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Srila Lochan Das Thakur



MAKE FRIENDS WITH KRISHNA

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Krishna is within you. He is sitting within your heart as a friend, not as an enemy. Krishna is always your friend. *Suḥṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ* (Bg. 5.29). You are searching out friends to talk with, to joke with, to love. Krishna is sitting there for that purpose.

If you love Krishna, if you make friendship with Krishna, if you love Krishna, then your life will be successful. You haven't got to search out any other friend. The friend is already there. Whether you are a boy or a girl, you will find a nice friend within yourself.

That is yoga system, when you realize this friend. This friend is so nice, as soon as you become a little inclined to hear about him, *śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ* — about Krishna, not any other nonsense talks, simply about Krishna — then Krishna will be so pleased!" 🙏

— Lecture in New Vrindaban. 7 June 1969.

UNPALATABLE INSTRUCTIONS

From the Life of Srila Gour Kishore Das Babaji

Once, Srila Gour Kishore Das Babaji wrapped his body and feet with a cloth. Sitting covered like this he said, "Many persons, after being informed by others that I am a *vaiṣṇava*, come here to collect the dust from my feet. I tell them, 'I am not a *vaiṣṇava*. If you go where there are *vaiṣṇavas* with their feet pretentiously decorated and extended to be touched, then you can get unlimited dust.'"

At this time a person named Bhattacharya came from Vrindavan with his female companion to see Srila Babaji Maharaja. Approaching him, he said, "You are my spiritual master. Please be merciful to me."

Babaji Maharaja replied, saying, “I have nothing. I have no *rasagullas*, *sandaśa*, *luci*, *puris*, money, sweet rice, or sweet words. How can I bless you? Those spiritual masters who can feed their disciples many sweets are praised as the most advanced. Nowadays such a person is qualified to become a spiritual master. Presently, the learned section defines the word *anukūla* [favorable] as ‘receiving wealth, a beautiful wife, or sweet words.’”

Bhattacharya then remarked, “We have many misconceptions. Whatever you instruct, that we will do.”

Srila Gour Kishore Das Babaji Maharaja then instructed him, “I can see what is most favorable for you. You should eat rice that has been soaked in water and sit on a grass seat. You should eat food that not even a dog would accept. You should wear clothes that even a thief

would not steal. You must remain in the association of devotees and always chant the holy name of the Lord. By imitating the activities of one who is very renounced, one resembles a monkey. Monkeys sit in one place and remain quiet, but when they get the opportunity, they steal something. As long as one acts like a monkey, then his devotional service will never become fixed.” 🍌

— From *Babaji Maharaja, Two Beyond Duality*. By Karnamrita Das. Pp. 47-48. New Jaipur Press. 1990.



Nāma-tattva

BE JOYFUL SEEING OTHERS CHANT

Srila Sanatan Goswami's
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.470-471

nāma-yuktān janān dṛṣṭvā snigdho bhavati yo naraḥ
sa yāti paramaṁ sthānaṁ viṣṇunā saha modate

tasmān nāmāni kaunteya bhajasva dṛḍha-mānasaḥ
nāma-yuktaḥ priyo 'smākaṁ nāma-yukto bhavārjuna

[Krishna to Arjuna in Ādi Purāṇa:] O son of Kunti, one who becomes joyful upon seeing a person who is inclined to chant the holy names of the Lord will also go back to Godhead and enjoy the association of Lord Vishnu. Therefore, my advice is that you go on chanting my holy names with firm determination, because one who is attached to chanting my holy names is very dear to me.

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THE STORY OF GOPAL JIU PART THREE

Kirtan Gurus

In the early seventeenth century, Shyamananda and Rasikananda Prabhus had preached all over Odisha, converting thousands into followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. They had a unique style of *kīrtana*, quite distinct from the styles practiced by Srinivas Acharya and Narottam Das Thakur in Bengal



Sri Sri Radha Gopal Jiu

and north-eastern India, and this style became very popular in Odisha, becoming known as *oḍiśī-kīrtana*. Dinabandhu Giri, like his father and grandfather before him, was expert in *oḍiśī-kīrtana*. He performed *kīrtana* all over Gadeigiri and the surrounding villages and was highly appreciated by the villagers. The Giri family was often invited to teach *kīrtana*, thus they became known as *kīrtana* gurus, instructing others in the performance of *kīrtana*.

Jagulai Durga

Dinabandhu Giri also lived to be 85, and after his departure Gopal's care was handed on to his son Abhiram Giri. Although Dinabandhu Giri was very expert in *saṅkīrtana*, his son Abhiram was not. One day, as the father and son were doing *kīrtana* in a nearby village, some people criticized Abhiram Giri saying, "How is it that the son of a *kīrtana* guru cannot do *kīrtana*?" Abhiram Giri felt very sad. He decided that when he returned to Gadeigiri he would pray to the Gopal deity for the ability to do *kīrtana*. According to the Giri family history, just before Abhiram arrived at Gopal's temple he saw mother Durga-devi, who is known as Jagulai, the protector of the village, coming to have *darśana* of Gopal.

Abhiram offered obeisances to Durga-devi, who is Vaishnavi-devi, a great devotee of Krishna. Jagulai-devi could understand Abhiram Giri's desire and she gave him the benediction that whenever he sang, everyone would appreciate it. Then she asked him to let her see Gopal.

The temple of Jagulai Durga is situated at the entrance way to the village of Gadeigiri. She is the presiding deity of the neighboring village of Nagpur. It is considered that she acts as a guard for Gopal's territory and that she regularly comes to have *darśana* of Gopal. Many local people have claimed to have seen her coming, carrying a burning *maśāla*, a type of torch common in rural areas. The local residents say that she comes every night for *darśana* of Gopal at midnight.

The Stealing of Gopal

Abhiram Giri served Gopal until he passed away at the ripe age of 90, and Gopal's service then passed on to his son Bhagavat Charan Giri. From the time of Gopal Giri, the family had engaged only *sannyāsīs* to perform the daily worship of Gopal. This tradition stopped during the life of Bhagavat Charan Giri. In one conversation Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami explained why:



Left to right: Sri Sri Radha Gopal Jiu and Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur's deities of Sri Sri Radha Madhava receiving abhiṣeka in Gadeigiri

One *vaiṣṇava sannyāsī* came to Gadeigiri and started doing service for Gopal. He thought to himself, “Oh, very nice deity, and he is staying in a thatched house, no security is there. Once he thought, “I will steal these deities.” At night he stole the deities and took them away. In a dream Gopal called my ancestor and told him, “This person is stealing me away! Come immediately and rescue me.” The *sannyāsī* had only gone a short distance when a very poisonous snake came and bit him, killing him. Finding Gopal lying on the ground, my ancestor picked him up and took him back to the temple.

After this incident, fearful that someone else would attempt to steal Gopal, Bhagavat Charan Giri engaged only hired brahmins for Gopal's worship. As a further precaution, he would not engage any one brahmin for very long but would regularly change them. 🍌

— From the book, *Gopal Jiu the Beloved Deity of Srila Gour Govinda Swami*. By Madhavananda Das. Pp. 6-11. Gopal Jiu Publications. Bhubaneswar, India. 2011.

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A HEART-RENDING PLEA

Srila Lochan Das Thakur's

Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala, sutra-khaṇḍa, texts 5 to 8

*viṣṇu-bhakta vandoṅ āge, āra yata mahābhāge,
yāra guṇe pṛthivī pavitra
sarvajībe kare dayā, viśeṣe ārati pānā,
tribhuvana maṅgala caritra*

I bow down before the devotees of Lord Vishnu — devotees who are very fortunate, devotees whose virtues purify the whole earth, devotees who are merciful to everyone, devotees who love everyone, devotees whose pastimes bring auspiciousness to the three worlds.

*muṇi ati abhājana, nā bujheñā ḍāhina-vāma,
ākāśa dharite cāhoñ vāhe
andhe divyaratna kāche, parvata nā dekhe kāche
nā jāni ki pariñāme haye*

I am worthless. I don't know right from left. I want to climb up and grab the sky. I am a blind man who wants to find a splendid jewel, even though I have no power to see even a mountain. What will become of me I do not know!

*sabe eka bharasā āche, prabhu tāhi kāho bāche,
guṇa gāya uttama adhame
sarvajīve samadayā, sabe pāya padachāyā,
adhikāri nāhika niyame*

There is but one hope. The Lord accepts any person, high or low, that sings his glories. He is merciful to everyone. To everyone he gives the shade of his feet. He does not worry whether they are qualified to receive his mercy.

*ye punaḥ vaiṣṇava jana, tāra kathā kahi śuna,
akāraṇe dayā sarvaloke
para lāgi jīvana, para lāgi bhūṣana,
para-upakāre māne sukhe*

Please hear the glories of the *vaiṣṇavas*! Without any ulterior motive they are merciful to everyone. They live to benefit others. To others they give even their ornaments. Their hearts become happy when they do good to others. 🍌

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