

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja  
**SRI GURU – HEAVIER THAN GOD**  
Hilo, Hawaii: January 11, 2003

I offer millions of obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and same to my siksa-guru, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. Very quickly, in a couple of years, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja preached throughout the world – in the mountains, on ocean Islands, in the North, East, South and West. I see his glories everywhere.

Although Srila Swami Maharaja actually came to this world as a representative of our guru-parampara, some people want him to be the only guru. They want that there be only one guru – for the past, present and future. They want to deny our guru-parampara. This is very bad; we should not try to do this. Rather, we should know what is guru-tattva.

Guru means "heavy," more so than anyone else in this world – even more so than Krsna Himself. Sometimes Krsna may come to that guru and take his foot dust; it may be so. It is written in Sri Gita-Govinda by Srila Jayadeva Gosvami that Krsna said to Srimati Radhika, "Dehi pada-pallavam udharam – Please be merciful and place Your lotus feet on My head. Be pleased with Me." Krsna sometimes also says this to the gopis who serve Srimati Radhika more so than they serve Him. He may pray to them, "Please place your footdust on My head," This is guru-tattva.

In other words, all the pure gurus in the disciplic line of Srila Rupa Gosvami, in their spiritually perfected forms, are gopi maidservants of Srimati Radhika. The subject of guru-tattva is the essence of all of our bhakti literature. This subject is very heavy, and therefore you should hear it with the core of your hearts. We can only worship Krsna after we have worshipped guru.

All of us in this world have turned away from Krsna. Whether you accept it or not, it is true. Although we are greatly suffering, we do not realize it. Why not? We have drunk such a large quantity of the alcohol of maya that we have become completely mad; and in this madness we think ourselves very happy. You should know that one day you will have to give up your bodies and all that you have collected in this world. One day you will surely have to be old. Old age is very eagerly waiting to embrace you, and none of you will be able to escape it. A devotee of the caliber of Sri Narada Muni can escape this maya and its presentation of old age, but you are not like Narada Muni. You will have to suffer if you are not careful.

It is stated in the Vedas:

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

(Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.23)

["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."]

The instruction has been given since ancient times: "Be careful." *Yasya deve para bhakti*. Those who are suffering and who want to be happy in this world and in the next, especially those living in the present age of quarrel and hypocrisy called kali-yuga, should serve Krsna, the Supreme Lord. And, not less than Him, such persons must serve the bona fide gurudeva. Here in this verse the word para-bhakti has been used, and we should therefore know the meaning of bhakti:

anyabhilasita sunyam jnana-karmady anavrtam  
anukulyena krsnanu silanam bhaktir uttama  
(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)

["The cultivation of activities which are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Sri Krsna, or in other words the uninterrupted flow of service to Sri Krsna, performed through all endeavors of the body, mind and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (bhavas), which is not covered by jnana and karma, and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Sri Krsna is called uttama-bhakti, pure devotional service."]

Para-bhakti is the continuous, uninterrupted flow of the activities performed by our body, mind, words and moods (bhavas), which are executed only for the benefit of Krsna. Such activities are not disturbed or covered by jnana (mental speculation or knowledge leading to impersonal liberation) and karma (the desire to enjoy the fruits of one's activities), and it is performed under the guidance of guru-tattva. If there is a lack of the above symptoms in a devotee's activities but bhakti is there to a small degree, we can still call it bhakti – but not para-bhakti.

The Vedas tell us that para-bhakti is certainly to be applied to Krsna, but first it must be applied to guru. If one has no guru, all his devotional activities will be like zero; only worldly fruits will come. If one thinks, "I am already chanting, remembering, and performing arcana (regulative worship of the deity)", but he is not truly initiated by a bona fide guru, the fruit of his activities will only be worldly. Intoxicated by sense enjoyment such a person may think himself happy, but he will not actually be happy. It is therefore stated in sastra:

brahmanda bhramite kona bhagyavan jiva  
guru-krsna-prasade paya bhakti-lata-bija  
(Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya 19.151)

["According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are

going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Krsna. By the mercy of both Krsna and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service." ]

What is the meaning of guru-krsna-prasade? It generally means that one can attain the bhakti-lata-bija – the seed of para-bhakti – by the combined mercy of guru and Krsna. In this connection, however, there is another meaning. Here the meaning is that the bona fide guru is a manifestation of Krsna Himself. Krsna does not come to us, but the guru may come, as Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came and traveled everywhere. You should realize that the mercy of Krsna first manifests as the mercy of guru. From the bona fide guru, who is Krsna Himself as His manifestation (asraya-vigraha), we can have the seed of bhakti, the bhakti-lata. What is the bhakti-lata? It is krsna-seva-vasana, the desire to serve Krsna. This desire will come only from gurudeva, the bona fide Vaisnava, and it does not matter whether a guru is acting as a siksa-guru or a diksa-guru. He may act as a siksa-guru in the case where a disciple is initiated by a bona fide guru but he cannot avail his siksa. The seed of the bhakti creeper comes from this high class of gurudeva, and that is why sastra states:

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

One can know who is Krsna only from gurudeva, and if a guru is not bona fide, Krsna cannot be known. Among the sixty-four limbs of bhakti described in Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, the first four are in relation to sri gurudeva. The first is guru-padasraya. Padasraya means taking shelter of gurudeva's lotus feet, and that shelter is taken through hearing. That is harinama initiation in the real sense. Those who take shelter of such a guru can progress quickly in bhakti. After guru-padasraya, there is diksa and siksa. Diksa means initiation and siksa means instruction. The disciple will begin to understand his gurudeva's instructions, and then he will try to follow them. So we should take initiation from that guru. But be very careful. If a guru is bona fide and you have some doubt in his character or teachings, Krsna will never accept you.

yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado  
yasyaprasadan na gath kuto 'pi  
dhyayam stuvams tasya yasas tri-sandhyam  
vande guroh sri caranaravindam  
(Sri Gurvastakam verse 8)

["Only by the mercy of sri gurudeva can one receive the mercy of Krsna; without his grace the living entities cannot make any advancement nor be delivered. I meditate three times a day on the glories of sri gurudeva and recite stava-stuti (prayers) unto his lotus feet." ]

ajnas casraddadhanas ca  
samsayatma vinasyati  
nayam loko 'sti na paro  
na sukham samsayatmanah  
(Bhagavatd-Gita 4.40)

["Ignorant and faithless persons who doubt the revealed scriptures do not attain God consciousness; they fall down. For the doubting soul there is happiness neither in this world nor in the next."]

Suppose a guru is bona fide and he is preaching and serving his gurudeva. If anyone doubts him and thinks, "My gurudeva is an ordinary man and he does not know this and that" or "I know better than him", even in ordinary matters, that person falls down from Krsna consciousness and no one will be able to save him. We should be very careful not to associate with such persons. Also, do not associate with anyone who associates with that type of wretched person. Try to behave as you would behave regarding the passing of stool. If we can pass stool easily, we are very happy. We feel great relief if there is a motion. If the stool remains inside the body, we will be restless. We will not be able to do bhakti or anything else. Similarly, you will surely have to give up bad association for your entire life. If you want bhakti, if you want to become Krsna conscious, then do not mix with those persons who doubt a bona fide guru who is serving his gurudeva and preaching throughout the world. Srila AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja had many thousands of disciples, but so many of them have completely given up their Krsna consciousness due to their doubts.

You may have heard the names of Dronacarya and Ekalavya. They were both present in this world 5,000 years ago, at the time of Krsna's pastimes here. Ekalavya went to Dronacarya and told him, "I accept you as my guru." Dronacarya replied, "I knew you would be coming to me even before you came. I know your heart and pulse; you are very much against pure bhaktas and therefore I will not teach you the art of archery." Ekalavya then said, "I have accepted you as my guru, so I must learn something about archery from you. Dronacarya again refused and said, "I cannot give lessons to you because if you learn archery you will become a burden to the entire world."

Still determined, Ekalavya went to the forest and made a clay statue of Dronacarya. He offered pranama to that statue and, repeatedly taking the foot dust of that statue he began to practice archery with great faith. Practicing archery while regularly performing arcana and offering flowers to Dronacarya, Ekalavya became a master of archery. Then, one day, Dronacarya went to the forest and saw Ekalavya, and he became astonished to see how he had learned such a high class of archery. When Ekalavya saw Dronacarya he fell at his lotus feet and told him, "What I have learned, I have learned from you." Dronacarya then told Ekalavya, "If you have really learned archery from me, then I want some guru-daksina. Ekalavya said, "Whatever you wish, I am prepared to give. I am also prepared to give me life if you want that." Dronacarya replied, "I want your right hand thumb." You would not be able to do this if you were asked to do so by your gurudeva, but Ekalavya did it immediately.

Ekalavya was still able to shoot with his remaining four fingers, but what was the result? During the Mahabharata battle he wanted to fight with Krsna and kill Him. Therefore, Krsna took His sudarsana cakra and very easily cut off his head.

In this connection, the sraddha of Ekalavya is compared to a clay pot. If one places a clay pot in fire, it will crack. The sraddha of Ekalavya was like that clay. He was selfish and wanted to ruin the devotees, and because of this ulterior motive, his sraddha in making and worshipping a statue of Dronacarya was really not sraddha at all. Our sraddha should not be like that of Ekalavya; it should be like that of Arjuna. Always remember this and do not associate with Ekalavya. Some ignorant devotees, who are not actually devotees, have named their sons or disciples "Ekalavya." We should always be careful not to have the misconception that he was a good disciple.

Someone may ask, "If a guru is not an uttama-adhikari, how can he help his disciples? He may speak and behave incorrectly." The reply to such a doubt is that if a guru is in the final stage of madhyama-adhikari, if he is madhyama-uttama, if he is very sincere and continually serving his uttama-adhikari gurudeva, and if he has no worldly desires, he will very soon become an uttama-adhikari. Mahaprabhu confirmed this truth at the Ratha-yatra festival while speaking to the inhabitants of Kulina-gram. Do not doubt this.

Krsna has said in the Bhagavad-gita (9.23):

ye 'py anya-devata-bhakta  
yajante sraddhayanvitah  
te 'pi mam eva kaunteya  
yajanty avidhi-purvakam

["Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kunti, but they do so in a wrong way."]

Krsna told Arjuna that if a person worships a demigod with strong faith in order to fulfill his worldly desires, thinking, "Surely he will fulfill my desire," That person is actually worshipping Krsna Himself, but in the wrong way. Someone may directly touch his nose and someone else may touch it by making his hand and finger go all the way around his head before it reaches his nose. Similarly, that person's desires can be fulfilled by Krsna alone, whether they are fulfilled by directly asking Him or by getting them fulfilled in a roundabout way by going to the demigods. The devatas are not powerful; they are unable to give any benediction. It is actually Krsna who gives their benedictions.

In a similar way, a guru may be a madhyama-adhikari in the final stage; he may not yet be siddha (a perfect, self-realized soul) like Sri Narada Muni, Sri Sukadeva Gosvami, and others. In that case, if he is a sincere devotee, and if a disciple follows him with deep faith, who will give the fruit of the disciple's worship? A madhyama-adhikari cannot give it. If one is an uttama-adhikari like Narada Rsi or Sri Sukadeva Gosvami or Srila Rupa Gosvami, he can give it at once, but a madhyama-adhikari cannot. The madhyama-adhikari guru will tell hari-katha and engage his disciples in such a way that they will

advance in bhakti. What will be the result? If one has very deep faith in that guru, Krsna Himself will surely give the fruit, and that fruit will be the transcendental. Krsna will give that disciple the fruit of the association and shelter of and uttama-adhikari guru. To a devotee initiated by a madhyama-adhikari guru and who really desires to attain the highest goal, Krsna gives the association and mercy of an uttama guru who can bless the disciple with that goal. Try to understand this. It is not very easy to understand, but try. Do not have any doubt about this.

Uttama-adhikari gurus are not easily available. They are very rare in this world. Moreover, even if they are available, most people will not be able to recognize them. For example, Sri Sukadeva Gosvami was naked, and Sri Vamsidasa babaji put fish bones and other abominable things outside his bhajana-sthali. You would not be able to know that Srila Gaura Kisorada babaji Maharaja is an uttama maha-bhagavata. If a madhyama-uttama guru who is under the guidance of an uttama-adhikari guru will tell you, or an uttama-adhikari playing the role of a devotee in the stage of madhyama-adhikari will tell you, then you will be able to know. We should be very, very careful about this. Do not have any doubt to that kind of guru. If one is madhyama-uttama, he can help so much by his direction. The advanced madhyama-adhikari will very soon come to the stage of rati (bhava), like Bharata Maharaja and Ambarisa Maharaja. If a person has doubts in him, do not associate with that person. His association should be given up as one gives up stool after passing it.

Editorial advisors: Pujoyapada Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanatha dasa

Transcriber: Mana-mohana dasa

Typist: Basanti dasi

Editor: Syamarani dasi