

Tridandi Svami Sri Srimada Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

## **A is for Apple, B is for Ball**

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Typists: Sriman Sudarsana dasa Adhikari & Srimati Vrndavanesvari devi dasi

Editor: Sripad Rsabhadeva dasa Adhikari

[Srla Narayana Maharaja asked Sripad Gopavrndapala dasa Adhikari, one of the senior disciples of Srla Prabhupada, to say something in Prabhupada's glorification. After his glorification, Srla Maharaja began his lecture.]

Srla Narayana Maharaja: I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my guru, om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and the same unto the lotus feet of my siksa-guru, om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

We have been discussing about the bhakti creeper. First of all we should know what is real bhakti. Pure bhakti is called uttama-bhakti. We must know this. Nowadays, some persons here, also in India but especially in Western countries, want to jump at once without any sadhana and without any bhajana. They don't practice the limbs of bhakti as explained in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindu. At once they want to jump — to see naked Radha-Krsna in Their nisanta-lila [pre-dawn pastimes].

You should not do this; it is an offence. You should not be mad. First you should hear what is uttama-bhakti and what are its limbs. When, by practicing uttama-bhakti genuine greed will come, then you can follow raganuga-bhakti. We do not give up the limbs of bhakti. We practice the same principles that we are practicing in vaidhi-bhakti, regulative bhakti. Only some moods are changed.

Nowadays the disciple does not want to hear his gurudeva. Very rare disciples are hearing, and most think that they are the guru of their guru. This habit will take them to hell. So many think that they know everything — who he is in his spiritual form, who that person is, and who someone else is. He will say, "He is Sivananda Sena, he was Raya Ramananda, he is that person, and he is this person." Such persons don't want to practice practically; they only want to travel in a dream. Why not practice bhakti-yoga? Don't follow your imagination. Your feet should be on the ground, and not here and there in a dream.

If you want to practice bhakti-yoga, you should follow Srla Rupa Gosvami. Don't go here and there and think, "I know more than Rupa Gosvami". Don't try to follow Krsna Bhavanamrta and Govinda Lilamrta at once; otherwise you will go to hell.

Who is qualified to hear and speak about the sweet pastimes of astakaliya-lila — the twenty-four-hour-a-day pastimes of Radha and Krsna? Those who are first practicing totally the principles of sravanam, kirtanam, visnu-smaranam, pada-sevanam, arcanam, vandanam, dasyam, sakhyam atma-nivedanam, and also sadhu-sanga, nama-kirtana, bhagavata-sravana. mathura-vasa, sri-murtira sraddhaya sevana. Mathura-vasa

means always living at Radha Kunda, Syama Kunda, Giriraja Govardhana, Navadvipa, and also in Nilacala.

If one has even a little relationship with these five principles and he is not offending anyone, he will attain Vraja-prema. We should try to practice from the very beginning. If you are not practicing uttama-bhakti, how can you think that you are seeing naked Radha and Krsna and all these things? How can you tell everyone, "I am this" or "I am that", "He is this" or "He is that"? "I am Krsna", "I am Sivananda Sena", or "I am Rupa Gosvami or Sanatana Gosvami." This is a bogus idea. It is mayavada. We should first hear from our gurudeva. If gurudeva is qualified he will first tell us about uttama-bhakti.

anyabhilasita-sunyam  
jnana-karmady-anavrtam  
anukulyena krsnanu-  
silanam bhaktir uttama  
[Madhya 19.167]

Sripad Aranya Maharaja: Gurudeva has ordered me to give just the outline of this verse composed by Srila Rupa Gosvami by the inspiration of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In his Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu he is giving the most excellent definition of uttama-bhakti, transcendental bhakti. It is the continuous unbroken cultivation of all the endeavors of your body, mind, words, and internal spiritual sentiments, which are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Krsna, totally devoid of any desires other than the desire to serve Krsna, not covered or mixed with karma, jnana, dry renunciation, yoga, astrology, and all other kinds of philosophies which are not conducive to bhakti.

Such endeavors should be like honey flowing from a jar. When we pour honey from a jar it does not come out in drops. It comes out in one thick steam. When cittavrtti, the tendency of the heart, along with the activities of the body, mind, and words, are flowing without any break in the service of Krsna, this is called uttama-bhakti.

Syamarani did: As Sripada Aranya Maharaja mentioned, this verse is written in Srila Rupa Gosvami's Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu, but where did he first get it? He heard it from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Mahaprabhu had given him instructions for ten days at Prayaga. Uttama-bhakti is the uninterrupted flow of all activities performed with the body, mind, intelligence, all the activities of the senses, and the spiritualized sentiments towards Krsna. It is only for the purpose of pleasing Krsna, without knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation, and without being covered by the desire to enjoy the fruit of our activities.

Karma must be there, activities must be there, but those activities should be under the influence of bhakti — not covering bhakti. In aropa-siddha bhakti, karma covers bhakti: "I like arts and crafts, I like to make pretty clothing. I worship the Deity so that I can be satisfied with the way in which I am designing clothing." This is not pure

bhakti, because the devotee has some personal desire. He is superimposing the word bhakti on an activity that he wants to do for his own happiness.

Srila Rupa Gosvami and Caitanya Mahaprabhu are saying, 'jnana karmadi anavrtam.' Avrtam means covered. Bhakti should be uncovered. It should be the controller of our karma and our jnana. Even jnana, the knowledge that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, gradually has to be changed to some relationship with Krsna in one of the five rasas — like that of the residents of Vrndavana — in order to come to the highest platform of uttama-bhakti.

Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe and the first spiritual master in our line, has stated that ultimately one has to give up jnana, the knowledge that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by hearing about His sweet pastimes from a pure devotee who has realized Krsna.

Our Guru Maharaja, Srila Prabhupada, has said that there are three stages. The first is 'under-knowledge'; less than knowledge, and that is atheism and mayavadism. Then there is the 'knowledge' that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When I have that faith by the association of a self realized soul, then I gradually come to the stage 'above knowledge', the stage where I realize my relationship with Krsna as my friend, as my master, as my son, or my beloved.

Anyabhilasita-sunyam jnana-karmady-anavrtam anukulyena krsnanu-silanam bhaktir uttama. Anusilanam means cultivation — of the physical, mental, intellectual, and sentimental activities — only for the pleasure of Krsna. Canura, and Mustika, the wrestlers in Mathura, were giving Krsna pleasure, because by their fighting they were giving Him a sense of heroism, and that made Him happy. But their activities were not bhakti. They wanted to kill Krsna. Bhakti depends on the motivation. In uttama-bhakti, not only does Krsna get pleasure, but the motivation is to give Krsna pleasure. The wrestlers gave Krsna pleasure, and mother Yasoda made Krsna cry, but she is the topmost uttama-bhakta. Why? Because her motive is, "I should punish Krsna so He won't be a thief and steal everyone's butter, and so that He'll grow up to have very good character."

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Has anyone any question about this? Have you understood the meaning?

Devotee: In krsna-lila, when the cowherd boys were in the forest fire and they asked Krsna, "O Krsna, Krsna save us, Balarama save us." was this just their lila? Is this going against uttama-bhakti?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: No, they are beyond uttama-bhakti. You cannot imagine their position. They are beyond uttama-bhakti. They are manifestations of Krsna Himself, and they are eternal associates. They came to this world only to fulfill the desires of Krsna. They are playing like ordinary boys to teach us. They are above our consideration.

The gopis, gopas, and all the associates of Goloka Vrndavana are above our consideration. They are like Krsna.

Devotee: If a person is on the neophyte platform, and he is cultivating devotional service in practice and trying his best even though he is full of desires, is that considered in the class of uttama-bhakti? Or, does he have to be on the spontaneous level to be classified as an uttama-bhakta?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: This question is wrong. Uttama-bhakti is not for general persons. It is beyond the calculation of kanistha-adhikaris. You are not even qualified to ask this question. Better to hear and serve gurudeva. By continually hearing, the proper questions will come. I request you to hear more and more, and first have an idea about bhakti — and then uttama-bhakti.

In bhakti, whatever you do is done for Krsna. This is simple. This is bhakti, but not uttama-bhakti. When the two symptoms, anyabhilasita sunyam and anakulyena krsnanusilanam are present, it is pure bhakti; otherwise not.

You should try with all your senses and all your activities to please gurudeva, but gurudeva should be bona fide. You should continually hear, as Pariksit Maharaja heard from Sukadeva Gosvami. In this age you should especially try to follow Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura in a practical way. You should read Jaiva Dharma from the beginning, from the first chapter, and especially the second part. Be like Brajanatha and Vijaya Kumara. Follow those who are really hearing everything from their gurudeva and are following. All questions are conclusively answered there in Jaiva Dharma.

We should not follow our uncontrolled mind. We should try to follow Brajanatha and Vijaya Kumara — how they were hearing and how they were totally engaged. Transcendental realization was coming into their hearts. If you are not fully hearing from your gurudeva, and you are engaged in so many speculations, you cannot follow bhakti. You must hear first what the two disciples heard from their gurudeva.

Whatever Raghunatha dasa Gosvami heard from Svarupa Damodhara he practiced, and what he heard from Caitanya Mahaprabhu he also practiced — he didn't speculate. Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was totally following Svarupa Damodara. Once, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami told Svarupa Damodara, "I want to take guidance from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." Mahaprabhu told him, "I have placed you in the hands of your siksa-guru, Svarupa Damodhara, and I Myself am hearing his very sweet hari-katha. However, if you still have some desire to hear from Me, then:

gramya-katha na sunibe, gramya-varta na kahibe  
bhala na khaibe ara bhala na paribe

amani manada hana krsna-nama sada la'be  
vraje radha-krsna-seva manase karibe  
(Antya-lila 6.236 & 237)

["Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Do not expect honor, but offer all

respect to others. Always chant the holy name of Lord Krsna, and within your mind render service to Radha and Krsna in Vrndavana."]

How was Raghunatha dasa maintaining his life? We should maintain our lives as he did, and then bhakti will come. If it is not coming, and we are only following our minds' imagination, it will not come. Always hear first from your gurudeva, and then remember and follow what he has told you.

Follow what has been told in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Do not try to meditate on svarasiki-lila. When you become qualified you can first meditate on mantra-mayi upasana, like Damodara-lila. Each lila is mantra-mayi upasana, but when all the lilas are continuing in a chain, from morning to morning, then it is svarasiki-lila. This is only for the high class of devotee.

Here we are discussing about bhakti-lata bija. The sadhaka is here in this world. Where? In Vrndavana. If he is not physically there, then he is there by mind, but to be there by body is better. Always be in Vrndavana, like Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Jiva Gosvami and others. You can also be in Navadvipa or Nilacala with Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You must be there, chanting the holy names continuously, like the honey that pours in an unbroken line — day and night. The sadhaka is here in this world, and he is hearing from gurudeva — not speculating.

You must note down in your heart what you have heard from gurudeva. What Sukadeva Gosvami heard from his gurudeva, he told to Pariksit Maharaja. He told nothing else, nothing from his imagination. We should think in a continuous line, without interruption, only the things which we have heard from gurudeva.

The sadhaka is here in this world. And what is he doing?

krti-sadhya bhavet sadhya-  
bhava sa sadhanabhidha  
nitya-siddhasya bhavasya  
prakatyam hrdisadhyata  
(Madhya 22.105)

["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. Such devotion eternally exists within the heart of every living entity. The awakening of this eternal devotion is the potentiality of devotional service in practice."]

What is sadhana? We should not follow our uncontrolled mind. Krti-sadhya bhavet sadhya-bhava sa sadhanabhidha nitya siddhasya bhavasya. Krsna has given everything in your constitutional body. Everyone has a transcendental body, and in this constitutional form we have some relation with Krsna. Now that is covered with maya, however, and we have forgotten all these things. Let us hear about this from gurudeva, and then practice uttama-bhakti.

You should know that the transcendental names and pastimes of Krsna are all transcendental. Our body, our senses, our tongue, and our ears are material. They can never reach transcendence. There is only one process by which they can touch it. Srila

Bhaktivinoda Thakura has revealed in his commentary on Sri Siksastakam how our material minds, ears, and senses can be tadatma, in oneness, with that transcendental realm. By praying, praying, praying to the lotus feet of gurudeva and Krsna, they will come and they will be tadatma with our tongue, our ears, our senses, and hearts. Then we can have some relation.

You should try to realize what I have said, otherwise you cannot develop properly. You will be a sahajiya, sakhibheki and mayavadi. Don't be like that. Always follow your gurudeva. He is very powerful. This applies to your Srila Prabhupada — Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja — and also to those in his line. It applies to me also. Try to follow. Don't obey your uncontrolled mind.

Pundarika brahmacari: Srila Gurudeva is telling us about the process of suddha-bhakti regarding the words krti-sadhya bhavet sadhya-bhava sa sadhanabhidha nitya-siddhasya bhavasya prakatyam hrdis adhyata This verse explains the actual process of bhakti.

Srila Narayana Maharaja: Srila Rupa Goswami has written this point in Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu, in very beginning, just after the definition of uttama-bhakti.

Pundarika prabhu: The actual process of bhakti is very simple. One does not need to speculate or invent any new methods. One simply has to tune one's heart, ones endeavors, ones senses, and each atom with the words of gurudeva and other authoritative Vaisnavas. All their endeavors, as we heard in the beginning of the lecture, should be focused on one point. Nitya-siddhasya bhavasya prakatyam hrdis adhyata. With all the endeavors of hearing, chanting, remembering, the goal is that I want to manifest that eternal relation which is dormant in my heart. Bhakti is eternal. It is not something which is present at one point in time and therefore by my endeavors it will manifest. That would mean that bhakti is something temporary.

Bhakti is eternal, nitya, and by making these endeavors it will awaken. It is already there, and it will awaken.

Srila Gurudeva: Transcendental moods are beyond the limit of matter. Our tongue cannot touch the pure transcendental name, our ears cannot hear transcendental words, our mind cannot think about transcendental Krsna or His pastimes. Then how can we connect with it? You should hear very patiently.

Sripada Aranya Maharaja: First of all it must be very firmly established in our hearts .Athah sri krsna namadi na bhavet grahyam indriyayah. Krsna's name, form, qualities, and pastimes are all beyond the jurisdiction of the senses...

Srila Gurudeva: When you think, "Oh, Krsna is very beautiful, and if He is naked He is still more beautiful, and His feet are very beautiful", it is your material idea. There is a process by practicing which we can touch that transcendental realm, however, and we

should adopt that process. Don't use your uncontrolled mind. This is a very good point, and you should try to realize it.

Sripada Aranya Maharaja: Mahaprabhu explains that the transcendental subject matter never comes under the jurisdiction of the material mind, senses, and perceptions. On one hand we have to chant Krsna's name, form, qualities, and pastimes, but on the other hand the material senses cannot touch this. How, then, can we come in the line of bhakti?

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti explains that we should first do sadhana- bhakti. What is that sadhana-bhakti? Kṛti sadhya bavet sadhya-bhava sa sadhanabhidha. Kṛti sadhya means that you are using your senses. Your hearing chanting remembering is coming from the senses. It is an affair of the senses. But what is bhakti? Bhakti is not an affair of the senses. Bhakti is the vṛtti, the function, of svarupa-sakti — especially the essence of samvit and hladini — Kṛṣṇa's knowledge potency, samvit, and Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency, hladini. When they are mixed together, this is called bhakti.

Bhakti is suddha-sattva visesatma. This is called bhava-bhakti, and it is the aim and object of our bhakti. First the devotee should understand why am I doing everything? Why am I hearing? Why am I chanting? Why am I remembering? Oh, it is only to realize this transcendental bhakti.

Srila Gurudeva: A boy's father and mother wanted that he should be educated, and they wanted to send him to school. When they brought him, he was weeping very much and he cried out, "I will not go to school! I will not read!" The father and mother were very expert, however, and he was admitted. The teachers were also expert, and they told him, "Oh, this boy is very intelligent. Good boy! Good boy! Bring a red book for him."

One of the teachers showed the boy a picture of a very reddish apple and told him, "A is for apple. Just see the picture of this apple." There was also a picture of a very colorful ball, and the teacher said, "B is for ball." There was also a cat and a dog, and so many things. The boy was only seeing them in pictures, and these pictures were in a very shiny reddish book. The teacher said, "Oh, I have admitted you in this school. You see A, apple. You should read B, ball; C, cat; D, dog." Later the teacher said, "You have passed all the exams. You are very smart."

The boy then returned to his home and he was very happy. He told his mother, "I studied so many things. Now I am a student. Mother, when will I again go to school?" His mother replied, "Oh, tomorrow, tomorrow." Now the boy was ready to go to school, and he was thinking, "I am a student" Actually, though, he was not yet a student.

Similarly, in the beginning a devotee is initiated by gurudeva and he is told, "You should chant the name and you should hear hari-katha", but actually none of his senses are touching those things. He is not educated and he is not even a student. He is only going and coming and seeing pictures.

Here is another example: The guru tells his disciples, "Today we will hold a fire sacrifice. Bring some ghee and pancamṛtam. Bring some dried fruits, bring some bricks,

sand, many mango leaves, and bring this and that." The disciples then bring the paraphernalia. Is this their participation in the fire sacrifice?

What is the fire sacrifice? It is only the offering of oneself to Krsna: "Om Krsnaya namah, Om Krsnaya svaha, Om radhikaya svaha." I have heard that the carrying of the paraphernalia 'is' the fire sacrifice, but we say that it will help with the fire sacrifice.

In this way, although you are hearing and chanting, you are not related with Krsna's transcendental name and pastimes because your senses are all material. Uttama-bhakti is performed by the transcendental mind, transcendental senses, and transcendental hands and feet. What we are doing?

We use these material ears, material minds, material everything, and at that time we are hearing gurudeva and addressing him, "O Gurudeva!" At that time gurudeva says to us, "Oh, very good boy! Very good boy! You are a very good student and a very good devotee!" But really we are not devotees. When we are using these material senses, bodies, hands, and so on, when we are performing arcana by these hands and seeing the Deity with material eyes, this is not actually arcana. This is not uttama-bhakti. By doing so, however, gradually, by the mercy of gurudeva and Krsna, a fraction of transcendental bhakti descends.

By the mercy of gurudeva and Krsna, svarupa sakti — samvit and hladini — will come in your heart, and they will become tadatma with these senses body, and mind. The example is given of the iron rod. On its own, it cannot burn. However, if you put it in a fire it will become red-hot, and if you will touch it, you will be burnt. What burns? The fire. Iron cannot burn, but here iron is one with the fire. Just as fire has some power, so this fraction of bhakti has some power to be one with our senses. When, by this process, bhakti will come, then you will gradually have all transcendental things.

Athah sri krsna namadi na bhavet grayam indrayah, sevanmukhehi. What is sevonmukha? To serve gurudeva, to serve harinama, to serve mahaprasadam, and to serve hari-katha. Don't eat anything. Rather you should serve mahaprasadam. Mahaprasade govinde nama brahmani vaisnave. You should not chant. Rather you should serve harinama. You should not hear hari-katha. Your senses cannot hear it. It is therefore better that you serve hari-katha.

In this way that transcendental bhakti will come gradually, and this is the only process. Follow Srila Rupa Gosvami's process. Then, in a practical way, bhakti will come. Don't depend on your own strength. You should only pray. There is a sloka in the Vedas which explains how, if one is fixed in a service mood, he will become a realized soul.

Nayam atma pravacanena labhya na medhaya na bahu srutena. We should wait and pray, "When will Krsna's mercy come? O Krsna, be merciful. O Gurudeva, please be merciful to me." Then, when Krsna thinks the devotee is qualified, He will say, "Now I should go and help." When Krsna wishes, at once the devotee will realize everything. By our efforts we cannot do anything. Mother Yasoda wanted to bind Krsna, but she could not. Then, when she prayed to Narayana, Krsna knew it. He is Mula Narayana,

the origin of Narayana. At once He became merciful, and He was bound by only one small rope.

I wanted to tell so many other things, but I also thought it more important that you first understand these things. No one else will tell all these things to you. You must think about this first. This will be a platform, and upon this platform all transcendental things will automatically come.

After this I will speak about the sadhaka who is here in this world, but whose kirtan has gone to Goloka Vrndavana. What is doing here? He is sitting here in transcendental Vrndavana. If not by his body, he is there by his mind, under the guidance of any rasika and tattvajna Vaisnava. He is always chanting and remembering the pastimes of Krsna. All the pastimes are coming automatically, like a chain.

Sripad Puspadanta dasa: You said bhakti will come gradually by the grace of guru and Krsna. It also comes at once?

Srila Gurudeva: It may come as it came in the heart of Kaliya, Aghasura, and Bakasura. They had not been under the guidance of any guru, but they had a special situation. Putana was the sister of Aghasura and Bakasura, and Kaliya's wives were very high-class devotees. Only by their mercy was Krsna pleased. Without any other cause He was bound to be merciful.

If your guru is like the wives of Kaliya, or if you have any tendency to serve, then your gurudeva will be merciful. If Narada tells you that, "You will be a tree and Krsna will come to liberate you", then Krsna is bound to do so. Narada Rsi was the guru of Prahlada, Druva, Vyasadeva, Praceta, and so many others. If your gurudeva is like Narada, he can also show that mercy. Bhakti is kripa-siddha. It is always is kripa-siddha. This kripa is of two kinds — the causeless mercy of Krsna and the causeless mercy of gurudeva — but Krsna's mercy always follows gurudeva's mercy. Without the devotee's mercy, Krsna mercy will not come. We should know all these things.