

TRIDANDI SWAMI SRI SRIMAD BHAKTIVEDANTA NARAYANA MAHARAJA

LECTURES ON PREMA VIVARTA

Mathura.
April 8,9,11. 2000

Excerpts from April 8

We should associate with sadhus, but it is very difficult to understand who is a sadhu. Even by trying to understand advanced personalities, one become bewildered. Nrsingha brahmacari was sent to Sri Raya Ramananda on the order of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu instructed that he hear hari-katha from him. When he went there, however, he saw Ramananda Raya engaged and busy in decorating young girls. Nrsingha brahmacari thus had ill-feelings for him. He thought, "How can he be an advanced devotee when he is behaving in that way with young girls?" He returned, but Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said to go again and hear hari-katha from him. He went again to Ramananda Raya and heard such nice hari-katha that he became fully absorbed in Krsna. It is so difficult to understand the position of a very high class of devotee. It is only possible when we are situated in a high-class state. Only a sadhu can understand a sadhu.

You have come from so many places around the world. So try to follow all these things. I see that Western devotees are sentimental. They take bhakti very sentimentally. They actually want to follow everything, but after some days they can totally give up their bhakti. They try to engage their whole energy in this, but somehow after some days, if they are not actually following, in a moment they leave it. So we should be very careful; very careful.

One very important thing: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to Vrindavana and then He returned. Who was with him? He had only two persons with him—Balabadra Bhattacharya and another brahmana. They were with Mahaprabhu all the time, and they were serving Him, but their names are not on the list of great Vaisnavas. In fact, Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself selected these two persons because they were 'neutral'. He did not select any of His intimate devotees to be with Him. Purposefully He did not. Why did it happen that they were not very much benefited? They were with Caitanya Mahaprabhu, but they only received very little sukrti from that service. They were not benefited to the extent that Srila Raghunatha das Goswami would have been benefited, or Sri Swarupa Damodara or Sri Rupa Goswami. This is because although they were serving Caitanya Mahaprabhu all the time, they were not gathering His mood. They were not trying to find out His inner mood. Had it been Srila Raghunatha das Goswami or Srila Rupa Goswami, they would have thought at every moment of Mahaprabhu's inner mood. They would have tried to follow those moods from the core of their hearts.

Srila Raghunatha das Goswami and Swarupa Damodara would have served Him better. But He did not want to be served better. He wanted to be alone. (By having these two with Him, it was practically like being alone). Therefore He did not take such high-class devotees. He accepted only those devotees who were neutral. We should serve our gurudeva in this manner, but should not become so intimate with him that we start quarreling with him and fighting with him—like Madhu Mangal fought with Krsna. Both Krsna and Madhu Mangala were liberated. Both were of the same category. But sishya and guru are not in same category. We must have ‘arcana bhava’. There must be awe and reverence while serving gurudeva. Some intimacy (guruseva) should be there, but mostly arcana bhava.

April 9

At the beginning of the class Srila Maharaja turned his attention to one of the senior disciples of Srila Prabhupada and said, ‘Vaco vegam, manasi krodha vegam...’ Do you know this sloka? It is for whom? Is it for parikara nitya-siddha devotees, those who have achieved prema? Is it for them? Or is it for sadhakas, practitioners? For whom have they written slokas like, Utsaha, nischatat... Can you explain?

Are we practitioners, or are we beyond, or lower than practitioners? What we are? We are nothing, zero. Or, are we bhakti-saddhakas? What we are? Especially what are you? Are you a saddhaka or siddha. You are willing to be a saddhaka? Then it is all for us, those who are bhakti-saddhakas. It is mostly for beginners. Those who have reached madhyama will follow. Those who are uttama have nothing to follow. All these slokas will follow them. We are beginners, so all these slokas are for us.

Why are we ‘up and down’ and always so worried? We are always in a weeping mood. Weep instead for Krsna. I don’t want to hear: “I have a problem.” You are creating your problems. Krsna is not creating any problems for you. All the problems which we are facing are due to whom? Can you tell? We are responsible for this problem of birth and death. We still want all the happiness which we once experienced in our past days. We have tasted everything, and now again we want to taste the same thing. At that time we were also not happy, but we want to return in that same condition. You can never, never be happy in this world. We should try to bhajana in the midst of problems, keeping our feet on the head of problems. There should be no word ‘problem’ in our dictionary. There should only be ‘O, how will I serve Krsna? How will I serve Vaisnavas?’ For ourselves there should be no problem at all. Then you can do bhajan; otherwise you cannot. You will return again from where you began, and you will have lost everything. Always have a broom, and always keep beating your mind. Our minds are so wicked--mad. In lakhs and lakhs of births you will never become happy.

We should follow Sri Ramanujacarya. Today is the abhirbava, birthday, of Ramanuja. Very soon Ramanavami, the birthday of Rama, is coming. Rama and Sita’s whole life was always full of problems. They are Bhagavan and His swarup sakti, but they are giving examples that in the world, even if you are a king or any strong personality, you will have to suffer. So be like Rama, like Sita, like Hanuman. Don’t be worried.

Ramanuja was Lakshmana. He, he accepted Sri Sampadaya. There are so many things that Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta took from this sampradaya: tridandi sannyasa, duties of disciples and guru, behavior towards Vaisnavas, etc. Srila Prabhupada took about 108 teachings of Ramanuja. We have published them in our Gaudiya Patrika and Bhagavat Patrika, and we also follow them.

April 11 (Translation given by Sripad Ramacandra dasa Adhikari)

Tomorrow is Rama-navami—*vidha-navami*. *Vidha* means mixed—mixed with another day—not a pure day. Navami actually begins tomorrow afternoon. Someone may question that if we observe Rama-navami tomorrow and it is not a pure Rama-navami, what will be the result? This can be done only for a *navami* day. *Navami* is the ninth day; then comes the tenth and then *ekadasi*, the eleventh day. There is a provision that if *navami* is mixed, we can still observe that day, and there will be no harm. Rather, we will get the full result. The main point is that *ekadasi* should not be disturbed. If we will follow *navami* on *dasami*, then we will have to break the fast on *ekadasi*. That means we cannot observe *ekadasi*. *Ekadasi* is even more important and glorious than Rama-navami.

There is one strong evidence for this. There are some provision that during Rama-navami day, after the *abhiseka* of Lord Rama, some devotees may take grains in the afternoon. Parampujapada Srila Sridhara Maharaja also might have done that sometimes. But for *ekadasi* there is no such provision. Even on the Janmastami day, after midnight some people begin taking grains. Some *maha-purusas* or great devotees can do this. This is not in accordance with the rules followed by pure *vaisnavas*, but there is no harm because somewhere there are such provisions. But *ekadasi* is not compromised anywhere. That is why we will observe *Rama-navami* and celebrate the Appearance of Lord Rama tomorrow.

Now, *Prema-vivarta*. If anyone is sincerely trying to follow the instructions of Sri Jagadananda Pandit Prabhu, it is sure that he will receive *suddha-bhakti* very soon. One should not have any doubt about this. In this book Sri Jagadananda Prabhu is very nicely explaining what is favorable for *bhakti* and what is not favorable. Two things. He is telling what should be accepted to advance in *bhakti*, and what we should reject. *Sadhu-sanga* and *asadhu-sanga*. We should try to give up *asadhu-sanga* completely. If we have any tinge of *asadhu-sanga*, our *bhajana* will not yield the fruit we want. We may endeavor, but that endeavor will not bear any fruits of love or *suddha-bhakti*. We should give this up and accept *sadhu-sanga* with all our energy and capacity. We should serve Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas* and follow their instructions. The mind has a very important role to play in this. We should not let our mind (the greatest *asadhu*) dictate to us. Rather we should control the mind through our intelligence.

Yesterday's instructions were more specifically for householders, but today the instructions are for both—those who are *grhasthas* and those who are renunciants. What should they do? Day and night they should chant *harinama* like Haridasa Thakura. They should not give the mind even a small amount of time to speculate or do whatever it wants. If one is fully engaged, he will always be having some pressure to perform something for the pleasure of Hari,

guru and *vaisnavas*. Then the mind will not bother him. However, if we neglect this, the mind will not leave us.

There are so many limbs of *bhakti*. There sixty-four limbs, then nine limbs (*sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *smaramnam*, etc.), then five limbs, and then three. But the most important limb is chanting *hari-nama*. Chanting is so much more powerful than *arcana*. If anybody performs *arcana* very nicely, following all the rules and regulations, then, after performing it for millions and millions and millions of lifetimes one will develop taste for the chanting of the holy name. But, if we try to sincerely pray to the holy name and chant in the association of *vaisnavas*, then the result or the mercy which we will obtain cannot be calculated—it is limitless. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has also very clearly stated in his books that we should follow the method shown by Srila Haridasa Thakura, to chant. Everything will come by the mercy of the name.

‘*Nama-cintamani-krsna caitanya-rasa-vigraha...*’ *Nama* and *nami* are non-different. Krsna has empowered the name with all His *sakti*, and also with all *rasa*. If we are able to receive the mercy of the name, there will be nothing lacking. We will need nothing from anywhere else. We will get much more than we want or what anyone else can give. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and other *gosvamis* have given so many beautiful meanings of the sixteen words of the holy name, and we should meditate on those meanings. While chanting we should try to absorb our minds in wonderful pastimes. Or, we should try to think of our services. However, if anyone is able to meditate on the pastimes, nothing can be compared with that. That should be done.

Especially before sleeping we should be very careful. We should sincerely pray that, "The whole day I have tried my best, but during the nighttime nothing is under my control. I do not know where my mind will fly and take me." If we pray and depend on the mercy of Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas*, they will take care of us. And what will be the result? We can observe what thought comes first in our heart and mind when we wake up in the morning. If we practice this, then, after a few days, when we awake some chanting will be automatically going on within us. Some prayers or some remembrance of the Lord will come for sure.

Although we hear that the name itself is all-powerful --- there is nothing more potent than the chanting of the holy name --- yet, unless this name is chanted in the association of *vaisnavas*, and unless it is chanted in the *dhama*, one will not obtain the same result. Or, one will not obtain the result so quickly. We must therefore try to always be in the *dhama* --- either both physically and mentally, or at least mentally if we cannot stay in the *dhama* physically. By doing this we shall always engage all our senses in service, and our mind in the pastimes and beautiful instructions.

We should chant loudly because the mind is tricky. If it is troubling us, we should chant loudly: Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare! Automatically we will get the full attention of the mind. But those who are advanced and whose *anarthas* are vanished, who are firmly situated in *bhakti*, can chant as they like. Their activities always stimulate so many spiritual emotions which are full with *bhakti*. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu used to do this in the Gambhira with Sri Svarupa Damodara and Sri Raya Ramananda. He always absorbed Himself in chanting the name, and relishing the nectar of the chanting. He would become mad in ecstasy.

Krsna is very merciful, and that is why He has appeared in the form of the name. That is His mercy, but the secret for receiving this mercy is to take the association of *rasika* and *bhavuka vaisnavas*. Then we can really understand how Krsna is merciful, and how the name is so powerful and full of nectar. Those who are unable to perform this activity or chant the holy name like this, should begin from the 'primary school' '*vaco-vegam manasa-krodha vegam jihva-vegam udaropastha-vegam*'.

The next instruction by Jagadananda Prabhu is that we should worship Gauracandra. This is very important. If anyone tries to obtain love and affection of the Divine Couple and is not taking shelter of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he can not advance in *bhakti* or come anywhere near to *suddha-bhakti*. How should we see Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? We should see Him as *guru*; as Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami has said in the second verse of his *Manah-siksa*. He is *mukunda-prestha*. Under His guidance we are serving *sri sri Radha-Krsna*.

Some people are chanting, "Jaya Gaura, Jaya Gaura, Gaura Gaura," But Jagadananda Prabhu is saying, "Why are you doing that? You should do what Mahaprabhu has said. We should follow the instructions of Mahaprabhu, not trying to do whimsically what we want. He told us to chant: 'Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna!' We should not put our *mala* aside after sixteen rounds. We should chant as much as possible.

By writing all these things Jagadananda Prabhu gets absorbed in his wonderful pastimes with Gauranga, Sacinandana, Nimai.

His next important instruction is to have *sarala-mana*, a simple mind. It is very important to be simple in our heart. If we are not simple in our heart—no use. We may make so many endeavors outwardly, but if our mind is not simple we will not get the result. What is the meaning of 'simple mind'? It means we are sure what we want. We are no longer confused and we are not trying to cheat others. We are not impostors. We know that we want love and affection of Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas*; so we try to please them. There are no other desires. We should especially be free from *kuti-nati*, which has a very strong home in our heart. It has been residing there for so many births. *Ku* and *na*: that which is prohibited, that which is against *bhakti*, should be given up in all behavior and in all desires.

Then what should we do? We should take shelter of a bona fide *guru*. We should offer our mind and our heart at his lotus feet --- like an open book. Then he can read each and every page. He can rub out all the garbage and again write new information about Radha and Krsna's love and affection.

But what is happening actually? In reality, we are all hearing this, but ninety-nine per cent of the devotees are unable to follow. They fear opening their hearts to their *gurudeva*. They hide so many things. One may be outwardly dressing himself as a follower of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu but within is doing so many things which are prohibited. There is one nice story. There was a person who used to follow *ekadasi* so strictly that he did not even drink water. Everyone knew this man because he used to advertise that, "I am following *ekadasi* so strictly, that I don't even drink water." But what did he do? On the day of *ekadasi* he used to go to the

Yamuna. At least four times a day he used to take bath: morning, afternoon, evening and night. When he dipped into the water he drank as much as he liked. He thought that nobody could see, and Krsna also could not see. Once, when he was drinking in this way, a thorny fish got stuck in his throat. What could he do now? When he came out everyone discovered how he observed *ekadasi*. *Kuti-nati* indulges us in *aparadhas*, which are worse than sins.

The whole world is completely unable to take the essence of the teachings of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In the community of devotees there are also so many examples. We see that a husband and wife have both taken initiation. Both have taken neck beads, and both are chanting *harinama*. Then one of them, the wife for example, becomes very interested in following *bhakti*. She waters *tulasi-devi* every day and she worships a Deity in her home. She is chanting properly, reading, and observing *ekadasi*. As a result she will develop some natural detachment from the mundane world. Especially she will not like to dress herself in a very fashionable manner, she will not be interested to go to any party, and she will not be interested in doing any mundane thing like going to the market, etc. So what will happen? The husband, if he is not developing that detachment, will be annoyed. He wants to go to parties and he wants that his wife accompany him. But the wife does not want to go because she has developed some detachment. A quarrel will ensue, and this will result in *aparadha* for her husband. He should be happy if some nice symptoms are appearing in someone else, because he himself is trying to follow *bhakti*. But this is not the case.

This example may be applied to anyone. Someone's son may have come into the association of devotees. By some great fortune he may have developed some taste and as a result he is losing interest in material life. But his father and mother, or either of them, do not appreciate that. This is not good. Especially in the devotees' community we should try to understand the goal of our life. This is an important point: if someone is following, one is sure to develop some detachment from mundane activities.

It is very easy to chant the holy name. *Sahajai* means it is natural and very easy. *Karma* in itself is very complicated and this is also true with *jnana* and *yoga*. One has to strictly observe all the rules and regulations and, if one is not following the prescribed method properly, he will not achieve the desired result. Sometimes the whole process might react on him in a completely opposite manner. In *bhakti* this is not the case.

Many people have a very negative understanding of the chanting of the holy name. Especially in India, many people who do not have the bona fide association of *vaisnavas* will not let their children take *harinama*. Especially if a young girl is unmarried, her father and mother will not allow her to accept initiation. Why? They consider that, "When she will grow up and be married, who knows what her husband will be like. He may not let her chant and he may compel her to eat meat and take all other forbidden things. In that case, because she has taken *harinama* previously and is now taking all these things, it will be an *aparadha*." This is the general understanding. But this understanding is not proper. It is against my Gurudeva's opinion, and it is against the opinion of all *sastras*.

If one is able to chant the holy name even one time, and then for some reason is unable to follow, the reward is still great. One gets so much *sukrti* and mercy from the Lord --- what

to speak if someone is able to chant for a few days, a few years or until the end of one's life. The chanting he did throughout that life, will give him such a strong impression that life after life it will cause him to take the association of the *vaisnavas*. It will create *sukrti*. We should not neglect this point. We should try to follow as much as we can.

Those who are serious should strictly, with a fixed mind, 'divide' their activities: this much *harinama*, this much studying the books, this much serving *guru* and *vaisnavas*, this much *hari-katha* speaking and this much *hari-katha* hearing. They can divide the whole day into so many activities. In this way, through the mercy of the holy name, after a few days they will develop *nistha* (firm faith and steadiness).

Next we should understand the difference between *karma-arpana* and *seva*. Unless we surrender ourselves first, we cannot perform service. This is the foundation of service. One may try to offer something, with great emotions and feelings. However, if he thinks, "I am giving," then he becomes 'the doer'. This is *karma* and this should not be done.

What is the difference between *karma-arpana* and *bhakti*? *Karma-arpana* means offering the results of our activities, and *seva* means to serve according to the pleasure of our divine master. Someone may perform *parikrama* of Govardhana, and at the end offer that activity at the lotus-feet of Gurudeva and Krsna. This is not condemned, but it is a very primary stage of *bhakti*. One who is advanced, or on a little higher stage, will do all these activities for the pleasure of Krsna and Guru. He is not thinking himself the doer, but is surrendering his own self on the orders of the spiritual master.

Suppose a son brings some nice cloth to his father and says, "Oh father, this is a small donation for you." What is this? Everything is given to him by his father, including his body. But today he is thinking, "I have brought this. I am giving this to my father." This is *dana*, charity, but in this case it is incorrect. It is not given properly. Similarly, this body and everything else in this world that we use was given by Krsna. So we cannot really donate anything to Him or to Gurudeva.

This is also true for all other activities: offering *prasadam* to the devotees, or serving them with the mood that, "Now I have offered this to them," is *karma*. But, again, if someone has not developed the highest *adhikara*, he must do this. It is not against *bhakti*. One should not be confused; This is not condemned. Simply a comparison is being shown for our understanding. Those who have not developed their *adhikara*, must do this. Only by observing such activities will they develop their *adhikara*. Then they will naturally have the feeling and inspiration to serve Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas* for their pleasure. They will understand that the knowledge they have imbibed is from Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas*. And now also, on the path of devotional service, they can only progress under their guidance—only by their mercy. So whatever they have now, whatever they are cultivating, is only because of them. Legally it is the property of Hari, *guru* and *vaisnavas*. This understanding, is called *seva* or *bhakti*. This means that a *sambandha* (relationship), is developing. It is very important for all practitioners to understand the difference between *karma-arpana* and *bhakti*.