

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
THE HIDDEN GLORIES OF MAHARAJA AMBARISA
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Submitted by Syamarani dasi

[The following is an edited transcription of the translation of Srila Narayana Maharaja's Hindi class. The translation was given by Srimati Uma devi dasi at Sri Kesavaji Gaudiya Matha in Mathura:]

Maharaja Ambarisa engaged all his senses in the service of Krsna. First he engaged his mind and then he engaged the rest of his senses. One gives an order to his subordinates, "Do this and that," and if they don't properly follow, he gives them punishment. Similarly, Maharaja Ambarisa threatened his mind and made it afraid to disobey him. The demigods serve Krsna in fear. Without fear, or without vaidhi-bhakti, prema will never come. If one gives a gentle request to someone else, that person may not listen to him. If he puts fear in the other's mind, however, that other person may follow his instruction.

Ambarisa Maharaja is the ideal of all Vaisnavas, and in this regard Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura continues to explain the deep meaning behind the conversation between Bhagavan and Durvasa Muni. Bhagavan is telling Durvasa, "How can I give up My devotee who has left his family, children, wife and sense gratification, and who has taken exclusive shelter of Me? I can never give him up."

ye yatha mam prapadyante
tams tathaiva bhajamy aham
mama vartmanuvartante
manusyah partha sarvasah

"As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prtha. As they surrender I reward them accordingly." (Bg. 4.11)

"My nature is that I reciprocate with My surrendered soul. How is it possible for me to save you from My Sudarsana cakra? What have you left for Me?"

Durvasa says, "O Brahmanyadeva! You are fond of, and have great respect for the brahmanas, and I'm not a simple brahmana. I'm a very high-class brahmana. Why are you neglecting me?"

Krsna replies, "Yes, I'm neglecting you. Do you think that I should give up My devotee for you? I should save you? I will not save the enemy of My devotee. I won't do so even if you request this of Me again and again. O brahmana, My devotee has left everything for Me and he has taken shelter of Me. Have you left a farthing, or done any service for Me?"

Durvasa Muni replies, "What has Maharaja Ambarisa left for you?"

Bhagavan says, "Oh, you don't know? He is a saranagata-bhakta. Devotees don't make any attempt to save themselves. When you created Kṛtya, the fire demoness, and she went to destroy Ambarisa Maharaja, he didn't make any attempt to save himself. You are an atmarama-muni. You are supposed to be self-satisfied, and yet you became afraid when My Sudarsana cakra came towards you. On the other hand, Ambarisa Maharaja didn't become fearful at all. Therefore he is saranagati. Why should I worry about you? If you've surrendered to guru and Kṛṣṇa, why are you running here and there to save yourself? My devotees are like purchased animals; they are never concerned for their own maintenance. On the other hand, as soon as you saw the Sudarsana cakra, you ran here, there, and everywhere, to caves, mountains and oceans. You went to take shelter of Brahma and Siva. You call yourself atmarama, but actually you are a foolish person. Why did you pray to the demigods?"

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings:

manasa, deho, geha, jo kichu mora
arpilun tuwa pade, nanda-kisora!

"Mind, body, and family, whatever may be mine, I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!"

Bhagavan continues, "What is your value? You have no saranagati. You are a foolish person. How can I convince you?" A guru can't convince a foolish disciple. Such a disciple thinks that he knows everything, but actually he knows nothing.

"You are a brahmavada-rsi. I can't be controlled by a yogi such as yourself. There is no example anywhere in sastra that I am controlled by a yogi. Just as a chaste wife is controlled by her husband, I am controlled by the service of My bhaktas who have so much bhakti that they control Me. I am not known as yogi-vatsalya-bhagavan. I am known as bhakta-vatsalya-bhagavan. My bhakta does not want any of the five types of liberation, even if I want to give it to him. By the influence of his bhajana, mukti automatically comes to him although he has no desire for it. When the sun rises, both light and heat are manifest. This is not actually a proper example, however, because devotees don't want heat and light. Other than bhakti itself, My devotees are udasina, indifferent, to all benefits given by bhakti. These devotees have given Me their heart and I also have given them mine in exchange. They are samadarsi; they have equal vision to all. They do not consider, 'Oh, this is my special sister,' or 'This is my special mother.' "

Ambarisa Maharaja is niskama-parikasta, the topmost example of niskama.

sadhavo hrdayam mahyam
sadhunam hrdayam tv aham
mad-anyaṭ te na jananti
naham tebhya manag api

"The devotees are always in My heart, and I am always in the hearts of the devotees. The devotee does not know anything beyond Me, and I also cannot forget the devotee. There is a very intimate relationship between Me and the pure devotees. Pure devotees in full knowledge are never out of spiritual touch, and therefore they are very much dear to Me." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.4.68)

Bhagavan continues, "Durvasa, you wanted to burn Ambarisa Maharaja, and that means that you wanted to burn Me. Do you understand? You have given pain to My heart. My heart is in the bhakta, and therefore you gave Me pain when you wanted to give him pain. If you make a bhakta suffer, it means that you are giving pain to Me. I feel pain when the sadhu feels pain because My heart and the heart of the sadhu is the same. Conversely, if a sadhu is happy, it means that I am also happy." When a bhakta like Ambarisa Maharaja is pleased then I am pleased. However, my bhakta never desires his personal pleasure. He always thinks, 'How can I please Bhagavan?'

"You sent the Kṛtya demoness to kill Ambarisa Maharaja. He has so much power that he could have protected himself and punished you also. But he is surrendered to Me and therefore he did not do so. I also could have easily and immediately punished you, but Maharaja Ambarisa would have been sorry and thought, 'A brahmana was killed only because of me.' This is the example of My honor for brahmanas. I wanted to give you appropriate and immediate punishment, but I could not. I was bound by Ambarisa Maharaja. His desire was that you should not be killed, and it is only by his desire that you are alive."

Durvasa replies, "You should not simply see my faults. I'm a very high-class brahmana. You should also see Maharaja Ambarisa's fault. I never accept invitations, but because he respected me I accepted his invitation. But then he insulted me by eating before me. Why do You only see my fault? His drinking water before he fed me was his 'cleverness.' He thinks he is very clever. He invited me and then he drank water before feeding me."

Bhagavan is now very angry and says, "Go and ask this question to Maharaja Ambarisa. He was simply following the srutis, the Vedas, and the Upanisads, which state that in order to break ekadasi on the dvadasi, paran [prasada taken after a fast] must be honored at a specific time. Otherwise, if this is not observed, the bhakti that would have been gained by following ekadasi disappears. Water is neither considered eating nor not eating, and therefore Maharaja Ambarisa cannot be criticized. Maharaja Ambarisa believes the injunctions of sastra, but you don't. It's much better to observe ekadasi and dvadasi than to respect a proud brahmana. He took dvadasi paran because he didn't want to lose his bhakti. Whatever he did was for My pleasure."

When Durvasa Muni asks, "What is more important: dvadasi paran or respecting brahmanas?" Bhagavan's anger increases and He replies, "I have no time to answer you. Go to Ambarisa Maharaja. He knows more than I do."

Durvasa persists, "He couldn't wait for a few minutes until I got there and ate first?"

Bhagavan now becomes very angry and says, "I have no time for these nonsense questions. You're so stupid. He only took Deity water, caranamrta. That means he was eating and not eating. One cannot blame him for doing either."

Durvasa Muni then thought seriously and considered, "Yes, I'm a brahmana, but the Sudarsana cakra made me fearfully flee everywhere. I couldn't save myself and I couldn't find any shelter. There must be some power in ekadasi-vrata."

Bhagavan then tells Durvasa Rsi, "I'll let you know how you can be saved. Listen to Me. You should go and take shelter of Maharaja Ambarisa."

Durvasa replies, "How can I go to him? He'll be angry."

Bhagavan tells him, "No; he's samadarsi. He sees everyone, enemies and friends, with equal vision. Just go and see. One of the symptoms of high-class Vaisnavas is that they'll forget whatever harm another person does to them, but they'll never forget whatever good one does to them. Don't see Maharaja Ambarisa as the creator of your suffering. You are the cause of your suffering. You brought him suffering, but still he prayed to the Sudarsana cakra to save you. It was only because of his prayers that the cakra did not destroy you."

Nanda Baba told Vasudeva Maharaja, "My son Krsna did not kill Kamsa. Kamsa was killed by his own actions." In a similar way, Bhagavan is telling Durvasa Muni, "Your own actions are the cause of your suffering."

In the meantime Ambarisa Maharaja has been praying, "O Sudarsana, don't burn Durvasa Rsi." The bhakta knows that suffering is coming to him from a past life, so he never takes revenge, nor does he blame anyone else.

Bhagavan continues, "You are not qualified. Your so-called knowledge is actually avidya, ignorance. You think that you are intelligent and learned, but tapasya and vidya never stay with proud persons. They stay only with those who are humble."

Visvamitra Muni and Vasista Muni once had an argument about which was more powerful and important: tapasya or bhakti. They asked Anantadeva, and Anantadeva replied to Visvamitra, "Take the burden of one of my hoods. Take one universe on your head." Visvamitra gave fifty thousand years worth of the results of his tapasya. Anantadeva then placed the universal planets on his head, and the planets immediately pushed his head down. Vasista then gave one minute's result of his sadhu-sanga, and he was immediately able to hold the universe on his head.

Durvasa now says "O Prabhuji, how can I go to him? He is a Ksatriya. He is of a lower caste, whereas I am a brahamana."

Bhagavan again says, "Tapasya cannot stay with a proud person. You're not qualified, and therefore tapasya and vidya cannot stay with you. If you want your welfare, go to Ambarisa Maharaja. A thorn in the foot cannot come out from the head. Go to Ambarisa Maharaja. A person who is proud, who is puffed up with false ego, cannot have real tapasya or vidya (learning)." It is not possible without faith in a self-realized guru. In fact, tapasya and vidya become like death for such a person. Even if one can give good lectures due to his learning, if he is not surrendered, his tapasya and vidya will become like death for him, and this was the case with Durvasa Muni. One should be humble and practice the principles of Sri Siksastakam. *Trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih.*

Durvasa tells Bhagavan, "Tapasya and vidya are not in me? I'm a brahma-vidya. I know everything. I'm also a tapasvi, whereas Ambarisa is only a ksatriya."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings in his song *Bimala Vaisnava*, "If I think I'm a Vaisnava, I'll want respect from others." If you want to become a pure Vaisnava, then don't think that you are a Vaisnava. You should think, "Why is everyone giving honor to me? I'm not qualified." A real devotee will weep when he considers this.

Once we went with our Guru Maharaja to Asana. There were more than twenty five devotees there, and one of those devotees was Bhagavan dasa Brahmachari. He was very learned and was always serving, but he made a statement that *grhasthas* are rotten and degraded. Hearing this, I became upset and told Guru Maharaja. Guru Maharaja called him and told him to twist his own ears and bob up and down as a punishment. He said, "All *grhastha bhaktas* are better than you. We do not see one's designation, but how much attachment one has for guru and Krsna." He then told Bhagavan dasa about his disciple *Madhusudana prabhu*, who at that time was a *grhastha*. He was so qualified that *Gurudeva* made him the editor of the *Gaudiya Patrika* magazine. He also had vast wealth and spent all of it for *Gurudeva*.

Finally convinced, Durvasa Rsi left *Vaikuntha*. In the meantime, *Sukadeva Gosvami* explains, *Ambarisa Maharaja* felt ashamed and thought, "A *brahmarsi* like Durvasa is suffering on my behalf." He therefore prayed to *Sudarsana cakra*. "O *Sudarsana*, you destroy demons and maintain *bhaktas*." Still *Sudarsana* was emitting tremendous heat. *Ambarisa* then prayed, "If in my life I have given donations to devotees and *sadhus*, and if I have done any service to Bhagavan, then please cool down Your heat." *Sudarsana* was still not pacified, and therefore *Ambarisa* continued, "If God is pleased with me, and if I have seen others with equal vision, then please cool down." By this time *Sudarsana* became cool like the moon. When Durvasa saw that *Sudarsana's* heat had gone down, he began to understand the glory of *Ambarisa Maharaja*. He said, "O king. Now I have seen the glory of the *bhaktas*." We have seen guru and *bhaktas* so many times, but we have never really seen them.

Ambarisa said to him, "O, *brahmana*, I have been waiting for you for one year. I am so worried because you have been going here and there without food, just because of me. Please take *prasadam*."

In this way Durvasa Muni saw that the mahatma of the bhakta was more than that of any brahmana. If a brahmana does not give honor to a Vaisnava, he is not a brahmana.

Once, when I was in Madras with Guru Maharaja and some of his other disciples, a god-brother named Ananga-mohana had tuberculosis. No one wanted to take him to the hospital and take care of him, but I saw how Gurudeva loved him, and so I decided to take care of him. I told Gurudeva, "You can go and preach, and I will take care of him." On his last day, the doctors said he had no pulse and that he was very soon going to die. Even without a pulse, however, he was calling out to Gurudeva, "O Baba! O Baba, Baba! Krsna is calling me, and Srimati Radhika is calling me. I'm going. O Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, O Nityananda Prabhu." I placed a photo of Gurudeva for him to see, and then I prayed to him, "O prabhu, please be merciful." I saw how Ananga-mohana heard them calling, and I heard him speaking even without any pulse. I saw the glory of a Vaisnava and therefore I realized further the glory of my Gurudeva. This is just one example. If one is surrendered, he can see the glory of his Gurudeva.

My Gurudeva dragged me to the lotus feet of Krsna and made me desire only to be a Radha-palya-dasi. If Krsna Himself offers me another service, I will not be interested. Sri rupa-manjari pada sei mora sampada. My only wealth is the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Manjari. I realize my Gurudeva's arati song. I am realizing something, and I'm trying to give something to you.

Maharaja Ambarisa served guru and Krsna with all his senses. Although he was a grhastha, all his senses were engaged. If one is a householder there is no harm. If he is renounced, there is no harm. In whatever situation one finds himself, if he engages all his senses in service, he is a devotee.

If a devotee is not in bhava-bhakti, Krsna will not send His Sudarsana cakra. This is our problem. Although we try to engage our senses, we can't. On the contrary, Maharaja Ambarisa engaged all his senses and moods. We should do the same, either in vaidhi-bhakti or raganuga-bhakti, either in Vrndavana or anywhere else.

Gaura premanande