

REVELATION of the REAL ISKCON

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By Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

[In these days of confusion, strife and doubt, tens of thousands of devotees around the world who had dedicated their lives with a desire to serve Srila Prabhupada's mission are now becoming more and more inclined to find out the true facts about that mission. What is truly ISKCON? Who are actually ISKCON members and what are their moods? Can a true member of ISKCON ever fall? Who are the real ISKCON leaders and how do we serve them? The astonishing answers to these questions are revealed by Srila Narayana Maharaja in the following lecture:]

If you have no love and affection and you are worshiping Krsna with sixteen different types of paraphernalia, Krsna will not accept your worship. And, if you have no paraphernalia to offer besides one drop of water or a leaf of tulasi, but you offer it with great love and affection, Krsna will be satisfied. Even if you do not offer any water or tulasi, but you say, "O Krsna, I am Yours and You are mine", this will suffice. We should try to follow this principle.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu requested Raya Ramananda to speak on this subject, and Raya Ramananda said:

krsnah bhakti rasa bhavita matih
kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mulyam ekalam
janma-koti-sukrtair na labhyate

[Syamarani reads translation:] "Pure devotional service in Krsna consciousness cannot be had even by pious activities in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be obtained only by paying one price; that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay. Purport: The previous two verses are included in the Padyavali (13, 14) by Srila Rupa Gosvami."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You should hear this very carefully. Bhakti begins from here.

[Syamarani dasi reads:] "Verse 69 refers to devotional service in faith and verse 70 refers to devotional service rendered out of intense greed. The first is devotional service rendered in accordance to the regulative principles, and the second refers to spontaneous loving service to the Lord without extraneous endeavor. Henceforward the basic principle underlying the talks between Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Raya will be spontaneous loving service to the Lord. The regulative principles according to the injunctions of the sastras are necessary insofar as one's original dormant Krsna Consciousness is not spontaneously awakened. An example of spontaneous action is the flowing of rivers into the ocean. Nothing can stop the flow of water. Similarly, when

one's dormant Krsna Consciousness is awakened, it spontaneously flows to the lotus feet of Krsna without impediment. Whatever will be spoken henceforth by Ramananda Raya based on spontaneous love will be agreeable to Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and the Lord will ask him more and more about this subject."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I have seen that Srila Swami Maharaja has given the definition of ISKCON with this sloka: krsnah bhakti rasa bhavita. This is the basis of ISKCON. [Srila Prabhupada is quoted here from the book Journey to Self-Discovery: "In another verse, Rupa Gosvami says, krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih kriyatau yadi kuto 'pi labhyate. I have translated the words Krsna consciousness from krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita. So here Rupa Gosvami advises, 'If Krsna consciousness is available, please purchase it immediately. Don't delay.' It is a very nice thing." In Vrndavana, March 13, 1974, Prabhupada stated: "Rupa Gosvami advised, krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih kriyatam yadi kuto 'pi labhyate. He advises that, 'If Krsna consciousness is available, you should purchase it. You should purchase it anywhere it is available.'" In Seattle, Washington, Oct. 4, 1968, Srila Prabhupada stated: "Krsna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih. Matih means intelligence or status of mind, that 'I'll serve Krsna.' If you can purchase this status of mind anywhere, please immediately purchase it."]

If anyone is not following this, even he is trying to be ISKCON, he is not really ISKCON. He is ISKCON-abhasa (a semblance or shadow). We see in the semblance of ISKCON that so many members can fall down. The real ISKCON members, however, will never fall down. Brahma is the first in ISKCON, Narada is second, Srila Vyasadeva is third, and fourth is Sri Sukadeva Gosvami. They cannot fall down. Srila Rupa Gosvami cannot fall down, and he is also ISKCON. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami will never fall down, and he is also ISKCON. We are all ISKCON, but those who can fall down, those who are simply trying to be ISKCON, are not really its members.

We must help devotees who are in that category. I pray that Krsna will sprinkle His mercy on them so that one day they will be in the real ISKCON. Generally, koti janma sukritair na labhyte: this high-class standard cannot be had only by sukrti (spiritually pious activities or regulative bhakti). If one gathers sukrti for thousands and thousands of births, in relation to Krsna and His devotees, or in relation to anything related to Krsna, then it will be real sukrti. When sukrti is in large enough quantity, you can have darsana of any exalted devotee. Sadhu-sanga will be achieved.

sadhu sanga sadhu sanga sarva sastra kaya
lavamatra sadhu sange sarva siddhi haya

This has been proclaimed everywhere, and Srila Swami Maharaja has also explained so much about it. Without sadhu-sanga we cannot advance to our goal.

The bhakti that is defined here in that verse, raganuga-bhakti or Vraja-bhakti, can never be achieved simply by great quantities of sukrti. It can be achieved only if you are so fortunate as to have darsana and association of a rasika-bhakta of Vraja. That high-class devotee's heart is saturated with love and affection, like an Indian rasagulla, and

everywhere there is rasa and rasa. If you squeeze a rasagulla, rasa will come out and still so much rasa will remain inside.

Examples of such rasika-bhaktas are Raya Ramananda, Rupa Gosvami, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, and all those in their disciplic succession from top to bottom. You can receive this from Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja and all others in our line, and especially from the associates of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. We are very fortunate that we are so near to the time of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. We can still have the association of that special kind of rasika-bhakta at present, but after some time it will be very, very hard to find a pure devotee in the line of Sri Rupa Gosvami and Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. You are all so fortunate to be hearing these things now.

After some time everything will be gone. There will only be some external practice, like yuga-dharma, and after that even yuga-dharma will disappear. Varnasrama dharma has already gone, with only the chanting of krsna-nama remaining, and after sometime it will also go. At that time there will be only confusion.

In this way, mere sukrti will not do. If we receive the causeless mercy of Krsna and His associates, we can have the sanga of a rasika Vaisnava. At that time we should give our life and everything else in his service, and we should patiently hear all these topics from him. We should always be hearing, and then that Vraja-bhakti may come.

Mahaprabhu became very happy to hear these words of Raya Ramananda and He said, "Oh, very good, very good." This is really the philosophy of love and affection. It is the platform of raganuga-bhakti. It is spontaneous bhakti, and what we were doing before is called regulative devotion. Srila Swami Maharaja has clarified this in his explanations.

prabhu kahe, "eho haya, age kaha ara"
raya kahe, "prema-bhakti sarva-sadhya-sara"

Mahaprabhu told Raya Ramananda, "Oh, you should continue", and Raya Ramananda then presented dasya-prema, servitude. Is Prahlada Maharaja 'dasa' or not? He is dasa, but not pure dasa. Hanuman is pure dasa. He is not like Prahlada who is only praying (because he thinks his Lord doesn't require service). Hanuman considers that his Prabhu Ramacandra has some appetite. Sometimes in the night he will guard and massage His Prabhu's feet. The whole day and night he will stay awake as a guard, and when he finds out that Ravana has stolen away Sita from Rama, he will jump over the ocean and kill the sons of Ravana. Then he will tell Sita, "O Site! You can sit on my back. At once I will take you to Rama." Sita will then reply, "I want Rama to come and kill all the demons. Ravana touched me when I was unconscious and helpless, but now I am in a sound condition and I cannot touch you. I touch only Rama, so please bring Him. Please tell Him to come." After that Rama came and He destroyed the whole dynasty of Ravana. He killed his one hundred thousand sons and one hundred twenty-five thousand grandchildren. He spared only Vibhisan, because he was a devotee.

Hanuman is a sevaka. He wants to serve in all ways. He thinks that if anyone will stop his service, he will die. Once Bharata, Laksmana, Satrugna and Sita were having a discussion about Hanuman and they decided, "Hanuman has come and taken all our services. We should make a scheme to drive him out from the Raja palace." They went to Rama and told Him, "We will serve You all day and night, and we will divide up all the services. The entire night Sita will serve You, and during the day sometimes Laksmana, sometimes Bharata, and sometimes Satrugna will serve."

They left no service for Hanuman, and therefore he humbly requested them, "Please give me some service; anything you like; any service at all."

They asked, "What service do you want?"

He replied, "Please give me the service that when Rama is yawning, I will snap my fingers."

"Why?"

Hanuman replied, "To make Rama remember Krsna or God." In Indian culture it is the habit of one to snap his fingers when someone else yawns so that the person will remember Krsna or Rama. "So I should do this."

They knew that Rama never yawns, and thus there would be nothing for Hanuman to do. They said, "Oh yes, we can give you this service." Hanuman then left the room and began to snap his fingers continually; and Rama began to yawn throughout the day and night. There was no other service to do because Rama was always yawning. A great problem arose and the four could not decide what to do. Now Sita was not serving, nor was Laksmana, nor Satrugna, nor anyone. They came to Rama and asked, "What should we do now?" And Rama continued to yawn.

They went to Hanuman and requested him, "You should stop snapping your fingers."

He asked, "Why should I stop? You have given me this service. I don't know when Rama will yawn, and therefore I snap my fingers all the time."

Rama then advised them, "Divide the service and give something to Hanuman. Otherwise he will always be snapping his fingers and I will be forced to continue yawning. Hanuman cannot live without service."

There are two kinds of servants. Hanuman wants to embrace Ramacandra. However, being a pure servant, he cannot do so. If you want to see another type of servant, you can go to Vraja, where there are the servants of Nanda Baba. These servants take Krsna in their laps and, kissing Him, say, "O baby Krsna, O baby Krsna!" Sometimes they even give Him their own remnants. They are far superior to Hanuman.

Hanuman wants to come to Vraja, but he cannot come. There he may see that Krsna's mother is controlling Him, twisting His ear, slapping Him, and taking a stick to Him and accusing Him, "You naughty boy!" He would not be able to tolerate this because he considers that his Prabhu is the supreme Lord, and therefore he never comes. On the other hand, the servants of Nanada Baba never think that Krsna is the supreme Lord. They only know that He is Nanda Baba's son.

Raya Ramananda continued:

yan-nama-sruti-matrena
puman bhavati nirmalam
tasya tirtha-padam kim va
dasanam avasisyate

What is the meaning?

[Syamarani reads Prabhupada's translation:] "A man becomes purified simply by hearing the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose lotus feet create the holy places of pilgrimage. Therefore, what remains to be attained by those who have become His servants?"

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Mother Yasoda, any sakha, and any dasa of Nanda Baba are so much superior to Brahma and Sankara. They are realized souls. They can create a universe in a second, but they don't use this power. By the wish of Krsna, Yogamaya always covers this power from all others. Even a creeper and a blade of grass can create all these things, and they are also so much superior to Brahma and all others like him. They are totally transcendental.

How fortunate are the blades of grass in Vrndavana. Krsna takes the kunkuma of the gopis on His lotus feet and walks on that grass, and the gopis also place their lotus footdust on the grass when they go to meet Krsna. How fortunate and very glorious the grasses are. Brahma and Sankara are not so fortunate.

Krsnadasa Kaviraja then writes: prabhu kahe, "eho haya, kichu age ara. eho haya, kichu age ara." Mahaprabhu said, "You should go still further." Now you will know what is Vraja-prema.

[Aranya Maharaja reads the translation:] "Hearing this from Ramananda Raya, the Lord again requested him to go a step further. In reply Ramananda Raya said, 'Loving service to Krsna rendered in fraternity, in a mood of friendship, sakhya prema, is the highest perfection. (Cc.Mad.8.74)'"

ittham satam brahma-sukhanubhutya
dasyam gatanam para-daivatena
mayasritanam nara-darakena
sakam vijahruh krta-punya-punjah

"Neither those who are engaged in self-realization and appreciating the Brahman effulgence of the Lord, nor those engaged in devotional service while accepting the Supreme Personality of Godhead as master, nor those who are under the clutches of Maya and thinking the Lord an ordinary person, can understand that certain exalted personalities, after accumulating volumes of pious activities, are now playing with the Lord in friendship as cowherd boys."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] This is very glorious. In the arena of Kamsa, Krsna and Baladeva very easily killed Mustika and Canura. After that many demons quickly came, and Krsna and Baladeva killed them all. When there was no one left to fight with Krsna and Baladeva, Baladeva said, "Oh, come on; anyone!" Sridama then jumped into the arena and began to wrestle with Krsna. He very quickly defeated Krsna and all were clapping; and Krsna was also smiling by being defeated. How glorious this was.

Now Mahaprabhu said: prabhu kahe, "eho uttama." Now He is saying 'uttama', the highest. Sakhya-rasa, vatsalya-rasa and madhurya-rasa are in Vraja. They are never anywhere else; not even in Dvaraka or in Rama-puri Ayodhya. There are so many associates of Krsna in Dvaraka-puri but the Vrajabasis are all superior to them.

After this Kaviraja Gosvami writes: raya kahe, "vatsalya-prema sarva-sadhya-sara." What is the meaning?

[Aranya Maharaja reads translation:] "The Lord said, 'This statement is very good, but please proceed even further.' Ramananda Raya then replied, 'Loving service to the Lord in the parental relationship is the highest perfectional stage.'"

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:]

nandah kim akarod brahman
sreya evam mahodayam
yasoda va maha-bhaga
papau yasyah stanam harih
(Cc.Mad.8.77)

Sri Sukadeva Gosvami himself is saying this: "What austerities, what punya, has Nanda Baba performed that he became the father of Krsna? He was always ordering Krsna, 'Bring my shoes.' 'Go and do this and that.' Yasoda va maha-bhaga. Mahabhagya Yasoda is so fortunate that she was able to give her breast-milk to Krsna."

Sukadeva Gosvami is speaking in wonder: "What did he do?" The answer is that he never did anything. Nanda Baba and Yasoda Maiya are Krsna's eternal father and mother. The Supreme Lord Krsna actually has no father and mother, but through love and affection they have become the transcendental and eternal father and mother of Krsna. Their love is so high that Krsna accepts, "Nanda Baba is My father and Yasoda Maiya is My mother."

There is no birth in aprakata (unmanifest) Goloka Vrndavana. Krsna does not come from the womb there. In this prakata (manifest) Vrndavana, however, Krsna comes in the womb of Mother Yasoda. He partly comes in the womb of Devaki, but He fully comes in the womb of Mother Yasoda. Thus, Mother Yasoda has so much more love than Devaki and Vasudeva.

It is not written anywhere that Mother Yasoda or Nanda Baba accepted Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sometimes they remember the words of Gargacarya: "Your son is powerful like Narayana", but they never accept that He is Bhagavan. No Vrajabasis ever accept the theory that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and without having their understanding, this prema cannot come. It will never come if you are always folding your hands and seeing only the opulence of Krsna. You will have to forget this. A time will come, a stage will come, when Yogamaya will cover your intelligence which dictates that Krsna is the Supreme Person. Then this love may come.

As you know, Yasoda bound Krsna. No one else can do this; not even Mother Kausalya or Mother Devaki. They can never chastise Krsna or Rama, what to speak of binding Them. In Vraja, however, Krsna is always bound. Mother Yasoda bound Him once, and the gopis bound Him so many times. They are always binding Him. They bound Krsna with the veil of Radhika and told Him, "You cannot go anywhere." They bound Krsna with Lalita at Sakhi Giri Parvat, and with Visakha somewhere else. This is love and affection. Krsna can only be bound by the Vrajabasis, and especially by the gopis.

Vatsalya-prema is also one goal. Up to now we have been speaking about different kinds of goals and processes, and Mahaprabhu wanted to clarify all these points. According to your qualification, your standard of bhakti, you can choose any one of the goals and processes to achieve them, but Mahaprabhu was always rejecting, rejecting, rejecting. He even rejected the love of vatsalya-rasa as being the topmost goal. He did pranama to that rasa because it is somewhat favorable to gopi-prema, but still He kept it aside and proceeded towards gopi-prema.

"Raya kahe, vatsalya prema sarva sadhya sara." Ramananda Raya had said that vatsalya-prema is the essence of perfection, and in order to substantiate his proposal he quoted the following sloka:

nemam virinco na bhavo
na srir apy anga-samsraya
prasadam lebhire gopi
yat tat prapa vimukti-dat

Krsna can give one all kinds of benedictions, but even Brahma could not receive that kind of prasadam, remnants, that is, the pleasure of Krsna. He could not please Krsna like this. Nemam virinco na bhavo na. What is the meaning?

[Sripad Aranya Maharaja reads the translation:] "The favor Mother Yasoda obtained from Sri Krsna, the bestower of liberation, was never obtained even by Lord Brahma or Lord Siva, nor even by the goddess of fortune who always remains on the chest of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Visnu."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Mahaprabhu said 'eho uttama', not 'sarva uttama.' Eho uttama, age kaha ara. "Oh, this is very high class. I accept that. But go on telling more and more." Then: raya kahe, "kanta-prema sarva-sadhya-sara."

[Sripad Aranya Maharaja reads translation:] "The Lord said, 'Your statements are certainly getting better and better one after the other, but surpassing all of them is another transcendental mellow, and you can speak of that as the most sublime.' Ramananda Raya then replied, 'Conjugal attachment for Krsna, that is, kanta-prema, is the topmost position in love of Godhead.'"

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] He then uttered this sloka:

nayam sriyo 'nga u nitanta-rateh prasadah
svar-yonitah nalina-gandha-rucam kuto 'nyah
rasotsave 'sya bhuja-danda-grhita-kantha-
labdhasisam ya udagad vraja-sundarinam

["When Lord Sri Krsna was dancing with the gopis in the rasa-lila, the gopis were embraced around the neck by the Lord's arms. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or the other consorts in the spiritual world. Nor was such a thing ever imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, girls whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the beauty and fragrance of lotus flowers. And what to speak of worldly women who may be very, very beautiful according to material estimation?" (quoted from Bhag. 10.47.60)]

There are so many things to know, but we have very little time. We spoke about this Raya Ramananda Samvad in Mathura and in Vrndavana for more than six months. If you want to know this subject well, it will take so much time. I am giving only an outline now.

Mahaprabhu then said, "Certainly what you are telling is true, that gopi-prema is the highest; but I want to know something more."

Raya Ramananda answered: "I don't know anyone in this entire world who can ask a question like this. Oh, certainly the love and affection of Radhika is highest among all the gopis. It is even higher than that of Candravali, Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Tungavidya, Indulekha, Rangadevi, and Sudevi. It has a speciality, and even Krsna does not have that love and affection in mahabhava, modana, and madana. Madana is the speciality only of Srimati Radhika.

Krsna is therefore always hankering to taste this mood. And, with the wish to taste it, He became Sacinandana Gaurahari.

Mahaprabhu said: "I want to hear more."

"More?" Raya Ramananda asked.

At this point Mahaprabhu gave Raya Ramananda darsana of His form of Rasaraja-Mahabhava, and he fainted. Mahaprabhu then said, "I want to know rasa-tattva, prema-tattva, radha-tattva, and krsna-tattva. These things are the very highest. These topics are also difficult for Narada Rsi because they are so elevated, and still I am giving you something. I know that these exalted topics cannot enter your consciousness. It requires some practice of bhakti-yoga. You must serve rasika Vaisnavas. By their mercy you can enter into this Vraja-bhakti; otherwise not.

Raya Ramananda then spoke about krsna-tattva, and he said: isvarah parama krsna sat-cid-ananda vigraha / anadir adir govindam sarva-karana-karanam. After that he explained about Srimati Radhika: He krsna! karuna-sindho! Dina-bandho! Jagat-pate! Gopesa! Gopika-kanta! Radha-kanta! Namostute! "O Krsna, You are an ocean of karuna, mercy. Dina-bandho. You are the friend of all persons. You are jagat-pate, master of the universe. Gopesa. O, You are Lord of all the gopas. You are also gopisa, and moreover You are gopi-kanta, the beloved of all the gopis." Mahaprabhu was not satisfied by this prayer up to that point, and therefore Raya Ramananda then said, Radha-kanta namostute. You are the beloved of Radhika.

Each one of these rasas is a different kind of sadhya and sadhana. You may have decided that your goal is gopi-prema or radha-prema, but you cannot achieve radha-prema. By your constitutional form you can only have the service of the gopis. Only the manjari mood, always serving the gopis, is possible for the jivas. If you want that, then you will also have to serve the gopis. Raya Ramananda ultimately revealed that the process is only to be under the guidance of the gopis, and to always remember Krsna and His gopis and their very sweet, transcendental pastimes. As Bharata became a deer by remembering 'deer, deer, deer, deer', if you are chanting Hare Krsna and remembering Krsna with the gopis, then you can attain a gopi form. This is the highest and most confidential philosophy. Chant and remember and always be under the guidance of the gopis, serve those who are in that mood, and hear from them. This is the process.

Gaura premananda.

Question: Gurudeva, in your class you said that only in Vraja is there the mood that, "Krsna is my beloved", but you also said that Draupadi and Kunti have it. How is that possible?

Srila Narayana Maharaja: They wanted it, and Srila Sanatana Gosvami wrote that actually they received it. They could not touch the glories of the gopis, however. They

could become maidservants there, but they could not have the mood of Lalita, Visakha, and Citra.

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