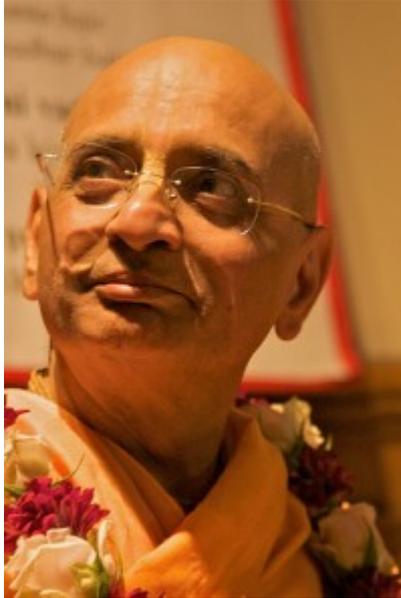


Bad Association Spoils Everything

THE FOLLOWING LECTURE ON SRIMAD-BHAGAVATAM, CANTO 3, CHAPTER 1, QUESTIONS BY VIDURA, TEXT 15, WAS GIVEN BY HIS HOLINESS BHAKTI CHARU SWAMI ON 26 MARCH 2008 IN ISKCON UJJAIN, INDIA.



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ka enam atopajuhava jihmam
dasyah sutam yad-balinaiva pushtah
tasmin pratipah parakritya aste
nirvasyatam asu purac chvasanah

SYNONYMS

kah — who; enam — this; atra — here; upajuhava — called for; jihmam — crooked; dasyah — of a kept mistress; sutam — son; yat — whose; balina — by whose subsistence; eva — certainly; pushtah — grown up; tasmin — unto him; pratipah — enmity; parakritya — enemy's interest; aste — situated; nirvasyatam — get him out; asu — immediately; purat — from the palace; svasanah — let him breathe only.

TRANSLATION

Who asked him to come here, this son of a kept mistress? He is so crooked that he spies in the interest of the enemy against those on whose support he has grown up. Toss him out of the palace immediately and leave him with only his breath.

PURPORT

When getting married, the kshatriya kings would take on several other youthful girls along with the married princess. These girl attendants of the king were known as dasis, or attendant mistresses. By intimate association with the king, the dasis would get sons. Such sons were called dasi-putras. They had no claim to a royal position, but they would get maintenance and other facilities just like princes. Vidura was the son of such a dasi, and he was thus not counted amongst the kshatriyas. King Dhritarashtra was very affectionate toward his younger dasi-putra brother, Vidura, and Vidura was a great friend and philosophical advisor to Dhritarashtra. Duryodhana knew very well that Vidura was a great soul and well-wisher, but unfortunately he used strong words to hurt his innocent uncle. Duryodhana not only attacked Vidura's birth, but also called him an infidel because he seemed to support the cause of Yudhishtira, whom Duryodhana considered his enemy. He desired that Vidura be immediately put out of the palace and deprived of all his possessions. If possible, he would have liked him caned until he was left with nothing but his breath. He charged that Vidura was a spy of the Pandavas because he advised King Dhritarashtra in their favor. Such is the situation of palace life and the intricacies of diplomacy that even a faultless person like Vidura could be charged with something abominable and punished. Vidura was struck with wonder at such unexpected behavior from his nephew Duryodhana, and before anything actually happened, he decided to leave the palace for good.

Lecture

So, does everybody remember Vidura's instruction to Dhritarashtra in this context? Ok, I will read the last few verses, because that will give us the background.

[Vidura said:] You must now return the legitimate share to Yudhishtira, who has no enemies and who has been forbearing through untold sufferings due to your offenses. He is waiting with his younger brothers, among whom is the revengeful Bhima, breathing heavily like a snake. Surely you are afraid of him. (11)

Lord Krishna, the Personality of Godhead, has accepted the sons of Pritha as His kinsmen, and all the kings of the world are with Lord Sri Krishna. He is present in His home with all His family members, the kings and princes of the Yadu dynasty, who have conquered an unlimited number of rulers, and He is their Lord. (12)

You are maintaining offense personified, Duryodhana, as your infallible son, but he is envious of Lord Krishna. And because you are thus maintaining a nondevotee of Krishna, you are devoid of all auspicious qualities. Relieve yourself of this ill fortune as soon as possible and do good to the whole family!(13)

While speaking thus, Vidura, whose personal character was esteemed by respectable persons, was insulted by Duryodhana, who was swollen with anger and whose lips were trembling.

Duryodhana was in company with Karna, his younger brothers and his maternal uncle Sakuni. (14)

(Guru Maharaja speaks) So, this is the verse of today ? What did Duryodhana say? He said, “Who asked him to come here, this son of a kept mistress? He is so crooked that he spies in the interest of the enemy against those on whose support he has grown up. Toss him out of the palace immediately and leave him with only his breath.” So, as we had been discussing for the last few days, how the evil minded people, no matter how much good advice is given to them, they cannot see the reality. The reality of this material nature is that good actions will lead to real happiness and bad actions will lead to suffering. Duryodhana and the other sons of Dhritarastra and their accomplices, their friends and followers, they all are evil. Duryodhana is actually evil personified, and the evil minded people are following Duryodhana, they are siding with Duryodhana. They may be of noble birth, but due to their bad association, they lost all their good qualities. Even personalities like Bhishma were affected by that. When the battle was about to begin, Yudhisthira Maharaja was very much against the battle. He said, “look, I can’t fight against Bhishma, I can’t fight against Drona. How can I shoot arrows?” and that was also the same dilemma that Arjuna was going through. He said, “How can I shoot arrows against Bhishma and Drona?” pujarhav arisudana “they are worshipable.” Katham bhismam aham sankhye dronam ca madhusudana..”O Madhusudana, how can I shoot arrows ?” isubhih pratiyotsyami. Isu means arrow. Ishubhih means with arrows. “How can I fight with them? How can I compete with them?” (BG 2.14)

Then Krishna actually pointed out to Yudhisthira Maharaja, “When I went to the court for a proposal for peace, the only person who was actually against that war was Vidura. Even Bishma did not protest. Even Drona did not protest, and now Bishma has become the general. So, why should you have any compassion for him? It is not that you wanted the war. It is they who wanted the war. It is they who wanted to fight against you.” In this way we can see how bad association can affect the mind of a great personality, a noble personality. Bishma, although he is a devotee of Krishna, but still he is standing against Krishna. Why? This is another consideration that has been pointed out in the Mahabharata, that the ultimate consideration is Krishna. But Bishma’s ultimate consideration was not Krishna. Bishma’s ultimate consideration was morality. What is moral and what is immoral. “I am a kshatriya, I am being maintained by the king. Therefore I must side with the king. So this is the moral consideration. In this consideration, the ultimate consideration of good and bad is not considered. Although he gave good advice to Dhritarastra, he tried to dissuade Duryodhana many times, but ultimately he considered that “these are my maintainers.” This is the sense of morality, niti. The niti is that one must side with the king. If you are with the king, you have to follow the king. You cannot judge the king. A citizen of a kingdom cannot judge the king. If he does that, and goes against the king, then he is considered to be a rebel, vidrohi.

(Jai sri sri Krishna Balaram ki jai, Sri Sri Radha Madanmohan ki jai, sri sri Gaur Nitai ki jai)

So that was the consideration. But what is the ultimate consideration? These are all relative considerations – good and bad, piety and sin, virtue and ill actions, morality and immorality, these are all relative considerations. Dvaite bhadrabhadra jnana saba mano dharma. This is just mental speculation. The material consideration of good and bad is the duality. But what is the absolute consideration? What is the ultimate spiritual consideration? The absolute consideration is, whatever is Krishna is right. Wherever is Krishna, that is right, and going against Krishna is wrong. As I was pointing out the other day, the fault of Yudhisthira Maharaja was not that he lied. He actually didn’t lie. The elephant named Aswatthama was

killed and Yudhisthira did say that the elephant named Aswatthama was killed – Aswatthama, the elephant is killed. So, where is the lie? So what was the defect in Yudhisthira Maharaja? That Krishna told him to say something, and he did not do that. So that is the ultimate consideration. And in Bhagavad-Gita Krishna gives the ultimate instruction also – sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja. “Just surrender unto me” because that is the ultimate dharma. All that which goes on besides that ? Besides surrendering to Krishna, whatever goes on, no matter how virtuous, how noble, how pious it may appear, it is not dharma. It is relative dharma. Therefore Krishna is saying, sarva dharman? Give up all that relative dharma and surrender unto me because that is the ultimate dharma. That is the ultimate responsibility, that is the ultimate duty.

So, we are seeing? the point I am making here is that how unfortunate bad association can be. Even a good person, even a noble person, even an illustrious person can become affected by bad association. Like here we are seeing that Bishma is affected by bad association. Because he was staying with the Kauravas, he was affected by their association. Another personality is Karna. Such an illustrious personality, the son of Sun god. He is a son of Vivasvan, the Sun-god and actually a son of Kunti herself, a brother of the Pandavas. But we are seeing that Karna was so low, although he is a very noble person. There was no one who could match him in charity. Karna is known as data Karna, danasila Karna. He is famous for his charitable nature. He was so charitable that he did not hesitate to offer his son, to kill his own son with his own hand. He was born with a natural kavaca and kundala, the armour. He was born with natural armor that would protect him from any kind of onslaught in a war. But when Indra came as a brahmana and asked for that, he took it out, cut it. They were part of his body- the kavaca and kundala. But he cut it off from his body and offered it to him. On one hand we see that he is such a noble person. But again we can see what happened to him due to bad association. That is why time and time again it has been pointed out that avoid bad association and always remain in good association. If you remain in good association, even though you may not be very exalted personality, you will derive benefit from that. But if you are in bad association, if you decide to go for bad association, no matter how exalted you may be, all your good qualities will be lost. And that also has been demonstrated very nicely by Bishma.

Bishma, when he was lying on the bed of arrows after the battle was over, he was waiting for uttarayana, the sun to move to the northern course, because the battle of Kurukshetra took place when the Sun was in the southern course, Dakshinayana. If someone dies during that time, when the Sun is in dakshinayana, one goes to the lower planetary systems. But when one leaves the body when the Sun is in Uttarayana, then he goes to the higher planetary systems. So, Bishma was waiting for the Sun to move to Uttarayana, and so when he was about to leave the body after the war was over, the Pandavas came to see him, and he was giving valuable advice to Yudhisthira Maharaja on how a ksatriya should rule the kingdom, what is right and what is wrong, how to be just and how to punish the injustice. At that time Draupadi smiled. Bishma noticed it. Bishma asked, “Draupadi, why are you smiling?” Draupadi said, “Where was your wisdom when the Kauravas were dishonoring me in the royal assembly? You were there. You didn’t protest. Now you are speaking these wise words of advice.” Bishma said, “Actually Draupadi, at that time, my consciousness became affected because I was eating the food given by Duryodhana. Because I was eating the food given by Duryodhana, my consciousness became affected by that. But now that bad blood has been drained out of my body. So now my consciousness has become purified.” *So this is how we see that consciousness can be so subtly affected. Just by eating food cooked by somebody whose

consciousness is bad, it will affect the consciousness of others.* And he was not even cooking. He was sponsoring the food. Because the food was purchased with the money of Duryodhana, the consciousness was affected.

So this is how the bad association, the bad people's association affects. On the other hand we can also see how the good people's association influences the consciousness of others. We come, we move into an ashram, live with the devotees, the first thing we notice is that we get rid of the bad habits very easily. That's one of the things that people notice. Many people have bad habits today. Many people today are meat eaters, non-vegetarian. But when they move into the temple, very easily they become vegetarian. How many of you were non-vegetarian before? Tomra ki ki age maach maanso khaiten? (Asked in Bangla) aar ashram join koraar pare k eke maach manso chede diyecho?(After joining the ashram, how many of you have left eating fish and meat?) If you stayed at home, could you give up? Badi te thaakle maach manso khawa chedte paarten? Ke chaadte parten? Keo i na. Maach manso khaiten? Khaiten na tomra. Abhiram? baadite I bondo kore diyecho. Very good sadhu you are. Maach maanso khawa chaada khub kathin hoy. Tara pare jader nasha – cigarette khava. Ami dekhechi. Koto log cigarette khawa chaadar cesta kore (If you stayed at home, would you have been able to give up meat eating? Who would have been able? No one. Were you eating? You were'nt? Abhiram? [inaudible] You gave up while you were at home itself? Very good sadhu you are. It is difficult to give up the habit of eating meat. And then those who have the habit of intoxication – smoking cigarettes.) So many people try to give up smoking, but they can't. but when they move into the temple, very easily they give it up. So many people are addicted to alcohol, but when they move into the temple, they give it up. Why? How can they do that so easily? Because of the right association, good association. It would be so difficult to practice Krishna consciousness, but when you move into a temple, due to the association, it becomes easy. So what is the lesson we learn from that? Should we remain in bad association? What should we do? We should be in good association. Give up bad association and remain in good association. In good association you may not get some money, but what will you get? You will get peace of mind. Whereas in bad association you may get so many material facilities? That is the problem that Duryodhana's accomplices had. They were getting material benefits. Because of Duryodhana, Karna got a kingdom. Because of Duryodhana's association, so many material facilities were available, but what was the result of that?

Their mental peace was lost. Dhritarastra had so much – he was the king, but he could not sleep. As we discussed the other day, he was telling Vidura, “Vidura, I can't sleep. Please help me that I can get some sleep.”

Why he could not get sleep? Because his consciousness was affected by his bad actions. In this way one thing becomes clear that good actions lead to real enjoyment and bad actions lead to suffering. We notice that devotees have bright faces. What does that indicate? Bright face means internally they are joyful. Whereas materially people may be opulent, but their face

looks so unhappy, indicating?. Face is actually the mirror of the mind. Face is the mirror of the mind. The way the mind is, the face will depict. When the mind is depressed, the face will look depressed. If the mind is joyful, if the mind is happy, the face will look happy. So, now what do we really want? Do we want suffering or do we want happiness? We all want happiness. We all want joy. And how do we become joyful? The way to become joyful is by becoming Krishna conscious. Hare Krishna!

Ke ke bhujite paro nai ami etokkhon ki bollaam? Jara bhujite paro nai haat tuloon. (How many of you did not understand what has been said? Those who did not understand, please raise your hands.)

(Guru Maharaja gives a brief summary of the class in Bangla.)

Question (inaudible)

Answer: But at the same time Prabhupada made arrangements that we can get pure food. Yes, it is difficult to maintain the purity of food, but we must try as much as possible. It is not that we should eat indiscriminately. But the point that Prabhupada is making is that even though we may try, to maintain absolute purity of food is not going to be possible in this age. And Prabhupada said, that is why he gave the holy name – Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given the holy name.

Question: (inaudible, in Bangla)

Answer: (Translated from Bangla) Vidura was not eating Duryodhana's food. He would live simply without taking anything from Duryodhana. That is why Krishna went to the house of Vidura. He didn't eat Duryodhana's food.

Question: What is the meaning of paramahansa?

Answer: Parama means great, and hansa means swan. The great swan. Swan has some qualities. When those qualities are magnified or seen in a man, then he is called paramahansa. You see, one of the qualities of a swan is that a swan can separate milk from water. You give a swan some milk diluted with water, and the swan takes the milk and leaves the water. A swan has the ability to do that. So similarly, when a man can separate the spiritual aspect from a mixture of spiritual and material, spirit and matter, he is called a paramahansa. He accepts the spiritual and rejects the material. Whereas in the material nature, everything is a mixture of material and spiritual. Like your body is made of matter and there is a spirit soul in the body. So it is a combination of matter and spirit. So a paramahansa takes the spiritual aspect and rejects the material aspect. He has the ability to do that – a very special ability. OK, Krishnacharya and then Nitai Chandra.

Question: What is the root cause of why someone is able to develop faith and why someone else is not able to do so?

Answer: The root cause of developing faith is spiritual advancement. The root cause of spiritual advancement is faith. (laughs) Alright? The more advanced you are, the more faith you have, and the more faith you have, the more advanced you are. And this is also connected to humbleness. To be respectful, you have to be humble. A person who is not humble cannot be respectful to his superiors. Nitai Chandra?

Q. (inaudible)

A. We discussed about it the other day. May be you were not in the class. You see, it is not that Bhishma was a mahajana right from the beginning. The indication of the word mahajana is a pure devotee. Right? But Bhishma was not a pure devotee at the beginning. He was a jnana misra bhakta. And that is why he was more concerned with the jnana aspect than the

devotion. He was affected by jnana – he was so concerned by the sense of morality. But a pure devotee would not care about the morality – his concern would be Krishna. So, we have to understand that at first Bhishma was a jnana misra bhakta and then he became a suddha bhakta. One can become a suddha bhakta when he becomes jnana karmady anavrtam. So initially he was a jnana misra bhakta but later on he became a suddha bhakta. So much so that Krishna came Himself at the time of his departure from the planet.

Question (inaudible)

Answer: to draw the line would be whether it is the instruction of the guru. Did Prabhupada say to take that unfair means? No. they concocted that means. Actually when Prabhupada got to know, I have seen myself. Prabhupada questioned somebody who was making a lot of money. One sannyasi, he was in Japan with his team of devotees and he was making a lot of money. And when Prabhupada found out that he was using unfair means, Prabhupada was annoyed with him. The consideration is whether Krishna said it. Not that I decide that “I can do it because I am serving Krishna. Like for example, once I was in Montreal. You see, in the Olympic village? at that time they had the Olympic games in Montreal. It was in 1982 or 1980 may be.

We used to go for a japa walk in the Olympic village because it was not far from the temple. One devotee picked flowers from the garden. You know how it is in the west. Nobody touches anybody else’s thing. It is a disgrace, you know. I told him and his thing was that, “Well, I am doing it for Krishna and everything is alright.” Then one day, as he was picking flowers, the guard saw it, and it brought so much disgrace to our society, that Hare Krishnas are stealing flowers. We should have a little foresight and see what will be beneficial for our movement and what will be harmful for our movement. Don’t do anything that will be harmful to the movement or harmful to our own spiritual advancement. Because we are devotee, that doesn’t give us the license to do anything we like. We have to maintain the sense of morality because that is what everybody follows. Now if Krishna says to do something different, then it is different. Krishna told Arjuna to fight against his grandfather and guru. But that shouldn’t be the standard for everyone. We should not say, “Well, kill all our grandfathers!” (everyone laughs) That shouldn’t become the standard.

Next question

Question: (Inaudible)

Answer: well, if it is vegetarian food, if it is bought with price, then some karma goes away. But then again, that shouldn’t be the standard, that everybody should go and buy samosa and eat it. If dravya mulya is the only consideration, then what about eating meat? If you buy meat with price, can you eat meat? So, main consideration should be, we should offer it to Krishna. It should be eligible to be offered to Krishna. But sometimes Prabhupada was liberal, because Prabhupada was dealing with a whole lot of Western devotees. I mean it is a big step for them to give up meat eating and become a vegetarian. So once in a while if they took a vegetarian samosa, that could have been accepted.

Question (inaudible)

Answer: Well, there is the consideration of time, place and circumstances. Like when the situation is such that you cannot completely disregard the person's offering, then you can accept it. But obviously you don't bring that food and offer it on the altar. In your mind or to a picture of Krishna you can make the offering. But generally we have to maintain a proper Krishna conscious standard.

Question (Unclear- about Devi dhama)

Answer: Devi dham is this place. This doesn't have any expansion. This material nature is devi dham. Mahesh dham is the abode of Lord Siva – Kailash. Mahesh dham is the expansion of the?in this earth you have Varanasi, that is Mahesh dham. Mahakaleswar is also a Mahesh dham. The twelve jyotirlingas are expansions of Mahesh dham. But Devi also has a place in the material nature. There are 51 tirthas. They are the places of Devi. Like Kamaksha? here also?Madurai, then Calcutta (laughter). Calcutta is a devi dham actually. There is a place called Kali ghat. A part of Devi's body fell there. Also, tarakeshwar and other such places. Okay? I think here also, Ujjain also there is a place of Devi? (Devotees say, "Harsiddhi") Harsiddhi. I think Devi's elbow actually fell there. Hare Krishna. Gaura Premanande! Hari Hari bol!