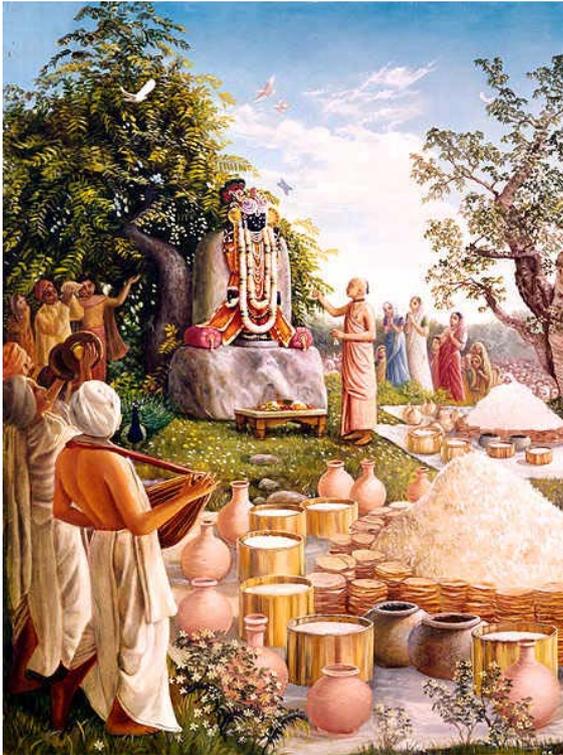


Sakshi Gopal: A witness For The Wedding



Once, two Brahmins from Vidyanagar, south India, went on a pilgrimage. One Brahmin was young and poor and he served the other who was old and wealthy.

They visited Gaya, Kashi, Prayag and Mathura. From there they went to Vrindavan where they visited the temple Of Gopal. The beauty of the Deity of Gopal made them stay in Vrindavan for several days. The old Brahmin was so pleased with the young man's services that he promised to give him his daughter in marriage. The young Brahmin replied that he only rendered him service to please Lord Krishna, who likes to see His devotees serving the Brahmins. He also argued that the elderly man's family would not be pleased with his decision since he was uneducated and poor.

The old man insisted that no one could make him change his mind, so the young Brahmin asked him to make his offer in front of the deity. They both went in the temple and the old Brahmin made his promise. Then the young Brahmin spoke, "Dear Lord, I may call for you to testify as my witness." The two men then returned to Vidyanagar.

Some days later, the old Brahmin told his family and friends about his promise. Everyone said that he should not give his daughter to the poor man and urged him to break his promise. They did not realize that a poor man can be the best husband if he is a devotee of the Lord. The Brahmin argued that, if he broke his promise, the young man would call the Deity as his witness and Gopal would be very displeased with him. The relatives threatened to commit suicide if the daughter was given away to the young Brahmin. The Brahmin's oldest son advised him to say that he doesn't remember anything. He added that the Deity lives far away in Vrindavan. How could He come to Vidyanagar?

The father prayed to Gopal, "Dear Gopal, please help me keep my promise and still save my family from killing themselves."

The next day, the young Brahmin came to ask about the marriage but the elderly Brahmin remained silent. His son screamed at the young man, threatening to beat him. The young Brahmin ran away, but the next day he gathered the villagers questioned him, the Brahmin said that he did not remember making such a promise. His son stood up and said, "This boy is a thief. He stole my father's money while on pilgrimage and now he is claiming that my father promised him his daughter."

The villagers did not know whom to believe. The young Brahmin told them about the witness Gopal. Then the old man admitted that the young man was telling the truth. He

said that if Gopal came there as the witness, he would give away his daughter. He was sure Gopal would help him keep his promise. Everyone liked the idea of inviting Gopal, even the Brahmin's son, who believed that the Deity could not walk or talk.

The young Brahmin left for Vrindavan and as soon as he reached the holy village, he went to see Gopal. "Dear Lord," he said, "I am not interested in marrying the Brahmin's daughter. I only feel pain that he broke his religious principle of truthfulness. Please be merciful to us and save us from sins by acting as my witness."

The Gopal Deity spoke and argued that he has never heard of a Deity walking from one place to another. The young Brahmin replied, "If you can talk, you can walk. You are not a statue. You are Krishna Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

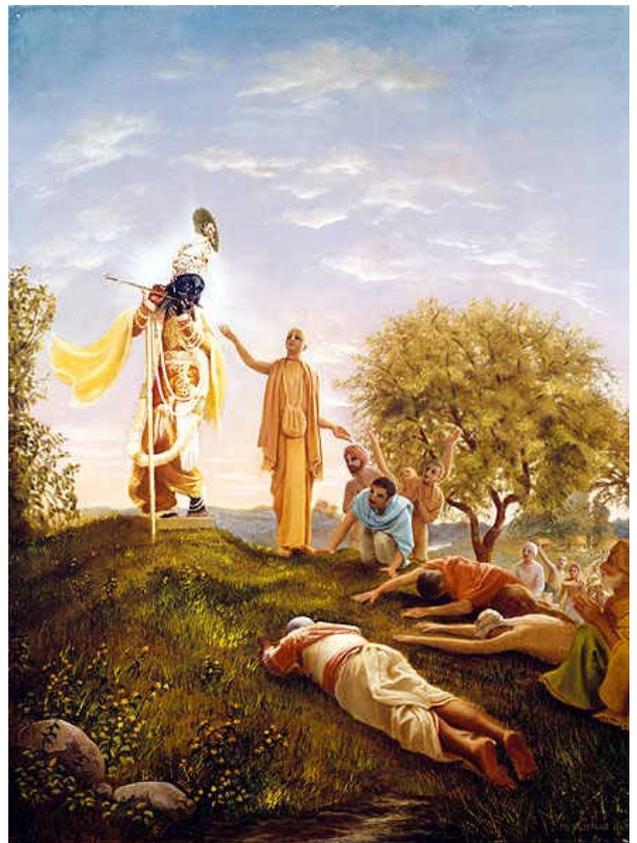
Gopal smiled and said, "I shall go with you. I shall walk behind you, but do not try to see Me by turning around. If you look at Me, I will remain fixed in that very spot."

You will know that I am walking behind you by the sound of My ankle bells. Cook rice daily and offer it to me."

They started their journey the next day and walked for one hundred days. Finally, they arrived at Vidyanagar. The young Brahmin turned around and looked into the smiling face of Gopal. "Now you can go home," Gopal said. "I will stay here."

The young Brahmin ran to the village and told everyone of Gopal's arrival. All were struck with wonder. The old Brahmin fell at the feet of Gopal. Thus, Gopal bore witness that the old Brahmin had indeed offered his daughter in marriage to the young Brahmin. The wedding ceremony was then held at the very spot. Afterwards, Gopal told both Brahmins that He was pleased by their truthfulness and He offered them any blessing they desired. The Brahmins begged the Lord to remain in Vidyanagar to prove how merciful He is to His devotees.

Gopal agreed to stay in Vidyanagar and to this very day He is worshipped there by truthful Brahmins. People from many countries came to see Gopal and at last the king also came and built a beautiful temple for the Lord. That temple is known as the temple of Sakshi Gopal, the witness Gopal.



Parent's Sign: _____