

Sri Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu 9 12

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Vaishnavapada das Babaji Maharaja

One of the close associates of Mahaprabhu and the acarya of our sampradaya, Rupa Goswamicaran wrote the book *Sri Bhakti Rasmarta Sindhu*. Here he gives a description of bhava bhakti. Bhava may come through sadhana.

When Narada came to Vyasa he told him, *"In a past life I had been serving some sadhus for four months during Caturmasya and I had also listened harikatha from them these four months. I was often in the house of these sadhus. Every day I came and I was listening to harikatha from them. These munis were devotees. I was the son of a maidservant. She was serving in that house and I was listening to harikatha. They were describing harikatha in an amazing way and I got attracted. Then I lost my mind - this harikatha stole my mind. By the mercy of these sadhus I entered into sadhana. I started to do bhajan. In this way I listened and listened to this amazing harikatha for some time, every day for these months. By their mercy I got faith in harikatha. Sraddha is a very rare treasure. I was listening to every word very carefully, with faith. I was a child, but I was able to understand everything."*

In different granthas it is said that from childhood Narada was very serious and satisfied. He was focused on listening. *"I never talked about these things, but I listened and tried to understand everything. I just focused. One of the names of Bhagavan is Vyesvar - Whose katha is very sweet. I developed very strong taste for harikatha and I started to think of the lotus feet of God all the time."* In these slokas Narada explained his path - how he came to sadhana. First he was doing vaidi bhakti sadhana. *"These sadhus described the lilas of Krishna and I listened to every word."* Srimad Jiva Goswami is explaining the meaning of these words of Narada saying, *"Just listen to this harikatha. It is the instruction of all the sastras."* Narada had rati to Bhagavan. He had already past nistha, ruci and asakti. Then nama is in the stage of bhava. After this he got prema. In the next slokas this is described in detail.

Now Sripad Narada is continuing, *"The rainy season passed and the autumn started. For four months I had listened harikatha very carefully every day. This bhakti destroyed my ignorance and passion."* Earlier he was saying that he got rati. Then he said that he had bhakti which destroyed the ignorance and passion. Rati is the first stage of prema. Prema is the ripe stage of rati. That's why the analogy of bhava being the sunrise is there - and the sun is the prema. The first rays of the sun is the symptoms of rati. But prema is the ripe stage. The scriptures explain the differences.

In the third canto of Srimad Bhagavatam it says, *"Oh mother, always associate with sadhus and always do sravanam and kirtanam. Those who know My glories describes Me."* The sadhus show this power. In *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna explains the symptoms of bhaktas. *"His consciousness is always given to Me. By serving Me he is supporting his life. I am his life and shelter."* Devotees have to share their understandings between each other. Devotees who are doing bhajan are fully immersed and they discuss service to Krishna amongst each other. It is very important to ask right questions. Why do they ask each other? Do they not

know something? No, it is because they always want to listen harikatha. They want to praise Krishna. They are very satisfied and happy - completely satisfied. Sadhus share their understandings between themselves. We should serve these kind of sadhus with love. Krishna says, *"I am coming Myself, eager to listen to them."* Without any effort, all desires will be fulfilled to one who with faith listens to this harikatha. Slowly such a person will reach bhava and prema. By listening and listening he will first get sraddha and he will then do sadhana. Then he will reach asakti and when asakti becomes very deep, he will reach bhava bhakti - rati. And when rati becomes deep, that will be bhakti. By bhakti we mean prema. Sadhana bhakti - bhava bhakti -prema bhakti. Rati and bhava are synonyms. In some books it says bhava and in other books it says rati. It is the same meaning.

Narada described this example from his life. Rupa Goswami wrote these two slokas describing Narada. He described his sadhana - how he first got vaidhi sadhana by practising. But in raganuga bhakti it is not the same. Vaidi bhakti bhava and vaidhi bhakti prema. Narada was worshipping Narayana. In the next sloka it is clearly explained that Narada was worshipping Vishnu. Bhakti to Narayana is vaidhi bhakti. In raganuga bhakti no one wants to reach Nrsinga or Vishnu. In Vaikuntha and Ayodhya there is aishvarya and aishvarya is an obstacle for Vrajavasis. They are following raganuga bhakti, but everything else is not raganuga. That's why, worshipping Vaikuntha or Ayodhya is all vaidhi bhakti. In Vaikuntha there is aishvarya jnana and this is an obstacle for reaching supreme love. Even in Mathura raganuga does not appear. Only Vrajavasis have raganuga bhakti. Narada worshipped Maha Vishnu. But his life was an example how he got bhava and prema in vaidhi.

There is an example of raganuga marg of one girl in the Padma Purana. Candrakanti was her name. She was such a fortunate girl. She got raganuga bhakti - kamanuga bhakti. Not dasya raganuga and not sakya raganuga. Like Gopa Kumara - he had sakya raganuga bhakti. *Brihad Bhagavatamrta* describes this. His disciple was Janasarma. This Candrakanti did not even have vatsalya, but kamanuga raganuga bhakti - or sakhi bhava. She was singing near the deities all night. Padma Purana says that she was engaged in sadhana. She felt that Krishna was her beloved and she worshipped Shyama like the Vraja gopis. She was dreaming to get to rasalila. She was hoping to be accepted in the rasa dance. She was singing, dancing and meditating on this rasalila in front of the deities. She saw the deities with love - and she was engaged in sadhana. All night she was dancing in front of the deities. Her bhava had been reached through sadhana. This is an example of raganuga sadhana. When she reached siddhi, Radharani accepted her as Her sakhi. There are many descriptions how devotees reach the feet of Radharani. This was the example of Candrakanti - how she reached the feet of Krishna and became the sakhi of Radharani. There are many examples of Krishna devotees who got bhava and prema by mercy. This is one kind - someone who is not doing any sadhana. Just by mercy of Krishna or His devotee they get bhava.

There are three types of mercy - mercy of Krishna by darshan, by word or touch. To somebody Bhagavan can give darshan and bless him. *"May you have bhakti without any cause."* Krishna can bless in this way. There are nitya siddhas and sadhana siddhas - they are different. Bhagavan gave blessings to Narada. He said, *"You were so eager to meet Me. I am blessing you with bhakti."* Immediately Narada got bhava. It didn't say anything about sadhana. He was doing sadhana, but he got bhava by the blessing of Bhagavan.

Maharaja Yudhistira was living in the forest. He saw Dvarakanath and His charm. He was living not far away from Hastinapura. By seeing Krishna, his heart was completely melted. He saw this beautiful form of Krishna and his heart melted. Krishna gave him mercy and he got bhava. Many citizens of Hastinapura got bhava without any sadhana. At the time of prakatha lila, when Krishna was present here – only by Krishna’s darshan many became His devotees. All these devotees of Krishna were also subjects of Yudhistira Maharaja. There were some connection between all these devotees.

There is a third type of mercy: by the desire of Bhagavan. One can get prema by His wish - from inside the heart. When Sukadeva Goswami was in the womb of the mother, he already got bhava. Being in the womb of his mother he already got all the fruits of sadhana. How did that happen? Bhagavan blessed him in this way. Bhagavan is all-powerful. Without any darshan or any words He can give this prema. He just appears in the heart. He can touch the heart of devotees. To somebody He can give bhava by blessing, to someone else He can give by darshan, and the third type is within the heart. He can give this wealth to anybody. But someone who doesn’t have any wealth cannot give to anyone. If Bhagavan is happy with somebody He can give him bhakti.

But we are normal jivas. Sometimes we purify our heart and then we reach pure bhakti. But if we get mercy of a mahabhagavata sadhu, this can be immediately. A mahabhagavata can just give this mercy – from heart to heart. Lika Prahlada Maharaja. He got mercy by Narada, being in the womb of the mother. He was waiting very long for birth because in the womb of the mother he was listening to harikatha. Narada decided to give Krishna rati to Prahlada. He decided to give him mercy. *“Oh Devarsi, how merciful you are! This boy is not even born and he already got bhava. Narada, you decided to save him.”* One disciple of Narada offered Tulasi and water to God. In this way he was doing seva to God according to the instructions. Parasha Muni said, *“Oh Narada, you are blessed! This hunter got mercy so quickly. He gave so much suffering to others living beings, but he achieved bhakti so quickly! He is now crying and trembling.”* This hunter fell at the lotus feet of Narada. *“Oh Narada, you blessed him so quickly to become a pure devotee!”* This is an example of the mercy of a devotee. Everything is possible. In this way the hunter got bhava bhakti, even after a very short time of association with Narada.