



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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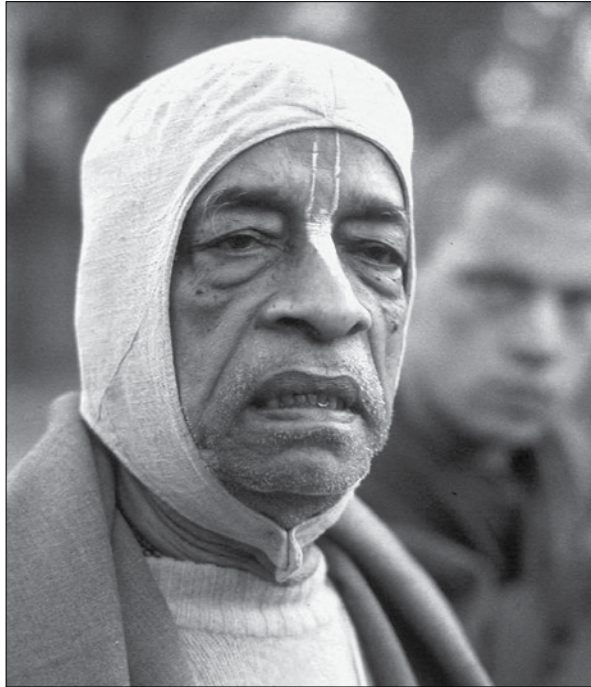
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His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

A SHOW OF RELIGION

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

Making a show of religion without Krishna consciousness may make one popular in the estimation of unintelligent men, but factually such a materialistic display of spiritual advancement does not help one at all; it will not prevent one from missing the goal of life. ❀

— Purport to *Bhāg.* 7.15.29

SRILA GOPAL GURU GOSWAMI

Although he is a famous follower of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Gopal Guru Goswami's name does not appear in either the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* of Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur or in Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Vakreśvara-carita* is a book written in 1900 by Amritalal Pal, a devotee in the line of Srila Vakreshwar Pandit. In the *madhya* section of the book he describes Gopal Guru as being one of the most prominent disciples of Srila Vakreshwar Pandit:

*candraśekhara, śaṅkarāraṇya ācārya ei dui jama
govindānanda, devānanda, nāhika kathān
gopāla-guru gosvāmira guṇera nāhi lekhā
vakreśvara paṇḍitera ei pañca-śākhā*

Chandrashekhara and Shankararanya Acharya, these two along with Govindananda and Devananda, and Gopal Guru Goswami, are the five branches of the tree of Srila Vakreshwar Pandit. It is not possible to describe their wonderful qualities. (*Vakreśvara-carita*, *madhya*, p. 116)

Gopal Guru was born in a family of Orissan brahmins. His father's name was Murari Pandit. His parents gave him the name Makaradhvaja Pandit. It is said that by the mercy of Mahaprabhu's servant Govinda, Makaradhvaja was able to render personal service to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu used to affectionately call the boy "Gopal".

How he became known as Gopal Guru is an interesting story with several slightly varying versions. From his childhood, Gopal served Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It is said that once, prior to Mahaprabhu's departure from Puri,

Gopal happened to notice that while the Lord was going to answer a call of nature that he had his tongue pressed between his teeth. When asked by the boy about his behavior, Mahaprabhu said that his tongue didn't want to stop chanting, but it was improper while he was engaged in a call of nature. Gopal remarked, "Prabhu, you are the Supreme Lord and everyone follows you. What if someone while following your example left his body, what would be his destination if he were not chanting?"

Mahaprabhu became pleased and said, "You have spoken correctly. From today you shall be known as 'guru'."

Devotees far and wide spoke about this incident and the glories of the young boy whom Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu titled, "guru". When Abhiram Thakur heard about it, he decided to come to Puri to test Gopal. Abhiram Thakur was a powerful associate of Lord Nityananda. Whenever he would offer obeisances to a deity that was not genuine then the deity would break. Similarly, by the strength of his obeisances, Abhiram had previously eliminated all of the offspring of Lord Nityananda except Ganga Devi and Virabhadra Prabhu. [For more on this pastime, see the article "Abhiram Thakur Tests the Sons of Lord Nityananda" in Bindu issue 4.]

When Gopal heard that Abhiram was on his way to meet him, he became terrified and ran and took shelter on the lap of Mahaprabhu. The Lord placed his foot on Gopal's head, thereby making a *tilaka* mark on the boy's forehead depicting the foot-print of the Lord. By the strength of that blessing, when Abhiram Thakur offered his obeisances to him, Gopal was unaffected.

According to the local tradition at the Gambhira in Puri, the deity of Sri Sri Radhakant installed there had been captured from a South Indian king during one of the military campaigns of Maharaja Purushottam Dev, the father of Prataparudra. Raj Purushottam Dev gifted the deities to his family priest, the father of Kashi Mishra. The worship was later passed on to Kashi Mishra, who served as the priest of Maharaja Prataparudra. After the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Vakreshwar took up residence in the Gambhira and received the service of Sri Sri Radhakant from Kashi Mishra. Before Vakreshwar Pandit's departure, he turned over the service to his dear disciple Gopal Guru Goswami. From 1538 to 1548 AD, Gopal was in charge of the service of Radhakanta. During that period the temple was thoroughly renovated. Under the order of Gopal Guru, four additional deities — of Sri Radha, Lalita, Nityananda Prabhu, and Lord Gauranga — were installed on the altar with Radhakanta.

A festival is held every year at the temple on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Magh. This is the day Gopal Guru became the mahant and took over charge of the service of the deities. It is considered that on this day Gopal Guru appears for a short time on one side of Mahaprabhu's seat.

It's said that in his old age Gopal Guru became concerned about who would perform the service for Sri Sri Radhakant after his disappearance. One night he



Nāma-tattva

EXPLANATION OF THE MAHA-MANTRA Sri Gopal Guru Goswami

*vijñāpya bhagavat-tattvaṁ cid-ghanānanda-vigrahaṁ
haraty avidyāṁ tat kāryam ato harir iti smṛtaḥ*

The Supreme Lord, the very form of eternal knowledge and concentrated bliss, who bestows transcendental knowledge of devotional service unto himself and thereby snatches all ignorance from the living entities, is known as *hari*, "he who takes away."

*harati śrī-kṛṣṇa manaḥ kṛṣṇāhlāda-svarūpiṇī
ato harety anenaiva śrī-rādhā parikīrtitā*

Because she enchants Krishna's heart, and because she is pleasure personified for Krishna, Sri Radha is called *harā*, "she who enchants".

*ānandaika-sukha-svāmī śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ
gokulānandano nanda-nandanah kṛṣṇa ilyate*

The dark-hued, lotus eyed son of Nanda, who is the delight of Gokula and the exclusive lord of all varieties of pleasures, is known as *kṛṣṇa*, "he who gives pleasure".

*vaidagdhī sāra-sarvasvaṁ mūrti-hīlādhidaivatam
rādhikāṁ ramayan nityaṁ rāma ity abhidhīyate*

That quintessential deity, possessed of superexcellent qualities and pastimes, who sports eternally with Sri Radhika, is known as *rāma*, "he who enjoys".

(Some vaiṣṇavas ascribe this commentary to Jiva Goswami.)

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Radhakant with Radha and Lalita

Mahaprabhu to left of Radha and Nityananda to right of Lalita

had a dream in which Krishna told him, “Don’t worry. I’ve arranged a *sevak* to continue the service. He will be the first person you meet tomorrow. That morning, Gopal Guru woke up and after performing his morning duties went outside. There he found an effulgent young brahmin who had been waiting at his doorstep to see him. Gopal Guru gave him mantra initiation and the name Sri Dhyanchandra and designated him to take over the deity service upon Gopal Guru’s departure from this world. According to the local tradition, the king of Puri was annoyed that the service of Radhakant was to be transferred without his approval. So when the news reached him that Gopal Guru had passed away, he sent soldiers to take over the temple. Meanwhile, Dhyanchandra was escorting the body of his guru to the funeral pyre at Swargadwar. When he heard about the king’s action, he grabbed his guru maharaja’s feet and began crying and pleading for Gopal Guru’s help. Suddenly, Gopal Guru rose up from the palanquin and led a *kīrtana* procession of ecstatic devotees back to the Gambhira, where he reclaimed the service of Radhakant.

After this, Gopal Guru is said to have remained at the Gambhira during the reign of the next three kings. Then he again turned over the service of Radhakant to Dhyanchandra Goswami and left his body on the ninth day of the dark fortnight in the month of *Kartika*.

The next year when a group of devotees came from Vraja to attend the Puri *Ratha-yātrā*, they told Dhyanchandra — “Gopal Guru is doing his bhajan near Vamsivat in Vrindavan.” Astonished to hear this news, Dhyanchandra went the entire distance to Vraja on foot. Upon arrival, he found his guru sitting under a tree chanting *japa*. “Guru Maharaja, how is it possible?” Dhyanchandra asked. “You left your body in Puri!”

Gopal Guru looked at his disciple and lightly rebuked him, “Don’t you understand the transcendental nature of Vrindavan Dham?”

Dhyanchandra began to weep in simultaneous happiness and distress, “Guru Maharaja, we can’t tolerate your separation. You must come back.”

Gopal Guru told him, “I won’t return this time. But when you arrive back in Puri, go to Siddha Bakul where Haridas Thakur did his bhajan. There you will find an old neem tree. Have a deity made of me from that tree. When you offer bhoga to Radhakant, place that deity in front of the Lord. Through that deity you will continue to have my *darśana*. To this day that deity of Gopal Guru can be seen sitting on an *āsana* near the doorway of the temple of Radhakant.

In *Jaiva Dharma*, Bhaktivinod Thakur has mentioned Gopal Guru Goswami and Dhyanchandra Goswami a number of times. Nearly the last third of that book is dedicated to describing them teaching two inquisitive students. Gopal Guru Goswami and his disciple Dhyanchandra both wrote books named *Śrī Gaura-govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*. Therein they have outlined the particular style of worship established by Gopal Guru Goswami. Later, these books were combined together and provide the basis for the worship conducted by some of the followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. — MD ॐ

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**THE GLORIES OF
GOPAL GURU GOSWAMI**
Narahari Das

The following sūcaka-kīrtana is sung on the occasion of Gopal Guru Goswami's disappearance day at the Gambhira in Puri.

*āre mora gopāla guru bhakati kalpa-taru
śrī-makaradvaja nāma yāhāra
śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya yānke gopāla baliyā ḍāke
dekhi śiṣu caritra udāra*

O my Gopal Guru! You are known as Makaradvaja and are a wish-fulfilling tree of devotion. Seeing the generous nature of the child, Sri Krishna Chaitanya called him “Gopal”.

*śrī gaurāṅgera sevā rase sadāi ānande bhāse
gaurā-vimū nāhi jāne āna
tileka nā dekhi yānre dhairaya dharite nāre
gaurā yena gopālera prāna*

He always floats in the nectar mellows of service to Sri Gaurāṅgera and does not know anything other than Gaura. Lord Gaurāṅgera is the life of Gopal. He could not remain patient for even a moment without having Gaurāṅgera's *darśana*.

*gopāla prabhura prati śikṣādila ekarīti
prabhu premaveśe dhali dhuli
kahe sabe āre āre āja ha-ite gopālere
ḍākibā gopāla guru bali*

☞

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The deity of Gopal Guru Goswami at the Gambhira

Gopal once instructed Gaurāṅgera, and with love Mahāprabhu told everyone, “From today you should address Gopal as guru.”

*gopāle karunā dekhi sabāra sajala ānkhī
sukhera samudra uthalīla
sabe kahe anupāma śrī gopāla guru nāma
prabhu datta jagate vyāpīla*

Seeing this mercy on Gopal, everyone's eyes filled with tears, and the ocean of bliss overflowed. All the devotees said, “Sri Gopal Guru' is the matchless name given by Mahāprabhu.”

*gopālera guru bhakti kahite nāhika śakti
sadāi prasanna vakreśvara
mahāmatta nṛtya-gīte nāhika upamā dite
sarva cittākārṣe kalevara*

I have no power to describe Gopal's *guru-bhakti*. Vakreshwar is always pleased with him. Gopal is absorbed in singing and dancing for Krishna. His all-attractive body is beyond any comparison.

*dekhīla sakala tāni emana dayālū nāi
kebā nā jagate yaśa ghoṣe
sabe kaila prema-pātra kevala vañcita mātra
narahari nija karma doṣe*

After searching the entire universe, I don't find any other merciful person than Gopal Guru. Who will not sing his glories? He makes everyone the object of mercy. Only Narahari was cheated due to his sinful reactions. ☞

— Translated by Mani Gopal Das, from *Śrī Gaurāṅga Pāṛṣada Vargera Sūcaka Kīrtana*. Compiled and edited by Kishori Das Babaji. Published by the editor. Halisahar, West Bengal. 2005.