

Lecture given by H.H. Suhotra Swami  
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Title: Upward mobility is demoniac

TRANSLATION

Since you are completely aware of the Supreme Brahman, you are a perfect brāhmaṇa, and therefore you are the spiritual master of all orders of life. We accept you as our spiritual master and director so that by the power of your austerity we may easily defeat the enemies who have conquered us.

PURPORT

One must approach a particular type of guru to execute a particular type of duty. Therefore although Viśvarūpa was inferior to the demigods, the demigods accepted him as their guru to conquer the demons.

LECTURE BY HH SUHOTRA SWAMI:

So whether he is younger, old or sannyasi, brahmana, sudra or even perhaps less than sudra by social cast and considerations, if he is a guru, than his instruction is needed to fulfill the human purpose. Here the demigods, they urgently need help to withstand pandemonium. Srila Prabhupada in a conversation once nicely explained this word “pandemonium” by breaking it up into its roots – “pan” means “everywhere”, like the theory of pantheism says God is everywhere, and “demonium” - demons are everywhere. So, Prabhupada has said that the modern misleaders, those who are unqualified and yet who occupy the leadership posts in society, they have created a pandemonium. They have allowed human society to become overrun by demons.

So in universal management the devas, the demigods, as it is said, visnu bhakti smrto.... The demigods are all devotees of Vishnu. And they are entrusted with a task, the great task of maintaining universal order and that means primarily to prevent pandemonium. To prevent the demoniac influence from becoming prominent. Of course the demons they have their place reserved for them. Krishna has created this cosmos, this material world in such a way that there are so many desires and so many living entities, so these desires are fulfilled in the universal management. So in the lower planets, Bila Svarga planetary systems, there is a place for the demons to live. But due to some long standing enmity which is described in Srimad Bhagavatam and other Puranas, the demons are very ambitious to break out of their, what they consider their social stratification, their limited opportunity and make their way to the heavenly planets even if it is by force and wrest the thrones of the demigods from them and rule the entire universe. They are very convinced that they are more qualified than the demigods to rule. They are very convinced that they know how to make this universe into a really nice place. Their consideration is that this material existence is meant for sense gratification. So why should there be so many

restrains and restrictions put upon the living entities in the name of dharma, in the name of tapasya, in the name of spiritual elevation. Who cares about that? It doesn't matter. So this is the demoniac attitude. So, they have their arguments why they are in their philosophy, why they're pushing to change the order of things in the world, in the universe.

They may put forward, sometimes they will put forward arguments just to regress some social injustice. The demons think they're being discriminated against by the demigods. So we have to set things right, perhaps to make a social experiment. Why should the demigods always rule? Why them, why not us? We're also highly qualified. Actually we come from the same family. Some of us demons are more powerful than demigods. Some of us have more knowledge. So, why can't we rule? And so on and so forth. They will put forward their arguments. But the fact is that the demigods are qualified because they are pointed to those posts by Lord Vishnu Himself, Who has given the plan for this universe. The purpose. Not some puffed up upstarts. So the devas they're in agreement with the plan of the Lord and so therefore they're given these posts by the Lord. The demons may be powerful in so many material ways, but they do not have that basic qualification of being submissive to the rule or order given by Krishna.

So, it brings up an interesting point that in western society we see that there's a very prominent philosophy, which is often called "upward mobility". Become very prominent in modern times where persons who were for so long considered to be a lower social status, now they want to ascertain themselves by rising to higher positions. So this ideal, it's a western ideal, which actually arises since Prithu Prabhu is here giving some insight into Christianity, this also comes from that. A sort of perversion of the teachings of Christianity. Christianity spread among the lower casts, largely due to appeal of the idea of resurrection. That the body dies, is buried, but when Jesus comes back the dead body will be made whole and will rise again. And moreover those who are faithful Christians will inherit the Earth and they will be able to see those who oppressed them, the rascal leaders, the higher classes, they will be able to see them banished into hell.

I have seen in monasteries in Eastern Europe, for instance there is a famous monastery in Romania called "Woronet (?)". All of this is depicted in frescos on the side of the church. I have seen the graves opening and the pious faithful Christians who endured so much suffering in life they're coming out with whole bodies again and then you see the opulently clad what are known as "boyars". Boyars means "nobleman". Nobleman, who are hypocrites, who are not true Christians, who oppressed the poor, who enjoyed this world by breaking the laws of God. So they are being confined to the flames of hell. They are very astonished: "What, us? We are going to hell?" They're being pushed there by so many horrible looking little devils. And the poor oppressed masses are enjoying the saints who have come down from heaven to take them back through the heavenly gates. So this has very strong, or had a very strong popular appeal and in this way Christian preachers could go forth among the masses and spread Christianity.

And in this resurrection philosophy of course was focused on the day Jesus will return. It's very interesting about Christian history that at first they said Jesus will come back one hundred years after his leaving. One hundred AD. So they were anxiously waiting but when that year came and went, Jesus did not come. So they added another zero and they said he will return in the year 1000 and still he did not return. And it was after that time that Europe which was in what is still known as the dark ages, an age when everyone was very much accepting the rigid authority of the Church, not expecting much from this life.

Then, after the year 1000, people began to think “What about this life, we’re waiting waiting, waiting, when is it going to happen. We’re waiting to inherit the Earth.” So then there was a scramble in the church. The pope, one pope Urban the Second, he declared the reason Jesus hasn’t come back. He said this near 1092 I think or 1094, something like that. He said the reason Christ didn’t return is because the Muslims have conquered Jerusalem. Jesus will descent in Jerusalem, but how can he? Because the Muslims are there. So that was the cause of the crusades. Seven crusades. It was a big social movement. Big social appeal, especially the lower classes, they wanted to get their right, so they were marching, they were following these, the sort of scruffy looking profits would come out and say “The kingdom of God is at hand, we just have to defeat the Muslims in Jerusalem and Jesus will come down and give us the Earth and set everything right.”

So, there are many mass migrations of poor persons from European villages to Jerusalem. On the way most of them were slaughtered by the Turks. So anyway, these crusades came and went and still nothing happened. Jerusalem was conquered so many times, still nothing happens, still the promised day did not come. So gradually, although the ideal remained, the religious element waned, because they were disappointed. “Where is Jesus? He hasn’t come yet. Maybe he’s not coming.”

So, historians say: this ideal became transformed into, what we now know as humanism, in which humanity became focused not on God, but on themselves. And so we see in European history the rise of various social and political philosophies, concepts, which are aimed at setting things right in the world. At rectifying injustices, at making the world peaceful and happy, in the ideals of the lion lying down with the lamb, of everyone being equal and happy together. So this cause was taken up by humanists, by socialists, by communists on and on and on. This is evolution of social movements in European history down to this very day.

I can recall myself when I was in the library party visiting one catholic university in America and so in the library party we used to search out the teachers, the professors and sell them Prabhupada’s books and get them to order books for their libraries. I was looking in this catholic university in which the staff was largely priests, so I was looking for some teachers to show Srila Prabhupadas books to, so I went into one office where we expected to find teachers and meanwhile I find all these scruffy looking characters with long side burns they were having, flowered shirts with pocket sleeves, this is back in the seventies, bell bottomed, blue jeans, boots. And they were, you know, as they were coming and going, they are giving each other the power, signal – right on. They were talking on the telephone organizing marches, organizing all sorts of alternative social things and I was surprised to find out at least with the priests, at the university. And one of them told me, this was about 1974, he said: “we’re trying to bring back 1968 in this university”. So this is what has become of religious principles in the western society. It became completely subverted by worldly considerations and that is now called humanism.

So this is a perversion of dharma, dharmasya glanih. This is not what is happening here. Here we see that Vishvarupa, who is socially inferior to the demigods, is being appointed as their guru, but it’s not the same thing. There’s dark difference. It’s that this is coming down from authority, coming down from Lord Brahma, who is the giver of Vedic knowledge. The demigods, being demigods, being devotees of the Lord, they have not had a democratic parliament session and try to work things out by consensus, by speculation,

come up with a new program – what have they done? They have gone to Lord Brahma, the supreme authority of Vedic knowledge in the universe and they have asked him “what shall we do”. And he has said: “You take Vishvarupa, maybe he is younger, but he is qualified to give you the knowledge you need to maintain your posts in this universe as demigods to defeat the uprising of the demons, their pandemonium.

So this approaching the spiritual master, one does this, as Srila Prabhupada says, quoting this *tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam* – for one’s supreme, higher benefit in life. The higher benefit in life is not to gain anything for oneself in this material world and proclaim oneself to be lord of something. That is also not the interest of the demigods. That is not why they approached Lord Brahma - simply because they’re fearful for their nice comfortable posts, but actually they have their dharma to fulfill. So Lord Brahma has appointed the spiritual master, who as is explained in this verse *brahmiṣṭham brāhmaṇam gurum* – he’s qualified to give knowledge of the Absolute Truth, he is perfectly aware of the supreme Brahman, he is a qualified brahmana, he is a perfect spiritual master. So he is qualified to instruct you in your ultimate good which is devotional service to the Supreme Lord. So spiritual master is meant for that.

Spiritual master, if he is qualified, he may come from any social background. Just like there is very well-known story from Gaudiya vaisnava history. We recently observed her appearance day – Ganga Mata Goswamini, so that’s a very nice story how she became so honored by being great vaisnava, perfect vaisnava that Lord Jagannatha ordered the king of Orissa and his ministers and indeed the brahmanas, who were engaged in the worship of Lord Jagannatha, to accept Ganga Mata as their spiritual master even though, again as here by social consideration, she was their inferior. But the real point of the story is to show this: Ganga Mata Goswamini became so qualified, so respectable, that even a king of Orissa accepted her as spiritual master by her unflinching adherence to the order of her spiritual master. That is the whole point of this history, that she have been sent by her guru maharaja from Vrindavana to preach in Orissa and she stayed there following very strictly and even though one holy day came where everyone was going up to Bengal, her home place was Bengal. And they were going there to bathe in the Jamuna on this particular holy day. So there was much talk: “Let’s go to Bengal, people are leaving.” And she was left all alone and she was thinking it would be nice to go there also and bathe in the Ganga but she thought that my guru maharaja did not give me such permission. So I will stay here and preach. So she continued on. And than a night before this holy day, this Varuni day, she had a dream in which her spiritual master told her that you just bath in some local river called the Sveta Ganga and it will be as good as bathing in the river Ganges.

So with great happiness the next evening, which is a time for taking that bath, she entered the waters of Sveta Ganga and there was a great wave, or great current which came up and swapped her away and she was wondering what is happening and she was actually swapped into the Jagannatha temple. And there she saw that these waters that had captured her were flowing from the lotus feet of Lord Jagannatha. This is of course late at night, there was no one around to see this. And in these waters she saw all the demigods, she saw all the sages, all the great personalities from all the universe, they had come to bathe in these waters and she also had the opportunity to bathe in those waters flowing from Lord Jagannatha’s lotus feet. So very happily she was bathing and because everyone was chanting auspicious mantras, that sound was reverberating inside the Jagannatha mandir and the watchman outside they heard this roaring sound, so they became alarmed and they brought priests and the priests heard the sound and they fetched the king and the

soldiers. So the king personally came, the doors were open, they came inside and all they found was this one lady vaisnava-mataji standing very humbly, so they arrested her. They were saying “Ha, we thought this was very strange that some woman sadhu would come here to preach, now we see what she really wanted, she came here in the night to steal the jewels of Lord Jagannatha – that’s all.” So he imprisoned her. But than that night the king, the ministers, the brahmans of the temple – they had a dream in which Lord Jagannatha appeared and said: “I am very angry with you, you immediately release Ganga Mata and you accept her as guru.” So because Lord Jagannath ordered, it was done.

So this is the main point of this pastime to illustrate Ganga Mata’s strict adherence to the order of guru. And because of this she became glorified by the arrangement of Krishna. This is exactly the same thing that is happening here. Vishvarupa is becoming spiritual master of the demigods because the demigods have turned to authority asking for help and authority Lord Brahma has determined that here is the most qualified, so you accept him. So very willingly they’re accepting Vishvarupa. Whereas the humanists or whatever you want to call them, those whose attention is focused on this world, on enjoying this world and controlling this world, they have another agenda. They may also turn to a spiritual authority but they want to extract from them permission, benediction for fulfilling their own agenda.

Just as there is a story from the Chandogya Upanishad to illustrate this, about Indra and Virocana, the son of Maharaja Bali, great king of the demons. So Indra and Virocana, they approached Lord Brahma to receive brahma jnana from him, the knowledge of the self. So Lord Brahma to test them, he first of all said: “The self, that you’ve come here to know about can be seen by anyone, if they simply fill a dish with water and look in it.” So, Virocana was very happy to hear this. He concluded “this great knowledge that you have to give, the conclusion of it is that is that we are our bodies, because when you look in a dish of water you see the reflection of your body. That’s wonderful.” So Virocana was very satisfied and he left Lord Brahma’s abode and went back to the demons and said: “I’ve got it!” And they all accepted him as guru. He said: “Wonderful, this is wonderful.”

But Indra, because he is a demigod, he thought: “Wait a minute, it can’t be right.” And so he came back to Lord Brahma and said: “Isn’t there something more?” and Brahma said: “Yes, I was just waiting to get rid of the other guy, because he is not qualified to receive this knowledge.” And then Lord Brahma instructed the real truth that we are not the body, we are eternal spirit soul and servant of Sri Krishna. So, even though the materialists they may approach spiritual authority, they have their own agenda and if they come to hear what the actual truth is, than they don’t like it, then they become disappointed.

There is a story that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati used to tell to illustrate this very point about the humanist agenda or philanthropic agenda with regards to spiritual life. It’s a story of swan and cranes. So there was group of cranes, these birds with a long neck and long legs, long beak, and they were in habit of boogie march. So one day they happened to see a swan come by. They’ve never seen a swan before. So the leader of the cranes asked a swan: “I see you are a very strange bird, you have a reddish eyes and a reddish beak and reddish peak, well, where do you come from?” “I come from lake Manasa Sarovara.” “Oh, what is that place like?” So, than the swan explained: “It is a beautiful lake of nectarean crystal clear waters and in these waters are islands made of jewels and on these islands are growing very fabulous fruit trees, very wonderful fruits and there are golden lotus flowers everywhere. It is here that we swans live.” And the cranes they looked at

each other very skeptically. They weren't very satisfied with this. So then, the leader of the cranes he asked: "Well, tell us one thing, are there big, fat sniles in the Manasa Sarovara lake?" And the swan answered: "No, I am sorry, we don't have such entities there, no big, fat sniles." So than all the cranes began to laugh: "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. You come from such a place where there's no fat sniles? We would never go there. You see our nice boogie march? There are many fat sniles here. We fill our belly here every day with them and so we are very satisfied to remain here. So go your way swan, go back to your Manasa Sarovara where do you come from, be happy there but we are staying here, we would never follow you there."

So the moral of this story as explained by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati is that the humanists and philanthropists and so on, they are very quick when they need the transcendentalist to ask: "So what is the social purpose of your mission. How are you going to places where there has been misfortune and how are you giving out free clothes and how are you giving education and how are you opening hospitals?" And when they come to find that the genuine transcendentalist is not interested in such affairs, then they say: "Ha, then there is no use to your mission. We will not follow that." So Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati says that these person they lack the capacity for real philosophical introspection. He says that there are three questions that are to be answered in life. And these are: "What, who and how." And these three questions can only be answered by approaching bona fide spiritual master.

One has to have intelligence, the brain power to be able to ask these three questions. "What" means what are the real problems of life, is it social injustice, is that a real problem of life? Inequality, inequity, is it anything like that? No, the real problems of life are birth, old age, disease, death. So that question must be first of all answered properly. The second question is "Who?" Who are suffering these real problems of life? Is it the poor, is it the downtrotten, is it the socially diseased? No, it is everybody. Everybody is suffering equally. So then, "Why"? Why are we suffering? Because we have this material body. Everyone. From Brahma down to the tiny ant. Everyone has this material body, everyone is suffering. So then how do we get out of this suffering condition? That is the subject matter of the Vedic scriptures. So it's for this knowledge that we approach spiritual master, to answer these questions. Tasmāt gurum prapadyeta jijñasa sreya uttama. This is the ultimate auspiciousness, ultimate benefit for all living entities to have these questions answered. Not to try to utilize this knowledge for making material adjustments in this world, to make an artificial solution to the problems of material existence.

So I'll stop here. Are there any questions? Yes?

Question No.1.....

There was in first purport: "One must approach a particular type of guru to execute a particular type of duty." Yes, well, in Krishna consciousness, for instance, there are various duties, and so various devotees become expert. I think Rohini Nanda Prabhu was mentioning in his class yesterday how in our movement there are various devotees who are outstanding for the expertise in various areas. So that means guru, that means they are teacher in these areas. So to become expert in that area one should approach one who is expert. Sometimes it is seen that a disciple will be referred by his diksa-guru, his initiating spiritual master, to another spiritual master, siksa-guru, to learn puja, or to learn cooking

or learn some other area, sankirtan, devotional service, because that spiritual master is most expert.

Question No. 2: .....

Yes. The real point of varnasrama is to surrender to Krishna. This is according to Bhagavadgita, that's the real point. The real point is that we do our duty not with the view to upward mobility, upward social mobility, as we see in the western world. One is thinking of coming on the bottom to take some low post, but gradually work may take up way up push out the sky on and come to the top. You know just like in United States a movie actor was considered in Vedic social terms sudra, but he can become president of the United States and that is the glory of the United States of America. But that is not the point of varnasrama dharma. The point of varnasrama dharma is clearly explained, actually it's the whole point of Bhagavadgita, that whatever your duty is, you do it for Krishna. Arjuna actually was proposing a type of upward social mobility you might say, in the beginning because he said "I want to give up my duty as a ksatriya and become a mendicant, renounced, become a sannyasi." But of course his reasons for that were, as Krishna pointed out, they were all selfish. Material reasons, Krishna said: "No, you are a ksatriya, that is your nature, so follow your nature, but for Me. Surrender to Me." So otherwise Krishna says anityam asukham lokam. That's an interesting point in the ninth chapter of Bhagavadgita, that mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās. That verse where Krishna says that anyone when they come from papa yoni – sinful birth, they may be woman, vaisya or sudra if they surrender to me then they can attain, they can approach the supreme destination. Te pi yānti parām gatim. Then Krishna goes on in next verse, so how much more so if the raja rsis - the saintly kings, the brahmanas, the great devotees in society who are the natural leaders of society, how much more they should surrender to Me?

Then Krishna makes this point. Anityam asukham loka - that this world is temporary, it's full of misery. So the point of being in the higher social position is not to enjoy. If one is thinking like that, than naturally he will be imposter of others. If he is thinking "let me take up an important post of king, of brahmana or even exalted devotee, prominent devotee for my own enjoyment", then he will be imposter. It's a fact. But Krishna gives this warning, this material world is anityam asukham loka. It is temporary, it is full of suffering. Therefore, what's the last line? Yes, imam...so, prapya, prapya, if you want something from this world, you just worship Me.

That what is to be attained. Prapya means gain. This is the only gain in this world, that you can worship Me. In whatever position you may be in. This is the instruction that Lord Caitanya accepted in his discussion with Ramananda Raya also. Ramananda Raya is making so many preliminary proposals as to what is the goal of life. And only when he gave that famous verse "you stay in your position, don't worry about that, don't worry about moving up the social ladder, you can just stay in your position, but you go on hearing about Krishna," and that's the point, that's the wonderful point – stay in your position and go on hearing. So you may be in a great position and the only person available to hear from is in a socially inferior position to you, doesn't matter, go on hearing, that's the point. Because the only thing that is really to be attained in this world is the worship of the Lord. Nothing else matters.

Question No. 3: .....

Maybe this is a question to ask Pritu Prabhu in a class. (laugh). I am not conversant about this subject matter - if there are any true Christians left, but someone else may be. Yes?

Question No. 4:.....

Yes, there's a kind of a scholarly view of European history, which is called "the philosophy of history" and versions of this even appear in a philosophy of Hegel and like that. It is explanation of historical evolution in those terms that the history is moving to the fulfillment of human ideals and this is actually the appearance of the divine in this world. That human society will become righteous at the end and everything the materialists want out of life, they'll get it at the end. So therefore keep on, keep on, keeping on, keep waving the flag, keep pushing, keep the revolution going because at the end we'll get what we want. Yes, this is the result of compromising the teachings of Jesus Christ, so that Christianity would be established among the masses. Popular appeal. You get what you want if you follow Jesus. Yes?

Question No.5:.....

Yes, Krishna says in Bhagavadgita: paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām. It gives the reason for His descent in this world, to deliver the sadhus, the saintly persons, His devotees from social oppression, from problems, from whatever you want to call it, and to annihilate the miscreants, to remove the miscreants. So the devotees of Krishna they depend upon Krishna and Srila Prabhupada in a purport in the ninth canto has said, that Krishna has taken birth as entered the womb of this Krishna consciousness movement. Krishna is with this Krishna consciousness movement as His holy name, in so many ways, as the Deity, Krishna is here with us. So we must learn to depend upon Him and that means we have to advance in Krishna consciousness, we have to take this process of bhakti yoga very seriously, more seriously perhaps than we have been. So, I mean a careful analysis of the social, do you want call it that, the social issues of ISKCON can be traced back to deviation in the basic principles of bhakti yoga. Lack of Krishna consciousness. So I'll stop here.

Srila Prabhupada ki – jay!