

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

MEETING IS HIGHER THAN SEPARATION

Hilo, Hawaii: January 13, 2003 part 2

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] There is another topic that requires proper reconciliation and correct understanding. Certain persons have written a paper in which they suggest that there is a difference of opinion between Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja and Srila Narayana Maharaja, regarding the relative spiritual exaltation in the moods of separation and meeting in conjugal love. These persons give a quotation from Srila Prabhupada's book, Teachings of Lord Caitanya, from the conversation between Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Ramananda Raya.

I am reading Srila Prabhupada's first quote, as presented in the above-mentioned paper: "Upon hearing of these transcendental activities, Lord Caitanya said, 'O My dear Ramananda, what you have explained regarding the transcendental pastimes of Sri Radha and Krsna is perfectly correct. Yet there is something more I would like to hear from you.' 'It is very difficult for me to express anything beyond this,' Raya Ramananda replied to Caitanya Mahaprabhu, 'but I can say only that there is an emotional activity called prema-vilasa-vivarta, which I may try to explain. But I don't know whether you would be happy to hear it.'"

The authors of the paper then quote Srila Prabhupada's short comment there: "In prema-vilasa there are two kinds of emotional activities—separation and meeting. That transcendental separation is so acute that it is actually more ecstatic than meeting." With this quotation the paper has attempted to assert that Srila Prabhupada is saying that separation (vipralambha) is on a higher level and brings more ecstasy than the meeting (sambhoga) between Radha and Krsna.* [See Endnote 1]

The paper then presents the idea that Srila Narayana Maharaja has said the opposite, and that he is incorrect. I am now reading their quotations from an English translation of Srila Maharaja's Hindi talks during Vraja Mandala Parikrama: "Those who have not scrutinizingly studied the scripture Srimad Bhagavatam, and who have not conscientiously comprehended Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, and who have not properly understood books like Bhakti-rasamrita-sindu, Brhad-bhagavamrta, Ujjvala-nilamani, Krsna-karnamrta and other literatures of this nature, consider vipralambha, the mood of separation, to be the highest level of ecstasy. Our previous acaryas have also considered vipralambha to be an exalted state; but after much reflection they perceived vipralambha as a pre-requisite to highlight and more fully embellish and amplify the ecstasy of reunion. If there would be only vipralambha for all of eternity, what would be its use? What would be its service? Vipralambha is necessary only because it intensifies the ecstatic feelings of reunion."

That is one quotation. Then the paper quoted one more short statement from Srila Maharaja's Vraja Mandala Parikrama book: "So you can see that the mood of vipralambha is much more complex than the way you envisioned it before. Those who still persist in advocating that vipralambha is the highest do not yet have the spiritual

maturity and understanding to realize that it is not possible for anything to be more elevated than Srimati Radharani and Krsna's ecstatic loving exchanges in reuniting (samboga)."

Does everyone understand clearly?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I have clarified this topic in the above-mentioned quotes – separation is only needed because it serves to increase the enjoyment of meeting; it helps in that. Still, I want to explain this further:

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has written that in madanakya-mahabhava there is the experience of the highest intensity of separation in meeting and the experience of the highest intensity of meeting in separation. All moods, in their extreme exaltation, are present in Srimati Radhika in her madanakya-mahabhava. Also, in intense separation (divya-viraha), Krsna reveals Himself totally. In that mood of separation the gopis are fully absorbed in Krsna, in all His qualities and in all His pastimes. Yet, at the same time, they want to embrace Krsna right then and there. They do not want to burn in the fire of separation.

The gopis are not satisfied in their mood of separation; they cannot be satisfied. Their desire is this: "Krsna should come directly in front of us – face to face – so that He can put His very soft and gentle lotus feet on our breasts." They lament that because their breasts are very hard, they must place His lotus feet there with the utmost gentle care. To whose lotus feet are they referring? The lotus feet of that Krsna, which even Brahma, Sri Narada Rsi, Sri Sukadeva Gosvami, and Sri Bhismadeva cannot bring in their trance of meditation. It is those feet that the gopis wanted to place on their breasts.

yat te sujata-caranamburuham stanesu
bhitah sanaih priya dadhimahi karkasesu
tenatavim atasi tad vyathate na kim svit
kurpadibhir bhramati dhir bhavad-ayusam nah

["O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.31.19)]

The gopis lament in this connection, "Oh, what shall we do? Krsna likes that His feet are placed on our breasts, but we are afraid we are hurting Him." The gopis don't want to meditate on Krsna. They desire this: "Krsna should come out from within our hearts so that we can embrace Him. Only in this way will our fire of separation be extinguished."

Some persons say that vipralambha is higher than sambhoga. Only a neutral person can say this. Such neutral persons alone can say that it is good if the gopis only see Krsna in their trance. Such persons can say that although the gopis want to embrace Krsna, it is better if Krsna's association comes to them by their mood of separation. It is better that they always meeting Him in their mood of separation, as they close their eyes and remember Him in their hearts. Such neutral persons think that the gopis' separation is very good, and such persons are like Akrura and Kamsa, who have no desire for the

meeting of Radha and Krsna. Akrura can say, "Take Krsna from Vraja. Let the Vrajavasis feel separation; they should be always feeling separation." And Kamsa will be very happy to say, "Bring Krsna here to Mathura, and I will kill Him there."

These two persons can speak in this way, but no Vrajavasi wants Krsna to be separated from Vraja. Not even a plant, creeper, or bird of Vrndavana wants Krsna to leave Vraja. No one there wants the Vrajavasis to feel separation. None of them think, "Separation is so high." And what to speak of the gopis? What to speak of Lalita and Visakha, and Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari?

Those who are confidential servants of Srimati Radhika, and who have more affection for Her than for Krsna, never desire Her separation from Krsna. In fact, Vrajavasis like Lalita and Visakha, and palya-dasis like Rupa Manjari, Rati Manjari, and Kamala Manjari, cannot tolerate the separation of Radhika from Krsna at all. Do you know who is Kamala Manjari? In her sadhaka form she (he) is Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

In his song, Sri Krsna Viraha, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura writes: "I cannot bear to see the feelings of separation of Radhika":

sri krsna-viraha, radhikara dasa, ami to sahite nari
yugala milana, sukerea karana, jivana chadite pari

["I am absolutely unable to tolerate Sri Radhika's pitiabile condition when She is suffering in separation from Sri Krsna, but I am fully prepared to immediately give up my life for the sake of Their happy reunion."]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is weeping as he writes, "When Radhika laments in divyon-mada, in the transcendental madness of separation from Krsna she displayed in Brahmara-gita (Radhika speaking with a bumblebee) and at other times, I cannot bear it. I don't want Krsna to leave Radhika. He should always remain with Her in Vraja." He continues, "I cannot tolerate the separation of Radhika for Krsna, but I can easily give up my life if that will help to bring Krsna to Her." This is the mood of the palya-dasis of Radhika.

Then, in another song, called Vrsabhanu-Suta, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura writes:

radha-paksa chadi, je jana se jana
je bhava se bhava thake
ami to Radhika-paksa pati sada
kabhu nahi heri ta-ke

["I am always in Radhika's entourage and I never look upon the faces of those who leave Her, no matter who they are or what is their mood."]

In other words, he is saying, "If someone thinks that the separation mood of Srimati Radhika is very good, I don't want to see that person's face! It would be a sinful act to see the face of such a person!"

Only Mathuravasis – only for those who are not able to appreciate vraja lila – like Akrura and Kamsa will want Radhika and Krsna to be separated. A rupanuga Vaisnava understands that everyone in Vraja is acting in such a way as to increase the happiness of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna. Uddhava went to Vraja, realized the separation of the gopis to a certain extent, and then returned to Krsna and said, "You must go at once; otherwise, if You do not go, Nanda and Yasoda, all the gopis, and all the cows and calves will soon be dead. You must go there." Even Baladeva and Rohini-maiya told Krsna, "Why don't you go to Vraja? All will die if You do not go." Baladeva told Him, "If You do not go there, then I must go; and I will tell them that You are coming very soon." Thus, all the Vrajavasis want Krsna to be with the gopis and with His father and mother in Vraja.

If vipralambha is higher than meeting, then Lalita and the other sakhis and manjaris would have been trying to keep Krsna out of Vraja. They would have tried to be very far away from Him. But have they done this? They can never do so. Do you want this? Do any of you want Krsna to be separated from Radhika? Do you want Radhika to weep and roll on the ground?

You may know that Lalita once sent a swan to Mathura. When she sent him off, she told him, "Go and tell Krsna about the dasami-dasa, the tenth stage, of Radhika's condition. In the eleventh stage she would surely die. Nowadays she is often unconscious, and she engages like a mad person in varieties of crazy talks (divyonmada). Go and tell Krsna, 'You must come in a day – or just now. Otherwise, if you go to Vraja later, You will not be able to meet with Radhika at all. You should always keep this in mind. If You want to be happy, and if You want to make all others happy, then come here at once.'"

Thus, according to the explanations of our previous acaryas, what I have told is correct. Vipralambha is only needed to help nourish meeting. If this is not accomplished there is no necessity of vipralambha. It is stated in Sri Ujjvala-nilamani, "Na vina vipralambhena sambhoga pustimasnute – without vipralambha, meeting will not be nourished."

Does meeting come first or does vipralambha come first? If the gopis had not met with Krsna, how would they have experienced vipralambha? First there is meeting, and then separation. Without meeting, the mood of separation cannot come and Srimati Radharani cannot weep for Krsna. Why are you not weeping? Can you weep for Krsna from the core of your heart? You cannot – because you have never seen Him. If you will see His beauty, His qualities, His affection, and His love and mercy, then you can cry for Him. So first is meeting, sambhoga, then separation in the middle, and then meeting again. There are four kinds of separation, and they are purva-raga, mana, pravasa and prema-vaicittya.

vipralambha catur-vidha--purva-raga, mana
pravasakhyā, ara prema-vaicittya-akhyāna

["Vipralambha has four divisions-purva-raga, mana, pravasa and prema-vaicittya."] (Caitanya-caritamṛta Madhya 23.63)

When Krsna goes to the forest, the gopis feel separation. They weep for Krsna and discuss among themselves His pastimes in the forest. The ultimate stage of conjugal love is madanakya-mahabhava, which is present only in Radhika. All varieties of the moods of meeting and all varieties of the moods of separation reside in madhanakya, and this is the monopoly of Srimati Radhika. This wonderful mood of Radhika is such that even the highest moods of separation are enclosed in it. This mood cannot occur at the time of separation; it occurs only in meeting. It occurs for example, when Radhika is sitting on the lap of Krsna at Prema Sarovara. Imagining that Krsna has left and will never return, Radhika laments, "Where is Krsna?" This is very wonderful and tasteful.

We should try to know all these truths, and that understanding will reconcile all the statements of your Srila Prabhupada.

[Syamarani dasi:] In case someone has any doubt, and thinks that our Srila Prabhupada considers separation higher than meeting, they can look in his books and see the many quotes confirming exactly what Srila Gurudeva has said tonight. * [See Endnote 1]

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I very humbly request those who have doubts to discuss with me personally this very deep subject. I welcome them, and I think that by such discussion, reconciliation will come.

[Jagadhatri dasi:] I don't know philosophy and I'm not a scholar, but I remember that in the Krsna book Krsna told the gopis, "I have never left you." So the gopis are in the mood of separation, but actually Krsna never left them.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If He never left, then why were the gopis always lamenting and suffering due to Him? The idea that Krsna never left, that He is everywhere, and therefore there was no need for the gopis to lament is the version of Uddhava. This was not the version of the gopis. Rather, the gopis defeated all of Uddhava's arguments.

I know that your Prabhupada is a philosopher and a rasika-bhakta as well. He realizes both vipralambha and sambhoga. Like his predecessor acaryas, he is a servant of Srimati Radhika. Will he say that Radha should always be far away from Krsna? Never. I know him. I have been with him since 1947, and I am still serving him. If he has written, on a rare occasion, that separation is higher than meeting, he has done this only for beginners. We must feel separation for Krsna, and we must lament that we have been separated from Him for a long time. It is essential for a sadhaka to feel that he is separated from Krsna, and thus he should lament in separation.* [See Endnote 2] On the other hand, for the mature devotee, Srila Swami Maharaja has written in his many books that separation is only accepted if it helps increase the enjoyment of meeting.

Now kindly digest all these truths.

NEXT MORNING, AT A DARSANA

All the sakhas (cowherd boys) also used to feel great separation from Krsna. Even when Krsna would hide behind a tree, they used to run very quickly to find him; and the gopis especially used to experience grievous separation. It has been written in Srimad Bhagavatam's Gopi-gita:

atati yad bhavan ahni kanaanam
truti yugayate tvam apasyatam
kutila-kuntalam sri-mukham ca te
jada udiksatam paksma-krd drsam

["When You go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator." (SB 10.31.15)]

The meaning is clear. When Krsna used to go for cow-grazing, and also when He returned from cow grazing, the gopis used to see Him. At that time they wanted a way to be free from the impediment of the eyelids covering their eyes. They wanted thousands of eyes without eyelids – all over their bodies – because they wanted to see Krsna unimpeded. They cursed the creator, "O Brahma, because of the blinking of the eyelids that were created by you, our vision of Krsna is disturbed. We cannot tolerate separation from Krsna for even a fraction of a second. Each fraction of a second seems to us to be thousands and thousands of yugas." How would the Vrajavasis be able to tolerate the suffering of gopis, and especially of Radhika?

NEXT NIGHT, DURING CLASS

January 14, 2003

It was only for beginners and sadhakas that Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja said that one must adapt the mood of separation. We have been forgetful of Krsna since the beginning of time. Thus, a sadhaka-bhakta should always lament, weep, and feel separation in his bhajana. He should weep like Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, like Srila Narottama dasa Thakura, and like Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Beginners must know that we have forgotten Krsna and we have been separated from Him from time immemorial, and therefore their bhajana should be full with feelings of separation.

The mature devotees will also feel separation, but moreover they will not want Srimati Radhika to feel separation from Krsna.

atati yad bhavan ahni kanaanam
truti yugayate tvam apasyatam
kutila-kuntalam sri-mukham ca te
jada udiksatam paksma-krd drsam

["When You go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator." (SB 10.31.15)]

The gopis criticized Brahma thus: "You don't know how to create. You have made us with only two eyes, and you have also given us eyelids that continue to blink. You don't know anything. If any new Brahma will come and follow our instructions, he will make thousands and thousands of eyes throughout our limbs – without lids. At that time we will vividly see Krsna when He comes home from grazing cows in the evening and when He

leaves again in the morning. At present, however, we eagerly wait for Krsna to return throughout the day. Then, when He comes home and we try to see Him, two things obstruct our vision. One obstruction is the tears that fall from our eyes, and second, we have eyelids. When Krsna is in front of us, if for a second we cannot see Him because of our tears or our eyelids, that second seems as long as thousands and millions of yugas (milleniums). We feel great separation at this time."

If you want the gopis to always be separated because this is higher, then what will become of them? They will die very soon. If you are happy to make them die, then you can say that the mood of separation is higher. If I ask those who have written that paper which tries to prove that separation is higher, "Do you want Radha and Krsna to always be separated and to always feel separation?" – I think they will not answer in the affirmative. Only one who has no bhakti at all can say, "Yes" to this.

The highly respected Srila Kavi Karnapura is an exalted devotee. When he was very young he sucked the toe of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and by that act he became one of the greatest Vaisnava poets and writers. He has written a famous book called Sri Ananda Vrndavana Campu, which is similar to Sri Gopala Campu of Srila Jiva Gosvami, and he is more senior than Jiva Gosvami in the sense that he met with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu before Jiva Gosvami did. He wrote about the activities of Krsna up to rasa-lila, holi-lila, the swinging pastimes, and so on, and he never described how Krsna went with Baladeva to Mathura and how He sent Uddhava to Vraja. He never told this because he could not tolerate the thought of separation between Radha and Krsna. He thinks that if Krsna will leave his Svaminiji Radhika and go to Mathura, Radhika will die. In Vraja, when Krsna used to go to the forest for cow-grazing, the gopis hardly felt any separation in comparison to what they felt when Krsna left for Mathura. When Krsna left for cow-grazing, groups of gopis used to assemble together to sing Gopi-gita and Venu-gita, and thus they maintained their lives. We should be happy by the meeting of Radha and Krsna, and we should be sad in Their separation. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has therefore written:

sri krsna-virahe, radhikara dasa, ami to' sahite nari
yugali-milana, sukhera karana, jivana chadite pari

["I am absolutely unable to tolerate Sri Radhika's pitiable condition when She is suffering in separation from Sri Krsna, but I am fully prepared to immediately give up my life for the sake of Their happy reunion." (Sri Krsna-Virahe, verse 1)]

radhikara tare, sata bara mari, se dukha amar soya

["For Radhika's sake I will gladly tolerate the pain and agony of death hundreds of times." (Sri Krsna-Virahe, verse 2)]

"If I see Radhika feeling separation, I will die in anguish hundreds and thousands of times over. On the other hand, I can do anything for Radhika's pleasure. For Her pleasure, I will happily die hundreds and hundreds of times."

This is the essence of all our discussion of yesterday.

[Endnote 1:

"When the lover and the beloved meet, they are called yukta (connected). Previous to their meeting, they are called ayukta (not connected). Whether connected or not connected, the ecstatic emotion arising due to not being able to embrace and kiss each other as desired is called vipralambha. This vipralambha helps nourish emotions at the time of meeting." (Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta Madhya 23.60)

"On the sambhoga platform, the dresses are unlimited, and on the vipralambha they are four in number. The ecstasy exhibited before the lover and beloved meet, the ecstasy experienced between them after meeting, the state of mind experienced by not meeting, and the state of mind experienced after meeting fearing separation are called vipralambha. That vipralambha serves as a nourishing element for future meetings." (Prabhupada's explanation in Teachings of Lord Caitanya)

Endnote 2:

"Lord Caitanya taught people in general the method of vipralambha-seva, which is the method of rendering service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the feeling of separation. The six Gosvamis also taught worship of Kṛṣṇa in the feeling of the gopis in separation. The prayers of Srinivasacarya about the Gosvamis explain these matters very clearly." (Kṛṣṇa Book, Chapter 47)

"Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught us this method of worship in separation, vipralambha-seva. Not that "Oh, I have seen yesterday. Last night, I have seen Kṛṣṇa. He was snatching my cloth." These are sahajiyas. Actually, our worship should be in separation. The Gosvamis also taught us like that." (Prabhupada's Srimad-Bhagavatam lecture: SB1.10.14)

"So for advanced devotee everything is possible, as described by this gentleman. But that is not for everyone. That is not a common thing. Exceptional. For the common person, as Caitanya Mahāprabhu has advised and as He has practically shown in His life, that is devotional service in separation: "Where is Kṛṣṇa?" Sunyayitam jagat sarvam govinda-virahena me. "I am seeing everything vacant because I cannot see Kṛṣṇa." The same thing was followed by the Gosvamis." (Prabhupada's lecture of Canto Five Srimad-Bhagavatam)

"Our, this Gaudiya-sampradaya, Caitanya Mahāprabhu's, in Caitanya Mahāprabhu's descendants, our line of God realization is that separation, feeling of separation. Not that we have got Kṛṣṇa within our hand. No. The feeling of separation, worship of Kṛṣṇa by feeling of separation is better than the worship by directly meeting. Vipralambha-seva." (Prabhupada's lecture of Feb.2,1968)

"Direct contact is not possible. Neither that is the way of worshiping by the method of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That is sahajiya-vada. "I am talking with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is snatching my cloth." There is a book, one lady has written, her experience that Kṛṣṇa comes, He talks with her and snatches her cloth. She has written openly. But this is not Caitanya Mahāprabhu's way...

"Real Caitanya Mahaprabhu sampradaya is that he should be feeling like Caitanya Mahaprabhu, separation. Not sambhoga. Vipralambha. Vipralambha-seva: "Oh, I am so wretched, I could not serve Krsna. How I can see Krsna? It is not possible." In this way. That is the teaching of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. "But even though I do not see Him, neither it is possible for me to see Him..." This means: "What I am? I am insignificant person. Why should Krsna come and see me?" This is right. "Why shall I aspire after seeing Krsna? What qualification I have got?" This is bhajana. This is bhajana. Why should I be proud that "Now I shall see Krsna"? What I am? That is the teaching of Caitanya Mahaprabhu...Krsna may not come. I may not see Krsna for thousands and thousands of lives. I may rot in the hellish condition of life for many, many births. That doesn't matter. Still, I cannot give up Krsna consciousness." This is required. I may be sent to hell, heaven; it doesn't matter. What qualification I have got that I want to see back to home, back to Godhead? It is not so easy thing." (Mayapura: June 27, 1973)

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