

# The Gopi-s' Question to Krishna

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Into English and within square brackets: Kid Samuelsson;

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[...] Now comes the renowned passage [X.32.16 ff.], which truly makes the full significance and purity, i.e. the freedom from every expectation of personal happiness, of this fifth bhakti-rasa absolutely clear.

I don't know if you fully understand what I mean. It is simply ridiculous to think that God in His Own realm can be the Lord, Father, Friend, Child etc., with all the intimate relations these forms of God's being involve, but on no account play the Lover and transgress the moral limits that *human beings* have laid down for *Him, God* (!!). I am sorry to say, however, that Adhokshaja [Name of Krishna: He who refuses to be comprehended by the senses and the mind.] does not care about the regulations human beings want to impute to Him, and there is nothing whatsoever indicating that self-righteous little fellows could be right when they explain the fifth rasa as "images".

Through God's grace, through the authority of the Word Revelation, however, an insight into the play of the fifth rasa is given, so that the person who only understands this properly, and listens to the explanations thereof with absolute certainty of belief that service of God is the eternal purpose of life, will be carried away by the will to serve the wondrous co-players who serve in this fifth rasa, because this play of God – when it manifests – throws everything we can find of "love" and "love play" in the world of Maya into the shade – *as all His lila-s do*, ridiculing all worldly service, all worldly friendship, all worldly parental love for the child.

After listening to the account of the Child Krishna and Yashoda there is simply no fascination left for the parental love that is to be found in the world, and the impulse is felt to serve the noble Yashoda and those who serve her – and it is exactly the same with this fifth rasa.

**The gopi-s' question:** "There are those who serve others in the same way as they are served by them; those who serve others, even when they are not served by them; on the other hand, there are also those who do not serve anyone at all, whether they are served or not. Tell us truthfully, how matters stand in this respect!" (In other words, which of these groups You belong to.)

**Krishna's answer** (His opinion of the first group): “Oh female friends, those who serve each other mutually [with a selfish motive], they do so because, in the end, they endeavour for their own good. In this kind of service there is neither noble-mindedness nor religion, the motive is entirely selfish – nothing else.”

This means that if Krishna and the gopi-s had served each other because at the bottom of their heart they had been expecting personal joy in return for their service, they would both belong to this group. Here you can see how Krishna forcibly rejects all this, and how the so-called bhakti with a motive is completely disregarded, whether it concerns bhakti for the sake of deliverance [from the cycle of birth and death] or experiencing God etc.

Krishna's opinion regarding the second group: “There are those who are compassionate and those who are parents, those who serve those who do not serve. In this form of service there is no low-mindedness to be found, only religion and noble-mindedness.”

Neither Krishna nor the gopi-s can belong to this group, because they serve each other mutually [without a selfish motive].

Krishna's opinion of the third and fourth group: “There are some who do not serve others, whether the others serve [them] or not. They either find all joy in themselves or have attained everything they have craved for; ungrateful creatures, enemies of the masters and elders.

But I, oh my female friends, do not serve them – animals without right understanding – even when they serve. I do not serve them, so that they may develop the right inclination for proper service (in other words, endeavour to serve in the way *I* appreciate), so that they think only of this and nothing else, like a wealthy person who has lost his fortune does not think of anything else.”

This means: as long as someone does not want to serve (vritti) for the sake of His service (anuvritti), a response from Krishna is out of the question. Krishna has showed mankind the paths they have to follow; the fruit they obtain corresponds with the path they follow (ye yatha etc. in the Gita [4.11]). Intentionally, Krishna Himself, however, does not enter into the picture as long as we want to serve Him *with the motive* that He will serve us in the same way (like the terrible first group). The person who does not [yet] have [pure] bhakti, bhakti without an ulterior motive, shall concentrate fully on this and not think of anything else, in the same way as someone who has lost all his money does not think of anything else. If Krishna gave him an experience of God etc., he would never attain pure bhakti and thereby realization of the service, i.e. attain the rasa of the serving love, never be able to experience what service is and the joy it implies. It is only this pure bhakti without ulterior motive that finally makes God submit and reveal Himself [to His bhakta].

Now Krishna speaks of Himself and the gopi-s: “You, frail (women), for My sake you have ceased to care for what the world and the Vedas say, and for what is yours (things and humans). I am your Beloved, you are the beloved. You must not be angry with Me, the Beloved, *because I was invisible and served in secret* (paroksham, adv.; i.e. saw and heard what you said and did), so that you should dedicate yourself completely to Me.”

That is to say, in the case of His beloved, not so that they should get the inclination to dedicate themselves to Him (anuvritti-vrittaya; as in the previous verse, concerning those He does not respond to) because His beloved already have this inclination to dedicate themselves to Him. He made Himself invisible with the intention to intensify their dedication to Him, but He served them, in contrast to those in the previous verse, whom He does not serve. He was invisible to them and His service of them could only be to see and hear what they did etc. He could not serve them directly, however, as long as He still wanted to be invisible to them – in order to heighten their dedication to Him even more. He is fully under the sway of their pure service and ask them not to be angry with Him.

“Even after life times as long as that of the creator Brahma, I am not able to make up for what you do for My sake; in utmost purity you have communion of love with Me. That you have completely torn apart the fetters of hearth and home, which are so difficult to overcome, and serve Me – this service itself is your reward.”

Please, not with emphasis on that they have torn the fetters apart, but having torn the fetters apart, *they serve Him*. This is what is essential, their service is their reward. The fetters are difficult to overcome – here you must watch out again! Already in X.14.35 you have the statement of Brahma, saying that the vrajavasi-s have everything they have only for His sake, and he wonders what Krishna could give them, something that could be the equivalent of their service of Him. To the gopi-s, the fetters to the house, to home and family were never fetters to the house out of selfishness, because the house was their house, the seeming husband was their husband only *for the sake of Krishna’s joy* – and *for Krishna’s sake* they generally avoid to betray their love for Him.

But when they perceive the sound of the flute, which summons the gopi-s to the rasa play, then they forget all cautiousness for Krishna’s sake – and because He is Bhagavan and He is calling them, nothing happened that could have made the vrajavasi-s believe that the gopi-s were with Krishna in the forest. Everyone believed that the gopi-s were at home with them, as you have seen above. The fetters of the house were so difficult [to break] because the gopi-s had worn them so long for Krishna’s sake. How could they bear that some reproach was brought upon Krishna? These fetters they wear for His sake – sticking to the rules of family life etc. –

they now tear apart, and everything they do during the rasa play, they do for Krishna's sake. And they do this because He called them, not by their own efforts.

In the case of the gopi-s, the fetters were not difficult to break because they were fetters that circumscribed their selfishness – no, they were fetters they wore for His sake and until now had not broken. But now they break them for His sake.

That a bhakta breaks the fetters that in his selfishness bind him to home and family, this has been shown by almost innumerable examples in the Bhagavatam and elsewhere – for this purpose the example of the gopi-s is not necessary, and this is not a reason for Krishna to praise them. It is the fetters to home and family, which they have kept so long for His sake, that they now break for His sake; and the fetters are difficult to break, because they accepted them for His sake.

From the passage above, which is spoken by Brahma, it must be clear to you how extremely exalted the vrajavasi-s are, compared with all yogi-s, jnani-s, karmi-s and the bhakta-s who have not yet pure bhakti – because the last-mentioned still do everything for the sake of their own happiness; their own atma is dear to them because it conveys the happiness associated with the expressionless Brahma – when it shines forth or when the atma enters into it etc. To the vrajavasi-s it is not only their own atma who is dear to them, but all they have, house and home, relatives etc., all is dear to them for His sake; they own it only for the sake of His joy, Krishna's joy.

I hope it is fairly clear to you how much the gopi-lila and the rasa etc. have been misunderstood and jotted down by people who cannot remember what have been said a few lines before, when they translate the next line.

As you see, I have inserted this conversation between Krishna and the gopi-s, because it is exactly this conversation that throws a new light on the signification of gopi-s' prema, and why the rasa play and the understanding thereof are so immensely important. Here in our world, even the most noble approach still has a savour of selfishness, yes all religion, in which there is still the least expectation of bliss and to taste bliss, and the will to serve God with the purpose of tasting the happiness of bliss, is nothing but Maya's mud. [...]

(Sadananda, Corrections, page 241–243)