

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

AN INTRODUCTION

University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona - May 4, 2003

[Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja spent two weeks in Tucson, Arizona, to write and to rest and receive medical treatment. While there, he gave a class in the Student Union of the University of Arizona. About sixty people were present – half devotees and half students of the University and local residents of Tucson. Srila Maharaja's doctor was also in the audience, and Srila Maharaja helped him and all others present to understand how they can remain in their present occupations and become Krsna conscious at the same time. After offering his "heart-touching" obeisances to his diksa-guru and to our Srila Prabhupada, he began thus:

You should know my relationship with your Prabhupada. He is my siksa-guru and also the godbrother of my spiritual master. He took sannyasa, the renounced order, from my spiritual master, Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and I did too – so we are also godbrothers. We are also very intimate friends. I have known him since 1946, and have served and obeyed him since then. He is Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja and I am Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja. I accepted sannyasa in 1954 and he accepted it in 1959, so with respect to the renounced order, I am senior to him. I taught him how to make a danda (the sannyasa staff) and how to wear these saffron clothes, and he was very pleased with me. He thus shared with me so many Krsna consciousness truths.

He first met his Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada, eighty years ago in India, and at that time he received the order to go to Western countries to preach in the English language. He was delayed and came to the West after about 40 years. He wanted to take me with him to the Western countries, especially to New York where he first began to preach. He ordered me to send him all his books, which I did. I also sent him Radha-Krsna deities, mrdangas, karatalas, and so many kinds of sweets and other paraphernalia. He wrote over 400 letters to me, and confided to me in one letter that we have a transcendental relation that cannot be destroyed.

How did he come to America? By Scindia Shipping Lines – over the sea, not by airplane – carrying some books like Bhagavad Gita and his translation of the Srimad Bhagavatam. At that time he was penniless. First he came to Boston and then went to New York. In a garden – a park – he used to sing with karatalas, chanting with his eyes closed: Sri Krsna Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda, Sri Advaita Gadadhara Srivasadi Gaura-bhakta-vrnda / Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Tears flowed from his eyes as he sang, and his heart melted. In that park there were so many hippies – drinking alcohol and engaging in many illicit activities. They came and surrounded him; and when he sang, they would dance and sometimes offer him their bottles of wine. After some time, he turned all those 'hippies' into 'happies' and their lives were changed. Thousands of hippies became happy and followed him. They began to meditate and worship the Supreme Lord; thus they became very happy.

He used to write me from all the places in which he was preaching. In a couple of years he translated many Indian scriptures and wrote many books, and his books have been translated into all the prominent languages of the world. He preached in the mountains, on islands like Hawaii, in forests like Saranagati in Canada, in the desert, and in so many countries around the world. His voice has reached everywhere, and his books have helped so many to realize the truths of Krsna Consciousness. He also established numerous preaching centers, farms for cow protection and schools; but when he left this world, what happened?

Now there are no gosals (cowsheds) because there are no (NO) longer any cows, and almost all the preaching centers are going to be closed because there are no students or devotees. After he left, all of his sannyasis except one or two left the mission; so many brahmacharis left as well. Ladies, who were not married and had been preaching, distributing books, establishing schools and doing so much service, also became weak and left. Many became householders and some turned against this philosophy and mission. I do not want to mention their names, but I know the formerly responsible leaders. Why did it happen? We should try to analyze this history.

First, a person must realize that worldly life is neither peaceful nor happy. There are so many problems in this world. One may be a beautiful lady or gentleman, wealthy and talented, with a good job; still, one day he or she will be old. No one can avoid this, not even with the help of thousands and thousands of doctors and scientists. When we become old, our beauty will go away – our teeth, eyesight and everything else will become weak and we will have to use a cane to walk.

The doctors will also have to experience this. Doctors are highly respected because they are dedicated to discovering illnesses and finding cures for their patients. They are taking the burden of care for that patient, thinking day and night, "How is he now? How can I take care of him?" The doctor thinks of how he will cure the patient, but he doesn't think of God – he has no time for God. One day, death will quickly come and will not give him a moment to think of anything. Even if we realize these facts and have thus left our houses, position, wealth and all attachments, and even if we have followed and taken initiation from a bona fide guru, if we have no taste in chanting and remembering Krsna's pastimes, our position is very critical.

This time is very critical for all devotees, as shown by the example of ISKCON after the departure of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. All the devotees became weak because they had not developed real taste for bhakti. They had given up their jobs, wealth and everything else, but they did not develop a taste for bhakti, nor did they even have nistha, the determination of mind to do bhajana. To develop these qualities, a high class of association (sadhu-sanga) is needed.

The qualification of a sadhu is that he has realized the meaning of the scriptures. Simply knowing the scriptures will not do; he should be realized by practicing bhakti-yoga. One who can tolerate all difficult situations and can reconcile all the conflict and confusion in this world, who is not attached to sense gratification and worldly things, is really a sadhu devotee. If one associates with such a sadhu he may be saved – otherwise not. That is why it is stated in Caitanya-caritamṛta:

sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya.

["The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success." (Sri Caitanya-Caritamṛta 22.54)]

If we associate with a pure sadhu, we can realize something about bhakti. We can then be like Sri Prahlada Maharaja, Srila Haridasa Thakura, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Santana Gosvami and your Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. Srila Swami Maharaja was really a sadhu. He preached throughout the entire world and he also sent me to do the same. He told me, "My devotees are in trouble and many problems are coming. They are becoming weak and lifeless; so you should go and help them."

I have come only for this purpose – not for wealth, reputation or any other material gain. At the old age of 84 I have traveled around the world about 16 times and all those who meet with me are attracted, especially sincere, senior devotees of Srila Swami Maharaja. Even those who have left the sannyasa order are now coming to me. Srila Swami Maharaja requested me at the time of his departure to help. He requested me to come to his bedside in Vrndavana, and when I approached him there he took my hands into his and began to weep. He requested me to please help his devotees. He told me that he had collected so many devotees, more than 10,000, but he had no more time to train them. He also told me in Bengali that he had collected so many monkeys but could not fully train them, so he wanted me to help them realize who he really was and what was his mission in this world.

The process to become happy is quite easy, but we must try to follow it. The Supreme Lord has created this world. Who is the Supreme Lord? The Lord is one without a second. There are not different gods for Americans, Indians, Christians, Hindus and Muslims – there is only one. The names are different, but they have similar meanings. What is the meaning of God? G – generator, O – operator and

D – destroyer. In both the Sanskrit and Arabic language, God has the same meaning. Within a second He can create, demolish, and again create entire worlds and universes. He is very powerful and merciful, and He also has some form, although it is not worldly or material.

His form is transcendental. In the Bible it has been told that God created man in His own image. What is the meaning? God has a transcendental form, and the human entity has a similar form. If God had no form, from where would the forms of this world come? How would God bestow His mercy? This is why the Bible says that man is created in the image of God.

Muslims also cannot deny that God has a form. In their Koran it has been written that Allah has a form, so how can they deny this? God has a transcendental form and He is very merciful. Sometimes He will manifest that transcendental form to those who serve and pray to Him.

I know from scriptures that Jesus went to India as a young man, and when he was there he traveled to various holy places. He went to South India and Jagannatha Puri, where he saw the deities of Krsna. There, all the devotees called Him Krsna, but the Oriyan pronunciation sounds like Krooshna. We call Him Krsna and they call Him Krooshna. Then, in Western countries, Jesus wanted to tell of Krsna or Krooshna, but His pronunciation sounded like Christos. Krishna – Krooshna – Christos – and then Christ. So God is one.

What is the process to receive the Lord's mercy? That Supreme Lord has invested all His unlimited powers and complete mercy in His holy names, and you can chant any of these holy names: Christ, Krooshna, Krsna, Allah, Hoodah or God.

If Jesus is the son of the Supreme Lord, then the Father must be like His son or His son should be like his Father. Like father like son, like son like father. If Jesus has a human form, then his Father must have a human form – not the form of a cat, a dog, or a pig, and not formless. He must have a beautiful form. We pray to His beautiful form and nature with such powerful names of God as: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. If you chant this even one time in your life, you will gradually develop honor for Krsna and after that you will have transcendental realization.

There was a dacoit named Valmiki, and he used to kill everyone who passed through his forest and steal all their possessions. He killed countless people. One day, a great realized sage named Narada Rsi came and asked him why he is doing such sinful things. Valmiki answered, "To protect and maintain my life and family members."

At first, Valmiki had also wanted to kill Narada Rsi, but Narada had said, "Stop!" By Narada's mystic powers Valmiki had to stop just by hearing that word. After that, Narada asked Valmiki whether the family members for whom he killed so

many persons were prepared to share his sinful reactions among themselves, and Valmiki insisted that they would certainly do so. Narada then requested him to go to his home and ask his family members for verification. He went home and asked his wife. She told him that according to Vedic culture it is the husband's duty to maintain his wife and children. It is up to the husband how he will do that, and he has to accept the reactions to his own deeds. The wife is called dharma-patni, the religious partner, and she thus shares in his religious merits – not in his sinful demerits. He then went to his parents and they told him that they had nourished him and maintained him since he was born, and now that they were very old it was his duty to maintain them. It was not their duty to share his sins. They told him that they could not do that.

Valmiki then realized something about material life and returned to Narada, and Narada then took some water and threw it on Valmiki's head. Valmiki began to see in trance that all the animals and people whom he had killed were in endless lines, holding their weapons and ready to kill him. Narada again sprinkled water on him, Valmiki regained his external consciousness, and he fell flat on the ground and prayed to Narada, "Please save me."

The great sage Narada replied, "I will save you, but first you should break your bow and repeat after me, 'Rama, Rama.'" This is the name of God, who is everywhere. He is called Rama because He gives pleasure to the hearts of all devotees." Narada told Valmiki to call "Rama" and he would thus become liberated and transcendently happy. Valmiki could not utter the name Rama. Narada Rsi then asked him if he could say "mara mara", and Valmiki said he could easily say this. Mara means "to kill." So he chanted "Maramarama", which became "Rama Rama Rama," and he was thus liberated.

If we chant with love and affection, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, or any name of God such as Krsna Krsna, Radhe Radhe, Rama Rama, God or Hoodah, that Supreme Lord will come and manifest His transcendental form. He will take you with Him and you will be happy forever. Why? There is a reason.

In this world we see that if you take a piece of stone or iron from the ground and throw it into the air, it will fall back to the earth. This is the law of gravitation. We see that all things made from earth will fall back to their source. On the other hand, if you release a gas balloon, it will float free of the earth into the air and you cannot imagine where it will go. Where do the flames of a fire go? They are attracted in the direction of the sun and rise up through the air. The theory is that parts of the whole are naturally attracted to their source. Similarly, when we, parts of the whole, eternal servants of God, meet together with Him, only then can we be happy.

I have explained that although we are conditioned souls and suffering so much, we are not realizing our soul and are not thinking about our spiritual

responsibilities. But we can very easily be happy in our life. We can have some realization of this, and that will come by chanting the holy name.

How can those who have so many responsibilities have time for chanting? We look to the gopis of Vrndavana who are the highest personifications of love. God is love and love is God. What is the meaning of love? This worldly sense gratification is not really love. Transcendental love is a phenomenon beyond this world. It is an exchange between the soul and the Supersoul, not between one material body and another. That is material sense gratification, whereas gopi-prema, love for Krsna in the mood of the gopis, is the highest example of love of God. The gopis remember God all the time, even in their householder life. They used to chant and sing all day: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti." They would chant the names of the Supreme Lord.

While sweeping their houses, they would sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

While they were milking the cows they would sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

When putting their babies to sleep, they would sing to them: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

All the gopis would wake early in the morning, at 4:00 am, and while churning yogurt and doing other household work they would sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

There is no need to constantly chant on beads. While driving in your car, you can sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

Even if you are a doctor and giving injections, you can sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

If you are a university student, give up thinking bad things and sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

There is no need to do exercises like repeatedly sitting down and standing up during prayer, as we see in some religions. Just sing: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti."

Nor are we like the yogis – sitting straight and still. Nowadays, in towns and cities around the world, especially in Japan and Thailand, I have seen thousands of persons doing "yoga". This is not yoga. Yoga means to connect the soul to the Supersoul. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came to preach this mission of bhakti-yoga. You should try to connect your soul to the Supersoul. This is a very easy process – simply chanting: "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti Govinda

Damodara Madhaveti," and "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare."

This is the easiest method during this lifetime, and also after we leave this world. The soul has a transcendental form, otherwise how could it be captured in this physical body? A time will come when the soul will give up this body, and then this very dear body will be put in a grave, burned to ashes, or eaten by worms and turned to stool. This is the transformation of this body.

We should try to somehow maintain our lives and also help others, but we should know who we really are, how we can be happy, and what is the process of chanting the holy names. I have not come to make you Hindu or to change your religion. I have come to tell you that you do not have to give up your religion, home, job and family. Just chant and remember the Supreme Lord. This is the only method – chanting the holy name. Without the holy name, nobody can save you. When you die, you cannot take any wealth from this world. Even a penny or a single hair on your head cannot be taken from here. Then why are you working so hard to enjoy this temporary body? You should maintain your body, but only to realize the soul and the Supersoul so that you can be happy forever.

Your purpose is not to be in this world. When you die, you will have to give up your father, property and all your possessions – and you will not know your destination. But by the practice of chanting you can know all these things very easily. The problems of this world will not be able to touch you, and if problems do arise you will be able to place your feet on the head of all those problems and be happy.

I request all of you, whether you are engineers, doctors, wealthy or poor, ladies or gentlemen, politicians, presidents, prime ministers, or anything in this world: just chant and remember Krsna, and help others by nagara-sankirtana – loud congregational chanting. If a yogi is in trance and hears some ordinary sound, he will be disturbed. But if you are chanting "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare," then all your senses will be controlled automatically. There will be no need to try to control them separately. This is the highest process, so you must try to follow it.

Gaura premanande.

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