

VENU-GĪTA

The Song of Kṛṣṇa's Flute

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Tenth Canto Chapter Twenty-One



The *gopīs* sing the glories of the sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute when He enters the enchanting forest of Vṛndāvana upon the arrival of autumn.

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

Other titles by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja:

The Nectar of Govinda-līlā
Going Beyond Vaikuṇṭha
Bhakti-rasāyana
Śrī Prabandhāvalī
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka
Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu
Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā
Bhakti-tattva-viveka

Available from:

Gauḍīya Vedānta Publications
254 Moorside Road
Downham, Bromley, Kent BR1 5EZ
ENGLAND

or

Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha
Mathurā (U.P.) 281001
INDIA

Copyright ©1994 by Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

Contents

Introduction	i
Text One: Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters the forest of Vṛndāvana upon the arrival of autumn.....	1
Text Two: Kṛṣṇa plays a captivating tune upon His flute.....	5
Text Three: The <i>gopīs</i> hear the sound of the flute and begin to describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His flute among themselves.....	7
Text Four: The <i>gopīs</i> are overwhelmed with an intense desire to meet Kṛṣṇa.....	9
Text Five: Within their minds the <i>gopīs</i> see Kṛṣṇa dressed like an artistic dancer, filling the flute with the nectar of His lips.....	11
Text Six: The <i>gopīs</i> embrace Kṛṣṇa within their hearts.....	15
Text Seven: The perfection of the eyes is to behold the face of Vrajeśa-suta.....	17
Text Eight: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are dressed like the best of dancers.....	22
Text Nine: The flute steals the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips which is the property of the <i>gopīs</i>	25
Text Ten: The peacocks become intoxicated and dance to the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute.....	28
Text Eleven: The deer worship Kṛṣṇa with their sidelong glances.....	30
Text Twelve: The <i>devīs</i> riding the airplanes become stunned and their clothes become loose.....	33
Text Thirteen: The cows drink the nectar of the flute with the upraised cups of their ears.....	38
Text Fourteen: The birds are great <i>munis</i> who sit upon the trees hearing the flute with rapt attention.....	42
Text Fifteen: The rivers embrace Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet with their waves.....	47
Text Sixteen: The clouds act as an umbrella to shelter Kṛṣṇa from the heat.....	50
Text Seventeen: The <i>Pulindīs</i> smear their faces and breasts with the <i>kuṅkuma</i> powder from Kṛṣṇa's feet.....	52
Text Eighteen: Govardhana is <i>hari-dāsa-varya</i>	63
Text Nineteen: Kṛṣṇa binds the cows with <i>niryoḡa-pāśa</i>	71
Text Twenty: The <i>gopīs</i> attain <i>tadātmā</i> with Kṛṣṇa.....	75
About the Author	77

Introduction

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a direct manifestation of the Supreme Lord. It is an ambrosial, overflowing ocean of nectarean love (*prema-rasa*) for Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of divine *rasa*. *Rasika* and *bhāvuka-bhaktas* always drown in this ocean. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the fully ripened, nectarean fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literature which comprises the entirety of Indian thought. Within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *gopī-prema* has been ascertained to be the ultimate objective.

A few towering waves of *gopī-prema* can be seen from the *Veṇu-gīta* portion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Rasika-bhaktas* drown themselves in these waves and even lose all consciousness of their own bodies. Greed to be immersed in this nectarean ocean sprouts even in the hearts of the faithful devotees who are situated on the shore of this ocean.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined form of Rasārāja and Mahābhāva, resplendent with the sentiment and bodily complexion of Śrī Rādhā, relished the nectar of *Veṇu-gīta* with Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda in Śrī Gambīra. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī collected a few drops of this nectar in their commentaries on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* entitled *Bṛhat-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* and *Laghu-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* respectively. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, through his commentary named *Sārārtha-darśinī*, has distributed to the whole world the same nectar in the form of the remnants of their *mahā-prasāda*.

Some persons believe that unqualified *sādhakas* are ineligible to hear, chant or remember the topics of *Śrī Veṇu-gīta*, *Śrī Rāsa Pañcādhyāya*, *Yugala-gīta*, *Bhramara-gīta* and so on, as described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This consideration is fully legitimate. But according to their conception, only a *sādhaka* who has conquered the six urges (*kāma*, *krodha*, etc.), who is free from all *anarthas* and fully purified from the heart disease of lust, is eligible to hear such topics, while all others have no right. We will now examine this topic in greater detail.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who established and fulfilled the inner heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, composed *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and other sacred texts. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī composed *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. While writing, they were deeply concerned that these confidential texts on *rasa* should not fall into the hands of unqualified persons. If this should occur, it may present a great disturbance to the world. A glimpse of this topic is found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā*, 4.231-237), as stated by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī:

*e saba siddhānta gūḍha,—kahite nā yuyāya
nā kahile, keha ihāra anta nāhi pāya
ataeva kahi kichu kariṇā nigūḍha
bujhibe rasika bhakta, nā bujhibe mūḍha
hṛdaye dharaye ye caitanya-nityānanda
e saba siddhānte sei pāibe ānanda
e saba siddhānta haya āmrera pallava*

*bhakta-gaṇa-kokilera sarvadā vallabha
abhakta-uṣṭrera ithe nā haya praveśa
tabe citte haya mora ānanda-viśeṣa
ye lāgi kahite bhaya, se yadi nā jāne
ihā vai kibā sukha āche tribhuvane
ataeva bhakta-gaṇe kari namaskāra
niḥśaṅke kahiye, tāra hauk camatkāra*

“The esoteric and confidential conclusions regarding the amorous pastimes of Rasarāja Śrī Kṛṣṇa together with the *gopīs*, who are the embodiments of *mahābhāva*, are not fit to be disclosed to the common ordinary man. But without revealing them, no one can enter into this topic. I shall, therefore, describe these topics in a concealed manner so that only *rasika-bhaktas* will be able to understand, whereas ineligible fools will not.

“Anyone who has established Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in their hearts will attain transcendental bliss by hearing all these conclusions. This entire doctrine is as sweet as newly grown mango sprouts which can be relished only by the devotees who are likened to cuckoo birds. For the camel-like nondevotees, there is no possibility of admittance into these topics. Therefore, there is special jubilation in my heart.

“If those whom I fear are themselves unable to comprehend these topics, then what could be a greater source of happiness in all the three worlds? Therefore, after offering obeisances to the devotees, I am revealing this subject without any hesitation.”

By reading and hearing these topics, everyone can attain the highest benefit. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has clarified this topic by quoting the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.36):

*anugrahāya bhaktānām mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ
bhajate tādṛśiḥ kṛdā yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*

“In order to bestow mercy upon the devotees as well as the conditioned souls, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests His humanlike form and performs such extraordinary pastimes (*rāsa-līlā*) that anyone who hears them becomes exclusively devoted unto Him.” (quoted in Cc, *Ādi-līlā* 4.34)

Here Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja points out that the verb *bhavet* in the above verse is in the imperative mood. This means it is compulsory for the *jīvas* to hear such pastimes, as explained in the following *śloka* from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Ādi-līlā* 4.35):

*‘bhavet’ kriyā vidhiliṅ, sei ihā kaya
kartavya avaśya ei, anyathā pratyavāya*

“In the above verse, the verb *bhavet* is in the imperative mood. Therefore, this certainly must be done. To not do so would be a discrepancy.”

For the information of the reader, I am referring here to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on the above quoted *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse (10.33.36).

tatra loke 'dhiṣṭhātṛtvena kṛṣṇākhyā narākāra parabrahmaṇaḥ śrī gopair anubhūtatvāt evaṁ bhaktānugrahārthaṁ tat krīḍety abhipretam. āptakāma tve 'pi bhaktānugraho yujyate. viśuddha sattvasya tathā svabhāvāt. yad bhāva bhāvite cānyatra dṛśyate 'sau. tathā rahugaṇānugrahake śrī jaḍa bharata charite, yathā vā bhagavad anugrahake mayīti ca. tatra bhakta śabdena braja devyo braja janās ca sarve kāla-traya sambandhino 'nye ca vaiṣṇavā gṛhītām—braja devīnām pūrva-rāgādibhir braja janānām janmāḍibhir anyeṣāṁ ca bhakta darśana śravaṇādibhir apūrvatva sphuraṇāt. ataeva tādrśa bhakta prasaṅgena tādrśīḥ sarva cittākārśinīḥ krīḍā bhajate, yāḥ sādharmaṇir api śrutvā bhaktebho 'nyo 'pi janas tatparo bhavet. kimuta rāsa līlā rūpām imām śrutvety arthaḥ. vakṣyate ca—vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ (S.B. 10.33.39) ityādi. yad vā, mānuṣaṁ deham āśritaḥ sarvo 'pi jīvas tatparo bhavet, martya loke śrī bhagavad avatārāt tathā bhajane mukhyatvāc ca manuṣyānām eva sukhena tac chravaṇādi siddheḥ. bhūtānām iti pāṭhe nijāvatāra kāraṇa bhakta sambandhena sarveṣāṁ eva janānām viṣayinām mumukṣūṇām muktānāṁ cety arthaḥ. iti parama kārūṇyam eva kāraṇam uktam. tathāpi bhajana sambandhenaiva sarvānugraho jñeyaḥ. anyattaiḥ. tatra bahirmukhānapīti tatparyantatvaṁ vivakṣitam, parama prema parākāṣṭhā mayatayā śrī śukasyāpi tad varṇanātīśaya pravṛtteḥ gopīnām ity asyārthāntare tv evaṁ vyākhyeyam.

The words *anugrahāya bhaktānām mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ* indicate that the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in His original humanlike form and performs various pastimes in order to bestow favor upon His devotees. Therefore, although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is satisfied in Himself (*āptakāma*), His display of kindness toward the devotees is quite appropriate. This is the distinctive characteristic of *viśuddha-sattva* (pure goodness). The Lord is always prepared to reward the devotees with a result consistent with their performance of *bhajana*. The favor shown toward King Rahugaṇa by Śrī Jaḍa Bharata and the Lord's favor toward me (Śukadeva) illustrate this.

In the verse under discussion, it is said that the Lord manifests His form and pastimes in order to bestow favor upon His devotees. The word *bhakta* used here refers to the *vraja-devīs* (the *gopīs*), the *vraja-vāsīs* (residents of Vraja) and all other Vaiṣṇavas—past, present and future. In order to bestow favor upon the *vraja-devīs*, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa lovingly executes such pastimes as *pūrva-rāga* (the attachment in anticipation of meeting Kṛṣṇa prior to their union). To bestow mercy upon all the residents of Vraja, He enacts His birth and other pastimes, and by all His activities, He bestows favor upon past, present and future devotees through the medium of hearing *līlā-kathā*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests all these pastimes to benefit the devotees. By so doing, even ordinary persons (other than the devotees) who hear even the more common of the Lord's pastimes become fully intent upon the Lord. Therefore, by hearing the supremely ambrosial *rāsa-līlā*, ordinary persons will certainly become exclusively devoted to the Lord—of this there can be no doubt. This fact will be elaborately discussed in subsequent verses such as *vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.33.39).

The words *mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ* may also indicate that those *jīvas* who have attained the human form of life are able to hear all these pastimes and thus they become exclusively devoted to the Supreme Lord. This is so because the Lord incarnates exclusively on the earthly planets (*martya loka*), and it is here only that worship of the Lord takes on its predominant form. Consequently, the human beings residing on the earthly planets may easily hear these narrations of the Lord's pastimes.

The word *bhaktānām* appears in this verse. But in some other editions, the word *bhūtānām* is found in its place. In that case, the purport would be as follows: the Lord incarnates only for the sake of the devotees. As a result, the devotees are the root cause of the Lord's appearance. The Lord also appears in His original humanlike form in order to bestow His favor upon the liberated souls (*muktas*), the aspirants for liberation (*mumukṣus*), sense enjoyers (*viṣayīs*) and all living entities in accordance with their relationship with the devotees. The Lord's compassion is therefore said to be the cause of His appearance. Nevertheless, it must be understood that the Lord's favor toward other living entities is due only to their relationship with His devotees. In other words, the Lord bestows favor upon other *jīvas* only because of their connection with devotees.

In his *Bhāgavatam* commentary known as *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā*, Śrīdhara Svāmī has written that what to speak of the devotees, even materialistic persons are freed from their material absorption by hearing the Lord's pastimes, and thus they become exclusively fixed upon Him.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains this verse in his commentary known as *Sārārtha-darśinī*:

bhaktānām anugrahāya tādṛśiḥ kṛḍāḥ bhajate yāḥ śrutvā mānuṣaṁ deham āśrīto jīvaḥ tatparas tad viṣayakaḥ śraddhāvān bhaved iti kṛḍāntar ato vailakṣaṇyena madhura rasamayāḥ asyāḥ kṛḍāyās tādṛśī maṇi-mantra-mahauṣadhānām iva kācid atarkyā śaktir astīty avagamyate.

“The Lord performs varieties of pastimes to show favor to His devotees. Having adopted the human form of life, living entities who hear these pastimes become exclusively devoted unto the Lord. In other words, they develop firm faith in hearing the narrations of the Lord's activities. What more shall I say about the importance of hearing *līlā-kathā*? And this *rāsa-līlā*, being fully imbued with *madhura rasa*, is eminently distinguished even from the Lord's other pastimes. Like a jewel, a *mantra* or a powerful medicine, this *rāsa-līlā* is endowed with such indisputable, astonishing potency that by hearing it, all persons in the human form become devoted to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, all varieties of devotees who hear the descriptions of these pastimes will become successful and obtain supreme pleasure. Can there be any question of doubt in this regard?”

In this context, we may cite the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.30):

*naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jam viṣam*

“In other words, those who are not *īśvara*, the Supreme Lord, who are powerless and subjected to *karma*, should never imitate the Lord’s pastimes even within their minds. If anyone foolishly imitates Lord Śiva by drinking the poison generated from the ocean, he will certainly be destroyed.”

The gist of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī’s and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentaries on this verse is that living entities who are subservient to the material body and who are *anīśvara*—bereft of the controlling potency of the Supreme Lord—should never behave in such a way even within their minds. What to speak of actually performing such activities, one should not even desire to do so. In other words, such acts performed by God in transgression of religious codes should not be contemplated even within the mind.

The word *samācaraṇa* (behaviour), when divided into its constituent parts (*samyak* + *ācaraṇa*), indicates complete behaviour. Here it has been used to indicate total prohibition of such activity. Therefore, the purport is that such behaviour should not be adopted even to the slightest extent. What to speak of performing such activities through speech or the senses, one should not even mentally conceive of such activities.

The word *hi* indicates that this certainly must *not* be done. If one were to behave in that way, he would be completely destroyed. The significance of the word *mauḍhyād* (stupidity) is that if anyone, being ignorant of the Lord’s omnipotence and his own incompetence, foolishly adopts such behaviour, he will be utterly ruined, just as if anyone other than Lord Śiva were to foolishly consume deadly poison, he would be instantly destroyed. But Lord Śiva, in spite of drinking poison, is not destroyed; to the contrary, he attains even greater fame and splendour as Nīlakaṇṭha, he whose throat turned blue from drinking poison.

Here in this verse, imitation of such behaviour has been prohibited, yet in the verse to come (10.33.36)—*yāḥ śrutvā tatparo bhavet*—it is evident that not only devotees, but even others who faithfully hear these pastimes will become fully devoted to the Supreme Lord. This has been further explained in the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39):

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito ’nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

“A sober person who in the beginning faithfully and continuously hears from his *guru* the narrations of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s unprecedented *rāsa* dance with the young wives (*gopīs*) of Vraja, and later describes those pastimes very soon attains *parā-bhakti* or *prema-bhakti* towards the Supreme Lord, and thus becomes competent to quickly dispel the heart disease of lust.”

Here Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments in *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*:

śraddhayā viśvāvasenānvita iti. tad viparītāvajñā-rupāparādha-nivṛity arthañca nairantaryārthañca. tac ca phala vaiśiṣṭyārtham, ataeva yo ’nu nirantaram śṛṇuyāt, athānantaram svayaṁ varṇayec ca, upalakṣaṇaṁ caitat smarec ca, bhaktiṁ prema-lakṣaṇam parāṁ śrī gopikā premānusāritvāt sarvot-tama jātīyām; pratikṣaṇam nūtanatvena labdhā; hṛd-roga-rūpaṁ kāmam iti bhagavad viṣayaḥ kāma

viśeṣo vyavacchinnaḥ, tasya parama prema rūpatvena tad vaiparītyāt. kāmam ity upalakṣaṇam anyeṣāṃ api hṛd-rogaṇām. anyatra śrūyate (śrī gītā, 18.54)—“brahma bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati, samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad bhaktim labhate parām.” iti atra tu hṛd-rogaṇāpahānāt pūrvam eva parama bhakti prāptiḥ tasmāt parama balavadevedaṃ sādhanam iti bhāvaḥ.

Having concluded the narration of the *rāsa-līlā*, Śukadeva Gosvāmī became deeply immersed in spiritual ecstasy. In this verse, he describes the fruits of hearing and chanting the *rāsa-līlā* and thus benedicts all future listeners and recitors. Those who incessantly and faithfully hear Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa-līlā* with the young wives of Vraja and later recite those pastimes, quickly attain *parā-bhakti* toward Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus relinquish the heart disease of lust.

Śraddhānvita means to hear with firm faith. This word has been used to prevent the offence which results from mistrust (*aviśvasa*) or disregard (*avaññā*) of the statements of *śāstra* in complete opposition to the principle of hearing with faith. It has also been used to promote constant hearing. By this word, the importance of hearing has been pointed out. The words *atha varṇayed* indicate that after continuously hearing the *rāsa-līlā* along with other special pastimes, one will personally describe those pastimes. By *upalakṣaṇa*, or indirect implication, it is further indicated that after hearing and reciting, one will also remember those pastimes and take great delight in them. In other words, hearing, chanting, remembering, experiencing delight, and so on, are all implied by the words *śraddhānvitaḥ anuśṛṇuyāt atha varṇayed* (to hear repeatedly with faith and then describe).

Parā-bhakti means *bhakti* which follows in the wake of the *gopīs* of Vraja. Therefore, the *bhakti* referred to here is *prema-bhakti* of the highest category. The word *pratilabhya* (repeatedly obtained), together with the word *parā-bhakti*, indicates that first *parā-bhakti* (possessing the distinctive characteristics of *prema*) is obtained within the heart at every moment in ever new variety. Thereafter one quickly gives up the heart disease of lust.

Here the difference between *kāma* (material lust) as a disease of the heart and *kāma* (spiritual love) in relationship to the Supreme Lord is pointed out. These two are distinct from each other. The word *kāma* here indirectly implies that all diseases of the heart will quickly be dispelled.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.54) it is said: “One who is situated in the transcendental position beyond the contamination of the three modes of nature (*brahma-bhūta*), who is fully satisfied in the self, who neither laments nor hankers for anything and who looks impartially upon all living beings attains *parā-bhakti* unto Me.” In this *Gītā* verse it is said that one attains *parā-bhakti* only after the disappearance of the diseases of the heart, but in the above verse it is said that one attains *parā-bhakti* even before their departure. Consequently, it is understood that hearing and chanting of *rāsa-līlā* is one of the most powerful forms of *sādhana*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states as follows in his *Sārārtha-darsinī* commentary on the same verse (10.33.39):

anudinaṃ vā śṛṇuyāt. atha varṇayet kīrttayet. svakavitayā kāvya-rūpatvena nibadhnīteti vā. parām prema lakṣaṇam prāpyeti ktvā pratyayena hṛd-rogaṇāpy adhikāriṇi pratham ataeva premṇaḥ praveśas tatas tat prabhāvenaivācirato hṛd roga nāśa iti premāyaṃ jñāna yoga iva na durbalaḥ paratantraś ceti bhāvaḥ. hṛd-roga-rūpaṃ kāmam iti bhagavad viśayakaḥ kāma viśeṣo vyavacchinnaḥ

tasya premāmṛta rūpatvena tad vaiparityāt. dhīraḥ paṇḍita iti hṛd roge satyapi katham premā bhaved ity anāstikya lakṣaṇena mūrkhatavena rahita ity arthaḥ. ataeva śraddhānvita iti śāstrāviśvāsinām nāmā-parādhinām premāpi nāṅgikarotīti bhāvaḥ.

The prefix *anu* (repeatedly or methodically) when applied to *śṛṇuyāt* (to hear) indicates constant hearing. By continuously hearing from the lips of the *śravaṇa-guru* and Vaiṣṇavas and thereafter reciting, narrating, or describing (those pastimes) in poetry of one's own composition, one attains *parā-bhakti* or in other words *bhakti* which is of the nature of *prema* (*prema-lakṣaṇa-bhakti*).

The suffix *ktvā* has been used in the formation of the verb *pratilabhya* (obtained) as follows: *prati* + *labh* + *ktvā*. According to the rules of Sanskrit grammar, when the suffix *ktvā* is applied to a verbal root with a prefix, it is replaced by *yap*. Then the letter *p* is dropped and thus the final form of the word (*pratilabhya*) is obtained. The suffix *ktvā* is applied to the first of two verbs performed by the same agent to show successive action (i.e., having attained *prema*, he relinquishes all lusty desires of the heart). In this case, the first action is *pratilabhya* (the attainment of *prema*) and the second action is *apahinoti* (renunciation of the lusty desires of the heart).

Therefore, the suffix *ktvā* in the verb *pratilabhya* indicates that although lust and other evils still remain within the heart, *prema-bhakti* first enters the heart and by its extraordinary influence destroys all vices to the root. In other words, hearing and reciting *rāsa-līlā* possess such astonishing power that the lust in the heart of the faithful *sādhaka* is destroyed and he attains *prema*. Though these two take place simultaneously, the influence of *prema* manifests first and through its effect, all lusty desires of the heart are dissipated.

Thus as a result of hearing and chanting the narrations of the Lord's pastimes, one first attains *prema* for the Lord's lotus feet and thereafter one's heart is liberated from lusty desires and all other contamination. In other words, he becomes perfectly pure because *prema* is not feeble like the processes of *jñāna* and *yoga*. *Bhakti* is omnipotent and supremely independent.

The words *hṛd-roga kāma* indicate the difference between lusty desires of the heart and the *kāma* in relationship to the Supreme Lord. *Kāma* which is in relationship to the Supreme Lord is of the very nature of the nectar of *prema* (*premāmṛta svarūpa*), whereas the lusty desires of the heart are exactly the opposite. Therefore, these two items are distinct from each other. This is substantiated by use of the words *hṛd-roga kāma*.

The word *dhīra* means a *paṇḍita*, or one who is learned in the *śāstra*. One who disbelieves the statement of this verse and thinks, "As long as the disease of lust remains in the heart, *prema* cannot be obtained," is said to possess an atheistic temperament. One who is free from such a foolish, atheistic demeanour is known as a *paṇḍita* or sober person (*dhīra*). Consequently, only those who have firm faith in the *śāstra* are known as *dhīra*. Those who have no faith in the statements of the *śāstra* are atheists and offenders to the holy name. Such persons can never attain *prema*.

Consequently, in the heart of the *sādhakas* who firmly believe in the statements of the *śāstra*, faith arises by hearing *rāsa-līlā* and other narrations. Only in the hearts of such faithful devotees does *prema* manifest its influence as a result of hearing *līlā-kathā*. Thereafter, lust and all evils present within the heart of the devotee are destroyed to the root.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.59) is also relevant to this discussion. There it is stated that *bhakti* is the only cause of superior qualities being found in any individual. Austerities, learning, knowledge, and so on, are not the cause of superior qualities. Although *bhakti* is itself of the highest excellence, it does not appear only in the most exceptional individuals endowed with all good qualities. On the contrary, it may manifest or remain even in the most condemned and vile persons. Furthermore, it causes thoroughly wretched and fallen persons to attain all good qualities, to become worthy of the respect of all, and to attain the highest and most rare achievement.

For this reason, the opinion that Bhakti-devī enters the heart only after all *anarthas*, *aparādhās*, lust and other diseases of the heart have been eradicated, is not appropriate. On the contrary, by the mercy of the Supreme Lord or the devotees, or by faithfully executing *sādhana* and *bhajana*, this rare *bhakti* enters the heart first and then all *anarthas* are automatically dissipated—this conclusion is thoroughly agreeable.

Therefore, only faithful *sādhakas* with firm belief in the statements of *śāstra*, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas are eligible to hear the *līlā-kathā* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which are saturated with *rasa*. And conversely, those who believe that only *sādhakas* who are completely free from all *anarthas* are eligible to hear the above-mentioned pastimes, will neither become free from *anarthas* nor obtain eligibility to hear even after millions of births.

Another point to consider is that if this argument is accepted, then we *sādhakas* who are still affected by *anarthas*, although possessing faith, could never read nor hear the sacred books of *rasika* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* like Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Under such a circumstance, we would be forever deprived of the extremely confidential and elevated truths of *bhakti* expressed by these *ācāryas*. There would be no possibility that the sprout of greed for *rāgānugā-bhakti* would ever be awakened in our hearts. Thus we would be forever cheated from that which was not previously given, the *prema-rasa* of the most munificent Śrī Śacīnandana, the bestower of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. What then would distinguish the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu from Vaiṣṇavas of other *sampradāyas*?

A third point to consider is this. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya*, 8.70) the following verse is quoted from *Padyāvalī*:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
krīyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalam
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate*

Here, the words *laulyam api mūlyam ekalam* (indeed the only price is greed) indicate that this supremely rare greed cannot be aroused even by pious activities accumulated over millions and millions of births. Then how can this greed be obtained? The words *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ* indicate one whose intelligence or perception has been awakened toward *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*. Here, the implication is that by faithfully hearing the narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes saturated with *rasa*

from the lips of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas in whom *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa* has arisen, or by faithfully and attentively studying the literature related to the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, composed by them, this greed may be obtained. Besides this, there is no other means.

Another argument that at present there is no *sādhaka* who is completely free from *anarthas* and, therefore, no one is eligible, nor in the future will anyone be eligible, is completely illogical. Freedom from lust and all other *anarthas* in and of itself is not the qualification for entrance into *rāgānugā-bhakti*. On the contrary, greed awakened towards the Lord's *mādhurya* (sweetness) is the sole qualification for entrance into *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Nor is there any certainty that by routine observance of the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti* alone, greed toward *rāgānugā-bhakti* will automatically awaken. There is no evidence of this anywhere. Therefore, our highest obligation is to follow the purport of the commentaries of the previous *ācāryas* to the above-mentioned verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

By the inspiration of His Divine Grace Śrīla *guru-pāda-padma nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and the repeated solicitation of many bumblebee-like devotees, I am presenting *Śrī Veṇu-gīta* to the readers along with a purport to the commentaries of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī named *Sārārtha-darśinī* and *Śrī Vaisnava-toṣaṇī* respectively. By reading this subject with full faith, the greed to enter into *rāgānugā-bhakti* will certainly sprout in the hearts of faithful devotees. This itself is the very purpose of human life.

Text One

śrī-śuka uvāca
itthaṁ śarat-svaccha-jalam
padmākara-sugandhinā
nyaviśad vāyunā vātaṁ
sa-go-gopālako 'cyutaḥ

śrī-śukaḥ uvāca—Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said (or *śrīya śuka*, the very dear parrot of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, said); *itthaṁ*—in this way; *śarat*—of the beautifully decorated season of autumn; *svaccha*—clear; *jalam*—having water; *padma-ākara*—from the lakes, ponds and rivers such as the Yamunā, Kusuma-sarovara, Mānasī-gaṅgā, Govinda-kunḍa and other such reservoirs of water filled with lotus flowers; *su-gandhinā*—with the sweet fragrance; *nyaviśat*—He entered; *vāyunā*—by the cool and fragrant breeze; *vātaṁ*—ventilated; *sa*—with; *go*—the cows; *gopālakaḥ*—and the cowherd boys; *acyutaḥ*—the infallible Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Translation

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: In this way, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Śrī Vṛndāvana became extremely beautiful due to the exquisitely decorated season of autumn. The lakes, ponds and rivers were filled with clear, sweet water. Gentle and fragrant breezes blew, carrying the aroma of lotus flowers from the lakes. The infallible Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered that enchanting Vṛndāvana forest, accompanied by His cows and *gopas*.

Commentary

Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains the six seasons. Summer and the rainy season passed, and now it is autumn. Autumn is followed by winter and then *vasanta*, spring. Although Vṛndāvana is always springlike, there are differences between the seasons. This first verse of the *Veṇu-gīta* describes the autumn season.

Since autumn comes after the rainy season, the ponds and rivers are filled with pure water and the lotuses are in full bloom. The bees are ‘kissing’ the flowers as they fly here and there drinking nectar. The air is full and heavy with the fragrance of the various blossoms—*belī*, *camelī*, *juhī* and others.

It is in this Vṛndāvana that Kṛṣṇa and the *gopas* and cows enter the forest every morning. Balarāma is also with Him. The *gopīs* watch Kṛṣṇa and His friends enter the forest from their homes, and then amongst their friends who share the same moods in love for Kṛṣṇa, they discuss His pastimes.

This verse describes a morning pastime. Although Kṛṣṇa has already entered the Vṛndāvana forest, the gopīs are still seeing His entrance into the forest and hearing His flute song in their hearts. They have gathered together in their specific groups to talk about Kṛṣṇa and to express their minds to others who are in the same mood.

There are different kinds of groups (*samuha*). The term *samuha* refers to a general group consisting of both older *gopīs* in the parental *rasa* and younger *gopīs* who have a conjugal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Within that group are many parties (*yūtha*). Each *yūtha* has a *yūtheśvarī* or leader. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the leader of one group of *gopīs*, Candrāvalī is the leader of another, and Śyāmā, Bhadra, Citrā and sometimes Lalitā and Viśākhā are other group leaders.

Within the *yūtha*, the *gopīs* are divided into smaller groups consisting of those who are experiencing the same *bhāva* or loving feelings reward Kṛṣṇa. Within these smaller groups (*gaṇas*), the *gopīs* reveal their hearts to one another. In this way, they become immersed in this particular pastime and are able to actually see it in their hearts. The *gopīs* are not remembering their homes, their physical bodies, or anything material. They are only seeing Kṛṣṇa and their pastimes with Him, although they are at home and He is in the forest with the cows and the cowherd boys.

This pastime takes place in the autumn (*śarat*), between summer and winter. The flowers are blooming and the weight of their fragrance makes the air so heavy that even moving about in it is difficult. Anyone who tries to run in this air has difficulty. Because it is autumn, the air is also cool. Jayadeva Gosvāmī has written a beautiful poem which contains these lines: *dhīra-samīre yamunā-tire vasanti vane vana-mālī*. *Dhīra-samīre* means the breeze is blowing pleasantly; *yamunā-tire* means on the bank of the river Yamunā. Although the *gopīs* are at home in the village, they can see Kṛṣṇa on the bank of the Yamunā within their hearts because they are immersed in remembrance of His pastimes. Because they have given their hearts and all their attention to Kṛṣṇa, they have become restless and all the symptoms of ecstasy are manifest.

In the first few verses of the *Veṇu-gīta*, the *gopīs* describe both the scenery of Vṛndāvana and Kṛṣṇa's beauty as He enters the forest with thousands of cows and cowherd boys (*sa-go-gopālako 'cyutaḥ*). *Acyuta* means that Kṛṣṇa is infallible. His face is beautiful. He is restless, and this in turn makes the *gopīs* restless. Kṛṣṇa steals their hearts (*vikṣipta-manaso-nṛpa*) and takes them into His own heart. Thus the *gopīs* become senseless; their hearts are with Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* are expressing *pūrva-rāga*, the mood of anticipation in meeting Kṛṣṇa. There are two kinds of *pūrva-rāga*, one for the *sādhaka* who is practicing *rāgānugā-bhajana*, and one for the *siddha* devotee. The *rāgānugā-sādhaka* can experience only a shadow or semblance of *pūrva-rāga*, but the *vraja-vāsīs* experience pure *pūrva-rāga*. When Śrīmatī Rādhikā meets Kṛṣṇa, She thinks it is the first time She has ever seen Him and Kṛṣṇa thinks He has never before met Rādhikā. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are *nitya-navīna*: They are ever-fresh. The *rāgānugā-sādhaka* can only realize *pūrva-rāga* when *viśuddha-sattva* (pure goodness) enters his heart. Until that time, he experiences *pūrva-rāga* only in a theoretical way. When the *sādhaka* attains the *siddha* stage, he can realize everything in the pure form.

Both the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bṛhad Vāmana Purāṇa* explain that the *gopīs* hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute were of three types: the *kāya-vyūha* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, *nitya-siddhas* and *sādhana-siddhas*. The *gopīs* belonging to the category of *kāya-vyūha* are not *jīva-tattva*. They are bodily expansions of Śrīmatī Rādhikā who is the personification of the *hlādinī-śakti*. The *nitya-siddha gopīs* are *jīva-tattva* who have manifested from Baladeva Prabhu. They were never conditioned at any time. The *sādhana-siddha gopīs* are of two kinds: *yauṭhakī* and *ayaṭhakī*. The word *yauṭhakī* means that which pertains

to a group (*yūtha*) or, in other words, a member of a group. The *yauṭhakī gopīs* were in special groups and the *ayaṭhakī gopīs* were not. The *yauṭhakī gopīs* are further divided into two categories: the *śruti-cāri gopīs* (personified Vedas) and the *ṛṣi-cāri gopīs* or *muni-cāri gopīs* (the sages who meditated in Daṇḍakarāṇya).

The *śruti-cāri gopīs* had been practicing *rāgānugā-sādhana* for many thousands of years, and they had pleased the Lord by offering beautiful prayers. By His grace, they attained the association of advanced devotees up to the standard of Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and developed past the stages of *śraddhā*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva*. When they reached the stage where their *bhāva* was about to be converted into *prema*, they left their bodies and took birth in the wombs of *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana. Then they attained the association of *nitya-siddha* devotees and were able to join the *rāsa* dance and the other *līlās*.

The *ṛṣi-cāri gopīs* did not practice full *rāgānugā-bhajana*. They had not become *siddha*. They attained the level of *suddha-sattva* by their meditation. They also had *lobha* for *bhajana* like that of Rūpa and Raghunātha Gosvāmīs. When they saw Lord Rāmacandra, their greed became thicker and they took their next birth in the wombs of *gopīs*, by the Lord's mercy. According to their previous qualifications, some of the *ṛṣi-cāri gopīs* received the association of *nitya-siddha* devotees and some of them did not. Those who did receive the association of *nitya-siddha gopīs* were purified by that association and thus were able to join the *rāsa* dance. Those who were not associated with *nitya-siddha gopīs* were held back by Yogamāyā.

Both the *śruti-cāri gopīs* and *ṛṣi-cāri gopīs* are *yauṭhakī gopīs*—they are in special groups according to their *bhāva* or mood in serving Kṛṣṇa. The *ayaṭhakī gopīs* are the daughters of the demigods and of many others. All of them had developed *lobha* (greed) to associate with Kṛṣṇa in the conjugal mood by hearing and seeing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The *yauṭhakī gopīs* were practicing under the guidance of the *nitya-siddha gopīs*.

When Kṛṣṇa called the *gopīs* to the forest in the middle of the night for the *rāsa* dance, only those *gopīs* who had attained perfection were able to go. By the influence of Yogamāyā, the *nitya-siddha gopīs* have no real relationship with their husbands and they have no children. Therefore, they are able to go to Kṛṣṇa. The less advanced *gopīs* do have relationships with their husbands and so they are hindered by them. By Yogamāyā's influence, these *gopīs* are restrained from going to Kṛṣṇa for the *rāsa* dance, but because they experience intense *pūrva-rāga*, and because of their greed to associate with Kṛṣṇa, the fire of separation burns up their good and bad *karma* and they become purified. Their *pūrva-rāga* was so strong that simply by hearing His flute, they became immersed in remembrance of Kṛṣṇa in deep separation.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.29.10 states:

“For those *gopīs* who were confined to their houses, intolerable separation away from their beloved caused an intense agony that burned away all impious *karma*.” Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī has explained that their bodies were partly material and partly *cinmaya* (spiritual). The basis of their impious *karma* (*aśubha*) was that they had some attraction to their husbands and children and to worldly affairs. But the fire of separation burned everything away. Kṛṣṇa appeared to them at that time and they took Him in through their eyes and brought Him into their hearts, embracing Him so deeply that all pious and impious *karma* was washed away (*prakṣiṇa-bandhanāḥ*).

Their impious *karma* was washed away, but Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī tells us that their *śubha-karma* was also washed away. What is this pious *karma*? *Aśubha* means worldly attachment; *śubha* means praise, wealth, reputation, followers—everything that automatically comes when one practices *bhakti*. Both are obstacles in *bhakti*. In the case of these *gopīs*, their husbands and other relatives loved them so much, and their attachment to this *śubha-karma* was an obstacle that was washed away when they took Kṛṣṇa into their hearts.

At present we have both *śubha* and *aśubha-karma*. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains these two *karmas* thoroughly in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu* and in *Mādhurya-kādambinī*. There he has broken down the *anarthas* into categories: *sukṛti-uttha*, *duskṛta-uttha*, *bhakti-uttha*, *aparādha-uttha*. *Duskṛta-uttha* means we are entangled in the many pains and pleasures of our bodies. Due to being embodied, we suffer in so many ways, and this appears to present obstacles to our *bhakti*. When all the *anarthas* are cleared from the heart, then *śuddha-bhakti* can enter.

In the case of the *ṛṣi-cāri gopīs*, not everything was washed away by their practice of *rāgānugā-sādhana*; they still retained a small amount of *śubha* and *aśubha-karma*. The *śruti-cāri gopīs* were in a different position because by their association with the *nitya-siddha* devotees, they were completely free from both the pious and impious activities. As a result, they were able to go to Kṛṣṇa when He called them with His flute. These *gopīs* were not ordinary souls. They were able to meditate on Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day in *pūrva-rāga*. The *gopīs* in the *Veṇu-gīta* have passed through all the stages of *sādhana* and have attained *prema*.

Text Two

*kusumita-vanarāji-śuṣmi-bhṛṅga-
dvija-kula-ghuṣṭa-saraḥ-sarin-mahīdhram
madhupatir avagāhya cārayan gāḥ
saha-pāśu-pāla-balaś cukūja veṇum*

kusumita—flowering; *vana-rāji*—amidst the rows of trees of the forest; *śuṣmi*—maddened; *bhṛṅga*—with bees; *dvija*—of birds; *kula*—and flocks; *ghuṣṭa*—resounding; *saraḥ sarit*—its lakes, ponds and rivers; *mahīdhram*—Govardhana, Nandagāṇ and all other hills; *madhu-patiḥ*—akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu Śrī Kṛṣṇa (here *madhu* means *rasa*; therefore, *madhu-patiḥ* refers to *rasika* Kṛṣṇa who is the ocean of nectar in the form of complete *rasa*); *avagāhya*—entering and taking bath; *cārayan*—while tending (grazing); *gāḥ*—the cows; *saha-pāśu-pāla-balaḥ*—in the company of the animals, the cowherd boys and His elder brother, Balarāma; *cukūja*—vibrated; *veṇum*—His flute

Translation

Intoxicated bees were humming here and there amidst the rows of lush green trees filled with beautiful fragrant flowers. All the lakes, rivers and hills of the forest resounded with the sweet and melodious cooing of the flocks of various birds. Madhupati Śrī Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Baladeva and the *gopas*, entered that forest and, while grazing the cows, vibrated a mellow, sweet tune upon His alluring flute.

Commentary

This verse describes how the bees become maddened by the fragrance from the *kamala*, *beli*, *cameli*, *juhī* and all the other newly blossoming flowers. The bees are intoxicated from tasting the *madhu* or honey in the flowers. Gradually, as they fly from flower to flower, they lose their discrimination due to intoxication and land on any flower, regardless of its quality.

Kṛṣṇa is of the same caste as the bees, and therefore He is referred to in this verse as Madhupati, the Lord of *madhu*. Kṛṣṇa is a bigger bee, but He is of the same nature and coloring as the little bees. When the *gopīs* see the bees in Vṛndāvana, they are reminded of Kṛṣṇa. They see the maddened bees flying from the fragrant *kamala* flowers to a flower that has no fragrance, and it reminds them of how Kṛṣṇa tastes the *gopīs* and then, after becoming intoxicated by their association and losing His discrimination, goes to be with Kubjā. The *gopīs* think that Kṛṣṇa is blind or overcome by a dreamlike, intoxicated state just like the bees.

And because the bees have no discrimination, they will sit on a lotus flower to drink honey even though that flower is about to close. The lotus closes and they are trapped inside. They are so intoxicated that they don't even struggle to free themselves. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa goes from one beautiful flowerlike *gopī* to another; then He forgets the *gopīs* and goes to Kubjā or other women.

Kusumita-vanarāji, Vṛndāvana is full of such a variety of flowers. Usually trees like the mango and *jambu* do not flower in the autumn, but at this time, flowers of every season were in bloom and the trees were heavy with fruit. The *gopīs* see the flowers and the bees flying here and there, and they also see the birds (*dvija-kula*)—cuckoos, peacocks and *papiha* birds (a common species of cuckoo). The *papiha* bird makes a sound like ‘*pikaha*’. *Pi* means *priyatam*, “Where is my lover? Where is my lover?” And the cuckoos are crying, “*Ku hoo, ku hoo*.” Actually, *ku* refers to Kṛṣṇa. It is a derivative of the Sanskrit letter *ka* which means Kṛṣṇa. The cuckoo is calling Kṛṣṇa. She is restless because she cannot see Kṛṣṇa.

Each word in the *Bhāgavatam* is condensed nectar. The word ‘cuckoo’ reminds us of a *nāyaka* and *nāyikā*, a lover and his beloved. According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, remembering this is called *uddīpana*, a stimulus for awakening *rasa* in remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the peacocks, the birds and the bees all remind us of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana.

The male and female peacocks sing *ke ka, ke ka*. The male peacock is calling ‘*ke*’, Rādhā. When Kṛṣṇa enters the forest in the morning, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is experiencing *māna* (jealous anger), and She is also shy to meet Kṛṣṇa because there are so many persons present of an opposite (*virudha*) *bhāva*. Her mother-in-law, sister-in-law, husband and other relatives are present and they will criticize Her. She is tolerating the rise of Her own *bhāva* in their presence. But when She hears Kṛṣṇa’s flute and sees Him glance at Her, She goes to meet Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is calling Her and by the sound of His flute and by His beauty, He entices Her to overcome all the obstacles and come to meet Him in the forest.

The female peacock is calling ‘*ka*’—Kṛṣṇa is a mad elephant who can only be controlled by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Therefore, by the peacocks calling to one another, they are increasing the *rasa*—helping Kṛṣṇa to remember Rādhikā and Rādhikā to remember Kṛṣṇa.

Ghuṣṭa-saraḥ-sarin-mahīdhram: the birds sing everywhere all over Vṛndāvana, and the fragrance of flowers has permeated the atmosphere. The Yamunā overflows with joy when she hears Kṛṣṇa’s flute song and sees Him entering the forest with the cows and cowherd boys (*madhupatir avagāhya cārayan gāḥ saha-paśu-pāla-balaś cukūja veṇum*).

As they enter the forest, Kṛṣṇa alone played a flute, while the other boys listened or sang along. This point is made clearer later in the chapter: *anu-veṇu-juṣṭam* (text 7).

Text Three

*tad vraja-striya āśrutya
veṇu-gītaṁ smarodayam
kāścit parokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasya
sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan*

tat—that; *vraja-striyaḥ*—the young girls (*kīśorīs*) in the cowherd village of Vraja; *āśrutya*—hearing; *veṇu-gītaṁ*—the song of the flute; *smara-udayam*—instigating an intense desire within the heart to meet with Kṛṣṇa; *kāścit*—some of them; *parokṣam*—privately (The *gopīs* met among themselves in a private place where Kṛṣṇa was not present. No others were present such as the *gopīs*' mothers-in-law or other family members. But they were not alone; hundreds and thousands of *gopīs* were there.); *kṛṣṇasya*—the beloved *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa; *sva-sakhībhyah*—to their intimate companions; *anuvavarṇayam*—continuously described (while in the state of *tadātmā*—complete identification with Śrī Kṛṣṇa)

Translation

The sound of the flute awakens feelings of love toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa and an intense desire to meet with Him. When the *gopīs* heard that sound, their hearts were overwhelmed with *prema*. The *gopīs* became completely infatuated and, in a secluded place, they began to describe the form and qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the powerful influence of His flute to their intimate companions.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa controls all living entities with His flute. When the cows hear His flute song, they immediately come running toward Him. Even nature is controlled by Kṛṣṇa's flute. As she hears the flute song, all the trees and flowers bloom out of season and create a beautiful atmosphere for loving exchange.

The *gopas* and *gopīs* are also maddened by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute (*tad vraja striya āśrutya veṇu-gītaṁ smarodayam*). When these verses are being spoken, the *gopīs* are not hearing the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. Kṛṣṇa has already gone to the forest. Therefore, the *gopīs* remember the flute song in their minds and hearts. *Smarodayam* means that Kāmadeva, Cupid, is rising. The *gopīs* remember their conjugal pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. *Kāma* means *prema*, but it is not ordinary *prema*. When the *gopīs* experience *kāma*, they want to meet Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa wants to meet them. They become mad in *smara* (recollection of their conjugal exchanges with Śrī Kṛṣṇa).

Then, *kāścit parokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasya sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan*—when a pot is full, it overflows. Similarly, as the *gopīs* become filled by the sound of the flute, they begin to discuss Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and qualities with other *gopīs*. They go mad out of love. Although they try to speak, they cannot speak in an orderly way; they discuss their different pastimes with Kṛṣṇa according to the waves of their *bhāva*.

When the *gopas* hear Kṛṣṇa's flute, they think it is beautiful, but the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute has a very different effect on the *gopīs*. Actually, the cows, the *gopas* and the *gopīs* are all hearing their own names in the sound of the flute. "Kṛṣṇa is calling me!" Rādhā hears, "Rādhē! Rādhē!" Lalitā hears, "Lalite! Lalite!" and each of the cows is hearing her own name and thinking that Kṛṣṇa is calling her to Him. Each *gopī* thinks that the flute song is a representative (*pratinidhi*) of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has sent the representative in the form of this song which enters their ears and steals their minds and hearts. Then the sound carries those minds and hearts back to Kṛṣṇa. When the *gopīs* see that their minds and hearts have been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, they immediately run after the thief who has stolen them. Their only consideration is to pursue the thief.

Madhupatir avagāhya cārayan gaḥ saha-paśu-pāla-balaś cukūja veṇum: Madhupati is Kṛṣṇa. The *madhu* from His lips is entering the flute and being churned into nectar. It is this nectar that is entering the *gopīs'* ears and making them mad with love for Kṛṣṇa. This verse states:

*tad vraja-striya āśrutya
veṇu-gītaṁ smarodayam
kāścit parokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasya
sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan*

By drinking that *madhu*, nectar, from Kṛṣṇa's lips through the vehicle of the *vaṁśī*, they become mad with *kāma* (*smara-udayam*). *Smara* means *prema*, but specifically, it is the possession of the *kāmānuga* or *kāmātmika gopīs*. *Kāma* is *viśuddha-prema*.*

The *gopīs'* ears are like cups filling up with nectar. When they overflow, they begin to discuss Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and qualities among other *gopīs* of a similar *bhāva*. They talk about Kṛṣṇa, about His flute, everything about Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has already entered the forest and they cannot actually hear the flute song, but they hear it in their minds. When I was young, I used to go from 6:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. to see dramas based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. When it was over and we were on our way home, we could still hear the sound in our ears. This is an example of how the *gopīs* are experiencing the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, even though they are at home and He has gone to the forest.

*At the stage of *bhāva*, *viśuddha-sattva* is injected into the heart of the *rāgānugā-sādhaka* by the eternal *rāgātmikā* associates of the Lord residing in Goloka-Vṛndāvana. Then it becomes *sthāyī-bhāva*. After this, the elements of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva* mix together with the *sthāyī-bhāva*. In the stage of *bhāva*, these elements will be experienced only to a slight degree. The *sādhaka* cannot experience beyond this stage in the present body. After giving up this body, the *sādhaka* who has attained to this stage takes birth in the *prakaṭa-līlā* of the Lord. Then he can attain *prema*, which develops into *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. *Viśuddha-prema* refers to this development of *prema* from its initial stage (simply termed *prema*) up to *mahābhāva*.

Text Four

*tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ
smarantyaḥ kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam
nāśakan smara-vegena
vikṣipta-manaso nṛpa*

tat—that (the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s flute); *varṇayitum*—to describe; *ārabdhāḥ*—beginning; *smarantyaḥ*—remembering (i.e., churning and turning over and over again within their minds); *kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam*—the activities of Kṛṣṇa (which attract the hearts of all); *na āśakan*—they were incapable; *smara-vegena*—by the force of their *prema* which is filled with *kāma* to meet with Kṛṣṇa; *vikṣipta*—agitated; *manasaḥ*—whose minds; *nṛpa*—O King Parikṣit

Translation

The *gopīs* of Vraja began to describe the sweetness of the sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute among themselves, but as soon as they remembered the flute, they were overpowered with strong feelings of affection for their beloved, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus they remembered His charming activities, His artistically curved eyebrows, His compelling glance filled with love, and His sweet, mild smiling. Their hearts became filled with an intense desire to meet with Śyāma. They completely lost control of their minds and at once they arrived before Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts. Their voices became choked up with ecstasy and thus they were unable to describe Him.

Commentary

Tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ: the *gopīs* begin to discuss Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (*kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam*). Although they are experiencing *pūrva-rāga*, they also experience Kṛṣṇa’s presence by talking about their pastimes with Him. Generally when a devotee experiences *pūrva-rāga* (separation), he does not simultaneously experience Kṛṣṇa’s presence. These are contradictory moods. But the *gopīs* taste both moods simultaneously.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes that by remembering and discussing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, the *gopīs* became mad by the rising force of Cupid. They remember Kṛṣṇa’s graceful dancing steps (*lalita-gatī*), His beautiful smile and His charming conversations with them. They remember, for example, how Śrīmatī Rādhikā went to Kusuma-sarovara to gather flowers with Lalitā and Viśākhā. Kṛṣṇa wanted to meet Her, so He also went to Kusuma-sarovara. When He saw her, He asked, “Who are You?” She responded, “You don’t know who I am? Why do You speak like this?” Kṛṣṇa wanted to talk to Rādhikā and on that pretext, He instigated a quarrel. Śrīmatī Rādhikā says, “No, I don’t know who You are. Why are You asking Me who I am?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Because you are a thief. You are stealing My flowers.”

Rādhā: “You are a thief. You destroy the flowers of Vṛndāvana by grazing Your cows in the forests and allowing your cows and cowherd friends to trample them. We *gopīs* have planted these flowers, so why are You saying they are Yours?”

In this way, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa quarrel. The *gopīs* remember this pastime along with many other conversations between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. And they remember how Kṛṣṇa dances so gracefully and how He speaks in a way that draws the *gopīs*’ hearts to Him. They want to discuss these things with one another (*nāśakan smara-vegena vikṣipta-mānaso*), but because their *prema* is filled with the *kāma* of wanting to meet Kṛṣṇa, to taste Kṛṣṇa and to be tasted by Kṛṣṇa, they cannot speak.

Text Five

*barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ
bibhrat vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīm ca mālām
randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāraṇyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśat gīta-kīrtiḥ*

barha—a peacock feather; *āpīḍaṁ*—as the head decoration; *naṭavara*—of the best of dancers (or unparalleled in amorous intrigues or gallantry); *vapuḥ*—the transcendental body; *karṇayoḥ*—on the ears; *karṇikāraṁ*—a flower similar to the yellow lotus; *bibhrat*—wearing; *vāsaḥ*—garments; *kanaka*—like gold; *kapiśaṁ*—yellowish; *vaijayantī*—named *vaijayantī* (a garland strung from flowers of five different colors and which extends down to the knees); *ca*—and, *mālām*—the garland; *randhrān*—the holes; *veṇoḥ*—of the flute; *adhara*—of His lips; *sudhayā*—with the nectar; *āpūrayan*—filling up; *gopa-vṛndair*—by the cowherd boys; *vṛnda-aranyaṁ*—the forest presided over by Vṛndā-devī (the forest of Vṛndāvana); *sva-pada*—because of the uncommon marks of His lotus feet; *ramaṇaṁ*—enchanting; *prāviśat*—He entered; *gīta*—being sung; *kīrtiḥ*—His glories

Translation

The *gopīs* began to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their minds. Accompanied by His cowherd boyfriends, Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered the charming forest of Vṛndāvana. His head was decorated with a peacock feather. He wore yellow *karṇikāra* flowers over His ears, a golden yellow garment on His body, and a beautiful, fragrant *vaijayantī* garland about His neck. Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibited His supremely captivating appearance, just like the best of dancers performing upon a stage. He filled up the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips. The cowherd boys followed behind Him singing His glories which purify the entire world. In this way, the forest of Vṛndāvana manifested even greater splendor than Vaikuṇṭha, due to being beautified by the marks of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Commentary

Kṛṣṇa is described as wearing a peacock feather ornament on His head. The peacock feather has seven primary colors, like the colors of the rainbow. The rainbow always appears opposite the position of the sun. On a cloudy day, a rainbow is particularly beautiful. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is the color of a fresh raincloud. He is *śyāma*, dark blue. When a cloud is full of water, it is dark. Flashes of lightning come and go. This lightning is the *pītambara* (yellow dhoti), and the peacock feather rainbow is a *mukuta* (ornament) on Kṛṣṇa's turban.

Kṛṣṇa is also described here as *naṭavara*, the best dancer. In Indian drama, a young couple is brought out before the play actually begins in order to enchant the audience. They are always

dressed beautifully and they appear ready to dance. This is called *naṭa*. When they appear before the audience, the entire audience falls silent and gives them full attention. Kṛṣṇa is called the best of dancers. Lord Śiva is also known as a dancer (*naṭa-rāja*), as are the Gāndharvās and the demigods, but Kṛṣṇa is described as *vara*, the best.

In Hindi, *vara* means a young bridegroom. Even an ugly youth will look beautiful on his wedding day. His relatives will decorate him with gold and ornaments to make him look beautiful. Kṛṣṇa is the most beautiful in all the three worlds. He is as beautiful as a “maddened elephant.” Sometimes He puts a *karṇikāra* flower on one of His ears. Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains in his commentary to this verse: “Only one *karṇikāra* flower is worn. The word *karṇiyoh* (ears) is in the dual case which indicates that sometimes it is worn on the left ear and sometimes on the right. He wears it in this way as an expression of the intoxication of His youth, and thus the activities of Kṛṣṇa very much agitate the influence of Cupid for those cowherd girls.”

Karṇikāram bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśam vaijayantīm ca mālām. His yellow *dhōtī* (*pītambara*, *kanaka-kapiśam*) is more beautiful than gold. His *vaijayantī* garland, consisting of a combination of five different flowers, hangs from His neck to His knees. It is fragrant with *tulasī-mañjarīs* and is therefore attracting the bees.

Randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan: Kṛṣṇa fills His flute with the nectar of His lips. The *veṇu* is male, yet he drinks the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, but the flute cannot hold that nectar, so it immediately flows out in the form of sound.

This is a famous verse and it is the best *śloka* in the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for remembering Kṛṣṇa. There are three *ślokas* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which are considered parallel, although there is some gradation. Along with this verse, there are verses 10.14.1 and 10.23.22:

śrī-brahmovāca
naumīdya te 'bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya
guṇjāvataṁsa-paripiccha-lasan-mukhāya
vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viśāṇa-veṇu-
lakṣma-śriye mṛdu-pade paśupāṅga-jāya

“Lord Brahmā said: O Lord, You are fit to receive the worship of the entire universe. O son of the king of cowherds, Your transcendental body is dark blue like a new cloud, Your garment is brilliant like lightning, and the beauty of Your face is enhanced by Your *guṇja* earrings and the peacock feather on Your head. Wearing garlands of various forest flowers and leaves, and equipped with a herding stick, a buffalo horn, a flute, and a morsel of grain mixed with yogurt in Your hand, You are most attractive. Your lotus feet are very soft. I offer my prayers unto You.”

And:

śyāmaṁ hiraṇya-paridhiṁ vanamālya-barha-
dhātu-pravāla-naṭa-veṣam anuvratāṁse
vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjaṁ
karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam

“His complexion was blackish, *śyāma*, like a new cloud and His garment golden. Decorated with a peacock feather, colored minerals, sprigs of flower buds, and a garland of forest flowers and leaves, He was dressed as the best of all dancers. He rested His left hand upon the shoulder of a friend and with His right hand, twirled a pastime lotus. Lilies graced His ears, His hair hung down over His cheeks, and His lotuslike face was smiling sweetly.”

These three *śloka*s are graduated. Brahmā’s prayer is at the bottom, the wives of the *yajñika-brāhmaṇas* is in the middle, and the topmost is the description of Kṛṣṇa by the *gopīs*. We are following the *gopīs*, not Brahmā or the *dvija-patnīs*. They are also advanced, but we only want to follow the *gopīs*. The descriptions appear similar, but each verse reveals a different taste or ambition in the speaker. Each is describing Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, but Brahmā is worshiping Kṛṣṇa in *dāsya-rasa*. Kṛṣṇa is at the top of Mount Everest and Brahmā is standing at the bottom in *dāsya-rasa* looking up. He is so advanced that he can see the mountain peak from the bottom, but he is worshiping Kṛṣṇa as his lowly servant. Therefore, he offers obeisances in this prayer: “Kṛṣṇa, You are the highest and I am your fallen servant.”

The *dvija-patnīs*, however, are not offering obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. They have some taste for the *vraja-rasa*. They meet Kṛṣṇa on the border of Vṛndāvana and Mathurā. Therefore, they are nearer to Kṛṣṇa. Their ambition is to enter Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana. Being on the border of Vṛndāvana and Mathurā means that they are in a marginal position. They are residents of Mathurā so they have some *aiśvarya-bhāva* but they also have *laulyam* for Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana mood and pastimes. Their greed is a hundred times stronger than Brahmā’s greed and therefore they can enter into some of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes by offering Him and His cowherd boys something to eat. The *dvija-patnīs* are able to cross the border between *aiśvarya-bhūmi* and *mādhurya-bhūmi* and see Kṛṣṇa as a beautiful cowherd boy. For this reason, they do not offer obeisances as Brahmā did.

The *dvija-patnīs* have not yet experienced their *sthāyī-bhāva*. They are following in the footsteps of the *kāmātmikā gopīs*, but their taking birth in Mathurā in *brāhmaṇa* families has presented an obstacle to their worship in the Vṛndāvana mood. They are presently *kāmānugās* (aspiring to follow the *kāmātmikā gopīs*); in their next life, they will take birth in the wombs of *vraja-gopīs* and become *kāmātmikā-gopīs* themselves. because they have no taste for worshiping Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā, and because they are following the *kāmātmikā gopīs* in this life, all their pious and impious *karma* will be burnt up and they will be able to take birth in Vṛndāvana according to their desires.

The description by the *gopīs* is the best of the three verses. Lord Brahmā describes Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful bodily color as being like a fresh, moist raincloud (*abhra-sekam*). Both Lord Brahmā and the *dvija-patnīs* describe Kṛṣṇa’s bodily hue, but the *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa with different eyes. All three describe Kṛṣṇa’s *vaijayantī* garland or His flower earrings or his yellow *dhotī*, but Brahmā does not describe Kṛṣṇa’s smiling face nor Kṛṣṇa playing on His flute. Brahma sees Kṛṣṇa’s flute tucked in His belt along with His cowherding stick and His bugle (*vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇu*). Brahmā’s description of Kṛṣṇa is not as beautiful as the *brāhmaṇīs*.

The flute is not present in the description by the *dvija-patnīs* either, but instead they concentrate on describing His face, His bodily color and His forest decorations:

*śyāmaṁ hiraṇya-paridhiṁ vanamālya-barha-
dhātu-pravāla-naṭa-veṣam anuvratāmse
vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjaṁ
karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam*

Kṛṣṇa is playing the flute only in the description by the *gopīs*. They describe His smiling face and how the nectar of His lips is entering the holes of the flute: *randhrān veṇor
adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair*. When Kṛṣṇa blows His flute, the flute song first searches the earth for someone qualified to hear it. Upon not finding anyone, it goes up to Brahmaloka after crossing the Virajā River, then beyond to Mukti-dhāma*. Then to Śiva-loka, then to Vaikuṇṭha, then to Ayodhyā and Dvārakā, then to Mathurā—but nowhere does it find anyone qualified to hear its song. Finally it enters Vṛndāvana. Here it finds some devotees who are qualified to receive its nectar, but it does not go to those devotees in *sānta* or *dāsyā* or even *sakhya-rasa*. It finds some qualification among those in *vātsalya-rasa*, but only enters the innermost hearts and minds of the *gopā-ramaṇīs*, the lovers of the Cowherd Boy. There it finds beautiful hearts and steals them. Then it returns to Kṛṣṇa. When the *gopīs* hear the flute song, they become mad and run to Kṛṣṇa to reclaim their stolen property. It doesn't matter what they are doing—whether they are eating or dressing, or applying cosmetics, or serving their husbands and children. They simply run after Kṛṣṇa without any other consideration.

Each *gopī* goes alone, not stopping to call the others. *The gopīs* were stunned in ecstasy and were not in the mood to speak (*nāśakan smara-vegena vikṣipta-mānaso*), still they could not help themselves from speaking like mad women. They do not discuss Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in an orderly way but out of madness, jumping from subject to subject. When we look at the verses of the *Veṇu-gīta*, we will see that there is no orderly link between the verses, no sequence. They spoke whatever came to mind. This particular verse is spoken by Śukadeva Gosvāmī, but the following verses will be spoken by various *gopīs*.

The Earth thinks herself fortunate because Kṛṣṇa walks over her surface. The *gopīs* also recognize the good fortune of the Earth as they see Kṛṣṇa's footprints everywhere. Seeing His footprints and hearing His flute song, they become so mad that they cannot speak, but after some time they are able to speak in a covered way that which is in their hearts.

This *śloka* is necessary for our practice of *rāgānugā-bhajana*. We should try to remember Kṛṣṇa according to this description. We have so little time and our hearts are still so hard. First we have to learn the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and if we learn the deeper meanings, that will give us the qualification to read the books of the Six Gosvāmīs and their followers.

*Mahākālapura consists of two parts, one being the eight-fold coverings of the universe and beyond that, Mukti-dhāma. After getting free from all gross identification one is able to enter the eight-fold coverings of the universe. One who is desiring *mukti* but is not yet free from subtle identification and desires for enjoyment gets caught up in these covering shells of the universe. After getting free from even subtle contamination, one enters Mukti-dhāma. There, the Lord's Brahman effulgence is prominent. Beyond this lies Sadāśiva-loka, then Vaikuṇṭha, then Goloka-Vṛndāvana. (*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Part 2, Chapter 2.225-226, Chapter 3.12-31)

Text Six

*iti veṇu-ravam rājan
sarva-bhūta-manoharam
śrutvā vraja-striyaḥ sarvā
varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire*

iti—thus; *veṇu-ravam*—the vibration of the flute; *rājan*—O King Parīkṣit; *sarva-bhūta*—for all living beings; *manaḥ-haram*—stealing the minds; *śrutvā*—hearing; *vraja-striyaḥ*—the ladies from the village of Vraja; *sarvāḥ*—all of them; *varṇayantyaḥ*—engaged in describing; *abhirebhire*—embraced Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of supreme spiritual bliss

Translation

O King, the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute steals the minds of all living beings, both animate and inanimate. When the young *gopīs* of Vraja heard that sound, they began to describe it. As they went on describing the sound of the flute, they entered a state of ecstatic trance and became completely absorbed in thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Within their hearts, they began to embrace Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is the embodiment of all *rasa* and the reservoir of supreme spiritual bliss.

Commentary

Śrī Śuka is describing the sound of the flute from the viewpoint of the *gopīs*, “O Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the sweet voice of the *veṇu* is *sarva-bhūta-manoharam*, it attracts the minds of all living entities. Yet the *gopīs* taste it in a special way. They become overwhelmed with *kāma*.” At first, *tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ smarantyaḥ kṛṣṇa ceṣṭitam nāśakan smara-vegena vikṣipt-manaso nṛpa* (text 4): *smara* (Cupid) comes. That is why they want to speak but cannot. It has a very deep meaning here. Why can’t they speak? Because they are all trying to hide something. They want to hide the depth of their *bhāva* from each other. Their hearts are filling up like an ocean filling with waves, but they are trying to hide their hearts (*avahita*). *Avahita* means to conceal something by speaking in an indirect way.

Here all the *gopīs* are feeling *smara*, *kāma*. *Kāma* and *prema* are both love, but *kāma* has a special and deep meaning. From *bhāva* we realize *prema*, but there is no *kāma* in this *prema*. There is no *kāma* before the stage of *anurāga* (a stage in the development of *prema*) because *kāma* is not the object of *sakhya* and *vātsalya-rasa*. After *anurāga*, *kāma* arises: seeing Kṛṣṇa or seeing anything connected to Kṛṣṇa gives rise to *kāma*. Therefore, it is only those *gopīs* who have *smara* who experience *kāma*. It is only the *kāmānugā* or *kāmātmikā gopīs*. All the *gopīs* speaking in the *Veṇu-gīta* are *kāmātmikā*.

One of the features of *kāma* is that it tries to cover itself. That is the *svarūpa* or nature of *kāma*. *Kāma* is like a serpent who always wants to hide. Each *gopī* is trying to hide her feelings from the others, fearing that by the symptoms of her *smara*, others will understand what she is feeling. It is an open secret, but each and every *gopī* wants to hide the fact that they love Kṛṣṇa, they want to meet Kṛṣṇa, and they want to enjoy with Kṛṣṇa. When it is hidden it becomes so much more beautiful. They think that if they tell anyone they want to taste Kṛṣṇa, everything will be spoiled.

Śrutvā vraja-striyaḥ sarvā varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire. They are each hiding their *prema* toward Kṛṣṇa. Instead of saying Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful, they are saying, “This *tamala* tree is so beautiful. The deer are so fortunate because they can go to Kṛṣṇa with the permission of their husbands.” They do not mention Kṛṣṇa, but speak indirectly of their love for Him, and in so speaking, they each realize the love in the other *gopīs*’ hearts.

They speak one after another. Śukadeva Gosvāmī hears their words from within his heart and repeats them to Mahārāja Parikṣit: *akṣaṇvatām phalam idaṁ na param vidāmaḥ*. “For those who have eyes, we think there is no greater object of vision” (text 7).

Rūpa Gosvāmī developed his style in writing *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* after reading these verses, or we can say that these verses (especially those contained within the *rasa* chapters of the *Bhāgavatam*) were written in the style of Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Ujjvala nīlamanī*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is *mūla-pramāṇa*, the original root of all Vedic evidence. Therefore, Rūpa Gosvāmī composed his poetry in pursuance of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s version. However, because Rūpa Gosvāmī is Rūpa Mañjarī and is an eternal associate of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, he is the root of all understanding. Thus, it is equally true to say that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* follows the direction of Rūpa Gosvāmī. To understand *rasa*, one should study *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* with a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava. In that way, one can enter deeply and understand all the symptoms of *bhāva* and *prema*.

Text Seven

śrī-gopya ūcuḥ
akṣaṇvatām phalam idam na param vidāmaḥ
sakhyaḥ paśūn anuviveśayator vayasyaiḥ
vaktram vrajeśa-sutayor anuveṇu-juṣṭam
yair vā nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣā-mokṣam

śrī-gopyaḥ ūcuḥ—the *gopīs* said; *akṣaṇvatām*—of those who have eyes; *phalam*—the fruit, *idam*—this (beautiful sight of the face of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as He enters the forest with the cows and cowherd boys); *na*—not; *param*—other (object of vision for the eyes); *vidāmaḥ*—we know; *sakhyaḥ*—O friends; *paśūn*—the cows; *anuviveśayatoḥ*—causing to enter one forest after another; *vayasyaiḥ*—with Their friends of the same age; *vaktram*—the faces; *vraja-īśa*—of Mahārāja Nanda; *sutayoḥ*—of the two sons (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma); *anu-veṇu-juṣṭam*—possessed of flutes; *yaiḥ*—by which; *vā*—or, *nipītam*—drunk or tasted (the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s sidelong glances); *anurakta*—loving; *kaṭākṣa*—side-long glances; *mokṣam*—giving off

Translation

The *gopīs* began to speak among themselves: O *sakhīs*! We think that for those who have eyes, there is but one thing which is a suitable object of vision. Success of the eyes lies in beholding this object alone; we know of no other. And what is that most precious object of attainment for the eyes? It is the vision of the two sons of Mahārāja Nanda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, accompanied by the *gopas*, as They enter the forest taking the cows, or as They bring them back to Vṛndāvana. They hold Their flutes to Their lips and look upon us with mild smiles and amorous sidelong glances filled with love. At that time, we drink the sweetness of Their faces.

Commentary

While experiencing the *bhāva* of *avahita* (trying to conceal their *kāma*), the *gopīs* begin speaking to one another. There are many different groups of *gopīs* formed according to their common mood in loving Kṛṣṇa. Here, one *gopī* is speaking. “What is the success of these eyes? What is the fruit of having eyes? We know only one thing: to see Kṛṣṇa’s face as He enters Vṛndāvana forest with the cows and *gopas*, dressed like a beautiful dancer and in the freshness of His youth. He looks just like a mad elephant.” The *gopīs* witness this scene every morning.

Sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair: Kṛṣṇa is singing surrounded by the *gopas* who are cheering Him on, “*Sādhū, sādhu, sādhu!*” *Vṛndāraṇyam sva-pada-ramaṇam prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ* (text 5): He walks on the earth of Vṛndāvana. The marks from the soles of his feet are imprinted all over the ground, and therefore the Earth considers herself fortunate to have Kṛṣṇa walking gently on her breast.

Prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ: the *gopīs* think of the good fortune of Prithivī-devī (the Earth) and when they see Kṛṣṇa's footprints and hear the song of His flute, they become so mad that they can no longer articulate their feelings about Kṛṣṇa to the other *gopīs*. After some time, they recover and begin to speak.

The *gopīs* say that the flute song has attracted all living beings, yet all living beings are not actually attracted. Only the *gopīs* are attracted. All living entities hear the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's flute song, but only the *gopīs* become mad. No one else runs after Kṛṣṇa when they hear the sound of His flute; it is especially sweet for the *gopīs*. *Śrutvā vraja-striyaḥ sarvā varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire*: thus they began to talk to one another about Kṛṣṇa and His flute, and they discussed what effect the flute song has on others. They say:

*akṣaṇvatām phalam idam na param vidāmaḥ
sakhyaḥ paśūn anuviveśayator vayasyaiḥ
vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor anuveṇu-juṣṭam
yair vā nipītam anurakta-kāṭākṣa-mokṣam*

Kṛṣṇa has so many cows and cowherd boys with Him. *Vayasyaiḥ* means that the boys are of the same age as Kṛṣṇa, all *kīśora*. The *gopīs* are speaking in a general way, which includes describing the cows and *gopas*, because they are trying to hide their *bhāva*. Everyone sees Kṛṣṇa as beautiful so it is not wrong for them to point this out, and they do so even to the other *gopīs*. Each *gopī* wants to conceal her heart from everyone. Therefore, she mentions that Kṛṣṇa is going to the forest accompanied by the boys and animals. In this way, she hides her exclusive love for Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* say *phalam idam*, the fruit of their eyes is to see Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* are saying that they don't know anything other than Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is present with so many friends and cows, and He is entering the forest of Vṛndāvana, which is fragrant with blooming flowers and ripening fruit. *Vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor* means "just to see the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa as He is surrounded by the cowherd boys." But this verse has other meanings. *Vrajeśa* means Nanda, and *sutayor* means Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. *Anuveṇu-juṣṭam*: the flute is on Their lips. *Yair va nipītam anurakta-kāṭākṣa-mokṣam*, Kṛṣṇa is looking toward the *gopīs* with loving glances (*anurakta-kāṭākṣa*). He is looking at them out of the corners of His eyes and smiling. He is begging for something with great affection. The *gopīs* are exclaiming that those who have not seen Kṛṣṇa's begging have not realized the value of their eyes.

Actually, according to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, this verse has four or five different meanings. The above meaning is the simple or external meaning, but there are other more *rasika* meanings.

Something appears wrong in this verse. The *gopīs* love only Kṛṣṇa, but Baladeva is also present. When Baladeva is present with Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* become shy and cover their faces with their *sārīs*. There will be no exchange of glances in Balarāma's presence. Why, then, is Śukadeva Gosvāmī speaking as if both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are present when the *gopīs* are exchanging with Kṛṣṇa? The meaning is hidden in the Sanskrit.

The *gopīs* are speaking to other *gopīs* in the same *bhāva*, the same *yūtha*. They are saying, “O *sakhī*, Kṛṣṇa is coming. He is looking at us from the the corners of His eyes and begging something. He is so beautiful, surrounded by the *gopas*.” *Sutayor* means Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa. But *anu* means that Kṛṣṇa is following a little behind Baladeva. Baladeva has already entered the forest and Kṛṣṇa is about to enter behind Him, but He is glancing and smiling at the *gopīs* to beg their *kāma*. He is shooting arrows from the bow of His eyebrows (*puṣṭabāṇa*). The *gopīs* are saying that to have *this* vision is the perfection of their eyes. It is not enough to see Kṛṣṇa in a general way as He enters the forest in the morning surrounded by cows and cowherd boys, but to see Him alone and with *kāma*.

The *gopīs*’ mention of Balarāma’s name is another instance of their trying to hide their true feelings for Kṛṣṇa. By mentioning Baladeva’s name, no one will understand their exclusive love for Kṛṣṇa. Everyone will think they have no exclusive feeling toward Kṛṣṇa because *vrajeśa-sutayor*, they are speaking of both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma going to the forest.

Anuveṇu-juṣṭam: this holds the key to another meaning. Baladeva does not play the flute all the time because He is not as expert as Kṛṣṇa. Baladeva mainly plays the buffalo horn. *Anuveṇu-juṣṭam*—it is Vrajendra-nandana who is walking behind Baladeva and playing the flute. The *gopīs* are indirectly saying that Balarāma is playing a buffalo horn, so although they appear to be speaking about both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they are only talking about Kṛṣṇa because they are talking about He who is playing the flute. They want to go and see that Nanda-suta, that Kṛṣṇa, who is keeping the flute to His lips and looking at them with so much love. Yet how can they go to see Him? All their relatives will see them—their mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, fathers-in-law. They are speaking quietly so they will not be overheard by their superiors. Otherwise, their superiors will accuse them of being unchaste and will lock them in their houses. What is the worst their superiors could inflict on them? They could throw them out of their homes. The *gopīs* are ready for that. Otherwise, they will always be restricted from seeing Kṛṣṇa and their eyes will become useless. Yet the older *gopīs* are not restricting their daughters and daughters-in-law because they themselves are going to see Kṛṣṇa as He enters Vṛndāvana in the morning. So the *gopīs* think, “What harm will there be if we also go?”

One *gopī* goes to make sure it is safe and then together they decide to see Kṛṣṇa from a distance. *Nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*, Kṛṣṇa is glancing lovingly at us. *Nipīta* means to drink. They are drinking *kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*, the sidelong glances that Kṛṣṇa is sending their way, and He is smiling at them. One *sakhī* is telling them to go forward and drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. Yet to get the honey from Kṛṣṇa’s lips means the *gopīs* will have to go to Him in the forest. Another *gopī* asks, “How can we do so in the presence of our superiors? Nevertheless, we will go, because when we see Kṛṣṇa’s face, we become mad in love for Him. We don’t know what our future will be, but let us run to Kṛṣṇa. Don’t be afraid. We do not care about anything else. Let us go and drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s flute and His smile.” In this way, this verse has three or four meanings which we can understand by analyzing each of the words.

These *ślokas* are here for us to use in *rāgānugā-sādhana*. We should be curious to understand all the meanings of the verses and to see Kṛṣṇa in this way. *Sakhya* has two meanings: *sakhā* (male friend) and *sakhī* (female friend). *Vayasaiḥ* means both male and female friend. The *gopīs* are only

speaking of Kṛṣṇa when they refer to *vrajeśa-sutayor anuvenu-juṣṭam*. Balarāma is present, but He has gone ahead into the forest. Kṛṣṇa is holding the flute to His lips and looking at them from the corners of His eyes. The *gopīs* are also offering *arcana* to Kṛṣṇa out of the corner of their eyes. Therefore, whoever has witnessed this scene has attained the fruit of having eyes.

Another meaning of this verse is based on the definition of *vrajeśa-sutayor*. Baladeva is going ahead and Kṛṣṇa, His younger brother (*anu*), is a little behind Him. The *gopīs* say they only want to see Balarāma's younger brother's face, that beautiful Kṛṣṇa. But when we look at the words *vrajeśa-sutayor*, we can find another meaning.

Because the *gopīs* only want to see Kṛṣṇa amongst themselves, their use of the words *sakhyaiḥ* and *vayasyaiḥ* both refer to the *gopīs*, not the *gopas*. When Kṛṣṇa goes to the forest with the cowherd boys, He exerts His *yogamāyā* potency to leave the *gopas* behind. Then He goes to Kusuma-sarovara, Rādhā-kuṇḍa or Sūrya-kuṇḍa to meet the *gopīs*. *Vayasyaiḥ* (surrounded by His friends) refers here to Kṛṣṇa being surrounded by the *gopīs*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is also present.

The words *vrajeśa-sutayor* have another meaning. *Vrajeśa* refers to two fathers, Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja and Vrajeśa-Nanda. Both are *vrajeśa*, kings of Vṛndāvana. Vṛṣabhānu-suta is Rādhikā and Nanda-suta is Kṛṣṇa. *Sutasya* means son and *sutasyā* means daughter. When *suta* and *sutā* are combined in Sanskrit grammar, the word becomes *sutayo*. Therefore, *vrajeśa-sutayor* refers to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* are describing *vrajeśa-sutayor* as the perfection of their vision. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are together in the *kuñja* and when Kṛṣṇa is smiling at Rādhā and Rādhā is glancing lovingly at Kṛṣṇa, whoever sees Kṛṣṇa's face at that time will drink the sweetest nectar.

So there are different meanings in this verse. First we see Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa, then only Kṛṣṇa, then Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Everything is there in this *śloka*. The devotees in *dāsya*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya* will see Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva together, the *priya-sakhīs* will see only Kṛṣṇa, but those who are in *mañjarī-bhāva* will see Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Another point in this verse is *vrajeśa-sutayor anuvenu-juṣṭam*. The verse states that both are taking the flute, but we have already discussed how Balarāma is not playing on the flute, He is playing on the buffalo horn. So this means that either Rādhā has stolen Kṛṣṇa's flute or He has asked Her to teach Him how to play, and He has given it to Her. This is an even sweeter fruit of the eyes, to see Rādhā teach Kṛṣṇa how to play the flute. The *gopīs* are seeing Rādhikā tell Kṛṣṇa, "You have made a mistake in Your flute-playing. You don't know how to play a melody. May I play?" Then Kṛṣṇa gives Her the flute and She plays better than Kṛṣṇa. Rūpa and Raghunātha Gosvāmīs have described this pastime in their poetry.

Anuvenu-juṣṭam: first Kṛṣṇa plays on the *vaṁśuli*. Then (*anu*) Rādhikā snatches it and tells Him He isn't playing properly. Then She begins to play. Kṛṣṇa looks at Rādhikā from the corners of His eyes, and Rādhikā also glances at Kṛṣṇa. If anyone can see this scene, his eyes will be successful. "Otherwise," the *gopīs* say, "we have not attained the success of having eyes." *Anuvenu-juṣṭam*: they both play on the *vaṁśī* and *kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*—they both look at each other out of the corners of Their eyes. *Yair vā nipītam*. *Nipītam* means we should drink that *kaṭākṣa* (sidelong glance) and then our eyes will be successful.

There is one more meaning to this verse: here the *gopīs* are referring to the *priya-narma-sakhīs* and the *priya-sakhīs*. They haven't spoken about the *mañjarīs*. The *mañjarīs* will not meet Kṛṣṇa directly, but their *bhāva* is to see Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together. In this way they feel the most pleasure. This is their *svabhāva* (nature) and *guṇa* (quality). They feel a hundred times more pleasure if Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa meet than they do from meeting Kṛṣṇa themselves.

What is the *bhāva* of Rūpa Mañjarī, Rati Mañjarī and all the *mañjarīs* here? The *gopīs* want to meet Kṛṣṇa, but this verse also describes the mood of the *mañjarīs*. *Nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*: the *mañjarīs* don't want to drink this *rasa* themselves, but they want Rādhikā to see Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa to see Rādhikā. This is the *bhāva* of a *mañjarī*.

This verse also contains *sakhī-bhāva*. The *sakhīs* are not *svatantra* (independent) like the *priya-narma sakhīs*. One *sakhī* tells another, "Let's go see Kṛṣṇa entering the forest." But the other *sakhī* responds, "How can we go? We can't go. There are so many superiors here. We are newly married so we should be at home." Another *sakhī* says, "Being in your husband's home is like being in jail. And not seeing Kṛṣṇa when He is going to the forest is worse than being in jail. Let us go at once and see Kṛṣṇa and drink the nectar coming from His eyes in the form of sidelong glances."

The first *sakhī* is asking how they can go since their fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law are home. "Don't speak so loudly," she says. "If they hear us speaking like this, they will abuse us." The second *sakhī* says, "If they weep, we don't care. What can they do? Everyone is going to see Kṛṣṇa, whether they are old or young, or ladies or gentlemen, or *brāhmaṇas* or not *brāhmaṇas*. Even the newly married daughters are going. Still, if my sister-in-law or mother-in-law hears that I want to go and see Kṛṣṇa, she will forbid me. She herself is going but she will tell me to stay at home. She says there is a black snake on the road that will bite me and I will die from the poison." That second *sakhī* is saying, "*Nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*." Here *nipīta* means not to see, but to drink. Anyone can drink this nectar by going close to Kṛṣṇa. Yet so many people are going to see Kṛṣṇa. How can we be so shameless as to step in front of them as He passes? Let us rather go to a *kuñja* or see Him from a distance. Let us stand somewhere so that Kṛṣṇa will also see us. We cannot get nearer to Kṛṣṇa, but if He sees us, we can drink the nectar from His sidelong glances.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī describes that another *gopī* speaks, "Never mind all these questions of etiquette. Let us go in front of Kṛṣṇa but stand at a distance. If Kṛṣṇa looks at any one of us, we will immediately lose our shame and our patience. Just by seeing Kṛṣṇa's glance from the corners of His eyes, we will lose everything and become mad. Then what will be our future? Don't worry, the flute song will manage everything. The flute will drag us to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. After we have drunk the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, we will be mad and we will no longer care about our relatives. We will not know what is happening to us, so let us go there and drink and both become mad."

Śukadeva Gosvāmī has given these details for the readers of the *Bhāgavatam*. If you have eyes, then look at this sight of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa exchanging glances. Try to remember all these things within your heart.

Text Eight

*cūta-pravāla-barha-stabakoṭpalābja-
mālānupṛkta-paridhāna-vicitra-veśau
madhye virejatur alam paśu-pāla-goṣṭhyām
raṅge yathā naṭa-varau kvaca gāyamānau*

cūta—of a mango tree; *pravāla*—with young sprouts; *barha*—peacock feathers; *stabaka*—bundles of flowers; *utpala*—water lilies (or blue lotuses); *abja*—and lotuses; *mālā*—with garlands; *anupṛkta*—touched; *paridhāna*—Their garments; *vicitra*—with great variety; *veśau*—being dressed; *madhye*—in the midst; *virejatuḥ*—the two of Them shone forth; *alam*—magnificently; *paśu-pāla*—of the cowherd boys; *goṣṭhyām*—within the assembly; *raṅge*—upon a stage; *yathā*—just as; *naṭa-varau*—two most excellent dancers; *kvaca*—sometimes; *gāyamānau*—Themselves singing

Translation

O *sakhī*! When dark-complexioned Śrī Kṛṣṇa, dressed in yellow garments, and fair-complexioned Baladeva, dressed in blue garments, decorate Themselves with newly grown mango blossoms, peacock feathers, clusters of flowers, and garlands of multicolored lotuses and lilies, Their appearance becomes astonishing. They sit down right in the middle of the assembly of cowherd boys and sing the sweetest of songs. O *priya sakhī*! At such times, They look just like two incomparably beautiful and expert dancers performing on a dramatic stage. What am I to say of the splendor of Their appearance at such times?

Commentary

It is important for *rāgānugā-bhajana* to understand how the *gopīs* are thinking and how they are serving Kṛṣṇa when He has gone to the forest during the day. They are always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and by understanding their mood, we can also think of Kṛṣṇa all the time. In *rāgānugā-bhajana*, we should remember Kṛṣṇa with *uddīpana*. Kṛṣṇa is a youth, *kīśora*, and He possesses all the qualities of a youthful lover. He is so beautiful and so *rasika*. We should practice *smaraṇam* of the *gopīs* whom we have the greed to follow. We should remember Kṛṣṇa, but we should also remember the *gopīs* (*janam casya*)—how they are serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. These verses describe the mood of the *gopīs*. By studying them, we can understand how the *gopīs* think of Kṛṣṇa.

I have already explained the meaning of *naṭa-vara* in the fifth verse. As in *vrajeśa-sutayor*, *naṭa-vara* also has a dual meaning. It means Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and it also means Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* were trying to hide their deep affection for Kṛṣṇa, but because they lost control of themselves, some of their *bhāvas* became evident. Therefore, they are again trying to cover themselves by speaking in a general way of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma dancing. In this way, it will appear that they have no special *kāma* for Kṛṣṇa if they also mention Balarāma's name.

Both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have decorated Themselves with *cūta-pravāla*. *Cūta* means mango and *pravāla* means young sprouts. Usually there are twelve or fifteen reddish sprouts in a sprig and they have a sweet, honeylike fragrance. *Barha* means peacock feather, which They have placed on Their turbans along with *stabaka*, bunches of flowers—lotuses, lilies and other flowers. They are wearing a flower garland (*mālānupṛkta*) of *belī*, *camelī*, *juhī* and other flowers, and the garlands fall from Their necks to Their feet. *Mālānupṛkta-paridhāna-vicitra-veśau*, the garland touches Kṛṣṇa. The bees are roaming here and there, and there are *tulasī-mañjarīs* in the garland. Kṛṣṇa's clothes are yellow and He is magnificently beautiful (*alam*). There are so many boys and Kṛṣṇa is in their midst (*madhye*). He is *virejatur*, elegant, simple and attractive. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are dancing and singing like the best of dancers (*naṭa-vara*).

Sometimes They are singing, sometimes They are dancing and sometimes They are playing the flute. They have many playful pastimes there. *Paśu-pāla-goṣṭhyaṁ*: *paśu-pāla* means cowherd boys, and *goṣṭhya* means company. In their midst Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are having *kīrtana*, playing the flute and dancing.

As I said, this description is concealing the *bhāva* of the *gopīs*. They use the word *gāyamānau*, meaning Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are both singing, yet they are not referring to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, but to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Without Rādhā, something is lacking. The *mañjarīs* especially want to see Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together. The *sakhīs* can see Kṛṣṇa alone, but the *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* will not see Him separately from Rādhā. *Sakhī* means “one who is inclined towards Kṛṣṇa”. *Nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* are inclined toward Śrīmatī Rādhikā. They want Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are a young couple, like the young couple who are brought out at the beginning of a drama. They are dancing, surrounded by the *sakhīs*, as if They are on a stage. In the next *śloka*, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that one *sakhī* is asking another, “We can go see Kṛṣṇa from a distance, but how can we go and drink the *adhara-sudhā*, the honey of Kṛṣṇa's lips? Everyone will see us and we will become ashamed.” Another *sakhī* responds, “Don't worry. When Kṛṣṇa looks at us from the corners of His eyes and begs our love from us, we will become mad. Kṛṣṇa's glance will remove all our shame. Let us go and then whatever has to happen will happen.”

Another *gopī* says, “How will we bear this shame if our husbands, fathers-in-law and other relatives try to stop us, and our superiors in the community abuse us? I don't think we should go.” Then another *gopī* says, “There is no harm in going because Baladeva is also there along with so many other boys. If Kṛṣṇa is alone, then we will be criticized, but Kṛṣṇa is with Baladeva, so no one will think badly of us. Baladeva is like our own father or elder brother. And so many of Their companions are also there. We should have no shame.” First she says that they should not go to see Kṛṣṇa and drink the nectar of his lips, but then she decides that they should go and watch Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from a distance by concealing themselves in the bushes. In this way, they will see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma playing and see how beautiful Kṛṣṇa is. They will also be able to hear His flute song and see Him dance, and then they will return to their homes.

Another *gopī* says, “Yes, we can go there, but I think that when we see Kṛṣṇa, we will be so attracted that we will become mad and lose our patience. Anyway, let us go. Whatever happens will not be in our control.”

Another *gopī* says, “When we see how Kṛṣṇa is decorated with fresh, reddish mango sprouts dripping with honey, and when we see the peacock feather on His turban and the *karṇikāra* flower over one of His ears, we will become mad.” Kṛṣṇa wears the *karṇikāra* flower on His ear as a sign of His prideful youth. He is young and He walks like a young elephant. When an elephant is maddened by the taste of nectar, His eyes roll in his head. Kṛṣṇa is walking like such an elephant who is maddened by the taste of nectar.

He is also carrying a *līlā-kamala* in His hand, a pastime lotus. This lotus is red and very beautiful. Kṛṣṇa twirls it as He dances, and when the *gopīs* see this, their eyes and hearts also dance. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa always twirls that lotus flower. Kṛṣṇa has gone to the forest and the *gopīs* are at home. But the *gopīs* are speaking about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes just as if they were present to witness them.

Text Nine

*gopyaḥ kim ācarat ayaṁ kuśalaṁ sma veṇur
dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopikānām
bhunkte svayaṁ yad avaśiṣṭa-rasaṁ hradinyo
hṛṣyat-tvaco 'śru mumucus taravo yathāryāḥ*

gopyaḥ—O *gopīs* (some other *gopī* is speaking); *kim*—what; *ācarat*—performed; *ayaṁ*—this; *kuśalaṁ*—auspicious activities performed in previous lives; *sma*—certainly; *veṇuḥ*—the flute; *dāmodara*—of Kṛṣṇa; *adhara-sudhām*—the nectar of the lips; *api*—even; *gopikānām*—which is the rightful property of the *gopīs* alone; *bhunkte*—enjoys; *svayaṁ*—independently; *yat*—from which (he is able to taste the nectar of Dāmodara's lips as much as he desires); *avaśiṣṭa*—(not even a drop) remaining; *rasam*—of that *rasa* (the nectar of Dāmodara's lips; *hradinyāḥ*—the rivers; *hṛṣyat*—feeling jubilant (due to seeing the flute's greed to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips and thus manifesting ecstatic symptoms in the form of blossoming lotus flowers); *tvacaḥ*—whose bodies; *aśru*—tears; *mumucuḥ*—shed; *taravaḥ*—the trees; *yathā*—exactly like; *āryāḥ*—old forefathers

Translation

O dear *sakhīs*! Although the flute is male, we cannot imagine what sort of *sādhana* and *bhajana* he must have performed in his previous births that in our very presence it is drinking the nectar of Dāmodara's lips, which rightfully belongs to us alone. He is not even sparing a drop of that *rasa* for us. On the pretext of their blossoming lotus flowers, the rivers, which have nourished the flute with their water (*rasa*), are exhibiting symptoms of ecstatic horripilation. The trees, who are forefathers of the flute, are equal to the best of men. Seeing their descendant filled with such intense love for the Lord, they have become overjoyed, and tears of ecstasy are flowing from their eyes.

Commentary

Gopyaḥ means that another *gopī* is speaking. The *gopīs* are telling each other about the good fortune of the flute. Although the flute is male, it must have performed so much pious activity in its past birth to have earned the chance to sit on Kṛṣṇa's lips and act the part of a *gopī*. Only the *gopīs* are authorized to drink the *adhara-sudhā*, the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, but right in front of us, this flute, even though he is a male, is taking all the nectar and not even leaving us a drop. The *veṇu* does not care about us. He is drinking the nectar in defiance of us. Therefore, they call the flute *niḍara*, fearless.

“We want to know what *tapasya* this flute has performed in previous births to have achieved this position so that we too may perform those same austerities and achieve the same result of drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips in front of our husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, and other superiors.

What do we have to do to become so daring?” This speech is the speech of madwomen who are experiencing *kṛṣṇa-bhāva*. The *gopīs* speak spontaneously, as if everyone has a *mādhurya* relationship with Kṛṣṇa. They speak desperately, with no control over their minds and senses in the madness that has overwhelmed them.

By seeing their son’s desperate thirst, the parents of the flute are happy to see their son become Kṛṣṇa’s flute and thus able to drink the nectar of His lips. The *veṇu* is bamboo. Therefore, the bamboo trees are rejoicing to see the good fortune of their relative. The *kadamba* trees, mango trees and other large trees are also laughing because they are all family members of the bamboo. All of them recognize the good fortune of their child. Tears of happiness (*ānandāśru*) come from their eyes in the form of running sap, and their hairs are standing on end in the form of blossoming flowers. Like fathers and mothers who become happy to see their children prosper, the trees and flowers weep in happiness for their child, the flute.

Hradinyaḥ here means water—the ponds and rivers. The water is also the flute’s mother, because the bamboo grows in the rivers’ water, and the bamboo sustains its body by drinking the milk (water) of the rivers. Therefore, the rivers simultaneously laugh and cry to see their child so fortunate. Their laughter takes the form of lotus flowers. When someone cries out of sorrow, their tears will be hot, but if they cry out of happiness, their tears will be cool. Because the rivers’ tears are cool, the *gopīs* think that the rivers are happy for their son. “Even Brahmā and Śiva cannot attain this position, so how is it that our son, a bamboo stick, is able to taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips?”

To the *gopīs*, the flute is their rival. The *veṇu* does not care for their claim on the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips but is drinking all of it himself. He doesn’t even leave them a drop. Therefore, the *gopīs* want to perform the same austerities performed by the flute in his past life in order to become Kṛṣṇa’s flute in their next birth.

Kṛṣṇa is never separated from His flute. He carries His flute everywhere; the flute is even with Him when He sleeps. The *gopīs* aspire to always be with Kṛṣṇa too—when He is sleeping, when He is going to the forest to take care of the cows, and at all other times. Yet they cannot attain this because they are blocked by their relatives. Thus the flute is a rival. The flute is free to go with Kṛṣṇa everywhere, but they are not. Therefore, although the mother and father of the flute are happy to see their son drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, the *gopīs* are envious. They are hoping to take birth as the flute in their next birth so that they will always be in Kṛṣṇa’s association without anyone abusing them, criticizing them, or questioning their behavior.

The *gopīs* are experiencing *mahābhāva**, and within that *mahābhāva*, their mood is *adhiruḍha-bhāva*. The *gopīs* are expressing their feelings. Everything is being experienced within their own hearts. It is the nature of the *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee to see everything and everyone as if they are in the same *bhāva*. The flute may or may not be conscious, but the *gopīs* see it as a rival for the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. Therefore, seeing through their eyes means seeing through their *bhāva*. To see anything and be reminded of our love for Kṛṣṇa is called *uddīpana-bhāva*. The *gopīs* see things in their minds and hearts according to *mādhurya-rasa*, which makes everything in Vṛndāvana seem like it is exchanging with Kṛṣṇa in conjugal love. An *uttama-adhikārī* can follow this mood and see like this, in *uddīpana-bhāva*.

This *gopī* is speaking so sweetly. “O dear *gopīs*, *kim ācarad ayaṁ kuśalam sma veṇuḥ*. This *veṇu* is a male, yet he is behaving like a young girl (*kiśorī*). For that reason, we cannot bear to see this flute. Has the flute gone to so many *tīrthas*? Has it taken its bath at so many holy places? Has it donated so much in charity that it can taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips day and night? Let us also perform these same austerities so we can become as fortunate as the flute.

“What does he think he is doing? Only the *gopīs* have the right to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. No one else is allowed to drink it, not even *brāhmaṇīs*. Only the *gopīs* are allowed to drink that nectar (*dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopikānām*). And what is this flute except a dry bamboo stick? Yet being a dry bamboo stick, he is very thirsty for this nectar and therefore he is desperately trying to drink it all.

“Right in front of us, this flute is stealing our property! He has no shame at all. Why is he doing this?” When a *badarī* fruit is unripe, it is dark, but when it becomes ripe, it turns yellow. Kṛṣṇa’s lips are red like the *bimba* fruit, but by blowing on the flute all day, and by the flute taking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, His lips have changed from red to yellowish. In spite of drinking so much nectar, the bamboo flute remains dry. Thus the *gopīs* are actually criticizing the flute while appearing to praise its good fortune.

Hṛṣyat-tvaco ’śru mumucus taravo yathāryāḥ: this is the hidden meaning. In comparison to this flute, we *gopīs* cannot serve Kṛṣṇa. If we can take another birth, and in that birth become bamboo, we can also be a flute and be as fortunate as this flute is to taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. Being *gopīs* is not enough for us because in these bodies we cannot go to Kṛṣṇa, we cannot meet Kṛṣṇa. There are so many obstacles. Therefore, we pray to God to take birth as bamboo trees and then to become flutes so we can always be in Kṛṣṇa’s association.

Also, in this verse the *gopīs* call Kṛṣṇa by the name Dāmodara. Dāmodara means Rādhā-Dāmodara. Dāmodara means that Kṛṣṇa is so loving toward His devotees (*bhakta-vatsala*) that He will fulfill His devotees’ desires. “If we pray to Him to become bamboo flutes, He will grant our wish.”

**Mahābhāva* is of two types, *adhiruḍha* and *ruḍha*. *Adhiruḍha* is found only among the *vraja devīs*. *Adhiruḍha* is also of two types, *madana* and *modana*. *Modana* is experienced in *vipralambha* (separation) and it is found only in Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s party. *Madana* is found only in Śrīmatī Rādhikā and it is the highest quality of *prema*. From the initial stage of *prema* up to *madana*, all these *bhāvas* are termed *viśuddha-prema*. When in *mahābhāva* all kinds of *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas* and *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* manifest to the supreme extent, and when all kinds of happiness in this world up to *Brahmaloka* combined will not compare to a drop of *vipralambha*, that state is called *adhiruḍha*. When *adhiruḍha mahābhāva* is experienced in the stage of *modana*, then *vipralambha* is experienced.

Text Ten

*vṛndāvanam sakhi bhuvo vitanoti kīrtim
yad devakī-suta-padāmbuja-labdha-lakṣmi
govinda-veṇum anu matta-mayūra-nṛtyam
prekṣyādri-sānv-avaratānya-samasta-sattvam*

vṛndāvanam—Vṛndāvana; *sakhi*—O friend; *bhuvaḥ*—of the earth; *vitānoti*—spreads (the glories of the Earth far exceeding even that of Vaikuṇṭha); *kīrtim*—the glories; *yat*—because; *devakī-suta*—of the son of Devakī (another name for Yaśodā); *pada-ambuja*—from the lotus feet; *labdha*—received; *lakṣmi*—the beautiful markings; *govinda-veṇum*—the flute of Govinda; *anu*—upon hearing; *matta*—maddened; *mayūra*—of the peacocks; *nṛtyam*—in which there is the dancing; *prekṣya*—seeing; *adri-sānu*—upon the peaks of the hills (Govardhana, etc.); *avarata*—stunned; *anya*—other; *samasta*—all; *sattvam*—creatures

Translation

O *sakhi*! This Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is even greater than Vaikuṇṭha, is enhancing the fame of the Earth planet. This is due to being splendidly decorated with the marks of the lotus feet of Dāmodara Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Yaśodā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays a melody on His flute, which captivates the three worlds, the peacocks become intoxicated and begin to dance to its tune. Seeing and hearing this, all the birds, animals and other moving living entities on Govardhana Hill become stunned silent and remain sitting or standing without moving, forgetting all their activities.

Commentary

The *gopīs* are speaking from the viewpoint of their *mahābhāva*. In the last *śloka*, the *gopīs* see everything in Vṛndāvana in relationship to Kṛṣṇa. Thus they see Kṛṣṇa's flute, the flute's relatives (the ponds, rivers, trees and flowers), the deer and birds as more fortunate than themselves. All the residents of the forest can see Kṛṣṇa and touch Kṛṣṇa without any hindrance, but the *gopīs* have so many obstacles in approaching Kṛṣṇa. The flute in particular is the most fortunate. Even though the flute is male, Kṛṣṇa presses the flute to His lips, tucks it in His belt, or holds it against His heart. Kṛṣṇa even sleeps with His flute. The *gopīs* think they have not attained such good fortune that they can be with Kṛṣṇa all the time. They pray to Kṛṣṇa that they can perform the same austerities performed by the flute in its previous birth so they can be flutes in their next lives. But at last they realize that this would be impossible for them.

When the *gopīs* look toward Vṛndāvana forest, they see Kṛṣṇa's footprints all over the earth. While they sit in their homes in the village, they see how the residents of Vṛndāvana such as the trees, creepers and deer are able to associate with Kṛṣṇa in an unrestricted way. They think that all those living entities are more fortunate than themselves.

Kṛṣṇa's feet are worshipable for Brahmā, Śiva, and the entire creation, but Kṛṣṇa climbs the trees of Vṛndāvana when He plays. The *gopīs* dream of keeping Kṛṣṇa's feet on their breasts, but those same lotus feet climb on the branches of trees, walk through the *kuñjas*, enter the ponds and go everywhere. Therefore, they begin to glorify Vṛndāvana.

“O *sakhī*, *vṛndāvanam bhuvo* (the ground of Vṛndāvana) is more glorious than *Vaikuṇṭha* because in this Vṛndāvana, *devakī-suta-padāmbuja-labdha-lakṣmī*: Kṛṣṇa's footprints are all over the ground.” *Devakī-suta* refers to Kṛṣṇa; *Yasodā* is also known as *Devakī*.

In Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa walks everywhere barefoot, watching the maddened dancing of the peacocks and playing on His *veṇu* or *vaṁśī*. Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute in such a way that it sounds like clouds rumbling, so the peacocks become mad and begin to dance. When Kṛṣṇa sees them dancing, He plays His flute more, and when the peacocks hear His flute song, they increase their dancing. The peacocks are so enthusiastic that they raise their tail feathers for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Both Kṛṣṇa and the peacocks become so happy that as a reward, the peacocks give Kṛṣṇa some of their tail feathers. The peacocks think that they have nothing to offer Kṛṣṇa but their beautiful feathers. To reciprocate, Kṛṣṇa places those feathers on His turban. Kṛṣṇa tells them that He will keep their feathers for the rest of His life, and this in turn incites the peacocks to dance again.

Prekṣyādri-sānv-avaratānya-samasta-sattvam: Kṛṣṇa plays the flute and the peacocks dance so beautifully that all the birds, cowherd boys, cows, calves and deer go to higher places on *Govardhana* to get a better view. Every branch is filled with birds. The cowherd boys sit nearby on the same level as Kṛṣṇa and the peacocks, and the whole hillside fills up with spectators. First the peacocks and the other birds become silent. Then all the boys and the animals forget everything and simply watch Kṛṣṇa dance. The calves leave their mothers, and the peacocks and peahens forget each other and begin to dance.

In this verse, the *gopīs* say, “Oh, may we become as fortunate as Vṛndāvana who keeps Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet on her breast! We have no such fortune. Kṛṣṇa is dancing with the peacocks and peahens. Can we dance to the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute with our husbands? No, we are so unfortunate. Our husbands would only become angry if they saw us with Kṛṣṇa. The deer, the trees, and all the birds are able to be near Kṛṣṇa. We have no such opportunity to be with Kṛṣṇa or hold Kṛṣṇa's feet on our breasts. There is nothing we can do. If we die and become some other being in Vṛndāvana, that will be our success.”

Text Eleven

*dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-gatayo 'pi harīṇya etā
yā nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam
ākarmaṇya veṇu-raṇitam saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ
pūjām dadhuḥ viracitām praṇayāvalokaiḥ*

dhanyāḥ—fortunate, blessed; *sma*—certainly; *mūḍha-gatayaḥ*—having taken birth in an ignorant animal species; *api*—although; *harīṇyaḥ*—she-deer; *etāḥ*—these; *yaḥ*—who; *nanda-nandanam*—the son of Mahārāja Nanda; *upātta-vicitra-veśam*—dressed very attractively; *ākarmaṇya*—hearing; *veṇu-raṇitam*—the sound of His flute; *saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ*—accompanied by the black deer (their husbands); *pūjām dadhuḥ*—they worshiped (Kṛṣṇa from a nearby place); *viracitām*—performed; *praṇaya-avalokaiḥ*—by their affectionate sidelong glances

Translation

O *sakhī*! When our dearest Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa dresses Himself in a most extraordinary fashion and plays upon His flute, then even the foolish deer, hearing the melody of the flute, approach Nanda-nandana along with their husbands (who are known as the *kṛṣṇa-sāra* deer) and begin to glance upon Him very affectionately with their large eyes. We know the meaning of their glancing. With their enormous eyes, expanded like the petals of a lotus flower, they are offering worship at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and accepting His invitation, which He extends by casting loving, sidelong glances. Truly, the lives of these deer are blessed. (Although we are *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, we are not able to offer ourselves freely to Kṛṣṇa in the same manner as the deer, for our husbands and elders restrain us and beat us—what an absurdity!)

Commentary

In their meditation, the *gopīs* see the deer (*harīṇya*) coming to hear Kṛṣṇa's flute song. They are so close to Kṛṣṇa that He can reach out and touch them. The *gopīs* think that the deer are just foolish animals, because without knowing anything, they have given their lives to the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. They don't know everything about the source of the sound—it could be luring them to their deaths—but they are approaching the source of the sound with their ears upraised like foolish animals. "They are so foolish and yet they are more fortunate than us."

The *gopīs* are at home, and yet they see the deer approach Kṛṣṇa. They think the deer have come because they want to kiss Kṛṣṇa. *Nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam*: *upātta* means *grhita vicitra-veśam*, Kṛṣṇa is wearing beautiful garments. He wears fresh red mango sprouts and fresh mango leaves, and He has clusters of flowers and a peacock feather on His turban. His *dhotī* is a brilliant yellow, He has a *karṇikāra* flower behind His ear, and He is wearing a *vaijayantī* garland that falls to

His knees. Kṛṣṇa is dressed like a *kīśora*, a fresh youth. The deer are seeing Kṛṣṇa with unbroken concentration as He dances in His beautiful clothes and forest ornaments.

Ākarṇya veṇu-raṇitaṁ: they hear the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute and run toward Him with their husbands (*saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ*). The husbands of the deer are known as *kṛṣṇa-sāra*, which means that Kṛṣṇa is the essence of their lives. They cannot live without Kṛṣṇa. These deer have made Kṛṣṇa their object and aim; they follow their wives because they love Kṛṣṇa wholeheartedly. The does are not watching their husbands follow behind them; they are simply running to Kṛṣṇa, without seeing anything else. The male deer realize that although they love Kṛṣṇa, their wives have so much more affection for Him. Therefore, they accept their wives as more advanced.

The *gopīs* think that the deer are more fortunate than themselves. The does are not concerned with who is watching them run to Kṛṣṇa. They are not afraid of their society. They are not even conscious of their bodies. The does are not concerned whether their husbands become jealous; they simply offer *pūjā* to Kṛṣṇa by their affectionate glances. In this verse, *praṇaya* means with the corners of their eyes and *pūjām dadhuḥ* means they are worshiping Kṛṣṇa from a nearby place. *Praṇaya-avalokaiḥ*, to see Kṛṣṇa with *praṇaya* is to perform *arcana*. The *gopīs* witness the deer performing this *pūjā*.

The *gopīs* say, "O deer, you are so fortunate and we are so unfortunate. Your husbands allow you to approach Kṛṣṇa, but our husbands only hinder us. They actually become angry when we want to meet with Kṛṣṇa or when they see that we love Him. Your husbands see you performing the *arcana* of sidelong glances and they only appreciate how much you love Kṛṣṇa. They encourage you to go to Him.

"Our husbands are the opposite. We cannot go to Kṛṣṇa or offer Him our affectionate glances because our husbands and superiors are nearby. We think it would be better for us to take birth as deer so that we could go to Kṛṣṇa with our husbands and serve Him as you are serving Him."

In this verse, the *gopīs* refer to the deer as *mūḍhas*, as foolish animals. To be foolish but to be associated with Kṛṣṇa is no problem, but if one is very intelligent and neglects Kṛṣṇa, then of what use is that intelligence? The *gopīs* say that they are willing to become foolish like the deer if they can only serve Kṛṣṇa.

Yāsodā and all the *gopas* also think like this. They have no *tattva-jñāna* that Kṛṣṇa is God. Rather all the *tattva-jñānīs* want to worship the dust of the feet of Nanda-bābā and the *vraja-vāsīs*.

In our *sampradāya*, we first learn *tattva-jñāna*, or knowledge of philosophical principles. What is Kṛṣṇa? What is *māyā*? What is *jīva*? What is *bhakti*? Later, we will have to forget that Kṛṣṇa is God. We will have to forget all the items of *tattva* and simply follow one of the *gopīs*, especially Rūpa Mañjarī and our own spiritual master. In this way, we should serve Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* are the most intelligent in that their only desire is to serve Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Yet they are actually simple cowherd girls without *tattva-jñāna*.

I can tell one story from my own experience of how an apparently foolish person gained the respect of the Vaiṣṇavas because of his attraction to the holy name. In our *maṭha* one time, there was a half-crazy person who was always chanting. Everyone knew that he was mad and they would joke about him and try to make fun of him in so many ways. But I always gave respect in my heart. My *gurudeva* also respected this person. If anyone told a joke at his expense, my *guru mahārāja*

would reprimand him. Anyone, no matter how cultured he was, would sit with him at once because he was always chanting. In a similar way, the *gopīs* respect the foolish deer because of their attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* are experiencing *viraha-bhāva*, separation from Kṛṣṇa. They see anyone who has contact with Kṛṣṇa as fortunate, even the trees, calves, foolish deer, or most intelligent persons like the demigods. The *gopīs* want to have that chance to associate with Kṛṣṇa too.

Text Twelve

*kṛṣṇaṁ nirikṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlaṁ
śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītaṁ
devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā
bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyāḥ*

kṛṣṇaṁ—Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the attractor of the heart); *nirikṣya*—observing; *vanitā*—for all young women (*kiśorīs*); *utsava*—a festival; *rūpa*—whose beauty; *śīlaṁ*—and character; *śrutvā*—hearing; *ca*—and; *tat*—by Him; *kvaṇita*—vibrated; *veṇu*—of the flute; *vivikta*—clear; *gītaṁ*—song; *devyaḥ*—the wives of the demigods; *vimāna-gatayaḥ*—traveling in their airplanes; *smara*—by Cupid; *nunna*—agitated; *sārāḥ*—their hearts; *bhraśyat*—slipping; *prasūna-kabarāḥ*—the flowers tied in their hair; *mumuhur*—they became bewildered; *vinīvyāḥ*—their belts loosening

Translation

O *sakhī*! Not to speak of the deer, when the wives of the demigods see Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is a treasury of all beauty and character and a festival of bliss for all young women, and when they hear the sweet, variegated melodies He plays upon His flute, their intelligence becomes stunned and they fall down unconscious in their airplanes, right in front of their husbands. How do I know this, O friend? Just hear! When their hearts become possessed of an intense desire to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they become so bewildered that they cannot even detect that the flowers braided in their hair are falling upon the surface of the earth. What's more, they don't even know that their *sārīs* are slipping from their waists and falling to the ground.

Commentary

After seeing the fortune of the deer, the *gopīs* also see that the wives of the demigods are watching Kṛṣṇa dance and are becoming mad and fainting. First they speak of the foolish deer as superior to them because they have Kṛṣṇa's association. Now, they tell of the superiority of the demigoddesses (*devīs*) who also have Kṛṣṇa's *darśana*. The *gopīs* aspire to become *devīs* so they too can witness Kṛṣṇa playing on His flute.

The *devīs* sit in their airplanes on the laps of their husbands and shower flowers down as Kṛṣṇa plays His flute and dances with the peacocks. The word *vanitā* means *kiśorī*, young women. Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form is a festival for the eyes of all young women (*kṛṣṇaṁ nirikṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlaṁ*).

Any young woman would become mad to see His form decorated with a peacock feather, wearing a *karṇikāra* flower over His ear, and fresh mango shoots and flower clusters on His turban. His garments shine like gold and He appears as the best dancer. Then what to speak of the effect of hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute? *Smara* would arise and *kāma* would be the result. *Śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-*

vivikta-gītam: the sound of the flute creates *kāma* in the hearts of all young women. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's form as *kāma-rūpa*, the women flying in the airplanes faint in the laps of their husbands (*devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyāḥ*). Their husbands do not mind witnessing the *kāma* of their wives because they also love Kṛṣṇa. Neither the husbands of the deer nor the demigods have any envy or jealousy that their wives love someone else. Instead, they want to encourage their wives' *prema*. The *gopīs* think that the deer are a lower species and the demigods are a higher species; it is only the humans (the middle species) whose husbands are jealous of their wives' love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, they are most unfortunate. They feel their own eyes, bodies and intelligence are unsuccessful.

Bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyāḥ: their flowers and garlands fall, their belts loosen, and they faint in the laps of their husbands. Their husbands then serve their wives, saying, "Oh, you are so fortunate. We love Kṛṣṇa, but we have no such love as you possess because we cannot be like you." The *gopīs* say: "If in a future birth we can take birth as *apsaras* or *devīs*, then we will have become fortunate."

The *gopīs* speak like this because they are experiencing *mahābhāva*. Actually, it is not possible for the wives of the demigods to see Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Just as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw Caṭaka-parvata as Govardhana, the ocean as the Yamunā, and any forest as Vṛndāvana, similarly, the *gopīs* experience *uddīpana*. Everything is reminding them of Kṛṣṇa. The flute is not really a person who is stealing the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips; it is just a dry bamboo stick. But in their madness of love of God, the *gopīs* see the bamboo in this way. Similarly, although the demigods and their wives may actually be present, they are not able to taste the *prema* ascribed to them by the *gopīs*.

Even Lakṣmī cannot enter Vṛndāvana and taste this *rasa* the *gopīs* are tasting. Even the *dvija-patnīs* are in a more advantageous position than the *devīs*, but they also cannot enter Vṛndāvana and see Kṛṣṇa in this way. Therefore, these verses describing the position of the flute, the deer, and the *devīs* are being spoken in the madness of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* see everything from their own *bhāva*, although it may not be the reality. The *gopīs* are so eager to associate with Kṛṣṇa that if Caṇura and the other wrestlers were fighting with Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* would see the wrestlers' good fortune in being able to touch Kṛṣṇa's body and have Him touch theirs. That is why in Bhaṇḍiravana, the *gopīs* want to fight with Kṛṣṇa. They wrestle with Him. Rādhikā wants to wrestle with Kṛṣṇa as the wrestlers did.

If the *gopīs* see a parrot and his mate sitting on a tree in Vṛndāvana, they desire to become a female parrot and sit with Kṛṣṇa: "O how beautiful and fortunate they are that they are sitting together, kissing and touching beaks. How beautiful! We *gopīs* cannot sit with Kṛṣṇa like that." They think Kṛṣṇa has become a parrot and one *gopī* has become a *sārī*. The parrots give rise to *uddīpana-bhāva*. The *gopīs* assume that the male parrot is Kṛṣṇa and the female is a *gopī*, and they desire to also associate with Kṛṣṇa in that form.

Sometimes devotees ask to whom the *gopīs* are married. If they are married to *gopas*, wouldn't it be true that the cowherd men love Kṛṣṇa and would behave like husbands of the deer or *devīs*? Sometimes it is said that the *gopīs* have no real husbands, that Yogamāyā has manufactured duplicate husbands for the sake of appearance.

Also, there is the story in the *Garga-saṁhitā* of Kṛṣṇa marrying all the *gopīs* during the *Brahmā-vimohana-līlā* while He was expanded as all the cowherd boys. At other times it is said that in Goloka, the *gopīs* maintain the conception (*abhimāna*) of having husbands, but they are not actually married at all. Sometimes it is said that there is no real Jaṭilā or Abhimanyu, although we have to wonder how there could be a Yāvaṭa without Jaṭilā.

This is *mādhurya-līlā*. *Mādhurya-līlā* means there is no *aiśvarya*. The *gopīs* think with the minds and hearts of human beings—nothing mystical. There is no *aiśvarya*. The *gopīs* are not omniscient (*antaryāmi*) like the Supersoul. They are very simple cowherd girls; they are not so clever. They don't know everything. Their hearts are simple. They cannot see that Yogamāyā has played a trick on them by getting them married to Kṛṣṇa instead of to their apparent husbands. As soon as they think that Yogamāyā is involved, then *aiśvarya* has entered. In their minds, they have been married to *gopas* and that's all they know. From that position, they speak of their love for Kṛṣṇa in *mādhurya-rasa*.

The *gopīs* don't know that they have been married to Kṛṣṇa. They don't know they have not married the *gopas*. They only know that they are married and they recognize the *gopas* as their husbands. They accept all the *gopas*' relatives as their own relatives. But when a third person such as Vyāsadeva, Śukadeva, Nārada, or ourself, who have no *gopī-bhāva*, comes and observes this, then we see all the details. We know the details, but the *gopīs* don't know anything. If they did, then the *līlās* could not take place.

Nārada Muni sees that they have not been married to *gopas* but to Kṛṣṇa. That is the fact. Yet the real fact is what the *gopīs* see. Nārada, Śukadeva, Vyāsa and others do not have the same *bhāva* as the *gopīs*. The others are *sarvajña*, all-knowing. Uddhava also has no *gopī-bhāva*. The *gopīs* only have one *bhāva*. They love Kṛṣṇa in a secret way, not knowing how they can realize their love for Him. They are at home meditating on Kṛṣṇa and trying to conceal their *bhāva*. That is all they know.

The *muni-cāri gopīs* had not developed full *prema*. They actually did marry *vraja-vāsī* cowherd men and they gave birth to children. We don't know the nature of their husbands, whether they were *nitya-siddha gopas* or *sādhana-siddha gopas*. It has not been recorded anywhere. But if the *gopīs* knew they were not married to other *gopas* but to Kṛṣṇa, then the *līlā* would be spoiled. If Kṛṣṇa knew that He was married to all the *gopīs*, then again the *līlā* would be spoiled. We should know that what is written in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is true.

Similarly, the *gopīs* see Jaṭilā and Abhimanyu because they are necessary for the *līlā* to continue. However, a neutral person cannot see them. The *gopīs* see Jaṭilā, but Uddhava doesn't see Jaṭilā or Abhimanyu in the same form as the *gopīs* see them. Uddhava is from Mathurā and he had to return there because his vision is different from the vision of a *vraja-vāsī*. Nārada Muni cannot enter Vṛndāvana either. If Kṛṣṇa thought that Jaṭilā and Abhimanyu weren't real, how could He enjoy His *līlā*? Kṛṣṇa is acting like an ordinary cowherd boy. Yogamāyā has arranged everything for His pleasure.

This is why Brahmā and Indra were bewildered when they saw Kṛṣṇa as a child. Consequently, we should always see everything through the eyes of the *gopīs*. Otherwise, we cannot enter this *līlā*. We should not think about how Kṛṣṇa married the *gopīs*, or how that means they are not really married to their husbands. Also, we should not see too carefully Yogamāyā's arrangements for Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has explained all these points to demonstrate the sanctity of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs*. Thus in some places he appeared to favor the conception of *svakīyā*, or wedded love. He has written in this way for the sake of unqualified persons who could not understand the superiority of *parakīyā rasa*. This is clear from his own statement given in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (1.21) in his commentary on the verse “*laghutvam atra yat proktam**.”

*svecchayā likhitam kiñcit kiñcit atra parecchayā
yat-pūrvāpara sambaddham tat-pūrvam aparam param*

“Some of what I have written is by my own desire and some is by the desire of others. The portions which are logically consistent throughout, those in which the conceptions of *svakīyā* and *parakīyā* have been reconciled, have been written by my own desire, whereas the portions which have not been thus reconciled have been written by the desire of others.”

We should understand that both Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have written correctly about *svakīya* and *parakīya rasa*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura are *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas and the latter is the successor of the former. Therefore we should understand Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī through the viewpoint of Śrīla Cakravartīpāda.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “Many people think that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has favored *svakīyā-rasa*. It is only for the benefit of unqualified persons that he has mentioned *svakīyā-rasa* in a few places, but for qualified persons he has specifically mentioned *parakīyā-rasa*.”

The thoughts that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura have expressed in their commentaries on *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* about *svakīyā* and *parakīyā* are both correct from their own individual perspectives. It is simply a difference of viewpoint. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written from the viewpoint of *tattva* and has therefore supported the position of *svakīyā*, whereas Śrīla Cakravartīpāda has written from the viewpoint of *līlā* and has therefore supported the position of *parakīya*. Similarly, Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa, Śrī Kavi Karṇapūra, and others have also described the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the mood of *parakīyā*.

Thus Jīva Gosvāmī's explanations regarding Kṛṣṇa's being married to the *gopīs* are specifically for the sake of *siddhānta* and preaching to the general people, but not for entering the *bhāva* of the *gopīs*. *Rasika* Vaiṣṇavas, however, desire to see through the eyes of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's explanation of the *gopīs'* *parakīyā* relationship with Kṛṣṇa, because this facilitates their attempt to enter into the *līlā*.

Uddhava went to the *gopīs* and lived in Vṛndāvana for many months, but still he was unable to forget the *aśvarya*. He wanted to have the same view as the *gopīs* but he was unable. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3) states:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*

“By residing continuously at the *āśrama* of *sādhus*, persons who have completely abandoned the attempt to obtain knowledge of the identity and opulence of Bhagavān through empirical knowledge automatically hear *hari-kathā* flowing from the lotus mouths of pure devotees. Such persons engage body, mind and words in the reception of these descriptions of Your transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes. They maintain their lives in this way, giving up all other engagement. You are certainly conquered by such persons, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.”

Jñāne prayāsam udapāśya: the devotee will have to give up all endeavor for knowledge. This instruction is not only for the *nirviśeṣa-jñānī*. To always remember Kṛṣṇa as the God of gods, as *sarva-karaṇa anādi*, is not for the *rasika* devotee. We have to forget these things about Kṛṣṇa. To become a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava means to cultivate *kṛṣṇa-anuśilanam*, our service relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That is true for anyone desiring to enter the four *bhāvas* of *dāśya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya*. Such devotees do not have to recognize Kṛṣṇa as the God of gods. *Advayam jñāna paratattva*: we should not think about Kṛṣṇa in this way. Instead, we should always hear and chant and remember Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana pastimes. A *rasika* devotee will learn only enough *tattva-jñāna* to facilitate his entrance into the *bhāva* he is attracted to. Then everything will develop and he will be able to enter the *līlā*. If he always thinks of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord, then his attraction for Kṛṣṇa will be predominated by *aśvarya-jñāna* and he will not be able to enter Kṛṣṇa’s *mādhurya-līlā*. Therefore a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava should not focus on Kṛṣṇa in the way He is presented in *Bhagavad-gītā*, as the Supreme God.

If anyone develops *bhāva*, then automatically everything will go and they will have only *bhāva*. *Bhāva*, *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika*, *vyabhicārī*—these states will come and the devotee will enter into them. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī never speaks about Kṛṣṇa in a non-*rasika* way, but Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written the complete *tattva* in the *Sandarbhās*.

Jīva Gosvāmī wrote like this to help the conditioned souls. His duty was to establish the *sampradāya* of Lord Caitanya. Otherwise, he was in the same mood as Rūpa-Raghunātha. He was interested only in weeping for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī was in the same mood. So much of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* contains the philosophy of the *Sandarbhās*, but Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja had more the mood of the *rasa-vicāra* of Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīs. Therefore, he has written at the end of each chapter, *śrī rūpa-raghunātha-pade yara āśa/caitanya-caritāmṛta kahe kṛṣṇadāsa*.

When we read the *Veṇu-gīta*, we should forget everything about Kṛṣṇa being Bhagavān and the *gopīs* being Bhagavatī. We should accept only the viewpoint of the *gopīs* as given by Rūpa Gosvāmī.

*The full verse from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* is as follows:

*laghutvam atra yat proktaṁ tat tu prākṛta nāyake
na kṛṣṇe rasa niryāsa svādārtham avatāriṇi*

“Whatever fault or impropriety has been pointed out (in other *rasa-śāstras*) in regards to the love of paramours applies to ordinary worldly lovers and not to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for He is the taster of the liquid essence of *rasa* and the source of all incarnations.” (In other words, the Lord’s incarnations are the controllers of religion and irreligion and never subjected to their control. How then can Śrī Kṛṣṇa be subjected to such codes when He is the source of all incarnations?)

Text Thirteen

*gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha-nirgata-veṇu-gīta-
pīyūṣam uttabhita-karṇa-putaiḥ pibantyaḥ
śāvāḥ snuta-stana-payāḥ-kavalāḥ sma tasthur
govindam ātmani dṛśāśru-kalāḥ spṛśantyaḥ*

gāvaḥ—the cows; *ca*—and; *kṛṣṇa-mukha*—from the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *nirgata*—emitted; *veṇu*—of the flute; *gīta*—of the song; *pīyūṣam*—the nectar; *uttabhita*—raised high; *karṇa*—with their ears; *putaiḥ*—which were acting as cups; *pibantyaḥ*—drinking; *śāvāḥ*—the calves; *snuta*—exuding; *stana*—from the udders; *payāḥ*—the milk; *kavalāḥ*—whose mouthfuls; *sma*—indeed; *tasthuḥ*—stood still (a symptom of the *sāttvika-bhāva* of becoming stunned); *govindam*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *ātmani*—within their hearts; *dṛśā*—with their vision; *āśru-kalāḥ*—their eyes full of tears; *spṛśantyaḥ*—touching (embracing)

Translation

Some other *sakhī* said: O friend! Why are you speaking about the *devīs*? Have you not seen the cows? When our dearest beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa fills the holes of the flute with the sound flowing from His mouth and the cows hear that sweet music, they turn their ears upward and indiscriminately drink that nectar with the cups of their ears. In this way, they are tasting the sweetness of that music. Why is that so, O friend? Taking beloved Govinda into their hearts through the doorway of their eyes, they seat Him there and embrace Him within their minds. Just see for yourself, the truth of my words! Tears of joy are gushing out from their eyes. The condition of their calves is indeed strange. Even though milk is flowing automatically from the udders of the cows, the calves, while in the midst of drinking that milk, suddenly hear the sound of the flute. At that moment the calves are neither able to spit out nor swallow the milk which they have taken in their mouths. They also take Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts and embrace Him. By obtaining the touch of the soft limbs of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, their eyes overflow with tears of joy, and they stand still, exactly as they were.

Commentary

Devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā (text 12): Kṛṣṇa's form and everything else about Kṛṣṇa is a festival for the eyes of the *gopīs*. In text 12, the *devīs*, the wives of the demigods, were being praised by the *gopīs* as more fortunate than themselves. In reality, the *devīs* are not so fortunate because they have no *mādhurya-bhāva*. They do not have the vision of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs* and they cannot come down to the Earth to engage in His pastimes. If they had so much *bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa, they could have come and joined the *rāsa* dance or met with Kṛṣṇa at some other time, but they do not come. They cannot come. It is only the *gopīs'* vision that is ascribing them with this *bhāva* because the *gopīs* are feeling themselves the most unfortunate.

If a she-goat (*bakari*) is searching for tender grass and happens to go to the spot where Kṛṣṇa is standing, the *gopīs* will see the she-goat as if she has come to put her head at Kṛṣṇa's feet in obeisances. The she-goat is not actually paying obeisances; she is only looking for tender grass. But the *gopīs* will see it differently. The animals are foolish, but the *gopīs* see them as wise because although they know nothing about loving Kṛṣṇa, they approach Him, hear the sweet flute song, and dedicate their hearts to Kṛṣṇa. The special thing is that while seeing Kṛṣṇa, these *devīs* don't remember that they are sitting on the laps of their husbands. If a man sees his wife loving another man, he will be jealous and he will take action. But in this case, the *gopīs* think, "Oh, see how wonderful and fortunate the *devīs* are. They must have performed so many pious acts in their previous birth that they have been able to find such good husbands who allow them to love Kṛṣṇa. Not only that, their husbands think that their wives are more fortunate than themselves because they have so much more *prema* for Kṛṣṇa than they do: 'Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord. We demigods are so fortunate to have wives who love Kṛṣṇa so much. We are fortunate to be associated with them.' The demigods have no jealousy toward Kṛṣṇa, although their wives love Him so much."

It is natural that we have faith in someone who has more *bhakti* than we do toward Kṛṣṇa. It is natural that a devotee will seek out loving association with someone who has more *bhakti* than he himself has and that he will try to serve that person. Therefore, the husbands of the *devīs* feel fortunate to be associated with their wives, who they consider more advanced.

The nature of *bhakti-devī* is like that. When she sees that someone has love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, she gives everything to that devotee. This is how the demigods feel: "We have received so much fortune in the form of the good qualities of our wives. They have so much affection for Kṛṣṇa that their flowers are falling from their hair and their belts are loosening. They don't even remember where they are, but because of the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, they have become senseless in our laps. If we could only have affection for Kṛṣṇa, our lives would be perfected." They honor their wives so much.

The *gopīs*' case, however, is the opposite. "Our husbands will be so jealous and they will try to restrict us from running to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, let us take birth as *devīs* so we can go to Kṛṣṇa whenever we want. Even if we cannot join His pastimes or touch the feet of Kṛṣṇa or bathe in the dust of His lotus feet, still we will be fortunate."

Everything the *gopīs* see is a stimulus for greater love. They have already spoken about the deer and the *devīs*, and now in this verse they remember the position of the cows. Although the position of the demigods is exalted, the *gopīs* see everything in Vṛndāvana—the trees, cows, flute and deer—as having more opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa. *Gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha-nirgata-veṇu-gīta-pīyūṣam uttabhita-karṇa-putaiḥ pibantyaḥ*: "See how fortunate the cows are. If we cannot be the wives of the demigods, then let us recognize the fortune of the cows. Kṛṣṇa is playing on His flute and from that flute, nectar is pouring out. The cows drink that nectar by using their upraised ears as cups." Normally a cow keeps her ears down, but when she is listening to something, she raises her ears. Why? Because they are cups. They want to contain what they are hearing. Tears fill their closed eyes and milk flows from their udders.

When milk flows automatically, it is a sign of *vātsalya-rasa*. We also see this symptom in Yaśodā-mātā. When she sees Kṛṣṇa, automatically her breasts overflow with milk. The cows are mothers.

Their ecstasy and their affection for Kṛṣṇa is in the *vātsalya-rasa*. This has been described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *gopīs* see that for many years Kṛṣṇa has taken the cows to the pasturing grounds. He makes them bathe in the ponds, He milks them, and sometimes He pets them. It is natural that when Kṛṣṇa and the cows have been living together for so long, an affectionate relationship will develop.

The cows which Kṛṣṇa takes out every day were calves during Kṛṣṇa's *pauganḍa-līlā*. They had an affectionate relationship with Kṛṣṇa from the beginning when Kṛṣṇa used to pet them and take them to the pastures. Now as cows, they have so much *prīti* for Kṛṣṇa. The cows are like mothers in their affection for Kṛṣṇa and in how they give Him their milk. These cows, having been accustomed to go with Kṛṣṇa from the beginning of their lives, began to go with Him again after their first calves were born. Out of love for Him, they were unable to go to the pastures with the older *gopas*.

When the calves were young, they had no particular *rasa* with Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the child *gopīs* had not yet awakened their *mādhurya-rasa* with Kṛṣṇa (*svaccha-rati*). The *gopīs* say that the cows have had affection for Kṛṣṇa since boyhood, and that while hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute, they gaze into Kṛṣṇa's face with great affection. But it is not really so. This is another example of the *gopīs* imagining the deer and the wives of the demigods having an intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* think: "The calves, which are in *svaccha-rati* because they are so young, have no relationship with Kṛṣṇa. They are only three or four days old, or less than a month. But they also hear the flute, and seeing Kṛṣṇa, they become stunned, just like the older cows. They lose all sensibility and even though their mothers' nipples are pressed in their mouths, they stop sucking. Even the older cows are allowing the grass to fall out of their mouths without chewing it."

Everything stops when Kṛṣṇa is there. The *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa and see the cows turn their faces toward Him. They see that the cows and the calves have taken Kṛṣṇa into their hearts and that they want to embrace Him. Kṛṣṇa is their son. They want to impress Kṛṣṇa on their hearts just as a mother embraces her child and carries his image in her heart. They want to embrace Kṛṣṇa like a beloved friend. Like a *gopī*, they want to embrace Kṛṣṇa strongly, internally. The *gopīs* see that their desires are being fulfilled because tears are flowing from their eyes. *Śāvāḥ snuta-stana-payaḥ-kavalāḥ sma tasthur/govindam ātmani dṛśāśru-kalāḥ sprśantyah*: *āśru-kalāḥ* means their eyes are full of tears. Both the cows' and the calves' eyes are full of tears. They know nothing other than Kṛṣṇa's face and the sound of His flute. They see only Kṛṣṇa. The calves are not looking at their mothers and the mothers are not looking at their babies. They aren't seeing the grass or anything else. They see only Kṛṣṇa.

The cows and calves may be *nitya-siddha* devotees or they may be *sādhana-siddha* devotees. We see that the cows were *śruti-mantra*, just as some *gopīs* were *muni-cāri*. Most of the cows are Vedic *ślokas*, and the calves are *ṛṣis* and *munis*. Hearing these descriptions, a *sādhaka* may desire to be like cows or calves. The *jīva* is independent (*svatantra*) and can desire anything. There is no reason why someone would desire to become a cow instead of a cowherd boy or an elder *gopī* in *vātsalya-rasa*. Independence is the tendency of the *jīva*. If a *sādhaka* wants to be a serpent, who can understand why? Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says: *yat kiñcit tṛṇa-gulma-kikāṭa-mukhaṁ goṣṭhe samāstaṁ hi tat sarvānandamayam mukunda-dayitam līlānukūlam*, "The grass, bushes, insects and

other creatures in Vraja are all very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. They assist the Lord in His pastimes. They are full of transcendental bliss.” (*Vraja-vilāsa-stava*, text 102).

Everything in Vraja is *sat-cit-ānanda*. Why would a devotee want to take the form of a tree? Because Kṛṣṇa will come and sit in his shade and take his fruits. He will hide in the shadow and He will climb the tree. A serpent will frighten Rādhikā into running back into Kṛṣṇa’s arms. If a devotee hears this, he may desire to become a serpent. There is no other reason. This verse gives a nice appreciation of the speciality of the residents of Vṛndāvana from the viewpoint of the *gopīs*. We should meditate on this vision in our *rāgānugā-bhajana*.

Text Fourteen

*prāyo batāmba vihagā munayo vane 'smin
kṛṣṇekṣitaṁ tad-uditaṁ kala-veṇu-gītaṁ
āruhya ye druma-bhujān rucira-pravālān
śṛṇvanti mīlita-dṛśo vigatānya-vācaḥ*

prāyaḥ—almost; *bata*—certainly; *amba*—O mother (O friend); *vihagāḥ*—the birds; *munayaḥ*—great sages; *vane*—in the forest; *asmin*—this; *kṛṣṇa-īkṣitaṁ*—seeing Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful face; *tad-uditaṁ*—created by Him; *kala-veṇu-gītaṁ*—sweet vibrations made by playing the flute; *āruhya*—rising; *ye*—who; *druma-bhujān*—to the branches of the trees (in the form of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*); *rucira-pravālān*—having beautiful creepers and twigs; *śṛṇvanti*—they hear; *mīlita-dṛśaḥ*—with their vision withdrawn from all phenomena and all knowledge related to the material body (i.e., with wide open, unblinking eyes fixed exclusively on the transcendental form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *vigata-anya-vācaḥ*—stopping all other sounds (not related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa)

Translation

O *sakhī*! Never mind this ordinary talk about cows and calves. Have you not seen the birds of Vṛndāvana? To call them birds is certainly a mistake. Truly speaking, most of them are exalted *ṛṣis* and *munis*. They are sitting quietly in the beautiful green trees of Vṛndāvana, upon branches that are sprouting many charming new blossoms. But these *ṛṣis* and *munis* do not close their eyes. They gaze continuously with unblinking eyes at the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s form, and taking in His sidelong glances laden with love, they become delighted. Ignoring all other types of sounds, they begin to hear Kṛṣṇa’s captivating voice and the music of His flute which enchants the three worlds. My dear *sakhī*! How fortunate their life is. (Alas! How unfortunate we are. Our birth has become spoiled, our eyes useless. Where lies our fortune to behold the beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa?)

Commentary

This *gopī* is addressing another *gopī* with the word *amba*, mother. In Bengali or in Hindi, we say *mā*. Whenever there are many women gathered and someone makes a wonderful exclamation, they say *Māgo*, and in Hindi, *Māyī-re*. There are no mothers here, just young girls who are all friends, but they say, “O Mother!” This is the mood of the exclamation. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are many places where ladies call each other mother although they are not each other’s mothers. O mother, O *sakhī*, O friend—these are all forms of address (*sambhodana*).

In the last *śloka* it is said *gāvās ca*, both the cows and their calves love Kṛṣṇa so much that although the calves are sucking milk and their mothers are eating grass, they become stunned by the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute. And Kṛṣṇa also loves them. They simply stand and listen with their ears

upraised like cups. They have no sense of self. They hear only the very sweet sound of the *veṇu*.

The *gopīs* remember that everything in Vṛndāvana is fortunate because it is able to drink the nectar of the flute and the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's form. Everything and everyone in Vṛndāvana, from the highest to the lowest—the peacocks, the cuckoos, the bees, rivers, deer, demigods—are attracted to the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's flute song and to His beauty. Similarly, the *gopīs* see the birds sitting still on the branches of the trees like great *munis*. Usually birds fly here and there and sing and twitter, but when Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, the birds become silent and simply close their eyes and listen. Therefore, this *gopī* is calling her *sakhīs*, "Mother, see how wonderful is the action of these birds": *vihagā munayo vane 'smin*.

Asmin vane means the forest of Vṛndāvana. *Vihagā munayo* means that the birds are *munis* or are acting like *munis*. The symptom of a *muni* is that he always sits with his eyes closed. He has no awareness of his external senses. He doesn't speak to anyone, but concentrates his mind in meditation. In Vṛndāvana, surely the *vihagās*, the birds, are *munis*.

Kṛṣṇekṣitaṁ tad-uditaṁ kala-veṇu-gītaṁ: "Because we are seeing the symptoms of *munis* in the birds, we cannot tell whether *munis* have taken birth as birds or whether the birds themselves have actually become *munis*. Perhaps both are true."

Kṛṣṇa-ikṣitaṁ means by seeing Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face. *Tad uditam kala-veṇu-gītaṁ* means by hearing the sweet melody flowing like nectar from the flute. *Kala* means sweet vibrations. It also means *klim*, *kala*, *kāma-bīja*. *Kala* also means that the birds think Kṛṣṇa is calling them with the flute's vibration. All the birds think that Kṛṣṇa is calling only them. That is *kala*.

There are two kinds of birds and three kinds of *munis*. One kind of *muni* is he who meditates on Brahman (*brahmavādīs*, like the four Kumāras before smelling the *tulasī* leaves offered to the lotus feet of the Lord), another is he who meditates on the Supersoul (*paramātmā-vādīs*, like Saubhari Muni), and then there are those who meditate on Bhagavān (*bhagavat-tattva-vādīs*). This latter class are all devotees.

Each type of *muni* has a different destination. The *brahmavādīs* don't see the form of Brahman, but they have *niṣṭhā*. They are not the same as *śaṅkara-vādīs* who are *śunya-vādīs*. We could say that at first, the four Kumāras and Śukadeva Gosvāmī were *brahmavādīs*. Without *sādhū-saṅga*, these *munis* will attain *mukti* either in *siddha-loka* or the *brahmajyoti*. *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati/samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*, "One who is situated on the transcendental platform of Brahman realization and is fully satisfied at heart never laments nor desires to have anything. He regards all living entities with equal vision. In that state he attains *parā-bhakti* or *prema-bhakti* unto Me." (Bg. 18.54). If a *brahmavādī* attains *rasika* Vaisnava association and hears the *siddhānta*, he will attain *parā-bhakti* (*prema-bhakti*, *viśuddha-bhakti*). At that time, he will either go to Vaikuṇṭha or to Goloka Vṛndāvana.

The *paramātmā-vādīs* have been described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who remember the Paramātmā as the witness in the heart, as the deliverer of one's past reactions, and the fulfiller of desires, become free from the fruits of all past activities. They are like *yogīs*. They have some mixture of *sat* and *cit* and are aware of the various forms of Kṛṣṇa like Karaṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. They go first to Brahmāloka with Brahmā, and from there they can go anywhere they desire according to their level of advancement and realization. They may go to the Brahmajy-

oti or to Vaiṣṇava, or even to Goloka, according to their association and their *bhajana* on the name, form, pastimes and qualities of the Lord. But they are *munis*, and therefore they cannot enter Vṛndāvana. Only those who chant and dance can go to Vṛndāvana, like the peacocks, cuckoos and parrots. The parrots and cuckoos sing melodiously so they can attract Kṛṣṇa and Rādhikā. The peacocks don't sing, but they dance.

Therefore, we know that the peacocks, cuckoos and parrots are not really *munis* or *yogis*. They are *bhaktas*, or topmost *munis*. Seeing Kṛṣṇa or remembering Kṛṣṇa, they begin to sing and dance. In this way, Sadāśiva is certainly a *rasika* Vaisnava because he sings and dances. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said *kīrtaniya-sadā hariḥ*. His instruction is *kīrtana*:

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahādāvāgni-nirvāpanam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
anandāmbudhi-varadhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

There are seven stages. *Sarvātma* is the last stage, but everything is attained by *kīrtana*. For this reason, *kīrtana* is the best of all.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta says *sapta-jīva*: first, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam* (cleansing the mirror of the heart); second, *bhava-mahādāvāgni-nirvāpanam* (extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence); third, *śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam* (the blossoming of the moonbeams of good fortune in the form of *bhāva-bhakti*); fourth, *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam* (the life and soul of transcendental knowledge); fifth, *anandāmbudhi-varadhanam* (the increasing ocean of bliss of love of God); sixth, *prati-padam-pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam* (relishing the taste of that blissful ocean at every step); and seventh, *sarvātma-snapanam* (bathing the whole self in that ocean).

Kīrtana and *prema* are the same thing. Only by *kīrtana* and dancing in *bhāva*, whether *gopī-bhāva* or another *vraja-bhāva*, can *prema* be achieved. The peacocks, cuckoos and male and female parrots sing and dance; therefore, they are not *munis* who only sit in meditation.

The word *prāya* means almost, not all. So *prāya* means not the cuckoos, peacocks or male and female parrots. These are only three kinds of birds. When they see Kṛṣṇa's face and hear His flute song, they begin to dance and sing. When the other types of birds hear Kṛṣṇa's flute song and see His face, and when they see the dancing and singing of the peacocks, parrots and cuckoos, they come out of their nests and see the beautiful scene. All the different birds come and sit on the branches of the trees (*āruhya ye druma-bhujān rucira-pravālān*) where new red leaves are budding. They do not sit in leafy trees which would obscure their vision of Kṛṣṇa, but on trees where the leaves are just starting to come out. In this way, Kṛṣṇa can also see them. It is more dangerous for them to sit on leafless branches because if they become unconscious, they can fall.

Also, *munis* live in cottages made of branches and leaves in the forest. These birds should also live in *kuṭīras*. They do not live on branches where there are no leaves. The branches they are sitting on have no leaves, but they are surrounded by leafy branches. Therefore, although they can see Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa can see them, they are hidden from the other birds. Like *munis*, they want to see Kṛṣṇa and to attain His mercy. There is a *sambandha* relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the *munis*,

but no one can see what they are doing. They want to worship Kṛṣṇa from the privacy of their caves or *kuṭīras* and not be seen by anyone except Kṛṣṇa. This is the symptom of a *muni*. These birds also have these symptoms.

This is the vision of the *gopīs*. The *gopīs* see how the birds behave, but these verses are coming from their hearts. There is a verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45):

śrī-havir uvāca
sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavatī ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

“Śrī Havir said: One who perceives his own perfected attitude of transcendental love toward the Lord within everything, animate and inanimate, and perceives that all things are situated in their perfected spiritual forms and engaged in serving the Lord with that mood, is known as an *uttama-bhāgavata*.”

The symptom of an *uttama-bhāgavata* is *sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed*, he sees his *bhāva* toward Kṛṣṇa everywhere. Prahlāda Mahārāja sees Nṛsiṃhadeva everywhere and feels everyone is worshipping Nṛsiṃhadeva like he is. The four Kumāras think that everyone is a *yogī*. Yaśodā-mā knows that everyone loves Kṛṣṇa as she loves Him. These are the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

This verse has also been explained in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ*. *Ātmanaḥ* means his relationship with Kṛṣṇa, how he loves Kṛṣṇa. All *mahā-bhāgavatas* see that everyone is worshipping Kṛṣṇa as they are.

The *mahā-bhāgavata* also sees that everyone is situated in Kṛṣṇa as they are. Yaśodā-mā saw the whole universe, including all the living entities, in Kṛṣṇa’s mouth. Arjuna saw the *virat-rūpa*. Prahlāda Mahārāja also has that vision. Although this is not the vision of a *vraja-bhakta*, Yaśodā-mā sees this vision, as does Lord Brahmā. This is one of the symptoms of a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu says in *Madhya* 8.274: *sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, nā dekhe tāra mūrti sarva-tra haya nija iṣṭa-deva-sphūrti*, “The *mahā-bhāgavata* looks upon all things mobile and immobile, but he does not directly see their forms. Rather, he immediately sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifest as the object of his heart’s longing.”

In this verse, there are two kinds of meaning: *sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe*, he is seeing the individual persons, the trees, the living entities, but he does not see them as who they are in this world. He will see that this is a *gopī* (if he is in *gopī-bhāva*). He will see all moving and nonmoving creatures as situated in the same *bhāva* that he is situated in. Those living entities may not factually be situated in the same *bhāva* but that is how the *mahā-bhāgavata* sees them. There is no such *bhāva* in the trees, and there is a different kind of *bhāva* in the birds and cows, but the *gopīs* think that each of these living entities is situated only in *gopī-bhāva* and is therefore loving Kṛṣṇa as they are loving Him. Because they want to approach Kṛṣṇa, touch Him and be touched by Him, they see every living entity as trying to attain the same goal. And because the *gopīs* are not successful in attaining their goal, they see all the other living entities like the trees, deer, flute, cows and birds as more fortunate than themselves.

Sthāvara-jaṅgama dekhe, nā dekhe tāra mūrti: the *gopīs* see both moving and nonmoving living entities, but they don't see their forms only in that way. Every living entity is to them a stimulus for greater love (*uddīpana*). By this vision they recognize Kṛṣṇa everywhere. They don't think of trees as inert or cows as moving; they see only their own *gopī-bhāva* in them. This is the symptom of a *mahā-bhāgavata*.

The *gopīs* are experiencing *mahābhāva*. This ecstasy is not available in the other *rasas* (*dāsyā*, *sakhya*, or *vātsalya*), although devotees in the other *rasas* can be *mahā-bhāgavatas*. Prahlāda Mahārāja is a *mahā-bhāgavata*, as is Uddhava and Nārada. But each of these *bhaktas* can see only according to their own *bhāva*. A *mahā-bhāgavata* in *gopī-bhāva* will hear Kṛṣṇa blowing His conch and think, "Oh, how fortunate is that conch that it is tasting the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips." The conchshell has no such view, but the *mahā-bhāgavata* will think that it does.

Another symptom of a *mahā-bhāgavata* is that he sees everyone serving Kṛṣṇa except himself. This is exemplified by the *gopīs* in this chapter because they are speaking of the good fortune of so many living entities and recognizing their own misfortune.

There is a second meaning of *druma-bhujān* (to the branches of the trees). There are so many *munis* who are *brahma-jñānīs* and who climb up on the Upaniṣads. This is one branch of the Vedas. They climb up and look at Kṛṣṇa from there. They see Kṛṣṇa as Brahman. A *yogī* climbs up on certain Upaniṣads, on the Smṛti. The *bhaktas* have their own branch, the branch of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. By climbing on this branch, they can see Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa can see them. Otherwise, in any Veda, Purāṇa, Upaniṣad, or Smṛti, there is no such branch upon which they can sit and see.

Therefore, *druma-bhujān* means that the *munis* leave all the branches of the Vedas and, instead, climb upon the branch of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way, they come to Vṛndāvana and climb upon that branch and see Kṛṣṇa. They prefer the Vṛndāvana trees to the trees of the Vedas. From Vṛndāvana, they can see Kṛṣṇa climbing on the trees, but they cannot see Him climbing on the trees of the Upaniṣads or other Vedas. These *munis* have desired to become birds—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanat-kumāra, Śukadeva Gosvāmī (who became a parrot) and so many other *munis*. When they give up the other Vedas, they will naturally go to Vṛndāvana and see Kṛṣṇa from the branches of the trees.

The *gopīs* say *rucira-pravālān*, that the birds are sitting on the beautiful twigs and creepers of the tree of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. From there the *munis* can see the peacocks dancing and the cuckoos and parrots singing, but they themselves are not singing or dancing—only sitting like *munis*, watching everything.

The *gopīs* are saying that it is true that Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the four Kumāras, like all *munis*, have performed so much austerity and served Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa so much, that by the mercy of Yogamāyā, they have come to Vṛndāvana in the form of birds. In this way, they are seeing and tasting Kṛṣṇa. *Śṛṇvanti milita-dṛśo vigatānya-vācaḥ*: the birds are not singing. Their external sensibilities have stopped. The *gopīs* wish they could have as much faith in Kṛṣṇa as these birds whose external senses have stopped and who have forgotten everything but Kṛṣṇa. "If we are fortunate enough to become birds in our next life, we will fly to Kṛṣṇa without any hesitation or restriction. If we become cuckoos or parrots, then what more will we have to say? We will be so faithful that we will always fly down to the hand of Kṛṣṇa or Śrīmatī Rādhikā. If we become cuckoos, then we will sing for Kṛṣṇa, and if we become peacocks, we will dance for Him."

Text Fifteen

*nadyas tadā tad upadhārya mukunda-gītam
āvarta-lakṣita-manobhava-bhagna-vegāḥ
āliṅgana-sthagitam ūrmi-bhujair murārer
grhṇanti pāda-yugalam kamalopahārāḥ*

nadyaḥ—the rivers (Śrī Kālindī, Mānasī Gaṅgā, and others); *tadā*—then; *tat*—that; *upadhārya*—perceiving (attentively hearing the song of the flute having come near them); *mukunda*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the pinnacle of spiritual bliss, who awards liberation from all distress by awarding His association; *gītam*—the song of Mukunda’s flute, which gives rise to supreme spiritual bliss; *āvarta*—by their whirlpools (indicative of their *kāma* to meet with Kṛṣṇa); *lakṣita*—manifest; *manaḥ-bhava*—by their conjugal desire; *bhagna*—broken; *vegāḥ*—their currents; *āliṅgana*—by their embrace; *sthagitam*—held stationary; *ūrmi-bhujaiḥ*—by the arms of their waves; *murāreḥ*—of Lord Murāri, the killer of the Mura demon; *grhṇanti*—they seize; *pāda-yugalam*—the two lotus feet; *kamala-upahārāḥ*—carrying offerings of lotus flowers

Translation

Some other *gopī* said: O *sakhī*! Why do you speak of the *devīs*, cows and birds? They are all animate living beings. Have you not seen the inanimate rivers? By the whirlpools that are seen in them, it is understood that within their hearts surges an intense desire to meet with Śyāmasundara. The flow of the rivers has been stopped by this intense emotional agitation. They have also heard the sound of our beloved Kṛṣṇa’s flute. Just see! Just see! With the arms of their waves, they have caught hold of His lotus feet and are presenting offerings of lotus flowers. They are embracing His lotus feet just as if they were offering their hearts to Him.

Commentary

Hearing the flute song, the rivers become still. They are full of *bhāva*. They cannot think of anything else. *Sthagitam* means they become silent. The *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa walking on the shore of the Yamunā by their *bhāva-netra* (eyes of love). Actually they are sitting in their rooms, but they see Kṛṣṇa walk on the shore of the Yamunā playing His flute. In this chapter, the *gopīs* speak only about the influence of Kṛṣṇa’s flute on the residents of Vṛndāvana; therefore, it is called the *Veṇu-gīta*.

Nadyas tadā, the *gopīs* see that the Yamunā has become still. Because of seeing the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa and hearing His flute, the river has stopped flowing. *Tad upadhārya mukunda-gītam āvarta-lakṣita-manobhava-bhagna-vegāḥ*: the *gopīs* think that the Yamunā is better than them because by hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute, Cupid has arisen in her heart and she now desires to taste Kṛṣṇa (*kāma*). This is why the Yamunā is still. If *smara* (Cupid) arises in someone’s heart, especially in the heart of a *kāmātmikā-gopī*, then there will be discernible symptoms.

The *gopīs* are speaking in a concealed way (*avahita*). They are trying not to express their *bhāva* to the other *gopīs*. Up until this point, they have not disclosed what has happened to them when they heard the flute song and saw Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face, but there have been symptoms. Now, *kāma* is quickly overtaking their hearts. They are so immersed in *kṛṣṇa-prema* that they want to conceal it from the other *gopīs*. They are not expressing their inner moods. If one person loves another just as a *gopī* loves Kṛṣṇa, he or she will feel palpitations in the heart. Not only palpitations, but if anyone has any experience of love between a man and a woman, they will be able to understand something by drawing comparison to this experience, although that feeling will be opposite to the *prema* of the *gopīs*. The *prema* of the *gopīs* in *vipralambha* is like deadly poison (*halāhala*). The *gopīs* are feeling the poison now, not the nectar. Sometimes they feel like they are dying, and sometimes they feel they are reviving. They cannot say whether it is nectar or poison.

In ordinary love, if our beloved goes away for a day and we do not know whether he or she will return, we will feel so much anxiety in our hearts. We will be unable to sleep and we will always feel restless. The *gopīs* are tasting this restlessness. Śukadeva Gosvāmī has only given hints here as to what the *gopīs* are feeling. And in their covered way, the *gopīs* are saying that they cannot express what must be going on in the heart of the Yamunā because she is seeing Kṛṣṇa and hearing the sound of his flute. They say only that they can see the Yamunā has become stunned. Therefore, she must be experiencing *kāma*.

The Yamunā is hearing from the upper division of her waters and her waves rush toward Kṛṣṇa to embrace Him. Her water is flowing not only from the waves, which are on the surface, but from her depths. This is creating thousands of whirlpools. So many *bhāvas* have arisen in her heart, not just one *bhāva*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu experienced the whirlpool of *kila-kiñchita-bhāva* along with various other *bhāvas* all at once. The different *bhāvas* came and tore His heart to pieces. Similarly, so many different moods are rising in the Yamunā and creating thousands and thousands of whirlpools. Finally, with her long arms (waves), she embraces Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet (*ūrmi-bhujair murārer grhṇanti pāda-yugalaṁ kamalopahārāḥ*) and offers Him lotus flowers.

This is the sign of *kāma* in the Yamunā. This is why her current is broken in so many places. The *gopīs* compare this to their own moods and how their own hearts are full of broken currents and whirlpools. The lotus flowers break from their stems by the force of the whirlpools and Yamunā-devī takes them and offers them at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa (*ālīṅgana-sthagitam ūrmi-bhujair murārer*).

Another meaning of the word *ālīṅgana* is that since Kṛṣṇa was standing on the shore of the Yamunā, the waves rush to His lotus feet and embrace them. Just as the ocean's waves crash onto the shore, so the Yamunā's waves crash toward Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. The Yamunā is not an ordinary river. The *gopīs* see her embrace Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa does not return her embrace. At last she becomes ashamed and says, "Oh, I have done wrong. I am not so qualified. If the *gopīs* were here, then Kṛṣṇa would have embraced them. But I am not so beautiful or lovely, so Kṛṣṇa is not embracing me."

Although the Yamunā is an expansion of Viśākhā, the *gopīs* see her in this way. The Yamunā then approaches Kṛṣṇa and gives Him her heart in the form of lotus flowers (*kamalopahārāḥ*) and begs Him to embrace her. Usually a woman does not express her desire to her lover first, but waits for

the man to take the initiative. If the woman expresses herself first, the man may tell her to return to her home. Then she will pray as the Yamunā is praying. Because Kṛṣṇa is silent and is not returning her embrace, the Yamunā feels shamed and humbled. Therefore, she offers lotus flowers at His feet.

The *gopīs* see the Yamunā as fortunate because she can embrace Kṛṣṇa. She can fall at His feet. She can place flowers on His feet. She can hear the melody of His flute song from nearby. “We *gopīs* cannot do anything. But if we were the waters of the Yamunā, we would be able to do things easily. Since we cannot do it now, we are so unfortunate.”

This is an important verse. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave reference to this *śloka* in his lectures, he used to be full of *bhāva*. His mouth would become reddish and his eyes would fill with tears. *Nadyas tadā tad upadhārya mukunda-gītam*. This is what *gopī-bhāva* is like. Up until now, the *gopīs* have covered their *bhāva* and controlled it. They have not expressed their feelings to any other *gopī*. But in this verse, they could no longer check their feelings. They are trying to contain them, but they cannot. It is automatically coming out. It was bound to do so. This is why this *śloka* is important.

When they realize that they have lost control and expressed more than they had intended, the *gopīs* again try to conceal their feelings. They do that by expressing them in another way, indirectly. When they see that somehow this *bhāva* has been expressed anyway, they are ashamed. Therefore, they want to cover it up again.

It may seem odd that since they are among friends of similar *bhāva* and age, the *gopīs* should feel ashamed to have their feelings revealed. But that is the nature of this *bhāva*. If they express themselves clearly, then others will know, “She wants Kṛṣṇa!” Then another *gopī* will also want Kṛṣṇa and they will have to share. They don’t want to share either their moods or Kṛṣṇa, even among their own friends, yet they will share their feelings with the *mañjarīs*.

For example, a so-called *sannyāsī* may have so many friends. If he loves a beautiful woman, does he tell all his friends? He cannot tell them. He wants to stop his attraction because he is a *sannyāsī*. If, however, his mind goes in that direction anyway, he will not tell others. He will try to conceal it. Similarly, the *gopīs* are not married to Kṛṣṇa, yet they are experiencing conjugal desire. They want Kṛṣṇa fully. They want Him to be controlled only by them. If they express this openly, everyone will know this secret. The whole society will laugh at them or punish them. Therefore, they are concealing these feelings.

Even between Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Lalitā and Viśākhā, Rādhikā will conceal Her feelings. There are some things She can express that do not have to be concealed—the more general things. But here it is not *rāga*, it is *pūrva-rāga*. The *gopīs* are in the mood of ardently desiring Kṛṣṇa. As a result, they will not tell anyone.

Text Sixteen

*dṛṣṭvātape vraja-paśūn saha rāma-gopaiḥ
sañcārayantam anu veṇum udīrayantam
prema-pravṛddha uditaḥ kusumāvalibhiḥ
sakhyur vyadhāt sva-vapuṣāmbuda ātapatram*

dṛṣṭvā—seeing; *ātape*—in the full heat of the sun; *vraja-paśūn*—the domestic animals of Vraja (the cows); *saha*—together with; *rāma-gopaiḥ*—Śrī Balarāma and the cowherd boys; *sañcārayantam*—herding together; *anu*—repeatedly; *veṇum*—His flute; *udīrayantam*—loudly playing; *prema*—out of love; *pravṛddhaḥ*—expanded; *uditaḥ*—rising high; *kusuma-āvalibhiḥ*—with particles of water vapor, which are like groups of flowers; *sakhyuḥ*—for his friend (who was of the same color—*śyāma*); *vyadhāt*—he constructed; *sva-vapuṣā*—out of his own body; *ambudaḥ*—the cloud; *ātapatram*—an umbrella (composed of drops of water)

Translation

O *sakhī*! These rivers also belong to our Vṛndāvana. Therefore, it is not very astonishing that they have offered their everything at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Please consider the clouds for a moment. When they see the prince of Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Balarāma, accompanied by the cowherd boys, herding the cows in the heat of summer, and when they hear Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing very sweetly on His flute, their hearts overflow with love. The clouds begin to hover above them. By extending their body, the new black clouds (*śyāmaghana*) become an umbrella to give shelter to their friend Ghanaśyāma. Moreover, when the clouds begin to rain tiny drops of water upon them, it seems that they are showering them with beautiful white flowers. Yet this is but a pretext; for by doing so, they are, in fact, offering their life and their everything.

Commentary

After telling the history of the Yamunā, the *gopīs* realize at once that they have made a mistake. They expressed something they did not want to express, Now they are beginning to cover it up again. In this verse, *dṛṣṭvātape* means they are again talking about *sakhya-rasa*. They want to cover their *mādhurya-rasa* with *sakhya-rasa*. Therefore, they look toward the clouds and see that it is noon. The sun is hot, but the clouds form an umbrella over Kṛṣṇa. Because the clouds are Kṛṣṇa's friends, Kṛṣṇa herds His cows under the shelter of the clouds. The clouds act as an umbrella over Kṛṣṇa to protect Him from the scorching heat of the sun.

In this verse, the *gopīs* again mention the name of Baladeva to bring out *sakhya-rasa*. *Vraja-paśūn saha rāma-gopaiḥ*: Kṛṣṇa is with the cows and calves of Vraja along with Balarāma and all the cowherd boys. By talking about Kṛṣṇa surrounded by the boys and cows, they cover their *mādhurya-bhāva*.

Saṁcārayantam anu veṇum udīrayantam: Lord Kṛṣṇa is continually vibrating His flute while herding all the animals of Vraja. The clouds hear the flute and, at the same time, notice that their friend Kṛṣṇa is hot. The sun is blazing down on His body and He is sweating. They decide to serve Kṛṣṇa (*prema-pravṛddha*) by expanding out of love. *Prema-pravṛddha* means that their love expands so much that they construct an umbrella composed of drops of water vapor (which are like flowers) from their bodies (*uditaḥ kusumāvalibhiḥ sakhyur vyadhāt sva-vapuṣāmbuda ātapatram*). Seeing Kṛṣṇa, tears come to their eyes. When tears are sorrowful or angry, they are hot, but when they are shed in happiness, they are cool. The clouds cry tears of happiness and Kṛṣṇa becomes cooled by their tears. This is how the clouds performed the duties of a friend (*sakhyur vyadhāt*).

The *gopīs* think that since they cannot have the same mood as the Yamunā (they cannot embrace Kṛṣṇa in their hearts or offer lotus flowers at His feet), then perhaps they can serve Him as the clouds serve Him. They desire to take birth as clouds so they can give shade to Kṛṣṇa and cry cooling tears to please Him. They think that in this way, they will become fortunate.

Text Seventeen

*pūrṇāḥ pulindya urugāya-padābja-rāga-
śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena
tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena
limpantya ānana-kuceṣu jahus tad-ādhim*

pūrṇāḥ—fully satisfied; *pulindyaḥ*—the wives of the Śabara tribe (a lower class tribe of aborigines); *urugāya*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (who sings loudly on the flute); *pada-abja*—from the lotus feet; *rāga*—carrying the reddish color; *śrī-kuṅkumena*—by the transcendental *kuṅkuma* powder; *dayitā*—of His girlfriends (of Śrī Rādhā); *stana*—the breasts; *maṇḍitena*—which had decorated; *tad*—of that; *darśana*—by the sight; *smara*—of Kāmadeva (Cupid); *rujaḥ*—feeling the torment; *tṛṇa*—upon the blades of grass; *rūṣitena*—attached; *limpantyaḥ*—smearing; *ānana*—upon their faces; *kuceṣu*—and breasts; *jahuḥ*—they gave up; *tad*—that; *ādhim*—the torment caused by Kāmadeva

Translation

Some other Vraja *gopī* said: O *sakhī*! We consider the young aborigine women (Pulindīs) to be truly blessed and successful because they possess extraordinary attachment (*anurāga*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts. When they see our dearmost beloved Kṛṣṇa, then an intense desire to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is aroused within their hearts. Their hearts are struck with the disease of love. At that time, they smear their breasts and faces with the reddish *kuṅkuma* powder collected from the grass of Vṛndāvana. The beloved *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa adorn their breasts with this *kuṅkuma* powder. It then becomes affixed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. When Śyāmasundara walks about Vṛndāvana, the grass becomes covered with this powder. The supremely fortunate Pulindī girls then smear their breasts and faces with this powder. In this way they alleviate the anguish of their love.

Commentary

The *gopīs* didn't want to disclose their feelings to each other. *Avahita* means not to disclose, but to conceal their most intimate feelings toward Kṛṣṇa. They were *kāmātmikā-gopīs*. That is why they wanted to conceal their desire to meet Kṛṣṇa and to satisfy Him. They were concealing these feelings by telling about the speciality of the flute and how sweet the flute song is, and how everything in Vraja, whether moving or inert, is melting to hear the flute song. The moving entities become inert like stones and the stones melt. The calves forget to drink their mothers' milk and the cows forget to graze. Everything is forgotten when Kṛṣṇa vibrates His flute. By speaking of these things, the *gopīs* attempt to conceal their own *bhāva* toward Kṛṣṇa.

In text 15, the *gopīs* openly expressed their feelings. They were so much affected by their own love for Kṛṣṇa that they forgot themselves and spoke directly. Rivers generally have no love. The

Mānasī Gaṅgā appears to have no love. But the *gopīs* saw them as embracing Kṛṣṇa through their hearts. Actually, the Yamunā river and the Mānasī Gaṅgā don't appear to be conscious, but the *gopīs* express their own feelings by describing the mood of the rivers.

If any woman loves a man like the *gopīs* love Kṛṣṇa, it may happen that when she embraces that man, he may act like he is unaffected by her advances. He may act aloof, then the woman will become ashamed and put her head at his feet. This is what the Yamunā did when she embraced Kṛṣṇa and He did not return her embrace. The *gopīs* saw this in their hearts. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is a verse (5.18.12):

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

“All the *devatās* and their exalted qualities, such as *dharma*, *jñāna* and *vairāgya*, are fully situated in one who has developed unalloyed *bhakti* for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. One who is devoid of *hari-bhakti* is engaged in ulterior desires, *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*, or attached to home and material enjoyment. Therefore, he can not possess exclusive devotion toward Śrī Hari. Being driven by his mental fantasies, he runs after the impermanent, external objects of sensual enjoyment. How can there be any good qualities in such a man?”

Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā: where there is *bhakti* and that *bhakti* is *akiñcana*, or *niskiñcana*, then *sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ*, all spiritual qualities (*aprakṛta*) appear in that *bhakti* and in that person performing *bhakti*. One of those qualities is to know everything, even if it is not visible. The *gopīs* can see what Kṛṣṇa is doing even though they are in their homes and He is pasturing the cows. An *akiñcana-bhakta* can know the past and the future. Nārada Muni and Śukadeva Gosvāmī are *akiñcana-bhaktas*. Sañjaya is also inclined towards *akiñcana-bhakti*. Consequently, he could see everything taking place on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra although he was not even present.

We have some *bhakti* but we are not *akiñcana-bhaktas*. *Akiñcana-bhakti* is so powerful that by it one can know Kṛṣṇa's heart. One can also know Śrīmatī Rādhikā's heart. The *mañjarīs* and Lalitā and Viśākhā know Rādhā's heart. It is more difficult to know the heart of Rādhikā than to know the heart of Kṛṣṇa. Usually Kṛṣṇa can conceal something, but Rādhikā cannot. On the other hand, if Rādhikā wants to conceal something, it is difficult even for Kṛṣṇa to know it. The *gopīs* have *niskiñcana-bhakti*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* love Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa also loves Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs*. Yet the *gopīs'* *prema* is greater. That is why Kṛṣṇa is always attracted more to the *gopīs* than the *gopīs* are attracted to Him.

The *gopīs* are telling everything. Although it seems that there is no *prema* in the rivers, the *gopīs* still see the rivers' *prema*. The Yamunā is a river, so how is it possible for her to have *prema*? Yet she is also an expansion of Viśākhā, so she does actually have the love for Kṛṣṇa that they are describing. The *gopīs* explain this by describing her mood.

Because the *gopīs* have *bhakti*, they also have *prema*. But more than that, they also experience *mādanaikya-bhāva*. Kṛṣṇa wants to taste this *mādanaikya-bhāva*, yet He cannot taste it in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Therefore, He appears as Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

The *gopīs* have up to *mādanaikya-bhāva*. They experience *prema-vaicittya* (feelings of separation even in the presence of the beloved, instigated by the intensity of *prema*) in *mādanaikya*.*

**Mādana* is the highest stage of *prema* and is found only in Śrīmatī Rādhikā. *Mādanaikya-bhāva* takes place in meeting. In the state of *mādana*, She forgets Her identity and also ‘exchanges’ Her identity with Kṛṣṇa (*bhrāntī*). Because of Her complete identification with the object of Her affection, She considers Herself to be Kṛṣṇa. In meeting there is separation and in separation there is meeting. Kṛṣṇa takes Rādhikā on His lap and Rādhikā is thinking, “Where is Kṛṣṇa? Where is Kṛṣṇa?” In separation, She embraces a *tamāla* tree and thinks that Kṛṣṇa is with Her. There are many symptoms like this which do not appear in prior stages of *bhāva*. Therefore, *mādana* is the supreme climax of *prema*.

Modana refers to the ecstasy which is experienced in *viraha*, separation. When the conditions of *modana* become uncontrolled and paralyzed in separation, and when all the eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* are fully and simultaneously manifest in all their fascinating bewilderment, it is called *mohana*. When the stage of *mohana* reaches its climax, then it is called *divyonmāda*. This *divyonmāda* or divine madness is expressed in manifold forms out of which *udghurṇā* and *citra-jalpa* are prominent. *Citra-jalpa* is further divided into ten varieties.

In the stage of *modanaikya*, the *gopīs* experience *divyonmāda* and *citra-jalpa*. This is described in the *Bhramara-gīta*. The *gopīs’ bhāva* extends up to *modanaikya*, *mādanaikya* and all these other symptoms. The *gopīs* describe from their hearts how they view life in Vraja. They are not just speaking of any clouds or any peacocks or deer. They are speaking of the residents of Vraja. It is a fact that these other entities also have affection for Kṛṣṇa. And therefore the *gopīs* explain their moods, but because they are trying to conceal their own *bhakti*, they use the description of these other entities to indirectly explain it. Finally, they become so deeply moved that they speak openly. Then again they try to conceal it by the previous *śloka* where Balarāma’s name is mentioned and the clouds are seen as participants in *sakhya-rasa*.

Because they cannot continue to conceal it, they remember the good fortune of the Pulindīs. The Pulindīs come from the Śabara tribe. They work hard for their living as palanquin carriers or by plowing fields. Their wives collect wood and dung from the forests, sell their surplus and use the balance in their own cooking. The Pulindīs were often near Govardhana and the village of Vṛndāvana, so they had many chances to hear Kṛṣṇa’s flute song and to meet the *gopīs*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is so liberal that She can love all these Pulinda *kanyās*. Actually, Śrīmatī Rādhikā loves all young women and She engages them in Her service.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā asks the Pulindīs to bring flowers or whatever She needs from the forests. There is a pastime described in *Govinda-līlāmṛta* where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were gambling. Kṛṣṇa said He would wager His flute, and He wanted to know what Rādhā’s wager was. Lalitā offers Rādhikā Herself to Kṛṣṇa. But when Rādhikā loses, She calls a Pulindī, “Oh, call Pulindī, My *sakhī*, My friend.” Rādhikā does not look down on the Pulindīs even though they are socially low caste. When the Pulindī comes, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Lalitā and Viśākhā laugh mildly and invite her to sit down like a friend. But Kṛṣṇa at once knows the truth. He knows Rādhikā plans to pay Her debt with this Pulindī. The Pulindī is ashamed sitting with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and all the *sakhīs*, but she performs the most intimate service for them.

The *gopīs* are speaking about these Pulindīs: *pūrṇāḥ pulindya*, these girls are fully satisfied. Everything they could desire in life has been fulfilled in the mood of the *gopīs* that has been described here:

*akṣaṇvatām phalam idaṁ na paraṁ vidāmaḥ
sakhyaḥ paśūn anuviveśayator vayasyaiḥ
vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor anuveṇu-juṣṭaṁ
yair vā nipītam anurakata-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*

“O *sakhīs*! We think that for those who have eyes, there is but one thing which is a suitable object of vision. Success of the eyes lies in beholding this object alone; we know of no other. And what is that most precious object of attainment for the eyes? It is the vision of the two sons of Mahārāja Nanda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, accompanied by Their cowherd boyfriends, as They enter the forest taking the cows, or as They bring them back to Vṛndāvana. They hold Their flutes to Their lips and look upon us with mild smiles and amorous sidelong glances filled with love. At that time, we drink the sweetness of Their faces.” (*Bhāg.* 10.21.7)

A person’s eyes are said to be successful if they see Kṛṣṇa playing on His flute. They are even more successful if they see the exchange of sidelong, crooked glances between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* (how the *gopīs* are worshiping Kṛṣṇa with their eyes). Baladeva is going ahead and Kṛṣṇa is a little behind. But the *gopīs* are saying something more, although they are trying to conceal it by mentioning Balarāma’s name. They are trying to tell us that Rādhā is performing *arcana* to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa is offering *arcana* back to Śrīmatī Rādhikā out of the corners of His eyes. Only the *gopīs*, the *mañjarīs*, can see this, and they may also see more pastimes than this. Therefore, *pūrṇāḥ pulindya*, the lives of the Pulindīs have become more successful and the *gopīs* think of them as more fortunate than themselves.

Both Sanātana Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have said that the *gopīs* are almost of the same status as Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Jīva Gosvāmī says that this verse is not spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, but by Lalitā, Viśākhā or perhaps Candrāvalī. He says that it is most likely Lalitā or Viśākhā speaking because *dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena*. *Dayitā* means very dear to Kṛṣṇa, His beloved. When the Pulindīs go to collect cow dung and dry wood from the forest, they see *kuṅkuma* on the grass. At once they become filled with *kāma*, with *smara-ruja*. *Smara-ruja* means *tāpa* or the burning sensation that is hotter than fire and which arises with *kāma*. The Pulindīs take the *kuṅkuma* and rub it on their mouths, breasts and entire bodies.

The *gopīs* witness this scene from their homes. *Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā*—by the fruit of *bhakti* they can see all these events. Although the *gopīs* are the *kaya-vyūha* (bodily expansions) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, we should not concentrate on this because this is *nara-līlā*. This is *mādhurya-līlā* in Vraja, not Goloka *aiśvarya-bhūmi*. Therefore, we should only focus our attention on those things that are helpful to our *mādhurya-bhāva*, not those things which pertain to *aiśvarya-bhāva*. The *gopīs* have *bhakti*, and that is why they are able to know what Kṛṣṇa is doing in the forest although they are at home. They can see the Pulindīs taking the *kuṅkuma* from the grass and rubbing it on their bodies and how by doing this, they alleviate the fire of their *kāma*.

The dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet and Kṛṣṇa's feet are nondifferent. The Pulindīs take the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet and rub it on their bodies. In this way, they keep Kṛṣṇa's feet on their breasts, heads and bodies. They feel as though they actually have Kṛṣṇa's feet in their possession. In this way, their *kāma-tāpa* is alleviated. Otherwise, their desire for Kṛṣṇa would increase because the *kuṅkuma* itself is *uddīpana* for them—seeing it increases their desire for union with Kṛṣṇa. The only way to alleviate the fire of *kāma* is by meeting Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the Pulindīs take that *kuṅkuma*, which is the dust of Kṛṣṇa's feet, and rub it on their bodies. By associating with the dust of His feet, they feel like they have associated directly with Kṛṣṇa. This alleviates the fire burning in their hearts.

In the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi*, Sanātana Gosvāmī gives a deeper meaning. He explains how one can understand who is *dayitā* (the beloved) and who would therefore be speaking this verse. If the *day-itā* refers to Lalitā, then we can assume that Viśākhā is speaking. Whoever is *dayitā* is superior to the speaker. How will we decide who is *dayitā*? *Anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yāṁ anayad rahaḥ*: “Certainly the independent Lord Śrī Nārāyaṇa, who takes away everyone's distress, has been perfectly worshiped by this fortunate *gopī*, for Govinda has abandoned all of us in this far distant forest and taken her alone to a secluded place.” (*Bhāg.* 10.30.28).

Anayārādhito nūnaṁ: all the *gopīs* were present at the *rāsa* dance arena, but Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa had disappeared. When the other *gopīs* saw the footprints and other signs showing that Kṛṣṇa was with this special *gopī*—the flowers Kṛṣṇa used to decorate this special *gopī*, the partial footprint where Kṛṣṇa had reached a high branch to gather flowers, the deeper imprint indicating that He was carrying Her—they considered that certainly this *gopī* has served God, not Kṛṣṇa, but God, and that is why God has arranged that She has become Kṛṣṇa's beloved. Because She is so dear to Kṛṣṇa, He has taken Her away with Him and left us all behind. She is superior to us. In this way, the *sakhīs* explain who is *dayitā*. This verse is being spoken about Rādhikā. *Śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena*: the Pulindīs are finding the *kuṅkuma* that has decorated the breasts of Kṛṣṇa's beloved (*dayitā*) and that beloved must be Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

*yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaīḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu
tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kiṁ svit
kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyusāṁ naḥ*

“O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. As You wander from forest to forest, our minds are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by sharp stones and pebbles. You are our very life. Only if You are satisfied can we maintain our existence.” (*Bhāg.* 10.31.19).

This verse is from the *Gopī-gīta*. *Jayati te 'dhikaṁ janmanā vrajaḥ*, or *tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta jīvanam*. The *gopīs* are crying and speaking all these verses on the bank of the Yamunā near the *rāsa-sthali*. *Yat te sujāta* is the last *śloka*. That is why when He heard it, Kṛṣṇa could not remain hidden any longer. *Yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu*: Rādhikā is saying that Kṛṣṇa's feet are more fragrant than a lotus flower. They are so soft that She wants to place His feet gently on Her

breasts so they won't be hurt as He walks in the forest. She wants to hold His feet so gently, and yet He walks with those soft lotus feet all over the sharp stones of the forest path. The forest path is so full of sharp stones and thorns that even the cows fear to walk on them, but Kṛṣṇa runs after them and hurts His feet. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is praying to keep His feet on Her breasts.

There are two times when She holds Kṛṣṇa's feet, one in the midnight pastimes, and the other during midday at Saṅket or Rādhā-kuṇḍa. There, the *gopīs* are alone with Kṛṣṇa. They are able to hold His feet and He enjoys with them. The *gopīs* remember this and say that only Rādhikā is fortunate enough to have Kṛṣṇa's feet on Her breasts. Jīva Gosvāmī explains that because the verse uses the word *dayitā*, Rādhikā cannot be speaking this verse. She would not speak about Herself in this way. Therefore, the *sakhīs* are speaking for Her, describing Her as *dayitā*.

By understanding the verses in the *Gopī-gīta*, we can see that this is also Rādhikā's mood: *yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu*. If Rādhikā were to use the word *dayitā*, who would She be speaking of? She could be speaking about Lalitā or Viśākhā or another *sakhī*, because they are almost equal to Śrīmatī Rādhikā in quality. The *sakhīs* are partial manifestations of Her qualities (*kaya-vyūha*). Therefore, they also get the opportunity to have the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa on their breasts.

Thus this verse could be spoken either by Rādhikā or another *gopī* because it correctly describes their moods. But here we see that Rādhikā is in *mādanaikya-bhāva* and is expressing Her feelings to the other *gopīs*. *Dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena*: the *sakhī* is saying, "O Pulindī, you are so fortunate. Though you have not held Kṛṣṇa's feet directly, you have received the *kuṅkuma* directly from Kṛṣṇa's feet. This *kuṅkuma* was on the breasts of the *gopīs*. Because Kṛṣṇa keeps His feet on their breasts, the *kuṅkuma* has rubbed off on His feet. At dawn when Kṛṣṇa returns home from the *kuñja* (*niśānta-līlā*), then this *kuṅkuma* mixes with the dew on the grass and washes off His feet. You Pulindīs affectionately rub that *kuṅkuma* left on the grass onto your mouths, breasts and bodies."

The *gopīs* think that if they become Pulindīs, they will be most fortunate. If they could become *dayitā*, then they would be extremely fortunate, "But we don't have so much fortune that we can become the beloved of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, let us take our next birth as Pulindīs. We see we cannot become Pulindīs, so let us become the grass of Vṛndāvana so that Kṛṣṇa will walk on us and the *kuṅkuma* on His lotus feet will rub off on us. In this way, we will become satisfied. Yet neither can we become grass, what to speak of Pulindīs, and what to speak of *dayitā*. Therefore, the Pulindīs are so fortunate. We have *kāma*, but we cannot rub that *kuṅkuma* on our bodies like the Pulindīs do. Neither can we be grass for Kṛṣṇa to walk on. Better to die and become grass, which is even more fortunate than the Pulindīs." The *dayitā* of *dayitās* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This *gopī* is speaking in this way.

Urugāya-padābja: this *gopī* calls Kṛṣṇa *urugāya*. *Urugāya-padābja-rāga*. Why has this *gopī* used the word *urugāya*? *Uru* means singing on the flute. Kṛṣṇa calls His *dayitā* by the melodious sound of His *varṇśī*.

In text 15 we read, *āliṅgana-sthagitam ūrmi-bhujair murārer*. *Murārer* has a link with *urugāya*. Mura was a demon who was killed by Nārāyaṇa. When there was a battle between the demigods and the demons, Nārāyaṇa took the side of the demigods and killed many *asuras*. Mura escaped and performed difficult austerities to worship Brahmā. Brahmā appeared and asked the Mura demon what benediction he wanted. "I desire to be able to touch anyone who attacks me with the palm

of my hand and they will burn up and die.” Brahmā agreed. Then the Mura demon went all over the world. Whenever the demigods attacked him, he just touched their heads and they burned up and died. Everyone knew he had received that benediction from Brahmā, so they always tried to escape without fighting him.

One time he approached Yamarāja. Although Yamarāja is powerful, he knew that the Mura demon was more powerful. The Mura demon said, “I must fight with someone. I cannot live without fighting.” Yamarāja told him that the only worthy opponent would be Nārāyaṇa Himself: “If you fight with Nārāyaṇa, He will fulfill your desire to fight and He will also kill you.” The Mura demon was happy to hear this and asked where Nārāyaṇa lived. Yamarāja said, “He lives everywhere. I cannot say where, but if you meditate on Him, He will certainly appear.”

So Mura began to meditate on Nārāyaṇa in hopes of fighting with him. Nārāyaṇa appeared before him and asked what he wanted. “I want to fight with someone, but there is no one in the whole world who is fit to fight with me. I have heard that You are a fit opponent.” Nārāyaṇa replied: “You are not fit to fight with Me! Look how your heart is trembling.” The Mura demon retorted, “My heart is not trembling.” Nārāyaṇa said, “If you touch your chest, you will see how your heart is trembling.” So the Mura demon touched his chest and immediately burned up and died. In this way Nārāyaṇa cheated him.

In the *Brahmā Purāṇa*, the word *mura* has four meanings. Mura is the name of a demon. It also means *kāma* (divine lust), *tāpa* (intense heat arising from that lust), *sānta* (peace) and *duḥkha* (distress). *Mura-hara* means killing the demon. The second meaning is to remove all pain. But in the *gopīs*’ case, there is no *sānta*, no peace, and neither is there a demon. What they do have is *kāma-roga* or *hṛd-roga* (the disease in the heart). This “heart disease” has arisen from meeting with Kṛṣṇa. Here it means that this *dayitā* who has *kāma-roga* due to the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute (*urugāya*), is taking the feet of Kṛṣṇa on Her breasts.

The more internal meaning of *urugāya* is that their taking of Kṛṣṇa’s feet is not for their own pleasure. *Urugāyati* means that Kṛṣṇa strongly desires that they hold His feet. In this way the *gopīs* are *dayā*, merciful. They are coming to quench Kṛṣṇa’s thirst. *Urugāya-padābja-rāga-śrī-kuṅkumena-dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena limpantya ānana-kuceṣu-jahus tad-ādhim.*

To summarize, the *gopīs* see in their hearts all the events described in this chapter of the *Bhāgavatam*. At first they conceal their feelings of love for Kṛṣṇa, but by the force of *kāma* everything automatically comes out against their wishes. They are saying that the Pulindīs are so fortunate because they are rubbing the *kuṅkuma* from the grass onto their bodies and in this way, giving up their *kāma-tāpa*. That *kuṅkuma* came from Kṛṣṇa’s feet. But where did Kṛṣṇa get it? It rubbed onto His feet because His feet were being held upon the breasts of His beloved. *Dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena*, the *gopīs* are decorated with *kuṅkuma*, and by keeping Kṛṣṇa’s feet on their breasts, the *kuṅkuma* rubbed off onto Kṛṣṇa’s feet.

“We are so unfortunate.” Who is feeling like this? That very *dayitā* is speaking, whether a *sakhī* or Rādhikā. “We have so little affection for Kṛṣṇa and do so little service for Him that we cannot directly meet Him. We are also like Pulindīs because they do not take the *kuṅkuma* directly from Kṛṣṇa’s feet, but from the grass where He walked. Thus they are filled with *prema*. But we are

more unfortunate. We can see Kṛṣṇa directly and still we don't become filled with such *prema* as these Pulindīs experience. Even the grass is more fortunate. That *kuṅkuma* dust is so powerful.”

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says: “Now the effulgence of the lotus feet of the young daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu that is manifesting that loving sentiment which is the highest essence known as *mādana*, or *mahābhāva*, the seventh stage of *prema*, is establishing that Kṛṣṇa is very enchanting. Even if one is without connection to His transcendental qualities of beauty, playing the flute and so forth, one is sure to be infatuated simply by a slight relationship with Him. This is the significance of the word *pūrṇa* (complete). The Pulindīs, the wives of the Śābaras, are complete, whereas we (the *gopīs*) are incomplete. Therefore, we should try to inquire into what sort of austerities they have performed.”

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī is naming that *dayitā*: She is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī said the word *dayitā* means that other *gopīs* are speaking this verse about a particular beloved. *Dayitā* could also mean that Rādhikā is speaking these words for another *gopī*. But Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that the *dayitā* refers to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Therefore, it is another *sakhī* who is speaking this verse.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī says: “Such an idea hints at their ecstatic attraction, *anurāga*. But it may be questioned, ‘How are they complete?’ It is by that divine *kuṅkuma* powder in which is found the coloration (*raga-rañjanam*) of the lotus feet of Lord Urugāya. But where has this *kuṅkuma* of His lotus feet been found? It decorated the breasts of His girlfriends or, in other words, it was attached to the breasts of His girlfriends when He was enjoying intimately with them. Therefore, this implies that the *gopīs* are thinking, ‘Although we desire to glorify the great fortune of that *kuṅkuma*, we cannot be so bold to do so. Therefore, we would rather glorify the Pulindīs.’

“Although in this instance the girlfriend is Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Herself, nevertheless, because Her attraction to Him is so exalted, She is not specifically acknowledged here. But it may be questioned where did these Pulindīs come in contact with those girlfriends of Kṛṣṇa? By the *kuṅkuma* which was attached (*rūṣitena lagnena*) to the blades of grass? The *kuṅkuma* became attached to the blades of grass after Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with His girlfriends in the forest. By seeing the *kuṅkuma* that was attached to the grass, the Pulindīs experienced the torment of Cupid (*smara-ruk* = *kandarpa-pīḍā*). In other words, the *gopīs* thought, ‘We cannot imagine what happened to them when they caught sight of Kṛṣṇa.’ And then with great desire to smell the fragrance of the body of Kṛṣṇa, they smeared that *kuṅkuma* upon their faces, and with the desire to relish the enjoyment He engaged in, they smeared it upon their breasts. Thus engaged, they were able to consider themselves enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa and gave up that diseased condition, the distress caused by Cupid. ‘Alas,’ the *gopīs* think, ‘this *kuṅkuma* must have some special potency. On the other hand, we have not been able to obtain even this *kuṅkuma* within our entire lives.’

“This same verse is cited in *Śrīmad Ujjvala-nīlamanī* under the topic of *mādana*, and shows how even when they are constantly enjoying with Him, they automatically engage in glorification just by encountering His fragrance. According to the verse *sadā bhoge apī*, since the state of *mādana* incorporates all the other loving sentiments, all kinds of intimate enjoyment and all kinds of pleasure exist within *mādana*. Therefore, this pastime (of the Pulindīs) is also one of intimate mutual enjoyment because Kṛṣṇa automatically appeared together with that *kuṅkuma*. Consequently, we should

conclude that as described in the earlier verse of this chapter, *varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire*: 'While describing the glories of *kuṅkuma*, they embraced one another.' This indicates that Kṛṣṇa Himself suddenly appeared and they were engaged in embracing Him."

The *gopīs* become mad as they reveal newer and newer things rising in their hearts. *Abhire* means *punaḥ punaḥ*, they embrace one another again and again. The symptom of *mādana-bhāva* is that after enjoying with Kṛṣṇa, they think they have not enjoyed with Him at all. The *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa again and again, yet they think they have never seen Him before and that they are seeing Him for the first time. Actually, the *kuṅkuma* is coming from their own breasts, yet they think they are unfortunate. This is *mādana*. They forget everything that has happened previously and only desire Kṛṣṇa. In this case, they reach *divyonmāda*, speak *citra-jalpa*, and go through so many stages of ecstasy. The difference between *divyonmāda* and *mādana* is that in meeting, *prema-vaicittya* (feelings of separation even in the presence of the beloved) arises, whereas *divyonmāda* and *citra-jalpa* arise from separation.

Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī continues: "This same idea is stated in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.219), *sarva-bhāvodgam-ollāsī mādano 'yam parātparaḥ/rājate hlādinī-sāro rādhāyām eva yaḥ sadā*: 'That *prema* which is the very essence of the *hlādinī* potency and which is the fully blossomed manifestation of all the spiritual sentiments from *rati* up to *modana adhiruḍha mahābhāva* is known as *mādana*. It is the highest development of *prema* and is therefore superior even to *modana mahābhāva*. It is always present only within Śrīmatī Rādhikā.' (It does not arise even in *Lalitā*.)"

In Rādhā we find *divyonmāda* as well as *mādanaikya-bhāva*. So he is saying that this *dayitā* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This is one of the best *śloka* in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If you want to have some experience of this *śloka*, you will have to become the *dāsī* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, not here, but there, in that world, the *pālya-dāsī* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Only then can we understand these *bhāvas*. We hear about them, but they have no effect on us. Those who have greed (*lobha*) for this can taste something. They can perform *prema-bhakti*. *Nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā, vadanam gadgada-rudhaya girā*, "My dear Lord, when will my eyes be filled with tears when I chant your holy name? When will my voice choke up and my hair stand on end at the recitation of Your holy name?" (*Śikṣāṣṭaka*, verse 6).

For those who have not attained these stages, they can still have some greed for it. If even a little ray of *lobha* comes, then our lives will be perfect. If not, then our *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, our *sādhana* is not real. What is *sādhana*? *Sādhana* means our practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to induce *bhāva*. If we are practicing *sādhana* in this way, then it can be called *sādhana*, otherwise it is not *sādhana*.

In *rāgānugā-bhajana* and in *vaidhī-bhakti*, *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam* and *smaranam* are all going on. We can have salvation, *svarga* (heaven), and praise in this world and many other benefits by that *aupād-hika-bhakti* (*bhakti* limited by material designations) but it will not be called *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhajana*. And when *bhāva-bhakti* comes, *bhāva-bhakti* will be performed for *prema-bhakti*, otherwise it won't be real *bhāva-bhakti*. When *sādhana* is performed for *bhāva*, then it is *sādhana-bhakti*: *kṛti sādhyā bhavet sādhyā bhāva*.

Sādhyā-bhāva means the *sādhana* which manifests *bhāva*. Then it is called *sādhana*. But when some state of *bhāva* is achieved by *sādhana*, it will no longer be called *sādhana* but *nitya-siddha-bhāva*. How can we call *sādhana* performed by a *sādhaka*, *nitya-siddha-bhāva*? If it is *nitya-siddha* in *gopī*-

bhāva, by the association of a devotee who is practiced in that *bhāva* and by the practice of *sādhana* aimed in that direction, then that *bhāva* will enter the heart of a *sādhaka*.

But the seed of the particular *bhāva* must also be there. When that seed is nourished by the *nitya-siddha bhāva* situated in the hearts of the Lord's eternal associates, then it manifests in the heart of the *sādhaka*. It is like the formation of pearls. Pearls do not appear everywhere, but when the *svāti-nakṣatra* constellation is in the sky, then pearls are formed from the raindrops that fall at that time. But to form the *bhāva* in our own hearts, we need more than the raindrops of association. If there is no seed for a particular *bhāva*, then that pearl will not form. For a plant to grow, both water and a seed are needed.

In *rāgānugā-sādhana* we will remember what the *gopīs* are doing, how they are performing *āratī* with their eyes and hearts, and how that is like the ghee lamp offered during *āratī* in the temple. We should remember the *āratī* of Lalitā, Viśākhā and all the other *gopīs*. *Āratī* will be *uddīpana* for us, a stimulus for love, just as when we see peacocks, we can remember the pastimes of *kuṅkuma* and all the *gopīs*.

When Lalitā is offering water in the *āratī*, she may be thinking that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have just awoken for *niśānta-lilā*. She is offering Them water to wash Their faces. There are so many signs of amorous sports on the bodies of Yugala-kīśora which Jaṭilā would be able to see, so Lalitā is washing these away, offering water and a cloth. This is Śrīmatī Rādhikā's desire, that all these things will be washed away before She goes home. Śrīmatī Rādhikā tells Kṛṣṇa that He should also wash Himself, and She and the *gopīs* point out where there are signs of Their sporting. A person performing *rāgānugā-bhajana* will have a heart full of these images and may see better and better ideas of how to serve. I cannot say what all these things are because they are the ideas of superior devotees.

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has explained the pastime of Śrīmatī Rādhikā bringing a Pulindī girl in *Dāna-keli-cintāmaṇi*. However, he has covered the pastime so no one can enter it. He has intimated about the valuable *maṇis* (jewels) and *māṇikas* (weights) but we are unable to ascertain what they are. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura wrote a commentary on this work, but he still did not disclose the inner meanings. He did not want to spoil it. It should be like that. The pastime should reveal itself in the heart of the listener by service to the *guru* in the *paramparā*. No one should attempt to immediately gain knowledge of all these things. Otherwise *kāma* (mundane lust) and *prema* will be mistaken to be the same and the proper understanding will be spoiled.

We should pray that these pastimes manifest in our hearts by the mercy of our *guru* and *guru-paramparā*. But we should think, "I am still waiting for that. If I had greed, then it would have been revealed. I want to have greed, but I don't have it." By hearing these pastimes, tears should come to our eyes and our hearts should melt. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu tasted the reality of this pastime in the Gambhīrā.

By hearing a verse like this *Veṇu-gīta* verse, greed can develop. It will develop, but at present it is not there in us. Only in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has Śukadeva Gosvāmī revealed all these things. Those who have no greed can develop it by reading and *sādhana*. Those who already possess greed can increase it by hearing these pastimes.

By hearing these pastimes, worldly lust can be destroyed, but we also have to have *śraddhā*, faith. Otherwise, lust will arise in us and we will see Kṛṣṇa's pastimes through the eyes of that worldly lust. We will not give His pastimes a chance to act. If someone has no taste for the holy name, or for *hari-kathā*, then he will not have the opportunity to hear these pastimes. Śukadeva Gosvāmī warns us not to disclose these pastimes to people who do not possess greed, or in other words, to worldly people. Those who are too much possessed by anger, lust or envy should not hear them.

For us, that last trace of lust, anger and envy is being dissipated because the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has given a blessing:

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

“A sober person who in the beginning faithfully and continuously hears the narrations of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unprecedented *rāsa* dance with the young wives of Vraja, and later repeats those pastimes, very soon attains *parā-bhakti* or *prema-bhakti* towards the Supreme Lord and thereafter, becomes competent to quickly dispel the heart disease of lust.” (Bhāg. 10.33.39). *Bhakti* will enter the heart and throw out lust; without *bhakti*, lust will prevail.

Text Eighteen

*hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayoḥ tayor yat
pāṇīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ*

hanta—Oh (indicating distress); *ayam*—this (as if indicating with the finger that Govardhana is just nearby); *adriḥ*—hill (Girirāja Govardhana); *abalāḥ*—O friends (*sakhīs*) (*abalāḥ* literally means those who are devoid of *bala* or strength to serve Kṛṣṇa in the same capacity as Govardhana); *hari-dāsa-varyaḥ*—the best among the servants of Lord Hari (Hari: He who steals away the mind, sinful activities and all distress); *yat-rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa*—because of the touch of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Balarāma (or because of the touch of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *ramaṇīs*—*gopīs*); *pramodaḥ*—jubilant (jubilation giving rise to the eight *sāttvika-bhāvas* such as standing of the hairs on end in the form of grass, tears in the form of cascading water, etc.); *mānaṁ tanoti*—offers respect (by offering various services); *saha*—with; *go-gaṇayoḥ*—the cows, calves and cowherd boys; *tayoḥ*—to Them (to the two lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or to the lotus feet of *yugala*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His *ramaṇī*); *yat*—because; *pāṇīya*—with drinking water or the fragrant cool water from Govardhana’s waterfalls; *sūyavasa*—very soft grass, food grains, flowers and fruits; *kandara*—caves; *kanda-mūlaiḥ*—and edible roots

Translation

O *sakhīs*! This Girirāja Govardhana is the best of all the devotees of Śrī Hari (Śrī Harideva). How fortunate he is indeed! Have you not seen how elated he is to obtain the touch of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is *prāṇa-vallabha*, dearer to us than life, and those of Śrī Baladeva who is *nayanābhirāma*, the source of delight for the eyes? Who can adequately praise his fortune? Just see how graciously he receives all the cows and cowherd boyfriends of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. He supplies cool, clear and sweet water for bathing and drinking, soft green grass for the cows, caves for them to rest in, and fruits and roots for them to eat. Truly, this Girirāja Govardhana is blessed.

Commentary

Hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo. *Abalā* means the *sakhīs*, the *gopīs*. One *gopī* is speaking to the other *gopīs*. Why are they called *abalā*? Because they have no power and no good fortune to be able to touch the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. They are unfortunate and therefore the word *abalā* is used. In reality, the *gopīs* are not *abalā*, they are *sabalā*. They do have power or *śakti* because they are Kṛṣṇa’s energy. But they feel unfortunate and powerless. They see through their inner eyes that the dust of Vṛndāvana, the grass, the trees, the ponds and rivers are so much more fortunate than

themselves. All moving and nonmoving entities living in Vṛndāvana are more fortunate than they are because they have the opportunity to touch the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and to see His form. And even more than seeing Kṛṣṇa, some of the living entities have the opportunity to play with Kṛṣṇa and to touch His hands and feet. For those living entities that cannot walk, Kṛṣṇa goes to them. He climbs the trees and affectionately plucks the flowers from the creepers. He pets the cows and loves the calves so much. The *gopīs* think that everything in Vṛndāvana is more fortunate than themselves.

Hantāyam adrir abalā. *Hanta* is told in *kheda*, in *duḥkha*, in sorrow. If we want something and cannot get it, then we will become sorrowful. On the other hand, if there is an excess of joy, then “*Hanta! Hanta!*” We will make exclamations of our happiness. But here the *gopīs* are saying *hanta* in sorrow. They are full of sorrow. They are disappointed that they don’t have an opportunity to see Kṛṣṇa. Thus they remember Girirāja Govardhana, *ayam adrir*, this Hill. The *gopīs* use the word *ayam*, this, to indicate Govardhana. They speak as if they are near Govardhana Hill, but they are at home. They feel so much affection that they have become mad (*pramāda*).

Pramāda is used for special women. The *gopīs* are *kṛṣṇasya-pramāda*. They have become mad out of love. Girirāja Govardhana is also mad. He has forgotten his body and everything connected with his body. Similarly the *gopīs* have forgotten everything about themselves—their bodies, their relatives, where they are, their bodily functions—therefore they are called mad. When they are performing the *rāsa* dance with Kṛṣṇa, they are called *pramāda* because they can become so filled with love for Kṛṣṇa that they become *mānavatī* or *anurāgavatī*. Then they are filled with *mahābhāva* or more. That is why they are called *pramāda*: *pramāda ramā-patī*, mad for Ramā-patī, Kṛṣṇa.

In this verse, *adri* means Girirāja Govardhana. The *gopīs* are sitting in their houses and talking about the good fortune of Govardhana Hill. He is the best servant of Lord Hari (*hari-dāsa-varya*). Why do they call him *hari-dāsa-varya*? Because if anyone serves Kṛṣṇa and satisfies Him, and when that servant is overjoyed by serving and the master is overjoyed with the servant’s service, then he is called *hari-dāsa*. The servant feels joy that the master is satisfied, and then the master becomes joyful that his servant is satisfied in his service, which in turn makes the servant more joyful—in this way a rivalry is created between them. It is difficult to say who is happier.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has described this phenomenon in relation to Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. If anyone serves his master and suffers due to the difficulties in his service, then that is not service. “Because I have been working so hard, now I am tired, but I cannot sleep because I have to continue doing my service.” This is not the mentality of a servant. If any servant is performing his service unwillingly, then that *sevaka* is not performing *sevā*. He is *vaka*, a deceitful crane. There is no service, no *se*, only *vaka*. Those who serve, but feel tired or who are not feeling any bliss, are not servants.

When Govardhana serves Kṛṣṇa, his hair stands on end and tears flow from his eyes (*romaṅca-pulaka*, *aśru-kampa*), and he feels bliss in having Kṛṣṇa’s feet touch his body. He becomes overjoyed. Indra throws lightning on Govardhana, but still Govardhana feels bliss in his service to Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Govardhana is a superior servant.

Similarly, if a devotee serves his *gurudeva* and his *gurudeva* is pleased, and if the devotee experiences joy in his service, giving everything, even his own body to his *gurudeva*, and is simply satisfied that he has offered service, then that is a servant.

In this verse, Govardhana Hill is being described. Harideva is his master. Harideva walks on the body of Girirāja Govardhana. A servant can serve his master by *sthāna* (position), *mana* (mind), *dhana* (wealth), *vidyā* (knowledge), *buddhi* (intelligence)—whatever he has, he should offer. If a man is serving his spiritual master or his beloved only with his words, but not with his heart, body, or wealth, then he is not a good servant. If he is serving with all his means, even with his heart and body, then that is a servant.

If someone is serving by his body, mind and any other means at his disposal, but cannot give his soul to the full extent, then that is *aiśvarya-bhāva*. A *sakhā* can serve Kṛṣṇa, yet he cannot give his entire body to Kṛṣṇa's service. A mother or father can also serve Kṛṣṇa. They give everything, including their hearts and souls, but still, there is one thing they cannot give. The *gopīs*, however, can give everything. There is nothing left for them, not even their reputation. They risk being shamed in society. They risk everything.

In this verse, the *gopīs* see that Govardhana never keeps anything for himself. He gives everything to Kṛṣṇa. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.56) describes Uddhava, one of three persons who have been described as *hari-dāsa*: *kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām*, “That servant of Lord Hari enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

We see that Nārada is also a *bhakta* because he serves Kṛṣṇa and all the other *avatāras*. Prahlāda, Dhruva, Nārada, Vyāsa—all are servants. But in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, only three persons have been designated as *hari-dāsa*. One is Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja. In the Rājasuya-yajña when all the *ṛṣis*, *brahmaṛṣis*, Grandfather Bhīṣma, Vyāsa, Nārada, and all the other saints and sages arrived, Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja said, “Oh, I am so fortunate today that these *ṛṣis* have come to my house to see Kṛṣṇa. I am so fortunate.” Then Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja said, “You are the greatest saints in the world. Kṛṣṇa wants to meet you.”

Nārada told Yudhiṣṭhira that he was millions of times more fortunate than the sages: “Kṛṣṇa is living in your home as a servant, friend and master. He is washing the feet of all the *ṛṣis* who have come here for the Rājasuya sacrifice. Kṛṣṇa is the goal for all human beings, yet He is rarely seen. But here He is, living in your home. Kṛṣṇa has become your servant. We have not come here to see Kṛṣṇa but to see the sacrifice and to see how you have conquered the unconquerable Kṛṣṇa and made Him happy.” “The *ṛṣis* have come only to see you because that *parabrahma*, the witness in the heart, Kṛṣṇa, is always with you in your home like an intimate friend.” Nārada began to weep and Śukadeva was overjoyed in relating this to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. “Oh, how wonderful it is.” *Hari-dāsasya rājarṣe rājasūya-mahodayam (Bhāg. 10.75.27)*.

In this case, *hari-dāsaya* means Yudhiṣṭhira. The sages say, “How fortunate the Paṇḍavas are that in their Rājasuya-yajña, we have all gathered to see them with Kṛṣṇa. They are serving Kṛṣṇa so much that Kṛṣṇa has become controlled by them.” This is *hari-dāsa*: Yudhiṣṭhira is Kṛṣṇa's elder, and therefore he was not personally serving Kṛṣṇa, although the other Paṇḍavas, Queen Kuntī, Yudhiṣṭhira's wives and children, and all the men of his kingdom were serving Him. In this way, Kṛṣṇa has become controlled by *sthāna*, *mana*, *dhana*, *vidyā* and *buddhi*. They are giving everything to Kṛṣṇa, but only Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira has been referred to as *hari-dāsa*.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī has also described Uddhava as *hari-dāsa*: *kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is saying that in happiness, Kṛṣṇa has sent Uddhava to console His

father and mother, the *gopīs* and all the residents of Vṛndāvana. Therefore, Uddhava is *hari-dāsa* because he has given everything to the service of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava that He should go Himself, but instead He is sending Uddhava as a representative (*pratinidhi*). Therefore, he is *hari-dāsa*.

Why didn't Kṛṣṇa go Himself? He wanted to increase the glories of the *bhāva* of separation. If there is no separation, then how will *mahābhāva*, *citra-jalpa* and all the other states the *gopīs* experience be manifest to this world? Everyone will think that Kṛṣṇa was cruel. Kṛṣṇa likes to hear Himself described in this way by the *gopīs*. And He agrees with their analysis. But by His apparent cruelty, He has revealed the highest stages of love of God.

There are also other reasons why Kṛṣṇa did not personally go to see the *gopīs*. One time at Prema-sarovara (near Varṣāṇā), Kṛṣṇa was sitting with Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the other *gopīs*. A bee came and began to buzz around Śrīmatī Rādhikā's feet, thinking that it had found a fragrant lotus flower. Rādhikā became frightened and She began running back and forth to escape the bee. The bee persistently tried to touch Her feet. Finally, Madhumaṅgala took a stick and chased the bee away. He came back and told Rādhikā, "That *madhusūdhana* (the bee) has gone. He will never come back." Rādhikā was sitting on Kṛṣṇa's lap but She began to cry, "Where is Madhusūdhana, where is Madhusūdāna?" Kṛṣṇa was amazed at Her feelings of separation even while in His presence (*prema-vaicitṭya*).

After some time, Kṛṣṇa saw that even in meeting Rādhikā feels separation; whereas in separation, She embraces a *tamāla* tree and talks, laughs and behaves like She is with Kṛṣṇa. In this way He saw that if He is present, She may feel separation, and if He is absent, then in separation She will meet Him and eat, drink and always be happy. Kṛṣṇa decided He should not live in Vṛndāvana. Then the whole world would know the glories of the *gopīs'* love-in-separation. Therefore, He left Vṛndāvana and never visibly came back.

In this verse the *gopīs* see that Govardhana gives everything to Kṛṣṇa. *Kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme hari-dāso vrajaukasām*: Govardhana is serving in so many ways. At last they say: *yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ*, "Being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant."

He is *hari-dāsa-varya*. *Hari-dāsa-varya* (the best servant of Lord Hari) is Govardhana. The *gopīs* have so much more honor and respect for Govardhana than they do for Uddhava or Yudiṣṭhira, because *yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ*, Kṛṣṇa puts His lotus feet on the body of Govardhana and Govardhana feels great joy. When Kṛṣṇa goes cowherding with His brother, His cows and His friends, He goes to Girirāja Govardhana. Then Govardhana feels the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Girirāja Govardhana is *hari-dāsa-varya* because unlike Nārada, Vyāsa, Śuka and other sages, Govardhana has made his body the abode of Kṛṣṇa. Girirāja Govardhana becomes a *kuñja*, he provides *guphas* (caves) and *sarovaras* (ponds). These are all present on his head and body.

Kṛṣṇa takes the cows and cowherd boys to Govardhana and Govardhana feels so much joy in serving them that tears come from his eyes in the form of the Mānasī-Gaṅgā, Kusuma-sarovara and other bodies of water. Govardhana sheds so many tears and experiences so much joy. In his ecstasy, his hairs stand on end (in the form of the grass) and all kinds of flowers blossom. So much sweet-smelling grass grows on Govardhana as a result of his ecstasy, and these grasses in turn nour-

ish the cows and calves and make their milk sweet. Also, in the different seasons, Govardhana makes his body useful for Kṛṣṇa. In the rainy season he becomes dry so that Kṛṣṇa can walk everywhere; in the winter he becomes warm; in summer he becomes cool. Govardhana changes according to the seasons so that the atmosphere will be pleasant for Kṛṣṇa, and he provides water, grass and thousands of fruit trees such as sweet mango and juicy jackfruit. Govardhana grows every kind of fruit and flower. He provides beautiful thrones that have the sweet fragrance of musk. He also provides beautiful *kuñjas* where there are flower beds (*paryāṅka*). Govardhana provides beautiful jewels (*ratna*) and minerals. Usually stones are hard, but the stones of Govardhana are soft. By hearing the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, his stones melt. This is how he changes just to please Kṛṣṇa. And *mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos taylor yat*: Govardhana gives all respect to the cows, cowherd boys, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. He serves them all.

In his commentary on C.c. Madhya 18.34, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the opulence of Govardhana Hill as follows: *pāṇīya* refers to the fragrant cool water from Govardhana's waterfalls. *Pāṇīya* means *pāṇi-jal*. *Pāṇīya* and *sūyavasya*: when these two words are combined, it becomes *pāṇīyasu*. Here *pāṇīya* means *jal* and *sū* means *sūyate*, or *jharati*. Water is coming out and falling (*nirjhara*) like a waterfall or a fountain. Generally, *sūyavasa* means good grains, but Viśvanātha Cakravartī has combined *sū* with *pāṇīya* and used that to explain that there are waterfalls on Govardhana Hill.

Sūyavasa also means all kinds of food grains, flowers and fruits. *Kandara* means *gupha* or cave. Govardhana supplies caves that are pleasing both in summer and in winter for sitting, lying down and playing. *Kandamūlaiḥ* means edible roots. By *upalakṣaṇa* or indirect inference one should also understand that Govardhana supplies jewelled beds, seats, lamps, mirrors, and so on. Whatever Kṛṣṇa or His friends and cows want, the plants on Govardhana immediately provide because Govardhana gives all respect to everyone in Kṛṣṇa's entourage. Therefore, he is certainly a *bhagavata-bhakta*, the crest-jewel of all devotees and of all *hari-dāsa*s. Yudiṣṭhira Mahārāja cannot serve like Govardhana, and neither can Uddhava serve like Govardhana, although he was able to represent Kṛṣṇa to the *gopīs*.

The *gopīs* say that Uddhava cannot do one thing: *yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ*. What does this mean? This is an indirect meaning. Are they referring to Rāma and Kṛṣṇa? Rāma here does not mean Baladeva. It means *ramaṇīya*, charming and delightful, or one who is to be delighted by amorous sports. Thus *rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa* (the lotus feet of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa) actually means *ramaṇīya-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa*, the charming lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. The *gopīs* have exclusive (*ananya*) *prema* for Kṛṣṇa; they are not seeing Balarāma. In the *rāsa* dance Kṛṣṇa plays with Rādhikā and enjoys with the *gopīs*. This *hari-dāsa* is the witness of that. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and all the *gopīs* walk on his head and chest. His chest is the platform for their *rāsa* dance. He feels joyful that Kṛṣṇa is playing and dancing with the *gopīs*. That is why he has so much *pramoda*, jubilation. Therefore, this *gopī* says that Rāma means *ramaṇīya*, that Kṛṣṇa is loving all the *gopīs* as their lover. *Yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos taylor yat pāṇīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ*.

The *gopīs* speak this concealed (*avahita*) meaning by using the word *rāma*. According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary, the word *rāma* has three meanings: blue, charming, and white. Viśvanātha

Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained that *rāma* has another meaning also: “The phrase *he abalā* indicates that for you who are under the control of your master, the only strength is to take shelter of him. Because of this joy, *yataḥ*, he is expanding honor and worship in order to satisfy Them. It refers to the two of Them who are present with all the cows.”

Girirāja Govardhana is more glorious than the other two *hari-dāsa*s because he can serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with his body. Because he has served with his body, he has seen the rarest sight. Kṛṣṇa dances with all the *gopīs* on his chest, but Uddhava and Yudhiṣṭhira cannot witness this.

Both Sanātana Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī have described the glories of Giri-Govardhana in their prayers and they have indicated who is speaking of Govardhana Hill as *hari-dāsa-varya*. Sanātana Gosvāmī says, *he govardhana, ayati śaila kulā-dhīrāja*. When glorifying Girirāja Govardhana in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, he says that Govardhana should be praised, because it is the *gopīs* who have called him *hari-dāsa-varya*. But Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, in his *Śrī Govardhana-vāsa-prarthanā-daśakam* (text 8) says: *giri-nṛpa! haridāsa-śreṇi-varyeti-nāmāmṛtam idam uditam śrī-rādhikā-vaktra-candrāt*, “O king of mountains! Look! From the moonlike mouth of Śrī Rādhā the following words have issued: ‘Hey lovely friends! This hill is the most superb of all of Kṛṣṇa’s servants.’”

Sanātana Gosvāmī says that one of the *gopīs* spoke this verse, but Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says Rādhikā Herself spoke it. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura reconciles these two opinions by saying that Rādhikā is a *gopī*. Sanātana Gosvāmī says a *gopī* spoke this verse and Viśvanātha Cakravartī shows that this does not contradict the fact that Rādhikā is speaking. Rādhā is the head of all the *gopīs*. If Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says *śrī rādhikā vaktra-candrāt*, then She is the *gopī* who is speaking. Where did Rādhikā say this? In the eighteenth verse of the *Veṇu-gīta*.

Rūpa Gosvāmī agrees with this viewpoint, and, therefore, Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, as a *rūpānugā*, has prayed in this way. He says that Rādhikā is speaking these verses: *Barhāpīḍam naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ* (text 5), and *akṣaṇvatām phalam idam na param vidāmaḥ sakhyaḥ paśūn anuviveśayator vayasaiḥ* (text 7). This verse (text 18) is also being spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The proof is that in the previous verse (text 17), it said *dayitā stana-maṇḍitena*. Rādhikā has given the *kuṅkuma* from Her breast to Kṛṣṇa’s feet, but She has forgotten. This is the most *mādhurya* thing, that She has once given Her *kuṅkuma* to Kṛṣṇa, but She Herself wants to taste that exchange again. Therefore, there is no real difference of opinion on this point between Sanātana Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Girirāja Govardhana tastes more bliss (*ānanda*) than Uddhava can understand. Uddhava has no experience of the *rāsa* dance or how Kṛṣṇa becomes controlled by this *gopī*. Kṛṣṇa puts His hand on the neck of the *gopīs*. Śukadeva Gosvāmī says:

*nāyaṁ śtriyo ’ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
svar-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucāṁ kuto ’nyāḥ
rāsotsave ’sya bhuja-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha-
labdhāśiṣām ya udagād vraja-vallabhinām*

“In the *rāsa-līlā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraced the *gopīs* with His powerful arms and thus fulfilled their heart’s desire. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon Lakṣmī, although she always resides at the chest of Śrī Nārāyaṇa and is situated in unalloyed *prema*. Neither was it obtained by the consorts of the Lord’s incarnations in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. What to speak of other women.” (*Bhāg.* 10.47.60).

This verse is also spoken for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, because when Kṛṣṇa left the *gopīs* during the *rāsa* dance and went into the forest with Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa held onto Her neck and said, “You should not leave Me because I cannot live without You.” In this way, Rādhikā controls Kṛṣṇa. Girirāja Govardhana sees this fact. He is the witness of all these pastimes. Kṛṣṇa is performing the *rāsa* dance on his chest and Girirāja Govardhana is tasting these pastimes and feeling jubilation.

Pramoda means *pramāda*, madness; it is similar to what the *gopīs* experience. The *gopīs* say that they would like to be a *govardhana-śilā*, a very small stone from Govardhana. Each part of Govardhana, each *śilā*, is so fortunate to experience Kṛṣṇa’s touch and to melt upon hearing His flute song. When Kṛṣṇa puts his feet on Govardhana, the stones are as soft as butter because they have been melted by the sound of His flute. “But we cannot melt like that. We also hear the sweet sound of the flute and we also see Kṛṣṇa, but still we are not melting. Therefore, let us become dust on Govardhana or a stone so that we can melt at the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute.”

How can we become a stone? If anyone wants *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* or *kṛṣṇa-prema*, he should take shelter under a *tadātmikā-bhakta*. If he does not have the association of a *tadātmikā-bhakta*, then he should have the association of a *rāgānugā-bhakta*. If he does not have that association, then at least he should seek out the association of a devotee who has a sense of greed toward *rāgānugā*. Then his own greed can develop and he can approach *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Therefore, we pray and take shelter of Girirāja Govardhana. Govardhana Hill is so *udāra*, liberal. He can give his association because he has served Kṛṣṇa and His associates and cows. If we surrender ourselves to Girirāja Govardhana, he will give us his blessings because he is so liberal. We are praying to him to give us his mercy so that we can become qualified to also serve Kṛṣṇa. This is the main purport of this verse.

We are servants of the *gopīs* and therefore we have to worship Govardhana as they have instructed. If we serve him like Harideva, then we will lose something. And if we worship Girirāja as written here (*hari-dāsa-varya*), then we will gain so much more. If anyone worships Kṛṣṇa, he does not gain as much as if he serves Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. If anyone serves the *gopīs*, he gains so much, thousands of times more than worshipping Kṛṣṇa. Our Gosvāmīs are wise to choose the service of the *gopīs*. They want to be the *pālya-dāsī* of Rādhā, not *pālya-dāsī* of Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu worships His *govardhana-śilā* as Kṛṣṇa. He has taken the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and always aspires to taste Kṛṣṇa. Everywhere He looks, He sees Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, He also sees Govardhana as Kṛṣṇa. He worships Govardhana by bathing him with tears and embracing the *śilā* to his chest.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā doesn’t worship Govardhana as Kṛṣṇa, but as *hari-dāsa-varya*. She desires that Girirāja gives Her a beautiful, decorated *kuñja* and beautiful lakes and waterfalls. If She were to see Govardhana as Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw him, namely as Kṛṣṇa, then how would He be able to give Her solitary *kuñjas* and beautiful fruits and flowers for Her service to Him? Kṛṣṇa cannot give Her

all these things. Therefore, the mood of worshiping Govardhana is different in *caitanya-līlā* than in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

There are two perceptions. One is that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā when She is in Vraja, and the other is that of Kṛṣṇa when He takes the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu is perceiving Himself as Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Her *bhāva* is there, but there are also some differences. This is *acintya-bhedābheda*. Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā sees Govardhana as Kṛṣṇa, but in Vraja, She sees Govardhana as *hari-dāsa-varya*.

We want to serve Govardhana as Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Her *gopīs* do. Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw only Kṛṣṇa, and when He placed a *guñja-mālā* next to His *śilā*, then He also saw Śrīmatī Rādhikā. In Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is not directly present—only Her mood is present. Therefore, there is a difference between *caitanya-līlā* and *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

Kṛṣṇa-smaran janam casya (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.294): we want to practice *rāgānugā-bhājana*. *Kṛṣṇa-smaran* means remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. *Janam* means the associates of Kṛṣṇa in that very *rasa* that a devotee aspires toward. Kṛṣṇa is one, but His associates are of five kinds. Anyone who has greed in any of these five *rasas*, especially in *mādhurya-rasa*, and within *mādhurya-rasa*, *tat tat bhāva iccāmayi mañjarī-bhāva*, then they should practice remembrance of that *bhāva* even more than of Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is the object of *prema* and Rādhā is the *āśraya*, or the shelter of *prema*. Those in *gopī-mañjarī-bhāva* have to practice remembrance of the *āśraya-tattva*. Lalitā and Viśākhā are also *āśraya-tattva*, along with Rūpa Mañjarī and Rati Mañjarī. (Lalitā and Viśākhā sometimes act in *mañjarī-bhāva*, although they are *sakhīs*). All the *gopīs* (except Śrīmatī Rādhikā) are of two kinds. Lalitā and Viśākhā are *kāmātmikā-gopīs*, but they can also enter *gopī-mañjarī-bhāva*. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Caitanya Mahāprabhu remembered both *veśas* (identities). But if anyone desires this *bhāva*, *tat tat bhāva iccāmayi mañjarī-bhāva*, he should remember this *bhāva* more than he remembers Kṛṣṇa. He should always be thinking of the services of that *mañjarī* he wishes to follow and become *tadātmikā* in that *bhāva*. If one is aspiring for that mood, but remembers and worships Girirāja Govardhana in the way that Caitanya Mahāprabhu has worshiped him, it will not be conducive for the attainment of that *bhāva*. Generally, however, everyone worships like that because they have no association of devotees in *mañjarī-bhāva*. They cannot imagine this *bhāva*. We should always remember the mood of Rādhikā and the *gopīs*, and especially our *gurudeva*, from the viewpoint of a *mañjarī*, under the guidance of Rūpa Mañjarī, Rati Mañjarī and Lavaṅga Mañjarī.

Govardhana is an associate of Kṛṣṇa because he is giving everything he possesses to Kṛṣṇa's service and especially to the service of the *gopīs*. There is no need of a *kuñja* for the *sakhās*; they can graze cows anywhere. They have no need to hide. But the *gopīs* need secret caves and *kuñjas*. Girirāja Govardhana is supplying these for their service. Thus Girirāja is *hari-dāsa-varya*. Therefore, we should also prefer Girirāja-varya (Govardhana as a devotee) more than Harideva (Govardhana as Kṛṣṇa Himself). Only someone in the mood of Caitanya Mahāprabhu should think of Govardhana as Hari-deva.

Text Nineteen

*gā gopakair anu-vanam nayator udāra-
veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyaḥ
aspandanam gati-matām pulakas tarūṇām
niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram*

gāḥ—the cows; *gopakaiḥ*—with the cowherd boys; *anu-vanam*—to each forest; *nayatoḥ*—leading; *udāra*—very liberal (the sound of the flute is very liberal because it distributes supreme bliss to the *gopīs* at various places); *veṇu-svanaiḥ*—by the vibrations of the Lord’s flute; *kala-padaiḥ*—having sweet tones; *tanu-bhṛtsu*—among the living entities; *sakhyaḥ*—O friends; *aspandanam-gati-matām*—the complete nonmovement of those living entities that can move at their own will as well as the rivers, etc., whose nature is to be always moving; *pulakaḥ-tarūṇām*—the ecstatic jubilation of the otherwise nonmoving trees; *niryoga-pāśa*—the ropes for binding the rear legs of the cows; *kṛta-lakṣaṇayoḥ*—of those two (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma), who are characterized by; *vicitram*—wonderful

Translation

Another *gopī* says: O *sakhīs*! The movements of these two youths (Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma), one dark and one fair (Śyāma-Gaura), is certainly unique. On Their turbans, They have rolled up one type of rope for binding the legs of the cows at the time of milking. On Their shoulders, They hang another type of rope for catching the cows who run away. They play on Their flutes and sing sweet songs with the cowherd boys as They lead the cows from one forest to another. At such times, to say nothing of the human beings, even the other moving living entities such as the animals and birds, as well as the rivers, become stunned and the nonmoving trees shiver with ecstasy. What more shall I tell you of the extraordinary wonders of the flute?

Commentary

The *gopīs* say, “O friends (*sakhyaḥ*), O those who have affection for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-anurāginī*).” The *gopīs* are discussing all these pastimes and the speciality of the flute song. Thus they have become immersed in the ocean of *bhāva* (*bhāva-sindhu*). They are speaking spontaneously as it arises in their hearts and minds, not by memory. They explained the characteristics of *hari-dāsa-varya*, Girirāja Govardhana, how he serves Kṛṣṇa in so many ways. “O *sakhyaḥ*, it is hard to serve Kṛṣṇa’s feet in the way that Girirāja Govardhana serves Kṛṣṇa’s feet. What to speak of serving Kṛṣṇa’s feet, we cannot even touch Kṛṣṇa’s feet the way Girirāja Govardhana does, or even smell Their fragrance. And if anyone knows that we are remembering Kṛṣṇa’s feet in our hearts, then they will abuse us and make us feel guilty. Still, we cannot hide these feelings. Girirāja serves Kṛṣṇa in every way.”

The *gopīs* remember and tell each other: *yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparāśa-pramodaḥ mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat pāṇiya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ* (text 18), these are the services performed by Govardhana Hill, and by performing them, he becomes filled with happiness and pleasure from the touch of Kṛṣṇa's feet. His hair stands on end and perspiration flows from his body. Then everything comes from his body, especially during the *rāsa* dance because at that time, all the *gopīs* come. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is in the middle and all the *gopīs* dance. At that time, Śrīmatī Rādhikā feels tired and Kṛṣṇa sits Her on the throne that Girirāja has prepared. Kṛṣṇa gently massages Śrīmatī Rādhikā's feet and sometimes He also places Her feet, which are painted with red *alta* (lac), on His chest. Girirāja Govardhana rejoices to see this and to feel Kṛṣṇa's and Rādhikā's feet on his own head, chest and body. He feels overjoyed and tears and perspiration flow. Girirāja Govardhana trembles as so many *bhāvas* arise and he experiences waves of prema. He becomes so filled with *prema* that he cannot express his joy.

“Oh, how much joy this Govardhana is experiencing. Alas, O *sakhīs*, we cannot touch the feet of Kṛṣṇa or serve in the ways that Govardhana Hill can serve.” The *gopīs* have touched Kṛṣṇa's feet, the *gopīs* have met Kṛṣṇa daily and served in the *rāsa* dance, but still they are experiencing *pūrvā-rāga*. Therefore, they speak as if they have never before met Kṛṣṇa or had the opportunity to touch His feet.

Girirāja Govardhana gives Kṛṣṇa so many varieties of sweet and sour fruits. There are four kinds of tastes in fruit—like lemons, oranges, mangoes, and so on. Girirāja Govardhana gives the fruits that grow on his body. He doesn't have to purchase them or bring them from somewhere else. “If we had any fruit in our bodies, we could give them to Kṛṣṇa—how wonderful it would be! But we do not have those fruits, so what do we have to give like Govardhana?”

They think in this way to such an extent that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* cannot explain it fully. Only the *rasika* followers of Śukadeva Gosvāmī or others can explain all these things. For each item of service that Govardhana Hill performs, he feels jubilation. He gives everything, but the *gopīs* feel that they cannot give anything. They have no fruits, no respect (*mānaṁ tanoti*), they cannot touch Kṛṣṇa's feet or serve Kṛṣṇa's cows and boyfriends like Govardhana can. They are expressing a mood of sorrow. “O *sakhīs*! We cannot imagine how Girirāja Govardhana is serving in this manner. We do not have that opportunity.” Thinking like this, the *gopīs* are moved in their *bhāva*. Kṛṣṇa is herding cows on Govardhana Hill. They are at home, and although They are at home, they can see Govardhana in their hearts.

Go means cows and *gopakair* means cowherd boys. Kṛṣṇa protects the cows and cowherd boys from every calamity, and He also protects them from separation. Another meaning is that they take Kṛṣṇa and keep Him with them. *Gopayati* means *rakṣayati* (shelter). The cowherd boys love Kṛṣṇa so much; therefore He always lives in their hearts.

Anu-vanam means “to each forest.” Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys travel to each forest for cowherding. Why is He roaming from forest to forest with thousands of cowherd boys and cows? Because He is searching for something. He is searching in such a way that no one can know His mind. He appears interested only in grazing the cows and finding the sweetest grasses and waters. Certainly He is going to search for water because water means life. When He sees that water in Kusuma-sarovara, Rādhā-kunḍa or on Govardhana, then He has found what He is looking for. He

is searching for the *vīgraha* of love; He is searching only for Rādhikā. And if He doesn't find Her, then *nayator-udāra-veṇu-svanaiḥ*, He calls Her by the sound of His flute.

The cowherd boys think that He is playing the flute to call the cows. Every cow thinks He is especially calling her by the sweet tones (*kala-padais*) of the flute song. Therefore, this verse says *kala*. But *kala* also means *kliṁ*. In *kliṁ*, every *gopī*'s name is present. Everyone thinks that *go gopakair* means "the cows," but actually it denotes the *gopīs*.

Veṇu-svanaiḥ—the flute song is so liberal (*udāra*) because it is for everyone and everything. It is not only for the *gopīs* or the cows or cowherd boys, but it is for everyone—every creeper, every tree, every bird and animal, every atom. Every living entity becomes jubilant when they hear the flute song, but they hear it only according to their qualification. The *gopīs* are the most affected, but every living entity becomes filled with *prema*, filled with love, by hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute.

Tanu-bhṛtsu sakhyaḥ aspandanāṁ gati-matāṁ pulakas tarūṇāṁ: those living entities that are immobile begin to move, and those that can move stand still. All who have life—whether they are trees, mountains, rivers, people, birds, or beasts—are of two kinds either moving or nonmoving. *Aspandanāṁ gati-matāṁ*: those who are moving, like deer, become silent. They should run away in fear of the cowherd boys and cows, but they stand still and offer their affection to Kṛṣṇa through their eyes. All the birds become silent when they hear the sweet voice of the flute and see the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa, even though they normally sing. The trees and mountains are nonmoving, but they become fluid. The rocks on the mountainsides melt and become soft. The trees blossom with flowers and fruits and their branches hang down to touch the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Their leaves quiver as they hear the flute song and the flowers are the symptoms of the trees' jubilation. *Pulakas tarūṇāṁ niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram*.

Kṛṣṇa has made His *svarūpa*, His body, very beautiful. He has a turban on His head, and on that there is a *pāśa*, a rope for binding cows (*niryoga*). When milking the cows, the cowherd boys bind the rear legs of the cows with ropes. That rope is special because it links the *jīva* to Kṛṣṇa. When a calf is running and the mother cow will not give milk, the cowherd takes the calf and ties it to the side of its mother to encourage her to let her milk down. The rope that binds the cow and calf is called *niryoga*. Kṛṣṇa wears that *niryoga-pāśa* on His turban. Naturally, as a cowherd boy He is decorated beautifully. Everything He does is beautiful.

Kṛṣṇa uses His rope as a noose. When a cow is not peaceful and will not give milk, or when there is a cow that is misbehaving, then the cowherds keep a rope to tie from her neck to her leg. In this way, she cannot escape. The noose hanging on her neck is tightened with bamboo, and if she runs, the bamboo will not move and she will not be able to escape. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa carries a noose.

If one cow is peaceful, a cowherd may tie her to a wilder cow to stop the wilder cow from running away. Kṛṣṇa wears this rope on His turban. Kṛṣṇa looks so beautiful when He is with the cows and milking them. Here the *gopīs* say, "O *sakhī*, Kṛṣṇa has that *niryoga-pāśa* for us. My desires are like the desires of the cows. I want Kṛṣṇa to bind me with the rope of love." With this rope, Kṛṣṇa can forever bind any *jīva*, anyone who has a body. That rope is so beautiful that it attracts everyone, because after being bound by it, it is impossible to be far from Kṛṣṇa. That rope binds the living entity to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

“This rope on His turban is not a mere rope, but it is *niryoga*. It forever links our minds and hearts with Kṛṣṇa. We cannot go home, we cannot be near our husbands, fathers and mothers. This rope takes everything we own and binds it forever to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” That is the meaning of *niryoga*. It is not really a *pāśa* for binding cows, but it is for binding our senses and hearts because they are filled with the same desires to run here and there as the cows do. It is the rope of love (*prema*). “We don’t have the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa like Girirāja Govardhana or like the trees and creepers of Vṛndāvana, but still Kṛṣṇa attracts our hearts so that we can never be far from Him. But actually, we are so far away from Kṛṣṇa.” By speaking about the rope for binding cows, the *gopīs* remember Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

Text Twenty

*evaṁ-vidhā bhagavato
yā vṛndāvana-cāriṇaḥ
varṇayantyo mitho gopyaḥ
krīḍās tan-mayatām yayaḥ*

evaṁ-vidhāḥ—of such a manner (pastimes of such a manner which astonish the entire world); *bhagavataḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (who manifests His own unlimited sweetness); *yāḥ*—which; *vṛndāvana-cāriṇaḥ*—who was wandering in the Vṛndāvana forest; *varṇayantyaḥ*—(the *gopīs* continuously) engaged in describing all these pastimes of the Lord (and thus attained a state of *tadātmā* with those pastimes; in other words, they entered into those pastimes and experienced Kṛṣṇa’s association directly); *mithaḥ*—among one another; *gopyaḥ*—the *gopīs*; *krīḍāḥ-tat-mayatām-yayaḥ*—they attained complete identification with those pastimes; in other words, those pastimes obtained manifestation within their hearts

Translation

O Mahārāja Parikṣit! Everyday the *gopīs*, being deeply immersed in *prema*, discuss among themselves the innumerable pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who plays in the forests of Vṛndāvana. By doing so, they enter a state of ecstatic trance of meditation upon Him. In this way, the pastimes of the Lord continuously manifest within their hearts.

Commentary

The *gopīs* remember all of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana. In this way, they become mad in *prema*. *Evaṁ-vidhā*—everything has been described in these nineteen *ślokas*, all the pastimes described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and some that have not been described. The *gopīs* are discussing these among themselves.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī asks Mahārāja Parikṣit in this verse, “How can I explain the waves of *prema* in the ocean of the *gopīs*’ hearts? I cannot explain all these things.” He is saying that he cannot express the *gopīs*’ feelings of *pūrva-rāga* before *abhisara* (meeting) or express their restlessness. When a lover is waiting and waiting for her beloved, she becomes restless. She doesn’t sleep. The thirty-three kinds of *sañcāri-bhāva* and the eight kinds of *sāttvika-bhāva* all arise in the *gopīs*’ hearts. Śukadeva Gosvāmī says he can see them, but he cannot explain them all, why they arise or how they are coming and going like waves. Therefore, he has given only a sampling of them here. I have spoken only a short version of it. Even Lord Brahmā cannot describe the feelings of the *gopīs* with his four mouths. Even Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa cannot describe them with His thousands of mouths. What then to speak of others? Kṛṣṇa also cannot express what the *gopīs* feel for Him. This chapter

describes *pūrva-rāga* which includes feelings of separation (*vipralambha*). *Pūrva-rāga* means separation before meeting. A *sādhaka* should experience this mood of separation. Without separation, there is no *sādhana*. *Sādhana* should bring on feelings of separation.

These verses are *svārasikī* (a continuous, unbroken meditation that flows like a stream of honey from a jar). They are not for *mantra-upāsana*. We can also practice *svārasikī* remembrance with these verses. *Mantra-upāsana* is practiced by meditating on one verse at a time, but *svārasikī-līlā* is a chain of verses, where each verse sparks remembrance of so many pastimes and connects to the other verses. This chapter is filled with chains of *līlās*. So many flowers form this garland. From beginning to end, this chapter contains so many pastimes.

If we take one of these verses at a time, we can use it for *mantra-upāsana*, especially verses like *barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāram*. The next verse can also be used for *mantra-upāsana*, but as a whole, this chapter is for *svārasikī* remembrance. Also, we should not think that descriptions of the stones melting and the rivers becoming hard are just poetic metaphors. In Caraṇa Pahārī and other places, we can see where the stones melted at the touch of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and now contain His footprints. This is also visible in Citrakuta in the place where Rāma and Bharata met. We should also melt, although we are harder than stone. By hearing and remembering these pastimes in our *rāgānugā-bhajana*, it is possible for our hearts to become soft.

About the Author

His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja is the disciple of *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who was one of the foremost leading disciples of *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was born in a village named Tewaripur located near the bank of the sacred Ganges river in Bihar, India. The area was renowned for being the place where Lord Rāmacandra and Viśvāmitra Muni came and killed the Taraka demon. He was born on the Amāvasyā (new moon) day of February, 1921, into a very religious Trivedi *brāhmaṇa* family. Throughout his childhood he had many opportunities to regularly accompany his father when he would go to attend *kīrtana* and *pravachana* assemblies.

In February of 1947 he had his first meeting with his Gurudeva in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, West Bengal. He had traveled there from his village after meeting a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura named Śrīla Narottamānanda Brahmācārī, who was touring and preaching the message of Śrī Caitanyadeva in the area. After initial discussions with this devotee, he was convinced of the paramount position of the philosophy given by the *ācāryas* in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, and within days he left home to join the mission of his spiritual master and surrender his life.

When he arrived in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, the annual *parikramā* was under way and he joined with the group. Upon its completion on Gaura-pūrṇimā, he was given both *harināma* and *gāyātrī* initiations by Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja and received the name Śrī Gaura Nārāyaṇa. Very soon afterward, his Gurudeva also awarded him the title of Bhakta-bandhava, which means “friend of the devotees,” because he was always serving all of the Vaiṣṇavas in a very pleasing manner.

He traveled extensively along with Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja on preaching tours throughout India over the next five years, and in 1952, on Gaura-pūrṇimā, his beloved Gurudeva awarded him initiation into the sacred order of *sannyāsa*. In 1954 Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja posted him in charge of the newly opened temple in Mathurā named Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja began to spend part of the year in Mathurā and the other part in Bengal, carrying on extensive services in both areas. This went on over the period of the next fourteen years. He was also appointed by Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja as Vice-President of his institution, the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, and Editor-in-Chief of its Hindi publications and the monthly magazine Śrī Bhāgavat Patrikā. In 1968 Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja passed from this world, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja performed all the necessary ceremonial rituals for his *samādhi* burial.

During this time period, as a humble servitor of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja began to organize the annual Kārttika Vraja Maṇḍala Parikramā, which he continues to carry on up to the present day. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was requested by his Gurudeva to translate the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura from Bengali into his native language, Hindi. He has carried out this request by translating some of the Ṭhākura’s most prominent books, such as *Jaiva Dharma*, *Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, *Bhakti-tattva-viveka*, *Vaisnava-siddhānta-mālā*, to name only a few. All these books are also presently being translated into English by his followers. He also continues to

lecture in Hindi, Bengali and English throughout India. All of his discourses are tape-recorded and are gradually being transcribed as well as translated into English for publication.

A significant relationship in the life of Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was his association with His Divine Grace Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, the world-famous preacher of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. They first met in Calcutta in 1948 on the occasion of the inauguration of a new branch of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti on Ghosh Para Lane, where they had both come to render their services. Their association continued a few years later when Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja accompanied Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja to Jhansi where Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja had been attempting to start a Vaiṣṇava society named The League of Devotees. A few years later in the early 50's, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja came to reside at Mathurā in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, by invitation of his godbrother, Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja, where he stayed for some months. By having regular devotional exchanges with him and deep discussions of Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja developed a very intimate relationship with him during this time period, regarding him both as his senior and superior, as well as his friend.

In 1959 Śrīla Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja initiated him into the sacred *sannyāsa* order, giving him the *sannyāsī* name and title Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. The ceremony of Vedic fire *yajña* and all the rituals were performed by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja was already residing in Vṛndāvana during this period, first at the Vamśī Gopāla Mandira and a few years later at the Śrī Śrī Rādhā Dāmodara Mandira. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja would often go there to visit with him. He would cook for him, honor the *prasāda* with him, and have intimate discussions on Vaiṣṇava philosophy.

When Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja went to preach in the West, and succeeded in starting the first Rādhā Kṛṣṇa temple in America, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja sent the first *mṛdaṅga* drums and *karatālas* to him to be used for *saṅkīrtana*. Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja maintained regular correspondence every month or two with Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja up until 1968 when Śrīla Keśava Mahārāja entered *nitya-līlā*. And after that, he continued to write Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja until his own divine departure.

Toward the end of his life, he personally requested Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja several times to kindly give his association to his Western disciples and help them to understand the deep truths of the Vaiṣṇava philosophy in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja humbly agreed to honor his request considering him to be one of his worshipable *śikṣā gurus*. He also requested Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja to take complete charge of performing all the rituals for his *samādhi* burial after his departure. Both of these requests by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja clearly demonstrated the firm and utter confidence that he held in Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.

For a period spanning almost two decades since his departure in November 1977, Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has unwaveringly been carrying out this final request by providing insightful guidance and loving shelter to all who come to him seeking such, and through the medium of his English books he is now giving his purifying association and divine realizations to sincere searchers of truth all over the globe.

For nearly half a century Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has demonstrated and exemplified the pure, unadulterated life of utter dedication and loving service to his Gurudeva, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and the Divine Couple, Yugala-kīśora, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, as Their intimate servitor, continues to illuminate the path for those who wish to discover and dive deep into the ecstatic ocean of *rādhā-dāsyam*, service to the radiantly beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearly beloved, Śrīmatī Rādhikā.