

kishorekrishnadasa@yahoo.com

cmynahan@jps.net

Who Are you? (A Basic Lecture for a Booklet)

harikatha@yahoo.com

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bvnmharikatha@yahoo.com

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Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

WHO ARE YOU?

(A Basic Lecture For A Booklet)

Malaysia, March 10, 2002

[Respected Maharajas, Prabhus, and Didis,

The following is a very basic lecture given by Srila Narayana Maharaja in Malaysia, with one section from a lecture given in Holland in July of 1999. On Srila Maharaja's order, we will try to make this into a very small booklet for free, mass distribution to the public, and you may also want to print such a booklet. Those of you who speak different languages may wish to translate it into your own language, for publication and free distribution to the people in general. You may also wish to add a page or two of your own information, to let people know how they can reach you and other devotees, Srila Maharaja's websites, and so on, when those people are fortunate enough to feel the need.– Syamarani dasi]

No One Is Happy

Our ancient Indian scriptures tell us that no one in this world wants suffering. Everyone wants complete happiness, and everyone is involved in endeavoring day and night for this. We see, however, that although the world's leaders have been discovering so many ways to be happy since ancient times, they have not been successful. They especially think that wealth can buy us happiness, but until now no one has become truly happy by that wealth. They discovered trains, then airplanes, and then so many medicines, and nowadays they have created computers and other new inventions. Nowadays doctors can transplant hearts, taking the heart of any animal and placing it in the body of a human being. After a person dies, the doctors can take his eyes and give them to another person. From the kitchen to the battlefield, there is advanced medical science, transportation, and communication; but still no one is happy. In fact, those who are most advanced in technology and science found that the buildings symbolic of their highest wealth and national defense were recently bombed and destroyed – and they fear still more to come. So no one is truly happy, and no one can stop death.

Although we are suffering, we think that we are doing well. We are like a person who has drunk great quantities of alcohol and has fallen in a drain that is full of stool and urine. At the same time that person thinks, "I am monarch of all." His face is being 'washed' by the

'hot water' coming from the urine of dogs, and yet he thinks, "I am happy." He is like a madman, and in a sense we are also like this.

No one in this world will ever be truly happy, and no one will ever be able to stop death. However, there is a transcendental science by understanding which there will be no birth and no death, and there will always be happiness. That science is known as bhakti, pure devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In bhakti, without money and without expending very much energy, everlasting happiness will easily come. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Lord descended in this world as His own devotee,* discovered a process, and that process is called love and affection for all living beings.

But in this world, it is absurd to think one can love all living beings. If you try to love a ferocious tiger, for example, he will attack you. A poisonous snake may attack and bite you if you try to show it love. However, if you can love the Supreme Lord, that love will be distributed to all beings, and all can be happy. This is the true "love and affection theory." In that realm of love, if you have some love for tigers and bears, they will become calm and quiet. Our Rsis, great sages of the past, used to go to very dense forests and live there, and they were never attacked by tigers or other wild beasts. We have heard from our scriptures about examples of this, such as Agasta Rsi, Narada Rsi, Dhruva Maharaja, Prahlada Maharaja, and many others.

How will we get that love and affection for the Supreme Lord by which we can love all others? In Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel, the only process is to chant the holy name of the Lord and this can be done very easily. It may be chanted by anyone of any language; it can be chanted by those who speak English, Malaysian, Hindi, Sanskrit, Spanish, Chinese, and so on. Don't think that there are many gods or that God is divided into many fractions. There is one God. The Chinese may call out to that same Supreme Lord, the Christians may also, the Hindus also, and the Vaisnavas also. He is very beautiful, charming, powerful, and merciful, and He can come and play with you in any relationship. He is not formless, or without a shape. This idea is wrong.

There are three letters in the word God. G stands for Generator, O for Operator, and D for Destroyer. One who can create entire universes cannot be formless or without attributes. He must have all kinds of power and opulence. All the forms of this world have come from Him, and therefore He Himself cannot be formless. It has been written in the Bible: "God created man in His own image," and this is also confirmed in our theistic devotion of the ancient Vedas: "What He was before He is now, and He will be the same in the future. He is ever-existing and in the ancient Sanskrit language He is called Brahma, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. Actually, Brahma (the impersonal effulgence of His body) and Paramatma (His manifestation as Supersoul in the heart of all beings are His partial expansions, but the word Bhagavan (the Supreme Lord containing all opulence and powers) is complete. Everything is present in Him. He is so large that complete universes are contained within Him, and at the same time He is so minute that He resides in each atom. He is present in every atom of air, in every atom of fire, and in every atom of water. He is everywhere and He can hear everything; so we should try to please Him.

An Ocean Of Love And Affection

We should know that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is one without a second. He is the same God for the Christians, for the Muslims, for the Hindus, and for all others. There are not different Gods. He is the same God, the same Hoda, the same Christ. Just as there is one sun and one moon for the whole world, similarly, there are not different Gods for different people. How can God be divided? There should not be more than one God, otherwise all the gods will quarrel over territory and position. There is only one God, but He appears according to the vision of the devotee.

It appears that there are fifteen different moons. For fifteen days the moon gradually increases in size, eventually becoming a full moon, and after that it decreases in size again, becoming a new moon on the last day of the month. The "moons" are not different; it is the names of the moon that are different: full moon, new moon, quarter moon, and so on. Similarly, there is only one God, but He appears to be many because the ignorant devotees seem to have divided Him up by their different languages.

Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has many manifestations such as Rama, Narasimha, Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Narayana, and they are all the same. Even the person you call 'God' is also the same, for He is also one of the manifestations of Krsna (the original name of God in the ancient Vedic scriptures), and so are Allah and Jehovah. These are all names of God's manifestations. Some of these manifestations are more complete and have more power, and some have less power. The full moon, the new moon, and the stages in between all belong to the same moon, but we see differences according to our angle of vision. Actually, the moon is always full, but we consider that it is waxing or waning when it is covered in varying degrees.

In the same way, Krsna is one without a second. He has innumerable manifestations, but they are all Krsna. We are also parts and parcels of Krsna. We are not Krsna, but at the same time we are not different from Him. Both principles are there: difference and non-difference. We can use the analogies of the sun and its rays, and the fire and its heat; they are also different and not different. This truth about the Supreme is astonishing, and Caitanya Mahaprabhu has explained it thoroughly.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is one without a second. Sometimes He manifests in this world personally, and sometimes He sends His associates to give pure knowledge. All the souls here in this world are His eternal servants. This is the true conception, whether we accept it or not. We have forgotten Him from the beginning of the creation of this world, so He sometimes descends and performs very sweet and powerful pastimes so that all conditioned souls will be attracted to Him and engage in His service.

No one has any confusion or doubt about whether the sun exists, so why should there be any doubt about the existence of the creator of hundreds of thousands of suns? He can create millions and millions of worlds in a moment, and He can also destroy them. Sometimes He comes here, only to save us and to engage us all in His service. Other than

servicing Him, there is no way to be happy in this world or in any other world. There is only one God, and ignorance of our relationship with Him is the cause of our unhappiness.

We can be happy if we are engaged in Krsna's service. Don't be afraid that serving Him will be like serving someone in this world. There is so much happiness in serving Him, more than in serving your wife, husband, children, father, and so on. There is very, very relishable love and affection in His service. There is so much love and affection in God's abode, Krsna's transcendental abode – oceans of love and affection. Here the master gains and the servant has to lose something, but it is not like that there.

First we should know that we are Krsna's eternal servants, but we have forgotten Him, and that is the cause of all our suffering and sorrow, birth and death. We should have very firm faith in this. Don't have any doubt that we are spirit souls, parts and parcels of Godhead, that we are His eternal servants, and that it is due to forgetting Him that we are suffering now.

We can realize His mercy if we chant His name, and He can be seen by us. In the ancient days of Satya-yuga (the age of goodness, a time when mankind lived pious, peaceful, and pure lives of thousands of years), great sages used to see Him by meditation. In this present age, however, meditation on such a deep level cannot be accomplished, because our minds are always fickle. There is one process by which we can meditate upon Him, and that process is the chanting of His holy names: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare.

At the same time, chanting alone will not suffice. That chanting must be done in an authentic process, which must be given by the Supreme Lord Himself. Those who have heard from that Supreme Lord are coming through the guru-parampara, the disciplic line of succession of pure spiritual masters. Brahma, the first created being of this universe, heard from God Himself, Krsna, or His expansion Narayana. Brahma then told the great sage Narada, and Narada told Vyasa, the literary incarnation of the Lord. Thus, in this way, the transcendental knowledge of the process and its goal is descending. A Guru, spiritual master, should be authentic, self-realized, and coming in this line of succession, and then a disciple can chant successfully.

Give Only Your Ears

The bona fide Guru tells us, "Give me your ears. I don't want all of your senses; I only want one of them." All the senses have a special function, but only the ears can hear sound vibration and transcendental words. Because of this specialty of the ear, the Guru coming in disciplic succession helps us to surrender to Krsna through that ear. It is through this vibration of sound that the Guru may give Krsna, God Himself, who is hidden in everyone's heart. He can easily give this through the ear, and not by any other sense.

You should know that there are two kinds of words, and they are called in the Sanskrit language, "sabda-brahma" and "sabda-samanya." Sabda-brahma means transcendental sound, that sound which is beyond this material world, and sabda-samanya means ordinary, mundane sound. Material sound comes from the vibration of the material tongue, but sabda-brahma comes from the Lord Himself. The great sage Narada Muni gave that transcendental sound to his disciples Valmiki and others, and they gave it to their disciples.

One who has not extensively practiced devotion and is not perfect may give Krsna's holy name, brahma-gayatri, and other transcendental mantras to others, but the sound vibrations given by him will not have any effect. Although they are by nature powerful and transcendental, they will not have an effect. In that instance, the words of the mantras and Krsna's holy names will manifest only as worldly, mundane words. If a Guru has not sufficiently practiced or realized that transcendental sound, it will not give any fruit in the heart of the person to whom he gives it.

On the other hand, great transcendentalists and self-realized souls of the past, like Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda, Srila Haridas Thakura, and Sri Rupa Gosvami the other Gosvamis, were perfect in the utterance of that sound. We should accept sabda-brahma from those of their caliber.

Who Can Give Pure Love And Devotion?

There is a verse in our Vedic scriptures that explains the quality of a person who can actually help you:

anyabhilasita-sunyam jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanu-silanam bhaktir uttama

"Pure devotional service is the cultivation of activities which are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Krsna, or in other words the uninterrupted flow of service to Krsna, 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), and it is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Krsna." (Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)

You can understand the meaning of this verse by the following example. There was a great devotee of Lord Rama, who is one of Lord Krsna's powerful incarnations. That devotee was named Valmiki, and he became perfect after a very long time. Although he was originally a brahmana, a member of the priestly caste, he had previously become a very ferocious dacoit due to bad association, and he thus murdered many sages and saintly kings. Valmiki also wanted to kill the sage Narada Muni, but as he approached him to do so, Narada held up his hand and said, "Stop." Valmiki was surprised that just by Narada's saying, "Stop," he was forced to stop against his will. Valmiki thus became

submissive, and Narada was able to explain to him about the bad reactions that would come to him as a result of his heinous sins. He revealed those reactions to Valmiki, who then took shelter of him and inquired how to become free. Narada told him, "You should sit down here and chant 'Rama Rama Rama Rama Rama.' Do only this." Valmiki was trying to obey, but due to his past sinful reactions he could not chant that divine name. Narada then told him, "If you cannot chant Rama, then you should chant, 'mara.'" Mara and Rama are both Sanskrit words, and mara has the same syllables as Rama, said backwards. Rama means God and mara means death, and therefore "Mara mara" could easily be chanted by Valmiki. Narada thus told him, "You should chant 'Mara'," and Valmiki began to chant, "Mara mara." Then, automatically, "mara mara" chanted repeatedly became "Rama Rama."

Valmiki continued chanting as he sat waiting for his Guru's return. He continued to sit for thousands of years, and during that time he did not eat, nor did he even pass stool or urine. His austerity was superior to that of Dhruva Maharaja, another saint of ancient times, and he became as good as Sri Vyasadeva, the compiler of the Vedic scriptures. As the thousands of years passed, Valmiki's body became like earth, in the sense that so many insects ate his flesh and blood and other bodily substances, and they made an ant-hill around him. The original Guru, Brahma, came after some time and sprinkled water from his sacred water pot while uttering mantras, and Valmiki's body became like that of a beautiful young person. Brahma then told Valmiki, "Now you are perfect."

In this world, we cannot follow such austerity. It is hard to sit for even two hours to chant, nor can one easily fast from eating, drinking, or sleeping, for even one day; nor can one be fully absorbed in meditation for 12 hours, 6 hours, or even 1 hour. But Caitanya Mahaprabhu has told us, "Don't be hopeless. Somehow chant and go to Gurudeva to take initiation. Take the seed of the perfect transcendental name of Krsna. Chant, and you will very easily become happy. This process is the essence of all scriptures."

Always remain in the association of pure devotees of Krsna, the reservoir of truth and pleasure. If you remain alone, you will become weak, and illusion will swallow you. Even if your Gurudeva is far away, in India or here and there, don't think that he is not in your heart. Like Krsna, he may be present anywhere, and you can call him. With this firm belief, you should chant in the correct and bona fide process, and very soon you will realize true happiness. Chant, "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare," and always think, "My beloved Krsna is everywhere." If you engage in this process you can be happy, and without this you will never be so. Our Rsis have discovered this method:

harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha

"In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the powerful holy names of the Lord. There is no other way; there is no other way; there is no other way." (Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adī 17.21)

[In the modern age, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu preached love of God by practical demonstration. He is the great apostle of love of God and the father of the congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord. He advented Himself at Sridhama Mayapura, a quarter in the city of Navadvipa in Bengal, in February 1486. Thousands of years prior to His appearance, many ancient Vedic scriptures foretold His coming.]

Editorial advisors: Sripad Brajanatha dasa and Sripad Gopavrndapala dasa

Transcriber: Radhika dasi

Editor: Syamarani dasi

Typists: Jaya Sri dasi, Vraja Mohini dasi, and Ananga Mohini dasi