

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
SRI PRAHLADA MAHARAJA – CONFIDENTIAL FACTS
Badger, California: May 14, 2003 (evening)

[Srila Narayana Maharaja spoke this class two years, on the appearance day of Lord Nrsimhadeva. We sent out the first half and, as the Lords appearance day is again approaching (May 22) we are sending out this never-before-published second half.]

Today is a very auspicious day – the appearance day of Sri Nrsimhadeva.

Prahlada and Bali Maharaja

When Sri Krsna's incarnation, Lord Vamanadeva, came to the palace of Bali Maharaja in the form of a dwarf-brahmana, his feet and legs were naturally very small. He told Bali Maharaja, "I want something from you."

Bali Maharaja became happy and said, "Ask for any boon – a very beautiful wife, a kingdom, heaven, wealth, reputation or a position. I can easily give you this."

Lord Vamanadeva replied, "I am a brahmana boy. I am always satisfied. I don't want anything unnecessary. I want only three steps of land, so that I may sit there and do bhajana (chant the Lord's names and glories, and remember Him)."

Bali Maharaja began to laugh and joke with that young brahmana. He said, "You are just a boy – a child – and your intelligence is also very small like that of a child. I want to give you everything imaginable but you do not want that. But alright, I shall give you the three steps of land, as you desire."

Lord Vamanadeva asked Bali Maharaja to do sankalpa (a ceremony (a ceremony to make a vow) that would consecrate the offering and finalize it.

Bali Maharaja's guru Sukracarya was actually a materialist, and was thus worried about his own security. He warned Bali, "Be careful. Don't make a vow to give him anything. Don't believe him. He is Visnu, not a dwarf. He is the imperishable Supreme Personality of Godhead Visnu. Accepting Kasyapa Muni as his father and Aditi as his mother, He has now appeared to fulfill the interests of the demigods. He is cheating you. Give something that will not be harmful to you. Give something, but not in a way that he can take everything."

Bali Maharaja replied, "If he is Visnu, he will somehow take everything anyway. Everything already belongs to Visnu, God; so why should I not give what he asks? And, if he is not Visnu, he will not be able to take anything except the three steps of land."

Lord Vamanadeva then said, "If Sukracarya does not assist you in making the vow, I will do so personally. Now take some water from this vessel and do sankalpa."

While Bali Maharaja was preparing to do the sankalpa, Sukracarya thought, "He did not obey me, and now Visnu will take everything. I must prevent that water from coming out of the vessel so that the vow will not be completed."

Because the water was not coming out, Lord Vamanadeva took a small stick and pierced a hole in the spout of that vessel, and blood at once began to flow from it. From where had the blood come? Sukracarya was a powerful mystic yogi. He had made himself become very small and had entered the vessel to stop the water from pouring from the spout – and now he had become blind in one eye. Of course, because he always had one eye on worldly things and not transcendental truths, he was actually blind in one eye even before this incident.

Persons who create problems for those who are coming to do bhajana and to accept a guru are blind in one eye. So don't give any such problems to your husband, children, wife, friends or anyone else. If any associate of yours wants to do bhajana, tell them they are doing very well and say, "I bless you. I will help you." If your husband or wife is trying to do bhajana, don't stop him or her. If you do so, you will become blind in one eye.

After the vow was completed, clever Lord Vamanadeva at once became so tall that his body extended from the Earth to the sky. By this pastime he became also known as Trivikrama, for he took three giant steps. His first step encompassed the entire lower half of the universe and his second step covered the upper half. Now it seemed that there was nothing remaining for Bali Maharaja to give. Vamanadeva asked, "Where should I put my third step?"

Sri Vamanadeva was very clever, and Bali Maharaja was also clever. Bali replied, "I am fully surrendering to you. Please take my body; place your foot on my head." He did atma-nivedana, full surrender of the body, words, mind and heart. But what was the result? Vamanadeva arrested him and bound him with the ropes of Varuna. There was a great roar of lamentation in all directions, but Bali Maharaja was nonetheless fixed in his determination to serve and love the Lord.

It appeared that Lord Vamanadeva was punishing Bali Maharaja, especially when He ordered that Bali would now have to go to the lower planetary system to reside. Bali would lose his usurped kingdom. But it was not an ordinary hellish planet to which the Lord sent Bali. This planet had been created for Bali by the Lord's own desire, and it was more opulent than any heaven. He even had the famous demigod architect, Visvakarma, build Bali Maharaja a palace that was far more opulent than that of the King of heaven.

Sri Prahlada Maharaja at once arrived, along with Lord Brahma, and asked Vamanadeva, "What are you doing Lord? He has given you everything, and you are binding him?" This was an indirect glorification. Tears came in the eyes of Prahlada Maharaja out of ecstatic affection for the Lord, and he also had great affection for Bali Maharaja. Bali Maharaja was the son of Virocana, who was the son of Sri Prahlada Maharaja. Bali Maharaja was thus the grandson of Prahlada Maharaja.

Lord Vamanadeva saw Prahlada Maharaja was weeping due to his love for his family member, and he therefore very humbly said, "O Bali Maharaja, you may ask for any benediction."

Being very clever, Bali Maharaja replied, "In my palace in Sutala there are 49 gates. There is no certainty by which gate or lane I will go out or in. I request the benediction that you stand at the gate of whatever lane I pass – all the time, day and night. Thus, he made Sri Vamanadeva gatekeeper, and Vamanadeva, Visnu, happily accepted this.

Why did Vamanadeva give this benediction to Bali Maharaja? It was because of the Lord's affection for Prahlada Maharaja. Otherwise, Bali Maharaja hadn't done anything to deserve it. A donation of only a universe cannot bring this mercy of Visnu. Do you understand? No one can satisfy the Lord by wealth, position or any other material offering. Vamanadeva gave the boon to be always present in Bali Maharaja's palace – due to Prahlada Maharaja. He told Prahlada, "Always remain there in Sutala and be happy with your relatives there; and I will also always be here."

Prahlada and Banasura

Have you heard of King Banasura? He was a devotee of Lord Siva and he had thousands of arms. Aniruddha, the grandson of Lord Krsna, was in love with Banasura's daughter, Usa. Aniruddha secretly went to Banasura's palace to stealthily meet with her. Banasura found out and wanted him arrested. Aniruddha fought to protect himself, but he was finally defeated by Banasura and his army, and he was arrested.

Narada, who is also a clever personality, brought the news of this to Sri Krsna and Sri Baladeva. He told them, "Banasura has captured your grandson." At once, along with His entire army, Krsna reached there and began to fight with Banasura. Banasura used his thousand arms to fight with many clubs, arrows and other weapons; but during that battle Krsna cut off all his arms and hands except for four.

In the meantime Banasura remembered his Lord, Sankara (Lord Siva) who immediately came and began to fight on Banasura's side. Lord Sri Krsna shot a special arrow called Visnu-jvara and Sankara shot his Siva-jvara. Sankara was defeated and then remembered Parvati, who came to that spot.

There was a demigoddess named Kotara who was worshiped by Banasura, and their relationship was as mother and son. Mother Kotara was upset that Banasura's life was in danger, so she appeared on the scene. With naked body and scattered hair, she stood before Lord Krsna. Sri Krsna did not like the sight of this naked woman, and to avoid seeing her he turned his face. We see this demigoddess as a manifestation of the power of Sankara, Parvati devi.

Krsna then stopped His fighting and said, "O Sankara, O Parvati, what do you want?"

They requested, "We want that he be spared. Please don't kill him."

Krsna then said, "All right. I will bless him that he will be loyal to you, and he will properly worship you."

Why was all this enacted by the Lord? The reason is that Banasura was also in the dynasty of Sri Prahlada Maharaja. Ultimately, Krsna did not favor Banasura because of Sankara nor Parvati – nor for any reason other than Prahlada Maharaja.

Prahlada and Ravana

While Lord Visnu was in the palace of Bali Maharaja, as the gatekeeper of his entire palace, Ravana came to conquer the world. Conquering almost everywhere, he arrived in Sutala and wanted to fight with Bali Maharaja. He knew that Bali Maharaja was a very strong personality and so he desired to defeat him. However, when Lord Visnu saw Ravana coming, He simply kicked him with his toe – and at once Ravana flew very far away to Lanka. Why did He do this? It was because Ravana would have otherwise disturbed Prahlada Maharaja and his grandson Bali Maharaja. He threw Ravana from there for Prahlada Maharaja.

Prahlada and Durvasa Muni

The Puranas relate still another history. Dvaraka was once invaded by a demon named Kush, and its residents became afraid. The demon wanted to kill all the inhabitants of Dvaraka, who thus began to weep. They begged the sage and powerful yogi Durvasa Muni, "Please go, like the wind, and find our Lord. You must know where He is. Please ask Him to come at once and save us."

Durvasa went to Sutala and prayed to Lord Visnu, "The demon Kush has invaded Dvaraka and is about to kill all your citizens. Please come and save them."

Lord Visnu told him, "I am not independent of My devotees. I am under their control. If you like, you can pray to Bali Maharaja. If he orders Me to go, then I can go; otherwise I cannot.

"Aham bhakta paradhinah...I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all dependent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of all material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotees, even those who are devotees of My devotees are very dear to Me."

Durvasa then approached Bali Maharaja and said, "O Bali Maharaja, please allow Lord Visnu to go with me to save the residents of Dvaraka. Otherwise they will all die."

Bali Maharaja replied, "You are capable of performing great tasks, and you know everything. You should know that it is not for me to say whether this clever and "tricky" personality should go or not. Lord Brahma and Lord Sankara always offer obeisances to His lotus feet. How can I order him to go? It is not so easy to order the Lord to do something.

I do not know what will happen to the residents of Dvaraka, but I will not order Him to go. I cannot allow it."

Bali Maharaja did not want the Lord to leave him. He knew that the Lord can do anything by His inconceivable power. Thus, the Lord can stay in Satala and at the same time He can go to Dvaraka and save the devotees there.

Why did Bali Maharaja have such power? It is because Prahlada Maharaja was there. What an exalted devotee Prahlada Maharaja is.

Prahlada, the Preacher

You may know that Prahlada Maharaja accepted the kingdom of the world from Lord Nrsimhadeva. He never accepted the boon of Vaikuntha, salvation and so on, but he accepted the kingdom of the world. Why? He thought, "In this way I may easily preach devotion to the Lord everywhere." So if you have money, there is no harm in that. Use it in the service of Lord Sri Krsna, to preach bhakti everywhere. Then Krsna will be happy, all the devotees will be happy, Bhakti-devi will be happy and you will also be happy.

Prahlada, the Warrior

Prahlada Maharaja once visited Naimisaranya, and there he saw a sage with matted locks, who had with him a bow and arrows and a sword. It is the duty of the Vedic king to maintain the proper religious and social system of varnasrama-dharma, and therefore Prahlada asked him, "Why do you have weapons? You wear garments of a renunciate performing austerities, and at the same time you have a sword and bow and arrows. Why? I cannot allow you to do so. Either be a sage or a ksatriya warrior." If you don't agree to follow my instruction, if you like you can fight with me and try to defeat me; but I will not allow you to do this. That person said, "I accept your challenge," and he became ready to fight.

They were fighting for one day, two days, three days, four days – and Prahlada Maharaja could not defeat him. He began to wonder, "Who is he? Why am I not able to defeat Him?" He then entered a trance of meditation. In that meditation he at once saw that the same garland he had made with his own hands and given that morning to his deity of Lord Nrsimhadeva, was on the neck of the person he was fighting. Prahlada then realized, "Oh, He is a very big trickster!" and he began to laugh. He dropped his bow and arrow and exclaimed, "Lord!" The Supreme Lord then gave him darsana as Nrsimhadeva.

Prahlada Maharaja asked him, "I have promised to defeat you, but I could not. What should I do?" Lord Nrsimhadeva wanted to test him, otherwise who could fight against Him?

The Lord answered, "I am always defeated by you. Not only today, but always. You always defeat Me – by your devotion." How exalted a devotee is Prahlada Maharaja.

Prahlada and Narada

Narada Muni was once traveling, from the places of one devotee to another, telling each one, "You are the greatest recipient of Sri Krsna's mercy. He had gone from worldly devotees to Lord Brahma to Lord Siva. Then he came to Sri Prahlada Maharaja and glorified him in many ways.

In another instance Sri Narada Muni prayed to Lord Visnu, "I once received a curse from Daksa, who told me, "You will not be able to stay anywhere for more than a moment – for as long as it takes to milk a cow." Jara (old age personified) had previously come to Narada and told him, "I want to marry you." He at once fled, on his way to Goloka Vrndavana, and Jara also cursed him in the same way.

Now Narada begged Lord Visnu, "I don't care about these curses. I want to remain always in Sutala and serve you there." Why did this incident take place? Prahlada Maharaja is there, and due to this Lord Visnu always remains there.

Prahlada and Srila Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada

There are so many more teachings and glorifications of Sri Prahlada Maharaja, and that is why Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada said that everyone should read about the life of Prahlada at least 108 times. He personally also gave at least 108 lectures about Prahlada.

If you really want to be happy, don't try to gallop over Prahlada Maharaja to be in Vrndavana. Don't be mad for "goopi-prema." First be like Prahlada, gradually be like Hanuman, then the Pandavas, then Uddhava and then any servant of the gopas and gopis. You cannot attain gopi-prema before doing this. Try to follow all the instructions of Prahlada:

sra vanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-vedanam

["Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Vishnu, 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 body, mind and words) -- these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service." (SB 7.5.23)]

Try to follow Prahlada, and also follow your Guru. Don't disobey him. Always perform visrambhena gurau-seva, intimate service to Gurudeva. Follow all the instructions of the Gosvamis and be happy forever. My benediction to you: Today I will pray to Lord Krsna and Lord Nrsimhadeva for you all.

Now we will see a drama about Lord Nrsimhadeva. It must be completed before dark. At once, take the mike.

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