

Envy Makes One Blind

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, CANTO 3, CHAPTER 1, QUESTIONS BY VIDURA, TEXT 14, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CARU SWAMI ON 25 MARCH 2008 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
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Srimad Bhagavatam, third Canto, first chapter, text fourteen. This chapter is entitled as ‘Questions By Vidura.’

ity ucivams tatra suyodhanena
pravridha-kopa-sphuritadharena
asat-kritah sat-sprihaniya-silah
kshatta sakarnanuja-saubalena

Synonyms:

iti — thus; ucivan — while speaking; tatra — there; suyodhanena — by Duryodhana; pravridha — swollen with; kopa — anger; sphurita — flapping; adharena — lips; asat-kritah — insulted; sat — respectable; sprihaniya-silah — desirable qualities; kshatta — Vidura; sa — with; karna — Karna; anuja — younger brothers; saubalena — with Shakuni.

Translation:

While speaking thus, Vidura, whose personal character was esteemed by respectable persons, was insulted by Duryodhana, who was swollen with anger and whose lips were trembling.

Duryodhana was in company with Karna, his younger brothers and his maternal uncle Shakuni.

Purport:

It is said that giving good counsel to a foolish person causes the fool to become angry, just as feeding milk to a snake only increases its venomous poison. Saint Vidura was so honorable that his character was looked up to by all respectable persons. But Duryodhana was so foolish that he dared to insult Vidura. This was due to his bad association with Shakuni, his maternal uncle, as well as with his friend Karna, who always encouraged Duryodhana in his nefarious acts.

[End of Purport]

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So, Sukadeva Gosvami is describing what happened just before the battle of Kurukshetra. Everyone tried to stop this battle, including even Krishna, but Duryodhana did not listen to those good advices. Duryodhana was evil personified. It has been described that Duryodhana is the incarnation of Kali, and who is Kali? Kali Yuga, the leader or the controller of the age of Kali is the personality of Kali. He is actually quarrel personified. Another meaning of the word Kali is quarrel, kalaha, and Kali is the son of Envy and Anger, himsa and krodha. Kali is the son of these two personalities: personified envy and personified anger. And we can see where is quarrel? Quarrel is a result of envy and anger. When people become envious and become angry then they fight, then they quarrel. So Mahabharata is depicting that very beautifully.

So what lesson do we learn from that? Mahabharata is giving a very, very vivid description of what happened between Kauravas and Pandavas, although they are the two branches of the same family, a very illustrious family, Kuru dynasty. Many illustrious kings adorned that dynasty but now these two branches of the same family started to fight with each other. We can see how the root of this fight goes even further back. It goes to Dhritarashtra. Dhritarashtra was also an illustrious personality, born out of an illustrious parentage. Although he hailed from this family, not only hailed from this illustrious Kuru family but he was actually the son of Vyasadeva. And his mother Ambika is an incarnation of Devi Durga. Such an illustrious personality: the son of Durga Devi, an incarnation of Durga Devi, and of Vyasadeva. But we see that he was blind from his childhood. From his birth he was blind. He was born blind. Although he is the elder brother, although he is the eldest of that family line, but he is blind.

And here also we see yet another wonderful lesson that how the child becomes affected by the nature of the mother, the mood of the mother. Vyasadeva came to procreate in order to maintain the family line. The family line would have otherwise been lost. Both Vicitravirya and Citrangada died. Vicitravirya died out of tuberculosis and Citrangada died fighting with

the Yaksa's. Now we can even go back, we can see, anyway let us make this point first: Vicitravirya and Citrangada both died at a young age, and although...

[Altar curtain close] Jaya Sri Sri Krishna Balarama ki jaya! Jaya Sri Sri Radha Madana Mohana ki jaya! Jaya Sri Sri Gaura Nitai ki jaya!

He died at a young age and there was no one in the family to continue the line. Now the royal heritage, the royal line must continue with a successor. That's why in the Vedic culture there is so much importance given to the male children because the male child actually carries the family line. The male child not only carries the family line, he also delivers the father and the forefathers of the family. Pindokakriya, this activity is pinda and offering water to the forefathers, causes deliverance to the departed souls. In the previous verse also it has been pointed out, Duryodhana has been pointed out that, although he is an 'apatya', the word apatya means one who delivers from falling down. The son delivers the father, protects the father from falling down, 'patan.' Therefore these two expressions in Sanskrit for son, one is apatya and the other is putra. Putra means one who delivers the father from a hell called 'Puna.' That's why he is punat trayate iti putra, he delivers the father from falling down to the Puna Narakha. That's why he is putra. And apatya: one who protects the father from falling down to the hellish planets. So the son actually delivers, and the son actually maintains the family line.

So, it was important that they have a son, they have someone to continue the family line and this is the illustrious family of royal lineage; rulers who had been hailing, the dynasty that has been hailing from the Candra Vamsha, from the Moon God himself, Somadeva. Mahabharata describes all that in details, how the line started from the Moon God and it continued through Pururava, Urvashi, Yayati, Dushyanta, Shakuntala, king Bharata was born. So it is a history actually, history of India.

Now the line is about to be destroyed. The line is about to come to an end. Both the members of the family died. Vicitravirya, Citrangada, both have died, two sons of king Shantanu. The only person who is alive is Bhishma. Now Bhishma has taken a vow of not getting married. Bhishma had taken a vow of a lifelong celibacy, akumara brahmacarya. He has taken a vow of celibacy and that also in order to enable his stepmother to get married to his father. And the stepmother's father had a condition that her son should become the king. So this is how we can see the irony of destiny. We want something but destiny arranges things to happen in some other way.

His father, Shantanu, became attracted to this extremely beautiful daughter, who was the daughter of a Dhivara Raja, the king of the fishermen. When Shantanu approached the king of the fishermen in order to marry his daughter, Satyavati, the king of the fishermen said, "Well, it's my great good fortune that an illustrious king like yourself wants to become my son-in-law, wants to marry my daughter. But you see, I have a desire that my daughter's son should become the king." And Shantanu said that, "Look, I already have a son and he is already coronated as the crown prince. He is the eldest of the family, eldest in the line so he is the natural successor to the throne." But then this leader of the fishermen said, "Then I am sorry. You can't get married to this daughter of mine." So Shantanu went back. Now Bhishma could recognize that something happened. At that time his name was not Bhishma as yet. He was Satyavrata. He inquired what happened and then he found out that his father wanted to marry this girl but he couldn't because her father had a condition. So he asked what was the condition and he was told by the chariot driver who was present there that this is

what happened, that he wanted that her son should become the king. But your father declined saying that you are the successor to the throne, so he can't marry her with the condition that her son would become the king. So Bhishma then went and he met this Dhivara Raja, the king of the fishermen, and Bhishma told that, "Look, I am relinquishing my claim over the throne." But this person, Satyavati's father, was a very crafty person. So he said, "Fine, you may relinquish your claim over the throne but what about your children? There will be a family fight because your children will fight with my grandchildren." Then Bhishma said, "Okay, if that is your anxiety then I am taking a vow that I will never get married." And it was such a terrible vow to maintain, lifelong celibacy, especially for a kshatriya. Kshatriyas' bodies are very passionate. For a person who is in the mode of goodness to maintain celibacy is not that difficult but for a kshatriya who is in the mode of passion, for him to maintain celibacy is very difficult. So it was such a terrible vow that being a kshatriya and such a powerful personality he has taken a vow of lifelong celibacy. The demigods started to exclaim, express their astonishment by this exclamation: "What a terrible vow he has taken! Bhishma! Bhishma!" And that's how he actually got the name Bhishma.

Now we can see, this father of this lady, Satyavati, wanted so much that his grandson should become the king and with that condition he got his daughter married to Shantanu, and he made Bhishma to take this vow that he would maintain a lifelong celibacy, but what happened in the course of destiny? Both the grandchildren, Citrangada and Vicitravirya, both are dead! And his wife, Vicitravirya was married to two girls, Ambika and Ambalika, the two daughters of Kashi Raja, the king of Kashi, but now they are widowed without any children. And now the whole dynasty is about to come to an end. No successor to the throne. Satyavati appealed to Bhishma that, "Please, you get married." The first proposal was that, "You get married." Bhishma said, "I have taken a vow not to get married." Then she said, "Okay, then you procreate in the field of these two sisters-in-law." Because in the Vedic culture in other ages it was authorized that if the brother died without having children then the brother-in-law could procreate in the womb of the wife of the brother, 'devarena sutotpatti.' That custom is called, devarena means brother-in-law, the husband's brother, and sutotpatti, procreation, producing children when the husband dies by the brother-in-law is authorized according to the Vedic culture. But that has been forbidden in the age of Kali.

Five things have been forbidden in the age of Kali:

asvamedham gavalambham

sannyasam pala-paitrikam

devarena sutotpattim

kalau panca vivarjayet

[CC Adi 17.164]

These five things have been vivarjayet, forbidden. What are those? Asvamedha sacrifice, asvamedham. Gavalambham: gomedha. Sannyasa, often when I say that, sometimes they ask: "But, Maharaja, how come you are a sannyasi?" [laughs] Prabhupada has introduced sannyasa. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura introduced sannyasa in our sampradaya. But this sannyasa is tri-dandi sannyasa. What has been forbidden is eka-dandi sannyasa. Eka-danda sannyasa has been forbidden, the kind of sannyasa through which one tries to attain liberation. But tri-danda sannyasa is a sannyasa of offering body, mind and words, these three aspects in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So that is not forbidden.

So sannyasa, pala-paitrikam. Pala means meat, offering meat in the Shraddha of the forefathers. That was also authorized in other ages because by sacrifice the meat used to be

sanctified and that meat was offered to the forefathers, but in the age of Kali that has been forbidden. Sannyasa and pala-paitrikam, and devarena sutotpattim, the procreation through the devara, brother-in-law, has been forbidden.

But in Dvapara Yuga it was authorized and that's why Satyawati requested Bhishma that he should procreate children in the womb of his sisters-in-law, Ambika and Ambalika. Bhishma declined. He said, "No, I can't break my vow." Satyawati insisted that, "Look, it is for my sake that you have taken the vow and now I am requesting you. And it is for the sake of maintaining the family line." But Bhishma declined. Then Satyawati told about her other son, Vyasadeva. Then Bhishma agreed and said, "Then call him." And Vyasadeva told Satyawati that whenever she wanted, whenever she remembered, he would just appear there. So Satyawati invited Vyasa to come and as a result of that Vyasa appeared there and Satyawati requested.

So Vyasa agreed but when he met with Ambika, Ambika was frightened to see the fierce appearance of Vyasadeva. He was an extremely powerful personality. His complexion was like a monsoon cloud. His head was filled with matted hair and he was a radiant personality with his spiritual prowess. She, out of fear, closed her eyes. So when Vyasadeva came out of the room Satyawati very eagerly asked, "Is everything alright?" Vyasadeva said, "Yes, it's alright. A son will be born with the strength of ten thousand elephants, but he'll be blind because she closed her eyes." Then Satyawati requested that, "Please, have another son." So Ambalika was asked to meet with Vyasadeva and she didn't close her eyes out of fear, but her face became pale out of fear. Vyasadeva declared that, "This son will be extremely powerful; extremely virtuous but his bodily complexion will be pale." Then she requested him to have another son and this time Ambika and Ambalika were afraid to face him so they sent a maidservant, a beautiful young maidservant. And as a result of that Vidura was born. So these were the three sons of Vyasadeva to maintain the family line of the Kuru dynasty.

Pandu was an extremely powerful personality, extremely virtuous, extremely noble. He was ruling the kingdom with the expertise of Indra. He was powerful as Indra, wise as Brihaspati and he was expert in everything. But unfortunately he was cursed that when he would embrace his wife, he would die. So Pandu retired. He didn't come home, come back to the palace. He just went to the Himayalan Mountains, Badarika ashrama, Badrinatha, high up in the Himalayas. He already took vanaprastha, sort of, and he was residing with the sages in that holy place in the Himalayas. He could not procreate children, so Kunti told him that she could invite the demigods and have children through them. So first they got Dharmaraja, Yamaraja, to come and as a result of that Yudhisthira was born.

[Altar curtains open] Jaya Sri Sri Krishna Balarama ki jaya! Jaya Sri Sri Radha Madana Mohana ki jaya! Jaya Sri Sri Gaura Nitai ki jaya!

Then Pavanadeva was invited and as a result of that Bhima was born. Then Indra was invited and Arjuna was born. And the other wife, Madri, Kunti gave her that mantra also that she received from Durvasa when she was a little girl. Madri invited the Ashvini Kumaras, the twin, and as a result of that she gave birth to Nakula and Sahadeva. So in this way five Pandavas were born, but when they were young, one day Pandu lost his resolve due to the influence of the spring time, when the whole nature becomes so beautiful. The gentle breeze blows carrying the fragrance of flowers and that season actually has a very strong influence on the living entities, especially human beings. Pandu lost control over himself. He completely forgot about the curse and when he embraced Madri he died. So Madri entered

into the fire, the funeral fire and became sahamvrita: she also left her body to accompany Pandu. Kunti remained to take care of these five children and Kunti and the children were brought to the palace of Hastinapura. The sages brought them and introduced them as the children of Pandu.

Now, Dhrtarashtra, although he was the elder of the two brothers, but he was blind, therefore he couldn't become a king. He had the desire, he had a burning desire to become a king. He couldn't become a king. He had a hope that maybe his son would become the king but before Duryodhana was born, Yudhishthira Maharaja was born. So as a result of that Yudhishthira became the natural successor to the throne. So that was another disappointment for Dhrtarashtra. The name also is very significant here. Dhrtarashtra: rashtra means kingdom and dhrtar means one who tries to hold on to his kingdom. He is blind but he is so passionate, he is so eager to become the king. Therefore, when the Pandavas were brought Dhrtarashtra became extremely disappointed. He thought that okay, Pandu has left and now his son will become the king, but unfortunately for him Pandu's son was older than his son. So he became the natural successor to the throne, Yudhishthira Maharaja. But he didn't mind it, as long as they were away but when they were brought to the palace, although externally Dhrtarashtra showed so much affection for them and he lamented, he repented, he grieved for his brother's demise, but internally he was burning with envy.

Once Dhrtarashtra was complaining that, "Look, I can't sleep. Vidura do something. I can't sleep." And Vidura told him that one cannot sleep because of five factors, and he said, "Not that you cannot sleep now, you cannot sleep since the Pandavas were brought to the palace. The day the Pandavas, the five sons of Pandu, were brought to the palace, since that time you cannot sleep. Due to your anxiety, due to your intense desire that your son would become the king you haven't been able to sleep. Your mental peace has been stolen." And Dhrtarashtra always supported Duryodhana in his evil plots. He tried to poison Bhima. He tried to burn them, along with Kunti in a house of shellac and Dhrtarashtra approved. He is the one who actually supported that and he made that happen.

Everybody could understand that the Pandavas were actually being sent out in exile when Dhrtarashtra actually being provoked by Duryodhana that, "These Pandavas should go to Varnavata. Father, please tell them that it is such a nice place, Varnavata. There even the demigods like to come and stay there, so you go and have a good time there. Have a break, have a nice time there." And Yudhishthira Maharaja knew that they were being sent out in exile but he couldn't do anything because they were in power and the evil-minded Duryodhana was behind all that. So Yudhishthira accepted that, "Okay, fine. We will go." Dhrtarashtra, in a hypocritical way, expressed his good wishes but internally he had this evil plan. And Yudhishthira Maharaja also understood that it was a plot to actually get rid of them but he didn't say anything. But the people, especially wise people, they knew what was happening and they were cursing Dhrtarashtra that, "This blind, envious person, instead of protecting the children of his dead brother, look how he is behaving with them, sending them out in exile."

And at that time Vidura actually told Yudhishthira Maharaja in an indirect way, using the language of the Mlechas, so that this is what's going to happen. He pointed out that when there is fire, to protect oneself if one is in a hole and if it burns on top, then the fire will not affect them. In this way he indicated. He gave some other indications also and Yudhishthira Maharaja could understand what was being told. And Vidura asked, "So did you understand?" And Yudhishthira Maharaja said, "Yes, I did understand." So he indicated that,

“This house that has been built there for your residence is made of inflammable objects, shellac. The way to protect yourself, you dig a hole, a tunnel out of that place, and that is how you should escape.” And then Vidura sent a person who could dig a tunnel, an expert tunnel digger, and the Pandavas, during the day they used to be awake as if everything is normal and at night they used to dig the tunnel out of that place. And when the tunnel was complete they set the house on fire themselves and ran away from there. Everyone thought that the Pandavas died along with Kunti. Actually, that night a Nishada woman came to the house and her children ate so much and drank so much that they fell asleep. So when the Pandavas escaped, they got burned along with the minister of Duryodhana, Purocana, who was actually the person who made all these treacherous arrangements. He also got burned.

So in this way they tried to kill the Pandavas but Krishna always protected the Pandavas. And Vidura always had been giving the good counsel to Dhrtarashtra that, “Do not become affected, do not become influenced by your evil-minded son, Duryodhana. Come to your senses. Be on the path of virtue and righteousness. The Pandavas, they are actually situated on the path of dharma and your children are on the path of adharma. So get rid of your children. Don’t side with this evil-minded Duryodhana. Don’t support him but rather support the Pandavas.” And when he advised Dhrtarashtra then Duryodhana became angry and he started to insult and that is what has been pointed out. And Prabhupada in his purport is saying that an evil-minded person cannot listen to good advice. A fool cannot listen to good counsel, because he is a fool. A fool is a person who doesn’t understand what is good for him and what is bad for him. And Duryodhana is a perfect example of a fool. He didn’t know what was for his real benefit. Time and time again he had been told that, “If you side with the Pandavas then you’ll become so powerful that you can easily rule over the world without any obstacle. So why not make truce with them? Why not join hands with them? Give them half of the kingdom that belongs to them and you will remain a king, they will remain a king and together you can become so powerful.” But Duryodhana was so envious that he did not want to give them even five villages. That was the ultimate condition. Yudhisthira Maharaja said, “Look, give us five villages.” Because a kshatriya has to be independent. A brahmana maintains himself by ‘pathana paathana, yajana yaajana’: by teaching and by worshipping the Deities, performing different types of religious activities. That’s how a brahmana maintains himself. A kshatriya maintains himself by ruling over a piece of land. A vaishya maintains himself by trading and a sudra maintains himself by accepting the job from somebody else. So that’s why as a kshatriya their dharma demanded that they have some land. They didn’t want half of the kingdom. They said, “Give us just five villages.” But Duryodhana refused to even give that and the result was the battle became imminent and here he is insulting Vidura. The next verse will describe how he started to insult Vidura and Vidura left the palace and he went on a pilgrimage. So, a very wise thing to do. Vidura didn’t want to be there to see the family being destroyed, the slaughter of so many illustrious members of the family. Actually, all the kings of this world were slaughtered in that battle by Krishna’s arrangement. In order to establish dharma when adharma became prevalent, Krishna had to make this arrangement. He came to get rid of these demoniac rulers. So He came, He personally took care of Kamsa and his associates and then finally He made this arrangement. All the impious, sinful rulers were brought together and in one go they all were slaughtered. In eighteen days the earth practically became bereft of kshatriya kings.

Hare Krishna! All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

Does anybody have any question?

Yes?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, yeah. In a family the sons take the same gotra. The daughters do not take the gotra of the father. The daughter takes the gotra, the lineage, of the husband. Therefore, the children born from that mother carry the family line. They are called 'kshetraja putra.' When for some reason the husband cannot procreate the wife can be impregnated, made pregnant, by somebody according to the rules of the scriptures. Like, as I mentioned, when the brother dies, when somebody dies then his brother can procreate in the field of his wife. Similarly, demigods can procreate if it is possible, as was the case of the Pandavas. And it has been also pointed out that in some way, at the time of marriage, the bride also gets married to the demigods. That point has been very nice explained through that incidence when Yamunacarya was challenged by this pandita called Kolahal. Kolahal became exhausted. He could not ask any more questions. Yamunacarya answered all his questions. Then he asked Yamunacarya to ask questions. At that time Yamunacarya was only eight years old. So Yamunacarya said that, "I am not going to ask you any questions. I'll make only three statements and you refute those three statements." He made three statements anyway. The first statement was that, 'Your mother is not barren.' To defeat that point he had to say that his mother is barren. So if his mother is barren then how can he be born? Then the other one was: the Queen is the epitome of virtue, epitome of chastity. So in order to refute that, he had to say that the Queen is unchaste. So when he could not, then he told the King that, "Look, how can I say a thing like that? Your wife is unchaste." And if he cannot prove that, if he cannot justify that, then he should be punished. He was telling about Yamunacarya. And Yamunacarya's answer was that, "Although the Queen is the most chaste and the most virtuous woman but at the time of marriage a woman gets married to the demigods also. So although she is married to the King, she has other husbands. Although she is completely chaste but she is also unchaste."

Okay, what is your second question?

Devotee: The five things that are forbidden in the age of Kali, I don't understand how cow sacrifice was allowed by the Vedas [inaudible]

BCS: What?

Devotee: Cow sacrifice.

BCS: Oh, cow sacrifice, okay, okay. Prabhupada actually mentioned that quite a few times in his purports that the purpose of this yajna, sacrifice, was not to slaughter the animal. The sacrifice was made, after the performance of the sacrifice, is to see whether the sacrifice is properly performed and as a result of that sacrifice the animal would either get elevated to a human form or elevated to the heavenly planet, or get a young body. So if an old cow gets a young body, what's the harm? So this sacrifice was not a matter of slaughtering the animal but to give a new life to the animal, as a result of that sacrifice.

Okay, the last question because we have other classes also.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: How come?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Okay, eka-danda sannyasa, yeah. Go ahead. What was the question?

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, so he actually came to establish something, asat sastram, mayavadam asat

sastram. He came to establish something that is temporary to establish a certain mission, to achieve a certain purpose. Because Sankaracarya introduced that, that doesn't mean that, to begin with he actually created a disturbance by doing that. So mayavada is a disturbance, eka-danda sannyasa introduced by him was a disturbance.

Devotee: [inaudible]

BCS: Yeah, yeah. Sure. You see, devotional service was not that prevalent in other ages, direct devotional service. It was given only to some rare individuals, direct devotional service, but otherwise they would be elevated gradually. And those days when they would take sannyasa they would generally take eka-danda sannyasa. Because since devotion was not prevalent, devotional service was a secret, it was not commonly practiced or it was not commonly distributed, that's why the sannyasa according to the devotional service was also not prevalent. Generally when people took sannyasa it was eka-danda sannyasa.

Devotee: Impersonal.

BCS: Impersonal, to merge into sayujya mukti.

Hare Krishna! Gaura Premanande Hari Haribol!