

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

**IF WE WANT TO READ PRABHUPADA'S BOOKS**

[A darsana in Houston]

Houston, Texas: June 28, 2005

[Devotee:] I want to know if it is necessary to discern, as one is reading through the scriptures, what is actually Krsna's desire for us and what is man-made rules and regulations. The reason I ask this question is that there seem to be a lot of negative connotations towards women, and I know that you do not agree with that. Since you don't agree with those statements, I wonder if there may be other things in the scriptures that were more-or-less of man-made ancient tradition, which are not applicable today.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No. Nothing like this has been written in the scriptures. We are neither male nor female. We are not this body – we are soul. According to the way in which we want to serve Krsna, or the way in which Krsna wants us to serve Him, He gives us our forms.

You know that Lord Rama loves His wife, Sita. You know how He loves Sabari, a very low-born lady. He even ate Sabari's food remnants. You know that Krsna took His flute and peacock feather and placed them at Srimati Radhika's lotus feet, saying, "I will not be able to repay you, even if I live for millions of years."

[Devotee:] Yes.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Then how can you think like this? You should not think in this way. Are you initiated by anyone?

[Devotee:] By you.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Then why are you...? Have I told anything like this? Has this been written in the Bhagavad-gita or in Srimad Bhagavatam?

[Devotee:] In the Gita it says that women are not intelligent and...

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No, you have not understood the meaning.

Yaha bhagavata pada vaisnavera. ["If you want to understand Srimad-Bhagavatam," Svarupa Damodara Gosvami said, "you must approach a self-realized Vaisnava and hear from him." (Sri Caitanya Caritamrta, Antya 5.131)]

If you want to read anything, don't read on your own. Your mind is not controlled, and it is not pure. You should therefore go to any realized person and serve that tattva-vetta purusa (a self-realized soul, who is a knower of all truths). And then hear from him.

tad viddhi pranipatena  
pariprasnena sevaya  
upadeksyanti te jnanam  
jnaninas tattva-darsinah

["Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth." (Bhagavad-gita 4.34)]

You should go to a person who has realized all spiritual truths. Serve him, and after that you may ask a question. With folded hands you may ask him, "If I am qualified to hear, then *please* explain such and such." Then he will speak, and then there will be no doubt. On the other hand, if you read by yourself, so many doubts will come. If you read Mahabharata, you may say, "Oh, Krsna has left His body and died." If you read Ramayana, you may think that Rama died, Laksmana died and all the monkeys died. This doubt may come; and if it comes, you will be ruined. Your bhakti will disappear. \*[See endnote]

[\*Endnote 1:

"So if you read different scriptures, you will be bewildered... But there is adjustment. If you go to the authorized person, he can adjust. But you cannot see. You see, you'll see contradiction. So *srutayo vibhinna*. Therefore they are considered different, but actually, they are not different. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.1.7 lecture, San Francisco, March 1, 1967)

"So Caitanya Mahaprabhu says the medium is sastra, and direction is the guru. Sastra also... we cannot understand any book, what to speak of the scripture. Sometimes we find contradiction in the scripture. That is not contradiction; that is my poor fund of knowledge. I cannot understand; therefore assistance of guru, a spiritual master, is required." (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta Madhya-lila 20.353-354 Lecture, New York, December 26, 1966)

"Because the spiritual master is the representative of the Supreme Lord, his direction is directly the direction of the Supreme Lord. The spiritual master, saintly persons and scriptures direct in the same way. There is no contradiction in these three sources. All actions done under such direction are free from the reactions of pious and impious activities of this material world." (Bhagavad-gita 10.3, purport)

"One should taste the meaning of Srimad-Bhagavatam in the association of pure devotees, and one should associate with the devotees who are more advanced than oneself and who are endowed with a similar type of affection for the Lord." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila 22.131)

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