

# Srimad Bhagavatam

## Kucēla



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**Translated by eSatsang Team**

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## Kucēla

*Parīkṣit maharāj* humbly bow down in front of *Śukabrahma* and asked respectfully, *Mahātmā!* Please expound on how Lord Krishna mercifully saved the ardent devotee, *Kucēla*. Being impressed with the humble request, *Śukabrahma* started explaining *Kucēla's* story.

*Kucēla* is a great devotee, the one who conquered his senses (*Jitēndriyuḍu*), serene and calm, master in spiritual knowledge, good-natured, and has absolute faith in god. He is the childhood friend of Shri Krishna. His original name was *Sudhāma*. *Kucēla* means “who wears a torn garment”. In fact, the physical body is a covering that undergoes wear and tear and eventually gets dissolved similar to a cloth garment. There is no one in the world who does not have a worn-out body before the dissolution. *Kucēla* is extremely poor. Despite the fact of sufferings from the pangs of

hunger, he always remembers and feels God's presence in his mind. He never asks for anything and lives a very contented life by accepting what has been given to him. His wife is also very pious and gentle. Due to poverty and poor eating, her body is emaciated.

She never complained about the situation to her husband. She managed and maintained the household with whatever was available. She never insulted her husband. But the days are becoming much worse. The children were starving, and the parents were unable to provide adequate food for them. She is managing herself with no food but feels very sad to see her husband and children starving. There is neither food nor any alternative way to fulfil their stomachs. Both of them didn't know what to do. Children started crying because they didn't have food for several days.

In such a worst scenario, she approached her husband and said humbly, "*O Mahātmā!* You said that Lord Shri Krishna is your childhood friend. He respects saints and

helps generously the poor people. Why don't you see him and he will certainly sympathise with you. *Kucēla* replied aptly, “What are you saying? You want me to ask the beloved God these trivial things. I can only contemplate on him but cannot beg him for these worldly objects.

His wife started convincing him, “I am not asking you to beg him. The lord is your childhood friend. Till now you haven't met him. You might get peace of mind if you visit him, and there are chances of finding a solution to our problems when we think with a peaceful mind. I apologise for reminding you about our situation. But the children are not able to bear the hunger anymore. Your friend is *DvāraKANāth*, and he welcomes everyone. I strongly believe that he will be happy to see you. Visiting the embodiment of God really helps us. My instinct is that your visit to Lord Krishna guides us like a compass. All our troubles will disappear at once with his *darśan*. *Kucēla* is pleased with his wife's explanation and wants to visit Shri Krishna. But still hesitating to visit with empty hands. He said to his wife, “he

is my childhood friend, and I am visiting him after a long time. How can I see him with empty hands? It doesn't look good.”

His wife searched the home but couldn't find anything. She never asks anyone to help her, no matter how much worse the situation at home. But this time, she broke that personal barrier and borrowed a portion of rice flakes from the neighbours. Thus, *Kucēla* wrapped up these rice flakes in a shabby piece of cloth since that was all he could afford and started his journey towards *Dvāraka* by chanting the glory of Lord Krishna. As he didn't have any food in the past four days, he was thinking while being on the journey.

:Verse:

Dvārakā nagarambu nērīti jottunu  
bhāsurāntaḥ pura vāsiyaina  
yappuṇḍarīkākṣu nakhilēśunebbaṅgi  
darśimpagalano taddvāra pālu  
rekkāḍi vipruḍa vindēla vacceda  
vaniyaḍḍa peṭṭirē napuḍu vāri

kēmaina baridāna micci coccedamanna

ūhimpa artha śūn'yuṅḍa nēnu (Sī.)

Aina nābhāgya matani dayārdra drṣṭi

gāka talapōyagā noṅḍu galade yāta

ḍēla nannu nupēkṣiṅcu nēṭi māṭa

lanucu nā dvārakāpura mataḍu socci. (tē.)

**Meaning:** How do I enter *Dvāraka* city? How do I see him who is in the inner palace? The gatekeepers may not let me be in, and I have nothing to offer them, and I will be at a loss. If my helpless situation is noticed by his compassionate heart, he will not disregard me.

With those thoughts in mind, he slowly reached *Dvāraka* kingdom, and as he was enquiring about Krishna's residence, the people started asking the reason for his search. Then *Kucēla* humbly said, "The Krishna who is *Yadukula śrēṣṭha* (the chief of *Yadukula*), *Indīvaraśyāma*, *Kaustubhālaṅkāra*, *Akhilalōkārādhyā*, *cakradhāri*, *pannagaśayana* is my friend. I came to meet him." The residents of *Dvāraka* started making fun of him. Finally, he

reached the entrance of the palace, and he was stopped by the guards. They didn't allow him inside the palace. He humbly requested them to allow him inside and told them that he is the friend of Lord Krishna. In the first instance, they didn't believe him. They felt he was out of his mind as it is hard to believe that Krishna, who is swaying in the riches, could be a friend of such a poor person. Looking at the beggarly appearance of *Kucēla*, the guards felt he came to seek some financial assistance, and they didn't allow him inside. Then, *Kucēla* humbly said, "Sir! My name is *Kucēla*. I haven't come here for begging. I am a childhood friend of Shri Krishna. I just came to meet him. I stay back here. You please inform Shri Krishna that I came to see him." After that, "Let whatever happens will happen as per my fate."

The guards got convinced and went inside to inform Krishna and said, "O Lord! One poor *Brāhmin* has come to see you. He seems to be very poor and looks like a beggar." They said his name was *Kucēla*. As the word *KUCĒLA* is heard, Shri Krishna at once jumped joyfully out of his throne



and rushed towards the entrance saying, “*Kucēla! Kucēla!*”.

The wives and the ministers were surprised to see this kind of behaviour from Krishna. So many visitors come to see him daily, but they have never seen such joy on Krishna’s face to see someone. They were wondering, “Who is *Kucēla*? What is so special about him?”

*Kucēla* is despondent and waiting outside at the entrance, taking the support of a stick on bare feet, wearing a faded dhoti with bones from his body sticking out, and with sunken eyes. By seeing such a friend, Shri Krishna rushed and hugged him with tears of joy and said, “O my dearest friend! *Kucēla!* At last, you came to see me. I am very happy to see you.” Everyone is surprised to see this unexpected reaction from Krishna towards his friend.

Krishna is so immersed in the joy of meeting his childhood friend. He held *Kucēla*’s hand and headed towards his personal residence. While walking, he said, “*Kucēla*, I thought of coming to see you personally but couldn’t make time to visit you. Today, you came by

yourself to see me. You came for me, and I am so happy to see you shedding joyful tears.” The wives are witnessing all these moments in awe and surprise. *Rukmiṇi dēvi* bought water in a jug, and Shri Krishna himself washed *Kucēla*’s feet and sprinkled that water on his head, exhibiting his reverence towards *Kucēla*. As *Kucēla* is walked on bare foot, some thorns were stuck on his feet. Shri Krishna removed them while washing his feet. All this seems to be surreal and dreamlike to *Kucēla*. He didn't expect this kind of affectionate treatment from his childhood bosom friend, Krishna. He humbly said, “O Dear Krishna! You are the majesty. I am a poor *Brāhmin*. I am fortunate, and due to my meritorious deeds in the previous birth, I have you as my childhood friend. It is not nice for you to touch and wash my feet. I am feeling so embarrassed.” Then Krishna replied, “O my friend *Kucēla*! No matter how rich I might be, you will always be my best friend. Please don't remove my image from your heart. Such sweet words from the Lord Krishna made *Kucēla* so happy. Both were looking at each

other with tears of joy. Both sat next to each other. *Rukmiṇi dēvi* is fanning the guest. Everyone in and around were surprised to witness such an unusual scene. They felt that *Kucēla* was a very lucky person and expressing--

:Verse:

Ēmi tapambu cēsenoko yī dharaṇī divijōttamuṇḍu tol  
bāmuna yōgi visphura dupāsyakuḍai tanarāru nī jagat  
svāmi ramādhi nādhu nijatalpamunan vasiyīñci yunnava  
ḍī mahaniyamūrti kenayē muni puṅgavulenta vāralun (U.)

Meaning: What kind of penance did this Poorman perform before to receive this kind of treatment by Lord Krishna? Krishna himself gave his lap as a pillow to *Kucēla*. Even great *Ṛṣīs* won't receive this kind of royal treatment by Lord Krishna.

Krishna held *Kucēla's* hand with affection and enquired about his family life. They both reminisced about their childhood memories with each other. Krishna said," Dear friend! Do you remember the incident when our *Gurupatni* (wife of *Guru*) sent us to the forest to bring some wood for

cooking purposes? It was raining heavily on that day, and we lost our way back to the *Āśram*. We had spent in the forest that night. *Kucēla* felt guilty and put his head down with shame. There is a reason behind his guilt. Both sat under the tree that day to protect themselves from the torrent. At that time, *Kucēla* had a handful of fried lentils in his hand. He was eating them alone. Krishna felt hungry and asked, “What are you eating? Is there anything to eat I am hungry.” *Kucēla* said spontaneously, “Nothing, Krishna, my teeth are grinding repeatedly because of the cold. You might be hearing my teeth chattering as munching.” *Kucēla* didn’t want to share his food with Krishna. The poverty he is suffering now is one of the consequences of his greediness. Now, he is paying the price for his greediness. This reminder made *Kucēla* realise his mistake and ask for forgiveness in his heart. Lord Krishna, who is omnipresent, understood the feelings of *Kucēla* and didn’t prolong that conversation. Finally, they both reminisced about their Guru’s affection and blessings. Their Guru said, “You all surrendered and

served me with faith, love and devotion. And I am well satisfied and happy with you all. May all your wishes and dreams come true with faith and devotion". Then *Kucēla* said with tears of joy, " I am so fortunate to study along with you and be your friend. I am leading a happy and contented life." This is all due to my fortunes from previous births, and he was teary-eyed with joy."

Everyone in the palace is so surprised to see the cordial bonding between the royal Krishna and the poor *Brāhmin*, *Kucēla*. They realised that God likes only the pure devotion from the devotee and nothing else. The pure devotion of *Kucēla* won the heart of Krishna. *Kucēla* ignored all his worldly desires and miseries as he came in contact with God. He never mentioned about the difficulties and family problems he is going through in his life to Krishna. For him, the love for God is more important than anything else in the world. This is the pure devotion.

As they met the next morning, Krishna asked him, "You came to see me after so long time. What have you

bought for me to eat? Whatever my devotees give, I take them with pleasure, and I don't accept any amount of gold and diamonds from an evil-minded individual.

Ślō II      patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ tōyaṁ  
                 yōmēbhaktyā prayacchati |  
                 tadahaṁ bhaktya pahṛtaṁ  
                 aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ ||

Meaning: Whoever offers me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit and even water that I accept from any pure-minded devotee.

*Kucēla* felt shame to hear this. He hesitated to give the rice flakes to the ruler of the universe.

Krishna, the omniscient, who knows everything, knows the struggles of *Kucēla* and wants to bless him with riches and pleasures. He wanted to show to the world the power of pure devotion and surrender to God. Hence, he asked, "What happened, *Kucēla*? Didn't you bring anything for me?" *Kucēla* was thinking, "I am such a poor man. What can I give you? Krishna said, "Didn't my sister (*Kucēla's* wife)

didn't sent anything to me? Now *Kucēla* was perplexed and didn't know what to do. Finally, Krishna said, "I think you have bought me something. Let me have a look." While saying this, he took the shabby cloth with a handful of rice flakes tied on one end of *Kucēla's* cloth. He opened and took some rice flakes and said," What is this *Kucēla*? You bought rice flakes for me. I like them very much." While saying this, he put some of them into his mouth. In this way, he got blessings from Lord Krishna. His house started filling with riches. As Krishna started taking the second serving, *Rukmiṇi dēvi* stopped him. She got scared that the Lord had blessed *Kucēla* with enormous riches with the first go, if he took the second serving, Krishna might send her as their family servant. That's why she stopped him from consuming the second fistful of rice flakes. The next day morning, *Kucēla* started his journey back home. Krishna hugged him and accompanied him to the gate. They said goodbye to each other.

*Kucēla* never mentioned his poverty and his problems to the Lord. Krishna also never mentioned that he blessed him with the riches. Both of them never discussed about problems and pleasures. Neither *Kucēla* told him the purpose of his visit, nor did Krishna ask him the purpose of his visit. Both met and had a good time together. If you seek God's grace, you will be looked after without fail for all your needs. *Kucēla* never asked for riches and pleasures but asked for God himself. When there is pure devotion towards God, he will look after the well-being of such devotees. If one has God's grace, one will be blessed with riches like water in a coconut. Similarly, if one doesn't have his grace, wealth disappears like the cream in a fruit swallowed by an elephant.

While going back, *Kucēla* was recollecting what had happened in the previous days. It was just like a beautiful dream to him. He felt ecstatic by the love showered by Krishna on him. He felt so fortunate to be able to spend such a beautiful time with Lord Krishna.



He felt that maybe my wife might have sent me to Krishna to seek help, but I am drenched with the hospitality of Krishna and *Rukmiṇi Māta*. I haven't got any gifts from him, but that is absolutely fine as these riches might make me feel proud, which will increase the distance between myself and God. Lord Krishna is the true well-wisher for me. He was mesmerised by the cordial treatment given by Lord Krishna, including using *Rukmiṇi's* bed to sit on and *Rukmiṇi Māta's* service in fanning him in the palace. He thanked from his heart for everything and continued his journey towards his home.

*Kucēla* reached his home. He didn't find his house. In the place of his house, there is a palace with a beautiful garden, and so many servants are moving. He thought maybe he reached the wrong place. As he was about to turn back, he saw his wife, who was looking gorgeous with beautiful attire and jewellery, come out to greet him. He was surprised to see his wife with an inordinate amount of wealth and jewellery. Then he realised that it was all from

the grace of Lord Krishna. He felt “O Lord! How can I ever thank you for your grace? You just took a handful of rice flakes and blessed me with abundant riches and pleasures. But I will not indulge myself in these worldly riches. I seek refuge at the God’s feet. I will contemplate on my God only”.

He and his wife prayed together to Lord Krishna, “Hey Krishna! Please bless me to have infinite faith and devotion towards you only. I don’t need all these riches. Please bless me to have strength so I can always surrender to you.”

### *Phalaśruti* (The result/benefit)

*Śukabrahma*, who recited this story to *Parīkṣit maharāj*, said that the one who reads and understands this story will enjoy the sweetness of divinity and help to progress in their spiritual path. They will receive God’s blessings in all aspects of their lives.

### *Viślēṣaṇa* (Analysis)

Shri Krishna and *Kucēla* are both childhood friends and schoolmates. This story is from *Bhāgavatam*.

On the other hand, King *Drupada* and *Drōṇācārya* are childhood friends and studymates. This story is from *Mahābhārata*.

Let us analyse and understand the differences between these stories and learn the value of true friendship. *Drupada* is the son of a king. *Drōṇācārya* is the son of sage *Bharadvāja*. Both first learned from Sage *Bharadvāja* and moved to Sage *Agnivēśa* for further studies to excel in archery. Both of them were best friends. *Drupada* used to say “*Drōṇā!*, My dearest friend! When I become king of *Pāncāla*, I will make you rich. I will give whatever you ask me.” As the days passed, both parted with each other. The *Drupada* became king, and *Drōṇā* still remained as a poor *Brāhmin* teacher. The situation of *Drōṇā* has become miserable. He couldn't provide milk to his child, *Aśvat'thāma*. He approached King *Drupada* for help but got insulted. *Drōṇā* took his revenge by dethroning *Drupada* through his disciples as *Gurudakṣiṇa*. King *Drupada* conducted a *Yajñam* to have a Son with valour, which

eventually led to the killing of *Drōṇācārya*, and in turn, *Drōṇācārya's* son and disciples destroyed the kingdom of *Pāñcāla* of *Drupada*.

Coming back to *Bhāgavatam*, Shri Krishna and *Kucēla* were childhood friends. They were students of *Sāndīpani Maharṣi*. Shri Krishna never made any false promises to *Kucēla* that he would look after him, unlike *Drupada*. Later in the years, *Kucēla* visited Shri Krishna on his wife's advice. *Kucēla* received royal treatment in *Dvāraka* from Shri Krishna and his consort *Rukmiṇi Dēvi*, and in the end, *Kucēla* was blessed with an inordinate amount of wealth. It was an unforgettable union between God and his staunch devotee. Here, we can also observe that you will never be disappointed if you expect nothing from anyone. *Kucēla* never expected gifts from Krishna. He just cherished the beautiful moments with Him. His contentment and everlasting gratitude have given him immense peace and God's blessings. This story depicts the beautiful relationship

between a devotee's devotion and God's love. Besides this, the story also shows the value of a true relationship.



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