

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



Bindu

Issue 631

adoṣa-darśitā guṇagrāhitā

Overlooking Faults and Finding Virtues





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His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

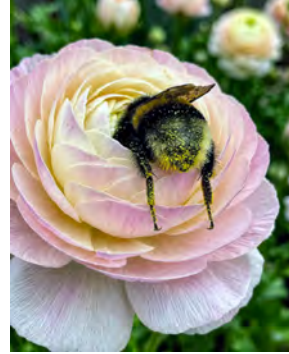
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DUTY OF THE SPIRITUAL MASTER



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Actually, it is the duty of the spiritual master to find fault with his students so that they may make progress, not that he should always be praising them. So if you find some criticism, kindly accept it in that spirit. I am only interested in that you along with all my other students should become Krishna Conscious. 🍌

— From a letter to Giriraja Das. 24 May 1972.



Unknown photographer.



Cover: Jagāi Mādhāi Uddhārāṇa. Unknown artist. Calcutta_c. 1880–1920.

Unknown artist. Delhi Agra region. Ca. 1525–1550.



Killing the calf demon Vatsasura

THE DANGER OF OFFENDING DEVOTEES



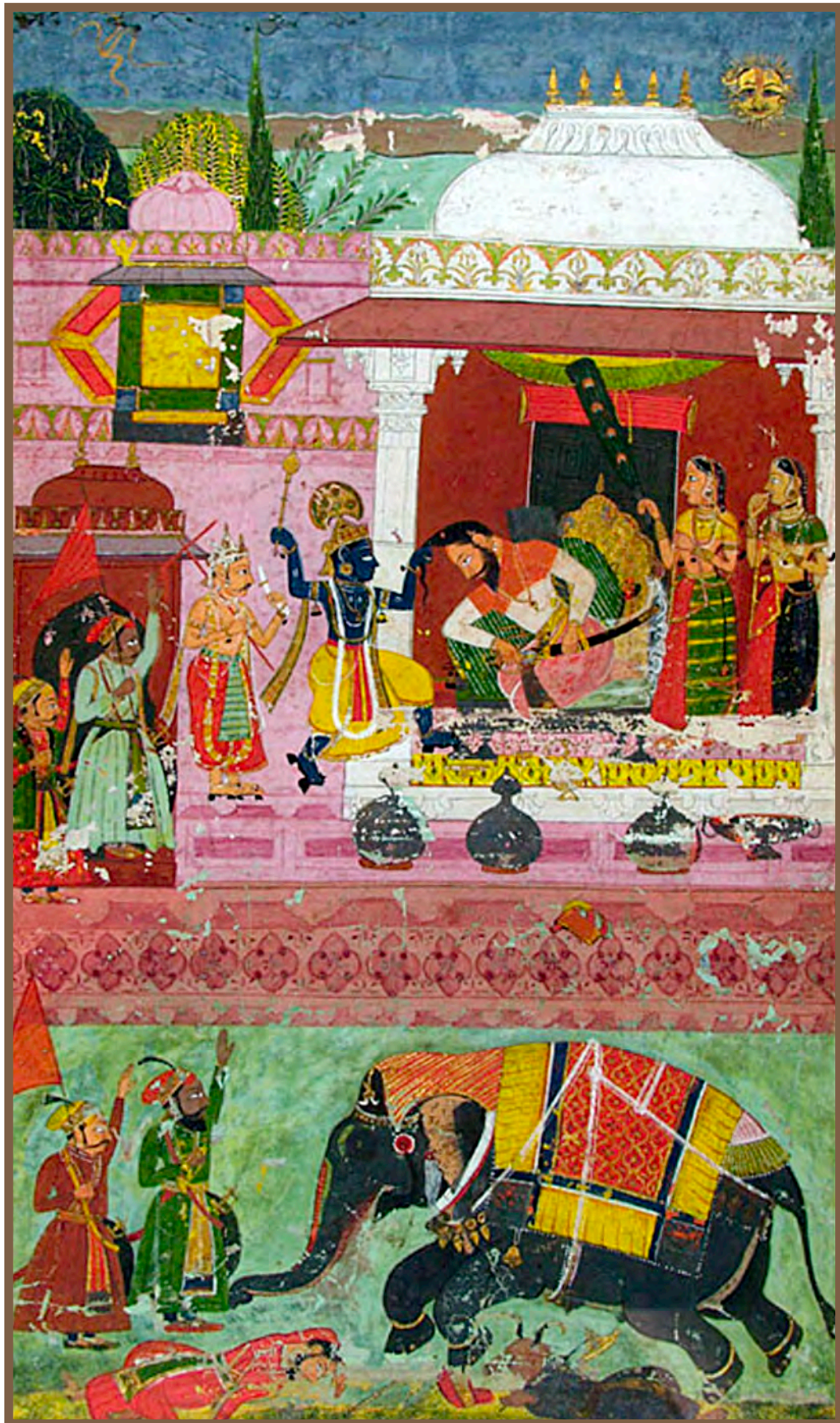
Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

To criticize, find fault with, or blaspheme a *vaiṣṇava* are all *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā*. If someone commits *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā* his *bhakti-latā* is uprooted, finished. It is most important that one should not in any way commit *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā* because Bhakti Devi will completely disappear. Why does *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā* take place? Why should there be criticism, enviousness, or hatred in the society of *vaiṣṇavas*? *Vaiṣṇava-āparādhā* is the most severe *anartha*. Bhakti Devi will disappear and one will never be able to develop *prema-bhakti*. If you commit *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā*, it will create a very great obstacle on the path of *prema-bhakti*. *Vaiṣṇava-āparādhā* generally takes place due to the presence of *īrṣā* and

bhaya — enviousness and fear. When this *āparādhā* is committed, *krodha*, anger, will arise. The offender will become very angry at a particular *vaiṣṇava*. He is afraid of that *vaiṣṇava* because of that *vaiṣṇava*'s great power. "He is making rapid advancement and I am not. Most people will be attracted to him and nobody will be attracted to me." Due to this envy and fear he finds fault with the *vaiṣṇava*, criticizes him, and speaks ill of him. Hatred and criticism arise and he speaks ill of that *vaiṣṇava* and concocts stories about him. Thus he commits *vaiṣṇava-āparādhā*. 🍊

— From chapter 2 of *Worship of Sri Guru*. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar Odisha. 2000.





Unknown artist. Mewar Rajasthan. C. 1680.

Krishna enters Mathura and Kills Kamsa

Unknown artist. Pre-Mughal school. Delhi Agra region. C. 1520.



Krishna's pastime of killing Trinavarta

Adoṣa-darśitā Guṇagrāhitā

OVERLOOKING FAULTS AND FINDING VIRTUES PART 5



Per their publishing standard, no name was given for the author of this article which was from the weekly Gauḍīya and published in Gauḍīya-Prabandha-Mālā, volume II. It was published under the guidance of the editor Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada.

Every line of Srila Narottam Thakur Mahasaya's Śrī Vaiṣṇavera Vijñapti teaches the principles of being adoṣa-darśī (one who sees no faults in others) and svadoṣa-darśī (one who perceives one's own faults). If the vaiṣṇava Thakurs themselves are adoṣa-darśī, then how shall we obtain their mercy while remaining absorbed in faultfinding? One who habitually

scrutinizes the faults of others can never become a recipient of the grace of the vaiṣṇavas.

Sri Gaura-pāṣada Srila Prabodhananda Saraswatipad has glorified the nature of the devotees of Sri Gauranga in the following verse:

trṇād api ca nīcatā sahaḥ-saumya-mugdhākṛtiḥ
sudhā-madhura-bhāṣitā viśaya-gandha-thū-thū-kṛtiḥ
hari-praṇaya-vihvalā kim api dhīr anālambitā
bhavanti kila sad-guṇā jagati gaura-bhājām imī

Humility deeper than that of a blade of grass; a naturally gentle, serene, and captivating disposition; speech sweeter than nectar itself; spontaneous revulsion toward even the scent of mundane sense enjoyment; and a heart overwhelmed with divine love for Sri Hari, resting upon no support other than him — such sublime qualities are only found in this world among the devotees of Sri Gaurangadev. (Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta 24)

Those who remain perpetually engaged in finding faults in others yet outwardly displaying counterfeit humility, respect, or reverence, yet who criticize and discuss the defects of certain persons behind



Unknown artist. Probably from Odisha. C. 1800–1900.

Krishna kills Bakasura





Krishna kills Putana

their backs, and then, for the sake of public opinion, again exhibit respect and honor toward those very same individuals — possess hearts harder than stone, hearts that serve as repositories of offences and envy. No matter how carefully they attempt to conceal themselves, the deadly poison of envy residing within their hearts inevitably manifests through their countenance, speech, and conduct. Therefore, they cannot possess the natural gentleness and captivating simplicity — *sahaja-saumya-mugdhākṛti* — which adorns the genuine devotee. The celebrated expression, *darśane pavitra kara, ei tomāra guṇa* — “By your very *darśana* a soul becomes purified” — finds its complete manifestation only in the life of a *vaiṣṇava* who is both *guṇa-grāhī* and *adoṣa-darśī*. Within such souls, two characteristics are seen simultaneously: speech sweet as nectar, and complete indifference toward anything devoid of relation to Bhagavan. Their words are filled with kindness and spiritual nourishment, yet they possess no attraction whatsoever for topics unrelated to Krishna.

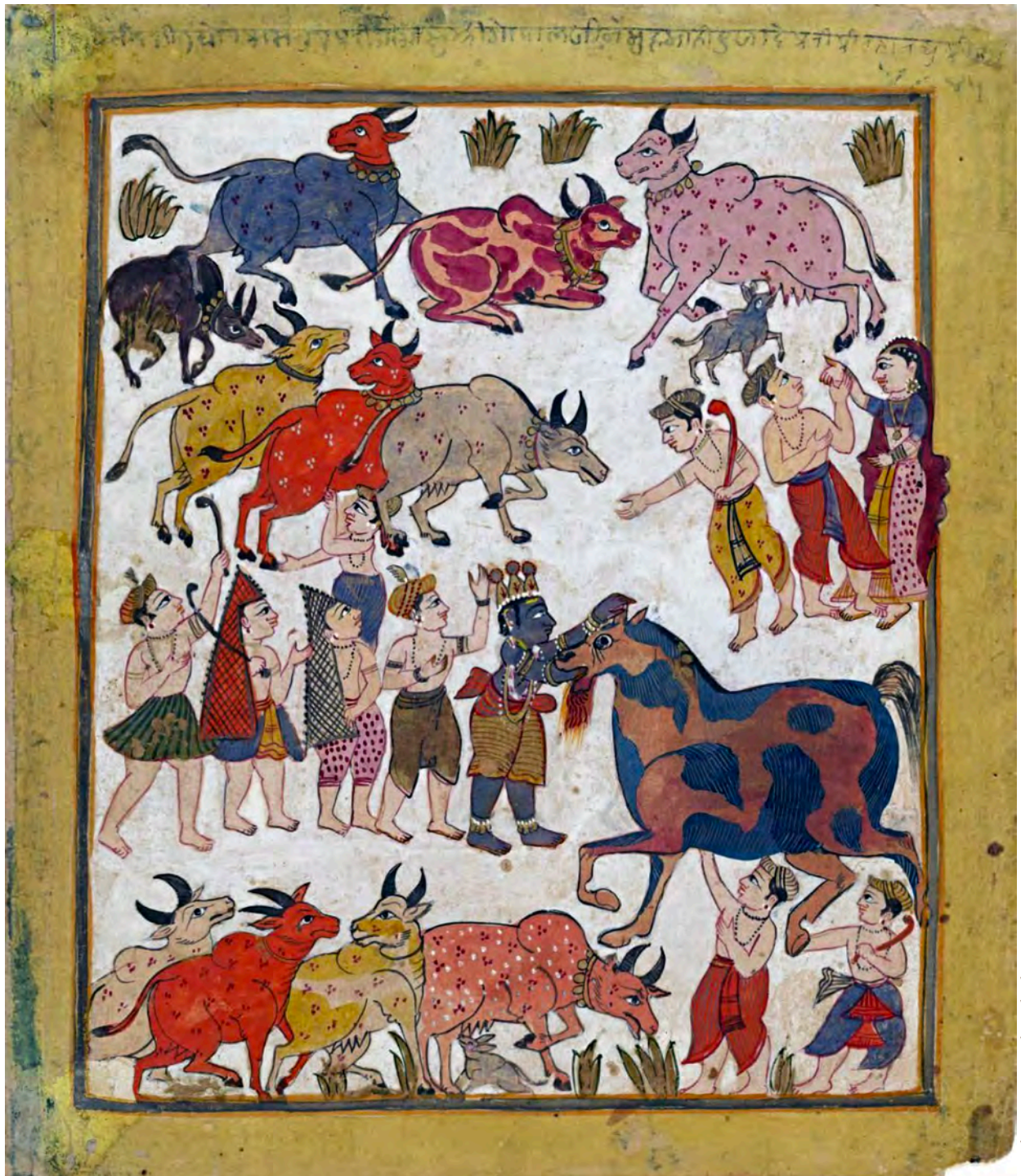
They cannot tolerate even the slightest fragrance of external subject matter dissociated from Krishna, yet they never become hateful toward those who are attached to such subjects. For hatred itself is merely a concealed and distorted form of attachment. The *vaiṣṇava* does not divide the world into opposing camps, one consisting of worldly persons and another consisting

of devotees, nor does he imagine that the duty of a *vaiṣṇava* is to spend his life searching out and exposing the faults of materialistic people. Such sectarian and antagonistic conceptions find no place in his heart.

The great teachers of the *rūpānuga* lineage consistently instruct us to examine our own faults rather than the faults of others. This essential lesson is emphasized by Sri Raghunath Das Goswami Prabhu in *Manah-śikṣā*, Srila Bhaktivinode Ṭhakur in *Manah-śikṣā Pañcaka*, and Srila Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada in his song “*Nirjane Anartha*,” where he sharply asks, “O wicked mind! What kind of *vaiṣṇava* are you?”

When the supremely compassionate *ācāryas*, out of concern for the welfare of the conditioned souls, administer discipline, chastisement, or corrective instruction, or when they describe the nature of *asat-saṅga*, such actions do not arise from a tendency toward faultfinding. Rather, they stand as the highest evidence of their profound anguish upon witnessing the suffering and spiritual degradation of others — *para-duḥkha-kātaratā*. Their admonitions are expressions of mercy, not manifestations of envy.

However, if a person unlawfully imitates those compassionate *ācāryas*, *śrī-gurudeva*, or the *vaiṣṇavas*, while remaining devoid of genuine sympathy and goodwill toward others, and under the pretext of “rejecting bad association” or “vigorously opposing *vaiṣṇava-nindā*,” indulges in faultfinding merely to



Krishna kills Dhenukasura while his friends watch



By the artist Makaku, Guler Punjab, Circa 1740.



Killing the demon Aristasura

gratify his own envy, then such conduct has nothing to do with *bhakti*. If, in the name of avoiding *asat-saṅga* or protesting offences against *vaiṣṇavas*, one continually stores within one's heart the refuse of criticism, memories of others' faults, condemnatory reflections, and discussions of their shortcomings, then that accumulated impurity eventually ignites like a fire concealed within dry husks. Though hidden from external view, that smoldering fire gradually burns from within, drying up, weakening, and withering the tender creeper of devotion.

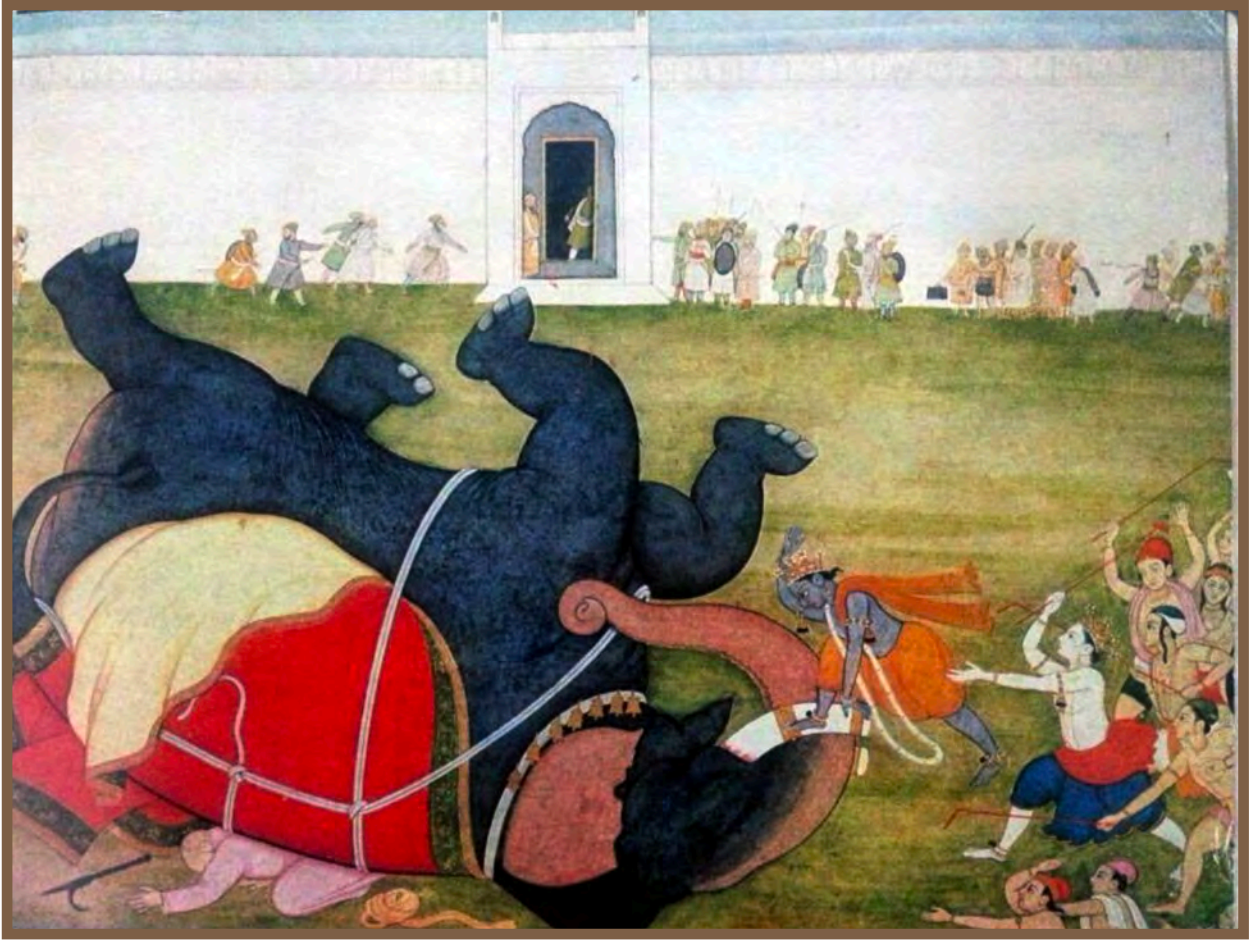
Furthermore, suppose the disciplinary mercy of genuine and well-wishing spiritual guardians falls upon a particular individual in the form of correction or chastisement. If, upon observing this, someone concludes that the chastised person is eternally fallen, perpetually offensive, or forever condemned; if he derives satisfaction from discussing and analyzing that person's faults; if he cites the corrective words of the guru as authoritative evidence and thereby declares that disciple to be destined for endless spiritual ruin; and if, instead of hoping for his reformation, he becomes eager to see him descend even further into degradation, then such a mentality can never promote either one's own welfare or the welfare of others.

When the *śrī-guru-vargas* point out the faults and shortcomings of a disciple for that disciple's

ultimate welfare, a sincere seeker of spiritual benefit does not regard that disciple as the object of condemnation. Rather, he applies that instructive mercy to himself and derives personal benefit from it. The self-deceived person, however, refuses to accept the instruction as applicable to himself; instead, he concludes that another person is at fault while considering himself innocent, and thus remains trapped in self-delusion.

When our *śrī-guru-vargas* mercifully chastise us, it is necessary to guard against the thought: "If others hear these words of correction, my honor and reputation will diminish." Such thinking is nothing but attachment to prestige — *pratiṣṭhā-moha*. Conversely, when our *guru-janas* chastise someone else, if one secretly experiences satisfaction upon hearing those words, as though deriving pleasure from the exposure of another's faults, then such a disposition is the natural tendency of those who are addicted to faultfinding, blind to their own defects, and afflicted with envy. This mentality must be beaten and driven entirely from the heart.

[Translator's note: The disposition of a genuine *sādhaka* is diametrically opposed to that of a hypocritical person. When he hears the guru's instruction, chastisement, or corrective guidance directed toward another individual, he does not view it as a revelation of that person's faults. Rather, he receives it as instruction meant for himself. They



Unknown artist. Pahari, Kangra school. 1775-1800.

Krishna kills the elephant Kuvaliyapida

reflect: “This teaching is for me. The very same defects may exist within my own heart.” The envious act in the opposite manner. Every instruction is applied to others and never to themselves. Consequently, they spend their entire life collecting evidence of the faults of others while remaining a stranger to their own shortcomings. This is one of the most subtle forms of self-deception in spiritual life. The words of guru descend as medicine for the conditioned soul, yet the conditioned mind converts that medicine into a weapon against others. Instead of becoming humbled, one becomes judgmental; instead of becoming introspective, one becomes accusatory. Therefore, this tendency must be completely uprooted from the heart. By sincerely accepting every instruction as personally relevant, by cultivating awareness of one’s own defects, and by learning to appreciate the virtues of others, one gradually becomes established in the pure *vaiṣṇava* qualities of *adoṣa-darśitā*, *guṇa-grāhitā*, and *svadoṣa-darśitā*. This is the true intention of the *śrī-guru-vargas* and the *mahāpuruṣas*.

Their purpose is not to provide material for criticism, but to awaken humility; not to expose others, but to reform themselves; not to increase sectarian judgment, but to cultivate the *vaiṣṇava* heart, which sees its own need for mercy and rejoices in the spiritual welfare of all living beings.]

Those who are habituated to faultfinding invariably view even the presentation of *śāstra* with suspicion. Whenever a *śāstric* discussion is conducted, they immediately imagine that, through some subtle strategy or indirect device, the subject has been introduced specifically to attack them. Every faultfinder perpetually considers himself the object of aggression. Living under the constant apprehension that he is being targeted, he eventually comes to oppose even the public recitation and glorification of revealed truth — *śrauta-vāñī-kīrtana*. Those who have become infected by the contagious disease of faultfinding remain exceedingly eager to spread that contagion still further. 🍌

(To be continued in the next issue.)

— Translated by Raya Ramananda Das



Krishna and Balaram defeat Chanura and Mustika

CLOSING THOUGHTS THE ALCHEMY OF DEVOTIONAL VISION



In the assembly of *vaiṣṇavas*, there is perhaps no fence more vital to guard our spiritual creeper than the boundary of *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra*. Yet, tragically, the default setting of human nature pulls us to search for flaws rather than beauty. When Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur stood before the assembly at Balighai in 1911, at the famous debate between Brahmins and *vaiṣṇavas* he was not merely defending a social position; he was defending the very integrity of the heart of the *vaiṣṇavas*. In that discourse he invoked a timeless warning of Srila Ramanujacharya, reminding us that how we choose to look at a devotee is a direct reflection of our spiritual position.

*vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca janmāni nidrāśayāni yāni ca
dṛṣṭvā tāny aprakāśyāni janebhya na vadet kvacit
teṣāṁ doṣān vihāyāśu guṇāṁś caiva prakīrtayet*

“(For the auspiciousness of the world and the benefit of neophytes:) Even if one knows about a *vaiṣṇava*’s birth, sleeping habits, and laziness, one should not (in order to proudly criticize) disclose

these things in public. Rather than finding faults, one should glorify the *vaiṣṇava*’s qualities.”

Our capacity to follow this injunction from Srila Ramanujacharya depends on the condition of our hearts. Expanding on this principle of perception, Srila Viswanath Chakravarti Thakura, in his *Sārārthadarśini* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.4.12), categorizes human nature into eight distinct lenses of vision. He divides them into four types of saintly persons and four types of wicked persons based on their propensity to find either fault or merit:

1) **Mahat** (“great person”) — A *mahat* has the ability to see some good in everyone. They also perceive faults in others, but they consider that those faults can be eventually transformed by certain methods into good qualities. Thus, if they feel that a person may be benefited by discussing that person’s faults, they may, under appropriate circumstances, speak harsh words. Neem juice tastes very bitter, but it can cure diseases when administered appropriately. It should be noted that a *mahat* will never reject or condemn a faulty person, but thinks only how that person may be benefited.

2) **Mahattara** (“greater person”) — A *mahattara* also sees good and bad qualities in others, but focuses on



Unknown artist, Gujarat. Circa 1720.

Krishna kills Bakasura



and praises the good qualities. Seeing a materialistic merchant, a *mahattara* will think, “Although he is a sense-gratifier, he takes good care of guests and is worthy of deliverance.”

3) **Mahattama** (“especially great person”) — A *mahattama* sees whatever good qualities others have and magnifies them, not seeing even the smallest fault. Viswanath describes their attitude, “This person has stolen my cloth because he is cold, and though he has a weapon, he doesn’t attack me because he is merciful. He is virtuous.”

4) **Ati-mahattama** (“extremely great person”) — An *ati-mahattama* sees good qualities in others even where there are none. Their attitude is, “In this world there are no bad people. Everyone is good.”

In the same purport, Viswanath also delineates four types of *asādhus*, wicked or bad persons, who are characterized according to their propensity for fault-finding:

1) **Asādhū** (“wicked person”) — An *asādhū* sees some good qualities in others but presumes that eventually those good qualities will be overshadowed or spoiled by some fault. For example, upon seeing someone working for another person’s benefit, the *asādhū* will conclude that eventually he or she will want to exploit the person whom they are helping. Simply put, *asādhus* are not gentlemen.

2) **Asādhutara** (“very wicked person”) — An *asādhutara* is even more improper. He or she sees only



Attributed to the artist Purkhu, Kangra, 1810.

Krishna gazes at a painting of Radharani

faults in others and overlooks others’ good qualities. “This *sannyāsī* eats ghee rice to fill his stomach. He is lusty and should be considered fallen.”

3) **Asādhutama** (“especially wicked person”) — An *asādhutama* takes small faults and magnifies them, seeing no good qualities at all. Viswanath gives an example: An *asādhutama* will criticize and condemn a renunciate as being a “bogus rascal”, for the fault of giving up the forest and living in the house of a married man. The *asādhutama* will conclude, “His obvious motivation is only to steal the money of that householder.”

4) **Aty-asādhutama** (“extremely wicked person”) — An *aty-asādhutama* sees faults in all others, even where there are no faults. “In this world, or in this society, no one is good. Everyone is evil.” They are the very worst.

This description of Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur acts as a mirror for the soul. It forces a sobering question upon us: In which of these eight categories do I reside? To choose the path of the *ati-mahattama* — to search out goodness even where there seems to be none — is not a sign of naivety. It is the symptom of a heart fully saturated by grace. If we desire to taste the pure nectar of the Holy Name, we must dismantle the fault-finding machinery within ourselves and beg for the vision of the saints. 🍌 — MDas

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