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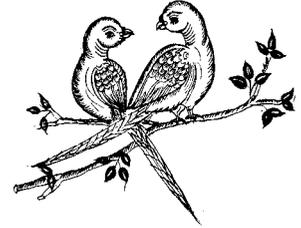
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RESPONSIBLE DEVOTEE MARRIAGES

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

I am so glad to hear that you are now married. I pray to Krishna that you may live henceforward happily as a householder without thinking of separation from your wife. According to Vedic wisdom, a good wife is a great assistant for material and spiritual prosperity. Even if there is some deficiency you should try to correct it without thinking in the westernized way. I hope your wife may be taking interest in your chanting, *saṅkīrtana* and reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. As she has become your life's companion, it is your duty to induce her, peacefully, in the matter of spiritual advancement of life. (Letter to Janis Damberg, 10 December 1966.)

I have already instructed you that he should get married. They should get a marriage certificate as soon as is possible. In the temple the ceremony should be observed by chanting Hare Krishna before the fire, offering the clarified butter with the word *svāhā* and the bride and groom should exchange their garlands before the deity of Lord Krishna and promise not to be separated in life. They should know it that bodily relations between the husband and wife is a secondary factor, whereas the primary factor is that both should help one another in the matter of advancement of Krishna consciousness. (Letter to Brahmananda, 4 August 1967.)

Marriage between husband and wife means that the husband must forever be responsible for the wife's well-being and protection in all cases. That does not mean that now there is agreement between us,



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

therefore I am responsible, but as soon as there is some disagreement then I immediately flee the scene and become so-called renounced. Whether your husband likes to take responsibility as your spiritual guide or not, that does not matter. He must do it. It is his duty because he has taken you as his wife. Therefore he must take full responsibility for you, the rest of his life. And you also must agree to serve him under all circumstances and assist him in every way so that he may make advancement in Krishna consciousness. By his making advancement in Krishna consciousness, automatically the wife will make advancement in the husband's footsteps;

but if you do not assist him and be very obedient to his welfare, then he may become disgusted and go away.

So there must be mutual responsibility by both parties, and now that you are married couple there is no question of your separation, but you must both strive very hard to serve Krishna together in harmony. What are these nonsense emotions that cause you to go this way and that way? The real thing is your duty. Now you are a married couple, and you know what your duty is, so the best thing is to perform your duty and always think of Krishna. Never mind some temporary inconvenience, we must remain steady in our duty to Krishna. (Letter to Sudevi Dasi, 15 September 1972.) ❧

THE MOOD OF SRIDHAR SWAMI

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

During the medieval age, Sridhar Swamipada, who was a member of the *viṣṇu-svāmī-sampradāya*, was found to be a worshiper of Nrsimhadeva and, from the external point of view, on the path of reverence. The worship of Krishna was also prominent in his heart.

In some opinions, Sridhar Swamipada was a *kevalādvaitī* (an impersonalist). Sri Vallabhacharya supports this opinion. By the association and strong flow of thought of the *vallabha-sampradāya* around Mathura, Vrindavan and other places of that time, the author of the *Dīpikā-dīpana* thought Sridhar Swamipada a *kevalādvaitī*. By impartially studying with subtle discrimination the conceptions of Sridhar Swami according to his own statements and the *Bhakta-māla* written by Nabha Das along with the opinions of other *sampradāyas*, one comes to the opposite conclusion. ❧

— *Vakṛtāvalī* (Garland of Divine Discourses) by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Thakura Prabhupada. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinode. Translated by Bhumiapati Das. Produced and published by Isvara Das.

THE FIRST ATTRACTION – PART 5

*From Srila Jiva Goswami's
Gopāla-pūrva-campu, 15th pūraṇa*

[Garga Muni instructs the residents of Vraja to not marry their daughters to Krishna but to other men. Meanwhile, Vrinda Devi comes to know of this and, becoming worried that the gopīs will end up getting married to other men, rushes to Purnamasi to tell her the news. Purnamasi convinces her that everything will be fine, for she will create duplicate māyā-gopīs by her mystic powers and these shadow gopīs will marry the other men. Here, Vrinda continues speaking to Purnamasi.]

Vrinda: “Still the possibility that the *gopīs* will be touched by other men remains.”

[Translator’s Note: Purnamasi will create duplicate *māyā-gopīs* out of her potency, but Vrinda Devi has doubts as to what will happen when the so-called husbands would want to enjoy a physical relation with the *gopīs*. Will the original *gopīs* remain untouched or is there a chance of them getting polluted by the association of these so-called husbands?]

Purnamasi: “That won’t happen, because [my arrangement will be such that] even the sages [like Sukadeva Goswami] will sing as follows:

*nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya mohitās tasya māyayā
manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān svān svān dārān vrajaukasah*

“The cowherd men, bewildered by Krishna’s illusory potency, thought that their wives had remained home at their sides. Thus they did not harbor any jealous feelings toward him.” (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.33.37)

[Translator’s Note: Purnamasi assures that her arrangement will be perfect. The other *gopas* will never suspect that the *gopīs* have any sort of a loving affair with Krishna.

Srila Rupa Goswami describes this arrangement in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (3.32):

*māyā-kalita-tādṛk-stri śīlanenānusūyubhiḥ
na jātu vraja-devīnām patibhiḥ saha saṅgamah*

The *gopīs*’ jealous husbands consorted not with their wives but with doubles manufactured by *yoga-māyā*. Thus these men never actually had any intimate contact with the divine ladies of Vraja.

At the time of enjoying the *rāsa* dance with Krishna, the original *gopīs* would go and dance with Krishna whereas the *māyā-gopīs* would stay behind lying on the bed with their so-called husbands. Thus, the cowherd men would never be able to touch the real *gopīs*. The so-called husbands would enjoy the *māyā-gopīs* while the original ones would be untouched. The children of the so-called husbands will be produced by contact with the *māyā-gopīs* and not the real ones.]

Purnamasi: “Thus, since these [original] *gopīs* will not give birth to any children of their own, Shukadev Goswami will say [in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.26.9], *pāyayantyaḥ śīsūn payaḥ* — ‘The *gopīs* were feeding milk to the infants.’ He will not say that the *gopīs* were ‘breast-feeding their own children’ [for they are not really the children of the real *gopīs*]. In this way,

Unknown artist. Early Bengal School. 20th c.



at some places the pretense of being mothers to children will be demonstrated by him. This pretentious language will appear very funny to Krishna.”

[**Translator’s Note:** Whenever the *gopīs* want to go to the forest to enjoy *rāsa-līlā* with Krishna, and whenever the so-called husbands want to enjoy any sort of a relationship with the *gopīs*, the *māyā-gopīs* manifest and take the place of the original *gopīs*. At other times, though, the job of feeding the children, household chores, etc., are performed by the real *gopīs*. Sages like Shukadev Goswami will notice this and thus, while describing these pastimes, they will use language to indicate that these children were not really of the original divine *gopīs*. When Shukadev Goswami will describe like this, it will give a lot of pleasure to Krishna.]

Vrinda: “Alright, but if it is like that, then the marriage of the actual *gopīs* will be extremely difficult, because for this kind of behavior even the authors of the strict codes of religion cannot find a process of atonement. Why do you neglect this fact as you make this arrangement?”

[**Translator’s Note:** Vrinda worries again. She thinks that Purnamasi has just found a temporary solution and somehow for the time-being avoided the marriage of the *gopīs* with the other so-called husbands. However, a day will come when they will grow up and will have

to be married. Who will they be married to? Also, since they will be enjoyed by Krishna, they will become unfit for marriage. A girl who has enjoyed a paramour before her marriage cannot find any process of atonement in the strict codes of Vedic religion. Such a girl has illicitly enjoyed the company of another man who is not her husband. How can such a girl be married? There is no possibility. These *gopīs* will lose all piety in this world and in the next. Vrinda is worried about all this.]

Purnamasi: “O noble lady! That will never happen. Don’t worry. Now go happily to your place.”

[Madhukantha and Snigdhanantha continue their narration:]

“Vrinda happily fell at the lotus feet of Purnamasi and cried tears of joy as she uttered praise. Purnamasi raised Vrinda from the ground, consoled her, and sent her back to the deep forest. Vrinda gave a sigh of relief and spent two or three nights in a carefree mood. However, on hearing the news that the *gopīs* had gotten married, her face lost its radiance again [out of dejection] and she came back to meet Purnamasi, standing still like a clay doll in front of her.”



Unknown artist

[**Translator's Note:** Vrinda again became depressed suspecting that maybe the real *gopīs* have been married off and the curtains will now close on their relationship with Krishna. She is still not convinced, and the entire news of the *gopīs*' marriage, which is the talk of the village, is causing her discomfort.]

Paurnameasi: "What event has occurred that you look so anxious in your heart?"

Vrinda: "I am unable to utter even a single syllable in this regard [due to my anxiety]. How can I narrate what has happened?"

Paurnameasi: "O lotus-eyed one! There is nothing for you to be doubtful about [especially regarding the marriage]."

Vrinda (smiling sarcastically): "Bhagavati! Please tell me how I cannot be harboring doubts in my mind?"

Paurnameasi: "Believe me! Even today, the marriage has not occurred."

Vrinda: "O learned lady! Everyone in the village is narrating the news of the marriage after seeing it with their very own eyes!"

Paurnameasi: "Where are the girls now?"

Vrinda: "It is being said that since the girls were very tender in age, their in-laws have kept them at their father's homes [and not taken them to their new homes]."

Paurnameasi (with loving anger): "So why do you disbelieve what I say and instead believe only in village gossip?"



Unknown artist

Vrinda: "O Bhagavati! I would be happy if this gossip turns out to be false, but my mind is unable to understand this talk about the marriages."

Paurnameasi (laughing): "The villagers are not speaking anything false nor has the marriage occurred."

Vrinda: "I can't understand anything!"

Paurnameasi: "Obviously you haven't understood. This is because:

*tvayy api līlā-śaktiṃ
avasara-nāmnī bhaved vibhoḥ śaktiḥ
tvām api yā bhramayanti
tasmīns tasmīn pravartayati*

You are the *līlā-śakti*, pastime potency, of the Lord, and within you is the *avasara-śakti* (the potency of being affected at special occasions) which deludes you and causes you to become engaged in various activities related to that special occasion (even if that occasion is false)."

[**Translator's Note:** Meter is *udgīti*.]

Vrinda (in a timid voice): "If it is so (that the marriage has not occurred), then please explain to me the entire secret." ❀

[To be continued.]

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the *Gopāla-pūrvacampūh*. Published by Sri Nityasvarup Brahmachari. 1912 A.D.

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