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Mahaprabhu and Krishn's Debt to the Gopis



In the *Bhagwad Gita* (4.11), Shri Krishn gives his eternal promise:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁstathaiva bhajāmyaham

"If someone loves me, I love them back in the exact same way."

From childhood, the *gopis* loved Krishn with complete dedication and with all of their hearts, wishing only to make him happy.

When Krishn called the *gopis* for Raas, they gave up three types of duties in order to meet him. According to Vishwanath Chakravarti, the following three verses from the *Shrimad*

Bhagwatam (10.29.5-7) show the *gopis'* dedication and detachment from everything but their Beloved:

1. The *gopis* left their *jati dharm* (caste duties) Milking the cows and working with the milk are duties of the cowherd caste to which the *gopis* belonged, but:

दुहन्त्योऽभिययुः काश्चिद्दोहं हित्वा समुत्सुकाः
पयोऽधिश्रित्य संयावमनुद्वास्यापरा ययुः

*duhantyo'bhiyayuh kāściddoham hitvā samutsukāḥ
payo'dhiśriya samyāvamanudvāsyāparā yayuh*

"Whether they were milking cows, boiling milk or cooking sweets, the *gopis* left everything at the moment they heard Krishn's flute." (10.29.5)

2. The *gopis* left their household duties

परिवेषयन्त्यस्तद्वित्वा पाययन्त्यः शिशून्प्ययः
शुश्रूषन्त्यः पतीन्काश्चिदशनन्त्योऽपास्य भोजनम्

*pariveṣayantyastaddhitvā pāyayantyah śiśūnpayaḥ
śuśrūṣantyah patīnkāścidaśnentyo'pāsya bhojanam*

"Whether they were dressing and decorating themselves, feeding babies or serving their husbands, they stopped whatever they were doing and rushed to find Krishn." (10.29.6)

3. The *gopis* gave up their *stri dharm* (feminine customs)

लिम्पन्त्यः प्रमृजन्त्योऽन्या अञ्जन्त्यः काश्च लोचने
व्यत्यस्तवस्त्राभरणाः काश्चित्कृष्णान्तिकं ययुः

*limpantyah pramṛjantyo'nyā añjantyah kāśca locane
vyat�astavastrābharaṇāḥ kāścitatkrṣṇāntikam yayuh*

"Some of the *gopis* were bathing or applying makeup at the moment they heard the flute, but they stopped everything immediately and ran to meet him with their clothing and makeup all topsy-turvy." (10.29.7)

The *gopis* left everything with the hope that Krishn would love them back the same way that they loved him. But Lord Krishn said to the *gopis*, "My dear *gopis*! I shall never be able to repay you for all that you have done

for me, even if I try for a lifetime of the gods. You have truly loved me, breaking the chains of household life, which is very difficult to do. May your own wonderful actions be your reward." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam* 10.32.22)

In Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur's commentary on the above verse, Shri Krishn confesses to the *gopis*, "I worship you, but I still love my parents, brother and friends too. I have promised to love everyone back in the same way that they love me (*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham*). But in your case, I have broken my promise. I cannot give up my other devotees the way you gave up everyone for me. I can never repay what you have done for me. May your own pure nature be your reward. Even if you forgive this debt by your own good nature, I still consider myself forever indebted to you."

In his famous prayer *Brahma Stuti*, even Brahma wonders how Krishn would be able to love the people of Braj back, the way they loved him, "Putna only disguised herself as a devotee, yet you have promised to become hers and even to bless her family members. When you give yourself to someone like her out of mercy, what is left to give to your Brajwasis? They have all given up their homes, wealth, relatives, children, friends and even their own bodies, hearts and lives for you." (*Shrimad Bhagwatam* 10.14.35)

Perhaps Krishn hadn't thought about that when he gave himself to Putna. He had to find a new path; a totally unique and wonderful way to love the Brajwasis.

And so, to repay his debt to the *gopis*, and to glorify them everywhere and in every possible way, on Phalguni Purnima, Krishn appeared on this Earth as his Madhurya Avatar, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

In this special avatar as Mahaprabhu, Krishn gave up the same three things that the *gopis*

renounced for him in the Raas:

1. By caste, Mahaprabhu was a Brahmin, and to follow his caste duty he became a teacher. But he gave up his teaching and immersed himself in the ocean of Shri Radha's love, singing *Harinaam Sankirtan* and remembering the *lila* of Eternal Vrindavan night and day.

2. Mahaprabhu was a householder. He had the responsibility to take care of his elderly mother and wife. But for the *gopis'* love, he gave up that duty too. He left home to become a *sannyasi*, and spread the glories of Shri Radha and the *gopis* throughout India.

3. As a *sannyasi*, he had the ornament of the *danda*, which he refused to use in later life, so that he could dance for the *gopis* by chanting Krishn's Name like they did, and swaying on the waves of their bliss.

Radharani's indescribable beauty and the *gopis'* love for Krishn was revealed to us only because of these sacrifices that Mahaprabhu made. His appearance on earth and the *lilas* that he performed are his supreme blessing on us. He showered sacred love upon the six Goswamis of Vrindavan, allowing them to continue giving his gift to the world even after his disappearance. On this divine day of Gaur Purnima, I offer my *pranams* to that Madhurya Moon, looking down and blessing all of us. I beg for just a tiny drop of his mercy, so that I too can be his instrument and spread the love of the *gopis* throughout this world.

-Vaisnavacharya Chandan Goswami

Holi - The Festival of Love

Each day at the Radharaman Temple is a festival. Still, Holi is the most blissful time of all, and the devotees wish it could last forever.

Vrindavan's Holi festival lasts for a month and a half. But the final eight days, called *holikashatak*, are the most important. During this time, Shri Radharaman Lal (Shriji) comes out into his *jagmohan* to play Holi with his devotees. Shriji looks so adorable with a rainbow of powders smeared on his cheeks. It feels like he has been waiting for this festival all year.

The Goswamis become Shriji's hands and throw handfuls of coloured powder on everyone. It is not possible to hide from Radharamanji's Love Holi - his affection in the form of colours. With silver *pichkaris* (water guns), he soaks them with streams of water, dyed orange by *tesu* flowers. Soon everyone is covered, including Radharamanji himself!

The *dhap*, a special drum played only during Holi, pulsates like the combined heartbeat of all the devotees. Everyone is drunk with love, as they dance and sing special Holi folk songs called "*rasiyas*".

As one famous "*rasiya*" says:

चिरजीवो होरी के रसिया
नित-नित आवौ होरी खेलन को
नित-नित गारी नित हसिया

*cirajīvo horī ke rasiyā
nit-nit āvau horī khelan ko
nit-nit gārī nit hasiyā*

"May you live forever, my charming Hero of Holi (Radharamanji). May we play Holi like this



every day, eternally. May we playfully tease and make each other laugh like this forever!"

Vedic New Year

The month of Chaitra marks the beginning of the Vedic new year. On this day, a *pandit* (priest) recites the new year's Vedic calendar (*panchang*) to Radharamanji, explaining to him how the year will go and telling him the main festival dates.

Due to the change in weather, which brings various skin diseases, we offer antifungal, antibacterial and antiviral *neem* to protect him. The bitterness of the *neem* is balanced with a generous sprinkling of sugar crystals.

Vaishnavs meditate while accepting the *prasad*, "Life is full of sweet and bitter moments; I, your servant, accept these bitter (*neem*) and sweet (*mishri*) experiences as your *prasad*."

Holi Pad from Shri Radharaman Gita

Holi by Gunmanjari Das Goswami

*śhrī-rādhāramāṇ chail gail pičhkārī chore
keśhar kī taki māre sajanī sabare aṅgan bore
mūṭh gulāl lāl kar det haī lāj sakučh ko tore,
āvat mukh māḍan dhore
aṅg anaṅg ko varashai bharo jovan ke jore
prāṇ-priyā kī sain pāike let ju sabahi akore,
karai jo so kachu thore
lekar ḫhapahi bajābai rasiyā ābai gīt ap jore
bhāgan phāgan āy gayau hai bolat bačhan kaṭhore,
piye chavi nain kaṭore
holī ko mis pāyke helī khel kare sab thaure
gunmañjarī priyā raṅg mē bharo hai hoy sabai ik thore,
rasik var nandakišhore*

The blessed time of Phagun is here! Charming Shri Radharaman Lal plays Holi in the narrow lanes of Vrindavan. He drenches Shri Priyaji with colourful saffron water from his *pichkari*. Wishing to conquer her shyness, Shriji runs to her with a handful of coloured powder (*gulaal*) and paints her lotus face.

With the power of his youthful charm, he showers everyone in the colours of his love. Catching Shri Priyaji's hint, he embraces her friends, then attacks them with an abundance of colours. Even though Shriji completely soaks

everyone, to him, it appears as if they are still dry and this play of Holi has just begun; such is the bliss of this moment!

Afterward, he takes the *dhap* drum and starts singing *rasiyas*. With the cups of their eyes, Shriji and the *sakhis* drink the nectar of each others' beauty and exchange loving abuses too. This festival of Holi has become a wonderful excuse for the Lovers and the *sakhis* to come together and play. Gunmanjari says, "Everyone, including Shriji is filled with the colour (love) of Shri Priyaji."

(English translation from the book *Shri Radharaman Gita* by Vaisnavacharya Chandan Goswami)

