

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

EACH ACTIVITY HAS ITS OWN MANTRA

Badger, California: 1997 (part 2)

[The following is part 2 of one of the oldest golden classes ever given by Srila Narayana Maharaja on his world preaching touring.]

I have heard from some devotees that when they offer bhoga to Radha and Krsna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu they chant: "Namah om visnu-padaya krsna-presthaya bhutale... ", or "Vancha-kalpa-tarubhas ca krpa-sindhubhaya eva ca." This is not the exact mantra for offering bhoga. When a devotee is brand new, knowing nothing, he can do this, and Parama-pujyapada Srila Swami Maharaja gave this to devotees in this category. A person can do this in the preliminary stage, and by mind he can say, "I am offering this beautiful and delicious food to you. Please accept it." This is how you should practice and meditate in the beginning, but after that you should come to the proper line of Srila Sanatana Gosvami's Hari-bhakti-vilasa, to the writings of Sri Gopal-guru Gosvami and Sri Dhyana-candra Gosvami, and down to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, my Gurudeva Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja and to Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

Each activity of worship has its own mantra. I think that not all of you have received second initiation, so I should not declare all the details in public. Instead, I am giving only an outline. We will have to chant a mantra when we give anything to Thakurji (the deity). Do not think, "I am offering;" otherwise your offering will be rejected. Do you understand why? We do not possess even saranagati (the six types of surrender). Saranagati includes the conviction that "Krsna will support me; He will nourish me; He will certainly save me; He will give me anything I want."

If we have that faith in Krsna, then why do we go to rich persons to beg? When any suffering comes, why do we say, "O, save me God, save me God"? Has Prahlada Maharaja prayed in this way? Did he beg Krsna, "O, save me!" when Hiranyakasipu tried to kill him? Srila Haridasa Thakura was beaten in twenty-two market places and his flesh and muscles were torn off; but he didn't say, "Krsna, save me!" He never said this. He knew that Krsna would save him. He had no doubt at all, and he was saved. This is saranagati.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has said that Krsna will not accept any offering from those who are not saranagata and those who are not chanting one lakh (64 rounds) of harinama daily. He will not accept anything from them.

To whom can you offer? Your pure Gurudeva is sarangata to Krsna, and he has so much affection for Him. He is a sakhi in Krsna's lila, and He is very near and dear to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in his male form. If we offer the bhoga to Sri Gurudeva to offer to Krsna, it will certainly be offered to Krsna and accepted by Him – there is no doubt about this. If you personally give it to Him, however, it is doubtful that He will take it. Do you

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understand? We are not bona fide Vaisnavas yet, so we must call Gurudeva and utter, "Gurudeva, please come – idam asanam aim guruve-namaha".

"Idam acmanayam – this is the water for washing you mouth." You should think that your Gurudeva is sitting there with you. You will place your offering in his hands, not for him to take himself, but to offer to Radha and Krsna. Then Gurudeva will call, "O Srimati Radhika, please come and give this to Your Svami, Your istadeva, Your beloved, Krsna – because He will not take from anyone else's hand. If You give it to Him, He will surely eat it."

Then, as Radhika is sitting and fanning Krsna, telling Him, for example, "This laddhu is so beautiful. Take this first." And then He takes another ladhu – a manohara ladhu. Then Srimati Radhika tells Him, "You have not yet taken this very beautiful and delicious chutney. Krsna will then taste it and say, "Oh, very beautiful!"

Then She will give Him a spoonful of a different preparation, and He will say, "Everything is so delicious." She will then continue to say about the various preparations, "You should taste this; You should eat this." In this way He will take.

There is a special mantra for this. "Vancha-kalpa-tarubyas" will not do at this time. That obesiances mantra should be uttered when there is a Vaisnava – or many Vaisnavas – present, to show them honor. Moreover, that mantra will not enter Goloka. It is only for the stage of sadhana (the practice stage). There, in Goloka, all the associates of Radha and Krsna are present – all are sakhis and sakhas. We cannot utter the obesiances mantra there. It is not uttered at the time of offering or taking maha-prasadam. It is uttered when Vaisnavas are gathered and we are hearing something from them. At that time we will pray, "Vancha-kalpa-tarubyas ca krpa-sindhubbhya eva ca" to them all.

When prasada is offered to Krsna, the mantra "namo maha-vadanyaya" will also not do. You can say this after you have completed the performance or observance of arati, or at the time of prayer, or at the beginning of your chanting. While remembering and chanting harinama you should utter this and think, "I am so worthless."

So there are special things we have been told to do. There is a special mantra for Radha and Krsna. Do not offer bhoga to Gurudeva; it is not the correct process to tell him, "Please take, and after that offer the same prasada to Radha and Krsna."

Regarding arati, if Sri Guru's altar is somewhat separate from that of Radha-Krsna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, we can offer his arati first – and keep the paraphernalia at his altar. After that you should take a new stick of incense, for example, and offer it to Radha-Krsna or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Then, when Their arati will be done, Their prasada (the incense or any other item) should be given to Gurudeva and then to all others present.

Regarding offering bhoga, it is first given to Radha-Krsna or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and after that Their Prasada is offered to all the sakhis. "Guru-rupi-sakhi" (Gurudeva in

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the form of a sakhi) is giving it to all. Gurudeva will not take and then give the remainder to Radha Krsna or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This is not proper. Arcana will be first performed to Gurudeva, but offerings are made first to Radha-Krsna.

If there are three altars, you can give three plates of bhoga. After offering to Radha and Krsna, the prasada should be given to Gurudeva to give to Lalita, Visakha and all other Vrajavasis. We should always remember all these instructions. Then our process will be in line, and then the deities will accept.

But do not disturb anyone and make problems. So that no problems will come, let devotees continue in the process established in the beginning by Parama-pujyapada Srila Swami Maharaja. He later gave the mantras when he established formal deity worship, as I am giving, and he wanted all his second initiated disciples to learn them, but most of the devotees do not know about this.* [see endnotes] Therefore, those who want to advance further should follow the principles I have been outlining here – in their rooms and houses, with other like-minded devotees. Srila Swami Maharaja wants this now. He has ordered me to tell you this.

[Nirguna dasa:] We should call to our Gurudeva, so he will offer to Radha and Krsna? Do I understand correctly?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Yes. First we should call him, but not to give, saying, "Please take." We should call Gurudeva with the words, "idam asanam acamaniyam aim guruve namah." [This offers honorable welcome, a seat and mouthwash.]

If you understand that your Guru has come, then give him the offering, thinking, "Please offer this. I am not qualified to do so." He will call Srimati Radhika, but the mantra should be uttered by us. Then pray to Sri Radha and Krsna, "Idam acamaniyam" and so on.

Then, after uttering the mantras for offering the naivedyam (bhoga, or unoffered foodstuffs), again utter the mantra for offering acaman (mouthwash).

Then, "idam tambulam" – This means Gurudeva is giving betal nuts to Radha-Krsna. That is, Gurudeva is placing it in the hands of Lalita or Visakha, she is giving to Srimati Radhika, and Radhika is giving it to Krsna.

Then, "etat puspanjali" – The offering of flowers is called puspanjali. And then, after everything else is done, give them garlands. After that, if it is the mid-day offering, you should do arati. All this should become systematic.

Who will tell you this? The siksa-guru may tell you. A siksa-guru, who is in the line of the diksa-guru and in whom you have faith, is also needed. If one is not very advanced, and his diksa-guru is not available or he has departed from the world, then a Vaisnava who is so much more qualified and advanced than us can be accepted. He can make us qualified.

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[*Endnotes –

In 1974, Srila Prabhupada translated Sri Caitanya caritamrta. There, in Madhya-lila chapter 24, beginning around text 225, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is instructing Sri Sanatana Gosvami to write the book Hari-bhakti-vilasa, which would have all the rules and regulations of deity worship, along with appropriate mantras.

An example of how Prabhupada wanted the proper mantras to be uttered for each activity is given in one of his purports of the above-mentioned dialogue: "As far as placing the deity in the bed is concerned, if the deity is large and heavy, it is not possible to move Him daily. It is better that a small deity, which is also worshiped, be taken to the bed. This mantra should be chanted: "agaccha sayana-sthanam priyabhiih saha kesava. O Kesava, kindly come to Your bed along with Srimati Radharani.' (Hari-bhakti-vilasa 11.40)"

In January 1976, Srila Prabhupada wrote several letters in his attempt to get the Hari-bhakti-vilasa translated and made available for all initiated brahmanas. One such letter is as follows: "Now, beginning from this year's Mayapura festival, the devotees will begin preparing for Bhakti-sastri examination. Therefore we require a guidebook for deity worship, arcana-paddhati, based on Hari-bhakti-vilasa. All brahmanas will be responsible to learn this book. I would like to have the manuscript ready as soon as possible, preferably by Gaura Purnima. So please work diligently for this. Pradyumna began this, but I do not know what he has done with his work." (letter to Nitai dasa)]

[Part 3 of this lecture will follow soon.]

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