

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

INSIGHTS ON PASTIMES

Houston, Texas - May 30, 2003

[After visiting Los Angeles, Badger and San Francisco in California, Parama-pujyapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja traveled to Houston, Texas. During his week-long hari-katha festival in Houston, Srila Narayana Maharaja gave a series of classes in Hindi, on the glory of Srimad Bhagavatam. The following is a translation of his May 30th class, given on his order just after the class, by Sripad Visnudasa Adhikari:]

[Sripad Visnudasa Adhikari:] Srila Gurudeva explained a very important siddhanta today, from the Brahma-vimohana-lila. While all the cowherd boys and cows were imprisoned in the cave by Brahma for one year, Gargacarya told the Vrajavasis that they should get all their daughters married during that year. He said that the most auspicious astrological combination of all the planets would be occurring in that year. If all the cowherds' daughters would get married in that year, they would become saubhagya-vati, meaning their husbands would have a long life. This is how Yogamaya arranged to fulfill the desires of all the gopis to have Krsna as their husbands.

Then Gurudeva asked a question. To whom did Srimati Radhika get married? She was married to Abhimanyu, who is a shadow of Krsna. Hers was not a real marriage; rather it was like a magic show. It was a shadow of Srimati Radhika who married Abhimanyu. Radha and Krsna are not different. Srimati Radhika is part of Krsna, therefore They are not separate, and therefore there was no need of a marriage between Them.

Nanda Baba and Vrsabhanu Maharaja had decided earlier to get Them married, but Purnamasi Yogamaya discouraged them. She told them that Their marriage would not be successful as Their astrological charts did not match. Therefore, They were not married at that time.

Srila Gurudeva then explained why They were not married. When a man and woman become husband and wife, the wife leaves her family and gotra (dynasty), and she becomes like a servant of the husband. That is the way of Indian culture. In such a relationship of servitor, the happiness or bhava that Krsna wants to enjoy is not present. He married Rukmini and Satyabauma, but we never chant "Rukmini-Krsna" or "Satyabauma-Krsna". We always chant "Radha-Krsna", because the relationship that Krsna has with Radhika in parakiya-bhava is the most exalted. If Krsna would have married Radhika, this bhava would not exist. In married life one can demand that his wife leave the house, but when one is a lover there is no question of this. Instead, Srimati Radhika chastises Krsna and tells Him to go out of Her kunjra. This could not have been accomplished if Radha and Krsna were married. Thus, to maintain Their parakiya-bhava, Radha and Krsna never married.

Gurudeva then explained that parakiya-bhava is not for us to follow. Krsna is Bhagavan, and He is associating with His own hladini-sakti. Radhika is not someone separate from

Him, so the parakiya-bhava between Them is the highest spiritual truth – that cannot be copied in this material world.

Krsna is only controlled by love, and He told the gopis:

na paraye 'ham niravadya-samyujam
sva-sadhu-krtyam vibudhayusapi vah
ya mabhajan durjara-geha-srnkhalah
samvrscya tad vah pratiyatu sadhuna

[I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahma. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation. (Srimad Bhagavatam, 10.32.22)]

The gopis' love for Krsna is very high. They left everything for Him. Krsna is saying here, "I cannot leave Nanda Baba and Mother Yasoda, so your love and renunciation is very high."

Gurudeva then said that if we believe hypothetically that Radha and Krsna were married, then we must accept that all Their other pastimes would not have been possible. For example, a husband would not dance with his wife. There would have been no Rasa dance. According to Vedic culture, after marriage a wife will never dance with her husband – and especially not with so many other ladies. Moreover, in Vedic culture, before one can marry his sacred thread ceremony is performed. That ceremony was not performed for Krsna in Vrndavana. It was performed in Mathura, so He could not have been married in Vrndavana. He received His brahminical thread in Mathura and He married when He was in Dvaraka.

Gurudeva then explained the beautiful pastime of the newlywed girl who came to Vrndavana and wanted to see Krsna. Her mother-in-law stopped her and said, "You cannot see Him because He is like a black snake, and if He bites someone the poison spreads and will never go out of the body." Still, even though the mother-in-law tried to stop her from going, the girl went out and saw Krsna. Krsna then made a calf go up to her, and pretending to try to get the calf back, He also went close to her. When he reached her He touched her chin with His flute, and after that she lost her mind completely. Her heart was stolen and she became just like a stone. Her mother-in-law tried to break her mood but could not. Later, when she went to the well to get some water, holding some earthen pots and a child, instead of putting the rope around the earthen pots she put the rope around the child.

This is man-mana bhava. Krsna explains in the Bhagavad-gita (18.65):

man-mana bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yaji mam namaskuru

mam evaisyasi satyam te
pratijane priyo 'si me

["Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend."]

This man-mana bhava is the highest form of samadhi, and the gopis always reside there. Great munis, rsis and yogis have to sit in a particular position, concentrate, and make great effort to achieve that stage of samadhi, but the gopis were always in samadhi because they were always absorbed in Krsna. This is called tanmayata, full absorption. One slowly progresses from the stages of nistha and ruci to the highest stage of prema.

Krsna used to go to the forest to graze the calves and cows, but this was not His real purpose. His real purpose was to meet with the gopis and perform many beautiful pastimes with them. Srila Gurudeva said these pastimes he is narrating, the pastimes narrated by rasika Vaisnavas, are the essence of a temple. A temple with only the deities of different gods or God Himself, is not really a temple, unless there is hari-katha being narrated by pure devotees. People have so many strange ideas about the relationship between Radha and Krsna because they do not have any understanding of who God is. We must be careful and not get carried away by the "logic" of impersonalists.

Srila Gurudeva then explained the pastime of Kaliya snake. Once Krsna was grazing the cows on the banks of the Yamuna. He was playing with His friends and was told not to go to a certain area because the entire water there was poisonous because of Kaliya. The boys were very thirsty, and they were also playing with their ball and their ball fell in the water. Krsna wanted to rid that place of Kaliya so that all the Vrajavasis could then come there and drink the nectarean water of the Yamuna. He was able to battle with Kaliya and gain control of Him, and then He came out of the water dancing on his hoods.

Actually, by all this He was trying to show off His power to the gopis: When ladies want to select a husband, they see if the man is very powerful. Krsna was trying to show the gopis that, "I am very powerful."

The naga-patnis, the wives of Kaliya, prayed to Krsna, "We do not want a husband who is against you."

Now, somehow, by Krsna's mercy, Kaliya surrendered unto Him, so he must have performed great previous pious activities. Great rsis try for years and years and do not get this benediction of Krsna putting His lotus feet on their heads, but this Naga (serpent), a demon, was being benedicted by Krsna's lotus feet.

Gurudeva then explained how Kaliya had first come to that place. Kadru was the mother of snakes and Vinata was the mother of Garuda. There was a bet between them, regarding whether the horses of the Sun-god were white or black. Kadru said they were black

whereas they are actually white, so she ordered her sons to wrap themselves around the tail of the horses so that when the two mothers would go to see, they will look black. This is how she won this bet, and thus Vinata was forced to become her maidservant.

To appease Kadru and to get his mother freed from this imprisonment, Garuda brought heavenly nectar for Kadru, but the demigods took it away before he reached her. This is the history of how Garuda and the snakes became enemies. Every half-moon day Garuda would eat one snake as a sacrificial offering, and then Kaliya began to eat his offerings himself and they had a fight. * [See Endnote 1]

Kaliya came to this place by the Yamuna to escape Garuda, because he knew that Garuda was cursed by Saubhari Rsi to not be able to go there. Saubhari Rsi was a great yogi and had been doing penances for a long time. Still, he fell down from his position because he committed an offense against Garuda, who is a great Vaisnava. Thus, we must never under any circumstance criticize exalted Vaisnavas and our Gurudeva.

Finally, Gurudeva explained the pastime of Bhandiravana, where Krsna was having lunch with His friends. While they were having lunch, all the cows were tempted by the thought of green grass and wandered away to the forest, into an area where all the grass was completely dry. Kamsa's followers then set everything on fire. * [See Endnote 2]

A comparison was made by Gurudeva here: "Go" means senses; our senses and mind get attracted by material desires, which are likened to the green grass. Just as the cows finally surrendered to Krsna and then Krsna came and saved them, similarly we cannot get out of this material world until we completely surrender unto Krsna, engage our senses in His service, and purify them by chanting His names.

When Krsna swallowed the fire He asked His cowherd friends to close their eyes. This was because He was remembering the time when Mother Yasoda saw the whole universe in His mouth, looking in there to see if He had eaten earth, and became very disturbed. She thought a ghost had engulfed Krsna, so she arranged for Him to be bathed by cow dung and cow urine. Krsna did not want to undergo that whole thing again. He thought that if someone would tell Mother Yasoda that He had eaten the fire, she would again be disturbed and He would have to be bathed with cow dung and cow urine again.

Gurudeva concluded his class by saying that we should meditate on these pastimes and chant the names of Krsna. That will make our lives perfect.

Gaura premanande.

[Endnote 1: "King Pariksit, after hearing of the chastisement of Kaliya, inquired from Sukadeva Gosvami as to why Kaliya left his beautiful land and why Garuda was so antagonistic to him. Sukadeva Gosvami informed the King that the island known as Nagalaya was inhabited by serpents and that Kaliya was one of the chief serpents there. Being accustomed to eating snakes, Garuda used to come to this island and kill many serpents at will. Some of them he actually ate, but some were unnecessarily killed. The

reptile society became so disturbed that their leader, Vasuki, appealed to Lord Brahma for protection. Lord Brahma made an arrangement by which Garuda would not create a disturbance: on each half-moon day, the reptile community would offer a serpent to Garuda. The serpent was to be kept underneath a tree as a sacrificial offering to Garuda. Garuda was satisfied with this offering, and therefore he did not disturb any other serpents.

"But gradually, Kaliya took advantage of this situation. He was unnecessarily puffed up by the volume of his accumulated poison, as well as by his material power, and he thought, "Why should Garuda be offered this sacrifice?" He then ceased offering any sacrifice; instead, he himself ate the offering intended for Garuda. When Garuda, the great devotee-carrier of Visnu, understood that Kaliya was eating the offered sacrifices, he became very angry and rushed to the island to kill the offensive serpent. Kaliya tried to fight Garuda and faced him with his many hoods and poisonous sharp teeth. Kaliya attempted to bite him, and Garuda, the son of Tarkasya (Kasyapa), in great anger and with the great force befitting the carrier of Lord Visnu, struck the body of Kaliya with his effulgent golden wings. Kaliya, who is also known as Kadrusuta, son of Kadru, immediately fled to the lake known as Kaliya-hrada, which lay within the Yamuna River and which Garuda could not approach.

"Kaliya took shelter within the water of the Yamuna for the following reason. Just as Garuda went to the island of the Kaliya snake, he also used to go to the Yamuna to catch fish to eat. There was, however, a great yogi known as Saubhari Muni, who used to meditate within the water there and who was sympathetic with the fish. He asked Garuda not to come there and disturb the fish. Although Garuda was not under anyone's order, being the carrier of Lord Visnu, he did not disobey the order of the great yogi. Instead of staying and eating many fish, he carried off one big fish, who was their leader. Saubhari Muni was sorry that one of the leaders of the fish was taken away by Garuda, and thinking of their protection, he cursed Garuda with the following words: Henceforward, from this day, if Garuda comes here to catch fish, then I say with all my strength that he will be immediately killed."

"This curse was known only to Kaliya. Kaliya was therefore confident that Garuda would not be able to come there, and so he thought it wise to take shelter of the lake within the Yamuna."(Krsna Book, chapter 17)]

[Endnote 2: "While Krsna and Balarama and Their friends were engaged in the pastimes described above, the cows, being unobserved, began to wander off on their own, entering farther and farther into the deepest part of the forest, allured by fresh grasses. The goats, cows and buffalo traveled from one forest to another and entered the forest known as Isikatavi. This forest was full of green grass, and therefore they were allured; but when they entered, they saw that there was a forest fire, and they began to cry. On the other side Balarama and Krsna, along with their friends, could not find their animals, and they became very aggrieved. They began to trace the cows by following their footprints, as well as the path of eaten grass. All of the boys feared that their very means of livelihood, the cows, were now lost. When searching out the cows in the forest, they themselves were very much tired and thirsty. Soon, however, they heard the crying of their cows. Krsna began to call the cows by their respective names, with great noise.

Upon hearing Krsna calling, the cows immediately replied with joy. But by this time the forest fire had surrounded all of them, and the situation appeared to be very fearful. The flames increased as the wind blew very quickly, and it appeared that everything movable and immovable would be devoured. All the cows and the boys became very frightened and they looked towards Balarama and Krsna the way a dying man looks at the picture of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They said, "My dear Krsna! My dear Krsna! You and Balarama are very powerful. We are now burning from the heat of this blazing fire. Let us take shelter of Your lotus feet. We know You can protect us from this great danger. Our dear friend Krsna, we are Your intimate friends. It is not right that we should suffer in this way. We are all completely dependent on You, and You are the knower of all religious life. We do not know anyone except You." The Personality of Godhead heard the appealing voices of His friends, and casting a pleasing glance over them, He began to answer. By speaking through His eyes, He impressed upon His friends that there was no cause for fear, and He assured them, "Don't worry." Then Krsna, the supreme mystic, the powerful Personality of Godhead, immediately swallowed up all the flames of the fire. The cows and boys were thus saved from imminent danger. Out of fear, the boys were almost unconscious, but when they regained their consciousness and opened their eyes, they saw that they were again in the Bhandira forest with Krsna, Balarama and the cows. They were astonished to see that they were completely free from the attack of the blazing fire and that the cows were saved. They secretly thought that Krsna must be not an ordinary boy but some demigod. "(Krsna Book, Chapter 19)]

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