

Śrī Śrī Vraja Vilāsa Stava

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Śrī Śrī Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava

A praise of the manifestation of the Vraja-
pastimes.

By Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

With the commentary of
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Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Padāmbujebhyo namaḥ

This publication is listed in the German National
Bibliography; bibliographic details you find at:
www.dnb.ddb.de

English edition

© Tarun Govinda dāsa

1st edition May 2014

Editor: Tarun Govinda dāsa

Translation: Advaita dāsa

Design and Layout: Acyutananda das, Tarun Govinda
dāsa & Yugal Kishore dāsa

Printed by SOWA DRUK, Poland

Original Bengali edition

© Śrīla Ananta dāsa

Bābājī

ISBN: 978-3-945129-02-9

Tattva Viveka Edition,
Berlin 2014

www.tattva.de

VERSE 1:

**pratiṣṭhā rajjūbhir baddham
kāmādyair vartma-pātibhiḥ
chittvā tāḥ samharantaḥ tā-
naghāreḥ pāntu mām bhaṭāḥ**

pratiṣṭhā - distinction; *rajjubhiḥ* - of the ropes; *baddham* - being bound; *kāmā-* lust; *ādyaiḥ* - and by others; *vartma-pātibhiḥ* - by the highwaymen; *chitvā* - to sever; *tāḥ* - they; *samharantaḥ* - destroying; *tān* - them; *aghāreḥ* - of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of sins, or Aghāsura; *pāntu* - may protect; *mām* - me; *bhaṭāḥ* - the heroic soldiers.

I am bound by the ropes of the desire for distinction by highwaymen like lust. May the heroic devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa save me by cutting these ropes and destroying them.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, Śrīpāda Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises the greatness and the glories of Śrī Vraja-dhāma and Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with Their associates according to his own desire.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha's consciousness is always immersed in the mellows of the Vraja-pastimes. **VRAJA** is the abode of love. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is beside Himself while swimming in the ocean of the Vrajavāsīs' love, and He can never find the limits to this relish. Śrīpāda Raghunātha is *ghurnana sadā divyati*, always spinning around in the ocean of *mahā-bhāva*, which consists of the *rasa-niryāsa* (extract) of the Vrajagopīs' *prema*, the summit of Vraja-rasa. The honey trickling

from the divine bud of his heart's lotus is this **VRAJA VILĀSA STAVA**.

Although this may be somewhat understandable to the *rāga-mārgīya-sādhaka-bhaktas*, who can somehow meditate on this, there is no doubt about it that its deep meaning will be diluted when an insignificant person like me, who performs no *bhajana* and who is bound by material desires, comments upon it.

May Śrīpāda Raghunātha's attribute of unlimited compassion therefore cleanse all the offences committed by a person like me and may he shower me with the pollen of his lotus feet, birth after birth, knowing that I have commenced this very bold and daring work for my own purification. This wretch prays that he may come close to his lotus feet.

At the beginning of this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, Śrīpāda Raghunātha out of humility and anxiety, qualities which naturally arise out of the ocean of his *prema*, submits his own disqualification at the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda and prays for His devotees' mercy in these first two *ślokas*. Such humility and eagerness awaken in the heart of a *premika* (lover of Kṛṣṇa) when he reaches the highest maturity in *prema*.

Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī has described the reciprocation between humility and *prema* -

*paripākena dainyasya premājasraṁ vitanyate
parasparaṁ tayor itthaṁ kārya kāraṇatekṣate*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.5.225)

"Humility becomes manifest when *prema* reaches its ripened stage. In the same way, *prema* becomes manifest when humility culminates. In this way love and humility are each other's cause and effect."

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī comments on this verse as follows:
*nanvevaṁ prema niṣṭhāyāḥ phalaṁ dainyaṁ iti paryavasyati
 taccāyuktaṁ sarvatra premṇa eva phalatvena pratipādanāt.
 satyaṁ tat tu premṇe nātīva bhinnam, kintu āntaralakṣaṇa
 rūpa mukhyataramaṅgamevetyāha - parīti.*

"In the previous verse it was said *daiṅyas tu paramaṁ
 premṇaḥ paripākeṇa janyate* - "When *prema* ripens humility
 awakens."

From this one might conclude: "So the result of fixation in
prema is humility", but this is not right, for is it not ascertained
 by everyone that *prema* is the result of the practice of *bhakti*?"
 The answer to this is: "Certainly, but humility is not so much
 different from *prema*, rather it is one of the main internal items
 of *prema*. This has been revealed in this *paripākeṇa*-verse."

Anyway, out of topmost humility Śrīpāda Raghunātha
 considers himself to be an ordinary *sādhaka* endowed with so
 many vices and says: *pratiṣṭhā-rajjubhir baddham kāmādyair
 vartma-pātibhiḥ*

"I have been bound up with the ropes of the desire for
 distinction by the highwaymen of the six enemies: lust, anger,
 greed, delusion, false pride and envy."

In verse 5 of his *Manah Śikṣā*, Śrīpāda has compared the six
 enemies starting with lust to highwaymen. Just as highwaymen
 rob travellers of all their possessions leaving them penniless,
 similarly the enemies like lust and anger rob the *sādhakas* of
 their wealth of *bhajana* and leave them devotionally penniless.

In the *Gītā* Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said to Arjuna: "All the senses are
 controlled by attraction and aversion to the sense objects. Do
 not become controlled by this duality of attraction and aversion.
 They are the greatest enemies of the spirit soul!"
 Thereafter Arjuna inquired:

*atha kena prayukto 'yam pāpam carati puruṣaḥ
anicchan api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitah*

(Gītā - 3.36)

"O Kṛṣṇa! By what are people forcibly engaged in sin, even unwillingly?"

In other words, who or what forcibly engages us in sinful activities, overwhelming our senses even if we do not want it and even if we know all the rules and prohibitions of the scriptures?

The Lord said:

*kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajoguṇa samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahāpāpmā viddhyenam iha vairiṇam*

(Gītā 3-37)

"O Arjuna! It is this lust, it is this anger that is born from the material mode of passion and which is insatiable and very horrible. Know this to be the great enemy of the *sādhaka*."

LUST is the desire for sense gratification. When this desire is unfulfilled or thwarted it turns into **ANGER**, hence lust and anger are one and therefore they are mentioned here in the singular tense.

These desires for sense gratification are again assuming the forms of greed, illusion, false pride and envy which are related to the sense objects. In other words, when one is excessively attracted to sweet flavours and money this behaviour is called **GREED**. When this craving makes the intelligence attached to temporary things it covers our spiritual knowledge and our knowledge of God and this is called **DELUSION**. When the

ignorance accruing from this craving bears the form of self identification like "I am rich" or "I am learned" then this is called **FALSE PRIDE**. When this self-esteem makes one upset after seeing others' wealth, friends and knowledge, then this burning sensation is called **ENVY** or *para śrī kātaraṭā*. Therefore lust or desire is the root cause of all mischief and the sole enemy of humankind. The main chief of the six highwaymen-enemies is **DESIRE** or **LUST**.

It cannot be said though, that all the *sādhakas* in the kingdom of *bhajana* have freed themselves completely from the grip of the highwaymen by giving up all connections with the sense-objects, considering them to be the only obstacles to *bhajana*. Although Śrīpāda Raghunātha is an eternal associate of the Lord he spoke to instruct all the living entities:

"The highwaymen like lust have bound me around the neck with the ropes of **THE DESIRE FOR DISTINCTION**".

'I am a scholar, I am so qualified, I am a devotee, renunciant, *bhajanānandī*, *premika*, everyone will sing my glories, I will lord it over the society of devotees by gaining the most respect there.'

These kinds of aspirations are called *pratiṣṭhāṣā*. Even a person who gave up everything cannot easily give up the desire for distinction. This is such a wicked and turbulent desire which is not so easy to control as are lust and anger and so on.

When a *sādhaka* begins to identify himself according to his *bhajana* then this will drag the boat of his *sādhana* down to hell (we have discussed this matter properly in the seventh *śloka* of Manaḥ Śikṣā). The target of a sincere devotee, who turns towards the Lord and who is free from deceit, is only to act for the love of the Lord. A devotee who is thus adorned with all great qualities like humility and modesty, can cast the desire for

distinction, which is a powerful weapon of the enemies like lust, far away. Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has written:

*nā koriho asat ceṣṭā, lābha pūjā pratiṣṭhā,
sadā cinta govinda caraṇa
sakala vipatti yābe, mahānanda sukha pābe,
prema bhakti parama kāraṇa*

(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"Do not endeavour for the false (unreal), like profit, adoration and distinction. Always think of Govinda's lotus feet! All calamities will vanish and you will become very happy. This is the greatest cause for loving devotion!"

All the calamities of the *sādhaka* will be destroyed by thinking of Govinda's lotus feet. The greatest means of remembering Govinda's lotus feet is association with Govinda's devotees and attaining their mercy. Therefore Śrī Raghunātha has said: *chittvā tāḥ saṁharantas tānn aghāreḥ pāntu mām bhaṭāḥ*.

"May the heroic devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa sever these ropes of distinction and protect me by destroying these highwaymen like lust."

In the company of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotees, their attributes of humility and modesty are infused into the consciousness of the *sādhaka*. By their grace the desire for distinction flees far away. By hearing *śrī hari-kathā* from their holy mouths, the enemies like lust disappear and attachment to *bhajana* awakens within the heart of the *sādhaka*.

*āpani pālābe saba, śuniyā govinda raba,
simha rabe yeno karigaṇa*

*sakala vipatti yābe, mahānanda sukha pābe
yāra hoy ekānta bhajana.*

(Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

"They (these vices) will flee automatically when they hear the sound of Govinda's name, just as elephants flee when they hear the lion's roar. All calamities will go from one who surrenders to *bhajana* and he will attain the topmost bliss."

Thus Śrīpāda Raghunātha teaches the *sādhakas* who are still struggling with all these vices by his own example how to pray to the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*kāmādi patha dasyugaṇa, kare tārā vicaraṇa,
e saṁsāre nigūḍha bhāvete
pratiṣṭhā rajjura dvārā, chaya jane mili tārā,
bāṇdhiyāche āmāra golete*

"Highwaymen like lust are secretly wandering through the material world. These six enemies have bound me around the neck with the ropes of distinction."

*kṛṣṇa bhakta vīraṇa, dante ṭṭṇa nivedana,
chinna kori tādera bandhana
chaya ripu vadha kori, rakṣā koro keśe dhari,
kṛṣṇa boli koriyā garjana*

"With a straw between my teeth I pray to the heroic devotees of Kṛṣṇa to sever the bondage. While roaring out the name of Kṛṣṇa they will kill these six enemies and save me by holding me by the hair."

VERSE 2:

**dagdham vārdhaka-vanya-vahnibhir alaṁ daṣṭam durāndhyāhinā
 biddham mām atipāraśya-viśikhaiḥ krodhādi-simhair vṛtam |
 svāmin prema-sudhā-dravaṁ karuṇayā drāk pāyaya śrī-hare
 yenaītān avadhīrya santatam ahaṁ dhīro bhavantaṁ bhaje ||2||**

dagdham - burnt; vārdhaka - old age; vanya - forest; vahnibhiḥ - by the fires; alaṁ - greatly; daṣṭam - bitten; durāndhya - great blindness; ahinā - by the snake; biddham - pierced; mām - me; ati - great; pāraśya - dependence; viśikhaiḥ - by the arrows; krodha - anger; ādi - and others; simhaiḥ - by the lions; vṛtam - surrounded; svāmin - O master!; prema - love of God; sudhā-dravaṁ - nectar; karuṇayā - by the grace; drāk - quickly; pāyaya - cause to drink; śrī hare - O Śrī Hari!; yena - by whom; etān - this; avadhīrya - ignore; santatam - constantly; ahaṁ - I; dhīraḥ - steadfastly; bhavantaṁ - You; bhaje - I may worship.

"O Śrī Hari! I am burning in the forest fires of old age, the terrible snake of blindness is biting me, I am pierced by the sharp arrows of dependence on others and I am surrounded by the lions of anger and so forth. O Master! Please quickly make me drink the nectar of your love, so that I may ignore all these things and worship You in a steadfast manner!"

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: From this verse it can be understood that this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava was written in Śrī Raghunātha's old age. The more his old age approached, the more his life-airs began to burn in an intolerable forest fire of separation from Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Rādhārāṇī. Moreover tears constantly streamed from his eyes like monsoon showers

out of separation from Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī, causing his eyesight to vanish.

When old age is nearing one becomes naturally dependent and when anger arises there will be an obstacle to the continuity of *bhajana*, which makes it naturally hard to remain alive. Although Śrī Raghunātha has a transcendental *pārṣada-śarīra* (body of an eternal associate of the Lord) and thus these hardships do not have any influence on him, he still is humbly revealing his deplorable condition in this verse, just to instruct the *sādhakas*.

After all, in the *Bhakti-Ratnākara* one can find a description of Śrī Raghunātha's extraordinary adherence to the regulative principles of *bhajana*:

*śrī dāsa gosāira kothā kohone na jāy;
nirantara dagdha hiyā viraha vyāthāya
kothā śrī svarūpa-rūpa sanātana - boli;
bhāsāye netrera jale viluṭhaye dhūli
ati kṣīṇa śarīra durbol kṣaṇe kṣaṇe
koroye bhakṣaṇa kichu dui cāri dine
yadyapi śuṣka deha bātāse hāloy;
tathāpi nirbandha kriyā sab samādoy
bhūme paḍi' praṇami' uthite nāhi pāre;
ithe ye niṣedhe kichu na kohoye tāre
prabhu datta govardhana śilā guñjā hāre;
seve ki adbhuta sukhe āpana pasāre
divā niśi nā jānāye śrī nāma grahane;
netre nidrā nāi aśrudhāra du' nayane
dāsa gosvāmīra ceṣṭā bujhite ke pāre;
sadā magna rādhā kṣṣṇa caitanya vihāre*

(*Bhakti-Ratnākara*, 6th Wave)

"Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī is indescribable. His heart was always burning in the fire of separation. While saying: "Where are you, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana!?", he rolled in the dust and floated in his own tears. His emaciated body became weaker at every moment and he would only eat something every two or four days. Although his body was so brittle that it could be blown away by the wind, he would still perform all his important duties. When he fell to the ground to offer obeisances to someone, he could not get up anymore. But if anyone (out of concern for him) forbade him to do this, he would not listen.

He would forget himself out of ecstasy when he worshipped the Govardhana-*śilā* and the *guñjā*-beads that Lord Caitanya had given him, and he did not know whether it was day or night when he chanted the beautiful names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There was no sleepiness in his eyes that were always full of tears of love. Who can understand the activities of Dāsa Gosvāmī? His mind was always immersed in the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya!"

Although he performed *bhajana* throughout the eight periods of the day his thirst for more *bhajan* was never quenched, as if he was suffering from cholera.¹ *bhakti* is by nature insatiable. As soon as satiation appears in *bhajana* we must understand that the lifespan of our *bhajan* is diminished. The relish of the flavours of *bhajana* can be measured according to the thirst for *bhajana*. The greater the thirst, the greater the relish, the greater the relish, the greater the thirst. They increase and nourish each other.

¹ A person who suffers from cholera never has his thirst for water quenched and ultimately dies of thirst.

In the previous verse Śrī Raghunātha prayed for the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas, so that he could be released from the hands of his enemies like lust and their great agent distinction, and thus attain the great fortune of pure *bhajana*. Then again he thinks: "Even if I am saved from the grip of enemies like lust and distinction, still this body of mine obstructs my *bhajana*. It is as if the forest fire of old age is constantly consuming my body. The burning of this fire gradually vanquishes my power of *bhajana*."

Although Śrī Raghunātha is an eternal associate of the Lord he gives here a beautiful teaching to the world. Many people keep their youth reserved for free sense gratification and their old age for *bhajana*. But alas! What else is it but crazyness or foolishness to engage our youthful energy in mortal sense gratification and to reserve our old age for attaining the immortal treasure of *prema*, thus desiring to give the remnants of *māyā* to the Lord? For this reason Śrīla Prahlāda Mahāśaya told his demoniac classmates:

*kaumāra ācaret prājño dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabham mānuṣaṁ janma tad apy adhruvam arthadam
yathā hi puruṣasyeha viṣṇoḥ pādopasarpaṇam
yad eṣa sarva bhūtānāṁ priya ātmeśvaraḥ suhṛt
sukham aindriyakam daityā deha yogena dehinām
sarvatra labhyate daivād yathā duḥkam ayatnataḥ
tat prayāso na kartavyo yata āyur vyayaḥ param
na tathā vindate kṣemaṁ mukunda caraṇāmbujam
tato yateta kuśalaḥ kṣemāya bhavam āśritaḥ
śariraṁ puruṣaṁ yāvan na vipadyeta puṅkalam*

(*Bhāgavata* 7.6.1-5)

"O friends! A wise man practises the theistic religion from his childhood! After all, human birth is very rare and although it bestows the highest blessing, it can be finished at any time. In this material world the human birth is most favourable for surrendering to the lotus feet of the Lord, Who is the dear most friend of all living beings. O demons! The happiness arising from sense gratification can be obtained everywhere without effort, even in the animal species, just as misery can be. Therefore we should not endeavour for sense pleasures, for this simply decreases our lifespan.

The auspiciousness arising from the worship of Lord Mukunda's lotus feet can never be attained by serving the senses. Therefore an intelligent person should not endeavour for temporary sense pleasures, but for the worship of Śrī Govinda's lotus feet as long as the body is not worn out by old age, disease and lamentations."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha teaches the living beings: "Don't save your old age for *bhajana*, for there are many problems in old age!"

He mentions himself as the example of all these problems:
daṣṭam durāndhyahinā

"I am bitten by the snake of blindness! The poisonous bite of the snake of blindness is burning up my body, mind and life-airs. The power of my *bhajana* is being diminished, and there is no shelter from this suffering!"

Then again he says: *viddha mām ati pāravaśya viśikhaiḥ*
"During old age the body and senses become invalid, so the help of others is needed to accomplish all kinds of perpetual devotional duties. The body becomes dependent and this is as miserable as being pierced by sharp arrows."

Śrī Raghunātha was the greatest renunciant; when he renounced his great wealth to come to the Lord's lotus feet at

Nilācala he began to live there by begging. That day, the Lord became very pleased with him and told him:

*bhālo koilā vairāgīra dharma ācarilā;
vairāgī koribo sadā nāma saṅkīrtana;
māgiyā khāiyā kore jīvana rakṣaṇa;
vairāgī hoiyā yebā kore parāpekṣā;
kārya siddhi nahe, kṛṣṇa korena apekṣā*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya 6)

"You have done very well by adhering to the principles of renunciation. A renunciant is always chanting the holy name, keeping himself alive by eating begged food. A renunciant who relies on others will not attain perfection. He will be neglected by Kṛṣṇa."

These words from the Lord's divine mouth are still floating on the canvas of Śrī Raghunātha's memory, but in old age one becomes helpless and accepts the help of others. He feels that he is acting contrary to the Lord's divine words and this misery feels to him like the sharp piercing of arrows.

Then again he says: *krodhādi simhair vṛtam* "I am attacked by the lions of anger and so." In old age, anger naturally awakens. It is the natural course of the body's development. This is striking the heart like the attack of a turbulent lion. When some traveller is by chance surrounded by a blazing forest fire and simultaneously bitten by a black snake, pierced by the sharp arrows of a hunter and attacked by so many lions, then no one else but the victim himself can understand how it feels to befall so many calamities at the same time. Śrī Raghunātha says: "I am suffering in a similar way."

Although he is always engaged in *bhajana* Śrī Raghunātha thinks that his old age is physically impeding it. How great is his craving for *bhajan*, although he is already constantly swimming in the ocean of *bhajan*!

He thinks to himself: "By drinking nectar, old age vanishes and the body is given new energy. By drinking nectar the demigods have become immortal. When old age is gone, all the conditions connected with it will also be gone and I could be so fortunate as to resume my *bhajan* without worries."

Hence he submits this prayer to Śrī Govinda's lotus feet: *svāmin prema sudhā-dravaṁ karuṇayā drāk pāyaya śrī hare yenaitān avadhīrya santatam ahaṁ dhīro bhavantaṁ bhaje*

"O Hari! O master! Please swiftly make me drink the nectar of Your love so that I can ignore all these conditions and I can always worship Your lotus feet!"

The meaning of these addresses here are as follows: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *svāmī*. Without His grace, no one can attain *prema* simply on the strength of his own *sādhana*. *sādhana* merely cleanses the heart of the *sādhaka* and makes it fit for *prema* to enter it. Śrī Kṛṣṇa may mercifully give *prema* to such a worthy object of His grace. Then again He is Hari, which means that He removes (*haraṇa*) all impediments from the surrendered *sādhaka* and steals his mind through *prema*:

*hari śabdera bahu artha dui mukhyatama;
sarva amaṅgala hare, prema diyā hare mana
(C.C.)*

Although the demigods in heaven become immortal by drinking nectar it is an impediment for the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. The transcendental body of their *bhajana* is being nourished by the **NECTAR OF PREMA**.

"O master, O Hari, Whom the six opulences are always serving like a mere maidservant, please give me the nectar of *prema*! I will drink it with all my heart! Please revive me thus!"

VERSE 3:

**yan mādhurī divyasudhārasābdheḥ
smṛteḥ kaṇenāpy atilolitātmā |
padmair vrajasthān akhilān vrajam ca
natvā svanāthau bata tau didṛkṣe ||3||**

yad - whose; mādhurī - sweetness; divya - divine; sudhā - nectar; rasa - transcendental flavours; abdhēḥ - of the ocean; smṛteḥ - of the remembrance; kaṇena - by the drop; api - even; ati - very much; lolita - restless, or possessed with transcendental greed; ātmā - self; padyaiḥ - with verses; vraja-sthān - those who live in Vraja; akhilān - all; vrajam ca - and the abode of Vraja; natvā - bowing down; sva - own; nāthau - two Lords; bata - alas!; tau - these two; didṛkṣe - desiring to see.

I greatly yearn to see My most beloved king and queen, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, the memory of a single drop from the nectar ocean of Whose sweetness has made my heart very eager to see Them. Thus through these verses I bow down to Their abode Vraja and its inhabitants.

Stavāmṛta kaṇā vyākhyā: Through the previous verse we can somehow get to know how great Śrīpāda Raghunātha's

passionate devotion was, that caused such a great yearning for *bhajana* in his old age.

His extraordinary renunciation and his harsh adherence to the regulative principles of *bhajana* simultaneously arise in one place with the tenderness of his loving devotion, always serving as a shining example for the *rāga-bhaktas* like the pole star

Deeply absorbed in *bhajana*, Śrī Raghunātha is weeping on the bank of Rādhākūṇḍa. He cannot remain alive without seeing the Lord directly. Occasionally a transcendental vision of the sweetness of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava awakens in him whose relish expands a supernatural bliss in his consciousness, and then a moment later the vision ends and his lamentations double in intensity.

It is comparable to the momentary lightning strike in a clouded new moon night, which (afterwards) doubles the darkness of the traveller's eyes. What a wonderful condition of *bhāva* awakens when the *premika* once relishes the sweetness of the Lord through his eyes and then this vision vanishes.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda describes this in his Mādhurya-Kādambinī-grantha (8th shower): *...hanta hanta kena vā anirvacanīya bhāgyena svayaṁ hasta prāpto nidhir ajani, kena vā mahāparādhena tataś cyutam iti, niścetum niścetano'haṁ na prabhavāmi tad bādhāvādhitadhīḥ kva yāmi kiṁ vā karomi kam upāyam atra kam uha vā pṛcchāmi mahā-śūnyam iva nirātmakam iva niḥsaraṇam iva dāva pluṣṭam iva māṁ nigilad iva tribhuvanam avaloke*

"Alas! Alas! By some indescribable stroke of luck I have gotten this jewel in my hand! What offence did I commit that made it fall from my hand again? I am ignorant, so I cannot ascertain anything myself! I've become like a great fool! Where shall I go? What shall I do? Whom shall I ask for the solution to

this? I feel completely empty as if bereft of all relatives, without shelter as if burning in a forest fire! It is as if the three worlds are devouring me!"

If a *sādhana-siddha-premika* experiences this out of want for the sweetness of the Lord, one can easily imagine how powerful the condition of separation of a *nitya-siddha-parikara* like Śrīpāda Raghunātha must be.

When his transcendental visions vanish, he feels a strong want and even during such *sphuraṇa*-(unfolding) visions he feels a deep hankering for the direct attainment of the deity. In such a condition Śrīpāda Raghunātha praised Śrīdhāma Vraja and the eternal associates of the Lord in this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, as a means to directly attain the Lord.

In this verse he says: *yan mādhurī divya sudhā rasābdheḥ smṛteḥ kaṇenāpyati lolitātmā*

"I have become extremely greedy after remembering the flavour of even one drop from the divine sweet nectarocean of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava."

The divine nectar of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's sweetness is like a billowing ocean. When Śrīpāda relishes a *sphuraṇa*-vision of even one drop of this nectar he becomes overwhelmed. Because he attracts everyone from the material universes up to Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka, from the mobile and immobile creatures up to Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa and even Himself, the Lord of Goloka, with His wonderful sweetness, He is named 'Kṛṣṇa'.

*vṛndāvane aprākṛta navīna madana;
kāma gāyatri kāma bīje yāra upāsana
puruṣa yoṣit kibā sthāvara jaṅgama;
sarva cittākaraṣaka sāksān manmatha madana*

*śṛṅgāra rasarājamaya mūrtidhara;
ataeva ātma paryanta sarva citta hara*

(*Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 8*)

"The transcendental youthful Cupid of Vṛndāvana is worshipped with the Kāma-Gāyatrī-mantra with the Kāma-bīja. He attracts men and women, mobile and immobile creatures, for He is the enchanter of Cupid Himself. He is the embodiment of the king of flavours, the erotic flavour, and thus He steals even His own mind away!"

Along with His all-attractive, ever fresh dense *śyāma*-beauty, the tender Śyāmasundara Who is an ocean of sweetness and the root cause of all lustre, there is *premera svarūpa deha prema vibhāvita; kṛṣṇera preyasī śreṣṭhā jagate vidita*.

Who can describe the power of the clash of the billowing waves of this incomparable ocean of sweetness, the golden embodiment of *mahābhāva*, that shines like fresh Gorocana-pigments, Kṛṣṇa's dear most beloved Śrīmatī Vārṣabānavī, with the Kṛṣṇa-ocean?

Simply by remembering one drop of this, Śrī Raghunātha becomes exceedingly greedy. Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda gives a slight hint of this self-manifest sweetness of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava:

*gaura śyāma rucojjvalābhir amalair akṣnor vilāsotsavair
nṛtyantibhir aśeṣa mādana kalā vaidagdhya digdhātmaभिḥ
anyonya priyatā sudhā parimala stomonmadāभिḥ sadā
Rādhā-Mādhava mādhurībhir abhitaś cittan mamākramyatām*

(*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha 581*)

"May Rādhā and Mādhava, Who are shining with a golden and bluish splendor, Whose eyes are dancing in a spotless festival of play, Who are anointed with endless cleverness in erotic artistry, and Who are greatly delighted by the nectarean fragrance of Their mutual dearness, attack my mind in all respects with Their sweetness." The purport of this verse is:

"May the combined self manifest, indescribable forms of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava arise in my consciousness in such a way that not even the slightest other awareness will remain. May that sweetness never leave my consciousness!" - This is Śrīpāda's wish.

He describes this sweetness as a bright golden and bluish splendor. In other words - The sapphire-like luster of Śyāma and the golden luster of Śrī Rādhā illuminate all directions.

Because of being with the beloved, Śrī Rādhā's right eye and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's left eye are gladdened by wonderful gestures, dancing with indescribable sweetness. The endless manifesting expertise of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī's *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* is as if surrounding Their sublime bodies.

In other words, Their bodies are adorned by the sweetness of innumerable wonderful pastimes like kissing and embracing, which are the visible signs of that *mādana-bhāva* from which innumerable pastimes become revealed, generating all *bhāvas*, from *rati* upto *mahābhāva*.

Then again They are gladdened by the fragrance of sweetness that anoints Them with the unguents of mutual love and enchants all the people. In other words, just as the vermilion and other unguents that adorn a hero and heroine's body makes their bodies fragrant and delights Their bystanding girlfriends, similarly the fragrance of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's mutual love supremely delights Their *sakhīs*.

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī said: "May this sweetness attack my consciousness in all respects!"

The remembrance of even a drop of this ocean of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's very powerful sweetness greatly overwhelms Śrīpāda Raghunātha's heart and mind. He becomes unsteady when great sacred greed awakens within him. Without directly being able to relish this sweetness he won't be able to stay alive. *jala vinā yeno mīna, duḥka pāya āyuh hīna* (Like a fish out of water I suffer like I am lifeless). Such is his condition. He cannot spend any more time without *darśana*.

Being thus helpless in his desire to see Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, his king and queen, he praises and honours Śrī Vraja-dhāma and its inhabitants in these verses, seeing this as the best way to attain Their *darśana*. *padyair vrajasthān akhilān vrajaṁ ca, natvā svanāthau bata tau didṛkṣe*. Hence this *stava* is called **Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava**. When Vraja-dhāma and the inhabitants of Vraja are merciful, he will easily attain the direct audience of his most beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, this is Śrī Raghunātha's unswayable faith.

*yāñdera mādhurī sindhu, smari tāra eka bindu
ati lubdha hoiyāchi āmi.
katipaya śloka kore, vraja-dhāma parikare,
bhakti bhare tāñhā sabe nami.*

"Because I have become very greedy even by remembering a mere drop of the ocean of Their beauty, I am now bowing down with devotion to Vraja-dhāma and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's associates there in these following verses."

*ei vāñchā hoy prāṇe, nitya kori daraśane,
prāṇa mora yugala kiśora.*

*vrajavāsi saṅge vāsa, ei mātra abhilāṣa,
(seve) ei āśā pūrṇa koro mora*

"I cherish the desire in my heart to always see Them, for the Yugala Kīśora are my very life. I desire only to live with the Vrajavāsīs. Please fulfill these desires (for service)!"

VERSE 4:

**prādurbhāva-sudhā-draveṇa nitarām aṅgitvam āptvā yayo-
goṣṭhe'tikṣnam anaṅga eṣa paritaḥ krīḍā-vinodaṁ rasaiḥ |
prītyollāsayatiha mugdha-mithuna-śreṇī-vataṁsāv imau
gāndharvā giridhāriṇau bata kadā drakṣyāmi rāgeṇa tau ||4||**

*prādurbhāva - appearance; sudhā-draveṇa - with the nectar;
nitarām - always; aṅgitvam - the embodied state; āptā - attain; yayoḥ
- of whom; goṣṭhe - in Vraja; abhikṣnam - constantly; anaṅga - the
disembodied Cupid; eṣa - this; paritaḥ - everywhere; krīḍā - play;
vinodaṁ - pleasure; rasaiḥ - with flavours; prītyā - with love;
ullāsayati - gladdens; iha - here; mugdha - bewildered, beautiful,
young; mithuna - pair; śreṇī - series; vataṁsau - the greatest
ornaments; imau - these two; gāndharvā - Rādhā; giridhāriṇau - and
Kṛṣṇa; bata - alas!; kadā - when; drakṣyāmi - I will see; rāgeṇa - with
passionate love; tau - these two.*

**When will I see Gāndharvā and Giridhārī, the crown
jewels of innocent, young and beautiful Couples, Who
gave the disembodied Cupid his body back by sprinkling
him with the nectar waves of Their appearance and Who
are always lovingly expanding Their erotic pastimes of
pleasure, with the eyes of devotional passion?**

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: A great longing for the sweetness of the Yugala awakens within Śrīpāda Raghunātha's heart. This intense longing is the very life-force of *rāga bhajana*. Through his wonderfully artistic sweet poetry Śrī Raghunātha reveals his deep *anurāga* in these verses.

The river of his *kāvya-rasa* (mellows of poetry) is agitated by ever new waves of beauty and sweetness and constantly flows towards the *mādhurya-sindhu* (ocean of sweetness) of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, illuminated by the lovely rays of the ever-fresh moon of *bhāva* and dancing with higher and higher waves of *lalita-līlā* (lovely pastimes), eager to go down into it.

In the previous verse he has said: "I greatly yearn to see My most beloved king and queen Rādhā and Mādhava, the memory of a single drop from the nectarocean of Whose sweetness has made my heart very eager to see Them. Thus through this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava I bow down to Their abode Vraja and its inhabitants."

One may ask here: "Śrīpāda! In what way do you like to see the Yugala? The desires of your eyes will already be fulfilled by seeing Them united just once, won't they?" To answer this question he speaks this verse: "I want to see this most *rasika*-pair enjoying erotic pastimes with Each other."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of complete erotic flavours and Śrī Rādhā is the embodiment of complete *mahābhāva*. If this embodiment of condensed erotic flavours and the embodiment of condensed love are relishable, then I must relish Them in a playful condition. In this condition I can perceive the pinnacle of Their exchange of *rasa* and *prema*, although generally Their *darśana* alone is already the greatest fruit of the eyes for those who have eyes. Because what to speak of others, They are Themselves already enchanted simply by seeing Each other. Śrī

Kṛṣṇa says: *rādhāra darśane āmāra juḍāya nayana; āmāra darśane rādhā sukhe ageyāna* (C.C.)

"The sight of Rādhā soothes My eyes and when Rādhā sees Me, She is beside Herself of bliss." Still, for Śrī Rādhā's *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* the highest fulfillment is the sight of the Yugala in a playful condition.

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha is saying: "By sprinkling the disembodied Cupid with the nectar-*rasa* of Their appearance, They have given him his body back². Thus They always increase the pleasure of Their pastimes through transcendental flavours like the *śṛṅgāra rasa*. It is as if the disembodied Cupid becomes directly embodied by being showered by the nectar of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's Vṛndāvana *līlā*. The purport of this is that the mundane Cupid has no power and influence at all in Vṛndāvana. Here the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendra-Nandana is the **TRANSCENDENTAL NEW CUPID** and the most loving Vraja-sundarīs serve this transcendental new Cupid with the supreme essence of *prema*, named *mahābhāva*.

This *prema* is called **KĀMA** here. Seeing the signs of this *kāma* (*gopī-prema*), great loving and wise devotees like Uddhava became astonished and ecstatic and prayed for births as blades of grass or shrubs in Vraja in order to get showered with their sacred footdust.

Although Śrī Vrajendra-Nandana is the Original Personality of Godhead and the embodiment of *rasa* and *ānanda*, and although all the people of the world can become free from all lusty desires and blessed with attaining *prema* simply by

² *śiva kopānala dagdha śarīra ityanubhūtārtha dyotaka etacchabdaḥ* (Baṅga Bihārī Vidyālaṅkāra): "Cupid initially lost his body because it was scorched by the fire of Śiva's anger."

hearing and chanting His holy name, He Himself considers Himself blessed when He is showered by the countless streams of lust or topmost love of Śrī Rādhā and the Vraja-*gopīs*, and the world and **Cupid** also become fulfilled.

*rādhikādi loiyā koilo rāsādi vilāsa;
vāñchā bhari āsvādilo rasera niryāsa
kaiśora vayasa, kāma jagata sakala;
rāsādi hlāya tina korilo saphala*

(*Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 4*)

"Taking Rādhikā and others along for the Rāsa-dance and other pastimes He fulfills His desires by extracting the transcendental flavours from them. He fulfills His adolescence and satisfies **Cupid** and the whole world by performing pastimes like the Rāsa-dance."

The purport here is that in lust there is a certain motivation for selfish sense gratification. One name of lust is *anaṅga* or the disembodied. If this lust, or *anaṅga*, is not joined with pure love, viz. activities only meant to please the beloved, without desiring personal sense gratification, then *anaṅga* can never become *sāṅga* (embodied).

Because the love of Śrī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* is in all respects free from all motivations, Anaṅga has now become blessed with a new body by revealing his innumerable items like kissing and embracing through them. Thus he has become free from the disgrace of his disembodied status. Especially through Śrī Rādhā's *mādanākhyā mahābhāva*-filled pastimes, Madana (Cupid) has been blessed again with a full embodiment. Hence Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*harir eṣa na ced avatāriṣyan mathurāyām madhurākṣi rādhikā ca
abhaviṣyad iyaṁ vṛthā viṣṛṣṭir makarāṅkas tu viśeṣatas tadātra*

(Vidagdha Mādhava Nāṭaka)

"O sweet-eyed girl! If Śrī Hari and Śrī Rādhikā had not descended in Mathurā, then the creation would have been in vain. Especially the existence of Cupid would have been a waste!"

Therefore Anaṅga became *sāṅga*, or embodied, as a result of the appearance of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and so the flavours of the pleasure-pastimes of this Rasika-Mithuna (romantic Couple) are expanding through the erotic flavour and other love-mellows.

Here we may ask: "The mundane Anaṅga cannot get a place in the transcendental loving pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, can he? Anaṅga may consider himself blessed and reembodied by taking part in these pastimes because of the semblance of lust in them, but can the mundane Cupid really actually nourish or increase the transcendental erotic pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava?"

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written about this in his Bṛhad Krama Sandarbha-commentary on the line *uttambhayan rati-patim ramayām cakāra* ("Śrī Kṛṣṇa created lusty feelings in the Vraja-sundarīs and then made love with them in different ways") of the Bhāgavata-śloka; *bāhu prasāra* (Bhā. 10.29.46):

*vastutastu tāsām premaiva sāhajikaḥ natu kāmah. tad
abhāve sālilā surasā na bhavātī svayam eva tāsām asantam
apī kāmāṁ vardhayāmāsetyarthah. sa tu kāmah prakṛto na
bhavati apī tu sa eva bhagavān yenāmśena kāmāvatāro bhavati
sa evaśas tāsām manasyāveśitaḥ*

This means: "Actually it is natural for the Vraja-ramaṇīs to have pure love for Kṛṣṇa without desiring personal sense gratification. It is impossible for desires of personal lusty sense gratification ever to enter into their hearts. But without lust, the meetings between heroes and heroines are never relishable. Therefore, although there was no lust in the hearts of the Vraja-sundaṛīs, the Lord infused lust into them and also increased it. But this lust is never like mundane lust. Rather, the Lord infused a particle of this lust in the presiding deity of mundane lust, with which he bewilders the living entities, in their hearts. Therefore, although the mundane Anaṅga has no right to enter into these pastimes he still considers himself embodied for the sake of these pastimes, and the transcendental Cupid expands the flavours of the Yugala-pastimes. Thus it must be understood."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha said: "Śrī Rādhā-Gīrdhārī are the crown jewels of all young, wonderful loving pairs in beauty, sweetness, love and playfulness. Not only of all the pairs in the material worlds, but also of all the Personalities of Godhead that sport in the spiritual worlds with Their goddesses of fortune.

vrajendranandana kṛṣṇa - nāyaka śīromaṇi,
nāyikāra śīromaṇi - rādhā ṭhākuraṇī
 (C.C.)

"Vrajendra-Nandana Kṛṣṇa is the crown jewel of all amorous heroes and goddess Rādhā is the crown jewel of all amorous heroines." Śrīpāda Raghunātha passionately yearns to see this Śrī Rādhā-Gīrdhārī. Unless this *anurāga* comes to anoint the eyes with the devotional power to see, the sweetness of the confidential pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava cannot be relished. Therefore Śrī Raghunātha urges the *sādhakas* who are

eager to relish the mellows of the pastimes of Rādhā-Mādhava to spend their lives practising full-time *rāga bhajana*.

*prakaṭita līlārūpa amṛta paraśe
anaṅga yeno aṅga lābha kori vraje
śṛṅgārādi rasa dvārā tiho nirantara
sucātura yṛddhi kore navīna līlāra
kāma kṛīḍā-rata sei yugala kiśora
anurāge sandarśane hoibo vibhōra*

"Through the nectarean touch of Their manifest pastimes, it was as if Anaṅga gained a body in Vraja. He constantly expands the cleverness of the mellows like *śṛṅgāra-rasa* of these ever-new pastimes. I will become absorbed in passionately witnessing the Yugala Kiśora engaging in Their erotic pastimes."

VERSE 5:

**vaikuṅṭhād api sodarātmaja-vṛtā dvāravati sā priyā
yatra śrī-sata-nindi-paṭṭa-mahiṣi-vṛndaiḥ prabhuḥ khelati |
prema-kṣetram asau tato'pi mathurā śreṣṭhā harer janmato
yatra śrī-vraja eva rājatitarāṁ tām eva nityaṁ bhaje ||5||**

vaikuṅṭhād - than Vaikuṅṭha; api - even; sodara - brother; ātmaja - child; vṛtā - surrounded; dvāravati - Dvārakā; sā - she; priyā - beloved; yatra - where; śrī - goddess of fortune; sata - a hundred; nindi - belittling; paṭṭamahiṣi-vṛndaiḥ - with many queens; prabhuḥ - the Lord; khelati - plays; prema - love; kṣetram - field; asau - this; tataḥ - than that; api - even; mathurā - Mathurā; śreṣṭhā - the greatest; hareḥ - of Hari; janmataḥ - of the birth; yatra - where; śrī vraja - Śrī Vraja;

eva - only; rājatitarāṁ - clearly manifest; tām - to her; eva - only; nityaṁ - eternally; bhaje - I worship.

I eternally worship Mathurā-dhāma, where the Supreme Lord personally took His birth, which includes Vraja and which is even greater than Dvārakā, where the Lord is always enjoying wonderful pastimes with His Queens like Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, Who are the greatest goddesses of fortune, where He is surrounded by His brother Balarāma and His sons, headed by Pradyumna, and which is in its turn again greater than Vaikuṅṭha.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: For the fulfillment of his desires Śrīpāda Raghunātha first praises Śrī Mathurā-maṇḍala in this verse.

Śrī Vaikuṅṭha is the Supreme Abode. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata (2.9.10) it is described:

*pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoh
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla vikramaḥ
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ*

"In Śrī Vaikuṅṭha there are no material modes of passion, ignorance or mixed goodness, nor is there any influence of time or *māyā*, what to speak of *māyā*-induced lust and anger. Here the associates of Lord Viṣṇu reside, worshipped by both gods and demons."

In the Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta it is seen that when Śrī Gopakumāra went to Vaikuṅṭha, he experienced the spotless bliss there and said:

*teṣu vai dṛśyamāneṣu tad brahmānubhave sukham
gacchet sutucchatām sadyo hriyeva vīramet sukham
aho sukhaṁ kīdṛg idaṁ durūham aho padaṁ kīdṛg idaṁ mahiṣṭham
aho mahāścaryatarah prabhuś ca kīdṛk tathāś caryatarā kṛpāsya*

"When I see this Vaiṅkṣṇa and all that is there, I consider the experience of *brahma* to be insignificant and the bliss of liberation becomes ashamed and ceases to exist. Aho! How blissful it is here! How supremely glorious, indescribable and inconceivable this place is! Aho! How amazing also the Lord of this abode is and how greatly astonishing is His grace!"

In other words: in Vaiṅkṣṇa-loka everything is adorned with the greatest glory. Higher than this supreme abode Vaiṅkṣṇa, though, is Dvārāvātī.

Being a worshiper in the mood of Vraja, Śrī Gopakumāra could not be happy by seeing the opulences of Vaiṅkṣṇa, so when he gradually proceeded to Ayodhyā and Dvārakā he experienced a happiness superior to that of Ayodhyā and Vaiṅkṣṇa in Dvārakā and said:

*mokṣe sukhaṁ nanu mahattamam acyute yat
tat koṭi koṭi guṇitam gaditum vikṣṇthe
yakyā kayācid adhikaṁ kila kośalāyām
yad dvārakābhavad idaṁ tu katham nirūpyam*

(*Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.5.37)

"In Vaiṅkṣṇa there is a bliss which is millions of times greater than the bliss of liberation, that is ascertained by those who desire liberation. The devotees of the Lord have ascertained that the bliss of Ayodhyā is again greater than that

in Vaikuṅṭha, but none of these persons have been able to measure the bliss of Dvārakā!"

Śrīpāda Sanātana Gosvāmī writes in his own commentary on the next verse (2.5.38): *yathā sevā rasa viśeṣa niṣṭhayāyodhyāyām vaikuṅṭhato'pi sukhādhikyam ghateta, tathā dvārakāyām api sauhṛda rasa viśeṣa niṣṭhayāyodhyāto'pi sukha viśeṣaḥ sidhyatyeva*

"There is more bliss in Ayodhyā than in Vaikuṅṭha because there is a specific and fixed service-attitude in Ayodhyā. Similarly more bliss is accomplished in Dvārakā than in Ayodhyā because there is a certain attitude of friendship in Dvārakā."

Thus showing the superiority of Dvārakā over Vaikuṅṭha, Śrī Raghunātha describes fixation in the *sauhṛd-rasa* (attitude of friendship) and says: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa shines beautifully in Dvārakā, surrounded by His brother Balarāma and His sons, headed by Pradyumna, and He enjoys wonderful pastimes with His 16,000 Queens, headed by Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, all excelling hundreds of goddesses of fortune and all existing for His pleasure."

After that he said: "But greater even than Dvārakā is Śrī Mathurā, because the Lord advented Himself there. Mathurā-purī shines like the Queen of Queens, being the greatest of the seven holy places." Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written:

*adyāvanti patad grahaṁ kuru kare māye śanair vijaya
cchatraṁ kāñci grhāṇa kāśi purataḥ pādūryugaṁ dhāraya
nāyodhye bhaja sambhramaṁ stuti-kathāṁ nodgāraya dvārake
deviyāṁ bhavatiṣu hanta mathurā dṛṣṭi-prasādaṁ dadhe*

(Stavamālā - Mathurā-stava - 4)

"O Avanti! Take the spittoon for spitting the chewed betel leaves in your hands! O Māyāpuri! Softly fan her! O Kāñci! Hold the umbrella! O Kāśi! Hold the two sandals in front of her! O Ayodhye! Don't be afraid anymore! O Dvārake! Do not offer anymore praises, because Mathurā, who has become the Queen of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, has become pleased with you!"

The glories of Mathurā are so great because Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, has advented Himself there. More glorious than that, though, is that **WITHIN THE DISTRICT OF MATHURĀ THERE IS VRAJA, THE ABODE OF PURE LOVE.**

The Lord descended in Mathurā, but He displayed His loving pastimes, devoid of all sense of awe and reverence, in Vraja, the abode of love.

His associates here have forgotten all of His majesty and have lost themselves in loving Kṛṣṇa in the mood of

*mora putra, mora sakhā,
mora prāṇapati*

(C.C.)

"He is my son, He is my friend, He is the Lord of My heart."

Hence there is no comparison to Vraja, the abode of pure love. When feelings of awe and reverence arise, they make the heart contract and this decreases the bliss of love. Love demands that the beloved is loved without any hesitation. When reverence or hesitation appear, love's heart breaks.

In love the devotee and the Lord are embracing each other in the most intimate way - this is the speciality of love. This cannot be found anywhere else than in Vraja, the abode of pure love.

Therefore in Vraja one wave of the celestial Gaṅgā-river of love follows the other, and they are flowing in innumerable directions. This ecstatic love cannot be witnessed anywhere else but in the pure and sweet ecstatic Vraja-*bhāva*. This is the exclusive glory or pride of Vraja-*prema*.

Śrī Raghunātha said: "I always worship this Śrī Mathurā, which includes Vraja, the abode of love".

*paṭṭamahīṣī śrī rukmiṇī satyabhāmā;
śata śata lakṣmī nahe yāhāra upamā
sahodara baladeva putra parikare;
ye sthānete śrī govinda nitui vihare
sei dhāma dvārāvati vaikuṅṭha hoite;
adhika mahimā boli gāya bhāgavate
mathurā maṅḍale prema kṣetra vrajadhāma;
yathā janma aṅgī kore svayaṁ bhagavān
dvārāvati hoite śreṣṭha mathurā maṅḍala
satata bhajanā kori sarva sumāṅgala*

"Dvārakā-dhāma, where Śrī Govinda eternally sports with His Queens Śrī Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, Who cannot be compared to hundreds of goddesses of fortune, as well as with His sons and His brother, is greater than Vaikuṅṭha and it is excessively praised by Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Mathurā-maṅḍala, the abode of love Vrajadhāma where the Original Personality of Godhead took His birth, is even greater than Dvārakā, though. I always worship this all-auspicious place."

VERSE 6:

**yatra krīḍati mādhaveḥ priyatamaiḥ snigdhaḥ sakhīnām kulai-
rnityam gāḍha-rasena rāma-sahito'py adyāpi go-cāraṇaiḥ |
yasyāpy adbhuta-mādhurī-rasa-vidām hr̥dy eva kāpi sphuret
preṣṭham tan-mathurā-purād api harer goṣṭham tad evāśraye ||6||**

yatra - where; *krīḍati* - plays; *mādhaveḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *priyatamaiḥ* - with His most dearly beloveds; *snigdhaḥ* - pleasant; *sakhīnām kulaiḥ* - with friends; *nityam* - eternally; *gāḍha rasena* - with deep love; *rāma sahitaḥ* - with Balarāma; *api* - even; *adya* - today; *api* - even; *gocāraṇaiḥ* - by tending cows; *yasya* - whose; *api* - even; *adbhuta* - wonderful; *mādhurī* - sweetness; *rasa-vidām* - of the *rasika* devotees; *hr̥di* - in the heart and mind; *eva* - only; *kāpi* - anyone; *sphuret* - is manifest; *preṣṭham* - dear; *tad* - that; *mathurā-purāt* - than the city of Mathurā; *api* - even; *hareḥ* - of Hari; *goṣṭham* - the pasturing fields; *tat* - that; *eva* - only; *āśraye* - take shelter.

I take shelter of the Goṣṭha (the pasturing fields of Vraja), where even today Mādhava, His brother and Their dearest friends are performing the pastime of herding the cows with great love, whose indescribable sweetness is manifest in the hearts and minds of the sensitive rasika-devotees and which is dearer to Śrī Hari than even Mathurā City.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In the previous verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praised the city of Śrī Mathurā and also mentioned that Mathurā is adorned with the greatest glory because it contains Vraja-maṇḍala, the most complete abode of Śrī Govinda's sweet intimate pastimes.

As Śrī Rāghunātha thus remembers Vraja-maṇḍala, the self-manifest pastimes of Vraja appear in his mind. In this verse he praises the *goṣṭha*, the pasturing fields of Vraja, remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes there with His brother Baladeva and friends like Śrīdāma.

On the day that Śrī Nanda and the Vrajavāsīs left Gokula and entered Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala to find a safe haven, the children Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa became most happy to see this peerless pasturingland.

*vṛndāvanam govardhanam yamunā pulināni ca;
vikṣyāsīd uttamā prīti rāma mādhavayor nṛpa*

(Bhāgavata 10.11.36)

Śrī Śukadeva told Mahārāja Parīkṣit: "O King! When Balarāma and Mādhava saw Vṛndāvana, Govardhana and the bank of the Yamunā, They felt the greatest ecstatic love!"

Being attracted to these most enchanting meadows in Their childhood, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa commenced Their *goṣṭha*-pastimes of tending the cows with Their friends like Subala. The attraction to this *goṣṭha-kṛīḍā* is so strong that even the affectionate laps of their mothers, fathers and relatives could not keep them at home.

Śrī Śukadeva Muni has said:

*evam vrajaukasām prītim yacchantau bāla ceṣṭitaiḥ;
kalavākyaiḥ svakālena vatsapālau vabhūvatuḥ
avidūre vrajabhuvah saha gopāla bālakaiḥ;
cārayāmāsatur vatsān nānā kṛīḍā paricchadau
kvacid vādayato veṇuṁ kṣepaṇaiḥ kṣipataḥ kvacit;
kvacit pādaiḥ kiṅkiṇibhiḥ kvacit kṛtrima go vṛṣaiḥ*

*vṛṣāyamāṇau nardantau yuyudhāte parasparam;
anukṛtya rutair jantūmś ceratuḥ prakṛtau yathā*

(Bhāgavata 10.11.37-40)

"In this way Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa commenced Their pastimes of herding the cows and calves in Their childhood, increasing the transcendental bliss of the Vrajavāsīs with Their different sweet words. Taking the different items of Their childhood play, like Their flutes, reeds, horns and balls along, They began to herd the calves with Their friends like Śrīdāma and Subala, not far from Nanda's abode. Sometimes the two brothers played Their flutes, sometimes They threw Bilva- and Āmalakī-fruits with bats, sometimes They sweetly danced, making the bells on Their lotus ankles jingle along in time, sometimes They appeared like cows and bulls by covering Their bodies with blankets and roared like bulls while fighting each other head-to-head, and sometimes They imitated the sounds of peacocks, swans and monkeys. In this way They enjoyed Themselves with various sweet pastimes, just like ordinary mundane boys."

As They gradually grew up (into the Paugaṇḍa-age-group) Their *goṣṭha-vihāra* also assumed sweeter forms. Then They could freely go further away from home into the *goṣṭha* to perform Their sweet and wonderful pastimes.

Like an expert artist Śrīpāda Śuka Muni has drawn a very enchanting picture of this *goṣṭha vihāra*:

*phala prabāla stavaka sumanaḥ piccha dhātubhiḥ;
kāca muktā maṇi svarṇa bhūṣitā apyabhūṣayan
muṣṇanto'nyonya śikyādīn jñātānārāc ca cikṣipuḥ;
tatratyāśca punar dūrāddhasantaśca punar daduḥ
yadi dūram gataḥ kṛṣṇo vana śobhekṣeṇāya tam;*

*aham pūrvam aham pūrvam iti saṁspr̥śya remire
 kecid venūn vādayanto dhmanṭaḥ śṛṅgāṇi kecana;
 kecid bhṛṅgaiḥ pragāyantaḥ kūjantaḥ kokilaiḥ pare
 vicchāyabhiḥ pradhāvanto gacchantaḥ sadhu haṁsakaiḥ;
 bakair upaviśantśca nṛtyantaś ca kalāpibhiḥ
 vikaṣantaḥ kiśa bālānārohantaś ca tair drumān;
 vikurvantaś ca taiḥ sākaṁ plavantaś ca palāśiśu
 sākaṁ bhekair vilāṅghantaḥ sarit srava samplutāḥ;
 vihasantaḥ praticchāyāḥ śapantaś ca pratisvanān*

(Bhāgavata 10.12.4-10)

"Although They were already decorated at home by Their mothers with glass beads, pearls, jewels and gold, when They came into the forest They still decorated Themselves even further with fruits, leaves, bunches of flowers, peacock feathers and mineral pigments. Thus They commenced their *goṣṭha-krīḍā*. One hid the flute and reed of another, and when the captor was caught, he flung it far away. When the owner of the flute and reed ran to the place where they were thrown to catch them, one boy who was standing there caught them and threw them even further away. Then they all laughed and returned the things to the robbed boy."

"Sometimes Kṛṣṇa left the cowherd boys, desiring to admire the sylvan beauty and then the cowherd boys all came running to Him, calling out: "I will be the first to touch Kṛṣṇa! I will be the first to touch Kṛṣṇa!", everyone floating in transcendental bliss.

"Some boys were playing flutes, some were playing horns, some were humming like bees, some were cooing like cuckoos, some took delight in running fast with the shadows of birds, some were imitating the walking of the swans, some sat in the water like ducks and some joined the peacocks in dancing.

Some boys pulled at the tails of the baby-monkeys who sat in the branches of the trees, and then joined them in the high branches, imitating the crazy faces they were making and climbing with them from one branch to the other. Some imitated the jumping of frogs and jumped across narrow brooks, others made fun of their own reflections and again others cursed their echoes."

While thus describing the various sweet activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends, Śrī Śuka Muni exclaimed in blissful astonishment:

*itthaṁ satām brahma sukhānubhūtyā
dāsyam gatānām paradaivatena
māyāśrītānām naradārakeṇa
sārdham vijahruḥ kṛta puṇya puñjāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.12.11)

"O King! Only because of having a great amount of pious merit could these cowherd boys play so many childhood pastimes with the Original Personality of Godhead, Who is identified with the undifferentiated bliss of *brahma* by wise men and mystics, Who is worshipped as the Supreme Lord by His servants, and Who is considered no more than a human child by ignorant people who are attached to sense gratification."

Although scriptures like the Śrīmad Bhāgavata describe the deeply loving *goṣṭha*-pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd boyfriends in their *paugaṇḍa*-age, the greatest aspiration of Śrīpāda Raghunātha, who is a maidservant of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, is to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa's deeply passionate erotic *goṣṭha*-pastimes in His *kaiśora*-age (adolescence).

When adolescence appears, erotic feelings awaken and Śrī Kṛṣṇa mainly develops the desire to enjoy in solitude at Govardhana and Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa together with Śrī Rādhā, by Whose form, qualities and pastimes He has become enchanted. This He expresses through words like *rākhāla loiyā vane, sadā phire dhenu sane, tuyā lāgi vane vanacārī*:

"I have become a cowherder in the forest and I am wandering around with My cows there simply to see You!"

He performs His sweet *goṣṭha*-pastimes with Baladeva and His friends and then goes off with His dearest friends like Subala and Madhumaṅgala on the pretext of admiring the beauty of the forest just to enjoy sweet passionate pastimes on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa with Śrī Rādhā, with the assistance of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends and maidservants.

The *rasa* of these pastimes flows into innumerable directions and inundates the fields of the sensitive *rasika*-devotees' hearts. The word *nityam* proves the eternity of all these pastimes. Hence Śrī Raghunātha has said: *yasyāpyadbhuta mādhuri rasavidān hṛdyeva kāpi sphuret*:

"The indescribable sweetness of this *rasa* is manifest in the hearts and minds of the *rasika* devotees. These pasturing fields are even dearer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than Mathurā. I take shelter of this *goṣṭha-pradeśa*."

*śrīdāmādi sakhā saṅge kṛṣṇa baladeve;
 gocāraṇe nitya khelā gāḍha anurāge
 adbhuta rasa keli mādhuriya viśeṣe;
 satata lāgiche yāhā rasika mānase
 madhupurī hoite śreṣṭha sei vrajadhāma;
 śrī govinda lilābhūmi nayanābhirāma*

"Vrajadhāma, Śrī Govinda's eye-enchanting playground, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His brother Baladeva eternally play the pastimes of cowherding with Their friends, headed by Śrīdāma, with deep love, the special sweetness of Whose *rasika*-pastimes is always on the minds of the *rasika*-devotees, is even greater than Mathurā City."

VERSE 7:

**vaidagdhya-narma-karmaṭha-sakhī-vṛndaiḥ parītaṁ rasaiḥ
pratyekaṁ taru-kuñja-vallari-giri-droṇīṣu rātrindivam |
nānā-keli-bhareṇa yatra ramate tan navya-yūnor yugaṁ
tat-pādāmbuja-gandha-bandhuratarāṁ vṛndāvanāṁ tad bhaje ||7||**

vaidagdhya - cleverness; *uttara* - greatest; *narma* - humorous; *karmaṭha* - expert; *sakhī-vṛndaiḥ* - with girlfriends; *parītaṁ* - surrounded; *rasaiḥ* - with tastes; *pratyekaṁ* - each and every one; *taru* - tree; *kuñja* - grove; *vallari* - vine; *giri* - mountain; *droṇīṣu* - in the caves; *rātrim* - night; *divam* - day; *nānā* - various; *keli* - pastimes; *bhareṇa* - with a multitude; *yatra* - where; *ramate* - enjoying love making; *tad* - that; *navya* - youthful; *yūnaḥ* - pair; *yugaṁ* - couple; *tat* - that; *pādāmbuja* - lotus feet; *gandha* - fragrance; *bandhuratarāṁ* - very lovely; *vṛndāvanāṁ* - Vṛndāvana; *tad* - that; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship the very enchanting abode named Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is made fragrant by the lotus feet of the Adolescent Couple, Who are surrounded there by many laughing and joking girlfriends, who are very expert in all kinds of arts of the amorous mellow and where the Divine Couple passionately sports day and

night in the groves, that are surrounded by trees, vines and fresh leaves and in the caves of the mountains.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Along with the remembrance of the *goṣṭha-līlā*, the sweet vision of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's passionate erotic pastimes with Their girlfriends awakens in Śrīpāda Raghunātha's consciousness.

He praises Vṛndāvana, the blissful abode of these *rasika* pastimes. The extraordinary speciality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His feature of *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, the embodiment of all transcendental flavours, is to relish the essential extract of *rasa* through and through.

He is *rasamaya* and *karuṇāmaya*, full of taste and compassion, and these two qualities have brought Him down to earth from the transcendental realm of Goloka Vṛndāvana with His eternal companions. This descension of the source of all descensions (*avatāri*) is a grave mystery.

*rasika śekhara parama karuṇa;
ei dui hetu hoite icchāra udgama
(C.C.)*

Astonishment is the very life-force of *rasa* and *līlā*. If there is no astonishment, the pastimes cannot be sweet.

Hence goddess Yogamāyā, who is expert in accomplishing the impossible (*aghaṭana-ghaṭana-paṭiyasī*) always keeps the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendra-Nandana absorbed in transcendental *rasa* by arranging His meetings and His resultant astonishing pastimes with His companions when He descends to the material world.

Of all the pastimes of the different Personalities of Godhead, the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead,

are supreme. Again of all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the Vṛndāvana-pastimes are purely the sweetest. Again of all the Vṛndāvana-pastimes, the sweet *rasika*-pastimes of Gopī-jana-vallabha with the *gopikās*, who are all endowed with *mahābhāva*, are the most astonishing.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet *rasika*-pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who is endowed with *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* though, are the very limits of relishable and astonishing pastimes. The abode of these most *rasika*-confidential pastimes is Śrī Vṛndāvana.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's supreme abode of erotic pastimes, Śrī Vṛndāvana, is full enchanting *kuñja* (grove)-abodes, that are surrounded by various trees, vines and fresh leaves.

These are not ordinary trees and vines!

*rādhākṛṣṇau parama kutukāt khelato yat taleṣu
 bhuñjāte yat phalam ati rasam yat prasunādi bhūṣau;
 yacchākhāsthaiḥ surucira khagair maunibhir nirnimesaiḥ
 pūtālāpāmṛta rucisudhau tāms tarūṁścintayāmi
 nānakārān divya nānā phalādīn rādhā-kṛṣṇa prītaye ye vahanti;
 nānā saṁsthānobhavāntardhibhājo vande vṛndāraṇya dhanya
 drumāms tām
 rādhā-kṛṣṇānurāgān mukula pulakino mākarandaugha vāṣpān
 tat tāḍṅ vāta cañcat kīśalaya karato divya nṛtyam dadhānāḥ;
 sat puṣpa śroṇa hāsāḥ khaga kula virutaiḥ saṁstuvantaḥ phalāder
 bhārair namra drumās te mama parama mude santu vṛndāvanīyāḥ*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 6.11-13)

"I meditate on the trees at whose bases Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa most humorously play, whose very luscious fruits They are eating, with whose flowers They decorate Themselves or Each other,

and on whose branches silent enchanting birds are entertaining Them with the nectar of their prattlings."

"I praise the blessed trees of Vṛndāvana, who bear many kinds of divine fruits in different shapes for the pleasure of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and who appear and disappear at different places in different ways."

"The trees of Vṛndāvana, that bear goose pimples of ecstatic love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the form of their sprouts, who release tears of ecstatic love in the form of oozing honeydrops, whose fresh hand-like leaves are dancing gently in the soft breezes, making dancing gestures, who smile through their nice flowers, whose birds offer complete praise by singing sweetly and who are laden with ripened fruits, they give me topmost transcendental bliss."

All these trees and similarly qualified vines and fresh leaves surround hundreds of *kuñja*-cottages, which extend an unprecedented beauty in Vṛndāvana. In all these *kuñja*-cottages and solitary enchanting cottages, the Adolescent Pair perform sweet *rasika*-pastimes day and night.

rātri dina kuñja kṛiḍā kore rādhā saṅge;
kaiśora boyas saphala koilo kṛiḍā raṅge
 (C.C.)

"Day and night Kṛṣṇa sports with Rādhā in the groves of Vṛndāvana, fulfilling His adolescence with His amorous sports."

Śrī Raghunātha says: "This amazing ocean of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes appears as if agitated at every moment by the *rasa*-waves of joking and laughter of Śrī Lalitā and the *sakhīs*. *vaidagdhlyottara narma karmaṭha sakhī-vṛndaiḥ parītaṁ rasaiḥ*. "The *sakhīs* nourish and expand all these topmost *rasika*-pastimes."

Śrī Rādhārāṇī is like a boundless ocean of *mahābhāva* and Śyāmasundara is like a shoreless ocean of transcendental flavours. Their meetings are naturally creating waves of *bhāva* on the oceans of *bhāva* and *rasa*.

Above that is the whirlwind of the jokes of Śrī Lalitā and the *sakhīs*, who are all highly expert in the art of the *parihāsa-rasa* (the flavours of humour), that makes this ocean highly billowy. Where is the boat of the Yugala's hearts getting lost in the womb of these billowing waves?

Śrīpāda says: "I worship that most enchanting **ŚRĪ VRINDĀVANA**, which is scented by the fragrance of the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who are always absorbed in ever-so-sweet pastimes."

*priya narma sakhī sane yugala kiśora;
ye sthānete vihariche rasete vibhora
keli parāyaṇa sei navīna yugale;
prati taru, kuñja guhāya latāra āḍāle
rasera bādara kore hāsya parihāse;
kuñja vana manorama aṅgera suvāse
divya cintāmaṇi dhāma sei vṛndāvana;
satata bhajana kori loiyā śaraṇa*

"I always take shelter of Vṛndāvana, that divine abode of Cintāmaṇi-jewels, where the Adolescent Pair is always absorbed in *rasika*-pastimes with Their dear most girlfriends, where They are playing in the concealment of every tree, grove, mountain cave and vine, making waves of *rasa* with Their joking and laughter and where They scent the groves with Their bodily fragrance."

VERSE 8:

**yatra śrīḥ parito bhramaty avirataṁ tās tā mahā-siddhayaḥ
sphītāḥ sṛṣṭir alaṁ gavāṁ udayanī vāso'pi goṣṭhaukasām |
vātsalyāt paripālito viharate kṛṣṇaḥ pitṛbhyāṁ sukhai-
stan nāndīśvaram ālayaṁ vraja-pater goṣṭhottamāṅgaṁ bhaje ||8||**

yatra - where; *śrīḥ* - the goddess of fortune; *paritaḥ* - everywhere; *bhramati* - rambles; *avirataṁ* - always; *tāḥ tā* - they; *mahā* - great; *siddhayaḥ* - perfections; *sphītāḥ* - fully blown; *sṛṣṭiḥ* - creation; *alaṁ* - greatly; *gavāṁ* - of the cows; *udayanī* - increasing the opulence; *vāsaḥ* - abode; *api* - even; *goṣṭhaukasām* - inhabitants of Vraja; *vātsalyāt* - out of parental love; *paripālito* - protected; *viharate* - enjoys; *kṛṣṇaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *pitṛbhyāṁ* - to the parents; *sukhaiḥ* - with happiness; *tat* - that; *nandīśvaram* - Nandīśvara; *ālayam* - abode; *vraja-pateḥ* - of the king of Vraja; *goṣṭha* - Vraja; *uttamāṅgam* - the head; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Nandīśvara, the abode of the King of Vraja, the crown jewel of Vraja, where the goddess of fortune always wanders around everywhere, where the eight mystic perfections are fully manifest, which has been created to increase the opulence of the cows, where the Vrajavāsīs live in topmost bliss and where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is enjoying Himself under the protection of His parents.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Śrīpāda Raghunātha's heart is immersed in the sweetness of the Vraja-*rasa*. In some form the remembrance of the Lord, His devotees and His abode arises in the consciousness of one in whose heart *prema* has appeared, and this *prema* attains a great savour.

yathā prāvṛṣi tṛṇāṅkurasyodbhedena tad bīja sattānumūyate (Vyāsa Bhāṣya) "Just as we can assume that the earth contains

seeds when the crops start growing in the monsoon-season, we can also understand that there is love in the heart of the person who becomes ecstatic upon hearing, chanting and remembering the Lord, His pastimes and His abode."

premādimatāntu yathā kathañcit smaraṇam api tatra hetuḥ
(Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda)

"In a *jāta-rati-sādhaka* (a devotee whose love for Kṛṣṇa has been born), the slightest relationship with the Lord causes ecstasy. In the stage of *prema*, *kṛṣṇa-rati* becomes immediately relishable when it becomes even slightly fit for a certain relish through even the smallest *vibhāva* (excitant).

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is in the kingdom of *mahābhāva*, so in his heart an inexhaustible fountain of Vraja-*rasa* is causing a flow like the current of the celestial Gaṅgā.

In this verse, the glories of Śrī Nandīśvara, the parental home of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, arises in the consciousness of Śrī Raghunātha. First he says: *yatra śrīḥ parito bhramatyaviratam* "At this Nandīśvara the goddess of fortune always wanders around like a mere maidservant."

After the advent of Śrī Kṛṣṇa was described in the Bhāgavata, a doubt arose in the mind of Mahārāja Parīkṣit when he heard about the countless jewels and other opulences Nanda Mahārāja was able to donate. He thought: "Even the wealthiest king of the world would not be able to donate so many jewels. How could Nanda Mahārāja, who was a mere local chieftain in Vraja-maṇḍala, a small region within the Mathurā-district, be able to donate all this wealth?"

The omniscient Śrī Śuka Muni, understanding the emperor's doubt, then spoke:

*tata ārabhya nandasya vrajaḥ sarva samṛddhimān
harer nivāsātma guṇaiḥ ramā-kṛdam abhūn nṛpa*

(Bhāgavata 10.5.18)

"O King! Vraja is the eternal abode of the Lord, therefore it is automatically filled with all opulences. From the day that Śrī Hari was born here, all opulences came to Nanda's Vraja."

The purport of this verse is that Vraja is naturally filled with all opulences, a mere speck of its dust containing the wealth of innumerable Vaikuṅṭha-planets. This place does not need the support of Ramā, the goddess of fortune! Still the goddess of fortune constantly roams all over Vraja like a mere maidservant, thinking that Her service to the companions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be for the benefit of everyone in all respects. These statements are made after experiencing the incomparable opulences of Nandīśvara.

This line can also mean that Śrī Rādhā and thousands of Vraja-sundarīs, whose lotus feet are worshipped by the greatest goddesses of fortune, are wandering around here every day.

Śrī Rādhārāṇī daily goes to Nandīśvara with hundreds and thousands of *sakhīs* to cook for Kṛṣṇa. Wandering over Nandīśvara's slopes, they render different services there to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Brahma Saṁhitā describes:

*cintāmaṇi prakara sadmasu kalpavṛkṣa
-lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhir abhipālayantam
lakṣmī sahasra śata sambhrama sevya mānaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

"I worship Govinda, the Primeval Lord, Who dwells in houses made of Cintāmaṇi-gemstones surrounded by hundreds of thousands of wish-yielding trees, Who is tending His Surabhī-cows and Who is reverentially served there by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune."

Yet another explanation is that the word *śrī* means beauty, and the embodiment of beauty is wandering around the Nandīśvara Giri. Wherever the eyes go, they can see there the matchless wealth of Nandīśvara Giri's natural beauty.

There are mango-, jackfruit-, Arjuna-, coconut-, betel-, Tamāla-, Kadamba-, Bakula-, Punnāga- and other trees, bearing enchanting beauty as they are entwined by Jāti-, Yūthi-, fresh Mallikā-, clove-, Atimuktā and other vines. These trees and vines bear various kinds of blooming flowers whose fragrance gladdens all the directions and that attracts hosts of humming bumblebees flying from flower bunch to flower bunch to drink the nectar of their honey.

The forest on the mountain is filled with the singing of cuckoos and other birds. Here and there are lakes and ponds with clear water that are filled with blooming water flowers like lotus and Kahlāra and singing water birds like Cakravāka-flamingos, swans, crane-birds and Kāraṇḍavas.

The periphery of Nandīśvara Giri is thus filled with a natural beauty and the opulences of hundreds of Amarāvatis.³ Wherever the eye goes, wonderful sculptures of jewels, diamonds and pearls can be seen. This city is filled with an inexhaustible fountain of sweet and all-delightful beauty.

³ Amarāvati is the abode of Indra, the king of heaven.

Then Śrī Raghunātha continues by saying: *tās tā mahā-siddhayaḥ sphītāḥ. yatra tāstāḥ prasiddhā aṇimādayo'ṣṭo mahā-siddhayaḥ sphītāḥ paripūrṇā vartanta iti śeṣaḥ*⁴

"Here the eight mystic perfections, starting with *aṇimā*, are fully manifest."

aṇimā, *mahimā*, *laghimā*, *prāpti*, *prākāmya*, *vaśitva*, *īśitva* and *kāma-vasāyitā* - these are the eight mystic perfections. *aṇimā* is the ability to make one's body as small as an atom, so that one is able to even enter into stones. *mahimā* is the ability to make oneself as big as one wishes. *laghimā* is the ability to make oneself as light as one wishes. *prāpti* is the ability to touch even the moon with one's finger. *prākāmya* is the ability to let a distant object appear nearby. *vaśitva* is the ability to control physical objects. *īśitva* is the ability to receive lordship over physical objects and *kāma-vasāyitā* is the ability to make a physical object do anything one wishes.

Those who take shelter of the path of pure devotional worship never desire such mystic perfections, but they renounce them, seeing them as obstacles on the way to pure devotion. If such desires remain on one's mind one cannot attain *prema*, even if one performs *bhajana*.

*bhukti mukti siddhi vāñchā mane yadi roy;
sādhana korile-o prema utpanna nā hoy
(C.C.)*

But, although the devotee does not covet such perfections, they automatically knock on the door of the heart that has devotion, like maidservants of Bhakti Mahārāṇī.

⁴ The second line of Sanskrit is quoted from the commentary of Śrī Baṅgabihārī Vidyālaṅkāra.

*hari bhakti mahādevyāḥ sarvā muktyādi siddhayāḥ.
bhuktayaś cādbutās tasyās ceṭikāvad anuvratāḥ* (Nārada
Pañcarātra)

"Liberation and all other amazing perfections follow the great goddess of Hari-bhakti like mere maidservants, along with all kinds of sense gratification."

Therefore these great perfections are all fully manifest at Nandīśvara Giri, the place that is filled with all supreme opulences, desiring to bless themselves.

Then again Śrī Raghunātha says: "It is as if this mountain has been created to increase the opulence of the cows!" *sṛṣṭir alam gavām udayanī*. It is as if the Śrī Giri has advented itself to increase the nourishment, the bliss and the nectarean flow of milk of the 900,000 cows of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and the thousands of cows of the other cowherders.

Actually it is said, *ananta kāmadhenu yāhā care vane vane* "Innumerable desire-cows are grazing there in every forest." Therefore, although there is no question of an increase of opulence, it is said so in the vision of innumerable cows mooing in great jubilation and cowherd boys making blissful noise. In his Vilāpa Kusumāñjali (60) Śrī Raghunātha has said:

*hamvāravair iha gavām api ballabānām
kolāhalair vividha vandi kalāvatām taiḥ
sambhrājate priyatayā vrajarāja sūnor
govardhanād api gurur vraja vanditād yaḥ*

"In Nandīśvara, which is worshipable by the people of Vraja because it is dearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prince of Vraja, than even Govardhana, the cows are mooing, the cowherders, the artists and panegyrist are making different kinds of noise."

Hence it is the most blissful abode of the people of Vraja: *vāso'pi goṣṭhaukasām*. Here the cowherders live with endless love, bliss and happiness.

Then again he says: *vātsalyāt paripālito viharate kṛṣṇaḥ pitṛbhyāṁ sukhaiḥ* "Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys here in topmost bliss, under the deeply loving protection of His mother and father, Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā."

According to its kind and the amount, a devotee's love can subdue the Lord. The main aim of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, in His Vraja-*līlā* is to savour the sweetness of His devotees' love. When the transcendental Lord, Who thirsts after the nectar of *prema*, is poured over with the buttermilk of Nanda-Yaśodā's pure love, He forgets His endless prowess and majesty and swims around in the ocean of their parental love in topmost bliss.

It is this capital of Nanda, the king of Vraja, the crown jewel of the Goṣṭha, or Vraja-Manḍala, Śrī Nandiśvara, that Śrī Raghunātha praises -

*ye sthānete svayaṁ lakṣmī mūrtimatī hoiyā;
 itas tataḥ bule sadā sevāra lāgiyā
 ye sthānete aṣṭa-siddhi sevā ākāṅkṣāya;
 paripūrṇa hoiyā āche nanda aṅgināya
 dhenugaṇera śrī-vṛddhi satata vihāra;
 kṛṣṇa nitya-dhāma vraja sukhera pāthāra
 vrajavāsigaṇa sukhe avasthāna kore;
 vātsalyete mātā pitā lālanādi kore
 śrī nandera rājadhānī nāma nandiśvare;
 bhajanā koribo ei lālasā antare*

"I will worship Śrī Nanda's capital named Nandiśvara, where Lakṣmīdevī Herself constantly wanders around, asking for

service, where the eight mystic perfections are present in full, desiring devotional service, where the opulence of the cows is constantly increased, where the Vrajavāsīs blissfully reside and where Kṛṣṇa is cuddled with great parental love by His mother and father. I always crave for the worship of this eternal abode of Kṛṣṇa, which is an ocean of transcendental bliss."

VERSE 9:

**putrasyābhyudayārtham ādara-bharair miṣṭānna-pānotkarai-
rdivyānām ca gavām maṇi-vraja-yuṣām dānair iha pratyaham |
yo viprān gaṇaśaḥ pratoṣayati tad bhavyasya vārtām muhuḥ
snehāt pṛcchati yaś ca tad-gata-manās taṁ gokulendraṁ bhaje ||9||**

putrasya - of the son; *abhyudayārtham* - for growing up; *ādara* - respect; *bharaiḥ* - filled with; *miṣṭānna* - sweetmeats; *pāna* - and drinks; *utkaraiḥ* - with multitudes; *divyānām* - of the divine; *ca* - and; *gavām* - cows; *maṇi-vraja* - many jewels; *yuṣām* - endowed with; *dānaiḥ* - with donations; *iha* - here; *prati* - each; *aham* - day; *yaḥ* - who; *viprān* - to the *brāhmaṇas*; *gaṇaśaḥ* - the hosts; *pratoṣayati* - satisfies; *tad* - that; *bhavyasya* - of the welfare; *vārtām* - news; *muhuḥ* - repeatedly; *snehāt* - out of affection; *pṛcchati* - inquires; *yaḥ* - who; *ca* - and; *tad-gata* - dedicated; *manāḥ* - thoughts; *taṁ* - him; *gokulendraṁ* - the King of Vraja; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, the king of Gokula, who satisfies the brāhmaṇas by respectfully giving them sweets, drinks, divine cows and jewels in charity every day for the auspicious growth of his son, and who affectionately asks them for blessings to his son's well-being, being totally absorbed in thoughts of Him.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: When describing Śrī Nandiśvara Giri, Śrī Raghunātha remembers Nanda and Yaśodā and thus he praises them in the next two verses.

In Vrajarāja and Vrajeśvarī, the summit of pure, sweet parental love for Kṛṣṇa rests, bereft of any whiff of awe and reverence towards Him - this is clearly known from scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata. Even if a huge mountain of *aiśvarya* falls into the boundless ocean of this parental love, it won't have any impact. Hence, when praising Śrī Nanda, it is first said: *putrasyābhyudayārtham ādara-bharair miṣṭānna pānotkarair divyānām ca gavām mañivraja-yujām dānair iha pratyaham*

"Every day he satisfies the *brāhmaṇas* by respectfully giving them sweets, drinks, divine cows and jewels in charity for the auspicious growth of his son."

Even when he sees Kṛṣṇa's matchless prowess, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja is unswerving in his sweet parental love for Him. Rather it nourishes his conception of Kṛṣṇa as his son - this is elaborately described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

When Śrī Nanda Mahārāja returned from Mathurā after the killing of the witch Pūtanā, he saw Pūtanā's huge corpse with his own eyes, and he had heard about these kinds of troubles in advance from Vasudeva Mahāśaya, but still the ocean of his parental love swelled when he saw Pūtanārī (Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Pūtanā) as Śrī Bāla Gopāla.

*nandaḥ sva putram ādāya proṣyāgatam udāra-dhīḥ
mūrdhnyupāghrāya paramām mudam lebhe kurūdvaha*

(Bhāgavata 10.6.43)

Śrī Śukadeva said: "O Mahārāja Parīkṣit! When the high-souled Śrī Nanda returned from his sojourn to Mathurā, he

held his son on his lap and felt the greatest bliss by smelling His head."

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī said: *anubhāvāḥ śiroghrāṇam* "One of the signs of parental love is the smelling of the head."

On the day of the Autthānika Parva (the festival to celebrate that the child is able to stand up), Śrī Nanda-Nandana lay under a big cart and crying for His mother's breast, He kicked His tender feet up into the air and kicked the huge cart over, thus killing Śakaṭāsura, the infamous cart-demon with His inconceivable power.

The cowherd boys then went to Nanda and the cowherd men and they told them: "Nanda-nandana has thrown over the cart by kicking it with His feet!", but they did not believe it.

*na te śraddadhīre gopā bāla bhāṣitam ityuta
aprimeyaṁ balaṁ tasya bālakasya na te viduḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.7.10)

"Nanda and the cowherders could not believe the words of the infantile boys, because they did not experience the great inconceivable powers of Nanda-Nandana out of great parental love."

Rather, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja became very worried about Kṛṣṇa's safety and had the Veda-knowing *brāhmaṇas* perform all kinds of auspicious rituals for the welfare of his son.

*iti bālakam ādāya sāmargyajur upākṛtaiḥ
jalaiḥ pavitrauśadhibhir abhiśicya dvijottamaiḥ
vācayitvā svastyayanam nanda gopaḥ samāhitaḥ
hutvā cāgnim dvijātibhyaḥ prādād annam mahā-guṇam
gāvah sarva guṇopetā vāsaḥ srag rukma māliniḥ*

ātmajābhyudayarthāya prādāt te cānvayunījata

(Bhāgavata 10.7.14-16)

"Śrī Nanda Mahārāja took his boy and made the Veda-knowing *brāhmaṇas* bathe Him with water sanctified by *mantras* from the Sāma-, Rig - and Yajur-Vedas and mixed with herbs like Kuśa, Sarvaṣadhi and Mahauṣadhi. After he made the *brāhmaṇas* perform other auspicious rites like the Homa-sacrifice, he fed them a feast. Then he donated golden-laced garments and milk cows, beautified by gold and garlands for the welfare (*abhyudaya*) of his son. Accepting Nanda's donations, the *brāhmaṇas* offered their blessings to Nanda-Nandana."

We can see that out of parental love, Śrī Nanda and the cowherd men acted similarly like this after the killing of Tṛṇāvarta and the breaking of the Yamalārjuna trees.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted Girirāja Govardhana for seven days and nights in front of the Vrajavāsīs' eyes, the cowherders were astonished to see His inconceivable prowess, but when they told Śrī Nanda Mahārāja about this inconceivable prowess, it could not reverse his feelings of pure sweetness at all. Rather, he destroyed their doubts by quoting Garga Muni, who had told him previously⁵ that the power of Śrī Nārāyaṇa was infused into his son, so that He would be able to protect them from all calamities and havoc. When the cowherders relished the nectarean words of Śrī Nanda emanating from the ocean of his pure parental love, the ocean of their own sweet love, in which

⁵ *ya etasmin mahābhāgāḥ prītiṃ kurvanti mānavāḥ; nārāyo'bhībhavatyetan viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsuraḥ tasmān nandātmajo'yaṁ te nārāyaṇa samo guṇaiḥ* (Bhāgavata 10.8.18-19)

a mountain of Kṛṣṇa's display of prowess was thrown that had temporarily made waves, returned to its natural and peaceful status. They also were reassured that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was simply the son of Śrī Nanda and this awareness made them float in the ocean of topmost transcendental bliss.

When during *māthura viraha* (when Kṛṣṇa had left Vraja to go to Mathurā), the crown jewel of all wise and learned devotees, Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya, saw the great parental love of Śrī Nanda-Yāśodā, he became astonished and exclaimed: *yuvāṁ ślāghyatamau nūnaṁ dehinām iha mānada; nārāyaṇe'khīla gurau yat kṛtā matir īdṛśī*⁶

"O bestower of honour! Of all the embodied souls you are the most praiseworthy, for you have developed such a parental love for Śrī Nārāyaṇa, Who is the Universal Teacher!"

Just to remove their distress, Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya had told them in many different ways that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, but that could not slacken their parental love even slightly.

We have said: the devotees' love causes the Lord's nature to arise. Thus the Lord forgot all about His own majesty, being subdued by Śrī Nanda Mahārāja's pure parental love and so He just considered Himself to be Śrī Nanda-Nandana, the son of king Nanda, and although He is the All-worshipable One, He devotedly held the dust of His father's lotus feet on His head.

The Lord, Whose feet are worshipable by Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, brought His father his slippers by carrying them on His head, thus making father Nanda float in an ocean of transcendental bliss.

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this **king of Gokula, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja**, who daily offers different

⁶ Bhāgavata 10:46:30.

kinds of sweetmeats, jewels and decorated cows to satisfy the *brāhmaṇas* for the welfare of His son, and who affectionately asks the *brāhmaṇas* for Kṛṣṇa's wellbeing, because he is totally absorbed in thinking of his son."

*putrera kalyāṇe yini ati samādare;
nānā-vidha miṣṭāṇna ratna thālā bhare
sudivya gābhī-gaṇe ratna alaṅkāre;
bhūṣita koriyā dāna kore brāhmaṇere
putra snehe tad-gata cintita antare;
maṅgala jijñāsā sadā kore brāhmaṇere
putrera maṅgala lāgi vyākulita yini;
gokulendra śrī nande bhajana kori āmi*

"I worship the King of Gokula, Śrī Nanda, who very respectfully offered jeweled plates with different kinds of sweetmeats and divine cows decorated with jeweled ornaments to the *brāhmaṇas*, and asked them for his son's welfare, being completely absorbed in thoughts of Him and very anxious about His well-being."

VERSE 10:

**putra-sneha-bharaiḥ sadā-snuta-kuca-dvandvā tadiyocchala-
gharmasyāpi lavasya rakṣaṇa-vidhau sva-prāṇa-dehārbudaiḥ |
āsaktā kṣaṇa-mātram apy akalanāt sadyaḥ prasūteva gau-
vyagrāyā vilapaty alaṁ bahu-bhayāt sā pātu goṣṭheśvarī ||10||**

putra - son; *sneha* - affection; *bharaiḥ* - filled with; *sadā* - always; *snuta* - trickling; *kuca-dvandva* - both breasts; *tadiya* - her; *ucchalad* - arising; *gharmasya* - of the sweat; *api* - even; *lavasya* - of a fraction;

rakṣaṇa - keeping; *vidhau* - in the process; *sva* - own; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *deha* - body; *arbudaiḥ* - by billions; *āsaktā* - attached; *kṛṇāṇa* - moment; *mātram* - only; *api* - only; *akalanāt* - not seeing; *sadyaḥ* - newly; *prasūta* - born; *iva* - just like; *gauḥ* - cow; *vyagrā* - with anxiety; *yā* - what; *vilapati* - laments; *alam* - greatly; *bahu* - much; *bhayāt* - out of fear; *sā* - she; *pātu* - may protect; *gōṅtheśvarī* - the Queen of Vraja, Yaśodā.

May Śrī Yaśodā, the Queen of Vraja, from whose breasts an unbroken stream of milk trickles out of motherly love for her son, who tries to protect Him with billions of life-airs when she sees even a mere sweatdrop on His body, who is so attached to Him that if she cannot see Him even for a moment, she anxiously laments like a cow with a newly born calf, may she protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In the previous verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha described the pure parental love of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and in this verse he praises the complete embodiment of motherly love, mother Yaśodā, taking shelter at her lotus feet for the fulfillment of his aspirations.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda described the shelter of parental love as follows-

*bhūryānugraha citena cetasā lālanotkam abhitaḥ kṛpākulam
gauraveṇa guruṇā jagad guraur gauravaṁ gaṇam agaṇyam āśraye*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.9)

"I take shelter of the superiors (*guru-gaṇa*) of the Universal Teacher (*jagad-guru*), who are always very eager to cuddle Him

with greatly compassionate hearts and who are greatly moved by pity."

Then Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī introduced them as follows-

*te tu tasyātra kathitā vraja-rājñī vrajeśvaraḥ
rohini tāś ca ballabyo yaḥ padmaja-hṛtātmapajā
devakī tat sapatnyaś ca kuntī cānakadundubhiḥ
sāndīpani mukhās cānye yathā-pūrvam amī varāḥ
vrajeśvarī vrajādhiśau śreṣṭhau guru-janeṣvimau*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.106-11)

"The Queen of Vraja (Yaśodā), the king of Vraja (Nanda) (this also indicates Kṛṣṇa's paternal uncles and their wives), the *gopīs* whose sons were stolen by Brahmā, Devakī, her co-wives, Kuntī, Vasudeva, Sāndīpani and other leading sages - these are Kṛṣṇa's superiors, in order of superiority. Of all the superiors, though, Vrajeśvarī Yaśodā and Vraja-rāja Nanda are the greatest."

From this we can understand that mother **Yaśomatī** embodies the **crown jewel** of parental love. Indeed, she is the deepest form of all parental love!

*tanau mantra-nyāsaṁ praṇayati harer gadgadamayī
savaśpākṣī rakṣā-tilakam alike kalpayati ca
snuvānā pratyūṣe dīśati ca bhujē kārmaṇam asau
yaśodā mūrteva sphurati suta vātsalya paṭalī*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.14)

"Every morning mother Yaśodā uses protective *mantras* on Hari with a faltering voice, puts *tilaka* on His forehead with tear filled eyes and hangs a protecting string around His wrist. Thus

Yaśodā, whose motherly affection causes milk to ooze from her breasts, is manifest as the embodiment of parental love."

In the explanation of the previous verse we described the pure paternal love of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, which is completely free from any whiff of reverence. In mother Yaśodā, these feelings are present in an even more astonishing way.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana Hill, the cowherders were moved by an awareness of His prowess, but Śrī Nanda Mahārāja made them understand that his son had received some power from Lord Nārāyaṇa, so that He was able to perform all these extraordinary feats.

But Yaśomatī could not even believe that! How could in her comprehension the power of Lord Nārāyaṇa ever be infused in her tender child? By the grace of Lord Nārāyaṇa, her child that was as tender as a Śiriṣa-flower, had been protected from different calamities, and even this was the result of Śrī Goparāja (Nanda)'s earnest worship of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

It was for this reason that at his advanced age, he could still have this son, Who illuminated the whole world, on his lap. Here mother Yaśodā is superior even to Śrī Nanda Mahārāja as the milk-ocean of pure parental love.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written:

*viṣṇur nityam upāsyate sakhi mayā tenātra nītāḥ kṣayam
śaṅke pūtanikādayaḥ kṣitiruhau tau vātyayonmūlitau
pratyakṣam girir eṣa goṣṭhapatinā rāmeṇa sārddham dhṛtas
tat tat karma duranvayaṁ mama śiśoḥ kenāsyā sambhāvyaṭe*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.7)

Śrī Yaśodā told one of her heart's friends: "O *sakhi*! I think it is because of the grace of Śrī Viṣṇu, Whom I have always worshipped with the Lord of the Goṣṭha (Nanda) that Pūtanā

and other demons were destroyed and that these two Yamalārjuna-trees were torn down and uprooted by the wind. This has nothing to do with our son. It was by Viṣṇu's grace that our son was protected. Vrajarāja has also lifted Girirāja by the grace of Viṣṇu. If my child was able to perform such a work, then wouldn't Balarāma also be able to do this? Therefore my child could not possibly have ever performed such heavy tasks!"

Hence Śrī Raghunātha says: *putra sneha-bharaiḥ sadā snuta-kuca-dvandvā* : "Milk constantly flows from mother Yaśodā's breasts because of her great love for Kṛṣṇa, that is completely free from awe and reverence. This *sāttvika bhāva*⁷ exists only in the motherly love:

*niculita giridhātu sphīta patrāvalikān
akhila surabhi-reṇun kṣālayadbhir yaśodā
kuca kalasa vimuktaiḥ sneha mādhvīkam edhyes
tava navam abhiṣekaṁ dugdha pūraiḥ karoti*

(Lalita Mādhava Nāṭakam)

"O Kṛṣṇa! Your beautiful leaf-pictures of mineral pigments have been wiped out by cowdust, but the pure stream of nectarean milk of affection oozing from Mother Yaśodā's jug-like breasts has washed it all away and has given You a new *abhiṣeka*!"

Not even being with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, when mother Yaśodā simply hears about Him, the strong *sāttvika-bhāva* of milk trickling from her breasts is visible on her.

When Kṛṣṇa had left for Mathurā, He sent Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya to Vraja to console Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā. When

⁷ Ecstasy of love of God which is shown by clear physical symptoms.

Uddhava was discussing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* with Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, mother Yaśomatī, who was emaciated because of not eating for so long, emitted streams of milk from her breasts.

This is described by Śrīpāda Śuka Muni: *yaśodā varṇyamānāni putrasya caritāni ca; śṛnvantyaśrūṇyavāsrākṣīt sneha snuta payodharā*⁸

"When Śrīla Vrajarāja described the wonderful activities of his son to Uddhava, milk oozed like torrents of rain from the breasts of Mother Yaśodā, who overheard it, and tears flowing from her eyes moistened her clothes."

It is with this kind of motherly love that mother Yaśomatī tries to protect her tender son with millions of life-air and bodies from even a single sweatdrop, for she becomes very thoughtful when she sees even one drop of sweat on His body, thinking that He has overworked.

tadīyocchalad gharmasyāpi lavasya rakṣaṇa vidhau sva prāṇa dehārbudaiḥ Which poet or scholar could describe the motherly love of mother Yaśodā through his poetry or scholarship without directly experiencing it? It is inconceivable! Any elucidation or example that may nourish this description of Śrīpāda Raghunātha is paltry. There is no doubt about this! Nothing can compare to the wonderful picture which Śrī Raghunātha, the matchless sculptor of Vraja-rasa, has painted with words here of mother Yaśodā's motherly love.

Finally he says: *kṣaṇa mātram apyakalanāt sadyaḥ prasūteva gaur vyagrā yā vilapatyalaṁ sā pātu goṣṭheśvari*:"May Śrī Yaśodā, the Queen of Vraja, who is so attached to Him that if she cannot see Him even for a moment, she anxiously laments like a cow with a newly born calf, protect me."

⁸ Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.46.28.

Thus the *mahājanas* have described mother Yaśodā's anxiety about Śrī Kṛṣṇa before He leaves for the forest —

*dekho dekho vrajeśvarī neha
godhana saṅge, vijaya koru nija sute
ki koribo nā pāyai theho*

"Just behold the anxiety of Queen Yaśodā when she sees her son leaving with their wealth of cows! I cannot find a description for it!"

*mukha dhari cumbana, karatahi puna puna,
nayane galaye jaladhāra.
stana gata vasana, bhigi paḍaye ghana
kṣīra dhārā anivāra*

"She holds His face and kisses Him again and again while tears stream from her eyes like torrents of rain. Her clothes get drenched by an unbroken stream of her breastmilk."

*vinihita nayana, vayana kamala para
yaichana cānda cakora
dina avasāne, kiye puna herabo
anumāni hoyato vibhora*

"She fixes her eyes on His lotus face, just as a Cakora-bird fixes his eyes on the moon. She is filled with doubts whether she will see Him again at the end of the day."

*ko vihi adabhuta, prema ghaṭāola,
tāhe puna iha paramāda
bhaṇa rādhā mohana, anudīna aichana,
hoyoto rasa mariyāda*

"Which Creator has created such a love and especially such an ecstatic love? Rādhā Mohana dāsa sings: These customs of *rasa* take place every day."

The closer the evening-time draws near, when Kṛṣṇa is expected back from the *goṣṭha*, the more anxious and worried mother Yaśodā gets out of separation from Him. Then, as she walks in and out of the house, she exceeds the love of millions of cows, that have newly born calves.

*yānti gehād ajiram ajirād geham āyānty atha yā
śuṣyad vaktrānyad ati rujavāntimañ yāmam ahnaḥ
sā goṣṭheśā taraṇi tanaye netra-yugmāt kucābhyām
jahnoḥ kanye asṛjad iva taṁ prekṣya sūnuṁ samīpe*

(Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta 17.12)

"Queen Yaśodā spent the evening in great distress, walking out of her house onto the courtyard and back, her face dried up from different worries about her son's delay in returning home. When she suddenly saw her beloved boy, her eyes emitted a Yamunā-stream of tears and her breasts a Gaṅgā-stream of milk."

Nothing can compare to the motherly love of mother Yaśodā! Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha prays:

*putra snehe vigalita yāhāra antara;
stana kṣīre āñkhi nire bhāse nirantara
putra aṅge gharma heri ati vyagra ho'ye;
sānti vidhāna kore koṭi deha prāṇa diye
kṣaṇa kāla adarśane govinda vadana;
prasūta gābhīra nyāya vyākulita mana
bhaye vyagra hoiyā yini korena vilāpa;
yaśomati rakṣā koru kori āśīrbāda*

"May Yaśomati, whose heart melts out of affection for her son, Who constantly bathes in her own breastmilk and tears, who becomes very anxious when she sees perspiration on her son's body and who comforts Him with millions of her life-airs and bodies, who becomes agitated like a cow with a new calf when she does not see Govinda's face for even a moment and who fearfully laments over Him, protect me with her blessings."

VERSE 11:

**putrāṅ uccair api hala-dharāt siñcati sneha-purair
govindaṁ yādbhuta-rasavatī-prakriyāsu pravīṇā |
sakhya-śrībhir vraja-pura-mahārāja-rājñīm nayais tad-
gopendraṁ yā sukhayati bhaje rohiṇīm īśvarīm tām ||11||**

putrāt - than the son; *uccaiḥ* - great; *api* - even; *haladharāt* - than Balarāma, the holder of the plough; *siñcati* - sprinkles; *sneha* - affection; *pūraiḥ* - with liquids; *govindaṁ* - Kṛṣṇa; *yā* - that; *adbhuta* - wonderful; *rasavatī* - kitchen; *prakriyāsu* - in the activities; *pravīṇā* - dexterious; *sakhya* - friendship; *śrībhiḥ* - with the opulences; *vraja-pura-* of Vraja; *mahārāja* - the king; *rājñīm* - the Queen; *nayaiḥ* - with knowledge of the etiquette; *tat* - that; *gopendraṁ* - the king of the cowherders; *yā* - who; *sukhayati* - gladdens; *bhaje* - I worship; *rohiṇīm* - Rohiṇī; *īśvarīm* - the mistress; *tām* - her.

I worship Queen Rohiṇī, who sprinkles Govinda with the nectar of her motherly love even more than her own son Haladhara (Balarāma), who is a most expert cook, who has a very firm friendship with Yaśodā, the Queen

of Vraja and who increases the love of Śrī Nanda, the king of cowherders, with her good manners.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: It is as if the mind and heart of Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa is floating in the nectar-stream of Vrajarasa. The endless sweetness of the loving expertise of the Vrajavāsīs is playing before Śrīpāda's eyes.

In this verse he praises mother Rohiṇī and mentions her motherly love. Amongst the parental lovers, Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned mother Rohiṇī after Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā. In this verse Śrī Raghunātha first says: *putrād uccair api haladharāt siñcati sneha-pūrair govindam yā*

"Mother Rohiṇī sprinkles Govinda with the nectar of her motherly love even more than her own son Haladhara (Balarāma)."

In his Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Gaṇoddeśa-Dīpikā, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*rohiṇī bṛhad ambāsya praharṣārohiṇī sadā;
sneham yā kurute rāma snehāt koṭi-guṇam harau*

"Rohiṇī is called *ānandamayī*, the blissful lady, and Kṛṣṇa's 'big mother' (*bṛhad-ambā*). She loves Hari millions of times more than her own son Balarāma."

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Śrīpāda Śuka Muni described how the elderly *gopas* and *gopīs* loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa more than their own children. To exemplify this he said:

*kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām*⁹

⁹ Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.14.55.

"Know Kṛṣṇa, Who is known as *narākr̥ti-para-brahma*, the Supreme Brahman in a human form, to be the Self of the selves."

All the boys of Vraja are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playmates, therefore it is natural that their mothers and fathers love Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the Self of their selves too, more than their own children, but although Baladeva is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, mother Rohiṇī still loves Kṛṣṇa more than her own son Balarāma.

This indeed is very special. The purport of this is that both Yaśodā and Rohiṇī both consider Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva to be their own sons. They don't see even the slightest difference between Them.

In the Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇi-commentary of Śrīmad Bhāgavata's verse *tan mātaraṁ nija sutau* (10.8.23) it is written: *nijau svīyau sutau iti tayor dvau pratyevam snehabhara uktaḥ nija nijetyanuktatvāt*

"Yaśodā and Rohiṇī took Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma on their laps as their own sons".

From this statement it is understood that they felt no difference between the two boys. If they had seen any difference, then Śrī Śuka Muni would have said *nija nija putra* instead of *nija putra*. And not only when They were babies, but also later, when They were in the Paugaṇḍa (5-10 years) and the Kaiśora (10-15)-ages, Śrī Śuka Muni described the love of Yaśodā and Rohiṇī for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as equal:

*tayor yaśodā-rohiṇīnau putrayoḥ putra vatsale
yathākāmaṁ yathā-kālaṁ vyadhataṁ paramāśiṣaḥ
gatādhvāna śramau tatra majjanonmardanādibhiḥ
nīvīm vāsītṛvā rucirām divya srag gandha maṇḍitau
jananyupahṛtam prāśya svādvannam upalālītau*

samviśya vara-śayyāyām sukhaṁ suṣupatur vraje

(Bhāgavata 10.15.44-47)

"Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, who were so fond of their sons, provided Them with excellent food and garments suited to the occasion and according to the latter's wishes. Relieved of the fatigue caused by Their pastimes in the forest by bath and massage etc., the two Brothers put on charming loin-cloths and were adorned with exquisite garlands and sandal paste. Then they ate the delicious sweets brought by the mothers and, cuddled by them, They lay down to rest and thus slept comfortably in Their excellent beds, that were as white as the foam on milk, in Vraja."

Although such equal affection is seen everywhere, still in her heart Rohiṇī cherishes more love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa than for her own son Baladeva. Although Baladeva is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, still Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Fountainhead of all personalities of Godhead and because lovers of Kṛṣṇa are fixed in Him, mother Rohiṇī loves Śrī Kṛṣṇa more than Baladeva.

All the Vrajavāsī-companions love their bodies, homes, children and relatives only because they are connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and not independently.

Śrī Brahmā told the Lord during his praises:

yad dhāmārtha suhṛt priyātma-tanaya prāṇāśayās tvat kṛte

(Bhāgavata 10.14.35)

"O Lord! The people of Vraja love their homes, wealth and friends only because of You!"

For this reason mother Rohiṇī loves Śrī Kṛṣṇa even more than Baladeva.

Then Śrī Raghunātha says: *yā'dbhuta rasavatī prakriyāsu pravīṇā* "She is very expert in cooking."

With great attachment she prepares many wonderfully relishable dishes of rice and vegetables for Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva. This is known from the descriptions of Śrī Śukadeva Muni-

*sarīt tīra gataṁ kṛṣṇaṁ bhagnārjunam athāhvayat;
rāmaṁ ca rohiṇī devī kṛḍantaṁ bālakair bhṛśam
nopeyātāṁ yadāhūtau kṛḍāsaṅgena putrakau
yaśodāṁ preṣayāmāsa rohiṇī putra vatsalām*

(Bhāgavata 10.11.12-13)

"A few days after the Yamalārjuna-trees were broken Śrī Kṛṣṇa played on the bank of a lake. Just then mother Rohiṇī-devī called Him and Baladeva, but They did not heed the call since They were absorbed in playing. Seeing this, Rohiṇī, who greatly loves her son, sent Yaśodā to get Them."

In this connection it is written in the Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī Ṭīkā: *rohiṇī tad bhojana sādhanātyāsaktayā śrī yaśodayaiva preṣiteti jñeyam*

"The reason that Rohiṇī is called *putra-vatsalā* in the text is that she sent Yaśodā to call Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa because she herself was too busy cooking for Them."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Vraja's *nitya siddha mañjarī* - Śrī Rādhā's maidservant, therefore he has ample experience of Rohiṇī's glorious expertise in cooking, because Mother Yaśodā daily calls Śrī Rādhārāṇī to Nandīśvara to cook there.

Tulasī Mañjarī always follows Śrī Rādhārāṇī like Her shadow when She goes to Nandīśvara and assists Her in Her duty of cooking. Therefore she has first-hand experience of how famous for her skill in cooking mother Rohiṇī is in Vraja.

After this Śrī Raghunātha said: *sakhya śrībhir vrajapura mahārāja rājñīm*. She maintains a very deep and sweet friendship with Śrī Yaśodā, the Queen of Vraja. They are like one soul in two bodies of motherly love, like the highly auspicious meeting of the Yamunā and Gaṅgā.

Anyone who dives into this extraordinary Trivenī-confluence is eternally blessed with the relish of motherly love of God, of this there is no doubt!

The friendships between devotees are centered around Kṛṣṇa and therefore not temporary like mundane friendships. These friendships are eternal. Who can therefore describe the sweetness and eternity of the friendship of the eternal mothers Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, which is centered around Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva? What to speak of Yaśodā, all the people of Vraja have a wonderful and genuine loving affection for mother Rohiṇī. This description can be found in the scripture named Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam. Although Vasudeva took mother Rohiṇī along to Dvārakā for taking part in Kṛṣṇa's Dvārakā-*līlā* and although she got Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa there as the sons of Vasudeva, she could not forget the warm affection of Vraja. When Śrī Uddhava told Śrī Nārada about Śrī Dvārakānātha's loving ecstasy on remembering the love of Vraja, mother Rohiṇī, who overheard them, wept and said:

*āstān śrī haridāsa tvam mahā durdaivamāritān;
saubhāgya gandha rahitān nimagnān dainya sāgare
tat tad bāḍava vahnyacintāpyamānān viṣākulān;
kṣaṇācintā sukhinyā me mā smṛteḥ padavīm naya
aham śrī vasudevena samānitā tato yadā;
yaśodāyā mahārtāyās tadānīntana rodanaiḥ
grāvo'pi rodityaśaner apyantar dalati dhruvam;
jīvan mṛtānām anyāsām vārtām ko'pi mukham nayet*

*athāgataṁ gurugrhāt tvat prabhuṁ prati kiñcana;
 sañkṣepeṇaiva tadvṛttaṁ duḥkādakathayaṁ kudhīḥ
 na hi komalitaṁ cittaṁ tenāpyasya yato bhavān;
 sandeśa cāturī vidyāpragalbhah preṣitah param*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta 1.6.29-34)

"O Haridāsa Uddhava! Be at ease, I have become slightly happy be giving up thoughts about them. Don't bring the people of Vraja who are struck by a great calamity, who are devoid of even a whiff of luck, who are immersed in an ocean of humility and misery, who are burning in the flames of a great fire and who are tortured by the burning poison of separation, back on the path of My memory! When Śrī Vasudeva took Me away from Gokula the weeping of mother Yaśodā caused even the hardest stones to weep along and the diamonds to crumble. And who can describe the condition of all the other cowherders, that are like living corpses? O Śrīman Uddhava! When your Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to Mathurā from the house of His *guru* Sāndīpanī Muni then I was so stupid to tell Him in short, and full of distress, about Vraja. My words did not soften the heart of your Lord, though, because He did not go to Vraja Himself, but sent you there, because you are such a clever messenger." This is a shining example of the genuine Vraja-love of Mother Rohiṇī.

Finally Śrī Raghunātha says: *nayais tad gopendram yā sukhayati bhaje rohiṇīm īśvarīm tām* "She increases the love of the king of cowherders with her knowledge of good manners."

Seeing the wonderfully good manners of Rohiṇī, the very chaste wife of Vasudeva Mahāśaya who is one in heart with him, Goparāja Nanda thinks: -

"Since this very chaste and most well-mannered lady has come here, I have gotten such a world-enchanting son and I have experienced such a tremendous increase in happiness." Therefore he feels very proud to have Rohiṇī in his house and has become very happy. Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises this **ŚRĪ ROHIṆĪ**, who is an *īśvarī*, a form consisting of pure *sattva* (transcendence), like Yaśodā and Devakī, and desires the worship of her lotus feet -

*baladeva hoite yei adhika ānande;
sneha rase abhiṣikta kore śrī govinde
pāka kārye supravīnya vrajete sukhyaṭi;
yāra śuddha sakhye sukhī nanda yaśomati
se īśvarī rohiṇīke sadā namaskari;
tāhāra caraṇe bhakti samprārthanā kori*

"I always offer my humble obeisances to Īśvarī Rohiṇī, who blissfully showers Śrī Govinda with even more nectar of motherly love than Baladeva; who is very famous in Vraja for her expertise in cooking and whose pure friendship delights Nanda and Yaśomati. I pray for devotion to her lotus feet."

VERSE 12:

**udyac-chubhrāṁsu-koṭi-dyuti-nikara-tiraskāra-kāry-ujjala-śrī-
rdurvāroddāma-dhāma-prakara-ripu-ghaṭonmāda-vidhvaṁsi-dagdhaḥ |
snehād apy unnimeṣaṁ nijam anujam ito'raṇya-bhūmau sva-vītaṁ
tad-vīrya-jñō'pi yo na kṣaṇam upanayate staumi taṁ dhenukārim ||12||**

udyat - rising; *śubhrāṁsu* - moon; *koṭi* - millions; *dyuti* - shining;
nikara - multitude; *tiraskāra-kāri* - mocker; *ujjala* - bright; *śrīh* -

beauty; *durvāra* - unbearable; *uddāma* - independent, self-perfect; *dhāma* - abode; *prakara* - multitude; *ripu* - enemy; *ghaṭā* - abundance; *unmāda* - false ego; *vidhvamsi* - destroying; *gandhaḥ* - whiff; *snehād* - out of affection; *api* - even; *unnimeṣam* - for just a moment; *nijam* - His own; *anujam* - His younger brother Kṛṣṇa; *itaḥ* - here; *araṇya-bhūmau* - in the forest; *sva* - own; *vitam* - leaving behind; *tat* - His; *vīrya* - power; *jñāḥ* - knowing; *api* - even; *na* - not; *kṣaṇam* - for a moment; *upanayate* - leaves; *staumi* - I praise; *tam* - Him; *dhenukārim* - Balarāma, the enemy of Dhenukāsura.

I praise Śrī Baladeva, the enemy of Dhenukāsura, Whose body shines brightly white like millions of rising moons, Who easily destroys even a whiff of the false ego of His invincible turbulent enemies, Who out of great affection does not leave His naughty little brother Kṛṣṇa out of His sight for even a moment when They go out into the woods, and Who treats Kṛṣṇa with this affection, despite of knowing about His divine prowess.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Śrīpāda Raghunātha attains a stream of transcendental visions of the ecstatic activities of the Vraja-companions, who are as grave as millions of oceans.

The self-manifest forms and attributes of the Vraja-companions automatically arise in Śrī Raghunātha's heart, which is illuminated by *viśuddha-sattva* (transcendence).

In this verse, he mentions and praises some of the forms and qualities of Śrī-Śrī Baladeva, Whose body is non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's. First of all he says: *udyaacchubhrāmśu koṭi dyuti nikara tiraskārakāryujjavala śrīḥ*

"His body has a white luster, defeating the shining of millions of rising moons." By comparing His body with millions of moons, he has revealed its elegance and beauty.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*śubhraḥ sphaṭika varṇādhyo balarāmo mahābalaḥ;
 nila vastra paridhāno vanamālā virājitah
 dīrgha keśaḥ sulāvaṇyaś cūḍā cārur manoharā;
 ratna kuṇḍala yugmaṁ ca karṇa-yugme virājitam
 nānā puṣpa maṇihāraḥ kaṇṭha-deśe suśobhitaḥ;
 keyūra balayau yugmau bāhu-yugme virājitau
 ratna nūpura yugmaṁ ca pāda yugme suśobhitam;
 vasudevaḥ pitā tasya mātā ca rohiṇī bhavet*

(Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā - 70)

"Śrī Balarāma's bodily luster is white like a crystal and because of His great physical strength He is named Balarāma. He wears a blue *dhotī*, He is beautified by a garland of forest flowers, He has long hair, He is filled with beauty and elegance, His crown is beautiful and enchanting, both His ears are beautified by jeweled earrings, His neck is adorned with different flower garlands and jewel strings, His arms are beautified by bangles and bracelets and His lotus feet are decorated with jeweled ankle bells. His father's name is Vasudeva and His mother's name is Rohiṇī."

"When Śrī Gargācārya performed the name-giving ceremony, he also mentioned Śrī Baladeva's forms, qualities and strength:

*ayaṁ hi rohiṇī putro ramāyan suhrdo guṇaiḥ
 ākhyāsyate rāma iti balādhikyād balaṁ viduḥ
 yadunām aprthag bhāvāt saṅkarṣaṇam uśantyapi*

(Bhāgavata 10.8.12)

"This son of Rohiṇī has three names: Rāma, Baladeva and Saṅkarṣaṇa. Because He delights His relatives with His different attributes He is named Rāma, because of His extraordinary strength He is named Bala and because He manages to keep the Yādavas united in heart and mind He is called Saṅkarṣaṇa."

Hence Śrī Baladeva is an ocean of beauty, attributes and strength. Śrī Raghunātha said: *durvāroddāma dhāma prakara ripu ghaṭonmāda vidhvamsi-gandhaḥ* "He can easily destroy even a whiff of pride of all His powerful and turbulent enemies."

In Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *līla-puruṣottama*, Who mainly advented Himself to relish the mellows of sweet pastimes with His Vraja-companions, that are free from even the slightest whiff of majesty and prowess. The killing of demons and the lightening of the burden of the earth is not the duty of the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If Śrī Kṛṣṇa is still seen killing demons then it is done by Śrī Viṣṇu through the transcendental appearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*svayaṁ bhagavānera karma nahe bhāra haraṇa;
 sthiti kartā viṣṇu kore jagata pālana
 kintu kṛṣṇera yei hoy avatāra kāla;
 bhāra haraṇa kāla tāte hoilo miśāla
 pūrṇa bhagavān avatare yei kāle;
 āra saba avatāra tāte āsi mile
 nārāyaṇa catur-vyūha matsyādyavatāra;
 yuga-manvantarāvatāra yoto āche āra
 sabhe āsi kṛṣṇa aṅge hon avatirṇa;
 aiche avatare kṛṣṇa bhagavān pūrṇa
 ataeva viṣṇu tokhon kṛṣṇera śarīre;
 viṣṇu-dvāre kore kṛṣṇa asura saṁhāre*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi 4)

"The duty of the Original Lord is not to relieve the burden of the earth, for it is the maintainer Viṣṇu who protects the universe. But when it was Kṛṣṇa's time to descend, the time to relieve the burden of the earth had also come. When the complete Personality of Godhead descends, all the other descensions appear in and with Him. Thus Nārāyaṇa, the quadruple phalanx (Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha), the ten descensions beginning with Matsya, the Yuga-avatāras (scheduled descensions) and the Manvantaras all descended along within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body. In this way the Kṛṣṇa-descension is the complete God. Therefore it was through Viṣṇu that Kṛṣṇa killed all the demons (during His Vraja-pastimes)."

Just as Kṛṣṇa destroys the demons through Lord Viṣṇu, similarly He arranges for the manifestation of His elder brother Baladeva's glories by making Him destroy all kinds of turbulent and powerful demons. Thus Śrī Baladeva easily killed demons like Dhenukāśura and Pralambāśura, who are so powerful that even the demigods could not defeat them, in the course of His playful sports.

In this connection Śrī Śuka Muni has said:

*naitat citre bhagavati
hyananta jagad īśvare;
ota protam idaṁ yasmīṁs
tantuṣvaṅga yathā paṭaḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.15.36)

"O King! This killing of Dhenukāsura was no miracle for the almighty Balarāma, for He is the Lord of the Universe in whom this universe is woven warp and woof, just like a piece of cloth in the threads!"

The purport of this verse is that Śrī Balarāma is the Lord of all the universes. He is the second form of the Original Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the root manifestation of Saṅkarṣaṇa. Hence He is essentially non-different from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The fragment of this Saṅkarṣaṇa is the first *puruṣāvatāra*, Mahāviṣṇu, from Whom the innumerable universes emanate and the innumerable divine descensions like Matsya and Kūrma advent.

The fragment of the fragment of this Saṅkarṣaṇa is the *puruṣa* that oversees all the living entities; hence He is the controller and regulator of the whole creation. For Him nothing is impossible to accomplish.

During the Great Dissolution, He retracts innumerable universal globes, all dissolving into Him. Is it so miraculous for Him to destroy a few insignificant demons? Therefore in the terms of human(-like) pastimes, this power to destroy demons is described as being verily miraculous, but considering the majestic pastimes of the Lord, this is just a trifling matter.

nara-līlayaiva kṛtam ityāścaryatvena varṇyate na tu aiśvarya-līlayetyāha naitad iti (Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī).

Finally Śrī Raghunātha says: *snehād apyunnimeṣaṁ nijam anujam ito'raṇya-bhūmau sva-vītaṁ tad vīrya-jñō'pi yo na kṣaṇam upanayate*

".. Who out of great affection does not leave His naughty little brother Kṛṣṇa out of His sight for even a moment when They go out into the woods and Who treats Kṛṣṇa with affection despite knowing about His divine prowess."

Baladeva's *rasa* is one of pure friendship mixed with parental concern. *yāra bhāva - śuddha sakhya vātsalyādīmaya* (C.C.)

Baladeva shows such affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the strength of His feelings of friendship mixed with great parental love. According to the amount of His devotee's love, the Lord reveals His quality of being subdued by the devotee, and thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa also displays the utmost devotion to His elder brother Baladeva. In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is described that Kṛṣṇa once went into the woods of Vraja and praised His brother there as follows:

*aho amī deva-varāmarārcitaṁ
pādāmbujam te sumanaḥ phalarhanam;
namantyupādāya śikhābhirātmanas
tamo`pahatyai taru-janma yat kṛtam
ete`khilanas tava yaśo`khila loka tīrthaṁ
gāyanta ādi-puruṣānupadaṁ bhajante;
prāyo amī munigaṇā bhavadīya mukhyā
gūḍhaṁ vane`pi na jahatyanaghātma daivam
nṛtyantyami śikhina ṛḍya mudā hariṇyaḥ
kurvanti gopya iva te priyam ikṣaṇena;
suktaiś ca kokila gaṇā grham āgatāya
dhanyā vanaukasa iyaṁ hi satāṁ nisargaḥ
dhanyeyam adya dharaṇi tṛṇa vīrudhas tvat
pāda-spr̥śo druma latāḥ karajābhīmṛṣṭāḥ;
nadyo`drayaḥ khaga-mṛgāḥ padayāvālokair
gopyo`ntareṇa bhujayor api yat spr̥hā śrīḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.15.5-8)

"O best of the gods! Those trees that took their low birth because of offences committed in their previous lives, are taking fruits and flowers onto their branch-like heads and offer obeisances to Your lotus feet to become freed from these offences. You are concealing Your real form here in Vṛndāvana to become carried away by childhood games, but still the great

devotee-saints have discovered You and like bumblebees they wander around singing Your glories, that sanctify the world.

When the peacocks see You they dance in topmost bliss and the does lovingly gaze at You just like the *gopīs* do. The cuckoos respectfully address You with their sweet songs, because it is the nature of the saints to greet guests who come to their houses. The earth and its grass and bulbs have become blessed by the touch of Your feet, the trees and vines have become blessed by the touch of Your fingers when You pick their flowers, and the *gopīs* have become blessed by the touch of Your chest, which is coveted even by the goddess of fortune!"

Śrī Baladeva shows similar affection towards His younger brother Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He won't let Kṛṣṇa out of His sight for even a moment when They ramble in the woods.

Mother Yaśomati also places Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the hands of Baladeva before they enter into the woods to keep her Gopāla protected.

*śrīdāma sudāma dāma, śuno ore balarāma,
minati koriye to sabāre
vana gata ati dūra, nava tṛṇa kuśāṅkura
gopāla loiyā nā yāiho dūre.*

"Listen, O Śrīdāma, Sudāma, Dāma and Balarāma! I beg you all: don't take Gopāla too deep into the forest, where there are new Kuśa-sprouts and fresh grass!"

*sakhā-gaṇa āge pāche, gopāla koriyā mājhe,
dhīre dhīre koriho gamana.
nava tṛṇāṅkura āge, rāṅgā pāya nāhi lāge,
prabodha nā māne māyera mana*

"Keep Gopāla always inbetween the cowherd boys, who should walk before and behind Him. Walk slowly! Take care that His reddish lotus feet are not injured by fresh grass and sprouts! Don't you care about a mother's worries?"

*gopāla āmāra parāṇa putalī
tomāre saṁpiyā rāma, kichui sandeha nāi
tamu prāṇa koroye vyākulī*

"O Gopāla, puppet of my heart! I place You in Balarāma's care, so there is nothing to worry about, but still my heart is filled with anxiety!"

Although Baladeva is aware of all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine prowess, out of great affection He is still always worried about Him in the sweet human-like pastimes. This is the nature of pure love. Therefore such worries about the beloved's welfare and safety are in place in the sweet Vraja-pastimes.

Śrī Raghunātha says: *staumi taṁ dhenukārim* "I praise this Baladeva, the killer of Dhenukāśura."

*koṭi-candra jini aṅga-kāntira vaibhava;
durdānta pratāpa-ripu māne parābhava
araṇya pradeśe śuddha sneha anugata;
cañcala govinda saṅge vihare satata
śrī kṛṣṇera bala vīrya pariñāta hoiyā;
sadā śikṣā dena jini amuja boliyā
sei dhenukāri vira śrī baladeve;
sadā stuti kori āmi āpanā śodhite*

"Just to purify myself I always praise the heroic killer of Dhenukāśura, Śrī Baladeva, Whose bodily luster defeats the shining of millions of moons, Who destroys the pride of His turbulent and powerful enemies, Who always plays with pure

affection with naughty Govinda in the woods, Who is aware of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's power and potency, but Who still gives Him instructions, considering Him His younger brother."

VERSE 13:

**parjanya-nāmā-nija-naptṛ-garvaiḥ
parjanya-lakṣānabhito vinindan |
yo narma tanvan ramate'sya karṇe
namāmy aho kṛṣṇa-pitāmahaṁ tam ||13||**

parjanya nāmā - named Parjanya; *nija* - own; *naptṛ* - grandson; *garvaiḥ* - with pride; *parjanya* - rain clouds; *lakṣāṇi* - hundred thousand (a host); *abhitaḥ* - completely; *vinindan* - mocking; *yaḥ* - who; *narma* - with joking words; *tanvan* - manifesting; *ramate* - pleasing, or playing; *asya* - Kṛṣṇa's; *karṇe* - in the ear; *namāmi* - I offer my obeisances; *aho!* - O!; *kṛṣṇa pitāmahaṁ tam* - unto Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandfather.

"Aho! I offer my obeisances unto the cowherder named Parjanya, who is Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandfather, who constantly mocks the clouds in his pride of his grandson and who speaks sweet, delightful and joking words into Kṛṣṇa's ears.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Śrīpāda Raghunātha is an eternal companion of the Lord, therefore he has direct visions of the sweet feelings of the Vraja-associates.

Although all the forms of the Lord are certainly full of *rasa*, this is a mere *rasāṁśa* (a fragment of transcendental flavour),

for *rasa* finds its ultimate culmination in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, the embodiment of all nectarean transcendental flavours.

Similarly, although all the companions of the Lord have sweet love for Him in their own right, which makes them relish the sweetness of the Lord, their *bhāva* is called *bhāvāmsa* (a fragment of *bhāva*), for the culmination of this *bhāva* is only found in Kṛṣṇa's companions in Vraja, the abode of pure sweetness.

In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha describes the sweet love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandfather **Parjanya** *gopa*. In Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā (15-18) it is described:

*pitāmaho harer gaurahḥ sita keśahḥ sitāmbarahḥ;
maṅgalāmṛta parjanyaḥ parjanyaḥ nāma ballabaḥ
yaḥ surarṣe nideśena lakṣmī-bhartur upāsanām;
variṣṭho vraja goṣṭhīnām sa kṛṣṇasya pitāmahah
purā nandīsvare cakre śreṣṭha santati kāṅkṣayā;
vāg mūrtā tatovyomni prādur āsit priyaṅkarī
tapasānena dhanyena bhāvīnaḥ pañca te sutāḥ;
varīyān madhyamas teṣāṃ nanda nāmā bhaviṣyati
nandanas tasya vijayī bhavitā vraja-nandanahḥ;
surāsura śikhā-ratna nīrājita padāmbujahḥ*

"Kṛṣṇa's grandfather Parjanya is like a rain cloud (*parjanya* also means rain cloud) of auspiciousness. His complexion is golden and his hair is white. He is respected by the whole community of Vraja. In the past, he worshipped Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa at Nandīśvara, on the advice of Devarṣi Nārada, because he desired great sons. After performing many austerities, a very lovely voice in the sky spoke:

"O Parjanya! As a result of your blessed austerities, five sons will be born to you. The middle one will be the greatest and he will be known as **Nanda**. The **son of this Nanda** will be victorious and He will delight all of Vraja. Both demons and demigods will worship His lotus feet with their crown jewels."

After attaining such a jewel-like grandson, Parjanya became so proud that he mocked hundreds of thousands, or indeed all the rain clouds. Although Parjanya was himself already adorned by all great qualities, his name really became accomplished when he became a cloud that showered all auspiciousness.

In Śrī Gopāla-Campū it is known from the descriptions of Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda:

sa ca śrīmān parjanyaḥ saujanya varṣyenārjitenā nijaiśvāryenāpi vaiśyāntarasādhāraṇyamatītāya tac ca nāścaryam; yataḥ svāśrita deśa pālakatā māṇyatayā vadānyatayā kṣīra-vaibhava plāvita sarva janatā labdha prādhānyatayā ca parjanya sāmānyatām āpaḥ - yaḥ khalu prahlādaḥ śravasi, dhruvaḥ pratiśruti, pṛthur mahimani, bhīṣma durhṛdi, śaṅkaraḥ suhṛdi, svayambhū garimaṇi, haris tejasi vabhūva

"It is not a miracle that Parjanya has become the greatest of all *vaiśyas* because of his saintliness and his self-earned wealth. By showering all the people with the milk-stream of his dedication to the protection of his land and his generosity, he has become most respectable, just like a rain cloud. He was like Prahlāda in certainty, like Dhruva in reliability, Pṛthu in greatness, Bhīṣma in destroying the enemies, Śaṅkara in friendship, Brahmā in glory and like Śrī Hari in prowess."

Therefore his glories naturally defeat the clouds and on top of that, the form and attributes of his grandson Śrī Kṛṣṇa defeated the clouds in all respects.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had made a mockery out of the clouds with His peerless bluish luster and His extraordinary shower of nectarean attributes and pastimes.

*muktā hāra baka pāṅti, indra-dhanu piñcha tati,
pītāmbara vijurī sañcāra
kṛṣṇa nava jaladhara, jagat śasya upara,
variṣaye lilāmṛta dhāra*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"Kṛṣṇa is like a fresh rain cloud that showers the wheat of the world with the nectarean streams of His pastimes. His pearl necklace is like a row of ducks. His peacockfeather crown is like a rainbow and His yellow cloth is like a lightning strike."

When Kṛṣṇa was seven years old, He thwarted the Indra-sacrifice and promulgated the Śrī Govardhana-sacrifice. This made Indra angry and caused him to send his clouds of universal destruction to Vraja to destroy it. So Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted Śrī Govardhana for seven days and nights, holding it steadily on His left little finger to protect the Vrajavāsīs from hail, rain and claps of thunder and give them great delight. Then Parjanya jokingly mocked the clouds, saying: "O hey, clouds! My name is also Parjanya or cloud! What audacity you have to try to inundate my kingdom as long as I am here! Let me first see you defeating this little grandson of mine, then I will argue with you!"

Śrī Raghunātha says: "(Parjanya) speaks sweet, delightful and funny words into Śrī Kṛṣṇa's ears. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is most delighted when His grandfather speaks these joking words, that's why He always very eagerly hangs them around his neck to hear them. There is no end to Rasamaya's (all-delicious Kṛṣṇa) desires for

these *rasamaya*-joking words. Although the Upaniṣads describe Him as full of taste, full of fragrance and full of form, He is still so desirous for the love of the people of Vraja! Blessed is Vraja-*dhāma*! Blessed is the Vraja-*līlā*! Śrī Raghunātha says: "I always offer my obeisances unto Parjanya, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandfather!"

śrī kṛṣṇa āmāra pauṭra' ei ahaṅkāre;
megha gaṇe divā-niśi ye avajñā kore
yāhāra mukhera vāṇi korite śravaṇa;
śrī govinda atīśaya ullasita hon
śrī kṛṣṇera pitāmaha śrī parjanya nāma;
luṅṭhita hoiyā pade koriye praṇāma

“ ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my grandson!’ With this pride he slights the clouds day and night. In obeisance, I roll at the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grandfather Śrī Parjanya, whose words Śrī Govinda is greatly delighted to hear with His ears!"

VERSE 14:

**priyasya naptuḥ sukhato'tigarvāt
 pādaḥ na yasyāḥ patataḥ pṛthivyām |
 namāmi narmārcita-naptṛ-candrām
 varīyasīm kṛṣṇa-pitāmahiṃ tām ||14||**

priyasya - of the beloved; *naptuḥ* - grandson; *sukhataḥ* - out of happiness; *ati* - greatly; *garvāt* - out of pride; *pādaḥ* - the feet; *na* - not; *yasyāḥ* - whose; *patataḥ* - fall; *pṛthivyām* - on the earth; *namāmi* - offer obeisances; *narma* - joking; *arcita* - delights; *naptṛ* - grandson;

candrām - moon-like; *varīyasīm* - Varīyasī; *kṛṣṇa-pitāmahīm* - Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother; *tām* - unto her.

I offer my obeisances unto Varīyasī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother, whose feet do not touch the ground out of pride over the happiness caused by her beloved grandson, and who always delights her moon-like grandson with her joking words.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: The *līlā-śakti* paints sweet pictures of the Vraja-companions' sweet love in the consciousness of Śrīpāda Raghunātha, who relishes these sweet feelings himself and leaves his *adharāmṛta* (lip-nectar, or remnants) to the practising devotees of the world.

When the practising devotees hear and chant this topic, their personal feelings towards their beloved deity will awaken and the corresponding *prema* will be infused into their hearts.

ei amṛta anukṣaṇa, sādhu mahanta megha-gaṇa,
viśvodyāne kore varīṣaṇa
tā'te phale prema-phala, bhakta khāya nirantara,
tāra śeṣe jīye jagajana

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"The great devotee-saints are like clouds that always shower nectar over the garden of the world and *prema* sprouts as a result. The devotees always eat this and the people of the world subsist on their remnants."

In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha introduces us to the great love of the *gopī* Varīyasī for her grandson Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *pitāmahī mahī-mānyā*

*kusumbhābhā harit-patā; varīyasīti vikhyātā kharvā kṣīrabha-kuntalā*¹⁰

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother is named Varīyasī and she is greatly respected in Vraja-maṇḍala. Her complexion resembles the Kusumbha-flower and her dress is green. She is small and her hair is white like milk."

Out of **pride** over the happiness caused by her beloved grandson, her feet do not touch the ground, so it is said by the people.

This **pride** is not a transformation of the mundane modes of passion and ignorance, it is a transformation of pure *sattva* (spirit). This pride arises from love of God.

prītiḥ khalu bhakta cittam ullāsayati mamatayā yojayati viśrambhayati, priyatvātīśayenābhimānayati, drāvayati, sva viśayaṁ pratyabhilāṣātīśayena yojayati prati-kṣaṇam eva sva viśayaṁ nava navatvenānubhāvayati asamordhva camatkāreṇomādayati ca. (Prīti Sandarbha: 84 Anu:)

"Love delights the hearts of the devotees, links through feelings of possessiveness, bestows confidence and through great feelings of affection, **special pride**. It causes one to melt (or soften); it creates a great craving for the Lord and a resultant attachment to Him; it causes the lover to experience the Lord as fresh at every moment and intoxicates the lover with unprecedented feelings of astonishment."

In the *bhakti-sāstras* (devotional scriptures), these feelings are progressively described as: *rati*, *prema*, *praṇaya*, *māna*, *sneha*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*.

Taking this *abhimāna* or pride to heart, Śrī Rādhārāṇī is saying: *baṅdhu, tomāra garave garavinī hām!* "O friend! I am proud of Your pride!"

Prema cannot leave this pride for even a moment. *premera sadāi abhimāna, prema cāya śola ānā prāṇa.* "Prema always has pride, *prema* wants 100% of the heart!"

¹⁰ Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 1,20.

What can a *premi*ka be more proud of? Only that the Lord is his all-in-all! The experienced know how high the price of this loving pride is! Knowing this to be the soul of *prema* they want to embrace it from all sides.

How glorious the *prema* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grandmother Varīyasī is, can be known from this verse. She always makes fun and jokes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and He is floating in an ocean of topmost bliss when He hears Her jokes.

Seeing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is happy with her jokes and humor, grandmother calls Him again and again: "O rey Nāti-cānd (moon-like grandson)! Come here!"

The *ācāryas* say: "Those who have realized that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Truth cannot understand Him in full. Śrī Govinda, Who is the embodiment of sweetness, can only be fully realized through a sweet loving attitude. Though one should not think that the knowledge of the Lord's prowess is thereby somewhat lost. Knowledge of the Lord's sweetness, which is like the Trivenī, (the confluence of the Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī) is always inseparably strewn together with knowledge of the Lord's prowess.

When separation is experienced all this is being revealed and thus saves the life of the devotee in separation.

Śrī Raghunātha bows down at the feet of Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother Varīyasī, who is most conscious of His sweetness -

*kṛṣṇa mora nāti' boli garve buka bharā;
kṛṣṇa sukha sampad heri sukhe ātma-hārā
pautra garve pā phele nā kabhu dharaṇīte;
hāsyā parihāse magna govinda sahite
kṛṣṇa pitāmahī boli yāra kautuka kathā;
ullāsete śune sabe prasaṅga hoy yathā
sei varīyasī kṛṣṇa pitāmahī yini;
kṛpā-lobhe sadā pade praṇata ye āmi*

"Eager for her mercy, I bow down to Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother Varīyasī, whose heart is filled with pride as she says: 'Kṛṣṇa is my grandson!', whose feet don't touch the ground out of pride of Her grandson, who is always immersed in joking and laughing with Govinda and who gladly speaks of herself as Kṛṣṇa's paternal grandmother, something which is gladly heard and discussed by all the others."

VERSE 15:

**śveta-śmaśru-bhareṇa sundara-mukhaḥ śyāmaḥ kṛtī mantraṇā-
bhijñāḥ saṁsadi santataṁ vraja-pateḥ kurvan sthitiḥ yo'rcitaḥ |
sva-prāṇārbuda-khaṇḍanair murabhidam bhrātuh sutaṁ toṣayet
sāhāre nivasan sa-goṣṭham avatān nāmnopanandaḥ sadā ||15||**

śveta - white; *śmaśru* - moustache; *bhareṇa* - with a great; *sundara* - beautiful; *mukhaḥ* - face; *śyāmaḥ* - black; *kṛtī* - qualified; *mantraṇābhijñāḥ* - learned counsellor; *saṁsadi* - in the assembly; *santataṁ* - always; *vrajapateḥ* - of the king of Vraja; *kurvan* - doing; *sthitim* - staying; *yaḥ* - who; *arcitaḥ* - worshipped; *sva* - own; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *arbuda* - millions; *khaṇḍanaiḥ* - in parts; *murabhidam* - Kṛṣṇa; *bhrātuh sutaṁ* - nephew; *toṣayet* - delights; *sāhāre* - in the village of Sāhāra; *nivasan* - resides; *sa* - he; *goṣṭham* - Vraja; *avatān* - may protect; *nāmnā* - named; *upanandaḥ* - Upananda; *sadā* - always.

May Kṛṣṇa's uncle Upananda, who delights his nephew with billions of life-airs; whose face is beautified by a white moustache; who has a blackish complexion; who is a wise and learned counsellor; who lives in the village of Sāhāra and who always stays in the government of the

king of Vraja as a learned scholar, always protect the land of Vraja!

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises Śrī Upananda, the elder brother and minister of Nanda Mahārāja.

upanando'bhinandaś ca pitṛvyaṁ pūrvajau pituḥ. pitṛvyaṁ tu kaniyāmsau syātāṁ sannanda nandanau (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 1,32):

"Nanda's elder brothers are Upananda and Abhinanda, and his younger brothers are Sannanda and Nandana". They are all Kṛṣṇa's uncles.

Upananda was the oldest son of Parjanya Mahārāja, and the third son Nanda inherited the kingdom only because of Upananda's magnanimity. In the scripture Śrī Gopāla Campū it is described that when Parjanya Mahārāja considered the qualifications of his sons he decided to hand over the responsibility of the kingdom to his eldest son Upananda. He had become eager to perform Śrī Hari-bhajana and had thus attained peace of mind.¹¹

He had the royal class headed by Vasudeva and the brahminical class headed by Garga called into the assembly and gave his oldest son Śrī Upānanda the royal *tilaka*¹² there.

saḥ punaḥ pitur ājñāṁ aṅgikṛtya kṛta-kṛtyas tasyām eva śrī vasudevādi sambalīta mahānubhāvānāṁ sabhāyām āhuya sabhāvam utsaṅga saṅgināṁ vidhāya madhyamam eva nijānujaṁ tena tilakena gokula rājatayā sabhājayāmāsa.

atha tatrānuje saṅkucati sarva eva ca jane vismayāṁ sa ca māne pitari ca rocamānelocane sacovāca - mayedaṁ nāvīcāram ācaritaṁ yataḥ sarva eva sneha paramparāyāḥ parādhīnaḥ; sā

¹¹ Having handed the kingdom into Upananda's able hands he could now worship Śrī Hari free from worries.

¹² A ceremony in which the old king hands his kingdom to his rightful heir.

*ca sād guṇyasya tac ca sarva samāñjasatāyāḥ sā cātra yathā
tathā na mad vidhe saiva ca khalu sarva vaśīkāritāyām svari
itām arhati*

*kiṁ ca sarvāntaryāmyapyenam evorarīcarīkaroti. dṛśyatām
asyām bhāsamānāyām sabhāyām sarveṣām netra-pāṭali
ṣaṭpada vallilāyamānā kevalam asya mukhaṁ kamalam iva
saṁbalate. tathā prathamataḥ eva tadānukūlyam atrākalpyate
parikalpyatām apīdaṁ mama nāmaiva; tasmād asmād ayam
eva rājeti. athābhavat kusumajavṛṣṭibhiḥ samāṁ sphuṭa-
dhvanir divam anu sādhu sādhviti sabhāsadām iha ca vikāsi
dṛṣṭibhir yathāsphuraj jaya jaya śabda maṅgalam*

(Gopāla Campū Pūrva 3.31-34)

"Śrī Upananda kept the order of his father on his head (he followed it), considering himself blessed. Then in the presence of Vasudeva and other great souls, he called his younger middle-brother Nanda into the assembly, embraced him lovingly and gave him the kingdom of Gokula by putting on him the royal *tilaka*. Afterwards he honoured him as the new king of Gokula."

"Seeing this inconceivable behaviour of his elder brother, Nanda Mahārāja became shy. Those present in the assembly were struck with wonder and father Parjanya Mahārāja looked at the two men with eyes wide of bliss

(Actually, Parjanya had been desirous to give the kingdom to Nanda, having seen his countless attributes, but he had thought it better to just follow the etiquette and give the kingdom to his oldest son).

Seeing this Śrī Upananda said: "This is not a thoughtless action of mine, because everyone is controlled by feelings of affection. The proper thing was done, considering Nanda's

glorious attributes. This is not a whimsical action on my behalf, the great qualities of Nanda just have an overwhelming, all-controlling effect."

"Besides, this is the arrangement of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the Overseer of all living beings. This is because everyone's bee-like eyes drink the honey of Śrī Nanda's beautiful lotus-like face. This has been Śrī Nārāyaṇa's decision long ago. Also, his name is Nanda, while my name is Upananda (sub-Nanda). Upa means inferior and assisting. Hence he is the king of Gokula, and I am his assistant."

"Hearing these words of Upananda, the demigods showered flowers from the sky and sang 'sādhu sādhu (glory, glory!)'. The lotus-like eyes of everyone present began to blossom and the auspicious sounds of 'jaya jaya!' filled the universe.

From that day on Nanda, the mine of all great qualities was the king of Gokula and Upananda was appointed as his minister."

Therefore it was said: Upananda is a learned and expert counsellor. His body has a deep blackish complexion and his face is beautified by a white moustache, which are signs of a learned and expert counsellor. His expert advise was the source of an increase in Nanda's bliss in all respects. When the demons caused havoc in Gokula, it was Upananda who gave the advise to leave Gokula and move to the safe haven Vṛndāvana¹³, just to save his nephew Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was dearer to him than millions of lives.

It was on his advise also that the safe haven Nandiśvara-Giri was established as the capital of the king of Vraja. When the people of Vraja are safe, then Śrīpāda Raghunātha is also safe

¹³ See Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.11.22-23

and his aspirations will be fulfilled - that is the secondary meaning transcending the first meaning of the verse.

*śveta śmaśru-bhare yāra vadana sundara;
śyāma ruci aṅga śobhā ati manohara
mantraṇāya mahā-vijña nanda sabhā mājhe;
pūjita hoyena yini paṇḍita samāje
bhrātuṣputra śrī govinde kolete koriyā;
santoṣa vidhāna kore marama bujhiyā
sei kṛṣṇa pīṭṛvya śrī upananda nāma;
goṣṭha-rakṣā korun tini ei nivedana*

"I pray that Kṛṣṇa's uncle, who is named Śrī Upananda, whose face is beautified by a white moustache: whose body shines with an enchanting blackish luster; who is the very expert counsellor in the assembly of Nanda Mahārāja; who is worshipped in the assembly of scholars; who takes his nephew Śrī Govinda on his lap and makes Him happy by understanding his feelings, may protect the *goṣṭha*!"

VERSE 16:

**gaurah komala-dhīr udāra-caritaḥ snigdho vrajendrānujaḥ
śyāma-śmaśrur alaṁ tadiya-caraṇe bhaktaḥ sunandā-pitā |
yah prāṇaiḥ parimañchya mādhaba-sukhaṁ dadhnā mahiṣyāḥ paraṁ
sannandas tanute sa pātu nitarāṁ naḥ kāsarīṇāṁ patiḥ ||16||**

gaurah - golden; *komala* - tender; *dhīh* - mind; *udāra* - generous; *caritaḥ* - behaviour; *snigdhaḥ* - pleasant; *vrajendra* - the king of Vraja; *anujaḥ* - younger brother; *śyāma* - black; *śmaśruḥ* - moustache; *alaṁ* - greatly; *tadiya* - his; *caraṇe* - lotus feet; *bhaktaḥ* - devotee; *sunandā* - Sunandā; *pitā* - the father; *yah* - who; *prāṇaiḥ* - with his life-airs;

parimañchya - worships; *mādhava* - Kṛṣṇa; *sukhaṁ* - happiness; *dadhnā* - with yoghurt; *mahiṣyāḥ* - of the buffaloes; *param* - greatest; *sannandaḥ* - Sannanda; *tanute* - expands; *sa* - he; *pātu* - may protect; *nitarāṁ* - constantly; *naḥ* - unto us; *kāsarīṇām* - of the she-buffaloes; *patiḥ* - the lord (keeper).

May Sannanda, the keeper of the she-buffaloes, who has a golden complexion; whose mind is filled with tenderness; who is very generous and kind; whose face is beautified with a black moustache; who is deeply devoted to Śrī Nanda Mahārāja; who worships Mādhava with his very life and greatly delights Him by treating Him on buffalo-yoghurt and who is Śrī Nanda's younger brother and Sunandā's father, protect us.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Vraja-*dhāma* is enriched by different companions of the Lord who all have different feelings and attitudes and these eternal companions each relish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness according to their own feelings, emanating from their self-perfect *prema-rasa*.

nija bhāve kore kṛṣṇa rasa āsvādane (C.C.). Even Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the object of their love, forgets about His own prowess and completeness and considers Himself blessed if He can relish their self-perfect sweet love, according to their own individual feelings.

This is the speciality of Vraja-*prema*. Wherever there is the full maturity of sweetness, we also find the greatest blossoming of *rasa*. This truth can be directly experienced when we discuss the pastimes of Vraja. The more the heart of a practising devotee gets purified by practising the Vraja-*bhāva-upāsanā*, the more his heart ascends the staircase (of love) and the more he becomes blessed with the experience of pure sweetness. The

best way of practising this Vraja-*bhāva-upāsanā* is the hearing, chanting and remembering of the sweet feelings of the companions of Vraja.

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises the younger brother of Vraja's king Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and the father of Sunandā, Sannanda.

sunandāpara paryāya sannanda kunda pāṇḍarah; śyāma-celaḥ sita dvitri keśo'yaṁ keśava-priyaḥ (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Gaṇoddeśa-Dīpikā 1, 35)

"Another name of Sannanda is Sunanda. His complexion is fair, he wears black and white clothes, two or three of his hairs are white and he is very dear to Keśava."

He keeps buffaloes because he thinks that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body will be nourished by their milk. Therefore he is the Mahiṣapati, the buffalo-keeper. He loves all things only if they bring happiness to Kṛṣṇa. He worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa through his buffalo-yoghurt. This worship is a great event of love, in which all mishap and inauspiciousness of the beloved is wiped out. Beloveds are worshipped with ingredients that are auspicious and that are very dear to them. Buffalo-yoghurt is very dear to Kṛṣṇa and it is naturally a very auspicious product, hence He is worshipped with buffalo-yoghurt. Śrī Raghunātha says: *yaḥ prāṇaiḥ parimañchya mādharma-sukhaṁ dadhnā mahiṣyāḥ param*

"He expands Mādhava's happiness by worshipping Him with his very life and with buffalo-yoghurt. When seeing his worship one thinks he is not doing it with yoghurt but with his very life-airs! That is why Mādhava, Who is dedicated to relishing the love of His devotees finds so much happiness in it!

Although Mādhava generally means the Original Lord of the goddess of fortune or all wealth, Kṛṣṇa only hankers for the purely sweet love of the people of Vraja. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed

Pūtanā, Aghāsura and Bakāsura, when He lifted Govardhana Hill, subdued the Kāliya-serpent, swallowed the forest fire and danced the Rāsa, He showed such vast prowess that no one can conceive of it.

But even all that prowess drowns in a bottomless and fathomless ocean of sweetness and simply serves to nourish this sweetness. This endless sweetness is established on the foundation of endless prowess and its glory attracts all people. This is only because of its proximity to the pure, sweet love of the Vrajavāsīs.

That is why Lord Brahmā, Uddhava and others were astonished when they saw this extraordinary sweet love of the Vrajavāsīs and then prayed for birth in Vraja even as a blade of grass or a bulb, so that they could be showered by their footdust.

In this verse, the tender feelings, the generous activities and the gentleness of Sannanda are mentioned - all these great glories arise automatically as a result of rendering loving devotional service. This is proclaimed everywhere.

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavatyakiñcanā sarvair guṇais tatra samāsata surāḥ (Bhāgavata 5.18.12) "All the demigods and their godly qualities eternally reside in anyone who has unswerving devotion to the Lord."

Śrī Raghunātha prays:

*gaura varṇa sukomala, udāra carita;
nandera kaniṣṭha bhrātā ati sneharita
syāma varṇa śmaśru-bhare śrī-mukha sundara;
nanda prati bhakti yāra ati gāḍhatara
sunandāra pitā boli vrajavāsi jāne;
prāṇa paṇe dadhi diyā kore kṛṣṇa nīrājane
mahīṣī rakṣaka se sannanda nāma yāra;*

rakṣa korun more ei minati āmāra

"May the buffalo-keeper named Sannanda, who has a golden complexion; who is very tender-hearted and generous; who is Nanda's very affectionate younger brother; whose face is beautified by a black moustache; who has very deep devotion to Nanda; who is known by the Vrajavāsīs as Sunandā's father and who worships Kṛṣṇa with buffalo-yoghurt and his very life, may he protect me. This is my prayer."

VERSE 17:

**śyāmaḥ sūkṣma-matir yuvāti-madhuro jyotir-vidām agrāṇiḥ
pāṇḍityair jita-gīṣpatir vraja-pateḥ savye kṛtāvasthitiḥ |
kṛṣṇaṁ pālayatiḥa yaḥ priyatamā prāṇārbudair apy alaṁ
mantreṇāpy upananda-sūnum iha taṁ prītyā subhadraṁ numaḥ**

śyāma - black; *sūkṣma-matiḥ* - fine intelligence; *yuva* - young; *ati madhuraḥ* - very sweet; *jyotirvidām* - astrologers; *agraṇī* - the leader; *pāṇḍityaiḥ* - by learning; *jita* - defeating; *gīṣpatiḥ* - Bṛhaspati; *vrajapateḥ* - the Lord of Vraja; *savye* - on the left; *kṛta* - doing; *avasthitiḥ* - situated; *kṛṣṇaṁ* - Kṛṣṇa; *pālayati* - protects; *iha* - here; *yaḥ* - who; *priyatayā* - out of love; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *arbudaiḥ* - with millions; *api* - even; *alaṁ* - greatly; *mantrēṇa* - with mantras; *api* - even; *upananda sūnum* - the son of Upananda; *iha* - here; *taṁ* - unto him; *prītyā* - with love; *subhadraṁ* - Subhadra; *numaḥ* - offering obeisances.

I offer my loving obeisances unto Subhadra, the son of Upananda, who has a blackish complexion; who has a fine intelligence; who is young and sweet (handsome); who is

the best of astrologers; who defeats even Bṛhaspati in learning; who stands on the left side of the Lord of Vraja Nanda Mahārāja; who protects Kṛṣṇa with billions of life-airs and who always offers Him advise.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Vraja-*dhāma* is the great transcendental centre where the Lord and His devotees relish the sweetness of each others' love.

The companions in Vraja are unrivalled relishers of the love of Śrī Govinda, Who is the embodiment of complete transcendental bliss. What's more, they are the embodiments of pure love! The Lord Who is Self-satisfied is attracted to the blissful love of the pure devotees and becomes completely engrossed with these devotees, up to the point that He loses Himself in it. This indicates how much ecstasy there is in loving devotion for both the devotee and the Lord. Therefore the Lord solely desires this pure love of the devotees, which is completely free from hesitation and reverence. What to speak of the loving devotees of Vraja, even from the reverential devotees the Lord likes to hear talks that are free from hesitation and reverence.

In the Haribhakti-Sudhodaya, we find the following words of the Lord to Śrī Prahlāda:

*sabhayaṁ sambhramaṁ vatsa mad gaurava kṛtaṁ tyaja;
 naiṣa priyo me bhakteṣu svādhīna praṇayi bhava
 api me pūrṇa kāmasya navaṁ navam idaṁ priyam;
 niḥśaṅka praṇayād bhakto yan māṁ paśyasi bhāṣate
 sadā mukto'pi baddho'smi bhakteṣu sneha rajjubhiḥ;
 ajito'pi jito'ham tair avāṣye'pi vaśikṛtaḥ*

"O child! Give up this reverence that simply causes fear and respect to awaken within you! I don't like this kind of reverence towards Me by My devotees! Please show some free feelings of love towards Me! The devotees see Me and speak with Me with love and without fear. Although I am Self-satisfied, I experience this as ever-fresh. Although I am eternally liberated, this ties Me to the ropes of My devotees' affection. Although I am invincible, I am thus defeated and although I am ever-independent, they manage to subdue Me completely!"

In this way one can understand the great glories of the love of the Lord's companions in Vraja. The love of the people of Vraja is the deepest because of the absence of hesitation and reverence within it.

They are completely absorbed in loving Kṛṣṇa purely as the *laukika-sad-bandhu*, the good worldly friend. The *ācāryas* call this *rāgātmikā bhakti*. Each and every Vraja-companion receives a share of this great sacrifice of *rāga-bhakti*.

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Subhadra, the son of Upananda:

*sucikkaṇau nīla-varṇaḥ subhadro diptimān bhavet;
pīta vastra paridhānā nānābharaṇa śobhitaḥ
upanandaḥ pītā tasya tulā mātā pativrataḥ;
paramojjala kaiśoraḥ patnī kundalatā bhavet*

(Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 2, 26-27)

"Subhadra's complexion is glossy, blue and brilliant. He wears a yellow *dhoṭī* and various ornaments. His father is Upananda and his mother the greatly chaste Tulā. Subhadra's

age is filled with the most brilliant adolescence and his wife is named Kundalatā.¹⁴

His complexion is *śyāma*, he is of fine intelligence, he is young and handsome and he is the best of astrologers. His knowledge of astrology has been accomplished because he centers it around Kṛṣṇa and his love for Him. The purport of this is that the great teacher of astrology, Mahāmuni Śrī Gargācārya came to Gokula on the instigation of Vasudeva to perform the name-giving ceremony of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva.

Seeing the pure parental love of Nanda-Yaśodā for Kṛṣṇa, Gargācārya's reverential attitude was stunned. During Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name-giving ceremony, he left the dignity of their love unaffected and made his knowledge of astrology perfect by describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories in an unequivocal way. But Subhadra is actually worried about Śrī Kṛṣṇa having some accident, so he anxiously draws charts to calculate Śrī Kṛṣṇa's luck and bad luck.

In this way he made his knowledge of astrology perfect in the realm of sweet love. That is the speciality of his knowledge of astrology and that is why he is called the greatest of all astrologers. He defeats even Bṛhaspati in learning and intelligence.

This is what the people say when they see Subhadra's learning and sharp intelligence. Otherwise from the natural point of view, the learning and intelligence of all the people of Vraja is peerless, because the Lord personally told Uddhava:

¹⁴ She is one of the most important assistants in Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's erotic pastimes. She is praised in verse 32 of this Vraja Vilāsa Stava.

*eṣām buddhimatām buddhir manīṣā ca manīṣiṇām;
yat satyam anṛteneha martyenāpnoti māmataṁ*

(Bhāgavata 11.29.22)

"The intelligence of the intelligent and the wisdom of the wise lies in My *bhajana*, because in this temporary and uncertain human birth, *bhajana* is real and immortal and through *bhajana* a human being can become blessed by attaining Me."

Who will therefore ignore the intelligence of the people of Vraja?

He stands by Vrajapati Śrī Nanda's left side, always serving him with advise and he protects and advises Śrī Nanda-Nandana with millions of life-airs. Although all transcendental and other knowledge is always serving Him, the Original Personality Of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa acts only according to the advise of Subhadra - this is the nature of love!¹⁵

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I lovingly bow down to this son of Upananda, named Subhadra!"

*śyāma varṇa sūkṣma mati navīna yauvana;
jyotirvid supaṇḍita priya daraśana
bṛhaspati jini yāra pāṇḍitya pratibhā;
vrajapati nanda vāme koriteche śobhā
prāṇa priya śrī govinde koriteche rakṣā;
upadeśa chale dāna kore nānā śikṣā
sei upananda putra subhadra yāra nāma;
nirantara stava kori padete praṇāma*

¹⁵ Mother Yaśodā also asks Subhadra every morning where her Gopāla should herd his cows that day.

"I always praise Upananda's son named Subhadra, who has a blackish complexion; who is of fine intelligence and fresh youthful beauty; who is an expert astrologer, a great scholar who defeats even Bṛhaspati in learning; who stands beautifully at Vrajapati Nanda's left side and who protects Śrī Govinda on the pretext of giving him different advises and teachings, by bowing down at his feet."

VERSE 18:

**daityād bhīter ativikala-dhīḥ komalāṅgasya sūnoḥ
kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ satatam avane vatsalā vyagra-cittā |
kṛcchrair ambām bahubhir abhito hanta santoṣya sūram
daitya-ghnam yā sutam ajanayat sāmīkā pātu dhātrī**

daityād - from demons; *bhīteḥ* - of fear; *ati* - very; *vikala* - upset; *dhīḥ* - consciousness; *komala* - tender; *aṅgasya* - of the body; *sūnoḥ* - of the son; *kṛṣṇasya* - of Kṛṣṇa; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *satatam* - always; *avane* - for protecting; *vatsalā* - parental love; *vyagra* - anxious; *cittā* - heart; *kṛcchraiḥ* - with hardships; *ambām* - mother; *bahubhiḥ* - with many; *abhitaḥ* - in all respects; *hanta* - alas!; *santoṣya* - satisfying; *sūram* - a hero; *daitya-* demons; *ghnam* - killer; *yā* - who (fem.); *sutam* - the son; *ajanayat* - gave birth to; *sā* - she; *ambikā* - Ambikā; *pātu* - may protect; *dhātrī* - wetnurse.

May Ambikā, Kṛṣṇa's wetnurse, who was very anxious out of fear of the demons and who performed many harsh austerities for Kṛṣṇa's protection with which she satisfied the universal mother Bhagavatī, who granted her a heroic son who is able to kill all the demons, protect us.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī draws a love-picture of Kṛṣṇa's wet nurse Ambikā, who is a vessel of pure parental love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

ambikā ca kilimbā ca dhātṛke stanya dātrike (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā) "Ambikā and Kilimbā are two wet nurses who breastfed Kṛṣṇa. The greater of them is Ambikā. She is Vrajeśvarī Yaśodā's dear girlfriend."

ambikeyaṁ tayor mukhyā vrajeśvaryāḥ priyā sakhī (ibid.) She worshipped Dūrga-devī and by her grace got a heroic son named Vijaya.

atrādhyākṣo'mbikā sūnur vijayākhyas tapasyayā. yaḥ kilāmbikayā lebhe dhātryopāsya sadāmbikām (ibid.) "Vijaya is the leader of the older boys who serve as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodyguards. His mother Ambikā performed penances to please Ambikā or Pārvatī to get a heroic son like him."

Out of fear of the demons she is very anxious at heart to keep tender Kṛṣṇa safe and protected. Wet nurse Ambikā is always carried away by worries that any calamity might befall Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She is always worried about the safety of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself the guardian of the world. This is the work of pure transcendental parental love.

Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written: It is love only that causes apprehension of harm - *yasmin jāte tat sambandhābhāsenāpi mahā-vāṣpādi vikāraḥ priya darśanādyatṛptasya parama sāmāthyātau satyapi koṣāñcid aniṣṭā-saṅkā ca jāyate* (Prīti Sandarbha)

"When *sneha* awakens even the slightest relationship with the Lord creates tear-filled emotional transformations. The devotee is never satisfied by seeing the Lord and he always apprehends harm befalling Him, although He is omnipotent."

This apprehension of harm is especially strong in parental love, where the devotee observes the tenderness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's

body. Therefore mother Ambikā is always afraid at heart of the demons.

"I think that a demon is coming, I think he's going to kill Kṛṣṇa!" - tormented by these apprehensions mother Ambikā desperately began to perform harsh austerities to please goddess Durgā with the aim of getting a heroic son who would protect Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

On the path of pure devotion it is an impairment to the principle of pure devotion if one worships other gods and goddesses, especially if it is for benefits like wealth and children. But the Vrajavāsīs' worship of other gods and goddesses and their praying to them for boons like children is nothing else but another form of their love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Gosvāmīs have given the following conclusion about the Vraja-kumārīs (virgin-gopīs)' worship of Kātyāyanī-devī to get Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a husband:

tato vrajasya lokavaḥlatvāt māyopāsanam eva labhyate, tāsāṃ ca parama premollāsa vilasitam eva tathopāsanam premṇaiva ca tathā tat prāptir na tathopāsanena iti vivektavyam. atra kecid anyan manyā yad anyatha manyante te na tadīya prema gandha sambandha gandhavāham api sprṣanti sarvatra śuddha bhagavat premaiva hi puruṣārthaḥ. sarvam ananya daivatopāsanādikam tu tat sādhanam eveti śrīmad bhāgavata siddhāntaḥ (Vaiṣṇava Toṣaṇī Tīkā of Bhāgavata 10.22.4)

"Because the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His companions in Vraja are human-like, it is seen that the Vraja-companions worship Māyādevī for getting wealth and sons and so on (although Kātyāyanī is the Lord's *cicchakti* or spiritual potency, when her worshippers ask her for wealth and children she gives it through her *māyā-śakti*), but these should be understood to be their most blissful loving pastimes. Their worship is also

nothing but *prema*, because as a result of their worship they do not attain Kātyāyanī-devī but the Supreme Lord.

Therefore if someone forgets the means and the goal and thinks: 'The Vraja-devīs were also worshipping Kātyāyanī-devī, therefore there is no other means to get Śrī Kṛṣṇa and love of Him than to worship her', or 'The worship of Kātyāyanī is the only means and goal', they will never even catch a whiff of the wind carrying the breeze of Kṛṣṇa-*prema*. The only means of attaining the Lord is pure and exclusive worship of and meditation on Him."

Basically the worship of the different gods is also worship of the Supreme Lord, because He is the aggregate of all the gods¹⁶: this is the philosophical conclusion of scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

There is no question of the self-perfect loving eternal companions of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja having to perform any *sādhanā*. Therefore, when mother Ambikā of Vraja who is constantly swimming in the ocean of pure parental love, saw Vraja being repeatedly attacked by demons, she became very apprehensive about Kṛṣṇa's safety and pleased Bhagavati-devī with her penances, desiring to get a son who could kill all the demons.

By Devī's grace she was then blessed with a heroic son named Vijaya.

¹⁶ Kṛṣṇa is attained by worshipping different gods and goddesses, because He is the aggregate of all the gods, but He is not attained by those who worship them with desires other than Him. Therefore the worship of other gods and goddesses is considered a impairment of exclusive devotion. Those who are very upset with apprehension of harm becoming to Śrī Kṛṣṇa may worship other gods and goddesses, but this behaviour of Kṛṣṇa's companions in Vraja is incomprehensible for an ordinary *sādhaka*.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: " May that goddess Ambikā always protect us!"

*vātsalye vyākula cittā daityera bhayete;
komalāṅga putra kṛṣṇera satata rakṣārthe
vyākulita hoiyā yei kore upavāsa;
jagan mātā bhagavatira māge āśīrvāda
tāra anugrahe yini daitya-ghātī putra;
prasava korilo kṛṣṇa rakṣī supavitra
śrī kṛṣṇera dhātṛi-mātā nāma se ambikā;
sadā rakṣā korun more vātsalye adhikā*

"May Śrī Kṛṣṇa's wet nurse named Ambikā, who, out of motherly love, is very frightened of demons; who fasted out of anxiety over the protection of her tender son Kṛṣṇa, praying for the blessings of the universal mother Bhagavatī, and who, by the goddess' grace, gave birth to a pure son who protects Kṛṣṇa by killing the demons, always protect me with great motherly love."

VERSE 19:

**nādair yasya sphuṭati parito divya-vidhy-aṅḍa-koṭiḥ
ke te tāvat kila diti-sutāḥ kṣudrakāt kṣudra-jīvāḥ |
snehān mātṛā vijayam abhito rakṣaṇe saṁniyuktāṁ
kṛṣṇasyārāt param iha bhaje hanta dhātṛi sutāṁ tam**

nādaiḥ - with sounds; *yasya* - whose; *sphuṭati* - burst; *paritaḥ* - in all respects; *divya* - divine; *vidhi* - Brahmā; *aṅḍa* - egg; *koṭiḥ* - millions; *ke* - who; *te* - they; *tāvat* - as long as; *kila* - certainly; *diti-sutāḥ* - sons of Diti (demons); *kṣudrakāt* - more insignificant than;

kṣudra - insignificant; *jivāḥ* - living beings; *snehāt* - out of affection; *mātrā* - of the mother; *vijayam* - Vijaya; *abhitaḥ* - always; *rakṣaṇe* - in the protection; *sanniyuktam* - engaged; *kṛṣṇasya* - of Kṛṣṇa; *ārāt* - in the vicinity; *param* - highest; *iha* - here; *bhaje* - I worship; *hanta* - alas!; *dhātri-sutam* - son of the wetnurse; *tam* - unto him.

I worship Vijaya, the son of Kṛṣṇa's wet nurse in Vraja, whose roars cause millions of divine universes to burst, what to speak of the demons, who are more insignificant than insignificant and who is engaged by his mother Ambikā in always staying near Śrī Kṛṣṇa to protect Him.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Vijaya, the son of Kṛṣṇa's wet nurse.

The nectarean, fearlessness-granting lotus feet of the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendra-Nandana have been prayed to for protection against the hands of different kinds of calamities since time immemorial by all intelligent people, but now His wetnurse Ambikā, apprehending some calamity befalling Him, has anxiously worshipped goddess Gaurī for His sake.

Truly, truly, her worship has been a success, for by the grace of Devī she has gotten a heroic son, the intimate friend (*suhṛd-sakhā*) of Kṛṣṇa named **Vijaya**.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*vātsalya gandhi sakhyās tu kiñcit te vayasādhikāḥ;
sāyudhās tasya duṣṭebhyaḥ sadā rakṣā parāyaṇāḥ
subhadra maṇḍalībhadrā bhadrā-varadhana gobhaṭāḥ;*

*yakṣendra-bhaṭa bhadraṅga vīrabhadra mahā-guṇāḥ
vijayo balabhadradīyāḥ suhr̥das tasya kīrtitāḥ*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.3.22-23)

"The *suhr̥d-sakhās* have a whiff of parental love for Him. They are a little older than Kṛṣṇa and they always take care to protect Him with their weapons. Subhadra, Maṇḍalībhadrā, Bhadrā-varḍhana Gobhaṭa, Yakṣa, Indra-bhaṭa, Bhadrāṅga, Vīrabhadra, Mahā-guṇa, Vijaya and Baladeva are amongst Kṛṣṇa's *suhr̥d*-friends."

During Kṛṣṇa's *goṣṭha-līlā*, they hold different weapons to constantly protect Him. As soon as there is any doubt about His safety, they run forward with their weapons in their hands.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written the following verse to exemplify these friends:

*dhunvan dhāvasi maṇḍalāgram amalāṁ tvāṁ maṇḍalībhadrā! kiṁ
gurvīm nārya! gadāṁ grhāṇa vijaya! kṣobhaṁ vṛthā mā kṛthāḥ
śaktiṁ na kṣīpa bhadravardhana! puro govardhanaṁ gāhate
garjann eṣa ghano balī na tu balivardākṛtir dānavāḥ*

(ibid.24)

"O Maṇḍalībhadrā! Why are you running around with this spotless sword? O Ārya! Don't pick up this heavy mace! O Vijaya! Don't be agitated for nothing! O Bhadrā-varḍhana! Don't throw this *śakti* for no reason! These are just some clouds rumbling above Govardhana Hill! This is not a large bull-demon (like Ariṣṭāsura)!"

Śrīpāda says: "Millions of divine universes burst when Vijaya shouts like a lion, indicating his heroism."

This is not at all astonishing, because the companions are just as qualified as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is. Then, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's prowess is revealed in a sweet way in Vraja-*dhāma*, meaning that if the cowherd boys see Śrī Kṛṣṇa killing a demon or so, there will be no awe and reverence in their minds. Rather they will just think: "My friend is so powerful, so we won't have to fear when we freely ramble in the forest!", thus nourishing the sweet pastimes. Similarly Vijaya also nourishes the *sakhya-rasa* (feeling of friendship) by roaring in a way indicating his heroism. To the demons though, this is truly terrifying and therefore Śrī Raghunātha has said: "What are those demons, who are the most insignificant living beings, before the energy of Vijaya?"

Mother Ambikā, who is totally overwhelmed by affection, keeps Vijaya always near Kṛṣṇa and has placed Kṛṣṇa under his protection. For the Vrajavāsīs, their bodies, homes, children and relatives are all offered for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.

yad dhāmārtha suhṛt priyātma tanaya prāṇāśayās tat kṛte

(Bhāgavata 10.14.35)

Whatever they have, it is all for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and whatever they don't have they hope to get, just for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Blessed is this wonderful spotless expertise of Vraja-*prema*!

*kṣudrād api kṣudra sei diti-putragāṇa;
kevē tādera vīra boli koroye gaṇana?
brahmāṇḍa koṭi yāra huhuṅkāra svare;
sphuṭita hoilo boli sabe mane kore
sneha paratantra hoiyā kṛṣṇera pālana;
jananī ambikā dilā rakṣaṇāvekṣaṇe*

*sei dhātrī-suta vīra vijaya yāra nāma;
satata bhajana kori - koro paritrāṇa*

"I always worship Vijaya, the heroic son of the wet nurse Ambikā. Who can mention the heroism of the demons who become most insignificant in front of him? When he shouts everyone thinks that the universe is bursting! Subdued by affection, he protects Kṛṣṇa, because his mother has placed Him under his protection. O Vijaya! Save me also!"

VERSE 20:

**mantra-nyāsair iha muraripos tat-purodhāḥ purastāt
sarvāṅgāni prakāṣa-nigamo bhāgurir yo'bhiraḥṣya |
āśīrbhiḥ ca pratidinam aho tac-chiro jighratīdam
vande tāvan munisurapates tasya pādābja-yugmam**

mantra-nyāsaiḥ - reciting mantras; *iha* - in Vraja; *muraripoḥ* - of Kṛṣṇa; *tat* - His; *purodhāḥ* - priest; *purastāt* - before; *sarvāṅgāni* - on all the limbs; *prakāṣa* - manifest; *nigamaḥ* - the Vedas; *bhāguri* - Bhāguri; *yah* - who; *abhiraḥṣya* - protecting; *āśīrbhiḥ* - with blessings; *ca* - and; *prati dinam* - every day; *aho* - O!; *tat* - His; *śiraḥ* - head; *jighrati* - smelling; *idam* - this; *vande* - obeisances; *tāvat* - thus; *muni* - sage; *sura-pateḥ* - the king of; *tasya* - his; *pādābja* - lotus feet; *yugmam* - pair.

I worship the lotus feet of Śrī Bhāguri, the king of sages, who is the priest in Nanda's Vraja; who daily places mantras on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's different limbs and offers Him words of blessings; who performs rituals for the

protection of each of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs; who smells His head and of whom the personified Vedas take shelter.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Vraja's priest Mahāmuni Bhāgurī.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *mahī-surās tu dvividhā gokulāntar vasanti ye; kulam āśritya vartante kecid anye purohitāḥ. veda garbho mahā-yajvā bhāguryādyāḥ purodhasaḥ* (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 1,64)

"The *brāhmaṇas* who live in Vraja are divided into two classes: some have taken shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's family and others are priests.

The *Vedagarbhas* are the great knowers of the Vedas and the *Mahāyajvās* are priests like Bhāgurī Muni who are performing great sacrifices."

Vraja's priest Śrī Bhāgurī Muni has pure parental love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and in this verse the characteristics of his pure parental love are described.

Desiring Kṛṣṇa's welfare, Śrī Nanda's priest Śrī Bhāgurī Muni is always coming to Nanda's house to give Śrī Nanda-Nandana His *rakṣā-bandhana* (protecting bracelet) and to offer Him words of benediction.

Śrī Nanda, Yaśodā and other loving devotees in the pure parental mood believe that all these *brāhmaṇas* are devoid of fault finding, falsehood, arrogance, envy, violence and false pride and that the blessings of *brāhmaṇas* who are fixed in truthfulness, transcendental consciousness and knowledge of the Vedas never go in vain.

ye'sūyānṛta dambherṣyā himsā māna vivarjitāḥ

na teṣāṃ satya-śīlānāṃ āśiṣo viphalāḥ kṛtāḥ

(Bhāgavata 10.7.13)

For this reason Nanda and Yaśomatī, afraid of any disturbance caused by demons, always call the great Veda-knower Bhāgurī Muni to Nandālaya to perform protective rituals and offer Him words of benediction.

When the king of *munis*, Śrī Bhāgurī, enters Nandālaya, Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā and others think that the embodiment of all the Vedas is residing amongst them. Factually the Vedas themselves take shelter of Nanda's priest in order to get blessed with even the slightest devotional service to Śrī Nanda-Nandana, Who is the goal of all Vedic knowledge.

Although the Personified Vedas take shelter of the king of *munis* Bhāgurī, he himself has not even the slightest feeling of awe and reverence towards Śrī Nanda-Nandana, for he considers Him to be just a Vrajavāsī. In a feeling of purely sweet love, he enters Nandālaya and first offers protective *mantras* to each of Murārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs before offering Him words of benediction and smelling His head with great parental love.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda describes the *anubhāvas* (external symptoms) of the parental-*rasa* as follows:

*anubhāvāḥ śiroghrāṇaṃ kareṇāṅgābhimārjanam
āśīrbādo nideśaś ca lālanam pratipālanam
hitopadeśa dānādyā vatsale parikīrtitāḥ*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.41)

"Smelling the head, rubbing the body with the hands, offering words of benediction and permission, cuddling,

rearing and giving instruction for the child's benefit - these are the activities of parental love."

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha has called Śrī Kṛṣṇa 'Mura-ripu', or the enemy of the demon named Mura. This means that the lovers of Kṛṣṇa who take shelter of the pure mood of parental love which is devoid of even the slightest whiff of awe and reverence, are worried about His safety and therefore place a protecting bracelet on His wrist. Although the burning power of fire is present everywhere, it is stunned by the Candrakānti-gem.

Revealing the extraordinary power of Mother Yaśodā's parental love, Śrīpāda Śuka Muni has said:

*trayyā copaniṣadbhis ca
sāṅkhya-yogaiś ca sātvataiḥ
upagīyamāna māhātmyam
hariṁ sāmānyatāmajam*

(Bhāgavata 10.8.45)

"Yaśodā considered Śrī Hari, Whose glories are always praised by the three Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and the Sātvata-scriptures, to be just her son."

Such is the power of pure parental love of God and it is in this consciousness that Śrī Bhāgurī considers Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be Nanda's son.

Śrīpāda says: "I praise the lotus feet of this king of sages, Śrī Bhāgurī!"

*purohita śreṣṭha yei ei vraja-dhāme;
mantra pāṭhe āśiṣa kore śrī nandanandane
govindera śānti hauk vāsanā antare;
mastaka āghrāṇa kore ati sneha bhare*

*nikhila nigama śāstra mūrtimān hoiyā
yāre āśraya koreche dhanya ho'bāra lāgiyā
se munīndra bhāgurīra yugala caraṇa;
pratyaha vandanā kori loiyā śaraṇa*

"I daily praise and take shelter of the lotus feet of Bhāguri, the king of Munis, the greatest priest of Vraja, who blesses Śrī Nanda-Nandana by reciting *mantras* on His limbs, desiring in his heart: 'May Govinda be in peace!'; who smells His head with great affection and of whom the embodied Vedic scriptures take shelter to have themselves blessed."

VERSE 21:

**kṛṣṇasyocaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ sampravīṇaḥ sakhinām
śyāmāṅgas tat-sama-guṇam vayo-veśa-saundarya-darpaḥ |
snehād andhaḥ kṣaṇam akalanāj jāyate yo'vadhūtaḥ
śrīdāmānam hari-sahacaram sarvadā tam prapadye**

kṛṣṇasya - Kṛṣṇa's; *uccaiḥ* - greatest; *praṇaya* - love; *vasatiḥ* - abode; *sampravīṇaḥ* - highly expert; *sakhinām* - of all the boyfriends; *śyāma* - blackish; *aṅgaḥ* - body; *tat* - Kṛṣṇa's; *sama* - same; *guṇa* - attributes; *vayaḥ* - age; *veśa* - dress; *saundarya* - beauty; *darpaḥ* - pride; *snehāt* - out of affection; *bandhoḥ* - of the friend; *kṣaṇam* - for a moment; *akalanāt* - because of not seeing; *jāyate* - becomes; *yah* - who; *avadhūtaḥ* - unsteady; *śrīdāmānam* - unto Śrīdāma; *hari sahacaram* - Hari's friend; *sarvadā* - always; *tam* - of Him; *prapadye* - I take shelter.

I always take shelter of the feet of Hari's best friend Śrīdāma, who is the greatest object of Kṛṣṇa's love; who

is the most expert of His friends; who is of blackish complexion; who is very proud of having the same qualities, age, dress and beauty as Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who becomes very unsteady when he is separated from His friend for even a moment.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: With the support of the Vedic scriptures, the Gosvāmīs have preached the most intimate spiritual truth to the world that in Him, Who always sports in evergreen pastimes in Vṛndāvana as the topmost embodiment of *rasa*, immersed in relishing the flavours of love with His companions, the summit of *rasa* is present.

By hearing and chanting about the various wonderful and sweet exchanges of love between *rasa-ghana-vigraha* Śyāmasundara (the embodiment of condensed spiritual flavours) and His companions in Vraja, this self-manifest transcendental *rasa* also becomes infused within the practising devotees. This is the teaching of the Gosvāmīs, that becomes accomplished by hearing and chanting this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava. In this verse Śrī Raghunātha dāsa describes the great love of Kṛṣṇa's best friend Śrīdāma.

*vayas tulyāḥ priya-sakhāḥ sakhyaṁ kevalam āsritāḥ;
śrīdāmā ca sudāmā ca dāmā ca vasudāmakāḥ
kīṅkiṇī stoka-kṛṣṇāṁśu bhadrasena vilāsinaḥ;
puṇḍarīka vīṭāṅkāḥśa kalaviṅkādayo'pyamī
ramayanti priyasakhāḥ kelibhir vividhaiḥ sadā;
niyuddha daṇḍa yuddhādi kautukair api keśavam*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.3.36-38)

"Those who equal Kṛṣṇa in age and have exclusive fraternal love for Him are called *priya-sakhās*. Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, Dāmā, Vasudāmā, Kiṅkiṇī, Stoka-kṛṣṇa, Aṁśu, Bhadrasena, Vilāsī, Puṇḍarīka, Viṭāṅka and Kalaviṅka are amongst those *priya-sakhās* who constantly delight Śrī Kṛṣṇa with games like arm-wrestling and stick-fighting."

eṣu priya vayasyeṣu śrīdāmā pravaro mataḥ (ibid. 40) "The greatest of these *priya sakhās* is **Śrīdāmā**."

About Śrīdāmā's form Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*vāsaḥ piṅgaṁ vibhrataṁ śṛṅga-pāṇiṁ
baddha spardham sauhṛdān mādhavena
tāmroṣṇīṣaṁ śyāma dhāmābhirāmaṁ
śrīdāmānaṁ dāma-bhājaṁ bhajāmi*

(ibid. 41)

"I worship Śrīdāmā, who wears a *piṅga* (a mixture of blue and yellow) dress; who holds a bugle-horn in his hand; who wears a copper-coloured turban; whose complexion is blackish and very enchanting; who wears a garland of forest flowers around the neck and who lovingly exchanges challenges with Mādhava." His friendship is also most extraordinary.

*tvaṁ naḥ projhva kaṭhōra yāmuna taṭe kasmād akasmād gato
diṣṭyā dṛṣṭim ito'si hanta niviḍāśleṣaiḥ sakhīn praṇaya
brūmaḥ satyam adarśane tava manāk kā dhenavaḥ ke vayanṁ
kiṁ goṣṭham kim abhīṣṭam ityacirataḥ sarvaṁ viparyasyati*

(ibid. 42)

"O cruel One! Why did You abandon us so suddenly on the bank of the Yamunā? Fortunately we found You now again! Aho! Satisfy Your friends with a firm embrace! O Kṛṣṇa! I tell You the truth: out of separation from You, the cows, we ourselves, the *goṣṭha* and indeed all desirable objects become unattractive within a moment!"

Therefore it is said in the verse: *snehād bandhoḥ kṣaṇam akalanāj jāyate yo'vadhūtaḥ*

"Out of love he feels very unsteady when he does not see his friend (Kṛṣṇa) for even a moment."

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has described such great affection and exclusive dedication of Vraja's friends for Kṛṣṇa - *kṣaṇādarśanato dīnāḥ sadā saha vihāriṇaḥ; tad eka jīvitāḥ proktā vayasyā vraja-vāsināḥ*. "The friends in Vraja are always enjoying with Him and they are extremely upset when they are separated from Him for even a moment, for Kṛṣṇa is their very life."

kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ "Śrīdāma is the **greatest object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's love.**"

The advanced stage of *prema* called *viśrambha* turns into *praṇaya* — "*viśrambhaḥ priyajanena saha sasyābheda mananam*":

"*viśrambha* means that the lover feels as if he is non-different from the beloved." This means that the limbs like the hands and the feet of the beloved are felt as non-different from one's own hands and feet.

praṇaya is the birthplace of *sakhya rasa* and Śrīdāma is the leader of the *priya-sakhās*, so he also holds the chief post in *praṇaya*. Thus it is said: *tat sama guṇa vayo veśa saundarya darpaḥ* "

He is proud of having the same qualities, dress, age and beauty as Kṛṣṇa.

Actually those who are equal to Śrī Hari in form, qualities and dress do not have any feeling of hesitation and reverence like the servants and because they have deep faith they are glorified as *vayasya* (friends)."

rūpa veṣa guṇādyais tu samāḥ samyag ayantritāḥ; viśrambha sambhṛtātmano vayasyaś tasya kīrtitāḥ (B.R.S: 3.3.8)

"Although this is said about all the friends of Kṛṣṇa there is a special part about Śrīdāma: the different servants know this. Thus Kṛṣṇa's friends told Him when He lifted Govardhana Hill

*unnidrasya yayus tavātra viratiṁ sapta kṣapās tiṣṭhato
hanta śānta ivāsi nikṣipa sakhe śrīdāma pāṇau girim
ādhi vidhyati nas tvam arpayā kare kiṁ vā kṣaṇam dakṣiṇe
doṣṇas te karavāma kāmam adhunā savyasya samvāhanam*

(ibid - 18)

"O friend! You have spent seven nights standing here without sleeping; aho! You must be tired now, so hand the mount over to **Śrīdāma**. We feel distressed when we see You suffering like this. Otherwise, just hold the mount with Your right hand for a while and we will nicely massage Your left arm."

The purport of the *sakhās'* suggestion that Śrī Kṛṣṇa should now hand Girirāja over to Śrīdāma is, that of all the *sakhās* Śrīdāma is equal to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the *śloka*, the pride of Śrīdāma is mentioned: this is a *sañcārī-bhāva* (transitory ecstasy) of fraternal love. That which moves the course of ecstatic love is called a *sañcārī-bhāva*. *Utsāha-rati* (enthusiasm) is infused in the mood of friendship

and in games like wrestling, the friends make Śrī Kṛṣṇa happy, who is dearer to them than millions of lives.

*kāḷindī taṭa bhuvī patra śṛṅga vaṁśī
nikkvāṇair iha mukharī-kṛtāmbarāyām
visphurjann aghadamanena yoddhu-kāmaḥ
śrīdāmā parikaram udbhaṭam babandha*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 2.5.59)

"On the bank of the Yamunā, the sky was filled with sounds of leaves, horns and flutes as Śrīdāmā showed his pride by tightly tying his scarf around his waist and preparing to fight Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

How this pride nourishes dual fights like wrestling can be best known from the book named Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta:

*are kiṁ śrīdāman vadasi mama dor-argala balat
taṭi loṭhi-ghaṭṭa praghaṭana nipiṣṭākhīla tano
viramyājer nāmno'pyapasara madādambabalava
sphuṭat karṇo'bhyaṛṇād yadi sapadi saṁ vāṅchasi bhṛṣam
jayaśrīḥ śrīdāmni prathita mahasān dhāmni sahasā vyarājīd
rājiṣyaty avakalaya rājaty api sadā
tavaivaṁsaḥ sāksī bhavati tad api tvam bhajasi kiṁ
mukhātopī kopī sva mahima vilopī capalatām
bakīm mātrair viprā nidhanam anayat yaḥ punar aghas
tad antaras tvam sarve vāyam api na kiṁ hanta yayima
bakaḥ kair vā gaṇyo girir api tad eṣṭaḥ svayam aho
vīyaty asthādstaujasi bhavati garvah katham abhūt
sa ittham tat prāṇārbuda niyuta nirmaṅcha kiraṇau
raṇotsāham sāhankṛti bhaṅita pīyūṣa pṛṣataiḥ*

*samañ mitrair dvi trair upasarid amandañ vipulayana
kṣaṇañ ninye mūrta praṇayasya eva praṇayibhiḥ*

(Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta 16,5-8)

(While playing ball, Śrīdāma spoke proudly to Kṛṣṇa, so Kṛṣṇa told him:) "A-re Śrīdāman! What are you saying? Don't you remember that the stories of my glories bust open your ears and that I almost crushed your whole body with My bolt-like arms, wielding a rod? If you desire your own welfare, then you should get out right after hearing the word 'armfight'!"

Śrīdāma said: "Śrīdāma, who is famous as the abode of power, has been victorious, is victorious and will remain victorious. This can be seen on Your shoulders (Śrīdāma sat there after defeating Kṛṣṇa in a game, see Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.18.24), but You still diminish Your own glories by showing Your restlessness with Your angry and proud face? You're so proud of killing all these demons but for no reason, because the *brāhmaṇas* killed Pūtanā with their *mantras*. And by the way, did You enter Aghāsura's belly alone or what? Who will even count Bakāsura? And if You say: 'I lifted Govardhana Hill', then I'll say it went up in the air by itself, being pleased with our Govardhana *pūjā* (You only had to stand under it, touching the bottom with Your hand)! Why are You so proud?"

"O *sakhīs*", Candana-kalā said, "in this way Kṛṣṇa became very enthusiastic to fight with His friends, who worshipped His splendid rays with millions of hearts by sprinkling Him with the nectardrops of their proud words. Being love personified, He spent some time with two or three of these friends on the bank of the Yamunā."

Śrī Raghunātha said: "I take shelter at the lotus feet of this dear friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, named Śrīdāma!"

*śrī kṛṣṇera atīśaya priya-pātra yini
 vayasya-gaṇa madhye yāre supravīṇa gaṇi
 saundarya, guṇa veśa vayasa samāna;
 sarvadā ānande yei kore abhimāna
 kṣaṇakāla śrī govinda ho'le adarsana;
 snehete adhika yini vyākulita hon
 śrī govinda priya-sakhā śrīdāma nāma yāra;
 sarvadā tāhāre pāi ākāṅkṣā āmāra*

"I pray that I may always attain Śrī Govinda's dear friend named Śrīdāma, who is the object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great love; who is counted as the leader of all of Kṛṣṇa's friends; who is always blissfully proud of the fact that he is equal to Kṛṣṇa in beauty, qualities, dressing and age and who is very much agitated by the pangs of loving unsteadiness when he does not see Śrī Govinda for even a moment."

VERSE 22:

**gāḍhānurāga-bhavato virahasya bhītyā
 svapne'pi gokula-vidhor na jahāti hastam |
 yo rādhikā-praṇaya-nirjhara-sikta-cetā-
 taṁ prema-vihvala-tanuṁ subalaṁ namāmi**

gāḍha - deep; *anurāga* - passionate love; *bharataḥ* - filled with; *virahasya* - of separation; *bhītyā* - with fear; *svapne* - in dreams; *api* - even; *gokula vidhoḥ* - of the moon of Gokula; *na* - not; *jahāti* - leaving; *hastam* - hands; *yaḥ* - who; *rādhikā praṇaya* - Rādhikā's love; *nirjhara* - stream; *sikta* - sprinkled; *cetāḥ* - consciousness; *taṁ* - him; *prema* -

love; *vihvala* - overwhelmed; *tanuṁ* - body; *subalaṁ* - Subala; *namāmi*
- I offer my obeisances.

I offer my obeisances unto Subala, the embodiment of overwhelming love, who loves Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Gokula, so much that even in his dreams he won't let go of His hand, afraid he will be separated from Him, and whose heart is showered by the stream of Śrī Rādhikā's love.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Kṛṣṇa's *priya-narma-sakhā* Śrī Subala. The *priya narma sakhās* are Kṛṣṇa's greatest friends in Vraja, and of them Subala is the chief.

*priya narma vayasyās tu pūrvato'pyabhito varāḥ;
atyantika rahasyeṣu yuktā bhāva viśeṣiṇaḥ;
subalārjuna gandharvās te vasantojjvalādayaḥ.*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.3.43)

"The *priya narma sakhās* are greater even than the *suhṛt-sakhās* and *priya-sakhās*, because they have a special mood towards Kṛṣṇa (an absorption of *sakhī-bhāva*) and are engaged in very intimate services (like secretly assisting Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts). Subala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vasanta, Ujjvala and Madhumaṅgala are some of Kṛṣṇa's *priya-narma*-friends."

Their intimate friendship is depicted as follows:

*rādhā-sandeśa-vṛndāṁ kathayati subalaḥ paśya kṛṣṇasya karṇe
śyāmā kandarpa-lekhaṁ nibhṛtam upaharatyujjvalaḥ paṇi-padme
pālī tāmbūlam āsye vitarati caturāḥ kokilo mūrdhṇi-dhatte
tārā-dāmeti narma praṇayi sahararās tanvi tanvanti sevām*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.3.44)

"One of Kṛṣṇa's *dūtīs* (girl-messenger) told another one: 'Look, Subala is whispering news about Rādhā into Kṛṣṇa's ear. Ujjvala places Śyāmā's love-letter into His lotushand in a secret place. Catura places a *pān* in His mouth from Pālī and Kokila places a garland made by Tārā on His head. In this way the *priya-narma-sakhās* remain engaged in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service!"

priya narma vayasyeṣu prabalau subalajjvalau (ibid.- 45)
 "Subala and Ujjvala are the greatest of the *priya-narma-sakhās*."

Subala's beauty is extraordinary -

*tanu ruci vijita hiraṇyam hari-dayitaṁ hāriṇam harid vasanam
 subalaṁ kuvalaya-nayanaṁ nayanandita bāndhavaṁ vande*

(*ibid* 46)

"I praise Hari's dear friend Subala, whose bodily luster defeats gold; who wears a necklace and a green *dhotī*; whose eyes resemble blue lotus flowers and who delights his friends!"

Śrī Raghunātha says: "...he who loves Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Gokula, so much that even in his dreams he won't let go of His hand, afraid he will be separated from Him." A great lover cannot tolerate separation from the beloved.

In *sakhya-bhāva*, the separation from the beloved is naturally felt very strongly. For a *śānta-bhakta*, there is neither meeting nor separation. They know that the Lord, Who is the Supreme Brahman, pervades the world warp and woof. Therefore their hearts are peaceful and still like the quiet ocean. The ocean of their hearts is not stirred by waves of

meeting and separation. They are always satisfied by seeing the Lord in their hearts. The *dāsa-bhaktas* (servant-devotees) however cannot be satisfied simply by seeing the Lord within the heart. They are anxious to attain the service of His lotus feet. Therefore they experience meeting and separation.

Still, under the influence of hesitation and reverence, they think that they cannot remove these feelings of separation by themselves without the grace of the Lord and so they look towards the Lord for His merciful glance and get back some peace of mind.

But the Lord's friends in Vraja almost die of misery and lamentation when they don't see Him even for a moment. Of them again Subala is called *gādhānurāgī*, which means that not only in the daytime, when he is awake, he is afraid to be separated from Kṛṣṇa, but even in his dreams he does not let go of His hand!

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called Gokula-vidhu or the moon of Gokula, because like the moon, he cools off the senses (*go-kula*) of Śrī Subala, who is afflicted by feelings of separation from Him.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa sports with Śrī Rādhā and other sweethearts, the *līlā-śakti* arranges for Him to be separated from His cowherd boyfriends for a while. But the *priya-narma-sakhās* like Subala, who have taken shelter of *sakhī-bhāva*, are not even separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He unites with His sweethearts.

Therefore Śrī Raghunātha says: *yo rādhikā praṇaya nirjhara sikta cetāḥ* "Subala is always showered by the stream of Śrī Rādhikā's love."

Śrī Rādhārāṇī loves Subala even more than Her own life-airs, because he is Her greatest assistant in meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Subala, who takes shelter of *sakhī-bhāva* in the ultimate stage, is blessed with the qualification to render many intimate

services during Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes of meeting, by Śrīmatī's grace.

*pratyāvartayati prasādyā lalanām kṛiḍā kali-prasthitām
śayyām kuñja-grhe karotyaghabhidaḥ kandarpa-līlocitām
svinnam vījayati priyā hṛdi parisrastāṅgam uccair amuṁ
kva śrīmān adhikāritām naḥ subalaḥ sevā vidhau vindati*

(Ujjvala Nilamaṇi 2.14)

Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī addressed a girlfriend who was very devoted to Subala, saying: "Sakhi! For which services to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Śrīmān Subala not eligible? When a quarrel arises between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His beloveds in the course of their pastimes, Subala goes to Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts and pacifies them with different humble words, thus convincing them to return to Him. He makes a wonderful playbed fit for erotic pastimes for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *kuñja*-cottages and when Kṛṣṇa becomes tired of love making and falls on His beloved's (Śrī Rādhā's) breasts being exhausted, Subala picks up a fan and fans Them."

Another explanation we have already mentioned: the word *praṇaya* means that the beloved considers his own hands and feet to be non-different from the hands and feet of the beloved. The *līlā-śakti* works so wonderfully that there is an amazing similarity between Subala's face, hands and feet and the same limbs of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, so that Subala can wear Rādhā's dress and stay in Jaṭilā's house, while Śrī Rādhā can go out to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa dressed like Subala without Jaṭilā or Kuṭilā noticing anything.¹⁷

¹⁷ This pastime is narrated in detail by *padakartā* Dīnabandhu dāsa.

Because Subala renders such wonderful services by which he saves *virahinī* Rādhā's life, Śrī Rādhā constantly showers him with the stream of Her love. Śrī Raghunātha offers his obeisances to this Śrī Subala, who is called *prema-vihvala-tanu*, the embodiment of ecstatic loving devotional service.

*gāḍha anurāge yei viraha bhayete;
svapne-o govinda hasta nā pāre chāḍite
śrī rādhāra aphuranta praṇaya nirjhare;
citta abhiṣikta yāra śuddha kalevara
kṛṣṇa preṣṭha se subala sakhāya namaskāra*

"I offer my obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa's dear friend Subala, who, out of great loving fear cannot let go of Govinda's hand even in dreams; whose heart is constantly showered by the endless stream of Śrī Rādhā's love and whose pure transcendental body is filled with *prema*."

VERSE 23:

**kṛtvākatra gavāṁ kulāni paritaḥ kṛṣṇena sārddham mudā
hastāhasti vinoda-narma-kathanaiḥ khelanti mitrotkarāḥ |
premāmbhodhi-vidhauta-gaurava-mahā-paṅkāś tad-aṅkārcitā-
stat-pādārpita-citta-jīvita-kalā ye tān prapadyāmahe**

kṛtvā - having done; *ekatra* - together; *gavāṁ* - cows; *kulāni* - the herd; *paritaḥ* - everywhere; *kṛṣṇena sārddham* - with Kṛṣṇa; *mudā* - happily; *hastāhasti* - hand in hand; *vinoda* - pleasure; *narma* - joking; *kathanaiḥ* - with words; *khelanti* - they play; *mītra* - friend; *utkarāḥ* - with a multitude; *prema* - love; *ambhodhi* - ocean; *vidhauta* - washing; *gaurava* - pride or honour; *mahā* - great; *paṅkāś* - mud; *tad* - His; *aṅka*

- signs like the reed, flute, horn etc.; *arcitāḥ* - beautified; *tat* - His; *pāda* - feet; *arpita* - offered; *citta* - heart; *jivita* - lives; *kalā* - wealth; *ye* - who; *tān* - they; *prapadyāmahe* - I take shelter.

I take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's friends who gather the cows scattered here and there; who play and joke with Kṛṣṇa hand in hand; who have washed off the great mud of awe and reverence with the water from the ocean of their pure fraternal love; who are decorated with all the apparel of cowherd boys, like flutes, horns and reeds and who have offered their lives, hearts and wealth to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī praises all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's friends who have taken shelter of Vraja's pure fraternal love and with whom He accomplishes His sweet and wonderful *goṣṭha-vihāra* (pasturing-pastimes), immersed in laughter and joking:

*nija sama sakhā saṅge,
godhana cāraṇa raṅge;
vṛndāvane svacchanda vihāra
(C.C.)*

"He plays on an equal level with His friends, tending the cows and enjoying freely in Vṛndāvana." With their wonderfully sweet love they delight Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*kecideṣu sthirā jātyā mantrivat tam upāsate;
tam hāsayanti capalāḥ kecid vaihāsikopamāḥ
kecid ārjava sāreṇa saralāḥ śīlayanti tam;
vāmā vakrīma cakreṇa kecid vismāyanty amuṁ*

*kecit pragalbhāḥ kurvanti vitaṇḍām amunāsamam;
saumyāḥ sunṛtayā vācā dhanyā dhinvanti taṁ pare
evaṁ vividhayā sarve prakṛtyā madhurā amī;
pavitra maitrī vaicitrī cārutām upacinvate*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.3.53-56)

"Some friends are naturally steady and they give wise council to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Some are very naughty and light hearted and laugh while making Kṛṣṇa laugh. Some are very innocent and delight Kṛṣṇa with their sincere behaviour. Some astonish Him with their crooked nature. Some boldly challenge Him in a debate and some gentle and blessed friends give Him love with their sweet words. In this way, all these friends expertly serve Kṛṣṇa with their different sweet natures, born from their pure fraternal love."

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises the cowherd boyfriends and describes their sweet activities, remembering the time when Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes His herd of cows back home in the afternoon (*uttara-goṣṭha*).

The cowherd boys leave the cows to graze in Śrī Vṛndāvana's extensive pasturing fields and all become absorbed in playing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Then the time for *Uttara-goṣṭha* approaches and by addressing Śrīdāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells His friends:

*pāla jaḍa koro śrīdāma, sāna deo śiṅgāya
saghane viśama khāi, nāma kore māy
āji māṭhe āmādera vilamba dekhiyā
heno bujhi kānde māya patha pāne cāiyā
beli avasāna hoilo colo yāi ghare
māye nā dekhiyā prāṇa kemon jāni kore*

*balarāma dāsa kohe śuni kānāira bola
sakala rākhāla mājhe paḍe utarola*

(Pada Kalpataru)

"O Śrīdāma! Collect the herd by blowing your horn! My mother was repeatedly calling Me in great anxiety.

I understand that My mother is weeping and looking out for Me over the forest path seeing that we are returning late from the meadows! Time is up! Come on, let's go home! How can I remain alive without seeing My mother?"

Balarāma dāsa says: "Hearing Kānāi's words all the cowherd boys made a great tumult."

Hearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words, the cowherd boys collected the cows that were wandering here and there in the woods. Breathing deeply in and out because of the hard work, these friends play all kinds of delightful games like holding hands with Kṛṣṇa or they show great ecstasy while massaging His hands and head on the way home. Meanwhile they are taking their cows along, playing and making many funny jokes.

When Kṛṣṇa returns home from the meadows, the greatest gods like Brahmā and Śiva daily appear before Him, offering all kinds of reverential prayers and praises unto Him. Then they return to their own abodes.

While the gods offer these praises to Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boys stand by and listen. When the gods have left, they come before Kṛṣṇa and imitate their gestures and words, joking about them and making thus Kṛṣṇa laugh. These friends who have taken shelter of the feelings of pure fraternal love think to themselves:

"How well do these gods know our friend? When they see Śrī Kṛṣṇa killing a demon or so, they mistakenly think Him to be

the Supreme Lord and praise Him as such. But only we know the secrets about Him. As a result of Vrajarāja Śrī Nanda's worship of Lord Nārāyaṇa, our friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been empowered by Lord Nārāyaṇa so that He was able to kill all those demons. Because the gods are not aware of this secret they call our friend Īsvara (God)! If our friend was really God, then why would He snatch food already eaten by us (*ucchiṣṭa*) from our hands? And how could He be defeated by us in play?"¹⁸ Those friends who have taken shelter of pure fraternal love thus make Kṛṣṇa laugh with their joking imitations of the gods' prayers.

Śrī Raghunātha says: *premāmbhodhi vidhauta gaurava mahā pañkāḥ* "The great mud of their awe and reverence has been washed off by an ocean of pure fraternal love."

They have given their wealth, minds, hearts and everything to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. What to speak of wakefulness, even in their dreams they do not know anything else but Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When He lies on His mother's lap at night they call out 'Kānāi! Kānāi!' and He wakes up with a startle.

Śrī Raghunātha desires the shelter of the lotus feet of these friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who are so sweetly decorated with clothes and ornaments like horns and reeds for their duty of herding the cows.

*vikṣipta gābhīgaṇe ekatra koriyā;
govindera saṅge yārā ānande mātiyā
hastāhasti kori yārā govinda sahite;
hāsya parihāse khele kautuka vākyete
kṛṣṇera parama mitra khyāti sarva kāle;
abhimāna mahāpañka premāmbhodhi jale*

¹⁸ This pastime is described in chapter 19 of Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta.

*prakṣāḷana koriyāche yādera śuddha mana;
 gocāraṇa veśa yādera aṅgera bhūṣaṇa
 yārā nija mana, prāṇa, saravasa dhana;
 śrī govinda pāda padme koreche arpaṇa
 sei kṛṣṇa saha-care śrī vṛndāvane;
 bhajanā koribo āmi āra koto dine*

"How many days still before I can worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa's friends in Vṛndāvana who collect their scattered cows; who are mad of ecstasy to be in Govinda's association: who hold hands with Him; who joke and play with Him, speaking funny words; who are always famous as Kṛṣṇa's greatest friends; whose pure minds have washed the great mud of awe and reverence off with water from the ocean of pure love; who are dressed and ornamented like cowherd boys and who have offered their minds, life-airs and wealth to the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda?"

VERSE 24:

**mūrto hāsya-rasaḥ sadaiva sumanāḥ kāmāṁ bubhukṣāturaḥ
 prāṇa-preṣṭha-vayasyayor anudinaṁ vāg-deha-bhaṅgy-utkaraiḥ |
 hāsyam̐ yo madhumaṅgalaḥ prakāṭayan sambhrājate kautukī
 taṁ vṛndāvana-candra-narma-sacivaṁ prītyāśu vandāmahe**

mūrtaḥ - embodiment; *hāsya-rasaḥ* - of the mellow of laughter; *sadā* - always; *eva* - only; *sumanāḥ* - blissful mind; *kāmāṁ* - desire; *bubhukṣa* - desiring to eat; *āturaḥ* - overwhelmed; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *preṣṭha* - dear; *vayasyayoḥ* - of the two friends; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *vāk* - words; *deha* - body; *bhaṅgi* - gesture; *utkaraiḥ* - with a multitude; *hāsyam̐* - laughter; *yaḥ* - who; *madhumaṅgalaḥ* - Madhumaṅgala; *prakāṭayan* - reveals; *sambhrājate* - shines; *kautukī* -

funny; *taṁ* - him; *vṛndāvana candra* - Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Vṛndāvana; *narma* - intimate, or joking; *sacivaṁ* - friend; *prītyā* - with love; *āśu* - swiftly; *vandāmahe* - we praise.

We lovingly praise Madhumaṅgala, the funniest friend of Vṛndāvana-Candra (Kṛṣṇa), who is the embodiment of the mellow of laughter; who is always happy; who is always very hungry and who always immerses his dear most friends Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mellow of laughter with his funny words and the many funny movements of his body.

Stavāmrta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Madhumaṅgala, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear friend and *hāsya rasika* (connoisseur in joking).

In relation to him the following is written in Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Gaṇoddeśa-Dīpikā (2.63-65):

*īṣac chyāmala varṇo'pi śrī madhumaṅgalo bhavet
vasanaṁ gaura varṇādhyāṁ vanamālā virājitaḥ
pitā sāndīpanir devo mātā ca sumukhī satī
nāndīmukhī ca bhaginī paurṇamāsī pitāmahī
vidūṣakaḥ kṛṣṇa-sakhaḥ śrī madhumaṅgalaḥ sadā*

"Śrī Madhumaṅgala who always serves as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's clownish friend has a slightly blackish complexion. He wears a golden dress and around his neck he has a garland of forest flowers. His father is the *brāhmaṇa* Sāndīpani Muni and his mother is the chaste Sumukhī. His sister is named Nāndīmukhī and his grandmother is Paurṇamāsī."

vikṛtāṅga-vaco-veśair hāsyakārī vidūṣakaḥ "As a real clown, he deranges his body, words and dress and thus makes everyone laugh."

*kusuma vasantādyabhidhaḥ karma vapur veśa-bhāṣādair
hāsyakaraḥ kalaha ratir vidūṣakaḥ syāt svakarmajñah*

(Sāhitya Darpaṇa)

"A clown is usually named after a flower or a season like the spring. He can create the *hāsyā-rasa* with his activities, body (gestures), clothes, ornaments and words and he is always fond of quarrelling. A friend with such qualities is called a *vidūṣaka* or clown (he is very fond of eating also)."

In Vraja the greatest shelter for *hāsyā-rasa* is **Madhumaṅgala**. He is like the **embodiment of laughter**. In other words, even when Madhumaṅgala is not present, his mere remembrance causes Śrī Kṛṣṇa to relish the sweet *hāsyā-rasa* when He talks about him with His friends or with Śrī Rādhā and the Vraja-sundarīs. And when he is present, his natural way of dressing and ornamenting, the movements of his limbs, his choice of words or his changing of his voice are the greatest incitements for laughter. What to speak then of when he really starts his funny gestures and words!

We have said that all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's friends are naturally endowed with sweet natures and that they naturally delight Him with their various feelings and activities. *hāsyā* is a secondary *bhakti-rasa* and it is relishable as one of the shelters of the five *rasas*, like *śānta-rasa*, thereby attaining the status of *sañcāri-bhāva* (transitory ecstasy):

śānta dāsyā sakhya vātsalya madhura rasa nāma;

*kṛṣṇa bhakti rasa madhye e pañca pradhāna
hāsyādbhuta bīra karuṇa raudra vibhatsa bhaya;
pañca vidha bhakte gauṇa sapta rasa hoy
pañca rasa sthāyī vyāpī rohe bhakta mane;
sapta gauṇa āgantuka pāyīe kāraṇe*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya Ch.19)

“There are five basic flavours in Kṛṣṇa-devotion: tranquility, servitude, friendship, parental love and sweet (amorous) love. There are seven secondary flavours in each of the main five: laughter, wonder, chivalry, pity, anger, disgust and fear. (One of) These five main flavours dwells in the devotees’ mind, while the seven secondary flavours are coming as ‘visitors’ “.

When the heart is blooming due to some perversion of the words, dress or activities, then this is called laughter. This causes a widening of the eyes and a tremor in the nose, lips and cheeks. *hāsa-rati* is a kind of bliss originating from activities related to Kṛṣṇa and that is blessed (nourished) by *rati*, which has itself a nature of contraction (hesitation).

*ceto vikāso hāsaḥ syād vāg veśehādi vaikṛtāt
sa dṛg vikāsa nāsauṣṭha kapola spandanādi kṛt
kṛṣṇa sambandhi ceṣṭotthaḥ svayam saṅkucad ātmanā
ratyānugrhyamāno’yam hāso hāsa ratir bhavet*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 2.5.52 and 53)

Hāsyā-rasika Baṭu Madhumaṅgala is always happy and he is always very hungry for nice food. In books like Govinda-Lilāmṛta and Kṛṣṇa-Bhāvanāmṛta, one can find descriptions of how *bhojana-lampaṭa* (the greedy eater) Madhumaṅgala makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva, Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her *sakhīs* and mothers

like Yaśodā and Rohiṇī relish a wonderful *hāsya-rasa* when they are having breakfast in Nanda's abode in the morning.

Śrī Madhumaṅgala also immerses Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva during their morning *goṣṭha*-pastimes and Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their *sakhīs* during Their midday-pastimes in the water of Rādhākunḍa, during Their picnic, the game of dice and the Sūrya Pūjā in a wonderful *hāsya-rasa*.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha said: "We lovingly praise the funniest friend of Śrī Vṛndāvana-Candra, Śrī Madhumaṅgala."

*mūrtimān hāsya rasa sadā hr̥ṣṭa mana;
 bubhukṣāra paravaśa yei jana
 vāg deha bhaṅgī dvārā yei prati dina;
 vṛndāvane prāṇādhika yugala navina
 hāsya rase nimagana koriteche sadā;
 kautuka līlāra sahāya vrajete sarvadā
 kautuka priya yei vṛndāvana candra;
 tānhāra ānanda dātā koriyā prabandha
 madhura maṅgala nāma 'śrī madhumaṅgala';
 sabe ḍāke 'baṭu baṭu' ativa sarala
 suddha sakhya bhāve yei govinda saṅgete;
 sarvadā vihare sadā vandiye tānhāke*

"We always praise the happy fellow who embodies the mellow of laughter; who is completely overwhelmed by greed for nice food; who always immerses the Adolescent Pair of Vṛndāvana, Who is dearer to him than life in the mellow of laughter with his crazy words and gestures; who always assists Vṛndāvana-Candra (Kṛṣṇa); who is so fond of having fun in all kinds of humorous games and thus always delights Him; who bears the sweet and auspicious name Śrī Madhumaṅgala, but

whom everyone always simply calls ‘Baṭu!’ and who always sports with Govinda in pure fraternal love."

VERSE 25:

**gūḍham̐ tat-suvidagdhātārcita-sakhī-dvāronnayantī tayoh
premnā suṣṭhu vidagdhayor anudinaṁ mānābhisārotsavaḥ |
rādhā-mādhavayoh sukhamṛta-rasaṁ yaivopabhuṅkte muhur
goṣṭhe bhavya-vidhāyinīm bhagavatīm tām paurṇamāsīm bhaje**

gūḍham̐ - secretly; *tat* - Their; *suvidagdhātā* - cleverness; *arcita* - worshipped; *sakhī* - girlfriend; *dvārā* - through; *unnayanti* - increasing; *tayoh* - of the two; *premnā* - with love; *suṣṭhu* - nicely; *vidagdhayoh* - of the two clever ones; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *māna* - loving pique; *abhisāra* - love-journey; *utsavam* - festival; *rādhā-mādhavayoh* - of Rādhā and Mādhava; *sukha* - bliss; *amṛta* - nectar; *rasaṁ* - flavour; *yā* - who; *eva* - only; *upabhuṅkte* - enjoys; *muhur* - repeatedly; *goṣṭhe* - in Vraja; *bhavya* - auspiciousness; *vidhāyinīm* - unto the establisher; *bhagavatīm* - the holy lady; *tām* - unto her; *paurṇamāsīm* - Paurṇamāsī; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship the holy mother Paurṇamāsī-devī, who always arranges for Vraja’s welfare; who secretly makes Lalitā and the most expert sakhīs lovingly and nicely nourish Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s festivals like māna (pique) and abhisāra (love-journey) and who always relishes the resultant nectarean blissful flavours.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the holy mother Śrī Paurṇamāsī-devī, who

is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā-potency, who is expert in accomplishing the impossible (*aghaṭana ghaṭana paṭīyasī*):

*paurṇamāsī bhagavatī sarva siddhi vidhāyini;
 kāṣāya vasanā gaurī kāśa keśi darāyatā
 mānyā vrajeśvarādīnām sarveṣāṃ vraja-vāsinām;
 devaṛṣeḥ priya-śiṣyeyam upadeśena tasya yā
 sāndīpaniṃ sutarṃ preṣṭhaṃ hitvāvanti purim api;
 svābhīṣṭa daivata premnā vyākulā gokularṃ gatā
 pitā surata devaś ca mātā candrakalā satī;
 prabalaś tu patis tasyā mahā-vidyā yaśaskarī
 bhrātāpi devaprasthaś ca vraje siddhā śiromaṇiḥ;
 nānā sandhāna kuśalā dvayoḥ saṅgama-kāriṇī*

(Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 1,67-69 and 2,90-91)

"The holy mother Paurṇamāsī brings about all perfections (she arranges all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, because she is Yogamāyā). Her dress is white, her complexion golden, her hair as white as a Kāśa-flower and her body is slightly tall.

She is respected by the king of Vraja and all other Vrajavāsīs. She is Devarṣi Nārada's dear disciple and on his advice she left her son, the famous Sāndīpani Muni (the teacher of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva) behind in her abode Avantīpura to come and live in Gokula, overcome by feelings of love for her beloved Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Her father is named Surata-deva and her mother is the chaste Candrakalā. Her husband is named Prabala. She is very famous for her magic arts and her knowledge and she is known in Vraja-maṇḍala as Siddhā or Yogīndrāṇī. Her brother is named Devaprastha. She is expert in investigating in different matters and she brings about all the intimate meetings of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

Vraja-dhāma is like an enchanting garden full of different flowers of love. Each associate there is a love-flower filled with the honey of *bhāva*, always intoxicating the heart of the Kṛṣṇa-honeybee.

In the scriptures it is seen that although the Lord is endless, before the devotee He becomes finite and although He is unlimited He becomes limited when He is held by the rope-like arms of His devotees. Although He has no (mundane) form He reveals His completely delicious form before the loving eyes of His devotees.

There is no limit to the good fortune of the Vraja-associates! Here, according to human customs, the Vraja-associates have out of great love completely accepted the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of *mora-putra*, *mora-sakhā more-prāṇa-pati* ("He is my son, He is my friend, He is the lover of My heart"), thus covering the awareness of all of His divine prowess.

The holy mother **Paurṇamāsī Yogamāyā** brings all this about, for she is expert in accomplishing the impossible (*aghaṭana ghaṭana paṭīyasī*).

In the Vraja-*līlā* more than anywhere else, *aghaṭana ghaṭana paṭīyasī* Yogamāyā can enchant and stimulate the Lord. There can be no *līlā* if there is no forgetfulness of *svarūpa*, the divine status. Just as the conditioned soul plays his *saṁsāra-līlā*, his game of material life, forgetting his real status (*svarūpa*) under the influence of *māyā*, similarly the *yoga-māyā*-potency, which is a part of the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti* (intrinsic energy) makes the Lord and his devotees forget their own divine status and lets them engage in their most blissful eternal intrinsic transcendental pastimes.

The holy mother Yogamāyā Paurṇamāsī covers the Lord's entire intrinsic prowess before His associates in Vraja so that they can mould Him as they like. This is her eternal welfare-work. Therefore she is called *bhavya-vidhāyinī* in the *goṣṭha*.

Although Bhagavatī Paurṇamāsī is greatly assisting in all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana-pastimes, she renders most of her service within the intimate erotic pastimes of Śrī Gopīnātha and the Śrī Gopikās.

*mo viṣaye gopīgaṇera upapati bhāve;
yogamāyā koribeka āpana prabhāve
āmiho nā jāni tāhā - nā jāne gopīgaṇa;
doṅhāra rūpa guṇe doṅhāra nitya hare mana
dharma chāḍi rāge doṅhe korāya milana;
kabhu mile, kabhu nā mile daivera ghaṭana*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi ch.4)

“Through her own power Yogamāyā makes the *gopīs* consider Me their paramour. I do not realize this, nor do the *gopīs* realize it. We always steal each others' minds with our qualities and forms. Out of passion, she makes us give up religious principles and meet each other. Sometimes we meet and sometimes we don't - it is up to providence (in the form of Yogamāyā).“

Although intrinsically the Vraja-*gopīs* belong to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's internal transcendental *svarūpa-śakti*-potency, they have such a passionate exchange of love with Him that it causes them to give up religious principles and forget what is proper and improper.

Plain (divine) passionate eagerness accomplishes their meeting. The Vraja-*devīs* thus see Kṛṣṇa as their paramour and

this is the most relishable position for a lady love. Such a meeting is the highest state of sweet amorous love: *parakīya bhāve ati rasera ullāsa*(C.C.)

"The highest joy of *rasa* is found in an extramarital affair."

Such a relish and bliss cannot be found in a free meeting between a hero and heroine. Unless there are many obstacles in a meeting there will be no assistance of feelings of great eagerness and without a great eagerness to meet, the relish of the meeting will be dimmed.

But how do Śrī Kṛṣṇa's consorts who belong to His intrinsic potency become aware of this feeling of adultery and how does the eagerness and anxiety for meeting swell in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*, so that this meeting will be accomplished? The full burden of this responsibility lies with the holy mother Yogamāyā Paurṇamāsī.

It has been arranged that billions of *gopīs* perform pastimes like the Rāsa-dance with Śrī Kṛṣṇa just to nourish the *bhāva* of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who is the crown jewel of Kṛṣṇa's lovers.

bahu kāntā vinā nahe rasera ullāsa (C.C.)

"There can be no joy of *rasa* without the presence of many lady loves."

Every day Paurṇamāsī-devī arranges for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes such as *māna* (pique), *abhisāra* (love-journey) or *milana* (meeting) through the agency of Lalitā and her most clever *sakhīs* and thus she most blissfully drowns in the *rasa*-ocean of *Yugala-līlās*.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship the lotus feet of this holy mother Paurṇamāsī-devī." The devoted practitioners also thoroughly need to worship Yogamāyā because she is the presiding goddess of the *samvid-amśa* (consciousness-particle)

of the Lord's *svarūpa śakti* (innate energy) called *bhakti* that spontaneously causes the devotees to experience and realize the truth about God within the heart.

This *yogamāyā*-potency which reveals the practising devotee's loving transcendental body through its *dravya-vṛtti* (materialising faculty) and which establishes the practising devotee's self-identification with either *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya-rasa* through its *guṇa-vṛtti* (attributing faculty), which infuses the spiritual body in the womb of a *gopī* at the time the practising devotee attains perfection and that blesses the practising devotee by bestowing direct devotional service in Vraja's human-like pastimes on him/her, this potency is manifest in Vraja in the personal form of **Śrī Paurṇamāsī**. Hence her mercy is indispensable for the practising devotee if he wishes to reach perfection.

*vaidagdhya caturā sakhī lalitādi dvāre;
cāturye korāna yini māna abhisāre
navīna śrī yugalera milana rasa raṅge;
upabhoga kore yei parama ānande
ei vraja-maṇḍalera kalyāṇa kāmanā;
ei yāra vrata, dhyāna, ei to sādhanā
sei paurṇamāsīra śrī caraṇa bhajibo;
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevā tabe to pāibo*

"I worship the lotus feet of Paurṇamāsī, who most blissfully makes the Navīna Yugala enjoy Their *rasika* pastimes of meeting, *māna* and *abhisāra* through the most clever *sakhīs* like Lalitā and whose only vow, meditation and practice is based on the desire for Vraja-Manḍala's welfare. In this way I will attain the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja."

VERSE 26:

**kharva-śmaśrum udāram ujjvala-kulaṁ gauram samānam sphurat-
pañcāśattama-varṣa-vandita-vayaḥ-krāntim pravīṇam vraje |
goṣṭheśasya sakhāyam unnatata-śrīdāmato'pi priya-
śrī-rādhām vṛṣabhānum udbhaṭa-yaśo-vrātam sadā tam bhaje**

kharva - small; *śmaśrum* - moustache; *udāram* - generous; *ujjvala* - brilliant; *kulaṁ* - family; *gauram* - golden; *samānam* - respectable; *sphurat* - manifest; *pañcāśattama* - fifty; *varṣa* - years; *vandita* - praised; *vayaḥ* - age; *krāntim* - attacked (by time for 50 years); *pravīṇam* - expert; *vraje* - in Vraja; *goṣṭheśasya* - of the king of Vraja; *sakhāyam* - friendship; *unnatata* - more elevated; *śrīdāmataḥ* - than Śrīdāma; *api* - even; *priya* - dear; *śrī rādhām* - Śrī Rādhā; *vṛṣabhānum* - Vṛṣabhānu; *udbhaṭa* - great; *yaśo-vrāta* - abundance of fame; *sadā* - always; *bhaje* - I worship.

I always worship the greatly famous king Vṛṣabhānu, who - has a small moustache, is very generous, comes from a brilliant dynasty, has a golden complexion, is greatly respected, is fifty years old, is very expert in Vraja; who is the greatest friend of Vraja's king Nanda and who loves his daughter Śrī Rādhā even more than his son Śrīdāma.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: For the fulfillment of his own aspirations Śrīpāda Raghunātha is praising Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu in this verse.

Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu is Śrī Rādhā's father who shines in all respects like the sun in the month of Jyeṣṭha (May-June, the sign of Taurus).

vṛṣabhānu pitā tasyā vṛṣabhānur ivojjvalaḥ (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 2,168). Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu is a great

reservoir of parental love and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearest beloved Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who is the Original Lakṣmī, has advented as his daughter. Without getting some insight into the glories of Śrī Rādhā one cannot understand the glories of Vṛṣabhānu-rājā.

*rādhikā hoyena kṛṣṇera praṇaya vikāra;
 svarūpa śakti 'hlādinī' nāma yāhāra
 hlādinī korāya kṛṣṇe ānandāsvādāna;
 hlādinī dvārāya kore bhaktera poṣaṇa
 hlādinīra sāra - 'prema',
 prema-sāra - 'bhāva';
 bhāvera paramakāṣṭhā - nāma mahābhāva
 mahābhāva svarūpā - śrī rādhā ṭhākurāṇī;
 sarva guṇa khani kṛṣṇa kāntā śiromaṇi*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"Rādhikā is a transformation of Kṛṣṇa's love, namely His intrinsic energy named 'Hlādinī'. Hlādinī causes Kṛṣṇa to relish transcendental bliss and nourishes the devotees. The essence of Hlādinī is *prema* (love of God) and the essence of *prema* is *bhāva*. The summit of *bhāva* is called *mahābhāva* and the embodiment of *mahābhāva* is Śrī Rādhārāṇī. She is the crown jewel of Kṛṣṇa's lovers and a mine full of attributes."

Just as the aggregate of form, flavour, scent, touch and sound is manifest in the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, similarly if no fully blown *mahābhāva*-eyes, tongue, nose, skin and ears are revealed, these complete and absolute sense-objects cannot be fully relished. And again: without a complete root-energy, no one is able to bear this full *mahābhāva*. Is there any limit to the glories of the man who has Śrī Rādhārāṇī for a daughter, Who is relishing the full sweetness of Kṛṣṇa, Who enters into all the innumerable devotees as a faculty to nourish

them by giving them *prema*, Who simultaneously makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa inwardly enjoy His own bliss as the Hlādinī-force and outwardly makes Him relish various pastimes in a personal form, Who is the very personification of Mahābhāva, the essence of *prema* and Who is a mine of all qualities and the crown jewel of all of Kṛṣṇa's consorts?

Śrīpāda Raghunātha has said: "The dynasty of Vṛṣabhānu Rājā is very splendid".

Śrī Nanda Mahārāja's dynasty is certainly also very bright, because the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa has advented in it, but the dynasty of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja is even more brilliant, because in his dynasty, *prema* Herself has advented. This is because even when one has attained the Lord one will remain deprived of relishing His sweetness without *prema*. Therefore the Lord Himself has established *prema* as being more important than He Himself.

Who can describe the glories of Vṛṣabhānu's dynasty, in which the Original Prema-Lakṣmī, the embodiment of complete love, Śrī Rādhā Herself, has advented as a daughter?

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: *śrīdāmo'pi priya śrī rādhā* "He loves his daughter Śrī Rādhā even more than his son Śrīdāma."

Her glories are so great that even the Original Personality of Godhead cannot find their limits- *yāra sad guṇa gaṇera kṛṣṇa nā pāna pāra* (C.C.)

She has descended in his house in the form of a daughter and since Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu has not even the slightest feeling of awe and reverence he cuddles and rears Her just like his little daughter with purely sweet love.

In the Pātāla-Khaṇḍa of the Padma-Purāṇa it is written how Devarṣi Nārada saw Śrī Rādhā as a little girl:

"When Śrī Rādhā Who is overwhelmed by love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended, She decided not to look at the world before seeing

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so She remained there with eyes closed. Then, one day, Devarṣi Nārada himself came to see Her and when he told Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu that he wanted to cure the little girl, Vṛṣabhānu told him:

*ekāsti putrikā deva devapatnyupamā mama
kanīyasi śīṣor asya jaḍāndha badhirākṛtiḥ
utsāhād buddhaye yāce tvām varam bhagavattama
prasanna dṛṣṭi-mātreṇa susthirān kuru bālikām*

(Padma Purāṇa)

"O Lord! I have a daughter who is equal to the demigoddesses and She is younger than this child (Śrīdāma), but She is dumb, blind and deaf. O greatest of saints! I am very eager to cuddle and rear Her so I pray to you for this boon: Please cure this child with your satisfied glance!"

After Nārada entered the house and saw Śrī Rādhā, he became overwhelmed by great feelings of love and began to offer her praises in both sweet and reverential manners:

*āhūya bhānuṃ provāca nāradaḥ sarva śobhanām
evaṃ svabhāvā bāleyaṃ na sādhyā daivatair api
kintu yad grham etasyāḥ pada cihna vibhūṣitam
tatra nārāyaṇo devaḥ sarva-devagaṇaiḥ saha
lakṣmīś ca vasate nityaṃ sarvābhiś caiva siddhibhiḥ
adyaḥ enāṃ varārohān sarva bhūṣaṇa bhūṣaṇām
devīm iva parān gehe rakṣa yatnena sattama*

(Padma Purāṇa)

Śrī Nārada called Vṛṣabhānu and told him about his most beautiful little girl: "O King! This is the nature of this little girl!"

Even the demigods are unable to cure Her! But in whatever house She places Her feet there Lord Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the goddess of fortune Lakṣmī and all mystic perfections reside! O great saint! Now you should keep this girl with Her nice hips Who is the ornament of ornaments carefully in your house like the supreme goddess!"

Although Śrī Nārada thus spoke different reverential words about devī Śrī Rādhā, it could not agitate the ocean of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu's parental love at all. Vṛṣabhānu just affectionately cuddled and reared Her like his little girl.

Introducing this Vṛṣabhānu Rājā to us, Śrīla Gosvāmīpāda says: "I always worship the greatly famous king Vṛṣabhānu, who has a small moustache, is very generous, on the strenght of whose love Prema-Lakṣmī advented in his house as his daughter to bless the people of the world by giving them the treasure of *prema*, who has a golden complexion, is greatly respected, is fifty years old, is very expert in Vraja and who is the greatest friend of Vraja's king Nanda."

*kharva śmaśru udāra carita sad vaiśa jāta;
gaura varṇa sambhrānta yāra boyos pañcāśata
vraja madhye hon yini atīva pravīṇa;
śrī nandera parama sahāya khyātite kulīna
śrīdāma hoyena priya yāra jyeṣṭha-santāna;
(tathāpi) kaniṣṭhā śrī rādhā prati atī snehavān
samunnata kīrti yāra vṛṣabhānu nāma;
sarvadā tāhāre bhaji pūrṇa hobe kāma*

"I always worship the greatly famous Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, who has a small moustache, is very generous, who hails from a good dynasty, has a golden complexion, is greatly respected, who is fifty years old and very expert in Vraja, who is known as

the greatest friend of Śrī Nanda of noble birth and who loves his younger daughter Śrī Rādhā even more than his eldest son Śrīdāma. In this way my (devotional) desires will be fulfilled."

VERSE 27:

**anudinam iha mātrā rādhikā-bhavya-vārtāḥ
kalayitum atiyatnāt preṣyate dhātrikāyāḥ
duhitṛ-yugalam uccaiḥ prema-pūra-prapañcair
vikala-mati yayāsau kīrtidā sāvātān naḥ**

anudinam - every day; *iha* - in Vraja; *mātrā* - by the mother; *rādhikā* - Rādhikā; *bhavya* - welfare; *vārtā* - news; *kalayitum* - for seeing; *ati* - greatly; *yatnāt* - endeavouring; *preṣyate* - sending; *dhātrikāyāḥ* - of the nurse; *duhitṛ* - daughter; *yugalam* - pair; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *prema* - love; *pūra* - filled; *prapañcaiḥ* - by the creations; *vikala* - agitated; *mati* - discriminating intelligence; *yayā* - by her; *asau* - she; *kīrtidā* - Kīrtidā; *sā* - she; *avatād* - protect; *naḥ* - us.

May mother Kīrtidā who anxiously, carefully and lovingly sends two daughters of her nurses daily to Śrī Rādhikā's abode in Vraja to inquire about Her welfare protect us.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Rādhā's mother Kīrtidā and takes shelter at her feet.

Kīrtidā is verily a bestower of fame (*kīrti*=fame and *dā*=bestower).

On the bank of the Godāvarī-river, Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya:

kīrti-gaṇa madhye jīvera kon boḍo kīrti?

"What is the greatest fame for a living being?", to which Rāma Rāya replied:

kṛṣṇa prema bhakta boli yāra hoy khyāti (C.C.)

"He who is known as a devotee and who loves Kṛṣṇa (is the most famous)."

In the whole world the lovers of Kṛṣṇa are verily the most famous. Mother Kīrtidā has bound the presiding goddess of love or Prema-Lakṣmī, Śrī Rādhārāṇī, in the net of her motherly love as her daughter and thus has given all the *sādhakas* of the world the lucky opportunity to attain *prema*.

In this way she has verily become the bestower of fame (*kīrtidā*) to the world.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "When Śrī Rādhā stays in her in-laws' abode at Yāvaṭa, mother Kīrtidā, agitated by feelings of motherly love, daily sends there two daughters of her nurses to inquire about Her welfare.

One name Śrī Raghunātha mentions in the praise of Śrī Rādhikā's 108 names is '*mātr sneha pīyūṣa putrikā*': Śrī Rādhārāṇī is the embodiment of mother Kīrtidā's nectarean feelings of motherly love.

Although She is the embodiment of love of God and can bestow the highest welfare on the whole world by bestowing *prema*, mother Kīrtidā is still always anxious that some inauspiciousness would be happening to Her.

This is the nature of love. The lover is always awake with worries about the beloved's welfare. Along with the constant thoughts about the beloved's welfare there is always the fear:

'I know some accident has happened, I know some accident has happened!' in the heart.

aniṣṭā-śaṅkīni bandhu hṛdayāni bhavanti hi (Abhijñāna Śakuntalā Nāṭaka - 4)

"Apprehension of mishap always dwells in the heart of the friend."

In this play we also find the words *sineho pāpamāsankādi*. This is *prākṛta*-language. In Sanskṛta it is: *snehaḥ pāpam āsankate*, or: "Affection causes apprehension of sin (inauspiciousness in general). One is always afraid something inauspicious may happen to the beloved.

Because mother Kīrtidā is always worried and overwhelmed by loving anxiety she most lovingly and diligently sends two daughters of her nurses to Yāvaṭa to inquire about Śrī Rādhā's welfare. Mother Kīrtidā who is the embodiment of deep motherly love knows that apart from her who can desire the welfare of Śrī Rādhā or look after Her?

Mother Kīrtidā never wants to lose Śrī Rādhārāṇī out of her sight but: 'Alas! Why has the Creator created this subservient woman's life?'

Thinking like this, mother floats in tears of love and lovingly and diligently sends out two daughters of her nurses to find out if She is allright.

The closer a river comes to the ocean, the more turbulent it gets. Similarly, mother Kīrtidā is very close to the Rādhā-ocean of love, that can be heard from Śrī Rādhārāṇī's own mouth: *śīśukāla hoite māyera sohāge, sohāgiṇī boḍo āmi*

"From My childhood I was always dearly beloved by My mother."

Hence the worries about auspiciousness or inauspiciousness befalling to Śrī Rādhā are like a garland of waves eternally billowing on the river of Mother Kīrtidā's heart.

When the daughters of the nurses return and tell her that everything is well with Śrī Rādhā, mother finds peace and takes her bath and her meal.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "May that mother Kīrtidā protect us!"

*śrī rādhāra kuśala vārtā jānibāra tare;
 atīva vyākula hoiyā cintita antare
 prīti sahakāre pāṭhāya dhātrī-kanyā-dvaye;
 prati dina ihā yāra kārya sūci hoye
 vraja mājhe khyāti yāra śrī rādhāra mātā
 āmāre korun rakṣā se mātā kīrtidā*

"May mother Kīrtidā, who is very anxious at heart to know about Śrī Rādhā's welfare and therefore lovingly sends two daughters of her nurses to Her abode to inquire about Her every day and who is famous in Vraja as Śrī Rādhā's mother, protect us."

VERSE 28:

**prathama-rasa-vilāse hanta roṣeṇa tāvat
 prakāṣam iva virodham sandadhānāpi bhaṅgyā
 pravalayati sukham yā navya-yūnoḥ sva-naptrōḥ
 param iha mukharām tām mūrdhni vṛddhām vahāmi**

prathama - first; *rasa* - flavour (erotic mellow); *vilāse* - in pastimes; *hanta* - alas!; *roṣeṇa* - with anger; *tāvat* - thus far; *prakāṣam* - manifest; *iva* - as if; *virodham* - obstacle; *sandadhāna* - placing; *api* - even; *bhaṅgya* - cleverly; *pravalayati* - strengthens; *sukham* - happiness; *yā* - who; *navya* - fresh; *yūnoḥ* - of the pair; *sva* - own; *naptrōḥ* - grandchildren; *param* - supreme; *iha* - in Vraja; *mukharām* - Mukharā; *tām* - her; *mūrdhni* - on the head; *vṛddhām* - the old woman; *vahāmi* - I carry.

I carry the old lady Mukharā, who gives her grandchildren, the fresh adolescent Pair Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, boundless bliss by cleverly and angrily opposing Their erotic pastimes on my head.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: A boundless upsurge of the nectar of the Vraja-associates' ecstatic love arises in Śrī Raghunātha's heart, that is filled with *viśuddha-sattva* (pure goodness, or transcendence).

In this verse he praises Śrī Rādhā's maternal grandmother Mukharā.

Knowingly or unknowingly the people of Vraja all take their share in helping the nourishment of the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's erotic pastimes. This is the conclusion of the *ācāryas*, which is based on their profound experiences. Just as there are visible assistants nourishing the pastimes of the Adolescent Pair like Śrī Rādhā's *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, the 'hostile' (rival-) consorts like Candrāvalī, who nourish Śrī Rādhā's pique and so on, as well as the friendly party and the neutral party of *gopīs* and the *priya-narma-sakhās* like Subala, similarly the mothers, fathers, fathers-in-law, mothers-in-law, relatives, grandfathers and grandmothers are all invisible assistants.

The extramarital love is always supplied with fresh impetus and nourishment because this kind of love is secret. The lovers rarely attain each other and there are many obstacles.

Although they all relish the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's flavours in their own way, each of the Lord's associates in Vraja is engaged by the *hilā-śakti* in accepting his/her own beautiful role in the nourishment of the emperor of transcendental flavours, the *śṛṅgāra* (erotic)-*rasa*.

The role of grandmother Mukharā is unprecedented. In this verse Mukharā is called the maternal grandmother of both Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Because Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are essentially one at heart, Śrī Rādhā's maternal grandmother is also Śrī Kṛṣṇa's maternal grandmother. Another explanation is that some

elderly *gopīs* are generally known as everyone's maternal grandmother in Vraja.

*bhāruṇḍā jaṭilā bhelā karālā karavālikā
ghargharā mukharā ghorā ghaṅṭā ghoṇī sughaṅṭikā
ḍhakkini ḍhoṅḍikā ḍhaṅḍī ḍiṅḍimā puṅḍavāṅikāḥ
ḍāmini ḍāmarī ḍumbi ḍaṅkā mātāmahī samāḥ*

(Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 1,54)

"Bhāruṇḍā, Jaṭilā, Bhelā, Karālā, Karavālikā, Ghargharā, Mukharā, Ghorā, Ghaṅṭā, Ghoṇī, Sughaṅṭikā, Ḍhakkini, Ḍhoṅḍikā, Ḍhaṅḍī, Ḍiṅḍimā, Puṅḍavāṅikāḥ, Ḍāmini, Ḍāmarī. Ḍumbi and Ḍaṅkā - they are all equal to maternal grandmothers."

Old granny Mukharā publicly opposes with certainty the meeting of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, but in a clever way (*bhaṅgya*) she is also nourishing (encouraging) this meeting.

Externally she angrily chastises Them, but in her heart she approves of Them meeting each other. In this way Mukharā pleases Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in the greatest way.

In the morning the cowherd village is filled with the sounds of *brāhmaṇas* reciting the Vedas, the bellowing of cows, the churning of curd and the milking of the cows. The sun is rising on the eastern horizon. It is as if the bride of the eastern direction wears a red spot of *sindūra* on the forehead. All the Vrajavāsīs are waking up.

In Yāvaṭa Śrī Rādhā is lying in Her bedroom, accompanied only by Her friends like Lalitā, still sleeping out of exhaustion from performing pastimes like the Rāsa-dance at night.

nāptri mukhāmbuja vilokana jīvitāyām

*tatropasṛtya sahasā mukharābhidhāyām
vātsalya ratna paṭalibhūta peṭikāyām
rādhe kva putri bhavasīti samāhvayantyām*

(Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta 3.13)

Mukharā, whose very life is the sight of her granddaughter Rādhikā's lotus-like face and who is like a box full of jewels of parental affection, came in and called out: "O Rādhe! O My daughter! Where are You?"

Seeing Mukharā, Jaṭilā then also comes to quickly wake up her daughter-in-law and desiring the welfare of her son, she requests Mukharā to engage Her in Sūrya-pūjā. Mukharā repeatedly calls out: "Granddaughter! Granddaughter!" while entering into Her bedroom. Then she says:

*uttiṣṭha vatse śayanāt pramugdhe
vyasmāri vāro'dya raves tvayā kim
snātvā prabhātārghya vidhānam asmai
pūjyopahāraṁ racayāsya cāśu*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 2,49)

"O my girl! Get up from bed now! O bewildered girl, have You forgotten that it is Sunday today? Take Your bath and quickly prepare Your paraphernalia for worshipping the sungod with morning-oblations!"

Hearing Mukharā's voice, Viśākhā and other *sakhīs* wake up and also awaken Śrīmatī, Who, stunned with fatigue, slowly sits up in Her bed. When Mukharā suddenly sees Śrī Rādhā's limbs covered with a yellow garment she says:

druta kanaka savarṇaṁ sāyam etan murārera

*vasanam urasi dṛṣṭam yat sakhī te vibharti
kim idam aji viśākhē hā pramādaḥ pramādo
vyavasitam idam asyāḥ paśya śuddhānvayāyāḥ*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 2,54)

"Viśākhē, look! What is this? Yesterday evening I saw this bright golden cloth on Murāri's chest, but now your friend is wearing it! Alas, alas! How could this happen to a pure housewife?"

Hearing Mukharā's words, Viśākhā shows her the sunrays entering the house through the windows and touching Śrī Rādhā's blue cloth, that covers Her brightly shining golden limbs, thereby making it seem golden.

Being addressed like this by Viśākhā, Mukharā leaves the room. She walks out carefully, because what a mishap it would be if by chance hostile elements like Jaṭilā would see it!

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I carry Śrī Rādhā's maternal grandmother Mukharā, who gives the greatest delight to the young pair Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with such a sweet undercurrent of her stream of love on my own head!"

*vraja mājhe navya yuvā navinā yuvati;
rādhā-kṛṣṇa duhu jana hoy yāra nātī
śṛṅgāra rasa-keli navīna yugale;
bhaṅgi kori bādhā-dāna koribāra chale
parokṣe ānanda dāna koriche dohāre;
mātāmahi rādhāra mukharā nāma yāra
ānande magana hoiyā āmāra mastake;
tāhāre bohon kori atīva kautuke*

"With great joy, eagerness and humor I carry Rādhā's maternal grandmother named Mukharā, who uses different

pretexts to obstruct the erotic pastimes of her grandchildren, the beautiful young girl Rādhā and the beautiful young boy Kṛṣṇa, but who thus secretly gives Them great bliss, on my head."

VERSE 29:

**sāndra-prema-rasaiḥ plutā priyatayā prāgalbhyam āptā tayoh
prāṇa-preṣṭha-vayasyayor anudinaṁ lilābhisāraṁ kramaiḥ
vaidagdhyaena tathā sakhīm prati sadā mānasya śikṣām rasair
yeyam kārayatiḥa hanta lalitā grhṇātu sā mām gaṇaiḥ**

sāndra - deep; *prema* - love; *rasaiḥ* - by flavours; *plutā* - inundated; *priyatayā* - lovingly; *prāgalbhyam* - boldness; *āptā* - attained; *tayoh* - of them both; *prāṇa* - heart; *preṣṭha* - beloved; *vayasyayoḥ* - of the two friends; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *lilā* - pastimes; *abhisāraṁ* - love-journey; *kramaiḥ* - gradually; *vaidagdhyaena* - cleverly; *tathā* - and then; *sakhīm* - girlfriend; *prati* - towards; *sadā* - always; *mānasya* - of loving pique; *śikṣām* - teaching; *rasaiḥ* - with flavours; *yā* - who; *iyam* - this; *kārayati* - causing; *iha* - in Vraja; *hanta* - alas; *lalitā* - Lalitā; *grhṇātu* - may accept; *sā* - she; *mām* - me; *gaṇaiḥ* - with the parties.

May Lalitā, who is immersed in the mellow of deep love, who takes shelter of an audacious mood simply out of love, who assists in accomplishing her heart's beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes like Their abhisāra (love-journey), and who always cleverly teaches her own girlfriend Rādhā the art of loving pique, accept me within her own party.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In the previous verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praised Mukharā, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's secret assistant in Their erotic mellows and in the following verses, now that he anyway perceives the erotic mellow, he praises the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*, the most *rasika*-assistants in the sweet pastimes of the divine Pair.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *prema līlā vihārāṇām samyag vistārikā sakhī; viśrambha-ratna-peṭi ca tataḥ suṣṭhu vivicyate* (Ujjvala Nīlamanī Sakhī Prakaraṇa 1)

"The *sakhīs* fully expand the love, the pastimes and the erotic union of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. They are like jewelboxes of trust and confidence, and in this way they are nicely divided." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda comments as follows on this verse in his Ānanda Candrikā-commentary:

na kevalam dūtya eva tāsām sakhīnām prādhānyam kintu rasasya sarva eva nirvāhas tan nidānaka evetyāha premeti. vistāro'tra vikhyāpanam vivardhanam ca. tatra nāyakasya premā nāyikāyām nāyikāyāḥ premā nāyake sakhīyā vikhyāpate tata eva vivardhate ca. līlā cābhisārādibhiḥ prāpta milanayor nāyakayoḥ svasthityā nāyikā-vāmyātīśayotthāpanena ca hāsa parihāsādibhiḥ ca vivardhate sthānāntare samayāntare ca vikhyāpyate ca. vihāras ca saṁprayogātmako guru patyādi sarva samādhānāṅgikāreṇa sāhasa dānād vivardhyate samayāntare ca saṁbhuktayā nāyikayā saha rasodgārād vikhyāpyate ceti samyag iti svābhīyogādaḥ vināpi sakhīm tat tat siddher asamyakatvam ity arthaḥ

"It is not that the *sakhīs* are just the chief messengers who accomplish the meeting of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, they are actually the final causes of Their *rasika*-accomplishments in all respects. This is ascertained in this verse *prema līlā vihārāṇām*.

The word *vistāra* means: proclaiming or increasing. The *sakhīs* tell the hero of the heroine's love and the heroine of the hero's love and thus they increase the love. The word *līlā* means that they help the Divine Pair to meet Each other through love-journeys. They increase the pride of the heroine who is in their midst, increase the flavour of the pastimes through laughter and joking. They also proclaim it in other places and at other times and solve all problems in relation to sexual intercourse, superiors and the heroine's husband.

In this way the sexual enjoyment increases with their assistance. They also proclaim the heroine's *rasodgāra* (amorous recollection). The word *samyak* means that without the aid of the *sakhīs*, the flavours of amorous meetings and so can never be accomplished."

In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Lalitā, the greatest of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's girlfriends, and their leader. Lalitā is so deeply absorbed in *madiyatāmaya-premābhimāṇa* (a loving pride in having controlled the lover, with the conception of 'he is mine'), that she always considers her friend Śrī Rādhā to be under the control of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She wants to keep Kṛṣṇa equally controlled, so she carefully sends Śrī Rādhā on Her *abhisāra* (love-journey) and when she sees an imbalance of power (in favour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa), her loving pride strikes heavily. Then she always instructs her girlfriend Śrī Rādhā in the finesses of loving pique and opposition. For this reason, Lalitā is called an *adhika-prakharā-sakhī*, a more audacious girlfriend.

*prema saubhāgya sad guṇyādyādhikyād adhikā sakhī
durlaṅghya vākya prakharā prakhyātā gauravocitā*

(Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi Sakhī Prakaraṇa 3)

"A girl who is superior in love, good fortune and great attributes is called *adhikā*, and a girl whose words are insurmountable is called *prakharā*, a girl who is always very proud." When such an *adhika-prakharā-sakhī* sees even the slightest flaw in Śrī Rādhā's total control over Śrī Kṛṣṇa she will teach Her *māna*, or loving pique, and she will not tolerate any slackening of that *māna*. For instance:

*mugdhe tuṣṇīm bhava śaṭha-kalā-maṇḍalākhaṇḍalena
tvaṁ manreṇa sphuṭam iha vaśīkṛtya tenānuśiṣṭā
kuñje govardhana śikhariṇo jāgareṇādya rādhām
dṛṣṭvāpyuccaiḥ sakhi yad asi me cātu-vāde pravṛttā*

(Ujjvala Nīlamanī Sakhī Prakaraṇa 15)

"When Lalitā saw Citrā-*sakhī* endeavouring to pacify Śrī Rādhā's proud huff, she told her: "O stupid girl! Shut up! I know that this king of cheaters (Kṛṣṇa) has subdued you with His instructions! How amazing! I praise your nature!¹⁹ Did you also use such flattering words even while seeing that Rādhā was spending the whole night in wakefulness on Govardhana Hill (vainly waiting for Kṛṣṇa)? Anyway, so far so good. There's no more need for any more flattering words! Quickly get out of here!"

When Lalitā instructs Rādhā in pique, then Rādhā cannot give up that *māna* without Lalitā's permission, not even out of Her own free will! Hence one of Śrī Rādhā's names is *lalitā-*

¹⁹ Citrā has the opposite nature of Lalitā, she is very submissive.

*bhūti-mānini*²⁰ This pique of Śrī Rādhā is Lalitā's greatest contribution to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

vāmya svabhāve māna uṭhe nīrantara; uhāra vāmye uṭhe kṛṣṇera ānanda sāgara (C.C.)

Just to make the ocean of Śrī Rādhā's love swell up unlimitedly and to give Śrī Kṛṣṇa the sweet relish of Śrī Rādhā's sweet love Lalitā instructs Śrīmatī in *māna*. This is one of her special dexterities of love. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written the following definition of *māna*'s nature:

*snehas tūtkṛṣṭatāvāptyā mādhyamān mānayan navam
yo dhārayatyadākṣiṇyam sa māna iti kīrtyate*

(Ujjvala Nīlmaṇi Sakhī Prakaraṇa 96)

"When *sneha* reaches its climax it makes the lover experience a fresh sweetness. When it carries a crooked kind of unsubmitiveness it is called *māna*."

Consequently *māna* arises to keep the course of love relishable, fresh and dynamic. *Māna* makes something which is anyway always enjoyable, sweet and desirable in its novel sweetness, hence Śrī Lalitā is known as she who is most expert in tastefully nourishing Śrī Rādhā's mood of opposition and pique.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "May that Lalitā accept me in her own party!"

*nīmagana hoiyā yei gāḍha prema rase;
priyatā hetu kiñcit auddhatya prakāśe*

²⁰ She who is angry with Kṛṣṇa out of fear of Lalitā (Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's 'Śrī Rādhikāṣṭottara-śata nāma stotram').

*śrī rādhā-govinda līlāra puṣṭira kāraṇa;
 rasa vākyāvalī sadā karoye varṣaṇa
 vāmyera maryādā sadā vṛddhira kāraṇa;
 śrī rādhāya māna śikṣā dena vilakṣaṇa
 sei to lalitā more nija gaṇa madhye;
 grahaṇa koriyā kobe kṛtārtha koribe*

"When will Lalitā, who is absorbed in deep feelings of love, who shows her audacity out of that love, who always showers Śrī Rādhā-Govinda with *rasika* words that nourish Their pastimes, who always increases the ways of love-in-opposition and who teaches Śrī Rādhā the special art of loving pique, bless me by accepting me within her own party?"

VERSE 30:

**praṇaya-lalita-narma-sphāra-bhūmis tayor yā
 vraja-pura-nava-yūnor yā ca kaṇṭhān pikānām |
 nayati param adhaṣṭād divya-gānena tuṣṭyā
 prathayatu mama dīkṣām hanta seyām viśākhā**

praṇaya - love; *lalita* - lovely; *narma* - joking; *sphāra* - extended; *bhūmiḥ* - ground; *tayoḥ* - of Them both; *yā* - who; *vraja-pura* - Vraja-pura; *nava* - new; *yūnoḥ* - pair; *yā* - who; *ca* - and; *kaṇṭhāt* - of the voice; *pikānām* - of the cuckoos; *nayati* - takes; *param* - greatly; *adhaṣṭ* - below; *tāt* - that; *divya* - beautiful/divine; *gānena* - with a song; *tuṣṭyā* - satisfying; *prathayatu* - may extend; *mama* - my; *dīkṣām* - initiation; *hanta* - alas; *sā* - she; *iyam* - this; *viśākhā* - Viśākhā.

May Viśākhā, who is the great object of love and humor of the youthful pair Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and who defeats

even the singing of the cuckoos with her divine artistry of song, be pleased with me and teach me the art of singing.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In his true intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*), Śrīpāda Raghunātha dāsa is an eternally perfect *mañjarī* in Vraja.

He has descended along with Śrī Gaurasundara, the combined form of *rasarāja*, Kṛṣṇa, the king of relishers, and *mahābhāva*, Rādhā, the embodiment of supreme love of God, to teach the practising devotees in the material world the meditation on the mellows of Vraja and to take them along to the *nikuñja*-abode of Vraja in the form of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness and Śrī Rādhā's *mahābhāva* have, of course, been discussed and described from the scriptures in the past, but they could not be conceived by human beings at that time. The Gosvāmīs have built a huge jewelled palace of sweet Vraja-*bhajana* on the unshakeable foundation of their own genuine transcendental experiences and scriptural evidence.

In this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, Śrīpāda Raghunātha describes the sweet and perfect love of the Lord's eternal companions in Vraja, by following in whose footsteps the practising devotees will gain entrance into that jewelled temple and become blessed by receiving the desired loving devotional service of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

In the previous verse, Śrī Raghunātha described the great love of Lalitā, one of Śrī Rādhā's best girlfriends. In this verse he describes the mood of Śrī Viśākhā and reveals to her his aspiration to learn the art of singing from her.

First of all he says: '*praṇaya lalita narma sphāra bhūmis tayor yā*' She is the abode of love and humor for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In Śrī Viśākhānandana-Stotram, he has said: *bhāva-nāma guṇādīnām aikyāt śrī rādhikaiva yā*

"She is just like Śrī Rādhikā in mood, name and attributes." Because of her outspoken boldness, Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava may still deal with Śrī Lalitā with some fear and reverence, but in Śrī Rādhā's *yūtha* (party), Śrī Viśākhā has attained the *bhāva* of *adhika-madhyā* (holding the balance between the left-wing and the right-wing *gopīs* in mood), hence she is not only respected by all because of her love, good fortune and great attributes, but she is also the object of love and humour for the Divine Couple because she is non-different at heart from Śrī Rādhā.

*viśākhā gūḍha narmokti jita kṛṣṇārpita smitā
narmādhyāya varācāryā bhārati jayi vāgmitā
viśākhāgre rahaḥ keli kathodghaṭaka mādhamam
tāḍayanti dvirabjena sa-bhrūbhaṅgena līlayā*

(Viśākhānandana Stotram 105 and 106)

"Śrī Rādhikā smiles when She sees that Kṛṣṇa is defeated by Viśākhā's intimate joking words. She is the best teacher in joking and she defeats even Sarasvatī-devī in eloquence. When Mādhava speaks about His intimate pastimes before Viśākhā, Śrī Rādhā frowns Her eyebrows and playfully beats Him with her play-lotus."

From this we can understand how Śrī Viśākhā is the object of the Divine Couple's love and humor.

In his 'Kṛṣṇāhnikā-Kaumudī', Śrīman Mahāprabhu's beloved companion Śrīla Kavi Karṇapura has drawn an enchanting

emotional picture of Śrī Viśākhā's joking discussions with Śrī Rādhā before Śrī Kṛṣṇa with great poetic expertise.

*etadīya kusumaṁ sakhi heyam kṛṣṇa pakṣa sarasā latikeyam;
yā ruṇandhi vasaṇam tava śākhā pāṇinetyupajahāsa viśākhā
śukla-pakṣa-nibha puṣpa-viśeṣā kṛṣṇa pakṣa sarasā kathameṣā;
mad viyogam asaḥiṣṇur iyaṁ māmāruṇandhi mama kautuka kāmā
mugdha eti madhupo mukha-candraṁ svādituṁ kamaladhī tava
sāndram;*

*tat tvayā'vahitatayā bhavitavyaṁ śyāmalasya caritaṁ nahi bhavyam
tvādrśāṁ mukha saroja samāje susmite sati katham dvija rāje;
hanta gandha rahite katham asya svāda eṣa bhavitā madhupasya*

(Kṛṣṇāhnikā Kaumudī 4.42-45)

"Viśākhā jokingly told Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Who was picking flowers: 'Sakhi! Don't pick the flowers from this vine, because this vine is *kṛṣṇa-pakṣā-sarasā* (blooming in the dark lunar fortnight, or, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and thus luscious) and will obstruct Your garment with its hand-like branches (they will give You a hint to go and meet with Kṛṣṇa)'. Śrī Rādhā smiled and replied: 'Sakhi Viśākhē! This vine is bearing flowers that bloom in the bright lunar fortnight! Why do you call them *kṛṣṇa-pakṣā-sarasā* (blooming in the dark lunar fortnight)? This vine is unable to tolerate separation from Me and is obstructing Me simply for fun!' Viśākhā said: 'O Mugdhe (naive girl)! Just see! A bee (Kṛṣṇa) is coming to relish Your moon-like face, taking it to be a lotus flower, so be careful! Those who have a blackish complexion (like Śyāmasundara) don't have a good character!' Hearing this, Śrī Rādhā said: 'Alas! When you girls are here with your blooming lotus-like faces, then how will this bumblebee ever come to relish My moon-like face, that has no scent at all?'

In this way Viśākhā is the abode of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's relishable joking conversations.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "May Viśākhā, who defeats the cuckoos' singing in the fifth note with her love-drenched voice, that sings enchanting divine songs having Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes as their subject, be pleased and satisfied with me and teach me the art of song!"

Śrīpāda Kavi Karṇapura has written: "The extraordinary transcendental art of singing as well as the voices of the Vrajasundarīs are all beyond Brahmā's creation, therefore they cannot be compared to anyone's voice within Brahmā's creation. Vṛndā-devī explained to one of Rādhā's *sakhīs*, named Saṅgīta Vidyā, what the difference is between the singing of the Kinnarī Mātāṅgī, who is the *ācārya* of the science of song, and the singing of the Vraja-devīs, saying:

*ayi saṅgīta vidye! saṅgīta vidyeyam anayā devyā
caturmukha-mukha nirgataiva vyākhyātā, khyātā ceyanī vo
virīñci prapañcata eva hi bahir iti tad ubhayam eva
niravadyaṃ* (Ānanda Vṛndāvana Campū)

"O Saṅgīta Vidyē! The science of song that Mātāṅgī-devī is explaining, emanates from Brahmā's mouth (which means that it is a part of the mundane creation), and the singing of the Vrajadevīs that you speak about is from beyond Brahmā's creation. Therefore there is consistency between your words and Mātāṅgī's words!"

In this Stavāvalī, Śrīpāda Raghunātha repeatedly reveals his desire to learn the art of singing about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa from Viśākhā and to please Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with these sweet songs.

*prāṇārbuda koṭi preṣṭha yugala mūrati;
tāñdera praṇaya madhu kautukera pātrī*

*śrī rādhā-govinda donhāra yugala mādhuri
yāra prema-kaṇṭhe divya saṅgīta lahari
kokilā kākali yiho parājaya kore
se viśākhā divya gāna śikṣā dena more*

"May Viśākhā, who is the object of the honey-sweet humorous love of the Yugala Mūrti, Who are dearer to her than millions of lives; whose loving voice creates a wave of divine songs that defeats the singing of the cuckoos and that describe the dual sweetness of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, teach me that divine art of song."

VERSE 31:

**prati-nava-nava-kuñjaṁ prema-pūreṇa pūrṇā
pracura-surabhi-puṣpair bhūṣayitvā krameṇa |
praṇayati bata vṛndā tatra nīlotsavaṁ yā
priya-gaṇa-vṛta-rādhā-kṛṣṇayos tām prapadye**

prati - every; *nava nava* - fresh and new; *kuñjaṁ* - groves; *prema* - love; *pūreṇa* - with an abundance; *pūrṇa* - full; *pracura* - abundant; *surabhi* - fragrant; *puṣpaiḥ* - with flowers; *bhūṣayitvā* - having ornamented; *krameṇa* - gradually; *praṇayati* - making; *bata* - indeed; *vṛndā* - Vṛndā; *tatra* - there; *hīlā* - pastimes; *utsavaṁ* - festival; *yā* - who; *priyagaṇa* - beloveds; *vṛta* - surrounded; *rādhā-kṛṣṇayoḥ* - of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *tām* - unto her; *prapadye* - I surrender.

I surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Vṛndā, who, steeped in great love, decorates the many ever-fresh play-groves with fragrant flowers and expands the festival of sweet

and blissful pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are surrounded by Their girlfriends.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the sylvan goddess Śrī Vṛndā, the presiding goddess of Śrī Vṛndāvana and surrenders at her lotus feet.

In the scripture ‘Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā’ (2.87-88), Śrī Vṛndā is introduced as follows:

*paurṇamāsī vīrā vṛndā vaiṣṇī nāndīmukhī tathā
vṛndārikā tathā menā muralādyās ca dūtikāḥ
nānā sandhāna kuśalā tayor milana kārīṇī
kuñjādi saṁskriyābhijñā vṛndā tāsu varīyasī*

"Paurṇamāsī, Vīrā, Vṛndā, Vaiṣṇī, Nāndīmukhī, Vṛndārikā, Menā and Muralī are among Śrī Kṛṣṇa's female messengers. They are very expert in various researches, in accomplishing the meetings between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His sweethearts and in maintaining trysting places like the kuñjas. The greatest in all these activities is Vṛndā."

Vṛndā is thus described:

*tapta kāñcana varṇābhā vṛndā kāntir manoharā;
nīlavastra parīdhānā muktāpuṣpa virājitā
candrabhānuḥ pitā tasyāḥ phullarā janani tathā;
patir asyā mahī-pālī mañjari bhaginī ca sā
vṛndāvana sadāvāsā nānakeli rasotsukā;
ubhayor milanākāñkṣī tayoh premapariplutā*

"Vṛndā's complexion is as enchanting as molten gold! She wears a blue dress, a pearl necklace and a flower garland. Her father is named Candrabhānu, her mother Phullarā, her

husband Mahīpāla and her sister Mañjarī. Vṛndā always lives in Vṛndāvana and is eager to play different *rasika* pastimes. She is eager to establish the meeting of the Divine Couple and is immersed in love for Them."

Śrī Vṛndāvana is the abode of sweet love. The name of Vṛndāvana causes agitation in the mind and heart of both the Lord and His devotees. Here the devotees forget all of the Lord's opulences and become eager to establish their own personal relationships with Him according to their individual feelings. The Lord also forgets His own nature here and allows Himself to be bound by the ropes of His devotees' passionate love for Him. And again, in this Vraja, the passionate love like the one of the *gopīs* cannot be found described in any scripture. In this Vraja, their naughty passion causes them to fall from the path of virtue and fidelity and flow towards Śyāmasundara forcefully and without interruption, like the currents of the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā.

Because this passion is ever-fresh, it causes Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of their love, to relish the wonderful ever-fresh essence of the erotic mellow. Above all, the *mādana-rasa* of Śrī Rādhā, who is the very embodiment of *mādanākhyā-mahā-bhāva*, makes the transcendental youthful Cupid of Vṛndāvana forget Himself in all respects. His *nikuñja*-pastimes with Śrī Rādhā continue day and night.

rātri-dīna kuñja krīḍā kore rādhā saṅge; kaiśora vayasa saphala koilo krīḍā raṅge (C.C.)

"Day and night He sports with Rādhā in the kuñjas and with these playful amusements, He makes His youth a success." Assisted by her girlfriends Śrī Vṛndā-devī, who is the teacher of thousands of *vanadevis* (sylvan fairies) decorates Śrī Vṛndāvana and the kuñjas, the playgrounds of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, in ever-new ways.

Vṛndā, the presiding goddess of this kingdom of sweet pastimes, decorates this naturally beautiful and sweet unique abode of the enjoyments of the Yugala with her loving hands, thus making it even sweeter. Thinking: "The deities of my heart will play here!", she keeps the *kuñjas* nicely decorated and scented by a variety of floral decorations. Just as a loving *pūjāriṇī* keeps the temple fragrant with incense sticks and *aguru*-perfumes, similarly *prema-pūjāriṇī* Vṛndā scents each *kuñja-mandira*, that is the playground of her heart's deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, with the sweet aroma of an abundance of flowers.

Just as an expert sculptor attracts his employer with his artistic work, similarly Vṛndā, the sculptress of love, intoxicates the hearts of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *sakhīs* with playful feelings and with her loving expertise in decorating Vṛndāvana and the *kuñjas*.

Śrī Vṛndā's cleverness in relaying messages is most wonderful! With her clever words, the lady-messenger Vṛndā always awakens a passionate attachment to a tryst in the hearts of the lovers.

For instance, when Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī sets out for Rādhākuṇḍa on Her noontime love-journey (*divābhisāra*) with Her *sakhīs* eager to meet Śyāmasundara, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is impatiently waiting for Her in the woods around the *kuṇḍa*, eager to meet Śrīmatī.

Meanwhile the forest becomes delighted by Śrī Rādhā's bodily fragrance and Śrī Kṛṣṇa sends Vṛndā out to quickly bring Śrīmatī to Him. When Śrī Rādhā sees Śrī Vṛndā, they have the following discussion:

*kasmād vṛnde priya sakhi hareḥ pādamūlāt kuto'sau
kuṇḍāranyaṅ kim iha kurute nṛtya śikṣāṁ guru kaḥ*

*taṁ tvan mūr̥tiḥ prati taru-lataṁ dik-vidikṣu sphuranti
śailuṣṭva bhramati parito nartayanti sva paścāt*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 8,77)

"O Vṛnde, where have you come from?"

Vṛndā replied: "From Hari's footsoles".

Rādhā: "Where is He?"

Vṛndā: "In the forest by Your lake!"

Rādhā: "What is He doing there?"

Vṛndā: "He is learning how to dance"

Rādhā: "Who is His teacher?"

Vṛndā: "Your very form, which is like a dancing girl whom He sees in each direction. He is simply wandering around, dancing behind You!"

With many of such clever words, Śrī Vṛndā-devī extends a wonderful sweet flavour of blissful pastimes for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who are surrounded by Their girlfriends.²¹

Śrī Raghunātha takes shelter of the lotus feet of this Vṛndā-devī.

*prema rase nimagana hoiyā yei jana;
sājāiyeche madhura ei śrī vṛndāvana
nava nava kuñja yoto sugandhi kusume;
suśobhita bohe yāhā malaya pavane
vṛndāra racita sei śrī vṛndāvana;
śrī rādhā-govinde korāya līlā uddīpana
nirantara sei vṛndāra bhaji bhakti bhare;
vrajavāsa rādhā-kṛṣṇera sevā-siddhi tare*

²¹ In books like Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta Vṛndā can be seen nourishing these transcendental pastimes in various wonderful ways.

"I always devotedly worship Śrī Vṛndā, who is absorbed in ecstatic love while sweetly decorating Śrī Vṛndāvana's ever-green kuñjas with beautiful flowers, whose fragrance are carried by the southern breezes and that incite amorous feelings in the hearts of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda, so that I will be able to live in Vraja and reach perfection in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's devotional service there."

VERSE 32:

**sakhyenālaṁ parama-rucirā narma-bhavyena rādhām
pākārtham yā vraja-pati-mahiṣy-ājñayā sannayantī |
premnā śasvat pathi pathi harer vārtayā tarpayantī
tuṣyatv etām param iha bhaje kunda-pūrvām latām tām**

sakhyena - with friendship; *alaṁ* - greatly; *parama* - greatest; *rucirā* - beautiful; *narma* - joking; *bhavyena* - with auspiciousness; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *pākārtham* - for the sake of cooking; *yā* - who; *vrajapati* - the king of Vraja; *mahiṣī* - queen; *ājñayā* - on the order; *sannayantī* - taking; *premnā* - with love; *śasvat* - constantly; *pathi pathi* - on the way; *hareḥ* - of Hari; *vārtayā* - with topics; *tarpayantī* - offers; *tuṣyatu* - may be satisfied; *etām* - this; *param* - greatly; *iha* - in Vraja; *bhaje* - I worship; *kunda pūrvām latām* - named Kundalatā; *tām* - her.

I worship Kundalatā, who, on the order of Queen Yaśodā, daily comes to take Śrī Rādhā to Nanda's abode to cook for Kṛṣṇa; who always greatly delights Rādhā by lovingly having joking discussions about Hari with Her

on the way and who is herself also most satisfied with this.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha worships Śrī Kundalatā, the special nourisher of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava’s pastimes.

We have already said that Vraja is like a beautiful garden full of flowers of love. The minds and hearts of the worshippers are scented by the loving expertise of the various companions of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Although the fragrance of the flowers causes everyone’s heart to blossom, the *rasika*-bee is as if intoxicated by the relish of this honey.

In the same way, although everyone’s heart is delighted to hear about the great love of the Vraja-companions, the heart of the *jāta-rati-mādhuryopāsaka*, the worshipper who is in the amorous mellow and whose *rati* or *bhāva* is born, becomes even more intoxicated by *rasa*.

Śrī Raghunātha is in the kingdom of *mahābhāva*, so in his heart a wonderful current of relish of the wonderful and great love of the Vraja-companions is flowing. After he has relished it, he records everything for the *rasika-bhāgavatas* (great aesthetic devotees) so they can relish it afterwards.

In this verse, Śrī Raghunātha praises the wife of Kṛṣṇa’s cousin, Kundalatā. Because of the boon of the sage Durvāsā, Śrī Rādhārāṇī has become *amṛta-hastā* (whatever Her hands touch while cooking turns into nectar). The vegetables and grains She cooks are not only delicious, they also bestow appetite and a certain extension of the lifespan.

For this reason, Śrī Yaśodā, out of love for her son, daily sends Kundalatā to Jaṭilā to ask her permission to bring Śrī Rādhā to her home to cook for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Kundalatā relays the request of the Queen of Vraja to mother Jaṭilā and then goes to

Śrī Rādhā and Her *sakhīs*, who are already floating in oceans of bliss.

This is described in Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta:

*anyonya darśana samudgamana smitāḍhya
 sāstānuyoga rabhasonnati śidhu vṛṣṭiḥ
 sadyo vabhūva yata eva tadā tadāli-
 vṛndaṁ nananda sama sauhr̥da hr̥dya rociḥ
 vrajapura parameśvarī prasādaṁ
 mayi sakhi vakti tavodayo hyakasmāt
 na śīsira rucinā vinaiva pūrvāṁ
 diśam adhirātri sameti kāpi lakṣmīḥ
 tad aham anumīme nideśa dambhāt
 kim api kṛpāmṛtam eva sā vyatārīt
 yad idam anupalabhya yan mamātmā
 svam api sakhedaṁ avāityanātmanīnam
 ajani rasavati vidhāpanārtha rasavati te gatir ity avaimi
 nūnam atha kim itarathā javādayasīḥ
 prathamito`nunayanty amūṁ madāryām
 iti sudṛg uditāmṛtaṁ pibanti smita
 subhagaṁ nijagāda kundavallī
 tad aya sakhi vidhehi tatra yātrām
 akṛta vilambam itaḥ sahālivṛnda*

(Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta 4,110 and 5,1-4)

The *sakhīs*, who are all equal to Śrī Rādhikā in affection, kindness and luster, all became ecstatic when they experienced the nectar-shower of Rādhikā's and Kundalatā's meeting, their exchange of smiles and their inquiry about each others' welfare. (Śrī Rādhikā got up to welcome Kundalatā and told her): "Sakhi! By Vrajeśvarī's grace you have quickly come here! Your arrival is as indescribably beautiful as the moonrise in the east

at nightfall! I understand that Queen Yaśodā showers Me with the nectar of mercy by giving this order! If I had not gotten this order (to cook for Kṛṣṇa), My mind would be so sad that it would have been better for Me to leave My body! O Rasavati (humorous girl or good cook)! I see you have come to take Me there for cooking, but first go to My superiors and ask them for permission and then quickly come back!"

Drinking the nectar of fair-eyed Rādhikā's words, Kundalatā blissfully smiled and said: "*Sakhi!* You know it all, so don't delay and come along with me and take Your friends along!"

Jaṭilā also follows the order of the Queen of Vraja and sends her daughter-in-law to Nanda's house, giving Her various beneficial instructions:

*jaratī yatano kori, kohe śuno sundari,
sakhī saṅge koroho payāna.
uḍanī yoḍanī māthe, dekhiyā colibe pathe,
lakhite nā pāre yeno āna.*

"Jaṭilā carefully said: Listen, O beautiful girl! Go now with Your *sakhīs*. Keep Your veil on Your head, so that no one else will see You while You walk down the road."

*boḍura jhiyāri baṭa, kule śīle naha choṭa
saba guṇe hao paravīṇa.
thākiho sabāra mājhe, bujhibā āpana kāje,
āmi āra jīva koto dīna*

"You are a high-born daughter. Indeed, Your dynasty and Your customs are not lowly! You are full of great qualities. Stay together in the midst of all the other girls and understand Your duties. After all, how much longer will I live?"

*sadaye vidāya kore, jaṭilā colilā ghare,
 ulasita rasavati rādhe
 raṅgiṇī saṅgiṇī tāra, lei saba upahāra,
 cololi pūraite sādhe.*

"Pitifully taking leave, Jaṭilā went back home and blissful *rasika*-Rādhā and Her playful girlfriends took all their paraphernalia along and went to fulfill their desires."

*gajendra gamana jini, cole rāi vinodinī,
 sughaḍa sakhīra heli aṅga.
 kohoye śekhara rāy, puchite puchite yāya
 rajanī vilāsa rasa raṅga*

(Padakartā Rāya Śekhara)

"Rāi Vinodinī thus left, walking like the king of elephants, leaning against Her *sakhīs*. Rāya Śekhara says: 'While walking along with Her, the *sakhīs* asked Her about Her amorous pastimes of the previous night.' "

While they were on the way to Nanda's house, Kundalatā jokingly told Śrī Rādhā:

*mūlyānītopasaryās tri-catura divasān proṣya sandhyāgatas te
 bhartā gobhīḥ sva goṣṭhe ghaṭayitum akhilām rātrim eva nyavātsit
 vakṣaḥ prodyan nakhāṅkāvali citam adharaḥ spaṣṭa danta kṣato yat
 tat sādhyās te satitvaṁ samucitam adhunā vyaktam ullāsatī
 antar gūḍha smitotphulla kiñcit kuñcita locanām
 sva sakhīm lalitālokya kundavallīm athābravit
 karaka-phala dhiyāsyāḥ kānane dhṛṣṭa kiraḥ
 stanam anu viniviṣṭaḥ pakka bimba bhrameṇa
 adaśad adharam uccais tan nakhācoṭitaṁ tad*

*dhṛdayam idam amuṣyāḥ kiṁ vṛthā śaṅkase tvam
sakhī vacah smarita kṛṣṇa saṅga lilocchalat kampa taraṅgitāṅgim
tām vikṣya padmākaram iṅsamāṇā jagau punaḥ kundalatā sahāsam
ānanda kampottaralāsi mugdhe
kiṁ bho vṛthā padmini kundavallyāḥ
na devaras tvām madhusūdano'sau
bhrāmyan punaḥ pāsyasi bhuktam uktām*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 3:29-33)

"O Rādhē! Even though Your husband was out for three or four days to have the newly purchased fertile cows inseminated by the bulls, he came home last night and slept alone in his own room! Still we can see that Your breasts are full of nail marks and Your lips are full of bite marks! We are all very happy that You show such clear signs of fidelity to Your husband now!"

Seeing Rādhā's hidden smile and Her wide, slightly squinted eyes, Lalitā told Kundalatā:

"Why are you causing needless anxiety to Rādhā's heart? Yesterday some bold parrot in the forest sat on Her breasts, thinking them to be pomegranates (and scratched them) and then he bit Her lips, thinking them to be bimba-fruits. That's why She is bruised like this!"

Kundalatā saw that Rādhikā's body shivered after hearing Lalitā's words, billowing on waves of playfulness while remembering Her pastimes with Kṛṣṇa the previous night. Slightly smiling, Kundalatā looked at a nearby pond and said, as if addressing a female lotus:

"O bewildered Padmini! Why are you vainly shivering out of ecstasy? Kundalatā's (a vine of Kunda-flowers or Kṛṣṇa's niece) *devara* (brother-in-law Kṛṣṇa or bestower of joy) Madhusūdana (Kṛṣṇa, or a bee), showing his own restlessness, has already

enjoyed you (leaving you after drinking your honey). Now will he drink your nectar again? (rest assured that he won't!)"

By being immersed in such joking discussions with Her, Kundalatā immerses Śrī Rādhā in the pinnacle of bliss and is herself similarly absorbed in the relish of this bliss.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship this Kundalatā."

*vrajapati mahiṣī yaśodāra ājñāte;
rādhāre ānena yiho pākera nimitte
sakhya bhāve rādhikāya pathe kautukete;
paritṛpta korena śrī kṛṣṇa prasaṅgete
kṛṣṇa kothā rasotsave ḍagamagi yini;
sei kundalatāya niranantara bhaji āmi*

"I constantly worship Kundalatā, who, on mother Yaśodā's order, brings Rādhā to the abode of the Queen of Vraja; who satisfies Rādhikā on the way there by making fun with Her about Kṛṣṇa in a friendly mood, and who is always immersed in an ocean of nectarean Kṛṣṇa-*kathā*."

VERSE 33:

**vrajeśvaryānītām bata rasavatī-kṛtya-vidhaye
mudā kāmam nandīśvara-giri-nikuñje praṇayinī |
chalaiḥ kṛṣṇaḥ rādhām dayitam abhi tām sārāyati yā
dhanīṣṭhām tat-prāṇa-priyatara-sakhīm tām kila bhaje**

vrajeśvaryā - by queen Yaśodā; *ānītām* - being brought; *bata* - indeed; *rasavatī* - kitchen; *kṛtya* - duties; *vidhaye* - for the sake of; *mudā* - gladly; *kāmam* - for their own pleasure; *nandīśvara giri* - the mount Nandīśvara; *nikuñje* - in a grove; *praṇayinī* - loving girl; *chalaiḥ*

- with tricks; *kṛṣṇam* - Kṛṣṇa; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *dayitam* - beloved; *abhitām* - close; *sārayati* - bringing; *yā* - who (fem.); *dhaniṣṭhām* - Dhaniṣṭhā; *tat* - Their; *prāṇa* - life; *priyatara* - dearest; *sakhīm* - girlfriend; *tām* - her; *kila* - certainly; *bhaje* - I worship.

"I worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's dear most girlfriend Dhaniṣṭhā, who, under different pretexts, joyfully arranges for Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's meeting in a kunjā on Mount Nandīśvara, after Śrī Rādhā was brought to Nandīśvara town in the morning by Yaśodā, the Queen of Vraja, to cook for Kṛṣṇa."

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Śrī Raghunātha's heart is filled with the sweetness of the companions of Vraja who have taken shelter of the amorous mellow *madhura rasa*. *ādyā eva paro rasah* "The greatest of transcendental mellows is the amorous one."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is amorous-*rasa* personified: *śṛṅgāraḥ sakhi mūrtimān iva madhau mugdho hariḥ kṛṣṇaḥ* (Gīta Govindam)

"O *sakhi* Rādhē! In this sweet spring, Hari plays as if He is erotic mellows personified!"

This embodiment of transcendental eros is fulfilled when He relishes the mellows of the Vrajasundarīs' *mahābhāva*. The transcendental youthful Cupid of Vṛndāvana is especially fulfilled when He relishes the *mādana-rasa* of Vṛṣabhānūnandinī. In this regard Śrī Rādhā's heart's friend Dhaniṣṭhā is the greatest support. In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises this Dhaniṣṭhā.

According to Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, Śrī Rādhā has five kinds of *sakhīs*: *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs*, *prāṇa-sakhīs*, *priya-sakhīs* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*.

Dhaniṣṭhā is a *sakhī* and she is known to have a greater love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *sakhyah kusumikā vindhyā dhaniṣṭhādyāḥ prakīrtitāḥ* (Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi)

"Kusumikā, Vindhyā and Dhaniṣṭhā are *sakhīs*. They are known for their greater love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *”yāḥ pūrvam sakhya ityuktās tās tu snehādhikā harau* (Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi)

Dhaniṣṭhā and Kundalatā nourish the flavours of the Yugala-pastimes by residing in Nanda's abode. They are known as those who expand Śrī Kṛṣṇa's ecstatic love.

namāmi guṇamālāṁ śrī dhaniṣṭhāṁ śubha rūpiṇīm. śrī kundalatikāṁ kṛṣṇa premānanda vivardhinīm (Paddhati Pradīpa)

When Kundalatā takes Śrī Rādhārāṇī to Nanda's abode to cook, Dhaniṣṭha comes out of her inner quarters, where she was waiting for Śrī Rādhā. She then takes Śrīmatī to Śrī Yaśodā.

In Śrī Vilāpa-Kusumāñjali-stava (61), Śrī Raghunātha has written:

*prāptāṁ nija praṇayinī prakaraḥ parītāṁ
nandīśvaraṁ vraja mahendra mahālayaṁ tam
dūre nirikṣya muditā tvaritaṁ dhaniṣṭhā
tvām ānayaṣyati kadā praṇayair mamāgre*

"When You arrive at Nandīśvara, the great abode of Nanda, the king of Vraja, You are surrounded by Your loving friends. When will I then see Dhaniṣṭhā quickly and lovingly taking You inside in front of me, after she sees You coming from afar?"

In Nanda's abode, all of Śrī Rādhā's activities, such as cooking, eating Kṛṣṇa's nectarean remnants and taking rest are accomplished by Dhaniṣṭhā.

After Kṛṣṇa and His friends have eaten and rested and Śrī Rādhā and Her girlfriends have eaten and taken rest, Dhaniṣṭhā accomplishes Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's amorous meeting in the Giri-nikuñja-grove on Nandiśvara Hill:

*kiñcid ūce viśākhayāḥ karṇe tat-sānvamanyata
rādhāpy anumimite'sma tad dvayoḥ smita vikṣayā
sakhyaḥ yad yuvayoḥ karṇākaraṇi sasmitam iksyate
mugdhayāḥ kulavadhvā me tannātra śreyasī sthitiḥ
ity utthāya svagehāya yāntyā vavre viśākhayā
proce śaṅkā miśeneṣṭa sprhā kiṁ sakhi sūcyate
hasa khela'ssa savayo vṛtetyāha vrajeśvarī
bhuktvā kṣaṇam aviśramya yāntī tām khedayiṣyasi
niṣkrāmyatām sakhi mayā saha sādhu-pakṣa
dvārena satvaram imāḥ khalu kūṭacaryāḥ
tad bandhujīva sumano nayana sprhā'pi
pūrṇā bhaviṣyatitarām nirapāyam eva
na jñāsyate vrajapurādhipayā vṛthā tvam
kiṁ śaṅkase sva grham evanayaiva vithyā
ity ādarād giri-guhā sukha-sadma ninye
tām kṛṣṇa kānti ruciram caturā dhaniṣṭhā*

(Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta 6.111-116)

Śrī Vrajeśvarī cuddled Śrī Rādhikā, giving Her different garments, ornaments and unguents. Tuṅgavidyā whispered something in Viśākhā's ear, making her giggle and shake her head. Śrī Rādhikā, Who saw this, understood what was on their minds and said: "O *sakhi* Viśākhe! O Tuṅgavidye! I should not stay here seeing you whispering in each other's ears and exchanging naughty glances with each other like that! You're just infatuated housewives!"

Then She got up to go home, but Viśākhā (stopped Her and) said: "O *sakhi!* Are You indicating Your desires with this show of fear? Why are You so disturbed by our whispering? *Sakhi!* Vrajeśvarī told You to freely play, joke and lie down with Your *vayas* (*sakhīs* or Kṛṣṇa)! Now, why do You make her sad by disobeying this order, going straight home without even taking a little rest after eating? Just make us happy by following her order and by playing with Your *vayas*."

Then clever Dhaniṣṭhā came and told Śrī Rādhikā: "*Sakhi!* Don't stay with them, they are very crooked! Come with me through this secret side-door, quickly! Your desire to pick Bandhujīva-flowers for *sūrya pūjā*, or the desires of Kṛṣṇa's heart, (*bandhu* = Your friend Kṛṣṇa and *jīva* = His heart, eyes and mind to unite with You) will be fulfilled without hindrance! O *Sakhi!* The Queen of Vraja will not find out. Don't be vainly afraid! Just come along with me down this path!", the clever Dhaniṣṭhā said and made Śrī Rādhikā meet beautiful Kṛṣṇa in a blissful abode in a (solitary) cave of Nandīśvara Hill, behind Vrajarāja's garden, thus fulfilling Kṛṣṇa's long standing desire to meet His hearts' beloved Śrī Rādhikā in a lonely place.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship this Dhaniṣṭhā, who is Śrī Rādhā's heart's friend!"

*pāka kārya anuṣṭhāne yaśodā rādhāke;
nityai ānena śrī nandīśvara parvate
kon chale śrī rādhāya nikuñja kānane;
nitya abhisāre milāya śrī kṛṣṇera sane
rādhikāra prāṇa sakhī sei to dhaniṣṭhā;
tāhare bhajibo āmi hoye eka niṣṭhā*

"I steadily worship Rādhikā's heart's friend Dhaniṣṭhā, who always brings Rādhā to the Śrī Nandīśvara Mount to cook for

mother Yaśodā and who always uses some pretext to unite Śrī Rādhā with Śrī Kṛṣṇa there in the mountain-woods."

VERSE 34:

**avantītaḥ kīrteḥ śravaṇa-bharato mugdha-hṛdayā
pragādhotkaṇṭhābhir vraja-bhuvam urikṛtya kila yā
mudā rādhā-kṛṣṇajjala-rasa-sukhaṁ vardhayati tāṁ
mukhīm nāndī-pūrvām satatam abhivande praṇayataḥ**

avantītaḥ - from Avantī; *kīrteḥ* - of the glories; *śravaṇa* - hearing; *bharataḥ* - filled; *mugdha* - enchanted; *hṛdayā* - heart; *pragādhā* - deeply; *utkaṇṭhābhiḥ* - with great eagerness; *vraja-bhuvanam* - Vraja; *urikṛtya* - having accepted; *kila* - certainly; *yā* - who; *mudā* - gladly; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* - Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *ujjala* - splendid (erotic); *rasa* - mellow; *sukhaṁ* - happiness; *vardhayati* - increases; *tāṁ* - her; *mukhīm nāndī pūrvām* - named Nāndīmukhī; *satatam* - always; *abhivande* - praise; *praṇayataḥ* - with love.

I lovingly praise Nāndīmukhī, who became enchanted after hearing about the great glories of Vraja-bhūmi and left her native place Avantīpura with great eagerness to settle in Vraja, and who always joyfully increases Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's blissful erotic enjoyments.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: The sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's most intimate pastimes can only be known through the scriptures and it is directly experienced in the minds of the great *rasika* swan-like saints who can relish Vraja-rasa.

They see these pastimes through their love-saturated eyes, relish them with their *rasika*-natures and float on the billowing waves of transcendental bliss. The *jñānis* consider themselves blessed when they experience *brahman* and the *yogīs* consider themselves blessed when they encounter the Witness, the Paramātmā. They are deprived, though, of the relish of the pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

But even the devotees who worship the Lord with awe and reverence cannot relish the sweet flavours of Vraja. The sweetness of Vraja is the relishable wealth of the *mādhuryopāsakas*, those who meditate on this transcendental sweetness. When they experience this sweetness just once, they consider everything else insignificant.

When Sāndīpani Muni's daughter Nāndīmukhī became greedy for that relishable sweetness she left her native place Avantīpura and vowed to live in Vraja.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda introduces Nāndīmukhī to us as follows:

*nāndīmukhī gaura varṇā paṭṭa-vastra vidhārīṇī
sāndīpaniḥ pitā tasyā mātā ca sumukhī satī
bhrātā madhumaṅgalo'syāḥ paurṇamāsī pitāmahī
nānā ratna bhūṣitāṅgī kaiśora vayasojjvalā
nānā sandhāna kuśalā nānā śilpa vidhāyinī
dvayor milana naipūṇyā sadā prema yutā bhavet*

(Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā 2, 98-100)

"Nāndīmukhī has a golden complexion and wears a silken garment. Her father is Sāndīpani Muni and her mother the chaste Sumukhi. Her brother is named Madhumaṅgala and her paternal grandmother Paurṇamāsī. She is decorated with

different jewels and is shining with youthful beauty. She is expert in establishing different meetings and various kinds of sculpture, and she is always immersed in love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa."

Śrī Raghunātha says: "Hearing about the glories of Vraja, Nāndīmukhī became enchanted and eagerly left her native place Avantīpura to settle down in Vraja-*dhāma*.

Eternal associates of the Lord, like the holy mother Paurṇamāsī (who actually is Yogamāyā, who can accomplish the impossible in the Vraja-*līla*), her adolescent granddaughter Kīsoṛī Nāndīmukhī and her grandson Madhumaṅgala, the embodiment of the mellow of laughter and the dear most friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they all appeared in Avantīpura.

In due course of time, they all left Avantī-nagara to come to Vraja and render their own favourite services. Still, to accomplish the mellows of the human-like pastimes, they think that they have come to Vraja-*dhāma*, becoming attracted after hearing about its great glories and thus they have settled down there.

Such a deep attachment between the Lord and His devotees cannot be found manifested in any other divine abode.

In Dvārakā-dhāma, the Lord performs His pastimes surrounded by His own energies (wives), but although it is said in the Brahma-Saṁhitā (*śriyaḥ kāntāḥ kāntaḥ paramaḥ puruṣaḥ*) that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is surrounded in Vṛndāvana by His internal potency too as He performs His pastimes, still they are performed in a pure extramarital mood.

Vraja-*līlā* shows a much greater sweetness and a much greater cleverness and variegatedness than the majestic Śrī Goloka-pastimes or the legally wedded pastimes of Dvārakā.

In Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs His sweet pastimes by taking shelter of His transcendental potency Yogamāyā, who is

expert in accomplishing the impossible. This Yogamāyā creates such an illusion in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innate potency, Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs, that they always consider themselves to be other men's adulterous wives and Kṛṣṇa to be their paramour. Śrī Kṛṣṇa in return also considers them to be other men's wives.

In this way Yogamāyā assists Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His energies in relishing the mellows of transcendental pastimes by covering over their awareness of Their true divine status.

There is no pastime that cannot be accomplished by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*, who possesses inconceivable opulences, but due to the great sweetness of His pastimes, He forgets His own status and simply relishes the mellows of pure love. Because Yogamāyā accomplishes this work, she is said to be able to accomplish the impossible.

In this way, the pastimes of pure love are possible only in Vraja-dhāma and therefore this Vraja-dhāma is superior in sweetness to all holy abodes.

And again, according to the particular love of His companions, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs a particular pastime: *tatrāpi rasa viśeṣa viśiṣṭa parikara vaiśiṣṭyenāvīrbhāva vaiśiṣṭyam dṛśyate* (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu)

One of the companions who nourish and create these kinds of wonderfully relishable pastimes is Nāndīmukhī. Accepting the role of one of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's friends in Their sweet and relishable pastimes, Nāndīmukhī constantly causes the ocean of Their erotic bliss to swell and increase and she herself is also constantly lost in swimming in this ocean of bliss and relish.

Just as the *brāhmaṇa*-lad Madhumaṅgala plays a special role amongst the cowherd boys, similarly the adolescent *brāhmaṇa*-girl Nāndīmukhī plays a special assisting role amongst the *sakhīs* in many different relishable pastimes.

All this can be beautifully experienced by reading *līlā-granthas* like Śrī Govinda-Līlāmṛta and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Bhāvanāmṛta²².

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I lovingly praise this Nāndīmukhī!"

*vrajera mahimā śuni avanti chāḍiyā;
vraje vāsa kore yei guṇe mugdha hoiyā
navīna yugalera śṛṅgāra rasa keli;
vardhana korena yini hoiyā kutūholi
vrajete vikhyāta nāma sei 'nāndīmukhī';
vandanā koribo āmi hoiyā boḍo sukhī*

"In great joy I will praise Nāndīmukhī, who is very famous in Vraja and who left her native place Avantīpura to move to Vraja, after having heard of its glories and thus becoming enchanted by them, and who eagerly increases the blissful erotic pastimes of the Adolescent Pair."

VERSE 35:

**mudā rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-jala-kelī rasa-bhara-
skhalat-kastūrī-tad-ghusṛṇa-ghana-carcārcita-jalā
pramodāt tau phaṇa-smita-muditam ūrmi-sphuṭa-kara-
śriyā siñcantīva prathayatu sukhaṁ nas taraṇijā**

mudā - happily; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* - Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *pracura* - abundant;
jalakelī - water sports; *rasabhara* - filled with *rasa*; *skhalat* - falling;
kastūrī - musk; *tat* - Their; *ghusṛṇa* - vermilion; *ghana* - deep; *carca* -

²² Unfortunately we cannot elaborate on these pastimes, being afraid that our book will become too large.

unguents; *arcita* - worshipped; *jalā* - water; *pramodāt* - out of jubilation; *tau* - they; *pheṇa* - foam; *smītam* - smile; *uditam* - arises; *ūrmi* - waves; *sphuṭa* - manifest; *kara* - hands; *śriyā* - with beauty; *siñcanti* - sprinkles; *iva* - as if; *prathayatu* - may expand; *sukhaṁ* - happiness; *naḥ* - of us; *taraṇijā* - the daughter of the sun.

May Yamunā, the daughter of the sun, whose waters are muddled and scented by the musk and vermilion that is washed off Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's bodies as They play great rasika-water sports there; who blissfully and mildly smiles at Them with the smile of her foam and who softly splashes Them with the hands of her waves, expand my happiness!

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises the most fortunate daughter of the sun Śrī Yamunā. *aho abhāgyaṁ tasya na pītaṁ yamunā-jalam. go gopa gopikā saṅge yatra kṛṇḍati kaṁsahā. yamunā-jala kallele sadā kṛṇḍati mādḥava iti* (Padma Purāṇa) "O how unfortunate are they who do not drink the water of the Yamunā, where Kaṁsa's enemy Kṛṣṇa eternally sports with the cows, cowherd boys and cowherd girls."

Mādḥava eternally plays in the billowing waters of the Yamunā. Because the verb 'kṛṇḍati' is in the present tense, it proves the eternity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the Yamunā.

The holy *dhāma* is transcendental, beyond the mundane creation, devoid of any material element, all-pervading, omnipresent and great —

sarvaga ananta vibhu kṛṇḍa tanu sama (C.C.)

Actually the Yamunā is not just a river filled with water, which is one of the five material elements. She carries transcendental nectar. The Lord says in the Bṛhad-Gautamiya

Tantra- *pañca yojanam evāsti vanam me deha-rūpakam;
kālindīyam suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta vāhinī*

"This Vṛndāvana, which extends over an area of ten miles, is My very body and the Yamunā, which carries the topmost divine nectar, is its spine."

This Yamunā, the carrier of the greatest nectar, is always absorbed in the mellows of the ecstatic service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and exists in Vṛndāvana as the object of His great love. From the words of the Śrī Vrajasundarī, we also learn how Yamunā and other rivers carry a sweet kind of love for Kṛṣṇa:

*nadyas tadā tad upadhārya mukunda gītam
āvarta lakṣita manobhava bhagna vegāḥ
ālīngana sthagitam ūrnibhujair murārer
grhṇanti pāda-yugalam kamalopahārāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.21.15)

"O *sakhīs!* When the Yamunā, Mānasa Gaṅgā and other rivers hear the flute song of Mukunda their minds are enchanted and this causes their waves to stop moving and to form whirlpools. They use their arm-like waves to embrace Madana-Mohana's lotus feet and offer lotus flowers to them, carrying His lotus feet on their bodies."

Just as the loving devotees perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* themselves and thus increase the devotion of the devotees who have taken shelter of them, similarly, Yamunā herself is relishing the bliss of Kṛṣṇa's service and in this way also increasing the devotion of the devotees.

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written:

māthureṇa maṇḍalena cāruṇābhimaṇḍitā

*premanaddha vaiṣṇavādhva vardhanāya paṇḍitā
ūrmī dorvilāsa padmanābha pāda vandinī
mām punātu sarvadāravinda-bandhu nandinī*

(Stavamālā)

"May the daughter of the friend of the lotus flowers (the sun), who is beautifully decorated by the Vraja-maṇḍala, who always increases the *rāga-bhakti* of the loving Vaiṣṇavas and who is dedicated to praising Padmanābha (Kṛṣṇa)'s lotus feet with the arms of her waves, always purify me."

Śrī Vṛndāvana's river Śrī Yamunā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most lovely playground, and there is no comparison to her wealth of natural beauty. From the descriptions in Gopāla Campū, we learn that Śrī Nanda and the Vrajavāsīs decided to abandon Gokula when they saw that different demons and monsters were constantly threatening Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When they came to the bank of the Yamunā in Śrī Vṛndāvana, the beauty of Vṛndāvana attracted Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart even more.

*rāma-kṛṣṇau ca baddha tṛṣṇāvāsādi tatīropakaṅthāvutkaṅthayā
bhuvī śakaṭād utplutau pluta saṁplutāhvānataḥ sukha samanvitam
sakhīnavagvidhāya pratyagram api pratyagrāyamāṇa-vaicitrī-
gahanam gahanam avagāhamānau savyāpasavyayoh paśyantau
caraṇa cāritām evācaritavantau. tadā kim anyad varṇanīyam
samastam vṛndāvanam api kṛṣṇena sprṣtam hṛṣtam eva nirṇīya
parāmṛṣtam. tatra ca-
yad gānam vipinasya kokila kale nṛtyam latā vibhrame
romṇām utthitam aṅkure ca kavitaṁ योग्यं nidānād ṛte
tan mithyā yadi kṛṣṇa saṅgati vaśāt tasmīn tathā varṇyate
satyam tarhi sadāpi tat tad akhilaṁ yasmāddarīḍṛsyate*

(Pūrva Campūḥ 9.63)

"When Nanda and the other cowherders came to Vṛndāvana in their bullock-carts, they were very eager to see Vṛndāvana's beauty. Eagerly, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma jumped from the cart and loudly called Their friends. They ran forwards and plunged into the ocean of Vṛndāvana's natural beauty, looking left and right in blissful astonishment as They wandered around. Vṛndāvana reciprocated by horripilating of ecstasy when being touched by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet."

This is only relishable for the *rasika*-devotees when it is confined to a poet's poetic descriptions such as:

"The cuckoos sang in the fifth note, the vines playfully danced in the wind and the sprouts showed goose bumps of ecstasy".

Actually there is no reality in this at all. As soon as it becomes 'linked' to Śrī Kṛṣṇa the poetry of the poet crystallises and reveals the real beauty of Vṛndāvana to the eyes."

In His *paugāṇḍa*-age (5-10 years), Śrī Kṛṣṇa chose the most enchanting bank of the Yamunā to have a picknick with His friends.

This is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata:

*aho'ti ramyaṁ pulinaṁ vayasyāḥ
sva keli sampan mṛdulāccha bālukam
sphuṭat saro gandha hṛtāli patrika
dhvani pratidhvāna lasad drumākulam*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.13.5)

"O friends! How enchanting is this beach! Everything required for our games can be found here! There is soft and clear sand here, the bees are buzzing, being attracted to the

fragrance of the blooming lotus flowers, and there are rows of trees here that are filled with birds whose songs echo all over the place!"

In Kṛṣṇa's *kaiśora*-age (10-15), the bank of the Yamunā was the place where the crown jewel of all of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the Rāsa-līlā, took place.

*tāḥ samādāya kālindiyā nivīśya pulinaṁ vibhuḥ.
vikasat kunda mandāra surabhyanila śaṭ-padam
saraccandrāmśu sandoha dhvasta doṣatamaḥ śivam.
kṛṣṇāyā hasta taralācita komala bālukam*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.32.11-12)

"Desiring to enjoy the Rāsa-*līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took the *gopīs* along to the bank of the Yamunā, where the autumnal moon extended his soft rays and removed the darkness of night, where the wind carried the fragrance of blooming Kunda- and Mandāra-flowers that attracted the humming bees that wandered from flowerbunch to flowerbunch, and where the soft sand of the beach is equally spread out by Yamunā's wave-like hands."

After performing the most *rasika*-Śrī-Śrī Rāsa-*līlā* on the bank of the Yamunā, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava performed water sports in her waters with the *gopīs*. Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava played extensively in the water like a mad elephant and she-elephant, and so the water of the Yamunā became muddled and scented with the vermilion, musk and sandalwood pulp that was washed off Their bodies. With a most blissful heart Yamunā attended the water sports of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *gopī*-friends and sprinkled Their bodies with the hands of her waves, that were beautified with the smile of her foam.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha dāsa says: "May that daughter of the sun, Kālindī, increase the wealth of my ecstatic love".

Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written: *kālindī salile ca tat kuca-taṭī kasturikā paṅkile snāyam snāyam aho kudehaja-malaṁ jahyam kadā nirmalaḥ* (Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi 60)

"When will I wash off the dirt from my dirty body (and my identification with it) while repeatedly bathing in the water of the Kālindī, which is muddled by the musk coming from Śrī Rādhārāṇī's nipples, and be blessed by relishing the mellows of devotion with a pure heart and deep absorption in my *siddha-svarūpa*?"

*paraspara ānandete śrī rādhā govinda
yamunāya jala keli korile ārambha
kasturī kuṅkuma candana duhuṅ aṅga hoite;
skhalita hoiyā paḍe jala pravāhete
ānande phenā rūpa mṛdu manda hāsye;
taraṅga rūpa hasta dvārā atīva ullāse
śrī rādhā govinde yiho abhiṣeka kore;
tapana tanayā śrī kālindī nāma dhare
bhāgyavatī pravāhiṇī sei to yamunā;
sukha sampad vṛddhi koro ei to prārthanā*

"May the fortunate river Yamunā, who is also known as Kālindī, the daughter of the sun, where Śrī Rādhā-Govinda blissfully begin Their water sports; whose current washes the vermilion, musk and sandal paste off Their bodies and who most blissfully sprinkles Śrī Rādhā-Govinda with the hands of her waves, increase the wealth of my ecstatic love - this is my prayer!"

VERSE 36:

**sarvānanda-kadambakena hariṇā prāg yācitā apy amūḥ
svairam cāru riraṁsayā rahasi yāḥ krodhād anādṛtya tām
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīm nijām anudinaṁ tenaiva sārddham mudā
rādhām saṁramayanti tāḥ priya-sakhī mūrdhnā prapadyetarām**

sarvānanda - all-blissful; *kadambakena* - by an abundance; *hariṇā* - by Hari; *prāg* - before; *yācitā* - begged; *apy* - even; *amūḥ* - them; *svairam* - own; *cāru* - lovely; *riraṁsayā* - with the desire to make love; *rahasi* - in private; *yāḥ* - who; *krodhād* - out of anger; *anādṛtya* - have disrespected; *tām* - Her; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *preṣṭha* - beloved; *sakhīm* - girlfriend; *nijām* - own; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *tena* - by him; *eva* - certainly; *sārddham* - along with; *mudā* - gladly; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *saṁramayanti* - makes love; *tāḥ* - they; *priya* - beloved; *sakhīḥ* - girlfriends; *mūrdhnā* - on the head; *prapadyetarām* - follow.

I carry Śrī Rādhā's dear most girlfriends, who blissfully make Śrī Rādhikā everyday meet Śrī Hari, the reservoir of all transcendental bliss, although He previously begged them for separate personal meetings with Him, on my head.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Rādhā's *sakhīs*.

yūthayos tu yayoḥ santi koṭi-saṅkhyā mṛgī-dṛśaḥ (Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi) "There are millions of doe-eyed *sakhīs* in the parties of both Rādhā and Candrāvalī."

Following this statement of Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, it is impossible to praise the innumerable different *sakhīs* of Śrī Rādhā by name, so they are praised collectively in this verse.

The love of the *gopikās* is completely devoid of desires for personal happiness.

*ātma-sukha duḥke gopīra nāhika vicāra;
 kṛṣṇa sukha hetu ceṣṭā mano vyavahāra.
 kṛṣṇa lāgi āra saba kori parityāga;
 kṛṣṇa sukha hetu kore śuddha anurāga*

(C.C.)

"The *gopīs* don't bother about their own happiness or distress. Their thoughts and endeavours are just fixed on Kṛṣṇa's happiness. For Kṛṣṇa's sake, they have given up everything else. For Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, they love Him with pure passion."

yad asyāṁ kṛṣṇa saukhyārtham eva kevalam udyamaḥ
 (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu)

"All their activities are performed simply for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure."

Just as Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs only desire the happiness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, similarly, Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends only desire the happiness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

The love of those who desire the sweet amorous mood of a Yūtheśvarī (*gopī*-group leader), who is a *nāyikā-bhāvatī* (amorous heroine) is known as **sakhī bhāva**. The *sakhīs* are happy when they can arrange for the meeting with their own Yūtheśvarī with Kṛṣṇa; **they do not desire independent meetings with Him.**

*sakhīra svabhāva eka akathya kathana;
 kṛṣṇa saha nija līlaya nāhi sakhīra mana
 kṛṣṇa saha rādhikāra līla ye korāya;
 nija keli hoite tāhe koṭi sukha pāya
 rādhāra svarūpa - kṛṣṇa prema kalpalatā;*

*sakhī gaṇa hoy tāra pallava puṣpa pātā
kṛṣṇa-līlāmṛta yadi latāke siñcaya;
nija seka hoite pallavādyera koṭi sukha hoy*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 8)

"The nature of the *sakhīs* is really indescribable - they do not desire personal pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. They find millions of times more happiness in the pastimes they arrange between Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa than in their own pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā is by nature a wish-yielding vine of love for Kṛṣṇa and the *sakhīs* are the tender leaves and flowers on this vine. When the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is sprinkled on this vine, it pleases the leaves and flowers millions of times more than if they were sprinkled themselves."

*sakhyah śrī rādhikāyā vraja kumuda vidhor hlādinī nāma śakteḥ
sārāṁśa-premavalayāḥ kisalaya-dala puṣpādi tulyāḥ svatulyāḥ
siktāyām kṛṣṇa līlāmṛta rasa nicayair ullasantyām amūṣyām
jātollāsāḥ svasekācchata guṇam adhikaṁ santi yat tan na citram*

(Govinda Līlāmṛta 10.16)

(Nāndīmukhī told Vṛndā:) "These girlfriends, who are equal to Śrī Rādhikā, are the pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is like the moon for the lily-like *gopīs*. The essence of this potency is *prema*, love of God. This love is personified by Śrī Rādhā and they are the sprouts, leaves and flowers of this vine. When this love-vine is sprinkled by the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, they become a hundred times happier than if they would be sprinkled themselves! This is not so astonishing!"

nirupādhi prīti-parā sadṛśī sukha duḥkayoḥ

vayasya bhāvād anyonya hṛdayajñā sakhī bhavet

(Alaṅkāra Kaustubha 5.279)

"They who have dedicated themselves to causeless love, who are equal and happiness and distress and who know each other's hearts due to their loving mutual friendship, are called **sakhīs**."

*svātmano'pyadhikaṁ prema kurvāṇānyo'nyam acchalam
viśrambhiṇī vayo-veśādibhis tulyā sakhī matā*

(Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi Dūti Prakaraṇa 70)

"They who love each other greatly and unambiguously, who can trust each other completely, and who are equal in age and dress are called each others' girlfriends."

Vṛndāvaneśvarī Rādhā has five kinds of *sakhīs*:

sakhīs, nitya-sakhīs, prāṇa-sakhīs, priya-sakhīs and *parama-preṣṭha sakhīs*.

Kusumikā, Vindhya, Dhaniṣṭhā and others are *sakhīs*, Kasturī, Maṇi Mañjarī and others are *nitya-sakhīs*, Śaśimukhī, Vāsantī and others are *prāṇa-sakhīs*, Kuraṅgākṣī, Sumadhyā and others are *priya-sakhīs* and Lalitā, Viśākhā and others are *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*.

In previous verses Śrī Raghunātha has praised the *sakhīs* like Lalitā, Viśākhā and Dhaniṣṭhā, and after this verse he will also praise the *mañjarīs*, who are *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*. Therefore, in this verse, he praises all of Śrī Vṛndāvaneśvarī's different other *sakhīs* collectively.

The joyful meeting between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā is the pinnacle of bliss to them. They do not covet personal meetings

with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If by chance such a situation arises, in other words, if Śrī Kṛṣṇa privately expresses His desire for intimacy with them, then they disrespect Him with loving anger and float in an ocean of bliss while arranging for the meeting of Śrī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I always carry these dear most girlfriends of Śrī Rādhā on my head."

*sarvānanda śrī govinda ekānta nirjane;
svacchanda vihāra lāgi kore nivedane
kintu yārā praṇaya kope kore pratyākhyāna;
śrī rādhāya milāiyā ullasitā hon
prāṇādhikā śrī rādhāra sei sakhīgaṇe;
mastake bohon kori ati harṣa mane*

"With a blissful mind I carry Śrī Rādhā's heart-friends, who may be petitioned in private by the all-blissful Śrī Govinda for free enjoyment, but who will then refuse Him with loving anger and blissfully arrange for His meeting with Śrī Rādhā instead, on my head."

VERSE 37:

**preṃṇā ye paribaṅṭanena kalitāḥ sevā-sadaivotsukāḥ
kurvāṇāḥ paramādareṇa satataṁ dāsā vayasyopamāḥ |
vaṁśī-darpaṇa-dūtya-vāri-vilasat-tāmbūla-viṇāḍibhiḥ
prāṇesaṁ paritoṣayanti paritas tān patri-mukhyān bhaje**

preṃṇā - with love; *ye* - who; *paribaṅṭanena* - by dividing; *kalitāḥ* - accepted; *sevāḥ* - devotional service; *sadā* - always; *eva* - only; *utsukāḥ* - eager; *kurvāṇāḥ* - doing; *paramādareṇa* - with the greatest respect; *satataṁ* - constantly; *dāsā* - servants; *vayasya* - friend;

upamāḥ - comparing; *vaṁśi* - flute; *darpaṇa* - mirror; *dūtya* - message-carrying; *vāri* - water; *vilasat* - shining; *tāmbūla* - betel leaves; *viṇā* - a stringed instrument; *ādibhiḥ* - and through other means; *prāṇeśam* - the Lord of their life; *paritoṣayanti* - they please; *paritaḥ* - everywhere; *tān* - they; *patri* - Patri; *mukhyān* - leading; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa's servants, headed by Patri, who always please Him by handing Him His flute, a mirror, water, camphor-scented betel leaves, by playing the Viṇā (a stringed instrument) or by carrying messages for Him; who have lovingly divided all these services amongst each other; who are most affectionally dedicated to the service of the Lord of their lives with body, mind and words and who are equal to His friends, although they are always eager to serve Him.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Raktaka, Patraka and all the other servants of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

dāsās tu prasṛitās tasya nideśa vaśa vartinaḥ. viśvastāḥ prabhutājñāna vinamrita dhiyaś ca te (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.2.16)

"The servants keep their eyes lowered, follow the orders of the Lord, are trustworthy, and have a very humble attitude, considering Kṛṣṇa to be their Lord."

According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has four kinds of servants - *adhikṛta*, *āśrita*, *pāriṣada* and *anuga*. *catur dhāmī adhikṛtāśrita pāriṣadānugāḥ* (ibid,18).

Brahmā, Mahādeva and Indra are amongst the *adhikṛta-dāsas*. There are three kinds of *āśritas*: *śaraṇya*, *jñānīcara* and *sevā-niṣṭha*.

Kaliya and the kings who were imprisoned by Jarasandha are among the *śaraṇyas*, Śaunaka and other sages are among the *jñānicaras*, Candradhvaja, Harihaya, Bahulāśva, Ikṣvāku, Śrutadeva and Puṇḍarīka are among the *sevā-niṣṭhas* and Uddhava, Dārūka and Jaitra are among the *pāriṣadas*.

There are two kinds of *anugas*: those in Dvārakā and those in Vraja. Sucandra and Maṇḍana are among the servants in Dvārakā, and Raktaka, Patraka, Patrī, Madhukaṇṭha, Madhuvrata, Rasāla, Suvilāsa, Premakanda, Marandaka, Ānanda, Candrahāsa, Payoda, Bakula, Rasada and Sārasa are some of Kṛṣṇa's servants in Vraja. Their forms are just as beautiful as their names —

*maṇimaya vara maṇḍanojjvalāṅgān
puraṭa javā madhuliṭ paṭira bhāsaḥ
nija vapur anurūpa divya vastrān
vrajapati nandana kiṅkarān namāmi*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.2.43)

"I offer my obeisances unto Śrī Nanda-Nandana's servants, whose bodies are brightened by shimmering jewelled ornaments, who possess enchanting complexions of gold, Javā-flowers (blood-red), bumblebees, sandalwood and others and who are beautified by divine garments exactly fitting their bodies."

Their service is also full of eagerness:

*drutaṁ kuru pariṣkṛtaṁ bakula! pīta paṭṭāmśukaṁ
varair agurubhir jalaṁ racaya vāsitaṁ vārīda*

*rasāla parikalpayor agalatā dalair vīṭikāḥ
parāga paṭalī gavāṁ diśam arundha paurandarīm*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.2.44)

"O Bakula! Quickly wash this yellow silken *dhotī*! O Vārida! Scent this water with the most excellent *aguru*-perfume! O Rasāla! Prepare betel leaves, for the eastern direction is covered with dust thrown up by the hooves of the cows!"

Because the service of the servants in Vraja is full of deep affection, Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī has called them *vayasyopamāḥ*, "just like friends".

According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *dāsyā-rasa* is *sambhrama-prīti*, and he has defined that *sambhrama-prīti* as follows:

*sambhramaḥ prabhutā jñānāt kampaś cetasi sādaraḥ.
anenaikyam gatā prītiḥ sambhrama-prītir ucyate. eṣā rase'tra
kathitā sthāyi-bhāvatayā budhaiḥ* (B.R.S. 3.2.76)

"When the heart trembles out of respect for the Lord, it is called *sambhrama*, and the love that attains oneness with this is called *sambhrama-prīti*. This *sambhrama-prīti* is called the *sthāyi-bhāva* of this *rasa* (*dāsyā-rasa*)."

It is therefore certain that there is some awe and reverence in *dāsyā rasa*. But Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written —

*śrī vraja-sthānam tu mādhyayaikamaya eva. athāpyeṣāṁ
prīter bhaktitvam śrī goparāja kumāra parama guṇa
prabhāvatvādi naivādara sambhavāt.*

"But the *sthāyi-bhāva* of the servants in Vraja consists of service rendered only in a mood of sweetness".

One may argue here: "Without some feeling of awe and reverence, a servant-attitude can simply not come to pass. If

there is no feeling in the servants of Vraja that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord, then how can their *dāsya-bhakti* be accomplished?"

For this reason Śrī Jīva says; "Although they feel a sweet love for Kṛṣṇa, their service attitude is accomplished because they honour Kṛṣṇa as the son of the king of Vraja, who is very qualified and powerful."

Not one of the Vrajavāsīs can see Kṛṣṇa as God. In *dāsya-rasa*, there is some respect for Him, though, as the son of the king, therefore Śrī Raghunātha das Gosvāmī has called them *vayasya-tulya* or equal to His friends.

They lovingly divide the services for Kṛṣṇa amongst each other: such as handing Him His flute or His mirror, carrying messages for Him, serving Him water or camphor-scented betel leaves or by playing the Vīṇā for Him.

In this way, they accomplish Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship these servants, headed by Patṛī, who are always eager to render devotional service."

*premāveśe kṛṣṇa-sevā kore rātri dine;
paraspara sevā kārya koriyā baṅtane
vaṁśī, darpaṇa, dūtya-kriyā, karpūra, tāmbūla;
paricaryā kore yārā samayānukūla
suvāsita jala bhogyā upakaraṇa yoto;
vīṇā-vādya yantra yāhā kṛṣṇa abhimata
kṛṣṇera marāma bujhi paricaryā kore;
bhāgyavān kṛṣṇa dāsa brahmāṇḍa bhitorē
sei vayasya tulya patṛī ādi dāsa gaṇa;
sarvadā bhajibo āmi ei mora mana*

"I wholeheartedly worship Patṛī and the other servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who lovingly engage in Kṛṣṇa's service day and night and who have divided these services amongst each other. They hand

Him His flute and His mirror, carry messages for Him and serve Him camphor and betel leaves as is fit for the time of the day or year. They give Him enjoyable things like scented water and play the Vīṇā exactly as Kṛṣṇa likes it. They serve Kṛṣṇa perfectly because they know exactly how He feels. These servants of Kṛṣṇa, who are comparable to His friends, are the most fortunate creatures of the world!!"

VERSE 38:

**tāmbūlarpaṇa-pāda-mardana-payo-dānābhīsārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya-maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ |
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā-bhūmikāḥ
kelī-bhūmiṣu rūpa-mañjarī-mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye**

tāmbūla - betel leaves; *arpaṇa* - offering; *pāda* - feet; *mardana* - massaging; *payāḥ* - water; *dāna* - giving; *abhīsāra* - love-journey; *ādibhiḥ* - and with various other things; *vṛndāraṇya* - Vṛndāvana; *maheśvarīm* - the great queen; *priyatayā* - out of love; *yāḥ* - who; *toṣayanti* - please; *priyāḥ* - beloveds; *prāṇa* - life; *preṣṭha* - beloved; *sakhī-kulād* - than all the girlfriends; *api* - even; *kilā* - certainly; *asaṅkocitā* - free from hesitation; *bhūmikāḥ* - the objects; *kelī* - play; *bhūmiṣu* - on the grounds; *rūpa mañjarī mukhāḥ* - headed by Rūpa Mañjarī; *tā* - they; *dāsikāḥ* - maidservants; *saṁśraye* - I take shelter.

"I take shelter of Śrī Rādhikā's maidservants, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī, who always engage in serving betel leaves, massaging the feet, serving water, and arranging for the Divine Couple's secret trysts. These maidservants are even more dear to the great Queen of Vṛndāraṇya (Śrī Rādhikā) than the *prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs* (the

girlfriends who are dearer to Her than life), and She is therefore not at all shy before them!"

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī praises the *mañjarīs*, the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā who have a greater love for Rādhā and who are led by Rūpa Mañjarī.

Of the aforementioned five kinds of *sakhīs*, they are the *prāṇa-sakhīs* and the *nitya-sakhīs*.

*yāḥ pūrvam prāṇa-sakhyāś ca nitya sakhyāś ca kīrtitāḥ.
sakhī-snehādhikā jñeyās tā evātra mañṣibhiḥ*

(Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi Sakhī Prakaraṇa 134)

"The *sakhīs* who I previously glorified as *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs* are considered to be more affectionate towards the heroine."

*tadīyatābhimāninyo yāḥ sneham sarvadāśritāḥ.
sakhīyām alpādhikam kṛṣṇāt sakhī snehādhikām tu tāḥ*

(ibid. 131)

"Any *sakhī* who thinks 'we are yours', who thus always shows affection for Śrī Rādhā, and who has a little more affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved Śrī Rādhā than for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, is called *sakhī-snehādhikā*."

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has given this example:

*vīramatu tava vṛnde dūtya cāturya caryā
sahacari vinivṛtya bruhi goṣṭhendra sūnum*

*viṣama viṣadhareyaṁ śarvarī prāvṛṣeṇyā
katham iha girikuñje bhīrur eṣā praheyā*

(Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi Sakhī Prakaraṇa 132)

"One of Śrī Rādhā's foremost *prāṇa-sakhīs* forbade Vṛndā to send Her on Her love-journey, saying: 'O friend Vṛnde! Let your clever message-carrying rest here! Go away from here and tell Goṣṭhendra-Nandana that this is a monsoon-night and there are poisonous snakes slithering around! How can we send our frightened friend Śrī Rādhā to that mountain-cave? He is able to defeat snakes like Kāliya, so let Him come this way Himself in secret!'"

These *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *nitya-sakhīs*, who have a greater love for Rādhā, are known as **mañjarīs**. Although they belong to the five classes of *sakhīs* they are maidservants who are always engaged in the service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. Hence it is said:

*tāmbūlārpaṇa pāda-mardana payodānābhisārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya maheśvarīṁ priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ*

"By offering Her betel leaves, massaging Her feet, giving Her water and escorting Her on Her love-journeys, they always satisfy the great queen of Vṛndāvana!"

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya has written:

*caudike sakhīra mājhe, rādhikāra iṅgite,
cīruṇī loiyā kore dhari
kuṭīla kuntala sab, vithāriyā āncarab
bonāibo vicitra kavārī*

"While I am surrounded by *sakhīs*, I take a comb in my hand, and on Her indication, I start to comb all of Rādhikā's curly hairs with a comb, binding it into a wonderful braid."

mṛgamada malayaja, sab aṅge lepabo,
porāibo manohara hāra
candana kuṅkume, tilaka bonāibo,
herabo mukha sudhākara

"I will anoint Her whole body with musk and sandalwood pulp and adorn Her with an enchanting necklace. I will make a *tilaka* for Her with sandalwood pulp and vermilion and look at Her moon-like face."

nīla paṭṭāmbara, yatane porāibo,
pāye dibo ratana mañjire
bhṛṅgārera jale, āṅgā caraṇa dhoyāibo,
muchāibo āpana cikure

"I will diligently dress Her in Her blue silken *sāḍī* and place jewelled anklebells on Her feet. I will wash Her reddish feet with water from a jug and dry them off with my hairs."

kusuma komala dale, śeja vichāibo,
śayana korābo doṅhākāre
dhavala cāmara āni, mṛdu mṛdu vijabo,
charamita duhuka śarīre

"I will make a bed of soft flower petals for Them both and then I will make Them lie down, bring a white whisk-fan and start softly fanning Their exhausted bodies."

*nānā chale kṛṣṇe prerī saṅgama korāya;
ātma-kṛṣṇa-saṅga hoite koṭi sukha pāya*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya Chapter 8)

"Although the *sakhīs* have no interest in personal intercourse with Kṛṣṇa, still Rādhikā carefully arranges for their meetings with Him. With different pretexts, She urges Kṛṣṇa to have intercourse with them and thus She attains millions of times more happiness than if She would personally unite with Kṛṣṇa."

But although the *mañjarīs* are in the class of the *sakhīs*, they never have sexual intercourse with Kṛṣṇa, due to their fixation in a pure service-attitude. Even if Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes a pass at them or even if their own Yūtheśvarīs are eager for them to do this, they never desire personal intercourse with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*ananya śrī rādhā padakamala dāsyaika rasadhī
hareḥ saṅge raṅgam svapana samaye nā'pi dadhati
balāt kṛṣṇa kūrpāsakabhīdi kim apy ācarati kā-
py udāśrur meveti pralapati mamātma ca hasati*

(Vṇḍāvana Mahimāmṛta 16,94)

"The maidservants, who are exclusively devoted to the service of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, which are like an ocean of nectar, do not enjoy with Śrī Hari even in their dreams. When Kṛṣṇa forcibly pulls at their bodices, they cry out: 'No, no!', while Rādhikā watches and laughs."

By laughing, Śrī Rādhā shows that she approves of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's actions.

In his Ānanda-Candrikā-ṭīkā of Śrī Ujjvala Nilamaṇi, Nāyaka-Sahāya-Bheda-prakaraṇa, verse 15, Śrīmat Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written —

yadyapi sakhyaḥ hi sva sva yūtheśvarīṇāṁ śrī rādhādinām eva śrī kṛṣṇāṅga saṅga-sukhena sukhinyaḥ na tu svāsām, tad api tāḥ sāmānyato dvidhā bhavati - prema-saundarya-vaidagdhyādinām ādhikyena śrī kṛṣṇasyāti lobhanīya gātryas teṣāṁ nyūnatvena tasyānati-lobhanīya gātryaś ca. tata eva sva yūtheśvarīṇāṁ apyāgrahādhikyāc ca kadācit śrī kṛṣṇāṅga saṅga sprhāvatyo'pi bhavanti, tās ca lalitādyāḥ parama preṣṭha sakhyaḥ. uttarām tu tad dvayābhāvāt kadāpi kṛṣṇāṅga saṅga sprhāvatyo na bhavanti, tās ca kasturyādayo nitya sakhyaḥ

"Although the *sakhīs* are happy when they can arrange for the meetings of their Yūtheśvarīs with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and do not desire the bliss of personal union with Him, still we can generally distinguish two kinds of them. To the first belong those who have bodies that are very attractive for Śrī Kṛṣṇa because they have more love, beauty and cleverness, and to the second belong those whose bodies are not so attractive to Him because they have less love, beauty etc.

Of them, the first are Lalitā and other *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*, who desire bodily intercourse with Śrī Kṛṣṇa because of the great eagerness of their Yūtheśvarīs, and the second group is never eager to meet with Kṛṣṇa, even if He requests it and their Yūtheśvarīs are eager to accomplish their meetings also. They are the *nitya-sakhīs* or *mañjarīs* like Kasturī."

The purport of this is that, according to the kind and the amount of the devotees' love, the Lord is greedy to taste the flavours of his/her love. The love of the *sama-snehā-sakhīs* can allow their Yūtheśvarī Rādhā to agree with their bodily

intercourse with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the desire to unite with them may also awaken in the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

But the love of the *mañjarīs*, who are exclusively fixed in a service-attitude, will not make them desire to unite with Śrī Kṛṣṇa even in dreams, what to speak of in a wakeful state! Therefore Śrī Kṛṣṇa will also never desire to unite with them. If He requests them to unite with Him, than it is only an external show, or done as a joke, it is never real.

Śrī Rādhā's efforts to make them unite with Kṛṣṇa should similarly be seen as an external act or as a mere joke.

Because of the complete purity of their attitude, Śrī Rādhā has accepted the *mañjarīs* as Her own Self, so that they automatically gain free access to all the places where the Śrī Yugala meets and performs pastimes.

The Śrī Yugala considers them to be like the embodiments of Their absorption in Their erotic pastimes. Because of this exclusive privilege, the *mañjarīs* are situated in the highest position in the kingdom of *prema*. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas perform their *bhajana* in allegiance to them. This is the unprecedented merciful gift of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

śrī rūpa mañjarī sāra, śrī rati mañjarī āra,
labaṅga mañjarī mañjulālī
śrī rasa mañjarī saṅge, kasturikā ādi raṅge,
prema sevā kore kutūhole

"I will eagerly render loving service with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Labaṅga Mañjarī, Mañjulālī Mañjarī, Śrī Rasa Mañjarī, Kasturikā and others. "

e sab anugā hoiyā, prema sevā nibo cāiyā,
iṅgite bujhibo sab kāje.

*rūpa guṇe ḍagamagi, sadā hobo anurāgi,
vasati koribo sakhī mājha*

"Following all of them, I will beg for devotional service, understanding what to do simply by receiving their hints. I will always float in the forms and attributes of the Divine Pair and live amongst the *sakhīs*."

*vṛndāvane dui jana, catur dīke sakhīgaṇa
samaya bujhiyā rasa sukhe
sakhīra ṅgita hobe, cāmara dhulābo kobe,
tāmbūla yogābo cānda mukhe*

"The Divine Pair of Vṛndāvana is surrounded by Their girlfriends. Understanding the time has come, I will, by the indication of the *sakhīs*, fan Them with a whisk-fan or place betel leaves in Their moon-like mouths in *rasika*-bliss."

*yugala caraṇa sevi, nirantara ei bhāvi,
anurāgi thākibo sadāy
sādhane bhāvibo yāhā, siddha dehe pābo tāhā,
rāga pathera ei se upāya*

"I will always think about the lotus feet of the Yugala Kīśora and remain passionately devoted to them. Whatever I think of during my practice I will get in my *siddha-deha*. These are the ways of *rāgānuga bhakti*."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of these maidservants of Śrī Rādhā, headed by Rūpa Mañjarī!"

In many ways and many places in this Stavāvalī, one can see Śrī Raghunātha thus speaking of the Yugala-sevā and Śrī

Rūpānugatyā-*bhajana*. All this will become known to us at the proper places.

*tāmbūla dāna, pāda mardana, jala dānādite;
nitya abhisāre rādhāya kore paritṛpte
prāṇa preṣṭha yoto sakhī lalitā pradhānā;
tānhādera ho'te yārā sevāte pravīṇā
niḥsaṅkoca citte tāi rahaḥ keli sthāne
sevā kārye kore yārā gamanāgamane
śrī rūpa mañjarī ādi rādhā dāsigaṇe;
āśraya loiyā bhaji ei mora mane*

"In my mind I worship Śrī Rādhā's maidservants, headed by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who satisfy Her by serving Her betel leaves and water, massaging Her feet and escorting Her on Her love-journeys. They are even more expert in devotional service than Śrī Rādhikā's heart's friends, headed by Lalitā, and they can freely come and go in and out of the places, where the Divine Pair perform Their intimate pastimes, to render their services there."

VERSE 39:

**tr̥ṇīkṛtya sphāraṁ sukha-jaladhi-sāraṁ sphuṭam api
svakīyaṁ premnām ye bhara-nikara-namrā muraripoḥ
sukhābhāsaṁ śasvat prathayitum alaṁ prauḍha-kutukād
ghatante tān dhanyān param iha bhaje mādharma-gaṇān**

tr̥ṇīkṛtya - making it insignificant like a blade of grass; *sphāraṁ* - increasing; *sukha* - bliss; *jaladhi* - ocean; *sāraṁ* - essence; *sphuṭam* - fully blooming; *api* - even; *svakīyaṁ* - own; *premnām* - with love; *ye* -

what; *bhara* - filled; *nikara* - multitude; *namrā* - humble; *muraripoḥ* - of Kṛṣṇa; *sukha* - happiness; *ābhāsam* - manifestation; *śāśvat* - constantly; *prathayitum* - to manifest; *alam* - greatly; *prauḍha* - increased; *kutukād* - out of eagerness; *yataḥ* - from where; *te* - they; *tān* - them; *dhanyān* - the fortunate ones; *param* - greatly; *iha* - in Vraja; *bhaje* - I worship; *mādhava* - Mādhava; *gaṇān* - the group.

I worship the most fortunate associates of Mādhava, who consider the nectar of their own happiness to be as insignificant as blades of grass and who always humbly and lovingly strive to expand Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises all the associates of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, both the famous and the less well-known.

Forgetting all their desires for personal happiness they have dedicated their bodies, minds and hearts to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.

yad dhāmārtha suhṛt priyātma tanaya prāṇāśayās tvat kṛte

(Bhāgavata 10.14.35)

"These Vrajavāsīs have engaged their bodies, homes, wealth, children and hearts all for Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

*nā gaṇi āpana duḥka, sabe vāñchi tāra sukha,
tāra sukhe āmāra tātparya*

(C.C.)

"I do not count my own sorrow. I just desire His happiness. His happiness is my goal!"

Only the Vrajavāsīs can say that, no one else. It is the nature of devotion that the devotees' thoughts are centered around the Lord's happiness.

*viṣayānukūlyātmakeśaś tadānukūlyānugata tat sprhā tad anubhava
hetukollāsamaya jñāna viśeṣaḥ priyatā*
(Pṛīti Sandarbha - 61 Anuḥ)

"To accomplish something favourable (i.e. happiness) for the object of love is the very life of love. The desire then awakens in the lover to arrange for anything which is favourable to the beloved's happiness."

Then, when the devotee feels that Kṛṣṇa is happy, he/she is also happy. The devotee has no independent desire for happiness. Above that, in Vraja-bhakti there is no awareness of the Lord's opulence and majesty. All this prowess and majesty is forgotten, so according to his/her own relationship with the Lord, the devotee thinks: *mora putra mora sakhā mora prāṇa-pati* "He is my son, He is my friend, He is my lover."

Then all kinds of anxiety about Kṛṣṇa's welfare awaken within the heart of the Vraja-lover.

"How will I accomplish Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness?"

The devotee's consciousness is absorbed in this thought. Thus they consider their own happiness as insignificant as blades of grass and only show great endeavours to expand Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness. Gradually their whole consciousness becomes centered around thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness, and they forget all about their own happiness. Hence the *mahājanas* have said:

*vrajera viśuddha prema,
yeno jāmbunada hema,*

ātma sukha yāhā nāhi gandha
(C.C.)

"The love of Vraja is as pure as Jāmbunada-gold - there is not even a whiff of personal happiness here."

Just as there is no stain in Jāmbunada-gold, there is also no stain in the love of Vraja, that is completely unmotivated and free from desires for personal happiness.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship these fortunate associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa!"

Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has shown a certain distinction between the different devotees who perform *bhajana* in allegiance to the Lord's associates in Vraja-

*dhanyo loke mumukṣur hari bhajana paro dhanya dhanyas tato'sau
dhanyo yaḥ kṛṣṇa pādāmbuja rati paramo rukmiṇīsa priyo'taḥ
yāśodeya priyo'taḥ subala-suhṛt ato gopī-kānta priyo'taḥ
śrī vṛndāvaneśvaryati rasa vivaśārādhakaḥ sarva mūrdhni*

(Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 2.34)

"Those who desire liberation from this world are certainly fortunate; those who worship Lord Hari are more fortunate, and those who are most attached to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are again more fortunate. More fortunate than them are the beloveds of the husband of Rukmiṇī; more praiseworthy than them are the beloveds of the son of Yaśodā; more fortunate than them are the beloveds of the friend of Subala, and again more fortunate than them are those who surrender to the worship of Gopījana-Vallabha (Kṛṣṇa, the lover of the *gopīs*). But above all of them are the worshippers of the most overwhelming supreme *rasa* of

the Queen of Vṛndāvana. In other words: the devotees who are in the mood of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants!"

Absorbed in the feelings of the Lord's associates in Vraja, Śrī Raghunātha desires their worship.

*tṛṇa tulya tuccha bhāvi nija sukha yoto;
prema bhare hoye yārā sadā avanata
prāṇanātha govindera sukha puṣṭi tare;
satata ānanda mane koto yatna kore
śrī kṛṣṇera parivāra dhanya bhaktagaṇe;
bhajana koribo sadā ei mora mane*

"I always yearn to worship the blessed devotees in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's entourage, who consider any kind of personal happiness to be as insignificant as blades of grass; who always bow down in loving humility and who always ecstatically endeavour to nourish the happiness of the Lord of their lives, Govinda."

VERSE 40:

**tasyāḥ kṣaṇādarśanato mriyante
sukhena tasyāḥ sukhino bhavanti |
snigdhaḥ paraṁ ye kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ
prāṇeśvarī-preṣṭha-gaṇān bhaje tān**

tasyāḥ - theirs; *kṣaṇa* - moment; *adarśanataḥ* - from not seeing; *mriyante* - they are dying; *sukhena* - with happiness; *tasyāḥ* - her; *sukhina* - happy; *bhavanti* - they are; *snigdhaḥ* - pleasant; *paraṁ* - greatest; *ye* - who; *kṛta* - done; *puṇya* - grace, or merit; *puñjāḥ* - abundance; *prāṇeśvarī* - queen of the heart; *preṣṭha* - beloveds; *gaṇān* - the hosts; *bhaje* - I worship; *tān* - them.

I worship Śrī Rādhā's beloved maidservants, who are like dead when they don't see Her for even a moment; who consider themselves to be most happy when Śrī Rādhā is happy; who are very softhearted and who have performed so many pious activities.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the most intimate friends of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Before this, all of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends and maidservants have been praised. It seems that there is a special reason why they have been praised here with the words *prāṇeśvarī preṣṭhagaṇān*.

First of all, these beloveds of Śrī Rādhā are defined as follows: *tasyāḥ kṣaṇādarśanato mriyante*

"When they don't see Śrī Rādhā for even a moment they are almost like dead."

In his Vṛndāvana-Mahimāmṛta (8.23-24) Śrīpāda Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written this about Śrī Rādhā's maidservants or *mañjarīs*:

*kṣaṇaṁ caraṇa vicchedyāc chrīśvaryaḥ prāṇa-hāriṇim
padāravinda samlagnatayaivāharniṣaṁ sthitām
bahuna kiṁ svakāntena kṛḍantyāpi latā-grhe
paryāṅkādhīṣṭhāpitām vā vastrair vācchādītām kvacit*

"The maidservant feels like dying when she is separated from her Śrīśvarī's lotus feet for even a moment. She's staying by Her lotus feet day and night. What more can I say? When Śrīmatī enjoys with Her lover in the vine-cottage She seats Her maidservant on the bed or covers her with Her sheets!" Therefore, if they don't see their Īśvarī for even a moment they

are like dead. Their forms embody devotional service, and if they are deprived of that devotional service it is as if they lose their lives.

*rādhā padābja sevānya sprhā kāla-trayojjihitām
rādhā prīti sukhāmbhodhāv apāre buḍitām sadā
rādhā padāmbujād anyat svapnānte'pi na jānatīm
rādhā sambandha samdhāvat prema sindhaugha-mālinīm*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 8.35-36)

"In past, present or future she does not covet anything else but Rādhā's lotus feet and she's always immersed in a boundless ocean of blissful love for Her. Even in dreams she doesn't know anything else but Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet and she's like a river that swiftly runs towards the ocean of Śrī Rādhā!" Following these quotations we assume that the *mañjarīs*, whose very hearts are dedicated to Śrī Rādhā, are indicated in this verse.

Then again it is said: *sukhena tasyāḥ sukhino bhavanti* "When Śrī Rādhā is happy they are happy." Just as the buds (*mañjarīs*) and fresh sprouts automatically blossom when a vine is sprinkled, the *mañjarīs* or maidservants of Śrī Rādhā blossom up with great bliss when the Rādhā-vine is sprinkled by the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nectarean pastimes. Śrī Rādhā's happiness and distress is reflected on them as if they are mirrors.

*patatyasre sāsrā bhavati pulake jāta pulakāḥ
smite bhāti smerā sumalimani jāte sumalināḥ
anāvādyā svāḥir mukuram abhivikṣya sva vadanaṁ
sukhaṁ vā duḥkaṁ vā kim api kathaniyaṁ mṛga dṛśaḥ*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says: "O fawn-eyed girls! As long as you did not meet your girlfriends you can see in the mirror whether you are happy or sad, but when your girlfriends stand before you, then what is the use of mirrors for you? They are just like mirrors themselves! When tears are falling from your eyes they also fall from their eyes, when you have goose pimples on your body, they also have them, when you laugh, they also laugh and when you are morose they are also sad!" In Śrī Govinda Līlāmṛta (11.137) it is described:

*spr̥ṣati yadi mukundo rādhikāṁ tat sakhināṁ
bhavati vapuṣi kampa sveda romaṅca vāṣpam
adhara madhu mudāsyās cet pibaty esa yatnād
bhavati bata tad āsāṁ mattatā citram etat*

"How amazing! When Mukunda touches Rādhikā, Her girlfriends cry of ecstasy and their bodies tremble, perspire, and are studded with goose pimples, and when Kṛṣṇa blissfully drinks the honey of Rādhikā's lips (by kissing Her), then they all become mad!" Again, even after a long search one can not find any happiness comparable to the happiness the *mañjarīs* feel when they behold the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's amorous pastimes through the windows of the *kuñja*:

*rādhā nāgara keli sāgara nimagnālī-dṛśāṁ yat sukham
no tal leśa lavāyate bhagavataḥ sarvo'pi saukhyotsavaḥ*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 1.54)

"The entire festival of bliss in the kingdom of God is not comparable to even a drop of the bliss the *sakhīs* feel when their

eyes drown in the ocean of Śrī Rādhā's lover's pastimes." The maidservants can experience Śrī Rādhārāṇī's happiness more than others.

Finally it is said: *snigdhaḥ param̐ ye kṛta puṇya puñjāḥ prāṇeśvarī preṣṭha-gaṇān bhaje tān*

"I worship Prāṇeśvarī Śrī Rādhā's most beloved ones, who have very soft hearts and who have performed many pious activities."

Because Śrī Rādhā's maidservants show the limit of selflessness, they are soft-hearted like no one else in the circle of *sakhīs*. They are in name *mañjarī* and in nature also *mañjarī* (buds). They will never allow the bumblebee to enjoy them. Just as the buds increase the bee's thirst for the flowers by surrounding these flowers, similarly the *mañjarī*-buds always increase Madhusūdana's (the Kṛṣṇa-bee's) thirst for the flower-like Śrī Rādhā.

Here they have been called *kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ*: girls who have performed many pious acts. But there is no kind of pious merit that can bring about the good fortune of attaining the service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

In his Laghu-Toṣaṇī-*tīkā* on the final words '*kṛta puṇya puñjāḥ*' of the Bhāgavata-verse *ittham̐ sukham̐ brahma-sukhānubhūtya* (10.12.11), Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written

atas tebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ kṛta puṇya puñjā iti lokoktiḥ. vastutastu kṛtānām̐ caritānām̐ bhagavataḥ parama prasāda-hetutvena puṇyās cāravaḥ puñjā yeṣām̐ te ityarthāḥ. puṇyas tu cārvapīyamaraḥ:

Śrī Śuka Muni repeatedly praised the cowherd boys who enjoyed with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as being more pious than the previously mentioned *jñānīs*, the devotees with a reverential service-attitude and those people who have taken shelter of *māyā*.

This is just a customary saying. Actually there is another meaning to the word *puṇya* (pious merit) and that is *cāru* or enchanting. This can be seen in the Amara-Koṣa-dictionary. The word *kr̥ta* means 'pastimes' .

In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is completely controlled by those who can perform such enchanting pastimes with Him. Here also the *mañjarīs* have been called *kr̥ta-puṇya-puñjāḥ* because they are so fixed in a service attitude towards the Yugala and they have such beautiful characters because they are free from even the slightest fragrance of personal desire.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship Śrī Rādhā's most beloved maidservants!"

*kṣaṇa kāla śrī rādhāra adarśana hole;
mṛta prāya hoy - yārā viraha anale
śrī rādhāra sukhe yārā hoy ātma-hārā;
ki vicitra puṇya puñja koriyāche tārā
prāṇeśvarīra snehārdra cittā preṣṭha-gaṇe
bhajana koribo āmi ei vāñchā mone*

"I yearn for the worship of Prāṇeśvarī Rādhā's beloveds, whose hearts melt with affection; who almost die in a fire of separation when they do not see Her for even a moment, and who are beside themselves of ecstasy when Śrī Rādhā is happy. What wonderful pious activities they have performed!"

VERSE 41:

**sāpatnyoccaya-rajyad-ujjala-rasasyoccaiḥ samudvṛddhaye
saubhāgyodbhāṭa-garva-vibhrama-bhṛtaḥ śrī-rādhikāyāḥ sphuṭam |
govindaḥ smara-phulla-vallava-vadhū-vargeṇa yena kṣaṇam**

krīḍaty eṣa tam atra viśṛta-mahā-puṇyam ca vandāmahe

sāpatnya - rivalry; *uccaya* - great; *rajyad* - manifesting; *ujjala* - erotic; *rasasya* - of the flavour; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *samudvṛddhaye* - for increasing; *saubhāgya* - fortune; *udbhata* - bold; *garva* - pride; *vibhramah* - motions; *bhṛtaḥ* - carrying; *śrī rādhikāyāḥ* - of Śrī Rādhikā; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *govindah* - Govinda; *smara* - Cupid; *phulla* - blossoming; *ballaba-vadhū-vargeṇa* - by the host of cowherdwomen; *yena* - by whom; *kṣaṇam* - a moment; *krīḍati* - plays; *eṣa* - He; *tam* - him; *atra* - here; *viśṛta* - extended; *mahā* - great; *puṇyam* - piety; *ca* - and; *vandāmahe* - we praise.

I praise the highly fortunate gopīs headed by Candrāvalī. Govinda makes these gopīs who are blossoming with amorous desires assume positions of Śrī Rādhikā's rivals by briefly enjoying with them, just to nourish Śrī Rādhikā's fortune, great pride, ecstatic bewilderment and other characteristics of an amorous heroine.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises Candrāvalī and other *gopīs* from the *vipakṣā* (the party that is hostile to Śrī Rādhā). In Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the king of erotic mellows, is enjoying without interruption with Śrī Rādhā, the embodiment of complete *mahābhāva*.

Śrīpāda Śuka Muni has written: *reme tayā cātma-rata ātmārāmo'pyakhaṇḍitaḥ* (Bhāg. 10.30.34)

"Although the Lord is Self-satisfied and Self-delighted, He still made love with Her (Rādhā) without interruption."

rātri-dīna kuṅja krīḍā kore rādhā-saṅge (C.C.) "Day and night He enjoys in the *kuṅja* with Rādhā."

Just to nourish and increase the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's enjoyments with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Candrāvalī and other *gopīs* assume a competitive and hostile attitude towards Her.

In Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi (Harivallabhā 1 and 2), Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*āsām caturvidho bhedaḥ sarvāsām vraja-subhruvām
syāt sva-pakṣaḥ suhṛt pakṣas taṭasthaḥ pratipakṣakaḥ
suhṛt pakṣa taṭasthau tu prāsaṅgikatayoditau
dvau svapakṣa vipakṣākhyau bhedāveva rasapradau*

"According to their species and moods, there are four kinds of fair-browed Vraja-*gopīs*: *svapakṣa* (own party), *suhṛt-pakṣa* (friendly party), *taṭastha-pakṣa* (neutral party) and *pratipakṣa* (enemies' party). Of these, the *svapakṣa* and *vipakṣa* give special flavours."

Actually, there is no comparison in Vraja to the love of Śrī Rādhā, Who embodies the *mādanākhyā-mahā-bhāva*. But for awakening Śrī Rādhā's tasty dispositions such as *khaṇḍitā*, *māna* and *kalahāntarītā*, Vraja's *śṛṅgāra-rasa* has created feelings of rivalry in *gopīs* like Candrāvalī, who thus feel that they are equal to Śrī Rādhā.

*nāmsō'pyanyatra rādhāyāḥ premādi guṇa sampadām
rasenaiva vipakṣāḍau mithaḥ sāmyam ivāryate*

Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi (Harivallabhā 51)

The *gopikās*, who are expert in the flavours of pure love, delight Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Whose form is full of pure love and Who is subdued by pure love, with service rendered with different emotional ingredients. Actually, the moon of the *gopikās'* love

causes the ocean of Rādhā's ecstatic love to swell in various ways and Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys swimming in that ocean of increased love in so many particular ways.

*premamaya vacu kṛṣṇa bhakta premādhīna;
 śuddha premarasa guṇe gopikā pravīṇa
 gopikāra preme nāhi rasābhāsa doṣa;
 ataeva kṛṣṇera kore parama santoṣa
 'vāmā' eka gopīgaṇa 'dakṣiṇā' eka gaṇa;
 nānā bhāve korāya kṛṣṇe rasa āsvādana
 gopīgaṇa madhye śreṣṭhā rādhā ṭhākuraṇī;
 nirmala ujjala rasa prema ratna khani
 vayase 'madhyamā' teṅho - svabhāvetē 'samā';
 gāḍha prema bhāve teṅho nirantara 'vāmā'
 vāmya-svabhāve 'māna' uṭhe nirantara;
 uhāra vāmye uṭhe kṛṣṇera ānanda sāgara*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 14)

"Kṛṣṇa's body is full of pure love and He is subdued by His devotees' love. The *gopikās* are expert in the attributes of the flavours of pure love. In the *gopikās'* love, there is no fault of a semblance of *rasa*, therefore they give Kṛṣṇa the greatest satisfaction.

One group of *gopīs* is left wing (unsubmissive) and the other is right wing (submissive). They make Kṛṣṇa relish *rasa* in various ways. Amongst the *gopīs*, Rādhā Ṭhākuraṇī is the greatest. She is a virtual mine of the flavours of spotless erotic love. She is of middle (adolescent) age and is equipoised by nature. Because of Her deep love She is constantly left-wing (unsubmissive). This left-wing mood continuously creates *māna* (jealous anger) and that *vāmya* causes the ocean of Kṛṣṇa's bliss to swell."

Śrī Rādhā, the jewel-mine of erotic mellows, is a ‘middle’-heroine, *sarva eva rasotkarṣo madhyāyām eva yuyjate* (U.N. Nāyikābheda -42)

"The middle-class heroine reveals the highest *rasa* in all respects. Because of her deep love, She is constantly left-wing and She always has a feeling of ‘Kṛṣṇa is Mine!’ (*madīyatāmaya bhāva*)

For this reason good fortune, pride and loving delusion are manifest in Her in wonderful ways. The *sañcārī-bhāva* named ‘pride’ is manifest for *bhāvas* like fortune and bewilderment.

saubhāgya nava tārūṇya guṇa sarvottamāśrayaiḥ. iṣṭa-lābhādinā cānya helanam garva irṣyate (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 2.4.41)

"When one disregards another because of one’s own good fortune, beauty, youthfulness and qualifications, because of being the greatest shelter or because of having attained one’s desired goal, it is called pride."

vallabha prāpti velāyām madanāveśa sambhramāt. vibhramo hāra mālyādi bhūṣā sthāna viparyayaḥ (U.N. Anu.pr. 39)

"When one places the garlands and necklaces on the wrong places out of erotic eagerness, knowing that the time to meet the lover has come, it is called *vibhrama*."

In this way, *premamayī* Śrī Rādhā is adorned with so many *bhāvālaṅkāras* (ornaments of ecstatic love) and thus increases the waves in the ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s bliss.

*kṛṣṇera darśana yadi pāya ācambite;
nānā bhāva vibhūṣaṇe hoy vibhūṣite
aṣṭa sāttvika harṣādi vyabhicārī āra;
sahaja prema viṁśati bhāva alaṅkāra
kila kiñcita, kuṭṭamita, vilāsa, lalita;*

*vivvoka, moṭṭāyita, āra maugdhya cakita
eto bhāva bhūṣāya bhūṣita rādhā aṅga;
dekhile uchale kṛṣṇera sukhābdhi taraṅga*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 14)

"When Rādhā suddenly sees Kṛṣṇa, She becomes adorned with different ornaments of ecstasy. Natural love has twenty ornaments, like the eight *sāttvika* ornaments and the *vyābhicārī-bhāvas* such as joy. Rādhā's body is adorned with ornaments of ecstasy such as *kila-kiñcita*, *kuṭṭamita*, *vilāsa*, *lalita*, *vivvoka*, *moṭṭāyita* and *maugdhya-cakita*. When Kṛṣṇa sees this, the waves on the ocean of His bliss swell."

In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens various waves like *māna* (jealous anger) and *kalahāntarītā* (remorse after a quarrel) on the ocean of Śrī Rādhā's love in order to relish the sweetness of that ocean, by briefly enjoying with Candrāvalī, who is disposed of a *dakṣiṇā* (submissive) nature, although He is actually completely subdued by Śrī Rādhā.

In truth, Candrāvalī and all the other *gopīs*, who are blooming of erotic ecstasy, are Śrī Rādhā's phalanx-expansions, increasing and nourishing the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā's flavours.

*lakṣmī-gaṇa tāra vaibhava vilāsāṁśa-rūpa;
mahiṣī-gaṇa vaibhava prakāśa svarūpa
ākāra svabhāva bhede vrajadvī-gaṇa;
kāya vyūha rūpa tāra rasera kāraṇa
bahu kāntā vinā nahe rasera ullāsa;
līlāra sahāya lāgi bahuta prakāśa*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"The goddesses of fortune are Her (Rādhā's) *vaibhava-vilāsa*-partial manifestations and the Queens of Dvārakā are Her *vaibhava-prakāśa*-forms. The *gopīs* of Vraja with their different forms and dispositions are the cause of Her flavours in the form of Her phalanx. Without the presence of many lovers, no joy is derived from *rasa*; hence there are many manifestations (of lady-lovers) to assist in the transcendental pastimes."

Still, to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa relish Śrī Rādhā's billowing sweetness, *rasa* has brought a feeling of rivalry to Candrāvalī and other *gopīs* towards Śrī Rādhā.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I praise these greatly pious adversaries of Śrī Rādhā, headed by Śrī Candrāvalī."

These words are spoken in *sādhakāveśa*. Śrī Raghunātha is an eternal maidservant of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, and when he is in *siddha-svarūpa*, he shows an adverse mood towards Śrīmatī's enemies like Candrāvalī.

In Bhakti Ratnākara (5th wave) it is written:

dāsa nāme eka vrajavāsī etha roy;
dāsa gosvāmīra tāre sneha atīsoy
teho eka dina sakhī-sthalī grāme gelā;
bṛhat palāśa patra dekhi tuli' nilā
dāsa gosvāmīra kothā mone mone kohe;
annādika tyāga koilā dāruṇa virahe
eka donā takra piye niyama tāhāra;
ithe kichu atirikta hoibe āhāra
aiche mone kori ghare āsi donā koilā;
tāhe takra loiyā raghunātha āge āilā
navya patra donā dekhi' jīñāse gosāi;
e bṛhat patra āji pāilā kon ṭhāi
dāsa kohe - sakhī-sthalī genu gocārāṇe;
pāyīā uttama patra āninu ekhāne

*sakhī-sthalī nāma śuni' krodhe pūrṇa hoilā;
 takra saha donā dūre phelāiyā dilā
 koto kṣaṇe sthira hoiyā kohe dāsa prati;
 se candrāvalira sthāna - na yāibā tathi
 ihā śuni dāsa vrajavāsī sthira hoiyā;
 jānilena sādḥaka dehete siddha-kriyā*

"There was one Vrajavāsī (inhabitant of Vraja) named Dāsa who loved Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī very much. He went to the village of Sakhīsthalī (close to the town of Govardhana) and found a big leaf cup there, which he brought along, thinking of Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, who had given up eating all solid food out of coarse separation from Rādhārāṇī. Dāsa thought: 'It is Raghunātha Dāsa's rule to drink only one cup of buttermilk a day. When I give Him this bigger leafcup he can eat a little more', and so he brought some buttermilk from his house to fill up the big leafcup.

When he came before him, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, seeing the new cup, asked him: 'Where did you get this big leafcup from?' Dāsa replied: 'I went to Sakhī-sthalī to herd my cows and I found this good leafcup there and brought it to you!' Hearing the name 'Sakhī-sthalī', Raghunātha Dāsa became filled with anger and threw the leafcup with the buttermilk far away. After some time he calmed down and told Dāsa: 'That is the place where Candrāvalī lives! Don't go there!' Hearing this, the Vrajavāsī Dāsa became steady. He understood that these were transcendental activities performed in a *sādḥaka*-body."

There are two ways through which the Lord can be relished: one is through *tattva* and the other is through *rasa*. Although from the *tattva*-point of view Candrāvalī and others, who assist in nourishing the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā's *rasa* and who are Her phalanx-expansions, are praiseworthy for Śrī Raghunātha,

in the kingdom of *rasa*, while being absorbed in his *siddha-svarūpa*, he shows malice and envy towards them because they are his Īśvarī's adversaries.

But in this way, the relish of *rasa* is beautifully accomplished. This is something that should be known.

*saubhāgya, garva, vibhrama, guṇādi vicitra;
śrī rādhāra śṛṅgāra rasa puṣṭira nimitta
śrī kṛṣṇa sāpatnya-bhāve yādera sahita;
kṣaṇa-kāla kriḍā kore samaya ucita
bhāgyavati candrāvalī ādi vrajāṅganā
tāhādera pāda-padma koriyā vandanā*

"I praise the lotus feet of fortunate *gopīs* like Candrāvalī, who briefly enjoy with Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to time and who are thus accepting a mood of rivalry with Śrī Rādhā, in order to nourish Her wonderful erotic expressions like fortune, pride and delusion."

VERSE 42:

**brahmāṇḍāt param ucchalat sukha-bharam tat koṭi-saṅkhyā api
premṇā kṛṣṇa-surakṣitāḥ pratimuhḥ prāptāḥ param nirvṛtāḥ |
kāmaṁ tat-pāda-padma-sundara-nakha-prānta-skhalad-reṇukā
rakṣā-vyagra-dhiyaḥ sphuranti kila ye tān gopa-varyān bhaje**

brahmāṇḍāt - than the universe; *param* - great; *ucchalat* - swelling; *sukhabharam* - full bliss; *tat koṭi* - ten million; *saṅkhyāt* - than the number; *api* - even; *premṇā* - with love; *kṛṣṇa* - Kṛṣṇa; *surakṣitāḥ* - protected; *prati* - each; *muhḥ* - moment; *prāptāḥ* - attained; *param* - greatest; *nirvṛtāḥ* - bliss; *kāmaṁ* - as much as desired; *tat* - His;

pāda-padma - lotus feet; *sundara* - beautiful; *nakha* - nails; *prānta* - edges; *skhalad* - falling; *reṇukā* - dust; *rakṣā* - protecting; *vyagra* - eager; *dhiyaḥ* - consciousness; *sphuranti* - revealed; *kila* - certainly; *ye* - who; *tān* - them; *gopa-varyān* - greatest cowherders; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship the best of cowherders, who have attained the greatest happiness that can be achieved in the entire universe; who are protected by Kṛṣṇa with more love than He feels for millions of universes, and who are themselves always eager to protect even the particles of dust falling from the edges of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful lotus-toenails.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises all the great cowherders of Vraja.

They are Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates and they have gotten Him, Whom they love millions of times more than themselves, nearby as their own relative. Although they can see Kṛṣṇa's unrivalled prowess when He kills demons and so, their conception of Him as Nanda's son is not even slightly slackened. Their passionate love for Him which they cannot give up simply increases at every moment. Hence Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmī has written:

tad evaṁ parama mādhuryātiśayānubhava svabhāvatvena parama jñānītvam eva śrī gopālānām aṅgikṛtam teṣām api yat svabhāvatvena sakala prīti jāti cūḍamaṇi-rūpā parā prītiḥ svabhāvata evodayate. yat svabhāvatvenaiva cāgantukād anya jñānāt nāsau prītir vyabhicarati. pratyuta tad eva tiraskaroti. tenāntarāya prāyeṇa varddhate ca. viṣayiṇām viṣaya prītir iva. yato viṣayiṇām viṣayeṣu sadoṣatve śrute drṣṭe'pi rāga prāpta

guṇavattva buddhiḥ prabalā dṛśyate (Prīti Sandarbhaḥ 100 Anuḥ)

"By nature the cowherders are able to experience the abundant sweetness of Kṛṣṇa; hence they are accepted as the greatest scholars and wise men. Because they have such dispositions, the greatest love which is the crown jewel of all kinds of love, naturally arises within them. Their love will not be adulterated by any other awareness that may come inbetween. Rather, their natures will defeat any incoming 'alternative feeling'".

Sense-enjoyers begin to love their favourite sense objects even more when some alternative feeling arises and disturbs their enjoyment. Although they know that their favourite sense-objects are full of faults, since they have seen and heard that, their strong love and their attachment for their sense-objects make them consider them all very glorious. This conception will be very strong.

In the same way, the cowherders naturally experience the great sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the most. Even if they witness Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great prowess, it does not change their love for Him, which is based on experiencing His sweetness. Rather, such experiences simply increase their love for Him, just as someone loves his beloved even more after seeing his peerless prowess." Śrī Śuka Muni described the Vrajavāsīs' point of view of the Goloka-world as follows:

*nandādayas tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā paramānanda nirvṛtāḥ
kṛṣṇaṁ ca tatra chandobhiḥ stūyamānaṁ suvismītāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.28.17)

"When the cowherders headed by Nanda, saw how Kṛṣṇa was being praised by the Personified Vedas, they were most astonished and floated in an ocean of topmost transcendental bliss."

tad evaṁ mādhurya jñānasyaiva balavat sukhamayatve sthite tasmīṅś ca śrī gopānām eva svābhāvikatayā labdhe brahmatveśvaratvānubhavam atikramya teṣāṁ eva bhāgyena śrī śukadevo'pi yuktam eva camatkṛtim avāpa (Prīti Sandarbhaḥ - 100 Anuḥ)

"In this way, the bliss of their sweet conceptions was fixed and the naturally sweet conception of the cowherders thus transcended the *jñānīs'* bliss of the experience of the non-personal *brahman* and the reverential worshippers' bliss of serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The cowherders' great bliss, being derived from their experience of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness, astonished even Śrī Śuka Muni, and that is also correct."

Repeating Lord Brahmā's words Śrī Śuka Muni said:

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda gopa vrajaukasām
yan mitram paramānandaṁ pūrṇam brahma sanātanam*

(Bhāgavata 10.14.32)

"Aho how fortunate! Aho, how fortunate are the Vrajavāsīs headed by Nanda Gopa, because the eternal full *brahman*, Who is inconceivable to the mind and words, has become their friend (as Śrī Kṛṣṇa)!"

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha has said:

"Having gotten the most blissful transcendental truth as their own, the Vrajavāsīs consider themselves most happy. They have gotten a bliss reaching far beyond the material universe!"

Then again he says: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa protects them perfectly with a love greater than the love He feels for millions of universes. They are even eager to protect just a particle of dust that drops from the edge of His beautiful lotus-like toenails."

We have said that the love of the devotees determines the disposition of the Lord. Just as the Vrajavāsīs forget all about the Lord's prowess and opulence and consider Him to be most soft and tender, so in their eagerness to protect Him, they worship even the luster of the edges of His toenails with millions of hearts.

Similarly, according to the principle of *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmyaham*²⁴ (Gītā 4.11), Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also unlimitedly eager to protect the Vraja-cowherds with a love transcending the love He may feel for millions of universes, since He considers them to be His own.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship these best of cowherds!"

*brahmāṇḍātīta pracura sukha āsvādane;
sukhī boli nija yārā bhāve anukṣaṇe
ananta brahmāṇḍa kṛṣṇa koriyā upekṣā;
samadhika preme yādera koriteche rakṣā
kṛṣṇa pāda-padma sundara nakha-maṇi koṇe;
skhalita ye reṇu-kaṇā tāhāra rakṣaṇe
vyagra citta hoiyā yārā avasthāna kore;
niyata bhajanā kori gopa parivāre*

"I always worship the cowherd clans, that relish a bliss reaching far beyond the material universe and that are anxious at heart to protect even a particle of dust dropping from the

²⁴ "In the way anyone worships Me, I worship that devotee, in perfect reciprocation."

edge of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful lotus-like toenails with a love that waits for unlimited worlds."

VERSE 43:

**prāṇebhyo'py adhikaiḥ priyair api paraṁ putrair mukundasya yāḥ
snehāt pāda-saroja-yugma-vigalad-gharmasya bindoḥ kaṇam |
nirmañchyoru-sikhaṇḍa-sundara-śiraś cumbanti gopyaś ciram
tāsām pāda-rajāmsi santatam aham nirmañchayāmi sphuṭam**

prāṇebhyaḥ - than life-air; *api* - even; *adhikaiḥ* - more; *priyaiḥ* - dearer; *api* - even; *paraṁ* -greatly; *putraiḥ* - than sons; *mukundasya* - of Mukunda; *yāḥ* - who; *snehāt* - out of affection; *pāda-saroja* - lotus feet; *yugma* - pair; *vigalat* - trickling; *gharmasya* - of sweat; *bindoḥ* - of the drop; *kaṇam* - drop; *nirmañchya* - worshipping; *uru* - great; *sikhaṇḍa* - peacockfeather; *sundara* - beautiful; *śiraḥ* - head; *cumbanti* - kisses; *gopyaḥ* - *gopīs*; *ciram* - for long; *tāsām* - of them; *pāda* - feet; *rajāmsi* - of the dust; *santatam* - constantly; *aham* - I; *nirmañchayāmi* - I worship; *sphuṭam* - manifest.

I worship the footdust of the elderly gopīs, who are endowed with motherly love; who most lovingly worship the sweat drops trickling from the lotus-feet of Śrī Mukunda, whom they consider millions of times more dear than their own sons, and who kiss His head, which is beautified by a peacockfeather-crown.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises those most fortunate elderly *gopīs*, who are endowed with parental love for Kṛṣṇa.

In the Brahma-Vimohana-līlā²⁵, it was tested whether they would love Śrī Yaśodā-Nandan even more than their own sons, who are dearer to them than their life, and if they would recognize Śrī Kṛṣṇa as such.

When Lord Brahmā stole Śrī Kṛṣṇa's cows, calves and cowherd boyfriends and Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally entered into the cowherd-abodes, assuming the forms of innumerable cows, cowherd boys and calves, then the love for Kṛṣṇa of the elderly *gopīs*, that was as pure as molten gold, became manifest in their natural love for their sons, who were actually just manifestations of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīpāda Śuka Muni describes it as follows:

*tan mātaro veṇu ravatvarothhitā
utthāpya dorbhiḥ parirabhya nirbharam
sneha snuta stanya payaḥ sudhāsavaṁ
matvā paraṁ brahma sutānapāyayan
tato nṛponmardana majja lepanā-
lankāra rakṣā tilakāsanādibhiḥ
samlālitaḥ svācaritaiḥ praharṣayan
sāyaṁ gato yāmayamena mādhaveḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.13.22-23)

"When Kṛṣṇa daily returned home from cowherding in the meadows with His friends, the mothers of the cowherd boys, the cowherd women with great motherly love, gave up their household duties as soon as they heard their bugle horns. They came out on their courtyards where they stared down the road with thirsty eyes. As soon as they saw Kṛṣṇa coming, the

²⁵ The pastime described in chapters 13 and 14 of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

mothers ran out, held Him to their chests, smelled His head and kissed His face, as their garments were moistened by tears from their eyes and milk from their breasts. Then Mother Yaśodā took Kṛṣṇa along inside her house, and the mothers too ecstatically took their own sons into their own houses, where they spent the night in blissful Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. They thought to themselves: 'If Kṛṣṇa was our son, how blessed wouldn't we be by being able to rear and cuddle Him!' "

On the day that Śrī Kṛṣṇa fulfilled their desires during the Brahma-mohana *hīlā* by assuming the forms of innumerable cows, calves and cowherd boys, the elderly *gopīs* came running out of their houses onto their courtyards like everyday when they heard His flute.

This time, however, they did not run quickly towards Kṛṣṇa with spread-out arms, as they were doing every day, but they took their own sons on their laps and locked them into a tight embrace, making the Supreme Brahman, Who had attained the forms of their sons, drink the delicious nectarean beverage of their breast milk.

Then they took them (Him) to their homes, massaged them with fragrant oils, bathed them, anointed their bodies with unguents like sandal paste, dressed them with fine clothes and ornaments, made a protective *tilaka* on them, fed them their meals and lay down with them. In this way they were drowning in an ocean of transcendental bliss by hearing from them about their day's adventures in the *goṣṭha*.

With this they showed that they had a greater love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa than for their own sons, who were already dearer to them than life. And like this, they had Śrī Kṛṣṇa for themselves for one year.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "With the topmost love they worship the honey-like sweat drops that trickle from Śrī Mukunda's

lotus feet (by wiping them off) and kiss His head, which is beautified by a peacockfeather." These are all signs of motherly love.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*anubhāvāḥ śiroghrāṇaṁ kareṇāṅgābhimārjanam
āśirbādo nideśaś ca lālanam pratipālanam
hitopadeśa dānādyā vatsale parikīrtitāḥ
cumbāśleṣo tathāhvānam nāma grahaṇa pūrvakam
upālabhādayaś cātra mitraiḥ sādharāṇāḥ kriyāḥ*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 3.4.41,44)

"Smelling the head, rubbing the body with the hands, offering words of benediction and permission, cuddling, rearing and giving instructions for the child's benefit - these are the activities of parental love. The ordinary activities of fraternal and parental love consist of kissing, embracing, calling the child by name and chastising him."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "Just as the elderly *gopīs* wipe out all kinds of misfortune for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I will also wipe off the dust from the lotus feet of these elderly *gopīs* with my head!"

*prāṇādhika putrāpekṣā adhika snehete;
priya jñāna yāhādera ei mukundete
pāda-padma vigalita gharma-bindu-caya;
ati sūkṣma-vastra dvārā mārjanā koroya
śikhaṇḍa śobhita mastaka koriyā cumbana;
ānanda samudra-mājhe ho'teche magana
sei sab gopikāra pāda-padma dhūli;
mārjanāte kori yena nitya snāna keli*

"May I eternally bathe in the dust of the lotus feet of the elderly *gopīs*, who love Mukunda even more than their own sons, who are already dearer to them than life; who wipe off the sweat drops that trickle from His lotus feet with very fine clothes and who drown in an ocean of bliss when they kiss His head, being beautified by a peacockfeather, by polishing these feet with my head."

VERSES 44-45:

**indra-ñila-khura-rājitāḥ param
svarṇa-baddha-vara-śṛṅga-rañjitāḥ
pāṇḍu-gaṇḍa-giri-garva-kharvikāḥ
pāntu naḥ sapadi kṛṣṇa-dhenavaḥ**

**yāsām pālana-dohanotsava-rataḥ sārddham vayasyotkaraiḥ
kāmañ rāma-virājitāḥ pratidinañ tat-pāda-reṇūjjvalam
prītyā sphīta-vanoru-parvata-nadī-kaccheṣu baddha-sprho
goṣṭhākhaṇḍala-nandano viharate tāḥ saurabheyīr bhaje**

indranīla - sapphire; *khura* - hooves; *rājitāḥ* - shining; *param* - greatest; *svarṇa* - gold; *baddha* - bound; *vara* - best; *śṛṅga* - horns; *rañjitāḥ* - coloured; *pāṇḍu* - white; *gaṇḍa* - cheek; *giri* - mountain; *garva* - pride; *kharvikāḥ* - smashing; *pāntu* - may protect; *naḥ* - us; *sapadi* - soon; *kṛṣṇa-dhenavaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa's cows. *yāsām* - whose (fem.); *pālana* - herding; *dohana* - milking; *utsava* - festival; *rata* - dedicating; *sārddham* - with; *vayasya* - friends; *utkaraiḥ* - with a multitude; *kāmañ* - desire; *rāma* - Baladeva; *virājitāḥ* - shining; *prati* - every; *dinañ* - day; *tat* - their; *pāda* - feet; *reṇu* - dust; *ujjvalam* - brilliant; *prītyā* - with

love; *sphīta* - great; *vana* - forest; *uru* - great; *parvata* - mountain; *nadī* - river; *kaccheṣu* - on the shores; *baddha* - bound; *sprha* - desire; *goṣṭha* - the meadows; *ākhaṇḍala* - the king; *nandana* - the son; *viharate* - enjoys; *tāḥ* - they; *saurabheyiḥ* - the cows; *bhaje* - I worship.

May Kṛṣṇa's cows, who have very beautiful blue hooves that shimmer like sapphires; whose horns are painted golden and whose complexions (and shapes) destroy the pride of small white mountains, protect us.

I worship the cows, who are the daughters of Surabhī; who always engage Vrajendra-Nandana, Baladeva, Śrīdāma and the cowherd boys in a festival of herding and milking them; who are decorated by the dust thrown up by their own hooves and who lovingly sport in the deep forests, on the mountains and on the banks of the rivers (where they are being herded).

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In these two verses, Śrī Raghunātha praises the cows, that accompany Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.

Who can describe the fortune of these cows, whom the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendra-Nandana, the attainment of the dust of Whose lotus feet is ascertained by all the Vedic scriptures as the highest goal of all spiritual practises, herds while wandering from forest to forest?

During this time, He plays His flute while leaning against these cows, lovingly caressing and massaging their bodies, his body becoming most lovely when it is greyed by the dust thrown up by their hooves?

If Gopāla does not go out into the woods, the cows will also not go. When the other cowherd boys engage in protecting them, the cows will loudly bellow and simply return to the *gośālās* (cowpens).

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa sets out for the woods, mother Yaśodā weeps with a heart agitated by fear of separation from Him

- *ore mora jivana dulāliyā! kibā ghare nāhi dhana, keno vā yāibe bana; rākhāle rākhibe dhenu loiyā* (Pada Kalpataru)

"O child of my heart! Don't we have any wealth at home? Why are You going out into the woods? Let the cowherd boys take the cows out and herd them!"

Kṛṣṇa then says: "O mother! If I don't go out, your wealth of cows will also not go out into the woods!"

Mother Yaśomatī has no answer to that, so she must grant Her son, Who is dearer to her than life, leave for tending the cows.

Being subdued by the sweetness of the love of His cows, Gokula-maṇi goes out into the woods to herd them.

surabhīr abhipālayantam (Brahma Saṁhitā)

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments on this verse: *abhi-sarvatobhāvena vana-nayana cāraṇa gosthānāyana sambhālana prakāreṇa 'pālayantam' sasnehaṁ rakṣantam*

"He herds the cows in Śrī Vṛndāvana in all respects, which means that He brings them into the forest, herds them there, brings them back to their barns and collects them. In this way He maintains them".

The Brahma Saṁhitā also says: *sa yatra kṣīrābdhiḥ śravati surabhībhyaś ca sumahān*

"The cows inundate Śrī Vṛndāvana with the stream of milk automatically trickling from their udders."

In his commentary on this line, Śrī Jīva has written:
surabhībhyas ca sravatiti tadiya vanśi-dhvanyādyāvesād iti bhāvah

"The cows issue such streams of milk as a loving reaction to hearing Kṛṣṇa's flutesong."

Śrī Śuka Muni has also described how ecstatic the cows were upon hearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flutesong:

gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha nirgata veṇu gīta pīyūṣam uttabhita karna puṭaiḥ pibantyaḥ (Bhāga. 10.21.13)

"With the cups of their pricked-up ears the cows relish the song that emanates from Kṛṣṇa's flute."

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays in the meadows with His pals and the cows freely wander through the extensive meadows of Vṛndāvana, getting more and more distant from Kṛṣṇa as they graze, Kṛṣṇa collects them all by playing His flute.

*āju bone ānanda bādhāi!
pātiyā vinoda khelā, rākhāla hoilā bholā,
dūra bone gelo sab gāi*

"Today the bliss in the forest increases! As the cowherd boys get carried away by their blissful games, the cows go far into the forest!"

*dhenu nā dekhiyā bone, sthakita rākhāla-gaṇe,
śrīdāma sudāma ādi sabhe.
kānāi kohiche bhāi, khelā bhāṅgā yābe nāi,
ānibo godhana veṇu rave*

"The cowherd boys, like Śrīdāma and Sudāma, become stunned when they do not see the cows in the woods anymore,

but Kānāī (Kṛṣṇa) says: "O brothers! Don't interrupt the game!
I will get our wealth of cows back by playing My flute!"

*sab dhenu nāma koiyā, adhare muralī loiyā,
ḍākiyā pūriilo ucca svare.
śuniyā veṇura rava, dhāya dhenu vatsa sab,
puccha pheli' piṭhera upare*

"Taking His Muralī-flute to His lips Kṛṣṇa loudly called each
cow by name. Hearing the sound of the flute, the cows and
calves came running with their tails going up on their backs."

*dhenu sab sāri sāri, hāmvā hāmvā rava kori,
dāḍāilo kṛṣṇera nikaṭe
dugdha sravi' paḍe bāṇṭe, premera taraṅga uṭhe,
snehe gābhī śyāma aṅga cāṭe*

"Moving in line, the cows then came to Kṛṣṇa's side, mooing
and bellowing. Waves of love arose from the streams of milk
that trickled from their udders. Affectionately Śyāma scratched
their bodies."

*dekhi' sab sakhāgaṇa, ābā ābā ghane ghana,
kānura korilo āliṅgana
prema dāsa kohe vāṇī, kānāira muralī śuni,
paśu pākhi pāilo cetana*

(Pada Kalpataru)

"Seeing this, all the cowherd boys tightly embrace Kṛṣṇa.
Prema dāsa says: 'Hearing the song of Kṛṣṇa's Muralī-flute all
the animals and birds become conscious'."

ananta kāma-dhenu yāhā cara vane vane (C.C.)
 "Innumerable desire-cows wander there from forest to forest."
 These are all wish yielding cows, not ordinary cows. Thus Śrīpāda Raghunātha describes their beauty —

"Their hooves are blue like sapphires, their horns are studded with gold and they defeat the beauty of small white mountains with both their complexions and their shapes. May these cows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa swiftly protect me. In other words: may they protect me from fear of material existence by granting me *prema*."

Śrīpāda speaks these words in *sādhakāveśa* (when his consciousness is absorbed in his external form as a practitioner of *bhakti*). The cows of Vraja have feelings of motherly love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa just as Vraja's elderly *gopīs* do. They thus bless the world by bestowing *prema*.

When Brahmā stole Kṛṣṇa's cows, calves and cowherd boyfriends during the Brahma-Mohana-*līlā* and Kṛṣṇa re-entered the cowherd-abode assuming the forms of all these cows, calves and cowherd boys, the cows showed the same love for their calves as they previously showed for Kṛṣṇa, just as the elderly *gopīs* now showed the same love for their sons as they previously did for Kṛṣṇa.

gāvas tato goṣṭham upetya satvaram
hunkāra ghoṣaiḥ parihūta saṅgatān
svakān svakān vatsatarān apāyanan
muhur lihantyaḥ sravadaudhasam payaḥ

(Bhāgavata 10.13.24)

"When the cows returned to the *gośālā* in the evening, they suckled their calves with the overflowing milk of their udders,

licking them again and again when they approached them on being called with their soft, but deep mooing."

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is also described that the cows were just as upset as the Vrajavāsīs when they witnessed Kṛṣṇa's bold pastime of entering into the poisoned lake of the Yamunā to subdue the Kāliya-snake:

*gāvo vṛṣā vatsataryaḥ krandaṁānāḥ suduḥkitāḥ
kṛṣṇe nyastekṣaṇā bhūtā rudatyā iva tasthire*

(Bhāgavata 10.16.11)

"The cows, bulls and calves that were present at the Kāliya-lake mowed loudly in great misery and shed tears while fixing their gaze on Kṛṣṇa in great fear."

In times of danger and distress, the cows also took shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, just like the Vrajavāsīs:

*tam āpatantaṁ parito dāvāgnim
gopās ca gāvaḥ prasamīkṣya bhūtāḥ
ūcuś ca kṛṣṇaṁ sabalaṁ prapannā
yathā hariṁ mṛtyu-bhayārditā janāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.19.8)

"When the cows and cowherds saw the forest fire quickly closing up on them from all directions, they became very much afraid and took shelter of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, just as living beings who are afraid of death take shelter of Lord Hari."

In this way, we can learn about the love for Kṛṣṇa of Vraja's cows in so many different situations. That is why the Lord, Who is subdued by love, remains engaged in herding them, takes part in the festival of milking them and lovingly wanders with

them through the woods, over the mountains and on the banks of the rivers along with Baladeva and His friends. All the while, His body is decorated by the dust thrown up by their hooves.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship these cows, that are protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa!"

*indranīlamanī tulya khura kṛṣṇa-varṇa;
rañjita śṛṅga yādera jaḍita suvarṇa
śubhra varṇa deha yādera atīva ujñjala;
gaṇḍa-giri garva jini kore jhālamala
śrī kṛṣṇera sei sab priya dhenugaṇa;
e prārthanā rakṣā korun more sarva kṣaṇa*

"I pray that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear cows, whose hooves are coloured black like sapphires, whose horns are coloured golden and whose bodies defeat the pride of white mountains in great splendour, may always protect me."

*vrajendra-nandana nitya baladeva saṅge;
śrīdāmādi vayasyagaṇa saṅge atiraṅge
pālana dohana kore yāhādera nitya;
ei to utsava mane śrī kṛṣṇera kṛtya
yādera pada-reṇute ujñjala kalevare;
vana parvate vihare prīti sahakāre
surabhi-nandinī sei yoto dhenugaṇa;
nitya nava bhāve bhaji ei mora mana*

"In ever-fresh ways, I always worship the cows, who are the daughters of Surabhi; who are always blissfully herded and milked by Vrajendra-Nandana, Balarāma and Their friends, headed by Subala. All these blissful activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are like festivals! Kṛṣṇa's body is brightened by their footdust as He lovingly sports with them in the woods and on the mountains!"

VERSE 46-47

**maṇi-khacita-suvarṇa-śliṣṭa-śṛṅga-dvaya-śrīr
asita-maṇi-manojña-jyotiḥ-udiyat-khurāḍhyaḥ
sphurat-aruṇima-gucchāndola-vidyoti-kaṇṭhaḥ
sa jayati baka-śatroḥ padma-gandhaḥ kakudmī**

**mṛdu-nava-tṛṇam alpam sa-sprham vaktra-madhye
kṣipati parama-yatnād alpa-kaṇḍūm ca gātre
prathayati mura-vairī hanta yad vatsakānām
sapadi kila didṛkṣe tat-tad-āṭikanāni**

maṇi - jewel; *khacita* - studded; *suvarṇa* - gold; *śliṣṭa* - embraced; *śṛṅga* - horns; *dvaya* - couple; *śrīḥ* - the beauty; *asita* - blue, dark; *maṇi* - jewel; *manojña* - enchanting; *jyotiḥ* - light; *udiyat* - shining; *khura* - hooves; *āḍhyaḥ* - enriched; *sphurat* - splendid; *aruṇima* - red; *guccha* - clusters; *āndola* - swinging; *vidyoti* - shining; *kaṇṭhaḥ* - neck; *sa* - he; *jayati* - is victorious; *baka-śatroḥ* - of Kṛṣṇa; *padma-gandhaḥ* - named Padmagandha; *kakudmī* - bull. *mṛdu* - soft; *nava* - fresh; *tṛṇam* - grass; *alpam* - small amount; *sasprham* - with desire; *vaktra* - mouth; *madhye* - within; *kṣipati* - throws; *parama* - greatest; *yatnāt* - carefully; *alpa* - lightly; *kaṇḍūm* - scratching; *ca* - and; *gātre* - on the body; *prathayati* - does; *muravairī* - Kṛṣṇa; *hanta* - alas; *yad* - that; *vatsakānām* - of the calves; *sapadi* - suddenly; *kila* - certainly; *didṛkṣe* - desiring to see; *tat* - that; *tad* - that; *āṭikanāni* - leaping movements.

All glories to Kṛṣṇa's pet bull Padmagandha, whose horns are very beautiful because they are studded with gold; whose hooves are extremely charming because they are endowed with a sweet bluish sapphire luster, and around whose neck a brilliant red necklace swings!

I like to see the calves of Kṛṣṇa jumping around. Kṛṣṇa lovingly places small amounts of fresh soft grass in their mouths and lightly scratches their bodies.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In these two verses, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Kṛṣṇa's pet bull Padmagandha and His calves.

padmagandha piśaṅgākṣau balivardāvati priyau (Dīpikā)
"Kṛṣṇa's dearest bulls are Padmagandha and Piśaṅgākṣa."

Kṛṣṇa has a natural love for bulls and calves and they too have a natural love for Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Śuka Muni has mentioned this when he described Kṛṣṇa's *ringaṇa-līlā* (childhood-pastimes of crawling).

In the verse starting with *śṛṅgyagni daṁṣṭryahi jala-dviija-kaṅṭhakebhyaḥ* (Bhāgavata 10.8.25), it is described how Śrī Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were crawling on the courtyard of Śrī Nanda and how they quickly went up to a bull when they saw one.

Seeing the world-enchanting beauty of Śrī Rāma-Kṛṣṇa; the bulls most blissfully lowered their heads, slowly swung their heads and became immersed in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweetness.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa then stood there, holding the horns of the bulls with both His hands. And sometimes *pragrhīta pucchaiḥ vatsair itas tata ubhāvanukṛṣyamāṇau* (Bhāgavata 10.8.24) When the two brothers; Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa; saw the tails of the cows and calves; They forcibly held on to them. The calves were startled when they felt their tails being held and they stood up.

Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa did not let go of their tails, though, but instead began to pull them hard. This made the calves flee, pulling the boys along with them all over Nanda's courtyard. The elderly *gopīs* then came running, took the boys' hands off

the tails and quickly placed Them on their laps, wiping Their bodies and kissing Them.

Then again they went up to the calves with spread-out hands. Seeing the boys' love for the calves, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja engaged Them in herding them.

We have mentioned how the cows relished the mellows of Kṛṣṇa's flute song, and in the Bhāgavata there is also a wonderful description of how the calves loved the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's flute:

*śāvāḥ snuta stana payaḥ kavalāḥ sma tasthur govindam
ātmani dṛśāśru-kalāḥ sprśantyaḥ* (Bhāgavata 10.21.13)

When the cows saw their calves, milk began to trickle from their udders and just when the calves wanted to start drinking that milk, Śrī Kṛṣṇa played His flute. When the calves heard the flute, the milk remained in their mouths. They could not swallow it, nor could they throw it out. All their senses were overwhelmed and they became completely motionless and quiet. Seeing them, it seemed as if they had gotten the touch of this delicious Śyāma-luster. Otherwise, why would they be standing there so silently and inert and why would tears trickle from their eyes?

Śrī Raghunātha describes the enchanting beauty of the bull Padmagandha as follows:

"All glories to Kṛṣṇa's pet bull Padmagandha, whose horns are very beautiful because they are studded with gold, whose hooves are extremely charming because they are endowed with a sweet bluish sapphire luster, and around whose neck a brilliant red necklace swings!"

The word *jaya* here means 'may the bull Padmagandha be supreme', or it can mean 'I offer my obeisances unto him.' Śrī Raghunātha offers his obeisances unto that bull.

Here it is described, how much Śrī Kṛṣṇa loves the calves. With the greatest love, Śrī Gopāla carefully places bunches of fresh soft grass in their mouths and makes them eat it, while He softly scratches their bodies. Receiving the touch of the embodiment of transcendental bliss, the calves began to jump around in topmost bliss.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha yearns to see their jumping. The confidential meaning of this is that, as a girl-messenger for Śrī Rādhā, he/she goes into the forest to search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Seeing the calves jumping around like that, she can understand clearly where Govinda's whereabouts are.

After relaying Śrīmatī's message to Govinda, she hears from Him where the trysting- *kuñja* will be and brings that message to Śrīmatī.

In this way, she expertly accomplishes the meeting of the Śrī Yugala. At that time, the frolicking of the calves will be experienced as a harbinger that establishes the meeting of the Yugala.

*maṇi khacita svarṇe yāra śrīṅga-dvaya;
suśobhita hoiyāche mahojjala-maya
nīla kānta maṇite yāra khura catuṣṭaya;
manohara kānti chaṭāya ramaṇīya hoy
aruṇima ujjvala hāra yāra kaṇṭhe dole;
padmagandha vṛṣera jaya boli bāhu tuli*

"Raising my arms, I proclaim the victory of the bull named Padmagandha, whose jewelstudded horns have become greatly effulgent and beautiful by being coloured gold; whose four hooves shine like sapphires in an enchanting and lovely way and around whose neck a brilliant red necklace dangles."

*govinda yādera mukhe mṛdu nava tṛṇa;
 prīte alpa alpa kori korena arpaṇa
 sayatne yādera pātra kaṇḍuyana kore;
 go vatsagaṇera bhāgya ke bolite pāre
 sei sab go-vatsera ullaṃphana gati;
 dekhite āmāra sādha hoy niti niti*

"I yearn to see the calves jumping and frolicking around. Govinda lovingly puts small bunches of soft fresh grass in their mouths and carefully carries them. Who can describe the fortune of these calves?"

VERSES 48-49

**naktam divam muraripoṣ adharāmṛtam yā
 sphītā pibatya alam abādham aho subhāgyā
 śrī-rādhikā-prathita-mānam apiha divya-
 nādair adho nayati tām muralīm namāmi**

**dūtībhīḥ bahu-cāṭubhīḥ sakhi-kulenālam vaco-bhaṅgibhīḥ
 pādānte patanair vrajendra-tanayenāpi kruddhālī-gaṇaiḥ
 rādhāyāḥ sakhi śakyate davayitum yo naiva māno yayā
 phutkṛtyaiva nirasyate sukṛtinīm vaiśīm sakhīm tām numah**

naktam - night; *divam* - day; *muraripoṣ* - of Kṛṣṇa; *adhara* - lips; *amṛtam* - nectar; *yā* - who; *sphītā* - eagerly; *pibati* - drinks; *alam* - greatly; *avādham* - unobstructed; *aho* - O!; *subhāgyā* - fortunately; *śrī rādhikā* - Śrī Rādhikā; *prathita* - manifested; *mānam* - pride; *api* - even; *iha* - in Vraja; *divya* - divine; *nādaiḥ* - with sounds; *adhaḥ* - downward; *nayati* - takes; *tām* - her; *muralīm* - the flute; *namāmi* - I offer my obeisances. *dūtībhīḥ* - by girl-messengers; *bahu* - many;

cāṭubhiḥ - with flattering words; *sakhi-kulena* - by the girlfriends; *alam* - greatly; *vacaḥ* - words; *bhaṅgibhiḥ* - with gestures; *pādānte* - at the footsoles; *patanaiḥ* - by falling; *vrajendra-tanayena* - by the prince of Vraja Kṛṣṇa; *api* - even; *krudha* - angry; *ali-gaṇaiḥ* - by the *sakhīs*; *rādhāyāḥ* - of Rādhā; *sakhi* - O girlfriend!; *śakyate* - is able; *davayitum* - to rout; *yaḥ* - who; *na* - not; *eva* - only; *mānaḥ* - pride; *gayā* - by whom; *phutkṛtya* - by sputtering; *eva* - only; *nirasyate* - removes; *sukṛtīnīm* - of the fortunate; *vaiśīṣīm* - the flute; *sakhīm* - the girlfriend; *tām* - her; *numaḥ* - obeisances.

Aho! I always offer my obeisances unto the most fortunate Muralī-flute, who is nourished by drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips day and night without obstruction and who takes away Śrī Rādhā's great loving pique with its sweet sounds!

Vṛndā and other girl-messengers used many flattering words, Madhumāṅgala and other boyfriends used many joking words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself fell at Her feet and Her girlfriends used intimidating threats - nothing could pacify Śrī Rādhā's turbulent loving pique but the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. I always praise this most fortunate sakhi, the Vaiśī-flute.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Now in these two verses, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Muralī and Vaiśī-flute.

hasta dvaya mitāyāmā mukha randhra samanvitā; caṭuḥ svara cchidra yuktā muralī cāru nādīnī (Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 2.1.367)

"A flute which is two hands long, which has a hole for the mouth and four sound-holes and which makes beautiful sounds is called a Muralī."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vaṁśī-flute is described as follows:

*ardhāṅgulāntaronmānaṁ tārādir vīvarāṣṭakam;
tataḥ sārḍhāṅgulād yatra mukha randhraṁ tathāṅgulam
śīro vedāṅgulam pucchaṁ tryaṅgulam sā tu vaṁśīkā;
nava randhrā smṛtā sapta daśāṅgula mitā budhaiḥ
daśāṅgulāntarā syāc cet sā tāra mukha randhrayoḥ;
mahānandeti vīkhyātā tathā sammohinī ca
bhavet sūryāntarā sā cet tata ākarṣiṇī matā;
ānandinī tadā vaṁśī bhaved indrāntarā yadi
gopānām vallabhā seyaṁ vaṁśulīti ca viśrutā;
kramān maṇimayī haimī vaiṇavīti tridhā ca yā*

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 2.1.368-72)

"A flute which has a distance of half a finger between each of the holes, which has eight sound-holes, whose mouth-hole is one and a half finger away from the first soundhole, whose frontpiece is four fingers long and backpiece is three fingers long, which has a total of nine holes and which is seventeen fingers long is called a Vaṁśī. When there is a distance of ten fingers between the mouth-hole and the sound-holes of a Vaṁśī, it is then called Mahānandā and Sammohinī. When there is a distance of twelve fingers, it is called Akarṣiṇī and when there is a distance of fourteen fingers, it is called Ānandinī. This Ānandinī-flute is very dear to the cowherders and is famous as the Vaṁśulī.

The Sammohinī is made of jewels, the Ākarṣiṇī is golden and the Vaṁśulī is made of bamboo."

Śrī Raghunātha says: *naktandivam madhurīpor
adharāmṛtam yā sphītā pibatyalam avādham aho subhāgyā*

"This fortunate flute is greatly nourished by drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute day and night without any obstruction."

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *kṛṣṇa vaktrendu niṣṭhyutaṁ muralī ninadāmṛtam uddīpanānāṁ sarveṣāṁ madhye pravaram irṣyate* (Ujjvala-Nīlamaṇi, Uddīpana Prakaraṇa 65)

"The nectarean flute-sound emanating from Kṛṣṇa's moon-like mouth is the greatest of all *uddīpanas* (incitations of ecstatic love)."

The sweetness of the flute is one of the four kinds of sweetness²⁶ that is innate in Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

trijagan mānasākārṣi muralī kala kūjitaḥ "The inarticulate sounds of the Muralī attracts the minds of the three worlds."

This is one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary qualities, which maddens the world. Only the flute-playing in Vṛndāvana can madden the world. The sound of transcendence emanates from the flute at Vrajendra-Nandana's mouth.

śabda brahmamaya veṇuṁ vādayantaṁ mukhāmbuje That sound, that tune, that gamut is one of the great treasures of the kingdom of God! That inarticulate sound is like an all-attractive *mantra* that causes the *kāma-bīja*²⁷ to vibrate.

se dhvani caudike dhāya, aṅḍa-bhedi vaikuṅṭhe yāya,
jagatera bole poiṣe kāne
sabhā mātoyāla kori, balātkāre āne dhari,
viśeṣata yuvatīra gaṇe

²⁶ The four kinds of sweetness manifest in Vraja are: sweetness of pastimes, sweetness of love, sweetness of the flute and sweetness of the form.

²⁷ Lit: seed of desire. Transcendental sound that invokes confidential Kṛṣṇa-*mantras*. Ed.

"This sound spreads in all directions, pierces the covering of the universe and ascends to Vaikuṅṭha. It forcibly enters into the ears of everyone in the world. It maddens everyone and brings them to Him by force. This counts especially for the young girls."

dhvani boḍo uddhata, pativratāra bhāṅge vrata,
pati kole hoite kāḍhi āne
vaikuṅṭhera lakṣmīgaṇe, yei kore ākarṣaṇe
tāra āge kibā gopīgaṇe

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 21)

"This sound is very audacious and breaks the vows of chaste wives, dragging them out of their husbands' laps. If it even attracts the goddesses of fortune from Vaikuṅṭha, then what to speak of the *gopīs*?"

The flute has the greatest influence on the Vraja-Kīśorīs, who have sweet amorous feelings for Kṛṣṇa. In his *svarūpa*, Śrīpāda Raghunātha is the maidservant of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, the crown jewel of Vraja-Kīśorīs. Therefore he glorifies the Muralī in the same way as the Vrajasundarīs do it. The Vrajasundarīs think that the Muralī is constantly drinking the most precious nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, without any obstruction, and that is not a small merit. They are eager to know what great pious acts this flute performed to attain such a great fortune.

gopyaḥ kim ācarad ayaṁ kuśalaṁ sma veṅur
dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopikānām
bhukte svayaṁ yad avasiṣṭa-rasaṁ hradīnyo
hṛṣyattvaco'sru mumucus taravo yathāryāḥ

(Bhāgavata 10.21.9)

“One Vrajasundarī, who was enchanted by the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s flute-playing, said: ‘O *sakhīs!* I do not know what great pious activities this dry wooden flute has performed, as a result of which he is freely and unlimitedly enjoying the nectar of Dāmodara’s lips, which is actually only enjoyable for the Vraja-*gopikās!* The rivers horripilate in the form of their blossoming lotus flowers when they behold this good fortune and the trees issue streams of honey as tears of ecstasy, just as the elders of a family shed tears of ecstasy when they see that some crown jewel of devotees has taken birth in their dynasty.’”

Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda has given a wonderful explanation of this verse when he describes Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s talks of ecstatic incoherence (*pralāpa*):

gopīgaṇa! koho sabhe koriyā vicāra!
kon tīrtha, kon tapa, kon siddha mantra japa,
ei veṇu koilo janmāntare

"O *gopīs!* Tell me after due consideration! In which holy place has this flute bathed? What penances did he perform, or what perfect *mantra* has he practised in a previous birth?"

heno kṛṣṇādhara sudhā, ye koilo amṛta mudhā,
yāra āśāya gopī dhare prāṇa
e veṇu ayogyā ati, eke sthāvāra puruṣa jāti,
sei sudhā sadā kore pāna

"Although this flute is so unqualified, being a motionless being of the male sex²⁸, he always drinks the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips, that defeats ordinary nectar, the aspiration for which keeps the *gopīs* alive."

yāra dhana nā kohe tāre, pāna kore balātkāre,
pite tāre ḍākiyā jānāya

tāra tapasyāra phala, dekho ihāra bhāgya bol,
ihāra ucchiṣṭa mahājane khāya

"He forcibly drinks the wealth that does not belong to him and then calls the *gopīs*, thus telling them about the result of his penances. Just see how fortunate he is! Even the great saints eat his remnants!"

mānasa gaṅgā kālindī, bhuvana pāvana nadī,
kṛṣṇa yadi tāte kore snāna
veṇura jhuṭādhara rasa, hoiyā lobhe paravaśa,
sei kāle harṣe kore pāna

"When Kṛṣṇa bathes in world-sanctifying rivers like Mānasa Gaṅgā and Yamunā, they become overwhelmed with greed and blissfully drink the saliva emanating from His flute."

e to nārī rahu dūre, vṛkṣa sab tāra tīre,
tapa kore para upakārī.
nadīra śeṣa rasa pāiyā, mūla dvāre ākarṣiyā
keno piye, bujhite nā pāre

²⁸ Previously, the flute was described as female, because the Muralī-flute is a female flute, but this *pada* glorifies the Veṇu, which is a male flute. Ed.

"What to speak of the women (rivers), even the trees on the banks of these waters, which perform penance for the welfare of others drink this saliva, which is the nectarean remnant of the rivers, by sucking it up through their roots. Why they are drinking it, they cannot understand."

*nijāṅkure pulakita, puṣpa hāsyā vikasita,
madhu miṣe bohe aśru-dhāra
veṇuke māni nija jāti, āryera yaiche putra nāti,
vaiṣṇava hoile ānanda vikāra*

"They horripilate through their sprouts, smile through their blooming flowers and shed streams of tears through their oozing honey. Considering the flute to belong to their species, they show these signs of ecstasy just as a noble man is ecstatic when his son or grandson becomes a Vaiṣṇava."

*veṇura tapa jāni yabe, ei tapa kore tabe,
o to ayogyā, āmarā yogyā nārī.
yā nā pāiyā duḥke more, ayogyā piye sahite nārī,
tāhā lāgi tapasyā vicāri*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya Ch.16)

"When we know what penance this Veṇu performed, we will also do it. He is, after all, unqualified and we are qualified because we are young women. We die of misery because we don't get it and we cannot tolerate that this unqualified flute gets it, so we ourselves consider to perform penance."

Śrīpāda ascertains the qualifications of the Muralī by saying:
*śrī rādhikā prathita mānam apīha divya nādair adho nayati
tām muralīm namāmi*

"I offer my obeisances unto this Muralī, who removes even Śrī Rādhikā's turbulent pique with her sweet sounds."

phutkṛti vidhuta mānaḥ sa bhavatu vijayī harer veṇuḥ
(Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi Śṛṅgāra bheda 140)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Veṇu is supreme, for Śrī Rādhikā's pique is destroyed simply when Hari blows through it."
mānasyopādhyāyi prasīda sakhī rundhi me śruti-dvandvam.
ayam uccāṭana mantram siddho veṇur vane paṭhati (ibid 141)

Lalitā teaches Śrī Rādhā *māna* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays His Muralī. Mānamayī Śrī Rādhā then admonishes Her dear friend Lalitā, saying:

"O teacher of the science of pique! Be pleased with Me and block My ears! Just listen! This flute is like a master of *yoga* that utters a persecuting *mantra* in the woods! When this *mantra* enters into My ears I won't be able to maintain My pique anymore!"

Remembering this wonderful ability of the flute to break (Rādhikā's) pique, he remembers a pastime, which was revealed to him in his *siddha-svarūpa* one day. This pastime is described in verse 49.

One day, Śrī Rādhā is pouting in a *kuñja* and Her pique is hard to conquer. She was eagerly waiting for Her lover in a *kuñja*, when He came to Her with the signs of enjoyment of another heroine on Him, and this caused Her pique. Everybody, Nāgara (Kṛṣṇa) as well as the *sakhīs*, was aggrieved because of Mānini's longlasting pique. The different clever and flattering words of Vṛndā and her girl-messengers could not remove Her pique. The different funny and suggestive words of Madhumaṅgala and his buddies were unable to remove Śrīmatī's pique and finally, the guilty Nāgara Himself fell at Mānini's foot soles and cajoled Her in so many ways, floating in

tejite cāhe parāṇa

(Pada Kalpataru)

"He makes a bed of Śirīṣa-flowers and faints because of Cupid's arrows. The sandalpulp anointing His body feels hotter to Him than poison. Thus He wants to give up His life." Even these petitions of the *sakhīs* could not break Śrīmatī's *māna*.

Then they tried to persuade Her with different intimidating words.

Lalitā said: "Come, Viśākhā! Come, my friends! We're all going home! Our hero has already left in despair. Let Her stay there alone in that *kuñja*, holding on to Her pride!"

Still Śrīmatī's *māna* did not go. Māninī silently sat there weeping and breathing deeply. Everyone is upset with anxiety and anguish. Just then, one *sakhī* told Śyāma:

"Śyāma! Have You forgotten the glories of Your flute? Take shelter of Your flute just once and let's see what will happen!"

Śyāmasundara then took His Muralī to His flower-like lips and blew in it. Śyāma's heartache of separation from Śrī Rādhā became manifest in the unclear sweet sounds of the flute, and as soon as that sound entered into Śrīmatī's earholes She became unsteady. Gone was Her pique!

The *sakhīs* then glorified the fortunate Muralī, who was able to remove Śrīmatī's pique and establish the meeting of the Divine Pair for that day.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I praise that *sakhī*, who appears as Kṛṣṇa's flute!"

*kṛṣṇera adharāmṛta divā-rātri pāne;
atīśaya pariṣṭa yei bhāgyavāne
rādhāra utkaṭa māna yāra divya nāde;*

*apanayana koriteche nitya pade pade
śrī kṛṣṇera kore sei mohana muralī;
namaskāra kori tāre ho'ye kutūholi*

"I eagerly offer my obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa's enchanting Muralī-flute, who is so fortunate to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips day and night and thus become greatly nourished, and whose divine sounds always remove Rādhā's harsh pique."

*nānā vidhā cāṭuvākye vṛndādi dūtigaṇa;
asamartha hoy yāhā korite khaṇḍana
madhumaṅgalādi sakhā parihāsa vākye;
śithila korite nāre ye māna-granthike
praṇata hoiyā pade vrajendranandana;
durjaya māna nirasane asamartha hon
vibhīṣikā pradarsane yoto sakhigaṇa;
yāra praśamane tārā-o parājita hon
phutkāra koribā-mātra se durjaya māna;
apasāraṇa kore yei tṛṇera samāna
saubhāgya śālīnī sakhī svarūpā vaṁśīke;
nitya stava kori āmi praṇata mastake*

"I bow down my head before the fortunate Vaṁśī, who appears like a *sakhī*. Simply by blowing into her, Kṛṣṇa managed to remove Śrī Rādhā's turbulent pique, which Vṛndā and her girl-messengers could not break with their different flattering words, which Madhumaṅgala and his buddies could not unravel with their joking words, which Vrajendra-Nandana could not remove by bowing down to Her, and which the *sakhīs* could not pacify by threatening to abandon Her.

Even they could not defeat Rādhā's pride, but the flute removed it just like a blade of grass. I eternally praise this flute."

VERSE 50:

**sphītas tāṇḍaviko harer muralikā-nādena nṛtyotsavam
ghūrṇac-cāru-sikhaṇḍa-valgu-sarasī-tīre nikuñjāgrataḥ
tanvan kuñja-vihāriṇoḥ sukha-bharam sampādayed yas tayoh
smṛtvā taṁ śikhi-rājam utsukatayā bādham didṛkṣāmahe**

sphītaḥ - blooming; *tāṇḍavikaḥ* - Tāṇḍavika; *hareḥ* - Hari's; *muralikā* - Muralī; *nādena* - by the sound; *nṛtya* - dance; *utsavam* - festival; *ghūrṇat* - turning; *cāru* - beautiful; *sikhaṇḍa* - peacock; *valgu* - lovely; *sarasī* - lake; *tīre* - on the bank; *nikuñja* - grove; *agrataḥ* - before; *tanvan* - extending; *kuñja vihāriṇa* - the enjoyers in the grove; *sukha-bharam* - great joy; *sampādayet* - accomplishes; *yah* - who; *tayoh* - of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *smṛtvā* - having remembered; *taṁ* - him; *śikhi-rājam* - the king of peacocks; *utsukatayā* - eagerly; *bādham* - increased; *didṛkṣāmahe* - we desire to see.

We eagerly yearn to see Tāṇḍavika, the king of peacocks, remembering how he bloomed of joy when hearing Hari's flute song and how he delighted the enjoyers of the kuñja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, by spreading out his feathers and engaging in a festival of dance before the gate of the nikuñja on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved peacock Tāṇḍavika.

All the animals, birds, trees and vines in Vraja are Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's playmates, and the Divine Pair considers them all Theirs. They have a sweet relationship with each of them, and thus the flavours of Their pastimes are nourished.

Tāṇḍavika is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved peacock. When Tāṇḍavika hears Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flutesong, he spreads out his feathers and shows the wonderful sweetness of his dancing.

From Śrīmad Bhāgavata's 'Veṇu-Gīti'-chapter we learn how the Vraja-*gopīs*, in their *pūrva-rāga* (preliminary stage of love) experienced the sweet dancing of the peacocks when they heard Śrī Govinda's flute —

*govinda veṇum anu matta mayūra nṛtyam prekṣādri
sānvaparatānya samasta sattvam* (Bhāg. 10.21.10)

The purport of this verse is, that when Śrī Kṛṣṇa came to the forest and began to play His flute, the peacocks took Him to be a fresh monsoon cloud, His dress to be the fresh lightning and His flute song to be the soft rumbling of the clouds. Thus they began to dance in ecstatic love, extending their feathers.

Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa increased their enthusiasm by playing His flute even more blissfully. In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute-playing and the dancing of the peacocks exhibit a wonderful transcendental bliss, which causes all the different birds and animals of the forest to become immersed in topmost bliss. Speechless and motionless they stand in the table land of Govardhana Hill, relishing the mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute-playing and the dancing of the peacocks as spectators.

When the peacocks blissfully spread out their feathers and start dancing, some of their feathers fall off, making Śrī Kṛṣṇa think:

"These peacocks are pleased with My flute-playing and are giving Me presents in the form of these nicely coloured peacock feathers. It is as if they are saying:

"Ohe Vrajendra-Nandana! We are just birds! We don't have any jewels and money, but the people love our feathers. Being pleased with Your flute-playing, we are offering You these

coloured peacock feathers as presents. Will You accept this humble offering?"

Vraja-rāja-Nandana then devotionally wears these loving offerings on His head. Hence He is called Śikhi-piñcha-maulī (He Who wears peacock feathers).

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa tucks these peacock feathers in His crown, all the mobile and immobile creatures become enchanted by His beauty and the peacocks, considering themselves fortunate, dance in even greater loving ecstasy!

This verse praises Vṛndāvana's greatest peacock Tāṇḍavika. Tāṇḍavika plays a very beautiful role in the pastimes of the Divine Pair.

During the *kuñja-bhaṅga*-pastime²⁹, he awakens the fear in Their hearts that some unwanted, adverse person is coming by crying out 'ke-o' 'ke-o', and thus he urges Them to return home. When the Divine Pair meets, he awakens in Them desires to make love with his dancing.

And how much bliss he gives to the Divine Pair and Their *sakhīs* when he is put at stake during gambling matches like the dice-game! And then again, when Śrī Rādhā and Her girlfriends see Tāṇḍavika when they are separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they can understand that Kṛṣṇa must be around there.

This verse depicts the remembrance of a sweet pastime that was perceived one day. The Divine Pair was once enjoying Themselves freely and sweetly in the woods around Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa at noontime. Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava entered into the forest named Varṣāharṣa (joy of the monsoon), where the sky was covered by garlands of monsoon clouds, rain was pouring

²⁹ Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pastime of awakening between 3.36-6 a.m., described in the opening chapters of Govinda-Līlāmṛta and Kṛṣṇa-Bhāvanāmṛta.

down incessantly and the directions were filled with Kadamba-, Arjuna- and other trees.

The *sakhī* of the monsoon-season arrived to render her service to the Divine Pair, wearing a black dress in the form of a garland of monsoon clouds, intertwined by golden threads of lightning, a pearl necklace in the form of a row of ducks and jeweled ornaments in the form of the rainbow with its multi-coloured beams of blue, yellow and red.

After admiring the beauty of the monsoon-forest, the Divine Pair sat down on a jeweled throne in a *kuñja*, where the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* became absorbed in their devotional services. Meanwhile Tāṇḍavika, the king of peacocks, entered the courtyard of the *kuñja* and began to dance sweetly, to inspire the Divine Pair to perform Their erotic pastimes.

How wonderfully sweetly the deep rumbling of the clouds is decorated by the soft sound of the fresh Kṛṣṇa-cloud's Muralī-flute! In the sky there is a garland of clouds inset with restless lightning strikes, and ahead, in the *kuñja*, is a fresh Kṛṣṇa-cloud embraced by Śrī Rādhā, Who has the luster of millions of steady lightning strikes!

There is no limit to Tāṇḍavika's joy! The king of peacocks, Tāṇḍavika, dances in an enchanting way, turning along an abundance of enchanting flowers. Kuñja-enjoyers Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are fascinated when They behold Tāṇḍavika's dance. Remembering this pastime, Śrī Raghunātha says: "Remembering this Tāṇḍavika I eagerly yearn to see him!"

Along with seeing Tāṇḍavika's dancing, Śrī Raghunātha is eager to see the sweetness of the pastimes of the Divine Pair.

*mohana muralī nāde rādhākuṇḍa tīre;
parānande mātiyā ye nikuñjera dvāre
puccha pasāriyā ghuri nṛtyotsava raṅge;*

*sukha dāna koriteche śrī rādhā govinde
sei śikhī-rāja śreṣṭha 'tāṇḍavika' nāma;
nitya daraśana lāgi ākulita prāṇa*

"With an anxious heart I always yearn to see the greatest king of peacocks named 'Tāṇḍavika', who delights Śrī Rādhā-Govinda by spreading out his tail and wiggling around in a festival of ecstatic intoxicated dance in front of the *nikuñja*-gate on the bank of Rādhākunḍa, following the enchanting sound of the Muralī-flute."

VERSE 51:

**saptāhaṁ mura-mardanaḥ praṇayato goṣṭhaika-rakṣotsuko
bibhran-mānam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇair yasmai salilam dadau
gāndharvā-murabhid-vilāsa-vigalat-kāśmīra-rajyad-guha-
tat khaṭṭāyita-ratna-sundara-sīlo govardhanaḥ pātu vah**

sapta - seven; *ahaṁ* - days; *muramardanaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *praṇayataḥ* - out of love; *goṣṭha* - Vraja; *eka* - only; *rakṣa* - protection; *utsukaḥ* - eager; *vibhrad* - carrying; *mānam* - worshipable; *udāra* - enchanting; *pāṇi* - hand; *ramaṇaiḥ* - through the lovely motions; *yasmai* - by whom; *salilam* - with pastimes; *dadau* - giving; *gāndharvā-murabhid* - Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *vilāsa* - pastimes; *vigalat* - melted off; *kāśmīra* - saffron; *rajyad* - shining; *guhāḥ* - cave; *tat* - its; *khaṭṭāyita* - couch; *ratna* - jewel; *sundara* - beautiful; *sīlaḥ* - rock; *govardhanaḥ* - Govardhana; *pātu* - may protect; *vah* - you.

May Govardhana Hill, who was lovingly held up on the graceful hand of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was eager to protect Gokula, for seven days; who was thus given the honour

of a worshipable personality by the Lord; whose caves are coloured by the saffron, which has fallen from Śrī Gāndharvā and Giridhārī's bodies during Their loving pastimes and whose boulders are like beautiful jeweled couches for the Divine Couple to sit on, protect you.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Girirāja Śrī Govardhana is being praised.

Śrī Girirāja is Vraja's *saubhāgya-tilaka* (the mark of glory and fortune), and because of him, Śrī Vṛndāvana is so lovely.

aho vṛndāvanam ramyam yatra govardhano giriḥ (Skanda Purāṇa)

By aborting the cowherders' traditional sacrifice to Indra and by establishing the worship of Girirāja instead, the Lord has personally announced the glories of Girirāja to the world. He extended the net of logical arguments before His worshipable father Śrī Nanda Mahārāja to make him lose confidence in the worship of Indra and then preached the worship of Govardhana Hill.

Finally Indra became angry and began to cause mischief to Vraja by pouring down rain and thunderbolts upon the area, and the Lord callously held up Girirāja with His left hand, thus protecting the people of Vraja.

One of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names is Muramardana, which means that He easily killed a demon named Mura, who was adverse to the demigods, headed by Indra.

He could have protected Vraja through so many other means also, but just to establish the glories of Girirāja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lifted His beloved mount and thus protected Vraja by providing its inhabitants, who were attacked by Indra, a place of shelter under it.

Not only that, He Himself worshipped Govardhana Hill with His lotus hands for seven days and nights without interruption.

Just as the means of worshipping the deity is laid down in the scriptures, that show how to make pure *mudras* with the hands, indicating one's expertise in ritual worship, similarly Śrī Giridhārī held Śrī Girirāja on the little finger of His left hand and worshipped Girirāja as if He were a worshipper Himself, by holding it continuously for seven days and nights, showing pure *mudras* with His left hand.

By thus personally worshipping Girirāja, who is also known as Haridāsa Varya, the best of Hari's servants, the Lord taught the people of the world how to worship a devotee.

The Lord personally told Śrī Uddhava:

mad bhakta pūjyābhyādhikā (Bhāg. 11.19.21) "One of the causes of attaining devotion unto Me is to know that it satisfies Me even more if My devotee is worshipped than if I am personally worshipped."

For this reason also the Lord told His beloved associate Arjuna in the Ādi-Purāṇa:

*ye me bhakta janāḥ pārtha na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās te me bhaktatamā matāḥ*

"O Pārtha! Those who are only My devotees are actually not My devotees, but those who are the devotees of My devotees, I consider them to be My topmost devotees!"

Śrīman Mahādeva also told Devī:

*ārāadhanānām sarveṣām viṣṇor ārāadhanām param
tasmāt paratarām devi tadīyānām samarcanam*

(Padma Purāṇa)

"O Devi! Of all the worship of gods, the worship of Viṣṇu is the greatest. Even greater than the worship of Viṣṇu is the worship of His devotee!"

The reason is:

*siddhir bhavati vā neti saṁśayo'cyuta sevinām
niḥsaṁśayas tu tad bhakta paricaryāratātmanām*

(Varāha Purāṇa)

"There may still be doubts about whether or not one attains perfection simply by serving Acyuta, but there is no doubt about it that perfection is attained when the devotee of Acyuta is served."

Thus:

*kṛṣṇa sevā hoite-o vaiṣṇava sevā boḍo;
bhāgavata-ādi sab śāstre koilo doḍho
eteke vaiṣṇava sevā parama upāya;
bhakta sevā hoite se sabāi kṛṣṇa pāya
sevakera dāsya prabhu kore nijānande;
ajaya caitanya simha jine bhakta vṛnde*

"The service to the Vaiṣṇavas is even greater than the service to Kṛṣṇa. All this has been firmly concluded by scriptures like the Bhāgavata. The service to the Vaiṣṇavas is the greatest means to attain Kṛṣṇa. The Lord Himself revels in the service to the devotees. Thus the devotees subdue the invincible Caitanya-lion."

Then Śrī Raghunātha shows how Śrī Girirāja Govardhana is the greatest of all of Lord Hari's servants by saying: *gāndharvā-*

*murabhid vilāsa vigalat kāsmīra rajyad guhas tat khaṭṭāyita
ratna sundara śilo govardhanaḥ pātu vaḥ*

"May Govardhana Hill, whose caves are coloured by the saffron that has fallen from Śrī Gāndharvā and Giridhārī's bodies during Their loving pastimes, and whose boulders are like beautiful jeweled couches for the Divine Couple to sit on, protect you."

There are many devotees known as Haridāsa in this world, but no one like Girirāja Govardhana can offer a lovely playground to the Lord with his own body. The most lovely solitary caves of Śrī-Śrī Girirāja are decorated by the saffron that has fallen off Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's bodies during Their amorous pastimes. This shows that the most intimate pastimes of the Divine Pair take place there.

In this way Śrī Girirāja has become blessed by carrying hundreds of charming caves and groves on his body, that are decorated with Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's necklaces, bangles and garlands, which were broken during Their amorous battles. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*gāndharvāyāḥ keli kalā bāndhava!
kuñje kṣuṇṇais tasyāḥ kañkaṇa hāraiḥ prayatāṅga
rāsa kṛīḍā-maṇḍitayopatyakayāḍhya!
pratyāśāṃ me tvam kuru govardhana pūrṇām*

(Stavamālā)

"O Govardhana! You are the assistant in Gāndharvā Śrī Rādhā's artistic pastimes. Your body has been decorated with Śrī Rādhā's broken bangles and garlands and your valleys have been enriched by having been adorned with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's Rāsa-pastimes. Please fulfill all my desires!"

In this way Girirāja's boulders are like beautiful jewelled couches for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, where the playful Pair can blissfully sit and enjoy a little rest. Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has written: *prājyā rājir yasya virājatyupalānām kṛṣṇenāsau santatam adhyāsita madhyā*

"O Govardhana! Your garland of boulders shines very beautifully because Śrī Kṛṣṇa always sits on them!"

Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī says:

"May that Govardhana, whose boulders are like beautiful jeweled couches for the Divine Couple to sit on, protect you!"

In other words:

"May he protect the surrendered soul by giving him *prema*!"
This is Śrīpāda Gosvāmīcaraṇa's merciful blessing upon the world.

<i>mura-nāśana śrī govinda,</i>	<i>rakṣā lāgi kori chanda,</i>
<i>prāṇa priya vraja vṛndāvana</i>	
<i>yāra pūjā jānāite,</i>	<i>nija manohara hāte,</i>
<i>sapta dina korilo dhāraṇa</i>	
<i>yugala vilāsa kāle,</i>	<i>duhuñ aṅga sveda jale,</i>
<i>vigalita kuṅkuma candane</i>	
<i>yāra guhā suraṅjita,</i>	<i>ratna-khattā śilā-yuta,</i>
<i>rakṣā korun sei govardhane</i>	

"May Govardhana Hill, who was held for seven days on the enchanting hand of Mura-nāśana Śrī Govinda, Who wanted to protect His heart's beloved Vraja-Vṛndāvana and Who wanted to show the world how to worship Girirāja, whose caves are coloured by the saffron that has melted off the sweat-studded bodies of the Divine Pair during Their amorous pastimes, and who has boulders like jeweled couches, my that Govardhana Hill protect you."

VERSE 52:

***nīpāis campaka-pālibhir nava-varāsokai rasālotkaraiḥ
punnāgair bakulair lavaṅga-latikā vāsantikābhir vṛtaiḥ
hṛdyam tat-priya-kunḍayos taṭa-milan-madhya-pradeśam param
rādhā-mādhavayoḥ priya-sthalam idam kelyās tad evāśraye***

nīpaiḥ - by Kadamba-trees; *campaka-pālibhiḥ* - by rows of Campaka-vines; *nava* - fresh; *vara* - best; *aśokaiḥ* - by Aśoka-trees; *rasāla* - mango-trees; *utkaraiḥ* - by a multitude; *punnāgaiḥ* - by Punnāga- or Nāga Keśara-trees; *bakulaiḥ* - by Bakula-trees; *lavaṅga-latikā* - by clove-vines; *vāsantikābhiḥ* - by Mādhavī-vines; *vṛtaiḥ* - surrounded; *hṛdyam* - pleasant; *tat* - Their; *priya* - dear; *kunḍayoḥ* - of both ponds; *taṭa* - the bank; *milan* - meeting; *madhya* - middle; *pradeśa* - area; *param* - greatest; *rādhā-mādhavayoḥ* - of Rādhā and Mādhava; *priya* - dear; *sthalam* - place; *idam* - this; *kelyaḥ* - plays; *tad* - that; *eva* - only; *āśraye* - I take shelter.

I take shelter of the central area where Rādhākunḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa meet (the Saṅgama), which is Rādhā and Mādhava's dear most playground and which is very charming due to being surrounded by Kadamba-trees, Campaka-vines, excellent Aśoka-trees, mango-trees, Nāga-Keśara-trees, Bakula-trees, clove-vines and Mādhavī-vines.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: After praising Śrī Govardhana, Śrīpāda Raghunātha now praises Śrī Rādhākunḍa, the most lovely crown jewel of Vraja, which is situated at the base of Śrī Govardhana and which is his exclusive sanctuary. He starts with the Saṅgama, the place where Śrī Rādhākunḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa meet.

After Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed the bull demon Ariṣṭāsura, He struck the ground with His left heel and created Śyāmakuṇḍa on the pretext of purifying Himself. Then He called all the holy waters of the world to come and enter into it.

When He challenged Śrī Rādhārāṇī in this way by making a *kuṇḍa* that contained all the holy waters, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, seeing a large hole on the western side of Śyāmakuṇḍa that Ariṣṭāsura had made at the time of death by kicking it with his hooves, began to make Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa there by digging out the soil with Her girlfriends.

In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the Saṅgama, the place where Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa meet. This Saṅgama-place is extremely charming due to being surrounded and covered by different trees and vines.

The mere sight of this place fills the minds of the Playful Pair Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with a strong desire to make love.

In Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam (4.102-107) Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī describes the wealth of the natural beauty that surrounds Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa:

*praphulla divya mallikā labāṅga jāti yūthikā
kadamba campakāvalī sthālāravinda vīthibhiḥ;
sīrīṣa kunda ketakī kusumbha kiṁśukādibhir
manojña mādhavī latādyananta puṣpa vallibhiḥ
pṛiyaṅgu nāga keśarair aśoka karṇikārakaiḥ
sphuṭātimukta saptalā suvarṇa yūthikādibhiḥ;
vicitra bheda jhiṅṭikā sugandha bandhujivakair
hayāri kubjakādibhiḥ praphullitair vicitritam
vicitra pallavodgamair vicitra puṣpa sambhṛtair
vicitra patra mañjarīr vicitra guccha jālakaiḥ;
vicitra saurabhodayair vicitra sidhu varṣibhir
vicitra rocir ujvalaiḥ paraiś ca sākhibhir vṛtam*

"All around the two *kuṇḍas* are blooming divine jasmine-vines, clove-vines, Jātis, Yūthikās, Kadamba-trees, rows of Campaka-trees, landlotuses, Śirīṣa-, Kunda-, Ketakī-, Kusumbha- and Kiṁśuka-flowers; innumerable flower vines like the Mādhavī-latās, Priyaṅgu-, Nāga-Keśara-, Aśoka-, and Karṇikāra-trees, blooming Mādhavī-vines, fresh jasmines, golden Yūthikās and so on; different kinds of Jhiṅṭikās, fragrant Bandhuka-flowers, Hayāri-, Kubjaka- and other trees.

The woods around the *kuṇḍa* are decorated with wonderfully effulgent trees bearing wonderful budding sprouts, an abundance of wonderful flowers, wonderful leaves and buds and wonderful garlands, which are spreading a wonderful scent and are creating a wonderful shower of honey."

And then again:

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa raha kathānuvadanād āścarya mādhyavad
dhvānaiḥ śrī śuka sārīkā-vyatikarair ānanda sarvasvadam
karṇākaraṣi kuhūḥ kuhūr iti kalālāpair vṛtam kokilair
nṛtyan matta mayūram anya vihagaiś cānanda kolāhala
tan madhye nava mañju kuñja valayaṁ śobhā vibhūtyāsamā-
nordhvaṁ divya vicitra ratna latikādyānanda puṣpa śrīyā
antastalpa varaṁ varopakaraṇair ādhyāṁ samantād dadhad
rādhā-mādhava bhukta bhogyam akhilānandaika sāmṛājya-bhūḥ
madhyaitādṛṣa kuñja maṇḍalam aho kuṇḍaṁ mahā mohanam
sāndrānanda mahā-rasāmṛta bharaṁ svacchaiḥ sadā sambhṛtam
ratnābaddha catustaṭi vilasitaṁ sad ratna sopānavat
tīrtham śrī taṭa sat kadambaka talacchāyā maṇi kuṭṭimam*

"The *kuñjas* give great delight with their sweet and amazing male and female parrots who loudly repeat Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's intimate talks. They are decorated with cuckoos who delight the ears with their unclear sweet singing of *kuhū kuhū*, intoxicated

peacocks who beautify the place with their dancing and various birds who make a great ecstatic tumult.

These fresh groves have attained a peerless status with their treasure of beauty and the blissful flowers of the wonderful and divine jeweled vines. Here again are the greatest couches, which are endowed with the most excellent ingredients for the enjoyment of Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava.

In this way, nothing else can be perceived anywhere but the kingdom of transcendental bliss".

"In the middle of these *kuñjas* is a charming pond, which is always filled with clear, nectar-like water that crystallises the strong flavours of deep bliss. Its four banks are studded with jewels, the *ghāṭs* (landingplaces) are beautified by superexcellent jeweled staircases and enchanting jeweled platforms that lie in the shade of Kadamba-trees."

In this way, the Saṅgama, the place where the two *kuṇḍas* meet and the place which is endowed with the most amazing natural beauty, is Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's dear most playground, where Their wonderful sweet pastimes take place.

The two *kuṇḍas* are non-different from Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma. This sweet meeting place of the two *kuṇḍas* awakens desires for amorous pastimes in the hearts of the Youthful Pair and thus makes Them unsteady.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of this most confidential playground of the Śrī Yugala."

This playground is transcendental and the reservoir of all compassion. The *kuṇḍas* will be merciful to anyone who is sincerely and earnestly surrendered and it will bless such a soul by showing him the pastimes that are taking place there. This is the main purpose of surrender.

kadamba campaka-śreṇī,

abhinava aśoka śreṇī,

bakulādi āmra nāgeśvara
labanṅa mādhavī dvārā, cāri dike āche gherā,
ye sthānera śobhā manohara
rādhākuṇḍa śyāmakuṇḍa, madhye ratna bhūmikhaṇḍa,
yethā nitya yugala vihāra.
divya cintāmaṇi dhāma, saṅgama sthala yāra nāma,
āśraya kori vāsanā āmāra

"I yearn to take shelter of the divine Cintāmaṇi-abode called the Saṅgama, the jewelled grounds that connect Rādhākuṇḍa and Śyāmakuṇḍa, where the Divine Pair always enjoys and which is beautifully surrounded by enchanting rows of Kadamba-, Campaka-, Aśoka-, Bakula-, mango- and Nāgeśvara-trees as well as clove- and Mādhavī-vines."

VERSE 53:

**śrī-vṛndā-vipinam suramyam api tac chrīmān sa govardhanaḥ
 sā rasa-sthalikāpy alam rasamayī kiṁ tāvad anya-sthalam
 yasyāpy aṁśa-lavena nārhati manāk sāmyaṁ mukundasya tat
 prāṇebhyo'py adhika-priyeva dayitam tat-kuṇḍam evāśraye**

śrī vṛndāvīpinam - Śrī Vṛndāvana; *suramyam* - very lovely; *api* - although; *tat* - that; *śrīmān* - beautiful; *sa* - he; *govardhanaḥ* - Govardhana; *sā* - she; *rāsa-sthalikā* - the place of the Rāsa dance; *api* - even; *alam* - greatly; *rasamayī* - full of flavour; *kiṁ* - what; *tāvat* - so far; *anya* - other; *sthalam* - places; *yasya* - whose; *aṁśa* - particle; *lavena* - with a fraction; *na* - not; *arhati* - should; *manāk* - slightly; *sāmyaṁ* - equality; *mukundasya* - of Mukunda; *tat* - that; *prāṇebhyaḥ* - than the heart; *api* - even; *adhika* - more; *priya* - dear; *iva* - as if;

dayitam - dearly beloved; *tat* - that; *kuṇḍam* - pond; *eva* - only; *āśraye* - I take shelter.

The delightful forest of Vṛndāvana, beautiful Govardhana Hill and the nectarean arena of the Rāsa-dance, what to speak of other places, are not equal to even a single particle of one of the atoms of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa. I take shelter of that divine lake, which is dearer to Mukunda than His own life breath.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīmat Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda, who has taken shelter of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, describes the glories of Vraja's crown jewel Śrī-Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and reveals his exclusive attachment to the shelter of the *kuṇḍa*.

yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍam priyam tathā. sarva gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta ballabhā (Padma Purāṇa)

"Just as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is dear to Kṛṣṇa, so is Her pond Rādhākuṇḍa. Of all the *gopīs*, She alone is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

On the day the *kuṇḍa* advented itself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally said:

*proce hariḥ priyatame tava kuṇḍam etat
mat kuṇḍato'pi mahimādhikam astu loke
atraiva me salila kelir ihaiva nityam
snānam yathā tvam asi tadvad idam saro me*

Śrī Hari said: "O Dearest One! May Your *kuṇḍa* be even more glorious in this world than mine! Here I will always bathe and play in the water, because this lake is as dear to Me as You are!"

*sarva gopī hoite rādhā kṛṣṇera preyasī;
 taiche rādhā-kṛṣṇa priya - priyāra sarasī
 yei kuṇḍe nitya kṛṣṇa rādhikāra saṅge;
 jale jalakeli kore - tīre rāsa raṅge
 sei kuṇḍe eka bāra yei kore snāna;
 tāre rādhā sama prema kṛṣṇa kore dāna
 kuṇḍera mādhuri yena rādhāra madhurimā;
 kuṇḍera mahimā yeno rādhāra mahimā*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya 18)

"Of all the *gopīs*, Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's most beloved and similarly, Her lake is most dear to Him. Anyone who bathes even once in this lake, in which Kṛṣṇa eternally plays water sports with Rādhikā and on whose banks He dances the Rāsa-dance with Her, will receive a love for Kṛṣṇa that equals the love of Rādhika! The sweetness of the *kuṇḍa* is like Rādhā's sweetness and the glories of the *kuṇḍa* are like Rādhā's glories."

Although there are thousands and thousands of holy waters in Vraja, no such glorification can be heard of any other holy water. For this reason, Rādhākuṇḍa is the crown jewel of Vraja. Śrī Raghunātha says:

"In the 168 miles circumference of Vraja, Śrī Vṛndāvana is very charming!"

In the Ādi Purāṇa it is written:

*yatra vṛndāvanam nāma vanam kāma dughair drumaiḥ
 manorama nikuñjādhyam sarvartu sukha saṁyutam
 yatra nirmala pānīyā kālindī saritam varā
 ratna baddhobhaya taṭā haṁsa padmādi saṅkulā*

"There (in Vraja-dhāma) is Vṛndāvana, which is enriched by charming arbours that are filled with wish yielding trees, and

where the six seasons spread delight. Here flows the best of rivers, Kālindī, which is filled with clear spotless water and blooming lotus flowers, where swans are swimming and whose banks are studded with jewels."

In the Padma Purāṇa it is written:

*idaṁ vṛndāvanam ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam
pañca yojanam evāsti vanaṁ me deha rūpakam
kālindīyaṁ suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta vāhinī
tejomayaṁ idaṁ ramyaṁ adṛśyaṁ carma cakṣuṣā*

"This charming Vṛndāvana is My only abode and with its ten-mile circumference, this forest is My body. The Kālindī, which carries the greatest nectar, is also known as the Suṣumnā (spine of Vraja). This charming Vṛndāvana is very powerful (and effulgent), but is invisible to the physical eyes."

There is written more in the Padma Purāṇa about the loveliness of Vṛndāvana:

*nitya nūtaṇa puṣpādi rañjitaṁ sukha saṅkulam
svātmānanda sukhotkarṣa śabdādi viṣayātmakam
nānā citra vihaṅgādi dhvanibhiḥ parirañjitaṁ
nānā ratna latāśobhi mattāli dhvani maṅḍitaṁ
cintāmaṇi paricchannaṁ jyotsna jāla samākulam
sarvartu phala puṣpādhyāṁ prabālaiḥ śobhitaṁ pari
kālindī jala saṁsargi vāyunā kampitaṁ muhuḥ
vṛndāvanam kusumitaṁ nānā vṛkṣa vihaṅgamaḥ
saṁsmaret sādḥako dhīmān vilāsaika nīketanam*

"An intelligent and attentive practitioner should fully remember flowery Vṛndāvana, which is the only abode of transcendental pastimes. This Vṛndāvana is coloured by evergreen flowers, it is filled with transcendental bliss which is

greater than the bliss experienced by those who perceive the Paramātmā and which is revealed through transcendental sounds, touches, forms, flavours and fragrances.

Vṛndāvana is beautified by the sounds of different kinds of birds and decorated by different jeweled vines with humming, intoxicated bees.

It is pervaded by a transcendental light which is diffused by Cintāmaṇi-jewels, filled with fruits of all the six seasons and beautified with coral rocks.

In this flowery Vṛndāvana, which is beautified with various trees and birds, the wind makes soft ripples on the water of the Kālindī. Such are the opulences of Vṛndāvana."

And in Vṛndāvana, again the most beautiful place is the delicious Rāsa-sthalī.

śaśvad rāsa rasonmattaṁ yatra gopī-kadambakam. tat kadamba madhyasthaḥ kiśorākṛtir acyutaḥ

"Here Śrī Acyuta always dwells in an adolescent form, surrounded by a circle of *gopīs* who are intoxicated by the flavours of the Rāsa-dance."

"In this Śrī Vṛndāvana, the opulence of Govardhana's beauty is yet again greater.

yatra govardhano nāma sunirjharadarīyutaḥ. ratna dhātumayaḥ śrīmān supakṣi gaṇa saṅkulaḥ (ibid.)

"Here in Vṛndāvana lies Govardhana, which is beautified with the most excellent brooks, caves and sweetly singing jeweled birds."

Therefore it is by nature even more beautiful than Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "What to speak of other places? Even the most charming Śrī Vṛndāvana, the most beautiful Govardhana Hill and the most delicious place where the Rāsa-dance took place cannot equal even a fraction of Śrī

Rādhākūṇḍa, for this lake is as dear to Mukunda as His heart's beloved, Śrī Rādhārāṇī."

Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmī has also written:

*vaikuṅṭhājjanitā varā madhupurī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra pāṇi ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhākūṇḍam ihāpi gokulapateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giritate sevām vivekī na kaḥ*

"Greater than Vaikuṅṭha is Mathurā and greater than that is Vṛndāvana, where the Rāsa-festival took place. Greater than that even is Govardhana, which was beautified by the charming hand of Giridhārī. But greatest of all is Rādhākūṇḍa, which is inundated by the nectarean love of the Lord of Gokula.

Which intelligent person will not serve this Rādhākūṇḍa, which is situated at the base of Girirāja Govardhana?"

Just as Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who is endowed with *mādanākhyamahābhāva*, the topmost ecstatic love, is dearer than life to Kṛṣṇa, Who is only subdued by pure love, Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa, which is connected with Her and non-different from Her, is also most dear to Her. Therefore there is no comparison to Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa's glories.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of that Śrī Rādhākūṇḍa."

*suramya śrī vṛndāvana, nava nava kuñjavana,
śobhāsālī giri govardhana.
sei mahārāsa sthālī, yathā rāsa rasa keli,
yāra mana nahe eka kaṇa
śrī vṛndā vipinera, ananta mahimā yāra,
lava nahe yāhāra tulanā.
rādhākūṇḍa rādhā-sama, mukundera priyatama,
āśraya kori e mora vāsanā*

"Although Śrī Vṛndāvana is very lovely and endlessly glorious because the Rāsa-dance took place there at the Mahārāsa-sthalī, and although Giri-Govardhana is beautiful due to its many fresh *kuñja*-forests, they are still not comparable to even a fraction of a drop from Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa.

I yearn to take shelter of that Rādhākuṇḍa, which is as dear to Mukunda as Rādhā Herself."

VERSE 54:

**sphīte ratna-suvarṇa-mauktika-bharaiḥ saṁnirmite maṇḍape
thūtkāraṁ vinidhāya yatra rabhasāt tau dampatī nirbharam
tanvāte rati-nātha-narma-sacivau tad-rājya-carcām mudā
taṁ rādhā-sarasī-ṭaṭojjala-mahā-kuñjaṁ sadāhaṁ bhaje**

sphīte - broad; *ratna* - jewel; *suvarṇa* - gold; *mauktika-bharaiḥ* - full of pearls; *sannirmite* - beautifully made of; *maṇḍape* - on the platform; *thūtkāraṁ* - spitting; *vinidhāya* - placing; *yatra* - where; *rabhasāt* - forcefully; *tau* - They; *dampatī* - the pair; *nirbharam* - absorbed; *tanvāte* - extending; *ratinātha* - Cupid; *narma* - joking; *sacivau* - two ministers; *tad* - his; *rājya* - kingdom; *carcām* - discussion; *mudā* - joyfully; *taṁ* - him; *rādhā-sarasī* - Rādhākuṇḍa; *ṭaṭa* - bank; *ujjala* - shining; *mahākuñjaṁ* - the great grove; *sadā* - always; *ahaṁ* - I; *bhaje* - worship.

I always worship the brilliant Mahākuñja on the bank of Rādhākuṇḍa, where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa take Cupid as a humorous minister and where they most blissfully discuss the situation in Cupid's kingdom after spitting upon (and abandoning) the broad platform which was beautifully made of gold, jewels and pearls.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: As he praises Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, Śrīpāda Raghunātha automatically perceives the sweetness of the *kuṇḍa* within his heart.

In this verse he praises the most brilliantly shining Mahākuṅja on the bank of the *kuṇḍa*. This most brilliantly shining Mahākuṅja must be the *kuṅja* named **Lalitānandada** or Anaṅga-Raṅgāmbuja on the northern bank of the *kuṇḍa*, because this particular *kuṅja* is the biggest of all the *kuṅjas* that are situated around Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa.

Close to the northern Ghāṭa of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa is this square **Anaṅga-Raṅgāmbuja-Kuṅja**, which consists of eight *kuṅjas* like an eight-petaled lotus flower.

The most excellent golden bananas are its filaments and a platform shaped like a thousand-petaled golden lotus flower is its trowel.

This *kuṅja* may expand or shrink whenever it suits the pastimes, which are performed there. It is greatly effulgent. Lalitā's disciple Kalāvalī is very diligently maintaining this *kuṅja*. All the six seasons and all kinds of pleasure are experienced in this *kuṅja*, which is the very form of different pleasant pastimes.

In this Lalitānandada-*kuṅja* is a royal temple which is endowed with the extraordinary wealth of beauty of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, the king and queen of the *kuṅja*, and Their girlfriends. The filaments of this lotus shaped *kuṅja* are made of jewels, the trowel of gold and the many circular rows of lotus petals are all of equal length and made of different colours of jewels. Outside of the trowel are the filaments and outside of the filaments are the petals that gradually increase in size and number.

Outside of the trowel of this lotus-like *kuñja*, which delights all five senses with its qualities like coolness, are rows of platforms of gold, lapis lazuli, sapphire, crystal and rubies respectively, which increase its peerless beauty.

In the middle of these platforms are various jeweled images of mating deer, birds, demigods, human beings, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and various other living beings. Thus this platform creates incitements for indescribable flavours.

Five colours (white, red, green, yellow and blue) of flowers beautify the filaments and the branches of the trees to form a kind of excellent canopy and the middle of this platform is a knee-high jeweled platform, which is like a trowel extending a wonderful beauty.

In the north-western corner of Lalitānandada-Kuñja is **Vasanta-Sukhada-Kuñja**, in the south west is the **Padma-Mandira**, in the north eastern corner is **Mādhavānandada-Kuñja**, in the north is **Sītāmbuja-Kuñja**, in the east **Asitāmbuja-Kuñja**, in the south **Aruṇāmbuja-Kuñja** and in the west **Hemāmbuja-Kuñja**.³⁰

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "The wealth of beauty of this Lalitānandada-Mahākuñja is so lovely and enchanting, that Śrī-Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa spit in disgust on the beautifully constructed, broadly jeweled, golden and pearl platforms and leave them behind to go to Lalitānandada-Kuñja, being enchanted by its natural beauty, to most blissfully become Cupid's ministers there and to discuss the matters of the kingdom of lusty desire."

The purport of this is that in Vraja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa is anyway the greatest abode for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma to enjoy

³⁰ The description of these *kuñjas* can be found in the seventh chapter of Govinda Līlāmṛta.

confidential solitary pastimes, but beyond that, Lalitānandada-Kuñja is so much filled with the treasure of beauty that Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their girlfriends freely play different erotic pastimes as well as different other kinds of humorous pastimes there.³¹

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I constantly worship this effulgent Mahākuñja, which is situated on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa."

*sei rādhākuṇḍa tīre, mahākuñja nāma dhare,
yāra prabhā ati samujjvala.
maṇi muktāya sunirmīta, ratna-vedī dhikkṛta,
vihāriche navīna yugala
rādhā-kṛṣṇa kautuka bhare, mantri kori kandarpere,
nimagaṇa hāsya parihāse
kāma rājyera ālocanā, yathā kore duhuṇi janā,
mahā-kuñja bhaji gala-vāse*

"I humbly worship the Mahākuñja, the great, brightly shining harbour on the bank of Rādhākuṇḍa, where the Youthful Pair, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa enjoys, cursing the platforms made of jewels and pearls and where They have great fun in joking with Each other, playing King Cupid's ministers and discussing the situation in the kingdom of lust."

³¹ These humorous pastimes are described in the midday-pastimes chapters of *līlā-granths* such as Śrī Govinda Līlāmṛta, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta and Śrī Kṛṣṇāhnikā Kaumudī.

VERSE 55:

**kāntyā hanta mithaḥ sphuṭam hr̥di taṭe sambimbitam dyotate
prītyā tan mithunam mudā padakavad rāgeṇa vibhrad yayoḥ
dhātrā bhāgya-bhareṇa nirmitatare trailokya-lakṣmyāspade
gaura-śyāmatame ime priyatame rūpe kadāham bhaje**

kāntyā - with the luster; *hanta* - alas!; *mithaḥ* - mutually; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *hr̥di taṭe* - on the edge of the heart; *sambimbitam* - reflected; *dyotate* - shines; *prītyā* - with love; *taḍ* - that; *mithunam* - pair; *mudā* - gladly; *padakavad* - like a medal; *rāgeṇa* - with passion; *vibhrad* - wearing; *yayoḥ* - of both; *dhātrā* - by the Creator; *bhāgya-bhareṇa* - with great fortune; *nirmitatare* - created; *trailokya* - of the three worlds; *lakṣmyā* - of beauty; *āspade* - in the abode; *gaura* - golden; *śyāmatame* - deep blue; *ime* - in this; *priyatame* - in the dearest; *rūpe* - in the form; *kadā* - when; *aham* - I; *bhaje* - will worship.

When can I worship my most beloved lightning-fair Rādhā and deep cloud-blue Śyāma, Whose splendid lustre is reflected on the borders of each other's heart (because of Their great mutual love), Who passionately wear each other in the heart as medals, Whom Lord Brahmā created from the summit of good fortune and Who are the topmost abode of all the beauty in the three worlds?

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In the previous verse, Śrī Raghunātha, who has taken shelter of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, praised the Kuṇḍa by glorifying the great Lalitānandada-*kuṇja* on its shore.

Śrī Raghunātha, who was absorbed in *bhajan* on the bank of the *kuṇḍa*, then suddenly perceived the dual form of Śrī Śrī

Words are completely insufficient here. Still these feelings want to come out through the current of verbal expression, but alas! Words do not have the power to contain the strong urge of *bhāva*! Words succumb under the pressure of *bhāva* and become stunned. In this condition, the heart can bloom because of anything that supports the *bhāva*, but words can only express a drop of this and remain helpless, standing before the *bhāvuka* (the ecstatic lover of God) like a beggar.

This inferior media of words is a very powerful stream of *bhāva*, which is poured into the senses of the *bhāvagrāhī-bhakta* (sensitive devotee) like a waterfall and assists the *bhāvuka* in awakening his *bhāva*.

The result, nature and dignity of whatever power *bhāva* can invest into words is unlimited. At various places in this *rasa-kāvya* (delicious poetry), Śrīpāda Raghunātha, who is a direct seer of the sweetness of the Divine Pair, is floating fast in countless directions on the powerful Yamunā- and Jāhnavī-streams of the transcendental sweetness of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, just to cool off the hearts of the *rasika*-devotees who are eager to relish that sweetness.

*dhātrā bhāgya bhareṇa nirmitatare trailokyā lakṣmyāspade
gaura śyāmatame*

"Lord Brahmā created this Rādhā of golden luster and this Śyāma of bluish luster from the summit of good fortune and thus They are the topmost abode of all the beauty in the three worlds."

When we study this part of Śrī Raghunātha's verse, we can understand how true these words are. The Mahājanas have also written:

*prati aṅga kon vidhi nirmilo kise. dekhite dekhite koto amiyā
variṣe*

"Which Creator has fashioned Their each and every limb?
How much nectar is showered upon me when I see this?"
Actually, the sweetness of the Divine Pair is not fashioned by
any Creator. It is an eternal, everlasting and self-manifest thing.
But out of great ecstasy and astonishment arising from seeing
these extraordinary, supernatural transcendental forms, these
words are used.

Śrī Raghunātha sees that *kāntyā hanta mithaḥ sphuṭaṁ hṛdi-
tate sambimbitaṁ dyotate prītyā tan mithunaṁ mudā
padakavad rāgeṇa vibhrad yayoh*

"Rādhā and Mādhava's splendid lustre is reflected on the
borders of Each other's heart (because of Their great mutual
love) and They passionately wear each other in the heart as
medals."

The desire of passion is like this: To always have the beloved
close by.

Śrī Rādhārāṇī Herself said:

*hātaka darapaṇa, māthaka phula;
nayanaka aṅjana, mukhaka tāmbūla
hṛdayaka mṛgamada, gīmaka hāra,
dehaka saravasa, gehaka sāra
pākhika pākha, mīnaka pāni,
jīvaka jīvana, hām tuhuṁ jāni
tuhuṁ kaise mādharma koho tuhuṁ moya,
vidyāpati koho - duhuṁ dohā hoy*

(Pada Kalpataru)

"You are the mirror in My hand and the flower in My hair.
You are the collyrium around My eyes and the betel leaves in
My mouth. You are the musk on My breasts and the necklace

around My neck. You are the all-in-all for My body and the essence of My house. I know You as the wing of the bird, the water for the fish and the life for the soul. O Mādhava! How can I explain to You what You are all to Me?"

Vidyāpati says: "They are everything to Each other!"

Although, out of great love, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are always entwined with Each other in the heart, still externally They have difficulty in meeting Each other because of Their extramarital relationship.

*kabhu mile kabhu nā mile,
daivera ghaṭana*

(C.C.)

"Sometimes They meet and sometimes They don't meet, it is up to Fate."

It is because They have so much difficulty in meeting Each other that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are so passionately attached to Each other and that Their very brilliant bluish and golden complexions are reflected on the borders of Each other's hearts, so that They shine in Each other's hearts like medals.

It is as if Śrī Raghunātha's heart is drowning in the ocean of the forms of the Divine Pair and as he gazes at Them, They disappear. He cannot see Them anymore. The vision has vanished and he starts to lament. As great humility awakens, Śrī Raghunātha thinks:

"I don't do any *bhajan*, so I am unqualified to see Them. They were so kind revealing Themselves to me once, but because I don't do any *bhajana*, I have lost Them again!"

Therefore he humbly does not desire to see Them, but just wants to do *bhajana*, for that will ultimately make him qualified. So he says:

"When will I worship my most beloved dual form of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Who are bluish like a cloud and golden like the lightning?"

*prīte aṅga kānti dvāre, hṛdi-taṭe paraspāre,
 pratibimbe koreche ujjvala
 vidhātāra bhāgya bhāri, sṛjana kalā bolihārī,
 gaḍḍiyāche dampati yugala
 śobhāra āspada rūpa, tribhuvane rasa-kūpa,
 abhinava gaura śyāma tame
 nitya nava anurāge, bhajibo kiśora yuge
 vrajavāsī saṅge anukṣaṇe*

"Along with the Vrajavāsīs I will always worship the Adolescent Pair, Who are lovingly reflected on the borders of Each other's hearts through Their brilliant complexions, Who were artistically created by Lord Brahmā from the summit of good fortune, Who are the abodes of beauty and the wells of nectar in the three worlds, and Who shine with fresh golden and bluish complexions, with ever-fresh devotional passion."

VERSE 56:

**netropānta-vighūrṇanair alaghu tad-dor-mūla-sañcālanair
 īṣad-dhāsyā-rasaiḥ sudhādhara-dhayaiś cumbair dṛḍhāliṅganaiḥ
 etair iṣṭa-mahopacāra-nicayaiś tan-navya-yūnor yugaṁ
 prītyā yaṁ bhajate tam ujjvala-mahā-rājāṁ pravandāmahe**

netra - eyes; *upānta* - the corners; *vighūrnanaiḥ* - by twirling; *alaghu* - heavily; *doḥ* - arm; *mūla* - pit; *sañcālanaiḥ* - by moving; *iṣat* - slightly; *hāsyā* - smiling; *rasaiḥ* - with the flavours; *sudhā* - nectar; *adhara* - lips; *dhayaiḥ* - by drinking; *cumbaiḥ* - by kissing; *ḍṛḍha* - firmly; *ālīnganaiḥ* - by embracing; *etaiḥ* - by these; *iṣṭa* - beloved deity; *mahā* - great; *upacāra* - paraphernalia; *nicayaiḥ* - by the multitude; *tat* - that; *navya* - new; *yūnoḥ* - of the youthful; *yugam* - pair; *prītyā* - with love; *yaṁ* - whom; *bhajate* - worshipping; *tam* - him; *ujjala mahārājaṁ* - Ujjvala Mahārāja; *pravandāmahe* - we praise.

We praise Ujjvala Mahārāja (the personification of the erotic mellow), who is most lovingly worshipped by the Youthful Couple (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) with many great paraphernalia, such as restless, sidelong glances, movements of the armpits, sweet soft smiling, drinking of the nectar of Each other's lips, kissing and firmly embracing Each other.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises Ujjvala Mahārāja.

Different other names for *ujjala rasa* are *madhura-rasa*, *śṛṅgāra-rasa* or *śuci-rasa*.

śṛṅgāra śucir ujjvalaḥ. This *rasa* is called Mahārāja because it is the king of transcendental flavours, the greatest of all. That is because the qualities of all the other *rasas* like *dāsyā* and *sakhya* are all present in this *madhura rasa*.

pūrva pūrva rasera guṇa pare pare hoy;
dui tina gaṇane pañca paryanta bāḍhaya
guṇādhikye svādādhikye bāḍhe prati rase;
śānta dāsyā sakhya vātsalyera guṇa madhurete boise
ākāśādīra guṇa yeno para para bhūte;
dui tina gaṇane bāḍhe pañca pṛthivīte

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya Ch. 8)

"Of the five *rasas*, each *rasa* has one quality more than the preceding, inferior one. Just as each of the five elements in material nature, starting with sky and ending with earth, has one quality more than the preceding one, each *rasa* has more qualities and relish than the preceding one. Hence the qualities of *śānta* (tranquil love), *dāsya* (love in servitude), *sakhya* (fraternal love) and *vātsalya* (parental love) are all seated in *madhura-rasa* (erotic love)."

atrāmbanaḥ kāntatvena sphuran kānta bhāva viśayaḥ śrī kṛṣṇaḥ. tad ādhārāḥ sajātīya bhāvās tadīya parama vallabhās ca (Prīti Sandarbha - 274 Anuḥ)

"The object of *ujjala-rasa* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who appears as the lover, and the shelter are His greatest lady loves, who are endowed with the same feelings."

Of these greatest of lady-loves, the Vraja-lady-loves, who have other men as their husbands, are the greatest.

The great sage Śrī Bharata has written:

*bahu vāryate yataḥ khalu yatra prachanna kāmukatvaṁ ca
yā ca mīthor durlabhatā sā manmathasya paramāratīḥ*

"Those lovers who undergo many social and religious obstacles, who must hide their lusty feelings and who find great difficulty in meeting each other, experience the greatest erotic excitement."

*atraiva paramotkarṣaḥ śṛṅgārasya pratiṣṭhitāḥ (U.N.)
atraiveti śrī kṛṣṇena saha vraja subhruvām īdṛśa līlā viśeṣa eva
śṛṅgārasya paramotkarṣa ityārthaḥ (Tīkā -Śrī Jīva)*

"The supreme manifestation of erotic mellows is that of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the fair-browed *gopīs* of Vraja (who are married with other men)."

Ascertaining the pinnacle of *rāga* (passionate love), Śrī Jīva also writes in his commentary on Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi:

*duḥkasya paramakāṣṭhā kula-vadhūnām svayam api parama
maryādānām svajanārya pathābhyām bhraṁśa eva nāgnyādir
na ca maraṇam. tataś ca tat kāritayā pratīto'pi śrī kṛṣṇa
sambandha sukhāyaḥ kalpyate cet tarhyaiva rāgasya parama
iyattā. tataś ca tām āśrityaiva pravṛtto'nurāgo bhāvāya
kalpyate*

"The greatest misery for a woman who follows the family-etiquette is to fall from the path of dignity in society. They would rather respectfully accept death by poison or fire than to give up their fidelity to their husbands.

Out of uncontrollable passion, the Vraja-*devīs* have given up all Vedic and social etiquette, though, just for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure".

In this way, the pinnacle of passionate love is manifest and the *anurāga* that is manifest from this great passionate love of the Vrajasundarīs ascends to the stage of *mahābhāva*.

In the mundane scriptures on *rasa*, the feelings of a paramour are condemned and this is certainly correct, but when the Vrajasundarīs become the shelter and Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes the object of such extramarital love, it becomes qualified and it is no longer a *dūṣaṇa* (moral stain) but a *bhūṣaṇa* (ornament).

Hence it is written in Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi:

*neṣṭā yad aṅgini rase kavibhiḥ paroḍhā; tat gokolāmbuja-
dṛśām kulam antareṇa*

"The extramarital heroine who is not accepted by the poets is understood to be any heroine other than the lotus-eyed *gopīs* of Gokula."

And it is also said:

laghutvam iti yat proktaṁ tat tu prākṛta nāyake. na kṛṣṇe rasa niryāsa svādārtham avatāriṇi (U.N.)

"The role of paramour which was condemned by the poets applies to mundane heroes, not to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because He has descended to relish the essence of transcendental flavours."

The Vrajasundarīs are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa relishes the essence of erotic flavours in them, because since beginningless time He has arranged that Yogamāyā, who is expert in accomplishing the impossible, makes them consider themselves other men's wives.

Amongst these Vrajasundarīs, again the greatest is *mahābhāvatī* Śrī Rādhikā. The various *gopīs* enjoy with Śrī Kṛṣṇa to increase His relish of the sweetness of His erotic pastimes with Śrī Rādhā.

*rādhā saha kṛḍā rasa vṛddhira kāraṇa;
āra sab gopīgaṇa rasopakaraṇa.
kṛṣṇera vallabhā rādhā- kṛṣṇa prāṇa dhana;
tāhā vinā sukha hetu nahe gopīgaṇa*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi Ch. 4)

"Rādhā is Kṛṣṇa's lover and the treasure of His heart. Without Her, the other *gopīs* can not make Him happy. As hero and heroine, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are therefore the topmost shelter of the erotic *rasa*."

nāyaka nāyikā dui - rasera ālambana;

sei dui śreṣṭha rādhā vrajendranandana (

(C.C. Madhya Ch. 23)

In this sweet love of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental crown jewels of heroes and heroines, the incitement (*uddīpana-vibhāva*) is caused by the playing of the flute, the external activities (*anubhāva*) are glances and sweet smiles, the *sāttvika* symptoms are perspiration and goose pimples and the *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* are joy and remorse. When they meet and become most wonderfully relishable, it results into ‘*śṛṅgāra-rasa-rāja*’, the king of erotic flavours.³²

Just as a very rich subject pleases the king by serving him with great paraphernalia worthy of a king, similarly, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava worship Ujjvala Mahārāja, King Cupid, with great paraphernalia worthy of a king, such as casting erotically tempting, sidelong glances, softly and sweetly smiling, moving Their armpits in a very agitating way, drinking the nectar of Each other’s lips, kissing and firmly embracing Each other.

The purport of this is that the youthful couple of Vraja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, float in innumerable directions on the stream of *ujjvala-rasa*, that manifests various sweet feelings that are fit for the service of the erotic flavour.

There are many confidential feelings, purports and suggestions hidden in this verse, but it is not possible to reveal all these meanings, as we fear this book will become too big. The experienced *rasika* devotees will relish them and will forgive this fallen soul.

³² More elaborate descriptions of the ingredients of *rasa* can be found in scriptures like Ujjvala Nīlamanī.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this Ujjvala Mahārāja with body, mind and words!"

*suvidagdha vraja nava kiśora yugala;
 suviśāla netrāñcala koriyā cañcala
 mṛdula madhura hāsyā prakāśī vadane;
 vilāsa bhaṅgite bāhu mūla sañcālāne
 adhara amiyā pāne madhura cumbane;
 atula premāveśe gāḍha āliṅgane
 e prakāra bahu vidha mahā upacāre;
 bhajanā koriche niti sayatane yā're
 ujjvala rasa nāme sei ṅṅpottame;
 kāya mano vākye vandi ei manaskāme*

"With body, mind and words, I praise the great king named Ujjvala Rasa, who is diligently worshiped by the very clever Youthful Pair of Vraja with many kinds of great paraphernalia, such as casting restless sidelong glances cast with wide eyes, the sweet and soft smiles that are manifest on Their faces, the playful movements of Their armpits, the drinking of sweet nectar by kissing Each other's lips, and the peerless ecstatic love with which They tightly embrace Each other."

VERSE 57:

**netre dairghyam apāṅgayoḥ kuṭilatā vakṣoja-vakṣaḥ-sthale
 sthaulyaṁ tan-mṛdu-vāci vakrīma-dhurā śroṇau pṛthu sphāratā
 sarvāṅge vara-mādhurī sphuṭam abhūd yeneha lokottarā
 rādhā-mādhavayor alaṁ nava-vayaḥ sandhiṁ sadā taiṁ bhaje**

netre - in the eyes; *dairghyam* - length; *apāṅgayoḥ* - of the corners of the eyes; *kuṭīlatā* - crookedness; *vakṣoja* - breasts; *vakṣaḥ-sthale* - chest; *sthaulyam* - vastness; *tad* - their; *mṛdu* - soft; *vāci* - words; *vakri* - crooked; *madhurā* - sweet; *śroṇau* - on the thighs; *pṛthu* - big; *sphāratā* - broadness; *sarva* - all; *aṅge* - on the body; *vara* - excellent; *mādhurī* - sweetness; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *abhūd* - it became; *yena* - by whom; *iha* - in Vraja; *lokottarā* - extraordinary; *rādhā-mādhavayoḥ* - of Rādhā and Mādhava; *alam* - greatly; *nava* - new; *vayaḥ* - age; *sandhiṃ* - conjunction; *sadā* - all; *taṃ* - him; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Rādhā and Mādhava's early adolescence, which is manifest through Their elongated eyes, the crookedness of Their sidelong glances, the increase of the volume of Her breasts and His chest, the great crookedness of Their softly spoken words, the largeness of Their buttocks and the extraordinary sweetness that pervades all of Their limbs.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In the previous verse Śrī Raghunātha praised the *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, and in this verse he praises the early adolescence of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, which is qualified to serve that *rasa*.

In the *prakāṣa-līlā* or *krama-līlā* (the manifest pastimes on earth, Ed.), Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava gradually pass through the ages of *bālyā* (0-5 years, Ed.), *paugaṇḍa* (5-10 years) and *kaiśora* (10-15 years) to arrive at Their eternal, intrinsic *kaiśora*-age. This is the sweetness of the *krama-līlā*.

The junction between *paugaṇḍa* and *kaiśora* is called **vayaḥ sandhi**.

In Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, it is seen that there are four kinds of ages suitable for the *madhura-rasa*:

vayaḥ sandhi, navya vayasa, vyakta vayasa and pūrṇa vayasa. vayaḥ sandhis tathā navyaṁ vyaktaṁ pūrṇam iti kramāt (Uddīpana Pra 8)

Of them, the *vayaḥ-sandhi* is described as follows: -

bālya yauvanayoḥ sandhir vayaḥ sandhir itiryate (ibid - 10)

"The junction between childhood and youth is called *vayaḥ sandhi* (or puberty)"

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments on this as follows:

bālya yauvanayoḥ sandhir iti kaiśorasya prathama bhāga tātṭparyakam - sarvasyāpi kaiśorasya tat sandhi-rūpatvāt. bālyam atra paugaṇḍam

"The junction between childhood and youth is called *prathama-kaiśora*. All manifestations of *kaiśora* are found between *bālya* and youth. This *bālya* must be understood to be the *paugaṇḍa*-age here."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vayaḥ-sandhi* is described as follows:

*yāntī śyāmalatārīṁ vimukta kapiśa cchāyāṁ smara kṣmā-pater
adyājñā-lipi varṇa paṅkti padavīm āpnoti romāvalī
vāñchaty ucchalitaṁ manāg abhinavāṁ tārūṇya nīra cchaṭāṁ
labdhā kiñcid adhīram akṣi śaphara dvandvaṁ ca kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ*

(Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamanī, Uddīpana Prakaraṇa 11)

Through the vines, one *dūti* showed Śrī Rādhā how Śrī Kṛṣṇa was standing under a tree and told Her:

"O dear *sakhi!* Look! Kaṁsārī's body-hairs have given up their greyish colour and have become black. It seems as if these body-hairs have attained the position of a relayer of Cupid's written order. And His fish-like eyes have become slightly restless too after having attained the luster of fresh

youthfulness. Behold, O *sakhi*, the enchanting form of Kāmīśārī!"

The sweetness of this puberty is described as follows:

*daśārddha-sāra-lubdhakam calam avekṣya lakṣyechchayā
viśantam iha sāmpratam bhavad apāṅgo śṛṅgopari
sadāśru nikarokṣitā vraja mahendra vṛndāvane
kuraṅga nayanāvali dara-pariplavatvam gatā*

(Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, Uddīpana Prakaraṇa 11)

Nāndīmukhī told Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was desirous to meet the *gopīs* in the stage of *pūrva rāga* (beginnings of love):

"O king of Vraja! Don't worry! Now the hunter named Cupid enters in Your sidelong glances, showing great restlessness. This is not an ordinary thing! Seeing how he never fails his target, the doe- like eyes of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana are filled with tears and they are shivering out of fear! Therefore Your desires will quickly be fulfilled!"

In the same way, Śrī Ujjvala-Nīlamaṇi describes Śrī Rādhā's puberty and its sweetness:

*vādyam kiṅkiṇim āharatyupacayam jñātvā nitambo guṇī
svasya dhvaṁsam avetya vaṣṭi balibhir yogam hrasan madhyamam
vakṣaḥ sādhu phala-dvayam vicinute rājopahāra kṣamam
rādhāyās tanu rājyam añcati nave kṣauṇi-patau yawane*

(Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, Uddīpana Prakaraṇa 13)

Seeing Śrī Rādhā from afar, Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Subala: "O friend! Look how the king of fresh youthfulness enters into the kingdom of Śrī Rādhā's body! Her qualified buttocks begin to

play musical instruments for him by blissfully jingling with Her waistbells. Her breasts are offering themselves to him as two large ripened picked fruits and Her waist is becoming afraid of perishing completely and therefore takes shelter of Her three-lined belly. Therefore, O *sakhi*! How wonderful is the power of the king of fresh youthfulness!"

The sweetness of Her puberty is described as follows:

*āsās te patituṃ kaṭākṣa-madhupo mandaṃ dṛg indivare
kiñcid vṛīḍa visāṅkuraṃ mṛgayate ceto marālārbakaḥ
narmālāpa madhu cchaṭāḍya vadanāmbhoje tavodīyate
sañke sundari mādhavotsava-karīṃ kāñcid daśām añcasi*

(Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, Uddīpana Prakaraṇa 14)

Viśākhā jokingly told Śrī Rādhā: "O Beautiful girl! The sweetness of Your body is most astonishing! Your bee-like glances aspire to gently land on the blue Indīvara-lotus flowers of Your eyes, the young swan of Your heart is seeking the lotusstems of slight bashfulness and the lustre of the honey of joking words is becoming manifest in Your lotus-like mouth! Therefore, O Rādhē! I think that You have attained a condition that can deliver a festival of joy to Mādhava!"

*saiśava yauvana daraśana bhelo; duhuṃ patha heraitte manasiḥ gelo
madana ki rāja pahilo paracāra; bhina jane deyallo bhina adhikāra
kaṭika gaurava pa-ala nitamba; ekaka kṣiṇa aoke avalamba
prakāṭa hāsa ab gopata bhelo; uraja prakāṭa ab tahnika lelo
caraṇa capala gati locana pābo; locanaka dhairaja pada tale yābo
nava kavi śekhara ki kohite pāro; bhina bhina rāja bhina vevahāra*

"Youthfulness came to see childhood and Cupid saw them both on the way. When king Cupid promulgates youthfulness

which makes Their words crooked and enlarges Their buttocks."

VERSE 58:

**duṣṭāriṣṭa-vadhe svayaṁ samudabhūt kṛṣṇāṅghri-padmād idaṁ
sphītaṁ yan makaranda-viṣṭīrīva ivāriṣṭākhyam iṣṭaṁ saraḥ
sopānaiḥ parirañjitaṁ priyatayā śrī-rādhayā kāritaiḥ
preṁṇāliṅgad iva priyā sara idaṁ tan nitya-nityaṁ bhaje**

duṣṭa - wicked; *ariṣṭa-vadhe* - in the killing of Ariṣṭa; *svayaṁ* - automatically; *samudabhūt* - appeared; *kṛṣṇāṅghri-padmād* - from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet; *idaṁ* - this; *sphītaṁ* - great; *yad* - that; *makaranda* - honey; *viṣṭīrīva* - extended; *iva* - just as; *ariṣṭākhyam* - known as Ariṣṭa; *iṣṭaṁ* - beloved; *saraḥ* - lake; *sopānaiḥ* - by staircases; *parirañjitaṁ* - decorated; *priyatayā* - with love; *śrī rādhayā* - by Śrī Rādhā; *kāritaiḥ* - done; *preṁṇā* - with love; *āliṅgad* - embraced; *iva* - just like; *priyā* - Rādhā; *sara* - lake; *idaṁ* - this; *tat* - that; *nitya* - eagerly; *nityaṁ* - eternal; *bhaje* - I worship.

I always eagerly worship Ariṣṭakuṇḍa (Śyāmakuṇḍa), who automatically appeared from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet just as honey automatically trickles from a blooming flower, when the wicked Ariṣṭa-demon was killed; who was beautified with staircases by Śrī Rādhā out of great love, and who lovingly embraces Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Ariṣṭakuṇḍa or Śyāmakuṇḍa.

In the previous verse he desired to worship the early adolescence of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and now he suddenly

thinks in great humility: "The worship of the Divine Pair's early adolescence is very intimate, is it possible for a person like me, whose heart is pierced by lusty desires, to perform such a spotless worship?"

While being absorbed in *bhajana* on the bank of Ariṣṭakuṇḍa, Śrī Raghunātha remembers Śyāmakuṇḍa, that destroys all mischief.³³ Hence he praises Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa in this verse, desiring to destroy all the obstacles in his *bhajana*.

While the bull-demon Ariṣṭāsura was killed, Śyāmakuṇḍa became manifest like honey flowing from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus-like feet. After killing the demon Ariṣṭa, who had appeared in the form of a bull, Śrī Kṛṣṇa desired to purify His body and thus struck the ground with His left heel. This caused the Bhogavatī Gaṅgā to appear from the Pātāla (subterranean) regions.

Seeing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said: "O holy waters! *āgaccha! āgaccha!* (Come! come!)", and all the holy waters of the world entered into this cavity.

Because Kṛṣṇa accomplished this by striking the ground with His heel, Śrīpāda Raghunātha gives the analogy here that it was as if Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa manifested itself automatically in the form of a stream of honey emanating from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa is very dear to Śrī Rādhārāṇī, because it is the lake of Śrī Śyāmasundara, Who is dearer to Her than millions of life-airs. When the *kuṇḍa* advented itself, Śrīmatī said:

*rādhā'bravid aham api sva sakhībhīr etya snāsyāmy ariṣṭa
śata mardanam astu tasya; yo'riṣṭa mardana sarasyuru-bhaktir
atra snāyād vasen mama sa eva mahāpriyo'stu*

Rādhā replied: "I will also bathe here with My girlfriends! Hundreds of sins of anyone who bathes in this Kṛṣṇa-kuṇḍa

³³ The Sanskrit word *ariṣṭa* also means mischief. Ed.

with devotion and lives on its banks will be destroyed. Such a person will become very dear to Me!"

Śrī Rādhārāṇī daily bathes at the Mānasa-Pāvana-Ghāṭa of Her dear most Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa with Her dear most girlfriends, and for the sake of bathing, Śrīmatī personally decorated Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa with a flight of stairs.

Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa keeps its dear Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa in a loving embrace. The two *kuṇḍas* are non-different from the dual forms of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraces His Priyājī with the greatest love, similarly Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa most lovingly keeps Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, which is non-different from Śrīmatī, in an embrace. At the auspicious time of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa's appearance, all the holy waters that had assembled in Śyāmakuṇḍa began to praise Śrīmatī in personified forms, aiming to please Her so that they could also dwell in Her *kuṇḍa*.

Then, as soon as they got Priyājī's permission, the holy waters most blissfully broke the wall that existed between the two *kuṇḍas* and streamed from Śyāmakuṇḍa into Rādhākuṇḍa. This place is known as the Saṅgama.

Consequently the holy waters united the two *kuṇḍas* under this pretext and now reside in both *kuṇḍas*. It is at this Saṅgama-passage, that Śrī Śyāmakuṇḍa lovingly embraces Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa!

In the scripture named Śrī Govinda Līlāmṛta it is written that when Śyāmasundara sees Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa He vividly remembers His Priyājī and when He sees the two *kuṇḍas* meet at the Saṅgama-passage, many *bhāva-citras* (pictures of loving feelings) of His meeting with Priyājī appear in His mind and heart:

khelac cakra-yugorojam pheṇa muktā-srag ujvalam

*rasormy-uccalitaṁ mene priya vakṣaḥ samaṁ saraḥ
 madhura rasa taraṅgā vibhrati pañkajāsyaṁ
 bhramaraka parivṛtaṁ prollasat khañjanākṣam
 pramudita hariṇocair haṁsakārāva ramyā
 priyatama sarasī sā preyasīva vyaloki
 sva preṣṭhāriṣṭa kuṇḍormi cañcat bāhūpagūhitā
 sva kokanada pāñibhyāṁ kṣipta tac calatat karā
 samīra cañcad ambhoja calāsyena balād iva
 cumbitāli kaṭākṣeṣat tiryag ambuja sanmukhī
 bhṛṅgī jhañkāra śītkāra vikala svara gadgadā
 prodyat kuṭṭamitā tena rādhikeva vyaloki sā*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 7.104-108)

"The playing Cakravāka-birds on the water reminded Kṛṣṇa of Priyājī's breasts, the foam on the water of Her pearl necklace, and the water's waves of Her mood. All these items reminded Him of Her chest. This dear most lake reminded Hari of His dearmost beloved. The sweet waves of water are like the waves of Her sweet love, the lotus flowers in the water of Her lotus face, the bees surrounding those lotuses of Her curly locks surrounding Her lotus face, the restless wagtail birds of Her restless eyes and the loud and sweet warbling of the swans reminded Him of Her jingling anklebells.

The red lotus flowers that stop the intruding waves of Śyāmakuṇḍa's water reminded Kṛṣṇa of Rādhikā's red lotus-like hands that try to stop Him from embracing Her with Her arms, and the lotus flowers, moved by the wind from Śyāmakuṇḍa, which are falling over the lotuses in Rādhākunda, which are adorned with bumblebees, remind Him of Her crooked looks during His efforts to forcibly kiss Her lotus-like face.

The buzzing of the bees reminded Kṛṣṇa of Rādhikā's faltering screams when She pretends to be angry with Him."

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I always worship this Ariṣṭakuṇḍa, which is non-different from Śyāmasundara!"

*ariṣṭa nidhana ante, kṛṣṇa pādapadma ho'te,
yei sarovara samudbhūta
puṣpa pūrṇa vikāsete, yaiche madhu jhare tā'te,
taiche ariṣṭakuṇḍa suvikhyāta*

*śrī rādhikā priya-jñāne, snāna keli jalapāne,
surañjita korilo sopāne.
govinda preyasī rādhā, ati priya kuṇḍa tathā,
rādhākuṇḍe kore āliṅgane*

*ati sphīta kalevara, yaiche śyāma manohara,
sadā hoka sei kuṇḍe vāsa.
snāna, pāna, ārādhana, saṅge vrajavāsī janā,
sadā bhaji ei mora āśa*

"I always aspire to worship the very famous Ariṣṭakuṇḍa, the lake that was created from Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet after the Ariṣṭa-demon was killed just as honey flows from blooming flowers. Śrī Rādhikā, Who loves this place because She bathes here and drinks the water, has decorated it with a staircase. This *kuṇḍa*, which is very dear to Govinda's beloved Rādhā, embraces Rādhākuṇḍa and has a very large body, just like enchanting Śyāma. May I always reside near this *kuṇḍa* and bathe there, drink its water and worship it along with the people of Vraja!"

VERSE 59:

**kadambānām vrātair madhupa-kula-jhaṅkāra-lalitaiḥ
parīte yatraiva priya-salila-līlāhati-miṣaiḥ
muhur gopendrasyātmajam abhisaranty ambuja-dṛśo
vinodena prītyā tad idam avatāt pāvana-saraḥ**

kadambānām - of the Kadamba-trees; *vrātaiḥ* - by hosts of; *madhupa* - bumblebees; *kula* - swarms; *jhaṅkāra* - buzzing; *lalitaiḥ* - by lovely ones; *parīte* - surrounded by; *yatra* - where; *eva* - only; *priya* - beloved; *salila* - water; *līlā* - pastimes; *āhṛti* - coming, or fetching; *miṣaiḥ* - by pretexts; *muhur* - repeatedly; *gopendrasya* - of the king of cowherds; *ātmajam* - the son; *abhisaranti* - they go on a love-journey; *ambuja-dṛśa* - lotus-eyed; *vinodena* - with pleasure; *prītyā* - with love; *tad* - that; *idam* - this; *avatāt* - may protect; *pāvana saraḥ* - Pāvana Sarovara.

May Pāvana-Sarovara, which is surrounded by Kadamba-trees and swarms of buzzing bees and where the lotus-eyed gopīs repeatedly and lovingly come to on the pretext of fetching water to blissfully meet the prince of cowherds there, protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Pāvana-Sarovara.

Pāvana-Sarovara is situated in the peerless abode of extraordinary natural beauty, Śrī Nandīśvara Giri.

pāvanākhyam saraḥ krīḍā kuñja puñja sphurat taṭam
(Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lake is known as Pāvana. There are many lovely harbours on its banks."

To give an indication of the beauty of Pāvana Sarovara, Śrī Raghunātha says: *kadambānām vr̥tair madhupa kula jhaṅkāra lalitaiḥ parīte*

"Pāvana Sarovara is surrounded by Kadamba-trees and swarms of buzzing bees."

This is simply a slight indication of the actual beauty of the place. Factually, Śrī Govinda's playgrounds are endowed with a wonderful transcendental beauty that is able to delight even Śrī Govinda, Who is Himself the embodiment of transcendental bliss. Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written:

*divyāneka vicitra puṣpa phalavad valli taruṇām tatir
divyāneka mayūra kokila śukādyānandam ādyāt kalāḥ
divyāneka saraḥ sarid giri varaḥ pratyagra kuñjāvalir
divyā kāñcana ratna bhūmir api mām vṛndāvane mohayat*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 2.2)

"Vṛndāvana's trees and vines with their many divine and wonderful fruits and flowers; the many divine peacocks, cuckoos, parrots and other birds that sing in a way that maddens one with transcendental bliss; the many divine lakes, rivers and mountains, the beautiful new arbours and the divine golden and jeweled grounds, they all simply enchant my mind!"

These lakes are filled with clear water, which is covered with white, black, red and golden lotus flowers as well as Kahlāra-flowers. There are many singing waterbirds, like Cakravākas, ducks, cranes, Kuravas and swans and there are swarms of sweetly humming bumblebees, who are attracted to the fragrance of the aforementioned flowers.

Pāvana-Sarovara is the most important one of these lakes. These banks of this large lake are covered with large Kadamba-trees that are filled with swarms of humming bees.

In this lake Śrī Kṛṣṇa eternally bathes and plays water sports. When they see His world enchanting form, all the mobile and immobile beings are enchanted. The lotus eyed Vrajasundarīs repeatedly go to Pāvana-Sarovara on the pretext of fetching water, knowing that they will meet their hearts' thief Śrī Hari there.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "On the pretext of fetching water the lotus-eyed Vrajasundarīs come again and again to Pāvana Sarovara to meet Kṛṣṇa".

This love-journey is the inevitable result of passionate love. Wherever there is strong passion, a love-journey is inevitable. A love-journey to Śyāma shows a great power of the heart. The heart anxiously comes running to see the desired beloved. This is called *abhisāra*.

The Mahājanas sing: *gharamāho rahata rahai nā pāro. ki korobo i sab vighini vithāra*

"I am staying at home, but I cannot stay there anymore. What can I do? So many obstacles are extending themselves!" Nothing- no elders, no family and no moral code - can stop the powerful course of this *abhisāra*.

The passionate love of the *gopīs*, which makes them want to see Kṛṣṇa, forcibly drags their hearts towards Pāvana-Sarovara again and again, where they run on the pretext of fetching water. Sometimes, when there are no elders around, they can enjoy sweet water sports there with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīpāda says: "May that Pāvana-Sarovara protect me", meaning: "May it bless me by showing me the sweet pastimes of Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs!"

madhupa kula jhaṅkāre, mukharita nirantare,
ye kadamba taruvara śreṇī
pāvana sarasī tīre, ghiriyāche cāri dhāre,
śuka pika bhramarera dhvani
jala-bharā chala kori, vraje yoto sukumārī,
yāya tārā sarovara tīre
gopendranandana kṛṣṇa, daraśane yārā tṛṣṇa,
jala pheli yāya bāre bāre
gurujanera agocare, kabhu jalakeli kore,
kṛṣṇa saṅge preme nimagana
duhuka sambhoga keli, sarovare sakhī mili,
kobe mora hobe daraśana?

"The bank of Pāvana-Sarovara is filled with rows of the most excellent Kadamba-trees, where swarms of bumblebees are constantly humming and parrots and cuckoos are singing. All the tender girls of Vraja go to the bank of that lake on the pretext of fetching water, being very eager to meet Kṛṣṇa, the prince of cowherds. They drop their water there time and again, and, when the elders don't see it, they sometimes play in the water with Kṛṣṇa, immersed in ecstatic love. When will I, in the company of the *sakhīs*, see Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment with the *gopīs* in that lake?"

VERSE 60:

parjaṇyena pitāmahena nitarām ārādhya nārāyaṇam
tyaktvāhāram abhūta putraka iha svīyātmaje goṣṭhape
yatrāvāpi surārihā giridharaḥ pautro guṇaikākaraḥ
kṣuṇṇāhāratayā prasiddham avanau tan me taḍagam gatiḥ

parjanyaena - by Parjanya; *pitāmahena* - by the paternal grandfather; *nitarām* - always; *ārādhya* - worshipable; *nārāyaṇam* - Nārāyaṇa; *tyaktvā* - having given up; *āhāra* - eating; *abhūd* - became; *aputraka* - without son; *iha* - here; *svīya* - own; *ātmaje* - in the son; *goṣṭhape* - in the king of Vraja; *yatra* - where; *avāpi* - attained; *surārihā* - killer of demons; *giridharaḥ* - holder of the mountain; *pautraḥ* - grandson; *guṇa* - quality; *eka* - only; *ākaraḥ* - reservoir; *kṣuṇṇāhāratayā* - by fasting; *prasiddham* - famous as; *avanau* - on the earth; *tat* - that; *me* - me; *taḍāgaṁ* - lake; *gatiḥ* - shelter.

Seeing that his son, the Lord of Vraja, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, had no son of his own, grandfather Parjanya Gopa engaged in worship of Śrī Nārāyaṇa by ardently fasting, so that he could get a grandson (Śrī Kṛṣṇa), who would be the abode of all great qualities and who could destroy the demons and lift the Govardhana Hill. This world famous pool named Kṣuṇṇāhāra Taḍāga is my shelter.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Kṣuṇṇāhāra Taḍāga is praised. Seeing that Śrī Nanda had no son Śrī Parjanya Gopa, the grandfather of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the father of Śrī Nanda, performed penances in the form of fasting to please Lord Nārāyaṇa. He prayed to Śrī Nārāyaṇa's lotus feet: "May Śrī Nanda obtain a son, who is the abode of all attributes and who can destroy the demons and thus delight the world!"

Śrī Nanda's son cannot be obtained through penance. Śrī Nanda-Yaśodā are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternally perfect parents and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also eternally Śrī Nanda's son.

In the *prakāṣa-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa advented as Nanda-Yaśodā's son, but that was merely caused by their eternally perfect parental love for Him. In the worldly custom, though, everyone thinks that Śrī Nanda-Nandana is the result of Nanda's father's,

Parjanya Gopa, harsh austerities of fasting on the bank of the Kṣuṇṇāhāra Taḍāga.

This is the sweetness of the worldly- or human-like pastimes. All the Vrajavāsīs know that and Śrī Nanda Mahārāja also thinks that this *bhuvana-sundara* (the world's most beautiful) child Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the reservoir of all great attributes and Who is able to kill the demons and lift mountains, is the benefit of father Parjanya's worship of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

What's more, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is playing at Kṣuṇṇāhāra-Sarovara and he hears from the people that His grandfather had performed penances there by fasting for a long time to get Him as a grandson, and that it was therefore called Kṣuṇṇāhāra-Sarovara, His heart is humbled by great devotion and respect for His grandfather and He considers Himself greatly honoured.

Blessed is the love of Vraja and the Lord's complete subjugation to this love! That Original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as a result of worshipping Whom all the people of the world are blessed by attaining the fulfillment of all their desires, that Lord, Who embodies all the Vedic scriptures, sees Himself as the result of the penances of His grandfather Parjanya and is proud of it.

Only in Vraja the Lord can be subdued by love in this way, nowhere else. Not only is He subdued by their love, the relish of this pure love, which is free from even a whiff of awe and reverence, is the treasure He always longs for.

*aiśvarya jñānete sab jagata miśrita;
aiśvarya śīthīla preme nāhi mora prīta
āmāre īśvara māne - āpanāke hīna;
preme vaśa āmi tāra nā hoi adhīna
āmāke to ye ye bhakta bhaje yei bhāve;*

*tāre se se bhāve bhaji e mora svabhāve
mora putra mora sakhā mora prāṇa-pati;
ei bhāve kore yei more śuddha bhakti
āpanāke boḍo māne - āmāre sama hīna;
sarva bhāve āmi hoi - tāhāra adhīna*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Ādi Ch. 4)

"The whole world is mixed with knowledge of My majesty, but love which is slackened by knowledge of My majesty does not please Me. Those who see Me as the Lord and themselves as inferior can not subdue Me with their love. In whatever mood My devotee worships Me, in that same mood I will worship Him — this is My nature. I am subdued in all respects by a person who is purely devoted to Me, thinking: 'He is my son, He is my friend', or 'He is the Lord of My life', who considers himself superior to Me and Me equal or inferior to him."

Forgetting all of His prowess the Lord is subdued by the love of the people of Vraja in all moods, according to the amount of their love for Him. The love of the people of Vraja covers all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own awareness of His prowess and He allows Himself to be moulded according to their love.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written:

*yathā saṁsāra-bandhe nipātya duḥkam evānubhāvayituṁ
māyāvṛttir avidyā jīvanām jñānam āvṛṇoti yathā ca mahā
madhura śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā sukham anubhāvayituṁ guṇātītānām śrī
kṛṣṇa parivārāṇām vrajeśvaryādīnām jñānam cicchakti-vṛttir
yogamāyāvṛṇoti tathaiva śrī kṛṣṇam ānanda svarūpam
apyānandātīśayam anubhāvayituṁ cicchaktir āvṛttih premaiva
tasya jñānam āvṛṇoti. premnas tu tat svarūpa-śaktitvāt tena
tasya vyāpter na dosaḥ*

"It is the essence of Kṛṣṇa's *cit-*, or knowledge-potency, named *prema*, or love of God, which covers Him over, making Him forget His actual identity, although He is ecstasy personified, all for the sake of increasing His own ecstasy. Just as *avidyā*, or the ignorance-potency of *māyā*, keeps all the living beings bound up in the material world, making them experience only suffering, and the transcendental energy of *yogamāyā* covers over the God-knowledge of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental associates in Vraja, like mother Yaśodā, making them experience His all-sweet humanlike pastimes.

There can be no fault in *prema* covering over Kṛṣṇa's knowledge of His *svarūpa* (true identity), rather it is most relishable."

Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa says: "May that world famous Kṣuṇṇāhāra-Taḍāga be my shelter", or: "May it be the greatest support for my practice of *prema*!"

parjanya śrī nanda pītā, adbhuta tāhāra kathā,
kṣuṇṇāhāra sarovara tire
vrata kori anaśane, pūjā kori nārāyaṇe
pautra rūpe pāilā kṣṇere
śrī kṣṇera pītāmahe, pade yeno mati rahe,
kṛpā hoile sarva labhya hoy.
ei more nivedana, janme janme hoy yeno,
kṣuṇṇāhāra taḍāga samāśraya

"The story of Śrī Nanda's father Parjanya is amazing! On the bank of the Kṣuṇṇāhāra-pool, he began to fast and worship Lord Nārāyaṇa. Thus he obtained Kṛṣṇa as a grandson! May my mind dwell in the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grandfather, for by his grace, everything desirable is attained. May I have the shelter of Kṣuṇṇāhāra-Taḍāga, birth after birth! This is my prayer!"

VERSE 61:

**sārdham mānasa-jāhnavīm upanadī-vargaiḥ saraṅgotkaraiḥ
sāvitrī-ādi-surī-kulaiś ca nitarām ākāśa-vāṇyā vidhoḥ
vṛndāraṇya-vareṇya-rājya-viṣaye śrī-paurṇamāsī mudā
rādhām yatra siṣeca siñcatu sukham sonmatta-rādhā-sthalī**

sārdham - along with; *mānasa jāhnavī mukha* - headed by Mānasa Gaṅgā; *nadī* - river; *vargaiḥ* - by hosts of; *sa* - with; *raṅga* - joy; *utkaraiḥ* - with hosts of; *sāvitrī* - Sāvitrī; *ādi* - and others; *surī-kulaiḥ* - by demigoddess; *ca* - and; *nitaram* - always; *ākāśa* - sky; *vāṇyā* - by a voice; *vidhoḥ* - of the creator; *vṛndāraṇya* - Vṛndāvana; *vareṇya* - the greatest; *rājya* - kingdom; *viṣaye* - about; *śrī paurṇamāsī* - Śrī Paurṇamāsī; *mudā* - gladly; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *yatra* - where; *siṣeca* - sprinkled; *siñcatu* - may shower; *sukham* - happiness; *sa* - with; *unmatta* - intoxicated³⁴; *rādhā sthalī* - Rādhā's place.

May Unmatta-Rādhāsthalī, the place where Śrī Rādhikā was jubilantly showered as the Queen of Vṛndāvana by Śrī Paurṇamāsī, who had heard Lord Brahmā's order in the sky, with the waters of sacred rivers like Mānasa Gaṅgā and with the assistance of goddesses like Sāvitrī, shower me with happiness.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha describes Unmatta-Rādhāsthalī, where Śrī Rādhārāṇī was showered as the Queen of Vṛndāvana.

³⁴ Sanskrit commentator Baṅga Bihārī Vidyālaṅkāra writes: *unmattā mamāyaṁ deśo'tra ye vartante te mama prajā iti sāhaṅkāra rādhā yatra sā* "Unmatta means pride. The place where Rādhā is proud, thinking: "This is My country and they are My subjects!"

The Gosvāmīs have been seen to greatly be absorbed in describing this pastime of Śrī Rādhārāṇī being showered as the Queen of Vṛndāvana. In his ‘Dāna Keli Kaumudī’ and in his Stavamālā’s ‘Rādhāṣṭakam’ and ‘Premendu Sudhā-satra’, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned Śrīmatī as the Queen of Vṛndāvana, and Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa has described Rādhā’s *abhiṣeka* in this verse as well as in his ‘Muktā Caritra’ and ‘Vilāpa Kusumāñjali’.

On the order of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written a matchless treatise named ‘Mādhava Mahotsava’, a great poem in which Śrī Rādhārāṇī’s *abhiṣeka* is elaborately and expertly described. Because they were supported by scriptural and Purānic statements as *vṛndāvanādhipatyam ca dattaṁ tasyai prasīdatā* ("Kṛṣṇa, being pleased with Rādhā, gave Her sovereignty over Vṛndāvana", Padma Purāṇa) and *rādhā vṛndāvane vane* ("In Vṛndāvana Rādhā is the Queen", Matsya Purāṇa) the Gosvāmīs are seen to be very much absorbed in describing Śrīmatī’s *abhiṣeka*-festival.

In the scripture ‘Mādhava Mahotsava’, it is described as follows:

"By Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s wish, Śrī Vṛndā-devī showered nectar in the form of an ethereal voice, which was aimed at Paurṇamāsī-devī: ‘O Queen of *yogīs* Paurṇamāsī! Swiftly shower this Candra-lakṣmī Śrī Rādhā, Who arose from an ocean of matchless qualities and Who is seated on a jewel-studded throne which is decorated with the great beauty of gold, in the universally praised land of Vṛndāvana!

This *abhiṣeka* of Śrī Rādhā will bring a matchless opulence of beauty to Śrī Vṛndāvana, Gokula and the whole world. Therefore, O Paurṇamāsī! Let Yaśodā and other cowherd women bring Śrī Rādhā to the king of meadows, Vṛndāvana, in

front of Her girlfriends, who are all reflections of Her divine form, and let them arrange for the *adhivāsa* (auspicious ceremony preceding the main ceremony, ed.). Tomorrow, on the Madhu-Pūrṇimā (the full moon of Caitra, or April), Śrī Rādhā will certainly undergo this auspicious shower! Today all the *adhivāsa*-preparations, like perfumes and so, must be completed for Śrī Rādhā, Who is the reservoir of all the most excellent attributes!"

This ethereal order was announced throughout Vraja. Everyone thought that Lord Brahmā had announced this order, which granted auspiciousness to Vraja and the whole world. After this the whole of Vraja-maṇḍala reacted with an upsurge of wonderful ecstasy.

In a great festival, Śrī Rādhā's wonderful royal *abhiṣeka* was accomplished. This coronation took place on the Madhu-Pūrṇimā under the guidance of Paurṇamāsī. Yamunā, Mānasa-Gaṅgā and other holy waters arrived in personified forms, and Sāvitrī, Indrāṇī, Rudrāṇī and other leading goddesses jubilantly came there as human ladies to attend the *abhiṣeka* of Śrī Rādhā, bringing different presents with them.

In front of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all the Vrajavāsīs and all the goddesses, Paurṇamāsī-*devī* accomplished Śrī Rādhā's *abhiṣeka* in a great public gathering.³⁵

The place where Śrī Rādhā's *abhiṣeka* took place is named 'Unmatta-Rādhāsthālī'. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written the book 'Mādhava Mahotsava' in nine *ullāsas* (jubilant chapters). In the ninth and final *ullāsa*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīcaraṇa describes how Śrī Rādhā mounts the throne in front of everybody, including Śrī

³⁵ Detailed descriptions can be found in Śrī Jīva's 'Mādhava Mahotsava' and in the Stavāmṛta-kaṇā-commentary of verse 87 of Vilāpa Kusumāñjali.

Kṛṣṇa, and accepts sovereignty over the kingdom, and he has called this chapter 'unmadarādhika'

This means, that the most bashful Śrī Rādhā accepted this royal shower in the ecstasy of loving intoxication. For this reason the place is called **unmatta-rādhāsthali**.

In Vraja-maṇḍala the place where Śrī Rādhā's *rājyābhiṣeka* took place is called 'Umrāo'.

"*amūra umrāo*", or *rājā-rājaḍā* (Bengali saying for princes and princelings or princely persons).

With this purpose the village is named Umrāo.³⁶

*paurṇamāsī yogīśvarī, vṛndāraṇye adhiśvarī,
śrī rādhāya koilā abhiṣeke
dhanya sei rādhā-sthalī, vandī āmi kutūholī,
avanata koriyā mastake*

"Blessed is this Rādhāsthali, where Paurṇamāsī, the Queen of the *yogīs*, showered Śrī Rādhā as the Queen of Vṛndāvana! I bow my head down and praise this place enthusiastically!"

*kṛṣṇa vidhu alakṣite, ājñā kore asākṣāte,
deva vāṇī boli yāre śuni
harṣa bhare paurṇamāsī, saṅge sab vrajavāsī,
śrī rādhāre sarva śreṣṭha māni*

"Moon-like Kṛṣṇa gave this order in an unseen way, and everyone who heard it took it to be a divine voice. Filled with joy, Paurṇamāsī, along with the people of Vraja, considered Śrī Rādhā to be the greatest of all."

³⁶ In Bhakti Ratnākara, Fifth Wave, verses 1220 to 1258, the royal *abhiṣeka* of Śrī Rādhā in Umrāo is described.

*premonmatta koribāre, unmatta rādhā-sthali vare,
devī-gaṇera nṛtyera vibhaṅga
mānasa gaṅgāra jale, nānā raṅge kutūhole,
samārpilā abhiṣeka raṅga*

"The demigoddesses danced with beautiful gestures to fill Unmatta-Rādhāsthali with ecstatic love and Mānasa-Gaṅgā blissfully offered her water for this *abhiṣeka*-pastime."

*sei rase mora mana, abhiṣikta anukṣaṇa,
hoiyā rahuka tāra vare.
ei prārthanā kori āmi, nahi mui anya kāmī,
kṛpā koro rādhāsthali vare*

"May I receive the blessing that my mind will be showered by this *rasa* at every moment. This is my prayer, and I do not desire any other boon. O Rādhāsthali, be merciful to me!"

VERSE 62:

**prītyā nandīśvara-giri-taṭe sphāra-pāṣāṇa-vṛndaiś
cātuṣkoṇye' nukṛti-gurubhir nirmitā yā vidagdhaiḥ
reme kṛṣṇaḥ sakhi-parivṛto yatra narmāṇi tanvan
nāsthānīm tām hari-pada-lasat-saurabhāktām prapadye**

prītyā - with love; *nandīśvara-giri* - the mount Nandīśvara; *taṭe* - on the base; *sphāra* - broad; *pāṣāṇa* - stone; *vṛndaiḥ* - with hosts; *cātuṣkoṇye* - square; *anukṛti* - imitating; *gurubhiḥ* - by superiors; *nirmitā* - made; *yā* - who; *vidagdhaiḥ* - by the clever; *reme* - enjoys; *kṛṣṇaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *sakhi* - by friends; *parivṛtaḥ* - surrounded; *yatra* - where; *narmāṇi* - jokingly; *tanvan* - expanding; *āsthānīm* - named

Āsthānī; *tām* - that place; *hari pada* - Hari's feet; *lasat* - beautified; *saurabha* - fragrance; *āktām* - anointed; *prapadye* - I take shelter.

I take shelter of the pavillion named Āsthānī, which is lovingly built on Nandīśvara Hill of large stones in a square fashion by expert architects, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays many funny games with His friends, and which is anointed by the fragrance of Śrī Hari's lotus feet.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playground named Āsthānī.
āsthānī maṇḍapaḥ pāṇḍu-gaṇḍa-sailāsanojjvalaḥ. āmoda vardhano nāma paramāmoda vāsitaḥ (Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Gaṇoddeśa Dīpikā)

"On the white slabs of stone adjoining Nandīśvara Hill is Āsthānī, the place where Kṛṣṇa sits with His friends. When He sits on this platform, His brightness is really revealed. Another name of this place, which is always scented by the greatest perfumes, is 'Āmoda Vardhana."

Śrī Nandīśvara Giri is the abode of many of Śrī Govinda's pastimes, and it is most dear to Vrajendra-Nandana.
sambhrājate priyatayā vrajarāja sūnor govardhanād api gurur vraja vanditād yaḥ (Vilāpa Kusumāñjali - 60)

"Nandīśvara Giri is most dear to Śrī Nanda-Nandana and it is even more worshipable for the people of Vraja than Govardhana!" Kṛṣṇa is always intoxicated by the taste of the blissful games He plays here with His friends.

Śrī Nanda Mahārāja engaged different expert artistic architects in making a square platform here out of large jewel-studded slabs of stone, where his Gopāla could play with His friends. How many sweet and humorous pastimes of laughter and joking Śrī Hari expands here with His friends!

Śrī Raghunātha is a maidservant who has taken shelter of Śrī Rādhārāṇī's lotus feet. Sometimes she goes to Nandīśvara as a girl-messenger who carries a message of *virahinī*³⁷ Śrīmatī, and sees Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing here on this platform. When Mādhava sees Śrīmatī's maidservant, He blooms up, as if His life is fulfilled! How wonderful is the majesty of Śrī Rādhā's love that *ānandamaya-vigraha* (Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of transcendental bliss) considers Himself blessed when He sees Her maidservant!

Kṛṣṇa is completely subdued by the love of Śrī Rādhā's, Who is His pleasure-potency. Śrī Hari, Who perspires even when He is repeatedly fanned by Śrī Rādhā's restless eyelids, Who is agitated even when He lives in the city of lustre and Who remains thirsty, even though He drinks the nectar of Her smile again and again, is the bestower of our delight!

In his *kiṅkari-rūpa*, Śrī Raghunātha experiences how wonderful this Āsthānī-platform smells of Śrī Hari's lotus feet. His heart and mind are intoxicated by this wonderful bodily fragrance. This bodily fragrance has the greatest influence on the Vrajasundarīs!

netra nābhi vadana, kara yuga caraṇa,
ei aṣṭa-padma kṛṣṇa aṅge
karpūra lipta kamala, tāra yaiche parimala,
sei gandha aṣṭa padma saṅge

"There are eight lotus flowers on Kṛṣṇa's body - His eyes, His navel, His face, His hands and His feet - and these eight lotus flowers smell of lotus anointed with camphor."

³⁷ Girl separated from her lover.

hema kilita candana, tāhā kori gharṣaṇa,
tāhe aguru kuṅkuma kastūrī
karpūra sane carcā aṅge, pūrva aṅgera gandha saṅge,
mili ḍākā yeno koilo curi
hare nārīra tanu mana, nāsā kore ghūrṇana,
khasāya nivī chuṭāya keśa bandha.
kori āge bāurī, nācāya jagata nārī,
heno ḍākāti kṛṣṇa aṅga gandha

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta Antya Ch. 19)

"When gold-bedecked sandalpulp with *aguru* (aloe), vermilion and musk is mixed with camphor and spread on Kṛṣṇa's body, it adds to Kṛṣṇa's original bodily fragrance and seems to steal it. It steals the bodies and minds of the women and makes their noses twirl, and it loosens their girdles and braids of hair. It makes the women of the world dance like madwomen. Thus Kṛṣṇa's bodily fragrance acts like a robber."

Rādhā's maidservants perceive how this fragrance maddens their mistress with feelings of ecstatic love.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of this Āsthānī-platform, which is scented by the fragrance of Śrī Hari's lotus feet!"

As a result of such surrender, Śrīpāda Raghunātha always wishes to experience the sweet pastimes that are taking place there.

giri-taṭe nandīsvare, vidagadha kārigare,
kṛṣṇa-kṛīḍā kautukera tare.
viṣṭṛta pāṣāṇa-vṛnde, catuṣkoṇa kore chande,
ye 'āsthānī' sunirmāṇa kore.
śrī govinda sakhā saṅge, madhumaya kṛīḍā raṅge
yathā nitya korena vihāra.

*hari pāda-padma gandhe, modita ye maṇḍape,
āśrayete lālasā āmāra*

"I want to take shelter of the Āsthānī-platform at the base of Nandīśvara Hill, which was constructed in a square fashion with large slabs of stone by expert architects, where Śrī Govinda always enjoys His honey-sweet games with His friends and which is delighted by the fragrance of Śrī Hari's lotus feet."

VERSE 63:

**vaidagdhyojjvala-valgu-vallava-vadhū-vargeṇa nṛtyann asau
hitvā taṁ murajid-rasena rahasi śrī-rādhikāṁ maṇḍayan
puṣpālaṅkṛti-sañcayena ramate yatra pramodotkarais
trailokyādbhuta-mādhurī parivr̥tā s̄ pātu rāsa-sthalī**

vaidagdhya - cleverness; *ujjvala* - brilliant, or erotic; *valgu* - lovely; *vallaba* - cowherds; *vadhū* - bride; *vargeṇa* - by the group; *nṛtyann* - dancing; *asau* - He; *hitvā* - having given up; *taṁ* - them; *murajid* - Kṛṣṇa; *rasena* - with taste; *rahasi* - in private; *śrī rādhikāṁ* - Śrī Rādhikā; *maṇḍayan* - decorates; *puṣpa* - flower; *alaṅkṛti* - decoration; *sañcayena* - by a collection; *ramate* - makes love; *yatra* - where; *pramoda* - joy; *utkaraiḥ* - with an abundance; *trailokya* - of the three worlds; *adbhuta* - wonderful; *mādhurī* - sweetness; *parivr̥tā* - filled; *s̄* - she; *pātu* - may protect; *rāsa-sthalī* - the place where the Rāsa-dance took place.

May the Rāsa-sthalī, the place where the Rāsa-dance took place, the place which is filled with all the wonderful sweetness of the three worlds, where Kṛṣṇa Murārī dances with the gopīs, who are clever in the arts of eros,

and then abandons them to take Śrī Rādhikā to a lonely place to decorate Her with flowers and enjoy with Her in great jubilation, protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises the most delicious place where the Rāsa-dance takes place.

The Rāsa-*līlā* is the crown jewel of all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the word 'rāsa' as follows:

rāso nāma bahu nartakī yukta nṛtya viśeṣaḥ

"The Rāsa is a kind of dance wherein many girls are dancing."

In the Alankāra-*śāstras*, we can find the following statement:
naṭair grhīta kaṅṭhīnām anyonyātra kara śriyām nartakīnām bhaved rāso maṇḍalībhūya nartanam

"When the male and the female dancers stand in a circle, the male dancers embrace the female dancers around the neck and the female dancers hold each other with their arms, then this dance is called a Rāsa."

Although this is the popular explanation of the word 'Rāsa', Śrīmat Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written:

rāsaḥ parama rasa-kadamba-maya iti yaugikārthaḥ

"The pastime that contains the greatest amount of *rasa* is called the Rāsa-*līlā*."

Rasa is the main ingredient of the Rāsa, because when the word *rasa* is inflected in the optimal way, it becomes Rāsa. Rasa means relish and when it is inflected to Rāsa, it means the pastime which contains the most relish.

The purport of this is that the **Rāsa līlā** is the pastime in which the *gopīs* can fully and blissfully relish the unrivalled sweetness and beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's perfect form, flavour, scent, sound and touch through their famous *mahābhāva*-love, and

Rasika Śekhara (the king of relishers) Śrī Kṛṣṇa can fully and blissfully relish the perfect forms, flavours, scents, sounds and touches of the Śrīla Vrajadevīs, who are anointed with the famous *mahābhāva*.

The hero of the Rāsa-*līlā* is Vrajendra-Nandana Rasikendra Mauli Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the heroines are the Queen of the Rāsa-dance Śrī Rādhā Herself, Who is endowed with *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* and the Vrajasundarīs, who are endowed with ordinary *mahābhāva*. The place is called the **Śrī-Śrī Rāsa-sthalī**, the most *rasika* place on the bank of the Yamunā which is endowed with extraordinary natural beauty. This verse praises this Rāsa-sthalī.

Rāseśvarī Śrī Rādhā is the main pillar of the Rāsa-dance.

tāhā vinā rāsa-līlā nāhi bhāya cite

(C.C.)

"Without Her Kṛṣṇa does not like the Rāsa-*līlā*."

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the Rāsa-sthalī by describing the great glories of Rāseśvarī, saying:

"This is the place where Kṛṣṇa Murārī dances with the *gopīs*, who are clever in the arts of eros, and then abandons them to take Śrī Rādhikā to a lonely place to decorate Her with flowers and jubilantly enjoy with Her in different ways."

In the description of the Mahā Rāsa³⁸, it can be seen that in the Rāsa-night, Śrī Kṛṣṇa first attracted the Vrajasundarīs with His enchanting flute-playing and then joked with them by speaking to them words of rejection (*upekṣā-vāṇī*).

³⁸ Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Canto Ten, Chapters 29-33.

Their humble prayers then ended His neglect and He met with them while laughing and joking. During their first pastimes of meeting, the Vrajasundarīs became very proud of their good fortune of getting the greatest attention from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Rādhā became very jealous and angry that Kṛṣṇa was enjoying equally with all the *gopīs*.

*tāsāṁ tat saubhagamadaṁ
vikṣya mānaṁ ca keśavaḥ
praśamāya prasādāya
tatraivāntaradhīyata*

(Bhāg. 10.29.48)

"Seeing the *gopīs*' pride of their good fortune and Rādhā's jealous anger, Keśava abandoned the Vrajasundarīs and went off with Śrī Rādhā alone. In this way He subdued the pride of the Vrajasundarīs and pacified Śrī Rādhā's jealous anger."

Actually the Rāsa-līlā had not commenced yet at that time, but it was about to begin and thus Śrīpāda speaks about Kṛṣṇa leaving the *gopīs* who were dancing. All the Gopa-sundarīs are endowed with *mahābhāva* and are expert in the arts of eros, so the fact that Kṛṣṇa took Rādhā away in front of them all and brought Her to a lonely place to enjoy all kinds of pastimes with Her there shows Her greatness to be far beyond the glories of all the other *gopīs*.

Śrī Raghunātha is Śrī Rādhā's beloved maidservant, so his favourite part of the various events that took place during the Rāsa-līlā is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa took away Śrī Rādhā alone from millions of other assembled *gopīs*, then decorated Her with floral ornaments and enjoyed different amorous pastimes with

Her in solitude. That is why he mentioned this pastime in his description of the Rāsa-sthalī.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Rādhā away and disappeared with Her during the Mahā-Rāsa, even Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends weren't aware of it. When they did not see Śrī Rādhārāṇī in their midst anymore, they understood that Śrī Kṛṣṇa must have taken Her off somewhere, and they became simultaneously happy (because of Śrī Rādhā's greatness) and sad (because they could not see the pastimes of the Divine Pair anymore). But when Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Śrī Rādhā along and disappeared with Her, Her maidservants, who are non-different from Her in the heart, were with Her and could personally witness the sweet and intimate pastimes of the Divine Pair and feel very happy and proud about the special glories of their Īśvarī.

This can be learned from the descriptions by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmpāda:

*rāsārambha vilasati parityajya goṣṭhāmbujākṣī-
vrndaṁ vrndāvana bhuvī rahah keśaveṇopanīya
tvāṁ svādhīna priyatama pada prāpaṇenārcitāṅgīm
dūre dṛṣṭvā hṛdi kim acirād arpayiṣyāmi darpam*

(Utkalikā Vallari - 42)

"When will my heart be filled with pride as I see from afar how Keśava leaves all the lotus-eyed girls of Vraja at the beginning of the Rāsa-dance in Vṛndāvana and takes You to a lonely place where, under Your command, He decorates You with flowers?"

In his description of the Rāsa-līlā, the Rāsa-vaktā (speaker) Śrīpāda Śuka Muni has clearly mentioned that Śrī Kṛṣṇa privately and blissfully enjoyed with Śrī Rādhā in different ways

in the Rāsa-night, arranged Her hair and adorned Her with decorations like flowers:

*atra prasūna-vacayaḥ
 priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ
 prapadākramane ete
 paśyatā sakale pade
 keśa prasādhananī hyatra
 kāmīnyāḥ kāmīnā kṛtam
 tāni cūdayatā kāntām
 upaviṣṭam iha dhruvam
 reme tayā svātma-rata
 ātmārāmo'pyakhaṇḍitaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.30.32-34)

"Śrī Rādhā's rival-*gopīs* told each other: 'Here Kṛṣṇa has picked flowers to decorate His beloved with. Look! Here He stood on His toes to pick flowers from a high branch. That's why we can see half-sized footprints in the earth here! Look, look! Here lusty Kṛṣṇa arranged the hair of His lusty girlfriend and sat down to make floral ornaments for Her head. Although He is Self-satisfied and Self-delighted, He made love with this girl in various ways here!'"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "May the Rāsa-sthalī, where Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava freely enjoyed such amorous pastimes and that fills the three worlds, Bhūrloka, Svargaloka and Pātāla-loka, or the fourteen worlds, with the very wonderful sweet flavours of the Rāsa-dance, protect me!"

*vidagdha ujjvalā gopī, yārā kṛṣṇa anurāgī,
 sarva śreṣṭha kṛṣṇa kāntā-gaṇa*

nirbhara - filled with; *bhoginī* - enjoyer; *iyam* - this; *govardhana* - Govardhana; *ujjala* - brilliant; *śilā* - rock; *kulam* - host; *unnayantī* - raising; *vīci-bharaiḥ* - by waves; *avatu* - may protect; *mānasa jāhnavī* - Mānasa Gaṅgā; *mām* - me.

May Mānasa-Gaṅgā, who enjoys the great sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's boating pastimes and whose waves are pushing up Govardhana Hill's brilliant boulders, protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Mānasa-Gaṅgā, one of Govardhana Hill's holy waters. *yatra vai mānasī gaṅgā mahā-pāpaughā-nāśinī* (Garga Saṁhitā) "On Govardhana Hill is Mānasī-Gaṅgā, which destroys all great sins."

This Mānasa-Gaṅgā is Śrī Śrī Girirāja's eye. *netre vai mānasī gaṅgā* (ibid.)

Mānasa-Gaṅgā is the abode where Kṛṣṇa plays water sports with His boyfriends and where Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava play different water sports with Their girlfriends.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Śrī Rādhā's maidservant, hence he mentions the most *rasika* boating-pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava when he praises Mānasa-Gaṅgā.

In this verse Mānasa-Gaṅgā is praised in connection with the revelation of a sweet pastime. Śrī Raghunātha was absorbed in *bhajana* on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa when he suddenly got a divine vision in which he saw Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Lalitā, Viśākhā and other *sakhīs* taking jugs with *ghī* and yoghurt to Govinda Kuṇḍa, a lake at the base of Govardhana Hill.

Under the guidance of Paurṇamāsī, they set out from Rādhākuṇḍa to Govardhana on the pretext of donating *ghī* to a

sacrifice there, but with the actual desire to meet Śyāma somewhere.

In his *kiṅkarī-rūpa*, Śrī Raghunātha follows his/her Īśvarī. The woods are illuminated by the golden bodily splendour of Śrīmatī and Her girlfriends. With restless eyes, Īśvarī looks all around —

"Where is the Lord of My life?!" Waves of *mahābhāva*-desires to see Her loving Śrī Kṛṣṇa rise on the ocean of Her heart.

When Śyāma gets a message that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends are approaching Govardhana Hill with *ghī* and yoghurt, He dresses Himself like an amazing boatman and sits in a boat on the Mānasa-Jāhnavī. Mānasa-Gaṅgā's bosom is illuminated by the bluish lustre of this boatman, Who enchants the three worlds.

Seeing this young boatman, Śrīmatī and Her girlfriends put down their pots of yoghurt and stand on the shore.

Then Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī tells Boḍāi (Her governess Paurṇamāsī):

boḍāi! ai ki ghāṭera neye

<i>kothā hoite āsi,</i>	<i>dilo daraśana,</i>	<i>vinoda taraṇi beye</i>
<i>rajata kāñcane,</i>	<i>nā-khāni jaḍita,</i>	<i>bājiche kiṅkiṇī jāla</i>
<i>aparūpa tā'te,</i>	<i>śobhā rāṅgā hāte,</i>	<i>maṇi-bāndhā keroyāla</i>
<i>hāsīte hāsīte,</i>	<i>gīta ālāpiche,</i>	<i>ḍhulāiche rāṅgā āṅkhi</i>
<i>cāpāiyā nāya,</i>	<i>ke jāne ki cāya,</i>	<i>cañcala nayana dekhi</i>
<i>ratanera phāli,</i>	<i>sire jhalamali,</i>	<i>kadamba kusuma kāne</i>
<i>jaṭhara añcale,</i>	<i>vāṁśīṭi guṇjeche,</i>	<i>śobhe nānā ābharāṇe</i>
<i>āmarā kohībo,</i>	<i>kaṁsera yogāni,</i>	<i>buke nā heliḥo kehu</i>
<i>jagannātha kohe,</i>	<i>śāsī ṣola kalā,</i>	<i>pele ki chāḍibe rāhu?</i>

(Pada Kalpataru)

"O holy mother! Who is this there near the Ghāṭa? Where has He come from, showing Himself to us, steering His blissful boat, which is studded with gold and silver? His waistbells jingle and on His reddish hands are beautiful bangles! He smiles and laughs and sings a song while His reddish eyes are twirling. He wants Me to board the boat. Who knows what He wants when you look in His naughty, restless eyes? A jeweled strip shimmers on His head and He wears Kadamba-flowers on His ears. He keeps His flute tucked in the scarf around His waist and He is beautified by different other ornaments. We will say: No one will neglect an assistant of Kaṁsa in the heart!"

Jagannātha dāsa says: "Will Rāhu (the eclipse) give up the full moon when he caught it?"

The *sakhīs* call out: "Boatman! Boatman!" Hearing their call, the enchanting boatman slowly brings His boat to the shore. With slow gait, Śrīmatī and Her friends board the boat, casting ecstatic glances here and there.

Suddenly the boatman Kṛṣṇa stops Śrīmatī from boarding the boat and says:

*kohiche cikaṇa kālā vāsa parihari,
boisoho kiśorī, pāra kori ei belā
nila vasana, kaṭite paraho,
dekhiye kāmpiche gā navīna nīrada,
bharame pavana, tvarāya ḍubābe lā
kānura vacana, śuniye tokhona,
kaṭe kohice dhanitomāra aṅgera,
cikaṇa varaṇa, kemone lukābe tumi
śuniyā e kothā, kohoye lalitā,
keho nā koriho gola kāliyā varaṇa,
chāpābo ekhona, dhāli diyā ghana ghola
śuniyā nāgara, hoiyā phāmphara,
madhura madhura hāse kohe guru dāsa,*

hṛdaye ullāsa, sukhera sāyare bhāse

Cikaṇa-Kālā (glossy complexioned Kṛṣṇa) said: "Give up Your dress (undress Yourself) and sit down, Kiśori (adolescent girl). Now I will help You to cross the river. If You wear this blue *sārī* on Your waist, though, the wind will tremble all over his body and quickly sink our ship, thinking it to be a fresh monsoon cloud.

Hearing Kānu's words, Dhani (fortunate Rādhikā) falsely said: "Your body has this glossy, black-bluish complexion. How will You hide that one?"

Hearing this, Lalitā said: "Let nobody cause any confusion! I will cover His black complexion now by pouring thick yoghurt over Him!" Hearing this, Nāgara (amorous hero Kṛṣṇa) became puzzled and began to smile sweetly."

Guru dāsa says: "My heart floats in an ocean of bliss!"

Joking like that, Śrīmatī and Her girlfriends eagerly boarded the boat, while waves of deep love played in Her heart. The young boatman brought the boat to the middle of the Jāhnavī, whose bosom became illuminated by the sweet and wonderful forms of the Divine Pair.

Jāhnavī could not control Her urges of ecstasy now that she got her most beloved Pair on her bosom, and became agitated by high waves, which smashed up against the large and brilliant boulders of Govardhana Hill. The billowing waves of ecstatic Jāhnavī gushed inside the boat, making Śrīmatī afraid.

The *sakhīs* said: "Ohe incompetent steersman! Are You going to kill us and ruin our wealth by making us drown in the middle of the Gaṅgā today, or what?"

The steersman didn't notice anything; He was simply absorbed in relishing the sweet feelings of restless-eyed Śrīmatī. As the boat sank, Śrīmatī became terrified and with

eyes startled with fear, She tightly clasped Śyāma around the neck.

In this way, the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* relished the wonderful sweetness of the union of the Divine Pair and Jāhnavī's desires were fulfilled. Slowly her waves became more peaceful and the boat sided to the shore. After feeding Śyāmasundara the yoghurt and the butter, everyone went back to their own places.

Holding the memory of this vision in his heart, Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

"May Mānasa-Gaṅgā, who enjoys the great sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's boating pastimes and whose waves are pushing up Govardhana Hill's brilliant boulders, protect me." Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīcaraṇa also praised Śrī Govardhana as such:

*kaṁsārātes tari vilasitairātarānaṅga raṅgair
ābhūrīṇām praṇayam abhitaḥ pātram unmīlayantyāḥ
dhauta grāvāvalir amalainair mānasāmartya sindhor
vīci-vrātaiḥ prathayatu sadā śarma govardhano naḥ*

(Stavamālā)

"The waves of the Mānasa-Gaṅgā lake, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes a boatman and accepts fees for His boat services from the *gopīs* and which increases the love of the *gopīs*, which subdues Śrī Kṛṣṇa, wash the rocks of Govardhana Hill. May that Govardhana Hill bestow all auspiciousness on us."

*rādhā-kṛṣṇera nau vihāra, ujjvala rasera sāra,
nītya bhoga koritechen yini
govardhana silā-kule, abhinava jhalamale,
taraṅgete ūrdhvetē cālani
sei to mānasa gaṅgā, bhāgyavatī antaraṅgā,
rakṣā korun pratikūla hoite*

*yugalera līlā-rasa, hoibe ki saravasa,
e lālasā jāge mora cite*

"May that fortunate Mānasa-Gaṅgā, who always enjoys the boating pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, which is the essence of the erotic mellow; whose waves push up the newly shimmering boulders of Govardhana Hill, and who is very close to the Divine Pair, protect me from all inauspiciousness. May the flavours of the pastimes of the Divine Pair become everything to me. This is the desire that awakens in my heart."

VERSE 65:

**yeṣāṁ kvāpi ca mādhave viharate snigdhair vayasyotkarais
tat-dhātu-drava-puñja-citritatarais tais taiḥ svayaṁ citritaḥ
kheḷābhīḥ kila-pālanair api gavāṁ kutrāpi narmotsavaiḥ
śrī-rādhā-sahito guhāsu ramate tān śaila-varyān bhaje**

yeṣāṁ - whose; *kvāpi* - anywhere; *ca* - and; *mādhavaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *viharate* - enjoys pastimes; *snigdhaiḥ* - with affectionate; *vayasya* - friends; *utkaraiḥ* - with multitudes; *tat* - that; *dhātu-drava* - minerals; *puñja* - abundance; *citritataraiḥ* - colourfully decorated; *taiḥ* - by them; *svayaṁ* - Himself; *citritaḥ* - colourfully decorated; *kheḷābhīḥ* - with games; *kila* - certainly; *pālanaiḥ* - by herding; *api* - even; *gavāṁ* - the cows; *kutrāpi* - somewhere; *narmotsavaiḥ* - with festivals of humour; *śrī rādhā sahitaḥ* - with Śrī Rādhā; *guhāsu* - in the caves; *ramate* - enjoys; *tān* - him; *śaila* - mountain; *varyān* - the best; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship the best of mountains in Vraja, like Govardhana, with whose colourful mineral pigments

Mādhava and His affectionate friends are decorated as they herd the cows, where they play hide-and seek and in whose caves Kṛṣṇa makes love with Śrī Rādhā.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Vraja's best mountains, like Govardhana.

In the previous verse, he has praised Mānasa-Gaṅgā, and as he does so he perceives the service Haridāsa-varya (the best of Hari's servants) Śrī Girirāja renders to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His friends and His beloved. In this mood, he praises Śrī Girirāja and other mountains of Vraja.

Śrī Girirāja is the abode where Śrī Kṛṣṇa freely plays with His friends.

*paripūrṇatamaḥ sākṣāt śrī kṛṣṇo bhagavān svayam;
asaṅkhyā brahmāṅḍa-patir golakeśaḥ parātparaḥ
asmin sthītaḥ sadā kṛḍām arbhakaiḥ saha maithīla;
karoti tasya mātmyam vaktum nālaṁ caturmukhaḥ*

(Garga Saṁhitā)

Śrī Nārada said: "O Lord of Mithilā! Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original and Complete Personality of Godhead, the maintainer of innumerable universes and the Lord of Goloka, is situated on this Govardhana Hill and always plays different games with the cowherd boys there. Hence, even the four-faced Lord Brahmā is unable to describe His glories!"

Before Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes to the base of the mount to herd His cows with His friends, they first decorate their bodies with Girirāja's colourful mineral pigments.

Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*śaśvad viśvālaṅkaraṇālaṅkṛtamedhyaiḥ premṇā dhautair
dhātubhir uddīpita-sāno* (Stavamālā)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is Himself the ornamentation of this world, is easily decorated by the mineral pigments that beautify the slopes of Govardhana Hill and that are sprinkled by love for Him."

When the time for cowherding comes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His friends love these colourful pigments, clothes and ornaments made of leaves and flowers more than ornaments of jewels and pearls.

*phala prabāla stavaka sumanaḥ piccha dhātubhiḥ. kāca
muktā maṇi svarṇa-bhūṣitā apyabhūṣayan* (Bhāg. 10.12.4)

"Although the cowherd boys were already decorated by their mothers with ornaments of glass, jewels, pearls and gold, they still decorated their bodies with different kinds of fruits, leaves, bunches of flowers, peacock feathers and colourful mineral pigments when they came into the forest."

In this way, the cowherd boys also decorated Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they liked with sylvan clothing and colourful mineral pigments, let the cows graze in the large meadows on the slopes of Girirāja and freely played games like 'hide-and-see' with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys playing different free games with His friends in this way, His mind remains fixed on Śrī Rādhā. In Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta it is seen:

*rātri-dina kuṅja krīḍā kore rādhā saṅge; kaiśora boyos
saphala koilo krīḍā-raṅge*

"Day and night He sports in the groves with Rādhā; in this way He made His adolescence a success."

One may ask here: "If He plays with Śrī Rādhā day and night, then when will He find the time to play in the meadows with His friends and time to perform loving pastimes with His parents?"

Actually, Śrī Kṛṣṇa always thinks of Śrī Rādhā as He performs these other pastimes. Śrī Rādhā, Who is endowed with the *mahābhāva* known as *mādana*, pervades Śrī Kṛṣṇa's entire awareness. From the first time He ever saw loving Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in the preliminary stage of *pūrva-rāga*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has always been thinking of Her.

*nayāna putalī rādhā mora; mana mājhe rādhikā ujora
kṣīti-tale dekhi rādhāmaya; gaganeho rādhikā udoy
rādhāmaya bhelo tribhuvana; tabe āmi koribo kemon
kothā sei rādhikā sundarī; nā dekhi' dhairaja hoite nāri
e yadunandana mane jāge; ki nā kore nava anurāge*

(Pada Kalpataru)

"Rādhā is the apple of My eyes and Rādhikā is shining within My mind. The surface of the earth is filled with Rādhā and in the sky Rādhikā also rises. The three worlds have become filled with Rādhā, so what shall I do? Where is that Rādhikā-Sundarī? I cannot remain calm if I don't see Her. Thus Yadunandana ponders: 'What will He not do out of fresh passion?'"

Even though He may be intoxicated by playing with His friends around Govardhana Hill, Śyāma is afflicted by the heartache of separation from Śrī Rādhā.

Meanwhile, one of Śrīmatī's girlfriends or maidservants keeps eager *abhisārikā*³⁹ Śrī Rādhikā in some cave of Govardhana Hill and comes to search for Śyāma. Seeing Śyāma engaged in playing with His friends, they give Him a hint in an unnoticed way, telling him that Śrī Rādhā has come to meet Him.

³⁹ A girl on a love-journey.

Śyāmasundara then leaves His friends on the pretext of admiring the natural beauty of the mount and goes along with the *sakhīs* to meet Śrī Rādhā and perform different amorous pastimes with Her in a hidden, solitary cave of Girirāja.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I worship these kings of mountains, like Govardhana, that are the sole abodes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's pastimes."

In other words, "I worship Śrī Śrī Girirāja and other mountains, so that I can witness such intimate pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava there and be blessed by rendering services to this Playful Pair, such as providing Them scented water and betel leaves and fanning Them."

*yāra dhātu drava puñje, vicitrīta hoiyā aṅge,
snigdha yoto kṛṣṇa sakhā-gaṇe
yāra gairīka drava gaṇe, nija sama sakhā-gaṇe
sājāyeche madana mohana
vicitrīta kalevare, sakhā saṅge khelā kore,
gocāraṇa korite korite.
bhaji sei śaila śreṣṭha, yāra guhāya kṛṣṇa preṣṭha
vihāriche śrī rādhā sahite*

" I worship the best of Vraja's mountains, in whose caves Kṛṣṇa enjoys with His beloved Rādhā and whose colourful, mineral pigments are used by Kṛṣṇa's affectionate friends to decorate their own bodies and with which these friends, who are considered on an equal level, also decorate Madana Mohana before they all go along herding the cows with picturesquely decorated bodies."

VERSE 66:

**sphīte yatra sarit-sarovara-kule gāḥ pālayan nirvṛte
grīṣme vāri-vihāra-keli-nivahair gopendra-vidyātmajaḥ
prītyā siñcati mugdha-mitra-nikarān harṣeṇa mugdhaḥ svayaṁ
kāñkṣan svīya-jayaṁ jayārthina imān nityaṁ tad etad bhaje**

sphīte - large; *yatra* - where; *sarit* - rivulet; *sarovare kule* - in the lakes; *gāḥ* - cows; *pālayan* - herding; *nirvṛtaḥ* - bliss; *grīṣme* - in the summer; *vāri* - water; *vihāra* - pastimes; *keli nivahaiḥ* - through pastimes; *gopendra* - the king of cowherds; *divya* - divine; *ātmajaḥ* - son; *prītyā* - with love; *siñcati* - splashes; *mugdha* - charming; *mītra-nikarān* - friends; *harṣeṇa* - with joy; *mugdha* - bewildered; *svayaṁ* - personally; *kāñkṣan* - desiring; *svīya* - own; *jayaṁ* - victory; *jayārthina* - by those desiring victory; *imān* - this; *nityaṁ* - eternally; *tad* - that; *etat* - this; *bhaje* - I worship.

I always worship all the rivers and lakes of Vraja, in whose waters Kṛṣṇa plays with His charming friends in the summertime by lovingly splashing them with water. There He is eager to defeat these friends who all also desire victory for themselves and with whom He was blissfully herding the cows.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Now Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the lakes and rivers of Vraja, like Yamunā and Mānasa Gaṅgā, on whose banks Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs His sweet cowherding-pastimes with His friends.

*nija sama sakhā saṅge, gogaṇa cāraṇa raṅge,
vṇdāvane svacchanda vihāra.*

*yāra veṇu-dhvani śuni, sthāvāra jaṅgama prāṇī,
pulaka kampa āsru bohe dhāra*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"Kṛṣṇa freely plays in Vṛndāvana with His equal friends with whom He enjoys herding the cows. When they hear His flute song, the mobile and immobile beings shed streams of tears, shiver and get goose pimples of ecstasy."

Although there is eternal spring in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's playground Vṛndāvana, since there is no influence of material time, still, to nourish the flavours of these transcendental pastimes, seasons like summer and the monsoon appear.

In the summer-season, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs His pastime of herding the cows, making the cows drink the water of the rivers and lakes, and freely playing in these waters with His friends.

*itas tataḥ sañcaratir gavāliḥ sva veṇu-nādair atha saṅkalayya
jagāma tāḥ pāyayitum vayasyaīḥ sañcālayan mānasa jāhnavim sa
pāyayitvā jalam gāstāḥ śitam svādu sunirmalam
svayam gopāḥ papuḥ sasnur vijahraḥ salile ciram*

(Govinda Lilāmṛta 6.36-37)

"Kṛṣṇa gathered His cows who were wandering here and there with the sound of His flute and brought them to the Mānasa Gaṅgā-lake with the cowherd boys to make them drink. Then he made all the cows and cowherd boys drink the nice cool and clear water. He Himself also drank and spent a lot of time bathing and playing in the water."

In his Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrīpāda Sanātana Gosvāmī gives a heartrending description of how Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His

cowherd boyfriends desire to defeat each other during their water sports in Śrī Yamunā:

*parasparam vārṣabhiṣiñcataḥ sakhīn;
 kadācid utkṣipyā jalāni bhañjayet;
 kadāpi tair eva vinoda kovido;
 vilambhito bhañgabharaṁ jaharṣa saḥ
 kilāla vādyāni śubhāni sākaṁ
 tair vādayan śrī yamunā pravāhe;
 sroto'nuloma-pratilomato'sau
 santāra lilām akarod vicitrām
 kadāpi kṛṣṇā-jala madhyato nijaṁ
 vapuḥ sa nihnutya saroja kānane;
 mukhaṁ ca vinyasya kutūhalī sthito,
 yathā na kenāpi bhavet sa lakṣitaḥ
 tatas tad eke kṣaṇa jivanās te;
 na taṁ samanviśya yadālabhanta;
 tadā mahārtāḥ suhr̥do rudanto
 vicrukuśur vyagra dhīyaḥ sughoram
 tato hasan padma vanād viniḥṣṛtaḥ
 praharṣa pūreṇa vikāsitekṣaṇaiḥ;
 sakūrdanas taiḥ purato'bhisāribhiḥ
 saṅgamyamāno vijahāra kautukī
 mṛṇāla-jālena manoramēna,
 viracya hārān jala puṣpa-jātaiḥ;
 sakhīn alaṅkṛtya samuttatāra
 jalāt samaṁ taiḥ sa ca bhūṣitas taiḥ*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.7.46-51)

"As Kṛṣṇa and His friends were splashing each other with water, Kṛṣṇa sometimes defeated His friends and sometimes the boys defeated Vinoda Kovida (Kṛṣṇa, Who is expert in having fun) by splashing Him with water to His delight.

Sometimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His friends played sweet music on the water, sometimes they swam along with the stream of the Yamunā and sometimes they swam against the stream. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa played a joke on the boys by concealing His Śyāma-body in the blue Yamunā-water and hiding His face in a cluster of blue lotus flowers, so that nobody could distinguish Him anymore. The boys then began to search for Him, Whose *darśana* is their very lives. When they could not find Him, they began to weep loudly in great anguish.

Hearing their weeping, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Joker, laughed and came out of the lotus cluster. Seeing Him back, the *suhṛt-sakhās* (dear most friends) began to run and jump around in front of Him. After this Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoyed different water sports with them.

He strung wonderful garlands of water lotuses on strings of lotus stems and decorated His friends with them, and His friends reciprocated by decorating Him likewise. Finally they all came out of the water onto the shore."

Śrī Hari plays such competitive water sports with His friends in Rādhākuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Pāvana-Sarovara, Kusuma-Sarovara and other large lakes.

In this way, Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmī reveals these endlessly sweet transcendental pastimes, calling Śrī Kṛṣṇa *gopendra-divyātmaja*, the divine son of the cowherd king.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I always worship all these lakes and rivers!"

sarit sarasī kūle, nitya gocāraṇa kāle,
rādhākuṇḍa kālindīra jale
se gopendra-divyātmaja, mūrtimanta manasija,
jala keli kore grīṣma-kāle

"The divine son of the cowherd king, Who is Cupid in His very own person, always sports in the waters of Rādhākuṇḍa and Yamunā when He herds His cows there in the summer."

*krīḍā-rase preme matta, nija priya sakhā-yūtha,
nitya yārā jalakeli kore.*

*govinda kautuka bhore, jayākāṅkṣī antare,
jala siñce tādera upore*

"Govinda eternally plays in the water with His dearest friends, intoxicated by the flavours of loving games He plays with them. Desiring victory in these sports, Govinda sprinkles them with water."

*jayārthī vayasya-gaṇa, siñce jala anukṣaṇa,
sadā se sarit sarovare.
bhajana koribo āmi, hoiyā tāra anugāmī,
e vāsanā jāgaye antare*

"His friends, who also desire victory, constantly splash Him with water. I will worship these lakes and rivers and will become their follower. This desire has awoken in my heart."

VERSE 67:

**yeṣāṁ kacchapikā lasan-muralikā-nādena harṣotkaraiḥ
srastārdhas tṛṇa-guccha eṣa nitarāṁ vaktreṣu saṁstambhate
sakhya-nāpi tayoh paraṁ parivṛtā rādhā-baka-dveṣiṇo-
te hṛdyā mṛga-yūthapāḥ pratidinaiṁ māṁ toṣayantu sphuṭam**

yeṣāṁ - whose; *kacchapikā* - a kind of Vīṇā; *lasat* - beautiful; *muralikā* - the flute; *nādena* - with the sound; *harṣa* - joy; *utkaraiḥ* - by an abundance; *srasta* - fallen; *arddhaḥ* - half; *trṇa* - grass; *guccha* - bunch; *eṣa* - here; *nitarāṁ* - always; *vaktreṣu* - in the faces; *saṁsthambhate* - stunned; *sakhyena* - with friendship; *api* - even; *tayoḥ* - of both; *param* - greatest; *parivṛtā* - surrounded; *rādhā-bakadvēṣiṇaḥ* - Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *te* - they; *hr̥dyā* - loving; *mṛga* - deer; *yūthapāḥ* - group-leaders; *prati* - each; *dinam* - day; *mām* - me; *toṣayantu* - may delight; *sphuṭam* - clearly.

When they hear Śrī Rādhikā playing Her Kacchapī-Vīṇā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing His beautiful Muralikā-flute, the deer become ecstatic and bunches of grass fall halfway out of their mouths before they become stunned. May these charming best of deer, who then surround Śrī-Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava in a mood of friendship, delight me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, the deer like the Kṛṣṇa-sāras are praised. Even the deer in Vraja, the loving playground of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are most blessed and praiseworthy.

How can there be any doubt about this when even Lord Brahmā and Uddhava are amongst those great souls who yearn to take birth here, even as immobile creatures as grass and bushes?

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, we can find the fortune of Vṛndāvana's deer and does being praised by the *pūrva-rāga-vatī* Vrajasundarīs (the *gopīs* who had just fallen in love with Kṛṣṇa):

*dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-matayo'pi hariṇya etā
yā nandanandanam upātta vicitra veṣam*

*ākaraṇya veṇuraṇitaṁ saha kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ
pūjāṁ dadhur viracitāṁ praṇayāvalokaiḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.21.11)

The purport of this verse is that one Vrajasundarī once told the other Vraja-devīs: "Ohe Sakhīs! Blessed are the does of Vṛndāvana! There is no comparison to their love! They are born as animals and they have no intelligence whatsoever. They cannot distinguish right from wrong, but their hearts are filled with love. They love this beautiful Śyāma-form even more than their life-airs! As soon as He enters into the woods, they come running. What to speak of when He starts playing His flute! When they hear His flute they come running even from afar and surround Him on all sides, taking their husbands, the Kṛṣṇa-sāra-bucks, along with them.

In this way, both husband and wife are blessed by seeing Kṛṣṇa. Just as a guest is heartily welcomed and lovingly given entry into the house when he comes to the door of a *grhastha*, similarly, when the beloved guest Śrī Govinda comes to the gate of the does' abode, they heartily welcome Him and offer Him love-*arghya* (water to wash the hands) with their restless eyes. They cannot speak but their heart's love is expressed through the eyes. Blessed are the lives of these does! They know very well how to worship the god of love (Kṛṣṇa). And blessed are their husbands too, for they do not obstruct their service to Kṛṣṇa, but act in a favourable way. They are justly called Kṛṣṇa-sāra⁴⁰!

⁴⁰ Kṛṣṇa-sāra means: "Kṛṣṇa is the essence", and that is what the bucks feel. Ed.

We are unfortunate girls, for although we attained *gopī*-bodies in Vṛndāvana, we could not worship Gopīnātha. It was better if we had attained births as does!"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Śrī Rādhārāṇī's maidservant, so he/she knows how fortunate the does of Vṛndāvana are!

Once, Śrīpāda Raghunātha is absorbed in the taste of *bhajana* on the bank of Rādhākunḍa, when he suddenly perceives a honey-sweet pastime of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gīridhārī are seated on a jeweled platform under a wish yielding tree, illuminating the bank of the *kunḍa* with their golden and bluish splendor.

There are no *sakhīs* around, but Śrī Raghunātha, as an *antaraṅgā sevādhikāriṇī kinkarī* (a maidservant who is eligible to render intimate services) is fanning the Divine Pair, Who are absorbed in different *rasika* conversations.

Suddenly Kṛṣṇa takes His enchanting flute to His lips and starts playing it, while Śrī Rādhārāṇī picks up Her Kacchapī-Viṇā and twangs its strings.

The mobile and immobile beings are enchanted by these charming tunes. The sweetness revealed by Śrīmatī's Viṇā-playing stifles even the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute-playing. Seeing this, the grazing deer and does take their bunches of grass along in their mouths and come to surround Śyāma and Svāminī as if they are bewitched by a *mantra*.

The bunches of grass fall halfway out of their mouths, but remain stuck there. What sweet feelings are revealed in their eyes! They are just like the Divine Pair's dearest girlfriends, the *priya-narma-sakhīs*.

Their hearts are filled with the sweetness of the flute and the Viṇā. With their eyes, they offer flowers of love to the lotus feet of Those, whose sweetness they are so attracted to.

Remembering his vision of that day and taking that remembrance in his heart, Śrī Raghunātha says:

"May those charming best of deer always delight me!"

In other words, "May I relish the enchanting sweetness of Śyāma and Svāminī and attain Their service together with them, this is my prayer!"

*rādhā-kare śobhe yini, se kacchapī vīṇā dhvani,
āra kṛṣṇa muralira tāne.
śravaṇete kṛṣṇa sāra, mantra mugdha bhāva yāra,
preme stabdha hoy toto-kṣaṇe*

"When the Kṛṣṇa-sāra-deer hear the sound of the Kacchapī-Vīṇā, which looks so beautiful in Rādhā's hands, and the sound of Kṛṣṇa's Muralī-flute, they become stunned of ecstatic love as if they are bewitched by a *mantra*."

*arddha guccha tṛṇa mukhe, eka diṭhe ceye thāke,
avicala dāḍāye royeche
rādhā-kṛṣṇe sakhya-bhāve, antarera anurāge,
citravat yeno virājiche*

"Half-chewed bunches of grass hang in their mouths and they stand there staring, motionless like pictures, their hearts filled with passionate fraternal love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa."

*kṛṣṇa anurāgī yoto, sei mṛgapati yūtha,
ei bhikṣā māge akiñcane
tāhādera bhāva-rāji, kṛpāya arpiyā āji,
santuṣṭa koruna anukṣaṇe*

"I humbly beg this alm from these best of deer, who are so deeply in love with Kṛṣṇa: May they give me the treasure of their ecstatic love today and thus delight me at every moment."

VERSE 68:

**guñjad-bhṛṅga-kulena juṣṭa-kusumaiḥ saṁlabdha-mañju-śriyām
kuñjānām nikareṣu yeṣu ramate saurabhya-vistāriṇāḥ
udyat-kāma-taraṅga-raṅgita-manas tan-navya-yūnor yugam
teṣām vistrta-keśa-pāśa-nikaraiḥ kuryām aho mārjanam**

guñjad - humming; *bhṛṅga* - bees; *kulena* - by swarms; *juṣṭa* - served; *kusumaiḥ* - with flowers; *saṁlabdha* - attained; *mañju-śriyām* - loveliness; *kuñjānām* - of the groves; *nikareṣu* - in the groups; *yeṣu* - in which; *ramate* - enjoying; *saurabhya* - fragrance; *vistāriṇām* - extended; *udyat* - raised; *kāma* - lust; *taraṅga* - waves; *raṅgita* - revelled; *manaḥ* - the mind; *tad* - that; *navya yūnoḥ* - young; *yugam* - couple; *teṣām* - of them; *vistrta* - extended; *keśa-pāśa-nikaraiḥ* - with the hairs; *kuryāmaho* - I will do; *mārjanam* - sweep.

In the fragrant arbours of Vraja, which are made very lovely by the flowers that are served (enjoyed) by swarms of sweetly humming bees, the young pair Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava make love, Their hearts delighted by the billowing waves of Cupid. May I sweep these groves with my long and opened hair.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrī Raghunātha praises the sweet *nikuñjas* that are the confidential playgrounds for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's erotic pastimes.

For the sake of nourishing the erotic pastimes of the Yugala Kīśora, there are always beautiful and enchanting arbour-cottages (*nikuñjas*), surrounded by flowerful trees and vines in the transcendental playground Śrī Vṛndāvana. The enchanting natural beauty of these *nikuñjas* makes the opulent beauty of jeweled temples insignificant. The *nikuñjas* are beautified by various kinds of flowers and in each *nikunja* there are swarms of humming bees.

The sylvan goddesses have decorated these *kuñja*-cottages with ecstatic pictures, depicting different sweet pastimes such as *pūrva-rāga*.

In each *kuñja*, there are jeweled beds made of stemless flowers like jasmine and the gates are decorated with erotic pictures made of ground vermilion. The pictures are agitating and the vermilion too.

Swarms of humming bees serve as gatekeepers for the floral gates and will not allow any unauthorised trespasser in.

Their humming, which sounds like war drums, make the Rasika-Pair mad during the erotic battle. These *nikuñjas* are always served by the six seasons and time is always standing by to serve the transcendental pastimes.

The sky, the air, the moon and the sun - they are all servants of these pastimes, who show their activities whenever it suits or supports them.

In this way, there is no comparison to the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's *nikuñjas*, which are endowed with different ingredients of natural beauty.

Experienced devotees see all this with the eyes of love.

In these *nikuñjas*, which are scented by various blooming flowers, the Nava Kīśora Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava perform Their wonderful pastimes, Their hearts billowing on the aggregate of Cupid's waves.

*tat saundaryam kim api kalayat sannavāṇi maranda-
syandaiḥ sāndra prasṛmara mahā candrikāsyāravinde;
sarvāṅgeṣu prakāṣṭa pulakānaṅga vaivaśya lolad
gaura śyāmāṅgakamavirahaṁ yatra bhāti dvidhām
yatrānyonya praṇaya sarasāveśa pūrṇāyitāṅgaṁ
hāsaṁ hāsaṁ rucira kalayānyonya saṅghaṭṭitāṅgam;
bāraṁ bāraṁ surasa samarotsāha sannaddha mūrṭi-
jyotir dvandvaṁ viśati sahasā mañju kuñjājireṣu*

(Śrī Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 6.72-73)

"A golden and bluish dual form, which becomes restless of erotic absorption and which gets goose bumps on all of Their limbs when They behold the indescribable beauty of Each other's lotus faces, which are like widely diffused big moon beams and Their exchange of stuttering words, which is like a trickling stream of honey, is eternally present in Vṛndāvana.

This is where they fill Each other's limbs with Each other's *rasika*-absorption of love, laughingly embrace Each other during enchanting artistic pastimes and suddenly enter into the lovely *kuñja*-yard time and again, decorated with enthusiasm to fight luscious erotic battles."

In all of these *kuñjas*, the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* are blessed by seeing the *rasika*-erotic pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and by attaining the extraordinary fortune of Their devotional service.

*veṇī-cūḍā tilaka racanair gandha tāmbūla mālyair
divyaiḥ sūkṣmojjvala vara paṭair divya divyānna pānaiḥ
samyak samvṛjana mṛdu padāmbhoja samvāhanādyaiḥ
sakhyo rādhā muralidharaṇau yan nikuñje bhajanti
kāścit kuñjān niravadhi pariṣkurvate śrī vibhedair
granthatyanyā vividha kusumair divya mālyādikāni*

*kāścid yuktyā vidadhati mudā divya gandha prakārān
kāścit kuñcantyati varapaṭam yatra rādhā sudāsyah*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 6.74-75)

The *sakhīs* serve Rādhā and Muralīdhara by making Their braids, crowns and *tilaka*, offering Them perfumes, betel leaves and garlands, dressing Them in divine, fine and brilliant clothes, serving Them divine drinks and dishes, fanning Them and gently massaging Their feet.

Some of the *sakhīs* always cleanse the *kuñjas*, some are always making flower garlands, dividing them according to beauty, some are blissfully offering reasonable advice and prepare perfumes and so on, and others again are folding very beautiful silken garments."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Rādhā's dear maidservant and a respectful maidservant, so he prays that he/she may sweep the *kuñja* of her mistress with her long, unravelled hair.

*alikulā guñjarita kusuma nikare;
parama surabhi ye sab kuñjera bhitorē
āhā! sei suvikhyaṭa navīna yugala;
madana taraṅgāveśe ho'ye suvihvala
unmatta hṛdaye nitya korena vihāra;
se sakala kuñja āmi haraṣe apāra
nija dīrgha keśa pāśe koribo mārjana;
e vāsanā mone mora jāge anukṣaṇa*

"Āhā! May I most blissfully sweep the most fragrant *kuñjas*, where the bees are humming around the flowers, where the famous Adolescent Couple is overwhelmed by the waves of Cupid and where They enjoy with intoxicated hearts, with my long hair. This aspiration constantly awakens within my heart."

VERSE 69:

**yeṣāṁ cāru taleṣu śīta-niviḍa-cchāyeṣu rātrindivam
 puṣpāṇām vīgalat-parāga-vilasat-talpeṣu kṣiptāśrayam
 prītyā snigdha-madhu-vratāir madhu-kaṇaiḥ saṁsevitaṁ tan navam
 yūnor yugmataram mudā viharate te pāntu mām bhū-ruhām**

yeṣāṁ - whose; *cāru* - beautiful; *taleṣu* - on the bases; *śīta* - cool; *niviḍa* - deep; *cchāyeṣu* - in the shades; *rātrim* - night; *divam* - day; *puṣpāṇām* - of the flowers; *vīgalat* - falling; *parāga* - pollen; *vilasat* - shining; *talpeṣu* - on the beds; *kṣipta* - made; *āśrayam* - shelter; *prītyā* - with love; *snigdha* - restless; *madhu-vratāiḥ* - by bumblebees; *madhu* - honey; *kaṇaiḥ* - by drops; *saṁsevitaṁ* - served; *tad* - that; *navam* - young; *yūnoḥ* - youngsters; *yugmataram* - couple; *mudā* - jubilantly; *viharate* - enjoys; *te* - they; *pāntu* - may protect; *mām* - me; *bhūruhāḥ* - the trees.

May the trees of Vraja, under whose deeply shaded, cool and beautiful bases the Youthful Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, blissfully enjoy love-sports day and night on a bed of flowers, beautified by flower pollen and drops of honey, which are eagerly served by restless swarms of humming bees, protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: After describing the sweet play groves that are made of trees and vines, Śrīpāda Raghunātha now praises the trees and vines separately in the following two verses.

In this verse he praises the trees. All the trees that are standing in Vṛndavāna, the playforest of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, are transcendental playmates of Them.

*drumās ca kalpa pūrvā ye nānāmoda vidhāyakāḥ.
vṛndāvanāsthās tān viddhi balabhadraṁśa sambhavān* (Kṛṣṇa
Yāmala Tantra)

"The wishyielding trees in Vṛndāvana give various kinds of transcendental happiness, and they are all (*viśuddha sattvamaya*) expansions of Lord Baladeva."

Therefore there is not even the slightest transformation of matter in them -

*kecit pīyūṣa sārōttama pariṇatayaḥ kecana kṣīra sārair
divyaiḥ sannirmitāḥ ke'pyatula mada-kṛtām āsavānām ghanāṅgāḥ
kecit saitopalāḥ ke'pyati himakarakāḥ kalpa rūpā iti śrī
vṛndāraṇye drumendrā dadhati bahuvīdhā rādhikā kṛṣṇa tuṣṭyai*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 10.77)

"For the satisfaction of Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa the trees of Vṛndāvana have taken many different forms: some of them are made of the crystallisation of the essence of nectar, some of them are made very beautifully from the essence of divine milk, some of them bear the bodies of incomparibly intoxicating condensed nectar, some of them are like crystal and some of them are wearing camphor-like, bright and white dresses."

In Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta (2.5.255) it is seen -

*yasyaika vṛkṣo'pi nijena kenācid
dravyeṇa kāmāṁś tanute'rthino'khilān
tathāpi tat tan na sadā prakāśayed
aiśvaryam īśaḥ svavīhāra vighnataḥ*

"Although all trees in Vraja, including their leaves and flowers, are able to give anything to the petitioner and thus

fulfill all his desires, still they do not always display this prowess and opulence, afraid that it will disturb the enjoyments of their Lord. Sometimes, when it suits the Lord's pastimes, they may manifest such prowess!"

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's service is the highest accomplishment for the trees of Vṛndāvana. After Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the Rāsa-*līlā*, the Vraja-*devīs* inquired from Vṛndāvana's trees about Him -

*cūta priyāla panasāsana kovidāra
jambvarka bilva bakulāmra kadamba-nīpāḥ
ye'nye parārtha-bhavakā yamunopakūlāḥ
śaṁsantu kṛṣṇa-padavīm rahitātmanām naḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.30.9)

"O Cūta-, Priyāla-, Panasa-, Asana-, Kovidāra-, Jambu-, Arka-, Bilva-, Bakula-, mango-, Kadamba-, Nīpa- and other trees that are standing on the bank of the Yamunā for the welfare of others! O coconut- and betel-trees! Please show these empty-hearted Vraja-girls the way to attain Kṛṣṇa!"

Some explain the word **parārtha-bhavakā** as follows:

*parā ca paraś ca parau śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇau tayor arthe tayoh
sevārtham bhavaḥ utpattir yeṣām te parārtha-bhavakāḥ*

"*para* means the Original Personality of Godhead, Vrajendra-Nāndana, and *parā* means the Supreme Goddess Śrī Rādhā - the auspicious advent of Śrī Vṛndāvana's trees took place for the sake of Their service".

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "May the trees of Vraja, under whose bases, which are densely shaded and cooled by thick foliage, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the Youthful Couple, blissfully enjoy love-sports day and night on a bed of flowers,

VERSE 70:

**gāndharvā mura-vairiṇoḥ praṇayiṇoḥ puṣpāṇi sañcinvatoḥ
svairam̐ smerā-sakhī-kulena vṛtayor iṣat-smitena dvayoḥ
dṛṣṭvā keli-kaliṁ tayor nava-navam̐ hāsyena puṣpa-cchalaiḥ
kāmam̐ yā vilasanti tāḥ kila latāḥ sevyāḥ param̐ premabhiḥ**

gāndharvā - Rādhā; *muravairiṇaḥ* - of Kṛṣṇa; *praṇayiṇaḥ* - loving; *puṣpāṇi* - of flowers; *sañcinvataḥ* - picking; *svairam̐* - freely; *smerā* - smiling; *sakhī-kulena* - by the girlfriends; *vṛtayoḥ* - surrounded; *iṣat* - slightly; *smitena* - by smiling; *dvayoḥ* - of the pair; *dṛṣṭvā* - having seen; *keli* - play; *kaliṁ* - quarrel; *tayoḥ* - of the two; *nava navam̐* - ever-fresh; *hāsyena* - by smiling; *puṣpa* - flower; *cchalaiḥ* - on the pretext; *kāmam̐* - sufficiently; *yā* - who; *vilasanti* - shine; *tāḥ* - they; *kila* - certainly; *latāḥ* - vines; *sevyāḥ* - to be served; *param̐* - great; *premabhiḥ* - with love.

I lovingly serve the vines of Śrī Vṛndāvana, whose flowers are picked by the Loving Pair, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, surrounded by Their sweetly smiling girlfriends, and who smile through their flowers when they see the ever-fresh loving quarrels of the Divine Pair and Their girlfriends.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the vines of Śrī Vṛndāvana, who should be considered just as glorious as Śrī Vṛndāvana's trees.

Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatīpāda has written in Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam (5.57):

*etā vallī-vitataya uru sneha viklinna cittāḥ
śrīmad vṛndāvana bhuvī mahābhūtayor mātṛ-bhūtāḥ
āśrīyante hari hari bahir vastu buddhiṁ vidhūya
yair dhīmadbhīḥ satatam iha va'mūtra vā te kṛtārthāḥ*

"Hari Hari! Any intelligent person who always takes shelter of these greatly opulent vines of Śrī Vṛndāvana-bhuvī, whose hearts melt of affection due to their motherly nature, giving up all external material conceptions of them, is blessed both in this world and in the next."

Śrī Rādhā considers these vines to be Her own:

*yā rādhāyā varatanu naṭetyukti mātṛeṇa nṛtyed
gāyetyuktvā madhukara rutair vijña-gānam tanoti
krandetyuktvā visṛjati madhūtp hullitā syāddhaseti
proktāśliṣya drumam iti girā savaje ghr̥ṣṭa-gucchā*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 5.37)

"As soon as Śrī Rādhā says: 'O beautiful vines! Dance!', they will dance and when She says: 'Sing!', their humming bees will sing an intoxicating song. When She says: 'Weep!', they will shed tears of honey, when She says: 'Laugh!', they will make their flowers blossom, and when She says: 'Embrace the trees!', they will jubilantly embrace the trees with their sprouts."

In this way, the vines of Vraja increase Premamayī Śrī Rādhārāṇī's love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa by giving Her many amorous incitements.

*navīna kalikodgatīm kusuma hāsa-saṁsobhinīm
nava stavaka maṇḍitām nava maranda dhārāṇī latām*

*tamāla-taru-saṅgatām samavalokya vṛndāvane
patiṣṇum ati vihvalām adhrta kāpi me svāminīm*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛtam 2.84)

"Seeing a fresh vine embracing a Tamāla-tree in Śrī Vṛndāvana, growing fresh buds, beautified by smiling flowers, decorated with fresh sprouts and exuding a trickling stream of fresh honey, my mistress faints and one of Her *sakhīs* holds Her up."

Taking the remembrance of a honey-sweet pastime within his heart, Śrī Raghunātha praises the vines of Vṛndāvana in this verse.

One day, Śrīpāda Raghunātha is absorbed in *bhajana* on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, when he has a transcendental vision: Śrīmatī and Her girlfriends are picking flowers in a garden near the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa. Suddenly Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes there, dressed as a gardener.

*mādhavas tām tadālokayan rādhikām ballabī-vargataḥ sad guṇenādhikām
keyam udbādhate mad vanam rāgatas tūrṇam ityullapan phulladhirāgataḥ*

(Stavamālā)

Seeing the crown jewel of young *gopīs*, Śrī Rādhikā, picking flowers, Mādhava said: "Who are You, making a mess of My *nikuṅja-vana*?", and quickly came up to Her. Śrīmatī covered Her whole body with Her garments, took some distance, smiled and said, while starting to pick flowers from another vine:

*sadātra cinumah prasūnamajane vayan hi niratāḥ surābhibhajane
na ko'pi kurute niṣedha vacanam kim adya tanuṣe pragalbha vacanam*

*prasīda kusumaṁ vicitya sarasā prayāmi sarasīruhākṣa tarasā
kriyādya mahati mamāsti bhavane vilambam adhikaṁ tanuṣva na vane*

(Stavamālā)

"Every day we come to this solitary forest to pick flowers for our worship of the gods and no one has prohibited us from this until now! Why are You speaking such impudent words to us today? O Lotus-eyed One! Be pleased with Me! Excuse Me! We don't know how to speak such bold words as You! I have many duties to perform at home, so I have to return home quickly after picking flowers. Let Me go without delay!" Hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied:

*nīyuktaḥ kṣitīndreṇa tenāsmi kāmāṁ vanāṁ pālayāmi krameṇābhirāmam
janaḥ śirṇam apyuddhared yo dalārddhaṁ harāmyambaram tasya vittena sārddham
parijñātam adya prasūnālim etāṁ lunīṣe tvam evaṁ prabālāiḥ sametām
dhṛtāsau mayā kāncana śreṇi gauri praviṣṭāsi gehaṁ kathāṁ puṣpa cauri*

(Stavamālā)

"I have been engaged by king Cupid in protecting this lovely garden since long. If someone even takes a brown, dried-up leaf from any tree in this garden, I will take all of his/her garments and ornaments away. O golden beauty! O flower thief! Today I learned that You have picked the flowers and fresh leaves from this garden. Today I have caught You! How will You go home now?"

In this way, the Divine Pair are having so much fun with Their girlfriends. When the vines witness these ever-fresh playful quarrels, they smile through their flowers.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I lovingly serve these vines of Vṛndāvana, which always relish these sweet pastimes of the Divine Pair!"

*supraṇayī rādhā-kṛṣṇa kṛīḍāmoda raṅge;
mṛdu hāsyā mukhī priya sakhīdera saṅge
svacchande hāsimākhā madhura ānane;
nirata hoile yādera kusuma cayane
prema raṅgī yugalera niyata nūtana;
keli kalaha līlā koriyā darśana
puṣpa vikāśera chale hāsyera vilāsa;
manohara rūpe yārā koriche prakāśa
se sakala latikā e vrajera mājhāre;
ekānta sevana योग्या प्रीति साहाकरे*

"I lovingly serve all the vines of Vraja, which show their enchanting smiles through their flowers, and which always witness the ever-fresh, playful quarrel-pastimes of the loving Divine Pair, Who are always engaged in freely picking their flowers with sweet smiles on Their faces, in the company of Their slightly smiling girlfriends.

VERSE 71:

**paricaya-rasa-magnāḥ kāmam ārāt tayor ye
madhuratara-rutenollāsam ullāsayanti
vraja-bhuvi nava-yūnoḥ supriyāḥ pakṣiṇas te
vidadhatu mama saukhyaṁ sphāram ālokanena**

paricaya - acquaintance⁴¹; *rasa* - flavours; *magnāḥ* - immersed in; *kāmam* - as desired; *ārāt* - from nearby; *tayoḥ* - of the two; *ye* - who; *madhuratarā* - sweeter; *rutena* - by singing; *ullāsam* - joy; *ullāsayanti* - manifest (v); *vrajabhūvi* - Vraja-bhūmi; *nava* - youthful; *yūnoḥ* - the couple; *supriyāḥ* - beloved; *pakṣiṇa* - birds; *te* - they; *vidadhatu* - may they accomplish; *mama* - my; *saukhyam* - happiness; *sphāram* - greatly; *ālokanena* - by faithfully looking.

May the birds of Vraja, who are so dear to Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are very well acquainted with Them and who increase Their happiness with their sweet singing, delight me with their merciful glance.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrī Raghunātha praises Vraja's birds, who are very dear to Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīpāda Śuka Muni mentioned, that the birds of Vṛndāvana are all sages. In the words of the Vrajadevīs, who were endowed with *pūrva rāga* (first love), he said:

*prāyo batāmba vihagā munayo vane'smin
kṛṣṇekṣitam tad uditam kala veṇu gītam
āruhya ye drumabhujān rucira prabālān
śṛnvantyamīlita dṛṣo vigatānya vācaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.21.14)

⁴¹ *paricaya so'yaṁ kṛṣṇo yo'smān āhārādīnā pālayati vyādhādibhyo rakṣati cetyākāraḥ sa eva raso-jalam tatra magnāḥ* (Sanskrit Commentator Baṅgabhīrī Vidyālaṅkāra) "They are acquainted to Kṛṣṇa in the following way: "He is that Kṛṣṇa who feeds us and who protects us from hunters and the like." In this way they are immersed in the nectar of acquaintance."

The purport of this verse is that one *gopa-sundarī* told the other — “O mother!⁴² Why do Vṛndāvana’s birds love Kṛṣṇa so much? Although they live in the woods and fly from branch to branch, they love Śrī Kṛṣṇa with all their hearts! As soon as they see Him or hear His flute from a distance, they come flying in groups to the nearest tree branches and sit there like sages who are fixed in *samādhi*.

Although there are ripe fruits and green leaves which they could eat if they wanted to, they do not eat them. They simply sit there motionlessly and silently. Some keep their eyes half-closed, while rivulets of tears trickle from their eyes, while others unclearly mumble ‘Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa’. I therefore think that they are all sages, and not just sages, but personalistic devotee-sages (*bhāgavata pravara muni*) who have flown away from the branches of the wish yielding tree of the Vedas and have taken shelter of the branches of Vṛndāvana’s trees, from where they can see Kṛṣṇa.

They greatly love Kṛṣṇa, hence they are immersed in meditation on His lotus feet, sitting in this tree."

The birds who Śrī Raghunātha praises in this verse are very well acquainted with Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, because they always stay very close to Them.

These birds, like the parrots, awaken the Divine Pair with sweet songs of awakening at night’s end.

*vṛndā vipinahi saba dvija kula; kūjaye caudiṣe hoi ākula
sāri śuka tahi kokila meli; kapota phukārata alikula keli
mayūra mayūrī dhvani śunite rasāla; bānarī rava tahi ati suviśāla
aichana śabada bhelo vana māha; jāgalo duhuñ jana nāgarī nāha*

⁴² This is a cry of astonishment and does not indicate that the addressed *gopī* is actually a mother. Ed.

*ālase duhuñ tanu duhuñ nāhi teje; śuti rahalo puna kiśalaya šeje
punahi phukārai śārī sukira; aichana yaiche sudhārasa gira
kabo balarāma śunabo tahi śravaṇe; rādhā-mādhava herabo nayane*

"All the birds of Vṛndāvana are anxiously chirping everywhere. The female and male parrots meet with the cuckoos and sing with the pigeons, while the bees are humming. The peacocks and peahens resound deliciously and the she-monkeys cry out loud.

In this way, the forest is filled with natural noises that awaken our hero and heroine, Who are Both still tired and unable to abandon Each other and thus lie down again on Their bed of fresh flowers.

Again and again, the female and fine male parrots make such nectarean sounds.

When will Balarāma dāsa hear these sounds and see Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava with his own eyes?

*vṛndā vacanahi, uṭhai phukārai,
śuka pika śārīka pāntīṣuni tahi jāgi, puna duhuñ ghumalo,
nāyari korahi yāti, hari hari jāgaho nāgara kāna!
vara pāmara vihi, kiye duhkha deyala,
rajanī hoyala avasāna āolo bāurī,
varaja maheśvarī, boloto puna dadhi lola
śunaite kātara, vidagadha nāgara,
thora nayana yuga khola nāgarī heri, punar hi diṭhi mudala,
pulaka mukula bharu aṅgebalarāma heri,
kabahu sukha sāyare, nimajaba rasa taraṅge*

"When Vṛndā addresses them, the Śuka-, Pika- and Śārīkā-birds awaken and start to sing.

Hearing this, the Divine Pair awakens and falls asleep again. Kṛṣṇa takes shelter of the lap of His heroine.

Hari! Hari! Wake up, O hero Kṛṣṇa! What misery that wretched Creator is giving You! The night is over!"

The monkey named Dadhilola says:

"The crazy old woman who rules over Vraja (Jaṭilā) has come!"

Hearing this, our clever hero Kṛṣṇa becomes very distressed and slightly opens His eyes. Seeing His heroine, He closes His eyes once again, His skin studded with sprout-like goose pimples."

Balarāma dāsa says: "When will I float on billowing waves of *rasa* an ocean of bliss as I see witness this?"

These birds give boundless bliss to the Divine Pair and Their girlfriends with their messenger-services and their descriptions of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's attributes, and sometimes the *śuka-śāri* (the male and the female parrots) greatly increase the bliss of the Divine Pair and Their girlfriends by choosing Rādhā or Kṛṣṇa's side and expanding a wonderfully loving quarrel among each other.⁴³

Śrī Raghunātha says: "May these birds, who are very dear to the Divine Pair, delight me with their merciful glance!"

*vṛndāvane pakṣigaṇe, yugalera sannidhāne,
nirantara kore avasthāna
rasa magna sucatura, dhvani kori sumadhura,
kore doṅhāra ānanda vardhana*

⁴³ All these services rendered by the birds to the Divine Pair are described in scriptures like Śrī Śrī Govinda Lilāmṛta and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhāvanāmṛta.

"Vṛndāvana's birds always stay near the Divine Pair, immersed in *rasa*, increasing Their delight by sweetly and cleverly singing."

*sei sab pakṣigaṇe, karuṇa nayāna koṇe,
āmā pāne bāreka tākāo
preme kaṇṭha phulāīyā, rase ḍagamagi hoiyā,
guṇa gābo ei mati dāo*

"May all these birds cast one merciful ,sidelong glance at me and give me the intelligence to sing the glories of the Divine Pair with a voice blossoming of love, immersed in *rasa*."

VERSE 72:

**cūteṣveṣu kadambakeṣu bakuleṣv anyeṣu vṛkṣeṣv alam
prītyā mādhavikādi-valliṣu tathā bhāṅkāra-nāдай dvayoḥ
ye bhṛṅgāḥ paritas tayoḥ sukha-bharaṁ vistārayanti sphuṭaṁ
guṅjanto bata vibhrameṇa nitarāṁ tān eva vandāmahe**

cūteṣu - in the mango-trees; *eṣu* - in them; *kadambakeṣu* - in the Kadamba-trees; *bakuleṣu* - in the Bakula-trees; *anyeṣu* - in the others; *vṛkṣeṣu* - in the trees; *alam* - greatly; *prītyā* - with love; *mādhavikā* - in Mādhavī; *ādi* - and others; *valliṣu* - in the vines; *tathā* - and then; *bhāṅkāra* - humming sounds of *bhāṁ*; *nāдай* - with sounds; *dvayoḥ* - of the pair; *ye* - who; *bhṛṅgāḥ* - the bees; *paritaḥ* - everywhere; *tayoḥ* - of them; *sukha-bharaṁ* - with great bliss; *vistārayanti* - extend; *sphuṭaṁ* - clearly; *guṅjantaḥ* - they are humming; *bata* - alas!; *vibhrameṇa* - by wandering here and there; *nitaraṁ* - with body mind and words; *tān* - them; *eva* - only; *vandāmahe* - I praise.

I diligently praise the bees of Vraja, who wander around the mango-, Kadamba- and Bakula-trees and around vines like the Mādhavī, thereby humming sweetly and indistinctly everywhere to the great pleasure of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Dāsa Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises the bees of Vraja, who are humming around the blooming flowers of the trees and vines of Vrajavana.

Who knows which great souls are assuming the form of bees to become intoxicated by the taste of the honey that trickles from the flowers of Vraja's trees and vines, humming *rasika* songs about Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa?

These bees become blessed by landing on the footprints of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, which are rarely attained even by the greatest mystics and sages, and kissing them, so that they can drink the honey trickling from these lotus-feet.

Can there be any doubt that these bees, who become intoxicated by relishing the extraordinary, nectarean bodily fragrance of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are fully blessed?

Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises these bees by saying:

"The bees of Vraja, who wander around the mango-, Kadamba- and Bakula-trees and around vines like the Mādhavī, are humming sweetly and indistinctly everywhere to the great pleasure of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa."

The humming of these bees is a special erotic incitement for Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and sounds like the victory-drum of Cupid.

The sweet humming of the bees is making the Yugala eager to make love, just like the sharp flower-arrows of Cupid.

These bees are always intoxicated by songs about the pastimes of the young Cupid of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Śyāmasundara, and the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, Whose lotus feet are worshipped by millions of Ratis. Because they drink the honey from the transcendental flowers of the transcendental trees and vines of Vṛndāvana, the minds and life-air of the bees are saturated by the same ingredients.

This is why they give so much happiness to the Divine Pair when they make Them hear their humming.

With their humming, the bees remind Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava of different sweet pastimes and in this way, they make Them very happy.

Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are seated on a jeweled throne in a Mādhavī-kuñja, immersed in laughing and joking with the *sakhīs*. Attracted to the bodily fragrance of the Divine Pair, the bees leave the flower garden and surround Them in the *nikuñja*, humming.

*taru sab pulakita bhramarera gaṇa;
saurabhe dhāyalo chāḍi phulavana
śrama bhare baiṭhalo mādHAVI kuñja;
rāi mukha kamale paḍaye alipuñja
līlā kamalahi kānu tāhā vāri;
'madhusūdana geo' kohoto ucāri
eto śuni rāi virāhe bhelo bhora;
koho rādhā-mohana anurāga ora*

"Swarms of horripilating bees fly towards the trees, leaving the flower garden, attracted to the fragrance of Śrīmatī Rāi, Who sits in a Mādhavī-kuñja, feeling exhausted. They land on Rāi's lotus face, but Kṛṣṇa stops them with His play-lotus. Then it is exclaimed: 'Madhusūdana (the bee, or Kṛṣṇa) has gone!'

Hearing this, Rāi becomes filled with feelings of separation. This was lovingly narrated by Rādhā-Mohana dāsa."

When Kṛṣṇa flapped His play-lotus, the bees left Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *sakhīs* said: "Madhusūdana has gone!"

As soon as Śrī Rādhā heard this, waves of *prema-vaicittya-rasa* arose in the *mahābhāva*-ocean of Her heart.

*priyasya sannikarṣe'pi premotkarṣa svabhāvataḥ
yā viśleṣādhiyāttis tat prema vaicittiyam ucyate*

(Ujjvala Nīlamanī)

"When the lover is so overwhelmed by feelings of love that he/she is afraid of separation from the beloved, even if the beloved is close by, and suffers from that feeling of fear, it is called *prema vaicittya*."

This means that the intelligence becomes so subtle because of great feelings of love, that the lady love cannot perceive both, Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, just as one can stick a needle once through a tiny hole in the cloth, but not twice or thrice.

In other words, when the intelligence enters into Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes the passionate lady love cannot perceive Kṛṣṇa Himself anymore⁴⁴. Then she will lament out of the anguish of separation:

*rasavatī baiṭhi rasika vara pāśa; roi kohoi dhanī viraha hutāśa
āra ki milabo mohe rasamaya śyāma; viraha jaladhi kobo pañrava hāma
nikaṭahi nāha nā herai rāi; sahacarī koto parabodhai tī
kānu camaki tab rāi karu kora; govinda dāsa heri bhelo bhora*

⁴⁴ This is quoted from Ānanda Candrikā, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpādā's commentary on Ujjvala Nīlamanī.

"Rasavatī Rāi sits next to Rasikavara Kṛṣṇa, loudly wailing and weeping and burning in the fire of separation. 'When will I again meet My *rasamaya* Śyāma? When will I cross this ocean of separation?'

Although her hero is close by, Rāi does not see Him, no matter how often Her girlfriends try to make Her conscious of this. Kṛṣṇa then takes Rāi on His lap in great astonishment. Govinda dāsa is absorbed in witnessing this."

Śrī Vṛndāvana's swarm of bees is the cause of the manifestation of all this extraordinarily sweet *rasa* of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, and they also make the Divine Pair relish great happiness by causing incitements of various other pastimes.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I praise these bees with care, meaning: with body, mind and words."

*āmra kadamba bakule, mādhavī ādi latā-kule,
madhu piye yevā bhṛṅga-gaṇa
madhura avyakta nāde, vṛkṣe vṛkṣe gatāyāte
puñje puñje koroye guñjana
rādhā-govindera yārā, madhura jhañkāra dvārā,
vistāriche atisaya sukha
tādera vandanā kori, mādhukarī vrata kori,
guṇa gābo heri candra mukha*

"I praise the bees who constantly drink the honey from the mango-, Kadamba-, and Bakula-trees and from vines like the Mādhavī, who fly around from tree to tree, sweetly and indistinctly humming, and who greatly increase the joy of Rādhā and Govinda with this sweet humming. I will sing their glories and see Rādhā and Govinda's moon-like faces."

VERSE 73:

**puṣpair yasya mudā svayaṁ giridharaṁ svairam nikuñjeśvarīm
 phullām phullatarair amaṇḍayad alaṁ phullo nikuñjeśvaraḥ
 iṣan-netra-vighūrṇanena kalita-svādhīna uccaiḥ tayā
 śrīmān sa prathayatv aho mama dṛśaḥ saukhyaṁ kadambeśvaraḥ**

puṣpaiḥ - with flowers; *yasya* - whose; *mudā* - gladly; *svayaṁ* - personally; *giridharaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *svairam* - freely; *nikuñjeśvarīm* - the queen of the groves; *phullām* - blissfully; *phullataraiḥ* - completely blossoming; *amaṇḍayat* - decorated; *alaṁ* - greatly; *phullaḥ* - blissful; *nikuñjeśvaraḥ* - the king of the groves; *iṣat* - slightly; *netra* - eyes; *vighūrṇanena* - by twirling; *kalita* - made; *svādhīna* - independent; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *tayā* - by Her; *śrīmān* - beautiful; *sa* - he; *prathayatu* - may expand; *aho* - O!; *mama* - my; *dṛśaḥ* - sight; *saukhyaṁ* - happiness; *kadambeśvaraḥ* - the king of Kadamba-trees.

May the beautiful king of Kadamba-trees, whose fully blooming flowers are blissfully used by Giridhārī, the king of the kuñjas, Who is totally subdued by even the slightest sidelong glance of His beloved Nikuñjeśvarī Rādhā, Whose heart also blossoms of jubilation, to decorate Her with, delight my eyes.

Stavāmrta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Kadambeśvara, the worshipable, large Kadamba-tree of Vṛndāvana, is being praised.

From the obvious sweetness of this verse we can understand that it was spoken with a particular pastime in mind.

The memory of a bygone pastime awakens here. How pure are the inconceivable feelings of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī! His heart and mind are always immersed in the transcendental flavours of these pastimes. No one reveals

experiences in *bhājana*, but the *ācāryas* have been so merciful to record their experiences in their books. Out of mercy upon the conditioned souls, who are scorched by the threefold material miseries and who are bewildered by *māyā*, the Gosvāmīs have broadcast the message of the *ramya-bhāva-loka* (the spiritual world, where all feelings are so lovely) in the material world. Thus they have blessed the conditioned souls by making them discover this blissful and transcendental abode.

Once Śrī Raghunātha had the following transcendental vision:

In his *kin̄karī-svarūpa*, he/she escorts Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī on Her love-journey, helping Her to meet Śyāmasundara in the *nikuñja*. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both become overwhelmed by ecstasy when They approach Each other.

The *kin̄karī* closes the door of the *nikuñja* and peeps in through the holes in the foliage to relish the sweetness of the confidential pastimes of the Divine Pair. How wonderful is Their expertise in love-making! The fish-like eyes of the *kin̄karī* are blissfully swimming on the high waves of pastimes in the ocean of *bhāva* (ecstatic love) and *rasa* (transcendental flavours).

Now the love-pastimes are over and the Divine Pair lies against Each other in complete exhaustion on Their bed of flowers, as if They serve as Each other's pillows.

Śyāmasundara is beside Himself of ecstasy when He beholds Svāminī's lotus-like face after Their love-pastimes.

*līlā ante sukhe ihāra ye aṅga mādhurī;
tāhā dekhi sukhe āmi āpanā pāsari*

(C.C.)

Śyāma stares at Svāminī's face and relishes the wonderful sweetness of Her limbs through the cups of His eyes. It is as if streams of sweetness gush from Svāminī's limbs! Śyāma is beside Himself from drinking the sweetness of this nectar, like a thirsty Cakora-bird.

Śrīmatī then accepts the mood of *svādhīna bhartṛkā*. *svāyattāsana dayitā bhavet svādhīna bhartṛkā* (Ujjvala Nilamaṇi)

"A *svādhīna-bhartṛkā* is a lady who has her lover always by her side and under her control."

Casting a slight sidelong glance full of feeling at Śyāmasundara's face, Svāminī says:

"Śyāma! My dress and ornaments are all messed up! Arrange them as they were before! When My *sakhīs* see Me like this they will laugh at Me!"

*racaya kucayoḥ patraṁ citraṁ kuruṣva kapalayor
ghaṭaya jaghane kāñcīmañca srajā kavari-bharam
kalaya balaya-śreṇīm pāṇau pade kuru nūpurāv
iti nigaditaḥ prītaḥ pītāmbaro'pi tathākarot*

(Gīta Govindam)

"O dearest One! Make Makarī-pictures on My breasts and make other pictures on My cheeks. Hang My sash of bells around My waist, place a garland in My braid, hang bangles on My wrists and anklebells on My feet!"

Śyāma follows Śrīmatī's orders and becomes absorbed in decorating Her.

How wonderful are the *sāttvika* transformations of ecstasy on Śyāma's body as He dresses His beloved!

He, Who casually lifted the Govardhana Hill for seven days, can no longer control Himself now. He shivers, gets goose bumps and perspires.

Svāminī also perspires and blossoms of ecstasy when She is touched by Śyāmasundara's hands. The maidservant dries up the Yugala's drops of perspiration by sweetly fanning Them. How expertly He dresses Her! The maidservant is completely beside herself when she sees it.

In his meditation, the practising devotee should attain the sweet relish of this *rasa*. The relish of this meditation is very sweet. With the help of these meditations, the *rasika* devotee will arrive in the transcendental kingdom of *rasa* and relish the sweetness of these pastimes as if perceiving them directly.

Śyāma picks flowers to dress and ornament Śrīmatī with. He brings in Kadamba-flowers that He picked from a large Kadamba-tree who is being served (relished) by a swarm of bees, and with these Kadamba-flowers He makes a garland to decorate Her braid with.

He makes a wonderful garland, full of Kadamba-flowers and -leaves and hangs it around Her neck. How wonderfully beautiful Śrīmatī is! She is just like the Queen of the Nikuñja! Is a Queen not to be worshipped? With tear filled eyes, Premapūjārī Śyāma offers everything to Śrīmatī's lotus feet - body, mind and life-airs - through these Kadamba-flowers.

Kiṅkarī Tulasī is beside herself of ecstasy when she witnesses the pastimes of the Divine Pair. Seeing Svāminī's prominence, her mind and life-airs have gone to the kingdom of unknown bliss. Taking the remembrance of this honey-sweet pastime in his heart, Śrī Raghunātha praises this **Kadambeśvara** in this verse.

*viśāla kadamba ḍāle, praphulla kadamba phule,
yāra śobhā kohone nā yāy
kuñješvara giridhare, puṣpa heri harṣa bhare
sānande cayana kori tāya*

"Blissfully, Giridhārī, the king of the groves, picks indescribably beautiful and blooming Kadamba-flowers from the large Kadamba-branches, after blissfully looking at them."

*kuñješvarī śrī rādhikā, rūpa guṇe sarvādhikā,
praphullita nā dhare ānanda
kadambera phula rāje, nija hāte rasa rāje,
sājāiche raciyā prabandha*

"Rasarāja (Kṛṣṇa, the king of relishers) makes floral ornaments of these regal Kadamba-flowers with His own hands, while the bliss of Śrī Rādhikā, the queen of the *kuñjas*, Whose beauty and qualities are supreme, knows no bounds."

*svādhīna bhartṛkā rādhā, pūrāiche mana sādā,
ye kadambera pari phula hāra.
se śrīmān kadambేశvara, yāra tale vilāsa ghara,
netrotsava koruna āmāra*

"In this way He fulfills the desires of Śrī Rādhā, the independent lady-love, by making a garland of Kadamba-flowers for Her. May the beautiful king of Kadamba-trees, at whose base a cottage for love-play is situated, create a festival for my eyes!"

VERSE 74:

**nīcaih prauḍha-bhayāt svayaṁ sura-patiḥ pādaḥ vidhṛtyeḥa yaiḥ
 svar-gaṅgā-salilaiḥ cakāra surabhi-dvārābhiṣekotsavam
 govindasya navam gavāṁ adhipatā rājye sphuṭam kautukāt
 tair yat prādurabhūt sadā sphuratu tad govinda-kuṇḍam dr̥ṣoḥ**

nīcaih - with humility; *prauḍha* - great; *bhayāt* - out of fear; *svayaṁ* - personally; *surapatiḥ* - the king of the gods; *pādaḥ* - two feet; *vidhṛtya* - holding; *iha* - here; *yaiḥ* - with which; *svar-gaṅgā* - the Ganges from heaven; *salilaiḥ* - by the waters; *cakāra* - did; *surabhi dvārā* - through a Surabhi-cow; *abhiṣeka* - ceremonial bathing; *utsavam* - festival; *govindasya* - of Govinda; *navam* - new; *gavāṁ* - cows; *adhipatā* - presiding lord; *rājye* - in the kingdom; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *kautukāt* - out of fun; *taiḥ* - by them; *yat* - what; *prādurabhūt* - happened; *sadā* - always; *sphuratu* - may be manifest; *tad* - that; *govinda kuṇḍam* - Govinda Kuṇḍa; *dr̥ṣoḥ* - to the eyes.

May Śrī Govinda Kuṇḍa, where Indra, the king of the gods, humbly clasped Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, afraid that he had committed an offence to Him, where he had a blissful shower-festival arranged to crown Kṛṣṇa as Govinda, the king of the cows, with the water of the celestial Gaṅgā through a Surabhi-cow, and that became visible through those waters, become manifest before my eyes.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Gosvāmīcaraṇa praises Śrī Govinda Kuṇḍa, a pond at the base of Śrī Girirāja. During one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's special pastimes this eternally perfect Śrī Govinda Kuṇḍa advented itself.

Out of mercy on the king of the gods Indra, who, out of ignorance, got stuck in the mud of great offences by accepting

worship from Śrī Nanda and the cowherders, the eternally perfect companions who are worshipable even for the Original Personality of Godhead Vrajendra-Nandana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa caused Śrī Nanda and the cowherds to give up the Indra-pūjā and to commence the Govardhana pūjā. Stupefied by his own opulence, Indra became very upset that his worship had been stopped and he engaged the clouds used to destroy the universe to inundate Vraja. By showering Vraja-dhāma for seven days and nights with powerful torrents of rain and thunderbolts he tried to cause great harm, and thus he committed a great offence.

Finally, on the advice of Lord Brahmā, he went to Vraja with mother Surabhi, offered humble prayers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was blissfully sitting on the Govardhana Hill, and bathed Him with the waters of the celestial Gaṅgā through mother Surabhi.

This can be known through the following description in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.27.1-3):

*govardhane dhr̥te śaila āsārād rakṣite vraje;
golokād āvrajat kṛṣṇam surabhiḥ śakra eva ca
vivikta upasaṅgamyā vr̥ditaḥ kṛta helanaḥ;
pasparśe pādayoṛ enaṁ kir̥tenārka varcasā
dṛṣṭa śrutānubhāvo'sya kṛṣṇasyāmita tejasah;
naṣṭa trilokeśa mada indra āha kṛtāñjalih*

"After Śrī Kṛṣṇa had protected the Vrajavāsīs from the powerful hailstorms by lifting Govardhana Hill, Surabhi and Indra came from the Go-loka (planet of cows) and took shelter of His lotus feet. Indra, who had become very embarrassed because he had disrespected Śrī Kṛṣṇa, considering Him to be just an ordinary boy, approached the Lord in solitude and offered his obeisances unto Him, touching the Lord's lotus feet

with his crown, that shone like the sun. Having seen the limitless power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and having heard about it from Lord Brahmā, Indra, whose pride of being the lord of the three worlds had been crushed, began to praise the Lord with folded hands."

After Śrī Indra had praised Śrī Kṛṣṇa with various reverential prayers, the most merciful son of Śrī Vraja-rāja smiled and said, with a voice as deep as the rumbling of the clouds:

*mayā te'kāri maghavan makha-bhaṅgo'nugrhnatā;
mad anusmṛtaye nityaṁ mattasyendra-śrīyā bhṛśam
mām aiśvarya śrī madāndho daṇḍa-pāṇim na paśyati
taṁ bhraṁśayāmi sampadbhṛyo yasya cecchāmyanugraham
gamyatām śakra bhadrāṁ vaḥ kriyatām me'nusāśanam
sthūyatām svādhikāreṣu yuktair vaḥ stambha varjitaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.27.15-17)

"O King of the gods! You had become greatly blinded with illusion due to your regal position, therefore I destroyed the sacrifice that was due to you in order to help you always to remember Me. Those who are intoxicated by false pride over their wealth and lordship cannot conceive of Me as the ruler and chastiser of all. If I want to bestow my mercy on one of them, I make him lose all his wealth. O Indra! Return to your abode! May all be well with you! You (demigods) all accept my sovereignty and remain on your posts without any false pride!"

After this, mother Surabhi and her calves paid obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and offered beautiful praises to Him. Then Surabhi showered Śrī Kṛṣṇa with water from the celestial Gaṅgā and a stream of her own milk and gave Him the title of **Govinda**, the king of cows. At that time Tumburu, Nārada, the

Gandharvas, Vidyādharas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas began to sing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's spotless glories and the Apsarās began to dance in topmost ecstasy. The demigods began to shower flowers from the sky, the soil of the earth became muddled by the milk that oozed from the cows, streams of *ghī* and milk began to flow in the rivers, streams of honey began to trickle from the trees, wheat and barley sprang up from the earth and ripened without the aid of sowing or ploughing, and the earth became newly decorated by innumerable jewels and other gems that came from the mines in the mountains.

From the water that showered Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs, this selfmanifest **Śrī Govinda-Kuṇḍa** advented itself.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "May that Govinda Kuṇḍa become visible to my eyes!"

*ṣaḍ aiśvarya yāra pade, se govinda-gocarete,
garva atiśaya tuccha hoy
bhaye devarāja indre, govinda padāravinde,
śaraṇete paḍiyā loṭāya
koto nā minati kori, stuti kore kara yoḍi,
surabhi dugdha mandākinī nīre
sei surapati indre, kṛpāmaya śrī govinde,
abhiṣeka kore bhakti bhare.
sei abhiṣeka nīre, prādurbhūta sarovare,
śrī govinda kuṇḍa yāra nāma
heno bhāgya hobe kobe, nayana gocara hobe,
dhanya hobo nīre kori snāna*

"When Indra, the king of the gods, perceived Śrī Govinda, Who is complete in six opulences, his glory became extremely insignificant. Fearfully he took shelter of Govinda's lotus feet and rolled in their dust. Humbly he praised the Lord with folded hands and devotedly bathed the merciful Śrī Govinda

with Surabhi's milk and the water from the celestial Gaṅgā. When will Śrī Govinda Kuṅḍa, the lake that advented itself from the water of this bathing-ceremony, become visible to my eyes, and when will I be blessed to bathe in its waters?"

VERSE 75:

**vrajendra-varyārpita-bhogam uccai-
dhṛtvā bṛhat-kāyam aghārī utkaḥ
vareṇa rādhām chalayan vibhunkte
yatrāṇṇa-kūṭam tad aham prapadye**

vrajendra - King Nanda; *varya* - excellent; *arpita* - offered; *bhogam* - offering of food; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *dhṛtvā* - having been carried; *bṛhat* - great; *kāyam* - body; *aghārī* - Kṛṣṇa; *utkaḥ* - eagerly; *vareṇa* - with a boon; *rādhām* - Rādhā; *chalyan* - deceived; *vibhunkte* - enjoyed; *yatra* - where; *anna-kūṭam* - Annakūṭa; *tad* - that; *aham* - I; *prapadye* - surrender.

I take shelter of the place where Śrī Nanda Mahārāja offered the Annakūṭa-feast to Govardhana Hill, and where Śrī Kṛṣṇa deceived Śrī Rādhā by offering Her a boon, assuming a very huge body.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises the place where the Annakūṭa-feast was offered to Govardhana-Hill.

At this place, Śrī Kṛṣṇa convinced His father to give up the habit of offering to Indra and to commence the tradition of offering to Govardhana-Hill, and here Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed a

huge body, proclaimed Himself to be the Govardhana Hill and ate the huge offering of foodstuffs called Annakūṭa, which was given by Śrī Nanda Mahārāja. *kṛṣṇas tvanyatamaṁ rūpaṁ gopa viśrambhaṇaṁ gataḥ; śailo'smīti bruvaṇ bhūri balim ādad brhad-vapuḥ* (Bhāg. 10.24.35) "To bestow faith on the cowherds Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed another huge body, proclaimed 'I am Govardhana Hill!', and ate the huge feast offered by the cowherds."

In his book Śrī Gopāla Campūḥ (Pūrva, 18th Pūraṇa), Śrīpad Jīva Gosvāmī has described how Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed this large form to eat the Annakūṭa-offering:

*annānyādhaka koṭi taṇḍula-kṛtānyādāya tad vyañjanāny-
apyeṣa pratikūṭam eka kavala prāptānnaṁ ādat tathā
madhyaṁ madhyam anupakṛṣya tu yathā nīraṁ piban palvalān
kuṇḍānyāśu sarāṁsi kiñca sarito ninye kṣayaṁ sarvataḥ
yadā grāsāya sa karaṁ prasārayati cāgrataḥ tadā sarve dravanti sma
sarvataś caṭakā iva
madhye kṛtya vyañjanānyannakūṭaṁ grāsāṁ grāsāṁ pāṇinā dakṣiṇena
tarjany āśv abud diśan vāmayā taṁ śakraṁ lolat prāntagatyā jahāsa
doṣṇas tasyāśv ati parimiti grāsa hetoḥ prasāre
cākuñce ca sthagita haritaḥ prāpta tat tad gaṇitām
akṣṇām āśid vraja kula bhuvāṁ citra-vṛnde'pi citraṁ
yat kvāpyekaṁ na kila gaṇitaṁ sikhtham ekaṁ sthitaṁ na
ataritṛṇyata grāsān bhūbhṛd bhūbhṛd yathā yathā
acalīknapyatāpyuccair māṁsalāya tathā tathā*

"This giant took handfuls of rice and vegetables from each of the huge piles of food and began to eat it, and inbetween He attracted small ponds, lakes and rivers to have something to drink. In this way the pools and ponds were all dried up. Wherever Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had attained the form of

Govardhana-Hill, stuck out His hand to take some food, all the Vrajavāsīs came running, just like Caṭaka-birds.

The Govardhana-giant placed all the vegetables in the piles of rice and began to take big morsels with His right hand, while sticking up His left thumb and index finger as if deriding Indra. To take more food, He began to extend and retract His hand so fast that He covered all four directions.

When the Vrajavāsīs saw this with their own eyes they became greatly astonished, because there was not even one grain of rice left over at the place where the mountain had eaten. He had become fattened and nourished exactly to the extent in which He had eaten.

In this way Girirāja had finished His meal in no time."

*bālā bhītiṁ yauvanonmatta cittā hāsaṁ vṛddhās citram arhās tu bhaktim
yātā ye ye teṣu sarveṣu devaḥ śuddhāṁ tuṣṭiṁ kautukitvād bhāja
dūrād durāt pūram ādāya bārāṁ vaktraṁ śasvat kṣālayann adri-devaḥ
śhivann uccaiḥ pṛṣṭha-deśe samantād vṛṣṭiṁ kurvan śaspa sṛṣṭiṁ cakāra
gaṅḍuṣāṇām antare vaṁśa daṅḍair dantāntargānyanna piṅḍāni kuṣṇan
udyan mūrtis tatra śailādhidevaḥ pūrtiṁ kurvan prāṇa-bhājāṁ sasarja
tāmbūlānām viṭikāḥ koṭi kharvaṁ kūṭikurvaṁś carvayan garva phullāḥ
prānta cchāyāmaṅḍalaś caṇḍa raśmiḥ prātar yadvat tadvadāsyam cakāra*

"Seeing the most amazing way in which Śrī Girirāja was eating, the children became afraid, the youngsters laughed and the elders became astonished. Jubilant Girirāja was very pleased with anyone who had become qualified for devotional service. Then He got Himself water from afar, repeatedly washed His mouth with it and repeatedly spat the water out again. This water caused high grass to grow. Then Girirāja took some large bamboo-rods and brushed His teeth with them.

By revealing this peerless transcendental form, Girirāja fulfilled everyone's desires. Then He took millions of betel

leaves and began to chew them. Blossoming of pride, He made His face look even more beautiful than the morning sun."

Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmīpāda says: "Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed this gigantic form when He had the mount worshipped so that He could find a pretext to deceive Śrī Rādhā by granting Her a boon.

Out of bashfulness, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa cannot freely look at Each other in front of Their superiors. This desire, cherished within the heart for so long, had become so strong that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had revealed this gigantic mountain-form in which He could eat. Now Śrī Rādhārāṇī could freely gaze at Her beloved form in front of Her elders and swim in an ocean of bliss by accepting Her blessing at the time when everyone else was also accepting blessings from Girirāja. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has written:

*paraṁ girir eva satraṁ hariṇā na prakāśitam
kintu śrī rādhikādinām ānanendurucer api*

"In this pastime Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not only reveal the sacrifice to Girirāja; He also relished the increase of beauty of the moon-like faces of Śrī Rādhikā and the Vrajasundarīs."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of the place at the base of Girirāja where Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Annakūṭa-pastime took place."

*śrī nanda vrajendra varya, manete koriyā dhārya,
kṛṣṇa-yukti koriyā śravaṇa
annakūṭa arpaṇa kore, govardhana girivare,
vraje yoto gopa gopīgaṇa
śrī govinda agocare, prakāṇḍa mūrati dhare,
annakūṭa korilā bhojana*

*varādi pradāna chale, rādhāke chalanā kore,
se sthānera loinu śaraṇa*

"I take shelter of the place where Śrī Vrajendra Nanda patiently listened to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's advice to offer a mountain of food to Girirāja Govardhana with all the cowherd men and women, and where Śrī Govinda assumed a gigantic form in an unseen way, so that He could eat the food-mountain and deceive Śrī Rādhā on the pretext of offering Her a boon."

VERSE 76:

**girīndra-varyopari-hāra-rūpī
hariḥ svayaṁ yatra vihāra-kārī
sadā mudā rājati rāja-bhogai-
hari-sthalaṁ tat tu bhaje'nurāgaiḥ**

girīndra-varya - the king of mountains; *upari* - at the peak of; *hāra* - enchanting; *rūpī* - in the form of; *hariḥ* - Hari; *svayaṁ* - Himself; *yatra* - where; *vihāra-kārī* - enjoyer; *sadā* - always; *mudā* - joyfully; *rājati* - shines; *rāja* - royal; *bhogaiḥ* - with enjoyments; *haristhalaṁ* - Haristhala; *tat* - that; *tu* - indeed; *bhaje* - I worship; *anurāgaiḥ* - with great love.

With great love I worship Haristhala, the place at the peak of Śrī Girirāja Govardhana, where enchanting Hari always blissfully enjoys Himself like a king.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Haristhala is praised.

Haristhala is the place, where Hari assumes an enchanting

form and enjoys Himself like a king. Because He steals everyone's mind one of the Lord's names is 'Hari'. Śrī Hari assumes many other forms, and they are all enchanting, but there is no Hari that is no naturally mindstealing as Vrajendranandana. Not only is He able to steal others' minds, He has the nature to enchant even His own mind! *vismāpanam svasya ca* (Bhāgavata). *rūpa dekhi āpanāra, kṛṣṇera hoy camatkār*(C.C.)

No one else but Kṛṣṇa has such a nature. The sweetness and beauty of Madana-Mohana-Vraja-Vihārī is incomparable!

Anyone who takes shelter of the sacred words of those who perceive this form with the eyes of passionate divine love will also be able to perceive this extraordinary form of Madana-Mohana.

There is no comparison to the passionate love of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura. He describes Vrajendra-Nandana exactly in the way in which he saw Him with the eyes of sacred passion:

*māraḥ svayaṁ nu madhura dyuti-maṅḍalam nu
mādhuryam eva nu mano nayanāmṛtam nu
venī-mṛjo nu mama jīvito vallabho nu
kṛṣṇo'yam abhyudayate mama locanāya*

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta)

"Is this Cupid himself? If not, then how can He create such lusty feelings (of pure love) in My heart when He appears?"

No, no, it can't be, for Cupid may be able to stir the mind, but he does not have so much splendour, and this one here has literally waves of splendour! Then is it some halo?"

But how could that be? There is light in a halo of course, but not so much sweetness! Then is this sweetness personified?"

No, for that does not have this nectar, that is relishable for the mind and the eyes! Then is it some fresh nectar for the eyes and mind? No, no, for this is an indescribable ocean of relish that far transcends that! Is He then My Mādhava, who loosens My braid? Has My Prāṇa-vallabha Śrī Kṛṣṇa come delight My eyes?"

Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the descension Who came to sanctify the age of Kali, said, while relishing the mellows of this verse:

*kibā ei sākṣāt kāma, dyuti bimba mūrtimān,
ki mādhyaya svayaṁ mūrtimanta
kibā mano netrotsava, kibā prāṇa vallabha,
satya kṛṣṇa āilā netrānanda*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"Is this Cupid, a personified halo or the embodiment of sweetness? Or is it a festival for the eyes and mind, or the lover of My heart? Truly, Kṛṣṇa has come to delight My eyes!"

Experienced people can immediately see that - is there any other form of Godhead that maddens the heart and mind with this kind of beauty or nature, which has been described in such an ecstatic language?

Not only that, there is another extraordinary nature that maddens the mind of a person that experienced this form, that enchants Cupid. Those who have experienced this form sometimes think there is no limit to their bliss and sometimes they think that there is no limit to this misery. Sometimes they think they are scorched by a forest fire and sometimes they think they are residing in the cool water of the river Yamunā.

In this way the hearts and minds of persons who have experienced this blend of poison and nectar, or of bliss and

anguish are not just taken away, but they go beyond themselves in all respects by some amazing condition that is inconceivable to body, mind and words.

A ray of this experience is also found in the descriptions of Līlāśuka -

*adhīra bimbādhara vibhrameṇa harṣādra veṇu svara sampadā ca
anena kenāpi manohareṇa hā hanta hā hanta mano dūnoṣi*

(Śrī Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛtam - 36)

"Alas! With the indescribable movements of Your cherry-like lips and with Your blissful flute-playing You are afflicting my mind!"

Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmīpāda writes in his Sāraṅga-Raṅgadā-commentary on this verse:

*ato manohareṇa mano mātraṁ harati kāryaṁ na siddhayati
indrajālavat yat tena*

"He steals the mind with His form and qualities, but does not reach perfection. Therefore this work of attracting the mind is illusory like a magic trick."

This mind-stealing Hari is very blissfully enjoying Himself like a great king on the peak of Girirāja Govardhana at the place called **Haristhala**, and Śrīpāda Raghunātha is passionately yearning to worship this Haristhala for the fulfillment of his sacred aspirations.

*girindra-govardhanera śikhara pradēse;
hari yathā cittahāri divya rūpa veśe
vividha vihāra sukhe prīti anurāge;
virāja korena mahārājocita bhoge
sei 'haristhala' āmi bhaji anurāge;
satata rahibo paḍi giri taṭa-bhāge*

"I passionately worship the place called Haristhala on the peak of Girirāja Govardhana, where Hari stands in a divine form, wearing a mind-stealing dress and blissfully enjoying different pastimes with passionate love, just like a great king. For this I always fall in prostration at the base of Girirāja."

VERSE 77:

**ghaṭṭa-kriḍā-kutukita-manā nāgarendro navīno
dānī bhūtvā madana-nṛpater gavya-dāna-cchalena
yatra prātaḥ sakhibhir abhito veṣṭitaḥ saṁrurodha
śrī-gāndharvān nija-gaṇa-vṛtām naumi tām kṛṣṇa-vedim**

ghaṭṭa-kriḍā - the toll-pastime; *kutukita* - delighted; *manā* - mind; *nāgarendra* - the king of amorous heroes; *navīnaḥ* - young; *dānī* - the tax-collector; *bhūtvā* - having become; *madana* - Cupid; *nṛpateḥ* - of the king; *gavya* - dairy products; *dāna* - payment; *cchalena* - on the pretext of; *yatra* - where; *prātaḥ* - in the morning; *sakhibhiḥ* - by friends; *abhitaḥ* - completely; *veṣṭitaḥ* - surrounded; *saṁrurodha* - obstructed; *śrī gāndharvān* - Śrī Rādhā; *nija* - own; *gaṇa* - party; *vṛtām* - surrounded; *naumi* - I offer my obeisances; *tām* - unto her; *kṛṣṇa-vedim* - unto Kṛṣṇa-vedī.

I offer my obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa-vedī, the place where the youthful amorous hero, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by His friends, became a toll collector for King Cupid one morning and jubilantly played the Dāna-pastime by obstructing Śrī Gāndharvikā and Her girlfriends on the pretext of collecting tax from them on their dairy products.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Kṛṣṇa-vedī, the place at the Dāna-ghāṭī of Govardhana Hill.⁴⁵ It was here that the crown jewel of amorous heroes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, had a lot of fun by dressing Himself wonderfully as a toll collector and stopping Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends on the road on the pretext of collecting tax from them.

For the welfare of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva, Vasudeva had engaged Bhāgūrī Ṛṣi to commence a great sacrifice near Govinda-Kuṇḍa, at the base of Govardhana Hill.

It was announced all over Vraja that any *gopī* who would personally take a jug of *ghī* on her head and donate it to the sacrifice would certainly have all of her desires fulfilled.

Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her girlfriends took golden jugs with fresh and fragrant *ghī* on their heads and headed towards Govardhana.

Hearing this news from a parrot, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His dear most friends went to the peak of Govardhana Hill and erected a peerless Dāna-Ghāṭī (toll station) there on a large platform called **Śyāma Vedī**.

*jñatvā tāsāṃ gamanam aciram kira-varyasya vaktrād
smitvā narma priya sakhagaṇair āvṛtaḥ sāvadhānaḥ
śailendrasyopari parilasann udbhṛta śyāmavedyāṃ
ghaṭṭipattāṃ vidadhad atulaṃ ballabādhiśa sūnuḥ*

(Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi - 15)

⁴⁵ Dāna Ghāṭī is situated on the Govardhana Hill, on the right side of the road from Govardhana to Delhi. Ed.

Seeing Śrī Rādhā walking with the charming gait of a swan, decorated with different garments and ornaments and holding a golden jug with *ghī* on Her head, being surrounded by Her girlfriends, Śyāmasundara became enchanted and thought:

*phulla campaka vallikāvalir iyaṁ kiṁ no na sā jaṅgamā
kiṁ vidyul latikā-tatir nahi ghane sa khe kṣaṇa dyotinī
kiṁ jyotir laharī sarin nahi na sā mūrtim vahet tad dhruvaṁ
jñātam jñātam asau sakhikula vṛtā rādhā sphuṭam prāñcati*

(Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi - 19)

"Is this a blooming Campaka-vine? No, because that does not move! Then is it a lightning strike? No, that also not, because the lightning rests in a cloud in the sky! Then is it a riverstream of effulgence? No, that is also not possible, because that has no form! Then I know for sure that it is Rādhā, Who is coming this way, surrounded by Her girlfriends!". Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *premamayī* Śrī Rādhā was also astonished and told Her girlfriends -

*kiṁ navyāmbuda eṣa bhavya-vadanāḥ kiṁ nīla ratnānkuraḥ
kiṁ nīlotpala navya mūrtir api kiṁ kastūrikā vibhramaḥ
āsteṣv eṣa na ko'pi hanta yad ayaṁ nastāpaye nirbharam
tasmād gokulacandra eva bhavitā śyāmo'dbhuta kṣmādhare*

"O fair-faced girlfriends! Is this a fresh rain cloud, a fresh sprout of sapphire, a new kind of blue lotus or a musk perfume? No, it is none of these things, because they do not give us so much pain! It must be wonderful Śyāma, the moon of Gokula, there on the hill!"

Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rādhā, Who was overwhelmed by mind-stealing feelings of ecstasy, walked on slowly with Her girlfriends.

Then, suddenly, Subala came running up to them, stood before them and loudly exclaimed: "O hey you milkmaids! Why are you avoiding this toll-station? Come here and pay your dues!"

The proud girls on the road proudly shrugged their shoulders and walked on without even blinking an eye in his direction. At each and every step, Śrīmatī extended a net of very powerful influence over Śyāma-Nāgara's mind. Nāgara was enchanted by the sounds of Her ornaments! As if bewitched by a *mantra*, the enchanting toll collector came running: flute in His hand, a smile on His face and casting sidelong glances. Obstructing the way for Śrīmatī our hero stood there and said:

"Pay Me My toll!" How beautiful Svāminī looked! How wonderfully She manifested Her *kila-kiñcita-bhāva*!

*antaḥ smeratayojjvalā jalakaṇā vyākīrṇa pakṣmāṅkurā
kiñcit pāṭalitāñcalā rasikatotsiktā puraḥ kuñcati
ruddhāyāḥ pathi mādhavena madhura vyābhugnatārottara
rādhāyāḥ kila kiñcita stavakīni dṛṣṭiḥ śriyaṃ vaḥ kriyāt*

(Dāna Keli Kaumudī - 1)

"When Śrī Rādhā is obstructed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa on the road to the Dāna Ghāṭī, Her glance attains some brightness because of Her slight smile, which is caused by Her inner joy. Her eyelashes are studded with tear drops, the corners of Her eyes look ruddy, Her glances are sprinkled with lusciousness, but become crooked when She faces Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the pupils of Her eyes are crooked in a sweet mood and thus carry an

extraordinary beauty. May this *kīla kiñcita-bhāva* in Śrī Rādhā's eyes, which is like a bouquet of flowers, bestow all auspiciousness on you!"

*kīla kiñcita bhāva bhūṣāra śuno vivaraṇa;
 ye bhūṣāya bhūṣita rādhā hare kṛṣṇa-mana
 rādhā dekhi kṛṣṇa yadi chuite kore mana;
 dāna-ghāṭī pathe yabe varjena gamana
 yabe āsi mānā kore puṣpa uṭhāite;
 sakhī āge cāhe yadi aṅge hasta dite
 ei sab sthane 'kīla kiñcita' udgama;
 prathamei harṣa sañcārī mūla kāraṇa
 āra sāta bhāva āsi sahaje milaya;
 aṣṭa bhāva sammilane mahābhāva hoy
 garva, abhilāṣa, bhaya, śuṣka rudita;
 krodha asūyā saha āra manda smita
 nānā svādu aṣṭabhāve ekatra milana;
 yāhāra āsvāde tṛpta hoy kṛṣṇa mana
 dadhi khaṇḍa ghṛta madhu marica karpūra;
 elāci milane yaiche 'rasāla' madhura
 ei bhāva yukta dekhi rādhāsyā nayana;
 saṅgama hoite sukha pāya koṭi guṇa*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"Listen to the description of the emotional ornamentation named *kīla-kiñcita-bhāva*. When Śrī Rādhā is decorated with these ornaments, She steals Kṛṣṇa's heart. When Kṛṣṇa sees Rādhā and wants to touch Her, He goes to the Dāna Ghāṭī and tries to stop Her there on the road, and when She comes to pick flowers Kṛṣṇa tries to lay His hands on Her in front of Her girlfriends.

At all these places the *kīla-kiñcita-bhāva* awakens in Her,

starting with joy, which is the primal cause of infused emotions (*sañcārī bhāvas*). The other seven ecstasies naturally meet with the first one, and when all the eight ecstasies are found together, we have *mahābhāva*. When these eight different delectable ecstasies, like pride, desire, fear, dry weeping, anger, envy and mild smiling come together, the relish satisfies Kṛṣṇa's mind.

It is as sweet as Rasālā, which contains yoghurt, rock candy, *ghī*, honey, black pepper, camphor and cardamom.

When Kṛṣṇa sees Śrī Rādhā's face and eyes endowed with these feelings it makes Him millions of times happier than when He directly unites with Her."

Because He hankers for the indescribably sweet relish of Śrī Rādhā's emotional displays like *kila kiñcita* Śrī Kṛṣṇa initiates humorous pastimes like the *Dāna-līlā*. Śyāmasundara speaks with the *sakhīs*, while Svāminī remains silent. The *sakhīs* say: "We never heard of a tollstation near Govardhana Hill before!" Śyāma says: "How amazing! They have never heard yet of the king of toll-collectors named Madana (Cupid)! Don't speak like that again! If King Madana hears it you will have to suffer a great royal punishment!" How many hundreds of memories are awakened of the wonderful erotic flavours of laughing and joking of the enchanting tollcollector with Śrī Gāndharvikā and Her girlfriends, when seeing Kṛṣṇa Vedī in this way.

Śrī Raghunātha says: "I offer my obeisances unto this Kṛṣṇa Vedī."

rasikendra cūdāmaṇi, hoiyā yethā mahādānī,
dāna līlāya kutukīta manā.
prātaḥ kāle sakhā saṅge, dāna māge mahāraṅge,
yathā rādhā saṅge vrajāṅganā
madana rājera ājñāte, dāna dāo e ghāṭete,

loiyā yāo dadhi, gṛta yoto.
eto boli nāgarendra, hāsya kori mṛdu manda,
avarodha koilo gopī patha.
vandi 'kṛṣṇa vedī' seho, yathā kṛṣṇa sakhā saha,
nitya raṅge korena vihāra
śrī rādhikā sakhī saṅge, kobe sethā yābe raṅge,
heno dina ki hoibe amāya?

"I praise the Kṛṣṇa-Vedī, where the crown jewel of relishers becomes a great tax collector, eagerly desiring to play the Dāna-līlā, and where He always comes in the morning with His friends and has great fun in levying tax from Rādhā and the Vraja-gopīs. Slightly smiling and saying 'Pay Me tax of all your yoghurt and *ghī* on the order of king Cupid, here at this toll-station!', Nāgarendra stopped the *gopīs* on the road.

When will the day be mine when I can go there with Śrī Rādhikā and Her *sakhīs*?"

VERSE 78:

nibhṛtam ajani yasmād dāna-nirvṛtir asmi
yatra idam abhidhānaṁ prāpayat tat sabhāyām
rasa-vimukha-nigūḍhe tatra taj-jñāika-vedye
sarasi bhavati vāso dāna-nirvartanena

nibhṛtam - solitary; *ajani* - became; *yasmād* - from which; *dāna* - tax; *nirvṛtīḥ* - collection; *asminn* - in this; *ata* - therefore; *idam* - here; *abhidhānaṁ* - name; *prāpa* - attained; *yat* - which; *tat* - that; *sabhāyām* - in the assembly; *rasa* - flavours; *vimukha* - averse; *nigūḍhe* - hidden; *tatra* -there; *tat* - that; *jñā* - knowing; *eka* - only; *vedye* -

knowable; *sarasi* - lake; *bhavatu* - let it be; *vāsaḥ* - residence; *dāna* - tax; *nirvartanena* - by fulfillment.

May we reside at Dāna-Nirvartana kuṇḍa, the solitary place where Rādhā and Mādhava completed Their Dāna-līlā, for which it is called Dāna-Nivṛtti-kuṇḍa in the assembly of devotees. This place is hidden for those who are averse to tasting transcendental mellows and is only known to those who know these transcendental flavours.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises Dāna Nirvartana Kuṇḍa, the lake on whose bank the most *rasika* Dāna-*līlā* was completed. There is no comparison to the sweetness of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's Dāna-*līlā*. Seeing the great anguish of separation of *viraha mūrti* (the embodiment of love-in-separation) Śrī Raghunātha, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who acted like a doctor who could cure his patient from severe burning-wounds⁴⁶ gave him his 'Lalita Mādhava'-play to read, which is filled with the great *rasa* of separation experienced by Śrī Rādhā after Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vraja for Mathurā.

When Śrīla Raghunātha, who is the manifest embodiment of *vipralambha-rasa* (the flavour of love-in-separation) read the story of the play, which is filled with great *vipralambha-rasa*, he became like mad, to the extent that he was about to die.

Then Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī composed 'Dāna Keli Kaumudī', a play which is full of *sambhoga rasa* (the flavour of transcendental union) and gave it to Raghunātha to read, taking back the Lalita Mādhava-book on the pretext of wanting to edit it.

Reading about the Dāna-*līlā*, which is the abode of Śrī-Śrī

⁴⁶ Of separation. Ed.

Rādhā-Mādhava's sweetest *parihāsa-rasa* (flavour of humour), Śrī Raghunātha obtained so much transcendental relish that he became absorbed in composing two books, 'Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi' and 'Mukta Carita', books filled with the flavour of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's union and humour, that recollected and re-relished the flavours of 'Dāna Keli Kaumudī'.

From this we can understand what great relish there is in the *Dāna-līlā*.

How wonderful is the flavour of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's mutual love when They quarrel over toll and taxes in the *Dāna-līlā*!

How many hundreds of kinds of sweet erotic feelings arise from the Divine Pair and Their girlfriends! Sometimes our toll collector becomes so enchanted by Śrīmatī's form that He comes up to Her to touch Her, saying: "Pay Me with Your youthful beauty!"

The *sakhīs* say: "Oh, is there also a levy on youthful beauty nowadays?" "Yes, this is paid at My station!", Dānī (Kṛṣṇa) replies. Śrīmatī then says:

*dūreṣu tiṣṭha na hi mām sprśa dhṛṣṭa dhūrta
yāntī suyāga bhavanam vratinīm pavitrām
sprṣṭām tavādya marutā'pi madīya gavyam
śyāmbhavan na bhavitā śubha yajña yogyam*

(Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi - 41)

"O shameless cheater! Stay far away! Don't touch Me! Don't instruct pure girls like us, that are under a vow and that are going to a sacrificial arena! If our *ghī* is even touched by the breeze coming from Your body it is contaminated and no longer fit for this holy sacrifice!" Śyāma says:

*nityaṁ garvini vanya vartmani miṣāt saṅgopya gavyādika
vikrīṇāsi śaṭhe tvam atra patitā bhāgyena haste'dya me
tvāṁ baddhoru manoja rāja purato neṣyāmy avaśyaṁ tathā
prītyā yacchati mahyam eva sa yathā tāruṇya ratnānivaḥ*

(Dāna Keli Cintāmaṇi - 37)

"O proud girl! You are always coming down this forest path, hiding the *ghī* and so that You want to sell! O Cheater, fortunately You fell into My hands today, so that I can safely bind You up and bring You before king Cupid, who will lovingly give Me the jewels of Your youth!"

Saying this, He comes up to catch Her.

Lalitā then comes up before Him and proudly says:

"I am Bhairavī (a man-hating goddess)! See if You can touch me!"

Dānī is unable to come any closer, but then He winks at the *sakhīs*, pointing at Śrī Rādhā and saying:

"Allright, if you don't have any money on you now, then keep Her bound here with Me and go. Once you have sold your dairy products you can return and bail Her out."

The *sakhīs* reply:

"That we cannot do!"

Hearing this, Śyāma proudly blocks the road and says:

"Then let Me see how you will go from here!", making the *sakhīs* flee in great fear.

Then Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava enter into a nearby *kuñja* and become immersed in an ocean of amorous pastimes there.

*duhuṁ avalokane, duhuṁ pulakāyita,
locane ānanda lora.*

*rasera āveṣe duhuṇ, hāme bhelo gada gada,
stabadha bhelo puna bhora*

"They both horripilate when They see Each other and tears stream from Their eyes. In *rasika*-absorption They perspire, Their voices stutter and They become stunned once again."

*atasi kusuma sama, śyāma sunāyara,
nāyari campaka gorī.
nava jaladhara janu, cāṇḍa āgorala,
aiche rahalo śyāma-kori.
vigalita keśa, kusuma sikhī-candraka,
vigalita nīla nicola*

"Śyāma, the great lover, resembles an Atasi-flower and our heroine a golden Campaka-flower, sitting on Śyāma's lap like the moon on the lap of a fresh monsoon cloud. Their hairs are loosened and Their flowers, peacock feather crown and blue *sārī* have all fallen off."

Because the Dāna-pastime was completed by Them on its solitary banks, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their *sakhīs* have called it **Dāna Nirvartana Kuṇḍa**.

This confidential Dāna-*līlā* is hidden to those who are averse to relishing transcendental mellows and can only be known by *rasika*-devotees who have taken shelter of the *madhura-bhāva*. Thus Śrīpāda Raghunātha desires to reside on the bank of Dāna-Nirvartana-Kuṇḍa, where this greatly confidential Dāna-pastime was completed by Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their boy- and girlfriends.

*yei sarovara tīre, gūḍha dāna-līlā kore,
nāma dhare 'dāna sarovara'*

cakraka-tīrtha - Cakra-tīrtha; *daivata giri* - Daivagiri; *śrī ratnapīṭhāni*
- jeweled places; *api* - even.

I praise all the best lakes and ponds around Govardhana Hill, such as Baladeva-kuṇḍa, Kadamba-Khaṇḍa, Kusuma-Sarovara, Rudra-kuṇḍa, Apsarā-kuṇḍa, Gaurī-tīrtha, Candra-Sarovara, Ṛṇa-pāpamocana Kuṇḍa, Mālyahāra-kuṇḍa, Vibudhāri-kuṇḍa and Indradhvaja-Vedī, as well as Cakra-tīrtha, Daiva-giri and the different jeweled pavilions.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrī Raghunātha praises all the different lakes and other holy places around Śrī Girirāja.

Śrī Govardhana is the place of Śrī Govinda's very wonderful pastimes. Here Līlāmaya (Playful Kṛṣṇa) relishes the flavours of different pastimes with His boyfriends and with Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs, and each playground is to be found in the form of a holy place.

On the edge of Govardhana Hill, on the south-western corner of the village of Parāsoli is the greatly luminous **Baladeva-Kuṇḍa**. All desires of a human being who bathes here are fulfilled.

In the Purāṇas the following description can be found of Brahmakuṇḍa —

*atra yātaṁ brahmakuṇḍaṁ brahmaṇā toṣito hariḥ
indrādi lokapālānāṁ jātāni ca sarāṁsi ca*

(Mathurā Khaṇḍa)

"**Brahma-Kuṇḍa** was created where Śrī Hari played and was being satisfied by Lord Brahmā. Next to that are also lakes of Indra and other universal protectors." And then —

*hradam̐ tatra mahābhāga druma gulma latāyutam
catvāri tatra tīrthāni puṇyāni ca śubhāni ca
indram̐ pūrveṇa pārśvena yama-tīrtham̐ tu dakṣiṇe
vāruṇam̐ paścime tīrtham̐ kuveraṁ cottareṇa tu
tatra madhye sthitas̐ cāham̐ krīḍayiṣye yadṛcchayā*

(Ādi Varāha Purāṇa)

"O greatly fortunate one! At Govardhana there is a pool named Brahma-Kuṇḍa, beautified by trees, vines and bushes. Around this pool, four highly auspicious and beneficent holy places are situated. East of this pool is Indra-tīrtha, south is Yama-tīrtha, west is Varuṇa-tīrtha and north Kuvera-tīrtha is situated. According to My liking I will reside and play in this pond."

At **Kadamba-Khaṇḍi**, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eagerly looking out for Śrī Rādhā to come.

*ei ye kadamba khaṇḍi - kṛṣṇa eikhāne;
cāhi rahe rādhikā gamana patha pāne
(Bhakti Ratnākara)*

At **Kusuma-Sarovara**, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have fun picking flowers.

*dekhoho kusuma sarovara ei vane;
doñhāra adbhuta raṅga kusuma cayane
(ibid).*

Before Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa meet at Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa at noontime, Śrī Kṛṣṇa consults Vṛndā-*devī* and Dhaniṣṭha here about how to bring Śrī Rādhārāṇī to Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, and here Tulasī, being sent by Śrī Rādhārāṇī, consoles Śrī Kṛṣṇa by bringing Him news about Her.

In the lonely woods around **Rudra-kuṇḍa**, Mahādeva is immersed in meditation on Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*dekho rudrakuṇḍa śobhā nirjana kānane;
ethā mahādeva magna hoilā kṛṣṇa-dhyāne*
(Bhakti Ratnākara - 5th Taraṅga).

Apsarākuṇḍa is situated at the end of Girirāja, near the village of Puccharī.

The most fortunate people are blessed by bathing in this *kuṇḍa*.

*dekhoho apsarākuṇḍa govardhana ante;
ethā snāna koroye parama bhāgyavanta*
(ibid.)

At **Gaurī-tīrtha**, a wonderful pastime of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava takes place. Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa deceived Jaṭilā and Abhimanyu by dressing like Gaurī (Durgā-devī) so that He could enjoy with Śrī Rādhā.

Near Gaurī-tīrtha is a large and enchanting Kadamba-tree which is the playground for the Divine Pair. Here is a place called Nīpakuṇḍa.

*paṇḍita ullāse kohe - dekho śrīnivāsa;
ei gaurī-tīrthe hoy adbhuta vilāsa.*

*gaurī tīrthe nīpa-vṛkṣa-rāja manohara;
nīpa kuṇḍa dekho ei parama sundara
(ibid.).*

Jubilantly Rāghava Paṇḍita said: "Look, O Śrīnivāsa! At this Gaurī-tīrtha wonderful pastimes take place. There is a graceful regal Nīpa-tree at Gaurī-tīrtha. Behold this most beautiful Nīpa Kuṇḍa!"

Candra Sarovara is situated close to the village of Parāsoli. Here Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra takes rest after dancing the vernal Rāsa-dance.

*ei dekho candrasarovara anupama;
ethā rāsāveśe kṛṣṇacandrera viśrāma (ibid.)*

Here also Śrī Kṛṣṇa singlehandedly dressed Śrī Rādhā. In the south western corner of the Sarovara is the Śiṅgāra Mandira and in the south-eastern corner is Śrī Rāsa Maṇḍala. The Mokṣaṇa-kuṇḍa mentioned in the *śloka* is mentioned in Bhakti Ratnākara as 'Ṛṇa-pāpamocana Kuṇḍa'. One who bathes in Ṛṇa-pāpamocana Kuṇḍa will be freed from all sins that are committed due to debts.

*ei ṛṇa mocana kuṇḍa pāpa mocana ākhyāna;
ṛṇa-pāpa ghuce kuṇḍa-dvaye koile snāna
(Bhakti Ratnākara).*

At Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, **Mālyahāra Kuṇḍa** is situated.

One day, on the occasion of Dīpānvitā (Dīwali), Śrī Rādhā and Her girlfriends headed by Lalitā and others, strung garlands of pearls here, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared on the scene and asked them for some pearls to decorate His pet-cows with.

But the *gopīs* didn't give Kṛṣṇa any pearls, so Kṛṣṇa planted some pearls Himself and grew some amazing pearl-vines.

Seeing this, Śrī Rādhā and the *gopīs* also planted pearls, but they just grew thorny vines instead.

Then, when they came to Śrī Kṛṣṇa to try to buy some pearls from Him, a wonderfully sweet pastime of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava manifested itself.

Śrīmad Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmīpāda has elaborately described this confidential pastime in his book 'Muktā Carita'.

*ei mālyahāri kuṇḍa ahe śrīnivāsa!
muktā mālā chale ethā adbhuta vilāsa.
śrī muktā carita granthe e sab vicāri,
varṇilā śrī raghunātha dāsa kṛpā kori
(ibid.)*

Vibudhārikunḍa has been identified in Bhakti Ratnākara as Ariṣṭakuṇḍa or Śyāmakunḍa. At **Indradhvaja Vedī**, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja used to perform Indra pūjā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seven years old, He came here and seeing His father engaged in Indra-pūjā here convinced him to commence Govardhana Pūjā instead.

*indradhvaja-vedī ei - ethā nanda rāya;
koritena indra-pūjā sarva-loke gāya
(Ibid.)*

Cakra Tīrtha is a very famous place. Here Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's see-saw pastimes take place. Cakratīrtha ordered Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī to reside here.

While living here, Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī daily circumambulated Govardhana Hill as a rule, and when he

became old, merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, seeing that this became too much of an effort for him, appeared to him dressed as a cowherd boy and told him that if he just circumambulated a stone that had His footprint on it, he would have completed his circumambulation. After saying this the Lord disappeared.

In Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara it is described -

*ei cakra tīrtha dekho ohe śrīnivāsa;
ihāra kṛpāte pūrṇa hoy abhilāsa
cakratīrtha parama prasiddha govardhane;
śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇera dolā krīḍā hoy eikhāne
ohe śrīnivāsa śrī gosvāmī sanātane;
cakra tīrtha ājñā koilo rahite ekhāne
ethā vāsa koilo ati ullāsa antare;
ei dekho tāra kuṭī bonera bhitoro
prati dina govardhana parikramā tānra;
bhramaye dvādaśa krośa aiche śakti kāra
vṛddha-kāle mahāśrama dekhi' gopinātha;
gopa bālakera chale hoilā sākṣāt
sanātana tanu gharma 'nivāri' yatane;
āśru-yukta hoiyā kohe madhura vacane
vṛddha-kāle eto śrama korite nāribā;
ohe svāmi, ye kohi tā' avaśya mānibā
sanātana kohe - koho, mānibo jāniyā;
śuni gopa govardhane caḍilena giyā
nija pada-cihna govardhana śilā āni;
sanātane kohe punaḥ sumadhura vāṇī
ohe svāmi, ei loho kṛṣṇa padacin;
āji hoite koribe ihāra pradakṣiṇa
saba parikramā siddha hoibe ihāte;
eto kohi śilā āni dilena kuṭite
śilā samarpiyā kṛṣṇa hoilo adarśana;
bālake nā dekhi' vyagra hoilo sanātana
sanātana vyākula dekhīyā adṛśyete;*

*nija paricaya dilā vihvala snehete
sanātana nija netra jale sikta hoilā;
kori' koto kheda citte dhairyāvalambilā*

"Behold this Cakratīrtha, O Śrīnivāsa! By its grace all desires are fulfilled! Cakratīrtha is most famous in Govardhana. Here Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's see-saw pastimes take place. Ohe Śrīnivāsa! Cakra Tīrtha ordered Sanātana Gosvāmī to reside here, so he lived here in great bliss. Look! There, in the woods is his hut! From here, Sanātana Gosvāmī daily performed Govardhana Parikramā. Who has the power to walk these 24 km every day? Seeing how much effort it took Sanātana Gosvāmī to accomplish this at his old age, Gopīnātha appeared before him dressed as a cowherd boy. Carefully he removed the sweat drops from Sanātana's body and said with a sweet voice and tear filled eyes:

"Don't do so much effort anymore in your old age. You must heed My words, O Svāmī!" Sanātana replied: Speak and I will heed Your words!"

Hearing this, the cowherd boy mounted Govardhana Hill and brought down a Govardhana Śilā with His footprints on it. Then He told Sanātana Gosvāmī with a very sweet voice:

"Ohe Svāmī! Take these footprints of Kṛṣṇa and circumambulate them from now on! This will complete your entire circumambulation of Govardhana Hill!"

Saying this, Kṛṣṇa brought the Śilā into Sanātana's *kuṭī* and disappeared. Not seeing the boy anymore, Sanātana became very upset. Observing Sanātana secretly and seeing that he was so upset, Kṛṣṇa revealed His real identity to him with great loving ecstasy. Sanātana became sprinkled with his own tears and with great difficulty he managed to remain calm."

This Govardhana Śilā with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's footprints on it remains in the Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara-Mandira in Śrī Vṛndāvana, proclaiming the glories of Cakratīrtha.

Daivata-giri is said by Bhakti-Ratnākara to mean Govardhana Hill itself and **Ratnapīṭha** is the jeweled throne that Śrī Rādhārāṇī sat on before and while She was being kidnapped by Śaṅkhacūḍa along with the throne, after which Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed Śaṅkhacūḍa.

*ei ratna simhāsana ithe bahu kathā,
ratna simhāsane śrī rādhikā chilo ethā.
śaṅkhacūḍa vadhera kāraṇa ethā hoite,
yaiche kṛṣṇa vadhe tā' vidita bhāgavate*

(Bhakti Ratnākara).

"There are many narrations about this Ratna-Simhāsana. Śrī Rādhikā sat on Ratna-Simhāsana, and it was also the cause of the killing of Śaṅkhacūḍa. From Śrīmad Bhāgavata you can learn how Kṛṣṇa killed Śaṅkhacūḍa."

Śrīla Raghunātha says: "I praise all these holy places around Govardhana Hill!"

*govardhana cāri dhāre, sei saba sarovare,
sīri-kuṇḍa kadamba-khaṇḍa ādi
apsarā rudra gaurī, mālyahāra vibudhāri,
jyotsnā-mokṣaṇa indra-dhvaja vedi.
yei cakra-tīrtha, śrī daivata parbata,
ratna-pīṭhādi yoto śobhe
nitya mui stava kori, sei līlā manohārī
darśana koribo ei lobhe*

"Eager to see the enchanting pastimes that take place there, I eternally praise all the beautiful lakes and other holy places that exist all around Govardhana Hill, such as Sīri-kuṇḍa, Kadamba-khaṇḍa, Apsarā-kuṇḍa, Rudra-kuṇḍa, Gaurī-tīrtha, Mālyahāra-kuṇḍa, Vibudhāri-kuṇḍa, Jyotsnā-mokṣaṇa-kuṇḍa, Indra-dhvaja Vedī, Cakra-tīrtha, Śrī Daivata-parvata and Ratna Pīṭha."

VERSE 80:

**aho dolā-krīḍā-rasa-vara-bharotphulla-vadanau
muhuḥ śrī-gāndharvā-giri-vara-dharau tau prati madhu
sakhī-vṛndam yatra prakāṭita-mud āndolayati tat
prasiddham govinda-sthalam idam udāram bata bhaje**

aho - O!; *dolā* - see-saw; *krīḍā* - the pastime; *rasa* - flavour; *vara* - the greatest; *bhara* - filled; *utphulla* - blooming; *vadanau* - the faces; *muhuḥ* - repeatedly; *śrī gāndharvā* - Śrī Rādhā; *girivaradharau* - Kṛṣṇa; *tau* - them both; *prati* - every; *madhu* - spring; *sakhī-vṛndam* - girlfriends; *yatra* - where; *prakāṭita* - manifest; *mudā* - happily; *andolayati* - swings; *tat* - that; *prasiddham* - famous; *govinda-sthalam* - Govinda Sthala; *idam* - this; *udāram* - blessed; *bata* - alas!; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship the great and famous Govinda-Sthala, where Śrī-Śrī Gāndharvā-Girivaradhārī and Their girlfriends are most blissfully swinging again and again each spring, Their faces blossoming of happiness when They taste the flavours of this swinging pastime.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Govinda-Sthalī, the most elevated place of Śrī Vṛndāvana.

Yamunā flows north of Govinda-Sthalī, and east and west of it are two other streams, which are like arms embracing this place, which gradually elevates like the back of a turtle.

In the middle is Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's great jeweled Yogapīṭha-mandira, which is surrounded by a Kalpavṛkṣa-tree in each of its four corners. Inside this, there are *kuñjas* with platforms in each of the four corners.

In the north is Śvetāmbuja-Kuñja, where Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa play dice. In the east is Nīlāmbuja-Kuñja, where They are dressed and ornamented. In the south is Aruṇāmbuja-Kuñja, where They dine and in the west is Hemāmbuja Kuñja, where They lay down to rest.

In the north-east is a Mādhavī-pavillion. In the south-east is a Mālatī-pavillion, in the south-west is a pavillion of fresh jasmynes, and in the north west is a pavillion of golden Yūthī-flowers.

Outside of that are the *kuñjas* of the eight *sakhīs* in a circle, and outside of that, in concentric circles, the *kuñjas* of sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four and many thousands of other *sakhīs*. Outside of that are again a golden place (*hemasthalī*), a banana-grove, a flower garden, orchards, six seasonal forests, betel-groves and coconut-groves in gradual rows. Outside of that, the aforementioned Yamunā-currents complete this beautiful and enchanting Govinda-sthala.

Each spring Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava enjoy swinging here. The *sakhīs* then sing of the sweetness of the Divine Pair, worship the lotus-like faces of the Rasika-Mithuna in *ārātrika* with flowers and lift Them on Their jeweled swing.

They straighten out Their necklaces and Kṛṣṇa's turban, which may become dishevelled while They mount the swing and then serve Them betel leaves, garlands and sandalwood pulp.

Two *prāṇa-sakhīs* tuck the edges of their *sāḍīs* away with their sashes of bells, bend over slightly, catch the swing and begin to rock it, while Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa embrace Each other.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa places His arm, which is so long that it reaches down to His knees, over Śrīmatī's left shoulder up to Her left breast, while Śrīmatī holds on to Śyāma's waist with Her right arm.

Both the lovers are blossoming with *rasa* beholding the sweetness of Each other's faces, while the *sakhīs* most blissfully swing the Divine Pair back and forth.

*jhulata śyāma, gorī bāma,
ānanda raṅge māṭiyā
īṣata hasita rabhasa keli, jhulāyata saba sakhinī meli,
gāota koto bhāṭiyā*

"Śyāma swings Gorī (Rādhā) on His left, maddened by ecstatic love. They play with slight smiles and all the *sakhīs* join in the pushing of the swing, singing so wonderfully."

*hema maṇi-yuta vara hi ḍora, racita kusuma gandhe bhora,
paḍato bhramara pāṅṭiyā
navīna latāya jaḍita dāla, vṛndā-vipina śobhita bhālo
cānda ujora rāṭiyā*

"The rope of the swing is made of gold and jewels and strings of bumblebees land on the flowers, which adorn these ropes, overwhelmed by their fragrance. The tree branch (that

supports the swing) is entwined by fresh vines that make Vṛndāvana so beautiful in the moonlit night.

*nava ghana tanu dolaye śyāma, rāi saṅge jhulata vāma,
taḍita jaḍita kāṅṭiyā
tārā-maṇi candrahāra, jhulita dolita gale donhāra
hilana duṅhuka gāṅṭiyā*

Śyāma, Who shines like a fresh monsoon cloud, swings with Rāi, Who embraces Him with Her lightning-like luster, on His left. Necklaces that shine like the moon and the stars oscillate around Their necks while They lean against Each other."

*dhidhikaṭa dhiyā tāthaiyā bola, bāje mṛdaṅga mohana rola,
tininā tininā tā tiyā
bheda pavana grāma pūra, ghora śabada jīla sūra,
varaṇa nāhiko yāṅṭiyā*

"The Mṛdaṅgas play 'dhidhikaṭa dhiyā tāthaiyā - tininā tininā tā tiyā' in an enchanting way, and the loud sounds of the songs and the musical instruments pierce the atmosphere in an indescribably sweet way."

*maṇi ābharaṇa kiṅkiṇī baṅka, jhulane bājaye jhunura jhaṅka,
jhana jhana jhāṅṭiyā
rādhā mohana caraṇe āśa, kevala bharaśā uddhava dāsa,
racita pūrta chāṅṭiyā*

"Their jewelled anklebells chime 'runu jhunu' along with the swinging. Uddhava Dāsa, his heart filled with the sole desire for attaining the lotus feet of Rādhā Mohana (Kṛṣṇa, the enchanter of Rādhā), writes this song."

Just for fun, Śrī Kṛṣṇa increases the speed of the swing, making Śrī Rādhā afraid that She will fall. The *sakhīs* forbid Kṛṣṇa to swing so fast, but Kṛṣṇa does not listen and increases the speed of the swing even more.

This causes Śrī Rādhā's braid to loosen, Her veil to fall off and Her clothes and ornaments to become dishevelled. Seeing the sweetness of Śrīmatī's form at that time, Kṛṣṇa begins to swing even harder, making the terrified Śrī Rādhā embrace Śrī Kṛṣṇa around the neck with Her vine-like arms.

Kṛṣṇa then lets go of the swing's ropes and holds Śrīmatī to His chest with both hands, while pushing the swing on with His feet.

In this way, it looks as if the Śrī-Mūrti-Yugala has become One in a beautiful way as They are bound by the ropes of Their mutual embrace. Thus They look as incomparably lovely and beautiful as a blooming Campaka-flower and a blooming Indīvara-flower, tightly united on one stem and oscillating in the southern breezes. The *sakhīs* are immersed in an ocean of transcendental bliss when they behold these sweet pastimes of the Śrī-Yugala.

After the swinging pastime, the *sakhīs* take the Divine Pair off the swing and serve Them by straightening out Their dresses and ornaments and by feeding Them a meal of fruits and roots.

In this way, Śrīpāda Raghunātha reveals his aspiration to worship Govinda-Sthalī, which is so famous and glorious because of the wonderful swinging-pastime that takes place there.

*dolā-kṛṣṇā rasabhare, ratana hindolā pare,
rādhā sane śrī rādhā-ramaṇa
utphulla vadana śobhā, daraśana manalobhā,
mātiyāche yoto sakhīgaṇa*

*samaya vasanta kāle, saba sakhīgaṇa mile,
āndolita koriche hindola
sukhamaya sei sthāne, bhaji nitya śuddha mane,
suprasiddha se govinda sthala*

"With a pure mind I always worship the blissful and famous place called Govinda-Sthala, where Rādhā and Śrī Rādhā-Ramaṇa sit on a jeweled swing with beautiful blossoming faces, which are so enchanting and intoxicating for the minds of the *sakhīs*, who meet here in the spring to push this swing."

VERSE 81:

**priyā priya-prāṇa-vayasya-varge
dhṛtāparādham kila kāliyaṁ tam
yatrārdayat pāda-talena nṛtyan
harir bhaje taṁ kila kāliyaṁ hradam**

priyāt - than dear; *priya* - dear; *prāṇa-vayasya* - heart's friend; *varge* - in the party; *dhṛta* - held; *aparādham* - offence; *kila* - certainly; *kāliyaṁ* - Kāliya; *tam* - him; *yatra* - where; *ardayat* - hurt; *pāda-talena* - with the footsoles; *nṛtyan* - danced; *hariḥ* - Hari; *bhaje* - I worship; *taṁ* - Him; *kila* - certainly; *kāliyaṁ hradam* - Kāliya's lake.

I worship Kāliya-Hrada (Kāliya's lake), where Śrī Kṛṣṇa punished Kāliya by dancing on him with His foot soles, thus kicking him for committing an offence to His friends, who are dearer to Him than life.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Kāliya-hrada.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart's friends drank the poisoned water of the Kāliya Hrada, they all left their bodies and lay dead on the bank of the lake. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then revived them by casting His nectarean glance on them. Therefore it is said: "Kāliya committed an offence to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart's friends".

This is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata as follows:

*atha gāvaś ca gopāś ca nidāghātapa piḍittāḥ;
duṣṭaṁ jalam papus tasyās tṛṣārtā viṣa duṣitam
viṣāmbhas tad upaspr̥śya daivopahata cetasah;
nipetur vyasavaḥ sarve salilānte kurūdvaha
vikṣa tān vai tathābhūtān kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ;
ikṣayāmṛta varṣiṇyā svanāthān samajīvayat*

(Bhāgavata 10.15.49-51)

Śrī Śuka Muni told Mahārāja Parīkṣita: "O King! Being thirsty and afflicted by the summer heat, the cows and cowherd boys came to drink the water of the Yamunā, which was polluted by the poison of the Kāliya-snake.

Unfortunately the cows and cowherd boys left their bodies and lay dead on the bank of the Yamunā. Seeing them in this condition, Kṛṣṇa, the king of the kings of *yoga*, revived them with His nectarean glance."

Seeing His heart's friends and His cows in this condition and considering this poisoned water to be a threat to them, Kṛṣṇa jumped from a high Kadamba-tree on the bank of the Kāliya-hrada right into the coils of the angry Kāliya and remained there without moving for some time.

When He saw that His friends, cows, mother, father and all the Vrajavāsīs were almost fainting of misery and anxiety over His safety, Kṛṣṇa came out of the grip of Kālīya's coils, climbed on his hoods and began to kick him by dancing on them.

This is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.16.26-30) as follows:

*evam paribhrama hetaujasam unnatāmsam
 ānamya tat prthu-siraḥ svadhirūḍha ādyah;
 tan mūrdhna ratna nikara sparśāti tāmra
 pādāmbujo`khila kalādi gurur nanarta
 tañ nartum udyatam avekṣya tadā tadiya
 gandharva siddha sura cāraṇa deva vadhvah;
 prītyā mṛdaṅga paṇavānaka vādya gīta
 puṣpopahāra nutibhiḥ sahasopaseduḥ
 yad yac chiro na namate`ṅga śataika śirṣṇas
 tam mamarda khara daṇḍa-dharo`ṅghri-pātail;
 kṣīṇāyuso bhramata ulbaṇamāsyato`srī
 nasto vaman parama kaśmalam āpa nāgaḥ
 tasyākṣibhir garalam udvamataḥ śiraḥsu
 yad yat samunnati niḥśvasato ruṣoccaiḥ;
 nṛtyan padānunamayan damayāmvabhūva
 puṣpaiḥ prapūjita iveha pumān purāṇaḥ
 tac citra tāṇḍava virugna phaṇā sahasro
 raktam mukhair uru vaman nṛpa bhagna-gātraḥ;
 smṛtvā carācara guruṁ puruṣam purāṇam
 nārāyaṇam tamarāṇam manasā jagāma*

"When Kālīya had become exhausted from whirling around Śrī Kṛṣṇa for so long, Kṛṣṇa pulled down his raised hood with His left hand and mounted his big head. Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all arts like singing and dancing, began to dance on

Kāliya's head, whose jewels illuminated His reddish foot soles.

Seeing this, the Lord's associates like Garuḍa and Viśvaksena, as well as the Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, gods and goddesses began to sing, play drums like the Mṛdaṅga and Paṇava, shower flowers and offer praises.

Whatever head of whirling hundred-hooded Kāliya, who was almost dead, was not yet lowered, was kicked down by the dancing feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the punisher of the wicked.

This caused blood to stream from Kāliya's mouths and nostrils, gave him great pain and put him into complete bewilderment. Then Kāliya became unsteady of anger, breathed out deeply and issued streams of poison from his eyes. It was as if Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Lord, was working for the benefit of the demigods, being pleased with the flowers they showered upon Him, by kicking down with His feet any of Kāliya's hoods that had not yet been lowered, on the pretext of dancing.

O King! Through this wonderful Tāṇḍava-dance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the thousand hoods of Kāliya, which served as an umbrella, were broken and each of his limbs were crushed while blood forcefully rushed from his mouths.

Then Kāliya remembered that the person who danced on his head was the ruler of all the worlds and the Original Person, and so he took shelter of His lotus feet."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship Kāliya-hrada, the place where Kāliya was defeated by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for the fulfillment of all my desires and for the destruction of all (my) mischief."

In his Stavamālā Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda used the pastime of the subjugation of Kāliya to praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the end he wrote:

*kāmaṁ dāmodara mama manaḥ pannagaḥ pīna-bhogo
 duṣṭāśirbhiḥ kuṭila balanaiḥ kṣobhayatyēṣa lokam
 tad viklāntas tvam udita pada dvandva paṅkeruhāṅkaṁ
 kurvan darvikara-damana he tāṇḍavair daṇḍayāmum*

"O Dāmodara! In Your pastime of defeating Kāliya, the Kāliya-snake has been justly subdued, that is for sure, but I do not think that this constitutes the end of Your pastimes of defeating snakes! The great serpent of my mind that is dwelling in the broad lake of my heart is even more poisonous and frightening than Kāliya and is crawling around everywhere, extending its hundreds of thousands of desires, which are like its hoods.

These hundreds of hoods of my sensual desires are not in any way less powerful, expansive and thick than this Kāliya-snake. Just as Kāliya did so much harm with his poisoned fangs and his naturally crooked gait, similarly my big snake-like mind has poisonous fangs in the form of its various desires for material enjoyment and a crooked gait in the form of thoughts about harming others, and is thus always engaged in causing mischief to others. Therefore, O most powerful Lord! Just as You have subdued the Kāliya-snake and have broken His 100 hoods by performing wonderful dances on them, You should also break the hundreds of thousands of hoods of material desires of the great snake of My mind and bless it forever by printing the marks of Your footprints on its head!"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

*priyatama premāspada, prāṇādhika sakhā yoto,
 tāhā prati aparādha hetu.
 kṛṣṇa yethā nṛtya kori, kāliyera śiropari,
 vimardita koilo dharma setu.*

*sei to kāliya hrada, sarva kāle sukhaprada,
jala yāra amṛta samāna.
kṛṣṇe sethā gocāraṇe, nitya pābo daraśane
bhaji nitya kori snāna pāna*

"By bathing there and drinking its waters, I always worship Kāliya-hrada, where Kṛṣṇa, the upholder of religious principles, danced on the heads of the Kāliya-serpent to punish him for committing an offence to His friends, who are dearer to Him than life, and thus subdued him.

May I always behold this ever-blissful Kāliya-lake, whose water is like nectar and where Kṛṣṇa engages in herding His cows."

VERSE 82:

**sūryair dvādaśabhiḥ paraṁ muraripuḥ śītārta ugrātapair
bhakti-prema-bharair udāra-caritaḥ śrīmān mudā sevitaḥ
yatra strī-puruṣaiḥ kvaṇat-paśu-kulair āveṣṭito rājate
snehair dvādaśa-sūrya-nāma tad idaṁ tīrtham sadā saṁśraye**

sūryaiḥ - by the suns; *dvādaśabhiḥ* - by the twelve; *paraṁ* - greatest; *muraripuḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *śīta* - cold; *ārta* - afflicted; *ugrātapaiḥ* - by the severe heat; *bhakti* - devotion; *prema* - love; *bharaiḥ* - filled with; *udāra* - generous; *caritaḥ* - character; *śrīmān* - beautiful; *mudā* - jubilantly; *sevitaḥ* - served; *yatra* - where; *strī* - women; *puruṣaiḥ* - and by men; *kvaṇat* - resounding; *paśu-kulaiḥ* - by the animals; *āveṣṭitaḥ* - surrounded; *rājate* - shines; *snehaiḥ* - with affection; *dvādaśa* - twelve; *sūrya* - suns; *nāma* - named; *tad* - that; *idaṁ* - thus; *tīrtham* - holy waters; *sadā* - always; *saṁśraye* - I take shelter.

I always take shelter of Dvādaśāditya-Tīrtha, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa was blissfully, devotedly and lovingly warmed by the severe rays of the twelve suns after He became afflicted by cold (from entering the Kāliya-lake) and where He shines, affectionately surrounded by men, women and bellowing cows.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the Dvādaśa-Āditya Tīrtha.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa came out of the Kāliya-lake after having swum there for a long time, He felt very cold and began to shiver. He is *udāra carita*, which means that He is always engaged in human-like pastimes.

While subduing the Kāliya-snake Kṛṣṇa certainly displayed great prowess in front of the Vrajavāsīs, but this prowess appeared as very sweet and relishable to them. This is the nature of the sweet conception.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda writes in his Rāga Vartma Candrikā (2.5):

*īśvaro'yaṁ ity anusandhāne'pi hṛt kampa janaka sambhrama
gandhasyānudgamāt svīya bhāvasyāti sthairyam eva yad
utpādayati tan mādhyura jñānam*

"When one understands that 'He is the Lord', but still does not awaken feelings of heart-trembling reverence, rather one is fixed in a friendly mood towards the Lord, thinking: 'He is my son, He is my friend, He is my lover!', then it is called *mādhyura-jñāna* (a sweet conception)."

In the material world it is also seen that when a mother's son becomes the President it does not weaken the mother's conception of him as a son, rather it strengthens her maternal love.

yathā prākṛtyā api mātuh putrasya pṛthvīsvaratve sati tat putra bhāvaḥ sphīta evābhavati (Ibid).

The Lord assumes a mood according to the way in which the devotee loves Him, and hence He reveals His sweet pastimes according to the sweet conception, the Vraja-devotees have of Him.

yathā pūtanā prāṇa hāritve'pi stana-cūṣaṇa lakṣaṇa nara bāla līlatvam eva. mahā kaṭhōra śakaṭa sphoṭane'pyati sukumāra caraṇa traimāsikyottāna sāyi bāla līlatvam. mahādirgha dāmāśakya bandhatve'pi mātṛ bhīti vaiklavyam. brahma baladevādi mohane'pi sarvajñatve'pi vatsa cāraṇa līlatvam (Rāga Vartma Candrikā 3)

"Even while killing a powerful witch like Pūtanā, Kṛṣṇa acted just like a human child by sucking a woman's breast. His act of kicking over a huge and very hard cart and thus destroying it, was accomplished with the tender feet of a three month old baby who was lying down, and even though, during the Dāma-bandhana-līlā, Mother Yaśodā could find no means to bind Him up because even the longest rope was always two fingers too short, still Śrī Kṛṣṇa was afraid of His mother.

Although He bewildered Lord Brahmā and Baladeva (during the Brahma-vimohana līlā) and showed His omniscience, He manifested His sweet pastimes of herding the calves at the same time."

Similarly, during the Kāliya-damana-līlā, Kṛṣṇa's tender form engaged in a sweet dance while smashing the 100 hoods of the greatly poisonous snake Kāliya.

When Kṛṣṇa came out of the Kāliya-lake after defeating the Kāliya-snake His whole body shivered of cold from being inside the water for so long. At that time the twelve suns rose near the Kāliya-lake with great loving devotion and most blissfully began to protect Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the cold with their hot rays.

Hence this place is called Dvādaśāditya-Tīrtha.
In the Ādi Varāha Purāṇa it is written:

*surya-tīrthe naraḥ snāto dṛṣṭādityān vasundhare
āditya bhuvanaṁ prāpya kṛta-kṛtyaḥ sa modate
āditye'hani saṁkrāntāv-asmin tīrthe vasundhare
manasābhīpsitaṁ kāmāṁ prāpnuvanti na saṁśayaḥ*

"O Vasundhare! A person who bathes in Sūrya-Tīrtha and sees Āditya there attains the sun and will be blessed with the topmost bliss. A person who bathes here on Sundays and on Saṅkranti-days will be blessed with the fulfillment of all his desires. Of this there is no doubt."

In the Sūrya-Purāṇa it is seen:

*dvādaśāditya tīrthākhyāṁ tīrthāṁ tad anupāvanam tasya
darśana mātṛeṇa nṛnām aṅgho vinaśyati.*

"This Dvādaśāditya-Tīrtha is most pure. Anyone who sees it is freed from all sins."

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the service of the twelve suns, His mother, father and all other Vrajavāsīs surrounded Him, making a lot of noise, while at the same time the cows filled the air with their bellowing.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I always seek the shelter of this Dvādaśa-Āditya-Tīrtha."

*udāra caritra yāra, muraripu khyāti tāra,
parameśvara boli gāya yāre
naralīlā anurūpe, śīte tāra aṅga kāmpe
līlā bhaṅgi ati camatkāre*

"Muraripu, Who is glorified as being the Supreme Lord, actually performs very sweet pastimes. According to these most

astonishing human-like pastimes, His whole body shivered because of the cold."

*yathā strī puruṣa-gaṇe, śabdāyamāna paśugaṇe,
veṣṭanete āchena govinda
dvādaśa sūrya ātapere, sevā kore śrī aṅgete,
prema bhare pulakita aṅga*

"Here Govinda shines, surrounded by women, men and bellowing cows, while the twelve suns serve His divine body with their heat, their bodies horripilating of ecstatic love."

*yāra dvādaśāditya nāma, mahā-tīrtha sei dhāma,
mui tāra daraśana lobhe.
sarvadā āśraya kori, nitya yeno tāre smari,
padāṅkita bhūmi anurāge*

"I take shelter of the great holy place named Dvādaśāditya-Tīrtha, where this pastime takes place and where the soil is marked by Kṛṣṇa's footprints. May I always remember this place, that I desire to see so much!"

VERSE 83:

**atyantātapa-sevanena paritaḥ saṁjāta-gharmotkarair
govindasya śārīrato nipatitair yat tīrtham uccair abhūt |
tat-tat-komala-sāndra-sundaratara-śrīmat-sad-aṅgocchalad-
gandhair hāri-suvāri-sudyuti bhaje praskandanam vandanaiḥ |**

atyanta - greatly; *ātapa* - heat; *sevanena* - by service; *paritaḥ* - all around; *saṁjāta* - generated; *gharmotkaraiḥ* - by sweatdrops;

govindasya - of Govinda; *śarirataḥ* - from the body; *nipatitaiḥ* - by falling; *yat* - which; *tīrtham* - holy waters; *uccaiḥ* - greatly; *abhūt* - became; *tat-tat* - those; *komala* - tender; *sāndra* - deeply; *sundaratara* - more beautiful; *śrīmat* - opulent; *sad* - real; *aṅga* - body; *ucchalad* - arising; *gandhaiḥ* - by scents; *hāri* - enchanting; *suvāri* - good water; *sudyuti* - good effulgence; *bhaje* - I worship; *praskandanam* - Praskandana; *vandanaiḥ* - by praises.

I worship and praise the most brilliant Praskandana-Tīrtha, the great holy water that became manifest from the sweat drops that trickled from Govinda's body as He was being served from all directions by the intense heat offered by the twelve suns, and which is filled with spotless water that is greatly scented and made lovely by the perfumes that came from Govinda's tender and extremely beautiful auspicious limbs.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Praskandana-Tīrtha, which lies very close to Dvādaśāditya Tīrtha, is being praised.

Along with removing the poison from the Kāliya-lake during His pastime of subduing the Kāliya-snake, Līlā Puruṣottama (the Most Playful Personality) Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Personality of Godhead, also revealed two enchanting lakes nearby. *sarva tīrtha govinda caraṇa* (Prema Bhakti Candrikā)

All holy places appear in connection with Śrī Govinda's lotus feet or with His pastimes. The water of these holy places destroys all sins and afflictions of those who bathe there and at the same time the remembrance of the divine pastimes that took place there destroys the seeds of all the material desires, which have been within the heart since beginningless time and awakens the experience of the sweetness of these pastimes.

When Śrī Govinda, Who is always engaged in sweet, human-like pastimes, came out of the water of the Kāliya-hrada, He shivered because of the cold, and to remove that cold the twelve Ādityas (suns) became manifest.

After the hot rays of the twelve suns removed the cold from Govinda's very tender and beautiful limbs, sweat drops began to appear on it. It was as if countless pearl drops trickled from a sapphire doll. These many sweat drops trickling from all of Kṛṣṇa's limbs formed a great stream that merged with the Yamunā and became known as **Praskandana-Tīrtha**.

In Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara it is written:

*ahe śrīnivāsa! sūrya-gaṇera tāpete;
dūre gelo śīta, gharma hoilo dehete
sei gharma jala sūrya kanyāya mililo;
ei hetu praskandana nāma tīrtha hoilo
dekho praskandana kṣetra snāne pāpa yāya;
prāṇa tyāga hoilei viṣṇuloka pāya*

"Ahe Śrīnivāsa! Because of the heat of the sun, the cold went away and sweat appeared on Kṛṣṇa's body. This sweat again met with the daughter of the Sun (Yamunā), and hence this place is called Praskandana-Tīrtha. See, by bathing in Praskandana-Kṣetra, all sins are destroyed and one who leaves his body here attains Viṣṇuloka."

In the Ādi-Varāha Purāṇa, Śrī Varāha-deva tells Dharaṇī (earth):

*punar anyat pravakṣyāmi tac chṛṇu tvam vasundhare
kṣetraṁ praskandanaṁ nāma sarva pāpa haraṁ śubham
tasmīn snātas tu manujaḥ sarva pāpahiḥ pramucyate
athātra hi muñcan prāṇān mama lokam sa gacchati*

"O Vasundhare! I will tell you about another holy place, listen! There is an auspicious place named Praskandana, which destroys all sins. A person who bathes there is freed from all sins and a person who leaves the body there will certainly attain My abode!"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "The water of Praskandana-Tirtha has become very clear and fragrant due to being filled with perfumes from Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most fragrant and auspicious limbs. A fragrance of lotus mixed with camphor emanates from the eight lotus flowers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's body —

His two eyes, two hands, two feet, His navel and His face.
*kuraṅga mada jid vapuḥ parimalormi kṛṣṭāṅganaḥ svakāṅga
nalināṣṭake śaśi-yutābja gandha-prathaḥ* (Govinda Līlāmṛtam)

"He who attracts the Vraja-gopīs with the waves of His bodily fragrance, which defeats that of musk, extends a fragrance of lotus mixed with camphor with the eight lotus flowers of His body."

During His Gāmbhīra-pastimes, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Whose heart was filled with the love of Śrī Rādhā, spoke the following ecstatic words while revealing the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's bodily fragrance:

*kasturī lipta nīlotpala, tāra yei parimala,
tāhā jini kṛṣṇa aṅga gandha
vyāpe caudde bhuvane, kore sarva ākarṣaṇe,
nārīgaṇera āṅkhi kore andha*

"The fragrance of Kṛṣṇa's body defeats that of a blue lotus flower anointed with musk. This fragrance pervades all the fourteen worlds and attracts everyone, blinding the eyes of the girls!"

*sakhi he! kṛṣṇa gandha jagat mātāy
nārīra nāsāya poiśe, sarva kāla tāhā boise,
kṛṣṇa pāśe dhari loiyā yāy*

"O *sakhi!* Kṛṣṇa's fragrance maddens the world! It enters the womens nostrils and always remains sitting there, holding them and taking them to Kṛṣṇa!"

*netra nābhi vadana, kara yuga caraṇa,
ei aṣṭa-padma kṛṣṇa aṅge
karpūra lipta kamala, tāra yaiche parimala,
sei gandha aṣṭa padma saṅge*

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

"There are eight lotus flowers on Kṛṣṇa's body - His eyes, His navel, His face, His hands and His feet - and these eight lotus flowers smell of lotus anointed with camphor."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this most brilliant Praskandana-Tīrtha by praising it."

*ugrātapa sevanete, śrī govinda aṅga hoite,
sañjāta ye gharma bindu caya.
tāhe tīrtha āvirbhūta, aṅga gandhe surabhita,
manohara dyuti śālī hoy.*

"The severe heat, caused by the service of the twelve suns, caused many sweatdrops to appear on Śrī Govinda's body and that perspiration created an enchanting and effulgent holy pond, which was scented with that bodily fragrance."

*pavitra tāhāra jala, sadā kore ṭalamala,
praskandana tīrtha yāra nāma*

*āśraya vandanā kori, tāra taṭe vāsa kori,
pūrṇa hobe mora manaskāma*

"This sacred water always trembles and is known as Praskandana-Tīrtha. I take shelter of this place, praise it and live on its bank, so that all my desires will be fulfilled."

VERSE 84:

**kātyāyany-atulārcanārtham amale kṛṣṇā-jale majjataḥ
kanyānām prakarasya cīra-nikaram saṁrakṣitam tīrataḥ
hṛtvāruhya kadambam ujjala-parihāsenā tam lajjayan
smerāṁ tam pradadau subhaṅgi-murajit tam cīra-ghaṭṭam śraye**

kātyāyani - Kātyāyanī-devī; *atula* - peerless; *arcanā* - worship; *artham* - for the sake of; *amale* - spotless; *kṛṣṇā* - Yamunā; *jale* - in the water; *majjataḥ* - immersed; *kanyānām* - of the virgins; *prakarasya* - of the group; *cīra* - clothes; *nikaram* - multitude; *saṁrakṣitam* - keeping; *tīrataḥ* - from the bank; *hṛtvā* - having taken away; *āruhya* - climbing; *kadambam* - Kadamba-tree; *ujjala* - erotic; *parihāsenā* - by joking; *taṁ* - him; *lajjayan* - embarrassing; *smerāṁ* - smiling; *taṁ* - him; *pradadau* - gave; *subhaṅgi* - nice gestures; *murajit* - Kṛṣṇa; *taṁ* - him; *cīra-ghaṭṭam* - Cīra-ghāṭa; *śraye* - I take shelter.

I take shelter of Cīra-Ghāṭa, where the unmarried gopīs worshipped Kātyāyanī-devī in an incomparable way by plunging into the spotless Yamunā-water, keeping their clothes on the shore, and where Kṛṣṇa later embarrassed them by stealing their clothes, climbing into a Kadamba-tree and making erotic jokes about them before returning the clothes.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Cīra Ghāṭa, the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa made wonderful *rasika* jokes with the maidens of Vraja who were engaged in the worship of the goddess Kātyāyanī.

In the 22nd chapter of the 10th Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Śrī Śuka Muni described how the Vraja-kumārīs engaged in the service of Kātyāyanī-devī and how their garments were stolen. Amongst it is a wonderful description of their peerless worship of Kātyāyanī:

*hemante prathame māsi nanda vraja kumārikā;
cerur haviṣyaṁ bhujjānā kātyāyanīarcana vratam
āplutyambhasi kālindiyā jalānte codite'ruṇe;
kṛtvā pratikṛtiṁ devīm ānarcur nṛpa saikatīm
gandhair mālyaiḥ surabhibhir balibhir dhūpa dipakaiḥ;
uccāvacaīs cāpahāraiḥ prabāla phala taṇḍulaiḥ
kātyāyanī mahāmāye mahā-yoginyadhīsvari;
nanda gopa sutam devī patiṁ me kurute namaḥ
iti mantram japantyās tāḥ pūjāṁ cakruḥ kumārikāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.22.1-4)

Śrī Śuka Muni said: "In the first month of the Hemanta season⁴⁷, the *gopīs* from Nanda's Vraja began to worship Kātyāyanī-devī (Pārvatī-devī) by eating Haviṣya (unspiced and unsalted grains). O King! Every morning at sunrise they went to bathe in the Yamunā and worshipped a sand deity of Kātyāyanī on the shore near the water with offerings of fragrant

⁴⁷ The Hemanta Season lasts from mid-November until mid-January. The first month, Mārgaśīrṣa, lasts from mid-November until mid-December. Ed.

perfumes, garlands, garments, ornaments, incense, lamps, fresh leaves, fruits and raw rice, praying to her:

‘O Goddess Kātyāyani! O Mahāmāyā! O inconceivable one! O supreme goddess! O expert player! Make the son of the cowherd king Nanda my husband! We offer our obeisances unto you!’ Repeating this *mantra*, the Vraja-kumārīs worshipped Kātyāyanī-devī."

In this way they continued their worship for one month with great steadfastness and on the final day of this month of vows, their most coveted Śrī Kṛṣṇa fulfilled their desires by stealing their clothes and making *rasika* jokes about them, all in accordance with their feelings for Him.

*uśasyutthāya gotraiḥ svair anyonyābaddha bāhavaḥ;
kṛṣṇam uccair jagur yāntyah kālindyām snatum anvaham
nadyām kadācid āgatya tīre niḥkṣīpya pūrvavat;
vāsāmsi kṛṣṇam gāyantyo vijahruḥ salile mudā
bhagavām stad abhipretya kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ;
vayasyaivāvṛtas tatra gatas tat karma siddhaye
tāsām vāsāmsyupādāya nīpam āruhya satvaraḥ;
hasadbhiḥ prahasan bālaiḥ parihāsam uvāca ha
atrāgatyābalāḥ kāmam svam svam vasaḥ pragrhyatām;
satyaṁ bruvāṇi no narma yad yūyaṁ vrata-karṣitāḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.22.6-10)

"Every morning the maidens of Vraja would rise before dawn, call each other and then walk hand-in-hand to the Yamunā to bathe, loudly singing Kṛṣṇa's glories. On the final day they came to the bank of the Yamunā like every other day, placed their garments there and began to play in the Yamunā-water, most blissfully singing Kṛṣṇa's glories.

Kṛṣṇa, Who is the Lord of the kings of Yoga, knew what they were doing and came to the bank of the Yamunā with His friends to grant them the fruits of their penances.

Very quickly Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole their clothes from the shore, climbed into a Kadamba-tree and began to make different jokes about them with His laughing friends.

When the cowherd maidens noticed this, He told them: "O cowherd maidens! Come to the Kadamba-tree if you like, find your own clothes and take them back from Me. You are all ascetic girls, so I am not kidding with you. I'm speaking the truth!"

Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa and hearing the joking words the thief of their clothes spoke according to their feelings, the maidens of Vraja floated in oceans of transcendental bliss, but out of embarrassment, they could not immediately come out of the Yamunā-water. With His erotic jokes, Kṛṣṇa brought them to the base of the Kadamba-tree and embarrassed them even further before returning them their clothes and fulfilling their desires by accepting them as His sweethearts.

The place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa stole the clothes of the cowherd maidens is known as **Cīra-Ghāṭa**.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I take shelter of this Cīra Ghāṭa."

*kātyāyanī vrata kore, kṛṣṇa ke pāvāra tare,
 jala magnā gopa kanyā gaṇa
 rākhilo vasana nikara, kṛṣṇa sabā agocara,
 tira hoite korilo haraṇa
 kadamba tarute bose, samujjvala parihāse,
 lajjita korilo kanyāgaṇe.
 punarāya saḥāsyete, vastra dāna kore yāte,
 āśraya kori cīra ghāṭa nāme*

"I take shelter of Cīra-Ghāṭa, where the cowherd maidens plunged into the Yamunā, performing a vow to please Kātyāyanī-devī to get Kṛṣṇa for a husband. The place where Kṛṣṇa stole their clothes from the shore, where they had kept them, without being noticed and where He sat in a Kadamba-tree, embarrassing them all by making erotic jokes, and where He finally returned them their clothes with a smile on His face."

VERSE 85:

**heṣābhiḥ jagatī-trayaṁ mada-bharair utkampayantaṁ paraiḥ
phullan-netra-vidhūrṇanena paritaḥ pūrṇaṁ dahantaṁ jagat
taṁ tāvat tṛṇavat vidīrya bakabhid-vidveṣiṇaṁ keśinaṁ
yatra kṣālitavān karau sa-rudhirau tat keśi-tīrthaṁ bhaje**

heṣābhiḥ - with whinnying; *jagatī* - the world; *trayaṁ* - three; *mada-bharaiḥ* - madly; *utkampayantaṁ* - causing to tremble; *paraiḥ* - greatly; *phullan* - wide open; *netra* - eyes; *vidhūrṇanena* - by rolling; *paritaḥ* - everywhere; *pūrṇaṁ* - full; *dahantaṁ* - burning; *jagat* - the world; *taṁ* - him; *tāvat* - that far; *tṛṇavat* - like a blade of grass; *vidīrya* - splitting; *bakabhī* - Kṛṣṇa; *vidveṣiṇaṁ* - of the hater; *keśinaṁ* - of Keśī; *yatra* - where; *kṣālitavān* - washed; *karau* - the hands; *sarudhirau* - with blood; *tat* - that; *keśi-tīrthaṁ* - Keśī Ghāṭa; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Keśī-Ghāṭa, where Kṛṣṇa washed the blood from His hands after He tore apart the great horse-demon Keśī, whose mad whinnying caused the three worlds to tremble and whose wide open, rolling eyes burned the whole universe, just like a blade of grass.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Keśī-tīrtha.

After Kaṁsa had sent so many powerful demons to Vraja to help him to harm Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa had so easily and playfully killed all these demons, Kaṁsa finally sent the powerful Keśī-demon to Vraja.

On Kaṁsa's order, this Keśī-demon assumed the form of a horse through his illusory potency and swiftly arrived in Vraja.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is written how the Keśī-demon, with his terrible appearance, was playfully and casually killed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa-

*keśī tu kaṁsa prahītaḥ khurair mahīm
mahā-hayo nirjarayan manojavaḥ;
saṭāvadhūtābhra vimāna saṅkulaṁ
kurvan nabho heṣita bhīṣitākhilāḥ
viśāla netro vikaṭāśya koṭaro
bṛhad galo nīla mahāmbudopamaḥ;
durāśayaḥ kaṁsa hitaṁ cikīrṣur
vrajaṁ sa nandasya jagāma kampayan
tām trāsayantāṁ bhagavān sva gokulaṁ
taddheṣitair bāla vicūrṇitāmbudam;
ātmanāmājau mṛgayantam agraṇīr
upāhvayat sa vyanadat mṛgendravat
sa taṁ niśāmyābhimukho mukhena khaṁ
pibann ivābhya dravatyamarsaṇaḥ;
jaghāna padbhyām aravinda locanaṁ
durāsadaś caṇḍajavo duratyayaḥ
tad vañcayitvā tam adhokṣajo ruṣā
pragrhya dorbhyaṁ parividhya pādayoḥ
sāvajñam utsṛjya dhanuḥ śatāntare
yathoragaṁ tārṣya suto vyavasthitaḥ
sa labdha sañjñāḥ punar utthito ruṣā
vyādāya keśī tarasāpatad dharim*

*so'py asya vaktre bhujam uttaram smayan
 praveśayāmāsa yathoragam bile
 dantā nipetur bhagavad bhuja spṛśam
 te keśinas tapta-maya spṛśo yathā
 bāhuś ca tad deha gato mahātmano
 yathāmayah samvavṛdhe hyupekṣitaḥ
 samedhamānena sa kṛṣṇa bāhunā
 niruddha vāyus caraṇāmś ca nikṣipan
 prasvinna gātraḥ parivṛtta locanaḥ
 papāta laṅḍam visṛjan kṣitau vyasuḥ
 tad dehataḥ karkaṭikāphalopamād
 vyasorapākṛṣya bhujam mahā-bhujah
 avismito'yatnahatārikaḥ suraiḥ
 prasūna varṣair niviṣadbhir ṛditaḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.37.1-9)

Śrī Śukadeva told Mahārāja Parīkṣit: "O King! Sent by Kaiṁsa and desiring to fulfill his wishes, the Keśī-demon went to Vraja, assuming the form of a gigantic horse - quick as the mind, with big eyes, a thick neck, a terrible cave-like mouth and resembling a large dark cloud - pounding and shaking the earth with his hooves, crowding the firmament with clouds and airplanes dispersed by his manes and terrifying everyone with his whinnying.

Stepping in front of him, the Lord challenged the horse-demon, who was frightening His Gokula with its loud whinnying, throwing the clouds into commotion with its tail-hair and challenging the Lord for a duel, roaring loudly like a lion.

Seeing the Lord, the Keśī-demon, who was not only hard to approach and who possessed terrible speed, but who was formidable and invincible too, turned round and ran towards

Him full of rage, and, drinking the heavens as it were with his wide open mouth, began to strike the lotus-eyed Lord with his hind legs.

Dodging the stroke and seizing the horse by his hind legs, Śrī Kṛṣṇa whirled him in a rage with His arms and, flinging him disdainfully to a distance of a hundred bows (400 cubits), just as Garuḍa would throw a serpent, stood there just as before.

Having recovered his senses and rising up again, Keśī rushed towards Śrī Hari with great speed, opening his mouth in fury. The Lord smilingly thrust His left arm into its mouth, just as a snake would enter a mouse-hole to eat the mouse.

Touching the Lord's arm, the teeth of Keśī fell out with their roots as if they were struck by a redhot iron rod. Finding its way into the demon's body, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arm swelled to an enormous degree, as if it had caught the disease of dropsy and had remained neglected.

With its breath choked by the immensely swelling arm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and its eyes rolling, and profusely sweating all over, the animal dropped dead on the ground, throwing up its legs and passing stool.

Pulling His arm out of the dead body, which resembled a ripe, burst-open cucumber, the mighty-armed Lord, Who had killed the animal without any effort and stood unelated, was glorified by the most amazed demigods, who showered Him with flowers."

Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa playfully and easily killed the powerful Keśī-demon and washed His blood-stained hands there in the Yamunā-water, this place has become famous as **Keśī-tīrtha** or Keśī-Ghāṭa.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this Keśī-tīrtha!"

mahā ahankāra mane, ati avalīlā-krame,

trijagat ye kampita kore.
phulla netra vighūrṇane, dagdha kore tribhuvane,
keśī-daitya yevā nāma dhare.
kaṁsera prerita cara, aśva-rūpī bhayaṅkara,
śrī govinda tṛṇa tulya māni.
vidārīta kori ari, ye sthānete giridhārī,
dhauta kore rudhirākta pāṇi.
yamunā pradeśa sthāna, keśī-tīrtha yāra nāma,
bhaji āmi sei keśī-ghāṭa
e boḍo lālasā mane, tīrtha kore daraśane,
yugala vilāsa prema hāṭa

I worship Keśī-tīrtha, the place on the bank of the Yamunā, where Śrī Govinda encountered the terrible horse-demon Keśī, who was sent by Kāmsa, who easily caused the three worlds to tremble and burn with his rolling, wide-open eyes and who was easily torn to shreds by Giridhārī, Who considered this enemy no more than a blade of grass.

I greatly long to see this holy place, which is the marketplace where love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa can be purchased."

VERSE 86:

annair yatra caturvidhaiḥ pṛthu-gaṇaiḥ svairam sudhā-nindibhiḥ
kāmaṁ rāma-sametam acyutam aho snigdhair vayasyair vṛtam
śrīmān yājñika-vijña-sundara-vadhū-vargaḥ svayaṁ yo mudā
bhaktiā bhōjitavān sthalaṁ ca tad idaṁ taṁ cāpi vandāmahe

annaiḥ - with grains; *yatra* - where; *catuḥ* - four; *vidhaiḥ* - kinds;
pṛthu - great; *gaṇaiḥ* - with qualities; *svairam* - automatically; *sudhā*
- nectar; *nindibhiḥ* - by those who defy; *kāmaṁ* - freely playing; *rāma*

- Balarāma; *sametam* - along with; *acyutam* - Kṛṣṇa; *aho* - O!; *snigdhaiḥ* - by the affectionate; *vayasyaiḥ* - by the friends; *vṛtam* - surrounded; *śrīmān* - the beautiful; *yājñika* - sacrificing; *viñña* - expert; *sundara* - beautiful; *vadhū* - brides; *vargaḥ* - group; *svayaṁ* - personally; *yaḥ* - who; *mudā* - gladly; *bhaktiā* - with devotion; *bhojitavān* - fed; *sthalam* - place; *ca* - and; *tat* - that; *idaṁ* - this; *taṁ* - him; *ca* - and; *api* - even; *vandāmahe* - praise.

I praise the place where the learned and beautiful wives of the sacrificing *brāhmaṇas* spontaneously, blissfully and with great devotion fed the freely playing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and Their affectionate friends four kinds⁴⁸ of high quality food grains, which defied the taste of nectar.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : Now Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the place where the wives of the sacrificing *brāhmaṇas* fed Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Baladeva and Their friends the foodgrains that they had brought there.

This most magnanimous pastime of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is described in the 23rd chapter of the 10th Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata.

Just to bestow His mercy on the highly devoted *brāhmaṇa*-wives, Śrī Kṛṣṇa once went to an Aśoka-forest far away from Vṛndāvana to herd His cows with Śrī Baladeva and His friends. When the cowherd boys became hungry and thirsty, He sent them to a group of *brāhmaṇas* who were performing sacrifice on the outskirts of Mathurā to beg for some food.

Even when the *brāhmaṇas* heard that the cowherd boys were begging food on behalf of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, they refused, considering the two brothers to be mere human boys.

⁴⁸ *carvya*, *coṣya*, *lehya* and *peya* - chewed, sucked, licked and drunk.

Thus the cowherd boys returned very unhappily, but this time the merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent them to beg food from the wives of these sacrificing *brāhmaṇas*, who were exclusively devoted to His lotus feet.

Hearing the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boys went to the highly devoted *brāhmaṇa*-wives and begged food from them, telling them that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva were hungry. Śrīmad Bhāgavata says:

*śrutvācyutam upāyātāṁ nityaṁ tad darśanotsukāḥ;
tat kathākṣipta manaso vabhūvur jāta sambhramāḥ
catur-vidham bahugūṇam annam ādāya bhojanaiḥ;
abhisarūḥ priyaṁ sarvāḥ samudram iva nimnagāḥ
niśidhyamānāḥ patibhiḥ pitṛbhir bhrātṛ bandhubhiḥ;
bhagavatyuttama śloke dīrgha śruta dhṛtāsayāḥ
yamunopavane śoka nava pallava maṇḍite;
vicarantaṁ vṛtaṁ gopaiḥ dadṛśuḥ sāgrajaṁ striyaḥ
syāmaṁ hiraṇya paridhiṁ vanamālya barha-
dhātu prabāla naṭaveśam anuvratāṁse
vinyasta hastam itareṇa dhunānanābjāṁ
karṇotpalālaka kapola mukhābja hāsam
prāyaḥ śruta priyatamodaya karṇapūrair
yasmin nimagna manasas tam athākṣi-randhrāiḥ
antaḥ praveśya suciraṁ parirabhya tāpaṁ
prājñāṁ yathābhimatayo vijahur narendra*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.23.18-23)

"The *brāhmaṇa*-wives had already been attracted to topics concerning Śrī Kṛṣṇa for a while and they were very eager to see Him. Now that they heard from the cowherd boys that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was coming, they went beside themselves of ecstasy.

The *brāhmaṇa*-wives had offered their hearts to Śrī Kṛṣṇa after constantly hearing about His matchless form, attributes and beauty and so they ran towards their most dearly beloved as the rivers run towards the ocean, with plates with four kinds of food - that which is licked, sucked, chewed or drunk - in their hands, although their husbands, fathers, brothers and friends tried to stop them.

They saw Kṛṣṇa playing different wonderful games with Śrī Baladeva and His cowherd boyfriends on the bank of the Yamunā in woods beautified by fresh Aśoka-leaves. He had a sapphire-like blue complexion. He wore a shining yellow garment, and a garland of forest flowers hung around His neck. He had a crown of peacock feathers and His dancing-dress was decorated with mineral pigments and fresh leaves. He held His left arm on the shoulder of a bystanding cowherd boy and twirled a lotus flower around in His right hand. His ears were decorated with lotus flowers, curly locks of hair were decorating His cheeks and His face was decorated with a sweet smile.

The wives of the *brāhmaṇas* had always decorated their throats (voices) with topics of the form, attributes, pastimes and beauty of their beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and their hearts were always immersed in Him. Now that they directly saw this Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they made Him enter into their hearts through their eyes, and there they tightly embraced Him.

In this way they became relieved from the affliction of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa in all respects, just as the conditioned souls, who are absorbed in conceptions of 'I' and 'mine' become relieved from all afflictions while they are in a deep sleep."

Because the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* desired the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord told them: "If you accept My service in this *brāhmaṇa*-birth, then it will not be liked and appreciated by

society. Therefore just serve Me mentally and in the next life you will attain Me!"

On the order of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* returned to the sacrificial arena, and by the Lord's grace, the *brāhmaṇas* found no fault in them, but completed the sacrifice with them.

Later, on the strength of their association with their wives, these *brāhmaṇas* themselves also came to understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa's glories, and were thus blessed.

Meanwhile Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva and the cowherd boys most blissfully ate the four kinds of exquisite dishes that were faithfully offered by the *brāhmaṇas'* wives and that defied the taste of nectar.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I praise this place where the Lord ate, as well as the wives of the sacrificing *brāhmaṇas* who offered Him that food."

susnigdha vayasya-gaṇe, saṅge kṛṣṇa balarāme,
vihariche svacchande yethāya
yājñika muni gaṇe, sundarī patnī-gaṇe
bhakti bhare harṣete tathāya
carva, coṣya, lehya, peya, svāde sudhā nindaniya
divya anna saṅgete ānīyā.
govinde arpaṇa kore, ye sthāne bhojana kore,
sakhā saṅge ānande mātiyā.
se heno pavitra sthāne, tathā yājñika badhū-gaṇe,
nitya bandi luṭāiyā pāya.
yāñhādera āśirbāde, avicalā bhakti lābhe,
iṣṭa prāpti hoibe niścoy

"I always praise the place where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma freely played with Their affectionate friends and where, in great bliss

and with great devotion, the beautiful wives of the sacrificing *brāhmaṇas* brought divine dishes, whose taste defy that of nectar and that can be chewed, sucked, licked and drunk, to Govinda and His friends, Who ate these dishes in great ecstasy. I always praise this sacred place and roll at the feet of these *brāhmaṇa*-wives, for it is certain that with their blessings one attains steady devotion."

VERSE 87:

**mudā gopendrasyaātmaja-bhuja-pariṣvaṅga-nidhaye
sphurad-gopī-vṛndair yam iha bhagavantaṁ praṇayibhiḥ
bhajadbhis tair bhaktyā svam abhilaṣitaṁ prāptam acirāt
yamī-tīre gopīśvaram anudinaṁ taṁ kila bhaje**

mudā - joyfully; *gopendrasya* - of the king of cowherds; *ātmaja* - son; *bhuja* - arm; *pariṣvaṅga* - embraced; *nidhaye* - for the jewel; *sphurad* - splendid; *gopī-vṛndaiḥ* - by the *gopīs*; *yam* - who; *iha* - in Vraja; *bhagavantaṁ* - of the Lord; *praṇayibhiḥ* - by the beloved; *bhajadbhiḥ* - by the worshippers; *taiḥ* - by them; *bhaktyā* - with devotion; *svam* - own; *abhilaṣitaṁ* - desired; *prāptam* - attained; *acirāt* - soon; *yamī* - Yamunā; *tīre* - on the bank; *gopīśvaram* - Gopīśvara; *anudinaṁ* - every day; *taṁ* - him; *kila* - certainly; *bhaje* - I worship.

I daily worship Gopīśvara Sadāśiva, who was devotedly worshipped on the bank of the Yamunā by the loving gopīs who desired the jewel-like embrace of the arms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the prince of Vraja, and who thus swiftly attained their desired object.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : Now Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Bhagavān Sadāśiva Śrī Gopīśvara, who is situated on the bank of the Yamunā.

Śrī Sadāśiva has freely taken shelter of the bank of the Yamunā in the transcendental abode of Vraja to worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pleasure potency, Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved Vrajasundarīs saw Śrīman Mahādeva situated on the bank of the Yamunā, though, they floated in an ocean of bliss, for they knew that by his grace, the company of Śrī Kṛṣṇa would certainly be attained.

By worshipping Bhagavān Sadāśiva with topmost devotion, they would swiftly attain their desired goal, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa's company.

From then onwards, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved Vrajasundarīs began to worship Śrī Sadāśiva on the bank of the Yamunā, yearning for the jewel-like embrace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arms, and the deity has hence become famous as **Gopīśvara**.

The *gopīs* attained a jewel by being embraced by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arms. It is described in the praises of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the personified Vedas:

*nibhṛta marun mano'kṣa dṛḍha yoga yujo hṛdi yan
munaya upāsate tad arayo'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt
striya-uragendra bhoga bhuja daṇḍa viśakta dhiyo
vayam api te samāḥ samadṛśo'nghrisaroja-sudhāḥ*

(Bhāgavata 10.87.23)

"O Lord! With rigid *yoga*-practices, the sages worship You in the heart as the undifferentiated *brahman*, subduing their minds, senses and life-air, but Your enemies have attained that

very same *brahman*-status by thinking of You in fear and enmity.

The *gopīs*, though, were **attached to the embrace of Your snake-like arms** and have thus attained the nectar of Your lotus feet on their breasts. By following in their footsteps we have also attained this nectar from Your lotus feet!"

Desiring this jewel-like embrace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's arms, the *gopīs* are worshipping Gopīśvara, being very attached to these arms. The reason is that the worship of Gopīśvara fulfills all the desires of everyone.

It is described in Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara:

*ki apūrva śobhā ei banera bhitorā;
 guṇātīta liṅga rūpa nāma gopīśvara
 ei sadāśiva vṛndāvipina pālaya;
 ihāke pūjile sarva kārya siddha hoy
 gopigaṇa sadā kṛṣṇa saṅgera lāgiyā;
 nirantara pūje yatne nānā dravya diyā
 kohite ki pāri ye mahimā gurutara;
 gopikā pūjita teṅho nāma gopīśvara
 indrādi devatā stuti koroye sadāya;
 vṛndāvane prīti vṛddhi ihāra kṛpāya*

"How wonderfully beautiful it is within this forest! Here is the transcendental *liṅga*-deity named Gopīśvara. This Sadāśiva is protecting Vṛndāvana and anyone who worships Him attains all perfection. The *gopīs* always desired to be with Kṛṣṇa and for this they always worshipped (Gopīśvara) with different paraphernalia. Who can describe the great glories of Gopīśvara, who was so named because the *gopīs* worshipped Him?"

The love of Vṛndāvana is increasing by the one, who is always praised by the demigods, headed by Indra."

*tathāhi- śrīmad gopīśvaraṃ vande śaṅkaraṃ karuṇāmayam
sarva kleśa haraṃ devaṃ vṛndāraṇya rati pradāṃ*

"I praise Śrīmad Gopīśvara Śaṅkara, the all-benign, the Lord who destroys all misery and who increases the love of Vṛndāvana."

*tathāca stavāṃṛta laharyāṃ-
vṛndāvanāvanipate jaya soma soma maule
sanandana sanātana nāradeḍya
gopeśvara vraja vilāsi-yugmāṅghri-padme
prema prayaccha nirupādhi namo namas te*

"O presiding god of Vṛndāvana! O beautiful moon-crested Lord! O you who are worshipable for Sanandana, Sanātana, Nārada and others! O Gopeśvara! All glories to you! Please give me unconditional love for the lotus feet of the playful pair of Vraja, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava! I offer my obeisances unto you again and again!"

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I always worship this Gopīśvara Sadāśiva! By the grace of Śrī Gopīśvara, who fulfills all desires, I will also attain the perfection of service to the lotus feet of the Divine Pair. Of this there is no doubt!"

*vraja gopī anurāge, nandātmaja bhujā yuge,
ālīṅgana divya ratna lābhe
nitya yamunāra tīre, mahāprema sahakāre,
bhakti kori pūje sadāśive*

"The Vraja-gopīs passionately desired the divine jewel-like embrace of the arms of Nanda's son, and for this reason they always went to the bank of the Yamunā with great love to devotedly worship Lord Sadāśiva."

*yāra śubhā karuṇāte, iṣṭa phala acirāte,
labhya hoy sei gopīśvare
sadāśiva bhagavān, deho iṣṭa vara dāna,
bhaji pade pulakita bhare*

"By Gopīśvara's auspicious grace all desires are swiftly fulfilled. O Lord Sadāśiva! Grant me my desired boon! I worship you with goose pimples on my skin!"

VERSE 88:

**bhayāt kaṁsasyārāt sadayam acirāc chantanu-pade
vinikṣiptā rādhā rahasi kila pitrā prakṛtitaḥ
sphurantaṁ taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā kam api ghana-puñjākṛti-varaṁ
tam evāptaṁ yatnād yam abhajata sūryo'vatu sa naḥ**

bhayāt - out of fear; *kaṁsasya* - of Kaṁsa; *ārāt* - nearby; *sadayam* - mercifully; *acirāt* - swiftly; *śaṁ* - welfare; *tanu-pade* - in a rare place; *vinikṣiptā* - keeping; *rādhā* - Rādhā; *rahasi* - secretly; *kila* - certainly; *pitrā* - by the father; *prakṛtitaḥ* - naturally; *sphurantaṁ* - revealed; *taṁ* - him; *dr̥ṣṭvā* - having seen; *kam api* - someone; *ghana* - monsoon cloud; *puñja* - host; *ākṛti* - form; *varam* - best; *tam* - him; *eva* - only; *āptum* - having attained; *yatnāt* - carefully; *yam* - whom; *abhajata* - worshipped; *sūryaḥ* - the sun; *avatu* - may protect; *sa* - he; *naḥ* - us.

May Sūrya-deva, who was diligently worshipped by Śrī Rādhā, Who was affectionately kept in a nearby hidden place by Her father for Her own welfare, out of fear of Kaṁsa, and who wanted to attain a beautiful youth with the complexion of deep monsoon clouds, protect us.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Sūryadeva, who was worshipped by Śrī Rādhā for the sake of attaining Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Out of fear of Kaiṁsa, Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja kept his daughter Śrī Rādhā in a solitary place. Kaiṁsa had become frightened after hearing the words of Devakī's daughter and he had begun the atrocities of killing all the young boys and kidnapping all the young girls.

Devī had said:

*yas tuṅgena puṛottamāṅgama harac cakreṇa te saṅgare
yaṁ vṛndāraka vṛnda vandita pada dvandvāravindaṁ viduḥ
ānandāmṛta sindhubhiḥ praṇayināṁ sandohamānandayam
prādurbhāvam avindad eṣa jagatī kando'dya candrodaye
kiñca - mattaḥ sattama mādhubirbhir adhikāḥ śvo vā paraśvo'thavā
gantāraḥ kṣiti-maṅdale prakāṣatām aṣṭo mahā-śaktayaḥ
vṛndiṣṭhe guṇa vṛnda mandiratayā tatra svasārāv ubhe
rājendro bhavitā harasya ca jayī pāṇau grhītā yayojḥ*

(Lalita Mādhava Nāṭaka - 1.15-16)

"O Kaiṁsa! He Who chopped off your head with His raised disc in your previous birth, when you were known as Kālanemi, Who is described by the scholars as He Whose lotus feet are worshipped by the demigods and Who is the root cause of the universe, has now risen like the moon to increase the nectar-ocean of the bliss of his beloveds!"

Devī also said: "Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, eight great *śaktis*, who are even sweeter than me, and who are named Rādhā, Candrāvalī, Lalitā, Viśākhā, Padmā, Śaibyā, Śyāmalā and Bhadrā, will appear on earth. Of these eight great *śaktis*, two sisters (Rādhā and Candrāvalī) are again the most qualified

and will become most famous as *gopī*-group leaders. He who marries these two sisters will become the greatest of all kings and defeat even Mahādeva (Śiva) in battle!"

After hearing these words of Devī, Kāṁsa began to attempt to kidnap Śrī Rādhā, and thus Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu began to keep Her in hidden places.

It is here that Śrī Rādhā saw an endlessly sweet boy Who was as deeply dark as the monsoon clouds and Who was called Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Attracted to His sweet mood, She became eager to attain Him as Her dear most beloved.

The Mahājanas describe this world-enchanting sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in their songs —

*kuvalaya nīla, ratana dalitāñjana,
megha puñja jini varaṇa suchānda
kuñcita keśa, khacita śikhi-candraka,
alakāvalita lalitānana cānda
āota re nava nāgara kāna
bhāvinī bhāva, vibhāvita antara,
dīnā rajanī nāhi jānato āna*

"Bhāvinī (sensitive Rādhā) cannot think of anyone else, day and night, but Her young lover Kāna (Kṛṣṇa), Who has come to Her, His complexion defeating the colour of a blue lotus flower, a sapphire, crushed eyeliner or a host of monsoon clouds, His curly locks, which are flanking His lovely moon-like face, crowned by a peacockfeather."

*madhurādhara hāsa, manohara tahi ati,
sumadhura muralī virāja.
bhāṅga vibhaṅgima, kuṭīla nehārai
kulavatī umati dūre rahu lāja.
gaja gati bhāti, gamana ati manthara,*

*mañjira bājata ruṇu jhuniyā
heraite koṭi, madana mūrachāyai,
govinda dāsa koho dhani dhaniyā*

"His sweetly smiling lips are very enchanting and He plays His flute so sweetly. He makes charming movements and casts crooked glances, maddening the married girls and removes their shame. His slow gait resembles that of an elephant and His anklebells jingle '*runu jhunu*'. "

Govinda dāsa says: "O fortunate girl! Seeing Him, millions of Cupids faint!"

For attaining this Śyāmasundara, Who enchants millions of Cupids, Śrī Rādhā worshipped Sūryadeva. Śrīmatī's *sūrya pūja* is just another way of loving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therein lies the sweetness of the human-like pastimes, namely that Śrī Rādhā, Who is Herself worshipable by all the demigods, including Sūrya, always worships Sūryadeva for establishing a meeting with Him or for His good health and so on.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha is Śrī Rādhā's beloved maidservant, so he also covets the mercy of the sungod so that he can attain the audience and the devotional service of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava.

*vṛṣabhānu rājā ati, kaṁsa bhaye bhītimati,
sneha bhare maṅgalera tare
śrī rādhāya gopya sthāne, rakṣā koilā sayatane,
yāra mādhuri khyāta viśva bhare*

"Out of great fear of Kaṁsa, Vṛṣabhānu Rājā affectionately kept Śrī Rādhā, whose sweetness is world-famous, in a secret place for Her own welfare."

*megha puñjākṛti vara, dekhi śyāma manohara,
se pītavasana vanamālī
śrī kṛṣṇera prāpti lobhe, bhaji nitya sūryadeve,
anurāge sakhīgaṇa mili.*

"When She saw enchanting Śyāma, Who resembled an excellent monsoon cloud and Who sported a yellow garment and a garland of forest flowers, She became eager to attain that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and passionately began to worship Sūryadeva with Her girlfriends."

*sei to sūryadeve, e minati kori ebe,
rakṣā koru sarva vighna hoite.
vāsa kori nanda vraje, bhaji śrī rādhā govinde,
sūryadeva! koro āśīrbāde*

"I humbly pray that this Sūryadeva will protect me from all obstacles and allow me to live in Nanda's Vraja to worship Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. O Sūryadeva! Bless me like this!"

VERSE 89:

**āvirbhāva-mahotsave muraripoḥ svarṇoru-muktā-phala-
śreṇī-vibhrama-maṇḍite nava-gavī-lakṣe dadau dve mudā
divyālaṅkṛti-ratna-parvata-tila-prasthādikaṁ cādarād
viprebhyaḥ kila yatra sa vrajapatir vande bṛhat-kānanam**

āvirbhāva - appearance; *mahā* - great; *utsave* - in the festival;
muraripoḥ - of Kṛṣṇa; *svaṛṇa* - golden; *uru* - great; *muktāphala* -
pearls; *śreṇī* - lines; *vibhrama* - surrounded; *maṇḍite* - decorated;
nava - young; *gavī* - cows; *lakṣe* - a hundred thousand; *dadau* - gave;

dve - two; *mudā* - gladly; *divya* - divine; *alañkṛta* - decorated; *parvata* - mountain; *tila* - sesame; *prastha* - heap; *ādikam* - bigger; *ca* - and; *ādarād* - respectfully; *viprebhyaḥ* - unto the *brāhmaṇas*; *kila* - certainly; *yatra* - where; *sa* - he; *vrajapatiḥ* - the lord of Vraja; *vande* - I praise; *bṛhat* - great; *kānanam* - forest.

I praise Bṛhadvana (Gokula), where the Lord of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja, jubilantly donated 200,000 young cows that were decorated with gold and strings of pearls, as well as heaps of divine ornaments and a mountain of sesame to the brāhmaṇas on the occasion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's birth-festival.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Bṛhad-vana, the place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's advent.

It is here that Śrī Nanda, the king of Vraja, desiring the welfare of his son, gave ample charity to the *brāhmaṇas* on the occasion of His birthday-festival.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is written: *dhenūnām niyute prādād viprebhyaḥ samalañkṛte tilādrīn sapta rātraugha sātakaumbhāmarāvṛtān* (Bhāg. 10.5.3), and Śrīdhara Svāmī comments: *niyute dve lakṣe*:

"When Śrī Kṛṣṇa took birth Śrī Nanda Mahārāja gave 200,000 cows beautified with golden horns and silver hooves and covered by clothes that were inset with different gems and strings of gold, as well as seven piles of sesame, to the *brāhmaṇas*."

In Śrī Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa it is seen that:

tato nandaś ca sānandaṁ brāhmaṇebhyaḥ dhanam dadau. sad ratnāni prabālāni hirakāni ca sādaram. tilānām parvatān sapta

*suvarṇa kāñcanaṃ mune. raupyaṃ dhānyācalaṃ vastraṃ go-
sahasraṃ manoramam.*

"Goparāja Śrī Nanda was so happy when Kṛṣṇa was born that he gave various gems, corals, diamonds and other riches, as well as seven piles of sesame, a mountain of paddy, gold, silver, garments and thousands upon thousands of cows to the *brāhmaṇas*."

In the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa we can see how much a pile of sesame is supposed to be:

*uttamo daśabhir droṇair madhyamaḥ pañcabhir mataḥ.
tribhiḥ kañiṣṭho rājendra tila śailaḥ prakīrtitaḥ.
pūrvavaccāparaṃ sarvaṃ viṣkambha parvatādikam*

"The greatest pile of sesame consists of ten *droṇas*⁴⁹. A pile of five *droṇas* is mediocre and a pile of three *droṇas* is the minimum. Just as there must be Viṣkambha-mountains⁵⁰ placed in all four corners around a mountain of paddy, so it is also prescribed for the mountain of sesame."

All these piles of sesame and paddy must be beautified with jewels, gold and flower garlands. The arrangements for this are also outlined by the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa:

*itthaṃ niveśyāmara śailam agra matas tu viṣkambha girīn
krameṇa. turīya bhāgena catur-dīśaṃ ca saṃsthāpayet puṣpa*

⁴⁹ A *droṇa* is a dry measure of 32 seers for corn etc., or a measuring vessel having this capacity.

⁵⁰ In order to keep the pivotal mountain Sumeru steady, Lord Brahmā placed four supporting mountains around it, viz. Mandāra, Gandhamādana, Nīla and Supārśva. Such mountains are called Viṣkambha-mountains. Even when mere mountains of paddy or sesame are being donated, four Viṣkambha-mountains must still be established around them, as if they were mount Sumeru.

*vilepanādhyam. merur mahān vrīhi-mayas tu madhye suvarṇa
vṛkṣa-traya samyutaḥ syāt. pūrveṇa muktāphala vajra-yukto
yāmyena gomedaka puṣpa-rāgaiḥ. paścāc ca gārutmata nīla-
ratnaih saumye ca vaidūrya saroja-rāgaiḥ.*

"When one thus has made a Sumeru-mountain with sesame or paddy in the amounts of ten *droṇas* or so, one must establish the Viṣkambha-mountains around them on four sides with sandal or flowers, divided in four parts.

In the mountains of sesame and paddy, one must then place three trees made of gold. The Viṣkambha-mountain situated in the east must contain pearls and diamonds, the Viṣkambha-mountain in the south must contain topaz-gems and Puṣpa-rāga gems, the Viṣkambha-mountain in the west must contain Gārutmata-gems and sapphires and the Viṣkambha-mountain in the north must be established, containing Lapis Lazuli and rubies."

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his Gopāla Campūḥ:
*daśabhir droṇaiḥ kṛta tīla saptācalīmad adāt. yad vṛti maṇi
kanakānām tad adhikatara bhāratā dvījer mene*

"Nanda Mahārāja donated seven piles of sesame, each containing ten *droṇas*, to the *brāhmaṇas*. The *brāhmaṇas* thought that the jewels and gold covering these mountains of sesame were even heavier than the sesame itself."

From this information, we can slightly conceive of the unlimited amount of jewels and gems Goparāja Nanda gave in charity.

Vrajadhāma is the transcendental playground of the Original Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore it is not at all impossible for Mahārāja Śrī Nanda to donate such amounts of jewels and gems.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha thus praises **Bṛhadvana**, the place where Śrī Nanda Mahārāja donated such a huge amount of wealth.

*śrī kṛṣṇera āvirbhāve, tāra janma mahotsave,
 vraje śrīla nanda mahārāja.
 dui lakṣa gābhī-gaṇe, maṇi muktā vibhūṣaṇe,
 kori divya ratnamaya sāja
 ratna rāśi tīla giri, parama ādara kori,
 brāhmaṇere korechilo dāna
 se bṛhat kānane, vandi mui sāvadhāne,
 divya cintāmaṇimaya sthāna*

"I attentively praise Mahāvana Gokula, the transcendental place made of Cintāmaṇi-gems, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa advented Himself and where Śrīla Nanda Mahārāja most respectfully gave 200,000 cows, decorated with jewels and pearls and dressed in divine jewel-studded blankets, as well as jewel-covered piles of sesame, in charity to the local *brāhmaṇas*."

VERSE 90:

**gāndharvāyā jani-maṇiḥ abhūt yatra saṅkīrtitāyām
 ānandotkaiḥ sura-muni-naraiḥ kīrtidā-garbha-khanyām
 gopī-gopaiḥ surabhī-nikaraiḥ samparīte'tra mukhe
 rāvalyākhye vṛṣaravi-pure prīti-pūro mamāstām**

gāndharvāyā - of Rādhā; *jani* - birth; *maṇiḥ* - jewel; *abhūt* - became; *yatra* - where; *saṅkīrtitāyām* - glorified; *ānanda* - bliss; *utkaraiḥ* - with a multitude; *sura* - gods; *muni* - sages; *naraiḥ* - by human beings; *kīrtidā* - Kīrtidā; *garbha* - womb; *khanyām* - in the

mine; *gopī* - cowherdwoman; *gopaiḥ* - by the cowherds; *surabhi-nikaraiḥ* - by the cows; *saṁparīte* - filled; *atra* - here; *mukhya* - chief; *irā* - the earth; *āvalī* - Rādhā's birthplace, a worshipable *vigraha*; or Rāvala; *ākhye* - known as; *vṛṣa-ravi-pure* - in the town of Vṛṣabhānu; *prīti* - love; *pūra* - a flood; *mama* - my; *āstām* - let it be.

May I drown in a flood of love for Rāvala, the capital of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, where many cowherd men and -women live and where the jewel-like Śrī Rādhā appeared from the mine-like womb of Her mother Kīrtidā, who was blissfully praised by the demigods, sages and human beings.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Rāvala, the capital of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu.

Just as Mahāvana or Bṛhad-vana is the birthplace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so is Rāval the birthplace of Śrī Rādhārāṇī. After seeing the havoc caused by different demons, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and his associates shifted their capital to Nandīśvara and Śrī Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja shifted his capital to Varṣānā.

In the village of Rāval, the great jewel Śrī Rādhārāṇī appeared from the mine-like womb of Mother Kīrtidā. Mother Kīrtidā is truly the giver of fame to the world.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya:

kīrti-gaṇa madhye jīvera kon boḍo kīrti? "Of all kinds of fame, which fame is the greatest?"

Śrī Rāma Rāya replied:

kṛṣṇa prema bhakti boli yāra hoy khyāti (C.C.) "The fame of he who is known to have loving devotion for Kṛṣṇa."

Because she made the presiding goddess of love for Kṛṣṇa personally descend and blessed the people of the world by giving them great fame as devotees of Kṛṣṇa, she is justly named

Kīrtidā. Can there be any doubt that the womb from which the great jewel Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who directly is the embodiment of *mahā-bhāva* and Who is Kṛṣṇa's most dearly beloved, has appeared, is a mine of jewels?

In Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda's 'Lalita Mādhava Nāṭaka', it is described how Harimāyā attracted Śrī Rādhā from Kīrtidā's womb and placed Her in the womb of the wife of the Vindhya-mountains, how Pūtanā kidnapped Her and how She returned into the hands of Vṛṣabhānu and Kīrtidā after Vindhya's priest launched a witch-killing *mantra* against Pūtanā and thus made her drop the baby before she could deliver it to Kaṁsa.

This is an occasional pastime, though, which occurs in some form in some *kalpa* (era). No one is able to understand the Playful Lord and the wonderfully playful manifestations of His *svarūpa-śakti* (innate energy). No one can understand in which age the Playful Lord performs what pastime and in which saint's heart this will be revealed. Actually Śrī Rādhārāṇī appears from the mine-like womb of Kīrtidā in every *kalpa*, but in some *kalpas* is She first drawn out of Kīrtidā's womb and placed in the womb of Vindhya's queen to appear from there. This is how we should understand it.

In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha clearly describes how the great Rādhā-jewel emerged from the mine-like womb of Śrī Kīrtidā and how the demigods, sages and human beings were immersed in the pinnacle of bliss when they beheld this pastime of advent.

Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara describes it thus:

*ahe śrīnivāsa dekho e 'rāvala' grāma;
ethā vṛṣabhānura vasati anupāma
śrī rādhikā prakāṣa hoilā eikhāne;
yāhāra prakāṣe sukha vyāpilo bhuvane*

*āji ki ānanda vṛṣabhānura mandire;
 janmilā rādhikā devī kṛttikā udare
 diśā daśa ālo kore rūpera chaṭāya;
 ye dekhe bāreka tāra tāpa dūre yāya
 sukomala tanu jini kanaka labanī;
 āhā mari! kibā prati aṅgera balanī
 janani janaka dhṛti dharite nā pāre;
 koto sādhe cānda mukha dekhe bāre bāre
 jaya jaya kalarave bharilo bhuvana;
 gāoye maṅgala gīta gopanāri-gaṇa
 bājaye vividha vādya parama rasāla;
 nācaye sakala loka, bole bhālo bhālo
 dadhi dudha haldi aṅgane chaḍāiyā;
 hāsaye hāsāya koto bhaṅgī prakāśiyā
 vipra vandi-gaṇe dāna kore nānā bhāti;
 dekhi ghanaśyāma onā rāṅga sukhe māti*

"Behold, O Śrīnivāsa, the village named Rāvala! This is the matchless abode of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu. It is here that Śrī Rādhikā appeared and thus filled the whole world with bliss. What bliss there is today in Vṛṣabhānu's abode, for today Rādhikā devī appeared from Kīrtidā's womb! Her bodily lustre, which illuminates all ten directions, removes the affliction of anyone who sees it even once. Her tender body shines brighter than gold. O goodness! Just see the elegance of each of Her limbs! Her mother and father could not remain calm and eagerly stared at Her moon-like face again and again. Shouts of *'jaya! jaya!'* filled the world and all the cowherd women sang auspicious songs. Various musical instruments were tastefully played and all the people danced saying: "Very well! Bravo!" Throwing yoghurt, milk and haldi around on the courtyard, they laughed and joked, making many gestures. Great charity was

given to the *brāhmaṇas* and the bards, and Ghanaśyāma was maddened with bliss when He saw this."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "May I drown in a flood of love for Rāvala, the capital of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu, which is filled with cowherd men and women".

In his *svarūpa*, Śrī Raghunātha is the maidservant of Śrī Rādhā, therefore she covets greatly passionate love for the birthplace of her supreme goddess, Who is dearer to him than millions of her life-airs.

*ānande vibhora, sura muni, nara,
 praśaṁsita kirtidāra
 garbha rūpa khani-, mājhāre ye maṇi,
 'rādhā' nāme camatkāra
 yethā āvirbhūta, ho'ye sukhāpluta,
 korechena carācara.
 rāvala nāmaka, gopa gopī dhenu,
 suveṣṭita manohara
 vṛṣabhānu pura, prati sumadhura,
 piriti pravāha rāsi.
 e hṛdaya mājhe, sadā yeno rāje,
 rahibo se rase bhāsi*

"May a stream of sweet love for Rāvala, which is beautifully filled with cows, cowherd men and cowherd women, and where demigods, sages and men were blissfully praising Kīrtidā, in whose mine-like womb the astonishing jewel named 'Rādhā' appeared, causing all moving and non-moving beings to be immersed in transcendental bliss, always flow through my heart, so that I can remain floating on it."

VERSE 91:

**yasya śrīmac-caraṇa-kamale komale komalāpi
 śrī-rādhocair nija-sukha-kṛte sannayantī kucāgre
 bhītāpy ārād atha nahi dadhāty asya kārkaśya-doṣāt
 sa śrī-goṣṭhe prathayatu sadā śeṣa-śāyī sthitim naḥ**

yasya - whose; *śrīmat* - beautiful; *caraṇa kamale* - lotus feet; *komale* - tender; *komalāpi* - more tender; *śrī rādhā* - Śrī Rādhā; *uccaiḥ* - highly; *nija* - own; *sukha-kṛte* - for delighting; *sannayantī* - brings; *kucāgre* - on the nipples; *bhītā* - fear; *api* - even; *ārāt* - close by; *atha* - then; *nahi* - not; *dadhāti* - places; *asya* - whose; *kārkaśya* - harshness; *doṣāt* - from the fault; *sa* - he; *śrī goṣṭhe* - in the beautiful meadows; *prathayatu* - may extend; *sadā* - always; *śeṣa* - on Ananta; *śāyī* - reclining; *sthitim* - position; *naḥ* - unto us.

May Śeṣa-śāyī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Whose tender and enchanting lotus feet tender Śrī Rādhā wanted to place on Her breasts for Her own happiness, but then changed Her mind because She was afraid that Her breasts were too hard for His feet, arrange for my staying in the enchanting meadows of Vraja.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śeṣa-śāyī.

Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa lay down on the bed of Ananta just for fun and Śrī Rādhārāṇī served His lotus feet just as Lakṣmīdevī serves the lotus feet of Śeṣa-śāyī Bhagavān.

e śeṣa-śāyī kṣīra samudra ethāte, kautuke śuilā kṛṣṇa ananta śayyāte; śrī rādhikā pāda-padma koroye sevana, ye ānanda hoilo tāhā nā yāya varṇana (Bhakti Ratnākara)

"Here at Śeṣa-śāyī is the Kṣīra Samudra (Milk-ocean), where Kṛṣṇa lay on the snake-bed Ananta just for fun. The bliss that was felt when Śrī Rādhikā then served His lotus feet cannot be described."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "When Śrī Rādhārāṇī served Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, She wanted to keep these feet on Her breasts for Her own happiness."

Here **own happiness** means the happiness that nourishes Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness, because the *gopīs* can never have any other purpose than Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

*ātma sukha duḥke gopīra nāhiko vicāra;
kṛṣṇa sukha hetu ceṣṭā mano vyavahāra.
kṛṣṇa lāgi āra sab kori parityāga;
kṛṣṇa sukha hetu kore śuddha anurāga*

(C.C.)

"The *gopīs* do not consider their own happiness or distress. All their thoughts and activities are aimed at pleasing Kṛṣṇa. For Kṛṣṇa, they have given up everything else. Their pure passionate love exists only for Kṛṣṇa's happiness."

Hence, wherever there is a mentioning of the *gopīs*' personal happiness, it must always be understood to be Kṛṣṇa's happiness.

*ataeva sei sukha kṛṣṇa sukha poṣe;
ei hetu gopī preme nāhi kāma doṣe*

(C.C.)

"Therefore, this happiness nourishes Kṛṣṇa's happiness, hence there is no fault of lust in the love of the *gopīs*."

This secret is revealed in this part of the *śloka*: *bhītyāpyārād
atha nahi dadhātīyasya kārkaśya doṣāt*

‘Śrī Rādhā did not want to place Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s tender lotus feet on Her breasts, afraid that they would be too hard for Him.’

When She served Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, Śrī Rādhārāṇī wanted to hold them on Her beautiful breasts, but when She brought these very soft feet, that are adorned with endless beauty and sweetness, to Her breasts She felt as if Her hard nipples struck them, and so She decided not to place them there.

Here it should be specially noticed that a lady love naturally goes beyond herself of bliss when she carries her lover on her breasts, but Śrī Rādhārāṇī did not lose Herself in bliss when the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Whom She loves more than a million life-airs, touched Her.

Her only aim is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s happiness. Her heart was filled with a fear that overruled Her own desire for happiness, and thus She did not place Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet on Her breasts anymore. Thus, the complete absence of desire for personal happiness, which is known to the *rasika* devotees, has been manifest.

Actually, one of the signs of the *gopīs’ rūḍha-mahābhāva* is: *tat saukhye’pi ārti-saṅkayā khinnatvam*

"They are anxious that even the things that please Kṛṣṇa may give Him pain."

When Rasika-Śekhara Śrī Kṛṣṇa places His feet on the breasts of the Vraja-devīs, then His happiness is clearly visible on His beautiful face, because it is simply not possible that the lover will be unhappy when he has his feet on the breasts of his lady love. Still, the Vrajadevīs think that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be unhappy when they do this. This is the private treasure of the

Vrajadevīs' ecstatic love, which is not accessible to any other consort of the Lord, like Rukmiṇī or Satyabhāmā.

The Vrajadevīs revealed this themselves in the night of the Rāsa-dance in the last verse of the Gopī-Gītī (10.31.19):

*yat te sujāta caraṇāmburuhaṃ staneṣu
bhītā śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu
tenāṭavim aṭasi tat vyathate na kiṃ svit
kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad āyuṣāṃ naḥ*

The Vrajasundarīs, who were separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, said, aiming at Him:

"O dearly beloved! We carefully hold Your delicate lotus feet on our breasts, afraid that our breasts will be too hard for them. You are our very life, and we are very worried about Your tender lotus feet when they tread the forestpaths, which are covered with pebbles and thorns!"

All these feelings are manifest in the most wonderful and amazing way in *mādanākhyā-mahābhāvavatī* (Who is endowed with the topmost love of God known as *mādana*) *śrī kṛṣṇa priya śiromaṇi* (the crown jewel of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloveds) *gopī varīyasī* (the greatest *gopī*) Śrī Rādhārāṇī.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "May Śeṣa-śāyī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Whose tender and enchanting lotus feet tender Śrī Rādhā wanted to place on Her breasts for Her own happiness, but then changed Her mind because She was afraid that Her breasts were too hard for His feet, arrange for my staying in the enchanting meadows of Vraja".

*śeṣera aṅga śayyāya, śrī aṅga helāye tāya,
pāda-padma prasārīta kore*

*cira viśrāma kore yāhā, śeṣa-śāyī nāma tāhā,
sadā lakṣmī pada sevā kore*

"The Lord, as Śeṣa-śāyī, reclines on the snake-bed of Śeṣa, spreading His lotus-legs out and resting there forever, His feet served by Lakṣmī-devī."

*sei to bhāvetē kṛṣṇa, śrī rādhāra saṅga tṛṣṇa,
śeṣa-śāyāya korilo śayana
śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇa tala, kamala hoite sukomala,
rādhā korena se pada sevana*

"In that mood, Kṛṣṇa, eager for Śrī Rādhā's company, reclines on the bed of Śeṣa while Rādhā serves His footsoles, which are more tender than lotus flowers."

*komalāṅgī bhānu-sutā, atīśaya bhaye bhītā,
śrī caraṇa nāhi dhare buke.
āmāra karkaśa hīyā, atī sukomala ihā,
ei cinti stabdha hoiyā thāke*

"Tender-limbed daughter of Vṛṣabhānu fearfully thinks to Herself: "His feet are so tender and My breasts are so hard", and thus does not place His lotus feet on Her breasts. She is always stunned by these thoughts.

*śeṣa-śāyī śrī govinde, minati padāravinde,
kṛpā kori goṣṭhe dāo vāsa
śrī rādhāra saṅge tomā, sadā bhaji e vāsanā,
e dīnera pūrāo abhilāṣa*

"This wretch humbly prays at the lotus feet of Śeṣa-śāyī Śrī Govinda: Please fulfill my desire and allow me to live in Vraja and always worship You and Śrī Rādhā there!"

VERSE 92:

**yatra kāma-saraḥ sākṣād gopikā-ramaṇaṁ saraḥ
rādhā-mādhavayoḥ preṣṭhaṁ tad-vanaṁ kāmyakaṁ bhaje**

yatra - where; *kāma-saraḥ* - Kāma Sarovara; *sākṣād* - directly; *gopikā-ramaṇaṁ saraḥ* - Gopikā-Ramaṇa Sarovara; *rādhā-mādhavayoḥ* - of Rādhā and Mādhava; *preṣṭhaṁ* - beloved; *tad* - that; *vanaṁ* - forest; *kāmyakaṁ* - Kāmyaka; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Rādhā and Mādhava's beloved Kāmyavana, where there are Kāma-Sarovara or Gopikā Ramaṇa-Sarovara itself.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Kāmyavana, one of the twelve forests of Vraja.

caturthaṁ kāmyakavanaṁ vanānāṁ vanam uttamam. tatra gatvā nara devi mama loke mahīyate (Ādi Varāha Purāṇa)

"O Devi! Kāmyavana is the fourth of the twelve forests of Vraja. Anyone who goes here will be worshipped in My abode!"

There are many, many holy places situated in Kāmyavana. There are 84 *kuṇḍas* and 110 Viṣṇu-thrones and there used to be 300 wells here, but it is said that they have been destroyed by Rākṣasas.

The biggest one is Vimalā-kuṇḍa, on whose banks there are temples of Vimalā-devī, Dāujī, Gaṅgājī, Gopārajī and Madana Gopāla.

At Setubandha Kuṇḍa there is Rāmeśvara Mahādeva. It is here that Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed the Setubandha-*līlā*.

On the bank of Ghoṣarāṇī-kuṇḍa is the parental home of Śrī Yaśodā. On the bank of Maṇikuṇḍa, Śrī Hariścandra Mahārāja performed penances. On the bank of Dvārakā-kuṇḍa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His Queens put up their camp when they came to Vraja from Dvārakā. On the bank of Balabhadra-kuṇḍa, Śrī Balarāma addressed the Vrajavāsīs when He came from Dvārakā. On the mountain of Caraṇa Pāhaḍī, one can see Śrī Kṛṣṇa's footprints.

Then there is Caurāśī-Khāmbā or King Kāmasena's court of justice. In this building, there are 84 pillars. On top of the mountain is the cave of Medhāvī Muni or Vyomāsura's cave. It is here that Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed Vyomāsura.

Nearby is Bhojan-Thālī, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His friends ate rice and yoghurt. At Kāmyavana, one can also see Śrī Govinda, Śrī Gopinātha, Madana-Mohana, Gokula-Candramā, Kāmeśvara-Mahādeva, Vimalākuṇḍa, Śrī Vṛndājī and the *bhajana-kuṭīra* of Siddha Jaya Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, among others.

The 84 *kuṇḍas* we mentioned include **Kāma-Sarovara** or **Gopikā Ramaṇa-Sarovara**. Here, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed wonderful pastimes with the *gopikās*.

In the Skanda Purāṇa, Mathurā-khaṇḍa, it is written:

tatra kāma saro rājan gopikā-ramaṇaṁ sarah. tatra tīrtha sahasrāṇi sarāṁsi ca pṛthak pṛthak

"In Kāmyavana is Gopikāramaṇa Sarovara, which is also named Kāma Sarovara. In Kāmyavana there is a total of thousands of sacred lakes."

In Bhakti-Ratnākara it is described:

dekho gopikā-ramaṇa kāma sarovara, ke varṇibe ethā ye vilāsa manohara. ei kāma sarovara mahā sukhamaya; kāma sarovare kāma sāgara kohoya

"Behold Gopikā Ramaṇa- or Kāma-Sarovara! Who can describe the enchanting pastimes that took place here? This Kāma-Sarovara is very blissful and is also called Kāma Sāgara."

Because all desires are fulfilled of anyone who bathes in its *kuṇḍas*, this place is **Kāmyavana**.

sarva kāma phalaprada kāmyavana hoy; yathā tathā koile snāna sarva duḥka kṣaya (Bhakti Ratnākara)

"Because all desires are fulfilled and all miseries are destroyed of anyone who bathes in its *kuṇḍas* this place is Kāmyavana."

tataḥ kāmyavanam rājan yatra bālye sthito bhavān; snāna-mātreṇa sarveṣāṃ sarva kāma phala pradam (Skanda Purāṇa, Mathurā Khaṇḍa)

"O Mahārāja! After this comes Kāmyavana, where you have resided in your childhood. Simply by bathing in this forest all desires will be fulfilled."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this Kāmyavana, which is most dear to Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava."

*gopī saṅge śrī kṛṣṇera sucāru vihāra;
hoyechilo yathā nāma kāma sarovara
sei kāma sarovara virāje yekhāne;
bhaji yugalera priya sei kāmyavane*

"I worship Kāmyavana, which is so dear to the Divine Pair and where there is Kāma-Sarovara, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa beautifully enjoyed with the *gopīs*."

VERSE 93:

**mallīkṛtya nijāḥ sakhīḥ priyatamā garveṇa sambhāvitā
mallībhūya mad-īśvarī rasa-mayī mallatvam utkaṅṭhayā
yasmin samyag-upeyūṣā baka-bhidā rādhā niyuddham mudā
kurvāṇā madanasya toṣam atanod bhāṅḍīrakam tām bhaje**

mallīkṛtya - wrestling; *nijāḥ* - own; *sakhī* - girlfriend; *priyatamā* - beloved; *garveṇa* - with pride; *sambhāvitā* - considered; *mallībhūya* - becoming a wrestler; *mat* - my; *īśvarī* - goddess; *rasamayī* - full of flavour; *mallatvam* - the status of a wrestler; *utkaṅṭhayā* - with eagerness; *yasmin* - in which; *samyak* - completely; *upeyūṣā* - attaining; *bakabhidā* - with Kṛṣṇa; *rādhā* - Rādhā; *niyuddham* - combat; *mudā* - joyful; *kurvāṇā* - did; *madanasya* - of Cupid; *toṣam* - pleasure; *atanot* - did; *bhāṅḍīrakam* - Bhāṅḍīraka; *tām* - him; *bhaje* - I worship.

I worship Bhāṅḍīra, where my mistress, Kṛṣṇa's beloved Rādhā, dressed Herself and Her girlfriends as wrestlers to have fun in a game of wrestling and became very proud when She blissfully wrestled with Kṛṣṇa, Who was also dressed as a wrestler, thus increasing Cupid's joy.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Bhāṅḍīra.

This is one of the twelve forests of Vraja and anyone who goes there to see it becomes blessed.

In the Ādi-Varāha Purāṇa it is said:

*ekādaśas tu bhāṅḍīraṁ yoginām priyam uttamam;
tasya darśana mātrena naro garbham na gacchati
bhāṅḍīraṁ samanuprāpya vanānām vanam uttamam;*

*vāsudevaṁ tatro dṛṣṭā punar janma na vidyate
tasmīn bhāṇḍīrake snāto niyato niyatāśanaḥ;
sarva pāpa vinirmukta indralokaṁ sa gacchati*

"The eleventh forest named Bhāṇḍīra is super excellent and is very dear to the *yogīs*. Simply by seeing Bhāṇḍīra, a person never enters a womb anymore. A person who goes to this super excellent forest Bhāṇḍīravana and sees Vāsudeva there, will never take birth again. A self-controlled person who controls his eating-habits and bathes in Bhāṇḍīra will be freed from all sins and attains Indraloka⁵¹."

In Bhāṇḍīravana is Bhāṇḍīrakuṇḍa, the temple of Śrīdāma Candra and Veṅkūpa. By playing His flute, Śrī Kṛṣṇa brought water from the Pātāla-region into this well to quench the thirst of His friends.

Śrī Rādhikā met Śrī Kṛṣṇa at Bhāṇḍīra by dressing like Subala and played different pastimes with Him here. Here is the famous Bhāṇḍīravaṭa or Akṣayaṭa.⁵²

Once upon a time, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was playing here with Baladeva and His friends, when Pralambāsura came and dressed himself like a cowherd boy to cause havoc by taking Balarāma on his shoulders and carrying Him off to Mathurā, but Baladeva killed him on the way.

One day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was at Bhāṇḍīra alone and played on His enchanting flute. Hearing this flute song, Śrī Rādhārāṇī became unsteady and went out to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Her girlfriends.

⁵¹ The word Indra comes from Idi, which means; "The greatest opulence". Therefore Indraloka here means the most opulent abode of the Supreme Lord.

⁵² Vaṭa means a Banyan-tree. Ed.

Īśvarī was most blissful to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa and She and Her girlfriends enjoyed different pastimes with Him at Bhāṇḍīra.

Just for fun, Śrī Rādhārāṇī asked Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

"What kind of games do You play here with Your friends?"

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied:

"Priye! Here I play wonderful wrestling-matches with My friends. No one in the world can wrestle as good as I can! I can easily defeat everyone else in wrestling!"

Hearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's words Śrī Lalitā-*sakhī* said:

"Today we want to see You dress like a wrestler and play a wrestling match!"

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

"Lalite! One does not wrestle alone! One needs an opponent, also dressed as a wrestler!"

Śrī Rādhārāṇī then said:

"Today we will be Your opponents in wrestling!", and proudly dressed Herself and Her girlfriends in wonderful wrestling-outfits.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was also dressed as a wrestler, saw Śrī Rādhā's wrestling-outfit, He became completely enchanted by the amazing sweetness of Her every limb and ecstatic symptoms like shiverings and goose bumps became manifest on His body.

Seeing this, the *sakhīs* jokingly said:

"Śyāma! Everyone in the world is defeated by You in wrestling, but now You are trembling even by seeing Your opponent! How will You fight now?"

Śyāma became embarrassed when He heard the *sakhīs'* words and regained His patience.

Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa began His match against slightly smiling, proud *rasika* Śrī Rādhā, Who was dressed as a wrestler, and the match soon became a stalemate, no one being able to win it.

Seeing this wonderful wrestling match, the *sakhīs* were beside themselves of bliss. Seeing the Divine Pair wrestling in this great erotic absorption even Cupid was intoxicated by feelings of boundless bliss. It has been described as such in Śrī Bhakti Ratnākara:

*eka dina kṛṣṇa ekā bhāṇḍīra talāya;
 vanśī-vādyā koilo yāte jagata mātāya
 vanśī-dhvani śuni rādhā adhairya hoilā;
 sakhī-saha āsi śighra kṛṣṇere mililā
 hoilo paramānanda doṅhāra antare;
 sakhīgaṇa saṅge nānā raṅgete vihare
 śrī rādhikā kṛṣṇa prati kohe mṛdu bhāṣe;
 sakhā saha koiche kṛḍā koro e pradeśe
 śrī kṛṣṇa kohena - ethā mallaveśa dhari;
 sakhīgaṇa saha sukhe malla-yuddha kori
 mora sama mallayuddha keho nā jānaya;
 anāyāse kori anya malla parājaya
 hāsiyā lalitā kṛṣṇe kohe bāra bāra;
 mallaveśe yuddha āji dekhibo tomāra
 eto kōhi sakalei koilā mallaveśa;
 kṛṣṇa mallaveśe darpa koroye aśeṣa
 kṛṣṇa pāne cāhi rāi manda manda hāse;
 mallayuddha hetu yuddha-sthalete praveśe
 mahā mallayuddhe nāhi jaya parājaya;
 hoilo ānanda kandarpera atīśaya*

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I worship this Bhāṇḍīra. When Bhāṇḍīra is merciful, then this wonderful wrestling match of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava will be revealed to me and I will be blessed with the relish of the flavour of my Īśvarī dressed like a wrestler, fighting a wrestling match."

*yathā rasamayī rādhā āmāra īsvarī;
 sājāiyā sakhigaṇe malla rūpa kori
 ati garve rādhārāṇī mallaveśa koilā;
 kṛṣṇa saṅge yuddha kori ānanditā hoilā
 kṛṣṇa saha śrī rādhāra malla kṛīḍā sthāna
 satata bhajibo āmi śrī bhāṇḍira nāma*

"I constantly worship Śrī Bhāṇḍira, the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa played a wrestling game with Śrī Rādhā and where my *rasika* Īśvarī very proudly dressed Herself and Her girlfriends like wrestlers and blissfully combated Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

VERSE 94:

**ākṛṣṭā yā kupita-halinā lāṅgalāgreṇa kṛṣṇā
 dhīrā yāntī lavaṇa-jaladhau kṛṣṇa-sambandha-hīnā
 adyāpīttham sakala-manujair dṛśyate saiva yasmin
 bhaktyā vande'dbhutam idam aho rāma-ghaṭṭam pradeśam**

ākṛṣṭā - drawn near; *yā* - who; *kupitā* - angry; *halinā* - by Balarāma; *lāṅgala* - the plow; *agreṇa* - by the tip; *kṛṣṇā* - Yamunā; *dhīrā* - calmly; *yāntī* - goes; *lavaṇa* - salt; *jaladhau* - in the ocean; *kṛṣṇa sambandha* - relation with Kṛṣṇa; *hīnā* - separated; *adya* - now; *api* - even; *ittham* - thus; *sakala* - all; *manujaiḥ* - by the human beings; *dṛśyate* - seen; *sa* - he; *eva* - only; *yasmin* - in which; *bhaktyā* - with devotion; *vande* - I praise; *adbhutam* - wonderful; *idam* - this; *aho* - O!; *rāma-ghaṭṭa pradeśam* - the place known as Rāma Ghāṭa.

I devotedly praise the wonderful place known as Rāma-Ghāṭa, where Yamunā, who gently flowed towards the salt-water-ocean without having a relationship with

Kṛṣṇa, was dragged near by angry Balarāma's plow, and were the river's crooked course can still be seen by all the people.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: Now Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Śrī Rāma-ghāṭa, where Śrī Baladeva enjoyed the Rāsa-dance with His beloved *gopīs* for two months and where He dragged her near with His plough to enjoy in her waters, making her course crooked even up until now.

This pastime is described in Śrīmad Bhāgavata (10.65.17-23,31):

*dvau māsau tatra cāvātsit madhum madhavam eva ca;
 rāmaḥ kṣapāsu bhagavān gopinām ratimāvahan
 pūrṇa-candra kalāmṛṣṭe kaumudī gandha vāyunā;
 yamunopavane reme sevite strīgaṇair vṛtaḥ
 varuṇa preṣitā devī vāruṇī vṛkṣa koṭarāt;
 patanti tad vanam sarvaṁ sugandhenādhyavāsayat
 tam gandham madhu-dhārāyā vāyunopahṛtam balah;
 āghrāyopāgatas tatra lalanābhiḥ samam papau
 upagīyamāna carito vanitābhir halāyudhaḥ;
 vaneṣu vyacarat kṣibo mada-vihvala locanaḥ
 sragvyeka kuntalo matto vaijayantyā ca mālayā;
 vibhrat smita mukhāmbhojam sveda prāleya bhūṣitam
 sa ājuhāva yamunām jala kṛḍāṛtham īsvaraḥ
 nijam vākyaṁ anādṛtya matta ityāpagām balah;
 anāgatām halāgreṇa kupito vicakarṣa ha
 adyāpi dṛśyate rājan yamunākṛṣṭa cartmanā;
 balasyānanta vīryasya vīryam sucayatīva hi*

"Śrī Baladeva came from Dvārakā and stayed in Vraja for two months to console the *gopīs*. During the months of Caitra (March-April) and Vaiśākha (April-May), He sported at night

with His beloved *gopīs*. The night was illuminated by the rays of the full moon and the southern breezes carried the fragrance of the Kumuda-flowers to the subforest, where Balarāma was enjoying with the *gopīs*.

For the service of Śrī Baladeva, Varuṇadeva sent Vāruṇī-devī (a celestial beverage), who trickled from the hollow of a tree and gladdened the forest with her fragrance. The wind distributed this honey-fragrance everywhere and when Baladeva caught a whiff of that fragrance, He went there and drank the Vāruṇī-honeywine with His beloveds.

The *gopīs*, who were intoxicated by the Vāruṇī-wine, sang about Śrī Halāyudha's (Balarāma's) sweet pastimes and Balarāma, Himself also intoxicated, rambled with them from forest to forest, His eyes rolling of drunkenness.

After enjoying the Rāsa-dance, the intoxicated Śrī Baladeva, Who was adorned with dewy drops of perspiration, Who wore a garland of forest flowers around His neck and one earring on His ears and Whose face was decorated with a nectarean slight smile, called Yamunā so that He could enjoy pastimes in her water with His sweethearts.

Thinking Baladeva to be drunk⁵³, Yamunā ignored His words, so Baladeva angrily dragged her near with the tip of His plough.

Śrī Śuka Muni told Mahārāja Parīkṣit

"O King! Even now, the Yamunā announces Śrī Balarāma's glorious prowess, for she still is flowing in a crooked course here!"

⁵³ "He is now drunk of Vāruṇī, and that's why He's calling me near, but a river does not go to anyone simply on being called. If He wants to enjoy in my water, then let Him come to me Himself!" Thinking like this, Yamunā did not come to Baladeva (Commentary by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī).

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

dhīrā yānti lavaṇa jaladhau kṛṣṇa sambandha hīnā :

"Like a *dhīra-nāyikā* (passive heroine), Yamunā flowed towards the saltwater ocean, bereft of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa."

The purport of this is that the Yamunā, who is punished by Baladeva, is not the eternal associate of Nanda-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but the shadow of the Lord's Queen Kāḷindī in Dvārakā, who was one of the wives in the ocean of the Lord's opulences there. This is written in the Toṣaṇī-commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavata:

devī ceyam śrī bhagavad rūpānusāreṇa lakṣmyā vividha mūrtivat bhagavan mahiṣi-varāyāḥ śrī kālindiyā eva samjñā chāyā nyāyena tac chāyā vibhūti-rūpā bhagavata eva mahā-vibhūteḥ samudrasya bhārya svarūpā mūrtir ekā jñeyā

Bhakti Ratnākara gives the following description about this event:

*ahe śrīnivāsa! ei rāmaghāṭa hoy;
ethā rāsa-līlā kore rohiṇī-tanaya
yathā kṛṣṇa priyāsaha koilo rāsa-keli;
tathā hoite dūra - e rāmera rāsa-sthali
kohite ki - teṅho koṭi samudra gabhīra;
kṛṣṇera dvitīya deha - parama sudhīra
dvārakā hoite utkaṇṭhāya vraje āilā;
caitra vaiśākha dui māsa sthiti koilā
śrī nanda-yaśodā ādi prabodhe sabāre;
sakhā-gaṇe santoṣaye vividha prakāre
nānā anunaya vijñā rohiṇī tanaya;
kṛṣṇa priyāgaṇe nānā prakāre sāntvaya
nija priya gopīgaṇa manohita kore;
ye sab sahita pūrve vasante vihare
ahe śrīnivāsa! śrī rāmera rāsa līlā;
prabhu bhaktaṅgaṇa bahu prakāre varṇilā*

*yamunā ākarṣi raṅge āne seikhāne;
jalakrīḍā koilo baladeva priyā sane*

"O Śrīnivāsa! This is Rāmaghāṭa! Here the son of Rohiṇī danced the Rāsa. This Rāsa-sthalī of Balarāma is far away from the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa played the Rāsa with His sweethearts. What can I say? Balarāma is as grave as millions of oceans. He is most patient and He is Kṛṣṇa's second body. He eagerly came to Vraja from Dvārakā and stayed there for two months - Caitra and Vaiśākha -, during which He spoke with Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā and delighted Kṛṣṇa's friends in different ways.

With different plaintive words, the intelligent son of Rohiṇī consoled Kṛṣṇa's sweethearts in different ways and then He enchanted His own beloved *gopīs*, with whom He had previously enjoyed in the spring. O Śrīnivāsa! The Lord and His devotees have described the Rāsa-līlā of Balarāma in many different ways. Balarāma dragged the Yamunā to this spot so that He could play in Her waters here."

When Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu came to Vṛndāvana in the course of His pilgrimage, He stayed at Rāma-ghāṭa for a few days, in the ecstasy of Baladeva.

Śrīla Raghunātha says: "I devotedly praise this wonderful Rāmaghāṭa."

*kṛṣṇa sambandha hīnā yamunā virāhe;
lavaṇa samudre yāya manda pravāhe
ye yamunāya baladeva kupita hoiyā;
ākarṣaṇa korechena lāṅgalāgra diyā
yāre ākrṣṭāra nyāya adyāpiho loke;
yamunāra tīre sei vakra ghāṭa dekhe
yamunā tirastha tīrtha 'rāma-ghāṭa' nāma;*

bhakti bhare vandi kori ananta praṇāma

Out of separation, Yamunā slowly streamed towards the ocean, being bereft of a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, when Baladeva angrily dragged her towards Himself with the tip of His plough. Even nowadays people can see that the course of the Yamunā is crooked here at this Ghāṭa because of this! With great devotion I offer innumerable obeisances unto Rāma-Ghāṭa on the bank of the Yamunā."

VERSE 95:

**prāṇa-preṣṭha-vayasya-vargam udare pāpīyaso'ghāsura-
syāraṇyodbhāṭa-pāvakoṭkaṭa-viṣair duṣṭe praviṣṭam puraḥ
vyagraḥ prekṣya ruṣā praviśya sahasā hatvā khalam taṁ bali
yatrainam nijam ārarakṣa murajit sā pātu sarpa-sthalī**

prāṇa-preṣṭha - hearts beloved; *vayasya* - friends; *vargam* - group; *udare* - in the belly; *pāpīyasaḥ* - sinful; *aghāsurasya* - of Aghāsura; *araṇya* - forest; *udbhāṭa* - fierce; *pāvaka* - fire; *utkaṭa* - severe; *viṣaiḥ* - by poisons; *duṣṭe* - in the wicked; *praviṣṭam* - entered; *puraḥ* - before; *vyagraḥ* - eager; *prekṣya* - seeing; *ruṣā* - angrily; *praviśya* - entering; *sahasā* - suddenly; *hatvā* - having killed; *khalam* - wicked; *taṁ* - him; *bali* - powerful; *yatra* - where; *enam* - this; *nijam* - own; *ārarakṣa* - protected; *murajit* - Kṛṣṇa; *sā* - she; *pātu* - may protect; *sarpa-sthalī* - the place of the snake.

May Sarpasthalī, where the powerful Murārī angrily and quickly entered into the mouth of the sinful demon Aghāsura to kill him and to save His heart's friends after anxiously seeing that they had entered into his belly; that

was polluted by severe poison burning strongly like a forest fire to save them, protect me.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Sarpasthalī, the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered into the mouth of Aghāsura, who had assumed the mountainous form of a snake, to kill him and thus save His cowherd boyfriends, His cows and calves.

*aghāsura vadhe kṛṣṇa - ei sarpasthalī;
 aghavana nāma loke kohoye 'sapaulī'
 ethā puṣpa varṣe deva jaya-dhvani kore;
 e hetu jayeta grāma kohoye ihāre
 sabe kohe -aghāsura vadhe e 'siyāna';
 tei e soyānogrāma - sehonā ākhyāna*

(Bhakti Ratnākara)

"At this Sarpasthalī, Kṛṣṇa killed Aghāsura, but the people call this Aghavana also Sapaulī. Here, the demigods showered flowers and sang Kṛṣṇa's glories. Therefore this village is called Jayeta. Everyone says: 'Aghāsura was killed here, therefore this Soyāno-village is known as Sehonā.'"

After the Yadu-dynasty vanished from the earth, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira installed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great grandson Śrīla Vajranābha on the throne of the Śūrasena-kingdom or Mathurā-maṇḍala. Once this had been done, the sages ordered him to recover and rename the lost holy places that were connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Even now the places are named in the way Vajranābha has named them, according to the pastimes that took place there.

When the calves and cowherd boys saw the mountainous snake-demon Aghāsura, they actually took him to be a mountain and entered into his mouth, which was filled with poisonous fumes that burned like a forest fire and whose severe heat made them faint.

Śrīmad Bhāgavata then narrates how Śrī Kṛṣṇa also entered the demon's mouth and destroyed him -

*tān vikṣya kṛṣṇaḥ sakalābhaya Prado
 hyananya nāthān svakarād apacyutān
 dīnānś ca mṛtyor jaṭharāgni ghāsān
 ghrṇārddito diṣṭa-kṛtena vismitaḥ
 kṛtyaṁ kim atrāsya khalasya jīvanam
 na vā amiṣām ca satām vihiṁsanam
 dvayaṁ katham syād iti sarivicitya
 taj jñātvāviśat tuṅdam aśeṣa dṛg hariḥ
 tadā ghanacchadā devā
 bhayāddhāheti cukruśuḥ;
 jahṛṣur ye ca kaṁsādyāḥ
 kauṇapāstaghābāndhavāḥ
 tac chrutvā bhagavān kṛṣṇas
 tvavyayaḥ sārḇha vatsakam;
 cūrṇīcīkīṣor ātmānam
 tarasā vavṛdhe gale
 tato'tikāyasya niruddha-mārgiṇo
 hyudgīrṇa dṛṣṭer bhramatas tvitas tataḥ
 pūrṇo'ntaraṅge pavano niruddho
 mūrdhnan vinibhidya vinirgato bahiḥ
 tenaiva sarveṣu bahirgateṣu
 prāṇeṣu vatsān suhṛdah paretān
 dṛṣṭvyāsvayothhāpya tad anvitaḥ punar
 vaktrān mukundo bhagavān viniryayau*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.12.27-32)

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who bestows fearlessness on all, had lost the cowherd boys, who have Him as their sole shelter. When He saw them fallen like dry blades of grass into the gastric fire of Aghāsura, who was like death personified, and therefore greatly distressed, He became overwhelmed with compassion and astonished that this was to be their fate.

The Original Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, simply by pronouncing whose name one destroys the reactions to all activities that cannot even be destroyed by *brahma-jñāna*, was immersed in an ocean of fraternal love for His friends and was thus astonished and plunged in an ocean of worries when He saw that they were in trouble, as anyone would be when seeing a beloved in this condition.

"What should I do? How can I kill this wicked Aghāsura and save the lives of My calves and cowherd boys?" Thinking like this, the omniscient Śrī Hari thought of a way to solve this problem and decided to personally enter into Aghāsura's gaping mouth.

Seeing this, the demigods in the clouds became afraid and exclaimed 'Alas! Alas!', and the demoniac friends of Kaiṣa rejoiced when they heard the news.

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard the lamentations of the demigods and the ecstatic shouts of the demons, He proceeded to save His calves and friends and to crush the demon, who had, in the meantime, closed his mouth by expanding His body, thus choking Aghāsura's throat.

When the throat of the mountainous snake-demon Agha was thus choked, his eyes came bulging out and he began to twist and move his large body here and there until his blocked life-airs suddenly came bursting out through the *brahma-randhra*-hole in his skull.

As soon as Aghāsura's life-airs had burst out, he lost all his sensual power. Then the Lord, the bestower of liberation, revived His stupefied calves and cowherd boyfriends with His nectarean glances and came out of Aghāsura's wide opened mouth with them.

Of the place where the Lord performed the pastime of killing Aghāsura, Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

"May that Sarpa-sthalī protect me!"

In other words, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa had mercifully saved His calves and cowherd boyfriends from the mouth of Aghāsura, may this playground similarly save me from the gaping mouth of the demon of separation from Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and show me Their divine lotus feet.

*pāpiṣṭha aghāsurerera udarera madhye;
prāṇa preṣṭha sakhāgaṇe śrī govinda dekhe
dāvāgnira jvālāmaya yāhāra udara;
kālakūṭa viṣa-duṣṭa tāhāra upara
sakhādera duḥka heri atisāya krodhe;
udare praveśa kori sei khala vadhe
nimeṣete vadha kori ye sthānete khale;
śrī govinda rakṣā koilā vayasya sakale
sei sarpasthalī hoy mahimā apāra
sakhā tulya rakṣā koru āmā sabhākāra*

‘When Śrī Govinda saw His heart's friends suffering in the belly of the sinful Aghāsura, which was burning like a forest fire and was polluted by burning poison, He became very angry and entered into the demon's belly to kill the wretch.

May that endlessly glorious Sarpasthalī, where Śrī Govinda protected all His friends by instantly killing this demon, protect us all as if we are friends."

VERSE 96:

**draṣṭuṁ sāksāt svapati-mahimodrekam utkena dhātrā
vatsa-vrāte drutam apahrte vatsapālotkare ca |
tat-tad-rūpo hariṛ atha bhavan yatra tat-tat-prasūnām
modaṁ cakre’śanam api bhaje vatsahāra-sthalīm tām ||96||**

draṣṭuṁ - seeing; *sāksāt* - personally; *sva* - own; *pati* - lord; *mahimā* - glories; *udrekam* - great; *utkena* - eagerly; *dhātrā* - by the Creator; *vatsavrāte* - the calves; *drutam* - quickly; *apahrte* - taking away; *vatsapāla* - cowherd boys; *utkare* - in the multitude; *ca* - and; *tat tat* - their; *rūpaḥ* - form; *hariḥ* - Hari; *atha* - then; *bhavan* - becoming; *yatra* - where; *tat tat* - their; *prasūnām* - mothers; *modaṁ* - gladly; *cakre* - performed; *aśanam* - eating; *api* - even; *bhaje* - I worship; *vatsa-hāra-sthalīm* - the place where the calves were stolen; *tām* - her.

I worship Vatsaharaṇa-sthalī, where the curious creator Lord Brahmā, eager to behold the lovely glories of his Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, swiftly kidnapped His calves and cowherd boys, after which Śrī Hari assumed the forms of all these calves and cowherd boys Himself and delighted their mothers, the cows and the elderly gopīs, by eating the dishes they offered Him.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Vatsaharaṇa-sthalī, the place where Śrī Brahmā stole Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s calves and cowherd boys.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is described as follows, how the four-faced Brahmā, eager to behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lovely glories, stole His calves and cowherd boys and how Śrī Kṛṣṇa then delighted the loving cows and the elderly *gopīs* by assuming the forms of

all the calves and cowherd boys and enjoying the dishes they affectionately offered to Him -

ambhojanma janis tad antara gato māyārbhakasyeṣitu-
 draṣṭaṁ māñju mahitvam anyad api tad vatsānito vatsapān;
 nītvānyatra kurūdvahāntara dadhāt khe'vasthīto yaḥ purā
 dr̥ṣṭvāghāśura mokṣaṇaṁ prabhavataḥ prāptaḥ paraṁ vismayam
 tato vatsān adr̥ṣṭvaitya puline'pi ca vatsapān;
 ubhāvapi vane kṛṣṇa vicikāya samantataḥ
 kāpyadr̥ṣṭvāntar vipine vatsān pālāms ca viśvavit;
 sarvaṁ vidhi-kṛtaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sahasāvajagāma ha
 tataḥ kṛṣṇo mudam kartum tan mātṛṇām ca kasya ca;
 ubhayāyitam ātmānaṁ cakre viśva-kṛd īśvaraḥ
 yāvad vatsapa vatsakālpaka vapur yāvāt karāṅghryādikaṁ
 yāvad yaṣṭi-viṣāṇa veṇu dala śig yāvad vibhūṣāmbaram;
 yāvāt chila guṇābhidhākṛti vayo yāvāt vihārādikaṁ
 sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ giro'ṅgavad ajaḥ sarva svarūpo vabhau
 svayam ātmātma govatsān prati-vāryātma vatsapaiḥ;
 kr̥ḍann ātma vihāraś ca sarvātmā prāvīśad vrajam
 tat tad vatsān pṛthān nītvā tat tad goṣṭhe niveśya saḥ;
 tat tad ātmābhavad rājyaṁs tat tad sadma praviṣṭavān
 tan mātaro veṇu-ravatvarothhitā
 utthāpya dorbbhiḥ parirabhya nirbharam;
 sneha snuta stanya payaḥ sudhāsavaṁ
 matvā paraṁ brahma sutānapāyayan
 tato nṛponmardana majja lepanā-
 laṅkāra rakṣā tilakāśanādibhiḥ;
 samlālitaḥ svācaritaiḥ praharṣayan
 sāyaṁ gato yāma yamena mādhaveḥ
 gāvas tato goṣṭham upetya satvaram
 huṅkāra-ghoṣaiḥ parihūta saṅgatān

*svakān svakān vatsatarān apāyayan
muhur lihantyaḥ sravadaudhasaṁ payaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.13.15-24)

Śrī Śuka Muni said: "O greatest of Kuru-kings! From the aerial path, lotus-born Brahmā saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime of killing Aghāsura and this astonished him greatly. Understanding that it was time to relish more sweet childhood pastimes of the Universal Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he came to Śrī Vṛndāvana, took Śrī Kṛṣṇa's calves and cowherd boys to another place and disappeared.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was searching for His calves in the woods and, when He could not find them, came to the bank of the Yamunā. When He saw that He had also lost His cowherd boyfriends, He began to search for both of the groups, looking in all four directions.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, absorbed in His childhood pastimes, He searched for His calves and cowherd boyfriends in all the woods, but could not find them anywhere. Then He understood ,that it was all the work of Brahmā.

Then, to increase the transcendental bliss of the loving cows and elderly *gopīs* and Lord Brahmā, who was so eager to behold His glories, Vrajendra-Nandana, the Original Personality of Godhead, Who is the origin of even the universal Creators, the Puruṣāvataras, personally assumed the forms of the innumerable calves and cowherd boys.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Actually Brahmā stole the calves and cowherd boys to make Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally relish the love of the cows and the elderly *gopīs* as their own individual son(s). Otherwise Brahmā would never have been able to kidnap the calves and cowherd boys, who are endowed with all great powers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates. The whole

Then Kṛṣṇa Himself manifested all the forms of the calves and the cowherd boys, with exactly the same small bodies, hands, feet, sticks, flutes, horns, lunchbags, dresses, ornaments, natures, attributes, names, forms, pastimes and behaviour towards their mothers and fathers.

In this way, He proved the truth of the scriptural saying 'sarvaṁ viṣṇu-mayaṁ jagat' - all we see in the universe is Viṣṇu."

After this Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had assumed the forms of all the calves and cowherd boys, took His own forms out from the forest with Himself (His original form) and entered Vraja while playing with them and resounding His flute.

O King! Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had now assumed the forms of Śrīdāma and Subala, drove all His individual cows over different paths, made them enter into their individual barns and Himself entered into the individual homes.

When the mothers of the cowherd boys like Śrīdāma and Subala heard the flute song, they quickly rose to their feet and came running out to lift the supreme *brahman* Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who was offering His obeisances to their feet, up from the courtyard with their arms, held Him on their laps, tightly embraced Him and made Him drink their breastmilk, which was tasty like nectar and intoxicating like wine and which trickled from their nipples out of pure motherly love.

Then the mothers, as usual, massaged Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had assumed the form of innumerable cowherd boys, with fragrant oil, bathed Him, anointed His limbs with sandalwood pulp,

pastime must be understood to have taken place with the previous agreement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, following His will, and endorsed by His powers. For details one should consult the Gosvāmīs' commentaries on this pastime and Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda's Gopāla Campū.

dressed and ornamented Him in a wonderful way, put wonderful protecting *tilaka* on His body, fed Him, asked Him what had all happened that day out in the meadows, heard His stories and put Him to sleep in bed. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who had assumed the forms of innumerable cowherd boys, was thus cuddled by the mothers, He experienced unlimited bliss.

In the evening, the cows returned from the forest, entered into their barns, and began to affectionately lick their calves, who had come close to them, mooing softly and deeply, and fed them the milk that was trickling from their udders out of sheer motherly love."

The place where Brahmā stole Śrī Kṛṣṇa's calves and cowherd boys, is known as **Vatsaharaṇa-sthalī**.

The names that Vajranābha had given to these places, according to the pastimes that Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed there, are described in Bhakti Ratnākara as follows:

*śrīnivāse kohe dekho ei 'vatsavana';
ethā caturmukha harilena vatsagaṇa
ei ye 'unāi' grāma - ethā sakhā saṅge;
vividha sāmāgrī kṛṣṇa bhuñje nānā raṅge
ei 'bālahārā' nāma grāma - eikhāne;
bālakādi hare caturmukha harṣa mane
'parikhama' - nāma sthāna dekhoho ethāte;
caturmukha chilo kṛṣṇe parikṣā korite
'sei' sthāna nāma e sakala loka jāne;
kṛṣṇera māyāte brahmā mohita ekhāne
śīśu vatsa hari brahmā rākhi saṅgopane;
sei śīśu vatsa dekhe kṛṣṇa sannidhāne
'sei ei' 'ei sei' bale bāra bāra;
ei hetu 'sei' nāma hoilo ihāra*

"Śrīnivāsa said: "Look, here is Vatsavana. Here the four-faced Brahmā stole the calves. Here is Unāi-village. Here Kṛṣṇa blissfully enjoyed different dishes with His friends. In this Bālahārā village, the four-faced Brahmā blissfully kidnapped the cowherd boys. Behold this place called 'Parikhama'. Here the four faced Brahmā tested Kṛṣṇa. This place is known by all people as 'Sei'. Here Brahmā was enchanted by Kṛṣṇa's illusory powers. Here Brahmā hid the boys and the calves he had stolen and here he also saw the same boys and calves in Kṛṣṇa's vicinity. Because he said 'sei ei' (they are that) and 'ei sei' (that are they), this village is called 'Sei'."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

"I worship this Vatsaharaṇa-sthalī."

*nija pati śrī kṛṣṇera, mañjula mahimā āro,
daraśana abhilāṣa tare.
brahmā yoto vatsagaṇa, śrī kṛṣṇera sakhāgaṇa,
druta sab apaharaṇa kore*

"Desiring to see the lovely glories of his master Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā quickly stole all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's calves and friends."

*śrī govinda kutūholī, dekhi brahmāra caturālī,
govatsa o sakhā-rūpa dhare
yoto vatsa sakhāgaṇe, tādera yoto mātṛgaṇe
nānā bhojya samarpaṇa kore*

"Śrī Govinda curiously beheld Brahmā's cleverness and personally assumed the forms of the calves and the boys, to whom their mothers offered different eatables."

*govinda bhojana kore, sei sei rūpa dhare,
mahānande bhāsiche sakale
nitya vraje kori vāsa, bhaji ei abhilāṣa,
manohara vatsahāra sthale*

"Assuming their forms, Govinda ate all these dishes and thus everyone floated in oceans of great transcendental bliss. May I always live in Vraja. With this aspiration I worship this enchanting Vatsahāra Sthala."

VERSE 97:

**bāḍham̐ vatsaka-vatsapāla-hṛtito jātāparādhād bhayair
brahmā sāśram apūṛva-padya-nivahair yasmin nīpatyāvanau
tuṣṭāvādbhuta-vatsapaṁ vraja-pateḥ putraṁ mukundaṁ manāk
smeraṁ bhīru-caturmukhākhyam anīśaṁ seśaṁ pradeśaṁ numah**

bāḍham̐ - greatly; *vatsaka* - calves; *vatsapāla* - cowherd boys; *hṛtitaḥ* - kidnapping; *jāta* - came to be; *aparādhād* - from an offence; *bhayaiḥ* - with fear; *brahmā* - Brahmā; *sāśram* - with tear filled eyes; *apūṛva* - wonderful; *padya* - verse; *nivahaiḥ* - with many; *yasmin* - in which; *nīpatya* - having fallen; *avanau* - on the ground; *tuṣṭāva* - praised; *adbhuta* - to the amazing; *vatsapaṁ* - herder of calves; *vrajapateḥ* - of the Lord of Vraja; *putraṁ* - the son; *mukundaṁ* - bestower of liberation; *manāk* - slightly; *smeraṁ* - smiling; *bhīru* - afraid; *caturmukha* - four faces; *akhyam* - known as; *anīśaṁ* - always; *sa* - with; *īśaṁ* - the Lord; *pradeśaṁ* - the land; *numah* - I offer my obeisances to.

I offer my obeisances to the place known as Bhīru Caturmukha, where the four-faced Lord Brahmā fell to

the ground with tear-filled eyes, afraid that he had committed an offence by kidnapping Mukunda's calves and cowherd boys and where he offered wonderful verses of praise to the son of the king of Vraja, the amazing, slightly smiling herder of calves.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the place where Lord Brahmā offered praises to Vrajendra-Nandana to beg forgiveness for his offence of stealing His calves and cowherd boys.

e 'caumuhā' grāme brahmā āsi kṛṣṇa-pāṣe; korilo kṛṣṇera stuti aśeṣa viśeṣe (Bhakti Ratnākara)

"In this 'Caumuhā'-village Brahmā came to Kṛṣṇa and offered all kinds of choice praises to Him."

Because Caturmukha (four-faced Lord Brahmā) offered prayers here, the village has been named Caumuhā by Vajranābha.

The elderly *gopīs*, who felt parental love for Kṛṣṇa, as well as the cows of Vraja, had developed the desire to cuddle and rear Śrī Kṛṣṇa by feeding Him their breast milk.

The love of the loving devotee generates a corresponding desire within the heart of the transcendent Lord to relish that love - that is the eternal nature of love. Hence the Supreme Lord inspired Brahmā within the heart to fulfill the desires in the minds of the loving elderly *gopīs* and cows and to arrange for Him (Kṛṣṇa) to become their son and relish their love for a full year.

Therefore, although Brahmā had actually committed no offence, he is still born from the lotus that grows from the Supreme Lord's navel and is the founder-*ācārya* of the Brahmā-*sampradāya*, he considered just a moment after he

had kidnapped the calves and the cowherd boys and had gone off with them, that he had committed a great offence to someone with the prowess and opulence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by doing this. Agitated by that idea, Brahmā returned to Vraja-*dhāma* within a split second to beg forgiveness, but since Brahmā's split second is a full year in the mortal world, the Lord could enjoy the parental love of His devotees in Vraja as He liked for a full year.

Coming to Vraja, Brahmā saw from the aerial path that the Lord was playing with the calves and cowherd boys that he had stolen. Brahmā thought:

"With His prowess, the Lord has taken the kidnapped calves and boys back and is playing with them again!", but at the same time he saw that the calves and cowherd boys he had kidnapped were still lying in the bed of his illusory power.

In this way, Brahmā was bewildered by the illusory energy of He, whom he wanted to bewilder with his own illusory energy, and he began to speculate about which group of calves and boys was the real one.

Then suddenly Brahma saw each of the calves and cowherd boys who were playing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa as wonderfully opulent four-armed Viṣṇu-forms and he became totally overwhelmed by feelings of astonishment.

A short while later, by the grace of the Lord, he saw Śrī Vṛndāvana's sweetness and Vṛndāvana Vihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone, His face adorned with a slight smile. He slowly approached the Lord's lotus feet, offered obeisances to Him again and again and offered wonderful praises, which were filled with both reverence and sweetness, all with tear-filled eyes.

How afraid Brahmā was of committing offences to the Lord and how he prayed to the Lord's lotus feet for forgiveness for

these offences, can be clearly learned from the following two verses —

*paśyeśa me'nāryam ananta ādye
parātmani tvayyapi māyi māyini
māyān vitatyekṣitum ātma vaibhavaṁ
hyahaṁ kiyānaiccham ivārcir agnau
ataḥ kṣamasvācyuta me rajo-bhuva
hyajānatas tvat pṛthag īsa māninaḥ
ajāvalepāndha tamo'ndha caḥsuṣa
eṣo'nukampyā mayi nāthavān iti*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.14.9-10)

Brahmā prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa: "O Lord! Just as a spark is very insignificant in comparison to a blazing fire, I am also very insignificant compared to You. Nevertheless, although I am myself bewildered by Your illusory energy, I was so foolish to try to proclaim my own lordship in front of You, the endless One, the cause of all causes, the controller of everything and the Lord of *māyā*.

O Acyuta! I am endowed with the mode of passion and I am very ignorant, thinking myself to be a Lord, separate from You. I am blinded by illusion, so consider me to be Your servant and please forgive me all my offences."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "I offer my obeisances unto the place where the frightened four-faced Brahmā offered prayers to his worshipable Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

*kṛṣṇa vatsa sakhā-gaṇe, hari brahmā vraja-vane,
kṛta aparādha manas tāpe
vrajendra-nandana yini, vatsa-pālaka maṇi,
stuti kore sei mukundake*

*aparūpa padya chande, stuti kori' śrī govinde,
bhīru brahmā bhāse netra jale.
sa-prabhu caturānane, mahā-tīrtha sei sthāne,
namaskāra kori kutūhole*

"I eagerly offer my obeisances to the great holy place, where the four-faced Brahmā praised Mukunda with wonderful poetic verses while floating in his own tears, begging forgiveness from the prince of Vraja, Śrī Govinda, the jewel of cowherd boys, for the offence of stealing his calves and cowherd boys in Vraja-vana."

VERSE 98:

**gandha-vyākula-bhṛṅga-sañcaya-camū-saṅghṛṣṭa-puṣpotkarair
bhājat kalpa-latā palāśi-nikarair vibhrājītāni sphuṭam
yāni sphāra-tadāga-parvata-nadi-vṛndena rājanty aho
kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha-vanāni tāni nitarāṁ vande muhur dvādaśa**

gandha - fragrance; *vyākula* - anxious; *bhṛṅga* - bumblebees; *sañcaya* - multitude; *camū* - armies; *saṅghṛṣṭa* - attacked; *puṣpa* - by the flowers; *utkaraiḥ* - by the multitude; *bhrājat* - shines; *kalpa-latā* - wishyielding vines; *palāśi-nikaraiḥ* - and by wishyielding trees; *vibhrājītāni* - manifest; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *yāni* - which; *sphāra* - broad; *tadāga* - lakes; *parvata* - mountains; *nadi-vṛndena* - by the rivers; *rājanti* - shine; *aho* - O!; *kṛṣṇa preṣṭha* - Kṛṣṇa's beloved; *vanāni* - in the forest; *tāni* - them; *nitarāṁ* - constantly; *vande* - I praise; *muhur* - repeatedly; *dvādaśa* - twelve.

Again and again I praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved twelve forests, which are filled by mountains, rivers, broad lakes

and wish yielding vines and -trees that are beautified by flowers, which are constantly ravished by armies of bumblebees, who are intoxicated by their fragrance.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: For the fulfillment of his sacred aspirations, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the twelve forests of Mathurā-maṇḍala in this verse.

In the Padma Purāṇa it is written:

*bhadra-śrī lauha bhāṇḍīra mahā tāla khadirakāḥ
bahulā kumudaṁ kāmyaṁ madhu vṛndāvanaṁ tathā
dvādaśaitānyaraṇyāni kālindyāḥ sapta paścime
pūrve pañca vanaṁ proktaṁ tatrāsti guhyam uttamam*

"Bhadra-, Śrī-, Lauha-, Bhāṇḍīra-, Mahā-, Tāla-, Khadira-, Bahulā-, Kumuda-, Kāmya-, Madhu- and Vṛndā-vana: these are the twelve forests in Mathurā Maṇḍala. Seven of them are west of the Yamunā and five are east. These twelve forests are **Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most confidential playgrounds.** "

In Bhakti Ratnākara it is seen:

*dvādaśa vipīna-yuktā śrī mathurā-purī;
puṇyā pāpa-harā śubhā - apūrva mādhuri*

"Śrī Mathurā-purī has twelve forests, is very auspicious and pious, destroys all sins and is endowed with a wonderful sweetness."

*tena dṛṣṭvā ca sā ramyā keśavasya purī tathā;
vanair dvādaśabhir yuktā puṇyā pāpaharā śubhā*

"He saw Keśava's abode, which has twelve forests, bestows merit, destroys sins, is full of auspiciousness and very lovely."

*dvādaśa vipina sarva purāṇe pramāṇa;
 sūnite se sab nāma juḍāya parāṇa
 madhu, tāla, kumuda, bahulā, kāmya āra;
 khadirā śrī vṛndāvana yamunā e pāra
 śrī, bhadra, bhāṇḍira, bilva, lauha,
 mahāvana; yamunā o pāra e manojña kānana*

"All the Purāṇas provide evidence of the authenticity of the twelve forests. Your heart will be comforted when you hear their names. On this side of the Yamunā are Madhavana, Tālavana, Kumudavana, Bahulāvana, Kāmyavana, Khadiravana and Śrī Vṛndāvana, and on the other side of the Yamunā are the beautiful Śrīvāna, Bhadravana, Bhāṇḍiravana, Bilvavana, Lauhavana and Mahāvana."

In the Purāṇas, these forests have been progressively named. First there is **Madhavana**, as is stated in the Ādi-Varāha Purāṇa -

*ramyaṁ madhuvanaṁ nāma viṣṇu-sthānam anuttamam;
 yad dr̥ṣṭvā manujo devi sarvān kāmān avāpnuyāt
 tatra kuṇḍaṁ svaccha-jalaṁ nilotpala vibhūṣitam;
 tatra snānena dānena vāñchitaṁ phalam āpnuyāt*

"O Devi! Viṣṇu's abode named Madhavana is the greatest and is very lovely. A person who sees this place has all his desires fulfilled. In this forest is a pond with clear water beautified by blue lotus flowers. A person who bathes there or gives charity there will certainly have all his desires fulfilled."

The second one is **Tālavana**, as is stated in the Skanda Purāṇa, Mathurā Khaṇḍa

aho tālavanaṁ pūrṇaṁ yatra tālair hato'suraḥ. hitāya yādavānāṁ ca ātma-kriḍanakāya ca

"Aho! In this auspicious Tālavana, Śrī Kṛṣṇa killed the palm-keeping demon for the sake of the Yādavas (Nanda and the cowherd men, because the Yādava-king Devamīḍa had a *vaiśyā*-wife whose son was Parjanya, and Parjanya's son was Nanda Mahārāja) and for the sake of His own play."

The third one is **Kumudavana**.

kumuda-vanam etacca tṛtīya vanam uttamam; yatra gatvā naro devi mama loke mahīyate (Ādi-Varāha)

"O Devi! This Kumudavana is the third and greatest forest. Anyone who goes there will be worshipped in My abode."

Kāmyavana is the fourth.

caturtha kāmyakavanaṁ vanānāṁ vanam uttamam; yatra gatvā naro devi mama loke mahīyate (ibid.)

"O Devi! Kāmyakavana is the fourth and greatest forest. Anyone who goes there will be worshipped in My abode!"

Bahulāvana is the fifth.

pañcamam bahulaṁ nāma vanānāṁ vanam uttamam; tatra gato naro devi agnisthānaṁ sa gacchati

"O Devi! Bahulāvana is the fifth and greatest forest. Anyone who goes there will attain the abode of Agnideva!"

The glories of Bahulāvana are also described in the Skanda Purāṇa, Mathurākhaṇḍa -

*bahulā śrī hareḥ patnī tatra tiṣṭhati sarvadā;
tasmin padma-vane rājan bahu puṇya-phalāni ca
tatraiva ramate viṣṇur lakṣmyā sārddham sadaiva hi;
tatra saṅkarsaṇam kuṇḍam tatra mānasaro nṛpa*

*yas tatra kurute snānaṁ madhumāse nṛpottama;
sa paśyati hariṁ tatra lakṣmyā saha viśāmpate*

"O greatest of kings! Śrī Hari's consort Bahulā always dwells in this Bahulāvana! O King! A person who enters the lotusforest there attains great pious merit. The reason is that Śrī Viṣṇu always blissfully dwells in this forest with Lakṣmī. O King! In Bahulāvana are Saṅkarṣaṇa-kuṇḍa and Māna Sarovara. O King! Anyone who bathes in these sacred tanks in the month of Caitra (March-April) will see Śrī Hari and Lakṣmī there!"

The sixth forest is **Bhadravana**.

*asti bhadravanam nāma śaṣṭham ca vanam uttamam. tatra
gatvā ca vasudhe mad bhakto mat parāyaṇaḥ* (Ādi Varāha)

"O Vasudhe! The sixth and greatest forest is Bhadravana. A person who goes there will become fixed in devotion to Me!"

The seventh is **Khadiravana**.

*saptamas tu vanam bhūmau khadiram loka viśrutam. tatra
gatvā nara bhadre mama lokam sa gacchati*

"The famous Khadiravana is the seventh forest. O Bhadre! Anyone who goes there will attain My abode!"

Mahāvana is the eighth.

*mahāvanam cāṣṭamam tu sadaiva tu mama priyam; tasmin
gatvā tu manuja indraloke mahīyate* (ibid.)

"The eighth forest is Mahāvana, which is always dear to Me. Any human being who goes there will be worshipped in Indraloka."

Lauhavana is the ninth forest.

*lauhajaṅgha-vanam nāma lauhajaṅghena rakṣitam;
navamam tu vanam devi sarva pātaka nāśanam* (ibid.)

"O Devi! The ninth forest, Lauhavana, which is protected by Lauhajaṅgha, destroys all sins."

Bilvavana is the tenth forest.

vanam bilva-vanam nāma daśamaṁ deva pūjitam; tatra gatvā tu manujo brahma-loke mahīyate (ibid.)

"The tenth forest, which is worshipped by the demigods, is Bilvavana. A human being who goes there will be worshipped in Brahmaloaka."

The eleventh is **Bhāṇḍīravana**.

ekādaśam tu bhāṇḍīraṁ yogīnām priyam uttamam; tasya darśana mātrena naro garbham na gacchati (ibid.)

"Bhāṇḍīravana, the eleventh and greatest forest, is very dear to the *yogīs*. Any human being who simply sees it will no longer enter into a mother's womb."

Śrī Vṛndāvana is the twelfth forest.

vṛndāvanam dvādaśakam vṛndayā parirakṣitam; mama caiva priyam bhūme sarva pātaka nāsanam. tatrāham kṛdayiṣyāmi gopī gopālakaiḥ saha; suramyam supratitam ca deva dānava durlabham (ibid.)

"O Dharaṇi! Vṛndāvana, the twelfth forest, is maintained by Vṛndā-devī, destroys all sins and is very dear to Me. I will play there with the cowherd boys and -girls, it is very beautiful and famous and it is rarely attained by the demons and demigods."

Śrī Vṛndāvana's opulence of beauty and glory is described in the Mathurā-khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa —

*tato vṛndāvanam puṇyam vṛndā-devi samāśritam;
hariṇādhiṣṭhitam taddhi brahma rudrādi sevitam
vṛndāvanam sugahanam viśalam viśṛtam bahu;
munīnām āśramaiḥ pūrṇam vanyavṛndā samanvitam
yathā lakṣmīḥ priyatamā sadā bhakti parāyaṇā;
govindasya priyatamam tathā vṛndāvanam bhuvī
vatsar vatsaribhiḥ ca sākam kṛdati mādhavah;
vṛndāntarāntara gataḥ sarāmo bālakair vṛtaḥ*

*aho vṛndāvanaṁ ramyaṁ yatra govardhano giriḥ;
tatra tirthānyanekāni viṣṇu deva kṛtāni ca*

"Then there is auspicious Vṛndāvana, which is always under the shelter of Vṛndādevī, where Śrī Hari is always present and which is thus served by gods like Brahmā and Śiva.

Vṛndāvana is hardly accessible and is filled with many large *āśramas* of *munis* as well as gardens full of Tulasī-plants. Just as the ever-devoted Kāmalā-devī (Lakṣmī-devī) is Śrī Viṣṇu's dearest beloved, similarly Vṛndāvana is Śrī Govinda's dearest beloved.

Mādhava always takes Baladeva, the cowherd boys and the cows along to play in Vṛndāvana. Aho! How lovely is Vṛndāvana's beauty! Here is Girirāja Govardhana and many other holy places created by Lord Viṣṇu!"

All the vines and trees in these forests are wish yielding trees and wish yielding vines. Brahma Saṁhitā says: *kalpataravo drumāḥ*. But because this is the abode of *mādhurya*, no one wants to accept anything else from these trees and vines but fruits and flowers, and they also do not give anything else but that, so that they will not spoil the mood of sweetness there.

Hence they are always beautified by flowers that attract swarms of bumblebees. These bumblebees are intoxicated by their fragrance and they always ravish them. With the word 'bees' it is also indicated, that birds like the cuckoos are singing there and that the forests are always beautified by wandering deer and hares, as well as (lotus-filled) ponds, mountains and rivers.

There is no comparison to the natural beauty of the twelve forests! Again and again Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the twelve forests, which are Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear most playgrounds!

gandhonmatta bhṛṅga-kula, senā-gaṇa sucañcala,
yāra puṣpa kore saṁgharṣaṇe
sei sab śobhamāna, kalpataru latāgaṇa,
(yāra) śobhā vṛddhi kore anukṣaṇe
phulla padma sarovare, giri nadi śobhā kore,
kokilādi koroye kūjana.
śrī kṛṣṇera priyatama, sei to dvādaśa vana,
bārambāra koriye vandana

"Again and again I praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloved twelve forests, where armies of restless bumblebees ravish the flowers that beautify the wish yielding vines and -trees, being intoxicated by their fragrance, and which are constantly beautified by lakes filled with blossoming lotus flowers as well as mountains and rivers, where birds like the cuckoo are singing."

VERSE 99:

**pūrṇaḥ prema-rasaiḥ sadā muraripor dāsaḥ sakhā ca priyaṁ
 sva-prāṇārbudato`pi tat-pada-yugaṁ hitveha māsān daśa
 prītyā yo nivasamṣ tadya-kathayā goṣṭham muhur jīvaty
 āyātam kila paśya kṛṣṇam iti tam mūrḍhnā vahāmy uddhavam**

pūrṇaḥ - full; *prema* - love; *rasaiḥ* - by flavours; *sadā* - always;
muraripoḥ - of Kṛṣṇa; *dāsaḥ* - servant; *sakhā* - friend; *ca* - and; *priyaṁ*
 - beloved; *sva* - own; *prāṇa* - life-airs; *arbudataḥ* - more than billions;
api - even; *tat* - His; *pada* - feet; *yugaṁ* - pair; *hitvā* - renounced; *iha*
 - here, in Vraja; *māsān* - months; *daśa* - ten; *prītyā* - with love; *yaḥ* -
 who; *nivasam* - resided; *tadya* - His; *kathayā* - with topics; *goṣṭham* -
 Vraja; *muhur* - repeatedly; *jīvaty* - revives; *āyātam* - came; *kila* -

certainly; *paśya* - look!; *kṛṣṇam iti* - this is Kṛṣṇa; *taṁ* - him; *mūrdhnā* - on the head; *vahāmi* - I carry; *uddhavam* - Uddhava.

Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya, who is always filled with flavours of love for Murāri both as a servant and friend, left the Lord's lotus feet, although they are dearer to him than billions of life-airs, and stayed in Vraja for ten months, consoling and reviving the Vrajavāsīs by saying: "Look, Kṛṣṇa is coming back to you!"

I carry this Śrī Uddhava on my head.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha is praising Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya.

Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya is a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a friend mixed with the mood of a servant. But he is not just a servant and a friend, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear most friend and servant, because his heart was filled with the flavours of love. Only love makes the devotee qualified to become the Lord's dearly beloved. We can learn from the Lord's own lotus-like mouth how the Lord offered Uddhava a seat of affection because of his love-filled heart:

*na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na saṅkaraḥ;
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātma ca yathā bhavān*

"O Uddhava! Neither Brahmā, My lotus-born son, nor Śaṅkara (Śiva), who is born from My nature, nor Saṅkarṣaṇa (Balarāma), although He is My own brother, nor Kamalā (Lakṣmī), who plays on My chest as My wife, nor even I Myself am so dear to Me as you are!" (Bhāg. 11.14.15)

The quality of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a treasure, which Śrī Uddhava was born with.

In the second chapter of the Third Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata it is seen:

*yaḥ panca hāyano mātṛā prātar āśāya yācitah;
tannaicchad racayan yasya saparyāṁ bāla-līlayā*

"When Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya was a child of five years old, he fashioned a deity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to serve .He became so absorbed in this childhood-pastime, that he was not even interested when his mother called him for breakfast."

From this statement we can learn, that he was deeply absorbed in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from his childhood.

Just as the Lord is always served by His six opulences, similarly, Śrīmān Uddhava Mahāśaya was decorated by six kinds of extraordinary qualities in his adolescence while engaging himself in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service.

Śrīla Śukadeva Muni describes in the 46th chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavata —

*vṛṣṇinām sammato mantri kṛṣṇasya dayitaḥ sakhaḥ;
śiṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād uddhavo buddhi-sammataḥ*

"Śrīmān Uddhava Mahāśaya was honoured by the Yādavas. He was Śrī Kṛṣṇa's counsellor, His dear friend and the object of His grace. He was the direct disciple of Bṛhaspati and the most intelligent of men."

Because Śrī Uddhava was endowed with so many qualities Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent him to Vraja to console Śrī Nanda, Yaśodā and all the cowherdmen and -women.

When Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya saw the billowing waves on the vast ocean of love of Nanda and the Vrajavāsīs, and especially Śrī Rādhā and the Vrajasundarīs, he was stunned of amazement

and remained in Vraja for ten months in great blissful astonishment, even though that meant he had to be separated from the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was dearer to him than billions of life-airs.

Saying: "Look! Kṛṣṇa is returning from Mathurā!", he offered them consolation, and by singing about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with a sweet voice it was as if he reproduced the divine form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly before the eyes of the Vrajavāsīs -

*uvāsa katicin māsān gopīnām vinudan śucaḥ;
kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathām gāyan ramayāmāsa gokulam
yāvanty ahāni nandasya vraje'vātsiṭ sa uddhavaḥ;
vrajaukasām kṣaṇa-prāyāṅyāsan kṛṣṇasya vārtayā
sarid vana giri droṇīr vīkṣan kusumitān drumān;
kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme haridāso vrajaukasām*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.47.54-56)

"Śrīmān Uddhava stayed in Vraja for ten months and removed the *gopīs'* agony of separation. When the *gopīs* lost all external consciousness because of their severe feelings of separation, he reminded them of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus soothed their pain as if he was neutralizing burning poison with the use of a powerful *mantra*.

In this way Śrīmān Uddhava also went before the cowherds and cowherdresses, headed by Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā, and revived them by singing about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, thus crystallizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa before them and plunging them into an ocean of transcendental bliss.

As long as Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya was in Vraja, he spoke about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus these ten long months appeared to be just like a moment.

"Although the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa were dearer to him than billions of life-airs, he left them to serve the Vrajavāsīs by constantly making them drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes."

*daśa māsa vrajavāse, sabāre se āśvāse,
śrī uddhava ei vākya bole
śrī kṛṣṇa āgata prāya, āra se vilamba nāi,
daraśana koroho sakale*

"Śrī Uddhava stayed in Vraja for ten months, consoling everyone with the words: 'Śrī Kṛṣṇa is coming. He won't be long! Look, everyone!' "

*govinda preyasī yoto, prasādhane suśobhita,
vastra mālya śrī hari-candana
śrī uddhava daraśane, kṛṣṇa korāya uddipane,
śire vandi tāra śrī caraṇa*

"When Govinda's beloved *gopīs* saw Śrī Uddhava wearing beautiful garments, garlands and white sandalwoodpulp, they all remembered Kṛṣṇa. I bow my head down before his divine feet."

VERSE 100:

**mudā yatra brahmā tṛṇa-nikara-gulmādiṣu paraṁ
sadā kāṅkṣan janmārpita-vividha-karmāpy anudinam
kramād ye tatraiva vraja-bhuvi vasanti priya-janā
mayā te te vandyāḥ parama vinayāt puṇya-khacitāḥ**

mudā - gladly; *yatra* - where; *brahmā* - Brahmā; *tr̥ṇa-nikara* - blades of grass; *gulma* - bush; *ādiṣu* - in others; *param̐* - greatest; *sadā* - always; *kāṅkṣan* - desiring; *janma* - birth; *arpita* - placed; *vividha* - various; *karma* - activities; *api* - even; *anudinam* - every day; *kramād* - gradually; *ye* - who; *tatra* - there; *eva* - only; *vrajabhūvi* - Vraja; *vasanti* - residing; *priya* - dear; *janā* - people; *mayā* - by me; *te te* them; *vandyāḥ* - praiseworthy; *parama* - greatest; *vinayāt* - out of humility; *punya* - auspiciousness; *khacitāḥ* - decorated with.

Although he is always anxiously engaged in duties given to him by the Supreme Lord such as creating the universe, Lord Brahmā most blissfully revealed his aspiration to take birth in Vraja, even as a blade of grass or a bush.

Each day I humbly praise each respective, most pious person who is residing in Vraja and who is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha humbly and attentively praises each and every person who lives in Vraja.

Brahmā is the lotus-born son of the Supreme Lord and His beloved devotee, who is responsible for the creation of the universe. As the result of committing selfless activities for one hundred births, a fortunate soul may become qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā. Because such a fortunate soul is very rare, the Supreme Lord Himself takes over the duty of the universal creation in some *kalpas* if there is no one else available.

Even Brahmā came to realize the good fortune of any person who lives in Vṛndāvana and submitted the following prayer to the lotus feet of the Lord -

*tad bhūri bhāgyam iha janma kim apyāṭavyān
 yad gokule'pi katamāᅅghri rajo'bhīsekam
 yaj jīvitam tu nikhilam bhagavān mukunda
 tvadyāpi yat padarajaᅅ śruti mᅇgyam eva*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.14.34)

"I consider birth in Vraja even as a blade of grass or a bush, in which I could attain even one speck of the foot dust of the Vrajavāsīs, whose very life is Mukunda, the specks of Whose foot dust is always sought for by the Vedas, a greater fortune than this birth as Brahmā. Therefore, birth in Vraja-*bhūmi* even as a blade of grass or a bush is my greatest desire."

In the Vaiᅅᅇava-toᅅaᅅi-commentary on this verse it is written:

*tatrāpi kim api dūrvaᅅi mᅇdu tᅇᅇatvam ityabhiprāyaᅅ;
 tatraivāᅅghri-rajobhiᅅ samyag abhiᅅeka-siddheᅅ.....nanu
 katham sāksāᅅ gopāᅅi janmaiva na prārthyatām tatrāha yad
 iti. yasya gokulasya tad-vāsi mātrasya nikhilam bhagavān
 mukunda eva. tatra yaᅅ svayaᅅ bhagavān parātparatvāt
 sādhayitum aśakya ityarthāᅅ sādhitō'pi yo mukundaᅅ prāyaᅅo
 muktim eva dātā na tu bhakti-yoga mātram api. tam etaᅅ vinā
 yajjanaᅅ kᅅaᅅam api jīvitum na śaknotītyarthāᅅ. iti parama
 prema viᅅeᅅavattvam uktam. āstām tāvad anyair
 duᅅsādhyatvaᅅ durllabha prematvaᅅ ca yasya pāᅅa-rajāᅅ
 śrutibhir adyāpi tvayi sāksāᅅ avatīᅇe'pi mᅇgyata eva katamam
 rajaᅅ kiyam mahimeti jᅅātum iᅅyata eva na tu tad antaᅅ
 prāpyata ityarthāᅅ. yato vāca ityāᅅi śruteᅅ. ataᅅ parama
 prācīna māᅅᅇsa sarva jᅅāna prada śruti-durlabha jᅅāne tat
 pāᅅa-rajasyāpi prārthanā me'nupayuktā kutaᅅ punaᅅ
 premabhara vaᅅikᅇta tvat pādābjaka śrī gopāᅅi janma
 prārthaneti bhāvaᅅ*

This means that Brahmā coveted any kind of birth in Vraja that would give him a shower of the Vrajavāsīs' footdust. This indicates Dūrva-sprouts and the soft blades of grass, for in that form a shower of the Vrajavāsīs' foot dust would certainly be accomplished.

One may ask here: "If Brahmā wanted to be blessed by being able to see the Vrajavāsīs, then why didn't he pray for a birth as a cowherder in Vraja for himself?"

The answer is: "Lord Mukunda is everything to the inhabitants of Gokula. He is the Supreme Lord and the Supreme Truth, Whose worship is rarely attained and Who, even if worshipped, usually gives only liberation, but not devotion. Without this rarely attained Mukunda, the Vrajavāsīs cannot remain alive for even a moment. This proves that the Vrajavāsīs have attained the highest stage of love of Godhead.

That Mukunda and the Vrajavāsīs' love is rarely attained by others is one thing, but even when the Lord had personally descended, the personified Vedas could not attain one speck of His foot dust, although they sought for it.

In other words, the Vedas just tried to understand 'How is His foot dust? What is its great glory?', but they could not find its limits.

After all, the Upaniṣads say: "Words and the mind cannot reach Him, but are sent back."

Therefore it is greatly improper of Brahmā to pray for the foot dust of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is unattainable even for the Vedas, who bestow all their knowledge upon him (the ancient Brahmā, at the time of creation).

Should it therefore still be said that it would have been greatly improper for Brahmā to pray for birth as a cowherder, whose great love has completely subdued the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord? Is it therefore so astonishing that Brahmā

VERSE 101:

**purā premodrekaiḥ pratipada-navānanda-madhuraiḥ
kṛta-śrī-gāndharvācyuta-caraṇa-varyārcana-balāt
nikāmaṁ svāmīnyaḥ priyatara-saras-tīra-bhuvane
vasanti sphīta ye ta iha mama jīvātava ime**

purā - in the past; *prema* - love; *udrekaiḥ* - with great amounts of; *pratipada* - constantly; *nava* - new; *ānanda* - bliss; *madhuraiḥ* - with sweetesses; *kṛta* - done; *śrī gāndharvā* - Śrī Rādhā; *acyuta* - Kṛṣṇa; *caraṇa* - lotus feet; *varya* - the great; *arcana* - worshipping; *balāt* - on the strength of; *nikāmaṁ* - by their own desire; *svāmīnyaḥ* - of Svāmīnī; *priyatara* - dearest; *saraḥ* - lake; *tīra* - bank; *bhuvane* - on the ground; *vasanti* - they reside; *sphīta* - greatly; *ye* - who; *te* - they; *iha* - here; *mama* - my; *jīvātava* - very lives; *ime* - here.

Because of having worshiped the beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Gāndharvā and Acyuta with the ever-fresh sweetness of ecstatic spiritual love in their previous lives, some great souls are able to live on the bank of Svāmīnī's dear most lake (Śrī Rādhākunḍa).

These great devotees are my life and soul!

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises the great souls who live around Śrī Rādhākunḍa.

Śrī Rādhākunḍa is the crown jewel of Vraja and the exclusive abode of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's confidential noon-pastimes. There is no place more dear to the Divine Pair than this one. Śrī Rādhākunḍa is as dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as Śrī Rādhā is and Śrī Śyāmakunḍa is as dear to Śrī Rādhā as Śyāmasundara is, because the two *kunḍas* are non-different from Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

These two *kuṇḍas* especially are assisting the separated Couple when They want to meet Each other, or to soothe the blazing fire of separation They feel when They are unable to meet Each other.

The Mahājanas sing:

*śrī kṛṣṇa yokhon rādhā daraśana lāgi utkaṅṭhita hoy;
sakala upāya viphalā hoiyā rādhākuṇḍāśraya loy
tat kāle rādhāra pāya daraśana emati kuṇḍa prabhāva;
rādhāra-o temati śyāmakūṇḍāśraye kṛṣṇa saṅga hoy lābha*

"When Kṛṣṇa becomes eager to see Rādhā and all His endeavours fail, He takes shelter of Rādhākuṇḍa. At that moment, He gets the audience of Rādhā on the strength of the *kuṇḍa*. In the same way Rādhā also takes shelter of Śyāmakūṇḍa and thus attains the company of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Therefore, the most fortunate (*sukṛti-sāli*) people reside around Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa, the crown jewel of Vraja. The *sukṛti* mentioned here does not refer to ordinary pious merit, but the great merit accrued from worshipping the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, which is attained by the grace of the great devotees.

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha has written in this verse:

*purā premodrekaiḥ pratipada navānanda madhuraiḥ kṛta
śrī gāndharvācyuta caraṇa varyārcana balāt:*

"Because of having worshiped the beautiful lotus feet of Śrī Gāndharvā and Acyuta with the ever-fresh sweetness of ecstatic spiritual love in their previous lives..."

When this great abundance of sweet love appears in the heart of the *sadhaka*, he will become able to relish the ever-fresh transcendental bliss of *bhajana*.

Śrī Rādhārāṇī mercifully bestows on those, who have previously worshipped Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's lotus feet with such love, a place to stay at Śrī Rādhākunḍa.

The attraction to reside around Śrī Rādhākunḍa awakens within the heart of a person who is totally fixed on Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet. Their knowledge and meditations are all aimed at Svāminī Śrī Rādhā, for whom She is everything and to whom She is dearer than millions of life-airs, and they don't know anything but Her lotus feet, in life or in death.

Those who are fixed in Her worship develop the desire to love Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

For example, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written:

*rādhā nāma sudhārasaṁ rasayituṁ jihvās tu me vihvālā
pādaṁ tat padakāṅkitāsu caratāṁ vṛndātāvī vithiṣu
tat karmaiva karaḥ karotu hṛdayaṁ tasyāḥ padam dhyāyatāt
tat bhāvotsavataḥ paraṁ bhavatu me tat prāṇanāthe ratiḥ*

(Rādhā Rasa Sudhānidhi 142)

"May my tongue become overwhelmed by relishing the nectarean flavour of Rādhā's holy name, may my feet walk over Vṛndāvana's pathways that are marked with Her footprints, may my hands only be engaged in Her menial service, may my heart meditate on Her lotus feet, and may I develop love for the Lord of Her life (Kṛṣṇa) through Her festival of emotions."

It is such *sādhakas*, who are so fixed in Rādhā, that Svāminī mercifully allows to live on the bank of Her *kunḍa*, which is non-different from Her, and such fortunate *sādhakas* are thus living on the bank of the *kunḍa*, nourished by drinking the nectar of *prema*.

In other words, **the greatly intelligent souls** who exchange hearing, chanting and remembering topics about Śrī Rādhā's names, forms, qualities and pastimes with each other reside on **the bank of Svāminī's kuṇḍa**.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha never left the bank of the *kuṇḍa* to go anywhere else. His firm determination was to stay on the bank of the *kuṇḍa*, spend his time serving (eating) fruits, roots and buttermilk from Vraja and ultimately to leave his body there. ***atraiva mama saṁvāsa ihaiva mama saṁsthiti*** (Vilāpa Kusumāñjali)

"Here I will live and here I will stay".

With the same determination, Śrīpāda Raghunātha prays: "May the great souls who live around Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa be my means of survival."

*pratipade navānanda, sumadhura sevānanda,
yugalera arcana prabhāve.
purākāle santa gaṇe, kṛṣṇa premāmṛta pāne,
vāsa kore rādhākuṇḍa-tīre.
se sab mahānta gaṇa, nāma dhare mahājana,
sabe mora jivana upāya.
brahmāṇḍa tārite pāre, jane jane śakti dhare,
koto dine luṭāibo pāya?*

"All the great souls who live on the bank of Rādhākuṇḍa on the strength of their sweet and constantly blissful worship of the Divine Pair in previous lives, in which they drank the nectar of love for Kṛṣṇa, are my very life.

Each one of these great souls, who are called *mahājanas*, is able to save the whole world. How many days more, before I can roll at their feet?"

VERSE 102:

**yat kiñcit tṛṇa gulma-kīkaṭa-mukhaṁ goṣṭhe samastaṁ hi tat
sarvānanda-mayaṁ mukunda-dayitaṁ līlānukūlaṁ param
śāstrair eva muhuḥ muhuḥ sphuṭam idaṁ niṣṭāṅkitaṁ yācñayā
brahmāder api sa-sprheṇa tad idaṁ sarvaṁ mayā vandyate**

yat - what; *kiñcit* - slightly; *tṛṇa* - grass; *gulma* - bushes; *kīkaṭa* - worms; *mukhaṁ* - and other insects; *goṣṭhe* - in Vraja; *samastaṁ* - all; *hi* - certainly; *tat* - that; *sarva* - all; *ānanda-mayaṁ* - full of bliss; *mukunda dayitaṁ* - dear to Mukunda; *līlā* - pastimes; *anukūlaṁ* - favourable; *param* - greatest; *śāstraiḥ* - by the scriptures; *eva* - only; *muhuḥ muhuḥ* - again and again; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *idaṁ* - this; *niṣṭāṅkitaṁ* - established; *yācñayā* - by prayer; *brahmādeḥ* - by Brahmā and others, *api* - even; *sa* - with; *sprheṇa* - with desire; *tad* - that; *idaṁ* - this; *sarvaṁ* - all; *mayā* - by me; *vandyate* - being praised.

With great longing I praise Vraja’s blissful grass, bushes, worms and insects, whose fortunes are desired for by Brahmā, Uddhava and others, whose glories are repeatedly and clearly established by scriptures like Śrīmad Bhāgavata, who are very dear to Mukunda and who assist Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.

Stavāmrta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : Desiring to see and personally serve Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrīpāda Raghunātha praises Vraja’s grass, bushes, worms and insects in this verse, who are all very dear to Mukunda and who assist Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.

Although they appear like insignificant blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects to the external eyes, they are not like the grass, bushes, worms and insects of this material world, who have taken such a low and fallen birth amongst the 8.4 million species of life due to their wicked and sinful acts in their

previous lives. No, they are favourable assistants to the pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa! They are also required in Their pastimes, just like the divine abode and the divine companions.

Hence, they are also divine companions in these transcendental pastimes and are dearly beloved by Mukunda.

They are so fortunate to relish the sweetness of Mukunda's smile, which is white as Kunda-flowers as He jokes with Priyājī and Her *sakhīs* during His sylvan pastimes, and they are blessed to relish His ever-so-sweet form, qualities and pastimes and be touched by His hands and feet.

Some people may think:

"The blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects that were present during Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *prakāṣa-līlā*⁵⁵ may have been the eternal companions of the Lord, but the blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects that are present now during the *aprakāṣa līlā*⁵⁶ did attain such wretched bodies due to their sinful activities in the past." No, it is not like that!

The scriptures and the great souls see it like this: That which is visible of the holy *dhāma* during the *aprakāṣa-līlā* may be transcendental, but out of mercy upon the living entities in this world, it accepts both the form and nature of the material planet earth. If not, then persons like us, who are bound to our worldly activities (*karma*) would never be able to see this transcendental abode or to reside there.

Therefore, just as the holy *dhāma* is transcendental although it assumes a material form, similarly, who knows which great, offenceless souls have taken birth in Vraja as blades of grass,

⁵⁵ The pastimes that were performed before everyone's eyes and were recorded in Śrīmad Bhāgavata and other scriptures. Ed.

⁵⁶ The pastimes of the Lord that are still going on in Vraja, but are invisible to all but the pure devotees. Ed.

bushes, worms and insects to live there and to relish the *aprakṛta* or *nitya-līlās* there?

The *ācāryas* say: Persons who commit the offence of considering these creatures ordinary will not experience any result from their *bhajana* or from an extensive stay in the *dhāma* (which can bestow *prema* even on one who stays there for only one night).

Therefore the offenceless person who considers all the blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects that reside in the *dhāma* to be transcendental will make his stay in the *dhāma* a success by attaining *prema*. This is the experienced conclusion of the wise and learned.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "Knowing these glories, great learned sages like Lord Brahmā and Uddhava have desired to take birth in Vraja as blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects. This is seen in Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which contains the essence of the whole Vedānta.

In our commentary on verse 100, wherein Brahmā prays '*mudā yatra brahmā*' we have quoted the Bhāgavata-verse *tad bhūri bhāgyam iha janma kim apyāṭavyām* and its Toṣaṇī-commentary.

Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya has prayed similarly -

*āsām aho caraṇa reṇu juṣām ahaṅ syāṅ
vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajāṅ svajanam aṛya-pathaṅ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda padavīṅ śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 10.47.61)

"Aho! I have an impossible dream! All the different bushes, vines and herbs of Śrī Vṛndāvana are most fortunate and

blessed, for they can easily hold the foot dust of the Vrajasundarīs on their heads!

If I could attain the birth of any of these bushes, vines and herbs, then I can also become blessed with the foot dust of the Vraja-*gopīs*, who have given up the path of morality and family-virtues, which is so hard to give up, to eagerly and thirstily worship the lotus feet of Mukunda. Such a position is coveted, but not attained even by the Vedas!"

In this way, Lord Brahmā and Uddhava pray for birth in Vraja as a blade of grass or a bush, and all of their words have been clearly mentioned by scriptures such as Śrīmad Bhāgavata, which is the essence of the Vedānta. Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "

Full of longing, I praise the all-blissful blades of grass, bushes, worms and insects of Vraja."

*brahmā uddhavādi yādera saubhāgya kāmanā
nirantara kore sadā koriyā vandanā
vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauṣadhīnām;
bhāgavata śāstre āche yāhāra pramāṇa
vraje yoto tṛṇa gulma kiṭa pataṅgādi;
kṛṣṇa līlāra anukūla sadā līlā sāthī
kṛṣṇa priya hoy tārā sarvānanda maya
vraja yoto tṛṇa gulma kiṭādi nicaya
sa-sprhe vandanā kori tāṅdera sakale
vāñchā-pūrti hoy yāñhādera kṛpā-bole*

"Full of longing, I always praise all the blissful blades of grass, bushes, worms and other creatures of Vraja, who are so dear to Kṛṣṇa, who favourably assist Him in His pastimes as His companions and whose fortunes have been coveted by Brahmā,

Uddhava and others, as has been proven in the Bhāgavata-verse *vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauṣadhīnām*.

On the strength of their grace, I will have all my desires fulfilled!"

VERSE 103:

**bhraman kacche kacche kṣiti-dhara-pater vakrīma-gatair
lapan rādhe kṛṣṇety anavaratam unmattavad aham
patan kvāpi kvāpy ucchalita-nayana-dvandva-salilaiḥ
kadā keli-sthānaṁ sakalam api siñcāmi vikalāḥ**

bhraman - wandering; *kacche kacche* - close by; *kṣitīdhara* - mountain; *pateḥ* - of the lord; *vakrīma* - crooked; *gataiḥ* - with courses; *lapan* - uttering; *rādhe kṛṣṇa* - O Rādhe! O Kṛṣṇa!; *iti* - thus; *anavaratam* - constantly; *unmattavad* - as if mad; *aham* - I; *patan* - falling; *kvāpi kvāpi* - anywhere; *ucchalita* - welling; *nayana* - eye; *dvandva* - pair; *salilaiḥ* - with the waters; *kadā* - when; *keli* - play; *sthānaṁ* - place; *sakalam* - all; *api* - even; *siñcāmi* - I sprinkle; *vikalāḥ* - eagerly.

When will I wander around the slopes of Govardhana Hill, constantly uttering "O Rādhe! O Kṛṣṇa!" as if being mad, and when will I stumble around, overwhelmed by feelings of ecstatic love, sprinkling Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's playgrounds with my tears?

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha, who is the embodiment of love-in-separation, reveals his aspiration to live in Vraja in great ecstatic agitation.

Actually Śrīpāda Raghunātha's heart is burning in a great fire of lamentation out of separation, and with such a burning heart, he falls on the bank of Śrī Rādhākuṇḍa and anxiously weeps, desiring to see the Queen of his heart.

This sacred Stavāvalī-scripture is the culmination of this all. It is as if the body of this sacred Stavāvalī-scripture is made of his tears of love-in-separation.

Still, on the plea of praying for this condition himself, he draws a very beautiful picture of living in Vraja in great ecstatic agitation, a condition coveted by the loving devotees.

Vraja-dhāma is a place to be in great ecstatic agitation. Here the *bhāvuka* (greatly sensitive and advanced) devotees are never immersed in bodily happiness, spending the time eating and sleeping and performing *bhajana* in a mechanical way, as a person like me is doing.

This Vraja is a place to experience separation. *bhajana* here consists of only tears.

In Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya reveals his experience of the mood of Vraja to Śrī Nārada and Gopa Kumāra -

*tatraivotpadyate dainyaṁ tat premāpi sadā satām
tat tacchūnyam ivāraṇya sarid giryaḍi paśyatām
sadā hāhā ravākrānta vadanānām tathā hṛdi
mahā santāpa dagdhānām sva priyaṁ parimṛgyatām*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛtam 2.5.242-243)

"When the saints see the void of the woods, rivers and mountains of Vraja, they automatically get feelings of humility and love simultaneously. They will loudly wail and lament and

search for their beloved deity with anxious hearts, which burn out of severe affliction."

The purport of this is, that the great souls who take shelter of Vraja to do *bhajana*, always see the pastime-places, but they do not see the playful pair, Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, there.

This naturally causes agitation in their hearts, as a result of which gradually humility and love are infused into the heart.

When humility awakens, the devotee considers himself very fallen and unqualified, and at the same time, while *prema* awakens, he develops a great eagerness for directly seeing his beloved deity. Then the loving devotee, whose heart is burning in the great fire of love-in-separation, wanders around everywhere in Vraja lamenting and searching for his beloved deity. **This elevated condition is even more praiseworthy than the direct meeting with the Lord.**

This is because the Lord, Who is subdued by the love of His devotees, generates such feelings of separation within the heart of the devotee, so that He can relish the sweetness of this condition of the devotee, while watching him from a hidden place.

bhaktera prema ceṣṭā dekhi kṛṣṇera camatkāra (C.C.)

"Kṛṣṇa is astonished when He witnesses the activities of His devotees."

When Śrī Gopa Kumāra was sent from Ūrdhva Dvārakā to the terrestrial Vraja by Śrī Uddhava and Nārada, he attained such an ecstatic condition.

It is described as such -

*tāṁ nāradīyām anusṛtya śikṣāṁ śrī kṛṣṇa nāmāni nija priyāṇi
saṅkīrtayan susvaramatra lilās tasya pragāyannanucintayamś ca
tadīya lilāsthala jātam etad vilokayan bhāvadaśe gato ye
tayoḥ sva-citte karaṇena lajje katham parasmin kathayānyaham te*

*sadā mahārtyā karuṇa svarairudan-nayāmi rātrir divasās ca kātaraḥ
na vedmi yad yat sucirād anuṣṭhitam sukhāya vā tat tad utārti sindhave
kathañcid apyākalayāmi naitat kim eṣa dāvāgni sikhāntare’ham
vasāmi kiṁ vā paramāmṛtāccha suśtala śrī yamunā-jalāntaḥ*

(Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.6.1-4)

Śrī Gopakumāra told Śrī Janaśarmā: “O *brāhmaṇa!* Following the instructions of Śrī Nārada, I am chanting the holy names of my beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa and I am residing in Śrī Vṛndāvana, singing about and remembering His pastimes. Although I have attained this ecstatic condition while witnessing these pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and I have kept these ecstatic feelings within the heart, I am feeling ashamed.

How will I reveal them to you? I was always weeping in great anguish, pitifully crying ‘O Lord!’ day and night.

I have practised this for a long time, but I don’t know if I did this for attaining happiness or for being immersed in an ocean of transcendental anguish. I could not ascertain in any way whether I was residing in the flames of a forest fire or in the cool water of the Yamunā! “

Actually, love for Śrī Nanda-Nandana Gopāla is full of contrast. Sometimes it seems there is no limit to the bliss, and again sometimes it seems there is no limit to the misery. Sometimes it is delicious like nectar and sometimes it is more burning than poison. And again sometimes, the nectar and the poison, the relish and the scorch blend and become one!

*bahir viṣa jvālā hoy,
antara ānandamoy,
kṛṣṇa premāra adbhūta carita
(C.C.)*

"Externally it is scorching like poison and internally it is blissful. This is the wonderful nature of love for Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "When will I wander around the table lands of Śrī Govardhana, constantly exclaiming: 'O Rādhe! O Kṛṣṇa!' like being mad, while searching for my most beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava?"

At some places I may stumble and fall and sometimes I will get up again, dance, sing and weep - when will streams of my tears shower these transcendental playgrounds?"

Actually Śrī Rūpa and Raghunātha dāsa and other *sampradāyācāryas* (teachers of the tradition of Caitanya-bhakti), gave the greatest example of how to live in Vraja in such an ecstatic condition.

At the end of Śrīnivāsācārya's Ṣaḍ Gosvāmyaṣṭakam it is written:

*he rādhe vraja devike ca lalite he nandasūno kutaḥ
śrī govardhana kalpapādapa tale kālindī vanye kutaḥ
ghoṣantāviti sarvato vrajapure khedair mahā-vihvalau
vande rūpa sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī jīva gopālakau*

"O Rādhe! O goddesses of Vraja! O Lalite! O Śrī Nanda-Nandana! Where are You? Are You at the base of a wish yielding tree at Govardhana Hill, or on the bank of the Yamunā? Where are You playing Your pastimes? This is Your Vraja-*dhāma*, where the stream of Your pastimes flows on eternally! Alas! How unfortunate I am that I cannot see Your pastimes here! Tell me where I should go to meet You!"

I praise Rūpa, Sanātana, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha dāsa, Śrī Jīva and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmīs, who were thus wandering all over Vraja like being mad, searching for their

most beloved Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in a very anxious state of mind."

Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya also sings:

hari hari! āra ki emon daśā hobo?²
e bhava saṁsāra tyaji, parama ānande maji,
āra kobe vrajabhūme yābo
sukhamaya vṛndāvana, kobe hobe daraśana,
se dhūli mākhibo kobe gāya
preme gada gada hoiyā, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nāma loiyā,
kāṁdiyā beḍābo ubharāya
nibhṛta nikuñje jāiyā, aṣṭāṅga praṇata hoiyā,
dākibo hā rādhānātha boli
kobe yamunāra tīre, paraśa koribo nīre,
kobe pibo karapuṭe tuli
āra kobe emana hobo, śrī rāsa maṇḍale yābo,
kobe gaḍāgaḍi dibo tāya
vaiśiṣṭa chāyā pāiyā, parama ānanda hoiyā,
paḍiyā rahibo tāra chāya
kobe govardhana giri, dekhibo nayana bhari,
kobe hobe rādhākuṇḍe vāsa
bhramite bhramite kobe, e deho patana hobe,
kohe dīna narottama dāsa

(Prārthanā)

"Hari Hari! When will I attain such a condition? When will I give up this material household life and go to Vrajabhūmi, immersed in transcendental bliss? When will I see blissful Vṛndāvana and smear its dust on my body? When will I wander around there, weeping and singing Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's names with a voice stuttering of ecstatic love? When will I go to the solitary

groves, offer prostrated obeisances there and cry out ‘O Lord of Rādhā!’?

When will I go to the bank of the Yamunā, touch her waters and drink it from my cupped hands? When will I go to the Śrī Rāsa-maṇḍala and roll around there in ecstasy? When will I attain the shadow of Vaṁśīvaṭa in topmost ecstasy and remain there? When will I fill my eyes with the vision of Govardhana Giri and when will I reside at Rādhākunḍa? The fallen Narottama dāsa says: When will my body fall when I thus wander around?"

The Vīṇā-like hearts of the great devotees all twang the same tune of anguish of separation from living in Vraja.

Hence Śrīpāda Raghunātha’s anxious prayer -

*nirantara hā rādhe! he śrī kṛṣṇa! boliyā;
unmattera prāya āmi pralāpa koriyā
govardhanera sānu-deśe bhramaṇa koribo;
premete vivaśa aṅga dhaliyā paḍibo
vyākulita citte sadā koribo krandana;
yugala vilāsa bhūmi koribo siñcana
ucchalita āñkhi nīre pañkilo se sthale;
sukhe viharibe sadā navina yugale*

I will wander around the base of Govardhana Hill, constantly exclaiming "Hā Rādhe! Hey Śrī Kṛṣṇa!" as if being mad. Overwhelmed by ecstatic love, I will drop my body and constantly weep with an anxious heart. I will shower and madden the ground where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa always blissfully play with streams of my tears.

VERSE 104:

**na brahmā na ca nārado nahi haro na prema-bhaktottamāḥ
samyag jñātum ihāñjasārhati tathā yasyocchalan-mādhurīm
kintv eko baladeva eva paritaḥ svārdham sva-mātrā sphuṭam
premnāpy uddhava eṣa vetti nitarām kiṁ sa vrajo varṇyate**

na - not; *brahmā* - Brahmā; *na* - not; *ca* - either; *nāradaḥ* - Nārada; *nahi* - not; *haraḥ* - Śiva; *na* - not; *prema* - love; *bhakta* - devotee; *uttamāḥ* - by the greatest; *samyak* - completely; *jñātum* - knowable; *iha* - here; *añjasā* - easily; *arhati* - is able; *tathā* - then; *yasya* - whose; *ucchalan* - rising; *mādhurīm* - sweetness; *kintu* - but; *ekaḥ* - one; *baladeva* - Baladeva; *eva* - only; *paritaḥ* - all; *sārdham* - along with; *sva* - own; *mātrā* - by the mother; *sphuṭam* - clearly; *premnā* - with love; *api* - even; *uddhava* - Uddhava; *eṣa* - this; *vetti* - knows; *nitaram* - constantly; *kiṁ* - what; *sa* - he; *vrajaḥ* - Vraja; *varṇyate* - can be described.

How can I describe this land of Vraja, whose welling sweetness cannot be fully comprehended by even the greatest loving devotees such as Lord Brahmā, Nārada or Lord Śiva, but can only be understood by Śrī Baladeva, His mother Rohiṇī, and, - on the strength of his great love - by Śrīla Uddhava Mahāśaya?

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : Śrīpāda Raghunātha's Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava is drawing to a close.

The ocean of love within his heart is churned by the whirlwind of his humility.

Śrīpāda thinks: "I am seated here to describe Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava's Vraja-*dhāma*, which is deeper than millions of oceans, which is hard to cross and very confidential.

Where is an insignificant living being like me, and where is the boundless ocean of sweetness of the love and the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their companions in Vraja, which is so hard to bathe in? How many hundreds of steamers have sunk in this vast and bottomless ocean, but I went into this vast ocean with a mere small wooden raft! How ignorant of me!

Am I able to describe the billowing sweetness of this Vraja, which cannot even be fully comprehended by the greatest loving devotees like Brahmā, Nārada and Mahādeva?"

Brahmā wanted to relish the sweetness of the Vraja-*hilā*, but out of ignorance, he stole Śrī Kṛṣṇa's calves and cowherd boys, who are His eternal transcendental companions of equal strength, and thus became an offender.

The reason is, that a reverential worshipper can never relish the sweetness of Vraja. Finally Brahmā praised Śrī Kṛṣṇa to beg Him forgiveness for the offence he committed and prayed that he might take birth in Vraja even as a blade of grass or a bush, so that he could be showered by the foot dust of anyone living in Vraja.

Although Śrī Nārada was very eager to relish the sweetness of Vraja, he could not do so in his ordinary external form of Nārada. Ultimately, with the assistance of Śrīman Mahādeva and Lord Brahmā and on the order of the Supreme Lord, he bathed in Nārada-Kuṇḍa and attained the form of a *gopī*, so that he was blessed with the eligibility to relish Rādhā and Mādhava's sweetness.

Śrīman Mahādeva came to Vṛndāvana, hoping to relish the sweetness of Vraja, but when the Vraja-*gopīs* saw him there, they began to worship him, thinking it was possible to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's association through his grace.

Since they were able to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa's association as a result of worshipping Śrīman Mahādeva, he was named

Gopīśvara. Although Śrīman Mahādeva came to Vraja to worship the *gopīs* and their Gopīnātha, he finally became the worshipable godhead of the *gopīs* himself! So like this, *aiśvarya* is defeated by *mādhurya*.

In this way, very big reverential lovers of the Lord are unable to relish the sweetness of Vraja.

*vidhi bhaktye vraja-bhāva pāite nāi śakti
aiśvarya jñāne vidhi mārge bhajana koriyā.
vaikuṅṭhe yāy, catur-vidha mukti pāiyā.
rāga-bhakte vraje svayaṁ bhagavān pāy;
vidhi-bhaktye pārṣada-dehe vaikuṅṭhe yāy*

(C.C.)

"Through regulated devotion one is unable to catch the mood of Vraja. Devotees who worship in the reverential and regulated way will attain Vaikuṅṭha, where they attain one of the four kinds of liberation.

Through *rāgānugā*-devotion, the devotee attains the original Godhead in Vraja and through regulated devotion he attains Vaikuṅṭha-loka, where he will get a *pārṣada*-body (transcendental companion of the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha)."

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says:

"Śrī Baladeva and His mother Rohiṇī fully relish the sweetness of Vraja and have fully realized it."

The purport of this is, that the sweetness of Vraja can only be known by the cowherders and cowherdesses who are from Vraja itself (because they are *vaiśyas* by caste).

Although Śrī Baladeva, the son of Vasudeva, was born of a *kṣatriya* caste, he relished the sweetness of Vraja because He accepted the mood of a cowherd boy, and although Rohiṇī,

Vasudeva's wife, was a *kṣatriyāṇī*, she plunged into the vast ocean of motherly love along with Mother Yaśodā and fully relished and realized the sweetness of Vraja due to her love being non-different from Yaśodā's.

Śrī Uddhava Mahāśaya was sent to Vraja by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to console the cowherders and cowherdresses and thus fully realized the sweetness of Vraja. Although he was unable to give up Śrī Kṛṣṇa's company for even a moment, he stayed in Vraja for ten months, thereby becoming totally immersed in its sweetness considering himself completely blessed by repeatedly praising the love in Vraja in ecstatic astonishment. Finally, before he took leave, he sold his head to the lotus feet of the *gopīs* and began to glorify their supreme greatness, praying for a birth in Vraja even as a blade of grass or a bush, so that he could wear even one speck of their divine foot dust on his head.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha says: "How will I be able to describe the great glories of **Vraja's sweetness?**"

*brahmā nārada mahādeva o prema bhaktottama;
ucchalita mādhuri yāra ananta aśima
samyak jānite yāhā hoy asamartha;
baladeva rohiṇī-mātā jānite samartha
prema bale śrī uddhava niścoyi kichu jāne;
ki rūpe varṇanā kori sei vṛndāvane*

"How can I describe this Vṛndāvana, whose endlessly welling sweetness cannot be fully known even by the greatest loving devotees like Brahmā, Nārada and Mahādeva? Only Baladeva and Rohiṇī know it, and on the strength of his love certainly also Śrī Uddhava knows some of it."

VERSE 105:

**anyatra kṣaṇa-mātram acyuta-pure premāmṛtāmbho-nidhi
snāto'py acutya-sajjanair api samaṁ nāhaṁ vasāmi kvacit
kintv atra vraja-vāsinām api samaṁ yenāpi kenāpy alaṁ
saṁlāpair mama nirbharah prati muhur vāso'stu nityaṁ mama**

anyatra - elsewhere; *kṣaṇa* - a moment; *mātram* - only; *acyuta* - Kṛṣṇa; *pure* - in the abode; *prema* - love; *amṛta* - nectar; *ambho-nidhiḥ* - ocean; *snātaḥ* - bathed; *api* - even; *acyuta* - Kṛṣṇa; *sajjanaiḥ* - by the saints; *api* - even; *samaṁ* - equal; *na* - not; *ahaṁ* - I; *vasāmi* - I reside; *kvacit* - ever; *kintu* - but; *atra* - here; *vraja-vāsinām* - of the people of Vraja; *api* - even; *samaṁ* - equal; *yena* - by whom; *api* - even; *kenāpi* - by anyone; *alaṁ* - greatly; *saṁlāpaiḥ* - by speaking casual topics; *mama* - my; *nirbharah* - being absorbed; *prati* - each; *muhur* - repeatedly; *vāsaḥ* - reside; *astu* - let it be; *nityaṁ* - eternally; *mama* - my.

I will not live in any other abode of the Lord, even if it is showered by an ocean of love of God or even if I have the company of pure devotees there.

I would rather just discuss casual topics even with those Vrajavāsīs who have no love for the Lord, as long as I can always live in Vraja with great devotional attachment!

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : In this verse, Śrīpāda Raghunātha reveals his fixation in living in Vraja.

The world that we see is a transformation of the material illusory energy, but the holy *dhāma* instead is a transformation of the internal conscious energy. The holy *dhāma* is established in the *sandhinī-śakti* (the existence-potency of the Lord).

The Upaniṣads also say - *sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti sve mahimni* (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.24)

"Where is the Lord situated? In His own glories, or His own inconceivable opulence."

The holy *dhāma* is transcendental, eternal and supernatural. It is the Lord's eternal playground and it is invisible to the physical eyes. There are hundreds of scriptural quotations to prove that.

āvirbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaved atra yuge yuge; tejomayam idam ramyam adṛśyam carma-cakṣuṣā

"The holy *dhāma* is eternal, everlasting, full of great effulgence and invisible to the physical eyes. The Lord appears and disappears in it in every age".

Just as the conscious Supersoul appears in the material body, which is made of the five inert elements, but remains completely separate from it, similarly the transcendental holy *dhāma* remains completely uncontaminated, although it appears within the inert material world. And just as the Supersoul is not destroyed when the body is destroyed, similarly, the holy *dhāma* remains situated in its transcendent nature even when the material world is destroyed.

It is therefore certain that by living in the holy *dhāma*, one will attain residence in the transcendental kingdom of God. By living in the holy *dhāma* especially, the surrender of the practising devotees reaches perfection, one attains favourable association of the devotees and the most favourable conditions for performing *bhajana sādhanā*.

Someone may say: "Śrīpāda! All the abodes of the Lord are eternal and transcendental! You can also live in another abode of the Lord, can't you? If you can be so fortunate to have more devotee-association in another abode of the Lord and more

opportunities to perform *prema-sādhana*, and if you can only spend your time in Vraja-*dhāma*, discussing profane village-topics with non-devotees, then isn't it better for you to reside in other divine abodes like Dvārakā?"

To this he replies: "What to speak of the fortune of better opportunities for *prema-sāadhanā*, even if I was so fortunate to constantly plunge into an ocean of *prema* and associate with many great devotees in another abode, I would still not desire to live in any other abode of the Lord even for a moment.

I would rather spend my time living in Vraja with great attachment, speaking nonsense with a person who has no love for Kṛṣṇa!"

From this we can understand that, what to speak of going out of Vraja into the mundane world, Śrīpāda Raghunātha would not even leave Vraja to go to any other abode of the Lord for even a moment, even if he could get the opportunity to relish the mellows of love of God in the association of great devotees there.

This is because living in Vraja is favourable for the practice of the sweet *rasa* of the *vraja-rasa-niṣṭha-sādhakas* (the practising devotees who are fixed in the mellows of Vraja) to the extent, that they cannot find this in any other abode of the Lord.

It is particularly this fixation in the *dhāma*, which is desired for by the worshipable deity, because the fixation of a devotee in the playground of his beloved deity is indicative of his fixation in his beloved deity.

Almost all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas know that Siddha Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja of Raṇabāḍī desired to leave Vraja to have *darśana* of the four *dhāmas*, but Dhāmeśvarī Śrī Rādhārāṇī forbade him to leave Vraja to go to another abode. Śrīla Bābā considered this but a mere dream and went to Dvārakā, where he received the *tāpta-mudrā* (heated stamp).

When Bābā returned to Vraja, Śrī Rādhārāṇī appeared to him in a dream and told him that he had become an associate of Śrī Satyabhāmā and that he should leave Vraja to go to Dvārakā. As a result, Bābā's divine body slowly burned to ashes in the fire of separation from Śrī Rādhā. This is the most clear evidence of how Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Her exclusive devotees act.

Hence Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has written:

*kiṁ no bhūpaiḥ kiṁ nu devādibhir vā svāpnaiśvāryotphullitaiḥ kiṁ ca muktaiḥ
śūnyālabhair vaiṣṇavair vāpi kiṁ naḥ śrīmad vṛndā-kānanaikānta bhājam
śaṁ sarveṣāṁ aprayāsena dātrī dvi traikānti prema mātraika pātrī
ānandātmā śeṣa sattvā nidhātrī śrī vṛndātavayas tu me'ndhasya dhātrī*

(Vṛndāvana Mahimāmṛta 1.25-26)

"What for do we, who are exclusively fixed on Vṛndāvana, need the kings, demigods or the dream-like opulences that cause the liberated souls to blossom? And what do we need the Vaiṣṇavas who aim at attaining Vaikuṅṭha-loka for?"

"May Vṛndātavī, which easily delights all persons, which is the object of love for only two or three (very few) persons, and which bestows transcendental bliss on all living entities, protect a blind person like me."

He also says:

*soḍhvā'pi duḥkāni suduḥsahāni tyaktvā'pyaho jāti kulādikāni
bhūktvā śvapākair api thukṛtāni vṛndātavī vāsam aham kariṣye*

"I will always live in Vṛndātavī, tolerating even intolerable suffering, giving up all my caste-and family-duties and eating even the food that was spat out by the dog eaters there."

*anya hari-dhāme yadi prema bhakta saṅge;
 snāna kori nitya prema samudra taraṅge
 tabu e vāsanā nāhi chāḍi vṛndāvana;
 anya dhāme vasavāsa kori eka kṣaṇa
 kintu vrajavāsi madhye kon-o prema śūnya;
 tāra saṅge vṛthālāpe-o nija māni dhanya
 ativa āsakti saha ei vṛndāvane;
 cira vāsa hok mora cāhi prati kṣaṇe*

"Even if I can eternally bathe in the waves of the ocean of *prema* with other loving devotees in another holy *dhāma*, I will not leave Vṛndāvana to go to any other abode for even a moment. But even if I can speak nonsense with a Vrajavāsi who has absolutely no love for Kṛṣṇa, I will consider myself to be blessed. May I always live in this Vṛndāvana with great attachment."

VERSE 106:

**rāgeṇa rūpa-mañjaryā raktikṛta-muradviṣaḥ
 guṇārādhita-rādhāyāḥ pāda-yugme ratir mama**

rāgeṇa - with passion; *rūpa mañjaryā* - Rūpa Mañjarī's; *rakti-kṛta* - made attached; *muradviṣaḥ* - Kṛṣṇa; *guṇa* - by attributes; *ārādhita* - worshipped; *rādhāyāḥ* - of Rādhā; *pāda* - feet; *yugma* - pair; *ratih* - loving attachment; *mama* - my.

May my loving attachment live in the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, Who is worshipped by all the divine attributes such as cleverness and to whom Rūpa Mañjarī has passionately made Kṛṣṇa very attached.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā : After praising the holy *dhāma* and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and Their associates, Śrīpāda Raghunātha now prays for his most precious aspiration - *śrī rādhāyāḥ pāda-yugme mama ratir astu*

"May I love the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā." **This is the practice and this is the goal.** This is the highest treasure that is aspired for by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who are endowed with *rādhā-snehādhika rati* (a greater love for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa).

As a result of being exclusively fixed on the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, all the desires of Vṛndāvana's *rasa-sādhakas* are fulfilled.

One may ask: "The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are *yuglopāsakas*: they worship and serve Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and meditate on Them. How can love for only Śrī Rādhā's feet be their goal? Shouldn't they aspire for love for the lotus feet of the Divine Pair?"

As an answer to such questions it is said: "There is absolutely no difference between love for the Pair's lotus feet and love for Rādhā's lotus feet. Rather, love for Rādhā's lotus feet automatically brings love for the Divine Pair and service to Their lotus feet to even greater perfection.

Although the practising devotee, who is fixed in Rādhā's lotus feet, does not want Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself comes out searching for him to make him His.

Śrī Rādhā is known as *Kṛṣṇamayī*, *kṛṣṇamayī kṛṣṇa yāra antara bāhire* (C.C.) "*Kṛṣṇamayī* means She whose inside out is Kṛṣṇa".

Through Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rādhā is worshipped. Therefore, how can Rādhā be worshipped and how can love for Her lotus feet be accomplished without Kṛṣṇa? Therefore although they are

yugalopāsakas, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas always think themselves to be Rādhā's maidservants —

"I am Rādhā's. I have exclusively given my heart to Her!"

This is why Śrīpāda Raghunātha desires love for Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet.

What this Śrī Rādhā is like is described in this verse —

Śrī Rādhā is worshipped by all the attributes, like cleverness. She, who is always worshipped by all the divine qualities, is Śrī Rādhā.

yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavatyakiñcanā sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ (Bhāg. 5.18.12)

"The demigods and all great attributes always reside in he who has unalloyed devotion for the Lord."

*sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-śarīre;
kṛṣṇa bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakala sañcāre*

(C.C.)

"All the great qualities reside in the Vaiṣṇava's body. All of Kṛṣṇa's attributes are infused into the devotee of Kṛṣṇa."

If all of Kṛṣṇa's attributes are infused within the insignificant living entities when they are devoted to the Lord, then is it any wonder, that all the divine attributes are worshipping Śrī Rādhā, Who is the quintessence of the Lord's pleasure potency, the embodiment of the *mahābhāva* known as *mādana* and Prema Lakṣmī, the supreme goddess of love?

Actually, any attempt of an ordinary person to count Śrī Rādhā's endless qualities are nothing else but ridiculous.

yāra sad-guṇa gaṇera svayaṁ kṛṣṇa nā pāna pāra;

tāra guṇa gaṇibe kemone jīva chāra?

(C.C.)

"Even Kṛṣṇa Himself cannot find the end to Her great qualities; how could any insignificant living being count them?"

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned 25 of Śrī Rādhā's sweeter-than-sweet qualities, which are suitable for the *madhura rasa* —

*atha vṛndāvaneśvaryāḥ kirtyante pravarā-guṇāḥ
madhureyaṅ nava vayāś calāpāṅgojvala smitā
cāru saubhāgya rekhāḍhya gandhonmāḍita mādhaḥ
saṅgīta prasārābhijñā ramya-vāṅ narma paṇḍitā
vinitā karuṇā-pūrṇā vidagdha pāṭavānvitā
lajjā-sīlā sumaryādā dhairya gāmbhīrya śālinī
suvilāsā mahābhāva paramotkarṣa tarṣiṇī
gokula prema vasatir jagac-chreṇī lasad yaśāḥ
gurvarpita guru snehā sakhī praṇayitā vaśā
kṛṣṇa priyāvalī mukhyā santatāśrava keśavā
bahunā kiṅ guṇās tasyāḥ saṅkhyātītā harer iva*

"She is sweet and young; She has restless eyes and a bright smile; She has beautiful lines of fortune on Her hands; Her fragrance intoxicates Mādhava; She is expert in singing; She speaks charming words; She is expert in joking; She is humble, full of compassion, clever, shy, respectful, patient, grave and playful.

She thirsts after (giving Kṛṣṇa) the pinnacle of *mahā-bhāva*; She has Her residence of love in Gokula (Vraja); Her glories pervade the whole universe; She is the object of Her superiors' affection; She is subdued by the love of Her girlfriends and She

is the chief of all of Kṛṣṇa's beloveds. Indeed, She fully controls Keśava!

What more can I say about Her attributes? They are innumerable, just like Hari's!"

In the Rādhā-prakaraṇa-chapter of his scripture Śrī Ujjvala Nīlamaṇi, Śrīmat Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has made an analysis of each of these qualities by citing examples. Anyone who wants to know these details should consult this book.

Śrīla Raghunātha says:

"Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī passionately makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa attached to Her."

The *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs* are engaged in making Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava attached to Each other by describing the One's forms and qualities to the Other. The transcendental *rasa* would not be nourished if They had to extend this **passion** Themselves, without the aid of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*.

Hence it is said that although the love of Rādhā and Mādhava is all-pervading, it is dependent on **the assistance of the *sakhīs* and *mañjarīs*** for its nourishment.

Śrīpāda Raghunātha das covets love for the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Who is Kṛṣṇa's most beloved and a mine of innumerable qualities such as cleverness.

There is also another meaning to this verse, namely:

"May I love the lotus feet of **Rūpa Mañjarī**, who colours Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the incomparable flavours of her heart's passionate love and worships Śrī Rādhārāṇī through her own incomparable qualities."

In other words: "Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī always keeps Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava subdued by her incomparable passionate love and her divine love-born qualities. If I can love the lotus feet of this Rūpa Mañjarī, all my desires will swiftly be fulfilled".

Thus Śrīpāda Raghunātha has simultaneously given two meanings to this concluding verse of Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, showing that he covets love for the lotus feet of his most beloved Śrī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. This is the highest aspiration for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. All glories to Śrīpāda Raghunātha's wonderful expertise in the art of poetry!

*śrī rūpa mañjarī kṛṣṇe anurāga rase;
rañjita koriyā yāra koriyāche vaśe
vaidagdhyaḍi guṇa dvārā yini ārādhitā;
sei rādhā pada dvandve rati hok sadā*

"May I love the lotus feet of Rādhā, Who is worshipped by all the divine attributes like cleverness and Who subdues Kṛṣṇa because He has been coloured by the flavours of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's passionate love!"

Or:

*hṛdayera atulana anurāga rase,
rādhānāthe yini sukhe kori surañjita
apūrvā madhura guṇāvalīra paraśe;
śrī rādhāre atīśaya koilā ānandita
sei śrī rūpa mañjarīra caraṇa kamala;
eka mātra gati mora ekānta sambala*

"The lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, who pleases Rādhā's Lord by colouring Him with the matchless flavours of her passionate heart and who greatly delights Śrī Rādhā with the touch of her wonderfully sweet qualities, are my only shelter and my only resort!"

VERSE 107:

**idaṁ niyatam ādarād vraja-vilāsa-nāma-stavam
sadā vraja-janollasan-madhura-mādhurī-bandhuram
muhuh kutuka-sambhṛtāḥ paripaṭhati ye valgu tat
samaṁ parikarair dṛḍham mithunam atra paśyanti te**

idaṁ - this; *niyatam* - regularly; *ādarād* - respectfully; *vraja vilāsa* - the pastimes or the manifestation of Vraja; *nāma* - named; *stavam* - praise; *sadā* - always; *vraja-jana* - the people of Vraja; *ullasat* - delights; *madhura* - sweet; *mādhurī* - sweetness; *bandhuram* - beautiful; *muhuh* - repeatedly; *kutuka* - eagerness; *sambhṛtāḥ* - filled with; *paripaṭhanti* - who recite; *ye* - those; *valgu* - lovely; *tat* - that; *samaṁ* - equal; *parikaraiḥ* - with companions; *dṛḍham* - firmly; *mithunam* - pair; *atra* - here; *paśyanti* - will see; *te* - they.

Those who regularly, eagerly and respectfully read this Vraja Vilāsa Stava, which is so beautiful and graceful because it reveals the sweetness of the people of Vraja, will certainly see the enchanting Divine Pair and Their associates in Vraja.

Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā: In this verse Śrīpāda Raghunātha describes the benediction (*phalaśruti*) on reciters of Vraja Vilāsa Stava.

In this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, the most sweet abode of Vraja and the Lord's associates in Vraja are being praised. Like a river in

autumn⁵⁷, this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava is filled to the brim with the sweeter-than-sweet ecstatic love of the Vraja-associates and the sweet flavours of the Vraja-pastimes.

Therefore Śrīpāda Raghunātha has justly named this *stuti* **Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava**. The hearing and chanting of this *stava* brings the pastimes of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava in Vraja before the glorifier in a crystallised form.

Hence it is said that this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava is very beautiful and graceful due to its evident sweetness, and that those who always respectfully and eagerly recite this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava will certainly see the enchanting Divine Pair (*manojña mithuna*) ,Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and Their associates in Vraja-*dhāma*.

The Manojña-Mithuna Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava are a billowing ocean, full of endless sweetness and beauty.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are the summit of all sweetness in the kingdom of God. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Himself the embodiment of sweetness- *mādhuryam eva nu* (Kṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta).

The endless ecstatic astonishment that awakens within the heart of one who witnesses the meeting of this boundless billowing ocean of sweetness with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, can only be known through experience; it cannot be expressed through words by anyone. By using the word **valgu**, Śrīpāda Raghunātha has only given a slight indication of the endless sweetness and beauty of the Divine Pair.

One may ask here: “The saints and the scriptures proclaim that after attaining *prema* as the culmination of the practice of *bhajana*, the *sādhaka* will meet the Lord face to face. Perhaps

⁵⁷ In India, the rivers in autumn are bursting with water flowing down from the mountains after the heavy rains in the monsoon, the season preceding autumn. Ed.

the *sādhaka's bhajana* will be nourished by hearing and chanting these *stavas* and *stotras*, but how is it possible that it makes him attain the direct vision of the Lord, which is the culmination of *prema*?"

This is true, but some items of *bhajana* are so powerful that, just like a *mantra*, they will attract the Lord to become immediately visible to the offenceless *sādhaka's* eyes.

Similarly, this Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, which is filled with the sweet flavours of Vraja and the Lord's associates in Vraja, will act like a powerful *mantra* to attract Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and make Them visible to the eyes of the respectful devotee-reciter.

This is the merciful blessing of Śrīpāda Raghunātha, the seer of the *mantra* of Vraja-rasa, on the *sādhakas* of the world and this is yet another cause of the reciter of this Stava becoming able to perceive the Yugala Kīśora.

After all, *kṛṣṇa tāhā pūrṇa kore māge yei bhṛtya; bhṛtya vāñchā pūrti vinā kṛṣṇera nāhi anya kṛtya* (C.C.)

"Kṛṣṇa fulfills all the desires of His servant. Kṛṣṇa has no other business than to fulfill the desires of His devotees."

vrajera prakāśamāna mādhuri viśeṣe;
'vraja vilāsa stava' nāma atīva ullāse
nitya sādarete yei ānandita mane;
stava ratna pāṭha kore koriyā niyame
manojña mithuna mūrti yugala kiśore;
daraśana dena tāre saha parikare
raghunātha dāsa kṛta 'vraja vilāsa stava';
rasika bhakata jane mahā mahotsava
sei mahā mahotsava koriyā smarāṇa;
hṛde dhari dāsa raghunāthera caraṇa

*'haripada' gāna kore padāvalī-chande;
heribo e āśā rādhā-kṛṣṇa pada dvandve*

"Anyone who always blissfully and respectfully recites this jewel of praises, known as Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava, which reveals the particular sweetness of Vraja in great jubilation, will see the Graceful Adolescent Pair and Their companions.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's 'Vraja-Vilāsa-Stava' is a great festival for the *rasika*-devotees. Remembering this great festival and holding the lotus feet of Dāsa Raghunātha in his heart, Haripada sings these devotional songs, hoping to thus see the lotus feet of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa."

Thus ends Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī's Vraja Vilāsa Stava.

Commentary of Śrī Rādhākunḍa Mahānta Paṇḍita Śrī Ananta Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja is named 'Stavāmṛta Kaṇā Vyākhyā' (a drop of the nectar of Stavāvalī), and was published in Gaurābda 503 (1989 A.D.) from Sri Krishna Chaitanya Shastra Mandir, Vrajananda Ghera, PO Radhakunda (district Mathura), U.P., India.

Devotional songs in Bengali following each commentary were composed by Dr. Haripada Śīla.