

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

A FIRESIDE DARSAN

February 23, 2003 Darsan

Almost four hundred devotees gathered near Frankfurt, Germany, for the week of February 18-24, to attend this year's harikatha festival. The theme of Srila Maharaja's nightly classes was "What is the goal of life and How to attain it." Besides his formal classes, Srila Maharaja held two darsanas in the large fireside heated hall. The following is an excerpt of one of those darsanas.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] (speaking to the Berlin temple president)

First you should preach from your center in Berlin, so that all will be happy and inspired, and then together you should make a committee with board members, and with its help you should make the temple still better. At that time we can bring very beautiful Deities from India – Radha-Krsna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. You should preach to others and they should be inspired to serve. To create a center is easy, but to maintain its activities is very hard. If you do this, I will be happy, and if you need help we will help you. I will send preachers there.

I am inviting you all to our Navadvipa parikrama, for the Navadvipa Mahotsava – the festival of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. We will be performing parikrama of the nine islands. If you have no money problems and your visa and passport are in order then come; otherwise you should wait for one month Vraja Mandala parikrama. I am inviting you all. If some of you come to parikrama, I will be very happy, and if you cannot come, do not be weak. Always be strong and see that Krsna, Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu and myself are there with you. Never be weak. This is my message to you all.

[Devotee:] I want to thank you very much because, in the last month, since you gave me initiation, I have felt so much more strength to chant harinama.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Disciples should not give thanks to Gurudeva. Do you understand? They are not qualified to give thanks to him. They should always be begging mercy.

[Devotee:] Can I have some more mercy so I can chant better please?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] In my classes I am giving my everything to you all. I am giving this without any cost, but how much you take and preserve is up to you. It depends on you. If you are like a bird you can take a little water, if you are like an elephant you can take more, and if you can still take more, then do that.

[Devotee:] I have a girlfriend back home and she is not so interested in Krsna Consciousness. How can I cultivate her in Krsna Consciousness without being too forceful?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I am not interested in girlfriends and boyfriends. Keep me out of that. I am only concerned with pure bhakti. If you want that, I can give it, but from where can I give you girlfriends or boyfriends? You should follow the instructions I am giving without cost. You should read Jaiva Dharma, Manah-Siksa, and Sri Upadesmrta.

[New devotee:] What book should I read first?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Jaiva Dharma and Bhagavad-gita.

[Devotee:] Our parampara acaryas are nitya siddhas. Are there any examples of any sadhaka has become liberated and an acarya.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] There are so many. Someone from that side (Goloka), and not having experiences of this world, cannot preach; they cannot help us. Only those devotees who have practiced bhakti-yoga can be acaryas. By practicing they have gradually come to ruci, taste, then asakti, so much attachment to Krsna, then rati and then prema, and who are serving Radha and Krsna or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The devotees who are of madhyama-adhikari, who have passed through all the processes and have become uttama-bhagavata can preach more than those from there (Goloka). They can help more because they know everything.

A madhyama-adhikari can help more than the maha-bhagavatas can. They cannot help so much. They cannot give their association, and we are not qualified to understand them. In other words, if Srila Sukadeva Gosvami came to you naked, what would you do? You would not be able to appreciate Him. A madhyama-adhikari who is going to touch (MM) uttama-bhagavata is the best personality for our association.

[Sripad Aranya Maharaja:] But Srila Narottama das Thakura preached everywhere – and he has come from there (Goloka).

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] But he was here taking initiation also. He attained realization from Srila Lokanath Gosvami and Srila Jiva Gosvami. An uttama-mahabhagavata will have to come as a devotee in the stage of madhyama-adhikari. They will have to act like they are coming from here; they will have to accept the role of madhyama-adhikari, or else they cannot preach. This is very hard to understand. All disciples will think very strongly, without any doubts, that My Gurudeva has come from Goloka Vrndavana and is an associate of Radha-Krsna, or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. He is like Krsna – very merciful – and he is liberated. They must think like this. They should think that his wooden sandals and all his paraphernalia are transcendental. Do you understand?

[Devotee:] How can I serve you? I asked yesterday, but the kirtana was so loud that I could not hear your answer.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You can serve me by engaging body, mind and words, all your senses and even by your mood. You can serve by all means – by wealth, by distributing and reading books, and also by having great affection for others. In this way you can serve.

[Radha-Madhava:] There are many services to do now. I want to know in which service I should completely fix my mind.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Try to fix your mind in harinama kirtana and japa. This is first. Pray to Nama Prabhu, who is not less than Krsna and Srimati Radhika. In fact, Nama Prabhu is more powerful even than Krsna. So pray to them: "Please make me qualified to serve you in all respects." Then, serve with your senses, mind, words and everything you possess.

If you concentrate your mind only on chanting and not eating, then you will die after two, three, or four days. So take some prasada, because you will have to maintain your body. As long as your body is there, you will have to maintain it. But don't be attached to that. Try to be attached to the pure name. We do not have darsana of Krsna, but He is present in the form of the name. Have this strong mood, and then you will be able to perform all activities like Ambarish Maharaja and Prahlada Maharaja.

sri-prahlada uvaca
sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam

["Prahlada Maharaja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Visnu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words) – these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.5.23)]

Maintain the mood that: "I am servant of all," not a temple commander or temple superintendent. One should think, "My gurudeva has told and inspired me to serve all, to preach to and to have love and affection for all." He should think, "I am servant of all;" otherwise he cannot do anything. All preachers should think "I am a servant of all." He should not be the monarch of all, or else he will be lose in false ego. Be very polite and humble. Everyone should behave gently and sweetly with all others.

[Devotee:] I want to know what we should think about you coming in our dreams, and giving instruction and darsana there.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I don't want to come in dreams. You should come in your real position. Dreams will never do anything. I see that all are pursuing dreaming. Do not dream. If you are drinking water or eating in a dream, you are not really drinking water or eating. I do not have any much faith in dreams of conditioned souls. Dreams are only for realized souls.

[Devotee:] But how will I know what to do when I have such a dream?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If something is good, you should follow it, and if it is bad then reject it.

[Devotee:] But what if we see you there?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Why not come in real life.

Gaurapremanande!

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