

Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā

śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā

An Account of its Origins
and a Description of the Confidential Moods
of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

translated from the Hindi edition of

Śrī Śrīmad

Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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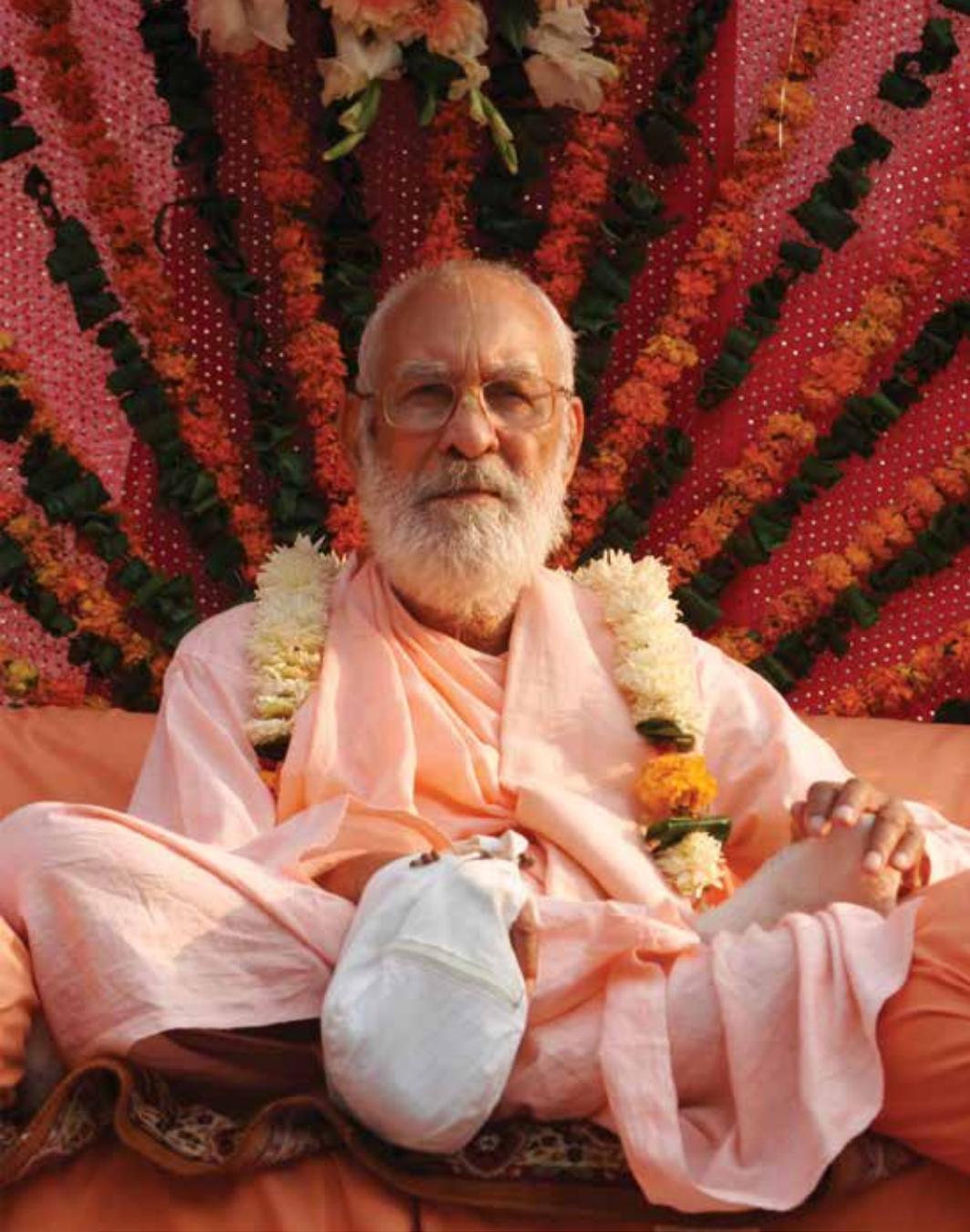
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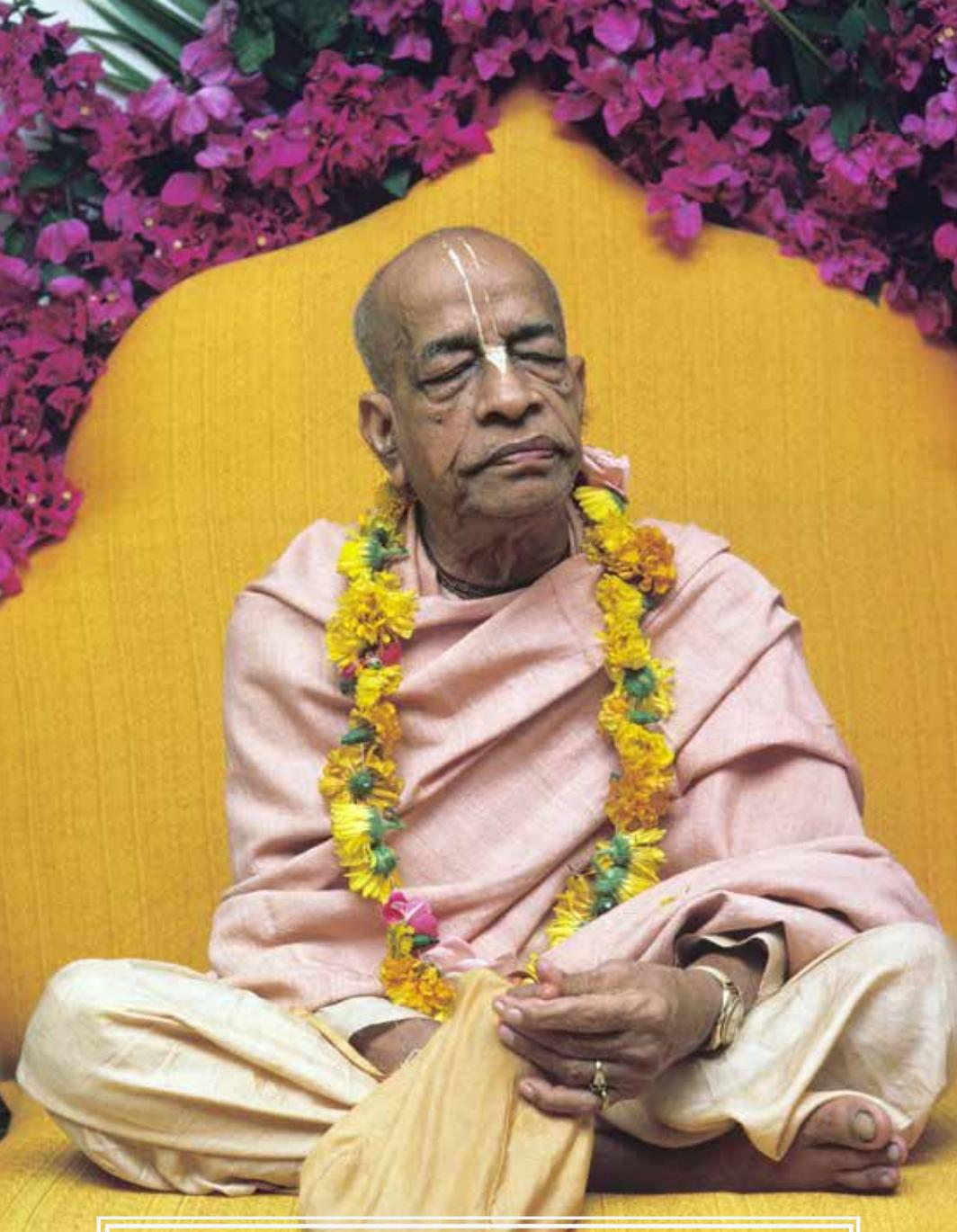
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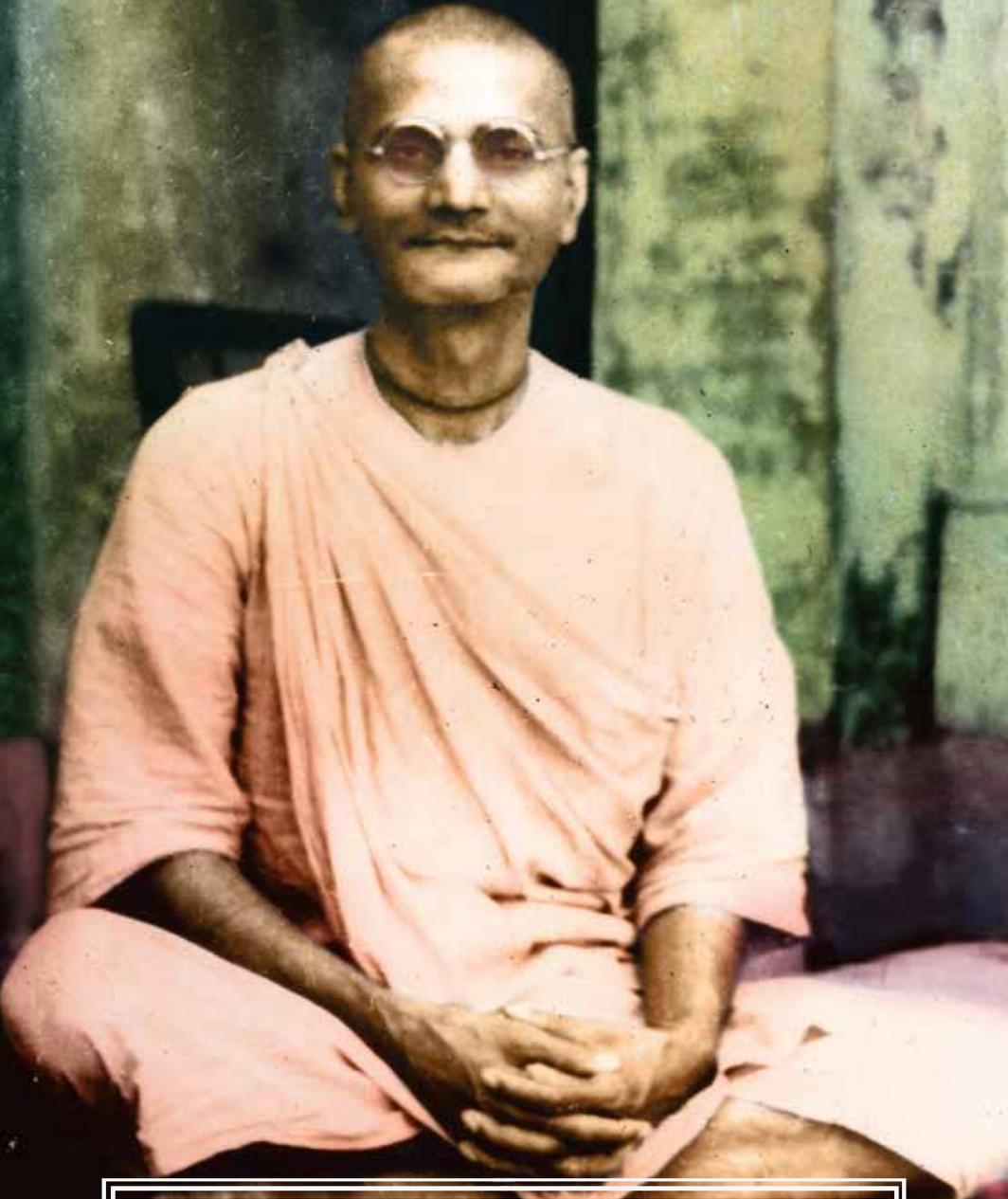


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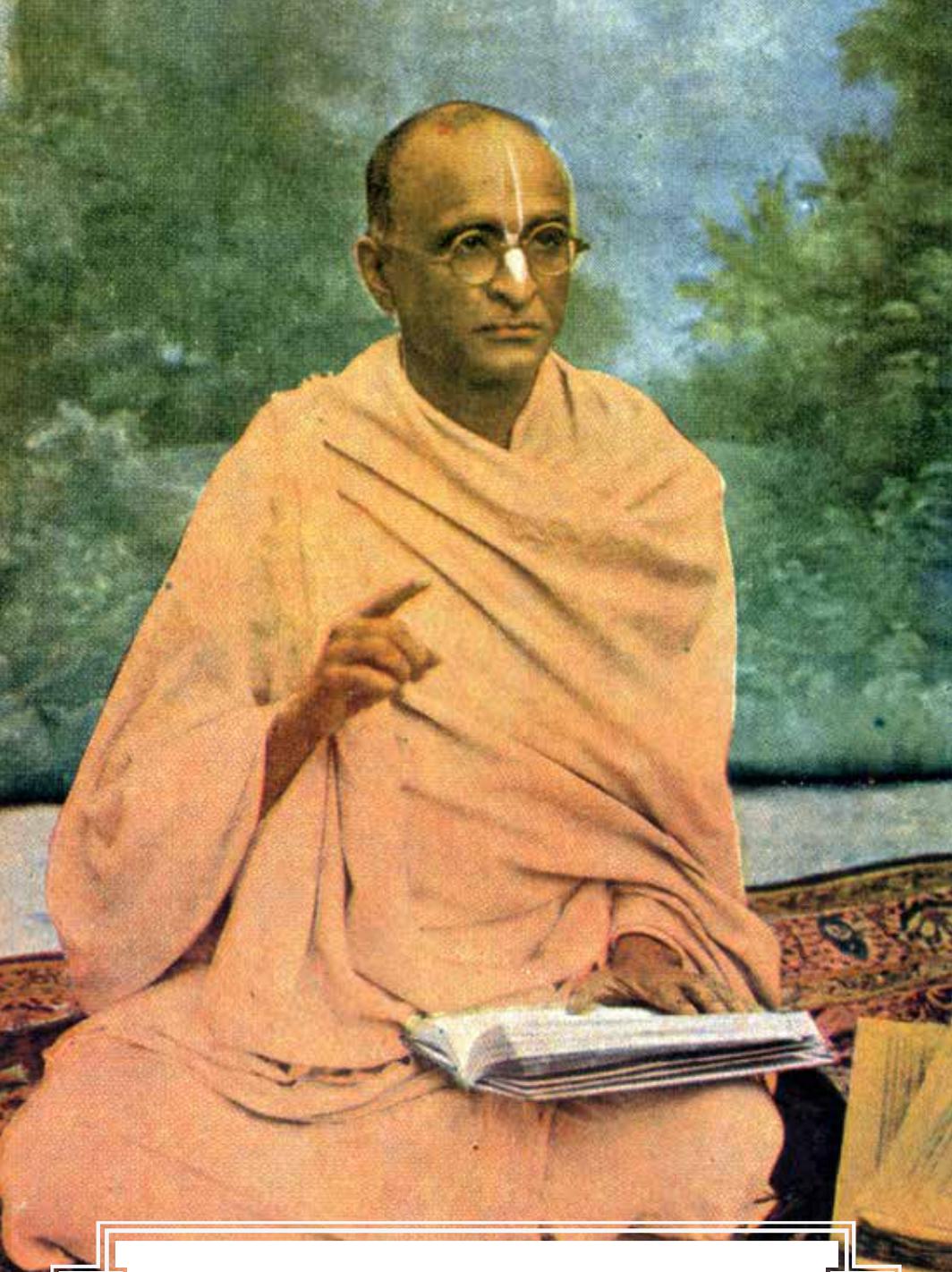


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nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇu-pāda

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTI PRAJÑĀNA KEŚAVA GOŚVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTISIDDHĀNTA SARASVATĪ ṬHĀKURA PRABHUPĀDA



nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa
ŚRĪLA GAURA-KIŚORA DĀSA BĀBĀJĪ MAHĀRĀJA



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
SACCIDĀNANDA ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVĪNODA ṬHĀKURA



ŚRĪ NĪLA-MĀDHAVA



ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA



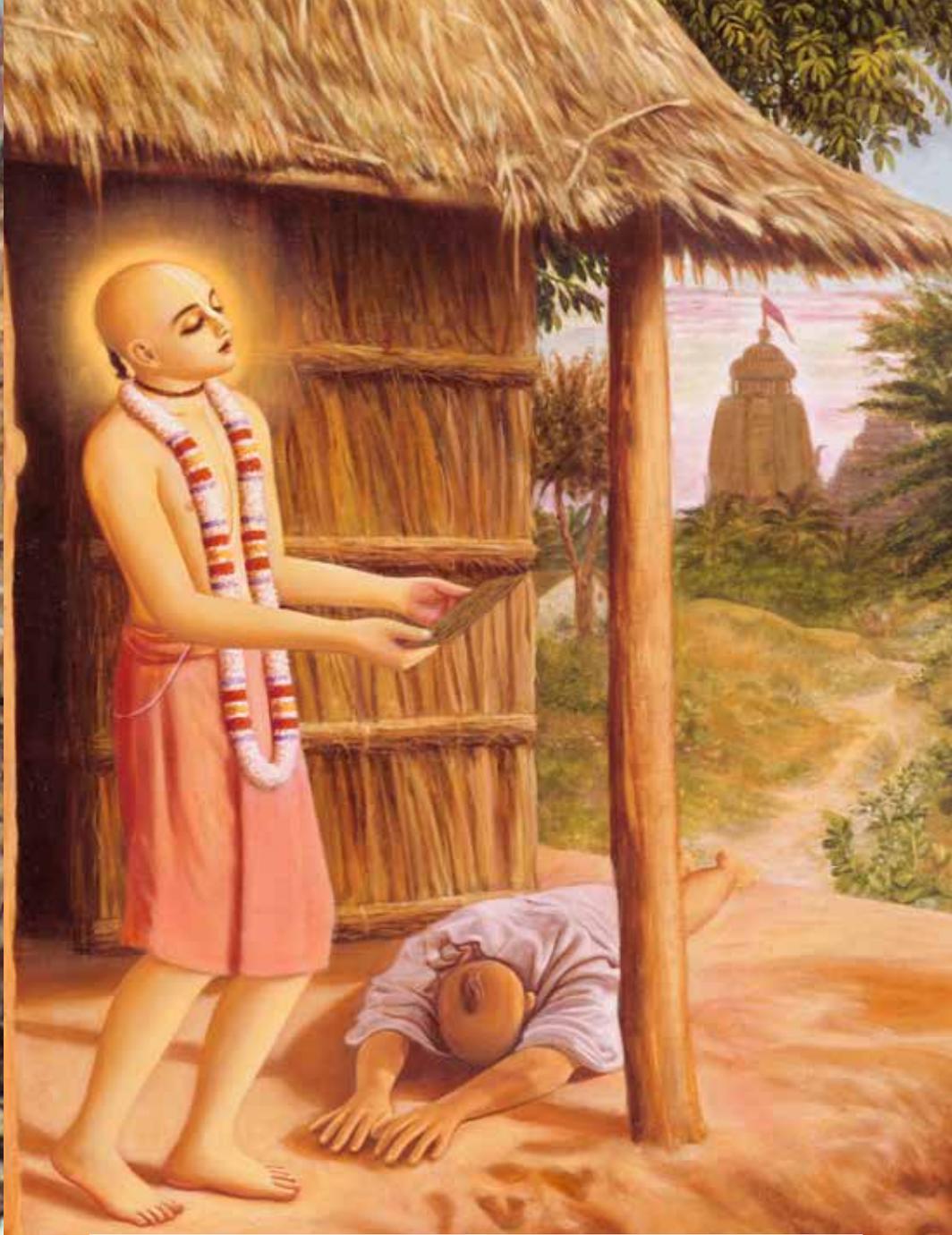
ŚRĪ BALADEVA



ŚRĪ SUBHADRĀ-DEVĪ



Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself began to dance. Having manifested Himself in seven forms, He danced and sang in each party simultaneously. A continuous stream of tears flowed from His eyes, and He danced with the same intense speed that Kṛṣṇa used to dance in His *rāsa-līlā*. (Page 75)



On that day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu saw the palm-leaf and read it. Meanwhile, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī returned and offered Śrīman Mahāprabhu prostrated obeisance. Having read that verse, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with *bhāva*. (Page 124)





The *gopīs* were extremely restless, being impatient to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and their life was just about to leave them. [...] The moment they saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they began to cry bitterly. They had never cried so much, even in Vraja, in separation from Him. Now, after waiting many years to meet Him, the *gopīs'* desire was finally being fulfilled. (Page 113)



THE FESTIVAL OF THE CHARIOTS





ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA ON HIS CHARIOT



ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA ENTERING
GUNDICĀ MANDIRA



ŚRĪ JAGANNĀTHA MANDIRA

Dedication

Published on the inspiration of śrī guru-pāda-padma

nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

that supremely rasika poet who has accepted exclusive shelter
of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who inaugurated Śrī Ratha-yātrā within
Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, and who, overwhelmed with bhāva,
eulogizes the moods of the separation of Vraja relished by
Śrīman Mahāprabhu at the time of Ratha-yātrā

Although this publication already belongs to him,
we offer it into his lotus hands.

Desiring the service of Śrī Hari, Guru, and Vaiṣṇavas
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa



Introduction

To the First Hindi Edition

By the causeless compassion and inspiration of my most worshipful *śrī guru-pāda-padma, nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja* and for his pleasure, *Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā* is being presented before the readers of the Hindi language. Because of this, I am experiencing boundless joy.

The festival of Ratha-yātrā is observed every year within Śrī Puruṣottama-dhāma, Śrī Jagannātha Purī, from the second day of the bright fortnight (*dvitīyā-tithi*) of the month of Āṣāḍha (June–July) up until the eleventh day of the bright fortnight (*ekādaśī-tithi*). That is nine days altogether. On the first day of this festival, the chariots of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrajī leave from Nilacala [Dvārakā] Śrī Jagannātha Mandira and journey to Sundarācala (Vṛndāvana) Guṇḍicā Mandira. Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrajī reside in Guṇḍicā Mandira for about seven days. On the ninth day, the day of the *śukla Ekādaśī* (the Ekādaśī in the waxing moon), the chariots are brought from Śrī Guṇḍicā Mandira back to Śrī Jagannātha Mandira.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu initiated the custom of cleaning Guṇḍicā Mandira the day before Ratha-yātrā, thereby making the festival last for ten days. During this time, festivals such as Netrotsava (or Aṅga-rāgotsava¹), Pāṇḍu-vijaya², Ratha-gamana³, Herā-pañcamī⁴, and many others are celebrated.

1 After Snāna-yātrā, the grand bathing ceremony of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadra, they become 'sick' for fifteen days. During this time, no one can have *darśana* of them. The day they again give their *darśana* is called Netrotsava (the festival of Jagannātha's opening His eyes) or Aṅga-rāgotsava (the festival of Jagannātha's body being painted). It takes place on the new moon, two days before Ratha-yātrā. – ed.

2 The tradition of bringing the deities from the temple and mounting them on their respective chariots. – ed.

3 The chariots moving from Śrī Jagannātha Mandira to Guṇḍicā Mandira. – ed.

4 Five days after Ratha-yātrā, Lakṣmī-devī leaves to search for Jagannātha. Also known as Śrī Lakṣmī-vijayotsava, the victory of Lakṣmī-devī. – ed.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has extensively described all these festivals and how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates would observe them.

Although the festival of Ratha-yātrā has been observed since ancient times, and although many different *sampradāyas* – even the *māyāvādīs* – gather for it, nevertheless, apart from the Śrī Gauḍīya *bhaktas*, almost everyone else is unaware of how Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has revealed its astonishing and profound secrets.

For the supreme welfare of the inhabitants of this world, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has recorded in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* an extremely moving account of all the moods and mysteries revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in relation to Ratha-yātrā. He did so on the basis of the diary of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī – an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu who directly witnessed all of His pastimes – and on the basis of the narrations that issued from the lotus lips of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

In the initial years of my spiritual life, I received the great fortune to hear about the deep secrets of Śrī Ratha-yātrā from the lips of my most worshipful *guru-pāda-padma*, *nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and from the many intimate disciples of Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who had taken full shelter of him.

On the basis of the narrations of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describing the divine, confidential moods relished by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, as well as the *hari-kathā* issued from the lotus mouth of those in our *guru-varga*, I touched on a few of the verses uttered by Śrīman Mahāprabhu during Ratha-yātrā in lectures I gave in Holland, 1997; in England, 1998; in France, England and Holland, 1999; in Wales, 2000; and in England, 2001 and 2002.

Śyāmarāṇī dāsī, with the help of other devotees, collected the recordings of these classes and had them printed in English as a book. Daughter Vṛndā (Vandanā), daughter Dr. Premamayī, and her mother Brajabālā-devī recognized the popularity of that book and translated its principle portions into the Hindi language. I gave that draft to

Śrīman Gokulapati dāsa Adhikārī for some necessary corrections and enhancements. He accomplished this work with great diligence and devotion. I then made some further corrections and improvements, and have prepared the book in this form, which is now before the eyes of the readers.

I pray at the feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu Śacīnandana Gaurahari and Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā-devī that They shower Their profuse mercy on all those who assisted in the publication of this book.

Only by understanding the deep moods of Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā can we properly come to know the purpose of the descent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is endowed with the moods and luster of Śrī Rādhā, and thus further understand what He wanted to confer upon the inhabitants of this world.

Through the three histories relating to Śrī Jagannātha's manifestation, the narrative of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's exhibition of affection for his devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*), the cleaning of the Guṇḍicā temple, the Ratha-yātrā festival itself, Śrīman Mahāprabhu's moods during Ratha-yātrā and Herā-pañcamī, the teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and the concluding words, this book provides many considerations useful for one's *bhajana-sādhana*.

I have firm faith that for the reader who continuously studies the topics in this book under the guidance of pure *bhagavad-bhaktas*, his heart will be infused with *vraja-bhakti*. Having understood the glories of the love-laden forms of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrājī, the reader will be able to receive qualification to enter the *prema-dharma* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

May the spiritually-inclined readers, by their own goodness, after having accepted the essence of this book, please forgive us and oblige us by correcting any typographical errors that may come into view. My only prayer is that those faithful persons who desire to attain the ultimate transcendental objective (*paramārtha*), after studying and performing *kīrtana* (repeating the contents) of this book, will proceed toward the supreme goal.

Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā

Alam-iti-vistāreṇa – Everything that needed to be said has now been expressed.

Śrī Nityānanda Trayodaśī

522 Śrī Caitanyābda

7 February, 2009

Praying for a particle of the mercy of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas,
Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

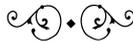
❧ Preface ❧

We forever offer our heartfelt obeisance at the divine lotus feet of our most worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva, *nityā-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda paramahansa aṣṭottara-śata śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*. By his causeless mercy and inspiration, we are able to offer to him this English translation of his Hindi edition of *Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā*.

Yearly, between 1997 and 2002, as he traveled the world, Śrīla Gurudeva would give English classes regarding Ratha-yātrā, coinciding with the time of the festival in Purī. These classes were transcribed and published in a book entitled, *The Origin of Ratha-yātrā*.

As described in the Introduction, in 2009, Śrīla Gurudeva had *The Origin of Ratha-yātrā* translated into Hindi. He adjusted the text to increase the focus on the moods and conceptions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu at the time of Ratha-yātrā. He added more text to some sections of the translation from English and removed text from other sections, publishing the new volume under the title of *Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā*. The book you now hold in your hands is a translation of that Hindi edition.

In presenting this book in English, our foundational text was *The Origin of Ratha-yātrā*, which we compared to the Hindi *Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā*. Where the English and Hindi text were similar, a fidelity check was done and the English text was adjusted. Where large portions of text were added, a translation was required. All footnotes are by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja except where otherwise noted.



On the basis of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Gurudeva has shown that understanding Ratha-yātrā in its deepest sense will fully nourish our aspiration to attain service to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and enrich our heart with an understanding of the beauty inherent in transcendental feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

We pray at his lotus feet that we shall one day embrace these teachings.

Aspiring to serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas

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• CHAPTER ONE •

— *Invocation Prayers and* —
a Brief Introduction to Ratha-yātrā —

*(om) ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
caksur unmilitam yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ*

I am blinded by the darkness of ignorance, but *śrī guru* has mercifully opened my eyes, anointing them with the salve of divine knowledge. I offer *praṇāma* to that *śrī gurudeva*.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

I offer *praṇāma* again and again unto the Vaiṣṇavas, who are saviors of the fallen, who are just like wish-fulfilling desire-trees, and who are oceans of mercy.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

I offer *praṇāma* to that greatly munificent Lord who bestows *kṛṣṇa-prema*. He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, who has assumed a golden complexion and accepted the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

*guruve gauracandrāya rādhikāyai tadālaye
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa bhaktāya tad-bhaktāya namo namaḥ*

I offer *praṇāma* to *śrī gurudeva*, Śrī Gauracandra, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and Her associates, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and the devotees of those devotees.

*bhaktyā vihīnā aparādha-lakṣaiḥ
kṣiptāś ca kāmādi-taraṅga-madhye
kṛpāmayi! tvām śaraṇaṁ prapannā
vrnde! namas te caraṇāravindam*

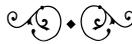
O merciful Devī, O Vṛndā, we offer *praṇāma* to your lotus feet. We are devoid of *hari-bhakti*, and therefore, due to hundreds and thousands of offenses, are being flung into the waves of the terrible ocean of lust, anger, and so on. For this reason, we take shelter of you.

*tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi na jīvāmi tvayā vinā
iti vijñāya devi (rādhe) tvaṁ naya mām caraṇāntikam
Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (96)*

O Svāminī Śrī Rādhe, I am Yours, I am Yours! I cannot live without You. Knowing this, please bestow the shelter of Your lotus feet.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vrnda*

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*



Every year, in the most holy city of Śrī Jagannātha Purī, located on the east coast of Orissa, the Ratha-yātrā festival of Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha is organized in accordance with traditional custom with great pomp. On this occasion, the temple servants bring the deities of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva and Their sister Śrī Subhadrā outside the temple and seat them each on huge chariots. Devotees pull these chariots and bring them to Guṇḍicā Mandira, where Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā take rest for one week. They then bring them back to Śrī Jagannātha Mandira.

**The external and confidential reasons
for Śrī Jagannātha Ratha-yātrā**

This custom of performing Ratha-yātrā has been prevalent since Satya-yuga. The narration of Ratha-yātrā has been described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*, *Padma Purāṇa*, *Puruṣottama-māhātmya*, *Śrī Jagannātha's Diary*, *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* by Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, and in the books of our other Gosvāmīs. The purpose of this Ratha-yātrā is to bestow good fortune upon those who are unable to enter the temple throughout the year, by giving them the opportunity to have *darśana* of Bhagavān. But this is just the external reason. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has revealed the deep secret behind Ratha-yātrā. Śrī Jagannātha Mandira is like Dvārakā, or Kurukṣetra, and Guṇḍicā Mandira represents Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa stayed in Vraja, where He exhilarated the Vrajavāsīs by His supremely sweet pastimes, from birth until eleven years of age. After that, He left with Akrūra for Mathurā. There He slayed Kāṁsa, thus liberating Śrī Vasudeva and Devakījī from Kāṁsa's atrocities. Upon Jarāsandha's repeated attacks on Mathurā, to protect its inhabitants, Kṛṣṇa took all of them to Dvārakā in the middle of the night.

Upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa's departure from Vraja, all the Vrajavāsīs became completely aggrieved in separation from Him. After many years, the Vrajavāsīs were reunited with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra, during a solar eclipse. Having met with Him, the *gopīs'* pain of separation from Him did diminish somewhat, but still, seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa there in royal attire and atmosphere, their hearts did not feel the same wonderful joy they used to feel when meeting with Him in His attire of a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana. During their reunion in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, topmost among all *gopīs*, said, "O Kṛṣṇa, our mind is Vṛndāvana. Stationed on the chariot of our heart, come with us to that Vṛndāvana, where Your most sweet, love-filled pastimes took place with us." Deeply moved by the *bhāvas* of Śrī Rādhājī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested these *bhāvas* at the time of Ratha-yātrā.

*The Well-known History
of the Appearance
of Lord Jagannātha and Ratha-yātrā*

The first history of the appearance of Lord Jagannātha and Ratha-yātrā is from Satya-yuga. The description in this chapter has been taken from the *Skanda Purāṇa* and *Puruṣottama-māhātmya*. Although there are minor differences in the details of these two descriptions, the main history is the same.

In Satya-yuga, within the ancient city of Avantī Nagarī in Ujjain, situated within middle-India, reigned a king named Indradyumna Mahārāja. Guṇḍicā was the name of his queen. The king and queen were *uttama-bhaktas* (topmost devotees) and thus very religious. Although they were childless, they did not lament; rather, they accepted it as the Lord's mercy. Their wealth and opulence were vast, yet they remained completely indifferent to mundane pleasures and were always engaged in the service of Bhagavān. In their heart, they strongly wanted to receive direct *darśana* of Bhagavān, and they passed their lives with the sole desire of attaining His mercy. They always used to pray in their heart, "When will that day come when we will directly receive *darśana* of our Lord?"

King Indradyumna would personally receive pilgrims from all over India and abroad, hosting them in the palace guesthouse. One night, some pilgrims arrived there to take rest. They had just come from an exalted holy place, having taken *darśana* of the extremely beautiful four-handed Nīla-mādhava, and were discussing among themselves the glories of that deity. A *brāhmaṇa* overheard their

conversation and informed the king's minister, who in turn told King Indradyumna, "O Mahārāja, last night some pilgrims were singing the glories of a deity who liberates from this miserable material existence anyone who has His *darśana*. Such a person never has to return to this mundane world, but will instead attain a four-armed form and become an associate of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha. What to speak of have *darśana* of this deity, even if someone vows, 'Tomorrow I will go to the temple of this deity to have *darśana* of Him,' but dies that very night, that person will still take a four-armed form and attain Vaikuṅṭha."

Hearing his minister's words, the king, full of delight, asked, "What is the name of this deity and where is He located? I too, along with my wife and subjects, will go to have *darśana* of Him.

The minister replied, "O King, the name of this deity of Bhagavān is Śrī Nīla-mādhava, but I do not know where He is located."

After hearing the wonderful glories of Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava from the lips of his minister, intense eagerness to have *darśana* of Him awoke within the king's heart. He began to think, "How will I be able to obtain *darśana* of Śrī Nīla-mādhava? Where is He located? Will those pilgrims tell us about Śrī Nīla-mādhava?" With many thoughts such as this, King Indradyumna became restless.

King Indradyumna said, "Quickly go and find out from those pilgrims the whereabouts of that deity."

When the minister reached the pilgrims' residence, he heard from other pilgrims who had stayed near them that they had already left in the night. He came before the king and conveyed everything to him. Having heard the report from the lips of his minister, the king became most perturbed and decided to personally search for the deity of Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava.

The endeavor to seek Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava

After calling Vidyapati, the very intelligent son of his priest, as well as his officials and commanders, King Indradyumna gave them an order to go in various directions to find the deity: "Some of you go to the east, others to the west, others south, and try to search everywhere

for Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava. It would be most excellent if any of you could find out about the deity; otherwise, if you are unable, then you should all return within three months. I will give vast wealth and an important position to whoever informs me about the deity.” After hearing these words of King Indradyumna, the officials enthusiastically set out in all directions. Vidyāpati, who was very young and handsome and who possessed all good qualities, set out toward the east.

All the officials and commanders returned unsuccessful after three months, but Vidyāpati did not return. The king became tormented with anxiety. There was nothing known about Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava, nor any message regarding Vidyāpati’s whereabouts. There was not even a person available who could give any information about this.

Meanwhile, Vidyāpati had come to the Indian Ocean on the east coast of India, where he constantly wandered about, fervently searching for the deity. One day, on the ocean shore, he saw an extremely enchanting village at the foot of a lush, green mountain that was covered with blossoming trees and flowers. The residents of that place were very cultured. Because evening was approaching, Vidyāpati decided to stay in that village. He said to the residents, “I would like to rest here tonight. Is there a suitable place for me to stay?”

The villagers replied, “Viśvāvasu is the prominent leader of this village. Although he is a *śabara* (from a lower caste), he is very qualified, religious-minded, intelligent, humble, and liberal. Whenever any traveler or guest comes, he visits the house of Viśvāvasu, so don’t hesitate to go there.”

When Vidyāpati reached Viśvāvasu’s house, he knocked on the door. Viśvāvasu’s very beautiful sixteen-year-old daughter, Lalitā, opened it and said, “My father is out now, but when he returns home, he will arrange everything for your stay. Kindly wait outside.”

After some time, Viśvāvasu arrived. A very sweet fragrance emanated from his body, and he was marked with beautiful and aromatic *tilaka*. When he saw his guest waiting outside, he became ashamed and told him, “Excuse me for returning so late. Please come inside.” He and his daughter brought their guest inside the house.

Upon seeing Vidyāpati's beautiful form and gentle nature, Viśvāvasu became very pleased and told him, "If you would like, you can stay here for some days." He told his daughter, "Take care of this *brāhmaṇa*. See that he has enough food, drink, and everything else he requires. There should be no lack of anything."

After taking his meal, Vidyāpati took rest. Previously, as he sat outside the house waiting for Viśvāvasu, a mind-enchancing fragrance had emanated from the house; upon Viśvāvasu's return, the fragrance intensified. Vidyāpati thought to himself, "Where does that enchanting fragrance come from? I have never in my entire life smelled anything like it. I should stay here for a few days. Maybe I can find out something about Nīla-mādhava." He thus remained there for a while, searching for Nīla-mādhava in various nearby places.

Having regularly served Vidyāpati for some days, Lalitā became attached to him. Vidyāpati's feelings for her also began to develop, and slowly, an intimate love for each other grew. Although he was already married, he had great affection for Lalitā and requested permission from Viśvāvasu to marry her. Viśvāvasu agreed to the marriage and he married them in that village.

Viśvāvasu used to go out every day. When he returned in the evening, he was jubilant, and that extraordinary fragrance came from his body. One day, Vidyāpati privately said to his wife, "My dear, now you are my wife, and I have full faith in you. Can you tell me where your father goes every day to perform worship, and where that astonishing fragrance comes from?"

Lalitā replied, "I cannot say. My father ordered me to not tell anyone. It is extremely confidential."

Vidyāpati said, "You cannot even tell me? You are my second half and non-different from me. I am your husband, so there should not be any secrets between us."

Lalitā said, "Then you must promise that you will never tell anyone."

Vidyāpati replied, "A wife should not have such doubts in her husband. I know you are a very chaste wife, so you will surely tell me." He then became silent.

“Okay. My father goes to worship a deity of Bhagavān.”

“Which deity?” Vidyāpati asked.

“I promised my father that I would not say, but I am telling you because you are my husband. My father goes to worship Nīla-mādhava.”

Upon hearing this, Vidyāpati became extremely joyful. “After such a long time,” he thought, “I am finally hearing the supremely sweet name of Nīla-mādhava. He must be somewhere nearby.”

Vidyāpati proceeded to show much affection to his wife, and Lalitā finally told him many things about Nīla-mādhava. Vidyāpati tenderly said, “O dearly beloved, request your father to take me with him one day.”

“I will certainly help you,” she said.

After her father returned from worship in the evening and had taken *prasāda*, Lalitā came to him and, with much love and affection, she said, “O revered Father, I want one benediction from you.”

“Daughter, what do you want?”

“I want something very special. I know that you will be hesitant to give it to me, but you must give it.”

“What do you want?” her father asked.

“O Father, my husband is extremely eager to see Nīla-mādhava. I want that you take him with you.”

Viśvāvasu became very grave and began to consider whether or not it was right that he take him. He knew that if he came for *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava with some unqualified person, the Lord would disappear. Fearing this, Viśvāvasu felt perturbed. Lalitā saw that he was not very willing and said, “If you do not take my husband to Nīla-mādhava for *darśana*, I will take poison and give up my life. Your objection means that you do not consider me dear to you.” Having said this, she prepared herself to take poison.

These are a lady’s most powerful weapons: “I will die,” “I will take poison,” “I will commit suicide.” What can a husband or father say? Of course he will say, “As you like, so it shall be.”

Viśvāvasu was drowning in the deep anxiety that if Nīla-mādhava somehow disappeared due to his taking an unqualified person to see

Him, how would he ever forgive himself? He was in a dilemma: on one side, there was his love for his daughter, and on the other side, his fear of separation from Nīla-mādhava. After much consideration, he said, “O daughter, I don’t want you to give up your life. I will certainly take your husband with me for *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava, but there is one condition. When we go, I will bind his eyes with a black cloth, removing it once we arrive so that he can have *darśana*. After *darśana*, I will again put the blindfold on him. In that way, he can have *darśana*, but will not know the whereabouts of Nīla-mādhava’s place of residence.”

Lalitā went to Vidyāpati and said, “Father has agreed to take you for *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava, but on the condition that he blindfolds you with a black cloth, so that you won’t be able to know of Nīla-mādhava’s place of residence. It seems to me, though, that there is no problem in this, because your interest is in taking *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava, not in how to get there.”

Hearing Lalitā’s words, Vidyāpati was overjoyed and was prepared to wear the blindfold. But in the night he said to Lalitā, “My dear, can you make a plan whereby one day I can again go for *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava, but alone?”

“I will think about it,” Lalitā said. “If any idea comes to me, I will certainly tell you.”

Vidyāpati’s *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava

The next morning, Lalitā discreetly gave Vidyāpati a small bundle of mustard seeds and quietly said to him, “Take this secretly with you. Drop the seeds one by one along the way. Since it is the rainy season, they will sprout and grow into beautiful yellow flowers. Then you will be able to follow the trail of flowers and go to Nīla-mādhava by yourself. You will not need to ask my father the way.” Pleased with Lalitā’s intelligence, he showed her much affection.

That day, as Viśvāvasu left to worship Nīla-mādhava, Lalitā said to him, “Father, please blindfold my husband and take him with you this very day.” Viśvāvasu sat Vidyāpati on the bullock cart and bound his eyes with a black cloth. Viśvāvasu took Vidyāpati along a zigzag route. Vidyāpati dropped the mustard seeds one by one, and Viśvāvasu knew

nothing of it. When they arrived at the foot of the mountain, Viśvāvasu left the bullock cart there. Taking Vidyāpati's hand, he led him to the temple of Nīla-mādhava atop the mountain. As soon as they entered the temple, Viśvāvasu removed the blindfold so that Vidyāpati could behold Nīla-mādhava.

The deity of Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava was four-handed. In His hands He held the *śankha* (conch), *cakra* (disc), *gadā* (club), and *padma* (lotus flower), and His form was extremely attractive, like that of Nārāyaṇa.

Vidyāpati, completely overjoyed, began to weep. "For such a long time, many months, I have been searching, and today, having received *darśana* of Śrī Nīla-mādhava, I am completely satisfied. My life is now successful."

Viśvāvasu told Vidyāpati, "Wait here for some time. I am going to the forest to bring some flowers and other paraphernalia. I shall then offer *candana* and other articles and perform *arcana*. Afterward, we will return home." Viśvāvasu then went to the forest.

While waiting for Viśvāvasu, Vidyāpati noticed a gorgeous lake, beautified with lotus flowers, adjacent to the temple. On the flowers bees were humming, and atop the trees birds were sweetly chirping. Hanging over the lake were the branches of a mango tree that was situated on its bank. On one of those branches, a black crow was sleeping. As Vidyāpati was watching this, the crow fell into the lake. Immediately upon falling in the water, the crow left his body and, before Vidyāpati's eyes, took a beautiful four-armed form. Vidyāpati saw that at that very moment, Garuḍa, the eagle carrier of Lord Viṣṇu, appeared there, placed that magnificent four-handed personality on his back and flew to Vaikuṅṭha.

"Oh!" Vidyāpati thought, "Without ever having practiced *bhakti*, this crow easily went to Vaikuṅṭha-loka. He never performed even one auspicious deed. Being an ordinary crow, a most impure bird, he ate flesh and other abominable things. Yet, simply by falling into this pond, he attained the topmost destination. Why, therefore, should I not give up this body right here and also go to Vaikuṅṭha?" Thinking such, he climbed the tree and was about to jump into the lake when an

aerial voice called to him, “Don’t commit suicide just so that you can be liberated and go to Vaikuṅṭha. You have many important services to perform for the benefit of the entire world. Be patient. When the time comes, you will be able to attain everything. Return to Mahārāja Indradyumna at once and inform him that Nīla-mādhava is here.”

In the meantime, Viśvāvasu returned with many flowers and other paraphernalia. During the *pūjā*, he called Vidyāpati to his side. Vidyāpati did not mention anything about the events that had occurred while Viśvāvasu was in the forest. Viśvāvasu prepared *candana* and other ingredients for the *pūjā*, and remained busy throughout the day in various devotional activities, such as worship and offering prayers, in service to Nīla-mādhava. Since Vidyāpati first heard the glories of Śrī Nīla-mādhava, he desired to have *darśana* of Him. And now, after directly seeing the glories of the Lord’s place of residence, he became very enchanted. Upon observing his father-in-law’s loving service to Nīla-mādhava, his heart blossomed with joy.

After the completion of the *pūjā*, Viśvāvasu again bound Vidyāpati’s eyes with the black cloth, and they headed homeward. After some hours, traveling again in a zig-zag way on the bullock cart, they arrived at the house. That night, Nīla-mādhava told Viśvāvasu in a dream, “O Viśvāvasu, you have served Me for so long, and I am extremely pleased with you. Still, I want to now receive the grand and royal service of a very high class devotee named Indradyumna Mahārāja. Do not be in anxiety and do not become distressed.”

When Viśvāvasu’s dream broke, however, he became agitated and began to think, “Bhagavān Śrī Nīla-mādhava will now go to Mahārāja Indradyumna? I cannot even imagine being away from Him. Although Nīla-mādhava said that I should not be in anxiety, how is that possible?” Viśvāvasu constantly contemplated this matter within his heart, but he never revealed Nīla-mādhava’s words in his dream to anyone.

A few days later, Vidyāpati mentioned that he would go to Avantī Nagarī. Viśvāvasu thought to himself, “Why does Vidyāpati suddenly desire to go to Avantī Nagarī? It could be that he will go and tell Mahārāja Indradyumna everything about Śrī Nīla-mādhava, and Mahārāja Indradyumna will come and forcibly take the deity with him.

Nīla-mādhava did tell me that He wanted to accept the grand, royal service of Mahārāja Indradyumna, but without Nīla-mādhava, I could not imagine living. What should I do? What is my duty?"

Thinking and thinking in this way, Viśvāvasu decided, "Why don't I stop Vidyāpati right now? If he cannot go to Mahārāja Indradyumna to tell him about Nīla-mādhava, then how will Mahārāja Indradyumna come to know of Him? For as long as possible, I will make Vidyāpati a prisoner and keep him right here." With these thoughts, Viśvāvasu somehow imprisoned Vidyāpati in one of the chambers of his house.

Vidyāpati, now confined within the house, said to Lalitā, "My dear, help me. I want to quickly return to my kingdom. I gave my word to King Indradyumna that I would return as soon as I found out the whereabouts of Bhagavān Nīla-mādhava. If you free me, I will immediately bring the king here with his family and again stay with you."

Lalitā agreed to help. "I will talk to my father right now," she said.

"If you do not release my husband from this prison," Lalitā said to her father, "then I will commit suicide at once," and she immediately made preparations to take her own life. Coming under the control of his love for his daughter, Viśvāvasu released Vidyāpati.

Now free, Vidyāpati assured his wife, "Don't worry, I will return very soon." He quickly left and proceeded towards Indradyumna's kingdom.

The disappearance of Śrī Nīla-mādhava

Vidyāpati walked continually without rest until he finally arrived back in Avantī Nagarī after six months. Presenting himself before Mahārāja Indradyumna, Vidyāpati informed him, "I have found Nīla-mādhava. Please come with me."

Upon hearing this, Mahārāja Indradyumna's joy knew no limits. With the intention of serving Nīla-mādhava for the rest of his life, the king set off for Nīlācala with his wife, wealth and opulence, subjects, and soldiers. His plan was to bring back Nīla-mādhava to his kingdom. Proceeding from Ujjain, he reached the village where Viśvāvasu's house was situated, about a hundred miles south of Purī. The mustard plants had grown, and their yellow flowers had blossomed. By means of the

path indicated by those plants, Vidyapati took King Indradyumna to the temple of Nīla-mādhava. But upon arrival, he saw that Bhagavān Nīla-mādhava was no longer there. King Indradyumna thought that Viśvāvasu must have certainly hidden the deity of Bhagavān Nīla-mādhava somewhere in the village. Thereafter, he surrounded the village on all sides with soldiers and confined all the *śabara* people, along with Viśvāvasu.¹

The king, dejected, began to weep. He sat down on a *kuśa* grass mat and faced the ocean. “I will not eat anything until I have had *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava,” he determined. “If I cannot have *darśana* of Him, I will give up my life. I have come with my whole kingdom, wealth, wife, and family to have *darśana* of Nīla-mādhava, but I did not get it. I should end my life.” Meditating on the Lord, he began to cry out, “*Hā* Nīla-mādhava! *Hā* Nīla-mādhava! *Hā* Nīla-mādhava!”

Just then, an aerial voice called to him, “O King, release the *śabara* people. I will not give you *darśana* in the form of Nīla-mādhava in this world, but will manifest in four forms: Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā, and Sudarśana *cakra*. Wait by Bāṅki-mūhāṇa², which is situated near the ocean. I will come in the ocean there in the form of *dāru-brahma* (the Supreme Lord in the form of wood). I will manifest in the form of a very large, fragrant, reddish log, which will be marked everywhere with the signs of the conch, disc, club, and lotus (indications of the Supreme Lord). Upon taking My form of *dāru-brahma* from the ocean, have four deities made from that log of wood. Then, placing them in a temple, perform worship of them.”

Upon hearing these instructions, the king had an enormous, beautiful temple constructed for the installation of the deities of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, Śrī Subhadrā and Sudarśanaḥ. On top of the temple was a water-pot (*kalāśa*) upon which a disc (*cakra*) was installed.

1 The details of these histories differ according to different ages (*kalpas*) and are therefore sometimes told differently. Also, when King Indradyumna confined the *śabara* community, he simply wanted to ensure he received *darśana* of the deity of Nīla-mādhava. He also wanted others to have this *darśana*, which is evident in his later construction of the Jagannātha and Guṇḍicā Mandiras. – ed.

2 At present, this place is known as Cakra-tīrtha.

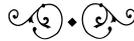
Mahārāja Indradyumna then went to Brahma-loka (the abode of Lord Brahmā, the creator of the universe) with the desire that Śrī Brahmā perform the temple installation, but he had to wait for Lord Brahmā for a very long time. When finally he received *darśana* of Brahmāji, the king introduced himself and also told him about the aerial voice. Mahārāja Indradyumna prayed, “O Prabhu, Śrī Jagannāthadeva will manifest at any time, so it is my request that you kindly come with me as quickly as possible and perform the temple installation.”

Brahmāji agreed with Indradyumna Mahārāja’s words and said, “Mahārāja, we should go to the specific place the Lord has designated and wait for Him.”

The manifestation of the deities

When Mahārāja Indradyumna went to Lord Brahmā, the huge temple he had constructed became completely covered by sand.

Once, another king named Gāla-mādhava was passing by that site. As his horse galloped along, it trod on something sharp and fell, which also resulted in injury to the king. He ordered his soldiers, “Find out what lies buried here.” Following the king’s instructions, the soldiers removed the sand and saw the peak of a temple sticking out. When this became known to King Gāla-mādhava, he was overjoyed and ordered his multitude of workers to remove the sand from that site and clean the temple. Although after much effort they all cleaned the temple and removed all the sand, the temple still had the appearance of ruins. King Gāla-mādhava then restored the temple and declared, “This temple was constructed by me.”



Now, when Mahārāja Indradyumna returned to Earth, thousands of years had passed [as time in Brahma-loka passes much more slowly than it does on Earth], and everything had changed. When he arrived at the temple, he came to know that some other king had claimed full proprietorship of it. Mahārāja Indradyumna approached King Gāla-mādhava and told him, “This temple does not belong to you.

It was I who had it constructed.” When King Gāla-mādhava demanded evidence, a crow named Kākabhuṣaṇḍī, who had been present there at the time of construction, declared this to be true.

Brahmāji also supported this. “Mahārāja Indradyumna has indeed built the temple,” he said. “You have only repaired it.”

Hearing words spoken by such authoritative sources, King Gāla-mādhava accepted Mahārāja Indradyumna’s claim and gave all proprietorship to him.

Somehow, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, King Indradyumna’s queen Guṇḍicā was still on Earth at that time. Mahārāja Indradyumna, his queen Guṇḍicā, and his subjects waited by the seashore at Bāṅki-mūhāṇa. Finally, one day, a reddish tree trunk, marked with the signs of conch, disc, club, and lotus, became visible. Mahārāja Indradyumna, with the help of his soldiers and elephants, endeavored to take the tree trunk from the water, but they were unsuccessful. His many elephants, strong men, and entire army combined were incapable of doing this.

Again, they heard an aerial voice: “Call for My old servant Dayitāpati Viśvāvasu, his daughter, and his son-in-law, Vidyāpati. From one side Viśvāvasu will carry Me, and the *brāhmaṇa* Vidyāpati and his wife Lalitā will carry Me from the other. Bring a golden chariot for Me. I will come out of the water easily. Then arrange to make the deities and install Them.”

Viśvāvasu, Lalitā, and Vidyāpati were still alive by the will and power of Nīla-mādhava. They were all brought there with honor. Mahārāja Indradyumna had a golden chariot constructed. He requested Viśvāvasu, Vidyāpati, and Lalitā to go into the water to take out the tree trunk. All three thought themselves incapable of lifting the trunk and began to pray in a voice filled with distress, “Jaya Jagannātha! Jaya Jagannātha! Jaya Nīla-mādhava! Jaya Nīla-mādhava! O please shower us with Your compassion and mercifully come upon our chariot.”

By the mercy of Bhagavān Nīla-mādhava, the three of them easily lifted the tree trunk and placed it on the golden chariot. After that, it was brought from Bāṅki-mūhāṇa to a place situated just a little distance from the present temple of Śrī Jagannātha. The king kept the tree trunk in a large chamber and summoned all the famous sculptors

of Orissa. He told them, “Whoever makes deities from this tree trunk will be entitled to an interminable amount of wealth and opulence.”

Renowned sculptors came forward to make the deity, but as soon as their ordinary iron tools touched the log, which was even harder than iron, the tools broke into pieces. Then, an elderly but beautiful *brāhmaṇa* came forward. He also had some tools with him. He said, “My name is Mahārāṇā. I am an expert sculptor, and I can certainly make the deities.” The truth was that Nīla-mādhava – or Jagannātha-deva Himself – had appeared in the form of that elderly *brāhmaṇa*. “I will make the deities in twenty-one days,” he said, “but you must give your word that until then, the door of this room will remain closed. Only I will remain inside, with my tools. After twenty-one days I will open the door, then all of you can have *darśana* of the deities and situate them in the temple, where you can serve and worship them. If anyone opens the door prior to this, I will immediately leave the work unfinished.”

Hearing this, the king replied, “Yes, I will definitely follow your instructions.”

The *brāhmaṇa* took his tools and entered the chamber, closing the door from inside. For fourteen days no sound was heard. Indradyumna Mahārāja became concerned. “For fourteen days the *brāhmaṇa* has not eaten anything or drunk even a drop of water,” he thought. “Could his life have left, by chance?”

The king’s prime minister advised him, “O Mahārāja, please do not open the door right now. There must certainly be a mysterious reason for this. You should open the door only after the twenty-one days are complete.”

The king’s wife, however, insisted, “If he dies because you have not opened the door, we will be guilty of *brahma-hatyā* (killing a *brāhmaṇa*). Please, open it immediately.”

Although Mahārāja Indradyumna was apprehensive about transgressing the order of a *brāhmaṇa*, because of his queen’s continuous pleading, he had the door forcibly opened by his soldiers and entered the room.

Inside, the king became completely struck with wonder, for he could not see the *brāhmaṇa*. The four deities – Jagannātha, Baladeva,

Subhadrā, and Sudarśana *cakra* – were there, but they were in an incomplete state. Their eyes and nose were only round shapes, their arms were half-length, and their hands and feet were incomplete.

According to another account, perhaps in the pastimes in another universe, when the king opened the door, he saw the *brāhmaṇa* inside. The *brāhmaṇa* said, “Only fourteen days have passed. Why did you open the door right now? I needed another seven days to complete the deities. Well, it must have been the will of Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha-deva Himself, otherwise, you could not have entered, and I would have been able to complete the deities without any interruption.” Saying this, the *brāhmaṇa* sculptor disappeared.

At that time, the king and his subjects realized that this was not any ordinary *brāhmaṇa* sculptor, but Śrī Jagannātha-deva Himself. Seeing the incomplete deities of Bhagavān, Mahārāja Indradyumna began to weep and related his heart’s affliction to his prime minister. “By breaking my promise, I have committed a heinous offense. It is only right for me to give up my life.”

Just then, Bhagavān instructed the king through His aerial voice, “Do not worry. I personally wanted to manifest in this form, and there is a deep and mysterious reason for this. Install these deities in the temple in these very forms. The sons of Vidyāpati’s *brāhmaṇa* wife will share performance of My worship among them, and the sons of his *śabara* wife will prepare many varieties of preparations. The *dayitās* of Viśvāvasu’s village and his dynasty will serve Me during the ten days of the Ratha-yātrā festival. Those *dayitās* alone will seat Śrī Baladeva, Subhadrā-devī, and Me on our respective chariots and bring us to the Guṇḍicā temple. Every year, during the days of Ratha-yātrā, make grand arrangements for Herā-pañcamī and other festivals.”

Then, in accordance with the order of Śrī Jagannātha, the king brought the deities into the temple and prayed to Lord Brahmā, “O Brahmā, without further delay, please perform the installation of Bhagavān and Bhagavān’s temple, so that we may be able to regularly perform *arcana* and *pūjā* (worship) according to scriptural regulations.”

Brahmā said, “I do not have the capacity to install deities of the Lord that manifested themselves, but I will certainly install a flag atop

this temple. If any person sees this flag and offers obeisance to it, even from afar, he will immediately and easily attain salvation.” Saying this, Lord Brahmā established the flag on top of the temple’s *cakra*. After that, the routine worship of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, Śrī Subhadrā, and Śrī Sudarśana commenced.

One day, Mahārāja Indradyumna said to Śrī Jagannātha-deva, “O Bhagavān, I want to ask You for a benediction. My desire is that the doors of Your temple remain closed for just one *prahara* (three hours) a day, so everyone can receive as long a *darśana* of You as possible.”

Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha cleverly said, “Then, there must always, at all times, be something for Me to eat, in order to keep sleepiness at bay.”

As soon as Mahārāja Indradyumna heard this, his voice choked up and he said, “*Aho bhāgya, aho bhāgya!* – Oh, how fortunate I am, how fortunate I am! O Lord, I promise that all throughout the day You will be served varieties of foodstuffs. Your lotus hands will never be dry.”

Then, Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha gave a benediction to Mahārāja Indradyumna: “Do whatever you please. I have no objection. But in asking for this benediction you have made a request for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the world. I want that you take a benediction for yourself.”

The king said, “So that no one person can claim Your temple to be their treasure, I ask for the benediction that I be without a dynasty. If I have descendants, then after I leave this world they will fight among themselves over my wealth and will have no attraction to serving You. They will think themselves the proprietors of the wealth gathered for Your service. I do not want any person from my dynasty to think, ‘This temple is my treasure. Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā are under my authority. The money coming from donations to the temple is for my enjoyment.’ If anyone misuses the wealth obtained for the service of Bhagavān, he surely goes to hell. Managers should perform their duty in a mood of service, and they should understand that the money they have for Bhagavān is only in their safekeeping.”

This entire pastime [of the manifestation of the wonderful forms of Śrī Jagannātha] was a result of Queen Guṇḍicā’s prayers. For this reason, the name of the temple in which Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva,

and Śrī Subhadrāṅī take rest for one week during Ratha-yātrā is Guṇḍicā Mandira. In this way, on Śrī Jagannātha-deva's order, a grand Ratha-yātrā festival is orchestrated every year.

During Ratha-yātrā, the *dayitās* of Viśvāvasu's village bring the deities from the temple, seat them on the chariots, and serve them for the ten days of the festival. The descendants coming from Lalitā are known as *supakāras*. Although they are born in a low caste family, Śrī Jagannātha entrusted them with the responsibility of cooking the *bhoga*. These *supakāras* are so expert in cooking that they cook a hundred *manas*³ of rice, *dāl*, and other preparations all at once.

At the time of Candana-yātrā, Śrī Jagannātha's entire body is smeared with sandalwood paste. The *vijaya-vigraha* (smaller deity taken out on processions during festivals), known by the name Śrī Madana-mohana, performs boat pastimes at that time. After that, on Snāna-yātrā, water is brought in thousands of water-pots from all the holy places in India. This water is used to perform the *abhiṣeka* (grand bathing ceremony) of the three deities. Due to being bathed with so much water, Bhagavān performs the pastime of becoming sick. At that time, Lakṣmī-devī takes Bhagavān into her palace and closes the door for fifteen days, in order to rejuvenate Him.

In the above-mentioned history of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's appearance, it is still unclear why He desired to appear in an incomplete deity form. This mystery will be described in the following chapters.

3 One *mana* (the Anglicized name is 'maund') is a traditional unit of mass used in British India. It is approximately 37 kilograms, or 82 pounds. – ed.

The First Secret
behind the Deities' Manifestation
in an Incomplete Form

The Gosvāmīs, coming in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, have described in their respective literatures the reason behind Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha-deva's manifestation in an incomplete form. A full written description of this is not available anywhere. It only manifests within the heart of the topmost devotees (*uttama bhaktas*), who are recipients of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy. In his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has given a partial description of the reason for Jagannātha's manifestation in an incomplete form. An account of this is given herein.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa took birth in Gokula as the son of Śrī Nanda and Śrīmatī Yaśodā. In Mathurā, He manifested before Devakī and Vasudeva as a youth of sixteen years; He did not take birth as a baby. On His body was a golden *pitāmbara*, He was decorated with sparkling golden ornaments, on His head a golden crown glittered, and His hair was wavy and long. And because He was in His four-armed form, His lotus hands held a conch, disc, club, and lotus.

In Gokula, on the other hand, He took birth from the womb of Yaśodā as a baby with two arms, along with His younger sister. He is fully the son of none other than Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā. Various places [in the scriptures] describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa as being the son of Vasudeva and Devakī, but the Vrajavāsīs dismiss this idea. Because Kṛṣṇa took birth in Vraja and the umbilical cord was cut there, how could the Vrajavāsīs ever believe that He took birth in Mathurā? It is accepted that He only appeared in Mathurā [but did not take birth there].

In Vraja, at the time of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birth, all the Vrajavāsīs, brimming with joy, gathered together in Nanda Bhavana. The flow of well-wishers was unbroken and unending. In bliss, due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birth, Nanda Bābā freely distributed cows, cloth, ornaments, wealth, and grains in such profusion that even Kuvera, the presiding demigod of wealth, could not have distributed as much. Despite Nanda Bābā's doing so, his wealth did not diminish.

Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā brought Śrī Kṛṣṇa up with much love and tenderness. In Vraja, many sweet pastimes took place, such as Kṛṣṇa's stealing of butter, being bound to the grinding mortar, grazing the cows, playing with the *sakhās*, lifting Govardhana Hill, and performing the *rāsa* dance. There, He killed Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura, Bakāsura, and so many other demons.

After some time, Akrūra came to Vṛndāvana and said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladevajī, "Kāṁsa has imprisoned Your father and mother, Vasudeva and Devakī, and he wants to kill them. Therefore, come with me to Mathurā and protect them."

Kṛṣṇa replied, "My mother and father are Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā, but nonetheless, Vasudevajī is a friend of My father, so it is My duty to protect them."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Balarāma went with Akrūra to Mathurā, and there They killed Kāṁsa, released Devakī and Śrī Vasudeva from prison, and returned Mathurā's throne to Ugrasena. Devakī and Vasudeva considered Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as their sons. Kāṁsa had imprisoned and tortured Devakī and Vasudeva for many years. For this reason, with the intention of bringing happiness to Devakī and Vasudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to live in Mathura.

Due to Jarāsandha's repeated attacks on Mathurā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma brought all Mathurā's inhabitants to Dvārakā in just one night. There, Śrī Kṛṣṇa married 16,108 princesses, making them His queens. Each and every queen gave birth to ten sons and one daughter.

Illuminating the glories of the gopīs through Śrī Nārada

Once, Śrī Nāradaḥ was wandering throughout various realms, wanting to know who the topmost devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is. In the

course of his doing so, he arrived in Dvārakā. Prior to this, he had successively visited Indra, Brahmā, Śivajī, Prahlaḍa and Hanumān, and then came to the Pāṇḍavas in Indraprastha. The Pāṇḍavas told him that even they are not as dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the inhabitants of Dvārakā. The inhabitants of Dvārakā are Kṛṣṇa's own kinsmen; some are His fathers, some are His mothers, some are His brothers, and some are His sons and other relatives. After hearing the Pāṇḍavas' words, Śrī Nārada came to Dvārakā. First, he entered the palace of Rukmiṇī-devī. There he saw Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Jāmbavatī, Mitravindā, and Nāgnajiti along with nearly all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's other queens. Śrī Nārada addressed them, saying, "All of you are very fortunate, because you have the opportunity to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You are the topmost beloveds of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His queens. In the entire world, you are the most praiseworthy persons. I offer my *praṇāma* unto you."

Hearing Śrī Nārada's words, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā became desolate and said, "O best of *munis*, why are you mocking us? You are needlessly glorifying us, because we know that, even after fifty years of marriage, we could never please Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even though we are most beautiful and expert in all the arts, we are unable to satisfy Him."

Rukmiṇī said, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa only ever thinks of the *gopīs*. When He sleeps on my bed in my room, He cries constantly. Sometimes in His dreams, He weeps and clutches my veil, saying, 'O Rādhikā, where are You? I cannot remain alive without You! O Lalitā, where are you?' Sometimes, remembering Yaśodā, He weeps piteously and cries, 'Where are you, Maiyā? I'm hungry. Sit Me on your lap and feed Me *mākhan-miśrī* (fresh butter with rock-candy).' Sometimes He calls His *sakhās*, 'O Śrīdāma! Subala! Madhumaṅgala! Where are you? I cannot live without you. It's time to herd the cows. Quickly come!' And sometimes He remembers His cows and calls out, 'O Śyāmālī, O Dhavalī, O Kālindī, O Gaṅgā, O Piśaṅgī! Where are you all?' He laments in this way all night long, and the entire bed becomes soaked with His tears. This has not just happened once. It is like this every day. Who we are or where we are does not even come in the path of His remembrance. We are His queens in name only. His heart remains

only in Vraja. Therefore, we always feel extremely dejected, because we have not been able, at any time, to become truly dear to Him. If we had, He would also call out the names, 'Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā!' and so on, like He does with the *gopīs*. But He never remembers us in this way."

Satyabhāmā said, "O *sakhī*, what you say is true. Just last night He wept and pulled at my *sārī*, saying, 'O Rādhā, O Rādhā!' and fell unconscious. I could not think of any way to console Him. We are His wives, so what is the mystery behind this? Even though we are most beautiful and proficient in all the arts, we cannot please Him. I want to know how we can satisfy Him."

Just then, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu's mother, Śrī Rohiṇī-devī entered the room. Although she was the wife of Vasudeva, out of fear of Kāṁsa, she had lived in Vraja, even prior to Baladeva's birth, and she remained in Vraja until Kāṁsa was slain. Along with Mother Yaśodā, she had lovingly raised Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Baladeva, and she had directly experienced the Vrajavāsīs' love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When she entered, all the queens rose, offered her *praṇāmas* and, with much honor, offered her a seat.

When she ascended that sitting place, the queens gathered around her and asked, "O Mother, we know that you have lived in Vraja since Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva's very childhood. You know the *gopīs* very well. How did the *gopīs*, Mother Yaśodā, and the other Vrajavāsīs love Śrī Kṛṣṇa to such an extent that, even now, He is controlled by their love? We want to know the glories of Vraja. We want to understand the depth of the Vrajavāsīs' *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, by which He can never forget them. Although we have been serving Him continuously for fifty years, our love is not able to control Him. He always calls out to the *gopīs*, saying, 'Rādhe, Rādhe! Viśākhe, Viśākhe! Lalite, Lalite!' but He never inquires about us in any way. He never even considers that He is in Dvārakā with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Why is this? What is this speciality of the *gopīs*? Their wealth is not equivalent to ours, nor do they have the same ornaments studded with gold, diamonds, and pearls. They only wear ornaments made of flowers. In Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally took the cows for grazing, but in Dvārakā He is the king

of kings. Why then does He always think of the Vrajavāsīs and no one else? Why has He given His heart to the *gopīs*? Do they know a special *mantra* to control Him? What is that speciality in the *gopīs* by which they have gained sole proprietorship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart? You must certainly know the glories of the love of the *gopīs* and Vrajavāsīs, so please tell us something.”

As soon as she remembered her *sakhī* Yaśodā and the Vrajavāsīs, Rohiṇī became very moved and began to weep. She cried for some time. When her heart felt somewhat lighter, though her mood still grave, she began to describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja.

Kāṁsa's mother, Padmāvati, then arrived. She was more than a hundred years old, her body was hunched and she only managed to walk with the help of a stick. As soon as she heard about the *gopīs*, she said angrily, “Any discussion about the *gopas* and *gopīs* is futile. They are extremely wicked, cruel, and miserly. To protect Kṛṣṇa from Kāṁsa, Vasudeva left Kṛṣṇa in the care of Nanda in Gokula. There, Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva were not properly nurtured. Yaśodā only thought of Kṛṣṇa as someone else's child, and for this reason, she never fed Kṛṣṇa enough milk to fill His belly. When He was hungry, He was therefore forced to steal butter from others' homes. If He was caught stealing, then that hard-hearted Yaśodā would bind Him with ropes and scare Him by showing Him a stick. At that time, terrified, He would cry, pleading, 'Don't beat Me!'

“At the age of five years, when all boys go to *gurukula* in order to acquire an education, Nanda and Yaśodā began sending Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva out into the forest to tend cows. On top of that, They weren't even given shoes to protect Their feet from the thorns and stones on the forest floor, nor were They given so much as an umbrella to protect Themselves from the sun and rain. For seven years, from sunrise till sunset, They grazed the cows; in return, all They got were a few clothes. I think that we should call Gargācārya and have him accurately calculate how much payment Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva should have received for grazing those cows, and also, how much money Nanda actually spent on Them. If it were Nanda who spent more money, then my generous-hearted husband will pay Nanda double that sum,

plus interest. And if Nanda did not give enough and we are to take from him, then we will be compassionate and say to him, ‘We don’t need you to give anything.’”

After hearing Padmāvati’s words, Rohiṇī became furious. “I know what kind of chaste wife you are.¹ You will never, ever, be able to even begin to estimate the glories of the Vrajavāsīs’ *prema*.” Padmāvati, contorting her face in anger, left that place.

Rohiṇī’s description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Vraja pastimes

Rohiṇī then ordered Subhadrā to sit at the doorway and not allow anyone else to come inside. She gravely proceeded to tell the queens of Dvārakā about the moods (*bhāvas*) of the Vrajavāsīs. “The Vrajavāsīs have such profound *prema* for Kṛṣṇa that, without Him, they cannot even maintain their life. For them, just one moment of separation from Kṛṣṇa seems equal to one *yuga*. When Putanā took six-day-old Kṛṣṇa and flew into the sky, Yaśodā felt that her life left with Kṛṣṇa, and she fell unconscious. Only by Kṛṣṇa’s touch did she regain consciousness. The elder *gopīs* loved Kṛṣṇa even more than they did their own sons. What to speak of the *gopīs*, even the cows of Vraja would not feed their calves milk without seeing Kṛṣṇa. The trees and creepers, worms and insects, animals and birds, and even the rivers, lakes and mountains, loved Kṛṣṇa.

“On the pretext of stealing fresh butter (*mākhan*) from the homes of the *gopīs*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would actually go to steal their heart. The *gopīs* would bring out sweet butter and eagerly wait for when He would go to their house to steal it. Then, on the pretext of making a complaint, they would go and tell Yaśodā of Kṛṣṇa’s butter-stealing pastimes. One day, Kṛṣṇa stole butter from His very own home, and Yaśodā caught hold of Him. ‘Kanhaiyā! Did you eat butter?’ she asked.

“Kṛṣṇa casually said, ‘*Maiyā, mai nahī mākhana khāyo* – Mother, I did not eat butter.’”

¹ Although Padmāvati was Ugrasena’s wife, Karṇa was not Ugrasena’s son. In her youth, Padmāvati was once playing with her friends on the banks of the Yamunā when she was seduced by a demon named Kāmuka Drumila, resulting in the birth of Karṇa. Therefore, in order to somehow get rid of Padmāvati, who was insulting Yaśodā, Mother Rohiṇī became angry, reminding her of this incident.

“Hearing this, Yaśodā said, ‘Well, how did You get butter on Your face?’

“‘My friends forcibly rubbed it on Me. I go to graze cows from sunrise till sunset. When do I have any time to steal butter? And you are calling Me a thief, only because I am not your son. I am going somewhere else.’

“Yaśodā’s heart broke, and she wept bitterly. She immediately held Kṛṣṇa to her bosom and soaked Him with her tears. Milk started to flow from her breasts, and she continuously wept, saying, ‘O Kanhaiyā, You did not eat the butter.’

“Kṛṣṇa wiped Yaśodā’s tears and, smiling, said, ‘*Maiyā, maine hī mākhana khāyo* – Mother, I really did eat butter.’”

While Rohiṇī was describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *vraja-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was in His Sudharmā Assembly Hall, deliberating on affairs of the State with Mahārāja Ugrasena, Vasudeva, Balarāma, and His ministers. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is all-knowing (*sarvajña*), and He therefore knew that Rohiṇī-devī was describing His Vraja pastimes at that time.

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sweet Vraja pastimes were being spoken in Rukmiṇī’s palace, how could He stay away? He left the Sudharmā hall and quickly reached the doors of Rukmiṇī’s palace. Balarāma, understanding Kṛṣṇa’s feelings, also speedily came there, behind Him. Subhadrā was guarding the door, and so that the narrations would not be interrupted, she stopped her two brothers from entering. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Subhadrā, pressed their ears against the door and began to relish the *rasa*-filled narrations being spoken inside. Rohiṇī-devī was saying, “One day, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma said to Yaśodā, ‘Mother, we want to take the cows out to graze. We are *gopas* and this is our practice, so please give us permission to go.’

“Mother Yaśodā said, ‘We have many servants in our palace, and they can adequately tend the cows. Also, Kānhā, Your feet are so soft that You won’t be able to walk on the thorny, rocky forest path. And Your body is soft like butter, so how will You tolerate the fierce heat of the sun? Just stay at home and be happy.’

“Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma repeatedly begged for her permission to do this, and finally she said, ‘Okay, You can take the calves out to graze nearby, but only in Vṛndāvana. You must come home after a short while.’

“Yaśodā then brought beautiful shoes and umbrellas for Them, but Kṛṣṇa said, ‘For Us, these calves are worshipful. Only because of them do the cows give milk. If you want to give Us shoes, then first, please have four shoes made for each calf. Bring umbrellas for each of them also. Only then will I accept shoes and an umbrella. I do not want to be the master of the cows and calves. I am a *gopa* and want only to be their servant.’

“When Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and the *sakhās* began to take the calves out into the forest, Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā started to walk with Them. In separation from their children, they felt anxious at heart, as they feared that They may fall prey to harm. Kṛṣṇa would tell them time and again to return home, and they would stop for a few moments, only to again to follow behind Them. Kṛṣṇa would then console them, saying, ‘Mother, do not worry. There are no thorns or rocks remaining anywhere on the path swept by the tails of the *camarī* cows (yaks) wandering throughout the forest. I will sit only in the shade of dense trees along the banks of the Yamunā and watch the grazing calves, and when it is time to return home, I will play My *veṇu* flute to gather them together. This will not be difficult for Me; rather, it will make Me so happy.’

“But even after hearing this, Nanda Bābā and Mother Yaśodā continued to walk with Them. Kṛṣṇa then said, ‘I promise you that I will return soon.’ Upon hearing this, Nanda and Yaśodā stopped right there and watched Kṛṣṇa walk into the forest. When Kṛṣṇa was out of sight, they returned to Nanda Bhavan, full of despair, just like a person who has become penniless, having lost the wealth he has obtained.”

Rohiṇī-devī continued, “Kṛṣṇa used to go to play in the forest with His *sakhās* on the pretext of grazing calves. Whenever Kṛṣṇa would move ahead of the *sakhās*, they would run to catch up with Him and would race to see who would touch Him first. At noontime, Kṛṣṇa would sit for lunch in the middle of all the *sakhās*, who would sit in circle after circle around Him. Opening up their lunch bags, the boys would bring Him the tastiest preparations. ‘O Kānhā, eat this and see what yummy things my mother has made.’ In this way, the *sakhās* would feed Kṛṣṇa their remnants and Kṛṣṇa would relish them with great love.

“In Dvārakā,” she said to the queens, “you all see Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān. Sometimes, you even have *darśana* of His four-armed form, but the Vrajavāsīs never, ever consider Kṛṣṇa to be Bhagavān. They only think of Him as their son, friend or beloved, a simple, innocent cowherd boy. In Vraja, Kṛṣṇa wears the attire of a *gopa*, a peacock feather adorns His turban (*paṇḍī*), and around His neck is a *vaijayanti-mālā*, a garland containing flowers of five different colors. When He places the flute to His lips and strikes up a sweet melody, the Vrajavāsīs forget about all their activities and become lost in the sweet musical sounds of the *veṇu* flute. The nature of all moving beings – birds and animals, worms and insects, and human beings – changes, as does the nature of non-moving beings. Rivers become stunned and stop flowing, and rocks begin to melt. The sound of the *veṇu* flute has an indescribable effect on the *gopīs*.”

The glory of the *gopīs*' *prema*

(Mother Rohiṇī's glorification of the *vraja-gopīs*' *prema* is briefly included within the narration of *Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. A more complete explanation is given here in detail to describe the moods relished by Śrīman Mahāprabhu during Ratha-yātrā)

Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Candrāvalī, and the other damsels of Vraja are the same age as Kṛṣṇa, and they had played with Him freely since childhood. For this reason, Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* have a deep affection (*anurāga*) for each other. In their childhood, the *gopīs* could not remain for even a moment without Kṛṣṇa, but as they grew older, a sense of shyness and so forth began to manifest within them. Moreover, by their marriage to someone other than Kṛṣṇa, they became others' wives (*para-vadhu*); and for them, Kṛṣṇa became a paramour (*para-puruṣa*).

Despite the increasing love between the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa in their youth, meeting each other became rare. At first the *gopīs* did not display their feelings, as they feared dishonor for their family, public shame, and their elders. Yet, upon hearing the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, they forgot they were bound by these things, and they were no longer capable of

hiding the deep *anurāga* within their heart. They gathered together and began to describe the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's *veṇu* flute. And upon beginning their description of His beautiful three-fold bending form, His curved movements, crooked glance, gentle smile, and so on, a sudden vision of Him would burst into view within their heart, and they would be carried away in the ecstasy of *prema*.

Some *gopīs*, thinking their *sakhī* to be Kṛṣṇa, would embrace her and become immersed in the blissful ocean of meeting with Kṛṣṇa. Due to the innate, insatiable nature of *prema*, the *gopīs* possessing *mahābhāva* remained ever-restless to meet with Kṛṣṇa, but shame had shackled their feet and it had not been possible for them to meet with Him. When the *gopīs* had been unable to calm their heart upon experiencing the strong impulse of emotion, they concealed their inner moods while describing Kṛṣṇa's *mādhurī* (sweetness) to each other as follows: “*akṣaṇvatām phalam idaṁ na paraṁ vidāmaḥ ...* – O dear *sakhīs*, all of you are bound in the shackles of the snare of your home, rendering useless your eyes and other senses given by the creator. Leaving the prison of your home as quickly as possible, let us go to Vṛndāvana. There, by having *darśana* of something that is indescribable and supremely wonderful, make your life, along with your eyes and all other senses, successful.”

The damsels of Vraja regarded anyone they had observed to have even a slight relationship with Kṛṣṇa as supremely fortunate, and in their humility, they considered themselves extremely unfortunate. Therefore, they used to say:

*dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-gatayo 'pi hariṇya etā
yā nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam
ākarnya veṇu-ṛaṇitaṁ saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ
pūjāṁ dadhur viracitāṁ praṇayāvalokaiḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.11)

O *sakhī*, when Nanda-nandana Śyāmasundara, wearing beautiful, multi-colored attire, vibrates a sweet melody on His *veṇu* flute, even the does, who are foolish due to having taken birth from the wombs of ignorant animals, run towards Him along with

their husbands – the *kṛṣṇa-sāra* deer [that is, deer that are blackish in color] – and they gaze upon Him with their large, love-laden eyes. They are not merely gazing, *sakhī*, but they are worshiping Him with crooked sidelong glances from their large, lotus-like eyes, and He is accepting their worship with His own loving sidelong glance. The lives of these deer are truly blessed. *Sakhī*, although we are *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, we are unable to offer ourselves like this. Our family members restrict us in many ways. How frustrating! Alas, why don't we give up this body and take birth as a doe, so that we may have unhindered *darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Rohiṇī continued, “The love of the *gopīs* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not based on some societal relationship, but is free of any cause and fully natural. From their very childhood, the *gopīs* offered their heart and everything else at Kṛṣṇa's feet. They do not hope for wealth, ornaments, dwellings, or any kind of material object. Their love for Kṛṣṇa is free of any selfish motive. They constantly serve Him, only to make Him happy. If the Vraja damsels decorate themselves, they do so only to please Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mood is such that She thinks, ‘If for Kṛṣṇa's happiness I have to undergo unlimited suffering, then that suffering would be My topmost joy.’ ”

“Here in Dvārakā, all of you are Kṛṣṇa's wives, not His beloveds. You expect fine cloth, ornaments, and other gifts from Him. Moreover, your love is divided into many parts; you do not love only Kṛṣṇa. Since you each have ten sons and one daughter, your love is divided into twelve. But the *gopīs'* love for Kṛṣṇa is undivided (*akhaṇḍa*). They have given up their husbands, they have no children, and even while performing their household duties, they constantly think only of Kṛṣṇa. While cooking, churning yogurt, milking cows, sweeping the house, or performing all other activities, they contemplate only the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form and pastimes, and sing, ‘Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti.’ In this way, the *gopīs'* dedication to Kṛṣṇa and their love for Him is undivided and complete.”

Kṛṣṇa's love, also, is divided into many parts. Although Kṛṣṇa has special *prema* for His Vrajavāsīs, at the same time, He cannot give up His devotees in Mathurā, Dvārakā, and other parts of the world. If someone remembers or calls out to Kṛṣṇa with love and distress, He goes to that person. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is always remembering His devotees, and He feels separation when He is away from them. In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's love is also divided into many parts, but the *gopīs'* love is undivided. For this reason, He forever remembers them and feels the acute pain of separation.

Rohiṇī continued, "Once, on the full moon day of autumn (*śarada-pūrṇimā*), at the beginning of the night, the full moon rose on the eastern horizon. The trees were full of soft, green leaves and fully blossomed flowers. The unprecedented beauty and fragrance of Vṛndāvana aroused in Kṛṣṇa's heart the desire to revel in *rāsa* with the Vraja maidens, and He began to play a sweet melody on His *veṇu* flute, which aroused the *kāma* (transcendental amour) sleeping within the heart of the *gopīs*. At that time, one *gopī* was milking a cow, another was boiling down milk on the stove, another was cooking *roṭīs*, another was serving food to the family members, another was serving her husband, and another was feeding her child milk. No matter what activity they were doing, they left it and ran to Kṛṣṇa.

"One *gopī* had been decorating herself and had applied *kājjala* (black cosmetic eye ointment) to only one eye, but when she heard the sound of the flute, she forgot about applying it to the other eye and ran. One *gopī* was getting dressed, and put the cloth meant for the top of her body on the bottom and the bottom cloth on the top, and dashed off. Even a moment's delay was unbearable for them. Their husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law asked, 'Where are you going?' But the sound of Kṛṣṇa's *veṇu* had taken dominion over the holes of the *gopīs'* ears, so how could they hear their words? Turning a deaf ear, they immediately set out and quickly came to Kṛṣṇa.

"The *rāsa* dance then began. In this *rāsa*, the *gopīs* danced and sang with Kṛṣṇa. If Kṛṣṇa began to sing in a sweet voice, then one *gopī* would sing in unison with Him, but even higher than Him. Kṛṣṇa then praised that *gopī*, saying, '*Sādhu, sādhu!* – excellent, excellent!'

If another *gopī* sang that same melody in [the style of singing known as] *dhrupad*, then Kṛṣṇa would praise her, saying, ‘Very beautiful! I could never sing like that.’ When the *gopīs* became tired, having engaged in playing, singing, and dancing for a very long time, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with His soft, fragrant, pleasing lotus-like hands, wiped beads of perspiration from their faces, and the *gopīs* honored Kṛṣṇa with their enchanting sidelong glances and sweet smiles.”

Due to their selfless love for Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* sacrificed everything. They even went so far as to give up the conventions of society, shyness (which for a lady is extremely difficult to relinquish), and righteous conduct. Therefore, in the context of the *rāsa-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself said to the *gopīs*:

*na pārāye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ
sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusaṁpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvṛścya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.22)*

My darling *gopīs*, your meeting Me is faultless and pure in every respect. It is devoid of even a single iota of desire for your own happiness and is full of supremely pure love. You have demolished the tenacious bonds of household life, and having transgressed the moral laws of this world, you have lovingly served Me. Even if I obtain a span of life like that of the gods, I would be unable to requite even one drop of your love, sacrifice, and service. All of you may free Me from debt simply by your own gentle nature, but I am forever the debtor of your *prema*.

The *rati* (attachment) of the *gopīs* is called *samartha-rati*, because the *gopīs* are capable of controlling Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their *prema*. Their love is not dependent on any societal relationship with Him. The *rati* of the queens of Dvārakā is called *samañjasā* because of their marital relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Their *prema* is incapable of controlling Him. The various stages of love are described in the scriptures delineating *rasa* as follows: *prema*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *rūḍha*,

adhirūḍha, *bhāva*, *mahābhāva*, *modana*, *mohana*, and *mādana*. The *prema* of the queens of Dvārakā can reach up to the stage of *anurāga*. Sometimes these queens attain a shadow of *mahābhāva*, and sometimes, to a very slight degree, they experience *divyonmāda* and *citra-jalpa*². The *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas* of the queens cannot reach the stage of *pradīpta* [also known as *uddīpta*]. Generally, their *bhāva* can only reach up to the stage of *dīpta*. Their *bhāva* reaches a stage where the flame of *prema* is not covered by any smoke. Nevertheless, the flame that blazes in that level of the queens' love cannot go as high as that of the *gopīs*'. The blaze of *gopīs*' flame of love is no doubt without smoke and reaches the highest extent of love.³

The super-excellence of Śrī Rādhā

Rohiṇī-devī began to describe the glories of the *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. "Once, Kṛṣṇa was out cowherding with His thousands of cows, as well as with Dāma, Śrīdāma, Madhumaṅgala, and thousands upon thousands of other *sakhās*. Some of the cows were white, some were black, and some were golden, and it looked as though the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā, and Sarasvatī were mixing together and then separating again. All that could be seen for miles and miles were the heads and bodies of cows. The Vrajavāsīs came out of their homes

2 *Divyonmāda* and *citra-jalpa* are ecstatic symptoms of utter confusion and variegated speech respectively. They appear in *mohana-mahābhāva* which manifests fully in Śrī Rādhā only. – ed.

3 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura clarifies the stages of *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas* – *dīpta*, *uddīpta*, and *suddīpta* – in his *Gītā-mālā* (Song 24, verse 1):

sādhāraṇī dhūmayitā, samañjasā sadā dīptā
rūḍhe tathoddīptā samarthāya
suddīptā śrī-rādhā-prema, jenō ujjvalita hema
modanādi bhāve sadā tāya

The spiritual ecstasy (*sāttvika-bhāva*) of *sādhāraṇī* lovers [such as Kubjā] is *dhūmayitā* (full of smoke). The spiritual ecstasy of *samañjasā* lovers [the queens of Dvārakā] is always *dīpta* (burning). The spiritual ecstasy of *samarthā* lovers [the *gopīs*] in *rūḍha-bhāva* is *uddīpta* (brightly burning). The spiritual ecstasy of Śrī Rādhā is *suddīpta* (blazing) and it glistens like gold. In that love, *modana* and the other *bhāvas* are always manifest. – ed.

and stood on the wayside, to get a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa. Nanda Bābā and Mother Yaśodā were following Him. The damsels of Vraja, who could not step outside their homes, in fear of their elders, were peeping out of their windows and doors. Kṛṣṇa looked over, through a latticed window, and saw Śrī Rādhājī performing *arcana* of Him with Her sidelong glances, which He lovingly accepted.

“By Rādhārāṇī’s glance,” Rohiṇī said, “the *vamśī* flute slipped from Kṛṣṇa’s hands, His crown of peacock feathers fell, His *pitāmbara* became disheveled, and He was just about to faint when Madhumaṅgala caught Him and said, shaking Him, ‘What are You doing?! Bābā and Maiyā (Father and Mother) are with us!’ Hearing Madhumaṅgala speaking in this way, Kṛṣṇa came back to external consciousness.

“Once, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by Lalitā and the other *sakhīs*, were immersed in love-laden, playful pastimes. Rādhārāṇī was sitting on Kṛṣṇa’s lap. At that moment a bee hovered here and there around Her lotus feet. Thinking Her feet to be a lotus flower, it circled around Her feet again and again, looking to drink nectar. Frightened, Rādhikā tried to chase the bee away, but it kept coming back to hover at Her feet. Seeing Rādhārāṇī so fearful, Madhumaṅgala chased that bee far away with his stick. When he returned, he said to Rādhājī, ‘I chased that *madhusūdana* far, far away from here. He has left and will not return.’

“Hearing this, Rādhikā, although sitting in Kṛṣṇa’s lap, thought that Madhusūdana (Kṛṣṇa) had abandoned Her. She could not understand that *madhusūdana* is another name for a bee, and lamenting, She became aggrieved in separation from Him. She began to repeatedly cry, ‘O Prāṇanātha, where have You gone, O Prāṇanātha, where have You gone?!’

“Seeing Rādhikā’s astonishing *bhāva* of *prema-vaicittya*, Kṛṣṇa, too, forgot that She, His dear most beloved, was on His lap. He too began crying, ‘O Priye, O Priye!’ Tears fell from Their eyes, perspiration flowed from Their bodies, and They fainted. Seeing Them in this condition, the *sakhīs* also fell unconscious. At that time, Rādhārāṇī’s female parrot (*sārikā*) began to loudly chant Śrī Rādhā’s name, and *suka* [the male parrot] began to loudly chant the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

As Their names entered Their ears, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both regained external consciousness and gazed upon each other with thirsty eyes. Gradually, the *sakhīs* also regained consciousness and began to call, 'Jaya! Jaya!' There was no limit to their happiness.

"It was at that very place that Śrī Kṛṣṇa thought, 'Although I remain close by My beloved Rādhikā, I am incapable of pacifying Her agony in separation from Me. She is forever scorched by the heat of impending separation from Me, and I see no way to console Her in such a situation. But when I am far away from Her, then She constantly thinks of Me and becomes absorbed in *bhāva*, laughing and talking to *tamāla* trees, playing with Her *sakhīs*, and sometimes even displaying *māna*. In contrast, even though I am nearby, by a mere *sphūrti* (a flash) of separation from Me, She becomes distressed and cries. Even though I am right beside Her, I am unable to console Her.⁴ Therefore, My being far away from Her is the only way to console Her, because in that state of separation, upon seeing a momentary vision (*sphūrti*) of Me or beholding the *tamāla* tree, which possesses a luster similar to My own, She considers, "This is my *priyatama* (dearest beloved)," and Her fire of separation is somewhat pacified.' Within His heart, Kṛṣṇa thus decided to reside somewhere far away from home. This, indeed, is the main reason He left Vṛndāvana to go to Mathurā and Dvārakā."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of *rasa*; He is Himself *rasa*, and He is also *rasika*, expert at relishing *rasa*. He is simultaneously *eka-rasa* (one *rasa*) and *aneka-rasa* (many *rasas*). When He is *eka-rasa*, everything that exists in all the three worlds, even up to Goloka Vṛndāvana, is present within Him. He is *pūrṇātama*, most complete, and *sarvajña*, all-knowing. Nothing is unknown to Him. When He is *aneka-rasa*, there is some mixture of *rasas*, and He knows some things but not others. That is, He knows something of the *rasa* that a devotee tastes, but He remains ignorant of the bliss Śrīmatī Rādhikā obtains in Her service to Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no experience of the bliss Śrīmatī Rādhikā obtains

4 This most exalted *mādana-bhāva* is only seen in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. It is not even seen manifest in Lalitā and other *sakhīs*. In this *mādana-bhāva*, all kinds of mutually contradictory *bhāvas*, such as *sambhoga* and *vipralambha*, occur simultaneously, in an astonishing way.

in tasting the sweetness of His form (*rūpa-mādhurī*), the sweetness of His qualities (*guṇa-mādhurī*), the sweetness of His pastimes (*līlā-mādhurī*), and the sweetness of His flute (*veṇu-mādhurī*). Although all these *mādhurīs* are present within Him, He is nevertheless unable to taste them completely. Therefore, for the purpose of relishing these *mādhurīs* and Rādhājī's *bhāvas*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumes Rādhikā's *bhāvas* and descends in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. On the banks of the Godāvārī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu received education about *prema* from Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, who in his form as a *gopī* is Viśākhā-devī. In the pastimes of Śācinandana Gaurahari, or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a mixture of both *eka-rasa* and *aneka-rasa* are observed. *Eka-rasa* is fully present in Kṛṣṇa, and *aneka-rasa* is fully present in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, since He is the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The appearance of the forms of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā

In this way, Mother Rohiṇī continued to describe Kṛṣṇa's many pastimes in Vraja, and the queens of Dvārakā listened in amazement. As Mother Rohiṇī spoke, her heart began to melt. Meanwhile, standing at the door, Śrī Kṛṣṇa listened to the description of His sweet *līlās* and completely drowned in them. Remembering the *prema* of the Vrajavāsīs, His heart also began to melt. Not only that, His hands and legs also began to contract. Subhadrā and Balarāmājī's heart also began to melt upon hearing the glories of the *gopīs'* love. A continuous stream of tears flowed from the eyes of all three, as their hands and feet contracted, their mouth expanded, and their eyes opened wide in astonishment. Slowly, slowly their form became that of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā.

Finally, Mother Rohiṇī also began to weep bitterly. She became incapable of speaking further and lost consciousness. Due to the break in the *kathā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's natural form began to slowly return, and He entered the chamber. He saw that Mother Rohiṇī had fallen unconscious and that Śrī Nārada, holding himself guilty for what had transpired, was fearfully standing to one side. Upon seeing Śrī

Kṛṣṇa, Nāradaḥ gravely said, “It was I who said something to Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā. Then, when they saw Mother Rohiṇī, they asked her about what I had said and she began to speak about Vraja. In this way, this incident took place. I am solely responsible for it.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, smiling, “Nārada, you are indeed the root cause of this incident, and for this reason I am most pleased with you. It is because of you that today, after so many days, I received the opportunity to hear the glories of Vraja. I want to grant you a boon. You can ask Me for anything you desire.”

Upon hearing this, Nāradaḥ became most joyful and said, “I want that the *vigrahas* (deities) of the love-laden forms the three of you manifested after hearing the glories of the Vrajavāsīs be always present somewhere within this world, so that the entire universe can take *darśana* of them. That marvelous form of Yours delivers the fallen, and by having *darśana* of that form, all the entire world will be able to understand the affection for Your devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*) that is within Your heart. Such deities may be worshiped throughout the entire world. By hearing their history, spotlessly pure love for You will arise in the heart of the inhabitants of this world, and they will thus attain the topmost auspiciousness.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “*Tathāstu* – so be it! After appearing in the form of these three deities, along with Sudarśana *cakra*, on the shore of the ocean in Jagannātha Purī, I will reside there on top of the Nīlādri Mountain, and all the residents of this world will be able to take *darśana* of Me.”

Why did Śrī Kṛṣṇa mention Sudarśana *cakra*, along with these three deities? The reason for this is that *sudarśana* means *ati sundara darśana*, ‘a most splendid vision.’ Sudarśana *cakra* alone will purify our heart and bestow transcendental vision (*divya dṛṣṭi*) upon us. In this way, we shall become fit for *darśana* of the actual forms of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadra. Otherwise, we will only see them as wooden statues and not be able to perceive their true form and beauty. When Sudarśana *cakra* bestows divine vision upon us, we shall be able to realize that Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha-deva is in fact Himself Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Syāmasundara.

Chapter Three

This history of the appearance of Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha is extremely sweet, and *vraja-prema* will most certainly arise in the heart of that person who hears it with deep faith.

The Second Secret
behind the Deities' Manifestation
in an Incomplete Form

There is one more explanation of Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha's manifestation in His incomplete form. This cause is extremely confidential, and it is only revealed in the heart of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His followers: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and other devotees performing *bhajana* under their guidance.

When Kṛṣṇa left Vraja for Mathurā, all of Vraja was drowned in separation from Him. What to speak of the *gopas* and *gopīs*, even the cows would not go out to graze, the calves would not drink from the cows' udder, the birds would not chirp, and the flowers on the trees and lakes would not bloom. All of the Vrajavāsīs' bodily activities had ceased. Burning in a fire of separation with tears flowing from their eyes, they somehow or other managed to maintain their lives. The condition of the *gopīs* was extremely pitiful, and among them, Śrīmatī Rādhikā was on the verge of death. Writhing in separation from Kṛṣṇa, they would faint. This was the only time they got some relief from the burning of separation from Him.

In Dvārakā, also, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would toss and turn in separation from the *gopīs*, and sometimes, while continuously thinking of Śrī Rādhā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, and so on, He would faint. Once, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa fainted while remembering Śrīmatī Rādhikā, all there became very anxious. Nārada, Uddhava, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, and others contemplated how to bring Him back to consciousness. Nārada was told to play his *vinā* and glorify Vraja, Mother Yaśodā, the *gopīs*, and all other Vrajavāsīs,

but he objected. “If I do that, do you know what will happen when He awakens? He will set off for Vraja at once, and no one will be able to stop Him. He will remain in Vraja forever, and never return to Dvārakā. You should make your decision after carefully considering the situation.”

Hearing this, everyone present fell into a dilemma. After deliberating on the situation carefully, they decided what to do. Previously, Uddhava had gone to Vraja with a message from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so they decided that this time he should go to Vraja and give the message to Mother Yaśodā, Nanda Mahārāja, and the *gopas* and *gopīs* that Kṛṣṇa will be arriving soon, and that preparations should be made to welcome Him. After Kṛṣṇa arrives, Uddhava should stay in Vraja with Him for a few days, and then somehow cleverly bring Him back to Dvārakā.

Uddhava became extremely sad when he heard this proposal. “If I go to Vṛndāvana and say that Kṛṣṇa is coming, no one will believe my words. This is because many years ago, I told the Vrajavāsīs, ‘Now I am going, and I will soon bring Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja.’ After that, I requested Kṛṣṇa many times to go to Vraja, but He would come up with one excuse or another and ignore my request. So if I go this time, the Vrajavāsīs will not believe my words. Rather, they will say that the liar has returned.”

“In that case,” Nārada Muni said, “only Śrī Baladeva Prabhu can go and pacify all the *gopas* and *gopīs*.”

But Śrī Baladeva Prabhu’s response was similar to Uddhava’s: “I told Kṛṣṇa so many times to go to Vraja, and He would always say, ‘Yes, I will go,’ but He never went. Finally, I went alone and pacified the Vrajavāsīs by giving My word that I will go to Dvārakā and bring Kṛṣṇa back. I don’t know why this hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa does not want to go there. His heart used to be so soft, but now it has become hard like a stone. Because I did not keep My word about bringing Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja, there will not be any benefit in My going there; the Vrajavāsīs will not believe Me either. Kṛṣṇa must go there Himself.”

While everyone was discussing this, Kṛṣṇa’s sister, Subhadrā, came in, heard everything, and said, “Don’t worry, I will go to Vṛndāvana

and meet with Mother Yaśodā. I will sit on her lap and tell her, ‘Mother, Bhaiyā Kṛṣṇa (Brother Kṛṣṇa) is coming here. He was traveling with me, but on the way, many kings surrounded Him to perform *arcana* to Him and offer Him many gifts. This is why I arrived here first. Bhaiyā Kṛṣṇa should arrive soon, anytime now.’ I will go to each one of the *gopīs*’ homes and give news of His coming. I will tell them to make preparations to welcome Him. When they hear this, their feelings of separation from Him will be dispelled. When Bhaiyā has stayed there for some days and pleased the Vrajavāsīs, I will cleverly bring Him back to Dvārakā. Therefore, all of you please quickly arrange a nice chariot for me, and Nāradaḥ, please sing the glories of Vraja with your *vīṇā*. Upon hearing these glories, Kṛṣṇa will return to consciousness and follow me to Vṛndāvana.”

Everyone supported Subhadrā’s proposal and a beautiful chariot was arranged for her. Just as she was about to go, Baladeva Prabhu said, “If Subhadrā and Kṛṣṇa are going, I should also go. I too want to meet with Yaśodā Maiyā, Nanda Bābā, and all My *sakhās* and *gopīs*. I cannot remain here.”

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, Śrī Subhadrā-devī, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa leave for Vraja

Śrī Subhadrā said, “Yes, we should all go together. Baladeva Bhaiyā will go first, and I will follow Him.” Another chariot (*ratha*) was then brought for Baladeva and placed in front of Subhadrā’s. As they were about to leave, Baladeva Prabhu told Kṛṣṇa’s chariot driver, Dāruka, “Bring your chariot here and be ready to follow us. As soon as Kṛṣṇa returns to consciousness, seat Him and quickly take Him to Vṛndāvana.”

Nārada Muni began to sweetly sing the glories of Vraja, while playing the *vīṇā*. The moment His sweet voice entered Kṛṣṇa’s ears, Kṛṣṇa regained consciousness and thought, “It’s morning time, and I am in Vraja. Where is My dear *vaṁśī*? Where has My precious *vaṁśī* gone? Oh, I know. The *gopīs* are very clever. They must have stolen it to tease and trouble Me. Today, I will teach them a good lesson.”

As Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa began searching for His *varṁsī*, He said, “Lalitā must have taken it. If not, Rādhā must have stolen it with the help of Viśākhā.” He then assumed His enchanting threefold-bending form, just as He used to in Vraja. Until then, no one in Dvārakā had ever seen that form of the Lord. At that moment, Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw Uddhava and asked, “Uddhavajī, how have you come to Vraja?” Then He saw Nārada and said, “Nārada-jī, you are also in Vṛndāvana?”

Nārada replied, “O my Lord, You are not in Vṛndāvana. You are in Dvārakā, and this is not the Yamunā. It is the ocean at Dvārakā Purī. Please remember where You are.”

Kṛṣṇa was so absorbed in the moods of Vraja that He had completely forgotten where He was, but after hearing Nārada’s words, He remembered He was actually in Dvārakā. Just as Kṛṣṇa was ready to run to Vṛndāvana to meet with the *gopas* and *gopīs*, Uddhava said, “Prabhu, Your chariot is ready. Please be seated upon it. We anticipated that You would want to go.”

Kṛṣṇa wanted to ascend His chariot, but He was so absorbed in love for Śrīmatī Rādhikā that He was unable to walk properly. Many people began to support Him by walking behind Him, in front of Him, and on both sides of Him. His love for Śrī Rādhā was causing Him to go mad. Somehow or other, He was brought onto the chariot. The moment He was seated, the charioteer Dāruka drove toward Vṛndāvana with great speed. Śrī Baladeva Prabhu and Śrī Subhadrā were ahead, with Kṛṣṇa following behind.

Meanwhile, in Vṛndāvana, Rādhājī, unable to bear further separation, was on the verge of death. All the Vrajavāsīs were extremely anxious, thinking that She would leave Her body at any moment. Everyone was drowning in an ocean of intense grief, absorbed in thoughts of how to save Her life. Lalitā and Viśākhā were trying their best to bring Her back to external consciousness, but there were no signs of revival.

While this was going on, Candrāvalī and all the other *sakhīs*, in great distress, also assembled there.

In Vraja there are four kinds of *gopīs*: *svapakṣā* (belonging to Rādhikā’s own group), *vipakṣā* (belonging to the group of Her rivals), *taṭastha-pakṣā* (belonging to the group neutral to Her), and *suhṛt-pakṣā*

(belonging to the group friendly to Her). When, however, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would disappear for the purpose of His *līlās* in Vraja, or after His departure for Mathurā or Dvārakā, the *gopīs* would no longer remain in separate groups. Whenever the feeling of separation arose in their heart, all the *gopīs* unified into one group and helped each other. The *vipakṣā sakhīs*, headed by Candrāvalī and Bhadrā, would come and give consolation to Śrī Rādhā, because Śrī Rādhā's feelings of separation are the most intense of all. Each and every *gopī* had feelings of sympathy for Śrī Rādhā, and they consoled Her because their feelings of separation were somewhat less than Hers. Although Candrāvalī's feeling of separation was also very great, still she gave consolation to Śrī Rādhā, saying, "O Rādhā, do not cry. Kṛṣṇa will come very soon."

Hearing Candrāvalī's words, Śrīmatī Rādhikā said to Lalitā, "If Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not return from Dvārakā, then surely I will never be able to meet with Him. He, also, will never be able to meet with Me. So, what need is there now to endeavor with great difficulty to keep this body? After My death, please do not, out of affection, try to save this body. It will eventually mix with the five elements. While offering *praṇāma*, My head resting on the earth, I want to make this one prayer to the creator: let the water of this body enter into Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure pond, let the fire of My body enter His mirror, let the ether of these limbs enter the ether of His courtyard, let the earth enter the path upon which He comes and goes, and let the wind enter His palm-leaf fan." Lamenting in this way, She again fell unconscious.

At that very moment, all three chariots arrived in Vraja – Śrī Baladeva's and Śrī Subhadrā's chariots were in front, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's chariot was behind. As soon as Kṛṣṇa arrived, He heard that Rādhājī was on the verge of death, and at any moment She could leave Her body. He ran to Her quickly. As soon as He saw Her, He became distressed and began to cry loudly. As He became more and more absorbed in *rādhā-prema*, His hands and body began to melt, His round face began to enlarge, and on that face His eyes shined big and round. Just then, Śrī Subhadrā and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu arrived. Upon witnessing this scene, they could not control themselves, and their bodies melted just like Kṛṣṇa's.

In the meantime, Lalitā said in one of Rādhā's ears, "O Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa has come to meet You. Do not give up Your life."

Viśākhā said in the other ear, "Kṛṣṇa has come to meet You!"

Hearing this, Śrī Rādhikā slowly, slowly regained Her external consciousness and opened Her eyes. "Oh!" She thought. "The dear most beloved of My life, Śyāmasundara, has come!" She then became further immersed in love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Seeing Her in such a maddened state, Kṛṣṇa's love also reached its highest limit. He lost consciousness and all understanding of His body, and began to roll on the earth.

Rādhikā said to Viśākhā, "*Sakhī*, help Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, He will give up His life. Viśākhā chanted in Kṛṣṇa's ear, "Rādhe, Rādhe, Rādhe!" When Kṛṣṇa heard these nectar-filled names from the lips of Viśākhā, He immediately regained external consciousness. Opening His eyes, He became overwhelmed with bliss. Slowly, His body became as before. Upon witnessing the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, all the Vrajavāsīs became most thrilled.

Just then, Nārada arrived and requested Kṛṣṇa, "Prabhu, please eternally manifest somewhere in this world these three forms (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadra), which are melted in the madness of the *prema* that You have just revealed here. By receiving *darśana* of these three forms, all living entities can come to know of Your love-laden *svarūpa* (form and nature).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied happily, "*Tathāstu, tathāstu, evam bhavatu* – So be it, so be it. May this come to pass. I shall always remain in these three forms in Nīlācala (Jagannātha Purī), which is like Dvārakā. There, everyone will be able to come and see this form of Mine." Overjoyed, Śrī Nāradaḥ began to perform *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* and dance while playing his *vīṇa*.

The pastimes of the manifestation of Lord Jagannātha differ from *kalpa* (a day of Lord Brahmā) to *kalpa*.

The History of
King Puruṣottama Jānā, and
Srīman Mahāprabhu's Neglect
of King Pratāparudra

Some time before Mahāprabhu's arrival in Śrī Jagannātha Purī, Pratāparudra Mahārāja's father, Puruṣottama Jānā, ruled Orissa. In his youth, he was extremely strong and beautiful, and there was talk of him marrying the princess of Vidyānagara, which is situated in South India. Puruṣottama Jānā had been communicating with the king of Vidyānagara through messengers, and the king informed him that he would come to meet Puruṣottama Jānā in person, not specifying when that would be. In order to see with his own eyes how beautiful, qualified, and wealthy Puruṣottama Jānā was, he arrived in Purī unannounced, along with his family.

By divine arrangement, it was the first day of Jagannātha's chariot festival, and King Puruṣottama Jānā, dressed in ordinary clothes, swept the road before Jagannātha-deva, just like a common sweeper. Although the king of Vidyānagara was greatly impressed by Puruṣottama Jānā's youth and beauty, within his heart, he felt no honor for him. He thought, "I have come here with the understanding that Puruṣottama Jānā is wealthy and intelligent, but he is dressed in ordinary clothes and is sweeping in front of Jagannātha-deva's chariot, just like a street sweeper. I could never give my daughter in marriage to this sweeper." Having decided to not marry his daughter to Puruṣottama Jānā, and without having met him, the king of Vidyānagara returned to his kingdom.

King Puruṣottama Jānā's defeat in battle

When, after many days had passed, no message had come from the king of Vidyānagara, Puruṣottama Jānā consulted his counselor. When the counselor sent a messenger to inquire about the matter, he found out what had transpired. The counselor said to the king, “O Mahārāja, the king of Vidyānagara saw you sweeping in front of Lord Śrī Jagannātha's cart on the day of Ratha-yātrā. He took you to be a common sweeper and decided to not give you his daughter in marriage.”

When Puruṣottama Jānā heard this, he was outraged and told his counselor to immediately prepare to attack Vidyānagara. In his mind, Puruṣottama Jānā told the king of Vidyānagara, “At the moment, you do not know the glory of Śrī Jagannātha-deva. It is solely because of this that you have such lack of intelligence.”

With the help of his army, the king attacked Vidyānagara.

The king of Vidyānagara was a worshiper of the demigod Gaṇeśa, and Gaṇeśa was mercifully disposed toward him. In the battle, Gaṇeśa personally fought on the side of the king of Vidyānagara, and Puruṣottama Jānā saw defeat. Upon his return to Purī, Puruṣottama Jānā, weeping, entered the temple of Śrī Jagannātha-deva. “O Lord,” he said, “I am Your servant. I was sweeping for You, only, but the king of Vidyānagara thought me to be a mere street cleaner and lost respect for me. I had full faith that You would help me in any situation, but You did not. The king of Vidyānagara is a devotee of Gaṇeśa, and it was due to his help that he was victorious. I cried out to You to protect me, but You did not come. Now, everyone in the world will think that Jagannātha does not have the *śakti* (power) to protect His devotees, and that His devotees, also, have no *śakti*. What in this world could be more shameful than this? Therefore, from now on, I shall give up eating and drinking and will die here in Your temple, right before You.”

Lord Jagannātha helps the king

That very night, King Puruṣottama Jānā had a dream in which Jagannātha-deva told him, “Without even calling out to Me, you went

straight to war, and therefore, I was unable to help you. Now, again prepare for battle. This time, I shall certainly help you. Baladeva and I will personally be there, and you will have direct experience of this. Fear not. You will crush the king of Vidyānagara, along with Gaṇeśa and all the warriors fighting on his side. Do not worry for this at all.”

Puruṣottama Jānā became most exuberant, and he again prepared to invade that kingdom. The very next day, he assembled his soldiers and hastily attacked Vidyānagara. Prior to King Puruṣottama Jānā’s departure, Jagannātha and Baladeva mounted well-nourished and robust horses and rode some miles ahead of his army. Jagannātha rode a horse of darkish complexion and Śrī Baladeva a horse of golden complexion. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma’s attractive, supremely enchanting forms and well-formed bodies revealed Their valor. It was summer and terribly hot. On the way, They saw an elderly woman, a milk-lady, carrying a clay pot of buttermilk on her head. “Mother,” They asked, “can you give Us some buttermilk? Our throats are dry with thirst.”

“Do You have the money to pay for it?” she asked. “If so, I can give You some buttermilk, otherwise not.”

“We are soldiers of the king,” Śrī Jagannātha-deva said, “and We are on our way to do battle. At the moment, We don’t have any money, but the king will soon come, along with his soldiers, and he will certainly pay for the buttermilk.”

“If I ask the king for the money, how will he know that it is for buttermilk taken by his own soldiers and that he must pay for it?” the milk-lady asked.

Śrī Jagannātha-deva replied, “Tell him, ‘Two of your soldiers, one dark complexioned and one white, riding horses and equipped with weapons, left here having taken buttermilk, but they did not pay for it.’ I am also giving you two rings. Show them to the king and say, ‘The owners of these rings have taken buttermilk from me and have ridden ahead of you. Kindly pay for it.’”

Śrī Jagannātha gave the milk-lady the two rings, and He and Baladeva drank the entire pot of buttermilk, quenching Their thirst. Satisfied, They moved onward.

After some time, King Puruṣottama Jānā arrived at that place with his army. The milk-lady approached and said, “O King, your two soldiers came here and drank my buttermilk. They left a while ago. Before leaving, They said that the king was riding behind Them and would give me the money for the milk.”

The king said, “None of my soldiers have gone before us.”

The milk-lady produced the two rings and said, “It was the owners of these rings who have taken buttermilk from me.”

The king saw that the two gold rings were imprinted with the names Jagannātha Simha and Baladeva Simha. He personally had a goldsmith make those rings for Jagannātha-deva and Baladeva Prabhu, and had offered them to Them. Upon seeing the rings, he became overjoyed. “This time I will surely be victorious,” he thought, “because Śrī Jagannātha-deva and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu Themselves have gone ahead to help me.” He donated a vast portion of land to that milk-lady and said, “You are supremely fortunate, because Bhagavān Himself, Śrī Jagannātha, along with Balabhadra, have drunk the buttermilk made by your own hands. From today, all the land in eyes’ view from here is yours. You may do with it whatever you want. This land will maintain your family for many generations to come.” The king then continued onward with his soldiers. To this day, that milk-lady’s dynasty is residing on that very same estate.

King Puruṣottama Jānā attacked Vidyānagara and defeated Vidyānagara’s army. Gaṇeśa was fighting on the side of the king of Vidyānagara, and Śrī Jagannātha-deva and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu defeated and imprisoned him. Although Gaṇeśa knew very well that Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, still, he took the side of the enemy. Therefore, Śrī Jagannātha and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu gave him the name Bhaṇḍa (cheater) Gaṇeśa.

King Puruṣottama imprisoned the king of Vidyānagara, his counselors and the princess. He took the king of Vidyānagara’s golden throne and the deity of Bhaṇḍa Gaṇeśa. Puruṣottama Jānā took permission from the deity of Sākṣī-gopāla to bring Him to Kaṭaka from Vidyānagara and establish Him there. Previously, Sākṣī-gopāla had come from Vṛndāvana as a witness for a young *brāhmaṇa* boy.

He also took from Vidyānagara the large, beautiful deities of Rādhā-kānta, who are present even today in Śrī Rādhā-kānta Maṭha¹, which is situated near Śrī Jagannātha Mandira, Purī.

Puruṣottama Jānā released the king of Vidyānagara, saying, “I shall not take your life, but I will keep your daughter with me.” He brought the princess with him to Purī. On reaching Purī, King Puruṣottama Jānā decided that he would not marry her. Rather, to take revenge for the disrespect shown to him, he would marry her to a sweeper. Hearing this, the princess became overwhelmed with grief and began to lament.

Upon seeing the princess greatly distressed, the merciful counselor of King Puruṣottama Jānā pacified her. Then he said, “O King, please do not act too rashly. We will look carefully for a husband for her and, after some time, marry her to a lowly and completely penniless street-sweeper.” The king accepted this advice and gave him the responsibility of finding a sweeper for the princess to marry. Then, with a plan in mind, the counselor hid the princess, concealing her from everyone’s sight for some time, and made sure she was well cared for, as a father would a daughter.

At the time of Ratha-yātrā the following year, King Puruṣottama began to sweep in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva’s chariot as usual. At that moment, acting on the advice of the minister, the princess placed a garland around the neck of the king before all present and said, “I shall marry this very sweeper.”

The king’s counselor approved. “Yes, yes,” he said. “This is a most wonderful proposal. The king is but a poor and destitute sweeper. Although a king, he is completely penniless, because his wealth, followers, body, mind, and everything belong exclusively to Jagannātha. He has nothing of his own. We cannot find another sweeper who is more poor and destitute. By marrying such a person, you will become the wife of a sweeper, and thus I will have fulfilled my responsibility of marrying you to one.”

1 This is also the place where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu resided when he lived in Jagannātha Purī. Nowadays, this place is famous by the name ‘Gambhīrā’.

Just then, the princess began to cry, and King Puruṣottama Jānā's heart melted. Their marriage ceremony was performed according to Vedic injunctions, and some time later an extremely beautiful son was born to them. That prince later became King Pratāparudra, who also became one of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's personal associates. The supremely merciful Śrī Jagannātha-deva is certainly *patita-pāvana* – the savior of the fallen, the protector of the surrendered – and also *bhakta-vātsala*, affectionate to His devotees.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's neglect of King Pratāparudra

King Pratāparudra was an exclusive devotee of Śrī Jagannātha, just like his father. At the time of Ratha-yātrā, he too would personally sweep the road. Seeing such service, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became extremely pleased. King Pratāparudra was very eager to meet with Śrīman Mahāprabhu, but there was a very big obstacle to his being able to do so: he was a king, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu was a *sannyāsī*.

For *sannyāsīs*, it is forbidden to associate with materialistic persons and women. Śrīman Mahāprabhu used to follow his *sannyāsa-dharma* impeccably. He never associated with any female, even a small girl. He gave the teaching that even a wooden statue of a woman can agitate the mind of a *muni*. Viśvāmītra and Nārada Muni were greatly renounced and conversant with *tattva*, but to teach the world, they performed pastimes that demonstrated that if a *sādhaka* is not vigilant, he can fall down. When men associate with women and when women associate with men, they should be very careful, because men and women are like Cupid for each another. When they come together, they cannot keep their heart and senses under control. For this reason *śāstra* warns that a man should not even sit on the same seat as his own mother, sister, or daughter.

Ordinarily, kings are known to have unlimited wealth and an abundance of ingredients for a luxurious life. For *sādhakas*, *śāstra* compares such materialistic persons with snakes. Even if a poisonous snake's fangs are removed, it is still a snake. If anyone comes close to it, it will certainly hiss and attack. It was for this reason that Śrīman

Mahāprabhu refused to meet King Pratāparudra, although he was an advanced devotee. Not only that, when Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaitācārya, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, and Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya insisted that Śrīman Mahāprabhu give *darśana* to the king, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “If all of you continue to pressure Me in this way, I will leave Purī and go to Alālanātha or any other place. I will not stay here. All of you may stay with him.”

When King Pratāparudra heard that Mahāprabhu would not give *darśana* to him, he became filled with despair. “If Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has promised to liberate the entire world from *māyā* and give everyone *kṛṣṇa-prema*, keeping only me bereft, then I, also, will make a promise: if He does not give me His *darśana*, I will give up my kingdom, my wife and children, and even my very life.”

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya pacified the king, saying, “O King, be patient. Don’t make a hasty decision. When the right time comes, you will certainly obtain His *darśana* and be able to serve Him. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is very pleased with you, because you are a simple-hearted person, and at the time of Ratha-yātrā, you serve Śrī Jagannātha-deva by sweeping in front of His chariot. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has special affection for your son, and for this reason He has embraced him and told him to meet with Him every day. Therefore, in one way, through your own son, you have already had Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s *darśana* and obtained His mercy. If you want His direct *darśana*, there is a way you can get it. At the time of Ratha-yātrā, after Śrīman Mahāprabhu dances before Śrī Jagannātha-deva’s cart, maddened in *prema*, He will rest in the Jagannātha-vallabha garden, absorbed in a deep mood. Like a beggar, go to Him at that time, wearing plain clothes [not the attire of a king]. Then sing *Gopī-gīta* and other verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that narrate the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. In this way, you will certainly become a recipient of the mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s lotus feet.”

The Cleaning of Guṇḍicā Temple

The cleaning of Guṇḍicā temple (Guṇḍicā Mandira *mārjana*) is performed one day before Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā. As a result, it becomes a suitable place for Bhagavān to take rest.

The significance of the cleansing of Guṇḍicā Temple

The creator and maintainer of this universe, Śrī Bhagavān, is one without a second. He is the same God for the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, or any other religion. He is indeed known by many names, such as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Nṛsimha, Śrī Jagannātha, Allah, Jesus Christ, and Jehovah. Just as there is only one sun and only one moon for the entire world, similarly, there is only one Bhagavān; not more.

Bhagavān manifests His *svarūpa* before the devotee in accordance with the devotee's *bhāvas*. This can be understood by citing the analogy of the moon. Between the new moon and the full moon, there seems to be fifteen different moons, each with its own name, but actually, there is only one moon. In the same way, there is only one God. When He fully manifests His opulence (*vaibhava*) and charm (*mādhurya*), He is known as Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When He manifests aspects of His opulence in accordance with place, time, and recipient, He is named accordingly. There is only one Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but He has innumerable incarnations, and all those incarnations are non-different from Him.

We living entities (*jīvas*) are parts and parcels of Bhagavān. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa states,

*mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke
jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*

Bhagavad-gītā (15.7)

This means that the *jīvas* are by nature eternal servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and manifestations of His marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*). The *jīva* is Bhagavān's eternal servant; he can never become Bhagavān. At the same time, Bhagavān and the *jīva* are simultaneously different and non-different from each other. Just as the sun's rays and heat are simultaneously different and non-different from the sun, and just as fire and its potency to burn are different and non-different, in the same way, the living entity is simultaneously different and non-different from Bhagavān.

The *jīva* is capable of being controlled by *māyā*, whereas Bhagavān is the master of *māyā*. Thus there is an eternal difference between the *jīva* and Bhagavān. By constitution, the *jīva* is a transcendental entity (*cit-vastu*), and Bhagavān too is a transcendental entity. Therefore, from this perspective, Bhagavān and the *jīva* are eternally non-different.

Considering thus, we can conclude that the *jīva* is simultaneously different (*bheda*) and non-different (*abheda*) from *bhagavat-tattva*, or in other words, that the *jīva* is Bhagavān's *bhedābheda-prakāśa* – different and non-different manifestation. This philosophical conclusion (*siddhānta*), called *acintya-bhedābheda* (inconceivable difference and non-difference), has been explained by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in depth.

All *jīvas* are, by constitution, eternal servants of Bhagavān. This is the absolute truth, whether one accepts it or not. Servitude toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa is alone the eternal function (*nitya-dharma*) of the living entity. Forgetting this, the *jīva*, becoming enchanted by *māyā*, becomes averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and falls into the cycle of birth and death within this material world. Only for the welfare of the *jīvas* does Bhagavān sometimes personally descend to this world to propagate pure knowledge of Himself, and other times He sends His associates.

Due to the presence of lust, anger, greed, attachment, intoxication, envy, etc. in the conditioned soul's heart, he cannot realize the pure, transcendental *svarūpa* of Bhagavān. As long as these unwanted things (*anarthas*) remain in the heart of the *jīva*, Bhagavān will not manifest there. In an impure heart, only material sense enjoyment related to one's personal happiness can be found and the tendency to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa is lacking.

Generally, service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is equated with service to ordinary people in the world. In this situation, the *jīvas* are completely ignorant of the fact that there is unlimited bliss (*ānanda*) in serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This *ānanda* is infinitely greater than the *ānanda* obtained by serving one's husband, wife, children, and family members. There is an unfathomable ocean of *prema* within Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode. To awaken that *prema* within our hearts, we must release our *anarthas* and make our heart pure. Guṇḍicā Mandira *mārjana* symbolizes the *sādhaka's* cleansing his heart.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's cleansing of Guṇḍicā Mandira

Before Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's arrival in Purī, only the servants of the king would clean the Guṇḍicā Mandira, but since they were solely interested in earning wages for this, they did not do their job efficiently. If devotional feelings toward Bhagavān are absent in a person's heart, then he cannot please Śrī Jagannātha. Therefore, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu arrived in Jagannātha Purī, He sent a message to the king through the king's *guru*, Kāśī Miśra: "I request permission to personally clean Guṇḍicā Mandira and its surrounding areas, along with My associates. Your servants are not required. You only need arrange some brooms and clay pots."

Although at first the king was astonished at this request, when he heard about Mahāprabhu's inner mood from the lips of Kāśī Miśra, the king became very pleased. He said to Kāśī Miśra, "It is a matter of utmost joy that by personally engaging in the cleaning of Guṇḍicā Mandira, Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His devotees will impart a valuable teaching to the inhabitants of this world. Therefore, do not hesitate to give Him whatever He may need."

The next day, early in the morning, devotees gathered together in great number for the purpose of cleaning Guṇḍicā Mandira. The devotees offered flower garlands and *candana* to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, but before they could offer Him obeisance, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, with upmost humility, offered *praṇāma* to all of them and smeared *candana* on their forehead. Śrīman Mahāprabhu touched Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's feet. He did not have even a trace of self-conception (*abhimāna*) that He was *guru*. He did not consider, "I am a *guru*. Everyone should respect Me. There is no need for me to respect anyone."

All the devotees walking with Śrīman Mahāprabhu were performing *kīrtana* and touching each other's feet. Śrīman Mahāprabhu handed each devotee a broom, and they all performed *saṅkīrtana* from the Jagannātha Mandira to the Guṇḍicā Mandira. Upon reaching Guṇḍicā Mandira, Śrīman Mahāprabhu began to clean the temple with a broom, sweeping everywhere, from top to bottom. The hundreds of devotees with Him also began to sweep. Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Himself Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He personally cleaned the temple.

In order to teach everyone, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to His associates, "While sweeping, we should perform *kīrtana*, chant Bhagavān's names, and remember Him. Only then will Bhagavān Śrī Jagannātha bestow mercy upon us. If we sweep without chanting Bhagavān's names, as most people do, then all our work will be *karma* only, not *bhakti*. By that, we will certainly earn some *sukṛti* (spiritual merit), but we will not gain entrance into *bhagavad-bhakti* (devotion to the Supreme Lord)." Upon saying this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself began to chant Bhagavān's names, and all the devotees imitated Him and began to perform their own various services, all the while performing *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names. If in our life we also do *kīrtana* of Bhagavān's names while performing every activity, then our heart also will become clean and we will be able to enter pure *bhagavad-bhakti*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the devotees first gathered up all of the grass, pebbles, and stones and threw them outside. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, "I want to see who has collected the most grass and dust. Everyone should collect grass, stones, and dust in their cloth and then show Me. I will inspect what has been gathered; otherwise, some people may

cheat by merely pretending to sweep.” Śrīman Mahāprabhu then went to the devotees and began to look at their piles of grass, dust, and so on. He praised those who had cleaned very nicely and gathered lots of grass and dust, but He lovingly scolded those who had not done so properly. After that, Mahāprabhu instructed the good cleaners to teach those who did not know how to clean nicely. In this way, all the devotees blissfully swept the temple. In the end, everyone saw that Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself had collected the most dust of all. Although the temple had been fully swept the first time they cleaned, Śrīman Mahāprabhu was not satisfied, and so, on His order, everyone began to sweep the temple once more. After the second cleaning, Mahāprabhu was somewhat satisfied, but even then, fine particles of dust spots, and stains remained that could not be removed with a broom.

One hundred people stood with one hundred earthen water pots full of water, awaiting the command to clean. When Mahāprabhu gave the order to bring water, they set the hundred water pots before Him. Hundreds of people brought water from the lake. Those who could not find a place to stand at the *ghāṭa* filled their water pots from wells. Hundreds of people brought hundreds of filled water pots, and hundreds of people took hundreds of empty water pots away. Everyone was filling water pots, washing the temple, and calling, “Hari, Hari!” The name of Kṛṣṇa was all that could be heard. As the devotees handed pots to each other, they called, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.” And as they asked for the pots, they called, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.”

In this way, the chanting of Kṛṣṇa accompanied the performance of each and every duty. If a pot were broken, the sound “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!” was heard, and new pots were arranged immediately.

In this way, all sides of Guṇḍicā Mandira were washed with water, and each and every corner was nicely cleaned and purified. After the temple had been cleaned with water, not one speck of dust remained. Śrīman Mahāprabhu then saw that a few spots of dirt and stains remained in some places. Mahāprabhu scrubbed the dirt with His own *uttariya-vastra* (the upper cloth worn by a *sannyāsī*). In this way, Guṇḍicā Mandira became as clean and pure as Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s heart.

Through this Guṇḍicā Mandira *mārjana* pastime, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the spiritual master of the universe, is imparting the teaching that, if any fortunate soul wants to seat Kṛṣṇa on the throne of his heart, he must first wash and clean the dirt from his heart. It is necessary to make the heart clean, calm, and radiant by devotional service. If there are any impediments to spiritual life (*anarthas*) at all within the field of the heart, in the form of thorny grass, dust, rocks, and so on, then the supremely worshipful Bhagavān will not situate Himself there. This, indeed, is the hidden meaning behind Guṇḍicā Mandira *mārjana*.

The anarthas of the jīvas bound by māyā

This dirt in the heart, that is, the multitude of *anarthas* that reside there, is nothing more than endeavors for *anyābhilāṣa* (ulterior desires) in the form of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *yoga*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has thus stated,

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)

[This verse conveys that] when *bhakti*, the innate tendency of the soul, is devoid of all types of desires other than *bhakti* (*anyābhilāṣa*) and is not covered by *jñāna*, *karma*, *yoga*, *tāpa*, etc. and moods unfavorable to *bhakti*, it is known as *uttamā-bhakti*, or *śuddha-bhakti*.

Without that *bhakti*, which is imbued with pure goodness (*śuddhā-sattva*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not appear in one's heart.

Anyābhilāṣa: *Anyābhilāṣa* means, 'As long as I stay in this world, I will only absorb my senses in sense enjoyment.' The thorny grass of such absorption repeatedly pierces the soft, natural inclination toward *kevalā-bhakti* (exclusive *bhakti*) that exists in the heart of the *jīva* in his pure state.

Karma-ceṣṭā: *Karma-ceṣṭā* means, 'By making offerings of sacrifice (*yāga-yajña*), bestowing charity (*dāna*), performing austerity (*tapasyā*), and so on, I will enjoy the pleasures of the higher planets

such as *svarga*, as well as the pleasures of this world.’ Such desire-filled endeavors are compared to dust. The whirlwind of pious action (*karma*) and the dust of desire (*vāsanā*) cover the clean and pure mirror of the heart. The unlimited dust particles of the tendency to perform pious and impious action soil the heart of the *jīva*, birth after birth. Therefore, the *jīvas* cannot completely eliminate the desire to perform *karma*. Living entities averse to Hari think that only by the performance of *karma* can the fruit of *karma* be removed, but this conception is utterly faulty. It is due to this erroneous reasoning that the *jīvas* are deprived of their constitutional form and nature (*svarūpa*). Just as fire can never be put out by ghee, the desire for fruitive activities cannot be removed by fruitive activities. Only by *kevalā-bhakti*, or *śuddhā-bhakti*, can the *jīva* remove all desires for his own happiness. When such desires have been removed, the clean throne of his heart becomes a suitable resting place for Śrī Bhagavān. This is why the devotee poet Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has said, “*tomāra hṛdaye sadā govinda viśrāma* – Śrī Govinda always rests within the heart of His devotee.”

Endeavors for impersonal knowledge (*nirviśeṣa-jñāna*), *yoga*, and other such endeavors are just like jagged stones that pierce the body of Śrī Hari instead of serving Him. Although in the first stage of pursuing the impersonal conception of the Lord (*nirviśeṣa-brahma*), chanting the holy name is accepted in a subsidiary capacity, still, in *mukti*, or the condition in which a person has the erroneous conception that he is *brahma* (the Supreme Spirit), his independent existence is not accepted. For this reason, Bhagavān does not appear in the heart of such an unfortunate *jīva*, who prides himself on being liberated.

With the objective that Bhagavān should soon reside in the temple without difficulty, Śrī Gaurasundara (Śrīman Mahāprabhu) did not keep unwanted things such as grass, dust, or stones inside the temple compounds. Rather, He personally threw them out.

It is often seen that, even though [the desire to perform] *karma*, *jñāna*, and other such endeavors remain distant from a living entity’s heart, some very fine particles of dirt remain within. They are compared to duplicity (*kuṭināṭi*), the desire for reputation (*pratiṣṭāśā*),

harmfulness to living entities (*jīva-himsā*), improper conduct (*niṣiddhācāra*), mundane profit (*lābha*), adoration (*pūjā*), and so on.

Kuṭināṭi: *Kuṭināṭi* means duplicity, *kapaṭatā*, and it is exemplified in the behavior of the demoness Pūtanā. Pūtanā was the embodiment of *kapaṭatā*. Externally she was the very form of affection, but internally she was similar to poison and the direct personification of death (*kāla*). As long as *kapaṭatā* remains in the heart of a spiritual practitioner (*sādhaka*), he will not be able to enter the realm of *bhagavad-bhajana*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa first slayed *kapaṭatā*, in the form of Pūtanā.

Pratiṣṭhāsā: “By performing solitary *bhajana*, ignorant people will call me a great *sādhu*, a *mahātmā*.” When this mundane desire to be known as a devotee or an incarnation prompts one with a rock-hard heart to feign ecstatic transformations and emotions for the purpose of receiving prestige, it is called *pratiṣṭhāsā*. For example, a *kaniṣṭha-bhakta* may perform *bhajana* in a secluded place, imitating Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but since the condition of his heart is not replete with *kṛṣṇa-prema* like Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s, he again falls down.

Some Western devotees once went to Purī. They were not allowed to take *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, and Śrī Subhadrā-devī in the temple, but they were able to go to the Ṭoṭā Gopinātha temple, Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s *samādhi*, and Siddha-bakula. At Siddha-bakula, one of the devotees saw Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s chanting beads (*mālā*). He gave the *pūjārī* a thousand dollars and said, “Give me that *mālā*.” The *pūjārī*, greedy for wealth, stole the *mālā* and gave it to that so-called devotee. Having received the *mālā*, he began to think, “By chanting on this very *mālā*, I too will become a devotee like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and everyone will offer me respect.”

But simply obtaining Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s *mālā* is insufficient. Only by performing *nāma-bhajana* at Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s lotus feet and under his guidance will the heart become purified. An unqualified endeavor only increases the probability of misfortune. We should not try to imitate (*anukaraṇa*) a devotee like Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura; rather, we should sincerely follow him (*anusaraṇa*). No one becomes a pure devotee simply by obtaining the *mālā* of a pure devotee by theft or deception. On the contrary, such endeavors cause offenses.

Nowadays, many people keep a large *mālā* weighing not less than five kilos, even though they cannot chant properly. They wear large *tulasī* neck beads that have “Rādhe, Rādhe” written on them. All one will obtain by such practice is an increasing false ego.

Jīva-himsā: The general principle regarding non-violence (*ahimsā*) is to not kill any living entity. *Himsā*, violence, does not only mean to commit murder with one’s hands or a weapon; rather, *himsā* is to cause pain to another with one’s tongue, mind, or heart. If you desire to make your heart pure and situate Bhagavān there, then you should never envy anyone, and you should always remain far from criticism of a Vaiṣṇava, because this is also one kind of *himsā*. Superficially sweeping, mopping, or merely washing with water does not remove the dirty spots that have fallen on the temple of the heart. These spots and blemishes are observed in the form of offenses at the lotus feet of Vaiṣṇavas and disobedience to *gurudeva*. Among the ten kinds of *nāma-aparādha*, the first offense is to the feet of pure Vaiṣṇavas. The *sādhaka* aspiring to transverse the path of *bhakti* must quickly endeavor to gain exemption from these *aparādhas*. To teach this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally cleaned and scrubbed the entire Guṇḍicā Mandira – up and down, here and there – with His own cloth. He completely cleaned everything, not leaving a single spot anywhere.

Niṣiddhācāra: We should try to understand what *niṣiddhācāra*, prohibited activities, are. For example, a *brahmacārī* or *sannyāsī* should stay far away from the desire for lust.

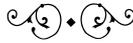
asat-saṅga-tyāga, – ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra

‘strī-saṅgī’ – eka asādhu, ‘kṛṣṇābhakta’ āra

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.84)

To give up bad association is the most appropriate conduct for Vaiṣṇavas. *Avaiṣṇava* refers to those who associate inappropriately with women (*strī-saṅgī*) and to those who are not devotees of Kṛṣṇa. There are two kinds of association with women. The first is in accordance with the codes of religion as established by the principles of *varṇāśrama*. The second refers to the illicit association of women which is against religious principles. The latter destroys *varṇāśrama*-

dharma and takes one to the hellish planets. Generally, in the material world, persons addicted to committing sinful acts are not qualified to become Vaiṣṇavas. The three objectives of religion (*dharma*), economic gain (*artha*), and sense gratification (*kāma*) keep one bound to inappropriate association with woman, which is conduct not befitting a Vaiṣṇava. The fourth principle, *mokṣā* (liberation), does not arise out of illicit association with women, but it is much more fearsome than the association of women. The association of both *māyāvādīs* (impersonalists who affirm everything to be illusion) and *māyāvilāsīs* (those given to indulging in illusion) is the cause of the destruction of Vaiṣṇavism and *śuddha-bhakti*.



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has also described these faults and *anarthas* in the first verse of his book, *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*:

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

A self-composed person who can tolerate his impetus to speak, the agitation of the mind, the onset of anger, the vehemence of the tongue, the urge of the belly, and the agitation of the genitals can instruct the entire world, that is, everyone becomes the disciple of such a person who has conquered his senses.

The root of the six kinds of urges (*vega*) is the tongue. The tongue does not have a bone and can thus move in all directions. If the tongue is not controlled, then the other five urges will control a person; and if the tongue is controlled, then all the other senses will be under control. The tongue has two functions: speaking and eating. If the first function of the tongue is not curbed, then there is great danger of engaging in useless talk, by which fearsome problems can be born, even to the extent that one's entire life can be destroyed. I will clarify this topic by giving a couple of examples.

Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira’s royal palace was so amazing that in some places, it was very difficult to discern the difference between water and dry ground. Once, Duryodhana fell into water, thinking it to be dry ground. Draupadi laughed and said, “The son of a blind man is also blind.” It was these words alone that caused the Mahābhārata War, in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

Also, when Śrī Rāma left Sītā in the care of Lakṣmaṇa and went to catch the demon Marīca, who had taken the form of a deer, Marīca adopted Rāma’s voice and cried out to Lakṣmaṇa in such distress that it seemed that He was in a frightful situation. Lakṣmaṇa understood that this was a trick of Marīca, and although Sītā-devī beseeched him many times to go and help Śrī Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa would not enter the forest and leave Sītā alone. Finally, Sītā angrily said to him, “Lakṣmaṇa, I know you want the destruction of Śrī Rāma now, so that you can make me your wife. Out of your obstinacy, you are not going to save Him, even after my repeated requests to you.” It was solely due to her love for Rāma that Sītā wanted Lakṣmaṇa to go to the forest. But when Lakṣmaṇa, who Sītā treated like her son, heard such bitter words from her, he unwillingly left her alone, resulting in her being kidnapped. In the end, for this very reason, war also ensued.

The other function of the tongue is to eat. Taking meat, fish, onion, garlic, and other such forbidden foodstuffs, as well as intoxicating substances, increases the mode of ignorance; thus one is not able to control one’s mind and heart. Through the uncontrolled mind, people become engrossed in sinful activities and destroy themselves.

There is a very simple way to bring the tongue under control. After offering foodstuffs to the Lord, partake of the *mahā-prasāda* and continuously chant the *mahā-mantra*: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*.

In the second *śloka* of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī states:

*atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyaṁ ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati*

Bhakti is destroyed by the six faults: (1) Over-collection and over-eating, (2) endeavors unfavorable to *bhakti*, (3) useless chatter, (4) enthusiasm for practices not befitting one's qualification and lack of enthusiasm to adopt essential regulations [for spiritual progress], (5) mundane association, and (6) greed, or the restlessness of the mind to adopt worthless opinions.

Atyāhāra means to eat more than necessary or to collect mundane sense objects. Remaining engaged in collecting worldly sense objects and endeavoring for that which is against *bhakti* is *prāyasa*.

Unnecessary, useless, time-wasting slander and gossip is called *prajalpa*. Not endeavoring for the topmost qualification – service to the Lord – and instead maintaining enthusiasm for the rules and regulations by which one procures insignificant attainments, such as entrance into the heavenly planets, while remaining indifferent to the rules that nourish *bhakti*, is *niyamāgraha*.

Leaving the association of pure devotees and associating with ordinary people is called *jana-saṅga*. Restlessness of the mind for trifling sense objects and unsteadiness of the mind due to associating with adherents of many other doctrines is the meaning of *laulya*.

As long as these faults and *anarthas* remain in the heart of a human being, Śrī Bhagavān will not situate Himself there. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and His manifestation as *śrī gurudeva* can dispel these unwanted things and make the heart pure. They are competent at doing this and they are also causelessly merciful. But without our own endeavor, it will not be possible to take that mercy; it is up to us to take it. If we cannot even do that much, then how will it come to pass? *Śrī gurudeva* mercifully gives us such instructions that success is assured if we live our life by them. For example, in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, we see the example of Arjuna, who said to Kṛṣṇa,

kārpaṇya-doṣopahata-svabhāvaḥ
prechāmi tvām dharma-sammūḍha-cetāḥ
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṁ brūhi tan me
śiṣyas te 'haṁ śādhi mām tvām prapannam
Śrīmad Bhagavad-gīta (2.7)

I have become overwhelmed by cowardice, having put aside my natural heroic nature and having become bewildered about how to ascertain my true duty. I am thus requesting You to tell me clearly what is auspicious for me.

Hearing Arjuna's sincere words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mercifully gave him many instructions and removed all doubts from his mind. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then gave Arjuna the order to enter battle, by following which Arjuna became victorious.

In exactly the same way, if a disciple is ready to follow the order of *guru*, then *guru* will always help the disciple. But if the disciple disobeys *guru* or misuses his independent desire, it is an offense to *guru*. As a consequence, the disciple's *bhakti* is destroyed and his desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa vanishes.

The characteristics of a bona fide guru

The bona fide spiritual master (*sad guru*) imparts teachings to the disciple through his own conduct. For example, while Śrīman Mahāprabhu was cleaning Guṇḍicā Mandira, a young boy, a Gauḍīya *bhakta*, brought a filled water pot, washed Mahāprabhu's feet, and drank the water. Mahāprabhu was furious and said, "What are you doing? Jagannātha is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, and He is just about to arrive here. We are cleaning this place in honor of His arrival. I am an ordinary person, and yet you have washed My feet and drunk the water. This is an offense to Śrī Jagannātha-deva. The outcome of this offense will be very bad for us both."

Śrīman Mahāprabhu then called Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and said, "Prabhu, just see how your Gauḍīya *bhakta* behaves inside Ṭhākuraḥ's temple. He is shaming Me. Have you not explained to him the convention to be observed by *śuddha-bhaktas*? Please tell him that since Jagannātha is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, washing the feet of an ordinary person like Me in His temple, and then taking the water as if it is water that has washed the feet of the Lord (*carāṇāmṛta*), is an offense to Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, and Śrī Subhadrā-devī."

With the aim of appeasing Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara slapped that young boy and took him outside. Although Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara was actually very happy with him, in order to establish the proper code of conduct (*dharma*), he showed support of the Lord's anger. When he was out of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's view, he said to that devotee, "Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Śrī Jagannātha-deva Himself, but He wants to teach people in general that we should not behave like this with ordinary persons. You have not done anything wrong; rather, you have performed the topmost activity. Wait right here. I will call you back in, and you can beg forgiveness from Śrīman Mahāprabhu." When that Bengali devotee was called, he went to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and said, "O Prabhu, I have done wrong. Please be merciful and forgive me." Hearing his prayer, Mahāprabhu forgot everything and forgave him.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu performed this pastime only to teach us the principles of *bhakti*. If any person tells others to worship him, it is improper in every respect. In front of the deities, one should not be openly affectionate with others, nor should one weep and wail, or discipline or assault anyone. In front of the deities, one should not offer *praṇāma* to anyone other than a bona fide *guru*.

A bona fide *guru* never egotistically considers himself to be a *guru* or even an advanced devotee. He never hopes, "May my disciple offer flowers at my feet, may he pour water on them and throw that very water on others, and may he take that *caraṇāmṛta*." A pure *guru*, or Vaiṣṇava, always remains far from such egoism. He naturally thinks himself to be extremely low and fallen, and he continuously offers prayers to Bhagavān's feet.

Absorbed in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is topmost among all devotees, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, used to say "*na prema-gandha* – I have not the slightest tinge of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa within My heart" (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 2.45). (If someone asks, "Then why are you crying while taking Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name?" then Śrīman Mahāprabhu answers,) "When you see Me crying in separation, know that I am just falsely exhibiting My great fortune. In truth, although I am bereft of the *darśana* of the beautiful face

of Kṛṣṇa playing His flute, I continue to live My life like an insect, without purpose. I have not even a scent of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Even fish are superior to Me, because if taken from water, they die at once, but although I have not had *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa, I do not die. I am extremely wretched.”

If anyone wants to continuously chant *japa* and perform *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names, then he must certainly follow this instruction spoken by Śrīman Mahāprabhu:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka (3)

Only one who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who always gives respect to others, not desiring personal honor, can very easily chant the holy name of Śrī Hari without cessation.

A person who is without the four qualities mentioned in this verse cannot truly chant the names of Śrī Hari.

Śrī Hari’s name is transcendental and divine, and therefore His name cannot be uttered with our material tongue, nor can we have *darśana* of the Lord with our material eyes.

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.234)

Kṛṣṇa’s name and so on cannot be perceived by material senses. In the stage of *sevonmukha*, when the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa arises, His name, form, qualities, pastimes, and so on manifest on the transcendental tongue, eyes, and other senses of the devotee.

Indeed, chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa is service to Him. There are three stages of chanting: *nāma-aparādha*, *nāma-ābhāsa*, and *śuddha-nāma*. When we chant with our tongue and by our own endeavor, without awareness of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*) or faith, it is called *nāma-aparādha*. When the name is chanted with some faith but no *sambandha-jñāna*, it is called *nāma-ābhāsa*. And when the name is chanted with full faith and self-surrender and is endowed with *sambandha-jñāna*, it is *śuddha-nāma*. If *śuddha-nāma* is uttered, Kṛṣṇa Himself will dance on the tongue. While chanting, we should pray to Kṛṣṇa, “I am offering myself unto Your lotus feet, giving up all worldly desires. I have no beloved other than You. You are my everything.”

There may not be any taste for the holy name in the beginning stage, but this is not a matter for concern. Yet there definitely should be a taste for listening to *hari-kathā*, because by hearing *hari-kathā* from the lips of pure devotees, a taste for chanting *harināma* will certainly arise. And even if there is no taste in hearing *hari-kathā*, it should be heard again and again, and the pure devotees speaking that *kathā* should be offered proper respect.

*satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hr̥t-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25)*

(Bhagavān Kapila-deva said to his mother, Devahūti:) In the association of saintly persons, My *kathā* gives genuine knowledge of My valiant deeds, which are dearly pleasing to the heart and ear. The result of hearing this *kathā*, which is release from ignorance, occurs very quickly, first of all in the form of *śraddhā* (firm faith in *sādhana-bhakti*), then *rati* (*bhāva-bhakti*), and finally the awakening of *prema-bhakti*.

The speaker should be *satām*, a pure devotee. We should not with our own intelligence make the mistake of accepting an ordinary person

or devotee to be a *mahā-bhāgavata*. In regard to discerning who is a *madhyama-adhikārī* and who is an *uttama-adhikārī*, we should only accept the opinion of a superior Vaiṣṇava as correct. When, by practicing *śuddha-bhakti*, we become *madhyama-adhikārī*, we will become capable of discerning this for ourselves. If we do not give proper respect to a *mahā-bhāgavata*, and if we consider a *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava to be a *mahā-bhāgavata*, it will constitute an offense to the true *mahā-bhāgavata*. The *uttama-bhāgavata* will keep his *svarūpa* (real nature) hidden. Although Śrīla Vaṁśī-dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja was an *uttama-bhāgavata*, he used to make a show of smoking *gañjā*. He sometimes scattered dry fish bones around his hut so that people would think that he ate fish. His thought was, “If those who are materially inclined remain far away from me, then I can one-pointedly chant Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name and remember Him.”

Whatever a bona fide *guru* does is solely to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *guru*, and Vaiṣṇavas. A bona fide *guru* does not have any worldly desires. Following his footsteps, we too ought to consider that every single activity performed with our body, mind, words, heart, and mood should only be performed to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi
yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya
tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam
Bhagavad-gītā (9.27)

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna:) “O son of Kuntī, whatever activity you undertake, whatever you eat, whatever you offer or give away, and whatever austerities you perform, offer to Me.”

If we also strictly follow this instruction of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa in our life, then, after some time, every single activity we perform will be done out of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His dear associate, *gurudeva*. In this way, our heart will slowly become purified, and *kṛṣṇa-prema* will manifest there. This, indeed, is the secret behind Guṇḍicā Mandira *mārjana*.

*The Narration
of Ratha-yātrā*

At the time of Ratha-yātrā, prior to Śrīman Mahāprabhu's coming to Purī, only the king's servants and elephants would pull the carts of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, and Śrī Subhadrā-devī. No special feeling for Lord Jagannātha arose in the people, because they did not perform *kīrtana* or dance for Him. But Śrīman Mahāprabhu, out of causeless mercy, manifested His inner moods by performing *kīrtana* and dancing with His associates. In this way, He filled Ratha-yātrā with *bhakti-rasa*, the blissful mellows of devotion. Hundreds of thousands of devotees from Bengal, Orissa, and other places in India came each year to taste this *rasa*. Nowadays about one million people come to take part in the Ratha-yātrā festival.

In the morning, on the day of Ratha-yātrā, the descendants of the *dayitās* from Viśvāvasu's village bring Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā-devī from the *mandira* and seat them on their chariots. They wrap cloth and ropes around the three deities and struggle, despite their great strength, to lift them up and carry them onto the chariot. This is an arduous task. While carrying Śrī Jagannātha, the *dayitās*, absorbed in affection, throw abuses at Him as the *gopīs* do. For instance, when they are unable to keep Śrī Jagannātha in the air and He lands on the ground, the *dayitās* say, "We don't know where You have taken birth or who Your mother and father are. Some say that you are the son of Vasudeva and some say that you are the son of Nanda, but who are You? Just tell us this." Abusing Him in this way [sometimes carrying Jagannātha with ease and sometimes with great

difficulty], it can take the *dayitās* three, four, or six hours to bring Śrī Jagannātha onto the chariot, and sometimes it even takes the entire day. On the four sides of all three chariots, devotees perform non-stop *kīrtana* – “Jaya Jagannātha, Jaya Baladeva, Jaya Subhadra! *Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma, rāma rāma hare hare.*”

In this way, when Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, and Śrī Subhadra have ascended their newly constructed, large chariots, the Ratha-yātrā begins. Śrī Baladeva Prabhu’s chariot leads the way, followed by Śrī Subhadra’s chariot; Śrī Jagannātha’s chariot is at the very end.

Every year, before Śrī Jagannātha-deva’s Ratha-yātrā commences, the king of Orissa sweeps and cleans the road upon which the chariot will travel. This is a custom from ancient times. The king abandons his royal dress and dons the cloth of an ordinary man. He sprinkles sandalwood water before the chariot and sweeps the road with a golden handled broom.

Śrī Caitanya-deva with His associates at Ratha-yātrā

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gathered all His devotees just as Lord Jagannātha-deva’s chariot was ready to proceed to Guṇḍicā Mandira, and with His own lotus hands, He decorated the devotees with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp. He then divided His close associates into four *kīrtana* parties. He arranged for six singers to lead the *kīrtana* in each party, accompanied by two *mṛdaṅga* players, and then gave them the order to begin chanting. In the first party, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu was the main dancer, in the second, Śrī Advaita Ācārya, in the third, Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and in the fourth, Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita danced in a most exquisite manner. All of them were extremely expert and all had the capacity to dance throughout the entire day and night. Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Mukunda, and Govinda Ghoṣa were the main singers in the four respective groups.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu manifests His opulence during Ratha-yātrā

Śrīman Mahāprabhu then created three more parties. The first was made up of Bengali householder devotees from the village of Kulīna-grāma. The second consisted of devotees from Śāntipura, and the third consisted of devotees from Śrīkhaṇḍa. The devotees in the first four groups sang and danced in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's chariot. The other three groups danced on each side of the chariot and behind it. In this way, the devotees in the seven parties performed *kīrtana* with thousands of devotees following each party.

Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself began to dance. Having manifested Himself in seven forms, He danced and sang in each party simultaneously. A continuous stream of tears flowed from His eyes, and He danced with the same intense speed that Kṛṣṇa used to dance in His *rāsa-līlā*.

Although Śrīman Mahāprabhu was present in all parties simultaneously, the devotees in each group saw that He was only with them, and they joyfully sang and danced. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also bestows the same joy on His associates in His pastimes. At Bhāṇḍīravāṭa, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa sat with His *sakhās* to take His meal, His many, many *sakhās* sat around Him. Some *sakhās* sat in front of Him, some sat on both sides of Him, some sat behind Him, some sat near to Him, and some sat very far away, yet each and every *sakhā* perceived that he was personally feeding Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that Kṛṣṇa was personally feeding him.

Similarly, at the time of *rāsa-līlā*, it seemed that hundreds of millions of Kṛṣṇas were dancing with hundreds of millions of *gopīs*. In between each pair of *gopīs* was Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and between each two Śrī Kṛṣṇas was one *gopī*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu now exhibited that astonishing spectacle in this *līlā*.

Except for King Pratāparudra, Kāśī Mīśra, and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, everyone perceived Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to be in their group exclusively. Only by Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mercy did the king see Mahāprabhu dancing in all seven parties. Beholding Śrīman Mahāprabhu's divine majesty (*aiśvarya*) and mercy, a continuous stream of tears began to flow from the king's eyes. He fell down and

rolled on the ground, and then Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya lifted him up. The king asked, “What am I seeing? Is my vision faulty? Śrīman Mahāprabhu is here, and He is also there, and there, and there. He is dancing in all seven parties.”

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya said to the king, “You are very fortunate. You have received Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy, and that is why you are able to have *darśana* of such a pastime of opulence.”

As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, devotees formed three concentric circles around Him, in order to prevent the crowds from coming too near Him. Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu directed the first circle, devotees headed by Kāśīśvara and Govinda linked hands to form a second circle, and King Pratāparudra and his personal assistants and soldiers came together to make the third circle. Pratāparudra’s general, Haricandana, was present there with the king. Along with his soldiers, he protected Mahārāja Pratāparudra and the other two circles from the crowd, who were eager to have *darśana* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu dancing.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu danced, absorbed in *mahābhāva*, and Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, who is Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi, was absorbed in watching Him. He stood in front of King Pratāparudra, thus obstructing the king’s vision of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. King Pratāparudra raised himself up by putting his hands on Haricandana’s shoulders, but Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita was absorbed in getting *darśana* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and his body moved from one side to the other, continuing to obstruct the king’s view.

Haricandana touched Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and said, “The king wants to see, so please move to the side.” But Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita’s absorption was such that he did not hear him. Haricandana then began to push Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita around. Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita became angry, and he slapped Haricandana, telling him to stand quietly.

General Haricandana was tall, strong, and stout. He went to arrest Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita right there and then, but King Pratāparudra stopped him. “Remain calm,” the king said. “These are Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s associates, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself. You are extremely fortunate to be slapped by such an elevated Vaiṣṇava. Accept this as his mercy.” Upon hearing this, the general became silent.

When the chariot of Lord Śrī Jagannātha-deva reached Balaguṇḍi, the midway point, it stopped. On the right was a forest of coconut trees, and on the left was a garden of flowers that was beautiful like Vṛndāvana.

*sei sthale bhoga lāge, āchaye niyama
koṭi bhoga jagannātha kare āsvādana*

*jagannāther choṭō-baḍō jatō bhakta-gaṇa
nija nija uttam-bhoga kare samarpaṇa*

*rājā, rāj-mahiṣī-vṛnda, pātra, mitra-gaṇa
nīlācala-vāsī jatō choṭō-baḍō jana*

*nānā-deśer deśī jatō jātrika jana
nija-nija-bhoga tāhā kare samarpaṇa*

*āge-pāche, dui pārśve udyānera-vane
jei jāhā pāya, lāgāy, – nāhika niyame*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.196–200)

According to custom, when the Lord arrived at Balaguṇḍi, He was offered food. Jagannātha relished millions of preparations here. All the devotees of Lord Jagannātha – both big and small – offered their best food preparations in accordance with their moods. The king, queens, ministers, and friends, and all other prominent and not-so-prominent residents of Nilacala, as well as all pilgrims from various places, offered their various food preparations. [It became so crowded that it was impossible to come in front of Lord Śrī Jagannātha's chariot, and so] everyone made their offerings wherever they stood, either in the garden or in the forest, or in front of the chariot, behind it, or on either side. There were no hard and fast rules. [Lord Śrī Jagannātha-deva accepted all the food preparations merely by His glance.]

Exhausted from having danced for so long, Śrīman Mahāprabhu went into the garden on the left and laid down under a tree. A cool, fragrant breeze gently blew over Him. Remembering the pastimes of Vraja, *prema* swelled even more within Him.

The mercy bestowed upon King Pratāparudra

On the advice of Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, King Pratāparudra went to Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaitācārya, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, offered *praṇāma* and said, “I am going to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Please give me your blessings.” He then removed his royal dress and ornaments and put on an ordinary *dhoti*. When he approached Śrīman Mahāprabhu, he took His lotus feet in his hands and gently and expertly began to massage them. While doing so, he sweetly sang *Gopī-gīta* from *Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*, the five chapters on *rāsa-līlā* within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ
śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakās
tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvām vicinvate

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.1)

[The *gopīs* said,] “O dearly beloved, because of Your birth in this land of Vraja, the entire area has become more glorious than Vaikuṅṭha and other planets. It is for this reason that Lakṣmī, the goddess of beauty and wealth, eternally decorates it with her presence. But, O Lord of our life, in this blissful land of Vraja, it is only Your beloveds – we *gopīs* – who, in separation from You, are deeply anguished. We maintain our lives solely for Your sake. Continuously searching for You in all directions, we have become dejected. Therefore, please appear before us now.

As King Pratāparudra sang, overwhelmed with spiritual emotion, Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s immersion in *bhāva* increased, and His heart melted even more. As soon as He heard the verses sweetly uttered by the king, He asked, “Oh! Who is pouring this nectar in My ears? Go on singing, go on singing. Continue giving Me this nectar.”

The king continued singing, until he came to the following verse:

*tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvī gṛṇanti te bhūri-dā janāḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.9)*

[O Śrī Kṛṣṇa,] ambrosial narrations about You are the life and soul of those tormented by separation from You. Realized persons, or poets (like Brahmā, Śiva, and the four Kumāras) sing of them. Discussions about You vanquish the distress of fructified (*prārabda*) and unfructified (*aprārabda*) sins. Simply hearing those narrations bestows auspiciousness, and they bestow the wealth of *prema*. The nectar of Your narrations is expanded by those who glorify Your pastimes. Therefore, that person who performs *kīrtana* of Your *līlā-kathā* in this world is the most generous benefactor.

As soon as Śrīman Mahāprabhu heard this verse from the lips of the king, He could not check Himself, and overwhelmed with *prema*, He embraced the king. “Who are you who are showing Me such kindness?” He asked.

King Pratāparudra replied, “I am an insignificant servant of Your servants.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu then said:

*“tumi more dile bahu amūlya ratana
mora kichu dite nāhi, dilū āliṅgana”
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.11)*

“You have given Me many priceless gems, but I am just a penniless beggar. Because I have no wealth, I am unable to give you anything in return. I can only give you My embrace. This is My only wealth.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu clasped the king to His heart, and an incessant stream of tears flowed from their eyes.

The deep bhāva of Gopī-gīta

All the verses of *Gopī-gīta* have exceedingly beautiful and esoteric meanings. Each and every verse is connected with the next. Also, *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas explain the meaning of each verse in one or more ways. These verses reveal the heartfelt moods of intense separation from Kṛṣṇa. Feeling this separation, the *gopīs*, in great distress, pray, “O Kṛṣṇa, please come to us and give Your *darśana*; otherwise, we will die.”

[In the first verse, the *gopīs* say,] *janmanā vraja*: “You have taken birth in Vṛndāvana, in Gokula, and that is why Mahālakṣmī sweeps the earth in Vṛndāvana and performs other services to make it beautiful. Indeed, Vraja is the topmost place of Your sweet pastimes.”

[The ninth verse begins with] *tava kathāmṛtaṁ*. There are many meanings for this verse, but here, only two are given in brief. The first is the general meaning, and the second is a deeper meaning.

(The first meaning of the verse ‘tava kathāmṛtaṁ’)

“The narration of Your pastimes is like nectar for the living entities. If someone hears those pastimes, You personally enter his heart in the form of *hari-kathā*.”

śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.17)

For whoever attentively hears these pastimes (*līlās*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally enters that person’s ears and heart, and like a dear, intimate friend, He removes lust, anger, desires for material enjoyment, and all other *anarthas* that reside there. Having removed these obstacles to *bhakti*, He makes that heart clean and pure, and situates Himself there for eternity.

The living entities who have been averse to the Lord since time immemorial have fallen into the cycle of birth and death, and undergo

extreme misery. But narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are like nectar for the *jīvas* who are scorched by the flames of this frightening misery. By faithfully hearing these *līlās*, the intense despair of the living entities is vanquished.

Parikṣit Mahārāja was due to die after seven days from the bite of a poisonous snake, and no one in this world was capable of saving him. For those seven days, [in preparation for death,] he completely gave up eating, drinking, and sleeping, and remained on the bank of the Gaṅgā, hearing *hari-kathā* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī.

*nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād
bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt
ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt
pumān virajyeta vinā paśu-ghnāt
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.1.4)*

Glorification of Uttamaśloka Śrī Hari is performed in the *śrouta-paramparā*¹. In other words, having heard such glorification (*saṅkīrtana*) from the lips of *śrī guru*, a person again narrates it. Those glories of Śrī Hari are nicely extolled by liberated personalities, who have no thirst for anything that is unrelated to Kṛṣṇa. [For the seekers of liberation, *mumukṣus*,] this *saṅkīrtana* is the infallible medicine for the disease of material existence. [For devotees who have taste, *ruci*,] it is the medicinal tonic (*rasāyana*) for the heart and ears. What intelligent person would stop hearing such glorification of the Lord? Only a butcher would do this; that is, one who is killing his own self.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī had no worldly desires at all. The *hari-kathā* spoken by such a *rasika-tattva-jña* devotee – a devotee who is fully conversant with the principles of transcendental *rasa* – is the infallible medicine for the disease of material existence. This is because such *hari-kathā* removes all kinds of diseases that are subsequent results of the disease of material existence. Lust, anger,

¹ A lineal descent of the message of Godhead, passed down from *guru* to disciple by means of oral reception. – ed.

and desires for worldly enjoyment, which accompany the snakebite of the worldly threefold miseries, are also quickly removed.

Tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam. The *hari-kathā* coming from the lotus mouth of a realized, *rasika* devotee who thoroughly explains the sweet pastimes of Kṛṣṇa pacifies the listener, and he receives new life. By regularly hearing such *hari-kathā*, one becomes full of happiness, not only in this life, but in the next life as well. Such a human being gradually climbs the steps of *bhakti* and attains the abode of the Lord, where he is forever immersed in an ocean of *ānanda* (transcendental bliss).

Kavibhir iḍitam. Great *kavis*, poets, such as Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrī Vālmiki, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Śrī Vyāsadeva, sing *śrī-kṛṣṇa-kathā*, narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Kalmaṣa-apaham. By hearing and chanting *śrī-kṛṣṇa-kathā*, all kinds of sins and the results of past actions disappear very quickly.

Śravaṇa-maṅgalam. By ceaselessly hearing *śrī-kṛṣṇa-kathā*, one attains all kinds of auspicious results in life.

Śrīmad ātatam. The *śrī* (fame) of that person who sings *hari-kathā*, spreads throughout the entire world.

Bhūridā. The greatest benefactors in this world are those who distribute *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Such benefactors sing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories and thereby uplift the whole world. Even if a king gives away his entire kingdom or a wealthy man gives his entire wealth and opulence, it does not qualify them as *bhūridā*. The greatest benefactors are those who describe Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes to others; no one else.

(The second meaning of the verse 'tava kathāmṛtaṁ')

Tava kathāmṛtaṁ. "In separation from You, Your *kathā* is not life-giving nectar (*amṛta*); it is *mṛta* (deadly poison). The reason for this is that when, in separation from You, we hear narrations of Your pastimes, the fire of separation intensifies even more, and we writhe in agony, being scorched by its burning flames."

Tapta-jīvanam. *Gopīs* like Śrīmatī Rādhikā say, "We are the proof of this. Before, we were perfectly happy in our family life, but the moment we fell in love with this Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all these problems began.

Now we are completely helpless. He has turned us into street beggars; we have no place to take shelter and are now on the verge of death. If anyone wants to remain happy in family life, then he should never ever hear Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, which cause distress."

Kavibhir iḍitam. "Poets have the capacity to praise a horse made of paper with words such as, 'This horse is strong and robust and is able to run more swiftly than the wind or the mind,' but their words are of no value. They also make statements like, 'By hearing narrations of Śrī Hari, all kinds of good fortune will arise.' This is simply not true. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has cheated us, and His narrations have also cheated us. We could not care less for these narrations, and we want to warn every person who has an attraction for *kṛṣṇa-kathā* to not hear it. Any lady who hears these narrations will forget her husband and children and will end up like a bird without a nest. She will always lament and cause her friends to weep as well.

"Those who want to happily remain with their relatives should not hear descriptions of that black Kṛṣṇa. If by chance they do hear them, they will certainly cut off all familial relationships and become mad. Always calling out, 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' they will aimlessly wander here and there, just like us. Singing in praise of Kṛṣṇa is poison. There is no doubt.

"Anyone who does not want to become mad like this should not hear narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, they should never hear from the mouth of cheaters, who come with a scripture under their arm to allure people, saying, 'Come to me. I have come to tell you sweet narrations of Śrī Hari. You do not need to be concerned about paying a fee. I will speak this *kathā* free of charge. Simply hear it.' While these duplicitous *kavis* speak *hari-kathā* in a voice as beautiful as a parrot's, the listener becomes charmed and fully immersed in that *kathā*. He then gives up his household, family, and everything, and becomes a street beggar. The speaker of such *kathā* can be compared with a cruel hunter, who attracts a deer with the sweet sound of his flute, only to slaughter it once it comes near. These trickster narrators are indeed *bhūri-dā janāḥ*, the destroyers, or killers, of those who hear them. Remain wary of them.

“But what can we do?” Śrī Rādhājī and Her *sakhīs* continue. “We can never give up listening to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā-kathā* and thinking about it.”

In this way, even though Śrī Rādhā and Her *sakhīs* want to forget Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because they are overwhelmed with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, they are unable to do so for a single moment.

A feeling can be expressed in two ways: directly or indirectly. However, the purpose of those who express such a feeling is the same. Here, we have given both kinds of explanations of the aforementioned *śloka*: the direct and the indirect. The deep intention of both is to state that we should always listen to discussions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. The result will be that all material attachments are very easily cut.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Mood
at Ratha-yātrā

At the time of Ratha-yātrā, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, overwhelmed with *bhāva*, began to offer a prayer to Lord Śrī Jagannātha-deva before His chariot.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Lord Śrī Jagannātha-deva as His *prāṇa-vallabha* (the beloved of His life), Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. He never saw Him as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā. Śrīman Mahāprabhu is indeed Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, endowed with the mood (*bhāva*) and luster (*kānti*) of Śrī Rādhā. In this *līlā*, being deeply immersed in the *bhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhājī, He spoke a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as He remembered the pastimes of Vraja:

jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanītānām vardhayan kāma-devam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.90.48)

He resides in the heart of all living entities in the form Antaryāmī (the indwelling Supersoul). (This also means, 'He lives among the *gopas* or Yādavas,' or 'He is present in the heart of every *jīva* and is the shelter of all.') In reality, it is only a rumor that He was born from the womb of Devakī, because He is unborn. [At the same time,] He is factually only the son of Yaśodā-gopī. Those who are the best of the Yadu dynasty are His servants. Although He is capable of causing universal destruction simply by His desire, by the strength

of His own arms (this also means, 'by devotees such as Arjuna, who are like His arms') He destroys the demons, who oppose the principles of religion (*dharma*). He removes the material suffering of all moving and non-moving living entities. (This also means, 'In Vraja-pura, He destroys the anguish caused by the separation of His own people from Him.') He increases the *kāma* (transcendental desire) of the damsels of Vraja-pura by His gently smiling lotus face. May that Śrī Kṛṣṇa be victorious.

As Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu utters this prayer, He is absorbed in the very same moods as Śrīmatī Rādhikā at the time of meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra.

With their *bhāvas*, the *gopīs* present in Kurukṣetra take Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Vṛndāvana and decorate Him with flowers. Purely by their *bhāvas*, they forcibly give Him the flute He left in Vṛndāvana with Mother Yaśodā, as well as a peacock feather, and whisper in His ear, "Forget that Your father and mother are Vasudeva and Devakī. Do not say that You are from the Yadu dynasty or that You are a Yādava. Just say that You are Yaśodā Maiyā's darling Gopāla and Nanda Bābā's darling Kanhaiyā."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replies, "Yes, I will surely do as you say."

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, also, has quoted the above *śloka* in his Śrī *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* commentary (2.5.152). It has many profound meanings. The entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is contained within this very *śloka*.

The general meaning of *jana-nivāsa* is, "He who is always situated in the heart of all as Paramātmā." But Kṛṣṇa cannot live as Paramātmā in the heart of the Vrajavāsīs; He resides there only in the form of Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. *Jana* also means *nija-jana* (His own near and dear ones), and therefore this refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personal associates. All the Vrajavāsīs are Kṛṣṇa's *nija-jana*, for He is the *prāṇa-dhana*, the life's treasure, of Nanda Bābā, Yaśodā Maiyā, all the *sakhās*, and especially the *gopīs*. Moreover, He is *rādhikā-jīvaner jīvan*, the very life of Śrī Rādhā's life, and He always resides in Her heart. This relationship is reciprocal; the Vrajavāsīs are His life just as much as He is theirs.

Devakī-jaṇma-vādo. Only Mathurāvāsīs and people of this world will say that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has taken birth from the womb of Mother Devakī. Actually, He is the son of Mother Yaśodā; she alone is His real mother.

Yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir. The members of the Yadu dynasty are the near and dear ones (*nija-jana*) of Dvārakādhiśa-Kṛṣṇa, for they are His associates. Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa was present in the Mahābhārata War. He fought with Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva and slayed many demons. This *śloka* seems to describe *dvārakā-lilā*, and it seems that Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa is the subject being written about, because it describes Arjuna, Bhīma, and other associates as the arms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But if we look into the deeper meaning, we will find that it simply describes the glories of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed Pūtanā and other demons with His own arms. Furthermore, in Vṛndāvana He killed the most dreadful demon of all: the feelings of separation felt by Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs*.

Sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smīta-śrī-mukhena vraja-puravanitānām. Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to remove all the problems and suffering of Vṛndāvana, simply with His enchanting, gentle smile and the sound of His flute. What is the actual suffering of the Vrajavāsīs? For them, the only suffering is separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Apart from this, they do not have the slightest recollection of any other suffering.

This verse includes the pastimes of Gokula, Vṛndāvana, Rādhākuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, *rāsa-lilā*, and other Vraja pastimes.

Vardhayan kāmadevam. In this connection, *kāma* does not mean the lust of this world; rather, it refers to transcendental lust (*āprakṛta kāma*), or unselfish, pure *prema*. That *prema* is not ‘ordinary’ *prema*; it is *prema* that increases from *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, and *bhāva*, up to *mahābhāva*. The *gopīs* tell Kṛṣṇa, “You are that very Kāmadeva who causes transcendental *kāma* to swell.” In this way, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, absorbed in the *bhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, takes *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, He sees Him directly as Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. He offers *praṇāma* and prays to Him with this one *śloka*, which contains the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and all of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

Among all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *līlās*, the *līlās* of Vraja are topmost. And of all the *līlās* of Vraja, *rāsa-līlā* is topmost, because only in *rāsa-līlā* does Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the form of *manmatha-manmatha* Kāmadeva¹ and in response to the *bhāvas* of those *gopīs* who embody *mahābhāva*, manifest the complete extent of His *rūpa* (beauty) and *mādhurya* (sweet charm). Therefore, after uttering *vraja-pura-vanītānām vardhayan kāma-devam*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, immersed in *rādhā-bhāva*, began to call out to Śrī Jagannātha-deva with the name *Gopī-bhartu*:

nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśya na śūdra
nāhaṁ varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdeh
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ
 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.80)

I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, or *śūdra*, nor am I a *brahmacārī*, *gr̥hastha*, *vānaprastha*, or *sannyāsī*. I am a servant of the servant of the servants of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the dearest beloved of the *gopīs* and an ocean of nectar laden with undivided spiritual bliss.

The meaning of *gopī-bhartuḥ*

The words *gopī-bhartuḥ* reveal Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs*. It means 'He who is the *gopīs*' most beloved' or 'He who is always controlled by the *gopīs*.' Mahāprabhu concludes, "I want to be the servant of the servant of the servant of that Kṛṣṇa."

At Ratha-yātrā, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu prays not only for Himself, but for all. He is the Supreme Lord, and He alone is *gopī-bhartuḥ*, but He offers prayers in order to teach us how to pray. He is telling us our actual identity. We are not *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, or *śūdras*, nor are we *brahmacārīs*, *gr̥hasthas*, *vānaprasthas*,

1 Kāmadeva: the transcendental Cupid who churns the mind of the Cupid of this world, who agitates the minds of all. – ed.

or *sannyāsīs*.² We are spirit soul (*jīvātmā*) and beyond this material body. Our eternal nature is to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa*. The *jīva* serves Kṛṣṇa according to his own specific taste (*ruci*) in one of the five *rasas*: *sānta* (neutrality), *dāsyā* (servitorship), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental affection), or *mādhurya* (amorous love). And only those who have the mood of the *gopīs* perform the topmost service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That is why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu referred to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Gopī-bhartu, the maintainer of the *gopīs*, when He called out to Him.

Who is Gopī-bhartu? He is Śrī Rādhā-kānta, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, or Śrī Gopinātha, who always resides in Vṛndāvana. For Kṛṣṇa to be *gopī-bhartuḥ*, it is necessary for His worshipable *gopīs* to be with Him. Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mood is, "I am a servant of that very Śrī Kṛṣṇa who worships the *gopīs*, and not of any other Kṛṣṇa. We are not servants of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa who enjoys with Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, the four-handed Śrī Kṛṣṇa who holds Sudarśana cakra, or of any of His various *avatāras*. Other people can be servants of such a Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His *avatāras*, but we, that is, I (Śrīman Mahāprabhu) and My associates, are only *śrī-rādhā-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ – gopīs* fixed in servitude to Rādhikā. In other words, we are the servants of the servants of the lotus feet of only that Śrī Kṛṣṇa who revels with the *gopīs* and is controlled by the *gopīs*, especially Śrī Rādhā." Such a one-pointed servant of Gopī-bhartu Śrī Kṛṣṇa is extremely rare.

The devotees who have come in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu are by constitution maidservants (*dāsīs*) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The line *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ* only applies to the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā. This statement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu refers to those people who are performing *bhakti* under His guidance and under the guidance of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, and our entire *guru-paramparā*. Only when the fruits, soft

2 This covers all walks of life: *brāhmanas* – the priestly class and thinkers; *kṣatriyas* – administrators and warriors; *vaiśyas* – farmers and tradesmen; and *śūdras* – laborers and artisans; as well as *brahmacāris* – celibate students; *grhastas* – married people; *vānaprasthas* – those retired from household life; *sannyāsīs* – those in the renounced order. – ed.

leaves, and flowers of *prema-bhakti* blossom on our *bhakti* creeper will we be able to realize this statement of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. This is the sole aim and object of our life.

Due to being so immersed in *bhāva*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was unable to utter Śrī Jagannātha-deva's name. He could only chant, "Jaja gaga, Jaja gaga!" Tears flowed constantly from His eyes, and His heart melted. Only a supremely *rasika* devotee can have realization of this condition. When He would take *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, Mahāprabhu would see Him as Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara. Absorbed in *rādhā-bhāva*, He would think, "I was burning in the fire of separation from the beloved of My life, and now, after a long time, I am meeting Him." Understanding the *bhāva* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara began to sing a song in accordance with that mood:

sei tō' parāṇa-nātha pāinu
jāhā lāgi' madana-dahane jhuri' genu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.113)

I have gained that very Lord of My life, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for whom I was burning in the fire of Kāma (Cupid).

**The necessity of taking shelter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
the king of scriptures, in order to understand
the hidden moods of Śrīman Mahāprabhu**

As Śrīman Mahāprabhu heard this song from the lips of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara, all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes manifested on the screen of His mind. Completely absorbed in *prema*, He became immersed in the moods of Vraja and was not conscious of anything external. In his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has given a mere indication of the internal condition of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

To understand the transcendental moods of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who was immersed in *rādhā-bhāva*, one must take shelter of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, because in it alone the history and confidential imports of Ratha-yātrā are given. At the mere age of eleven, Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana and went to Mathurā. Then, after some time, to protect

the Mathuravāsīs from Jarāsandha’s repeated attacks, He shifted them in just one night to Dvārakā, which was newly constructed by Viśvakarma, the architect of the demigods.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, all the Vrajavāsīs sank in the great ocean of separation from Him. Yaśodā Maiyā, Nanda Bābā, all the other *gopās* and *gopīs* who are endowed with parental affection (*vātsalya-bhāva*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s friends, and His beloved *gopīs* wept day and night, remembering Him. All the cows and calves, animals and birds, and the worms and insects of Vraja became overwhelmed with sorrow. The trees, creepers, rivers, lakes, and waterfalls of Vṛndāvana also began to dry up in separation from Him.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa sends Uddhava to Vraja

In Mathurā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa too was becoming aggrieved, due to His love for His beloved *gopīs* and for His mother and father. In Mathurā there was no one to console Him. In Vraja, however, the *gopīs* used to meet together and express their pangs of separation from Him. In this way, they shared each other’s grief and experienced some relief. There, Lalitājī would say to Śrī Rādhā, “O *sakhī*, do not become so restless. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not far away. He is right in Your heart.” Speaking in this way, she would pacify Her, share Her grief, and cry with Her.

But in Mathurā there was no such person with whom Kṛṣṇa could cry or share His sadness by speaking about the *gopīs*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa thus considered sending His friend and advisor, Uddhavajī, to Vraja. He thought, “Uddhavajī might give consolation to Mother and Father, and especially to My dear, beloved *gopīs*. By the mercy of the *gopīs*, he may come to know something of the glories of *prema*. Then, when he returns to Mathurā, having studied in the school of the *gopīs*, I shall be able to sit with him and express the feelings of My heart, and the pain I feel in separation from them will be removed.”

While Śrī Kṛṣṇa was thinking like this, Uddhavajī came to Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Uddhava’s hand in His own and said, “O Uddhava, quickly go to Vṛndāvana. There, My mother, father, and all the Vrajavāsīs are writhing in separation from Me. The *gopīs* are experiencing the topmost limit of separation. Therefore, please console My mother and

father, and give a message to the *gopīs*. My mother and father will be consoled by your words, but the *gopīs* are beyond the influence of your consolation. Your endeavor will only further increase their fire of separation even more, so you should simply give them My message, by which their agony will somewhat decrease.”

Hearing this, Uddhava became a little melancholy and said, “To live elsewhere without You for so many days is not possible for me. I cannot remain alive without You, even for a moment.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “Do not worry. I am only slightly here in Mathurā, but I am fully in Vraja, exclusively. Only a mere portion of My heart is in Mathurā. When you go to Vraja, you will see that I fully reside there.”

Speaking thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa prepared Uddhavajī to go to Vraja, arranging for him a golden chariot that had been used by Kāmsa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then put His own garland, ornaments, and so forth on Uddhavajī, who now looked just like Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His dark complexion, temperament, body, and even his language were just like Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s, as were his qualities.

Uddhava set off for Vraja, carrying Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s message. When he arrived, it was evening, and he saw the cows coming back from the forest. So much dust rose from the hooves of the cows that it filled the entire sky. For this reason, no one saw Uddhavajī enter Vraja.

Meanwhile, in Mathurā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa thought, “Uddhava is going to Vraja, thinking that I am not there. When I was in Vraja, all the Vrajavāsīs were perpetually overwhelmed with love for Me. My cows, calves, friends, mother, father, and *gopīs* all remained overjoyed and enraptured in *prema*, and the atmosphere was suffused with unprecedented joy. If I do not manifest this for Uddhava, he will never grasp the significance of Vraja.” As soon as Śrī Kṛṣṇa desired this, His *yogamāyā* potency, which makes the impossible possible, performed a pastime in which an amazing sight manifested before Uddhavajī’s eyes.

Uddhavajī saw a countless number of extremely beautiful white and black calves leaping here and there. The cows’ udders were so heavy with milk that it looked as if they would touch the earth as milk dripped from them. The cows are Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mothers, and they

possess parental affection for Him. Without seeing Him, they were not even feeding their own calves milk.

On all four sides, the older *gopīs* were churning yogurt, and while doing so, they remembered Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, singing, "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti." While churning yogurt their bracelets jingled, and the churning rod in the clay pot made a '*dhik-tān, dhik-tān*' sound, as if it was trying to say that the life of those who do not perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is cursed (*dhik*).

Uddhavajī saw that everywhere fragrant ghee wicks were burning, emanating a soft glow that was charming to the eyes. A very gentle breeze spread the sweet scent of flowers in all directions. The humming of bumblebees as they hovered over the flowers sounded like the sweet sound emanating from the conch of Cupid. Cuckoos and other birds were singing everywhere, and peacocks were dancing and making their '*ke-kā, ke-kā*' sound. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *sakhās* were coming back from the pasturing grounds, frolicking here and there, saying, "O Kanhaiyā, where are You? O Kanhaiyā, where are You? *Kanhaiyā kī jaya ho! Kanhaiyā kī jaya ho!*"

In this way, Uddhavajī became quite content, having received a glimpse of what it was like when Śrī Kṛṣṇa lived in Vraja. He developed the faith that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even then, was, fully situated only in Vraja, and that He was only partially present in Mathurā. He finally arrived at the door of Nanda-bhavan (the home of Nanda and Yaśodā). Leaving his chariot there, he went inside.

Uddhavajī endeavors to give consolation to Nanda Bābā

When Nanda Bābā heard that Uddhava had come to the door, he very lovingly brought him inside and offered him a seat. Nanda Bābā knew that he had to feed something to a guest who had come to his home, but when he searched his house, he saw that there was nothing to offer Uddhava at all, not even milk, nor was there anyone to milk a cow. Needless to say, there was no yogurt churned. For whom was all this previously done? Ever since Śrī Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, all the kitchen pots in Nanda-bhavan were left upside down, and the

courtyard had never been swept. Mother Yaśodā constantly wept and tossed about in pain, so how could she prepare anything? Spiders had woven webs on the stove. Previously, Nanda Bābā's storeroom was completely full, but since Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, no one was even needed to look after it, because it was empty.

For this reason, Nanda Bābā had a message sent to a *brāhmaṇa* who lived at one end of the village, informing him that Kṛṣṇa's dear friend Uddhava had come and asking him to kindly prepare some foodstuffs to offer him. That *brāhmaṇa* made *khīr* (milk and rice pudding), but there was no sugar in his house, so he cooked the *khīr* without sugar and brought that. But because Uddhavajī was hungry, he ate that *khīr* with great love. Afterwards, Nanda Bābā had one of his servants massage Uddhavajī's feet.

After Uddhava awoke from a short rest, Nanda Bābā wanted to inquire about his darling boy, but whenever he uttered 'Kṛṣṇa,' his throat choked up and tears flowed from his eyes. For this reason, he maintained some gravity and simply asked, "O my dear Uddhava, my friend Vasudeva is very fortunate. He is happy and healthy, is he not? Kāmsa has died due to his own sins, and the Yadus, who had hidden in other kingdoms in fear of him, are now returning to Mathurā, free from fear, no?"

*api smarati naḥ kṛṣṇo
mātaraṁ suhṛdaḥ sakhīn
gopān vrajaṁ cātma-nāthaṁ
gāvo vṛndāvanaṁ girim*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.46.18)

Does Śrī Kṛṣṇa still remember me and His mother, and His other well-wishers, His cowherd friends headed by Śrīdāma, and all the other cowherd men? Does He remember Vraja-maṇḍala, which He protected, or the cows, Vṛndāvana, and Govardhana Hill?

Then, with great difficulty, Nanda Bābā asked, "Does our darling boy ever remember His mother, who has become blind due to incessantly crying in separation from Him? She pampered Him so lovingly and cannot live without Him, even for a moment. Yaśodā's friends consider Kṛṣṇa to be their very own son, and they love Him

more than they love their own sons. When Kṛṣṇa would come back from grazing cows, they would first offer *āratī* to Him and bless Him by taking all of His misfortunes on their own head, and only then would they do the same for their sons. Yaśodā's friends used to call Kṛṣṇa to their house and feed Him, and He would lovingly reciprocate. Does Kṛṣṇa ever remember such well-wishers?

“Does He ever remember those *sakhīs* He used to play with throughout Vraja, sometimes on the banks of the Yamunā and sometimes in Govardhana?³ Does Kṛṣṇa remember Rādhikā, Lalitā, Viśākhā, and the other *sakhīs* who, upon not seeing Kṛṣṇa for a split second, would twist and turn in the distress of separation from Him? Since their very childhood, these *gopīs* loved Kṛṣṇa millions of times more than they cared for their own lives. O Uddhava, what to speak of the Vrajavāsīs, even the cows love Kṛṣṇa more than they love their own calves. The trees, creepers, mountains (Govardhana), rivers, waterfalls, animals, and birds love Kṛṣṇa. The entirety of Vraja is anguished in separation. Does He ever remember that Vraja? Uddhava, will Kṛṣṇa ever come to Vraja again?”

Uddhava said, “Bābā, do not cry. Kṛṣṇa has promised to return to Vraja, and so He most certainly will come back.”

Nanda Bābā began to remember the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. Weeping, he said, “Oh, how beautiful Kṛṣṇa is! How beautiful is His nose, which is like a sesame flower. How beautiful and extraordinary are His sidelong glances. How charming and lovely are His cheeks. When He smiles, His dimples become visible, further enhancing His beauty, and the entire world seems to sacrifice everything at His feet.”

Continuously remembering Kṛṣṇa in this way, Nanda Bābā became restless. He wept and his throat became choked.

Uddhavajī said, “Your affection for Kṛṣṇa is supremely blessed. I have seen many people who have affection for Kṛṣṇa, but none of them have an affection like yours. Do not worry. Kṛṣṇa promised that He would come back, so there should be not a single doubt about the certainty of His return. It may well be that for some reason or other there is a delay, but He will surely come back to Vraja.”

3 Here, Nanda Bābā is referring to Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* as young children. – ed.

Nanda Bābā again began to speak, agitated with love. “Yes, Kṛṣṇa was the protector of us all. Whenever adversities fell upon Vraja, Kṛṣṇa protected us. One time, He swallowed a forest fire in order to save the *sakhās* and calves. On Kṛṣṇa’s advice, we stopped the *pūjā* of Indra and performed *pūjā* of Govardhana instead. Indra then became filled with rage and gave orders to the clouds of universal destruction to pelt down showers of rain and drown all the Vrajavāsīs and Kṛṣṇa in a deluge of water. For seven days and seven nights there was tumultuous downpour, and Kṛṣṇa very playfully lifted Govardhana as if it were an umbrella, and called all the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves, and all Vrajavāsīs under its shelter. Once, Vṛṣabhāsura assumed the form of a bull and entered Vraja, but Kṛṣṇa slayed him. The Keśī demon, Aghāsura, Bakāsura, and other demons came to kill the Vrajavāsīs, but Kṛṣṇa killed them all and the Vrajavāsīs were saved. And now we Vrajavāsīs are drowning in the great ocean of separation from Kṛṣṇa. If He does not come back now and save us, then all of Vraja will drown in the great ocean of separation and die.”

Thus, while incessantly remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, sweetness, captivating smile, sweet speech, enchanting crooked gait, chivalry, brilliance, and so on, all of Nanda Bābā’s senses became inert. Overwhelmed with *prema*, he fainted.

Uddhavajī thought, “Oh! How wonderful is the *prema* of Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They do not know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān. They are completely captivated by Him and consider Him to be their son. How can I possibly console them?”

Slowly, slowly, Uddhavajī brought Nanda Bābā to consciousness. Nanda Bābā began to say, “In order to forget Kṛṣṇa, I go outside. But all throughout Vraja are Kṛṣṇa’s darling, soft little footprints. He used to play on the banks of Yamunā and everywhere in Vraja. There is not a tree, a cave in Girirāja, or a *kuñja* where He did not play. Wherever I go I only have visions (*sphūrtis*) of His pastimes, and memories come to mind of His playing, laughing, speaking – everything.” Ceaselessly thinking about Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this way, Nanda Bābā was again overwhelmed with *prema* and became silent.

Uddhavajī thought, “I came to console him, but instead he has become agonized by his deep lamentation for Kṛṣṇa. In this material existence, supremely blessed is he who meditates upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with a continuous stream of tears flowing from his eyes. This is the characteristic of *bhāva-bhakti* (when one’s inner moods of devotion are fully developed), and it is apparent in Nanda Bābā. He is thinking of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and crying for Him. Still, I must give him some kind of consolation. If a person is crying, then one should comfort him, telling him not to cry. Ironically, I cannot even do that. How can I say, ‘Nanda Bābā, do not cry for Kṛṣṇa’? If I do so, then, according to *sāstra*, it constitutes sinful activity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa told me to come back after giving consolation to His mother, father, and all of Vraja. But how can I console them? We may be able to console a distressed person when our feelings are somewhat similar to theirs and tears come to our eyes. Nanda Bābā’s feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa are so intense that no one can remain before him without crying. But I am most unfortunate, because I am devoid of love for Kṛṣṇa, unlike the *gopas* and *gopīs*, and that is why I am not crying. The greatest fruit of a human birth is to call out, ‘Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,’ while crying for Him in separation. If I were to say to Nanda Bābā, ‘Bābā, weep and keep on weeping,’ then I would not be following Kṛṣṇa’s order to pacify him. To give consolation, it is necessary to divert a person’s mind from what he is crying about and direct it toward something else. But I cannot even do this, because Nanda Bābā’s mind is fixed exclusively on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How can I tell him to take his mind off Kṛṣṇa and think about something else? If someone becomes absorbed in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he has attained his life’s greatest fortune. In reality, Nanda Bābā is extremely great and his life is most blessed.”

After much thought and consideration, Uddhavajī said to Nanda Bābā:

*yuvām ślāghyatamau nūnam
dehinām iha māna-da
nārāyaṇe ‘khila-gurau
yat kṛtā matir idṛśī*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.46.30)

In this world, extending to all universes, you and Yaśodā Maiyā are the most fortunate and worthy of praise, because you have ardent affection for Nārāyaṇa Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *guru* of the entire universe. Not a single living entity can touch this fortune of yours.

Upon hearing this, Nanda Bābā said to Uddhava, “What are you saying? What are you saying? You are calling me fortunate? Uddhava, I lament over your intelligence. I used to think that because you live with Kṛṣṇa, you must have become very intelligent. But your words seem to reveal that even your milk teeth have not yet come out. You are describing as fortunate that person who is the most unfortunate in all of this material existence. Before speaking, first think a little. You are saying that Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual preceptor of the entire universe. Before, I used to think of Kṛṣṇa as just my son, and so I cried, agitated in separation from Him. I want my life to pass, but it will not. Brahmājī has made my heart as hard as a thunderbolt. The one and only true father in this world was Mahārāja Daśāratha, who, in separation from his son, gave up his body, crying out, ‘O Rāma, O Rāma!’ But I am not dying in separation from my son. I am such a greatly unfortunate person that I got Nārāyaṇa as my son, but due to my wickedness, I have lost Him. Bhagavān stays only in those places where someone loves Him. It seems that there is no *prema* in me, and for this reason Kṛṣṇa left me and went to Mathurā.”

Uddhavajī thought, “Now what shall I do? He who Nanda Bābā considers to be his son is not his son. *Viśvasya ca bīja-yonī (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.46.31)*. The seed (*bīja*) of the universe is the *puruṣa*, and the creative potency (*prakṛti*) is the womb (*yonī*). Universal creation happens because of both of them. Nanda Bābā considers that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Person and who is the cause of that *puruṣa* (in the form of a seed) and *prakṛti*, to be his son. He is very anxious for those he considers his sons, Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who are all-pervading and thus known as the source of the universe. Everything is within Them, and They lack nothing whatsoever. People in this world cry only because they have fallen into illusion. Illusion arises from ignorance. Only by destroying ignorance through transcendental

knowledge (*tattva-jñāna*) can illusion be dispelled. If Nanda Bābā obtains this knowledge that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān and all-pervading, then his illusion will be broken and the agony of separation from Him will also be dispelled.”

Thinking in this way, Uddhavaji said, “Bābā, ‘*nārāyaṇe ’khilagurau* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa, the *guru* of the entire universe’ (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.46.30). Everyone is His progeny, and you are crying for Him, considering Him to be your son. Your son is the Supreme Person. This is indeed the truth, as corroborated by the Purāṇas and Vedas. He is the cause of all causes and the source of the universe. O great one, O Nanda Bābā, please understand that there is not a single place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not.”

Nanda Bābā became agitated and said, “O Uddhava, you are calling Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān? For just a little bit of buttermilk (*chāch*) or *roṭī* and fresh butter (*mākhan*), He used to become so fractious. At every moment Kṛṣṇa felt so hungry that He ate butter, having stolen it from others’ houses. He used to tell lies, and He would become so angry about the most insignificant things. You are calling that Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān? Bhagavān is He who does not feel hunger or thirst, who is above birth and death, and in whom there is no anger, attachment, aversion, or the like. I pity your intelligence.”

As soon as Uddhava heard this, he began to consider that he had made a mistake. He should have not called Śrī Kṛṣṇa Nārāyaṇa, because by doing so, Nanda Bābā’s pain of separation only increased. Uddhava could not think how to console Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā. It was as if the *prema* of Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā was as tall as the Himalayan mountains, and, in tilting his head to see the height of its summit, Uddhava’s turban (of *brahma-jñāna* – his awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s Godhood) had fallen off. Then, not knowing what to do next, he said, “Father, do not be so distressed. ‘*Āgamiṣyaty adirgheṇa kālena vrajam acyutaḥ* – Acyuta shall return to Vraja within a short time.’ (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.46.34) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is true to His word. If He has promised to come back, then He shall certainly come. I therefore request you to please have patience. Kṛṣṇa, who saves Yaśodā Maiyā, you, and all the Vrajavāsīs from distress, will certainly return. Do not be distraught.”

The entire night passed – arguing, giving consolation, and weeping. In the morning, Uddhava went to take bath in a lake situated nearby Nandagāon, which is now called Kṛṣṇa-kuṇḍa. He bathed and sat down to do his *āhnikā*, but today his mind was not focused. Nanda Bābā's form, full of love, and his feelings for Kṛṣṇa kept arising in his meditation. "I do not even know how to cry for Kṛṣṇa," he thought, "whereas the sobbing and weeping of Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā for Him never decrease."

Uddhavajī's darśana of the *gopīs*' mahābhāva

At that very moment, some distance away, by the mercy of Yogamāyā, Uddhavajī saw a forest of Kadamba trees. Upon coming closer, he noticed millions of *gopīs* sitting there, looking forlorn. Their faces were pale. Their cloth was dirty, having become wet with their tears and smeared with the dust of Vraja. The *gopīs* would not clean their clothes, because the tears on those clothes had been wept for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Overwhelmed in separation, those *gopīs* were on the verge of death. One *gopī* said, "*Sakhī*, this morning I saw a golden chariot. Do you know why that chariot has come here and who came in it?"

Another *gopī* said, "After killing Kāmsa, Kṛṣṇa has become the Lord of Mathurā (Mathurādhīśa). He has seated His servant in a golden chariot and sent him here to flaunt His opulence before His father, mother, and the Vrajavāsīs."

Another *gopī* said, "I know why that chariot has come. In Mathurā, Kāmsa has died, hasn't he? And today is the day to offer him oblations (*piṇḍa*). Possibly there is nothing for *piṇḍa* there, but in Vraja there is so much. The Mathurāvāsīs probably think that in separation from Kṛṣṇa all of us must have died; therefore, they have sent him here to take our heart to be offered as *piṇḍa*."

Hearing these words of the *gopīs*, Uddhavajī became stunned. "I should not have come to console them in this golden chariot," he thought. "O Pṛthvī-devī (Mother Earth), please crack open so that I can sink into the ground in shame."

At that very moment, one *gopī* caught sight of Uddhava standing there. She immediately pointed to him and asked her *sakhīs*, “Ah, who is this?”

One *sakhī* said, “I know this to be Kṛṣṇa’s companion and attendant, Uddhava.”

“How do you know?” another *sakhī* asked.

“My sense of smell is flawless. The fragrance of that *vaijayantī* garland he has come here wearing carries the extraordinarily intoxicating fragrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s body. By this it can be understood that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has sent him here, having placed His own garland on him.”

Knowing Uddhava to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s companion, the *gopīs* encircled him. “O companion of Kṛṣṇa, why have you come here? There was no need for you to come to us. Kṛṣṇa now has no relation with us. Our relationship with Him depends on acceptance. If Kṛṣṇa accepts our relationship, then it exists; and if He does not accept it, it does not. We used to regard Him as our *priyatama* (deardest beloved), and He also used to regard us as His *priyatamās*. But now He has discarded all relationship with us and gone to Mathurā.

“Uddhava, we want to ask you a question. *Prema* is of two kinds: selfish and selfless. The relationship of a bumblebee with a flower and a man with a lady is selfish love. When a king becomes incapable of protecting his kingdom, his subjects leave his side. Birds abandon trees upon which no fruits and flowers remain. Animals immediately flee from a forest that is set on fire. No matter how much attachment a woman’s heart may have for a man, if he is adulterous, he does not even turn to look back at her after his lust has been fulfilled. But, Uddhava, we had selfless love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa had selfless love for us. How has that love broken?”

Hearing this, Uddhava began to scratch his head.

Another *gopī* continued, “Kṛṣṇa has forgotten us, but the frustrating thing is that we cannot forget Him. Now He has no relationship with us. But how could He have forgotten His own mother and father? He cannot break that relationship, because His very body is made of the blood of Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā. Therefore, O Uddhava, go to Maiyā and Bābā over there in Nanda Bhavana.” Speaking in this way,

the *gopīs* constantly remembered the *līlās* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Forgetting the shyness natural for ladies, they began to cry bitterly.

Those *gopīs* then took Uddhavaḥ deeper into a field situated in the dense Kadamba forest [Kadamba-kyārī]. There, Uddhava saw a golden, doll-like *gopī* lying on a bed of lotus flowers, looking as if She was about to pass from this world. Her *sakhīs* held a piece of cotton to Her nostrils to see whether or not She was still living. By doing so, they knew that there was still some life in Her. *Dhyāyantī kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam*. Meanwhile, that *gopī* who was lying down began to incoherently utter words in transcendental madness (*divya-unmāḍ*). In that unconscious condition, She, Śrī Rādhā, began to deeply contemplate Śrī Kṛṣṇa and how He left Her to go to Mathurā. Because She knew He cannot remain without a sweetheart, She understood that He was surrounded by young damsels of Mathurā and was reveling with them. Even in Her delirious state, Śrī Rādhā became full of *māna* and began to rant in transcendental madness. Her talks in this condition are known as *Bhramara-gīta*, which is a chapter within the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*kācin madhukaram dṛṣtvā
dhyāyantī kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam
priya-prasthāpitam dūtam
kalpayitvedam abravīt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.11)

Meanwhile, a humming bumblebee, thinking Śrī Rādhā's feet to be a lotus flower, began to hover over them, greedy for honey. Thinking the bee to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa's messenger, Rādhāḥī, who was in *māna*, said, "O Madhupa! O friend of a cheater! Go away, go away! Do not touch My feet. Your mustache is smeared with yellow *kuṅkum* from the breasts of the Mathurā damsels that have rubbed against the forest flower garland of our beloved. Let Madhupati (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) dispel the *māna* of those *māniṇīs* (haughty girls) of Mathurā. He who sends a messenger like you, bearing the marks of His other beloveds, to dispel the jealous anger of a *māniṇī* must certainly be an object of ridicule in the Yādava assembly.

“O Madhukara (O bumblebee), it seems that My beloved has sent you to console Me, because He has committed an offense. But your master is just like you. You drink the *rasa* from one flower and then fly to another flower to drink its *rasa*, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa made us drink the nectar of His lips just once – yes, only one time – and then immediately abandoned us *gopīs* and went away. You may ask, ‘If Kṛṣṇa is as corrupt as You say, then why does Lakṣmī-devī serve His feet?’ The answer is that it seems to us that Lakṣmī-devī must have most certainly come into contact with His slippery, tricky, saccharine words.

“However, O bee, we are not naive like Lakṣmī. Why are you glorifying Kṛṣṇa in front of us? We know this cheat very well. He told us that He would never be able to repay His debt to us for our selfless love, and after giving us His word that He would return in two days, He still has not come. How can you say that He is truthful? Why are you trying to cajole us? We are simply forest dwellers; we do not even have any home and family. We have become street beggars for Him. What do we even have to give you? If you go to Mathurā and repeatedly solicit the young girls living there, then they will give you your desired things. Madhukara! Do not try to touch your head to My feet. It seems your master has sent you here after teaching and training you very well how to appease a *mānini*, but it does not seem to Me that anyone will hear what you have to say. We abandoned our husbands, sons, friends, and other relations for Kṛṣṇa, but He ungratefully left us, so how is it possible for us to make peace with Him?

“O friend of a cheater, just listen to some more of the qualities of your black master. In Tretā-yuga, this black person mercilessly hid like a hunter and slayed the king of monkeys, Bāli. Under the control of a woman, He disfigured the helpless, innocent Śūrpaṅakhā, who came to Him proposing marriage, and cut off her nose and ears so that she could never marry anyone else. In this very age (*yuga*), in the form of a dwarf, He accepted the worship performed by Mahārāja Bali, and then, even after He took His desired object from him, He bound him with the ropes of Varuṇa and sent him to the lower regions. It was just like how a black crow eats what someone has offered him, and then surrounds that person with all his companions and harasses him.

What is our concern with your black master? You may ask, 'If this is truly His nature, then why can't you *gopīs* just forget Him? Why do you talk about Him?' The answer is, O Madhupa, that you are correct in saying we should forget Him and, really, we want to. But despite this desire, we cannot give up speaking about Him; this is our frustration."

Having heard this, the bumblebee flew elsewhere, but after some time, he came back. Again Śrī Rādhā said to him, "O gentle soul, did My dearly beloved send you back to appease Me? What? Do you want to take us there? But His wife, Lakṣmī-devī, is always residing right on His chest; so, how can we stay there? O Madhukara, tell us, the beloved of our life is well, isn't He? Does He ever remember His mother and father, relatives, friends, and cows? Does He ever remember these maidservants of His? Will He ever place His hands, which are imbued with the divine fragrance of *aguru*, on our heads? Will such an auspicious occasion ever come in our lives?"

Continuously speaking like this, Śrī Rādhā lost all composure and began to weep bitterly, as She lamented as follows:

*he nātha he ramā-nātha
vraja-nāthārti-nāśana
magnam uddhara govinda
gokulaṁ vṛjinārṇavāt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.52)

O Nātha, O Ramānātha, O Vrajanātha, O destroyer of all suffering, Govinda, please quickly lift this Vraja-maṇḍala out of the endless ocean of distress in which it is drowning. We are not capable of maintaining our lives any longer.

Uddhava saw that the *gopīs*' lives were just about to leave them due to their feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he therefore related Śrī Kṛṣṇa's message to the *gopīs* exactly as it was. By his doing so, the *gopīs*' agony of separation became even more intensified. Before Uddhava came to Vraja, the *gopīs* used to think that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had given His word that He would return to Vraja, but after hearing His message, their creeper of hope was removed at the very root, and their separation increased even more.

Uddhava's petition for the gopīs' mercy

Having seen the *gopīs'* love for Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava's pride in his knowledge was crushed. He began to think, "The *gopīs'* *prema* is so elevated and unfathomable that I cannot even touch it. I cannot even imagine their glories. If I could obtain just a single particle of dust from their feet, my life would become meaningful, but I am not even qualified to touch that dust. I therefore offer *praṇāma* to them from afar."

Thinking like this, Uddhavajī began to pray:

*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhīnām
yā dustyajam̐ sva-janam̐ ārya-patham̐ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-pada vim̐ śrutibhir vim̐rgyām
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.61)*

The best thing that could possibly happen to me would be to take birth in this Vṛndāvana as a forest bush, creeper, or medicinal herb. *Aho!* If I could become one of these, I would continuously have the good fortune of serving the foot dust from the lotus feet of these *vraja-gopīs*, and if I bathe in their foot dust, I will become blessed. These *gopīs* are most fortunate. Just see! Having abandoned the things that are most difficult to give up – relations with family members and the restrictions imposed by society and seniors – these *gopīs* have obtained the topmost love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What more can I say? Even the Śrutis, which are the Vedic instructions that emanate from the breathing of the Supreme Lord, are still searching for that super-excellent, love-laden form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but they cannot attain it. However, the *gopīs* have obtained that supremely elevated love.

After speaking the aforementioned verse, Uddhavajī began to think, "I could never possibly have the good fortune to take birth in Vraja in the form of grass and be constantly sprinkled with the dust of the *gopīs'* feet." Therefore, praying for only one particle of the *gopīs'* foot dust, he said:

*vande nanda-vraja-strīṇām
pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
yāsām hari-kathodgītām
punāti bhuvana-trayam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.63)

I ceaselessly offer obeisance to the foot dust of the *gopīs* of Nanda Bābā's Vraja. The narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes sung by these *gopīs* shall forever purify the three worlds.

From which *gopī's* foot did Uddhava desire a particle of dust? Śrī Rādhā. But he began to think, "I am not even worthy of this, so if I can obtain a dust particle from the feet of any one of Her *sakhīs*, then my birth will become successful."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had sent Uddhavajī to Vraja, go to the school of the *gopīs* and study the subject of *prema*. But the *gopīs* did not give him entrance, saying he was unqualified. Uddhavajī therefore offered *praṇāma* to that school from afar. He learned whatever he could by observing it from the outside. Then, having tried his best to understand, he returned to Mathurā.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa reunites with the Vrajavāsīs at Kurukṣetra

Many years after Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vraja, there was a solar eclipse. According to scriptures, at the time of an eclipse one must bathe three times: when the eclipse begins, when the eclipse is in full swing, and when it comes to an end. After the third bath, one must give in charity. It is described in Indian history and in the Vedas and Upaniṣads that at the closure of an eclipse, some kings would donate their entire wealth and possessions to the *brāhmaṇas* and needy persons. Those generous persons used to give so much in charity that within no time, there was not a single person remaining who had not taken charity. And those who had accepted charity would also give charity to others. All became donors, and all were satisfied. Even nowadays in India, there are many generous-hearted persons who give charity with open

arms, but this aspect of the culture is rapidly dwindling, even though giving in charity is of great benefit to the donor.

On the occasion of the solar eclipse, Śrī Kṛṣṇa made arrangements to go to Kurukṣetra and take bath in Brahma-sarovara, along with Devakī and Vasudeva, His 16,108 queens, and His commanders. He did not send an invitation to Nanda Bābā to meet with Him in Kurukṣetra, but He thought, “Father will know I am going, and he will not be able to remain in Vraja. He and all the Vrajavāsīs will automatically come of their own accord.”

In Vṛndāvana, Nanda Bābā somehow came to know about Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s going to Kurukṣetra. There were no limits to his joy, and he decided to bring all the Vrajavāsīs with him to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As soon as everyone heard they would soon obtain the chance to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a wave of bliss spread throughout the entirety of Vraja. To the Vrajavāsīs, who for years had been scorched by the flames of separation from Him, it seemed that a host of clouds showering life-giving nectar had covered Vraja. The Vrajavāsīs, who were almost dead, became infused with new life. Drowning in bliss, they began to prepare to go to Kurukṣetra, gathering up all the things that were dear to Him.

After Kṛṣṇa left Vraja, the stoves in all the kitchens remained unlit. Now, however, the *gopīs* cleaned the stoves and prepared His favorite eatables. Everyone donned fine clothes. The *gopīs* decorated themselves and put on ornaments. Then all the *gopas* and *gopīs* sat in their bullock carts and proceeded toward Kurukṣetra, leaving Upananda and some other elders in Vraja to look after everything. On the way, they constantly remembered Śrī Kṛṣṇa and sang, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti!”

About sixty to seventy years had passed by, with the *gopīs* continuously lamenting, overwhelmed with the grief of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But even after all those years, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was still youthful (*kiśora*), and the *gopīs* were youthful (*kiśorī*) as well. All now assembled in Kurukṣetra.

Thousands and thousands of *ṛṣis*, *maharṣis*, *brahmvādīs*, and realized, great souls like Nārada Muni, Vyāsadeva, Gautama, and Yājñavalkya were present on this occasion of the solar eclipse.

Dharmarāja Śrī Yudhiṣṭira and the other Pāṇḍavas, as well as Draupadī, Kuntī, Grandfather Bhīṣma, Droṇācārya, Duryodhana and his brothers, Karṇa, Kauravas from all over India, and people from all over the world assembled there. All the kings of the world had arrived at Kurukṣetra to bathe in the supremely pure Brahma-sarovara. At that time, more than ten million people had gathered there. Thousands of rows of tents that went far into the distance had been erected.

Many blood relatives had assembled in the encampment of Devakī and Vasudeva, with the desire to take *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa. His tent was so large that thousands of people could sit inside.

On meeting with her brother Vasudeva, Kuntī wept loudly and said, “Brother, when my sons were given poison, when they were almost immolated by fire, and when all their kingdom, wealth, and everything else was snatched away and we were wandering here and there like beggars, at that time you did not take care of us. Duryodhana cheated my sons. He drove them from their kingdom and tried to disrobe Draupadī in an assembly where Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma Pitāmaha, and other elders were present. You are my brother. You should have remembered me and come to my aid. How could you have forgotten your sister at such a time of danger?” Weeping loudly, she flung her arms around Vasudeva’s neck, and Vasudeva Mahārāja also began to weep.

Kuntī continued, “Perhaps, my brother, you have forgotten me.”

Vasudeva replied, “O sister, please do not lament like this. This was all caused by Śrī Bhagavān’s cycle of time. At that time, my wife and I were imprisoned in the jail of Kaṁsa. He was making us suffer grievously, always maltreating and insulting us. His wardens bound me in iron chains. Not only that, they seized our six sons from our lap and killed them right in front of us, dashing them one after another onto a rock. Luckily, Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa were saved. I was imprisoned within the jail, and that is why I could not help you. Nevertheless, I always remembered you, and when I was freed from the jail, the first thing I did was send Uddhava to you. O sister, everything depends on the desire of Bhagavān. For some time we meet, and then after some time we are separated from each other. Sometimes we meet with sorrow and dire suffering, and sometimes we reach the summit of prosperity.

Time alone does everything. Nothing depends on the desire of any one soul. Do not worry anymore. That time has now passed.” In this way, Vasudeva consoled Kuntī-devī.

In the meantime, Nanda Bābā and the Vrajavāsīs arrived nearby on many bullock carts. All Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd friends, like Dāmā, Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, Vasudāma, Stoka-kṛṣṇa, and Madhumaṅgala, and also Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā, all the *gopīs*, like Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Lalitā, and Viśākhā, and all others were extremely eager to see Him.

While everyone else in Kurukṣetra was meeting with Kṛṣṇa, someone came to Him and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu and said, “O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Your father and mother from Vraja are coming on a bullock cart.” Immediately upon hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa left the thousands of devotees present there, like Kaśyapa, Kavi, Havi, Antarikṣa, Nārada, Vasiṣṭha, Āgastya, and Vālmiki, and ran toward Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā, weeping and weeping. Completely overwhelmed, He called out, “Oh, Mother is coming! Father is coming! My friends are coming!” In distress, He cried, “Mother, Mother, where are you?” Baladeva Prabhu also called out to His mother and father as He ran toward them, weeping incessantly.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa meets with Śrī Nanda and Mother Yaśodā in Kurukṣetra

The bullock cart stopped. Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā came down from the cart, and upon seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they became overwhelmed with emotion and began to weep.

Mother Yaśodā immediately took Śrī Kṛṣṇa onto her lap, and Baladeva Prabhu fell at Nanda Bābā’s feet. In Vraja, due to incessant weeping, Yaśodā Maiyā’s tears had dried up. But today, after so many years of separation, a stream of tears flowed from her eyes upon seeing her son. Swelling with deep motherly affection, milk flowed from her breasts. Moreover, Yaśodā Maiyā cried that day as if she had never cried in Vraja. There she had become like a statue, and her heart had dried up in separation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In separation from her, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, also, had become like dry wood or stone, but now He also wept

aloud. Nanda Bābā took Baladeva Prabhu in his lap, and they also both began to weep. It was a very heart-rending scene. Kṛṣṇa cried out, “Maiyā, Maiyā!” Baladeva Prabhu, sitting on the lap of Nanda Bābā, cried out, “Bābā, Bābā!” And Nanda Bābā lovingly caressed him.

Vasudevajī, Devakī, and Rohiṇī Maiyā also arrived there, just after Kṛṣṇa did, and they all witnessed this touching moment. Rohiṇī Maiyā began to think, “Kṛṣṇa was always somewhat hesitant to say anything before Mother Devakī. Whenever He was hungry, He would tell me, not Mother Devakī. Today, Devakī is watching that very same Kṛṣṇa, who never used to sit on her lap even on her insistence, sitting on Yaśodā’s lap, sobbing incessantly without constraint.”

Mother Devakī thought, “Kṛṣṇa never sat on my lap. He has never called out for me, saying, ‘Mother, Mother.’ But now He is on the lap of Yaśodā, crying, ‘Mother, Mother, Mother!’ Yaśodā thinks, ‘Kṛṣṇa is my very own son,’ and Kṛṣṇa also thinks, ‘Yaśodā is my only mother – not Devakī.’ Yaśodā will surely take Kṛṣṇa and return to Vraja. Kṛṣṇa will go forever and never return to Dvārakā.”

She wanted to tell Yaśodā, “O Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa is not your son. He is my son. But He has forgotten this now and is considering you to be His mother.” She also wanted to tell Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “You are not the son of Yaśodā. You are my son.”

Due to social etiquette, she could not openly speak all this in an assembly of so many persons, and therefore she said very cleverly, “O dear friend Yaśodā, you are so compassionate. When we were in the prison of Kaṁsa, we secretly sent our son to Gokula, to you. Although you know Kṛṣṇa is my son, still you lovingly raised and nourished Him like a child born from your own womb. Just as the eyelids protect the eyes, in the same way you protected Kṛṣṇa. I consider, therefore, that there is no one as merciful as you in the entire world. You are extremely munificent and big-hearted. From His birth until He was eleven years old, you lovingly raised Him. Because of this, He always thinks that you alone are His mother. It is for this very reason that He never calls me Mother.”

Mother Rohiṇī got the impression that Devakī was trying to speak something inappropriate, and thus come between Yaśodā Maiyā and

Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To avoid any disturbance in Yaśodā and Kṛṣṇa's meeting, she thought of a plan. She promptly said, "O Sister Devakī, Mother Kuntī and so many other friends and relatives are waiting for us. We should go there." In this way, she cleverly took Devakī, along with Vasudeva Mahārāja, away from there to welcome guests.

After some time, Yaśodā Maiyā felt a little peace. But, overwhelmed with emotion, she and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were not in a state to be able to say anything. They exchanged their emotions only by heart. Yaśodā thought, "Outside, nearby, all the *gopīs*, such as Rādhā, Lalitā, and Viśākhā, are waiting. They cannot meet Kṛṣṇa if I am here, or if Nanda Bābā and Baladeva are here."

Until now, the *gopīs* somehow checked their moods, and their lives remained in their bodies. Once they came close to Kṛṣṇa, however, they could not tolerate even a moment's more separation, and were about to give up their lives. Being very kind and generous, Mother Yaśodā thought, "If they do not meet with Kṛṣṇa immediately, they will not be able to live another minute. By some trick, I must send everyone else away from here so that the *gopīs* can meet with Him without fear. If I delay, they will all die."

Thinking like this, Yaśodā Maiyā took the hand of Baladeva Prabhu and, looking at Nanda Bābā, said, "We should also meet with the others." Baladeva Prabhu understood Yaśodā Maiyā's intention and thought, "If I am here, the *gopīs* will not come," and so He too hurriedly left with His parents.

Yaśodā Maiyā embraced Mother Devakī, and some dialogue ensued. Nanda Bābā met with Vasudeva and others, and they discussed one another's happiness and sorrows.

*Śrīman Mahāprabhu Relishes
the Conversation between
the Gopīs and Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Nṛukṣetra*

The reunion of the gopīs with Śrī Kṛṣṇa

*T*he gopīs were extremely restless, being impatient to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and their life was just about to leave them. For many years they had been maintaining their life with great difficulty, solely in hope of meeting with Him; however as they came closer to Him, every moment of delay seemed equivalent to the passing of several ages (*yugas*). Now their composure began to break. The moment they saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they began to cry bitterly. They had never cried so much, even in Vraja, in separation from Him. Now, after waiting many years to meet Him, the gopīs' desire was finally being fulfilled.

*gopyaś ca kṛṣṇam upalabhya cirād abhiṣṭam
yat-prekṣaṇe dṛśiṣu pakṣma-kṛtam śapanti
dṛgbhir hṛdikṛtam alaṁ parirabhya sarvās
tad-bhāvam āpur api nitya-yujām durāpam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.39)

When the gopīs used to gaze at their beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the blinking of their eyes would obstruct their *darśana* of Him. They would thus call the creator, Lord Brahmā, a fool, and would scold him, saying, "Why did you put eyelids on our eyes?" Now, after so many years of separation, the gopīs took Śrī Kṛṣṇa into their heart through the path of their eyes and tightly embraced Him. They became completely submerged in the blissful ocean

of that meeting. Such immersion is not possible even for the greatest *yogīs*.

Having tightly embraced Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts, the *gopīs*, especially Śrī Rādhā, felt they had become one with Him.

They had wanted to speak with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but their voices choked up and they became incapable of saying anything. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, after seeing the *gopīs*, lost all calmness of mind and began to cry. After some time, He regained His composure. He blamed Himself for the *gopīs*' condition and said, "O *gopīs*, My friends, you are the life of My life. You have tolerated so much distress in separation from Me. You have given up everything for My sake – your husbands, homes, wealth, and fear of your elders – and you have even given up the path of chastity (*ārya-dharma*), which is very difficult to renounce. Still, I abandoned you and went far away. You must have considered Me to be cruel and ungrateful, but truly I am not. I always remembered you and never forgot you for even a moment. But I have caused you so much pain. Please forgive Me."

After some time, when the *gopīs*' weeping subsided, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

*mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām
amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho
bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.44)

O *gopīs*, generally, for the living entities, the loving performance of *bhakti* to Me is life-giving nectar, but in your case, your affection for Me is the sole cause of our meeting. In other words, your affection alone is the fully ripened, highest state of *bhakti*. Therefore your love for Me will soon cause us to again meet, for all time.

*ahaṁ hi sarva-bhūtānām
ādir anto 'ntaram bahiḥ
bhautikānām yathā khaṁ vār
bhūr vāyur jyotir aṅganāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.45)

Dear young damsels, just as the elements – ether, water, earth, air, and fire – are the beginning and end of all material objects and exist both inside and outside of them, in the same way, I am the beginning and end of all living entities and exist both inside and outside of them.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa further said, “My beloveds, I am telling you a secret. Did you know that I alone am the Supreme Person, Bhagavān? I am the all-pervading Viṣṇu. I reside in the heart of all living entities. I am in your heart as well. I am everywhere, and no one, anywhere, is separated from Me. Just as an earthen vessel cannot be separated from the earth, in the same way, you cannot be separated from Me. You are a part of Me and created out of Me, so why do you experience separation from Me? If you single-mindedly meditate on Me, then you will realize that I am all-pervading and that you are therefore never separated from Me. You should understand that your body, mind, and everything is made of *prema* for Me. Always meditate on Me and do not lament. I am always with you.”

The *gopīs* were hoping to hear some loving words from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but when He spoke this *tattva-jñāna*, their feelings of separation increased even more, and slowly they began to feel angry also. Still, they kept their anger hidden and said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a sweet voice, “O cheater, You are black both inside and out. You have always cheated us. We know that You are not Bhagavān. You are only the son of Yaśodā Maiyā. Since our very birth, we have known about Your nature. You always lie. Once, at Brahmāṇḍa-ghāṭa, You ate dirt, and when Your mother asked if You had, You lied, saying, ‘I did not eat dirt.’ You used to steal yogurt and fresh butter from the home of the other *gopīs*, and upon being caught, You would say, ‘I have never stolen anything. Why are you falsely accusing Me?’ Since You lie, steal, get angry, and experience hunger and thirst, how can you possibly be Bhagavān?

“You are very passionate. Do you remember how, in Vraja, You used to call us by the faint sound of Your flute? Enchanted by the sound of the *vaṁśī* flute, we would abandon our households to meet You. You would dance, sing, laugh, and joke with us. Would Śrī Bhagavān actually come to dance and sing with village cowherd girls like us? When Śrī Rādhā went into *māna*, to pacify Her, You used to place Your *vaṁśī* and even Your

head at Her feet, and beg for Her forgiveness. The demigods, headed by Brahmā and Śiva, bow their heads at the feet of Bhagavān, but Bhagavān does not lower His head before anyone. Therefore the words you speak, proclaiming Yourself to be Bhagavān, are falsehoods. Would the Supreme Personality of Godhead behave like this? You are simply the love of our life – nothing else.”

Another *gopī*, completely concealing her feelings, retorted with the following crooked words:

*āhuś ca te nalina-nābha-padāravindam
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.48)*

O Kamala-nābha (You whose navel is shaped like a lotus), great *yogīs* who possess profound intelligence meditate upon Your lotus feet in their lotus-like heart. Your lotus feet are the only means of escape for those who have fallen into the well of material existence. O Lord, please give us the benediction that, even when we are ensnared in the perplexities of our household, Your lotus feet will always reside in our heart and we will never forget them, not even for a moment.

Here, externally displaying humility, the *gopīs* say that they want to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in their heart in order to deliver themselves, as if they are *jīvas* fallen in the well of material existence. But the *gopīs* have given up everything for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so where is there any question of their being in material existence? This remark is therefore satirical.

The moods of the *gopīs'* hearts are very profound. On the occasion of Ratha-yātrā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became immersed in relishing each one of their profound *bhāvas*. Hearing Him utter these *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses and also explain them, only Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara was able to understand. No one else could understand the correlation between these verses and Lord Śrī Jagannātha-deva's Ratha-yātrā. Śrīman

Mahāprabhu, drowning in the *bhāvas* of the *gopīs*, was conversing with Śrī Jagannātha-deva. Now, becoming a little angry, He said:

nahe gopī yogeśvara, pada-kama tomāra,
dhyāna kōri' pāibe santoṣa
tomāra vākya-paripāṭi, tāra madhye kuṭināṭi,
śuni' gopīr āro baḍhe roṣa
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.141)

We *gopīs* are not like mystic *yogīs*, who become satisfied simply by meditating on Your lotus feet. Your way of speaking is duplicitous. You are giving us instructions on meditating on Your feet.

deha-smṛti nāhi jāra, saṁsār-kūpa kāhā tāra,
tāhā hōite nā cāhe uddhāra
viraha-samudra-jale, kāma-timīṅgila gile,
gopī-gaṇe neha' tāra pāra
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.142)

For a person who does not have the slightest remembrance of his own body, where is there any well of material existence from which he wants deliverance? We are drowning in the endless ocean of separation from You. In that ocean, the *timīṅgila* fish of *kāma* [that is, the sole desire of service to You] is devouring us. Therefore, please deliver us from that ocean of separation.

The direct service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the sole life of the *gopīs*, and in their distress of separation is a want of such service. The word *kāma*, used in relation to the *gopīs*, simply indicates their transcendental *prema*. It does not refer to the lust of women and men in this material world. The *gopīs* continued:

vṛndāvana, govardhana, yamunā-pulina, vana,
sei kuṅje rāsādika līlā
sei vrajer vraja-jana, mātā, pitā, bandhu-gaṇa,
baḍō citra, kemōne pāsariḷā
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.143)

Kṛṣṇa, it is very astonishing to us how You have forgotten Your people of Vraja (*vraja-jana*), that is, Your mother, father, and friends. How could You have forgotten Vṛndāvana, Govardhana Hill, the bank of the Yamunā, and the pastime places of the various forests where You performed pastimes such as the *rāsa* dance with us?

vidagha, mṛdu, sad-guṇa, suśīla, snigdha, karuṇa,
tumi, tomār nāhi doṣābhāsa
tabe je tomāra mana, nāhi smare vraja-jana,
se – āmāra durdaiva-vilāsa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.144)

Kṛṣṇa, You are cultured, soft-hearted, virtuous, good-natured, affectionate, and full of compassion. There is not even a tinge of fault in You. Even so, Your mind does not remember the inhabitants of Vraja. You are not at fault for this; rather, the cause of such forgetfulness is simply our misfortune.

The mood deep within the *gopīs'* hearts, however, is this: “You Yourself are drowning in the ocean of separation from us. How can He who is Himself drowning protect others? Rather, it is only we who can save You. But still, You have given us the instruction to meditate on Your feet. This indeed is a laughing matter. We have constantly desired to hold Your feet to our breast. Therefore, You can give this instruction to Brahmā, Śaṅkara, and other *yogīs*, but we are in no need of it. We want to forget You! All the problems we have had in our life have arisen because of our remembering You. If You can forget us and go somewhere far away, then we also want to forget You. The frustrating thing is that, even though we want to forget You, we cannot. Those who remember Your name and pastimes become street beggars, with no kind of home, family, or the like. Our condition is like that of a bird without a nest, aimlessly wandering here and there.

“We are not great *yogīs* like Brahmā, who remember You for their own self-interest. We only want Your happiness. We know that Your life flounders in separation from us. This is why we have come here,

to shower our invigorating nectar of mercy upon You and preserve Your life. We do not cry for You, but for Your woeful condition. Alone, You are helpless. Only our *sakhī* Rādhā can save You, because She alone is Your very life and soul.

“If You want to remain happy, then ascend the chariot of our heart. We will take You to that place where our mind and heart reside. We are unable to serve You here [in Kurukṣetra], because You are with Your wives, sons and daughters, army, many friends, *ṛṣis*, and so on. We want to take You to Vṛndāvana, where You performed numerous kinds of sweet pastimes with us. There, we will be able to satisfy You in every way.”

Continuously relishing these *bhāvas* of the *gopīs*, Śrīman Mahāprabhu began to sing a verse from a famous poem:

*yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
te conmilīta-mālatī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidhau
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetaḥ samutkañṭhate*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.121)

[A heroine says to one of her *sakhīs*,] He who has stolen away my youth is now my husband. These are the same moonlit nights in the month of Caitra, when we first met in our youth. The same breezes from the *kadamba* forest are blowing the same light, sweet fragrance from the blossoming *mālatī* flowers. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover. Nonetheless, my heart is longing for the amorous, love-laden play of our first meeting at the foot of the *vetasī* tree on the bank of the river Revā.

No one had understood the deep mood behind Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s recital of this verse. But after hearing it, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who had just now joined in the Ratha-yātrā festival, composed another verse¹ in accordance with the *bhāva* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

¹ This verse and its purport by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja are included in an endnote at the end of this chapter. – ed.

Not seeing a favorable atmosphere for loving pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī wanted to take Him to Vṛndāvana. Therefore Śrīman Mahāprabhu, immersed in the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, said to Śrī Jagannātha:

anyera hṛdaya – mana, mora mana – vṛndāvana,
'mane' 'vane' eka kōri' jāni
tāhā tomār pada-dvaya, karāhō jadi udaya,
tabe tomār pūrṇa kṛpā māni
 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.137)

For the people of this world, their mind and heart are one. But My mind and Vṛndāvana are one, because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvana. Only in Vṛndāvana do You experience the topmost happiness. Therefore, if You place Your lotus feet in the Vṛndāvana of My mind, then I would deem that Your full mercy.

“We cannot maintain our lives without You. If You do not come with us to Vṛndāvana, then all the Vrajavāsīs, as well as the cows and calves, animals, and birds, will not be able to remain living in separation from You, and all of Vraja will become empty.”

After hearing Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's humble entreaty from the lips of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Jagannātha's *prema* for the Vrajavāsīs swelled even more, and He became restless. He began to consider Himself indebted to them for their love, and in order to console Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who was engrossed in *rādhā-bhāva*, He said:

'prāṇa-priye, śunō, mora e-satya-vacana
tomā-sabāra smarāṇe, jhurō muī rātri-dine,
mor duḥkha nā jāne konō jana
vraja-vāsī jatō jana, mātā, pitā, sakhā-gaṇa,
sabe haya mora prāṇa-sama
tāra madhye gopī-gaṇa, sākṣāt mora jīvana,
tumi – mora jīvanera jīvana
 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.149–150)

My dearest beloved, hear these truthful words of Mine. I go on crying day and night remembering all you Vrajavāsīs. In Dvārakā, Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, and even Uddhava cannot understand the suffering of My heart. I am powerless to tolerate this searing pain of distress deep within Me.

My mother, father, *sakhās*, and all the Vrajavāsīs are non-different from My very life. Among them, the *gopīs* are directly My life and soul. And among them, O Rādhe, You are the very life of My life.

tomā-sabār prema-rase, āmāke kōrilō vaśe,
āmi tomār adhīna kevala
tomā-sabā chāḍāiyā, āmā dūra-deśe lōiyā,
rākhiyāche durdaiva prabala
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.151)

The *prema-rasa* of all of you has subjugated Me, and therefore, I am dependent on you alone. It is My severe misfortune that has taken Me away from you all to a very far distant land.

priyā priya-saṅga-hīnā, priya priyā-saṅga binā,
nāhi jīye, – e satya pramāṇa
mora daśā śone jābe, tāra ei daśā habe,
ei bhaye dūhe rākhe prāṇa

sei satī – premavatī, premavān sei pati,
vīyoge je vāñche priya-hite
nā gaṇe āpana-duḥkha, vāñche priyajana-sukha,
sei dui mile acirāte
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.152–153)

A lover cannot live without his beloved, and a beloved cannot live without her lover – this is the truth. One who hears of the condition of the other will be beset with the same exact condition. If one of them gives up their life, then the other will also not be able to keep their life. Due to this very fear, both maintain their lives.

Such a chaste woman and such a husband who, even in separation, only desire each other's well-being are possessed of love. They only want their beloved's happiness and are not aware of their own sorrow. Such lovers meet again without delay.

*rākhite tomār jīvana, sevi āmi nārāyaṇa,
tāra śaktye āsi niti-niti
tomā-sane kriḍā kōri', punaḥ jāi jadu-purī,
tāhā tumi mānahô mora sphūrti*

*mora bhāgya mo-viṣaye, tomāra je prema haye,
sei prema – parama prabala
lukāiyā āmā āne, saṅga karāy tomā sane,
prakaṭeḥa ānibe satvara
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.154–155)*

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa continued:] Rādhe, You are My most dear beloved. I know that You cannot remain living without Me for even a single moment, and that is why I perform worship of Lord Nārāyaṇa, in order to protect Your life. It is by His mercy that I come to Vṛndāvana every day to sport with You and then return to Dvārakā. But You, in Vṛndāvana, consider that to be just a momentary vision of Me.

Due to My good fortune, Your love for Me is exceedingly strong. That mighty *prema* stealthily brings Me to Vṛndāvana and is the cause of My meeting with You. That strong *prema* will now quickly arrange My direct meeting with You in Vṛndāvana.

*yādavera vipakṣa, jatô duṣṭa kaṁsa-pakṣa,
tāhā āmi kailū saba kṣaya
āche dui-cāri jana, tāhā māri' vṛndāvana,
āilām āmi, jānihô niścaya*

*sei śatru-gaṇa hôte, vraja-jana rākhite,
rahi rājye udāsīna hōiyā
jebā strī-putra-dhane, kōri rājya āvaraṇe,
yadu-gaṇer santoṣa lāgiyā*

*tomāra je prema-guṇa, kare āmā ākarṣaṇa,
ānibe āmā dina daśa biśe
punaḥ āsi' vṛndāvane, vraja-vadhū tomā-sane,
vilasibō rajanī-divase
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.156–158)*

I have killed the enemies of the Yadu dynasty, like Kāmsa and other demons. Now there are only a few demons left. Therefore, I will also slay them and then surely come back to Vṛndāvana.

If I were to come to Vraja right now, then these demons would cause trouble for the Vrajavāsīs. Know for certain that I have no attachment to my wives, sons and daughters, and wealth and assets. I live in Dvārakā in a mood of indifference, only to satisfy the Yādavas.

I am controlled solely by Your love. Therefore, in only ten or twenty days, I will slay the demons and again return to Vṛndāvana, to enjoy amorous pastimes with You day and night.

But the *gopīs* did not hear any of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words; rather they seated Him on the chariot of their mind and brought Him to Vṛndāvana. It is with this very mood that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu sat Śrī Jagannātha-deva upon the chariot and brought Him from Dvārakā to Vṛndāvana.

Endnote to page 119

*priyaḥ so 'yam kṛṣṇaḥ saḥacari kuru-kṣetra-militas
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprḥayati*

After meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Kurukṣetra, Śrī Rādhā said to Her *sakhī*, "My dear friend, in this Kurukṣetra is that very same Śrī Kṛṣṇa who had secretly engaged in amorous pastimes with Me in Vṛndāvana. I am also the same Rādhā, and the happiness of our meeting is still the same. But nonetheless, My heart is yearning for that very forest of Vṛndāvana, situated on the banks

of the Yamunā, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa used to continuously engage in pastimes and play the fifth note of His charming *muralī* flute.

The deep meaning of this verse is this: “Although this Kṛṣṇa [in Kurukṣetra] is that very same Śrī Kṛṣṇa [as in Vṛndāvana], still there is no charming *muralī* flute in His hand, no peacock feather on His head, and no feeling in Him that He is the son of Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā. Here, accompanying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are all His wives, Balarāma and other brothers, Śrī Vasudeva and Mother Devakī, elephants, horses, and soldiers. Therefore, even though He is that same Śrī Kṛṣṇa, we do not find the same happiness in meeting with Him that we found in our secluded meetings with Him in Vṛndāvana.”

It is for this reason that Śrī Rādhā is praying to Śrī Kṛṣṇa to come with Her and the other *gopīs* to Vṛndāvana. One might therefore suppose that Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted Śrī Rādhā’s and the Vrajavāsī *gopīs*’ proposal, after which the *gopīs*, seating Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the chariot of their mind, brought Him from Kurukṣetra to Vṛndāvana. This was the deep, confidential disposition of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī understood. In accordance with that, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī composed this verse.

During Ratha-yātrā, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, or those who follow Śrīman Mahāprabhu, seat Śrī Kṛṣṇa upon the chariot and bring Him from Kurukṣetra to Vṛndāvana in faithful adherence to these moods of the *gopīs*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote this verse on a palm-leaf and placed it in the roof of Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s hut [to dry], and then went to the ocean to take bath. Śrīman Mahāprabhu would daily come to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s hut to meet with him. On that day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu saw the palm-leaf and read it. Meanwhile, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī returned and offered Śrīman Mahāprabhu prostrated obeisance. Having read that verse, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became overwhelmed with *bhāva*. As soon as Mahāprabhu saw Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, He brimmed with affection and lovingly gave him a slap. “Rūpa! How did you know My heart’s feelings?” Completely taken aback, He turned toward Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and asked, “How did Rūpa understand My heart?”

Chapter Nine

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “Since Śrī Rūpa has understood Your heart, it is apparent that You must have bestowed Your mercy upon Him.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Yes, I had embraced Rūpa and invested his heart with all of My *śakti*. He is a worthy candidate for being able to deliberate upon the confidential *śāstras* on *rasa*.”

Herā-pañcamī

Every year, before Ratha-yātrā, thousands of clay pots filled with water from holy places (*tīrthas*) situated all over India are brought for Lord Śrī Jagannātha's bathing festival (Snāna-yātrā). With this water, the *abhiseka* of Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva, and Śrī Subhadrā is performed. Because an excessive amount of water is used, they enact a pastime of illness. At that time, Lakṣmī-devī takes them to her palace, where she locks the door for fifteen days and cares for them. As a result, they regain their health. Lord Jagannātha-deva says to Lakṣmījī, "My dear, due to your care, we have become healthy, but we do not like being confined to the palace for so long. I desire to wander around outside for a few days, for a change of atmosphere."

Lakṣmījī asked, "Prabhu, how long will it be until you all return?"
"We shall come back very soon," said Śrī Jagannātha.

Śrī Lakṣmījī agreed to Jagannātha-deva's request. There was no apprehension in her mind, because Śrī Baladeva and Subhadrājī were going along with Him. Thus, by Lakṣmījī's agreement, Lord Jagannātha-deva, along with Śrī Baladeva and Subhadrājī, mounted their chariots and left.

Lakṣmījī's exhibition of anger

When five days had elapsed, Lakṣmījī began to wonder, "Where has my husband gone? He promised that He would come back very soon, but so many days have passed and He has not returned." Lakṣmījī became incapable of tolerating Śrī Jagannātha's neglect of her by delaying His return. In her anger, she ordered all her maidservants to equip themselves with weapons. Then, like the commander-in-chief

of an army, she set out to attack her husband. They searched and searched for Śrī Jagannātha, until they came to the Guṇḍicā Mandira. It was there that they searched (*heratī*) for Him. That is why the residents of Orissa (Utkalavāsīs) call this day 'Hera-pañcamī'. [*Pañcamī* refers to the fifth day after the Ratha-yātrā festival, as well as the fifth day of the waxing and waning moon on the lunar calendar.]

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's desire to see Hera-pañcamī

Śrīman Mahāprabhu called Nilacala 'Dvārakā,' and He called Guṇḍicā Mandira 'Vṛndāvana'. His purpose in doing so was to make the inhabitants of the world understand the difference between Dvārakā and Vṛndāvana. Therefore, the day before Hera-pañcamī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to Śrī Kāśī Miśra, "I, along with My devotees, want to see the Hera-pañcamī festival."

Kāśī Miśra expressed Śrīman Mahāprabhu's desire to King Pratāparudra and asked the king to decorate Mahālakṣmī-devī¹ with very gorgeous gold ornaments and hold such a magnificent festival that, after seeing her opulence, everyone will be struck with wonder.

The king was most elated to receive such a golden opportunity to perform service to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. He told Kāśī Miśra that he could take whatever he wanted from the royal treasury.

On the day of Hera-pañcamī, Kāśī Miśra prepared for this pastime by getting hundreds of devotees to beautifully adorn themselves. In the morning, Śrīman Mahāprabhu took His devotees and went inside Guṇḍicā Mandira for *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha-deva. He then took them to Śrī Jagannātha Mandira to see the Hera-pañcamī festival. Kāśī Miśra treated Him with great respect and had Him seated in a beautiful spot next to the Simha-dvāra².

It has been described in the previous chapter that both the Vrajavāsīs and Dvārakāvāsīs have so much *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but

1 This refers to the deity of Mahālakṣmī in the Jagannātha temple. – ed.

2 The Simha-dvāra ('Lion Gate') is the main entrance of the four entrances into Śrī Jagannātha Mandira. It faces east, opening onto the Baḍa-dāṇḍa, also known as the Grand Road. – ed.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by the *prema* of the Vrajavāsīs. Therefore, on the day of Herā-pañcamī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara some questions, with the purpose of establishing the glories of the Vrajavāsīs' *prema* in the world.

The discussion between Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara

With the desire to hear about the speciality of *rasa*, by comparing the *rasa* of Vraja to the *rasa* of Vaikuṅṭha, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, somewhat laughingly, asked Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara:

*“yadyapi jagannāth karen dvārakāy vihāra
sahaja prakṛta kare parama udāra*

*“tathāpi vatsara-madhye haya eka-bāra
vṛndāvana dekhite tāra utkaṅṭhā apāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.117–118)

Although Śrī Jagannātha-deva reigns in the Nīlācala Mandira, which is Dvārakā-dhāma, and engages in pastimes there, thus bestowing His supreme, natural compassion upon the *jīvas*, still, once a year, He becomes overwhelmed with immense eagerness to see Vṛndāvana.

*“vṛndāvana-sama ei upavana-gaṇa
tāhā dekhibāre utkaṅṭhita haya mana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.119)

[On both sides of Baḍa-dāṇḍa (Grand Road) are beautiful groves. Pointing toward those gardens, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] “These gardens are identical to Vṛndāvana; therefore, Śrī Jagannātha-deva remains extremely eager at heart to see them.

*“bāhira hōite kare ratha-yātrā-chala
sundarācale jāya prabhu chāḍi’ nīlācala*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.120)

“Outwardly, Śrī Jagannātha mounts the chariot, on the pretense of going to roam about in the gardens. In this way, He leaves Nīlācala (Dvārakā) and goes to Sundarācala (Vṛndāvana).

*“nānā-puṣpodyāne tathā khele rātri-dine
lakṣmī-devīre saṅge nāhi laya ki kāraṇe?”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.121)

“Bhagavān sports and plays, day and night, in the various flower gardens there, but why does He not take Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of fortune, with Him?”

**Only the gopīs have the qualification
to enter rāsa-līlā**

*svarūpa kahe – “śunô, prabhu, kāraṇa ihāra
vṛndāvan-kṛīḍāte lakṣmīr nāhi adhikāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.122)

Svarūpa Dāmodara replied, “Prabhu, please listen. The reason for this is that Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of fortune, does not have the proper qualification to enter the playful pastimes of Vṛndāvana.

*“vṛndāvana-līlāy kṛṣṇer sahāy gopī-gaṇa
gopī-gaṇa binā kṛṣṇer harite nāre mana”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.123)

“In the sweet pastimes of Vṛndāvana, the only assistants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the gopīs. But for them, no one can steal the mind of Kṛṣṇa.”

In Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has 16,000 queens, as well as eight principal queens, headed by Satyabhāmā and Rukmiṇījī. All of them are *lakṣmī-svarūpa*, meaning they are embodiments of Lakṣmī. If none of these eight principal queens have the qualification to enter Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana, then what can be said about the remaining 16,000 queens? In Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs’* service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is performed in *parakīyā-bhāva* (the mood of

a paramour), and in Dvārakā, the queens serve Him in *svakīyā-bhāva* (wedded love).

Prema has two aspects: meeting (*milana*) and separation (*viraha*). Separation increases the eagerness to meet and nourishes that meeting. When there is only meeting, the waves of the *bhāvas* of *prema* do not arise. In Dvārakā, the queens are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lawfully married wives, and there are no societal restrictions on their meeting with Him; they can do so whenever they want. Therefore, their *prema* lacks an ever-freshness. If *prema* has a cause, then, when the cause breaks, *prema* also breaks. The Dvārakā queens' *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is based on their marriage to Him. But the *gopīs*' *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not depend on any societal relationship. They are married to other *gopas*, but their innate *prema* is for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Furthermore, each one of the Dvārakā queens has ten sons and one daughter, and their love is therefore divided. But the *gopīs* [who enter *rāsa-līlā*] do not have any children, nor do they have a relationship with their husband. They have undivided *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone.

When the *gopīs* married, they became wives of others (*para-vadhū*). Kṛṣṇa was then a man other than their husband (*para-puruṣa*). Therefore, they could not meet with Him of their own accord. There were many obstacles to their meeting with Kṛṣṇa, such as their husband, mother-in-law and father-in-law, other family members, and societal conventions. By any trick or excuse, the *gopīs* were forever looking for a chance to meet with Him, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, hiding from His mother, father, and friends, was forever looking for a chance to meet with the *gopīs*. All these obstacles constantly increase the intense eagerness for meeting (*milana*), and they increase the joy of meeting a million times over. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supremely independent. Still, to relish such meetings, He performs such pastimes through His *yogamāyā* potency. To possess the mood of the *gopīs* is the one and only qualification for entering into such Vraja pastimes.

Once, after hearing about the glories of *rāsa-līlā*, a longing to also enter *rāsa-līlā* awoke within Lakṣmījī's heart. But because she does not possess the qualification to even enter Vṛndāvana, she therefore

performed austerities for thousands of years on the other side of the Yamunā in Baelvana. At that time, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came and asked her, “Why are you performing these arduous austerities?”

Lakṣmījī said, “I want to receive a boon from You, to be able to enter the *rāsa-līlā*.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “Right now, this is not possible for you.”

“Why not?” Lakṣmī-devī asked.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “To enter *rāsa*, it is necessary to have the body of a *gopī* and the identity (*abhimāna*) of a *gopī*. At the end of this lifetime, you have to take birth from the womb of a *gopī* in Vṛndāvana and marry a *gopa* (cowherd). After that, once you have submitted yourself to being under the shelter of the *nitya-siddha* (eternally perfected) *gopīs* and are situated in the pure *abhimāna* of a *gopī*, only then will you be able to enter in the *rāsa-līlā* – not before.

“Those *vraja-gopīs* who have children are also unable to enter this *rāsa*. Only those *gopīs* who have no relationship with their husband are able to do so. Therefore, how will you be able to enter? For this you will have to give up your loving feelings for Nārāyaṇa and your self-conception of being a *brāhmaṇī*. You will have to deceive your cowherd husband and adopt the mood of a paramour. In this way, only after being situated in the mood of a *gopī* can you enter in the *rāsa-līlā*.”

Lakṣmī-devī opposed this, saying, “How can I abandon my husband, Nārāyaṇa? I cannot give up my chastity and desert Him, and then marry a cowherd.”

“Until you are prepared to do all this, you will have to wait to enter the *rāsa-līlā*,” Śrī Kṛṣṇa told her.

For this reason, Lakṣmījī is performing austerities in Baelvana to this very day, but still she has not attained the necessary qualification. Everyone can desire this *gopī-prema*, but it is so extremely rare that even Lakṣmījī, Śaṅkarājī, Brahmājī, and so on cannot attain it, what to speak of others.

In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mother and father, friends, and the other *gopas* and motherly *gopīs* have so much love for Him. But here, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara describes only His beloved *gopīs*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is the following description:

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam
nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ
pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.32)

Oh, how greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, all the *gopas* and *gopīs*, the animals, birds, and all other living entities residing in Vraja. There is actually no limit to their good fortune, because the abode of *paramānanda* (supreme bliss), the eternal and complete Parabrahma, has descended among them and become their friend.

All the *gopas* also serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Nanda Bābā serves Him as His father, and Gargācārya, Bhāguri Muni, Śaṅḍilya Ṛṣi, and others offer Him blessings as His *gurus*. Sudāma, Subala, Madhumaṅgala, and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu also serve Him in a male form. But no one in a male body can perform the kind of service Śrīmatī Rādhikā performs. Therefore, all males are forbidden to enter that place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is engaged in pastimes with Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs*.

Some *sakhās*, such as Madhumaṅgala, Subala Sakhā, Kokila, Bhṛṅga, and other *priya-narma-sakhās*, who have a semblance of *mahābhāva*, assist these pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa only from a distance, because they are also forbidden from entering the *kuñjas*. On the other hand, all the *gopīs* can enter the *kuñjas*. Therefore, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said that apart from the *gopīs*, no one has the eligibility to steal Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart and reign over it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also confirms this statement in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.32.22):

*na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ
sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjaya-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvṛścyā tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā*

My darling *gopīs*, your meeting Me is faultless and pure in every respect. It is devoid of even a single iota of desire for your own

happiness and is full of supremely pure love. You have demolished the tenacious bonds of household life, and having transgressed the moral laws of this world, you have lovingly served Me. Even if I obtain a span of life like that of the gods, I would be unable to requite even one drop of your love, sacrifice, and service. All of you may free Me from debt simply by your own gentle nature, but I am forever the debtor of your *prema*, and will always continue to be.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has never said this to anyone but the *gopīs*. It is for this reason that Svarūpa Dāmodara has described the *gopīs* only.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is most munificent (*mahāvadānya*), and He descended to this earthly plane to bestow this very *gopī-prema*. If an intense hankering to perform service within the *rāsa-līlā* of the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, awakens within anyone, then that person will obtain the good fortune of entering this *rāsa*. Only for awakening such longing within the *jīvas* does Śrīman Mahāprabhu send so many great personalities (*mahāpuruṣas*) to this world, such as Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and his personal associates (*parikāras*) such as Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu desires to know the cause of Lakṣmī-devī's anger

*prabhu kahe – “yātrā-chale kṛṣṇera gamana
subhadrā āra baladeva, saṅge dui jana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.124)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu again asked Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara a question: “On the pretext of Ratha-yātrā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went with Śrī Baladeva Prabhu and Śrī Subhadrā-devī to Guṇḍicā Mandira (Vṛndāvana) to meet with Yaśodā Maiyā, Nanda Bābā, the *gopas*, *gopīs*,

and the rest of the Vrajavāsīs. He took Śrī Baladeva Prabhu and Śrī Subhadrājī along with Him, so that Lakṣmījī would not suspect that He has gone to Vṛndāvana. Śrī Baladeva Prabhu had lived with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja until the age of eleven, and Śrī Subhadrājī has great feelings of affection for the *gopīs*; therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took them with Him. He first went to Nanda Bhavana, and met with His parents. After that, He left Baladeva and Subhadrā there and went alone to His beloved *gopīs*.”

Śrī Baladeva and Subhadrājī cannot understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s confidential pastimes with the *gopīs*, nor do they know that during the day, having made an excuse to the *sakhās*, and during the night, without anyone coming to know, He sometimes goes to Vaṁśīvaṭa, sometimes to Sevā-kuṅja, sometimes to Saṅket, and sometimes to Rādhā-kuṅḍa, to meet alone with the *gopīs*. Playing with the *gopīs* in these places, sometimes He swings on swings, sometimes He is defeated by them in games, and sometimes the *gopīs* stealthily steal His flute. Sometimes He plays water-sports with the *gopīs* in Śyāma-kuṅḍa and Rādhā-kuṅḍa. In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs many confidential, sweet pastimes with the *gopīs*.

“*gopī-saṅge jatô līlā haya upavane
nigūḍha kṛṣṇera bhāva kehô nāhi jāne*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.125)

No one can understand the confidential moods of Kṛṣṇa in all the pastimes that take place with the *gopīs* in the *kuṅjas*.

Even Yaśodā Maiyā does not know about these confidential pastimes. Only Yogamāyā Paurṇamāsī-devī, Vṛndā-devī, Dhaniṣṭhā, and Kundalatā, etc. know of them. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *priya-narma-sakhās* such as Subala and Madhumaṅgala know something about them, but even then, they do not have entrance in those pastimes. Therefore, Śrī Subhadrā-devī and Śrī Baladeva Prabhu cannot understand why Śrī Kṛṣṇa has come to Vṛndāvana. Lakṣmī-devī was thinking that Śrī Jagannātha was wandering about with Śrī Baladeva Prabhu and Subhadrājī, and that He would soon return to Dvārakā.

“ataev kṛṣṇer prākāṭye nāhi kichu doṣa
tabe kene lakṣmī-devī kare etô roṣa?”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.126)

[Caitanya Mahāprabhu then asked,] “Therefore, since Śrī Jagannātha has not committed any perceivable offense to Śrī Lakṣmī, why does she become so angry with Him?”

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara replied:

*svarūpa kahe, – “prema-batīr ei tō’ svabhāva
kāntera audāsya-leṣe haya krodha-bhāva”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.127)

“It is natural for a girl, rapt in love, to become angry upon her lover showing her the slightest bit of neglect. This is why Lakṣmījī was in māna.”

*henô-kāle, khacita jāhe vividha ratana
suarṇera caudolā kôri’ ārohaṇa*

*chatra-cāmara-dhvajā patākāra gaṇa
nānā-vādyā-āge nāce deva-dāsī-gaṇa*

*tāmbūla-samputa, jhāri, vyajana, cāmara
sāthe dāsī śata, hāra divya bhūṣāmbara*

*aneka aiśvarya saṅge bahu-parivāra
kruddha hōiyā lakṣmī-devī āilā simha-dvāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.128–131)

At that moment, everyone saw that Lakṣmī-devī came there riding on a golden, gem-studded palanquin. Her maidservants accompanied her, carrying umbrellas, cāmaras, and flags. The other maidservants were playing various musical instruments, and the devadāsīs³ were dancing. Hundreds of maidservants, surrounded her on all sides, carrying boxes of pāna (betel nuts),

3 Devadāsīs were Jagannātha’s maidservants who dedicated their lives to singing and dancing for His pleasure. – ed.

small water containers with a spout for sprinkling water, fans, and *cāmaras*. These maidservants were all adorned with divine ornaments. With her many associates and exhibiting vast opulence, Lakṣmī-devī came to the Śimha-dvāra, filled with anger.

*jaḡannāther mukhya mukhya jaṭō bhṛtya-gaṇe
lakṣmī-devīr dāsī-gaṇa karena bandhane*

*bāndhiyā āniyā pāḡe lakṣmīra caraṇe
core daṇḡa kare, jeṇō laya nānā-dhane*

*acetanavat tāre karena tāḡane
nānā-matō gāli dena bhaṇḡa-vacane*

*lakṣmī-saṅge dāsī-gaṇer prāgalbhya dekhiyā
hāse mahāprabhur gaṇa mukhe hasta diyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.132–135)

On the order of Lakṣmījī, her maidservants grabbed the chief servants of Śrī Jaḡannātha. They began to bind them with ropes and threw them at Lakṣmī-devī's feet. She proceeded to punish them as if they had stolen a vast amount of wealth. Those maidservants assailed them with many abuses and harsh words, as if Jaḡannātha's servants were ignorant fools. Seeing the boldness and expertise of Lakṣmī-devī and her associates, Mahāprabhu and His associates covered their mouth and began to laugh.

Lakṣmījī departs for Guṇḡicā Mandira

After this, Lakṣmījī began to move toward Śrī Guṇḡicā Mandira along with her maidservants. Śrīman Mahāprabhu also, accompanied by all His devotees, followed just behind, to see the *bhāvas* of Lakṣmī-devī.

*dāmodara kahe, – “aiche mānera prakāra
tri-jagate kāhā dekhi, śuni nāi āra*

*māninī nirutsāhe chāḡe vibhūsaṇa
bhūme bōsi' nakhe lekhe, malina-vadana*

*pūrve satyabhāmār śuni evaṁ-vidha māna
vraje gopī-gaṇer māna – rasera nidhāna*

*ihō nija-sampatti sab prakāṣa kōriyā
priyera upara jāya sainya sājāiyā”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.136–139)

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “Never before have I seen or heard of such astonishing *māna* anywhere within the three worlds. Usually, a woman in *māna* becomes morose, throws off all her ornaments, and sits on the ground. Because she is filled with anger and distress, she looks dejected. She begins to write something by scratching her nails on the ground. Previously, when Satyabhāmājī had exhibited *māna*, her condition was just like this, so what can be said of the *māna* of the *gopīs*! Their *māna* is the treasury, the crown-jewel, of *rasa*. But here, in the case of Lakṣmījī, the exact opposite is shown. Bedecked in all her wealth and opulence, she and her army have prepared to make an attack on her beloved. What kind of *māna* is this?”

The *māna* of the *gopīs*

Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked, “How many kinds of *māna* are there in the *vraja-gopīs*?”

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “The *gopīs*’ *māna* is of hundreds of types. There are many divisions of heroines, according to their nature and the propensity of their *prema*. *Māna* arises in the heroine in accordance with those divisions. It is not possible to describe all the different types of *māna*, and therefore, I can give only a general overview by describing a few divisions.

“The *gopīs*’ *māna* is sometimes aroused by a cause and sometimes without any cause. *Māna* is an advanced stage of *prema* that manifests after *sthāyibhāva* (one’s permanent sentiment) is attained. There are five kinds of *sthāyibhāva*,⁴ and they never change. When *vibhāva*,

4 The five types of *sthāyibhāva* are the permanent sentiments in one of the five primary relationships of neutrality (*sānta*), servitude (*dāsya*), friendship (*sakhya*), parenthood (*vātsalya*), or amorous love (*mādhurya*). – ed.

anubhāva, *sāttvika-bhāva*, and *vyabhicārī-bhāva*⁵ all mix together on the platform of *sthāyibhāva*, then *bhakti-rasa* is produced. In the *sādhaka's* heart, first *rati* arises, and then, after some time, by the mercy of a *rāgātmikā-bhakta* of Goloka Vṛndāvana, the permanent foundation of *prema*, *sthāyibhāva*, manifests in his heart.

“What is the nature of *prema*? Even when there is every reason for the *prema* to break, it only increases more and more. In *prema*, there is not even the slightest trace of desire for one’s own happiness. The *gopīs’* objective is simply to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s objective is to please the *gopīs*. The mutual love of conditioned souls of this world is not selfless, and therefore, when there is just a little harm to one’s self-interest, the connection of love breaks.

“After *prema* comes the stage of *sneha*, in which the devotee’s heart melts immediately upon seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and streams of tears continuously flow from his eyes. There are two kinds of *sneha*: *ghṛta-sneha* and *madhu-sneha*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *sakhīs* in Her group have *madhu-sneha*, and Candrāvalī and the *sakhīs* in her group have *ghṛta-sneha*. The *gopīs* with *madhu-sneha* possess the mood that Kṛṣṇa is theirs, whereas the *gopīs* with *ghṛta-sneha* think, ‘I am Kṛṣṇa’s.’

“After *sneha*, the mood of *praṇaya* arises, in which the *gopīs’ sneha* increases so much that they consider themselves and Kṛṣṇa to be one soul in two bodies.

“After *praṇaya* comes the stage of *māna*. But sometimes *māna* arises before the stage of *praṇaya*. The *gopīs* have a firm conviction that if they go into *māna*, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa will surely come to pacify them. This alone is the purpose of their *māna*.

“There are unlimited moods within Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Among them, three hundred sixty are prominent, and therefore, there are basically three hundred sixty kinds of *gopīs*. Each *gopī* has a different mood, and all moods are embodied in Śrīmatī Rādhikā. All the *gopīs* are Her *kaya-vyūhā* (direct expansions), and their moods manifest by Her

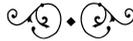
5 *Vibhāva* – that which causes one to relish one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa; *anubhāva* – visible actions that reveal spiritual emotions; *sāttvika-bhāva* – eight symptoms of spiritual ecstasy; *vyabhicārī-bhāva* – thirty-three spiritual emotions that arise from one’s permanent sentiment. – ed.

desire. Lalitā is *prakharā* (bold and outspoken), some *gopīs* are gentle and sober (*dhīrā*), and some restless (*adhīrā*).”

When Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara explained all this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “I want to hear about the *bhāvas* that are beyond this.”

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “When those *gopīs* who have the mood ‘I belong to Kṛṣṇa’ are in *māna*, they do not speak cutting words to Him; they just weep. However, when the *gopīs* who have the mood ‘Kṛṣṇa is mine’ exhibit *māna*, then, with tears flowing from their eyes and being filled with anger, they pierce Kṛṣṇa with the arrows of their harsh words.

“Once, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to Rādhājī, His face and arms bore black and red marks. Seeing this, Rādhājī thought that these marks were from His amorous play (*vilāsa*) with other *gopīs*. She then exhibited *māna*. With sarcasm, She sweetly said, ‘Oh! You have come. You look most exhausted. Please rest for a little while.’ She gave Him a place to sit and shot a side-long glance at His face. ‘You are looking very beautiful. You look just like Mahādeva Śaṅkarajī.’ Nīla-rohita Rudra Śaṅkarajī’s complexion is a combination of blue, black, and red. In this way, Śrī Rādhājī compared Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Śaṅkarajī.”



Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī became so absorbed in discussing the moods of the Vrajavāsīs that they did not even notice that Lakṣmījī’s chariot had reached Guṇḍicā Mandira.

(Now the pastime of Lakṣmī-devī arriving at Guṇḍicā Mandira is being described.)

When Lakṣmī realized that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had left Nīlācala (Dvārakā) to go to Sundarācala (Vṛndāvana), her anger suddenly increased.

*śrīvāsa hāsīyā kahe, – “śunō, dāmodara
āmāra lakṣmīra dekhō sampatti vistara*

*“vṛndāvaner sampad dekhō, – puṣpa-kisalaya
giri-dhātu-śikhi-piccha-guñjā-phala-maya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.203–204)

Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura, laughing, said to Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, “My dear friend, just see the extent of the unlimited opulence of my Lakṣmījī. Vṛndāvana’s treasure merely consists of some flowers, creepers, minerals from the hills, peacock feathers, and *guñjā* berries.

“In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not even have a gold crown on His head. He bears only a flute made of bamboo, a peacock feather, a *pītambara*, and a flower garland.”

*“vṛndāvana dekhībāre gelā jagannātha
suni’ lakṣmī-devīr mane hōilō āsoyātha*

*“etō sampatti chāḍī’ kene gelā vṛndāvana
tāre hāsyā kōrite lakṣmī kōrilā sājana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.205–206)

[Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura continued,] “Upon hearing that Śrī Jagannāthajī has gone to see that Vṛndāvana, the heart of my *svāmīnī*, Śrī Lakṣmī, has become saddened. ‘Why has Śrī Jagannāthajī gone to see Vṛndāvana, leaving behind so much wealth and opulence?’ Just to make a mockery of this, Lakṣmījī has set out with her entire opulence and wealth.”

Then the maidservants of Lakṣmījī said to the servants of Lord Jagannātha-deva:

*“tomāra ṭhākur, dekhō etō sampatti chāḍī’
patra-phala-phula-lobhe gelā puṣpa-bāḍī*

*ei karma kare kāhā vidagdha-śiromaṇi?
lakṣmīr agrete nija prabhure dehō’ āni’ ”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.207–208)

“Your master, Jagannātha, abandoning the great opulence of Lakṣmījī, went into the flower garden, greedy for some leaves, fruits, and flowers. Your master is the crest jewel of the clever, so why is He showing such foolishness? Very quickly present your master before Lakṣmī-devī.”

*etô bôli' lakṣmīra saba dāsī-gaṇe
kaṭi-vastre bāndhi' āne prabhur nija-gaṇe*

*lakṣmīra caraṇe āni' karāya praṇati
dhana-daṇḍa laya, āra karāya minati*

*rathera upare kare daṇḍera tāḍana
cora-prāya kare jagannāther sevak-gaṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.209–211)

Saying this, the maidservants of Lakṣmī arrested the servants of Jagannātha and bound them by throwing cloth around their waist. They then brought them to Lakṣmī and made them offer *praṇāma* at her feet. As punishment, they took their wealth and had them make a humble entreaty to her. They even beat Śrī Jagannātha's chariot with sticks. They treated Jagannātha's servants just like thieves.

*saba bhṛtya-gana kahe, – joḍa kôri' hāta
'kāli āni dibô tomār āge jagannātha'*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.212)

Finally, Lord Śrī Jagannātha's servants came before Lakṣmī-devī with folded hands and said, "We will bring Lord Śrī Jagannātha before you tomorrow."

Having fined and punished Śrī Jagannātha's servants, Lakṣmī-devī, upon hearing them make this promise, released them and went to her abode, pacified.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita said to Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, "It is not possible to describe my Lakṣmījī's wealth in words. Your *gopīs* make ghee, yogurt, butter, and so forth from the milk of their cows. This is how they make their livelihood. They live in *kuñjas* (bowers), not in the big palaces of Mathurā and Dvārakā. They make their ornaments from forest flowers, whereas Dvārakāvāsīs have ornaments of gold, pearls, diamonds, and jewels. And my Ṭhākuraṇī sits on a jeweled throne."

Hearing the words of Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, who was in the mood of Śrī Nāradaḥ, the devotees of Śrīman Mahāprabhu burst out laughing.

*prabhu kahe, – “śrīvās, tomāte nārad-svabhāva
aiśvarya-bhāve tomāte, īśvara-prabhāva*

*“īho dāmodar-svarūpa – śuddha-vrajavāsī
aiśvarya nā jāne īho śuddha-preme bhāsi”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.216–217)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Śrīvāsa, your nature is like that of Śrī Nārada. By the Lord’s influence, you are only attracted to the mood of opulence (*aiśvarya*). But this Svarūpa Dāmodara is a pure Vrajavāsī. He does not know *aiśvarya*. He simply remains immersed in pure *prema*.”

The majesty of Vṛndāvana

*svarūpa kahe, – “śrīvāsa, śunō sāvadhāne
vṛndāvana-sampad tomār nāhi paḍe mane?*

*vṛndāvane sāhajika je sampat-sindhu
dvārakā-vaikuṅṭha-sampat – tāra eka bindu*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 14.218–219)

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara said, “Śrīvāsa, just listen attentively. Do you not know the transcendental opulence of Vṛndāvana? The natural opulence of Vṛndāvana is vast like an ocean. The opulence of Dvārakā and Vaikuṅṭha is not equal to even a drop of that ocean.”

*śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ kalpa-taravo
drumā bhūmiś cintāmaṇi-gaṇa-mayī toyam amṛtam
kathā gānaṁ nāṭyaṁ gamanam api vaṁśī priya-sakhī
cid-ānandaṁ jyotiḥ param api tad āsvādyam api ca
Brahma-saṁhitā (5.56)*

However much opulence the Supreme personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa has is fully manifested in His own abode, Vṛndāvana. There, the earth is made of wish-fulfilling *cintāmaṇi* jewels, and the houses are made of jewels. Even the maidservants there wear ankle-bells

made of *cintāmaṇi* gems. There, all the trees are desire-trees (*kalpa-urkṣa*), but the Vrajavāsīs only desire fruits and flowers from them. The limitless cows there are all wish-fulfilling cows (*kāmadhenus*), but the Vrajavāsīs beg only milk from them, not any other kind of wealth. The Vrajavāsīs' ordinary speech is song, and their natural walk a dance. The water of that abode is nectar. With its own transcendental radiance, that abode illuminates itself. The Lakṣmīs there, that is, the *gopīs*, defeat the Lakṣmī of Vaikuṅṭha and Dvārakā with their astonishing qualities. There, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vaṁśī* flute itself performs the activities of a dearest friend (*priya-sakhī*).⁶

Kṛṣṇa is the crown-jewel among connoisseurs of *rasa* (*rasika sekhara*), and that is why He wants to relish the *rasa* of *unnata-ujjvala-prema* (the supremely elevated, resplendent love of the *gopīs*). He is not fully satisfied by any other sentiment of love. This *unnata-ujjvala-rasa* is only within the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, and therefore, leaving aside the opulence displayed in the abode of Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa always resides in Vṛndāvana, which is full of *mādhurya*.

Upon hearing the glories of Vṛndāvana from Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita's mood changed. He became absorbed in the mood of Madhumaṅgala, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear *sakhā* in Vraja. Absorbed in the mood of Vraja, he began to dance and loudly laugh while making a funny sound by squeezing air out of his armpit with his cupped hand. After hearing the glories of the pure *prema* of Śrī Rādhājī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu too, became even more immersed in *prema*. He began to dance, and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara began to perform *kīrtana*.

The difference between the mood of aiśvarya and mādhurya

Here the question arises that if Śrī Kṛṣṇa has so much love for the Vrajavāsīs, why did He go to Mathurā and Dvārakā and leave them

6 *Brahma-saṁhitā* (56): "In Goloka-dhāma, *vaṁśī* is the dearest friend (*priya-sakhī*), because by the waves of her sweet voice, she first informs Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved *gopīs* about where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is happily engaged in His pastimes, and then, exerting a powerful attraction upon them, she brings them to that very place". – ed.

burning in the agony of separation from Him? The explanation for this is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot abandon any devotee. For this reason, He went there to fulfill the desires of the devotees in Mathurā and Dvārakā.

The following question is then raised: After bringing joy to the devotees of Mathurā and Dvārakā, why did He not return to Vṛndāvana? The reason for this is that if Śrī Kṛṣṇa had returned to Vṛndāvana at that time, then Jarāsandha would have come to know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the son of Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā. To take revenge on Śrī Kṛṣṇa for causing Kāṁsa's death, he would have attacked Vraja. In Vraja there is no system to protect it from outsiders, nor was there any fort, nor did Nanda Bābā have any soldiers. Jarāsandha would have easily destroyed all of Vraja and imprisoned Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā Maiyā, just as Kāṁsa had imprisoned Śrī Vasudeva and Devakī. This is the external reason for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's not returning to Vraja, but there are also many other, confidential reasons for this.

Could Śrī Kṛṣṇa not have come to Vṛndāvana from time to time, to pacify the Vrajavāsīs, especially the *gopīs*, who were enduring the agony of separation from Him? The reason He did not do so is because the very bodies of the *gopīs* are made of separation. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was in Vṛndāvana, even a moment's separation from Him used to seem like eons for the *gopīs*. And when He went to Mathurā, their feeling of separation intensified immensely. When a droplet of water falls on a hot frying pan, it instantly sizzles and evaporates turning into steam, and the temperature of the frying pan increases rather than decreases. In the same way, the *gopīs*' agony of separation is like a hot frying pan, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's meeting them for a few days would be like a drop of water intensifying their burning in separation.

Some people may ask the following question: Śrī Kṛṣṇa delivered the sleeping Mathurāvāsīs to Dvārakā in the middle of the night, thus showing that He can make the impossible possible, but why did He not take Nanda Bābā, Yaśodā Maiyā, His *sakhās*, *gopīs*, and other Vrajavāsīs to Dvārakā? In Dvārakā, He had numerous enormous palaces for not only each of His queens, but also for Vasudeva and Devakī, Akrūra, Uddhava, and so on. When thousands and millions

of Mathurāvāsīs used to live there, could He not have made beautiful arrangements for the Vrajavāsīs to stay there also?

The reason Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not do this is that Mathurā and Dvārakā are lands of *aiśvarya* (majesty and opulence), and Vṛndāvana is the land of *mādhurya* (charming sweetness). *Aiśvarya* and *mādhurya* cannot simultaneously exist in one place. The moods of Vṛndāvana can never manifest in Dvārakā, and the moods of Dvārakā can never manifest in Vṛndāvana. These two *bhāvas* are opposite, and putting them together is called *rasābhāsa*, the overlapping of mellows. To understand this, it is first of all necessary to understand the meaning of *mādhurya* and *aiśvarya bhāvas*.

In Dvārakā, there is complete majesty (*vaibhava*). There, the Yadu dynasty regards Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the complete Supreme Controller (Parameśvara). Sometimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa even assumes His four-armed form there.

In Vṛndāvana, on the other hand, only *mādhurya-bhāva* is displayed. *Aiśvarya-bhāva* remains covered by *mādhurya-bhāva*. There, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of Mother Yaśodā. As a tiny baby, He could not even turn over without His mother's help. He used to feel hungry frequently, and if He did not get butter, He would become angry and break clay pots of yogurt. Sometimes He would steal butter from the houses of the Vraja *gopīs*. Once, on breaking a pot of yogurt in His own home, Mother Yaśodā bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa to a grinding mortar. She always considers Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be her son, having been born from her womb. The idea that He is the complete Absolute (Pūrṇabrahma) and the Supreme Controller (Parameśvara) never enters her heart. This alone is *mādhurya-bhāva*. If she considered Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be Pūrṇabrahma, she would never have been able to scold Him.

When it is said that Vṛndāvana is the land of *mādhurya*, one should not think that *aiśvarya* is lacking there. Goloka Vṛndāvana is the foundation of all other abodes. All of the *aiśvarya* that is manifest in other abodes is only a fraction of the *aiśvarya* of Vṛndāvana. But in Vṛndāvana, *mādhurya-bhāva* is so strong that it covers such *aiśvarya*, which is allowed to manifest only when appropriate for *līlā*. Even though there is *aiśvarya-bhāva* in Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa

performs human-like pastimes there, just like an ordinary boy. For example, the demoness Pūtanā came to Gokula in the disguise of a beautiful woman. ‘Lovingly’ calling six-day-old Kṛṣṇa her dear son, she took Him on her lap and began to feed Him her breast-milk. She had applied deadly poison to her breasts. Her intention in coming to Vraja was to kill Him. As soon as He saw her, He closed His eyes as if afraid of her and began to suck on her breast. While doing so, He began to suck out her life as well. The pain in her breast was tremendous, and she began to loudly cry out, “Leave me! Leave me!” Pūtanā had the strength of ten thousand elephants, but she could not free herself from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s grasp. To save her life, she transformed into her real form and flew into the sky, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa easily took away her life. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the form of a tiny, helpless baby, killed such a strong witch as Pūtanā and revealed His Godhood and majesty.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was only seven years of age, He, smiling, lifted Govardhana Hill on His little finger and held it there for seven days, as easily as an elephant lifts a lotus flower with its trunk, all the while standing in His charming threefold-bending form. All the cowherd boys held up their sticks and supported Govardhana, thinking that they themselves were holding up the hill. Nanda Mahārāja prayed to his worshipful form of Bhagavān, “O Nārāyaṇa, please do not allow this mountain to fall down.” And what can be said of the *gopīs*? They are the very *śakti* of Kṛṣṇa. Rādhāji looked at Govardhana with a piercing sidelong glance and said, “If you fall, you will burn to ashes.” In this way, everyone was helping in accordance with their own *bhāvas*, thinking that without their assistance, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would not be able to hold up Govardhana alone.

Without assuming a huge form or four-armed form, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana Hill and displayed His great majesty (*aiśvarya*). Even if *aiśvarya* is displayed in Bhagavān’s human-like pastimes, they are still called *mādhurya*-filled pastimes. In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa is the friend of all the *gopas*, He is the beloved of all the young *gopīs*, and He is the son of all the motherly *gopīs*.

This mood is not in Dvārakā. There, only the mood of majesty and opulence is prominent. In Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself as

being a *kṣatriya* and the son of Vasudeva and Devakī. In Vṛndāvana, however, He considers Himself to be a *gopa* and the son of Nanda Bābā and Yaśodā. If the Mathurāvāsīs and Vrajavāsīs all lived together in Dvārakā, then whose son would Śrī Kṛṣṇa call Himself? In Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a king and therefore would not be able to go out cowherding with His *sakhās*. He would not be able to give up His gem-studded golden crown and don a crown of peacock feathers. Due to the presence of the 16,108 queens, He could not play His flute there to call the *gopīs* to the *rāsa* dance. If all the *gopas* and *gopīs* were to come to Dvārakā, the union of the two *bhāvas* would give rise to the defect of *rasābhāsa*, the overlapping of mellows.

The elevated mood of Vṛndāvana can never arise in Dvārakā. In Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa carries His flute and wears a peacock feather, and He displays His beautiful, threefold-bending form as *manmatha-manmathaḥ*, He who enchants Cupid (Kāmadeva) himself. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's topmost pastime place, Girirāja Govardhana, as well as Śrī Vṛndā-devī, who arranges His sweet pastimes, could never abandon Vraja and go to Dvārakā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot perform *rāsa-līlā* in Dvārakā, and so the *gopīs* would never go there. Śrī Kṛṣṇa can never be there in His complete *svarūpa* (form). He resides there in His manifestation of Vāsudeva, because Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa never gives up His *svarūpa* of Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara and He could never abandon Vṛndāvana.

The Instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu

Distinctions among Vaiṣṇavas

The Ratha-yātrā festival of Lord Śrī Jagannātha continued for nine days. Śrīman Mahāprabhu was residing with the devotees in a large flower garden just near Guṇḍicā Mandira, called Jagannātha Vāṭikā. Every day, after taking morning bath, Śrīman Mahāprabhu would take *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha, and then dance and perform *kīrtana* for a long time with the devotees in the temple's courtyard. He would then take them with Him to a nearby garden, and dance and perform *kīrtana* there. When the trees and creepers of that place had *darśana* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, they blossomed and were thus covered with many kinds of flowers. Swarms of buzzing honeybees, attracted by the sweet fragrance of those flowers, began to hover around those trees, birds such as parrots and cuckoos sweetly chirped, and gentle, fragrant breezes blew.

As Śrīman Mahāprabhu roamed in that place, He felt that He was in Vṛndāvana when Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes were going on, after Śrī Kṛṣṇa had returned from Dvārakā. By this momentary inner heart's vision, His feelings of separation dissipated. Thinking Himself to be a maidservant of Śrī Rādhājī, He became immersed in an ocean of joy at the meeting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with His *āśraya vighra*¹, Śrī Rādhājī. Drowning in this *rasa*, He sang and danced with the devotees in the garden. Under each and every tree, Vāsudeva Datta and other devotees would sing songs, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu would enter a state of supreme rapture and dance. Sometimes, Vakreśvara Paṇḍita

1 *Āśraya-vighra* – the receptacle of love for Kṛṣṇa, the devotee. – ed.

would dance. Seeing him do so, Śrīman Mahāprabhu would begin to sing. In this way, they performed pastimes in the garden for a very long time, after which Śrīman Mahāprabhu would take the devotees to Narendra Sarovara and engage in playful water pastimes with them. He would then return to the garden with the devotees and honor *prasāda*.

In this way, after remembering and glorifying *vr̥ndāvana-līlā* while in the Guṇḍicā Mandira, the return Ratha-yātrā (*ul̥ṭā-ratha*)² began, in which Śrī Jagannātha proceeded to return to His temple. As they were moving along, they sang and danced in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva's chariot.

After the Ratha-yātrā festival, the devotees coming from Bengal met with Śrīman Mahāprabhu and sought permission from Him to return to Bengal. Satyarāja Khān and his good son, Rāmānanda Vasu, inquired from Śrīman Mahāprabhu as follows:

*“gṛhastha viṣayī āmi, ki mora sādhanē
śrī-mukhe kareṇa ājñā – nivedi caraṇē”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.103)

“Prabhu, we are householders and engrossed in worldly affairs. Our humble supplication at Your lotus feet is that, for our well-being, You give us appropriate instructions on *bhakti-sādhana* from Your lotus lips.”

They asked this question not for themselves, but for the benefit of all *jīvas*.

*prabhu kahē, – “ ‘kṛṣṇa-sevā’, ‘vaiṣṇava-sevana’
‘nirantara karô kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana’ ”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.104)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “Service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, service to the Vaiṣṇavas, and continuous performance of *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana* are the sole duties of *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas.”

2 Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja has explained that on the return journey, also, Mahāprabhu and all His associates thought they were going to Vraja from Kurukṣetra, and they performed the same pastimes as on their journey to Guṇḍicā. – ed.

Satyaṛāja Khān and Rāmānanda thought that *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana* and service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa are easy to understand. When a person does *kīrtana* on his own, it is called *kīrtana*, and when many devotees perform *kīrtana* under the guidance of a devotee who has full realization of his internal spiritual form and identity (a *svarūpa-siddha bhakta*), it is called *saṅkīrtana*. Performing various services and worshiping Śrī Kṛṣṇa from morning till night – such as offering *ārati*, bathing the deities, offering them *bhoga* at the appropriate times, and so on – is *kṛṣṇa-sevā*, or service to Kṛṣṇa. But because it is difficult to discern who a Vaiṣṇava is, it is not easy to get the opportunity to serve one.

satyaṛāja bale, – “vaiṣṇav cinibô kemône?

ke vaiṣṇava, kahô târa sāmānya lakṣaṇe”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.105)

Satyaṛāja Khān then asked Śrīman Mahāprabhu, “How can we recognize a Vaiṣṇava? Please tell us who a Vaiṣṇava is and what his common symptoms are.”

prabhu kahe, – “jāra mukhe śuni eka-bāra

kṛṣṇa-nāma, sei pūjya, – śreṣṭha sabākāra

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.106)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu answered, “He from whose mouth *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is heard even once is worshipful and is the best among human beings.

eka kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa kṣaya

nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma hôite haya”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.107)

“Chanting one name of Kṛṣṇa destroys all sins. Simply by chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, all the nine limbs of *bhakti* are accomplished.”

Only by taking shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, having abandoned committing *nāma-aparādha*, are all the offenses of the *jīvas* absolved and their material desires for enjoyment, which are rooted in sins and piety, completely destroyed. Hearing about Śrī Viṣṇu (*śravaṇa*),

chanting His glories (*kīrtana*), remembering Him (*smaraṇa*), serving His feet (*pada-sevana*), worshiping Him (*arcana*), offering prayers to Him (*vandana*), serving Him (*dāśya*), being His friend (*sakhya*), and fully dedicating oneself to Him (*ātma-nivedana*), is called *navadhā-bhakti*, or the nine limbs of *bhakti*. Only by *bhajana* of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa do the nine limbs of *bhakti* attain fulfillment. Śrīman Mahāprabhu continued:

*“dīkṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare
jihvā-sparśe ācaṇḍāle sabāre uddhāre*

*anuṣaṅga-phale kare saṁsāreṇa kṣaya
citta ākarṣiṇī karāya kṛṣṇe premodaya”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.108–109)

“One is not required to undergo the process of receiving formal initiation (*dīkṣā*) or performing certain regulative rites (called *puraścaryā*³) in order to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Simply by coming in contact with the tongue, *kṛṣṇa-nāma* delivers everyone, including even the most degraded class of men.

“*Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is so sweet that it attracts the heart of that *sādhaka* and causes *kṛṣṇa-prema* to arise within him. Consequently, it cuts the ties of his material existence (*saṁsāra*).”

To verify this, Śrīman Mahāprabhu quoted a verse from the scriptures:

*ākṛṣṭiḥ kṛta-cetasām sumanasām uccātanām cāmhasām
ācaṇḍālam amūka-loka-sulabho vaśyaś ca mukti-śriyaḥ
no dīkṣām na ca sat-kriyām na ca puraścaryām manāg iḥsate
mantra 'yaṁ rasanā-sparṣe eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakah*

Padyāvalī (29);

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.110)

3 The five components of *puraścaryā* are worship (*pūjā*), chanting (*japa*), offering water (*tarpaṇa*), performing sacrifice (*homa*), and feeding the *brāhmaṇas* (*brāhmaṇa bhajana*). They are to be performed daily at the three junctures of the day – morning, noon, and evening.

The pure name of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa attracts saintly and liberated persons. It destroys the fruit of sinful activities, and it is so merciful that, beginning with *cāṇḍālas*, it is easily obtained by everyone, apart from those who are mute and unable to speak.⁴ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name bestows liberation, and it is just as powerful as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. As soon as this pure name touches the tongue, its transformation is immediately visible. The chanting of these names is not dependent on *dikṣā*, moral conduct, or preparatory rites. This name is completely full in itself.

*ataeva jãra mukhe eka kṛṣṇa-nãma
sei tô' vaiṣṇava, kôrihô tâhâr sammãna
Śrī Caitanya-caritãmṛta (Madhya-lilã 15.111)*

“One who chants Kṛṣṇa's name even a single time is described as a Vaiṣṇava; therefore, you should show him utmost respect.”

Knowing that only by *śrī kṛṣṇa-nãma* all perfection is attained, faithful persons who chant the holy name are called Vaiṣṇavas. Faith (*śraddhã*) grants the sole qualification to be a Vaiṣṇava. In the elementary stages, however, *śraddhã* is very tender (*komala*), and so beginners in spiritual life do not continuously chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. This is the characteristic of a *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava.

The next year after Ratha-yãtrã, Satyarãja Khãn, as before, asked his question about his duty:

4 This refers to uttering *śrī nãma* with the mouth. For this reason, it was said that, apart from those who are mute or unable to speak, all can chant it. By this, however, it should not be understood that Bhagavãn's name is incapable of delivering persons who are unable to speak. In *Śrī Brhad-bhãgavatãmṛta* (1.1.9), Śrīla Sanãtana Gosvãmīpãda explains in his commentary that *śrī kṛṣṇa-nãma* bestows liberation upon those who chant it just once, in any way, with any one of the five senses. A person without a tongue can insure his welfare by chanting *śrī nãma* with his eyes by reading the holy name written somewhere, or by chanting *śrī nãma* through touch, by painting it on the chest and other parts of the body, by feeling *śrī nãma* written on paper, or by holding a banner marked with *śrī nãma*.

*prabhu kahe, – “vaiṣṇava-sevā, nāma-saṅkīrtana
dui karô, śīghra pābe śrī-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 16.70)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “By performing the two activities of service to the Vaiṣṇavas and *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, you will very quickly attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

*têho kahe, – “ke vaiṣṇava, ki tāra lakṣaṇa?”
tabe hāsi’ kahe prabhu jāni’ tāra mana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 16.71)

Satyaṛāja Khān asked, “Who is a Vaiṣṇava and what are his symptoms?” Śrīman Mahāprabhu, understanding his mind, smiled and said:

*“kṛṣṇa-nāma nirantara jâhāra vadane
sei vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha, bhaja tâhāra caraṇe”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 16.72)

“That Vaiṣṇava who ceaselessly utters *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is superior to a *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava, who has soft faith. He is to be known as a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava. To perform service to the feet of a *madhyama-adhikāri* Vaiṣṇava is the duty of *grhastha* Vaiṣṇavas.”

Nirantara (‘ceaselessly’ or ‘without a pause’) means that there is no interval or obstruction in chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Apart from service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, any other kind of desire, activity, knowledge, or laziness constitutes a pause or an obstruction. The word *antara* (a pause) should be understood to pertain to the body (meaning the satisfaction of the senses), wealth (meaning the endeavor to accumulate wealth), people (meaning association with materialistic or wicked persons), greed (meaning the intense desire to satisfy the tongue), and atheism (meaning the conception that the deities are made of substances such as stone, wood, gold, brass, and so on; that *śrī gurudeva* is mortal; that Vaiṣṇavas are based on distinctions of caste; that the water that has washed the feet of Śrī Viṣṇu or the Vaiṣṇavas is ordinary water;

that the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma-mantra* bestowed by *śrī gurudeva* is equal to worldly sounds; and that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is equal with the demigods, who are bound by the three modes of *māyā*). Know these to be the root of all offenses.

By the *madhyama-bhāgavata*'s ceaseless chanting of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema* is aroused in his heart, and he identifies himself as being a transcendental servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes he gives mercy to the *kaniṣṭha bhakta* by bestowing his association upon him and speaking *hari-kathā* to him. He makes friendship with pure devotees and gives up the association of inimical persons who are devoid of affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

On the third year after Ratha-yātrā, the residents of Kulīna-grāma again asked that same question, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu explained the characteristics of an *uttama bhāgavata*, saying:

“*jāhāra darśane mukhe āise kṛṣṇa-nāma
tāhāre jānihō tumi 'vaiṣṇava-pradhāna'*”

*krama kōri' kahe prabhu 'vaiṣṇava'-lakṣaṇa
'vaiṣṇava', 'vaiṣṇavatara', āra 'vaiṣṇavatama'*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 16.74–75)

“Know that he who makes *kṛṣṇa-nāma* automatically come from the mouth by merely seeing him is to be known as *vaiṣṇava-pradhāna*, the most exalted Vaiṣṇava.”

In this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu sequentially explained the different grades of Vaiṣṇavas – *vaiṣṇava*, *vaiṣṇavatara*, and *vaiṣṇavatama* – according to their symptoms. It is the duty of *grhastha* Vaiṣṇavas to serve these three kinds of Vaiṣṇavas.

That Vaiṣṇava, who simply by his *darśana* causes *kṛṣṇa-nāma* to automatically come from one's lips is to be known as a *mahā-bhāgavata*. Equipped with knowledge (*jñāna*) and realization (*vijñāna*), he has *darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Apart from Bhagavān, he does not have *darśana* of any other object, and it appears to him that all living entities are performing service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, no one else. Through his

lotus mouth, he perpetually performs *kīrtana* of pure *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Since he is endowed with divine eyes, he grants divine vision to *jīvas* who are aimlessly wandering about in the darkness of ignorance, mesmerized by the threefold modes of *māyā*, and he is also capable of engaging them in service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Statements such as “*brahmāṇḍa tārīte śakti dhare jane jane* – in each and every *mahā-bhāgavata* is the potency to deliver the entire universe” and “*lohāke yāvāt sparśa hema nāhi kare, tāvat sparśa-maṇi keha cinīte nā pare* – until a touchstone transforms iron into gold, it is not easy to recognize it,” have been made exclusively in relation to *mahā-bhāgavatas*. When a *mahā-bhāgavata*, who sees all living beings equally and whose heart is free from criticizing, is satisfied by the service of a *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava, then by the influence of that *mahā-bhāgavata*’s mercy, the *madhyama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava achieves the great fortune of becoming an *uttama-adhikārī*.

In the first year, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, describing the glories of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma*, said that there is no need to take *dikṣā* to chant the holy name. He gave such instructions only to awaken *komala śraddhā* (tender and delicate faith) in the wayward *jīvas* bound by *māyā*. Only when such *śraddhā* arises does the living entity become capable of dedicating himself to *guru*. Therefore, in that first year, Śrīman Mahāprabhu spoke on the topic of honoring *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇavas, but in the following years Śrīman Mahāprabhu gave them instructions on service to the feet of *madhyama-* and *uttama-bhāgavatas* and performing *bhajana* under their guidance. Without taking the shelter of a bona fide *guru*, it is not possible to become advanced in the realm of *bhakti*. Even Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself accepted *dikṣā* from Śrīpad Iśvara Purī, thereby giving this instruction to the world.

The scriptures say, “That process by which transcendental, divine knowledge arises and sins are destroyed by the root is called *dikṣā* by learned persons. Just as a man does not have the qualification to read the Vedas without undergoing the sacred thread ceremony (*upanayana saṁskāra*), in the same way, an uninitiated person does not have the qualification to chant *mantras* and so forth. Therefore, for their supreme welfare, everyone should accept *dikṣā* from a bona fide *guru*.”

Through the medium of the following narration, Śrīman Mahāprabhu explains who a *guru* is. Narahari Sarakāra, Mukunda dāsa, and his son, Raghunandana, were Śrīman Mahāprabhu's intimate associates from the village of Śrīkhaṇḍa, near Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. After Ratha-yātrā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu called Mukunda dāsa and asked him in front of all the devotees, "Mukunda dāsa, are you Raghunandana's father or is Raghunandana your father? I have some doubt in this regard. Tell Me your verdict."

Mukunda smiled and said, "Prabhu, Raghunandana is my father, and I am his son. In reality, a father is he who gives *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. Our whole family has received *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* from Raghunandana, and therefore he is not my son; I am his son."

Śrīman Mahāprabhu became extremely happy and said, "Now my doubt has been dispelled. One who awakens *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is the real *guru*. You are truly an elevated devotee."

Because a *sādhaka* in the beginning stages of spiritual practice does not have good knowledge of the scriptures, it can happen that he accepts *dīkṣā* from a *guru* who does not have the qualification to give *śrī-kṛṣṇa-prema*. But if later, upon receiving the association of a pure devotee, his *bhakti* begins to progress, an eagerness arises in his heart to know who a real *guru* is.

That person who brings one to a bona fide *guru* is called a *vartma-pradarśaka guru* (the spiritual guide who illuminates the path). That person who possesses *bhakti* and knowledge of *tattva* in equal proportion to that of the *dīkṣā-guru* is called the *śikṣā-guru*. The importance of the *śikṣa-guru* is equal to or even greater than that of the *dīkṣā-guru*. If the *dīkṣā-guru* is competent and the disciple also obtains his association, then he is both the *dīkṣā-guru* and the *śikṣā-guru* of that disciple. The *paramparā* that runs through the succession of the *dīkṣā-gurus* is called the *pāñcarātrika paramparā*, and the *paramparā* that runs through the succession of *śikṣā-gurus* is called the *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

In the *pāñcarātrika paramparā*, if there is a lack of deep relationship between the disciple and the *guru*, it can lead to differences in conceptions and moods. Therefore, the knowledge received in this

paramparā does not flow purely. But in the *bhāgavata-paramparā*, the disciple's relationship with the *guru* is very close, and the disciple's *bhajana-sādhana* arises simply according to the *bhāvas* of the *śikṣā-guru*. Therefore, the current of *bhakti* flows purely through the medium of the *bhāgavata-paramparā*.

That is why Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gave greater significance to Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja than to his *dikṣā-guru*, Śrī Vipina-bihārī Gosvāmī. Śyāmānanda Prabhu, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya also gave more importance to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī than to their respective *dikṣā-gurus*. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gave greater respect to his *śikṣa-gurus*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, than to his *dikṣā-guru*, and at the end of every chapter of his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* he has begged for their mercy:

*śrī-rūpa-raghunātha-pade jāra āśa
caitanya-caritāmṛta kahe kṛṣṇadāsa*

Only desiring the guidance of the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Kṛṣṇadāsa narrates *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

This is the *bhāgavata-paramparā*, and if the *dikṣā-guru* is also in this *bhāgavata-paramparā*, that is the best of all.

The *sādhaka* should obtain the goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema* by taking shelter of the lotus feet of *guru* and performing *bhajana* endowed with knowledge of his relationship (*sambandha-jñāna*) with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*veda-sāstre kahe sambandha, abhidheya, prayojana
kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa-bhakti, prema – tina mahā-dhana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.143)

In the Vedic scriptures, three treasures have been described: Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *sambandha-tattva*, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* as *abhidheya-tattva*, and *kṛṣṇa-prema* as *prayojana-tattva*.

Śrī Madana-mohana is the presiding deity of *sambandha* (relationship with Kṛṣṇa), Govinda of *abhidheya* (the method to attain Kṛṣṇa), and Gopīnātha of *prayojana* (the goal, personal service to Kṛṣṇa).

The means to achieve this *prayojana* is stated in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 8.229):

*gopī-ānugatyā binā aiśvarya-jñāne
bhajilehō nāhi pāya vrajendra-nandane*

One cannot obtain Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa without the guidance of the *vraja-gopīs* or by performing *bhajana* with knowledge of His majesty and opulence.

Unless a person follows in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, he cannot know Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *prema* for Gopīnātha. But this is also not achieved by following any of the *gopīs*. This *prema* cannot be achieved by following Yaśodā Maiyā and the other *gopīs* of her age, because their *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in *vātsalya-bhāva*. Candrāvalī's *prema* in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* (the amorous mellow) goes up to *mahābhāva*, but even still, there is something lacking in it.

The highest level of *prema*, known as *mādana-bhāva*, can be found in Śrīmatī Rādhikā exclusively. This *prema* can only be achieved by Her guidance (*ānugatyā*). In accordance with Śrīman Mahāprabhu's line of thought, we cannot directly serve under the *ānugatyā* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, nor can we imitate Her *sakhīs* Lalitā, Viśākhā, and so on. We can only accept the *ānugatyā* of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, and their *sakhīs*.

We must especially submit to the guidance of Rūpa Mañjarī. She remains forever immersed in serving Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī is completely one at heart with the *bhāvas* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and all of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *bhāvas* manifest within her. The *jīva* can only obtain this topmost condition of *prema* if he remains exclusively under the guidance of the *mañjarīs*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself said that apart from this, there is no other means to attain *rādhā-dāsyā*, nor will there ever be.

• CONCLUDING WORDS •

—•— *Śrīman Mahāprabhu's* —•—
Lament in Separation from
Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Through Ratha-yātrā, Śrī Jagannātha-deva bestows mercy upon all the living entities of this universe. Having descended in the age of Kali in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He has manifested the deep significance of Ratha-yātrā. Indeed, it is only by the causeless mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the supreme embodiment of magnanimity, that the world has come to know that the essence of Godhead (*bhagavattā*) is situated in charming sweetness (*mādhurya*).

According to the view of all the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of ancient times, however, the sole essence of Bhagavān's nature as the Supreme is *aiśvarya* (majesty). Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Gosvāmīs, who are the vessels of His mercy, have, on the basis of verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the crest-jewel of all *śāstra* and the most spotless scriptural evidence, nevertheless determined *mādhurya* as the very foundation of the Lord's own Godliness. Although all forms of Godhead are non-different in *tattva*, still, it is only Parabrahma Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has a human form, who is the direct embodiment of *mādhurya*, and who is *rasika-śekhara*, the sole relisher of all *rasas*. The four *mādhurīs* – *līlā-mādhurī* (the charming sweetness of His pastimes), *prema-mādhurī* (the charming sweetness of His love), *veṇu-mādhurī* (the charming sweetness of His flute), and *rūpa-mādhurī* (the charming sweetness of His form) – are observed in their entirety in Śrī Kṛṣṇa exclusively, and not in any other form of Godhead.

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid-upāsanā vraja-vadhū vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pumartho mahān
śrīcaitanya mahāprabhor matam idam tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my topmost object of worship, as is His transcendental abode, Śrī Vṛndāvana. The *bhāva* with which the *gopīs* have worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most excellent form of worship of all. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* alone is the immaculate scriptural evidence (*śabda-pramāṇa*), and *prema* is the supreme objective of life (*parama puruṣārtha*). This is the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Any other conception is not worthy of respect.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most excellent *mādhurī*, sweetness, is displayed only when He is with the *gopīs* who possess *mahābhāva*. Only when He is in front of the *gopīs* does His *manmatha-manmatha* form, which attracts millions and millions of cupids, manifest. The *unnata-ujjala-prema* of the *gopīs* is the sole cause of His manifesting this *mādhurī*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has shown that the zenith of *prema* is manifested exclusively in *vipralambha-bhāva* (the mood of separation). Having seen the moods of separation in the *gopīs*, Uddhavajī bowed his head in front of their elevated *prema*. In Gambhira, during the last twelve years of His manifest pastimes, Śrīman Mahāprabhu became immersed in the *bhāvas* of Śrī Rādhā, exclusively relishing Her mood of separation. Day and night, He would remain restless in separation. He would call out:

*“kāhā mora prāṇanātha muralī-vadana
kāhā karō, kāhā pāū vrajendra-nandana*

*kāhāre kahibō, kebā jāne mora duḥkha
vrajendra-nandana binā phāṭe mora buka”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 2.15–16)

“Alas, alas! Where is the Lord of My life, My Śyāmasundara, who captivates the mind with His *muralī* flute? What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where will I find My Vrajendra-nandana? To whom shall I speak My sorrows? Who will understand My sorrow? In separation from Vrajendra-nandana, My heart is breaking.”

“*hā hā sakhī, ki kôri upāya!*
kyā karō, kâhā jāū, kâhā gele kṛṣṇa pāū,
kṛṣṇa binā prāṇa mora jāya”
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 17.53)

“Alas, *sakhī*, what means shall I devise? What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where can I go to find Kṛṣṇa? Without Kṛṣṇa, I cannot hold onto this life.”

Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, who in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* are Lalitā and Viśākhā respectively, would console Śrīman Mahāprabhu by singing *ślokas* from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta*, verses from *Gīta-govinda*, and verses written by Vidyāpati, Caṇḍidāsa, and other *rasika* poets. In a state of maddened separation, *aṣṭa-sāttvika* transformations would manifest to the degree of *sudīpta* (blazing) on the body of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Sometimes He would become as long as twenty hand-widths. And sometimes the joints of His bones would open and His limbs would contract inside Him, like a tortoise’s. Sometimes in intense separation, He would dash Himself against the walls, and sometimes He would roll on the ground. In this way, blood would ooze from His body.

There are two aspects of *prema*: *milana* (meeting) and *vīyoga*, or *vipralambha* (separation). The *gopīs*, who possess *mahābhāva*, display *prema-vaicitṭya*. In *prema-vaicitṭya*, one experiences suffering when, even while meeting with one’s lover, feelings of separation are manifest. It has been described in the previous chapters that even while Śrīmatī Rādhājī is with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, She faints due to fear of impending separation from Him. Her *prema* contains such astonishment that it brings about the experience of meeting in separation and separation in meeting. Having become restless due to not having seen Śrī Kṛṣṇa,

She would sometimes embrace a *tamāla* tree, thinking it to be Him. At that time, She would then become immersed in the blissful ocean of meeting with Him. It was after seeing such *bhāvas* of Śrī Rādhājī that Śrī Kṛṣṇa resolved to go to Mathurā.

On the basis of the Puraṇas, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī have proven that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa never abandons Vraja; only His manifestation of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa goes to Mathurā and Dvārakā. In the very same way, Rādhājī also never leaves Vraja to go elsewhere. In Vraja, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are meeting eternally.

Here, a question may be asked: “If this is so, how, in Vraja, did Uddhavājī receive *darśana* of Śrī Rādhājī in Her state of separation? And how did She go to Kurukṣetra?” The answer to this is as follows. Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests many forms of Himself (*svarūpas*), Śrī Rādhājī also manifests many *svarūpas*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s original *svarūpa* is Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Rādhājī’s original *svarūpa* is Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Rādhā. Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Rādhājī has two other forms: *saṁyoginī* Rādhā (that Rādhā who is immersed in the mood of meeting Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra) and *vīyoginī* Rādhā (that Rādhā who is immersed in a mood of separation from Him). After Uddhavājī went to Kadamba Kyārī, near Nandagāon, he had *darśana* of *vīyoginī* Rādhājī. Only *saṁyoginī* Rādhājī met with Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Kurukṣetra, and after seating Him on the chariot of Her heart, She brought Him back to Vṛndāvana.

During the Ratha-yātrā festival also, Śrīman Mahāprabhu would dance in front of Śrī Jagannātha-deva, immersing Himself in the *bhāvas* of *vīyoginī* Rādhā and *saṁyoginī* Rādhā, and He would relish these verses of Govinda dāsa and Caṇḍīdāsa:

tuhū se rahili madhupura
vrajakula ākula, dukūla kalarava,
kānu kānu kōri jhura (1)

O Kṛṣṇa! You have gone far away to Mathurā. What has become of Your Vṛndāvana? All the Vrajavāsīs are extremely distressed. They call for You, saying, “Kānu, Kānu,” but only their echo is heard in response. Even the birds call for You, but no response comes. All are crying in separation.

Concluding Words

yaśomatī-nanda, andha sama baiṭhai,
sāhase uṭhāi nā pāra
sakhā-gaṇa dhenu, veṇu-rava nā śuniye,
vichurala nagara bājāra (2)

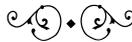
O Yaśodā-nandana! Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā are weeping incessantly. They have become as if blind and have given up eating and drinking. They cannot move anywhere; they only sit in one place and cry constantly. Not hearing the sound of the *vaṁśī* flute, the *sakhās*, and cows also cry without stopping. No one goes to the town marketplaces. It is empty everywhere.

kusuma tyajiyā ali, kṣiti-tale luṭhata,
taru-gaṇa malina samāna
mayūri nā nācata, kapotī nā bolata,
kokilā nā karatahi gāṇa (3)

O Kānu! When You were in Vraja, the bumblebees used to drink the *rasa* of the flowers, but they no longer do so. In separation from You, they roll on the ground crying. The trees and creepers, feeling melancholy, are drying up. Now the peacocks do not dance, the she-pigeons do not sing, and the cuckoos do not call out, 'Kuhū-kuhū.' Everyone is tossing and turning in separation.

virahiṇī rāi, viraha-jvare jarajara,
caudike viraha hutāśa
sahaje yamunā jala, āgi samāna bhelô,
kahatahi govinda dāsa (4)

Rādhārāṇī is burning in the fire of separation, day and night. In Vraja, in all four directions, only sounds of lamentation are heard. The water of Yamunā has become motionless and has abandoned her coolness, thereby becoming scorching hot as fire. The poet Govinda dāsa is saying, "O Kānu, all of Vraja is drowning in the great ocean of separation from You, so why do You reside in Mathurā?"



*sukhera lāgiyā, e ghara bādhinu,
āgune puḍiyā gelô
amiyā-sāgare, sināna kōrite,
sakali garalô bhelô (1)*

In the hope of finding happiness, I constructed this house, but fire has burned it down. In the hope of cooling my heart, I wanted to swim in an ocean of nectar, but it turned into an ocean of poison.

*sakhī, ki mora kapāle lekhi
śītala bōliyā, cāda sevinu,
bhānura kiraṇa dekhi (2)*

O *sakhī*, what misfortune is written in my destiny? Considering the moon to be very cooling, I went toward it, but it emitted the scorching rays of the sun and burned me.

*ucala bōliyā, acale caḍinu,
paḍinu agādha-jale
lachamī cāhite, dāridrya beḍhalô,
māṇika hārānu hele (3)*

Knowing the mountain to be very high, I climbed its peak, but then fell into a fathomless ocean of water. I desired wealth, but my poverty only increased. From somewhere a jewel came into my hand, but I have lost it.

*nagara basālām, sāgara bādhilām,
māṇika pābāra āśe
sāgara śukālô, māṇika lukālô,
abhāgī-karama-doṣe (4)*

With the desire to obtain precious gemstones, I built a house on the shore of the ocean and then dammed up the ocean. But due to my fate, all the ocean water drained onto the other side of the dam; the gemstones hid themselves from me.

Concluding Words

*piyāsa lāgiyā, jalada sevinu,
bajara paḍiyā gelô
kahe caṇḍidāsa, śyāmera pirīti,
marame rahalô śelô (5)*

To quench my thirst, I tried to drink the water of a raincloud, but a thunderbolt struck me. Caṇḍidāsa says that after loving Śyāma, all that has happened is that a trident has pierced his heart. “I loved Śyāma in hope of happiness. I gave my everything to Him, but He abandoned me and went away. Alas! Now what am I to do?”

In this way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu revealed the uttermost excellence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s *prema*, and He showed that only the *prema* of Śrī Rādhā is capable of fully controlling Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Except for Śrī Rādhā, it is not possible for any other person to possess such *prema*. This is why *rādhā-dāsyam* is the sole supreme goal of the *jīvas*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s supreme munificence to the *jīvas* was to manifest this very line of thought. He illuminated all these truths (*tattvas*) in the Ratha-yātrā festival. We should make our lives successful by remembering these truths with unyielding conviction and by following them.

᳚ Glossary ᳚

A

abhīṣeka – the bathing of a deity in milk, yogurt, water, and other ingredients.

ācārya – spiritual preceptor; one who teaches by example.

adhirūḍha-mahābhāva – the highest state of *mahābhāva*, found only in the *gopīs* of Vraja. See *modana* and *mādana*.

aiśvarya – opulence and majesty.

anartha – (*an-artha*, meaning ‘non-value’) unwanted desires, activities, or habits that impede one’s advancement in *bhakti*.

anurāga – (1) deep attachment and affection; (2) the stage of *prema* above *rāga*.

aparādha – an offense.

ārati – the ceremony of offering a deity articles of worship, such as incense, lamp, flowers, and fan, accompanied by chanting and ringing a bell.

arcana – deity worship.

aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas – the eight ecstatic bodily transformations: becoming stunned, perspiring, standing of the hairs on end, faltering of the voice, trembling, losing bodily color, shedding tears, and fainting.

B

bhajana – The verbal root *bhaj* means ‘to render service’. *Bhajana* also refers to hearing, chanting, and meditating upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name, form, qualities, pastimes, abode, and associates in the pure consciousness of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa.

bhakta – a devotee.

bhakti (also *bhagavad-bhakti*) – pure loving devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

bhakti-rasa – the transcendental mellows of pure devotion.

Bhagavān – the Supreme Lord who possesses in full the six opulences: beauty, wealth, strength, fame, knowledge, and renunciation.

bhāva – (1) spiritual emotions, moods, or sentiments; (2) the stage in the development of *bhakti* just before *prema*; (3) the stage of *prema* above *anurāga* characterized by constant absorption in ecstatic transcendental emotion.

bhoga – food before it has been offered to the deity.

brahmacārī – a member of the first *āśrama* (stage of life) in the *varṇāśrama* system; a celibate student.

brāhmaṇa – the highest of the four *varṇas* (castes) in the *varṇāśrama* system; a priest or teacher.

C

cakra – disc.

candana – sandalwood paste.

D

darśana – seeing or having audience of the deity, a sacred place, or an exalted Vaiṣṇava.

dīkṣā – initiation by a spiritual master.

dīkṣā-guru – the initiating spiritual master.

G

gopa – (1) a cowherd boy, who serves Kṛṣṇa in a mood of intimate friendship; (2) an elderly associate of Nanda Mahārāja who serves Kṛṣṇa in a mood of parental affection.

gopī – (1) one of the young cowherd maidens of Vraja who serve Kṛṣṇa in a mood of amorous love; (2) an elderly associate of Mother Yaśodā who serves Kṛṣṇa in a mood of parental affection.

gṛhastha – a member of the second *āśrama* (stage of life) in the *varṇāśrama* system; a householder.

guru-paramparā – the disciplic succession through which spiritual knowledge is transmitted by bona fide spiritual masters.

H

hari-kathā – narrations of the glories of the holy name, form, qualities, pastimes, abode, and devotees of the Lord.

harināma – The holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

J

jīva – the eternal individual living entity.

jñāna – (1) knowledge; (2) knowledge leading to impersonal liberation.

K

kaniṣṭha-adhikārī (or **kaniṣṭha-bhakta**) – a devotee who is on the neophyte stage of *bhakti*.

karma – (1) any activity performed in the course of material existence; (2) reward-seeking activities; pious activities leading to material gain in this world or in the heavenly planets after death.

kīrtana – singing about or glorifying the name, form, qualities, pastimes, abode, and devotees of Śrī Bhagavān; the most important limb of the celebrated nine-fold system of devotional service.

ksatriya – the second of the four *varṇas* (castes) in the *varṇāśrama* system; an administrator or warrior.

kuñja – a secluded grove or bower.

L

līlā – the divine pastimes of the Lord and His eternal associates.

M

mādana (also **mādanākhyā-mahābhāva**) – the highest form of *adhirūḍha-mahābhāva*; *Mādana-mahābhāva* is even superior to *mohana-bhāva* and is also more astonishing. It is the immutable essence of the great potency called *hlādinī* (the transcendental pleasure-giving potency) and it remains forever present only in Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This indescribable and extraordinarily beautiful *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* awakens only at the time of meeting, not in separation.

mādhurya – (1) charming sweetness (especially used in reference to the mood of Vraja); (2) the fifth and highest of the primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa – the mood of conjugal love.

madhyama-adhikārī (also **madhyama-bhakta** or **madhyama-bhāgavata**) – a devotee on the intermediate stage of *bhakti*.

mahā-bhāgavata (also **uttama-bhāgavata**) – a pure devotee on the highest stage of *bhakti*.

mahābhāva – the highest stage of *prema*. See *rūḍha* and *adhirūḍha*.

mahā-prasāda – see *prasāda*.

māna – (1) the jealous anger of a lover, directed toward the beloved; (2) the stage of *prema* above *sneha*, wherein the mood of transcendental jealousy or contrariness prevents uninhibited meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

mandīra – temple.

modana – the first stage of *adhirūḍha-mahābhāva*. When *modana-mahābhāva* manifests, even Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His beloved *gopīs* experience great astonishment and unrest upon seeing the resultant eight transcendental transformations manifesting simultaneously in their fully blazing condition (*suddīpta-sāttvika-vikāras*). This *modana* is present only in Śrīmatī Rādhikā's group, not in others.

māyā – illusion; that which is not; Śrī Bhagavān's external potency which influences the living entities to accept the false egoism of being independent enjoyers of this material world, thus imprisoning them into an identification with a material body.

N

nāma – the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is chanted by devotees as part of their devotional practice.

P

paramparā – see *guru-paramparā*.

praṇāma – respectful obeisances.

praṇaya – the stage of *prema* above *māna*, characterized by unrestrained intimacy known as *viśrambha*.

prasāda – (literally, ‘mercy’) especially refers to the remnants of food offered to the deity; also known as *mahā-prasāda*.

prema – love for Kṛṣṇa that is extremely concentrated, that completely melts the heart, and that gives rise to a deep sense of possessiveness in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When *prema* is augmented, it is gradually transformed into *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, and *bhāva*.

prema-bhakti – a stage of *bhakti* which is characterised by the appearance of *prema*.

priya-narmā-sakhās – the most intimate cowherd friends of Kṛṣṇa.

pūjā – offering of worship.

pūjārī – priest, one who offers *pūjā*, or worships the deity in a temple.

purāṇa – the eighteen historical supplements to the Vedas.

R

rāga – (1) attachment and affection; (2) the stage of *prema* above *praṇaya* at which affection for the beloved converts unhappiness into happiness.

rasa – (1) the spiritual transformation of the heart that takes place when the perfectional state of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, known as *rati*, is converted into “liquid” emotions by combining with various types of transcendental ecstasies; (2) taste, flavor.

rāsa-līlā – Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dance with His most confidential servitors, the *vraja-gopīs*, which is a pure exchange of spiritual love between them.

rasika – one who is expert at relishing *rasa*; a connoisseur of *rasa*.

rūḍha-mahābhāva – the stage of *mahābhāva* in which all the *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas* are manifest simultaneously in the brightly burning (*uddipta*) condition.

S

sādhana – the method one adopts in order to obtain one’s specific goal.

sakhā – a male friend, companion, or attendant.

sakhī – a female friend, companion, or attendant.

sampradāya – a school of religious thought.

saṅkīrtana – congregational chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

sannyāsa – the fourth *āśrama* (stage of life) in the *varṇāśrama* system; renounced, ascetic life.

sannyāsī – a member of the renounced order.

śāstra – the Vedic scriptures.

satya-yuga – the first of the four cyclic ages of a *mahā-yuga* in the progression of universal time. Satya-yuga is characterized by virtue, wisdom, and religion. It is known as the golden age, when people lived as long as one hundred thousand years. It lasts 1,728,000 solar years.

śikṣā-guru – the person from whom one receives instructions on how to progress on the path of *bhajana*; the instructing spiritual master.

śloka – a Sanskrit verse.

sneha – the stage above *prema* characterized by intense affection that causes the heart to melt.

Sudarśana cakra – the invincible disc weapon of the Supreme Lord.

śuddha – pure, uncontaminated.

svarūpa – form, constitutional nature, inherent identity.

Svayam Bhagavān – that form of the Lord who has no source other than Himself.

T

tattva – truth, reality, philosophical principle; the essence or substance of anything (e.g., the truths relating to *bhakti* are known as *bhakti-tattva*).

tilaka – clay markings worn on the forehead and other parts of the body by Vaiṣṇavas, signifying their devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu, and consecrating the body as the Lord's temple.

U

uttama-adhikārī (also *uttama-bhakta* or *uttama-bhāgavata*) – a pure devotee at the highest stage of *bhakti*.

V

vaijayantī-mālā – a garland made of five varieties of flowers and which reaches the knees.

Vaiṣṇava – literally means one whose nature is ‘of Viṣṇu’, in other words, one in whose heart and mind only Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa resides. A devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu.

Veda – the four primary books of knowledge compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, namely, the *Ṛg Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, and *Yajur Veda*.

vighraha – the deity form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His loving associates.

Y

yoga – (1) union, meeting, connection, or combination; (2) spiritual discipline to link one with the Supreme; to stabilize the mind so that it is not disturbed by sense objects. There are many different branches of *yoga*, such as *karma-yoga* (*yoga* through offering one’s pious acts to the Supreme Lord), *jñāna-yoga* (*yoga* through transcendental knowledge), and *bhakti-yoga* (*yoga* through devotion to the Supreme Lord). Unless otherwise specified, the word *yoga* usually refers to the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system of Patañjali.

yogamāyā – the internal potency of Bhagavān that engages in arranging and enhancing all His pastimes.

yogī – one who practices the *yoga* system with the goal of realizing the Supersoul or merging into the Lord’s body.

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