***Yata Mata Tata Patha***

**Ramakrishna Swami’s idea*:***

“*Yata mata tata patha”*

*yata* -as many; *mata* -opinions; *tata* -that many; *patha* -ways

“There are as many paths as there are opinions.”

**What happens when people manufacture their own religion?**

“If everyone is an authority, or if everyone accepts his own intelligence as the ultimate criterion—as is presently fashionable—the scriptures will be interpreted in many different ways, and everyone will claim that his own philosophy is supreme. This has become ***a very great problem***...*Yata mata tata patha.* Now everybody and anybody is trying to establish his own theory as the ultimate truth.”—*Madhya 9.49 purport*

“There are thousands of editions of *Bhagavad-gétä*, and they have tried to interpret in their own way, all nonsense. They should be all thrown away. Simply you have to read *Bhagavad-gétä* as it is. Then you’ll understand. There is no question of interpretation. Then ***the authority is gone***. As soon as you interpret, then there is no authority…

Law-book! Do you mean to say that in the court if you say before the judge, ‘My dear lord, I interpret this passage in this way,’ it will be accepted? The judge will at once say, ‘Who are you to interpret? You have no right.’… Those who are interpreting unnecessarily, they should be rejected immediately. Immediately, without consideration.” —*Lecture, Seattle, Oct. 2, 1968*

“Religion consists of the laws of God. People who do not know this think that religion means faith...

‘You can manufacture your own way.’ *Yata mata tata patha:* ‘Whatever you think is right, that is right.’...

***Suppose I am a madman. Is whatever I think all right?*** How could this be?

‘Two plus two equals four’ is science. If I believe that two plus two equals five or three, does it become true? No.

So there are laws of God, and when there is *dharmasya glanih*, deviation from these laws, we suffer.

Just as we might suffer by violating the laws of the state, as soon as we violate the laws of God we are subjected to so many tribulations.” —*Teachings of Queen Kunti, chapter 19*

“Religion means the laws of God. Religion does not mean ‘I have manufactured some religion, he has manufactured some religion, he has manufactured some religion, and another man has... Yes, all religions are right.’ *Yata mata tata patha.* No. That is nonsense.

Religion is one. *Sarva-dharmän parityajya mäm ekaà çaraëaà vraja* [Bg. 18.66]. This is religion. Kick out all sorts of religious principles; simply surrender to God, or Kåñëa.

*Sa vai puàsäà paro dharmoyato bhaktir adhokñaje* [SB 1.2.6]. This is confirmed. That is first-class religion, which teaches how to surrender to God and how to become a lover of God. That is religion. Otherwise, they are ***simply cheating religion***.” —*Bhagavad-gétä lecture, Bombay, Feb 22, 1974*

“If you have got faith in these words of Kåñëa, that ‘Yes, whatever Kåñëa says, *arva-dharmän parityajya mäm ekaà çaraëaà*... [Bg. 18.66], accept it,’ then *çraddhä* begins.

Otherwise...they say that ‘Everyone is all right.’ *Yata mata tata path,* ‘Whatever you like.’That is not *çraddhä*; that is whims...

*Sudåòha* means very firm faith; not ***flickering faith***.” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, Våndävana, Sept. 24, 1976*

*“Çravaëaà kértanaà viñëoù* [SB 7.5.23].

But ...the rascal swami will say, ‘No, any name, *çravaëa*, will do. Any name. Why Visnu? Oh, Kali.’ You know, in Bengal there is a party, *kali-kirtana*. What is this ***nonsense, kali-kirtana****?* ...But these rascals have discovered because they are very fertile brain and they can discover so many things*. Yata mata tata patha,* ‘I have discovered this.’” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, Mäyäpur, Oct. 15, 1974*

“Caitanya Mahäprabhu has especially warned that ‘Anyone who hears about the Mäyäväda commentation, ***he’s doomed***. He’s gone forever, lost. He will have no understanding, either this way or that.’

The Vedas, they give us information of the demigods, but they are not imagination. And neither Kåñëa is imagination. The *Bhagavata* is giving this direction; *Bhagavata* means Vyäsadeva is giving direction that ‘If you want this profit, then worship this demigod.’

So he’s playing childish, foolish things? He’s giving some wrong information? Imagination? What business he has got to do that? But these Mäyävädi rascals will say that ‘The demigods are also *mäyä*, Kåñëa is also *mäyä*, everything is *mäyä*.’ Therefore we call them Mäyävädi, everything *mäyä*. '*Kåñëa-bhakti* is *mäyä'* they say, it is good for raising oneself to the platform of impersonalism. Their process is that you, if you want to go higher platform, you take one staircase and get on it, and then throw it away, because you don’t require to come down again. That is their philosophy. So you take any means, the Ramakrishna Mission also says like that. *Yata mata tata patha. ‘*You can worship *brahma-varcasa*, you can worship Devi-mäyä; you can worship Vasun; you can worship Rudra; you can worship anyone; ultimately, you become one with the Supreme.’ Most misguiding.”

— *Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, LA, May 22, 1972*

“And the so-called rascal leaders, they are also misleading them, that:

‘There was no Battle of Kurukshetra. There was no instruction like that. It is all mythology, and we can utilize it for our political purposes but it has ***no value***. I can interpret in my own way; you can interpret in your own way. Actually, this instruction has no value.’ *Yata mata tata patha*, ‘You can interpret in your own way; I can interpret’...” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, Våndävana, Nov 19, 1976*

*“Vedo näräyaëaù säkñät.* In other words, that ***you*** cannot make any law. The ***government*** can make law. Similarly, ***you*** cannot manufacture any religion. *Näräyaëaù säkñät.*. ***Näräyaëa, God, He*** can make. You cannot make at your home, ‘I have manufactured a type of religion.’ No. That you cannot do.

Nowadays this is going on. *Yata mata tata patha.* ‘You can manufacture your own religion.’ This is going on. ‘You are okay, I am okay. I manufacture my religion. You manufacture your religion. Don’t fight. Let us become brother.’ This is going on. So how you can be brother? ***The dog remains a dog***. How they can become brother? It is not possible. Therefore so many religious systems, they are all rascaldom.

One religion: that is the order of God. That is religion. If you want one religion, then you must know who is God and you must abide by the order of God. That is religion, very simple thing. You cannot manufacture, concoction. That is not religion. Therefore *Bhagavata*, it is said, *dharmaù projjhita-kaitavo*: ‘All these cheating type of religion is rejected, kicked out from *Çrémad-Bhägavatam*.’ What is that religion there? *Paraà satyaà dhémahi*: ‘The Supreme Truth, the Absolute Truth, we are accepting.’ This is religion.” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, San Francisco, July 21, 1975*

“But nowadays everyone is ***manufacturing a dharma***, and the so-called rascals, they are supporting that ‘As many opinions there are, all of them are good.’ *Yata mata tata patha*. That is the preaching of the Ramakrishna Mission, that ‘Anyone can manufacture his own. It is personal.’ Is it not? And I have seen in your country also this, the same opinion he gave, that ‘Everyone has got his personal religion.’ And there are the hippies also. They are against any organized religion. These things are going on.” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, Gorakhpur, Feb. 12, 1971*

“Even they, somebody becomes interested in self-realization, they accept some ***wrong path***. *Mandäù sumanda-matayo* [SB 1.1.10]. They have got different *mataù*, opinion or path. And the so-called swamis, they also support that ‘Whatever opinion you have got about religious system, that is all right.’ *Yata mata tata patha.*

But actually, the fact is different; the fact is that one should take simply to the devotional path*, bhaktyä mäm abhijänäti* [Bg. 18.55]. If you are actually serious to know God, or Kåñëa, then you must take to this process of devotional service. Without this you cannot understand. ‘Not through *karma*, not through mystic yogic exercises, but through devotional service’, *bhaktyä mäm abhijänäti yävän yaç cäsmi tattvataù [Bg. 18.55]*.”

—*Nectar of Devotion lecture, Våndävana, Nov. 1, 1972*

“So that he can go on talking whatever he likes. *(laughter)* All nonsense. All he wants that license, ‘You can go on talking all nonsense, I can go on talking all nonsense. You are right, I am right, everything is all right.’ *Yata mata tata patha. Yata mata*, ‘As many opinions there are, so many ... are there also.’

So it ***does not apply in legal sense***. Just like the same example that I give always, ‘Keep to the right.’ Then if somebody says, ‘My opinion is keep to the left,’ but as soon as he does it, he is arrested.” —*Discussion with Syamasundara re: David Hume*

“You cannot create God. And they are creating God. Just like Vivekananda mission, *yata mata tata patha*. ‘As many opinion you have got, you can have your religious way.’ *Yata mata*, this is their mission, *yata mata tata patha,* ‘Whatever you are thinking, all right.’ Ramakrishna, he wanted to realize God from any way.

And later on he wanted to realize God by the Mohammedans’ way and he asked the proprietor of the temple to allow him to take meat, cow’s flesh. So when he asked, the proprietor said, ***‘Please go out. Get out.’*** ...This philosophy also, ‘You can realize God in any way’*, yata mata.* Now he wanted to realize in the Mohammedan’s way, therefore he thought it wise that he must eat cow’s flesh.” —*Discussion with Syamasundara re: Hegel*

“Anyone may be supremely devoted to his wife or sometimes supremely devoted to his dog. ***The dog is God?***

Wife is God? So everyone has got one god, and I think that it is supported by Vivekananda, ***yata mata tata patha****,* ‘Whatever you think of God, that’s all right.’” —*Discussion with Syamasundara re: Dewey*

“Just like Vivekananda, *yata mata*, Ramakrishna, *yata mata tata patha*, ‘You can manufacture your truth.’ That is going on. That is going on. The hippies, they are manufacturing their truth. So ***truth cannot be manufactured***.

Truth is truth. That is called absolute truth. Not relative truth, absolute truth. ‘You can manufacture relative truth…You make your own morality.’” —*Discussion with Çyämasundara, re: Kierkegaard*

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: That is Ramakrishna mission’s morality: *yata mata tata patha.* ‘Whatever you think, that is your way’, *yata mata tata patha.*

**Svarüpa Dämodara**: *Yata mata tata patha*.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: ‘As many ways you think, that’s all right.’

**Svarüpa Dämodara**: That is how they define morality.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: Yes. That, ***‘You make your own morality.***’ —*Morning Walk, Los Angeles, April 25, 1973*

“Kåñëa says, *sarva-dharmän parityajya*: [Bg. 18.66] ‘You rascal, you give up all these religion. Real religion is surrender to Me.’ ...*Dharma-saàsthäpanärthäya, ‘*I come, I descend just to reestablish the principle of religion.’

Does it mean that He came to support Hindu religion, Muslim religion, Christian religion? No. He came to reestablish religion.

People do not know what is that religion. They have created their own religion. And some rascal swami is supporting, *yata mata tata patha*... This is going on...but...these rascals, they do not know what is the meaning of religion.

Religion means to abide by the laws of God, simple definition...

Without God there is no question of religion. If somebody says, ‘I don’t care for God. ***But my religion is simply to cut throat.’ Is that religion?***

So therefore one must know what is religion.” —*Çrémad-Bhägavatam lecture, Los Angeles, December, 13, 1973*

“Then, instead of Christianity, it will be ***‘Churchianity.’*** You know this word, ‘churchianity?’ You know? Yes. Everywhere this churchianity is going on. And the real aim is how to enjoy sense, under different cover. That is going on all over the world. Therefore it has come to that Rajneesh. Ramakrishna Mission, Rajneesh mission. Vivekananda has given, preached, *Yata mata tata patha;* Rajneesh also, a *mata*. They have got also followers. ‘Everyone can manufacture his own way of religion. So sense enjoyment, there is free field.’ This material world means sense enjoyment.

But spiritual life means no sense enjoyment, *tapasya*. *Tapo divyaà*.” —*Room Conversation, Bombay, Sept 19, 1973*

“Kalidasa, a great poet, he was a great rascal. So... It is a long story. So he was sitting on the branch of a tree and cutting. So some gentleman: ‘Why you are cutting? You’ll fall down.’ ‘No, no, I’ll not fall down.’ But when he fell down, then he went to that gentleman, ‘How did you know, sir, that I shall fall down?’ Then they concluded, ‘Here is a rascal number one.’ *(laughter)* ‘Here is a rascal number one.’

They do not know that they are going to hell. That is rascaldom. By their so-called scientific advancement, philosophy, education, they are going to hell. That they do not know. Therefore they are rascals. Therefore they are rascals. This is ***the definition of rascaldom***: one who does not know where he is going.

If somebody goes in this way straight, and you say, ‘Don’t go!’ ‘No! Why shall I not go?***’*** He’s rascal. *(laughter)* He’s rascal. And the another rascal, ‘Yes, yes, you can go, it is all right.’ *Yata mata tata patha*. ‘As many ways you manu-facture, it is all right. You can go this way.’ He’s another rascal. This is going on.” —*Morning Walk, LA, Dec 2, 73*

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: But you’re believing in Lenin’s philosophy, the communist. And what is this hippies’… their philosophy, Allen Ginsberg’s philosophy? Ha? Debauch number one. *(laughter)*

**Satsvarüpa**: Ultimately, they don’t follow anyone...

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: No, they follow...But they are manufacture their own philosophy. Philosophy there must be.

They’ve become their own authority. That is a chaotic condition. Authority he has made himself. ‘Yes. I am my authority.’ ... But he does not know that I am fool number one, what is the value of my authority? Authority he must accept. But he makes himself his authority. That is the tendency now. ‘In my opinion.’ All rascals say like that, ‘In my opinion.’... He’s rascal number one, what is the value of his opinion? But he’ll say… ‘In my opinion.’ That is the difficulty. And this is called creative philosophy. Is it not?

**Puñöa-kåñëa**: Yes.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: This is going on. ***All rascals have creative philosophy***.

**Pusta-krsna**: When I hear in the United States there’s a saying, a slogan, amongst the young people, ‘Do your own thing.’ And also in India now when I go there they say, ‘So many men, so many minds.’

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: Yes, that is Vivekananda. *Yata mata tata patha*. That means everyone can become authority....

**Satsvarupa**: And others praise this as...

**Puñöa-kåñëa**: Very tolerant, liberal.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: Yes, but our philosophy, Kåñëa says, ‘You rascal, give up everything. Just surrender unto Me.’ This is our philosophy. ‘You rascal, you give up everything and surrender unto Me.’ This is our philosophy.

**Devotee**: Haribol.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: *Sarva-dharmän parityajya mäm ekaà* [Bg. 18.66]. He’s decrying this Vivekananda philosophy. Rascal philosophy. There was a suggestion when I *(indistinct*) international, I was going to register, they suggested, ‘Why don’t you make God conscious? Why you make Kåñëa conscious?’ And if I had made God conscious so many rascals will bring so many Gods. Therefore specifically only Kåñëa God. That’s all.

That is authorized. If you like, you take other’s God. But this is our philosophy, *mäm ekaà çaraëaà vraja*.

Was it not wise conclusion?

**Guru-Gauräìga**: Yes.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: If I have made a little liberal, God conscious, all rascals would have brought... ‘Here is my God.’ To stop this nonsense I made it Kåñëa conscious. Kåñëa is God only...What is the use of cooperation of some rascaldom?

**Guru-Gauräìga**: That man yesterday wanted to know if we collaborated with other groups.

**Çréla Prabhupäda**: Yes... If you accept God, we accept God. Then where is ‘no cooperation’? This is cooperation.

But if you don’t know what is God, we know. That is the difference. Ask this Christians, Mohammedans,

and any other religious group, ... ask them what is the form of God, what does He do.... They do not know.

But we know. —*Morning Walk, Geneva, June 8, 74*

“Even most people who claim to belong to the Vedic system of religion are actually opposed to the Vedic principles. Every day they manufacture a new type of *dharma* on the plea that whatever one manufactures is also a path of liberation. Atheistic men generally say, *yata mata tata patha*. According to this view, ‘There are hundreds and thousands of different opinions in human society, and each opinion is a valid religious principle.’ This philosophy of rascals has killed the religious principles mentioned in the Vedas, and such philosophies will become increasingly influential as Kali-yuga progresses.

In the last stage of Kali-yuga, ***Kalkideva, the fierce incarnation of Kesava, will descend to kill all the atheists*** and will save only the devotees of the Lord.”

—*Çrémad-Bhägavatam 3.8.19 purport*

**The genuine guru has only one opinion**

“One may ask whether the guru is absolutely necessary. The Vedas inform us …*tad-vijïänärthaà sa gurum eväbhigacchet samit-päëiù çrotriyaà brahma-niñöham* [MU 1.2.12] The Vedas enjoin us to …seek out ***the*** guru, not just ***a*** guru. The guru is one because he comes ***IN*** disciplic succession. What Vyäsadeva and Kåñëa taught five thousand years ago is also being taught now. There is no difference between the two instructions. Although hundreds and thousands of *äcärya's* have come and gone, the message is one. The real guru cannot be two, for the real guru does not speak differently from his predecessors.

Some spiritual teachers say, ‘In my opinion you should do this,’ but this is not a guru. Such so-called gurus are simply rascals.

***The genuine guru has only one opinion***, and that is the opinion expressed by Kåñëa, Vyäsadeva, Närada, Arjuna, Çré Caitanya Mahäprabhu, and the Gosvämés. Five thousand years ago Lord Sri Kåñëa spoke the *Bhagavad-gétä*, and Vyäsadeva recorded it. Srila Vyäsadeva did not say, ‘This is my opinion.’ Rather, he wrote, *çré-bhagavän uväca*, that is, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead says.’ Whatever Vyäsadeva wrote was originally spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead; Srila Vyäsadeva did not give his own opinion. Consequently, Srila Vyäsadeva is a guru. He does not misinterpret the words of Kåñëa, but transmits them exactly as they were spoken. If we send a telegram, the person who delivers the telegram does not have to correct it, edit it, or add to it. He simply presents it. That is the guru’s business. The guru may be this person or that, but the message is the same; therefore it is said that guru is one.” —*Vyäsa-puja day lecture, 1973, Bhaktivedänta Manor, England*

“So *äcärya’s* duty is to point out the *sastric* injunction...

If you go to a drug shop, all of them are medicines, but the experienced physician, he gives you a medicine, which is particularly suitable for you. You cannot say, ‘Sir, why you are selecting medicine? You can give any one bottle.’ That is nonsense. Not any one; the particular body, a particular bottle, and a particular medicine, which is suitable for you, the experienced physician gives you. He’s acarya. So you cannot say that ‘Everything is medicine; whichever bottle I take, that’s all right.’ No. That’s not.

This is going on. *Yata mata tata patha*. Why *yata mata tata patha*?

The particular *mata* which is suitable for you at a particular time, that should be accepted, not any other *mata*. So similarly, in this age, in this *Kali-yuga*, where people are very short-living, duration of life is very short, they are unfortunate, they’re very slow, and they take to unauthorized means of religious principles, they’re prone to so many disturbances of life... Therefore this ***particular medicine for this age***, as given by Caitanya Mahaprabhu, ‘*harer näma harer näma harer nämaiva kevalam kalau nästy eva nästy eva nästy eva gatir anyathä* [Adi 17.21].’”

—*Nectar of Devotion lecture, Våndävana, Nov. 5, 1972*