

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

BY A MOMENT OF SADHU-SANGA

Verbania, Italy: June 22, 2004

[In most of his morning and evening classes given during the Kartika parikrama this year, Srila Narayana Maharaja read from his Hindi translations and commentaries of Sri Manah-siksa, Sri Bhajana-rahasya and Sri Vraja-mandala Parikrama; and every ten minutes or so he called on Sripad Aranya Maharaja to translate what he had just read. Sripad Aranya Maharaja also mostly read from the English translations of those books, and now and then translated Srila Maharaja's additional words.

Sometimes Srila Maharaja spoke additional katha, but for the most part he read. He completed the entire Manah-siksa (twelve verses) and also the fifth and sixth chapters of Bhajana-rahasya (dealing with the subjects of the stages of asakti and bhava (attachment to Srimati Radhika and Lord Krsna and transcendental emotions in relation to Their service). His evening readings of the Vraja-mandala Parikrama book coincided with the places visited by the international parikrama pilgrims earlier that day.

You will be gradually receiving the classes and parts of the classes in which Srila Maharaja did not do readings. In his final class he glorified sadhu-sanga; so in the meantime, until those classes are ready, kindly accept this belated transcript of his class on the same subject, given on his recent visit to Italy.]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written in his song, Kabe Aha Gauranga Baliya:

vaisnava dekhiya, padiba carane, hridayera bandhu jani
vaisnava thakura, prabhura kirtana, dekhaibe dasa mani

"Seeing a Vaisnava devotee, I will fall at his lotus feet, knowing him to be the only true friend of my heart. Accepting me as his servant, the venerable devotee will then reveal to me the most confidential kirtana for worshipping the Lord. (verse 5)]

Here, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is glorifying sadhu-sanga. Hridayera bandhu: there is no one in this entire world more dear than that Vaisnava. Worldly fathers, mothers and other relatives are dear, but not as dear as that Vaisnava. They may also give suffering; but a sadhu will take away all your sufferings. For this reason the scriptures tell us:

'sadhu-sanga', 'sadhu-sanga' – sarva-sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva-siddhi haya

["The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success." (Caitanya-Caritamrta, Madya, 22.54)]

Sarva-siddhi haya. Even by one moment's association with such sadhus, all of one's desires will be fulfilled. It is not worldly desires that are referred to here: "O Lord Krsna, I want to marry. Please help me." "All desires" means the best among all desires: "O Lord Krsna, please take me to the shelter of Your lotus feet and give me vraja-bhakti."

This is confirmed in the following verse from Sri Brhad-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. (Sri Brhad-Bhagavatamrta 2.7.14)]

By the time the Mahabharata battle was over, Duryodhana and his ninety-nine brothers had been killed. On the side of the Pandavas only six were remaining – the five Pandavas and Lord Krsna. On the side of Duryodhana only three remained –Kṛpacarya, Krtavarma and Asvattama. All others were put to death – top to bottom.

Vidura had left home before the war began, because Duryodana was opposed to his devotion to Lord Krsna. Rejecting that place, he gave up his bow and arrow and crown and said, "I have nothing to do with anything or any place that has no relation with krsna-bhakti". He then traveled to Ayodhya, Dvaraka and Mathura.

The battle was finished in eighteen days, after that Vidura returned to Maharaja Yudhishthira's palace in Indraprastha, and from there he went to Hastinapura. When he arrived there, all his family members became very happy and they felt as if their life had returned to them. All the Pandavas had been weeping in separation of him, and now he had returned.

He had come only momentarily, however, because he had left his old life and was now a sannyasi – and more than that – a paramahamsa. He went to meet Maharaja Dhrtarastra, who was now in Hastinapura under the care of Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula, Sahadeva and Yudhishthira. He had come in the dead of night, around midnight, and told Dhrtarastra, "Why are you still staying here? What do you want? All your sons have been killed. All your divisions of soldiers have been destroyed. What more do you want done to you?"

Dhrtarastra replied, "What can I do? I am blind!" Vidura replied, "Yes, you are really blind. You are blind externally, by your eyes, and you are also blind internally. From today onwards you should give up this palatial building, and come with me." "How can

I?" "Oh, you can. I will help you. You are like a dog to whom Bhima throws some bread and calls to you, "Tututututu." You have no shame at all! No shame at all! You are a shameless person." Dhrtarastra began to weep and asked, "What should I do?" Vidura said, "Come with me; we should leave in the midnight hour. I will take you to Haridwara and to Hrsikesa, to the very deep jungle forest. And there you will meditate on Krsna." Dhrtarastra replied, "I am ready."

Then Dhrtarastra, his wife Gandhari, and Kunti-devi, the mother of the Pandavas, fled from the back door. They went to Haridwara and after that they went to Hrsikesa. They took bath in the Ganges River, Vidura taught him how to meditate on the mantra of Krsna, and they began to chant, "Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya." After fifteen days they became very lean and thin. They had stopped taking their meals and were now always remembering their mantra – chanting and meditating. While Dhrtarastra was meditating, a mystic fire emanated from his body, and his body was consumed in that fire. While outside observing her husband, who burned in the fire of mystic power along with his thatched cottage, his chaste wife entered the fire with rapt attention.

In this way, although Dhrtarastra had been an enemy of Sri Krsna's pure devotees, the Pandavas, by the mercy of a pure devotee like Vidura, he was delivered.

In Srila Sanatana Gosvami's Brhad-bhagavatamrta, Gopa Kumara (who is known as Svarupa in Krsna's pastimes) tells his personal history to his disciple, the Mathura brahmana, Jana Sarma. Previous to this, Jana Sarma had executed no devotional practices to speak of – like Pariksit Maharaja. Pariksit Maharaja heard Srimad-Bhagavatam for only seven days and nights. He was only hearing. He did not practice any of the other nine limbs of bhakti. However, simply by hearing, he received gopi-bhava.

Jana Sarma heard all philosophical truths and all about Krsna's glories, and he had no realization of what he had heard. However, when his Gurudeva, Svarupa (in the form of Gopa-kumara), put his hand on his head and said, "Oh, you should now realize all that I've spoken" at once, in a moment, without any sadhana or bhajana, he saw Krsna's abode and realized, "I am in Goloka Vrndavana, in Vraja." Being situated in sakhya-rasa there, Krsna met him, embraced him, and he fainted.

Svarupavat – he became just like Svarupa. And, if you will have strong faith in sadhu-sanga, you can all become like that – by that sadhu-sanga. So believe in this.

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)]

The glory of sadhu-sanga is so high, so extraordinary and wonderful, that in a moment Jana Sarma became like his Guru, Svarupa, without performing sadhana.

Svarupa was a personal associate of Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana, and by the order of Srimati Radhika he came to help Jana Sarma. He is an eternal associate with no need to have ever done sadhana and bhajana. He is like Mother Yasoda and Nanda Baba, and like all the sakhis of Srimati Radhika. It is not a fact that they previously did sadhana-bhajana, as we must, and after that they became matured. However, as Gopa-Kumara, he played the role of a conditioned soul doing sadhana and gradually developing to perfection.

On the other hand, the Mathura brahmana was a conditioned soul. By constitution he was an eternal sakha (cowherd friend) of Krsna, and by the mercy of Gopa-kumara, Svarupa, he realized his pure form.

By nature we are all eternal associates of Krsna; we are transcendental. But we are not realizing that now. Similarly, Jana Sarma was not realized, but by the mercy of his nitya-parikara (eternal associate of Lord Krsna) Guru, Svarupa, sent by Radhika from Goloka, he became the same as him.

Mother Yasoda is eternally Krsna's mother. She never had to practice bhakti-yoga to become so. As previously mentioned Svarupa was also like that, but, as Gopa-kumara in this world he showed how conditioned souls can become perfect by execution of sadhana coupled with the mercy of the pure devotees.

There are two kinds of mercy (krpa): Vaisnava-krpa and Krsna-krpa. There are two kinds of sraddha (faith): laukiki (material and weak) and paramarthika (transcendental and powerful). Paramarthika-sraddha is also of two kinds: vaidhi (regulative) and madurya (spontaneous, with a transcendental greed to enter Vrndavana as a gopi). Do you understand? The second kind is very, very difficult, and very rare. From that type of sraddha, nistha, ruci, asakti, rati and prema comes –and that prema is of the nature of ruddha, adhiruddha and madana.

How can we receive this? Only by the mercy of Krsna or His associate. Without mercy we cannot do anything. Here we see that, like Gopa-kumara, by sadhana our bhakti can gradually be matured in so many births in so many kalpas (millenniums). And what became of Jana Sarma? By his Guru placing his hands on his head, he at once closed his eyes, opened them, and saw that he was not in this world but in transcendental Goloka Vrndavana. He saw how Krsna was returning home from cow-herding, he met Krsna, Krsna embraced him and he fainted.

How could this occur? One may have such a doubt. We have a Guru and we are chanting, but we are not tasting any spiritual fruit. Why? It is because there are so many defects in our bhakti. So how did it happen that the impossible became possible – that at once, in a

moment, in a second, without any sadhana or bhajana, Jana Sarma went to Goloka-Vrindavana and met with his friend Krsna, with Srimati Yasoda devi and Nanda Baba, and with the gopis and all other Vrajavasis. Don't doubt this. This was a miracle; you should believe this. Why should you not doubt? Because if you doubt, your bhakti cannot mature and you cannot become a real devotee.

anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanu-
silanam bhaktir uttama

["The cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Sri Krsna, or in other words the uninterrupted flow of service to Sri Krsna, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (bhavas), which is not covered by jnana (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and karma (reward-seeking activity), and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Sri Krsna, is called uttama-bhakti, pure devotional service." (Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)]

Hear this very carefully. Whatever you do, do for Krsna. Be open; quite open – not covered. If you want to hide anything from anyone, if you want to do something but in a hidden way, it means you are ashamed of what you are doing. If you are in sadhu-sanga and still you want to hide something; this is an offense. You should have an open book policy – having nothing to hide, being fully surrendered, and not doing anything for yourselves. Then, if you will be in sadhu-sanga, in a moment, by the grace of your Gurudeva this miracle will be possible for you.

But Gurudeva should be of the quality of Svarupa. If Gurudeva is not like him, he cannot give such blessings to his disciple. A guru can help his disciple to the degree he himself is qualified. He can be kind to his disciple to that degree.

I think that you are very, very lucky that you have come in the line of Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada. You should hear hari-katha and become like him – whether you are in family life or you are a brahmachari or sannyasi, it doesn't matter.

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