

Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

IT IS NOT A DAY – IT IS KRSNA

[Dear respected Readers,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga. September 22nd (in some countries, and September 23rd in others) is the auspicious day of Ekadasi. We hope you enjoy this never-before-published lecture given by Srila Narayana Maharaja in Los Angeles, California, on June 5, 1998:]

Today is Ekadasi, a very auspicious day. In this regard, let us remember the history of Ambarisa Maharaja and Durvasa Rsi.*[See endnote 1] There are so many things to learn from this history – first to learn, then to practice, and then to realize.

What is the speciality of today that gives it the name Ekadasi? It is the eleventh day from the dark moon day (Amavasya) and from the full moon day (Purnima). We have eleven senses – five working senses and five knowledge-acquiring senses. That makes ten, and the mind is the eleventh. With these eleven senses we should try to become nearer to Krsna. Ekadasi – by our eleven senses we do ‘upavasa’. Upa means ‘very near’ and vasa means ‘to reside.’ On the Ekadasi day, we should try to be somehow nearer to Krsna, with our entire mind and body, and with all our senses.

Not following Ekadasi will be harmful to us. On Ekadasi the moon comes closer to the Earth, and therefore it attracts water from everywhere – from the sea, from the river, from our bodies, and so on. If one takes any grains on this day, the grains become like blotting-paper. If you drink water, the water will very soon pass out from the body. However, if you take grains and water together, the grains become like blotting paper or cotton – grains hold the water.

Even if you squeeze the cotton, some water will remain. Similarly, if you eat any grain, it becomes like a sponge. It will hold a lot of water. The moon will attract that water, and all your diseases will increase. You can see this in the sea or ocean. At this time there are high tides and the waves become very high.

Similarly, it is like this in our bodies. If a person already has some disease, his disease increases from Ekadasi to Purnima and Ekadasi to Amavasya. We have tested this in hospitals, and we see that of those who die in hospitals, most of them die on these days.

Control your eating on Ekadasi, and do not take grains. It is better to perform nirjala, complete fasting, with no water. Today in India, so many people observe nirjala-ekadasi – even young boys, and even when the temperature outside is 48 degrees Celsius. Still these people observe nirjala. No harm at all comes to such persons by this; rather, this fasting removes all diseases.

Be careful to observe Ekadasi in such a way that you will become nearer to Krsna – to Krsna and to those personalities and things related to the Lord. This includes Tulasi,

Ganga, Yamuna, Vrndavana, Giriraja, and any temple of Sri-Sri Radha-Krsna. Mostly it refers to His pure devotees—the rasika and tattva-jna uttama-adhikaris (first class pure devotees), and even to madhyama-adhikaris (intermediate devotees). If you are associating with them, living in Vrndavana, being near to the Tulasi plant, to Puri-dhama where Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu resided for some time, to Sri Govinda Temple and Sri Gopinatha Temple, and to all temples, and if you are praying and hearing hari-katha, you will become nearer to Krsna. This is called upa (near)-vasa (residing). Try not to do any worldly activities on Ekadasi.

We should utilize at least one day in two weeks to be closer to Sri Sri Radha and Krsna, and in that way you will not lose your bhakti. Your bhakti will certainly increase by Their association, and therefore Krsna has arranged this opportunity – He Himself has become Ekadasi. In the form of Ekadasi, He invites us: “Today you should give your eleven senses to Me.” This is a very good thing – Krsna has become Ekadasi – so we should try to observe it.

Krsna called His cakra and ordered him to go to Sisupala, and in one second that cakra cut off Sisupala’s head. In the Vedic scriptures we see that whenever Krsna takes His cakra and throws it, it cuts off that person’s head in a second. Why, then, did the cakra pursue Durvasa, who was quickly running away from it, for one entire year, and still it did not reach him to cut his head? Why? What is the reason? Why was the cakra not cutting his head? It did not cut his head even after one minute, two minutes, three minutes, one hour, two hours, or even one month. It took nearly one entire year, but it still did not cut off his head. Why did it continue to remain two fingers away? What is the reason?

[Devotee:] Because Ambarisa Maharaja was praying to Lord Visnu for the benediction that nothing should harm Durvasa.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No, this is not the reason. Ambarisa Maharaja can never be opposed to Krsna’s will. If Narayana or Krsna throws the Sudarsana-cakra, it must cut off the person’s head.

Sudarsana-cakra is not only a weapon. The word Sudarsana means ‘auspicious vision’. By connection with that auspicious vision one will not die. He will not be destroyed, either by cutting of his head or by any other means.

Durvasa Rsi is a pure Vaisnava; he is a manifestation of Sankara, Lord Siva. He is the greatest of all Vaisnavas (‘vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh’)*[See endnote 2]. He wanted to glorify bhakti (pure devotion to Krsna) and the power of the devotees of Krsna – in an indirect way. He can give any benediction to anyone, and he even gave a benediction to Srimati Radhika. Radhika received from him the benediction that whatever She cooked would be sweeter than nectar, and that is the special feature of Her cooking.

How is it possible for a person who wanted to glorify bhakti and Krsna to be opposed to a person like Ambarisa Maharaja? Durvasa Rsi is a high-class brahmana and a yogi, and he is immortal. He lives in Brahma-loka* [See endnote 3], not on this Earth planet.

Maharaja Ambarisa was always chanting Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, and other devotional hymns (kirtans). He was very simple. He used to personally perform many services, such as collecting flowers and making garlands for Krsna in the form of the Deity. And, regarding the control and maintenance of his kingdom, he gave that job to his ministers. No one could realize that he was such a high-class devotee.

A devotee who is always purely chanting Hare Krsna Hare Krsna while doing his worldly job and maintaining his life is greater than any yogi or brahma-jnani (one who has realized the impersonal feature of the Supreme Lord) like Durvasa. He may not have attained his spiritual position, but still he is so much higher than any brahma-jnani.

Sudarsana-cakra knew, “Durvasa is also my devotee. He wants to glorify bhakti, the Lord’s devotee, and the Supreme Lord Himself. Since he is going to glorify them in an indirect way, I will also act in an indirect way. I will not cut his head, but I will pursue him. I will do this in order to create fear in all those who are against the Lord’s devotees. They will understand that Sudarsana-cakra always protects all devotees, like Prahlada Maharaja, Gajendra and others.

Ambarisa Maharaja was thinking, “What shall I do? On one hand, if I drink caranamrta (the water that has bathed the Deity of the Lord), then I will be neglecting that brahmanayogi, but on the other hand I must consider Ekadasi. If I do not properly observe Ekadasi (which includes concluding it by honoring the Lord’s prasadam at the proper time the next day), that means I am neglecting Ekadasi. What is more harmful – to disobey a brahmana or to disobey bhakti?”

He concluded, “I may disobey thousands upon thousands of brahmanas like this brahma-jnani-yogi, but I cannot disobey the holy name or Ekadasi.”

The Vaisnavas utter this prayer before honoring maha-prasadam, the remnants of the Lord’s foodstuffs) “Mahaprasade govinde-nama-brahmani-vaisnave/svalpa-punya-vatam- rajan-visvaso-naiva-jayate (Those who have very few pious activities to their credit can never develop faith in mahaprasada, in Sri Govinda, in the holy name of the Lord, or in the Vaisnavas.” [from Skanda Purana, quoted in Caitanya Caritamrta Antya-lila 16.96 purport]). We cannot disobey harinama or Ekadasi.

Ekadasi is the mother of devotion. If you observe Ekadasi, bhakti will surely come. It may seem like a very ordinary thing, but it is not ordinary at all. Maharaja Ambarisa took some caranamrta, which was not parana (breaking the fast) and also parana at the same time, because this water is not like a grain or a food. When one observes nirjala Ekadasi (fasting even from water), if one drinks water the next day at the specified time for breaking the fast, then that water is also considered parana. Otherwise, if one is taking

fruits and water on Ekadasi, he will have to break the fast with a grain. Maharaja Ambarisa was observing nirjala for three days. On the first day he drank water one time, on the last day (Dvadasi, the day after Ekadasi) one time, and in between, for the entire Ekadasi day he did nirjala. He did not sleep at night, not even for a moment. Rather, he was always chanting and remembering Sri Krsna's name and glories. This is the process of Ekadasi.

We are not qualified like Maharaja Ambarisa, so Krsna has given us some concessions, and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja has also given more concessions to us. You can take fruit, milk, and curd, there is no harm in that – but observe Ekadasi. Don't take grains. Try to take one meal in the day, but if you are not able, you can take two times; but not three times, four times, five times, six times – with one kilo of juice, rabari (an Indian sweet), one kilo of mango, fruit juice, orange juice, and after that apple juice – not giving a rest to your stomach, but always eating. We should not do this. One or two meals is sufficient; and each time one should take only enough prasadam to half-fill the stomach. Half the stomach should remain empty. Take very little; then it is Ekadasi.

[Endnote 1:

“Maharaja Ambarisa was the emperor of the entire world, but he considered his opulence temporary. Indeed, knowing that such material opulence is the cause of downfall into conditional life, he was unattached to this opulence. He engaged his senses and mind in the service of the Lord. This process is called yukta-vairagya, or feasible renunciation, which is quite suitable for worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because Maharaja Ambarisa, as the emperor, was immensely opulent, he performed devotional service with great opulence. Therefore, despite his wealth, he had no attachment to his wife, children or kingdom. He constantly engaged his senses and mind in the service of the Lord. Therefore, to say nothing of enjoying material opulence, he never desired even liberation.

“Once Maharaja Ambarisa was worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead in Vrndavana, observing the vow of Dvadasi. On Dvadasi, the day after Ekadasi, when he was about to break his Ekadasi fast, the great mystic yogi Durvasa appeared in his house and became his guest. King Ambarisa respectfully received Durvasa Muni, and Durvasa Muni, after accepting his invitation to eat there, went to bathe in the Yamuna River at noontime. Because he was absorbed in samadhi, he did not come back very soon. Maharaja Ambarisa, however, upon seeing that the time to break the fast was passing, drank a little water, in accordance with the advice of learned brahmanas, just to observe the formality of breaking the fast.

“By mystic power, Durvasa Muni could understand that this had happened, and he was very angry. When he returned he began to chastise Maharaja Ambarisa, but he was not satisfied, and finally he created from his hair a demon appearing like the fire of death. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, is always the protector of His devotee, and to protect Maharaja Ambarisa, He sent His disc, the Sudarsana-cakra, which immediately vanquished the fiery demon and then pursued Durvasa, who was so envious of Maharaja Ambarisa.

“Durvasa fled to Brahmaloaka, Sivaloka and all the other higher planets, but he could not protect himself from the wrath of the Sudarsana-cakra. Finally he went to the spiritual world and surrendered to Lord Narayana, but Lord Narayana could not excuse a person who had offended a Vaisnava. To be excused from such an offense, one must submit to the Vaisnava whom he has offended. There is no other way to be excused. Thus Lord Narayana advised Durvasa to return to Maharaja Ambarisa and beg his pardon.

“By the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Visnu, Durvasa Muni immediately went to Maharaja Ambarisa and fell at his lotus feet. Maharaja Ambarisa, being naturally very humble and meek, felt shy and ashamed because Durvasa Muni had fallen at his feet, and thus he began to offer prayers to the Sudarsana-cakra just to save Durvasa.

“What is this Sudarsana-cakra? The Sudarsana-cakra is the glance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead by which He creates the entire material world. Sa aikṣata, sa asṛjata. This is the Vedic version. The Sudarsana cakra, which is the origin of creation and is most dear to the Lord, has thousands of spokes. This Sudarsana cakra is the killer of the prowess of all other weapons, the killer of darkness, and the manifestor of the prowess of devotional service; it is the means of establishing religious principles, and it is the killer of all irreligious activities.

“Without his mercy, the universe cannot be maintained, and therefore the Sudarsana-cakra is employed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“When Maharaja Ambarisa thus prayed that the Sudarsana-cakra be merciful, the Sudarsana-cakra, being appeased, refrained from killing Durvasa Muni, who thus achieved the Sudarsana-cakra’s mercy. Durvasa Muni thus learned to give up the nasty idea of considering a Vaisnava an ordinary person (vaisnave jati-buddhi). Maharaja Ambarisa belonged to the ksatriya group, and therefore Durvasa Muni considered him lower than the brahmanas and wanted to exercise brahminical power against him.

“By this incident, everyone should learn how to stop mischievous ideas of neglecting Vaisnavas. After this incident, Maharaja Ambarisa gave Durvasa Muni sumptuous food to eat, and then the King, who had been standing in the same place for one year without eating anything, also took prasadam. Maharaja Ambarisa later divided his property among his sons and went to the bank of Manasa-sarovara to execute devotional meditation.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam, Canto 9 Chapter 4 Summary, and Canto 9 Chapter 5 Summary by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja)]

[Endnote 2:

nimna ganam yatha ganga
devanam acyuto yatha
vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh
purananam idam tatha

“Just as the Ganga is the greatest of all rivers, Lord Acyuta the supreme among deities and Lord Sambhu (Siva) the greatest of Vaisnavas, so Srimad-Bhagavatam is the greatest of all Puranas.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 12.13.16]

[*Endnote 3:

Sukadeva Gosvami continued: Thus being satisfied in all respects, the great mystic yogi Durvasa took permission and left, continuously glorifying the King. Through the skyways, he went to Brahmhaloka, which is devoid of agnostics and dry philosophical speculators.

PURPORT (by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja) Although Durvasa Muni went back to Brahmhaloka through the space-ways, he did not need an airplane, for great mystic yogis can transport themselves from any planet to any other without any machine. There is a planet named Siddhaloka whose inhabitants can go to any other planet because they naturally have all the perfection of yoga practice. Thus Durvasa Muni, the great mystic yogi, could go through the skyways to any planet, even to Brahmhaloka. In Brahmhaloka, everyone is self-realized, and thus there is no need of philosophical speculation to come to the conclusion of the Absolute Truth. Durvasa Muni's purpose in going to Brahmhaloka was apparently to speak to the residents of Brahmhaloka about how powerful a devotee is and how a devotee can surpass every living entity within this material world. The so-called jnanis and yogis cannot compare to a devotee. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.5.22)]

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