

## **CHAPTER EIGHTY-TWO**

### **Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana**

This chapter describes how the Yādavas and many other kings met at Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse and discussed topics concerning Lord Kṛṣṇa. It also relates how Kṛṣṇa met Nanda Mahārāja and the other residents of Vṛndāvana at Kurukṣetra and gave them great joy.

Hearing that a total eclipse of the sun was soon to occur, people from all over Bhārata-varṣa, including the Yādavas, converged at Kurukṣetra to earn special pious credit. After the Yadus had bathed and performed other obligatory rituals, they noticed that kings of Matsya, Uśīnara and other places had also come, as well as Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd community of Vraja, who were always feeling the intense anxiety of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The Yādavas, overjoyed to see all these old friends, embraced them one by one as they shed tears of happiness. Their wives also embraced one another with great pleasure.

When Queen Kuntī saw her brother Vasudeva and other members of her family, she put aside her sorrow. Yet still she said to Vasudeva, “O brother, I am so unfortunate, because all of you forgot me during my tribulations. Alas, even one’s relatives forget a person whom Providence no longer favors.”

Vasudeva replied, “My dear sister, everyone is merely a plaything of fate. We Yādavas were so harassed by Kāṁsa that we were forced to scatter and take shelter in foreign lands. So there was no way for us to keep in touch with you.”

The kings present were struck with wonder upon beholding Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His wives, and they began to glorify the Yādavas for having gotten the Lord’s personal association. Seeing Nanda Mahārāja, the Yādavas were delighted, and each of them embraced him tightly. Vasudeva also embraced Nanda with great joy and remembered how, when Vasudeva was tormented by Kāṁsa, Nanda had taken his sons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, under his protection. Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa embraced and bowed down to mother Yaśodā, but Their throats choked up with emotion and they could

say nothing to her. Nanda and Yaśodā lifted their two sons onto their laps and embraced Them, and in this way they relieved the distress of separation. Rohiṇī and Devakī both embraced Yaśodā and, remembering the great friendship she had shown them, told her that the kindness she had done by raising and supporting Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma could not be repaid even with the wealth of Indra.

Then the Supreme Lord approached the young cowherd girls in a secluded place. He consoled them by pointing out that He is all-pervasive, being the source of all energies, and thus He implied that they could never be separated from Him. Having been at long last reunited with Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs prayed simply to have His lotus feet manifested in their hearts.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, while Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were living in Dvārakā, there occurred a great eclipse of the sun, just as if the end of Lord Brahmā's day had come.

Text 2:

Knowing of this eclipse in advance, O King, many people went to the holy place known as Samanta-pāñcaka in order to earn pious credit.

Texts 3-6:

After ridding the earth of kings, Lord Paraśurāma, the foremost of warriors, created huge lakes from the kings' blood at Samantaka-pāñcaka. Although he is never tainted by karmic reactions, Lord Paraśurāma performed sacrifices there to instruct people in general; thus he acted like an ordinary person trying to free himself of sins. From all parts of Bhārata-varṣa a great number of people now came to that Samanta-pāñcaka on pilgrimage. O descendant of Bharata, among those arriving at the holy place were many Vṛṣṇis, such as Gada, Pradyumna and Sāmba, hoping to be relieved of their sins; Akrūra, Vasudeva, Āhuka and other kings also went there. Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa to guard the city, together with Kṛtavarmā, the commander of their armed forces.

Texts 7-8:

The mighty Yādavas passed with great majesty along the road. They were attended by their soldiers, who rode on chariots rivaling the airplanes

of heaven, on horses moving with a rhythmic gait, and on bellowing elephants as huge as clouds. Also with them were many infantrymen as effulgent as celestial Vidyādhara. The Yādavas were so divinely dressed — being adorned with gold necklaces and flower garlands and wearing fine armor — that as they proceeded along the road with their wives they seemed to be demigods flying through the sky.

Text 9:

At Samanta-pāñcaka, the saintly Yādavas bathed and then observed a fast with careful attention. Afterward they presented brāhmaṇas with cows bedecked with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces.

Text 10:

In accordance with scriptural injunctions, the descendants of Vṛṣṇi then bathed once more in Lord Paraśurāma's lakes and fed first-class brāhmaṇas with sumptuous food. All the while they prayed, "May we be granted devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Text 11:

Then, with the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, their sole object of worship, the Vṛṣṇis ate breakfast and sat down at their leisure beneath trees that gave cooling shade.

Texts 12-13:

The Yādavas saw that many of the kings who had arrived were old friends and relatives — the Matsyas, Uśīnaras, Kauśalyas, Vidarbhas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbojas, Kaikayas, Madras, Kuntīs and the kings of Ānarta and Kerala. They also saw many hundreds of other kings, both allies and adversaries. In addition, my dear King Parīkṣit, they saw their dear friends Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men and women, who had been suffering in anxiety for so long.

Text 14:

As the great joy of seeing one another made the lotuses of their hearts and faces bloom with fresh beauty, the men embraced one another enthusiastically. With tears pouring from their eyes, the hair on their bodies standing on end and their voices choked up, they all felt intense bliss.

Text 15:

The women glanced at one another with pure smiles of loving friendship. And when they embraced, their breasts, smeared with saffron paste, pressed against one another as their eyes filled with tears of affection.

Text 16:

They all then offered obeisances to their elders and received respect in turn from their younger relatives. After inquiring from one another about the comfort of their trip and their well-being, they proceeded to talk about Kṛṣṇa.

Text 17:

Queen Kuntī met with her brothers and sisters and their children, and also with her parents, her brothers' wives and Lord Mukunda. While talking with them she forgot her sorrow.

Text 18:

Queen Kuntī said: My dear, respectable brother, I feel that my desires have been frustrated, because although all of you are most saintly, you forgot me during my calamities.

Text 19:

Friends and family members — even children, brothers and parents — forget a dear one whom Providence no longer favors.

Text 20:

Śrī Vasudeva said: Dear sister, please do not be angry with us. We are only ordinary men, playthings of fate. Indeed, whether a person acts on his own or is forced by others, he is always under the Supreme Lord's control.

Text 21:

Harassed by Kāṁsa, we all fled in various directions, but by the grace of Providence we have now finally been able to return to our homes, my dear sister.

Text 22:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the other Yadus honored the various kings, who became supremely blissful and content upon seeing Lord Acyuta.

Texts 23-26:

All the royalty present, including Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and her sons, the Pāṇḍavas and their wives, Kuntī, Sañjaya, Vidura, Kṛpācārya, Kuntībhoja, Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Kāśirāja, Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, Maithila, Madra, Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika with his associates and their sons, and the many other kings subservient to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira — all of them, O best of kings, were simply amazed to see the transcendental form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all opulence and beauty, standing before them with His consorts.

Text 27:

After Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa had liberally honored them, with great joy and enthusiasm these kings began to praise the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's personal associates.

Text 28:

[The kings said:] O King of the Bhojas, you alone among men have achieved a truly exalted birth, for you continually behold Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely visible even to great yogīs.

Texts 29-30:

His fame, as broadcast by the Vedas, the water that has washed His feet, and the words He speaks in the form of the revealed scriptures — these thoroughly purify this universe. Although the earth's good fortune was ravaged by time, the touch of His lotus feet has revitalized her, and thus she is raining down on us the fulfillment of all our desires. The same Lord Viṣṇu who makes one forget the goals of heaven and liberation has now entered into marital and blood relationships with you, who otherwise travel on the hellish path of family life. Indeed, in these relationships you see and touch Him directly, walk beside Him, converse with Him, and together with Him lie down to rest, sit at ease and take your meals.

Text 31:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Nanda Mahārāja learned that the Yadus had arrived, led by Kṛṣṇa, he immediately went to see them. The cowherds accompanied him, their various possessions loaded on their wagons.

Text 32:

Seeing Nanda, the Vṛṣṇis were delighted and stood up like dead bodies coming back to life. Having felt much distress at not seeing him for so long, they held him in a tight embrace.

Text 33:

Vasudeva embraced Nanda Mahārāja with great joy. Beside himself with ecstatic love, Vasudeva remembered the troubles Kāṁsa had caused him, forcing him to leave his sons in Gokula for Their safety.

Text 34:

O hero of the Kurus, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma embraced Their foster parents and bowed down to them, but Their throats were so choked up with tears of love that the two Lords could say nothing.

Text 35:

Raising their two sons onto their laps and holding Them in their arms, Nanda and saintly mother Yaśodā forgot their sorrow.

Text 36:

Then Rohiṇī and Devakī both embraced the Queen of Vraja, remembering the faithful friendship she had shown them. Their throats choking with tears, they addressed her as follows.

Text 37:

[Rohiṇī and Devakī said:] What woman could forget the unceasing friendship you and Nanda have shown us, dear Queen of Vraja? There is no way to repay you in this world, even with the wealth of Indra.

Text 38:

Before these two boys had ever seen Their real parents, you acted as Their parents and gave Them all affectionate care, training, nourishment and protection. They were never afraid, good lady, because you protected Them just as eyelids protect the eyes. Indeed, saintly persons like you never discriminate between outsiders and their own kin.

Text 39:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While gazing at their beloved Kṛṣṇa, the young gopīs used to condemn the creator of their eyelids, [which would

momentarily block their vision of Him]. Now, seeing Kṛṣṇa again after such a long separation, with their eyes they took Him into their hearts, and there they embraced Him to their full satisfaction. In this way they became totally absorbed in ecstatic meditation on Him, although those who constantly practice mystic yoga find such absorption difficult to achieve.

Text 40:

The Supreme Lord approached the gopīs in a secluded place as they stood in their ecstatic trance. After embracing each of them and inquiring about their well-being, He laughed and spoke as follows.

Text 41:

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girlfriends, do you still remember Me? It was for My relatives' sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying My enemies.

Text 42:

Do you perhaps think I'm ungrateful and thus hold Me in contempt? After all, it is the Supreme Lord who brings living beings together and then separates them.

Text 43:

Just as the wind brings together masses of clouds, blades of grass, wisps of cotton and particles of dust, only to scatter them all again, so the creator deals with His created beings in the same way.

Text 44:

Rendering devotional service to Me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But by your good fortune you have developed a special loving attitude toward Me, by which you have obtained Me.

Text 45:

Dear ladies, I am the beginning and end of all created beings and exist both within and without them, just as the elements ether, water, earth, air and fire are the beginning and end of all material objects and exist both within and without them.

Text 46:

In this way all created things reside within the basic elements of creation, while the spirit souls pervade the creation, remaining in their own true identity. You should see both of these — the material creation and the self — as manifest within Me, the imperishable Supreme Truth.

Text 47:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus been instructed by Kṛṣṇa in spiritual matters, the gopīs were freed of all tinges of false ego because of their incessant meditation upon Him. And with their deepening absorption in Him, they came to understand Him fully.

Text 48:

The gopīs spoke thus: Dear Lord, whose navel is just like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic yogīs and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet may also be awakened within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs.