

CHAPTER SIXTY-FIVE

Lord Balarāma Visits Vṛndāvana

This chapter relates how Lord Balarāma went to Gokula, enjoyed the company of the cowherd girls and dragged the Yamunā River.

One day Lord Balarāma went to Gokula to see His relatives and friends. When He arrived there, the elder gopīs and Lord Kṛṣṇa’s parents, Nanda and Yaśodā, who had all been in great anxiety for a long time, embraced Him and blessed Him. Lord Balarāma offered appropriate respects and greetings to each of His worshipable elders according to age, friendship and family relation. After Gokula’s residents and Lord Balarāma had inquired about each other’s welfare, the Lord rested from His journey.

In a short while the young gopīs came to Lord Balarāma and questioned Him about Kṛṣṇa’s well-being. They asked, “Does Kṛṣṇa still remember His parents and friends, and will He be coming to Gokula to visit them? For Kṛṣṇa’s sake we gave up everything — even our fathers, mothers and other relatives — but now He has abandoned us. How could we help but put our faith in Kṛṣṇa’s words after seeing His sweetly smiling face and thus being overwhelmed by the urges of Cupid? Still, if Kṛṣṇa can spend His days in separation from us, why can’t we tolerate separation from Him? So there is no reason to keep talking about Him.” In this manner the gopīs remembered Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s charming talks, enchanting glances, playful gestures and loving embraces, and as a result they began to cry. Lord Balarāma consoled them by conveying the attractive messages Kṛṣṇa had given Him for them.

Lord Balarāma stayed in Gokula for two months, sporting with the gopīs in the groves on the Yamunā’s shore. The demigods who witnessed these pastimes played kettledrums in the heavens and showered down flower petals, while the celestial sages recited Balarāma’s glories.

One day Lord Balarāma became intoxicated by drinking some vāruṇī liquor and began wandering about the forest in the company of the gopīs. He called out to the Yamunā, “Come near so I and the gopīs can enjoy sporting in your waters.” But the Yamunā ignored His command. Lord Balarāma then started to pull the Yamunā with the end of His plow, splitting her into hundreds of tributaries. Trembling out of fright, the

goddess Yamunā appeared, fell down at Lord Balarāma's feet and prayed for forgiveness. The Lord let her go and then entered her waters with His girlfriends to sport for some time. When they rose from the water, the goddess Kānti presented Lord Balarāma with beautiful ornaments, clothing and garlands. Even today the Yamunā River flows through the many channels cut by Lord Baladeva's plow, the signs of His having subdued her.

While Lord Balarāma played, His mind became enchanted by the gopīs' pastimes. Thus the many nights He spent in their company seemed to Him like a single night.

Text 1:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of the Kurus, once Lord Balarāma, eager to visit His well-wishing friends, mounted His chariot and traveled to Nanda Gokula.

Text 2:

Having long suffered the anxiety of separation, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Lord Balarāma. The Lord then offered respects to His parents, and they joyfully greeted Him with prayers.

Text 3:

[Nanda and Yaśodā prayed,] "O descendant of Daśārha, O Lord of the universe, may You and Your younger brother Kṛṣṇa ever protect us." Saying this, they raised Śrī Balarāma onto their laps, embraced Him and moistened Him with tears from their eyes.

Texts 4-6:

Lord Balarāma then paid proper respects to the elder cowherd men, and the younger ones all greeted Him respectfully. He met them all with smiles, handshakes and so on, dealing personally with each one according to age, degree of friendship, and family relationship. Then, after resting, the Lord accepted a comfortable seat, and they all gathered around Him. With voices faltering out of love for Him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvārakā], and Balarāma in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare.

Text 7:

[The cowherds said:] O Rāma, are all our relatives doing well? And Rāma, do all of you, with your wives and children, still remember us?

Text 8:

It is our great fortune that sinful Kāṁsa has been killed and our dear relatives have been freed. And it is also our good fortune that our relatives have killed and defeated their enemies and found complete security in a great fortress.

Text 9:

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Honored to have the personal audience of Lord Balarāma, the young gopīs smiled and asked Him, “Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?

Text 10:

“Does He remember His family members, especially His father and mother? Do you think He will ever come back even once to see His mother? And does mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa remember the service we always did for Him?

Texts 11-12:

“For Kṛṣṇa’s sake, O descendant of Dāśārha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. But now, O Lord, that same Kṛṣṇa has suddenly abandoned us and gone away, breaking off all affectionate ties with us. And yet how could any woman fail to trust His promises?

Text 13:

“How can intelligent city women possibly trust the words of one whose heart is so unsteady and who is so ungrateful? They must believe Him because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their lust.

Text 14:

“Why bother talking about Him, dear gopī? Please talk of something else. If He passes His time without us, then we shall similarly pass ours [without Him].”

Text 15:

While speaking these words, the young cowherd women remembered Lord Śāuri's laughter, His pleasing conversations with them, His attractive glances, His style of walking and His loving embraces. Thus they began to cry.

Text 16:

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the attractor of all, being expert at various kinds of conciliation, consoled the gopīs by relaying to them the confidential messages Lord Kṛṣṇa had sent with Him. These messages deeply touched the gopīs' hearts.

Text 17:

Lord Balarāma, the Personality of Godhead, resided there for the two months of Madhu and Mādhava, and during the nights He gave His cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure.

Text 18:

In the company of numerous women, Lord Balarāma enjoyed in a garden by the Yamunā River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses.

Text 19:

Sent by the demigod Varuṇa, the divine vāruṇī liquor flowed from a tree hollow and made the entire forest even more fragrant with its sweet aroma.

Text 20:

The wind carried to Balarāma the fragrance of that flood of sweet liquor, and when He smelled it He went [to the tree]. There He and His female companions drank.

Text 21:

As the Gandharvas sang His glories, Lord Balarāma enjoyed within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airāvata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants.

Text 22:

At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Lord Balarāma's heroic deeds.

Text 23:

As His deeds were sung, Lord Halāyudha wandered as if inebriated among the various forests with His girlfriends. His eyes rolled from the effects of the liquor.

Texts 24-25:

Intoxicated with joy, Lord Balarāma sported flower garlands, including the famous Vaijayantī. He wore a single earring, and beads of perspiration decorated His smiling lotus face like snowflakes. The Lord then summoned the Yamunā River so that He could play in her waters, but she disregarded His command, thinking He was drunk. This angered Balarāma, and He began dragging the river with the tip of His plow.

Text 26:

[Lord Balarāma said:] O sinful one disrespecting Me, you do not come when I call you but rather move only by your own whim. Therefore with the tip of My plow I shall bring you here in a hundred streams!

Text 27:

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus scolded by the Lord, O King, the frightened river-goddess Yamunā came and fell at the feet of Śrī Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu. Trembling, she spoke to Him the following words.

Text 28:

[Goddess Yamunā said:] Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.

Text 29:

My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn't understand Your position as the Supreme Godhead, but now I have surrendered unto You, and You are always kind to Your devotees.

Text 30:

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thereupon Lord Balarāma released the Yamunā and, like the king of the elephants with his entourage of she-elephants, entered the river's water with His female companions.

Text 31:

The Lord played in the water to His full satisfaction, and when He came out Goddess Kānti presented Him with blue garments, precious ornaments and a brilliant necklace.

Text 32:

Lord Balarāma dressed Himself in the blue garments and put on the gold necklace. Anointed with fragrances and beautifully adorned, He appeared as resplendent as Indra's royal elephant.

Text 33:

Even today, O King, one can see how the Yamunā flows through the many channels created when it was dragged by the unlimitedly powerful Lord Balarāma. Thus she demonstrates His prowess.

Text 34:

Thus for Lord Balarāma all the nights passed like a single night as He enjoyed in Vraja, His mind enchanted by the exquisite charm and beauty of Vraja's young ladies.