

— Helpful Remedies — For Common Health Problems

Boat in the water, not water in the boat

Once upon a time there was a very simple village boy who had never seen the ocean or even a lake of water. One day he travelled with his family to a distant tourist resort. For the first time in his life he saw a lake and small boats on its shore. He asked the guide at the resort, “My dear sir, what are those things on the side of the lake and what is their purpose?”

Charmed by the small boy’s innocence, the man smiled and replied, “They are called ‘boats’. If you place them on the water, they will take you wherever you want to go. If you give me five rupees, you can use one for an afternoon and experience the fun of boating.” The boy had been given twenty rupees of pocket money by his parents and was inquisitive to explore his new environment; so he gave the man five rupees. He was then shown his boat and given a few basic tips for using it. The guide then left to take his lunch and a little rest, but promised he’d return in a few hours to reclaim the boat.

The young boy was excited with his new toy, but also a little confused. He was also a little hesitant to venture too close to the water. “Hmm”, he thought, “Did he say ‘Put the boat in the water’, or did he say, ‘Put the water in the boat’.” He saw a bucket in the boat, and so he decided that the appropriate thing to do was to put the water in the boat. Within an hour the boat was full of water and only the seat remained dry. He climbed into the boat and sat on the seat, optimistic that the boat would now take him wherever he wanted to go. But nothing happened.

He sat and sat. But nothing happened.

After some time he saw the resort guide returning and he angrily yelled at him, “Give me back my five rupees! You cheated me! This boat hasn’t moved one inch since I sat in it. Give me back my five rupees!”

The resort guide laughed and said, “My dear boy, the boat is not moving because you’ve made a very big mistake. You were supposed to put the boat in the water, not the water in the boat! Come with me and we will try again.” He took the boy to another boat and they had a wonderful time boating on the lake. The boy was very, very happy and really felt he’d gotten his five rupees worth.

Comment:

The boat is our *sādhana* and the water is the wonderful organizational support and service that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ISKCON provides. If we put our boat in the water, we are supported and nourished in so many very special ways — we can hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Bhagavad-gītā* classes, tune into *Nāma saṅkīrtana*, associate with devotees, take a wonderful feast with them, etc. In this way we will easily sail towards

our cherished goal. However, if we put the water in the boat — if we allow our active service commitments to disturb and interfere with our *sadhana* commitments — we will go nowhere. Sometimes we need to be reminded of this by a more experienced, kind-hearted devotee.

Kṛṣṇa Is Time

Kṛṣṇa is time, and time will tell who is who and what is what.

Pūtanā was a vicious she-demon who deceived Mother Yaśodā and her friends, but she was unable to deceive Kṛṣṇa. She approached Him with the intention to kill Him, but Kṛṣṇa killed her. A demon named Vatsāsura also tried to deceive Kṛṣṇa by taking the form of a calf, but Kṛṣṇa immediately detected him and killed him. Kṛṣṇa is the greatest trickster, no one can outsmart or deceive Him.

Comment:

Sometimes we worry that unfavorable, ill-motivated influences are gaining strength both within Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ISKCON and in the preaching field. It’s best to pray to Kṛṣṇa about our concerns and leave them at His feet. He’s the expert. He has His plans and they are perfect. After all, Kṛṣṇa is time, and time will tell who is who and what is what.

Three Circles of Vision

Once upon a time I witnessed a very pure and elevated *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava being publicly chastised and humiliated by a very angry devotee in spiritual leadership. It literally cracked my heart to hear and see this. I very carefully watched the devotee being abused. He remained silent and peaceful throughout the tirade. When it finally came to an end, he paid his full obeisances to the angry devotee and quietly continued his service. I was amazed.

The following day I approached the chastised devotee and asked him how he could manage to stay so calm and respectful. He kindly explained his secret. He said, “I have three circles of vision:

1. If I have responsibility and influence I see things 100% and act accordingly. That is my duty to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his ISKCON.
2. If I have no responsibility but I have influence, I will advise when asked.
3. If I have no responsibility and no influence, I don’t see and I don’t act.

In this way I can fulfill my responsibilities to Śrīla Prabhupāda, but not be sidetracked or implicated in petty politics and *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Yesterday I had no responsibility for the circumstances, and I certainly had no influence. There was no need to say anything nor do anything. Best to just tolerate such things.”

(*This is a true story.)

Comment:

Our tendency is to try to adjust or rectify unpleasant situations in which we find ourselves. But often this implicates us more and the situation becomes an even greater problem or disturbance. In the future perhaps it would be a good idea to ask ourselves two questions before we speak or act:

- 1) Do I have influence here?
- 2) Do I have responsibility here?

Why not give it a try?!