



Sri Krishna Kathamrita

तव कथामृतम् तप्तजीवनम्

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

Bindu

Fortnightly email mini-magazine from Gopal Jiu Publications

Issue No. 348

Śrī Varūthini Ekādaśī

15 April 2015

Circulation 7,810

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REGULATED AUSTERITY

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

Regarding the vows and chanting method you have adopted, it is very nice. But do not impose something which will be difficult to execute. There is no need of fasting once every week. Two days fasting per month on Ekadashi is sufficient. Besides that, there are other special fasting days. Spiritual realization depends on austerities and vows, but in this age by the mercy of Krishna and Lord Chaitanya we need not undergo very severe penances, as we are unable to do it. The rules and regulations which we have already prescribed, that is sufficient for ordinary men. But as you have increased the chanting of beads daily to 25 rounds, that is very nice. 🙏

— Letter to Rudra. 11 November 1969.

GO DEEPER TO FIND JEWELS

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

In the *Ujjvala-nīlamanīḥ* Srila Rupa Goswami has defined *prema*, and the same *prema* is also mentioned in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Krishna has said everything, but it has to be understood — not just by superficially reading but by going deeper. Therefore go deep, deeper, to the deepest regions. This is like an unlimited ocean. One of the words for ocean is *ratna-garbha*, meaning that it contains invaluable gems, *ratna*. But where in the ocean are such invaluable gems available? They are available only in the deepest regions. If you float on the surface you will only



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

collect fish. Nothing more than that. You cannot get the gems, *ratna*, unless you go deep, deeper, to the deepest region. Try to understand it very well! If you float on the surface of the sea you will only collect fish. So you are just collecting fish. You cannot go to the deepest region of the ocean to collect that *ratna*, invaluable gem. And what is that *ratna*? That is *prema-ratna*. This love of Krishna is the *ratna*, the invaluable gem. Narottama Dasa Thakura says, *prema ratana-dhana helāya harāinu* — “Due to my carelessness, I am losing the opportunity to get this *krṣṇa-prema-ratna*” [Prārthanā song 41]. So go deep, into the deepest region of the ocean, and then you can collect this *ratna*. 🙏

— From a lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.30. 1 June 1993. Baltimore, USA.

THE FIRST ATTRACTION – PART 14

From Srila Jīva Goswami's
Gopāla-pūrva-campu, 15th pūraṇa

Madhukantha and Snigdhantha continue describing the pre-adolescence pastimes of Srimati Radharani and the gopīs.

[Looking at Sri Radha's beauty] the following gossip spread among the gopīs of Vraja:

*indur mandati khañjarīṭa-taruṇaḥ khañjann ivālokyate
dūnaṁ bhāti tīla-prasūnam aruṇād bimbanḁ guṇāl lambate
svaṛṇa-śrī-jayi-varṇa-jāla-vilasad-vallī na līṇāyate
rādhāyā madhurimṇi yad vidhuratām āpnoti tan-mādhurī*

The moon has faded, the graceful wag-tail appears handicapped, the white sesame flower appears to be burning, the bimba fruit has lost its redness, the creepers that conquer the brilliance of gold appear to be faded. In front of the brilliance of Sri Radha, all others are losing their respective brilliances.

Thereafter, on attaining the age known as *kiśora*, the love of those gopīs for Krishna increased, just as the thirst of growing creepers to curl around their respective shelters increases.

At that age, their feelings were as follows:

*janmany etad aho kim atra bhavitā yat tasya vakṣaḥ-sthalaṁ
vistīrṇātula-ṇila-ratna-masṛṇaṁ spr̥ṣyeta mad-vakṣasā
tāmbūlaṁ bata carvitaṁ ca mukhataḥ kṛṣyeta kiṁ man-mukhe-
naivaṁ keyam aho mamādyā vimatir dharma-dhruḡ abhyāgatā*

Will it be possible in this life that the incomparable broad blue sapphire-decorated chest of Krishna will ever touch mine? Will it ever happen that the betel chewed in his mouth will be transferred to my mouth? Is it correct to think like this or not? Alas! How has this irreligious thought come into my mind today?

Their love attained extreme heights:

*pūrvam yat parito harer anubhavāt kaiśoram āśūdghataṁ
tat tāsū sphuritaṁ tam eva vidadhal līlābhīr uccaiḥ sthītam
apy ākarṇana-darśanādi-rahitās tā devatāviṣṭavac
ceṣṭante sma yataḥ śasāka nahi yad boddhumḁ janaś cāṅv api*

The *kiśora* age, which had arisen quickly in the gopīs due to their deep experience of Lord Hari's love, now attained its pinnacle, generating various new experiences of the Lord. However, due to not attaining the sight, sound etc. of the Lord, these gopīs would behave like women who have been possessed, causing confusion among their relatives.

*sūnyam paśyati bāṣpa-pūram anīṣam momucyate kampate
svīdyaty udghata-kaṅṭakatvam ayate stambhaṁ puṇaḥ pr̥rcchati
glāṇim gacchati vācīṭāpi vacanam nābhāṣate seti tām
paśyantī suhr̥dām tatir muhur aho rādhām aśocan muhuḥ*

[Among these gopīs suffering from separation,] Radha would see everything as void, she would cry torrents of tears, she would shiver and sweat constantly as her hair stood on end. Then she would become motionless and would not respond even when she was called upon. Seeing Radha in such a condition, her relatives were in constant anxiety.

Her feelings were as follows:

*rūpeṇāmṛta-sindhuh kīrtibhir amṛta-dyutir yad api
tad api harir mama hr̥dayam vidahati hā dhig vidhir vāmah*

When it comes to beauty, Hari is like an ocean of nectar. When it comes to spotless fame, he is like the moon. Yet even though he is like these two cooling objects, he burns my heart. Fie on the creator, who has become unfavorable towards me!

[Translator's Note: Nectar and moon are both cooling in their effect. However, Lord Hari is having an opposite effect on Sri Radha. Thus she is cursing the creator of the universe. The meter of this verse is *upaḡītiḥ*.]

Krishna's feelings were as follows:

*hr̥dayam pūrvam aliptam bhāvah kaḥ punar alipta me sahasā
smarad api yasya tu viṣayān svayam atha cittaṁ svato 'pi jihreti*

Earlier my heart was okay, but what are these feelings that have suddenly overtaken me? These feelings are reminding me of those objects of enjoyment, thinking of which I become ashamed.

Remembering his feelings for the gopīs that he had experienced during the pastime of subduing Kaliya, he thought to himself:

*pitā me sādḥūnām kula-tilakatā-vīśruta-gatis
tathā mātā sādḥvī-samudaya-vivekāgrima-lipiḥ
katham rādhādīnām para-mṛgadṛśām bhāvam abhito
bhajaty antaḥ kiṁvā mama mṛdulatā māṁ klamayati*

My father is the greatest decoration in the family of gentlemen. My mother is described first among saintly chaste ladies. How is it that my mind is revolving around and serving the doe-eyed Radha and the other gopīs? Is it my own weakness that is causing me to think like this?

*hanta jñānam mama vilulitaṁ kvāpi na syāt parantu
premārdrām tad bhavati sutarām tāsū tu preyasiṣu
yasmāt tāsū sphurati na dhiyā premamayyā parā tvaṁ
nāpi khyātim bahir anugayā tām parākartum īśe*

Alas! Although my knowledge is never lost to me, it is becoming soaked with love in the thoughts of these gopīs. Due to this, out of love my intelligence does not consider them as the property of others. While the worst part is that [at least] externally, I am not able to make them my property [due to fear of society].



In such a state of mind, his strange activities were as follows:

*maunārhe pratibhāṣate sma vacanaucitye munitvaṁ dadhe
śocyatve hasati sma hāsa-kathane rūkṣatvam evādade
prastāve vraja-subhruvāṁ sakhi-janair nirmiyamāṇe harer
yadyapy evam athāpi-varṇa-vikṛter vyatyastir ālakṣyate*

When silence was required, he would speak. When he was expected to speak, he would keep silent. In matters of sorrow he would laugh, and in light-hearted moments he would exhibit a serious nature. All of these [confusing] behaviors would be exhibited by Hari, but when his friends would speak about the *gopīs* his bodily hue would change [and would thus give away the feelings of his heart].

On hearing of the *gopīs* marriage:

*bahiḥ surasatām vyañjanm api tarhi balānujah
antas tu virasaḥ praikṣi marmajñaiḥ pakva-pīluvat*

The younger brother of Balaram would externally show great delight, but internally he would be devoid of all mellows. According to the experts of aesthetics, his condition was like that of a pilu fruit, which looks ripe on the outside but is tasteless within.

In this condition, the fathers of the *gopīs*, who were requested by the in-laws of their daughters to send the *gopīs* to their new homes, did not disclose this request to the *gopīs*. Instead, they discussed it among themselves. Due to the words of Garga Muni and the unusual behavior of the *gopīs*, the parents of the *gopīs* had not even broken the news to them that they had been pledged in marriage to other men, thinking, “Our daughters long only for Krishna.” Thus they feared that

if the *gopīs* somehow realize that they have been married to other men they would give up their lives. How then could they send off these *gopīs* to their in-laws' homes?

The parents of the *gopīs* thought as follows: “Just as a small dose of poison becomes tolerable for a person if it is taken from childhood, similarly we have been gradually drinking small doses of poison in the form of arranging the marriages of our daughters to other men. Now gradually we should also learn to drink the poison of sending them off to their in-laws' homes.” Thinking in this way, they informed the respective in-laws [that they would send the girls soon].

On hearing the news that they would soon be sent to the homes of men other than Krishna, the *gopīs* became extremely distressed, and indeed each girl decided that they would give up their life.

Before the forenoon arrived, they each snuck out, and with a consciousness devoid of any thoughts or dualities they arrived at Kaliya Hrada [where Krishna chastised Kaliya] to give up their lives. This Kaliya Hrada was full of deep, dark water and was making a loud noise that was disturbing to the ears. [Apparently referring to the gushing sound of the waters of the Yamuna. This noise appeared to be excessively loud on the day of the *gopīs* intended suicide.]

[By the arrangement of providence] all the *gopīs* simultaneously assembled at the Kaliya Hrada and started looking at each other as if they did not know one another. They started asking each other “Who are you?” Gradually they asked each other why they had assembled at Kaliya Hrada. And then seeing that the other *gopīs* were afflicted by the same problems, and seeing the faded colors of each other's lips, limbs, etc., they embraced each other tightly and started loud wailing, understanding each other's hearts.

Even though they were women belonging to noble families, they all mentally made a decision to end their lives and thus their relationships with their families. Among them all, Srimati Radharani situated herself between all of them and expressed her opinion clearly as follows:

*yady etad-vapur anya-sātkṛtam abhūt pitrādibhis tarhy adah
preta-grastam ivāpi jīvad adhikaṁ dhik-kāra-yogyam bhavet
dhik cātmānam aho yad eṣa sahate 'py etasya saṅgāpadam
tat-tīrthāya balād balānuja-kṛte kartavyam asyārpanam*

If this body is offered by our parents in the service of other men then it will become just like a body haunted by a ghost. Such a life would be even more

condemnable than death! Not only the body, but my soul will also become condemned, for it will have to bear the torture of associating with a so-called husband. Therefore it is better that I forcibly give up this body for the purpose of attaining Krishna. Thus I surrender this body to Krishna's holy places such as the Yamuna. [In other words, it is better that I drown.]

[Srimati Radharani says]: There is no use thinking about this topic very much. It is a well-known fact that good deeds are often fraught with obstacles. Therefore we should not delay in giving up our lives.

Srimati Radharani, saying like this, led all the *gopīs*, hand-to-hand, to the bank of the Kaliya Hrada. Then she folded her hands in front of the Yamuna and spoke as follows in a loud, broken voice choked with tears:

*goṣṭha-kṣmāpati-dampatī śvaśuratām rāmānujaḥ svāmitām
vṛndāranyam idaṁ sadāpi bhajatām āramatām naḥ pari
yāḥ snehād vyatibaddha-hastam abhitaḥ kālindi magnā bhavat-
pānīyāntar amūr bhajantu sakhitām tvām āśritās tad vayam*

O Kalindi! May the couple of Vrindavan (Nanda and Yashoda) become our in-laws. May the younger brother of Balaram become our husband. May this Vrindavan become our eternal sporting ground. May these *sakhīs* who are now preparing to drown in your waters by holding each other's hands become eternal friends. We now take shelter of you! [In other words, we are now giving up our lives.]

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SRI KRISHNA KATHAMRITA BINDU

A free bi-monthly service provided by:
Gopal Jiu Publications

c/o Sri Krishna Balarama Mandir
National Highway No. 5, IRC Village
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India, 751015

Phone: (0674) 2553250, 2557026

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Website: www.gopaljiu.org

Subscriptions: minimag@gopaljiu.org

Gopal Jiu Publications is a branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

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The *gopīs* who had entered the water to drown themselves thus obtained each other's association. All the other *gopīs* emulated the behavior of Sri Radha, and even though they knew that their path to death was not going to be easy, they rejected all such difficulties and prepared to surrender their lives to Yamuna in the Kaliya Hrada.

At that time, some divine voices spoke to them from the sky:

*ahaha gopa-sutāḥ saha-sāhasam
na sahasā kurutāpuru-buddhayaḥ
śṛṇuta vaḥ pratikūla-kusaṅgatir
na bhavitā na bhaven na bhaviṣyati*

O daughters of the *gopas*! Do not think of committing this terrible act! Do not act in a foolish way! Please listen carefully! There is no possibility that you will ever be touched by any undesirable company.”

*virahāvagraha-kliṣṭā gopī-bhūmi-sarojinīḥ
kṛtvā gīḥ-sudhayā siktā devābdās tri-divaṁ yayuḥ*

Thus, the *gopīs* who were deeply troubled by the drought of Krishna's separation and who appeared like day-lotuses on dry land were sufficiently nourished by the nectarean words of the demigods [in the form of the voices from the sky. These demigods then went back to heaven. [To be continued.] ॥

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the *Gopāla-pūrva-campūḥ*.
Published by Sri Nityasvarup Brahmachari. 1912 A.D.