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A DEVOTEE NEVER THINKS HIMSELF GREAT

*His Divine Grace A.C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

A devotee always appreciates the activities of other devotees. Yudhishtir Maharaja was appreciating the qualities of Prahlad, and that is one symptom of a pure devotee. A pure devotee never thinks himself as great; he always thinks that other devotees are greater than himself. The King was thinking, "Prahlad Maharaja is actually a devotee of the Lord, while I am nothing," and while thinking this, he was addressed by Narada as follows: "My dear King Yudhishtira, in this world you, the Pandava brothers, are the only fortunate people. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has appeared on this planet and is presenting himself to you as an ordinary human being. He is always with you in all circumstances. He is living with you and covering himself from the eyes of others. Others cannot understand that he is the Supreme Lord, but he is still living with you as your cousin, as your friend, and even as your messenger. Therefore you must know that nobody in this world is more fortunate than you." ❀

— *Nectar of Devotion*. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Los Angeles. 1982. Pages 16-17.



Drawing by Anuradha Dasi

*The lotus feet of His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

OUT OF FEAR OF A BOGUS GURU

*From Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode's
Commentary on Tattva-viveka, 1.28*

In accepting a guru, one may later receive false teachings from him. Thus, out of fear of being directed to a wrong path, some persons are averse to accepting and worshipping any guru — even a genuine saintly guru that they may come in contact with. Some people say that the truth is there in one's own heart, and that they can know it by their own endeavor. Therefore there is no need to

take shelter of a guru. Some people say that one should only accept the most prominent, famous spiritual master (*pradhāna-ācārya*). They say that the *pradhāna-ācārya* is God himself, the true teacher and the deliverer. Entering into our hearts, he destroys our sinful desires. Therefore there is no need to accept any mere human being as guru.

Others among them say that one should only worship the scriptures, which are given by God. Still others among them say that the scriptures are filled with errors — afraid in this way, they will not honor any scripture. Please know that these philosophies are wrong in every way. They present that God has many faults and is unable to help the individual spirit souls. ❀

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KRISHNA'S BRAHMACARI LIFE

PART THREE: SERVING GURU

Adapted from Srila Jiva Goswami's *Gopāla-campū*, part 2, chapter 8

Part two of this story described Krishna and Balaram's arrival in Avantipur and their meeting with Sandipani Muni at his ashram.

Thereafter, begging for boiled rice and grains along with all others, Krishna and Balaram had become the very means of subsistence for them all. Wherever these two boys went with the other students for begging, nothing was unobtainable. In fact, the two of them received so much through begging that the remaining students [did not have to beg and] became mere carriers of what Krishna and Balaram received. When both of them went to collect alms for their spiritual master, the people who gave to them [contradictorily] became beggars, requesting the boys to come again and repeatedly give their *darśana*.

In the city of Avantipur the charity-giving young women were looked upon as mothers by both of them, and the two divine youth were looked upon as sons by the women. Verily this behavior is suitable both for the donor and for the beggar. Furthermore, both of them begged only at those places where their fellow students were well recognized. They did not beg at other places, considering that begging on behalf of their guru at places where their guru was not known and respected might be counted as a misdeed.

Gaining respect by passing all tests of honesty and truthfulness, they would daily bring increasing amounts of begged food and other articles to the guru. Distributing the begged goods with excitement, the guru developed great attraction for the two boys. Attracted to them, he did not make them work since they were young and tender. But the two, with great devotion, engaged in menial work excellently when the guru was not present.

One day the guru's wife asked, "O master! Among all your students who are the most devoted?"

He said, "The two *ksatriya* boys."

She said with a smile, "I do not see them serving you."

He said, "Out of affection I forbid them from personally serving me. They apparently follow this order, but I can understand that when no one is looking they serve."

One day, seeing un-seasonal rain, the wife called some students to bring wood, excluding the two boys. "O sons! Bring wood from somewhere!"

In fear, the students said, "How can we go to the forest in the afternoon?" Krishna and Balaram heard this. Immediately, with great devotion they went off separately deep into the forest to find the best wood. Seeing them go, the others followed. When they entered the huge forest, heavy rain blocked all visibility. The other students could not join them when this happened. But Krishna and Balaram collected the best wood and, feeling successful, remained there. But since night was approaching they could not return. But why describe further, since it will disturb the people of Vraja who are listening [to this narration by Madhu-kantha and Snigdha-kantha]?



Krishna and Balaram collect firewood for their guru

After saying this, understanding the lamentation of the people of Vraja, the reciter paused a moment and then continued speaking.

O brother Snigdha-kaṇṭha! In the morning, Sandipani became furiously angry. Castigating his wife, and neglecting his morning rites, he went to the forest. Though tired, the two boys, most attractive in their clothing, carrying the wood and showing devotion to guru, were joking with the other students about how they spent the night. However, on seeing their guru, who had come there with difficulty through the dense growth of creepers, they became embarrassed since he had heard their joking words.

The brothers bowed their heads to their guru, giving him happiness. He embraced them with affection and blessed them in his mind that they would have a revelation of all knowledge. He bathed them in a stream of tears.

The creator, the bestower of good and bad results to all, the friend who fulfills all desires in an appropriate way, the life of his father and mother — whom Sukadev, though liberated, glorifies for their parental attachment to him — carried firewood to satisfy his guru. My life air aches to relate this fact.

Anyway, let that be as it may. Now we will continue the story. The guru took the wood, put it on the heads of other students, and returned home. Arranging the wood with his wife, he made the students study. The activities of the teacher, outstanding because of his fatherly attitude, purified all minds.

Although there were hundreds of students with equal qualities, Krishna was especially attracted to Sridama Sharma [Sridama Brahmin] since he had the same name as his dear friend in Vraja, just as he showed affection for the Pandava Arjuna and for Sudama, the garland maker of Mathura.

In this regard, please understand an amazing thing — it is true that in Avanti many brah-

mins like Sridama and others studied along with Krishna and Balarama and enthusiastically tried to match the brothers. But enthusiasm alone is not sufficient, just like swans who think they are very beautiful are nothing in comparison with Garuda. Though the *brahmacārīs* Krishna and Balaram were in the introductory class, they defeated all those versed in the Vedas and even those who had graduated. Studying only once, they learned all the Vedas and were praised by all others who had studied many times. In sixty-four days the two boys mastered the sixty-four branches of knowledge, placing that knowledge in their hearts like pictures, since in their hearts lay the whole universe — something which their guru could not understand.

*sāndīpaner adhūtaṁ hari-rāmābhyāṁ iti khyātaṁ
sāndīpanis tu tābhyāṁ bhramam apahatawān
bahutra vidyāsu*

It is well known that Krishna and Balaram learned from Sandipani and that Sandipani gave up many errors in knowledge because of them. ❀

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DOES HE REMEMBER US?

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

[Speaking to Uddhava regarding Krishna and Balaram's activities after they left Vraja and went to Mathura,] Nanda Maharaja said, "I heard that my brother Vasudev sent Krishna and Balaram to their guru's house, Sandipani Muni's ashram in Avantinagar. How my heart is splitting, Uddhava! They have become *brahmacārīs!* They have to go out and beg alms for their guru! They have to collect *samit*, wood for *yajña!* O Uddhava, my son Krishna is a milk-fed child, who eats ten times in one *danḍa*, twenty-four minutes! Such a heavy responsibility has been placed on him! He is going to the forest to fetch wood, fuel for the guru's ashram! This is not befitting my milk-fed Gopal. Uddhava, my heart is breaking hearing all these things."

He asked Uddhava, "Does he still remember us? Is he remembering his most beloved mother? Does he remember his friends, the cowherd boys? Is he remembering his most beloved cows and calves, which he was feeding with his own hands? Does he remember how he was forgetting his food and sleep while playing



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in this jungle of Vrindavan? Is he remembering Giriraj Govardhan? His footprints are still there. Giriraj Govardhan is still carrying them. That Giriraj Govardhan is crying for him. Is he feeling that crying? Has he such feelings?"

Nanda Maharaja could not speak about himself. He asked about others. While Nanda Maharaja was speaking, His heart filled with *vātsalya-prīti*. His voice choked up and he couldn't speak.

Nanda Maharaja said, "O Uddhava, Krishna is a very simple child. He was not thinking of anything on any day. Now there is so much anxiety on him. Jarasandha attacked Mathura and the Yadavas had to be protected from that attack. Such a small child, and such a heavy burden has been placed on Him! When I think of this, my heart breaks!" ❀

— From *Mathura Meets Vrindavan*. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, India. 2003. Pages 141-142.

THE DARK CLOUD KRISHNA Sri Rupa Goswami Prabhupada's Lalita-mādhava 1.2

*aṣṭau prokṣya dig-aṅganā ghana-rasaiḥ
patrāṅkurāṅgām śrīyā*

*kurvan mañju latā-bharasya ca sadā rāmāvali-
maṅḍanam*

*yaḥ pīne hṛdi bhānujām atula-bhām candrākṛtiṁ
cojivalām*

*rundhānaḥ kramate tam atra mudiraṁ kṣṇam
namas kurmahe*

Let us offer our respectful obeisances to the dark cloud of Lord Krishna, who showers the goddesses of the eight directions with a rain of sweetness, which eternally decorates the *gopīs* with beautiful vine-grown leaves and flowers, and which embraces to its chest the peerlessly splendid moon of Sri Radha. ❀

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