

Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

Opening Words

Paderborn, Germany: April 4, 2006

[Dear Readers,

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

Many people who have yahoo accounts have told us that they are not getting these hari-katha lectures. It has been brought to our attention that the lectures are going into the BULK account on yahoo, therefore, we request that you please check your bulk folder and see if they are there. We pray that this resolves this problem.

your aspiring servants,

The hari-katha team]

First of all I offer millions of obeisances unto the lotus feet of my diksa-guru, om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja; and the same unto the lotus feet of my siksa-guru, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

I am coming to the Western countries especially by the mercy of my siksa-guru, Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. After taking sannyasa in Sri Kesavaji Gaudiya Matha, Srila Swami Maharaja came to New York City in America. From there, in a couple of years, he preached all over America, in European countries, Australia and elsewhere. He established preaching centers in the midst of the ocean – in Hawaii. He did so in Canada in the mountains, in forests and so many other places. He translated many books, like Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Krsna Book and others. He did this in a couple of years by the mercy of Lord Sri Krsna, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. They sprinkled upon him a special power, and thus he preached very quickly. An ordinary person cannot do what he did.

Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura sent many preachers to the West before Srila Swami Maharaja, but they were not very successful. They went to the British Royal family and others, but only one or two people came. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja entered the world of hippies and introduced them to "Sri Krsna Caitanya Prabhu Nityananda Sri Advaita Gadhadhara Srivasadi Gaura bhakta-vrnda." From there he started his mission, and very soon a big spiritual family manifested. He performed a miracle.

I wanted to see his miracle, so I went to the places he went to, and I saw how glorious he was. Even today, those who are coming to Krsna Consciousness do so because of reading his books and hearing his glories. Those who come to me are coming because I served him and followed him. I offer my pusanjali unto his lotus feet.

This year our Navadvipa Parikrama was especially very, very successful. In my sixty years of doing parikrama, this was the most successful. Indra was very merciful – there was not very much heat, clouds or rain, and there were no difficulties. Sweet hari-katha and programs of sankirtana and dramas were conducted according to our sastra. I think many of you joined and experienced this. And now, here in Germany, almost the same number of western devotees has gathered. What is our purpose? What is the aim of our coming here?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja called on Bhudara Prabhu and Harinamananda Prabhu to speak, and then he continued:]

I realize that most of the devotees become weak when we are not here. They begin to chant less, or they stop their chanting altogether. They don't chant their guru-mantra and they have no inspiration. That is why, to inspire them, I come sometimes to European countries, sometimes to Australia, and sometimes to America. I come to inspire them so that they will not be weak.

Suppose you collect a great amount of money. One day you will have to give it up. You will become old and then you will die – leaving everything. You cannot take a single farthing with you. Always remember that death is sure.

Srimad-bhagavatam states:

labdhva su-durlabham idam bahu-sambhavante
manusyam artha-dam anityam apiha dhirah
turnam yateta na pated anu-mrtyu yavan
nihsreyasaya visayah khalu sarvatah syat

["After many, many births and deaths one achieves the rare human form of life, which, although temporary, affords one the opportunity to attain the highest perfection. Thus a sober human being should quickly endeavour for the ultimate perfection of life as long as his body, which is always subject to death, has not fallen down and died. After all, sense gratification is available even in the most abominable species of life, whereas Krsna consciousness is possible only for a human being." (Srimad-bhagavatam, 11.9.29)]

Turnam yateta na pated anu-mrtyu yavan. Our death is sure. Before death comes, we have to realize Krsna and our transcendental form as His servant. Then our lives are successful; otherwise life is not successful.

This Iron Age called kali-yuga is especially terrible, but in one sense it is okay. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to this world in this Age, so it is dhanya-kali (blessed Kali-yuga). So many faults are present in this Iron Age, but if one chants Lord Sri Krsna's name even once, his life is successful.

After the disappearance of Sri Krsna, many great sannyasis, rsis and maharsis came to Naimisaranya on the bank of the Gomati River. They asked Srila Suta Gosvami, "You are a disciple of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami. You know all the Vedic scriptures, and the essence of all the Vedas which is Brahma-sutra. Especially, you have heard Srimad-bhagavatam from your father, who was very intelligent and very merciful.

The sages continued:

prayenalpayusah sabhya
kalav asmin yuge janah
mandah sumanda-matayo
manda-bhagya hy upadrutah

["O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.10)]

In Satya-yuga, Hiranyakasipu performed austerities for sixty thousands years. We can imagine what his age was! Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Meganath lived for hundreds and thousands of years. Gradually the life-span reduced, and now in Kali-yuga we do not live for more than a hundred years. In one hundred years we sleep half the time, and then we spend twenty or twenty five years learning to be qualified for any job. From 80 to 100 years we are too old to do anything properly, and therefore there is only a few years left to marry and look after their children. Thus the time passes.

Turnam yateta na pated anu-mrtyu yavan. Before your death, you should realize who you are and what is your relation with the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna; and you should try to practice devotion to Him.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Sri Krsna Himself, who took the intrinsic mood and beauty of Srimati Radhika. By His mercy He taught Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Santana Gosvami, and His teachings are called Gaura-vani. A book has just been published called Gaura-vani Pracarine. Please try to get that book. It is very good. You should read it and know what Gaura-vani is.

Try to realize the writings of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is called Saptama Gosvami – the Seventh Gosvami. He has written so many books. We should especially read his Jaiva Dharma. Whatever he wrote was personally realized by him.

As I was saying, in Kali-yuga there are only a few years to marry, to look after children and to do the many other related activities. Any moment we may die. Those who are fortunate will pay attention to the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came and did "Gaura-vani pracarine." In other words he preached the mission of Sri Gauranga, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He began, but his Prabhu Lord Krsna called Him before he could complete his task. In his last days he called me to Vrndavana and told me, "I have collected so many disciples, but I could not fully complete their training; so please help me." I told him, "I promise I will help," and I am doing so. You see how many senior devotees of Srila Swami Maharaja are here. They are coming to me and I am helping them.

The sages told Srila Suta Gosvami:

bhurini bhuri-karmani
srotavyani vibhagasah
atah sadho 'tra yat saram
samuddhrtya manisaya
bruhi bhadraya bhutanam
yenatma suprasidati

["There are many varieties of scriptures, and in all of them there are many prescribed duties, which can be learned only after many years of study in their various divisions. Therefore, O sage, please select the essence of all these scriptures and explain it for the good of all living beings, that by such instruction their hearts may be fully satisfied." (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.11)]

They told him, "You are very intelligent. Please tell us how a soul will be happy." They did not ask about the mind at all. They did not ask about brahmacaris, sannyasis, or about any other material designation. They asked how a soul can be happy.

Srila Suta Gosvami became very happy to hear their enquiry. He offered obeisances to his Gurudeva and then told the sages how the soul can be happy:

sa vai pumsam paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhoksaje
ahaituky apratihata
yayatma suprasidati

["The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self. (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.6)]

You should all realize that you are not this physical body. This body is a bag of urine, stool and so many similar things. Lord Krsna has made it very beautiful and attractive, and because of that it is easy to attract the opposite sex. It is very difficult to perform bhajana in Kali-yuga. We see that so many sannyasis are falling down, having become attached to ladies - and ladies have become attached to men. You should be very careful – very careful. We have engaged in sense gratification in the past, for millions upon millions of lives. We have done it, and even though we are not satisfied by it, still we want it. So we should try to listen to hari-katha, to Vedic scriptures like Bhagavad-gita, Srimad-Bhagavatam, Ramayana and the Puranas.

Sa vai pumsam. This applies to all living beings. Surely this is parama-dharma, the transcendental religion of the soul – beyond the limit of words, mind and intelligence. Ahaituki means that such pure service to the Supreme is without any material cause. If you perform bhakti, your soul will be happy. There is no other way for the soul to be happy.

What is bhakti? By the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Rupa Gosvami has written two important books: Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu and Ujjvala-nilamani. In Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu he wrote:

anyabhilasita sunyam
jnana karmadi anavritam
anukulyena krsnanusilnam
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)]

vasudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogah prayojitah

janayaty asu vairagyam
jñanam (JNANAM) ca yad ahaitukam

["By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead, Sri Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world. (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.7)]

Bhakti is of two kinds: vaidhi and raganuga. By hearing Srimad-bhagavatam, this greed may come to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa like Subala-sakha, Madhumangala, Mother Yasoda and Nanda Baba, or especially like the gopis. If one is performing bhakti with this greed, bhakti will take one up to Goloka Vṛndavana. Or one may perform bhakti when there is no greed. Rather, one performs bhakti by hearing from scriptures, "If you don't do bhakti, you will go to hell." If one is induced to perform bhakti by this fear, such performance is called vaidhi-bhakti.

If you have transcendental greed, your bhakti goes up to sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga, bhava, mahabhava, ruddha, adiruddha, modana, mohana and madana. This is a very special phenomenon. If there is no greed, then an awareness of the Lord's opulence may come; your bhakti may be mixed with opulence and take you to Vaikuntha. In order to go to Goloka Vṛndavana, to become a maidservant of Srimati Rādhikā, this greed – raganuga-bhakti – is essential.

This is why Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu came:

anarpita-carim cirat karunaya vatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah

["May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Srimati Saci-devi be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love." (Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta Ādi 1.4)]

Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to distribute this manjari mood – this mood of service to Srimati Rādhikā. If you are very fortunate, you will come to the line of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Srīlā Rūpā Gosvāmī. But keep your hands on your heart and consider: "How much am I following the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam?" If you are totally following, then renunciation will surely come; it is bound to come. All tattva – (established philosophical truths) jiva-tattva, maya-tattva, prema-tattva, kṛṣṇa-tattva and rādhā-tattva must come. If no realization is coming, it means there is a loophole in your practice, and you should try to repair it. There is no time; at any time an earthquake may come at which time thousands of people die. We see that so many catastrophes are taking place.

Thus, you should practice bhakti-yoga by heart and soul.

dharmah svanusthitah pumsam
visvaksena-kathasu yah
notpadayed yadi ratim
srama eva hi kevalam

[The occupational activities a man performs according to his own position are only so much useless labour if they do not provoke attraction for the message of the Personality of Godhead. (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.8)]

We should first try to hear from Gurudeva, from diksa-guru and siksa-guru. We can read Srimad-Bhagavatam. We should know, however, that mayavadis also read Bhagavatam and can also explain it, but they have no bhakti. They simply meditate: "Aham brahmasmi, tat tvam asi - I am that supreme Spirit Whole."

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 5.31)"]

Go and hear Srimad-Bhagavatam. Dharmah svanusthitah pumsam visvaksena-kathasu yah, notpadayed yadi ratim srama eva hi kevalam. If you have no taste in hearing hari-katha, the sweet pastimes of Lord Sri Krsna and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, then whatever you are doing comes to naught.

You should try to hear, and to follow at the same time. You will very soon see that Krsna is coming in your heart.

dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam
vedyam vastavam atra vastu sivadam tapa-trayonmulanam
srimad-bhagavate maha-muni-krte kim va parair isvarah
sadyo hrady avarudhyate 'tra krtibhih susrusubhis tat-ksanat

["Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhagavata Purana propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful Bhagavatam, compiled by the great sage Vyasadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of Bhagavatam, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart."(Srimad-bhagavatam 1.1.2)]

If you have taste in hearing, Sri Sri Radha-Krsna will come in your heart.

srnvatam sva-kathah krsnah
punya-sravana-kirtanah
hrady antah stho hy abhadrani
vidhunoti suhrt satam

[Sri Krsna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma (Supersoul) in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted. (Srimad-bhagavatam 1.2.17)]

This verse is very important. It is perhaps the essence of the entire Srimad-Bhagavatam.

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