

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

HOW FAITH COMES

Los Angeles, May 10, 2003

I am very happy that a great number of senior and sincere disciples of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja are coming to hear hari-katha. We should hear about the real nature of bhakti – not the kind of hearing in which the subject matter goes in one ear and out the other, but truly following and getting genuine realization. Full bhakti is so high that it is rare to find one who has realized it. We begin from the point of sraddha, where the first and smallest fraction of bhakti manifests. We must know what is sraddha, how it comes, and what are its effects. Keep this in your hearts and be determined to follow these teachings.

In ancient times there was a very beautiful and qualified young boy. He became attached to a prostitute, however, and because of that he gave up all his wealth and position and left his wife and children. What is the nature of prostitutes? They show affection artificially, and their only purpose is to take money – nothing else. They do not consider whether or not a person is qualified and beautiful. They do not want a relationship; they only want money.

After that young boy had given all his wealth to the prostitute and she saw that he was unable to give her anything more, she ordered him, "Do not come to me!" And she kicked him out. The boy thought, "Oh, what have I done?! I have made a great mistake." He was deeply lamenting and his heart was broken; he wanted to commit suicide. He left the prostitute's house as night was falling and entered a forest; and as he did so it became very dark and began to rain heavily. He wanted to die, but to die is not so easy. He lost his resolve and sought shelter to pass the night. Deep within the jungle he discovered an old, dilapidated temple in which he took refuge. He continued to lament and weep, wishing to give up that prostitute, but images of her came to his mind again and again.

What became of that prostitute? After that young boy left she remembered, "He was so beautiful, and he loved me from his heart." Repenting, she thought, "Oh, I have made a mistake; I should not have kicked him out. I should go and satisfy him and bring him back."

She asked many people which way the boy had gone. She followed him into that dark forest and, seeking protection from the heavy rains she entered the same temple. It was so dark that she could not see, and she took shelter in another area of the temple. She repented and wept for that boy throughout the night, and he was weeping for her. The next morning the two met in the temple. They began to weep, they apologized to each other, and they returned to the prostitute's house.

Fortunately, that previous day was the appearance day of Lord Nrsimhadeva, and that old temple was Lord Nrsimhadeva's temple. The couple was fasting and not criticizing anyone – only weeping, weeping, and weeping. They spent the night without sleeping or eating – within the temple of Lord Nrsimhadeva. This is ajnata-sukrti (spiritual pious activity

performed without the performer's knowledge). What was the power of his ajnata-sukrti? That boy became Prahlada Maharaja in his next life.

How did this ajnata-sukrti occur? Why did the boy go to the temple of Lord Nrsimhadeva on the day of His appearance? Why did the prostitute follow him and why did they meet there? This was the mercy of Krsna – no doubt at all. We sometimes call such incidences accidents, but what was that accident? There was some mercy of Krsna. We are part and parcel and eternal servants of Krsna by constitution. Our constitutional form is to serve Him, but being tatastha-sakti (Krsna's marginal potency) and having come from the marginal line (the area between the spiritual and material world), this service has not manifest yet.

You should know that there are many kinds of jivas. Some are coming from Baladeva Prabhu in Goloka Vrndavana, and they are serving Radha and Krsna conjugal eternally. They have not seen or realized this material world. Some jivas are coming from Baladeva in Dvaraka, and they are serving Krsna in His form of Dvarakadhisa. Some are coming from His manifestation called Maha-Sankarsana, and they are serving in Vaikuntha. They are serving incarnations like Vaikunthesvara Narayana, Sri Ramacandra, Nrsimhadeva and others. Finally, those who are coming from the incarnation of Maha-Sankarsana known as Karanadakasayi Visnu are in the marginal (tatastha) region.

We have all come from there, not from Goloka. Those who have received and tasted the service of Krsna can never fall down. They cannot become conditioned souls. If one has gone there by developing bhakti from sraddha all the way to prema, how can he fall down? There is no mahamaya in Goloka; only Yogamaya. She will always help the devotees, and therefore there is no question of forgetting Krsna there.

The conditioned souls have come from the marginal line – from the illuminated glance of Karanadakasayi Visnu. The realized souls coming from Baladeva Prabhu, the kayavyuha (bodily expansions) of Radhika, and also the conditioned souls, are all parts and parcels of Krsna. Krsna has so much unconditional love and causeless mercy towards all living entities. He cannot tolerate to see us suffering the miseries of adhyatmika (bodily or mental), adhibhautika (caused by others) and adhidaivika (caused by nature and the demigods). Even if you are wealthy, healthy, possessed of all good qualities and have a very high position, you'll have to become old one day. All you beautiful ladies and men will be forced to grow old, and one day you will have to die. You cannot take a single farthing from this world; not even a hair from your head. The only thing you may take with you is some sukrti, or pure bhakti; otherwise you leave with nothing.

Undoubtedly, Krsna is causelessly merciful. He cannot tolerate the suffering of His minute parts, the jivas, who are His eternal servants. If we worldly people don't want our children to suffer, then how can Krsna tolerate the suffering of the jivas? He mercifully descends Himself, and sometimes He comes as His incarnations like Rama, Nrsimha, Kalki, Vamana, and so on. Jesus Christ is also a messenger of God.

Sometimes Krsna comes Himself with all His associates. He displays poignant and heart-breaking pastimes as Rama, and sometimes He manifests the pastimes of Nrsimha Bhagavan who, in a moment, killed a person who had a boon not to die in the day or night, by any weapon or any mantra, or in the sea, sky or land. He was killed in a moment – because he tried to torture a bhakta like Prahlada. If anyone commits an offence or acts neglectfully to the Vaisnavas, Krsna will come in some way. Sometimes He sends His

Sudarsana-cakra as He did to protect Ambarisa Maharaja, sometimes He appears as Nrsimhadeva and sometimes as Sri Rama.

Who is Sri Rama? He is Krsna Himself. What was he doing? He was bitterly weeping for Sita, "Oh Sita, Oh Sita," and he became mad. This is such a heart-rending pastime that everyone weeps simply by hearing it. When Svayam Bhagavan appeared in his original form as Sri Krsna, Nanda-nandana, Vrajendra-nandana, He performed miraculous pastimes that even Rama and Sri Nrsimha could not do. He called to everyone by His flute-playing. He also called the conditioned souls, but they could not hear. Even Krsna's cowherd boy friends could not hear. Who was able to hear that flute song? Only the gopis heard it. He is calling us all. He is sending messengers like Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja to the Western countries, telling him, "Oh, go and call them. They should come to Vrndavana and meet Me there. If they cannot come, I will create Vrndavana within their minds and hearts." How merciful He is. That is why He made some rules and regulations – so that if we can follow or even a little, we will very easily become His associates and we can dance with Him.

Krsna appeared in the jail of Kamsa, and then He quickly left that place, went to Vraja, and then He became the son of Nanda and Yasoda. During His first ten years He performed all His Vraja pastimes, and after that He went to Mathura, killed Kamsa and all his associates, went to Dvaraka, and later enacted the Mahabharata war. In these pastimes many demons were killed and the sadhus were saved, and if anyone hears all these pastimes, or even one of them, Krsna may touch his heart and he will gradually attain sraddha. Without the mercy of Krsna, there can be no sraddha – nothing is there.

I explained how Prahlada, in his past life, through sukrti and the special mercy of Krsna, was unknowingly led to the temple of Lord Nrsimhadeva. This pastime was exhibited to show the power of sraddha to the people in general. We know that Prahlada is an eternal associate of Bhagavan Sri Nrsimhadeva. He cannot fall under the influence of the external energy and he has no need of sukrti. It was his partial manifestation who performed this pastime.

We see that Drona and Dhara performed great austerities. Lord Brahma gave them the boon that the Supreme Lord will appear as their son and they will have love for Him in a parental mood. This boon was given only by the mercy of Sri Krsna, and thus He took birth in Gokula. In sastra it has been said that Drona became Nanda Baba and Dhara became Yasoda-maiya. If we very deeply examine the mood of the sastras and the explanations of our acaryas, however, we will see that Nanda Baba and Yasoda are the eternal father and mother of Krsna – with no beginning and no end. Drona and Dhara were Vasu Gandharvas who performed worship desiring that parental mood. Subsequently, they took birth in Vrndavana and merged into Nanda Baba and Yasoda-maiya. Later when that lila was finished in this world, Drona and Dhara became the neighbors of Nanda Baba and Yasoda in Goloka Vrndavana, with the mood of vatsalya-prema for Krsna. Nanda Baba is not only in one form. As Krsna appears in all the universes, engaging in unlimited pastimes with all His associates, Nanda Maharaja appears along with Him. These topics are very confidential.

The root of all sraddha, gained knowingly or unknowingly, is the mercy of Krsna. This mercy comes in two ways – either by the mercy of Krsna or by the mercy of guru. We see that Narada Rsi, by his special causeless mercy, is much more merciful than Krsna Himself. Krsna has given him this mood by telling him, "Go and help them." Who is Narada? Narada is Guru, and Guru is the essence of the mercy of Krsna – the embodiment of Krsna's mercy.

samsara davanala lidha loka
tranaya karunya ghanaghanatvam
praptasya kalyana gunarnavasya
vande guroh sri caranaravindam

[Just as a raincloud extinguishes a blazing forest fire by showering its rain upon it, Sri Gurudeva, by his rain of divine mercy, delivers the people burning in the forest fire of material existence, suffering the threefold miseries – adhyatmika, abhibhautika and adhidaivika. I offer prayers unto the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva, who manifest when Krsna's mercy becomes thick and who is an ocean of auspicious qualities (Sri Gurvastakam verse 1).]

The embodiment of Krsna's mercy is Sri Gurudeva. The root of Sri Gurudeva is Baladeva Prabhu, and Narada is an incarnation of Baladeva Prabhu. The complete mercy of Baladeva Prabhu has become a form, and that form is called Narada – the root of our entire guru-parampara. Krsna ordered Narada, "Go. You can go without an invitation to this world, to Svarga, to Brahma-loka and Siva-loka, and also to Vaikuntha, Ayodya, Dvaraka and Mathura. You can go everywhere. It is My boon that you will have millions and millions of forms so that you can preach everywhere, and millions of tongues to do kirtana."

narada muni, bajaya vina, 'radhika-ramana' name
nama amani, udita hoye, bhakata-gita-same

[The supremely rasika Narada Muni plays his vina, singing the names of Sri Radhika-ramana. Hearing this kirtana, Sri Radha and Sri Radhika-ramana Themselves immediately descend, dancing and tasting the bhava of Their own devotees. (Narada Muni, verse 1)]

You should try to remember all that was explained about sraddha, especially transcendental sraddha, and particularly lobhamayi-sraddha.*[See endnote] You can also write it down to fix your remembrance. That high class of transcendental lobhamayi-sraddha depends on the mercy of Krsna and His associates. Moreover, Krsna's mercy is dependent upon the mercy of His devotees. Krsna will not hear your entreaties or your prayers. However, if you satisfy a Guru like Narada or my Gurudeva, they will tell Krsna, "Please be merciful upon this person." I know this; I satisfied my Gurudeva.

Krsna is here; He is everywhere, so why does He not see us? It is because He is always engaged in Vrndavana's sweet pastimes, and forgets everything.

sad-anga saranagati haibe jahara

tahara prarthana sune sri nanda kumara

[The prayers of one who submits unconditionally to this sixfold surrender are heard by Sri Nanda-kumara. (Sad-anga Saranagati, Six Fold Surrender, verse 5, by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura)]

Narada will say, "I have cursed Nalakuvera and Manigriva. Krsna should always remember this and uphold my word." Brahma will remind Krsna, "I have given a boon to Hiranyakasipu and others. Please keep my promise." Brahma also made a request to Hanuman. "Please keep my oath; I have given a boon to Indrajit that he can bind anyone with the nagapasa (snake rope)." He bound Hanuman with that nagapasa, but Brahma had also given Hanuman a boon that no one could bind him. In order to allow Brahma's boon to Indrajit to stand, Hanuman mercifully allowed himself to be bound by Indrajit, and then later easily escaped.

Although Krsna is merciful, his devotees like Narada and Prahlada Maharaja are even more merciful. Nrsimhadeva wanted to give many boons to Prahlada Maharaja. He told him, "Any benediction you like, you may have." Prahlada replied, "I wish not to be given any boon. This is my request." Lord Nrsimhadeva said, "You must ask for something." Prahlada thought, "What should I do?" and then he replied, "Please liberate my father even though he has offended both You and me." The Lord answered, "This has been done already. You should ask for anything else. My darsana should not go in vain." Then Prahlad said, "I want to take all the miseries of the world. I want to be merciful to the conditioned souls and take their suffering so that they may be liberated and engaged in Your service."

How magnanimous Prahlada is! By his mercy so many demons and their children became bhaktas.

When mercy is bestowed by a special kind of realized rasika bhavuka Vaisnava, one can receive lobhamayi-sraddha. If anyone hears Sri Caitanya-caritamrta and Srimad Bhagavatam from Sukadeva Gosvami, Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, he must be delivered. He will receive lobhamayi sraddha.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has said "adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sanga..." There are so many kinds of sadhu-sanga. Sadhu-sanga will come first, and from this, sukrti will come. Otherwise, sukrti cannot come. Although they don't need anything, sadhus will go to your door and beg, "Oh, can you give me a glass of water?" Why? It is said in the Srimad Bhagavatam:

mahad-vicalanam nram
grhinam dina-cetasam
nihsreyasaya bhagavan
kalpate nanyatha kvacit

[O my lord, O great devotee, persons like you move from one place to another, not for their own interests but for the sake of poor-hearted grhasthas [householders].

Otherwise, you have no interest in going from one place to another. (Srimad Bhagavatam 10:8:4)]

It was explained earlier that sraddha can only come by the causeless mercy of Krsna and Vaisnavas, especially Vaisnavas. What did Srila Rupa Gosvami mean when he wrote "adau sraddha?" In the beginning there must be sadhu-sanga. Without this, the tendency to serve Krsna cannot come in the heart. Those who are serving Guru can discover what happiness comes by serving Krsna. Our transcendental form will be realized and we will be engaged in Krsna's service. Those who are realized, like Narada and others, can preach very boldly and strongly to anybody.

Sraddha, the seed of bhakti, is the tendency to serve Krsna. If we think that we have sraddha in our hearts, but we have no tendency to serve Krsna and His devotees, then we actually have no sraddha. Sadhu-sanga gives us hari-katha – so abundantly and sweetly. We hear from sadhus that Krsna is the Supreme Lord with all kinds of power, yet He was bound by the ropes of mother Yasoda. That rope was not an ordinary rope, but a rope made of sneha, transcendental love and affection. Hearing all these pastimes of Krsna, from beginning to end, a tendency may come: "I should serve Krsna like His friends Sridhama and Subala," or "I should serve Krsna like mother Yasoda and Nanda Baba," or "I want to serve conjugal Krsna and Radhika in the mood of the gopis." A specific tendency will come. When will it come? After serving for some time with real sraddha, as defined in the words of Krsna, in the words of scriptures and in the in the words of Gurudeva, a specific service mood will manifest in our hearts. Sraddha is the beginning, and it will develop only by sadhu-sanga.

Without sadhu-sanga (association with pure devotees) you cannot progress. You are chanting and remembering in your houses and in your apartments, but are you not realizing something more here? Are you inspired or sleeping here? Have you come for wealth? No? This is good. The devotees and I have called you, and that call has been answered by devotees who have come from Los Angeles, England, Brazil, Germany, France, Australia, Canada and Hawaii, and Krsna dasa (Srila Maharaja's servant and kirtana leader) is here from India.

We have called you only to give you the tendency to serve Krsna – but the service of Krsna alone will not suffice. You must serve all His associates. The Vraja-gopis are the highest, and of all the Vraja-gopis Srimati Radhika is highest. The service of Srimati Radhika is inspiring you. If even one of you is inspired, I will think that I am successful in my mission.

Gaura Premanande

[*Endnote: Paramarthika-sraddha (transcendental faith) is of two kinds: 1) sastrartha avadharanamayi-sraddha - faith which brings about engagement in the path of bhakti inspired by the governing principles of scripture, and 2) bhagavat-lila-madhurya-lobhamayi-sraddha - faith which brings about engagement in bhakti due to lobha or intense longing, arisen out of some extreme good fortune by hearing the lila-madhurya of Bhagavan.]

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