

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
ONLY BY GURU'S GRACE

Volgograd, Russia: September 14, 2004

Yesterday we explained the following verse:

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati
(Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.6)

[“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.”]

The explanation of the word parama-dharma can be understood by Srila Rupa Gosvami's verse defining *uttama bhakti*. We should follow this parama-dharma of chanting, remembering and meditating on Lord Krsna. Hari-katha is very powerful. Krsna has invested all His power in His name and His hari-katha. In fact, hari-katha is Krsna Himself. In the form of harinama and hari-katha, Krsna comes in your heart. You should strongly believe this. He will purify you of the greater part of your anarthas very soon. Then *naistiki-bhakti* will come, and after that the knots in your heart (*hrdaya granthi*) will be gone.

bhidyate hrdaya-granthis
chidyante sarva-samsayah
ksiyante casya karmani
drtsta evatmanisvare
(Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.21)

[“Thus the knots of the heart and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions, or karma, is terminated when one sees the self as master.”]

tada rajas-tamo-bhavah
kama-lobhadayas ca ye
ceta etair anaviddham
sthitam sattve prasidati

[“As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.19)]

If you do not understand you can question me, and this question and answer period is called istagosthi. My door is always open, to hear any questions and to reply them.

Srimad-bhagavatam has described how Sri Vyasadeva engaged in this uttama-bhakti-yoga and was thus able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

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)]

He saw Lord Krsna with all His associates, such as Sridama, Dama, Sudama, Vasudama, Stoka-krsna, Nanda Baba and Mother Yasoda, as well as Lalita, Visakha, Citra and all other gopis. He saw all the pastimes Krsna performed with them. The previously mentioned verses are the essence of the entire Srimad-Bhagavatam. If you will follow bhakti, you will also be able to see Krsna with His pastimes, and associates – and all your doubts and questions will disappear.

anyabhilasita-sunyam, jnana-karmady-ana-vrtam

anukulyena krsnanu-silanam bhaktir uttama

[“Uttama bhakti is the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the benefit of Sri Krsna, in other words, the uninterrupted flow of service to Him, performed through all endeavors of the body, mind, and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (bhavas). It is not covered by jnana (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and karma (reward-seeking activity), yoga or austerities; and it is completely free from all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Krsna.” (Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)]

The word uttama-bhakti is in this verse, so there must also be some lower classes of bhakti – mixed with karma, jnana, yoga, severe austerity and so on – and historical examples of devotees in those stages have been given in Srimad-bhagavatam.

We should especially know that service to Krsna with mamata (a sense of “mineness” towards Lord Krsna) is uttama-bhakti, and the increase of mamata in service places a devotee in successively higher stages.

In the beginning of bhakti, we must know the principles of saranagati (surrender) and follow them. If there is no saranagati, there is no bhakti, nor is there even a shadow or semblance of bhakti. We should know the six limbs of saranagati. Have faith in Krsna, that He is protecting and saving you, supporting and nourishing you, and He is worried for you. You need not worry, because Krsna is worried for you. Your maintenance and everything else in your life depends on Krsna. If you are going to be sick or in any accident, Lord Krsna knows this. He knows what will occur; you don't know. Surrender, and He will take care of you. This strong faith should come, otherwise there can be no bhakti.

All devotees – sannyasis, brahmacaris and general devotees – should avoid thinking, “I am the doer.” Give up this idea. This is false ego. What you are doing is by the inspiration of Gurudeva and Krsna. Always remember this, otherwise false ego will come and you will go down.

I have explained that in anyabilasita-sunyam bhakti, there are many gradations, but we will learn all the truths in that regard by serving Gurudeva and fulfilling his desire. This is the root of all bhakti; the backbone of bhakti. If you have no guru-nistha, faith in Sri Guru, you cannot develop even an inch in the bhakti line. In Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta and all other scriptures, the glories of Guru have been given, as well as the glory of the services he performs to his Gurudeva and Sri Krsna.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam we see that only by the grace of his Gurudeva, Narada Rsi, Sri Vyasadeva knew so many truths. He is a manifestation of Krsna Himself, but he had some doubts. He could not understand, “Why am I not satisfied? Why is my soul not satisfied and happy?” Knowing everything, Narada Rsi at once came to him.

Narada Rsi has many manifestations. One manifestation is a servant of Narayana, one is an associate of Krsna in Vraja, one is Naradi-gopi and one is Madhumangala. There is one Narada, but he has many manifestations. Sri Narada can remove the doubts of Krsna Himself, in the form of Vyasadeva. If he will come before Mother Yasoda, she will place her son Krsna's head on his feet, and he will bless her son, saying, “Be happy.” This is a very wonderful thing!

Sri Vyasadeva is a manifestation of Krsna. He divided the Vedas into four parts – Rg, Sama, Yajur and Atharva. He wrote the essence of Vedanta, which is Brahma-sutra. He compiled a very large book called Mahabharata, and within Mahabharata he revealed the Bhagavad-gita, the words and teachings of Lord Krsna. He wrote many Puranas – 36 Puranas.

Once he was sitting on his asana (seat) on the bank of the Sarasvati River and not feeling happy. He was thinking, “Why am I not happy? I have written down all knowledge for the benefit of the world, including dharma (religion), karma (fruitive activity and elevation to heaven), varnasrama-dharma (the means by

which the social castes and spiritual asramas can advance in spiritual life), and bhakti (devotion to the Supreme Lord). But I am not happy. Why is that?”

Being omnipotent and causelessly merciful, Narada Rsi at once arrived at the asrama of Srila Vyasadeva. A bona fide and qualified guru comes, as Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja came – door to door in Western countries. The people living there did not go to him; he went to them.

Sri Narada Rsi asked Srila Vyasadeva, “You have performed all your duties to the world, and yet you are not happy. Why are you lamenting?”

Vyasadeva replied, “I do not know why I am not happy. I have done everything.”

Narada Rsi said, “You are not happy because you have written about dharma (religiosity), kama (sense gratification), artha (economic development) and moksa (liberation), but you have not described the glorification of Lord Krsna. Have you written that Mother Yasoda bound the Supreme Lord?” “No.” “Have you written that Krsna offered His head and flute at the lotus feet of the gopis?” Srila Vyasadeva replied, “No, I have not.” “Krsna laments for the gopis, feeling separation from them. Have you written this? He is atmarama (fully satisfied within) and atmakama (externally fulfilled), so why does He do so? Have you written about this?”

Sri Narada Muni then told Srila Vyasadeva his own past history, explaining how he reached to the standard of uttama-bhakti. He described how, by taking the remnants of pure devotees’ prasada and by hearing their hari-katha during Caturmasya (the four months of the rainy season when saintly devotees don’t travel, but rather stay in one place and enlighten the residents of that place), he became glorious and realized everything about the Absolute Truth and this world also – and became Narada Rsi. [See Endnote 1]

This is the process by which one attains his siddha-deha (spiritual body). First svarupa-siddhi (realization within the heart of God’s form and ones own form) comes, and after that vastu-siddhi comes (the stage at which one gives up his material body and attains a body fit for associating with God). All truths about gradual advancement in Krsna Consciousness are found in this history of Srimad-Bhagavatam. First, Narada Rsi served his Gurudeva and the other rsis (saints) and maharsis (saintly kings) in all respects. When he would go with his Gurus to take bath in the river, Narada Rsi would carry cloth for drying them. He would massage them and render all other appropriate services. He would honor the remnants of their prasadam with their permission. This is the process: to serve Gurudeva first. Krsna will then appear in your heart, as in the example of Sri Narada Rsi. He served his gurus, and they gave him the mantra. By the power of mantra, Narada became a high class of devotee in a very short time

Lord Krsna came to Narada in the form of Lord Narayana and told him, “I regret that during this lifetime you will not be able to see Me anymore. Those who are incomplete in service and who are not completely free from all material taints can hardly see Me.”

Don't desire anything. Always chant, remember and serve Gurudeva. If you have any desire other than to serve Krsna your bhakti will come very late. Even if you have a personal desire in relation to serving Krsna, still, your progress will be impeded.

We should not have any doubt about what is the process of bhakti. Everything has been explained here. Sri Narada Rsi thought, “I will go to a forest in the mood of goodness and serve Krsna there.” He had a slightly independent mood. However, by his separation feelings that were created when Lord Narayana disappeared, his desire was burnt to ashes . He became pure, and Lord Krsna manifested Himself in his heart at once.

I have come to give this message to you. This is the message of Krsna Himself, Srimad-bhagavatam, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Rupa Gosvami, and the entire guru-parampara. Do not have any doubts in this message. Try to remove your false ego so you can understand and follow the path of pure bhakti.

[Question:] Uttama-bhakti means to engage ones body, mind, words and spiritual sentiments in Krsna's service. Without bhava-bhakti there can't be spiritual sentiments. So I understand from your explanation that there is no uttama-bhakti before bhava-bhakti.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No, everything is included. The explanation of sadhana-bhakti has been told in this verse also: This verse says that uttama-bhakti means endeavors of all senses, all organs of the body.

[Syamarani dasi:] You once said that this is the sadhana of a bhava-bhakta like Bilvamangala Thakura. So when the verse says sadhana-rupa, is that the sadhana before bhava-bhakti or the sadhana of a bhava-bhakta?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Uttama-bhakti begins from beginning of sadhana. The definition of sadhana-bhakti is:

krti-sadhya bhavet sadhya-bhava sa sadhanabhidha
nitya-siddhasya bhavasya prakatyam hrdisadhyata

[“When transcendental devotional service, by which love for Krsna is attained, is executed by the senses, it is called sadhana-bhakti, or the regulative discharge of devotional service. Pure devotion, bhava-bhakti, eternally exists within the heart of every living entity. The awakening of this eternal devotion is the potentiality of devotional service in practice.” (Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.2)]

Even if there is yet no manifestation of bhava, by engaging in bhakti with all the senses, bhava will come. After sadhana, bhava-bhakti comes.

[Endnote 1: “O muni, in the last millennium I was born as the son of a certain maidservant engaged in the service of brahmanas who were following the principles of Vedanta. When they were living together during the four months of the rainy season, I was engaged in their personal service. Although they were impartial by nature, those followers of the Vedanta blessed me with their causeless mercy. As far as I was concerned, I was self-controlled and had no attachment for sports, even though I was a boy. In addition, I was not naughty, and I did not speak more than required.

“Once only, by their permission, I took the remnants of their food, and by so doing all my sins were at once eradicated. Thus being engaged, I became purified in heart, and at that time the very nature of the transcendentalist became attractive to me. O Vyasadeva, in that association and by the mercy of those great Vedantists, I could hear them describe the attractive activities of Lord Krsna. Thus listening attentively, my taste for hearing of the Personality of Godhead increased at every step.

“O great sage, as soon as I got a taste for the Personality of Godhead, my attention to hear about the Lord was unflinching. And as my taste developed, I could realize that it was only in my ignorance that I had accepted gross and subtle coverings, for both the Lord and I are transcendental. Thus during two seasons—the rainy season and autumn—I had the opportunity to hear these great-souled sages constantly chant the unadulterated glories of the Lord Hari. As the flow of my devotional service began, the coverings of the modes of passion and ignorance vanished. I was very much attached to those sages. I was gentle in behavior, and all my sins were eradicated in their service. In my heart I had strong faith in them. I had subjugated the senses, and I was strictly following them with body and mind.

“As they were leaving, those bhakti-vedantas, who are very kind to poor-hearted souls, instructed me in that most confidential subject which is instructed by the Personality of Godhead Himself. By that confidential knowledge, I could understand clearly the influence of the energy of Lord Krsna, the creator, maintainer and annihilator of everything. By knowing that, one can return to Him and personally meet Him. O Vyasadeva, it is decided by the learned that the best remedial measure for removing all troubles and miseries is to dedicate one’s activities to the service of the Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead . O good soul, does not a thing, applied therapeutically, cure a disease which was caused by that very same thing? Thus when all a man's activities are dedicated to the service of the Lord, those very activities which caused his perpetual bondage become the destroyer of the tree of work.

“O brahmana, thus by the Supreme Lord Krsna I was endowed first with the transcendental knowledge of the Lord as inculcated in the confidential parts of the Vedas, then with the spiritual opulences, and then with His intimate loving service. Please, therefore, describe the Almighty Lord's activities which you have learned by your vast knowledge of the Vedas, for that will satisfy the hankerings of great learned men and at the same time mitigate the miseries of the masses of common people who are always suffering from material pangs. Indeed, there is no other way to get out of such miseries. (SB 1.5.23-40)”]
(Please see chapter 6 of First Canto Srimad Bhagavatam for the rest of this history.)

Editorial advisors: Sripad Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanatha dasa
Transcriber: Vasanti dasi
Typist: Anita dasi
Editor: Syamarani dasi