

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

TO TRANSCEND THE IRON AGE

Badger, California: May 18, 2004 (Part 1)

I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my diksa-guru, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja – and the same, so many, humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my siksa-guru, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja.

I have told you the purpose of my coming to the West, and I have glorified my siksa-guru, Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja. Now I want to explain the reason for which I have come – why Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, my guru-parampara, my Gurudeva and Srila Svami Maharaja have sent me here.

It is now Kali-yuga, the Iron Age, and it began five thousand years ago. Once, just before the beginning of the Age, eighty-eight thousand rsis, maharsis and other advanced devotees were gathered on the bank of the River Gomati at Naimisaranya. These elevated personalities were very worried, because Kali-yuga would be coming very soon. It had been somewhat controlled by Pariksit Maharaja after Sri Krsna's disappearance, but now it would be uncontrolled. This age would be so dangerous that it would even change the mood of religious persons. Ladies would always be engaged in sense gratification; no chaste ladies would be found anywhere. Men would behave like bulls and other animals, and they would also be continually engaged in sense gratification. Kali-yuga would spoil everything.

Presently, in spite of the leaders in Kali-yuga having created the United Nations for the benefit of the entire world, wars are taking place almost everywhere, especially in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. I don't know why, but they call these "Holy Wars".

So the rsis and maharisis in Naimisaranya were discussing what to do, and in the meantime Sri Suta Gosvami, the disciple of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami arrived there. They all honored him. They gave him a seat in the midst of the assembly and glorified him and his Gurudeva. They told him, "You have heard all spiritual subject matters from Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, your respected and all-knowing Gurudeva, and you are his special disciple. And actually, you are a disciple of Sri Baladeva Prabhu. He inspired in your heart all the knowledge of the scriptures, such as the Vedas, Upanisads and Bhagavad-gita, and he seated you on the vyasana. You are thus present before us. Kindly tell us the best course of action for everyone's benefit."

bhurini bhuri-karmani
srotavyani vibhagasah
atah sadho 'tra yat saram
samuddhrtiya manisaya

bruhi bhadraya bhutanam
yenatma suprasidati

["There are many varieties of scriptures, and in all of them there are many prescribed duties, which can be learned only after many years of study in their various divisions. Therefore, O sage, please select the essence of all these scriptures and explain it for the good of all living beings, that by such instruction their hearts may be fully satisfied."(Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.11)]

prayenālpayusah sabhya
kalav asmin yuge janah
mandah sumanda-matayo
manda-bhagya hy upadrutah

["O learned one, in this Iron Age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.10)]

In this Iron Age, we have a very short duration of life. Sri Prahlada Maharaja has said that in a one hundred-year life-span, you spend fifty years sleeping and twenty years becoming very expert in any occupation. Then, for the final twenty years, from eighty to one hundred, you cannot do anything; you cannot even sit straight. In this way, so many years are gone. The remaining years are spent in developing your home and taking care of your children by arranging their studies and so on. These remaining years go in a moment.

What should you do for yourself? From the beginning of your life, from the age of five, you must try to do bhajana and accept any bona-fide Guru who can help you in transcendental life.

All the devotees assembled at Naimisaranya were rsis and maharajis. Some were even more qualified than Srila Suta Gosvami. Saunaka Rsi, a pure bhakta, was present there. Sri Narada Rsi and Srila Vyasadeva, his Grand-guru, were sitting there; and even the father and Guru of Srila Vyasadeva, Sri Parasara Muni, was present there. Representing the eighty-eight thousand sages, Saunaka Rsi asked this above-mentioned question.

What is the meaning of yenatma suprasidati? Saunaka Rsi asked how people's souls – not bodies – could be fully satisfied. You should all know that the body you are taking care of is a bag of stool, urine, blood, and other thoroughly contaminated substances. If any doctor will operate on your body, he will not see the transcendental soul and Supersoul (paramatma) inside. The Supersoul is outside and inside the body. He is everywhere and He is transcendental. But Guru may give you transcendental eyes, just as Sri Narada Rsi gave transcendental eyes to Srila Vyasadeva.

Until the time Narada gave him those eyes, Vyasadeva could not decide what to do. He was thinking, "I have divided the Vedas into four and I have written all worldly and spiritual truths. I have written about all subjects matters for the benefit of mankind in the Puranas. So I don't know why I feel dissatisfied." His Gurudeva, Sri Narada Rsi, told him, "You have given importance only to dharma (religiosity), artha (economic development), kama (sense gratification) and moksa (liberation). You gave no importance to pure bhakti, and especially to vraja-bhakti.

"Have you written that Yasoda bound the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that Sudama and Sridama take the food remnants from their mouth and put them by force in the mouth of Lord Krsna? Have you written that Sridama defeated Krsna in wrestling, and this made Krsna happy? Have you written in any Veda, Upanisad or Purana that Krsna began to massage Srimati Radhika's lotus feet, put His vamsi (flute) at Her feet and begged pardon, saying, 'I will never again commit any offence at Your lotus feet. Please excuse me.' Have you written this?"

Sri Vyasadeva replied, "No Gurudeva." Narada Muni then told him to write Srimad-bhagavatam. He taught him how to first see the Srimad-bhagavatam in trance, and then write. Vyasadeva followed his instructions:

bhakti-yogena manasi
samyak pranihite 'male
apasyat purusam purnam
mayam ca tad-apasrayam

["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." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.7.4)]

yaya sammohito jiva
atmanam tri-gunatmakam
paro 'pi manute 'nartham
tat-krtam cabhipadyate

["Due to this external energy, the living entity, although transcendental to the three modes of material nature, thinks of himself as a material product and thus undergoes the reactions of material miseries." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.7.5)]

anarthopasamam saksad
bhakti-yogam adhoksaje
lokasyajanato vidvams
cakre satvata-samhitam

["The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyasadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.7.6)]

yasyam vai sruyamanayam
krsne parama-puruse
bhaktir utpadyate pumsah
soka-moha-bhayapaha

["Simply by giving aural reception to this Vedic literature, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.7.70)]

Vyasadeva saw the Purusa-purnam, Sri Krsna, in the battle of the Mahabharata, in Mathura and in Vraja. He also saw that He was begging pardon at the lotus feet of the gopis. He saw rasa-lila and all other pastimes. Even for those who have no connection with Krsna, he wrote these down in the Srimad-bhagavatam.

All jivas, living entities, have a transcendental connection with Lord Krsna. Now that is forgotten, but it is received by the mercy of Sri Guru. You should realize who is really Guru. Guru must be a bona fide Guru, not a kan-guru. He should be qualified to help devotees in all transcendental matters.

Sri Vyasadeva wrote:

prayenapayusah sabhya
kalav asmin yuge janah
mandah sumanda-matayo
manda-bhagya hy upadrutah

["O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.10)]

Sri Saunaka Rsi said that in this Kali-yuga people are manda, lazy. Manda mattayo means misguided. Manda bhagya means unfortunate and hy upadrutah means there are always so many disturbances – problems, problems, problems. The people themselves make problems for themselves. Many ask me, "Maharaja, should I marry?" or "Maharaja, please allow me to have a son" or "Maharaja I am very unfortunate; please order me to give my wife a divorce." They create so many jobs and are always coming and going to those jobs.

You are very lucky to be in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Rupa and Sanatana Gosvamis, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada, my Gurudeva Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja and Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja. And I am helping you to remain in line. Give importance to bhajana, to Krsna consciousness. This is not the first or last human form that Krsna is mercifully giving you.

Saunaka Rsi requested Sri Suta Gosvami, "Please tell us the essence of what you have heard from Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, what you have heard from Narada Gosvami, from Sri Vyasadeva, and what you have realized from Sri Baladeva Prabhuh.

Yenatma suprasidati – if the soul is happy, the body must surely be happy, so try to follow all these teachings.

Suta Gosvami became very happy by hearing the inquiries of the sages. He first remembered and uttered the verses of mangalacarana (auspicious invocation):

janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah svarat
tene brahma hrda ya adi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah
tejo-vari-mrdam yatha vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mrta
dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhaka satyam param dhimahi

["O my Lord, Sri Krsna, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Sri Krsna because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmaji, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Sri Krsna, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth. (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.1)]

This is mangalacarana, and its explanation is very high and very deep. He then offered obeisances to his Guru:

Suta uvaca:
yam pravrajantam anupetam apeta-krtam
dvaipayano viraha-katara ajuhava
putreti tan-mayataya taravo 'bhinedus

tam sarva-bhuta-hrdayam munim anato 'smi

["Srila Suta Gosvami said: Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto that great sage [Sukadeva Gosvami] who can enter the hearts of all. When he went away to take up the renounced order of life [sannyasa], leaving home without undergoing reformation by the sacred thread or the ceremonies observed by the higher castes, his father, Vyasadeva, fearing separation from him, cried out, "O my son!" Indeed, only the trees, which were absorbed in the same feelings of separation, echoed in response to the begrieved father." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.2)]

His Gurudeva is Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, whose Guru is Sri Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva's Gurudeva is Sri Narada Rsi, and Narada's Guru is Lord Brahma. Brahma, Narada, Vyasa, Suka, Suta Gosvami, Madhvacarya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and Srila Rupa and Santana Gosvamis are all in one line. We are very fortunate to be in this special line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Svayam Krsna Himself.

Sri Suta Gosvami replied to the sages:

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

["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." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.6)]

The sages had inquired: "By what practice can we attain perfection of the soul?" There are two kinds of souls - soul and the Supersoul, or atma and Paramatma. Paramatma is the fraction of Karanadakasayi Visnu, who is the fraction of Maha Sankarsana. Maha Sankarsana is the fraction of first phalanx of plenary expansions – Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Annirudha. Sri Baladeva Prabhu is akanda guru-tattva (the undivided and complete principle of Guru). His Guru and all-in-all is Vrajendranandana Syamasundara. Regarding this Syamasundara Krsna of Vraja, if He were powerless, He would not be able to do anything. His power does everything for Him. Who is that power? Hladini-sakti Srimati Radhika.

Lord Krsna always begs mercy from His power. Krsna can only desire; He cannot do anything without His power. He will desire, and at once, in a second, and even before He desires, His Hladini-sakti, Srimati Radhika is ready to fulfill His all desires.

So who should we take shelter of? Not Lord Krsna, because He cannot do anything independently. We should take shelter of His power, Hladini-sakti. She is the root of bhakti.

Sri Suta Gosvami offered pranama to his Gurudeva and guru-parampara, and all others present offered pranama to him. Without guru-nistha (strong faith in Guru), one cannot gain any advancement in spiritual life. Guru-nistha is first.

[Thus ends part 1. Part 2 will be coming shortly.]

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