



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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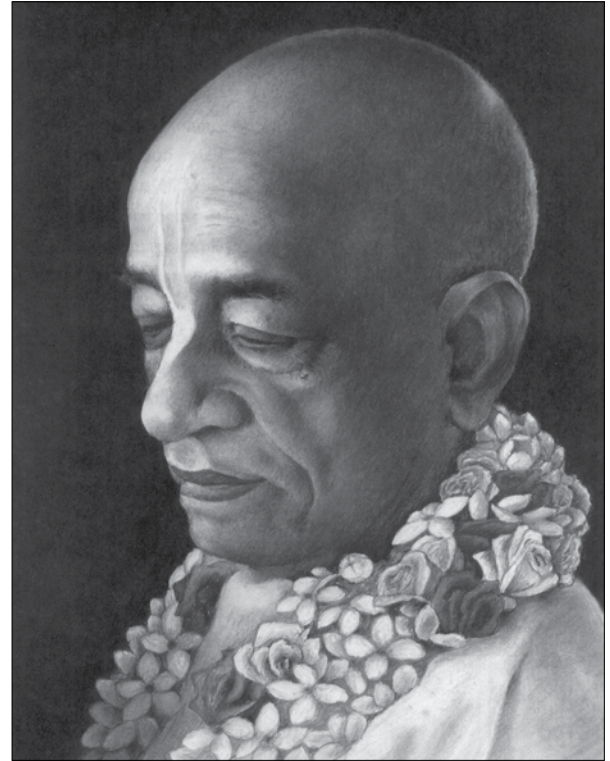


THE GLORIES OF RADHA KUND

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

Arit Gram is also called Arishta Gram. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu understood that Arishtasura had been killed by Sri Krishna in that village. While there, he inquired about Radha Kund, but no one could tell him where it was. The brahmin accompanying him could also not ascertain its whereabouts. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu could then understand that the holy places known as Radha Kund and Shyam Kund were at that time lost to everyone's vision. He therefore discovered Radha Kund and Shyam Kund, which were two reservoirs of water in two paddy fields. Although there was very little water, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was omniscient and could understand that formerly these two ponds were called Sri Radha Kund and Shyam Kund. In this way Radha Kund and Shyam Kund were discovered. (Purport to *Cc. madhya* 18.3)

The spot where we now find Sri Radha Kund was an agricultural field during the time of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. A small reservoir of water was there, and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu bathed in that water and pointed out that originally Radha Kund existed in that location. Following his directions, Srila Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami renovated Radha Kund. This is one of the brilliant examples of how



Painting by Anuradha Dasi

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

the Goswamis excavated lost places of pilgrimage. Similarly, it is through the endeavor of the Goswamis that all the important temples in Vrindavan were established. (Purport to *Cc. ādi* 10.90)

Why is Radha Kund so exalted? The lake is so exalted because it belongs to Srimati Radharani, who is the most beloved object of Sri Krishna. Among all the *gopīs*, she is the most beloved. Similarly, her lake, Sri Radha Kund, is also described by great sages as the lake that is as dear to Krishna as Radha herself. Indeed, Krishna's love for Radha Kund and his love for Srimati Radharani are the same in all respects. Radha Kund is very rarely attained, even by great personalities fully engaged in devotional service, what to speak of ordinary devotees who are only engaged in the practice of *vaidhī bhakti*.

It is stated that a devotee will at once develop pure love of Krishna in the mood of the *gopīs* if he once takes a bath in Radha Kund. Srila Rupa Goswami recommends that even if one cannot live permanently on the banks of Radha Kund, he should at least take a bath in the lake as many times as possible. This is a most important item in the execution of devotional service. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur writes in this connection that Sri Radha Kund is the most select place for those interested in advancing their devotional service in the mood of the lady friends (*sakhīs*) and confidential serving maids (*mañjarīs*) of Srimati Radharani. Living entities that are eager to return home to the transcendental kingdom of God, Goloka Vrindavan, by means of attaining their spiritual bodies (*siddha-dehā*) should live at Radha Kund, take shelter of the confidential serving maids of Sri Radha, and under their direction engage constantly in her service. This is the most exalted method for those engaged in devotional service under the protection of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In this connection, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur writes that even great sages and great devotees like Narada and Sanaka do not get an opportunity to come to Radha Kund to take bath. What, then, to speak of ordinary devotees? If, by great fortune, one gets an opportunity to come to Radha Kund and bathe even once, he can develop his transcendental love for Krishna exactly as the *gopīs* did. It is also recommended that one should live on the banks of Radha Kund and should be absorbed in the loving service of the Lord. One should bathe there regularly and give up all material conceptions, taking shelter of Sri Radha and her assistant *gopīs*. If one is thus constantly engaged during ones lifetime,



Unknown artist

Radha Krishna in lotus dress

after giving up the body one will return back to Godhead to serve Sri Radha in the same way as he contemplated during his life on the banks of Radha Kund. The conclusion is that to live on the banks of Radha Kund and to bathe there daily constitute the highest perfection of devotional service. It is a difficult position to attain, even for great sages and devotees like Narada. Thus there is no limit to the glory of Sri Radha Kund. By serving Radha Kund one can get an opportunity to become an assistant of Srimati Radharani under the eternal guidance of the *gopīs*. (Purport to *Nectar of Instruction* verse 11) ❀

THE PERFECTION OF ALL BHAJANA

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur

Bhaktivinode Thakur discusses the glories of Sri Radha Kund in his pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī commentary on the last verse of Srila Rupa Goswami's Upadeśāmṛta.

śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇera svābhāvika māhātmya varṇana-dvārā sādhakera citte dṛḍhatā utpanna karibāra abhiprāye ekādaśa ślokerā avatāraṇā. śrī rādhikā śrī kṛṣṇera atiśaya praṇaya-vasati evaṁ anyapriyājana apekṣā sarvatābhāve preṣṭhā. munigaṇa śāstre ei-rūpa utkarṣa śrī-rādhā-kuṇḍa sambandhe likhiyāchena. kevala sādha-bhakta digera ta kathāi nāi, ye prema nāradādi preṣṭha-vargera pakṣā-u durlabha, tāhā anāyāse bhaktipūrvaka

*rādhā-kunḍe snāna karile sei kuṇḍa pradāna
karena. sutarām rādhā-kundaī samasta bhajana-
parāyaṇa-digera-vāsa-yogyā sthāna. aprākṛta
vraje aprākṛta jīva aprākṛta gopī-deha lābha kariyā
śrī-rādhā-kunḍe svīya guru-rūpā sakhīra kuñje
pālya-dāsī-bhāve avasthīti karataḥ bāhye nirantara
nāmāśraya-pūrvaka kṛṣṇera aṣṭa-kālīya sevāya
śrīmatī rādhikāra paricaryā karāī śrī-caitanya-
caraṇāśrita vyaktira bhajana-cāturī.*

Through the description of the natural glories of Sri Sri Radha Krishna (in the previous verse), this eleventh verse is composed with the intention of solidifying the devotional consciousness of the practitioner of devotional service.

Srimati Radhika is the topmost abode of deep-rooted love of Krishna, and moreover she is superior in all respects to all other dear cowherd girls. The glories of her *kuṇḍa* have also been described by the great sages in a similar way in the revealed scriptures.

The *prema* that is difficult to attain even for sages like Narada, what to speak of general practitioners, is attained by devotionally bathing in the waters of this *kuṇḍa*.



Unknown artist

Krishna serving Radharani's lotus feet

Therefore, its banks are the ideal residence for all those engaged in perfecting their devotional life.

The expertise of a living entity sheltered at the feet of Lord Chaitanya will be exhibited in three ways — he will externally chant and remember the *aṣṭa-kālīya* pastimes of the divine couple, he will internally serve Srimati Radharani by acquiring a spiritually perfected *gopī* body in the divine realm of Vrindavan, and he will always keep a mood of being the maintainer maid-servant (*pālya-dāsī*) of the flowery bower (*kuñja*) created by the *sakhī* who is one's guru. ❀

— Translated from the *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* with various commentaries published by Sri Chaitanya Math, Mayapur.

SHELTER AT RADHA KUND

Sri Radha Raman Das Goswami

Sri Radha Raman Das Goswami, a learned vaiṣṇava in the line of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami, discusses the glories of Sri Radha Kund in his upadeśa-prakāśikā commentary on the last verse of Srila Rupa Goswami's Upadeśāmṛta.

nanu tad-āśrayād kiṁ milati? tatra tādrṣa-siddhāntam-evopasaṁvahan tataḥ premopalabdhim-āha - kṛṣṇasyeti. yat-prema kṛṣṇa priyatvena khyāter-nārad-ādibhiḥ jalam durlabhaḥ tadnān taj-jātīya premāsambhavāditi bhāvah. tadapi prema-karma-bhūtam karṭṛ-bhṛtam-idaṁ savah snātum sambandhe āviṣkaroti prakāṣayati. tad ko nāśrayediti pūrvenaiva sambandhaḥ.

Question: What is attained by taking shelter of Radha Kund?

Answer: To uphold the *siddhānta* that *prema* is attained by staying at Radha Kund, this verse, “*kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ ...*” (text eleven) is spoken.

This *prema* is renowned due to it being very dear to Lord Krishna. Even for sages like Narada, etc., the waters of Radha-kunda are difficult to attain. This *kuṇḍa* is both the bestower of *prema* (*karṭṛ*) and the object of *prema* (*karmā*). *Prema* manifests to one who bathes in its waters. Therefore, who is that intelligent person who won't take shelter of Radha Kund? ❀

— Transcribed and translated from *Sri Upadeśāmṛta* with various commentaries, published by Sri Chaitanya Math, Mayapur.

LORD SHIVA AT RADHA KUND

Lord Shiva is a great devotee of Krishna and of Srimati Radharani. In text 113 of the *Rādhā-sahasra-nāma-stotra*, Lord Shiva mentions two

names of Radharani connected with him. He says that she is known as *śaivā*, “the worshiper of Lord Shiva”, and *śaivalānanda-dāyini* — “She who gives happiness to the worshipers of Lord Shiva.”

Of all the *līlā-sthalīs*, pastime places of the divine couple, Radha Kund is the topmost. In order to protect Radha Kund, and also to give himself the opportunity to observe some of the intimate pastimes that Sri Sri Radha Krishna performed at this place, Lord Shiva has manifested himself here in the forms of several *līngas*. The oldest and chief ones are:

1) Kundeshwar Mahadeva — This very old *śiva-līnga* is installed on the southwestern side of Radha Kund. It is said that in 1545, Srila Raghunath Das Goswami found ancient deities of Radha Krishna and this *śiva-līnga* buried in the divine mud of Radha Kund during his excavation work. Pilgrims commonly first go to him to seek his blessings before taking bath in Radha Kund. Some say that this *līnga* is actually a *govardhana-śilā*.

2) Bankhandi Mahadeva — also known as Barkhandi Mahadeva. Barkhandi (*baḍa-khaṇḍi*) seems to be a corruption of *vaṭa-khaṇḍi*, meaning “resident of a banyan tree forest”. He guards the eastern side of Radha Kund.

3) Ranuva Mahadeva — *Ranuva* means “celibate”. This *śiva-līnga* is called Ranuva because there is no deity

of Parvati here. Ranuva Mahadeva is situated on the northeastern side of Shyam Kund, near the Jagannath temple and behind the Radha Kund town hall.

4) Laliteshwar Mahadeva — Situated near Lalitakunda on the northeastern side of Shyam Kund.

5) Rameshwar Mahadeva — Situated next to the cremation grounds and the lake named Shiva Puskarini, just west of Radha Kund. He guards the western side of Radha Kund.

There is also a *śiva-līnga* at the place known as Vallabha Pataka, where Srila Vallabhacharya performed his *bhājana*. Although this *līnga* is said to have been worshiped by Vallabhacharya, some scholarly residents of Radha Kund doubt this to be true. According to them, while Vallabhacharya was staying at Radha Kund he was daily going to have *darśana* of the ancient Shiva deity of Bankhandi Mahadeva mentioned above. So perhaps this *līnga* is a recent addition, i.e. less than 500 years old. ❀
— Sri Krishna Kathamrita, Issue No. 8 (The Glories of Lord Shiva, Part II).

BENEFITS OF THE BAHULASHTAMI BATH Sri Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 16.207

pādme tatraiva —

*govardhana-girau ramye rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ priyaṁ hareḥ
kārttike bahulāṣṭamyāṁ tatra snātvā hareḥ priyaḥ
naro bhakto bhaved viprās tad dhi tasya pratoṣaṇam*

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said, “O brahmins, a person who during the month of *Kārttika*, on the *Bahulāṣṭamī* day, bathes in Radha Kund, which is by beautiful Govardhan Hill and which is very dear to Lord Krishna, becomes a great devotee. Lord Hari is pleased when someone bathes here.

Commentary by Srila Sanatan Goswami:
tatra-kuṇḍe naraḥ snātvā hareḥ priyatamo bhavet. ‘hi yataḥ tatra tatra sthānaṁ tasya hareḥ pratoṣaṇam prakarṣeṇa toṣayatī arthaḥ.

By bathing in Radha Kund, one becomes dear to Lord Hari. The word *hi* in the verse (*tad dhi*) means that by bathing in those places Lord Hari is thoroughly pleased (*prakarṣeṇa toṣayati*) ❀

— Translated from the Sanskrit found at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (<http://www.granthamandira.com>)



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