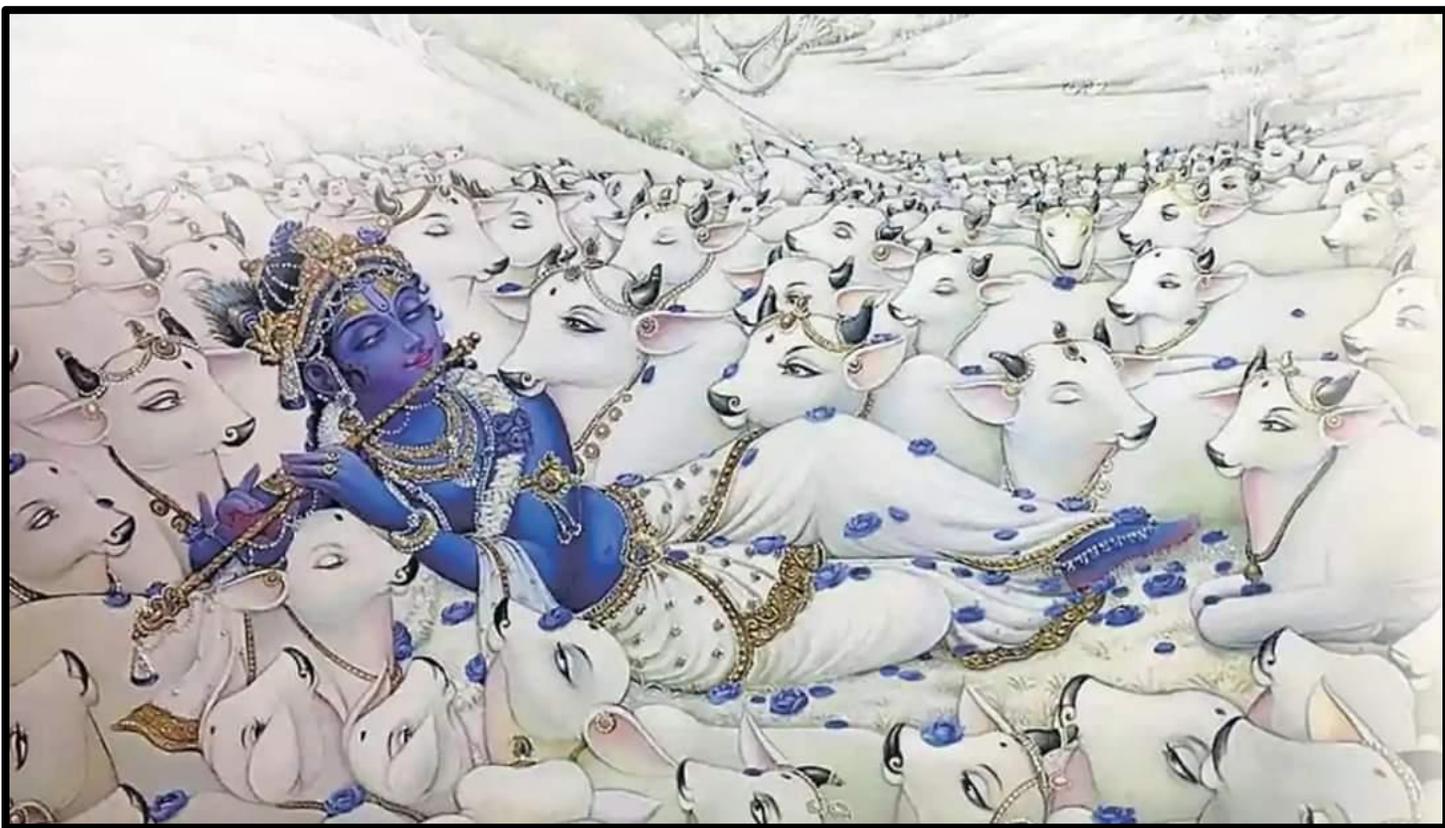


Momma, You Look So Stressed!

— Presented by Śrīmatī Dāsī and team
ISKCON, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma



All the cowherd men, including Nanda Mahārāja, used to talk of the wonderful activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and they were always so much absorbed in those talks that they forgot the threefold miseries of this material existence. This is the effect of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What was enjoyed five thousand years ago by Nanda Mahārāja can still be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa conscious persons simply by talking about the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His associates.

— Kṛṣṇa Book, Ch. 11

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Momma, You Look So Stressed!

- * Momma, you look so stressed and tired today, what's the problem?
- * I guess I've reached my limits with this lockdown, Lalitā. It seems like it's never going to end.

Placing her little hand on my arm, my six-year old daughter gazed upon me with the eyes of a wise old sage. And sagaciously she said,

- * Momma, Kṛṣṇa is taking such good care of us. What complaint can we make? Our family is healthy and we can keep in touch by skype or zoom. He's giving us so much super practical support in so many ways.
- * Yes, that's true. I guess the real problem is that I am very worried about your Papa. The new business he started last October is an import/export venture and he's invested all our life savings in it. The coronavirus pandemic is tearing all his plans to shreds. Life is very, very tough for him right now, and so I worry about him.

Worrying Is Such a Nasty Habit!

- * Yesterday in our skype class, Govinda Mātājī said that our habit of worrying about things is a special trick of Māyādevī to take our minds away from Kṛṣṇa. She said we should pray and try our best to solve our problems

BUT WE SHOULD NEVER EVER WORRY!

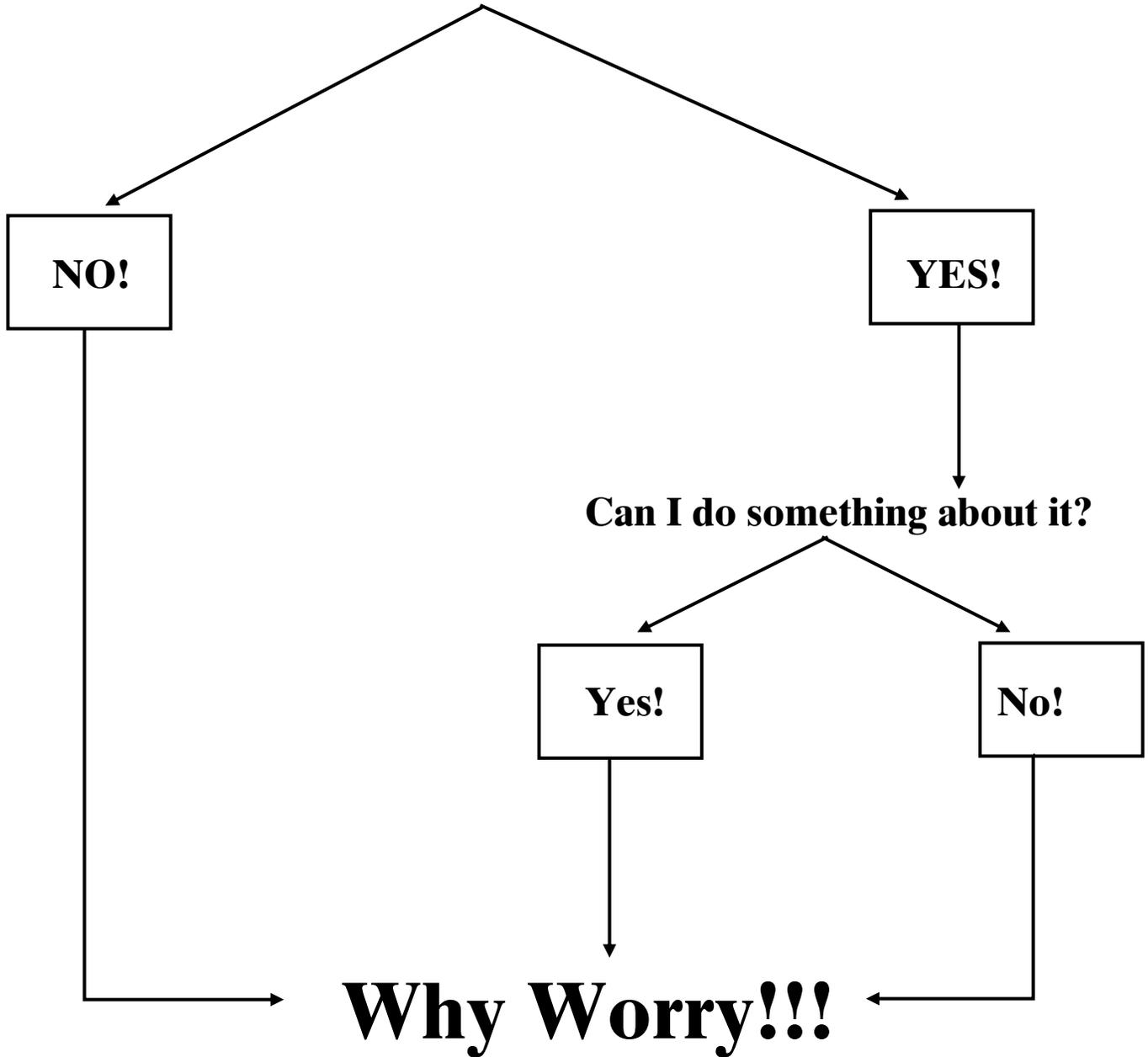
- * Really?! What else did she say?
- * Well, she started the class with an amazing question that got us all talking. ***Always remember corona — Never forget corona. These are the essential principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, aren't they?*** Of course, we all laughed and then corrected her — but she'd very powerfully made her point. Worrying not only takes our thoughts away from Kṛṣṇa and fills our very being with all-devouring negativity.....

IT DOESN'T EVEN SLIGHTLY HELP SOLVE OUR PROBLEM!

She shared a chart with us from a famous devotee life coach which really smashes the idea that if I worry it means I care. Actually, worrying is just a habit — a nasty, very destructive habit. Best we give it up and get on with the real life. Would you like to take a look at the chart Govinda Mātājī shared with us? It's really something!

- * Sure

GOT A PROBLEM?



**Oh my dear mind,
Please Don't Make a Habit of Anxiety and Worry
— It Will Eat Me Alive! —**

The pure devotee does not have to worry about the material necessities of life; he need not be anxious, because when he removes the darkness from his heart, everything is provided automatically by the Supreme Lord, who is pleased by the loving devotional service of the devotee. This is the essence of the teachings of Bhagavad-gītā.

— Bg 10.11p

- * Very powerful, isn't it?! Do you want to hear something else she told us that's really special?
- * Why not?!

TIME TO EXERCISE OUR FAITH MUSCLES

She said we are not in the central fire of the present global crisis right now and we should see that as Kṛṣṇa's very special mercy. We should also see it as a special opportunity for us to start following in the footsteps of Kṛṣṇa's greatest lovers — His eternal associates in Vṛndāvana who faced so many crises. Of course, we can't imitate their selfless love for Him. But that love has two very distinctive characteristics

-  complete absorption in Kṛṣṇa and
-  complete dependence on Kṛṣṇa

Mātāji said that if we start practicing these two things in our own little way now our faith muscles will gradually become very strong

-  strong enough to deal with the coronavirus pandemic challenge
-  strong enough to deal with any life challenge that comes our way.

- * That makes sense, what else did Govinda Mātāji say?

She Told Us Pastimes I've Never Heard!

She said we'd talked enough for today and so now we should start practicing what she'd shared with us. ***We should think about Kṛṣṇa — not corona!*** And to help us do that she began to tell us a very special pastime....

- * Once upon a time in Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa and His queen Satyabhāmā had just finished a game of chess and were relaxing together in Their palace. Satyabhāmā took the opportunity to ask Kṛṣṇa a question that had been on her mind for quite some time.

My beloved Lord, both sages and ascetics have told me that when You lived in Vṛndāvana You grew an amazing garden of exquisite pearls. This fascinates me. If You so wish, kindly share this pastime with me. Your loving exchanges and pastimes with Your gopīs in Vraja truly enliven and nourish my heart. Please tell ...

- * Govinda Mātāji, Satyabhāmā is Kṛṣṇa's queen, she lives in Dvārakā. Why is she so attracted to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana?
- * That's a very god question, Lalitā — and a very big topic! Today I'll just answer it with another pastime. Is that okay?
- * Sure, Mātāji. Please tell...

Satyabhāmā Makes Kṛṣṇa Nārada Muni's Servant

* One day, Nārada Muni came to Dvārakā to take *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa. In the palace courtyard he met Satyabhāmā who was decorating her beautiful tresses with flowers for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. Nārada Muni knew of Satyabhāmā's pride and fiery nature and he thought to make some fun. He walked up to her and very innocently inquired, ***My deep respects to you Queen Satyabhāmā. Please don't doubt my intentions, but I've a sensitive and delicate question to ask of you — Is it true that Kṛṣṇa loves Rukmiṇī more than you?***

Satyabhāmā was thoroughly shaken by his question and stood stunned before him, not knowing what to say or think.

And so Nārada continued, ***You are far more beautiful and charming than Queen Rukmiṇī. You are the younger queen. Don't you feel you deserve more attention.***

Satyabhāmā was intrigued by Nārada Muni's words. She looked at him inquisitively and with great intensity. She asked, ***Oh, great sage, please help me. How can I best attain Kṛṣṇa's undivided love?***

Oh, that's not so difficult, replied Nārada, ***please hear my simple foolproof plan.***

Satyabhāmā's face lit up, her eyes twinkled and she listened to Nārada's words with rapt attention.

You gift your Kṛṣṇa to me as my servant, and then I'll allow you to buy Him back by giving me all your precious jewelry and treasures equal to His weight. When Kṛṣṇa sees that you are willing to give up all your favorite jewelry and opulence to attain Him, no doubt He'll be attracted by your selfless sacrifice and want to keep you always close to Him. This is an excellent plan, But I've one doubt — Will your wealth be sufficient to match Kṛṣṇa's weight?

Proud as ever, Satyabhāmā felt insulted by Nārada Muni's doubt, and emphatically replied, ***I am the only daughter of King Satrājīt. My wealth is limitless. Of course I'll have enough to balance Kṛṣṇa's weight! Your plan is a very good one. Let's immediately put it into action.***

That said, she immediately left to inform Kṛṣṇa that He was now Nārada Muni's servant, but she would use all her jewelry and treasures to buy Him back.

Knowing very well the nature of Nārada Muni, Kṛṣṇa said nothing. He just smiled and nodded His head.

Satyabhāmā then commanded some of the servants to bring the large scales used to weigh grains to the center of the grand court room. She also sent the caretaker of all her jewelry and wealth to bring it all to the same room. All the ministers stared at the huge scales in the middle of the room, and their mouths dropped in surprise when they saw box after box of jewelry and precious treasures being carried into the court room. Satyabhāmā then gently but very firmly led Kṛṣṇa into the room. Kṛṣṇa remained peaceful and silent throughout the whole event. But when the ministers saw Kṛṣṇa enter so sheepishly and led by a very determined Satyabhāmā, they made a roar of mixed surprise and displeasure so loud that all of Kṛṣṇa's other queens came running from their palaces.

Then, amidst all the courtiers and with Kṛṣṇa Himself as the witness, Satyabhāmā gave Kṛṣṇa to Nārada Muni for him to engage in his service. All of Kṛṣṇa's other wives were shocked and outraged by this, but being ever-dutiful they could not bring themselves to speak out in front of so many respected elders.

Nārada Muni accepted Kṛṣṇa as his servant, but gave Satyabhāmā the option of buying Him back by giving him treasures equal in weight to Kṛṣṇa. Immediately there were loud sighs of relief from all present, and Satyabhāmā graciously accepted Nārada's offer. She then asked Kṛṣṇa to kindly sit on one side of the scales and with a confident smile began piling her precious jewelry on the other side.

But the scales didn't budge an inch. She determinedly added more and more precious weight — but still no change! Satyabhāmā became very nervous and giving up her pride began to ask all the other queens present to offer their jewelry. Being very devoted to Kṛṣṇa, all the queens removed every ornament they were wearing until all that was left was their Maṅgalasūtras. But still the scale showed no signs of change.

Satyabhāmā panicked and finally Kṛṣṇa spoke to her, ***My dear queen, your giving Me to Nārada Muni for service is ridiculous. Why don't you ask Rukmiṇī for help? She is very intelligent and sober, I am sure she'll be able to free us from this predicament.***

Satyabhāmā was at a loss for words. She saw Rukmiṇī as her rival and her pride didn't like the idea of approaching her for help. But what could she do?! Kṛṣṇa was at stake! Putting aside her ill will towards Rukmiṇī, she ran to her and begged for her help.

Ever calm, sober and gentle, Rukmiṇī walked with Satyabhāmā back to the court room. Along the way she saw a Tulasī tree offered her obeisances and prayers and after purifying her hands, plucked a Tulasī leaf for Kṛṣṇa. When she entered the hall, she offered her obeisances to her husband and her respects to all present. She then very quietly walked towards the balance, prayed to Kṛṣṇa, and placed the single Tulasī leaf on top of all the precious treasures.

Everyone present laughed in great relief and cheered to see the result — Kṛṣṇa's side of the scale flew up and remained underbalanced. Shocked by this, Satyabhāmā looked to Kṛṣṇa for an explanation.



But Kṛṣṇa just smiled at her and said, ***Please remove all your jewelry from the scale.***

With a very sceptical look on her face, Satyabhāmā removed all the jewelry from the scale — only the Tulasī leaf remained. And yet it weighed more than Kṛṣṇa! She was stunned — and very much humbled. Kṛṣṇa jumped down from the scale and approached her. ***My dear Satyabhāmā, you gave all your riches to Me, but there was no devotion — only pride and a sense of ownership. Your offering was very cheap, there was no depth of heart in it. Rukmiṇī offered Me a single Tulasī leaf, but she offered it with utmost love for Me. Please always remember, I want your heart, not your possessions — just serve Me with a simple and open heart as the gopis of Vṛndāvana do. Then I will always be captured by your love. Rukmiṇī has learnt this lesson very well — you have much to learn from her.***

Then, leaving Satyabhāmā stunned and standing in the court room, Kṛṣṇa left with Rukmiṇī and His other queens.

Her eyes streaming with tears, Satyabhāmā then turned towards Nārada Muni and said, ***Devarṣi Nārada, all glories to you! Today you have taught me a very painful but precious lesson. Never again will I underestimate the power of selfless love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Never again will I take lightly the simple hearted, soft hearted and selfless love for Kṛṣṇa of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. I've so much to learn from them! Thank you so much for your kindness upon me.***

Nārada Muni smiled, glanced very mercifully upon her and then left for his next preaching field.



- * Now do you understand why Satyabhāmā likes to hear about Kṛṣṇa's loving dealings and pastimes with the *gopīs*, Lalitā?
- * Yes Mātājī — such an amazing story! Thank you so much!
- * Okay, so do we still want to hear about Kṛṣṇa growing His own pearls?!
- * YES PLEASE!

Kṛṣṇa Grows His Own Pearls

- * Every day Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda and Their *sakhīs* enjoy exquisitely beautiful, fun-filled pastimes at Rādhā-kuṇḍa. More than four cherished hours are spent together in flute stealing, water sports, Holi play, swing pastimes, feasting, dice playing — and so much more!

Preparing for these precious hours of play also keeps Śrī Rādhā and Her *sakhīs* very busy. There's so much to be cooked, so many garlands and flower ornaments to be made. In the morning, they collect flowers from Kusuma Sarovara, and then walk to a small but very sacred *kuṇḍa* near Rādhā-kuṇḍa named Mālyahāra-kuṇḍa. Here they very expertly string beautiful garlands and ornaments.

One fine Dīwālī morning during the most auspicious month of Kārtika, Kṛṣṇa heard from His pet parrot Vicakṣaṇa that Rādhā and Her friends were stringing garlands of pearls instead of flowers. Curious about their unusual activity and ever-eager for their company, Kṛṣṇa walked alone to Mālyahāra-kuṇḍa. But their dealings with Him greatly disappointed Him. They didn't seem happy to see Him and when He asked for just a few pearls to make necklaces for two of His favorite cows, Vamśipriyā and Maṅgalā — who were also very dear to the *gopīs* — they flatly refused Him. Very proudly they retorted, ***“These are very rare and precious pearls — they are definitely not***

suitable for Your cows.” When He persisted despite them ignoring Him, Lalitā finally went to the large basket of pearls and searched through them. She found a small damaged pearl and handed it to Kṛṣṇa saying, ***“This is all we have for Your cows, please stop bothering us and go home.”***

Govinda was heartbroken. He cried for some time, but then decided that He’d grow His own pearls. He returned home and asked Yaśodā Māi, ***“Mātā, please give Me some of your best quality pearls.”*** When Yaśodā asked why, Kṛṣṇa told her that He wanted to grow pearls and needed a few to start His garden. Surprised by her son’s request, she replied gently, “My dear Gopāla, pearls won’t grow in the earth. They come from the ocean.” But Gopāla was very determined and just to satisfy His heart, she gave Him a handful of first-class pearls. Delighted and excited, Gopāla then ran to the bank of the Yamunā and immediately dug some little holes in the earth. He placed a pearl in each hole and covered each one with soil. He then decided that He needed to water them. He wanted shining white pearls and therefore decided He should only water them with fresh cow’s milk.

Once again, He approached His dearest *gopīs*, but this time He asked for lots of milk to water His pearl garden. At first Rādhā and Her friends looked at Him incredulously and they were speechless. But soon they all broke into laughter — and that’s all they would give Him — lots of laughter! Upset, but ever-determined, Gopāla returned Home. ***“Mātā, I need lots of milk to water My pearl garden”***. Yaśodā Māi just smiled and gave her very special son all the milk He desired. Happy and enthusiastic, Gopāla profusely watered His pearl garden with first class milk.

After a few days, little green shoots started appearing from where the pearls had been planted. Kṛṣṇa was so happy and ran to share His success with Rādhā and Her *gopī* friends. Curious, they came to the pearl garden to inspect the new little plants. ***“You fool, these are not pearl sprouts, they are thorn bush sprouts. You’re wasting Your time — and Your mother’s precious pearls!”*** That said, they all left without saying another word.

But a few days later, those sprouts grew into luxurious creepers that bore an immense quantity of large and very beautiful pearls that had an ambrosial fragrance which permeated the entire realm of Vṛndāvana. Smelling the intoxicatingly sweet scent, the *gopīs* came to Kṛṣṇa’s pearl garden. Kṛṣṇa began laughing and joking with them, ***“Just see! My pearls are so much bigger and better than yours — they even have a wonderful fragrance.”***

Not to be outdone, Rādhā and Her *gopīs* met and decided that they would make their own pearl garden. They collected all their own pearls, as well as those of their mothers and other family members. They planted every single pearl they could lay their hands on — and they watered their huge pearl garden three times a day with milk, yogurt,

butter and *ghee*. After just a few days, small green sprouts appeared which quickly grew into bushes — THORN BUSHES! Rādhā and Her friends were horrified!

But Kṛṣṇa just laughed and laughed and laughed. He called all His boyfriends and together they made a beautiful pearl necklace for each and every cow in Vṛndāvana. He made one for each of His favorite bulls — Padmagandha and Piśāṅgākṣa. He made one for each of His two dogs — Vyāghra and Bhramaraka. He made one for His pet monkey, Dadhilobha — and even one for His pet peacock, Tāṇḍavika. In fact, He and His friends made pearl necklaces for every buffalo, every goat and every sheep in Vṛndāvana. Even the monkeys were proudly wearing their fabulous new pearl necklaces. **BUT KRṢṂA WOULD NOT GIVE A SINGLE PEARL TO THE GOPĪS!**



And the *gopīs* were in so much anxiety. They'd planted all their pearls, but they all turned into thorn bushes! What were they going to tell their mothers and mother-in-laws? They shuddered at the thought of how their families would react when they heard the bad news. However soon they devised a plan — Kañcanalatā and Candramukhī would go to Kṛṣṇa and offer gold in exchange for some of His amazing pearls. But as soon as they approached Him, Kṛṣṇa retorted, ***“Even the jewelry of Lord Nārāyaṇa is not worth a fraction of the price of one of My pearls. Your offer is not only inappropriate, it’s ludicrous!”*** Each *gopī* tried her level best to barter with Kṛṣṇa but He flatly refused each one of them with the words, ***“My dear gopī, I’d rather throw them in the Yamunā.”***

Rejected, dejected and in complete anxiety the *gopīs* left to the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s jeering and joking words. Not wanting to return home, they decided to go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and

try to devise a more successful plan. They thought and thought and thought, and talked and talked and talked, but no plan came.

Meanwhile Kṛṣṇa was in His pearl garden admiring the beauty and exotic fragrance of His unlimited pearls. Suddenly an idea overwhelmed His heart with joy — He decided to make a pearl necklace for each of His dear but very unhappy *gopīs*. He took the very best of His pearls and with His own hands strung a most elegant necklace. He then carefully placed that necklace in a very ornate box and with His own hands engraved the name of Śrī Rādhā on the box. In this way, He made named boxes with gifts of precious pearl necklaces for all of Rādhārāṇī's *gopīs* and for Rādhā Herself. He then asked Subala and Madhumaṅgala to deliver them.

All of the *gopīs* were overjoyed by the beautiful gifts and overwhelmed with happiness by this auspicious and very timely turn of events. They strung very beautiful and fragrant garlands and cooked exotic delicacies for the two trusted messengers to take to Kṛṣṇa. Once the boys had left, each *gopī* marveled at the wonderful gift Kṛṣṇa had made just for her and then proudly — and very happily — wore it. These were the most precious and rare pearls in all of existence, so now they could finally go home without fear of being chastised and punished by their parents.....

Jaya Rādhā, Jaya Kṛṣṇa, Jaya Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma!



- * Thank you so much for sharing these amazingly sweet pastimes with me Lalitā. I feel more content and relaxed than I have in a long, long time.
- * And I bet you haven't worried about Poppa for the last thirty minutes — and that's what really makes the difference!
- * Lalitā, can I ask a favor of you?
- * Sure!
- * Can you please share with me any pastimes Govinda Mātājī tells you?
- * My pleasure, Momma — then I'll also get to hear them again. I am also tuning in to some fabulous international kirtans and nectar sessions, do you want me to keep you updated?
- * That would be great. If I'm in-tune with Kṛṣṇa and happy and relaxed I'll be able to offer a lot more help and meaningful support to your Poppa. Just commiserating and worrying with him doesn't make a lot of sense.
- * It doesn't make any sense, Momma —

Worry is just a nasty, destructive habit!

Still Got a Problem?

Hearing and Chanting about Kṛṣṇa Offer the Only Permanent Solution!!!

Dear Lord, words spoken by You or words describing Your activities are full of nectar, and simply by speaking or hearing Your words one can be saved from the blazing fire of material existence.

— *Songs by the Gopīs*, KB, Ch. 31



Intelligent persons factually dip into the ocean of Your nectarean activities and very patiently hear about them. Thus they are immediately freed from the contamination of the material qualities; they do not have to undergo severe penances and austerities for advancement in spiritual life. This chanting and hearing of Your transcendental pastimes is the easiest process for self-realization. Simply by submissive aural reception of the transcendental message, one's heart is cleansed of all dirty things. Thus Kṛṣṇa consciousness becomes fixed in the heart of a devotee." The great authority Bhīṣmadeva has also given the opinion that this process of chanting and hearing about the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the highest religious process. And the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says that worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the essence of all Vedic ritualistic performances.

"Dear Lord," the personified *Vedas* continued, "the devotee who wants to elevate himself simply by the process of devotional activities, especially by hearing and chanting, very soon comes out of the clutches of the dualities of material existence. By this simple process of penance and austerity, the Supersoul within the devotee's heart is very much pleased and gives the devotee directions so that he may go back home, back to Godhead.

— *Prayers by the Personified Vedas*, KB, Ch. 87



Regardless of what one is, if one wants the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the transcendental kingdom of God for eternity in blissful existence, one must hear about the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and chant the *mahā-mantra*, *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*.

The transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, are so powerful that simply by hearing, reading and memorizing this book, Kṛṣṇa, one is sure to be transferred to the spiritual world, which is ordinarily very difficult to achieve. The description of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that it automatically gives us an impetus to study repeatedly, and the more we study the pastimes of the Lord, the more we become attached to Him. This very attachment to Kṛṣṇa makes one eligible to be transferred to His abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana.

— *Summary Description of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes*, KB, Ch. 90



It is the nature of a devotee to constantly apply his mind, energy, words, ears, etc., in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

— *The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahmā*, KB, Ch. 13