

Sri Krishna Kathamrita



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The Fire of Separation





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SEPARATION IS THE HIGHEST

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Separation from Guru

The separation that you are feeling on account of my physical absence is a good sign. The more you feel such separation the more you will be situated in Krishna consciousness. Lord Chaitanya felt this separation, and his process of approaching Krishna is the feeling of separation. (Letter to Ballabhi. 22 April 1967.)

Yes, the ecstasy of separation of spiritual master is even greater ecstasy than meeting with him. (Letter to Jadurani. 13 Jan 1968.)

Please be happy in separation. I am separated from my Guru Maharaja since 1936, but I am always with him so long I work according to his direction. So we should all work together for satisfying Lord Krishna, and in that way the feeling of separation will transform into transcendental bliss. (Letter to Uddhava. 5 March 1968.)

Cover: "Secrets". Painting by Dhriti Devi Dasi.

Our business is to chant and glorify the holy name of Krishna, and wherever we may remain, Krishna is with us. Krishna is within your heart, Krishna is within my heart. So, spiritually, there is no question of separation, even physically we may be in a far distant place. (Letter to Syam. 30 August 1968.)

Our meeting and separation in the material world is like the flowing tide of the river. During the flowing tide of the river, so many different floating articles meet together, and with the flowing they again become separated by the movement of the waves. That is the way of material life. But our separation, although it resembles exactly in the material way, it is completely different. In the spiritual world, separation is more relishable than meeting. In other words, in spiritual life there is no separation. Separation is eternal, and meeting is also eternal. The separation is simply another feature of meeting. (Letter to Brahmananda. 3 April 1969.)

So far I am concerned, I do not factually feel any separation from my spiritual master because I am trying to serve him according to his desire. That should be the motto. If you kindly try to fulfill my mission for which you have been sent there, that will be our constant association. (Letter to Hamsaduta. 22 June 1970.)

Mood of our Sampradaya

In the *sāstra* it is said: *vṛndāvanam parityajya padam ekam na gacchati* — “Krishna does not go even one step from Vrindavan.” He is so much attached to Vrindavan. So how is it that we see that Krishna left Vrindavan and went so far away to Mathura and did not return for many years? No. Krishna actually did not leave Vrindavan. However, since Krishna left Vrindavan, all the inhabitants were simply thinking of Krishna and crying. That was their business. Mother Yasoda, Nanda Maharaja, Radharani, all the *gopīs*, all the cows, all the calves, and all the cowherd boys — their only business was to think of Krishna and cry in separation.

Krishna can be felt, Krishna can be present more acutely in separation. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s teaching — to love Krishna in separation.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has written, *śūnyāyitam jagat sarvaṁ govinda-virahaṇa me* — “Everything is vacant without Govinda, without Krishna.” [*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 7] That is the highest perfection. When we see that everything is nothing and only Krishna consciousness is there, that is the highest. That is the *gopīs*. Therefore, the *gopīs* are so exalted. They could not forget Krishna for a single moment. When Krishna was going to the forest with his cows and calves, the *gopīs* at home were disturbed in their minds, “Oh, Krishna is walking bare-footed. There are so many stones and nails. They will prick Krishna’s lotus feet, which are so soft that we think our breasts hard when Krishna puts his lotus feet on them.” They are absorbed in these thoughts and crying. They are so anxious to see Krishna return home that in the evening they are standing on the roof watching, “Now Krishna is coming back with his cows and friends.” This is Krishna consciousness. Krishna cannot be

absent from a devotee when he is absorbed in thoughts of Krishna. This is the process of Krishna consciousness.

Kuntidevi was very anxious that Krishna will be absent. But when Krishna will be absent physically, he will be

more present within the mind of the devotee. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s teaching is *vipralambha-sevā*. He has shown this by his practical life. He was searching out Krishna. He was crying, tears were coming like torrents of rain from his eyes, and he was feeling everything vacant for want of Krishna. This is separation, *vipralambha*. There are two stages, *sambhoga* and *vipralambha*. When he is personally present, personally meeting, and personally embracing, that is called *sambhoga*. And when there is separation, that is called *vipralambha*. These are two ways that a devotee can be benefited. (Lecture in Los Angeles on the teachings of Queen Kunti. 1 May 1973.)

The *gopīs* of Vrindavan were so attached to Krishna that they were not satisfied simply with the *rāsa* dance at night. They wanted to associate with him and enjoy his company during the daytime also. When Krishna went to the forest with his cowherd boyfriends and cows, the *gopīs* did not physically take part, but their

"Krishna can be felt, Krishna can be present more acutely in separation. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching — to love Krishna in separation."



Unknown artist

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was searching for Krishna and crying

hearts went with him. And because their hearts went, they were able to enjoy his company through strong feelings of separation. To acquire this strong feeling of separation is the teaching of Lord Chaitanya and his direct disciplic succession of *gosvāmīs*. When we are not in physical contact with Krishna we can associate with him like the *gopīs* through feelings of separation. Krishna's transcendental form, qualities,

pastimes, and entourage are all identical with him. There are nine different kinds of devotional service. Devotional service to Krishna in feelings of separation elevates the devotee to the highest perfectional level, to the level of the *gopīs*. (*Kṛṣṇa Book*, chapter 35.)

Those who are in the disciplic succession of the *Madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya* should always feel separation from Krishna,

worship his transcendental form, and discuss his transcendental teachings, his pastimes, his qualities, and his entourage. That will enrich the devotees to the highest devotional perfection. Feeling constant separation while engaged in the service of the Lord is the perfection of Krishna consciousness. (*Kṛṣṇa Book*, chapter 35.) 🍌

SEPARATION CAUSES ECSTASY



Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

“O Govinda, the world is simply an immense void in your absence. My eyes are raining tears like monsoon-laden clouds, each batting of an eyelid seems to last a millennium.” This is an excellent example of *vipralambha-rasa*. The *śloka* intends to point out that for the *jāta-rati* devotee [a devotee in whom *rati* has manifested] it is absolutely essential that he seek to experience *vipralambha-rasa* and not care for *sambhoga*, enjoyment.

In material life, *viraha*, separation, causes only grief, whereas on the transcendental plane it produces exultant ecstasy even though it seems like acute anguish. *Vipralambha* nourishes *sambhoga*, or enjoyment. As a matter of fact, in *prema-vaicittya*, variegatedness of love within the *vipralambha-rasa*, there is *sambhoga*, but only externally. *Vipralambha* is marked by incessant and intense recollections of Krishna and his pastimes, and thus in fact one never forgets Krishna. This is the super-excellent stage of *bhajana*. 🍌

— *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*. Commentary on verse 7. English translation by Sarvabhavana Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vrindavan. 1999.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SEPARATION



Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

What is the characteristic of *vipralambha-rasa*?

Vipralambha means separation. When dyeing an already colored cloth, the color of the cloth intensifies. Similarly, through separation, the desire for conjugal enjoyment intensifies. Without *vipralambha*, the conjugal pastimes cannot be nourished. (*Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 37. Quoted in *Bhaktivinoda Vani Vaibhava*, chapter 104.)

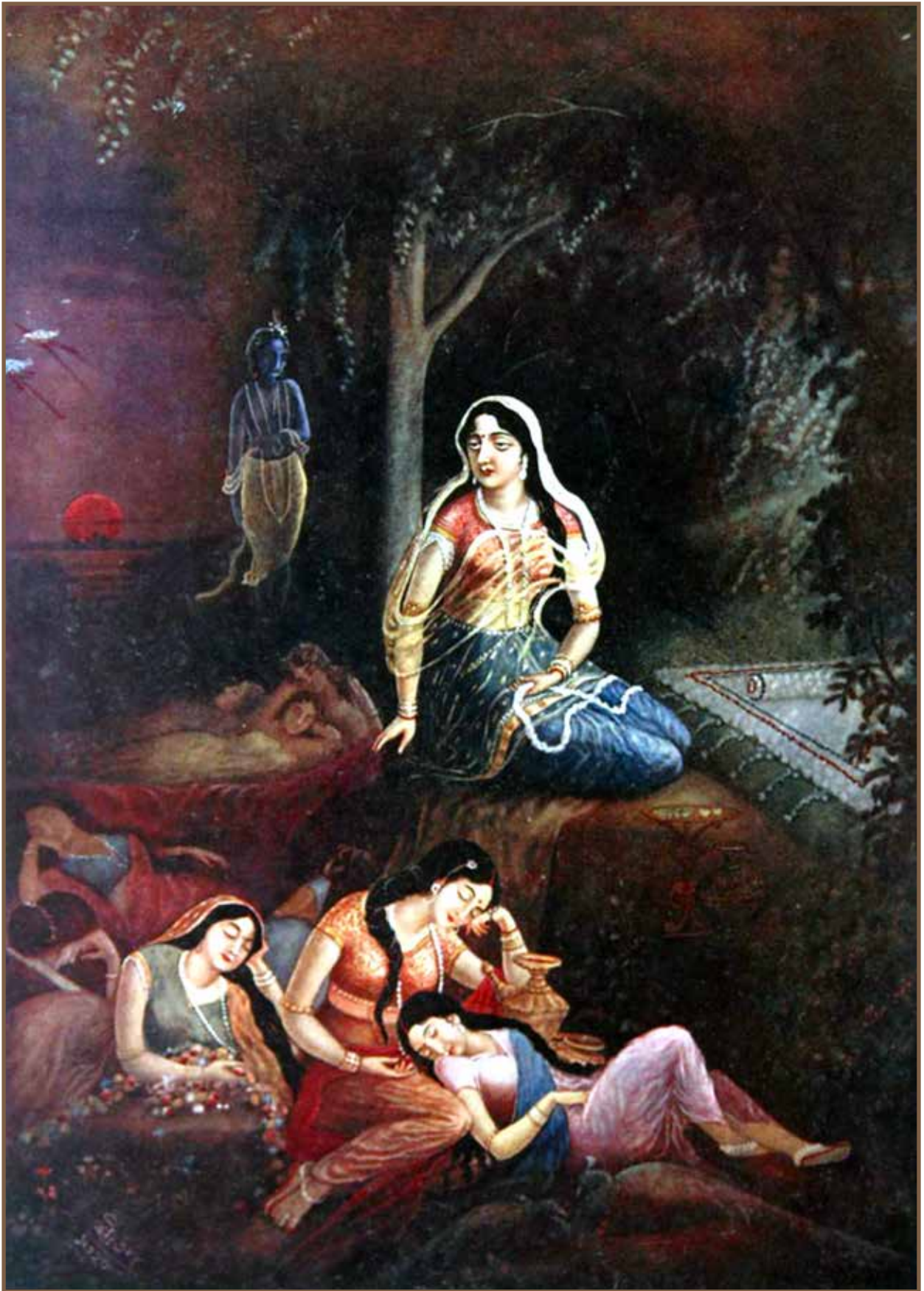


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Separation from Krishna is only apparant

Do the devotees experience separation in the Lord's unmanifest pastimes due to his going to a distant place?

The Lord's pastimes are of two types, unmanifest and manifest. [Note: Krishna pastimes are going on eternally in the spiritual world. When they are also going on in the material world it is said that they are *prakaṭa*, manifest. Otherwise it is said that they are *aprakaṭa*, unmanifest.] The separation experienced in *vipralambha-rasa* pertains only to the Lord's manifest pastimes. Actually, there is no separation between Sri Krishna and the *Vraja gopīs*. *Mathurā-mahātmya* states that Lord Krishna enjoys his pastimes in *Vraja* in the company of the cowherd boys and girls. The word *krīdati*, “plays”, is in the present tense, so we can understand that Krishna's *Vrindavan* pastimes are eternal. Even if Krishna goes to a distant place, there is no separation in Krishna's unmanifest pastimes in



Painting by Sheetal Banerjee, Circa 1930

Separation means internal union



Unknown artist. Gita Press

In separation Radharani sees Krishna everywhere

Goloka Vrindavan. There, enjoyment is eternal. (Jaiva Dharma, chapter 38. Quoted in Bhaktivinoda Vani Vaibhava, chapter 104.)

The word *yugāyitam* is simple and direct. The phrase *govinda-virahaṇa* expresses deep feelings of separation. Self-realized *rasika* devotees have divided *vipralambha*, the mood of separation, into *purva-raga*, *mana*, *pravasa*, and so on. Yet the recondite import lodged deep within this *śloka* composed by Lord Chaitanya is that the devotee

living in this world need only relish the separation of *pūrva-raga*. The scriptures also say that the mood of *viraha*, separation, has ten attendant conditions: pondering, sleeplessness, perturbation, emaciation, pallor, incoherent speech, being stricken, madness, delusion, and death (or unconsciousness).

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (antya 20.40-41) Lord Chaitanya says,

“In my agitation, a day never ends, for every moment seems like a millennium. Pouring incessant tears,

Unknown artist



In the madness of their separation the gopīs began acting out the pastimes of Krishna

my eyes are like clouds in the rainy season. The three worlds have become void because of separation from Govinda. I feel as if I am burning alive in a slow fire.” (Commentary on verse seven of Śikṣāṣṭaka.) 🍌

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MEETING AND SEPARATION



Srila Thakur Bhaktinode's Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya Parikramā-khaṇḍa, 14.18-23

Lord Ramachandra once told his wife:

āmāte ye prema-bhakti tāra āsvādana
dui mate haya sītā śunaha vacana
āmāra saṁyoge sukha sambhoga bolaya
āmāra viyoge sukha vipralambha haya

Listen, Sita! My devotees relish *prema-bhakti* in two ways. In union with me they enjoy *sambhoga*, and in separation from me they enjoy *vipralambha*.

Ślokāmṛta

A SNAKE IN SEPARATION

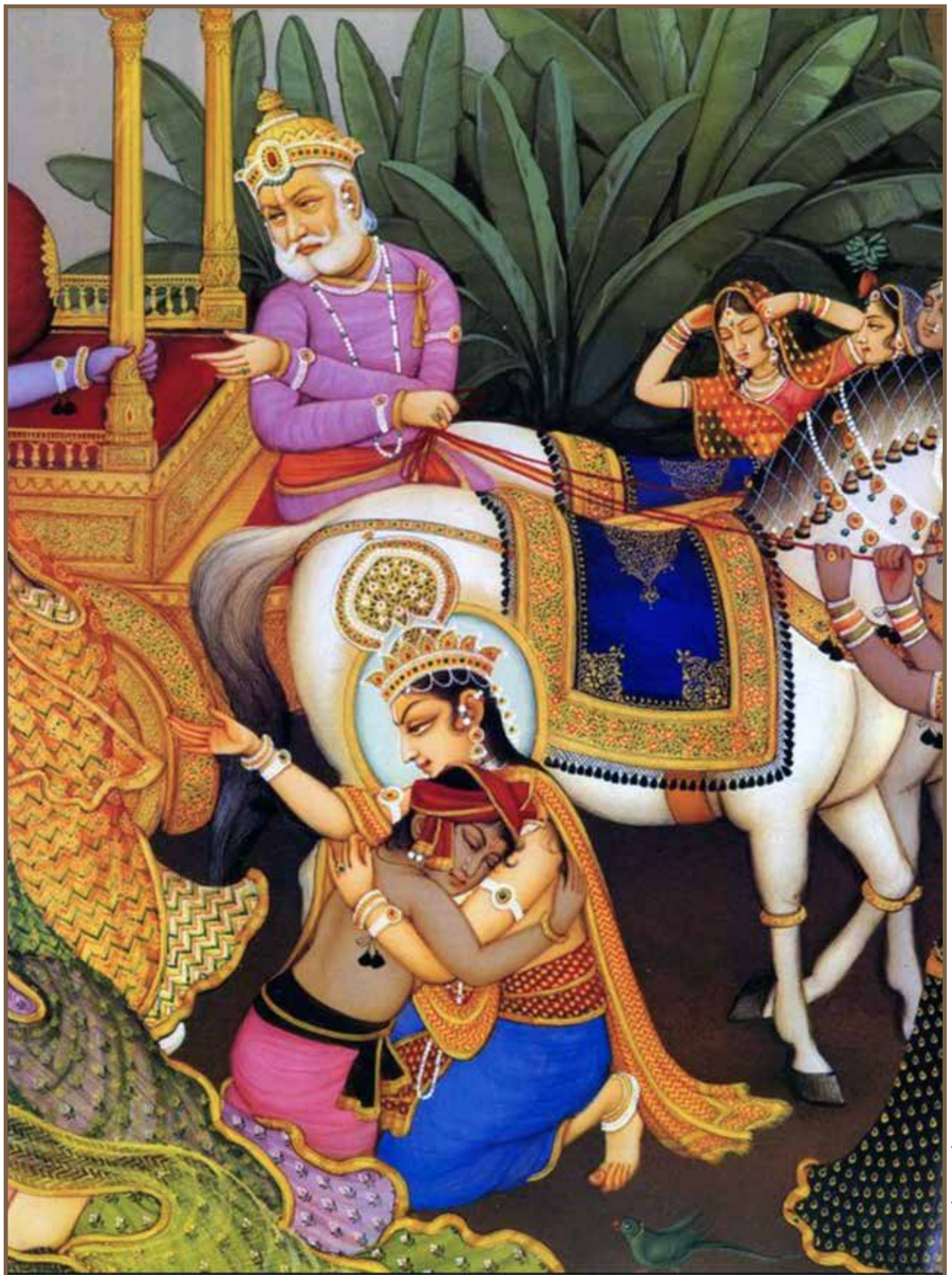
*Raghunath Das Goswami's Stavavali,
Śrī Prārthanāśraya-caturdaśaka text 11*

śūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham girīndro `jagarāyate
vyāghra-tuṅḍāyate kuṅḍam jīvātu-rahitasya me

Now that I no longer have the sustainer of my life [Sri Rupa Goswami], the land of Vraja has become empty and desolate, Govardhan Hill has become like a great python, and Radha Kund has become like the gaping mouth of a ferocious tiger.

— From Sivaram Swami's *Śuddha-bhakti-cintāmaṇi*. Lal Publications. Hungary. 2003.





Painting by B. G. Sharma

Balaram embraces one of his cowherd boy friends before he leaves Vrindavan

Unknown artist



Radharani's intimate friends console her when she is feeling separation from Krishna

*bhakta mora nityasaṅgī sambhoga vāñcāya
mama kṛpāveśe tāra vipralambha haya*

My eternal associates desire *sambhoga*, but I mercifully give them *vipralambha*.

*vipralambhe duḥkha yei āmāra kāraṇa
parama ānānda tāhā jāne bhakta-jana*

The devotees know that distress due to separation from me is actually the topmost bliss.

*vipralambha-śeṣa yabe sambhoga udaya
pūrvāpekṣā koṭi-guṇa sukha tāhe haya*

After separation, when union occurs, they feel happiness so much greater than before — ten million times multiplied.

*sei ta' sukhera hetu āmāra vicheda
strīkāra karaha tumi bale cāri veda*

That is the explanation of how there can be happiness in separation. You should accept this mood which is described in the four Vedas. 🍌

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THE STRONG BOLT ON THE DOOR



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Rupa Goswami describes in his *Lalita-mādhava* (3.9):

*bhrātara vāyasa-maṇḍalī-mukūṭa he niṣkramya goṣṭhād itaḥ
sandeśam vada vandanottaram amuṇi vṛndātavindrāya me
dagdhuṇi prāṇa-paśuṇi śikhī viraha-bhūr indhe mad-aṅgālaye
sāndraṇi nāgara-candra bhīndhi rabhasād āśārgalā-bandhanam*

Radharani looked at the sky. A crow was flying overhead, going towards Mathura. All of a sudden, pointing out that crow, Radharani said, “Hey crow. Here! Over here! Are you going to Mathura? Please hear me. Don’t go anywhere else! Go directly to Mathura. There you will find a king named Mathuranath. When you meet him, pay your obeisances and give him a message. Whatever message I give to you, deliver it to him. Do you understand? If a house is on fire, what is the first duty of the housemaster? His first duty is that if there are domestic animals they must be released. You may be burned to ashes but let them not be burned. My body is like a house which is now on fire. And who has set fire to this house? It is that Krishna who has set this house on fire. Tell him, O crow, tell him! My life is like a domestic animal, *prāṇa-paśu*, but it cannot get out. And why not?

Ślokāmṛta

FIRE IN VRAJA

**Srila Rupa Goswami's
Uddhava Sandeśa text 9**

*mad-viśleṣa-jvalana-paṭali-jvālayā jarjarāṅgāḥ
sarve tasmin nidhana-padavīm śākhino `py āśrayiṣyan
gopī-netrāvali-vigalitair bhūribhir bāṣpa-vārām
pūrais teṣām yadi niravadhir nābhiṣeko `tarisyato*

[While in Mathura, Krishna said to Uddhava:] If they were not always drenched by a flood of tears from the *gopīs'* eyes, all of Vraja's trees would have burned in a great fire of separation from me. They would have walked on a pathway that leads to death.

— *Uddhava Sandeśa*. Translation by Sri Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California.



This animal cannot get out because there is a very strong bolt on the door. So let Krishna come and unbolt it.”

Then Radharani told the crow, “If you want to know what is that bolt, I’ll tell you. When Krishna left Vrajabhumi he told us: ‘I’ll come back. I will come back.’ That promise is the very strong bolt. Only with this hope are we surviving. But Krishna is not coming back. So let him come and unbolt it.”

This is Radharani’s mood, feeling the acute pangs of separation from Krishna, and dying. The whole house, her body, is on fire. And the *prāṇa-paśu*, her life, which is like a domestic animal, is now burning. It could not get out. Radharani told the crow, “This is the very strong bolt on the door, so let him come and unbolt it. That means let him withdraw his words. 🍌

— From chapter five of *Embankment of Separation*. Gopal Jiu Publications.

WHO IS PLAYING THE FLUTE?



The Medieval Bengali Poet Chandidas

On hearing the sound of Krishna’s flute, Radha is extremely distressed, and she addresses her friend and chaperone, an old lady. This poem is written in an archaic Bengali dialect of southwestern Bengal.

*ke nā vāṁśī bāe baḍāyi kālīnī na-i kule
ke nā bāśī bāe baḍāyi e goṭha gokule*

“O grandmother! Who is it that is playing a flute on the bank of the river Kalindi (Yamuna)? O grandmother! Who is it that is playing a flute in the groves of Gokula?

*ākula śārīra mora be-ākula mana
vāṁśīra śabade moṁ ālāilom rāndhana*

“My body is paralyzed, and my mind has become mad; I have made a mess of my cooking — all because of the sound of that flute.

*ke nā vāṁśī bāe baḍāyi se nā kona janā
dāsī haām tāra pāe niśibom āpanā*

“O grandmother! Who is it who plays that flute? What sort of a man is he? I shall become his slave and offer myself at his feet.

*ke nā vāṁśī bāe baḍāyi cittera hariṣe
tāra pāe baḍāyi mo kailo kona doṣe*

“O grandmother! Who is it that is playing the flute with such joyfulness of heart? O grandmother! What offense have I done at his feet?

Painting by Abdur Rahman



In separation from Krishna, Srimati Radharani sees the whole world as vacant



Unknown artist

Krishna appears in the heart of his devotees who are absorbed in thinking of him



Painting by R. S. Chonke

Radharani sees Krishna in her dreams

ājhara jharae mora nayanera pāṇi
vāṁśira śabadem baḍāyi hārāyiloṁ parāṇī

“Rivers of tears flow down from my eyes. O grandmother! I have lost my soul at the sound of the flute.

ākula kariteṁ kibā āmhāra mana
bājāe susara vāṁśi nāndera nandana

“Is the son of Nanda playing the flute so sweetly simply to destroy the tranquility of my mind?

pākhi nahom tāra ṭhāṇi ūḍī paḍi jāom
medani vidāra deu pasiām lukāom

“I am not a bird so that I may fly to him. Let the earth split open so that I may enter it and hide myself.

vana poḍe āga baḍāyi jaga-jane jāṇī
mora mana poḍe jenha kumbhāraera paṇī

“O grandmother! Everyone can see when a forest is on fire. [But no one can see] my heart which is burning like the potter’s oven.

āntara sukhāe more kāṅha-ābhilāse
bāsali śire vandi gāila caṇḍidāse

“My heart is drying up with a desire for Krishna! So sings Chandidas, bowing his head to his deity Basali.”

[Note: Basali is a tantric goddess who was previously the worshipable deity of Chandidas. According to tradition, it was Basali Devi who instructed Chandidas to write songs about Radha and Krishna.] 🍌

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