

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
Mahaprabhu Was Also Very Strict

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In Alachua and Holland we were discussing the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He taught Srila Rupa Gosvami and inspired all His teachings in his heart. Now we will explain the teachings of Mahaprabhu to Srila Sanatana Gosvami.

Mahaprabhu's mercy is endless because it is the combined mercy of Radha and Krsna. That is why He was traveling throughout the whole of India, here and there, South, North, West, and East. He met with Raya Ramananda in the South, and He went to Dvaraka, Vrndavana, and so many other places. In Jarikanda forest, on His way from Jagannatha Puri to Vrndavana, He sprinkled His mercy even upon the trees, creepers, animals and grasses, and He inspired a high class of bhakti in the hearts of tigers, bears, and mad elephants. Mad elephants, tigers, bears, and deer were all in one group, kissing each other and chanting Hari bol, Hari bol.

At the same time, this Mahaprabhu sometimes became very, very strict and severe. In Puri there was a brahmana boy, a devotee, and his name was Chota Haridasa. He went to the home of an aged lady devotee, Madhavi devi, the sister of Sikhi Mahiti, who was 84 years old. Mahaprabhu could not tolerate this. "Although he is a brahmachari-sannyasi, he went there", Mahaprabhu said. "Why has he gone there? From now on he should not come here. My door is closed to that devotee."

That boy later died by committing suicide, but Mahaprabhu's heart did not melt. Everyone, including even Sri Raya Ramananda, Sri Svarupa Damodara, and Sri Nityananda Prabhu were saying that His heart was very cruel. They all requested Him to see Chota Haridasa, but He was not persuaded. Even Paramananda Puri, who was like His guru, requested Him, but Mahaprabhu told him, "Prabhu, I cannot live here any longer. I am going elsewhere. Govinda, bring My dor-kaupin. We should leave from here at once. Prabhu, you can remain here with your associates, but I cannot remain. His heart was not at all melted.

[In his book Prema-vivarta, Chapter Seven, Sri Jagadananda Pandita says:

vairagi bhai gramya-katha na sunibe kane
gramya-varta na kahibe yabe milibe ane
svapane o na kara bhai stri-sambhanda
grhe stri chaoiya bhai asiyacha vana
yadi caha pranaya rakhite gaurangera sane
chota haridasera katha thake yena mane
bhala na khaibe ara bhala na paribe
hrdayete radha-krsna sarvada sevibe

"My dear brother, you are in the renounced order of life and should not listen to talk about ordinary worldly things, nor should you talk about worldly things when you meet with others. Do not think of women even in dreams. You have accepted the renounced order of life with a vow that forbids you to associate with women. If you wish to associate with Caitanya Mahaprabhu, you must always remember the incident of Chota Haridasa and how he was rejected by the Lord. Do not eat luxurious dishes or dress in fine garments, but always remain humble and serve Their Lordships Sri Sri Radha-Krsna in your heart of hearts." (NOI text 1purp.)]

Yadi caha pranaya rakhite gaurangera sane / chota haridasera katha thake yena mane. If you want to love and honor Caitanya Mahaprabhu and you want His mercy to come to you, always remember the pastime of Caitanya Mahaprabhu banishing Chota Haridasa. Do you know that history? You should speak something about it in brief.

Sripad Aranya Maharaja: When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu stayed in Jagannatha Puri there was a young devotee renunciate whose name was Chota Haridasa. Chota Haridasa means small Haridasa, because the older Haridasa was Srila Haridasa Thakura. One day Bhagavan Acarya requested Chota Haridasa to go to the house of Madhavi devi to do some bhiksha, that is, to beg some rice. Madhavi devi was not an ordinary person. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu had 3 1/2 confidential associates, and one of them was Madhavi devi. She was very high class of Vaisnavi. Not only was she very advanced, but she was very old. She was 84 years old and she was practicing very severe austerities. Chota Haridasa went there and begged some rice from her, and when he returned he gave the rice to the cooks.

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu later tasted that rice He asked, "This is very good. Where has it come from?"

The cook told Him, "This rice was begged by Chota Haridasa. He took it from the house of Madhavi devi."

When Caitanya Mahaprabhu heard this He became very grave, and later He sent a message: "You can tell Chota Haridasa that he should not come here again. I do not want to see his face."

When the devotees heard this they became astonished, and Chota Haridasa was also astonished. The devotees thought that this was too strong a thing to do. They said, "What is his fault? He has not made a big mistake". Svarupa Damodara, Raya Ramananda, and others, and even Caitanya Mahaprabhu's guru-jana, Paramananda Puri, requested Caitanya Mahaprabhu again and again, "Why are you being so strict with him? What has he done? What is his fault?" But Caitanya Mahaprabhu's heart did not melt. He would not change his decision.

After some time Chota Haridasa became very much aggrieved in separation of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He therefore went to the Triveni, and there he jumped into the river and drowned himself. When this news came to the ears of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He was pleased.

Sri Jagadananda Pandit is saying: If you want to have pranaya, a very intimate and close relationship with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, then don't forget this katha of Chota Haridas."

Anyone may ask, "What was his fault?" Srila Gurudeva explained the answer one day. In the asrama of Madhavi devi there was a girl who was serving her. When Chota Haridasa went there, he had an idea in his mind to look towards that young girl. Even though outwardly he was a renunciate, in his heart he was keeping some lust, some attachment. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu knows the heart of everyone. No one can hide his feelings from Him. Therefore, understanding everything, He banished him.

This is one explanation, but if we go deeper we will see that actually Chota Haridasa is an eternal associate of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He was performing this pastime to set an example to the whole world that those who are renounced and in the line of Caitanya Mahaprabhu should not have any duplicity or harbor even a trace of any lust in their hearts.

Srila Narayana Maharaja: After he was thus ordered, Chota Haridasa thought that he had not even a hope that he could return to Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He therefore left Puri and went to

Triveni-sangam at Prayag, and there he entered into the water and drowned. In spite of this, Mahaprabhu's heart was not melted.

After some time Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to the ocean to take bath, and there He heard a beautiful song in a beautiful melody, and thought, "Oh, this is the melody of Chota Haridasa. Where is he?" He asked His associates, "Where is Chota Haridasa now?" They told Him, "He went to drown in the Triveni at Prayag. He was completely hopeless because You did not give him darsana. He therefore went to Triveni and drowned there."

Mahaprabhu replied, "If anyone acts as he did, this will be his destination. I cannot tolerate such behavior."

His associates said there was no offence on his part, because even Raya Ramananda was with very beautiful teenaged girls, and they were naked. He used to decorate them. For hours and hours he would teach them how to dance for Lord Jagannatha, and in that dance to express the different moods of the gopis. Mahaprabhu replied that Raya Ramananda is Raya Ramananda. No maya can influence him. Similarly, Advaita Acarya, Srivasa Pandit, and Bhavananda Raya were all were with ladies, their wives, and Mahaprabhu was not angry with them. He never corrected them like this. Why, then, did He correct Chota Haridasa? This is because Chota Haridasa was like a sannyasi. Sannyasis should not act like this, and brahmacaris should not act in this way. Nowadays we see the result. Sannyasis and brahmacaris are falling down in this way.

Mahaprabhu only pretended to reject Chota Haridasa. Chota Haridasa was His associate. He was liberated. There was actually no offence on his part But Mahaprabhu wanted to teach everyone by this example. He wanted to show that He cannot tolerate this behavior. Even if a married person is lusty, Mahaprabhu cannot tolerate it.

You can be a family person, but don't be attached. Ramachandra was with Sita for fourteen years but He had no son. Mahaprabhu is therefore teaching that those who want to have love and affection for Him, those who want His mercy, should abide by this prohibition.

We should try to know all these principles of bhakti. Try to give up all of your worldly desires, and only keep the desire to serve Krishna. If your aim and objective is fixed, you can go on progressing and developing your Krishna consciousness. If any kind of problems come, don't stop your practices of bhakti. We should try to know the objective and mood of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He was so merciful, but He was also somewhat hard.

Devotee: When Caitanya Mahaprabhu heard the singing of Chota Haridasa, where was the singing coming from?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Chota Haridasa was there, singing, by soul. He was a liberated soul. He was singing and Caitanya Mahaprabhu was hearing him. Caitanya Mahaprabhu was hearing and others also, but they were in confusion. They asked, "Where is the sound coming from?" And Caitanya Mahaprabhu replied that it was coming from Chota Haridasa.

Gaura-premanande.

