



Śrī Annadā Ekādaśī

Issue no:168

3rd September

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Circulation 32005



THE SONG OF SEPARATION
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The Gopīs said: O beloved, Your birth in the land of Vraja has made it exceedingly glorious, and thus Indira, the goddess of fortune, always resides here. It is only for Your sake that we, Your devoted servants, maintain our lives. We have been searching everywhere for You, so please show Yourself to us. O Lord of love, in beauty Your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of benedictions, You are killing the maid servants who have given themselves to You freely, without any price. Isn't this murder? O greatest of personalities, You have repeatedly saved us from all kinds of danger from poisoned water, from the terrible man-eater Agha, from the great rains, from the wind demon, from the fiery thunderbolt of Indra, from the bull demon and from the son of Maya *Dānava*. You are not actually the son of the *gopī* Yasoda, O friend, but rather the indwelling witness in the hearts of all embodied souls. Because Lord Brahma prayed for

You to come and protect the universe, You have now appeared in the Satvata dynasty.

O best of the Vrsnis, Your lotus-like hand, which holds the hand of the goddess of fortune, grants fearlessness to those who approach Your feet out of fear of material existence. O lover, please place that wish-fulfilling lotus hand on our heads. O You who destroy the suffering of Vraja's people, O hero of all women, Your smile shatters the false pride of Your devotees. Please, dear friend, accept us as Your maidservants and show us Your beautiful lotus face. Your lotus feet destroy the past sins of all embodied souls who surrender to them. Those feet follow after the cows in the pastures and yet are the eternal abode of the goddess of fortune. Since You once put those feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kaliya, please place them upon our breasts and tear away the lust in our hearts. O lotus-eyed one, Your sweet voice and charming words, which attract the minds of the intelligent, are bewildering us more and more. Our dear hero, please revive Your maid servants with the nectar of Your lips. The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent. Your smiles, Your sweet, loving glances, the intimate pastimes and confidential talks we enjoyed with You; all these are auspicious to meditate upon, and they touch our hearts. But at the same time, O deceiver, they agitate our minds greatly.

Dear master, dear lover, when You leave the cowherd village to herd the cows, our minds are disturbed with the thought that Your feet, more beautiful than a lotus, will be pricked by the spiked husks of grain and the rough grass and plants. At the end of the day You repeatedly show us Your lotus face, covered with dark blue locks of hair and thickly powdered with dust. Thus, O hero, You arouse lusty desires in our minds. Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by Lord Brahma, fulfill the desires of all who bow down to them. They are the ornament of the earth, they give the

highest satisfaction, and in times of danger they are the appropriate object of meditation. O lover, O destroyer of anxiety, please put those lotus feet upon our breasts. O hero, kindly distribute to us the nectar of Your lips, which enhances conjugal pleasure and vanquishes grief. That nectar is thoroughly relished by Your vibrating flute and makes people forget any other attachment. When You go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator. Dear Acyuta, You know very well why we have come here. Who but a cheater like You would abandon young women who come to see Him in the middle of the night, enchanted by the loud song of His flute? Just to see You, we have completely rejected our husbands, children, ancestors, brothers and other relatives. Our minds are repeatedly bewildered as we think of the intimate conversations we had with You in secret, feel the rise of lust in our hearts and remember Your smiling face, Your loving glances and Your broad chest, the resting place of the goddess of fortune. Thus we experience the most severe hankering for You. O beloved, Your all-auspicious appearance vanquishes the distress of those living in Vraja's forests. Our minds long for Your association. Please give us just a drop of that medicine, which counteracts the disease in Your devotees' hearts. O dearly beloved, Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Canto 10: "The Summum Bonum" > Chapter 31. The Gopīs' Songs of Separation > Verses: 1-19, Translations by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada.

TWO CATEGORIES OF GOPĪS
Followers of His Divine Grace
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Throughout the Tenth Canto, Srila Visvantha Cakravarti Thakura gives elaborate poetic

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commentaries on Lord Krishna's pastimes. The acarya's comments on this verse are as follows:

"In this context we will make our analysis according to the method described in Srila Rupa Goswami's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. There are two categories of *gopīs*: the eternally perfect (*nitya-siddha*) and those who have become perfect by practicing *bhakti-yoga* (*sādhana-siddhas*). The *sādhana-siddhas* are of two categories: those who belong to special groups and those who do not. And there are also two classes of the *gopīs* belonging to special groups: namely the *śruti-cārīs*, who come from the group of the personified *Vedas*, and the *ṛṣi-cārīs*, who come from the group of sages who saw Lord Ramacandra in the Dandakaranya forest.

"This same fourfold categorization of the *gopīs* is given in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*gopyas tu śrutayo jñeyā
ṛṣi-jā gopa-kanyakāḥ
deva-kanyās ca rājendra
na mānuṣyāḥ kathaṅcana*

'It is understood that some of the *gopīs* are personified *Vedic* literatures, while others are reborn sages, daughters of cowherds, or demigod maidens. But by no means, my dear King, are any of them ordinary humans.' Here we are informed that although the *gopīs* appeared to be human cowherd girls, they actually were not. Thus the contention that they are mortals is refuted.

"The daughters of cowherds, referred to here as *gopa-kanyās*, must be eternally perfect, since we never hear of them having executed any *sādhana*. Their apparent *sādhana* of worshiping goddess *Kātyāyanī* in the role of *gopīs* merely manifests their manner of playing like human beings, and the *Bhāgavatam* narrates the account of this worship only to show how they had fully taken on the role of cowherd girls.

"That the *gopa-kanyā gopīs* are actually *nitya-siddhas*, eternally perfect devotees of the Lord, is established by a statement in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37)—*ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ*—which proves that they are the Lord's spiritual pleasure potency. Similarly, we have the words of the *Gautamīya-tantra* verifying the point, *hlādinī yā mahā-śaktiḥ*. Further corroboration of their eter-

Bhāgavata Mahāvidyālaya



nal perfection is that these *gopīs*, being coeternal with Lord Krishna, their lover, are mentioned along with Him in the eighteen-syllable *mantra*, the ten-syllable *mantra* and others, and also that the worship of these *mantras*, and also the *śrutis* that present them, have been in existence since beginningless time.

"The *deva-kanyās*, daughters of the demigods, who are mentioned in the verse beginning *sambhavas tv amara-striyaḥ*, are explained in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as partial expansions of the *gopīs* who are eternally perfect. That the *śruti-cārī gopīs*, the personified *Vedas*, are *sādhana-siddha* is understood from the following words of theirs quoted in the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāna*:

*kandarpa-koṭi-lāvāṇye
tvayi dṛṣṭe manāmsi naḥ
kāminī-bhāvam āsādya
smara-kṣubdhānya-saṁśayāḥ*

*yathā tval-loka-vāsinyāḥ
kāma-tattvena gopikāḥ
bhajanti ramaṇam matvā
cikīrṣājaninas tathā*

'Since we have seen Your face, which possesses the beauty of millions of Cupids, our minds have

become lusty after You like those of young girls, and we have forgotten all other allurements. We have developed the desire to act toward You as do the *gopīs* who dwell on Your transcendental planet and who manifest the nature of Cupid by worshipping You with the idea that You are their paramour.'

"The *ṛṣi-cārī gopīs* are also *sādhana-siddha*, as stated in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*: *gopālopāsakāḥ pūrvaṁ aprāptābhīṣṭa-siddhayaḥ*. Previously they were all *mahārṣis* living in the *Danḍaka* forest. We find evidence for this in the *Padma Purāna*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa*:

*dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra
bhoktum icchan su-vigraham
te sarve strītvam āpannāḥ
samudbhūtās ca gokule
hariṁ samprāpya kāmena
tato muktā bhavārṇavāt*

This verse says that upon seeing Lord Ramacandra, the sages in the *Dandaka* forest desired to enjoy Lord Hari (Krishna). In other words, the sight of Lord Rama's beauty reminded them of Lord Hari, Gopala, their personal object of worship, and they then wanted to frolic with Him. But out of embarrassment they did not act on that desire, whereupon Lord Sri Rama, who is like a desire tree, gave His mercy to them, even though they had not voiced their request. Thus their desire was fulfilled, as stated by the words beginning *te sarve*. By means of their lusty attraction they became freed from the ocean of material existence, the cycle of birth and death, and coincidentally they got the association of Hari in conjugal love.

In the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam* we understand that it was the *gopīs* who had children who were kept forcibly at home. This fact is clear from verses yet to come: *mātarāḥ pitarāḥ putrāḥ* (SB 10.29.20), *yat-paty-apatya-suhrdām anuvṛttir aṅga* (SB 10.29.32) and *pati-sutānvaya-bhrāṭṛ-bāndhavān* (SB 10.31.16). In his comments on the Tenth Canto, Srila Kavi-karnapura Gosvami mentions this fact. Without trying to repeat all his thoughts on this verse, we will give the gist of his purport:

'Upon seeing the personal form of Lord Sri Ramacandra, the sages who were worshipers



of Lord Gopala immediately became elevated to the mature platform of spontaneous devotion, automatically reaching the stages of firm faith, attraction and attachment. But they had not yet completely freed themselves of all material contamination; therefore Sri Yogamaya-devi arranged for them to take birth from the wombs of *gopīs* and become cowherd girls. By associating with the eternally perfect *gopīs*, some of these new *gopīs* fully manifested loving attraction prior to meeting (*pūrva-raga*) for Krishna as soon as they reached puberty. When these new *gopīs* got the direct audience of Krishna and physically associated with Him, all their remaining contamination became burned up, and they achieved the advanced stages of *prema*, *sneha* and so on.'

'Even though they were in the company of their cowherd husbands, by the power of Yogamaya the *gopīs* remained unsullied by sexual contact with them; rather, they were situated in purely spiritual bodies that Krishna alone touched. On the night they heard the sound of Krishna's flute, their husbands tried to stop them, but by the merciful assistance of Yogamaya the *sādhana-siddha gopīs* were able to go forth to their beloved, together with the *nitya-siddha gopīs*.

"Other *gopīs*, however, because of not getting the good fortune of associating with the *nitya-siddha gopīs* and other advanced *gopīs*, had not achieved the stage of *prema*, and so their contamination

was not completely burned away. They entered the company of their cowherd husbands and, after sexual union with them, gave birth to children. But a short time later even these *gopīs* developed *pūrva-raga* by hankering intensely for the physical association of Krishna—a hankering they acquired by associating with the eternally perfect *gopīs*. Becoming worthy recipients of the mercy of the perfected *gopīs*, they assumed transcendental bodies fit to be touched by Krishna, and when Yogamaya failed to help them overcome their husbands' attempts to keep them from going out, they felt themselves cast into the worst calamity. Viewing their husbands, brothers, fathers and other family members as enemies, they came close to dying. Just as other women might remember their mothers or other relatives at the time of death, these *gopīs* remembered the sole friend of their very life, Krishna, as stated in the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the word *antar*.'

'It is implied that those ladies were not able to exit because they were held back by their husbands, who were standing before them with sticks in their hands, scolding them. Although these *gopīs* were perpetually absorbed in love for Krishna, at that particular time they meditated upon Him and cried out within: "Alas, alas, O only friend of our life! O ocean of the artistic skills of Vrndavana forest! Please let us become your girlfriends in some future life, because at this time we cannot see Your lotus-like face with our eyes. So be it; we shall look upon You with our minds." Each of them lamenting to herself in this way, the *gopīs* stood with their eyes shut and meditated deeply upon Him.'

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Canto 10: "The Summum Bonum" > Chapter 29. The Gopīs' Songs of Separation > Verse: 10-11, Purport by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

THE GOPĪS OF GOKULA Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura

Vrajanatha, "The scriptures tell us that the *gopīs* of Gokula in the spiritual sky are eternally perfect personalities *nitya-siddha* manifesting in *Vraja-dhāma* upon earth to enhance the transcendental pastimes of Sri Krishna. If this is the case then how may the statement of the *Padma Purāṇa* regarding



the Dandakaranya sages be harmonised with this description of the *gopīs* of Gokula?”

Raghunatha dasa Babaji, “The *nitya-siddha gopīs* manifest in the material world to participate in the *rasa-līlā* dance of Sri Krishna at Gokula. However, in addition to them, there is another category of *gopīs*, who have attained perfection through spiritual practice (*sādhana-siddha*). Having attained perfection through *kāmarūpa-sādhana bhakti*, they are elevated to the pastimes in Gokula. According to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 10.29.8, where it is said ...*tā vāryamāṇāḥ patibhiḥ*... ‘By serving Sri Krishna in meditation, when hindered by their mothers, fathers, husbands and brothers from meeting Govinda, they [the *sādhana-siddha gopīs*] abandoned their external material bodies and regained their original purely spiritual forms, and in these forms they attained the association of Sri Krishna in His *rāsa-līlā* pastime.’ Many of these *sādhana-siddha gopīs* were previously the Dandakaranya sages who had performed *rāgānuga sādhana-bhakti* with the conjugal mood towards Krishna in their hearts. Thus, they later acquired transcendental forms as *gopīs* in Vraja.”

Vrajanatha, “Babaji, who are the *nitya-siddhas*, and who are the *sādhana-siddhas*?”

Bhāgavata Mahāvīdyālaya

Raghunatha dasa Babaji, “The complete embodiment of Sri Krishna’s internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) is Srimati Radharni. Her immediate personal expansions are the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, the eight principal *gopīs*, who further expand as the *nitya-siddha gopīs*, who are thus the *kāya-vyūha*, bodily expansions, of Srimati Rādhārāṇī. They are all *nitya-siddha*, eternally perfect, and not in the category of the ordinary living entities (*jīva-śakti*); they are an exclusive class of their own, being the expansions of the *svarūpa-śakti* of Krishna, Srimati Radharani.

“The general *sakhīs* of Vraja had attained perfection through their intense engagement in *rāgānuga sādhana-bhakti* and were later elevated to associate with the *nitya-siddha* expansions of Srimati Radhika; they are perfect examples of *sādhana-siddha bhaktas*. By being imbued with the *hlādinī-śakti* by the mercy of Srimati Radhika, they have attained *sālokya* to serve with the *nitya-siddha vraja-gopīs*.

“Those devotees who are engaged in *rāgānuga-bhakti* in *mādhurya-rasa* are elevated as *sakhīs*, i.e. *gopī* friends of Srimati Radhika, when they attain perfection. Other *sādhakas* may endeavour solely upon the path of *vaidhī-bhakti*—putting aside the internal practices of *rāgānuga-bhakti*—to satisfy the *riraṁsa*, amorous desires, of Sri Krish-

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na with deference to śāstric import. Later, when leaving their bodies these practitioners of exclusive *vaidhī-bhakti* may serve Krishna in Dvaraka as His married queens. The practice of taking shelter of Sri Radha, the Goddess of Vraja, and Her *vraja-gopīs* is outside the curriculum of *vaidhī-bhakti-mārga*, the path of regulative devotion. Thus, only those who nurture *rāgānuga-bhakti* internally and practice the *vaidhī-bhakti* discipline externally will obtain the perfection of service in Vraja.”

- Jaiva-dharma Translated by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. & Sarvabhavana dasa

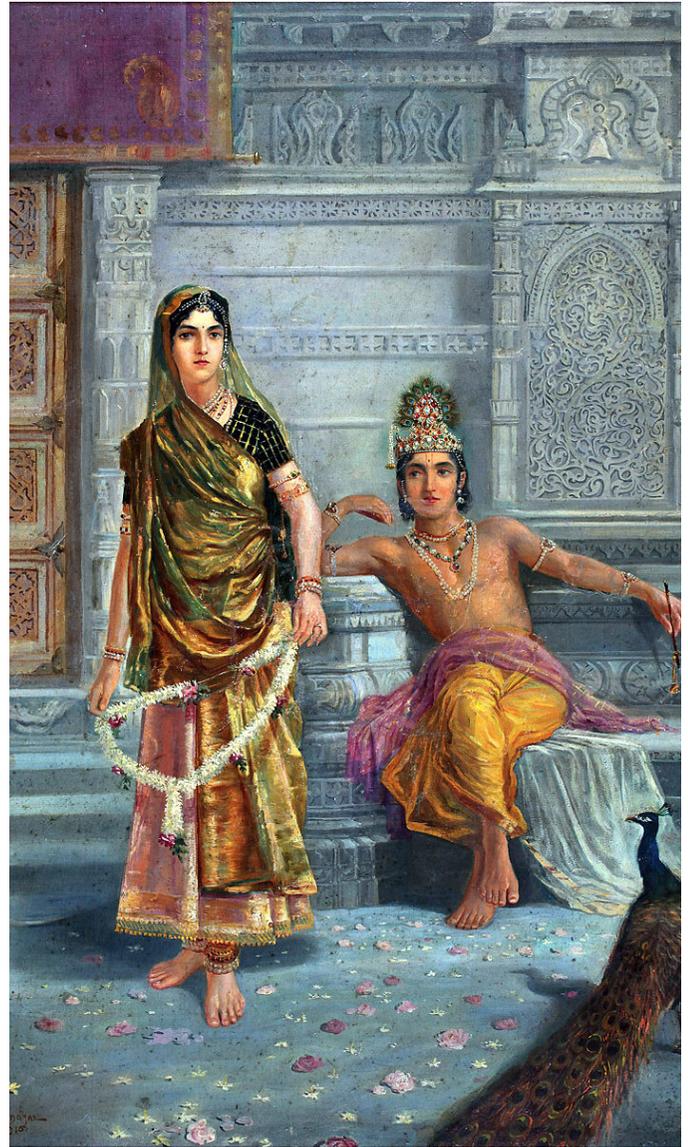
THE BEST WAY TO WORSHIP KRISHNA Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

The best way to worship Krishna is in the way in which the *gopīs* of Vraja worshiped Him. Lord Krishna is composed of transcendental energies and is supremely independent. His transcendental energies have three principal duties. His first energy is called *hlādinī*, and its purpose is to give Krishna pleasure. His second energy is called *saṁvit*, and its purpose is to help Krishna feel the depth of His own self. The third energy is known as *sandhinī*, the energy of existence, and its purpose is to make all arrangements for the Lord's enjoyment.

Actually, all the ingredients for Krishna's enjoyment are arranged by the *sandhinī-śakti*. Personified, she serves Krishna by manifesting His abode and the paraphernalia for His pastimes. The *saṁvit* energy serves Krishna by making Him feel pleasure and helping Him realize Himself. The *hlādinī-śakti* personified manifests Herself in various forms to increase the transcendental mellows of Krishna's ecstatic love in newer and newer ways. These forms appear as the young milkmaid damsels of Vrindavana (*gopīs*). These *gopīs* are expansions of Sri Radha, who is the personification of ecstatic love for Krishna and the supreme enchantress. Sri Radha is the original shelter of all of Krishna's transcendental energy. Although this divine young couple form a unity, they manifest Themselves as the enjoyer and the enjoyed. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes to establish our service to Krishna through subordination to Radhika.

- Amṛta Vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality of His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada; Compiled by Sripada Bhakti Mayukha Bhāgavat Maharaja; Adapted and Published by Isvara dasa; Touchstone Media.

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