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GURU'S ORDER IS KRISHNA'S ORDER

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



I am so pleased to learn that you are constantly trying to follow my instructions. Of course, I have no particular instructions save and except the instruction I have also heard from my spiritual master.

So all instructions in the disciplic succession directly come from the Supreme Person. Therefore to follow the instructions of a spiritual master is to follow the instructions of the Supreme Person. And as soon as we are accustomed to this habit, then all our misgivings of material existence are over. ❀

— Letter to Dayananda Das, 10 May 1968.

CURSE OF THE DOG

Taking the position of being a leader is a serious thing, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (1.77) states:

*rājñi cāmātyajā doṣāḥ patnī-pāpaṁ sva-bhartari
tathā śiṣyārjitam pāpaṁ guruḥ prāpnoti niścitam*

The sins of a counselor fall on his king, and the sins of a wife fall on her husband. In the same way a guru takes the sins of his disciple. That is certain.

Srila Prabhupada has described the thankless and dangerous service of managing in a spiritual institution:

So Vidura was Yamaraja. Not only he was Yamaraja, but he is one of the twelve great

authorities mentioned in the *śāstra*. One of them is Yamaraja. This is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Yamaraja is one of the GBC of Krishna. As we have got twelve GBC's, similarly Krishna has got GBC's.

*svayambhūr nāradaḥ śambhuḥ kumāraḥ kapilo manuḥ
prahlādo janako bhīṣmo balir vaiyāsakir vāyam*

[Bhāg. 6.3.20]

Twelve men are authorized to preach Krishna consciousness. So we have to follow them — *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*. Therefore we have created these GBC. So they should be very responsible men. Otherwise, they will be punished. They will be punished to become *śūdras*. Although Yamaraja is a GBC, he made a little mistake so he was punished to become a *śūdra*. So those who are GBC's, they should be very, very careful to administer the business of ISKCON. Otherwise they will be punished. As the post is very great, similarly the punishment is also very great. [Class on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.13.15 — Geneva, June 4, 1974]

Similarly, in a room conversation in Los Angeles, Srila Prabhupada said:

... if we do not understand the responsibility... Just like in an establishment one man is promoted. His first charge is doorkeeper, then gradually he is given promotion; he may come to the post of the manager. Just like in bank, it so happens. They must go through all the different stages of service. So when he becomes manager if he does not understand the responsibility, then again he falls to the lowest position. Again he

has to strive for the top. So if we forget our responsibility and become like cats and dogs, then we are going to come back again to take the forms of cats and dogs. [Room Conversation — Los Angeles, June 14, 1972]

Although the following story is found in most editions of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Uttara Khanda*, it is considered by many scholars to be interpolated. Nevertheless, we present it here because it nicely illustrates the points Srila Prabhupada has made above:

One early morning, lotus-eyed Rama arrived at the royal council chamber along with Vasishtha and Kasyapa to attend the duties of state administration. That royal assembly consisted of ministers, persons expert in common practices, teachers of law, diplomats, kings, and other respectable persons. The exalted assembly of Sri Rama looked like the assembly of Indra, Yamaraja or Varuna. Rama ordered His brother, “O long-armed Lakshman, go to the palace gate and see if anyone has come with any petitions.”

Lakshman soon returned and said, “O Lord, it appears that there is no one in the Kosala Kingdom who is in need of anything.”

Rama, however, insisted, “Go again and look more carefully. I do not wish to be accused of the slightest neglect. Nor do I want the least bit of *adharmā* to go undetected in My kingdom.”

Going out again, Lakshman then noticed a dog sitting near the palace gate, its head bleeding. While looking at Lakshman, the dog whined mournfully. Thus Lakshman asked, “What is wrong? Why have you come here? Please do not fear, for you may tell me everything.”

The dog replied, “I wish to speak directly to Lord Rama, whose lotus feet award one fearlessness and who is the shelter of the distressed.”

Lakshman then said, “If you have something to say, then you are welcome to come speak to the King Himself.”

*lakṣmaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā sārāmeyo 'bhyabhāṣata
devāgāre nṛpāgāre dvija-veśmasu vai tathā
vahniḥ śata-kṛatūś caiva sūryō vāyus ca tiṣṭhiti
nātra yogyāstu saumitre yonīnām adhamā vāyam*

Hearing Lakshman, the dog replied, “Agni the fire god, Indra the king of heaven, Surya the sun god, and Vayu the wind god, are all present in the temples, the palace of

the king, and the abodes of the *brahmāṇas*. Lowborn creatures like myself are unfit to enter these places. (Texts 60.20-21)

“The king is the embodiment of dharma. He always speaks the truth, is expert at fighting, and is devoted to the welfare of everyone. Sri Rama knows the proper dispensation of justice. He is omniscient and is the foremost of those who delight others. He is the moon god, death personified, as well as the gods of wealth, fire, water and the sun. Sri Rama is Indra, the king of the gods, and He is the protector of His subjects. O Laksman, tell him that without His permission I do not want to enter into the royal palace.”

When Lakshman reported the matter, Rama immediately commanded, “Whoever it may be, usher them in without delay!”

The dog then humbly came before Rama and said, “O Lord, the king is the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus he is the savior of all creatures. While others sleep peacefully, the king remains alert, always working for the welfare of his subjects. However, since everything depends upon him, when the king is negligent his subjects very soon perish. The king is the upholder of religious principles, and thus curbs the forces of evil. Those who follow religious principles experience happiness in this life and the next. Thus the king receives great merit for sustaining dharma. O Rama, You are the model of a religious king. With my head placed at Your lotus feet I seek Your mercy. Do not become angry at what I have to say.”

Rama reassured the dog, saying, “Go on! Speak without fear!”

Thus encouraged, the dog continued, “A mendicant *brāhmaṇa* named Sarvartha-siddha has injured my head, although there was no fault on my part.”

Immediately, Rama had His men summon Sarvartha-siddha. Soon thereafter, when the *brāhmaṇa* came before Him, Rama inquired, “Why did you strike this dog? What was his fault?”

*krodhaḥ prāṇa-haraḥ śatruḥ krodho mitra-mukho ripuḥ
krodho hy asir mahātikṣṇaḥ sarvaṁ krodho 'pakaṣṭi*

“Anger is a deadly enemy, a sweet spoken enemy in the garb of a friend. It is like a sharp sword and it destroys everything. (Text 61.21)

*tapate jagate caiva yaś ca dānaṁ prayacchati
krodhena sarvaṁ harati tasmāt krodhaṁ visarjayet*

“Anger nullifies whatever sacrifices and austerities one has performed as well as whatever charity one has given. (Text 61.22)

*indriyānām pradusṭānām hayānām iva dhāvātām
kurvitā dhṛtyā sārādhyam sahr̥tyendriya-gocaram*

“Therefore one should give up anger, and as a driver controls a chariot one should control the senses, which are running towards their objects like wicked horses. (Text 61.23)

*manasā karmanā vācā cakṣuṣā ca samācaret
śreyo lokasya carato na dveṣṭi na ca lipyate*

“By ones thoughts, words, and deeds one should do good to those nearby. One should not hurt others. Sin will not come to one who behaves like this. (Text 61.24)

*na tat kuryād asis tīkṣṇaḥ sarpo vā vyāhataḥ padā
arir vā nitya-saṅkrudho yathātma dur-anuṣṭitaḥ*

“The harm that can be accomplished by an uncontrolled mind is greater than that which can be done by a sharp sword, a poisonous snake that has been stepped on, or an enemy who has been provoked. (Text 61.25)

*vinīta vinayasy āpi prakṛtirna vidhīyate
prakṛtiḥ gūhamānasya niścayena kṛtir dhruvā*

“In spite of making an external show of proper social behavior one’s nature will be revealed by one’s actions.” (Text 61.26)

The *brāhmaṇa* then replied, “I was wandering about for a long time, begging for alms, when I came upon this dog squatting in the middle of the road, blocking my path. I told him, ‘Make way!’ but he got up so slowly that I struck him over the head with my staff. I was famished and my anger was easily aroused. O king, I admit my guilt. You should punish me as You see fit, just to save me from falling down into a hellish condition of life.”

Rama turned to His ministers and inquired, “What punishment should be inflicted on him? Justice must be done, for nothing instills more confidence in people’s minds than the administration of fair punishment to all wrong-doers.”

Bhṛigu, Angiras, Vasishtha, Kasyapa, and other knowers of religious principles replied, “A *brāhmaṇa* is never to be punished. This is the unanimous opinion of those conversant with *rāja-dharma*. Still, O Rama, You are the ultimate judge, for You are the Lord of the entire universe. You are Lord Vishnu Himself. Thus, whatever is spoken by You is eternal religion.”

The dog then interrupted, saying, “O king, You have asked, ‘What can I do for you?’ If You truly wish to please me then kindly appoint this *brāhmaṇa* as the head of the Kalanjara Monastery.”

Rama fulfilled the dog’s request, and thus the delighted *brāhmaṇa*, Sarvartha-siddha, became honored as a spiritual leader and was placed atop a magnificently decorated elephant. Seeing this, however, the ministers became greatly upset and protested, “O king, this cannot be considered a punishment! Rather than punishing the *brāhmaṇa* You have awarded him an exalted position!”

Rama replied, “You do not understand the intricacies of karma. The dog, however, does.”

Then, prompted by Rama, the dog explained, “In my last life I was the head of the Kalanjara Monastery. I duly worshipped the deities and the *brāhmanas* and I always took *prasādam*. I performed my sacred duties carefully, and properly maintained the servants and maidservants. I was modest and well-behaved and was always engaged in doing good to all living beings. Still, in spite of taking so much care, due to some unknown fault I had to take this lowest birth as a wretched dog. If in spite of having taken so much care I had to take a birth like this, then what to speak of this *brāhmaṇa*! He is hot-tempered, ruthless, and harsh. He cannot control his anger and he is engaged in harming others. He is certainly unfit to be an *ācārya*. For his audacity in accepting such a position he will degrade seven generations of his family.

“Therefore, if you wish to condemn someone to hell, put them in charge of the *brāhmanas*, cows, and deity worship. Anyone who steals from the *brāhmanas*, the demigods, women or children is doomed, as is one who takes back a gift that was freely given. Indeed, even the very thought of stealing from the demigods and *brāhmanas* will send a man to the lowest of hells.”

Saying this, the dog suddenly departed while Rama and the others sat wonder-struck with wide-open eyes. Although previously born in a very high family, that living being had somehow been forced to accept the body of a dog. After leaving the royal court at Ayodhya, the dog gave up his life by

abstaining from food and water with the hope of attaining a better birth.

Now, one could argue that since the Lord personally gave the exalted position to the *brāhmaṇa* Sarvartha-siddha, how could there be any danger in his accepting it? Certainly there is no inherent fault in accepting the post of a leader. From the example of Maharaja Priyavrata in the fifth canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* we can understand that if one accepts a position for the pleasure of Guru and Krishna he is protected from material entanglement. Srila Prabhupada has described:

When Priyavrata's father, Swayambhuva Manu, requested him to accept the responsibility of ruling over the world, he did not welcome the suggestion. This is the symptom of a great, liberated devotee. Even though engaged in worldly affairs, he does not take pleasure in them, but remains always absorbed in the Lord's service. While thus serving the Lord, he deals externally with worldly affairs without being affected. ... By serving the lotus feet of his spiritual master, prince Priyavrata very soon attained the perfectional stage of Krishna consciousness. This is the only way to advance in spiritual life. [Purport to *Bhāg.* 5.1.6.]

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King Priyavrata had to be persuaded by Lord Brahma to accept the post of emperor of the entire universe. Similarly, his father, Swayambhuva Manu, felt relieved to entrust the universal government to Priyavrata. Thus it is evident that the kings and executive heads of government in the Vedic age never accepted their positions for sense enjoyment. Such exalted kings, who were known as *rājarsis*, ruled only to maintain and protect the kingdom for the welfare of the citizens. The history of Priyavrata and Swayambhuva Manu describes how exemplary, responsible monarchs performed the duties of government with disinterest, keeping themselves always aloof from the contamination of material attachment. [Purport to *Bhāg.* 5.1.22]

However, unlike Maharaja Priyavrata, Sarvartha-siddha accepted the position of head of the Kalanjara Monastery not for the service of the Lord but for his own self-aggrandizement. The dog understood this, and thus knew that he would be suitably punished in due course of time. ❀

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YASODA'S BREAST

*nandaḥ kim akarod brahman śreya evaṁ mahodayam
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā papau yasyaḥ stanam hariḥ*

[Having heard of the great fortune of mother Yasoda, Parikshit Maharaja inquired from Sukadev Goswami:] O learned *brāhmaṇa*, mother Yasoda's breast milk was sucked by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What past auspicious activities did she and Nanda Maharaja perform to achieve such perfection in ecstatic love?

—*Bhāg.* 10.8.46. BBT translation.

*kara-yugalena grhītaṁ nidhāya vadanāmbuje dhaman
kambum vraja-rājñī-stana-pāna-smaraṇa-stimito harir jayati*

[Describing Krishna's preparation to fight with Jarashandha and the other kings at the time He kidnapped Rukmini:] All glories to Lord Krishna who, grasping the conchshell with both hands, placing it to His lotus mouth, and blowing it, remembers how He once drank the breast-milk of mother Yasoda and becomes stunned and motionless! ❀

— Srila Rupa Goswami's *Lalita Mādhava* act 5 text 69. Translated by Sri Kusakratha Das.