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DELIVERANCE OF PUTANA

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

There was great jubilation all over Vrindavan upon Krishna's birth. Everyone was overwhelmed with joy. Maharaja Nanda, King of Vraja, joyfully performed the birth ceremony for his child. During this great festival, Nanda Maharaja gave everyone in charity whatever they desired. After the festival, Nanda Maharaja put the cowherd men in charge of protecting Gokula, and then he went to Mathura to pay official taxes to Kamsa. In Mathura, Nanda Maharaja met his brother Vasudeva, who praised Nanda Maharaja's good fortune because he knew that Krishna had accepted Nanda Maharaja as His father. Vasudeva inquired from Nanda Maharaja about the welfare of the child and Nanda Maharaja informed him all about Vrindavan. Vasudeva was very happy to hear this, although he also expressed grief because all of Devaki's children had been killed by Kamsa. Nanda Maharaja consoled Vasudeva by saying that in this world, everything happens according to destiny. One who has this knowledge, never grieves. Anticipating many disturbances in Gokula, Vasudeva then advised Nanda Maharaja not to wait in Mathura, but to return to Vrindavan as soon as possible.

Thus Nanda Maharaja took leave of Vasudeva and with the other cowherd men, returned to Vrindavan on their bullock carts. On the way home, Nanda Maharaja considered that what Vasudeva had said must be true. It is destined that some disturbances might be due in Gokula. As Nanda Maharaja thought about the danger for his beautiful son, Krishna, he was afraid, and he took shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. By this time, the evil King Kamsa had engaged a fierce woman named Putana to kill all the new born children in the towns, cities and villages of Mathura. While Nanda Maharaja was returning to Gokula, these nefarious activities were going on.

According to her desire, Putana *rākṣasī* could travel anywhere, including outer space. One day, by mystic power, she converted herself into a very beautiful woman and entered Gokula, the abode of Nanda Maharaja. Her hips were full, her breasts were large and firm, seeming to overburden her slim waist, and she was dressed very nicely. Her hair, adorned with a garland of mallika flowers, was scattered around her beautiful face. Her earrings were brilliant, and as she glanced upon everyone smiling very attractively. Her beauty drew the attention of all the inhabitants of Vraja, especially the men. When the gopis saw her, they thought that the beautiful goddess of fortune, holding a lotus flower in her hand, had come to see her husband, Krishna.

The *rākṣasī* Putana was expert in killing small children, and she searched for them everywhere. In this way, she entered the house of Nanda Maharaja. Surprisingly, she was not obstructed, because she had been sent by the superior potency of the Lord. Without asking anyone's

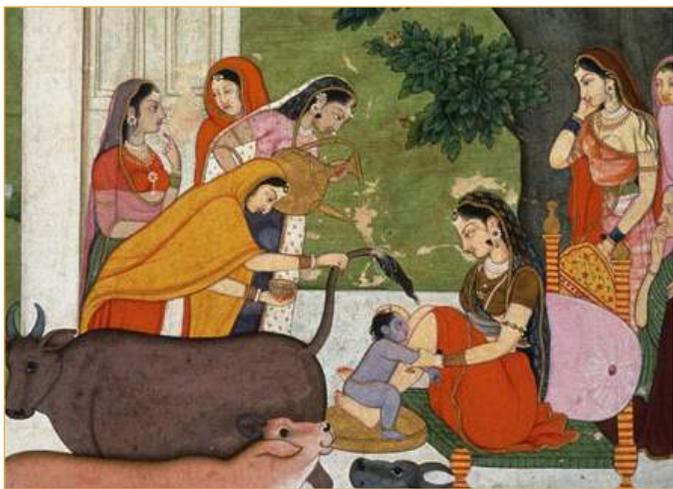
nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

permission, she entered Nanda Maharaja's room, and saw the child sleeping on the bed. Like a powerful fire covered by ashes, Krishna's unlimited power was concealed. Putana could somehow understand that this child was not ordinary, but was meant to kill all demons.

Lying on the bed like an ordinary child, the all-pervading Supersoul Lord Sri Krishna understood that the witch Putana had come to kill Him. Therefore, as if afraid of her, Krishna closed His eyes. Thus Putana placed upon her lap, the child who was meant for her destruction, just as an unintelligent person places a sleeping snake on his lap, thinking it to be a rope. Though she looked like a very affectionate mother, Putana's heart was fierce and cruel. Thus she resembled a sharp sword in a soft sheath. Although they saw her in the room with the child, Yashoda and Rohini did not stop her but remained silent; overwhelmed by her beauty and seeing her apparent motherly affection.

On that very spot, the fiercely dangerous *rākṣasī* took Krishna on her lap and put her breast into His mouth. The nipple of her breast was smeared with a dangerous, immediately effective poison. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, became very angry at her and took hold of her breast, strongly squeezed it very with both hands and began to suck. In this way, He drew out both the poison and her life airs. Unbearably pressed in every vital point, Putana began to cry out, "Please leave me, leave me! Suck my breast no longer!" Perspiring, her eyes wide open and her arms and legs flailing, she cried very loudly again and again. As Putana screamed loudly and forcefully, the earth with its mountains, and outer space with its planets all trembled. The lower planets and all directions vibrated, and people fell down, fearing that thunderbolts were falling upon them. Putana was very much afflicted because her breast was violently sucked by Krishna, and she thus lost her life. Her mouth open wide, her arms and legs spread-eagled, and her hair disheveled, Putana, assuming her original form as a *rākṣasī*, fell into the pasturing grounds of Vraja, just as Vritrasura had fallen when killed by the thunderbolt of Indra.

When the gigantic body of Putana fell to the ground, it smashed all the trees within a radius of twelve miles. Appearing in a gigantic body, she was certainly extraordinary. The *rākṣasī*'s mouth was full of teeth, which resembled the front of a plow. Her nostrils were deep like mountain caves, and her breasts resembled big slabs of stone fallen from a hill. Her scattered hair was the color of copper. The sockets of her eyes appeared like deep blind wells, her fearful thighs resembled the banks of a river, her arms, legs and feet seemed like big bridges, and her abdomen appeared like a dried-up lake. The hearts, ears and heads of the cowherd men and women were already shocked by the *rākṣasī*'s screaming, and when they saw the fierce wonder of her body, they were even more frightened. However, the child Krishna was fearlessly playing on her breast. When the gopis saw the



child's wonderful activity, they immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Him up.

Thereafter, mother Yashoda and Rohini, along with the other elderly gopis performed the ritual of purification and protection for the child Krishna by waving the tail-hair of a cow. The child was thoroughly washed with cow urine and then smeared with the dust raised by the walking of the cows. Then different names of the Lord were applied with cow dung on twelve different parts of His body, beginning with the forehead, as done in applying tilaka. In this way, the child was given protection. The gopis first executed the process of *ācamana*, drinking a sip of water from the right hand. They purified their bodies and hands with the *nyāsa*-mantra and then applied the same mantra upon the body of the child.

The gopis, following the proper system, protected their child Krishna with this mantra: 'May Aja protect Your legs, may Maniman protect Your knees, Yajna Your thighs, Acyuta the upper part of Your waist, and Hayagriva Your abdomen. May Keshava protect Your heart, Isha Your chest, the sun-god Your neck, Vishnu Your arms, Urukrama Your face, and Ishvara Your head. May Cakri protect You from the front; may Sri Hari, Gadadhari, the carrier of the club, protect You from the back; and may the carrier of the bow, who is known as the enemy of Madhu, and Lord Ajana, the carrier of the sword, protect Your two sides. May Lord Urugaya, the carrier of the conchshell, protect You from all corners; may Upendra protect You from above; may Garuda protect You on the ground; and may Lord Haladhara, the Supreme Person, protect You on all sides. May Hrisikesha protect Your senses, and Narayana Your life air. May the master of Shvetadvīpa protect the core of Your heart, and may Lord Yogeshvara protect Your mind. May Lord Prsnigarbha protect Your intelligence, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Your soul. While You are playing, may Govinda protect You, and while You are sleeping may Madhava protect You. May Lord Vaikuntha protect You while You are walking, and may Lord Narayana, the husband of the goddess of fortune, protect You while You are sitting. Similarly, may Lord Yajñabhuk, the fearful enemy of all evil planets, always protect You

while You live life.'

The evil witches known as Dakinis, Yatudhanis and Kusmandas are the greatest enemies of children, and the evil spirits like Bhutas, Pretas, Pisacas, Yaksas, Raksasas and Vinayakas, as well as witches like Kotara, Revati, Jyestha, Putana and Matrka, are always ready to give trouble to the body, the life air and the senses, causing loss of memory, madness and bad dreams. Like the most commonly encountered evil planets, they all create great disturbances, especially for children. However, one can vanquish them all simply by uttering Lord Vishnu's name, for when Lord Vishnu's name resounds, all of them become afraid and go away.

All the gopis, headed by mother Yashoda, were full of maternal affection for Krishna. After they chanted mantras to protect the Him, mother Yashoda breast-fed Krishna and then lay Him down on His bed. Meanwhile, all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Maharaja, who were returning from Mathura, saw on the way the gigantic body of Putana lying dead. They were struck with great wonder! Nanda Maharaja and the other gopas exclaimed: "My dear friends, you must know that Anakadundubhi, Vasudeva, has become a great saint or a master of mystic power. Otherwise how could he have foreseen and predicted this calamity?"

Using axes, the inhabitants of Vraja cut the gigantic body of Putana into pieces. Then they took the pieces to a distant place, covered them with wood and burned them to ashes. Because of Krishna's having sucked the breast of Putana, she was immediately freed of all material contamination. Her sinful reactions automatically vanished. Therefore, when her gigantic body was being burnt, the smoke emanating from the fire was fragrant like aguru incense.

Putana was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Krishna. However, since she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement. Then, what can be said of those who had natural devotion and affection for Krishna as mothers who offered Him their breasts to suck, or those who offered something very dear as a mother offers something to her child? The Supreme Personality of





Godhead, Krishna, is always situated within the core of the heart of the pure devotee, and He is always offered prayers by such worshipable personalities as Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. Because Krishna embraced Putana's body with great pleasure and sucked her breast, although she was a witch, she attained the position of a mother in the transcendental world and thus achieved the highest perfection. What then can be said of the cows whose nipples Krishna sucked with great pleasure and who offered their milk very jubilantly and affectionately like a mother? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is the bestower of many benedictions, including liberation [*kaivalya*], or oneness with the Brahman effulgence. For that Personality of Godhead, the gopis always felt maternal love, and Krishna sucked their breasts with full satisfaction. Therefore, because of their relationship as mother and son, although the gopis were engaged in various family activities, one should never think that they returned to this material world after leaving their bodies.

Upon smelling the fragrance of the smoke emanating from Putana's burning body, the inhabitants of the distant parts of Vrajabhumi were astonished. "Where is this fragrance coming from?" they asked. Thus they went to the spot where Putana's body was being burnt. When they heard the story of how Putana had come and then been killed by Krishna, they were astonished, and they offered their blessings to the child for His wonderful deed of killing Putana.

Nanda Maharaja felt very much obliged to Vasudeva, who had foreseen this incident. Thinking how great he was, he expressed heartfelt gratitude to Vasudeva. O Maharaja Pariksit, best of the Kurus, Nanda Maharaja was very liberal and simple-hearted. He immediately took his son Krishna on his lap, feeling as if He had returned from death. Affectionately smelling his son's head, Nanda Maharaja enjoyed transcendental bliss.

Any person who hears with faith and devotion about how Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, killed Putana, and who thus becomes absorbed in hearing such childhood pastimes of Krishna, certainly attains attachment for Govinda, the Supreme, original person.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 6: 6. The Killing of the Demon Putana » Verses: 1 - 44*

UNDERSTANDING THE DELIVERANCE OF PUTANA

Sri Sanatana Goswami

Krishna allowed Putana to enter Gokula respectably, appearing among the cowherds dressed as a first-class lady. At the beginning of Sukadeva Goswami's description of Putana's encounter with Krishna, we are told:

*na yatra śravaṇādīni
rakṣo-ghnāni sva-karmasu
kurvanti sātvatām bhartur
yātudhānyaś ca tatra hi*

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

"My dear king, wherever people in any position perform their occupational duties of devotional service by chanting and hearing [*śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ*], there cannot be any danger from bad elements. Therefore, there was no need for anxiety about Gokula while the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally present." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.6.3*)

In other words, the witch Putana posed no threat to the inhabitants of Gokula. Krishna allowed her to enter simply to give her His mercy. Krishna placed His lotus feet, the object of Lord Brahma's meditation, on Putana's lap and allowed her to caress Him. By this, Yashoda and Rohini were greatly astonished:

*tām tīkṣṇa-cittām ati-vāma-ceṣṭitām
vīkṣyāntarā koṣa-paricchadāsi-vat
vara-striyam tat-prabhayā ca dharṣite
nirīkṣyamāṇe janāni hy atiṣṭhatām*

"Though she looked like a very affectionate mother, Putana's heart was fierce and cruel. Thus she resembled a sharp sword in a soft sheath. Although they saw her in the room with the child, Yashoda and Rohini did not stop her but remained silent; overwhelmed by her beauty and seeing her apparent motherly affection." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.6.9*)

Due to treating Krishna as her own child, Putana became His mother eternally, as several authorities in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* affirm. According to Sukadeva Goswami:

*pūtanā loka-bāla-ghnī
rākṣasī rudhirāsanā
jighāmsayāpi haraye
stanam dattvāpa sad-gatim*

"Putana was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Krishna; but because she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.6.35*)

As Lord Brahma said to Lord Krishna, *sad-veśād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā*: "You have already arranged to give Yourself to Putana and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.35*)

And in the words of Sri Uddhava:

*aho bakīyam stana-kāla-kūṭam
jighāmsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam
kam vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema*

"Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of mother to a she-demon [Putana] although she was unfaithful and she had prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?" (*Bhāgavatam 3.2.23*)

Even Putana's dead body, restored to the horrible form of a witch, was sanctified as Krishna's playground:

*bālam ca tasyā urasi
krīḍantam akuto-bhayam*



*gopyas tūrṇam samabhyetya
jagrhur jāta-sambhramāḥ*

“Without fear, the child Krishna was playing on the upper portion of Putana *rākṣasī*'s breast, and when the gopis saw the child's wonderful activities, they immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Him up.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.6.18)

And when her corpse was burned, it gave off a fragrance like precious aguru, which spread in all directions:

*dahyamānasya dehasya
dhūmaś cāguru-saurabhaḥ
utthītaḥ Krishna-nirbhukta-
sapady āhata-pāpmanaḥ*

“Because of Krishna's having sucked the breast of the *rākṣasī* Putana, she was immediately freed of all material contamination. When Krishna killed her, all her sinful reactions automatically vanished. Therefore when her gigantic body was being burnt, the smoke that emanated was fragrant like aguru incense.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.6.34)

— *Śrī Bhṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* » 1.5.29 » Translation by Gopiparandhan dasa.

Did PUTANA REALLY ATTAIN GOLOKA VRINDAVAN?

Srila Jiva Goswami

*tena dhūrā api yaṅti brahma-vida upakramya svargalokam
ito vimuktāḥ iti śruty-anusāreṇa svarga-śabdenāpy āha
yatudhāny api sā svargam avāpa janani-gatim. iti.*

The transferal of the devotees to the spiritual abode of Lord Krishna is described in the following verses, where the word ‘svarga’ means ‘the planet of Lord Krishna in the spiritual world’:

“The saintly devotees become liberated from the clutches of matter and enter the abode of Lord Krishna.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.8)

“Although Putana was a witch, she attained the position of Krishna's mother in the transcendental world and thus achieved the highest perfection.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.6.38)

*atra jānani-gatim iti viśeṣeṇa lokāntaram nirastam.
tat-prakaraṇa eva tad-ādīnām bahuśo gaty-antara-
niśedhāt"sad-vesā iva Putanapi sakulā tvām eva devā pitā
ity atra sākṣāt tat-prāpti nirdharaṇāc ca.*

Because this verse states that Putana attained the post of Lord Krishna's mother in the *svarga* planet, the *svarga* planet must be Lord Krishna's planet, Goloka Vrindavan. The word *svarga* here cannot mean the planet of Indra. That Putana became Lord Krishna's mother in the transcendental world is also confirmed by the following statement of Lord Brahma in (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.35):

"O My dear Lord, even Putana, who came to cheat You by dressing herself as a very affectionate mother, was awarded liberation and the actual post of a mother. And other demons belonging to the same family, such as

Aghasura and Bakasura, were also favored with liberation."

*tathā ca kenopaniṣadi dṛśyate keneśitam manaḥ patati,
prānasya prāṇam uta cakṣusaḥ cakṣur atimucya dhūrāḥ
pretyāsmāl lokād amṛtā bhavanti ity upakramya tad
eva brahma tvam viddhi: iti madhye procyā amṛtatvam
hi vindate, satyam āyatanam, yo va etam upaniṣadam
vedāpahatya papmānām anante svarge loka pratiṣṭhati ity
upasamhṛtam.*

The devotees' attainment of the spiritual world is also described in the following statements of the Katha Upaniṣad, where the word *svarga* is also used to meant the spiritual world (and not the planet of Indra):

Lord Siva asked: “Who is the controller of the mind and the other senses?”

Brahma replied: “The ability to see, the functions of all the senses, and indeed life itself, are all given to the living entities by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The saintly devotees who understand this true position of the Supreme Lord become free from the cycle of birth and death. After leaving this body, they return to the spiritual world, and never again take birth or die.” – (1.1-2)

“Please try to understand the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One who understands the Supreme Lord returns to the spiritual world and becomes free from birth and death.” – (1.4, 2.4)

“The transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord is eternal.” – (4.8)

“One who understands the teaching of this Upaniṣad becomes free from all past sinful reactions. He becomes liberated and enters the unlimited spiritual world *svarga*.” – (4.9)

*tataḥ ko vā svargaḥ kim tad brahma. ity apekṣāyām
puruṣo ha vai nārāyaṇaḥ: ity upakramya punaś
cābhyaśena nityo deva eko nārāyaṇaḥ ity uktvā
nārāyanopāsakasya ca stutiṁ kṛtvā tad brahma nārāyaṇa
eva iti vyajya svargam pratipādayitum vaikuṅṭhavana-
lokam gamiṣyati, tad idam puram idam puṇḍarikam
viṣṇāna-ghanam tasmāt tad ivā vabhāsam. iti vana-
lokākārasya vaikuṅṭhasyānandātmakatvam pratipādyā sa
ca tad-adhiṣṭhātā nārāyaṇaḥ Krishna evety upasamharati
brahmaṇyo devakī-putraḥ iti. śrī-śukāḥ.*

Someone may question our interpretation of the words *svarga* and *brahma* in these passages. In order to allay their doubts, we give the following evidence from Vedic literatures which confirm our understanding that the word *svarga* means ‘the planet of Sri Krishna’ and the word *brahma* means ‘the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, who is also known as Narayana.’

"Lord Narayana is the Supreme Personality of Godhead". -*Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*

"Lord Narayana is the eternal Supreme Lord". -*Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*

"Lord Narayana is the Supreme Brahman." -Prayers of

the devotees of Lord Narayana

That the word *svarga* means ‘the abode of Sri Krishna’ is described in the Vedic literatures:

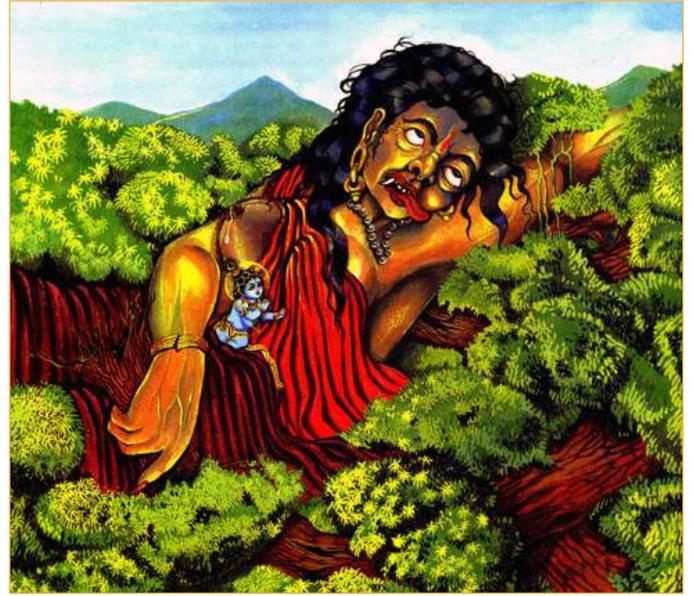
"Saintly devotee will attain the highest Vaikuntha planet, which is a forest in the form of a great lotus flower full of transcendental knowledge."

In this way the blissful nature of Vaikunthaloka's forest (Krishnaloka) is described. The ruler of that forest is Lord Krishna, who is also known as Narayana. This is confirmed in the Atharva Veda:

"The son of Devaki is the Original Personality of Godhead."

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse quoted in Text 1 was spoken by Srila Sukadeva Goswami.

—From *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-sandarbha* of Srila Jiva Goswami » *Anuccheda 108* »
Translation by Srila Bhanu Swami.



Putana: The slayer of infants

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

The above *Bhāgavatam* narrative (Deliverance of Putana) embodies a most important moral for those seeking the Absolute, but before offering the textual interpretation favored by the previous *ācāryas*, I would like to draw the reader's attention to certain possible misconceptions regarding the nature of the interpretation about to be offered. There is a class of persons who insist on the texts being taken in their literal, worldly sense. Interpreters have used much ingenuity to extract meanings that satisfy the empiric judgment of those working by the literal method. Their arguments are not unintelligible. As revealed literature is to be regarded as containing information of the Absolute, the language should be regarded as part and parcel of the meaning of the text. From this conclusion, the literal interpreters jump to the wrong inference that it should be possible for the conditioned soul to ascertain the real meaning of the scriptures by sticking to the lexicographical sense of their actual wordings. This latter part of the argument is inapplicable to the subject, which is transcendental. Rather, the words possess a double meaning. The lexicographic meaning refers to this world's entities and is therefore inapplicable to the case. The conditioned souls' gross senses and mind cannot access the esoteric meaning. This is a great and insuperable difficulty. The literal interpreters who follow the lexicographical meaning err grievously when they overlook this all-important consideration.

The transcendental meaning of the words cannot be conveyed to the conditioned soul's senses as long as the conditioned soul does not agree to listen submissively to the transcendental sound spoken by a pure devotee. There is a definite line of succession of bona fide teachers of the truth. Hypocrites and atheists, who do not want to serve Godhead, cannot recognize bona fide *ācāryas*. Sooner or later, though, a real spiritual seeker will find and recognize a

WHICH SYMBOL OF ANARTHA IS PUTANA?

Putana symbolises a false spiritual master who teaches material enjoyment and liberation. Pseudo sadhus, who are fond of material enjoyment and liberation, sometimes become gurus and are thus compared to Putana. Out of compassion for His sincere devotees, Krishna kills 'Putana' in the form of a false guru and thus protects their newly grown (infant) mood of bhakti.

—Taken from *Sri Caitanya Śikṣāmrta* 6/6 of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

TWO TYPES OF GURUS

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

There are two types of gurus: *antarāṅgā* or internal, and *bahirāṅgā* or external. The living entity who is situated in *samādhi* is his own internal spiritual master. One who accepts argument as his spiritual master and learns the process of worship in this way, is said to have accepted the shelter of a bogus spiritual master. Thus, argument poses itself as nourishing the living entities' constitutional duties (*bhakti*). This may be compared to Putana's falsely posing as a nurse.

Worshippers on the path of attachment (*rāga bhakti*) must completely give up argumentation in spiritual subjects and rather take shelter of genuine *samādhi* from a realized soul. The guru from whom the science of worship is learned is called the external spiritual master. One who properly knows the path of attachment and who instructs his disciples according to their qualification is a *sad-guru*, or eternal spiritual master.

—Taken from *Sri Krishna-saṁhitā* (8/14) of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

bona fide teacher. Before finding such a teacher to enlighten him, however, a spiritual candidate should concentrate on self-examination. In this way he will not harbor any lurking traces of insincerity. The *sadhu's* words are also available, by his causeless mercy, to help such candidates discover their own insincerity.

It is by overlooking or deliberately neglecting this preliminary training to understand transcendental meaning that the literal interpreters fail to understand the need to never deviate from the explanations offered by self-realized souls. It is only to such souls that the transcendental meanings are available. Some empiricists, while following the lexicographical and syntactical method of literal interpretation, do not hesitate to read their own meanings into the texts under the impression that the scriptures and the products of the human brain liable to every form of error and, therefore fit to be corrected by the equally erring caprices of other hypothetical thinkers on the ground of allegations of error that cannot be proved, are disposed to think that the *ācāryas'* interpretations are not scrupulously faithful to the text. They then offer allegorical explanations to support their own sectarian views.

I list these possible misunderstandings in order to attract the reader's attention to the importance of the following interpretation of the Putana narrative. It is based on the exposition of previous *ācāryas* and was originally spoken by a bona fide teacher of the Absolute. I do not offer this interpretation as a literal, lexicographical explanation nor as an allegory created to satisfy what people feel they know about the human race's history.

Sri Krishna manifests His eternal birth in the pure cognitive essence of the serving soul, who is located above all mundane limitations. King Kamsa is the typical aggressive empiricist. He is ever on the lookout for the Truth's appearance, because he wishes to suppress the Truth before He has time to grow up. I am not exaggerating the real purpose and understanding of the usual empiricist's position. The materialist has a natural repugnance for the transcendental. He is disposed to think that faith in the incomprehensible is the parent of dogmatism and hypocrisy in the guise of religion. He is also equally under the delusion that there is and can be no real dividing line between matter and spirit. His delusions are strengthened by reading scriptural interpretations presented by those who are of like-minded with himself. This includes all lexicographic interpreters. Kamsa upholds the lexicographical interpretation as the real scientific explanation of scripture and one that is perfectly in keeping with his dread of and aversion for the transcendental. These lexicographical interpreters are employed by Kamsa in suppressing the first suspected appearance of any genuine faith in the transcendental. King Kamsa knows very well that if the faith in the transcendental is once allowed to grow, it is sure to upset all his empiric prospects.

There is historical ground for such misgivings. Accordingly, if the empiric domination is to be preserved intact, it is

necessary to immediately put down the transcendental heresy the moment it threatens to appear. Acting on this traditional fear, King Kamsa is quick to take the scientific precaution of deputing empiric scriptural teachers, backed by dictionary, grammar, and all their empiric subtleties, to put down, by specious arguments based on hypotheses, the true interpretation of eternal religion revealed by the scriptures. Kamsa strongly believes that empiricism can effectively defeat faith in the transcendental if prompt and decisive measures are adopted at the outset. He attributes the past failures of atheism to the neglect of such measures before the theistic fallacy had time to spread among the fanatical masses.

But Kamsa counts without his host. When Krishna is born, He is able to upset all sinister designs against those whom He has apprised of His advent. The apparently causeless faith displayed by persons irrespective of age, gender, or condition may confound all fervent empiricists who are on principle averse to the Absolute Truth. Why are they so averse? Because His appearance is utterly incompatible with the domination of empiricism. But no adverse attempt of the empiricists, whose rule seems till then perfectly well-established over the minds of the world's deluded souls, can dissuade anyone from exclusively following the Truth when the Truth appears to take birth in the pure cognitive essence of his soul.

Putana is the slayer of infants. When a baby emerges from its mother's womb, it at once falls into the clutches of pseudo religious teachers. These teachers are successful in forestalling the good preceptor's attempts, whose help atheists never seek when they baptize their children. 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 the worldly parents. No human contrivance can prevent these Putanas from obtaining possession of the pulpits. This is because most people in this world are disposed toward atheism. The church with the best chance to survive in this damned world is the atheistic church that functions under the convenient guise of theism. The churches have always proven the staunchest upholders of the grossest forms of worldliness, from which even the worst of non-ecclesiastical criminals are found to recoil. It is not from any deliberate opposition to the ordained clergy that I make these observations.

The original purpose of the world's established churches may not have always been objectionable, but no stable religious arrangement for instructing the masses has yet been successful. The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya, in pursuance of scriptural teachings, enjoins the absence of conventionalism among teachers of the eternal religion. It does not follow that mechanically adopting an unconventional life will make one a fit religious teacher. Regulation is necessary if one wishes to control the conditioned souls' inherent worldliness, but no mechanical regulation has ever succeeded for such a purpose. The

mere pursuit of fixed doctrines and liturgies cannot hold a person to the true spirit of doctrine or liturgy. The bona fide religious teacher, however, is neither a product nor the proponent of any mechanical system. In his hands, no system can degenerate into a lifeless arrangement.

The idea of an intelligibly organized church indeed marks the close of the living spiritual movement. The great ecclesiastical establishments are the dykes and dams to retain a current that cannot be held by such contrivances. They indeed indicate the masses' desire to exploit a spiritual movement for their own purpose. They also unmistakably indicate the end of the absolute and unconventional guidance of the bona fide spiritual teacher. The people of this world understand preventive systems, but they have no idea at all of the un-prevented positive eternal life. Neither can there be any earthly contrivance for the permanent preservation of the life eternal on this mundane plane on the popular scale.

Those who are disposed, therefore, to look forward to improvement of the worldly state in a mundane sense from the worldly success of any really spiritual movement are greatly mistaken. It is these worldly aspirants who become the patrons of the mischievous race of pseudo religious teachers, the Putanas, whose congenial function is to stifle the theistic disposition at the very moment they suspect its appearance. But the real theistic disposition can never be stifled even by the Putanas' efforts. The Putanas have power only over atheists, and it is for these willing victims that they perform their salutary task.

As soon as the theistic disposition makes its appearance in the pure cognitive essence of the awakened soul, the Putanas are decisively silenced at the earliest stage of their encounter with newborn Krishna. The would-be slayer is herself slain. This is how the negative service the Putanas unwittingly render to theists is rewarded: all their hypocritical demonstrations are strangled. But Putana does not like to receive her reward, because it involves the total destruction of her wrong personality. Neither does King Kamsa like to lose the service of his most trusted agents. The effective silencing of the whole race of pseudo religious teachers is the first clear indication of the appearance of the Absolute on the mundane plane. The bona fide teacher of the Absolute heralds Krishna's advent by his uncompromising campaign against pseudo teachers of religion.

—Taken from the writings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, published in *Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (The Harmonist), January 1932.

WHY THEN SHOULD ONE GO TO ANY DEMIGOD?

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada

Bhakti is *nirguṇa*, free from all tinges of material qualities. Although the discharge of devotional service appears to be like material activities, it is never *saguṇa*, or contaminated by material qualities. *Tad-guṇāśrayayā* means that Lord Krishna's transcendental qualities are so sublime that there



is no need to divert one's attention to any other activities. His behavior with the devotees is so exalted that a devotee need not try to divert his attention to any other worship. It is said that the demoniac Putana came to kill Krishna by poisoning Him, but because Krishna was pleased to suck her breast, she was given the same position as His mother. Devotees pray, therefore, that if a demon who wanted to kill Krishna gets such an exalted position, why should they go to anyone other than Krishna for their worshipful attachment? There are two kinds of religious activities: one for material advancement and the other for spiritual advancement. By taking shelter under the lotus feet of Krishna, one is endowed with both kinds of prosperity, material and spiritual. Why then should one go to any demigod?

—*Srīmad Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 3: The Status Quo » Chapter 32. Entanglement in Fruitive Activities » Verse: 22.*



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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada

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