

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

SEPARATION IS SUCH A THING

Mathura, India: August 16, 2003

[The following is a translation of one of the classes, in a long series of classes, given by Parama-pujyapada Srila Narayana Maharaja on Srila Sanatana Gosvami's Srimad Brhat-bhagavatamrta. Class after class Srila Maharaja read from Srila Sanatana Gosvami's original Sanskrit texts. Then, revealing his own deep moods to his international audience, he spoke his own commentary in Hindi. As he spoke, those devotees who had headsets heard simultaneous translations in Hindi and Russian, and every so often Srila Maharaja stopped speaking so that the entire audience could hear a translation. In these classes, as in Srimad Brhat-bhagavatamrta itself, the greatest recipients of Lord Krsna's mercy are revealed to this netherworld, by the will of Krsna Himself and by the medium of the travel pastimes of Sri Narada Muni.]

Sri Uddhava related to Narada Muni how he went to Vrndavana and saw how, in separation from Lord Krsna, the Vrajavasis meet with Him internally. Externally this separation seems like a bitter type of unhappiness, but knowers of the truth understand it to be actually a type of great happiness. He explained how, after hearing the hari-katha of the gopis, he had prayed again and again to somehow become a small shrub or blade of grass in Vrndavana, so that he could be bathed in the foot dust of the gopis and especially of one gopi – Srimati Radhika. In some cases hari-katha is superior to Lord Sri Krsna Himself. Srimati Radhika and the gopis could tolerate separation from Him, but they could not give-up His hari-katha. Uddhavaji explained how he had heard Srimati Radhika speaking in Brahmara-gita, complaining, "Krsna left us, so we can also live far from Him, but unfortunately we can never think of leaving His hari-katha in any situation in which He puts us." – because it has so much rasa (transcendental mellow taste).

Sri Krsna's glorification, His holy names and His associates are all non-different from Himself. It is therefore very important to have taste in hearing hari-katha. When He left Vrndavana on Earth to return to the spiritual world, He mercifully left His hari-katha here so that those practitioners of bhakti who are following under the guidance of the gopis can achieve the topmost benefit by hearing it. He left His hari-katha, which is full of all types of mercy because it is full of Krsna Himself.

Those who have no taste in hearing hari-katha are most unfortunate. We may perform many different types of service, such as regularly chanting arinama or giving many rupees in donation, but unless we have taste in hearing hari-katha, we cannot attain our goal. The fruit of our sadhu-sanga is to hear hari-katha and attain taste for it.

We can look at the example of Bharata Maharaja. Although he took birth as a deer, he stayed near sadhus so that he could take their prasadam remnants and

hear all their hari-katha. Just by the simple act of hearing bhakti-tattva, the established truths of the science of bhakti, he attained para-bhakti (pure, unalloyed devotion) and in his next life he became the great self-realized devotee, Jada Bharata. Most people thought he was a mad person, but only those who are similarly mad can understand the greatness of his madness.

As Uddhava was describing the glories of the gopis to Sri Narada, present also were Rukmini devi, Rohini devi and Satyabhama devi. When Satyabhama heard this glorification she became jealous, and Uddhava remembered that when Lord Krsna had given a parijata flower to Rukmini, Satyabhama had become so upset that in order to pacify her Krsna had to go to Svarga (heaven) and bring an entire parijata tree down to her palace in Dvaraka from there. Knowing the situation Uddhava became silent. He did not want Satyabhama and the other queens to leave, thinking that otherwise Krsna may enter too deeply into the mood of the Vrajavasis and faint. If this would happen, it would create a big problem for all concerned. He then discretely continued speaking to Sri Narada.

In an indirect way, Uddhava glorified the love of the Vrajavasis, and especially the gopis, by saying, "The poison of the separation mood of the Vrajavasis is the most virulent and aggressive type of poison possible, and therefore the hari-katha about their activities is very dangerous." He actually meant that it is only "dangerous" only for materialists, because if they properly hear hari-katha they will have to give up their material lives and adapt the path of bhakti. This indirect way of glorifying krsna-prema was also adopted by Srila Rupa Gosvami. In the mood of a gopi speaking to her friend, Srila Rupa Gosvami indirectly glorified the results of having Krsna's direct darsana by saying, "Oh my dear friend, if you want to be happy in society, friendship and love, don't hear hari-katha, don't come to Vrndavana, don't go to the bank of the Yamuna, and don't see the smiling face of Govinda. Otherwise, everything will be lost to you."

By traveling from one devotee to another, Sri Narada Muni had been trying to clearly reveal the most fortunate – the greatest recipient of Sri Krsna's mercy. From Hanuman he had gone to the Pandavas, from the Pandavas to the Yadavas, and among the Yadavas he heard that Uddhava is the best. In the presence of Sri Naradaji, and in a similar mood to the abovementioned mood of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Uddhava now indirectly glorified the Vrajavasis, especially the gopis who are the topmost, among whom Candravali and Radhika are superior and between them especially Srimati Radharani who is vastly superior.

Rsi Narada said, "Uddhava, the reason I came here is to understand these topics." Uddhava replied, indirectly glorifying the great fortune of the Vrajavasis, "O best of the munis, you are the guru of even Srila Sukadeva Gosvami and Sri Vyasadeva. Please accept my obeisances again and again. I think that you also should not hear this hari-katha, otherwise you will become like the Vrajavasis who, drowning in the ocean of separation, are most unhappy. If you do so, the queens of Dvaraka will become angry with me."

Uddhava's explanation of how Lord Krsna is very eager to taste the happiness of rasa-lila, even up to the state of the sancari-bhava of unconsciousness, as well as Uddhava's explanation of the separation of the gopis, was intolerant to Rohini Ma, the mother of Sri Baladeva Prabhu. Understanding Uddhava's mind she stood up and said, "Oh Uddhava, how can you say that the gopis are the most fortunate? How can you say that they are the greatest recipients of Krsna's mercy? This is completely wrong. You are saying the exact opposite of the truth. The gopis burn day and night in separation from Krsna. They drink poison 24 hours a day. I know about this more than you, because I was there in Gokula even before the birth of Balarama and Krsna."

Out of fear of Kamsa, Srimati Rohini devi had left Mathura and gone to Gokula when she was pregnant with Baladeva Prabhu, where she stayed with Mother Yasoda and Nanda Baba. She now continued, "Oh Uddhava, I know more than you. You are called Haridasa, the topmost servant of Hari, but how is this possible? You have not understood anything. I think you should be quiet. Since I have been here in Dvaraka, I have been forgetting the Vrajavasis and I could feel some happiness. But now that you are talking about them, I am again remembering them – feeling most unhappy and without a scent of good fortune." When someone is unhappy and we remember that person, we also become unhappy.

Rohini Ma continued, "Krsna killed Kamsa before His sacred thread ceremony, and at that time Nanda Maharaja returned alone to Vrndavana. What was the situation of the Vrajavasis at that time? Mother Yasoda became stunned – more than a stone. Her bitter tears melted stone and shattered thunder bolts – and what to speak of the tears of other gopas and gopis.

"O Uddhava, I could not tell if they were alive or dead. Hearing about them, everyone's heart completely melted – except for your Krsna's heart. Actually, I cannot say if Krsna has a heart or not. Hearing about the separation of the Vrajavasis even the stones melted. The only person whose heart did not melt was Krsna Himself. Uddhava, why are you speaking about the Vrajavasis? If we can forget these topics we can become happy."

Rohini Ma began to weep bitterly. Only someone who has experienced Vraja can understand what she was experiencing. My Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, has said that separation is such a thing that although it is full of sadness, anyone who experiences it never wants to leave that experience. He gave an example of some actors who performed a drama about Sri Ramayana. The scenes in the drama included Lord Rama hearing the criticism of the populace, his leaving Srimati Sita devi weeping in the forest, Valmiki taking Sita into his ashram, and her residing there. The drama showed that Sita gave birth to Lav and Kush, and it showed Lord Rama's performance of many asvamedha-yajnas. Towards the end of the drama Sita devi brought Lav and Kush before

Rama, and Rama asked her, "O Sita devi, please give me evidence that you are pure." Following the words of Valmiki she had come to meet Rama, and now, hearing the words of her husband she became very upset. She called out, "Oh Mother Earth, it is true that I have been touched by another man, but this was by force. If I have only thought of Rama and not any other man, by my body, mind and words, then please divide yourself and take me into yourself." Mother Earth, Prthivi-devi, then opened up, Sita devi entered into the Earth, and the Earth closed up behind her. At that time everyone began to cry, especially Ramacandra Bhagavan. Sri Ramacandra immediately took his bow and arrow and very angrily announced, "O Mother Earth, if you don't return my Sita devi, I will destroy you." Just then Valmiki said to Him, "O Rama, stop here; I wrote only up to this point in my Ramayana."

Although this drama displayed great suffering in separation, the next night, when the same drama was performed, thousands upon thousands more people attended. Each person in the audience had brought another, saying, "O, such a wonderful play." Separation is such a thing that even though it appears like unhappiness, one who experiences it does not want to give up that experience. Only one who has experienced the separation of the Vrajavasis and especially the gopis, like Uddhava, Rohini and Narada, can understand this. No one else can understand.

Srimati Rohini devi continued, "Don't remind me of these topics. Why do you make me remember all these things again and again? Your Prabhu has a hard heart. Previously I was unintelligent and foolish; I thought He was so kind and merciful. But He is actually a very cruel person. When he left Vraja He told the Vrajavasis that He will return "the day after tomorrow", and still He does not return. Does He know the situation of the Vrajavasis in Vrndavana? Most of them are perhaps dead, and those who aren't dead will soon die."

When someone who is unhappy reveals his mind to someone else who is unhappy, both their minds become joyful and relieved of that suffering. Srimati Rohini devi continued, "I was so foolish. I thought if I revealed my mind to Krsna our unhappiness would go – but I wasted my time." Your Krsna knows philosophy. He sent you to Vraja with a nice, philosophical message for the gopis. By hearing the nice instructions in your message, did the gopis become happy? Did their separation mood decrease? No, the completely opposite result was attained. Uddhava, by going there did you help them in any way? No, you didn't help."

Srila Sukadeva Gosvami also explained this in the Srimad-Bhagavatam. He said that when the gopis heard the message of Krsna from Uddhavaji they did not become peaceful, and now Rohini said to Uddhava, "What type of mercy have you given? What type of happiness are the Vrajavasis the recipients of? Is it kindness and mercy to give others unhappiness? No.

"Uddhava, your Prabhu sent Balarama to Vrndavana, and He Himself also met with the gopis at Kuruksetra; but was their happiness dissipated? No, not in any way. I had full experience in Vrndavana, because I was there even before the birth of Krsna and Balarama. I know for a fact that before Krsna's birth nobody in Vrndavana was unhappy in the slightest way; but as soon as He was born, all types of disturbances appeared along with Him. For example, three days after His birth the man-eating demoness Putana came and began to kill babies. Then came Trnavarta, the whirlwind demon, and then Bakasura. Why did they come? Was there any fault in the hearts of any Vrajavasis or gopis? No, the demons only came to kill Krsna. Moreover, did Krsna experience any unhappiness by all the activities of those demons? No, He was very happy, playing His flute. It was the Vrajavasis who suffered, day and night, in so many ways.

On the day of Ekadasi Nanda Baba went to bathe in the Yamuna, only to give the result of his pious activity to Krsna so that He would be happy. Nanda Baba never did anything for himself. Just to give happiness to Krsna he was captured by Varuna and experienced great discomfort. Later, all the residents of Vrndavana met at Nanda Baitak and discussed that ever since they had been in Gokula, so many demons had tried to kill Krsna – and therefore they should all move to Vrndavana. Day and night they never did anything for their own happiness. They did everything to give happiness to Krsna; and what did Krsna do in return? He left Vrndavana and went to Mathura, and then to Dvaraka, and there He married 16,108 queens and had many thousands of sons, grandchildren and palaces. He never did anything for the Vrajavasis."

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