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Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

UDDHAVA'S GURU RSI NARADA

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[In a series of 29 classes of Srila Sanatana Gosvami's Brhat-bhagavatamrta, which began on August 14 and continued throughout most of the Kartika parikrama, Paramapujyapada Srila Narayana Maharaja described the history of Sri Narada Muni's mission to reveal to the world the greatest recipients of Lord Krsna's mercy. This history was originally narrated in the discourse between Maharaja Pariksit and his mother, Uttara.]

After arriving in Dvaraka in an ecstatic and maddened state, Sri Narada Muni made his way into the wonderfully opulent palace of Srimati Rukmini devi, to the entrance of her room, where he saw an astonishing sight. A large crowd had gathered there, including Srimati Rohini-maiya, Rukmini devi and Krsna's other queens, their maidservants, and Sri Uddhava. Everyone there was concerned and upset because, although it was late in the morning, Lord Krsna was still sleeping in His bed.

When those gathered there saw the ecstatic state of Narada Muni, they washed his face with water, attempting to calm him so that he would not disturb Krsna. They asked him what had happened to him and how he had come to be in such a state. He replied, "Water alone will not pacify me; I just want one thing. I want to meet with parama-bhagavata Uddhavaji and get his foot dust. Please tell me where he is."

Uddhava could understand the mood of Narada, why he had come and what his goal was. It was the inner desire of Sri Krsna Himself that all will come to understand who the greatest recipients of His mercy are, and ultimately how the prema of the Vrajavis and especially the gopis is wonderful and most astonishing.

Speaking to all present, Narada began to proclaim the glories of Uddhava, announcing that he is the best of devotees. Krsna Himself has glorified Uddhavaji with His own lotus mouth in the Srimad Bhagavatam. He says, "Of all devotees, I am Uddhava", and, "He is not less than Me". He also told Uddhava personally, "Oh Uddhava, you are very dear to me. You are dearer to Me than Lord Brahma, more dear than My most dear Mahadeva, more dear than My brother and expansion Sankarsana, and you are more dear to Me than Sri." This word "Sri" refers to Sri Laksmi devi and Srimati Rukmini devi, not to Srimati Radharani. "Oh Uddhava, you are so dear to Me; even My own body is not as dear to Me as you are."

Narada continued, "O Uddhava, you are so great that Lord Krsna has continuously described your glories both in the Srimad Bhagavatam and in the various Puranas."

Because of Uddhava's extraordinary qualifications, and because he was very "ripe", he was exclusively chosen by Krsna Bhagavan to visit Vrndavana. Krsna had requested him to try to pacify Nanda Baba, Yasoda-maiya and the gopis, who were burning in the fire of separation from Him. As Sri Naradaji explained all this, Uddhava could understand his intention: to declare everywhere that the gopis are the greatest recipients of Krsna's mercy. Uddhava understood that this was indeed the intention of Krsna Himself.

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Continuing this narration to his mother, Maharaja Pariksit explained that when Uddhava heard his own glorification from Sri Narada Muni, he immediately thought of the glories of the Vrajavasis and felt ashamed. Weeping and approaching Rsi Narada, he tightly clasped both his feet. Immediately reaching down, Sri Narada Muni picked him up and embraced him very tightly.

Because of the inner desire of Lord Krsna that His nearest and dearest devotees be revealed and glorified, Rsi Narada had traveled from place to place – to Prayaga, Jagannatha Puri, Brahmaloaka, and now to Dvaraka. We should not think he did not understand that the Vrajavasis are in the highest position. Being all-knowing he understands everything, but by the process of seeking out different grades of devotees, one after another, he revealed the glories of the Vrajavasis to all.

We should understand the reason Uddhava clasped the lotus feet of Narada. In one sense Rsi Narada is the guru of Uddhava, being Madhu-mangala, one of the priya-narma-sakhas of Krsna in Vraja along with Subal. He thus knows unlimited secret pastimes of Krsna.

Hearing his glorification, Uddhava deeply remembered the glories of the Vrajavasis and thus he began to weep. Whether he wept in sadness or great jubilation we cannot say.

Uddhava recalled, "The prema of the Vrajavasis – Nanda Baba, Yasoda-maiya and especially the gopis – is like an unlimited ocean that has no shore. But who am I? I am nothing. I thought I was a great devotee, and the Yadavas and Ugrasena feel so too, but when I went to Vrndavana my false ego was completely crushed." Remembering how all the Vrajavasis were weeping for Sri Krsna day and night, Uddhava himself continuously wept. He wondered how Krsna could stay there in Dvaraka even though the residents of Vraja have so much more prema for Him. Sri Balarama and some of the other Vrajavasis present in Rukmini's palace rose and managed to calm him.

Uddhava felt some sattvika-matsarya, transcendental jealousy, towards Rsi Narada, due to the latter's intimate knowledge of Krsna's confidential pastimes. Matsarya means envy, and sattvika means completely devoid of the three modes of nature. Thus sattvika-matsarya bhava, in the disagreements between Srimati Satyabhama and Rukmini, or between Srimati Radhika and Candravali, is a pure transformation of krsna-prema. We should not misunderstand their contrary feelings to be ordinary sentiments as seen in this world. Understand for certain that these are manifestations of suddha-sattva, pure spiritual existence.

When we chant under the guidance of Hari, Guru and Vaisnavas, that sattvika-bhava enters our heart and we can understand these topics. This is also called tadatma-bhava. As when an iron rod is placed into fire the iron develops the same qualities as the fire, a surrendered devotee realizes the moods of these associates.

Remembering the high degree of the gopis' anuraga, their maha-bhava for Lord Krsna, Uddhava's mind was not peaceful. He was particularly struck by the memory of Srimati

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Radhika singing the verses of Brahmara-gita in great distress. He remembered Her display of divyona-mada, divine madness, and Her other various stages of mahabhava. Not only did Uddhava weep because of these memories, but all the Dvarakavasis, and even Krsna Himself, cried while remembering them.

The gopis had great prema-sampati-vaibhava, wealth and opulence in krsna-prema. In order to keep their distress hidden from the general people they sought the solitude of the Vrndavana forests and especially the Yamuna. There, however, they were reminded of all Krsna's lilas and cried still more. Remembering Him day and night, they would continuously weep and roll on the ground.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself displayed these symptoms when He came to this world. At night He would not rest. Instead, remembering the gopis and their various pastimes with Krsna, spiritual ecstasy manifested in Him and He would weep bitterly.

In viraha, separation, deep remembrance of the meetings they had with Sri Krsna came to the gopis and they exclaimed, "Oh how we met with Him, how we used to talk with Him!" In this separation mood, asta-sattvika-bhava, eight kinds of ecstatic spiritual transformations, would manifest in their bodies. Uddhava also remembered how Srimati Radharani sang the Brahmara-gita and how She tasted ten different types of anger, jealousy and humility.

When He was leaving His house to take sannyasa, Lord Caitanya abandoned all material circumstances. He left His mother Sacimata standing like a statue. Unable to speak, she wept bitterly as He offered dandavat pranama to her and left home forever. At that time His wife Srimati Visnupriya devi was in a greatly unfortunate situation, also weeping bitterly, but the gopis felt still more separation and more love for Krsna than Visnupriya did for Lord Caitanya.

After clasping the lotus feet of Sri Narada Muni, Uddhava said, "O Narada, O all-knowing personality, O crest jewel of all honest and truthful persons, even more so than King Hari-candana and King Yudhisthira! Narada, Guru of all types of devotees including Sri Sukadeva Gosvami and Srila Vyasadeva, you are the original Guru of all types of bhakti. What you speak about me is true, but unfortunately you have left something out. My real glory is hidden. My only quality is the fortune I received by being sent by Lord Krsna to Vraja, where I saw the prema of the Vrajavasis. At that place there is a "prema school," of which Srimati Radhika is the principle. Her two department heads are Srimati Lalita-devi and Srimati Visakha-devi. In the subject of prema, my qualification was so low that I could not even get admission into that school. I could only offer pranama to those gopis. My false ego was crushed by that experience, and I realized that Lord Krsna was being very merciful to me and blessing me abundantly. I know the Vrajavasis are the greatest devotees, and of them all, the gopis are the most excellent. I am therefore undoubtedly very fortunate and a great recipient of Krsna's mercy, due to witnessing their great state of separation from Him.

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“O Narada, there in Vrndavana I drowned in a great unlimited ocean of happiness. Seeing their immaculate prema and hearing their expressions of separation for Sri Krsna, I tried my best to glorify them, but I could not do very well. In this entire universe the earth is most fortunate because of the presence of Vrndavana, and Vrndavana is fortunate because of the presence of the gopis.”

etah param tanu-bhrto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo
govinda eva nikhilatmani rudha-bhavah
vanchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayam ca
kim brahma-janmabhir ananta-katha-rasasya

[Uddhava sang: “Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Lord Govinda. Their pure love is hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by us as well. For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brahmana, or even as Lord Brahma himself?” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.47.58)]

“The bhava of the gopis is so wonderful and glorious that those who are afraid of material existence, those who are munis, free from all types of material desire, and even I myself desire to attain that type of love towards Krsna that the gopis experience.”

We are foolish persons, choosing marriage in this world over absorption in the nectar of these topics, believing that in this way we can enjoy more happiness. This is a very poor idea. Simply sit and hear, and if you don't understand, continue to sit here and listen again and again. Then, one day you will understand.

Sri Uddhavaji continued, "In whatever condition one is situated, if one is of bad character and has all types of disqualifications, if one is like a woman who leaves her husband, or like Kubja who had lust toward Krsna, if one approaches Krsna, he will be purified. Even one who is unaware of the powers possessed by touchstones, mantras and medicinal herbs, one will definitely be affected by their contact. Similarly, those who hear the topics of the gopis' prema towards Lord Krsna will undoubtedly become purified.”

Uddhava said that the mercy Sri Krsna gave to the gopis is not possible to be received by anyone else, including the most attractive girls in this world, nor even by Sri Laksmi devi:

ya vai sriyarcitam ajadibhir apta-kamair
yogesvarair api yad atmani rasa-gosthyam
krsnasya tad bhagavatah caranaravindam
nyastam stanesu vijahuh parirabhya tapam

["The goddess of fortune herself, along with Lord Brahma and all the other demigods, who are masters of yogic perfection, can worship the lotus feet of Krsna only within their minds. But during the rasa dance Lord Krsna placed His feet upon these gopis' breasts,

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and by embracing those feet the gopis gave up all distress." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.47.62)]

Even great perfected munis and powerful personalities like Lord Brahma and Lord Siva, in their greatest attempts at meditation, are only able to think of the lotus foot dust of Lord Krsna with great difficulty and rare success. How much greater is the prema of the gopis! They are not satisfied by simply meditating on His lotus foot dust. They hold those same lotus feet, meditated on by the best of perfected personalities, on their breasts, and thus become free from their grief of separation.

vande nanda- vraja- strinam
pada-renum abhiksnasah
yasam hari-kathodgitam
punati bhuvana-trayam

["I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Maharaja's cowherd village. When these gopis loudly chant the glories of Sri Krsna, the vibration purifies the three worlds." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.47.63)]

"All glories to the gopis of Vrndavana," Uddhava said. "They are greatly powerful because they are always talking about Lord Krsna. With great care and attention, I worship one dust particle from their lotus feet." One speck of dust can only be present on the lotus feet of one gopi – Srimati Radhika. He wept in great separation and said, "I don't have that bhava".

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu used to taste all the moods of the gopis. After the Ratha-yatra festival, He was lying down in a garden. At that time Maharaja Prataparudra, disguised as an ordinary Vaisnava, approached Him and, while massaging His lotus feet, sang the verses of Gopi-gita. When Lord Caitanya heard these verses He became ecstatic, stood up and said, "Oh! Unfortunately, because I am simply a sannyasi beggar, I have no wealth to offer you. The only wealth I can give you is My embrace." He embraced Prataparudra Maharaja who, by the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also drowned in prema.

This Srimad Bhagavatam is like an ocean, churned very strongly by Srila Sukadeva Gosvami. At the bottom of that ocean there were some very precious jewels, the glorification of the gopis given in Rasa-Pancadyaya, the five chapters of the Bhagavatam concerned with the Rasa-lila – like Gopi-gita, Brahmara-gita and Pranaya-gita. We are very fortunate to come in contact with these topics, for they are the priceless jewels of the Srimad Bhagavatam. Who can glorify the gopis more than this?

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