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Śrī Bhakti Ratnāvalī

Compiled by Śrīla Viṣṇu Purī

Visnu Puri:

- 1- Born in Tirhut in Mithila.
- 2- Wrote BR in Benares.
- 3- Some claim he was contemporary of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.
- 4- Other s claim he appeared 2 centuries before.
- 5- Some say he was a disciple of Purusottama Tirtha or Brahmanya Tirtha.
- 6- Tradition says that he met Mahaprabhu when He visited Benares. Later when Visnu Puri's disciples visited Jagannath Puri to pay homage to Mahaprabhu, they asked Him if he had a message for their guru. He told them that He wanted a necklace of gems. The bewildered disciples returned to Benares and told Visnu Puri the message. He understood at one and subsequently began to compose BR. When Mahaprabhu received it, He offered it to Lord Jagannatha.
- 7- Caitanya Caritamrta mentions his name as one of the sannyasis present in Puri at the time of Mahaprabhu.
- 8- Gaura Ganodesa Dipika mentions him as the disciple of Jayadharma Tirthathis would certainly put him back about 2 centuries.

Mangalācaraņa

jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāma-devam

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is He who is known as jana-nivāsa, the ultimate resort of all living entities, and who is also known as Devakīnandana or Yaśodā-nandana, the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious, as well as every man who is impious. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the lusty desires of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. May He be all glorious and happy! (10.09.48)

yat-kirtanam yat-smaranam yad-iksanam

yad-vandanam yac-chravaṇam yad-arhaṇam lokasya sadyo vidhunoti kalmaṣam tasmai subhadra-śravase namo namaḥ

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-auspicious Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, about whom glorification, remembrances, audience, prayers, hearing and worship can at once cleanse the effects of all sins of the performer. (2.4.15)

bhūyo namaḥ sad-vṛjina-cchide 'satām asambhavāyākhila-sattva-mūrtaye puṁsāṁ punaḥ pāramahaṁsya āśrame vyavasthitānām anumṛgya-dāśuṣe

I again offer my respectful obeisances unto the form of complete existence and transcendence, who is the liberator of the pious devotees from all distresses and the destroyer of the further advances in atheistic temperament of the nondevotee-demons. For the transcendentalists who are situated in the topmost spiritual perfection, He grants their specific destinations. (2.4.13)

śriyah patir yajña-patih prajā-patir dhiyām patir loka-patir dharā-patih patir gatiś cāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām prasīdatām me bhagavān satām patih

May Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the worshipable Lord of all devotees, the protector and glory of all the kings like Andhaka and Vṛṣṇi of the Yadu dynasty, the husband of all goddesses of fortune, the director of all sacrifices and therefore the leader of all living entities, the controller of all intelligence, the proprietor of all planets, spiritual and material, and the supreme incarnation on the earth (the supreme all in all), be merciful upon me. (2.4.20)

yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam adhyātma-dīpam atititīrṣatām tamo 'ndham samsāriņām karuņayāha purāṇa-guhyam tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi gurum munīnām

Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto him [Śuka], the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross over the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of Vedic knowledge, after having personally assimilated it by experience. (1.2.3)

dūrānniśāy-mahimānamupetya-pārśvam antaḥ praviśya śubha-bhāgavatāmṛtābdheḥ / paśyāmi kṛṣṇa-karuṇānjananirmalena

hrllocanena bhagavad-bhajanam hi ratnam // 6

Hearing from afar about its glories, I approached and plunged deep into this divine nectarine ocean of the Bhagavatam and with my minds eye purified by the collyrium of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, I perceived the jewel of transcendental love deposited in it.

> tadidamatimahārgham bhakti-ratnam murāri-rahamadhikasayatnah prītaye vaiṣṇavānām / hrdigata-jagadīśadeśa-māsādyamādyannidhivaramiva tasmād-vāridherudbharāmi // 7

With very great effort I am lifting up, like a precious treasure, this great gem of Divine Love out of the ocean of the Bhāgavatam for the enjoyment of the Vaiṣnavas. In this I am following the instruction of the Supreme Lord in my heart.

> kante kṛtā kulameśeṣam-alamkaroti veśmasthitā nikhilameva tamo'pahanti / tāmujjvalām gunavatīm jagadīśa-bhaktiratnāvalīm sukṛtatinah pariśīlayantu //

Worn around the neck (recited), it is an ornament to the wearer. Placed in the house (heart), it removes darkness (ignorance). May all good people always wear on their bosom (apply themselves seriously to it's study) this effulgent and precious necklace made of gems of transcendental love (Bhakti Ratnāvalī).

nikhila-bhāgavata-śravanalasā bahu-kathā-bhirathānavakāśinaḥ / ayamayaṁ nanu tānanu sārthako bhavatu viṣṇu purī grathanagrhaḥ //

There are many, who though not lazy, cannot study or hear the full and original Bhāgavatam owing to their preoccupation with the various affairs of life. Let this effort of Viṣṇu Purī to gather the gems of verses from various sections of the Bhāgavatam and string them together in a line, become useful for such devotees.

STRAND 1 – General Reflections on Bhakti

Religion and Spirituality are Based on Devotion to the Lord

sa vai pumsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje ahaituky apratihatā yayātmā suprasīdati The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (1.2.6)

vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam

By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. (1.2.7)

sattvam rajas tama iti prakrter guņās tair yuktah parah purusa eka ihāsya dhatte sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-hareti samjñāh śreyāmsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nrṇām syuh

The transcendental Personality of Godhead is indirectly associated with the three modes of material nature, namely passion, goodness and ignorance, and just for the material world's creation, maintenance and destruction He accepts the three qualitative forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. Of these three, all human beings can derive ultimate benefit from Viṣṇu, the form of the quality of goodness. (1.2.23)

ato vai kavayo nityam bhaktim paramayā mudā vāsudeve bhagavati kurvanty ātma-prasādanīm

Certainly, therefore, since time immemorial, all transcendentalists have been rendering devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, with great delight, because such devotional service is enlivening to the self. (1.2.22)

mumukṣavo ghora-rūpān hitvā bhūta-patīn atha nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntā bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ

Those who are serious about liberation are certainly nonenvious, and they respect all. Yet they reject the horrible and ghastly forms of the demigods and worship only the all-blissful forms of Lord Viṣṇu and His plenary portions. (1.2.26)

All Kinds of Devotees, Sakama or Akama, Should Offer Devotion to the Lord

akāmaķ sarva-kāmo vā

mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param

Whether one is without desire [the condition of the devotees], or is desirous of all fruitive results, or is after liberation, one should with all efforts try to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead for complete perfection, culminating in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. (2.3.10)

All Paths are meant for Attaining Vasudeva

vāsudeva-parā vedā vāsudeva-parā makhāḥ vāsudeva-parā yogā vāsudeva-parāḥ kriyāḥ vāsudeva-paraṁ jñānaṁ vāsudeva-paraṁ tapaḥ vāsudeva-paro dharmo vāsudeva-parā gatiḥ

In the revealed scriptures, the ultimate object of knowledge is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. The purpose of performing sacrifice is to please Him. Yoga is for realizing Him. All fruitive activities are ultimately rewarded by Him only. He is supreme knowledge, and all severe austerities are performed to know Him. Religion [dharma] is rendering loving service unto Him. He is the supreme goal of life.(1.2.28-29)

Narada on Why Devotion is Superior to All Other Practices

yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ mukunda-sevayā yadvat tathātmāddhā na śāmyati

It is true that by practicing restraint of the senses by the yoga system one can get relief from the disturbances of desire and lust, but this is not sufficient to give satisfaction to the soul, for this [satisfaction] is derived from devotional service to the Personality of Godhead. (1.6.35)

Suta Explains the Efficiency of Bhakti-yoga

bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male apaśyat puruṣaṁ pūrṇaṁ māyāṁ ca tad-apāśrayam Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service [bhakti-yoga] without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the Absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under full control. (1.7.4)

Lord Kapila on the Nature of the Highest Form of Devotion

devānām guņa-lingānām ānuśravika-karmaņām sattva evaika-manaso vṛttiḥ svābhāvikī tu yā animittā bhāgavatī bhaktiḥ siddher garīyasī

jarayaty āśu yā kośam nigīrņam analo yathā

Lord Kapila said: The senses are symbolic representations of the demigods, and their natural inclination is to work under the direction of the Vedic injunctions. As the senses are representatives of the demigods, so the mind is the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The mind's natural duty is to serve. When that service spirit is engaged in devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, without any motive, that is far better even than salvation.

Bhakti, devotional service, dissolves the subtle body of the living entity without separate effort, just as fire in the stomach digests all that we eat.(3.25.32-33)

Kapila Explains the Superior Position of Bhakti over Mukti

naikātmatām me spṛhayanti kecin mat-pāda-sevābhiratā mad-īhāḥ ye 'nyonyato bhāgavatāḥ prasajya sabhājayante mama pauruṣāṇi

A pure devotee, who is attached to the activities of devotional service and who always engages in the service of My lotus feet, never desires to become one with Me. Such a devotee, who is unflinchingly engaged, always glorifies My pastimes and activities.(3.25.34)

Kapila Explains the Result of Such a Devotee

paśyanti te me rucirāņy amba santaķ prasanna-vaktrāruņa-locanāni rūpāņi divyāni vara-pradāni sākam vācam spṛhaņīyām vadanti tair darśanīyāvayavair udāravilāsa-hāsekṣita-vāma-sūktaiḥ hṛtātmano hṛta-prāṇāṁś ca bhaktir anicchato me gatim aṇvīṁ prayuṅkte

atho vibhūtim mama māyāvinas tām aišvaryam astāngam anupravrttam śriyam bhāgavatīm vāsprhayanti bhadrām parasya me te 'śnuvate tu loke

na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe nankṣyanti no me 'nimiṣo leḍhi hetiḥ yeṣām aham priya ātmā sutaś ca sakhā guruḥ suhṛdo daivam iṣṭam

O My mother, My devotees always see the smiling face of My form, with eyes like the rising morning sun. They like to see My various transcendental forms, which are all benevolent, and they also talk favorably with Me.

Upon seeing the charming forms of the Lord, smiling and attractive, and hearing His very pleasing words, the pure devotee almost loses all other consciousness. His senses are freed from all other engagements, and he becomes absorbed in devotional service. Thus in spite of his unwillingness, he attains liberation without separate endeavor.

Thus because he is completely absorbed in thought of Me, the devotee does not desire even the highest benediction obtainable in the upper planetary systems, including Satyaloka. He does not desire the eight material perfections obtained from mystic yoga, nor does he desire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. Yet even without desiring them, the devotee enjoys, even in this life, all the offered benedictions.

My dear mother, devotees who receive such transcendental opulences are never bereft of them; neither weapons nor the change of time can destroy such opulences. Because the devotees accept Me as their friend, their relative, their son, preceptor, benefactor and Supreme Deity, they cannot be deprived of their possessions at any time.(3.25.35-38)

Kapila Confirms that Those with True Devotion and Renunciation Automatically Achieve Liberation

imam lokam tathaivāmum ātmānam ubhayāyinam ātmānam anu ye ceha ye rāyaḥ paśavo gṛhāḥ visrjya sarvān anyāms ca mām evam visvato-mukham bhajanty ananyayā bhaktyā tān mṛtyor atipāraye

nānyatra mad bhagavataḥ pradhāna-puruṣeśvarāt ātmanaḥ sarva-bhūtānāṁ bhayaṁ tīvraṁ nivartate

Thus the devotee who worships Me, the all-pervading Lord of the universe, in unflinching devotional service, gives up all aspirations to be promoted to heavenly planets or to become happy in this world with wealth, children, cattle, home or anything in relationship with the body. I take him to the other side of birth and death.

The terrible fear of birth and death can never be forsaken by anyone who resorts to any shelter other than Myself, for I am the almighty Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original source of all creation, and also the Supreme Soul of all souls.

(3.25.39-41)

tasmāt tvam sarva-bhāvena bhajasva parameṣṭhinam tad-guṇāśrayayā bhaktyā bhajanīya-padāmbujam

My dear mother, I therefore advise that you take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for His lotus feet are worth worshiping. Accept this with all devotion and love, for thus you can be situated in transcendental devotional service.(3.32.22)

Suniti Explains to Dhruva Why Visnu Alone is Worthy of Worship

tam eva vatsāśraya bhṛtya-vatsalam mumukṣubhir mṛgya-padābja-paddhatim ananya-bhāve nija-dharma-bhāvite manasy avasthāpya bhajasva pūruṣam

My dear boy, you also should take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is very kind to His devotees. Persons seeking liberation from the cycle of birth and death always take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord in devotional service. Becoming purified by executing your allotted occupation, just situate the Supreme Personality of Godhead in your heart, and without deviating for a moment, engage always in His service.

nānyam tataḥ padma-palāśa-locanād duḥkha-cchidam te mṛgayāmi kañcana yo mṛgyate hasta-gṛhīta-padmayā śriyetarair aṅga vimṛgyamāṇayā

My dear Dhruva, as far as I am concerned, I do not find anyone who can mitigate your distress but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose eyes are like lotus petals. Many demigods such as Lord Brahmā seek the pleasure of the goddess of fortune, but the goddess of fortune herself, with a lotus flower in her hand, is always ready to render service to the Supreme Lord.(4.8.22-23)

Prthu Explains th e Reason Why Laksmi Devi Seeks Him Alone

athābhaje tvākhila-pūruṣottamam guṇālayam padma-kareva lālasaḥ apy āvayor eka-pati-spṛdhoḥ kalir na syāt kṛta-tvac-caraṇaika-tānayoḥ

jagaj-jananyām jagad-īša vaišasam syād eva yat-karmaņi naḥ samīhitam karoși phalgv apy uru dīna-vatsalaḥ sva eva dhiṣṇye 'bhiratasya kim tayā

Now I wish to engage in the service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to serve just like the goddess of fortune, who carries a lotus flower in her hand, because His Lordship, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the reservoir of all transcendental qualities. I am afraid that the goddess of fortune and I would quarrel because both of us would be attentively engaged in the same service.

My dear Lord of the universe, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, is the mother of the universe, and yet I think that she may be angry with me because of my intruding upon her service and acting on that very platform to which she is so much attached. Yet I am hopeful that even though there is some misunderstanding, You will take my part, for You are very much inclined to the poor and You always magnify even insignificant service unto You. Therefore even though she becomes angry, I think that there is no harm for You, because You are so self-sufficient that You can do without her.(4.20.27-28)

Rudra Explains to the Pracetas the relationship between Him and Lord Visnu

yaḥ param ramhasaḥ sākṣāt tri-guṇāj jīva-samjñitāt bhagavantam vāsudevam prapannaḥ sa priyo hi me

Any person who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the controller of everything—material nature as well as the living entity—is actually very dear to me. (4.24.28)

atha bhāgavatā yūyam priyāḥ stha bhagavān yathā na mad bhāgavatānām ca preyān anyo 'sti karhicit

You are all devotees of the Lord, and as such I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. I know in this way that the devotees also respect me and that I am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am.(4.24.30)

Narada Speaks on the Supremecy of Lord Hari

tat karma hari-toṣam yat sā vidyā tan-matir yayā

Your only activities should be those that can please the Personality of Godhead. Our education should be such that we can become elevated to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.(4.20.49)

Prahlada Maharaja Contends that Devotion is the Sign of a Great Man

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā sarvair guņais tatra samāsate surāḥ harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guņā mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ

harir hi sākṣād bhagavān śarīriṇām ātmā jhaṣāṇām iva toyam īpsitam hitvā mahāms tam yadi sajjate gṛhe tadā mahattvam vayasā dampatīnām

One who has unflinching devotion for the Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material qualifications that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.

Just as aquatics always desire to remain in the vast mass of water, all conditioned living entities naturally desire to remain in the vast existence of the Supreme Lord. Therefore if someone very great by material calculations fails to take shelter of the Supreme Soul but instead becomes attached to material household life, his greatness is like that of a young, low-class couple. One who is too attached to material life loses all good spiritual qualities.(5.18.12-13)

Rama Devi States that Sri Hari Alone is worthy of Worship

sa vai patiḥ syād akutobhayaḥ svayam samantataḥ pāti bhayāturam janam sa eka evetarathā mitho bhayam naivātmalābhād adhi manyate param

He alone who is never afraid but who, on the contrary, gives complete shelter to all fearful persons can actually become a husband and protector. Therefore, my Lord, you are the only husband, and no one else can claim this position. If you were not the only husband, You would be afraid of others. Therefore persons learned in all Vedic literature accept only Your Lordship as everyone's master, and they think no one else a better husband and protector than You.(5.18.20)

Sri Hanuman on the Qualification to Worship Lord Hari

na janma nūnam mahato na saubhagam na vān na buddhir nākṛtis toṣa-hetuḥ tair yad visṛṣṭān api no vanaukasaś cakāra sakhye bata lakṣmaṇāgrajaḥ

suro 'suro vāpy atha vānaro naraḥ sarvātmanā yaḥ sukṛtajñam uttamam bhajeta rāmam manujākṛtim harim ya uttarān anayat kosalān divam iti

One cannot establish a friendship with the Supreme Lord Rāmacandra on the basis of material qualities such as one's birth in an aristocratic family, one's personal beauty, one's eloquence, one's sharp intelligence or one's superior race or nation. None of these qualifications is actually a prerequisite for friendship with Lord Śrī Rāmacandra. Otherwise how is it possible that although we uncivilized inhabitants of the forest have not taken noble births, although we have no physical beauty and although we cannot speak like gentlemen, Lord Rāmacandra has nevertheless accepted us as friends?

Therefore, whether one is a demigod or a demon, a man or a creature other than man, such as a beast or bird, everyone should worship Lord Rāmacandra, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who appears on this earth just like a human being. There is no need of great austerities or penances to worship the Lord, for Me accepts even a small service offered by His devotee. Thus He is satisfied, and as soon as He is satisfied, the devotee is successful. Indeed, Lord Śrī Rāmacandra brought all the devotees of Ayodhyā back home, back to Godhead [Vaikuṇṭha]. (5.19.7-8)

The Demigods on the Greatness of Pure Devotion

satyam diśaty arthitam arthito nṛṇām naivārthado yat punar arthitā yataḥ

svayam vidhatte bhajatām anicchatām icchāpidhānam nija-pāda-pallavam

The Supreme Personality of Godhead fulfills the material desires of a devotee who approaches Him with such motives, but He does not bestow benedictions upon the devotee that will cause him to demand more benedictions again. However, the Lord willingly gives the devotee shelter at His own lotus feet, even though such a person does not aspire for it, and that shelter satisfies all his desires. That is the Supreme Personality's special mercy. (5.19.27)

Prahlada Maharaja on the Need for Solitude to Become Fixed in Devotion

tat sādhu manye 'sura-varya dehinām sadā samudvigna-dhiyām asad-grahāt hitvātma-pātam gṛham andha-kūpam vanam gato yad dharim āśrayeta

Prahlāda Mahārāja replied: O best of the asuras, King of the demons, as far as I have learned from my spiritual master, any person who has accepted a temporary body and temporary household life is certainly embarrassed by anxiety because of having fallen in a dark well where there is no water but only suffering. One should give up this position and go to the forest and should thus take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (7.5.5)

Yamaraja on the Practice of Devotion Being the Prime Duty of All Men

etāvān eva loke 'smin pumsām dharmaḥ paraḥ smṛtaḥ bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ

Devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society. (6.3.22)

Material Existence Cannot be Overcome Except by Dependence on the Lord

avismitam tam paripūrņa-kāmam svenaiva lābhena samam prašāntam vinopasarpaty aparam hi bālišaḥ śva-lāngulenātititarti sindhum

Free from all material conceptions of existence and never wonder-struck by anything, the Lord is always jubilant and fully satisfied by His own spiritual perfection. He has no material designations, and therefore He is steady and unattached. That Supreme Personality of Godhead is the only shelter of everyone. Anyone desiring to be protected by others is certainly a great fool who desires to cross the sea by holding the tail of a dog. (6.9.22)

6.17.28/31 7.5.30-32 Kaumara acaret ? 7.6.19 7.7.38 7.7.39-40 7.7.18 7.7.51-52 7.9.9 8.23.8 10.9.18-21 10.14.4-5 10.46.33 10.47.24 10.47.59-61 10.82.45 li.2.34-36 11.3.28 11.2.37 11.4.10 11.5.2-3 11.8.41-42 11.14.18 11.26.15 11.18.45 11.14.19-21 11.14.22-24 11.14.25 12.10.34 3.5.46 3.9.10 3.15.24 3.16.37 4.29.46 4.31.22 5.6.18 6.1.17 6.3.27 10.38.22 11.12.8 1.5.12 1.7.10

6.11.25 11.20.31-37