

Śrī
Gīta-govinda

— ŚRĪ JAYADEVA GOSVĀMĪ —

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Śrī
Gīta-govinda

— ŚRĪ JAYADEVA GOSVĀMĪ —

Revised Edition

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD
BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA



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- SAMĀRPAṆA -

Just as one may worship the Ganges
with the water of the Ganges, similarly, this book has been
offered unto the lotus hands of my revered and causelessly
merciful Gurupādapadma,



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA,
by whose inspiration it has been published.

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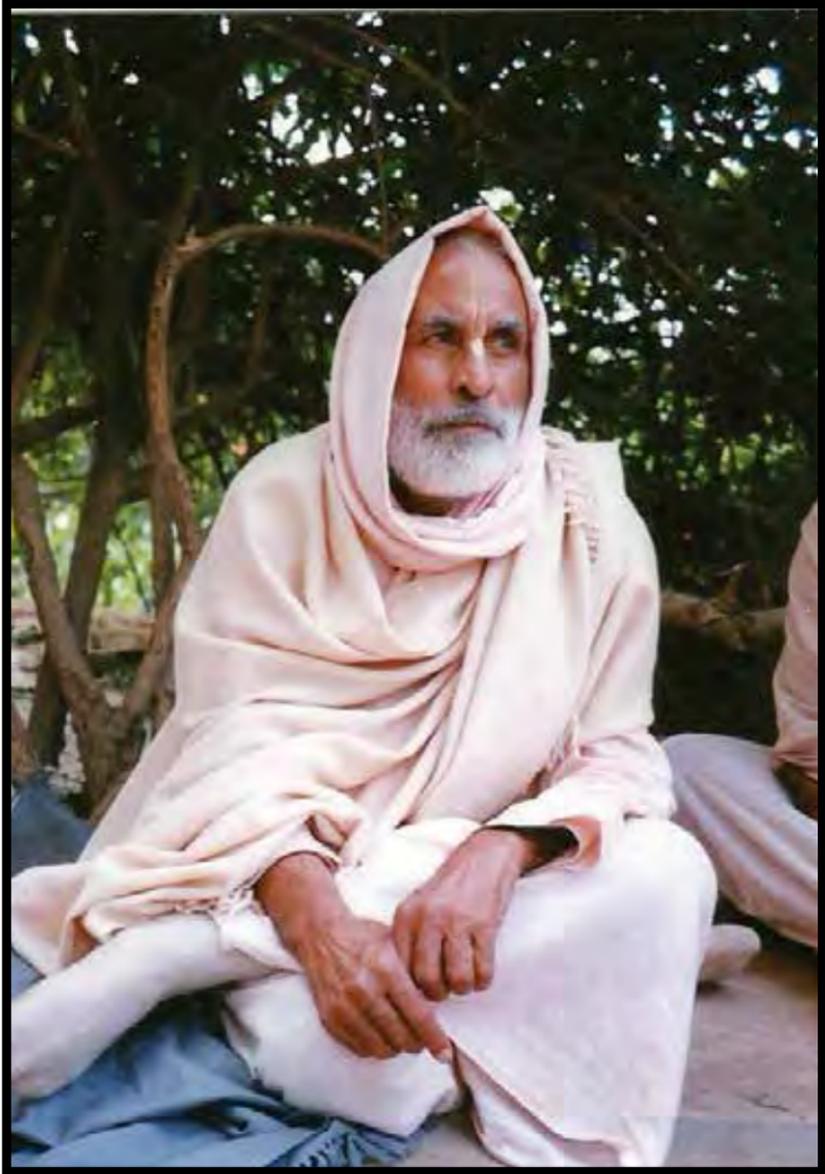
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*Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*



Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda



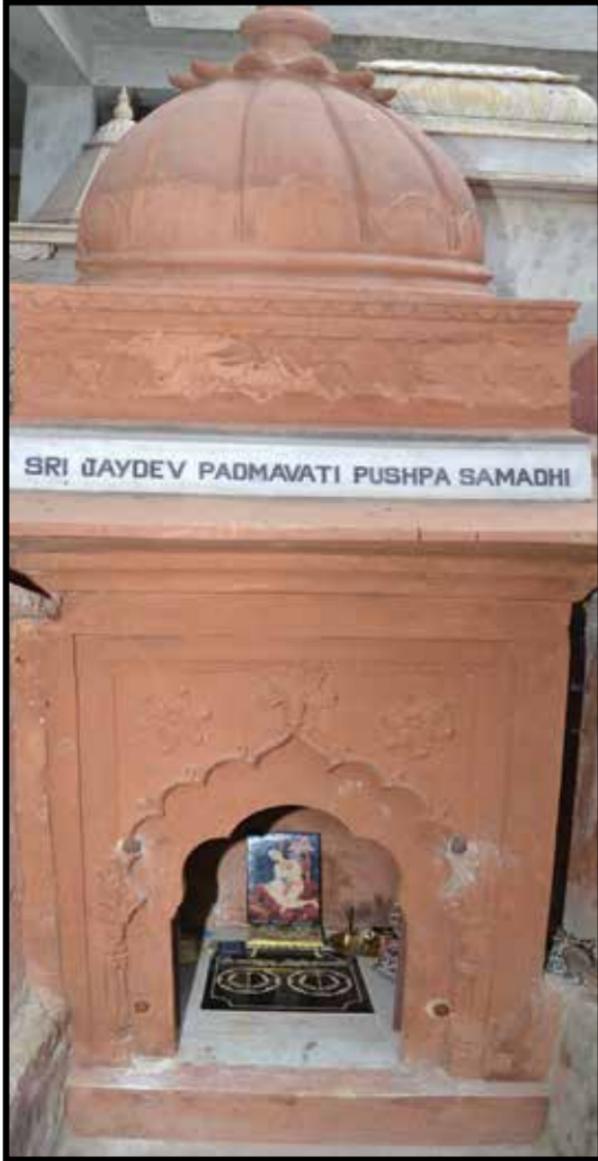
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Śrī Śrīmad
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Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja



*Śrī Jayadeva and Padmāvati Puṣpa Samādhi
at Rādhā-Dāmodara, Vṛndāvana*



Śrī Jayadeva discovering the verse
completed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself

Preface

It is indeed a happy event that Gauḍīya Vedānta Publications is printing a revised translation of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *Gīta-govinda*, published in Hindi in 2003 by our Gurudeva, *nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Śrī *Gīta-govinda* is the zenith of all literatures; the poet himself confidently tells his audience this fact at the beginning as well as at the end of his divine masterpiece. This great classic is an immaculate presentation of sacred amorous love, manifested in this world by a genuine Vrajavāsī, a resident of the topmost spiritual realm. It was by the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that this intimate vision of *madhura-rasa* was revealed in this world, providing a means for Him to relish the moods of Śrī Rādhā. It furthermore affords a view of the unimaginable, confidential reality of Goloka Vraja for the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga. This *Gīta-govinda* and other Gosvāmī literatures, with their pristine descriptions of the erotic mellow, are indeed the very medicine to alleviate our *hṛd-roga*, the disease of lust contaminating our hearts. Śrī Jayadeva himself confirms this in the eighth verse of many of the *aṣṭapadīs* of this epic masterpiece, assuring us that his words are just the remedy to counteract the foulness of Kali.

The present edition is the fruit of over ten year's devoted service. Those of us who worked on the current volume have strived to present the delicate subject matter tactfully. We hope that persons who feel that *Gīta-govinda* is beyond their level of qualification, will find this edition approachable. The beauty of the poetry and the inconceivable genius of Jayadeva Gosvāmī

are perfectly capable to captivate and melt the heart. All of us who helped with this production are grateful to have been given this opportunity. It has been a thrilling experience, and we relished many hours of joy as we repeatedly chewed the words of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's sweet, astonishing poem.

We pray that today's publication will be happily received in the society of devotees, as well as in academic and cultured circles around the globe. Please excuse any mistakes that may have eluded us. If our work is acceptable to our *guru-vārga*, then we give all credit to our beloved Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who fearlessly took the responsibility to keep *Śrī Gīta-govinda* in circulation and thus preserve our precious Gauḍīya heritage for posterity.

Praying for the blessings
of Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrī Jayadeva,

The very fallen
Vicitrī dāsī

Sevā-kuñja
Completed on 9 July 2017, Śrī Guru-pūrṇimā

śrī śrī guru gaurāṅgau jayataḥ
śrī śrī gīta-govindam

Introduction

We herewith present a new edition of *Śrī Gīta-govinda*, the famous composition of the pre-eminent transcendental poet, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī. This publication is born out of the causeless mercy of the founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, *ācārya keśarī nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*. May he be pleased with our offering.

To enter into the internal mood (*bhāvārtha*) of such a sublime text as this *Gīta-govinda*, one needs proper qualification. To read any great literary work and understand the words at their face value is one matter, but to appreciate the profound sentiments by which one becomes truly familiar with the text is entirely another experience. Comprehension of the literal meaning of words is generally a simple affair, whereas assimilation of their underlying emotional significance is not so easy. Therefore all ancient scriptures traditionally begin by defining specific parameters of eligibility for prospective readers. Some deeply realized authors have strictly forbidden unqualified persons to study their compositions and have even pronounced curses upon those who might dare to delve into that for which they are ineligible. What is the necessity of such strict prohibitions? They are needed because unqualified persons will inevitably misinterpret elevated texts. The result is that both the author and the unqualified reader lose the potential benefits from such literature, and instead accrue harmful effects.

In the beginning of the auspicious invocation of his book, the worshipful Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has also clarified the subject matter of eligibility thus:

*yadi hari-smaraṇe sarasaṁ mano
yadi vilāsa-kalāsu kutūhalaṁ
madhura-komala-kānta-padāvalīṁ
śṛṇu tadā jayadeva-sarasvatīm*

“If at all your heart yearns for that remembrance of Śrī Hari which bestows all happiness, if you are hankering to contemplate upon Śrī Hari with intense affection, and if you are overwhelmed with curiosity to know about Śrī Hari’s skill in His amorous pastimes, then by all means read this book. You may find this poetry very sweet and pleasing, but if you do not nurture these three desires, then this moving and lyrical literature is not for you. Only if your heart is full of intense eagerness to fathom Śrī Hari’s love dalliance will you be able to appreciate my mellifluous and inspiring poetry.”

Even after the poet Śrī Jayadeva explained the situation so explicitly, the unqualified sector of society fails to understand him. Mundane readers begin to read this text, being attracted by its charming linguistic embellishments. Yet in the end, because they are not competent to grasp its real essence or internal significance, they resort to insulting the crest jewel of poets Śrī Jayadeva as if his composition were something crude. And so they must, for they do not recognize the divinity of Śrī Hari. They are not even inclined to approach the precincts of sweet contemplation upon Him. Being confined to their experience of identifying themselves with the physical body and senses, they consider sensual gratification to be the utmost limit of happiness. What can such slaves to lust ever understand about the affairs of transcendental love described by Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī?

Therefore the most worshipful Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*kāma, prema—dōhākāra vibhinna lakṣaṇa
lauha āra hema jaiche svarūpe-vilakṣaṇa
ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali 'kāma'
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma
kāmera tātparya—nija-sambhoga kevala
kṛṣṇa-sukha-tātparya—prema mahā-bala*

“The characteristics of worldly lust and transcendental love are completely different. If mundane lust is likened to iron then spiritual love can be likened to gold. The desire to give satisfaction to one’s own senses is called lust. However the desire to satisfy the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called pure love, or *viśuddha-prema*. The goal of lust is one’s own enjoyment, whereas the purpose of this immensely powerful *prema* is simply to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy.”

How many people can understand the gravity of Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s words, especially those who are continuously absorbed in their own sense gratification? For them, the supra-mundane loving pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are nothing but the play of lusty desires. If they could love someone to the point of total abandonment of all social customs, Vedic religious principles, and bodily connections – as Śrī Rādhikā and Her friends have done – then one day they might also have some idea about the principles underlying these pastimes. Only after making such sacrifice is it possible to understand that selfless *prema* can be expressed only by those who do not cherish even the slightest ambition for their own pleasure.

The lion among poets, Śrī Jayadeva, like the other great Vaiṣṇava poets, took up the pen simply for the sake of giving instructions about this self-effacing transcendental love

(*aprākṛta-prema*) by which the Absolute Reality Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes controlled. One day, Śrī Jayadeva wished to write that wherever Kṛṣṇa finds the scent of such unmotivated *prema*, He is always ready to fall at the feet of that person with the humble entreaty: *dehi pāda-pallavam udāram* – mercifully bestow upon Me the soft petals of Your lotus feet. Śrī Jayadeva’s biographers affirm that he became greatly perturbed at the thought of writing these words, which formed the fourth line of the verse he was composing (Śrī Gīta-govinda 10.8). In great anxiety the poet pondered, “How can I record such words coming from the mouth of the ultimate Controller of unlimited millions of universes, Śrī Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara?” Many times he asked himself, “Should I write such a thing?” And many times he decided, “Yes, I should.” Even though he wanted to do it, he could not bring himself to write this line. Śrī Jayadeva knew Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Bhagavān; thus his *aiśvarya-bhāva*, the mood of veneration, checked his pen. To settle Śrī Jayadeva’s dilemma, one day *bhakta-vatsala* Bhagavān, who is always affectionate to His devotees, assumed the guise of Śrī Jayadeva and came to his house. The Lord took the manuscript and, with His own hand, completed the fourth line of the verse, *dehi pāda-pallavam udāram*, in golden letters. By doing so, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made a resounding announcement, as if beating kettledrums everywhere, to loudly proclaim His love for His devotees.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the *avatāra* who purifies the hearts of the living beings in this age of Kali, would retire with Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāmananda Rāya to the privacy of Śrī Gambhīrā, His small room at Kāśī Mīśra Bhavan. There Mahāprabhu would relish the transcendental mellows of several *rasa-granthas* (sacred texts describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s loving exchanges with His companions) and become overwhelmed with joy. Among those literatures, the excellence of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī’s *Gīta-govinda* is

unsurpassed. As directly stated by Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 2.77):

*caṇḍidāsa, vidyāpati, rāyera nāṭaka-gīti,
karṇāmṛta, śrī-gīta-govinda
svarūpa-rāmānanda-sane, mahāprabhu rātri-dine
gāya, śune—parama ānanda*

“He would hear the songs of Caṇḍidāsa and Vidyāpati, quotations from Rāya Rāmānanda’s *Jagannātha-vallabha-nāṭaka*, *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* and *Gīta-govinda* from the mouths of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda. Thus He passed His days and nights singing and listening with great joy.”

Herein lies a profound sentiment worthy of our special attention. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended to this world to teach devotional service by His own personal conduct. Why did He study and taste the transcendental mellows of all these sacred texts in such a solitary and hidden place as the Gambhīrā with only one or two of His confidential associates? The issue of eligibility is relevant even in this extreme case. Furthermore, the environment in which to study esoteric literatures has also been revealed. In public Śrīman Mahāprabhu performed only *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name, while He executed *rasa-saṅkīrtana* in His private dwelling, Śrī Gambhīrā, exclusively in the company of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda. He observed this same practice in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa: public *kīrtana* during the day, and at night private *kīrtana* behind closed doors in the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. Here *jagadguru* Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, the spiritual master of the entire universe, is giving the highest instruction: “If you want to attain the highest auspiciousness, first become qualified and then study this literature discreetly. This will allow you to be a candidate for *prema-bhakti*. Otherwise, you will commit offenses to Bhagavān and His devotees, and you will fall down.”

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *śaktimān*, the supreme potent entity, and Śrīmatī Rādhikā is His supreme potency. As stated by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja:

*sac-cid-ānanda pūrṇa kṛṣṇera svarūpa
eka-i cic-chakti tāra dhare tina rūpa*

*ānandāmśe hlādinī, sad-amśe sandhinī
cid-amśe samvit—jāre jñāna kari' jāni*

*hlādinīra sāra 'prema', prema-sāra 'bhāva'
bhāvera parāma-kāṣṭhā—nāma 'mahā-bhāva'*

*mahābhāva-svarūpā śrī-rādhā-ṭhākuraṇī
sarva-guṇa-khani kṛṣṇa-kāntā-śiromaṇi*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s body is the complete manifestation of eternal existence, consciousness and pleasure. His one spiritual potency manifests in three ways. *Hlādinī* is His bliss aspect; *sandhinī*, eternal existence; and *samvit*, cognition and also knowledge. The essence of *hlādinī* is *prema*, unconditional love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The essence of *prema* is *bhāva*, spiritual emotion, and the ultimate development of *bhāva* is called *mahābhāva*. Śrī Rādhā, the very embodiment of *mahābhāva*, is likened to a deep mine of all precious qualities and She is the crest jewel among Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beloved *gopīs*.” (Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 4.61–62, 68–69)

The pastimes of Śrī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the transcendental loving play of *śakti* and *śaktimān*, the power and the possessor of that power. This Divine Couple have the power to sanctify the whole world because they are completely free from even the slightest trace of lust. One should make a diligent study of these pastimes, as such study constitutes one of the limbs of *bhakti-yoga*. Although many devotees are conversant with this conclusion, Śrī *Gīta-govinda* remains inaccessible to them because they are not

sufficiently acquainted with the Sanskrit language and its implications. This present edition will provide them with sufficient help to understand the meaning of the words and the emotions implied therein.

Nowadays *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is celebrated in the educated society as an exquisite poetic composition that exemplifies the amorous mellow, *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Its author, the revered Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, is also widely accepted as an exceptionally talented poet. However, *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is not merely a world-famous poem full of emotive literary ornaments arranged in proper meter. Moreover, Jayadeva Gosvāmī is not merely a poet adept in tasteful expressions through the development of his innate abilities. *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is the very essence of all the Vedas and Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī is the highest class of devotional practitioner (*sādhaka*) and perfected spiritualist (*siddha*), with complete mastery of all Vedic wisdom.

We see that Śrī Jayadeva commences his poem by remembering his worshipful deity with his auspicious invocation: *rādhā-mādhavayor jayanti yamunā-kūle rahaḥ-kelayaḥ*. “The inscrutable and extremely confidential pleasure pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava on the banks of Śrī Yamunā reign above all.”

In the second verse he introduces his praiseworthy subject matter: *śrī-vāsudeva-rati-keli-kathā-sametam / etaṁ karoti jayadeva-kaviḥ prabandham*. “The poet Jayadeva is writing this narration after taking complete shelter of the supremely blissful amorous play (*rati-keli*) of Śrī Vāsudeva, Śyāmasundara, the son of the King of Vraja.”

As mentioned previously, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has defined the qualifications required to read this poem in the third verse:

*yadi hari-smaraṇe sarasaṁ mano
yadi vilāsa-kalāsu kutūhalam
madhura-komala-kānta-padāvalīṁ
śṛṇu tadā jayadeva-sarasvatīm*

“If you are eager for your mind to be submerged in constant remembrance of Śrī Hari, or your heart is already absorbed in contemplation upon Him, and if you are curious to taste the mellows of His pastimes, that is, you hanker exclusively for this and nothing else, then by all means listen to these melodious, appealing and sweet verses of Jayadeva’s transcendental poetry.”

In this supra-mundane lyrical poem Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has very charmingly described Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava’s intimate transcendental love. This composition presents both separation and meeting, which are the basis of the super-excellent position of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. The poet upholds the view that when the union of lovers has been thoroughly nourished first by feelings of separation, it bestows a greater joy upon perfected spiritualists and devotional practitioners who are expert in relishing the amorous mellow.

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given instructions to His intimate devotee, Arjuna, about the eligibility to hear and speak *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* in its Eighteenth Chapter, verses 67–68:

*idaṁ te nātapaskāya
nābhaktāya kadācana
na cāśuśrūṣave vācyam
na ca mām yo ’bhyasūyati (67)*

“Do not speak about this confidential knowledge and realization to those unqualified persons who have no faith and who are not engaged in pure devotion to Me.”

*ya imam paramam guhyam
mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati
bhaktim mayi parām kṛtvā
mām evaiśyaty asaṁśayaḥ (68)*

“One who explains the supreme mystery of My *Gītā* to the faithful devotees is sure to attain pure devotion and in the end he will come to Me.”

In these verses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes the characteristics of the genuine candidates for transcendental realization after first defining the disqualifications. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has also presented a clear analysis of the qualifications for hearing his *Gopāla-campū*, and has forbidden unqualified persons to read it, as they are bereft of faith and devotion. Similarly, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has strictly prohibited the faithless to hear or read his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. Such is also the case with our other Gosvāmīs, who have all given similar warnings.

The Substance of Śrī *Gīta-govinda*

Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī thoroughly understood the nature of mankind in Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel. He knew how easily people become captivated by the sight of superficial beauty. Perceiving only an external covering of beauty, they could even overlook a potent medicinal herb, thinking it to be of no value. The poet Śrī Jayadeva was moved by the causeless compassion Vaiṣṇavas feel for all fallen souls. To make them relish eternal bliss, he wrapped the incomparable shelter of his matchless, supremely sweet, transcendental ecstatic moods in the covering of the base sweetness of worldly conjugal love. By so doing, Śrī Jayadeva has manifested the exclusive antidote for the disease of material existence in the form of this poem.

The respected readers can now readily understand that *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is not about mundane sexuality. Rather, it pertains to the very same sublime transcendental *rasa* that the Vedas ascribe as the cause of lasting joy for all living beings. *Śrī Gīta-govinda* may appear as a mundane poetic composition, but it is, in fact, the embodiment of the essence of all the Vedas.

Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has been compared to the sacred decorative marking (*tilaka*) upon the forehead of the entire dynasty of poets who are conversant with the principles of spiritual mellows. Sometimes he has portrayed Śrī Rādhā, when separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as a jealous heroine, proud of Her eminence. Sometimes he has depicted Her weeping incessantly in the intolerable pain of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and sometimes he also shows Śrī Bhagavān in the intense anxiety of separation from Her. Yet he did not stop there. He wrote about Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara catching the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhājī and begging, “*dehi pada-pallavam udāram* – kindly decorate My head with the soft buds of Your lotus feet.” By this he has manifested the utmost extremity of love of God and also the pinnacle of Bhagavān’s affection for His devotee. This is the essence of all the Vedas.

The *śrutis* proclaim that the indwelling Lord, Paramātmā, is only attained when He agrees to reveal Himself.

*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām*

(*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.2.23)

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of concentrated bliss (*ānanda*). The living entity is searching exclusively for this *ānanda* at all times, but without success. However, his

good fortune arises when he witnesses the internal emotional ecstasies of the pure devotees. On that day Bhagavān will make Himself known to that fortunate soul and bliss personified begins to search for him.

Pure devotion (*prema*) is characterized by its power to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The practicing devotee may be sitting in his home, but once his heart is infused with devotion, blissful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, ever greedy for the taste of *prema*, becomes intensely anxious for his association. Like an offender, He will meekly petition His devotee with the humble entreaty, *dehi pada-pallavam udāram*. “Kindly accept Me as your servant and decorate My brow with the soft buds of your lotus feet.” This is the essence of all the Vedas. The *śrutis* inform us that just as the Absolute Truth is far away, He is also very near.

A Review of the Literary Principles of Śrī Gīta-govinda

While carefully observing the ancient traditional methodology of literary composition, Śrī Jayadeva used the logical principle of ‘jewels and gold,’ or *maṇi-kāncana-nyāya*, which dictates that priceless jewels should be set in pure gold. In accordance with this principle, the poet has presented a narrative of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s priceless pastimes in the purest example of literary composition. His poetry includes many remarkable features: the sublime artistic sensibilities of musical theory (*gāndharva-vidya*), all the confidential mysteries related to contemplation upon Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, and an elaborate assessment of *śṅgāra-rasa* in both meeting and separation. In Śrī Jayadeva’s own words, *sānandāḥ pariśodhayantu sudhiyaḥ śrī-gīta-govindataḥ* (12.24.11) – the absolute purity of all the aforementioned attributes can only be found in the poetry of this *Gīta-govinda*. Therefore, it is necessary that learned persons make

a thorough examination of the text in order to understand the validity of this unprecedented claim. Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's resolute conviction is that the intoxicating effect of wine, the sweetness of sugar, the flavor of ripe mangoes and the taste of the lips of a beautiful woman, all pale into insignificance in the presence of the sweetness of *Śrī Gīta-govinda* because this romantic poem is fully saturated with the complete essence of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*.

*sādhvī mādhvīka cintā na bhavati bhavatī śarkare karkaśāsi
drākṣe drakṣyanti ke tvām amṛta mṛtamasi kṣīra nīraṁ rasaste
mākanda kranda kāntādhara dhara na tulām gaucha yacchanti yāvad
bhāvaṁ yāva-cchṛṅgāra-sāraṁ śubham iva jayadevasya viṣvag-vacānsi*
(*Śrī Gīta-govinda* 12.24.27)

Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has employed varieties of rhythm, *rasa* and other poignant literary devices in his epic poem. His predominant meditation is the mellifluous singing of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's amorous pastimes showcased through the medium of twenty-four songs, each consisting of eight verses (*aṣṭapadī*). The author has clearly revealed the immense depth of his study of musical theory based on *saṅgīta-śāstra* and dramatic science based on *rasa-śāstra*. Every song is composed in a different classical melodic mode (*rāga*) and rhythm (*tāla*). To those who are expert in relishing such expertly composed poetry, it seems that Śrī Jayadeva has directly experienced Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's meeting and separation while meditating in trance.

The Method for Entering into *Śrī Gīta-govinda*

The best of poets, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, has employed a female confidante, or *sakhī*, as a mediator to arrange Śrī Kṛṣṇa's meetings with Śrī Rādhā. Why? Unless one is under the personal guidance of such a *sakhī* and until one attains

the help of the *sakhī*, one cannot achieve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is the conclusion of all the *bhakti-sāstras*. The help of a *sakhī* and the help of *guru* are one and the same. Indeed, that confidential *sakhī* is none other than *guru-sakhī*. To be *guru* one must take shelter of the disposition of the *sakhīs*; and to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa one must accept the shelter of a spiritual master who is perfectly situated in the transcendental mood of a *sakhī*. Herein lies the essential message of the Vedas:

*tasmād guruṃ prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātām
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.3.21)

To know the Absolute Truth (*brahma*) one must take shelter of a perfect *guru* who is fixed in devotion to the Absolute. When Śrī Suta Gosvāmī began to narrate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the sacred forest of Naimiṣāraṇya, he called it the essence of the entire Vedas. And ultimately he reveals that the very pith of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is *rāsa-līlā*. Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, who has the ability to extract the essence of all things, condensed the gist of *rāsa-līlā* still further, just as one might perform the impossible feat of confining the ocean within a jar. Compelled by compassion, he has manifested the nectar of immortality in the form of his epic *Śrī Gīta-govinda* for the upliftment of all living beings in this age of Kali.

In answer to the inquiries of Parīkṣit Mahārāja, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:

*anugrahāya bhaktānām
mānuṣaṃ deham āśritaḥ
bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍā
yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.33.36)

The purport is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests *rāsa-līlā* to bestow mercy upon His devotees. Yet the non-devotees are also naturally fond of romance, or *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Therefore, when they hear these pastimes they, too, gradually become absorbed in thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. From this we can understand that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has manifested this type of apparently erotic pastime on the Earth out of compassion for everyone, devotees and non-devotees alike. Mahārṣi Vedavyāsa was moved by compassion to record it for the benefit of all, and the topmost devotee, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, with the same motivation, preached it throughout the world. After that, the best of poets, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, also mercifully reproduced it in his lyrical composition even sweeter than the *Bhāgavatam*.

In answer to the questions raised by Śrīman Śacī-nandana Gaurahari, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda has explained:

*prabhu kahe,—‘sādhya-vastura avadhi’ ei haya
tomāra prasāde ihā jānilūṅ niścaya*

*‘sādhya-vastu’ ‘sādhana’ vinu keha nāhi pāya
kṛpā kari kaha, rāya, pābāra upāya*

*rāya kahe,—jeī kahāo, seī kahi vāṇī
ki kahiye bhāla-manda, kichui nā jāni*

*tri-bhuvana-madhyae aiche haya kaun dhīra
je tomāra māyā-nāṭe ha-ibeka sthira*

*mora mukhe vaktā tumi, tumi hao śrotā
atyanta rahasya, śuna, sādhanera kathā*

*rādhā-kṛṣṇera līlā ei ati gūḍhatara
dāsya-vātsalya-bhāve nā haya gocara*

*sabe eka sakhī-gaṇera ihā adhikāra
sakhī haite haya ei līlāra vistāra*

*sakhī vinā ei lilā puṣṭa nāhi haya
sakhī lilā vistāriyā, sakhī āsvādaya*

*sakhī vinā ei lilāya anyera nāhi gati
sakhī-bhāve je tāre kare anugati*

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kuñja-sevā-sādhyā sei pāya
sei sādhyā pāite āra nāhika upāya*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.195–204)

After hearing about the goal of life from the lotus mouth of Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “This is the last word in regard to *sādhyā-vastu*, the object of attainment. By your mercy I have understood the whole subject very well. However, no one can attain this extremely profound *sādhyā-vastu* without adopting the appropriate means (*sādhana*). O Rāya! Be merciful to me by kindly explaining the method for attaining this goal.”

Rāya replied, “I am only speaking whatever You inspire within my heart. I do not know whether what I am saying is good or bad. Who is so sober that they can remain steady within the dance of Your energy? You are speaking through my mouth and at the same time You are also the audience. This is an extremely mysterious phenomenon.

“Now I will tell You about this highly confidential *sādhana*. The *kuñja-līlā* or *rāsa-līlā* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is exceedingly deep. Devotees established in the moods of servitude, friendship and parenthood cannot perceive this. None of them have eligibility to enter into this pastime – only the *sakhīs* are qualified. Without them it cannot be nourished. The *sakhīs* expand this *līlā* and only they can taste it. Indeed, no one can enter Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *kuñja-līlā* without cultivating the moods of the *sakhīs* under their guidance. There is no way to obtain this objective except

to absorb oneself in intense remembrance of the *sakhīs* (*smaraṇa*) while taking complete shelter of their lotus feet.”

The Life History of the Poet Śrī Jayadeva

Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī was born in the village of Kendubilva, commonly known as Kendulī, on the northern side of the Ajaya River, almost twenty miles south of the Virabhūma district in West Bengal. Śrī Jayadeva’s father’s name was Bhojadeva and his mother’s name was Vāmā-devī. Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has revealed his place of birth in his *Gīta-govinda* (3.7.10):

*varṇitam jayadeva-kena harer idam pravaṇena
kendubilva-samudra-sambhava-rohiṇī-ramaṇena*

“He who appeared in the village of Kendubilva, just as the moon rises from the ocean, has collected Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s expressions of lamentation. That Jayadeva is humbly narrating this song.”

The king of Bengal, Mahārāja Lakṣmaṇa Sena, was as learned in morality and appreciative of merit as the famous Mahārāja Vikramāditya. Just as the royal council of Mahārāja Vikramāditya was decorated with the splendor of nine jewels in the form of his talented advisors such as Kālidāsa and Vararuci, similarly, five jewels headed by Govardhanācārya and Jayadeva adorned the royal assembly of Mahārāja Lakṣmaṇa Sena. The following verse was engraved upon a stone tablet at the entrance to the king’s council chamber:

*govardhanaś ca śaraṇo jayadeva umāpatih
kavirājaś ca ratnāni samitau lakṣṇasya ca*

Therefore it is evident that Govardhana, Śaraṇa, Jayadeva, Umāpati and Kavirāja were the names of the king’s *rāja-panḍitas*, or royal advisors.

vācaḥ pallavayaty umāpati-dharaḥ sandarbha-suddhim girām
 jānīte jayadeva eva śaraṇam ślāghyo durūha-drute
 śṛṅgārottara-sat-prameya-racanair ācārya-govardhana-
 spardhī ko 'pi na viśrutaḥ śruti-dharo dhoyī kavi-kṣmā-patih

Thus all the *rāja-paṇḍitas*' names have been mentioned in this fourth verse found in the beginning of *Śrī Gīta-govinda*. The king held them all in great reverence, and even selected Umāpatidhara as his prime minister.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact date of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's birth. According to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's main disciple, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jayadeva Gosvāmī was a contemporary of the Bengali king, Mahārāja Lakṣmaṇa Sena. On the basis of authentic texts we know that Śrī Lakṣmaṇa Sena was reigning in 1030 Śākābda, corresponding to 1107 AD. This date has also been verified by the writings of Dr. Rājendralāl Mitra on the basis of supporting evidence gleaned from his extensive research. Therefore it is certain that Śrī Jayadeva, being a contemporary of Śrī Lakṣmaṇa Sena, lived in the 12th century. Cānda Kavi, a member of the royal council of Mahārāja Pṛthvīrāja, has recounted the glorious histories of the poets of former times in his book entitled *Cauhāna-rāṣṭra*. Śrī Jayadeva and *Gīta-govinda* are also mentioned therein. Pṛthvīrāja Mahārāja was ruling from his capital, Delhi, in the final part of the 12th century. He was killed in a battle with Mohammad Gaurī on the banks of the Dṛśadvati River in 1193 AD. Thus it is clearly proven that *Gīta-govinda* had already been written prior to the period of Cānda Kavi; otherwise he could not have mentioned it in his book.

Many wondrous and divine events from the life of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī have been described in Nābhājī Bhaṭṭa's text, *Bhaktamāla*. However, we will not repeat all those details here for fear of making this book excessively long. The human side of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's pastimes has

now become completely covered by the passing of many centuries. Nevertheless, every year to this very day, a huge gathering takes place in Kendulī-grāma to commemorate his disappearance from our mortal vision. Fifty to one hundred thousand pilgrims gather at Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's *samādhi-mandira* to honor him during this festival which begins on Makara-Saṅkrānti in the month of Māgha (January-February). All the assembled Vaiṣṇavas hear and recite Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī's poetry celebrating Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's amorous meeting.

Commentaries on Śrī Gīta-govinda

There are six famous commentaries on Śrī Gīta-govinda:

- Rasa Mañjarī* – by Mahāmahopādhyāya Śaṅkara Miśra. He wrote this *ṭīkā* on the inspiration of Śrī Śālinātha.
- Rasika-priyā* – by Kumbha-nṛpati Kumbhakarna, the king of Mewar. His reign spanned the first quarter of the fourteenth century.
- Saṅjīvanī* – by Vanamālī Bhaṭṭa.
- Padadyotanikā* – by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa.
- Bālabodhinī* – by Śrī Pūjārī Gosvāmī, also known as Caitanya dāsa. He was a Bengali Vaiṣṇava scholar who lived in Vṛndāvana late in the sixteenth-early seventeenth centuries.
- Dīpikā* – Ācārya Gopāla.

Bowing in deference to Śrī Pūjārī Gosvāmī's *Bālabodhinī-ṭīkā*, I humbly present *Bālabodhinī-prakāśa*. Though drawing extensively from the exposition of Śrī Pūjārī Gosvāmī, this new commentary includes additional material from the other prominent commentators, along with further elaborations in accordance with the precepts of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

The initial manuscript for the Hindi edition was diligently compiled by Śrīmān Bhaktivedānta Tīrtha Mahārāja. After that my daughter Śrī Madhu Khaṇḍelavāla (MA, PhD) refined and embellished the language as if infusing the text with living force.

I pray at the lotus feet of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī and his worshipful Śrī Rādhikā and Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, “Kindly bestow Your causeless mercy upon all those who assisted in the production of this edition and thus make them genuinely qualified to enter into this illustrious literature.”

Śrī-hari-guru-vaiṣṇava kṛpāleśa prārthī dīna-hīna
Fervently begging for a slight trace of the mercy of Śrī Hari,
Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas, destitute and worthless,

Tridaṇḍibhikṣu Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

Phālguna pūrṇimā

517 śrī-gaurābda

bhāratīyābda 1924,

18 March 2003



*Jayadeva Gosvāmī's Rādhā-Mādhava Deities at
Rādhā-Dāmodara, Vṛndāvana*

Foreword

A FEW WORDS FROM
PRABHUPĀDA ŚRĪLA BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ ṬHĀKURA

ON ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA

The following discourse was delivered in 1932 on the eve of the 446th commemoration of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance.

Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the court poet of the Sena dynasty, has welcomed the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the auspicious invocation of Śrī Gīta-govinda (1.1).

“O Rādhā, all directions are covered by dense and ominous clouds. The forest floor has been cast into darkness by the shadows of blackish *tamāla* trees. Kṛṣṇa is naturally timid. He cannot be alone at night, so take Him home with You.” Śrī Rādhā turned Her face towards the bower of desire trees beside the forest path and, bewildered by intense joy, She honored the words of Her friend. When She arrived on the bank of the Yamunā River, She initiated Her love-play in a secret place. May the sweetness of this confidential pastime of the Divine Couple be victorious by manifesting in the hearts of the devotees.

Śrī Pūjārī Gosvāmī's commentary on the above verse does not disclose the picture in its entirety. Here, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī has also revealed Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the hearts of highly advanced devotees. The poet hints at the

appearance of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in one chamber of the great Yogapīṭha of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura; and simultaneously, at the appearance of the combination of their bodies as the independent form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The path to the spiritual sky had become thoroughly obscured by the dense clouds of various dark ideologies. Due to their obfuscation, the pleasant beauty of the trees of Vṛndāvana appeared gloomy to the people of this world. When Kṛṣṇa appeared during the night (towards the end) of Dvāpara-yuga, he said, *mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja* – “Unconditionally surrender to me,” and *ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānāṁ bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca* – “I alone am the enjoyer and master of all sacrifices.” Those of demonic intelligence thought that the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa had spoken out of egoism and pride. Thus the darkness and intoxication of atheism became dominant, deviating the multitude of souls from the path of spiritual welfare.

No one will care to listen to His words in the current age if He appears again as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Being. Therefore, it is essential for Him to appear combined in one form with Śrī Rādhā in order to mitigate the contempt of the public and overcome His own timidity. Realizing this, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī says, *grhaṁ prāpaya*, “O Kṛṣṇa, combine with Rādhā and proceed to *nanda-grha*, the home of Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra at the great Yogapīṭha in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura.”

Another name of Nanda is Vasudeva. In the Fourth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated, *sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditaṁ* – “The pure consciousness in which Kṛṣṇa is revealed is called *vasudeva*.” Although this is a consideration from the perspective of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine majesty, still Śrī Kṛṣṇa only appears in pure consciousness (*viśuddha-sattva*), even in His human-like pastimes.

Let the celebrations on the eve of the appearance of the combined form of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa be accomplished by means of *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the holy names. Let all other conceptions be reduced to ashes in the fire of *saṅkīrtana*. May the consciousness of all living beings become fuel in the fire of love for Kṛṣṇa, His holy names and His divine abode. The Ganges has achieved oneness with the Yamunā River by the influence of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance upon her banks. May the secret amorous pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined – the *saṅkīrtana-rāsa* – be victorious!

On Eroticism — Sacred & Profane

Adapted from Śrī Caitanya's Teachings, Chapter XIV

The sexual principle is a misunderstood symbol of Reality. It can no more be banished from our consciousness than consciousness itself. The male and female forms are also not the sole and distinctive possessions of this world. There is Reality behind them as well. The soul has a body which is symbolized by the female form and which is absolutely free from any unwholesome material association.

The ascetic's repugnance to the female form prevents an unprejudiced examination of the female sex that is a necessary factor of our conception of amorous love. This amorous love is the highest subject of human poetry and the most powerful factor in all human activities. Its worthlessness is not established by refusing to recognize it as a part of our nature. It would be much more to the purpose to try to understand what it really is. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the only book that answers this all-important question.

The worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is held by some modern thinkers to be dangerous, and even immoral. They apparently take exception to the erotic element, which is the prominent aspect of the highest worship of Śrī Rādhā- Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches us that it is obligatory for everyone to pay homage to spiritual amour that characterizes the highest service of the Divine Person. This is the central topic of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which deals with the transcendental service of the Personal Absolute.

Spiritual amour is the highest service to Divinity in His most complete manifestation. The real Nature of Divine Personality can never be fully understood by those who are unable to appreciate the pre-eminent excellence of His service by amorous love.

The conception of personality that is available to us in this world necessarily refers to the gross human physique combined with convention-ridden human mentality. These two are the definite contents of the conception. The functions of such personality can have meaning only if they supply the needs of body and mind.

Man is connected with the entities of this world for the satisfaction of the needs of his body and mind by five varieties of relationship. These five modes exhaust all possible forms of such relationship. A person may stand in the relationship of impartiality to other human beings; however, the emotional forms of relationship may be said to begin with the relationship of the servant towards his master. This is characterized by the sentiment of distant respect for the master. The relationship of friendship is closer than that of servitude. Parenthood is still more intimate. Consort hood, as of the wife or mistress to her husband or lover, is the most intimate and comprehensive form of relationship possible

with another entity. The chain of relationships is completed by the reciprocal relationships of master to servant, friend to friend, child to parents, husband or lover to wife or sweetheart.

There is no reason not to believe that the five forms of relationship are also inseparable concomitants of the personality of the Absolute Being. However, they are free from the fetters of the gross physical body and materialistic mind. Consorthood, as of the wife or mistress of this world, is not eligible by itself to set the tune for other relationships. Mundane consorthood is compelled to shrink, at least outwardly, into the strictly private and personal corner of the affairs of this world. It is not welcomed for influencing other activities in an explicit manner. It can act openly only within the limits of extreme privacy.

Consorthood is nevertheless recognized as imparting its deepest charm to life in a world in which it would not be worth living devoid of this relationship. Everyone in this world is however compelled to repress, more or less, the working of this admittedly deepest principle of his individual nature, on account of the opposition of the uncongenial environment in the shape of the defective organs, through which it has to be exercised. But this cannot condemn the principle itself that is the ruling force of life. It operates with no less predominance, but with less weight of responsibility, by being driven underground by the blind opposition of an unsympathetic environment and gross sense organs.

Should we deliberately deny ourselves the benefit of the guidance of well-considered opinion in this most vital and important affair of life? All the great religions scrupulously avoid and forbid any examination of this all-important subject. The worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is the only exception to this rule.

The worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa has been subject to much easily avoidable misunderstanding, bred by sheer ignorance and easily welcomed prejudices. The personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Eternal Divine Lover of Śrī Rādhikā, is the premier spiritual male of the Realm of Vraja, which is the Eternal Abode of the Divine Pair as depicted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is thought to be an unworthy conception of the Absolute Personality, and even as the survival and historical myth of a national hero in the times of promiscuous sexuality and primitive barbarism.

Hostility to the Divinity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is entertained on the ground that morality should constitute the kernel and pervading principle of religion. We should not, however, forget that this advertised morality is at best only a regulative and restrictive principle. We are so much wedded to the indispensable nature of this moral regulation that it requires no small effort of the imagination to admit that moral intervention would be uncalled for and harmful but for the actually defective nature of our present environment and sense organs. It would be irrational to do away with moral regulation as long as we are compelled to remain in our present defective condition. But there must surely be a plane that is free from all defects, being the natural and eternal sphere of the activities of our unadulterated spiritual nature. The plane of Divinity is superior to that of our conditioned souls. There is no need for any form of restrictive morality in the spiritual world, where the soul is not subject to the limiting operation of his present material and mental adjuncts.

The moral principle presupposes the existence of a strong and spontaneous tendency for evil as being innate to human nature. The good in this world is in a state of perpetual conflict with dominating evil. Moral regulation thus becomes the indispensable and permanent outward expression of the suppressed good life.

On further analysis however, we discover that moral judgement can take its stand only on an attenuated form of the evil that it ostensibly seeks to eradicate. It does not advocate acceptance of the substantive good. What it chooses to call goodness is only relatively and tentatively a lesser evil. The substantive good has remained and will ever remain an open issue, if we are content to be finally guided by a purely restrictive moral code. The above difficulty and insufficiency of the immoral code is most clearly realized in practice by every sincere person. It can never be good in itself. Empiric morality, as synthesis, is a counsel of expediency for the establishment of a certain radically defective kind of social living. Does not the existence of positive regulation obstruct the practice of real goodness? The goodness that is producible by the so-called moral regulation is not substantively different from wickedness.

It is necessary to fix our attention on this positive issue. Is the act of procreation of offspring good or evil? Is amour to be condemned or acclaimed? Can a questionable principle of blind regulation supply the answer to these real problems of life?

Amour is a hard fact of life. It is probably the controlling fact. Why should it be capable of doing harm? Or, should it be checked because of the inopportune character of our present organs and environment? Can a policy of repression of a really good principle be healthy in the long run? Is it not tantamount to refusal to think about the proper solution? Would it be honest or helpful, for humoring this criminal indolence, to gag those who put forward sound proposals for the real solution?

True, the religions have systematically avoided thinking positively on this fundamental issue. They have prescribed only regulations of the present evil life engendered by the

uncongenial nature of the present environment and the defective character of our mind and body. This is not even negative help, if it is the only provision. The disease is marked, but no effort is made for its cure. But disease cannot be healed by a policy that refuses in principle to contemplate the restoration of healthy activity.

The question thus resolves itself into an enquiry, “How can the fullest natural use of this amorous aptitude be secured?” Aesthetics does not provide the answer. Aesthetics cannot overlook or heal the really unwholesome side of the mundane principle that is the only subject matter of its examination. The ethical answer, which is more to the point in one respect, has been considered and rejected.

Medical science, biology and eugenics confine themselves to the bodily consequence of the principle of amour and the reaction of these on the mind. They also cover much less ground than ethics.

The positive answer to the whole issue is given only by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This has been accepted and explained by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The answer elucidated by the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is prevented from being misunderstood by His own illustrative career.

Any person who has taken the trouble to read the accounts of the career of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, penned by His associates and their spiritual successors, must be struck with the total absence of the erotic element in His career. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya never mixed with women on the footing of sexual intimacy. His conduct is disappointing to those who expect to find a rich harvest of erotic activities because He was the supreme teacher of the amorous service of Divinity.

In our present sinful state, sex suggests the idea of sensuous impurity because our present self is sensuous.

The sense of impurity is really nothing but the incongruity of any material, limited, unconscious substance with the nature of the human soul. We are not on the same plane with the object of our thoughts, but are yoked to it in a most unnatural way. This longing is the feeling of impurity or repugnance. So long as we continue to look upon sex with an eye of longing we can never think of it in any other way. But this longing is also part of our present acquired nature and cannot leave us until we can rid ourselves of this secondary nature itself. With this reform of nature our relation to the principle of sex also undergoes a complete transformation that is, however, otherwise incomprehensible to our present understanding. The relationship between the female form of the human soul and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not the relation between the material female form and its corresponding male form. The amorous Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the spiritual milkmaids of Vraja are not the amorous pastimes between male and female of this world. The amorous Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are not a concoction of the dismissed brain of the sensualist. The amours of this world could have no existence unless the substantive principle exists in Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But no one denies the existence and importance of the principle of amour in the realm of the Absolute in its perfectly wholesome form.

It is because we choose to regard as material the female form of the soul that we are shocked at what we suppose to be shameless sensuous proclivities of the transcendentalists. This is inevitable so long as we deliberately choose to nurse the error that the sex of our experience is the real entity and not its perverted reflection and imagine that we have been able to solve the problem of sex by transferring our sensuous activity from the body to the mind and by condemning as impure the excesses of the external sexual act on no consistent principle. Such bungling philosophy has not confined and will never convince anybody of the real nature and purpose of the sexual

act. This is so because the sexual act is the eternal concomitant in this sinful world of the highest function of the spirit, which can never be minimized or abolished by all our empiric endeavours. The right understanding alone can save us from the terrible consequences of our present suicidal sexual follies.

The Personality of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is identical with and yet distinct from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are, therefore, also identical with and yet distinct from the Amorous Pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appear in the form capable of being received by the conditioned soul without any chance of muddling by his conditioned judgment.

The perfect chant of the Name of Kṛṣṇa is available to all souls, and it is identical with the amorous service of the spiritual milkmaids of Vraja. This is the sum and substance of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Conversely, those who do not perform the congregational chant of the name of Kṛṣṇa in the manner that is free from offence are not in a position to realize the nature of Divine amour. Those who miss such realization remain subject to the abject slavery of mundane lust.

Śrī Rādhikā is not specifically mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But in the description of the Circular Amorous Dance, the *rāsa* pastimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is represented as leaving the circle of the dancing milkmaids in the company of a female who is more favored than all the rest. The milkmaids who were thus abruptly abandoned in the very midst of the dance praised the genuine devotion of the unnamed female who could induce Śrī Kṛṣṇa to prefer Her sole company to the combined attractions of all the others.

But although the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* mentions the above incident, the subject is not further developed in that work.

This has been explained by the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, the apostles of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as due to a deliberate resolve on the part of Śrī Śukadeva, who is the narrator of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, to avoid disclosing to his miscellaneous audience the ‘hidden matters’ of the scriptures. The ‘hidden matters’ can only be known by the special grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and not otherwise. They are not to be divulged to all persons indiscriminately.

This explanation offered by the Gosvāmīs is not opposed to the open treatment of the same subject by Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī and other writers. In spite of the *Śrī Gīta-govinda* and its companion works, the subject of the relationship of Śrī Rādhikā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa remains shrouded in impenetrable mystery. No language can convey to the lay reader anything but a misleading idea of the nature of the subject on which Śrī Śukadeva maintained such discreet silence. This result is hailed with unmistakable joy by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Kavirāja Gosvāmī pertinently observes that no joy can excel that of the narrator of the hidden subject when he realizes that unqualified persons are wholly and automatically barred from all knowledge of the subject.

Śrī Śukadeva’s hesitation to divulge the secrets of the Vedas is well founded. The conduct of Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī in speaking without reserve is equally in order if we remember that his book cannot be understood at all by those who are lacking in the highest spiritual culture.

Certain uncritical writers have even thrown mud at the author of *Śrī Gīta-govinda*; but they are the exceptions. Generally writers have thought it wise to avoid all reference to the subject for the honest enough reason that they have failed to understand how a book that has a most obscene exterior could be cherished by all the great devotees of the

country whose conduct is universally admitted to have been freed from any taint of indecency. It is this paradox that has always exercised a salutary restraining influence on the saner sections of writers with regard to the treatment of this unintelligible subject.

Śrī Rādhikā is realizable as the Counter-Whole of the Personal Absolute. She is the Predominated Moiety of the Absolute Whole. With regard to Śrī Rādhikā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Predominating Moiety. The conception of male and female refers to the principle of personality. As both Personalities are fully divine, no grossness or inadequacy of the corresponding mundane conception need be imported into the subject. But it is imperative to admit the absolute logical validity, under the reservation of the inconceivability by our present understanding, of the conception of the Divine Pair possessing actual male and female spiritual forms.

The individual souls serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa as constituents of Śrī Rādhikā. When they forget that they are constituents of Śrī Rādhikā they forget the nature of their own selves, and engage in the abnormal activities of the mundane plane. The relation between one individual soul and another is that of obeying each other as constituents of Śrī Rādhikā in the performance of their allotted service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To use a mundane analogy, all individual souls are spiritual females in a subordinate position to Śrī Rādhikā, whose service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa they share by their nature as constituents. The object of endeavour of the individual souls is to learn to obey Śrī Rādhikā. Only by obeying Śrī Rādhikā can they serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only object of all worship. Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the recipient of all service. No individual soul can be the recipient of any service on his own account or on account of any other individual soul. This points to the true significance of the scriptural injunction to abstain

from sexual activity and avoid the company of all sensual persons in order to qualify for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the spiritual plane. No idea of the positive nature of the function of the higher plane corresponding to the sexual activity of this world can be conveyed to those who are not completely free from the disease of mundane sexual desire. It is for this reason advisable to abstain from all empiric study of the descriptions of the amorous activities of divinity until one has actually been freed from every worldly passion by the preparatory service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master.



Act One

SĀMODA-DĀMODARAḤ – DĀMODARA DELIGHTED

VERSE 1

*meghair meduram ambaraṃ vana-bhuvah śyāmās tamāla-drumair
naktam bhīrur ayaṃ tvam eva tad imaṃ rādhe gṛhaṃ prāpaya
itthaṃ nanda-nideśataś calitayoḥ praty-adhva-kuñja-drumaṃ
rādhā-mādhavayor jayanti yamunākūle rahaḥ-kelayaḥ*

“O Rādhā! Threatening clouds devour the sky. Blackish *tamāla* trees cast the forest into darkness. Dāmodara is naturally timid and cannot be alone at night so take Him home with You.” Bewildered by intense joy as She turned toward the bower of desire-trees beside the forest path, Śrī Rādhā honored Her friend’s words. She reached the bank of the Yamunā, and in a secret place initiated Her love play. Triumph to Rādhā-Mādhava’s confidential pastime. May its sweetness come alive in the hearts of the devotees.

Commentary

In his epic poem *Gīta-govinda*, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī paints a vivid picture of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava’s romantic interludes in the secluded love bowers that attest to Their exclusive devotion for each other. By describing Their amorous pastimes the poet establishes Their supremacy and the super-excellence of Their love.

In his auspicious invocation, Śrī Jayadeva first depicts the scene of the Divine Couple entering into a *nikuñja* hidden

in the dense darkness of *tamāla* trees. He describes how Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most beloved Rādhā, heeding the words of Her close friend, leads Kṛṣṇa to a forest bower where She engages in joyful love play with Him. As this great poem establishes the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes, it is auspicious and beneficial for everyone.

Rādhā-mādhavayor jayanti: “May Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's amorous pastimes – supreme and confidential – be victorious.” Generally, the name Mādhava refers to Lakṣmīpati, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, who is the husband of the Goddess of Fortune. Here, however, Mādhava indicates Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is renowned for His overflowing love for Śrī Rādhā. This is substantiated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, wherein Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī defines Kṛṣṇa as the original Supreme Personality of Godhead and the source of all divine incarnations. Śrī Rādhā's supreme position is described in *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*:

*devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā
rādhikā para-devatā
sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva
kāntiḥ sammohinī parā*

“Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the most radiant and beautiful of all, and is the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playful pastimes. As She always sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa everywhere, within and without, She is called *kṛṣṇa-mayī*. She is the topmost of all worshipful deities; out of all goddesses of fortune She is the supreme Lakṣmī who continually fulfills Kṛṣṇa's desires, and She is the heart of all existence. She is *parā*, superior to all, because She even captivates the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

In accordance with literary tradition, the author begins by humbly petitioning Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava to kindly bestow Their grace so that this poem can be completed without impediment.

The word *jaya* indicates the pre-eminence of these pastimes; therefore it is appropriate for all devotees to honor them with great reverence. They are the result of the activity of Bhagavān’s internal potency, His *svarūpa-śakti*. “Triumph unto them!” If one inquires, “Which pastimes should be victorious?” the reply is, *yamunā-kūle*. “May Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava’s pastimes in the *kuñjas* on the banks of the Yamunā River be triumphant.” This line indicates that the pastimes achieve success on the banks of the Yamunā because there the cool, gentle breeze can dispel the fatigue arising from amorous play.

Nanda-nideśataḥ – The word *nanda* means “one who gives happiness to everyone.” Alternatively the whole phrase can be understood in the sense of *nandaś cāsau nideśaś ceti*, “Upon the order of Nanda Mahārāja, the father of Śrī Kṛṣṇa...” or “upon the instruction of one who is eternally submerged in *ānanda*, Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa...” However, both of these interpretations are technically inconsistent from the perspective of *rasa* because a defective mellow would arise if Nanda Mahārāja ordered Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to enjoy with Kṛṣṇa in a *kuñja* or if Kṛṣṇa Himself gave the order. Therefore, the most appropriate interpretation is, “After Kṛṣṇa’s most beloved Rādhā heard the words of Her friend...” Honoring Her friend’s words, Rādhikā started off, taking Śyāma with Her. The *sakhī* said, “O Rādhā, Mādhava is timorous because He rejected You last night to meet with another girl. It is natural that after slighting You, He will fear You. You were right to scornfully call him *bahu-nāyikā-vallabha*, the lover of many heroines. But now allow that broken-hearted Dāmodara to finally meet with You.”

The phrase *gṛham prāpaya* means ‘take Him home.’ “O Rādhā, take Mādhava with You and enter this love chamber (*keli-sadana*), because this place is quite favorable for You. Have Him enter the *kuñja-gṛha*, the love bower, and there,

meet with Him (*grhastha*) and have Him accept You as His mistress (*grhiṇī*).” The general meaning of the word *grha* is ‘home,’ but here it indicates *grhiṇī*, ‘the mistress who dwells there.’ *Prāpaya* is derived from the verbal root *āp* (to take possession of or to meet with), prefixed by *pra* (in the most excellent way). The word *eva* adds the emphasis that ‘only You are qualified to be His wife.’ If someone says that Rukmiṇī is actually His wife because all the residents of Kuṇḍina Nagara have blessed their marriage, then the answer is given here. In the same way Rādhā’s *sakhī* is blessing Her, “O Rādhā, become Mādhava’s consort! That dwelling is not a home (*grha*) in which there is no mistress (*grhiṇī*).”

Śrī Rādhikā says to Her *sakhī*, “On this bright moonlit night, how can I go off alone with Mādhava in front of all the others?” In response to this, the poet has selected a favorable moment, and accordingly Her *sakhī* replies, “O Rādhā! To our great delight, the sky has just now filled with clouds that have covered the moon rays. It seems as if the clouds have done this deliberately, knowing that Mādhava longs to meet with His sweetheart.”

Encouraging Rādhā, she continues, “Look! Dark clouds holding the fair-complexioned moon in a loving embrace are a stimulant (*uddīpana*) for Dāmodara’s mood. Seeing the example of the clouds, the dark-complexioned Śyāma is anxious to be united with the golden-limbed Rādhā.”

Śrī Rādhikā’s *sakhī* suggests, “It is night and the forest is dark, covered by a canopy of *tamāla* trees. Impenetrable darkness has spread everywhere, so who will be able to see You? Now do not delay for another second.”

In this opening verse, the great poet informs us that the prominent *rasa* of this poem is *śṛṅgāra*, amorous love, the monarch of mellows. The darkness of night, the cloud-covered sky and the dense foliage of the forest beautified by

tamāla trees are all *uddīpana-vibhāva*, stimulants of the moods. Śrīmatī Rādhā is *ālambana-vibhāva*, the person who tastes love (*rati*). The *sthāyī-bhāva*, or permanent emotion, is *madhura-rati*, highly developed amorous love. The *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*, transitory emotions, include *harṣa* (jubilation), *āvega* (agitation) and *autsukya* (ardent desire). The *anubhāva*, an external symptom which reveals the moods in the heart, is *bhīrutva*, timidity. Here Śrī Rādhā has been described first because the heroine is prominent in *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the amorous mellow.

At this opportune moment in the pastime, Śrī Rādhā's *sakhī* listens and looks all around to make sure that it is safe to go. Then she says, "Enter the forest while the moon is covered." In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.30.42) Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has said: *tamaḥ praviṣtam ālakṣya* – "On seeing a dark place..."

According to literary tradition, there are two types of poetic composition – *sādhāraṇa-kāvya* and *mahā-kāvya*, the ordinary poem and the epic masterpiece. There are several criteria that a composition must include to qualify as a *mahā-kāvya*: eight or more short *sargas*, cantos or chapters, each composed in a meter appropriate to the particular subject matter, containing descriptions of various seasons and sceneries, and presenting all of the *rasas*, or emotional sentiments. The *maṅgalācaraṇa* verse of a *mahā-kāvya* exhibits three components – blessings (*āśīrvāda*), obeisances (*namaskāra*) and a definition of content (*vastu-nirdeśa*). In the present verse, the word *jayanti* is understood in the sense of *namaskāra*, respectful obeisances. This type of interpretation is supported by the text *Kāvya-prakāśa*. The subject matter, namely, Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's amorous play, acts in the capacity of both *vastu-nirdeśa* and *āśīrvāda*. Thus we see that this composition conforms to the definition of a *mahā-kāvya*. More simply, *Kāvyaḍarśa* defines a composition presented in *sarga* format as *mahā-kāvya*.

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa aiche sadā eka-i svarūpa
līlā-rasa āsvādite dhare dui rūpa*

“Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally one identity, yet They have assumed two forms in order to relish exchanges of love.”

This verse from Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 4.98) indicates the unadulterated nature of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s relationship. It is also stated in the *Ṛk Pariśiṣṭa – rādhayā mādhavo devo mādhavenaiva śrī-rādhikā*: “Mādhava’s highest glories shine out when He is with Rādhā, and Śrī Rādhikā’s splendor is heightened when with Mādhava.” Similarly, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī points to the inseparable nature of the Divine Couple’s eternal relationship in his opening verse by employing the dual compound, *rādhā-mādhava*.

The first half of this verse is ornamented by *samuccaya-alankāra* (a figure of speech in which two or more independent objects associated in idea with some common action are joined together) and the second half by *āśīḥ-alankāra* (a figure of speech bestowing blessings). Consequently there is *saṁsṛṣṭi*, the combination of two distinct figures of speech in one sentence. The hero is *anukūla-nāyaka*, the obliging lover, and the heroine is *svādhīna-bharṭṛkā-nāyikā*, a domineering girl who controls her lover. The first half of the verse is an example of *abhilāṣa-lakṣaṇa vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*, amorous feelings in separation, characterized by intense hankering. The *chanda* (poetic meter) is *śārdūla-vikṛīḍita*.

VERSE 2

*vāg-devatā-carita-citrita-citta-sadmā
padmāvatī-caraṇa-cāraṇa-cakravartī
śrī-vāsudeva-rati-keli-kathā-sametam
etaṁ karoti jayadeva-kaviḥ prabandham*

The heart of the great poet Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī is a temple beautifully decorated with paintings depicting the activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the predominating deity of speech. The author, whose heart is always dancing with desire to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, has filled his *Gīta-govinda* with descriptions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *rati-keli*, His confidential erotic pastimes in the forest bowers, thereby creating a tremendous upsurge of the radiant and romantic *bhakti-rasa* within devotees immersed in transcendental emotions.

Commentary

The heart of Śrī Jayadeva has become inundated with euphoria after attaining a momentary vision of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes as indicated by one line of the previous verse. The emperor of poets, the compassionate Śrī Jayadeva, bestows favor upon all the devotees by directly expressing his own literary competence in this verse beginning *vāg-devatā*.

Jayadevaḥ – *jaya* means 'the utmost excellence;' *deva* means *dyotayati*, *prakāśayati*, or 'he illuminates.' The purport is that Śrī Jayadeva, by his devotion, illuminates the super-excellence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. At the same time this literary composition (*prabandha*) entitled *Gīta-govinda* attracts the hearts of its audience in the most excellent way (*pra*). It causes Kṛṣṇa's pastimes to awaken in the hearts of the devotees in the most excellent way, thus liberating them from the bondage (*bandha*) of material existence.

One might ask: wherefrom came this literature's competence to attract the hearts of its listeners? The reply is, *śrī-vāsudeva-rati-keli-kathā-sametam*. Here the word *śrī* refers to Rādhā and *vāsudeva* refers to the master and indwelling soul of the entire universe, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has descended in the form of the son of Vasudeva. Their amorous love games

(*rati-keli*) are described. He who brilliantly illuminates the Vasu dynasty, namely Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, the best of the Vasus, is called Vasudeva. Consequently the son of that Śrī Nandajī is called Vāsudeva Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Because Śrī Jayadeva elaborately describes the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's love play, his composition has the power to attract the hearts of all. The etymology of this line is *śrīś ca vāsudevaś ca śrī-vāsudevau tayo rati-keli-kathaḥ tābhiḥ sametam*.

The next question is, “How did this narration come about?” Śrī Jayadeva replies that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the presiding deity of artful speech. He is the orator, ever present within the innermost region of Śrī Jayadeva's heart, inspiring him to write. As the *adhiṣṭhātr-devatā* of the poet's senses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa infuses them with potency. Therefore Śrī Jayadeva describes his worshipful deity as *vāg-devatā*, the presiding deity of speech, to confirm that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is personally composing this poem.

All the pastimes are gathered together like a collection of paintings lining the walls of Śrī Jayadeva's heart. An artist first has an internal vision which, when transferred to canvas, becomes a painting. Similarly, this picture of loving pastimes has been painted by the brush of Śrī Jayadeva. The sacred palace of his heart is quite astonishing: the fabulous wealth of fascinating poetry is its treasury, and the exquisite paintings of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's intimate encounters are its decorations. The poet has renounced all claims of having authored this narration, as his speech and mind are absorbed in Mādhava.

All this being so, still the question may be raised once again, from where did the power to depict such pastimes come? In reply Śrī Jayadeva admits that his sensory powers are all inspired by Śrī Rādhā. And how is She present within

those powers? Śrī Rādhā is Padmāvātī. The etymology of the word *padmāvātī* is *padmam kare asti yasyāḥ*: “She who holds a lotus flower in her hand,” namely Śrī Rādhā. The emperor of bards, the most accomplished dancer and the world’s best actor – Śrī Jayadeva – is ever eager to employ the artistic dance of his lyrical expression in the service of Padmāvātī Śrī Rādhā. Another confidential mystery is that Padmāvātī is also the name of Śrī Jayadeva’s wife. The great poet praises Rādhā and simultaneously expresses feelings of gratitude for his wife, Śrī Padmāvātī, who was highly elevated in the loving service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

The literary device of comparing the heart to a mansion is an example of *rūpaka-* and *anujñā-alaṅkāras*. The meter is *vasanta-tilakā*. We also find examples of *oja-guṇa*, *gauḍīyā-rīti*, *bhāratī-vṛtti* and *sambhāvitā-gīti*.

VERSE 3

*yadi hari-smaraṇe sarasaṁ mano
yadi vilāsa-kalāsu kutūhalam
madhura-komala-kānta-padāvalim
śṛṇu tadā jayadeva-sarasvatīm*

Dear audience, if remembering Śrī Hari enriches your heart with feelings of deep love, and if you are curious to know about His ingenuity in the romantic arts, then may you become immersed in bliss by hearing Jayadeva’s narrations in these mellifluous, tender and pleasing songs.

Commentary

Without qualms the poet boldly proclaims his eligibility to write this epic poem. Sometimes dull-witted persons do not have faith in this; therefore the qualifications required to study this epic poem have been defined.

Dear devotees, if your heart is moved with affection by constantly remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa and your mind is steeped in curiosity to know about His delightful escapades such as *rāsa-vihāra*, *kuñja-vilāsa*¹ (His pleasure in the love groves), His inventiveness in pastimes and the sweetness of His cunning behavior, then by all means hear these honeyed words of Jayadeva, the bard of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*.

Some devotees derive transcendental bliss from remembering Śrī Hari in a general way, whereas others experience spiritual happiness by focusing on His romantic activities such as *rāsa-līlā*. Now what kind of poem is this? The answer is that this poem is predominated by the conjugal mellow (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) and is exceptionally sweet. Its meaning is simple and readily comprehensible. This poem, comprising a series of sweet descriptions strung together, is immensely appealing because it is imbued with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *kānti*, or the luster They emit in an amorous exchange. This charming composition is extremely dear to the pure devotees, just as a ladylove is to her lover. Love naturally takes expression in song, so Śrī Gīta-govinda has perforce assumed the format of an opera, and should be sung in a melodious voice.

Ancient authorities on rhetoric have concluded that *mādhurya-guṇa* and *komalatā*, the qualities of sweetness and tenderness, are of two types: *śabdāśrita*, related to the individual words, and *arthāśrita*, related to the wonderful emotional impact of those words. Both types are evident in this composition.

The current verse has delineated *abhidheya*, *prayojana* and *adhikārī*. Remembrance of the amorous pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are *abhidheya*, the method of attainment. Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are *pratipādyā*, the expounded subject,

1 Editor: The word *vilāsa* refers to the coquettish gestures women employ to attract a man, beginning with *hāva* and *bhāva*. The activities of passionate love are also called *vilāsa*.

and the literature itself is *pratipādaka*, the expounder. *Pratipādyā* and *pratipādaka* are connected in *smārya-smāraka sambandha*, the relationship of the memorable and the memorial. Only those Vaiṣṇavas who feel transcendental bliss upon hearing and reciting the loving pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and whose innermost hearts are infused with ecstatic emotions by this poem are *adhikārī*, qualified.

This third verse features *dīpaka-alaṅkāra*, *pāñcālī-rīti*, *kaiśikī-vṛtti* and *druta-vilambita-chanda*.

VERSE 4

vācaḥ pallavayaty umāpatidharaḥ sandarbha-śuddhim girām
 jānīte jayadeva eva śaraṇaḥ ślāghyo durūha-drute
 śṛṅgārottara-sat-prameya-racanair ācārya-govardhanaspardhī
 ko 'pi na viśrutaḥ śruti-dharo dhoyī kavi-kṣmāpatiḥ

The rhetoric of the illustrious poet Umāpatidhara is adorned with alliteration and other figures of speech. The poet named Śaraṇa is acclaimed for his cryptic verses. No one has ever heard of a poet who can convey the flavor of worldly romance as skillfully as Govardhana. Kavirāja Dhoyī can recite anything after hearing it but once. When even these formidable poets could not master every aspect of poetic expression, how could the poetry of Jayadeva abound with all attributes?

Commentary

With all humility, Śrī Jayadeva has introduced himself as the emperor of bards who glorify the lotus feet of Padmāvati Śrī Rādhārānī. Here, absorbed in that same demure spirit, Śrī Jayadeva elaborates upon the deep significance and maturity of his own composition, pronouncing the achievements of other poets as mundane and insignificant.

There were six famous scholars in the royal assembly of Mahārāja Lakṣmaṇa Sena:

- (1) The poet Umāpatidhara was the counselor of King Lakṣmaṇa Sena. He only knew how to develop his message by elaborating on details. Thus linguistic and semantic sweetness were absent from his writing. Although his compositions flourished into many branches and sub-branches, they did not meet with acceptance. Since his poetry is not particularly heart-warming, it is confined to the category of descriptive writing.
- (2) The poet Śaraṇa was renowned for his ability to quickly compose enigmatic verses. Although he was popular, his writing was afflicted with defects such as *gūḍhārthatva*, the employment of expressions that are cryptic to the point of being unintelligible. Attributes such as *prasāda-guṇa*, or lucidity of style, were also absent from his works.
- (3) Govardhanācārya was the third *paṇḍita* in the assembly of Lakṣmaṇa Sena. His power of literary expression was flawless. *Śṛṅgāra*, amorous love, is the ultimate stage in the sequential development of *rasa* and no one could compete with Ācārya Govardhana in describing the ordinary hero and heroine who are the seat of that *rasa*. However, he was incapable of describing the other *rasas*.
- (4) The poet Śrutidhara was famous for his ability to commit any composition to memory after hearing it but once.
- (5) Dhoyī Kavi, commonly known as Kavirāja, was highly qualified in his understanding of literature. However, he was not able to compose original poetry of his own.
- (6) The sixth poet in the assembly of Lakṣmaṇa Sena was Śrī Jayadeva. The perfection of language is achieved only in descriptions of the name, form, qualities and pastimes

of Bhagavān, as confirmed by Śrī Nārada, *tad vāg-visargo janatāgha viplavo* (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.11). This method of flawless composition was known only to Śrī Jayadeva.

Therefore he expresses his humility as follows: “Does Jayadeva know how to compose flawless poetry? Not at all. Umāpati can write meticulously detailed descriptions; Śaraṇa Kavi is famous for quickly composing inscrutable verses; Ācārya Govardhana has no equal; Dhoyī is the king of the literati; and Śrutidhara has perfect aural retention; but Jayadeva does not know anything.”

The author of *Rasa Mañjarī* has accepted the existence of only five poets in Lakṣmaṇa Sena’s court. Rather than considering the word *śrutidharaḥ* to be the title of a specific poet, he took it as an adjective qualifying Dhoyī Kavi. In this case the meaning is, “Dhoyī Kavi can recite any poem after hearing it but once.”

The presiding deity of speech, Sarasvatī, affirms that language achieves perfect purity when it celebrates all the various aspects of the Supreme Lord. Because *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is a description of Bhagavān’s pastimes, it is superior to all other poetic compositions. This poetic song is at once elegant, confidential, sweet, and full of genuine emotion.

The present verse features *samuccaya-alāṅkāra* and *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*.



❧ Song One ❧

The musical mode is *mālava-gauḍa-rāga* and the rhythm is *rūpaka-tāla*.

VERSE 5

*pralaya-payodhi-jale dhṛtavān asi vedam
vihita-vahitra-caritram akhedam
keśava dhṛta-mīna-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare (1)*

O Jagadīśvara! O Hari! From Your eternal spiritual abode, You descend to this temporary world in the form of a fish and save the Vedas from the ocean of universal devastation, just as a ship effortlessly rescues a drowning man. O Supreme Lord, You have appeared as Matsyāvātāra. May You be victorious.

Commentary

The sole purpose of Śrī Jayadeva's writing is to reveal the supreme sweetness present in Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes. The crest jewel of heroes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the original shelter of all existence. All the verses of this song describe the *avatāras* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, beginning here with Matsya. This *aṣṭapadī* is sung in *mālava-gauḍa-rāga* and *rūpaka-tāla*. *Mālava-gauḍa-rāga* is characterized thus:

*nitambinī-cumbita-vaktra-padmaḥ
śuka-dyutiḥ kuṇḍalavān pramattaḥ
saṅgīta-sālām praviśan pradōṣe
mālā-dharo mālava-rāga-rājah*

“Mālava, the king of *rāgas*, enters the music hall in a state of intoxication, all the while a shapely heroine kissing his lotus face. His complexion is green like a parrot, and he is ornamented with earrings and a flower garland around his neck.”

The rhythm known as *rūpaka-tāla* has been employed here. It is characterized by the combination of *virām* and *druta* at the end.

This *aṣṭapadī* contains four terms of address for Śrī Bhagavān. The first one is *keśava*. There are several reasons why the Lord is called Keśava. (1) The hair that fell from Bhagavān in His Varāha incarnation grew and became *kuśa* grass, which is essential for the performance of Vedic sacrifices. Without *kuśa* grass the sacrifice is not complete. (2) According to Pāṇinī – *keśādvō 'nyatarasyāma* – the word *keśava* is derived from the word *keśa*, meaning 'hair' in its widely known sense, suffixed by the syllable *va*. (3) Among the twelve *vyūha* expansions of Śrī Bhagavān, the *keśava-vyūha* comes first. (4) Commenting on this name, the author of *Bhagavadguṇa Darpaṇa* states – *praśasta-snigdha-nīla-kuṭīla-kuntalaḥ* – “The name Keśava tells us that Bhagavān is acclaimed for His soft, black, curly hair.” (5) *keśavaḥ: ko brahmā īśāś ca tāvapi vayate praśastīti* – “The governor and instructing authority of both *ka* (Brahmā) and *īśa* (Mahādeva Śiva) is called Keśava.” (6) *keśān vayate* – “The crest jewel of those who relish *rasa*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called Keśava because He decorates the hair of the *gopīs*.” (7) The destroyer of the Keśī demon is called Keśava.

The second title is *dhṛta-mīna-śarīra* – “You who have assumed the form of a fish.” Śrī Bhagavān descends in various forms to deliver the devotees and destroy the sinful. Among His innumerable incarnations, ten are prominent, beginning with Matsyāvātāra. In this incarnation Śrī Bhagavān killed the demon Hayagrīva, who had stolen the Vedas, and thus retrieved them.²

2 *Śrīmad-Bhagavatām* tells of Matsyāvātāra killing Hayagrīva in the previous *kalpa*. In another age Śrī Bhagavān came as Hayagrīva, with the head of a horse; He killed the Madhu demon and saved the Vedas.

The third form of address, Jagadīśa, “Lord of the Universe,” signifies that He is the controller of the entire cosmos and all the activities of nature (*prakṛti*). He regulates the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe and He governs its every detail from within in the form of *antaryāmī*, the Supersoul. The name Jagadīśa is also used to express the Lord’s compassion.

The purport of the fourth title, Hare, is *harati bhaktānām kleśam*. “Bhagavān descends to relieve His devotees from the endless distress of this world.” Kavirāja Jayadeva has shown the highest honor for Śrī Bhagavān by these four titles.

Jaya means, “He Prabhu, O Master! You are expert in discovering Your own eminence. Kindly manifest Your greatness.” The line *jaya jagadīśa hare* has been sung at the end of every verse. Therefore it is called the *dhruva-pada*, refrain, in accordance with the convention, *dhruvatvācca dhruvo jñeyah*.

Here the poet recounts the noble activities of Matsyāvātāra. During the universal dissolution, He effortlessly rescued the Vedas, Manu, the Seven Sages and all types of seeds, by pulling them through the vast waters in a boat attached to His horn. In this incarnation, He also protected Satyavrata Muni. Therefore, may Bhagavān Keśava be victorious.

This verse features *ūrdhvamāgadhī-rīti*, *upamā-* and *atīśayokti-alankāras* and *vīra-rasa*. The *sthāyi-bhāva* is *utsāha*, heroic strength of will. Matsyāvātāra is also recognized as the predominating deity of *vibhatsa-rasa* (disgust).

VERSE 6

kṣītir ati-vipula-tare tiṣṭhati tava pṛṣṭhe
dharāṇi-dharāṇa-kīna-cakra-gariṣṭhe
keśava dhṛta-kacchapa-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (2)

O Keśi-niṣūdana! O Jagadīśa! O Hari! Assuming Your tortoise form, You held the Earth on one part of Your expansive back. The fame of the impression made by the Earth on Your back is ever increasing. May You be victorious!

Commentary

In the second verse of this *aṣṭapadī*, Śrī Bhagavān's tortoise incarnation has been described. "Not only did You draw this Earth (Mandarācala) towards You, but You also supported it upon Your back." Śrī Bhagavān is situated beneath the Earth in His tortoise incarnation. This Bhūmaṇḍala is situated like a small toy ball upon His huge back where it has made a permanent impression. "This scar is Your ornament. May You be victorious."

Jaya jagadīśa hare! This refrain is like the lid of the jeweled casket of the whole *aṣṭapadī*.

VERSE 7

*vasati daśana-śikhare dharaṇī tava lagnā
śaṣīni kalaṅka-kaleva nimagnā
keśava dhṛta-śūkara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (3)*

O Jagadīśa! O Keśava! O Hari! O You who have assumed the form of a boar! The Earth rests upon the tip of Your tusks like a tiny spot upon the moon. May You be victorious!

Commentary

Śrī Bhagavān has been eulogized in this third verse for not only holding up the Earth planet with all the moving and non-moving living beings on His tusks, but for also running along with it. At the beginning of the creation, Hiranyākṣa stole Bija-bhūtā Pṛthvī and went down to Rasātala, the lower

planetary system. In response, Śrī Bhagavān assumed the form of a boar, entered the waters of devastation and rescued Pṛthvī by lifting her up on the tip of His tusks. He then placed her on the surface of the water by His yogic power called *satya-saṅkalpa*, the power by which His desire becomes reality. When Bhagavān was carrying the Earth upon His radiant tusks, she appeared as beautiful as the dark marks upon the moon. The poet has compared Bhagavān's tusks with the new moon to illustrate their vast size in comparison to the minuteness of the Earth, which is as inconspicuous as marks on the moon. The word *nimagnā* illuminates Varāhadeva's identity as the presiding deity of *bhayānaka-rasa* (terror). This verse contains *upamā-alaṅkāra*.

O You who appear in the form of a boar! May You be victorious!

VERSE 8

*tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-śṛṅgam
dalita-hiraṇyakaśipu-tanu-bhrṅgam
keśava dhṛta-narahari-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (4)*

O Jagadīśvara! O Hari! O Keśava! You have assumed the form of Nṛsimha, part man and part lion. With the wonderful sharp tips of the nails of Your excellent lotus hands You rip apart the body of Hiraṇyakaśipu just as a bumblebee tears a flower. May You be victorious!

Commentary

Here Śrī Jayadeva has praised Bhagavān in the form of Nṛsimha-avatāra. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is distressed by the sorrow of others. He can accept any difficulty for Himself, but He cannot tolerate the suffering of others. Hiraṇyakaśipu, the son of Diti, committed atrocities against his own son, the

great devotee Prahlāda. Therefore, Bhagavān, in the form of Nṛsimha, protected Prahlāda Mahārāja by tearing apart the chest of that powerful demon with His nails.

O Keśava! You have assumed a form which is part man and part lion. The extremely sharp nails of Your excellent lotus hands are like the tips of the best of lotus flowers. Those nails inspire wonder because they also resemble the pinnacles of a mountain. The specific significance of Your nails being like the tips of lotus flowers is that bumblebees tear apart the tips of other lotus flowers but the tips of Your lotus hands have torn apart the bee-like body of the demon Hiranyakaśipu. This is an example of *virodhābhāsa-alaṅkāra*, reverse analogy. *Rūpaka-alaṅkāra* has been employed by comparing the demon with a bumblebee to convey his blackness. In the *Viśvakoṣa* Sanskrit dictionary, the word *śṛṅga* can refer to a musical horn, excellence or the extreme tip. Śrī Nṛsimha is considered to be the presiding deity of *vātsalya-rasa*, parental affection.

VERSE 9

*chalayasi vikramaṇe balim adbhuta-vāmana
pada-nakha-nīra-janita-jana-pāvana
keśava dhṛta-vāmana-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (5)*

O Master of the entire universe! O Śrī Hari! O Keśava! Assuming the form of a dwarf, You cheat King Bali on the pretext of begging for three paces of land. The population of the universe has become purified by the water that touched Your toenails (the Ganges). O astonishing Vāmana-deva! May You be victorious!

Commentary

Śrī Vāmana-deva has been praised in this fifth verse. After going to King Bali's sacrificial arena on the pretext of

begging alms, You assumed Your gigantic Trivikrama form and spanned the upper and lower planetary systems.

The verb *chalayasi*, to cheat, is in the present tense. The purport is that after tricking Bali out of his entire kingdom, You blessed him and now You mercifully reside with him in Pātāla. Another meaning is that You have been repeatedly cheating him in the form of a dwarf since time without beginning.

The phrase *pada-nakha-nīra-janita-jana-pāvana* implies that Bhagavān has purified the whole material world by manifesting the Ganges from His toenails. As Bhagavān spanned the Earth, Lord Brahmā saw His lotus feet in Brahmāloka and offered *arghya*, scented water for washing the feet, hands and mouth. That very water transformed to become the Ganges. Therefore, “O Keśava, may You be victorious!”

This verse is an example of *adbhuta-rasa* (wonderment). Here Śrī Bhagavān has manifested as the presiding deity of *sakhya-rasa* (friendship).

VERSE 10

kṣatriya-rudhira-maye jagad-apagata-pāpam
snayasi payasi śamita-bhava-tāpam
keśava dhṛta-bhṛgupati-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (6)

O Jagadīśa! O Hari! O Keśi-nisūdana! Taking the form of Bhṛgupati (Paraśurāma), You dispelled the anguish of the material world by destroying the dynasty of the reigning military caste (the *kṣatriyas*) and purifying the universe with the streams of their blood. May You be victorious!

Commentary

The Paraśurāma incarnation has been glorified in this sixth verse. O Prabhu, O Master! Assuming the form of

Bhṛḡupati, You destroyed the warrior caste who had become inimical to the *brāhmaṇas*, not only once but twenty-one times. You have made the lake of their blood at Kurukṣetra into a place of pilgrimage. Any living entities who take bath there are delivered from the reactions of their sins and attain liberation from the suffering of material existence. When knowledge awakens, suffering is relieved and one is pacified.

This verse features *svābhāvīkōkti-alāṅkāra* and *adbhuta-rasa* (astonishment). The Paraśurāma-avatāra is accepted as the presiding deity of *raudra-rasa* (anger). The hero of the first six verses of this song is *dhīroddhata-nāyaka*, a proud, insolent hero.

VERSE 11

vitarsi dikṣu raṇe dik-pati-kamaṇīyam
daśa-mukha-mauli-baliṁ ramaṇīyam
keśava dhṛta-ṛaghupati-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (7)

O master of the universe, Śrī Hari! O killer of the Keśi demon! Assuming the form of Śrī Rāma, during the battle with the ten-headed demon King Rāvaṇa, You threw his extremely attractive crowned heads in all directions as a pleasing offering to Indra and the other demigods presiding over all the points of the compass. O Rāma, may You be victorious!

Commentary

The character of Śrī Rāma has been described in this seventh verse. “O Prabhu, You have appeared as Śrī Rāma, the *tilaka* of the Raghu dynasty, to endure separation from Your beloved.”

Śrī Bhagavān fought with Rāvaṇa, who was a source of distress to the whole world. In a ferocious battle, Bhagavān cut off Rāvaṇa’s ten heads and offered them as oblations to the presiding deities of the ten directions. In this way He

brought peace to a world that had been overwhelmed with catastrophes inflicted by evil demons.

The presiding deities of the directions had been anxiously waiting to receive the sacrificial offering of Rāvaṇa's heads. The whole world was overjoyed at the demon's death. Śrī Jayadeva has expressed this with the words *dikpati-kamaṇīyam* (desired by the presiding gods) and *ramaṇīyam* (pleasing). There are ten *dikpālas*, or presiding deities of the ten directions, and the crowned heads of Rāvaṇa were also ten in number. Therefore this offering was *kamaṇīya*, immensely pleasing to the *dikpālas*, who each received one crowned head. Bhagavān has increased the bliss of the entire world population by killing Rāvaṇa, who had been inflicting pain upon all.

In this verse the hero is *dhīrodātta-nāyaka*, a hero who is naturally very grave, gentle and chivalrous. Śrī Bhagavān's Rāma-avatāra manifests *karuṇa-rasa* (compassion). The etymology of the phrase *daśa-mukha-mauli-balim* is *daśa-mukhasya ye maulaya tānyeva balim* – “The crowned heads of Rāvaṇa are the offering.” Although the word *mauli* means both ‘head’ and ‘crown,’ the generally accepted meaning is ‘crowned head,’ in accordance with the impartial interpretation (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*).

VERSE 12

*vahasi vapuṣi viśade vasanaṁ jaladābham
hala-hati-bhīti-milita-yamunābham
keśava dhṛta-haladhara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (8)*

O Jagat-svāmī! O killer of the demon Keśi! O Hari! Taking the form of Baladeva, You sport a brilliant white complexion and blue clothes that resemble the beauty of fresh rainclouds. It seems that the river Yamunā has hidden in Your cloth, fearing the blow of Your plough. O wielder of the plough, may You be victorious!

Commentary

Bhagavān's form as the carrier of the plough, Śrī Balarāma, is being glorified in this eighth verse. The words *vapuṣi viśade* indicate that the fair complexion of Balarāmajī is radiantly white. The word *jaladābha* indicates that His clothes are deep blue. Dark blue clouds that are dense with water are called *jalada*. The word *jaladābha* is derived thus – *jaladasya ābhā – śyābhā yasya tam*. Just as a fresh raincloud is a source of joy to a farmer, Balarāmajī's cloth bestows bliss upon the devotees.

The etymology of the phrase *hala-hati-bhīti-milita-yamunābham* is *halena yā hatih tad bhītyā militā yā yamunā tasyā ābhā iva ābhā yasya tat*. It is not that Bhagavān only finds the distress of separation from His beloved to be intolerable, as He did in His Rāma incarnation; He also cannot bear the minor distress of His beloveds' fatigue. Here the poet says, "You have forcibly pulled Your dear devotee, Yamunājī, only for the sake of dispelling Your sweethearts' exhaustion. When You pulled the frightened and hesitant Yamunā towards You with Your plough, it seemed that her waters entered Your cloth, turning them a clear deep blue that highlighted Your radiant white body."

The hero of this verse, Śrī Balarāmajī, is depicted here as *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka* (carefree, jovial, confident and submissive to His lovers). He is considered to be the presiding deity of *hasya-rasa*, laughter.

VERSE 13

*nindasi yajña-vidher ahaha śruti-jātam
sadaya-hṛdaya darśita-paśu-ghātam
keśava dhṛta-buddha-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare (9)*

O Jagadīśvara! O Hari! O Keśi-niṣūdana! You have assumed the form of Buddha. Being compassionate and

sensitive, You decry the Vedas when You see the violence inflicted upon animals in the course of sacrificial performances. May You be victorious!

Commentary

Bhagavān's Buddha-avatāra is eulogized in this ninth verse. The Vedas are the embodiment of the breath of Bhagavān, and are considered to be His personal orders. When conceptions opposed to the Vedas began to flourish in the name of Vedic sacrifice, You descended as Buddha.

One might ask, "If You have personally established the regulations for sacrifice, then why did You speak out against them? It is surprising that although You are the original propagator of the Vedas, You are now abnegating them."

In response it is stated here: *sadaya-hṛdaya darśita-paśu-ghātam* – "Because You are kind to animals You have bewildered the demons by instructing them that non-violence is the highest religion. Just as You bewildered the demons when You came as Mohinī-mūrti to save the ambrosia, similarly You captivated the demons and rescued the animals by teaching that sacrifices are improper." Seeing the violence committed against sacrificial animals, Śrī Bhagavān's heart was moved with compassion; thus He decried the Vedic scriptures that advocate sacrifice.

In this verse the hero is *dhīra-śānta* (peaceful and forbearing). Bhagavān Buddha is considered to be the presiding deity of *śānta-rasa*, tranquility.

VERSE 14

*mleccha-nivaha-nidhane kalayasi karavālam
dhūmaketum iva kim api karālam*

keśava dhṛta-kalki-śarīra jaya jagadīśa hare (10)

O Śrī Hari, Controller of the universe! O Killer of the Keśi demon! Adventing as Kalki, You wield a fearsome sword that resembles a foreboding star as You slaughter the barbarians. May You be victorious!

Commentary

Now the poet recounts the glories of Bhagavān's Kalki-avatāra. "Without there being a war at the end of Kali-yuga, the savage population will not be destroyed, and without such destruction, peace will not come. Therefore You assume the form of Kalki and exterminate the barbarians. To annihilate the degraded and wicked humans, You wield a terrifying sword that appears as death personified." The poet has used the words *kim api* to emphasize that this sword is the embodiment of terror.

Dhūmaketu *iva*: Dhūmaketu is the name of a particular dreaded star that signifies impending disaster. Bhagavān's sword is the Dhūmaketu that spells imminent destruction for the uncivilized. The word *dhūmaketu* also means 'fire,' indicating that His sword is loathed by the barbaric society.

The hero of the current verse is *dhīroddhata-nāyaka*, proud and restless. Kalki Bhagavān is the presiding deity of *vīra-rasa*, chivalry.

VERSE 15

śrī-jayadeva-kaver idam uditam udāram
ṣṇu sukha-daṁ śubha-daṁ bhava-sāram
keśava dhṛta-daśa-vidha-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare (11)

O Jagadīśvara! O Śrī Hari! O Keśi-niṣūdana! O You who appear in ten different forms! May You be pleased to hear Śrī Jayadeva's magnanimous prayer of glorification, which bestows both happiness and auspiciousness because it destroys material existence.

Commentary

After glorifying each of the ten *avatāras*, who are the presiding deities of the various *rasas*, the great poet Jayadeva now makes his humble request to the undisputed hero of all *rasas*. “O You who are the embodiment of all ten forms! May You be victorious!”

Sukhada – This poetic eulogy bestows transcendental happiness as soon as one hears it because it immediately removes one’s absorption in anything else.

Śubha-dam – This prayer bestows auspiciousness upon the world because it reveals the mysteries of Your appearance pastimes and it destroys all impediments obscuring the attainment of Paramātmā.

Bhava-sāram – This phrase is an example of a compound in which the middle term has been omitted (*madhya-pada lope samāsa*). The full phrase is *bhava-cchedaka hetu madhye sāram*, “This prayer is the essence of all processes for crossing over the ocean of material existence.”

Jaya – Use of the present tense indicates that all of Bhagavān’s incarnations are eternal and Their pastimes are also eternal. The poet has testified that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *avatāri*, the original cause of all incarnations, all of them manifesting from Him. He is the ultimate reality in all forms, therefore “O complete origin of all *avatāras*, You who are endlessly reveling in Your pastimes, You who attract the hearts of everyone and bestow sublime transcendental happiness upon them, may You be eternally victorious! Your devotee, Jayadeva, is offering this prayer unto You.”

In this verse we find *śānta-rasa* and *paryāyokti-alāṅkāra*.

VERSE 16

vedān uddharate jaganti vahate bhū-golaṃ udbibhrate
 daityaṃ dārayate balim chalayate kṣatra-kṣayaṃ kurvate
 paulastyaṃ jayate halaṃ kalayate kārūṇyaṃ ātanvate
 mlecchān mūrcchayate daśākṛti-kṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṃ namaḥ

Unto the deliverer of the Vedas, the upholder of the world of moving and non-moving living beings, the savior of Bhū-maṇḍala, the slayer of Hiranyakaśipu, the deceiver of Bali, the destroyer of the *kṣatriyas*, the conqueror of Paulastya (Rāvaṇa), the carrier of the plough called Āyudha, the advocate of compassion, and the slayer of the barbarians – unto You who assume these ten transcendental bodies, O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I offer My obeisances.

Commentary

In the ten verses of this first song of Śrī Gīta-govinda, Śrī Jayadeva has depicted the charming pastimes of the *avatāras* of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That Śrī Kṛṣṇa who manifests Himself as the ten *avatāras* has delivered the Vedas in the form of Matsya, upheld the Earth as Kurma, saved Pṛthvī as Varāha, killed Hiranyakaśipu as Nṛsimha, cheated Bali and made him His own as Vāmana, annihilated the wicked *kṣatriyas* as Paraśurāma, chastised the miscreants as Balabhadra, advocated compassion as Buddha and slew the barbarians as Kalki. O Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, O You who assume these ten incarnations, obeisances unto You.

This *Daśāvatāra Stotra* has been included at the very beginning of Śrī Gīta-govinda to establish that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Godhead; He is *avatāri*, the source of all these *avatāras*. Thus, the protagonist in this book is no ordinary person. The hero who engages in the confidential amorous pastimes depicted herein, is not subject to any mundane lusty sentiments. He is completely pure in His every action and beyond all material considerations.

Song One, entitled *Daśavatāra Stotra*, is composed in the meter called *kīrti-dhavalā*. Appropriate *rāgas* include *pārasvara* and *madhyama* in *ādi-tāla*. We also find *vilambitalāya*, *mādhyamī-rīti* and *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. In this way the fame of Vāsudeva Bhagavān has been described.



❧ Song Two ❧

The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga* and the rhythm is *niḥsāra-tāla*. The personification of *gurjarī-rāga* resembles the *śyāmā* heroine. Her body is warm in the cold season and cool in the hot season. Her breasts are extremely firm and her hair is captivating. Simply by the touch of her feet, the *aśoka* tree blossoms out of season. She arrives at a bed that is decorated with soft buds of the best *malaya* sandalwood trees. Coming from the south, she assumes semitones between the scale degrees (*śruti*). The rhythm is *niḥsāra-tāla* with two quick beats (*druta-tāla*) and two light beats (*laghu-tāla*).

VERSE 17

*śrita-kamalā-kuca-maṇḍala dhṛta-kuṇḍala e
kalita-lalita-vanamāla jaya jaya deva hare (1)*

O Deva! O Hari! O You who take shelter of Kamalā Śrī Rādhā's round breasts, O You whose ears are decorated with earrings and who are garlanded with an enchanting wreath of forest flowers, O Hari, may You triumph!

Commentary

In the first song, Kṛṣṇa was described as the subject of everyone's worship. Now Śrī Jayadeva glorifies Him as the exclusive subject of contemplation and meditation.

These prayers reveal Kṛṣṇa's highest excellence as the crest jewel of all heroes because in Him the various moods of a hero – the chivalrous (*dhīrodātta*), the arrogant (*dhīroddhata*), the sober (*dhīra-śānta*) and the romantic (*dhīra-lalita*) *nāyaka* – are perfectly harmonized.

Śrīta-kamalā-kuca-maṇḍala e – the etymology of this phrase is *śrīta-kamalāyāḥ kuca-maṇḍalam yenā 'sau tatsamvukṣai śrīta-kamalā-kuca-maṇḍala*: “Śrī Kṛṣṇa serves Śrī Rādhā's ample breasts.” He is the beloved of Lakṣmī, His dearest goddess of fortune. This line infers that Kṛṣṇa is charmed by this beloved and revels in amorous games; He is carefree, cunning in the arts of love, and expert in joking. The letter ‘e’ is simply a musical embellishment which completes the *rāga*.

Dhṛta-kuṇḍala e (*dhṛte kuṇḍala yena sa tathā tasya sambuddhiḥ*) – “He who wears earrings.” The beauty of His lotus face is further enhanced by those *makara*-shaped earrings³. *Kalita-lalita-vanamāla* – “You have donned an extremely attractive forest-flower garland.” The author of the *Viśvakoṣa* dictionary states:

*āpāda-lambinī mālā
vanamāleti tām viduḥ
patra-puṣpa-mayī mālā
vanamālā prakīrtitā*

“A garland made from leaves and flowers that hangs all the way down to one's feet is called *vanamālā*.”

Thus Kṛṣṇa's fresh youthfulness has been proclaimed by these three descriptive phrases, which also reveal His style of dress – *gopa-veśa veṇu-kara, nava-kiśora naṭa-vara*. “Dressed as a cowherd boy and holding a flute, Kṛṣṇa is an ever fresh youth and the best of dramatic dancers” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 21.101).

3 The *makara* is a sea creature who flies on Cupid's banner.

Hare – O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! By displaying Your astonishing pastimes, You attract the heart and mind – and indeed the vital spirit – of all living beings, thus awakening them to Your supremacy.

Every verse of this song ends with *jaya jaya deva hare*, the refrain, or *dhruva-pada*, which lends unity to the whole song.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is portrayed here as *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka*. This hero is skilled in the erotic arts, ever youthful, humorous, carefree, and submissive to His beloveds.

VERSE 18

*dina-maṇi-maṇḍala-maṇḍana bhava-khaṇḍana e
muni-jana-mānasa-haṁsa jaya jaya deva hare (2)*

O Deva! O Hari! O Ornament of the sun globe, You sever the bondage of material existence. O swan playing in the cool mountain lake (Mānasa Sarovara) of the sages' hearts! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

Dina-maṇi-maṇḍala-maṇḍana! “As the sun is worshipful for everyone, You deserve to be contemplated and adored.” The Vedas enjoin, *dheyah sadā savitr-maṇḍala-madhya-vartī, nārāyaṇaḥ sarasijāsana sanniviṣṭaḥ* – “Śrī Bhagavān resides within the sun planet in the form of the Indwelling Witness (*antaryāmī*). One should remember this during meditation.” Furthermore, it is stated: *jyotir-abhyantare śyāmasundaram atulam*. “The incomparable Śyāmasundara resides within the light.”

Bhava-khaṇḍana e – The qualities of the soul have been described in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.7.1):

*eṣa ātmā 'pahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko
vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ*

“By nature the soul is free from the bondage of actions, old age, death, lamentation, bewilderment, hunger and thirst. All his desires are directed to the Supreme Truth (*satya-kāma*), and all of them come into being (*satya-saṅkalpa*).”

These qualities are concealed as long as one remains materially bound; they manifest when Bhagavān bestows His mercy. Therefore Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been addressed as *bhava-khaṇḍana* – He who dissolves one’s entanglement in material existence.

Muni-jana-mānasa-haṁsa (muni-janānām mānasāni iva mānasāni teṣu haṁsa iva haṁsa): “As the king of swans sports upon Lake Mānasa, You enact Your pastimes upon the minds of the thoughtful sages. An internal vision of Your loving play is continuously revealed to them.” Such equiposed visionaries are tolerant in the face of adversity. They are decorated with all meritorious qualities, especially humility, and thus they fully engage in *bhajana*, the supramundane service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By His mercy the sages become completely detached from material existence.

Deva – Bhagavān is called *deva* because He is replete with divine attributes (*divya-guṇa*). *Jaya* – The use of this verb reveals the poet’s immense reverence for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The hero of this verse is the sober *dhīra-sānta-nāyaka*.

VERSE 19

*kāliya-viṣa-dhara-gaṅjana jana-raṅjana e
yadu-kula-nalina-dineśa jaya jaya deva hare (3)*

O Deva! O Hari! O You who pulverize the pride of the venomous snake Kāliya and fill the hearts of Your dearest

Vrajavāsīs with joy! You are the sun that causes the lotus of the Yadu dynasty to bloom! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

Here the poet offers hymns of praise to his worshipful deity and the object of his meditation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is portrayed as the arrogant hero, *dhīroddhata-nāyaka*.

Kāliya-viṣa-dhara-gaṅjana – Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa crushed the pride of the one hundred-headed venomous serpent Kāliya, who lived in the Yamunā at Kāliya-daha.

Jana-rañjana e – By subduing Kāliya, Bhagavān gave pleasure to the community of Vraja. Śrī Kṛṣṇa knows very well that the Vrajavāsīs do not desire anything but Him. Moreover He thinks, “They cannot even stay alive without Me. Therefore, it is My responsibility to protect and satisfy them.” O You who bring delight to Your people, may You be triumphant!

Yadu-kula-nalina-dineśa – As the lotus blossoms with the rising of the sun, the Yadus flourish when Śrī Bhagavān descends in their dynasty. Actually, the Yādavas are the cowherd community of Vraja. Therefore, the sun Śrī Kṛṣṇa lights up Gokula.

This verse describes Śrī Bhagavān as a powerful individual who enlivens His devotees and who has appeared in a noble family. “O Deva! Kindly crush the vanity of envious egotists such as ourselves, and fill us with pleasure.”

The arrogant hero, *dhīroddhata-nāyaka*, is envious, proud, treacherous, angry, fickle and boastful.

VERSE 20

madhu-mura-naraka-vināśana garuḍāsana e
sura-kula-keli-nidāna jaya jaya deva hare (4)

O Deva! O Hari! O destroyer of the demons Madhu, Mura and Naraka! O You who ride upon Garuḍa! O You who are the original cause of the demigods' delight! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

Madhu-mura-naraka-vināśana – Bhagavān destroys the demons Madhu and Naraka during His residence in Dvārakā. The reference to Mura alludes to His mystical powers of deception. Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibits ninety-six heroic traits while performing His eternal pleasure pastimes in three spiritual realms: Gokula, Mathurā and Dvārakā. His role as the arrogant hero (*dhīroddhata*) is indicated here.

Garuḍāsana e (*garuḍa āsanam yasya tat-sambuddhau*) – Bhagavān is called Garuḍāsana because He accepts the back of Garuḍa, the king of birds, as His throne.

Sura-kula-keli-nidāna – Bhagavān increases the happiness of the demigods by annihilating the demons and He personally engages in blissful amusements with His pure devotees. O Hari! May You be triumphant!

VERSE 21

amala-kamala-dala-locana bhava-mocana e
tri-bhuvana-bhavana-nidhāna jaya jaya deva hare (5)

O Deva! O Hari! O You whose long eyes are just like immaculate lotus petals! O You who free us from the shackles of material existence! O treasure of the three worlds! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

Amala-kamala-dala-locana (*amale ye kamala-dale te iva locane yasyā 'sau tathā vidhaḥ tat sambuddhau*) – “He whose

clear eyes are like the petals of a spotless lotus.” His eyes allay the suffering and steal away the heart, mind and the very life of all, as stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 21.105):

*terache netrānta vāṇa, tāra dṛḍha sandhāna
vindhe rādhā-gopī-gaṇa-mana*

“The powerful arrow of His sidelong glance pierces the hearts of Rādhā and the gopīs.”

Bhava-mocana – Bhagavān delivers His devotees from the endless chain of birth and death and protects all living entities. This reveals His compassion.

Tribhuvana-bhavana-nidhāna – Śrī Hari pervades the three planetary divisions of the universe (*tribhuvana*). He is the treasure house (*nidhi*) within the palace (*bhavana*) of the three worlds; He is the primal cause and the original father.

This verse portrays Kṛṣṇa as the chivalrous hero (*dhīrodātta-nāyaka*), who is characterized by gravity, courtesy, forgiveness, compassion, adherence to one’s vows, modesty in speaking, honesty, and the power to thwart the pride of other heroes. These qualities exist in their fullness only in the Supreme Personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

May You be triumphant!

VERSE 22

*janaka-sutā-kṛta-bhūṣaṇa jita-dūṣaṇa e
samara-śamita-daśakaṅṭha jaya jaya deva hare (6)*

O Deva! O Hari! You decorate Sītā-devī in Your descent as Śrī Rāma. You defeat the demon Dūṣaṇa and You restore peace to the world by killing the ten-headed Rāvaṇa in battle. Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

Janaka-sūtā-kṛta-bhūṣaṇa – “O Deva, as a chivalrous hero, You decorate the daughter of Janaka Mahārāja with Your own hands. Your complexion being dark as freshly grown *dūrvā* grass, You are the ornament of the golden-limbed Sitā. O You who are steadfast in Your vows, may You be triumphant!”

Jita-dūṣaṇa e (jita-dūṣaṇau yenā 'sau) – You killed the cannibal Dūṣaṇa during Your exile in the Daṇḍaka forest. This is why You are called Jita-dūṣaṇa.

Samara-śamita-daśakaṇṭha – The demon king Rāvaṇa was steadfast in battle, belligerent and boastful. Yet You felled and silenced such a powerful warrior. O master of all chivalrous heroes (*dhīrodātta*)! O Hari! May You who are adorned with profound dignity and forgiveness be triumphant!

VERSE 23

abhinava-jaladhara-sundara dhṛta-mandara e
śrī-mukha-candra-cakora jaya jaya deva hare (7)

O Śyāmasundara! You whose complexion is as lustrous as a fresh raincloud! O holder of Mandara Mountain (Girirāja)! O *cakora* bird who incessantly drink the moonlight of the face of the Supreme Goddess of Fortune, Śrī Rādhā! O Hari! O Deva! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

In this song, the poet has presented the pastimes of various incarnations of Bhagavān and here establishes the predominance of the romantic hero (*dhīra-lalita-nāyaka*).

Abhinava-jaladhara sundara – Śrī Bhagavān, with His supremely transcendental, auspicious form, is beautiful like a captivating fresh raincloud.

Dhṛta-mandara – When the Mandara Mountain would not remain steady, You became a tortoise and held it on Your back during the churning of the Milk Ocean. Simultaneously assuming another form, You then assisted the demigods in churning. Alternatively, *dhṛta-mandara* means “You who firmly hold Śrī Rādhā’s bosom,” or it can refer to Govardhana Hill.

Śrī-mukha-candra-cakora – The lotus face of Śrī Rādhā is a constant source of joy for Śrī Bhagavān. Just as a *cakora* bird, in a state of distraction, stares in the direction of the moon with unblinking eyes, similarly Śrī Bhagavān always feels extreme jubilation upon beholding Śrī Rādhā’s enchanting face. Therefore Her lotus face has been compared to the moon. ODeva! O Hari! May You be triumphant!

The phrase *abhinava-jaladhara sundara* sheds light upon Bhagavān’s fresh youthfulness. The word *cakora* indicates that He is subjugated by the affection of His sweethearts. The phrase *dhṛta-mandara*, referring to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of holding the breasts of Śrī Rādhā, reveals His dexterity in amorous play. These three qualities are prominent in the *dhīra-lalita-nāyaka*. O Prabhu, may You be triumphant!

VERSE 24

*tava carāṇe praṇatā vāyam iti bhāvaya e
kuru kuśalam praṇateṣu jaya jaya deva hare (8)*

O Bhagavān! We have surrendered at Your lotus feet. May You confer auspiciousness by blessing us with the gift of *prema-bhakti*. O Deva! O Hari! Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

In this verse the poet beseeches Śrī Kṛṣṇa to mercifully confer auspiciousness upon the hearers and reciters of his poem. “O ocean of auspicious qualities! We bow down

and surrender ourselves at Your lotus feet. Kindly fill our lives with auspiciousness. May you destroy all the sins and sufferings of Your devotees. You and Your pastimes are the embodiment of the highest bliss. May You expand our joy by granting a vision of those pastimes within our hearts.”

VERSE 25

*śrī-jayadeva-kaver idam kurute mudam e
maṅgalam ujjala-gītam jaya jaya deva hare (9)*

O Deva! May this charmingly radiant and melodious *maṅgalācarana* composed by Śrī Jayadeva increase Your happiness. May it bestow bliss upon Your devotees who hear and recite Your glorious qualities. Triumph! Triumph unto You!

Commentary

On completing his eulogy of Bhagavān, Śrī Jayadeva presents this humble supplication: “O Deva, in this auspicious invocation I have taken a vow to sing about *ujjala-rasa* with a description of Your amorous pastimes with Śrī Rādhā. Already turbulent waves of euphoria have begun to rise within my heart. If there is so much bliss in this invocation, then I cannot estimate how much there will be in the actual description itself. May my auspicious song be a source of joy for You both and may it also confer spiritual success upon those who hear and recite it.”

The meter of this song is *maṅgala chanda*.

VERSE 26

*padmā-payodhara-taṭi-parirammbha-lagna
kāśmīra-mudritam uro madhusūdanasya
vyaktānurāgam iva khelad-anaṅga-kheda
svedāmbu-pūram anupūrayatu priyaṁ vaḥ*

Madhusūdana lounges on the slope of Padmā Śrī Rādhikā's breast, His chest marked with Her *kuṅkuma* from Their tight embrace, thus displaying His deep love within. Her *kuṅkuma* blends there with streams of perspiration from Their amorous passion. May His chest decorated thus fulfill our cherished desires.

Commentary

After glorifying his Prabhu in this song, Śrī Jayadeva offers the audience a benediction in this verse.

Padmā-payodhara-taṭī – When Vraja-vilāsī Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraces His dearest beloved, the crimson *kuṅkuma* that covered Her bosom melts, leaving a red mark of passion upon Bhagavān's chest. It is as if the *anurāga*, the overpowering love, for Śrī Rādhā that always colors His heart, is now displayed outwardly, indicating His supreme affection for Her. The words *payodhara-taṭī* indicate that Śrī Rādhā's highly raised breasts are like mountain peaks with a valley in between.

Parirambha-lagna-kāśmīra – The *kuṅkuma* from Rādhā's breasts marking Śrī Kṛṣṇa's chest indicates that They had been immersed in a long, deep embrace.

Mudrita-muro – The image of Rādhā's bosom stamped on Kṛṣṇa's chest is like a seal of approval, which vastly enhances the beauty of His breast. *Aho!* How auspicious is Their overflowing affection for each other!

Vyaktānurāgam iva – The compelling love (*anurāga*) previously hidden within His heart is now outwardly showing its face, clearly coloring His chest and claiming its territory. Thus His heart cannot be smeared by the love of anyone else.

Khelad-anaṅga-kheda-svedāmbu-puram – Śrī Kṛṣṇa's chest, colored with His passion, is covered with perspiration, indicating His exhaustion from prolonged engagement in

Cupid's play (*kandarpa-kīḍā*). In other words, that *kuṅkuma*, moistened by drops of perspiration on Śrī Śyāma's broad chest, is displaying outwardly the *anurāga* dwelling within His heart.

Anupurayatu priyaṃ vaḥ – May Śrī Kṛṣṇa's saffron-colored chest fulfill our most cherished desires by increasing the *prema* in our hearts.

This verse has been sung in *vasanta-rāga*, alluding to Śrī Madhusūdana's nature in springtime. The heroine is *mugdhnāyikā*, the captivated ladylove, and the hero is *kuśala-nāyaka*, the expert lover. Here we find *vasantatilakā-chanda*; the *alaṅkāras* include *āśiḥ*, *utprekṣā* and *anuprāsa*. The *rasa* is *śṛṅgāra*, the amorous mellow.



VERSE 27

*vasante vāsantī-kusuma-sukumārair avayavair
bhramantīm kāntāre bahu-vihita-kṛṣṇānuseraṇām
amandaṃ kandarpa-jvara-janita-cintākulatayā
valad-bādhām rādhām sarasam idam ūce saha-carī*

In the spring, the lovesick Rādhikā, whose tender limbs were soft as *mādhavī* flowers, wandered far and wide in the woods searching for Kṛṣṇa. Cupid tormented Her mind with the fever of love, while Her close friend lovingly spoke to Her to heighten the mood.

Commentary

The great poet Śrī Jayadeva has depicted the pre-eminent virtues of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava by describing Their auspicious and endearing meeting. In that prologue, the lotus of the poet's heart began to bloom. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa sometimes plays

the *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka* (guileless hero who loves more than one lady), *dhr̥ṣṭa-nāyaka* (bold and arrogant hero who denies his intimacies with another even while displaying telltale signs) and *śaṭha-nāyaka* (cheating and underhanded), the *rasika* poet has portrayed Him in Song Two as the *anukūla-nāyaka* (obliging, faithful hero) who finds His full satisfaction only with Śrī Rādhikā. In accordance with *sūcī-kaṭāha-nyāya*, the logic of accomplishing a relatively effortless task prior to attempting a strenuous one, Śrī Śukadeva first demonstrated the excellence of all the *gopīs* before finally establishing the supremacy of Śrī Rādhā. Similarly, Śrī Jayadeva has described the symptoms of eight types of *nāyikās* (heroines), all of which are found in Śrī Rādhā, ultimately to establish Her as the crest jewel of them all.

The eight types of *nāyikās* are (1) *abhisārikā* – a girl going to meet her lover, (2) *vāsakasajjā* – a girl who decorates herself and the love bower in anticipation of receiving her lover, (3) *utkaṇṭhitā* – a girl anxiously longing for her lover, who for some reason is late, (4) *khaṇḍitā* – a girl who becomes jealous seeing the marks on her unfaithful lover, (5) *vipralabdā* – a disappointed girl whose lover never arrives, (6) *kalahāntarītā* – a girl who quarrels with her lover and sends him away, (7) *proṣita-bhartṛkā* – a girl suffering because her lover is living far away, (8) *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* – a domineering girl who controls her lover.

In the current verse Rādhikā is being depicted as *utkaṇṭhitā nāyikā*, a heroine afflicted with anxiety due to separation from her beloved. Bharata Muni has explained the symptoms of this heroine in *Nāṭya-śāstra*, his work on dramatic theory. This heroine is fitful, afflicted with amorous passion and burning with high fever. Her unkempt body trembles, her hairs stand on end, she is repeatedly bewildered, and her speech is impelled by acute feelings of anxious anticipation. In *Śṛṅgāra Tilaka* (1.78) the symptoms of the *virahotkaṇṭhitā-nāyikā* have been described thus:

utkā bhavati sā yasyāḥ
 saṅketam nāgataḥ priyaḥ
 tasyā 'nāgamane hetum
 cintayaty ākulā yathā

“A heroine whose hero does not come to the appointed meeting place at the agreed-upon time is called *virahotkaṅṭhitā-nāyikā*. Carefully pondering the reasons for her beloved’s failure to arrive, she becomes fraught with anxiety.”

The current verse is the foundation for the portrayal of *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*, a lover’s sentiments during separation. The poet narrates an incident during the spring season in which one of Rādhikā’s *sakhīs* says, “O Rādhā, Your body is as soft as a *mādhavī* flower and You have grown weary from wandering in search of Your lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, here in the dense forest full of thorns and sharp grass. Despite Your great endeavor, You have not found Him. Tormented by the arrows of Cupid and burning in a fever of amorous desire, You pine for His association.”

The specific time or season, indicated by the word *vasanta*, springtime, is the stimulant (*uddīpana-vibhāva*) in this verse. The word *calad* (an alternative reading for the word *valad*) is an adjective referring to Rādhā, indicating that She has searched extensively for Kṛṣṇa. Hoping against hope, She thinks, “Perhaps My sweetheart is about to arrive. He may come at any moment now.”

Vāsantī-kusuma-sukumārair avayavaiḥ – “The limbs of Rādhā’s body resemble spring flowers.” The comparison has been made to convey the tenderness of Her youthful beauty. *Vāsantī-kusuma* – The *mādhavī* vine comes into full bloom during the spring season. This phrase indicates that Śrī Rādhā’s limbs are as enchanting and delicate as the flowers of the *mādhavī* vine.

“O Rādhā, it is certain that Your *prāṇa-nātha* Śyāmasundara, who is the very breath of Your life, has forsaken You and now He must be romancing with someone else. On the first autumn night of the *śārādīyā rāsa-līlā*, Śyāmasundara experienced the incomparable sweetness of Your beauty and thus He felt fulfilled, His famous passion for You satisfied. Therefore, sometimes He goes out, scouting around for a few days as if mining for precious stones, just to find out whether or not anyone in all Vraja-maṇḍala is equal to You. To satisfy His curiosity, Yogamāyā inspired Kāmsa to send Akrūra to Nanda Gaon to take Śyāma to Mathurā, the home of multitudes of young ladies. He saw that there was no one in Mathurā-maṇḍala whose beauty and attractive qualities could compare with those of the damsels of Vraja.

“Then Madhusudana set off for Dvārakā, as if impelled by this desire to find Your equal. There He married eight princesses, but His quest was still not complete. Then He married the sixteen thousand princesses who had been kidnapped by Narakāsura. They included celestial maidens (*gandharva-kanyā*), maidens among the attendants of Kuvera (*yakṣa-kanyā*), the daughters of serpents (*nāga-kanyā*) and human damsels (*mānava-kanyā*). But still, O Rādhikā, He could not find anyone like You, so He has returned again to Vraja after killing Dantavakra.”

A discussion about Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s return to Vraja after His long stay in a distant land is found in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*kṛṣṇo ’pi taṁ dantavakraṁ hatvā yamunāmutīrya nanda-
vrajaṁ gatvā sothaṅṭhau pitarau abhivādyāśvāsya tābhyāṁ
sāśru-kaṅṭham āliṅgitaḥ sakala gopa-vṛndān praṇamyāśvāsya
sarvān santarpayām āsa*

“After killing Dantavakra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa crossed the Yamunā and arrived in Vraja. He offered obeisances and consoled

Nanda and Yaśodā, who for so long had been yearning to see Him. They bathed their son in their tears, embraced Him to their hearts and thus pacified their long-lived anguish. After that, Śrī Kṛṣṇa met with all the cowherds and soothed their pain of separation. Finally, He met with the *vraja-gopīs*, who had been sorely missing Him, and relieved their acute affliction.”

In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.9), the residents of Dvārakā say:

*yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān
kurūn madhūn vātha suhṛd-didr̥kṣayā
tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved
ravim vinākṣnor iva nas tavācyuta*

“Kamala-nayana, O lotus-eyed one! When You leave for Kurudeśa and Madhupurī (Vraja-maṇḍala) to meet with Your dear ones, one moment feels like ten million eons. Just as the eyes perceive only darkness in the absence of the sun, without You all four directions seem like a desolate void.”

The joy that the *gopīs* derive from meeting with their beloved in the springtime and the sorrow they feel when distanced from Him are both heart-touching. Śrī Rādhā's *sakhī* is reminding Her of both these conditions.

This verse includes *vaidarbhī-rīti* and *upanāgarikā-vṛtti*. Kedāra Bhaṭṭa defines the meter, *śikhariṇī-chanda*, in his *Vṛttaratnakāra* (3.93) thus: *rasaiḥ rudraiś chinnā ya-ma-na-sa-bha-lā-gaḥ śikhariṇī*. “In the *śikhariṇī* meter each line consists of six combinations, called *ya*, *ma*, *na*, *sa*, *bha* and *laghu-guru* respectively, with a caesura after the eleventh syllable.” The six combinations are: one short, five long, five short, two long, three short, one long.

❧ Song Three ❧

The musical mode is *vasanta-rāga* and the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

*śikhaṇḍa-barhoccaya-baddha-cūḍaḥ
puṣṇan pikaṁ cūta-navāṅkureṇa
bhraman mudā-rāmam anaṅga mūrtir
marto mātaṅgo hi vasanta-rāgaḥ*

The *vasanta-rāga* personified wears a peacock feather upon his head. He nourishes a flock of the finest cuckoos with freshly sprouted mango buds and creepers. His body resembles Kāmadeva and he wanders joyfully like the madly intoxicated king of elephants.

VERSE 28

*lalita-lavaṅga-latā-pariśilana-komala-malaya-samīre
madhukara-nikara-karambita-kokila-kūjita-kuñja-kuṭīre (1)*

*viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante
nṛtyati yuvati-janena samam sakhi virahi-janasya durante
(refrain)*

O Rādhā! Alas, how enchanting springtime is when the Malayan breeze arrives and impetuously embraces the tender clove creepers. The *kuñjas* resound with the sweet *kuhu* sound of the cuckoos and the humming of bees as they bumble to and fro.

Śyāma is blithely enjoying with some fortunate damsels, dancing in a festival of love. O friend, this springtime brings endless agony to the forlorn and lonely-hearted. (refrain)

Commentary

When the trees are infused with new life by the touch of the Malayan breeze, the bumblebees begin to hum with

excitement, attracted by the blossoming jasmines, and the cuckoos begin to coo on finding fresh buds on the mango trees. Appearing like an elephant maddened with lust and wearing a peacock feather in His turban, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mesmerizes the minds of all.

Vasanta-rāga is prominent in springtime. In *yati-tāla* there are three short beats and three fast beats. The word *sakhī* conveys the feeling of intimate friendship.

Sarasa-vasante – the adjective *sarasa* indicates that springtime is relishable and full of astonishing mellows.

Virahi-janasya durante – Deserted lovers pass their time with great difficulty in this provocative spring season. Śrī Hari steals the mind, heart and very life of everyone by His sweet pastimes, so separation from Him at this time becomes all the more painful and intolerable.

Lalita-lavaṅga-latā-pariśilana-komala-malaya-samīre – This phrase describes the specialty of the location. The Malayan breeze was already cool, gentle and fragrant, but it has become even more so by the touch of the elegant clove vines.

Madhukara-nikara-karambita-kokila-kūjita-kuñja-kuṭīre – The etymology of this line is as follows: *madhukarāṇām yo hi nikaras tena karambitāḥ misritāḥ ye kokilāstaiḥ kūjitaḥ yaḥ kuñja kuṭīraḥ tatra* – The dancing takes place in a forest bower alive with the singing of a multitude of bees and cuckoos.

A *sakhī* describes the beauty of the Vṛndāvana spring to the anxious and lonely heroine (*viraha-utkaṅṭhitā*) Śrī Rādhā: “The fragrance of the flowers, the touch of the Malayan breeze, the coolness of the Yamunā’s water, the handsome trees tightly embraced by attractive clove creepers, the burgeoning vines and the tender touch of one’s lover’s limbs – however pleasant the spring season may be when lovers meet, it is equally distressing during separation.

“If an unconscious vine cannot remain without her beloved in the excitement of the romantic season, then how can a fully conscious vine-like woman exist without her lover? Now the drone of the bees and the cooing of the cuckoos are ever more heart-wrenching. When even the minds of great sages are attracted by the fragrance of the *mādhavī* and *belī* flowers, then what to speak of emotionally aroused women?”

As Rādhā’s friend was speaking, she had a momentary inner vision of Mādhava. She continued, “When a mango tree is embraced by a *mādhavī* vine, it blossoms with new buds, just like a man whose hair stands on end when embraced by a beautiful woman. In the same way, today Hari, enchanted by Vṛndāvana’s beautiful riverside forest, dabbles in amour, absorbed in the embrace of fetching young beauties.” Rādhā responded to Her *sakhī*, “Alas! How can I control myself?”

This verse describes the excitants (*uddīpana-vibhāva*) that nourish amorous love in separation (*vipralambha-śṛṅgāra-rasa*).

VERSE 29

*unmada-madana-manoratha-pathika-vadhū-jana-janita-vilāpe
ali-kula-saṅkula-kusuma-samūha-nirākula-bakula-kalāpe
viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (2)*

“My dear friend, when husbands are long absent, lonely wives, excited by Cupid, simply weep continuously. But look! *Mālatī* blossoms crowd upon the branches, while swarms of bumblebees buzz around the abundantly blooming *bakula* flowers.”

And over there Mādhava is romancing and dancing with those other fortunate maidens. (refrain)

Commentary

Painting a picture of the vexatious and impassioning nature of spring, Rādhārānī's *sakhī* tells Her that this season is immensely troublesome for lonely lovers because it incites lust. Heroines whose dearest ones have gone to distant lands pine incessantly, unable to satisfy their inflamed desires. When *bakula* and other flowers spread their fragrance in all directions, swarms of jubilant bumblebees hum as if in a state of intense agitation.

VERSE 30

*mṛgamada-saurabha-rabhasa-vaśamvadanava-dala-māla-tamāle
yuva-jana-hṛdaya-vidāraṇa-manasija-nakha-ruci-kimśuka-jāle
viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (3)*

Adorned with new leaves, the *tamāla* trees delight in diffusing their musk-like fragrance. The flame-like petals of the *palāśa* flowers, exactly resembling Kāmadeva's fingernails, tear at young hearts.

Commentary

All directions are now beautified by the scent of musk flowing from the newly grown *tamāla* leaves. The clusters of fully-blossomed *palāśa* flowers seem like fingernails, Cupid's special weapons for ripping open the hearts of young couples who have been separated.

The purport is that Mādhava's bodily fragrance is enthusing the whole atmosphere, making separation from Him unbearable. For tender maidens especially, such separation is extremely harsh.

VERSE 31

*madana-mahīpati-kanaka-daṇḍa-ruci-keśara-kusuma-vikāse
 milita-sīlimukha-pāṭali-pāṭala-kṛta-smara-tūṇa-vilāse
 viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (4)*

The saffron *nāga-keśara* flowers appear like the golden scepters of the King of Love, and the trumpet (*pāṭali*) flowers surrounded by bumblebees are Kāmadeva's quiver.

Commentary

The blooming *nāga-keśara* flowers exactly resemble the luster of His Majesty King Madana's golden wand. Springtime is like the arrows of the bumblebees' sharp teeth cutting the hearts of lonely lovers.

VERSE 32

*vigalita-lajjita-jagad-avalokana-taruṇa-karuṇa-kṛta-hāse
 virahi-nikṛtana-kunta-mukhākṛti-ketaki-danturitāse
 viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (5)*

The compassionate trees burst into bloom as if laughing at a world gone shameless under the influence of spring. The spiked *ketakī* flowers, brightly blossoming in all directions and gratifying the whole atmosphere, pierce the hearts of forlorn lovers.

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā's companion continues, "Dear *sakhī*, what more can I say? In springtime the lovelorn abandon their shyness and cry in separation from their lovers. Indeed, all the living entities throughout the creation discard their bashfulness. Seeing the world in this condition, the youthful, compassionate trees blossom and scatter their radiant flowers, as if dispersing

the nectar of laughter. They are like young men chuckling, acknowledging the lusty desires in the hearts of torrid women.”

How can compassion and laughter possibly occur simultaneously? When intimate lovers are separated, their condition is very pitiful and they arouse compassion. But by losing their self-composure, they become the objects of laughter. The tips of the blossoming *ketakī* flowers act as lances to pierce the lonely-hearted.

VERSE 33

*mādhavikā-parimala-lalite nava-mālikayāti-sugandhau
muni-manasām api mohana-kāriṇi taruṇākāraṇa-bandhau
viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (6)*

The pollen of the *mādhavikā* flowers mixes with the exquisite aroma of *nava-mālikā* blossoms (*jūhī*), agitating the minds of even great sages, who suddenly become bewildered. This enchanting springtime is the natural friend of the young.

Commentary

“The spring season is charming because the whole atmosphere is fragrant with the delightful aroma of jasmine (*nava-mālikā*) and the pollen of spring flowers (*mādhavī*). If this stimulation arouses lust within the minds of great sages, what can be said of its effect on ordinary men? Even unconscious creepers cannot bear to be without their lovers (the trees) during this provocative season, so how can we conscious maidens, akin to the creepers, tolerate being alone? The buzzing of the bees and the cooing of the cuckoos break the heart; this spring season is the natural friend of the young.”

VERSE 34

*sphurad-atimukta-latā-parirambhaṇa-pulakita-mukulita-cūte
vṛndāvana-vipine parisara-parigata-yamunā-jala-pūte
viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (7)*

Trembling with rapture from the embrace of the restless *mādhavī* vines, the mango trees burst with new buds. Yamunā's pure waters flow nearby where Hari rejoices with lovely damsels in the groves of Vṛndāvana.

Commentary

In springtime, even inert substances become agitated by lust. Impelled by the breeze, the *mādhavī* vine caresses the mango tree, which, thrilled with joy, bursts with new buds. The Yamunā flows nearby, purifying the love arbors of Vṛndāvana where Śrī Hari dallies with beautiful girls.

VERSE 35

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam udayati hari-caraṇa-smṛti-sāram
sarasa-vasanta-samaya-vana-varṇanam anugata-madana-vikāram
viharati harir iha sarasa-vasante... (8)*

Śrī Jayadeva sings of the beauty of the springtime forest suffused with Rādhā's ecstatic transformations of love. May his auspicious *rasa*-laden song, woven together with pangs of love that fill the forest, awaken remembrance of Śrī Hari's lotus feet.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva concludes by defining the specific excellence of this song – an expression of the springtime nourishing *śṅgāra-rasa* in the forest where Kṛṣṇa enjoys romantic escapades. The forest, awakening with signs of passion, is reflecting *utkaṇṭhitā* Rādhā's ecstatic transformations of love

when She is overwhelmed with anxiety in separation from Kṛṣṇa. May this auspicious song, which stimulates powerful remembrance of Śrī Hari's lotus feet, be victorious. May those who are disturbed by lust have the opportunity to hear this song so that their heart disease may be eradicated forever.

In this song Rādhā is a *madhyā-nāyikā*, a heroine who is sometimes mild and shy (*mugdhā*) and at other times severe and bold (*pragalbhā*), and who, because of being subject to these two extreme temperaments, displays the pinnacle of all *rasa*; and Kṛṣṇa is a *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka*, a guileless lover having many sweethearts. The *rasa* is *vipralambha-śṅgāra*. This third song is entitled *Mādhavotsava-kamalākara*, “The Spring Festival Abounding with Lotus-like Beauties.”

VERSE 36

dara-vidalita-mallī-valli-cañcat-parāga
prakaṭita-ṭaṭavāsair vāsayan kānanāni
iha hi dahati cetaḥ ketakī-gandha-bandhuḥ
prasarad-asamabāṇa-prāṇavad-gandhavāhaḥ

O *sakhī*, look! The spring breeze – laden with the fragrance of *ketakī* flowers and spreading throughout the forest a white veil of pollen from the half-opened *mallikā* blossoms – is Kāmadeva's ally, torturing the hearts of deserted lovers.

Commentary

Describing to Śrī Rādhā the arousing effect of the Malayan breeze in springtime, Her *sakhī* tells Her that the gentle wind sets the hearts of lonely lovers on fire. One may ask, “What have they done wrong that they are being punished in this way?” The answer is, “This wind is like Kāmadeva's very breath. They are bosom friends, and just to obey the order of his intimate ally, the wind burns the hearts of the lovelorn.”

In springtime, when the *mallikā* vines begin to blossom, the whole atmosphere is thick with their pollen flying everywhere, and the air is also saturated with the fragrance of the *ketakī*'s aromatic pollen. Laden with these heady scents, the gently moving breeze behaves exactly like Kāmadeva and scorches lonely lovers. Thus it is seen that they are like-minded friends.

This verse, composed in *mālinī-chanda*, contains a combination of *samāsokti*- and *varṇānuprāsa-alāṅkāras*.

VERSE 37

*adyotsaṅga-vasad-bhujāṅga-kavala-kleśād iveśācalaṁ
prāleya-plavanecchayānusarati śrīkhaṇḍa-sailānilaḥ
kiṁ ca snigdha-rasāla-mauli-mukulāny ālokya harṣodayād
unmīlanti kuhūḥ kuhūr iti kalottālāḥ pikānām girāḥ*

“O *sakhī*, I have heard that many snakes live in the Malaya Hills, whose breeze has surely been overwhelmed by their burning poison. It seems that it is now on its way to the Himālayas to cool down in the icy waters there. The cuckoos are loudly singing *kuhu-kuhu* in mellifluous voices, jubilant on seeing the tender and tasty mango buds.”

Commentary

In this verse Rādhā's *sakhī* paints a picture of two intensifiers (*uddīpana*) of *śṛṅgāra-rasa* that stimulate Her *kāma*. “Now it is springtime and the Malayan breeze, burning from the poisonous fumes of the venomous snakes residing in the sandalwood trees of the Malaya Hills, is floating towards the snow-covered Himālayas. It seems to be seeking relief, wanting to enjoy the bliss of the cold mountain air. Now the sap is rising in the trees and they are bursting with buds. The cuckoos, delighted to see the mango blossoms,

loudly sing out, ‘*Kuhu-kuhu.*’ O Rādhā, at such a provocative and exciting time there is no reason for You to feel inhibited before Mādhava.”

This verse includes *anuprāsa-* and *upamā-alañkāras*, *vaidarbhī-rīti* and *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*. The *sthāyībhāva*, or permanent emotion, is the amorous mellow (*śṛṅgāra-rati*) in separation.

VERSE 38

*unmīlan-madhu-gandha-lubdha-madhupa-vyādhūta-cūtānkura
krīḍat-kokila-kākalī-kalakalair udgīṛṇa-karṇa-jvarāḥ
nīyante pathikaiḥ katham katham api dhyānāvadhāna-kṣaṇa
prāpta-prāṇasamā-samāgama-rasollāsair amī vāsarāḥ*

“O *sakhī*, look! The sweet *kuhu-kuhu* of cuckoos sporting in the tender mango sprouts combines with the drone of the greedy bees obsessed with the blossoming flowers’ fragrant honey. This clamor raises fever in the ears of lonely wayfarers pining in separation, who, for a moment’s happiness, spend their pain-filled spring days contemplating the delightful dalliance they had enjoyed with beloveds dear as their lives.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā’s *sakhī* admits that separation is extremely difficult to tolerate. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is absent, the Malayan breeze simply inflicts pain. Furthermore, the sweet murmuring of cuckoos sitting in the mango trees reverberates in all directions, and stirs feelings of deep regret in the hearts of deserted lovers. The cooing of these playful birds causes an outbreak of high fever in their ears. The cuckoos’ voices remind them of their lovers, who are as dear to them as life itself, and for a moment, as they meditate on their faces, they feel as if they have united with them. These painful times are troublesome.

The current verse contains *kāvya-linga-alankāra*, *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *gauḍiyā-rīti* and *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Plural usage of the word *vāsarāḥ*, the spring days, is most appropriate.



VERSE 39

aneka-nārī-parirambha-sambhrama
sphuran-manohāri-vilāsa-lālasam
murārim ārād upadarśayanty asau
sakhī samakṣam punar āha rādhikām

Śrī Rādhikā's *sakhī* cleverly searched out Śrī Kṛṣṇa and discovered Him nearby, delighting in the enthusiastic embraces of the lovable cowherd damsels, who were receiving Him with the utmost respect. Attracted by their advances, Murāri became eager to enjoy love play. Drawing Rādhā's attention to this scene from a hidden place, Her *sakhī* spoke to Her again.

Commentary

The poet has described Śrī Rādhā's intensely inflamed emotions through a vivid description of the beauty of the forest. Her *sakhī* directly reveals Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intentions by saying, "Sakhī, look! See what Murāri is doing now." He was being embraced by so many tender maidens, but they never fully satisfied Him. In the end, He was overwhelmed with an intense eagerness to meet with the more captivating Śrī Rādhā and enjoy with Her.

The meter of this verse is *vamśasthavila*, the *alankāra* is *anuprāsa* and the hero is *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka*, the guileless lover having many sweethearts.

❁ Song Four ❁

The musical mode is *rāmakarī-rāga* and the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 40

candana-carcita-nīla-kalevara-pīta-vasana-vanamālī
keli-calan-maṇi-kunḍala-maṇḍita-gaṇḍa-yuga-smīta-śālī (1)

harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare
vilāsini vilasati keli-pare (refrain)

“His golden garment and wreath of wild flowers contrast His dark limbs besmeared with sandalwood paste. Jeweled earrings dangling from His ears make His cheeks glitter, setting off the bewitching smile on His face.

“*He vilāsini Śrī Rādhe!* O coquettish girl, look! Hari joyously revels with a host of love-maddened maidens here in the forest.” (refrain)

Commentary

The *rāga* of this song is *rāmakarī* and the *tāla* is *jhampā*. According to the author of *Rasa-mañjarī*, the *tāla* is *rūpaka*.

When a heroine dresses in blue cloth and adorns herself with golden ornaments, thus resembling the morning sky, and when she impetuously becomes highly indignant towards her beloved, the hero will sit at her feet and placate her. The *rāga* employed to capture this moment is called *rāmakarī*.

Fully absorbed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa sweetly laughs and jokes as He takes delight in dallying with a crowd of alluring young brides. Not far from there, Śrī Rādhā, along with Her *sakhī*, observes Him and, as She watches Him enjoying Himself, an intense yearning to engage in amour with Him suddenly

awakens in Her mind. Therefore, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraced one beautiful *vraja-gopī* in a solitary *kuñja*, a *sphūrti* of Rādhā manifested in His heart.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are eternal, and therefore they are also perceptible. In separation there are three prominent ways in which they are beheld: remembrance (*smaraṇa*), an internal vision (*sphūrti*) and direct appearance (*āvirbhāva*). This particular pastime is punctuated with a *sphūrti*, which, albeit brief, profoundly affects the course of events.

The word *mugdha* can mean 'innocent, lovesick heroine' and also 'beautiful.' Both meanings are intended in this context. The word *vilāsa* refers to an ecstatic emotional ornament characterized by *bhāva* (the first stirring of passion) and *hāva* (subsequent provocative gestures). As stated by Bharata Muni in *Nāṭya-śāstra*:

*sthāne yānāsane vāpi
netra vaktrādi karmaṇā
utpādyate viśeṣo yaḥ
sa-vilāsaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*

“Enchanting bodily postures and expressions of the eyes and face while moving, sitting or walking are called *vilāsa*.”

The word *smīta* indicates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is smiling. Mild laughter is also called *smīta*. In the words of Bharata Muni:

*īṣad vikasitair gaṇḍaiḥ
kaṭākṣaiḥ sauṣṭhavānvitaiḥ
alākṣita dvijaṃ dhīram
uttamānām smītaṃ bhavet*

“*Smīta* occurs when a person who is smiling does not show his teeth. His cheeks are sure to blossom slightly as he casts a charming sidelong glance.”

VERSE 41

*pīna-payodhara-bhāra-bhareṇa hariṁ parirabhya sa-rāgam
gopa-vadhūr anugāyati kācid udañcita-pañcama-rāgam
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (2)*

“One *gopī*, passionately embracing Hari and crushing Him with the weight of her heavy breasts, is singing with Him in the fifth note.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā's *sakhī* is relaying an eye-witness account of the *gopīs'* activities with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are unfolding. “O Rādhā, Your love play with Hari is unequalled and unsurpassed. He is being fervently embraced by one proud and buxom *gopī*, but this is just a dim reflection of His pastimes with You. Indeed, how can these beautiful damsels possibly be compared with You? Now He is singing in the fifth *rāga* and she responds by echoing His song.”

By describing the *gopī* as being full bosomed, Rādhā's *sakhī* is implying that the *gopī* is stunningly beautiful. “It appears that Hari is not very skilled. He is not even attempting to embrace this *gopī*; therefore she is taking the lead in embracing Him. This secret amorous exchange may be sweet, but in Your absence how can it really excel? Śṛṅgāra-rasa is fully nourished when mutual embracing occurs and that is only possible with You, Rādhā. Look at how Śyāmasundara is attempting to enjoy with others, even though You are the one who constantly occupies His mind.”

Pañcama-rāga, the fifth musical mode, is usually sung to accompany *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Bharata Muni has also stated:

*pañcamam madhya bhūyiṣṭham
hāsya śṅgārayor bhavet*

“Pañcama-rāga in madhya-tāla is predominant in hāsya- and śṅgāra-rasa.”

VERSE 42

*kāpi vilāsa-vilola-vilocana-khelana-janita-manojam
dhyāyati mugdha-vadhūr adhikam madhusūdana-vadana-sarojam
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (3)*

“Another beautiful damsel, aroused by Madhusūdana’s crooked glances sparkling with passion, drinks with her eyes the honey of His pleasing lotus face. Then she lapses into intent meditation on His beauty.”

Commentary

Describing an enchanted heroine (*mugdhā nāyikā*), Śrī Rādhā’s *sakhī* says, “This *gopī* is meditating on Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face. As Śyāmasundara revels in amorous play, His restless eyes display suggestive expressions. He spontaneously arouses desire in the hearts of impassioned maidens with His inviting glances, and thus feels immense bliss within the core of His heart.”

The *mugdhā-nāyikā* is very shy, therefore her amatory endeavors are inhibited by social conventions.

VERSE 43

*kāpi kapola-tale militā lapitum kim api śruti-mūle
cāru cucumba nitambavatī dayitam pulakair anukūle
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (4)*

“One full-hipped beauty is bending forward pretending to whisper a secret in the ear of her beloved, causing His

hairs to bristle. Seeing His rapture, that romantic maiden seizes this cherished opportunity to kiss His cheek.”

Commentary

The word *nitambavatī* – a woman with shapely hips – has been used to convey the mature heroine’s exquisite beauty. It is improper to kiss one’s beloved in the presence of one’s friends. Therefore, on the pretext of telling Śrī Kṛṣṇa something, she kissed the edge of His cheek. This shows the heroine’s expertise in loving affairs (*śṛṅgāra-vaidagdhya*). Here Kṛṣṇa is *anukūla-nāyaka*, the obliging hero.

VERSE 44

*keli-kalā-kutukena ca kācid amuṁ yamunā-jala-kūle
mañjula-vañjula-kuñja-gataṁ vicakarṣa kareṇa dukūle
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (5)*

“Another *gopī* discovered herself alone with Hari by a charming, secluded *vetasī-kuñja* on the bank of the Yamunā. Eager for enjoying amatory arts, she caught hold of His yellow cloth and pulled Him in.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā’s friend is describing a temperamental heroine, the *adhīrā-nāyikā*. “When Madhusūdana came to the charming vine-covered bamboo *kuñja* on the bank of the Yamunā, this *adhīrā-nāyikā*, deeply desiring to delight in erotic arts, tugged at His cloth and brought Him inside.”

The word *ca* (and) implies that she began to joke with Kṛṣṇa in various ways upon noticing a place that afforded complete privacy. The words *yamunā-tīre* – on the bank of the Yamunā – have not been used. Rather, the phrase *yamunā-jala-tīre* has been employed to indicate that the river bank is cool and pure like water (*jala*).

Pulling Kṛṣṇa away by his cloth when He shows signs of being attracted to another maiden is typical of the temperamental ladylove (*adhīrā-nāyikā*).

VERSE 45

*kara-tala-tāla-tarala-valayāvali-kalita-kalasvana-vaṁśe
rāsa-rase saha-nṛtya-parā hariṇā yuvatīḥ praśāśamse
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (6)*

“Hari praises one youthful beauty intoxicated from dancing in the ecstasy of the *rāsa*, her clapping hands and tinkling bangles echoing His flute’s sweet notes.”

Commentary

Our *sakhī* tells Śrī Rādhā that while dancing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *rāsa-līlā* another damsel is expertly clapping her hands in perfect rhythm and tone. Thus her bangles collide, making a sweet jingle that complements the sound of the flute. Hearing this astonishingly sweet duet, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly applauds this attractive temptress.

VERSE 46

*śliṣyati kām api cumbati kām api kām api ramayati rāmām
paśyati sa-smīta-cārutarām aparām anugacchati vāmām
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (7)*

“Driven by His craving for *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, one *gopī* He embraces, another He kisses, yet another He fervidly caresses. Another captures His expectant gaze with her suggestive smiles, and still another leaves in a huff, inducing Him to run after her.”

Commentary

During *rāsa-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumes many forms and dallies with the beautiful damsels who are ready for romance.

Overwhelmed with desire for erotic joy, He embraces one inflamed girl, kisses another, He strolls along with another, and He thirstily gazes upon yet another ravishing beauty. One especially lovely maiden He accidentally addresses, ‘O Rādhā,’ becoming indignant she runs off in a huff. Anxious for her love, Śrī Kṛṣṇa follows her, attempting to convince her to return. When that sulky *gopī* refuses His advances, He tries to soften her anger with humble requests for conciliation.

This verse portrays Kṛṣṇa as the *śaṭha nāyaka* (the cheating lover), *dhṛṣṭa* (the bold and arrogant lover), *dakṣiṇa* (the expert lover) and *anukūla* (the obliging hero). The heroines are all *abhisārikā-nāyikās*, happy to meet their lover.

The symptoms of *dhṛṣṭa-nāyaka* have been defined in *Śṛṅgāra-tilaka* (1.17) and also in *Ujjvala-nilamaṇī* (1.40):

abhivyaktānya taruṇī
bhoga-lakṣmāpi nirbhayaḥ
mithyā-vacana dakṣas ca
dhṛṣṭo ’yaṁ khalu kathyate

“Although the signs of lovemaking with another vibrant maiden are clearly visible on his person, the audacious hero expertly and fearlessly concocts a deceitful alibi. He is called a *dhṛṣṭa-nāyaka*.”

The symptoms of the *śaṭha-nāyaka* have been described thus:

priyaṁ vyakti puro ’nyatra
vipriyaṁ kurute bhṛṣam
nigūḍham aparādham ca
śaṭho ’yaṁ kathito budhaiḥ

(Śṛṅgāra-tilaka 1.18 and
 Ujjvala-nilamaṇī 1.39)

“Learned authorities state that the *śaṭha-nāyaka* conceals his infidelity to his avowed sweetheart, speaking sweet words to her, all the while remaining covertly attached to another.”

VERSE 47

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam adbhuta-keśava-keli-rahasyam
vṛndāvana-vipine lalitam vitanotu śubhāni yaśasyam
harir iha mugdha-vadhū-nikare... (8)*

May Śrī Jayadeva’s delightful song describing the astonishing mystery of Śrī Keśava’s amorous play in the bowers of Vṛndāvana, bestow auspiciousness on all.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva concludes by describing the mystery of Śrī Keśava’s astonishing romantic escapades. The wonderful secret is that one Kṛṣṇa revels with many sublime maidens at once and fulfills all their cherished desires simultaneously. This song is very appealing due to its description of Śrī Keśava’s secret practice of the amorous arts, which causes Śrī Rādhā to lament as She witnesses Him in action. Its charm is further increased because of its exact adherence to the rigors of *rāga* and *tāla*. May this melodious song, which extends the excellence emanating from those forest pastimes, confer auspiciousness and increase the virtue of those who recite and hear it.

VERSE 48

*viśveṣām anurañjanena janayann ānandam indīvaraśreṇī-
śyāmala-komalair upanayann aṅgair anaṅgotsavam
svacchandaṁ vraja-sundarībhir abhitaḥ praty-aṅgam āliṅgitaḥ
śṅgāraḥ sakhi mūrtimān iva madhau mugdho hariḥ kṛḍati*

“O *sakhī*, Hari, whose soft, dark limbs surpass the beauty of a blue lotus, begins the festival of love. Intoxicated by the *rasa* of romantic springtime encounters, He plays like erotic mood incarnate. With intense fervor, He is satisfying the *gopīs*’ unbridled passion far beyond their expectations. The beautiful cowherd maidens, aroused into a wild, blissful state, embrace His every limb without restraint.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā’s friend says, “*Sakhī*, look!” as she points out the amorous activities of their cherished Hari with the intention of stimulating Her passion. “It is springtime. Not only that, it is the month of Madhu, and Hari is lost in enjoying love play with all the *gopīs* as if He were Cupid himself.”

Śṛṅgāraḥ sakhīḥ mūrtimān iva – The *sakhī* reveals Kṛṣṇa as erotic euphoria personified as He meets with His beloveds, who are inflamed with desire. *Puruṣaḥ pramadā-yuktaḥ śṛṅgāra itī samjñitaḥ* – “A man delighting with a highly aroused woman is called *śṛṅgāra*.” Kṛṣṇa is satisfying the *gopīs*’ coveted ambitions far beyond their expectations and intensifying their happiness in a festival of Eros. That Śrī Hari, through His ever increasing love for the cowherd maidens, is bestowing bliss upon all living entities.

The *sakhī* describes Kṛṣṇa’s elegant limbs as darker and softer than a blue lotus. The word *indīvara*, blue lotus, conveys the sense of darkness, softness and refreshing coolness; the word *śreṇī* indicates freshness that appears newer at every moment; and the word *śyāmala* implies handsome tender youthfulness. Such a Kṛṣṇa – *śṛṅgāraḥ-mūrtimān*, the shelter of unparalleled beauty and the indisputable master of erotic enjoyment – is celebrating a festival of transcendental

amorous love. And in response the attractive *vraja-gopīs* are freely and spontaneously embracing each and every limb of His body.

Rasa emerges from the combination of two elements, namely, the hero's *anurāga* for his ladylove and the heroine's *anurāga* for her sweetheart. The hero and heroine must experience mutual attraction for *rasa* to swell to its fullest form.

Here we indeed find *paraspara-anurañjana*, the act of pleasing each other, so *rasa* will certainly manifest. It begins with the integration of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika* and *sañcārī-bhāvas*.⁴ As *rasa* flourishes with the maturity of *prema*, it escalates sequentially through the stages of *sneha*, *māna*, *pranaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. When *prema-rasa* begins to emerge, the hero and heroine feel no inhibitions regarding their actions, the place or the time. Despite the absence of any restriction, the act of love, involving the complete union of every limb, still does not reach its pinnacle until *mahābhāva* is achieved, evincing the fullest expression of *prema-rasa*. At this stage the *nāyaka* and *nāyikā* are overwhelmed in astonishment, which is the life and soul and very essence of *rasa*. As their external and internal senses become fully mesmerized by the newer and newer emotions they are relishing, they lose awareness of everything else.

4 *Vibhāva* – excitants that cause the appearance of *kṛṣṇa-rati*; *anubhāva* – twelve subordinate bodily symptoms of ecstasy, including dancing, rolling on the ground and crying loudly; *sāttvika* – eight transformations in the body such as tears, horripilation and trembling, arising from the internal disturbance of the heart and *prāṇa*; *sañcārī-bhāvas* – thirty-three overwhelming transitory emotions such as indifference, happiness and jealousy. These are the four ingredients of *bhāva*, which are relished independently of one another upon their appearance.

As Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Southern Quadrant, Fifth wave, verse 132):

vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma
yaś camatkāra-bhāra-bhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bādham
svadate sa raso mataḥ

“[In the stage of distinguishing the constituent *bhāvas* being surpassed,] that ecstasy which becomes even more intensely relishable in the heart resplendent with *śuddha-sattva* (pure existential goodness coming with the attainment of *bhāva*), which transcends the platform of thought, and which becomes even more astonishing in bliss than *bhāva* – such rapture is called *rasa*.”

A doubt may come. Śrī Kṛṣṇa beheld those voluptuous maidens from one direction, thus His experience of them was not complete. This point is refuted by the phrase *praty-aṅgam āliṅgita* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa has satisfied all *gopīs* by contact with each and every limb, by embracing, kissing, touching and other appropriate activities. One might further query, “How could one single Kṛṣṇa have embraced all of them?” The answer is that Kāmadeva is one, yet he pervades the entire creation. Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is one and also all-pervading. By virtue of this attribute, He is competent to delight the whole universe.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes this verse in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Western Quadrant, Fifth Wave, verse 5) as an example of *ālambana-vibhāva* in *madhura-bhakti-rasa*.

The current verse includes *dīpaka-alāṅkāra*, *vaidarbhī-rīti*, *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *śṛṅgāra-rasa* and *vākyaucitya*. The heroine of the song, Rādhā, is *utkaṅṭhitā-nāyikā*, who remains in the anxiety of separation and worries when Her hero fails to come.

VERSE 49

*rāsollāsa-bhareṇa vibhrama-bhṛtām ābhīra-vāma-bhruvām
 abhyarṇaṁ parirabhya nirbharam uraḥ premāndhayā rādhayā
 sādhu tvad-vadanam sudhā-mayam iti vyāhṛtya gīta-stutivyājād
 udbhāṭa-cumbitaḥ smita-manohārī hariḥ pātu vah*

Blinded by love, the bewildered Śrī Rādhā lost all sense of decorum. Before all the enchanting *gopīs* drowning in *prema* in the *rāsa-līlā*, She tightly embraced Śrī Kṛṣṇa's chest and kissed Him deep, exclaiming, "Ahā nātha, O possessor of My life! Sweet indeed is Your face, sweet as nectar." Her driving love spontaneously filled His heart with rhapsody, bringing a charming smile to His lotus face. May that Śrī Hari bestow auspiciousness upon all.

Commentary

This is the final verse of Act One, entitled *Sāmoda-Dāmodara*, "Dāmodara Delighted." After painting a picture of the *vasanti* (spring) night, the *sakhī* is reminding Rādhā of a previous romantic encounter with Śrī Kṛṣṇa during the *śārādīyā-rāsa* in the autumn. Kṛṣṇa was immersed in a festival of amour, enjoying amidst a host of cowherd damsels, who were shooting crooked glances at Him. At first Rādhā was anxious, feeling separation, but through Her friend's encouragement She was suddenly overwhelmed with passion. Now blinded by Her *prema*, She lost Her shyness. On the pretext of sweetly singing Kṛṣṇa's praises, She brazenly clasped His chest in a tight embrace and kissed Him directly in front of all the other *gopīs*.

When Rādhā freely exhibited Her ecstatic emotions before all the sublimely beautiful cowherd maidens, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's face expressed the utmost delight. He was completely smitten by the amorous expertise of Śrī Rādhikā, who was

blinded with love, being maddened with the joy of the festival. May that bewitched Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestow auspiciousness upon all.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nilamaṇi* (13.20.2) to illustrate *cāpalya-saṅcari-bhāva*, restlessness or light-headedness caused by overwhelming amorous attachment (*rāga*).

In this verse the *nāyikā* is *pragalbhā*, impudent and bold, and the *nāyaka* is *mugdha*, enchanted. The *chanda* is *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*. The *alankāras* include *āśīḥ*, *aprastuta*, *praśamsā* and *vyājokti*.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT ONE
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED SĀMODA-DĀMODARA,
“DĀMODARA DELIGHTED.”



Act Two

AKLEŚA-KEŚAVAḤ – CAREFREE KEŚAVA

VERSE 1

*viharati vane rādhā sādhāraṇa-praṇaye harau
vigalita-nijotkarṣād īrṣyā-vaśena gatānyataḥ
kvacid api latā-kuñje guñjan-madhu-vrata-maṇḍalī-
mukhara-śikhare līnā dīnāpy uvāca rahaḥ sachem*

Overlooking Śrī Rādhā's eminence, Hari dallied in the forest with all the cowherd maidens. Feeling neglected and driven away by jealousy, She retreated to a secluded vine-covered bower that resounded with the drone of bumblebees. Despondent, She poured out Her secret agony to Her friend.

Commentary

Act Two is entitled *Akleśa-keśava*. The purport is that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ultimate connoisseur of *rasa*, is eternally free from distress. He never has to undergo even the slightest pain. Bhagavān has two uncommon characteristics:

(1) *Akhila-heya-pratyānikatva* – Being beyond all material imperfections, He has no connection with any type of painful misfortune or calamity. He is *pratyānika*, the formidable foe of all defects. In this regard, the author of *Yoga-sūtra* has also stated, *kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ*. “A person who has no relationship with defects such as ignorance, false egotism, attachment, aversion, fear of death, or reactive work and its consequences is called *īśvara* (master).” (*Yoga-sūtra* 1.24)

(2) *Akhila kalyāṇa guṇākaratva* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the benefactor of the entire creation and a mine of supernatural virtues.

Śrī Rādhā is prone to temperamental behavior. Her *sakhī* informed Her of Keśava's whereabouts, and She entered His great festival of love. When She saw Him expressing equal affection to all the cowherd maidens, She proudly thought, "I am the love of His life and His constant companion, yet today He is not showing partiality to Me." Running off in a huff, She entered a distant vine-covered grove whose flowers had attracted a swarm of humming bees. Even there, still seething with jealousy, She could find no peace. To relieve Her pain, She confided Her most private feelings to Her companion, Her voice covered by the drone of the bees. The word *api* strongly emphasizes that Rādhā was in such a condition that She was barely able to speak. Furthermore, She never discloses secrets. Thus the word *api*, meaning 'nevertheless,' conveys the sense of utter amazement that she would do so.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Western Quadrant, Fifth Wave, verse 29) to illustrate *māna*, jealous anger.

The meter of this verse is *hariṇī* which is defined as *rasayuga hayair n-sau m-rau s-lau go yadā hariṇī tadā*. "Hariṇī meter is as follows: short, short, short, short, short, long, long, long, long, long, short, long, short, short, long, short, long, and there are caesuras on the sixth, tenth and seventeenth syllables." The heroine is *prauḍhā-nāyikā*, the mature heroine who is proud and impetuous. The literary ornaments include *anuprāsa-alāṅkāra*. *Rasavad-alāṅkāra* is present due to profuse *rati-bhāva*. The present verse is a preface to the Fifth Song, which begins with the next verse.

❧ Song Five ❧

[The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga* and the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.]

VERSE 2

*sañcarad-adhara-sudhā-madhura-dhvani-mukharita-mohana-varṁsam
valita-dṛg-añcala-cañcala-maulikapola-vilola-vataṁsam* (1)

rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam

smarati mano mama kṛta-parihāsam (refrain)

“*Sakhī!* How astonishing it is that in this *rāsa* festival, Madhuripu has abandoned Me and He is roguishly amusing Himself with other alluring girls. Despite this, again and again I remember Him in My heart. He fills the flute resting in His lotus hands with the nectar of His lips, nectar that streams forth as a sweet suggestive melody. When He glances flirtatiously from the corners of His eyes, His jeweled headdress quivers as His earrings swing against His cheeks.

“Over and over I remember Hari’s attractive dark complexion, His laughter and His amusing behavior.” (refrain)

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā’s *sakhī* said, “Dear Rādhikā, Hari has neglected You, so why do You still love Him so much that You are losing Your composure?”

Hearing the reproaches of Her *sakhī*, Śrī Rādhā replied in a mood of extreme self-abasement. “*Sakhī*, what you say is true. Hari has renounced Me and with gay abandon is now passionately enjoying Himself with some other comely maidens. I know it is futile for Me to show My love for Him,

but what am I to do? Memories of His tender, lighthearted dalliances with Me are alive in My heart. O *sakhī*! This is the very grove where We previously relished the joy of intense love. I am so attached to Him that I cannot forsake Him. My mind continues to dwell on His merits. My heart cannot even imagine the slightest fault in Him, and I am always satisfied with Him.

“When Śyāmasundara laughs and jokes with the beautiful *gopīs* of Vraja on the night of the *rāsa-līlā*, He fills the flute in His lotus hands with an enchanting sound produced from the sweet nectar of His lips.” Thus Rādhikā begins Her song of separation – *sañcarad-adhara-sudhā-madhura-dhvani-mukharita*. The etymology of this phrase is *sañcarantyā adhara-sudhayā madhuro dhvani yatra tad yathā syād tathā mukharitā mohinī vaṁsī yena tam*. “He plays His flute, bringing forth a mellifluous sound from the nectar of His lips. The enchanting influence of that legendary sound makes My mind unsteady, robbing Me of My composure. The very moment I remember the beauty of His limbs, the restless ornament on His head, His swinging earrings, and especially the way He embraces and kisses the youthful *gopīs*, I lose my sense of propriety. O *sakhī*, what am I to do?”

VERSE 3

*candraka-cāru-mayūra-śikhaṇḍaka-maṇḍala-valayita-keśam
pracura-purandara-dhanur-anurañjita-medura-mudira-suveśam
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam (2)*

“His hair is adorned with a superbly charming array of peacock feathers fashioned in a striking half-moon design. His luster resembles a mass of refreshing rainclouds colorfully shot through by an unending succession of brilliant rainbows. These especially vivid images of Hari constantly possess Me.”

Commentary

The circular pattern at the end of a peacock feather is called *candraka*, and like the moon, *candramā*, it also bestows joy. “Hari’s hair is encircled in the sweetest way with peacock feathers and His dark hue gives the impression of a fresh cloud decorated with many rainbows. The vision of His lovely, radiant figure constantly appears within My mind.”

VERSE 4

*gopa-kadamba-nitambavatī-mukha-cumbana-lambhita-lobham
bandhujīva-madhurādhara-pallavam ullasita-smīta-śobham
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam... (3)*

“In the festival of Anaṅga He leans forward, desiring to kiss the lotus faces of the cowherd girls. His tender lips are of an enchanting soft reddish color like the bud of a *bandhuka* flower, and the unprecedented luster of His mild smile spreads across His handsome face. The vision of this very Hari constantly appears within My mind.”

Commentary

“My mind is being invaded by memories of Hari greedy to kiss the faces of the newly-married *gopīs*. Absorbed in secret love play in the *kuñjas*, He becomes more and more excited to repeatedly kiss them. The remembrance of His red lips, bright as a scarlet *bandhuka* flower, spontaneously awakens within My mind. *Sakhī*, when He smiles, He becomes even more handsome.”

VERSE 5

*vipula-pulaka-bhuja-pallava-valayita-ballava-yuvati-sahasram
kara-caraṇorasi maṇi-gaṇa-bhūṣaṇa-kiraṇa-vibhinna-tamisram
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam... (4)*

“The hairs on Hari’s entire body rise up in joy when, with His arms as delicate as new blossoms, He tightly embraces thousands upon thousands of youthful *gopīs*. The rays of light emitted by the jeweled ornaments on His hands, feet and chest illuminate all directions. I cannot help thinking about Him.”

Commentary

“I am remembering Śyāmasundara’s arms, soft as newly sprouted leaves and horripilating in intense rapture. He puts His arms around thousands of *gopīs* and closely embraces them. All darkness is dispelled by the rays of beauty emanating from the ornaments on His hands, feet and chest.”

VERSE 6

*jalada-paṭala-valad-indu-vinindaka-candana-tilaka-lalātam
pīna-payodhara-parisara-mardana-nirdaya-hṛdaya-kavātam
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam... (5)*

“The captivating sandal paste *tilaka* embellishing His forehead defeats the loveliness of a fickle moon amidst a thick bank of fresh rainclouds. With His broad chest firm as a door, that cruel-hearted fellow is ever fond of inflicting pain upon the full breasts of the young brides. These very images of Hari constantly occupy My mind.”

Commentary

“The beauty of the restless moon amidst water-laden clouds is a spectacle to behold. The dark hue of Hari’s broad forehead resembles a fresh raincloud, upon which His white sandal paste *tilaka* puts to shame even the pleasing effect of brilliant moonbeams. I vividly remember how at the time of their amorous union Śyāmasundara, with His broad chest, so mercilessly crushes the tender breasts of the young girls.”

VERSE 7

*maṇimaya-makara-manohara-kundala-mañḍita-gaṇḍam udāram
pīta-vasanam anugata-muni-manuja-surāsura-vara-parivāram
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam...* (6)

“The beauty of His cheeks is enhanced by His enchanting, jewel-studded *makara* earrings. Madhuripu, attired in yellow, attracts a retinue of gods, demons, sages and humans. Memories of that Hari forcefully come to Me.”

Commentary

“Madhuripu’s ears are adorned with dangling *makara* earrings (shaped like Cupid’s aquatic emblem) that enhance the beauty of His cheeks. He is a *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka*, the compliant lover who generously fulfills the deepest yearnings of His desire-filled sweethearts. Dressed in yellow, He diffuses His sweetness and saturates with *prema-rasa* the best of His followers, including Nārada among the sages, Bhīṣma among the humans, Prahlāda among the demons, and Indra among the demigods. I cannot forget him.”

VERSE 8

*viśada-kadamba-tale militam kali-kaluṣa-bhayam śamayantam
mām api kim api taraṅgad-anaṅga-dṛśā manasā ramayantam
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam...* (7)

“Arriving beneath an expansive *kadamba* tree in full bloom, He would wait for Me and glance around in anticipation. When We would meet, He would fully dispel all My fears of separation by reassuring Me with clever and flattering words. With ravishing glances emitting waves of longing, He would revel in loving pastimes with Me which are still alive in My heart of hearts. I become more and more restless remembering that Hari.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā says, “O *sakhī*, He would eagerly wait for Me at the appointed meeting place beneath a vast *kadamba* tree. Whenever we had a lovers’ quarrel, fearing Our separation He would appease Me with ingenious flattering words. With His *rasa*-laden glances and impassioned heart He ever delighted Me.”

Mām api – “He still makes Me happy.” The implication is, “My beloved Śyāma’s endeavors to appease Me are so delightful that just remembering Him doing this, I feel unbounded rapture.”

VERSE 9

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam ati-sundara-mohana-madhuripu-rūpam
hari-carāṇa-smaraṇam prati samprati puṇyavatām anurūpam
rāse harim iha vihita-vilāsam...* (8)

Describing Madhuripu’s spell-binding beauty, Śrī Jayadeva has composed this lyrical song – the very embodiment of remembrance of Śrī Hari’s lotus feet – for those fortunate persons devoted to serving Bhagavān.

Commentary

Concluding the Fifth Song, Śrī Jayadeva states that he has written this poem to awaken remembrance of Hari’s lotus feet in the hearts of the fortunate devotees imbued with *prema-bhakti*. To taste it, one must certainly embrace the primary *rasa* (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) under the guidance of those fortunate devotees who have relished it. Here *carāṇa* refers to pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā*, the remembrance of which is the method for bringing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet to mind. *Rāsa-līlā* is an astonishingly beautiful pastime, which always remains locked in Śrī Rādhā’s memory.

This Fifth Song is entitled *Madhuripu-ratna-kañṭhikā*, “The Jeweled Necklace of Madhuripu’s Beauty and Other Virtues.”

VERSE 10

*gaṇayati guṇa-grāmaṁ bhrāmaṁ bhramād api nehate
vahati ca parītoṣaṁ doṣaṁ vimuñcati dūrataḥ
yuvatiṣu valat-trṣṇe kṛṣṇe vihāriṇi mām vinā
punar api mano vāmaṁ kāmaṁ karoti karomi kim*

Madhuripu has abandoned Me to enjoy ever fresh intimacies with other enticing damsels. I know it futile to express My passion for Him; still, what am I to do? My love is so over-powering that it will not abate under any circumstances. My heart values His wonderful qualities. I cannot be angry with Him, even when He errs. Overlooking His faults I feel great bliss. *Sakhī*, I ardently long for Him at every moment and cannot forget Him. What am I to do?”

Commentary

Rādhā’s intimate companion reproaches Her, “Kṛṣṇa has neglected You, so why let love for Him disturb You?” Setting the scene for the Sixth Song, Rādhā begins an account of Her private affairs by saying, “*Sakhī*, My heart is submissive to Madhuripu, in spite of His philandering. Although I don’t want to, I cannot help but remember His manifold virtues. I become maddened with ecstasy and long to be with Him.”

Bhrāmaṁ bhramād api nehate – Here the word *bhrāma* means ‘anger.’ “My heart refuses to be angry with Him, in any circumstances. I have no desire to see faults in Him, such as His attachment for other girls or His indifference to Me. I remain completely satisfied with Him. What am I to do?”

Śrī Rādhā has been portrayed as *utkañṭhitā-nāyikā* in this verse. The symptoms of *utkañṭhitā-nāyikā* are:

utkā bhavati sā yasyā
 vāsake nāgataḥ priyaḥ
 tasyānāgamane hetuṃ
 cintayantyākulā yathā

“A heroine who anxiously frets over why her beloved has failed to come to her bed-chamber is called *utkaṅṭhitā*.”

This verse, introducing the Sixth Song, includes *hariṇī-chanda*, *kriyaucitya*, *yamaka-śabda-alankāra* and two *artha-alankāras*, namely *saṁśaya* and *dīpaka*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*Vyabhicārī-prakarana* 13.9) to illustrate *nirveda*, disgust.



❧ Song Six ❧

[The musical mode is *mālava-rāga*. The rhythm moves quickly in *ekatālī-tāla*.]

VERSE 11

*nibhṛta-nikuṅja-grhaṃ gatayā niśi rahasi nilīya vasantam
 cakita-vilokita-sakala-dīśā rati-rabhasa-bhareṇa hasantam* (1)

*sakhi he keśi-mathanam udāraṃ
 ramaya mayā saha madana-manoratha-
 bhāvitayā sa-vikāram* (refrain)

“One night He came to the secluded forest bower where We had agreed to meet. He mischievously concealed Himself in the dense foliage of the *nikuṅja* just to observe My eagerness for Him and My agony in His absence. Overcome by anxiety, My eyes weary and full of apprehension, I looked around wondering, ‘Oh, when will He come?’ Seeing

Me so tormented, He then delighted Me with the nectar of His laughter, full of *ṣṛṅāra-rasa*.

“O *sakhī*, Keśi-mathana is most munificent when it comes to relieving the burning heat of Kāmadeva. Amorous desire has seized My heart and driven Me mad. My dear *sakhī*, arrange at once for the killer of Keśi to come and fulfill My yearnings.” (refrain)

Commentary

Burning in a fever of amorous desire, Śrī Rādhā reveals to Her *sakhī* Her desire to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She begins by disclosing details of a previous romantic encounter when She had pleased Her *prāṇa-nātha*. This pastime is full of the deepest mysteries.

Sakhī! ramaya keśi-mathanam udāram mayā saha: “*Sakhī*, arrange a delightful tryst for Me with Keśi-nisūdana.” Here Śrī Rādhā expresses desire for Her own happiness – that the munificent Keśi-mathana should relieve the torments of Her unfulfilled amorous yearnings – but this is opposed to the definition of *śuddha-bhakti*, which prohibits self-interest. Why, then, does She have such a desire? The reply is that the *gopīs* have renounced everything in order to love Śrī Kṛṣṇa so there is not even the slightest trace of selfishness in them. *Prema* does not manifest fully until deep *anurāga* arises in both parties. Thus, the *preyasī* (the ladylove) must convey her own, intrinsic passion in order to arouse the craving for love in the heart of her sweetheart. This is the way of *prema*.

If *prema* is one-sided, the defect of *rasābhāsa*, or faulty mellow, arises. It is stated:

anurāgo 'nuraktāyām
rasāvaha iti sthitiḥ
abhāve tv anurāgasya
rasābhāsaṁ jagur budhāḥ

“It is the opinion of learned authorities that *rasa* is nourished by a woman’s eagerness for love, whereas *rasābhāsa* occurs in the absence of such *anurāga*.” Therefore, Rādhā’s keen desire for Kṛṣṇa acts to increase *rasa*.

“*Sakhī!* At our very first intimate encounter Śyāmasundara experienced the delights of amour. Now that We are apart, that joyful meeting keeps arising in My memory, leaving Me distraught. As amorous sentiments continue to stir up My heart, separation from the munificent Keśi-mathana, who satisfies desire, is becoming intolerable. O My dear *sakhī*, at once arrange for My union with Him.”

In this way the poet demonstrates Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *anurāga*, Their compelling attraction, for each other. If an author introduces the subject of union before depicting mutual *anurāga*, the defect of *rasābhāsa* (the absence of one of the essential ingredients) occurs.

The word *sa-vikāram* indicates that Śrī Rādhā is experiencing the arousal of *kāma*. When a woman’s lust is aroused, she devises an excuse to show her beloved some parts of her body, like her navel and breasts. The *Rasika-sarvasva* commentary states:

*nābhī mūla kucodara prakāṣṇavyājena yad yoṣitām
sākām kṣam muhur-ikṣaṇam skhalitatā nīvīnibandhasya ca
keśa-bhraṃsana samyamau cakamitur mitrādi sandarśanaiḥ
sauhāgyādi guṇa praśasti kathanaiḥ tat sānurāgeṅgikatam*

“When a woman is aroused, her gestures are full of *anurāga*. For example, on some pretext, she reveals her navel, breasts and abdomen; she repeatedly glances toward her beloved with desire in her eyes; her undergarments loosen; her hair comes undone and she tries to tie it up; she observes all the activities of her beloved’s friends and along with them she praises his good fortune and virtues.”

“O *sakhī!* I am guilty of all these love-laden gestures. Arrange My meeting with Keśi-mathana at once.”

The phrase *madana-manoratha-bhāvitayā* means, “My heart runneth over with amorous desires.”

*ceṣṭā bhavati pūnnāryo
raty-utthānāti-saktayoḥ
sambhogo vipralambhaś ca
sa śṛṅgāro dvidhā mataḥ*

“When a man and a woman who are intensely attached to each other perform romantic activities to stimulate each other’s desires for union, the amorous mood is of two types, namely, meeting (*sambhoga*) and separation (*vipralambha*).”

“Just as I, the separated lover, long for My hero, He also yearns for Me. O *sakhī*, bring Me to Him at once!” In this instance, *śṛṅgāra-rasa* is complete. Śrī Rādhā says, “When I arrived at the secluded *kuñja* in the dead of night, not seeing Śyāmasundara, I anxiously looked about. From His hiding place in a dense grove He observed My eagerness for Him. As I searched for Him with eyes full of apprehension, He suddenly appeared in front of Me. Laughing in delight and very eager for romantic dalliance, He illuminated all directions with joy. O *sakhī*, take Me to Him at once.”

VERSE 12

*prathama-samāgama-lajjitayā paṭu-cātu-śatair anukūlam
mṛdu-madhura-smita-bhāṣitayā śithilī-kṛta-jaghana-dukūlam
sakhi he keśi-mathanam udāram... (2)*

“Seeing Me so naive and gullible due to the natural embarrassment of one’s first amorous encounter, He employed a succession of courteous words and humble entreaties to dispel My shyness. Enchanted by His flattering words, I conversed with Him while smiling softly and

sweetly. Just then that cunning Hari suddenly removed the cloth from My hips. O *sakhī*, arrange for Me to meet with Him this very moment.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā was telling Her friend, “This was not My first intimate meeting with Śyāmasundara. Nevertheless, I behaved just like a heroine who is naturally very shy the first time she meets with her beloved. He plied Me with flattering words to win Me over. His romantic chatter delighted Me and with a soft smile I tenderly conversed with Him. As soon as He saw that I was well disposed towards Him, He suddenly pulled open My lower garment. I want to engage in amour with My *prāṇa-nātha*. O *sakhī*, arrange for Me to meet Him at once.”

The phrase *prathama-samāgama* (first union) infers that amorous love [at the stage of *anurāga*] is always experienced in newer and newer ways.

VERSE 13

*kisalaya-śayana-niveśitayā ciram urasi mamaiva śayānam
kṛta-parirambhaṇa-cumbanayā parirabhya kṛtādharma-pānam
sakhī he keśī-mathanam udāram... (3)*

“With great pleasure He had Me lie down on a soft bed of tender blossoms, and feeling highly elated He reclined upon My heart. I tightly embraced and kissed Him; and He, being under the powerful influence of *anaṅga-rasa*, returned the embrace and repeatedly drank the nectar of My lips. O *sakhī*! He is dearer to Me than My very life. Arrange for Me to meet with Him at once.”

Commentary

“*Sakhī*! In that secret meeting place My hero had Me lie down upon a bed of soft flowers. For a long time He enjoyed

lovmaking upon My bosom. I embraced and kissed Him and He reciprocated by embracing Me and drinking the nectar of My lips. O *sakhī*! Arrange for Me to meet with My heart's beloved at once."

Kṛta-parirambhaṇa – The author of *Rasa-mañjarī* has explained that this type of embrace is called *kṣīra-nīra-āliṅgana* (an embrace akin to the mixing of milk and water) on the basis of evidence from the text of *Pañcasāyaka*. The author of *Rasika-priyā* considers this type of embrace to be *tila-taṇḍula-āliṅgana* (an embrace as agreeable as rice mixed with sesame) and gives evidence from his *Koka-śāstra*.

VERSE 14

alasa-nimīlita-locanayā pulakāvali-lalita-kapolam
śrama-jala-sakala-kalevarayā vara-madana-madād ati-lolam
sakhi he keśī-mathanam dāram... (4)

"A sudden, unexpected surge of rapture during the pleasurable experience of passionate love with Him caused My languid eyes to close. The joy of this love play made His cheeks radiate with an extraordinary charm and beauty. Although He was already intoxicated by the flavors of amorous union, seeing My attractive body exhausted and dripping with perspiration, He became even more restless to taste *anaṅga-rasa*. O *sakhī*, quickly arrange for Me to meet with Keśī-mathana."

Commentary

"*Sakhī*, I was overcome with fatigue and My eyes closed from the exhaustion resulting from amorous pleasure. Agitated by desire, My whole body was wet with drops of perspiration. When Keśava saw My condition, the intense passion in His heart caused His jubilation to escalate. This manifested an enthralling luster on His cheeks. He was

drowning in the immensely powerful bliss of conjugal love. Beholding My body delicate as a vine, He suddenly became restless. O *sakhī*, arrange for Me to meet with Him.”

Śrī Rādhā's body was drenched with perspiration due to the ecstasy of lovemaking, thus revealing that Her pleasure on that occasion reached complete fulfillment.

VERSE 15

kokila-kalarava-kūjīṭayā jīta-manasija-tantra-vicāram
ślatha-kusumākula-kuntalayā nakha-likhita-ghana-stana-bhāram
sakhī he keśi-mathanam udāram... (5)

“He is thoroughly conversant with the confidential theory of *rati-śāstra* and He also practices its rites. At the time of amorous union with Him, I softly cooed like a cuckoo. My braid came undone and the flowers adorning it fell out. I do not know what He was writing on My full, round breasts with the scratching of His fingernails. O *sakhī*! Arrange for Me to meet with the enemy of Keśī at once.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is describing to Her *sakhī* Her experience of enjoying with Śrī Kṛṣṇa the exotic practices prescribed in the *kāma-śāstras*. At the time of making love, She murmured like a cuckoo. The author of *Rasika-sarvasva* has stated: *kalarava śabdaḥ pārāvata paryāyaḥ* – “At the time of amorous union, when being kissed and embraced by her lover, the heroine makes a sudden gasping sound, similar to the cooing of the cuckoo or the pigeon, thus expressing the thrill of pleasurable sensations.”

“Holding Me by the hair and kissing Me, Mādhava drank the nectar of My lips. At the height of Our love games, He drew marks on My firm, full breasts with His nails. *Sakhī*, arrange for Me to meet with Him at once.”

VERSE 16

*carāṇa-raṇita-maṇi-nūpurayā paripūrita-surata-vitānam
mukhara-viṣṅkhala-mekhalayā sa-kaca-graha-cumbana-dānam
sakhi he keśi-mathanam udāraṁ... (6)*

“As We reached the height of passion, My jewel-studded anklebells rang out and My waistbells fell off noisily. He caught Me by the hair and repeatedly kissed My face. O *sakhī*, quickly arrange for My union with that Keśi-mathana.”

Commentary

“*Sakhī!* When Hari performed such endearing love play, My jeweled anklebells jingled. At first the sash of bells around My waist tinkled, but later it broke, noisily dropped away and fell silent. He caught My hair and gifted Me with many kisses. O *sakhī*, arrange for My union with Him at once.”

VERSE 17

*rati-sukha-samaya-rasālasayā dara-mukulita-nayana-sarojam
niḥsaha-nipatita-tanu-latayā madhusūdanam udita-manojam¹
sakhi he keśi-mathanam udāraṁ... (7)*

1 *Alasā* means *mantharā*. It is stated – *rati-sukha-samaye dvayor eka-kālam retah kaṇa kṣaraṇa samaye yo rasaḥ tad ekāgrī bhāvas tena alasā mantharā*.

Dara-mukulite means ‘slightly closed’; *niḥsahā* means *asamarthaḥ*, ‘incapable’; *udita-manojam* means ‘fully roused lust’; *nipatita-tanu-latā* meaning ‘fallen vine-like body’, which indicates *viparīta-rati*, the lovers’ role reversal in which the heroine dominates.

Asamarthā – *cyuti kālottarāvasthā ity arthaḥ*

Bharata Muni has stated:

*aṅge svedaḥ ślathatvaṁ ca keśa-vastrādi samvṛttiḥ
jāte cyuti sukhe nāryā virāmeccā ca gamyate*

“When the rapture from *rati-vilāsa* is over and the woman, whose body is languid and damp with perspiration, attempts to cover herself with her hair and clothes, she is known to need rest.”

“While enjoying *rati-vilāsa* with Him, I gradually became exhausted due to the intense experience of conjugal bliss. All My limbs became languid and the vine of My body was overcome by the vigorous exertion of lovemaking. I finally fell as if lifeless. Soaked in the flavors of Cupid, Madhusūdana’s lotus eyes opened slightly as extravagant amorous desires played rampantly within His mind. O *sakhī*, immediately arrange My union with My dearest Keśī-mathana at once.”

Commentary

After being immersed in the experience of amorous pleasure, Śrī Rādhā became weary and Śrī Kṛṣṇa half-closed His lotus eyes. A bumblebee generally sits on all the flowers one by one and drinks their nectar, but when he sees the excellence of the lotus, he remains there transfixed. Drinking its nectar he becomes madly intoxicated and then finds repose there. In the same way, knowing Her excellence Śrī Madhusūdana has abandoned all flower-like *gopīs* and become deeply attached to the lotus-like Rādhā, taking Her for His resting place. Only with Her can He experience the ecstasy of all varieties of amorous pleasure. Moreover, when Śrī Rādhā experiences Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s romantic expertise, She becomes *anurāginī*, completely possessed by desire for Him.

Today, within Her mind Śrī Rādhā enjoyed all over again Her previous amorous encounters with Śrī Hari. Becoming overwhelmed with longing She told Her friend, “O *sakhī*! Take Me to meet with Keśī-mathana at once.”

VERSE 18

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam atiśaya-madhuripu-nidhuvana-śīlam
sukham utkaṅṭhita-gopa-vadhū-kathitam vitanotu sa-līlam
sakhī he keśī-mathanam udāram... (8)

This love poem written by Śrī Jayadeva portrays Madhuripu's unbounded passion as described by the anxious and impatient heroine pining in separation from Him. May it increase the auspiciousness of all the devotees who recite and hear it.

Commentary

In conclusion Śrī Jayadeva says, "Although I am the author of this composition, in actuality the song is spoken by *utkaṅṭhitā-nāyikā* Śrī Rādhā Herself, who is confiding to Her intimate friend the details of Kṛṣṇa's prowess in *kāma-kṛīḍā*, Their love play.

Remembering those meetings, Śrī Rādhā became excited; thus, from Her heart She revealed to Her *sakhī* Her desire to meet with Śyāmasundara again. Śrī Rādhā is *nidhuvana-nāgarī*, expert in erotic play. May this description of Her amorous amusements (*surata-kṛīḍā*) and Her all-consuming passion (*anurāga*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestow auspiciousness upon all.

This Sixth Song of Śrī *Gīta-govinda* is entitled *Akleśa-keśava-kuñjara-tilaka*, "Carefree Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Elephant of all Lovers." The entire song is permeated with *vipralambha śṅgāra-rasa* and is sung in the *laya-chanda* meter.

VERSE 19

*hasta-srasta-vilāsa-vamśam anṛju-bhrū-vallimad-ballavī
vṛndotsāri-dṛganta-vīkṣitam ati-svedārdra-gaṇḍa-sthalam
mām udvīkṣya vilajjita-smīta-sudhā-mugdhānanam kānane
govindam vraja-sundarī-gaṇa-vṛtaṁ paśyāmi hr̥ṣyāmi ca*

"O *sakhī*! While romancing with the cowherd girls, whose eyebrows were arched like attractive creepers, Govinda was relishing their charms with His eyes. Though He was

surrounded by a throng of beautiful *gopīs*, as soon as He saw Me, He was struck with wonder and sent all of them away with a glance. His mind became possessed with amorous desires, causing His *vanśī* to fall from His delicate hands and His cheeks to become moist with perspiration. His face blossomed with the nectar of a bashful smile expressing His exuberance. When I picture this scene, I feel an indescribable bliss.”

Commentary

In separation, the three types of realization – remembrance (*smaraṇa*), internal vision (*sphūrṭi*) and direct audience (*avirbhāva*) – awakened in Śrī Rādhā. First She experienced *smaraṇa*. When Her mood intensified to *sudīpta-mahābhāva*, pastimes manifested automatically as a vision within Her heart. Now, in the present verses, Her realization is *sākṣāt-anubhava*, a direct experience. She tells Her friend, “*Sakhī*, look! I feel overjoyed and am laughing to see Govinda here in the Vraja forest accompanied by the beautiful *vraja-gopīs*.”

Her *sakhī* asks, “O silly girl, blinded by love! How can You be in bliss when Keśava has left You in order to frolic with other *gopīs*?” Rādhā replies, “When He notices that I am here, He will feel so embarrassed and guilty that He will break out into a heavy sweat, making His cheeks drip with perspiration. When He sees My ecstatic symptoms (*sāttvika-bhāva*), He will also experience them. His flute will slip from His hands out of shame. Though the *vraja-gopīs* fascinate Him with their creeper-like eyebrows, with just a flick of the eyebrow He will send them all away. His face, evincing a mild smile, will become utterly captivating. When I behold My treasured sweetheart looking like this, I will drown in bliss. *Sakhī*! When, oh when will I meet My precious darling?”

This verse includes *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *dīpaka*- and *lāṭānuprāsa-alankāras*, and *pāñcālī-rīti*. The mood of this verse

is *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra-rasa*. The hero is *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka*, the guileless hero who has many sweethearts but still remains submissive to his first ladylove.

VERSE 20

*durāloka-stoka-stabaka-navakāśoka-latikā
vikāsaḥ kāsāropavana-pavano 'pi vyathayati
api bhrāmyad-bhṛṅgī-raṇita-ramaṇīyā na mukula
prasūtiś cūtānām sakhi śikhariṇīyaṃ sukhayati*

“Separation has now become absolutely intolerable. The radiant beauty of this freshly budding *aśoka* vine is like a spear piercing My eyes. Breezes blowing from the lakeside gardens are only inflaming Me. Even the freshly bursting mango blossoms swarming with sweetly humming bees are no comfort to Me now, My friend.”

Commentary

Describing springtime excitants (*vibhāvas*) of love in separation, Rādhā tells Her intimate friend, “I can no longer look at the *aśoka* trees. Ordinarily they remove sorrow, but now their new buds are fanning the fire of separation. The breeze moving through the lakeside *kuñjas*, bringing forth tiny clusters of new blossoms on *aśoka* creepers, also feeds My grief.”

The word *durāloka* is derived thus: *duḥkhena āloka avalokanam yasyā 'sau*. “When I met with Kṛṣṇa before, the buds blossoming on the mango trees and the humming bees hovering around them made Me happy, but now they only make Me morose.”

The phrase *bhrāmyad-bhṛṅgī* means ‘wandering female bees.’ This alludes to all the *gopīs*. Śrī Rādhā is speaking and revealing that “we yearn only for Keśava, no one else. He is the only desirable male in our eyes.”

This verse features *samuccaya-* and *anuprāsa-alāṅkāras*, *kriyaucitya* and *vipralambha-śṅgāra-rasa*. The *rīti* is *māgadhi* and *gauḍiyā*. Appropriately the meter is *śikharīṇī-chanda*.

VERSE 21

*sākūta-smitam ākulākula-galad-dhammillam ullāsita-
bhrū-vallīkam alīka-darśita-bhujā-mūlārddha-dṛṣṭa-stanam
gopīnām nibhṛtaṁ nirīksya gamitākāṅkṣaś ciraṁ cintayan
antar mugdha-manoharam haratu vaḥ kleśam navaḥ keśavaḥ*

He discretely gazed upon a host of cowherd maidens undergoing ecstatic transformations – irresistible provocative smiles, restless movements of the eyes, braids coming undone, raising the arms to expose their breasts on the pretext of adjusting hair loosened by lust. Yet, all of their seductive gestures lost their power to attract Him, who was now rapt in deep thoughts of Rādhā. May that ever fresh Keśava steal away all our sufferings.

Commentary

The great poet, Śrī Jayadeva, bestows a benediction upon all devotees here in the final verse of Act Two. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is extremely discerning. He carefully deliberated upon the *gopīs*’ four gestures. Even a naive person could decipher their common motive and would be attracted.”

(1) *Sākūta-smitam* – Although the *gopīs*’ smiling is natural, it also conveys intentions. Their smiles were obviously amorous desire in disguise. An impassioned woman will automatically deploy seductive gestures when she sees a young man.

(2) *Ākulākula-galad-dhammillam* – Due to intense desire the *gopīs* underwent horripilation and other transformations, causing their braids to come loose.

(3) *Bhrū-vallīkam alīka* – On seeing Kṛṣṇa their eyes became restless with amorous desire.

(4) *Bhujā-mūlā* – Although there was no reason to expose their armpits or raise their hands, they would use excuses such as artificially yawning as opportunities to show Kṛṣṇa their uplifted breasts.

Deliberating on the *gopīs*' behavior within His heart, Śrī Kṛṣṇa decided that their efforts were all in vain because no one can ever be compared to Śrī Rādhā, who increases His astonishment by the moment. May Śrī Keśava, who is praised in this way by His loving servants, dispel the sorrows of all His devotees.

This verse includes *samuccaya*, *āśīḥ* and *parikara-alāṅkāras*. The *chanda* is *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT TWO
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED AKLEŚA-KEŚAVA,
“CAREFREE KEŚAVA.”



Act Three

MUGDHA-MADHUSŪDANAḤ – MADHUSŪDANA
MESMERIZED

VERSE 1

*kaṁsārīr api saṁsāra-vāsanābandha-śṛṅkhalām
rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ*

Consumed in thoughts of Rādhā, His heart bound by the chain of Her love, Kaṁsārī, desiring to enjoy the quintessence of *madhura-rasa* (*rāsa-līlā*), abandoned all the other beautiful Vraja maidens.

Commentary

Acts One and Two describe the excellence of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, concluding with a vivid portrayal of Rādhā's loving thirst and eagerness for Kṛṣṇa. Now, in the beginning of Act Three, the author depicts Kṛṣṇa's intense passion for Rādhā.

Memories of the autumnal dance (*śārādiya-rāsa-līlā*) suddenly awakened in Kṛṣṇa's heart. He remembered Śrī Rādhā's intense love for Him and realized it to be the ultimate expression of the most excellent *prema*. He had left the other *gopīs* in the dance pavilion to meet with Śrī Rādhā alone, and had nourished Her affection by ornamenting Her and decorating Her hair. Now, in Her absence His heart began to burn, and He abandoned the other fetching *vraja-gopīs*, considering their love insignificant.

Kaṁsāri – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the enemy of the demoniac King Kaṁsā. Alternatively – *kaṁ sukhaṁ sārāyati vistārayati kaṁsāriḥ* – “Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa who expands one’s happiness is called Kaṁsāri.”

Sāmsāra-vāsanā-bandha-śṛṅkhalām – When the word *sāmsāra* is interpreted as a compound of *samyak* (complete) and *sāra* (essence), then it refers to the delightful and endearing *madhura-rasa*. Therefore, the tendency to remain always preoccupied with *madhura-rasa* is called *sāmsāra-vāsanā*. Because Rādhā keeps Him under Her control, She is the binding link (*śṛṅkhalā*) in the *rāsa* dance, which is the complete essence of all Kṛṣṇa’s desires. When one ascertains what the most essential substance of all is, he naturally abandons everything else and with zeal he pursues his desired object, making it his sole focus. Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, leaving all the other *gopīs*, accepted Rādhā as His exclusive refuge.

Vraja-sundarīḥ – The plural declension indicates that Kṛṣṇa had forsaken a host of enthralling damsels in the anguish of separation from Rādhā. This reveals His overflowing *anurāga*, His unbounded, compelling love for Her.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Western Quadrant, Fifth Wave, verse 10, as an example of *ālambana-vibhāva* in *madhura-bhakti-rasa*.

The meter of this verse is *pathyā*.

VERSE 2

*itas tatas tām anusṛtya rādhikām
 anaṅga-bāṇa-vraṇa-khinna-mānasah
 kṛtānutāpaḥ sa kalinda-nandinī-
 taṭānta-kuñje viṣasāda mādhaveḥ*

As Mādhava vainly searched everywhere for Rādhikā, His weary mind was pierced by Cupid's shafts. Regretting having neglected Her, He entered a secluded *kuñja* by the Yamunā and lamented.

Commentary

The poet describes Kṛṣṇa's emotions: "Alas! Why did I leave Her? How will I meet Her again?" He felt the same turmoil that Rādhā was experiencing in separation from Him. Although all the beautiful *vraja-gopīs* were ready for Him, He was indifferent to their service. The fact that His favorite beloved was actually somewhere nearby, made Him all the more despondent. He thought, "Today I could not properly respect Rādhā, so She must have gone to a *kuñja* by the Yamunā." He looked in one *kuñja* after another. After searching extensively, He was seized by hopelessness and about to give up. "If only I had honored Rādhā, She would not have left." In this way Kṛṣṇa sank to the depths of despair, stricken by arrows of love and ablaze in guilt.

Mādhavaḥ – *mā* (Lakṣmī) + *dhava* (pati) = Lakṣmīpati, the husband of the Goddess of Fortune. This name of Kṛṣṇa has a specific significance in this context: *mā* (Rādhā) + *dhava* (deardest) = Mādhava, who means more to Rādhā than Her own life and whose distress in separation from Her is the emblem of Her immense fortune.

The *chanda* of this verse is *vaṁśasthāvila*, which is defined *vadanti vaṁśasthāvilaṁ ja-tau ja-rau*. "The length of syllables in the *vaṁśasthāvila* meter is as follows: short, long, short, long, long, short, short, long, short, short, long, short."

❧ Song Seven ❧

The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga*; the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 3

*mām iyaṁ calitā vilokya vṛtaṁ vadhū-nicayena
sāparādhatayā mayāpi na vāritāti-bhayena (1)*

hari hari hatādaratayā gatā sā kupiteva (refrain)

“Seeing Me surrounded by a host of shapely *vraja-gopīs*, Rādhā became indignant and went off. Fearing that I had offended Her, I could not muster the courage to stop Her from leaving.

“Alas! Feeling slighted She left in a huff.” (refrain)

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa expresses His disappointment by calling out *hari! hari!* “Alas, what a tragedy! Rādhā felt slighted and left when She saw Me surrounded by a throng of beautiful *gopīs*, and now She has disappeared. My beloved Rādhā is the empress of My heart. She abounds with all desirable virtues, and Her intrinsic love for Me has never been surpassed; still I rudely neglected Her. Somehow I panicked and was unable to utter even a few polite words to pacify Her. In anger She stormed off, and now I am truly repentant for what has happened.”

VERSE 4

*kiṁ kariṣyati kiṁ vadiṣyati sā ciraṁ virahēṇa
kiṁ dhanena janena kiṁ mama jīvitena gr̥hēṇa
hari hari hatādaratayā... (2)*

“What will She do? What will She say, after the long agony of burning separation? I do not know. Alas! Without

Rādhā, My wealth, My kinsmen, My life, My home and My everything seem worthless.”

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is describing His own condition of separation. “Whatever I am feeling in separation from Rādhā, She must also be feeling. How much anxiety and distress She must be going through! And My blunder is the cause of this pain. Because of Me She is suffering so much. When I meet Her again I do not know how She will react. How will She express Her anger, jealousy and hurt feelings? I wonder what She is telling Her intimate friend. She must be accusing Me of being so cruel and heartless. But I will say to Her, ‘O Rādhā, without You, My wealth, My community, My cows and My home – everything seems insignificant to Me.’”

VERSE 5

*cintayāmi tad-ānanam kuṭīla-bhru kopa-bhareṇa
śoṇa-padmam ivopari bhramatākulam bhramareṇa
hari hari hatādaratayā... (3)*

“My mind dwells on Rādhā’s face, now red with anger and eyebrows crooked like a creeper, resembling a beautiful red lotus with black bumblebees hovering above.”

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “My thoughts have been taken over by the vision of Rādhā’s lotus face. Now that She is vexed, the arch of Her eyebrows must have become even more pronounced. Her golden dejected face, now red with anger, is enhanced by Her beautiful curved eyebrows, as if a line of black bumblebees is fluttering above a red lotus flower.”

In this verse, Her angry face is compared to a red lotus and Her curved black eyebrows are likened to a row of black bumblebees. This is an example of *vākyārthā-upamā-alankāra*.

VERSE 6

*tām ahaṁ hṛdi saṅgatām anīśaṁ bhṛśaṁ ramayāmi
kiṁ vane ’nusaṛāmi tām iha kiṁ vṛthā vilapāmi
hari hari hatādaratayā... (4)*

“Alas! Since Rādhā dwells forever in the temple of My heart, where I hold Her in a tight embrace, why am I uselessly lamenting and time and again searching for Her from forest to forest?”

Commentary

Experiencing intense anguish due to separation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa attains a *sphūrti*, or a vision, of Śrī Rādhā in the core of His heart, He thus understands, “Rādhā, the love of My life, is permanently enshrined in the temple of My heart where We forever enjoy unending amorous pastimes. We are truly never separated. If She is not to be found in the forest, then what profit lies in searching for Her there? Rather, if I see Her here in My heart, then why lament?”

VERSE 7

*tanvi khinnam asūyayā hṛdayaṁ tavākalayāmi
tan na vedmi kuto gatāsi na tena te ’nunayāmi
hari hari hatādaratayā... (5)*

“O Kṛśāṅgī, My delicate one! It seems that Your heart is afflicted by jealousy. You proudly went off in a huff somewhere, so how can I petition You for pardon?”

Commentary

Separated from Śrī Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa has become half-mad in distress. When She suddenly appears in a *sphūrti*, He calls out to Her, “O Tanvi, svelte maiden,” as if She is directly before Him. “*He Rādhe!* Because I turned My back on You to enjoy Myself with some other beguiling Vraja maidens, Your heart is now wild with jealousy due to Your haughty self-importance. Accusing Me of some impropriety, You have become dejected and have gone off somewhere. If I knew where You were, I would touch Your feet and try to pacify You by begging for forgiveness.”

VERSE 8

*dr̥syase purato gatāgatam eva me vidadhāsi
kiṁ pureva sa-sambhramaṁ parirambhaṇaṁ na dadāsi
hari hari hatādaratayā... (6)*

“Alas! You repeatedly come before Me and then vanish. Why don’t You impetuously embrace Me as You used to?”

Commentary

“O My darling Kṛṣṅāṅgī! Why are You merely coming and going before My eyes? Why are You not impelled by Your overwhelming love and enchaining Me in Your embrace today? Why are You so cruel?”

Indeed, when a man separated from his beloved is drowning in the depths of despair, his reverie on her becomes so intense that it seems as if she is actually with him. In Rādhā’s absence Kṛṣṇa has become so desperate that His meditation has culminated in directly perceiving Her before His eyes. Wherever He looks He sees only Śrī Rādhā. She is there in every direction – She is everywhere. And that Rādhā alone is the only thing He sees in all existence.

VERSE 9

*kṣamyatām अपराम् kadāpi tavedṛśam na karomi
dehi sundari darśanam mama manmathena dunomi
hari hari hatādaratayā... (7)*

“He Sundari, O beautiful one! Please forgive Me. I will never do such a thing again. Please show Me Your face at once. I am tormented with love for You.”

Commentary

Here the poet reveals the height of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s despondency. As a vision of Śrī Rādhā manifests in His heart, He takes Her as the supreme object of adoration and says, “O Rādhā, please forgive My knavery. Kindly forget whatever has transpired. Hereafter, I will never commit such treachery again. I beg You to come before Me. I am Your dearmost beloved. Do not deny My eager eyes the sight of You. In Your absence the heat of amorous desire is burning Me alive.”

In this song Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described as *anukūla-nāyaka*, a lover who is grave, humble, and fixed in his resolve to please his sweetheart. The prominent *rasa* is *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra* arising from mutual *anurāga*.

VERSE 10

*varṇitam jayadeva-kena harer idam pravaṇena
kindubilva-samudra-sambhava-rohiṇī-ramaṇena
hari hari hatādaratayā... (8)*

He who appeared like the moon from the ocean of the village of Kindubilva has collected Hari’s lament. That very Jayadeva is humbly delivering this song.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva, in utter humility, has described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grief of separation from Śrī Rādhā. Just as the moon rises from the ocean, the poet Jayadeva has appeared in the village of Kindubilva. One of Śrī Jayadeva's names is Pīyūṣavarṣā, a name of the moon meaning 'shower of nectar.' Another name of the moon is Rohiṇī-ramaṇa, the lover of the Rohiṇī constellation. Just as everyone is delighted by the moon, similarly, this lyrical song is bound to thrill the whole world.

VERSE 11

*hṛdi visa-latā-hāro nāyam bhujāṅgama-nāyakaḥ
kuvalaya-dala-śreṇī kaṅṭhe na sā garala-dyutiḥ
malayaja-rajo nedaṁ bhasma priyā-rahite mayi
prahara na hara-bhrāntyānaṅga krudhā kim u dhāvasi*

“O Anaṅga, god of love! Are you so vehemently tormenting Me because you think that I am Lord Śiva? This is a necklace of lotus stems adorning My chest, not Vāsukī, the king of snakes. A garland of blue lotus flowers colors My throat, not a streak of poison. This is sandalwood paste smeared on My lovelorn body; it is not ash from a funeral pyre. Back off! Retreat! You have caught Me by mistake, so cease from firing your terrible arrows at Me. Why do you rush upon Me with such fury?”

Commentary

Devastated in separation, Kṛṣṇa protests that Kāmadeva must have mistaken Him for Lord Śiva. Why else would he attack so vehemently with his invincible arrows? Helplessly overpowered, Kṛṣṇa calls out, “He Anaṅga, just see how happily Lord Śiva lives, half his body united with his beloved Pārvatī. But that is not the case with Me. Not only am I

separated from My beloved Rādhikā, who is dearer to Me than My own breath, I don't even know where She is."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is experiencing a *sphūrti* of Rādhā, while agonizing from the burning sensation caused by Cupid. Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly says, "Anaṅga, why are you furiously chasing after Me? Do you intend to continue this incessant beating under the misconception that I am Lord Śiva? This garland may look like a snake but it is only a necklace of lotus stalks. And this is a line of blue lotuses on My neck, not a blue stain left by poison. This is not ash you see; it is Malayan sandal paste smeared upon My body to relieve the heat of separation from My beloved, but now dried up and turned to powder. Without My lover, I am lifeless, so why do you persist in attacking Me?"

This verse portrays *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra* and employs *apahnuti-alāṅkāra*. The meter is *hariṇī-chanda*. The verse also includes *bhrāntimān-alāṅkāra* according to the opinion of some learned authorities.

VERSE 12

*pāṇau mā kuru cūta-sāyakam amuṁ mā cāpam āropaya
krīḍā-nirjita-viśva mūrccita-janāghātena kiṁ pauraṣam
tasyā eva mṛgī-dṛṣo manasija preṅkhat-kaṭākṣāṣugaśreṇī-
jarjaritaṁ manāg api mano nādyāpi sandhuṣate*

"O Kandarpa, god of love! You have vanquished the entire universe with your games. Don't take that mango-bud arrow in your hand. If you do, at least do not place it on your bow. What valor is there in striking down someone who has already been thoroughly scorched by the fever of lust? Just see! My heart has been cut to pieces by the sidelong glances streaming forth from that doe-eyed Rādhā, leaving Me nearly dead. Please don't attack Me."

Commentary

It is as if Kāmadeva said to Kṛṣṇa, “Although Śiva, who incinerated my body, is certainly my enemy, You have also transgressed my command. Therefore I will also aim my arrows at You.” Kṛṣṇa then beseeched Kāma, “O Manasija, don’t take that mango-bud arrow in your hand.”

Kāmadeva’s *puṣpa-bāṇa* (flower arrows) are of five types: (1) *āmra-mukula* (mango buds), (2) *aśoka*, (3) *mallikā*, (4) *mādhavī* and (5) *bakula*. The tips of the mango branches are bursting with springtime buds. Kṛṣṇa thinks, “Kāmadeva has made them into his arrows and he will shoot Me down, seeing Me reduced in separation from Rādhā.” Therefore He forbids him: “Do not pick up that mango-bud arrow.”

Mā cāpam āropaya – “If you do, then at least do not load it on your bowstring.”

Kṛīḍā-nirjita-viśva – “O you for whom conquering the universe is simply a matter of play. With joined palms I beseech you. This arrow will surely deal Me a mortal blow. You are the conqueror of the universe and I am like a dead person in separation from Rādhā. If a hero like you were to thrash a dying person, it would simply result in your defamation. No one would applaud you for heroic prowess.”

By the word *manasija*, Kṛṣṇa implies, “You have arisen from My mind. It is not ethical to beat the one who has given you birth. You want to shoot Me down on Rādhā’s behalf. But the arrow of Her sidelong glance, even sharper than your shafts, has already torn Me apart. What is the necessity of firing a poisoned arrow on top of the wounds I have already sustained?”

This verse is an example of *śārdūla-vikṛīḍita-chanda* and *ākṣepa-alankāra*.

VERSE 13

*bhrū-pallavo dhanur apāṅga-taraṅgitāni
 bāṇā guṇaḥ śravaṇa-pāṅir iti smareṇa
 tasyām anaṅga-jaya-jaṅgama-devatāyām
 astrāṇi nirjita-jaganti kim arpitāni*

“Aha! Her arched blossoming eyebrows are his bow, the many waves of Her crooked glances are the arrows, Her long eyes that almost touch the ears are the bowstring – such are the weapons in Kāmadeva’s arsenal. After conquering all souls in the universe without exception, Kāmadeva has offered them back to their Empress, the living Goddess of his own victory, the beautiful Rādhā.”

Commentary

Attributing the entire armory of Cupid’s arrows to Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa says, by the word *tasyām* (to Her), “Kāmadeva has returned his world-conquering weapons to Rādhā, My cherished one, from whom I feel the anguish of separation.” Why? Here, the word *tat* conveys the sense of previous experience. To establish Rādhā’s second unique quality, Kṛṣṇa affirms that She is the living Goddess of Victory for Cupid. Kāmadeva is the roving celestial who has conquered the universe, but he accomplished this only after acquiring weapons from Rādhā. When his objective was accomplished, he offered those weapons back to their Mistress.

Bhrū-pallava-dhanuḥ – ‘the bow of blossoming eyebrows.’ Rādhā’s eyebrows are compared to fresh petals because they are dark and smooth, and to a bow because they are curved.

Apāṅga-taraṅga – The waves of Her sidelong glances are Kāmadeva’s sharp arrows. Thus Kṛṣṇa implies, “Just as an arrow pierces its target, Rādhā’s glance has stabbed My heart.”

Astra – This refers to the weapons employed in military science. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is comparing the specific capabilities manifest in the different parts of Rādhā’s body to particular instruments Kāmadeva uses in his warfare.

This verse has been composed in *vasanta-tilakā-chanda* and embellished with *utprekṣā-* and *rūpaka-alaṅkāras*.

VERSE 14

*bhrū-cāpe nihitaḥ kaṭākṣa-viśikho nirmātu marma-vyathām
śyāmātmā kuṭilaḥ karotu kabarī-bhāro 'pi mārodyamam
mohaṁ tāvad ayaṁ ca tanvi tanutām bimbādharo rāgavān
sad-vṛttaṁ stana-maṇḍalaṁ tava kathaṁ prāṇair mama kṛṇḍati*

“Tanvi, O fragile girl, let the dart-like sidelong glances issuing from the bow of Your brows strike at My vulnerable parts, causing Me intolerable pain. Let Your black serpentine braid thrash Me to death. Let Your soft lips, red and succulent as *bimba* fruits, make Me delirious. But Your perfectly round and enchanting breasts are ordinarily well-behaved, so how is it that they are cruelly trifling with My life-airs?”

Commentary

Absorbed in thoughts of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa says, “The barrage of Your arrow-like sidelong glances shooting from the bow of Your arched eyebrows is cutting Me to the quick. This behavior is quite befitting, because it is natural for a bow and arrows to give distress to others. Wounding others is their *dharma*, the purpose of their existence.

“Your sinuous black braid, which naturally moves like a snake, is attacking with the intent of manslaughter. This is also not inappropriate because it is perfectly natural for those of corrupt heart to attempt murder.

“O frail Rādhā, Your red (*rāgī*) lips make Me fall in a swoon. This is also befitting. After all, is there anything that the passionately attached (*rāgī*) will not do to achieve their desires? It is their very nature to bewilder others.

“But what I can’t understand is why Your melon-like breasts are trying to steal My life-airs on the pretext of playing an innocent game. This seems thoroughly inappropriate. Such behavior is not natural for persons of integrity. Those who are *sadvṛtta* (perfectly behaved or perfectly round) do not take pleasure in toying with others’ life-airs.”

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *virodhalaṅkāra*.

VERSE 15

*tāni sparśa-sukhāni te ca taralāḥ snigdḥā dr̥ṣor vibhramās
 tad vaktrāmbuja-saurabhaṁ sa ca sudhā-syandī girām vakrimā
 sā bimbādhara-mādhurīti viṣayāsange ’pi cen mānasam
 tasyām lagna-samādhi hanta viraha-vyādhiḥ katham vardhate*

“The thrill of Her touch, Her restless tender eyes, Her bewildering glances which restore My life, the flood of fragrance from Her mouth, Her ambrosial words in a stream of crooked statements, honey dripping from Her scarlet lips – thus I behold Her in a gripping trance. Why then is the disease of separation growing?”

Commentary

Romantic intrigue with Rādhā comes alive in His meditation; even so, His heart suffers increasing separation. Caught in dichotomy, Kṛṣṇa laments, “I am in deep *samādhi* upon Rādhā, so why do feelings of separation still torture Me? Separation (*viraha*) is a condition of distress that occurs

in the absence of one's beloved, but My mind is intimately united with Rādhā.

“The absence of internal meeting is considered separation. Even when the mind experiences internal union, there may still be separation feelings due to the absence of external sensory union. Sometimes in the absence of the sense objects, one feels sensory pleasure within the heart; this is also referred to as union (*saṁyoga*). But now even this has also become a mode of *viraha*.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is wondering, “What is real? The experience of meeting also occurs in the physical absence of My beloved Rādhā. Even now in separation, My skin is feeling the happiness of Rādhā's touch. My eyes are beholding Her restless glances, full of affectionate mellows and overflowing with *prema*. My nose is smelling the fragrance of Her lotus mouth. My ears are relishing the trickling nectar of Rādhā's crooked words as if I were directly hearing them. My tongue is drinking the delectable juice flowing from Her soft, red-berry lips. I am enjoying all of these sense objects now, just as I did when We were together. Therefore, I cannot understand why the torment of separation continues to mount.”

The present verse features *sārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *samuccaya-alankāra* and *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra*.

VERSE 16

*tiryak-kaṅṭha-vilola-mauli-taralottaṁsasya vaṁśoccarad
gīti-sthāna-kṛtāvadhāna-lalanā-lakṣair na saṁlakṣitāḥ
sammugdhe madhusūdanasya madhure rādhā-mukhendau sudhā-
sāre kandalitās ciraṁ dadhatu vaḥ kṣemaṁ kaṭākṣormayaḥ*

May the countless waves flowing from Śrī Madhusūdana's sidelong glances bestow peace and prosperity upon all,

glances wonderfully excited from enjoying the sweet nectar of Rādhā's moon-like face. Transfixed on Her enchanting visage, He tilts His head and plays a bewitching flute song that enraptures the myriads of *gopīs* as His crown and earrings rhythmically sway with the music.

Commentary

This last verse of Act Three substantiates Śrī Rādhā's inspiration throughout this lyrical composition. It concludes with the poet's description of Kṛṣṇa's emotional state when, surrounded by a multitude of *gopīs*, He caught sight of Śrī Rādhā. The poet has blessed the singers and the listeners of this song by saying, "May that mesmerized Madhusūdana bestow auspiciousness upon all."

Here Kṛṣṇa is called Madhusūdana, meaning 'bumblebee,' or literally, 'one who drinks honey.' Filled with joy at the vision of Rādhā's lotus face – slightly restless and breathtakingly beautiful – Kṛṣṇa forgot about everything else and became transfixed on Her. Her sidelong glance overflowing with waves of affection welded Madhusūdana to *madhu*, the intoxicating honey of Her enchanting moon-like face. The word *sammugdha* expresses the thrilling beauty of Her face; *madhura* implies that its sweetness, greater than the nectar of immortality, is spellbinding, forcing Kṛṣṇa to behold it with great eagerness; and *sudhā-sāra* suggests that Her face is the most relishable of ambrosias. She has been likened to the moon because She inundates Śrī Kṛṣṇa with joy.

Kṛṣṇa was mesmerized by Rādhā's face; the other *gopīs* around Him were completely unaware of this. Kṛṣṇa was improvising an extraordinary rhapsody upon His flute, reaching the most provocative notes that riveted everyone's attention in the joy of listening. His expertise in fluting was

such that He succeeded in bewitching Rādhā also, without the other *gopīs* noticing, thus demonstrating His cunning genius.

Describing the position of Kṛṣṇa's head the poet says, *tiryak-kaṅṭhaviḷola-mauli-taralottāmsasya* – “He tilted His neck to one side, causing His earrings and crown to dance.” The word *mauli* can mean both ‘crown’ and ‘head.’ Moving the head is a fault for a flute player, whereas not moving the head is considered to be a mark of expertise. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's skill is extraordinary, therefore His head was not moving. Rather, only His earrings and crown were swaying.

This verse includes *rūpaka-alāṅkāra* and *sārdūla-vikrīḍitā-chanda*.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT THREE
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED MUGDHA-MADHUSŪDĀNA,
“MADHUSŪDĀNA MESMERIZED.”



Act Four

SNIGDHA-MADHUSŪDANAḤ – AFFECTIONATE MADHUSŪDANA

VERSE 1

*yamunā-tīra-vānīra-
nikuñje mandam āsthitam
prāha prema-bharodbhrāntam
mādhavaṁ rādhikā-sakhī*

Lovesick in separation from Rādhā, Mādhava was sitting in a *vānīra-kuñja* on the bank of the Yamunā, wallowing in sadness, when Rādhā's dear friend came and spoke to Him.

Commentary

After painting first Rādhā's love-stricken condition and then Kṛṣṇa's, the poet now describes the strategy employed by Rādhā's messenger who desires to bring about Their meeting. Impelled by loneliness prior to meeting (*pūrvā-rāga*), Rādhā revealed to Her intimate friend Her consuming desire to meet with Kṛṣṇa. After consoling Rādhā, that *sakhī* set off to locate Mādhava, whom she found sitting alone in a secluded *vetasī-nikuñja* on the Yamunā riverside, half mad with anxiety due to His overflowing love for Rādhā. Her *sakhī* then spoke to Him.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī describes the character of the messengers of the *vraja-sundarīs* in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (7.54). Such young maidens, called *āpta-amitārthā-dūtīs*, are highly trustworthy,

very affectionate, and skilled in conversing. From observing just one or two symptoms in their mistress they can understand her desire. Even at the risk of their own lives they discreetly deliver the message of their *sakhī* to Her beloved and expediently arrange a rendezvous between them.

❧ Song Eight ❧

The musical mode is *kaṇṭā-rāga*, the rhythm, *ekatālī-tāla*.

Kaṇṭā-rāga – Śikhikaṇṭha, blue-throated Mahādeva, is walking along, holding a huge elephant tusk on his right shoulder with one hand and wielding a sword in the other. Dancing angels and other celestial beings glorify him with respectful prayers. On such an occasion, it is appropriate to present *kaṇṭā-rāga*.

VERSE 2

*nindati candanam indu-kiraṇam anu vindati khedam adhīram
vyāla-nilaya-milanena garalam iva kalayati malaya-samīram* (1)

sā virahe tava dīnā

mādhava manasija-vīśikha-bhayād iva bhāvanayā tvayi līnā
(refrain)

“In Your absence, She defames sandal paste. She finds the rays of the moon tormenting, and She considers the Malayan breeze, which only fans Her heat, as the poison of venomous snakes coiling the *candana* trees.

“O Mādhava! Deserted by You Rādhā is lying desolate. Fearing a rain of Cupid’s shafts She has embraced You in meditation to relieve the slow-burning fire of separation.”
(refrain)

Commentary

The *sakhī* informs Kṛṣṇa about Rādhā's agony in separation from Him. "Afraid of Kāmadeva's arrows, She has absorbed Herself in meditation and is fixed in *samādhi* on You. Just as a person who is afraid of being shot by arrows runs to take shelter of someone else to save his life, similarly She has taken shelter of You, *kāma-svarūpa*, the embodiment of amorous love. Once You are satisfied, there is no one to be feared. O Mādhava, in Your absence, Rādhā rebukes the sandalwood paste smeared on Her body; rather than soothing Her, it seems to have set Her body on fire. Even the cooling rays of the moon, igniting the fire of Her desires, set Her heart ablaze. And for Her the Malayan breeze has turned into poison from the breathing of the venomous snakes who wind around the *candana* trees of the Malaya Hills."

The phrase *manasija-viśikha-bhayād iva* (as if fearing Cupid's arrows) is a charming example of *utprekṣā-alānkāra*. This verse is also embellished by *rūpaka*- and *virodha-alānkāras*.

VERSE 3

*avirala-nipatita-madana-śarād iva bhavad-avanāya viśālam
sva-hṛdaya-marmaṇi varma karoti sajala-nalinī-dala-jālam
sā virahe tava dīnā... (2)*

"A barrage of Kāmadeva's arrows is ceaselessly falling upon Her heart. Because You are enshrined in its tender core, She is attempting to protect You there by covering it with a mystical shield of large moist lotus petals."

Commentary

Rādhā's continuous meditation on Kṛṣṇa has made Her heart one with His. Her *sakhī* tells Him: "O Mādhava, You

are always dwelling in the heart of Rādhā, who thinks to Herself, 'Kāmadeva is perpetually attacking Me with a steady rain of arrows but My Kṛṣṇa should not undergo the slightest difficulty.' So she covers Her vulnerable heart with large lotus petals bearing droplets of water (*jāla*). She is employing all possible measures to protect You."

The word *jāla* can also mean 'net.' By using this word, the *sakhī* implies, "She has covered Her heart with a net of lotus petals" to express Rādhā's sentiment, "May You never leave My heart even for a moment."

"Kāmadeva's quiver is inexhaustible. He releases his arrows one after another. O Mādhava, while languishing helpless in separation from You, She tries to contemplate a remedy. But how can She even think like this? The lotus petals are themselves exactly like Kāmadeva's arrows, therefore how can they be the shield? By using these lotus petals to protect You, She simply increases Her own suffering."

VERSE 4

*kusuma-viśikha-śara-talpam analpa-vilāsa-kalā-kamanīyam
vratam iva tava parirambha-sukhāya karoti kusuma-śayanīyam
sā virahe tava dīnā... (3)*

"She has fashioned an artistic bed of flowers for enjoying the delights of amour, yet it seems a bed of Kāmadeva's arrows. Vowing to obtain the bliss of Your tight embrace, She performs austerity, lying on Her bed of arrows."

Commentary

"O Mādhava, as She prepares the bed of flowers She burns in separation from You. This love-couch is the highest object in the arts of lovemaking, but to Her it is a bed of

Kāmadeva’s arrows.” The *sakhī* implies, “Just as one might observe a ghastly vow to attain some fabulous comforts, similarly, Rādhā is performing *śaraśayyā-vrata*, the severe austerity of lying on a bed of arrows, for the sake of attaining the rare happiness of Your embrace.”

VERSE 5

*vahati ca valita-vilocana-jaladharam ānana-kamalam udāram
vidhum iva vikaṭa-vidhantuda-danta-dalana-galitāmṛta-dhāram
sā virahe tava dīnā... (4)*

“A steady stream of tears flows from the restless eyes of Her lovely lotus face, just as ambrosia streams from the moon after being bitten by Rāhu’s dreadful fangs.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “O Mādhava, in Your absence, endless tears stream from Rādhā’s restless, wide eyes. It seems as if the fearsome Rāhu has gashed the moon with his teeth, unleashing a current of nectar.” Rādhā’s face is not like a lotus, but like the moon, and the teardrops flowing from Her eyes are like nectar.

This verse is an example of *upamā-alankāra*.

VERSE 6

*vilikhati rahasi kuraṅga-madena bhavantam asamaśara-bhūtam
praṇamati makaram adho vinidhāya kare ca śaramṇ nava-cūtam
sā virahe tava dīnā... (5)*

“She secretly paints a picture in musk of Your enchanting form, capturing You as Kāmadeva himself riding upon a *makara*. Then She draws mango-bud arrows in Your hand, and bows down before You.”

Commentary

“Sitting in seclusion Rādhā takes *kastūrī* and paints Your portrait, depicting You as Kāmadeva, the god of love, because other than You, who can madden Her heart with desire? You are the only one who can fulfill Her cherished longings. In Your hand She paints mango buds, the most powerful of Cupid’s shafts. She then places You upon a *makara*, the aquatic creature who serves as the insignia of Kāmadeva on his flag. And when finished, She reverentially bows down before Your portrait and offers heartfelt prayers for relief from the blazing fire of love.”

This verse includes *upamā-alankāra*.

VERSE 7

*prati-padam idam api nigadati mādharma tava caraṇe patitāham
tvayi vimukhe mayi sapadi sudhā-nidhir api tanute tanu-dāham
sā virāhe tava dīnā... (6)*

“She pleads again and again, ‘O Mādhava, I am falling at Your feet. As soon as You turn away from Me, even the moon-god, with his chalice of nectar, begins to shower fire upon My body.’”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says, “O Mādhava, with every step, at every moment She utters, ‘I fall at Your feet. Please do not turn Your back on Me. Whenever You are not satisfied with Me, even the moon Candramā, the ocean of cooling nectar, ignites a fire within My body.’”

The author of *Rasa-mañjarī* hints about the reason for Rādhā’s use of the word *mādhava*. The syllable *mā* refers to Lakṣmī, and *dhava* means *pati*, her Lord. When Kṛṣṇa stays close to Rādhā, even Lakṣmī, who sees Rādhā as a rival, cannot harm Her. But when Kṛṣṇa is indifferent to Rādhā,

Lakṣmī-devī's brother, Candramā, tortures Her for being His sister's competitor.

This verse includes *atiśayokti-alāṅkāra*. The description of Candramā acting against his nature is an example of *viroddha-alāṅkāra*.

VERSE 8

*dhyāna-layena puraḥ parikalpya bhavantam atīva durāpam
vilapati hasati viśidati roditi cañcati muñcati tāpam
sā virahe tava dīnā... (7)*

“Intently meditating on You, She imagines that You have appeared before Her. Sometimes She laments in separation, and the next moment She joyfully laughs. Sometimes She cries and sometimes, receiving Your embrace in a vision, She abandons all suffering.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says, “O Mādhava, unable to locate You after long search, Rādhā absorbs Herself in meditation instead and imagines that You are with Her. Feeling that You are directly before Her, She paints Your picture. When She looks at Your portrait, feeling You to be nearby, She laughs and jokes with You. Her mind billows with waves of joy, but when You do not embrace Her, Her loud, frenzied laughter transforms into a cry of lamentation. When Your imaginary form disappears, She tries to embrace it again. Then She thinks, ‘If My lover sees Me, He will certainly come under My control.’ Thus consoling Herself, She drops Her capriciousness and anguish.”

According to the commentary *Rasika-priyā*, the word *vilapati* (lamenting) should read *vilikhati* (painting). The heroine is displaying *unmada*, madness in separation. This verse features *dīpaka-alāṅkāra*.

VERSE 9

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam adhikam yadi manasā naṭanīyam
hari-virahākula-ballava-yuvati-sakhī-vacanam paṭhanīyam
sā virahe tava dīnā... (8)

If your heart yearns to relish Śrī Jayadeva's song, constantly recite the words of Rādhā's dear friend portraying Her anguish in separation from Śrī Hari.

Commentary

In this song Śrī Jayadeva depicts the youthful Rādhā perturbed by separation from Hari. The *sakhī* has revealed to Kṛṣṇa Rādhā's deep love for Him; her love-laden presentation should enact itself within the reader's heart. Acting is prominent in dramatic theory (*nāṭya*). Therefore the word *naṭanīyam* means 'worthy of being enacted;' it can also mean *rasanīya*, 'relishable,' and *āsvādanīya*, 'to be tasted.' In his *Nāṭya-sāstra*, Bharata Muni has stated *naṭa śabdo rase mukhyaḥ* – "The primary meaning of the word *naṭa* is *rasa*."

The purport of the phrase *śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam adhikam* is that the entire essence of *Śrī Gīta-govinda* is fully present in the *sakhī*'s words in this Eighth Song. Therefore it is to be revered and savored by pure devotees.



VERSE 10

āvāso vipināyate priya-sakhī-mālāpi jālāyate
tāpo 'pi śvasitena dāva-dahana-jvālā-kalāpāyate
sāpi tvad-virahena hanta hariṇī-rūpāyate hā katham
kandarpo 'pi yamāyate viracayan sārḍūla-vikrīḍitam

“Her residence transforms into a wild jungle, Her circle of intimate friends the hunter’s net. Her sighs of pain fan the flames blazing within. Alas! In separation from You She has become like a frightened doe. Playing just like a tiger, Kandarpa has become death personified threatening Her very life.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā’s confidante paints a picture of Her pitiful condition. Bereft of Kṛṣṇa’s company Rādhā, now pale and timid like a deer, has taken up residence in the forest. Seared by separation from Her beloved, She wants to flee, but cannot because Her dearest *sakhīs* are surrounding Her like a hunter’s net. Thus thwarted, She remains grieving, frustrated and alarmed like a confused deer trapped in a forest fire, not knowing what to do when Her own deep sorrowful sighs set Her ablaze like a forest fire or a shower of meteors. Only the sound “Alas! Alas!” comes from Her mouth. Kāmadeva is always favorably disposed to Rādhā when She is close to Kṛṣṇa, yet now, playing like a tiger, he appears as Yama, death personified, as if he wants to kill Her.

Amorous desire is like the play of a tiger who pounces upon an innocent deer. The meter of this verse is called *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*, tiger’s play. The meter is exactly like the play of Kāmadeva. The comparison of Rādhā with a deer is indeed appropriate. Her body is feeble and She is perplexed about what to do. Helpless and innocent, She is tortured by desire for Kṛṣṇa’s affection; all the while Cupid demonstrates his prowess like a cruel tiger.

Rādhā’s *sakhī* implies, “A discerning woman will entrust her heart to someone who showers her with affection, but Rādhā has fallen so much in love with You that She is living in an ocean of love. Therefore, how is it possible that You feel

nothing for Her? Only an animal will not reciprocate with someone's affection for him." Helpless and innocent, Rādhā has fallen in love with an unwilling candidate.

The *chanda* of this verse is *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*. The *alankāras* are *luptopamā* and *virodhābhāsa*.

❧ Song Nine ❧

The musical mode is *deśākhyā-rāga*, the rhythm, *ekatālī-tāla*. The rays of the moon illuminate all directions. The hero is a wrestler, whose hair stands on end in delight as he makes a sound by slapping his huge arms. At such a time it is appropriate to sing *deśākhyā-rāga*.

VERSE 11

stana-vinihitam api hāram udāram
sā manute kṛṣa-tanur iva bhāram (1)
rādhikā virahe tava keśava (refrain)

“Wasted away in separation, She finds the enchanting garland lying on Her breast a burden.

“Keśava, Rādhikā suffers in Your absence.” (refrain)

Commentary

In this song the *sakhī*'s description of Rādhā's agony takes a new twist. Painfully emaciated now in Kṛṣṇa's absence, She cannot bear even the weight of the lotus flower garland upon Her breast.

The author of the *Gīta-govinda-dīpikā* (commentary that illuminates the *Gīta-govinda*) explains that *kam* means *sukha*

(happiness). Kṛṣṇa is the controller of *kam*, therefore He is called Keśava. The word *keśa* means 'to bestow happiness upon all.' The syllable *va* in Keśava indicates the specific nectar (*amṛta*) that is the life and soul of young women. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa is called Keśava because He is the life and soul of all the Vraja maidens. This being the case, why is His sweetheart Rādhā so unhappy? Impelled by loneliness, She utters the most startling comments that cannot be repeated. Her ornaments are not only a burden, they are a curse; therefore She wants to toss them away.

VERSE 12

*sarasa-masṛṇam api malayaja-pankam
paśyati viṣam iva vapuṣi saśaṅkam
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (2)*

“She feels the moist sandal paste smoothed on Her body as dreadful poison. Keśava, Rādhikā suffers in Your absence.”

Commentary

Malayan sandal balm is smooth and refreshing, but She feels Her body is besmeared with virulent poison. In the agony of Her loneliness, it is far from pleasing.

VERSE 13

*śvasita-pavanam anupama-pariṇāham
madana-dahanam iva vahati sa-dāham
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (3)*

“Long sorrowful sighs heated by the flames of passion scorch Her body. Still, She holds on. Keśava, Rādhikā suffers without You.”

Commentary

The intense heat of separation within Her heart has become unbearable. Attempting to cool off, She lets out deep sighs, but instead of finding relief She feels the fire spreading throughout Her whole body. It is Cupid himself who is feeding this fire.

VERSE 14

*diśi diśi kirati sajala-kaṇa-jālam
nayana-nalinam iva vīgalita-nālam
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (4)*

“Her lotus eyes glance in all directions, scattering the rain of Her tears like water-drops from lotus flowers broken off their stems.”

Commentary

“Her tearful eyes are as charming as blue lotuses adorned with droplets of water. All directions are caught in the unbroken flow of Her tears that spread out like a net as She looks around in anticipation of Your return, thinking that You could appear from any direction. As a lotus flower has no fixed position once broken from its stem, Her eyes do not remain anywhere for more than a moment. You are the only object that can fix Her gaze.”

This verse includes *upamā-* and *utprekṣā-alāṅkāras*.

VERSE 15

*tyajati na pāṇi-talena kapoḷam
bāla-śaśinam iva sāyam alolam
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (5)*

“Her cheek, buried in Her reddish palm, resembles a crescent moon in the twilight sky when She sits off all alone.”

Commentary

“Confused about what to do, Rādhā has become paralyzed. Now in anxiety She holds the palm of Her hand to Her cheek and thinks, ‘Somehow or other, the day passes by, but what will happen when night falls? It will be an unending night.’ Her face is pale like the evening moon, and half covered by Her hand it resembles the crescent moon.” Just as twilight holds back the early evening moon, in Her sadness She supports Her lackluster face with the shield of Her hand.

VERSE 16

*nayana-viṣayam api kisalaya-talpam
gaṇayati vihita-hutāṣa-vikalpam
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (6)*

“She sees the bed of fresh petals and perceives it as a blazing fire.”

Commentary

“Traumatized by Your neglect, Rādhā looks upon a bed of fresh red petals as a fiery funeral pyre. Because Her eyes are attached to You She imagines objects directly before Her to be something else.”

Doubt about the identity of a substance arises from its similarity with another. As fire is red and burning, so are flower petals for deserted women. Therefore Rādhā mistakes the petals for fire.

VERSE 17

*harir iti harir iti japati sa-kāmam
viraha-vihita-maraṇeva nikāmam
rādhikā virahe tava keśava... (7)*

“With intense longing for You, She continuously chants ‘Hari, Hari,’ feeling that death is drawing near.”

Commentary

“She is burning so intensely in separation that it seems certain that Her life is about to finish. Just as those who are hopeless and wish to die chant ‘Śrī Hari’ day and night, Rādhā also, fervently desiring You, incessantly calls out ‘Hari.’”

Kṛṣṇa is called Hari because He destroys the suffering of those who take shelter of Him. Rādhā is murmuring with hope: “I may not attain Him in this life, but by My repeatedly uttering ‘Hari, Hari,’ surely He will be My dearmost beloved in My next life.”

VERSE 18

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam iti gītam
sukhayatu keśava-padam upanītam
rādhikā virāhe tava keśava... (8)*

May this song composed by Śrī Jayadeva bestow happiness upon those drawn to Keśava’s lotus feet.

Commentary

This song will certainly be a source of joy for the unalloyed devotees, because simply by their remembering Rādhā’s heartfelt feelings, their meditation will easily arrive at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet (*keśava-padam*). Alternatively, the poet has recited this song in the presence of pure Vaiṣṇavas. The etymology of *keśavaḥ padam* is *sthānam yasyā ’sau taṁ keśava-padam* – “Those Vaiṣṇavas who have attained Bhagavān are called *keśava-pada*.”

The song is embellished throughout by *upamā-alānkāra*. The meter is *mālācatuṣpadī-chanda*.

VERSE 19

sā romāñcati sīt-karoti vilapaty utkampate tāmyati
 dhyāyaty udbhramati pramīlati pataty udyāti mūrchaty api
 etāvaty atanu-jvare vara-tanur jīven na kiṃ te rasāt
 svar-vaidyā-pratima prasīdasi yadi tyakto 'nyathā hastakaḥ

“Deranged in separation She undergoes extreme transformations of passion: Her hairs stand on end, She heaves with remorse, weeps out loud, trembles with grief, meditates on You with rapt attention, wanders about Your pastime places, closes Her eyes in bewilderment, falls down, manages to stand up, faints and falls to the ground again. The lovesick girl is severely afflicted with a raging fever. If You feel pity, O best of physicians as skilled as the Aśvinī-kumāras, administer Your ambrosial medicine and rejuvenate Her. Otherwise She will die.”

Commentary

“Rādhā is inflamed with the virulent fever of *kāma*. Her condition is so critical that She is wallowing in the utter despair that heralds death. Not only thirsting for You consciously, She is besieged by involuntary transformations of love (*sāttvika-bhāvas*). These indicate that She is meeting with You internally, and thus She stays alive. This is evidence of Her pure love.”

The *sāttvika-bhāvas* are as follows:

*stambhaḥ svedo 'tha romāñcaḥ svarabhaṅgo 'tha vepathuḥ
 vaivaṅryam aśru pralayā- vityaṣṭau sāttvikā mataḥ*

Romāñcati – Its etymology is *romāñca vidyate yasya sa romāñcaḥ. romāñcita ity ārthaḥ. tadvad ācarati romāñcati* – “One who is thrilled with horripilation is called *romāñcita*, whose bodily hairs rise in rapture.”

Vaivarnya – “Her color fades due to Her incessantly remembering and worrying about You.”

Aśru – “She weeps when She remembers Your virtues.”

Vepathu – “She thinks, ‘How will I be able to tolerate the pain of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa?’ and trembles at the thought.”

Sveda – “On becoming mentally and physically debilitated, She perspires profusely.”

Stambha – “As She meditates upon You, She closes Her eyes as if all the activities of Her senses were about to cease.”

Vepathu – The second example of *vepathu* is indicated by the word *udbhramati*. “She wanders throughout the places of Your amorous pastimes in the hope of finding You.”

Svara-bhaṅga – Choking of the voice is indicated by the word *pramīlati*. “She closes Her eyes and remembers Your embrace and other acts of love. Thus She is unable to speak.”

Stambha – The second example of becoming stunned is intimated by the word *patati*, ‘She falls.’ She falls to the ground as She walks because Her body is so weak and emaciated.

Pralaya – Rādhā’s friend informs Kṛṣṇa about Her devastation (*pralaya*). The word *udyati*, ‘She gets up,’ indicates that after falling She stands up again, and then She experiences *murcchati* – She faints.

Rādhā’s dear *sakhī* addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “You are expert like the Aśvinī-kumāras, the heavenly physicians. If You care to be gracious with Rādhā, surely Her lovesickness (*kandarpa-vikāra*) will be cured. The use of a tonic is of no avail in the advanced stage of a raging fever. We try to relieve Her by covering Her with cool lotus petals and fanning Her with palm leaves, but nothing mitigates Her disease of

separation. Rather, it gradually increases. She has become so weak that all She can do is move Her hands. If She were to know that You do not agree to meet Her, then Her demise would be assured. She has given Her heart exclusively to You, so if You do not save Her life by meeting with Her, then You will surely incur the sin of turning Your back on a dependent.”

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *dīpakā-lāṅkāra* and *vipralambha-śṅgāra-rasa*. The heroine is *vipralabdhā*, devastated that her beloved has failed to keep their appointment. A female attendant who assists the heroine is called a *sakhī*. Hearing the *sakhī*'s poignant description of Śrī Rādhā's dire condition, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His heart now deeply moved, transforms from the *dakṣiṇa-nāyaka*, the guileless lover who maintains relations with many *nāyikās* simultaneously, and emerges in the next song as the *anukūla-nayaka*, the submissive lover who is faithful to just one consort.

VERSE 20

smarāturām daivata-vaidyā-hṛdyā
tvad-aṅga-saṅgāmṛta-mātra-sādhyām
vimukta-bādhām kuruṣe na rādhām
upendra vajrād api dāruṇo 'si

“You are a better doctor than the celestial physicians. Only the nectar of intimate contact with You will save lovesick Rādhā from the torments of Cupid. If You do not heal Her disease of amorous desire, O Upendra, then we will know that You are harder than a thunderbolt.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* has decorated Kṛṣṇa with two titles: (1) *Daivata-vaidyā-hṛdyā*. Kṛṣṇa is even more skilled and charming than the celestial physicians, the *Aśvinī-kumāras*.

(2) *Upendra*. Kṛṣṇa previously appeared as Śrī Vāmanadeva from the womb of Mother Aditi to bestow auspiciousness upon the aggrieved demigods. In that incarnation, His name was Upendra because He was the younger brother of Indra. This address alludes to Kṛṣṇa’s personal oath to always protect His dependants.

The *sakhī* confides in Kṛṣṇa, “Rādhā is victimized by Cupid’s disease: unfulfilled *kāma*. The only medicine for this incurable condition is to be united with You. The touch of Your limbs is like nectar for Her. This will not involve any difficulty whatsoever on Your part. Therefore, if You do not bring Her back to life by Your *aṅga-saṅga*, then surely You are even harder than a thunderbolt.”

Appropriately, the *chanda* of this verse is *upendra-vajrā* (Upendra’s thunderbolt).

VERSE 21

*kandarpa-jvara-saṁjvarātura-tanor āścaryam asyās ciraṁ
cetaś candana-candramaḥ kamalinī-cintāsu santāmyati
kintu klānti-vaśena śītalatanuṁ tvām ekam eva priyaṁ
dhyāyanti rahasi sthitā katham api kṣiṇā kṣaṇaṁ prāṇiti*

“She lies gravely ill, smoldering in the fever of passion. How astonishing it is that when She thinks of soothing sandal paste, cooling moonshine and lotus ponds, Her fever only escalates. Alas, in a secluded place the feeble girl meditates on You – Her very cooling, sole lover – and somehow breathes some moments more.”

Commentary

“O Mādhava, only the hope of meeting with You keeps Her alive. Her fever has reached *sannipāta*, the critical condition when all methods of mitigating the fever are

useless. Sandalwood paste, cooling moonshine or lotus flowers simply do not work. Just the thought of them increases Her temperature. Sometimes the rising fever which has sapped Her strength suddenly drops, and Her body turns cold from the perspiration. Pining for You, She sees only You in Her uneasy heart. Wasting away in such hard times, She still considers a moment's meditation on You as a grand festival and thus is able to hold onto Her life-air.

“If You are wondering how She is still alive and breathing, then the answer is that You are Her only beloved and She nourishes the hope of attaining the touch of Your cool body. This hope alone gives Her a few more moments to live. If You do not go to Her this very second, You may never see Her alive again.”

This verse includes *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *virodhā-alaṅkāra* and *adbhuta-rasa*.

VERSE 22

*kṣaṇam api virahaḥ purā na sehe
nayana-nimīlana-khinnayā yayā te
śvasiti katham asau rasāla-śākhām
cira-viraheṇa vilokya puṣpitāgrām*

“When She would gaze upon You and Her eyes would blink, that brief instant of separation would throw Her into utter despair. So how will She survive this long loneliness, especially with the mango trees coming into full blossom in front of Her eyes?”

Commentary

“O Keśava, previously Rādhā always stayed close to You, unable to bear even a second's absence from You. The momentary blinking of Her eyes caused great anguish, and

She would curse Brahmā for making blinking eyelids, which just briefly obstructed Her vision of Your face. So how can She tolerate this prolonged separation, which is aggravated by seeing the blossoming mango trees? Every branch is flowing with *rasa*, causing the tips to burgeon with fresh buds. It is now springtime, when deserted heroines undergo pain akin to death. How does She continue to breathe? O Keśava, don't lose a second. Go to Her right now.

“There is one thing keeping Her alive. She thinks, ‘Just as I am stirred with desire from seeing the mango blossoms, Mādhava must be feeling the same thing for Me. Therefore, He will certainly come to meet Me.’”

Appropriately, this verse is composed in the meter called *puṣpitāgrā* (flowering tips).

VERSE 23

*vṛṣṭi-vyākula-gokulāvana-rasād uddhṛtya govardhanam
bibhrad vallava-vallabhābhir adhikānandāc ciraṁ cumbitaḥ
darpeṇeva tad-arpitādharma-taṭi sindūra-mudrāṅkito
bāhur gopa-tanos tanotu bhavatām śreyāṁsi kamsa-dviṣaḥ*

When the residents of Gokula were distressed by heavy rainfall, that young *gopa*, the enemy of Kamsā, lifted Giri Govardhana with His arm to protect them. With great exultation myriads of beautiful maidens long kissed that arm which proudly bore the bright vermilion from their lips. May His arm grant auspiciousness to all.

Commentary

Maṅgalāntāni ca śāstrāṇi prathante – “A scripture which is auspicious in the beginning, the middle and the end will have far-reaching effect.” Accordingly, the poet Śrī Jayadeva concludes Act Four with an invocation of auspiciousness,

just as he has done throughout the entire composition. “May Kṛṣṇa’s arm bestow good fortune upon the reciters and hearers of this *Gīta-govinda*.”

This verse describes the unique aspect of Kṛṣṇa’s arm featured in this pastime. In a rage, Indra challenged the enemy of Kāṁsa by inciting the *puṣkara* and *āvartaka* clouds to bombard Gokula with terrifying torrents of rain. Seeing the anxiety of the cowherd folk, Kṛṣṇa immediately uprooted Govardhana Mountain and held it aloft upon His hand to protect them. In this way, Kṛṣṇa’s arm manifested the mellow of chivalry (*vīra-rasa*) and thus stimulated romantic emotions (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*).

The *gopīs* thrilled to see Kṛṣṇa holding Govardhana, and they kissed His arm. As they beheld His cleverness and sweet beauty, they smudged His arm with the brilliant red gloss from their lips. May that arm, stamped with His intoxicating good fortune, bestow auspiciousness upon all.

The title of this act, *Snigdha-madhusūdāna*, “Affectionate Madhusūdāna,” implies that when Kṛṣṇa heard about Rādhā’s pathetic condition, He was deeply touched and fell inert.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚĀ COMMENTARY ON ACT FOUR
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED SNIGDHA-MADHUSŪDĀNA,
“AFFECTIONATE MADHUSŪDĀNA.”



Act Five

SĀKĀNĶṢA-PUNḌARĪKĀKṢAḤ – PUNḌARĪKĀKṢA PINING AWAY

VERSE 1

*aham iha nivasāmi yāhi rādhām
anunaya mad-vacanena cānayethāḥ
iti madhuripuṇā sakhī niyuktā
svayam idam etya punar jagāda rādhām*

(When Kṛṣṇa heard the moving account of Rādhā's pitiful condition from Her intimate friend, He suggested,) "I will wait here. You go to Rādhā, pacify Her with My humble appeal and then bring Her here." Entrusted by the enemy of Madhu, Her *sakhī* went back to Rādhā and delivered His message.

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā's intense agony of separation has just been described in the songs of Act Four. Upon hearing of Her dire distress from Her *sakhī*, Kṛṣṇa realized His blunder, and immediately felt ashamed, as well as apprehensive. Although He was eager to meet with His eternal consort, He did not go to Her in person. Rather, He expressed His remorse to Her *sakhī* and sent her to placate Rādhā's pique with soothing words. He instructed the *sakhī*, "Humbly supplicate Rādhā on My behalf. Devise a way to make Her happy somehow or other, and then bring Her to Me. I will wait for Her here by the Yamunā." Receiving this instruction, the *sakhī* went to inform Rādhā of the news.

Kṛṣṇa's heart was now pounding with ardent longing (*sākāṅkṣa*) for Śrī Rādhā, His eternal lover. Hence Act Five is entitled *Sākāṅkṣa-puṇḍarīkākṣa*. The name Puṇḍarīkākṣa, meaning 'lotus-eyed one,' attracts the reader's attention to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supremely enchanting eyes. In the Vedas His eyes are compared to red lotus flowers – *tasya yathā puṇḍarīkam evam evākṣiṇī*.

The meter of this verse is *puṣpītāgrā-chanda*.

❧ Song Ten ❧

The musical mode is *deśavarāḍī-rāga*. The rhythm is *rūpaka-tāla*. A heroine, with beautiful hair like a heavenly angel, decorates her hands with bangles and her ears with *devapuṣpa* flowers. When she fans her beloved with a yak-tail whisk and enjoys delightful pastimes with him, it is appropriate to introduce *deśīvarāḍī-rāga*.

VERSE 2

*vahati malaya-samīre madanam upanidhāya
sphuṭati kusuma-nikare virahi-hṛdaya-dalanāya (1)
sakhī! sīdati tava virahe vanamālī (refrain)*

As the Malayan breeze slowly drifts along, saturating everyone with a mood for amour, a profusion of flowers bursts into blossom and rips apart the hearts of lonely lovers.

Vanamālī is crushed by sorrow without You, friend.
(refrain)

Commentary

Rādhā's *sakhī* tells Her, "O friend, now it is springtime and the Malayan breeze is gently moving along, anguishing

forlorn lovers. Arousing romantic sentiments the hosts of blossoming flowers break their hearts. Without You Kṛṣṇa is utterly dejected. Go to Him!”

Here Kṛṣṇa is called Vanamālī, ‘He who wears a forest-flower garland.’ “The only thing keeping Him alive is that He is wearing a garland that You made for Him.”

VERSE 3

*dahati śiśira-mayūkhe maraṇam anukaroti
patati madana-viśikhe vilapati vikalataro ’ti
sakhi! sīdati tava virahe vanamālī (2)*

“Cool moonshine scorches Him, heralding His death. Flowers falling from the trees pierce His heart like love’s arrows. He bitterly laments His destitute condition.”

Commentary

“Moonlight cannot soothe Vanamālī. Shattered with longing for You, He feels death personified hovering over Him. Flames seem to be emanating from the moon and setting Him ablaze. He is behaving exactly like a person who is about to die. Leaves and flowers falling from the trees feel like a shower of Kāmadeva’s arrows assaulting His heart. Overwhelmed with grief He lies weeping on His flower bed, now a bed of arrows.”

VERSE 4

*dhvanati madhupa-samūhe śravaṇam apidadhāti
manasi valita-virahe niśi niśi rujam upayāti
sakhi! sīdati tava virahe vanamālī (3)*

“He shuts His ears to the swarms of humming bees. As He waits for You night after night, disappointed, His heart becomes more and more crippled in separation.”

Commentary

“The humming of the swarms of bees filling all four directions unpleasantly grates against Him, forcing Him to block His ears. Every night He thinks that You are by His side, but when He realizes that You are not actually there, His sorrow intensifies. Consumed by loneliness, He tosses and turns fitfully when He lies down to rest.”

In this verse, the *sakhī* has described *vipralambha-uddīpana-vibhāva*.

VERSE 5

vasati vipina-vitāne tyajati lalita-dhāma
luṭhati dharāṇi-śayane bahu vilapati tava nāma
sakhī! sīdati tava virahe vanamālī (4)

“He has taken up residence in the forest, abandoning His comfortable home. He rolls about on the ground, desperately calling out Your name.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says, “Rādhā, deserted by You, Vanamālī has left His palace of delights, preferring the canopy of the jungle. He sleeps on the bare earth. Feeling the pangs of separation He tosses and turns the whole night, and repeatedly calls for You, ‘Ha Rādhe! Ha Rādhe!’”

VERSE 6

bhaṇati kavi-jayadeve viraha-vilasitena
manasi rabhasa-vibhave harir udayatu sukṛtena
sakhī! sīdati tava virahe vanamālī (5)

May Śrī Jayadeva's song describing Hari's desolation infuse the singers' hearts with good fortune and immerse them in these separation pastimes, thus inducing Him to appear within.

Commentary

The poet Śrī Jayadeva avows that the reciters and audience of this Tenth Song, entitled *Garuḍapada*, will accumulate immense piety. Consequently Śrī Hari's separation pastimes will enrich their hearts with sustained enthusiasm. May Bhagavān appear in the hearts of those who are ardently longing for divine pleasure.

This poem may also be sung in *kedāra-rāga*. Kṛṣṇa is Rādhā's *prāṇa-nātha*, the very breath of Her life, to whose lotus feet She offers Her vital airs millions and millions of times over. Therefore, as soon as She heard about His dire condition, She swooned and tumbled to the ground. Her *sakhī* fell silent, unable to speak another word. For this reason, this song has been completed in only five verses.

VERSE 7

*pūrvam yatra samam tvayā rati-pater āsāditāḥ siddhayas
tasminn eva nikuṅja-manmatha-mahā-tīrthe punar mādhaveḥ
dhyāyaṁs tvām anīśam japann api tavaivālāpa-mantrāvalīm
bhūyas tvat-kuca-kumbha-nirbhara-parīrambhāmṛtam vāñchati*

“In that most sacred place – Cupid's private love garden – where Mādhava perfected His amorous skills with You, He contemplates You incessantly, murmuring the *mantras* of His previous romantic conversations with You, yearning to again taste the nectar of liberation that flows in the tight embrace of Your ample breasts.”

Commentary

Thereafter, the *sakhī* sprinkled the refreshing water of Kṛṣṇa's qualities upon Rādhā to bring Her back to consciousness. She tried to comfort Rādhā by convincing Her that Mādhava's heart sought refuge in Her alone, thus preparing Her as the *abhisārikā-nāyikā* about to rendezvous with Her lover. "Rādhā! Previously, meeting with You in Cupid's holy abode – that secluded pleasure grove – Mādhava attained great mystic powers in the amorous arts, like kissing and embracing. He desires to attain that same nectar today.

"The firm embrace of Your full breasts is nectar and the water of that sacred pilgrimage place is also nectar. Meditating on Your beauty and virtues, He is waiting for You there. Day and night he utters the *mantra* of His bygone romantic talks with You. A mystic perfection is only attained by chanting a *mantra* and meditating in a secluded place before a deity. Mādhava wants to attain *kāma-siddhi* in your presence in the form of your satisfaction in the *kāma-tirtha* of the secluded forest groves. You are the deity of the *nikuñja*, and Your amorous repartee has become the *mantra* to attain *kāma-siddhi*. By this *mantra*, He wants to attain ambrosia in the form of tightly embracing Your raised, round breasts."

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *kāvyaṅga-alankāra*.



❀ Song Eleven ❀

The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga*; the rhythm is *ekatālī-tāla*.

VERSE 8

rati-sukha-sāre gatam abhisāre madana-manohara-veṣam
na kuru nitambini gamana-vilambanam anusara taṁ hṛdayeṣam (1)

dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre vasati vane vanamālī
pīna-payodhara-parisara-mardana-cañcala-kara-yuga-śālī
 (refrain)

“O handsome-hipped girl! The beloved of Your heart, fascinatingly attired as the god of love, awaits You in the appointed place, perfect for savoring amour. Do not delay. Go at once and meet Him.

“Vanamālī, whose hands are always restless to press the *gopīs*’ breasts, is waiting in a forest bower on the bank of the Yamunā, where the gentle Malayan breeze wafts.” (refrain)

Commentary

Encouraging Rādhā to leave for Her appointment with Kṛṣṇa, Her *sakhī* says, “Nitambini, O broad-hipped beauty! You already move slowly due to the weight of Your hips, so don’t waste another minute or else You will be late for Your tryst. Hurry so that You will reach the appointed rendezvous shortly after Your beloved. The possessor of Your heart, Vanamālī, beautifully dressed like Madana, is already on His way and He will be anxiously watching out for Your arrival.”

Rādhā’s *sakhī* clearly describes that meeting place where amorous euphoria is fostered. “There is a *vetasī* forest on the bank of the Yamunā, where the drifting air slowly moves along. The forest is dense and isolated, and this gentle breeze

is indeed pleasant at the time of lovemaking. Keśava has dressed Himself appropriately for *madana-sevā*, the service of Cupid, and He has gone for *abhisāra*.” To set out for a rendezvous on a moonlit night, after decorating and dressing suitably for the occasion, is called *abhisāra*. “Quickly, quickly, go at once and meet with Vanamālī in that love bower.”

VERSE 9

*nāma-sametam kṛta-saṅketam vādayate mṛdu-veṇum
bahu manute tanu te tanu-saṅgata-pavana-calitam api reṇum
dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (2)*

“He is softly playing His flute, weaving Your name into the melody. When the specks of dust that have touched Your body are carried to Him on the breeze, He prizes His good fortune.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* is assuring Rādhā, “If You have no faith in my words, then just listen to the sound of Vanamālī’s flute coming from that very place. The flute is singing Your name, signaling You to meet Him and also showing You the path. Perhaps You are doubtful and are thinking, ‘I will definitely be cheated when I arrive. He must have gone there to meet another girl.’ But I can assure You that Your doubt is simply unfounded. Believe me when I tell You that He considers the specks of dust raised by Your feet to be valuable jewels; indeed, He receives them with great honor as they come to Him on the breeze.”

VERSE 10

*patati patatre vicalati patre saṅkita-bhavad-upayānam
racayati śayanam sacakita-nayanam paśyati tava panthānam
dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (3)*

“Hearing the slightest sound – a bird landing on a tree, a fluttering leaf – He imagines You have come. He joyfully prepares the flower bed, and anxiously watches the path for Your arrival.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* informs Rādhā, “The slight sounds – falling leaves, movements of the air, or birds coming and going in the trees – arouse Keśava’s anticipation. ‘She must be coming.’ With joyful enthusiasm, He busies Himself in quickly refreshing the bed and with restless eyes glances towards the path of Your expected arrival.”

VERSE 11

*mukharam adhīram tyaja mañjīram ripum iva keliṣu lolam
cala sakhi kuñjam satimira-puñjam śīlaya nīla-nicolam
dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (4)*

“*Sakhī*, remove Your anklebells, those enemies that betray Your amorous play with their loud chatter. Don this dark cloak and hasten to that dense, dark *kuñja*.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says, “O Rādhā, it is getting dark; this is just the right time to go for rendezvous. *Abhisārikā* heroines meet their lovers in the dark, so set off for that secret forest grove now. My dear friend, remove these restless anklebells. They are informers: their talkative tinkling betrays You when walking and playing at love. Like enemies, they open their mouths without understanding the nature of the occasion, and stand in the way of the fulfillment of Your desire. Cover Yourself with this blue shawl which will mask Your golden effulgence as You move along, making You one with the darkness (or one with Śyāma).”

VERSE 12

*urasi murārer upahita-hāre ghana iva tarala-balāke
 taḍid iva pīte rati-viparīte rājasi sukṛta-vipāke
 dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (5)*

“Soon You will reap Your reward from pious deeds. You will dominate in the play of love as Your pearl necklace, looking like a beautiful flock of cranes flitting across the cloudy sky, falls on Murāri’s dark chest. You will shine like a streak of lightning upon the dark raincloud of His torso.”

Commentary

Rādhā’s *sakhī* says, “O Gaurāṅgī, if You go there, do you know how much You will gain? You are so fortunate that You will lie on Murāri’s chest, thereby becoming His garland. Reclining there, You will glimmer like a flash of lightning ornamenting His cloudy dark chest. Your pearl necklace will fall on Murāri’s breast, recalling a flock of white cranes flying past the clouds. Go and enjoy *viparīta-rati* and triumph over Him.”

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments on the meaning of *upahita-hāre*: “What is His chest like? It is *upahita-hāre*, ‘one from which ornaments have been removed,’ that is, because You are playing the man’s role, You remove all the ornaments that could be an obstacle in Your embrace. Alternatively, His chest is ‘one on which ornaments have been placed,’ that is, while embracing Him, You quickly place the pearls from Your neck on His chest to make manifest His special beauty.”

VERSE 13

*vigalita-vasanaṁ pariḥṛta-rasanaṁ ghaṭaya jaghanam apidhānam
 kisalaya-śayane pañkaja-nayane nidhim iva harṣa-nidhānam
 dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (6)*

“O blue lotus-eyed one, shed Your silken cloth and untie Your waistbells. Place the treasured jewel of Your thighs on the bed of fresh, tender leaves. This will give Him great delight.”

Commentary

In the previous verse, the *sakhī* awakened Rādhā's zest for *viparīta-rati*, when the heroine plays the aggressive lover. Now Her *sakhī* arouses Rādhā's eagerness to experience Kṛṣṇa as the active element in Their love play. “O Rādhā, Your eyes are as captivating as lotus flowers. When You see how Kṛṣṇa is ten million times more ravishing than the god of passion, the cloth covering Your hips will slip off by itself, and Your noisy waistbells will be cast aside. Then You should place the precious jewel of Your hips – the receptacle of bliss which provides for Hari's happiness – on the flower bed He has crafted for the occasion.”

VERSE 14

harir abhimānī rajanir idānīm iyam api yāti virāmam
kuru mama vacanaṁ satvara-racanaṁ pūraya madhuripu-kāmam
dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (7)

“Hari is being stubborn. The night is just about to end, so accept my advice. Go at once without further delay, and fulfill the desires of the enemy of Madhu.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “Madhuripu has a mind of His own.” The implied meaning is, “Śyāmasundara's heart and mind are at odds with each other. He is trying very hard to appease You, so do not worry that He will meet with anyone else. Still, because He is headstrong and, remarkably enough, feels the

need to protect His own dignity, He cannot come to You; and at the same time, He cannot get You out of His mind. Sooner or later, You will have to approach Him, so why not go now? The night is passing and the opportunity to meet will be lost. Do as I say – go to Mādhava immediately and fulfill His desires.”

VERSE 15

*śrī-jayadeve kṛta-hari-seve bhaṇati parama-ramaṇīyam
pramudita-hṛdayaṁ harim ati-sadayaṁ namata sukṛta-kamaṇīyam
dhīra-samīre yamunā-tīre... (8)*

O gentle saints, reciting this enchanting poetry penned by Hari’s servant Jayadeva, bow down to Śrī Hari, who is most charming, merciful and blissful-hearted.

Commentary

Poet Jayadeva concludes, “O devotees of Bhagavān! Because this endearing conversation has been composed by one who is ever absorbed in serving the Lord, Hari is eternally pleased with it. So, when the devotees deeply meditate on it, the lovable Śrī Kṛṣṇa grants them a *sphūr̥ti* of His delightful pastimes, and thus He becomes the object of everyone’s desires. With glad heart may you all prostrate before He who is exuberant, causelessly merciful, exceptionally sweet, virtuous and adorned with all desirable qualities.”

VERSE 16

*vikirati muhuḥ śvāsān āśāḥ puro muhur īkṣate
praviśati muhuḥ kuñjaṁ guñjan muhur bahu tāmyati
racayati muhuḥ śayyāṁ paryākulaṁ muhur īkṣate
madana-kadana-klāntaḥ kānte priyas tava vartate*

“He Kāmini, O passionate girl! Burning with amorous desire, Your beloved is waiting for You in the seclusion of the *nikuñja*. Sighing and apprehensively looking all around, again and again He laments in indistinct words. Time after time He comes out of the blossoming bower only to return again disappointed. Over and over He refreshes the flower-bed and looks down the path in expectation of Your arrival.”

Commentary

The poet concludes this act with the *sakhī* first informing Śrī Rādhā about Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s condition and then presenting many arguments to convince Her to meet with Him. “In Your absence Madhusūdana is desolate, His desires unfulfilled. He repeatedly sighs in disappointment, ‘Ahhh, You have not come yet.’ He comes out of the *latā-kuñja* looking expectantly for You in all directions, then He goes back in, thinking that You might have hidden Yourself inside. He goes in and out over and over. Why? Because He is thinking, ‘She is not here yet? Maybe She is on Her way. Perhaps She has stopped for something or maybe She is afraid.’ Unable to understand why You have not come, He mulls over all these different possibilities. Then again He thinks, ‘Anyway, all this guesswork and speculation is useless. She will surely come.’ With this conviction He begins to make the bed.”

The word *kadana* implies that Śrī Kṛṣṇa thinks, “Because of Her ever fresh and ever increasing love for Me, She will definitely come.” Therefore once again He eagerly continues to watch for Her arrival.

This verse includes *dīpaka-alankāra*. The meter is *hariṇī*.

VERSE 17

*tvad-vāmyena samaṁ samagram adhunā tigmāṁsur astaṁ gato
 govindasya manorathena ca samaṁ prāptaṁ tamaḥ sāndratām
 kokānām karuṇa-svanena sadṛśī dīrghā mad-abhyarthanā
 tan-mugdhe viphalam vilambanam asau ramyo 'bhisāra-kṣaṇaḥ*

“O Mugdhe, bewildered one! The sun has fully set and so has Your contrary mood. The darkness has become extremely dense, as has Govinda’s desire. My request has become futile, just like the continuous crying of the lonely *cakravāka* bird, who uselessly laments in pathetic tones throughout the night. I have been imploring You from the core of my heart for a long time. To delay any longer is useless. The delightful time for *abhisāra* has arrived.”

Commentary

“*He Rādhe!* O bewildered one! Now is the perfect time to go to Your beloved. You became indignant, helplessly impelled by Your contrary nature, and refused to go. But now there are no obstacles to Your tryst, since Your *māna*, along with the sun, has set. As the darkness of the night has grown deep, the ardent desires of love for You within Govinda’s heart have flourished; and His longing to meet You has also intensified a millionfold.

“During the night the male and female *cakravāka* birds, being far away from each other, let out long pitiful cries of agony due to extreme feelings of separation. Just as their sustained cries go in vain, my repeated requests for You to meet Kṛṣṇa have also proved futile. O Mugdhe, naive girl! Do not miss this opportunity. The time for *abhisāra* is just ripe. The darkness is impenetrable and Your dearest beloved is

eager for You. Do not delay on the pretext of dressing and decorating Yourself. Go at once!”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*Sakhī-prakārāṇām*, 8.107) to describe how Rādhā's *sakhī* (identified by Rūpa Gosvāmī as Sudevī) is encouraging Her to go for *abhisāra*.

This verse features *sahokti-alāṅkāra* and *śardūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*.

VERSE 18

*āsleṣād anu cumbanād anu nakhollekhād anu svāntaja-prodbodhād
anu sambhramād anu ratārambhād anu pṛitayoḥ
anyārthaṁ gatayor bhramān militayoḥ sambhāṣanair jānator
dampatyor iha ko na ko na tamasi vrīḍā-vimiśro rasah*

O *sakhī*, once before, being so much in love, You went for *abhisāra* on a night as dark as this. After wandering about for quite some time, You met Your beloved by chance, but in the pitch dark You both thought You had encountered a stranger. Only after conversing did You recognize each other, upon which You immediately embraced, kissed and scratched each other. As desire rose to dizzying heights, You both lost composure and excitedly engaged in love play. Your amorous pleasure, tinged with shyness, left both of You feeling an astonishing type of affection. O beautiful one, what delight is awaiting You in this darkness! Therefore, go as quickly as possible to Your sylvan love chamber. How can You possibly neglect such a golden opportunity?”

Commentary

Having openly described how anxious Kṛṣṇa is to meet with Rādhikā, Her *sakhī* now speaks this verse beginning

with *āśleṣād anu* to increase Rādhā's eagerness for *abhisāra*. Kṛṣṇa had instructed the *sakhī* to remind His sweetheart about a previous meeting recounted in *Gīta-govinda's* very first verse – *meghair meduram*.

Her *sakhī* reports to Rādhikā, “Kṛṣṇa remembers how once before, when the night was pitch black with a thick carpet of clouds covering the sky, You suddenly met each other in the dark. Due to long separation and the natural embarrassment inherent in *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, You were hesitant at first to engage in amour, thinking, ‘How can We act so suddenly?’ Nevertheless You overcame Your bashfulness and enjoyed together, experiencing all the varieties of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. Govinda has recaptured that moment, ‘What didn’t We taste? I long to relish that same enjoyment again.’”

By conveying Śrī Kṛṣṇa's desire, the *sakhī* encourages Śrī Rādhikā. To further arouse Her enthusiasm, she describes the details of Their past experience: “Full of anguish because You had not seen one another for a long time, the two of You, unbeknownst to each other, set out to arrange a tryst. After roaming about for some time, You suddenly came upon each other unexpectedly. And then what happened? A *rasa* mingled with bashfulness arose. Why? At first You did not recognize each other and were shy, thinking you had encountered an unknown person. Upon exchanging a few words You realized, ‘Oh, this is My own beloved.’ At this, You impetuously embraced, then You kissed and after that You scratched each other. As amorous desire soared high, in full eagerness You commenced Your amatory enjoyment in great haste, time being short and fearing that you might be seen. Thus You both experienced the astonishing and unprecedented bliss of *vrīḍā-miśrita-śṛṅgāra-rasa*, erotic ecstasies mixed with feelings of shame. Are there any

mellows beyond this? No, all flavors are incorporated in this *vṛīḍā-miśrita-rasa*.

“Kṛṣṇa is ever eager to meet with You again. Therefore, it is not proper to delay any longer.” Thus reminding Rādhikā of a previous romantic encounter, Her *sakhī* urges, “Fulfill this desire as the two of You did once before. O Rādhā, You are also anxious to meet with Him. Go and consummate Your and Kṛṣṇa’s deepest longings.”

When lovers meet, they undergo a sequence of emotions. The word *bhramāt* means ‘roaming.’ They meet while wandering about and come to identify each other in the dense darkness only after speaking. They may have set out with other purposes and then meet by chance along the way. Recognizing their lover, they suddenly embrace as *sāttvika-bhāvas* arise, but both still remain inhibited, afraid that someone might see them. Now losing all inhibition they start their love play, and experience the happiness of *rasa*. When *kāma* escalates, they indulge in varieties of playful exchanges as they laugh and speak joking words to each other. Finally, when their lovemaking, *rati-kṛīḍā*, is fully accomplished and they are both feeling complete joy, they realize the full sweetness and astonishment of amorous love, *rasa-rāja-śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the supreme emperor of all mellows.

The entire sequence of the development of intimate amorous enjoyment (*cauryarata-krama*) has been explained by Bharata Muni:

*āśleṣa-cumbana-nakha-kṣata-kāma-bodha-
śīghratva-maithunam ananta-sukha-prabodham
prītis tato 'pi rasa-bhāvanam eva kāryam
evam nitāntanaturāḥ suciram ramante*

“Embracing, kissing, scratching with nails, quickly expressing amorous desire – such amorous union brings unlimited pleasure. Love is to be expressed, and then the *rasas* are relished. Thus, without any fatigue, lovers enjoy for a very long time.”

Dīpaka-, *samuccaya-* and *bhrāntimān-alaṅkāras* are prominent in this verse. The meter is *śardūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*.

VERSE 19

*sa-bhaya-cakitaṁ vinyasyantīm dṛṣaṁ timire pathi
prati-taru muhuḥ sthitvā mandaṁ padāni vitanvatīm
katham api rahaḥ prāptām aṅgair anaṅga-taraṅgibhiḥ
sumukhi subhagaḥ paśyan sa tvām upaitu kṛtārthatām*

“O beautiful girl! Timidly looking around as You tread the dark path with fright, stopping at each tree and then gradually resuming Your steps, You move along with waves of desire billowing through You till You finally reach the secluded rendezvous. When Your hero sees You He feels greatly blessed.”

Commentary

“Being with You, O stunningly beautiful one, means everything to Hari,” the *sakhī* tells Rādhā. “When You set out from here, You will move cautiously along the path in the dense darkness. It is only natural to be afraid in the dark, and You are also apprehensive that someone might see You. In amazement You will think, ‘I am actually on My way on this black night to the rendezvous (*saṅketa-sthāna*) to meet with My *prāṇa-nātha*.’ And at the same time, You will wonder, ‘When I arrive there, will I meet with Keśava or not?’ Because of Your heavy breasts and hips, You cannot walk fast and You tire quickly, so stop and wait beneath every

tree before going on. Hari will burst with joy when He sees You arrive at the meeting place in this enfeebled condition, with waves of *anaṅga* rippling through Your body. Feeling His life successful, Hari will plunge into turbulent waves of excitement.”

This verse is embellished by *atiśyukti-alankāra*. The meter is *hariṇī*.

VERSE 20

*rādhā-mugdha-mukhāravinda-madhupas trailokya-mauli-sthali
nepathyocita-nīla-ratnam avanī-bhārāvatārāntakaḥ
svacchandaṁ vraja-sundarī-jana-manas-toṣa-pradoṣodayaḥ
kaṁsa-dhvaṁsana-dhūmaketur avatu tvām devakī-nandanah*

He is the bumblebee who drinks the honey of Rādhā's charming lotus face. He is the sapphire ornamenting Vṛndāvana, which is itself the crest jewel of the three worlds. He is the twilight effortlessly satisfying the beautiful girls of Vraja. He is death incarnate annihilating the wicked Daityas and Dānavas who overburden the Earth. He is the comet Dhūmaketu foreboding Kāmsa's destruction. May that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, protect you all.

Commentary

After describing Rādhā's and Kṛṣṇa's emotions during separation, the poet portrays the *śṛṅgāra-rasa* evoked by Their meeting. In this verse, Śrī Jayadeva bestows blessings upon the reciters and audience of this poem.

Mugdha-mukhāravinda-madhupaḥ – Rādhā's face is like a lotus flower. As a bumblebee frequents the lotus flower to drink the nectar of its pollen, similarly Kṛṣṇa tastes the sweetness of Rādhā's lotus face. Therefore He has been

addressed as *mugdha-madhupa*, the bewildered bumblebee. This part of the verse indicates Their pastimes of meeting.

Trailokya-mauli-sthalī-nepathyocita-nīla-ratnaḥ – He is a sapphire upon the crown of the three worlds; that is, He beautifies the best places in the entire creation (the *kuñjas*). The phrase *nepathyocita* means ‘a befitting ornament.’

Avanī-bhārāvantārāntakaḥ – When demons such as Śiśupāla, Dantavakra and Kāmsa took birth to increase the burden of the Earth, Kṛṣṇa appeared to bring about their destruction. The word *antaka* means *yama*, or death personified. Kṛṣṇa is death for those who are a burden on the Earth.

Svacchandam vraja-sundarī-jana-manas-toṣodayaḥ – Kṛṣṇa nourishes the hearts of the strikingly beautiful *vraja-gopīs* like twilight. As the rising moon at dusk pleases women by setting the scene for them to meet with their lovers, Kṛṣṇa uninhibitedly delights the hearts of the attractive *vraja-gopīs* and gratifies their desires.

Kāmsa-dhvaṁsana-dhūmaketuḥ – Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of the demon Kāmsa, is like the comet Dhūmaketu, whose appearance augurs the imminent destruction of the king. Similarly, the descent of Kṛṣṇa forebodes the destruction of Kāmsa. Another meaning of *dhūmaketu* is ‘one who illuminates like the sun.’ Śrī Kṛṣṇa is effulgent like the sun, and He is also the Dhūmaketu that spells the pacification of Śrī Rādhā’s *kāma*.

The etymology of the word *pradoṣa* is *pragatā doṣādayaḥ yasmin*, which means: ‘that [period] in which the night has started.’ Night personified is called *doṣā*. This verse includes the *alankāras* called *śleṣa*, *luptopamā*, *parikara* and *varṇopamā*. The meter is *śardūla-vikrīḍita* and the *rīti* is *pāñcālī*.

Act Five has described the *abhisārikā-nāyikā*, the heroine who embarks for a secret tryst. The lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa is ready and waiting for Rādhā's arrival.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT FIVE
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED SĀKĀṆKṢA-PUṆḌARĪKĀKṢA,
PUṆḌARĪKĀKṢA (LOTUS-EYED KṚṢṆA) PINING AWAY.



Act Six

DHRṢṬA-VAIKUNṬHAH – CAPRICIOUS KṚṢṆA

VERSE 1

*atha tām gantum aśaktām ciram anuraktām latā-gr̥he dṛṣṭvā
tac-caritam govinde manasija-mande sakhī prāha*

When Her *sakhī* saw Rādhā in the bower of vines, Her heart set on Govinda but too weak to go to Him, Rādhā's friend described Her condition to Him, who was Himself tortured by Cupid.

Commentary

Rādhā was sorely hankering for Kṛṣṇa, but, being debilitated from the trauma of separation, She was unable to go to Him. Seeing this, the *sakhī* left Rādhikā there in the bower of flowering creepers and went to inform Kṛṣṇa about Rādhā's predicament. Kṛṣṇa was sitting down in a state of depression, languishing under the burning of unfulfilled passion. The purport of *latā-gr̥ha* is *saṅketa-sthala*, the appointed meeting place.

The meter of this verse is *aryā*.

❀ Song Twelve ❀

The musical mode is *naṭa* or *guṇakarī-rāga*. The rhythm is *rūpaka-tāla*.

VERSE 2

*paśyati diśi diśi rahasi bhavantam
tad-adhara-madhura-madhūni pibantam (1)*

nātha hare! sīdati rādhā vāsa-grhe (refrain)

“In all directions and in the core of Her heart, She sees You in Her loneliness – You who are so skillful in drinking the sweetness of Her lips.

“*He nātha*, O Hari, You are Her only refuge. Rādhā pines for You in Her sylvan retreat.” (refrain)

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “Now listless, Rādhā is sitting alone in the *saṅketa-kuñja*. Due to the mighty storm of Her emotions, She has become *kṛṣṇamayī* – beholding nothing but You in all directions.”

Another meaning can be taken for *kṛṣṇamayī*: “In Her forest bower, Rādhā with great fervor drinks through Her ears sweet depictions of You, which color the whole atmosphere. In Her heart She wants to come to You, but Her body is not cooperating. This is the nature of long-standing *prema* – body and mind do not work in harmony. This is why She has become so lifeless.”

VERSE 3

*tvad-abhisaraṇa-rabhasena valantī
patati padāni kiyanti calantī*

nātha hare! sīdati... (2)

“Eager to go for *abhisāra* Rādhā quickly readies Herself, but taking a few steps She falls down.”

Commentary

Rādhā impetuously stands up to decorate and prepare Herself to go meet Her beloved, but She is so enfeebled in the wake of separation that after taking a few steps, She falls helplessly to the ground in a swoon.

VERSE 4

*vihita-viśada-bisa-kisalaya-valayā
jīvati param iha tava rati-kalayā
nātha hare! sīdati... (3)*

“She adorns Herself with a profusion of ornaments made of tender, white lotus stems and freshly sprouted leaves. Only the hope of enjoying amour with You keeps Her alive.”

Commentary

“Rādhā has covered Herself with lotus stems and freshly sprouted leaves to relieve the burning of *kāma*. Although feeble and emaciated, She has held onto Her life-airs until now only because the hope of enjoying amorous pastimes with You gives Her some happiness. Even now, the ways of Your love reside in Her very breath and are resonating upon Her heart-strings. Her total absorption in reveling in pleasure with You is the only cause of Her continued existence.”

VERSE 5

*muhur avalokita-maṇḍana-līlā
madhuripu aham iti bhāvana-śīlā
nātha hare! sīdati... (4)*

“Looking repeatedly at Her ornaments She fancies, ‘I am Madhuripu.’”

Commentary

“O Hari, Her heart has become one with Yours. Imagining that ‘I am Madhusūdana. I am Rādhā’s *prāṇa-nātha*,’ She identifies as You and becomes just like You. She casts aside ladies’ ornaments, and instead adorns Herself as a male lover and looks just like You. As She adorns Herself She muses, ‘These ornaments – this crown, these earrings and this garland of forest flowers – are just right for romancing with Rādhā.’ After transforming into Mādhava, She gazes with wonderment upon Rādhā’s ornaments. In this way, She passes Her separation from You.”

VERSE 6

*tvaritam upaiti na katham abhisāram
harir iti vadati sakhīm anuvāram
nātha hare! sīdati... (5)*

“She keeps asking Her companion, ‘*Sakhī*, why is Hari taking so long to come for Our rendezvous?’”

Commentary

The *sakhī* informs Kṛṣṇa, “Sometimes She comes to me and asks repeatedly, ‘Why isn’t Hari hurrying to meet Me here in the *saṅketa* arbor?’”

VERSE 7

*śliṣyati cumbati jaladhara-kalpam
harir upagata iti timiram analpam
nātha hare! sīdati... (6)*

“She embraces and kisses the darkness, dense like rainclouds, thinking, ‘Oh, Hari has come.’”

Commentary

“Upon spying the dense darkness, blackish as a cloud about to burst, She thinks, ‘Hari, You have come.’ Then She embraces that lovely darkness to Her breast and kisses it.”

VERSE 8

*bhavati vilambini vīgalita-lajjā
vilapati roditi vāsakasajjā
nātha hare! sīdati... (7)*

“Realizing that You are late, She loses all shame and unabashedly weeps as She waits for You.”

Commentary

When She regains external consciousness, She realizes, “This is just the dense darkness. It is not Hari that I have been embracing and kissing.” Embarrassed at Her behavior, She weeps. Her deranged condition is such that She takes the dark night for Her dark-complected sweetheart. Upon understanding Her mistake, She laments, “Why has My dear love not come yet?”

Rādhā is portrayed here as *vāsakasajjā-nāyikā* – the heroine who arrives at the appointed *kuñja* and waits for her hero with intense eagerness. She personally decorates the love bower, prepares a flower bed and sends messengers to the hero.

VERSE 9

*śrī-jayadeva-kaver idam uditam
rasika-janaṁ tanutām ati-muditam
nātha hare! sīdati... (8)*

May this song, composed by the poet Jayadeva, awaken unending rapture in the hearts of those who are expert in relishing *rasa*.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva says, “A *sakhī* has sung about Rādhā’s pitiful condition. May her words bestow bliss upon the expert devotees whose hearts are infused with *śṛṅgāra-rasa*.”

This Twelfth Song portrays the *vipralambha-bhāva* of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the mood of separation in the amorous mellow. The *alankāra* is *samuccaya*, the hero is *śaṭha-nāyaka*, duplicitous, and the heroine is a distraught *vāsakasajjā-nāyikā*.

VERSE 10

*vipula-pulaka-pāliḥ sphīta-sītkāram antar-
janita-jaḍima-kāku-vyākulaṁ vyāharantī
tava kitava vidhāyāmanda-kandarpa-cintām
rasa-jaladhi-nimagnā dhyāna-lagnā mṛgākṣī*

“Rippling in rapture, murmuring indistinct and protracted sounds of pleasure, and stunned from within, the doe-eyed girl is fully agitated by Cupid. Embracing You in meditation, You cheater, She is plunged in the ocean of *prema-rasa*.”

Commentary

Painting a picture of Rādhā in the madness of love, Her *sakhī* continues, “O cunning cheater! You treacherous rogue! The doe-eyed Rādhikā, absorbed in meditation, sinks into the nectar-ocean of Your binding embrace, feeling You tightly clasping Her to Your chest. Therefore every pore of Her skin is bursting with pleasure. She suddenly draws in Her breath and, as She swoons, coos indistinctly. When the

frenzy of Her amorous longings subsides, She sinks into the ocean of *ānanda*.”

This verse features *mālinī-chanda* and *rasavad-alāṅkāra*.

VERSE 11

*aṅgeṣv ābharaṇaṁ karoti bahusāḥ patre 'pi sañcāriṇi
prāptaṁ tvāṁ pariśaṅkate vitanute śayyāṁ ciraṁ dhyāyati
ity ākalpa-vikalpa-talpa-racanā-saṅkalpa-līlā-śata-
vyāsaktāpi vinā tvayā vara-tanur naiṣā niśāṁ neṣyati*

“The beautiful Rādhā decorates Herself with a profusion of ornaments. Hearing the leaves rustle and thinking You are approaching, She prepares a soft bed and meditates on You in expectation. In this way, She keeps busy – ornamenting Herself, wondering about Your delay, preparing the bed, babbling loving words, and nurturing the conviction that You are on Your way. Still She will not survive the night without You.”

Commentary

Describing the state of mind and erratic behavior of the *vāsakasajjā*, Her *sakhī* tells Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “In meditation She enjoys amour with You, but without direct meeting She remains unsatisfied. O Mādhava, in expectation of Your imminent arrival, my most beautiful friend ornaments Her elegant limbs for Your sake. When the leaves rustle in the breeze, She presumes that You are on the way. With the conviction that You will surely come, She prepares a bed of tender leaves. Lost in thoughts of You, sometimes She looks outside to see if You are coming, and when You are late, She feels acute pain and becomes utterly dejected. Thus, although Rādhā remains occupied in all these activities with the firm conviction that You must be on the way, still She is incapable of lasting the night without You.”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (13.87) to illustrate *autsukya-vyabhicārī-bhāva*, eagerness, coming from the ardent desire to meet with one's beloved.

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *samuccaya-alankāra*.

VERSE 12

*kim viśrāmyasi kṛṣṇa-bhogi-bhavane bhāṅḍīra-bhūmī-ruhe
bhrātar yāsi na dṛṣṭi-gocaram itaḥ sānanda-nandāspadam
rādhāyā vacanam tad adhvaga-mukhān nandāntike gopato
govindasya jayanti sāyam atithi-prāśastya-garbhā girah*

“When I was a guest in Śrī Rādhā’s home, She said to me, ‘O brother, why are you resting at the foot of this *bhāṅḍīra* tree? A poisonous black serpent lives here. Get up and go to the delightful home of Nanda Mahārāja, which is visible just before you. Why don’t you go there?’” On hearing Rādhā’s message from the lips of a pilgrim, Kṛṣṇa thanked ‘him’ in such a way that His father Śrī Nanda would not understand the inner meaning of the traveler’s message. May Govinda’s words of appreciation be victorious.

Commentary

As he concludes Act Six, Śrī Jayadeva bestows a blessing in the verse at hand. The context is as follows: When Rādhā saw that Her *sakhī* was late, She devised a scheme to send another female envoy, who disguised herself as a male pilgrim and approached Kṛṣṇa in the evening twilight. The ‘pilgrim’ relayed to Kṛṣṇa Rādhā’s message, indirectly informing Him about a secret tryst. Śrī Jayadeva says, “May Govinda’s words of thanks to that pilgrim be victorious.”

Concealing His intentions from His father, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa indicated His agreement by repeating the pilgrim's message. "O brother, why are you lamenting here beneath this banyan tree which is the home of a black snake? Go to the delightful abode of pleasure. You will see it just a little further ahead."

Kṛṣṇa-bhogi – 'black snake;' or alternatively, 'the debauchee Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys union (*sambhoga*) with His beloved.'

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚĀ COMMENTARY ON ACT SIX
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED DHRṢṬA-VAIKUṆṬHA,
"CAPRICIOUS KṚṢṆA," WHICH DESCRIBES THE VĀSAKASAJJĀ-NĀYIKĀ,
THE HEROINE WHO PROUDLY DRESSES IN HER BEST FINERY
AND PREPARES THE LOVE BOWER WHILE WAITING
TO RECEIVE HER LOVER.



Act Seven

NĀGARA-NĀRĀYAṆAḤ –
THE SUPREME TRANSCENDENTAL HERO

VERSE 1

*atrāntare ca kulaṭā-kula-vartma-pāta-
sañjāta-pātaka iva sphuṭa-lāñchana-śrīḥ
vṛndāvanāntaram adīpayad aṁśu-jālair
dik-sundarī-vadana-candana-bindur induḥ*

Meanwhile, the moon lit the depths of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma with his gentle rays. Appearing in the eastern direction, he was just like a drop of *candana* on the face of a beautiful newly married maiden. At the same time he bore a blemish for obstructing the paths of adulterous women.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva is describing the rising of the full moon which obliterates the reluctance of contrary heroines. The poet says, “When Śrī Rādhā was burning in separation from Kṛṣṇa, the rays of the full moon illuminated the Vṛndāvana forest. The moon had decorated all directions with his effulgence, perfectly ornamenting the beautiful eastern horizon, Pūrva-diśā, like a spot of sandalwood paste adorning the forehead of a lovely woman.”

Pātaka iva – A person who obstructs the path of others is considered sinful. Besides adorning the eastern horizon, the moon is also bearing the mark of his own ill-fame accrued as

the sinful reaction for exposing the furtive journeys of women of ill repute. Unchaste women only have an opportunity to meet with their lovers at night. The moonlight creates an obstacle by jeopardizing the secrecy of their movements. The reaction to this sin is evident from the moon's deer-shaped mark. From one perspective, the moon is considered to be stained by infamy, and from another, it is the ornament of the open directions.

There is another explanation behind the moon's deer-shaped blemish. When the moon was abetting Indra's illicit meeting with Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama Ṛṣi, the sage angrily threw his deer-skin *āsana* at the moon, which left a mark, and cursed him with *kṣaya-roga*, the painful disease of decreasing for fifteen days every month.

This verse includes *rūpaka-* and *utprekṣā-alankāras*. The meter is *vasanta-tilakā*.

VERSE 2

*prasarati śaśadhara-bimbe vihita-vilambe ca mādhave vidhurā
viracita-vividha-vilāpaṁ sā paritāpaṁ cakāroccaiḥ*

As the moon rose in the sky and Mādhava was delaying, Rādhā loudly uttered a string of lamentations, being severely aggrieved in Her loneliness.

Commentary

As the moon continued to rise, Rādhā lost all hope that Mādhava would come, and Her anguish increased. She felt completely helpless and began to weep loudly in great distress. The moon was shining everywhere but still Mādhava had not arrived. In utter despair, Rādhā burst into tears.

This verse is in *āryā-chanda*.

❁ Song Thirteen ❁

The musical mode is *mālava-rāga*. The rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 3

*kathita-samaye 'pi harir ahaha na yayau vanam
mama viphalam idam amalām api rūpa-yauvanam (1)*

*yāmi he! kam iha śaraṇam
sakhī-jana-vacana-vañcitā (refrain)*

“Hari is late for Our forest rendezvous. Alas, alas! My pristine youthful beauty is going to waste.

“I have been deceived by My own *sakhīs*. Oh, who will give Me shelter now?”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā laments as She burns in the agony of separation, “*Sakhī*, you told Me, ‘Just wait here. I will bring Him immediately.’ But even you have betrayed Me. You said that you would return to the *saṅketa-kuñja* before moonrise, but the moon has already fully risen. I was misled by your false words of reassurance. Now My youthful beauty, so exquisite and flawless, seems utterly worthless. If it had any value, He would have come by now.”

The word *ahaha* (Alas! Alas!) indicates Rādhā’s deep sorrow. The word *he* (O!) is used in addressing someone.

VERSE 4

*yad-anugamanāya niśi gahanam api śīlitam
tena mama hṛdayam idam asamaśara-kīlitam
yāmi he! kam iha... (2)*

“Alas! I entered deep into the forest on this dark night in search of Him – He who is piercing My heart with the shafts of love. Oh, who else will give Me shelter now?”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā says, “He whom I came to meet in this secluded jungle has driven the stake of lust into My heart. Or perhaps a seed *mantra* of amorous desire has pinned Me down in such a way that I have lost all sense of where I belong.”

The word *api* implies, “I had never done such a thing before.”

VERSE 5

*mama maraṇam eva varam ati-vitatha-keṭanā
kim iha viṣahāmi virahānalam acetanā
yāmi he! kam iha... (3)*

“What is the use of preserving this body any longer? It is better to die. How can I maintain My equilibrium with this intolerable fire of separation?”

Commentary

“I am ruined! Tonight I sit deep in the forest in this terrifying darkness, hoping to meet My lover. I am so unsettled by His absence that I am losing My mind. Where can I go? It is better to die. How much agony can I tolerate? All My hopes have been dashed. My body is worthless, otherwise Hari would not neglect Me in this way. Believing My *sakhī*, I dared to come here, but all My endeavors have gone in vain. It is useless to continue living.”

VERSE 6

*mām ahaha vidhurayati madhura-madhu-yāminī
kāpi harim anubhavati kṛta-sukṛta-kāminī
yāmi he! kam iha... (4)*

“Oh, I am cursed! This sweet spring night embitters My loneliness. Certainly some fortunate damsel, reaping the fruit of her piety, is now basking in Hari’s arms.”

Commentary

Expressing the terrible pain in the core of Her heart, Rādhā says, “These *rasa*-laden spring nights bear the highest joy, but for Me they are a torture. While I am suffering alone here, some fortunate maiden is savoring the ambrosia of enjoying amour with Hari. He did not come to Me as promised because that seductress has trapped Him in the ropes of her love as He revels in their amorous play. How I must be lacking in pious credits!”

In the *Viśvakoṣa* dictionary *vidhura* is defined as *vikalatā*, agitation.

VERSE 7

*ahaha kalayāmi valayādi-maṇi-bhūṣaṇam
hari-viraha-dahana-vahanena bahu-dūṣaṇam
yāmi he! kam iha... (5)*

“Alas, alas! All the jeweled ornaments I am wearing are feeding the fire of separation from Hari and inflicting unlimited pain. Therefore they are also implicated.”

Commentary

“O *sakhī*, you have sorely deceived Me. I adorned Myself with a profusion of flowers, freshly-sprouted leaves and

jeweled ornaments. But now, they all seem like flames in the fire of separation from Hari, a fire fueled with the pain of unfulfilled desire. They are no longer ornaments; rather, they have become a curse, and I don't care for them anymore as they have turned traitor. The only reward for a ladylove's beauty and attire is her sweetheart's appreciative glance. Her ornaments are precious to her only if they make someone cast a loving look her way."

VERSE 8

*kusuma-sukumāra-tanum atanu-śara-līlayā
srag api hṛdi hanti mām ati-viṣama-śīlayā
yāmi he! kam iha... (6)*

"Even this *vana-mālā* on My breast, as if an arrow of Kāma, vehemently rips the tender flower of My heart."

Commentary

"O My beloved! What to speak of My other ornaments, the *vana-mālā* I wear over My heart for Your pleasure turns into a weapon of Kāmadeva and ravages My very being. It jabs My heart with the arrow of erotic desire, attacking Me so fiercely that the delicate flower of My body is unable to endure it. An ordinary kind of pain is experienced when one is severely wounded by arrows, but even more intolerable is the agony inflicted in a heart ravaged by the arrows of *kāma*."

VERSE 9

*aham iha nivasāmi na gaṇita-vana-vetasā
smarati madhusūdano mām api na cetasā
yāmi he! kam iha... (7)*

"Fearlessly I wait for Him in this dense bamboo forest. But Madhusūdana does not remember Me even for a moment."

Commentary

In great humility Śrī Rādhā says, “Believing in My *sakhī*’s words I entered this eerie forest to meet with Madhusūdana, but He is indifferent to Me. He is extremely fickle in His affection. How amazing it is that I am fearlessly waiting here for someone who does not remember Me even for an instant. Alas, this is simply My misfortune.”

VERSE 10

hari-caraṇa-śaraṇa-jayadeva-kavi-bhārātī
vasatu hṛdī yuvatir iva komala-kalāvātī
yāmi he! kam iha... (8)

May this song of the poet Śrī Jayadeva, who is unconditionally surrendered at the lotus feet of Śrī Hari, always grace the hearts of *rasika* devotees like a charming and tender maiden skilled in all the arts.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva proclaims the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as his sole protector. His poem is adorned with tender words and lyrical expressions. Just as a beautiful, soft-natured damsel, adorned with sweet qualities and talented in the amorous arts, always fills the heart of her hero with unlimited joy, may this song dwell within the heart of the devotees. This is the poet’s cherished desire.

VERSE 11

tat kiṁ kām api kāmīnīm abhisṛtaḥ kiṁ vā kalā-kelibhir
baddho bandhubhir andhakāriṇi vanābhyarṇe kim udbhrāmyati
kāntaḥ klānta-manā manāg api pathi prasthātum evākṣamaḥ
saṅketi-kṛta-mañju-vañjula-latā-kuñje pi yan nāgataḥ

“Why has My dearest *prāṇa-vallabha* not come to this charming vine-covered bower where We agreed to meet? Has He gone in pursuit of another alluring maiden? Have His *gopa* friends detained Him with their joyful pranks? Has He lost His way in the dark forest? Or has My lover become exhausted at heart and thus unable to take another step?”

Commentary

Pondering the possible reasons why Śrī Kṛṣṇa has not come to the *sanketa-sthala*, *virahiṇī* Rādhikā is beset with doubts. “I wonder why He has not come.” Śrī Rādhā reveals Her suspicions: “This charming *vetasa-latā* thicket is the place where We agreed to meet, so what could have happened to Him? Why is He not here? Did He go off with another girl? But how can He love someone else more than He loves Me? How can it be possible that He has left Me waiting in such a beautiful place, to go and enjoy with another? Did His skillful friends, engrossed in their sports, detain Him in their woodland playground, preventing Him from coming here? This is also not feasible. How could He forget the time for *abhisāra*? It seems that the crest jewel of cunning tricksters cannot find Me in this darkness; He may still be searching for Me all over. But He has met Me in this forest many times before. The path is well known to Him, so how could He forget the way? This is impossible. Could He be languishing so much in separation that He is unable to walk? Perhaps He is worrying, ‘How will Rādhā feel after the moon has risen?’ and becoming afflicted with the distress of separation, He is unable to make His way here.”

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and the *alankāra* is *saṁśaya* (doubt).



VERSE 12

*athāgatām mādhavam antareṇa
 sakhīm iyaṁ vīksya viśāda-mūkām
 viśaṅkamānā ramitaṁ kayāpi
 janārdanaṁ dr̥ṣṭavad etad āha*

When Rādhā saw Her companion return without Mādhava, Her heart sank. Silently grieving, She suspected Janārdana's fresh dalliance with another captivating maiden and spoke to Her friend as if having witnessed His infidelity.

Commentary

Rādhā was pondering over the many possible reasons for Kṛṣṇa's not coming to the trysting place. When She saw Her friend return without Him, Her emotions reached the peak for a *vipralabdhā-nāyikā*, a disappointed mistress whose lover has not kept their appointment. Rādhā was rendered speechless by the intensity of Her anguish and Her friend also remained silent in a state of despair. Rādhā presumed, "She is silent and disheartened because she has seen Vrajendra-nandana romancing with another girl. That's why she is not saying anything." Rādhā burst out crying, "Doesn't Janārdana mean 'one who wants to inflict pain upon others?' This is why He is tormenting Me."

Vipralabdhā-nāyikā – Impelled by ever increasing passion, the ladylove arrives first at the prearranged meeting place and sends a messenger to her hero. However, by the will of providence the hero does not show up and the time for meeting passes. At this point, the heroine becomes a *vipralabdhā-nāyikā*, who, in her disappointment, anxiously laments, cries constantly, sighs deeply and faints.

The meter of this verse is *upendra-vajrā*.

❧ Song Fourteen ❧

The musical mode is *vasanta-rāga*. The rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 13

smara-samarocita-viracita-veśā
dalita-kusuma-dara-vilulita-keśā (1)

kāpi madhuripuṇā
vilasati yuvatir adhika-guṇā (refrain)

“*Sakhī*, beautifully dressed and ornamented, she is appropriately attired for the battle of love. As absorption in *anaṅga-rasa* overtakes her, her braid opens and the flowers falling from her disheveled tresses are crushed.

“Some lovely damsel, more qualified than Myself, is blissfully reveling with Madhuripu.” (refrain)

Commentary

With great apprehension, Rādhā says, “O *sakhī*! Some enticing beauty, dressed for amorous combat (*kāma-saṅgrāma*), is sporting with Madhuripu. In the course of her love games, her tightly bound braid came undone and now her loose tresses are swaying freely. The flowers that were woven in her hair have cascaded down.”

Madhuripu – “Kṛṣṇa is the enemy of *mādhurya*. He does not approve of sweetness. Therefore He has neglected Me to woo another maiden.”

Yuvatir adhika-guṇā – “This lovely *vraja-gopī* is more qualified than I.” But that is impossible. The suggested meaning is, “How amazing it is that a less qualified girl is enjoying amour with Him.” This description alludes to *viparīta-rati*, an intimate encounter in which the heroine assumes the dominant role.

Smara-samara – Conjugal love has been called *smara-samara*, an erotic battle. Their lovemaking is such an intense scuffle that the heroine’s braid opens and the flowers woven therein cascade down and scatter.

In this *aṣṭapadī* and the next one, Rādhā is in *citra-jalpa-bhāva*. In the delirium of separation, She engages in mad, emotional talks, containing veiled anger, intense love, and great longing within the heart.

VERSE 14

hari-parirambhaṇa-valita-vikārā
kuca-kalaśopari taralita-hārā
kāpi madhuripuṇā... (2)

“Enchanted by Hari’s deep embraces, she exhibits the symptoms of Eros, causing the necklace on her waterpot-like breasts to swing to and fro.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is imagining the behavior of that other lady-love. Painting a vivid picture of her actions, She says, “Due to Hari’s embrace, that damsel must be feeling the upsurge of the symptoms of Eros. Her hairs must be standing on end and her necklace must be swinging upon her full, raised breasts.” When the heroine takes the active role in lovemaking and prevails over her hero, her necklace sways. This only happens during *viparīta-rati*.

VERSE 15

vicalad-alaka-lalitānana-candrā
tad-adhara-pāna-rabhasa-kṛta-tandrā
kāpi madhuripuṇā... (3)

“Straying curls set off the beauty of her moon-like face, and her eyes are blissfully closed after ardently drinking the nectar of His lips.”

Commentary

“The moon-like face of that charming girl is even more beautiful with her curling locks bouncing about. As she makes love with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, she quaffs the ambrosia of His lips. Plunged in the joy of union, she keeps her eyes closed, feigning sleep.”

VERSE 16

*cañcala-kunḍala-lalita-kapolā
mukharita-rasana-jaghana-gati-lolā
kāpi madhuripuṇā... (4)*

“The swinging of her earrings enhances the loveliness of her cheeks. The tiny bells on the jeweled sash elegantly adorning her waist tinkle sweetly with the swaying of her hips.”

Commentary

“As she plays love’s game, her earrings naturally swing, rendering her cheeks more charming. The restless bells on the sash around her waist peal repeatedly with the constant moving of her hips.”

VERSE 17

*dayita-vilokita-lajjita-hasitā
bahu-vidha-kūjita-rati-rasa-rasitā
kāpi madhuripuṇā... (5)*

“The glances of her beloved incite her bashful laughter. Tasting the ambrosia of love, she murmurs like a cuckoo or a warbling *kalahaṁsa*, voicing her pleasure at the sudden surge of euphoria.”

Commentary

Being pleased, her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa gazes upon her. She lowers her face shyly and giggles softly. As she breathes heavily in the intensity of her rapture, she murmurs many different types of sweet sounds like the trills of the cuckoo or the *kalahaṁsa*.

VERSE 18

vipula-pulaka-pṛthuvathu-vepathu-bhaṅgā
śvasita-nimīlita-vikasada-anāṅgā
kāpi madhuripuṅā... (6)

“She thrills with the ecstasies of Cupid, the pores of her skin swelling in delight and her body shivering in waves of pleasure. She closes her eyes and sighs deep, revealing her profound absorption in amorous rapture.”

Commentary

“As they make love, her *kāma* gradually increases in intensity. The pores of her skin swell in delight, she trembles, her voice falters and she excitedly heaves deep sighs. She closes her eyes in the climax of her rapture.”

Vepathu-bhaṅgā – In this verse, horripilation and trembling have been compared to waves. “Just like the billows in the ocean, wave upon wave of horripilation and trembling swell in her body.”

VERSE 19

śrama-jala-kaṇa-bhara-subhaga-śarīrā
paripatitorasi rati-raṇa-dhīrā
kāpi madhuripuṅā... (7)

“This impassioned maiden, a connoisseur of amorous love, looks even more attractive sparkling with droplets of perspiration from her love play. She is expert in exhibiting great fortitude in amorous combat. How beautiful she is when she finally collapses upon her lover’s chest, thoroughly exhausted from the tussle of lovemaking.”

Commentary

“Absorbed in amorous enjoyment she is now completely exhausted. How splendidly her lotus face glistens, drenched with drops of perspiration from love’s labor! And how astonishingly beautiful she looks having fallen upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s chest, she who is thoroughly adept in delightful amorous warfare.”

VERSE 20

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇita-hari-ramitam
kali-kaluṣaṁ janayatu pariśamitam
kāpi madhuripuṇā... (8)*

May Śrī Jayadeva’s description of Hari’s love play subdue the ill-effects of the age of Kali and pacify the lusty desires of all.

Commentary

The Fourteenth Song of Śrī Gīta-govinda, entitled *Hari-ramita-campaka-śekhara*, “Hari who Enjoys with the Best Golden Campaka Flower,” describes *viparīta-rati*. Although the current era (Kali-yuga) is highly contaminating, Hari’s amorous dalliances depicted here are extremely pure. May this poem cleanse every lusty desire from the hearts of all those who recite and hear it.

VERSE 21

*viraha-pāṇḍu-murāri-mukhāmbuja-
dyutir ayaṁ tirayann api vedanām
vidhur atīva tanoti mano-bhuvah
suhṛd aye hṛdaye madana-vyathām*

“*Priya-sakhī*, O my dear friend! The fading moon, resembling Murāri’s lotus face now pale in My absence, briefly diminishes My anguish. But then again, being the friend of Kāmadeva, it increases the burning of amorous desires in My heart.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā lamented throughout the night. Seeing the moon moving towards Mount Asta on the western horizon, She remembered Kṛṣṇa’s previous affection for Her and told Her dear friend, “O *sakhī*, how painful it is that the moon increases the distress of jilted lovers. With the setting of the moon the burning of amorous desires within Me is now cooling down. The moon’s wan complexion stirs recollections of Murāri’s lotus face. How listless He must have become away from Me.” Then, Her thoughts taking a different direction, She said, “Hari has deserted Me and is amusing Himself with another beloved. Therefore His luster, now pale like the setting moon, deepens the crevice of pain in My heart.”



❀ Song Fifteen ❀

The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga*; the rhythm is *ekatālī-tāla*.

In this song that beautiful enchantress engrossed in dallying with Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā has been portrayed as *svādhīna-bhartṛkā*, the mistress who controls her lover.

VERSE 22

samudita-madane ramaṇī-vadane cumbana-valitādhare
mṛgamada-tilakaṁ likhati sa-pulakaṁ mṛgam iva rajanī-kare (1)

ramate yamunā-pulina-vane
vijayī murārīr adhunā (refrain)

“This enchanting maiden, every pore of her body swelling in rapture, is the very embodiment of everything that excites amorous desire. With *kastūrī-tilaka*, Murārī is drawing the mark of a deer on the moon of her face. His hairs bristling in exhilaration, He kisses her.

“Even now, Madhuripu, invincible in love battle, is romancing with another maiden in the woods along the Yamunā’s bank.” (refrain)

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā, in great distress, fantasizes about Her imaginary rival. Actually, sitting alone She is remembering Her own previous pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and describing what She sees through the eyes of Her *bhāva*. Rādhā envisions a wonderful heroine who is thinking, “Madhuripu has defeated me in this love battle and now He is celebrating the *vijaya-utsava* (victory festival) in the *nikuñja*.”

Śrī Rādhā continues, “In a grove adjoining the Yamunā’s sandy bank, Kṛṣṇa is amusing Himself by artistically decorating that alluring coquette. As He applies deer-musk *tilaka* upon her lotus face, every pore of her body swells with rapture. Wanting to kiss her, Murāri has drawn her face close to His. This fully arouses His desire, and now His hairs also are standing on end. Unable to contain His feelings, He encounters great difficulty in painting her *tilaka*, which has ended up crooked. Now she is beautiful like the moon with its deer mark. Smudged with that *tilaka*, Kṛṣṇa’s lips tell the story of His having kissed her all over her face.”

VERSE 23

*ghana-caya-rucire racayati cikure taralita-taruṇānane
kurubaka-kusumaṁ capalā-suṣamaṁ rati-pati-mṛga-kānane
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (2)*

“That young maiden’s charming locks are a park where Madana, the god of love, frolics like a deer. He is now arranging *kurubaka* blossoms in her tresses, which resemble a mass of dark rainclouds and from which her fresh, tender face always shines forth.”

Commentary

Commenting on Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s playfully decorating His beloved, Śrī Rādhā says to Her *sakhī*, “Not only has He drawn *tilaka* upon her forehead, He has also adorned her hair with *kanera* flowers. Her thick hair is very black, soft and curly, resembling a mass of rainclouds or a dense forest wherein Kāmadeva, like a deer, can wander without fear. *Kurubaka* flowers arranged by Śrī Hari flash through her hair like streaks of lightning. Just the sight of these tresses makes the hearts of young men restless.”

VERSE 24

*ghaṭayati sughane kuca-yuga-gagane mṛgamada-ruci-rūṣite
maṇi-saram amalāṁ tāraka-pāṭalaṁ nakha-pada-śaśi-bhūṣite
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (3)*

“Her plump breasts smeared thick with black *kastūrī* powder resemble the night sky. Upon that dark firmament He lays an enchanting pearl necklace shimmering like a myriad of stars, and embellishes it with the half-moon marks of His fingernails.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is saying, “That enchantress is blessed with wondrous hair and large round breasts. Hari lays a pearl necklace on her bosom, as if placing a multitude of stars upon the sky of that ladylove’s breasts, decorated with half-moons etched by His fingernails.” There is a charming and multifaceted similarity between the sky and her two breasts:

Kuca-yuga-gagane – “As the sky is expansive, so are her breasts.”

Sughane – “That heroine’s firm breasts touch each other in the middle, appearing like the sky full of beautiful, dense clouds.”

Mṛgamada-ruci-rūṣite – “Droplets of perspiration are trickling down her breasts from the fatigue of tumultuous loving. They are dried by smearing *kastūrī* powder on them. *Kastūrī*, like the night sky, is also bluish-black.”

Tāraka-pāṭalaṁ nakha-pada-śaśi-bhūṣite – “In the night sky of her breasts, her pearl necklace appears like a constellation of twinkling stars, and the impressions left by the tips of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s fingernails are as radiant as half-moons in that night sky.”

All these comparisons taken together comprise a delightful use of imagery. Her *tilaka* is a deer, her forehead is the moon and her luxuriant hair is a safe and peaceful forest. The *kurubaka* flowers are flashes of lightning and her breasts are the sky, enhanced by the moon and stars in the form of nail-marks and tiny pearls.

VERSE 25

*jita-bisa-śakale mṛdu-bhuja-yugale kara-tala-nalinī-dale
marakata-valayaṃ madhukara-nicayaṃ vitarati hima-śītale
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (4)*

“Her arms, more delicate than lotus stems, are beautified by the tender lotus petals of her hands, cool like snow. Over these petal-like hands He slips sapphire-studded bangles looking like swarms of bumblebees.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is saying, “The arms of that fortunate maiden defeat the softness of lotus stems. Her hands are fair like snow and her cool palms red as lotus flowers. Just as the sight of black bumblebees upon the petals of a red lotus is very pleasing, similarly her lotus-petal hands look delightful as Murāri adorns them with bangles encrusted with blue sapphires that resemble a line of black bumblebees hovering around her hands.”

Hima-śītale – “The arms of His beloved have become as cool as snow, the heat of her amorous desires having been relieved by His touch.” Coolness can also indicate this absence of desire, which is rekindled when her cool hands receive those bracelets.

VERSE 26

*rati-grha-jaghane vipulāpaghane manasija-kanakāsane
mañimaya-rasanam toraṇa-hasanam vikirati kṛta-vāsane
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (5)*

“The hips of that enthralling beauty are as voluptuous, fragrant and broad as the golden throne of Kāmadeva. He is decorating her hips – the shrine of Eros – with a gem-studded sash, as if He were embellishing the arched doorway to that shrine with an auspicious festoon.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is saying, “The hips of that inviting damsel embody the very abode of amorous delight. Her beautiful thighs, round and full, are the shining pillars supporting the golden throne of the god of love. The very sight of them awakens intense hankering for erotic pleasure in Murāri’s heart.”

Kṛta-vāsanam – “Heroines perfume their limbs with a special kind of fragrant smoke that makes their lovers submissive. That bewitching beauty has perfumed her hips with this scent and brought Keśava under her control.”

Kanakāsane – ‘The golden throne of Kāmadeva.’ The word *kanaka*, meaning ‘gold,’ also refers to the poisonous herb, *dhatūrā*, which is very dear to Śaṅkarajī. Because this herb has an intoxicating effect, the word *kanaka* has been used to indicate the incitement of desire.

Mañimaya-rasanam toraṇa-hasanam – Whenever a king ascends to the throne, the principal arched gateway to the palace is decorated with *vandana-vāra*, an auspicious festoon of leaves and flowers. Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa decorates His beloved with *vandana-vāra*, a jeweled waistbelt, in honor of King Kāmadeva’s ascension to the golden throne of her fair thighs.

Vikirati – Śrī Kṛṣṇa trembles with amorous desire at the touch of her thighs. Thus He is not able to properly dress her with the *maṇimaya-mekhalā*, that jeweled waistbelt. Still, He tries. His futile attempt triggers the recollection of one special *lilā*.

VERSE 27

*caraṇa-kisalaye kamalā-nilaye nakha-maṇi-gaṇa-pūjite
bahir-apavaraṇam yāvaka-bharaṇam janayati hṛdi yojite
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (6)*

“The tender buds of her feet glow and her toenails shimmer like precious jewels. He places these feet upon His chest, honoring the residence of Goddess Lakṣmī, and carefully colors them with enthralling red *yāvaka-rasa*.”

Commentary

Describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s new love play, Śrī Rādhā says, “The lotus feet of that greatly fortunate maiden are the very abode of Lakṣmī. They are reddish like soft, fresh flower petals and her toenails shine like precious jewels. Sitting down, He embraces them to His heart. Lakṣmī eternally resides upon His chest, which is now decorated with an array of gems and the nail marks made by that enthralling ladylove. Kṛṣṇa is applying *yāvaka* footlac with His own lotus hands on her naturally reddish feet and adorning them with ornaments, thereby carefully protecting them.”

The adjectival phrase *nakha-maṇi-gaṇa-pūjita*, worship of and worship with the gem-like toenails, is applicable to both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His sweetheart.

VERSE 28

*ramayati subhṛṣaṁ kām api sudṛṣaṁ khala-haladhara-sodare
kim aphalam avasaṁ ciram iha virasaṁ vada sakhī viṭapodare
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (7)*

“That wicked brother of Haladhara is an indiscriminate, ill-mannered rogue. It is sure that He is tightly embracing and sharing intimacies with that beautiful-eyed girl. So *sakhī*, tell Me how long shall I continue pining in this bower of flowering vines without any pleasure?”

Commentary

After waiting for a long time, Śrī Rādhā becomes hopeless and tells Her friend, “*Sakhī*, say something. Break your silence. What is the use of waiting for so long in a wild thicket in the forest?”

Khala-haladhara-sodare – Haladhara, a name of Balarāma, means ‘He who wields a plough.’ Rādhā refers to His extremely mischievous younger brother as such because, just like a farmer, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is base, rustic and unsophisticated.

“Neglecting and cheating Me, He is amusing Himself with that lovely-eyed beauty. Oh, how can it be that she has such exquisite eyes? She is simply an uncouth villager, just like Him. What connection do I have with Him? I spent the whole night sitting in this wild jungle because I trusted Him and what was the result? Just see how He has neglected Me! Should I allow Myself to be consumed by remorse in this *kuñja* any longer? Should I continue to search for Him? What recourse do I have? *Sakhī*, how can I tolerate this? He told Me that He would come, but He is fully occupied dallying with another sweetheart.”

The heroine of this Fifteenth Song is *svādhīna-bhartṛkā-nāyikā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot leave her because He is captivated

by her qualities. This is the root cause of His neglect towards Rādhā.

VERSE 29

*iha rasa-bhaṇane kṛta-hari-guṇane madhuripu-pada-sevake
kali-yuga-caritaṁ na vasatu duritaṁ kavi-nṛpa-jayadevake
ramate yamunā-pulina vane... (8)*

Madhuripu's servant, the king of bards Jayadeva, glorifies Hari's romantic *śṛṅgāra-rasa* pastimes. May his song check the ill effects of Kali-yuga.

Commentary

In the ecstasy of writing this song, Śrī Jayadeva considers himself the best among all the servants of Madhuripu and prays that the disgraceful characteristics prevalent in this present age of quarrel and hypocrisy may never enter those who hear this poem. The word *rasa-bhaṇane* means 'one who speaks of amour in a way that is full of *rasa*.' *Hari-guṇane* refers to Kavirāja Jayadeva as 'one who repeats the topics of Śrī Hari.' All of the poet's statements in this song are *uddīpana*, excitants of *rasa*. When this *rasa* appears, the dark tendencies aroused by the influence of Kali-yuga cannot enter the heart.

This song, entitled *Hari-rasa-manmatha-tilaka*, "Hari Wearing Irresistible Kandarpa Tilaka that Maddens All Women," has been called the king of all songs. It is sung in *druta-tāla* and *druta-laya*. The *rāga* is *malhāra*.

VERSE 30

*nāyātaḥ sakhi nirdayo yadi śaṭhas tvaṁ dūti kim dūyase
svacchandaṁ bahu-vallabhaḥ sa ramate kim tatra te dūṣaṇam
paśyādya priya-saṅgamāya dayitasyākṛṣyamāṇam guṇair
utkaṅṭhārti-bharād iva sphuṭad idaṁ cetaḥ svayaṁ yāsyati*

“My dear Rādhā, He did not come.”

“O My messenger friend, if that cruel-hearted, two-faced cheater did not come, why are you upset?”

“That libertine delights in loving many women.”

“Is that your fault? Look! Attracted by My beloved’s virtues and broken by the burden of longing for Him, My heart flees to meet Him of its own accord.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā continued to express Her anxious longing in the great distress of separation. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa failed to come, Her despondent-faced messenger told Rādhā, “My dear friend Rādhā, I summoned that Casanova many times, but He is so cruel that He did not come.” Śrī Rādhā replied, “*He dūtī*, My dear messenger friend, if that double-dealing rogue has not come, how is that your fault? Why are you so upset? You have nicely done your duty as a messenger.” The *dūtī* answered, “I am upset because I could not bring Him. He has numerous beloveds and is independent. He enjoys whenever and wherever He wants.” Śrī Rādhā again asked, “So why are you to blame? Now look here. My heart is forcibly attracted by His qualities and it is being torn apart by the intolerable agony of not being able to meet with Him, so My devastated *prāṇa* will surely leave and reach Him on its own.”

What is the nature of Rādhā’s heart? It is spontaneously attracted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s qualities. The phrase *utkaṅṭhārti-bharād* means, “My heart is breaking apart under the painful burden of the unfulfilled desire to meet with My beloved. Although I try to check My heart, it will not listen; it will certainly reach Him.” Alternatively, “Look, *sakhī*, it is not

possible for Me to be with My beloved at this time since He is tied up with another alluring beauty. Nevertheless, My eagerness is increasing by the moment.”

Śrī Rādhā’s words may also be understood in the following sense. “This heart has previously experienced erotic joy with Hari, so it will definitely join Him. This is no fault of yours and no fault of Mine. That charming maiden is also not to be blamed. Providence has surely become adverse to Me.”

There is yet a further meaning: “Thus, My heart must go to Him and, after attaining release, it will cease all activity.”

As Śrī Rādhā sang of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s qualities in a state of calm despondency (*śānta-nirveda*), She attained *daśamī-daśā*, the tenth and final condition of separation in which She desires Her own death. That charming maiden who is deriving happiness from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s qualities experiences not even the slightest distress. And Śrī Rādhā, on the other hand, is thrown into extreme despondency, feeling great misery in His absence.

The first half of this verse is a dialogue between Śrī Rādhā and Her *sakhī*. Śrī Rādhā has the impression that this *dūtī* went to summon Śrī Kṛṣṇa on Her behalf, and now she has returned after making love with Him herself. Therefore She accuses Kṛṣṇa of being a hard-hearted, two-faced cheater. “What an uncouth rustic He is. He does not even know the difference between a *nāyikā* and a *dūtī*.”

In this verse the meter is *vikrīḍita* and the *alāṅkāra* is called *kāvyaṅga*.



❧ Song Sixteen ❧

The musical mode is *deśavarāḍī-rāga*. The rhythm is *rūpaka-tāla*.

VERSE 31

*anila-tarala-kuvalaya-nayanena
tapati na sā kisalaya-śayanena* (1)

sakhi! yā ramitā vanamālinā (refrain)

“That superior maiden is delighted by Keśava, whose eyes are as restless as a lotus flower swaying in the wind. As she reclines with Him upon the couch of fresh, tender leaves, it is unlikely that she feels even the slightest distress.

“Friend, Vanamālī is amusing Himself with that inviting maiden.” (refrain)

Commentary

In this song Śrī Rādhā’s jealousy has become even more inflamed. Therefore, all the compliments spoken by Rādhā in this song are simultaneously veiled criticisms. Each of the following verses will be explained first as a praise (*stuti-paraka-artha*) and then as a reproach (*nindāparaka-artha*).

She tells Her friend, “O *sakhī!* Kṛṣṇa is Vanamālī, garlanded with the flowers of the forest. His eyes are as restless as a blue lotus moving in the southern breeze. He is giving amorous pleasure to that most qualified damsel, who is in turn delighting Him. So, why would she be scorched like Me, even while I recline on a bed of fresh leaves? I am the only one who knows how a heart can be ravaged.” Here Śrī Rādhā has praised Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this verse by describing Him as a courteous and considerate lover.

If Śrī Rādhā's words are taken as *nindāparaka-artha*, a criticism, the meaning would be, "Immersed in enjoying the splendor of the naturally lush forest, Vanamālī is so distracted that He is actually uninterested in romantic pursuits. His eyes, roving like blue lotuses waving in the wind, merely skim over that *gopī*, hardly paying Her any heed at all. Reclining on a bed of soft leaves, does that *gopikā* feel distress because she is unable to induce Him to do more than simply enjoy her only with His eyes? She surely does." In other words, "Certainly that *gopī* feels dejected because Vanamālī, whose blue lotus eyes are restless, is already absent-mindedly looking about for another sweetheart."

VERSE 32

*vikasita-sarasija-lalita-mukhena
sphuṭati na sā manasija-viśikhena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (2)*

"Kandarpa's deadly shafts can never wound that bewitching beauty enjoyed by Him, whose charming face is a fully blossomed lotus flower."

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā tells Her *sakhī*, "Vanamālī's face shines with romantic expressions like a lotus in full bloom as He gives joy to His sweetheart. How could she know the pain inflicted by the shafts of Madana? That ladylove is certainly not suffering the pain of *kāma*'s arrows piercing the heart as I am, My heart devastated in separation." This is a *stuti-paraka-vyākhyā* – Rādhā is praising Vanamālī for being the expert lover.

Alternatively, Rādhā criticizes Him, "But Kṛṣṇa is indifferent to lovemaking. He is busy laughing and joking; thus this

gopikā is not able to enjoy amour with her charming-faced lover. Is she suffering from Madana's arrows or not? She certainly is."

VERSE 33

*amṛta-madhura-mṛdutarā-vacanena
jvalati na sā malayaja-pavanena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (3)*

"She who has been delighted by His extremely sweet and tender words is not scorched by contact with the Malayan breeze."

Commentary

"*Sakhī*, He charms that lovely beauty with the ambrosia of His soft and endearing words. How would she know that the cool southern wind coming from the Malayan Hills actually sets off blazing fires? She will not know the pain that burns jilted heroines."

The alternative meaning is, "Vanamālī is not enjoying amorous love with that *gopikā*. Rather, He is simply enticing her with the ambrosia of His sweet and gentle words. Is that maiden burning in the Malayan breeze? She certainly is."

VERSE 34

*sthala-jalaruha-ruci-kara-caraṇena
luṭhati na sā himakara-kiraṇena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (4)*

"That enchantress, having been enraptured by Vanamālī, whose cooling hands and feet gleam like a land-lotus, is not rolling in the dust, anguished by the scorching rays of the moon."

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā tells Her friend, “O *sakhī*, the palms of Keśava’s hands and the soles of His feet are cooling and radiant like land-lotuses. Will that ravishing beauty, enjoying love with Him, know how cool moonbeams can burn? Will she be shifting from side to side throughout the night while lying on her bed as she burns in the moonshine?”

Alternatively, “She is continually tossing and turning throughout the night for want of attaining the embrace of Keśava’s cool lotus limbs.”

VERSE 35

sajala-jalada-samudaya-rucireṇa
dahati na sā hṛdi viraha-davena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (5)

“That enchanting Vanamālī, more fresh and lustrous than a host of new rainclouds, showers affection on that shapely maiden. The poison of long separation does not scorch her heart.”

Commentary

“O *sakhī*, that enthralling beauty, who enjoys with Śyāmasundara – whose form is exceptionally enchanting and fresh like a new raincloud – is not afraid of the venom of separation. He is drenching her with His love. What does she know about the prolonged separation that tears one to pieces?”

Alternatively, “That *gopī* is not really enjoying love with Śyāmasundara, whose complexion resembles a fresh raincloud. Is she suffering from the severe poison of prolonged separation? She certainly is.”

VERSE 36

kanaka-nikaṣa-ruci-śuci-vasanena
śvasiti na sā parijana-hasanena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (6)

“Pure yellow cloth reflecting against His dark complexion, He resembles a testing stone radiating gold. The fortunate beloved enjoyed by Him does not sigh deep at the taunts of her companions.”

Commentary

“*Sakhī*, our beloved Pītāmbara’s yellow cloth is as pure and radiant as golden lines rubbed upon the testing stone of His dark body. That greatly fortunate mistress is also *pītāmbarī*, becoming His yellow garment when He binds her in the ropes of His arms. So, what will that noble maiden who has been delighted by Him know of the pain felt when teased by one’s own friends? And as a consequence, will she know how one’s breathing becomes stifled and how dejected one feels?”

Alternatively, “*Śyāmasundara*’s yellow garments glow like gold against His dark complexion. After that *gopī* attained the happiness of union with Him, her garments are fragrant and spattered with many colors. For this reason her friends are teasing her so she must be feeling embarrassed.”

VERSE 37

sakala-bhuvana-jana-vara-taruṇena
vahati na sā rujam ati-karuṇena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (7)

“Enjoying amour with the best of all youths in the entire universe, she is not tortured by the pain of separation, being the object of His vast compassion.”

Commentary

“Among all tender young men of the universe, Vanamālī is by far the best. He is thoroughly enchanting, being the most handsome and radiant, the best among all fresh, youthful, artistic dancers – *nava-kiśora naṭavara* – and an ocean of mercy. That enchantress, being delighted by Him, will not become despondent and listless like Me.”

Alternatively, “The attractive young mistress who enjoys love with the best of the young men in the universe must feel anguish when separated from He who makes her heart melt with special affection.”

[Even though it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s habit to romance with the other *gopīs*, Śrī Rādhā knows that She is the only one capable of satisfying Him and that soon He will lose interest in His current flame. Indignant at being superseded and agonizing in separation, She expresses Her envy of Her rival. She will say, “As Kṛṣṇa is *bahu-nāyaka*, the lover of many, My rival will not be happy for long. Soon He will betray her also.” At the same time, internally Rādhā is happy that Kṛṣṇa meets with other *gopīs* in order to accept their *prema-sevā*. Even when Kṛṣṇa is meeting with another *gopī*, Rādhā appreciates why He is doing so and confidently thinks, “He may be with another girl now but He is keen and anxious to be with Me.”]

VERSE 38

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇita-vacanena
praviśatu harir api hṛdayam anena
sakhi! yā ramitā... (8)

May Śrī Hari enter the hearts of the devotees through the words of Śrī Jayadeva’s song.

Commentary

May Mādhava be pleased with Śrī Jayadeva's rendition of Rādhā's words glorifying Him, and may He enter the heart. Whose heart should He enter? Śrī Rādhā's – and also the reciters' and listeners' of this song. May Nāgara Nārāyaṇa Hari, the supreme paramour, entering through their ears along with Śrī Rādhā's words of lamentation, take His place in their lotus hearts moistened with ecstatic loving moods.

Thus ends the Sixteenth Song entitled *Nārāyaṇa-madanāyāsa*, "The Supreme Skillful Lover."

VERSE 39

*manobhavānandana candanānila
prasīda re dakṣiṇa muñca vāmatām
kṣaṇam jagat-prāṇa vidhāya mādhavam
puro mama prāṇa-haro bhaviṣyasi*

"O southern breeze from the Malaya Hills, giver joy to Kandarpa! Stay where you are! Be gracious and give up your opposition towards Me! O breeze that brings life to the world! Bring Mādhava to Me, even if just for a moment, and then you can take away My life."

Commentary

Unable to tolerate the onslaught of Kāmadeva's shafts, Śrī Rādhā addresses the Malayan breeze, "O wind from the Malaya Hills, who carry the arrows of desire to their target, you have turned against Me. You have delighted your friend Kāmadeva by setting Me on fire, burning Me in the devouring flames of amorous desire. Since you are the Southern wind that gives joy to the whole world and an ally of Madana, why are you hostile towards Me? The sandalwood trees on the

Malaya Hills are full of snakes, and certainly by contact with them your nature has become defiled. How much suffering you are inflicting on Me! Jagat-prāṇa, O life of the universe! Be pleased for just a moment and forgive Me. Abandon your animosity towards Me. Take My life, but first give Me the opportunity to see My *prāṇanātha* Mādhava for one moment and then you can plunder My *prāṇa*.”

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*Uddipana-prakarana* 10.107) as an example of *gandhavaḥ-uddipana* – the fragrant breeze acting as a stimulant of *prema*.

This verse features *vaṁśastha-chanda-* and *atiśayokti-alankāra*.

VERSE 40

ripur iva sakhī-saṁvāso 'yaṁ śikhīva himānilo
viṣaṁ iva sudhā-raśmir yasmin dunoti manogate
hṛdayam adaye tasminn evaṁ punar valate balāt
kuvalaya-dṛśāṁ vāmaḥ kāmo nikāma-niraṅkuṣaḥ

“O *sakhī*, in My heart friends feel like foes. The cool and gentle breeze seems like fire. The moonbeams torment Me like poison. Nevertheless My heart is forcibly attracted to Him against My will. It is true that *kāma* is always completely unbridled when attacking impassioned young maidens with eyes beautiful as blue night-lilies.”

Commentary

Maddened by separation Śrī Rādhā berates Her enfeebled heart, saying to Her *sakhī*, “Alas! Who can I blame? Now, when I think of that Kṛṣṇa, whom My *priya-sakhīs* would forbid Me to meet, these usually pleasing friends seem to

be like longstanding enemies. Today the cool breeze burns like fire and the soothing moon seems just like the deadly *halāhala* poison [produced when the demigods and demons churned the ocean]. Despite all this, *sakhī*, My unrestrained heart still races after that Kṛṣṇa, and, being undiscerning, has become the cause of My suffering. Lotus-eyed women who have no power of discrimination fall prey to the unrelenting strikes of Kāmadeva, who becomes a source of endless misery for them. As it is, Kāmadeva is undefeatable. For stunningly beautiful women such as these, he is exceptionally harsh and antagonistic, and for heroines in separation, he is utterly ruthless.”

This verse features *hariṇī-vṛtta*- and *virodhālankāra*.

VERSE 41

*bādhām vidhehi malayānila pañca-bāṇa
prāṇān grhāṇa na grhaṁ punar āsrayiṣye
kiṁ te kṛtānta-bhagini kṣamayā taraṅgair
aṅgāni siñca mama śāmyatu deha-dāhaḥ*

“O Malayan breeze, go ahead, give me trouble! O Pañcabāṇa! God of love who shoots five arrows, you may rob Me of My life, but I will never return home. O Yamunā, sister of Yama, the lord of death! Why should you hold back? Drown Me with your waves so that the conflagration raging in My body will be extinguished forever.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā is now burning in the heat of separation. Taking a vow to give up Her life, She says, “O Malayan breeze! O cooling wind, what are you waiting for? Give Me as much pain as you like! O Pañcabāṇa, plunder My *prāṇa*. That is why you have been invested with five arrows – to

steal My five life-airs. Stealing *prāṇa* is your only business in life. That may be, Kāmadeva, but you inflame those who are suffering and turn them into householders. However, I will die first. No matter how much you control Me, I will never go back to My house. I will take shelter of the lotus feet of Vanamālī.”

Devastated by amorous desire, Śrī Rādhā reproaches both Kāmadeva and the Malayan breeze, and then turns to the Yamunā River, “O Yamunā, you are the sister of Yamarāja, the lord of death. The Malayan breeze and Pañcabāṇa are tormenting Me. Kāmadeva compels lovers to meet, but he has reversed his behavior. The Malayan breeze, generally a cause of happiness, instead is making Me depressed. When they seize My life-airs, what answer will you give to your brother Yama? So do not spare Me. Swallow Me up in your waves. Submerge My lifeless body in your waters, thereby extinguishing its burning, and let it lie in peace.”

In this way Śrī Rādhā’s feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa reached the tenth condition, namely, desiring one’s own death. The hero is *śaṭha*, an underhanded, double-dealing rogue who plays with ladies’ affection, and the heroine is *vipralabdha-nāyikā*, disappointed by her lover who does not come.

This verse features *vasanta-tilaka-chanda* and *aprastuta-praśamsā-alan̄kāra*.

VERSE 42

*prātar nīla-nicolam acyutam uraḥ samvīta-pītāmśukam
rādhāyāś cakitaṁ vilokya hasati svairam sakhī-maṇḍale
vrīḍā-cañcalam añcalam nayanayor ādhāya rādhānane
svādu-smera-mukho ’yam astu jagad-ānandāya nandātmajaḥ*

One morning, Acyuta found Himself mistakenly garbed in Śrī Rādhā's blue veil, and Her breast was covered with His yellow shawl. This caused all the *sakhīs* to burst out laughing. Seeing their mirth He fell shy and with a mild smile, He fired a mischievous sidelong glance at Śrī Rādhā's lotus face. May that Nanda-nandana give joy to all the worlds.

Commentary

In the final verse of this act the poet Jayadeva has given a blessing to the Vaiṣṇavas: "May this Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestow bliss upon the whole world." Śrī Jayadeva remembered one of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's previous, matchless amorous pastimes that took place in the early morning in a nearby secluded forest.

Unable to further describe Śrī Rādhā's pain in separation, the poet instead affords us a glimpse of Her blissful state of disarray after passing the night with Kṛṣṇa. Jayadeva employs the logic of a lion's glance (*siṃhāvalokana-nyāya*) to depict the general trend of the night-time pastimes. This form of logic refers to the casting of a retrospective glance while still proceeding.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava had passed the night together engaged in *rati-keli* and They had mistakenly taken each others' clothes in a state of bewilderment. Struck with wonder, the *sakhīs* burst out laughing at this surprising exchange. Acyuta Kṛṣṇa had put on Her blue veil and Śrī Rādhā had covered Her breast with His yellow shawl. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eyes darted about in embarrassment. His sidelong glance fell upon Śrī Rādhā's face and He smiled gently.

This verse reveals Śrī Jayadeva's desire for the world's auspiciousness. It includes *hasya-rati* (the mellow of laughter) and *svabhāvokti-alāṅkāra*. The hero is *anukula-nāyaka*, the

obedient lover completely fixed on his ladylove, and the heroine is *abhisārikā-nāyikā*, a girl who happily meets her lover at the appointed rendezvous.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT SEVEN
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED NĀGARA-NĀRĀYAṆA,
“THE SUPREME TRANSCENDENTAL HERO.”



Act Eight

VILAKṢYA-LAKṢMĪPATHI – THE UNLUCKY LORD OF FORTUNE

VERSE 1

*atha katham api yāminīm vinīya
smara-śara-jarjaritāpi sā prabhāte
anunaya-vacanam vadantam agre
praṇatam api priyam āha sābhyasūyam*

Though split asunder by the arrows of love, Śrī Rādhā somehow managed to pass the night. When Her beloved came at dawn, falling at Her feet and humbly attempting to pacify Her, She condemned Him in Her jealous anger.

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā spent the night weaving a network of assumptions about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, entirely from the figments of Her imagination. She waited for His arrival with intense longing, and when He did not come She was shattered by disappointment. Throughout the night She sent messages and counter-messages one after another describing the distress caused by the intoxicating spring breeze. The *vasanta* season was bombarding Her from all directions at once with the fragrance of many flowers and the arrows of amorous desire. Waiting in the appointed meeting place, She lamented incessantly while dreaming about meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She completely lost Herself in memories of union with Him. In such a state of unremitting

separation, She passed the whole night. Finally, in a submissive mood Śrī Kṛṣṇā came before Her in the morning, bowing down and begging for a reconciliation. He attempted to comfort Her and to dispel Her anger. However, under the influence of the devastating pain of unfulfilled *kāma*, She saw signs of lovemaking on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body and became even more agitated.

How ironic it is that the *māna* of pouting heroines increases even more in the presence of their beloved. Bowing at Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, Śrī Kṛṣṇa displayed the peak of *prema*. Śrī Rādhā, Her *prāṇa* having risen up to Her throat, was on the verge of leaving Her body. The sight of Her beloved increased Her jealousy even more, and She spoke as follows.

❧ Song Seventeen ❧

The musical mode is *bhairavī-rāga*; the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 2

rajani-janita-guru-jāgara-rāga-kaṣāyitam alasa-nimeṣam
vahati nayanam anurāgam iva sphuṭam udita-rasābhiniveṣam (1)

hari hari yāhi mādharma yāhi keśava mā vada kaitava-vādam
tām anusara sarasīruha-locana yā tava harati viṣādam
(refrain)

“Your reddish, drowsy, half-closed eyes tell of Your wakeful night passed in the flurry of lovemaking and expose Your ardent passion for that *vraja-sundari*.

“Go, Mādhava! Go away, Keśava! Do not ply Me with Your deceptive words. O lotus-eyed one, go to that agreeable damsel who is quite capable of removing Your sorrow.”
(refrain)

Commentary

Hari! Hari! – “O God, Lord have mercy!” These two words are used here to express Rādhā’s profound disappointment and also to complete the meter. Alternatively, Hari implies, “The expressive glances from Your beautifully enchanting eyes steal away the heart.”

Red from the night-long vigil, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eyes display the feelings of separation that He has undergone. He is so tired that He can hardly keep His eyes open. Noticing His half-closed red eyes, Rādhā addresses Him by three names that reveal Her inner moods, especially jealousy towards Her rival.

Mādhava – In the mood of *khaṇḍitā-nāyikā*, a forsaken heroine, Śrī Rādhā says to Her prostrated beloved, “O Mādhava! O Lakṣmīpati! Go! Go away! You are passionately absorbed in someone else, so what right do You have to go and deceive others? You are not My (*mā*) husband (*dhava*). If You were, would You have cheated on Me?”

Alternatively, *mā* implies, “I am devoted to one beloved, while Lakṣmī is fickle by nature. It is only logical that her husband will be the same. So how can You have true affection for Me? Just go away!” *Mā* actually means Śrī Rādhā and *dhava* refers to *prāṇa-priyatama*, Her most beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whom She holds dearer than Her own life.

Keśava – Lodging further accusations and expressing Her dissatisfaction She says, “O Keśava, go away!” He who wears excellent attire and ornaments and who always leaves His hair untied is called Keśava. Or, he who is fascinated with one having beautiful hair is also addressed as Keśava: “Keep Your heart with that maiden whose hair is so attractively arranged.”

She continues to berate Him, “O *bahu-vallabha*, beloved of many! What is the point of speaking deceptive words to

Me when I love only one? Do not lie. If You are wondering why I am angry and upset, then listen. It is not so.”

Sarasīruha-locana – “O lotus-eyed one, go to that lotus-eyed lady who takes away all Your cares and woes. Your beloved must also have many lovers – like attracts like.” The word *sarasīruha* can refer to either the day-blooming lotus (*kamala*) or the night-blooming lotus (*kumuda*). It is well known that Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eye’s resemble the *kamala*, but here Śrī Rādhā’s intended meaning is *kumuda*, which remains open throughout the night and closes at the break of day. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also appeared in the moon dynasty. Therefore, Rādhā suspects that, just like the moon, He has spent the whole night awake with another. “Even now, Your thirst for her is visible in Your eyes. The red glow of love, still coloring them, speaks of Your guilt. Your burning absorption in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* last night is evident in Your eyes even now. The nature of one’s heart determines the degree to which one’s cunning will manifest.” *Sarasīruha-locana* also denotes one whose eyes are half closed because He is always immersed in bliss.

“Hari, Hari! Go to that ladylove who has showered her favor on You all night.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies, “By heart and body You and I are one. Rādhā, I am speaking the truth when I say that I did not stay awake all night with any other girl. My reddish eyes are closing simply because I’m tired.”

VERSE 3

kajjala-malina-vilocana-cumbana-viracita-nīlima-rūpam
daśana-vasanam aruṇam tava kṛṣṇa tanoti tanor anurūpam
hari hari yāhi mādharma... (2)

“Your beautiful red lips, the raiment of Your teeth, have become blackish like Your body, Mādhava, from kissing her *kajjala*-annointed eyes.”

Commentary

Thinking that Mādhava has betrayed Her, Śrī Rādhā pierces Him in His most vulnerable spot, maiming Him with the shafts of Her scathing insinuations. “Śyāma! There is no need for deceit. If You say, ‘I have not spent the night with any other lover,’ why, then, are Your eyes so red? Your *prema* for that provocative beloved radiates from Your eyes even now.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies, “*Priya*, My dearest! I am telling You the truth. I have not been awake the whole night with another girl. My eyes are closing simply because I am tired.” Śrī Rādhā continues, “Then why have Your red lips become black and now match the color of Your body? It is because You have been kissing her collyrium-smearred eyes all night. Go away! Go back to that sweetheart who has colored Your eyes, tinged Your lips and showered You with favors all night. Do not lie to Me. Just go! Your eyes are reddish from Your all-consuming absorption in love play. Being colored by the redness of *anurāga*, they are clearly expressing Your proclivity for that beautiful *vraja-gopī*.”

VERSE 4

*vapur anuهارati tava smara-saṅgarakhara-nakhara-kṣata-rekham
marakata-śakala-kalita-kala-dhauta-liper iva rati-jaya-lekham
hari hari yāhi mādharma... (3)*

“Your dark body, scratched by the sharp nails of that enticing maiden expert in erotic combat, bespeaks of Your amorous play. These marks are like love’s proclamation of victory inscribed in golden letters upon an emerald tablet.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā says, “O Mādhava! Every part of Your body tells the story of Your *kāma-keli*, Your amorous encounter. That charming maiden has scratched Your chest with Her

sharp nails. Your heart appears to be a battlefield where a great war has taken place. Your dark body bears the clear, red scratches of that maiden. It appears as if *rati-jaya-patrī*, a proclamation of victory in lovemaking, has been written in golden ink upon a dark emerald plaque, announcing her triumph. An impassioned maiden has sent this love-letter to her lover: ‘I won complete victory in this erotic contest.’”

Śrī Rādhā is sarcastically insinuating that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in a fallen position, having been demoted to the position of a messenger to deliver Her rival’s victory letter. With a particular purpose in mind, Śrī Rādhā uses the word *khara*, or sharp. One meaning indicates humiliating defeat in lovemaking. Another indicates hard scratches which are painful. Nail scratches should not be cutting, rather they should be soft. So Śrī Rādhā is implying, “It seems that Your ladylove is not very expert in the techniques of romance. Now go away!” Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies, “Rādhā, these are not the nail-marks of some sweetheart. My body got scratched by thorns when I was searching for You in the woods.”

VERSE 5

*carāṇa-kamala-galad-alaktaka-siktam idaṁ tava hṛdayam udāram
darśayatīva bahir madana-druma-nava-kisalaya-parivāram
hari hari yāhi mādharma...* (4)

“Your celebrated chest bears the crimson marks of red lac from the lotus feet of that fair maiden. It seems as if *madana-vṛkṣa*, the tree of amorous desire, firmly rooted in the core of Your heart is outwardly manifesting its newly sprouted red buds.”

Commentary

Her words full of veiled accusations, Śrī Rādhā says to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “Aha! What a munificent heart You have! And

just see the enchanting appearance it has assumed! You are so magnanimous that You have clasped Your sweetheart's lotus feet to Your heart in the joy of *prema*. The red lac from her feet has flowed onto Your chest. That crimson color against Your *śyāma* complexion makes You even more handsome. These fresh, bud-like marks are just like the fresh buds sprouting on the tree of desire within Your heart. Manifesting outwardly, they expose Your intense passion for this forbidden love affair. You cannot conceal Your ardor for her. So go away! There is nothing for You here."

Pleading innocence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "This is just a design painted with red ocher. I have not held any girl's lotus feet over My heart and this is certainly nobody's foot-lac."

According to the opinion of some commentators, the intended meaning of Śrī Rādhā's statement here is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has enjoyed love with this heroine in a special way called *krodha-bandha*.

VERSE 6

*daśana-padaṁ bhavad-adhara-gataṁ mama janayati cetasi khedam
kathayati katham adhunāpi mayā saha tava vapur etad abhedam
hari hari yāhi mādharma... (5)*

"Seeing all the bite-marks left by that playful coquette on Your lips, My heart sinks in sorrow, and still You insist that Your body is not separate from Mine."

Commentary

"O Mādhava! You can make excuses to cover up for the redness of Your eyes and everything else with Your deceptive words, but how can You conceal all the cuts – clear as shining crescent moons – left by the teeth of that coquette on the tender petals of Your lips? Your shameless smile makes My

heart blaze. The bite-marks that *ramaṇī* impressed on Your lips during lovemaking stir up My grief. Separation from You has driven Me to the point of death (*mṛti* – the tenth and last stage of separation). You repeatedly say, ‘You and I are one’, but under the circumstances how can You suggest that We are non-different? Just go.”

Defending His innocence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa retorts, “*Priya*, My darling! These cuts are from bumblebees who, greedy after the fragrance of My lips, were biting them. These are not bites from any *ramaṇī*.”

VERSE 7

*bahir iva malinataraṁ tava kṛṣṇa mano 'pi bhaviṣyati nūnam
katham atha vañcayase janam anugatam asamaśara-jvara-dūnam
hari hari yāhi mādharma...* (6)

“O Keśava, Your body is black, and so is Your heart. How could You deceive someone faithful to You, especially when She has been maimed by Cupid’s shafts?”

Commentary

Distraught, Śrī Rādhā says, “*He Kṛṣṇa!* You are even blacker on the inside than on the outside. If it were not so, then how could a heart that is by nature noble and pure become so indifferent to Me? Your black heart is wicked even with those who favor and rely on You. Only one with such a polluted heart could neglect Me and enjoy with another *ramaṇī*, thereby deceiving a person who has taken shelter of You. How could You betray Me when You see that I am already traumatized by the arrows of *kāma*? Go, cheater! Just leave. A pure-hearted person would never do such a thing.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “*Rādhā*, do not harbor these unfounded doubts. I could never cheat You.”

VERSE 8

*bhramati bhavān abalā-kavalāya vaneṣu kim atra vicitram
prathayati pūtanikaiva vadhū-vadha-nirdaya-bāla-caritram
hari hari yāhi mādharma... (7)*

“You wander from one forest to the next with the simple purpose of preying upon weak maidens. What is surprising about this? While still an infant You killed Pūtanā, and demonstrated Your cruel-hearted nature. Killing women is Your habit.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā continued, “It is just Your inherent nature to wander about the forests ‘devouring’ and abusing women. So if You also misuse Me, then what is so unusual about that?”

“Even in Your infancy You became renowned for killing the belligerent Pūtanā, the sister of Bakāsura. When such a powerful woman immediately aged and died by Your influence, then what is astonishing about killing a woman like Me? It would be just a small matter for You. The Vedic scriptures prohibit murdering ladies, considering it most heinous and unpardonable. But this depravity on Your part is inherent in Your character from birth. Kindly go away. Because You are a young man, You will not have to make the slightest endeavour to slay a female like Me. Cruel one, now leave Me alone.”

VERSE 9

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇita-rati-vañcita-khaṇḍita-yuvati-vilāpam
śṛṇuta sudhā-madhuraṁ vibudhā vibudhālayato 'pi durāpam
hari hari yāhi mādharma... (8)*

O learned sages! Please listen to Śrī Jayadeva’s account of the bitter lament of Śrī Rādhā, a maiden betrayed and

cheated by passion, a lament that is even sweeter than *amṛta* and rarely heard even in the celestial realm.

Commentary

Here, the poet, addressing the learned scholars (and the *devatās*), says, “O learned sages! Listen to the lament of this deserted maiden deprived of Her coveted amorous pleasure. Her grief-stricken song of separation is sweeter than any heavenly nectar. In the celestial worlds, it is not possible to taste the kind of nectar contained in Her lament. The sweetest substance available in Devaloka is *amṛta*, the ambrosia of the demigods. However this *amṛta* is bitter in comparison with Śrī Rādhā’s lament, which is only available to humans here on Earth. Therefore, learned scholars eager to attain real *amṛta*, which is the constant remembrance of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, should definitely drink the incomparable nectar found on Earth in Śrī Jayadeva’s exquisite *Gīta-govinda*.

In this song, Śrī Rādhā is *khaṇḍitā-nāyikā*. A heroine becomes *khaṇḍitā* when:

*nidrā-kaśāya-mukulīkṛta-tāmrantetro
nārī-nakhavraṇaviśeṣa-vicitratāṅgaḥ
yasyāḥ kuto’pi patireti grhaṁ prabhāte
sā khaṇḍeti kathitākavibhiḥ purāṇaiḥ*

“In the early morning the hero enters the heroine’s abode from elsewhere. He has had no chance to sleep because he was awake the whole night. His eyes are red and his whole body is beautifully marked with scratches made by some other girl. Learned poets have called the heroine in this situation *khaṇḍitā-nāyikā*.” She becomes extremely jealous, and either chastizes him, or turns aside and silently pouts.

This Seventeenth Song of Śrī Gīta-govinda, entitled *Lakṣmīpati-ratnāvalī*, “Kṛṣṇa Bejeweled,” features *megha-rāga* and the *vipralambha* aspect of *śṛṅgāra-rasa* and *karuṇa-rasa*.

VERSE 10

*tavedaṁ paśyantyāḥ prasaraḍ-anurāgaṁ bahir iva
 priyā-pādālakta-cchuritam aruṇa-dyoti-hṛdayam
 mamāḍya prakhyāta-praṇaya-bhara-bhaṅgena kitava
 tvad-ālokaḥ śokād api kim api lajjām janayati*

“*He śaṭha*, O two-faced cheater! My long-standing and well-known love for You is shattered when I see Your chest colored with the red lac from that *vraja-gopī*’s feet. That radiant red color seems to be outwardly proclaiming the passion You harbor for her within. It is shame more than sorrow that I feel within My heart.”

Commentary

Khaṇḍitā Rādhikā, the deserted heroine, now resorts to arrogance, accusing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “*He kitava*, O charlatan! You did not come, but still I waited for You for a long time. Our glorious *praṇaya*, the love that made Our hearts one, is now shattered to pieces. The overwhelming anguish I have suffered in Your separation is indescribable. I do not know whether to live or die. There is no question of continuing to live, and at the same time death refuses to take Me. How have I fallen into such a dilemma?

“O traitor, seeing You like this, I do not feel as much anguish as I feel shame. You passed the night enjoying with that temptress, and having clasped her feet to Your heart, Your chest is now adorned with her red footlac. The red glow of the rising dawn suggests to me that the *anurāga* You were carrying in Your heart has today spilled outside. When I see the signs of that ladylove’s pleasure where You used to wear the Kaustubha jewel, I feel totally mortified.

“The pride I felt from the matchless love We shared filled Me with unbounded happiness. But now You have broken

that connecting thread of *prema* with Your contemptible behavior. You have enjoyed intimacies with her and You are not even ashamed of it. May You be blessed, Keśava! Now go away! O unfaithful one, why did I ever love You?”

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*Vyabhicārī-prakarāṇa* 13.63) to illustrate *vriḍa*, shame.

The meter of this verse is *śikhariṇī-chand*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa considered, “Despite all My many attempts, Rādhā’s obdurate sulk is not dissipating. So now I will have to employ *vamśī-dūtī*, My flute-messenger. I have no alternative. The sound of My flute will surely dispell Rādhikā’s *māna*.” Therefore the poet Jayadeva offers a benediction through the *vamśī-dhvani*, the sound of the flute, in the following verse.

VERSE 11

antar-mohana-mauli-ghūrṇana-calan-mandāra-visraṁsana
stabdhākarṣaṇa-dṛṣṭi-harṣaṇa-mahā-mantraḥ kuraṅgī-dṛśām
dṛpyad-dānava-dūyamāna-diviṣad-durvāra-duḥkhā-padām
bhramśaḥ kamsa-ripor vyapohayatu vaḥ śreyāṁsi vamśī-ravaḥ

The sound of Kamsa-ripu’s flute casts a magic spell that bewilders the *gopīs*, causing their heads to reel and their flower decorations to fall. Attracted by that bewitching melody, the doe-eyed maidens become stunned in rapture and stare vacantly into space as their eyes brim with bliss. That enchanting sound, acting as a potent *mantra*, drives away the unbearable suffering of the *devatās* harassed by the arrogant *dānava* demons. May that flute song destroy all impediments to everyone’s auspiciousness.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva bestows a benediction upon the singers and audience of his poem through an auspicious invocation in

this final verse of Act Eight. “May the sound of Kāmsārī’s flute spread good fortune. This flute melody dispels the demigods’ intolerable suffering caused by the arrogant demons. It enchants the hearts of the doe-eyed *gopīs* to such an extent that, struck with rapture, they continuously stare in bewilderment as their heads spin, their jeweled tiaras tremble, and their *mandāra* flower garlands break and fall.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute song is endowed with six magical powers: (1) *mohanatva* – to bewilder one in the core of his heart, (2) *vaśīkaraṇatva* – to enslave others, (3) *stambhatva* – to stun them, (4) *ākaraṣaṇatva* – to attract them, (5) *uccāṭanaṭva* – to make them give up their inherent nature, and (6) *māraṇatva* – to destroy all opposing elements. Therefore it is, indeed, a *mahā-mantra* whose spell-binding magic has a special kinship with the *gopīs*.

Aware of the flute’s bewitching effect, the presiding deity of the art of subjugating others by magical spells (the *vaśīkṛta-devatā*) calls out “*Sādhu, sādhu!* Bravo!” and nods his head in appreciation. The trembling of the head and the falling of *mandāra* flowers indicate the flute’s power of *māraṇa*, or the authority to destroy opposition. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *vaṁśī* is famous for its ability to attract and stun. This flute sound charms the female deer of Vraja also and leaves them dazed.

In order to vanquish Śrī Rādhā’s extremely deep *māna*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa began to play upon His *vaṁśī*, the sound of which is the greatest mystical incantation, endowed with six effective methods of accomplishing one’s objective.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT EIGHT
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED VILAKṢYA-LAKṢMĪPATĪ,
“THE UNLUCKY LORD OF FORTUNE,” DESCRIBING THE
KHAṆḌITĀ-NĀYIKĀ, THE FORSAKEN HEROINE.



Act Nine

MUGDHA-MUKUNDAH – THE INNOCENT LORD OF LIBERATION

VERSE 1

*tām atha manmatha-khinnām rati-rasa-bhinnām viśāda-sampannām
anucintita-hari-caritām kalahāntarītām uvāca rahaḥ sakhī*

Oppressed by Cupid's arrows, deeply disappointed at being deprived of amour, obsessed with Hari's romantic tactics, and indignant at being neglected, She released Her anger on Her beloved. Then Her *sakhī* spoke to Her in a secluded place.

Commentary

Now Śrī Jayadeva reveals Rādhā's mood, describing in detail the ways in which She has been suffering in separation. In truth, She is separated from Her lover only as a consequence of Her quarrelsome nature, which has driven Her to play the *kalahāntarītā-nāyikā*. Understanding this, Her *sakhī* encourages Her to accept Kṛṣṇa and receive Him with honor.

Manmatha-khinnā – Śrī Rādhā is tormented by Madana.

Rati-rasa-bhinnā – She is grief-stricken being deprived of the joy of love play.

Viśāda-sampannām – Her intense desire to enjoy intimacies with Śrī Kṛṣṇa has pushed Her into the stage of conflicting emotions (*bhāva-śabalatā*).

Anucintita-hari-caritām – She is continuously mulling over Kṛṣṇa’s activities.

Kalahāntarītā – Although Her beloved is falling at Her feet even in front of Her friends, She severely reprimands Him and denies His requests. In such a condition She is prone to incoherent speech, anguish, debility and deep, heavy breathing.

Rādhā exhibits all the traits of the *kalahāntarītā-nāyikā*: (1) She pours scorn on all the statements made by Her lover, considering His reasonable explanations and submissive mood to be nothing but cunning trickery. (2) She critically analyzes His behavior and lodges various allegations against Him out of loving anger. (3) The more He prostrates Himself before Her, the more Her obstinacy escalates. (4) In addition to that, Her anguish increases as She goes on contemplating Her own fabricated contentions. (5) Her lover and nothing else completely occupy Her anxious thoughts. Śrī Rādhā exhibits all these five characteristics.

❁ Song Eighteen ❁

The musical mode is *gurjarī-rāga*. The rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 2

*harir abhisarati vahati madhu-pavane
kim aparam adhika-sukhaṁ sakhi bhavane* (1)

mādhava mā kuru mānini mānam aye (refrain)

“The honeyed spring breezes bring Hari to meet with You. O friend, what could be a greater source of happiness than this?”

“*He mānini*, O indignant girl! Do not be angry with Mādhava.” (refrain)

Commentary

“O *sakhī*, give up Your *māna* and cooperate with Your Lakṣmī-pati Mādhava. He has appeared in the Madhu dynasty and He possesses great riches. Nevertheless, He is humbly propitiating You. But now He is leaving. Drop Your sulky mood. The spring breeze is blowing and Hari has personally come to meet with You in Your private chamber. What could be a greater source of happiness than this? His arrival heralds the ultimate in joy. O Rādhā, honor Him.”

VERSE 3

*tāla-phalād api gurum ati-sarasam
kiṁ viphalī-kuruṣe kuca-kalaśam
mādhave... (2)*

“Your jug-like breasts are heavier and richer than fully ripened palm fruits. Why let them go to waste?”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says, “O Rādhā, Your pitcher-like breasts are better than *tāla* fruits. *Rasa-śāstra* describes *tāla* fruits as big and juicy, but, next to Your ample breasts, they are puny and dry. The fulfillment of those breasts lies with Hari and His touch. The heaviness of those pitchers is meant for His enjoyment and You are thwarting their purpose.” Śrī Rādhā’s breasts have been compared to waterpots to express their immensity. “Give up Your contrary mood and facilitate Śrī Hari in relishing the flavor of erotic escapades.”

VERSE 4

*kati na kathitam idam anupadam aciram
mā parihara harim atiśaya-ruciram
mādhave... (3)*

“How many times must I tell You, ‘Do not spurn Hari, who is so boundlessly handsome and charming!’”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “O Rādhā, how long I have been trying to convince You to give up Your *māna*! Hari is so handsome and lustrous. Change Your attitude – forget Your sulky mood and welcome Him. Hari is so delightful that He steals everyone’s heart. It is foolish to reject Him.”

VERSE 5

kim iti viśīdasi rodiṣi vikalā
vihasati yuvati-sabhā tava sakalā
mādhave... (4)

“Why do You weep in dejection? Seeing Your behavior, all Your rivals are laughing at You.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā hears the words of Her *sakhī* but continues sobbing. Then our *sakhī* says, “O Rādhā, why are You upset and still crying? All Your rivals are mocking You to witness Your method of seduction. How foolish You are. Hari is rolling on the ground at Your feet and You just go on crying.”

VERSE 6

sajala-nalinī-dala-śīlita-śayane
harim avalokaya saphalaya nayane
mādhave... (5)

“Make Your eyes successful by gazing lovingly upon Hari as He reclines upon a cool bed of moist lotus petals.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* tells Śrī Rādhā, “O Rādhā, behold Hari in this appointed love bower as He relaxes upon a bed of cool lotus petals adorned with diamonds and pearls. Feast Your eyes upon that person for whom You have been thirsting. Do not quarrel with Him. He is waiting for You, so just let go of Your wounded pride.”

VERSE 7

*janayasi manasi kim iti guru-khedam
 śṛṇu mama vacanam anīhita-bhedam
 mādhave... (6)*

“Why do You allow distress to possess Your heart? Listen to me. I am speaking only for Your benefit, without any separate interest.”

Commentary

Even after hearing all of Her *sakhī*'s suggestions, Śrī Rādhā was still disturbed. Her *sakhī* continued, “*He priya-sakhī*, O my dear friend! Why are You making such trouble for Yourself? How have You allowed this animosity to plunder Your heart and unfounded suspicions to devour You? I can see that the tribulation of separation has paralyzed You, leaving You in apathy. Heed my words. Just understand this – I only want Your welfare. There is no difference between You and Mādhava; You and He are one.”

VERSE 8

*harir upayātu vadatu bahu-madhuram
 kim iti karoṣi hṛdayam ati-vidhuram
 mādhave... (7)*

“Let Hari come. Allow Him to speak to You sweetly. Why doom Your heart to loneliness?”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā's *sakhī* says, “*He priya Rādhā!* Let Hari approach You and speak honeyed words. It is not befitting for You to keep Him distant. Make Yourself happy by listening to His flattering words and thereby make Him blissful. Your heart craves Him, so why are You resisting? You are uselessly betraying Your own better interests by being indignant and thus making Yourself suffer. Give up Your *māna*.”

VERSE 9

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam ati-lalitam
sukhayatu rasika-janaṁ hari-caritam
mādhave... (8)

May Śrī Jayadeva's charming description of Śrī Hari's behavior increase the happiness of devotees expert in relishing *rasa*.

Commentary

This Eighteenth Song of Śrī Gīta-govinda is entitled *Amanda-mukunda*, “Exuberant Mukunda.” The only purpose of this song and its fruit as well is the pleasure of Śrī Hari and the *rasika-bhaktas*. Śrī Jayadeva says, “I have described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appealing activities. May they bring joy to the hearts of pure devotees.”

VERSE 10

snigdhe yat paruṣāsi yat praṇamati stabdhāsi yad rāgiṇi
dveṣasthāsi yad un mukhe vimukhatām yātāsi tasmin priye
tad yuktaṁ viparīta-kāriṇi tava śrīkhaṇḍa-carcā viṣaṁ
śītāṁśus tapano himaṁ hutavahaḥ kṛīḍā-mudo yātanāḥ

“Hari petitions You very affectionately but You meet His appeals with harshness. He prostrates before You and You remain rigid. He displays His deep love for You, yet You are hostile. He approaches You and You turn away. *He viparīta-kāriṇī*, You whose behavior is totally perverse! Your behavior makes sandalwood paste feel like poison, the refreshing moon like the harsh sun, cooling camphor like fire, and the happiness of lovemaking like torture.”

Commentary

When Śrī Rādhā did not reply or register even the slightest response, Her *sakhī* said, “Rādhā, what has happened to You? Your behavior is thoroughly perverse. You were burning in despair for His *prema*, and now, when He has come to meet You, Your attitude has surprisingly reversed. Do not let this golden opportunity slip through Your fingers. How much tender affection Hari has for You, but You are harsh and cruel towards Him, rebuking Him with abrasive words. He is bowing at Your feet while You simply stand haughtily. He is endowed with all good qualities. Just see how madly in love with You He is, yet You are still hostile towards Him. How He is looking upon Your beautiful face, beaming with whole-hearted attention, joy and eagerness, but not only do You remain unaffected, You are averse to Him.

“Perhaps Your intelligence has turned topsy-turvy. Your behavior is thoroughly backwards, so naturally on such a happy occasion sandalwood paste burns You like venom, the cool rays of the moon seem as oppressive as the scorching heat of the sun, camphor burns like fire, and the joy of lovemaking seems miserable. Your mind is pervaded by pessimism. At once abandon this contrary behavior.”

VERSE 11

sāndrānanda-purandarādi-diviṣad-vṛndair amandādarād
 ānamrair mukuṭendranīla-maṇibhiḥ sandarsitendindiram
 svacchandam makaranda-sundara-galan-mandākinī-meduram
 śrī-govinda-padāravindam aśubha-skandāya vandāmahe

We offer prayers to Śrī Govinda's lotus feet, which annihilate all adversity. Those lotus feet were radiant like blue lotuses reflecting the sapphire-encrusted crowns of the overjoyed *devatās*, who bowed down reverentially to Him upon the defeat of King Bali. Those lotus feet are the source of the enchanting Mandākinī (Ganges), which spontaneously issued forth like a flow of honey.

Commentary

When Śrī Jayadeva remembered the flattering words Śrī Kṛṣṇa spoke to Śrī Rādhā, Her greatness flashed in the poet's heart. To establish the extent of Her good fortune he begins to describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa's opulence, saying, "Along with my disciples and their disciples, I offer prayers to Śrī Govinda's lotus feet, which nullify all inauspiciousness and impediments to *prema-bhakti*."

In this verse Bhagavān Śrī Govinda's feet have been compared to charming lotus flowers enhanced by fragrant pollen in the form of the spontaneous flow of the celestial Ganges. The *devatās* headed by Indra blissfully offer prostrated obeisances at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, like bumblebees adorning a pollen-covered lotus. When they bow down, the aura of sapphires and other jewels upon their crowns falls upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet and thus they appear to be blue lotuses. Just as bumblebees always hover around blue lotuses, the hearts of the devotees eternally hover around the lotus feet

of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and perpetually sing their glories. The yogīs continually meditate upon His lotus feet for the annihilation of their impediments.

Who has the power to describe the glories of Śrī Mukunda's lotus feet? But how curious it is that Mukunda is now perplexed with worry about how to pacify Śrī Rādhā's *māna*. So what can be said of Her glories? Mukunda is personally praying to clasp Her lotus feet upon His head.

Śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda and *rūpaka-alankāra* have been employed in this verse. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's feet have been compared to lotuses, the Gaṅgā to fragrant pollen, and sapphires and other crest jewels to bumblebees.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚĀ COMMENTARY ON ACT NINE
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA ENTITLED MUGDHA-MUKUNDA,
“THE INNOCENT LORD OF LIBERATION.”



Act Ten

CATURA-CATURBHUJAH –
CLEVER KṚṢṆA, THE FOUR-ARMED FLATTERER

VERSE 1

*atrāntare maṣṛṇa-roṣa-vaśām-asīma-
niḥśvāsaniḥ saha-mukhīm sumukhīm upetya
savrīḍam ikṣita-sakhī-vadanām pradoṣe
sānanda-gadgada-padam harir ity uvāca*

With the advent of evening, when Śrī Rādhā's anger had abated and Her face was wasted from endless sighing, She glanced bashfully at the face of Her *sakhī*. Just then Śrī Hari approached, and seeing She had softened, He blossomed in bliss and stammered an emotional appeal.

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā's dear *sakhī* tried various ways to make Her understand that She should give up Her anger, but Kiśorījī's fury did not wane. In the meantime, the day was drawing to a close. Now Rādhā, Her lotus face looking extremely dejected, was gasping in the pain of separation. After exhausting all possible methods to alleviate her Svamīnī's *māna*, Her *sakhī* fell silent. Grippled in the perplexities of *prema* as She looked shyly at Her friend, Rādhā thought, "Just now I have slighted Him, so how can I suddenly change My mind and ask for His company?" Her depression cast a shadow over the whole atmosphere.

As the evening approached, Śrī Kṛṣṇa thought that Śrī Rādhā must be feeling remorse. “Let Me go to Her. I will accept all Her accusations and pray for forgiveness.” Then He approached Rādhā and, blossoming with joy, He began to plead with Her in a voice choked with loving emotions.

❧ Song Nineteen ❧

The musical mode is *deśavarāḍī-rāga*. The rhythm is *aṣṭatālī-tāla*.

VERSE 2

*vadasi yadi kiñcid api danta-ruci-kaumudī
harati dara-timiram ati-ghoram
sphurad-adhara-sīdhave tava vadana-candramā
rocayatu locana-cakoram (1)*

*priye! cāruṣīle! muñca mayi mānam anidānaṁ
sapadi madanānalo dahati mama mānasaṁ
dehi mukha-kamala-madhu-pānam (refrain)*

“If You would speak to Me, even a little, then the effulgent rays of Your teeth would dispel the terrible darkness of My fears. Let Your moon-like face lure My *cakora*-bird eyes, longing for the sweet drink of Your lips.

“O My cherished love! O sweet-natured one! Cast off Your wrath for Me. The fire of amorous desire has set My heart ablaze. Allow Me to drink the honey of Your lotus lips.” (refrain)

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Śrī Rādhā, “*He priye*, O My darling! O You who have such an exquisite nature, You are unnecessarily

upset with Me. This fierce resolve to continue Your *māna* is improper. Ever since You have been sulking, I have been burning in the fire of *kāma*. There is no reason for Your ire. Your suspicions about another lover are unfounded.

“Cupid inflicts pain upon Me only when You spurn Me. Allow Me to drink the honey of Your lotus lips – so rarely attained – thus quelling the fire raging within Me. If You do not agree, then at least say something – whether good or bad – but say something. As You speak, Your lotus face will bloom, allowing the moonbeams of Your teeth to shine forth and destroy the dark fear gripping My heart. *He Rādhe*, the *cakora* birds of My eyes long to drink the life-giving nectar flowing from Your moonlike face. O My beloved, whose disposition is so pleasing! You alone are the life and soul of My eyes.”

VERSE 3

*satyam evāsi yadi sudati mayi kopinī
dehi khara-nayana-śara-ghātam
ghātaya bhujā-bandhanam janaya rada-khaṇḍanam
yena vā bhavati sukha-jātam
priye! cāruṣīle!... (2)*

“O beautiful girl with radiant teeth! If You are really furious with Me, then strike Me with the sharp arrows of Your nails. Bind Me in the ropes of Your arms. Bite My lips with Your teeth. Do whatever arouses Your happiness.”

Commentary

To pacify Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O My dearest Rādhā, whose teeth shine so brightly! Do not be angry with Me. If You really want to give vent to Your fury, then gouge Me with Your piercing nails. And if this does not pacify You, then imprison Me by binding Me in the ropes of Your embrace.

If You are still not satisfied, then injure Me with Your teeth. And if that does not appease You, then just do whatever will excite Your pleasure. I deserve to be abused and punished.” On the pretext of accepting punishment, Kṛṣṇa is ardently requesting Rādhā to scratch Him with Her nails, embrace Him and kiss Him.

VERSE 4

*tvam asi mama bhūṣaṇam tvam asi mama jīvanam
tvam asi mama bhava-jaladhi-ratnam
bhavatu bhavatīha mayi satatam anurodhinī
tatra mama hṛdayam ati-yatnam
priye! cāruṣīle!... (3)*

“You are My only ornament. You are My very life. You are the jewel in the sea of My existence. Be gracious towards Me always. Pleasing You is the sole aim of My life.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā might say, “O Mādhava, I will not punish You. For that, You have other sweethearts, so go and beg from them.” Fearing thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Beloved, You alone are My complete adornment. I am fortunate in all respects only when I am decorated by You. More than this, You are the very foundation of My life. You are My *prāṇa* – without You I cannot even live. So what is the question of other lovers?”

“You are the only treasure in the ocean of existence. Just as one considers Himself fortunate upon finding a wonderful jewel in the ocean, so I feel My life a grand success having found the incomparable gem of a lover like You. Therefore, always be gracious towards Me; I continually strive only for this. All My endeavors are simply for the sake of receiving Your favor.”

VERSE 5

nīla-nalinābham api tanvi tava locanam
 dhārayati kokanada-rūpam
 kusumaśara-bāṇa-bhāvena yadi rañjayasi
 kṛṣṇam idam etad anurūpam
 priye! cāruṣīle!... (4)

“O slender maiden, Your blue lotus eyes are now scarlet with anger. Shoot the flower-arrow of Your crooked glance and color My dark figure red with passion.”

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Rādhā, Your eyes naturally resemble blue lotus flowers, but now they have assumed the color of a red lotus. Since You are well versed in the art of dyeing, You have become expert in coloring Your eyes with ever fresh and increasing *anurāga*. It is clear that You are proficient in making dark substances red. If You were to accept Me and color Me scarlet, then My life would be auspicious.

“Therefore, if You pierce Me with the arrows of amorous desire by casting a sidelong glance, then I will understand that You have employed Your knowledge most befittingly. Rādhā, give up this anger and show Me Your love. Immerse Yourself in erotic play and let Your intrinsic nature shine forth.”

VERSE 6

sphuratu kuca-kumbhayor upari maṇi-mañjarī
 rañjayatu tava hṛdaya-deśam
 rasatu raśanāpi tava ghana-jaghana-maṇḍale
 ghoṣayatu manmatha-nideśam
 priye! cāruṣīle!... (5)

“May this jeweled necklace shining on Your full breasts beautify the region of Your heart. Let this sash of bells adorning Your plump hips proclaim the edict of Kandarpa.”

Commentary

Here, by means of subtle suggestion Śrī Kṛṣṇa prays to Śrī Rādhā for *rati-keli*. “May Our auspicious love games commence. Give up Your shyness. You are ready for Cupid’s combat. But before enjoying amour (*surata*) one must perform the ritual of installing the water pots. May this jeweled necklace illuminate Your large water-pot breasts and enhance their beauty as it swings to and fro. May the sash of bells encircling Your voluptuous hips resound with a sweet *kiṇa-kiṇa* sound as We make love, thus announcing Kāmadeva’s command. His mandate reflects his rising ambitions: ‘May all men and women eager for amour during this intoxicating springtime become completely absorbed in romance. Contrary women, give up your resistance and prepare yourselves for *rati-kṛīḍā!*’”

VERSE 7

*sthala-kamala-gaṅjanam mama hṛdaya-rañjanam
janita-rati-raṅga-para-bhāgam
bhaṇa maṣṇa-vāṇi karavāṇi caraṇa-dvayam
sarasa-lasad-alaktaka-rāgam
priye! cāruṣīle!... (6)*

“O soft-spoken girl! Your feet, more beautiful than the land lotus, color My heart as Your radiance fills the stage of love. Utter one word of command and I will paint Your feet with gleaming red lac.”

Commentary

As Rādhā has not given any reply, Śrī Kṛṣṇa encourages Her to speak. “O softly-spoken one, how sweet Your words are!

Release the arrow of Your tender words and gently whisper an order. Allow Me to apply red lac to Your feet, more beautiful than a land lotus. When they are painted and become even lovelier, they color My heart red with passion; and during Our amorous play they stimulate *kāma*. *He priya-bhāṣiṇī*, O You who speak so endearingly! These colored feet will take on an indescribable splendor in the midst of Our erotic enjoyment. They are the charming reservoir of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the door to the arousal of passion, and the cause of the upsurge of desire. O graceful one, give up Your *māna*.” When a young man sees a beautiful young maiden’s charming feet painted with red lac, his mind becomes overwhelmed with desire.

VERSE 8

*smara-garala-khaṇḍanam mama śirasi maṇḍanam
dehi pada-pallavam udāram
jvalati mayi dāruṇo madana-kadanānalo¹
haratu tad-upāhita-vikāram
priye! cāruṣīle!... (7)*

“O My beloved! The delirium of love has lodged in My head. Place the fresh petals of Your enchanting feet there to counteract its poison, and let those feet pacify the harsh fire of amorous desires burning within.”

Commentary

“O Rādhā, My suffering will be vanquished only when You accept Me. An overwhelming flash of Your all-conquering qualities has lit up My heart, and I am helplessly praying to You to kindly place the freshly sprouted buds of Your feet upon My head. These munificent tender feet fulfill

1 Some editions of the text read *madana-kadanārūṇaḥ* – “The affliction of desire burns with the intensity of the blazing sun.”

the innermost cherished desires of those who pray to them. They are perfect for ornaments because, like new leaves, they are red, soft and cooling. If You offer them upon My head, the poisonous effect of *kāma* will be counteracted and simultaneously My head will be ornamented.”

Here *kāma* has been likened to the venom of a snake. “The touch of Your feet destroy the poison of *kāma* just as the touch of Garuḍa’s feet is the antidote for the poison of a snake. Even My defects, such as the agitation of My mind arising from the heat of *kāma*, will cease when You offer Your feet to Me. The terrible suffering produced by *kāma* is burning My heart, turning every vital limb into smoldering coals. The fever of *kāma* blazing within and without will be vanquished only when You rest Your tender feet upon My head.”

Throughout this song Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *anukūla-nāyaka* (the favorable lover, faithful to one beloved). The *nāyikā*, Śrī Rādhā, is *prauḍhā* (whose mature, fully developed *prema* cannot tolerate separation) and *mānavatī* (indignant). She is exhibiting *kilakiñcita-bhāva*, the simultaneous manifestation of seven *anubhāvas* – pride, desire, weeping, smiling, envy, fear and anger. Inwardly She is overjoyed to finally have Her beloved present before Her, but nevertheless meets His fervent supplications with indignation and a complexity of other emotions.

VERSE 9

iti caṭula-cātu-paṭu-cāru mura-vairiṇo
rādhikām adhi vacana-jātam
jayati padmāvatī-ramaṇa-jayadeva-kavi-
bhāratī-bhaṇitam ati-śātam
priye! cāruṣīle!... (8)

May this endearing and ingenious sweet talk Mura's foe spoke to pacify Śrī Rādhikā and joyfully sung by the poet Jāyadeva, Padmāvatī's dear one, be victorious.

Commentary

The statements of Muravairī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, elicited by His beloved Rādhā's scornful and contrary mood, are both delightful and cogent because they brilliantly illuminate His intense hankering. May they triumph in every respect. This charming song contains ingenious flattery and appealing tender words. May it conquer the hearts of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa (*padmāvati-ramaṇa*). Alternatively, *padmāvati-ramaṇa* refers to the eloquent poet Śrī Jayadeva, the husband of Padmāvatī. Kṛṣṇa came personally in the guise of Śrī Jayadeva and wrote the line *dehi pada-pallavam udāram* ("Kindly bestow upon My head the tender buds of Your munificent lotus feet."), which had been revealed to Śrī Jayadeva in his trance.

This Nineteenth Song of Śrī *Gīta-govinda* is entitled *Caturbhujā-rāgarāji-candrodyota*, "Caturbhujā Kṛṣṇa, Reddish with Rādhā's *Anurāga*, Beams like the Rising Moon."

VERSE 10

*parihara kṛtātānke saṅkām tvayā satataṁ ghanastana-
jaghanayā-krānte svānte parān-avakāśini
viśati vitanor anyo dhanyo na ko 'pi mamāntaraṁ
praṇayini parīrambhārambhe vidhehi vidheyatām*

"Fretful Rādhā, be done with Your unfounded suspicions. Your voluptuous breasts and hips always fill My heart, leaving no room for another. Only Madana, the disembodied god of love, has the fortune to enter. My Love, command Me as to what I should do as I begin to embrace You."

Commentary

Now Śrī Kṛṣṇa is telling Rādhā, “Why has this apprehension uselessly arisen within Your heart? Do not accuse Me of associating with another ladylove. The weight of Your ample breasts and heavy hips have so overpowered My heart that they leave Me no chance even to remember anyone else. Your love has invaded and completely captured My heart so there is not the slightest space left for another. Then how can there be anyone else? The only other who can enter is Madana, and he has no body. O My beloved Rādhā! Now give up Your *māna*. Do the needful so that I may embrace Your round breasts. Make Me Your servant and grant Me permission to proceed.”

This verse features *hariṇī-chanda* and *kāvyaṅga-alankāra*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *pragalbha-nāyaka*, the bold lover, and Śrī Rādhā is *prauḍha-nāyikā*, one whose love is mature and who cannot stay a moment without her *nāyaka*.

VERSE 11

*mugdhe vidhehi mayi nirdaya-danta-damśa-
dor-valli-bandha-niviḍa-stana-pīḍanāni
caṇḍi tvam eva mudam añca na pañca-bāṇa-
cāṇḍāla-kāṇḍa-dalanād asavaḥ prayāntu*

“O tender, innocent one! Punish Me at once. Bite Me with Your teeth and cruelly hurt Me. Bind Me tightly with the slender creepers of Your arms. Crush Me with Your hard breasts. O angry maiden, You should take pleasure in torturing Me. If Your severe punishment causes My life to leave, I do not mind, but do not allow the arrows of the vile Cupid to bring about My demise.”

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleads, “O lovely fool, if You have no faith in My words, then You can punish Me. What are You waiting for? You are so wrathful that You are not trying to understand Me. So, if You think I am an offender, don’t hesitate to punish Me as You like. That rogue Cupid is trying to kill Me with his five arrows. Kindly favor Me and prevent him from succeeding.

“My dear naive one, You do not even know Your own good. Do not be so hot-tempered. The mean Kāmadeva is piercing Me with his arrows on Your account and My life is ebbing away. Please save Me. May You find satisfaction in punishing Me. Ruthlessly bite Me with Your teeth. Crush Me with Your firm breasts. Bind Me tightly in Your creeper-like arms and as You laugh, tell Me, ‘Now You are My prisoner, and You will never escape.’”

VERSE 12

*śāsimukhi tava bhāti bhaṅgura-bhrūr
 yuva-jana-moha-karāla-kāla-sarpī
 tad-udita-bhaya-bhañjanāya yūnām
 tvad-adhara-sīdhu-sudhaiva siddha-mantraḥ*

“Śāsimukhi, O moon-faced girl! The crooked eyebrows shining on Your face are a formidable black female snake which makes young men like Me fall unconscious out of fear. But the intoxicating nectar flowing from Your lips is indeed the potent *mantra* to dispel their fear of that serpent.”

Commentary

Taking shelter of *vātsyāyana-nyāya* (the logic of Vātsyāyana Ṛṣi, the author of *Kāma-sūtra*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O Śāsimukhi, although Your face is as gentle as the moon,

Your curved eyebrows can bewilder a young man like Me exactly like the fearsome female serpent. They generate intense fear and oh, they look so ferocious. But You are Candra-mukhī, You have a moon-face, so why will You be angry with young men? No youth can survive the bite of this female snake, as it has no antidote. But yes, to counteract the poisonous snake-bite of Your eyebrows there is one *siddha-mantra* – the nectar of Your lips.”

The *chanda* of this verse is *puṣpitāgrā*. The *alaṅkāras* are *kalpitopamā* and *rūpaka*.

VERSE 13

*vyathayati vṛthā maunaṁ tanvi prapañcaya pañcamam
taruṇi madhurālāpais tāpaṁ vinodaya dṛṣṭibhiḥ
sumukhi vimukhī-bhāvaṁ tāvad vimuñca na muñca mām
svayam atiśaya-snigdho mugdhe priyo 'yam upasthitaḥ*

“O Tanvi, graceful girl, Your vain, stubborn silence is torturing Me. Taruṇi, O tender maiden, sing a melodious love song in the *pañcama-svara* (fifth note). Destroy My torment with a compassionate glance. Sumukhi, O lovely-faced girl, do not cast Me aside; You should cast away Your indifference instead. Foolish one, Your affectionate lover has come to You.”

Commentary

So far, Śrī Rādhā has met all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s suggestions with silence. Now He appeals to Her with courteous words. “Kṛṣāṅgi, O slender maiden! How gaunt You have become! Your pointless silence is eating You alive, and this is causing Me great pain. Start singing in the *pañcama-svara*, the fifth note, and let Your heart be soft. Your voice is sweeter than a cuckoo’s, so speak some honeyed words. O Taruṇi, delicate

damsel, let Your gracious glance shower Me with *rasa* and extinguish all My anguish. O fair-faced Sumukhi, it is not proper for You to disregard Me. Give up Your indifference and Your pride. Mugdhe, O bewildered one, You have lost all sense of discrimination. I am Your beloved, fully devoted to You. I have so much affection for You that I have come without invitation. Look, I am standing before You with tears in My eyes. Come to Me like impassioned girls in the springtime running to their dearest beloveds. Bind Me with Your affectionate glance.”

This verse includes *hariṇī-chanda*, *yathāsāmratna-alankāra*, *prasāda-guṇa*, *kausikī-vṛtti*, *vaidarbhī-rīti* and *māgadhī-gīti*. The hero is *anukūla-nāyaka*, the lover who is finally properly disposed.

VERSE 14

*bandhūka-dyuti-bāndhavo 'yam adharahṣ snigdho madhūka-cchavir
gandāś caṇḍi cakāsti nīla-nalina-śrī-mocane locanam
nāsābhyeti tila-prasūna-padavīm kundābha-danti priye
prāyas tvan-mukha-sevayā vijayate viśvaṁ sa puṣpāyudhaḥ*

“My beloved Caṇḍi, My darling hot-tempered girl! Your enchanting lips are red like the kindred *bandhūka* flower. Your soft cheeks bear the splendor of a *madhūka* blossom. Your eyes glare more than a gleaming blue lotus. Your nose follows the path of a sesame flower. Your teeth are radiant as white *kunda* flowers. O My beloved, it is only by first worshiping Your face that the flower-archer Kāmadeva is able to conquer the entire universe with his five flower-arrows.”

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa addresses Rādhā as Caṇḍi (hot-tempered girl) because She is still angry. “My dearest! Five weapons shine

upon Your lotus face like the weapons of the flower-archer, Kāmadeva. O passionate one, by borrowing flower weapons from You, the highly acclaimed conqueror of the universe, Kāmadeva, dominates the entire creation. After vanquishing the universe, he returned those weapons, which now, reposing radiantly upon Your face, have become more powerful and more attractive.”

The special characteristics of Kāmadeva’s five arrows are as follows:

- (1) “Your lips, red as a *bandhūka* flower, are Kāmadeva’s red *ākaraṣaṇa-bāṇa*, his arrows that captivate.”
- (2) “Your cool cheeks wear the elegant golden-white luster of a *madhūka* blossom, looking as if nectar is just about to ooze out. They are Kāmadeva’s yellow *vaśīkaraṇa-bāṇa*, his arrows that subjugate by casting a spell.”
- (3) “Your blue eyes, having collected within themselves the essence of all beauty, humiliate the beauty of blue lotus flowers. They are Kāmadeva’s dark blue *unmādana-bāṇa*, his arrows that intoxicate.”
- (4) “Your nose resembles a sesame flower. This is *drāvaṇa-bāṇa*, his arrow that melts the heart.”
- (5) “Your teeth are like *kunda* flowers. They are Kāmadeva’s white *śoṣaṇa-bāṇa*, his arrows that suck up one’s strength.”

“In this way, Kāmadeva attained Your mercy by serving Your face with all five weapons. On the strength of that mercy he conquers the entire universe.”

This verse features *sārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *utprekṣā-alāṅkāra*.

VERSE 15

*dṛśau tava madālase vadanam indu-sandīpanam
 gatir jana-manoramā vijita-rambham ūru-dvayam
 ratis tava kalāvati rucira-citra-lekhe bhruvāv
 aho vibudha-yauvataṁ vahasi tanvi pṛthvī-gatā*

“Tanvi, O delicate damsel! You are like Madālasā, Your indolent eyes intoxicated in rapture. You are like the moonlight nymph Indumatī, Your face aglow. You are like Manoramā, with Your enthralling gait. You are like Rambhā, Your thighs like plantain stalks in motion. You are like Kalāvati, mistress of the erotic arts. You are like Citralekhā, with spellbinding eyebrows. Precious Rādhā! You are like an assembly of young demigoddesses descended to this Earth.”

Commentary

“O slender-waisted Rādhikā! Although You are situated upon this Earth planet, it seems as if all the heavenly goddesses are residing within You. Your eyes are listless as You are intoxicated with the good fortune of having Your lover at Your feet. This has made You so jubilant, My lovely consort, that it appears that the celestial *apsarā*, Madālasā, is in Your eyes, rolling in pleasure. Your face is the abode of Indumatī, the wife of the moon; yet it is even more essential for Me than moonlight is for the moon. Candramā’s heart fills with envy upon seeing Your face, because he has no power in comparison with Yours.

“Your walking puts joy in everyone’s hearts; thus goddess Manoramā resides in You. Your thighs, which appear to be the residence of Rambhā, defame the trunk of a plantain tree. Your movements are adorned with all the seductive arts such as *hāva*, *bhāva*, *vilāsa* and *kilakiñcita*. Therefore You are the

abode of goddess Kalāvātī. Your eyebrows are fascinating like Citralekhā's. Although You reside on Earth, it seems that You are heavenly youthful beauty incarnate. In other words, Your youthfulness is divine.”

This verse features *pṛthvī-chanda* and *kalpitopamā-alānkāra*.

VERSE 16

sa pṛitīm tanutām hariḥ kuvalayāpīḍena sārdaṁ raṇe
 rādhā-pīna-payodhara-smaraṇa-kṛt-kumbhena sambhedavān
 yatra svidyati mīlati kṣaṇam api kṣipte dvipe tat-kṣaṇāt
 kamsasyālam abhūt jitaṁ jitaṁ iti vyāmoha-kolāhalaḥ

While fighting with the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, whose protruding cranial globes reminded Hari of Śrī Rādhā's stout breasts, He broke out in perspiration and closed His eyes, becoming absorbed in *anaṅga-rasa*. That instant Kāmsa's followers joyfully cried out in their confusion, “We have won! We have won!” May that Śrī Hari increase the bliss of the entire universe.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva bestows a benediction upon everyone. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, absorbed in glorifying His beloved Śrī Rādhā, remembers the happiness of Her touch, even in an extremely perilous situation. May that Śrī Hari increase Your love.

When Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa fought with Kāmsa's elephant, Kuvalayāpīḍa, He saw the elephant's large temples and was reminded of Rādhā's full, round breasts. Due to absorption in *anaṅga-rasa*, the erotic mellow, He experienced some bodily transformation (*sāttvika-bhāva*) as if He had been touched by Rādhā; and He closed His eyes in bliss, overwhelmed by

memories of the joy of union with Her. Seeing this, Kāṁsa's courtiers exclaimed with great delight, "We have won! Kṛṣṇa has closed His eyes in fear." But as soon as Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard the tumult of their mistaken words, He suppressed His feelings, beat the elephant to the ground, and quickly killed him. Immediately a commotion aroused among Kāṁsa's followers, "Oh, Kṛṣṇa has triumphed! He has triumphed!" This uproar was delightful.

Act Ten has described Kṛṣṇa's agitation on remembering Rādhā. Having lost His composure and exhibiting the ecstasies of amour, Mādhava looked extraordinarily charming.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT TEN
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA ENTITLED CATURA-CATURBHUJAḤ,
"CLEVER KṚṢṆA, THE FOUR-ARMED FLATTERER."



Act Eleven

SĀMODA-GOVINDA – GOVINDA GLADDENED

VERSE 1

*suciram anunayena prīṇayitvā mṛgākṣīm
gatahati kṛtaveśe keśave kuñja-śayyām
racita-rucira-bhūṣām dṛṣṭi-moṣe pradose
sphurati niravasādām kāpi rādhām jagāda*

Pacifying the doe-eyed Rādhā with His lengthy pleas, Keśava went to the *kuñja* where He dressed enchantingly and laid on the bed awaiting Her. As twilight began to fall, spreading its veil of darkness, Rādhā captivately decorated Herself, and Her *sakhī* spoke to Her.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa continued to plead with Rādhā until late into the day. When She was at last satisfied, He confidently set off to prepare a love-bed in the *nikuñja*. Her despair now dissolved, the doe-eyed Rādhā was shining with a joy that reflected in the ecstatic emotions overflowing from Her eyes and swelled in Her heart. She wore a dark blue garment to conceal Her journey through the forest, and decorated Herself with suitable enchanting ornaments that also would not draw attention. To intensify Rādhā's eagerness to meet with Kṛṣṇa, Her friend remarked emphatically, "Rādhā, now is it not clear that Madhusūdana adores You?"

The word *pradoṣa* indicates that night is falling, and thus vision is obscured. The *chanda* of the present verse is *mālinī*.

❧ Song Twenty ❧

The musical mode is *vasanta-rāga*. The rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 2

*viracita-cāṭu-vacana-racanaṁ carāṇe racita-praṇipātam
samprati mañjula-vañjula-sīmani keli-śayanam anuyātam (1)
mugdhe! madhu-mathanam anugātam anusara rādhike!
(refrain)*

“After soothing You with flattering words and falling at Your feet, He has returned to the couch of amorous enjoyment in a lovely forest bower of flowering creepers.

“O guileless Rādhikā, go and join the killer of Madhu at once.” (refrain)

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “Rādhikā, the enemy of Madhu is now completely under Your spell. Go and meet with Him at once. Do not waste another second. He has humbly appealed to You with such sweet words, and has thrown Himself at Your feet. He has prepared for Your arrival and is waiting on the pastime-bed in a remote love bower. Run after Him. O foolish one, You are so naive that You do not even know when to rendezvous with Your beloved. Go to Him at once and reciprocate with Him in every way.”

Rādhike – The suffix *ka* sheds light upon Rādhā’s state of innocence. The refrain is “Follow Madhusūdana. Do not delay.”

The *nikuñja* with its many trees and creepers has been described as delightful because it stimulates romantic emotions.

VERSE 3

*ghana-jaghana-stana-bhāra-bhare daramanthara-caraṇa-vihāram
mukharita-maṇi-mañjīram upaihi vidhehi marāla-nikāram
mugdhe!...(2)*

“Under the weight of Your broad hips and full breasts, You move slowly. With Your jeweled anklets singing out an enchanting call, go to meet Him at a pace more graceful than a royal swan.”

Commentary

“O Rādhā, Your cumbersome hips and large breasts weigh You down, so walk slowly in Your rhythmical gait that embarrasses a swan. Go to the charming arbor of amour accompanied by the melodious ringing of Your jeweled anklebells which arouses passion. O innocent one, do not delay. Placing Your unsteady feet upon the earth and with jeweled anklebells resounding, go and join Madhusūdana.”

VERSE 4

*ṣṅṅu ramaṇīya-taraṁ taruṇī-jana-mohana-madhuripu-rāvam
kusuma-śarāsana-sāsana-vandini pika-nikare bhaja bhāvam
mugdhe!...(3)*

“Listen to the delightful humming of bumblebees enticing tender maidens’ hearts. Enter the mood of the cuckoos melodiously broadcasting Kandarpa’s sweet royal edict.”

Commentary

“*Sakhī*, set off at once. How many auspicious signs have appeared for the sake of Your tryst! In the spring, the bumblebees’ buzzing resounds in all four directions. They are anxious to sing in harmony with the chime of Your anklebells. Listen to their drone, which bewilders the hearts of alluring maidens. As bumblebees are dark, so is Kṛṣṇa. The humming of the bees signals the time for trysting and fills maidens’ hearts with auspiciousness. Indeed, whose mind will not be swayed by their polite flattering appeals?”

“Listen! In this spring month *Madhu*, the cuckoos call out with a shrill cry in pursuance of the proclamation of *Kāmadeva*. Indeed, they seem to be *Kāmadeva*’s bards, their fifth note announcing his order. Mix Your moods with those of the cuckoos and let *Cupid*’s command manifest far and wide. With the beating of drums, announce the flower-archer’s order: ‘May all impassioned youths and maidens enjoy each other without restraint.’”

Madhuripu-rāvam – The word *madhuripu*, meaning ‘bumblebee,’ alludes to Kṛṣṇa.

The cuckoos’ stimulating effect (*vibhāva*) has been expressed by the phrase *kusuma-śarāsana-śāsana-vandini*, the order of the flower-archer.

VERSE 5

*anila-tarala-kisalaya-nikareṇa kareṇa latā-nikurambam
preraṇam iva karabhoru karoti gatim prati muñca vilambam
mugdhe!... (4)*

“O lovely-thighed girl, profusely budding vines dance in the breeze, like hands waving the way to the bower and

inviting You to go there, gesturing to Your tapering thighs to quicken their pace. Do not tarry.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “O You whose excellent thighs taper like an elephant’s trunk! The creepers flutter in the wind, their leaves like hands beckoning You to join Hari. Go at once. All nature is anxious to unite You with Him. Do not delay any longer.

“The gentle, cool breeze and the signaling of the new leaves trembling in the wind are encouraging You to go. The insentient objects of nature are instructing You as if they were sentient. Therefore Your cherished desire is bound to be fulfilled. Your most beloved Kṛṣṇa, rapt in love for You, is waiting on the love-couch in a bower of *vañjula* creepers. Go swiftly. Make haste. When You walk, the slope of Your thighs is most attractive.”

VERSE 6

*sphuritam anaṅga-taraṅga-vaśād iva sūcita-hari-parirambham
pṛccha manohara-hāra-vimala-jaladhāram amuṁ kuca-kumbham
mugdhe!... (5)*

“Ask Your quivering jug-like breasts what to do. Helplessly trembling in waves of love and beautified by the immaculate stream of Your enchanting necklace, Your full breasts indicate the imminence of Hari’s embrace.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “Rādhā, what thoughts occupy Your mind? Now, what more evidence do You need? If You do not believe me then ask Your own breasts, which are just like

waterpots bearing the stream of Your captivating necklace. What is causing them to tremble? They are under the control of the waves of amorous desire and are indicating that Your lover will soon embrace You. Hari will be carried along by the powerful current of *rasa* from Your breasts, only to be immersed in the ocean of *prema*. They are intensely hankering for the caress of Hari's lotus hands.

“Your breasts are two auspicious pots, and the immaculate, charming necklace resting upon them is a flow of pure and sparkling water, whose waves indicate that You are about to attain Your darling. Erotic desire makes Your breasts quiver and thus they augur auspiciousness. Do not think this *kāma* is a curse and delay any longer. Go quickly.”

VERSE 7

*adhigatam akhila-sakhībhir idam tava vapur api rati-raṇa-sajjam
caṇḍi raṇita-rasanā-rava-diṇḍimam abhisara sarasam alajjam
mugdhe!... (6)*

“O Caṇḍi, peevish one, Your *sakhīs* know well that Your body is arrayed for love battle. So enthusiastically sound the war-drums of Your chiming sash of bells. Shed Your bashfulness and boldly go forth to rendezvous with Your beloved.”

Commentary

The *sakhī* says to Rādhā, “O You who are so skilled in the battle of lovemaking! Now why are You being so haughty? Your desire has already crossed all limits, so why hesitate? There is no reason to be ashamed to go and meet with Keśava. We are all Your intimate friends. Certainly no one else is here but us, so why be angry? All Your *sakhīs* can see that Your body is appropriately ornamented with everything required for a love skirmish. Arrayed as the

beautiful female warrior, You are now ready for combat. As You set off, the bells on Your waistbelt will ring out like the instruments announcing the march to battle. Declare war! Abandon all shyness and flow along in the current of *rasa* as You move forward with ever increasing eagerness to meet Hari. O passionate maiden, face the direction of the meeting place. Advance, Caṇḍi!”

Caṇḍi, or ‘belligerent woman,’ is an appropriate address for Rādhā when She is ready to fight.

VERSE 8

*smara-śara-subhaga-nakhena kareṇa sakhīm avalambya sa-lilam
cala valaya-kvaṇitair avabodhaya harim api nija-gati-śīlam
mugdhe!...(7)*

“Go forth, playfully resting Your lotus hand on Your companion, Your attractive fingernails like Cupid’s five arrows. With the jingling of Your bracelets celebrate Your arrival to the highly acclaimed Hari.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says to Rādhā, “O fortunate one, the nails of Your soft, charming hands are Kāmadeva’s five flower arrows, fit for the love battle. Hold Your *sakhī*’s hand and be on Your way, ornamented by Your suggestive *hāva-bhāva* gestures. Your enchanting nails, as piercing as the shafts of passionate desire, are Your weapons in this amorous skirmish. As a warrior first informs his adversary that he is on the warpath, You should alert Mādhava of Your arrival with the jangling of Your bangles. Now under Cupid’s control, He is eagerly awaiting You, occupied in preparing Himself with the desire to fulfill the hankerings of His heart. Let Him know that You are ready and determined for a love battle.”

VERSE 9

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam adharīkṛta-hāram udāsita-rāmam
 hari-vinihita-manasām adhiṭṭhatu kaṇṭha-taṭīm avirāmam
 mugdhe!...(8)

Śrī Jayadeva's song is more beautiful than elegant jeweled necklaces and the fairest maidens. May it perpetually grace the throats of those who devote their hearts to Śrī Hari.

Commentary

This song of Śrī Jayadeva puts to shame the beauty of jeweled necklaces and charming damsels. May it always beautify the throats of Bhagavān's devotees. Vaiṣṇavas such as Parāśara, whose hearts are attached to Bhagavān, will wear this precious necklace narrated by Jayadeva rather than any necklace of jewels and pearls. And they will embrace this song instead of a beautiful woman. Necklaces and attractive maidens adorn the bosom of those who are attached to worldly pleasures, and even then, only during their youth. May this song, glorifying Śrī Hari, adorn the throats of His devotees under all circumstances.

This Twentieth Song of Śrī Gīta-govinda is entitled Śrī Hari-tālarāji-jaladhara-vilāsita, "Śrī Hari – the Dark Raincloud Shining with Rādhā's Anurāga." The *rasa* herein is *vipralambha-śṅgāra*. The hero is *uttama-nāyaka*, the topmost lover.

VERSE 10

sā mām draṅśyati vaksyati smara-kathām praty-aṅgam āliṅganaiḥ
 pṛītiṃ yāsyati raṅsyate sakhi samāgatyeti cintākulaḥ
 sa tvām paśyati vepate pulakayaty ānandati svidyati
 praty-udgacchati mūrcchati sthira-tamaḥ-puñje nikuñje priyaḥ

"Sakhī, Your beloved is wrapped in the dense darkness of a secluded bower, anxiously thinking, 'When Rādhā comes,

Her eyes will be brimming with affection for Me. She will speak words of love, revealing Her amorous desires. She will take delight in fully embracing Me and We will enjoy intimacies.’ Feeling Your presence and thus absorbed, He pines for You, His body trembling, hairs bristling, perspiring profusely and blooming with unlimited joy. Thinking You have come, He steps forward to meet You and faints in the frenzy of pleasure.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “Rādhā, Hari behaves strangely as He sits in the dense darkness of the *nikuñja*. His unusual behavior is symptomatic of His burgeoning thirst for You. Anxiously remembering You, He is overrun with thoughts of amour. He pines for You, thinking, ‘Rādhā will see Me and will serve Me the sweet, intoxicating wine of Her *rasa*-laden, impassioned words. She will become overjoyed by embracing My whole body and will then be eager for love games.’

“In this way, Kṛṣṇa becomes exuberant as His heart swells with many desires and expectations. When He sees You in His meditation, He suddenly trembles and thrills with horripilation, feeling the *rasa* of union with You. As Your amorous play gradually progresses, He becomes drenched in perspiration. Seeing You in this ecstatic vision, He stands up, and then, realizing that You are not there, He falls unconscious.”

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *dīpaka-alāṅkāra*. The eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* are divided as follows:

- (1) Becoming stunned (*stambha*) and fading complexion (*vaivarṇya*) – Waiting anxiously for amour in the dark, He sees Rādhā coming from afar; His complexion fades and He becomes stunned.

- (2) Trembling (*vepathu*) and the rising up of hair (*romāñca*) – When He dreams about Rādhā’s method of intensifying *kāma-keli* through Her erotic conversation, He trembles and horripilates.
- (3) Tears (*asrū*) and perspiration (*sveda*) – In His imagination, He feels the rapture of Rādhā embracing every one of His limbs and, in the gradual progress of Their lovemaking, He becomes wet with perspiration.
- (4) Faltering of the voice (*svara-bhaṅga*) and devastation (*pralaya*) – He is unable to call Rādhā’s name when His voice falters in the joy of uniting with Her, and He is devastated when He realizes that He is bereft of Her association.

VERSE 11

*akṣnor nikhṣipad añjanam śravaṇayos tāpiccha-gucchāvalīm
mūrddhani śyāma-saroja-dāma kucayoḥ kastūrikā-patrukam
dhūrtānām abhisāra-satvara-hṛdām viṣvaṅ nikuñje sakhi
dhvāntam nīla-nicola-cāru sudṛṣām praty-aṅgam ālingati*

“*Sakhī*, look! The night covers the *kuñjas* with a dark cherished cloak which hugs closely beautiful adulteresses whose hearts hasten to meet with their cunning lovers. The dark has lined their eyes with black collyrium, it has become the clusters of *tamāla* leaves on their ears, the dark blue lotus wreaths on their heads, and the leafy designs of musk on their full breasts.”

Commentary

“Rādhā,” Her *sakhī* continues, “the darkness of the whole world has been gathered up and is cloaking the *keli-nikuñja* where Śyāma eagerly awaits You. Do not delay another moment. *Abhisārikā* heroines, dressed in deep dark

blue, move unnoticed in the dead of night. Their dear friend, the deep blue darkness of the night, covers them with its embrace and arouses their eagerness for amour with deceitful paramours in remote love bowers. That darkness is the mascara lining their eyes; it is the clusters of dark blue peacock feathers and *tamāla* leaves adorning their ears; it is the wreath of blue lotuses on their heads and the pictures painted in musk on their breasts.

“That same darkness has also enfolded every one of Your limbs in its embrace and is adorning You with its ornaments. Thus suitably attired for Your tryst, set off into the dense darkness. Do not be late. The whole environment is encouraging accomplished lovers to go and meet with their sweethearts. This night, in its endless expansions, is the blue wrap providing full cover. Go! Be on Your way! You should arrive there before another rival heroine takes Your place. Do not take the time to decorate Yourself with eye-liner, earrings, garlands, musk paintings or anything else. Just go at once.”

VERSE 12

*kāsmīra-gaura-vapuṣām abhisārikāṇām
ābaddha-rekham abhito ruci-mañjarībhiḥ
etat tamāla-dala-nīla-tamaṁ tamisraṁ
tat-prema-hema-nikaṣopalatām tanoti*

Saffron-complected bodies of wanton women rushing to join their paramours leave golden streaks in the black *tamāla*-leaf darkness of night, creating the testing stone for the gold of their love.

Commentary

Her *sakhī* says, “My dear friend, for *abhisārikā* heroines whose bodies are as lustrous as saffron, this darkness, deep

blue like *tamāla* leaves, is the testing stone for the gold of love. The darkness is marked everywhere with the lines of their shimmering golden luster.

“The testing stone of the darkness examines the purity of the gold of these young women’s *prema*. The gold leaves a line on the stone, but the color of the stone does not come off on the gold. However, when You enter this dense darkness, golden-limbed Rādhā, the testing stone will make a dark blue line upon Your golden body. Now go to the meeting place as quickly as possible.”

This verse features *upamā-alaṅkāra* and *vasanta-tilakā-chanda*.



VERSE 13

hārāvalī-tarala-kāñcana-kāñci-dāma
mañjīra-kañkaṇa-maṇi-dyuti-dīpitasya
dvāre nikuñja-nilayasya hariṁ vilokya
vṛḍḍavatīm atha sakhīm iyam ity uvāca

Her shining ornaments – the golden waistbelt, the brilliant pendant, the jeweled necklaces, armlets, bracelets and earrings – lit up the whole *nikuñja* as She stood at the entrance. Beholding Hari She became shy while Her *sakhī* urged Her on.

Commentary

After being encouraged by Her *sakhī*, the shy Rādhā arrives at the forest bower. When She sees Śrī Hari is already there, She becomes even more bashful. The radiance of Her ornaments – Her pearl necklace, gold waistbelt, topaz and jeweled earrings light up the doorway of the *nikuñja*. She can

see Kṛṣṇa waiting for Her by their effulgence, and immediately She is overwhelmed with embarrassment.

Desire-filled maidens are naturally shy at the time of their first union and this excites their lovers' *kāma*. Now the *sakhī* is pressing Rādhā to enter the love bower.

The chanda of this verse is *vasanta-tilakā*.

❀ Song Twenty-one ❀

The musical mode is *varāḍī-rāga*; the rhythm is *rūpaka-tāla*.

VERSE 14

mañjutara-kuñja-tala-keli-sadane
vilasa rati-rabhasa-hasita-vadane (1)

praviṣa rādhe! mādhava-samīpam iha
(refrain)

“Your smiling face is blooming with eagerness for amour, and this charming forest arbor is just the place for love play.

“O Rādhā, go inside and enjoy with Mādhava.” (refrain)

Commentary

Her *sakhī* told Rādhā, “O Rādhikā, Your happy face shows Your enthusiasm for love play; the force of *prema* makes You smile in jubilation. The playground in this captivating thicket is ready. Please enter and approach Mādhava for romance.”

VERSE 15

nava-bhavad-aśoka-dala-śayana-sāre
vilasa kuca-kalaśa-tarala-hāre

praviṣa rādhe!... (2)

“Your necklace is gently quivering upon Your full breasts; join Your lover upon the bed of fresh *aśoka* leaves. Approach Mādhava and enjoy with Him.”

Commentary

“The pearl necklace lying restlessly upon Your bosom bespeaks Your eagerness for union. Go and revel upon this bed of tender young *aśoka* leaves, elegantly decorated just for You.”

VERSE 16

kusuma-caya-racita-śuci-vāsa-gehe
vilasa kusuma-sukumāra-dehe
praviśa rādhe!... (3)

“Enter the pleasure bower radiantly adorned with a profusion of flowers. Your tender body is itself a flower. Approach Mādhava and enjoy with Him.”

Commentary

“Your body is even softer than flower blossoms, and this entire pastime retreat is composed entirely of brilliantly sparkling flowers. Therefore enter this shining flower arbor and experience rapture with Mādhava. Go! Proceed without fear; this is Your own boudoir.”

VERSE 17

(mṛdu-cala-malaya-pavana-surabhi-śīte
vilasa madana-śara-nikara-bhīte)
cala-malaya-vana-pavana-surabhi-śīte
vilasa rati-valita-lalita-gīte
praviśa rādhe!... (4)

“Enter the pastime pavilion of flowering vines, cool with the gentle gusts of the fragrant Malayan breezes. You fear Cupid’s shafts, yet Your sensual singing sets the mood for love. Approach Mādhava and delight in amorous pleasure with Him.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* encourages Rādhā, “You are intimidated by Kāmadeva’s arrows, so take shelter in this love chamber where the Malayan breezes blow. The soft touch of the breeze makes the grove of blossoming creepers even more refreshing and aromatic. Enter this temple of *prema* and romance with Mādhava. The moment has come to express Your inner ecstasy with heartfelt song. Sing out the madly passionate song of love.”

VERSE 18

vitata-bahu-valli-nava-pallava-ghane
vilasa ciram alasa-pīna-jaghane
praviṣa rādhe!... (5)

“Enter this secluded bower dense with fresh foliage, O buxom-hipped one who moves lazily. Approach Mādhava and leisurely relish pastimes with Him.”

Commentary

“Because of Your broad hips, You move slowly. This *nikuñja* is a mass of flourishing vines, even more luxuriant now with newly sprouted leaves. No one will be able to see You, so go inside and revel at leisure with Your most beloved Keśava.”

VERSE 19

madhu-mudita-madhupa-kula-kalita-rāve
vilasa madana-rasa-sarasa-bhāve
praviśa rādhe!... (6)

“Enter this flowery bower resounding with the humming of bumblebees maddened from drinking honey, O You whose heart is aroused for amour. Approach Mādhava and romance with Him.”

Commentary

“Your passion has been aroused by Kāmadeva. Intoxicated bumblebees, most happy in the spring, are humming in bliss as they drink the honey of the flowers in this thicket. You also enter and taste the honey of amour. This *kuñja*, abounding with joy, auspiciously opens the way to intimacy. Go inside, Rādhā, go!”

VERSE 20

madhuratara-pika-nikara-ninada-mukhare
vilasa daśana-ruci-rucira-śikhare
praviśa rādhe!... (7)

“O Rādhā, Your pearly teeth glow like ripe pomegranate seeds. Romance here under the flowering vines, where flocking cuckoos croon sweetly. Join Mādhava and enjoy with Him.”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* urges, “O Rādhā, your teeth glisten like sparkling reddish jewels. Enter this *nikuñja*, which is already resounding with the sweet low tone of warbling cuckoos. Sing along with them as You revel to Your heart’s content with Mādhava. No one will hear You.”

VERSE 21

*vihita-padmāvatī-sukha-samāje
 kuru murāre maṅgala-śatāni
 bhaṇati jayadeva-kavirāja-rāje
 praviśa rādhe!... (8)*

“O enemy of Mura, hearing the emperor of poets, Śrī Jayadeva, singing this song, which gladdens Padmāvatī Rādhā’s heart, may You confer unlimited blessings upon us.”

Commentary

Offering his poem at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, Śrī Jayadeva says, “O Murāri, on hearing this song by the king of bards, may You bestow all varieties of auspiciousness upon the entire world.” Padmāvatī, the name of Śrī Jayadeva’s wife, also refers to the original Goddess of Fortune, Śrī Rādhā. The supreme poet Jayadeva, a worshiper of Padmāvatī, humbly prays to Śrī Hari, “O Murāri, I have established Padmāvatī within the secret love bowers of the lofty palace of this *Gīta-govinda*. Therefore this poetry is for Your happiness. May You be delighted and confer auspiciousness upon us hundreds of times over.”

Alternatively, Śrī Jayadeva personally appeals to Rādhā, “O Padmāvatī, He who is the complete wealth of Lakṣmī is joyfully present today within the *vilāsa-kuñja*. May You confer unlimited auspiciousness upon Him, whose only welfare lies in enjoying amour with You.”

VERSE 22

*tvām cittena ciraṁ vahann ayam ati-śrānto bhṛṣaṁ tāpitaḥ
 kandarpaṇa ca pātum icchati sudhā-sambādha-bimbādharāṁ
 asyāṅkaṁ tad alaṅkuru kṣaṇaṁ iha bhrū-kṣepa-lakṣmī-lavakṛite
 dāsa ivopasevita-padāmbhoje kutaḥ sambhramah*

“O ravishing beauty! Your beloved stands before You, wearied from bearing You in the core of His heart for so long while inflamed with desire. He ardently longs to drink the sweet nectar flowing from Your *bimba*-fruit lips. Go and adorn the chest of Your eager lover who worships Your lotus feet – a slave purchased merely with just Your precious fleeting glance. Why hesitate any longer?”

Commentary

Her *sakhī* tells Rādhā, “Hari is wasting away from carrying You in His heart all this time. Severely tormented by Kāmadeva, He has been scorched from deep within. Therefore, allow Him to drink the sweet ambrosia of Your red *bimba*-fruit lips for which He is so eager. My dear one, ornament Your lover who is hankering for You. You have purchased Him simply with a shooting glance. Now fully decorate the body of Your footservant, Hari. Why deliberate any further? Without inhibition, adorn His chest at once. Why are You shy? What are you waiting for?”

This verse features *rūpaka*- and *utprekṣā-alaṅkāras*. The chanda is *śārdūla-vikrīḍita*.



VERSE 23

*sā sa-sādhvasa-sānandaṁ
govinde lola-locanā
siñjāna-mañju-mañjīraṁ
praviveśa niveśanam*

Her roving eyes coming to rest on Govinda, Her heart mixing with trepidation and bliss, She entered the *nikuñja* to the sweet tinkling of jeweled anklebells.

Commentary

Feeling both nervous and elated, Rādhā glanced all around and then rested Her eyes on the expectant Govinda. Following the advice of Her friend She entered the forest bower, just perfect for love games, accompanied by the tinkling of Her anklebells. As She looked at Her beloved, She felt as if He were holding Her with His every limb.

❧ Song Twenty-two ❧

The musical mode is *varāḍi-rāga* and the rhythm is *yati-tāla*. When an attractively coiffed woman, with bangles on wrists and flowers bunched on her ears, shyly takes up a yak-tail whisk and fans her beloved as she delights in amusement with him, her song is called *varāḍi-rāga*.

VERSE 24

*rādhā-vadana-vilokana-vikasita-vividha-vikāra-vibhaṅgam
jala-nidhim iva vidhu-maṇḍala-darśana-taralita-tuṅga-taraṅgam* (1)

*harim eka-rasaṁ ciram abhilaṣita-vilāsaṁ
sā dadarśa guru-harṣa-vaśaṁvada-vadanam anaṅga-nivāsaṁ*
(refrain)

Beholding Rādhā's moon-like face, Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of erotic mellows, bloomed with jubilation, His body undergoing transformations of amorous desire and assuming suggestive gestures, just like the ocean cresting with turbulent waves under the influence of the full moon.

Joyfully Rādhā gazed upon Hari, who was long obsessed with desire to enjoy with Her, His rapturous face appearing like Cupid himself. (refrain)

Commentary

In the *nikuñja* Rādhā beheld Kṛṣṇa with great affection, appreciating His unique and manifold virtues, all of which find their basis in Her. Śrī Hari is referred to as *eka-rasa*. The purport is that one *rasa*, the amorous mellow (*śṛṅgāra*), is primary and that Kṛṣṇa is brimming with many of its aspects.

He had been obsessed with the desire to enjoy intimacy with Her for a long time and now He was bursting with uncontrollable passion. Rādhā's presence in the pastime bower brought Him back to life, as She is His everything, having completely taken possession of His heart. Kṛṣṇa was overwhelmed with happiness simply by seeing Her and as He broke out into *sāttvika* transformations He began trembling and horripilating. When Kṛṣṇa beheld Rādhā's face, which appeared as the abode of Kāmadeva, He lit up with jubilation. Rādhā's face is the full moon, upon seeing which the Kṛṣṇa ocean becomes turbulent and heaves with towering waves. Rādhā noticed that as soon as Kṛṣṇa beheld Her, He began to manifest many kinds of amatory emotions, indicating His desire to consummate Their love.

VERSE 25

*hāram amalatarā-tāram urasi dadhataṁ parilambya vidūram
sphutatara-phena-kadamba-karambitam iva yamunā-jala-pūram
harim eka-rasam... (2)*

A lustrous pearl necklace swinging on His broad chest appeared like masses of white foam bobbing in the dark waters of the Yamunā.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa is compared to the broad current of the Yamunā River. An auspicious pearl necklace that hangs down to His

knees, repeatedly embraces His dark blue chest again and again, giving the impression of the Yamunā's dark waters mixed with white foam. It is also implied that profuse perspiration is clearly visible on Kṛṣṇa's body as He breaks out in *sāttvika-bhāvas* due to seeing Śrī Rādhā.

VERSE 26

*śyāmala-mṛdula-kalevara-maṇḍalam adhigata-gaura-dukūlam
nīla-nalinam iva pīta-parāga-pāṭala-bhara-valayita-mūlam
harim eka-rasaṁ... (3)*

His delicate dark body draped with yellow garments looked like a blue lotus dusted thick with its own golden pollen.

Commentary

Having thrown a yellow shawl over His dark blue transcendental body, Śrī Hari resembles a blue lotus flower, ornately covered by its own yellow pollen. This also indicates that Rādhā's golden limbs will be even more beautiful upon Kṛṣṇa's dark blue chest. In this way, Kṛṣṇa's yellow garments herald the awaited *viparīta-rati*.

VERSE 27

*tarala-dṛg-añcala-calana-manohara-vadana-janita-rati-rāgam
spphuṭa-kamalodara-khelita-khañjana-yugam iva śaradi tadāgam
harim eka-rasaṁ... (4)*

Provocative glances playing on His enchanting blue lotus face – appearing like wagtails flitting among lotus blossoms in the autumn pond – aroused Her passion.

Commentary

When Rādhā entered the *nikuñja* and saw Kṛṣṇa's charming face with its mild smile and eyes now restless, the

desire to enjoy amorous pleasure stirred in Her heart. Kṛṣṇa's smiling face with its darting eyes resembled a fully blossomed autumn lotus, upon which two wagtail birds sported. On beholding Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa became stunned; therefore He has been compared to an autumn lake. The restlessness of His eyes reveals His thirst for amour, and His sidelong glances inflame Rādhā's passion. His charming face awakens young women's desire for romance.

VERSE 28

*vadana-kamala-pariśīlana-milita-mihira-sama-kunḍala-śobham
smita-ruci-kusuma-samullasitādhara-pallava-kṛta-rati-lobham
harim eka-rasaṁ... (5)*

His jeweled earrings, reflecting the morning sun, glowed like a pair of pink sun globes rising to caress His shining lotus face. His flower-bud lips blossoming into a gentle, radiant smile caused Her passion to swell.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa's earrings appear like two rising suns reaching His cheeks to attain the touch of His blooming lotus face – the beauty of the one ascending to contact the beauty of the other. The light of dawn is a reminder that the time for amour is about to end. Even so, Kṛṣṇa's gentle, inviting smile increases the radiance of His face, and His flower-bud lips, eager to kiss Rādhā's, express His ongoing thirst for romance. As She beholds His lotus face – the ornament of the essence of beauty – the desire for amorous love also rises in Her heart.

VERSE 29

*śaśi-kiraṇa-cchuritodara-jaladhara-sundara-sakusuma-keśam
timirodita-vidhu-maṇḍala-nirmala-malayaja-tilaka-niveśam
harim eka-rasaṁ... (6)*

The flowers strewn in His hair appeared like moonbeams piercing through a cloud bank, and the radiant sandal paste *tilaka* on His forehead like the full moon high in a dark sky.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa's beautiful curling locks are adorned with radiant, fully blossomed flowers, giving the impression of the moon hidden amongst a mass of dark clouds. That is, the rays of the moon are pervading His dark tresses. The Malayan sandalwood *tilaka* on Kṛṣṇa's dark forehead looks like the full moon risen in the dark sky. Rādhā's presence casts a golden tint on Kṛṣṇa's clothing and ornaments as She now beholds that golden Śyāmasundara.

VERSE 30

*vipula-pulaka-bhara-danturitaṁ rati-keli-kalābhir adhīram
maṇi-gaṇa-kiraṇa-samūha-samujjvala-bhūṣaṇa-subhaga-sarīram
harim eka-rasaṁ... (7)*

Her glance caused His bodily hairs to bristle in excitement, His restless mind became eager for amorous play, and bedecked with luminous jewels His pleasing form glowed.

Commentary

Rādhā was astonished to see the wonderful way Kṛṣṇa's skin was rippling with pleasure and how His bodily hairs were bristling. The sight of Rādhā caused Kṛṣṇa's excitement to mount with the expectation of immanent love play as He contemplated kissing and other practices of the erotic arts. Rādhā gazed upon Kṛṣṇa, who was dazzlingly beautiful, wearing ornaments of sparkling jewels emitting effulgent rays that illuminated His whole body.

VERSE 31

śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇita-vibhava-dviguṇīkṛta-bhūṣaṇa-bhāram
 praṇamata ḥṛdi vinidhāya harim suciram sukṛtodaya-sāram
 harim eka-rasaṁ... (8)

All of Kṛṣṇa's ornaments are indeed marvelous, but the ornamental language of Śrī Jayadeva's lyrical song redoubles their splendor. O *rasika bhaktas*, Kṛṣṇa is the fruit of all your pious activities. With great care, may you hold Him within your hearts and reverentially adore Him forever.

Commentary

To conclude, Śrī Jayadeva says, "O devoted ones! The poetry of the crest jewel of bards, Śrī Jayadeva, has doubled the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's ornaments. In other words, Kṛṣṇa's adornments are now two-fold – His own jewels and the highly embellished flowery language of this narration, which heightens Kṛṣṇa's grandeur. My poetry is marked by two kinds of *alaṅkāras* – the subject matter, which is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and the ornamental figures of speech."

When Kṛṣṇa unites with Rādhā, His attributes are greatly enhanced, being decorated by Her ornaments also and again by the influence of Their meeting. "May that very Kṛṣṇa, upon whom Śrī Rādhā gazes incessantly, be graciously present within your heart for eternal time."

"Such captivating appearances of Kṛṣṇa arise within the heart as a result of immense piety accumulated over a vast period of time. Treasure Him and bow before Him."

This Twenty-second Song of Śrī Gīta-govinda is entitled *Sānanda-govinda-rāga śreṇi-kusumābharana*, "The Flower Garland of the Blissful Govinda's Vehement Desires."

VERSE 32

*atikramyāpāṅgaṁ śravaṇa-patha-paryanta-gamana
 prayāsenevākṣṇos taralatara-tāraṁ patitayoḥ
 tadānīm rādhāyāḥ priyatama-samāloka-samaye
 papāta svedāmbu-prakara iva harṣāśru-nikaraḥ*

As Rādhā's hungered eyes happily fell upon Her lover, they strained so much in their attempt to swallow Him that they practically touched Her ears, giving rise to tears of joy that fell like a stream of perspiration.

Commentary

After agonizing in separation for such a long time, when Rādhā finally met with Kṛṣṇa, She experienced a jubilation that knew no bounds, and that overflowed from Her large eyes. These tears appeared like the perspiration that comes from relishing love play. Alternatively, Her eyes tried to overreach their corners and stretch to Her ears, in an attempt to hear something. It was as if the perspiration, arising from the hard endeavor of Her eyes, was falling like tears of joy. Rādhā's eyes were also overly restless due to their intense hankering to feast upon Her beloved.

This verse, which reveals Rādhā's *sāttvika-bhāva*, features *upamā-alaṅkāra* and *śikhariṇī-chanda*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (12.25) to illustrate *aśru-sāttvika-bhāva*, the flowing of tears of joy.

VERSE 33

*bhajantyās talpāntaṁ kṛta-kapaṭa-kaṇḍūti-pihita
 smitaṁ yāte gehād bahir avahitāli-parijane
 priyāsyam paśyantyāḥ smara-śara-samāhūta-subhagam
 salajjā lajjāpi vyagamad iva dūraṁ mṛga-dṛśaḥ*

As the doe-eyed Rādhā took Her seat upon the flower couch, Her companions were eager to make Her happy. They tactfully concealed their smiles by pretending to scratch their faces and came out of the *nikuñja*. Kindled by erotic desire, She fired a charming sidelong glance at Her lover, causing Her shyness to flee in embarrassment.

Commentary

The moment Rādhā sat down on the bed, Her considerate *sakhīs* understood that it would not be proper for them to stay there any longer, as their presence would impede Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's sweet meeting. Smiling, scratching their ears and making various excuses, those shrewd *sakhīs* exited from the flowery arbor. Now alone with Her sweetheart, Rādhā came totally under the spell of Kāmadeva's arrows and gazed at Him as if to pierce Him with those same arrows. Witnessing Rādhā's boldness, the goddess of shyness herself became embarrassed, just like the *sakhīs*, and abandoned the doe-eyed Rādhā. Now, how will inhibition remain in this amorous affair? With Her unremitting stare, Rādhā took complete possession of Her beloved.

This verse features *rasavad-alankāra* and *śikhariṇī-chanda*.

VERSE 34

*sānandaṁ nanda-sūnur dīśatu mita-paraṁ sammadaṁ manda-mandaṁ
rādhāṁ ādhāya bāhvor vivaram anu dṛḍhaṁ pīdayan prīti-yogāt
tuṅgau tasyā urojāv atanu-vara-tanor nigatau mā sma bhūtān
pṛṣṭhaṁ nirbhidyā tasmād bahir iti valita-grīvam ālokyan vaḥ*

The son of Nanda slowly and gently took Rādhā in His arms. His embrace tightening with affection, He felt as if Her protruding breasts might pierce through His back. May that Śrī Kṛṣṇa confer bliss upon all.

Commentary

Nanda's son, Śrī Govinda, and Rādhā have met together alone. Now fully enraptured, Kṛṣṇa slowly and tenderly enfolded Her in His embrace. As Rādhā is more delicate than an acacia flower, Kṛṣṇa held Her gently in His arms, but, driven by increasing thirst for Her love, revealed by the phrase *dr̥ḍham pīḍayan*, He tightened His embrace. Kṛṣṇa felt as if Rādhā's pointed breasts were about to pierce all the way through His back. In this context, the hard and penetrating nature of Her breasts is being revealed, indicating the extreme sensual appeal and fresh feminine youthfulness of Her natural beauty. Otherwise She is softer than a flower.

This verse features *śṅgāra-rasa*, *vaidarbhī-rīti*, *prasāda-guṇa* and *sragdharā-chanda*.

VERSE 35

jayaśrī-vinyastair mahita iva mandāra-kusumaiḥ
svayaṁ sindūreṇa dvipa-raṇa-mudā mudrita iva
bhujāpīḍa-kṛīḍā-hata-kuvalayāpīḍa-kariṇaḥ
prakīrṇāśṛg-bindur jayati bhujā-daṇḍo murajitaḥ

When Kṛṣṇa playfully killed the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, His broad arms were spattered with drops of blood. It seemed that they had been anointed with red *sindura* out of joy in fighting and that they had been worshiped with a shower of red *mandāra* flowers by the Goddess of Victory. May Murajita's strong arms be ever triumphant.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva says, "May Śrī Kṛṣṇa's excellent arms confer auspiciousness upon you all. They are praiseworthy throughout the entire universe. He is known as Murajita

because His arms, like rods of chastisement, brought an end to the Mura demon. His formidable arms also sportively dispatched Kaiṁsa's elephant, Kuvalayāpīḍa. When drops of the elephant's blood splattered on His arms, it seemed as if the Goddess of Victory was personally worshiping Him with *pārijāta* flowers. Kṛṣṇa's delight in killing the elephant assumed the form of vermilion." It is said that Kṛṣṇa remembered Rādhā when He saw the elephant's protruding cranial globes. Therefore, although His arms were beautified by drops of blood, they seemed to be decorated with the vermilion of bliss or by *mandāra* flowers offered by Vijaya-Lakṣmī, the Goddess of Victory.

"May those strong arms bestow auspiciousness upon all. O Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arms, triumph unto you! Triumph!"

This verse features *śikhariṇī-chanda*, *anuprāsa-* and *utprekṣā-alaṅkāras*, *pāñcālī-rīti*, *ārabhaṭī-vṛtti* and *vira-rasa*.

VERSE 36

saundaryaika-nidher anaṅga-lalanā-lāvanya-līlā-juṣo
rādhāyā hṛdi palvale manasija-kṛīḍaika-raṅga-sthale
ramyoroja-saroja-khelana-rasitvād ātmanaḥ khyāpayan
dhyātur mānasa-rāja-haiṁsa-nibhatām deyaṅ mukundo mudam

Śrī Rādhā, the ocean of all beauty, is more lustrous than Cupid's consort Rati-devi. Mukunda, the king of swans, is engrossed in play with Her lotus breasts upon the enchanting stage of the lake of Her heart, just as the regal swans of Mānasa-sarovara play among its lotus flowers. May Śrī Mukunda, who praises those who cherish this vision of Him in their hearts, bestow happiness upon all.

Commentary

Mukunda refers to He who releases everyone from distress and bestows bliss. In this verse the crest jewel of poets, Śrī Jayadeva, gives a benediction to his readers and audience by describing Rādhā as the exclusive ocean of all beauty and Her bosom as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playground. The poet has compared Rādhā's chest to a lake upon which grow the two enchanting lotus flowers of Her breasts. The playful Kṛṣṇa is the king of swans who takes His pleasure there. That Kṛṣṇa swan also sports on Mānasa-sarovara, the lake of the hearts of those swan-like sages who meditate upon that vision of Him. May this *rāja-hamsa* Mukunda confer auspiciousness upon all His devotees.

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT ELEVEN
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED SĀNANDA-GOVINDAḤ,
“GOVINDA GLADDENED.”



Act Twelve

SUPRĪTA-PĪTĀMBARAH – PĪTĀMBARA PERFECTLY PLEASED

VERSE 1

*gatavati sakhī-vṛnde 'manda-trapā-bhara-nirbhara
smara-śara-vaśākūta-sphīta-smīta-snapitādharām
sarasa-manasaṁ dṛṣṭvā rādhāṁ muhur nava-pallava
prasara-śayane nikṣiptākṣiṁ uvāca hariḥ priyām*

When Her friends had left, the shy Rādhā became possessed by Kāmadeva. Her lips bathed with a broad smile, She stared wistfully at His bed of tender petals, Her passion for love play growing. Seeing Her mood, Hari spoke to His sweetheart.

Commentary

When in the vine-covered *nikuñja* Rādhā approached the love couch, Her *sakhīs* felt like intruders and excused themselves. Kṛṣṇa observed that Rādhā had been feeling overly shy, and now influenced by *kāma*, an open smile was playing on Her lips as She looked expectantly at the bed of soft, new leaves and tender petals. Her mind filled with unquenchable desire as the fresh flower couch gripped Her attention, leaving Her unable to speak. Seeing Rādhā's disposition, Hari spoke to Her with intense passion.

The meter of this verse is *hariṇī*. This act describes the *svadhīna-bhartṛkā* heroine, who completely subjugates her compliant lover.

❧ Song Twenty-three ❧

The musical mode is *vibhāsa-rāga*; the rhythm is *ekatāli-tāla*.

VERSE 2

*kisalaya-śayana-tale kuru kāmīni caraṇa-nalina-viniveśam
tava pada-pallava-vairi-parābhavam idam anubhavatu suveśam* (1)

*kṣaṇam adhunā nārāyaṇam anugatam anusara rādhike!
(refrain)*

“O amorous one, place Your flower-like feet upon this bed of tender petals and tender leaves. Rivaling the softness of Your velvety feet, My bed of fresh petals should now feel the humiliation of defeat.

“O Rādhikā, I am Your subservient Nārāyaṇa. Come to Me now.” (refrain)

Commentary

Śrī Hari said to Rādhā, “O impassioned maiden, place Your lotus feet on this bed of soft petals, the competitors of Your petal-like feet. Crush them with Your feet, and let them realize defeat. This is how an adversary conquers his enemy. My love, seeing You is a happy event for Me. Let this joyful moment continue by allowing Me to partake of the delightful festival of union with You. Now the moment has come to enjoy amour with Your subservient Nārāyaṇa.”

To set the ground for the creation of *rasa*, Kṛṣṇa said, “I am Nārāyaṇa.” Nārāyaṇa has two meanings: He who resides (*ayana*) in the water (*nāra*); and He who is the shelter (*ayana*) of all living entities (*nāra*). By this Kṛṣṇa implies, “Playing in the ocean brings joy to a distressed person. So come and sport in the ocean of My *prema*. Enjoy love play

and relieve Your burning desire, thus making the two of Us refreshed and happy.”

The word *anugata* (subordinate) implies, “Although I am the beloved of many, You are the only love of My life.” The phrase ‘place Your feet’ on the bed reveals that Kṛṣṇa has a specific activity in mind.

VERSE 3

*kara-kamalena karomi caraṇam aham āgamitāsi vidūram
kṣaṇam upakuru śayanopari mām iva nūpuram anugati-śūram
kṣaṇam adhunā... (2)*

“My dear one, You have walked so far. Let Me soothe Your feet with My lotus hands. As I am a valiant follower of Your anklebells, come and favor Me upon My bed for a moment.”

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O Rādhā, You have traveled such a long distance. Come, let Me worship Your lotus feet by massaging them with My hands. Like Your anklebells, I am always ready to follow You wherever You go. Likewise, I am also eligible for Your favor. So bless Me by gracing My bed, just as You favor Your anklebells by wearing them.”

VERSE 4

*vadana-sudhā-nidhi-galitam amṛtam iva racaya vacanam anukūlam
viraham ivāpanayāmi payodhara-rodhakam urasi dukūlam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (3)*

“Speak pleasant words that trickle like nectar from the moon of Your face. I desire to remove separation personified in the form of the garment that covers Your breasts and obstructs Our togetherness.”

Commentary

“O Rādhā, kindly utter sweet words that will arouse love. I have been suffering in separation from You. As nectar flows from the moon, please shower Me with the nectar of Your mellifluous love talk flowing from Your moon-like face.” According to the principle of correlation between the subject and object of a simile, it is equally valid to say, ‘I remove the separation, which is like a fine cloth,’ or ‘I remove the fine cloth of separation.’ “As separation obstructs Our union, the fine cloth upon Your breasts impedes Our meeting. Therefore allow Me to remove this barrier. The breasts of passionate women wither in separation; furthermore, they do not flourish when hidden by a garment, so I will remove the covering of separation that checks the radiance of Your bosom.”

VERSE 5

*priya-parirambhaṇa-rabhasa-valitam iva pulakitam ati-duravāpam
mad-urasi kuca-kalaśam viniveśaya śoṣaya manasija-tāpam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (4)*

“My dear, Your full breasts, prohibited to the touch, now throb in excitement, eager for the embrace of Your beloved. Press them on My chest and vanquish the heat of My unfulfilled desires.”

Commentary

“O Rādhā, hold your pitcher-like breasts on My chest as if placing vessels upon a sacrificial altar. Thus cool the heat of My passion, as heat is vanquished by the presence of a water pot. Your ample breasts are pulsating in excitement. Without Your assent, the touch of Your breasts is next to impossible, but now they are primed for Your sweetheart’s embrace. Therefore, place them on My heart and drive away My burning *kāma*.”

VERSE 6

*adhara-sudhā-rasam upanaya bhāmini jīvaya mṛtam iva dāsam
tvayi vinihita-manasaṁ virahānala-dagdha-vapuṣam avilāsam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (5)*

“My heart, burning from rejection and bereft of all pleasure, knows only You. Bhāmini, O haughty girl, revive this dying slave with Your lips’ ambrosia.”

Commentary

“O Bhāmini, My dear indignant one! I am nothing but a slave at Your feet. Be gracious and give up Your contrary behavior – be done with Your anger. I have been burning with loneliness, unable to stop thinking about You. Rejuvenate this dying servant with the nectar of Your lips and bring Me back to life. It is common knowledge that *amṛta* can infuse new life into a dead person. Even though deprived of all happiness, My heart is still fully fixed on You. Your spurning has reduced Me to cinders, so kindly sprinkle Me with the nectar of Your lips.”

VERSE 7

*śaśimukhi mukharaya maṇi-raśanā-guṇam anugūṇa-kaṇṭha-ninādam
śruti-puṭa-yugale pika-ruta-vikale śamaya cirād avasādam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (6)*

“O beautiful moon-faced girl, let the jewels on Your cummerbund resonate along with Your sweet voice. Soothe the long torture My ears have suffered from the cuckoo’s harsh call.”

Commentary

“*He candrānane*, O radiant moon-faced maiden, You are the moon dripping with nectar. Make the jeweled bells on

Your girdle sing out in harmony with Your sweet voice so that when You take the lead in lovemaking those bells will mark rhythm along with Your rapturous cooing. For lonely lovers, the cuckoos' call is simply painful. Their singing, stimulating memories of You, brought distress to My ears. Now fill them with Your music and allay this long deprivation."

VERSE 8

*mām ati-viphala-ruṣā vikalī-kṛtam avalokitum adhunedam
mīlita-lajjitam iva nayanam tava virama visrja rati-khedam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (7)*

"Your furious eyes cast Me into distress. Having tortured Me with baseless anger, they now half closed in shame. Glance in My direction and set Our passion free."

Commentary

"O contrary woman, You glared at Me with anger in Your eyes for no reason, thus causing Me distress. Your show of wrath has left Me shattered. But now Your glance is showering *prema*. The furious glance is ashamed, so Your eyes are half closed. Now they should also give up this useless expression. Be pleased with Me and enthusiastically cast aside Your reluctance for romance."

VERSE 9

*śrī-jayadeva-bhaṇitam idam anupadanigadita-madhuripu-modam
janayatu rasika-janeṣu manorama-rati-rasa-bhāva-vinodam
kṣaṇam adhunā... (8)*

Every word of Śrī Jayadeva's poem resounds with the rapture of Madhuripu Śrī Kṛṣṇa. May this song arouse the pleasure of these delightful amorous pastimes in the heart of *rasika* devotees.

Commentary

In this song, entitled *Madhuripu-moda-vidyādhara-līlā*, “Madhuripu Enjoying Amorous Affairs,” Śrī Jayadeva has encapsulated Madhusūdana’s ever increasing ecstasy. The incomparable nature and pre-eminence of *śṛṅgāra-rasa* is accepted unanimously among the expert devotees. “May this song awaken the enchanting joy of the erotic mellow in the hearts of connoisseurs of spiritual love.”

This composition is pleasing to Śrīpati Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for it awakens *sambhoga-śṛṅgāra-rasa* and brings amorous emotions into full bloom.

VERSE 10

*pratyūhaḥ pulakānkureṇa nividāśleṣe nimeṣeṇa ca
kṛīḍākūta-vilokite ’dhara-sudhā-pāne kathā-kelibhiḥ
ānandādhigamena manmatha-kalā-yuddhe ’pi yasminn abhū
udbhūtaḥ sa tayor babhūva suratārambhaḥ priyam bhāvukah*

They began Their long-awaited amorous contest, intent on tasting pleasure. But Their rapture was interrupted – by horripilation from the thrill of Their deep embrace, by blinking eyes unable to observe each other’s expert tactics, by erotic sweet talk impeding drinking the nectar of each other’s lips. And even rapture itself became an obstacle in Their artful conjugal sparring.

Commentary

In this verse Śrī Jayadeva explains that Rādhā-Mādhava have now begun Their long-awaited and intensely pleasurable amorous play. At the onset of Their love games, the rapturous rippling of Their skin created an obstacle, as the bristling of Their hairs naturally impeded Their coming together in an embrace. Furthermore, the blinking of Their eyes,

obstructing Their careful observation of each other, became intolerable as They were eager to watch each other's specific intentions. As They drank the nectar of each other's lips, Their love chatter just seemed to get in the way. After all, when lovers are kissing, even sweet talk is intolerable. Tasting each other's lips becomes much more pleasurable than inciting each other with provocative words. Even the attainment of rapture seemed to be an impediment in the amorous battle.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (15.256) as an example of *samprayoga-līlā*, conjugal union. This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *yathāsankhya-alāṅkāra* and the *śṛṅgāra-rasa* called *sambhoga*. The present verse is an introduction to the Twenty-fourth Song entitled *Candrahāsa*, “Kṛṣṇa – the Beaming Moon.”

VERSE 11

*dorbhyām saṁyamitaḥ payodhara-bhareṇāpīḍitaḥ pāñijair
āviddho daśanaiḥ kṣatādhara-putaḥ śronī-tateṇāhataḥ
hastenānamitaḥ kace 'dhara-madhu-syandena sammohitaḥ
kāntaḥ kām api tṛptim āpa tad aho kāmasya vāmā gatiḥ*

Bound by Her arms, crushed under the weight of Her breasts, scratched by Her fingernails, bitten on the lips by Her teeth, pummeled by Her hips, held down by the hair with Her hand, and enraptured by the stream of sweet honey from Her lips, Her beloved attained an inexpressible elation. The ways of love are indeed mysterious.

Commentary

The poet Śrī Jayadeva is describing *viparīta-rati* in this verse. He states that Kṛṣṇa has attained an indescribable fulfillment. Therefore it is said that the ways of *kāma* are

contradictory and beyond ordinary experience. This paradox arises from the appearance of another *rasa*. As a criminal takes shelter of chivalry (*vīra-rasa*) to accept his punishment, Kṛṣṇa took shelter of *vīra-rasa* and progressed through the stages of being arrested, beaten, pierced, bound, wounded and forced to submit. Finally He fell into an embarrassed stupor.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s enthusiasm is relentless, and neither side is prepared to withdraw from this love battle. Rādhā inflicted a variety of punishments on Kṛṣṇa through *viparīta-rati*: She bound Him in the prison of Her arms, oppressed and trounced Him with the weight of Her breasts, wounded Him with Her nails, bit His lips with Her teeth, bashed Him with Her broad hips, and grabbed His hair with Her hands as She drank the current of honey from His lips. Thus, Rādhā brought Her lover to the point of complete bewilderment. Such love is a matter of great wonderment!

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda* and *rasavad-alāṅkāra*. Some scholars also refer to this verse as a specific sub-section entitled *Kāminihāsa*, “The Laughing Impassioned Heroine.”

VERSE 12

*mārāṅke rati-keli-saṅkula-raṅārambhe tayā sāhasa-
prāyaṁ kānta-jayāya kiñcid upari prārambhi yat-sambhramāt
niṣpandā jaghana-sthalī śīthilatā dor-vallir utkampitam
vakṣo mīlitam akṣi pauruṣa-rasaḥ strīṅām kutaḥ sidhyati*

At the onset of the love battle, Śrī Rādhā, spurred by *kāma*, initiated a vigorous assault, assuming the dominant role in an attempt to gain a hasty victory over Her lover. But She soon languished – Her hips stilled, Her vine-like arms slackened, Her breasts heaved and Her eyes closed. Indeed, how can a woman ever be successful in assuming the masculine role in love?

Commentary

Continuing the previous description, the author presents a further development of *śṛṅgāra-rasa* amalgamated with *vīra-rasa*. Therefore this verse should be accepted in the context of the previous one. From the perspective of philosophical principles (*tattva-vicāra*), Rādhā is present in the left side of Kṛṣṇa's body. As Their intense amorous war began, Rādhā, full of fighting spirit, strove for victory and impetuously assailed Her lover, aggressively binding and striking Him, etc. However, She eventually became completely exhausted. Her hips stopped moving, and Her arms fell limp. Unable to move, She could no longer bind Him. Her breasts began to heave deeply and Her eyes closed. Some people say that women are weaker and cannot maintain the dominant male position (*pauruṣatva*). How can *vīra-rasa* possibly arise in them?

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has quoted this verse in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (13.18) as an example of the *sañcāri-bhāva* 'surata-hetu-glāni', weariness resulting from amorous play. Some scholars call this verse *Pauruṣa-prema-vilāsa*, "The Masculine Role in Romance." It features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *viśeṣokti-alāṅkāra* and *sambhoga-śṛṅgāra-rasa*.

VERSE 13

tasyāḥ pātala-pāñijāṅkitam uro nidrā-kaśāye dṛśau
nirdhauto 'dhara-ṣoṇimā vilulitāḥ srasta-srajo mūrdhajāḥ
kāñcī-dāma dara-ślathāñcalam iti prātar nikhātair dṛśor
ebhiḥ kāma-śarais tad-adbhutam abhūt patyur manāḥ kīlitam

He contemplated Her condition at dawn: Her breasts now pink with fingernail marks, Her sleepy eyes red, Her scarlet lip gloss washed away from profuse kisses, the flowers in Her disheveled hair withered, Her waistbelt and shawl loose. And again Kāmadeva's five flowery shafts pierced Kṛṣṇa's heart. How astonishing!

Commentary

Here Śrī Jayadeva adds that Rādhā's five lust-provoking arrows penetrated Kṛṣṇa's mind again, even when Their lovemaking was over. Astounding, is it not! In the early morning, Kṛṣṇa's amorous desires reawakened. His mind was naturally pierced upon beholding Rādhā. Her limbs are the embodiment of Cupid's powerful arrows, which entered His heart through the pathway of His eyes. In which of Her limbs did Kṛṣṇa see the arrows that excited His *kāma*? In answer Śrī Jayadeva says:

- (1) *Palāśa puṣpa-bāṇa* – Kṛṣṇa had marked Rādhā's breasts with His fingernails while They were making love. Therefore Her breasts are the pink crocus flower arrow.
- (2) *Kamala puṣpa-bāṇa* – Her eyes had become red from being awake throughout the night. Therefore Her eyes are the lotus flower arrow.
- (3) *Bandhujīva puṣpa-bāṇa* – When Rādhā's red lip gloss was washed away, Her lips' natural luster was revealed. Therefore Her lips are the phoenicia flower arrow.
- (4) *Mālatī puṣpa-bāṇa* – The flower garland adorning Rādhā's dishevelled hair withered and fell, having been crushed during Their love games. Therefore this wilted garland is the jasmine flower arrow.
- (5) *Kusumāstra-bāṇa* – Rādhā's sash and veil had become slack. They are Kāmadeva's golden arrows such as the bauhinia flower.

This verse is a sub-section entitled *Kāmādbhutābhinava-mrgāṅka-lekha*, “Astonishing New Acts of Amour Etched like Marks on the Moon.” The *chanda* is *sārdūla-vikrīḍita* and the *rasa* is *adbhuta-rasopabṛmhita-śṛṅgāra*.

VERSE 14

*vyālohā keśa-pāśas taralitam alakaiḥ sveda-lolau kapolau
kliṣṭā dṛṣṭādhara-śrīḥ kuca-kalaśa-rucā hāritā hāra-yaṣṭiḥ
kāñci-kāñcid gatāśāṁ stana-jaghana-padam pāṇinācchādyā sadyaḥ
paśyantī satrapaṁ mām tad api vilulita-srag-dhareyaṁ dhinoti*

Her hair loose, curling locks waving around Her face,
Her cheeks studded with drops of sweat, Her lips bitten
and faded, Her full breasts stealing the gleam of Her pearl
necklace, Her glowing hips making Her golden waistbells
hopeless, Her hands screening Her feminine charms,
bashfully Rādhā gazed upon Kṛṣṇa, who took great delight
in Her captivating loveliness.

Commentary

Rādhā, thoroughly drained from lovemaking, was overwhelmed with fatigue. At dawn, in shyness She swiftly covered Herself, Her tender feminine beauty stealing Her beloved's heart as She gazed upon Him. Her braid undone, Her curling locks hovered about Her face. Her cheeks were stained from dried-up perspiration. The luster of her *bimba*-fruit lips had paled. The splendor of Her necklace had lost hope before the radiance of Her round breasts. In the absence of Her bodice, Her necklace seemed pallid and the luster of the sash on Her hips also faded against the background of Her bare beauty.

Appropriately, the *chanda* of this verse is *sragdharā* (wearing garlands).

VERSE 15

*iṣan-mīlita-dṛṣṭi mugdha-vilasat-sītkāra-dhārā-vaśād
avyaktākula-keli-kāku-vikasad-dantāṁśu-dhautādharam
śvāsonnaddha-payodharopari-pariṣvaṅgāt kuraṅgī-dṛṣo
harṣotkarṣa-vimukti-niḥsaha-tanor dhanyo dhayaty ānamam*

Blessed indeed are they who drink the sweetness of the doe-eyed Rādhā's face rapturous in the aftermath of lovemaking – eyes only slightly open, lips bathed by the rays of Her teeth as She emitted indistinct sweet murmurs combined with continuous sighs, Her body lost in lassitude, Her breasts slightly trembling in Kṛṣṇa's compelling embrace.

Commentary

The poet says that Rādhā's amorous play afforded Her extreme euphoria, and, on being released from Kṛṣṇa's embraces and kisses, She drowned in a joy unique and unbounded. Her body, fully overwhelmed by *kāma*, could do nothing more. Kṛṣṇa had embraced Her so tightly that Her breasts were pressed down; they were thus prevented from swelling with pleasure, and they became hard. When Her lover Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw the doe-eyed girl's face with eyes half closed, He wanted to embrace and kiss Her all over again.

Rādhā was gasping over and over again in intense ecstasy. As indiscernible, charming sounds issued from Her mouth, Her lips were washed in the rays emanating from Her sparkling teeth. Only those who have accrued substantial spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) can see Rādhā's face in this condition. Indeed, only Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā's maidservants, Her *mañjarīs*, possess this good fortune.

This verse features *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *jāti-alankāra*, *pāncālī-rīti*, *māgadhi-gīti*, *bhāratī-vṛtti*. The song makes use of *sthita-laya*. Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's embrace is called *vṛkṣādhirūḍhakam-āliṅgana*, the creeper twining around the tree.



VERSE 16

[*atha sā nirgata-bādhā rādhā svādhīna-bhartṛkā
 nijagāda rati-klāntaṁ kāntaṁ maṇḍana-vāñchayā*
*atha sahasā supṛītaṁ suratānte sā nitānta-khinnāṅgī
 rādhā jagāda sādaram idam ānandena govindam*

[Her passion pacified, the triumphant Rādhā expressed Her desire that Her sweetheart, exhausted from lovemaking, should decorate Her.]

When Their lovemaking came to an end, the blissfully exhausted Rādhā began to speak courteously to Govinda.

Commentary

Their blissful dalliance finished, the fatigued Rādhā saw that Her sweetheart Govinda was joyful and spoke to encourage Him. When one's lover is completely absorbed in affection, one's request is sure to be fulfilled – this is an accepted fact. Therefore, Rādhā smiled. The words She spoke to Kṛṣṇa are described in the next song.

❧ *Song Twenty-four* ❧

The musical mode is *rāmakarī-rāga*; the rhythm is *yati-tāla*.

VERSE 17

*kuru yadunandana candana-śīśiratarena kareṇa payodhare
 mṛgamada-patrakam atra manobhava-maṅgala-kalaśa-sahodare (1)*
nijagāda sā yadunandane krīḍati hṛdayānandane
 (refrain)

“O Yadu-nandana, with Your hands more cooling than sandal paste, paint a leafy creeper in musk on My breasts, Kāmadeva’s auspicious vessels.”

She spoke to the son of Yadu, whose love play delighted Her heart. (refrain)

Commentary

Kṛīdati hṛdayānandane in the refrain means that Kṛṣṇa had awakened bliss (*ānanda*) in Rādhā’s heart (*hṛdaya*). Yadu-nandana refers to the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in the Yadu dynasty. Seeing Kṛṣṇa intent to continue Their play, Rādhā said, “Decorate Me with Your hands in such a way that You make Me *kṛṣṇa-mayī* – take possession of My whole being. First, with Your cool hand, more refreshing than sandal pulp, paint a leafy vine in musk upon My pot-like breasts, in the same way that Kāmadeva’s sacred jugs are decorated with dark mango leaves for his procession around the universe.” In this way She courteously requested Her sweetheart to paint artistic designs on Her bosom.

This verse also alludes to a specific type of nail mark called *mayūra-padaka*, which resembles the impression made by a peacock’s foot, by which a ladylove will remember her beloved.

VERSE 18

*ali-kula-gaṅjana-sañjanakam rati-nāyaka-sāyaka-mocane
tvad-adhara-cumbana-lambita-kajjalam ujjvalaya priya locane
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (2)*

“My love, besmear My eyes with shiny collyrium eclipsing the beauty of a swarm of dark bumblebees. Your lips kissed away the black *kajjala* lining My eyes, the bow that discharges Cupid’s arrows.

Commentary

Rādhā continued, “O love of My life, anoint My eyes with this fresh eyeliner which excels the splendor of a swarm of bumblebees. Kāmadeva’s arrows fly from My sidelong glance. The collyrium on My eyes has been smudged off by the kissing of Your lips.” This verse reveals Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of kissing Rādhā’s eyes. She implies, “My darling, You are the black ointment lining My eyes!”

VERSE 19

*nayana-kuraṅga-taraṅga-vikāsa-nirāsa-kare śruti-maṇḍale
manasija-pāśa-vilāsa-dhare śubha-veśa niveśaya kuṇḍale
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (3)*

“O dashing fellow! My earrings confine the leaping deer of My eyes. Decorate My ears with those earrings, the snares of Kāmadeva.”

Commentary

Rādhā instructs Kṛṣṇa, “My love, enchantingly dressed in yellow, O dedicated lover! Decorate My ears with these ornaments, the elegant trap of love. My ears prevent the deer of My eyes from bounding away. O delight of My heart, set aright those earrings that bewilder the hearts of young men.”

This verse describes how Rādhā’s eyes are so elongated that they reach around to Her ears. They are compared to a deer because of their restlessness and their oblique movements.

VERSE 20

*bhramara-cayaṁ racayantam upari ruciraṁ suciraṁ mama sammukhe
jita-kamale vimale parikarmaya narma-janakam alakam mukhe
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (4)*

“Brush aside the curls of hair falling like a swarm of splendid bumblebees on the exquisite lotus of My perfect face. Braid My hair lest ridicule be aroused.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā said, “O Yadunandana, arrange the locks of hair falling over My charming, unblemished and perfect face, which defeats the luster of a lotus. My disarrayed tresses may prompt others to pass joking comments. Or one might mistake My curls for a crowd of bumblebees who always hover about a lotus flower. O Kṛṣṇa, indeed You are the curling black locks playing about the lotus of My face!”

The similarity of Rādhā’s tresses to a formation of bumblebees supports the comparison of Her face to a lotus flower. This is an example of *utprekṣā-alānkāra*.

VERSE 21

*mṛgamada-rasa-valitaṁ lalitaṁ kuru tilakam alika-rajani-kare
vihita-kalaṅka-kalaṁ kamalānana viśramita-śrama-śīkare
nijaḡāda sā yadunandane... (5)*

“O lotus-faced one, the perspiration from fatigue of amour on the half-moon of My forehead has now dried. Draw a captivating musk *tilaka* there, and let it look like the deer-shaped mark on the moon.”

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “O lotus-faced one, O joy of My heart, the sweat from love’s labor has dried up on My broad, moon-like forehead. Paint an enchanting *tilaka* with liquid musk there, thus making My face as beautiful as the young moon with its deer mark.

As with the previous verses, this verse also reveals a specific excitant (*uddīpana-vibhāva*) of the permanent ecstatic emotion. Rādhā's inner feeling is, "O Kṛṣṇa, You are the central point of My good fortune – You are the *tilaka* on My forehead!"

VERSE 22

*mama rucire cikure kuru mānada mānasaja-dhvaja-cāmare
rati-galite lalite kusumāni śikhaṇḍi-śikhaṇḍaka-dāmare
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (6)*

"O Mānada, respectful one, My hair fell loose in Our amorous play. Weave flowers into My tresses, which are like the whisk of Kāmadeva's flag and which are more captivating than peacock plumes."

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā addresses Kṛṣṇa as Mānada, one who gives honor (*māna*) to His beloveds, or one who breaks the contrary mood of indignant lovers. "O Kṛṣṇa, Your luster eclipses the iridescent tail feathers of a peacock. My black hair, charming and attractive as the whisk of Kāmadeva's flag, came undone in the flurry of love. Please decorate My braid with flowers. Indeed, become My flower-laden braid, and diffuse Your fragrance."

VERSE 23

*sarasa-ghane jaghane mama śambarā-dāraṇa-vāraṇa-kandare
maṇi-raśanā-vasanābharaṇāni śubhāśaya vāsaya sundare
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (7)*

"O pure-hearted one, please array My beautiful, broad loins – the cave of that madly passionate elephant Kāmadeva – with a jeweled girdle, fine cloth and ornaments."

Commentary

Śrī Rādhā says, “O virtuous one! Delight of My heart! O love of My life! Your lotus hands are the abode of all good fortune. Your heart, being full of *rasa*, is the root of all auspiciousness. Kindly drape My sloping hips with a gem-studded sash, silk and ornaments. My lovely loins – soft, voluptuous and rich in *rasa* – are alluring like the dark, cavernous habitat of the madly impassioned elephant Kāmadeva, who killed the demon Śambara. Dress them with garments and ornaments. Actually, You are the decoration of My loins.”

In this song, the hero is *anukūla-nāyaka* (the compliant lover dedicated to one heroine), the heroine is *pragalbhā-nāyikā* (mature, clever, intrepid and arrogant) and the *rasa* is *sambhoga-śṛṅgāra*.

VERSE 24

*śrī-jayadeva-vacasi jayade hṛdayaṁ sadayaṁ kuru maṇḍane
hari-carāṇa-smaraṇāmṛta-kṛta-kalikaluṣa-bhava-jvara-khaṇḍane
nijagāda sā yadunandane... (8)*

Adorn yourself with Śrī Jayadeva’s words, which bestow auspiciousness and enchant the heart; thus your spirit will become tender. The nectar of remembrance of Śrī Hari’s lotus feet is the panacea against fevers of Kali.

Commentary

This song reveals the progressive path of Rādhā’s *prema* leading to its ultimate expression: Her craving to melt and completely blend with Kṛṣṇa. She yearns for the touch of His hands to make Her *kṛṣṇa-maya*, fully one with Him, sharing the same heart, and for Him to become all Her finery. In this

song the high level of *prema* that Rādhā is tasting turns into liquid *rasa* and pours down like rain. Rādhā says, “O Yadu-nandana, make Your heart soft. Let it become My ornament and revel with Me.”

From another perspective, the subject of this song, *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the mellows of amorous love, is described by Śrī Jayadeva in most eloquent speech, which has become more relishable due to the inspiration of Jayadeva’s wife. “As You graciously decorate Rādhā, kindly favor me by accepting my words as Your ornaments.” Therefore, each verse can be interpreted as a specific reference to either Rādhā’s ornaments or Jayadeva’s words.

This lyrical composition streams with the nectar of remembrance of Śrī Hari’s lotus feet. Such nectar pacifies the furious fever of immorality in the age of Kali and destroys all sins. Simply remembering the nectar shower of Śrī Jayadeva’s eloquent poetry bestows auspiciousness upon all.

VERSE 25

*racaya kucayoḥ patraṁ citraṁ kuruṣva kapolayor
ghaṭaya jaghane kāñcīm añca srajā kabārī-bharam
kalaya valaya-śreṇīm pāṇau pade kuru nūpurāv
iti nigaditaḥ prītaḥ pītāmbaro 'pi tathākarot*

“Paint leaves upon My breast and pictures on My cheeks. Wrap My hips with a jeweled sash. Weave My braid with flowers. Bedeck My wrists with bangles and My feet with anklebells.” Pītāmbara lovingly did whatever Rādhā bid Him.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva sums up this song in brief and adds that Pītāmbara-dhārī Kṛṣṇa, who wears yellow cloth, gladly

complied with Rādhā's commands, exactly as She desired. This is indicated by the word *api* (indeed). She insisted politely, "O Yadunandana, O You who are as dear as My very life, paint a leafy creeper on My breasts. Draw *makara* and other pictures on My cheeks. Tie a sash around My hips. The garland has fallen from My hair. Weave another string of charming flowers into My braid. Place bangles on My wrists and jeweled anklebells on My feet." In great delight, Kṛṣṇa lovingly arranged all these decorations. How? By personally becoming all of Rādhā's ornaments.

This verse features *hariṇī-chanda* and *saṅkhyā-alaṅkāra*. The heroine is *svādhīna-bhartṛkā-nāyikā*, who controls Her lover, and the hero is *anukula-nāyaka*, submissive. The *rasa* is the *saṁyoga* aspect of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*.

VERSE 26

*yad-gāndharva-kalāsu kauśalam anudhyānam ca yad-vaiṣṇavam
yac chr̥ṅgāra-viveka-tattvam api yat kāvyeṣu lilāyitam
tat sarvam jayadeva-pañḍita-kaveḥ kṛṣṇaika-tānātmanah
sānandah pariśodhayantu sudhiyah śrī-gīta-govindataḥ*

Scholarly devotees who are acquainted with the musical genius of the Gāndharvas, all Vaiṣṇava meditations on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, knowledge of the true nature of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, and pastimes described in the Kāvya, will recognize that the master poet Jayadeva has most expertly blended all of these into his epic poem. May these devotees deeply enter into his *Gīta-govinda* and blissfully sing it out for the benefit of others.

Commentary

On the pretext of praying to the learned devotees, Śrī Jayadeva promulgates his own glories. "O saintly scholars, my *Gīta-govinda* is the entirety of the poet Jayadeva's wealth.

May you realize its profundities. Test it to see how it is full of *rasa* and then share it with others.”

The authenticity of this composition is substantiated by references to these other writings. *Gāndharva-vidyā* refers to literatures on the musical arts (*saṅgīta-śāstra*). The poet has captured in his poem all the musical expertise described in *Gāndharva-vidyā*. Vaiṣṇava meditation on Bhagavān ultimately yields *rasa*, and *Gīta-govinda* proves this. Whatever deliberations have been made previously about *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, in both meeting and separation, have been presented here in a superior way. And whatever pastimes have been depicted in the highly revered *kāvya*s, the prominent poems about erotic love, are more brilliantly manifested here. Śrī Jayadeva's heart and intelligence are exclusively absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. The purpose of his composition is to induce one-pointed meditation on his Lord. If devotees want to get a glimpse of the sheer astonishment coming from the best of artistic and finely discerning writing, meditation and descriptions of pastimes, then they may do so through this epic poem, *Śrī Gīta-govinda*.

VERSE 27

*sādhvī mādhvīka cintā na bhavati bhavataḥ śarkare karkaśāsi
drākṣe drakṣyanti ke tvām amṛta mṛtam asi kṣīra nīraṁ rasas te
mākanda kranda kāntādhara dharāṇi-talaṁ gaṅga yacchanti yāvad
bhāvaṁ śṛṅgāra-sārasvatam iha jayadevasya viṣvag-vacāṁsi*

O powerful wine, do not think you are so intoxicating. O sugar, you are harsh. O grapes, who will look at you? O nectar (*amṛta*), you are indeed lifeless (*mṛta*). O milk, you taste like water. O ripe mango, now go and weep. O lips of a ladylove, now you can go to hell. All of you no longer have any value as long as Śrī Jayadeva's eloquent, essential description of erotic love is manifest in this world.

Commentary

In this verse Śrī Jayadeva is describing the sweet artistry of his *Gīta-govinda*, which is a tribute to the glories of the most brilliant *śṅgāra-rasa* in its most refined form. Its unparalleled sweetness renders all other substances in the world insipid; for the learned devotees there is nothing else sweeter. Śrī Jayadeva's ingenious composition, the ultimate expression of the essence of all romantic sentiments (*śṅgāra-rasa*), is the very personification of auspiciousness.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's auspicious adventures are the exclusive embodiment of good fortune. For the *rasika* devotees, the astonishingly delightful taste of the *rasa* of *Gīta-govinda* is not available anywhere else. If one gathers together all the sweetness in the entire world in one place, it will be tasteless in the face of this lyrical song. The author says, "Hey wine, what do you think about yourself now? Your sweetness is useless – what power do you have to intoxicate the righteous devotees? Hey sugar, what happened to your sweetness? How bitter you are. You have lost your flavor, so who would bother with you now? Hey grapes, beware! Why would any connoisseur of *rasa* ever even look in your direction? Hey nectar, you no longer have any reason to be proud. You are mortal. Hey milk, do not proudly think, "I am *rasa*," because your *rasa* is just water. Hey ripe mango, you have to cry. The *rasika* devotees will take no heed of your growing old and drying up. Hey lips of passionate maidens! You also have no place. Go to Pātāla, the residence of the infernals. None of you can provide any sweetness for those who are expert in relishing the *rasa* of this poetry."

This literary composition is nothing but auspiciousness through and through, from the beginning to the end. Therefore it is the ingredient cause of the word *śubha*

(auspiciousness). The present verse features *sragdharā-chanda*, *āramayī-vṛtti*, *vaidarbhī-rīti*, *tiraskṛtopadā-alaṅkāra* and the *nāṭya-alaṅkāra* called *guṇa-kīrtana*.

VERSE 28

*itthaṁ keli-tatīr viḥṛtya yamunā-kūle samam rādhayā
tad-romāvali-mauktikāvali-yuge veṇī-bhramam bibhrati
tatrāhlādi-kuca-prayāga-phalayor lipsāvator hastayār
vyāpārāḥ puruṣottamasya dadatu sphītām mudā sampadam*

In this way, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed many love games with Rādhā on the banks of the Yamunā. He mistook the meeting of the row of hairs above Her navel with Her pearl necklace to be the Prayāga confluence. And Her delightful breasts, the fruits offered by that Prayāga, are the cherished goal of that best of males, Puruṣottama. May the affairs of His two lotus hands bestow the wealth of happiness upon the reciters and the audience of this poem.

Commentary

Śrī Jayadeva says, “May the activities of the hands of Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestow immense happiness upon those who recite and hear this poetic composition.” The speciality of His hands is that they perpetually find joy in the Veṇī-saṅgama, or Prayāga confluence, which awards the fruit of Her breasts. According to His own desires, Kṛṣṇa plays many games with the dominant heroine, Rādhā, on the banks of the Yamunā. The meeting of the row of hairs (*romāvalī*) above Rādhā’s navel with Her pearl necklace inspires remembrance of the playful confluence of the Ganges and Yamunā Rivers. Her *romāvalī*, dark like Kṛṣṇa, has been compared with the Yamunā, and Her bright pearls to the Ganges. Their meeting place must surely be Prayāga. Śrī Rādhā is Herself Prayāga and the fruits of bathing in this

Prayāga are Her breasts. “May whatever activities Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s hands perform, impelled by the desire to attain this Prayāga’s delightful fruit, confer ever increasing bliss upon all those who recite and hear this poem.”

This sub-section is entitled *Suprīta-pītāmbara-tālaśreṇī*, “Perfectly Pleased Pītāmbara Decorates Rādhikā with Wreaths of Rhythmic Melodies.” It features *sāṅga-rūpaka-alāṅkāra*, *śārdūla-vikrīḍita-chanda*, *pāncālī-rīti* and *gīti* and *bhāratī-vṛtti*. The heroine is *svādhīna-bhārṭṛkā-nāyika* and the hero is *uttama-nāyaka* with the attributes of a *dhīrodatta* (grave, gentle, merciful, determined, humble, highly qualified, chivalrous and physically attractive).

VERSE 29

paryāṅkī-kṛta-nāga-nāyaka-phaṅā-śreṇī-maṇinām gaṇe
saṅkrānta-pratibimba-saṅkalanayā bibhrad vibhu-prakriyam
pādāmbhōruha-dhāri-vāridhi-sutām akṣṇām didṛkṣuḥ śataih
kāya-vyūham ivācarann upacitibhūto hariḥ pātu vah

He whose bed is Śeṣa-rāja, the chief of all serpents, unlimitedly expanded His splendor by reflecting in the jewels upon the serpent’s innumerable hoods, and thus assumed a host of forms with thousands of eyes desiring to gaze upon Goddess Lakṣmī as She massages His lotus feet. May that Śrī Hari protect you all.

Commentary

As Lord Nārāyaṇa rested upon His serpent-couch, Śeṣa-rāja, He assumed a multitude of forms by reflecting Himself in the many jewels on the snake’s hoods. Thus, He took on thousands of eyes desiring to gaze upon Mahā-Lakṣmī. Similarly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa hankers for thousands of eyes to look at His Rādhārāṇī.

VERSE 30

tvām aprāpya mayi svayamvara-parām kṣīroda-tīrodare
 śaṅke sundari kālakūṭam apivat mūḍho mṛḍānī-patiḥ
 itthaṁ pūrva-kathābhir anyamanaso vikṣipyā vakṣo 'ñcalam
 rādhāyāḥ stana-korakopari-milan-netro hariḥ pātu vaḥ

“O beautiful one! When the Lord of Pārvatī (Śiva) could not attain you on the shore of the Ocean of Milk, bewildered by your breathtaking beauty, he swallowed the deadly *kālakūṭa* poison. You then selected me as your consort.”¹ Remembering this previous conversation, Kṛṣṇa repeatedly filled His eyes with the sight of the treasured *mahāpadma* jewels of Śrī Rādhā’s breasts. May that Śrī Hari protect you all.

Commentary

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was very eager to have Rādhā’s *darśana*, to see the wonder of Her beauty. Which Kṛṣṇa? He who is removing the cover over Rādhā’s breast and is looking at Her upper bosom. What is that Rādhārāṇī like? Her beauty is contained in the Ocean of Milk. “Śivajī was looking for Lakṣmī in the Milk Ocean but, because he could not find her, he drank *kālakūṭa* poison. Śivajī did not get You, O beautiful one. And if I don’t get You, I will do the same thing – I will take poison and die.” May that Kṛṣṇa protect you.

VERSE 31

śrī-bhøjadeva-prabhavasya rāmā-
 devī-suta śrī-jayadevakasya
 parāśarādi-priya-bandhu-kaṇṭhe
 śrī-gīta-govinda-kavitvam astu

1 This is a reference to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.8.8–24.

May the melodious poetry of Śrī *Gīta-govinda* of Śrī Jayadeva, the son of Śrī Bhoja-deva and Rāmā-devī, decorate the voices of Parāśara and other dear friends.

Commentary

This *Gīta-govinda* of Śrī Jayadeva, the son of Śrī Bhoja-deva and Rāmā-devī, has been composed to decorate the voices of Bhagavān's confidential devotees like Parāśara. "Their recitation of this poem should unendingly reverberate throughout the sky. May this unprecedented picture of pastimes continue to be beautified eternally in the hearts of the devotees. May Śrī *Gīta-govinda* become their beloved, indeed their most beloved all-inclusive life's breath, for awakening remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of *rasa*."

THUS ENDS THE BĀLABODHINĪ-PRAKĀŚA COMMENTARY ON ACT TWELVE
OF ŚRĪ GĪTA-GOVINDA, ENTITLED SUPRĪTA-PĪTĀMBARA,
"PĪTĀMBARA PERFECTLY PLEASED"

The End



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