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ETERNAL TRANSCENDENTAL LOVE
Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

LORD KRISHNA KIDNAPS RUKMINI
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Sukadeva Gosvami said: My dear King, thus graced by Lord Krishna, Mucukunda circumambulated Him and bowed down to Him. Then Mucukunda, the beloved descendant of Ikṣvaku, exited through the mouth of the cave. Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the Age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north. The sober King, beyond material association and free of doubt, was convinced of the value of austerity. Absorbing his mind in Lord Krishna, he came to Gandhamadana Mountain. There he arrived at Badarikashrama, the abode of Lord Nara-Narayana, where, remaining tolerant of all dualities, he peacefully worshiped the Supreme Lord Hari by performing severe austerities.

The Lord returned to Mathura, which was still surrounded by Yavanas. Then He destroyed the army of barbarians and began taking their valuables to Dvaraka. As the wealth was being carried by oxen and men under Lord Krishna's direction, Jarasandha appeared at the head of twenty-three armies. O King, seeing the fierce waves of the enemy's army, the two Madhavas, imitating human behavior, ran swiftly away. Abandoning the abundant riches, fearless but feigning fear, They went many yojanas on Their lotuslike feet. When he saw Them fleeing, powerful Jarasandha laughed loudly and then pursued Them with charioteers and foot soldiers. He could not understand the exalted position of the two Lords. Apparently exhausted after fleeing a long distance, the two Lords climbed a high mountain named Pravara-shana, upon which Lord Indra showers incessant rain. Although he knew They were hiding on the mountain, Jarasandha could find no trace of Them. Therefore, O King, he placed firewood on all sides and set the mountain ablaze.

The two of Them then suddenly jumped from the burning mountain, which was eleven yojanas high, and fell to the ground. Unseen by Their opponent or his followers, O King, those two most exalted Yadus returned to Their city of Dvaraka, which had the ocean as a protective moat. Jarasandha, moreover, mistakenly thought that

Balarama and Keshava had burned to death in the fire. Thus he withdrew his vast military force and returned to the Magadha kingdom. As ordered by Lord Brahma, Raivata, the opulent ruler of Anarta, gave Lord Balarama his daughter Raivati in marriage. This has already been discussed.

O hero among the Kurus, the Supreme Lord Himself, Govinda, married Bhishmaka's daughter, Vaidarbhi, who was a direct expansion of the goddess of fortune. The Lord did this by her desire, and in the process He beat down Shalva and other kings who took Shishupala's side. Indeed, as everyone watched, Sri Krishna took Rukmini just as Garuda boldly stole nectar from the demigods.

King Parikshit said: The Supreme Lord married Rukmini, the beautiful-faced daughter of Bhishmaka, in the Rakshasa style or so I have heard. My lord, I wish to hear how the immeasurably powerful Lord Krishna took away His bride while defeating such kings as Magadha and Shalva. What experienced listener, O *brāhmaṇa*, could ever grow satiated while listening to the pious, charming and ever-fresh topics of Lord Krishna, which cleanse away the world's contamination?

Sri Badarayana said: There was a king named Bhishmaka, the powerful ruler of Vidarbha. He had five sons and one daughter of lovely countenance. Rukmi was the firstborn son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmabahu, Rukmakesha and Rukmamali. Their sister was the exalted Rukmini. Hearing of the beauty, prowess, transcendental character and opulence of Mukunda from visitors to the palace who sang His praises, Rukmini decided that He would be the perfect husband for her. Lord Krishna knew that Rukmini possessed intelligence, auspicious bodily markings, magnanimity, beauty, proper behavior and all other good qualities. Concluding that she would be an ideal wife for Him, He made up His mind to marry her. O King, because Rukmi envied the Lord, he forbade his family members to give his sister to Krishna, although they wanted to. Instead, Rukmi decided to give Rukmini to Shishupala.

Dark-eyed Vaidarbhi was aware of this plan, and it deeply upset her. Analyzing the situation, she quickly sent a trustworthy *brāhmaṇa* to Krishna. Upon reaching Dvaraka, the *brāhmaṇa* was brought inside by the gatekeepers and saw the primeval Personality of Godhead sitting on a golden

throne. Seeing the *brāhmaṇa*, Sri Krishna, Lord of the brahmanas, came down from His throne and seated him. Then the Lord worshiped him just as He Himself is worshiped by the demigods. After the *brāhmaṇa* had eaten and rested, Sri Krishna, the goal of saintly devotees, came forward, and while massaging the *brāhmaṇa*'s feet with His own hands, He patiently questioned him as follows.

[The Supreme Lord said:] O best of exalted brahmanas, are your religious practices, sanctioned by senior authorities, proceeding without great difficulty? Is your mind always fully satisfied? When a *brāhmaṇa* is satisfied with whatever comes his way and does not fall away from his religious duties, those very religious principles become his desire cow, fulfilling all his wishes. An unsatisfied *brāhmaṇa* wanders restlessly from one planet to another, even if he becomes King of heaven. But a satisfied *brāhmaṇa*, though he may possess nothing, rests peacefully, all his limbs free of distress. I repeatedly bow My head in respect to those brahmanas who are satisfied with their lot. Saintly, prideless and peaceful, they are the best well-wishers of all living beings. O *brāhmaṇa*, is your King attending to your welfare? Indeed, that king in whose country the citizens are happy and protected is very dear to Me. Whence have you come, crossing the impassable sea, and for what purpose? Explain all this to Us if it is not a secret, and tell Us what We may do for you.

Thus questioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who incarnates to perform His pastimes, the *brāhmaṇa* told Him everything.

Sri Rukmini said [in her letter, as read by the *brāhmaṇa*]: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of Your beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You, O Krishna. O Mukunda, You are equal only to Yourself in lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youthfulness, wealth and influence. O lion among men, You delight the minds of all mankind. What aristocratic, soberminded and marriageable girl of a good family would not choose You as her husband when the proper time has come? Therefore, my dear Lord, I have chosen You as my husband, and I surrender myself to You. Please come swiftly, O almighty

one, and make me Your wife. My dear lotus-eyed Lord, let Shishupala never touch the hero's portion like a jackal stealing the property of a lion. If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious works, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the demigods, brahmanas and gurus, then may Gadagraja come and take my hand, and not Damaghosha's son or anyone else.

O unconquerable one, tomorrow when my marriage ceremony is about to begin, You should arrive unseen in Vidarbha and surround Yourself with the leaders of Your army. Then crush the forces of Caidya and Magadhendra and marry me in the Rakshasa style, winning me with Your valor. Since I will be staying within the inner chambers of the palace, You may wonder, "How can I carry you away without killing some of your relatives?" But I shall tell You a way: On the day before the marriage there is a grand procession to honor the royal family's deity, and in this procession the new bride goes outside the city to visit Goddess Girija. O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Lord Shiva hanker to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain Your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.

[The *brāhmaṇa* said:] This is the confidential message I have brought with me, O Lord of the Yadus. Please consider what must be done in these circumstances, and do it at once.

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 51 » Verses 1–44 » Translations by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

ETERNAL TRANSCENDENTAL LOVE

Disciples of His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

*bhagavān api govinda
upayeme kurūdvaha
vaidarbhīm Bhishmaka-sutām
śriyo mātrām svayam-vare*

*pramathya tarasā rājñah
śālvādīmś caidyapaṅṣa-gān*

*paśyatām sarva-lokānām
tārksya-putraḥ sudhām iva*

Srila Jiva Gosvami gives the following profound comments on these two verses: The words *śriyo mātrām* indicate that beautiful Rukmini is a direct expansion of the eternal goddess of fortune. Therefore she is worthy to be the bride of the Personality of Godhead. As stated in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.56), *śriyaḥ kāntā kāntaḥ parama-puruṣaḥ*: "In the spiritual world, all the female lovers are goddesses of fortune and the male lover is the Supreme Personality." Thus, Srila Jiva Gosvami explains, Srimati Rukmini-devi is a plenary portion of Srimati Radharani. The *Kārttika-māhātmya* section of the *Padma Purāṇa* states, *kaiṣore gopa-kanyās tā yauvane rāja-kanyakāḥ*: "Those who were cowherds' daughters in their adolescence became kings' daughters in their young womanhood." Similarly, in the *Skanda Purāṇa* we find this statement: *rukmiṇī dvāravatyām tu rādhā vṛndāvane vane*. "Rukmini in Dvaraka is also Radha in Vrindavan forest."

The term *svayam-vare* here means "by one's own choice." Although the word often refers to a formal Vedic ceremony in which an aristocratic girl may select her own husband, here it indicates the informal and indeed unprecedented events surrounding Krishna's marriage to Rukmini. In fact, Sri Krishna and Srimati Rukmini chose each other because of their eternal, transcendental love.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summit Bonum » Chapter 52 » Verse 18 » Purport by Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

LORD KRISHNA KIDNAPS RUKMINI Srila Jiva Gosvami

Hearing that His brother Krishna had, to kidnap Rukmini, gone alone to Kundina City, and also hearing that Krishna was surrounded by a host of enemies, Sri Balarama, who was born from an ocean of love for Krishna, and who was anointed with the fragrant oil of love for Krishna, and who was overcome with fear for His brother's safety, went, accompanied by a great host of armies, to Kundina City.

Thinking in their hearts, the people of Vraja compared Lord Balarama and the residents of the Yadava city of Dvaraka in the following way: "Love that is present because of one's birth is love that is limitless and unconditional. Love that comes later, like a guest, is both limited and conditional. How can that love be equal to the great limitless and unconditional love?"

Vraja's King Nanda said: "Then? Then?" The two messengers said: When Krishna became embarrassed by His elder brother Balarama's arrival, Balarama became red with anger, red like a rising reddish moon. Balarama did not say anything to Krishna, Krishna who was then thinking how to kidnap Rukmini. Having His soldiers form a circle around Them, Lord Balarama stood before Lord Krishna.

Vraja's King Nanda joyfully said: "Where did the *brāhmaṇa* go? What was the condition of Rukmini's heart, Rukmini whose heart was touched by the fear that her religious principles were in danger of their imminent destruction?" The two messengers said: Thinking, "Nothing will happen on this gentle night," and conjecturing how in the near future he would attain great good fortune, the brahmanastayed awake the whole night. That evening Rukmini waited for the *brāhmaṇa*'s return. Her heart was restless. She worried that her plan might somehow be thwarted. She remembered how in the letter she had written: "O invincible Krishna, carefully hidden, and surrounded by Your generals, please come to Vidarbha tomorrow. As I exit Goddess Durga's temple, please crush Shishupala and his allies, and then kidnap me." She thought: "The time of my wedding is imminent, but the *brāhmaṇa* has not yet returned. It is so difficult to pass the time as I wait!" Carefully watching the pathways, struggling to control her heart, lowering her head, gnashing her teeth, struggling to remain calm, and closing her flooded-with-tears eyes, Rukmini passed some moments.

At the moment when she could no longer bear waiting for the *brāhmaṇa*'s return, destiny, which had now become Rukmini's friend, and which had now become the root from which the tree of Rukmini's happinesses would soon grow, created a sudden trembling in Rukmini's left eye,

arm, thigh, and foot. When she opened her eyes, Rukmini saw the brahmanastanding before her. Seeing the *brāhmaṇa*'s glistening-with-happinesses face, heart-anointed-with-doubt Rukmini felt her lotus eyes and lotus heart were now splashed by cooling bliss.

The fragrance of Sri Krishna's body now scented the *brāhmaṇa* messenger's body. Smelling that fragrance, Sri Rukmini became fragrant with sweet bliss. Pushed by intense bliss, the hairs of Rukmini's body now stood erect. In that secret place Rukmini asked questions of the *brāhmaṇa*. Asked, the *brāhmaṇa* clearly replied that Sri Krishna had accepted her proposal and He would personally travel here by chariot. When she heard this news, Rukmini thought: "Of all the valuable treasures I possess, nothing is valuable enough to be a worthy gift to give to this *brāhmaṇa*." Accepting the *brāhmaṇa* as her spiritual master, Rukmini bowed down before him, bowed as if she were offering her own head as her gift to him. As the moon becomes free from Rahu's grip on the seventh *rāśi*, so Rukmini, her form glorious like the moon, became free of the grip of Shishupala.

Vraja's King Nanda said: "With what clever excuse did Krishna and Balarama explain Their sudden arrival there? How did King Bhishmaka receive Krishna and Balarama?" The two messengers said: The excuse They gave was that They had come to see the wedding festival. Hearing this from Krishna and Balarama, and assuming that They therefore approved of the marriage arrangements, King Bhishmaka worshiped Them like two honored guests. Vraja's King Nanda said: "If he considered Them merely two ordinary guests, then King Bhishmaka must have been neutral to Krishna and Balarama. Therefore I think the people of Kundina City must also have been neutral and aloof in their relationship with Krishna and Balarama.

The two messengers said: No. No. Only because of the bad counsel of his son Rukmi was King Bhishmaka not openly affectionate to Sri Krishna. The people in general openly lamented the situation. Gathering together, and with the cupped palms of their eyes sipping the flood of sweet nectar flowing from the blue lotus-flower of Sri Krishna's face, a lotus flower blissfully blooming in the evening, the people of Kundina City said: "Rukmini

should become Krishna's wife. Krishna should become Rukmini's husband." At every step the people spoke words like these. The people said: "We do not wish that the results of our pious deeds performed in the past, present, and future will be used to further our own happiness. Indeed, we now speak this prayer: O destiny, who give to all living entities the results of their various deeds, please take the results of all our pious deeds and use them so that powerful lotus-eyed Sri Krishna may, either according to the rules of ordinary righteousness, or in flagrant defiance of those rules, may accept the hand of Sri Rukmini in marriage."

Vraja's King Nanda and the people of Vraja then joyfully said in unison: "Then? Then?" The two messengers said: "After performing her morning duties, her heart filled with joy, and after bowing down before her elders and superiors as if asking their permission for her departure for Dvaraka, and after hearing their words of instruction, and intent on worshiping Goddess Durga, and decorated with glorious garments, and accompanied by her girlfriends, her sisters-in-law, her father's wives, the wives of her family priests, her multitudes of maidservants, multitudes of elderly male attendants, multitudes of guards bearing swords and garbed in armor, cavalry bearing a host of formidable weapons, warriors riding on glorious elephants and seeming to present everywhere and before every eye, warriors riding in chariots, musicians playing wonderful and colorful melodies on a host of musical instruments, dancers gracefully dancing, suta, magadha, and vandi poets speaking pure and graceful words, poets

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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again and again speaking wonderful and blissful *utprekṣā* metaphors, Sri Rukmini, her heart rapt in thinking of her beloved Sri Krishna, departed from the women's quarters of the palace, and, accompanied by her entourage, proceeded on the pathway, and then finally entered the temple of Goddess Durga.

After appropriately worshiping the Deity of Goddess Durga, and after receiving Goddess Durga's mercy in her heart and on her body, Sri Rukmini, grasping in her graceful jewel-ring-adorned hand the hand of a girlfriend, departed from the temple. As Rukmini, her teeth graceful like jasmine-buds, was departing, Sri Krishna's *māyā* potency gave to her two different forms. To persons who had turned their faces away from Krishna, Rukmini appeared like an ordinary girl in the grip of the material energy. To persons who had turned their faces towards Krishna, Rukmini appeared like Lord Krishna's wife. The former were bewildered by Lord Krishna's external energy. The latter were filled with devotion to Lord Krishna. While Sri Krishna stood on His taller-than-all-others chariot, He and Rukmini exchanged a wonderful glance, a glance not noticed by anyone else there.

Rushing in on His swiftly-moving chariot, Sri Krishna suddenly kidnapped Princess Rukmini as, on some pretext hesitating to mount her own chariot, she cast a glance on Him from the corners of her eyes. People far away saw only the figure of Garuda emblazoned on Sri Krishna's flag. They thought Garuda himself had grasped Rukmini and was now swiftly fleeing with her. As Krishna approached to kidnap Rukmini, kidnapped her, and then fled, King Jarasandha and the other kings and their limitless armies were at first bewildered when they heard the rumbling sounds of Sri Krishna's fleeing chariot. They had no power to understand what had just happened. "From where had He come? Where did He go?", they asked.

Its dundubhi drums harshly proclaiming, "Dum! Dum! Dum!", the horses drawing its ten million chariots ferociously neighing, and its chariots now in hot pursuit of Princess Rukmini's kidnapper, the great army of the kings seemed to writhe in pain. There is no need to describe the outcome of that army's attack on Sri Krish-

na's formidable weapons any more than there is need to describe the outcome of a pack of jackals' foolish attack on a lion.

Meeting Krishna for the first time, born-in-a-glorious-family, shy-at-heart, and afraid-of-the-enemy-army Princess Rukmini, embraced, with a meaning-filled glance, her beloved Sri Krishna's face. Thinking, "Even though she well knows My mighty powers, because she is a woman Rukmini is now afraid," compassionate Sri Krishna consoled His beloved Rukmini with many sweet words. The enemy soldiers unleashed a host of arrows upon the soldiers of the Vrishni dynasty. That is a fact. Still, those arrows were all blown away from their targets. They were like hosts of clouds deflected by a powerful wind.

The Yadava soldiers saw the hosts of arrows flying towards them from all sides. Still, and this is indeed a great wonder, not a single Yadava soldier experienced upon the limbs of his body the touch of even a single arrow. In the enemy soldiers' scabbards rested a great host of swords, each sword equal to a *parārdha* of other swords. Still, as a miser never draws his money from its vault, so the enemy soldiers had no power to draw their swords from the scabbards. Although many soldiers fell in that battle, the survivors of that four-fold army did not lament. Thinking, "My body is still alive!", the surviving soldiers felt happiness that had no peer. The bodies of the frightened enemies frantically fleeing from the Yadava-king Sri Krishna were like a great host of corpses at a crematorium-ghata, a crematorium-ghata meant to send the souls that formerly resided in those bodies to Devaloka.

Some bewildered decapitated warriors were seen running here and there. Thinking, "Was my head severed?", they placed their hands on the place where their heads once were. Throwing far away any enthusiasm for battle, and with words affirming that past karma is the cause of all present joys and troubles consoling Shishupala, who was of the opinion that his bride had just been kidnapped, the enemy warriors all departed from the battlefield.

"Seventeen times Krishna defeated me. I could defeat Him only once. Look. Your condition is the same as mine." Who would not laugh on hearing these words Jarasandha spoke to Shishupala?

“Seventeen times Krishna defeated me in battle, but this time, the eighteenth time, I have defeated Him!” As he spoke these words Jarasandha was indeed bewildered, for this eighteenth time was again defeated by Krishna.

Standing before the defeated warriors, who were like palm trees that had burst into flames because many powerful thunderbolts had fallen upon them, miserable and defeated Rukmi vowed, “Because I could not defeat Rukmini's kidnapper and rescue Rukmini, I will not return to my home.”

These words spoken by Rukmi caused great unhappiness to take its birth within us. Even though it was well known that Sri Krishna was in truth the son of King Vasudeva, the enemy kings, disregarding this truth, mocked Krishna by calling Him a cowherd man. Because He did nothing to retaliate these insults, it is clearly seen that Sri Krishna is supremely peaceful and satisfied at heart. Vraja's King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Rukmi may have been rash and foolish, but his allies were all weaklings and cowards. That everyone could see. Even though they surrounded Krishna in the battle, they ended by fleeing from Him. Their hearts were like the hearts of deer. They did not have hearts like the hearts of lions.”

Vraja's King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Displeased with his unworthy allies, abandoning their company, taking with him an *akṣauhiṇī* division of soldiers, seeing the warriors in the *akṣauhiṇī* division flee from the battlefield, now having only his own body to aid him in his struggle, seeing that he himself did not have the power to catch up with Krishna, and hoping that at least his words would catch up with Krishna, Rukmi, pushed by his own nature as a cruel blasphemer, a person who bites people in the back, from far away called out to Krishna, ‘Wait! Wait!’ Not hearing the rumbling sounds of Rukmi's chariot, sounds devoured by the loud rumbling sounds of His own chariot, Krishna continued to travel ahead. When, hearing Rukmi's calls, virtuous Sri Krishna stopped His chariot, Rukmi angrily fired insults from his mouth and arrows from his bow.

With His smile Krishna pushed away Rukmi's insults and with His skin, now become, by Yogamaya's influence, like armor, Krishna pushed away Rukmi's arrows. Krishna's arrows then flew at Rukmi. In a single moment they severed Rukmi's bow and the flag-post on Rukmi's chariot. In another moment Krishna's arrows sharply hit Rukmi's body and Rukmi's chariot-driver and four horses. Rukmi watched as all this happened. With great difficulty Rukmi drew another bow. The arrows that flew from it met the same fate as Rukmi's other arrows. Feeling frustrated at heart, Rukmi hurled at Krishna a host of iron clubs, lances, spears, pieces of armor, shields, swords and maces. All these weapons met a terrible fate. They were all useless. From his chariot, which was now broken into a hundred pieces, Rukmi now descended.

After thus depriving Rukmi of his chariot, Sri Krishna stepped down from His own chariot and, ferocious like Lord Shiva himself, rushed towards Rukmi. Then Rukmi picked up a wonderfully ornamented golden sword and shield. Sri Krishna did not then break that sword and shield into pieces the size of sesame seeds. He broke them only to a certain extent, not completely. Wishing that unhappy Rukmi would himself discard his partly-broken weapons, Sri Krishna did not break them completely.”

Vraja's King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Then, acting according to her nature as a woman, Rukmini, abandoning all shyness, and taking help of many sorrow-filled lamentations, acted to protect her brother. Then Sri Krishna ferociously imposed upon Rukmi a strange and terrible punishment, a punishment worse than death.” Everyone said: “What was it? Tell us!” The two messengers said: “To punish crooked Rukmi with a fate like death itself, Rukmi who was now like a snake shorn of its pride, a snake unable to escape, Sri Krishna tightly bound Rukmi in ripped-up pieces of his own clothing. Powerful Rukmi had no power to unloose his bonds.

“The faint reflection of mercy now, because of Rukmini's appeals, glistening within Him, Sri Krishna, whose smile defeats even the moon, with His glittering curved sword, itself like a smiling crescent moon, cut here and there the hair on Rukmi's head. In the dense forest of hairs on

Rukmi's head, He created many roads going from left to right.”

Hearing these descriptions, the people of Vraja all laughed. Then the two messengers again said: “Please listen. As a person may bandage a cut nose with a silken bandage, so Sri Balarama gave friendly help to Rukmi. While Rukmi was fighting with Rukmini's kidnapper, Sri Krishna, then Sri Balarama, with the assistance of Sri Krishna's armies, made Rukmi's armies, armies for which everything had suddenly become inauspicious, flee in battle. As Rukmi was tied up Sri Balarama arrived there. Seeing Rukmi tied up like a captive about to be killed, Sri Balarama felt compassion for him, untied him, and again and again rebuked Sri Krishna.

Then, to pacify agitated Rukmini, Sri Balarama spoke to her the following instruction: “Krishna, Your action is not at all satisfactory. This is an abomination very much contrary to Our family tradition. To cut someone's hair and shave his mustache and beard is almost comparable to killing him.’ After this, in order to pacify her, Lord Balarama said to Rukmini: ‘You should not be sorry because your brother has been made very odd-looking. Everyone suffers or enjoys the results of his own actions.’ Lord Balarama again turned toward Krishna and said: ‘My dear Krishna, a relative, even though he commits such a blunder and deserves to be killed, should be excused, for when such a relative is conscious of his own fault, that consciousness itself is like death. Therefore there is no need in killing him.’ He again turned toward Rukmini and informed her that the current duty of the ksatriyas in human society is so fixed that, according to the principles of fighting, one's own brother may become an enemy on the opposite side. A *ksatriya* does not hesitate to kill his own brother.’”

Vraja's King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “Sincere Rukmini abided by Lord Balarama's instructions. Still, those instructions made her very unhappy at heart. They brought her more suffering than did the binding of her brother. Vraja's King Nanda said: Where did Rukmi go after that?” The two messengers said: “Released by Balarama, and his eyes now filled with tears, Rukmi returned to the surviving warriors of his army.” Everyone in the assembly of Vraja said:

“Rukmi was wickedness personified. How did he, his appearance now so odd, return to his home?” The two messengers said: “Even though He had ordained for him a double punishment, Sri Balarama, as if to protect Rukmini's honor, had a barber completely shave Rukmi's head, had him decorated with glorious garments and ornaments, and sent Rukmi back home, riding on a chariot as if he had just returned from a pilgrimage. In this way Rukmi, who was filled with wicked desires, and who was by nature always a ferocious enemy of Lord Krishna, returned to his home. It is said: ‘Too much talk of sins leads to inauspiciousness.’ Therefore we will not say anything more about Rukmi.

Vraja's King Nanda asked: “Did Krishna then happily return to His home?” The two messengers said: “Sri Krishna returned to His home, placed in His ears Uddhava's narration of the news of Vraja, and, with Uddhava's consent, sent us back here at once with all this news.” Vraja's King Nanda asked: “Has the marriage ritual been performed yet?” The two messengers said: “No. No. There is some delay. From the very beginning it was decided there should be a delay. “Having heard from Uddhava's blissful mouth that He should do this first, how could Sri Krishna marry without first receiving permission from you?” As the people in the assembly of Vraja were considering these points, two servants of King Vasudeva, servants bearing a letter, arrived from the land of Dvaraka, approached the lotus flower that was Vraja's King Nanda's feet, offered obeisances to that lotus flower, asked about King Nanda's welfare, and then spoke the following words: “O lord, please accept this letter written by our master.” Vraja's King Nanda respectfully accepted the letter and had someone read it aloud.

The letter said: “Salutations. Tightly hugging the glorious person that bears the name Nanda, a person who is the root of great bliss, a person who is a dear friend, a person who is a great fire of wild ecstasies, I, Anakadundubhi, bow down to offer my respectful obeisances. I speak the following message: “I think of Krishna as my son and you think of Him as your son. We do not think of Him in different ways. This truth

you know, and I know it also. Others may think of Him in a different way. I now request that you give your permission for Krishna to marry. Please write out that permission in your own hand and send it to me at once.” After thus causing the letter to be read, Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Good. Please arrange a nice meal for the two messengers. Later I will write an appropriate letter in reply.”

All the people of Vraja assembled and reasoned in the following way: “Although Krishna desires to return to Vraja, and although His desires are always fulfilled, and although therefore He will not be turned away from returning to Vraja, still, He may be delayed, for He has many enemies to slay. For the present He has not returned. When will He return? Balarama is now happy in household life. His younger brother Krishna is now longer a delicate boy. He would also like to marry. This He personally told to me.”

Sri Krishna had long ago said to Nanda and Yashoda: “My dear father and mother, I know you will be feeling separation by returning to Vrindavan and leaving Us here, but please rest assured that I shall be coming back to Vrindavan just after giving some satisfaction to My real father and mother, Vasudeva and Devaki, My grandfather, and other relatives and family members.”

With these words Sri Krishna informs us: “I act to give pleasure to My dear friends. That is why I accept one and then another status, such as accepting the status of a *ksatriya* in the Yadava dynasty. If I do not accept that I am one of the members of the Yadava dynasty, then many goals of Mine will remain unfulfilled. For that reason I declare that I am just like Vasudeva and the other ksatriyas in the Yadava dynasty. Vraja’s King Nanda then wrote the following letter: “Salutations. Hugging my son playful like a little calf, my son whose graceful and handsome face all happinesses worship by performing *ārati*, I place the following request before my son. O my son playful like a little calf, You know what is in my heart. I do not think Myself different from King Vasudeva. Please know that if you act according to his desire, then you will be acting according to My desire also. If I were not non-different from King Vasudeva, then how would I have been

able for so long to tolerate the great poverty of not being able to see the splendor of the lotus flower that is Your face? I would never, never have been able to tolerate that poverty.”

Taking this letter with them, the two messengers departed. After some days they returned again to Vraja, asked about the welfare of the people of Vraja, and then recounted the news of Dvaraka. Vraja’s King Nanda asked: “What has happened in Dvaraka? Please tell the news.” The two messengers said: “O King Nanda, O king of the gopas, when He read it, your son washed away with His tears the ink-written characters of the letter you wrote. The glorious message of that letter now stays only in his heart.” Tears in his eyes, Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Then? Then?” The two messengers said: “When He received your letter of consent, Sri Krishna formally accepted the hand of Rukmini in marriage. Musical instruments were sounded in home after home in Sri Krishna’s realm of Dvaraka. The demigods in Devaloka also played on many musical instruments. The ocean around Dvaraka also celebrated with a great festival of crashing waves, each wave trying to outdo the others. Then, in the presence of the Yadu, Kunti, Kekaya, and Kuru dynasties, and also in the presence of Bhishmaka, the king of Vidarbha, Sri Krishna joyfully accepted the hand of Princess Rukmini in marriage. Vraja’s King Nanda asked: “Were the people of Vidarbha also present at that ceremony?”

The two messengers said: “They all came. Only King Bhishmaka’s sons did not come.” Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Did not King Bhishmaka feel shy to attend?” The two messengers said: “He was shy. He feared that King Vasudeva and his associates would be hostile to him. He also feared that his own jewellike daughter Rukmini would also be hostile to him.” Vraja’s King Nanda said: “Did the relatives of the bride meet with the relatives of the groom?” The two messengers said: “Yes. Yes. They met. Still, because you were not there no one could feel peaceful at heart. What is the need of describing all this in detail?”

Then, hearing these descriptions in the assembly, King Nanda suddenly turned pale, Snigdhantha abruptly concluded his narration by saying: Even in the presence of the great lotus flower that was His father Vasudeva, His mother,

Devaki, and all His kinsmen in the Yadu dynasty, and even in the midst of His many millions of gloriously opulent palaces, handsome-faced Sri Krishna did not feel any happiness like the happiness He felt when with His eyes He sipped the nectar of gazing at you, O King Nanda.

After hearing these words, and after gazing at the glorious splendor of Sri Krishna's graceful eyes, King Nanda was no longer pale. He hugged his son. The hairs of his body stood erect with bliss. Filled with bliss by gazing at Sri Krishna, the poets of Vraja sang the following song:

vraja-madhura-mād
hurī-hrasita-para-kāmanam
manasi nṛpa-vaibha
vaṁ dadhatam ati-vāmanam
pariānayana-vāñchatā-rahita-manasācitam
agamad atha kaścana dvijanir asurāhitam

One day a *brāhmaṇa* approached Lord Krishna, whose sweet pastimes in Vraja had ended, who was the demons' enemy, and who, in His heart thinking of Himself as a king, had no desire for marriage.

nija-nṛpati-dehajā-vacanam upasandiśan
sa tad-ucita-caturīm amṛtam iva nirviśan
tam anu nijam āyayau nagaram ita-sammadaḥ
avadad api taṁ harer abhigamana-sampadaḥ

The *brāhmaṇa* recited a message from Princess Rukmini, and Lord Krishna replied with eloquent words sweet like nectar. The happy *brāhmaṇa* returned to his own city and spoke to Rukmini the good news of Krishna's arrival there.

atha sa-sukha-bhīṣmajā muhur anamad atra-sā
dvijam amukam icchati nija-bhāvīokam atra sā
iha mahasi śailajā-paricaraṇa-dambhikā
bhavitum atha bhīṣmajā hari-carāṇa-lambhikā

Bowing again and again before the *brāhmaṇa*, joyful Rukmini desired that he become happy and prosperous. Yearning to attain Lord Krishna's feet, Rukmini worshiped Goddess Parvati.

saratha-harināhṛtārucad amala-rociṣā
ripu-nicayam ācinon malina-mukha-śociṣā
magadha-mukha-śātrave
raṇa-vimukha-bhāvake
yudham adhīta rukmavān asura-paribhāvake

Riding on a chariot, Lord Krishna gloriously kidnapped Rukmini as His enemies complained with unhappy faces. Lord Krishna made Jarasandha and His other enemies turn from battle, and only Rukmi was willing to fight with Krishna, the crusher of the demons.

vyadhīta khalu rukmiṇaṁ kṛta-vāpana-muṇḍa-
nam
na param ajitas tathākṛta-vikṛta-tuṇḍakam
murajid atha nirjayan sa-nṛpa-caya-bhīṣmajam
agamad atha tan nijam nagaram ita-bhīṣmajam

Lord Krishna defeated Rukmi, shaved his head, and made him very odd-looking. Defeated by Krishna, Rukmi and the kings returned to their own cities. In this way was concluded the nighttime narration of pastimes, a narration that brought bliss to Sri Radha and the other people of Vraja.

—Sri Gopāla-Campū of Srīla Jīva Gosvāmī » Translation by Kushakratha Das



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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