

When Swans Preach to Ass-like Men

Worshippers of Śrī Raṅganātha at Śrīraṅgam used to steal the ingredients meant for Viṣṇu's service; instead of using Viṣṇu's wealth in His service, they would engage it in service to their wives and sons and deceitfully tell ordinary people that such usage was for Viṣṇu. Śrī Rāmānujācārya protested that theft by the attendants of the deity. Wherever the truth is preached, it is inevitable that blindly selfish persons who are opposed to the truth will become inimical; hence, to kill Rāmānujācārya, the *pūjārīs* at Śrīraṅgam first gave him rice mixed with poison. But after the simple-hearted wife of one of those *pūjārīs* by hint informed Ācārya Rāmānuja of their evil intent, he gave the rice to a dog, who ate it and immediately died. And on yet another occasion, the same *pūjārīs* gave Śrī Rāmānuja poison mixed with the *caranāmṛta* of Śrī Raṅganātha.

– Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava Vol 3. p57



In the course of time, Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī, Jagannātha Ācārya and other well-known *brāhmaṇas* started to become Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's disciples. This caused a stir in the *smārta* community and they went to complain to Rāja Narasiṃha: “Narottama is a *sūdra* who makes disciples of *brāhmaṇas*. He is using some kind of mystic powers or hypnotism to convert them. He should be stopped.”

After discussions with Rāja Narasiṃha, it was decided that a scholar named Rūpa Nārāyaṇa should be summoned to debate Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. This *brāhmaṇa* had won numerous debates of this sort and was known as a *digvijayī*. The Rāja himself set off with Rūpa Nārāyaṇa and a number of other *brāhmaṇas* toward Kheturi.

Rāmacandra Kavirāja and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa Cakravartī were upset to see the wicked intentions of the Rāja and his *paṇḍita*. When they heard that the Rāja and his entourage were resting overnight in Kumarapura village, they went in disguise as a potter and a panseller and set up stalls in the village market. When the *brāhmaṇas* came through the market, Rāmacandra and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa spoke with them in Sanskrit. The *brāhmaṇas* were astounded that even ordinary stall-keepers in the village were able to speak in Sanskrit. Rāmacandra and Gaṅgā Nārāyaṇa began a debate with the *brāhmaṇas*, defeating every *smārta* argument that they put forward and establishing the pure doctrine of devotional service.

The Rāja and his *Digvijayī paṇḍita* were rendered speechless by the scholarship of the two ordinary stall-keepers. When they learned that the two men were disciples of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, the Rāja said to his *paṇḍita*, “If Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's ordinary disciples can defeat you in debate, there is no need of going to see him.”

– Śrī Caitanya: His Life & Associates



Rasikānanda Deva Gosvāmī fully committed himself in body, mind and soul to the service of his *guru*. Indeed, he served him so well that in a short time he was recognized as Śyāmānanda’s chief disciple, a very powerful preacher and initiating *guru* himself. In fact, it is a truism that a good disciple becomes a good teacher. A spiritual master may have innumerable followers who call him their *guru*, but are disciples in name only. Only a true disciple who has dedicated himself completely to his spiritual mater is imbued with all the powers of the *guru*. Śyāmānanda invested Rasikānanda with such spiritual power that he was able to convert many criminals, atheists, Muslims, and other fallen spirit souls to the path of devotion, bestowing the jewel of *prema* upon them all.

On one occasion, a wicked Muslim tried to silence Rasika Murāri by having him attacked by an intoxicated elephant, but Rasikānanda was able to transform even the elephant into a disciple and engage him in the service of Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. All who witnessed this amazing event were overwhelmed with astonishment at Rasika Murāri's spiritual power and the evil Muslim *zamindār* himself came and surrendered to him.

– Śrī Caitanya: His Life & Associates



The scene was Māyāpur and Prabhupāda was taking his morning walk on the roof of the residential building. Jayapatāka Swami introduced Prabhupāda to a prominent businessman who had come to visit from Calcutta.

Speaking in English, Prabhupāda greeted him pleasantly.

“I am pleased to see you,” said Prabhupāda. “Thank you for coming to Māyāpur. So, what is your factory?”

The businessman from Calcutta, a heavy-set man in an immaculate white *dhotī*, *kūrta*, and vest, spoke in a loud voice.

“I manufacture glass,” he said.

“Hmm,” Prabhupāda reflected. “So where does the glass come from?”

“It is from silicon,” the man replied. “It is from sand.”

“Yes,” said Prabhupāda, “but who owns the sand?”

The Calcutta man was not only an intelligent businessman, but he was pious and could understand what Bhaktivedanta Swami, as *guru*, was driving at. He said, “Oh, the sand comes from *Bhagavān*.”

Prabhupāda replied quickly, “Oh, you are stealing from *Bhagavān*?”

Prabhupāda’s retort made everyone laugh—even the industrialist could not help but join in the laughter.

– Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar, Vol 2.20



This illusory world is always ruled by those who are envious of Viṣṇu, for they are the majority. Indeed it is so arranged by the will of Viṣṇu, the bewilderer of the demons, just to protect the rarely attained and most confidential treasure of *bhakti*.