

O My Friend

Welcome to this episode of Kartik Inspirations.

Today, I took my bicycle and rode to Gulal-kund, where we had celebrated the Holi festival a few months ago. The pujari recognized me immediately; it was the same one who had invited me to dance with him, and who had shown me some dancing steps. When he saw me this time, he embraced me and was very, very happy.

This is actually typical for Vrindavan. The Vrajavasis are very close with people whom they accept, and to accept someone, a Vrajavasi only wants to see that they like Krishna.

This whole mood echoes the atmosphere of the real and the eternal, the transcendental Vrindavan. The Lord there is a close Lord. One of his friends there is Subhadra, the son of Upananda, who possesses a very fine intelligence, which he has directed towards astrology. He's so good at it that he defeats even Brihaspati in the heavenly planets in learning. And Mother Yasoda goes every morning to him and asks him to read the charts for Krishna, so that Krishna knows which meadow is best for his cows on that day, and so on.

So, Subhadra is so worried that Krishna doesn't have some accident that he constantly sits over his charts and calculates Sri Krishna's luck, and also bad luck. So what closeness, what love in action!

This mood is very nicely explained in the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya, where Lord Nrsimhadev calls Prahlad forward. He doesn't want him to be in the distance, but wants to put him on His lap. And He says, "O, child, give up this reverence that simply causes fear and respect to awaken within you. I don't

like this kind of reverence towards Me by My devotees. Please show some feelings of love towards Me. The devotees see Me and speak with Me with love and not with fear. Although I am self-satisfied, I experience this as ever fresh. And although I am eternally liberated, the love and affection of My devotees ties Me with ropes."

So this is how you can understand Braj Krishna. He is the laukika-sad-bandhu. That's how it is explained in Brihad-Bhagavatamrita—a good worldly friend.

I remember, once Srila Prabhupada told a devotee who wanted to know in what mood to chant, that he should address the Lord with a feeling, "O my friend, O my friend! Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, O my dear friend." This type of mood is very pleasing to Krishna, and it is truly coming out of the pages of Raghunatha Dasa Goswami's writing about the eternal Vrindavan and the eternal associates of Lord Krishna, who see the Lord as their very best friend, whom they serve with their respective abilities.

What could this mean for us?

Well, simply put, the devotee who wants to build a closer relationship with Krishna should ask himself, 'Have I pleased Krishna today? Have I done something exclusively for His pleasure?' And once the devotee entertains such thoughts, he will actually experience the Lord not as a distant entity, a distant God, but a very close, nearby God.

See you for the next Kartik Inspiration.

Ratnanandana Prasad
SACINANDANA SWAMI

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