

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

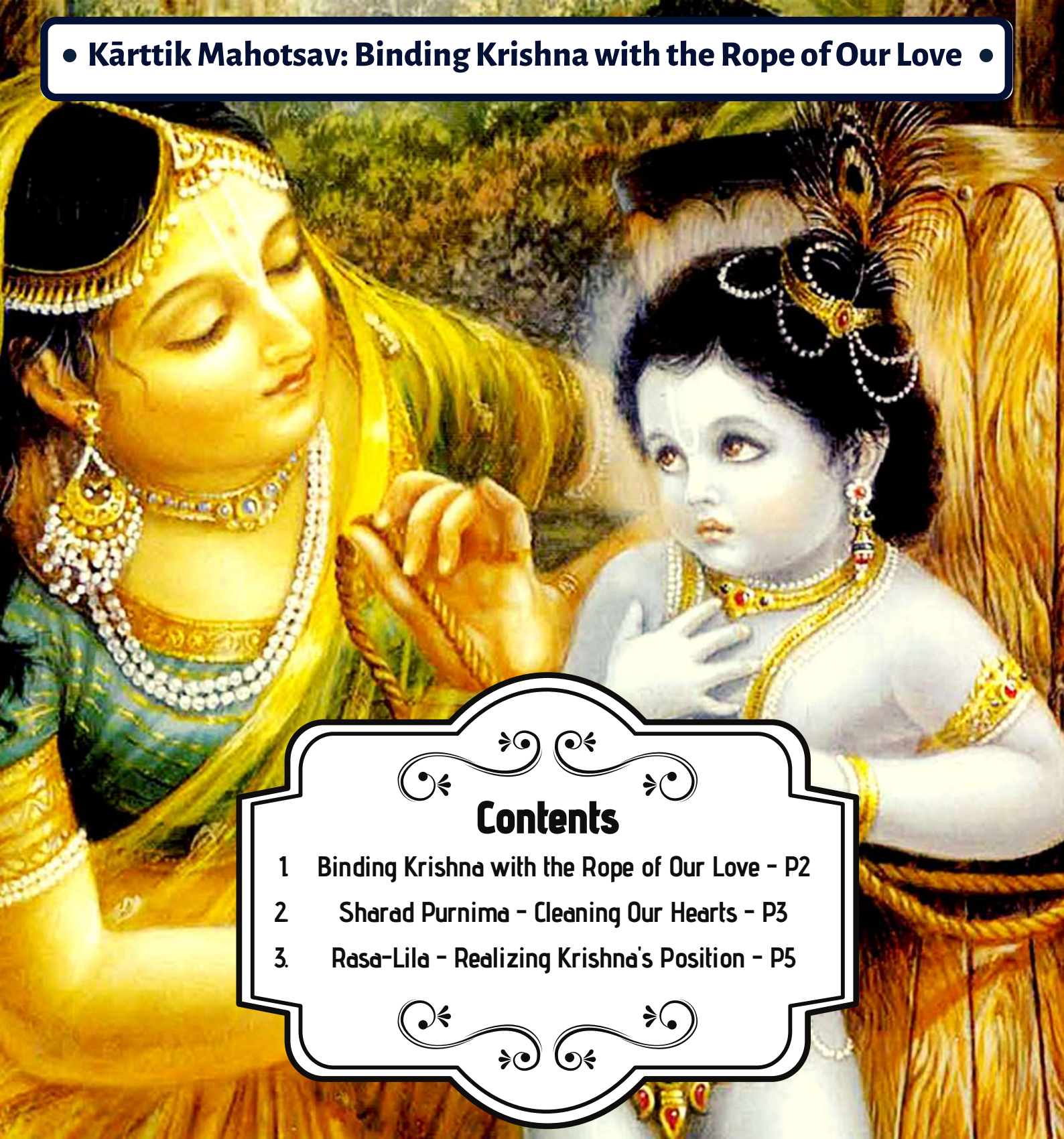
Bhāgavatam Rasamālayam

The Abode of Supreme Nectar

Meditations & Reflections from the lectures of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

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• Kārttik Mahotsav: Binding Krishna with the Rope of Our Love •



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On Sarad Purnima, at Iskcon Chowpatty,
on Oct 22, 2010

Binding Krishna with the Rope of Our Love

When we develop our loving relationship with the Lord, through devotion, then the Lord allows Himself to be controlled by us. He finally allows Mother Yasoda to bind Him but then this Damodarastakam is saying, "bhakti-baddham". She bound Him with bhakti, with devotion. Every one of us have a personal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, otherwise why should He be in our hearts as the Super Soul? Why should He always accompany us? It is not that only some big devotees will have a relationship with Krishna and not us. No, Krishna is allowing us all to develop a relationship with Him. Now it is up to us to feel that relationship, to cultivate that relationship. Krishna Consciousness is a practical process. It is not just a matter of performing some rituals. If it becomes some kind of ritual then we have to recognise that we're missing out the main point. The real purpose is to develop a relationship with Him. That is why He has appeared here.

- H.H Bhakti Charu Swami

Srila Prabhupada on the Observance of Kārttika

In the month of Kārttika (October-November); especially in Vrndavana, there is a specific program for temple worship of the Lord in His Dāmodara form. "Dāmodara" refers to Krishna's being bound with rope by His mother, Yaśodā. It is said that just as Lord Dāmodara is very dear to His devotees, so the month known as Dāmodara or Kārttika is also very dear to them...The execution of devotional service during Ūrja-vrata in the month of Kārttika is especially recommended to be performed at Mathurā. This system is still followed by many devotees. They go to Mathurā or Vrndavana and stay there during the month of Kārttika specifically to perform devotional services during this period.

"...the Lord does not award devotional service to ordinary persons who are not serious about it. But even such unserious persons who execute devotional service according to the regulative principles during the month of Kārttika, and within the jurisdiction of Mathurā in India, are very easily awarded the Lord's personal service."

Srila Prabhupada in Nectar of Devotion, Ch. 12]



Sharad Purnima - Cleaning our Hearts for Krishna to Appear

H.H BCS: I am very very happy to be here. Today is Sharad Purnima. Sharad actually is a very special season. This season is there only in India. In the west, they only have four seasons – summer, autumn, winter, spring. But in India there are two extra seasons – Varsha and Sharad. Monsoon and Sharad, although Sharad has sometimes been translated as autumn, but Sharad is not actually autumn. Autumn is the time when the leaves fall from the tree. Sharad is the time when the trees become most beautiful. Autumn is the time when not only the trees, but the whole atmosphere becomes so beautiful.

Monsoon and Autumn, these two seasons have been very beautifully described in Srimad Bhagavatam. Two entire chapters actually deal with the descriptions of these two seasons. In Monsoon due to the rain, the whole atmosphere becomes cleansed. Due to the cleansing process, it is a little unclean. That season is quite muddy, apparently quite dirty. But that dirt is actually due to the process of cleansing and then after monsoon comes Sharad and during Sharad, the whole atmosphere becomes so beautiful. The trees become lush, the dust settles due to the monsoon, the whole atmosphere becomes very pure and very clean, the water which became muddy during the monsoon, now the dirt sediments in the water becomes crystal clear. The sky becomes free from clouds. Because of the monsoon, the clouds have poured their rains and what remains in the sky is some drifting cloud that looks like cotton wool, very pure, white, light and not heavy.

And at that time the sun's rays becomes golden, especially during the morning time. That is the time when Krishna dances His Rasa dance. There are two seasons when Krishna dances His Rasa dance – One is Basanta Rasa or spring time and one is Sharadiya Rasa or during this Sharad Purnima. When the full moon appears in the sky, then Krishna plays His flute and hearing His flute, all the Gopis, they just come running to meet Him. And Krishna plays His most beautiful Rasa dance.

Srila Prabhupada was quite cautious about entering into Krishna's intimate pastimes in Vrindavan, like Rasa dance. And that's why Prabhupada wanted us to first become qualified to understand Krishna's position as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and then enter into Krishna's reading or discussing about Krishna's Rasa dance.

So we have sensitivity about it. It is mainly because of so much misunderstanding about Krishna's intimate pastimes. The moralists say that it is not proper on Krishna's part to act like that. They also go to the extent of saying that it is immoral for Krishna to have displayed such pastimes. But the main point is that they do not understand who Krishna is. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So for Him, whatever He does is perfect because He is the Supreme Proprietor.

So that's why Srila Prabhupada first wanted us to understand who Krishna is and Srila Prabhupada very systematically and very scientifically, presented the teachings of Krishna Consciousness based on scriptures – Bhagavad Gita. Prabhupada gave a very clear syllabus – first Bhagavad Gita, then Srimad Bhagavatam, then Chaitanya Charitamrta. And what do we understand in Bhagavad Gita or preliminary teachings? The preliminary teachings is the difference between body and soul, matter and spirit. Unless and until we are able to discriminate between these two there is no way we can understand the spiritual reality.

The spiritual reality is completely different from matter. The soul is completely different from body. The body is inert, the soul is conscious. The soul is so conscious that when the soul is in the body, the body becomes conscious. A lump of matter becomes conscious due to the contact with the soul. And when the soul leaves the body, the body becomes dead. Dead means, that the body made of matter becomes matter again. So that is the first thing we have to understand. And this understanding has been presented in a very very systematically way through the Vedic teachings. The Sankhya philosophy very analytically defines, analyses the material nature very systematically. And it comes from the gross matter – the five elements, then to the five senses, the five objects of the senses, then five working senses and then three subtle elements, bringing the elements to twenty three. Then twenty fourth consideration is the Maha Tattva – the sum total of the entire material elements from which the entire material nature has evolved. And then they come to a consideration that although the entire material nature has been analysed, but this analysis of the material nature is objective.

This is the object, but the object cannot exist without the subject. So who is the subject? The subject is "I". I am therefore this world is, if I am not here then the world would not be here. So this is how they come to the spiritual consideration, transcending the material nature. The twenty fifth consideration is the soul. And then they consider that these souls are many and minute. Therefore they must have a source or origin. So that is the twenty-sixth consideration, the Supersoul. So Sankhya philosophy very systematically analysed (the difference between matter and spirit) whereas Bhagavad Gita gives us the conclusion just in two verses – Krishna says:

**bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuh
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā [BG 7.4]**

This material nature which is the separated energy of the Lord comprises of eight elements – earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. And then He considers: *apareyam itas tv anyāṁ* - this material nature which is the separated energy of the Lord is the inferior energy of the Lord, but this inferior energy is sustained by the superior energy from which the spirit soul comes from or sustained by the spirit soul, who is coming from the superior spiritual nature. So the point is that in this way, it has been clearly analysed that the difference between matter and spirit. The body and soul. In the beginning also Krishna pointed out, is there –

**dehino 'smin yathā dehe
tathā dehāntara-prāptir
dhīras tatra na muhyati [BG 2.13]**

The body is there and the owner of the body is also there. This "deha" is transient, *kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā*, but the "deha" is transient but the "dehi – the soul", is constant. The soul is unchanging. So in this way systematically, step by step, after analysing matter, we come to the spiritual reality. And then it goes on further and further and finally Krishna's identity as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is established. And then Krishna points out how His parts and parcels can be connected to Him through devotional service. And when we become connected to Krishna, we understand Krishna, then we get to see Krishna's reality, Krishna's nature, Krishna's pastimes. And the ultimate consideration of Krishna's pastimes is His dealings with His Gopis, which has been revealed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.



Rasa Lila - Realizing Krishna's Position, The Supreme Enjoyer

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings is that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna the son of Nanda Maharaja. He is emphatically pointing out, the son of Nanda Maharaj, Krishna, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead - Ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam. His abode is Vrindavan. And ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇā yā kalpita. The way the cowherd damsels of Vrindavan displayed their devotion to Krishna – that is the highest form of devotion.

So that is Mahaprabhu's teachings. So in this way through Srila Prabhupada's mercy, through Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings we get to understand who Krishna is. And then only we will learn to appreciate, we will become eligible to appreciate Krishna's most wonderful pastimes in Vrindavan, which culminates into Rasa dance.

jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ
śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakās
tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvām vicinvate

This is the Gopi-Gita, the 31st chapter of the 10th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. The Gopis were dancing with Krishna, 16,000 Gopis were dancing with 16,000 Krishnas. And at one point, Krishna just left them because Srimati Radharani became somewhat upset with Krishna. So when Srimati Radharani left the Rasa dance, Krishna also left with Radharani. And all the Gopis, all of a sudden becoming bereft of Krishna's association, started to search for Krishna. Searching for Krishna they came to the bank of Yamuna and they started to express the agony in their heart. And that is what Gopi-Gita is.

The song that Krishna sang is Bhagavad Gita, now this is Gopi-Gita, the song of separation of the Gopis. And the Gopis are telling - jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ. Krishna – since you have taken birth in Vraja, in Vrindavan, Vrindavan has become glorified. And śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi – Indira, Laxmidevi, is constantly residing here since then, because You have taken birth here.





“Dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakās – due to your birth, Vrindavan has achieved an inconceivable good fortune but look at our condition, we have become so unfortunate due to being bereft of your association and please appear to us - dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakās – Oh dear Krishna please come and give us Your darshan. śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat- sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dṛśā. The beauty of Your face is like the lotus that bloomed in the Sharad season. “Surata-nātha te ’śulka-dāsikā – Oh Lord of love, we are Your unpaid maid servants - te ’śulka-dāsikā. And look what you are doing to us, by not giving Your darshan to us,

You’re killing us and You will get the blame of killing the innocent maid servants who have completed offered themselves to You without any price. You have saved us from different situations – from the poisonous lake - viṣa-jalāpyayād vyāla-rākṣasād, varṣa-mārutād vaidyutānalāt, from the thunderbolt, from the forest fire and varṣa-mārutād – and from the wind and storm, from the serpent Aghasura, from the other demons. Vṛṣa-mayātmajād – You have saved us from the bull demon, Aristasura. And in this way You have saved us from all kinds of fear. And ṛṣabha te vayaṃ - Oh best of all personalities please rakṣitā muhuḥ - You have always saved us all the time, now why aren’t You saving us at this very very dangerous situation.

Na khalu gopikā-nandano bhavān - Krishna, You are not actually the son of the Gopi Yasoda. “Akhila-dehinām antarātma-dṛk” – You are the Supersoul of all living entities. “Vikhanasārthito viśva-guptaye” – in order to save the world, due to the prayer of Lord Brahma, sakha udeyivān sātvatām kule – You appeared in the Satvata dynasty, the Yadu Dynasty.

