

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

What a Preacher Should Know

A Morning Walk

Badger, California: June 15, 2005 [Part 2]

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] We in the Gaudiya Sampradaya follow the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda. *[see endnote 1] We accept this, and the Nimbarka Sampradaya also accepts bhedabheda. What is the difference?

[Devotee:] The Nimbarka Sampradaya doesn't accept parakiya-rasa (the supreme, paramour relationship between Sri Krsna and the gopis).

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] This is not tattva.

[Devotee:] They preach vastu-parinamvad (Creation through transformation of the Absolute Truth), and we preach sakti-parinamvad (Creation through transformation of the energy of the Absolute Truth). Their bhedabheda (theory of the difference between the Lord and His energies) is svabhavika-bhedabheda [See explanation below] and not acintya-bhedabheda.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] You should all know all these topics. A preacher should know. There are so many things to know. What is the philosophy of Sankaracarya (the leader of the impersonalist school of philosophy)?

[Devotee:] Kevaladvaita. *[See endnote 2]

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] And Ramanuja? *[See endnote 3]

[Devotee:] Visistadvaita. *[See endnote 4]

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] What does it mean?

[Devotee:] Well, the title is 'specific monism', 'qualified monism.' It is monism but with acceptance of the difference.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] You should explain clearly. Can you? What is the meaning? What is the meaning of "visista"?

[Devotees:] Specific. Speciality.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] What is special?

[Devotee:] In Sanskrit, an adjective is called visesan. A noun is qualified by adjectives. For example, there is a car. It can be a big car or a big red car. The noun is car and the qualities of the car are the adjectives: It is big; it is red. In the same way, all the discussions of bhedabheda, suddhadvaita, *[See endnote 5] and so on, are about the relationship between brahma, (God), the living entity and the inert material world. Here, in the case of the philosophy of visistadvaita, brahma (God, or the absolute spirit whole) is the noun, and

living beings and this material world of ignorance are the adjectives. Parabrahma (the Supreme Personality of Godhead) is like the noun.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Don't say "brahmaa." Say, "bram-ha."

[Devotee:] Bram-ha.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Otherwise it will refer to Lord Brahma (the demigod).

[Devotee:] Para-tattva (the Supreme Personality of Godhead) is one Truth, and the living being and material world are considered to be like the adjectives of that original noun. This is the visista. Because the adjective is called visesan, so this philosophy is called visistadvaitavada. [Advaita means monism or oneness, and vada means conclusion or theory]

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Visistadvaitavada is actually advaitavada, (monism) but with an adjective. Suppose we say, "Black cow" or "White cow." The words white and black are adjectives (visesan). So brahma is one without second, but...

[Madhava Maharaja:] It is specified by adjectives.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Adjectives. They say that this entire material world is the gross body of that brahma, and that the living entities are his subtle body. In One – the subtle body and gross body. This is visistadvaitavada. There are so many things to know.

Now, what is the meaning of svabhavika?

[Madhava Maharaja:] The word svabhavika means natural. Svabhavika bhedabhedavada. Bheda means difference and abheda means non-difference. These two are simultaneously and naturally there in brahma.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Be more clear.

[Madhava Maharaja:] They embrace the theory of vastu-parinamvada (transformation of the Absolute Truth). Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said this is wrong. Brahma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, can never be transformed. Rather, his potency transforms (sakti-parinamvada) and creates the spiritual, marginal and material worlds.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Svabhavika means natural. There are so many living entities, and this world consists of many millions of universes and so many things. How has it come about? Nimbadiya (Nimbarka) says that it came naturally from Sri Krsna – Parabrahma. Do you understand?

Sankaracarya and others say that brahma (the impersonal Absolute Whole) is transformed. But brahma never transforms. This is explained throughout scripture. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu taught acintya-bhedabheda: Both the living entities and this material world are transformations of the Lord's potency. This philosophy is called sakti-parinamvada.*[See endnote 6]

The visistadvaita philosophy does not accept sakti-parinamvada. Its followers accept svabhavika, and we say acintya (inconceivable). Brahma is 'as it is'. He is like cintamani. So much gold and other things come from cintamani, but they are not cintamani. Cintamani is as it was before. So much gold has come, and yet cintamani remains the same. There is no transformation.

So Parabrahma (the Supreme Absolute, or Supreme Personality of Godhead), Lord Sri Krsna, is like that cintamani. He is Nanda-nandana, Vrajendra-nandana – Parabrahma. His potency transforms in many different ways (sakti-parinamvada). It transforms into the living entities and into this entire material existence. Do you understand?

[Devotee:] Do all the four Vaisnava-acaryas accept sakti-parinamvada?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No; there is some difference. They accept one thing. They accept bhakti and the Supreme Lord – this relation. They also say we have come from the Supreme Lord. But regarding how we came, there are some differences.

[Devotee:] Did Ramanujacarya accept sakti-parinamvada?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No.

[Madhava Maharaja:] None of the other acaryas accepted it.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Any questions?

[Devotee:] If I am not this body, then what is this body?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] When you sleep, do you see your body or not? Your eyes are closed and you are totally sleeping. You have no external consciousness. What is your question?

[Devotee:] Okay. I am not this body. Where am I? Inside?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] There is a body inside. Lord Sri Krsna doesn't have two or three bodies, but we do. Do you understand? Krsna is the same as His soul, but we have our transcendental body, then the subtle body and then the gross body. We are not aware of this, however, because of maya. We are covered. We are not aware, but inside there is a very beautiful transcendental form, meant for Sri Krsna's service. That is to be realized. That is why Guru is needed. Krsna will not tell this to you all. He can tell something inside as a caitya-guru (the Lord in his form as Supersoul, residing in everyone's heart), but your Guru will tell you everything. There is no other way than to surrender to Guru.

If a man is chanting "Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna," why would he require all this siddhanta (philosophy)? What is the need of so much siddhanta? If he is remembering that "I am a manjari," what is the need of all this siddhanta?

[Devotee:] One reason would be for preaching, and the other would be to deepen...

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No.

[Padmanabha Maharaja:] Because Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has said:

siddhanta baliya citte na kara alasa
iha haite krsne lage sudrdha manasa

["A sincere student should not neglect the discussion of such conclusions, considering them controversial, for such discussions strengthen the mind. Thus one's mind becomes attached to Sri Krsna." (Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adi-līla 2.117)] *[See endnote 7]

"One's mind will become very firmly fixed in surrender to Sri Krsna and service to Him if one studies siddhanta. So one should not be lazy to try to understand it."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If one is only chanting the holy name and remembering Krsna's asta-kaliya-līla (24-hour-a-day pastimes), what will happen? He will fall down.

[Padmanabha Maharaja:] This is in relation to the stage in which one hasn't come to the proper qualification for that. But when one comes to the proper qualification, then is there no need to study so much siddhanta?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Without this, how will he come to that qualification? You should know all these truths. Krsnadas Kaviraja Gosvami and all of our disciplic succession included these in their literatures. Caitanya Mahaprabhu defeated Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, and Srila Jiva Gosvami defeated so many. Srila Rupa Gosvami knew all these truths, but he left it for his disciples to explain; and he did only that.

[Devotee:] Srila Jiva Gosvami studied under Madhusudana Sarasvati, who is the disciple of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, who heard from Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Also, we read that Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura had tutors come from the Ramanuja- and Madhva Sampradayas, and he used to train his sannyasis in Mayapura in the philosophy of these other sampradayas. Should we do that also? Should we get some teachers to tell us how to understand these philosophies?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] What is the need?

[Devotee:] You said we should know all these things deeply.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Srila Prabhupada did not have the same situation as nowadays. He taught and studied all the principles of all the different Vaisnava-theories, and then he preached. But now books are available to us.

[Madhava Maharaja:] The books are available.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If you go to associate with other sampradayas and you are a kanistha-adhikari, you will be deviated.

[Devotee:] In aprakat-līla, (the pastimes in the transcendental realm) when the gopis and Krsna have their interactions....

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] They have no need for siddhanta.

[Devotee:] As a joke?

[Devotee:] Sometimes they mention something. They know all the seven planetary systems, all the higher planetary systems. Sometimes they joke. Sometimes they mention something.

[Madhava Maharaja:] What they are saying is siddhanta.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] But they don't explain siddhanta. Siddhanta comes automatically.

[Jayanta Krsna das:] I have one question. It is said that the seed of love of God, Vraja-prema, came with Srila Madhavendra Puri. Does this mean that everybody before him was worshiping in aisvarya-bhava, awe and reverence, as devotees worship Laksmi and Narayana? There were Jayadeva Gosvami and Candidas, Vidyapati and the Alvars in South India. They also mentioned the worship of Radha and Krsna and the gopis. So why do we say that the seed came with Madhavendra Puri?

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Can you answer? Vidyapati and Candidas were also in madhurya rasa.

[Damodara Maharaja:] Because Madhavendra Puri was related with Caitanya Mahaprabhu, therefore he could give it?

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Srila Madhavendra Puripada has specifically dedicated his prayers to Radhika, especially these two slokas:

he deva, he dayita he karunaika sindhu
he krsna he capala he bhuvanaika bandhu
he natha he ramana he nayanabhirama
ha ha kada nu bhavitasi padam drsor me

["O My Lord! O dearest one! O only friend of the universe! O Krsna, O restless one, O ocean of mercy!
O My Lord, O My enjoyer, O beloved to My eyes! Alas, when will You again be visible to Me?" (text
40 of Srila Bilvamangala Thakura's Krsna-karnamrta)]

ayi dina-dayardra natha he
mathura-natha kadavalokyase
hrdayam tvad-aloka-kataram
dayita bhramyati kim karomy aham

["O My Lord! O most merciful master! O master of Mathura! When shall I see You again? Because of My
not seeing You, My agitated heart has become unsteady. O most beloved one, what shall I do now?"
(Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 4.197)]

Why Mathura-natha?

[Jayanta Krsna Prabhu:] Krsna has gone to Mathura.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] What is Radhika thinking now?

[Jayanta Krsna Prabhu:] "Now you have become the Lord of Mathura. You are not coming back."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You can see all these moods of Radhika in Brahmara-gita, so the conception of these moods existed before, it exists now, and it will exist in the future also. In this world, in this kalpa you can say, something came from or was manifested by Madhavendra Puripada, but it existed before. It exists always; it is transcendental.

Srila Jayadeva Gosvami lived long before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When it was revealed to him in trance that Sri Krsna was placing His head on the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika, he feared to write it. The sprout of the conception was there in Madhavendra Puripada, but after Sriman Mahaprabhu it was manifested in Rupa Gosvami and others. They wrote more than this, without hesitation.

They have written so many pastimes and prayers, full with these ideas. Madhavendra Puri is called prema-kalpataru-ankura, the sprout of the desire tree of prema-bhakti.

[Padmanabha Maharaja:] Does that mean then, that Madhavendra Puri was the first person in our sampradaya to begin to taste these moods? And maybe Jayadeva and Vidyapati did not taste them?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] They were tasting, but it has been told that there was sometimes fear. There was no pure-parakiya moods at that time. They are fearing.

[Atul Krsna dasa:] Srila Gurudeva, you say we should give respect to other sampradayas, and yet you are discussing some things that are different in their philosophical understanding. In sadhya (the goal) and sadhana (the devotional process to attain the goal) they are sometimes quite different, and especially in rasa-vicar.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No. In sadhya they are not different.

[Devotee:] But in Ramanujacarya's line they will say that no one can go higher than Hanumanji.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Lord Krsna and Lord Narayana are the same tattva. There is no difference; there is only some speciality. They also accept bhakti, and they all accept visnu-tattva, but there is some gradation in visnu-tattva. So we should honor the four Vaisnava-sampradayas. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu did so. Theirs is suddha-bhakti (pure bhakti), but not suddha-tara bhakti (more pure) or Visuddha (most pure). All are suddha, all are purna (complete), but not purnatara (more complete) and purnatama (most complete). There is some speciality.

[Devotee:] I have a question. By studying the scriptures we understand that Guru is the manifestation of Lord Krsna's mercy. But is guru-tattva and sakti-tattva the same, or can Guru also be a jiva?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Guru is not different from Krsna. Actually Sri Krsna's entire mercy – condensed mercy – is Gurudeva.

[Devotee:] So Gurudeva is not a jiva?

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Yes, he may be a jiva. However, when he is perfect by sadhana, there is no difference between him and Krsna's eternal associates, the nitya-siddha associates. All are serving Krsna. They will all be called parikaras, associates.

[Devotee:] No more jiva?

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] They will not be called jivas. They will still be jivas, from one point of view. From here we can say they are jivas, but there they will not. All are considered associates.

You cannot understand without chanting more, being dedicated to Gurudeva, giving your whole energy, being loyal to Gurudeva, and taking him as good as Krsna – saksad-haritvena. When this occurs, you will realize everything and then you can serve.

ENDNOTES:

[ALL ENDNOTES ARE FROM THE TRANSLATIONS AND PURPORTS IN THE BOOKS OF
SRILA PRABHUPADA BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI MAHARAJA]

[*Endnote 1 – Acintya bhedabheda:

"The whole material creation, therefore, is one with and different from Narayana, simultaneously, and this supports the acintya-bhedabheda-tattva philosophy of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Being an emanation from the glancing potency of Narayana, the whole material creation is non-different from Him. But because it is the effect of His external energy (bahiranga maya) and is aloof from the internal potency (atma-maya), the whole material creation is different from Him at the same time.

"The example given in this verse very nicely is that of the dreaming man. The dreaming man creates many things in his dream, and thus he himself becomes the entangled seer of the dream and is also affected by the consequences. This material creation is also exactly a dreamlike creation of the Lord, but He, being the transcendental Supersoul, is neither entangled nor affected by the reactions of such a dreamlike creation. He is always in His transcendental position, but essentially He is everything, and nothing is apart from Him. As a part of Him, one should therefore concentrate on Him only, without deviation; otherwise one is sure to be overcome by the potencies of the material creation, one after another. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.39 Purport)

"This philosophical truth of simultaneous oneness and difference was propounded by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and it is known as acintya-bhedabheda-tattva. Brahma, Narada and all others are simultaneously one with the Lord and different from the Supreme Lord. We are all one with Him, just as the gold ornaments are one in quality with the stock gold, but the individual gold ornament is never equal in quantity with the stock gold. The stock gold is never exhausted even if there are innumerable ornaments emanating from the stock, because the stock is purnam, complete; even if purnam is deducted from the purnam, still the supreme purnam remains the same purnam. This fact is inconceivable to our present imperfect senses. Lord Caitanya therefore defined His theory of philosophy as acintya (inconceivable), and as confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita as well as in the Bhagavatam, Lord Caitanya's theory of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva is the perfect philosophy of the Absolute Truth." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.6.13-16 Purport)

"This is Krsna, who is understood by acintya-bhedabheda-tattva philosophy. Purnasya purnam adaya purnam evavaisyate: Krsna is always complete, and although He can create millions of universes, all of them full in all opulences, He remains as opulent as ever, without any change (advaitam). This is explained by different Vaisnava acaryas through philosophies such as suddhadvaita visistadvaita and dvaitadvaita. Therefore one must learn about Krsna from the acaryas.(Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.13.19 Purport]

[*Endnote 2 – Kevaladvaita:

"The purpose of the discussions in the Upanisads and Vedanta-sutra is to philosophically establish the personal feature of the Absolute Truth. The impersonalists, however, in order to establish their philosophy, accept these discussions in terms of laksana-vrtti, or indirect meanings. Thus instead of being tattva-vada, or in search of the Absolute Truth, they become Mayavada, or illusioned by the material energy. When Sri Visnusvami, one of the four acaryas of the Vaisnava cult, presented his thesis on the subject matter of suddhadvaita-vada, immediately the Mayavadis took advantage of this philosophy and tried to establish their advaita-vada or kevaladvaita-vada. To defeat this kevaladvaita-vada, Sri Ramanujacarya presented his philosophy as visistadvaita-vada, and Sri Madhvacarya presented his philosophy of tattva-vada, both of which are stumbling blocks to the Mayavadis because they defeat their philosophy in scrupulous detail. Students of Vedic philosophy know very well how strongly Sri Ramanujacarya's visistadvaita-vada and Sri Madhvacarya's tattva-vada contest the impersonal Mayavada philosophy. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, however, accepted the direct meaning of the Vedanta philosophy and thus defeated the Mayavada philosophy immediately. He opined in this connection that anyone who follows the principles of the Sariraka-bhasya is doomed." (Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 7.110 Purport)

"The philosophers known as kevaladvaita-vadis generally occupy themselves with hearing the Sariraka-bhasya, a commentary by Sankaracarya, advocating that one impersonally consider oneself the Supreme Lord. Such Mayavada philosophical commentaries upon Vedanta are simply imaginary, but there are other commentaries on Vedanta philosophy. The commentary by Srila Ramanujacarya, known as Sri-bhasya, establishes the visistadvaita-vada philosophy. Similarly, in the Brahma-sampradaya, Madhvacarya's Purnaprajna-bhasya establishes suddha-dvaita-vada. In the Kumara-sampradaya, or Nimbarka-sampradaya, Sri Nimbarka establishes the philosophy of dvaitadvaita-vada in the Parijata-saurabha-bhasya. And in the Visnusvami-sampradaya, or Rudra-sampradaya, which comes from Lord Siva, Visnusvami has written a commentary called Sarvajna-bhasya, which establishes suddhadvaita-vada.

"A Vaisnava should study the commentaries on Vedanta-sutra written by the four sampradaya-acaryas, namely Sri Ramanujacarya, Madhvacarya, Visnusvami and Nimbarka, for these commentaries are based upon the philosophy that the Lord is the master and that all living entities are His eternal servants. One interested in studying Vedanta philosophy properly must study these commentaries, especially if he is a Vaisnava. These commentaries are always adored by Vaisnavas." (Caitanya-caritamrta Antya-lila 2.95)

"Mayavadis do not discuss these philosophies, for they are firmly convinced of their own philosophy of kevaladvaita, exclusive monism. Accepting this system of philosophy as the pure understanding of the Vedanta-sutra, they believe that Krsna has a body made of material elements and that the activities of loving service to Krsna are sentimentality. They are known as Mayavadis because according to their opinion Krsna has a body made of maya, and the loving service of the Lord executed by devotees is also maya. They consider such devotional service to be an aspect of fruitive activities (karma-kanda). According to their view, bhakti consists of mental speculation or sometimes meditation. This is the difference between the Mayavadi and Vaisnava philosophies."]

[*Endnote 3 – Sri Ramanuja:

He is one of the four Sampradaya acaryas. He is the leading preceptor of the Sri (Laxmi) Sampradaya]

[*Endnote 4 – Visistadvaita:

"Thus Krsna should not be thought of as being alone but should be considered as eternally existing with all His manifestations, as described by Ramanujacarya. In the Visistadvaita philosophy, God's energies, expansions and incarnations are considered to be oneness in diversity. In other words, God is not separate from all of these; everything together is God." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Introduction)

"Thus although the energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead interact within the cosmic manifestation, each keeps its separate individual existence. Merging in the material or spiritual energies, therefore, does not involve loss of individuality. According to Sri Ramanujapada's theory of Visistadvaita, although all the energies of the Lord are one, each keeps its individuality (vaisistya)." (Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 7.121 Purport)

"Vaisnava mahatmas have explained the aphorism sarvam khalv idam brahma in this manner: The philosophical school known as Visistadvaita propounds the idea that the Supreme Lord eternally exists with His two principal potencies: the cit-sakti, or spiritual potency, and the acit-sakti, or material potency. Though the Lord is one nondual entity, He exists dynamically, manifesting His multifarious energies under the main headings of the cit and acit potencies, which He absolutely controls. Although He is the source of unlimited potencies, He eternally exists in His transcendental, personal form. This form manifests in three aspects, namely, as He sees Himself, as a loving devotee sees Him, and as He is seen by His competitors and enemies. The Sri Vaisnava disciplic succession, headed by Sri Ramanujacarya, cites the same text we have cited above to explain the situation of the Lord and His energies:

"A fire radiates light all around although remaining in one spot. Similarly, the Supreme Brahman radiates energy everywhere, which is manifested as this material world." (Renunciation Through Wisdom 3.3)]

[*Endnote 5 – Suddhadvaita:

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[*Endnote 6 – Sakti-parinamavada:

"In his Vedanta-sutra Srila Vyasadeva has described that everything is but a transformation of the energy of the Lord. Sankaracarya, however, has misled the world by commenting that Vyasadeva was mistaken. Thus he has raised great opposition to theism throughout the entire world. According to Sankaracarya, by accepting the theory of the transformation of the energy of the Lord, one creates an illusion by indirectly accepting that the Absolute Truth is transformed. (Caitanya caritamrta Adi-lila 7.121

"Transformation of energy is a proven fact. It is the false bodily conception of the self that is an illusion. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is opulent in all respects. Therefore by His inconceivable energies He has transformed the material cosmic manifestation. Using the example of a touchstone, which by its energy turns iron to gold and yet remains the same, we can understand that although the Supreme Personality of Godhead transforms His innumerable energies, He remains unchanged. "Although a touchstone produces many varieties of valuable jewels, it nevertheless remains the same. It does not change its original form. Although a touchstone produces many varieties of valuable jewels, it nevertheless remains the same. It does not change its original form." (Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 7. 120-127)]

[Endnote 7 – Why study so much siddhanta:

"There are many students who, in spite of reading the Bhagavad-gita, misunderstand Krsna because of imperfect knowledge and conclude Him to be an ordinary, historical personality. This one must not do. One should be particularly careful to understand the truth about Krsna. If because of laziness one does not come to know Krsna conclusively, one will be misguided about the cult of devotion, like those who declare themselves advanced devotees and imitate the transcendental symptoms sometimes observed in liberated souls. Although the use of thoughts and arguments is a most suitable process for inducing an uninitiated person to become a devotee, neophytes in devotional service must always alertly understand Krsna through the vision of the revealed scriptures, the bona fide devotees and the spiritual master. Unless one hears about Sri Krsna from such authorities, one cannot make advancement in devotion to Sri Krsna. The revealed scriptures mention nine means of attaining devotional service, of which the first and foremost is hearing from authority. The seed of devotion cannot sprout unless watered by the process of hearing and chanting. One should submissively receive the transcendental messages from spiritually advanced sources and chant the very same messages for one's own benefit as well as the benefit of one's audience." (Purport to Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila 2.117)]

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