

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
THE HEART OF AMBARISA MAHARAJA
Mathura, India: August 22,2001 (evening)

Submitted by Syamarani dasi

[Before going to Jagannatha Puri Srila Narayana Maharaja gave a series of classes in the glories of Ambarisa Maharaja. Translations of Srila Maharaja's classes were given by Srimati Uma devi dasi at Sri Kesavaji Gaudiya Matha in Mathura. The following is an edited transcription of her translation of the class given on Aug. 22:]

When Durvasa muni returned to the palace of Ambarisa Maharaja after taking bath in the river, he was greeted by him with open arms. Ambarisa Maharaja told Durvasa, "O Muniji, please come and take prasada."

Durvasa Muni was very angry because he understood during his meditation at the river that Ambarisa Maharaja had drunk water. He told Ambarisa Maharaja, "You are a hypocrite. You say that you are a bhakta of Visnu, but your Visnu shows honor to brahmanas whereas you don't. Instead, you drank water before I had even sat down to eat. You ate before feeding me, and this is your neglect. Actually, you don't know how to honor a brahmana. You are cruel, and therefore I will punish you."

Ambarisa Maharaja thought, "I have offended him, and therefore I did wrong. But I did not want to loose my bhakti, and that is why I had to drink the water."

Extremely angry, Durvasa grabbed a lock of his hair and threw it towards Maharaja Ambarisa. It immediately became the fiery demoness named Krtya.

Bhaktas like Ambarisa Maharaja don't try to protect their lives. Once Draupadi called out to Krsna to save her from being disrobed in front of an assembly of crude and rude ksatriyas, but Ambarisa did not pray for his safety at all. This does not mean, however, that Ambarisa was better than Draupadi. Ambarisa Maharaja was a sadhaka and Draupadi is Krsna's eternal associate. Whatever she does is for Krsna's pleasure and glory.

Sudarsana had previously received the order from Bhagavan, "If you see any pure devotee in danger, you must protect him." Long before, when Ambarisa had first fully surrendered, Visnu had told Sudarsana, "Ambarisa won't care about his own life. You should therefore always be alert and protect him."

tasma adad dharis cakram
pratyanika-bhayavaham
ekanta-bhakti-bhavena
prito bhaktabhiraksanam

"Being very pleased by the unalloyed devotion of Maharaja Ambarisa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead gave the king His disc, which is fearful to enemies and which always protects the devotee from enemies and adversities." (Srimad Bhagavatam 9.4.28)

A purchased animal does not think about his own protection or maintenance, and Maharaja Ambarisa had this mood in relation to Bhagavan. Therefore, Sudarsana cakra immediately burned Kṛtya to death, and then he ran towards Durvasa. Durvasa was a high-class yogi, and yet he ran in fear of his life. Following very closely behind, Sudarsana was almost touching him, ready to burn him as he ran towards the ocean, into caves, and on the top of mountains. Durvasa then went to Brahmaloaka and prayed to Brahma. Brahma replied to him, "How can I save you? Simply by His glance Lord Visnu performs the acts of creation and destruction of all the universes. If He is now sending His cakra, how can I save you? You should go now, otherwise that Sudarsana cakra will also come to me".

Durvasa then ran to the planet of Sankara, Lord Siva, but Lord Siva told him, from a distance, to leave. Next he went to Rama-priya Vaikuntha and he begged Lord Visnu, "Please save me from Your cakra. You are Brahmanya-deva, the Lord and protector of the brahmanas, so please protect me."

Bhagavan replied:

sri-bhagavan uvaca
aham bhakta-paradhino
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sadhubhir grasta-hrdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah
(Srimad Bhagavatam 9.4.63.)

"I am not independent. Although Brahma, Siva, Vayu and other demigods who are directors of the universal functions are dependent upon Me, I, myself, am not independent. I am dependent on My devotees. If I save you, then My devotee will think, 'Oh, Bhagavan has neglected me.' I fear the anger of My devotee."

In his commentary on these verses that reveal the conversation between Bhagavan and Durvasa Muni, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura gives a purva-paksa. He poses the questions, and then he answers his own questions as follows:

If Durvasa Muni were to ask Bhagavan, "Why are You not independent? How can Your devotees make You dependent?" Bhagavan would answer, "It is My svabhava, nature, that when devotees surrender unto Me, I become dependant upon them."

Durvasa Muni may then say, "O Bhagavan. You are so merciful. When You see anyone suffering, Your heart melts."

Bhagavan may then say, "My mind can't think of your suffering because My mind is not with Me. It has been stolen by My devotees. How can I give you My mercy? My mind is possessed by My devotees. I do not belong to Myself; I am captured by them. They put My heart in their hearts, and they very carefully serve My heart there. They are in My heart and I am in their hearts.

"The bhaktas are always busy serving Me. If I say to them, 'I am very pleased with your service, what can I do for you?' they will say, 'Nothing. Just let us serve you.' This makes Me so indebted to them that I think I must give them My most valuable possession. My most valuable possession is My heart, and thus I give My valuable heart to them. The bhakta doesn't pray to Me to give My heart, but still I give it."

In Atmanivedana, song number four, verse eight, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings,

tomara ichaya more iccha misailo
bhaktivinoda aja apane bhulilo

"My will has become merged with Your will. From this day forward Bhaktivinoda has completely forgotten himself."

In song number five verse six he sings,

tomara icchaya mora indriya-calana
sravana, darsana, ghrana, bhojana-vasana

"I exercise my senses only according to Your direction, and thus I desire to hear, see, smell, and taste."

Bhagavan may continue, "You should know that all My krpa, mercy, is stored in the heart of My devotee. When My devotee wishes to show mercy to someone, I fulfill the desire of that devotee." This is called anugamani. Bhagavan-krpa is bhakta-anugamani. Krsna's mercy follows His devotees' mercy. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura is thus giving this purva-paksa.

Bhagavan then tells Durvasa, "According to the relationship the devotee has towards Me, or according to the relationship a devotee has with My devotee, I treat him accordingly." As Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said in Jagannatha Puri, "I am so indebted to the devotees in Kulina-grama that even a dog from their village is dear to me."

"You have created Kṛtya, the fire demoness, to burn Maharaja Ambarisa, and you did this without any consideration of these truths. You did wrong. You want to put in danger he whose only shelter is Me? This is not good for you.

"In My svarupa, My inherent being, I have unlimited pleasure, and I also have great opulence. However, I forget all My bhagavata, 'godhood,' when I'm absorbed in the

ananda that I get from the service of My uttama-bhaktas. I forget the happiness of being Bhagavan."

Who is the greatest uttama-bhakta? Krsna is raso-vai-saha, the embodiment of all rasa. However, the madhanakya-mahabhava mood of Srimati Radhika is unknown to Him, and therefore He had to come as Gaurasundara in order to taste it.

Lord Visnu continues, "Ambarisa Maharaja has left everything for Me. Have you left anything for Me? You think you are great, whereas Ambarisa Maharaja is dinahina. He thinks he is very fallen. I even look after an ordinary devotee, and what to speak of a devotee like Maharaja Ambarisa. If someone has come to the platform of bhava-bhakti like Maharaja Ambarisa, I send My Sudarsana cakra to always look after him."

Gaurapramanande