

Virtues and Vices of Others - Part 1

Date: 2020-11-24

Author: Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept our humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

In many of the business centers or shops we can see boards saying “***If you are satisfied with our services, please tell others about it and if you are not, then please tell us so that we can improve ourselves.***”

In all our human dealings also it is very pleasing, if we praise the living entities in public and if anyone is to be chastised, then it is a good etiquette to do so in private, as otherwise they will be very much embarrassed in front of others. This important etiquette is taught to us in a very beautiful way in Srimad Bhagavatam.

In the eighth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam we have the pastime of churning of the milk ocean for nectar. In the beginning, as a result of the churning, a huge amount of poison was produced. The Prajapatis, seeing no one else to save them, approached Lord Siva and offered him prayers full of truth. Lord Siva is called Asutoshha because He is very pleased if one is a devotee. Therefore He easily agreed to drink all the poison generated by the churning. Thereafter, Lord Siva, who is dedicated to auspicious, benevolent work for humanity, compassionately took the whole quantity of poison in His palm and drank it. As if in defamation, the poison born from the ocean of milk manifested its potency by marking Lord Siva's neck with a bluish line. That line, however, is now accepted as an ornament of the Lord. So Lord Siva could hide the poison within His throat. We also see that the moon manifested from the ocean of milk and the same was placed by Lord Siva on His head for everyone to see. Because He carries the crescent moon on His head, He is called Chandramauleeshwara. There is a beautiful *subhashitam* in Sanskrit connected to this pastime of Lord Siva which brings out something we must learn and practise in our daily lives. The *subhashitam* says :

*guṇadoṣau budhau gr̥h̥ṇan indu kṣvelāviveśvaraḥ
śīrasā ślāghyate pūrvam param kaṅṭhe niyacchati*

A wise man holding both virtue and the vice (of others) keeps the former on head and (swallows) the latter in his throat just like Lord Shiva carries the moon (on the head) and the poison (in his throat).

So the common sensical good etiquette is that the virtues of others are praised openly and the vices are not openly criticised. We also understand that the poison was kept in the throat and the nectar which came at the end of the churning, was distributed to all the demigods. This also indicates that distressful news is not shared with others unless absolutely essential, whereas auspiciousness and happiness is shared with one and all.

Krishna willing, we shall see the pastimes related to the above in the ensuing offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Chennai.

Virtues and Vices of Others - Part 2

Date: 2020-11-25

Author: Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in continuation of the previous offering titled, "**Virtues and Vices of Others**", wherein we were meditating on the nice message conveyed in the below *subhashitam* in Sanskrit, in relation to the pastime of churning the milk ocean and Lord Siva swallowing the poison and keeping it in His throat.

*guṇadoṣau budhau gr̥hṇan indu kṣvelāviveśvaraḥ
śīrasā ślāghyate pūrvaṁ param̐ kaṅṭhe niyacchati*

A wise man holding both virtue and the vice (of others) keeps the former on head and (swallows) the latter in his throat just like Lord Shiva carries the moon (on the head) and the poison (in his throat).

From this we learn the following:

1. The virtues of others are to be praised openly like the moon is carried on the head by Lord Siva.
2. The vices of others are not to be criticised in public just like the poison was kept in the throat by Lord Siva.
3. Also the distressful happenings are not to be distributed to others just like poison was not distributed
4. Auspicious happenings and happiness are to be shared with others just like the nectar was distributed to the demigods.

We shall see some related pastimes in this regard

1. **The virtues of others are to be praised openly:** While praising the virtues also, there are a class of good persons who set a new standard as mentioned in the following verse from Niti satakam by Bhartruhari.

*manasi vacasi kāye puṇya pīyūṣa pūrṇāḥ
tribhuvanam-upakāra-sreṇibhiḥ prīṇayantaḥ
para-guṇa-paramāñūn-parvatī kṛtya nityaṁ
nija-hṛdi vikasantaḥ santi santaḥ kiyantaḥ*

There are a few good people, filled with the nectar of purity in thought, word and action, pleasing the three worlds with a series of beneficial acts. They make a mountain of the tiniest virtues of others and rejoice in their heart.

We can see this quality present in Lord Siva who is glorified by Goddess Sati in the verse 4.4.12 of Srimad Bhagavatam

*doṣān pareṣāṁ hi guṇeṣu sādhave
gr̥hṇanti kecin na bhavadṛśo dvija
guṇāṁś ca phalgūn bahulī-kariṣṇavo
mahattamās teṣv avidad bhavān agham*

Twice-born Dakṣa, a man like you can simply find fault in the qualities of others. Lord Śiva, however, not only finds no faults with others' qualities, but if someone has a little good quality, he magnifies it greatly . Unfortunately, you have found fault with such a great soul.

Srila Prabhupada writes in the purport, "There are some highly qualified persons who accept only the good qualities of others. Just as a bee is always interested in the honey in the flower and does not consider the thorns and colors, highly qualified persons, who are uncommon, accept only the good qualities of others, not considering their bad qualities,

whereas the common man can judge what are good qualities and what are bad qualities. Among the uncommonly good souls there are still gradations, and the best good soul is one who accepts an insignificant asset of a person and magnifies that good quality. Lord Śiva is also called Āśutoṣa, which refers to one who is satisfied very easily and who offers to any person the highest level of benediction. For example, once a devotee of Lord Śiva wanted the benediction that whenever he touched someone on the head, that person's head would at once be separated from his trunk. Lord Śiva agreed. Although the benediction asked was not very commendable because the devotee wanted to kill his enemy, Lord Śiva considered the devotee's good quality in worshiping and satisfying him and granted the benediction. Thus Lord Śiva accepted his bad qualities as magnificently good qualities."

We also see that Lord Krishna accepted the motherhood of Putana because she pretended to be an affectionate mother, allowing Krishna to suck her breast. Srila Prabhupada writes, "**The Lord accepts the least qualification of the living entity and awards him the highest reward. That is the standard of His character. Therefore, who but the Lord can be the ultimate shelter?**"

Krishna willing we shall see the other points in the ensuing offering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

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Chennai.

Virtues and Vices of Others - Part 3

Date: 2020-11-26

Author: Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

This is in conclusion of the previous offering titled, "Virtues and Vices of Others", wherein we were meditating on the various pastimes in Srimad Bhagavatam related to the following points:

1. The virtues of others are to be praised openly like the moon is carried on the head by Lord Siva.
2. The vices of others are not to be criticised in public just like the poison was kept in the throat by Lord Siva.
3. The distressful happenings are not to be distributed to others just like poison was not distributed
4. Auspicious happenings and happiness are to be shared with others just like the nectar was distributed to the demigods.

We saw the first point in the last offering. We shall see the other points.

2. The vices of others are not to be criticised in public:

In the pastime of worshiping the Govardhana hill, we see that Indra was ashamed of having attacked Vrindavana with a violent storm, Indra secretly came before Lord Krishna, offered obeisances and he wanted to seek forgiveness from the Lord. Srimad Bhagavatam says in 10.27.2

*vivikta upasaṅgamyā vrīḍītaḥ kṛta-helanaḥ
pasparśa pādayor enaṁ kirītenārka-varcasā*

Indra was very ashamed of having offended the Lord. Approaching Him in a solitary place, Indra fell down and lay his helmet, whose effulgence was as brilliant as the sun, upon the Lord's lotus feet.

In the purport it is mentioned that, "From the commentaries of the ācāryas we understand that Lord Kṛṣṇa wanted to provide a solitary meeting for Indra, so that he would not be further humiliated. Indra came to surrender and beg forgiveness, and the Lord allowed him to do so privately."

Herein we see that the Lord did not want to embarrass Indra and He allowed Indra a private audience wherein he could open his heart and admit his offences.

3. The distressful and unpalatable happenings are not to be distributed to others:

When Mahatma Vidura returned to Hastinapura after his pilgrimage, Maharaja Yudhisthira made loving enquiries about the pilgrimage and asked about the welfare of the descendants of Yadu who were always rapt in the service of Lord Sri Krishna. On being thus questioned, Mahatma Vidura gradually described everything he had personally experienced, except news of the annihilation of the Yadu dynasty. Srimad Bhagavatam 1.13.13 says,

*nanv apriyaṁ durviśahaṁ nṛṇāṁ svayam upasthitam
nāvedayat sakaruṇo duḥkhitān draṣṭum akṣamaḥ*

Compassionate Mahatma Vidura could not stand to see the Pandavas distressed at any time. Therefore he did not disclose this unpalatable incident because calamities come of their own accord.

The material world is a place of calamities and miseries at every step. Just like a forest fire somehow blazes without being set by anyone, our situation is such that perplexities appear without our wanting them and it is more so in Kaliyuga. So it is very important that we do not add to the miseries of the living entities by speaking unpalatable truth,

causing more distress. Srila Prabhupada writes in the purport, "**According to Niti sastra, one should not speak an unpalatable truth to cause distress to others. Distress comes upon us in its own way by the laws of nature, so one should not aggravate it by propaganda.**" So Mahatma vidura just held it within his throat just like Lod Siva held the poison in His throat.

4. **Auspicious news and happiness are to be shared with others:** It is part of the Vedic culture that whenever there is any occasion to celebrate in the family, like the birth of a child or marriage, then charity is given profusely and all are invited for a good feast. Our happiness multiplies by sharing it with everyone. We see that after Kamsa was killed by Krishna and His parents were released from prison, Vasudeva had his sons initiated by sacred thread as the token of second birth, which is essential for the higher castes of human society. Vasudeva called for his family priest and learned brahmanas, and the sacred thread ceremony of Krishna and Balarama was duly performed. During this ceremony, Vasudeva gave various ornaments in charity to the brahmanas and endowed them with cows decorated with silken cloths and golden ornaments. Then Vasudeva remembered the cows he had wanted to give in charity to the brahmanas after the birth of Krishna and Balarama. But being imprisoned by Kamsa at that time, Vasudeva had been able to do so only within his mind, for Kamsa had stolen all his cows. With the death of Kamsa, his cows were released, and now Vasudeva gave the actual cows to the brahmanas.

May we cultivate the civilized behaviour of praising virtue in public and correcting the vices in private, as also not to propagate unpalatable happenings and to share happiness and ultimate auspiciousness with one and all.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Chennai.