

24. Krishna Was An Infinite Ocean: Gopikas Were Small Tributaries Merging In The Ocean

Happiness is generated where there is total love. Truth, sacrifice and peace will be associated with such a place. There is no safety for anyone without love. This word of Sai shows you the path of love.

Gopala left *gopis* and the Gokula and reached Madhura. The whole of Gokula was suffering from the pangs of separation. The *gopikas* who had experienced the taste of divine company did not want to have any other experience. The *gopikas* were anxiously waiting for the return of Gopala. Every day, the *gopikas* were looking at the path along which Gopala might return. They were waiting to have his vision. Madhava, who knew the minds of the *gopikas*, sent his friend Uddhava to console them. Nobody knew when Uddhava reached Gokula. As the day was dawning, they found a huge chariot in front of Nanda's palace. The *gopikas* were overjoyed because they thought that their Lord knew of their sorrow and came to console them. In a moment, the news of the arrival of the chariot spread throughout Gokula. Unable to control their happiness, the *gopikas* came in groups to Nanda's house. As soon as they came there, they realised that Krishna had not come, but sent a messenger to console them. Sinking in disappointment, they fell on the ground. At that time, Uddhava came out and wanted to give them news of Krishna. Since the *gopikas* had totally surrendered themselves to Krishna, they were not in the habit of looking at or talking to a stranger. Their minds did not agree to a direct conversation with Uddhava. They took a bee as an intermediary and they talked to Uddhava through the bee. The word *Bhramara* is a Sanskrit word for bee and this episode is known as *Bhramara Gita*. Uddhava tried to explain to the

gopikas that Krishna is God himself and that he has no qualities and that he is omnipresent. He advised them that since Krishna was omnipresent, there was no need for them to feel sorry that he was away. He told them that they should accept Krishna's presence everywhere. In fact, from the very beginning, the *gopikas* were used to worshipping the pure, clean *sathwik* form of Krishna. Having been used to worshipping a form, they could not readily agree to think of Krishna as a formless divine aspect. Addressing Uddhava through the bee, they said "Oh, Bhramara! He may be a great *Yogeswara* to the *Yogis*, but to us, he is Nanda Kisora and we want him in the form in which we know him. We do not want him in the form of a *Yogeswara*. Will it be possible to get rid of all the darkness in the world by simply bringing a message about some brilliant light? Will the poverty of a poor man disappear merely by his listening to the might of wealth? Will a hungry man's hunger be relieved only by hearing a description of the food? Will the disease of a sick man be cured if you describe the greatness of various medicines to him?" They would not talk directly to Uddhava. They were only addressing the bee. Continuing they said, "Oh, bee, by simply bringing in messages, is our sorrow going to be diminished? By looking at you and hearing your message, can we get the sweet form of Krishna? By listening to your message, our sorrow is not going to be reduced. In order that we may have the vision of the Lord, we have been spending each moment as a *Yuga*. By the pangs of separation, our hearts have become heavy and we have become weak. Under these circumstances, your message will not satisfy us." From their childhood, the *gopikas* had played with Krishna and had experienced his divinity. They will never be satisfied with a message, and they can never accept the suggestion to think of Krishna as a formless entity. So, they said, "Oh, Bee, keep your message to yourself. We need Gopala, but not the message. Do what you may, bring Gopala

to us and show him to us. We heard that you are a friend of Gopala. We also heard that Krishna will readily accept a friend's advice. Please go back to Madhura and make efforts to bring Krishna to Gokula. Reduce our suffering and help us." Another *gopika* took up the conversation and said, "We have only one mind, and even that mind has gone with Gopala. We do not have another mind to listen to you and appreciate that aspect of formless divinity that you are preaching. If we had more minds than one, we would have gladly listened to you, but now it is not possible for us to listen at all. Since we have no other mind, there is no chance of our listening to your preaching. So, please return to Madhura." To this, Uddhava said, "*Gopikas*, do not be in a hurry. At least, listen to the message that God has sent, read the note that I have brought and send a reply." The *gopikas* then said, "Gokulam is a small village, there are no big schools here. We are illiterate and cannot read the note. We do not have the ability of reading Krishna's message. We are not the type who will be satisfied with a message or a letter. For one who is used to enjoying what is immortal, a letter does not mean anything." Clearly and categorically, they said that the letter is of no use to them. Another *gopika* said, "By the suffering of separation, our bodies have become hot and unbearable and it is possible that because of this heat, the letter may get burnt. Alternatively, the letter may get drenched by the tears of sorrow from our eyes. In either case, it will not be possible for us to read the letter sent by Krishna." When he heard these sacred thoughts of the *gopikas*, several ideas were sprouting in the mind of Uddhava. He was a great scholar, but he did not realise the intensity of the suffering of the *gopikas*. Within himself, he tried to understand each and every word uttered by the *gopikas* and gave it a sacred *Vedic* meaning.

The *gopikas* said that they had only one mind in this statement; Uddhava recognised that there is a high level of concentration on the object. He recognised that *gopikas* had all their minds fixed on one object. In understanding that the only mind of the *gopikas* was fixed on Krishna, he realised in it, the aspect of total surrender and became very happy. The mind of human beings has three states—state of nothingness, state of thinking of diverse things and state of concentration. It is very difficult to attain the state of concentration. It will come only after a lot of effort. Amongst the people who could reach the state of concentration, the *gopikas* were at the highest level. All the ideas of *gopikas* had no relation whatsoever with things concerning the world. Their attention was directed towards *Atma* only. Since the *gopikas* were habituated to worship a form, they had secured this easily. Uddhava recognised the ideas that were in the *gopikas*' minds and could understand their suffering. They said, "Oh, Bee! Our mind is able to picture all the mischievous things that Krishna did. Although in the superficial form, Krishna and we are different, yet, we are identical so far as our ideas are concerned. You may teach us many kinds of worship involving the formless aspect. It will not appeal to us. It is easy to preach—anyone can do so—but it is difficult to put it into practice. We have been waiting for Krishna's return." Such talk melted Uddhava's heart. He found that the physical strength of the *gopikas* was gradually sinking because they were not eating food or paying attention to their bodies. While the *gopikas* were sending messages through Uddhava, Radha was preparing to merge her life with Krishna. Radha reached the Kunjana Vana. At a lonely place, with a sacred idea of imprinting Krishna's picture in her mind, she said, "All these days, I had the form of Krishna in the lake of my mind. I have been protecting it with tears of love. In course of time, this lake began to get drier and drier. Then, I kept the form in my eyes and nurtured it with my tears. Even these tears

are now becoming scarce. In what other manner can I protect the lotus of Krishna? The time is fleeting away, and I may have to leave this body soon. A situation has come when the *Jyothi* of my life has to merge in the divine.” When she was thus thinking of Krishna with great intensity of feeling, Krishna came. She had only one last wish. She expressed this wish by saying that she wanted to hear the Lord sing on his *Murali*. While listening to the *Murali*, she gave up her life. Later, Krishna explained the inner significance of this to the Pandavas. From that day, Krishna gave up his *Murali* which was with him always, during his younger days. Krishna stopped playing on the *Murali* from the day when Radha ended her life. It is necessary for us to recognise the close connection that exists between Radha and the *Murali*. The human body in its bodily aspect has nine holes. The *Murali* also has nine holes. Radha was like a *Murali* and she had no place in her for any worldly ideas. Radha was above all worldly ideas. Such a Radha came out of the *Murali*, and she again went and merged in the *Murali*. Here *Murali* means the body. The breathing in and breathing out represents God’s *Sankalpa*. This is also termed “*Soham*” in the form of *Hamsa Gayatri*. It also gives us the ideal “I am that, I am that.” The same idea has also been described in “*Thath Thwam Asi*” or “That Art Thou.” While everyone is identical with the divine, Radha is establishing this great truth in her form. The following is a small example for this.

In a hillock, there is a rock. A sculptor goes to the rock and attempts to chisel out a figure. When he chisels a figure out of the rock, small bits of the rock fall out. It is only the sacred figure that has been carved out that will be put in the temple. Other pieces of rock will remain near the hillock. The other pieces of rock may keep saying, “We are a part of the beautiful figure that has been carved out.” This is the meaning

of “*Thath Thwam Asi.*” This means that the small pieces of rock and the beautiful idol have come from the same source. Only the sculptor gave a beautiful form to the idol and it is worshipped as being divine. The only difference between the small pieces of rock and the idol is in the form and the name.

In the same manner, although all the *Jivas* are identical with the divine, the aspect of Radha is like the beautiful chiselled form, whereas, the *gopikas* are like the small pieces of rock. Here we should recognise the great truth that the *Easwara* present in all the *Jivas* is one and the same. Just as many *jyothis* come out of one *paramjyothi*, many *jivas* come from the divine aspect. We can get a good example for this from the tradition that we follow during Deepavali. We take one single candle and with that we light a number of *jyothis*. If we do not have the candle, we cannot light so many *jyothis*. Several *jyothis* come from the same *jyothi*. In the same manner, since all *jivas* have originated from one *Brahma jyothi*, our *Sadhana* should aim at taking back the *jivas* to the *Brahma Jyothi*. However, we are forgetting the original *Brahma Jyothi* and giving importance to the secondary *jivana jyothi*. The *gopikas* recognised their origin. After having surrendered themselves to one aspect, they would not worship any other aspect. In this manner, they developed the highest form of concentration. Today, people have several minds, several offerings, several paths, several ideas and thoughts. We are living in diversity and have become distant from oneness. We remember God when we are in difficulty and once our troubles are over, we think only of the world. Shaping our lives in that manner, yet we call ourselves devotees of God. Truly, if we compare ourselves with the *gopikas* and *gopalas*, we will not find a single instance of comparison. Till the very end of their lives, they relied on the name and form of Krishna. Everyday, we are also offering ourselves, but to what? to children, to wealth and to enjoyment. In that context, we should describe our devotion as

part-time devotion. From such devotion it will not be possible to get any kind of bliss. Students, you have two ears and you can listen to two things. You have two eyes and you can use them to see two things, but you have only one tongue and you should utter only one word and use it to describe only one form. This is the real symbol of the path of truth.

If we follow this path, we can make our life an ideal example for others. Whatever be the difficulties through which they had to pass, the *gopikas* exhibited only one mind and only one objective. They took a vow that even if they live for a million years, they will not touch anyone else's feet. They said, they would wait for Krishna till eternity with their eyes looking to him. We will surrender all we have if necessary, but we will never accept any other path. By showing such determination, the *gopikas* were showing an ideal path for humanity to follow. Truly, if we look at *Bhagavatha* and interpret what is contained therein superficially, we will misunderstand it greatly. The *gopikas* were very blessed people. They led exemplary lives and were so born because of great spiritual attainments. To take such sacred individuals and compare them to ordinary human beings will be very wrong. This is the reason why even sage Suka, who had sacrificed everything, and who would not be subservient to anything, praised the devotion of the *gopikas* very much. Parikshith asked Suka if there was a possibility of the *gopikas* attaining salvation if they go along the path which they were following. He asked how the *gopikas*, who attached importance to body consciousness and worshipped a form, get salvation. To this, Suka replied, "If you completely and unwaveringly believe that Krishna is God, you will then accept a form. He is of infinite number of forms and is like an infinite ocean. You may compare *gopikas* to small tributaries or canals. They may have some aspects of attachment. But, once this small tributary gets into the ocean, will the ocean be pol-

luted or will the tributary be purified? In this context, we should cite two good examples. If in ten litres of milk, we mix ten drops of water, the result will be milk and not water. If in ten litres of water, we mix ten drops of milk, the result will be water and even the few drops of milk will lose their value. Whatever is in a large quantity will convert the smaller quantity into having its characteristics. In the same manner, God is like the infinite ocean. He is the *Ksheera Sagara*. In this way, if we take our lives with all the impurities in it and merge them in the sacred ocean, the drop will get the quality of the ocean. If the individual goes and merges himself into the infinite divine, he will also become divine. This is why it has been said, "*Brahma vid Brahmaiva bhavati.*" So, do not pay attention to the ideas and thoughts of man, but pay attention to his desire of going and merging with the divine. Those of you who make an effort to spend at least a part of your time with the thought of the divine, will surely take the sacred path. If you spend all your life in earning money and thinking of your family and your relations, what kind of help will you get from such thoughts after your death? You must make an attempt to get a peaceful death. You cannot escape death. So long as you live, if you spend your time in the pursuit of material objects, when will you think of God? That is why Suka advised Parikshith to spend the last days of his life in listening to *Bhagavatha*. The whole of *Bhagavatha* consists of methods of making man's life sacred. For the past twenty-five days, you have been listening to the sacred *Bhagavatha*. All this will be useful if you practice at least one or two of these aspects. Students, boys and girls, you must promote the aspect of divine love. You should not promote narrow worldly type of love. You should make an effort to promote the divine total love that emanates from the depths of your heart. You should not promote love which is individual. You should get rid of narrow ideas and promote God's love. Do not let this sacred opportunity that has come

your way slip out of your hands. You must make every effort to make good use of this opportunity.