

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Govardhana, India: November 18, 2007

[During the Vraja Mandala Parikrama festival, Srila Narayana Maharaja held regular informal group darsanas so he could meet with everyone and answer the questions of the international pilgrims. The devotees of Russia, China, India, and Brazil were so great in number that separate meetings were held in the temple room for each of those nationalities on different days. The following is a transcription of the darsana that was arranged for the devotees from all the remaining nations.

[Young lady:] Can I come on your summer tour?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes, if you don't go for the purpose of having any relationship with any boy. Don't go on the tour for the purpose of choosing any boyfriend; otherwise it is better not to go. Do you understand?

There is a very big disease here. So many naughty boys and naughty girls – they are disobeying. I want to correct them. This is not the place [particularly at the Vrndavana-Govardhana Kartika festival, and also at all the other festivals] for those who are looking for someone to marry or to enjoy sense gratification. They should go out of the temple and return to their countries. They can enjoy there.

So you can come on my tour, if you are strict and intend to make progress in your Krsna consciousness.

[Devotee:] What is the qualification for meditating on Radha-Krsna's daily pastimes?

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] Those who have totally removed their lust and all kinds of anarthas (unwanted thoughts and habits), whose hearts are now totally pure and who have become humble, they can do so:

trnad api sunicena
taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena
kirtaniya sada harih

[One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor yet is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.]"(Sri Siksastam, verse 3)]

They are qualified to meditate on Sri Sri Radha-Krsna's daily pastimes.

So many devotees take the association of the babajis of Radha-kunda and in Vrndavana, and in this way they are going to ruination. First try to remove all of your anarthas. Follow the system told by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura in Sri Bhajana-rahasya.

[Savitri dasi, introducing a new devotee:] She is from Turkey. She wants to get initiated. She is saying, “When I go back to Turkey, if I tell people that I visited the same places that Allah (God) visited, what will people think? They will think I am crazy.”

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should tell them all the things you have heard – that you went to the places of Allah. You should know all the conclusive philosophical truths that I have been explaining. You should tell your people, “I am a soul and Sri Krsna is the Supersoul. That Supersoul was in India, in Vrndavana, and I have heard so many of His sweet pastimes. Always chant and remember, ‘Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.’”

[Mohini dasi:] I have heard that you were previously doing bhajana here in Govardhana. Can you tell something about how you were living here, how much you were chanting, how you were alone, what you were eating, what you were doing, and when you were waking up?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] I lived here before 1968 for two months. Daily I would do parikrama and read Srimad-Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritamrta, while weeping, alone.

[Sripad Madhava Maharaja:] In other words, not for showing off to anyone else.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] I was chanting more than 64 rounds a day.

[Mohini dasi:] What time would you wake up?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] I would wake up at 3:00 am.

[Mohini dasi:] Then what? How would you begin your day?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] First I would chant harinama, then I would chant my anhick (gayatri mantras), then do parikrama while chanting – 14 miles daily. When I returned I would beg madhukari (very small amounts of prasadam) at the Vrajavasis’ houses. After returning from there, I would read Caitanya-caritamrta, while weeping and experiencing so many transcendental moods. All my sentiments cannot be told.

[Bhadra dasi:] Previously I’ve heard it said that when we are preparing an offering for Krsna, we should never taste it. Nowadays I am hearing that it is okay to taste the offering before it is offered, as long as it is not tasted in an enjoying mood, but only for Krsna’s pleasure.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Suppose that somehow you are preparing something, and without tasting it yourself you give it to your Deity; and suppose it was like poison. Or, instead of using sugar, you used salt – how will it taste? A raganuga-bhakta who wants to give delicious foods to Krsna may taste it first. Krsna’s cowherd friend Madhumangala would taste a preparation first, and would think, “This

is very sweet.” Then he would give his remnants to Krsna. Those who are qualified for this can do so.

[Krsnacandra dasa:] When you were in the Philippines, you gave me one of your socks, and all the paraphernalia you used there is still with us. We are a third world country and you only came there two times. What is the best attitude for us brahmacaris to develop our love for our Gurudeva?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You should read my books – you should also read Srimad-Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritamrta – and always engage your mind in Krsna Consciousness. Go on doing this, always thinking, “My Gurudeva is with me, in my heart.”

[Devotee:] Who is the guru of Jesus?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] (Asking Prema-prayojana dasa) Who is the Guru of Jesus?

[Prema-prayojana dasa:] John the Baptist gave him initiation, which is called baptism in Christianity.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Jesus was a servant of God. He was a high class Vaisnava, but not an uttama-Vaisnava in the mood of Vraja.

[Venu-gopal dasa:] The other day you mentioned about the chastisement of Chota Haridasa – you said that he committed a minor offense but he received a serious chastisement. I am wondering how it is possible to follow pure strictness in our own lives.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:]

yadi caha pranaya rakhite gaurangera sane
chota-haridasera katha thake yena mane

["If you desire to maintain your loving relationship with Sri Gauranga, then constantly remember Chota Haridasa and why he was so strictly ostracized by the Lord Himself." (Prema-vivarta, Chapter Seven)]

Whether you are a brahmacari or a sannyasi, if you are not following the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, you will be ruined. We see so many historical examples of this – so be careful.

Chota Haridasa was not lusty. On the request of Mahaprabhu’s associate, Sri Bhagavan Acarya, Chota Haridasa went to the house of a very old lady named Madhavi Mahiti to obtain some fine white rice for offering to the Deity. Madhavi Mahiti was 84 years old, and she was considered to be one of the eternal associates of the Lord.

But there was also a young lady present in Madhavi Mahiti devi’s house. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu knew this, and when He later heard about Chota Haridasa’s going there,

He at once stopped Chota Haridasa from coming to see Him. He was teaching us that if one is in the renounced order of life and he sees a young lady, his mind and body may become transformed with lusty feelings. Mahaprabhu wanted to teach us that those in the renounced order should follow the ideal etiquette and be careful about association with the opposite sex. *[See Endnote] We should always remember this.

Your mind is very weak. Don't listen to your mind. At any time it may cheat you. Maya cheated Brahma, Sankara, Indra, and Narada. She is very powerful, and she can only be defeated by Krsna. So, be careful if you want to attain love for Krsna.

[Devotee:] Is it possible that there is a difference between the disciple's external relationship with Gurudeva and his internal relationship?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Externally you should know that: "Guru is my father, my mother, my brother, my guardian, my protector, and my well-wisher." So try to obey all of his instructions.

Internally, you should know that he is an associate of Sri Krsna:

saksad dharitvena samasta sastrair
uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih
kintu prabhur ya priya eve 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 worshipful manifestation of the Lord), I offer prayers unto his lotus feet." (Sri Gurvastakam, verse 7)]

You should also know that Gurudeva is serving Krsna (Krsna Himself) and Krsnaa (Srimati Radhika), so he (Gurudeva) must also have a teen-age gopi form. You should think, "I want to be her maidservant."

[Devotee:] Why is sannyasa only given to men?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Women can take sannyasa, no harm. If a woman is qualified, she can take sannyasa. However, if any lusty person forcibly attacks her, how will she be able to protect herself? In a rare case, a lady can take sannyasa, like Syamarani is sannyasi, although not with danda (the sannyasa staff) and all the other paraphernalia of a sannyasi.

[*Endnote]

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the ocean of mercy. Who can understand Him? When He chastises His dear devotees, He certainly does so to reestablish the principles of religion or duty.

PURPORT

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura says in this connection that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the ocean of mercy, chastised Junior [Chota] Haridasa, although Junior

Haridasa was His dear devotee, to establish that one in the devotional line, engaged in pure devotional service, should not be a hypocrite. For a person engaged in devotional service in the renounced order, having intimate relationships with women is certainly hypocrisy. This chastisement was given to Junior Haridasa as an example to future sahajiyas who might adopt the dress of the renounced order to imitate Rupa Gosvami and other bona fide sannyasis but secretly have illicit connections with women. To teach such men, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu chastised His dear devotee Haridasa for a slight deviation from the regulative principles. Srimati Madhavi-devi was a highly elevated devotee; therefore approaching her to ask for some rice to serve Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was certainly not very offensive.

Nevertheless, just to preserve the regulative principles for the future, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu enforced the hard-and-fast rule that no one in the renounced order should intimately mix with women. Had Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu not chastised Junior Haridasa for this slight deviation, so-called devotees of the Lord would have exploited the example of Junior Haridasa to continue their habit of illicit connections with women unrestrictedly. Indeed, they still preach that such behavior is allowed for a Vaisnava. But it is strictly not allowed. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the teacher of the entire world, and therefore He enforced this exemplary punishment to establish that illicit sexual connections are never allowed by Vaisnava philosophy. This was His purpose in chastising Junior Haridasa. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is in fact the most magnanimous incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He strictly prohibited illicit sex. (Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līla 2.143, with purport by Srīla Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja)]

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