

## ***Sunday Feast Lecture by His Holiness Kadamba Kanana Swami***

Villa Vrindavan, Italy, 5.7.09

### **A Saintly Person is Always Happy!**

In every culture, we find a community of saints, especially in Italy, where we have so many saints like St Francis and others. These saintly people have one quality in common and that quality is that they are always happy. No matter what happens, they are still happy. Even when apparently everything goes wrong, the saintly persons are still happy. Of course, that happiness is related to their relationship with God, because they live in that relationship with the Supreme Lord. They are never alone.

### **Prabhupada Inspired Us Not Just by Logic, but by His Presence and Realisation...**

Srila Prabhupada came by ship in his old age from India to America. He lived in New York, the capital of Maya, where every sinful activity of the world can be experienced in its full form. If there is anything in your mind, you can find it in New York- the capital of Maya! And Prabhupada landed *there!* He didn't exactly come with an easy message: he came to tell them to stop all the things they were doing- no meat-eating, no gambling, no illicit sex and no intoxication. No, so what a message for the Western world!

Prabhupada certainly convinced people by his words- he was logical. He explained in a logical way: every action has a reaction; one should not do to others what you do not like them to do to you. We don't like it when they cook us for lunch, so we should not cook other living beings for lunch either, even if they're very tasty. They say that of all animals, human beings are the tastiest of all...so they say. So taste is not everything, because there are also reactions. Therefore, Prabhupada explained by logic.

But more than his words was also the expression on his face, speaking very clearly to the people. They could see his happiness. In one lecture, Prabhupada was being challenged.

One student was asking [*smug voice*], "Swamiji... Swamiji, are you *really* happy?"

Prabhupada said, "If I tell you will you really believe it?"

"Ah, come on, Swamiji, tell us: Are you *really* happy?"

"If I would tell you, would you *believe* it?"

"Ah, come on Swamiji..."

Then suddenly Prabhupada broke out in a huge smile and he said, "Yes!"

All of them started laughing, and the student's face became...[pulls a shocked and chastened face].

So, in this way, Srila Prabhupada also inspired by his presence and realisation.

### **Prabhupada Spoke From the Heart- It's Scientific!**

This is the wonderful quality of a saintly person: he speaks from the heart, and he speaks the same as the scriptures. At the same time he is embodying the greatest happiness, and that creates a lot of faith. Here is someone who doesn't speculate, who speaks in an authorised way. He speaks from the perfect words of Krsna, he has dedicated his life to following it, and the result is visible to all. While he is speaking from the Gita, everyone can see the effulgence of Prabhupada's face.

In Germany, they were taking photos of Prabhupada and they were using a flash, so at one point Prabhupada was seeing so many balls in front of his eyes and he said, "No more balls!" The photographer was an expert photographer- "No problem." He put in a slow film that was very light-sensitive but in those days the

cameras were not computerised. He had to adjust the lens by hand and was measuring the light with a light meter. So, he was looking at the light meter and he was looking at the camera and the tripod with the cords, clicking away. Then suddenly the light meter went to the maximum! Did someone turn on the light? No, nobody turned on the light. Then, what was it? It was Prabupada- he was beaming, effulgent..... and it was measure on a German light meter. So, it is scientific- more scientific you cannot get!

### **Why Would Great Souls NOT Have Taste? Krsna is so Wonderful!**

In this way, a saintly person is not just someone who speaks a great message. Of course, anyone who speaks the message of Krsna is saintly; anyone who tries to live according to the Gita is a special person. But someone who has completely realised the Gita and who shows it in his satisfaction and happiness, that is a great soul. Such great souls, they are *always* engaged in serving Krsna. They speak about Krsna; they have great taste. Why would they not have great taste? Krsna is so wonderful. Isn't everything wonderful that Krsna does? Yes! Like if I begin simply, He has lotus feet. So that is nice. So, everything about Krsna is attractive.

### **The Necessity of Mercy**

The mahatma is simply appreciating Krsna. He is especially appreciating the merciful nature of Krsna. There are many, many examples of Krsna's mercy and it is Krsna's mercy that is very important for us. Without the mercy of Krsna, what can we do? You've probably heard that story of the sparrow who lost its eggs in the ocean. That sparrow went to the ocean and said, "Return my eggs!" The ocean, of course, didn't care. He didn't reply. The little sparrow then said, "If you don't return the eggs, I will drink all your water. The ocean was not impressed and didn't even reply. But then, when Garuda saw that little bird, so sincere, it touched his heart. He said, "I will help that bird. You return those eggs now or *I* will drink your water." Varuna appeared- "Yes, Mr Garuda! Of course, Mr Garuda! Would you like the eggs? And what else I can offer you?"

### **Our Difficulty: We Like Krsna and We Also Like Maya...**

So, in this way, *our* service- what will it do? We are not saintly people- we are full of greed, full of lust, anger and envy. These things are very deep in our heart. We are addicted to so many sinful activities. Somehow or other, we like Krsna. How exactly? By Prabhupada's mercy. We like Krsna, but we also like Maya- we also like the material energy. We like both, and sometimes we don't know who we like most! This is the difficulty.

So, how can we become free from all these lower desires? Just speak to the devotees and they will tell you, "My problem is that I like Krsna but I also have material desires. What will I do about these material desires?" Yesterday we also met someone like that, who told me, "My material desires..." Well, there are so many things we can say. For the time being, we should at least not have faith in these material desires. "If only I would have a Mercedes..." And then what? Still not happy! So if a desire comes, we have no faith in that desire. Someone may think, "Maybe I should marry again for the sixth time." But still not happy.

### **If Krsna Helps Us, We Can Change In One Moment!**

So, one who has no faith in material desires is already strong. That is the beginning, but still we need more, so we pray to Krsna. We pray to Krsna for help and we know if we try hard that maybe we can attract Krsna even if we are not pure. If we try hard to serve Krsna, maybe we can attract Him and he will help us, just like Garuda helped the little sparrow. We cannot get rid of these material desires but Krsna can. If Krsna wants we can change in one moment. We'll be dancing around the temple, flying, in the greatest happiness! Just in one moment- if Krsna gives us the mercy. So this movement is definitely a mercy movement. We are always

thinking of the mercy of Krsna, praying for the mercy of Krsna, thinking how we can get the mercy of Krsna. In this way, we make different plans to get the mercy of Krsna. We *need* the mercy of Krsna. We *want* the mercy of Krsna. Where *is* the mercy of Krsna? Like this, we can be thinking. So, that mercy of Krsna can change our heart, change us into a real saintly person.

### **If We Become Proud, Krsna's Mercy May Come In a Form We Don't Want...**

[*Dramatic*] I kind of like my saffron outfit- it looks very spiritual. I have a certain smile that goes with it. I sit on a transcendental seat. It is nice and soft. And in this huge big building, I am staying in the *guru* room! There are enough mirrors that I can look at myself. In short, I kind of like the life I live. But this lifestyle has one problem, that maybe I will become proud! People, they all bow down to the swami, they cook for the swami, they want to talk to the swami, they send e-mails to the swami, so many every day! "Swami is speaking!" Very important. *I am special!*

Yes, that's dangerous because *then* Krsna's mercy may come, but maybe in a form we didn't want. Because the mercy of Krsna comes in two ways: some of the mercy is very sweet, and some of the mercy of Krsna is very, very *decantare* (deflating or, literally, "fading"). This is the case, that we want the mercy of Krsna, but sometimes it comes in the form of blessings and everything goes very well. At other times the mercy of Krsna comes in the form of punishment. The second type of mercy, the *decantare*, is more difficult to appreciate. That we don't want so much. But because we are so full of material qualities that it is difficult for us to surrender to Krsna, some of us need the heavy mercy- a little car accident, a little disease, a little this or that. Then suddenly we are new people. Certainly we are very saintly, chanting all the time, "Krsna, Krsna Krsna!"

### **See That Krsna Is Behind Everything**

So the mercy of Krsna is always there but we don't see it. We don't see. We are living in the middle of all this mercy of Krsna but we do not see how He is present. We are not paying attention. We are just busy with our small reality. We forget who is behind it all. But this is the fact, He is behind everything, and if we can see that, that Krsna is behind everything and that everything goes on by His plan, then yes- then you are ready for the mercy.

### **To Be a Saint is Normal- Everyone Else is Mad!**

So, to become a saintly person... Nowadays it's very special, to be a saint. In the Catholic church it is difficult to become a saint. You have to be dead for many years, there have to be no bad reference about you anywhere (they have a whole list of conditions), and then you can be officially declared a saint. It's rare nowadays. But actually to be a saint- that is the normal condition. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (5.5.4) says *nunam pramattah kurute vikarma yad indriya-pritaya aprnoti*, which means that people are just trying to enjoy material things. Such people are *pramattah*. *Pramattah* translates thus: *mattah* means mad and *pramattah* means completely mad. So, that's a fact- anybody who is just busy trying to enjoy the material world is just mad.

### **A Saintly Person Gives Up Suffering**

One devotee, in his robes as a monk, was walking the streets. One policeman saw him. He could see this devotee dressed like a monk, looking very renounced and it looked like this person had really given up the world. So the policeman asked him, "What is it you have to give up to become a monk? What in this world do you have to give up to be a monk?" The devotee said, "Suffering." That's the only thing.

When you get old in the material world you will suffer. Like here on the farm they have a *Cinque Cento* [an old-model two-seater Fiat car]. It brings back a sort of nostalgia. It sort of looks really nice, a *Cinque Cento*- it's like a symbol of Italy. But if you have a *Cinque Cento*, there are problems because you cannot take any friends- and then you think you need a bigger car. But if you have a bigger car, then you also have a problem because then when you take it for repair, you also have a big bill.

One boy, he had the most beautiful girl in the world. His friends were going, "He he, you *lucky* chap, you have the most beautiful girl in the world!" "Yeah... but that's a problem. She is very difficult to satisfy, because there are twenty other guys waiting for her also, if not more, and she knows it very well..." [The girlfriend] "He's offering me all these things and what are you giving me?" So, in the material world, everything has two sides, but we only see the one side- "It looks *SO* good!" But everything is good *and* bad. It always has two sides- that's the material world. Yet for a saintly person, there is nothing like this. He gives up suffering and he just spends his time with Krsna.

### **Krsna is More Interesting and More Beautiful Than Any Girl....**

And Krsna is interesting and more beautiful than any girl...In the *Nectar of Devotion* there is one story. One day Uddhava was seeing this beautiful girl and he became very attracted. "What is wrong with me? I have become attracted to this girl just as much as to Krsna. I think it is Krsna dressed up like a girl...and it was! So, that's Uddhava, Krsna's close friend. It was not attraction for the material body. Why **WOULD** he be attracted to the material body? Uddhava is only attracted to Krsna, serving Krsna.

### **Service to Krsna Takes Over Your Life!**

So, that is normal, and we can also become normal. Everybody else is mad. The world is mad. It is like a big psychiatric hospital. Everyone is completely... [*points to his head, indicating a crazy mind*]. Like that. So that's a fact, but one who is fully dedicating himself to Krsna, he is completely normal and he is always happy. So to be a saint is normal and that is our message to the world. Therefore we say it is not rare to be a saint. Everyone can be a saint. The people in this room can be saints. The people in the back, they also can be saints. Anybody can be. It's very easy. We simply begin to serve Krsna. A little service, whatever we do for Krsna. Don't ask for money. Just do it like that... and whatever will happen, after a little while you become attached to it. That's the nature of that service, that you become attached to it. After a while you can't stop it and slowly it takes over your life.

### **Devotees Become Addicted to the Mercy!**

Everything is almost finished in this lecture- we are going into the last five minutes, so don't worry. Here you come on a Sunday and you get a nice meal. Tasty, well-prepared- they know how to cook, the Hare Krsnas! Its worthwhile... but that's not everything. It doesn't just taste good. This food has also been offered to Krsna and therefore it has a spiritual dimension to it, a dimension of mercy. As we are eating it, we get mercy at the same time and that makes it very special. And everything spiritual is like that. There is always this mercy attached to it, and devotees become addicted to this!

### **The Spiritual Dimension- We Can Not LIVE Without It!**

One time I came to Italy (that was in my former asrama as a grhastha). I came to Roma and I had a *Back to Godhead* magazine. Then I went to the address of the temple but when I went there the temple was *gone*- no more temple! But the magazine said there was also a restaurant. So, "Alright, let's go to the restaurant"... but it was closed for renovation. It was night, very late, so what to do? I said, "What to do? No place to eat. No place to stay. A hotel in the centre of Rome- it's expensive! Nothing Vegetarian! All the restaurants- meat, meat, meat!"

One restaurant had some fruits in the window. I wanted to buy them, but they said, “No, No! They are for decoration!” I said [*in Italian accent*], “Please! I am a vegetarian...” Very expensive, but I got some fruits. For two days we suffered, then on the third day, we found a devotee on the street and he said, “Oh, we have a hotel just around the corner.” We went to the hotel and my former wife said, “Is there some prasada?” and he said, “Yes!” So much prasada! My God....finally we had arrived! Like this, that spiritual dimension- we cannot LIVE without it!” THIS is what can change us from a madman into a saint (and don’t forget to chant Hare Krsna, every day!)

Any questions? Any comments?

***Is there any difference between Krsna’s palatable mercy and Krsna’s unpalatable mercy?***

Maybe in the external experience there is. On the spiritual platform, not, because Krsna’s mercy is always bringing us closer to Him. That’s what it means, Krsna’s mercy- everything that brings us closer to Krsna. So whether it is sweet or heavy, it brings us closer. Still, we prefer the sweet, if possible. We are human also.

***When devotees say everyone in this world is crazy...***

Yes, everyone! *Tutti, tutti* [everyone]

***...how can we explain that?***

Yes, the president of the country is crazy. The president of the country next door is also crazy. Their wives, also crazy. Even their children are crazy. Even the dogs are crazy. Everybody is crazy. The movie stars are crazy. The famous celebrities- they are crazy. And anybody who doesn’t believe it is also crazy! But one who is a devotee of Krsna, he is not crazy. Prabhupada was not so worried about what people would think. He was ready to tell it to their face. He was ready to call a crazy man “crazy” to his face. I think we should also not fear because deep down in their heart, they know it. Actually, deep down, they know, “I am actually crazy. I am doing so many crazy things. I am growing all these grapes and drinking all this wine, and its crazy!” That is part of every-day life, but it is poison, it is crazy. It all causes suffering. So, anyone who engages in activities that cause him suffering is crazy. If you knowingly do things that cause you suffering and you still do it, you are crazy. Therefore a devotee is not crazy because he is trying to become purified.

Actually, everyone is a devotee. They asked Prabhupada, “How many devotees does your movement have?” Prabhupada said, “There is no limit to the devotees that my movement has, only some know it and others do not.” So the question is not, “Is this for me or not?” It is for EVERYONE! Everyone is a devotee. There are some who know it and some don’t. Those who don’t know it are crazy. What to do? Give them the medicine- chant Hare Krsna and the craziness will go away. In this way, it may sound strong, but it is a good message because the result is that we will become happy. That is normal and to suffer is crazy.

Thank you very much. [*Applause*]