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A STREET SWEEPER'S BEAUTY

TRANSLATION AND PURPORT TO

ŚRĪMAD BHAGAVATAM 1.10.16

HIS DIVINE GRACE

A. C. B HAKTIVEDANT A SWAMI
PRABHUPADA

*prāsāda-śikharārūḍhāḥ kuru-nāryo didṛkṣayā
vaorṣuḥ kusumaiḥ kṛṣṇa prema-vrīḍā-smitekṣaṇāḥ*

Out of a loving desire to see the Lord, the royal ladies of the Kurus got up on top of the palace, and smiling with affection and shyness, they showered flowers upon the Lord.

PURPORT

Shyness is a particular extra-natural beauty of the fair sex, and it commands respect from the opposite sex. This custom was observed even during the days of the *Mahābhārata*, i.e., more than five thousand years ago. It is only the less intelligent persons not well versed in the history of the world who say that observance of separation of female from male is an introduction of the Mohammedan period in India. This incident from the *Mahābhārata* period proves definitely that the ladies of the palace observed strict *pardā* (restricted association with men), and instead of coming down in the open air where Lord Krishna and others were assembled, the ladies of the palace went up on the top of the palace and from there paid their respects to Lord Krishna by showers of flowers. It is definitely stated here that the ladies were smiling there on the top of the palace, checked by shyness. This shyness is a gift of nature to the fair

sex, and it enhances their beauty and prestige, even if they are of a less important family or even if they are less attractive. We have practical experience of this fact. A sweeper woman commanded the respect of many respectable gentlemen simply by manifesting a lady's shyness. Half-naked ladies in the street do not command any respect, but a shy sweeper's wife commands respect from all.

Human civilization, as conceived of by the sages of India, is to help one free oneself from the clutches of illusion. The material beauty of a woman is an illusion because actually the body is made of earth, water, fire, air, etc. But because there is the association of the living spark with matter, it appears to be beautiful. An earthen doll attracts no one, even if it is most perfectly prepared to attract the attention of others. The dead body has no beauty because no one will accept the dead body of a so-called beautiful woman. Therefore, the conclusion is that the spirit spark is beautiful, and because of the soul's beauty one is attracted by the beauty of the outward body. The Vedic wisdom, therefore, forbids us to be attracted by false beauty. But because we are now in the darkness of ignorance, the Vedic civilization allows very restricted mixing of woman and man. They say that the woman is considered to be the fire, and the man is considered to be the butter. Butter must melt in association with fire, and therefore they may be brought together only when necessary. And shyness is a check to the unrestricted mixing. It is nature's gift, and it must be utilized.

From Srila Prabhupada's Life

Bhishmadev stressed the importance of shyness in women, *lajjā*. If you break that shyness then there will be disaster — it is a natural control valve. Woman's shyness is one kind of beauty. And we have practical experience in our life of how it commands respect:

Once my friend and neighbor Dinanath Mishra came. We were sitting in the corridor of our house. At that time one sweeper woman wanted to come in, but she was very shy. She was standing and waiting with a covering on her head. Although she had a broomstick and a bucket, she was waiting because we were sitting in her way. She was feeling too shy to enter the house. So we decided to move so that she could come. This example is given. She is a maidservant or sweeper — not very respectable — but on account of her shyness we had to welcome, "Yes, we are moving. You come in." Just see. This is psychology. Therefore at his dying stage Bhishmadev stressed that a woman's shyness is the control valve. If their shyness is broken then it will create disaster:

— Srila Prabhupada's lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.6.4., Vrindavan, 26 November 1976.

THE STORY OF UPAMANYU

SRI LA GOUR GOVINDA SWAMI

In Mahabharata there is the episode of the *muni* named Dhaumya who had a *brahmacari* disciple named Upamanyu. The guru ordered the disciple, "Upamanyu, take care of my cows. This is your *sevā*." So Upamanyu was taking care of the cows. Early in the morning he would get up, perform *maṅgalārātrika*, and take the cows to the jungle, then he would return in the evening and offer *daṇḍavoats* to his guru. After a few days, Dhaumya saw that Upamanyu was getting fat. He told him, "Upamanyu, you're getting fat! Are you eating something?"

With folded hands, Upamanyu said: "Bhagavan, I collect some *bhikṣā*, alms. I go to four or five houses, beg some food, *mādhukarī*, and eat it."

"Who told you to do this thing? Have you taken my permission? Why are you doing this if I have not given permission? You must not do this any more. When you go to collect *bhikṣā* you should give it to me, as it belongs to me. It is not yours. How can you accept it?"

"I agree. What you have said, I'll do."

From then on, every day he would collect *bhikṣā* and would give it to his guru. A few evenings later, as he was paying obeisances, the guru again said to Upamanyu, "You have given the *bhikṣā* you have been collecting to me. Still I see that you are getting fat. Are you eating something?"

"Gurudeva, the first time I go to collect *bhikṣā*, whatever I collect I give you everything, and the second time I go, whatever I get I keep."

"That is not good. If you do like this you'll develop greed. I have not told you to do this thing. Why are you doing it? Stop it. You cannot do it."

"Yes. I won't do that. I accept."

Again after a few days, in the evening the guru observed:

"Upamanyu, I have forbidden you to accept *bhikṣā* for yourself, and instructed you to give it all to me. You are giving me but still you are getting fat. Are you eating something?"

"Yes, Gurudev. I drink some of the cow's milk."

"Huh? You drink some milk from the cows? Who told you to do that? No, you should not do that. It is not your duty. Stop it."

"Yes, Gurudeva. I won't do it any more."

He accepted what his guru said and he stopped that activity. A few days passed. Then one evening the guru said:

"My dear Upamanyu, I have forbidden you to accept any *bhikṣā* for yourself, and you are giving me everything. I forbade you to drink the milk of the cows, and I think you are following that. Yet still I see that you are becoming fat. Are you eating something?"

"Yes, Gurudeva. When the calves drink milk, some foam is there over their mouths and I lick that."

"Huh? Why are you doing this? Who told you to do this? The cows are very merciful and affectionate to you, so they'll give you more foam. Then you'll become much fatter. No, stop it! You can't do it."

"Yes, Gurudeva. I will not do it"

So strict! The guru stopped everything.

You are always thinking, "Oh what is this *guru-sevā*? I cannot do it. Better to perform *māyā-sevā*." Isn't it?

However, whatever his guru said, Upamanyu accepted. He did not violate the instruction of his guru. One day he was very hungry. He could not tolerate the hunger. What to do? His guru had stopped everything. He had nothing to eat. He thought, "How can I serve my guru? I am so hungry! If my body fails then I won't be able to move. How can I serve my guru?"

He then took some leaves of an *arka* bush, which are poisonous. He ate them and at once became blind. Then he fell into a deep dark well. That evening he could not return to his guru's *āśrama* with the cows. When the guru noticed that Upamanyu had not returned he wondered what had happened to him. The guru was thinking deeply of his disciple.

Guru has affection for his disciple, although outwardly he is very heavy. That is *sādhu*. He is like a coconut — outwardly very hard but inside very soft. So the guru thought, "Upamanyu has not returned today. Because I stopped his eating, he became very distressed. Therefore he has not returned" He took a few disciples with him and went to the jungle to search for Upamanyu, loudly calling: "Upamanyu, where are you?"

From inside the well where he had fallen, Upamanyu shouted: "Gurudeva, I am here. I have fallen into a deep, dark well." The guru went there and saw that Upamanyu had become blind from eating those poisonous leaves.

He told Upamanyu: "Offer prayers to the Asvini-kumaras. They'll give you back your eyesight."

Upamanyu offered prayers to them and they came, gave him a cake, and said, "Upamanyu! Take this cake and eat it. You will then get your eyesight back."

"No, I cannot eat it without my guru's permission."

"There is no harm. Previously when your guru offered prayers to us we gave him one such cake and he ate it. Your guru has done it, so you can also do."

"No, no. Please excuse me. I cannot imitate my guru. My guru may do that, but I cannot. I cannot imitate him. Without the permission of my guru I cannot eat."

They saw his *guru-bhakti* and were very pleased with him, so they gave him their blessings, "All of your teeth will become golden, and you will have very nice eyesight. You will develop transcendental vision."

Upamanyu got out of the well and offered *daṇḍavat-praṇāms* to his guru, who told him, "You have passed the test successfully. You have all my blessings."

Obtaining the blessings and mercy of his gurudeva, Upamanyu developed pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. All Vedic *tattva*, *śikṣā*, and *jñāna* — truth, learning, and knowledge — became manifest to him.

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

This is *guru-kṛpā*. If you get the mercy of guru, it is so powerful that even if you are dumb and cannot utter even one word you will become an eloquent speaker of the Vedas. If you are crippled and you cannot move one inch, still you will be able to do mountaineering. You will get such strength. That is *guru-kṛpā*.

You should understand that whatever you see is all the property of guru and Gaurāṅga. You should think, "It is not my property. It is guru and Gaurāṅga's property. They are the enjoyers. I am not the enjoyer. I am a servant. They are to be served. It is their property. Everything is to be utilized for their service. This service is my eternal dharma. My dharma is not enjoyment. Guru and Gaurāṅga are the enjoyers, not I"

However severe and difficult the order of the guru may be, a real disciple, a *sat-śiṣya*, will carry it out. If it is required that his life must be given, he sacrifices his life. He thinks, "What is the value of my life if I cannot serve guru and Gaurāṅga and give them pleasure?" If a disciple becomes deprived of *sevā* then it is death. "Because I am eternally a servant, if I am deprived of service why shall I survive?"

"PLEASE GIVE ME YOUR STOOL"

FROM THE LIFE OF
SRI LA GOUR KISHOR DAS BABAJI MAHARAJ

Girish Babu, the owner of a *dharmashalla* in Nabadwip, once came with his wife to see Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji Maharaj. Girish Babu's wife asked Babaji Maharaja, "Please instruct us how we can construct a small cottage for your *bhajan*. We feel pained to see you suffering throughout the rainy season and the hot season with very little shelter."

Srila Gour Kishor replied, "I have no anxiety residing in my small hut. I have only one trouble. Many persons come to me and very deceptively ask again and again, '*Kṛpā koro! Kṛpā koro! Please give us your mercy!*' They are not interested in their own genuine benefit, and as a result of their coming my *bhajan* is disturbed. If both of you could just give me some of your stool at this place where I perform my *bhajan*, that would be favorable. Then I would be able to chant '*hare kṛṣṇa*' day and night. By depositing your stool, people won't like to come here. If you can't do this then many people will come and waste my time and thus, this human form of life."

Girish Babu's wife replied, "Babaji Maharaja, we should certainly take your instruction to heart, but if we pass stool and offer it to you where you perform your *bhajan*, won't that result in unlimited sinful reactions for us?"

Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji said, "I am not a *vaiṣṇava*. Those owners of large temples who wear long matted hair are actually *vaiṣṇavas*. I have not gotten any result in the performance of my *bhajan*. Therefore, the place where I reside is fit to receive your stool. Both of you please offer me your stool, otherwise I have nothing to say to either of you."

Girish Babu and his wife agreed and said, "Even though you won't stay there, still, if we build a second hut then your servants can stay in one of them." Following this, Girish Babu and his wife constructed another small room with the help of a carpenter. Gour Kishor Das Babaji never entered the room Girish Babu had built, because for him the smell of false prestige and the desire for women and wealth was more obnoxious than the smell of ordinary stool. Srila Gour Kishor Das Babaji resided for six months in the area where persons that lived at the *dharmashalla* passed stool.

— Translated by Vyenkata Das Brahmachari from *Amara Prabhura-kathā*, a collection of articles written by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada.

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MAKING THE WORLD ALIVE

SRI LA BHAKTISIDDHANTA
SARASWATI THAKUR PRABHUPADA

The following is an excerpt from a conversation between Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and Pandit Shyamasundar Chakravarty, a famous leader of the independence movement in India and the then chief editor of the English magazine, *Servant and Vasumati*.

Pandit Shyamasundar Chakravarty: By what means can devotion to Krishna grow?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur: Devotion to the Supreme Lord Krishna is generated when, attentively and with a serving mood, one listens to the accounts of His glories, etc., from guileless devotees who have nothing to do except to incessantly chant these accounts. Vishnu is sustaining the entire universe with the function in which *sattva*, goodness, is the chief element. As He has been making the world *cetana*, alive, to the concerns of Krishna, He is known as Krishna Chaitanya. It was for generating *caitanya*, aliveness, in *jīvas* that were without it, that he adopted *sannyāsa*. As yet we have not got *caitanya* (i.e., we have not been brought to our senses). In the function of *śuddha cetana*, pure consciousness, there is no service done to *anartha*, the unnecessary. There is only service to *artha*, the true necessity, which is God.

LUST DEFEATED

*kāṣāyān na ca bhojanādi-niyamān no vā vane vāsato
vyākhyānād athavā muni-orata-bharāc cittodbhavaḥ kṣīyate
kintu sphīta-kalinda-śaila-tanayā-tīreṣu vikrīḍato
govindasya padāravinda-bhajanārambhasya leśād api*

Not by wearing saffron cloth, not by restricting food and other sense-activities, not by living in the forest, not by discussing philosophy, and not by observing a vow of silence, but only by even the slightest beginning of devotional service to the lotus feet of Lord Govinda, who enjoys pastimes on the Yamuna's wide banks, is Kamadev, lust, stopped.

—Author unknown. Quoted in Srila Rupa Goswami's *Padyāvalī*, Text 11.
Translated by Sripad Kusakratha Das.