

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

TODAY IS GURU DAY

Murwillumbah, Australia: December 3, 2002 (Evening – Part 1)

[SRILA NARAYANA MAHARAJA:] Why are you happy that I am among you?
Vrajavallabha prabhu will speak.

[VRAJAVALLABHA PRABHU:] Srila Gurudeva knows why he has come here; it is perhaps we who are not so clear as why he has come here. Gurudeva wants us to establish within our hearts the goal of our life. This is a very rare thing and he wants to firmly implant this into our hearts so we will be equipped for now and the future to carry on with our own search for Krsna. This search is an eternal search for Sri Krsna, and Gurudeva wants to energize and establish it deeply while he has a chance and while we have a chance. It is very rare to meet and surrender to a pure Vaisnava and to take into our heart what he wants us to. Saranagati is all in all, especially for us. Gurudeva wants that we can somehow or other surrender, to embrace the words of Sri Krsna deeply in to our heart and to make that the inspiration of our life, giving up our mental pursuits, and relying on our intellect to guide us. Our material conceptions are failing us at every minute of our existence because our hearts are not full, our eyes are not open, and therefore we cannot perceive things in reality. Gurudeva has come here with his devotees to try to open our eyes and our hearts so that we can absorb ourselves in Krsna consciousness.

[SRILA NARAYANA MAHARAJA:] What is the meaning and purport of the sloka I spoke about in this morning's class?

bhayam dvitiyabhinivesatah syad
isad apetasya viparyayo 'smrtih
tan-mayayato budha abhajat tam
bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma

["Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is affected by the potency for illusion, called maya. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul." (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.37).]

[PUNDARIKA DASA:] Srila Gurudeva has ordered me to speak on the verse he discussed this morning.

The cause of the living entities' material conditioning, and its resultant fear, has been pointed out in this verse. That cause is forgetfulness of Krsna arising from aversion to Him. That fear creates a "second nature" or dvitiyabhinivesa. Abhinivesa means material

absorption, or absorption in something that is not really there. Gurudeva was explaining this morning about maya – accepting something that is actually different from what it appears to be. Our actual nature is simply to serve Sri Krsna, who is our origin. A spark of fire belongs to the fire's flames and it wants to unite with that. Similarly, the thirst in the heart of every living entity to enjoy and be happy can only be satisfied by serving Sri Krsna. Forgetting that eternal nature and being covered by the subtle and gross body, the living entity thinks himself to be different from what he actually is. Due to various designations and self-conceptions, one's happiness or distress depends on the results of his karmic activities. According to the body with which one identifies, a person sometimes becomes happy and sometimes distressed by that body and its surroundings and circumstances.

As this cycle goes on and on, what is the way out? The way out is to come in touch with pure sadhus who are like the current of the causeless mercy of the Supreme Lord, He has manifested here in this material world as sadhus and sastra. Coming in touch with the sadhus, who are non-different from sastra, is very rare. Moreover, even if one is fortunate and able to come in contact with a sadhu, it is equally difficult to surrender unto that personality and to imbibe his innermost moods and the inspiration that he wants to manifest in our hearts.

This sloka is pointing out that this is the only way out of fear. It says that one must unconditionally imbibe that mood of surrender towards the sad-guru, try to observe his activities, and thereby learn from him externally and internally how to serve sri gurudeva, the sadhus, and Sri Krsna's bona fide disciplic succession. The word gurudeva refers to diksa and siksa-guru from whom we are trying to benefit ourselves through spiritual knowledge. If we are able to feel natural attraction towards that personality, feeling that inspiration coming from him in our heart, then our heart will run towards that person very naturally and spontaneously. We will feel that our heart has become one with his. We will not feel any blockage or impediment is of the flow of love and trust towards him, which will in turn bring all that which is contained in his heart. It will bring all the knowledge required, as well as complete sambandha-jnana (realization of our relationship with Radha and Krsna). It will also further direct us towards the accurate and exact process, with constant inspiration, determination, and tolerance. That will bring us to the goal of life which is to serve Sri Krsna wherever we are and in whatever condition we are situated.

[SRILA NARAYANA MAHARAJA:] What is the meaning of the last line of this sloka – "bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma"?

[SRIPAD PADMANAVA MAHARAJA:] Srila Gurudeva has ordered that I explain "bhaktyaikayesam guru-devatatma." This sloka, from the eleventh canto of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, is explaining how the living entity has become entrapped in the bondage of this material world and has forgotten his actual identity and eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. What is the process by which this reversed conception of life can again be turned back to the normal, natural condition of the living being, which is to have eternal loving devotion for his eternal source, the Supreme Lord?

In this verse it has been said that one must accept sri gurudeva, who is the non-different manifestation of the Supreme Lord within this world, saksat-hari who is coming as an emissary of the Supreme Lord to rescue the conditioned souls. "Krsna krpa sri murti," the very personification of the mercy of Krsna, is coming to the conditioned soul is to bring him back to the lotus feet of Krsna. How should that soul aspiring freedom receive this pure representative of Krsna? He should receive him as his most worshipable lord -just as one would worship Sri Krsna Himself. "Bhaktyaikayesaṁ guru-devatātma" means that he will have one-pointed bhakti– one-pointed faith and devotion– to the lotus feet of guru. If he develops this one-pointed devotion, he will also consider that Sri Guru is more dear to him than his own life. He must surrender his entire body, mind, words and all possessions unto the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva with visvambha-bhava. Visvambhena gurau seva. By accepting the lotus feet of guru in this way, by serving Sri Gurudeva with such open-hearted loving devotion, Sri Krsna becomes very pleased:

Yasya prasadaḥ bhagavat-prasado
Yasyaprasadaḥ na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
Dhyāyāṁstuvāms tasya yasaḥ tri-sandhyāṁ
Vande guroḥ śrī caranaravindam

["Only by the mercy of sri gurudeva can one receive the mercy of Krsna; without his grace the living entities cannot make any advancement in bhakti, nor can they be delivered. Meditating three times a day on the glories of sri gurudeva and reciting stava stuti, I offer prayers unto his lotus feet" (Sri Gurvastakam, verse 8).]

By the mercy of sri guru, Bhagavan gives His mercy. "yasya-aprasadaḥ na gatiḥ kuto pi" – without that mercy of the representative of the Supreme Lord, it is not actually possible to attain His lotus feet. If sad-guru, the bona fide spiritual master, is not pleased, the conditioned soul remains within this world.

"Tan mayayato budha abajet tam" – an intelligent person in this world, a fortunate soul who has an opportunity to meet a sad-guru, accepts him in this way. By worshiping his lotus feet and considering him his dear-most friend, lord, and master, just like his own family member, he becomes eligible to approach the lotus feet of Sri Krsna. This is an important instruction. This condition of being absorbed in maya can be reversed by the process of accepting sri guru, serving his lotus feet with one-pointed devotion, and becoming actually tadatmika with him. Tadatmika means to consider oneself identical with him, in the sense that one has no separate interest other than to please him. His life is only for serving guru; it has no other purpose. When this comes into the life of a disciple, he can then realize the mercy of sri guru. At that time all instructions of sri gurudeva will be manifested within his heart and he will definitely achieve perfection even in this very short span of life.

[SRILA NARAYANA MAHARAJA:] This is a very good explanation. We should try not only to speak, but also to follow. If a devotee is chanting a lot, reading, and glorifying Sri Krsna, but he is not following his gurudeva, what will be the result?

[SRIPAD ARANYA MAHARAJA:] Srila Gurudeva is raising the point that if a disciple is engaged in much sadhana but he has no nistha (faith) in guru, what will be the result? It will be zero. This has been described in many places in sastra. Krsna Himself has said:

Lord Krsna says, mad-bhakta-pujabhyadhika: (SB 11.19.21) "The worship of My devotees is better than worship of Me." He also says, "That person who says he is My devotee but is not devoted to My devotee, is not My devotee at all." Krsna rejects that person.

yasya deve para bhaktir
yatha deve tatha gurau
tasyaite kathita hy arthah
prakasante mahatmanah

["Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed." (Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.23).]

If anyone is reading all the sastras very carefully but he has no faith in guru, the internal meaning of what is written in sastra will never manifest in his heart. He is completely unable to touch those sastras. Therefore, Svarupa Damodara also gave the instruction:

yaha, bhagavata pada vaisnavera sthane
ekanta asraya kara caitanya-carane

["If you want to understand Srimad-Bhagavatam," he said, "you must approach a self-realized Vaisnava and hear from him. You can do this when you have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (Caitanya-caritamrta Antya-lila 5.131).]

If you want to understand Srimad-Bhagavatam then you must surrender yourself at the lotus feet of a bhakta-bhagavata.

nasta-prayesu abhadresu
nityam bhagavata-sevaya
bhagavaty uttama-sloke
bhaktir bhavati naisthiki

["By regular attendance in classes on the Bhagavatam and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.18)]

If one wants to have all anarthas covering his transcendental knowledge destroyed, then "nityam bhagavata-sevaya".

eka bhagavata bada—bhagavata-sastra
ara bhagavata—bhakta bhakti-rasa-patra

["One of the bhagavatas is the great scripture Srimad-Bhagavatam, and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion." (Caitanya Caritamrta Adi 1.100)]

One type of bhagavata is the sastra or book, and the other type of bhagavata is the personality, sad-guru, the pure Vaisnava who is the abode of all rasa.

dui bhagavata dvara diya bhakti-rasa
tanhara hrdaye tanra preme haya vasa

["Through the actions of these two bhagavatas the Lord instills the mellows of transcendental loving service into the heart of a living being, and thus the Lord, in the heart of His devotee, comes under the control of the devotee's love." (Caitanya-caritamrta Adi 1.101)]

Only by the action of the book bhagavata and the pure devotee bhagavata do the mellows of bhakti-rasa enter someone's heart.

Krsna Himself has said, "If one wants to do any puja or seva, he must first know that he should not serve Me, but he should serve his gurudeva as his life and soul. If that person follows this process, he will attain perfection. However, if he neglects to serve the lotus feet of sri guru and comes directly to me, then all his endeavors will have no fruit at all."

aham bhakta-paradhino
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sadhubhir grasta-hrdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah

["The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to the brahmana: I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.4.63)]

nikunja-yuno rati-keli-siddhyai
ya yalibhir yuktir apeksaniya
tatrati-daskyad ati-vallabhyasya
vande guroh sri caranaravindam

["Sri gurudeva is always present with the sakhis, planning the arrangements for the perfection of yugala-kisora's amorous pastimes (rati-keli) within the kunjās of Vr̄ndavana. Because he is so expert in making these tasteful arrangements for Their pleasure, he is very dear to Sri Radha and Kṛṣṇa. I offer prayers unto the lotus feet of sri gurudeva"(Guruvastakam verse 6).]

Kṛṣṇa is always feeling separation from Rādhikā, and Rādhikā is feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa. That personality who is so expert that she can bring them together to meet, then how indebted Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa feel. Even an ordinary conditioned soul in this world gives his life and surrenders at the lotus feet of that person who is so dear. Similarly, that devotee who fulfills the innermost heart's desire of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will automatically become dear to Them. And if one surrenders to that pure devotee's lotus feet, then, through that pure devotee guru and Vaisnava, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa will shower their mercy on him and quickly bring him to Their lotus feet.

Yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado
Yasyaprasadan na gatih kuto 'pi
Dhyayamstuvams tasya yasas tri-sandhyam
Vande guroh sri caranaravindam

["Only by the mercy of sri gurudeva can one receive the mercy of Kṛṣṇa; without his grace the living entities cannot make any advancement nor be delivered. Meditating three times a day on the glories of sri gurudeva and reciting stava stuti, I offer prayers unto his lotus feet" (Sri Gurvastakam, verse 8).]

Those who serve and obtain the favor of guru can be successful in their life. If one does not satisfy sri guru, he cannot be elevated at all. It does not matter how much sadhana he will do, like chanting or studying of many scriptures.

na yam atma pravacanena labhyo
na medhaya na bahudha srutena
yam evaisa vrnute tena labhyas
tasyaisa atma vivrnute tanuh svam

["The whole matter is explained by the Lord Himself, and one who has no approach to the Lord in His personal feature can rarely understand the purport of Srimad-Bhagavatam without being taught by the bhagavatas in the disciplic succession" (Katha Upanisad 1.2.23).]

Kṛṣṇa is transcendental. As stated in the Padma Purana:

atah sri-kṛṣṇa-namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuraty adah
(Padma Purana)

["No one can understand Krsna as He is by the blunt material senses but He reveals Himself to the devotees, being pleased with them for their transcendental loving service unto Him. So, keep everyone engaged 24 hours and everything will be all right" (Padma Purana)]

No material senses can touch Krsna, and no conditioned soul can understand anything about Him. He is acintya-tattva, supremely inconceivable. He will show Himself to that person who has pleased gurudeva, but not to that person who gives very learned discourses. One who is very intelligent and who has heard a great deal from the Vedas cannot be successful unless he has pleased guru.

Srila Narottama dasa Thakura has given the instruction in his song, Sri Guru Carana Padma:

guru-mukha-padma-vakya, cittete kariya aikya,
ara na kariha mane asa

"Guru-devatatma" – one should make his heart one with words emanating from the lotus mouth of guru.

sri-guru-carane rati, ei se uttama gati,
je prasade pure sarva asa

By having rati, spontaneous attachment of the heart, for the lotus feet of the guru, a disciple will attain his goal. Without the mercy of guru, any kind of sadhana has no strength or power at all. Therefore, the first anga (limb) of bhakti out of 64 angas is guru padasraya:

guru-padasraya, diksa, gurura sevana
sad-dharma-siksa-prccha, sadhu-marganugamana

["On the path of regulative devotional service, one must observe the following items: (1) One must accept a bona fide spiritual master. (2) One must accept initiation from him. (3) One must serve him. (4) One must receive instructions from the spiritual master and make inquiries in order to learn devotional service. (5) One must follow in the footsteps of the previous acaryas and follow the directions given by the spiritual master." (Caitanya caritamrta, Madhya-lila 22.116)]

Guru-padasraya. Why should we surrender to a guru? Surrender (saranagati) is the doorway to bhakti, and surrender has an object. Krsna has said in the Bhagavad-gita:

sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah

["Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (Bhagavad-gita, 18.66)]

Upon reading the words of Krsna, the inquiry may come into our mind, "Yes Krsna, I want to surrender unto You, so what should I do? What do you want?" We do not know what Krsna wants, and therefore how can we surrender to Him? Saranagati does not mean that when your machine gun runs out of bullets, you hold up a white flag and surrender. This is not surrender. Surrender has an object, a personality who has a desire. When we make our desire one with the desire of that person, this is surrender – the doorway to bhakti.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written:

atma nivedana, tuwa pade kori, hoinu parama sukhi
duhkha dure gelo, cinta na rohilo, caudike ananda dekhi

["O My Lord, since I have surrendered my soul permanently at Your lotus feet, I have become supremely joyful. All my sufferings and sorrows have gone far away, and no more anxieties remain in my mind. I see only bliss everywhere in all four directions." (Atma Nivedana, first verse)]

bhaktivinoda, ananda dubiya, tomara sevara tare
saba cesta kore, taba iccha-mato, thakiya tomara ghare

["Bhaktivinoda, sinking in an ocean of nectar, says, "All of my endeavors are completely mixed with Your desires and are directed to You only now that I am a resident in Your house." (Atma-Nivedana, verse 6)]

Saranagati is not the highest level of bhakti; it is only the doorway. The disciple first becomes soft and malleable in the hands of his guru:

vettha tvam saumya tat sarvam
tattvatas tad-anugrahat
bruyuh snigdhasya sisyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta

["And because you are submissive, your spiritual masters have endowed you with all the favors bestowed upon a gentle disciple. Therefore you can tell us all that you have scientifically learned from them." (Srimad Bhagavatam 1.1.8)]

To whom does the guru reveal confidential knowledge? He reveals it unto that disciple who is snigda – very affectionate and soft. The analogy has been given of a blacksmith. A blacksmith cannot do anything with cold iron. He will put the iron in the fire and make it red-hot. When it becomes soft, he can do anything he likes with it. If a piece of paper has a great deal of writing on it, you cannot write anything new. If clay is hard, the potter cannot make a pot. When that clay becomes soft and malleable, the potter can mold it in

any way he likes. In the same way, if a jiva with material desires comes to sad-guru and appears to be engaged in so much sadhana bhajana, this is not actually sadhana bhajana, but sadhana-abhasa – and perhaps not even sadhana-abhasa. It is like a drama for impressing others and collecting praise. First he has to become completely malleable and submissive to the will of guru, and then guru can shape his heart exactly as he likes.

We sing, "Gurudeva, krpa karke mujhe ko apana lena" – Gurudeva give mercy to me and accept me as your own." We also sing, "sakti-buddhi-hina ami ati dina koro more atma satha – "O Gurudeva, I have no intelligence or power. Please accept me as your own." Gurudeva is serving Radha and Krsna in transcendental Vrndavana. For that disciple who is unconditionally surrendered to his guru and following his teachings, his guru can make him atma-sat (like himself).

Actually, guru does not want any disciples, but he accepts disciples with the desire to make the jiva like himself. As he is relishing the eternal nectar of the service of Radha and Krsna, he wants that all jivas should serve in that way. In this world, sad-guru takes the role of acarya and accepts disciples. By his causeless mercy he wants to give them an object of surrender. Krsna has told us to surrender to Him, but we cannot. Gurudeva takes the role of the transparent via-medium through which the disciples can surrender themselves to the will of Krsna.

The sincere disciple follows saranagati:

anukulyasya sankalpah
pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso
goptrtve varanam tatha
atma-niksepa-karpanye
sad-vidha saranagatih

["The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Krsna will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one's guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility." (Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 22.100)]

When the synthesis of these six moods are steadily established in the heart of the jiva, this is called sraddha, after which comes sadhu-sanga, bhajana-kriya, anartha-nrvrtti, nistha, ruci, asakti, bhava, and prema. Saranagati is the beginning of bhakti. In the stage of asakti one can begin to think of the meaning of asta-kaliya-lila, he will realize this meaning in the stage of bhava, and then prema will come and he will go back home, back to Godhead.

[SRILA NARAYANA MAHARAJA:] Have you heard of Upamanyu? His guru once told him, "Oh, you go out to graze cows all day, and you do not bring with you anything with you to eat, and yet you are very healthy and fat. Why is that? Do you drink milk

from the cows udders?" Upamanyu replied, "Yes I do." His guru told him, "Don't drink it anymore", but he did not tell him what he would be allowed to eat or drink. During the next days Upamanyu continued to go out, and after some days his guru said, "You still look very fat. Are you drinking milk? Or, what are you doing? " Upamanyu told him, "I am only eating the foam that accumulates on the mouth of the cows – nothing else." His guru then asked him, "Have I told you to eat that? Don't eat it." Then, without Upamanyu asking what to eat and without his gurudeva telling him what he would be allowed to eat, gurudeva went away. His gurudeva was not actually displeased with him. He was actually only acting displeased in order to test his disciple's obedience.

On the next day the cows returned without Upamanyu, and his guru went out in search for him. He called out, "Upamanyu, where are you? Where are you?" He heard a sound from the well, and that sound was the voice of Upamanyu calling, "Gurudeva, I am here in this well." Gurudeva asked, "What are you doing in there?" Upamanyu replied, "Gurudeva, you told me not to take milk or foam. So I became so hungry that I drank the milk of a leaf of an ekwan plant – and then I discovered that it was poisonous. By drinking it I became totally blind." Now showing his pleasure, Upamanyu's guru said, "You have followed my instructions!" He took him out of the well and blessed him by saying, "All the knowledge of the Vedas will now enter your heart." Then, at once, all the Srutis, Vedas, Upanisads, and all varieties of knowledge were inspired in his heart.

In the history of Aruni, and also in the history of Sudama and Krsna, we find similar miraculous results as the fruit of surrender to sri gurudeva. There is no possibility of attaining bhakti if we do not totally follow our gurudeva.

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jjnasuh sreya uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam

["Therefore any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the bona fide guru is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters." (Srimad Bhagavatam 11.3.21).]

Today, the day that begins our tour, is like "Guru Day."

[...to be continued]

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