

The Fetters of the Gopi-s

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Into English and within square brackets: Kid Samuelsson;

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[...] “You have fully cut asunder the fetters that bound you to your home, fetters that are difficult to break, and serve Me lovingly.” [Bha.X.32.22]

Krishna speaks here, having in view the gopi-s’ feeling of being married, that they *believe* themselves to be married and to be mortal beings. In the text itself there is not a word about the gopi-s having fetters of *samsara*, and to say that they were selfish and then vanquished their selfishness is a gross defamation of the gopi-s. [...] According to *Brahma* [in his stuti, Bha.X.14], the vraja-vasi-s’ house, family etc., all they have, their atma, their hopes are only for Krishna’s sake.

In general, the gopi-s are very careful *not to give Krishna a bad reputation* among the cowherds, a reputation of being a *seducer*. They are careful *for His sake*, not for the sake of *their own* reputation, but when He calls them to the rasa-play, then they forget everything and run to Him *immediately*. It is *not* that they *hesitate* to run to Him in the rasa-lila – in their belief to be married women, feeling themselves to be adulteresses – they simply forget *everything* and run to Him *immediately*.

Generally, however, they observe their duties, the duties incumbent on them as wives of cowherds, which they believe they are. They do this for Krishna’s sake, not out of “samsara” or selfishness [...]. They wear these fetters, these duties, for Krishna’s sake, but here, during the rasa-play, they transgress these bounds *for His sake* [immediately, without hesitation]. Higher than what people think of Him, His joy is their joy, which He is now calling them to.

As you know from Shuka’s answer to Parikshit’s question, the gopi-s were not married [to the cowherds] at all. The cowherds always had *their* wives by their side, they did not marry Radha or the other gopi-s at all. Already during the celebration of matrimony they married gopi-s who resembled Radha and the others gopi-s. Radha does not know this, however, and Krishna does not destroy this conception of Hers.

In his Krishna-Sandarbha and Gopala-Champu, Jiva Gosvami has collected all these details from Skanda-, Brahma-, Brahmanda- and Brahmavaivarta-Purana and other sources. There is no one who is betrayed in Vraja, as in the world of Maya and the adulterer. The first verse of

the rasa-chapters [X.29.1] says that Krishna *particularly uses Yogamaya* in His lila with the gopi-s. [...]

There is not a single word in the text saying that the gopi-s were shut up in their chambers by their men. To begin with, no one at all knows why these gopi-s suddenly are running away like wild, neither the older nor the younger of the cowherds and cowherdesses. And the husbands even less. [...] Shuka explains to Parikshit: “The cowherds were not angry at all, because Krishna’s mighty power had produced a kind of mental derangement in them – they were of the opinion that their own wives were by their side.” (X.33.37)

Now you think clearly, please. This lila is just as complicated or even more complicated than Krishna’s lila with the calves and the boys. From other passages, from the words of the gopi-s in chapter 29 and 32, and Shuka’s description (see later in my notes), it is evident that the gopi-s are Krishna’s shakti-s and wedded wives. The gopa-s and everyone else know that they were married. As you know, Krishna had also told the gopi girls that they were to be His wives. (ch. 22) No one should think that adultery is praised or is only used as a “metaphor” here in the Bhagavatam!!! Adultery is never “pure” love, as Krishna and Uddhava and others call gopi-s’ love!!

As Shuka says, the husbands etc. did not throw suspicion either on Krishna or the gopi-s. During the time when the gopi-s were in the woods, the gopa-s actually saw that they were with them. Yes, not only the husbands, it says “the inhabitants of Vraja”, i.e. also their parents, their parents-in-law, their brothers, their kinsfolk etc.

But why does it say, “They were of the opinion...”? Since the wives of the gopa-s created by Yogamaya were very much *alike* the true gopi-s, the latter were never touched by the husbands in any way. [...]

The gopa-s were thus lawfully married to gopi-s – *the gopis created by Yogamaya, who are very much alike Krishna’s gopi-s*. And since they are very much alike the true gopi-s, the cowherds, enchanted by Yogamaya, believe that the true gopi-s are with them – without actually being so. As soon as the day is dawning these wives disappear and Krishna’s gopi-s – who believe themselves to be married [to their so-called husbands] – return to their houses. [...]

Now it says, “Some gopi-s were in their houses and could not come out”. Full of anxious love they closed their eyes, completely lost in thoughts of Krishna.” (X.29.9) [...] Because of their loving care etc. for Him (tat), they cannot do anything else than to forget everything else they have in their minds, and for His sake exclusively think of Him.

In his stuti Brahma says [...] that the vrajavasi-s – *not* only the gopi-s – have all they have, within and without, only for His sake, to give Him joy. Yashoda cooked His milk for His sake, and for His sake she left Him.

Krishna’s gopi-s have their supposed husbands and homes for Krishna’s sake. But when Krishna calls them to render special service, then they leave everything they have for His sake, or as those mentioned here, who *tried to* leave everything, but *to no avail*. Here you can see how Krishna’s gopi-s have a more intensive, [self-]hypnotizing love for Krishna. In their will to serve, in their loving care for Him, they are completely lost in thoughts of Him, unable to think of anything else.

“They, whose happiness (in their hope to come to [serve] Krishna in the woods) was gone, attained great joy through the embrace of Krishna, Whom they had attained by exclusive thinking of Him. Through the severe agony of unbearable separation from the Beloved, everything dreadful (the obstacles standing in their way) had now been destroyed.” (Bhagavatam X.29,10–11) “Yes, they came together with Him, the most Precious of the precious, in spite of thinking that He was their Lover (and not their Husband). They left the body of attachments and became completely free – immediately – from the attachment to their house.”

As I have already said, it is a distinctive feature even of anuraga that Krishna becomes visible and “shines forth” [visphurti]. In the even more intensive stage of prema, i.e. mahabhava, one directly plays with Him [avirbhava].

They don’t experience Him “in meditation”. They experience Him because they care for Him only for His sake, and think of Him in the deepest possible way. They think that Krishna is their lover and that they are married [to others]. But now they leave their awareness of being on earth and being married [to others], and know Him as He is in the lila which is not visible on earth, as their true Husband, from Whom they are not separated at all. That they abandon a body made of Maya’s guna-s is out of the question. [...] Krishna’s Own co-players *never* have a body consisting of the three guna-s of Maya. [...]

[In his translation of a part of Shrimad-Bhagavata-Mahatmyam, Svami writes: “Yes, in the midst of these eternal co-players, who in the prakata-prakasha, *the* form of being and expression of His realm that becomes manifest (prakata) on earth, believe and experience themselves to be human beings, in this manifest Vraja, in the district of Mathura, gopa-s and gopi-s are born, who truly *are* mere human beings, as for example *the* gopis, who could not rush to the rasa-

play, but abandoned their body consisting of the guna-s, and then, in their new deha (cit-body) of a parishada (God's Own co-player) entered the rasa-lila.]

I give you the passage from Uddhava's message here: "The noble ones, who could not come to Me at night, to the rasa-play, when I played in the woods, and who remained at the cowherd settlement, by complete absorption in My nature and My power (virya), they came to Me." (Bha.X.47.37) "The women of Vraja perceived what their Beloved instructed them to do. Through His message they remembered this, and deeply gladdened at heart they told Uddhava ..." etc. Here Krishna gives them the practical instructions, *what* the gopis shall do until He returns to Vraja. [...]

God's realm is everywhere. During particular circumstances and particularly intense serving Love, the gopi-s perceive that Krishna is present in the realm that never becomes visible on earth [Goloka], and they immediately lose the awareness that they are here on earth and that He is not with them or that they could not be with Him – and the awareness of the gopi *here* becomes one with the identical gopi *in the realm of the Absolute [Goloka]*, and she immediately has rasa-lila etc. with Him in His invisible realm. [...]

According to God's Word Revelation, God's realm, His eternal form and His eternal co-players are always present; at certain times His realm becomes visible in the world, it doubles, so to say. The fullness is here, the fullness is there. At certain moments, every prema-bhakta can experience that the eternally present invisible realm becomes visible, that it *shines forth*. This happens when his longing for service reaches a certain intensity. And the gopi-s experience this to a very great extent, because they are all Krishna's eternal beloved and wives since eternity, and have maha-bhava, anuraga etc.

In addition to this, just before the rasa-lila[-chapters in the Bhagavatam], you have the account, in which Krishna shows them their and His own realm [Goloka] that never becomes manifest in the world [X.28]. [...]

(Sadananda, Corrections, page 214 ff.)