

From Sri Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir

Date: February 4, 2015 Speaker: HH Romapada Swami

Subject: SB 6.3.30

tat kñamyatää sa bhagavän puruñau puräeo
näräyaëau sva-puruñair yad asat kåtaà nau
svänäm aho na viduñää racitäijalénää
kñántir garéyasi namaù puruñäya bhümne

TRANSLATION:

Then Yamarāja, considering himself and his servants to be offenders, spoke as follows, begging pardon from the Lord. "O my Lord, my servants have surely committed a great offense by arresting a Vaiṣṇava such as Ajāmila. O Nārāyaṇa, O supreme and oldest person, please forgive us. Because of our ignorance, we failed to recognize Ajāmila as a servant of Your Lordship, and thus we have certainly committed a great offense. Therefore with folded hands we beg Your pardon. My Lord, since You are supremely merciful and are always full of good qualities, please pardon us. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You."

PURPORT

Lord Yamarāja took upon himself the responsibility for the offense committed by his servants. If the servant of an establishment makes a mistake, the establishment takes responsibility for it. Although Yamarāja is above offenses, his servants, practically with his permission, went to arrest Ajāmila, which was a great offense. The nyāya-śāstra confirms, bhṛtyāparādhe svāmīno daṇḍaḥ: if a servant makes a mistake, the master is punishable because he is responsible for the offense. Taking this seriously, Yamarāja, along with his servants, prayed with folded hands to be excused by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa.

HH Romapada Swami:

(Pranama mantra)

Due to time constraints regarding when the class must end, I have to speak very concisely. Three points. In the purport of this verse, Srila Prabhupada is not only speaking of mistakes or offenses one makes which may reflect badly upon the acharya; he specifies that the establishment which a servant is part of receives the reactions of its members. To illustrate this, I am going to narrate an anecdote. In 1970, Srila Prabhupada was visiting Radha Govinda Mandir in Brooklyn. As was his practice after taking his morning walk, he directly came to the Temple room. At seven o'clock he stood before the altar to greet the Deities. Many sannyasis were standing right next to him holding their dandas, appearing very formidable. The mood of their good fortune and importance was evident: "We're next to Prabhupada!" Srila Prabhupada heard the

Govindam Prayers and then paid his obeisances. Then he went to take charnamrita. Someone had put salt in the charnamrita bowl instead of sugar!

As you know, Prabhupada's physical stature was quite short compared to his American sannyasis, whose height was much greater than his. Right in the middle of the Temple room floor he looked in all directions at these towering sannyasis, all holding their dandas. His voice was loud enough that although I was way in the back of the temple room by the vyasasana, I could clearly hear his voice. It was loud! He demanded "Who is responsible for this?!"

Now, when Prabhupada exhibited the mood of anger, everyone stepped back. They gave the wrong answer. They looked at each other and said, "Well, the head pujari must know who made the charnamrita. We will ask the head pujari, Srila Prabhupada, who made the charnamrita." And again I was way on the other side of the Temple room and I heard what Prabhupada said to that message. He said "No. When you delegate some responsibility, you hold the responsibility for those who you delegate authority to. This should not happen again." Everyone got ruffled and became absolutely silent. Then Prabhupada sternly walked to the vyasasana as we offered Guru Puja and he gave class.

It happened again the next morning! I'll leave it to your imagination what that scene was like. The heat and fire and flames that came from Prabhupada's mood!

I've heard from a couple of devotees who have served Prabhupada, particularly Hari Sauri, that when mistakes were made in serving Prabhupada, he was lenient in forgiving a mistake when made the first time, accompanied by an explanation of what should be done. His expectation was that the mistake wouldn't happen again. If it happened again, the person who made the mistake the second time was sorry...far more sorry than the first time!

Through this charnamrita example Srila Prabhupada wanted to teach his disciples a lesson. Whenever you act on behalf of a superior, then in turn you delegate part of that authority to someone else, you are responsible for the actions of those to whom you delegate that service or authority. The exact same message is directly what is being said in this verse.

Direct scriptural reference regarding this principle found within the purport is *Nyāya Sāstra*, but Prabhupada cites it, as does Visvānatha Cakravarti Thākura in his commentary. *bhṛtyāparādhe svāmīno daṇḍaḥ*. *Bhṛtya* means the servant, and *aparadha* means offense. *bhṛtyāparādhe* means "when the servant makes an *aparādha*." *Bhṛtyāparādhe svāmīno daṇḍaḥ* means that "the master of the servant who makes an offense is to be punished."

Then there's the flip side to this point. When we're acting on behalf of someone, our bad conduct, mistake, or offense may go to the person we are representing. Very significant consideration isn't it! Now, of course, we can use the excuse, or the rubber crutch, that we are neophyte, or not mature yet, so we are bound to make mistakes. Nonetheless we must remember that our Founder-acharya is being evaluated by the public, what to speak of other kinds of evaluations, for mistakes that we make! The opposite is also true: whatever

successes we may achieve, our Founder-acarya is naturally honored. No matter what is our level of advancement, these two things are always present.

Those who we delegate responsibility and authority to, even if they are mixing sugar into the charnamrita bowl, or whatever the service is that we delegate to others, we bear the responsibility of their actions. Conversely, we are all doing service on behalf of someone. However we conduct that service immediately bears credit or discredit to the person who we're serving.

It's something like what Krishna says to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita. "Arjuna, you're an Aryan! You are one who understands the value and higher purpose of life. You have great ancestors. The lineage from which you come is very exalted. So there's weight upon you, Arjuna, to act as an Aryan will act. Otherwise it will reflect badly upon your ancestors, upon your exalted predecessors." The same applies to each of us. A principle to live by is to feel the obligation of properly representing our exalted, flawless acaryas. Through the process of diksa, predecessor acaryas have effectively accepted us their representative. Especially for initiated devotees, our character and actions are reflecting in a good way or a bad way upon them.

For a cultured person, that's a very powerful sobering notion to carry. Uncultured persons don't care. For cultured persons, it keeps us in the middle of the road. It keeps us on track. A cultured person accepts that I am representing others, and acts out of love and respect for their good name.

Second point. Forgiveness. In Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's commentary on this verse, he raises a question, a doubt, and then responds. The doubt runs like this. "Only persons who are innocent, who are found to be not guilty, they are to be pardoned or forgiven. But those who are guilty are not to be forgiven, they are to be punished." To that doubt, he answers "The quality of the Supreme Lord is that He extends His forgiveness." Just as a Vaisnava is to give forgiveness to others, where does that quality come from? It comes from the Supreme Lord!

There is the classic example of the offense made against Maharaj Ambarisa by Durvasa Muni. Durvasa Muni offended Maharaj Ambarisa big time. The Supreme Lord Narayana declared "I am powerless to do anything about removing my sudarshan chakra from approaching you, unless you receive the forgiveness of Maharaj Ambarisa. I cannot act independently of My devotee. If you receive his forgiveness, automatically you receive My forgiveness because My forgiveness follows his forgiveness."

We must always remember that we are representatives of someone who we are serving. Ultimately that someone who we are serving is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Uniquely, in this case, where the offense was made against Ajamila by the Yamadutas, nonetheless the prayer of Yamaraja is going directly to the Supreme Lord.

In Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's commentary, he is very clear about the nature of the Supreme Lord. When one is sincerely repentant for some mistake or for some aparadha, as is the word here, His nature is that He is forgiving. Yamaraj is appealing to that quality of forgiveness in the Supreme Lord Narayana.

There's a very nice expression of this quality of the Lord to grant forgiveness and to give shelter to the surrendered souls in Ramayana. One of the places I visited about two weeks ago in South India is called Thirupullani, which is called Saranagati Kshetram by the local people. It's the place where Vibhishana surrendered to Lord Ramachandra. Two spies of Ravana, Suka and Sharana, surrendered to Lord Ramachandra. And Samudra or Varuna surrendered to Lord Ramachandra. Each one of them had made mistakes. The Lord not only forgave their mistakes, but He gave them shelter. In this place a very beautiful and very famous statement from Ramayana is made by Lord Rama. When Vibhishana tried his very best multiple times to persuade Ravana to stop his vicious activity and to return Sita to Rama, in this way the whole danger of being destroyed by the forces of Ramacandra and the vanaras would be over, Ravana became so angry that he tossed him out of the assembly. He said "If you weren't my brother I would kill you."

Vibhishana had mystic power. He rose in the air in the midst of the assembly, abandoned Ravana, and went to take shelter of Lord Ramacandra. In less than an hour he went all the way from Lanka to the place where Ramachandra and all the Vanaras were. Following him were four ministers. Vibhishana and the four ministers remained hovering in the air -- like this verse here, with palms folded -- offering prayers to Ramachandra. In this case they approached through Sugriva, an intermediary, or as Madhusevita Prabhu uses the word interlocutor. The question for Lord Ramachandra was "Will you give me shelter?" Sugriva didn't trust him at all.

Rama turned to His ministers and said "A qualified leader will always consult with his ministers. You have heard Vibhishana's request. What do you all think? What would be your advice for me?" He is the Supreme Lord, what does He need advice for! However, He's showing by example what leaders are to do.

After Angada and Jambavan and others gave their different opinions, Lord Ramachandra called upon Hanuman for his advice. Hanuman first of all said "You don't need my advice. But You're asking, so in service to You I'll suggest." One by one, he repeated the advice offered by others and refuted their viewpoint. Then he stated his own opinion. He said "Just by seeing his face, because the face is the index to the mind, and by hearing the sound of his voice, I say you should accept him. In his heart there may be some selfish motive"...because that's what Jambavan had said. [Jambavan said: 'I think he wants to be King of Lanka and he knows Ravana will be destroyed so he's next in line. He wants to become King. That's why he has come. 'I'll become your devotee so you'll give me the kingdom.'" He clearly has a motive."] Hanuman continued "But even if he has a motive, he wants to take shelter of Rama. That desire to take shelter of Rama will carry him beyond whatever selfish interest that may be in his heart."

Rama smiled. He liked what Hanuman had said. And then He spoke this very memorable passage from Ramayana. "My dear devotees, please listen carefully. I take a solemn vow. For one who even once surrenders unto Me, saying 'From this day forward I am Yours', I will give that person protection for the rest of their life, and I will free them from the condition of fear. They will become fearless."

Then He said to Sugriva, "Your concern is due to your love for Me. You do not want any harm to come to Me by Vibhishana having a double purpose, being a double agent. But please understand, I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Who can harm me? I could destroy the entire Lanka and the entire universe with a blink of My eye! Please understand that just as I need no assistance to destroy Ravana, likewise no one can harm Me. I don't need all of your service, but I'm engaging you all in service. You are saying because Vibhisana gave up the association of his brother and is now coming to take shelter of me, he can turn against me just as he gave up the association of his brother. I request you, please ask yourself about your own brother **Vali**. Did you not call upon me to help destroy your brother? Nonetheless, I'm accepting you because you are my devotee. I know your heart. You also wanted something. And he may want something. Nonetheless I'm accepting you, and similarly I accept him. Even if Ravana came just now, despite all the bad things he has done, stealing Sita and tormenting so many people, if he came and surrendered I would accept him also. Listen carefully. I've already accepted Vibhisana as my devotee. And you're keeping him waiting. Don't make him wait any longer. You'll aggravate your offense against someone who is already My devotee. Go and bring him here to Me at once."

Beautiful passage! Filled with nice instruction for us and our devotional service!

And the third thing that I wanted to speak about, I don't have time for.

Here it is in brief. From the side of a devotee that makes a mistake, the devotee doesn't think "Well, I made a mistake. But Krishna is very kind, or Ramacandra is very kind, the Lord is very kind. He'll forgive my mistake. And whatever I haven't been able to accomplish He'll take care of because He's very powerful." That's not how the devotee thinks. When Hanuman was sent by Ramacandra to bring the Siva lingam to Ramesvara to worship, Hanuman was very happy to have some service. He just wants service, any service! As soon as Lord Ramacandra requested this service, there went Hanuman to Mount Kailash. But Lord Siva was in meditation. Hanuman couldn't disturb Lord Siva's meditation, but he was to get a Siva lingam personally from Lord Siva. And it took too long. The auspicious time to worship Lord Siva was about to pass. So Sita with Her own hands fashioned a Siva lingam from sand which was then consecrated and then worshipped by Lord Rama within the proper auspicious time. Just when the worship was completed, Hanuman showed up with the Siva lingam that was given by Lord Siva. And what did he feel? "I failed to carry out the service given to me!" He wasn't saying "Well, I've done volumes and volumes of service. What is

one half of one percent incomplete service measured against 99.5%, or all the volumes of my wonderful accomplishments?" A devotee does not think like that. Although the Lord is very forgiving, the devotee is wishing to fully utilize whatever strength or ability and whatever is given to that devotee, to carry out his service favorably. If the devotee fails to complete some assigned service, he feels deeply repentant. Rupa Goswami felt the same way when he was unable to find the Govindaji deity; I have no time to cover all the details of that lila.

That's the consciousness of the devotee. Side by side, there is the loving shelter and forgiveness of the Supreme Lord.

So we're learning some nice lessons from Srimad Bhagavatam and Ramayana, the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. How does one who's representing others feel and conduct their life? Similarly, when we receive some service, what a great responsibility we have to carry out that service very very carefully!

Hare Krishna

Srila Prabhupada ki jaya