



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Highlights

• DRUNKARDS AND KRISHNA-BHAKTI

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• A SUPERIOR LIFE WITH MAHAPRASADA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

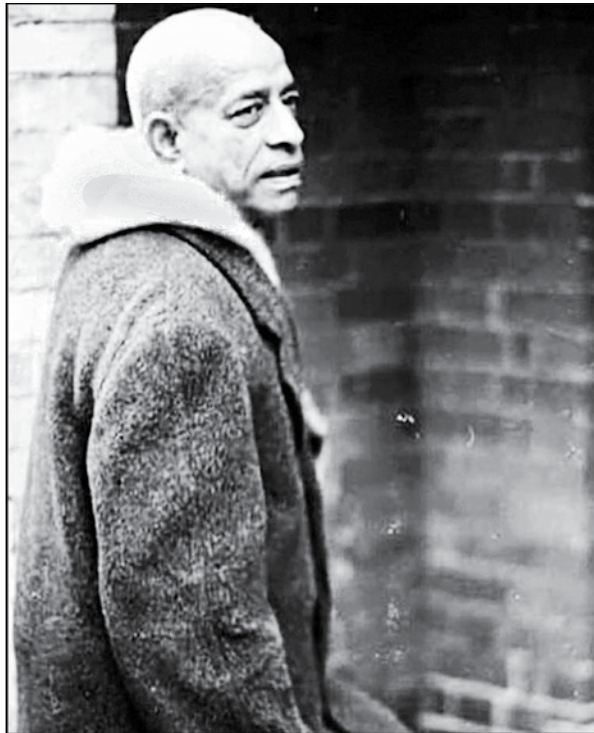
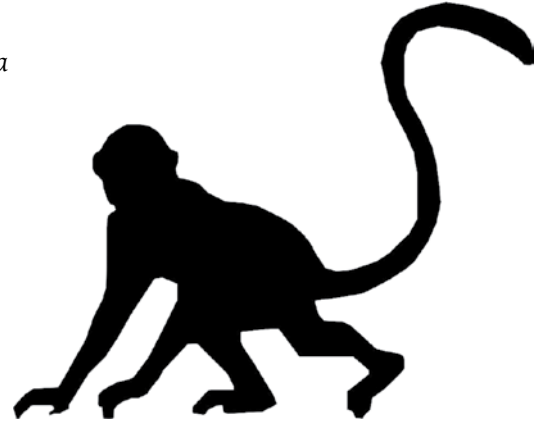
• NAMA-TATVA — RUDRA GLORIFIES HARI

From the Bhagavan-nāma-māhātmya-saṅgrahaḥ

• RESOLUTION OF DOUBTS

• BLISSFUL NITYANANDA AVATAR

The medieval poet Rama



DRUNKARDS AND KRISHNA-BHAKTI

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Krishna describes himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*. He says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya* [Bg. 7.8] "I am the taste of liquids." So one can remember Krishna by tasting water. Even if one is drinking liquor, if he thinks, "The taste of

this drink is Krishna," he will one day turn out to be a great saintly person. So I can request even drunkards to become Krishna conscious, what to speak of others, because Krishna says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*: "I am the taste of liquids." Generally in this context, "liquid" is taken to mean water. But liquor is also liquid. It is only sugar and molasses or some other combination fermented and distilled. Of course, it is bad because it creates intoxication. Although in one sense nothing is bad, liquor is bad because it creates bad effects. In America there are many drunkards. There is no scarcity of them. But I may request even the drunkards, "When drinking wine, kindly remember that the taste of this drink is Krishna. Just begin in this way, and one day you will become a saintly, Krishna conscious person." (Teachings of Queen Kunti, Chapter 5.)

Even the drunkard, they have developed a kind of *rasa*, a kind of taste, in the wine. So Krishna says, "All right, when you taste wine, you see you taste Krishna." So who cannot see Krishna? Everyone can see. Even greatest drunkard can see Krishna, what to speak of a devotee. Krishna says, *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*. If you are tasting something... It is just like the drunkard, they take wine. "All right, that taste is Krishna." To practice this, not to speak of the ordinary man, they're drinking water, but those who are drinking wine... If you think, "Now I am drinking wine, I am tasting. It is very nice taste. This is Krishna." Then one day he'll come out a great devotee.

So where is the difficulty to see Krishna? There is no difficulty — *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya* [Bg. 7.8]. Krishna is so nice that in every stage of life if you practice Krishna consciousness your life will be sublime. (Lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. 27 February 1973. Jakarta.)



A SUPERIOR LIFE WITH MAHAPRASADA

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura


Honoring *mahāprasāda* is not only symbolic of the superior life of the *vaiṣṇavas*, but it is part of worship, which ordinary theists cannot fully understand. Ordinary men are very much inclined to preserve the superiority of reason over the intuitive feelings of man toward the god of love. We must now proceed to show with healthy arguments that our intuitive feelings want us to offer everything we eat to the lord of our heart. We must first examine the arguments of the antagonists.

The rationalist states that God is infinite and without wants, so consequently it is foolish to offer eatables to such a being. It is a sacrilege to offer created things to the creator and thereby degrade the divinity of God, treating him as a human being. These are reasonable arguments indeed, and one who has heard them will certainly be inclined to declare to others, “Down with *mahāprasāda*!” These conclusions, which may appear reasonable, are dry and destructive. They tend to separate us from all connection in worshiping God. When you say that the infinite wants nothing, you forbid all contemplation and prayer. “The infinite does not want your grateful expressions or flattery.

Utter a word to the unconditioned Lord and you are sure to degrade him into a conditioned being. Hymns, prayers, and sermons are all over!” Shut your temple door and church gates because our rationalist has advised you to do so. Believe in a creative principle and you have done your duty! Oh! What a shame! What a dreadful fall! Theists, beware of these degrading principles!

Now the rationalist appears in another form and allows prayers, sermons, psalms, and churchgoing, saying that these things are wanted for the improvement of the soul, but God does not want them at all. We are glad that the rationalist has come toward us and will make further approaches in the course of time.

Yes, the progressive rationalist has admitted a very broad principle in theology: Whatever we do toward God is for our own benefit and not for the benefit of God, who is not in want of anything. However, the rationalist is a rationalist still and will continue to be so as long as he seeks self-interest. We know for certain that religion promises to give eternal happiness to man, and it is impossible to conceive of any religion that is not based on self-interest. This view, however, smells of utilitarianism and can never be theism. We must love God for God's sake even if our actions appear unreasonable. Our love must be without any goal concerning ourselves. This love must be a natural emotion to the deity as our well-wisher, without inference or experience. Salvation, dear as it is, should not be the object of this love. What, then, about other forms of happiness? Love of God is its own reward. Salvation, as a concomitant consequence,



Nāma-tattva


RUDRA GLORIFIES HARI

From Bhagavan-nāma-māhātmya-saṅgrahaḥ

*tvan nāma-kīrtanād viṣṇo! pūtaḥ pūjyo janair aham
tvaṁ haṁsi sarva-jantūnāṁ malaṁ tena hariḥ smṛtaḥ*

[Lord Rudra said], “O Vishnu! By chanting your names I have become purified and worthy of worship by all men. You snatch away all the sins of all living entities, and therefore you are known as Hari.”

—Bhagavan-nāma-māhātmya-saṅgraha. Princess of Wales Saraswati Bhavana Text No. 56. Edited by Mahamahopadhyaya Gopi Natha Kaviraja. Printed at Vidya Vilasa Press, Benares City. 1934.



must be a servant of love, but we must not look on it as the main goal. If a rationalist is prepared to believe this, he becomes a theist of the *vaiṣṇava* class. But the mere assuming of a name is of no consequence.

Though fully aware that the Lord is completely unconditioned, our holy and sweet principle of love takes a different view to that of the rationalist. Reason says one thing but love prescribes the opposite. Reason tells me that God has no sorrow, but love sees God in tears for his sons who are misled to evil. Reason tells me that the strict laws of God reward and punish me in a cold manner, but love reveals that God slackens his laws to the repentant soul. Reason tells me that with all his improvements man will never touch God, but love preaches that on the conversion of the soul into a state of spiritual womanhood, God, unconditioned as he is, accepts an eternal marriage with the liberated soul. Reason tells me that God is in infinite space and time, but love describes that the all-beautiful Lord is sitting before us like a respected relative and enjoying the pleasures of society. As a father in his amusements with his young children, God is spreading all sorts of delicious food all over the earth and expecting his sons to gather them for their own benefit. But the loving children, out of their holy and unmixed love, gather all the scattered blessings and with strong feelings of love, regardless of reason, offer all the blessings to the father, whom they love more than their lives.

The father again, in reply to their kind feelings, gives back the offering to the children and kindly tells them, “O my children! These blessings are intended for you! Out of your natural love, you bring them to me for my enjoyment, but naturally I have no wants for you to supply. I have, however, accepted that part of your offering which is for me: your unmixed love and unbiased affections, for which I am exceedingly anxious. Take back these sweet things and enjoy them.”

This process of unbiased love, which dry reason can never approach, sanctifies the food we take and brings us harmless enjoyment every day of our natural life! This is a system of sincere worship, which theists of a higher class alone can act upon. We cannot express the joy we often felt when we took the *mahāprasāda* in the temple! The holiness we attach to it is its sweetness, and often we pray that all men may enjoy it. 🌸

— *Bhaktivinoda Vani Vaibhava* (14.6). Translated by *Bhumipati Das*.
Published by *Iswara Das and Touchstone Media*. Vrindavan. 2003.

RESOLUTION OF DOUBTS

Traditionally, a *vyākhyāna*, a complete explanation of any *śāstra*, consists of five limbs. These five limbs are defined in the *Parāśara Purāṇa* (18.18) as follows:

pada-cchedaḥ padārthoktir vighraho vākya-yojanā
ākṣepasya samādhānam vyākhyānam pañca-lakṣanam

A *vyākhyāna*, complete explanation, of any *śāstra* consists of five items:

- 1) ***Pada-cchedaḥ*** — breaking down the text into individual terms.
- 2) ***Padārthoktiḥ*** — explaining the meaning of each and every term.
- 3) ***Vighrahaḥ*** — explaining the grammatical breakdown of difficult terms.
- 4) ***Vākya-yojanā*** — forming a meaningful sentence by showing the connections between the various terms. This is also technically known as *anvaya*.
- 5) ***Ākṣepasya samādhānam*** — the resolution of various doubts [and the correction of various errors that the disciple might have made while understanding the *śāstra*].

The first four items may be present in the writings of an *ācārya*. In the case of the fifth item, however, a book doesn't speak and answer questions. Although many doubts can be resolved by reading the teachings of an *ācārya* who is not physically present, in general to resolve-uncertainty one has to approach a living representative of the *paramparā* and hear from him.

For example, the first book that a child learns from is one that explains the alphabet. In order to learn the sequence, the proper pronunciation, and the examples for each alphabet (“a” for apple, etc.), a child has to approach a living person. What to speak of learning something as subtle and difficult as *ŚĀSTRĀ* or *hari-kathā*! It requires the guidance of a person who can resolve doubts and correct mistakes that may occur in our learning from time to time.

Even an *ācārya* like Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur, who is ever immersed in the divine pastimes of the youthful couple of Vrindavan, had a major doubt about an apparently missing half syllable in the *kāma-gāyatrī*. Unable to get it resolved, he became dejected and began fasting in order to get an answer from the Lord within his heart. Finally, Srimati Radharani appeared before him and revealed that the answer was available in a book named *Varṇāgama-bhāsvat*. This incident illustrates three things:

- 1) Even the liberated souls may have doubts and difficulties understanding certain subject matters (and hence there should be no wonder if the practitioners have certain doubts which are not resolved).

2) Such doubts can be resolved by the mercy of Srimati Radharani, Lord Krishna, or their living representatives.

3) Doubt solving is a living, ongoing process. 🙏

— Compiled from *Parāśaropapurāṇam*, Critical Edition. Edited by Dr. Kapildev Tripathi. Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya. Varanasi. 1990 A.D.

BLISSFUL NITYANANDA AVATAR

The medieval poet Rama

kīrtana rasa-maya, āgama-agocara
kevala ānanda-kanda
akhila-loka-gati, bhakata prāṇa pati
jaya nityānanda canda

Imbued with mellows of *kīrtana*, hidden even from the Vedas, the exclusive source of all joy, the shelter of all living entities in all planets, and the lord of the life of all devotees is my Nityananda Chandra. All glories to him!

heri patita-gaṇa, karuṇa vilokana
jaga bhari tārala apāra
bhava-bhaya-bhañjana, durita-nivāraṇa
dhanya dhanya avatāra

Observing the fallen souls [of this age] through his merciful glance, he delivered the entire world. He dispels the fear of material existence and counteracts all sins. Glorious, glorious is Nityananda Avatar!



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Unknown artist

Sri Nityananda Prabhu

hari saṅkīrtana, mātala jaga-jana
sura nara nāga paśu-pākhī
sakala veda sāra, prema-sudhā-rasa
deyala kāhu nā upekhi

In the *saṅkīrtana* of Lord Hari [commenced by Nityananda] everyone in the world became mad, including gods, humans, serpents, beasts and birds. The honey-nectar of love of Krishna is the essence of all Vedas, and Nityananda gave such nectar to everyone. He did not neglect anyone.

tribhuvana maṅgala, nāma-prema-bale
dūre gela kali-āndhiyāra
śamana bhavana patha, sabe eka rodhala
vañcita rāma durācāra

Krishna's name and love for him are all auspicious for the three planetary systems. On the strength of such *nāma* and *prema* the darkness of the age of Kali was dispelled. Nityananda Prabhu single-handedly obstructed all paths leading to the abode of Yama-rajā. Only the misbehaved debauchee named Rama was deprived of Nityananda's mercy. 🙏

— *Vaiṣṇava Padāvalī*, fourth edition, April 2010. Compiled and edited by Hare Krishna Mukhopadhyay. Published by Shishu Sahitya Sansad Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata.