



Sri Aparā Ekādaśī

Issue no: 235

3rd June 2024

THE STORY OF KUBJA

THE STORY OF KUBJA
Srila Jiva Gosvami

KRISHNA PLEASURES HIS DEVOTEES
Srila Sukadeva Gosvami

TWO LEVELS TO UNDERSTAND KUBJA
Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

THE STORY OF KUBJA

Srila Jiva Gosvami

It is because Sri Radha and the gopis spoke words giving this specific benediction to them that the ladies of Mathura were able to see Sri Krishna. This truth is confirmed by the following words of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.42.24): “When Krishna and Balarama had been going from Vrindavan to Mathura, the inhabitants of Vrindavan had imagined the great fortune of the citizens of Mathura in being able to see the wonderful beauty of Krishna, who is worshiped by His pure devotees and the goddess of fortune. The fantasies of the residents of Vrindavan were now actually realized, for the citizens of Mathura became fully satisfied by seeing Krishna.”

Her words tinged with irony, Lalita then said: “It is certainly by Sri Radha’s mercy that the women of Mathura attained their desire. Still, did you not omit something in your account of these glorious pastimes? why did you speak such a truncated description of Lord Krishna’s pastimes with Kubja?”

Seeing the shy reluctance of the two narrators, Sri Krishna said: “You two know My heart. Please tell the story of Kubja. Tell it as it truly was.” The two narrators said: “O graceful Lalita, please listen. By mere logic no one can understand the actions of supremely merciful Sri Krishna. Krishna’s heart melts with compassion when He sees a person who has been rejected by all others in the world. If a poor and downtrodden person becomes attracted to Krishna, then Krishna, who places Himself under the control of His poor and humble devotee, becomes attracted to that person. Thousands of wise philosophers cite the story of Krishna and Kubja as the proof of this.

About Krishna and Kubja, Madhukantha spoke the following words: When He saw Kubja, Sri Krishna thought: “Her face shines like the moon, although her body is crooked like the body of Ashtavakra Muni. I should ask her some questions. Now that she stands before Me, My heart trembles in a great festival of bliss. Yes. Yes. She is a maidservant carrying sweet fragrances to Kamsa. She is all alone. In her hands she carefully carries a jeweled container filled with sweet fragrances. I think she must be carrying them to the inner

rooms of King Kamsa’s palace. As I took away the glorious garments being carried to Kamsa, so I will also take away the sweet fragrances also being to carried to him. I should not agitate this girl, as I agitated the washerman. Instead, I should inspire her to yearn to enjoy with Me. Because her body is so bent and deformed, she cannot have enjoyed the company of any man. Therefore she will easily and naturally yearn to enjoy amorous pastimes with Me. It cannot be that she will not yearn to enjoy with Me and with no one else. Of this I am certain. By speaking affectionate joking words with her I will encourage her to desire Me.”

After thinking in this way, Sri Krishna, who is the supreme teacher of all who are clever and expert, openly said: “O girl with graceful thighs, O girl so earnestly walking on this path, who are you?” Kubja then said: “O boy with the handsome face, I am a maidservant.” Sri Krishna said: “Whom do you serve?” Kubja said: “Kamsa.” Sri Krishna said: “O crest-jewel of all graceful goddesses, what is your name?” Kubja shyly replied: “O boy handsome like Indra, my name is Trivakra (bent in three places).” Sri Krishna, who was accompanied by His associates, smiled and said: “Your name is certainly appropriate.” Krishna again said: “For whom do you carry this sweet fragrant ointment, ointment that relieves the sorrows of every part of the body?” Kubja smiled and said: “O crown of intelligent boys, I am Kamsa’s maidservant, so I carry this for him.” Sri Krishna said: “O sweetly talking girl, some maidservants are very obedient to their master, and other maidservants are indifferent and do not much care what their master thinks or wishes.” Kubja said: “O boy with the handsome face, what You say is true. I am obedient to my master. I do not disobey him.”

Krishna’s associates all smiled and said: “Her body is very beautiful. How is it possible that Kamsa has not already accepted her as his beloved?” Sri Krishna said: “Are you obedient to Kamsa? Tell the truth.” Now filled with the anger of love, Kubja said: “You can see for Yourself. Why do You even ask? This sweet fragrance is meant to anoint Kamsa’s body.” Sri Krishna said: “Many other fortunate and glorious persons are also obedient like you.” Kubja said: “That may be. Still, this fragrant ointment I carry is meant for the en-

joyment of Kamsa, the king of the Bhoja dynasty.” Sri Krishna said: “If you think it is not improper, then I wish to enjoy the sweet fragrance of this scented ointment.” Kubja said: “There is nothing that I will not give to You. I vow this before all elders and superiors and gurus.” Sri Krishna said: “If these words that you speak are the truth, then please anoint My body and the body of My companion (Balarama) with this fragrant ointment.

Smiling with a smile of love, Kubja said: “Who but You two, who are the most wonderful teenage boys in the entire universe, is so worthy to receive this scented ointment? If You wish, please accept it.” Krishna’s cowherd associates smiled and whispered amongst themselves: “Aha! The beautiful girl desires both Krishna and Balarama.” Praising Kubja, Sri Krishna said: “Very soon, you will attain happiness and auspiciousness.” Her heart intoxicated by gazing on the sweetness of Krishna’s supremely handsome form and by listening to the sweetness of Krishna’s bathed-in-playful-jokes charming words, Kubja anointed the bodies of Krishna and Balarama with the fragrant ointment. As the glory of the moon becomes doubled when it is reflected in the water, so the glory of fair Balarama and dark Krishna became doubled when They were anointed with the sweet-fragrant ointment. By the touch of Krishna and Balarama, who are like two treasures of handsomeness, the fragrant ointment became greatly increased in quantity. All of Krishna’s cowherd friends were then also anointed with that fragrant ointment.

Krishna was splendidly anointed with yellow saffron and Balarama was splendidly anointed with dark musk. They were glorious like a dark raincloud and glittering lightning, or like two glorious moons shining together. Because he was about to narrate the embarrassing part of the story, Madhukantha’s voice then became choked up. Smiling Lalita then said: “Now please describe your master Krishna’s miracle of changing the nature of the girl Kubjas body.” Madhukantha replied with the following words: When Kubja had thus anointed Him with the fragrant ointment, Sri Krishna, who is merciful to the poor and wretched, and who is the purifier of Putana and a host of others like her, thought: “This girl has a beautiful face, but because her body is so crooked, she feels as if an arrow has been shot into her heart. Because she served Me,

I will kindly give her protection. She directly saw Me, so therefore she is qualified to have the suffering-like-an-arrow-in-her heart pulled out of her.

Then Sri Krishna openly said: “O Trivakra, I would like to ask permission to make your body straight.” Thinking Krishna’s words only a joke, Kubja smiled and said: “Why not? But how will You do that?” Sri Krishna said: “By expertly grasping you in a specific way.” As Krishna’s friends loudly laughed to hear this conversation, Kubja, the hairs of her body now standing erect, said: “Then You should come to my house.” Sri Krishna laughed and said: “It is not what you think. Approach Me now and you will see something that will fill the whole universe with wonder.” When trembling Kubja approached, and as all the cowherd boys watched, Sri Krishna performed a great wonder. First He adopted the graceful pose of a dancer. Then He placed both His feet upon Kubjas feet. Then He placed the forefinger and middle finger of His left hand under Kubjas chin. With a sudden jerk he made Kubjas body straight. The crookedness in Kubjas back and limbs was suddenly made straight. With a glance from the corner of His eyes Krishna made Kubjas breasts, hips, and thighs gracefully full. Simply by Lord Krishna’s touch Kubja became wonderfully beautiful like the most beautiful of all graceful-eyebrowed women.

Filled with wonder, the people made a great tumult of “Hala! Hala!” No one had ever done such a thing before. With His supreme knowledge of how to make anyone beautiful, Krishna had transformed Kubja into a beautiful woman. Of these actions I think in the following way:

“Prosperity quickly brings pride, and misfortune forcibly brings humility.” Please heed these words of the scriptures, words that are not untrue anywhere in the universe. Now fortunate with beauty and teenage youthfulness, Kubja at once began to tug at the edge of Lord Krishna’s upper garment. If after adversity a person attains good fortune, then that person will remain righteous and humble. In that place filled with people, Kubja said to Sri Krishna: “O hero, please come with me and satisfy me. I am now greatly afflicted with passionate love for You.”

Lalita said: “By Krishna’s touch we gopis have attained a fate like that of Kubja, who gave plea-

sure to enjoyer-of-limitless-pastimes Sri Krishna. Please fearlessly continue the narration.” Madhukantha shyly said: Then supremely merciful, supremely wonderful, and supremely blissful Sri Krishna was overcome with shyness. Glancing at His contemporary cowherd-friends and at smiling Balarama, who had been His companion in playing since earliest childhood, Sri Krishna cheated Kubja by speaking the following words (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.42.12):

“My dear beautiful girl, I am very much pleased by your invitation, and I must come to your home after finishing My other business here. Such a beautiful girl as you is the only means of solace for persons like Us, who are away from home and not married. Certainly a suitable girlfriend like you can give Us relief from all kinds of mental agitation.” Lalita smiled and said: “Whatever great persons say is always proper. This I have always seen.” Vishakha said: “What did you say? Please explain it.” Lalita laughed and said: “For a person who is by nature always satisfied, and who sees his little hut to be like a grand palace and his little sleeping-platform an opulent bed, may also see the girl Kubja to be glorious like an *apsarā*.” Sri Radha gently smiled and said: “Why does Madhukantha not say to Kubja: ‘You gave pleasure to others. Now you should give pleasure to me.’?”

Madhukantha said: You gopis may think in that way. For myself what I think is this: If a poor and fallen person comes within the glance of very merciful persons, then, although they are by nature the masters, the merciful persons will act as if they are under the control of the poor and fallen persons. Momentarily attracted, Sri Krishna may cast a glance on Kubja. Aha! Then Kubja will jump to imitate Sri Krishna’s *gopī*-beloveds.

O Radha, only Your pure love has the power to bind Your friend Krishna. May merciful and wonderfully playful Sri Krishna be always manifest before You. When this narration of pastimes, a narration pleasing to Them both, came to its conclusion, Sri Radha and Sri Krishna went to Their charming palace.

– Sri Gopāla-Campū of Śrīla Jīva Gosvami » Translation by Kushakratha Das

Sukadeva Gosvami said: After assimilating Uddhava’s report, Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the omniscient Soul of all that be, desired to satisfy the serving girl Trivakra, who was troubled by lust. Thus He went to her house. Trivakra’s home was opulently appointed with expensive furnishings and replete with sensual accoutrements meant to inspire sexual desire. There were banners, rows of strung pearls, canopies, fine beds and sitting places, and also fragrant incense, oil lamps, flower garlands and aromatic sandalwood paste. When Trivakra saw Him arriving at her house, she at once rose from her seat in a flurry. Coming forward graciously with her girlfriends, she respectfully greeted Lord Acyuta by offering Him an excellent seat and other articles of worship.

Uddhava also received a seat of honor, since he was a saintly person, but he simply touched it and sat on the floor. Then Lord Krishna, imitating the manners of human society, quickly made Himself comfortable on an opulent bed. Trivakra prepared herself by bathing, anointing her body, and dressing in fine garments, by putting on jewelry, garlands and perfume, and also by chewing betel nut, drinking fragrant liquor, and so on. She then approached Lord Madhava with shy, playful smiles and coquettish glances. Calling forward His beloved, who was anxious and shy at the prospect of this new contact, the Lord pulled her by her bangled hands onto the bed. Thus He enjoyed with that beautiful girl, whose only trace of piety was her having offered ointment to the Lord. Simply by smelling the fragrance of Krishna’s lotus feet, Trivakra cleansed away the burning lust Cupid had aroused in her breasts, chest and eyes. With her two arms she embraced between her breasts her lover, Sri Krishna, the personification of bliss, and thus she gave up her long-standing distress.

Having thus gotten the hard-to-get Supreme Lord by the simple act of offering Him body ointment, unfortunate Trivakra submitted to that Lord of freedom the following request.

[Trivakra said:] O beloved, please stay here with me for a few days more and enjoy. I cannot bear to give up Your association, O lotus-eyed one! Promising her the fulfillment of this lusty desire, considerate Krishna, Lord of all beings, paid Trivakra His respects and then returned with Uddhava to His own supremely opulent residence. Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of all lords, is ordinarily difficult to approach. One who has properly worshiped Him and then chooses the benediction of mundane sense gratification is certainly of poor intelligence, for he is satisfied with an insignificant result.

Then Lord Krishna, wanting to have some things done, went to Akrura's house with Balarama and Uddhava. The Lord also desired to please Akrura. Akrura stood up in great joy when he saw them, his own relatives and the greatest of exalted personalities, coming from a distance. After embracing them and greeting them, Akrura bowed down to Krishna and Balarama and was greeted by Them in return. Then, when his guests had taken their seats, he worshiped them in accordance with scriptural rules. O King, Akrura bathed the feet of Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama and then poured the bath water on his head. He presented Them with gifts of fine clothing, aromatic sandalwood paste, flower garlands and excellent jewelry. After thus worshiping the two Lords, he bowed his head to the floor. He then began to massage Lord Krishna's feet, placing them on his lap, and with his head bowed in humility he addressed Krishna and Balarama as follows.

[Akrura said:] It is our good fortune that You two Lords have killed the evil Kamsa and his followers, thus delivering Your dynasty from endless suffering and causing it to flourish. You both are the original Supreme Person, the cause of the universe and its very substance. Not the slightest subtle cause or manifest product of creation exists apart from You. O Supreme Absolute Truth, with Your personal energies You create this universe and then enter into it. Thus one can perceive You in many different forms by hearing from authorities and by direct experience. Just as the primary elements earth and so on manifest themselves in abundant variety among all the species of mobile and immobile life, so You, the one independent Supreme Soul, appear to be manifold among the

variegated objects of Your creation. You create, destroy and also maintain this universe with Your personal energies—the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness yet You are never entangled by these modes or the activities they generate. Since You are the original source of all knowledge, what could ever cause You to be bound by illusion?

Since it has never been demonstrated that You are covered by material, bodily designations, it must be concluded that for You there is neither birth in a literal sense nor any duality. Therefore, You never undergo bondage or liberation, and if You appear to, it is only because of Your desire that we see You in that way, or simply because of our lack of discrimination. You originally enunciated the ancient religious path of the Vedas for the benefit of the whole universe. Whenever that path becomes obstructed by wicked persons following the path of atheism, You assume one of Your incarnations, which are all in the transcendental mode of goodness. You are that very same Supreme Person, my Lord, and You have now appeared in the home of Vasudeva with Your plenary portion. You have done this to relieve the earth's burden by killing hundreds of armies led by kings who are expansions of the demigods' enemies, and also to spread the fame of our dynasty.

Today, O Lord, my home has become most fortunate because You have entered it. As the Supreme Truth, You embody the forefathers, ordinary creatures, human beings and demigods, and the water that has washed Your feet purifies the three worlds. Indeed, O transcendent one, You are the spiritual master of the universe. What learned person would approach anyone but You for shelter, when You are the affectionate, grateful and truthful well-wisher of Your devotees? To those who worship You in sincere friendship You reward everything they desire, even Your own self, yet You never increase or diminish.

It is by our great fortune, Janardana, that You are now visible to us, for even the masters of yoga and the foremost demigods can achieve this goal only with great difficulty. Please quickly cut the ropes of our illusory attachment for children, wife, wealth, influential friends, home and body. All such attachment is simply the effect of Your illusory material energy.

Sukadeva Gosvami continued: Thus worshiped and fully glorified by His devotee, the Supreme Lord Hari smilingly addressed Akrura, completely charming him with His words.

[The Supreme Lord said:] You are Our spiritual master, paternal uncle and praiseworthy friend, and We are like your sons, always dependent on your protection, sustenance and compassion. Exalted souls like you are the true objects of service and the most worshipable authorities for those who desire the highest good in life. Demigods are generally concerned with their own interests, but saintly devotees never are. No one can deny that there are holy places with sacred rivers, or that the demigods appear in deity forms made of earth and stone. But these purify the soul only after a long time, whereas saintly persons purify just by being seen.

You are indeed the best of Our friends, so please go to Hastinapura and, as the well-wisher of the Pandavas, find out how they are doing. We have heard that when their father passed away, the young Pandavas were brought with their anguished mother to the capital city by King Dhritarashtra, and that they are now living there. Indeed, weak-minded Dhritarashtra, the son of Ambika, has come under the control of his wicked sons, and therefore that blind King is not treating his brother's sons fairly. Go and see whether Dhritarashtra is acting properly or not. When We find out, We will make the necessary arrangements to help Our dear friends.

Sukadeva Gosvami continued: Thus fully instructing Akrura, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari then returned to His residence, accompanied by Lord Sankarshana and Uddhava.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 48 » Verses 1–36 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*

TWO LEVELS TO UNDERSTAND KUBJA

Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

It is clear from the commentaries of the acharyas that the story of Trivakra is to be understood on two levels. On the one hand, she is understood

to be a liberated soul, directly associating with the Lord and participating in His pastimes. On the other hand, her conduct is clearly meant to teach a lesson about what not to do in relation with Lord Krishna. Since all of the Lord's pastimes are not only blissful but also didactic, there is no real contradiction in this pastime, since Trivakra's purity and her bad example take place on two distinct levels. Arjuna is also considered a pure devotee, yet by initially disobeying Krishna's instruction to fight, he also showed an example of what not to do. However, such "bad examples" always have happy endings in the blissful association of the Absolute Truth, Sri Krishna.

— *Srimad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 48 » Verse 11 » Purport by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.*



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

ISKCON

Bhāgavata Mahāvidyalaya

is a branch of
International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acārya: His Divine Grace
A.C. BhaktiVedanta Swami Prabhupada

Quotations from the books, letters, and lectures of
His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada

©Bhaktivedanta Book Trust International.

©All the paintings are copyrights of their respective artists.