

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

GO TO GURU AT ONCE

[This class is a continuation of Srila Maharaja's discussion of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's book, Sri Bhagavata Arka Maricimala]

Badger, California: June 17, 2005 (Part 2)

[Respected Readers,

Dandavat pranama. All glories to Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga.

Friday, September 16, 2005, is the Appearance Day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Over the last couple of months you have been receiving Srila Narayana Maharaja's lectures on the subject of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's book, Sri Bhagavata-arka-marici-mala. In glorification of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, we are sending you another such class today:]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is telling us about sadhana-bhakti, in both vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti. What is vaidhi-bhakti? [*See endnote 1]

At the time of sadhana-bhakti, one follows these principles:

utsahan niscayad dhairyat
tat-tat-karma-pravartanat
sanga-tyagat sato vrtteh
sadbhir bhaktih prasidhyati

[There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles [such as sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam [SB 7.5.23]-hearing, chanting and remembering Krsna], (5) abandoning the association of non-devotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous acaryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service." (Nectar of Instruction, verse 3)]

Always have enthusiasm in bhakti. Never be neutral – unenthusiastic. Never be neutral.

Regarding raganuga-bhakti – suppose you are hearing a class on Srimad-Bhagavatam, and this subject matter came up: Krsna was very naughty, stealing butter here and there, and so many complaints came against Him. Mother Yasoda wanted to control Him. Who? The Supreme Lord. She took her stick and began to chastise Him, saying, "You are a 'friend of the monkeys.'" Although Krsna began weeping, she was not satisfied. She thus bound Him to a grinding mortar and His weeping increased. Who was weeping? The Supreme Personality of Godhead. Was He pretending to weep, or was He really weeping? He is really weeping. By hearing His name, fear personified also becomes fearful; but in this situation He Himself was weeping.

Hearing this pastime someone may think, "Mother Yasoda is controlling Sri Krsna in such a wonderful way. I also want Krsna as my son. I also want to control Him."

Mother Yasoda is a ragatmika-parikara, an eternal associate of Krsna, and those who want to be like her are called raganuga.

Or, someone might hear that Sri Krsna was playing with Srimati Radhika and all the sakhis. Radhika defeated Krsna and all the sakhis were clapping. Srila Rupa Gosvami prays, "When will a time come that, when Sri Krsna is defeated by Srimati Radhika and all the gopis are happy, I will also be happy to witness that?"

That devotee may then hear that if Krsna defeats Srimati Radhika, the sakhis will not be happy, although Vrnda or Kundalata may be happy. Hearing this, he may want to be in the gopis' assembly. He may think, "When will I serve them?" In that connection, Lalita and Visakha are ragatmika, serving Sri Sri Radha and Krsna. Those who have some greed to serve Krsna in this way are raganuga, and they are very, very fortunate. So, as stated in the afore-mentioned verse three of Nectar of Instruction, always be enthusiastic. Be confident and patient.

Now I have explained something about vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga bhakti, and the following history reveals something further:

During the Rajasuya sacrifice held by Maharaja Yudhisthira, one of the important procedures was that the most exalted personality in the assembly should be first offered worship. After all arrangements were made for the sacrifice, the next consideration was who should be worshiped first in the ceremony.

When the matter remained undecided, Sahadeva began to speak in favor of Lord Krsna. He said, "Lord Krsna, the best amongst the members of the Yadu dynasty and the protector of His devotees, is the most exalted personality in this assembly. Krsna is present as the Supersoul in every living being, and if we can satisfy Him, then every living being automatically becomes satisfied."

In the meantime, Sisupala, the friend of the demons Kalayavana, Jarasanda, Kamsa and Dantavakra, began to criticize Lord Krsna over and over again. He criticized Him one hundred times. Bhima and all others were ready to kill him, and Baladeva Prabhu became grave and wanted to crush him at once with his plough.

Lord Krsna said, "Remain calm; please be calm." Then, when Sisupala criticized Him one-hundred and one times, Krsna personally took His cakra in His hand and severed the head of Sisupala from his body. A light at once came from his body and entered Krsna's lotus feet.

Yudhisthira Maharaja then asked Sri Narada, who was present in the assembly, "How wonderful this is! Sisupala criticized Krsna so much, and still he attained the same liberation that rsis and munis attain after performing very severe austerities for millions of years. He attained that goal very easily.

Narada Muni replied, "O Maharaja Yudhisthira, there are two kinds of absorption in Sri Krsna. One is called raga (strong attachment) and the other is dvesa (envy). In this connection, raga is favorable absorption whereas envy, anger and fear are unfavorable. Kama (transcendental lust), sneha (transcendental affection) and sambandha (a family relation) are favorable and they are called raga. Envy is opposite

to raga although it is also absorption of the heart and mind. Envy denotes: "I will kill him."

gopyah kamad bhayat kamsa
dvesac caidyada yo nrpah
sambandhad vrsnayah snehad
yuyam bhaktya vayam vibho

["My dear King Yudhisthira, the gopis by their lusty desires, Kamsa by his fear, Sisupala and other kings by envy, the Yadus by their familial relationship with Krsna, you Pandavas by your great affection for Krsna, and we, the general devotees, by our devotional service, have obtained the mercy of Krsna." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.1.31)]

In general, all these six are raga-mayi (full absorption in Sri Krsna). Kamsa's fear was also raga-mayi, but with envy. Sisupala and Dantavakra were also like that. Kamsa was totally absorbed in Krsna out of fear, day and night. While he slept, he was always dreaming about Krsna. He was always afraid, thinking, "When Krsna comes, I will kill Him."

So Kamsa attained complete absorption by fear, Sisupala out of envy, and the Vrsni dynasty (the Yadavas) by sambandha (family relation). The members of the Vrsni dynasty considered Krsna as their brother, son, grandfather or uncle. All the Yadavas thought in those ways, and their wives were also in those relationships. Sri Narada Muni also cited the example of the Pandavas, who had both sambandha and sneha (affection) - a very high class of sneha.

Referring to himself and others like him, Narada said, "Our bhakti is vaidhi-bhakti." However, we see that Narada's bhakti is so high. In one form he is a gopi, so we cannot imagine how high his bhakti is. In another form Narada is Madhumangala [Krsna's brahmana cowherd friend who assists in many of his pastimes with the gopis]. So, he is a very high class devotee, but here he is speaking in a general way.

Out of the six kinds of absorption in Sri Krsna, we should not accept fear, envy and anger. In the other three, that is lust, relationship and affection, raga-bhakti or transcendental attachment is there. In these three, transcendental lust (kama) refers to the gopis, and sambandha and sneha refer especially to Nanda Baba and Yasoda. But the Pandavas also have sambandha and they also have sneha, as do others like them. We can follow them. Those who follow all these associates are performing sadhana-bhakti. Sadhana-bhakti is of two kinds, but here Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura refers to raganuga sadhana-bhakti. Those who follow that will engage in:

sravanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam

["Prahlada Maharaja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Visnu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant,

considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words)-these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.5.23)]

They will engage in:

sadhu-sanga, nama-kirtana, bhagavata-sravaṇa
mathura-vasa, sri-murtira sraddhaya sevana

["One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear Srimad-Bhagavatam, reside at Mathura and worship the Deity with faith and veneration." (Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya 22.128)]

The gopis' "lust" is not lust, but actually the highest class of prema. Their total absorption in Kṛṣṇa, their complete attachment to Him, was attained through the medium of their transcendental lust or prema. This is raga. To consider what is our duty or responsibility in kṛṣṇa-bhajana is called vaidhi-bhakti, whereas the practice sadhana by following in the footsteps of the gopis is raganuga-bhakti.

The nine processes of devotional service are practiced in both vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti, but the mood is different. In all respects there is a difference in the moods and topics of hearing, chanting and so on. The vaidhi-bhakti sadhaka's (devotional practitioner's) hearing will be so much different from the hearing of those who hear pastimes of Sri Kṛṣṇa in raganuga-bhakti. Outwardly it may appear that both are the same, but actually there is so much difference – just as there is a difference between lust and prema although externally they are seen as the same. If Sri Kṛṣṇa is embracing Srimati Rādhikā or kissing Her, it may seem like mundane lust, but there is so much difference between the two.

Raganuga sadhana-bhajana is more powerful than vaidhi sadhana. I have told you so many truths about this topic, and about the sweet pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Srimati Rādhikā. I have explained to you Caitanya-caritamṛta; that is, Rāya Rāmananda Samvada, Rupa-sikṣa, Sanātana-sikṣa and so many other topics. You should understand that all these topics are raganuga. If you are sincere, loyal to Guru and our scriptures like Srimad-Bhagavatam and others, and have no envy towards anyone, you can very quickly achieve this path of raganuga.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura writes in his book, Bhagavata-arka-marici-mala, "First I will first explain vaidhi-bhakti, and then raganuga-bhakti." He quotes the following verse:

nr-deham adyam su-labham su-durlabham
plavam su-kalpam guru-karnadharam
mayanukuleṇa nabhasvateritam
puman bhavabdhim na taret sa atma-ha

["The human body, which can award all benefit in life, is automatically obtained by the laws of nature, although it is a very rare achievement. This human body can be compared to a perfectly constructed boat having the spiritual master as the captain and the instructions of the Personality of Godhead as favorable winds impelling it on its

course. Considering all these advantages, a human being who does not utilize his human life to cross the ocean of material existence must be considered the killer of his own soul." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.20.17)]

In this verse Srila Sukadeva Gosvami is indicating to Maharaja Pariksit, "Katvanga Maharaja attained Krsna-bhakti and went to Vaikuntha in only 12 minutes. You have 7 days left to live, and so you can achieve more than he did."

In this human form of life you can fulfill all your desires. Although it is very rare to attain this human form, we now have it. "Plavam" – to cross a river or ocean, a very strong boat is needed, and this human form is compared to that well-constructed boat. "Guru karnadharam" – if you are sitting on a boat that is without a captain, you will drown in the ocean. You have received a very elevated Guru, like Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, like our guru-parampara, like Srila Rupa Gosvami and others. Sri Guru is very expert in sailing the boat and giving directions, telling us where to go. He will say, "Our goal is radha-dasyam. Our boat will go there." "Mayanukulena" – if there are favorable winds and the boat has good sails, and if the boatman is very expert, we will cross the river or ocean in no time.

I have given you very high sadhu-sanga. Having all these facilities and favorable situations, if you do not take advantage, you will be hurled into the cycle of endless birth and death – coming, going, coming, going – for many future births. Despite having all these facilities, if you are envious, if you are quarrelling with others, criticizing others and always searching for some hole in others; if you are not seeing what you yourself are doing wrong, you will be committing spiritual suicide. You will be the killer of your own soul, and others' as well.

nivrtta-tarsair upagiyamanad
bhavausadhac chrotra-mano-'bhiramat
ka uttamaslōka-gunanuvadat
puman virajyeta vina pasughnat

["Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the parampara system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?" (Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.1.4)]

This verse has the same meaning. Nivrtta-tarsair refers to those who are detached from worldly desires, and who are tattva-jna (knowing all philosophical truths), like Srila Sukadeva Gosvami. Here in this verse Pariksit Maharaja is addressing Sukadeva Gosvami: "You are tattva-jna and rasika (knowing all rasas). You have nothing to take from anywhere, and no need to wear any garment.

"Your hari-katha is the infallible medicine. It gives immediate comfort. It will cure everyone of their material disease and it is also very pleasing to the heart. How beautiful, how sweet are the pastimes of Sri Krsna! If one is not hearing, or if hari-katha is being spoken and one's mind is here and there, then he is a killer of his own

soul and of others'."

If there is something lacking in your spiritual life, then go at once to Guru, the captain of the strong boat of this human existence:

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijnasuh sreya uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam

["Therefore any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the bona fide guru is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.2.21)]

Go to Guru at once. Why? In order to inquire, "What is my ultimate benefit? Please tell me." To whom should you go? Sabde pare ca nisnatam. The Guru knows sastra and logical evidence, and he can remove all doubts, but this is secondary. One may know all sastra, but he may be not realizing anything (paranishata). In that case his hari-katha will not be affective. The Guru should be detached (upasamasrayam) from worldly things, as Sukadeva Gosvami is detached. Sukadeva Gosvami is very rasika, knowing all tattvas (truths) and realizing them. This is because he is sriya-suka, the parrot of Srimati Radhika. You should take shelter and surrender totally (prapadyeta), without holding back and without delay. You should sincerely tell him, "Now I am yours."

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has sung:

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)]

This should be followed; not only by words, but by action. If you are hiding something from your Gurudeva - your dearest friend - this means you are killing yourself. Don't do that. Prapadyeta means that in every respect you should be surrendered to Gurudeva - if you want to perfect your human form of life.

You should learn from your Gurudeva what is told in Srimad-Bhagavatam about the relationships with Lord Krsna called dasya (servant), sakhya (friend), vatsalya (parent) and madhurya (lover). Such a Guru is called bhagavata, for he can open the lock of the (book) bhagavata. [*See endnote 2]

Don't have any duplicity. Don't try to hide anything from Gurudeva. Totally surrender to him. All your actions should be to please that perfect Guru. The real Guru is not an ordinary human being, like so-called gurus here and there. If one opens his heart to that bona fide Guru, without hiding anything, he will then open his own heart; he will

give everything to that surrendered disciple. On the other hand, to those who try to hide something, that Guru, who has learned everything from "tricky" Krsna, will also be very "tricky."

Sri Guru has two forms. One is God, Krsna, and one is Krsna's devotee. Krsna is most rasika and has all other unfathomable qualities.

acaryam mam vijaniyan
navamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyasuyeta
sarva-devamayo guruh

["One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am," said the Blessed Lord. "Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all demigods." Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.7.27)]

Have a strong belief in this principle, and have such faith in Guru.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has collected this verse, beginning "nr-deham adyam..." as above-mentioned, from the 11th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam.

There was once a young rsi (sage) who travelled everywhere naked. He was very beautiful and had very strong health. He never knew where he was going, and he was always very, very happy. Sometimes he was chanting kirtana, sometimes rolling on the ground, and sometimes laughing. He used to live in this way.

A king named Yadu Maharaja saw him and thought, "He looks extremely happy". He asked him, "Who are you, and where have you learned all these things?" The young rsi replied, "I have 24 instructing-gurus."

Who these gurus were, I will tell you tomorrow.

Gaura premanande.

[*Endnote 1:

raga-hina jana bhaje sastrera ajnaya
`vaidhi bhakti' bali' tare sarva-sastre gaya

["Those who have not attained the platform of spontaneous attachment in devotional service render devotional service under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master according to the regulative principles mentioned in the revealed scriptures. According to the revealed scriptures, this kind of devotional service is called vaidhi bhakti." (Caitanya-caritamra, Madhya 22.109)]

Endnote 2:

yaha, bhagavata pada vaisnavera sthane
ekanta asraya kara caitanya-carane

["If you want to understand Srimad-Bhagavatam," he said, "you must approach a self-realized Vaisnava and hear from him. You can do this when you have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu."(Caitanya-caritamrta, Antya 5.131)]

Editorial Advisors: Sripad Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanatha dasa

Editor: Syamarani dasi

Transcriber: Vasanti dasi

Typist: Anita dasi

Proof-reader: Krsna-kamini dasi