

Part Fifteen

DESCENT OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

YASHODA TELLING NARD THAT IT WAS HER FAULT THAT KRISHNA LEFT BRAJ.



Yashoda tied baby Krishna with a rope to a wooden rice-pounding mortar to discipline him.(Photo courtesy: ISKON Bangalore).

Yashoda blamed herself for Krishna's departure. She told Nard that it was not the fault of her son Krishna, who went away and never returned. Rather, it was the backwash of her strict parenting, and that Krishna ran away because she disciplined him once when he was very naughty. She narrated, "When he was a little boy, he used to be very wayward. He used to sneak into every house in the neighborhood, and steal yoghurt, white butter, and cheese.

Not only did he eat the stuff and enjoy himself, but he also broke many earthenware unglazed pots containing them. He also fed monkeys with those milky things. He often prevented many cowherds from milking cows and let their calves loose and wander.

When someone rebuked boy Krishna, he retorted in a sharp but witty phrase. People did not mind a couple of times, but he did so frequently that they came to me complaining and asking me to sort him out so that he did not become a delinquent.

One day, I had to fasten him with a rope around his waist and tie him to a wooden rice pounding mortar. I still cannot forget how he looked so frightened and darted around sheepishly before I caught him for that petty chastisement.

Jashoda wept with torrents of tears cascading down the skin on her aging cheeks. She was feeling sorry for herself. While continuing her story, she passed out in mid-sentence. She had no pulse as if she was dead. Nard became panicky and got hold of *kamandalu* water [Water in a kamandalu, the elixir of life, in the hands of gods].

After the muni sprinkled *Kamandalu* water on her face, she revived instantly. Then, he asked Yashoda with *yukti* (expedient) words, how did such an unkind thought come over to her? He tried to make Yashoda feel guiltless, saying, “There was no injustice in disciplining your own child. It is the universal law. It is not sinful. I have told you earlier not to worry. I will certainly, arrange for you to meet your beloved son Krishna.”

Nard muni having pacified Yashoda Rani, departed on his way to meet ShreeDam. He met ShreeDam and other cowherds, who relived their old days when Krishna played so many leelas. Nobody looked happy. They were all miserable and lethargic. They talked about Krishna all the time and cried for him when they met Nard. They blighted themselves for losing Krishna so easily, and repeated in a monotone that he was a gem in their possession which they did not know then.

Everyone despaired. A few were knackered and grouched, lamenting that, “ We made Krishna do all the hard and dirty works. We told him to look for lost cows when cows came home; when we were famished in the forest, we would ask him to find fruits. When demons came and set our houses ablaze, we always asked him for his help.

It is shame that he always did the rough and tumble fights while we just remained mere spectators. In those days we never appreciated all the good tasks he performed. Please tell us *muniji* {respectable muni} whether we would be able to see such a friend again.”

The piety, allegiance, and enthusiasm of these cowherds to Krishna, emotionally touched Nard. He told them to wait for a bit and that they would be seeing Krishna very shortly. Having assuaged their feelings, Nard set off for Dwarka to meet Krishna.

Twenty-First Chapter

NARD CAME TO DWARKA [GATEWAY TO HEAVEN]

Nard had spent enough time making everybody happy in Braj. He then thought it was time to make his trip to the city of Dwarka for the meeting with Krishna. The sooner he thought the faster he arrived in Dwarka.

Narda discovered that the city was more majestic than Amirpour, a city that was built by Vishwakarma, the Hindu god of architecture and engineering. He also built Dwarka and Hastinapur. He built many architectural wonders through the four *yugas* [Ages of time in Hinduism].

It made a big dent in the pride of Indra god. Every structure he built, such as the storied buildings with brick walls, paved roads, sturdy bridges, and well-constructed ponds had no parallels that one could think of.

As Nard approached the huge gate of Dwarka there were fearsome-looking guards at the gate, who would not let anybody go through, regardless of who he or she was; whether an enemy or a Brahmin, a Vaishnav, or Muni/Rishi, without orders from the top.

Nard walked in unhindered, playing his veena, and chanting the name of Hari. There were multitudes of good-looking children playing about. Some were singing songs, some were dancing, and a few of them were playing musical instruments of all sorts.

When they heard Nard's veena music, they looked for it towards the source of the music. Soon, they swarmed around Nard like flies around honey and looked at him with astonishment in their eyes. Some smaller and younger ones were frightened to see his long white hair and ran away. The older boys came to him running and surrounded him.

One or two pulled at his beard. Some others threw dust on him. No one showed any fear of him. They were all wild grandchildren of Krishna. Nothing much in this world ever terrified them.

Nard was not offended. He took it all as playful teasing. He himself was rather high-spirited when someone snatched away his veena. Some dipped their hands into his *jhola* [bag]. A few others twisted their mouths with sardonic smiles and were cheeky and acerbic, showing utter disrespect.

Nard put on a wry smile and with his natural quiet civility he ambled along seemingly unconcerned. Eventually he arrived at the house of Basudev. Seeing Nard muni, Basudev got up, bowed down, and touched his feet with due reverence.

Having brought *Padyam* [Water for washing feet, produced by mixing the sacred waters of all the *tirthas* [sacred places, especially on the banks of a river like Kashi [Varanasi], and adding fragrant substances, they did *argha* [Libation with water].

Nard was seated down on a luxurious mat. Then, Basudev kneeling with folded hands, asked Nard if there was anything that he could do. Much appreciated, Nard enquired of him about his health and welfare.

Basudev replied with all humility that, because of his son Krishna there was no more fear of Kansa. And in Dwarka, as Krishna was very powerful, nothing perverse had happened. Then he asked Nard to wait for a bit while he sent for Krishna to come and pay homage to him at his feet. And he politely besought Nard to be kind enough to bestow all the blessings to his son.

Hearing Basudev talk about Krishna like an ordinary person, Nard beamed, and said, he did not need to send for Krishna. He would go himself to meet him at his residence. He wanted to see how Krishna lived and would like to walk about from door to door in his neighborhood before he went to Krishna's residence.

Having said that, Nard got up and began to walk towards *Mani Mandir* [Name of a Temple] strumming his veena.

Indestructible is the name of HARI, your everlasting companion after your death. It is the most durable wealth. Oh, stupid mind! What are you on about? Understand the truth. Chant Hare Krishna, Krishna, Krishna; Hare, Hare.