



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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THE JUNCTION OF AUSPICIOUS AND INAUSPICIOUS

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

One night, after the Putana demon had been killed, baby Krishna could be seen playing upon her breast. Upon seeing this, Yashoda became stunned for some time. This is an example of a conjunction of various symptoms of ecstatic love. The conjunction can be auspicious or inauspicious. That the Putana demon had been killed was auspicious, but that Krishna was playing on her breast in the dead of night, with no one to help him in case of trouble, was inauspicious. Yashoda was caught between auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. 🙏

— From chapter 31 of *Nectar of Devotion*.

PUTANA PART 2

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

An article published in the *Harmonist*, January 1932

Sri Krishna manifests his eternal birth in the pure consciousness of the serving soul who is located

above all mundane limitations. When Krishna is born, he is able to upset all sinister designs against those who are apprised by himself of his advent. The apparently causeless faith displayed by persons irrespective of age, sex, and condition may confound all rabid empiricists who are in principle averse to the absolute truth, whose appearance is utterly incompatible with the domination of empiricism.

But no adverse efforts of the empiricists, whose rule seems till then to be perfectly well-established over the minds of the deluded souls of this world, can dissuade any person from exclusively following the truth when he [the truth] actually manifests his birth in the pure consciousness of the soul.

Putana is the slayer of all infants. The baby, when he or she comes out of the mother's womb, falls at once into the hands of the pseudo-teachers of religion. These teachers are successful in forestalling the attempts of the good preceptor, whose help is never sought by the atheists of this world at the baptisms of their babies. This is ensured by the arrangements of all established churches of the world. They have been successful only in supplying watchful Putanas for effecting the spiritual destruction of persons from the moment of their birth with the cooperation of their worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Putanas from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is due to the general prevalence of atheistic disposition in the people of this world. 🙏

(Continued in the next issue)

Unknown artist. 1884. Cleveland Museum of Art



Burning the body of Putana

MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL AUTHORITIES

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Here we pose a commonly asked question about institutions and spiritual life, with an answer from the teachings of Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja.

Should we accept someone as an authority if they have material attachments and are not situated on the spiritual platform?

We accept because we are in a society. Someone may be GBC of some region of the world, so according to the management system he is authority. But by the spiritual system, unless I am convinced I cannot accept him as authority. That is up to me. I have independence. It is my choice. As far as the management system goes, I accept him because he is GBC. But as far as spiritual things go, unless I am convinced I cannot accept. "Please excuse me." Acceptance of someone as a spiritual authority should not be forced or compulsory. That is a principle. For me to accept someone as a spiritual authority my heart must be convinced, because it is based on the desire of the heart. It is not an external thing. It is internal. Acting in that way is not offensive. I am not disregarding him. He is a *vaiṣṇava*,

so I offer him obeisances. We pay obeisances to all *vaiṣṇavas*, regardless if they are *kaniṣṭha*, *madhyama*, or whatever. That is etiquette. But accepting someone as spiritual master, that is something else. ❀

— From an Evening Darshan, Bhubaneswar, 1990.

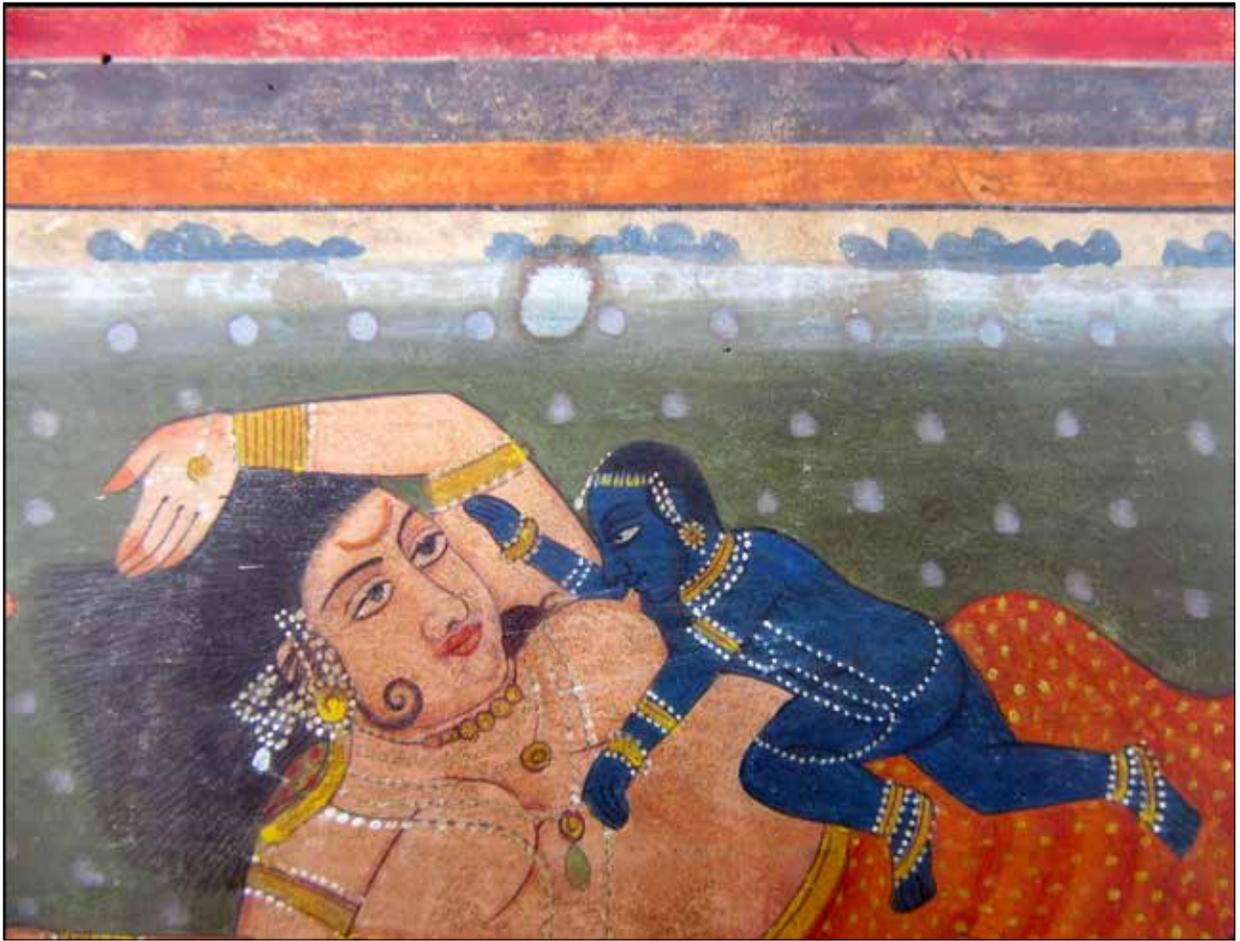
PUTANA, FALSE GURUS, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE HOLY NAME PART 2

Reflections on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's "Putana"

Qualification of Guru

Kamsa, as described by Srila Saraswati Thakur, is representative of the materialistic leaders of religious institutions. In order to suppress genuine spiritual life, Kamsa advocates a superficial simulation of religion. His instrument in accomplishing this purpose is his lackey in the form of Putana, who represents the false guru. Kamsa's standard of qualification for a guru is mere membership in his church or sect. In his "Putana" article, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta dismisses this attitude:

The Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in pursuance of the teachings of the scriptures, mandates all absence of conventionalism for the teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow from this, however, that the mechanical adoption of the



Unknown artist

Krishna Kills Putana

unconventional life by any person will make him a fit teacher of religion. Regulation is necessary for controlling the inherent worldliness of conditioned souls. But no mechanical regulation has any value, even for such a purpose. The bona-fide teacher of religion is neither any product of nor the favorer of any mechanical system.

Source of the False Guru

In several places, Thakur Bhaktivinode writes about *dharmadvajīs*, cheating religionists — literally, “those who wave the flag of *dharmā*”. He says that there are two types of *dharmadvajīs*, the false leaders and their foolish followers. He describes them as “the hypocrites and the fools or the cheaters and the cheated”. The existence of the hypocritical leaders is dependent upon the followers. If there were no foolish followers, how could there be false gurus?

In *Bhaktiyāloka*, a series of articles he wrote commenting on the second and third verses of *Upadeśāmṛta*, Bhaktivinode says:

With special care, one should give up the association of the *dharmadvajīs*, the hypocritically devout. Those who

accept the external signs of *dharmā* but do not actually follow *dharmā* are called *dharmadvajīs*. There are two types of *dharmadvajīs* — the hypocrites and the fools, or the cheaters and the cheated. When such hypocrisy is found in those following *jñāna-kaṇḍa*, the path of knowledge, and *karma-kaṇḍa*, the path of fruitive activities, it is also condemned, but in devotional service, hypocrisy ruins everything. It is better to associate with sense enjoyers, for in this whole world there is no worse association than the *dharmadvajī*. The deceitful *dharmadvajīs* accept the signs of *dharmā* with a desire to cheat the world, and to fulfill their crooked desires they cheat the foolish by helping them in their rascaldom. Some of them become gurus and others become disciples, and by trickery they accumulate wealth, women, false prestige, and material assets. If one gives up the association of crooked hypocrites then he can honestly engage in devotional service. Honest worship is the only way to attain Krishna’s mercy.

While cheating gurus are all too common, it is very rare to find a bona fide guru. As described in the *Purāṇas*: [Note: Srila Bhaktisiddhanta and Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada often quoted this verse. It is included in *Gauḍīya Kaṇṭahāra*, a compilation of verses often cited by Srila

Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. The only reference given therein is *purāṇa-vākya*, “a statement of the *Purāṇas*”.]

*guravo bahavaḥ santi śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ
durlabhaḥ sad-gurur devī śiṣya-santāpa-hārakāḥ*

O Devi, there are many gurus who are expert in plundering the wealth of their disciples, but a bona fide guru who can remove the miseries of his disciple is very difficult to find.

Knowing everyone’s inner thoughts and desires, Krishna sends an appropriate guru. The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.3) states:

*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṃ svām*

The Supreme Lord is not obtained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, or even by much hearing. He is obtained only by one whom he himself chooses. To such a person, he manifests his own form.

Krishna says in the *Gītā* (4.11):

*ye yathā māṃ prapadyante tāṃs tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ*

As all surrender unto me, I reciprocate with them accordingly. Everyone follows my path in all respects, O son of Pritha.

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For those who are genuine in their desire to advance, Krishna sends bona fide gurus. And for those who have mixed motivations or who are not genuinely sincere about advancing in spiritual life — who to one extent or another only want to make a show of religion or who depend on their own empiric senses to find a spiritual master — Krishna sends relative degrees of false gurus. This is the root cause of Putana’s appearance. One should therefore pray feelingly for Krishna to send and reveal who is really guru. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur has written:

At the dawn of our spiritual life we sincerely and with complete submission and self-surrender pray to God for receiving the protection of Sri Guru. The Supreme Lord, perceiving our earnestness and devotion with a view to guide us on the true path, will send a real guru to us. Otherwise it is impossible for us to find Sri Guru by our own fallible energy. If we guide ourselves by our own energy we shall come across the pseudo-gurus, and being caught hold of by them by their temporary pleasing manners, run down to hell. (*Sajjana-Toshani*. Oct. 1929, vol. XVI, no. 5.)

Sri Krishna himself helps us in finding the really good preceptor in two ways. In the first place he instructs us regarding the character and functions of a great preceptor through the revealed *śāstras*. In the second place he himself sends to us the good preceptor at the right moment when we are at all likely to benefit by his instructions. (From article entitled, “Initiation into Spiritual Life”. *Sajjana-Toshani*, Dec. 1928, vol. XVI, no. 1.)

The Degeneration of Religion

The *Bhāgavatam* (6.3.19) states, *dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam* — real religion is brought to this world only by the Lord or his intimate devotee. Throughout history, Krishna, his expansions and his empowered devotees in the form of various *ācāryas*, prophets, and teachers, have come to establish spirit in this world of matter. Srila Saraswati Thakur writes:

Out of pity for the apostate *jīvas*, God sends his own messenger into this world in every age for establishing the pure (*śudha*) and eternal (*sanātana*) religion in the form of constant service of Krishna. Either Krishna or Krishna’s own messenger establishes the true and eternal religion in this world. This task is beyond the capacity of those who are not helped by the grace of God himself. (From the article “Thakur Bhaktivinode” published in *Sajjana-Toshani* magazine. September 1927, volume XV, no. 4.)

(Continued in the next issue)