

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja

QUESTIONS AT THE AIRPORT

(An informal meeting at the airport in Hong Kong)

April 16, 2008

[Devotee:] You teach, and it's stated in scripture, that all those in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu have two constitutional or spiritual forms – one in the pastimes of Radha and Krsna and one in the pastimes of Mahaprabhu. Many scriptures describe the personal services of Srimati Radharani's maidservants, Sri Rupa Manjari and her followers, in Radharani's transcendental pastimes with Krsna. So my question is this: what are the personal services of the followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] It may be that they have two constitutional forms – one in Krsna's pastimes and also one in Mahaprabhu's pastimes. Srila Kavi Karnapura has explained this in his book, Sri Gaura-ganodessa-dipika, and Srila Rupa Gosvami has explained this in his Radha-Krsna-ganodessa-dipika. Srila Kavi Karnapura has written that in Gaura-lila (Mahaprabhu's pastimes) Radhika is Sri Gadhadhara Pandita, Lalita-devi is Sri Svarupa Damodara, and Visakha-devi is Sri Raya Ramananda. He has told everything in this regard.

[Devotee:] With reference to the books and prayers of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha das Gosvami, Srila Narottama dasa Thakura and our other acaryas (spiritual preceptors), you have told us many times about the personal services of the followers of Rupa Manjari in Goloka-Vrndavana.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Their services are rendered according to their group (yutha). For example, Rupa Manjari is in the group of Lalita-devi. Lalita-devi has delegated so many duties for those in her group. How can I decide what are their duties?

[Devotee:] You have told about their many services, like assisting Srimati Radharani in cooking for Krsna and in serving His prasadam.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Some make garlands, some fan Her with a chamara fan, some make powders for massaging Her, and there are so many other services.

[Devotee:] When those same maidservants came in the form of followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's pastimes, what are their services to Mahaprabhu?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You can see in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta what Svarupa Damodara, Raya Ramananda, and Rupa Gosvami are doing. What is Srila Rupa Gosvami doing?

[Devotee:] Mostly kirtana, offering obeisances, and writing books?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:]

sri-caitanya-mano bhistam sthapitam yena bhutale
svayam rupah kada mahyam dadati sva padantikam

[“When will Sri Rupa Gosvami give me the shelter of his lotus feet? Because he understood the innermost desire of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he was able to establish His mission in this world and is very dear to the Lord.”]

[Devotee:] And preaching – establishing His mission. Do all the followers of Srila Rupa Gosvami have the same kind of services?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] There may be some differences, but those different duties are all according to a particular group. Each group has various duties.

[Devotee:] Do they also render personal services?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] One may write books, preach, and perform kirtana. Srila Haridasa Thakura performed kirtana and japa chanting of the holy names. Sri Svarupa Damodara was always with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the Gambhira. Srila Sanatana Gosvami was writing books, establishing Deities, and engaged in so many other services. Regarding their followers, they do likewise. What am I doing? I am not an eternal associate, but what am I doing? What was Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja doing?

[Devotee:] Writing, preaching and opening temples.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] And inspiring everyone to perform bhajana – doing that for which Mahaprabhu came.

[Devotee:] Do Srila Rupa Gosvami and his followers also perform personal services like cooking and serving prasadam?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] You can see what they do by reading Caitanya-caritamṛta and other authorized books.

[Devotee:] All of our acaryas are performing those varieties of services?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] We should also become qualified to do this.

[Jayasri dasi:] Srila Gurudeva, you say that only a pure Vaisnava or Guru can give the seed of bhakti to the conditioned soul. At the same time, it is said that the seed of bhakti is already within each soul. How can we reconcile this?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] The seed of bhakti is present in each soul, but there is something more to be given. A seed alone will not suffice. If some water, air, soil, and sunrays are given to the seed, then it will sprout. Do you understand?

[Jayasri dasi:] I remember you saying that bhakti or pure devotion is the sentiment for Radha and Kṛṣṇa – the special feeling or love and affection for Radha and Kṛṣṇa. Does this mean that the Guru gives this sentiment? Is that correct?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] First he gives a seed – the desire to serve Sri Radha and Krsna. Though the seed is already in the heart of the soul, Guru makes an environment for that seed to sprout. So he gives something.

[Jayasri dasi:] How can the seed sprout?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] By water, air, and sunrays. The bona fide spiritual master gives all these things by speaking about topics that are favorable and inspiring for bhakti. He gives hari-katha and diksa and a relationship with Sri Krsna.

[Jayasri dasi:] The Srimad-Bhagavatam mentions that the real Buddha is an incarnation of Krsna. Why is the real Buddha not worshipped nowadays? Why is it that a false Buddha is worshipped?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] We preach about the real Buddha wherever we go. Do you know the difference between the Bhagavata Buddha (the incarnation of Sri Krsna) and the atheist Buddha?

[Jayasri dasi:] Yes, you told us this before, many years ago in Taiwan.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] We tell this everywhere. Those in the line of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura teach this truth. So some people know – but where we do not go, they do not know. Now it is your duty to preach this mission.

[Dinanatha dasa:] Your Gurudeva's book (Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja's book), Mayavada-jivana (Beyond Nirvana), mentions that Sankaracarya was defeated by the Buddhists in Tibet, and as a result of this defeat he put himself in boiling oil and gave up his life.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes, what my Gurudeva has written is true. He has evidence.

[Jayasri dasi:] How can this be true? Was Sankaracarya not a scholar like the Tibetan (Buddhist) Lama guru?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Sankaracarya defeated all kinds of religious persons in India, but he could not defeat any devotee. He never defeated any devotee of Krsna, or Rama, or any incarnation of Visnu. He only defeated jnanis (mental speculators) and karmis (materialistic philosophers).

[Jayasri dasi:] Isn't Sankaracarya more advanced than any Mayavadi or Buddhist? How can he be defeated by them? Isn't he more advanced?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] He can be defeated by them because he has accepted Buddhism. He accepted and preached 'covered Buddhism', a hidden form of Buddhism. Do you understand?

The root of Sankaracarya's teaching is Buddhism. His guru was Govindapada, whose guru was Gaurapada. They knew better than him about Buddhism.

[Jayasri dasi:] So the guru of Sankaracarya is more powerful than Sankaracarya.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Yes, more powerful.

[Devotee:] Since both of them are not bona fide, what is the significance of one un-bona fide teaching or teacher defeating another un-bona fide teaching?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Sankaracarya has taught a special thing – they accept the Vedas and also the Supreme Lord as the creator. [They say that there is a Supreme Lord, but He has no form; He is impersonal.] This is the only difference. Buddhism doesn't accept this. Gaurapada was the guru of Sankaracarya's guru. The disciple of Gaurapada wrote commentaries called Sankya Karika from which Sankaracarya based his own commentary and preached his mayavada philosophy. They knew more than Sankaracarya; no doubt.

It may be also said that Sankaracarya was actually Sankara, Mahadeva, Lord Siva. No one can defeat Sankara, so it was only by the wish of Krsna that he could be defeated. Now his duty was completed. There was no need of staying in this world any longer.

[Jayasri dasi:] But the way he died was quite horrible – to die in boiling oil!

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] There was a ruling of the Buddhists that no one should deviate from Buddhism and no one should follow Sankaracarya. To this end, they determined that everyone should see how he received such a painful death. It was declared before the debate that the person who loses will enter boiling oil.

This may be likened to the Muslim Kazi who declared that Srila Haridasa Thakura should not be beaten inside a house, but in 22 marketplaces. In this way everyone would know, and no one would dare to give up Muslimism to accept Hinduism.

[Dinanatha dasa:] Yes, it was to create fear. But, at least the mayavada philosophy accepted the Lord [a formless Lord]. This is more favorable than Buddhism. If Sankaracarya had defeated that Buddhist, wouldn't that have been more favorable for Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Somehow this was the will of Krsna. No one can challenge Krsna. Without Krsna's will, nothing can be done. Even a blade of grass cannot move, and leaves cannot move, without His will. So, there was some reason that Sankaracarya was defeated. Why did Duryodhana want to disrobe Draupadi and make her naked? Was she meant to suffer for some past karma?

[Jayasri dasi] He was envious.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] No, no, no. Krsna personally inspired Duryodhana to do this. From within his heart, Krsna told him: "You should do this." Krsna thought, "In this way the Mahabharata battle will take place and I will have the opportunity to kill all the Kauravas."

[Madhava Maharaja:] Krsna thought, "I will take away the burden from the Earth."

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] There are so many reasons.

[Madhava Maharaja:] Krsna wanted to show the world Draupadi's surrender. She called Krsna, and He was bound to come.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] This may also be the reason: During the attempted disrobing of Draupadi, Bhima declared, "I will break the legs of Duryodhana, because he said, 'Naked Draupidi will sit on my lap.' And I will break the arm of Duhsasana because he pulled her cloth with that arm."

[Devotee:] Srila Gurudeva, a couple of days ago you were speaking about the pastimes of Lord Rama. You said that Rama placed the real Sita in the care of Agni-deva (the fire god), and the false Sita was kidnapped. Then Rama was weeping in the forest, "Alas Sita, Alas Sita..."

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] This is Rama's sweet pastimes as a human.

[Devotee:] But He already knew that She was with Agni-deva. Why would He weep?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Now He is thinking, "I have forgotten all of this."

[Devotee:] Oh, very interesting.

[As he was leaving for his gate Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja called out to the devotees present:] Come to India in October for Vraja Mandal Parikrama. I am inviting you all.

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