

Part Thirty-One

DESCENTION OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

Fifty-Seventh Chapter

SHREEMATI RADHIKA TREATING AYAN WITH COMMISERATION AND COMPASSION



An Artist's impression of gorgeous Radhika
(Courtesy: Radha Krishna Temple, Dallas, USA)

It was in the middle of the day. High noon. The sun was showing its greatest prowess. Apart from his friends - the beautiful lotuses, all the

living beings and plants were suffering from sunburn, dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

The poor Earth was burning. The water in the pond was boiling hot. All the aquatic life was taking shelter in the cool mud. Animals in the forests were parched and searching for water holes. Those that were unsuccessful ended up unconscious, while some of them died due to lack of enough water in their body.

The sandy soil in Braj, on the banks of the mighty Jamuna River, turned into burning sparks that burned the feet of the travellers. All the birds flew away looking for bushy boughs to escape the sun's heat. So many travellers were resting in the shade of leafy trees like the Banshi Bat. The young cowherd boys deserted the grazing fields and trotted homewards, drenched in perspiration, carrying only the thin pointed sticks used for driving cattle.

On this shoddy day and at this crummy hour, Ayan, thirsty with parched throat, famished, and sweating profusely, was returning home with rapid breathing due to dehydration, from the land of the cowshed (gotham). As soon as he reached home, he went to lay down on the cool floor. His throat was so dry that he could hardly engage in chit-chat with anybody.

Radha noticed the exhausted, sluggish, and apathetic Ayan lying on the floor. She shared his distress mentally. With loving care, she took some cold water that was stored in an earthenware pot for him, to quench his thirst.

She then sat down by his side and tried to cool him down by fanning him with a hand-held punkha [fan]. Ayan was blessed with good luck. The power of Tap or Tapas [austere spiritual meditation practice] is such a strangely wonderful thing. It was such a boon to have Radhika as his wife. Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, had been making great efforts to 'reach her divine feet' but without success.

And for Ayan, this sati woman Radha, as his wife, was caring for him, holding a fan in her hand, to relieve some of his discomfort from the scorching heat. Nothing like this ever happened. It was such a surprise for Ayan. He was over the moon.

Ayan saw Radha's full wholesome face and forgot all his suffering. All these years, he never had a chance to have a full glimpse of Radha's face. He was so happy. He quickly sat up on the floor. He could not take his eyes off Radha, who exposed her full countenance. With every blink of his eyes, he felt remorseful for missing such a gorgeous face and for so long. Goose pimples pricked his body from the tickling excitement. He felt like weeping with such joyousness.

The story of Savitri [& Satyavan] came fleetingly over his mind, which he linked to Radha's genuine devotion to him. Likewise, many strange thoughts, albeit delightful, were zooming round in his head. He was so mesmerised that wherever he looked he saw only the gorgeous face of Radha, the beautiful Radha.

Ayan remembered that, even Shree Hari, the Lord of the universe, who is immune to all the illusions, and who is the ultimate reality, or the 'expansion', as propounded in all the Vedas, when he saw the splendid and seraphic face of Radhika, often got so beguiled that he begged for the favour of a place at her feet.

Ayan saw, for the first time, such an aesthetic face of Radha, which was cool, calm, radiant and adorable. He noticed her alert eyes, small proportional nose, perky cheeks, full lips and a slim body in overall harmonious proportions. He was awestruck with an attitudinal feeling of deep respect, love, and profound amazement. A deep courteous feeling erupted in his heart like a fresh fountain that suddenly broke out among the rocks. He shook his head in wonderment and realised that Radha had certain magical powers in her hands.

Meanwhile, Radha, holding a dry leaf of *Kona mana* [palm tree leaf] in her right angelic hand, sat graciously by the side of Ayan, while supporting her left cheek in the palm of her left hand. With the *kona mana* [Manipuri] she would fan Ayan's face to cool him down. After a while, Radha's face became lack-luster mirroring her emotions,

Fifty-Eight Chapter

RADHIKA GAVE DIBYAGYAN TO AYAN

While Radhika was going through the motions of fanning Ayan gently and thoughtfully, sitting by his side, her heart was breaking and burning with ardent love for Krishna. It was that which was visible on her face.

Ayan noticed Radha's face change into anguish. He had his own suspicions, but still, he wondered why. He asked her, "Why my love, are you so unhappy? Your face looks like you are about to burst into tears. Has anybody insulted you, or did you feel slighted by anyone?"

I dare anyone to misbehave towards you while I am here in Braj. Is there any who is foolish enough not to know that fire burns, and a serpent bites? If there is such a person, I swear I will avenge him by slicing his nose and ears with my sword in my hand,

Having heard Ayan's such straightforward protective words, Radha answered with very serious and cultured words that deserved respect. "I know nobody, who would demean a married woman in Braj, while her husband is around. It is not like that. It is only that, today, I have something out of the ordinary, to tell you, as I have decided to open my heart and I want to make a clean breast of it. That is the stress which is showing on

my face, dull and lifeless. First, I suggest you have a bath, a puja, and a meal. Then, we will go to a quiet room, and there, I will tell you *Mahasay* (high-minded) everything.”

Radha then got up and walked over to the kitchen with all kinds of thoughts crisscrossing her turbulent mind. It occurred to her that, so far, she had not cooked a single meal to feed Ayan, because her mother-in-law Jatila loved her so much that she never allowed her to do any cooking, telling her to rest instead. Radha was determined to cook a decent meal that day with the help of her sakhi friends, before she left Ayan’s house for good. She must cook and give the family a meal for goodness’ sake. She will grant Ayan that he will not suffer from hunger for the rest of his life.

She decided that following the meal she would bestow Ayan with *Dibya gyan* [Divine knowledge] and teach him about general behaviour and conduct in society, like doing away with negative attitudes towards the elderly so that they are seen as people. Finally, she will coerce him to say a fond farewell of his own accord.

With this upbeat idea, keeping faith in herself, and looking on the bright side of things, Radha glided into the kitchen and said to Jatila with all the charms at her command, “Dear mother-in-law, today, please let me cook the meal for once.”

Jatila replied with love in her eyes, “I did not let you cook all these years as I did not want your face that is as lovely as the open lotus, to be marred by the intense heat of fire. Like Lakshmi and Saraswati, you should rest to be the light of the house. This is my greatest joy to see you happy.

With this great show of affection for her from Jatila, Radha responded with great respect and by showing her interest in learning something from Jatila, “If not every day, please allow me to cook from time to time. If I do not learn it from you now, I am sure one day, I will have embarrassing moments. Today, for no reason, I feel like doing it. Please, mother-in-law, let me have the chance.” Jatila told Radha to go ahead. So, Radhika

prepared to cook while her *sakhi* friends were preparing the ingredients for various dishes.

With the potential of Annapurna, all the dishes were prepared in no time and with good taste. There were all kinds of haute cuisine. Altogether there were one hundred and eight dishes in total, whose aroma wafted from the kitchen to all the rooms.

Ayan, in the meantime, having had his bath and done his puja, came to the kitchen and sat down on a nice dinner mat, to partake in the sumptuous repast. He did his *achman*. [achman is a purification ritual performed at the beginning of more complex religious ceremonies, which is believed to cure all physical and mental impurities. It involves sipping water and reciting a mantra].

Radhika cooked the vast meal so effortlessly as if it was the easiest thing in the world to do. She began to put the dishes in various cups made of banana leaves for Ayan, who was enjoying the scrumptious meal that even Brahma and Shiva had never had a chance to enjoy. Ayan thought to himself, "How delicious. I have never seen such a meal in my life anywhere, and at any time, let alone eating it. Could it be that by sheer chance, Lakshmi Devi from heaven in the guise of Radha, had been to cook them!

After ruminating over the various sweet and saporous dishes he had just eaten, some of which were tangy, with bright and bold colours, Ayan then got up and walked over to his room in a state of trance, without saying anything to anybody.

Ayan was such a fortunate person. Because of Radhika's kindness, he achieved what was unattainable in somebody's life. A cooked meal by Radhika.

