



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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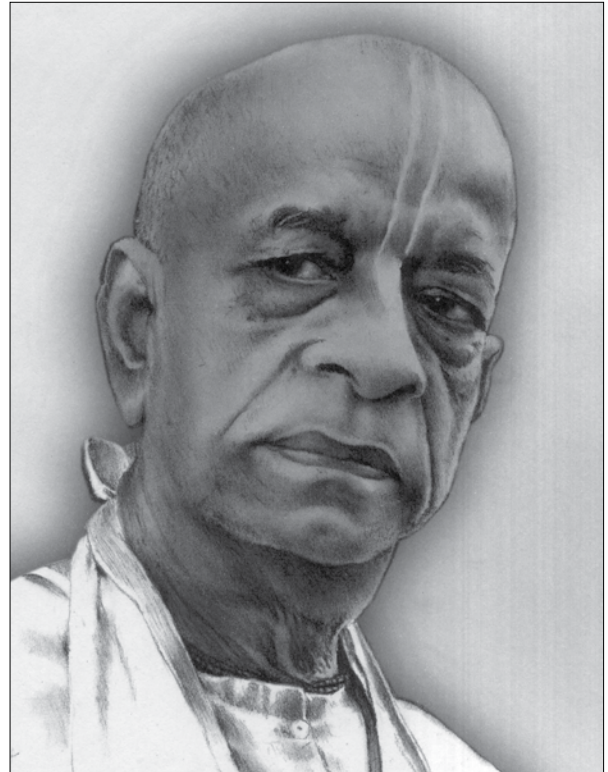


BECOME ATTACHED TO KRISHNA

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Āsakti means attachment. Some persons are attached to their family, some to society, some to nation, some to business, and some to so many things. But to make your life perfect you have to transfer that *āsakti* to Krishna. In the Western countries I have seen that most people have no attachment to family, but because *āsakti* is there, everyone keeps a dog. So they are accustomed to apply their *āsakti* to cats and dogs. That means that *āsakti* cannot be finished. That is not possible. So you haven't got to learn what is *āsakti*. *Āsakti* is there. Everyone has got experience. Simply that *āsakti*, that tendency of attachment, should be transferred to Krishna. That is Vrindavan life. In Vrindavan the center of *āsakti* is Krishna. Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yasoda have *āsakti* for Krishna. The young girls of Vrindavan have *āsakti* for Krishna. The cowherd boys have *āsakti* for Krishna. The trees of Vrindavan have *āsakti* for Krishna. The fruits and flowers of Vrindavan have *āsakti* for Krishna. The Yamuna River has *āsakti* for Krishna. So if you make Krishna your central point of *āsakti*, then you can create Vrindavan anywhere. This is the success of life. We have to change our *āsakti* to Krishna. That is the highest form of mystic yoga.

... This Krishna consciousness movement means to educate people how to become attached to Krishna. But if one does not know what is Krishna, there is no question of increasing ones *āsakti* for Krishna. ❀ (Lecture in Sanand, 27 December 1972.)



Painting by Anuradha Dasi

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

GOPI VASTRAHARANA LILA

PART TWO

Sri Srimad Purnachandra Goswami

Katyayani Puja

They chose a quiet, secluded place for the *kātyāyanī-pūjā*. It was a pure place, free from the contamination of river foam and the footprints of birds or animals. One *gopī* asked, "Are we going

to worship Katyayani separately or are we going to do it all together? We should decide now because we don't want to make any mistakes." Another *gopī* answered, "We should do it together because to worship separately is not very good. Worshipping together will be more beneficial."

The deity of goddess Katyayani was fashioned out of sand from the bank of the Yamuna. As the *vraja-kumārīs* did this, they chanted lovely verses praising Krishna. But even before they established the deity with *mantras*, they sensed that Katyayani was present and thus felt successful that she is already pleased. This encouraged them from the very beginning.

The young *gopīs* started the *pūjā* by chanting a *mantra* to invoke the deity's presence. They beckoned her, "Please come Devi! Please come and accept this *mūrti*. Please help me to come close to Krishna. I offer my obeisances unto you." After welcoming her by bathing her feet with water, they offered *arghya*, *ācamana* and *madhuparka*. While offering these preliminary sweet items, the *gopīs* prayed to taste Krishna's sweet lips.

They began worshipping Katyayani in an extremely elaborate way, expressing their heart-felt desires while doing so. The lotus-eyed girls offered a sari woven with golden threads, and prayed, "O Devi! Please accept this golden sari. And please arrange that my clothes will be exchanged with Krishna's clothes." They brought flawless jewels and ornaments, and prayed, "Please adorn yourself with these priceless ornaments. And please adorn me with the nectar of Krishna's limbs." They offered fragrant ointments made of *aguru*, camphor and musk, and prayed, "O Devi! I anoint you with these rich ointments. Please arrange that I will become anointed with the touch of Krishna's limbs."

They began offering sandalwood paste, incense, flowers, *ghee* lamps, fruit, *betel* nuts, milk, butter, bananas, coconuts, *mung-dāl*, rock candy, sun-dried rice, and cakes soaked in sugar water. They decorated her with new leaves from the trees and with garlands they had strung. They also offered various clothing, ornaments and cooked food like *malpua*, sweet rice, *amṛta-keli*, and many different kinds of cakes. They prayed, "Please accept all of these offerings, dear goddess Katyayani, and

please bestow upon me the remnants from the lotus mouth of the ever-youthful Krishna." Then they chanted with great feeling the mantra found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.22.4) and other scriptures:

*kātyāyani mahā-māye mahā-yoginy adhiśvari
nanda-gopa-sutani devi patini me kuru te namaḥ*

"O goddess Katyayani! O great potency of the Lord! O possessor of great mystic power and mighty controller of all! Please make the son of Nanda Maharaja my husband! I offer my obeisances unto you."

Goddess Katyayani might object, "But when you say *kuru*, 'Please do it!' what do you want from me? You should be allowed to marry whomever you wish. I shall simply inspire your parents to arrange it. Therefore you should rather use the words, 'please cause someone to do it'."

Anticipating this objection, the *gopīs* spoke this verse in agitation. "My connection with him should be immediately arranged by you, rather than with the unnecessary disturbance of my parents. After all, I am extremely anxious and cannot wait any longer. Besides, Krishna has not yet taken initiation and thus is not ready for formal marriage. O goddess, without the formal marriage ceremony, simply by the Gandharva rite, please make him my husband."

The word *adhiśvari* in the above prayer implies that, "There is nothing impossible for you." But the goddess may object, "How can your desire to have intimate association with Krishna come to pass without your parents even knowing?" The *gopīs* reply by the word *mahā-māyā*: "By the power of illusion you should bewilder everyone so that no member of the cowherd community may cause them to surmise my marriage. They should not be able to ascertain the secret of my intimate association with Krishna. The status of being a husband can be achieved without marriage, and thus there is no harm even if I am formally married to some other cowherd man." In this way, each of the *gopīs* separately meditated on the meaning of the *mantra*.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravartipad has commented that the *gopīs* were not actually worshipping *mahā-māyā*, but rather *yoga-māyā*. This is clear since the *gopīs* are such exalted devotees of the Lord that they could never be in contact with the material energy.

And they certainly do not need to worship *māyā-devī*. *Yogamāyā* in Vrindavan is Purnamasi and in other places she expands as Subhadra or Ekanamsa.

Hypothetically, there is no fault even if they were worshipping *mahā-māyā*, since the inhabitants of Vraja are performing the pastime of acting as members of ordinary society. Furthermore, we have the statement of *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Srila Sanatan Goswami's commentary on the tenth canto, that some persons may think that this Durga is *mahā-māyā*. But because such an idea is contrary, such persons are unable to touch even a faint trace of a taste of the *gopīs'* love for Krishna.

After offering *ārati* and finishing their prayers, the *gopīs* paid their obeisances and offered the deity of Katyayani into the Yamuna. Throughout the entire month, the *vraja-kumārīs* kept their enthusiasm, and even increased the standard of worship. Every day at dawn the young girls of Vrindavan village would come to the Yamuna and perform the same activities. The common folk thought that they were trying to obtain wealth, but they had no desire for wealth.

Just before the end of the month, the *gopīs* received the mercy of Katyayani. Katyayani reciprocated with the young *vraja-kumārīs* by appearing in their minds. She spoke to each of them thusly, “O young girls, you are the topmost attraction for Krishna's conjugal love. You will attain all good fortune by worshipping Krishna. Your sincere prayers indicate your strong longings for Krishna. Your prayers also make me glorious. Very soon you will all attain Krishna's association according to your individual tastes. Now you can complete your austerities.”

The Last Day

When the *gopīs* received this revelation, they became greatly encouraged and finished the last few days of the *vrata*. Then, on the last day, which was *Pūrṇimā*, they went to take their final bath. The *Bhāgavatam* tells us that they were bathing naked every day. To celebrate the successful completion of their vow, they, all having the same idea in mind, invited the daughter of Vrishabhanu, Sri Radhika, who along with her prominent *sakhīs* was a special object of their affection. They brought these special *gopīs* with

them to the river that last morning. This statement indicates that Sri Radhika was not performing this *vrata* daily along with them because she and her girlfriends were already betrothed to be married.

The significance of the *gopīs'* inviting Sri Radha and her *sakhīs* to the last day of their *vrata* is that one cannot enter *vraja-līlā* without the sanction and assistance of Vraja's eternal residents. Therefore a *sādhaka* takes shelter of a *nitya-siddha* associate of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna and prays for that associate's mercy to be accepted into the specific group desired. Srila Prabhupada describes:

“The *vrndāvana-vāsīs* — mother Yasoda, Krishna's friends, and Krishna's conjugal lovers, the younger *gopīs* with whom he dances — have very intimate relationships with Krishna, and if one follows in the footsteps of these devotees, Krishna is available. Although the *nitya-siddha* expansions of Krishna always remain with Krishna, if those engaged in *sādhana-siddhi* follow in the footsteps of Krishna's *nitya-siddha* associates, such *sādhana-siddhas* also can easily attain Krishna without difficulty.” [Purport to *Bhāg.* 10.9.21]

On that last morning, the *gopīs* felt quivering in their left arms, eyes and thighs. This is auspicious for ladies, whereas quivering on the right side would indicate inauspiciousness. They were happily playing in the water that morning, feeling successful in the fulfillment of their vow. Their playing in the water was meant to serve as their *avabhṛtha-snāna*, the ceremonial bath taken immediately upon the completion of a Vedic sacrifice.

Krishna knew and understood everything about the *gopīs'* desires and austerities, and he went to the bank of the Yamuna with four young boys to award the *gopīs* the results of their loving endeavors. The four boys, whose names were Sridama, Sudama, Vasudama and Kinkini, are known to be the external manifestations of Krishna's intelligence, ego, heart and mind. From the moment of their departure, the boys, being enthusiastic, kept asking him, “Where are we going? Where are we going?” until they finally arrived at the Yamuna.

Srila Sanatan Goswami and Srila Jiva Goswami have written that these boys were four or five years old, which makes their presence completely inoffensive. Srila Kavi Karnapur further describes that these boys were friends from the same group who were tending

the cows that day along with Krishna. According to Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur, however, these boys were even younger, only two or three years old. As such they could not even judge the difference between a boy and a girl. He writes that they had left their homes completely naked in the usual fashion of young village boys. These little boys from Vrindavan were so attached to Krishna that when he left the village to herd the cows in the pasturing grounds, they had to follow him, not being able to tolerate his absence. Either way, Krishna arranged younger friends to accompany him that morning because the *gopīs* would be too embarrassed if older boys were present.

The *gopīs' prema* had reached its goal because they had no other desire. This is necessary for success on the path of *bhakti*. Srila Rupa Goswami has defined *uttama-bhakti* as *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*, devoid of any other desires. One's *bhakti* must gradually become one-pointed, and Krishna often helps his devotees to achieve this stage by taking everything else away from them. This is his special mercy. In this way, Bhagavan Sri Krishna is more assertive in dragging his devotee to perfection than the Paramatma, who simply fulfills desires. Srila Kaviraja Goswami has written in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta madhya* 22.38–39:



Krishna stole the clothes of the gopīs

*kṛṣṇa kahe, — 'āmā bhaje, māge viṣaya-sukha
amṛta chāḍī' viṣa māge, — ei baḍa mūrkhā*

*āmi — vijñā, ei mūrkhē 'viṣaya' kene dība?
sva-caraṇāmṛta diyā 'viṣaya' bhulāiba*

Krishna says, “If one engages in my transcendental loving service but at the same time wants the opulence of material enjoyment, he is very, very foolish. Indeed, he is just like a person who gives up ambrosia to drink poison. Since I am very intelligent, why should I give this fool material prosperity? Instead I shall induce him to take the nectar of the shelter of my lotus feet and make him forget illusory material enjoyment.”

This scenario is for very sincere devotees. Srila Prabhupada has commented on this verse as follows:

Of course, sometimes if a devotee is very sincere, the Lord, as a special favor to him, refuses to fulfill his material desires and directly blesses him with pure, unalloyed devotional service. [Purport to *Bhāg.* 8.16.21]

Because of the strong, pure love of the *gopīs*, Krishna left his cowherd friends and Balaram to reciprocate with them.

(to be continued) ❧

ONLY A VAISHNAVA *Padma Purāna* 6.253.27

*mahākūla-prasūto 'pi sarva-yajñeṣu dīkṣitaḥ
sahasra-śākhādhyāyī ca na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavaḥ*

Even though born in an exalted caste, having been initiated in all the Vedic sacrifices, and having studied thousands of branches of the Vedas, a non-*vaiṣṇava* should never accept the position of guru. ❧

— Quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 1.54. Sanskrit transliteration from Gaudiya Grantha Mandir: <http://www.granthamandira.com>. Translated by Hari Parshad Das.

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