

Part Thirty-Six

DESCENTION OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

Sixty-Ninth Chapter

NEXT MORNING AT DAYBREAK BRAJABASHIS BEGAN TO DEPART FOR PRABAS



Performing Vedic Fire ceremony of Yagna, a ritual rite, a pooja
(Credit: Royalty-Free Stock photos]

The Brajabashis now, having realised Radha's divine energy of illuminating the darkness, began to pay homage to her as a goddess. They became very humble and respectful to Radhika.

Radhika, seeing the alteration in their behaviour towards her, cast a spell with a half-smile on her face. That caused the people to forget all about what she had done. They were now back to their original selves.

This night was generally called *Krishna Trayodarshi* (thirteenth day in the Hindu lunar month when the moon could be seen just before daybreak). As soon as they saw the moon everyone began their journey toward Prabas, chanting 'Krishna, Krishna'.

The Brajabashis were engaged with only one thought. That was to see Krishna. There was no idle talk among the travellers. They toiled along. No one ever complained of fatigue from their incessant walking, which was less exhausting because of Radha, who took the heat from the Sun.

It took three days for the Brajabashis to arrive at Prabas. At noon on *Amavasya* day, the solar eclipse began in the sky above. At Prabas there was liveliness with commotion and excitement. At this time, all the Brajabashis arrived at the massive main entrance door of the castle.

The splendour of the massive palace swept the Brajabashis off their feet. They knew that there were four such doors that were guarded by innumerable guards, who welcomed them, saying, "Come through, come through, ShreeKrishna will be inside."

Then the hordes of Brajabashis began jostling and pushing each other, rushing for the gate. This caused a great ruckus, yelling and arguing with each other. To control the crowd, the security guards closed the gates and stopped people entering the palace. The guards were heavily armed with swords, bows and arrows, and clubs. After an exchange of heated words with the irate crowd, the guards became very angry with their eyes as red as copper.

Seeing their irritated faces, the frightened crowd began to filter around the palace walls looking for other gates, only to find that all the three others were also locked. The Brajabashis who were very exhausted and disheartened, began to wail, being utterly helpless.

After a brief interlude, they devised a plan to separate them into groups to give some order. Nand, Yashoda, all the elderly gopas, and married couples were assigned to the south gate. Other Brajabashis like Subal, ShreeDam and Sudam along with their cattle were assigned to the east gate. The north gate was allotted to Radharani, Brinda Devi and other Sakhis. Those gopas and gopis, still unaccounted for, were sent to the west gate. Now all the delegated groups of Brajabashis moved and gathered in front of the designated four gates accordingly.

Seventieth Chapter

SHREE BALRAM EXPLODED INTO FITFUL ANGER AT THE VENUE OF YAGYA

When Shree Ram looked around at the crowd that had congregated at the centre of the palace, he could not see any one from Braj. He wondered what had happened to them, when every living being of any description from the three lokas were present, including mountains. It occurred to him that Nard could have forgotten to invite them. Or perhaps, they had all drowned themselves by jumping into the Jamuna River out of despair.

Balram then called Nard and asked him if he forgot to invite the Brajabashis while everybody from three lokas are there? Or did someone tell you not to invite them? "Tell me, you must know". Unable to dam the rising emotions about Yashoda, Nand, all the people of Braj, and Shree Balram burst out sobbing like any other cowherd.

Nard understood the distress in Ram's heart. With great reverence he told Ram the truth of the matter, "All the Brajabashis are alive and spend their time in abject misery since you two brothers left Brindaban. They had not been eating or drinking much. The eyesight of your parents was dwindling because of ceaseless crying, and they lost so much weight that their bodies had become only a skeleton, covered by their skin.

I do not know what to say. I would not have missed to invite the Brajabashis. It was your younger brother who specifically stopped me from inviting them. He felt that if the Brajabashis had been invited this yagya would surely be worthless. I have argued against his decision, but he was adamant. That was why I did not invite them.

Hearing Nard's version of the story, Shree Ram was quite confounded as to what had come over Krishna. He felt that the Brajabashis would surely be hearing about this yagna and what would they think about him for not inviting them. Krishna being young, nobody would blame him, but they would surely curse me for not advising Krishna as I am the older brother.

Ram felt indignant that Krishna was taking liberty too far as his younger brother. If he had reason not to invite them, the least he could do was to inform him why. He wondered if there was any point of his presence at the yagna when his opinions did not count. As his frenzied thoughts were criss-crossing in his brain, his anger was rising. He found himself double taking. Soon Ram left the function. He went to his room and locked himself inside. He lay down on the floor as he could not reconcile himself.

It was an auspicious time. Inside the palace, humans, devas, munis, rishis, and everyone were watching the eclipse in the sky. The munis and rishis told Basudev that it was time to start the yagna. Garg Muni [the priest of the Yadu dynasty] took up his place and told Basudev to begin the yagna.

Krishna also came in and asked his father Basudev to take his seat. At that moment, Basudev, who was standing up, was looking for his eldest son Ram, to apprise him that the yagna was about to start. When he could not see Balram, he sent his servants to look for him. A few people who saw Balram going out in a huff, said he had gone to his residence.

Basudev hurried to Balram's place. He found the door locked. Basudev was very worried and called out his name. Ram, hearing his father shout, got up, opened the door, and then lay in bed without speaking a word. Misery etched his face. Despair clouded his eyes. He looked like a man whose life has lost its meaning.

Seventy-First Chapter

KRISHNA TRIED TO EASE RAM'S ANGUISHED FEELINGS

Quite concerned and upset, Basudev asked him why he was so annoyed just before the start of the yagna? "I only performed it because you two brothers organised it. As I said before, it was beyond my propensity. Everyone from the three lokas are now gathered at this convention. Garg Muni has given the order to begin the yagna. At this critical time, if you are aloof because of your frustration for something, who is going to run this yagna?"

Seeing his father was so aggrieved, Ram said to his father, "Why father, my younger brother is there. He has organised everything. What do I know about it. Let him do as he pleases. My presence there, could be a hinderance to him. He has not invited the people of Braj. Is it because of your insistence?"

Since King Kansa ordered us, two brothers to come over to Mathura, we have never been back to Braj even once, to see our father Nand and mother Yashoda. I now understand that they had been crying and missing us with hardly any food and drinks, so much so that they have now been reduced to skeletons". We seldom remembered all the gopas and gopis.

And now, when such a world-wide function occurs, it is just not fair that we forget them also. Could there be one in this wide world, who is as heartless as we two brothers! My heart is broken. I do not want to be a part of this yagna anymore. I am leaving. Please perform it with my younger brother." Having said this, Balram began to weep.

Hearing Ram's soulful protest Basudev also shed tears. Basudev then immediately sent someone to find Krishna with the message to come immediately and see him there. Krishna came running. He bowed to his father and brother.

Basudev said to Krishna, "I am told that you prevented Nard from inviting the people of Braj. Don't you think this is very cruel that you have not invited Nand and Yashoda who doted on you so much and who brought you up with love and care. Tell me the reason why." Krishna knew his elder brother was fuming. Quick-witted and ingenious, Krishna thought very quickly how to calm him down.

Krishna replied to Basudev with unruffled words that could paint the town red. "Dear papa, I know what you mean. First, please hear me out. "What is the purpose of an invitation? Who do we invite when we have a function? They are only those outside one's family. Never the people in the family. What do you think of Nand and Yashoda? Who are they in relation to us, two brothers? We were born to you and our mother Devaki, but we grew up in the care of Nand and Yashoda.

[Before the twin boys, Ram and Krishna were born from Devaki's womb, Lord Vishnu transported Ram into the womb of Rohini, another wife of Devaki's husband, Vasudeva].

I cannot speak for my elder brother. Nand and Yashoda are very close to me. They are my family. How can I invite them, who for me, had shunned all the pleasures of life, who had starved themselves while calling for me day and night and had been eking out their life with only one wish. That was to see me once more before the end of their life.

What would they think if I were to invite them at this yagna? They would feel that I think about them as strangers. They are likely to jump into the Jamuna River and drown themselves. That was why I stopped Nard from inviting them. Please do not worry. They will all come to attend the yagna when they hear about it. None will be left in Brindaban. Even birds and animals will follow them."

Balram, hearing Krishna's explanation was very delighted. All his anger dissipated, he got up and gave his younger brother a tight hug. The three of them came back to the venue of the yagna. Everyone was pleased to have the sight of these three. Coinciding with the auspicious moment, the yagna had begun, following the instructions as written in the Vedas.

Seventy-Second Chapter

THE STORY OF THE SOUTH GATE

Led by Nand and Yashoda, many Brajabashis walked over to the South Gate, but they were forbidden to enter the palace by the security guards. Nand with folded hands entreated them to allow the Brajabashis to pass through but the guards, instead, became abusive. He was so ashamed that he returned and sat somewhere very quietly and very despondent.

Yashoda noticed how her husband was insulted. She cried for Krishna. Then with a mixture of pride and shame she came forward and with a calming voice, asked the guards to let them in. She pleaded that she was Krishna's mother, she was telling the truth and Krishna would not mind.

The gatekeeper replied. "There is no need for you to come inside. When the yagna is over, Kuber will come out with all the handouts to give them to you all. And I will put in a few good words to him to give you very good gifts especially to you, old woman. Since you are not properly dressed and lacking in decorum, you would be the laughingstock of people inside, if we let you in."

Yashoda responded, "Listen you doorkeeper. Why would the mother of Krishna want riches from others?" The doorkeeper laughed and said, "Are you a bit confused? You think we are fools? Are you trying to convince us that you are Lord Krishna's mother?"

His father and mother, Basudev and Devaki, are in there with him. Here, you are shouting, calling him your son. You are very insulting. If he hears, you will be restrained and fastened with a rope. Go away. Otherwise, you will end up being beaten." Saying this, the gatekeeper came forward threatening them with a long stick.

Seeing the fracas, someone higher in rank, stopped him. "Let her say whatever she wants. Do not do anything. She is saying it with affection for Krishna. You are the one who is incorrect. Just do not let them in. That is all. They are rustic people from hills and forests."

Yashoda Rani began to cry, thumping her chest with her fist and calling Gopal, Gopal. She mourned deeply with tearful eyes, "What a life! I was once said to be fortunate to give birth to Krishna, but it is now so shameful to exist. It is better I die."

While Yashoda was moaning by the South Gate, many sakhas got entry through the West gate.