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Highlights

• **ENTERING KRISHNA'S FAMILY**

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• **MUNDANE AND DIVINE LOVE**

Srila Jagadananda Pandit

• **GOPI VASTRAHARANA LILA, PART FIVE**

Sri Srimad Purnachandra Goswami

• **CONTROLLING THE ELEPHANT OF THE LORD'S GLORIES**

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.269

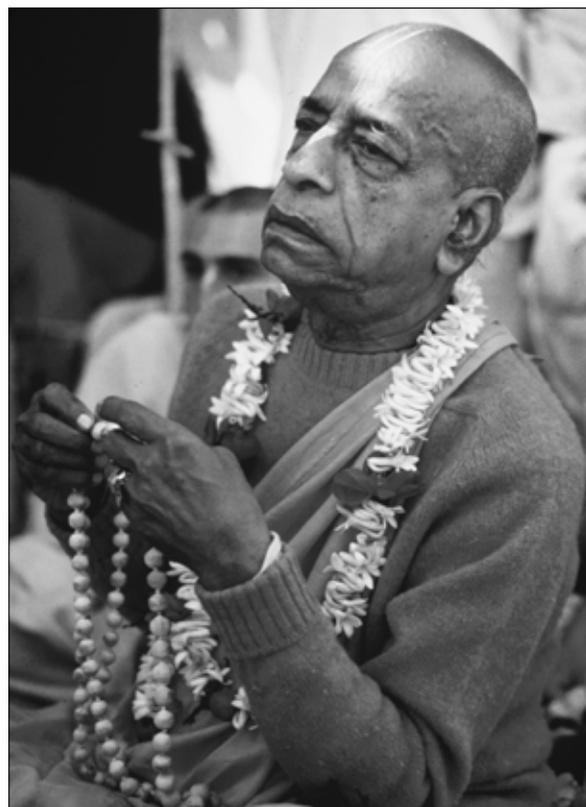


ENTERING KRISHNA'S FAMILY

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

Intelligent men should inquire, "Where can we enter into family life and eternally enjoy?" That place is Krishna's family. You should enter into Krishna's Vrindavan family, where Krishna has his father, mother, and his friends, his lovers, his beloved, his cows, his garden, and his Yamuna. Then *yad gatvā na nivartante*— you will not have to return back to this temporary family. [Bg. 15.6] Krishna comes for this reason. Krishna is so kind. He says, "You are so fond of family life — just see, I have got my family. I am not impersonal. I have my father. I have my mother. I have my friends. I have my beloved, Radharani, and the *gopīs*. I have got everything. You can also enter. Come! Why you are rotting here?" That is Krishna's mission.

The Krishna consciousness movement means to practice in this life how to enter Krishna's family. You enter Krishna's family as you like. There are five *rasas*, types of relationships: *śānta-rasa*, *dāsya-rasa*, *sākhya-rasa*, *vātsalya-rasa*, and *mādhurya-rasa*. These mellows are there in the spiritual world and they are also reflected in this material world. *Tejo-vāri-mṛdāṁ vinimayaḥ*. This material world is a reflection of the spiritual world. Here there is also master and servant,



His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

there is also friend and friend, there is also father and mother and son, and there is also lover and beloved. Everything is here in this material world, but they are imitation, *chāya*. They are not reality. So if you want real friendship, then make friendship with Krishna. ❀

— From a lecture in Mayapur, 23 October 1974.

MUNDANE AND DIVINE LOVE
Srī Jagadananda Pandit's
Prema Vivarta, Chapter 16

kabhū e saṁsāre strī puṁ vyavahāre
nā haya pīriti dhana
carma sukha yata anīya niyata
nahe nīya saṅghaṭana

When one is in the material world of male and female dealings it is very difficult to obtain the wealth of divine love. The pleasures of the body are invariably transient and can never bring one to the transcendental realm. (33)

gopī bhāva dhari cid dharma ācari
pīriti sādhibe yei
strī puṁ vyavahāra nāhika tāmhāra
bhūtare gopinī sei

But one who is absorbed in the mood of the *gopīs* and follows their transcendental dharma of divine love is no longer attracted to the exchanges between mundane men and women. (34)

bāhire sajjana dharma ācaraṇa
āmarāṇa vaidhācāra
antarete gopī citte kṛṣṇa seve
kevala pīriti tāra

While internally serving Krishna as a *gopī* with unalloyed devotion, such a devotee maintains external purity and strictly follows religious principles and lawful behavior throughout his life. (35) ॐ

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GOPI VASTRAHARANA LILA

Sri Srimad Purnachandra Das Goswami

PART FIVE

Standing Naked Before God

When the *gopīs* saw that Krishna was determined and undefeatable they began to realize that they had no alternative. While still in the water they concluded with each other, “Alas, my friends, we have been defeated by our own words. If we delay any longer some other man may come along and then certainly we will fall into the great ocean of mortification. Besides, our desire to have physical association with him has become very strong and impossible to ward off. This desire will not allow

us to even drown ourselves here and die. Otherwise, this fact would not be written on our foreheads by the creator. Therefore let us force ourselves to go forward to our beloved, laying our embarrassment down upon the ground. We will fold our hands in supplication, and by closing our eyes, cover our own bodies with darkness. Come, let us now leave the water and go onto the shore.” Others agreed, “Yes, there is nothing else we can do. We must come out. If we delay any longer, another man may come along and that would be unbearable for us.”

Therefore they all slowly rose up from the water, covering their private parts with their hands. In that posture they were all shivering, bending over like hunchbacks. They could not move forward because the power of their moral character equaled that of their strong attraction for Krishna. Though filled with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, modesty restrained their ecstatic bliss. Restlessly glancing to and fro, the *gopīs* came to the riverbank with great difficulty.

As the *gopīs* gradually came out, they placed the smallest girls in front. The others followed and tried to hide behind them, hoping that they would remain unnoticed. Their wet hair was hanging down, covering portions of their bodies. They were also trying to move in such a way that Krishna would not see their naked beauty.

When Krishna saw how embarrassed the girls were, he became deeply impressed by their pure love; he saw their innocence and purity. Then, out of love and respect for them, and out of eagerness to relish their fragrance, he placed their clothes on his shoulder. With a gentle smile, he began to speak to them, “I have so much respect for you that I even placed your lower garments on my shoulders.”

A war waged inside the *gopīs'* hearts, shyness holding them back and desire pushing them forward. Krishna said, “O *sakhis*, why are you afraid of me? You are standing there in a confused state as if you're not attracted to me at all. How is it possible for you to cover yourselves? Because I'm sitting up here in the tree, I can easily see everything. On the pretext of morality you're trying to cheat me. Now, don't just stand there in one group. Stand in a straight line, and come before me. If you follow my instructions it shall be very easy for you to get your clothes.” The *vraja-kumārīs*

felt embarrassed, but they were overwhelmed with love and respect for Krishna. They gradually moved closer and closer to Krishna.

Krishna said, “It is very inauspicious that you are standing there with your hair hanging loose, especially for religious girls performing a *vrata*. Even ordinary ladies keep their hair tied up. What to speak of religious ladies, even celestial nymphs lose their beauty if they let their hair down. By doing this you have spoiled your beauty. Therefore you should tie your hair in a braid. Be religious!”

When the *gopīs* heard Krishna’s firm, nectarean words, their affection for him increased a thousand times, and they gradually came closer and closer to him. Their bodily hair stood up due to ecstasy, and they laughed nervously.

Krishna continued, “Ladies, this is not the proper conduct for righteous people. A person who is performing a *vrata* should never bathe naked in a river. In this way you have offended Yamuna Devi. You will ruin your *vrata*. You also made an offense to Varunadev.”

The *gopīs* were trying to cover themselves with their hands because they felt so embarrassed. It’s natural that young girls would feel so. But Krishna wanted them to surrender completely to him. Seeing them feeling remorse in their minds, discolored, with flaccid limbs, and extremely agitated, he thought, “Ah, I should not allow them to give up their lives.” He then mercifully spoke the process of atoning for the offense.

Seeing that they were fatigued and worried, Krishna consoled them, saying, “Dear emaciated girls, do not fear. Your eyes are moving back and forth like *cakora* birds. Do not argue. Just hear my words. I can remove all of your offenses. At the present moment I am, for you, Narayan. Therefore, placing yourselves before me, you should offer obeisances in order to eradicate the offense. Can someone quench his thirst without water? Can someone get relief from the heat of summer without the evening? Therefore you should just follow my order. You can mitigate all your sins simply by offering respects to me. And if you do it with great faith and devotion, you will receive your desired results in many ways. So now you should offer obeisances by joining your palms together and placing them over your head.”

When they tried to offer their obeisances by only bowing down their heads, he said, “Offering obeisances simply with one’s head is inadequate.” Seeing their next

attempt to offer obeisances with only one hand, he cited a verse beginning “*eka-hasta-praṇāmah!*”, and by thus pointing out the discrepancy, convinced them to fold their hands together. Upon seeing that they were holding their hands below, He said, “Now you should offer obeisances by placing your joined palms over your heads.” The *gopīs* were nervous because they did not know what to do. Among themselves they whispered, “What is he going to do next? If we don’t do as he says, our *vrata* may be destroyed.”

As the *gopīs* were shyly looking back and forth, they thought, “Our vow cannot go in vain. Rather, let all our codes of family and class religion and our shame be destroyed.” Then, with half-closed eyes, they placed their hands over their heads like toy dolls controlled by Krishna. They pacified Krishna by standing very humbly with their heads hanging down.

Krishna thought, “In surrender to me they have given up their shyness in such a way that it is even worse than death for such aristocratic girls.” Then Krishna’s heart melted like butter, and a sweet smile appeared on his lips. He said, “You have greatly pleased me and I feel so much love for you. Now dress yourselves in your clothes. May you all drown in the ocean of ecstasy according to your individual tastes of love.” Seeing them humbly bowing down, the Supreme Personality of Godhead returned their clothes.

We must also fully surrender to Krishna with body, mind and soul. The *gopīs* agreed to be fully controlled by Krishna because they love him. And in doing so they conquered the Lord’s heart. If any devotee allows himself to be controlled by Krishna, as the Lord’s puppet, then he or she will in turn control and conquer Krishna. That is the nature of Sri Krishna — he is conquered by love. Srila Kaviraj Goswami has composed a beautiful verse:

*uṣṇo raviḥ śitala eva candrah
sarvaṁ saha bhūṣ capalah samīrah
sādhuḥ sudhīro ’mbu nidhir gabhīrah
svabhāvataḥ prema-vaśo hi kṛṣṇah*

The sun is naturally warm, the moon naturally cool. The earth is naturally tolerant, the wind naturally restless. The saints are naturally grave, the ocean naturally deep. And Krishna is naturally controlled by love.” [Govinda-līlāmṛta 17.16]

Srila Prabhupada writes in *Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*:

“The *gopīs* were all simple souls, and whatever Krishna said they took to be true. In order to be freed from the wrath of Varunadev, as well as to fulfill the desired end of their vows and ultimately to please their worshipable Lord, Krishna, they immediately abided by his order. Thus they became the greatest lovers of Krishna and his most obedient servitors. Nothing can compare to the Krishna consciousness of the *gopīs*. Actually, the *gopīs* did not care for Varuna or any other demigod. They only wanted to satisfy Krishna.”

Although they were totally cheated, ridiculed, and utterly embarrassed, they did not feel inimical towards their beloved Krishna. Rather, they felt overjoyed with the association of their beloved, even though he was acting like this. When one is considered dear, whatever that dear one does is experienced with pleasure, even if it gives pain. This is the mood of the *gopīs*. They are the purest servants of the Lord. And their mood of love is glorified by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his *Śikṣāṣṭakam* prayers:

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratānī pinaṣtu mām
adarśamān marma-hatānī karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

My dear Lord Krishna, you may embrace me or trample me under your feet, or you may make me brokenhearted by never being present before me.



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Whatever you like you can do, because you have complete freedom to act. But in spite of all your dealings, you are my Lord eternally. I have no other worshipable object.

This is the attitude of the *gopīs* toward Krishna. They were willing to accept whatever situation they were put in by Krishna. Even though they were so embarrassed, that embarrassment or feeling of morality was conquered by their *prema*, because their *prema* became more powerful than their shame and embarrassment. Of course, this does not mean that Krishna devotees promote immorality or shamelessness, but they understand that pleasing Krishna is more important than anything else. And in this situation, Krishna was directly ordering them in a firm way. Thus they all stood naked before the Lord.

It is not so easy to stand naked before the Lord. One must surrender everything — one's possessions, one's attachments, one's fear, and one's plans. One must strip oneself of all subtle conceptions of being the enjoyer, and of all plans for security, totally giving up all false pride and trying to protect oneself. Only after stripping oneself completely from all these can one truly stand before the Lord in utter surrender. Thus the *gopīs* have established the highest standard of surrender for all devotees.

(to be continued) ❁

CONTROLLING THE ELEPHANT OF THE LORD'S GLORIES

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.269

*pūjā-mahima-mattebhāḥ sāstrāraṇya-vihāriṇaḥ
kīṭena kati saṅgrāhyāḥ prabhāvaṁ śrī-harer vinā*

How can an ordinary person, who is as insignificant as an insect, control the intoxicated elephant in the form of the Lord's glories that wanders about within the forest of the Vedic literature? It is only possible by the mercy of Lord Hari. ❁

— Sanatan Goswami. *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 2006.

