

## Part Two

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# THE DESCENT OF RADHA-KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

## NARD MUNI CAME TO SEE NARAYAN TO ASK ABOUT KRISHNA'S BIRTH STORY

With the studied politeness of gesture, Nard Muni [A great disciple of Krishna] came to see Narayan [In the Bhagavata Purana, Narayan is referred to as Para Brahman, or Supreme Lord]. His mind darted backward in conjectures, and forward in provisions, of what he was about to ask. He prostrated in front of Narayan, and with great unpretentiousness, supplicated to Narayan to recount the story of Krishna's birth.



Imagery of young Nard Muni with his Veena  
(Credit: Hindu Art painting) Young Nard Muni

Nard said, "Gurudeva, please be so condescending as to narrate how Krishna was born. I know any person who is fortunate enough to hear Shree Krishna leela [Pastimes of Krishna with Radha and Gopis of Braj Brindaban] will not suffer the cycle of life and death anymore. Hari's life story is like a torch of knowledge that guides all the living beings towards Hari-worship."

Narda continued. "How did Shree Krishna, along with Radha who possesses *hladini shakti* [pleasure-rendering power], leave Golak [Divine world; Celestial abode] and appear as avatar [Incarnation] at the same place as terrestrial Brindaban? And why did Krishna make Radha suffer the pang of separation for the whole hundred years, and in the end, how did both return together to Golak." [Because of Krishna, Brindaban is often referred to as Golak Dham].

Narayan's face glowed and he began to recount: "Narda, you are the virtuous torch bearer of the family, the pillar of devotion with a pure heart. You are the plenipotentiary and cupbearer to the creator. You walk around with your veena to bring redemption to the world.



Krishna Temple (R) next to an old mosque (L) in Mathura (1980).  
Mathura is 15 km away from Brindaban. 30 mts by road.

And now, you have come to me to hear the exquisite leela of Shree Hari. As it is, whenever there is a devotional chant about Shree Krishna leela, there is a confluence of all the *Tirth* [Holy place, especially by a river like the Ganges, where the heaven and earth meet] There will be an unplanned gathering of all the Muni and Rishi.

Blessed are those people who are fortunate to hear the recitation and have faith in Hari. They will be blessed with a renewal of hope and happiness. He, who carols Hari leela with unadulterated devotion, will have his sins absolved, as well as those of his family members for hundred generations.

Are you aware Nard that, there are nine aptitudes which are essential for selfless devotion to Hari: (1) dedication, (2) making a bond, (3) religious zeal, (4) pure heart like gold, (5) glorifying god (6) using a mantra [sacred word or sound that has a spiritual power], (7) perfection of the soul, (8) being a devotee of Hari, and (9) endowment with mental activity to find truth.

Those who have concerted adoration of Hari, will be free from the hardships and miseries of life, and be safeguarded from oppression by the servants of Yam [Hindu god of Death] forever. And those who tremble in hearing the praise of Hari and shed emotional tears in chanting his name, are the true Vaishnavs. [when I was a young boy, Meitei elderly men used to weep aloud during any *Nat Sankritan* [Singing and dancing while narrating the life and times of Krishna]. I did not know then why they were crying.

You must know Nard that, All the living beings are equal in his eyes. Wherever he dwells, is a place for pilgrimage. The sight of him [idol] will exonerate all your sins. Krishna leela is as expansive as the ocean. They are unintelligible in detail to everyone. You, Nard, are virtuous and so, I will answer your queries succinctly."

## Second Chapter

# CHRONICLE OF THE BIRTH OF SHREE KRISHNA

Beckoning to Nard, Narayan exclaimed, “Oh, great rishi! Shree Krishna leela is sweeter than Amrit [nectar, a drink which will bestow eternal life]. It so happened that, eons ago, in Golak, Radha had an awful quarrel with ShreeDam, a companion and a great devotee of Krishna.

In the heat of the moment during an altercation, Radha looked at ShreeDam with scornful eyes and cursed him that he be born again as a *Daitya* [demon]. True to her words, when the time was ripe, he was reborn as *Shankhachurd daitya* [one of the three families of demons].

Hearing Radha’s profanity, ShreeDam, with a grain of tension and a shadow of treachery in his expression, responded to Radha after a staccato exchange. He pronounced indignantly and in smoldering fury: “Hear me, Radha. This is a travesty. As you have without any compelling reason, sworn at me, I also curse you, that you be born as a human and live as a gopi woman in Braj country on Earth.”

When she heard ShreeDam’s curse, Shreemati Radhika was petrified. She could not move or think anything straight. She had gone completely white and began to shake like a leaf. Not knowing what to do, she sent for her Lord Govind [Cow-finder, another name of Krishna]. She reported the incident to him amidst uncontrollable sobbing.



An artist’s impression of Radharani  
(Courtesy: ISKON)

Consumed with dismay, Radha asked Krishna for counsel to counter ShreeDam’s curse. She appealed to him that she was weak and helpless and that he was her strength, the savior of all the living beings, as well as the *kalpbriksha* [wish-full-filling divine tree of all his devotees].

Radha bemoaned, “Oh Hari, must I leave this divine world because of ShreeDam’s curse and take birth on Earth as a gopi girl? How would I live without you? My restless heart will pine for you all day and all night. A moment’s separation will be like an eon. I am Radha, your paramour. My heart breaks whenever you are away from me.

I do not want to lose you because of ShreeDam's curse. You are my heart and soul. You are the core of my being. I do not know anyone who is more superb than you. While I am awake or asleep, you are always in my thoughts.

You are my reflection, my knowledge, and your name is my *mantra* [Literal meaning - Mind. An incantation with word or words that is believed to have a special power eg 'OM', 'Hari OM']. I am always ecstatic when I look at your captivating face. I can lose myself all day long, floating in rapture, just thinking about you.

Please assure me that it will not be forever. Your seductive, dark, and lotus-like face is more beguiling than the fresh rain cloud. It never fails to replenish me with my vital energy, in the way the beautiful moon of the month of Autumn provides life sustenance for the *nongyin* bird [Manipuri for a type of pheasant].

Nothing could be more senseless, not to say pointless and contemptible than this curse. How can I go and be born as a gopi woman on Earth? Am I utterly without hope? It is not my wish to say goodbye to you. I have no words that can convey to you the secret agony of my soul."

With her soft eyes full of tears, Radha paused. Full of pity for herself, but with her own restrained elegance, she remained speechless for a bit. Then, with a further surge of emotions Radha broke down again. She began to whine with torrents of tears cascading down her cheeks that are as smooth as glass. "Oh, noble Hari, *mon amour*, please save me.

You are known to be the strength for the weak, and the last resort for destitute humanity. You are the wishing-tree of your devotees. Please help me out, my lord. This wretched Radha is entreating you by falling to your feet. Please do not let me be born as a gopi woman on Earth."