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Sweet Pastimes of Lord Krishna

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When the *yamala-arjuna* trees fell, all the cowherd men in the neighborhood, hearing the violent sound and fearing thunderbolts, hurried to the place they fell. There they saw the *yamala-arjuna* trees on the ground, but they were bewildered because, even though they could see that the trees had fallen, they could not understand why Krishna was still tied by ropes to the mortar which He was dragging. But how could He have pulled down the trees? Who had actually done it? Where was the source for this incident? Considering all these things astonishing, the cowherd men were doubtful and bewildered.

Then all the cowherd boys said: It is Krishna who has done this. When He was in between the two trees, the mortar fell crosswise. Krishna dragged the mortar, and the two trees fell down. After that, two beautiful men came out of the trees. We have seen this with our own eyes.

Because of intense paternal affection, the cowherd men, headed by Nanda, could not believe that Krishna could have uprooted the trees in such a wonderful way. Therefore, they could not put their faith in the words of the boys. Some of the men, however, considered, "Since Krishna was predicted to be equal to Narayana," they thought, "it might be that He has done it." When Nanda

Maharaja saw his son tied with ropes to the wooden mortar and dragging it behind Him, he smiled and released Krishna from His bonds.

The gopis would say, "If You dance, my dear Krishna, then I shall give You half a sweet-meat." By saying these words or by clapping their hands, all the gopis encouraged Krishna in different ways. At such times, although He was the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead, He would smile and dance according to their desire, as if He were a wooden doll in their hands. Sometimes He would sing very loudly, at their bidding. In this way, Krishna came completely under the control of the gopis. Sometimes mother Yashoda and her gopi friends would tell Krishna, "Bring this article" or "Bring that article." Sometimes they would order Him to bring a wooden plank, wooden shoes or a wooden measuring pot, and Krishna, when thus ordered by the mothers, would try to bring them. Sometimes, however, as if unable to raise these things, He would touch them and stand there. Just to invite the pleasure of His relatives, He would strike His body with His arms to show that He had sufficient strength. To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, exhibited how He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the *Vrajavāsīs* by His childhood activities.

Once a woman selling fruit was calling, "O



inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, if you want to purchase some fruits, come here!” Upon hearing this, Krishna immediately took some grains and went to barter as if He needed some fruit. While Krishna was going to the fruit vendor very hastily, most of the grains He was holding in His small hand fell out. Nonetheless, the fruit vendor filled Krishna’s hands with fruit, and simultaneously Krishna filled her fruit basket with jewels and gold.

Once, after the uprooting of the *yamala-arjuna* trees, Rohinidevi went to call Rama and Krishna, who had both gone to the riverside and were playing with the other boys with deep attention. Because of being absorbed in playing with the other boys, Krishna and Balarama did not return upon being called by Rohini. Therefore, Rohini sent mother Yashoda to call Them, because mother Yashoda was more affectionate to Krishna and Balarama. Krishna and Balarama, were very attached to playing, and continued to play with the other boys although it was past the time of Their lunch. Therefore, mother Yashoda called Them to come home and eat. Because of deep affection for Krishna and Balarama, milk flowed from her breasts as she looked upon Them.

Mother Yashoda said: My dear son Krishna, lotus-eyed Krishna, come here and drink my milk. My dear darling, You must be very tired because of hunger and the fatigue of playing so long. There is no need to play any more. My dear Baladeva, best of our family, please come immediately with Your younger brother, Krishna. You both ate only in the morning, so now You ought to eat something more. Nanda Maharaja, the King of Vraja, is now waiting to take his lunch..

O my dear son Balarama, Nanda Maharaja is waiting for You too. Therefore, come back to please us. All the boys playing with You and Krishna should now go to their homes.

Mother Yashoda further told Krishna: My dear son, because of playing all day, Your body has become covered with dust and sand. Therefore, come back, take Your bath and cleanse Yourself. Today the moon is conjoined with the auspicious star of Your birth. Therefore, bathe and become pure and then you can give cows in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*. Just see how all Your playmates have been washed and decorated with beautiful ornaments by their mothers. You should come here, and after You have taken Your bath, eaten Your lunch and been decorated with ornaments, You may play with Your friends again.

Because of intense love and affection, Krishna’s mother Yashoda, considered Him, who was at the source of all opulences, to be her son. Thus she took Krishna along with Balarama by the hand,

and brought Them home. There she performed her duties by fully bathing Them, and then dressing and feeding Them.

Having seen the great disturbances in Brihadvana, one time all the elderly persons among the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Maharaja, assembled and began to consider what to do to stop the continuous disturbing situations in Vraja. At this meeting of all the inhabitants of Gokula, a cowherd man named Upananda who was the most mature in age and knowledge and very experienced in making decisions according to time, place and circumstances, made a suggestion for the benefit of Rama and Krishna.

Upananda said: My dear cowherd friends, in order to do good to this place, Gokula, we should leave, because so many disturbances are continuously occurring here as if, just for the purpose of killing Rama and Krishna. This child Krishna, simply by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was somehow or other rescued from the hands of the *rākṣasī* Putana, who intended to kill Him. Then, again by the mercy of the Supreme Godhead, the handcart missed falling upon the child. After that, the demon Trinavarta, in the form of a whirl-wind, took the child away and carried Him high into the sky. He also intended to kill Him, but the demon fell down onto a slab of stone. In that case also, by the mercy of Lord Vishnu or His associates, the child was saved.

Even the other day, neither Krishna nor any of His playmates died from the falling of the two trees, although the children were near the trees or even between them. This also is to be considered the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. All these incidents are being caused by some unknown demon. Before he comes here to create another disturbance, it is our duty to relocate ourselves somewhere else where there will be no more disturbances for the boys..

Between Nandeshvara and Mahavana is a place named Vrindavana. This place is very suitable because it is lush with grass, plants and creepers for the cows and other animals. It has nice gardens and tall mountains and is full of facilities for the happiness of all the gopas and gopis and our animals. Therefore, let us immediately go today. There is no need to wait any further. If you agree to my proposal, let us prepare all the bullock carts and put the cows in front of us, and let us go there.

Upon hearing this advice from Upananda, the cowherd men unanimously agreed. “Very nice, very nice” they said. Thus they sorted out their household affairs, placed their clothing and other paraphernalia on the carts, and immediately started for Vrindavana. Placing all the old men, women,

children as well as the household paraphernalia on the bullock carts and keeping all the cows in front, the cowherd men picked up their bows and arrows with great care and sounded bugles made of horn.

In this way, with bugles vibrating all around, the cowherd men, accompanied by their priests, began their journey. The cowherd women, riding on the bullock carts, were dressed very nicely with excellent garments, and their bodies especially their bosom was decorated with fresh *kunkuma* powder.

As they rode, they sung with great pleasure about the pastimes of Krishna. Thus very happily hearing about the pastimes of Krishna and Balarama, mother Yashoda and Rohinidevi, so as not to be separated from Krishna and Balarama for even a moment, sat with Them on one bullock cart. In this way, they all looked very beautiful to behold. Like this they entered Vrindavana, where in all seasons it is pleasing to live. They made a temporary camp by placing their bullock carts around them in the shape of a half moon. When Rama and Krishna saw Vrindavana, Govardhana and the banks of the river Yamuna, They both experienced great pleasure.

Krishna and Balarama, acting like small boys and talking in broken language, gave transcendental pleasure to all the inhabitants of Vraja. In due course of time, They became old enough to take care of the calves. In a place not far away from Their residence, Krishna and Balarama, brought all kinds of toys and played with other cowherd boys whilst tending to the small calves. Sometimes Krishna and Balarama would play Their flutes, sometimes They would throw ropes and stones devised for getting fruits from the trees, sometimes They would throw only stones, and sometimes, Their ankle bells tinkling, They would play football with fruits like *bael* and *āmalaki*. Sometimes They would cover Themselves with blankets and imitate cows and bulls and fight with one another, roaring loudly, and sometimes They would imitate the calls of the animals. In this way They enjoyed sporting, exactly like two ordinary human children.

One day while Rama and Krishna along with Their playmates were tending the calves on the bank of the river Yamuna, another demon desiring to kill Them arrived there. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead saw that the demon had assumed the form of a calf and entered among the groups of other calves, He pointed out to Baladeva, "Here is another demon." Then He very slowly approached the demon, as if He did not understand his intentions. Sri Krishna caught



the disguised demon by the hind legs and tail, and very vigorously spun him until he died. Krishna then, threw his now huge body into the top of a *kapittha* tree, which in turn fell down. Upon seeing the dead body of the demon, all the cowherd boys exclaimed, "Well done, Krishna! Very good, very good! Thank You." In the upper planetary system, all the demigods were pleased, and therefore they showered flowers on the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna.

After the killing of the demon, Krishna and Balarama finished Their breakfast, and while continuing to take care of the calves, They wandered to different places. Krishna and Balarama, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, who maintain the entire creation, now took charge of the calves as if They were ordinary cowherd boys. One day Krishna and Balarama and all the boys, each with his own group of calves, brought them to a reservoir of water, so they could drink. After the animals, the boys also drank water there. Right by the reservoir, the boys saw a gigantic form resembling a broken mountain peak broken struck down by a thunder-bolt. They were afraid even to see such a huge living being. That huge bodied demon was named Bakasura. He had assumed the body of a heron with a very sharp beak. Having come there, he immediately swallowed Krishna. When Balarama and the other boys saw that Krishna had been devoured by the gigantic heron, they became almost unconscious, like senses without life. Though Krishna, is the

father of Lord Brahma, He was acting as the son of a cowherd man. Still, He made Himself hot like fire, burning Bakasura's throat, and hence the demon immediately disgorged Him. When he saw that Krishna, although having been swallowed, was unharmed, he immediately attacked Krishna with his sharp beak. (50)

When Krishna, the leader of the Vaishnavas, saw that the demon Bakasura, the friend of Kamsa, was endeavoring to attack Him, He held the demon by the two halves of his beak, and in the presence of all the cowherd boys Krishna very easily bifurcated him, as a child splits a blade of grass. By thus killing the demon, Krishna very much pleased the denizens of heaven who, in turn showered *mallikā-puṣpa*, flowers grown in *Nandana-kānana*, upon Krishna, addressing Him as the enemy of Bakasura. They congratulated Him by also sounding celestial kettledrums and conchshells and by offering prayers. Seeing this, the cowherd boys were struck with wonder.

Just as the senses are pacified when consciousness and life return, so when Krishna was freed from this danger, all the boys, including Balarama, thought that their life had been restored. They joyfully embraced Krishna, and then collected their own calves and returned to Vrajabhumi, where they loudly narrated the whole incident.

Upon hearing about the killing of Bakasura in the forest cowherd men and women, were wonderous. Seeing Krishna and hearing the story, they received Him very eagerly, thinking that He and the other boys had returned from the mouth of death. Now that

Krishna and the boys were safe the cowherd men and women looked upon Them in contemplative silence, not wanting to turn their eyes away. The cowherd men, headed by Nanda Maharaja, began to think: It is very astonishing that although this boy Krishna has many faced many varied causes of death, by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead it was these causes that were killed and not Him. Although, these *daityas*, were very fierce, they could not kill this boy Krishna. Rather, because they came to kill innocent boys, as soon as they approached Him, they themselves were killed, exactly like flies attacking a fire. It is very wonderful that whatever Garga Muni predicted we are now actually experiencing in all detail. The words of persons in full knowledge of Brahman certainly never become untrue.

In this way all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Maharaja, enjoyed discussing the pastimes of Krishna and Balarama with great transcendental pleasure, so much so that and they could not perceive any material distress. Krishna and Balarama passed Their childhood age in Vrajabhumi by engaging in activities of childish play, such as playing hide-and-peek, constructing a make believe bridge on the ocean, and jumping around it like monkeys.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (BhāgavataPurāṇa) » Canto 10: The SummumBonum
» Chapter 11: The Childhood Pastimes of Krishna» Verse: 1-59





THE MEETING ROOM OF NANDA MAHARAJA

Srila VishvanathaChakravartiThakura

Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men sat in the meeting room, and repeatedly discussed the naughtiness of the boy and His killing of Vatsasura and Bakasura. They also composed songs which they sang again and again, and thus they did not perceive the tribulations of material existence.

Other elderly cowherd men coming from distant places informed Nanda about need to become liberated from the material world: “Half your life is gone. Why do you remain immersed in discussing about child, family and wife? Why don’t you concentrate on knowledge, detachment, austerity and remembrance of Narayana so that you get deliverance from the material world?” Though requested in this way, Nanda Maharaja and the other cowherd men did not pay any attention to that (*na avindan bhavasya vedanām*). To say that this phrase means that “they did not suffer the pains of material life” is not acceptable. The *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.6.40) describes the exalted nature of the cowherd men and women, who were not touched by the material world born of ignorance. There is no question that they could be affected by the pains of the material world. In this way, whatever appears as material tribulations simply nourishes the pastimes and therefore is called *līlā-māyā*.

Not only did the cowherd men speak about Krishna and His past and future pastimes, but they also enjoyed playing with Krishna (*ramamānāh*). Thus they did not know the sufferings of materialistic persons (*bhava vedanām*), though they were living in the material world. When the Vrajavaṣis say “I am suffering from hunger,” that hunger is not related to the material world.

— From *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by *Srila VishvanāthaChakravartiThakura*» Canto 10: The SummumBonum » Chapter 11: The Childhood Pastimes of Krishna» Verse 58 » Translated by His Holiness *Bhanu Swami*. ❀

SHOULD WE ALLOW THE SINGING OF LORD’S CONJUGAL PASTIMES IN THE TEMPLE?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur

We do not object to hearing and chanting about Krishna’s pastimes. In fact, the Lord’s pastimes must be heard and chanted. Only then will the conditioned souls’ natural taste or eagerness for hearing and chanting about their own heroic activities and other forms of idle talk be destroyed. There is no substitute for this. We should hear from devotees of the Lord who are more elevated than

ourselves. If we hear from materialists or others, we will gain nothing. We should hear glorification of the Lord only from a spiritual master or pure devotee. A real devotee has the determination that, “I will hear *hari-kathā* only from my spiritual master’s mouth. I will hear and discuss the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam* Sri Sukadeva Goswami spoke. I will hear glorification of the Lord as it was inaugurated by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, or discuss Lord Krishna’s names, forms, and qualities. I will discuss the Lord’s pure devotees, who are fully dedicated to their spiritual master.”

However, there is no difference between chanting about the Lord’s general pastimes and chanting about the mellows of the Lord’s conjugal pastimes. We should therefore not think that one is higher and the other lower. Hearing about the conjugal pastimes requires qualification. Living entities with *anarthas* can hear and chant about the pastimes of Lord Gauranga and the childhood pastimes of Lord Krishna. If people try to hear and chant about the confidential pastimes between Sri Radha and Krishna they will find misfortune rather than auspiciousness. Hearing and chanting about Sri Sri Radha-Krishna’s confidential pastimes is certainly the best way to worship the Lord. It is, however, improper and even offensive to sing about such pastimes in public. A person wishing to attain auspiciousness must obey these words from the *mahājanas*, *pana bhajana kathā na kahibe yatha tatha*: “Do not disclose your confidential mode of worship to anyone and everyone.”

We should sing the holy name’s glories, offer prayers to the Lord, and chant the glories of the Lord’s service where people of different natures and statuses are assembled. If we are qualified, only in the association of like-minded devotees, can we hear about the Lord’s confidential pastimes, perceiving our own mood according to our constitutional position. Otherwise we will receive an opposite result. If in order to maintain this standard, singing the Lord’s glories must be stopped altogether, let it be so. We are interested in benefiting the people. It is Kali who keeps alive the public singing of the Lord’s confidential pastimes simply to accumulate money and enjoy sense gratification.

—*AmṛtaVāṇī*: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality, His Divine Grace *Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda*, Compiled by *Śrīpāda Bhakti Mayukha Bhāgavat Mahārāja*, Translated from Bengali by *Bhumipatidāsa*, Adapted and Published by *Īśvaradāsa*. ❀

THE TWO KINDS OF PREMA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Prema, love of Godhead, is of two kinds: *kevala-prema* (unalloyed love) and *mahīm-jnāna-yukta-*



prema (love mixed with knowledge, awe and reverential worship). The goal of *rāgānuga-bhakti-sādhana* is primarily *kevala-prema*. Devotees on the path of *vaidhi-bhakti-sādhana* attain such liberations as *sārūpya* (equal bodily feature), *sālokyā* (equal facility to live on the same planet with the Lord), *sārṣṭi* (equal possession of opulence like the Lord), and *sāmīpya* (equal association with the Lord). According to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings, *kevala-prema*, unalloyed devotional surrender is the pinnacle of all attainments and goals. *Kevala-prema* is further sub-divided as: *bhāvottha* (sprung from *bhāva*) and *prāsadotha* (sprung directly from mercy). Further subdivisions of *bhāvottha* are: *vaidhi* and *rāgānuga*. *Prāsadotha* is extremely rare. *Bhavottha-prema* is more common and is described in the *Srī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* (23.9-13, 39):

*kona bhāgye kona jīvera śraddhā yadi haya
tave sei jīva sādhu saṅga karaya
sādhu saṅga haite haya śravaṇa kīrtana
sādhana bhaktye haya sarvānārtha nivartana
anārtha nivṛtti haile bhakti niṣṭha haya
niṣṭha haite śravaṇādye ruci upajaya
ruci bhakti haite haya aśakti pracura
aśakti haite citte janme kṛṣṇe prīty ankura
sei rati gāḍha haila dhare prema nāma
sei prema prayojana sarvānanda dhāma
yānra citte kṛṣṇa prema karaye udaya
tānra vākya, kriyā, mudrā vijneha na bujhaya*

"If, by good fortune, a living entity develops faith in Krishna he begins to associate with pure devotees. Inspired by that association he begins the process of devotional service by hearing and chanting which cleanses his heart of all unwanted contamination. Freed from all contamination, his devotion advances to the stage of firm, undeviating faith. When firm faith awakens, taste for hearing and chanting blossoms. From taste for devotional service arises deep attachment, leading to the appearance in the heart of the seed of love, which begins to grow. When that stage of ecstasy intensifies, it is called love of Godhead, *prema*. *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the prime human necessity, life's ultimate goal and the reservoir of all pleasure. Even the most learned man could not understand the words, activities and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead."

The *Kārikā*, Explanatory Verse

*ākarma sannidhau lauhaḥ pravṛtto dṛśyate yathā
aṅor mahati caitanye pravṛtīḥ prītir eva sā
pratiphalana-dharmatvāt baddha-jīve nisargataḥ
itaresu ca sarvesu rāgo ṣṭi viśayādiṣu
līnga-bhaṅgottarā bhaktiḥ śuddha-prītir anuttamā
tat pūrvam ātmānikṣepāt bhaktiḥ prītimayī satī*

"When iron is placed near a magnet the iron, acting according to its properties, is drawn to the magnet. Similarly, when the infinitesimal living entity



comes in front of Krishna, the infinite Supreme Being, its exhibits its innate characteristics—unalloyed spiritual love. This spontaneous spiritual emotion is self-perfected and self-manifesting in the transcendental realm. This material world is merely a perverted reflection of the spiritual abode. The living entity (*jīva*) has been forced to accept an alien nature in this material world, contrary to its original spiritual nature. Thus, he has developed an aberrant attachment for the base and gross material things—this becoming his second nature.

"As long as the *jīvas* subtle material body (consisting of mind, intelligence and false-ego) is not purified, pure spiritual emotions, which are transcendental and self-perfected, cannot awaken. The symptoms of *bhakti* exhibited after the dismantling of the *jīvas* subtle material body are indeed pure love of Godhead. Preceding this stage, the *jīva* must attempt to discard his material identity. He acknowledges his transcendental nature as a rarely attained gift and offers himself in full surrender. At this point, devotion can at best be affectionate, but not profound spontaneous love."

These matters described by Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja in his immortal *Srī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā* (22.149, 153, 156-157, 159):

*rāgatmikā bhakti mukhyavrajavāsī jane
tā'raanugatabhaktirarāgānuganāme
lobhevrajavāsīrabhāvekareanugati
śāstrayuktinahimānerāgānugāraprakṛti
bāhya, abhyantara, ihāra dui ta śādhana
bahyesādhakadehekareśraṇakīrtana
mānenija siddha dehakariyabhāvan
ratri dīne karevrajekṛṣṇerāsevāna
nijābiṣṭhaKrishnapreṣṭhapāche ta' lāgiyaś
nirantarāsevākareantarmanāhaśā*

"The original inhabitants of Vrindavana are attached to Krishna spontaneously in devotional service. Nothing can compare to their devotional service, which is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. When a devotee follows in the footsteps of the devotees of Vrindavana his devotion is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*. If one is a follower of an eternal inhabitant of Vrindavana and develops covetousness (*lobha*) for his mood of surrender then he does not care for the injunctions and reasoning of the *śāstras*. That is the way of spontaneous love. One may execute this *rāgānuga-bhakti* by two processes—external and internal. The self-realised, advanced devotee externally remains like a neophyte and executes all the *śāstric* injunctions, especially hearing and chanting. However, within his mind, in his original purified self-realised position, he serves Krishna in

nityam bhāgavata-sevayā

Vrindavana in his particular way. He serves Krishna ceaselessly, throughout the day and night. Actually, the inhabitants of Vrindavana are very dear to Krishna. If one wants to engage in spontaneous loving service, he must follow the inhabitants of Vrindavana and constantly engage in devotional service within his mind.

The *Kārikā*, Explanatory Verse

*kṛṣṇa-bahirmukhe sā ca viśaya-prītir eva hi
sā caiva kṛṣṇa-sammukhyāt kṛṣṇa-prītiḥ sunirmalā
raty ādi-bhāva-paryantam svarūpa-lakṣaṇam smṛtam
dāsya-sakhyādi-sambandhāt sa caiva rasatām vrajet*

"The difference between love of Godhead, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and love of matter is profound. As soon as the loving propensity is withdrawn from matter and dovetailed towards Krishna, it becomes love of Godhead (*prema*). On the other hand, when the *jīva* turns his back to Krishna and observes matter with the intent of enjoyment, he develops material attachment and love for matter. When the symptoms of the soul's original identity begin to manifest, they start on the level of *rati* and can reach the heights of *mahābhāva*. *Sthāyi-bhāva* is the *jīvas* steady constitutional emotion and it evokes the individual spiritual moods of *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*. It becomes a catalyst, helping the ecstatic symptoms to manifest, creating *rasa*, spiritual relish."

—The Ten Esoteric Truths of the Vedas, Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura, Translated by Śrīman Sarvabhāvana Dāsa



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