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LORD BALARAMA VISITS VRINDAVAN

Sri Sukadeva Goswami

Sukadeva Gosvami said: O best of the Kurus, once Lord Balarama, felt eager to visit His well-wishing friends, and thus He mounted His chariot and travelled to Nanda Gokula. Having long suffered the anxiety of separation from Krishna and Balarama, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Lord Balarama. The Lord then offered respects to His parents, and they joyfully greeted Him with prayers. [Nanda and Yashoda prayed,] “O descendant of Dasharha, O Lord of the universe, may You and Your younger brother Krishna ever protect us.” Saying this, they raised Sri Balarama onto their laps, embraced Him and moistened Him with tears from their eyes. Lord Balarama then paid proper respects to the elder cowherd men, and the younger ones all greeted Him respectfully. He met them all with smiles, handshakes and so on, dealing personally with each one according to age, degree of friendship, and family relationship.

Then, after resting, the Lord accepted a comfortable seat, and they all gathered around Him. With voices faltering out of love for Him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Krishna, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvaraka], and Balarama in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare. [The cowherds said:] O Rama, are all our relatives doing well? And Rama, do all of you, with your wives and children, still remember us? It is our great fortune that sinful Kamsa has been killed and our dear relatives have been freed. And it is also our good fortune that our relatives have killed and defeated their enemies and found complete security in a great fortress.

Honoured to have the personal audience of Lord Balarama, the young gopis smiled and asked Him, “Is Krishna, the darling of the city women, living happily? “Does He

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remember His family members, especially His father and mother? Do you think He will ever come back - even once - to see His mother? And does mighty- armed Krishna remember the service we always did for Him? For Krishna's sake, O descendant of Dasharha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. But now, O Lord, that same Krishna has suddenly abandoned us and gone away, breaking off all affectionate ties with us. And yet how could any woman fail to trust His promises? How can intelligent city women possibly trust the words of one whose heart is so unsteady and who is so ungrateful? They must believe Him because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their amorous desires.”

“Why bother talking about Him, dear gopi? Please speak of something else. If He passes His time without us, then we shall similarly pass ours without Him.” While speaking these words, the young cowherd women remembered Lord Shauri's laughter, His pleasing conversations with them, His attractive glances, His style of walking and His loving embraces. Thus they began to cry.

The Supreme Lord Balarama, the attractor of all, being expert at various kinds of conciliation, consoled the gopis by relaying to them the confidential messages that Lord Krishna had entrusted Him with. These messages deeply touched the gopis' hearts. Lord Balarama, the Personality of Godhead, resided in Vrindavan for the two months of Madhu and Madhava, and during the nights He gave His cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure.

In the company of numerous gopis, Lord Balarama reveled in a garden by the Yamuna River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses. Sent by the demigod



Varuna, the divine *vāruṇī* liquor flowed from a tree hollow and made the entire forest even more fragrant with its sweet aroma. The wind carried to Balarama the fragrance of that flood of sweet liquor, and when He smelled it He went to its source. There He and His female companions drank *vāruṇī*. As the Gandharvas sang His glories, Lord Balarama frolicked within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airavata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants. At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas

joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Lord Balarama's heroic deeds.

As His deeds were sung, Lord Halayudha wandered the various forests with His girlfriends as if inebriated. His eyes tettered from the effects of drinking the *vāruṇī* liquor. Exhilarated with joy, Lord Balarama splendidly sported various flower garlands, including the famous Vaijayanti. He wore a single ear ring, and beads of perspiration decorated His smiling lotus face like snowflakes. The Lord then summoned the



Yamuna River so that He could play in her waters, but she disregarded His command, considering Him drunk. This angered Balarama, and He began dragging the river with the tip of His plough.

[Lord Balarama said:] O sinful one disrespecting Me, you do not come when I call you but rather move by your independent volition. Therefore, with the tip of My plough I shall bring you here in a hundred streams! Thus scolded by the Lord, the frightened river-goddess Yamuna came and fell at the feet of Sri Balarama, the beloved descendant of Yadu. Trembling, she spoke to Him the following words. Rama, Rama, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe. My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn't realise Your position as the Supreme Godhead, but now I surrender unto You, knowing that You are always kind to Your devotees.

Thereupon Lord Balarama released the Yamuna and, like an elephant king with his entourage of female elephants, entered the river's water with His gopi companions. The Lord played in the water to His full satisfaction, and when He

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came out Goddess Kanti presented Him with blue garments, precious ornaments and a brilliant necklace. Lord Balarama dressed Himself in the blue garments and put on the gold necklace. Anointed with fragrances and beautifully adorned, He appeared as resplendent as Indra's royal elephant. Even today, O King, one can see how the Yamuna flows through the many channels created when it was dragged by the unlimitedly powerful Lord Balarama. Thus she demonstrates His prowess. In this way, His mind enchanted by the exquisite charm and beauty of Vraja's young ladies, all the evenings passed as if a single night for Lord Balarama as He frolicked in Vraja.

—Srimad-Bhāgavatam » Chapter 10: 65. Lord Balarama Visits Vrindavan » Verse: 1- 34 .

BALARAMA'S *RĀSA-LĪLĀ*

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura

*dvau māsau tatra cāvātsīn
madhuṁ mādhaveṁ eva ca
rāmaḥ kṣapāsu bhagavān
gopīnāṁ ratim āvahan*

Balarama's *rāsa-līlā* is described by Sri Sanatana Goswami in his *Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary as follows: "In this way Sri Baladeva first solaced those gopis who were attached to Krishna and thus fulfilled the principle purpose of His visit. In this way He exhibited His affection for the residents of Vraja. Thereafter He enjoyed spring pastimes with other gopis." He then says, "Regarding the words *ratim āvahan*, *rati* refers to the original mellow, *ādi-rasa*, or conjugal love, the prefix *ā* means 'properly,' and the word *vahan* means 'having received.' Because He is *rāmaḥ*, He is expert in conjugal affairs. He is also the Supreme Lord, so He is very expert in the various types of conjugal pastimes mentioned in the *Kāma-sāstras*. Or the word *tāḥ* can also refer to those gopis who are greatly afflicted out of separation from Krishna

and whose only desire was to see Him. Therefore, Balarama resided in Vrindavan for two months in order to please the gopis of Vraja by performing conjugal pastimes at night. By the use of the word *ca* it is understood that Lord Balarama remained in Vrindavan for more than two months, because the gopis were greatly afflicted by feelings of separation and because Lord Baladeva is most merciful and gives happiness to everyone.”

In his *Laghu-toṣaṇī* commentary, Sri Jiva Goswami writes: “The word *gopīnām* in this verse refers to other gopis, for the use of the word *gopi* does not always refer to Krishna’s gopis. One may say that both subject matters are the same—Krishna enjoyed pastimes at night with the gopis, and Baladeva also enjoyed pastimes at night with the gopis—so there is no difference between Krishna’s gopis and Balarama’s gopis. In reply to this it may be said that no one should have such doubts, because the gopis described in the previous *rāsa* pastimes are different from these gopis. Therefore one should understand that Balarama’s gopis are different. So Sri Baladeva expertly pacified Krishna’s beloved gopis and then went to those gopis in whose presence He was once teased by Krishna. At that time, Krishna said, ‘My dear older brother, the gopis are desiring the touch of Your broad chest and the embrace of Your two arms.’ These joking words indicated that although Balarama did not make contact with those gopis at the time, it would take place in the future.

There no mention that after Krishna killed Shankhacuda and enacted the Holi pastime with His beloved gopis that these gopis, described as subordinate to Krishna’s beloved gopis, received Krishna’s touch. Therefore, it should be understood that Krishna instructed these gopis to carefully protect their chastity for the pleasure of Balarama. According to this, it should be understood that Krishna solaced these gopis as explained above.

The word *kṣapāsu* means ‘most

confidential.’ The word *rāmah* in this verse refers to one who is qualified for enjoying.” In his *Krama-sandarbha*, Jiva Goswami writes: “The gopis referred to in this verse as Balarama’s gopis are those who played Holi along with Krishna’s gopis after the killing of Shankhacuda. It should be understood at this point that these gopis remained chaste, following Krishna’s instructions. There is no mention of these gopis receiving the touch of Balarama in His earlier Vraja pastimes; there is only some mention of their strong attachment for Balarama. Therefore Krishna mercifully requested them to protect their chastity for the pleasure of Balarama.” In his *Bṛhat-krama-sandarbha*, Jiva Goswami writes: “He pleased His gopis’ means that He pleased His own group of gopis.”

In his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary, Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura has quoted Sridhara Swami as follows: “The conjugal affairs of the gopis mentioned in this verse relate with those gopis who had either not taken birth when Krishna enjoyed His *rāsa-līlā* pastimes or who were too young to take part. This is the standard understanding of the previous *ācāryas*. Our Prabhupada, Sri Sanatana Goswami, has stated that these beloved gopis of Balarama were those who had joined Krishna’s beloved gopis in the Holi pastimes after the killing of Shankhacuda.”

— Sri Caitanya Bhagavata » Ādi-khaṇḍa » Chapter 1 » Verse 25
» Translated by Bhumipati Dasa.

FIVE WAYS LORD BALARAMA ASSISTS

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

According to expert opinion, Balarama, as the chief of the original quadruple forms, is also the original Sankarshana. Balarama, the first expansion of Krishna, expands Himself in five forms: (1) Maha-Sankarsana, (2) Karanodakashayi, (3) Garbhodakashayi, (4) Ksirodakashayi, and (5) Shesha. These five plenary portions are responsible for both the spiritual and



material cosmic manifestations. In these five forms Lord Balarama assists Lord Krishna in His activities.

The first four of these forms are responsible for the cosmic manifestations, whereas Shesha is responsible for personal service to the Lord. Shesha is called Ananta, or unlimited, because He assists the Personality of Godhead in His unlimited expansions by performing an unlimited variety of services. Sri Balarama is the servitor Godhead who serves Lord Krishna in all affairs of existence and knowledge. Lord Nityananda Prabhu, who is the same servitor Godhead, Balarama, performs the same service to Lord Gauranga by constant companionship.

—Sri Caitanya-caritamṛta » *Adi Lila* » Chapter 5 » text 11, Purport.

BALADEVA PRABHU IS THE SOURCE OF BOTH GOLOKA AND GOKULA

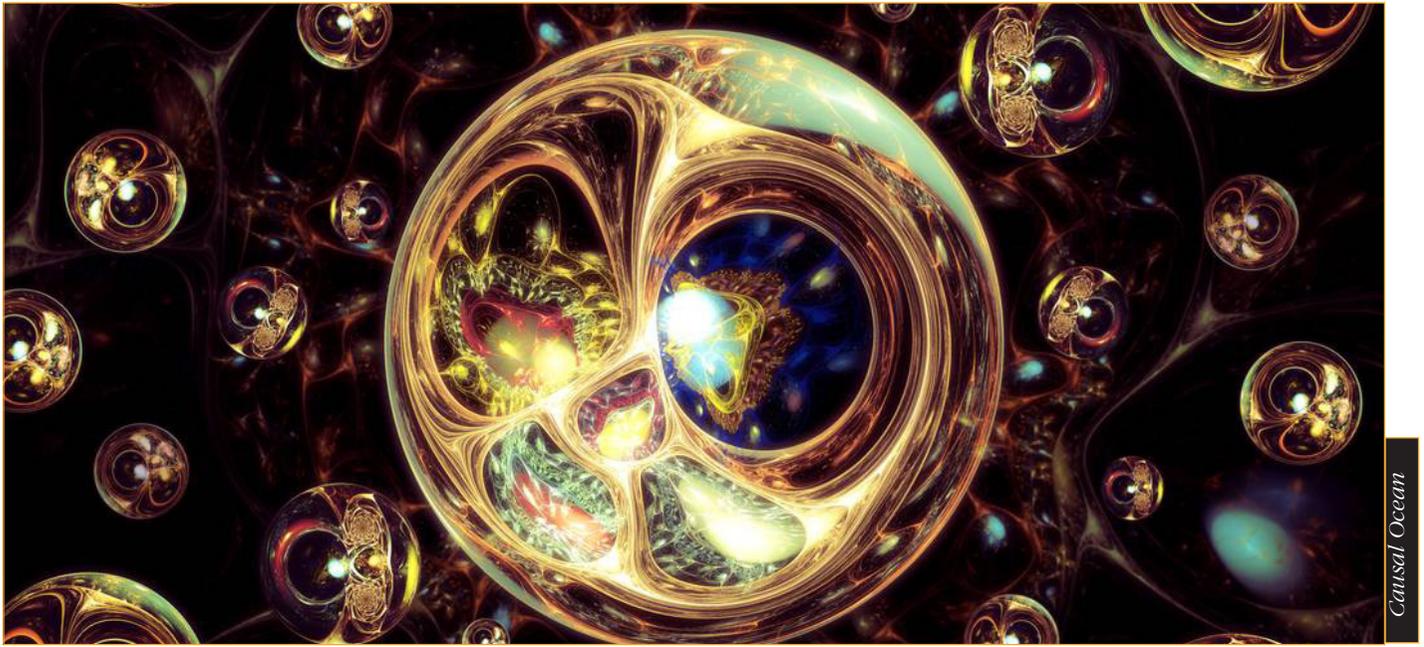
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Gokula, like Goloka, is not a created mundane plane. Rather, this display of the Supreme Lord's unlimited potency and His propagating manifestation is of unbound character. Baladeva is the mainstay of that energetic manifestation. The transcendental entity Sri Baladeva has two aspects viz., infinite spiritual manifestation and infinite accommodating space for insentient gross things. The single quadrantal material universe will be discussed in the proper place. The triple quadrantal extensions of the transcendental infinitary field of the almighty is known as *Vaikunṭha-dhāma*. There lamentation, perishability and non-cognition are conspicuous by their absence. This unlimited, self luminous realm is the fully spiritual majestic foliation. This very majestic extension also portrays the manifested lofty rich feature of the vaster unlimited region or greater atmosphere which has its resplendent location wholly beyond the realm of mundane nature, on the further shore of Viraja surrounded by the halo of Brahman or indistinguishable

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entity. This majestic power of unlimited spirit emanates on the upper portion of the luminous sphere morphing into the most charming Gokula or eternally existing Goloka, exceedingly beautified by the assorted display of effulgence. Some designate this region as the abode of the Supreme Narayana, or the original fountainhead. Hence Gokula, which is identical with Goloka, is the supreme plane. The same sphere shines as Goloka and Gokula respectively by its upper or transcendental and lower or mundane position.

Sri Sanatana Goswami has told us as follows in his *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, which embodies the final essence of all the books of instructions: " Krishna displays His pastimes here in this land as He is used to doing in Goloka. The difference between the two planes lies only in their locations as high and low; that is, in other words, Krishna plays exactly the same role in Goloka as He exhibits on the local plane of Gokula. There is practically no difference between Gokula and Goloka save that this what exists in the shape of Goloka in the upper region is the same as Gokula on the mundane plane when Krishna showed His various activity there. Sri Jiva Goswami has also inculcated the same in the *Bhāgavata-sandarbhā* of his 'Six Treatises.' " To ascertain the plane of Goloka Vrindavan is the eternal abode of Krishna and Goloka and Vrindavan are identically one, and though both are identical, yet Krishna's inconceivable energy has made Goloka the acme of this spiritual kingdom and Gokula of Mathura province forming a part of the mundane plane which is also a manifestation of triple quadrantal *vibhūti* (conducting majesty). Poor human understanding cannot possibly make out how the extensive triquadrantal, which is beyond human comprehension, can be accommodated in the limited nether material universe of a unquadrantal disclosure. Gokula is a spiritual plane, hence his condescended position in the region of material space, time, etc., is in no



way restricted but unlimitedly manifested with his full boundless propriety. But conditioned souls are apt to assert, by their limited senses, a material conception in regard to Gokula so as to bring him below the level of their intellect. Though the eye of an observer is impeded by a cloud when gazing at the sun and though the tiny cloud can never really cover the sun, still the clouded vision apparently observes the sun as covered by the cloud. In just the same way the conditioned souls with their obscured intelligence, senses and deliberations, accept Gokula as a piece of measurable land. We can see Gokula from Goloka which is eternal. This is also a mystery. The attainment of final beatitude is the success in attaining one's eternal self. The success in identifying the true self is finally achieved when the screen of gross and subtle coils of conditioned souls is removed by the sweet will of Krishna. However, the idea of Goloka is seen to differ from Gokula until the success in unalloyed devotion is achieved. The transcendental plane of infinite spiritual manifestation having thousands of petals and corolla like those of the lotus, is Gokula, the eternal abode of Krishna.

— Sri Brahma samhita 5.3 » Purport by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura.

LORD BALARAMA AND THE JIVAS

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

“In Goloka Vrindavan, Sri Balarama manifests unlimited *nitya-pārṣadās*, eternal associates, belonging to the jiva category for the service of Sri Krishna. Similarly, in Vaikuntha, Lord Sankarsana manifests unlimited *nitya-pārṣadās* also of the jiva category for the service of Sri Narayana. These *nitya-pārṣadās* are eternally engaged in serving their object of worship, the Supreme Godhead, who is absorbed in transcendental *rasa* (mellows). They are eternally situated in their *svarāpa* (eternal identity), remain constantly engrossed in satisfying their beloved Lordship, and possess empassioned attraction and affection for the Lord that never diminishes. They are eternally highly spiritually empowered, being imbued with the *cit-śakti* (internal energy) of the Lord. They have no connection with *maya*—indeed they are even unmindful of her very existence. They are permanent residents of the spiritual world and are very far away from *maya*. These jivas are fully absorbed in relishing the bliss of devotional service to their beloved Lord. Self centred material joys and their consequent sorrows are totally alien to these eternally liberated souls. Due to pure spiritual love (*prema*)



being their life and soul, they do not even know that lamentation, death or fear actually exist.

“Also, countless, infinitesimal jivas emanate from Karanodakashayi Maha Vishnu, lying within the Causal Ocean, whose glance impregnates the *māyā-śakti*. As these jivas are the neighbours of maya, they witness her variegated manifestations. The symptoms of the general mass of jivas (as discussed earlier) are also present in these jivas. However, because they are minuscule in size and situated at the margin, their constitutional nature is to look at both the material world and the spiritual sky. Their marginal condition makes them vulnerable because—up to this point of time—they have not been endowed with *cit-bala*, the strength of spiritual potency, which is imparted by the mercy of the Supreme Lord. Those amongst them who desire to enjoy material nature become absorbed in matter and are thus eternally enthralled by her. Conversely, those endeavouring to serve the Divine Worshipable Object, upon receiving His mercy, are elevated to the spiritual world. Therefore, my son, we are in a most wretched state. Having forgotten our devotion and service to Sri Krishna, we are

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held as the captives of maya, and thus, in lieu of our original transcendental status, we are in this miserable situation.”

Vrajanatha asked, “Dear master, I understand that the jiva is the *taṭasthā-śakti* of the Lord and is situated at the *tata*, junction, of both worlds. However, why are some jivas subsequently engrossed in material existence, while others are elevated to the spiritual sky?”

Raghunatha dasa Babaji replied, “The transcendental qualities of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna are also present in the jiva, but up to a very small degree. The quality of free will natural to Sri Krishna is therefore innate to the constitution of the jiva but is minute in quantity. When the jiva makes proper use of his independence, he becomes consciously connected with Sri Krishna. Conversely, by misusing his independence, he separates himself from the Lord and is attracted to exploiting and reveling in the material nature. Developing the despicable quality of false pride, he thinks, ‘I am the enjoyer of everything I survey.’ Thus, the five levels of ignorance—*tāmisra*, rebellious rejection of the Lord’s service; *andha-tāmisra*, considering death to be the final conclusion; *tamas*, ignorance of one’s position as a jiva; *moha*, the illusory bodily conception of life; and *mahā-moha*, attachment for material enjoyment—cloud the pure spiritual consciousness of the jiva. The sole cause of the jiva becoming either liberated or conditioned lies in the proper or improper use of his minute independence.”

—*Jaiva Dharma, Part Three: The Jiva, the Eternal Individual Spirit Soul* » Chapter Fifteen: *Nitya-dharma and Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana* » Translated by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. & Sarvabhāvana dāsa.



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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