



तव कथामृतं तसजीवनम्
tava kathāmytam tapta-jīvanam

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NO MIRACLES IN VRAJA

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada*

Devotee: When Krishna lifted up Govardhana Hill, nobody said that it was a miracle. But when Jesus Christ did so many things, they say it's a miracle. How is that?

Prabhupada: The difference is that in Vrindavan they are pure devotees. They knew that "Oh, this is not a miracle for Krishna. Krishna can do anything and everything." So they were not surprised. If I lift one mountain, you will be surprised because you know that "Swamiji is man. How he is lifting?" But [in Vrindavan] they know that Krishna is all-powerful. So there was no surprise. [The Vrajabasis considered] it just like natural work. They were so much affectionate to Krishna. Krishna was not only lifting [Govardhan Hill]. Every day He was performing so many great performances. His boyfriends would come home and narrate the stories to their mothers, "Oh, mother, today Krishna performed this. There was a great demon, and He killed him immediately." And the mother would say, "Oh, Krishna did that? He is a very nice boy." Because they were so affectionate to Krishna, they always thought, "Anything is possible

for Krishna. Krishna is so nice. Krishna is so great." That is their idea. So [this kind of activity for Krishna] is not a miracle. That is an ordinary thing for Him. Just like Yasoda; one day Krishna's friends complained, "Mother Yasoda, Krishna has eaten earth. You gave Him some sweets, but He was not eating them." Boys often complain about each other and then again make friends. Yasoda said, "Oh, Krishna, I gave You some sweets and You are eating earth?"

"No, mother. I have not eaten. They are telling false."

[But the boys] were still [saying], "Yes. We have seen, mother, He has eaten."

Then mother asked Him, "Oh, show Your face. Open Your mouth. I want to see."

So He opened His mouth, and she saw the whole universe within His mouth, the earth, the sun and moon, all planets, everything, within His mouth. Then she thought, "Oh, what I have seen? All right. Don't do it." That's all. She was not at all surprised. She thought, "I saw something. Maybe I am wrong or right. All right. Don't do it." That's all. They were so much affectionate to Krishna that Krishna's jugglery could not enchant them. (chuckles) Therefore Krishna said to the *gopīs*, "Your love is so pure that it is not possible for Me to repay you." Krishna is declaring insolvent to pay their debt. "You be satisfied with your love only. I cannot repay."

That is the position of Krishna. Krishna and the residents of Vrindavan are so affectionately connected that there is no conception that “Krishna is God, Krishna can do wonderful things.” They simply love Krishna. And out of love they forget everything. That ecstasy of love is only possible in Vrindavan. ❀

—Questions and Answers, 6 September 1968, New York.

CHEAP DISPLAYS OF ECSTASY REJECTED

From the life of Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji

Deception and Devotional Service

One day a resident of East Bengal who was a very wealthy landlord, a scholar, a *brāhmaṇa*, and a famous great devotee of the Lord came along with a friend to see Srila Gour Kishor. The landowner was so deeply absorbed in devotional ecstasies that his friend had to assist him by holding his hand when he walked. His friend would hold the shoulder of the wealthy landowner because his body was trembling so much. When the two arrived before Srila Gour Kishor, two other persons present immediately recognized the wealthy landowner and received him as an advanced devotee of the Lord. They very carefully offered their obeisances to him and arranged a sitting place, praying to him to please be seated. At that time Srila Gour Kishor, enacting his pastime of a blind person, said, “Who has come?” The friend of the landowner introduced his companion by glorifying the landowner’s erudition, devotion, and how, although he possessed unlimited wealth, he was detached from material sense gratification. He then described how, just one fortnight before, a thief had come and stolen forty-five thousand Rupees from the landowner’s house. Although suffering such a setback, the landowner, knowing devotion to be the main attachment, had come to obtain Srila Gour Kishor’s transcendental *darśan*. The friend added, “I am his friend. He has left all material sense gratification and keeps only my association. You will be able to realize his greatness by conversing with him. He once asked me a question about a confidential exchange between Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Ramananda Ray from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I told him that only

Gour Kishor Das Babaji could properly answer his question and certainly no one else. We have already been to see many learned persons in this area and still we cannot come to an agreement about the meaning of this conversation. We think that only you are able to explain it properly.”

After the friend of the great devotee completed his introduction, Srila Gour Kishor replied, “I will tell you a process by which you can understand the conclusion of this conversation. But before trying to understand these confidential topics between Lord Chaitanya and Ramananda Ray, you should renounce the association of this rascal impostor and take shelter of a pure devotee of the Lord. You should hear the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* one hundred times in the association of real devotees of the Lord. In this way, being absorbed in devotional ecstasy, you will be able to realize the purport of these conversations. At the present moment all the devotees here want to perform congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord. We don’t have time to discuss any other topics.” Then Srila Gour Kishor very loudly requested everyone to perform *hari-nāma sankīrtana*. Everyone then began to congregationally chant the Lord’s holy name. After hearing the statement by Srila Gour Kishor, the proud landowner and his friend immediately left that place. Later in the evening, when almost everyone had left, some persons told Srila Gour Kishor, “That very learned landowner was absorbed in devotional ecstasy. We could not see any manifestation of material consciousness in him. He was devoid of any worldly consciousness.” Another person sitting nearby, who had always heard that Srila Gour Kishor was very open with everyone, said, “That person was so immersed in various loving devotional ecstasies that he could not even walk by his own efforts. How is it that you can say he was not on the highest level of *bhāva-bhakti*?”

Gour Kishor Das Babaji then replied, “After speaking with him for a few moments I could understand that he had no good intentions in his performance of devotional service. One cannot measure the amount of devotion a person possesses by the approval of the general people. If a person is not serious in his devotional practice, then even

if he has the symptoms of renunciation, detachment, and many ecstasies, still he should not be considered to have real renunciation or detachment. As soon as a difficult test comes, then that false renunciation will cease. Detachment searches out the shelter of those who are actually fixed in their intentions for devotional service. In our practical devotional service, we should never show anyone our devotional ecstasies. One should perform devotional service in such a way that his deep attachment to the Lord will increase within his heart. Even if one displays hundreds and hundreds of exhibitions of external attachment, the Lord will not bless him if he does not develop internal loving attachment. If there is actually a deep loving attitude, then Krishna Himself will approach and overtake the advanced devotee. Whoever is not enticed by the fragrance of unflinching devotional service and whose heart is filled with material desires will wear different types of external bodily dress. Krishna is proportionately aloof or available to the degree of one's surrender. If one is deeply immersed in devotional attachment to Lord Hari, then even while suffering distressing diseases or other material miseries, still he will remain absorbed in transcendental loving service to the Lord. If you can fast and chant Hare Krishna both day and night, and when you can always cry out in desire for the service of Vrishabhanu Radharani, without displaying this to others, then Sri Krishna, who is very dear to Srimati Radharani, will call out for you to take his shelter."

Displaying Ecstatic Symptoms

Another day Srila Gour Kishor was sitting in his *bhajana-kuṭīra* in Sri Nabadwip Dhama, chanting Hare Krishna very loudly. Other persons who had assembled there were also chanting. At this time, one person came and began to display different emotional symptoms, such as crying. Some devotees began to think that that person had attained the highest stage of devotional ecstasy by chanting the glories of the Lord. Srila Gour Kishor immediately requested that person to leave. Some of the persons assembled there became disturbed

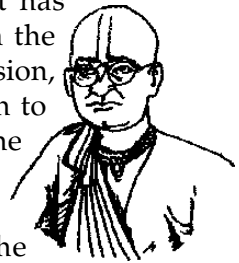
at seeing this and also left. Srila Gour Kishor then said, "One who has actually attained love of Godhead will never display the symptoms, but will always keep them hidden from the general people, just as a chaste wife becomes very embarrassed when she has to show any part of her body and thus keeps her body very thoroughly covered. In the same way, when one has real devotion unto the Supreme Lord and becomes elevated to love of Godhead, he always feels embarrassed to exhibit the symptoms of ecstasy and thus always keeps such symptoms unmanifest." ❀

—Translated by Vyenkata Das Brahmachari from *Amara Prabhura-kathā*, collection of articles written by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada.

THE LOTUS FEET OF SRI GURU

Prabhupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

If I disobey the law that has come down to me through the chain of preceptorial succession, the offense due to omission to carry out the command of the guru will sever me from the lotus-feet of Sri Gurudeva. If in order to carry out the command of the *vaiṣṇava* guru I have to be arrogant, to be brutish, to suffer eternal perdition, I am prepared to welcome such eternal damnation and even sign a pact to that effect. I will not listen to the words of other malicious persons in lieu of the command of the gurudeva. I will dissipate with indomitable courage and conviction the currents of thought of all the rest of the world, relying on the strength derived from the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva. I confess to this arrogance. By sprinkling a particle of the pollen of the lotus-feet of my preceptor, crores of people like you will be saved. There is no such learning in this world, no such sound reasoning in all the fourteen worlds, in no man-gods, that can weigh more than a solitary particle of the dust of the lotus-feet of my gurudeva. Gurudeva in whom I have implicit trust can never spite me. I am by no means prepared to listen to the words of any one who wants to hurt me or to accept such a malicious person as my preceptor. ❀



—Lecture by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, "Assuming Responsibility of Being Guru"

RAMA AND BEAUTIFUL SYAMA

Nasir Mamud

Aside from Mahaprabhu's famous associate Srila Haridas Thakur, within the history of Chaitanya Vaiṣṇavism there is record of a number of persons originally coming from Muslim backgrounds who later either adopted the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava faith or at least became strongly influenced by Vaiṣṇava religion and literature. The Bengali scholar Vraja-sundara Sanyal published a collection of songs composed by Islamic Vaiṣṇava poets, named Musalmān Vaiṣṇava Kavi. Therein he includes works from over forty different Muslim Vaiṣṇava poets, including the Oriya poet Salabeg, Saiyad Martuja from Bengal's Murshidabad District, Nasir Mamud, and Shah Akbar, who composed poems in glorification of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Pada-kalpa-taru is a famous Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava songbook compiled in the 1850's by Gokulananda Sen under the pen name Vaishnava Das. It includes the following beautiful song written in brajabuli language by Nasir Mamud:

(Tuḍī-rāga)

(1) calata rāma sundara śyāma
pāñcanī kācani vetra veṇu
muralī-khuralī gāna ri

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(2) priya śrīdāma sudāma meli
taraṇī-tanayā-tīre keli
dhabalī śāñalī āo ri āo ri
phukari calata kāna ri

(3) bayase kiśora mohana bhāti
vadana indu jalada-kānti
cāru-candri guñjā-hāra
vadane madana-bhāna ri

(4) āgama-nigama-veda-sāra
līlāya karata goṭha-bihāra
nasira-māmuda karata āśa
caraṇe śaraṇa dāna ri

(1) Balarama and beautiful Syama Krishna are moving along holding rods for driving the cows, ropes for binding them, canes, and the flute from which issues sweet notes.

(2) Krishna calls out, "O dear Sridama! O Sudama! Come let us play together on the bank of the daughter of Tarani (the Yamuna). As He walks, Krishna calls out for His pet cows, "Dhabali! Syamali! Come along."

(3) Young is His age; charming is His beauty. His face is a veritable moon, and His complexion is like that of a dark cloud. He is decorated with a peacock feather on His head and a necklace of gunja seeds. His face appears like that of the god of love.

(4) Although He is the essence or the only deity worshipped in the āgamas, nigamas and Vedas, He is relishing the pastime of herding the cows. Nasir Mamud clings to the hope that He may give him refuge at His lotus feet. ❀

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CIRCUMAMBULATING THE DEITIES

*ekāñ cañḍyāñ ravau sapta tisro dadyād vināyake
catasraḥ keśave dadyāt śive tvardha-pradaḥṣiñām*

One should circumambulate Durga' one time, the sun-god seven times, Ganesh three times, Lord Krishna four times, and Siva half a time. ❀

— *Nṛsiṃha Purāṇa* quoted in Srila Sanatan Goswami's, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 8.394. Translated by Kusakratha Prabhu.