

Part Thirty-Seven

DESCENTION OF RADHA KRISHNA TO GOLAK DHAM BRINDABAN

Seventy-Third Chapter

THE STORY OF EAST GATE



Eight top gopis of Brindaban, close to Radhika by the Jamuna River
(Credit: Shuttlecock)

ShreeDam and other sakhas came to the east gate along with their cattle. The cows and calves holding their heads high and curling up their tails towards the sky, rushed up to the gate. The sakhas followed them with grim faces. It was such an amazing sight to see all these cattle with tears welling up in their eyes and hoping to see Krishna.

They gave the doorkeepers the fright of their life. They wondered why all these cows and calves wanted to go inside. They had their own ideas. Some of them guessed where they all came from. And a few toyed with the nasty idea that they probably came to break up the yagna.

The guards shouted, “Who are you people? Do you know we are here guarding this gate? Soon there was an array of heavily armed guards standing in rows. They were furious and their eyes were as red as copper. They stood in front of the gate as menacingly as Yamraj’s fiends blocking entry to hell.

Many guards swore and rushed out to beat up those who were standing in front. Sensing the danger, the cow known as Kali, bristling with fury, said to Dhabli, another cow, “Look, look, my dear friend. They are not going to let us in. Are we to return without seeing the auspicious sight of Krishna [Darshan]? They do not know what we are like and how capable we are. I am going to give them the punishment they deserve. I cannot tolerate their awful behaviour anymore. I will kill all of them today.”

The cow Dhabli saw how infuriated her cow friend Kali was. She tried to calm her down with soothing words, “Please chill out my dear friend; hang on for a while. Let us see what else they are planning to do. We have come here for Krishna Darshan. Fighting and killing might cause disruption to the yagna. These fools have not heard about the greatness of Braj. What good will it do to behave like they are doing? So, my friend, forgive them. I am sure Krishna will be organising something for us.”

Hearing what Dhabli said, Kali remained pacified, but tears were running down her cheek because of self-absorbed unhappiness. Soon, all the cows that were equally unhappy, began to moo with different pitches of sound to voice their protests together. The tremendous cacophony that was made by the cows mooing, sadly reverberated all the way to the sky. The security guards began to tremble out of fear.

Likewise, the situation also remained volatile at the west gate, as no one was allowed to enter. All the Brajabashis remained utterly vulnerable and defenseless like new-born children against the loathsome security guards. They remained stymied and prone to indecision. There was no one to lead them. They could only chant Krishna’s name and for him to come to their rescue.

Seventy-Fourth Chapter

THE STORY OF NORTHERN GATE

Thirty-six thousand, one hundred and eight sakhis walked over to the north gate, along with Shreemati Radhika. At the gate, stood guards carrying their bows on their backs and holding swords in their hands. They were quite fearsome. They had red and green sashes across their shoulders. They looked ferocious when they moved about shouting *singhanand* (lion's roar). The chorus was terrifying and animalistic. It felt like the earth was trembling. It was very scary for the poor Brajabashis.

When the guards saw that the oncoming crowd was only women, they were not so intimidated. Walking back and forth, they looked as if they were waiting for an easy kill. They made faces, scowling and grimacing. The gopis, however, were not daunted by their menacing behaviour. They swarmed in, steadily and without pausing.

The Brajabashi women were all skinny and had unkept hair. Their apparel was dirty, and their lips were stone dry. But their faces carried their beauty like gold that was covered by a thin muslin cloth. Their countenances were shining like the cool and ethereal October moon that was covered with thin passing clouds. They had tears overflowing their lower eyelids and they made the nimble sound of 'Krishna, Krishna' coming from their dry mouths like whispering.

As the sakhis got nearer, the guards were now getting a bit panicky. They became agitated at the exhibition of courage by hordes of these gopis. But they stood still in lines, each holding a stick in their hands. As the gate was locked up, the gopis were helpless. They stopped advancing. Tearful Radharani also came to a halt without saying a word, when from among **those eight sakhis** who were escorting her, one who was named

Lalita, approached the guards, and said, “Listen you gatekeepers. You are all intelligent people. This is a yagna where everyone from the three lokas was invited. Why is it that you are stopping us in particular? We are only women. Why are you so frightened of us?”

One gatekeeper responded, “We are not really alarmed about you all, but we are quite puzzled by the sight of so many of you. We do not know who you are or where you came from. Tell us who you are related to. You are dressed like vagabonds though your lovely looks excel the faces of Lakshmi Devi of heaven. Who is this lady leading you? She looks as though she is the queen of Lakshmi, Saraswati, and others. It seems to me that you have come with some illusion for this yagna. Tell us your names and where you come from. If we think you are entitled to go inside, we will let you in. It is the order of the king. We cannot allow anybody in without knowing their details and without invitations.

Hearing what the guards had said, Brinda took over the conversation. She gave a suave reply. “Let me begin with our particulars. Shall we? Let us see where it gets us. Not that there is any point in submitting our particulars to you. This will be enough. We have come to take part in the wonderful yagna of your king; we have come to feast on the looks and the attire of Krishna’s rani; and we have come from a faraway land.

Do not ignore us just looking at our drab and dull dresses. We are impoverished country women. Open the gate. We must go in. I do not know about you, but you are wasting our time. Just because you are the servants of a dishonest lord, it does not mean we are thieves. Are you equally dishonorable because your master is fraudulent? Do you take us as pilferers just because your lord is deceitful. Do not be stupid. Open the gate. We must go in.

Brinda’s intended short implosion enraged the guards to no ends. They were fuming and shouting. One shouted, “You are peasants, country bumkins. You show where you come from. You do not have the polite behaviour of conducting yourselves with royalty. You do not mouth here whatever comes to your mind. Do not utter that type of uncivil language

anymore. You will be in great trouble if the King hears them. We forgive you as you belong to the fair sex. Otherwise, you would have had a taste of this cane.

Seventy-Fifth Chapter

BRINDA DEVI'S ANGER WAS ALSO BOILING INSIDE HER

Faced with the wrath of the doorkeepers, Brinda Devi, undeterred, gave a fitting reply, "Why are you so annoyed when I call your lord a great deceiver? You have got it all wrong. What I am saying is an adulation for him. It is his in-born talent. Since he came of age and as a little boy, he used to steal butter, yoghurt, and cheese from every household in Brindaban. With a leering smile, flirtatious eyes, and a silver-tongue, he used to steal the poor hearts of women.

If you do not believe me, just go, and put this to him and he will reward you for sure. He first fled to Madhupur after conning us. From Madhupur he was chased out by Jarasandha when he went to Dwarka and settled there. News recently came round to Braj that such a crook is now, in the guise of a sadhu, is performing a yagna. So, we have come to see the effort he is making to atone himself and look at his consorts, who he has fooled. Nothing important.

I am warning you not to delay in opening the door and not to try to be unpleasant. You will all curse yourselves once we reach the venue of the yagna and see what we can do for you. Because we are going to arrest the thief, your master, bind him with a rope and carry him home to Braj Brindaban. We feel it is time for him to stop hoodwinking us. This is why we are here to see him. You are all half-wit doorkeepers, and you have no clue as to who we gopis are. That is a shame."

Brinda Devi's ungainly words infuriated the guards as if ghee was poured on a dancing flame. They glared at the gopis as if they wanted to eat them up. They shouted at the top of their voices like the roar of a lion, uttering fearsome words like, "Beat them, cut them up, and kill them all". A few non-too-bright guards advanced with wide open eyes to thrash them.

During this melee, an experienced person of a higher echelon came out to the front with his arms swaying and stopped the guards from rushing forward towards the gopis. He ordered: "Just frighten them; do not lay hands on them. Do you know who they are? What will happen to you if they are Krishna's relatives? They look naive and decent. Do not humour them just because they are women. All you should do is bar them from entering.

On the other side, the temper of Brinda Devi that is normally placid, was rising at the discourteous behaviour of the guards. She became like a raging bull with a red flag before it. With a deadpan face and deadly serious, she said, "Hey, you great devilish men, why are your legs searching for your cremation ground? Why are you hurrying up to go to Yam's hell? Listen carefully, you debauched people. You are going to raise your hands on Shreemati Radhika, who so many saints and divine people, such as Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar, have been meditating for eons, Just to be able to touch her feet? Could there be anyone in this world who is more ignoble than you blaggards! You deserve to be reduced to ashes.

Brinda was so angry that she thought of *sanghar* (annihilation, apocalypse). [Because of her devotion to Lord Vishnu, Brinda Devi had an enormous number of yogic powers].

Whereupon Radharani, sensing what Brinda Devi had in mind, put an illusion in front of Brinda's eyes with her divine hand. And gently, in a reflective tone of voice, she said to Brinda, "Why Brinda are you so hyped up? If you are so angry, the world will come to an end. There will certainly be an apocalypse. It is not only the gatekeepers, but the Prabhas palace will turn into ashes. What will Hari say about it? We will not get his

auspicious sight. Nor will we have a place to go. It is not time yet. Calm down Brinda.”

Brinda controlled her resentment. In a beat, Radharani sat down in her *yogasandan* [in total union with divine consciousness], and called Krishna at her heart, “Hê Hari, oh, compassionate Hari. I pay my humble obeisance to you. It is time for you to show your auspicious face. I cannot bear the torment in my heart anymore. Are you still not satisfied with my suffering? You are omniscient and omnipotent. You are the Absolute Brahma (omnibenevolence). You must see what is happening here. Are you getting your pleasures out of your servants’ insulting behaviour to us?”

All the Brajabashis and your parents are going to lay down their lives at these gates. Kindly give up your illusion and grant us your grace. If not my lord, in the years to come, you will lament with a broken heart. All knowing Hari who is seeing all these events while sitting down at the venue of the yagna became very restless. He, utterly devastated with the love of Radha like someone who is at a loss, would just jump up and down immediately, to control himself.

Despite the sufferings of so many, Hari was waiting for the call from Yashoda to receive her with great love and respect, for what she was and for who she was. In that he himself was raked in pain. This was Hari leela.

