

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

A Morning Walk in Badger

Badger, California: June 17, 2006

[Devotee:] Because of Gurudeva, by his kind mercy, we are able to receive Krsna consciousness. At the time of death, should we think about Gurudeva or should we think about Krsna?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] At the time of death, Sri Krsna. Gurudeva and the entire world are there in Krsna. Do you understand? The entire world, Gurudeva, all Sri Krsna's associates, and everything else are in Krsna. Remember Sri Krsna but also His power – both the gopis and Srimati Radhika. This was told to us by Srila Rupa Gosvami.

krsnam smaran janam casya
prestham nija-samihitam
tat-tat-katha-ratas casau
kuryad vasam vraje sada

["The devotee should always think of Krsna within himself and should choose a very dear devotee who is a servitor of Krsna in Vrndavana. One should constantly engage in topics about that servitor and his loving relationship with Krsna, and one should live in Vrndavana. If one is physically unable to go to Vrndavana, he should mentally live there." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 22.160)]

Remember Sri Krsna, His associates and Sri Vrndavana.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja and the devotees continue walking & chanting]

[Devotee:] It is stated in the scripture:

yasya deve para bhaktir
yatha deve tatha gurau
tasyaite kathitahy arthah
prakasante mahatmanah

["Unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, all the imports of Vedic knowledge are automatically revealed." (Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.23)]

Krsna's holy name is non-different from Krsna. So does it follow that we should have the same faith in the name of Gurudeva?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You can, but here in this verse, "Yasya deve para-bhaktir, yatha deve tatha gurau," this has been told for the Supreme Lord and Guru. The holy name has no mention here, but you should always chant with great attraction, affection and attachment for the holy name.

[Brajnath dasa:] Gurudeva, he is saying, that since Krsna's holy name is non-different from Krsna, can we think of 'deve' (God) as 'nama' (His name).

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You can think in that way, but it is not stated in this verse.

[Devotee:] How can we increase our faith in Guru and Krsna?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] I am telling so much – so much – about this in my classes. First become detached. Be in the renounced order (sannyasa). Not only be in the renounced order, but follow what I am telling in these classes [June 14-18, 2006]. Remember all the examples (of the twenty-four siksa-gurus) that were told by Dattatreya. Give up everything – all worldly desire for wife, children and everything else. Give your heart, mind and everything you possess to Guru and Krsna. Then everything will be alright.

[Jayanta Krsna dasa:] Some have the opinion that there is always prema in the jiva, and some say there is initially no prema, but the seed or potentiality to develop and receive prema is there. What is the established philosophical truth?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Prema is there, but like a seed.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] Not manifested, but in a latent position.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Just as everything about a tree is present in its seed – the tree, its flowers, its leaves and everything else – so krsna-prema is present in the soul of the living entity, but in a latent position. That prema will first appear as sraddha (initial faith), then nistha (firm faith), then ruci (relish), and in this way it will gradually grow.

[Sripad Padmanabha Maharaja:] Krsna says in the Gita:

yanti deva- vrata devan
pitrn yanti pitr- vratah
bhutani yanti bhutejya
yanti mad-yajino 'pi mam

[Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me.

(Bhagavad-gita 9.25)]

Here, Krsna is indicating that one goes to the place of the object of ones worship. So if someone worships a pure devotee of Sri Krsna, what will be his result? Suppose his bhakti towards Sri Krsna is not very developed.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Sometimes, the mercy of sadhu-sanga (association with a self-realized soul) is superior to the mercy of Sri Krsna Himself. I have told you that it is the madhyama-adhikari (intermediate devotee) who comes to us. He realizes our position – that we are suffering. Lord Krsna is not aware of this, because He is always drowning in the ocean of prema. The uttama-bhagavata (topmost devotee) also does not know whether or not we are suffering. Srila Sukadeva Gosvami will not be aware. However, a madhyama-adhikari – Gurudeva – is here in this world. He knows about us and his sadhu-sanga is for us.

[Devotee:] The residents of Goloka have no consciousness towards the suffering of the jivas (living entities). You said that only a madhyama-adhikari can understand the suffering of the jivas in the material world. Can we then understand that the uttama-bhagavata associates (nitya-siddhas) *[see endnote 1] come here for preaching, and here he acts like a madhyama devotee and is aware of our suffering? Or, do only sadhana-siddha or krpa-siddha *[see endnote 2] devotees come here from the spiritual world to act like madhyama-adhikaris?

[Madhava Maharaja:] Srila Rupa Gosvamipada is an eternal associate in Gokoka-Vrndavana. Does he not come? Srila Sanatana Gosvamipada does not come? They do not preach here?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] They may come when Lord Krsna comes, and sometimes Krsna sends them or Srimati Radhika sends them. She sent Her associate Gopakumara.

An example of a sadhana-siddha devotee is Sri Narada Gosvami. He had realized the nature of this world after some births, and now he has become Sri Krsna's associate. So he knows; he can come and help us. Otherwise, how could he have initiated Dhruva, Prahlada, Valmiki, Vyasa and so many others?

[Raghunatha Bhatta dasa:] So should the disciple see Sri Guru as nitya-siddha, sadhana-siddha or krpa-siddha?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] They should think he is siddha – an nitya parikara (eternal associate). Even if he is madhyama-adhikari, the disciple should regard him as he regards Krsna: yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau. (Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.23) Always remember this.

[Madhava Maharaja:] Otherwise they cannot advance.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If you see like this, Krsna will help you.

[Devotee:] Lord Krsna and His paraphernalia are non-different. He and His mahaprasada are non-different. Yet, I have heard that krsna-prasadam can become affected by a living entity's karma or consciousness? How is it possible? For example, I've heard that if we eat prasadam from the plate of another conditioned soul, we can be affected by the second person's karma or consciousness. How is that possible that prasada – which is Krsna Himself – can be contaminated in that way?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Padmanabha, what is your idea about what he is saying?

[Padmanabha Maharaja:]
maha-prasade govinde nama-brahmani vaisnave
sv-alpa-punyavatam rajan visvaso naiva jayate
"Persons who are not very highly elevated in pious activities cannot believe in the remnants of food [prasadam] of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, nor in Govinda, the holy name of the Lord, nor in the Vaisnavas." (Skanda-purana)
If a person doesn't have enough svalpa-punya, meaning pious activities from previous lives, he will not have full faith in maha-prasadam. In Jagannatha Puri, devotees

understand there that Lord Jagannatha's maha-prasadam is completely transcendental, even if it is touched by the mouth of a dog and it falls on the ground. If a person properly understands maha-prasadam, he will not hesitate to eat those remnants. It depends on the person's faith.

I can give an example. There was a disciple of our Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja who liked to eat maha-prasadam that was three or four days old. He didn't want to throw anything away. And not only that; he was also forcing the other devotees to eat it. He wrote a letter about this to Prabhupada and Prabhupada replied that it is a matter of faith. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami had the highest faith. He was taking the maha-prasadam that even the cows wouldn't eat because it was so rotten. He was washing it and eating that, but he was tasting it as nectar. In fact, Mahaprabhu Himself came and stole that from his hand, and He was overwhelmed in ecstasy by eating it. So it depends on the person's actual deep faith.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Another example is Sri Narada Rsi. In his previous birth he once took the prasadam remnants of the Four Kumaras with their permission – from their leaf plates – and after that, all his impurities were washed away. He said, "I received rati (transcendental ecstasy) at once."

[Sugata dasa:] During our Prabhupada's time, we had farm projects all over the country [America]. He wanted us not only just to live in our asrama, but to grow our own food, make our own cloth, and use bullock carts instead of cars and tractors. That was a long time ago, and things have changed. What is your vision for the New Vraja village community in the long run? Do you want the devotees there to have a modern life with modern jobs and modern things, or should they go back to simple, old village life, and not be dependent on the Western civilization?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] A bullock cart will not do. You cannot preach here and there by bullock cart. If Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja and I would have used only bullock carts, could we have come?

[Devotees:] No

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura also said that we should take advantage of what the scientists are inventing and engage those things in preaching.

[Sugata dasa:] Yes, but this is a different thing. Our Srila Prabhupada said the same thing you are saying – to use things for Krsna. But he also had a long term vision of communities engaging in an old, traditional lifestyle, with activities like making ones own food, cloth and milk, and being self-sufficient.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] How much will you do? If you are going to be cultivating the field for making grains and making your cloth, when will you do bhajana?

[Sugata dasa:] Srila Maharaja, sometimes at Gita-Nagari where I did service, our bhajana was just farming – from four in the morning until twelve midnight. But for our Srila Prabhupada this was preaching. It was daivi-varnasrama. This was his preaching.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] He did this for those who were not so qualified. It was for them.

[Sugata dasa:] Yes, this is the thing.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] They can go to the grhastha-asrama (they can be householders), they can cultivate the land, they can make their cloth and they can perform other activities of that nature. But when they will advance by sadhu-sanga, they will think that this is a waste of time. We should not waste a moment. Better to beg something and spend the entire day like Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami.

[Sugata dasa:] So preaching is the essence; preaching is the important thing.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Yes

[Devotee:] My parents are both Prabhupada's disciples, and it seems that the older they get, the further they seem removed from Krsna. I was wondering if there is something you can tell me – something that I can do to help them come back.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] This is due to lack of sadhu-sanga – association with pure devotees. If your parents would have come here, they would have been inspired again. I think it will be best if they associate with sadhus and hear hari-katha. You can make arrangements that sadhus may go to your house and speak hari-katha. Or, your parents can go to that place where hari-katha is going on.

[Rasasindhu dasa:] We have heard from you about many renounced persons, including Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. When young Raghunatha wanted to leave his family, Mahaprabhu told him, "Na hao vatula – don't be crazy." And then He said, "krame krame paya loka bhava-sindhu-kula."

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:]

sthira hana ghare yao, na hao vatula
krame krame paya loka bhava-sindhu-kula

[Be patient and return home. Don't be a crazy fellow. By and by you will be able to cross the ocean of material existence. (Caitanya-caritamrta 16.237)]

[Rasasindhu dasa:] It seems that the path of bhakti is very gradual and slow, but we see that Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami left his family very soon – a short time after receiving Mahaprabhu's instructions. How is it possible?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] He is a nitya-siddha parikara, an eternal associate of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna. He is eternally Rati-manjari, so for him it was possible. Mahaprabhu also left His own house and everything connected with it. He is the Supreme Lord Krsna Himself. What is possible for the Lord and His pure devotee is not possible for you and others.

Mahaprabhu had told him, "First be qualified, and then give up material activities." This is the purpose of varna-asrama. If you have given up household life without being qualified to do so, you will again remember the same thing and return there. So

we should first be qualified and then give up the grhastha-asrama. Be qualified while in grhastha-asrama. All the verses in Sri Upadesamrta have been told for grhasthas. After practicing bhakti according to the verses therein, you will become renounced. This is the process.

vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegam
jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etan vegan yo visaheta dhirah
sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat

["A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world." (Sri Upadesamrta, verse 1)]

[Srauti Maharaja:] Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said that if we put our Gurudeva in our heart, have him travelling and walking and sitting there, then the Supreme Personality of Godhead will appear there also. So what is the process of putting Guru in the heart?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Gurudeva is always with you. So you can...

[Srauti Maharaja:] But he is outside.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] It is very hard to keep Krsna in the heart because we have not seen Him. We have never had His association. We are simply serving Him according to what we know from Gurudeva. But Gurudeva is personally coming to you. You see him walking...

[Srauti Maharaja:] How can we put Guru in the heart? Once, when I had just arrived from Europe to attend your Vyasa-puja festival in Alachua, I opened the door of your car. I was very happy and I told you, "Oh Gurudeva, you see? I have come to see you." And you said, "You should put me in your heart."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Yes

[Srauti Maharaja:] So how to do it?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] You can always remember him, his mercy and his glorification. I can remember how my Gurudeva is so glorious. I can continually remember his qualities.

[Padmanabha Maharaja:] Suppose Gurudeva gives sannyasa to some person, knowing that the person was not so qualified, but he wanted to utilize the person for his mission. An example of this is our Srila Prabhupada AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. He gave sannyasa to so many persons, knowing that they were not qualified.

He even said on one occasion, "I am giving you sannyasa even though you are unqualified. Actually it is like in war time. I am giving you battle commission. I am giving you this, and it is possible that in the future you may fall down." And then our

Prabhupada said, "But it will be a glorious death." On the battle field, when a soldier dies it is a glorious death, because he tried. Now some persons are using this argument and saying, "Oh, Gurudeva gave sannyasa to this person, and then he fell down. Since he wasn't qualified, there is no harm that he fell down and gave up his sannyasa.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] No, no, no. This is not good. You should not think like this. Gurudeva has kindly, mercifully, given that person a chance, and that person should utilize the chance. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu also gave a chance without a person's qualification, and Gurudeva also sometimes does this. Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja gave sannyasa to so many. He knew that most of them were not qualified, and that is why he did not give any of them Vedic sannyasa names.

[*Endnotes 1 and 2: In Vaisnava philosophy there are three ways for perfection—namely, sadhana-siddha, perfection attained by executing devotional service according to the rules and regulations; nitya-siddha, eternal perfection attained by never forgetting Kṛṣṇa at any time; and kṛpā-siddha, perfection attained by the mercy of the spiritual master or another Vaisnava. Kavirāja Gosvami here stresses kṛpā-siddha, perfection by the mercy of superior authorities. (Caitanya-caritamṛta Adī-līlā, 8.5)]

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