

Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

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I am very happy to see so many devotees, not only from Malaysia, but also from Singapore, Indonesia, America, India, and the Philippines and other places. The purpose of our preaching is to present the instructions given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to Srila Rupa Gosvami. We should know the purpose, the aim and object, of our bhajana and sadhana, and then we must practice the devotional activities that lead us to that goal.

If you do not know the real goal of your life – where you must ultimately go – then where will you go? Therefore, we should know the aim and object of our life, and the process by which we can attain it. We can understand all these truths from the literature of Srila Rupa Gosvami, and especially from Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has written:

aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa-tanayas tad-dhama vrndavanam
ramya kacid upasana vraja-vadhu-vargena ya kalpita
srimad-bhagavatam pramanam-amalam prema pumartho mahan
sri-caitanya mahaprabhor-matam-idam tatrataro nah parah

[The Supreme Lord, the son of Nanda Maharaja, and also His transcendental abode, Sri Vrndavana-dhama, are my worshipful objects. The most excellent method of worshipping Krsna is that which was adopted by the gopis, the young wives of Vraja. Srimad-Bhagavatam, which is evidence of this, is the flawless and most authoritative scripture, and Krsna-prema is the fifth and highest achievement of human life – beyond mundane religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and impersonal liberation. This is the opinion of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. We have supreme regard for this conclusion.”]

Sri Krsna, who is the son of Nanda Baba and Mother Yasoda, is our topmost worshipful object. There is one Krsna. When He is in Vrndavana He thinks that He is the son of Nanda Baba and Mother Yasoda. He thinks, “I am Radha-kanta, the beloved of Srimati Radhika, and Rasa-vihari (the central enjoyer of the Rasa Dance).”

In Vrndavana He has a flute, a peacock feather, and a cow-herding stick; but when He goes to Mathura and Dvaraka, He gives these up and His mood is different. The Krsna of Mathura and Dvaraka has a different mood from the Krsna of Vrndavana. Now He thinks, “I am the son of Vasudeva Maharaja and Devaki.” Though He is one, He has many moods. Dvarakadhisa or Mathuradhisa Krsna is not really the original Supreme Lord, (Svayam Bhagavan). They are not Rasika-sekara (the topmost enjoyer of transcendental loving mellows) or Rasa-vihari. Only Radha-kanta and Rasa-vihari can perform rasa-lila. Without Krsna’s peacock feather and flute, He cannot dance with the gopis.

Aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa tanayas, tad dhama vrndavanam. This Krsna never leaves Vrndavana, and His sweet pastimes can only be performed there. In Dvaraka, Mathura

and Ayodhya, there is no rasa dance. In those places Krsna has no flute or peacock feather.

Radha and Krsna – that is, Vrsabhanu-nandini Radhika, Nanda-nandana and Radha-kanta Krsna – do not leave Vrndavana for even a moment.

We see that Radha and Krsna met in Kuruksetra. Who are They? They are not really Vrajendra-nandana Krsna or Vrsabhanu-nandini Radhika. A manifestation of Krsna, that is, Vasudeva-nandana, and a manifestation of Vrsabhanu-nandini, that is Samyogini-Radha, met in Kuruksetra. There are so many deep conclusive philosophical truths in this regard, and from time to time I have told the pastimes in relation to these truths.

What is the nature of the gopis love for Krsna? Their love is so strong that they can take the heart of Krsna and control it. Rukmini, Satyabhama, and the other 16,108 queens were all very beautiful, marvelous, and possessed all good qualities, but they could not take the heart of Krsna and control it. Only the gopis can do this, and among the gopis, Srimati Radhika can do so still more. In this way, the mood of the gopis in worshiping and serving Krsna is the highest.

There is one topic that Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has not included in this verse, which is that Radha-dasyam, service as a maid servant of Srimati Radhika, is higher than the worship of Radha-kanta, Vrajendra-nandana Sri Krsna. Sri Krsna bestows Radha-dasyam upon whomever He is pleased.

Srimad-Bhagavatam pramanam amalam. The best evidence of the above truths are given in Srimad-Bhagavatam. In all other Puranas, Vedic scriptures and Upanisads there are some worldly considerations, but this Srimad-Bhagavatam is the siddhanta of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Here we can realize our goal to serve Krsna, and more than that, Radha-dasyam.

Once we determine that the goal of life is Radha-dasyam, we should begin from sraddha (and gradually come to anartha nirvriti (becoming free from unwanted habits and thoughts), nistha (steadiness), ruci (taste for bhakti), asakti (attachment to Krsna) and so on. Upadesamrta states that those who want to do bhajana should first of all control their speech, mind, anger, tongue, belly and genitals. A person who can control these six urges is jagat-guru (guru of the entire world); he is a gosvami (controller of the senses). The Six Gosvamis of Vrndavana are Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Raghunath dasa Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami, Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and Sri Bhatta Raghunath Gosvami. The Seventh Gosvami is Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. Nowadays many sannyasis call themselves 'gosvami', but this is wrong. Gosvami means one who can control the six urges.

Now we should understand the meaning of sraddha (faith in the words of Guru, sadhu, and Vedic scriptures). We have heard that sraddha is the smallest fraction of bhakti, but we should know what bhakti is.

Srimad-Bhagavatam states that after the disappearance of Krsna from this world, Kali Yuga (the Age of quarrel and hypocrisy) began. Many Rsis and Maharsis (sages and saints) were very fearful of this Iron Age of Kali-yuga. They went to Naimisaranya, where Sri Suta Gosvami, the disciple of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, was also present. The assembled sages asked him, “O, Suta Gosvami, Kali Yuga is coming. In this kali-yuga life is very short, and the mind is always disturbed with so many problems.

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)]

The sages requested Suta Gosvami, “We are very unfortunate. So many problems are coming and thus our minds are always disturbed. You know all the Vedic scriptures. If we are qualified to hear, please tell us how our souls can become satisfied:

bhurini bhuri-karmani
srotavyani vibhagasah
atah sadho ’tra yat saram
samuddhrtiya 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)]

Suta Gosvami became very happy and said, “You have reminded me of the sweet pastimes of Krsna.” Then he offered obeisances to his Gurudeva:

yam pravrajantam anupetam apeta-krtiyam
dvaipayano viraha-katara ajuhava
putreti tan-mayataya taravo ’bhinedus
tam sarva-bhuta-hridayam munim anato ’smi

[Srila Suta Gosvami said: Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto that great sage [Sukadeva Gosvami] who can enter the hearts of all. When he went away to take up the renounced order of life [sannyasa], leaving home without undergoing reformation by the sacred thread or the ceremonies observed by the higher castes, his father, Vyasadeva, fearing separation from him, cried out, “O my son!” Indeed, only the trees, which were

absorbed in the same feelings of separation, echoed in response to the begrieved father. (Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.2.2)]

He prayed, “Gurudeva, you know everything. As Krsna knows everything about our hearts, you are also everywhere and also in our hearts. I offer obeisances unto you. I am going to tell harikatha now so please inspire me.” Suta Gosvami then said:

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)]

Here there is one thing to remember. Why did the sages not ask how one’s self as this body can be happy? You should know why and the entire world should know why? The reason is not written or told anywhere in the world, except in Indian Vedic culture, and it is especially told in the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Sa vai pumsam paro dharmo. The original Supreme Lord is Krsna. Service to Him who is above our senses, continuously and without any worldly desires, is the supreme duty (parama dharmo) of the soul.

The soul is the real self. This material body is nothing but a bag of urine, blood, puss and stool, but the soul and the Supersoul, Krsna are present there. If the soul leaves, at once the body will rot. It will be burnt or put in the earth. So the happiness of the body is therefore not the happiness of the soul. If the soul is happy, then the body is undoubtedly happy.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has given the best definition of bhakti:

anyabhilasita sunyam
jnana karmadi anavritam
anukulyena krsnanusil(A)nam
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)]

Those of you who are children, and those of you who are young, you should always remember that one day you will have to become old. This is for certain. No scientist or doctor can stop your inevitable old age from coming. After sometime you will have to give up this body and what you have collected in this world. None of your relatives: father, daughter, son, mother, or wife – will go with you. Not a farthing will go with you.

Therefore, try to realize the soul, and the Supersoul, Krsna, in your heart. If you lose this opportunity of human life and are only engaged in collecting money, putting your whole energy into that, then you are more foolish than a donkey. Don't lose this precious life in which, by the grace of Gurudeva, we can realize Krsna. Don't be weak. You should work only to maintain your life, and try to give all your energy to Krsna Consciousness. Then, you can understand all these essential truths. Now you should hear.

Bhakti is very rare. Those who are very fortunate can have it. How?

Bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta sangena parijayate
sat-sanga prapyate pumbhiih sukrtaih purva sancitaih

["Bhakti becomes manifested by the association of the Lord's devotees. The association of devotees is obtained by previous accumulated piety." Brhan-naradiya Purana, 4.33]

If someone in his past thousands of lives has accumulated a great amount of pious activities (sukrti) in relation to Krsna or His associates, only then will he receive sadhu-sanga. Without sukrti, you will be unable to find an elevated and qualified, bona fide guru.

That sadhu will tell that without Guru your life will not be successful: "If you want to get rid of the pain of endless birth and death, if you want to be happy, if you want to have Krsna-prema, then you will have to go to a bona fide and very qualified guru:"

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jjinasuh 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 11.3.21)]

Some persons drink alcohol. Then, drunk and senseless they think, "I am the supreme master of this entire world," and in the meantime, while laying in the street completely senseless, their faces are taking a hot shower in the urine of a dog standing nearby. Some

persons think that if we take eggs, meat and wine then we will be happy. What is the meaning of meat? ME-EAT. Whom you eat now will certainly eat you in the future. Don't take all these things.

The symptom of guru has been given in the above verse, beginning with tasmad gurum.

When a person realizes that this world is perishable with no real happiness, then they will take shelter of a realized and qualified guru. The above-mentioned verse states that a guru should be very expert in his knowledge of all the Vedic literatures, from beginning to end – Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Mahabharata, Ramayana and all others – so that he can remove the doubts of his disciples. He should have realization of the original Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. He must know kṛṣṇa-tattva, jīva-tattva, and māya-tattva. He should know how Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of rasa, and how He has inconceivable energies or powers, and how He is eternal, full of pleasure and knowledge. He must have realized all these truths and he must be detached from worldly sense gratification. He has controlled his anger, lust and all other urges. The guru goes everywhere, only to help the conditioned souls. These are the symptoms of guru.

I have not come for any other reason – not to collect money or anything else. I have come to invite you to Vrndavana for one month, so that you can attend Vraja Mandala Parikrama and hear the sweet pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and also to invite you to our Navadvīpa Parikrama for seven days, where you will hear the sweet pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you come to Vrndavana or Navadvīpa, you will get so much inspiration to do bhajana. All your anarthas (unwanted and degrading habits and thoughts) will automatically go away. You must come to Vraja Mandala Parikrama now. Navadvīpa and Calcutta are very near to Malaysia. I see that only Doctor Paramesvari, Vijay Prabhu and a few other devotees have been coming recently, but in previous years so many were coming from Malaysia. I want to see all of you there.

Without Guru you cannot receive bhakti. This fact has especially been told in the Vedas:

yasya deve para bhaktir
yatha deve tatha gurau
tasyaite kathita hy arthah
prakasante mahatmana

["Anyone who has developed unflinching faith in the Lord and the spiritual master can understand the revealed scripture folded before Him." (Svetasvatara Upanisad 6.38)]

Those who have honor and supreme devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, they should have the same mood, not less towards their Gurudeva. Always know who Gurudeva is:

saksad-dharitvena samasta-sastrair
uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih
kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya
vande guroh sri-caranaravindam

[All the scriptures proclaim Sri Gurudeva is saksat hari, the direct potency of Sri Hari, and is thus considered by saintly authorities to be His non-different representative. Because Sri Gurudeva is so dear to the Lord, being His confidential servitor (acintya-bhedabheda-prakasa-vigraha, the inconceivable different and non-different worshipable manifestation of the Lord), I offer prayers unto his lotus feet. (Sri Guruvastakam, verse 7)]

Haritvena, He is not Hari, Krsna, but he is His near and dear associate. Therefore, you should know that if Guru is happy, then Krsna is happy, and if Gurudeva is not happy, then Krsna is also not happy.

yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado
yasyaprasadan na gatih kuto 'pi
dhyayam stuvams tasya yasas tri-sandhyam
vande guroh sri-caranaravindam

[Only by the mercy of Sri Gurudeva can one receive the mercy of Krsna; without his grace the living entities cannot make advancement nor be delivered. Meditating three times a day on the glories of Sri Gurudeva and reciting stava-stuti, I offer prayers unto his lotus feet. (Sri Guruvastakam, verse 8)]

If you disturb Gurudeva and he becomes angry, then even Krsna cannot help you. We can see this in the case of Durvasa Rsi. He committed an offense at the lotus feet of Ambarisa Maharaja, and therefore even Lord Narayana could not save him. Narayana told him to beg forgiveness from Ambarisa Maharaja.

So without Guru, we cannot have bhakti. What to say of ordinary persons and devotees, Krsna Himself accepted a Guru in this world. He accepted Bhaguri Rsi. Lord Ramacandra came and He accepted Visvamitra Muni as a Guru, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came and accepted Isvara Puripada as His Guru. Why did They do this? To teach, and be an example to all others.

It is stated in scriptures: Visrambhena guroh seva. Try to follow the orders of Gurudeva and serve him like a laukika sad-bandhu. Sad-bandhu means like a bosom friend or a worldly relative – like we serve our father, mother or brother.

For example, we can see in the Srimad-Bhagavatam how Sri Narada Rsi told about his realizations to Srila Vyasadeva. Vyasadeva is sakti-avesa avatara, a manifestation of Narayana. He was in a dilemma, and in the meantime his Guru Narada came to see him. Narada asked him, “Why are you unsatisfied?”

[Srimati Syamarani was called on to speak about Narada’s subsequent discussion with Vyasadeva, and then Srila Narayana Maharaja continued with his class.]

vasudeve bhagavati

bhakti-yogah prayojitah
janayaty asu vairagyam
jnanam ca yad ahaitukam

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

Vyasadeva’s Gurudeva ordered him to enter in trance and witness Krsna’s pastimes. On his Guru’s order, Vyasadeva surrendered totally to Krsna and prayed, “O Lord Krsna, please give me realization of Your sweet childhood pastimes, youthful pastimes and all others as well.” At once he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nanda Baba, Mother Yasoda, the gopis, the cows and all the other associates of Krsna. He saw Krsna’s childhood pastimes. He saw how even though Krsna is full with unlimited potencies, He was bound by Mother Yasoda. Before and after this pastime, no one was able to bind Krsna in this way with the exception of Srimati Radhika and the gopis. In this way, there are two Damodaras – Radha-Damodara and Yasoda-Damodara. We follow Radha-Damodara, yet Yasoda-Damodara is so important for us.

Srila Vyasadeva also saw how Krsna killed Aghasura, Bakasura, Putana, Dhenukasura and so many other demons in Vrndavana, and then Kamsa, Canura, Mustika and all others in Mathura and Dvaraka.

He saw how Sri Krsna left Vrndavana and went to Mathura. He saw how later He sent Uddhava to Vrndavana. He said, “O Uddhava, go to Vrndavana and pacify My father and mother, and especially the gopis who cannot remain a moment without Me. I have promised that I am coming tomorrow or the day after. Only because of this are they able to maintain their lives. You should go there.”

Sri Krsna wanted to send Uddhava so that Uddhava could be admitted into the same school where He had learned the art of love and affection. He was thinking, “Uddhava will learn from the gopis, and when he returns here, I will open My heart and tell how I am suffering in separation for Radhika, the gopis and all the Vrajavasis. The gopis can discuss amongst themselves, and especially they all pacify Srimati Radhika. They are able to share their suffering but I cannot. So Uddhava should go.”

Uddhava went to Vrndavana, but he was not admitted in the University of Prema (transcendental love), where the principal was Srimati Radhika, and Lalita and Visakha were the professors of prema, raga, anuraga, mahabhava and so on.

The gopis asked Uddhava, “There are two kinds of love – one with selfishness, and one without. Those who want something in return for their love, from the persons they love, have selfish prema. They are likened to a beggar who goes to a house and says, “Radhe Radhe.” After the resident gives a donation to that beggar, he will not stay there for one moment longer. Another analogy is that a student goes to a teacher; when his lessons are complete he does not stay with that teacher for one more day, and in the future he will not

visit his teacher and inquire after his well being. He will not ask, ‘O Gurudeva, how are you?’ In a jungle there are many varieties of trees like pippal or banyan. Many birds make their nests and take the fruits of those trees. If those same trees become dry or burn, the birds will no longer remain there. Another analogy: A prostitute has affairs with many men. If anyone gives her money, she will show him so much love and affection, but when she has taken all of his money, that prostitute will kick him out.”

These analogies may be likened to those persons who are always attached to worldly sense gratification. When one’s wife is very beautiful, he will serve her and address her: ‘My dear wife.’ However, if she becomes ugly, he will take a second wife. This is selfishness.

The gopis told Uddhava, “Krsna loved without any selfishness, and we also love Him without any self interest, so how did this transcendental love and affection of Krsnas break? He left us and went to Mathura and now we are all weeping. Uddhava, can you tell us why He has done this to us?” Uddhava began to scratch his head. He could not give the gopis an answer, so they did not admit him into their school and he returned to Mathura.

All this is very sweet hari-katha. By hearing the sweet pastimes of Krsna, all tattva-jnana (knowledge of God, the living entities, the material and spiritual worlds, and pure love of God) will automatically manifest in your heart without any effort to attain it. You may know that even without all kinds of knowledge regarding Sri Krsna’s Godhood and creation, so many persons – ladies, men and even monkeys –have gone to Vaikuntha. Even deer and others have been able to approach Krsna simply by hearing His sweet pastimes. You should all come here tomorrow, and I will tell you about the sweet pastimes of Krsna. After I depart from here, then you will become somewhat weak. I don’t want you to become like this. Therefore I have come to remind you of the importance of hearing, chanting and reading about Sri Krsna’s pastimes. If you always remember Krsna and Gurudeva, they will inspire you.

Gaura Premanande.

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