

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

MORE THAN THAT MAGICIAN

May 22, 2004: Badger, California

I offer millions of humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my diksa-guru, om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja; and the same unto the lotus feet of my siksa-guru, om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami has written in his Sri Brhat-Bhagavatamrta:

mahat-sangama-mahatmyam
evaitat paramadbhutam
krtartho yena vipro 'sau
sadyo 'bhut tat-svarupavat

["The glory of mahat-sanga is super-astounding. By the influence of that glory, Jana Sarma's life immediately became successful, like that of his Guru, Svarupa. He became a personal friend of Sri Krsna by the association of Svarupa, who was known as Gopa Kumara in this world. That he immediately attained bhagavat-prema demonstrated the immense value of association with a great personality. Just like Svarupa, within an instance that brahmana felt fully gratified." (Brhat-Bhagavatamrta 2.7.14)]

In Devahuti-samvad (the conversation between Srimati Devahuti and Lord Kapila), the Lord said,

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido
bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah
taj-josanad asv apavarga-vartmani
sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati

["In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin." (Srimad-bhagavatam 3.25.25)]

Gradually, in mahat-sanga, first sraddha (faith in the words of Guru, sadhu and the scriptures) comes, then rati (the preliminary stage of love of God), and then prema-bhakti (pure love) will come. If you are hearing about Krsna under the guidance of any maha-purusa (self-realized soul) and then practicing and performing the nine limbs of bhakti such as sravanam, kirtanam and smaranam, your anarthas, that is, obstacles caused by impurities, will go away and rati will appear. After rati, prema-bhakti will come, and it will develop to madanakya-

mahabhava, the special mood in Srimati Radhika that is not even found in Sri Krsna. You are very lucky to be hearing these explanations of Srila Sanatana Gosvami, and the deep meanings of his explanations that I have researched.

Dhruva Maharaja also prayed for mahat-sanga. His bhakti was not very high, for it was not pure in regard to anyabilasita sunyam (freedom from any other desire than the desire to give happiness to Lord Krsna); it was covered with jnana and karma. However, after some time, by the association of a mahat like Sri Narada Muni, Druva became a Vaisnava. Sri Narada is a touchstone – whoever he touches will be changed, and that person will not remain impure.

At the time of departure from this world to Vaikuntha, the spiritual planetary system, Dhruva wondered, "Where is my mother?" So he was not a Vrajavasi bhakta or a bhakta like Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami – but he was a bhakta.

If one takes shelter of a maha-purusa, and under the shelter of such a great soul one worships and meditates on Lord Krsna, the Lord will mercifully sprinkle His mercy upon him. All his anarthas will go away and he will become a pure bhakta. If he has worldly desires, Sri Krsna will smash those desires, for He is causelessly merciful.

Maha-purusas are those pure-hearted devotees who have no worldly desires and are not engaged in sense gratification, and who only have the desire to serve Sri Krsna (anukulyena krsnanu silanam). Their meditation and service to Lord Krsna is like an unbroken stream of honey. When we find out that there is a maha-purusa telling hari-katha in any place, we should pray to Krsna, "Please be merciful and send me there. I want to hear with thousands of ears."

You may have a doubt, or you may raise the question: "Why not pray for purusartha (religion which has material benefits, economic development, sense gratification and liberation)?" Srila Sanatana Gosvami has revealed that if bhakti is present, then moksa (liberation) automatically comes as an incidental result. If you eat honey – for taste – automatically sweetness and bodily heat will come as incidental results. Similarly, if one prays for bhakti, then the four purusarthas, svarga (heaven), and also all worldly happiness will come to him. He will be happy in this world and beyond this world – in Goloka Vrndavana. Otherwise he will not be happy. So why worry for the varieties of material happiness?

A brahmana in Kasi Varanasi prayed to Lord Sankara, "I want to give my daughter in marriage, but I have no money. Please give me money." Sankara told him, "You should go to Vrndavana, to meet Srila Sanatana Gosvami. You can ask him to give you some wealth for your daughter's marriage." The brahmana went to Vrndavana, by foot, and he asked the residents about the whereabouts of a person named Sanatana Gosvami. As they all knew him, they pointed out his residence.

At that time Srila Sanatana Gosvami was doing bhajana in Vrndavana, near the Yamuna, at Kaliya-hrda, the former abode of the very poisonous snake named Kaliya. Presently, Kaliya-hrda is far away from the Yamuna, but at that time it was close, and therefore its surrounding area was full of sand.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami wore only a kaupin. He used to go for madhukari (begging door to door for a small amount of prasada.) and would only eat at a time a dry chapati – with no salt. The brahmana arrived at his cottage and told him, "I went to Sankara Mahadeva and he told me to come to Vrndavana to meet you. He told me, "Srila Sanatana Gosvami will give you some wealth to manage your daughter's marriage."

Srila Sanatana Gosvami replied, "I have nothing. You can see I have nothing but a loincloth." Then he thought, "Oh, Sankara can not tell a lie. He is my bosom friend." He thus told the brahmana, "Go to the Yamuna and remove some of the sand, and there you will find a touchstone. The brahmana went to the Yamuna, removed some sand – and he found a jewel. He became so happy. He touched the touchstone to iron and it turned into gold. He was very, very happy that Sankara had told him to go to Vrndavana, and he was grateful that, "my prayer has been answered by him."

On the way home that brahmana began thinking, "Why has a person like Srila Sanatana Gosvami kept a touchstone in the sand? It has no use there. He must have still more valuable jewels than this." He thus returned to Vrndavana, where Srila Sanatana Gosvami asked him, "Why have you returned?" He replied, "I have returned because I know that you have more valuable jewels than this."

Srila Sanatana Gosvami then told him, "Throw the touchstone in the Yamuna." The brahmana did so with all his power, and then Sanatana Gosvami told him, "Come here. Come here." He gave him the mantra, "Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare", and said, "I do not have worldly jewels, but I have transcendental jewels. The jewel of Lord Krsna and Sri Radha will come to you in a very short time, so remain here. Your daughter's marriage will happen automatically. Stay here and chant Hare Krsna." That brahmana followed his instruction and thus became a very elevated saint.

Where there is harinama, the chanting of the holy names of Sri Radha and Krsna, everything of value in this world and in the heavenly planets, moksa, and after that Goloka Vrndavana, will also be present.

harinama, tuva aneka svarupa
Yasoda-nandana, ananda-varadhana, nanda-tanaya rasa-kupa

["O Harinama, you possess unlimited forms, such as Yasoda's beloved son, He who increase the bliss of Gokula, the son of Nanda, and the deep well of rasa. (Harinama, Tuwa Aneka Svarupa (verse 1)]

Have strong faith in this. What you cannot receive by your own efforts, services and jobs, will very easily be earned in a second, simply by chanting Hare Krsna and by mahat-sanga; so much money can be earned . I do not do anything for money, but thousands of millions of dollars come to me. I tell the money, "Don't come. Don't come", but still it comes. I see so many grhasthas and brahmacaris and sanniyasis here. Why have you come here to be with me? I am not giving money, or anything like that, so why do you come? There is something special that I am giving. I can perform greater magic than that magician. [*See Endnote] I am Guru of so many magicians. That magician may be able to transfer \$5 into \$100, but I can transfer it into millions upon millions of dollars.

Sankara, Bhagavan Mahadeva, is near and dear to Lord Krsna. Sometimes he appears as the manifestation of Sri Krsna known as Sadasiva, whose transcendental abode is in Kailash, near Vaikuntha, and sometimes he manifests as Rudra.

Lord Sankara has said:

tulayama lavenapi
na svargam napunar-bhavam
bhagavat-sangi-sangasya
martyanam kim utasisah

["The value of a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.18.13)]

Mahat sanga, the association of pure, exalted Vaisnavas is very rare – very rare – in this world. Even half a moment with him cannot be compared with the benefits of svarga (heaven), moksa (liberation) or any worldly achievement. It cannot compare with anything lower than Vaikuntha, what to speak of the attainment of an ordinary kingdom. In this world we should pray only for the high class associates of Lord Krsna, like Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sri Svarupa Damodara, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Srila Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and like Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja Prabhupada. Your Prahupada changed millions of lives. I often say that if you have come to me, you have come through him, through his teachings and by reading his books. The Iskcon leaders cannot glorify their Guru, because they do not know who he is.

Namaste Sarasvati devi gauravani pracarine – what is the meaning? They do not know the meaning, so they cannot glorify him. (Addressing Syamarani dasi) I

think you should publish some books, very soon – one on Jiva-Tattva, and one on the meaning of Gaura-vani, to remove all the doubts regarding these two subject matters.

In the pranam mantra of Your Prabhupada's Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada, it is stated "Namaste gauravani sri murtae". This is the svarupa, or form, of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. He is the embodiment of gaura-vani. The glory of both these acaryas is the same. You cannot imagine their greatness, but in maha-purusa-sanga you can realize it.

Once, the sages Visvamitra and Vasistha were quarrelling. Visvamitra told Vasistha, "You should address me as Brahma-rsi, because I have become an exalted, realized brahmana. Vasistha said, "I will address you as Rajarsi, a saintly ksatriya, because you have come from a royal family." He refused to praise Visvamitra as a Brahma-rsi, because he considered he would become proud, and that pride would not be beneficial for him.

Visvamitra then boasted that his performance of austerities was a great thing – greater than any other achievement. Vasistha disagreed. He insisted that sadhu-sanga was the greatest achievement.

They went to Ananta Sesa-naga, (the great serpent incarnation of the Lord on whose innumerable hoods millions of universes rest) and presented their situation to him. Visvamitra asked him, "Please, you decide if Vasistha is telling the truth or am I? Am I greater than Vasistha or is Vasistha greater than me?"

Lord Ananta replied, "This is a very deep and heavy topic. At present, I am carrying the burden of entire universes upon my hoods. O Visvamitra, I am extremely tired. I want to rest one of my hoods. Please take my burden for a moment, and then I will answer. Please arrange that when I remove my hood, the universe will not move from its position. It should remain unwavering and not fall." Visvamitra said, "Oh, that is a very insignificant task." He then gave the fruit of all his performances of yoga and austerities, but he could not take the burden of Ananta for even a moment. As soon as Ananta began to remove his hood, there were severe earthquakes, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Ananta then asked Vasistha, "Can you take my burden?" Vasistha replied, "I am giving you the result of only half a moment of the sadhu-sanga that I have attained. If I have had any elevated Vaisnava association, then may the universe remain calm and quiet and unwavering." Then, although Ananta removed his hood from underneath the universe, it remained calmly in its place, hovering in space without moving.

Ananta said, "Now, Visvamitra, I have given my answer, and you yourself can judge what it is. Vasistha has given only half a moment's result of sadhu-sanga, and by that I became free from the burden. You could not arrange that for me."

So, even a fraction of a second of sadhu-sanga may change your entire life and make you happy forever. This is mahat-sanga.

Mahat-sanga is the highest of all kinds of purusartha (material religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and, at the end, the attempt to become one with the Supreme). In fact, it dances on the head of all kinds of purusartha. "O, Bhagavan, I know that when You touched Aghasura, when You entered his mouth and stomach, he left his body and became immortal. Because of Your touch, his dead body did not emit a foul order. Rather its scent was like sandalwood, and all the cowherd boys of Vraja used to play in it as though it were a cave.

It is understood that those who have attended the hari-katha of mahat-sanga have already achieved the results of taking bath in the Ganges and in all the world's other tirthas (holy places). They have performed all kinds of austerities and given all varieties of donations. Moreover, all these fruits can never be compared with a particle of that mahat-sanga. Chant Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare with a strong belief in this.

The water touched by the lotus feet of the gopis is so high – even more so than the water of the Ganges. The gopis used to go to the Yamuna to collect water. Not really water – but the love and affection of Krsna. They also used to take bath there. If anyone touches that water and hears the gopis' hari-katha, he becomes outwardly and inwardly pure. Such purification cannot be attained by touching the Ganges water, or the water of any other tirtha.

If you go to the Ganges to take bath and you are hearing hari-katha, only then can you make a comparison. Your heart may be changed at that time. I have seen that the hearts of most people who go to India and visit all the tirthas, such as the Ganges, the Indian Ocean, Sri Rangam in South India, Kanya Kumari and so many other places, are not purified. However, the heart of a person who had only half of a moment of sadhu-sanga will be changed totally, and krsna-bhakti will come to him.

athana ghanghres tava kirti-tirthayor
antar-bahih-snana-vidhuta-papmanam
bhutesv anukrosa-susattva-silinam
syat sangamo 'nugraha esa nas tava

["My dear Lord, Your lotus feet are the cause of all auspicious things and the destroyer of all the contamination of sin. I therefore beg Your Lordship to bless me by the association of Your devotees, who are completely purified by worshipping Your lotus feet and who are so merciful upon the conditioned souls. I think that Your real benediction will be to allow me to associate with such devotees." (Srimad-bhagavatam 4.24.59)

"The Ganges water is celebrated as being able to eradicate all kinds of sinful reactions. In other words, when a person takes his bath in the Ganges, he becomes freed from all life's contaminations. The Ganges water is celebrated in this way because it emanates from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Similarly, those who are directly in touch with the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and who are absorbed in the chanting of His glories are freed from all material contamination. Such unalloyed devotees are able to show mercy to the common conditioned soul. Srila Vrndavana dasa Thakura has sung that the devotees of Lord Caitanya are so powerful that each one of them can deliver a universe. In other words, it is the business of devotees to preach the glories of the Lord and deliver all conditioned souls to the platform of suddha-sattva, pure goodness. Here the word su-sattva means suddha-sattva, the transcendental stage beyond material goodness. By his exemplary prayers, Lord Siva teaches us that our best course is to take shelter of Lord Visnu and His Vaisnava devotees. (Srimad-bhagavatam 4.24.59 purport by Srila Prabhupada)]

Here, Lord Siva glorifies the sadhu, the maha-purusa, who is sarala, meaning very calm and quiet, without any worldly desires. This is one of his symptoms. Lord Siva says, "I pray, O Lord Krsna, please give me mahat-sanga; for by that my whole life will be successful."

In Srimad-bhagavatam Canto Five, Jada Bharata tells King Rahugana:

rahuganaitat tapasa na yati
na cejyaya nirvapanad grhad va
na cchandasa naiva jalagni-suryair
vina mahat-pada-rajo-'bhisekam

["My dear King Rahugana, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Absolute Truth. One cannot realize the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy (brahmacarya), strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a vanaprastha, accepting sannyasa, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee." (Srimad-bhagavatam 5.12.12)]

[*Endnote: Before Srila Narayana Maharaja began this lecture, his new doctor-magician-disciple, nicknamed Dr. T., performed a magic trick in front of the 600 devotees present at the Badger hari-katha festival. Dr. T. told the audience that he was about to give Srila Maharaja \$100 for his temple construction project in Navadvipa, and he hoped others who had the funds would do the same. He then proceeded to turn a \$5 bill into a \$100 bill. His shirt had no long sleeves. He first held out his hands to the audience, to show the devotees that he had no bill

between his fingers, and he then took a \$5 bill from Srila Maharaja and returned to him a \$100 bill.]

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