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OCCASIONAL RELIGION SHOULD MELT AWAY

[A Lecture on Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Jaiva Dharma]

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Namo bhaktivinodaya saccidananda namine gaura-sakti svarupaya rupanuga varaya te.

[I offer pranama unto Saccidananda Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura who is the foremost of rupanugas and the embodiment (prakasa) of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's sakti, Sri Gadadhara Pandita.]

One should understand the proper relationship between guru and disciple, as exemplified by Sannyasi Thakura and Premadasa Babaji. One should understand how Sannyasi Thakura followed and served his Gurudeva. One day, in the early morning, as the reddish sun rays first appeared, the solar orb yet resting below the earth, Paramahansa Premadasa Babaji was chanting harinama on his tulasi beads, sitting in the sacred kunjya named Madhavi-mandapa.

Madhava is Krsna, and Madhavi is Radhika. For transcendental remembrance, a high class of Vaisnava like Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Santana Gosvami will replicate Vrndavana, as they did when they lived in Ramakeli. There they excavated two ponds, Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda, and they also made many kunjyas for doing bhajana. In Mayapura, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura also developed Radha Kunda and Syama Kunda, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura created Svananda Sukhada Kunja in Godruma. Similarly, in order to help in always remembering Radha and Krsna, Premadasa Babaji made Madhavi-mandapa. The flowers and creepers there were very fragrant, mild and sweet madhavi-lata, and bumblebees used to come there to sing and take madhu (honey) from those flowers.

While Premadasa was chanting, he first offered pranama to nisanta-lila (the end of night pastimes) of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and then he remembered Radha-Krsna's nisanta-lila and kunjya-bhanga-lila [when Radha and Krsna have to leave the kunjya]. These sweet pastimes are the object of our life. Service in asta-kaliya-lila is the objective of our bhajana, and the first lila is nisanta-lila. All the sakhis, like Lalita, Visakha, Rupa Manjari, Rati Manjari, and so many others were together with Radha and Krsna in a kunjya, sweet pastimes were transpiring, and Premadasa Babaji was remembering those pastimes. A high class of devotee divides the 24-hour day into eight - three hours in the night, three in the day, three the evening, three in the morning - and they always chant and remember accordingly.

As Premadasa Babaji remembered that nisanta-lila, he heard an old monkey of Radhika call out, "Jatila! Jatila is coming to reward You! O greatest lampat (debauchee), she is very soon coming to reward you. Wait a little. She is coming just now." Radhika and Krsna became alert and prepared to return to their houses. All the sakhis were very, very, concerned and Sri Radhika became like a mad person. She asked her sakhis, "Who am I? Where am I going? What should I do?"

Extremely upset, the sakhis asked, "Why did this old monkey have to come and disturb us?" At that time Sri Vrnda told the manjaris, or Rupa Manjari may also sometimes tell them, "Make that monkey silent, please. Make him silent. This disturbance is ruining everything." In the meantime, Yogamaya arranged that Srimati Radhika could quickly, in minutes, enter Her house in Yavat.

In his internal gopi form, Premadasa Babaji was serving both Radha and Krsna, with a leaning toward Radhika. Radhika was unhappy, thinking, "Where am I? Where am I going?" She had forgotten everything in that deep mood of anticipated separation. Premadasa Babaji was in a faint, weeping, in the line of Rupa Gosvami. This is our object as well, but as far as we are concerned, we waste so much of our time and energy in maintenance. Though we are devotees, our whole time is entangled and we have no time for remembering and chanting. We think, "If we give our whole time to devotional activities, our business will fail. How, then, will we be able to maintain ourselves?" We have no belief in Krsna, and we have no belief that He will continue our maintenance. He is the main root of our maintenance. We think, "I maintain myself. If I will give my whole energy to krsna-bhajana as this Babaji did, then who will maintain my wife, my children, and my paraphernalia?" This worry is endless.

Babaji was totally engaged in bhajana. He forgot that he was Paramahansa Babaji, and instead he was thinking, "I am the maidservant of Rupa Manjari." He was able to see those nearby, like Sannyasi Thakura, but at the same time he remained in that transcendental mood and called out, "O Ramana Manjari, you should stop that old monkey." He pointed to the sannyasi and addressed him, "O, Ramana Manjari!"

The Thakura thought: "My Gurudeva has indicated my constitutional form. I firmly believe his words. I am a servant of Radhika. This is my transcendental position. This is my form. Now I shall remember these things."

He still had no tilaka, no mala, and no Vaisnava dress, but internally he was totally surrendered. We are not like that. We wear very big tilaka, and big, big neck beads. Our japa mala is not less than 5 kilos, and we can even spend \$1000 to steal the mala of Haridasa Thakura from Puri. Someone once thought, "If I can take that mala, my bhajana will be very high." He somehow gave \$1000 to a greedy Orissan pujari in Srila Haridasa Thakura's samadhi, and the pujari later on claimed that someone had stolen them. This was a great offence.

Someone else thought, "The very small beads that my Gurudeva has given will not do." He therefore told his Gurudeva, "Gurudeva, a monkey has taken my beads," or "I forget where I kept my beads. Oh, please, I brought very good mala from Vrndavana. The price was \$100." They think that simply having big mala will suffice, but Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself used to count His names on knotted cloth.

Pointing to the sannyasi, Premadasa Babaji said, "O sakhi, you should silence that monkey." At that time Sannyasa Thakura became realized. A guru will give his disciple that realization when he is free from all kinds of unwanted and unfavorable habits, when he has nothing else to do, when he has forgotten everything, when his heart is totally pure, and when he is serving his gurudeva completely. In this way, Sannyasi Thakura's Gurudeva revealed to him his real self.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has clearly written in the third part of Jaiva Dharma that those who take vesa (saffron or white cloth of a renunciate), danda, and copin in an immature stage, will give it up and fall down after some time. The mantra of sannyasa and that of babaji-vesa is the same. The mantra is to help the devotee do bhajana in a gopi mood. One should not give, and one should not take, these things in an immature state.

When the devotee has complete greed to serve Radha-Krsna, he will be at least in the stage of asakti or ruci. He will jump at once in this stage of ruci. There will be no need of his first coming in sraddha, anartha-nivrtti, and so on. Anartha-nivrtti is already accomplished. That devotee has passed anartha-nivrtti. He has no anarthas. Sannyasi Thakura had become free from anarthas at the time of attaining brahma-jnana, and now he was on the platform of remembering Radha and Krsna's sweet pastimes.

You should know all these truths and try to develop like in this way - not jumping beforehand and reading Govinda Lilamrta and Krsna Bhavanamrta. I stand at a distance in awe, and fold my palms and offer pranama to both books, but I know that all of you keep three or four copies of each. I am waiting for my maturity. Some of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja's disciples once came to me asking, "Please help us! Please give us siddha-pranali." I replied, "I cannot help myself. How can I help you?" These disciples then went to the sahajiya babajis at Radha Kunda. Those sahajiya babajis then gave them 'siddha pranamli' for five anna paisa, although they never knew the meaning of siddha-pranali. Real siddha-pranali has been explained by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. I was searching for these new babajis, and I have now heard that they are married. Don't be like them. Be disciples like Sannyasi Thakura. A disciple like this Sannyasi Thakura will never fall down.

Premadasa Babaji Maharaja then became silent, and from that very day this sannyasi became known as 'Vaisnava dasa.' He was now chanting and remembering Radha and Krsna and the eight parts of Their day.

One day Vaisnava dasa fell at the lotus feet of Premadasa Babaji Maharaja, and asked a question. It was not actually a question, but a jijnasu. What is the difference between a question

and jijnasu? Jijnasu means 'humble inquiry'. The disciple addresses his guru, "If I am qualified to hear the answer, please tell me; and if I am not qualified to hear, I don't want to hear. Please warn me not to ask such questions until I'm qualified." This is the etiquette of a pure disciple. He does not say, "You must answer my question, otherwise I will give you up." This is not the mood of a devotee.

Babaji Maharaja replied, "You are actually qualified. I will try to answer your question according to my knowledge."

Vaisnava dasa said, "Prabhu, this is my question: I have heard for a long time about dharma, religion. Dharma is glorified in all circles. All cultures say that without religion, one is like an animal - like a dog, a hog, or a pig. All scriptures and all religious books teach, "Dharma is everything. We are doing everything for dharma. We can shoot the whole world for dharma. Buddhists, Christians, Shaivites, Hindus, and Vaisnavas all say that without religion a person is like an animal. However, their explanations of dharma are different. If dharma is one, the explanation of dharma should be one. But I am very worried that what I have heard from various persons about the glorification, explanation, and meaning of dharma are all different. There is so much difference in them. I cannot imagine why, since if dharma is one, why are the meanings differ among various kinds of religious persons. If dharma is one, then why do they not give one explanation?"

What is the difference between sunyavada and sankaravada? Sankara's guru was Gaurapada and his paramaguru was Govindapada. Gaurapada and Govindapada were both totally Buddhist, and Sankara was a nirviesa brahmavadi. He established the Vedas with a brahmavada interpretation. Sarvam kalvidam brahma. He said there is nothing 'dual' at all. Everything is God. He preached the idea that the appearance of many different things is due to maya. We ask the followers of this idea, "From where has this second thing known as maya come? Sankara preached sat-asat anirvachaniya-tvat. The Ultimate Truth is neither sat nor asat. It is neither existent nor non-existent. It cannot be defined or expressed in words. It cannot be contemplated. But this is also ultimately zero, just as is preached in Buddhism. Nowadays Buddhism is flourishing. It is increasing very rapidly because his friend Kali-yuga is helping so much.

And what is the Muslims' idea of dharma? They say that Allah has no shape, no qualities, and no mercy. Then what is the use of Allah if he cannot speak, he cannot realize our pain and worry, and he has no mercy, no form, and no ears to hear. Their conception of Allah is the same as brahmavada or Sankara philosophy. It is the same thing.

So, "Bhagavata kahe taha pan purna cale" Srimad-Bhagavatam (SB1.1.2) states that all kinds of cheating religious systems are kicked out." This verse is translated into Bengali:

prthivite yaha kichu dharma name cale
bhagavata kahe taha paripurna chale

" According to Bhagavata, whatever is going on throughout the whole world in the name of religion is all cheating."

[Sripad Pundarika prabhu reads from Jaiva Dharma:] Nature arises from the elementary structure of an object.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Any object, however created, receives its intrinsic nature at the time of its creation. That inherent nature naturally present with that object since its creation.

dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam
vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivadam tapa-trayonmulanam
srimad-bhagavate maha-muni-krte kim va parair isvarah
sadyo hrady avarudhyate 'tra krtibhis susrusubhis tat-ksanat
(SB1.1.2)

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhagavata Purana propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful Bhagavatam, compiled by the great sage Vyasadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of Bhagavatam, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart."

Srimad Bhagavatam revealed the eternal truth, not only five thousand years ago, but before creation. Srimad Bhagavatam is transcendental. It never changes. Like Krsna, it is eternal. Everything is there in Srimad Bhagavatam. Those who say, "There is no God, or if there is God, He has no form, no attributes, no quality, and no power," are propounding the same falsity as Sankara did, or as Gaurapada claimed on behalf of Buddhism.

Vaisnava philosophy is real. There is one God, Krsna, and He has unlimited manifestations like Rama, Nrsimha, and Vamana. He has so many vibhutip - powers, like the demigods, but they are not brahma. They are servants of Krsna, as are all goddesses. All truths are included in Vaisnavism. There are so many new religions, and their proponents present so many books. When Communism appeared, it spread everywhere like a forest fire, and after some time it collapsed. All modern religions are like this. In India, Sikhism originally began to protect Hindu or Vaisnava dharma, but now it is in full motion as a totally separate thing.

Having heard the question of Vaisnava dasa, Babaji Maharaja offered pranama to Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, and Radha and Krsna. He prayed, "He krsna karuna sindhu, dina bandhu jagat pate..." and then he began, "Vande ham sri guru sri yuta pada kamalam..." He then told Vaisnava dasa, "You are most fortunate to have a question like this. You have

reminded me of the entirety of krsna-tattva, and in this tattva exists radha-tattva and all other tattvas."

[Srla Narayana Maharaja speaks Hindi and Sripad Pundarika Prabhu translates:] An object is called a 'vastu' and its eternal nature is known as its nitya-dharma, or eternal religion. By Krsna's desire, when an object is formed, a particular nature is inherent in that structure as an eternal concomitant factor. This very nature is the nitya-dharma, or 'eternal religion' of the object.

Premadasa Babaji explained that the nature of an object becomes altered or distorted when a change takes place within it, either by force of circumstance or due to contact with other objects. With the passing of time, this distorted nature becomes fixed and appears to be permanent, as if it were the eternal nature of that object. This distorted nature is not the svabhava, or true nature. It is that nature which is acquired through long-term association. This temporary condition occupies the place of the factual nature, and becomes identified as the svabhava.

For example, water is an object, and its svabhava or nature is liquidity. When water solidifies due to certain circumstances, it becomes ice. The acquired nature of solidity takes the place of its inherent liquid nature. In reality, this acquired nature is not eternal. Rather, it is occasional or temporary, arising because of certain external causes. When this external cause is no longer effective, this acquired nature vanishes automatically.

On the other hand, the svabhava is eternal. The object's core nature is not distorted. It may appear distorted, but it still remains inseparably connected with its object. The original nature will certainly become evident again when the proper time and circumstances arise. The living entity's eternal nature is to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but because of a certain cause or circumstances, he has forgotten his eternal nature or duty - the service to the Supreme Lord. When the fortunate living entity receives sadhu-sanga, in that association his eternal nature can again be revived.

If you will understand these first two chapters, you can then understand the whole book. The fundamental basis of the entire book depends on these two chapters. The other chapters are comparatively very easy, and these two are the most essential. You should not think, "What is the need of this philosophy? We will distribute books, and very easily we will remember asta-kaliya-lila. What is the use of these bogus things? It is too hard a subject, and it is without rasa. It is a dry subject."

Premadasa Babaji Maharaja is now concluding his explanation of 'vastu'. We will have to know this subject matter one day. Your arcana and other devotional activities will not help you if you do not know these facts from your siksa-guru. One day you will have to become realized, surely, so why not now? Why not today? You should try to begin, today, to realize these truths. If you do not understand your transcendental nature, then your book distribution, your reading, and even your sannyasa will not help you. Sravanam is first. First hear.

The svabhava, true nature, of an object is its nitya-dharma. What is that true nature? We are soul, coming from eternal Krsna. "Jivera svarupa hoyā nitya Krsna-dasa." This is our intrinsic nature. We are all Krsna dasa or Krsna dasi, in any form. This is transcendental. It cannot be changed. This physical body may be changed, but that never changes.

The acquired nature or nisarga is its nimittika-dharma or occasional religion or function. What is occasional and what is transcendental? If one knows this difference, he can do real bhajana and serve Krsna. It is therefore essential to know these truths. We should not think, "I am the wife of that person," "I am husband of that person," "I am from Nigeria," "I am from England," "I am Christian," "Hindu," "Vaisnava." This will not do. Somehow we must know these truths. Try to know. Even if you have no taste there is no harm. Still you should try. Even if you have no taste in the name, still you should chant. Even if you have no taste in hearing all these topics you should think, "I will be here, somehow or other, even if I have to take chili powder. I must hear. I will go, again and again."

If one does not know what is the transcendental nature of the jiva, and what is occasional, temporary, one is bound to think, "What I am now, this is real." No one can help such a person. Krsna sometimes comes in the form of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Rama, and others, and He sends His own associates - sometimes Hanuman, sometimes Bhima, and sometimes Ramanuja and others. He sends our Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, and my Gurudeva. He sends such help to the conditioned souls.

Somehow that occasional religion should melt and go away, and the real transcendental, intrinsic nature, to serve Krsna, should manifest. Try to think, try to read, and try to follow. If you do not understand, again and again serve your Gurudeva. Serve, and then inquire. Don't inquire without serving. By that seva, Guru will be satisfied, and like a cow he will give milk. His milk is hari-katha. You cannot have this without serving, and therefore you should always remember this Gita principle.

tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninas tattva-darsinah

"Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." (Bg.4.34)

That Guru should be tattva-darsi, a realized soul. If he is not a realized soul, he cannot fully express all these truths to you. By his causeless mercy, the bona fide guru will inspire you. He will give you the power to understand and realize all these truths. Surrender to a soul like that.

Gaura Premanande.

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