

A Critique on BarkingDog18's Video

[Respected Readers,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga. A video is currently playing on www.Google.com, which is called "Narayana Maharaja Blasphemes Prabhupada."

The name of the person who posted this video is unknown to us, but he identifies himself on Google as Barkingdog18. In order to try to establish his conception, Barkingdog18 has cut and edited out various parts of the lecture.

In actuality, Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja was glorifying Srila Prabhupada and defending his integrity as a pure Guru in our disciplic succession. Some people had been criticizing Prabhupada's books, saying that they are against women. Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja establishes in his discourse that this is not true.

The following is a transcription of the actual lecture, edited for clarity under Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja's guidance. This harikatha lecture is color-coded for ease of understanding. The **green text** shows the crucial words that were cut from the beginning Barkingdog18's video. The **red text** shows our explanations. The **blue text** shows Srila Narayana Maharaja's similar statements on the day before and the day after this July 13th discourse, which further clarify his illuminating points.

FOR PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF SRILA PRABHUPADA'S BOOKS

The Hague, Holland: July 13, 2005

Some devotees have told me [these introductory words in green were edited out of the original video by the person who made the movie clip on google] that when they read Srimad-Bhagavatam, and especially the purports of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, they lose their faith in Krsna-consciousness because his purports state that ladies are inferior; and that black people are all sudras, they should not be given bhakti, they cannot have bhakti, and so many things like that. So many people who were in ISKCON left because of this.

[Madhava Maharaja:] Gurudeva is not saying this. They are saying this.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] In this regard, I want to tell you all that in the Bhagavad-gita it is written:

[At this time Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja called on Padmanabha Maharaja to read the translation as given in the 1972 edition of our Srila Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As It Is. He began to read from a paper that had been given to Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja earlier, which contained certain verses and purports of Srila Prabhupada that some devotees had doubts about.]

[Padmanabha Maharaja:] It is stated in Bhagavad-gita 9th chapter, 32nd verse:

mam hi partha vyapasritya
ye 'pi syuh papa-yonayah
striyo vaisyas tatha sudras
te 'pi yanti param gatim

Krsna is telling, "O son of Prtha, Arjuna, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth – women, vaisyas (merchants) and sudras (workers) – still, they can attain the supreme destination." (Bhagavad Gita 9.32)

[The inflection in Padmanabha Maharaja's voice indicated a dash after 'birth' and before 'they'. This dash indicates that women, vaisyas, and sudras are among the papa-yoni, those of lower birth. Hearing the indication of this punctuation, Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja said:]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] This is wrong. What you have explained is totally wrong. This is why they are confused and have doubts.

[Madhava Maharaja:] Over-editing. Over-editing by the disciples.

[On the next day, July 14, Srila Narayana Maharaja explained further why he said the 1972 edition of our Prabhupada's Bhagavad-gita As It Is was misedited. He said: "I want to explain something regarding my class yesterday. In the Bhagavad-gita, Sri Krsna made a statement about women: 'mam hi partha vyapasritya...' What is the meaning? Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja has written: 'O son of Pritha, anyone who will take shelter in Me, whether a woman, or a merchant, or born in a low family, can yet approach the Supreme Destination.' [Translation taken from the 1968 edition of Bhagavad-gita] This is a very good translation. Everything is clear. This is the first edition, and it is clear here. Then, in the next edition [1972], the translation was changed to become "Not As It Is."

Because the editors had no realization, they were bound to change the punctuation and wording to make it look like all women are of a low, sinful birth, less intelligent, and so on. You should know the truth. If you want to know, you can read his original books. "O son of Pritha, anyone who will take shelter in Me, whether a woman, or a merchant, or born in a low family, can yet approach the Supreme Destination." This is very clear. This is the original.]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Mam hi partha vyapasritya. after the word 'papa-yoniya' (sinful species) there should be a comma, [not a dash]. [The idea is that when there is a group of words inside two dashes, it is understood that all the words in that group fit into the same category. They fit into the category of the word preceding the dash. For example, "There are many trees - palm, apple, pine, and pear - and they are all very beautiful." All the words within the two dashes are types of trees. So, by having a

dash instead of a comma, women and sudras and vaisyas all become thought of as papa-yoni. By having the comma after papa-yoni, this puts 'women, sudras, and vaisyas' in their own separate categories.]

Stri, women, are not papa-yoni. Sudras are also not papa-yoni. Who are papa-yoni? Srimad-Bhagavatam explains this:

kirata-hunandhra-pulinda-pulkasa
abhira-sumbha yavanah khasadayah
ye 'nye ca papa yad-apasrayasrayah
sudhyanti tasmai prabhavisnave namah

"Kirata, Huna, Andhra, Pulinda, Pulkasa, Abhira, Sumbha, Yavana, members of the Khasa races and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him." (Srimad Bhagavatam 2.4.18)]

Huna, Andra, Kirata – they are papa-yoni, because they have no Krsna-consciousness. They eat meat and eggs, and they drink so much wine and alcohol. They smoke and engage in so many other sinful activities. They are papa-yoni.

For stri (women), it has only been said that they have some monthly impurity. They are not inferior. Papa-yoni does not have the meaning we think it has.

Who is Sri Narada Rsi? In what class was he born? Narada was a dasi-putra, the son of a maidservant. Was he low class? Srila Vyasadeva was also (born from the womb of a sudra mother), Prahlada (was the son of an atheistic demon), and Vidura (was also born of a sudra mother), and there are so many others like them. Should we reject them? *[See endnote 1]

[On the previous day, Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja explained more about this: "Srila Vyasadeva appeared in a family of sudras, and Sri Narada Rsi was also born in a sudra-family. However, whoever calls them sudras will go to hell. Srila Haridasa Thakura was born in a Muslim family. He appeared in a family in which cows were slaughtered and their flesh eaten, but he is not a Muslim. Ramananda Raya said about himself, 'I am sudra.' This is trnad-api-sunicena – humility. Mahaprabhu said about Himself, 'I am a Mayavadi sannyasi.' Was He a Mayavadi sannyasi? Never. Do not think in that way. One may say that He Himself has said so, but He said so only out of humility.]

Those who are doubting quote this (purport of Cc Madhya-lila 8.36): "The word papa-yonayah means 'born into a lower class'. According to the Vedic system of classification, women, vaisyas and sudras belong to a lower social order." I don't agree that Srila Swami Maharaja personally wrote this about woman being papa-yoni, and this has never been written in any scripture.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja again looks at the paper he had been handed earlier, containing the verses and purports that some devotees had doubts about.]

In Srimad Bhagavatam, 1.9.48, in the original verse itself and purport, nothing like this has been written – that ladies are less-intelligent, or that they cannot perform bhajana, or that they are lusty [from this points, the Barkingdog18 video cuts out some sentences and leaves in some sentences. What you are reading is the full transcription:] and men are not so. Men are also lusty. Moreover, it is the soul who comes in a male-form or women-form; so all are equal.

All the Rsis of Dandakaranya were male. They prayed to Lord Ramacandra, "We want to be like the gopis." Then, by Lord Rama's mercy, they very soon became perfectly self-realized (siddha) and went to Vraja. There, taking birth from the wombs of gopis, they attained the forms of gopis. Were they less intelligent? We should not think like that.

[On the previous day Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja explained more on this idea: 'If ladies are so low-class and so low in intelligence, how could the gopis have defeated even Lord Sri Krsna? *[See Endnote 2] Why does our guru-parampara, beginning from Brahma and Narada, worship the gopis? Why did Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is Sri Krsna Himself, adopt Srimati Radha's mood? Srimati Radhika always defeats Krsna in beauty, in intelligence, and in all other ways. If ladies are less, why do we Gaudiya Vaisnavas want to be gopis? We want to serve Lord Krsna and Srimati Radhika in a female form, not a male form. So how is it possible that this female form is lower? Don't think like this.']*]

In some places Srila Swami Maharaja has written that there is some speciality in women and some speciality in male, and he has explained this. This has also been told in Srimad-Bhagavatam. So we should not think that ladies cannot perform bhakti or that they are less intelligent or inferior.

[On the day before, July 12, Srila Narayana Maharaja explained more about this. He said: 'It has been sometimes stated in the scriptures that there are some specialities in ladies; ladies can have children. Men cannot do this, not even if they were to have an operation. If a man has an operation to become a lady, still he cannot have children. Also, ladies are very affectionate. They always have a service-mood. A boy will say, 'Sister, give me water. Mother, give me water.' But ladies will not say, 'Oh brother, Oh father, give me water.' These are specialities.']*]

Another quote given by those who doubt Srila Swami Maharaja is found in the edited and published version of his purport to Srimad-Bhagavatam (4. 25.42) in Puranjana-Upakhya. "Generally when a woman is attacked by a man – whether her husband or some other man – she enjoys the attack, being too lusty." *[See Endnote 3] In the original verse itself, nothing like this has been written. *[See Endnote 4] Moreover, this purport, as well as some of the other purports given by Srila Swami Maharaja, have been somewhat changed by the editors. He could never have written it.

Regarding the statements he actually did write, they are right. You should try to reconcile such statements, (knowing which are his and which are not). This is because it has been written in Srimad-Bhagavatam.

It is stated in Sri Jagadananda Pandita's Prema-Vivarta,

yadi caha pranaya rakhite gaurangera sane
chota haridasera katha thake yena mane

["If you wish to associate with Caitanya Mahaprabhu, you must always remember the incident of Chota Haridasa and how he was rejected by the Lord."]

What is the meaning? Ladies are very attractive and beautiful, so men should not mix with them. But ladies are also advised not to mix with men. The advice is for both. We should not think that ladies are inferior or less intelligent. We should not think in this way.

Some devotees [those who are doubting] also quote this statement in his purport: I have read everything. "It may be clearly said that the understanding of a woman is always inferior to the understanding of a man." I do not agree with this statement, and Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja could never have written it. [Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja said here, "He cannot write this." Barkingdog18, not understanding Srila Maharaja's intention, capitalized on the fact that English is not Srila Maharaja's first language. By the very title of his cut and spliced video, he encourages the unaware viewer to think that Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja is criticizing Prabhupada. The viewer tends to think Srila Maharaja is saying that Prabhupada is "not allowed to say this." His meaning is actually "I know that Prabhupada is a self-realized soul and a bona-fide guru in the disciplic line from Sri Krsna Himself. He could not have possibly said this."] You should try to reconcile this with what he has actually said. Don't be worried about this. Whatever is actually written in sastra is okay.

[Barkingdog18's video ended here. Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja's wonderful lecture defending Srila Prabhupada's integrity, and imploring devotees to understand Prabhupada's glory properly, continues as follows:]

Do you know Lord Brahma? He begot a beautiful daughter named Sarasvati and began pursuing her. She at once became a lady deer and began to run, and he became a male deer. Marici was present and he said, "Father, what are you doing? You are intelligent. You should know that everybody will laugh at you. Don't do this." Marici's six sons began to laugh, and then Lord Brahma cursed them. They became the sons of Kalanemi, and in their following birth they became the six sons of Devaki who were killed by Kamsa. They could not understand Lord Brahma, but Marici understood. He did not commit an offence, but his sons did so.

So we should be very careful. I have read everything that Srila Swami Maharaja wrote, and everything is ok. The only thing is that there is some wrong editing by his disciples,

because they cannot reconcile these things. They say papa-yoni, which means sinful, necessarily applies to ladies. This is quite wrong.

Srimati Radhika wants to be a Pulinda girl. She prays (in Srimad Bhagavatam 10.21.17) to take Her next birth as a Pulinda girl. [Although the Pulinda girls are born in families of aborigine tribesmen and have menial jobs like carrying firewood,] Radhika says, "The Pulinda girls are most fortunate, because they place the dust of the lotus feet of Krsna on their breasts. I want to be a Pulinda girl." So you should not worry about a lady's so-called high or low birth.

[Question:] Could you explain what Prabhupada meant when He translates in the Bhagavad-gita that women, vaisyas and sudras are less than brahmanas and ksatriyas? We read that in Srila Prabhupada's translation.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Brahmana refers to "brahma-jnanati". Such brahmanas are self-realized; they are not like the brahmanas of Kali-yuga. If a Vaisnava is really a Vaisnava, he will have no lust or anger, or any other bad qualities. If one has no envy, greed, pride or illusion, then he is really brahmana. He is victorious over the six bad qualities. At that time, before Kali-yuga, Vasistha, Atri, and so many other exalted devotees were present. They were real brahmanas.

The ksatriyas were engaged in war, in controlling the state, in taking taxes, and in many other political activities. The vaisyas were engaged in business and farming, but they also served the Vaisnavas and brahmanas. Then, striya – ladies. They have children, and engage in such activities as serving their husbands and doing household work. For this reason it has been told that vaisyas, women and sudras are less than brahmanas and ksatriyas. But this has not been told about women like Arundhati, or Anasuya, Gargi, Gangamata Thakurani, Jahnava Thakurani or Hemlata Thakurani. This does not refer to them.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja ended his previous day's discussion on this subject with the following statement: "Throw out all these doubts – the ideas that Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja has written something against ladies and sudras. It is not correct. If anyone has explained his words in this way, they didn't understand his idea. Perhaps they have made mistakes in their editing. He, or anyone like him, will never write like this. What is actually written in the Bhagavatam is true."]*[See endnote 5]

Amsterdam, Holland: July 15, 2005 – Darsana at Schiphol Airport

[Question:] Gurudeva, the other night you were speaking about the wrong editing of our Srila Prabhupada's books. Having heard your class, some devotees may become afraid to read his books now, doubting all his published books. They may be wondering if they are really reading the words of Srila Prabhupada, or someone else's words. Can you say something about that?

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] They should carefully read the books of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. They should read all his books. Generally there will be no doubt, but where there is some doubt, they should see his original writing. So many changes by the editors have been made in Srimad-Bhagavatam also.

[Question:] For many years it was preached in ISKCON that women are less intelligent than men.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] Both women and men are transcendental parts of Krsna – jiva-tattva. *[See Endnote 7] Regarding their being less intelligent than men, this is completely wrong.

[Question:] We could also say that if there is any doubt, the reader can go and ask a pure devotee, as it's stated in the verse: yaha, bhagavata pada vaisnavera sthane.

["If you want to understand Srimad-Bhagavatam, you must approach a self-realized Vaisnava and hear from him." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Antya-lila 5.131)]

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] They should see the original version.

[Question:] But even during Srila Prabhupada's lifetime, even the first time a book was published it had mistakes, because his disciples were new devotees at that time, including the editors.

[Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja:] My books also; they should not be changed. What I am writing or translating should stay the same. The editors should not try to explain more. If they do that, they may fail. They may write something wrong.

Endnotes

[All the following endnotes are from the books of Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.]

*Endnote 1:

"The Krsna consciousness movement, therefore, is a cultural movement that does not care about local social conventions. Following in the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Advaita Acarya, we can accept a devotee from any part of the world and recognize him as a brahmana as soon as he is qualified due to following the principles of Vaisnava behavior." (Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Antya-lila 3.221, purport)

"But what is today being labeled varnasrama is an atheistic concept totally unsupported by the scriptures. Real varnasrama is based not on birth but on people's qualities and activities. One cannot reach the goal of the scriptures by practicing today's demoniac caste system. Only the introduction of daivi-varnasrama, the transcendental varnasrama system, will serve the purpose of the scriptures. This will move humanity toward liberation." (Renunciation Through Wisdom, 5.1)

"We also give. 'Never mind you are sudra. You become brahmana. Come on. Be Krsna conscious.' That we also are giving. We don't deny, 'Oh, you are sudra, you cannot become a brahmana.' We don't say that. He can also become a brahmana. 'Come on. You learn how to become brahmana.' That's all. The point is this equality, there cannot be. First point is this. This is nonsense. But everyone should be given the chance to occupy the best position. That is in our philosophy also. But inequality there must remain. You cannot make equality. It is not possible. That is nonsense. In your country there is not equality. Why an old woman – I have seen it – she is sweeping the street? So old woman, she should have taken rest, but she is engaged in sweeping the street. And a young man is becoming dictator. Where is the equality? She should have given rest, but she is obliged to work. And another young man, he is a manager. Why? Why this inequality? Where is equality? First of all settle up how you can make equal. That you cannot do. Then you are talking nonsense, 'equality.' It is not possible." (Morning Walk. Rome, 29 May 1974)]

[Endnote 2: It is stated in the Gosvamis' literatures that the gopis defeat Krsna in word games, dice games, wrestling and other sports. -ed

"Just like gopis. The gopis were women and not very high class women, cowherd's men, in the village, not in town, very educated, high society, brahmana, ksatriya, no. They all belonged to the vaisya class. And they were women, not Vedantists, not scholars. But they conquered Krsna. Why? They heard about Krsna, and they became lovers of Krsna. That is required. So that is the real qualification. Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He was so strict about womanly association. Still, He recommended, ramya kacid upasana vrajavadhuvargena ya kalpita: 'There is no better type of worshipping Krsna than that system which vraja-vadhu, the gopis, adopted to love Krsna. That is the first-class.'" (Purport to Parama Karuna. Atlanta, 28 February 1975)]

[Endnote 3: "Besides the editing consideration mentioned by Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja, the above quote was taken from the middle of Srila Prabhupada's purport. The beginning of the purport is: 'Both man and woman desire one another; that is the basic principle of material existence.'" (Srimad-Bhagavatam 4.26.26, purport)]

[Endnote 4: The verse itself states: "My dear Queen, due to my sinful desires I went to the forest to hunt without asking you. Therefore I must admit that I have offended you. Nonetheless, thinking of me as your most intimate subordinate, you should still be very much pleased with me. Factually I am very much bereaved, but being pierced by the arrow of Cupid, I am feeling lusty. But where is the beautiful woman who would give up her lusty husband and refuse to unite with him?" (SB. 4.26.26)]

[Endnote 5: "On the spiritual platform, the learned person not only gives up the duality of man and woman, but also gives up the duality of man and animal. This is the test of self-realization. One must realize perfectly that the living being is spirit soul but is tasting various types of material bodies." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.12.10, purport)]

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