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SRI GURU – MORE INTIMATE THAN OUR ATMA
Murwillumbah, Australia: December 3, 2002 (morning)

I remember a sloka of Srimad-Bhagavatam, which was spoken by Narada Rsi to Vasudeva, the father of Krsna.* [See Endnote 1] This sloka was then re-told by Srila Sukadeva Gosvami to Pariksit Maharaja, who was cursed to die by the bite of a snake-bird after seven days:

bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad
isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih
tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam
bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma

["Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called maya. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul." (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.37)]

What are the causes of fear? Srila Sukadeva Gosvami has explained it. We all fear. Although everyone in all species of life throughout all the material universes only wants peace of mind and happiness, everyone is full of fear.

Happiness and peace of life follow us like a shadow. If we want to take that shadow within our grasp, we will find it to be intangible – with no substance. On the other hand, when we proceed forward, turning away from our shadow, that shadow will follow us. This is the nature of shadows.

Perhaps all of you know the meaning of maya? Maya, in the form of economic development, sense gratification, and impersonal liberation, is like a shadow. When we turn to her and try to enjoy sense gratification, we find sense gratification to have no substance. In other words, the desire for material happiness becomes the cause of pain and grief. There is no happiness in the material world, only distress and suffering, and this suffering is experienced as the endless chain of birth and death. No one is happy to be in maya. On the other hand, if we progress towards Krsna, then all material facility and liberation will follow us.

We are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, Krsna, and He is an ocean of ananda, unlimited happiness and peace. He is the reservoir of pure ananda, and in fact He Himself is ananda. Because we are His parts and parcels, by our constitutional position, by nature, our bodies are made of pure ananda. This refers to our transcendental body, however, not our material body.

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Somehow we have departed from that Supreme Lord, the ocean of rasa and ananda, who is ananda Himself, and now we are entangled in illusory maya. Ma – Ya. We are seeing that which is not actually a fact to be a fact. Whatever we see or feel by our sensory perception is maya.

When we first departed from Krsna, when we first forgot Him, maya came at once and attacked us. She defeated us and put us in her jail. What is that jail? It is this body and mind. Actually there are two jails, one within the other. This gross body is the outer jail and the subtle body is the inner jail. We have been suffering and fearing since time immemorial, and we are never free from that.

Pariksit Maharaja asked Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, "How can we come out of this endless chain of birth and death? How can we get free from maya?" Srila Sukadeva Gosvami replied, "Tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam / bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma." Being in maya, we cannot become free from maya at once and go to Goloka Vrndavana. It is possible only by the help of Vaisnavas. By the association of pure Vaisnavas, you can have a very pure guru – not an imitation guru or a kan-guru, but a sad-guru. If we take shelter in his lotus feet, he will take full charge of our lives. He will take all kinds of responsibility for our lives, and he will teach how to do bhajana of Krsna.

Guru-devatatma. First, we must think that guru is our atma. Being totally surrendered to him, we must depend solely on him. Tan abhajat. Tan means the Supreme Lord, Krsna. If we serve Krsna under the guidance of sad-guru, then certainly, like magic, we will be out of maya. We will see that our transcendental form has manifested, that we are serving Krsna, and that we are now bathing in the endless ocean of ananda and rasa. At that time we will also be embodiments of ananda, and we will simultaneously be the enjoyers of ananda by serving.

Try to realize all these facts. It is not sufficient to simply hear about this and tell others. We will have to be established in this truth. We are in deep maya, and to the extent we are in maya we are that far away from Krsna. Our only hope is the fact that Krsna has sent sad-guru and Vaisnavas to this world. I realize this; I was a third-class bogus person, but my Gurudeva picked me up and engaged me in this transcendental service.

To give the happiness of direct service to Radha-Krsna Yugala is the mission of Srimad Bhagavatam, Sri Narada Rsi, Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, our guru-varga, and especially, in Western countries, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja – who ordered me to also preach it.

I request you all to understand these eternal truths and be established in them, and to also preach this mission of our guru-parampara to others. If you are practicing but not preaching, you are selfish. Do not be weak. Preach.

It is stated in Caitanya Caritamṛta: "Sthane sthitah sruti-gatam tanu-van-manobhir" If you are wearing the saffron cloth of a brahmacari or sannyasi, do not marry and do not fall down. If you are grhastha, then remain grhastha, but after you are fifty years old, try to come out of grhastha life. Do not engage your whole life in the grhastha asrama. If you can be a grhastha like Prahlada Maharaja or the Pandavas, that is fine; but that is very rare.

Gaurapremanande

* [Endnote: "This is a quotation from Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.2.37). It is an instruction given by Kavi Rsi, one of the nine saintly personalities called the nine Yogendras. When Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa's father, asked Devarsi Narada in Dvaraka about devotional service, it was mentioned that previously King Nimi, who was the King of Videha, was instructed by the nine Yogendras. When Sri Narada Muni discoursed on bhagavata-dharma, devotional service, he indicated how a conditioned soul can be liberated by engaging in the loving transcendental service of the Lord" (Caitanya Caritamṛta Madhya 20.119 purport by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja).]