

SHRI SUBODHINI

These Subodhini passages are taken from The Venu Gita, Shri Vallabhacharya's teachings on the Song of the Flute as well as from the Chira Haran Lila when Shri Krishna stole the Gopis clothes in order to award them divine garments that transformed their lives. Both chapters are found in the tenth canto of the Shrimad Bhagavatam. The Shri Subodhini contains the essences of the Master's devotional heart. It is a refined blend of exalted Vedantic teaching infused with the bhava of the Vrindavan Gopis. It gives, as its name implies, beautiful intelligence.

SHRI KRISHNA AWAKENS

Before there is attachment however, love must arise and only Shri Hari can cause this awakening...Lila is replete with purpose and Shri Krishna awakens only those whose time has come. Others simply will not respond to His calling.

SHRI KRISHNA IS THE LORD OF SPRING

Shri Krishna is the Lord of Spring, the supreme season of love. Shri Hari is comprised of nectar, His bhava supports the conjugal exchange.

THE GREATEST REWARD

The Svaminis know of no greater reward for those endowed with eyes, then to behold Shri Krishna and Balaram playing their flutes and herding cows.

DIVINE NECTAR

Divine nectar is independent. It is not tasted by practice. It arrives on its own accord. It is concealed. It resides and develops in the realms of utmost secrecy. When it is too revealed, improperly displayed or unguarded, it vanishes. To protect this delicate devotional elixir, Shri Krishna wears cloth as brilliant as gold. It baffles and bedazzles.

VEILED GLORY

What is profound cannot be inappropriately displayed. For this reason Shri Hari uses maya to veil His own glory. When His golden shawl, His *pitambar* is so radiant that it is impossible to gaze at, then what to speak of the *ras* that surges behind it in the form of Shri Krishna ?

SHRI KRISHNA LIKES THE SUBLIME

Shri Krishna only likes what is sublime and delightful. It is only when nectar completely engulfs the soul that the blessed one can come face to face with Shri Hari. This is a divine state of consciousness wherein the bhakta becomes oblivious to the world.

REVERSED ROLES

First Shri Krishna enjoyed the Gopis and then Shri Krishna was enjoyed by them. The roles became reversed in the surge of grace. The Svaminis enjoyed Shri Krishna the way He enjoyed them.

LOTUS FEET

Shri Krishna's lotus feet are the very form of devotion. They purify. They have appeared not only for play, but to establish devotion in Hari's people.

SECRET TEACHING

Krishna's essence is His love. His *bhava* for Shri Svaminiji is the true meaning of Blissful Krishna. It is also the secret essential teaching of the Blessed Path.

THE FLUTE'S CALL

The call of Shri Hari's flute is enchanting to all, regardless of position or aptitude. It is all-attractive like Shri Krishna.

BLISS PENETRATED

The Gopi's sang and rejoiced. They were oblivious to all the pains of the world. They dallied in the ocean of Supreme Bliss, no longer obstructed by overwhelming desires that blocked their bhakti-filled hearts. Shri Hari's nectar has made its way into their souls. It completely penetrated their beings.

BHAKTI'S GREATNESS

When the unconscious becomes conscious, when rivers stop their flow to listen, the greatness of bhakti is revealed.

SUPREME REWARD

To behold Him with eyes or better yet, with all senses and to imbibe His form, His divine essence is the only reward for us. Liberation, for those who know how to employ the senses in Shri Krishna's pleasure, appears to us as pure bondage. You need to leave behind only one thing: that which is not for His pleasure. The reward for those who experience Shri Krishna's Bliss within and without and through all channels of perception stands far above those who know Him merely as impersonal Brahman, devoid of all attire.

ONE-POINTED LOVE

Our love is one-pointed. We see the Beloved's face everywhere. All forms have become His expansions. Our love for Shri Hari is complete.

RAS

Only when *ras* (nectar) appears can it be tasted. Once it is tasted there is dance and beauty. In *lila*, Shri Krishna reveals esoteric *ras*. Know it to be the supreme secret arising in the company of the Vrindavan Svaminis.

DIVINE ITEMS

Divine items are always filled with consciousness, regardless of what they are or where they live.

UNCOMMON EXPERIENCE

To be totally full of bliss and to have your hairs stand on end; these are not common experiences, yet in Vrindavan even trees and rivers have them.

INDEPENDENT KRISHNA

Shri Krishna is independent and only reveals Himself occasionally. Not even Vrindavan has the power to bring forth His darshan. Only by means of devotion is His vision attained everywhere. Without devotion, however, even Vrindavan becomes devoid of fame.

UNCONDITIONAL LORDSHIP

Whenever you see the simple-minded worship the Blessed Lord unpromptedly, know that Unconditional Lordship has appeared within the world of beings.

REFUGE

When you transcend your lower nature, you attain true knowledge. Then there is refuge and dedication that creates love for Shri Hari's lotus feet.

TWO WISDOMS

Bhagavat jnan (knowledge of Shri Hari) is to know what Shri Krishna needs at any time or place. *Sva jnan* (knowledge of Self) is knowing how to offer magnificent things to Him. When we do not know when, where, how or what types of items to offer Shri Hari, the undertaking becomes fruitless. Know how to connect everything to Him. Know what He likes. By knowing these two wisdoms (knowledge of Shri Hari and Self), worship becomes refined and meaningful.

BLISSFUL SIGHT

The sight of Shri Krishna is blissful and Shri Krishna *sadhana* (devotion practice) is joyous. Blessed is the *bhava* of His attachment. It provides constant elation.

THE ULTIMATE NECTAR

The conjugal mood is described in holy lore as the ultimate *ras*. It is the exalted state, the only true mood. It is the substratum of the true drama and without it, there is simply no taste. For this reason it is held in the highest esteem. As gold is the best metal to adorn the Great One, similarly the amorous mood is the supreme mood. All other nectars are contained within its dimensions and without it, knowers of *ras* could never take delight.

THE BIRDS

They are seers, contemplative and patient. These birds are watching and waiting for Shri Krishna to walk through their

forest. They wait for their great opportunity in the protective arms of the noble Vrindavan woods, who are also considered to be high incarnations. From their elevated branches the winged ones will behold Shri Hari only after relishing the call of His flute.

THE WATERS

It is the natural dharma for rivers and springs to flow, but in Vrindavan, things are very different. The profound desires of the waters' hearts are filled with wisdom and discrimination. The halting of those springs and rivers was not due to weakness or formula. They stopped only to meet with Hari.

THE CLOUD

One who is born and can develop and cultivate devotion to God attains *atmanivedanam*, the blessed state of Soulful Dedication. A cloud perfected *atmanivedanam*. Some compare that cloud to Shri Krishna since she is charitable like Shri Hari. She also shares His hue and like Him, nourishes and helps create life with her nourishing waters. Those who share similar qualities are generally friends. This cloud excels even in friendship. She has given everything she owns to Shri Krishna. Her nectar essence of flowers is freely offered to Shri Hari. It is an act of selfless love.

THE GOVARDHAN HILL

The Govardhan Hill is pure. Govardhan is *nirguna* or full of non-worldly virtues. Although penniless, the Hill offers the

cows, the cowlads, gods, as well as Shri Balaram and Shri Krishna water, grass, caves and roots. The Govardhan Hill is a fine host to its divine guests. For good hospitality four items never leave the saint's abode: A grass mat to sit on, a place on earth to entertain, water to refresh the guest and sweet speech that is pleasing to the mind.

DHARMA FORTUNE

If a person has a doubt concerning the nature of dharma, he should look towards a being who is grounded in it. Only blessed beings receive the fruit of dharma. When dharma is absent, barriers arise. The fortune of true dharma is immense. The person who understands the Dharma Fortune attains fame and is appreciated by all.

SERVICE TO OTHERS

Life and dharma become exquisite when they are employed in the service of others. Activities done with selfish motives are always inferior. Mediocrity reigns when actions mingle with selfish and selfless motives. The highest course of action is exemplified by Rantideva. While he fasted, he gave food to others; his deeds are grounds for liberation.

THE VRINDAVAN TREES

The trees of Vrindavan are most blessed. They support all of life. Their existence is fruitful because they advance the lives of others. This honorable nature is seen in saints. Like trees, saints never turn anyone away who desires something that

they can provide. They are rare beings of saintly nature... When a tree dies, its branches no longer obstruct the bird's view and its body can be cut and used as fuel. Even after dying, like a great renunciate, the tree is always beyond the snares of death.

THE TREE'S OPEN HOME

The home of a tree is its shade and it is open to all. Human home-owners do not invite everyone in and their guests can also create conflict.

THE TREE'S SERVICE

Trees serve and protect us from excessive heat, cold and rain. Dharma is found in the roots of trees. They provide us with medicinal herbs... From the tree's wood and bark, garments and vessels are made. Even the tree's previously enjoyed dead branches are useful, unlike women and men's brittle bodies that can no longer be enjoyed. The fragrance of trees constitutes their fame. The fame of a man or his name does not serve us at all. The inner essence of trees is their resin. It is their speech. Even ash from the burned tree is useful in washing things. The ashes from human cremations are useless and considered impure. When the dead body becomes a ghost, purification rites have to be performed for the ultimate release of the deceased. The partially burned portions of a tree become coal, an excellent heating source while the charred remains of a dead body should not even be touched. Finally, the small branches of a tree are like good servants. Trees fulfill the wishes of all people.

ACCOMPLISHED BEINGS

Birth is productive when there are no obstructing selfish concerns. Enlightened beings see all things, even their children and family existing by the wish of Hari. Accomplished ones do not feel as though they are the doers in any situation.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS

The blessed ones who understand that Bhagavan has created everything for everyone use all they have for the benefit of others. They are like God, they are equal to an *avatar*. Their births are fruitful.

TOTAL OFFERING

Shri Krishna's form of wisdom outshines a billion suns. Every mind and heart is under His hold. When the mind is offered to Him, everything associated with that being becomes dedicated. This total offering is revealed when Shri Krishna tells the Gopis they are, "absorbed into Me." They are not only dedicated but they are enthralled and totally established.

HIS PERSONAL TOUCH

He knows that the Gopis did not come to Him for worldly marriage or sensual enjoyment. They do not contradict the ways of the world nor do they desire wisdom. Those blessed girls contemplated the situation from every angle and arrived

there only for love. They confirm this by longing to touch His feet. Through Bhakti Yoga they only desired Shri Krishna.

They crave His devotional touch and now have no interest in even hearing about Him. There is no longer any desire to practice anything else, not even the devotion of being His friend. All they want is His personal contact. It is not merely a longing, but a clear desire to employ their bodies and senses in the sacred act.

ACTION AND KNOWLEDGE

Shri Krishna explains, "Gopis, this act of folding your hands will permeate everything with knowledge. It occurs when your power of action contained in the folding of your hands is raised towards your head, the seat of knowledge. This protects your Self from the worldly flow and establishes you firmly with Me. Then wisdom arises everywhere and God is pleased. Knowers of sacred lore tell us that the reward is attained when actions mature and converge with knowledge. Then there is true accomplishment!"

BHAKTI DHARMA

Like good association with other bhaktas allows for the attainment of God, similarly when the Gopis' garments had the association of the Kadamba tree, who was a great bhakta, they became filled with devotional dharma.

THE GOPI'S VIRTUES

The virtues that appear in the various Gopis are all examples for us to understand the nature of divine attributes. The Gopis

of Vrindavan are not part of the worldly creation. They appear only for the sake of *lila*. They are different *bhava* forms that appear in response to Shri Krishna Who is the embodiment of the unshakeable nectar. Know that Shri Krishna's *lila* creation is eternal and totally divine. It is not part of the world that Brahma creates, but it is purely Shri Krishna's.

HIS MERE PRESENCE

Since Shri Krishna is the Lord of the lord of Yogis, He is able to remove imperfections from within others. A single lord of Yogis is able to enter a being and cleanse that soul of impurities wherever he or she may reside through his power of Yoga. Shri Krishna is the Lord of even those lords of yogis and so He does not even have to enter them to remove their shortcomings. Everything is accomplished through His mere presence.

SHRI KRISHNA ONLY KNOWS HIS BHAKTAS

Shri Krishna is all-knowing, but when He engages in the grace-filled cause, He is only aware of His bhaktas, His loving devotees. Shri Krishna perfectly supports all contradictions. The stealing of the Gopi's garments is a part of His grace-filled *lila*. There is no fault here. Shri Krishna does not contradict any lawful program and this play of His contains supreme merit.