

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja  
You May Speak Further  
Jagannatha Puri, India: August 10, 2004

Srila Narayana Maharaja on a morning walk in Fiji a few days ago, on the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

In Fiji he lectured nightly on Sanatana-dharma. The lecture below was not given in Fiji.

[Respected Readers. Obeisances to you all. You will be interested and happy to know that last week in Murwillumbah, on April 29, just a few days before he went to Fiji, Srila Narayana spoke practically the same points he discussed in the class below, in Puri. So kindly accept this until we can send you the Australia class:]

We are continuing the conversation between Sri Ramananda Raya and Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, so please come to the banks of the Godavari.

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asked Sri Raya Ramananda to tell Him, with scriptural reference, what is the ultimate goal in life, Raya Ramananda first quoted a verse from the Visnu Purana.

varnasramacaravata  
purusena parah puman  
visnur aradhyate pantha  
nanyat tat-tosa-karanam

[“One can worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Visnu, by proper discharge of the principles of varna and asrama. There is no alternative to pacifying the Lord by execution of the principles of the varnasrama system.”]

This verse, first spoken by Sri Parasara Muni, is also used in the Ramanuja-sampradaya as evidence that this is the goal of life. Sri Raya Ramananda explained that by following ones sva-dharma, one’s position in varnasrama-dharma, one will achieve pure devotion to the Supreme Godhead. Hearing this, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu replied, “This is external. If you know more, you may speak further.” This is because the devotion of a person engaging in his position in varnasrama is mixed with great attachment to his gross body, and he also has a desire for liberation.

This type of mixed bhakti will not take one to Vaikuntha, the spiritual abode of God; it may only take him up to Siddhaloka, liberation. It is true that pure bhakti is the ultimate goal (sadhya), but varnasrama-dharma is not the process (sadhana) to obtain that type of bhakti. For this reason Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu rejected it as external.

Sri Raya Ramananda then recommended that offering the fruits of one’s activities to Krsna (krsna-karmarpanam) is the highest goal of life. From Bhagavata-gita we learn that

the karma or fruitive activities lead to bondage. The same activity that would otherwise cause bondage should be offered to Krsna.

Krsna says in Bhagavad-gita (9.27):

yat karosi yad asnasi  
yaj juhosi dadasi yat  
yat tapasyasi kaunteya  
tat kurusva mad-arpanam

[“O Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever sacrifices and austerities you perform, do that as an offering to Me, the Supreme Lord.” The Gita also says, “O Arjuna, whatever you do as fruitive activity causes bondage and whatever you do for Lord Visnu causes liberation.”]

yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra  
loko 'yam karma-bandhanah  
tad-artham karma kaunteya  
mukta-sangah samacara

"One should leave all types of fruitive activity. Instead of trying to enjoy the fruits of one's work for oneself, one should offer the results to Lord Sri Krsna."

There are two types of conceptions here. One is that you should first perform your own fruitive activities, and then after you have done that, you should offer the result to Krsna. The second, more superior method is to first offer yourself to Krsna, and then perform your activities in this world. These two conceptions look a bit similar, but there is actually a vast difference between them.

Sri Prahlada Maharaja said:

iti pumsarpita visnau  
bhaktis cen nava-laksna  
kriyeta bhagavaty addha  
tan manye 'dhitam uttamam

[The nine processes of hearing, chanting about and remembering etc. are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Krsna through these nine methods is understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge. (Srimad-bhagavatam 7.24)]

First completely offer yourself to Visnu; then perform the nine limbs of devotion. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written,

manasa, deha, geha, jo kichu mora  
arpilu tuwa pade, nanda-kisora

["Mind, body, family, everything I own I offer at Your lotus feet, O Nanda-kisora!"  
(Manasa, Deha, Geha, verse 1)]

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu rejected the proposal by Sri Raya Ramananda – that the above mentioned Bhagavat-gita verse (9.27) is the goal of life. He said that this procedure is external, because in it there is also so much attachment to the body and no question of direct service to the Lord. There is no question of atma-sambandi – no heart-to-heart relationship with the Lord. The activities here are not directly composed of pure bhakti. They are performed with the body and the result is offered to the Lord for ones personal benefit. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore rejected this proposal and said, "This is external. If you know more, you may speak further."

Sri Ramananda Raya then suggested sva-dharma-tyaga, giving up one's occupational duty. Ultimately, even if one wants to offer the fruits of ones worldly activities to Krsna, since Krsna actually owns everything, what can one actually offer to Him? Everything belongs to Krsna, and therefore one should simply renounce and leave one's material designation in varnasrama. One should be very careful to avoid anything that is against bhakti. Giving up all of one's material designations, one should perform bhakti – this is the ultimate goal of life.

Raya Ramananda said, "svadharmatyaga, ei sadhya-sara – renunciation of the duties of Varnasrama is the essence of all objectives in life." For this he gave two evidences – one from Srimad-Bhagavatam and one from Bhagavad-gita. In Srimad-Bhagavatam Sri Krsna told Uddhava, "One should follow the injunctions of the Vedas. However, if a person who has carefully and thoughtfully examined those injunctions and after due consideration of the merits and defects of following one's duties leaves all performance of duties to engage exclusively in bhajana or devotional service, that person is the best of all. "Mam bhajeta sa tu sattamah (11.29.32). That person who sees all the attributes and defects of Vedic injunctions and then decides to leave them completely and perform my bhajana is the highest, best person." What is the meaning of sat tu sattamah? In Srimad Bhagavatam the twenty six qualities of a devotee, such as being very compassionate, silent, grave, expert and thoughtful is delineated.

There are three kinds of people who neglect their religious duties in Varnasrama-dharma. The first category is the completely foolish and ignorant. Ignorant people may neglect their duties, because they have no proper understanding about what is to be done and what is not to be done. Though they are ignorant, they will still have to accept the sinful reaction for such neglect. The second type is the atheist. Atheists have no faith in God and no faith in performing their prescribed religious duties, because these duties are recommended in the Vedic scriptures.

Saksi-gopal, the Deity we visited today, was previously staying in a temple in Vrndavana, but in order to play the role of a witness in a dispute, he walked thousands of miles to Vidyanagara in South India. After that he came to the Jagannatha temple, where he was taking all the food offerings that were supposed to be offered to Lord Jagannatha – and

Lord Jagannatha had to fast completely. Because of this, the king came and took him from that temple, and brought him to the temple where he is worshipped today. Some people think Saksi-gopal is a statue and ask, “How can he walk, and how can he talk and perform pastimes?” Such persons have no faith, and they are called atheists.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami was serving the Deity Madan Mohan, and he personally saw that Madan Mohan would play with the son of a brahmana lady in Mathura. Also, when Sanatana Gosvami would sometimes offer him only some flour and water mixed together and cooked in a fire, he would say, “Oh, my throat is very dry. I cannot swallow this. Many people don’t believe that the Deity spoke to Srila Sanatana Gosvami or that he can speak to us. Therefore, they are atheists. They don’t even believe that by performing karmas or the duties in life such as serving mothers and fathers they can become happily situated in this world. Those persons who are atheists can also neglect their duties.

The third category is spoken about in this verse from the Srimad Bhagavatam (11.11) It speaks about those who have a very strong faith in the sastra, yet they also give up the sastric injunction to perform duties. Why? Such persons have a particular qualification.

They are nirveda, which means they have understood that to perform duties in this world is a temporary thing, a material activity that ultimately has no value in relationship with the soul. Therefore, they become completely discouraged and uninspired to perform such duties. They also have sraddha, strong faith in the power of hari-katha. Those persons are qualified to leave behind or neglect prescribed duties. The root cause of these two qualities is sadhu-sanga, the association of a sadhu. Those who have sadhu-sanga and develop these two characteristics can renounce the performance of prescribed duties.

After explaining the verse from Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sri Raya Ramananda quoted a verse from the Bhagavad-gita (18.66):

sarva-dharman parityajya  
mam ekam saranam vraja  
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo  
moksayisyami ma sucah

[“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.]

In this verse Lord Sri Krsna gives the instruction to give up all dharma. This dharma refers to varnasrama-dharma, or the dharma that is related to the physical body and the subtle, material mind. Krsna says, “Leave all these and surrender to My lotus feet. If you do this, I will deliver you from all types of sinful reaction. Do not fear.”

Why is Krsna saying, “I will deliver you from all types of sinful reactions,” and why is He saying, “Don’t be afraid”? Because the dharma of the body and mind includes living with one’s family, wife and children, taking care of one’s aged parents and all related duties. Vedic scriptures say that if you leave your wife or neglect your young children, or

if you will not take care of your aged parents, this is very sinful. Therefore, if someone will consider doing this, some fear will come in their mind, thinking, “Should I do it or not?” Sri Kṛṣṇa considers, “They are afraid because sinful reactions might come, and they will have to taste the sinful reactions.” He therefore says, “Aham tvam sarva papebhyo – I will protect you from the sin of that neglect. Don’t be afraid.”

Srīmad-Bhāgavatam gives the same conclusion:

devarsī-bhūtapta-nānam pitināh  
nā kinkaro nāyam rñé ca rājan  
sarvatmanā yāù çaranaà çaranyāà  
gato mukundaà parihrtya kartam

[“O King, one who has given up all material duties and has taken full shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, who offers shelter to all, is not indebted to the demigods, great sages, ordinary living beings, relatives, friends, mankind or even one’s forefathers who have passed away. Since all such classes of living entities are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, one who has surrendered to the Lord’s service has no need to serve such persons separately.” (Srīmad-bhāgavatam 11.5.41)]

In this world everyone who is born has so many debts. They are indebted to the demigods, to the sages, to their forefathers, to other living entities and to the king of their society. They will have to do their prescribed duties, and by performing them they will pay their debts. Otherwise, a punishment is incurred for not paying those debts. If someone will surrender completely to Sri Kṛṣṇa, they will no longer be indebted to anyone. Srīmad-bhāgavatam gives this conclusion. To leave everything for Kṛṣṇa’s service is actually not a problem. There is no necessity of being afraid.

Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected this suggestion of dharma-tyāga as the goal of life, and then Rāmananda Raya suggested saraṇagatī. In this verse, sarva dharma parityajya – leave all karma and surrender to Sri Kṛṣṇa. Saraṇagatī, surrender to God, is a very high thing. Why is it that, after hearing this, Srī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This surrender to Kṛṣṇa is also external. I want to hear something superior.”

First we should know the definition of saraṇagatī. In the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, the definition of saraṇagatī has been given.

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam  
raksisyatiti visvaso goprtve varanam tatha  
atma niksepa karpanye sad-vidha saraṇagatī

[“The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kāñēa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one’s guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility.]

Saranagati has six limbs. First of all, anukulyasya sankalpa – one should make a very strong, determined, unbreakable vow to except those things that are favorable for devotional service. Pratikulyasya varjanam – one should leave anything that is unfavorable or detrimental to devotional service. Even if someone you know who is most dear to you but his association is unfavorable – he must be given up. Raksisyatiti visvaso – at the time of danger, who will protect me? I have very strong confidence that Sri Krsna will protect me. Then goprtve varanam – who will maintain me? Who will maintain my life, now and in the future? If a lady gets a husband she may think, “Oh, my husband will maintain me” and forget Krsna.” This is not saranagati. Saranagati means, “I have a very strong faith that Krsna will maintain me every step of my life.” Then, atma niksepa karpanye – karpanye means to always be very meek humble, and to consider oneself more insignificant than a blade of grass. Atma niksepa – this means to have no independent desire.

Saranagati is actually not bhakti. It is the step leading towards bhakti; it is the door through which one must go to enter into the realm of bhakti. In this verse, sarva dharma parityajya, there is no mention of direct service to Sri Krsna. In Sri Brhad-bhagavatamrta Arjuna was speaking with Sri Narada about the time he received the instructions of the Gita, because Narada had glorified him saying “You are a great personality. Krsna directly instructed you in the Bhagavad-gita.” What was Arjuna’s opinion in regards to this? He said, “Actually I am not the true recipient of Krsna’s mercy, because I am His friend. I have a relationship as a friend. But what did He say to me? He told me, ‘You should perform saranagati, because this is the doorway to bhakti. I have already established a relationship with Him as a friend. By giving me that instruction he did not make me the recipient of His mercy. He cheated me. If He had given me a blessing that I could obtain Vraja-bhakti, service to Him in Vraja, that would have been a real blessing. Instead He told me to perform saranagati; so I have been cheated.’”

This teaching gives guidance to the people in general. In saranagati there is no conception of svarupa anubandhi – the eternal relationship between the svarupa of the soul and the svarupa of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krsna says in this verse, “Mah sucah – don’t be afraid.” The surrender in this verse is inspired by fear, not by a loving relationship. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore said, “Eho bahya, age kaha ara – speak something further.”

Gaura premanande!