

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pundarika Vidyanidhi

A disciple of Sri Madhavendra Puri, Pundarika Vidyanidhi was Sri Gadadhara Pandit's guru, and an intimate friend of Svarupa Damodara. Pundarika Vidyanidhi had other names-Sri Vidyanidhi, Acaryanidhi, Bhaktyanidhi, and Premanidhi (given by Lord Chaitanya). He is Srimati Radharani's father - Vrishabhanu in Krishna Lila.

On the Odana Sashthi festival, Jagannath's servants dress Him in a cloth which still has starch in it. Pundarika Vidyanidhi was a pure sad-achari, i.e., attached to the proper etiquette of Vaishnavism. When he observed this custom, he did not feel happy about it and said to his friend, Svarupa Damodar, "Why do they give this unwashed cloth to the Lord?"

Svarupa Damodar answered that the Supreme Lord is beyond the rules and regulations that have become general custom and that therefore there was no fault. Pundarika Vidyanidhi did not find this conclusion satisfying and he countered by saying, "That may be true for the Lord Himself. But His servants should follow the rules of the scripture. The Sri-vigraha of the Lord is beyond the material qualities, so you can say this of Him, but His servants are not of the same nature as He. So we have to judge whether their behavior is proper or improper."

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Hare Hare

Pundarika Vidyanidhi is Mahaprabhu's dear associate and beyond any fault, but once again we see that the Lord teaches particular lessons through His Devotees. Here He wished to show that we have no right to make judgments or to find fault with the behavior of Jagannath's Devotees. That night angry Jagannath came to Pundarika Vidyanidhi and gave him a dream vision. Vidyanidhi was frightened when he saw the anger of the Lord. He saw both Jagannath and Balaram slap him on each of his cheeks and he started to cry out, "Krishna save me! Krishna, save me! Forgive me my offense!" Jagannath said to him: "There is no end to your offensiveness. Just as there is no question of pure and impure in my case, the same holds true for my servants."

When he woke up in the morning, the Devotees saw the marks of the Lords' slaps on his cheeks, which had swollen as a result and they started to laugh. This pastime shows just how dear Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was to Jagannath and to Mahaprabhu, for the Lord only comes to His dearest Devotees to personally punish them in this way.