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OUR MOST IMPORTANT WEAPONS

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I am so glad to know that you and the others at ISKCON Press are doing such wonderful service with these books and magazines. These books and magazines are our most important propaganda weapons to defeat the ignorance of Maya's army. The more we produce such literature and sell them profusely all over the world, the more we shall deliver the world from the suicide course. So your work is the most important preaching work. May Krishna bless you more and more. Thank you for helping me in this way. ❀

— Letter to Jayadvaita, 18 November 1972.

PURE DEVOTEES AND MATERIALISTIC SOCIETY

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

Do swanlike persons engage only in spiritual activities and neglect material activities? No. Swanlike persons worship Krishna in the mood of one who is enjoyed, and they boldly take care of the external body. Eating, sleeping, enjoying, traveling, exercising, protecting society, protecting the body, riding in vehicles, engaging in industrial enterprises, and walking in the open air are seen in the lives of swanlike persons.

(Śrī Krishna-saṁhitā, chapter 10/12)

The swanlike *vaiṣṇavas* valiantly remain and work among men. They are the shelter of women, and are respected by them. They take part in social activities and gain much experience. They teach their children *artha-sāstra*, and thus become known as headmasters.

(Śrī Krishna-saṁhitā, chapter 10/13)

— Sundarananda Vidyavinode. *Bhaktivinode-vāṇī-vaibhava*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Touchstone Media. Vrindavan. 2002.

THE TEMPLE INSIDE THE BOOKS AND DEVOTEES

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada called his printing press *Bṛhat Mṛdāṅga* (the big clay drum). During *saṅkīrtan*, the sound of the ordinary clay drum (*mṛdāṅga*) can be heard only in the immediate vicinity. But the divine message of Sriman Mahaprabhu can be spread all over the world through the publication of books.

At the opening ceremony of the Bagbazar Gaudiya Math, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta said, "... to establish internal *hari-bhajan* in this world, quite a few books have to be written and published. The temple which is within the books and the temple which is within the devotees are more important than the temple built with bricks and stones, because by constructing such temples, *hari-kathā* can be preached in this world much longer."

Srila Saraswati Prabhupada had among his disciples a very talented team of writers and editors

who dedicated their lives to his publication mission. Among them were: Sripad Sundarananda Vidyavinode, Sripad Paramananda Vidyaratna, Sripad Bhaktisudhakar Prabhu (Professor Nishikant Sanyal), Srimad Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaja, Srimad Bhakti Pradip Tirtha Maharaja, and Sripad Pranavananda Pratnaviyalankar (later Srimad Bhakti Pramod Puri Maharaja).

After the disappearance of Srila Saraswati Prabhupada, another name would be added to this list, that of Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, who published beautifully designed English translations of *Bhagavad-gītā* (as *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*), *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta sindhu* (as *Nectar of Devotion*), and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. These books would capture the hearts of thousands of people all over the world. ❀

— Page 36 from *Prabhupada Saraswati Thakur*. Mandala Publishing, Eugene, Oregon. 1997.

BOOK DISTRIBUTION IS NOT MUNDANE BUSINESS

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Devotee: It is often said that one should not make a business out of the *Bhāgavatam*. If materialistic persons heard that, they could easily look at us and say this whole ISKCON society is based on selling *Bhāgavatam*. It seems we are contradictory to our own preaching.

Gour Govinda Swami: Devotees sell the *Bhāgavatam* book and thereby they give opportunity to people to serve Krishna or serve a pure devotee, *vaiṣṇava*. They take money from people in exchange for the *Bhāgavatam* and they utilize that money in the service of guru, *vaiṣṇava* and Krishna, and not for their sense gratification. Such devotees are not *vyavasāyīs*, businessmen. But *Bhāgavatam-vyavasāyīs*, so-called pandits who speak on the *Bhāgavatam* for money, and who upon obtaining that money use it for sense gratification — they are doing sinful activity. Devotees never do that. Their selling the *Bhāgavatam* is not a profession, a business. They are distributing mercy. My Guru Maharaja Srila Prabhupada said, “If someone simply gives money and takes *Bhāgavatam*, even if he never reads it, if he just keeps it in his house, then he gets benefit, because *Bhāgavatam* is non-different from Krishna — *kṛṣṇa tulya bhāgavatam*.” Krishna and His *vāṇī* are non-different. So if he keeps Krishna in his house, then the day will come

when his son, or his son’s son, will read it and get benefit. This is not business. We are not doing business. We are distributing mercy. They cannot understand, so they say like that.

Devotee: What about the situation where one is a *gṛhastha*? If he goes out and sells *Bhāgavatam* or Krishna consciousness literatures to support his family, is that the same? Is that cheating?

Gour Govinda Swami: You should understand. A devotee, a *vaiṣṇava*, if he is a family man, his family is not an ordinary family. All of the members of his family are *vaiṣṇavas*. All of the relationships among them — husband and wife, father and son, friend and friend, master and servant — must be based on a relationship with Krishna. This is a *vaiṣṇava* family, *sādhu-saṁsāra*. Thereby he shows the public how to have a Krishna conscious household life and not a materialistic or illusory family life. *Kṛṣṇera-saṁsāra*, and not *māyāra-saṁsāra*. So that *gṛhastha-vaiṣṇava*, householder devotee, must do some business for the service of Krishna or the maintenance of the devotees of Krishna. It is not for his sense gratification. This is a *gṛhī-vaiṣṇava*. He is not an ordinary householder. He is *vaiṣṇava*.

Devotee: As long as he is following the principles.

Gour Govinda Swami: Yes. He never does anything for his own sense gratification. He does everything for the gratification of the senses of Krishna. He is a *vaiṣṇava*, but general people cannot understand it. In order to teach them, a *vaiṣṇava* becomes a *gṛhastha*. By doing so, he shows how to maintain a family in Krishna consciousness. He shows how to make all the members of the family *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, how to serve Krishna. In other words, how to have Krishna conscious family life, *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*. “You have been doing *māyā-saṁsāra*, but now do *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*.” Therefore, a *sādhu* becomes a *gṛhastha* to teach this thing. ❀

— Lecture, Bhubaneswar, 23 September 1989.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHASTITY

Adapted from Padma Purāṇa

Uttara-khaṇḍa 206.5-63

In his purport to Bhagavad-gītā 1.40, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has written:

Good population in human society is the basic principle for peace, prosperity and spiritual progress in life. The varṇāśrama religion’s principles were so designed

that the good population would prevail in society for the general spiritual progress of state and community. Such population depends on the chastity and faithfulness of its womanhood. As children are very prone to be misled, women are similarly very prone to degradation. Therefore, both children and women require protection by the elder members of the family.

The following story narrated by Narada Muni to King Sibi from the Padma Purāṇa nicely illustrates this point:

In Kampilya there was a certain *brāhmaṇa* who looked as though he were Cupid personified. By his beauty and behavior, he attracted the hearts of all women. Skilled in the science of music, his voice was sweet like that of a cuckoo. That intelligent *brāhmaṇa* moved about the city, playing a lute and singing. Hearing his sweet singing, the wives of the citizens abandoned their domestic work and went to him. Fascinated by his handsome form, they could not bear the force of lust. Hearing his song, they became disturbed. What self-controlled and wise person is able to conquer Cupid, who created a longing for Saraswati in the mind of Brahma, and caused half of Shiva's body to be given to Parvati? Moreover, women are fickle by nature. Even the chaste ones are unable to tolerate the excitement caused by Cupid. Cupid is very difficult to conquer in this world.

Wherever that handsome *brāhmaṇa* went, singing and playing the lute, those ladies followed. Their husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers came there, and threatening them, took them back to their homes. When the ladies again approached that *brāhmaṇa*, the citizens reported everything to their king. The king called that *brāhmaṇa* and asked him in private, "O best *brāhmaṇa*, tell me by what charm you have fascinated the women in the city. Answer and I shall give you much wealth. Otherwise I shall drive you out of my kingdom."

Hearing these words of the king, that best *brāhmaṇa*, the ocean of handsomeness and virtues, spoke to him true words. "O king, I, a beggar, have neither a charm nor an herb. All of the women in your city have no control over their senses. It is they who upon seeing my handsome form and hearing my songs cannot tolerate the force of lust. O great king, what can I do? What is my fault?"

At that time all of the assembled citizens approached the king and said, "O king, this

brāhmaṇa has fascinated our wives. They no longer remain in their houses. They cannot be stopped by us. O lord, if this one who infatuates all women continues to live in this city, then today we shall all depart to other countries. O lord of men, we, abandoned by fortune, have no other shelter than you. Our wives follow him as female elephants follow their lord. How can the goddess of fortune remain in a vacant house? Piety, wealth and home all depend upon the piety of the wife. If she is gone, all three are lost."

The wives of the citizens then came before the king, sat, and began to speak to one another. "Upon seeing the charming form of this *brāhmaṇa*, our minds open like lotus flowers do upon seeing the lord of the day, the sun, and they close in his absence just as the white lotuses close without the moon. Come, together we shall seize and take this *brāhmaṇa* before the king. He is not fit to be killed, nor are we. What will the king do?" Saying so, they hurriedly seized that best of the *brāhmaṇas*, in front of the king, while their own husbands were watching. They said to that *brāhmaṇa*, "O lord of our minds, come to our house, and quickly pacify the agony tormenting our hearts. We cannot live without you."

The *brāhmaṇa* replied, "I am your son and you are my mothers. Leaving your homes, why are you wandering about? Serve your husbands. When their husbands are properly served, wives enjoy both the material and spiritual worlds, and Vishnu, the lord of the gods, is pleased. When the husband is pleased, what is difficult to obtain? A woman who forsakes her husband and resorts to another man with a desire for enjoyment, invites censure and goes to a fearful hell. She, the deceiver of her husband, lives there until the end of the *kalpa*. After that, she attains the state of an inanimate object. Then she takes birth as a beast for many lives. Following that, she is born as a cripple. Understanding the sinful reactions for this behavior, turn away from Cupid. Otherwise, at the end of your lives you will go to a very fearful hell. You will not obtain the pleasure that you desire from me."

Hearing his words and seeing the faces of their husbands, those ladies hung their heads with shame like creepers struck by a stormy wind. The terrible fire of lust of the women of the city was extinguished by the cold water of the words of that *brāhmaṇa*. Condemning Cupid as one who bewilders even gods like Brahma and Indra, they all got up and walked away.

The women said, “Fie upon committing sinful acts, an axe to the wood of good character! What should we say to the worshipable Rukmini, who carried this Rahu Cupid named Pradyumna in her womb, who eats the moon of the good character of women? If that cruel god comes within the range of our sight again, we shall throw him into the fire of the third eye of lord Shiva. That cruel one made Vishnu the lover of sixteen thousand women. What then can be said about us?”

Having thus censured Cupid, the women praised that best *brāhmaṇa* who preserved his own character and theirs also. “Blessed is the mother who gave birth to this excellent *brāhmaṇa*, who vanquished Cupid and preserved the virtue of others! Fie upon us who were laughed at by the king’s men, who were vanquished by Cupid, and by whom great sins were committed through speech and mind!” Thinking thus, the ladies returned to their respective homes. The king of Kampilya then honored that *brāhmaṇa* with garments and ornaments.

Shortly after that, the powerful king of Karusha attacked Kampilya with his armies. A great war took place in which the king of Kampilya was killed. The king of Karusha plundered the entire city and the citizens were killed everywhere. The women of that city drank *kālakūṭa* poison and died. Those ladies had not yet atoned for their sins of lusting after the *brāhmaṇa*. As a result,

they were all born as demonesses with huge bodies causing fear to all in the city of the demon Bhishan. All the women in that city were killed by Hanuman, occupying the banner of the chariot of Vishnu. Again they were born as demonesses on the path to Maru. They were oppressed by hunger and thirst, and caused fear at their sight. Thus due to their sins committed by speech and mind, they had to undergo two births as demonesses. Due to their sin the two cities [Kampilya and the city of the demon Bhishan] along with their kings were destroyed.

Therefore, women, fearing sin, should never resort to another lover even through speech or mind. Women desiring salvation should not desert their husband even if he is diseased, dull, poor or blind. This story thus describes the great sin produced by devotion to another man by means of speech or mind and the fruit of this sin obtained by these women. Finally, after receiving drops of sacred water from Dwarka on their heads, these women were freed from the bodies of *rākṣasīs*, corpse-eaters, and obtained the forms of heavenly damsels.

Yet our ācāryas have described that not all unchaste women are to be condemned. Srila Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur writes in his purport to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.47.59:

There are three types of adulterous women. The first is a woman who enjoys both her husband and a lover, being faithful to neither. Both ordinary society and the scriptures condemn this conduct. The second type of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband to enjoy only with her lover. Society and the scriptures also condemn this behavior, although such a fallen woman may be said to at least have the good quality of dedicating herself to a single man. The last kind of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband and enjoys in the attitude of being a lover of the Supreme Lord alone. Srila Viswanath Chakravarti explains that although the foolish, common people criticize this position, such behavior is commended by those who are wise in spiritual science. Therefore, learned members of society and the revealed scriptures praise such single-minded devotion to the Lord. Such was the gopīs’ behavior. Thus the term vyabhicāraduṣṭāḥ, “corrupted by deviation,” indicates the apparent resemblance between the gopīs’ behavior and that of ordinary adulterous women. ❀

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