



तवकथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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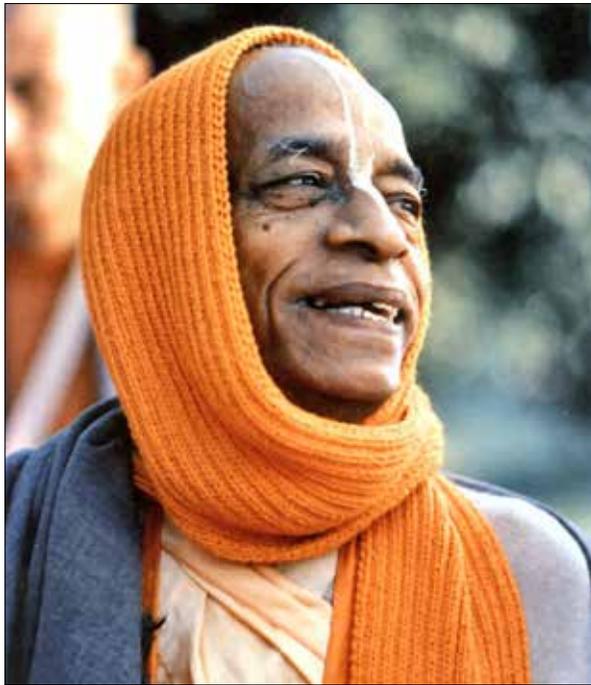
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WORSHIP SHIVA AS A VAISHNAVA

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Devotee: Srila Prabhupada, in Winnipeg there is one very pious East Indian man who for many years has been worshipping Lord Shiva. His wife is also a chaste woman and a sincere follower, and her parents were worshipers of Lord Shiva. This man is reading your *Bhagavad-gītā*. He visits our temple. I have given him the first volume of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* canto four, which discusses Lord Shiva a great deal. He has read in one of your purports that Krishna is more pleased when you worship his devotee than when you worship him directly. And Lord

Shiva is a very great devotee of Krishna. So this man has now interpreted that to mean that if he worships Lord Shiva nicely then actually he is pleasing Krishna. He is experiencing some difficulty because of this and I'm not quite sure how to instruct him.

Prabhupada: But if he accepts that Lord Shiva is a devotee of Krishna, then by worshipping Lord Shiva he will be benefited. If he thinks that Lord Shiva is independent, then he will not be benefited.

Devotee: I've got him to accept that Lord Shiva is a devotee of Krishna, but there's no practical instruction in his worldly activities coming.

Prabhupada: No, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*: "Amongst the *vaiṣṇavas*, Sambhu, Lord Shiva, is the greatest *vaiṣṇava*." So we worship Lord Shiva as a *vaiṣṇava*. We give respect to *vaiṣṇavas*. So why not Lord Shiva? Lord Shiva is a big *vaiṣṇava*. Generally, the devotees of Lord Shiva consider Lord Shiva is independently God. That is offensive. If you know that Lord Shiva is also a devotee then you can give more respect to Lord Shiva. Krishna will be pleased.

Devotee: But Srila Prabhupada, he does not chant Hare Krishna. He chants *om śivāya namaḥ*.

Prabhupada: That's all right.

Devotee: It's all right?

Prabhupada: He will gradually become a devotee. When God, Lord Shiva, will be pleased upon him he will advise to worship Krishna.

Devotee: He is already trying to follow in your footsteps. Just before I left he said that he will try once again to chant sixteen rounds of Hare Krishna *japa*. He has tried already. He has a taste for...

Prabhupada: If he simply understands that Lord Shiva is a *vaiṣṇava*, and if he worships Lord Shiva, then he will get the benefit. 🙏

— Room Conversation, Chicago. 9 July 1975.

GURU IS NOT CHILD'S PLAY

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

One who plays the role of guru should be guru in the true sense, not a pretender or a cheater. He must be a real teacher. He should be conscious of his capacity: “If I can only carry one ton, why should I accept a load of two tons?” If you take more than you can carry then you’ll be crushed, degraded. That is the result of greed. Why develop such greed? One should be conscious of his capacity. “I have no capacity. I cannot deliver a soul. I am not liberated myself. So why shall I accept disciples?” That is only cheating and hypocrisy, nothing else. I am not completely free from *anarthas*, so how can I make him free? Guru means heavy. It also means heavy responsibility. It is not an easy affair to deliver even one soul from the clutches of *māyā*, the fort of Durga. To do so, the guru has to spend gallons and gallons of spiritual blood. This is not child’s play. 🙏

— *The Process of Inquiry*, p. 89. Gopal Jiu Publications. Discussion, San Diego, 23 June 1992.

PUTANA, FALSE GURUS, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE HOLY NAME PART 6

Reflections on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta’s “Putana”

In the previous instalment of this article we spoke about how Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada and his disciple Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada had two “secret” weapons that they knew would protect the purity of their institution. Those “secret” weapons were the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and the chanting of the holy names of Krishna.

Secret?

How it is that chanting *hare kṛṣṇa* and reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* are “secret” weapons in societies that advocate mass distribution of the holy name and where all the members daily chant and read the *Bhāgavatam* as well as distribute it profusely to others? They are secret in the sense that the *bahir-mukha janas*, those external persons who are unwittingly Putana’s great supporters, don’t take them seriously. Lacking faith in these activities, such false pretenders only make a show of chanting and reading the *Bhāgavatam*. If they do not chant the required number of rounds and attend

(or give) lectures on *Bhāgavatam* then they will not be allowed to remain in the society and thus they will lose the source of their income, prestige and position. Such persons think that they are cheating others, but actually Krishna is cheating them. Putana thought that by killing the children in Vraja she was promoting her own cause. However, Srila Jiva Goswami comments in *Laghu-toṣaṇī* that Krishna tricked Putana and arranged for her to only kill the children of those who were averse to Krishna and were on the side of Kamsa.

She thought that she was fooling Krishna, but ultimately she was fooled and used by Krishna for his own purposes. In the same way, Srīman Mahāprabhu uses the little Putanas, the pretender devotees, to help push on his movement. Moreover, just as Putana was ultimately purified and delivered by Krishna, similarly, the little Putanas of today who have infiltrated the temples, institutions, and *saṅgas* in Mahāprabhu’s society are also ultimately purified and delivered, provided they maintain their contact with the holy name. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur was aware of the presence of such duplicity in his institution, but as the following story illustrates, he understood that in the end such persons would become benefited:

Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the editor of Ananda Bazar Patrika, once told Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, “I see many hypocrites in your mission. They are not sincere. What they say and what they do are not the same. Why not put them out? Let them go home and get married, or whatever. Why keep them in your *maṭha*?” Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati replied, “O editor, you will save me! Is there any better place to uplift them than here? Whether they be good or bad, if their fortune allows they will become good. If not, what can I do?” To another person who questioned him similarly, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati revealed, “They have been with me for several years now, and for better or worse I have developed affection for them. After such a long time I cannot simply turn them out.” (Remembrances of Jatishekhara Das, disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, from *Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Vaibhava* by Bhaktivikas Swami.)

Similarly, from many statements and historical episodes it is clear that Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was also aware that hypocrisy and various other improprieties were going on in his society. But, like Srila Saraswati Thakur, he had faith that by following the process of Krishna consciousness such persons would ultimately be purified.



Unknown artist. Rajasthan. c. 1725

Krishna kills Putana

The Enemy is Us

One may ask, “How is it possible for demoniac and deceitful persons posing as sincere spiritual aspirants to enter into a genuine spiritual movement?” To properly answer this question, we should consider the much more perplexing question of how it was possible for the terrible demoness Putana to enter Vraja, deceive Krishna’s eternal associates such as Yashoda and Rohini, and thus gain entrance into the bedroom where baby Krishna was resting? If even Yashoda and Rohini could be tricked into thinking that the false guru Putana was a genuine devotee, then what hope is there for the insignificant living entities in this material world to recognize her? Therefore, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta says that only Krishna can recognize and stop the false guru Putanas:

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.

... as soon as theistic disposition proper makes its appearance in the pure consciousness of the awakened soul, the Putanas are decisively silenced at the very earliest stage of their encounter with new-born Krishna. (“Putana” article)

Saraswati Thakur says it is a mistake to think that conditioned souls who perceive the world through the same dull material senses that bind them to it can have any success in driving out the Putanas from the world’s religious institutions. Rather, he says that those who strive with material means to expose and drive out Putana become her unwitting supporters:

They are, therefore, greatly mistaken who are disposed to look forward to the amelioration of the worldly state in any worldly sense due to the worldly success of any truly spiritual movement. It is such worldly expectants [i.e., persons who are hopeful or expectant] who become the patrons of the mischievous race of the pseudo-teachers of religion, the Putanas, whose congenial function is to stifle the theistic disposition at the very moment of its suspected appearance. (Ibid.)

They become Putana’s supporters because in trying to drive Putana out they take shelter of the very process that she advocates — empiricism. Krishna is the only person who can expose and drive out Putana, the first *anartha* in spiritual life. But rather than taking shelter of Krishna, these inadvertent supporters of this demoness take shelter of their self-conceived strengths in the form of imagined intelligence,

scriptural knowledge, and superficial religious practices. However, none of these — not even apparent spirituality, is sufficient to recognize or defeat Putana. Rather, they only support her cause as the false guru by distracting people from taking one-pointed shelter of Krishna. The real enemy of spiritual life is not an external force. The enemy is one's tendency to take shelter elsewhere than Krishna, to try to defeat Putana on one's own, separate from Krishna. As it is said, "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

The Corruption of Reform

The injurious consequences of the conditioned soul's endeavor to expose and police evil are understood in Vedic as well as secular circles. The British philosopher and author Aldous Huxley wrote:

The effects that follow the constant and intense concentration upon evil are always disastrous. Those who crusade not for God in themselves but against the demons in others never succeed in making the world better, but leave it either as it was, or sometimes even perceptibly worse than it was before the crusade began. By thinking primarily of evil we tend, however excellent our intentions, to create occasions for evil to manifest itself. (The Devils of Loudon. P. 192)

No man can concentrate his attention upon evil, or even the idea of evil, and remain unaffected. To be more against the demon than for godliness is exceedingly dangerous. Every crusader is apt to go mad. He is haunted by the



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wickedness that he attributes to his enemies; it becomes sort of a part of him. (The Devils of Loudon. Page 260.)

Krishna similarly tells Uddhava:

*para-svabhāva-karmāṇi yaḥ praśaṁsati nindati
sa āśu bhraśyate svārthād asaty abhiniveśataḥ*

Whoever indulges in praising or criticizing the qualities and behavior of others will quickly become deviated from his own best interest by his entanglement in illusory dualities. (Bhāg. 11.28.2.)

Narottam Das Thakur therefore says that pure *bhajana* means not concerning oneself with the non-devotees and false pretenders:

*karmī jñānī michā-bhakta nā habe tāya anurakta
śuddha-bhajanete kara mana*

Don't be attached to the fruitive worker, the philosopher, and the hypocritical devotee, but fix your mind in pure *bhajana*. (Prema-bhakti-candrikā 6.18.)

Protected

Ultimately, the false guru is oneself, for in spiritual life no one else can cheat us. If one is sincere, then Krishna will manifest in the form of good intelligence and provide protection from the false gurus of this world. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati writes in "Putana":

Sri Krishna manifests his eternal birth in the pure consciousness of the serving soul who is located above all mundane limitations.

... as soon as theistic disposition proper makes its appearance in the pure consciousness of the awakened soul, the Putanas are decisively silenced at the very earliest stage of their encounter with new-born Krishna.

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 [Krishna] actually manifests his birth in the pure consciousness of the soul.

The theistic disposition can never be stifled by the efforts of those Putanas. The Putanas have power only over the atheists. They perform a thankless but salutary task for the benefit of their unwilling victims.

As Krishna says in the *Gītā* (6.40):

*pārtha naiveha nāmutra vināśas tasya vidyate
na hi kalyāṇa-kṛt kaścid durgatim tāta gacchati*

O Arjuna, a transcendentalist engaged in auspicious activities does not meet with destruction either in this world or in the spiritual world; one who does good, my friend, is never overcome by evil. 🙏

(Article is concluded here)