

SRI NAVADVIPA DHAMA PARIKRAMA AND DISCOURSES

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March 16: Ekadasi

At 5 AM, after mangal arati and parikrama of the presiding Deities of Sri Devananda Gaudiya Matha, the devotee-pilgrims left the temple and walked to Rtudwipa and other sacred pastime-places of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates. Those who were unable to walk took rikshaws, and there were also two or three cars. About twelve sannyasis lead the group of fifteen thousand devotees—brahmacaris, grhasthas, widows, the elderly and young children. When they arrived at Rtudwipa, they all sat or stood at the big festival area surrounded which was by colorful decorated flags.

Each day, at the beginning of the parikrama festival, one of the sannyasis, holding a Bengali *Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya*, would sing verses about that particular place. This was also true at Rtudwipa. Those Westerners who were fortunate enough to have the English *Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya* followed along. (Another nice book is *Sri Navadvipa Bhavataranga*, which tells some pastimes not mentioned in Sri Navadvipa Dhama Mahatmya.)

Pujyapada Parjataka Maharaja melodiously sang the Bengali verses, translated as: “When the night lifted the devotees raised their bodies and called out ‘Nitai Gaura’”. Then, leaving Champahatta behind them, they came to Ratupur, or Rtudwipa, and saw the beauty of that town. Sri Nityananda said, “This place is extremely attractive. The trees are bending down their heads in respect. The breeze is blowing gently and the flowers are blooming everywhere. The humming of bees and the fragrance of flowers intoxicates the traveler’s minds here.” Becoming like a madman, Nityananda Prabhu exclaimed, “Quickly, bring my horn. The calves have gone far off and Krsna is fast asleep and won’t come. He is acting like a baby. Where are Subala and Sridhama? All alone I cannot go and herd the cows.” Shouting, “Kanai, Kanai” Nityananda jumped a few yards. Seeing His state, the devotees immediately supplicated at His feet. “O Prabhu Nityananda. Your brother Gauracandra is no longer here. He has taken sannyasa and gone to Nilacala, leaving us poor beggars.” Nityananda became dejected and fell to the ground crying, “You have put us in such sorrow, Kanai, My brother. You have taken sannyasa and left us to go to Nilacala. I will not continue My life. I will jump in the Yamuna river.” Saying this, Sri Nityananda lost consciousness.

Sensing Nityananda Prabhu’s elevated state of spiritual emotions, they began to chant the holy name. After two hours had passed, Nityananda still did not rise. Finally, when the devotees began chanting the glories of Gauranga, Nitai awoke. “This is the place of Radha-kunda!” He exclaimed. “Here in the afternoon, Gaurahari would perform kirtana with His associates. Look at the brilliance of Syama-kunda, which attracts the minds of everyone in the universe. And look. Here and there are the sakhi’s groves. In the afternoon, Gauranga would become immersed in singing Krsna’s glories and satisfy all by distributing prema. Know that in the three worlds there is no equal to this place, where the devotees worship the Lord. Whoever lives here will get love of God, which will soothe the burning fire of material life.”

Srila Narayana Maharaja called on various speakers. Subhananda brahmacary (now Sripad Tirtha Maharaja) spoke from Caitanya Caritmrta Adi Chapter 4 which describes the glories of Srimati Radhika. Next Prema Prayojana brahmacari (now Sripada Aranya Maharaja) spoke in English. He gave the very esoteric

meaning of the words “para-devata,” as quoted in the *Adi lila* Ch. 4. Para-devata means that Srimati Radhika is the supreme worshipable Deity of all—especially Krsna. He decorates Her and surrenders at Her feet.

Srila Maharaja then explained how Ritudvipa is Radha-kunda. He quoted text nine of *Nectar of Instruction*: “Higher than Vaikuntha is Dwarka, higher still is Mathura. The best place in Mathura is Vrindavana. In Vrindavana the best is Govardhana and there the best is Radha-kunda. So who is so unintelligent that he would not take shelter here in Radha-kunda?” He defined the word Radhika. Radha means ‘she who worships Krsna’ and ‘dika’ means ‘she who is worshiped by Krsna’. Krsna is indebted to her and always sings her glories.

Led by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu who was carried on a palanquin, the devotees next walked to the Gaura-Gadadhara Gaudiya Matha in Champahatta—north of Koladvipa. There Srila Maharaja explained the lila behind Sri Jayadeva Goswami’s *Gita Govinda* verse, “smaragaralakanandana.”

Evening—Devananda Gaudiya Matha:

Before giving class, Srila Maharaja requested Sripada Ramakanta Prabhu, who was sitting off to the side in his wheelchair, to come the front mid-center of the mandir, just below the large dias. He then announced, “The natya mandir was about to collapse. It was worn and torn. We thought we should build a new building, but we had no money. So I told Ramakantha, ‘We have got this project.’ He told me, ‘I will donate all the money for the natya mandir.’ He is helping in all my preaching. He gives so many lakhs of rupees, and by this we are preaching around the world and publishing books. Therefore, on behalf of the Vaisnavas, we are glorifying him. We pray to Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda that They should sprinkle Their mercy, so that he will become a qualified devotee, a Krsna-bhakta and Gaura-bhakta. We are presenting him with this *Bhagavad Gita* (covered with red velvet). We cannot repay him by money, but I know that if Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura will sprinkle his mercy, then he will know all tattvas and have pure prema-bhakti. It is only mercy, not our endeavors, that gives this.

He then requested Sripad Urukrama Prabhu to speak, saying, “He is always helping with book editing. He is an old disciple of Nitya-lila Pravista Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, and knows all established truths and siddhantas.” Srila Maharaja also called on the Bengali sannyasis, Pujapada Srila Vaisnava Maharaja and Pujapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Sannyasi Maharaja, to speak; and they glorified Mahaprabhu in their Bengali language.

He then explained about ekadasi. “Ekadasi tithi is bhakti-janani, the mother of devotion. Even if you do all kinds of devotional service, if you don’t observe ekadasi, you won’t get the benefit of your other activities. “*Sruti smriti puranadi, pancharatra vidam vina. Ahaituki harer bhaktim utpatayaiva kalpate.*” “If one is engaged in all kinds of devotional service, but is not under guidance of authority, then his activities are just a disturbance.” Even if you are chanting one lakha of hari-nama and remembering the pastimes of Krsna, if you do not observe ekadasi, so many obstacles will come in your endeavor for pure bhakti, and you will never come in the line of pure devotion. We must follow ekadasi.”

Srila Maharaja came to the main topic of his class, and spoke alternatively in Bengali and English: “Under the guidance of the Vaisnavas, and by their mercy, today we went to Champahatti and Samudraghar.” Because the parikrama had returned from Samudra Ghar earlier in the day, he then spoke about King Samudra Sena and Bhima. During the parikrama lecture, he and Parampujyapada Srila Trivikrama Maharaja had been having their yearly mock-argument about who was the higher devotee—Bhimasena or Samudra Sena. In this evening’s class, just by presenting tattva, he proved that King Samudra Sena was superior. For

the benefit of those who were attached to the conception of Bhimasena's superiority, he began by saying, "Even if he is not superior, he has some specialty."

The following information is from notes taken during the translation of Srila Maharaja's evidential class:

Srila Sanatana Goswami explains that there are five kinds of bhaktas—the jnani-bhakta, suddha-bhakta, premi-bhakta, premapara-bhakta, and prematura-bhakta. King Samudra Sena knew that if he defeated Bhima in battle, Bhima would call for Krsna to help him. Krsna would thus appear there and he himself would be able to see Him. That was the only reason he wanted to defeat Bhimasena.. Dvarakadisha Krsna always appeared to Bhima, but Radha-Krsna appeared to King Samudra Sena. They displayed Their lila to him, along with Their sakhis and the manjaris. During their yearly mock-argument earlier in the day, Srila Trivikrama Maharaja had argued that Bhimasena was greater. He was a Pandava and renowned all over the world. Srila Maharaja argued that King Samudra Sena was superior. His proof was that according to these five types of devotees, one can understand a bhakta's superiority.

Prahlada, Sukadeva Goswami and the four Kumaras are pure devotees, but they have knowledge of Krsna's opulence. They are therefore called jnani-bhaktas. They cannot conceive of Krsna being anything but Bhagavan, who does not need any service. He never gets hungry or thirsty or tired, so why fan Him or bring Him water? Their service is thus impeded by their sense of opulence and majesty.

There is a difference between a jnani and a jnani-bhakta. A jnani is a speculator who thinks that ultimately the absolute truth is impersonal, or that 'I am God'. They think that by their intelligence they can grasp the Absolute Truth. 'The Truth is not anything that I am seeing, so it must be formless.' This is the conclusion of mental speculation. A jnani-bhakta is a bhakta who has jnana, knowledge that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is a lesser kind of devotee because the higher devotees, like the Vrajasis, do not know that Krsna is God.

Higher than the jnani-bhakta is the suddha-bhakta, and the example is Maharaja Ambarisha. He rendered all kinds of services to the Deity. However, he could not do any direct seva with his transcendental body to the transcendental body of the Supreme Lord because he did not have full prema.

The next highest is the premi-bhakta, like Hanuman. He knows that Rama is God, but still he serves in so many ways, thinking that his service is needed. There is a blockage in his love however, because of his sense of opulence. He cannot embrace Rama. He cannot give Him the remnants of his food or sit on His bed.

Next highest is the premapara-bhaktas, like the Pandavas and Bhisma. They partly know that Krsna is God, and partly think of Him as their ordinary friend and relative. They can joke with Him, but when He shows His universal form, Arjuna will apologize for his previous joking. The prematur-bhakta is the best, and the best example is Sri Uddhava. He has more relationship. It is thicker and has more variety. Uddhava is Krsna's friend, relative, prime minister, and confidante. He was even qualified to see Krsna crying, and he was qualified to go to Vrindavana.

One can understand the superiority of a bhakta by the superiority of his Istadeva worshipable Lord. Hanuman worships Lord Rama in Ayodhya, and He is not the complete Godhead. Ambarish Maharaja worshiped Krsna in Mathura. He is complete; but Ambarish did not have full prema. The Pandavas worshiped Dwarkadisha. Uddhava also worshipped Dwarkadisha and Mathuresha, but he had some conception of Krsna in Vrindavana. He was able to go to Vrindavana, see the gopis and speak with them. The gopis themselves, however, are above all these five kinds of devotees. They are not actually devotees, they are svayam prema svarupa—the embodiment of Krsna's love. They are parasakti svarupa—the embodiment of Krsna's supreme transcendental internal potency.

Samudra Sena, by his sincere desire, had the darsana of Radha-Krsna along with the gopis and manjaris. It is understood by this consideration that he is a superior bhakta to Bhima, although Bhima is a Pandava and more famous.

Sri Jayadeva Goswami is also a pure devotee, but because of his slight sense of opulence, he could not fully understand the glory of Krsna, which is that He is the worshiper of Srimati Radhika. Krsna as Rasaraja, Radha-Kantha, Radha-Gopinatha, and Radha-Govinda, is the highest aspect of the Supreme Lord. Jayadeva Goswami had the realization that Krsna is God. He was receiving dication in his heart that Krsna fell at the feet of Srimati Radhika and said, “I am burning in the fire of separation from You. Only You can put out that fire—by placing Your lotus feet on My head.” However, even though he was getting dictation in trance for his poem, that Krsna’s peacock feather and flute touched the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika, he could not accept it or write it. His heart was trembling and his hand was trembling.

Therefore, according to the superiority of the bhakta, he has that much access to understanding Krsna’s real nature. Krsna had prayed to Srimati Radhika, “Please be the alankara, the ornament, of My head. Decorate My head with the dust of your feet.” Jayadeva Goswami did not have this highest understanding of Krsna—that He is subordinate to Srimati Radhika.

Srila Prabhodananda Sarasvati, on the other hand, free from that sense of opulence, could understand Krsna. Without any hesitation, he wrote the prayer, ‘yat kinkarisu...’ “It is my desire to become one of the straw-sticks on the broom that sweeps the courtyard of Srimati Radharani’s kunjā.” In humility he wanted to surrender to Her conjugal pastimes and participate in that way. He is actually Tungavidya-gopi, but in humility he is expressing the desire to be a straw-stick.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu explained to Ramananda Raya that without the help of the gopis, no one can understand the conjugal pastimes of Srimati Radhika and Krsna, what to speak of enter into them. Krsna told Uddhava, “You are dearer to me than all, and that is why I am sending you to Vrindavana”. Still, Uddhava could not fully understand the gopis—and he returned to Mathura. If he had understood, he would not have returned.

By all this evidence we can understand the superiority of King Samudra Sena. Tomorrow we will go to Vidyananagar, Mamagacchi (Modrumdwip), Jambudvipa, and Godadrumadvip.