

Part Thirteen

DESCENT OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

RADHA'S WARM RECEPTION TO NARD



Nand Maharaj Temple in Gokul

Radhika, in her natural, relaxed deportment, and with poise and balance, led Nard with other gopis to the Temple, where he was received with incense, flame, chandon, rice, sesame, and flowers. There, he had a sumptuous repast. Radha then sent Nard to a quiet place for a lie-down on a soft and comfortable bed. Nard was exalted at the service provided. He went to relax and spent some time chanting Hari's name.

Meanwhile, all the milkmaids who saw Nard prostrate in front of Radhika, offering his homage with tears in his eyes, came to realise that Radha was indeed the Ishwar (God). They all bowed to her with folded palms in devoted veneration.

They dedicated their hearts and souls to her and felt blessed. They begged to be her adherents in all their births. Radhika observed them with kindness at her heart and then with another illusionary glance (Maya), made them forget all about it.

Jatila came running. Kutila also arrived, having been informed by Radha. They genuflected and bowed to the rishi, with their heads touching his feet. Nard gave them blessings. He told Jatila that he was coming to see her as he needed to be fed many things, such as rice pudding, yogurt, and cheese.

He said he was pushed for time; they needed to hurry up as it would take time to cook; and that they made sure everything like rice grains, sesame seeds, flowers and so on, were available for puja to a *devi*. Hearing Nard's instruction, Jatila in turn, told Radha to organise all these things with the help of her friends.

NARD HELPED TO ORGANISE A PUJA

Nard then directed Jatila that everybody should leave the room and let her daughter-in-law do the puja herself alone with him. Whereupon everybody walked out but was listening and watching clandestinely, to find out what sort of puja it was going to be.

After all the milkmaids had gone out, the rishi offered all those items at the feet of Radha, chanting Vedic mantra including *Naivedium* Mantra [O Dev, please accept this Naivedium (prasad) and make my devotion steady towards you. And please grant me my desired boon].

Radha gave her blessings to Nard, that everything he desired may be fulfilled. She also advised him to eat whatever he wanted and then proceed to do what he had in mind, using his time economically. Following Radha's command, Nard ate the most scrumptious fare he had ever had, and showered blessings on Jatila. He then took leave of Radha and was on his way to Nanda's residence.

Before that, Kutila, who was suspicious by nature, had a peep through a window and saw with her own eyes that the rishi was performing a puja with incantations of mantras at the feet of Radha. She was dumbfounded. Now, she had tangential notions as to who Radha was.

It dawned on her that Radha was indeed, from beyond this world, and that she was an embodiment of Brahma, and the mother of the world. It came to her senses that she was wrong about Radha. She began to feel very guilty about her ill treatment of Radha over the years. An uncomfortable chill was running down her spine.

Kutila began to repent. Full of remorse, she began to fret and murmur to herself, "Oh, Destiny, how strange it is for me! Am I reaping as I sowed? All these years, I have been blind to the precious gem I was holding in my hand.

Overloaded with a heavy burden of shame and guilt for her wrongdoing to Radha, she walked sheepishly into the room, while her body was shuddering violently with fear. She wanted to lay herself at the feet of Radha and ask her for exoneration.

Radha knew the alarm that was causing the remorseful feeling in Kutila's mind. She immediately put her under a spell. When Kutila walked into the room, she forgot what she came in for. She turned abruptly and waout and was back to her original sadistic self.

Seventeenth Chapter

NARD ARRIVED AT THE PALACE OF NAND MAHARAJ

Nard sauntered along with restored confidence and full of indulgence of having done a good job. He chanted the greatness of Hari, accompanied by his veena. The resulting duet of his singing and the acoustic tumult of his veena drew everybody out to the roadside. All paid their deference to the rishi when they saw him walking nonchalantly as if there was no worry for him in this world.

As Nard arrived at the court of Nand Maharaj it was as usual, full of men, courtiers. Everyone had a dull and deadpan face. When the twanging music sound of veena reached their ears, they perked up and soon came to know that Nard muni was on his way to them.

Nard himself, had a flutter in his heart at the thought of meeting moribund Nard and Yashoda. He soon made his appearance at the court of Nand Maharaj. Everybody, including Nand, paid veneration to Nard. He was offered a comfortable seat. A puja was performed in his honour. Having been satisfied with the care and obeisance offered to him, Nard muni asked with empathy about the welfare of Nand and everybody else, as well as about any propitious events in Brindaban.

Nand replied, punctuated with sobs, “What good omen could come to Brindaban! The auspiciousness of Brindaban was Krishna himself. There was nothing left in Brindaban without him. My son was my life. After he left, I had nothing to live for, but death is taking its own time. I am still living. My heart is harder than stone which will not burn with the flame of sorrow that flared up from my separation from Krishna.”

While bemoaning about the absence of Krishna, he suddenly burst into a high-toned cry, calling ‘Krishna, Krishna’, and lay down on the floor, unable to support himself upright. The burst of emotions about the absent Krishna, evoked by the appearance of Nard, choked him, depriving him of his power of speech. Then he conked out.

Nard muni was confounded. He remarked to himself, “Oh Nand Maharaj, your love for Krishna is such a great blessing. I wonder how many good Karmas [Auspicious activities] you have collected over so many of your previous births, because of which you have been granted so much love for Krishna!”

Nard muni, having appreciated Nanda’s deep affection for Krishna, gently sprinkled some water over his face from *kamandalu* [Oblong-shaped pot for water – the elixir of life that Brahma holds in his hand]. Nand revived but did not stop crying despite Rishi’s mitigating words, such as about *dharma* [religious moral laws governing individual conduct], and *Karma* [one’s actions in life].

Nand was not listening. He was looking at Nard’s face but did not see it. It just went through to Krishna’s loving face. So, Nard attracted his attention and said to him, “Stop crying Nand and listen to what I am going to say to you. I am going to organise a meeting for you with your son Krishna. I will be leaving tomorrow to organise it.”

Hearing this, Nand Maharaj stopped weeping and said to Nard while touching his feet, “I know your words are like those scripted in the Vedas. I am now sure that I will see Gopal again. Please do me one more great favour. Kindly let Yashoda have an auspicious sight of you before you go.

She has been grieving for one hundred years because of his estranged son. She had hardly been eating or drinking. She had not been herself anymore. Please give her the good news. She will not believe me if I tell her.”

Nard agreed that he would have a good look at Yashoda’s condition and give her the firsthand information about her meeting Krishna herself. Then, they got up and walked over together to Yashoda’s place.

Eighteenth Chapter

ASTONISHMENT OF NARD AT SEEING THE PITIABLE STATE IN WHICH YASHODA WAS

Nard muni and Nand Maharaj found Yashoda sitting quietly in her room. She was immersed in the thought of her long-lost son. She had selective mutism because of her anxiety disorder. She could not have a long

conversation with anybody. Her personal milkmaid friends, four of them, like *Dhanistan*, were trying to soothe her mental torture in the little ways they could.

When Yashoda saw the muni, she got up and bowed to him. There was a sudden emotional arousal, recalling her love for Balkrishna [Baby Krishna] which overwhelmed her. She stood up and without moving, began to cry like thunder, and then suddenly became quiet and motionless as if she was in shock. She had heavy breathing while tears began to flood her eyes.

Sharing the immense grief of Yashoda Rani over the loss of her son, Nard called out to her saying, “Yashoda, wake up, wake up.” Having failed to bring her out of her suspended animation, Nard planned to use his cosmic energy. He got his veena to call out, “Mama, mama” in Krishna’s voice. It did the trick and achieved the desired result. Jashoda came round.

It is Hari’s leela, sweeter than Amrit. It is an indestructible wealth for humanity.