

**KRISHNA –  
THE BUTTERTHIEF**

**SRI SRIMAD BHAKTIVEDANTA  
NARAYANA MAHARAJA**

## CHAPTER ONE HEARING KRISHNA'S PASTIMES

### RELIABLE AND ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE

The Vedic culture of India is steeped in esoteric knowledge, and has developed to such a degree that the sages in this culture have discovered the soul. They have also discovered God within and without, and through research into the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they have even discovered and realised different relationships with God.

We can never imagine or realise transcendental relationships with the Supreme Personality of Godhead through our imperfect material senses and knowledge. However, the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Himself transmits transcendental knowledge through an unbroken succession of spiritual masters and disciples. He personally imparted this transcendental knowledge to Brahma (the creator of the material universe). Brahma then gave it to Narada, Narada gave it to Vyasa, and Vyasa gave it to Sukadeva. This process of disciplic succession' established a body of transcendental knowledge that has descended to us from the perfect source. We should trust this disciplic succession and try our best to follow it.

“What is God’s transcendental nature? What can we know of his omnipotence and mercy? What relationship do we have with Him, and how can we realise this relationship and serve Him eternally?” These topics have been elaborately described and explained in the great scripture *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, which contains the essence of all Vedic literature. There are twelve cantos in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and its most important instructions are contained in the Tenth Canto. The purpose of this booklet is to explain the essence of the Tenth Canto. It is very attractive and enjoyable to read, and will help you to practise *bhakti-yoga*.

## BHAKTI-YOGA

We must practise *bhakti-yoga* in order to understand and realise the Absolute Truth. We can not realise anything transcendental otherwise.

In order to appreciate what *bhakti* is, we must first know that the soul and Supersoul exist eternally. Krishna is eternally the one Supersoul, and the innumerable individual souls are also eternal.

Two pure souls (that is, the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, Krishna) can only come together through the medium of love and affection. This love and affection is called *bhakti-yoga*.

There are many categories of transcendental love and affection, or *prema*. The liberated souls serve Krishna eternally in the pure and transcendental realm of Vaikuntha. Within Vaikuntha is Krishna's supreme abode, which is called Goloka-Vrindavana. There, he is served with the most perfect moods of transcendental love and affection.

Conditioned souls are materially bound, and covered by *maya* or illusion. They are only qualified to serve bodies, which are made of matter, not spirit. Conditioned souls are always unhappy, because they are suffering in the chain of birth and death. How can they attain the eternal and transcendental stage? They have to practise *bhakti-yoga* from the beginning stages, and develop progressively and regularly from the stage of faith through steadiness, taste, transcendental attachment, and transcendental ecstasy. This is the way.

## THE DESCENT OF THE LORD

It is only through *bhakti-yoga* that we can realise the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We cannot do so by any other means.

The Supreme Lord is so merciful that He sometimes descends in this world to bestow His mercy on the

conditioned souls who inhabit it. For instance, the scriptures tell us about the ten primary incarnations. These are:

- (1) the fish incarnation (Matsya);
- (2) the gigantic, transcendental tortoise (Kurma);
- (3) the boar incarnation (Varaha);
- (4) the terrifying form as half-man and half-lion (Nrsinghadeva);
- (5) the dwarf incarnation (Vamana);
- (6) Parasurama, the invincible warrior;
- (7) Lord Ramacandra, the great king;
- (8) Baladeva, who is the complete form of all spiritual masters;
- (9) Buddha;
- (10) Kalki, who rides a white horse and destroys the miscreants at the end of the Iron Age.

### **KRISHNA ATTRACTS ALL**

The root and the original cause of all these ten forms is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna Himself. Krishna descends to this world, not only in these different incarnations, but also in His original form. In this original Krishna form, He attracts everyone. What to speak of human beings, He also attracts the animals, deer, birds, creepers and trees.

Krishna attracts all creatures, because He attracts the soul, which is present in the demigods; in the hog and the fish; in eggs, trees and creepers; and even in water particles and dust. The soul is present everywhere. If you practise *bhakti-yoga*, you can see and realise this fact, and you will gradually develop *bhakti*, devotion to Krishna.

People generally do not appreciate hearing philosophical conclusions alone. For this reason I want to explain these categories of *prema* by narrating Krishna's pastimes. This *bhakti-yoga* will become more attractive if we explain the Tenth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* - how Krishna descends in

this world, how He protects the *sadhus* and kills the demons, and how He performs His supremely attractive pastimes.

### THE BLESSINGS OF HEARING KRISHNA'S PASTIMES

Krishna's name and Krishna's pastimes are not mundane things of this mortal world; they are transcendental. Hearing Krishna's pastimes is not an ordinary activity; it is also transcendental. There is a vast difference between the mortal world and the transcendental world. When we glorify Krishna's qualities and pastimes, or chant His holy names, the transcendental sound vibration is extremely auspicious.

Even if one is covered with ignorance, and his heart is full of unwanted material thoughts and desires, still, if he has a little honour — just a very little — these transcendental vibrations will come through his ears to his heart. These are not words in the common sense; Krishna Himself comes in these transcendental sound vibrations. how? His transcendental world comes into the heart of any person who has a slight fraction of faith (*Sraddha*).

When one realises this, his whole heart becomes clean and pure, and his faith (*Sraddha*) becomes more condensed. Transcendental devotion (*bhakti*) comes into his heart, and he becomes a devotee. The devotee takes initiation from Gurudeva, and engages in devotional service. All the unwanted material conceptions and desires flee from his heart, and all his bad habits go away. Then he develops his Krishna consciousness, and fixed and stable practice (*nistha*), taste (*ruci*) and transcendental attachment (*asakti*) follow.

After that, his devotion develops to the stage of transcendental ecstasy, and then fully developed transcendental love for Krishna, or *prema*. At some point, he will give up his material body, mind, false ego, etc., and be situated as pure spirit soul. In a transcendental body, the devotee associates with Krishna as an eternal resident of Vraja, and becomes happy forever.

## CHAPTER TWO THE LORD'S CHILDHOOD PASTIMES

### INTRODUCTION

The Vedic literatures — including the first nine cantos of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* — describe pastimes of the Supreme Lord which would not be possible for human beings, or even for the demigods. In these pastimes, it is clear to all that He is the Absolute, Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Tenth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* reveals confidential pastimes which only take place in Vraja, or Vrndavana. There the Supreme Lord appears like an ordinary human being, and His devotees do not think that He is the Supreme Lord. Rather, they see Him as the supremely attractive personality, and they can therefore serve Him in intimate moods of love and affection, which would not be possible if His devotees thought that He is God.

In these Vraja pastimes, Krishna appeared to take birth, perform pastimes as a helpless baby, and then mature into childhood and youth. However, unlike us, He is not subject to the changes imposed by material nature; He only acts as if He were to delight His affectionate devotees. He is always the same unchanging, all-knowing, all-powerful, transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead, but to facilitate these pastimes, His pastime potency covers His knowledge, so that even He forgets that He is God. Thus, He can become completely absorbed in these intimate, loving exchanges with His devotees.

### ONE ABSOLUTE TRUTH APPEARING AS TWO

Krishna and Baladeva are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One may ask how two Personalities can both be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We should understand that, although They manifest two bodies, Baladeva is actually non-different from Krishna. They are both one. Krishna has

appeared in the body of Baladeva, and the purpose of this incarnation is to teach us how to serve Krishna.

Baladeva Prabhu is the sum total of the eternal principle of *guru*. He imparts all the eternal truths and principles, and teaches us how to serve Radha and Krishna, that is, Krishna with His eternal pleasure potency.

### **WHEN THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH GROWS UP**

Krishna and Baladeva now appeared in Vraja as small boys of one or two years old. We conditioned souls start life as babies; then we grow into children, youths and adults; and from adulthood, we come to old age. Krishna, however, does not go through these stages. In His eternal, unmanifest pastimes, He is always a very beautiful teenage boy. He never becomes older or younger. However, when He displays his pastimes in the material world, He manifests all these stages of growth in order to increase the love and affection of the devotees.

Although Krishna and Baladeva are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, They appeared in Vraja as naked babies, and crawled here and there on Their hands and knees. Krishna's mother is called Yasoda, and Baladeva's mother is called Rohini.

Sometimes, Krishna or Baladeva would see a snake and catch hold of it. When Yasoda and Rohini mother saw this, they became so afraid! Sometimes the boys put Their hands in the mouths of wild dogs, and the dogs became very calm.

They learned a very good game; They would seize the tail of a dog or a calf, and hold on tightly, and the dog or calf would drag Them around, with love. Sometimes, Krishna and Baladeva would catch the horns of very large and ferocious bulls, and wrestle and play with them, and the bulls would play with Krishna and Baladeva.

## YASODA REMEMBERS KRISHNA

While Krishna and Baladeva were still very young babies, They sometimes crawled to the outer gate of the house. If They saw anyone, Oh! They became afraid. They remembered Their mothers, and at once turned back, and rushed to sit in their laps. And what did Yasoda, and Rohini do then? They put Them in their laps, covered Them with their veils, and caressed Their hair; and then with tears in their eyes, and with melting hearts, they put their breasts in the mouths of Krishna and Baladeva.

Sometimes a *gopi* would come into Yasoda Maiya's courtyard. What did she see? Yasoda Maiya was engaged in churning and performing other duties, just to prepare something for Krishna. She had no other occupation. She was always engaged in serving Krishna, and whenever she was performing service, she always remembered him, and sang:

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

Krishna was crawling in the house and courtyard, and she was making everything neat and clean to protect Him. While she did so, she was singing like this:

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

Sometimes she was engaged in grinding something with a pestle and mortar, and as she did so, she sang:

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

Sometimes she engaged her servants in various tasks. At other times, she gave some pomegranate seeds to the parrots, and she told them, "You should sing like me. Sing this song:

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

Yasoda Maiya was not the only one who remembered Krishna while she performed her household duties. All the *gopis* of Vraja always remembered Krishna in their homes, and they carried on their everyday activities for Krishna, just so that He would come to their houses and steal some butter. They used to think, “He must surely come, and then, somehow I will play a trick and catch hold of Him.”

The Vraja *gopis* spent all their time serving Krishna by performing their activities in this mood.

Sometimes, at about seven in the morning, they would stop what they were doing, and gather together at Yasoda’s house. Why? To see Krishna. He was so beautiful that they had more love and affection for Him than they had even for their own sons. They longed for Krishna so much: “Oh, we want Krishna to be our son, so that we can give Him our breast milk, and serve Him with so much love and affection.”

### **BABY WRESTLERS**

All the *gopis* felt this way, and the cows did, too! Sometimes, the cows would come into the cowherd town of Nandagrama, and stand waiting. Then Krishna and Baladeva used to go out, and lie down on the ground beneath them, and the cows udders would spontaneously pour milk into Their mouths. The cows would think, “If only Krishna were my son! Then I could give Him my milk, and show love and affection for Krishna.” This mood was everywhere in Vraja.

Krishna and Baladeva grew up, and when They were about one and a half years old, They could stand up, and walk a little; and sometimes They would fall down, as well. The *gopis* would come to see Them, and they divided themselves into two parties. One party took Baladeva’s side and the other party supported Krishna.

The *gopis* on Krishna’s side announced, “Krishna is so strong that He can defeat Baladeva.”

Then Baladeva Prabhu’s party disputed with them: “No, no, Baladeva is stronger than Krishna.” The *gopis* on Krishna’s side said, “If Krishna defeats Baladeva, I will give

Krishna a *laddu*." And the *gopis* in Baladeva Prabhu's party said, "If Baladeva wins this battle, then we will give Baladeva a *laddu*."

Krishna and Baladeva could understand what was going on, and in this way, the *gopis* inspired the two brothers to wrestle with each other. Krishna and Baladeva were naked. They stood opposite each other, and began to slap Their thighs and chests like adult wrestlers. Then They caught hold of each other and tried to bring each other to the ground, but They were equally matched. Sometimes Baladeva would almost defeat Krishna but then, Oh! Krishna turned just in time, and He would defeat Baladeva; then Baladeva would defeat Him. They were going on like this — back and forth — and everyone rejoiced, singing and clapping. All the *gopis* were overjoyed to see this play.

### COMPLAINING IN LOVE

Now Krishna grew older and bigger. Quite often, He just wore a golden chain, which tinkled and jangled around His waist. Krishna always wondered, "Where is that sound coming from?" He used to look here and there, not realising that He was making the sound Himself.

The *gopis* still came to see Krishna, but now they came to Yasoda Ma to complain about her son: "Sometimes Krishna comes to our houses, and He steals our butter, even though we have hidden it here and there, in different places. He has so many friends — Sudama, Sridama, Subala, Madhumangala — and they're always with Krishna. They're just like mischievous little monkeys." Krishna's baby friends were all as naked as the four Kumaras, and they were with Krishna the whole time.

When the *gopis* came to Mother Yasoda to complain about Krishna, they were not at all angry; on the contrary, they felt sorry for Yasoda. They thought, "Yasoda is not as fortunate as we are. Krishna comes to our houses and plays here and there, and steals things according to His own sweet will; but He doesn't steal things in His own house, and He does not

play so sweetly there, either. So Yasoda is not as fortunate as we are, because she doesn't see all these sweet pastimes. We are so fortunate." It seemed that they were coming to complain to Yasoda, but really they were only pretending to complain, so that they could engage in *Krishna-katha*, and let Yasoda know how sweet Her son was.

Here are some of the stories that Yasoda's friends would tell her: "Oh! Your boy has become so naughty! He enters our houses, and He plays so many naughty tricks. He steals our butter, and then He hands out it to his friends, and even to the monkeys.

"Sometimes He makes a naughty plan, and tells one of His friends, 'You go to your mother, while we hide in the shelter of a tree, or another good hiding place just outside the house. Say to your mother, "Oh, come quickly! Someone has untied the calf's tether, and it's got free. Now it's taking its mother's milk, and soon there won't be any left.'"

"When the boy tells his mother, the *gopi* goes chasing after the calf, and while she is away, Krishna and His friends enter her home, and steal butter and whatever else they want."

Sometimes a *gopi* would hide in her own house, thinking, "Krishna must come, and then I will catch Him." Sure enough, Krishna would creep in and put His hand in the pot of butter. The *gopi* would suddenly pounce on Krishna and rebuke Him:

"Oh! You are stealing in my house?"

Krishna would say, "Oh, Mother, I came here because I thought this was My home and you are My mother. It never occurred to Me that you're not My mother, and I certainly didn't think you'd catch hold of Me and beat Me." Saying this He began to smile, and the *gopi's* heart melted. Although she had caught hold of Krishna's wrist, He wrenched His hand free and ran away.

### THE RUNAWAY CALF

One day a *gopi* told Mother Yasoda, "Today, I caught your son Krishna red-handed, with His hand right in a pot of

butter. I asked Him, ‘Why have you come here? Did You come to steal butter?’

“No, no mother! I was searching for My calf. I was playing with him today, and he ran away. So I followed him, but he jumped into this pot.’

“Oh, your calf has jumped in this pot, has he?”

“Yes, Mother’, Your son replied very innocently, and when He pulled His hand out of the butter pot, He was holding a marble toy calf! Then He and His friends all began to laugh, and they quickly ran away.

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He always wants to please His devotees. Krishna’s other incarnations are not like He is. Everyone can worship Krishna. but Krishna Himself wants to worship His pure devotees, and serve them, and fulfil their desires. Krishna’s pure devotees in Vraja think, “I really want Krishna to come to my house and steal butter from me,” and that is why Krishna comes. Otherwise, Krishna will never come to any home.

### **KRISHNA ONLY ACCEPTS LOVE AND AFFECTION**

Krishna will only accept an offering that is made with love and affection. One incident which shows this very clearly took place many years later, when He was in Hastinapura.

One day, Krishna was visiting Arjuna and his four brothers, who were all His very dear friends and devotees. Duryodhana, who also lived in Hastinapura, was the sworn enemy of Arjuna and his brothers (later they fought each other at the Battle of Kuruksetra), but he wanted to invite Krishna to a feast. Duryodhana was very wealthy, so he served preparations of delicious foodstuffs — such as *Iaddu*, *pera*, *keicodi*, *puns* and *makhan* - in golden dishes, and put water in golden cups. Then he requested Krishna, “Please come and take Your meal with Me.”

Krishna objected, “I can’t eat anything, because I have no appetite. I can eat anything where there is love and affection, but I can never eat with you, because you have no love and

affection for Me! Besides that, I came to Hastinapura to make a specific proposal to you, but you haven't complied with it. How can I take My meal with you? I'm not a beggar, and I'm not hungry."

### DELICIOUS BANANA PEELS

Shortly after speaking with Duryodhana, Krishna went to Vidura's house. Vidura was Krishna's devotee, and was also very affectionate to Arjuna and his four brothers; in fact, on several occasions he had saved them from great danger. Because of this, Krishna was very fond of Vidura.

When Krishna got to Vidura's house, Vidura was not there, so Krishna pleaded with his wife Vidurani, "Oh, Vidurani Maiya, I am so hungry! Please give Me something to eat." Vidurani was very affectionate to Krishna, and she was anxious to serve Him. She began to offer Him bananas, but in her confusion, she threw away the fruit and gave Him the peels. Krishna affectionately accepted the peels, and relished them joyfully. They tasted sweeter to Him than all the preparations and offerings made in Dvaraka by his chief queens Rukmini and Satyabhama.

While Krishna was completely absorbed in accepting Vidurani's offering of banana peels, Vidura came in. He was astonished at what he saw, and exclaimed, "Oh, Vidurani! What are you doing?"

Krishna tried to caution him, "Don't speak to her. She is not in her external senses. She is fully absorbed in transcendental love and affection." Vidurani, however, came back to external consciousness when she heard her husband speak, and she soon realised what was happening. Then she began to give Krishna the fruit of the bananas, and throw away the peels.

Krishna was a little disappointed. "Oh! This fruit is not as tasty as the peels were."

From this pastime, we can see that Krishna never becomes hungry. He doesn't want to taste banana, or *rabadi*, or milk or anything. He just wants to take the essence of all

the fruits. What is that essence? It is simply love and affection, the mood of *bhakti* in the offering.

Krishna will never take anything from someone who has no love and affection for Him. On the other hand, He will forcibly take what He wants from a devotee who has love and affection for Him, if that devotee does not give Him enough. When Krishna appeared in the form of His own devotee as Caitanya Mahaprabhu, He used to quarrel with His dear devotee Sridhara, and take the things that Sridhara was selling. Sridhara used to protest, “No! I won’t give you these things without payment! I’m a very poor person, or, You shouldn’t take these things. Go and get them from someone else.” But Mahaprabhu used to take his *moca*, and banana flowers and other things anyway. That is Krishna’s nature.

Krishna is not a beggar. He is full in all opulence, but still He comes to Vraja to serve all His associates, and to play with them.

### **KRISHNA IS LET DOWN**

Now Krishna became somewhat bigger. One day Yasoda told Him, “It’s your birthday today. Go and bring a female calf here, and worship her.”

Krishna became so happy. He went out and chose a very beautiful she-calf, who was as snow-white as a swan. The calf was very healthy, and stout and strong, and was jumping here and there. Krishna wanted to catch her, but He couldn’t, because she was jumping so much. After a great struggle, He managed to hold her, and then He wanted to bring her in to the courtyard. He tried to tie up her four legs, but the calf refused to let Him tie her, and they had another wrestling match. Somehow or other, Krishna managed to bring her into the courtyard, and as He was doing so, He suddenly noticed a pot hanging from a rope. He could immediately understand that this pot must be full of sweet butter.

In an instant, Krishna’s intense greed for the butter made Him forget that He was supposed to bring the calf in. But how could He reach the butter? It was hanging high up in the

rafters, and there was no ladder, or anything to stand on. When He was with His friends, He would climb on their backs, one by one, higher and higher, until He could reach the butter. However, none of His friends were there, and He had no stick. What to do?

After considering carefully, Krishna thought, "I can reach the butter very easily if I stand on this calf." He managed to climb up on the calf's back, and when He stood upright, sure enough, He was high enough to put His hand into the pot. Just at that moment, however, the calf suddenly jumped away. Little Krishna had put His whole arm into the pot, so when the calf ran away, He was left dangling there. Now He called out fearfully, "O Mother! Mother! Mother!" and cried bitterly.

Mother Yasoda was churning, and when she heard Krishna weeping and crying for her, she smiled and ran out to help Him. As soon as she saw Him hanging high above the ground, she understood what had happened.

"You stay like that!" she told Him. "I'm not going to touch You. And I'll punish You for being naughty, as well. I'll never help You!"

Krishna began to weep more loudly: "Mother! Mother! Mother! Mother!" and of course, Yasoda brought Him down.

Krishna was extremely naughty in His boyhood, and that is why He garnered so much love and affection from all the *gopis*, and especially from His mother.

### CAUGHT RED-HANDED

One day, Yasoda's *gopi* friend told her a story about Krishna's mischievous activities. "Early this morning, Krishna came to my house to steal butter. When He got there, He saw that everything had been stored very carefully, and there was no butter lying about for Him to steal. My little baby son was asleep, but Krishna pinched him so much that he woke up, and began to cry. If we don't keep butter in our houses for Him to steal, then He will do such terrible things. And if He finds butter and doesn't like it, He breaks all the pots."

When Yasoda heard this story, she thought, “I think that Krishna has become naughty, stealing butter in other people’s houses. I must teach Him a good lesson.”

Meanwhile, her *gopi* friend thought, “Yasoda doesn’t really believe us when we tell her what her son has done. I’ll wait for Krishna in my house, and when He comes, I’ll catch Him red-handed, and take Him to Yasoda. Then she’ll see how naughty her boy is.”

In the very early morning, while it was still very dark, Krishna came alone to the house. He was stealing butter here and there, and thinking, “No one can catch me.” However, that *gopi* was hidden from view, and waiting to catch Him. When Krishna came and ate her butter, she was watching Him from her hiding-place. She pounced on Him, and caught Him red-handed. “Oh, I will take you to Mother Yasoda!” she exclaimed in great excitement. “Then she’ll have to believe us when we tell her that her boy is a great thief.”

The *gopi* covered Krishna with a cloth *chaddar* to take Him as a captive to Yasoda Maiya. When she arrived at Yasoda’s house, she called out, “Oh Yasoda! Oh Yasoda! Just see! I have caught your son red-handed! He has become a thief! You’ve never believed me up till now, but today you’ll have to believe me.”

Yasoda came out to meet her friend, and on the way, she saw that Krishna was asleep on the bed. Puzzled, she asked, “Where is my son?” In response, the *gopi* took off the cloth that she had used to wrap up Krishna when she caught Him. “Oh!” Both were amazed to see that it was not Krishna, but the *gopi*’s own son, who was wrapped in the *chaddar*!

Krishna came out of the bedroom, and started weeping. “O Mother! O Mother! Just see! They are all telling lies about Me. I have never been to that house. They are all liars! Now I will *have to* go and steal some butter!”

## CHAPTER THREE BOUND BY LOVE

### YASODA MAIYA'S BEAUTY

While Yasoda performed her household chores, she considered how to satisfy Krishna's desire for butter. "All the other *gopis* prepare butter with their own hands to give Krishna with love and affection," she thought. "That butter is are so sweet. Up till now, I haven't made butter myself; my servants and maidservants have done it for me. From now on. I'll milk the cows with my own hands, put the milk on the fire and then I'll personally make very sweet yoghurt from it. I'll churn the yoghurt myself, so that my butter will be very sweet, and Krishna will take it with great delight and happiness."

Having made this decision, on the day of Diwali, Yasoda sent all her servants and maidservants to the house of Nanda Baba's older brother, Upananda. She even sent Rohini Maiya off with Baladeva. because there was no one to help with the Diwali preparations at Rohini's palace.

Yasoda was left all alone, churning yoghurt just at dawn, when the reddish sun rises in the peace and calm of the early morning. Yasoda was so beautiful. If she were not, how could Krishna be beautiful? The son cannot be so beautiful if the mother is ugly.

How can we describe Yasoda's beauty? Her breasts were so broad, that it seemed as if her slim waist would break if she bent down. She wore fine silk clothes. In India at that time, the art of making silk cloth was highly developed. A standard cloth [*san*] for a lady was about ten yards, and the weavers were so expert that a full *san* could be pulled through a hole no bigger than one's finger-nail; the cloth was so fine. Yasoda had put on especially fine silken cloth for the Diwali festival, and her feminine beauty shone through her clothes.

Mother Yasoda prepared for churning. She put the pot of yoghurt next to a pillar, and supported the churning rod in

the pot with thin ropes. She then began to churn by pulling on the ends of the rope that was wrapped around the churning rod. She was very beautiful, resourceful and intelligent. That is why Krishna was so attractive, that if thousands of people were watching His activities, He would completely capture everyone's attention. 50yos naturally have that quality.

What was Yasoda's mood while she was churning? She was remembering the sweet childhood pastimes of Bala Krishna and singing:

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti,  
Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

Yasoda was absorbed in singing, and thinking of Krishna. Her heart was melting, her eyes were closed, and tears of love were flowing down her cheeks.

### YASODA'S SINGING

When Vaisnavas sing in glorification of Sri Krishna, they accompany themselves with a special drum called the *mrdanga*. The large end of the *mrdanga* resounds deeply, "Tan! Tan!" while the small end gives a high sound, "Dik! Dik!" The singers also play small cymbals called *karatalas*, which chime sweetly and rhythmically.

While Mother Yasoda was singing and churning, the rhythmic motion of the churning rod in the deep pot of yoghurt made a sound like the drum: "Dik, dik, tan! Dik, dik, tan!" At the same time, the golden chain on her neck, and the bangles on her wrists chimed in time like very sweet cymbals. Yasoda was singing in time with the "Dik tan! Dik tan!" accompaniment.

The 'dik tan' sound of the churning was singing, 'Fie on those who don't worship Krishna, and who don't remember Krishna! Fie on them! Fie on them! Dik-tan! Dik-tan!'

## KRISHNA SEARCHES FOR YASODA

Yasoda was totally absorbed. In the meantime, Krishna awoke in the bed where He slept with His mother. His eyes were still closed, but He was searching for His mother with His hands, and whimpering softly: “Ma! Ma! Ma!” When He found that His mother was not there, He began to cry a little louder, and rub His sleepy eyes with His little fists. At first, there were no tears; He just smeared the black *kajal* that His mother had applied to His big eyes, which were very long, like the petals of a lotus flower.

When Krishna could not find His mother, He began to weep: “I’ve just woken Lip, and I’m so hungry, and Mother has gone somewhere and left Me.” He cried, as babies do when they want their mother. After a while, He heard the sound of the churning, and then He realised that His mother could not hear Him. “Oh, she’s over there churning, ‘dik-tan!’ ‘dik-tan!’ and she’s singing, ‘*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*’, and that’s why she can’t hear Me.”

He began to cry more loudly, but still His mother did not come. Now He wanted to climb down from the bed, but it was high, so how could He get down? As the Supreme Lord, He is limitless, and the whole universe is within His body, but now, playing the part of a small child, He could hardly get down from His bed.

Krishna lay on His front, put His feet over the side of the bed, and began to let Himself down backwards, very carefully and gradually. Slowly, He slid off the bed until His feet touched the ground, and then He began to walk towards His mother.

He was walking very unsteadily, staggering first to one side and then to the other, because He was still quite sleepy. He was crying, and tears were rolling down His cheeks. His tears were white like the River Ganges, and the streaks of smeared *kajal* (collyrium eye-liner) were black like the River Yamuna. Krishna was black, and the black *kajal* made Him blacker and blacker. He was weeping loudly now, more and more loudly still, but Yasoda was so absorbed, and the

sounds of the singing and churning were so loud, that she still could not hear Him.

At last, baby Krishna came right up to Yasoda. He caught hold of the churning stick with His left hand, and the end of her veil with His right hand. Yasoda, still absorbed, wondered, “What has stopped my churning?” Then she looked back and saw her baby Krishna.

“Oh, Krishna has come, and He’s crying.”

Yasoda stopped churning at once, and took Krishna in her lap. He was still weeping, so she wiped His tears with her veil, and began to relieve Him of His distress. She pacified Him, caressed Him, and put her breast in His mouth.

### DESPERATE MILK

Now Krishna stopped crying, but Yasoda began to weep herself. She did not cry loudly, but tears of love flowed softly down her cheeks. At the same time, her hair began to stand on end in her transcendental loving ecstasy. Advanced devotees experience eight bodily symptoms of transcendental ecstasy, and these symptoms all began to appear in Yasoda. Tears poured from her eyes profusely, her body trembled, and she began to perspire heavily. She was completely absorbed in her ecstasy of transcendental maternal affection for Krishna, and Krishna was relishing it fully.

Krishna sucked Yasoda’s breast for some time, but He was still not satisfied, because He had been hungry for a long while. Meanwhile, Yasoda looked at the pot of milk that she had left heating, and she saw that the milk was boiling over into the fire.

Yasoda realised that this milk was also a devotee, who was thinking, “I want to serve Krishna, but Krishna’s stomach is so vast that it can contain the whole world, and there is enough milk in Yasoda’s breasts to fill millions and millions of Milk Oceans. Krishna’s appetite is limitless, His stomach is limitless, and Yasoda has endless oceans of milk. If Krishna takes Yasoda’s milk for millions and millions of years, it will never be depleted. I will never have a chance to serve Krishna

in this lifetime, so what is the use of maintaining my life? It's better if I die now." That is why the milk was boiling over into the fire.

### GURUDEVA ENGAGES DEVOTEES

Wherever you find *bhaktas* (devotees), the symptom of their *bhakti* is that they feel intense separation: "My body, my mind and all my senses are not engaged in serving Krishna. So let me die. What is the use of living?"

We are not thinking in that way. No such desire is coming in us. And why not? Because we do not have good practice. When this intense desire comes in one's practice, Krishna will appear at once, and award us His service. Or a *bhakta* like Yasoda will come and give us a chance to serve Krishna, and engage in His service.

When Yasoda understood that this milk was desperately jumping into the fire, she told it, "All right, I will engage you in Krishna's service, and I will serve Krishna afterwards." A real *bhakta* — a *guru* like this — engages newer and newer devotees in serving Krishna. Gurudeva's service is to engage qualified souls — those who are eager — in Krishna's service.

Yasoda Maiya is like a *guru* of parental love for Krishna' and in order to help the milk, she had to put Krishna down quickly, and run to the fire. This is the *guru's* inclination and mood — to help others to serve Krishna. It is his first duty. That is why Yasoda Maiya wanted to put Krishna aside.

### YASODA DEFEATS KRISHNA

Just after Krishna was born, when He was only six days old, a demoness called Putana had come to Vrndavan a to try to kill Him. She put poison on her breast, and took the form of a very beautiful woman. When she offered her breast to baby Krishna, he began to suck out her life. The demoness had the strength of many thousands of elephants, but even though

she tried to pull Krishna from her breast, she could not escape from His grasp, and she died.

Now Krishna was much older and stronger. When He saw that Yasoda wanted to put Him down, He caught hold of her like a baby monkey. He wrapped His arms and legs tightly around her body, and fastened His mouth on her breast. All His senses were completely engaged, and He resolved, “I won’t give up My position in Yasoda’s lap!”

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He possesses the sum total of all opulence. He has the power to defeat the whole world, including all sorts of mighty demons such as Kesi, Agha, Baka, Putana, Hiranyakasipu and Ravana. Still, He could not prevent His mother from putting Him down! Yasoda Maiya defeated Him without any difficulty. “You should sit here,” she told Him, and despite Krishna’s best efforts, she quickly and easily lifted Him off her lap with one hand, and put him down. Krishna was helpless.

This is a good lesson for everyone. If anyone has such deep and strong *bhakti* for *Krishna*, Krishna becomes like a baby. By the arrangement of His pastime potency Yogamaya, His limitless power deserts Him, and He becomes helpless.

When Yasoda left Krishna, even though He wanted to keep drinking her breast milk, He began to weep loudly, and He became angry: “She hasn’t satisfied My hunger, and yet she has left Me and gone to save that milk.”

### THE SERVANT OF THE SERVANT

It is clear from this pastime that those who serve Krishna also take care of the articles with which Krishna is served: the utensils, the clothes, the flute, the peacock feather and all the paraphernalia. Yasoda Maiya gave more attention to these than she did to Krishna. Why? This is the nature of the *bhakta* in this world. It is not so easy to understand, but there are some examples that will help us.

Yasoda would sometimes slap Krishna when He got mud and earth on His clothes. “Oh, You are so naughty!” she

would say. “I have only just washed Your clothes, and now You’ve made them dirty again.”

Now, when the milk jumped into the fire, Yasoda had put Krishna aside to go and save it, even though Krishna was weeping. Why? What was so special about this milk? The whole purpose of the milk was to satisfy Krishna, but Yasoda’s priority was exactly the opposite: she was ready to satisfy the milk before she satisfied Krishna.

Why did she put Krishna aside, and go to save the milk — even though He wept when she did so? For the same reason that she sometimes slapped Him for making His clothes dirty: the milk was for Krishna’s service, just as the clothes were for Krishna’s service.

This is the nature of pure *bhakti* (transcendental devotional service). Krishna has more affection for those who serve His *bhakta* (devotee) than He does for those who serve Him directly. He becomes very pleased with the servant of the devotee. We must try to understand this concept; it is essential.

For example, Srimati Radhika is Krishna’s dearest devotee, so Krishna is more pleased with one who is serving Her than He is with someone who is serving Him directly. And if someone is serving Rupa Manjari, who is the servant of Srimati Radhika, Krishna will say, “You are a servant of Rupa Manjari? Oh, I shall give you everything. What do you want?”

This is the nature of *bhakti*.

### WEAKENED BY LOVE

Yasoda went to save the milk, which was especially for Krishna. Yasoda needed that milk, as well as her breast milk. “My breast milk alone is not enough for Krishna,” she thought. “I can’t make sweet yoghurt from my milk, so how can I use my milk to make butter?” Since she couldn’t make butter from her breast milk, it was essential to save the milk in the pot on the fire, so off she went.

But Krishna was weeping.

Now, what should we understand if Krishna is weeping? Is He angry or not? Externally, it seems that He was angry, but internally, He was so happy — Oh! so happy — even though He was weeping.

Krishna thought, “My mother has gone away, and left Me here without satisfying Me, so I will teach her a lesson. I’ll get into mischief.”

He stood up and tried to upset a nearby vessel containing yoghurt, but He was not strong enough to move it. Although He had previously killed the witch Putana, Yasoda’s maternal love for Him now made Him become like a small boy, and He was so weak that He could not move the pot, or even shake it.

Where love and affection are prominent, Krishna can forget all His opulence, and everything to do with being the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is why He forgot all His opulence at this point, and became ignorant and weak.

### **BREAKING THE YOGHURT POT**

“What should I do?” Krishna thought to Himself. “I can’t turn the pot over, so I’ll try to break it. The top of the pot is very thick, but the bottom is quite thin, so if I hit it there with the pestle, it’ll break.” And that’s what He did; He took the pestle and smashed a hole in the bottom of the pot. Since the hole was at the bottom of the pot of yoghurt, the pressure inside made a very beautiful jet of white yoghurt squirt out of the pot, and across the kitchen floor.

When Krishna saw the yoghurt streaming everywhere, He was delighted, and He began to clap His hands, and laugh. But the next moment, he thought, “Oh! If Mother Yasoda sees Me, she will punish Me.” He immediately became very fearful, and decided that it was best to leave the scene of the crime.

Krishna left that room and went into another room that was close by. As He went, He thought, “I will hide so that Mother will not find Me.” By the influence of His pastime potency Yogamaya, he was playing the part of an ordinary

small boy. Consequently, He did not notice that after He had paddled in the stream of yoghurt, He had left a trail of very sweet and pretty yoghurt footprints for His mother to follow.

### **KRISHNA REWARDS HIS DEVOTEES**

Krishna went into the next room, and there He saw a grinding mortar, above which a pot of butter hung in a swing. When he saw the butter, His mouth began to water. He climbed on top of the grinding mortar, and began to take the butter and feed it to the monkeys and crows, who had gathered in great numbers. Krishna was very happy. He thought, "In my previous incarnation as Ramacandra, the monkeys came and helped Me so much when I was living in the forest. They worked very hard, day and night, to build the bridge to Lanka, but I couldn't feed them or satisfy them properly at that time. Now I'll give them this butter. "These crows have appeared in the dynasty of My very dear servant Kakabhusandhi, so I will feed them as well."

In the meantime, while Krishna was joyfully feeding the crows and monkeys, Mother Yasoda had come back to the room where she had been sitting with Him, and had seen the broken pot of yoghurt. She followed the yoghurt-thief's trail of footprints, and approached the room where Krishna was feeding the monkeys. This room had two doors, one coming from the inner rooms of the house, and the other opening into the outer courtyard. Krishna had entered the room from the inner compound, and now had His back towards it. Mother Yasoda came through this door, and began to sneak up on Him very stealthily, like a cat walking skilfully and silently on dry leaves.

Krishna did not notice His mother coming closer, but when the monkeys and crows saw her, they began to scatter and fly away in all directions. When Krishna saw the birds and monkeys leaving, at first He thought, "Oh, where are you going?" Then He realised, "Aha! Someone else is in the room!" As Yasoda Maiya was just about to catch Him, He

looked over His shoulder and saw her. “Oh, Maiya is coming!” Quickly He jumped down from the grinding mortar, and began to run away.

### **THE ZIGZAG COURSE OF THE ABSOLUTE**

Krishna ran as fast as He could, and Yasoda Maiya began to run after Him. “Oh, You friend of a monkey!” she called after Him, “You come here!” Krishna was running in a zigzag way, and Mother Yasoda could not run so fast because of her heavy breasts and slim waist.

Krishna was so nimble that it was difficult for her to run after Him and catch Him. Still, He saw that she would catch Him in the end, so He had an idea: “I won’t run around the room; I’ll go outside.” In the Vedic culture, ladies don’t appear in public places alone. Krishna knew that it would be very embarrassing for His mother to chase Him in the street, so He thought, “I will run outside so that she won’t chase after Me.”

### **THE SPEED OF AFFECTION**

Krishna ran outside, and Mother Yasoda came to the door, looked after Him, and thought, “Oh! What to do?” She looked left and right, and saw that no one was watching, so she also ran outside, and began to pursue Her naughty son.

Mother Yasoda eventually caught up with Krishna, and grabbed His right hand with her left hand. She was carrying a stick in the other hand, and Krishna was so afraid of the stick that He was dodging this way and that around her legs.

There is a good lesson here. Krishna is the goal that we want to attain, and the devotee is the practitioner who wants to attain that goal. Krishna is the practitioner’s object of love. When Krishna was running away from Yasoda Maiya, she had to run faster than Krishna to catch Him. Devotees should practice in such a way that their love and affection surpasses Krishna’s.

Krishna has affection for His devotees and the devotees have affection for their beloved Krishna. If the love is equal — that is, if Krishna loves the devotee as much as the devotee loves Krishna — then Krishna will not be controlled. However, if a devotee has more love and affection for Krishna than Krishna has for him, that devotee can control Krishna. Krishna was very loving and affectionate towards His mother, but Mother Yasoda had more love and affection for Him. Her love for Him was very high in comparison to His love for Her, and that is why she could catch Him. This is the hidden conclusion here.

### A LOVING QUARREL

Mother Yasoda held Krishna, and began to scold Him. “I’ll give You such a beating!” she threatened. “I know You go from house to house, stealing. You are a thief (*caura*)!”

Krishna replied, “Oh! Why are you saying that I am a thief? There is no thief in My dynasty, in Nanda Baba’s dynasty. Perhaps there is a thief in your dynasty.”

He was so cheeky. He had heard Yasoda Maiya and Nanda Baba talking about Mother Yasoda’s forefather called Caura Ghosh. *Caura* means thief. Krishna now remembered that there was someone called Caura in his mother’s dynasty, and that is why He told Her, “There is no *caura* in My dynasty, but there is a Caura in your dynasty.”

“Why are you chastising me?” Krishna protested innocently. “What have I done?”

“How was the yoghurt pot broken?”

“That was the punishment of the Supreme Lord,” said Krishna.

“And who fed the butter to the monkeys?”

“He who made the monkeys, feeds the monkeys,” said Krishna.

Yasoda Maiya was a little angry, but she was laughing as well. “Now tell me the truth!” she said.

“Who broke the yoghurt pot?”

Krishna explained, “Oh Mother! You jumped up to pacify the milk that was boiling over, and when you rushed into the kitchen, you were in such a hurry that your heavy ankle bells hit the yoghurt pot, and broke it. I haven’t done anything.”

“Is that the truth? In that case, how is it that You have butter all over Your face?”

Krishna said, “Oh Maiya! Every day a monkey comes and puts his hand in the pot to eat the butter, but today I caught him. He pulled his hand out of the pot and began to run away, but the butter on his hand smeared all over My face. Tell Me honestly, am I to blame for this? But still you call Me a thief and you want to beat Me.”

“Oh! You are a liar.”

### **BINDING KRISHNA WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION**

Yasoda Maiya considered in her mind, “What shall I do? My boy is so restless, that He might try to run away. Besides, if I don’t punish Him for his mischief, He might become a dacoit when He grows up. Then she came to a decision and told Krishna, “The grinding mortar helped you to steal the butter, so I will punish you and your accomplice by tying you both together.”

Yasoda Maiya took a rope and tried to tie Krishna up with it, but the rope was too short by the width of two fingers, so she asked a servant to bring another rope. Surprisingly, when both ropes were tied together, somehow or other they were still two fingers too short. Now her *sakbis* began to bring ropes from their homes, but no matter how many ropes they tied together, the rope was always too short.

The *gopis* were all laughing and clapping their hands, and they told Yasoda Maiya, “Oh *sakbis*, it is not written on His forehead that he can be bound. It is not in His destiny.”

Yasoda thought, “He is my child, and He came from my womb. It will be so embarrassing if I cannot bind him. How will I ever be able to look my *sakbis* in the face again?”

From early morning until noon, she tried again and again to tie Krishna. She was becoming more and more fatigued.

Her face was red, and she was breathing heavily. She was perspiring, and the flowers were falling from her hair.

Finally, Yasoda Maiya took shelter of her worshipful Deity, Narayana, “O Narayana! O Supreme Personality of Godhead! Please help me bind my son!” At that moment (the Supreme Personality of Godhead heard her prayers), Krishna, having seen His mother’s hard labour, allowed Her to bind Him. His pastime potency Yogamaya immediately expanded her influence and Yasoda Maiya took the cord with which her hair was bound and very easily tied Krishna.

What is the significance of the rope always being two fingers too short? One finger represents our own hard endeavours to practise devotional service. The second finger represents Krishna’s mercy. When Krishna sees our repeated and sincere endeavour to serve Him, His heart melts with compassion. At that time, by His causeless mercy, He allows himself to be bound by the devotee’s *prema*.

## CHAPTER FOUR A FLOOD OF AFFECTION

### YASODA'S DOUBT

When Yasoda Maiya had bound Krishna, she went into the house to continue with her household duties. She resumed her churning, but her mind was not there. It had become somewhat upset, and she was always thinking about Krishna.

“Why did I tie Him up?” she thought. “I should not have done that. But actually, I was right to bind Him. If I hadn’t, He would have done something even naughtier.” Then again, she thought that she was not justified. “He is so soft and sweet, and I have given Him too much pain. No, not to Him. I have given myself too much pain. I have given too much trouble to my own heart.

“What can I do? Krishna is so angry, and I am afraid that if I untie His rope, He will go roaming all over Vraja, and I won’t be able to control His movements. It’s best to let Him remain there for the time being.” However, she was not peaceful. She maintained a constant vigil from inside the house to see what He was doing.

### THE OPPOSITION PARTY

In the meantime, Krishna’s cowherd friends had gathered round, and they began to joke with Him. Since they were laughing and clapping, Krishna began to laugh with them. The mixture of tears and black collyrium dried on His face, and down the front of His body to His waist.

Now Krishna became somewhat happy, and He forgot what His mother had done. The boys said to each other, “Why don’t we untie Krishna’s ropes and free Him?” Krishna was enthusiastic. “Yes, yes! My hands won’t reach all the way round the grinding mortar to untie the ropes, so you should do it.” All his friends came one by one to try, but the knot was so tight that none of them could untie it. Still, they were

trying, one after another. When one was defeated, the others would say, “Oh you can’t untie it, but I can,” and then he would wrestle the knot away from the others and try himself. Each of them failed several times, but they still persisted in pushing each other out of the way, and trying yet again.

Krishna’s funny friend Madhumangala was especially determined. “You are all bogus! You have no idea at all. I can untie it.” He quickly came up, pushing all the others out of the way, and tried himself, but he also failed. All the others laughed at him in great amusement.

Amidst all the clamour and hubbub, the boys were thinking, “If Baladeva were here, He could untie Krishna in a moment. Then this would all be finished, and we could do something else.”

Meanwhile, Mother Rohini was coming with Baladeva Prabhu. Baladeva found the boys playing with Krishna in the courtyard, and when He saw that Krishna was tied up to the grinding mortar, He became furiously angry.

“Who has done this?” He said. “I will punish him.”

He was so upset that His eyes became reddish, and His hands were shaking with rage. Then Subala came close to Him and whispered in His ear, “Oh brother, don’t be so upset. Mother Yasoda has done this.”

“Maiya did it? Oh. if she did it, I can’t do anything.” Baladeva backed away thinking, “There must be some reason behind all this.”

### **THE PLAN FOR DELIVERANCE**

While this was going on, Krishna was thinking. He is all-knowing, and He remembered a pastime that had taken place in the previous millennium. “Now I recall how My dear devotee Narada cursed Nalakuvera and Manigriva.”

Nalakuvera and Manigriva were sons of Kuvera, who was a friend of Lord Siva, and Siva is very near and dear to Krishna, so there was a relationship. The very exalted, saintly devotee Narada was also a friend of Kuvera. One day, Narada saw Kuvera’s two sons playing in a lake with a

number of extremely beautiful young women from the heavenly planets. The women and the two young men were naked, and they were playing various games, such as hide-and-seek. When Narada approached, the women became ashamed. Coming out of the water, they hastily put on their clothes, and offered obeisances repentantly.

The two young men, however, were stubborn, and did not change their behaviour. They were madly intoxicated from drinking wine, and they began to abuse Narada and the girls shamelessly. “Why has this madman come here? He is completely ignorant. And you are all so bogus that you left the pond when you saw him. Now the mood has been completely spoiled.”

The young men stood in front of the great devotee Narada without any clothes on. They had lost their shame and knowledge; and they did not know how to respect a superior, or a saintly person. Narada saw that they were like dry trees. He thought, “These young men are very near and dear to Sivaji, so I should teach them a good lesson.”

### **A STRONG INJECTION**

A person who has had a thorn under the skin knows what pain is, but someone who has not experienced such pain can give pain to others very easily, and without remorse. We see that people can cut off a fish’s head, and cut the throats of goats, cows and other animals, just to eat their flesh. If anyone gives such hard-hearted people even a little injection of awareness, they can come to their senses and understand, “I should not do this.” One who understands nature’s laws realises that the pain of cutting one’s finger is simply the pain that we have given to others coming back to us.

We should note the spelling of the word ‘meat’: M E A T. It contains the word ‘eat’: E A T, and it means, “Those whose flesh I eat will return to eat me.” Every action has its reaction. If you abuse anyone, you will receive abuse. If you give someone else a slap, someone will slap you. Animals who have been slaughtered will receive a human body, and

will eat those who killed them in their previous life. We should therefore avoid eating meat and fish.

Nalakuvera and Manigriva had taken birth in an aristocratic family, and they were very beautiful and wealthy. They were also highly cultured and had a good education. Such people often have so much opulence that they don't believe in God at all, and certainly don't want to perform *bhajan* of Krishna (offer their hearts to Him with devotion.) They are puffed up with false ego, thinking, "I am so educated and so beautiful. I come from an aristocratic family; I am a *brahmana* I am very wealthy." Those who think like that can never do *bhajan* of Krishna.

Narada understood how fallen the two young men were, and he decided to give them an injection. "You are acting exactly like trees, standing naked, and not caring for your superior. You are behaving in a nonsensical way! You should at once become trees."

His words were so powerful! Manigriva and Nalakuvera immediately sensed that they were undergoing some transformation; they were beginning to become trees. Quickly realising how serious the situation was, they fell down at Narada Rsi's feet. "Oh, Narada Rsi, we never knew that you were so powerful. We were always immersed in false ego. Now we understand that Krishna has given us this human body for *bhajan*, so that we can realise who is God. We have misused our time, always drinking and making merry. Please be merciful to us. Surely it can't be true that we are going to be trees?"

Narada said, "What I have said will surely happen. No one can make my words false. Still, I will minimise the punishment, because you are now realising how foolish you have been, and you are the sons of my friend. You will certainly become two trees, but you will be in Vrndavana, and after some time, Krishna will appear in the neighbourhood where you are standing. When He is playing as a boy, He will personally touch you both, and then you will not only have liberation, but *bhaktas* well."

Slowly, the two young men became pacified and peaceful.

## THE LIBERATION OF NALAKUVERA AND MANIGRIVA

Krishna remembered Narada Rsi's prediction, and thought, "I must fulfil My devotee's desire." Krishna is so expert, that He can accomplish many goals and fulfil many desires with one action.

Krishna immediately asked His friends to push the grinding mortar out of Nanda Baba's compound, and they began to push it and pull it towards the gate. Just outside the main gate were two very large, tall *arjuna* trees. These trees cast cooling shade over a wide area, and thousands of birds were taking shelter in their broad branches. The two trees stood close together, with only a narrow passageway between them. Krishna crawled through the narrow passage between the two trees, but the grinding mortar was wider than He was, and as the cowherd boys pushed and pulled, it became stuck between the two trees.

When the mortar touched the trees, they became connected to Krishna through the rope. It was as if a current flowed from Krishna to the mortar, and from the mortar to the two Arjuna trees. Anyone who touched the mortar would receive that current.

As Krishna continued to pull at the mortar which was stuck between the two trees, by Narada's grace they surrendered to Krishna's pull, and fell with a tremendous crash. Krishna's friends had been playing with Him, pulling, shouting, playing and joking happily, but when the trees unexpectedly fell, the boys suddenly became very frightened. What had happened?

As the trees toppled over, the two beautiful demigods appeared before Krishna. They offered prayers and obeisances to Him, and He blessed them that they would both go to His eternal abode, where they would sing about His wonderful pastimes. They circumambulated Krishna, and then proceeded to their glorious destination.

## YASODA'S FEAR AND SHOCK

The whole of Vraja trembled with the sound of the *arjuna* trees falling, and all the inhabitants of Vraja ran towards the terrible, noise from wherever they were.

Meanwhile, Mother Yasoda had been restless, and unable to concentrate on what she was doing. She became very fearful when she heard the frightful sound. "Where is that sound coming from? Oh! It is very close to where Krishna is — very close." Her heart began to pound with fear, and at once, she began running toward the source of the sound. All the other residents of Vraja came quickly.

When they arrived at the spot, they were deeply relieved and thankful at their good fortune. The trees had fallen to the left and right of Krishna, and not on Him, so He was not even slightly hurt. Still, they were all afraid.

Yasoda saw it all from a distance. "Oh, those two trees have been uprooted, and Krishna is in the middle. What would have happened if they had fallen on Him?" She could not bear to think of anything at all after this, and became completely stunned, like a tree, with no sense at all — just like dry wood. There were no tears, and she was not even breathing. She just stood there like a pillar.

## NANDA BABA RELEASES THE SUPREME

Nanda Baba had been taking bath in Brahmanda Ghata, and he also came running to see what had caused that sound. When he saw Krishna tied to the grinding mortar, he was dumbstruck. Boiling with rage, he took Krishna in his lap and asked Him, "Who did this?"

Meanwhile, the small boys gathered around and clamoured, "Baba! Baba! Baba! Krishna touched the two trees and they were uprooted. Two very beautiful people like gods or sunrays came out of the trees. They began to pray, and Krishna said something to them. Then they walked round Krishna, fell flat on the ground in front of Him, and left to the North."

Nanda Baba did not believe them. “These boys are so simple,” he thought. “How could Krishna uproot two great trees? Maybe those two were demons sent by Kamsa to kill Krishna. As for Yasoda, she is so cruel-hearted and unintelligent that she doesn’t realise the danger she has brought on by her actions.” Suddenly he considered the unthinkable: “What would have happened if Krishna had been killed?” He could not think any more after that.

Just after the trees had fallen down, Krishna had been laughing happily. However, when He saw Nanda Baba coming in the distance, He began to weep more and more loudly. When Nanda Baba arrived, Krishna told him piteously, “Mother said she would beat Me!” He was sobbing now, catching long breaths between His speech and His cries.

Nanda Baba tried to pacify Him, but Krishna wept even more. Nanda Baba wiped Krishna’s tears with his *chaddar*, and asked him, “My dear son, who tied You up?” But Krishna would not tell him.

Nanda Baba repeated, “Who tied You up? Tell me! I will punish whoever it was.” He kept asking again and again, as he untied the knots in the rope tying Krishna to the mortar.

Finally, Krishna put His mouth very close to Nanda’s ear and whispered, “Mother tied Me.”

Nanda Baba was astonished by Krishna’s revelation. “Your mother tied you up? Oh! I never knew that she was so cruel-hearted.” He gave Krishna a *laddu*, and Krishna took it in His hand, but He did not eat it. Still, He was pacified a little, and the tears had almost stopped, although not completely Nanda Baba caressed Krishna’s head and body, and Krishna became very grave, looking at Mother Yasoda with fearful eyes.

Mother Yasoda was not in external consciousness. She sat motionless, and her *gopi* friends waited around her. They could read Yasoda’s heart, and they were deeply unhappy. How they wished that Krishna would come to Yasoda’s lap!

Nanda Baba also looked very grave now. He took Krishna and Baladeva on his shoulders — Baladeva on his right shoulder and Krishna on his left shoulder — and went to

Brahmanda Ghata to bathe in the Yamuna. He bathed Krishna and Baladeva at the *ghata* and took bath himself, so that they would all be purified after this inauspicious event. Then he lifted Krishna and Baladeva onto his shoulders again, and returned home. It was after 2 p.m., but no one had cooked anything at Yasoda's house that day. Who would cook? Yasoda and her *sakhis* were so upset that they were just staring into space. None of them had even thought of cooking, much less eating.

### A MEAL IN THE COW BARN

When Mother Rohini saw Nanda Baba coming with the two boys, she quickly went to the kitchen and cooked a little sweet porridge. She gave it to Nanda Baba, and he fed the boys — first Baladeva, and then Krishna. When They were satisfied, he began to take a little himself. He was still very grave, but he ate something, and then went outdoors.

Homes in India — especially the homes of wealthy people — are divided into two parts. The inner part of the house is reserved for the ladies, and it contains the kitchen and other rooms where they do the household work. The outer part is for the men, and it has a courtyard or meeting hall, as well as a drying-room, where clothes can dry without being stolen by the monkeys. It was to these outer quarters that Nanda Baba went now.

The afternoon passed, and it was time for the evening meal. Still nobody had cooked, so Nanda Baba went to the cows' barn with the boys. There he milked the cows directly into the mouths of Krishna and Baladeva, and gave them some sugar-candy. The two boys ate and drank till their stomachs were full, and then Nanda Baba returned home with Them. By that time, it was night.

### “BRING KRISHNA TO YASODA MAIYA“

By now, all of Yasoda's *sakhis* — especially Rohini and Upananda's wife - were very worried. All the older ladies

came with Mother Rohini to where Nanda Baba was sitting with Baladeva and Krishna in his lap.

The older *gopis* said to Baladeva, "You are stronger than Krishna, and He will listen to You, because You are His older brother. Quickly, take Him straight to Yasoda Maiya's lap." Baladeva went to pull Krishna, but Krishna gave Him such a strong push that Baladeva fell down. Krishna wrapped His arms tightly around Nanda Baba's neck.

Rohini said, "O King Nanda! Krishna's mother has not taken anything to eat. She is sitting in a corner as still and silent as stone. All the *gopis* in the house are so sad, and they are also sitting silently, without eating or drinking."

"What can I do?" said Nanda Baba. "She should realise that this is the result of her anger. She has acted cruelly."

Tears flowed from the eyes of the elderly *gopis*. "Alas! Alas! You shouldn't call her cruel! It's not right to use a word like that for her. She is extremely soft, both inside and out."

Hearing this, King Nanda became more emotional. "Lala! Will You go to Maiya?"

"No! No! I will stay with you," replied Krishna emphatically.

### **"I'LL STAY WITH FATHER!"**

Then Rohini Maiya came to Krishna, "Krishna, where will You spend the night? Where will you sleep?"

"I'll sleep with Father."

"Not with Mother?"

"No."

Upananda's wife said, "You may stay with Baba, but what will you eat? Who will breastfeed You?"

"I will drink milk straight from the udders of the cows. My Baba will give it to Me, and he will give Me sugar candy, too."

"Who will You play with?"

"I will play with My brother and Nanda Baba."

"Won't You go to Your Mother?"

"No, I will never go to Her."

Nanda Baba said, “Why don’t You go to Rohini Maiya?”

Krishna sobbed and declared angrily, “I was calling out to my elder mother to come and untie Me, but she didn’t come, and Rohini Maiya didn’t come either.”

When Rohini heard this, tears flowed down her face, and she said softly, “Lala! Don’t be so cruel-hearted. Your mother is crying for You!”

Krishna’s eyes, too, brimmed with tears when He heard this. He turned around, and looked at his father’s face. A shower of tears began to fall from Baba’s eyes, as well.

“Lala! Should I slap your mother?” Nanda asked Krishna. He raised his hands, and made a gesture as if he were beating someone. Krishna could not tolerate this, and He caught hold of His father’s hands tightly. At that moment, Nanda Baba remembered the anguish in Yasoda’s heart.

Then Rohini Maiya said to Krishna, “And what if your mother is.. “She paused and snapped her fingers above her head, meaning, “What if she passes away?”

Oh! Seeing this, Krishna became very anxious. He began to cry out loudly, “Oh, Mother! Mother!” He jumped down off His father’s lap, and began to run towards His mother of His own accord, with His arms outstretched, to sit in her lap.

Rohini Maiya was weeping. Picking up Krishna — who was also crying — she quickly took Him into the ladies’ quarters, and placed Him in Mother Yasoda’s lap.

Until now, Mother Yasoda had been as senseless as a statue, but when Rohini Maiya placed Krishna in her lap she came to life, and became very relieved.

“My dear son! My dear son!” she cried again and again. Trembling, and with her heart melting, she covered Krishna with her veil and began weeping and weeping like a *kurari bird*.

Krishna began consoling her. “Mother! Mother! Mother!” Rohini Maiya and all the other *gopis* had gathered there by this time, and they all began to weep and cry loudly.

Yasoda was weeping; Krishna was weeping; Rohini was weeping; and all the *gopis* were weeping. In the meeting room, Nanda Baba was weeping as well. Everyone was weeping, and

the whole area was over-flooded with the condensed moods of parental love and affection.

After some time, when Yasoda was somewhat pacified, she gave Krishna her breast, and in the meantime, some food was prepared. Nanda Baba was quickly called to take some *prasadam* and he sat down with Krishna and Baladeva to his left and his right. Nanda Baba said, “Krishna, go and call your Mother. If she doesn’t come, I will not take anything.”

Yasoda was so ashamed and embarrassed that she would not come, but Krishna caught hold of her veil and pulled, so she could not resist, and He brought her to Nanda Baba.

Nanda Baba took some *prasadam*, gave some to Krishna and Balarama, and left some remnants, which were distributed to everyone in Yasoda’s house. Krishna was now sitting in Yasoda’s lap, and that night, He slept with her very peacefully.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, performs so many sweet pastimes. Why? To renew the love and affection of those who love Him dearly.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**THE GLORIOUS FRUIT-SELLER**

**ATTRACTED BY NANDA-NANDANA**

At the same time as Sri Krishna was performing His pastimes in Vrndavana, there was a lady in the nearby city of Mathura who used to sell very, very sweet fruits. She would go to the country villages where small children lived, and she would walk through the narrow lanes calling out, “Mangos! Oranges! Bananas! Guava!” She had such lovely, ripe fruits, that many children would run to her, and ask for them in a beautiful way. They would all collect around her, and watch her with greedy eyes, saying, “Mother, mother! I want to take that fruit.” She was very popular with the children.

One day, this fruit-seller lady heard the name Nanda-nandana, which means ‘the son of Nanda’, and she became very much attracted. Someone told her, “Yasoda has given birth to a very lovely boy, and His name is Krishna. He is so beautiful and so attractive, that anyone who goes to Gokula and sees Him just once cannot return his mind to his business. If he does return, it is without his mind and without his heart.” When the fruit-seller heard this, she wanted to see that boy.

**CALLING OUT TO KRISHNA**

One day she took a basket full of fruits, and with some difficulty crossed the river Yamuna in a makeshift boat made of branches and banana trees. Then she set off for Gokula, which was only seven miles from where she had crossed the Yamuna.

(When we first came to Gurudeva, we used to walk there on foot. Now, they have invented taxis, cars and so many things, that hinder us from going there.)

The fruit seller went to Gokula, and she began calling out to attract people to buy her fruits. She wanted to call out,

“fruit! Bananas! Mangos! Oranges! Guava!” but she was just thinking of Krishna, so instead she called out,

*Govinda Damodara Madhavi, Govinda, Damodara, Madhavi*

She began to cry out more loudly, “Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!” as she walked along with her basket on her head. (Indian ladies can carry baskets on their heads without touching them with their hands. They can carry two, three, or even four pots of water on top of each other on their heads without holding them. *Vraja gopis* are expert in this. Even today, you can see them doing it in Vrndavana.)

The fruit-seller went on calling like this, and her heart was crying, “Krishna! Govinda! Damodara!” The whole of that day, she made the rounds in Nandagrama, where Krishna lived with His parents, but Krishna did not come. She returned the next day, and the next, but she still did not see Him.

### THE FRUIT-SELLER’S VOW

After the third day, she vowed, “If Krishna does not allow me to see Him today, I will not return. I will just give up my life.” With this conviction, she was so absorbed in singing, “Govinda! Damodara! Madhava!” that Krishna could not check Himself when he heard her calling. He was sitting in Mother Yasoda’s lap, but He quickly jumped up to go to the fruit-seller. Krishna had seen adults bartering, and He knew that the fruit-seller would give Him some fruit, if He gave Her something in return. On the way out, He saw a sack of grains, and He picked some up in his little hands, and ran into the courtyard. “Oh, I want some fruits, I want some! Give Me fruits!”

This fruit-seller was from a lower caste, so she was waiting outside the gate; she could not come into Mother Yasoda’s house, or even into the courtyard. Although Krishna had tried to bring some grains for bartering, His little hands would not hold many, and most of the grains that He had

picked up fell to the ground as He ran out. There were only a very few grains left, but Krishna did not notice this; He thought that His hands were so full of grains that the fruit-seller would give Him plenty of fruit.

### THE SUPREME LAPFUL

When the fruit-seller saw Krishna, she became completely absorbed in the wonderful sight. She just sat looking and looking at Him. In a moment, she had given her heart to Krishna.

“Give Me fruits! Give Me fruits!” Krishna told her.

“What will You give me in return?”

“I’ve brought lots of grains with Me.”

The fruit-seller smiled and said, “Oh boy, there are no grains in Your hands.”

Krishna looked at His hands, and was surprised to see that all the grains were gone. He still wanted the fruits, though.

The fruit-seller looked at Krishna’s face, and said, “If you call me ‘Mother’ and sit in my lap, I will give You all the fruits You want.”

Krishna looked up and down, this way and that, to see if anyone was watching. He is very affectionate to all His devotees, and is not even slightly concerned what caste or class they are born in. Still, He was playing the part of the son of the Icing of Vraja. “I don’t know what will happen if My mother or anyone in Vraja sees Me sitting in the lap of this lady,” He thought. “And what would My friends say if they found out that I had called Her ‘Mother?’” That’s why He was looking here and there, to see if anyone was watching.

When He saw that no one else was around, He quickly jumped into the lady’s lap and said, “Mother!” Then just as quickly, He jumped out of her lap and demanded, “Now, you should give He some fruits.”

The fruit-seller lady was delighted, for Krishna had fulfilled all of her desires. She wanted to give Him everything — all of her fruits — but His hands were so small that He

could only take two mangos and a banana. He held the fruits against His chest with both hands, and went off dancing, as small boys do.

Krishna went to his mother and put all the fruits in her veil. She began to distribute them to her friends, and she became so happy, for they provided an endless and inexhaustible supply. She gave fruits to all the *gopis*, and when everyone had received fruits, there were still fruits left.

And what happened to that fruit seller? When Krishna sat in her lap and called her. ‘Mother!’ she was overcome with transcendental sentiments and emotions. She had given her whole heart and mind to Krishna.

She didn’t move for a long time, but sat there outside the gate, motionless in disbelief. When anyone came and asked. “Why are you just sitting here?” she did not reply; she couldn’t.

### A BASKET OF JEWELS

Eventually, towards evening-time, the fruit-seller took her basket on her head, and started for home. When she came to the banks of the Yamuna River, she thought, “My basket is very heavy. What is in it?”

When she put the basket down and looked into it, she was amazed at what she saw. The basket was full of countless wonderful jewels, each one equal in value to the whole of King Kamsa’s treasury.

The fruit-seller was completely fixed in her determination. Standing on the bank of the Yamuna, she cried out, “What is the use of all these jewels?” Then she threw them all into the Yamuna, and with her hands above her head, she began to sing like a mad woman,

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

She had no veil — it had come off. She collapsed, and fell on the earth, weeping. She had no sense — only the sense

that Krishna was there. Tears were pouring from her eyes, and her heart was melting.

No one knew where she went after that, for she never returned to her house. Where had she gone? Can anyone tell?

Krishna knew her heart completely, and He thought. “Oh, she would like to be My mother!” He gave her a very beautiful spiritual body, and quickly took her to His supreme abode, Goloka Vrndavana, where she could be like His mother eternally.

Only her body was left lying on the banks of the Yamuna, and someone came and gave it to fire.

### SINGING FROM THE HEART

It is very wonderful to follow that fruit-seller lady, if you want to. Gurudeva has come to give you this, to sprinkle this mercy. You cannot repay him with wealth, or reputation, or anything of this world. You have nothing to give to Gurudeva to repay him.

You should meditate on Srila Gurudeva’s glory, and try to understand who he is. He wants to give you the same wealth that Krishna gave to that fruit-seller, so try to take what he wants to give you. Don’t waste your valuable time, and don’t waste this valuable human body. At once, from this moment, you should try to be like that, always absorbed in that way and always singing,

*Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti  
Govinda Damodara Madhaveti, Govinda Damodara Madhaveti*

How should you sing? Not as if you are singing an ordinary song. You should pray to Krishna with all your heart, and then Krishna will hear. Otherwise, you may be singing like a professional, but Krishna doesn’t need so much music. He already knows many songs. He wants your heart. An inferior devotee may be able to sing expertly, but Krishna wants more.

Try to pray like this — with your full heart — and Krishna will hear. However you chant, whatever *kirtana* you sing, you should be absorbed in it. If you are singing just to make music, Krishna will not hear, but if you are chanting and hearing in a heartfelt way, Krishna will come at once, and give you His wealth.

*Gaura-premanande! Haribol!*