

Swamy Desikan's Yaadavaabhyudayam



Annotated Commentary In English By
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श्रीः

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

स्वामि देशिकैः अनुगृहीतम्

यादवाभ्युदयम्

Swamy Desikan's
Yaadhavaabhyudhayam



Yadhavaabhyudhaya is the story of Krishnaavathaara retold by VedantaDesika with a beautiful poetic flavor steeped in bhakthi.

Desika has written devotional hymns on all the archaavathaaras - the deities of all the vaishnavite shrines - but none of the forms of Lord Narayana seems to be so dear to him as His incarnation as Krishna. Gopalavimsati, twenty verses in praise of Krishna is the most exquisite work exuding charm and beauty. Yadhavaabhyudhaya is an epic which seems to be an elongated version of Gopalavimsati as it elaborates on the subtle references to the exploits of Krishna therein but it is rich in poetic skill and intellectual excellence. The most significant fact which points out to the link between the two works is that the opening verse of both the works is the same. The greatness of Yadhavaabhyudhaya can be understood by the fact that the commentator of the work is none other than Appayya Dikshitha, the well known exponent of Advaita Vedanta. In this page an endeavor will be made to present this great work in such a way that all can enjoy its richness and beauty, which has been made known only to Sanskrit scholars so far.

-Dr.Saroja Ramanujam, M.A, Ph.D, Siromani in Sanskrit

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Malayappa swamy in KaNNan ThirukOlam - Tirupathi Brahmotsavam





Story of Sri KrishNa (Part 1)





श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्य कवितार्किककेसरी
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्योमे सन्निदत्ताम् सदाहृदि ।
कवितार्किकसिम्हाय कल्याणगुणशालिने
श्रीमतेवेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरुवे नमः ॥





CHAPTER 1

PROLOGUE

Vedantadesika starts his epic with the mangalasloka:

"vande brindavanacharam vallaveejanavallabham;
jayanteesambhavam dhaama vyjayantheevibhooshanam"

This verse is rich in meaning and brings out fully the glory of Krishna. It means, Salutations to Him, who was born on Krishnaashtami, who used to inhabit the Brindavan, adorned with the garland of forest flowers, self effulgent and loved by gopis. The four adjectives given to the Lord, namely,

brindavanacharam, the one who roams around in Brindavan,

vallaveejanavallabham, the beloved of the gopis,

jayanteesambhavam, born on the day of His avatar,

vyjayantheevibhooshanam, adorned by the forest flowers are rich in meaning as they denote His vathsalya, souseelya, soulbhya and svamithva.

His Vaathsalya, love towards His dependents is indicated by Brindhaavanacharam, which is like that of a cow towards its calf. Brindha denotes His devotees, for whose protection, avanaaya, He moves about, charathi. This dispels the fear in the heart of His punishment for the wrong deeds one has committed, svaaparaadha bhaya nivarthakam. Appayya dikshitha, in his commentary says that He, who was dhandakaaranyachara, walked in the dhandaka forest for the protection of the rishis became brindhaavanachara, for the protection of the cows, in Krishnaavathaara true to His promise later,





"parithraanaaya saadhoonaam vinaasaaya cha dushkrthaam,
dharma samsthaapanaarthaaya samhavaami yuge yuge"

"I manifest myself in each epoch in order to protect the good and to punish the wicked."

The cows represent the good who resort to the Lord for their welfare. Sentiment, rasa, exhibited by this epithet is adbhutha, wonder that the lord assumes the form of a cowherd and showers His love to one and all, man, bird and beast. The same vathsalya as He has shown towards Prahladha so that Hiranya kasipyu could not harm even a hair on his body, towards Jatayu in Ramaavathaara and towards all His dependents in Krishnaavathaara which made Him even to wash and feed the horses during the Mahabhaaratha war

Valavee jana vallabham, the beloved of the gopis, is the epithet chosen for the purpose of indicating His Souseelyam, benevolence. Souseelyam is defined as "mahathah mandhaihi saha neerandhra samslesha svabhaavah", the close friendship shown by the great towards the humble folk. This quality of the Lord dispels the fear that He is beyond comprehension. Appayya dikshitha says that the fact that He who enjoys the uninterrupted union with Mahakakshmi was also able to enjoy the company of the simple cowherd girls is the proof of His souseelya. The term Vallavijana is used to denote their nomad existence as valla means movement. The sentiment expressed here is sringara.

Desika uses the epithet Jayanthee sambhavam to denote the soulabhya of the Lord, in taking birth in the yadhavakula, which removes the fear that the Lord is unapproachable. Soulabhya is labhdhum susakathvam, easy accessibility. The significance of the word jayanthee sambhava instead of Devaki sambhava implies that the Lord manifested Himself as Krishna and was not born, according to His words "sambhavaami yuge yuge" and "yadha yadha hi dharmasya glaanirbhavathi -----thadhaathmaanam srjamyaham." Jayanthi also means jayam thanothi, victorious in the vinaasa of dushkrtha, indicative of





virarasa. It is interesting to observe here that the words jayanthi and janmaashtami are used only to mark Krishnajayanthi, janmaashtami avathaara dhinasya jayanthetheethi vyavahaarah and all the others are mentioned as Ramanavami, Nrsimhajayanthi and so on.

Dhaama vyjayanthee vibhooshanam relates to the svaamithva, overlordship. Dhaama means the self effulgent nature and vyjayayanthi which normally means garland of forest flowers also implies bhootha thanmaathra adhishtaana devatha the divinity behind the elements. The vanamaala here is the maya of the Lord which He wears like a garland in His manifestations this indicates that Krishna is the Parabrahman who is the cause of this universe created out of His own Maya. The Paravasudeva is referred to by this epithet.

For a literary work there are four aspects that have to be specified at the outset.

1. the **grantha** - the mention of the work itself.
2. the **vishaya** - the subject matter,
3. the **adhikaari** - to whom the work is intended, and
4. the **phala** or **prayojana** - the benefit that will accrue by the study of the grantha.

Here by the four adjectives given to the Lord in the sloka refer to the above mentioned four requisites of a kavya.

1. The **grantha** is **Yadhavaabhyudhaya**, the glory of Yadhava, Krishna. This is indicated by brindhaavanacharam, the inhabitant of brindhaavan, Krishna.
2. The **vishaya** is the story of Krishna denoted by jayantheesambhavam, born on Janmaashtami.
3. **Adhikaari** is the one who has love for the Lord. This is shown by the word vallavee jana vallabham.
4. Lastly the **phala**, fruit of hearing the story of the Lord is Moksha,





salvation which is implied by dhaama vyjayanthee vibhooshanam. Knowing Him as Dhaama the Parabrahman manifest in the garb of a cowherd through His maya, vyjayanthee vibhooshanam, and one gets emancipated.

The glory of the Lord is such that even the Vedas, which are the primary source of knowledge about Him, are not able to do full justice to His description. Desika portrays the Vedas as the bards trying to sing about His merits and he says that when they start extolling even one of His infinite auspicious attributes, they become tired.

"Ekaika gunapraanthe sranthaah nigamavandhinah"

Then Desika expresses his humility by saying that under such circumstances what those with limited intellect can expect to accomplish, meaning himself! He goes on to reassure himself that the subject is **sourikatha**, story of Krishna, which is like nectar that will be relished even if it is told by a dull witted person. He reaffirms his position by claiming that there could be nothing wrong in following the footsteps of the great poets like Valmiki and Vyasa.

Then Desika extols the kavithva saying that a kavi, poet, whose creation is full of merits such as rasa, bhaava and alamkara is akin to the creator, Brahma, in whom Sarasvathi revels.

1. **Rasa** is the nine kinds of sentiment, srngara etc.
2. **bhaava** here means the accompanying moods that go with each sentiment, called vibhaava, anubhaava and sanchaaribhaava and
3. **alamkara** is the figure of speech.

Such poetry is like goddess Sarasvathi, expressive, beautiful and well adorned with ornaments. The poet who is endowed with all these skills is like Brahma associated with Sarasvathi.

But should perfection be an essential characteristic in composing poetry? No, says Desika. If a talented dancer makes a slip in her performance a





connoisseur will ignore it and will appreciate only the overall effect. Similarly considering the vishayagourava, the merit of the subject matter which is Bhagavatvishaya, story of the Lord, even if there may be any fault, it can be excused.

So, says Desika, "I will now speak of the story of Krishna, which is the nectar emerging out of the ocean of Vyasaveda, the Mahabharatha, without any hesitancy." What is implied here is that the most enjoyable part of Mahabharatha is the story of Krishna. Vyasaveda may also mean the Vedas, the essence of which is the Lord, as Ramanuja says in the mangala sloka of Sribhaashya, *sruthi sirasi vidheepthe brahmani Srinivaase*, the Lord forms the crown of the Vedas. So the story of Krishna is the *sarabhootha*, essence of Vedas as well as Mahabharatha which is later given by Vyasa as Bhagavathapurana like extracting the butter out of the milk of Mahabharatha.

Desika calls the story of Krishna *vibhudhajeewaathu*, the elixir for vibhudha, devas, as the incarnation took place on being entreated by devas and the Bhoodevi. The word vibhudha also means men of wisdom of whom the story of Krishna is the paramoushadham greatest antidote for the ills of the samsara.

In this context it would be interesting to note the peculiar circumstances which made Vyasa write the Bhagavatha purana. The Dasamaskandha, tenth section of Bhagavathapurana contains the story of Krishna, the subject matter of Yadhavaabhyudhaya.

It seemed that after Vyasa had finished Mahabharatha and other vedantic works he became depressed for no reason. Narada came to him and told him that his feeling of depression born out of dissatisfaction was due to the fact that though he exhaustively wrote about dharma and Vedanta he did not write about the exploits and the glory of Krishna and the incarnations of the Lord which would inculcate bhakthi. Hence his heart became dry and depressed. Then Narada told him the whole Bhagavata as he had learnt from Brahma. This was the inducement for Vyasa to write the Bhagavatha purana. That is why





Desika calls it vibhudhajeevaathu, the life-giving elixir.

Desika refers to the Lord as Vibhu, and Sreemaan. He is Vibhu, all powerful, all pervading, Sreemaan associated with Sree, Lakshmi. The significance of the two adjectives is given by the words **eko vusvamidham chithram ajeejanath**. He is **eka**, one only. "**Sadheva soumya idham agra aaseeth, ekameva adhvitheeyam**" (**Chandhogya Up.**) "**Sat** alone existed in the beginning, one only without a second." Hence Brahman, Lord Narayana of Visistadvaita, was both the material and instrumental cause of the Universe. Usually in creation as applied to the worldly things like the creation of a pot the material cause, the mud and the instrumental cause, the potter are different. But before creation, says the Upanishad there was none else than the Brahman. So Brahman is the **upaadhaana karana**, material cause and **nimiththa kaarana**, instrumental cause. This is indicated by the words **svayam** and **svasmin**.

The Lord created the world which Desika describes as chithram, wonderful. He compares it to a painting; chithram which is created by the Lord with the brush of His leela, playful and without effort, and the paint He used was His krpa, infinite mercy. The canvas was nothing but the Lord Himself, **svasmin**, in Him, created by Himself, **svayam**. This is in accordance with the concept of sarira-sariri bhava of Visishtadvaita. The world consisting of sentient and insentient beings is the body of the Lord of which He is the soul. Before creation the world exists in Him in subtle form and after creation it assumes the gross form.

Now what is the purpose of creation? To say that it is His leela would make Him a sadist who has created the world full of sorrow and misery for His sport. No, it is not so, says Desika, because He has coloured it with His krpa. The word leela only denotes that the creation was as effortless as a play for Him. He not only created but also sustains the universe through His acts of mercy. The dukkha is due to our karma but to protect us by showing the path to emancipation is His act of mercy.





Then Desika traces the clan of yadhu in which the Lord took the incarnation as Krishna.

1. The first of the clan was **Chandra**, the Moon. "**Chandramaa manaso jaathah**". The Moon was born from the mind of the Lord. (Purushasuktham). Desika gives the reason as to why the Moon was born out of His mind. The Moon came out as though he is the personification of the **prasaadha**, grace of the Lord, **paripaalayithavyeshu prasaadha iva**, towards the people deserve to be protected, His devotees because the moon is **jagadhaahlaadhakara**, gives happiness to all.
2. **Budha**, the adhidevatha of the planet Mercury was the son of Moon and **Pururavas** was the son of Budha. Pururavas, says Desika, was the living example of the efficacy of **sathaam aahitha vahneenaam stheyathaa**, the power of aahithaagni the sacrificial fire, which represents the acts of sacrifice, yajna because it gave him the power of visiting svarga where he fell in love with Urvashi, the celestial damsel and married her.
3. The lineage of Pururavas flourished in all directions of the earth by the fame of his descendants like **Ayus** and **Nahusha**, who attained the status of Indra through his merit. When Indra incurred brahmahatthi dosha, the sin of killing a Brahmin by his slaying Vrthraasura, who was the son of Thvashta, a Brahmin, he had to leave the svarga and do penance. Then the devas put Nahusha in the place of Indra since he has performed hundred asvamedha yagas, which makes him qualified for the post of Indra but he incurred the displeasure of Agasthya and was cursed by him to become a snake.
4. **Yayathi** was the son of Nahusha and had three sons and one of them was **Yadhu**, who was a vadhaanya, very generous and austere and just. Vasudeva, the father of Krishna was born in the clan of Yadhu. Vasudeva was Kasyapa prajaapathi in his previous birth and was the father of both devas and. asuras. His wives Surabhi and Adhithi were born as **Rohini** and **Devaki** in next birth and married Vasudeva. When Vasudeva was born the divine musical instruments, aanaka and





dhundhubhi sounded and hence he acquired the name AAnakadhundhubhi.

Vasudeva was the refuge of the good as Lord Vishnu is for the world, the Sun is for light and the sea is for gems. This implies that he was the sole resort of the good as the earth was burdened with unrighteous kings for whose destruction the Lord descended in the form of Krishna. Even though born of the royal family Vasudeva was intent on attaining mukthi and was not interested in the worldly possessions and became content with whatever came to him of its own accord. Vasudeva got married to Devaki, the cousin sister of Kamsa whom he loved very much but hearing the aerial declaration that the eighth son of Devaki will be his killer Kamsa put them both in prison.

In the meanwhile the devas were approached by Bhoodevi who entreated them to relieve her of her burden of adharma perpetuated by the unrighteous kings who oppressed her like giant mountains. Then they all approached the Lord Narayana along with Brahma and with Bhoodevi in front and started praying to Him.

The devas praised the Lord thus:

1. He is **thrivedimadhya dheeptha**, shines on the three vedas because He is vedavedya, known through the Vedas. Here it would be interesting to compare the words of Thyagaraja in his kriti "**saamajavaragamana**" on Krishna. He calls Him "**vedasiromaathrja sapthaswara naadhaachala dheepa**," He shines as the light on the mountain of naadha, made up of the seven notes, sapthasvara which were born out of the head of vedas, that is pranava.
2. He is **thridhaama**, having three abodes, namely, **Vaikunta** which is His paramapadha, supreme abode, the **milky ocean** and the **surya mandala**, disc of the Sun, He is described in the upanishad as **Suryamandalamadhya varthi**.
3. He has five weapons, panchahethayah, shankha, charka gadha ,sharnga and khadga, the Conch, Disc, Mace, Bow and Sword respectively.





4. He is **baahyaanthara havirbhuja**, takes the external offering in the yajna and also internal in the form of the self which is offered in devotion and He as varadha, bestows His grace.
5. His power is independent **ananyaadheena mahima** and unlimited whereas that of other gods are in His control **paraadheena vaibhava** and hence limited. Devas beseech Him to protect them as He is **dhayaadheena vihara** overwhelmed with mercy as shown by His acts like killing Ravana. In this sloka the poetic skill is shown in the choice of the epithets ananyaadheena, svaadheena and dhayaadheena.
6. The Lord is the ocean of mercy, **dhayaambhudhi** in which His gunas, jnana, bala, aisvarya, shakthi, tejas and virya are the ratnas, gems and the waves are His vyuhas and vibhavas. The six attributes, knowledge, might, sovereignty, power, glory and valiance are called bhagas and hence the name bhagavan. The vyuhas are His manifestations as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradhyumna and Anirudhdha and the vibhavas are His incarnations. These are metaphorically described as the waves while the gunas are the precious gems which are said to be in the ocean.
7. The glory of the Lord cannot be ascertained from the Vedas even, because they are His creation and they are compared to the travelers who even after traveling from morning till evening are unable to reach the destination, namely to describe Him as such.
8. He puts on different costumes and comes down as incarnations like an actor and He acts according to the role He assumes. This amuses the wise who see Him act like a subordinate, a supplicant and obedient son to His own children and dependents. He is the one who apportions the result of karma to the individuals and it is all His leela which waters the seeds of karma so that it brings forth the sprouts of results, karmaphala. Desika says that this is true with all beings, **brahmaadhisthambaparyantham**, from the four-faced Brahma down to the blade of grass as everything is His creation only.
9. He shines in the hearts of the pure in His full splendour and like the





Chintamani fulfils all their wishes. Chintamani is a precious gem which is supposed to grant all wishes of the possessor.

10. To those who have become fatigued by traveling in the desert of samsara the devotion of the Lord serves as a welcome river, flowing with the nectar of His mercy, in which they plunge and enjoy its coolness.
11. He is the boat that helps those who are caught in the whirlpool of sin to cross over to the other side.
12. He is unparalleled, limitless, and the cause of the universe, Himself uncaused. He is denoted by Pranava, the essence of Vedas and the raft of rescue from the sea of samsara. Those who seek refuge in Him alone depend only on Him for their redemption and do not adopt any other means except devotion to Him like the chathaka bird which live on rain drops alone. Not seeking any other source of water.
13. Like the sun that wakes up from sleep the Lord wakes up the jivas from the sleep of ignorance. Hence, the devas entreated Him to dispel their calamity like the sun destroys the darkness because Kamsa and others have risen like comets to create disturbances in the world.

Thus entreated by the devas Bhagavan appeared before them out of mercy. Desika here gives a beautiful description of the Lord.

The devas saw Him reclined on the couch of Adishesha, like a rain-bearing cloud, dark in hue, on a white cloud of autumn. Adishesha is supposed to be white in color and sitting on him the lord presented a picture of a dark cloud on the top of a white cloud, which is a rare occurrence. This simile is an indication of the wonder the devas experienced on seeing the Lord before them.

The lord was accompanied by Sridevi with lotus in her hand implying His aisvarya, the mastery over the universe. The epithet Lakshmipathi denotes the supreme power combined with mercy of the Lord. He was adorned with ornaments which were **sukumara**, slender and not heavy, **sukhasparsa**, soft of touch on His body and not rough, like sweet smelling flowers, **suganshibhih**



prasoonaih iva, and well suited to His gunas, the infinitely auspicious qualities. His form is the garden of His gunas and the ornaments were like the flowers in the garden. Desika expresses his love for the Lord in imagining the ornaments on His body to be tender like flowers. An ardent devotee treats the archa or idol of the Lord as real and cannot bear to see even the stalks of the flowers hurting Him. And arranges the ornaments on the idol in such a way as not to hurt Him



The Sun who never sets and the Moon who never wanes

Every part of His body vying each other in beauty excelled that of His ornaments and stole the hearts of all beings. The ornaments were beautified



by Him and not vice versa. The weapons He was wielding, namely the disc, bow, mace etc. were proclaiming His natural qualities like valor, power and so on and seemed to forecast the victory of the devas. With His form created by Himself, He shone like a sapphire rising out of the sea of His own splendor.

Along with the Lord came Garuda, who is the embodiment of Vedas, srutiroopa, and covered with the fragrance of the feet of the Lord, being His carrier, signifying the impending war with the asuras. The veda calls Garuda "**suparno asi garutman trivrtththe sirah**" meaning that Garuda with powerful wings has veda as his head.

The Lord thus presented a picture of a Sun who never sets, a Moon who never wanes and an ocean of nectar which has no bounds to devas. He was shining in His glory which excelled the Sun, was source of joy in His cool mercy, which never diminishes and He was like everlasting nectar to the devas in showering His grace. By seeing Him thus the eyes of the devas became fruitful and the Lord reassured them with His abhayahasta, showing His hand in a gesture of protection and by His smile that destroys evil by the mere sight of it. The abhayakara and the mandasmita were reassuring enough for them that their prayer is answered even before He began to speak.

DEVAS APPEAL TO THE LORD

The devas started to tell the Lord that rakshasas who were extinguished previously by Him like moths by the fire, have come back to earth in the form of kshathriyas and the earth is suffering by their misdeeds and if the Lord does not intervene the earth will be submerged into the sea, not being able to bear their weight. The idea here is that the wicked are burden to the earth. They entreated Him thus: ~This earth which has you, who is full of with mercy, as its helmsman, should not be allowed to go under."

Desika provides a beautiful metaphor by referring to the Lord as the central jewel of the girdle of the earth. The devas claimed that the earth deserves the protection of the Lord from the oppression of the wicked kshathriyas. The earth is surrounded by the ocean like a girdle of the Bhoodevi and the Lord



shining in the middle of the ocean like a sapphire is like its central gem. Further the devas said that He should free the earth from the burden of these wicked kings and make her shine as the crest jewel of Aadhisessa, meaning that the earth should be made light as a crest jewel for Sesha who supports it on his head.



devAs pray to SrIman nArAyaNa!
(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

Desika, the bhaktha, here comes out with beautiful expression. He makes the devas say:

"Prabhodhasubhagaih smeraih prasannaih sheethalaischa nah
kataakshaih plaavaya kshipram krpakodhanavadhoormibhih,"

They pray to him to direct His merciful glances towards them. The glances of the Lord are, **Prabhodha subhaga**, attractive, He just being awakened from His yoganidra, **smera**, accompanied with His charming smile, **prasaana**, pleasing, **sheethala**, cooling with love and they are like the waves of the sea of His mercy, **krpakodhanavadhoormibhih**. Imagining the Lord thus is enough to send



a devotee to ecstasy. With these words devas concluded their entreaty asking the Lord to forgive them for their impudence in informing Him the reason of their approaching Him as though He did not know everything being the antharyami, indweller of all.

Then Bhoodevi bowed down to Him, who has vowed to protect His dependents, along with the devas and informed Him of her plight. Desika describes her as being beautiful like the Maya of the Lord. The earth assuming the form of an exemplary damsel, **vanithaarathnarupini**, of slender waist and large eyes, **thanumadhyaa visaalaakshi**, is compared by Desika to the enchanting Maya of the Lord. The whole Universe constituted of the five elements is the product of Prakrthi, otherwise known as the Maya of the Lord.

Desika's poetic skill is seen in his further description of Bhoodevi. She was sporting beautiful hair, the natural scent of which attracted the bees that hover on her head presenting a spectacle of her being covered with an umbrella made of peacock feathers. The tears of joy on seeing her Lord formed the beads of pearls that adorn her chest. Her left shoulder throbbed as though desiring the embrace of her Lord which was welcomed by her as a good sign. Desika uses the word Dhakshinaa for the Bhoodevi to imply that she is knowledgeable about the meaning of signs and employs the word **dhakshinaadhitharam**, the one other than the right to denote left arm thus enhancing the poetic beauty.

The Lord replied to them in a voice that echoed the sound of His Paanchajanya. He reassured them by saying that those who follow His command will never come to harm. [Vide: Bhagavatgita-6-40 - "**na hi kalyanakrth kaschith dhurgathim thaatha gachchathi**."] The Lord then promised that He will descend to earth as an incarnation to lessen the burden of the earth by destroying the evil kshathriyas and will establish dharma and He asked them to take birth as kings to partake the result of His deeds. So saying the Lord awaited the right time to enter the garba of Devaki to be born as Krishna. Thus the one in whom the entire world resided came to reside in Devaki.





CHAPTER 2

THE EVE OF INCARNATION

Devaki appeared divine because she carried the krishnarasayana, the elixir which is sidhdha and sidhdhanishevitha, resorted to by the sages being sure of effect.

Devaki ate the mud, symbolic of the earth, during her pregnancy as if she is showing by her action, naatitham, that the one who has devoured the whole earth is inside her, "bhukthaa puraa yene vasundharaa saa sa visvabhoktha mamagarbhabhoothah," says Desika.

She dreamt that she was lying on Adhishesha and traveled on Garuda. Utthamur swami explains this as:

"devakigarbhantham bhagavanthamprthak paricharithum anishtvaa
seshaadhayah devakeesthathvaveshenaiva paricharantheeva."

It looked as though Adhishesha and others carried devaki along with the Lord in order to do service to Him. She walked slowly as if not to burden the earth with the weight of Him who is visvaguru, the mighty Lord who has the entire universe in Him. He is vidvaguru or jagatguru as He was going to impart the Gita to the world and also the greater than the greatest, mahatho mahiyaan. The word 'guru' contains a pun to mean preceptor as well as big.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NIGHT OF KRISHNAVATHAARA

Then starts the description of the night of Krishnavathaara. The appearance of the dusk, sandhya, seemed to denote the advent of the Lord. Sandhya, personified as a damsel, is compared to the form of the Lord, **murdhvishah**





murthih dhvitheeyaa, on account of the attire of golden hue, suvarnapithaambhara vaasinee, and hiding the Sun with the brilliance of own light, svadhaamasam chaadhtha suryamurthih. The Sun sinking in the ocean seemed to seek some support avalambhana, by his rays stretched out. He looked like a lotus plucked from the pond of the sky by sandhya and the crest jewel of a serpent plunging into the ocean afraid of Garuda in the form of sandhya. The richness of poetic imagination of Desika is illustrated by these words.

At the setting of the Sun, the day being ashtami - 8th day - of krishnapaksha, dark fortnight, no moon appeared and darkness spread everywhere. Stars looked like a garland of pearls to adorn the Lord on His avathara prepared by His servant, the Kala, Time. Later when the moon rose, the eastern direction looked like Devaki, Thamahprasangena vimuchyamaana gourprabhaa. The paleness of her is the white light, gouraprabhaa of the moon who has risen from darkness as she is going to be freed from her sorrow, thamahprasangena vimuchyamaana. The Moon being the first forefather of the Yadhuvamsa, looked like a purohitha, priest coming after bath from the ocean to do the samskara, the rites for the newborn.

The darkness that first came was like the haalaahala, the terrible poison which came out of the milky ocean, namely the eastern direction indicative of the subsequent emergence of Lakshmi, the good fortune of Yadhuvamsa. Desika says later in describing Krishna that Lakshmi was always with the Lord whichever avathara He took because She is inseparable as the sloka goes:

"Raaghavathve bhavathseetharukminee Krishna janamani
anyeshuchaavathareshu vishnoreshaa anapaayini."

It is said that even in Vamanaavathara Lakshmi was in His chest, to hide whom, the Lord covered His chest with deerskin lest He could not take away the aisvarya of Bali if he gets the glance of Lakshmi, lakshmikataaksha.

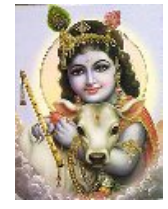
Then the auspicious time for the avathara drew near. The wicked people like





Kamsa were sleeping and the good were awake like Devaki and Vasudeva. Vadyagasha of divine instruments could be heard everywhere. The lamps in the house of Kamsa became extinct for no reason and so did the anguish in the minds of devotees. Ashtami was chosen by the Lord for his avathara as the eighth child and the next day Navami was going to be the day of the avathara of Yogamaaya.

Hence, as Desika puts it, ashtami became prathama and navami, dvitheeya. Krishna appeared at vrishabha lagna when the five planets, Chandra, angaraka, bhudha, guru and sani were in exalted position. Desika describes His manifesting Himself as Devakiputra was like the eastern direction produced the Lord, the moon, implying that He was not born in the usual way but as He says in the Gita "**sambhavaami aathmamaayayaa**" He only made Himself manifest as the moon coming out in the East.





CHAPTER 3

THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

At the time of the birth of Krishna the whole world seemed to be happy. The directions looked bright devoid of darkness as though the day is born. This implies that the manifestation of the Lord dispelled the darkness in the mind caused by ragadvesha and the hearts of the good became filled with the joy arising out of the understanding of the truth about the manifestation. Among the usual paraphernalia that is described in the puranas and ithihasas when some divine or extraordinary event happens, such as the apsaras dancing, the trumpets sounding, the kinnaras singing in the devaloka, there was cool breeze blowing from the quarters and the clouds thundered which was like the jayagosha by the devas. Here we see the poetic skill of Desika who says that all the anxieties in the minds of all the people joined together like rivers and fell into the mind of Kamsa, who was the only one agitated to the utmost. Andal addresses the Lord as "**kamsan vayittril neruppenne ninra nedumaalE**", the one who stood like fire in the stomach of Kamsa.

Vasudeva became free from his shackles. "**Rnaadhiva devakipathih amuchyatha srnkalathah**" says Desika, comparing the release from srnkala to that from debt. In fact the word '**rna**' could mean debt as well as **prarabdhakarma** as the saying goes "**rnaanubandhasaarena pasupatni suthaalayaa**", one's acquisition of wealth, son and property is according to prarabdhakarma. Desika asks, "what is so wonderful about this in front of one who removes the shackles of all bondage?"

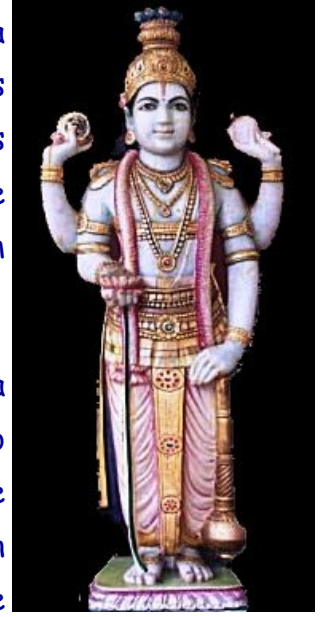
Devaki was having Krishna on her lap and shone like a golden mountain which had a peak of indraneelamani, sapphire. Vasudeva saw Him, who had the color of the sea, carrying sankha, conch, chakra the disc, gada, the mace and ambuja, a lotus.





Vasudeva prayed to Him to hide His divine form lest Kamsa will come to know His true identity. He praised the Lord as the embodiment of the Veda, who had come to be born as his son due to his prayers in the previous birth. At the same time he was worried about His safety and begs Him to disguise Himself. That is the maya of the Lord!

Then the Lord instructed Vasudeva to take Him to Gokula and leave Him there and bring the female child born to Yasodha to Mathura. Vasudeva took the infant, which the Lord changed Himself into, as requested and the prison gate opened and the guards were fast asleep. When he approached the street the quarters became lighter due to the lustre of the body of Krishna. Garuda circled around to ward off the evil forces and Adisesha followed spreading his hoods as an umbrella to protect from the rain.



**The divine form
seen by Vasudeva**

"sruthimayo vihagah parithah prabhum vyacharadhaasu vidhoothanisaacharah;
anujagaama cha bhoodharapannagahsphuta phanamanidheepaganodvahah."

Garuda is sruthimaya , the personification of vedas, as Yamunacharya calls him "vedhaathmaa vihagesvarah", and the Sesha is referred to as Bhoodhara pannaga, who followed giving light by the gems on his thousand hoods as though thinking that the Lord needed some light as He had contracted His own tejas. The significance of the word Bhoodharapannaga by Desika is that the Krishnavathara was for the purpose of lightening the burden of the earth which will also lighten the burden on the head of Sesha who is bhoodhara, bearer of the earth.

Vasudeva carried Krishna as though on the gurudavahana and reached river Yamna, directed by the moonlight. The land near Yamuna seemed to welcome Vasudeva by its cool breeze to remove the fatigue and the buzzing of the bees, serving as the welcome song.





The description of Yamuna when Vasudeva approached the river with Krishna brings the poetic fervour of Desika. He says that it looked as though the river is bemoaning the plight of the Lord which made Him take the guise of a mortal, feigning weakness, 'kuhakadhainyam'. The lilies, 'asithaneeraja' were closing its eyes, petals, as the morning was approaching and the lotuses had not yet started to bloom and the chakravaka couple, a kind of birds which become blind in the night were wailing, not being able to see one another. All this seemed to indicate the mental anguish of Yamuna, savithuh sutha, the daughter of the Sun.

"Nimishithaasithaneerajalochanaa mukulithaabjamukhee savithussuthaa;
lulithadheenarathaangayugasvanaa kuhakadhainyam asochatheeva prabhoh."

The river throwing its waves here and there looked as though, Yamuna, without knowing that all is the leela of the Lord, was throwing up her arms in distress, fearing Kamsa. Yamuna gave way to Vasudeva, looking high in the east and almost dry in the west. It makes the kavi wonder whether she wanted to ascend the vishnupada or was going to the Kalinda Mountain, her father's abode. Thus vasudeva crossed the river as if it was jananasindhu, sea of birth, which he would cross obtaining the Lord as his offspring.

Vasudeva entered Gokula where, says Desika, "svasutham agryam asooyatha rohini", which implies that he saw his son Balarama also. There he placed Krishna near the sleeping Yasodha and took the female child near her to Mathura. Knowing that the eighth child was born, Kamsa came and took the infant by her legs to strike her on the rock when she kicked herself free and rose up to the sky and warned kamsa about the birth of Krishna. Her speech is described by Desika thus: "patu gabheeram udhaaram anaakulam hitham avistharam arthyam aviplavam". It was:

1. patu, sharp and pungent,
2. gabheeram, resonant,





3. **udhaaram**, distinct,
4. **anaakulam**, poised,
5. **hitham**, well wishing. Due to her karuna the goddess Durga as she was to be known later, wanted to warn him not to court destruction.
6. **avistharam**, brief,
7. **arthyam**, meaningful and
8. **aviplavam** unmistakeable.

She said that she was asesha suraasura mohinee, the deluder of all devas and asuras, being the Maya of the Lord, the destroyer of madhukaitabha, the maya that veils the real nature of the Lord, yavanikaa. Then she warned him that his destroyer is in the house of Nanda, "**Vasathi nandagrhe vibudhadhvishaam dhamayithaa vasudeva samudbhavah thava naasayitha**". In the Bhagavatha the Yogamaya does not divulge the whereabouts of Krishna but Desika boldly makes her give the address of Krishna perhaps to make it clear to Kamsa that he cannot harm Krishna even if he finds Him.

Then the scene changes and in Gokula, yasodha and others regain consciousness from the swoon-like sleep induced by the maya of the Lord and Yasodha found a male child next to her. Desika describes the Lord as the one who is aagamabhooshana, ornament to the vedas, who is enquired into by the sages even now without finding His real nature, became the ornament of the gopas due to destiny of His own making.

After Krishna came to Gokula there was no death of calves and the cows were contented and gave plenty of milk as Andal said, "**vaangakkudam niraikkum vallal perum pasukkal**". The person had no fear from robbers and from disease and Desika says that the life in Gokula resembled that in Krthayuga.

Nanda celebrated the birth of Krishna elaborately. "**Adhichakaara**





vadhaanyamaneh sriyam vyadhitha kalpathroranukalpathaam ajanayaccha sutha prasavotsave mahathi megha vikatthana modhathaam.". That is, Nanda appropriated the glory of chintamani, the wish-giving gem, by his generosity, which made the kalpataru lose its importance and he outshined the rain giving clouds by his shower of gifts. This made the people of Gokula, says Desika, look down on the Indraloka. The news of the celebrations in Gokula pacified the minds of Devaki and Vasudeva who were separated from Krishna, the puraanapurusha, who had come to them through the penance of earlier life.

"putram praooyathapasaa purusham puranam kaalam
chiram vidhivasaath kila viprakarshou."

The two boys, Balarama and Krishna grew up in Gokula like the Moon in sukla paksha creating happiness not only to the inhabitants but also to devas who were eagerly waiting for the destruction of Kamsa and others.



The divine cowherds - Balarama and Sri Krishna in Gokulam
(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)





CHAPTER 4

BALAKRISHNA

Next Desika presents the picture of crawling Krishna. When Krishna crawled on the floor the dust covered his body all over. Desika says that the earth goddess tried to embrace him under the pretext of covering his body with dust.

"prAyO dharithree parishasvajE tham sApathrapA sAndhrarajacchalEna"

The joy of Nanda knew no bounds on seeing the face of Krishna which was nirvyAja mandhasmitha dharsaneeyam, delightful to behold with His spontaneous smile. When He lisped and pronounced the name of His mother partly He was acclaimed by all. Everyone was pleased with His attempt to speak which was fascinating, says Desika, because the Lord who created all the worlds and gave them name and form, is here praised by the people in Gokula for uttering His mother's name partially.



The upanishad says that after creating the world of beings Brahman willed to enter them with their soul to give them name and form. "anEna jeevEna AthmanA anupravisya nAmrupE vyAkaravANi" (Chan.6-3-2)

The Joy of Nandagopa!

Then Krishna started to speak with clarity and His pronunciation had the scent of veda, says Desika. "varNasvarAdhivyavas AyabhoomnA sikshAvidhAm sikshaNam agryam Aseeth".

It was as though He was teaching the gopis who tried to make Him speak through





His pronunciation of letters and the intonation etc. which resembled that of the vedas.

Next we have the delightful picture of Krishna trying to stand.



The One who measured the three Worlds, manifests as a Child





"thameeshadhutthAya nileenabhArAth samprekshya hanthAnkurachAruhAsam;
sanAthaneem dhrshtim ananya dhrshtih sAnandham ALOkatha nandha pathnee"

"He tries to stand a little but keeps falling off and He smiles sweetly showing His budding teeth. Yasodha who had no eyes for any thing else, was looking at Him, who is the eye of all, with joy."

Here it would be interesting to see how Periazvar enjoys Krishna having his first teeth. "kOla narumpavaLa senthuvar vAyinidai komaLa veLLimuLai pOl sila pallilaga" in his mouth, red like coral, there are a few teeth showing like tender shoots of silver.

Yasodha teaches Krishna to walk and Desika enjoys the scene thus: Yasodha took hold of his hands and made him walk and he keeps falling now and then pretending that he could not walk more than few steps so that his mother will pick him up and tries again. Who is He! The one who measured the three worlds with three steps and now manifest as a child in order to protect the world.

"padhaisthribhihkrAntha jagaththrayam tham bhavyAsA bhAvina bAlabhAvam."

Soon Krishna was walking all around marking the earth with his footprints as though to put his seal on earth to drive away the wicked. Next comes the scene where Krishna dances to the tune of the gopis.

DANCING KRISHNA

Perhaps the scene opens as the gopis are churning the milk and Krishna comes there and begs for butter and they tell him to dance if he wants butter and this is described by Desika as follows:

ya Esha lOkathrayasuthradhA rah paryAyapASthrANi charAcharANi
Anarthayathyadhbhut hacheshtithOasou nanarthakhElannavan eethakAngkshee
He who is the director of the three worlds causing the movable and immovable





beings enact their role in turn, with His wonderful act, danced playfully (in front of the gopis) desirous of getting butter. This Desika names as Navaneetha natyam in his Gopalavimsathi.



navaneetha nAtyam - SrI maTam dOlai KaNNan





Aavirbhvathyanibhrt haabharaNam purasthaath
aakunchithaikachara Nam nibhrthaanyapaadham
DHadhnaa nimanTha mukhareNanibaddhath aalam
naatTHasya nandhabhavane navaneethnaatyam

which means, 'Let the vision of Krishna dancing in the house of Nanda, His ornaments sounding as He dances, with one foot steady and the other bent, His navaneethnaatya, dance for butter, to the thala of the churning of milk, appear in front of me'

In gokula, keeping close to the churning pot desiring butter, the body of Krishna is splattered with drops of curd. Desika is reminded of the form of the Lord splattered with drops of nectar, or milk while churning the milky ocean.

The same idea is expressed by Kulasekhara in Mukundamala where he says,

ksheerasaagarathara ngaseekaraasaara thaarakrtha charumoorthaye
bhogibhogasayaneeya saayine maadhavaaya madhvidvishe namah.

"Salutations to Madhava, the killer of Madhu, reclining on the bed of adishesha, His body charming splattered with the drops from the waves of the milky ocean, looking as though He is covered with stars".

The dance of Krishna desiring butter is described by Leelasuka also thus:

Vadhane navaneethagandDHava aham vachane thaskarachaathuree DHureeNam
nayanaakuhanaasru asrayetTHaah charaNam komalathaandavam kumaaram

Seek the foot of the boy who is dancing gracefully, with His mouth smelling of butter, His speech showing Him to be the foremost of cheats, His eyes (on being told off) full of false tears.

The devotees imagine that the reason the Lord left the milky ocean and came to gokula is because being milky ocean He can get only milk there and not





butter.

Perhaps this scene was in the mind of Oothukkadu venkatakavi when he sang "AdAdhu asangAdhu vAA kannA", which is a beautiful song and should be dealt with separately to bring out its beauty.

KRISHNA THE BUTTER THIEF



The Butter Thief!

(Courtesy: www.stephen-knapp.com)

hrasyan mukundho navaneethachouryAth

nirbhugna gAthrO nibhrtham sayAnah





nijAni nissabdhadhaSAm yayAche

baddhAnjalim bAlavibhooshaNAni

Krishna stole butter and was hiding with his body contracted out of fear from the gopis. Desika calls him Mukundha, the one who gives Moksha, as well as bhoga, here enacting fear. His limbs were trembling with fear and he was afraid of being found out by the sound of his ornaments and hence begged them not to make noise! To think about this fearful posture of Krishna will remove all our fears.

Once Krishna wished for the forest fruits and approached the hunter girl who was selling them with handful of grains. Desika says, the one who gives Aranyakaphala wanted Aranyakaphala. The part of veda taught in the forest is called Aranyaka, that is, upanishads and the Lord is the giver of the fruit of that knowledge, namely moksha and here he himself desired aranyakaphala, the forest fruits. There is pun on the word aranyaka.

He carried a handful of grains to buy the fruits as is the custom in those days and being a child, all the grains were falling off from his hands when he ran towards the vendor. There were only few grains and what the hunter girl saw was his hand marked with the sign of conch and disc (sujAtharEkhAthmaka sankachakram) She thought that she should give herself to those hands, which is of course more desirable to the Lord than the fruits as He expects only the heart of the devotee more than the other offerings. Then she filled his hands with fruits and her basket was immediately filled with precious gems. Desika refers to him as kreedAsisu, one who appeared as a child by his leela. The gems were not in any way inferior to Kousthubha, "rathnaisthadhA kousthubha nirvisEshaih".

Krishna was frequently engaged in some mischief or other like stealing butter, freeing the calves even when it was not milking time, and other such deeds and once his long suffering mother wanted to tie him to the mortar to keep him out of mischief. Desika says that the mortar has done some punya to acquire that





good fortune that Yasodha wanted to tie Krishna to it, "ulookhalE kuthrachith AtthapuNyE".



baala cheshtitham

Desika uses a pun on the word banDHu by saying that she wished to tie him banDHum iyEsha who is the relative of the good, sathAm banDHuh. The punyaaphala of the mortar was to have the contact of the body of the Lord and also serving the purpose of his further deed, namely the freeing of the sons of Kubera from their curse.

Then comes the description of the difficulty Yasodha was experiencing in tying him to the mortar. Bhagavatha says that whatever rope she tried it was found two inches short, dhvayangulOnam.

Aneetham agrE nija banDHanArTHam
dhAmAkhilam samhitham apyapoorNam
nireekshya nirviNna DHiyOjananyAh





sankOcha shakthyA sa babhoova vanDHyah

On seeing that all the ropes even when joined together were not enough due to his maya his mother became desperate. Then krishna took pity on her and made himself small enough to be tied while he made the ropes short earlier. The sight of Krishna bound to the mortar was enjoyed by the devotees variously.

Leelasuka says,

varamimam upadhEsam AdhriyaDHvam

nigamavanEshu nithAntha chAra khinnAh

vichinutha bhavnEshu vallaveenAm

upanishadharTHam ulookhalE nibaddham

"Listen to this best advice, you who are fatigued in wandering in the forest of vedas! The Brahman of the upanishads whom you try to find, is bound to the mortar here in the house of the milkmaids".

Desika himself refers to Krishna as Brahmakishora, Brahman in form of a child in Gopalavimsathi.

Those who think of the Lord in this state of being bound to the mortar will be freed from the bondage of karma without any effort on their part. Desika further says, "thapasvinee thathkrathu neethirAdhya savreedam AraNya kaTHAsu thasTHou". The rule called thathkrathu in vedanta is that whatever one thinks on so he becomes. In the case of Krishna, whatever leela of Bhagavn one thinks of, the result is just the opposite. This is illustrated by Desika saying, those who think of Krishna as being bound, get freedom from their bondage. And he says that with a poetic expression. The thathkrathu nyaya went and hid itself in the stories of the forest out of shame on its failure. Aranyakas are the upanishads which contain this nyaya and hence the word Aranyaka is used as a pun to denote forest.





The eyes of Krishna were full of tears and that amused the onlookers because he looked like an elephant bound to its post. Desika describes this in Gopalavimsathi thus. Yasodha is grasping Krishna in her hand and threatens him and Krishna is seen crying and smudging the eyeliner applied to his eyes with his hand. What a delightful picture of the leela of the Lord! Desika calls him **miThyAgOpa**, the pseudo cowherd in Gopalavimsathi because being **visvagoptha**, the protector of the whole universe, he is now pretending to be a cowherd boy feigning fear. Then Desika describes very briefly the release of the sons of Kubera from their curse. Krishna dragged the mortar playfully and it was stopped by the twin trees and when dragged further by him it uprooted the trees. The two sons of Kubera, Nalakoobara and Manigreeva who were cursed by the sage Narada to become trees got back their original form. Bhagavatha says that Krishna thought that the sage Narada is dear to him and the time has come to fulfill his promise to the yakshas and hence he enacted this scene. The two yakshas bowed down to Krishna and went their way:

devarshirme priyathamah yadhimou dhanaddhaathmajou

thatthathaa saadhayishyaami yadhgeetham thanmahaathmanaa (Bh.10-10-25)

"The devarshi Narada is dear to me and these are the sons of Kubera (who is also a devotee) and hence I will fulfill what has been promised by Narada."

As he took the form of a lion-man to prove the words of Prahlada and the boon of Brahma, both of whom were His devotees, now he allowed Himself to be bound to the mortar in order to free the twins and to prove the words of Narada. That is the karunaa of the Lord.

Almost immediately Desika switches to the migration of the residents of Gokula to Brindvan.

BRINDHAVANASANCHAREE

Desika says that Krishna made the woods fertile by mere will. There is nothing





to be surprised with this, says Desika, because he is the one who created the moon, the lord of all the herbs, who delights the whole universe with his will at the beginning of creation. Now he has become like a moon to the cowherds, **gODHanavamsa chandhrah**, whose wealth are the cows and made brindavanam a fertile land for the sake of the cows. He is sathAm gOptha., protector of the good and by his glances which were like rising waves of the sea made the Brindavanam look like the youth of the earth, abounding in fruits flowers and grass. The grass was sweet and the ground was soft with them devoid of stones or thorns and the trees outdid the kalpaka vrksha by their bounty of fruits and flowers. The gopas were thrilled to find such a place of habitation. NammAzvar says in his thiruvaimozi "**dhivatthilum pasu nirai mEyppu uvatthi**", the Lord left the vaikunta and came to Gokula and relished the caring for the cattle more than residing in Vaikunta.



gO-pAlanam

Desika mentions the killing of ThrnAvartha and BakAsura very briefly and proceeds to describe the pavai nonbu of the cowherd girls and stealing their clothes by Krishna. Bhagavtha mentions this vratha as the worship of Devi Kathyayani in the month of margasira (**hEmanthE praTHamE mAsi**) by the young gopis wishing the union with Krishna, reciting the following sloka:





kArthyAyaani mahAmAyE mahAyOginyaDheesvari
nandhgOpasutham dEvi pathim mE kuru thEnamah.

GOPIVASHTRAPAHAANA

niSAthyayE snAna samudhyathAnAm
nikshiptham AbheerakumArikANAm
koolAdhupAdhAya dhukoolajAlam
kundhADHirooDO mumudhE mukundhah

When the young cowherd girls went to the river yamuna in the early morning to take bath and left their garments made of white silk on the bank, Krishna took them from there and climbed the kundha tree with delight. Utthamur swami comments on this sloka, saying that first it was koola dhukoola sangamam, the garments, dhukoola, had the contact with the bank and then there was kundhamukundha sangamam, the contact with the branch of the kundha tree and with Mukundha. The kooladhukoola sangamam denotes leaving the old vasanas and bathe in Krishnanubhava and the kundhamukundha sangamam implies mukthi, as the word Mukundha means the one who gives mukthi, mukthim dhadhAthi ithi mukundhah. Kum, sin, dhyathi, destroys ithi kundhah. So kundha-mukundha sangamam means that the Lord destroys all the sin and gives moksha.

When they requested him to give back their garments he made them come out and pray to him with folded hands. This was to make them cast off their dhEhAthmabuddhi only when they become qualified for mukthi. The Lord has already willed to give them mukthi after their present life and only wanted to create the desire in them. He says in Gita "vAsAmsi jeerNANI yaTHA vihAya --thaTHA sarirANI vihAya jeerNANI anYANi samyAthi navANI dhEhee" meaning just as one casts off the old clothes and put on new ones the soul casts off the old body and takes a new one. But until there is total surrender this changing of bodies will go on. When the soul surrenders the Lord gives a new awareness





under the pretext of giving back their garments which have undergone change on account of kundhamukundha sambandha. This is the significance behind the episode of gopivasthrApahaharaNam.

Krishna became the capital of Anandha samrajya for gopis. His vilAsas, actions, were like the army protecting the kingdom. His lustre, kAnthi was the protecting wall, his sport was like a preventive measure for the non-entry of others. This means that the premebhakthi was the exclusive area of the gopis and could not be penetrated by others due to their lack of understanding.



sadagopan.org

KrishNa becomes the capital of AnandasaamrAjya for gOpis

When Krishna returned from the forest after tending the cattle the young girls of Gokula felt as though they were attacked by a fourfold army of cupid. The chathurangasena of a king, namely, ratha, gaja, thuraga padhAathi, in this case was the sound of the flute, the dust on his body, the sunlight playing on





his body at sunset and the garland of forest flowers he was wearing. Each one of them stole the heart of the gopis and they felt as though being attacked by the God of love.

Krishna resembled a tree by his peacock feathers looking like green branches and the cows took shelter in him as in the shadow of a tree.

Desika seems to be enthralled with the peacock feathers, which is obvious even from his Gopalavimsathi and here dedicates four slokas to describe Krishna adorned with peacock feathers.

Krishna shone like a mountain of sapphire with the peacock feathers and they created a magical effect of love on the others (peacock feathers are found in the hand of magicians to effect the illusion).

Yasodha touched the peacock feathers that adorned his crown again and again and was delighted. Desika uses two adjectives to describe Krishna, **mugDHAnganA mOhanavamsika**, the one who enchants the beautiful cowherd girls by his flute playing and **maneeshiNAm mAngalika**, one who effects auspicious happenings for those who meditate on him. That is his maya deludes those who do not have the knowledge of his real nature as the supreme self but for those who have conquered the maya and know him as he is, it fetches auspicious results. But the gopis are blessed even if they were deluded by his maya into believing that he was mortal because their desire was towards him and not on worldly things.

The dark hue of the peacock feathers made also the golden hued Lakshmi in his chest to appear dark. The implication here is that Lakshmi abides in the heart of the Lord in whichever form he appears. That is why when he came as Vamana he covered his chest with his upper garment (angavastra), says one commentator, because he did not want Lakshmi to look at Bali as otherwise it will not be possible to take away the possessions of Bali once he gets the Lakshmikataksham.





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Krishna shone like a mountain of sapphire with the peacock feathers

Krishna came playing his flute which seemed to reply to the message sent out by the glances of the gopis. This idea we see even in Gopalavimsathi in sloka 15. Desika says that the gopis are making sound with their bracelets keeping time to the music and it looks as though the flute is conversing with the bracelets.





Krishna was also dancing while he came playing the flute, a dance called AbheeranAtyam, the dance of the cowherd. Desika says the music was something not known even to Thumburu and Narada. Desika calls Krishna, rAgAbDHi, the sea of music and he seemed to attract the whole world by his music. There is pun in the word raga meaning both attachment and tune. He created raga, attachment towards him through his raga.

Desika describes the state of the mind of the gopis who looked at Krishna by a beautiful sloka,

apathrapAsaikatham AsrithAnAm

rAgOdhaDHou krishnamukhEndhunun nE

hasthAvalambO na babhoova thAsAm

uthpakshmaNAm uthkalikApluthAnAm

The face of Krishna was like the moon, krishnamukhEndhu, that caused the waves of desire to rise in the sea of love, rAgAbDHi. The gopis tried to ascend on the sand hill made of bashfulness, apathrapAsaikatha, due to the fear of censure, in order to escape being immersed in the sea, and looked up to get some support, uthpakshma but not finding any, hasthAvalamba, were deeply immersed in their love.

At this juncture Desika asserts that there was no brahmacharyabhanga to Krishna by sporting with the gopis which is proved in the incident of saving the life of Parikshith who was born charred by the apandavAsthra of Asvatthama. In Mahabharatha Krishna says "yadhi mE brahmacharyam syAth sathyam cha mayi thishTathi avyAhatham mamaiSvaryam thEmna jeevathu bAlakah", that if he is a true brahmachari and there is truth in him and if his mastery is untarnished this child should live. And Parikshith came back to life. There is another story to illustrate this.

Once Krishna told a gopi to take food for Vyasa who was at the other side of river Yamuna. But she was not able to cross the river as Yamuna as in spate.





Krishna told her to pray that if Krishna was a nithya brahmachari the river should part. Probably the gopi had her own doubts but she had explicit faith in Krishna and did as he told her and the river parted and she went to the other side and gave the food to Vyasa. But again there was flood and she could not go back. Then Vyasa told her that if he was nithya upavasi the river will part. This time the girl was really perplexed because just then he ate the whole food brought by her and termed himself a nithya upavasi. She expressed her doubt to Vyasa and also told him what Krishna said about Himself. Vyasa explained that both of them being jeevanmukthas the function of their bodies did not touch their real Self. The real "I" which is the pure Self is neither the doer nor the enjoyer.

What does this mean? The Lord is the inner self of all and the experience of the body does not touch the self. The whole world is the sarira of the Lord and the experiences of the world do not touch Him who is the self. Krishna, being the supreme self, all the experiences is for the others and not for Him. He appears to have the experience through His maya.

There are two ways to mukthi, rasAsvadhya, or experiencing the joy of union with the Lord and brahmajnana, through meditation or jnanamarga. The upanishad says, "rasO vai sah: rasam hOvAyamlabDhva Anandhee bhavathi", Brahman or Narayana is the rasa and attaining Him is the bliss. Rasa, Anandha and Brahman are synonymous terms.

The rasakreeda signifies the jivas enjoying the bliss with the Lord. The sages see the leela of the Lord in the world where all the jivas are around Him holding His hand. So the whole world is the brindavan and the leela of the Lord in creating sustaining and annihilating is the rasakreeda. RAsa is also termed as the collection of all the five vaishnava rasas, namely, dAsya, sakhya, vAtsalya, madhura and shantha.

To those who criticize the rasaleela the answer would be that Krishna was only 10 when he was in Brindavan and where does eroticism figure? Parikshit





himself was ignorant on this aspect and asked Shuka how it is justified for one who incarnated for dharmasamsthapana to play with the wives of others. And Shuka replied,

gOpeenAm thathpatheenAm cha sarvEshAmEva dhEhinAm

yO anthascharathi so aDHyakshah kreedanEna iha dhEhabhavah

The one who is the indweller of the gopis and their husbands and all beings and the witness self, is now playing in physical form.

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KrishNa - the Indweller of all - playing in physical form
(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

Srimadbhagavatha says, rEmE ramESO vrajasundareebhih yaTHA arbakah svaprathibimba vibhramah.

The Lord of Lakshmi enjoyed the company of the cowherd damsels as a child will revel in his own reflections.

The whole of Bhagavatha is considered to be the sarira of the Lord and the





five adhyayas describing rasakreeda are the prANasThAna. It is bhakthyAh parA kAshTA na sringArasya. It is the height of devotion and not of physical desire. It is said in Bhagavatha that the husbands never felt the absence of their wives during the nights of rasakreeda because their yogasariras were with Krishna while their bhogasariras were at home doing their duty. As the gopis saw only Krishna everywhere their love for their kith and kin only increased, and for the same reason it was reciprocated.

Vedantadesika in his yadhavabhyudhaya mentions that the brahmacharya of Krishna was not in any way affected, "abrhmachryam bibhidhE thadheeyam", and Appayya dikshita, a leading exponent of advaita, writing commentary on this work says that this is because everything is His sarira and He was embracing His own sarira. He quotes the PADhmOttharakAnda from PadmapuraNa where Lord Siva tells Parvathi, who raised the same question, that it is like 'svasariraparishvanga' embracing oneself.

The one who related the story is a parivrajaka brahmajnani and the one to whom it is told is Parikshit, paramabhagavtha and those who listened were rshis. All jivas are women and He alone is the Purusha. (This explanation is given here instead of giving it in the chapter on rasakrida because it would help understanding and enjoying Rasakreeda when we come to the chapter.)

KRISHNA THE COWHERD

Nandha sent Krishna and Balarama to tend the cattle Desika says,

ananya thanthrah svayamEva dhEvAn
padmAsanAdheen prajanayya rakshan
sa rakshakah seerabhrtha saha Aseeth
nEthA gavAm nandhaniyogavarthee

The one who created the devas including Brahma and is their protector, obeyed the command of Nandha and became a cowherd along with Balarama.





YasOdha worried over his tender feet becoming hurt with the stony path of the forest as Periazvar says, "kudaiyum seruppum kodAdhE----kodiYEn en piLLaiyai pOkkinEn eIlE pAvame" imagining himself as YasOdha.

Desika says that the vedas themselves became the cows when their protector became a cowherd. The cows being the personification of the vedas, the Supreme Being, paramapurusha was their rakshaka.

gOpAyamAnE purushE parasmin gOroopathAm vEdhagirO bajanthyah



The vedas became cows when their Protector became a cowherd

(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

The sounds made by them when they touched his feet with their mouths echoed the words pronounced in samagana.

bhavyairasEvantha padham thadheeyam

sthObha prathicchandhanibha ih svasabdhaih





sthobha are the sabdhas like 'ha, uhA, u' that are uttered in samagana which resemble the sound made by the cows.

Krishna tied and released the cows as required, signifying his power in binding and releasing jeevas.

The way Krishna showed his affection to the calves playing with him seem to teach the cows how to love their calves, "**vAthsalyasiksham iva vAsudhEvAth**". Whenever the other cowherd boys felt hungry Krishna gave them curd rice, dhaDHyanna out of his hand which is described by Desika as madhuplutha, dripping with honey. The boys gave him delicious fruits they gathered in the forest and he ate them with relish after giving them first to Balarama. He ate the sesha of the sesha!

The Brindavana appeared as something that was never seen in any yuga, says Desika. being protected by Narayana with Sesha who is like His arm, that is, Krishna and Balarama, the brindhavana with its herds of cows, vyAprtha dhEnu brindham was true to its name.

The brindhavana was full of deep pools, abundant grass, shady and even in the hot summer it was cool for the cows and the cowherds. The cows never had any fear from disease, demons and wild animals. The gopas being under the care of Vasudeva, never experienced the natural calamities like athivrshti, flood and anAvrshti, draught etc and also any obstacles from other beings. so they enjoyed a prosperity not obtained in any other yuga "**apoorvayugAnubhoothi**"

Desika here alludes to an episode according to which the crown of Lord Vishnu was stolen by Bali and Garuda brought it back in KrishnAvathAra.

Garuda gave a crown to Krishna which, Desika says, rightly belonged to him being robbed from him while he was sleeping in his seshasayana by Bali. The words describing the arrival of Garuda are much more enchanting than the story itself.

AghrAtha varthmAnam aranyabhAgEshu





AraNyakaih AsrithaDHEnubhAvaih

kEnApi thasyApahrtham kireetam

prathyAharan praukshatha pathrinAThah

Desika says that Garuda found Krishna by the cows which were smelling the path followed by him. Here the word 'AraNyakaih Asritha DHEnubhAvaih' means that the vedas which became the cows and Garuda being the personification of vedas, 'vedAthmA vihagEsvarah' found the Lord who is vedavedhya, known only from the vedas.

The yajnapathni upAkhyAna is mentioned briefly by Desika in one sloka. When the cowherd boys became hungry Krishna told them to go to the nearby yajnasAla and ask the rshis there for food, which was refused to them by the rshis who were learned in vedas but did not know the import of the vedas, the Lord Himself, whom all offerings in all yajnas go to and who had come as a cowherd. But their wives steeped in bhakthi obliged courting the anger of their husbands Due to the grace of the Lord the rshis understood their mistake and praised their wives for their bhakthi.

Then Desika describes how Krishna was enjoying the company of the calves and vice versa. They are compared with saints filled with devotion, bhakthibharAvanamrAn as they imitated their behavior. They closed their eyes, nimeelithAkshAn on being touched by him, and were drowsy being fondled by his hand and with their attention only on him. ananyAbhimukhAn. The calves went to the places where there is no grass because they were green with the hue of Krishna. On returning he himself fed them by taking them to their mothers as they were parisramsAnthapadhAh, tired after roaming in the forest.

The scene in which Krishna is returning from the forest is described thus. Coming at a distance with the cows, he became the cause of brightening of the faces of the gopis with joy, ullAsa, as the rising sun causing the blossoming of lotuses. The word 'gOBih' means also 'by rays' and 'ullasa' is joy as well as



blossoming. When he came playing his flute his lustre gave so much joy to the girls that it looked as though the whole world was enchanted by his peacock feathers.



Krishna was enjoying the company of the calves

How did the womenfolk of the gokula enjoyed his presence is given in a beautiful sloka by Desika.

bAlam tharuNyah tharuNam cha bAlAh



tham avarjyantha samAnabhAvAh

thadhadhbhutham thasya vilOkanam vA

thasyaiva sarvArha rasAthmathA vA

He was loved by young women and by young girls alike as though he was of their age group. Desika says it is to be ascertained whether this wonder is due to his maya or his being the essence of everything, 'rasO vai sah'.

Further Desika says that both Balrama and Krishna were looked upon differently by different groups of people. They were sons to their parents, handsome young men to young women, ancient, puraANapurushas to the wise old men who knew about their avatharahasya.

Desika also mentions the marriage of Krishna to Nappinna in his young age by taming seven bulls. She is said to be the daughter of the sister of Nandhgopa and mentioned as sathya in Bhagavatham and her marriage with Krishna is mentioned only after that of Rukmini and sathyabhAma. She was supposed to be the incarnation of Neela devi as Rukmini was sreedevi and sathyabhama was bhoodevi.

KALIYAMARDANA

After a brief mention of the killing of Denuka and Pralamba Desika starts relating the episode of Kaliya.

Once Krishna was away from Balarama and went to a hitherto unseen spot on Yamuna. He saw that the part of the river there was made black with the poison of Kaliya. He climbed on a kadhamba tree on the bank which remained kAshTamAthram, a bare branch because the leaves were burnt with the vapours of the poison. At the touch of the feet of Krishna the tree sprouted and blossomed. Krishna jumped into the pool of water like the manthra mountain into the milky ocean and all the snakes except kaliya left the place and went to the sea out of fear on seeing Krishna jumping in with anger like the Garuda himself. Then Kaliya rose with a fierce form and entwined the body





of Krishna who pushed him aside and jumped on one of his hoods.

Desika describes Krishna on the hood of Kaliya thus:

sadhyO mahaneelamayem mukundhah

sapadhmaAgAmiva padha peeteem

krAman phaNAn kAliyapannagasya

grasthOdhithO bhAnurivbhabhAsE

Krishna stepping on the hood of Kaliya which looked like his footrest made of blue sapphire studded with ruby with the red eyes of Kaliya on his black hood. Krishna shone like the sun rising while being grasped by Rahu.

When Krishna started dancing on the hoods of Kaliya it reminded of His subduing the five indhriyas of His devotees extricating the poison of the sensual desires. The underlying implication of these words is that when the mind, instead of being under the sway of the five senses, climbs over them and dances with the ecstasy of the love for the Lord, the senses like KAliya are subdued and leave the mind in peace. This can be done only when the Lord takes possession of the mind.

The dance of Krishna on KAliya, the KAliyananthana, was performed on the head of Kaliya as the stage and the sound of the waves of Yamuna served as the play of Mridhanga. He looked as though he is everywhere like the moon reflected in the waves. Desika refers to Him as Ananthain to indicate that there is no antha, end for the dance of the Lord.

When Kaliya could not endure it any longer his wives came out and entreated Krishna to show mercy at which Krishna relented and gave him reprieve. Devas expressed their joy on seeing the wonderful dance of Krishna and Kaliya also praised him along with his wives. The sloka describing this is beautiful, being full of yamaka, alliteration like "leelApathncharaNal eelAhathiksharit ha hAlAhal nijaphaNe" etc.





KAliya was given refuge by Krishna who sent him to the sea assuring him that Garuda will not harm him as his heads are stamped with the sign of the feet of the Lord. Thus Yamuna was freed of the poison of KAliya and because of the contact of the body of Krishna became even more glorified than the ganga who had the only merit that she sprung from the feet of the Lord. Desika says that KAliya reached the place where the Lord has his yoganidra, namely the sea thus the Lord has given place for KAliya in His own abode. Such is the mercy of the Lord to those who surrender to Him.

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kAliya mardanam - Malayappa svAmi - Thirupathi





CHAPTER 5

THE ADVENT OF SEASONS

The summer, bringing ripe mangoes, fragrance of patala flowers and jasmine in full bloom, seemed as though it has come to pay its respects to Krishna and Balarama.

Even though it was summer the trees in the forest gave enough shade for the cattle, growing dense as though by the music that flowed from the flute of Krishna, **krthAvasEkA iva krshnageethaih.**

Neither was the trees uprooted by **pravAtha**, strong wind, nor was they burnt by forest fire because they were protected by Krishna as were the cattle. So for both the gopas and the cattle the summer that advanced after the spring was not in any way unwelcome due to their proximity to Yamuna and its forests. The cattle never felt the heat, says Desika, because they were enjoying the shower of nectar from the KrishnamEgha, dark clouds in the form of Krishna, and grazed happily.

Then came the rainy season. Desika calls the varsharthu as: '**vichithrasamyOdhay a mEchakAngee mEghAviLA mAdhavayOgavELA.** '

The mountains were like kings whose abhisheka was performed by the rain-bearing clouds serving as the pots and their neerajana was done by them with lightning. The description of Desika of the rainy season reminds one of Kalidasa. The rows of clouds were the army of Cupid, the lightning was like the luster of his sword, the thunder was his conch, the rainbow was his bow and the storks flying above were like his flag. This picture is to show the virahathapa of the damsels who are separated from their lovers because of rainy season.





The next sloka is even more beautiful.

mrdhangaDHeerasthan ithO vihAyAh
soudhamaneesambhrth a chArulAsyAh
babhou navAnAm prabhavO rasAnam
rathipriasyEva natasya rangah

Cupid, rathipriya, is portrayed as the dancer, nata, here. Sringara is supposed to be the rasaraja, king of sentiments which is here referred to as 'navAnAm prabhavO rasah', the prime among the rasas. His dance was lasya, a kind of gentle dance, performed by the damsels in the form of lightning, soudhAmanee, and the mridhanga, talavadhya is provided by the thunder of the clouds.

The gopas lived in the caves of the Govardhana mountain when the land was flooded. Then by the will of Krishna the rains stopped. Desika says that he removed the clouds that covered the sun and the moon as though removing the hands that covered his eyes. (Sun and the moon are said to be the eyes of the Lord.)

In describing the advent of autumn Desika turns poetic and his objects of comparison are in keeping with his philosophical erudition. The sky with black and white clouds seemed to him like half-baked aspirants who stagger with their doubts uncleared.

The bees leaving the flowers in the hills and going to those in the plains like lotuses, is compared to the people who leave those who have lost their riches and going to the freshly rich.

The array of clouds, that looked like the yoganidra of the Lord, disappeared and the saradrthi advanced. The clouds were white like the pious man who is pure in and out and they stayed in the path of stars, sathpaTham, that is the sky. The clouds are referred to as charAcharEshu Ahitha jeevanAh, the source





of life to all, similar to a hospitable grhasTha, who gives food and other things to all who come to him, and who stays in the path of good Sathpathah. These traits are denoted by the swans that flocked to the sky, meaning that the swans which come back to the land from the Manasa lake where they go in the rainy season, indicate the advent of sard rthu. Here the swans, hamsagaNa, imply the sannysis who come back to receive the hospitality of the householders after their chathurmasya vratha during the rainy season when they stay in one place.

sukhAvagAhyaih sutharAm athushyath

svAdhOttharaih Sourih apEthapankaih

prasannaSeethaih anaghaih payObhih

svabhakthachitthaih iva yAmuneeyaih

Krishna was pleased with the waters of Yamuna which was easy to enter, clear of mud, sweet, cool and capable of destroying the sin by its purity, because it reminded him of the minds of his devotees. Their minds are also easy to enter for the good, clear of any impurities, sweet-natured, peaceful and removes the sin of others by their good thoughts. The word yAmuneeya refers to Yamunacharya who guides the minds of devotees. All the adjectives also apply to him, who is the foremost of the devotees, directly.

The water of the river was gradually shrinking and the marks made by the receding waves looked like the steps for Lakshmi who wishes to come to her abode of lotuses.

The rainy season was like the yoganidra of the Lord when the whole world merges in Him and the saradrthu is compared to the time of creation because no activity takes place in the rainy season and all the acts of dharma can begin only in the autumn.

The following sloka is very beautiful.

avyAsangam jalaDHisayanAth utTHithasya AthmaDHAMnah





pathyuh puNyam praTHamanayana spandhitham prApthukAmA
nithyApoorva SruthiparimaLam nyastha leelAravindhA
pAdhAmbOjam saha vasuDHayA dDHArayAmAsa padmA

Lakshmi along with Bhoo devi caught hold of the feet of the Lord so that they will receive His first glance before His eyes come into contact with anything else and she put down the lotus in her hand to do so. The lotus-like feet of the Lord are always filled with the fragrance of the vedas and hence she preferred it to the lotus in her hand. The reason for her and Bhoodevi to wait for His first glance is to plead for the devotees before He sees their faults due to poorvakarma and secure His grace for them. The purushakara of the divine mother is implied by this. Here it is interesting to remember the Thiruppavai pasuram 'angaNmAjnAklatthu', where Andal prays for the first glance to fall on them as Krishna opens his eyes slowly for which the acharyas give beautiful explanation.

Then the gopas started thinking about the Indra puja and the next chapter deals with Krishna arguing them out of it and them worshipping the Govardhana Mountain instead.





CHAPTER 6

CHITHRASARGA

This chapter is called chithrasarga because it abounds in chithraslokas; the slokas with alliteration containing one or more syllable repeated etc which are made into chithrabandhas.

Krishna advises to worship Govardhana

When Nandha with gopas was preparing to do Indra pooja, Krishna approached him and said thus:

vidhithavAniva vijnApayAmyaham
srnutha mE SakunEriva bhaAshitham
prTHukabuddhiraham prTHuchEthasah
prabhavathO bhavathO na hi SikshayE

This is a delightful sloka in which Desika makes Krishna speak like a humble boy towards his elders.

He says, "I speak as though I know everything and hear my words as though it is from a parrot. (Sakuni here means birds in general like parrot etc.) I am with meagre intellect and I cannot advise great wise men like you". What is meant here by the word parrot is that he is not telling something new but only what has been taught to him by his elders already because in the next verse he says, "nigamadhrshtham idham nikhilEna vah" - you have already learnt this through the vedas.

What is it? 'athiyajEtha nijAm yadhi dhEvathAm ubhayathah chyavathE jushathE





api agham', if one leaves his own God and worship another he is abandoned by both and incurs sin. All things mountains and the like are the manifestations of Narayana and the Govardhana Mountain is the cause of rain for the gokulam and also provides grass and other vegetation for people and the cattle and not Indra. The very name of the mountain as Govardhana shows that through it alone the cattle flourish.

bahumathO manujA dhaDhathE DHrthim

bahumathO api ayam ananyaDHrthih sathAm

giriSathOnnathimAna DHikah

giriSathOpakrthOpi maheebhrthah

This sloka contains yamakachathushtayam, two words in the poorvArDha, first half and two in UtthrArDha, second half repeated.

It means that this mountain give joy to all and extolled by the good as the best. It is even more praiseworthy than even the Himalayas which gives joy to Gireesa (Siva) being greater than hundreds of hills. (Pun on the word girisathah, as 'of GiriSa,' and 'hundred hills.')

So Krishna said, this mountain should be worshipped as Lord Narayana Himself. Krishna reassures Nandha that if Indra gets angry on his pooja being stopped and attacks, Balarama will conquer him with his plough as his weapon. This mountain, says Krishna is the gOthra, protector of the cattle and is near, whereas Indra is 'gOthrbith,' destroyer of mountains and is far away.

Krishna praises Nandha as being wiser than Brhaspathi and asks him to contemplate on this matter. The sloka is rich with alliteration.

DHishaNAttheetha DHishaNa lOkaneeyASthu lOkanee

suDHarE asmin vasuDHarE thAtha thEjasvithAthathE

Dhishanaatheetha means wiser than Brhaspathi (DhishaNA), second DHishaNA means buddhi. the word lOkaneeya means lOkaneethi and lOkanee denotes





perception. The mountains are called **vasudDHara**, support of the earth while **suDHara** means the best land meaning the mountain.

After this there are many chithra slokas with various bandhachithras, the letters of which are portrayed in a pattern to form gomuthrika bandha etc., all of them extolling the glory of Govardhana.

The skilful construction of words is found in the following slokas:

☆ **EkakriyAnvithaslOkA vrtthih**

The same sloka split up differently giving different meaning.

abhrAnthamathiSayyE ha virAjitha thamAgamE

niSAmayAleenaghanam sAlougham athi nandhanam (6-77)

The verb is **niSAmaya**, see. Split up as **abhrAntham athiSayya iha virAjithathamA agamE Aleenaghanam athinandhanam sAlougham niSAmaya**, it gives the meaning 'see the groups of sala trees, which are extending beyond the sky and in them the clouds, are hanging'.

When split in another way as '**thathama, Sayya iha vi rAji agamE aleenaghanam athinandhanam sAlOgham niSAmaya**'. "Oh Prosperous one, in this mountain where the birds rest, see the waterfalls delightful with the groups of bees hovering around the trees"

☆ **Dvayakshara slokas**

The whole sloka made up of two alphabets:

charucheeree ruchA rOchee ruruchArairachrchar uh

chirOccharochiracha ro ruchoro ruchirAcharah (6-78)

The two alphabets are adhanthya, not belonging to those of dental class. There are other slokas with only dental alphabets, (6-79 to 92) and slokas with the same akshara in each padha such as





Rururooruriraroram dhoodhadheem dhadhadhAdhidhah

lAlilOlAlileelAlO hAhAhoohooahEha hi (6-95)

☆ EkAkahara slokas

Only one alphabet used through out:

nAnAnAnAnAnAnAnA nAnAnAnAnAnAnAnA

nAnAnAnAnAnAnAnA nAnAnAnAnAnAnAnA (6-96)

For this sloka there are four different meanings given by commentators.
Other similar slokas are,

nayAnayAnayAnaya nayAnayAnayAnaya

nayAnayAnayAnaya nayAnayAnayAnaya (6-97)

prathilOma of the same,

yAnayAnayAnayAna yAnayAnayAnayAna

yAnayAnayAnayAna yAnayAnayAnayAna (6-98)

The last type is called sarvathO badhram which goes like this;

mAyAbhAsA sAbhAyAma yAsoothAya yathAsooya

bhAthAyAya yAythAbhA sA yayage gEyAyaAsA (6-99)

In the end of the chithrasarga Desika says,

aklishtachithram idham athra manAg iva uktham

chithrAyuthAni suvachAni punasthaTHApi

krthyam vibhoh nigamaneeyam ananyabhakthaih

ArADhyathAm harirasou prthiveedhrAthmA (6-108)

There are so many wonders (chithram) in this mountain. Only a little has been said and there are more than ten thousand yet to be seen. But the main purpose is to do the worship of Lord Hari in the form of the mountain with





unswerving devotion, giving up all other thoughts.

By this sloka Desika hints that he is capable of writing much more chithraslokas than what is given here but since the main purpose of the work is to describe the glory of the Lord Hari he has mentioned only a few.

At this moment the aged gopas saw a male form in the mountain which looked like the Lord Himself, a split image of Krishna, and Nandha too seeing it thought that all their prayers were answered.





CHAPTER 7

GOVARDHANODDHARANAM

Indra's anger

The gopas worshipped the devatha that appeared in the mountain who was none other than Krishna himself and he also joined them in the worship, thus worshipping himself by himself. By instructing them on worship of Govardhana, he also became their acharya, thus was his delightful leela.

Indra became furious on finding the gopas worshipping the mountain instead of him, and decided to send torrents of rain to flood the gokula. Desika says that he is ungrateful because he has been propitiated till then by the gopas and forgot all that and intended to harm them proving that those who are ungrateful show their mean-mindedness. 'krathAnabhijnEshu kim AnrSamsyam'.

Indra commanded the group of clouds called samvarthaka which have the power of giving out rain heavy enough to make all the seas merge during the time of deluge. Desika describes the rain that followed thus:

pradheepithAn kOpahuthASa bhoomnA
peethOdhaDHeen vAriDharAyuDHoghAn
maruthbhujEna thvaritham maruthvAn
prAyunktha ghOshAbhimukham saghOshAn

Indra sent the samvarthaka clouds which looked like weapons, advancing towards the village of the gopas with tumultous noise, burnt in the fire of anger, dipped in the sea and thrown by the arm of the wind.





The clouds, with thousands of lightning and thunder, presented a picture of Indra himself mounted on the vehicle of the cloud with his bow and vajrayudha advancing with the view of destroying them with eyes like thousand fire.

Indra is described as being hidden behind the clouds as though hidden by the trees in the shore of the ocean called the sky in order to hunt the gopas like a hunter. Desika says that he was hiding like a owl afraid of the lustre of the Lord, which shines in all His three abodes, exceeding that of the Sun. The three abodes of the Lord are, 'ambhasya pAra, bhuvansya maDhye nAkasya prshTE ithi sTHAnathrayam' (Uththamur Swami) Vaikunta, Milky ocean on Adhishesha and on earth in the form of archavathara.

The sound of the vrshti is described as

gambheera garjApatahapraNAdha m
prArabDHAjhanjhanil a nAdha geetham
thatidhbhirApAdhith a thANdavam thath
kAlasya sangeetham apoorvam Aseeth

The tumultuous thunder was the drum, the torrential rain and the stormy wind was the music and the lightning supplied the dance. Thus it was the music of deluge, never experienced before.

The net of clouds woven with lightning in the darkness was spread by Indra due to his mrgayEcchA, desire for hunt. The sky that looked like a sea with bheemapayOdhanakram, frightening whales of clouds, veechigaNAwakeerNam, filled with waves of rain which fell like big serpents, pushed by the forceful wind.

All this made the gopas agitated and frightened when Krishna pacified them with his abhayamudra 'ASvasayAmasa karENa Sourih', reassuring hand. He did not stop the rain at the outset because he wished to show the gopas that the





mountain which they worshipped will protect them from any calamity. That was why he did not resort to arms to fight Indra.

UPLIFTING OF THE GOVARDHANA



Krishna lifted the mountain by one hand playfully like an umbrella

(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

sa leelaya mErumiva dhvittheeyam

gOvarDHanam gOpakula pradheepah

navapraroODam nihithaika hasthah

nAgO nalasthambamiva ujjahAra

Krishna, the light of Gokula, placed one hand on the mountain and lifted it, which was like a second Meru, as playfully as an elephant would lift a nala grass.





aDHO mukhAvasTHitha mErukalpam
Sailam samuthkhAya SaraNyagopah
udhanchayath sathvaram oorDHva moolam
chakrE mahEndhram SamithArDha garvam

Krishna who was the refuge of the gopas, swiftly uprooted the mountain and turned it upside down like the Meru inverted, and quelled half the arrogance of Indra by his act.

The hand of Krishna looked like AdhiSEsha holding the earth. The whiteness of the sandalpaste applied by Nappinna on his arm resembled the colour of Sesa, the fingers resembling the hoods.

Here we should note that Krishna not only held the mountain with his whole hand but inverted it, for which there is evidence also in Srimadbhagavatham.

In srimadbhagavatha the lifting of the mountain is described thus:

'Ithyukthvaa ekena hasthena krthvaa govardhanAchalam
dhadhAra leelayA krishnah cchathrAkamiva bAlakah'

"Krishna lifted the mountain by one hand playfully like an umbrella."

Periazvar describing this incident by 10 verses says that the hand of Krishna looked like adhishesha holding the earth. 'padangal palavumudai pAmbaraiyan padarbhoomiyai thAnga kidappavan pol' as the fingers resembled the hoods of the sesha with his hand opened wide, 'thadangai viralaindhum malara vaitthu.'

Desika further describes the hand thus: His hands red like lotus were like the base of the opened umbrella, 'abugnarakthAnguli panjaram' and the rays of the rings on His fingers forming the rods 'ratnormikArasmi SalAkamanthah' it looked like a huge chathra, umbrella, supported by the staff of His arm.

Let us also enjoy the words of Periazvar-





seppAdudaiya thirumAlavan than senthAmarai kaiviral aindhinaiyum
kappAga edutthu mani nedunthoL kAmbAga kodutthu kavittha malai.

The Lord upturned the mountain 'kavitthu' holding it with His five fingers of His lotus-like hand, with His arm as the supporting stick of the umbrella, "aninedum thoL kAmbAga". The streams of water falling around looked like the pearl strings round the umbrella, 'parandhizi theLLaruvi muthuvadam'. All these show without doubt that the Lord held the mountain with His hand and not with His little finger, which must have been the modification for the sake of dramatic element. Moreover in Bhagavatha itself Krishna tells 'yathopajosham visatha girigartham sagodhanaah' meaning, enter into these hollows or caves of the mountain along with the cattle etc. and live there. So the beings of gokula were not standing under the mountain but lived comfortably in the caves as in their houses. Unless the mountain was upturned this is not possible as they could not have climbed up the top which was under the rain. So there is ample evidence apart from the azvar and Desika sukthis that Krishna indeed upturned the mountain and He held it with one hand and not with little finger.

The mountain lit by the fire above (lightning) looked like the prathyasthra, counter weapon of the vajarayudha of Indra. When the mountain was uprooted the ground underneath there was no hollow ground, says Desika, but it was filled with earth by the power of the Lord and grass grew there so that the cattle were able to have their fill.

The gopas were inadvertently uttering the truth by remarking that when the younger brother is able to bear the mountain, kshamADhara, the elder brother surely will lift the earth.

Here Desika gives a quaint description of the sages doing thapas in the mountain.

babhuh svaSAkhA graTHithAgra pAdhaih





thapODhanaih sAKam aDHah Sirobhih
krthAbhimukhyAh krthinO mukundhe
thapah prvrttha iva thathra vrkshAh

The trees were upside down looking at Krishna and the sages who were doing thapas on their branches were also upside down, unconscious of that fact, engrossed in their contemplation and it looked as though the leaves were also doing thapas.

Krishna showed the grass on the inverted mountain slopes and the cows were grazing with their heads lifted. Thus life was going on as usual under the mountain as in Gokula.

Periazvar says, 'ilangAzikkai endhai edutttha malai' the Lord who wears the discus was holding the mountain. The same idea is elaborated by Desika who says,

prabhootha DHArA prathipanna Saithyam
prApthAram adhri prabhuh adhbuthAnAm
sudharsanAth aDHikAm anaisheeth
pavithrathAm pANisarojayOgAth

The mountain attained more pavithratha, purity than even the sudarsana on being borne by the lotus-like hand of the Lord. the adjectives qualifying Govardhana are also applicable to Sudarsana by means of pun on the words.

1. prabhootha DHArA prathipanna saithyam - In the case of the mountain the saithya, coolness is due to prabhootha, abundana nce of DHArA, flow of water. With respect to Sudarsana, the saithya,sharpness is due to prabhootha, numerous, DHArA, edges.
2. prApthAram - The mountain was with pra+ apthAram, loud noise of the Waterfalls. Sudarsana has got prAptha, spokes, Aram.
3. pavithratha - purity common to both because they were held by the





lotus-like hands of the Lord but the mountain had one more special merit than the Sudarsana as it protected the gopas from the vajrayudha of Indra. the word pavithra is derived as pavibhyah, vajrebhyah, from the weapons such as vajra, thrAyatha, protected.

So Krishna made the mountain excel even the Sudarsana. The Mountains are supposed to fear vajra of Indra because when they had wings once upon a time Indra cut off their wings with his vajra. But on account of being held by the hand of the Lord the mountain got the power to protect from vajra which is the extraordinary feature that gave it superiority over even the Sudarsana.

The gopas enjoyed their stay in the caves of the mountain as though at a holiday resort. The gopas considered Krishna as a powerful human being capable of holding the mountain without realizing that the Lord of the universe has disguised Himself as a boy, while acting like an extraordinarily strong youth. They, being simple-minded, thought that he is a sarvashakthimAn having seen all his childhood exploits.

The gopis on the other hand wished that the rain will never stop because they enjoyed the company of Krishna without interruption.

GOVINDAPATTABHISHEKAM

The rain continued for seven days and seven night as nonstop. Even though Krishna could have dispersed the clouds at his will, he did not do so in order to humble Indra and stood there for seven days at the end of which Devendra was ashamed and stopped the clouds understanding the mercy of Krishna who did not destroy him. He became afraid thinking of his offense and came to Krishna on his white elephant, Airavatha. Krishna on seeing him thus subdued, put the mountain back in its place. His friends touched his limbs to see whether he was hurt by standing there so long holding the mountain. Periazvar describes the state of the Lord thus: 'kodiEru senthamaraiviralgolamum azindhitrila vaditrila'.





Even the red lacquer on his fingers remained intact and the fingers did not show any sign of fatigue. Desika says,

Ekathra samrakshathi krshnamEghe
gOthreNa chaikEna gavAm kulAni
aSEsha gothrougaha bhidha niyukthaih
meghAyuthaih mOghathamaih babhoove

When the dark cloud-like Krishna (krishnamEgha - dark, rain bearing, cloud) was protecting the cattle with one mountain (gOthra), the more than ten thousand clouds sent by gOthrabidh, Indra (because he cut off the wings of mountains), became powerless.

The next scene is the Govindapattabhisheka by Indra.

Indra approached Krishna realising that he is Upendra (vamana). Brahma sent Kamadhenu for the abhisheka of Krishna as Govinda. Keeping the Kamadhenu in front, Indra spoke to Krishna:

nATha thvayAnarmavihArabha Aja
vimohitho viprathisArithascha
akimchanah thvAm aham ASrithah san
kshipthApakArO na bahishkriyArhah

Oh Lord! Through your leela you made me deluded (into thinking that I am greater than you) and later you yourself made me repent. Now that I have come to you in helpless state banishing my sinful thought you should not discard me.

krthAparAdhEshvapi sanukampam
kshemamkaram kshEthra vivEchakanam
viSvOpakArADHvaraba ddhadheeksham
vEdhyam param vedhavidho vidhusthvAm





It is known by those well versed in the vedas that you are merciful even towards wrongdoers, beneficiary to those who know the truth about you and has taken a vow in the yajna of protecting the whole word.

We are all inert like machines activated by you and to start the rain and stop it are all your leela.

gOpAyithum pArayathi thrilOkeem

gOpAyamAnadhapi na thvadhanyah

Though you are diguising yourself as a cowherd, who can protect the three worlds except you. The word thrilokee can also be construed to mean the three kinds of people, namely **bhaktha** (devotee), **dhvEshya** (enemy) and **udhAseena** (indifferent).

It is not a wonder that you lifted the mountain because you sustain the whole world through your **svarupa viSEsha** and **vigraha viSEsha**. {He is in everything and everything is in Him "mayA thatham idham sarvam jagadhavyakthamoort hinA; mathsTHAni sarvabhoothAni, na chaham thEshvavasTHithah' (BG.9-4). The entire world is pervaded by Me, in my unmanifest form; All beings dwell in Me but I do not dwell in them."}

Then Indra told Krishna who protected the gokula that he wanted to do abhisheka of Krishna as Govinda. '**icchami samrakshitha gOvrajam thvam sTHAne gavam indrathaya abhishikthum**'.

He further said the name Govinda has been given already as the Lord retrieved the earth as Varaha. (The word go in Sanskrit has many meanings besides cow and earth is one of them.)

The Kamadhenu came from the goloka, he said, pleased with Krishna for protecting the cattle and wishes to do abhisheka. Indra thought of the celestial Ganges as though wishing to remove the fatigue of Krishna who held the mountain for so long. The devaganga came and Indra informed her of his



wish to do abhisheka to Krishna

Indra performed the abhisheka with the water of the celestial Ganges and the milk of Kamadhenu and the earth was sanctified by it falling from the body of Krishna, which appeared to Indra to be relieved of its burden already, the purpose for which Krishna incarnated. Then Krishna was given the name Govinda which was His own and Desika says that Indra was blessed to do Govindapattabhisheka. After that Indra took leave of Krishna and returned to his realm.



gOvindhA - MannArgudi rAjagOpalan
(Courtesy: Srimathi. Sumithra Varadarajan)



CHAPTER 8

SPRING SEASON AND RASAKREEDA

Advent of the Spring season

It was spring time in Brindavan The wind was soft and gentle and Krishna enjoyed it in the company of young damsels and Balarama. Spring is the time of love and the god of love, Manmatha was not far behind.

The cuckoos, with their shrill note of Panchama svara, seemed to give their blessings to Manmatha, who has the bow called pundra and arrows of flowers and wishes to conquer the world.

The champak flowers with their red tips shone like the flames of the lamps for the festival of Kama.

The malaymArutham, southerly wind, which rose from the river Thamraparni, wandered around, strewing flowers all around, like the elephant with rut belonging to the god of love.

The Thamraparni is described as mukthApaga, the source of pearls. It is also the land of mukthas, released souls like Nammazvar.

In Bhagavatha it is said that there will be great bhakthas in the south and in the west during kaliyuga, in the lands where the rivers Thamraparni, Karveri and Mahanadhi flow.

kalou khalu bhavishyanthi nAraynaparAyaNAh

kvachit kvachit mahArAja dhraavidEshu cha bhooriSah

thAmraparNee nadhee yathra krthamAlA payasvinee





kAvEree cha mahApuNya pratheechee cha Mahanadhee

Most of the azvars and acharyas were found in the land of Thamraparni and Kaveri and great devotees belong to the land of Mahanadhi.

Hence the southerly wind coming from Thamraparni, like an elephant emerges after dipping in the river roamed around everywhere reaching the land of Brindavan. This denotes the atmosphere of bhakthi in the scene of rasakreeda.

The wind rising from its dip in the river implies coolness and carrying flowers in its wake denotes the fragrance thus pleasing to the senses.

When the bees sat on the flowers and rose from them it looked like the bowstring of Kama bending and stretching. The karnikara flowers, orange in colour, shaking with the breeze seemed to do the mangalarathi for Manmatha.

When Krishna entered the forest, the flowers fell from trees and did abhisheka for him. Krishna showed the delightful scene to Balarama and compared the forest to the garden of Kubera.

All animals shed their natural enmity and lion cubs and elephant cubs played happily together as though born of same mother drinking the milk of the she-lion: 'simheeva SASThanyavidhO bhajanthE subhrAthrthAm kEsaridhanthi pOthAh'.

Krishna said that the forest deities were singing as though pleased with the white colour of the body of Balarama which is like the moon to the chakora birds. (The legendary chakora birds were said to thrive only on moonlight.)

The river Yamunaa was fanning with her lotuses and it looked like Balarama with his blue garment with its white colour and its blue flowers (indraneela)

Then inspired by the beauty of the scene Krishna started playing the flute as though calling the gopis. Desika describes this as,





prAyasthAdhAhvAnavi dhou niyOkthum
pragrhya vENum prathipanna dhoothyam
nyavESayath kungmalithE saleelam
bibmbAdharE soochitha chittha rAgE.

He put the flute on his closed lips as though to send it as a messenger to convey his love to the gopis.

Then starts the description of the venugana and the arrival of gopis for Rasakreeda.

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KrishNa plays His flute
(SrI KrishNa at Hembargala, Karnataka)
(Courtesy: Sri. Lakshminarasimhan Sridhar)





RASAKREEDA- THE SIGNIFICANCE

The gopis came and surrounded Krishna. To them Krishna appeared as the moon who never undergoes waning and waxing, and loki the god of love who has given up his bow of sugarcane and took flute in his hand because the sound of the flute was like the arrows of the cupid for them.

Here even before he starts to describe the rasakreeda, Desika explains the significance and purity of it in order to dispel any notion of worldly love-sport. He says,

surAnganAbhih samayE DhrthAyAm
svEnEva gopAKrthibhoomikyAm
akarmavaSyasya vibhOh thadhAseeth
archAphalasparSanamAthr leelA

The gopis were suppose to be the celestial damsels who took the incarnation of cowherd girls while the Lord put on the costume of a cowherd and it is not due to karma that He was born as the son of Devaki. So the whole thing was a drama and it was not due to the desire for carnal pleasures. The janma of the celestial damsels as gopis was the fruit of their worship.

na khalu amushya pramadha madhAnDhyam
na kuthsanam thath thath abheeshTa dhAthuH
na Dharma samsThApana bADha ganDHaH
SuddhAnuchinthyA hi SubhasyaleelA

Krishna did not play with gopis because He was attracted by them. This was no misconduct on the part of Him who is the real Self of all and who gives each one the fruit of their desire. And hence there was not even a trace of deviation from His role of establishing Dharma. Desika further says that this leela of Bhagavan who has all the auspicious qualities is to be contemplated only through pure mind as that of the yogis.





The conduct of the gopis, says Desika is to be viewed thus: They have forsaken the path of the worldly dharma and even disobeyed their elders but it is not to be condemned because they followed the highest dharma, their guide in that path being the Lord Himself who taught detachment through Gita later on.

As Bhishma said to Yudhishtira in instructing him about dharma,

'Esha mE sarvaDHarmANAm DharmO aDHikathamO mathah;

yadbhakthyA pundareekAksham sthavairarchEth naraH sadhA'

The greatest dharma is the devotion to the Lord, weighed against which all the worldly dharma comes to a naught. We had the example of Meera and other women saints even in kaliyuga to prove this. It is the soulabhya, souSeelya and vAthsalya of the Lord that while even the rshis have to struggle hard to get the pure devotion, the simple gopis and the wives of the rshis were blessed with parA-bhakthi, which is different from para-bhakthi as it is wrongly understood by the uninitiated.

Suka says to parikshith in Bhagavatha that Krishna played with the gopis as a child plays with his own reflection. Krishna was the Lord who is inside not only the gopis but also their husbands and it was the play of the Self with the bodies it occupies. Moreover the gopis saw Krishna everywhere and also in their husbands and hence their love for their husbands only grew. They also never missed their wives from their side and such is the mAya of the Lord. Above all it should be remembered that Krishna was only ten at that time. The joy experienced by the gopis in the company of Krishna is described by Desiks as: 'abhinna bAhyAntharam aikarasyAth AmOdham anyOnyasaganDham ApuH.'

Krishna gave them flowers picked by Him and their happiness was equally experienced both inside and outside. The bAhya or external joy was due to Krishna doing things to please them and the internal joy is because they enjoyed His presence in their heart.





RASAKREEDA - A DESCRIPTION

Gopis, for a moment, were overwhelmed with pride that Krishna found them attractive and Krishna knowing this disappeared from their midst. Desika says He was near but they could not see Him. 'aviprakashE api thiraskariNyA klrpthAvrthim krshNam aneekshamANAh.' The Lord is always near but only we fail to see Him due to our ego born out of ignorance.

Not able to see Krishna the gopis became miserable and they began to sing about His gunas and actions.. This act of the gopis is described as the famous Gopikageetham in Srimadbhagavatham.

Desika devotes only two slokas for this.

VileenachitthA vishamAshthra thApAth
vilApayanthiO vasuDhAm vilApaih
adhrSyaroopasya hareragAyan
guNAN charithrANi cha gopakanyAH

Miserable, struck with the arrows of Cupid, melting the very earth by lamentations, they started to sing about the gunas and actions of Hari who concealed Himself.

mukundha viSIEsha vimOhithAnAm
samSrooyamANAni muhuH vanAnthE
Sama praDHAni AthmavidhAm abhoovan
thrayyanthagandHeeni vachAmsi thAsAm

The words of the songs of the gopis reverberated throughout the forest. Desika says that it carried the fragrance of the upanishads and provided peace to the enlightened souls. The Upanishad declares 'rasO vai saH' He is the essence of all sentiments attaining whom one enjoys bliss. So the words of gopis steeped in rasAnubhava were in reality the words of the upanishad.





The Lord appeared before them, which, Desika says, is the proof that He gives His darsan when he wants to grace the devotee after concealing Himself by mAyA in order to ripen their devotion. The gopis were delighted beyond measure to see Krishna in front of them with a smile resembling a full blown lotus, wearing yellow garment on His blue form, which attracted even the god of love.

This sloka by Desika is the reflection of that in Srimadbhagavatham,

'ThAsam Avirabhooth Sourih smayamAbna mukhAmbujaH,
peethAmbaraDHara srgvee sAkshAth manmaThamanmaThaH.'

The gopis felt as though they got into another life on seeing Krishna. He was yOgaiH alakshyaH, not perceptible even by yoga, but to the gopis he was praNayAparADHee, erring lover and they attacked him by their glances like arrows flung from the bow-like brows. He, the eternal lover, pacified them by signs and glances individually without the knowledge of each other.

Then starts the rAsa, the dance of gopis and Krishna. Desika describes this in two slokas briefly and says Krishna joined hands with all of them taking many forms alternatively dancing. This is as described by Leelasuka in his KrishnakarNAmrtha in which he devoted eight slokas to describe the rasakreeda. The first sloka runs as follows.

'anganAm anganAm antharE madhavO
mAdhavam mAdhavam anthareNA anganA
itTham AkalpithE mandalE maDHyagah
sanjagou vENunA dhEvakeenandhanaH.' (KK.2.35)

In the circle consisting of Krishna alternately between each gopi Krishna stood in the middle playing flute.

Desika says that the Lord who removes the delusion (bhrama) of those who surrender to His feet made the gopis have bhrama, revolving in the dance.





'padhASrithAnAm bhramaSanthihEthuH priyAsahasram bhramayAMschakAra.'

He, who makes all beings move like puppets through His mAyA, stood as an illustration of His own mAyA by making the gopis dance as He wished.



The dance of the paramAtma with jeevAtmAs
(Courtesy: www.stephen-knapp.com)

SvamAyayA ghoorNayathO mahathyA
viSvAni bhoothAni vibhOrajasram
lambAlakAnam lalithasmithAnAm
lAbhAth svayam labhDhamanoratho abhooth

The circle of the rAsa dance by its fast movement looked like a wheel with no space in between. There was a shower of flowers from the heaven and the sound of instruments and celestial damsels danced on seeing the Rasakreeda. After dancing for a long time Krishna sat on the floor and the gopis fanned him by the branches having leaves and flowers and Desika says that Krishna shone





like a blue mountain surrounded by peacocks.

Afterwards Krishna entered the river Yamuna with them as though to get rid of the fatigue due to rAsakreeda. Desika describes this in a poetic manner.

mukhEna thasya dhvijarAjabhasa

thArAbhirAmENa thamopahena

premOdhaDHim varDHayathA priyANAm

samchikshipe thathra sarOjakAnthih

The face of Krishna was like the moon, beautiful with the stars, dispelling the darkness, with its dark eyes which removes the darkness of ignorance. Like the moon his face made the ocean of love of the gopis to rise and lotuses in the river closed as though with the lustre of his moon-like face.

Krishna and the gopis played spraying water on each other and eyes of the gopis, closing when krishna sprayed water on them, were like lotuses closing on the rise of moon, his face resembling the moon. The dark waters of Yamuna became white with the sandal pastes on their bodies and red with their vermilion on their foreheads looking like the Ganges and the Sona river alternatively.

The river Yamuna also attained her purusharTha by the union of Krishna like the gopis. The red lac on their feet, their eye-liner and their sandal paste were washed off by the river as though out of jealousy for their beauty but they shone even more beautiful without the decorations. The water level rising due to the numerous gopis entering it made the lotuses immersed in water and it is imagined by Desika that they were ashamed of the beauty of the damsels and hid their faces in water. The red eyes of the gopis due to the play in water looked as though they were intoxicated with the love of Krishna.

prayApithE gopikayA kadhAchith

krishnAnanam keechakyanthra thOye





nimeelanOnmeelanathasthadheeyAn

nakthamdhivam thathkshaNadhrSyam Aseeth

The eyelids of Krishna were closing and opening alternatively when some gopi sprayed water on him and it was like the illustration of day and night. When his eyes were open it was like day for them and when they closed it was like the night. The day is when the world is awake and means that the Lord has opened is eyes. The night is when the world merges in Him when He is in His yoganidhra.

A gopi went behind Krishna and hugged him tightly so that the others could spray water on him. This incident is reversed by Desika in his Gopalavimsathi where he says that Krishna went behind a gopi and held her tight so that she could not escape and others sprayed water on her. At the end of the play in water the river Yamuna herself came with a divine form and worshipped Krishna. The celestial damsels came and dressed him with divine garments.Desika describes Krishna as 'uttharantham sarithah pravAhath utthArakam pankamayAh payODHeH,' He who helps all out of the sinful sea of samsara, Himself came out of the water.

Then all of them returned to gokula and Desika briefly mentions the destruction of Arishtasura, who chased the cattle in the form of a bull and was killed by Krishna. Thus ends the Krishnaleela in Brindavan and the time has come for him to leave for Mathura.

STORY OF KRISHNA - END OF PART 1

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Story of SrI KrishNa (Part 2)





KrishNa karNamrutham
(Courtesy: Sow. R. Chitralekha)





CHAPTER 9

THE ARRIVAL OF AKRURA

The state of kamsa, on hearing from Narada that the Lord Narayana, who is superior to devas and asuras, having been born as Krishna and growing in Gokula, is described by Desika as **vyaThayA peethavishOpamO abhavath.**

He became like one who has drunk poison. Thinking how Krishna had destroyed all the asuras sent by him and also hearing about the episode of govarddhanOddhAraNam, Kamsa started planning what to do next. Desika says,

ithi viprathisAra vihvalaH

svayam utthApitha mrthyuchOdhithaH

prathihanthum iyEsha chakriNam

Salabho dheeptham iva ASu SukshaNim

He resented his inability to do what was required with respect to the rise of Krishna, became intent on a plan to destroy Krishna because he was forced by fate as his end was nearing. Here Desika refers to Krishna as chakree, one who wields the disc, meaning He is Sreeman narayana Himself. So the act of Kamsa is compared to that of a moth attacking the burning fire.

Kamsa tossed his head with a resolve and he looked like the sun at the end of the day. Fear, anger and surprise all mingled together in his heart and he felt as though his life was hanging on a thread.

Then he called Akrura, and told him to go to Gokula and bring Krishna and Balarama to Mathura along with Nanda and others. He told Akrura that he should bring Krishna and Balarama by hook or crook and in order to ward off any





suspicion as to is real intention, he said that Nanda and others should also be brought under the pretext of paying their tribute to the king. Desika says that these words of Kamsa was like raising a sword to kill himself, 'svavadhopAttha krpANikopamAm vACham udheerya'

Even before this order can be executed he wanted to try once more to destroy Krishna and sent Kesi to Brindavan for the purpose. Kesi took the form of a mighty horse. Desika devotes 13 slokas to describe the fearful appearance of Kesi as a horse to show that he was much more frightful than any of the demons sent by Kamsa earlier. His teeth were like vajrayudha, hoofs were blasting the earth, with his foaming mouth resembling the ocean, his tail raising dust like smoke and spitting fire. He managed to press down the earth with his weight which caused much effort even for Adisesha to lift it up again and his neighing was thunderous and deafening.



keshikasura vadam

(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)





Seeing such an animal enough to defeat even a lion the gopas in brindavan were frightened and Krishna gave out a laugh loud enough to quell the pride of the asura and to reassure the gopas

'avamathya thurangadhAnavam Samayan gOpagaNasya sAdhvasam prajhAsa hariH.'

Then Krishna inserted his arm deep into the mouth of the horse and broken him into two halves as though cut by a knife into two equal parts. Then the gokula became sanAtha with the yadhunAtha.

In the meanwhile Akrura started from Mathura as per the command of Kamsa which was agreeable to him because it gave him an opportunity to see Krishna. The thoughts that ran in the mind of Akrura on his way to Brindavan is described beautifully by Desika.

The Brindavan was compared by Akrura to the place of Upanishads, as the Supreme Purusha described in the upanishads resided there and he looked forward to see Him and attain the supreme bliss. The place, he thought was purified by the dust of the feet of Krishna, which are the remedy for the woes of samsara.

He considered Krishna as the elixir that gives incomparable joy, which destroys all sins of those who come to Him and it was enjoyed ever by the Sridevi and Bhoodevi. He wished that Krishna will put His divine foot on his head and bless him.

Krishna's face would be like the moon, thought Akrura, the rays of nectar from which, together with his speech with the fragrance of the vedas, removes the fever of samsara. He wondered whether krishna would speak to him when he surrenders himself. At the same time he had trepidation thinking that whether he will get the darshan of Him whom even the yogis try to see with much effort and penance. He yearned for the glance of Krishna which would be like the waves of the ocean of nectar.





He felt gratified that inspite of his serving a wicked man like Kamsa he had the good fortune to see Krishna by which all his sins would be washed off. Even if Krishna would not shower His grace on him, Akrura thought that His darsan itself is enough and there is now wish for anything else.

He expressed his hope that Krishna and Balarama will agree to come to Mathura and adorn the city as he wished. He wondered at the good fortune of the residents of mathura who were going to see Krishna and Balarama from where they were.

Akrura wished that people like him who had **charmadrk**, physical eye and not divine eye to know the glory of the Lord would also see the exploits of Krishna if He would come to Mathura and destroy Kamsa. Desika says '**ramayA kshamayA cha mAdhavaH ramamANaH prathigamya thAm pureem**', returning to Mathura, because that is where He belonged, and enjoy with Sri and Bhoodevi, meaning that He would become the king. He explicitly mentions this in the next sloka.

avaruddha bhujAntharaH Sriya

vidhaDHAno vasuDhAkaragraham

abhishEkam ul pEyivAn asou

kimu nAthO bhavitha kulasya naH

"Would He who has made His chest the abode of Lakshmi, and who grasps the hand of Bhoodevi agree to have coronation and to become the Lord of our clan?" Grasping the hand of Bhoodevi means to become the king.

But immediately Akrura became afraid of the harm that Kamsa would do to Krishna, m nevertheless assuring himself that Krishna would surely kill Kamsa because nothing is impossible to the glorious. '**nahi dhurAsadham achinthyathEjasaH.**'

Thinking thus Akrura reached Brindavan and alighted from his chariot still





riding on the chariot of his wishes, manoratha which had his satthvaguNa as the sArathi. Honoured by Nanda and others, he looked for Krishna here and there and saw Him coming with the cows after KesivaDha.

Then follows the description of Krishna as seen by Akrura.

AKRURA SEES KRISHNA

Krishna was returning after killing Kesi, behind the cows, with a jumping gait, gavAm anuplavam, and Akrura saw Garuda flying overhead warding off the heat of the Sun for Krishna. Garuda perhaps wanted to do service to Krishna and the Lord being in the form of gopala he could not serve as a vehicle and so served as the umbrella, thus taking the place of Adhisessa who was born as Balarama. This is the idea implied in the description of Desika, who further explicitly refers to the parathva of Krishna by saying 'gathim aprathighAthA dhvayinAm'. Krishna is none else that Narayana who is the goal to be attained by those proceeding along the path devoid of obstacles, meaning the archirAdhi mArga, 'gathim aprathighAdhvayyinAm'.

Narada was seen behind the clouds singing the glory of the Lord by samagana and the cows smelling the feet of Krishna seemed to be the vedas themselves. Krishna was wearing a garment of the colour of the rising Sun and shining with the hue of Thamala flower.

To Akrura, Krishna decorated with peacock-feather appeared as the Lord Himself adorned with Lakshmi and kousthubha, who can be seen only by those with vedic perception, devoid of misconceptions. He was equal to the Sun and the Moon in lustre and comparable only to Himself as there is no one like Him, samahAneH upamEyam AthmanA. He is ever new to the vedas which sing His praise.

Akrura considered those cowherd boys who sang and danced with Krishna as yogis and the cows and calves were the vedas and their angas. Seeing him thus Akrura was overwhelmed with devotion and started praising Him.





"I have fallen at your feet tormented by the demons of my sins and bound by the three gunas like ropes. (guna also meaning rope) Please take me up. You with your limitless glory are the helmsman in the sea of sin and rescues those who surrender to your feet. You are the rajahamsa that enter the manasa lake of the pure hearts of yogis."

Desika, speaking through the words of Akrura, says,

athirOdhi asou nidhih SruthEH
animEshavratha dhESinee dhersOH
thanuthE thanureeSa thAvakee
smaraNam vissmaraNam cha dhuSSakam

The meaning of the sloka is as follows:

The Lord is hidden by the vedas like a treasure and hence could not be contemplated. Now that He is visible and has become the object of the eyes that fail to wink, he cannot be forgotten again. Hence there could be neither smarana, remembering nor vismarana; loss of memory. This is one of the many slokas illustrating the chamatkara, the skill of poetry of Desika.

Another beautiful sloka that is full of devotional fervour comes next.

vyapadhiSya mukundha dhEvakeem
viharanthyaA vasudhEvamandhirE
janithOsi nijAnukampayA
jagathee rakshaNajAgarookadheeH

"You have made Devaki as a pretext to manifest yourself and she is in reality your mercy only, which alone is the cause of your incarnation because you are intent to protect the world."

Akrura further continues as follows:





"Those who experience the joy of seeing your form on earth, do not want even the attainment of moksha and those who understand your play on this world, unlike the ego-centric ones who are obsessed with the notion of 'I' and 'mine', never return to this world again"

This is as Krishna says in the Gita,

'janmakarma cha mE dhivyam Evam yO vEtthi thatthvathaH;

thyakthvA dhEham punarjanama naithi mAmEthi pAndava,----- (BG-4-9)

"One who knows my divine birth and my actions as they are, never are they reborn but attain me after leaving their bodies."

"The sins are destroyed by You like the darkness by the Sun and like the Moon you make the hearts of the yogis blossom like the lilies."

Next Desika reiterates the statement made by him earlier in the first chapter that the vedas themselves are not able to describe the glory of the Lord, through the speech of Akrura. (Ibid.1-2)

mahimArNavavarnanOdhyathAh

parimAthum guNamEkam akshamAH

thrapayEva bajanthi aseemani

thvayi vAchamyamatham anuSravAH

"The vedas trying to narrate the sea of your glory, unable to finish describing even one attribute fully, became silent as though ashamed."

Then Akrura started informing Krishna about the purpose of his visit.

thava viSvavidhO vadhAmi kim

jagadhEkAdhipathEH dhiSAmi kim

krpaNaH paripoorNasampadhaH

kamivAmsSam paripoorayAmyaham





This sloka means that to one who knows everything that happens in the world there is nothing to inform, there is nothing to show to one who is the Lord of the Universe and to the one who has all, there is nothing to give. Still he felt he had to carry his orders and told Krishna that it is time for him to return to Mathura and destroy the enemies. Kamsa, he said, is plotting for his own destruction and is going to die. Thus to Krishna who enquired after the welfare of Mathura and its inhabitants Akrura informed of the intention of Kamsa to call him and Balarama to Mathura. Then the gopas including Nanda started for Mathura obeying the orders of Kamsa and Akrura took Krishna and Balaarama in his chariot and started towards Mathura.

Next comes the description of the state of gopis grieved over the departure of Krishna.





CHAPTER 10

ENTRY INTO MATHURA AND THE END OF KAMSA

Krishna and Balarama entered the city of Mathura and seeing those people thought that they have attained the fruit of all their meritorious deeds and that their eyes have fulfilled their purpose.

Desika describes the experience of the people who saw them by 15 slokas.

They felt as though the months of chaithra and visakha coming together, the two sentiments, veera rasa and adbutha rasa combined, sensory experience and renunciation joined together.

The two purified the royal highway by their lotus feet; their beauty was enough to melt even stones, hiding their divinity by their simplicity.

Their beauty was that of ten thousands of cupids, they were as fragrant as ten thousands of spring seasons, as graceful as ten thousands of moons and shining like ten thousand suns. The ladies looking from the balconies of the mansions were like painted pictures as their mind as well as body became motionless, attracted by the two youths and the people who followed them running said that good days have started for them.

Desika briefly mentions the washer man of Kamsa who refused to give the clothes he was carrying for the king and he was overcome by Krishna and Balrama while they accepted the garlands given by the garland maker and graced him and the hunchback girl who gave them unguents and Krishna made her back straight and she requested him to come to her house.

Then they entered into the building where the bows were kept, which was deep





like the nether regions of Mahabali. Krishna saw a bow which was big and mighty like that of Lord Siva and like the vajra of Indra and as though reminiscent of his previous incarnation he took it and broke it trying to string it. The sound was so loud that the minds of their enemies broke with it as well as the big mansions of Mathura which crumbled.

Then Balarama and Krishna killed the guards who attacked them in the place where the bows were kept and came to the entrance of the wrestlers-hall. There the elephant Kuvalayapeetam which was fierce like the god of death advanced towards them and Krishna attacked it and overpowered it and they plucked the tusks of the elephant as though it was their weapon against the wrestlers.

When they entered the hall the people assembled there saw them as the personification of dhanurveda.

Desika says

'thadhAlokAlAbhEnasAmAjikajanasthadhA;

anidhampoorvamAhIAdham apavrktha iva anvabhooth,'

The common people felt a joy never experienced so far and it was like that of a realised soul. Anidham poorvam means that which has no beginning that is eternal and also something which was not experienced before. The first meaning refers to the infinite joy of a released soul and the second applies to the people of Mathura who never had such experience of joy before that time.

Krishna saw beautiful women and the kings all looking like celestial beings with their beauty, attire and ornaments. Kamsa was seated on a high throne and Krishna saw him and was pleased that his mission was going to be accomplished. Desika says that Kamsa was like a cluster of darkness and an assembly of sins, 'thamasAmiva sanghAtham samAharam iva EnasAm'.





The wrestlers challenged the brothers and their battle cry seemed like that of jackals compared with the roar of the lions of Yaduvamsa, Balarama and Krishna. Then two well known wrestlers Chanoora and Mushtika came to fight with them and the people were upset that those youths who were unfamiliar with warfare, who had soft limbs, were set against these seasoned wrestlers, who were like two mountains.

At the same time having heard about the exploits of Krishna like killing Poothana and others they wondered whether they might win and thought that if that happens it would be proved that Krishna was none other than the Lord who killed Madhu and Kaitabha.

Krishna smiled hearing their talk challenged the wrestler Chanoora who advanced towards him by clapping his shoulders, the sound of which struck terror in the followers of Kamsa. Krishna killed Chanoora as he destroyed the demon Madhu and as playfully as he danced on the hoods of Kaliya. Balarama also killed the other one, Mushtika.

Desika says,

rAmarAmAnujAbhyAm thou ravaNEndrajithou iva

namayAmasathuh prthveem nagapAtham nipathithou

They, Balarama and Krishna, Rama and Ramanuja, lowered the earth by the weight of the mountain like wrestlers, as they, (Rama and Ramanuja) have done in their previous incarnation by killing Ravana and Indrajit. Rama denotes Balarama as well as Raghurama and similarly ramanuja refers to both Krishna, the brother of Rama and Lakshmana.

After defeating the others who attacked him Krishna leaped to where Kamsa was like Garuda flying skyward from the earth.

'garuthmAn iva bhoobhAghAth gaganAbhOgam Ayatham;

kamsamancham apadhvArAth udhaplavatha kESavah.'





Desika says he went by unusual path, apadhvAra, by leaping into the sky and Appayya dishitha commenting on it says 'vaDHArTham Sathrugrham praviSadbhih amArgENa pravEshtavyam ithi prasiddhih' That is, when one enters the abode of his enemy to kill him he should not go through the normal gate.

Desika describes kamsavadha by just one sloka. His work is mainly bhakthi-oriented and he does not dwell upon the evil forces and their destruction at length. He says that Krishna pulled Kamsa by his hair and when he fell down he broke his chest and killed him.

Desika describes the kamsavadha in his own way as the vedanthacharya thus:

'mahAmOham ivAkramya mAthulam madhusooDhanah;
viveka iva vrtthasTham ugrasEnam vimochayath.'

Madhusudhana, killed his uncle and released Ugrasena, the father of Kamsa, imprisoned by Kamsa when he usurped the kingdom, like the viveka, discrimination, subdues the great delusion, mahamoha and releases the soul which is on the right path. Appayya dikshitha gives beautiful explanation for the comparison of Ugrasena with the individual self, jiva. He says that the word sEna means the sense organs and they become ugra, inflamed by mahamoha, the ignorance and hence the name Ugrasena. It follows that the jiva is imprisoned by its own ignorance causing sensual desires and discrimination by grace of God frees it from the delusion.

KRISHNA MEETS HIS PARENTS

After destroying the Kamsa and others Krishna and Balarama went to their parents, Vasudeva and Devaki, who were moved to tears on seeing them. Vasudeva endowed with insight due to the grace of the Lord started praising Krishna knowing Him as the Supreme Being.

Desika refers to Krishna as sAthvathAm pathi. Sathvatham means





pancharathram, called Vaishnava thanthram which was told by the Lord Himself. So the word means that Krishna is none other than Narayana Himself.

Desika goes into ecstasy in relating the praise of the Lord by Vasudeva and the glory of Krishna in Mathura.

Vasudeva said:

"You are the Lord Vishnu, the unoriginated, who is the only subject of the vedas, from whose navel, which sports the lotus, Brahma originated and the sages learn from the veda that You are ananyAdhAram, self supporting yet supports everything, AdhAram, the Lord of all but has no one superior, anayESvaram isvaram and the Master of all but no one rules over Him, ananyADhipathim pathim."

"You are the lamp of which your grace is the wick and your mercy is the ghee by which it burns bright showing everything clearly, that is, induces clear perception destroying darkness (ignorance)"

dEvakee dhanujasThooNA dhivuyam DHAmA vrajAngaNam

ramA rADHAdhayScha ithi rASibhEdhairna bhidhyasE

"You are the same, (na bhidhyasE-do not differ) even when Your place of manifestation differ such as, Devaki or the pillar in the house of Hiranyakasipu, or the courtyard of the mansion of Nanda or when You are in Vaikunta. Your consorts differ, Lakshmi in Vaikunta, Radha or Neela in gokula etc."

This reflects the idea set out in the Nammazvar Pasuram, 'palappalavE AbharaNam pErum palppalavE'. Desika himself has said in the first chapter, 'natavath bhoomikabhEdhaih nAtha dheevyan prthagviDhaih' (1.49), "Oh lord You shine with different costumes like an actor on the stage." Here it is shown that the settings and co-actors differ in each play of His but He is the same.





Lord Vishnu, the unoriginated
(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

The next sloka is also the reflection of the sloka 49 of the first chapter, 'namyasya namathah kshudhrAn--- puthraih pithrumathAm kreedA', Vasudeva says,

niyanthA sarvabhoothAnAm niyanthavyairniyamy asE
pithAmahamukhAih puthree mamaputhrOasi mAyayA

"Though You are the controller of all You allow Yourself to be controlled by them. From Brahma downwards all are your children and You appear as my son by Your Maya.

mahathA thvadpadhEnaiva mAruthinyAyam ASrithAh
nistharanthi achirAth santhah dhustharam bhavasAgaram





"The great men cross the ocean of samsara, which is difficult to cross over, by the power of your feet following the way of Hanuman."

The implication here is that Hanuman was able to cross the ocean by resorting to the power of the feet of Rama. So too the wise cross the ocean of samsara with the power of His feet. Appayya Dikshitha explains thavatpadhena (the power of) Your feet by taking it to mean the anguleeyaka of Rama which Hanuman carried with devotion and faith and that is described here as the power of His feet.

But Utthamur swami says that the anguleeyaka was only to instill confidence in the mind of Seetha in the words of Hanuman and not the cause of crossing the ocean. He explains the word thavatpadha as Vishnupadha, that is Akasa, called as such because the Lord in His Thirivikramavathara covered the sky with His foot. But it is common belief that hanuman have conquered the power to cross the ocean because he was carrying the anguleeyaka of Rama while returning the choodamani of Seetha gave him the power.

Thus extolling the glory of the Lord, Vasudeva beseeched Him that he, vasudeva should not revert back into the illusion if considering Krishna as an ordinary human being which even the yogis who know the real identity of the Lord could not escape. (The episodes of Brahma hiding the cattle and the gopas and Indra getting angry at the worship of Govardhana are the examples of this fact.) He further said that to kill Kamsa and others was not a great achievement for Krishna who is capable of destroying the wicked by the tip of His fingernails. Hence, he said all the praise he had uttered so far were like one who is praising the invaluable gem without knowing its merit. That is, the praise of only the person who knows the value is to be esteemed and not by an ignorant man who does not know its real worth.

Krishna, hearing this, treated the speech of vasudeva only as the praise of the son by the father and never showed His real identity. He replied fittingly to put the mind of Vasudeva at rest.





DESIKA DESCRIBES KRISHNA IN MATHURA THUS

Krishna appeared with four arms as he was when he manifested first in prison. But the common people did not understand his true identity and thought that he was an extraordinary human with four arms. Perhaps in the puranic age it was common because Ravana and Kṛthaveerya were described with more than two arms etc.

Krishna was behaving as an obedient younger brother to Balarama and Desika says that when he bowed down to Balarama the latter shone as the crown of Krishna and hence retained his state as Sesha. With the pun on the word Sesha, the kireeta is the sesha of the wearer, being an ornament (sesha means one belonging to someone else who is the seshi) and also Balarama is sesha in reality (Adhishesha)

Then Desika describes that the ornaments on Krishna which were beautified by his body, the royal umbrella held over him was like the lotus from his navel. His face like lotus flanked on both sides with the chamaras looked like the reflection of himself as hamsavathara.

Krishna made the clan of yadhavas rise in glory like the moon makes the lilies rise up. The Brahmins who resorted to him were like Brahma himself who has left off his work of creation and came to him. His speeches were pleasing and true and gave joy to his dependents.

Krishna, though requested by the elders to become the king, put only Ugrasena on the throne but accepted the status of crowned prince. Krishna with his prowess and glory made Mathura equivalent to his divine abode, Vaikunta. He cast off all his previous adornments like peacock feathers but was wearing only the crown brought to him by Garuda while in Brindavan. (Vide-chapter-4-Krishna the cowherd.)

Desika continues the thread about the transformation of all that was his while being a cowherd into his royal signalia by saying that the four vedas which





served him earlier in the form of cows, became his four royal horses, named, sainya, sugreeva, meghapushpa and valahaka. Not only that but they took the form of his foot rest and supported his feet which were like lotuses comparable only with those held by Lakshmi. His flute attained its original form of conch and enjoyed the contact with his lips.

Desika refers to the episode of bringing back the dead son of his guru Sandheepani very briefly denoting the gurukula vasa of Krishna.

The royal hall called sudharma was given to Krishna by Indra and Krishna made Ugrasena the head of the counsel, because he was the king. Ugrasena with the help of Krishna reigned the kingdom well according to dharmasasthra. All the supporters of Kamsa were thrown out and filled the court with good and wise. Krishna by conquering all the kings made Ugrasena the sovereign of the land.

Desika, proving himself as the kavithArkika kesari, describes the counsel of Ugrasena thus:

mAnasamrakshakah thasya manthrah tharka iva Anayah
anganchakasampatt hyA vipakshE dhandathAm yayou

It was like tharka. Tharka here means only anumana, one of the valid means of cognition, though the name tharka sasthra is given to the whole science of ascertaining a truth by perception, inference, comparison and verbal testimony.

Anumana has five limbs and so was the counsel of Ugrasena, says Desika. The five limbs of the counsel are:

1. karmaNAm ArambhOpAyah, the plan of action,
2. purushadhrav yasampatthih, human and material resources,
3. dhESa kAla vibhAgah, apportioning of proper time and place,
4. vinipAthapratheekArah, removal of obstacles and
5. kAryasiddhi, success.





Manthra or counsel done in this manner will be vipakshadhanda, punishment to the enemy.

This is compared to tharka which also has five limbs. Here the valid means of cognition, namely, anumana, inference is referred to. To arrive at anumana that causes vipalsha dhanda, refutation of the opponent there must be five steps of argument.

1. First is **vyapthi** that is invariable concomitance. When one wants to infer from smoke coming out of a mountain that the mountain has fire, the vyapti or the invariable connection between fire and smoke has to be established such as 'wherever there is smoke there is fire.'
2. Secondly a **sapaksha** or a similar instance must be quoted such as. 'As in the case of a kitchen'
3. Thirdly it is argued that 'this is so'.
4. Next the absence of vyapthi when the sadhya, major term (the object of inference, that is, fire), absent must be shown such as where there is no fire there is no smoke as in a lake. This is the fourth limb. This is **vipaksha**. Finally the conclusion that the mountain has fire.

Thus Krishna upheld the yadhuvamsa once again which suffered due to the tyranny of Kamsa.





CHAPTER 11

BATTLE WITH JARASANDHA AND BUILDING OF DVARAKA

Jarasandha, the father-in-law of Kamsa, attacked Mathura eighteen times and was defeated by Krishna and Balarama, who acquired their weapons, the disc, chakra and the plough respectively. Krishna did not kill Jarasandha because he was destined to be killed by Bhima. Then Mathura was besieged by Kalayavana, who was created by Garga maharshi out of spite for Yadavas who insulted him. Krishna did not kill him due to respect for the power of the sage Garga but he was destroyed by Muchukunda when he chased Krishna who went inside the cave where Muchukunda was sleeping. These episodes are described in more detailed manner in Srimad bhagavatha but Desika only makes a fleeting mention to it.

Then in consideration of the people of Mathura who were constantly troubled by the attacks from enemy kings, Krishna wished to construct a city which would be invincible and decided to leave Mathura. Here it should be noted that the city which is known as Mathura in modern times might have been called Madhura in ancient times because in Srimad bhagavatham it is mentioned as Madhura only. Desika also mentions it so and says that Krishna left the city of his ancestors as Parasurama left the earth conquered by him and as Rama left Ayodhya. But the city retained its glory because Krishna manifested there and his presence in the city became permanent for the devotees. But the city lost its madhurya, sweetness and remained as madhura only in a name, 'nAmnaivamAdhuryavathee thadhAseeth'. It became divested of its glamour as all the people and things there were transported to the new city and Desika compares it poetically to a river devoid of swans and lotuses, 'ahamsapadhmAm iva vAhineem', the night bereft of moon and the stars, 'veethEndhuthArAmiva vAsathEyeem' and the place of yajna after the rituals are over, 'samApthakAryAm iva sathra SAIAm'.





Srimad bhagavatham says that Krishna transported all in Mathura to Dvaraka in a single night by His yoga maya after creating it in a moment through Visvakarma but Desika describes the travel to the seashore by Krishna with his army elaborately.

prAcheem anadhrthya nivAsa bhoomim

prthyangmukheem paddhathim Adh dhAnA

sTHiram padham prApthum iyEsha senA

satthvAdhika dheeriva sAthvathAnAm (Yad. 11.15)

The army, which was strong, **satthvAdhika**, left its residence, **nivAsabhoomi**, in the east, **prAchee**, and went towards the west, **prathyang**, wishing for a permanent residence, **sTHiram padham**. Desika, the vedanthacharya, compares this to the intellect, **DHee** of the devotees which filled with satthvaguna, **satthvADhika**, leave the inferior path of worldliness which is **prAchee**, followed from time immemorial, and proceeds towards the path of the self, **prathyang**, meaning prathyagAthma to attain salvation, **sThiram padham**.

The mighty army resembled a sea by its elephants roaming like the crocodiles, the horses galloping like the waves and thus it was apoorva like the sea (apoorva means west as well as 'unseen before') and the sea itself was agitated as though fearing that it was no river, **vAhinee** coming to join it but an army. (**vAhinee** means river as well as an army). And hence it looked as though two forces were preparing to fight each other. The poetic fervor of Desika surfaces by the description of the sea. The sound of the waves was subdued by that of the army as though the sea accepted defeat and by the rising waves, the sea seemed to offer arghya with its hands and welcome the Lord with folded hands who returned to His residence after a long time.

Krishna called the king of the sea and commanded him to provide an island resembling the land of the devas and in that island Visvakarma, the celestial architect constructed a city by the order of Brahma and other devas. The city was incomparable and Krishna made all people from Mathura enter the new





city. Desika says that it was even superior to Vaikunta. The devas seeing the city on the sea and their own city, Amaravathi in the sky, thought that one is the reflection of the other.

Desika gives a luxurious description of the city at length.

DESCRIPTION OF DVARAKA

The fragrance emitted out of the mansions were giving their smell to the celestial chariots that came near, meaning that the mansions were so high. The devas stood immobile like painted ones admiring the beauty of Dvaraka and its inhabitants as though they were given pranaprathishta.

The residents were not affected by the six external and internal afflictions. 'na shadbhirAsan vyasanAni pumsAm yadvAmsinAm eethibhH oormibhih vA'.

The external difficulties to life are called **eethis** and were six in number. They are: **athvrshti**, excess of rains, **anAvrshti**, drought, **SalabhAH**, locusts, **mooshakAH**, rats, **SukA**, parrots (these cause damage by eating the crops.) etc.,

The internal afflictions are caused by kama, krodha, lobha, moha, madha and mathasarya, the internal enemies of man. The intellect became firmly established in the Lord without any disciplines like yoga.

The city was like a beautiful forest fit for the enjoyment of the god of love. The presence of the Lord who could be seen only by men of renunciation was enjoyed by the royal damsels in human form.

The verse comparing the city to the forest is full of pun, using same adjectives for both, with different meanings.

pravALachithreekrthajAlakashreeH

sAlAvrthA sambhrtha pathrajAlA





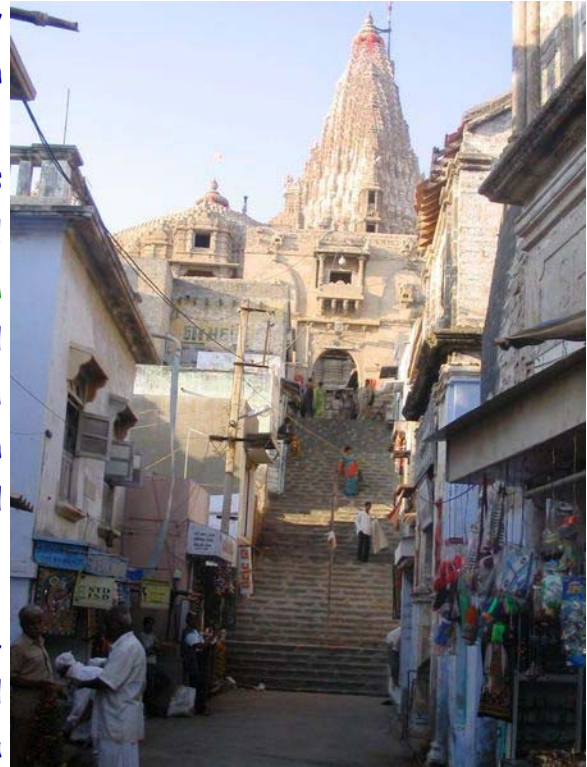
parishkrthA bhadhramrgAdhibhiryA

babhou smarasyEva vihAravanya

On the part of the city, it abounds in pravALa, corals, jalaka, windows which were chithreekrtha, well decorated and surrounded with walls, sAla and has vehicles, pathrajala. It has bhadra, auspiciousness and inhabited by elephants, mrga.

On the part of the forest, pravALa, means sprouts, jAlaka is the flower-bud, sAla means the trees and pathrajAla, leaves. bhadhra is a kind of elephant and mrga denotes other animals and birds.

The flags were so high that they appeared to pierce the orb of the moon and shower the nectar on the tall mansions. That is, they were always clean and white-washed and looked newly built. 'soudhaih nithyam naveenairiva nirbabhAse' The word 'soudhaih' is derived from sudhA, which means nectar as well as lime. The sun appeared more luminous being reflected by the gems on the mansions.



dvAraka gopurA

Having many lotus ponds, pushkara, the yaga done by the detached persons being prayaga (the word pra added gives a special meaning-Yagas are usually done with expectations of fulfillment of desire and the word prayaga means the yaga done without it and hence special.) There was prabhAsa great luminance due to the pious men, and thus Dvaraka was like the combination of all the sacred places. Pushkara, Prayaga and prabhasa are the dharmakshethras, places of piety.





The whole city was like a huge heap of gems of which Krishna was the central gem and Dvaraka was like a gem necklace worn by the sea. Thus the whole city had so many shining qualities but the predominantly praiseworthy feature was the presence of Krishna and Balarama. Desika, makes a comparison saying, 'sathyEva thArAnikare thrilOkee chakshushmathee chandrathivAkarabhyAm', even though there are numerous stars on the sky only the moon and the sun are said to be the eyes of all the worlds.

Desika concludes the description by

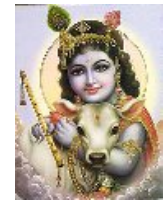
'prabhuNA sahasravadhanEna varnyathAm
dhviguNairamushya nayanairavEkshyathAm
Sruthibhischa thasya bahuDHA nisamyathAm
aDHIkAm thathaH Sriyam avApa sA puree

The meaning of the sloka is as follows:

The city of Dvaraka attained more glory than even Adhishesha with his thousand faces and mouths can describe, can see and hear with twice as much eyes and ears.

Krishna lived in a palace which was like the mount meru and excelled even that of Indra. Desika briefly mentions the exploits of Balarama in pulling the river Yamuna to his door when he went to Gokula to see his friends, and married Revathi, daughter of Revatha, a king of Ikshvaku clan.

The episode of Revatha is told in the 9th skandha of Bhagavatha during the description of the kings of Suryavamsa. Revatha went to Brahmaloaka with Revathi looking for a bridegroom for his daughter and spent sometime listening to the music of gandharvas during which several yugas were lapsed on earth and Brahma told him to go to the earth where the Lord had incarnated as Balarama at that time and give his daughter to him in marriage. Ravathi was very tall belonging to the early yuga and Balarama shortened her with the tip





of his plough and married her. Desika says the exploits of the Lord as Rama in all the three incarnations in that name have been wonderful. the next chapter deals with the marriage of Krishna with Rukmini.





CHAPTER 12

RUKMINI

thaThAviDHAnandhamahApayODHEH
tharangavrtthyA bajathO avathArAn
aSEsharoopEshvanurooparoopA
dhEvee jagannEthuh anuprajajnE

The Lord takes numerous incarnations like the waves of the sea of bliss. Lakshmi also takes many forms accordingly and follows Him in all His incarnations.

The upanishad says, 'sa Eko brahmaNa Anandhah', the bliss is one and of Brahman. That bliss is like an ocean, Anandha lahari, and the waves of the ocean is the avatharas, differing only in the form like the waves which are nothing but the ocean. To Him who is the controller of the Universe, Sridevi becomes His fitting consort in all His incarnations, in some not manifest as in mathasya, koorma, vamana etc. She is like the light of the Sun as Seetha says to Ravana 'ananyA raghavEnAham bhasakareNa yaTHA prabhA, I am non-different from Rama as the light from the Sun (SK-20.15)

Sikhandakam nishprathimam SrutheenAm
SrngAraleelOpamavisvagrthyam
aDHeeyathE thanmiThunam svabhAvAth
anyOnyajeevAthum ananya bhOgyam

The divine couple, the unparalleled jewel of the vedas, to whom the creation of the universe is like a play of love. The two are mutual elixir to each other and the delight of the devotees who do not seek anything else.





The word anyonya jeevathum is explained by Appayya dIkshitha as follows: The meaning of aham, 'I', ahamarTha , is the Lord , being the real self of all. Sri is the ahamthA, the 'I-ness' being his dharmadharmiNi. That is, His shakthi or power. One who possesses power is called shakthimAn, and he ceases to be so without shakthi. Similarly shakthi, being a dharma cannot stand by itself without a substratum, dharmi, namely the one who has shakthi. So both are mutually dependent for their existence.

Desika, the author of Dhayasathaka, describes Sridevi as:

'dhayEva nithyam dhayithA thriDHAMnah sarvEshu bhAveshu samAnabhAvA;
parAvarANAm jananee prajAnAm.'

She is like dhaya, mercy of the Lord, which cannot be dissociated from Him, because she is His dhaya. She is the mother of all beings great and small and attains equal status in all three abodes of His, namely, Srivaikunta, the supreme abode, Suryamandala, the orb of the Sun, and ksheerAbDHi, the milky ocean.

So Sridevi took the incarnation as Rukmini in the land of Vidharbha. Desika says,

amanyatha EnAm thanayAm sa rAjA
rukmee cha mOhAth anujAm anyAm
yAm Ekapathneem anaghaScha pumsaH
prajAsrjAm mAtharam Amananthi

Bheeshmaka, the king of Vudharbha thought she was his daughter and his son Rukmi considered her as his sister out of delusion because she is the divine consort of the Lord, the mother of all beings, including Brahma, and birth less.

Almost the whole chapter has been dedicated to the description of Rukmini, since to Desika, a paramvaishnava, thayar, the divine mother, is more





praiseworthy than even the Lord Himself, she being the personification of His mercy.

All the virtues found an ideal abode in her where they will be uncontaminated by faults and her form looked like the combination of the rays of the sun and the moon or of gold and gems, because her lustre was like a lightning.

She grew up more and more beautiful as though wishing to delight Krishna for whom she has taken birth. Her playful activities were uncognisable except by the subtlest intellects, says Desika, 'adhrsyabhEdhaih athisookshmabhAvAth jajnE jaganmangalathAm dhaDHAnaih' and they were conferring blessings on the whole world. The celestial damsels showered flowers on her and thus her desire of playing in the dust, as is usual for children, was fulfilled by the pollen of the flowers which fell on her. Desika says that being apAmsula, clean and pure, her wish to play in dust, pAmsu vihAra vAncchA, is satisfied only in this manner.

Her words were perfect, grammatically and phonetically, equal to the vedas and such that it presented a challenge even to sarasvathi, the goddess of learning.

Rukmini attained her youth which was like the moon free from the clouds, the natural intellect combined with scriptural knowledge and the unerring and fruitful justice.

'niSena chandhrENa ghanavyapAyE,naisargikee buddhiriva SruthEna;
phalena sa neethiriva apramAdhA yukthA babhou noothana youvanEna.'

She seemed to be a golden lotus that manifested at the time of the appearance of Lakshmi from the milky ocean.

Desika, not satisfied by the objects of comparison for her beauty finds comfort in the thought that comparing something which is inferior only extols the glory of the thing compared. Appayya dikshitha commenting on the





line 'nidharSanam thairapi nithyadhrshtAm yEshAm nikarshOpi guNo yathaH syAth' says, 'yEshAm, AkASAdheenAm,yathaH paramAthmAdhEH nikarshO api gunaH SyAth, yaTHA 'AkASavath sarvagathasya nithyaH' ithyAdhi Sruthishu.' Just as the Brahman is compared with Akasa as in the text 'He is eternal and all pervading like the Akasa,' when there is nothing equal to the subject, even comparing with an inferior object is a merit as it denoted the incomparable nature of the subject.

But Desika continues to describe Rukimini kesadhipadhantham as Narayana bhattadhri described the form of Narasimha, after saying that it defies description, in his Narayaneeyam.

She reached the marriageable age and her mind has gone to Krishna already. When her friends asked her about the bridegroom she had in her mind she bent her head with shyness as though by looking at herself she indicated that the one in her heart is her counterpart. 'asoochayan noonam anEna thasyAH svalakshaNam Sourim ananya lakshyam'

Desika differs from the account of Srimad bhagavatham where it is mentioned that Rukmini sent a letter to Krishna, in the famous passage, 'SruthvA guNAN bhuvanasundhara' etc. in as much as he never refers to it at all. His idea may be that as soon as the devotee thinks of the Lord earnestly He makes His appearance Himself because residing in the heart as the real self He need not be told about the wishes of the devotees.

But nevertheless there is a veiled reference to the letter of Rukmini in Bhagavatham as Desika relating the intention of Sisupala to marry her says, 'alipsatha SvA iva haviH thadhA EnAm dhaithyasvabhAvO dhamaghoshajanmA' the son of Dhamagosha, Sisupala, who had the attributes of an asura, though a human, desired her as a dog wishing to get the offering of the devas. Rukmini says in her letter to Krishna, 'mA veerabhAgam abhimarSathu chaidhya ArAth gOmAyuvath mrgapathEh balim ambujAksha', let not, chaidhya, that is, Sisupala, carry me away like a jackal stealing the prey of the lion.





Andal also says in her Nacchiar thirumozhi, 'vanidai vazum avvanavarkku maraiyavar vELviyi lvaguttha vavai, kAnidai thirivadhOr nari pugundhu kadappadhum mOppadhum Seivadhoppa,' meaning that to give her in marriage to a human being is like the offering consecrated for the devas by the vedic scholars being smelled and carried away by a fox that roams in the forest.

Rukmini was decorated for the marriage with Sisupala, which was agreed upon by her brother Rukmi, and Desika gives an elaborate description of her adorned beauty by 16 slokas. Rukmini was thinking only of Krishna and the other chaste ladies blessed her for the fulfillment of her desire even without knowing her heart. She was taken to the temple of Indra and she prayed to the goddess for the fulfillment of her desire. (In Bhagavatham Rukmini was mentioned as worshipping goddess Durga but here Desika says that it was IndhraNi, the goddess of marriage.)

Her left thigh and left eye throbbed to indicate that Krishna has come and the air was full of the fragrance of Tulasi and she heard the sound of Panchajanya. Thus ends the 12th chapter and the next one describes the marriage of Rukmini.





CHAPTER 13

KRISHNA CARRIES RUKMINI OFF

Rukmini came out of the temple and saw Krishna. Her glances, says Desika, were like the garlands she placed on him as in svayamvara. It was like one made of lotus, lily and indheevara, a flower colored indigo, because her eyes resembled all the three. He looked as the personification of the rasas, sringara, veera and adhbutha, the sentiments of love, valour and wonder and at the same time he surpassed all these and shone as something different from all these because he excelled all the rasas.

Sa rukmineenethra chakorachandhrah
thA thathpraharshAmbuja poorvasanDhyA
thadhadhbhuthadhdhvandhvam avekshya sakhyah
yayuh thulAm apsarasAm anoonAm- (Yad.13-13)

The friends of Rukmini seeing the couple resembled the celestial damsels because they were looking without batting their eyelids. Krishna was the moon for the chakora birds, meaning her eyes, and she appeared as the dawn for the lotus of his eyes. Chakora is a mythological bird believed to survive by the light of the moon. The lotuses similarly blossom at the arrival of dawn. Hence the comparison.

Krishna came near Rukmini and grasped her hand. Desika poetically describes that his hand looked like a bee desiring for the lotus of her face and her eyes became the bees for his lotus-face. Desika says that this incarnation of Rukmini excelled the others such as Sita in brilliance because she was going to give birth to the god of love himself as Pradhyumna.





The couple, who were bound to each other by their auspicious qualities, gave immense joy to the friends of Rukmini who thought that she was like a lioness being Haripriya, beloved to Lord Hari, (pun on the word hari which means both lion and Krishna) and hence unapproachable by the other kings who were like elephants in front of the lion, 'haripriyAm kesariNeem ivainAm dhurAsadhAm anyanrpadvipendhrai'



Krishna carried Rukmini in his chariot
(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

As Rama freed Sita from the rakshasas and took her in the pushpaka vimana Krishna carried Rukmini in his chariot in front of all the enemy kings. Desika describes Rukmini traveling with Krishna thus:

prabhEva dhEvEna thamopahEna
prathyak dhiSam thena saha prayAhnthee





nithyAnapAyithvam ajAnatheenAm

sathyApayAmAsa nijam prajAnAm

Just as the light of the Sun goes with him to the west Rukmini went towards the west to Dvaraka with Krishna who is the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance. Thus she seemed to proclaim her inseparable state with the Lord. Sita says in Sundarakanda 'ananyA rAghaveNAham bhAskareNa prabha yaThA' - "I am inseparable from Rama as the light from the Sun". Lakshmi always accompanies the Lord as the Azvar puts it 'agalakillen enru iraiyum alarmEl mangai urai marbA'

Sisupala to whom Rukmini was betrothed ran behind the lion of the yadhavas, carrying Rukmini like his lioness, hollering like a jackal and Rukmi, the brother of Rukmini pursued Krishna with the intention of avenging the insult to his friends. But Krishna vanquished him and carried Rukmini off to Dvaraka. Desika skips the details of fight between Rukmi with Krishna and his humiliation, probably because it is unnecessary for a bhakthikavya.

When they entered Dvaraka all the women hastened to see Rukmini and Desika elaborately describes their arrival to the scene. Each one of them was in a different state decorating them and hurrying up in the middle of it. The people seeing Rukmini who looked like a golden creeper around the kalpavrksha obtained all the four purusharthas, says Desika.

Krshnasya thAm skanDham upaGnayantheem

Suradhrumasyeva suvarNa valleem

Avekshya noonamchathurah pumarTHAn

Ananya labhyAn alabhantha pourAh

(Yad.13-65)

The four purusharthas, namely dharma, arTha, kama and moksha was gained simultaneously by the people of Dvaraka which is rare to get otherwise. Dharma due to the rightful union of the two, arTHa due to the arrival of Rukmini who is none other than Lakshmi, seeing them as a couple satisfied the





desire kama and the divine sight is capable of securing moksha.

THE MARRIAGE OF RUKMINI AND KRISHNA

Desika describes the marriage in detail which was not found in Srimadbhagavatham. One can understand all the steps of the ceremony of marriage by reading this chapter. These slokas will be a fitting quotation in a marriage invitation.

Elderly ladies adorned Rukmini with ornaments and it looked as though they have covered her beauty with ornaments thinking that it is too much to be shown in full. The auspicious garlands and the sacred rice grains attained their merit by the association with the divine couple. The sacred thread tied to the hand of Krishna looked like Vasuki on the Manthra Mountain, as his hands resembled the mountain which was going to churn the sea of his foes.

The flames of the fire in the altar when ignited burned round as though doing mangalarathi to the couple. The puffed rice was put in the fire which is usually done by the bride whose hand is placed on the bridegroom (lajahoma) with the prayer for the long life of her husband. (arimugan acchuthan kaimmEl en kai vaitthu porimugam thatta kanAkkandEn -Nacchiar thirumozhi)

Then the couple chanted the manthra for life-long companionship and took seven steps round the fire.

Anvethu vishnuh svayam ithi udheerya

priyAm parADheena ivAnugacchan

jAyApatheenAm jagadhudhbhavAnAm

bhavyAm dhaSAm bhAvayathi sma nAThah

Krishna, the Lord Vishnu Himself, chanted the manthra which means 'let Vishnu follow you,' and went behind Rukmini, like an ordinary mortal. Desika explains the act of Krishna going round the fire as 'AthmAnameva svayam





agniroopamparikramaih paryacharath sa dhevah' he went round himself in the form of agni.

The reason for this is 'viSvasya bAhyAntharanithyavrtthyA na karma kartha cha ya eva eshAm' since the Lord is everywhere inside and outside, being transcendent and imminent, he can neither be the doer nor the act as nothing else exists other than Him. Agni, the fire-god also sent his flames in a circular motion as though circumambulating the divine couple who are inside him.

Then Krishna grasped the feet of Rukmini and placed it on the grinding stone, ammi, which acquired the status of the jewel-stone crowning the Vedas, due to the association of the hand of the Lord and the foot of Sridevi, says Desika.

Finally Krishna did the svishtakrth yaga (must be the seshahoma) which is done as the upasana of agnideva with the implication that even if the steps of the marriage were done in a wrong order agni should rectify it and make it right.

Desika says 'svathejasA bhAvitha viSvathejAhsvAhAsakham dhevam upAstha dhevah', meaning, the one with whose light everything else shines (thameva bhAntham anubhAthi srvam thasya bhasA sarvamidham vibhAthi- upanishad.) propitiated the fire.

rAmasya seetheva rameva vishnoh

amushya bhooyAsthvam ihaikapathnee

ithyoochisho yAdhavavrddhadhArAn

preethASayA praikshatha sAsanAThA (Yad.13-95)

Rukmini looked at the elderly women of Yadava clan who blessed her she should be the one and only wife to Krishna. Here there could arise a doubt regarding the comparison with Rama and Vishnu by the women, who naturally were not aware of the identity of the divine couple and simply gave the traditional blessing. To say that she should be the ekapathni of Krishna like Seetha to Rama is of course valid but Vishnu is known to have three pathnis, namely,





Sridevi, Bhoo devi and Neeladevi. And in krishnavathara also he had many pathnis.

But this should be construed to mean that Rukmini is the pathnee which word is derived as 'yajne pathyuh samyogah yayA sA' , that is, the pathni is the one who is in unison with her husband in yajna and other vedic duties. It is always the first wife who is entitled for this. Even in respect to Lord Vishnu Lakshmi is the main consort who being inseparable from Him, takes prominent part in protecting the devotees. Of course Rukmini being none else that Sridevi herself this blessing is quite appropriate.

The ritual of seeing Arundhathi, the wife of Vasisihta was also performed and Desika says Arundhathi became fit to be seen by all with reverence because of this.

The sages gave their blessing that Krishna, who married his own wife by his leela as a human being, should prosper in auspiciousness more and more.

After doing the proper honoring to both everyone went back to their houses and the whole city of Dvaraka was flourishing in dharma, because both of them, the prime cause of all beings, were there.

srivathsasamsThAna jushA prkrthyA

sThAnenachihnena cha lakshaneeyou

dhRshtAvabheeshtam bajathAm dhadhAthe

jagathpathee thAviha dhampathee dhvou

That divine couple who were the masters of the universe, bestowed all blessings to the world. Desika says that they ere known to be the Lord Himself and His consort by the srivathsa mark on His chest which is also the place of Lakshmi.

Those who were blessed by the sight of the two, who were mutual adornment to each other and beyond the dualities of opposites like heat and cold, were





not to be considered either humans or divine being, says Desika.



Rukmini and SrI KRishna
(Courtesy: www.stephen-knapp.com)

Na the manushyA nacha dhevathAthe
prAyeNa thAmeva thaTHA bhavanthou
Yairevam anyonya vibhooshitham thath
dvandhvAdhikam dvandhvam avaikshi dhanyaih (Yad.13-107)

They are not humans because the divinity is not perceptible by humans and they can neither be devas because they also have their limitations. The implication is that the divine couple themselves assumed the role of spectators





to see themselves as the dvandhva, the pair who are dhvandhvAtheetha, transcendent of the duality. The import of this sloka is the mahavakya thathvamasi, says Utthamur swamin.

Desika concludes the chapter by a beautiful sloka as follows.

Subhagam upalabimbe SATHakummbhe api rathnam

Kanathi vipinabhAge kAlakante api gangA

vaSika nrpagrhe sA vasudeve api adheepyath

na hi bhavathi viseshah kvApi nithyonnathAnAm

The precious gem, either in a stone image or embedded in gold shines the same. Similarly Rukmini shone in all her splendour in the mansion of Vasudeva as well as when she was in the palace of the king of vidarbha which was inferior to her status.

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CHAPTER 14

KRISHNA MARRIES SATHYABHAMA, JAMBHAVATHI AND FIVE OTHERS

Retrieving syamanthakamani and fight with Jambavan

Sathrajith, a vassal king on the west coast, got a gem called syamanthaka from Surya, whom he worshipped and the gem had the capacity to bestow large amount of gold everyday. Krishna asked him to give the gem to Ugrasena for the benefit of all but he refused and gave it to his younger brother Prasena for safe-keeping.

thadhEkamEkena cha labhdham EkathO

rasEna rathnAmisham arThakAnkshiNA

babhoova thath banDhuvirODHam AdhaDhath

kramAth bahoonAm vinipAthakaraNam (Yadh.14-4)

The gem, which was an object of enjoyment, rathnAmisham, (the word Amisham means bhogya vasthu, object of enjoyment as well as flesh, (mAmsam) given by one (Surya) and obtained by another (Sathrajith), who was desirous of wealth, (arThakankshee) with delight, (rasena). Created enmity between the relatives, and was the cause of the downfall of many. Desika implies that it was like Amisha, flesh which was juicy (rasa). This is quite fitting to one who threw away the gold rice grains given to him by a devotee as biksha.

The implication of the sloka is this:

The brother of Sathrajith went to forest wearing the gem and was killed by a lion which took the gem. Jambavan, the celebrated bear of Ramayana was living there and he killed the lion and took the gem to decorate the cradle of his son.





Sathrajith spread the rumour that Krishna had killed his brother to get the gem. Krishna went in search of it in order to clear his name and met Jambavan and this was the cause of his marrying Jambavathi, daughter of Jamabavan and later Sathyabhama, and the daughter of Sathrajith.

Desika describes in detail the episode of Krishna meeting Jamabavan and marrying Jambavathi while he narrates the marriage of Krishna with others in brief. This may be due to his intention of extolling the virtues of the great devotee Jambavan and his meeting with Krishna, who was his own object of worship, Rama, in the previous yuga. Jamabavan was blessed with eternal life, chiramjeevithvam and thus he was existing in dvaparayuga also.

Krishna saw the gem near the child of Jambavan and Wanted to take it and Jambavan mistaking him for a robber tried to overcome him by his strength. Desika says that Brahma, seeing the battle between his father and his son, (Jambavan was the son of Brahma born out of his yawn) did not prevent it because he knew that only something good would come out of it.

Krishna fought with Jambavan by wrestling for twenty one days. Krishna's body describes Desika, splattered with the blood of Jambavan, and looked like a bed of grass with scattered silk worms. He considered perhaps the fight of the great devotee Jambavan as a form of worship. Gradually Jambavan lost his strength. Krishna did not harm Jambavan but only destroyed the arrogance remembering his assistance during the war with Ravana in His previous incarnation.

Finally Jambavan realized that his opponent was none other than Srirama Himself in His next incarnation. He said that he was told by siddhapurushas that the Lord who was in the cave of his heart would come to his cave one day. He understood that now and started praising Krishna.

Desika narrates the words of Jambavan in detail by 27 slokas in order to bring out the greatness of his devotion. The gist of the passage is as follows:





Jambavan went round the worlds when the Lord incarnated as Thrivikrama in Vamanavathara with a tumultuous cry 'jaganthi viSvAni mithAni vishnunA', Lord Vishnu has measured all the three worlds.' He again served the Lord during his battle with Ravana. He said that he reaped the fruit of his staying behind on earth when Sugriva and others went to Vaikunta by seeing Krishna and felt that he has regained his youth. He foresaw that Krishna was going to lighten the burden of the earth and his leelas shine as the crown of the Vedas.

viSuddhamiSraih chathuraSravrtthakaih

aghADhathungaih pramithAmithakramaih

ananyabhAvAn anukampathE bhavAn

achinthyachinthyaiH avathAra nAtakaiH

His incarnations are dramas sometimes viSuddha, pure like Rama, sometimes mixed, miSra, like Narasimha and Hayagriva, beautiful and appropriate. They are very deep and lofty, comprehended by some but incomprehensible to others. He shows His grace to those whose mind is concentrated on Him by His incarnations which are beyond mind and intellect.

Even though the Lord is beyond action and its results, He restricts Himself to the rules laid down by Himself according to the role he plays and even the devas along with the asuras could not understand His real nature, being overpowered with the maya consisting of the three gunas.

Jambavan said that the Lord is inside and outside everything, transcendent and imminent, and the power of all beings including brahma is through His will and hence no one can vanquish Him. Even though he was a devotee right and proper he fought against the Lord without knowing His identity and for that he asked the forgiveness of Krishna. He offered his daughter Jamabavathi who was really the daughter of the ocean and also the syamanthakamani.

In the concluding slokas Desika speaks himself in the guise of Jambavan and the slokas are filled with devotion.





bhavArNavE karmavipAkavAthyayA

bhavadhbhih AvarthaganaH paribhraman

krthOparOdhaH krpayA thvadheeyayA

bhavathpadham koolamiva prapadhyathE

One who is thrown into the ocean of samsara, the whirlwinds of the fruits of past karma toss him about and he goes revolving world without support. Then the mercy of the Lord intervenes and he is stopped by the feet of the Lord which he grasps in anguish.

avindhathaH thvAm amithAmrthOdhaDhim

vighADa thrshnA vivaSAntharAthmanH

vigAhaneeyAH prathibhAnthi veechikAH

mareechikAnAm iva bhogasampadhAm

Those who do not resort to the Lord who is the ocean of nectar, possessed by avarice and desire, consider the hot winds of the desert in the form of sensual enjoyment as something cool and to be plunged in.

Then we see the reflection of the thought expressed by Desika at the outset describing his inability to enumerate the auspicious qualities of the Lord. (Vide sloka 2 - chapter1)

guNOdhaDhim yaH pramithapramANayA

girA thvadheeyam parimAthum icchathi

sa pAthum eehEtha samagrachApalaH

payOjanALEna payaH payOnidhim

"You are the ocean of virtues. One who wants to describe You with his limited power of speech is like the one who wishes to drink the milky ocean with the stalk of a lotus."

This is similar to the verse of Kamban who says that his ambition to write

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Ramayana is like that of a cat who wishes to drink the milky ocean by licking.

"Osai petru uyar pArkadal utru oru poosai mutravumnakkububukkena Asai patri araiyalutrEn kAsil kotratthu irAman kadhai arO." (KR-Payiram-4)

Saying thus Jambavan fell at the feet of Krishna like an uprooted tree. Krishna uplifted him and embraced him.

KRISHNA MARRIES JAMBAVATHI AND FIVE OTHERS.

Desika narrates the marriage of Krishna with Jambavathi in his own inimitable style as the kavitarkika kesari as follows:

vanoukasAm pathyuH aheendhrashobinA
vimaThyamAnAth achalena bAhunA
nanandha labdhvA hrdhayangamAm priyAm
maNim cha dhivyam madhukaitabhAnthakaH

Krishna, the slayer of Madhu and Kaitabha, accepted the gem along with the girl with pleasure. Here the words used are full of pun as often it is with the poetry of Desika.

VanoukasAm pathuH means from Jambavan, the word vanoukasam pathi means both Jambavan the king of forest animals as well as the ocean, the residence of beings in water, because the word vana has also another meaning as 'water in general'. Okas means residence.

Aheendhra shobinA vimaThyamanAth qualifies Jambavan, who has been hit by the arms of Krishna like the big serpent. Aheendhra also could mean Vasuki with whom the ocean was churned, vimathyamAna.

acalEna bAhuna denotes the arms of Krishna like mountain and also the word achala means the manthara mountain with which the ocean was churned.

labDhvA hrdhayangamAm priyam means obtaining the bride who is pleasing to





his heart. The word hrdhayangama also could mean Lakshmi who took seat in the heart of the Lord.

Divyam maNim the divine jewel means both syamanthaka and kousthubha.

Hence the sloka refers to the Lord obtaining Lakshmi from the milky ocean, which was churned by Manthara Mountain and Vasuki, along with the divine gem Kousthubha and implies that Krishna was as happy as He was at that time.

The sloka that describes the feeling of Jambavathi about Krishna describes the stages of bhakthi vividly. Desika says that she at first was filled with wonder and then became joyous and gradually forget everything else and saw nothing but Him everywhere and became one with Him.

This is the stages of bhakthi which a devotee experiences and none else could describe it better than Desika the great bhaktha!

Then Krishna blessed Jambavan to remain on earth as long as he wishes and then reach the supreme abode of the Lord.

Krishna returned to Dvaraka and gave the jewel to Sathrajith and erased the guilt which was imposed on him wrongly on which Sathrajith being ashamed of himself gave Krishna his daughter Sathyabhama in marriage to redress the wrong committed by him.

Desika says that Krishna shone with his three wives as with the three shakthis, (Sri, Bhoo and Neela) and possessing the shadgunas (jnana, bala, aisvarya, veerya, tejas and shakthi) achieved success like the governing powers of a monarch. The policy of rule depends on the three powers of prabhu shakthi, power of royalty, manthra shakthi the power of counsel and uthsaha shakthi the power of energy meaning the army and the six gunas denote the six means of success, namely, **sandhi**, peacemaking, **vigraha**, fight, **yAna**, advancing against, **sThAna** or halt, **samSraya**, seeking shelter and **dvaiDha**, duplicity.





Krishna married another five, namely, Kalindhi. Mithravindha, Sathya, Lakshmana and Badhra. They were like the five unmanifest elements and the eight wives are compared to the eight siddhis by Desika and represented the eight directions, denoting the all pervasiveness of the Lord.

Desika concludes the chapter by saying that narrating this episode or hearing it will fetch good results and lead one in the right path.





CHAPTER 15

SISUPALAVADHAM - THE SLAYING OF SISUPALA

Arrival of Narada in Dvaraka

Narada came to Dvaraka to see Krishna singing thus with his veena.

"The Lord Narayana, from whose navel my father Brahma has originated, has now incarnated as the son of Vasudeva. He is a great actor who has assumed the role of a cowherd and now made himself known as the son of Devaki and acquired Sridevi (Rukmini) as though as a reward for his performance like a veena given to an artiste for his skill in music and dance."

Here Lakshmi is qualified by the adjective sruthilakshyA, known through the Vedas, which epithet is also applicable to a good veena.

Thadhaham sThitham parasthAth

anapAyadhuthi bhAsvathA Athmana Eva

kamalollasithEna darsaneeyam

dinamAdhyanthavivarjitham dhidhrkshe

"I wish to see the daylight which is Krishna, situated beyond the darkness (of thamas), self-illuminated and beginning less and endless and shining with the lustre of Lakshmi, (Kamala)."

Here the well-known daylight used as a metaphor, refers to the Sun who is beyond darkness, thamas and accompanied with the blossoming of lotuses (kamalollasitha)

The next sloka is beautiful by the figure of speech known as virodhAbhAsa, in





which an entity is qualified by adjectives which are contrary to each other.

guNasinDhurasou guNATHivrthee

gathiranthasThithirAgmaikagamyah

dhayithAsahitho dhyai kasangee

gururAdhyo mayi gouravam viDhAthA

He is gunasindhu, ocean of virtues, (gunas) yet guNATHivarthee, transcends the gunas (the three gunas of sattva rajas and thamas).

He is the gathi, goal of everyone and anthasThithih, situated within, yet Agamaikagamyah, known only through the Vedas. (The words gathi and anthasThithi shows His easy accessibility while Agamaikagamyah denotes that He is difficult to be known except by the Vedas.)

He is accompanied with Lakshmi yet shows favors to Daya, (here daya or mercy is elevated to the status of a consort to the Lord. It is to be expected from the author of dayasathakam to do so.)

He is the first guru yet shows reverence to other gurus like Narada.

Then Narada mentioned his own role in the world as the preserver of dharma and for that purpose he goes on playing one against the other and earned the name kalahapriya, one who reveals o in creating discord. He was revered by all because they know that his kalaha will end in the welfare of the world. Thus saying Narada approached Krishna.

Narada spoke to Krishna thus:

Jaya dheva jagathryAntharAthman

Na niyantha nachthe samasthavadhanyah

Bhavabheethinieethineevin bhAtham

Paramam brahma bhavantham Amananthi





Victory to Thee, Oh Lord, there is no one who can command you and equal to you. To those afraid of the night called samsara you are the dawn.

udhithaH praNavAnkurAthmanA thavth

viviDha skanDha vibhaktha rooDa SAKhah

thvadhanugrahapushpithah prajAnAm

phalam ishtam nigamdhrumah prasoothe

The tree called Vedas sprung from You from the sprout of Omkara, sport many branches and put forth flowers of Your grace.

Then Narada spoke about Sisupala who had two lives as HiraNyakasipu and Ravana and now taken birth as Sisupala. He has become krthrimasathru, enemy with a cause besides being natural enemy in the previous births because Krishna married Rukmini who was betrothed to him earlier. Narada said that Sisupala has to be annihilated in this birth also as he was becoming increasingly wicked. Narada further praised Krishna saying that to Him who had destroyed the demons Madhu and Kaitabha who were like the mount Meru, Sisupala is like a fly.

Desika here through the words of Narada refers to the upanishadic declaration 'yasya brahma cha kshathram chObhE bhavatha Odhanah; mrthyuryasyOpasEchanam' (Kato.1-2-25), to whom brahma kshatriya varnas are food and the god of death is the condiment and the corresponding Brahmasuthra 'AtthA charAcharagrahaNath'. Brahman is the eater because of consuming the whole universe of movable and immovable beings.

Food referred to be the whole universe of movable and immovable, signified by brahmaNa and kshathriya, because they are the foremost beings of creation. It means the absorption of the universe and not the action of enjoying the food. Mrthyu, death is said to be the condiment, or that mixed with which the food is eaten. Because like the condiment which becomes the inducement for eating the food while itself being eaten, the death consumes everything while





it being consumed by Brahman.

Now let us see the words of Desika.

aThavA jagadhethath Odhanasthe thath
upaghnan upasechanam cha mrthyuh
mahadhAdhi vilApayan mahimnA
dhamanenAdhriyase na dhAnavAnAm

Narada said, the destruction of asuras like Madhu and Kaitabha, is nothing to the one to whom the whole universe from mahat till the gross elements, is the food with god of death being the side dish.

Narada further said that partiality cannot be attributed to the Lord because He destroys the wicked because He is impartial towards all and protects those who surrender to Him whether he is an asura or a deva and punishes likewise. (We could see this in the example of Vibheeshana and Jayantha)

Krishna was praised by Narada as the first and the ultimate God. He is the one worshipped by all and the one who bestows the fruit of action. He is both creator and annihilator and the only reality in the Vedas and the world of beings.

The next sloka is very beautiful and full of import.

Savane bhavamukthi sanDhiroope
viDhinA viSvapathe vichithrahethim
hrdhi SAnthaDhiyah saminDhathe thvAm
anaGhathma krathu havyavahanam Adhyam

At the time of release from the samsara which is the yajna, the Lord is the fire in which the self is sacrificed by the enlightened. The sacrificial altar is the heart and the fire into which the self is offered is the Lord. The word vichithrahethi means wonderful flame as well as wonderful weapons, that is,





charka, gadha etc.

Even though He cannot be seen He becomes perceptible through devotion and with insight. (Brahman is described as being inside the eye, the individual self, in the hrdayapundarika and also all pervading in the brahma vidhyas of the Upanishads.)

Hence the svarupa of the Lord is not known to the unenlightened and the worldly but the jnanis know Him like the fruit on their palm.

Thus entreating Krishna to punish Sisupala, Narada went away.

RAJASUYAYAGA AND THE AGRAPUJA OF KRISHNA

Krishna went to Indraprastha accepting the invitation of Yudhishtira for the rajasuya yaga. Desika says that the Lord who is worshipped even by the devas disguised Himself as a yadhava and hence all accept those who know Him treated him with disrespect and added to this Krishna showed his soulabhya in undertaking the duty of washing the feet of the Brahmins.

Then at the time of agrapuja, the ritual of first honour, Sahadeva announce his intention to do agrapuja to Krishna thus:

Avadhath cha tham etham agragaNyam
vibuDhAnAm pitharam pathim gurm cha
harim archithum archyamudhyathAh smah
thath aSeshaih anmanyathAm suDheebhih

He is Lord Vishnu Himself, known through the Vedas, the first and foremost of all devas and the father, Lord and acharya of all. Hence we have come forward to worship Him first. Let this be permitted by the wise of this assembly.

Desika says that there was a shower of flowers, accompanied by the buzzing of bees that came with them, on the head of Sahadeva indicating that the





devas will honor the one who worships Hari.

All have agreed except Sisupala who got angry and insulted the pandavas and udhishtira in particular for doing puja for a cowherd, ignoring Bheeshma and others.

He also started abusing Krishna, saying that he was a juggler, pretending as Vishnu wearing conch and the disc, and a coward who ran from Kalayavana etc.

Bheeshma tried to pacify him with good words. He said that to worship someone else when the one who bestows all benefits including moksha is nearby, is like discarding kousthubha for red stones. Propitiating Krishna will bring all purusharthas including moksha and abusing him will result only in residence in hell. Bheeshma also reminded Sisupala that when Krishna came to his house when he was born his third eye and two extra arms vanished and hence he is inviting his own destruction.

Sisupala was the son of sister of Vasudeva and when he was born a celestial voice told his mother that when the person who will cause his death come near him the extra two arms and eye will vanish. This happened when Krishna came there and the mother of Sisupala requested Krishna to bear with her son till he hurls 100 abuses at Krishna. That is what Bheeshma refers to here and cautions Sisupala not to abuse Krishna.

Bheeshma further said that there are so many in the assembly who knew the meaning of the Vedas and they are being disgraced by the words of Sisupala and censure him. Bheeshma admonishing Sisupala said that if he did not listen to the words which were uttered for his own benefit he could as well consider himself gone with final ablution performed in respect of him.

Then Bheeshma addressed the assembly of kings and sages extolling Krishna.

viDhihastha DhrthAth yadhanghri padhmAth

chyavamAna pavan mAna veganeetha





vipunAathi jaganthi dhivyasidhuh

kramathe hantha thadharchane vivAdDah

To debate on worshipping Him, from whose feet, grasped by Brahma, the divine Ganga flows and carried by the wind purifies all the worlds, is really distressing and Sisupala is like an animal that is going to be sacrificed in the battle that is to be but he can be excused if he thinks that Krishna, whom devas worship should not be worshipped by humans. But he had been abusing Krishna and hence he is going to be the fuel to the hell-fire, because he had already crossed the limit of 100 insults which Krishna promised his mother to tolerate.

Then Sisupala got furious and insulted Bheeshma also. All those assembled were shocked and the yadhavas though flared up kept their silence seeing the face of Krishna which showed no anger. Bhima rose to attack Sisupala but Bheeshma restrained him saying that Sisupala is to be killed by Krishna only and Bhima should not incur the blame of attacking one of his guests.

Bheeshma told everyone to allow the agrapuja of Krishna and Narada who was there praised him and sang the glory of Krishna, playing his veena and dancing accordingly. Desika says that the song of Narada was same as the udhgita of the rthviks in the yaga. (udhgita is the singing of Sama hymns)

The four slokas that follow are the same as those in Gopalavimsathi.

vrajyoshidhapaangaveDHaneeyam madhuraabhaagyam ananyabhogyameede

vasudevavadhoosthanandhayam thath kimapi brahma kishorabhaava dhrsyam

-(Gopalavimsati-6)

I worship that Brahman, who appears as a child of Vasudeva and Devaki, who is pierced by the glances of the gopis (like arrows) and who is the fortune of the kingdom of Madhura and is the delight of His ardent devotees.

nikateshu nisaamayaami nithyam





nigamaantharairadhunaapi mrgyamaanam
yamalaarjuna dhrshtabaalakelim
yamunaasaakshikayouvanam kumaaram

(Gopalavimsathi-8)

Let me observe everywhere near me, Him, who is inquired by the vedas even now and eternal, whose childhood sport is witnessed by the twin trees and whose boyhood is witnessed by the river Yamuna.

Padhaveem adhaveeyaseem vimukthEh
ataveesampadham ambuvAhayantheem
aruNADHara sAbilAshavamsAm
karuNAM kAraNa mAnusheem bajAmi

(Gopalavimsathi-9)

I worship Him, who is the cause of the world and the personification of mercy in human form, thus a shortcut to salvation, who is the rain bearing cloud to Brindavan forest and holds the flute, which looks eager to be near His red lips.

adharaahitha chaaruvamsanaaLaah
makutaalambhimayoorapicchamaalaah
harineelasilaavibhangaleelaah prathibhaah
mamaanthimaprayaaNe santhu

(Gopalavimsathi-12)

May the appearance of the flute applied to the lower lips, of the garland of peacock feathers at his crown, of the lustre resembling that of sapphire blue always be in front of me when I start on my last journey.

Narada concluded his eulogy with the words 'Krathurathra samarpithah krthArThah' the yaga has become fruitful by this act.





May His divya rUpam always be in my thoughts!
(periyasramam-dolai kannan-thanks shreyas sarangan)

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THE DEATH OF SISUPALA

Then Sahadeva, who was respected by those who had the knowledge of the Vedas, performed the worship of Krishna. Sisupala continued to abuse everyone including Bheeshma. Desika describes his anger and outburst in detail and says that it was like the drumbeat signifying his own end. He was looking like the Sun in eclipse over powered with thamas (ignorance and delusion) which was like Rahu. Then Sisupala challenged the yadhavas for battle and went out. Krishna gave sanction for the Pandavas to conduct the yaga and followed Sisupala with his army and a battle ensued between the supporters of Sisupala and the yadhavas.

Sisupala went towards Krishna like a moth towards a fire. Desika says both





devas and the friends of Sisupala were watching with anguish, the former anxious for his death and the latter out of fear. Desika describes Sisupala attacking Krishna thus:

madhalupthaDhiyA thadhA abhiyukthah

yadhusimhah sisupAlakunjareNa

vijahAra guhASayah tharasvee

nikhilAraNyaka nirvighAthavrtthih

The foolish elephant, SisupAla attacked the Lion of Yadhus, who is in his cave, strong and wanders among the animals of the forest unchallenged. The Lord is in the cave of the heart, and has free movement among the Upanishads called Aranyakas. There is pun on the word 'AraNyaka,' which means wild animals as well as Upanishads.

Desika describes the battle as 'athirAghavarAvaNam', excelling even that between Rama and Ravana, to indicate its fierceness. Here we see the kavithArkika kesari comparing the battle to vAdhaprathivAdha, debate between two opponents, who desirous of winning each other make use of all their arguments like weapons. It created wonder and satisfaction among the kings who were witnessing the fight as the humans and devas get satisfaction from a sacrifice. The word 'naradeva' is used to denote the kings which can also be construed as nara+deva, men and devas.

Sisupala, the moon, lost his lustre gradually by coming closer to Krishna, the Sun but on the part of Krishna, krishnapaksha, there was no decrease. The light of the moon coming nearer and nearer the Sun is reduced until it unites with the Sun causing Amavasya. The implication is that Sisupala was going to merge with the Lord, that being his last janma of the three.

Then Krishna cut off the head of Sisupala with His sudarsanachara, and a light arose from the body of Sisupala and merged with Krishna.





CHAPTER 16

DESTROYING NARAKASURA

After Krishna returned to Dvaraka, Indra came on his celestial elephant Airavatha to Dvaraka to see Krishna. (Desika describes Airavatha in 18 slokas.)

Indra stopped his elephant and his retinue at the gate and went into the residence of Krishna by walking. When Krishna honoured him in a fitting manner Indra informed Krishna about the atrocities of Narakasura, who was came out of the earth, Bhoodevi, when the Lord took Varahavathara, and hence even more terrible than Hiranyaksha and Hiranya kasipu. The vajra of Indra was powerless in front of him and so were the weapons of all the eight Dikpalakas, Agni, Varuna, and the rest. He defeated all of them except Rudra, perhaps thinking that he was only a hermit and did not deserve notice. He confiscated the umbrella and the jeweled mount of Indra and the earrings made of precious gems of Adhithi, mother of devas and at that particular time wished to take away the Airavatha. Not only that but he had carried away sixteen thousand and hundred damsels born of devas, kings and asuras. Indra told Krishna that by killing Naraka he will reduce the burden of the earth by half. Krishna reassured Indra and thought of his celestial carrier-bird, Garuda, who came immediately.

Desika describes Garuda by eleven slokas.

Garuda was adorned by garlands of snakes. The sound of his wings seemed to create the Vedas, the golden hue of his body along with that of the Sun made the directions golden, and he looked like the dusk at the time of deluge accompanied by lightning. His body was shining with the gems at the head of the snakes which were resembling Adhishesha and his chest covered the whole sky. His big shoulders looked like the Manthara Mountain with the snakes on both sides. He





was wearing red garment and stood in front of Krishna with his usual pose of one knee bent and the other straight he seemed to perform a kind of dance.

vapushA bhakthinamreNa Dheeronnatha maheeyasA

SAnthaveerAdhbhutha rasAn samAhathyeva sampathan

(Yad.61)

moorthimAn iva samrambho roopavAn iva mAruthah

tharangAn pakshatheekrthya samkshiptha iva sAgarah

(Yad.62)

Garuda was humble with devotion but very lofty and majestic and demonstrated the rasa of SAntha, veera and adhbhutha.

He seemed to be the personification of energy, the physical form of the wind and the sea in contracted form with its waves as wings.

When Krishna made arrangements to start for the fight with Naraka, Garuda patted his shoulders and shook his wings which appeared to Desika as though he is fanning the Vedas which were oppressed by the heat of those who contested the scriptures, thus proving himself as the kavithArkika simha.

Garuda raised victory slogans to Krishna who mounted him with Sathyabhama who did not want to be parted from him and advanced towards PrAgjyothishapura, the capital of Naraka after sending Indra back with encouraging words.

To indicate the speed of Garuda, Desika says that the yadhavas in DvAraka and the asuras in PrAgjyothishapura witnessed the starting of Krishna and his arrival at the same time, meaning that no time lapsed between the two acts.

Krishna destroyed the demon Mura, Panchajana and the 7000 sons of Mura with one flinging of the charka.

Describing Naraka coming out of his city Desika shines as a vedantacharya and





Kavitharkika kesari.

abhimAnodhithavyakthih ahamkAra iva ulbaNah

mahatho dhaithyanagarAth niragAth narakAsurah (Yad.16-78)

Naraka looked like the manifestation of ahamkara rising out of arrogance emerging out of the great mahath, city of his, as the ahankara thathva evolving out of the mahath thathva, born out of prakrthi. The implication is that the destruction of Naraka is symbolic of the destruction of ahamkara, the impediment to realization of truth.

The asuras surrounding Naraka are compared to those who contest the Vedas and hence become associates to the one who is banned by the Vedas.

Tham asthramAyAbhyaDhikAh dhAnavAh paryavarayan

Prakataacchanna koutilyAh pAshandam iva haithukAh (Yad.16-79)

Desika describes the battle by 27 slokas.

The dust that was raised by the four kinds of army, ratha gaja, thuraga. padhathi, that is, chariots, elephants, cavalry and soldiers, completely cut off the vision as in a being, whose rajoguna is uppermost of the other two and Satthva and thamas become powerless. Here there is pun on the word rajas which means both rajoguna and dust. Also rajas denote rakshasas.

There was a torrential shower of arrows from the asuras, like the clouds concealing all the directions pouring water on the sea. But Desika says that the Lord was not at all affected just like His own devotees who are not affected by any calamity. From the bow of the Lord, Sarnga, arrows flowed as cataracts from the mountain and cut the sea of the army of the enemies into two. None witnessed the act of Krishna fixing the arrows in his bow but only saw the fall of the arrows on the asura army.

svabhAva niyathasthatra parabhADhAbhilAshiNAM

prayAsah suraSathrooNAM jAThyuttharam ivAbhavath (Yad.16-95)





narakAsura vadam

(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

The efforts of the asuras to hurt others recoiled on them, says Desika, like the argument in a debate called jAthyutthara. When an opponent gives a reply as criticism against his opponent and it becomes applicable to his side as well it





is called jAthuttharam.

visanDhivigrahAh kshipthayAnAsanasamASrayAh

dhvaiDheebhAva srjo yoDhA dhurhnayasThA ivAbhavan

(Yad.16-97)

Desika compares the army of the asuras to the polity which has gone awry. The six limbs of statesmanship are sanDhi, peace-making, vigraha, fighting, yAna, marching against the enemy, Asanam, cease-fire, samASraya, have allies and dhvaiDheebhAva, creating rift between friends. The asuras were visanDhivigrahAh, broken-limbed, (sandhis the joint of the body and vigraha means body), also meaning going against sandhi and vigraha. kshiptha yAnAsana samASrayAh, given up, (kshiptha,) the movements of going, yAna, Asana, sitting and samASraya, leaning against etc. They were cut into two and hence dhvaiDheebhAva srjah, created two halves of them. The word srj also means abandon and hence they are compared to those who have given up dhvaiDheebhAva. Further the asuras were compared to yogis because their fighting was anaghavyavasAya, fruitful because of their sincerity to serve their master. The effort of yogi is also fruitful since it secured him moksha. The asuras are termed asangathyakthavarshmaNah as they were prepared to lay down their lives and hence given up attachment of their body, like the yogis. Their gathi or movement was in one direction only that is to give up their life without returning back to their abode like the gathi of a yogi which is that of no return to this world again, aparAvarthana.

The next sloka shows Desika to be well versed in astrology also. He compares Naraka to Angaraka, Mars, who was also supposed to be bhouma, the son of the goddess of earth. Naraka was having vakravrtthi, crooked conduct like Angaraka who was known to have vakravrtthi, that is, terrible powers like Saturn. Naraka became saruDhira, covered with blood and hence lohithAnga, red-limbed while Angaraka was also called RuDhira, the word being split as sa he, Angaraka, was ruDhira, called Rudhira and lohithanga, possessed of red body. The similarity is not finished yet. Desika says,





prApya yAdhavbhAsvantham mooDah sambhavath kramAth

(Yad.16-103)

Naraka moving close to Krishna (yadhava), who was like the Sun, bhAsvan, became mooDa, not knowing what to do like Angaraka nearing the Sun loses his luster and vanishes; the word mooda is used in the sense of becoming extinct.

Krishna cut off his head like that of Rahu. Desika here uses the term ramApathi to denote Krishna implying that He was the same Narayana who cut off the head of Rahu. Naraka was nisargathamah, full of thamoguna by nature, nisarga, and of jihmagathi, crooked conduct as Rahu, who was called Thamas and has crooked movement being a snake.

The chopped head of Naraka fell on the lap of Bhoodevi, his mother. Bhoodevi praised the Lord thus:

Aham asmi vibhoothisthe bhoothaDhathree thvayADhrthA

aSeshADharam ekam thvAm anADhAram aDHeeyathe

(Yad.16-112)

"I am included among Your manifestations. I support all beings, being supported by You. The Vedas praise You who is the substratum of all while You need no support.

Thisrubhih shakthibhih uktham shAdguNyapraThithodhayam

aDhirAjam aSeshasya jagadhuh thvAm jithAhitham

(Yad.16-113)

You are deemed as the king of kings, with Your three shakthis, namely, Lakshmi, Bhoo and NeeLa, with the six aspects of Lordship, (jnana, bala, aisvarya, veerya, shakthi, thejas - the six qualities that are known as bhagas that go to make BhagavAn) as the three shakthis of a king, utsaha, prabhu and manthra shakthis, that is Lordly power, good council of ministers and powerful army, and the six limbs of statesmanship."





Bhoodevi further praise the Lord that His virtues are like the milky ocean even a drop of which cannot be tasted by all beings with all their faces. The world is a garden created by Him dividing it into movables and immovables and He alone can protect it. The beings bound by the three gunas as by three ropes, (guna means rope as well as the three attributes of satthva, rajas and thamas) can be released only by the Lord.

The next verse is steeped in bhakthi and reminds the lines in Mukundamala by Kulasekhara, 'thvathbrthyabrthya parichAraka bhrthya bhrthya bhrthyasya bhrthya ithi mAm smara lokanATha'.

Meaning:

"Oh the Lord of the universe, remember me as the servant of your servant of your servant" etc. to the seventh degree, probably to denote the seven times seven lives to come.

The sloka of Desika goes like this:

Yasya thvam yasya hrdhyastheyasyAsou thasya yasthayaA
nATha thvathpadham Aryhya na punah thaih nivrthyathe (Yad.16-119)

The one to whom you are dear, the one who is dear to You, the one to whom he is dear, continuing like this, all these attain Your abode never to return to earth. That is the devotee of the Lord, the devotee of the devotee and those who are graced by them are all blessed to attain moksha.

The next sloka is also of the same texture of bhakthi and reminds the one in KamasikAshtaka by Desika himself.

Kasthavth angeekrtham hanthA kasthrAtha thvath jighAmsitham
Nihanthi pAthi cha ekasthvam svena viSvam pareNa vA (Yad.16-121)

Who can kill the one who is accepted by You and who can protect one who is abandoned by You? You alone destroy as well as protect the universe by





yourself or through others.

The parallel sloka in kAmAsikAshtakam is,

Thvayi rakshathi rakshakaih kim anyaih

Thvayi cha arakshathi rakshakaih kim anyaih

Ithi nischithaDheeh SrayAmi nithyam

Nrhare vegavattheethatASrayam thvAm

Where is the need of other protectors when you are there protecting us and what is the use of other protectors when you forsake us. With this firm thought I resort to You, Oh Nrhari, who resides on the bank of Vegavathi river.

Bhoodevi said that she had no attachment towards Naraka in particular as all beings are her children only. Moreover he was created by the Lord and now annihilated by the Lord Himself which is his good fortune.

The Lord has no enemies, said Bhoodevi but those who torment his devotees he destroys as it is His duty to protect the devotees. All beings and even the universe itself are subjected to destruction at one time or other and hence there is no cause for sorrow.

Then Bhoodevi gave back the earrings of Adhithi taken away by Naraka and bid adieu to Krishna after having the assurance that Naraka will get salvation.

Then Krishna entered the city of Naraka and accepted the 16100 damsels who on seeing Krishna wished to marry only him. He sent them to Dvaraka and later married them there.

The last sloka is full of poetic beauty.

UdhgamyadhurgajalaDherudhayAdhrikalpam

ThungamvihangamapathimthvarayaAdhirohan





ullAsahethurabhavath yadhuveerabhAsvAn

vimAnikapraNayineeevadhanAmbujAnAm

Krishna, the Sun, rose from the fort of Naraka as from the eastern mountain and traveling on the back of Garuda, made the lotuses of the faces of Apsara damsels' blossom.

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CHAPTER 17

KRISHNA BRINGS PARIJATHA TREE TO DVARAKA

Krishna traveled on Garuda with Sathyabhama to Indraloka to return the earrings of Adhithi and the umbrella of Varuna, which Naraka confiscated from them. After being honored by Indra and others Krishna, wishing to return to the earth, saw the nandanavana, the celestial garden of Indra and showed the beauty of it to Sathyabhama. Desika says that the garden was so exquisite that Indra on seeing it used to feel as though he had only one eye instead of his 1000 eyes.

Krishna compared the beauty of the flowers and creepers to that of Bhama and said that the creepers dance to the tune of the music of the birds and the bees.

There were four kinds of trees in the nandanavana, namely, mandhara, santhana, kalpavriksha and harichandhana. The fifth was the parijata which came out of the milky ocean. The sprouts of the tree were like rubies, the leaves were like emeralds, the flowers of the tree were like jewels worn on the body and the bark was shining like gold. The tree can provide beads for japa, flowers for worship and bark for austere garment.

With the karpaka creeper around it and with red sprouts it reminded one of Lord Narayana, with Lakshmi, who was also born from the milky ocean, and wearing the kousthubha gem. The tree which was a sibling of crescent moon and kousthubha seemed to be smiling with the dew drops like the teeth, shining on the red lip-like sprouts.

Here Desika implies that Krishna has already willed to take the tree to





Dvaraka, may be, to show the power of His maya which made Indra forget the great help rendered by Krishna and fight with him over the tree. Krishna said as he had to rush to Dvaraka as all are expecting him there, his eyes were taking in the beauty of the tree as though it was the breakfast before journey, meaning that the full beauty will be enjoyed later as he intended to take it with him. He put words in the mouth of Sathyabhama to achieve this end by saying that she looked as though she wanted to take the tree and plant it in her garden. He told her that along with this tree Dvaraka would shine even more than the capital of Indra because there were already the sankha and padma nidhis as in the capital of Kubera and also the assembly hall was called sudharma after that of devaloka.

In the next sloka Desika says that the suggestion of Krishna was accepted by Sathyabhama with joy.

Ittham AdhikavinA sameerithA

sA anvabhAvi kila sathyabhAmaY

Samarasyamiva thEna jagmushee

soukumAryasubhagA sarasvasthee

(Yad.17-44)

The speech of the Lord, who is Adhikavi (because he was the one who instructed Brahma, whose consort is Sarasvathi who graced Valmiki, known as Adhikavi) and which was sweet and soft and conveyed his intention, was welcomed by Sathyabhama with glee.

This sloka is explained by Utthamur swamin with a delightful meaning as follows:

Desika himself, he says is fit to be called Adhikavi as he stands in front of everyone else being the kavithArkika simha. The word sathyabhAma is split as sathya+bhA+mA meaning true wisdom and glory (ma meaning Lakshmi) and the words of Desika, sarasvathi is enjoyed by those who have wisdom and glory.





Utthamur swamin also gives another explanation that refers to Ramayanakavya. The sarasvathi referred could be taken as Ramayanakatha that was composed by Valmiki, who is the Adhikavi and his words were enjoyed by Seetha whose glory and wisdom were true (bhA cha mA cha sathyA yasyAh thayA) when the kavya was sung by Lava and KuSa. This meaning, though it may look far-fetched, is beautiful.

Garuda, instructed by Krishna, uprooted the parijatha tree and hid it inside his wings which were like a big forest. Desika refers to Garuda as khyAthakeerthih amrthApaharathah, meaning that he was already renowned for arraying off amrtha. Garuda carried away amrtha to free his mother from slavery of Kathru, his stepmother and mother of the serpents, who laid the condition that he, should do so. But it was taken back by Indra who followed him as soon as Vinatha, mother of Garuda was freed, before the serpents tasted it.

KRISHNA SUBDUES INDRA

Hearing that Krishna is carrying off the parijatha tree on Garuda, which was something unheard of earlier, Indra was overwhelmed by both fear and anger. Indra, without realizing that he could do nothing against the will of the Lord, got angry. The chamatkara of Desika is seen in saying 'manyureva sathamanyunA mahAn Agrheetha manasA abhyamanyatha'. The mind of Indra chose only anger (and not fears) the word Sathamanyu denotes Indra because the post of Indra could be attained by performing 100 Asvamedhayagas. There is a pun on the word manyu to mean anger as well as sacrifice, thus implying that one who is called sathamanyu naturally got anger only.

Indra facing Krishna in battle is described by Desika as 'bheeshaNapraLayameghasannibham krishnamegham aTha megha vAhanah', Indra who had clouds as his vehicle faced Krishnamegha, the cloud called Krishna, who was more formidable than the clouds at deluge.

The arrows of Indra fell on Garuda and were reduced to ashes with the fire of





glory, tejas, of Garuda, and were like the ghee poured on the sacrificial fire because Garuda appeared to shine more with them.

Desika describes Garuda fighting with the devas thus:

thungapakshathiSathAngaSAlinah

bheemanAgaghatithAkrtheh abhooth

vAhathAm cha vahathah sapatthithAm

sainyathA asya surasainya yoDhinah

Garuda, was himself the four kinds of army, his wings containing hundreds of feathers, **thunga pakshathi SathAnga**, the serpents which formed his ornaments, **bheemanAga**, his stature as the vehicle of the Lord, **vAhathAm vahathah** and the gait of him, **sapatthithA**. The four kinds of army, namely ratha, gaja thuraga padhAthi, are implied with the pun on the words, **SathAnga**, which also means ratha, chariot, **nAga** meaning the elephant, **vAha** denotes cavalry and **patthi** is the infantry.

The army of the devas were overpowered with the poison of the serpents and the outgoing breath of Garuda was so strong that they scattered the winds that formed the armour of Indra and made the arrows of Indra recoil on the army of devas.

How ever Krishna did not want to destroy the devas because even though they were under delusion at that time, they were his dependents. The devas faced extinction of their valour as the planets and stars lose their luster going near the Sun. Desika says that they attained **dhurdhaSA** like the planets, meaning that as the evil planets rahu and kethu are not visible, the devas also reached a state when they appeared to be extinct even though they were alive. Indra being defeated, again started attacking Krishna with the desire to retrieve the parijatha tree and wielded his vajra when Krishna took his chakra. All beings waited with trepidation to see the effect of this act. Krishna appropriated the vajra with the intention of returning it to Indra later.





Indra became ashamed of his helplessness and Sathyabhama looked at him in derision.

Desika explains the result of the battle thus:

yAdhavendhra vibudhendhrayoh thadhA

rathnayoriva thulADhirooDayoh

gouraveNa dhadhrSe samunnathih

lAghavena cha nathih thadhadhbhutham

Krishna and Indra looked like gems of equal weight placed on the balance and Krishna gained more weight by his victory and reached high while Indra became lighter with his defeat and went down. Desika calls it a wonder because it is usually the object with more weight goes down and the lighter one rises above. This is an instance of the chamathkAra of the kavi.

Indra realized his mistake of fighting for a tree with the Lord of the universe and derided himself that he was lost due to his forgetfulness (as to the real identity of Krishna), his attachment to his possessions and arrogance of power. Then he started praising Krishna with folded hands.

STORY OF KRISHNA - END OF PART 2





Story of Sri KrishNa (Part 3)





SrI KrishNa





CHAPTER 18

TRAVELLOGUE!

Krishna traveled from Indraloka to Dvaraka with Sathyabhama and showed her the places they were crossing explaining about them. This reminds one of the immortal kavya Megha dhutha of kalidasa.

He starts by showing her the mount Meru in the north above the earth, on the way from Devaloka.

nisargakaLyANathayA pradheeptham

sarvottharam thatthvam ivaikam Adhyam

amum priye noonam athandhrithAni

jyothemshi bhakthyA pariyanthi ajasram

The mount Meru is compared to the Lord who is the supreme reality, sarvottharam thatthvam, and possesses infinitely auspicious qualities. The mount Meru is situated in the north of all, sarvottharam, always auspicious, nisarga kalyANatha being made of gold. The heavenly luminous bodies like the Sun and the Moon go round it, always, diligently, athandhritham pariyanthi ajasram as though with devotion, as the nithya sooris, the eternal souls always go round the Lord with devotion.

The sky with the stars shone as the canopy of pearls and the Meru in the centre was being showered by the water of the Ganges from heaven, like king having abhisheka performed to him and the luminous bodies going round were doing mangAlarathi as it were. The Meru abounds in caves of precious gems that put to shame those in the palaces of the dhikpalakas.





Krishna showed to Bhama how the earth itself looked like a lotus and the Meru was like the centre of the flower. The earth itself revolves like a chakra of the Lord.

Next Krishna describes the three regions of the earth, namely, IAvrthavarsha, Harivarsha and Kimpurushavarsha. Garuda was flying over the Harivarsha that is the modern Arabia which is situated to the south of IAvrtha, Tibet and was nearing the Kimpurushavatrsha that is the slopes of Himalayas, which was inhabited by the kimpurushas and kinnaras. The former have horse-face and the latter are musicians of celestial heritage. Garuda was flying high and low like a jet plane to show the places below and when he ascends above the clouds looked like the fans for the divine couple as they moved fast. The movement of Garuda was so smooth that the earth and the mountains with forests seem to come near them and recede as when we travel in a vehicle with high speed.

They were approaching Mount Kailas and Krishna compared it to the clouds of autumn which are white in colour and imagines that it is the heap of the sacred ash fallen from the body of Siva who dances in the pradhoshakala. The place of Kubera is also situated there and shine as though white-washed by the reflection of the snow- clad mountain peaks and it is enhanced by the waves of the Ganges flowing from the head of Siva when he shakes his head during his dance.

Desika here alludes to the incident of Ravana moving the kailasa mountain.

udhagravajravraNakarkaSAnAm
paryApthasAreNa bhujaArgaLAnAm
anenavikhyApitha vikramamthath
rakshah pur ramasaravyam Aseeth

Kailasa Mountain proclaimed the fame of Ravana who moved it with his twenty arms hardened by the blow of Vajra and who later fell for the arrow of Rama.





By this sloka the strength of Ravana, the greatness of Kailasa, which he could not move though tried because his hands were caught under it due to Siva pressing his big toe and also the glory of Rama who could vanquish such a valiant hero, are all brought out.

Krishna compared the mountain to Balarama by saying that it had dark middle due to the trees and white in the upper part and red at places due to the red sand of the mountain like Balarama who used to wear dark garment with a white body and his eyes red with wine.

The next sloka is full of poetic beauty.

niSamya dhivyadhrumasambhavAnAm
noonam ravam noopuramanjareeNAm
uddeeyamANAh pratyanthi amee thvAm
manjusvarAh mAnasa hamsadhArAh

The sound made by the cluster of flowers of the parijatha resembled the sound of the swans of the MANASA Lake in Kailas and so the swans come in front as though honouring them.

Next they neared the city of SoNithapura where the asuras like Hiranayakasipu were ruling and which was at that time reined by BaNAsura, the son of Bali, who pleased Siva by playing mrdhanga with his 1000 arms. Then Krishna pointed out the Krouncha Mountain in which Parasurama made a hole with his arrow and through that whole swans are flying with ease and it looked like the Ganges coming out of the ear of Jahnu. (Ganga when following Bhagiratha flooded the asrama of he sage Jahnu and he drank the river and let it out of his left ear as requested by Bhagirtha which was why Ganga acquired the name Jahnvi.)

Krishna showed to Sathyabhama the Manthara mountain which was churned by the devas to get amrtha. The poetic imagination of Desika runs riot in this





chapter and he describes that the gems on the ornaments of the Lord which were stained by the blood of the asuras, became polished and shining due to the drops of nectar the fell on them when the peaks of the mountain were churned and hence they acted as the polishing stones for the gems. This from the mouth of Krishna Himself adds the vehemence and the sloka is also one of metrical beauty.

Vilagna dhaithyeSvara SoNithAnAM

vikunTa keyoorajushAmmaNeenAm

ayathnaSANopalathAmapushyan

ArdhrAh suDhAbinDhubhih asya kootAh

(Yad.18-30)

Krishna further said that the whirlpools of the sea stand as the marks of the speed of the mountain being churned in order to get amrtha and Lakshmi. Here the words 'lakshmeesuDhAsanjananAya', reminds one of the words of Yamuna in his sthothra rathna where he says that the Lord took so much trouble to churn the ocean not for securing amrtha to the devas but only to get Lakshmi for Himself. Apart from the meaning in a lighter vein, this may mean that the Lord wanted Lakshmi not for Himself but for the world because she took place in His heart and made it full of mercy.

(Reading the sloka of Yamuna this sloka arose in the mind which I would like to share with the devotees.

SreeprApthyarTham eva yadhi mahadhAYAsam krtham

Thadhapi thava karuNA eva na svArTham

karuNekshaNenakarothi yA jaganmangalam

chakarTha thasyAh khalu nivAsam thava hrdhayam

That You have taken so much trouble to churn the ocean to get Lakshmi if nit an act of selfishness but for the sake of the world because You have made your heart her abode that she directs her merciful glances to all and causes





the welfare of the world.)

Thus they reached the Himalayas which Krishna describes as the second Siva because it has Ganges and resorted to by the siddhapurushas and it forms the ornamental boundary to the land of Bharathavarsha. The description of the Himalayas by Desika can only be compared to that of Kalidasa in his kumarasambhava and it excels by the aura of devotion.



CHAPTER 19

KRISHNA WAKENED BY THE VEDAS

Krishna on hearing about the imprisonment of Aniruddha decided to advance against Bana the next day and spent the night in his palace. On the daybreak he was awakened by the vedas themselves assuming the role of vandhis, the bards who normally wake up the king by their song of praise.

The whole adhyaya consists of the waking up of Krishna. The meaning of some of the eighty slokas will be explained here.

Krishna, says Desika, who is always awake, nithyaprabuddha, with his divine intellect, was closing his lotus-like eyes as though he was sleeping.

yAminyapaithi yadhunATha vimuncha nidhrAm

unmesham icchathi thavonmishithena lokam

jAthah svayam khalu jagath hithameva karthum

DharmapravarthanDhiyA DharaNeethale thvam (Yad.19.2)

"The Lord of yadhavas! Give up your sleep. When you open your eyes it will be the waking up of the whole world. You have manifested yourself to do good to the world because of your will to spread dharma."

This has reference to the GIIta sloka 'uthseedheyuh ime lokAh na kuryAm karmacheth aham', in which the Lord says that the worlds will collapse if He does not do His work, namely the protection of the world of beings. The words jAthah svayam khalu indicates that the seeming births of the Lord as Krishnan, Rama etc. are only His manifestations.





Santhyajyathe tharalamoukthikajAladhrSyaih

thArAgaNaih thridhaSavarthma thamAlaneelam

padhmApatheh amrtha nirmaThanAvasAne

dhugDhAmburASiprshathaih iva roopam agryam

(Yad.19.7)

The sky regains its blue colour becoming devoid of the stars like the body of the Lord which regained His original colour at the end of the churning of the ocean for nectar when, the drops of the milky ocean that were splattered on His body fell off.

The cocks with red crown with their loud cry come out of the houses and play to the joy of the damsels. This reminds of the line 'kozi azaitthana kAN', in Thiruppavai pasuram of Andal.

Prathyakshithe thamasi yAsyathi viprakarsham

Sanccahnna bhAnumathi samprathi jeevaloke

gangAyamAnasalilam nijaraSmiyogAth

sishNAsyeva sithabhAnuh upaithi sinDhum

(Yad.19.13)

The darkness that has been perceptible so long is going to vanish and the Sun is still hidden from the view of all beings and the Moon enters the ocean which has been made white by his rays as though he wishes to take bath in the Ganges. The implication here is that the Sun is hidden when the **thamas**, that is, Rahu is present during eclipse. So the entering of the Moon in to the ocean is compared to the bath taken at the end of eclipse when all waters are considered to be as pure as the Ganges. The Moon is referred to as sithabhAnu, which means one with white rays. The poetical fancy continues further when Desika personifies the dawn as the wife of the Sun who has got up earlier like a good wife and the red hue of the rising Sun in the dark morning is the mark of Sindhoor at the parting of her dark hair.

The philosopher comes to the forefront in the following sloka along with the





poet.

prAdhurbhavishyathi charAcharjanthuvarge

prApthAruNena viDhuna thamasA cha vela

AbhAathi bhAvithaparasparleSayogA

mAyAvipakthih iva lohitha SuklakraShNA (Yad.19.18)

The time of the morning, before the moveable and immovable beings woke up, is red with Aruna, dawn, white Moon and the darkness still remaining, is like the causative elements of the universe, namely, fire, red, water, white and earth, black. It resembles the prakrthi or primal nature which consists of the three gunas, which are described as red, white and black, before creation.

The dawn is compared to the Lord with lotuses blossoming like His eyes opening, the colour of the indheevara flowers shining like the dark blue of His body, welcomed by the sages who got up in the morning, accompanied by the red colour of the dawn like that of Lakshmi and with rathAnga, that is chakravaka birds (the word raThAnga also means chakrayudha).

The light of the Sun starting from the east waking up the flowers and destroying the darkness is like the light brilliance of the chakra of the Lord, rising up to delight the good and to destroy the asuras.

pAdhasprSAM dhiSathibhoomibhrthAmprakASam

satthvam sameDhayathisadbhiah udheerithArGhyah

thejogaNANapithirasuruthe svadheepthyA

chakrapriyah thvam ivasamprthi chandabhAnuh (Yad.19.35)

The Sun when risen is like Krishna himself because he gives light to the bhooDhara mountains by his rays, padma, make the endeavour grow by inducing action. He is worshipped by the good. He eclipses the glory of other luminous bodies by his light and he is dear to the chakravakas, chakrapriyah. Krishna is also chakrapriya, fond of his chakra, and gives light of knowledge to the kings





bhooDhara, who resort to him, makes the good actions flourish and worshipped by the good.

Aruna, the dawn removed part of the darkness and the Sun destroyed the rest. This is like some of the sins being removed by the association of the good and the rest of the sins are destroyed later by the wise who make us meditate on the Lord.

Desika the baktha makes reference now to Sri Narasimha and Sri Varaha. He says that the Sun is like Narasimha who manifested suddenly and tore the body of Hiranyakasipu in tearing away the darkness. The earth which was immersed in the darkness for long is rescued by the Sun like the time when the earth was immersed in the sea by Hiranyaksha and was brought out by Varaha.

Now we see the vedanthacharya coming to the forefront in the following sloka.

nidhrAm apAsya thamasA cha dhrSo niroDham
prathangmukham praThamathah praThayan prakASam
niSSreyasa prathipadhena nijena DhAmnA
viSvam samADhiriva dharSayathi vivasvAN

Desika compares the Sun to the state of samADhi or realization. He wakes up the sleeping, dispels the darkness, spreads the light to the west and then shows himself and causes the welfare of the world. SamaDhi also is achieved after first dispelling the darkness of ignorance which makes the individual soul sleep in worldliness, as though in a dream and then creating awareness in the self and then causing the perception of reality resulting in moksha. Here the prathyak means the west and also the individual soul and nissreyas is both worldly welfare as well as moksha.

The elephants getting up are compared to the benefactors who are ever





engaged in the act of giving gifts to others. The trunks of the elephants are always covered with rut like the water flowing from the vessel used for dhAna. The bees which hover around them are like those who are asking for gifts and the elephants getting up are compared to the respectful gesture of the donors towards the receivers of the gifts.

After along description of the morning the bards entreated Krishna to get up from his bed like the adhisessa and cast his honey-like merciful glances towards them from his lotus eyes.

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Meditating on Him destroys our sins

vedasreni kannan-

thanks-Ananth Padmanabhan (ananth_882002@yahoo.com)

The next adhyaya describes the defeat of Bana and the marriage of Usha and Aniruddha.





CHAPTER 20

DEFEAT OF BANA AND THE MARRIAGE OF USHA AND ANIRUDDHA

Usha, the daughter of Banasura, saw Aniruddha in her dream and asked Chित्रलेखा her friend who possessed of magical powers to find him and bring him. Chित्रलेखा did so and Usha and Aniruddha were married secretly. Bana coming to know of this imprisoned Aniruddha. Being informed of this by Narada Krishna decided to march against Bana and bring Aniruddha back.

Krishna started for SoNithapura, he capital of BANa. The army was so huge that the weight of it converged in one place made Adhishesha who bore the earth bow down with it with his hoods lowered. But the earth bore it patiently knowing that her burden would be lessened shortly. The dust that rose above looked like the earth itself ascending to tell the good news that her burden is going to be less, to Brahma.

Krishna reached SoNithapura very quickly that it seemed that the direction, ASA, itself advanced in front with desire, ASA, to welcome Krishna. The flag of the city shook with the speed of the wings of Garuda carrying Krishna.

The bhoothas of Siva who guarded the city ran away in fear seeing the force of Balarama. The yadhavas attacked the city with all their force and Bana himself came out with anger.

The following sloka shows how the vedanthacharya sees the philosophical meaning even in fighting.

asrkcchatAsAravaSAth DhvajinyAh

rajassamethe thamasi praSAnthe





satthvAnuroopam vidhaDhe pramodham

samAn miThah sammukhayam prakASah

The darkness, thamas, created by the dust, rajas, was removed by the flow of blood, the light showed the fight between warriors of equal strength, satthvAnuroopam, creating mutual joy. The use of the words sattva, rajas and thamas, implies that when the gunas - rajas and thamas are removed due to hatred towards samsara, the satthva guna enables the meeting of like-minded and creates joy.

The word 'samAn' means people of equal wisdom, as said in the gita, 'pandithAh samadharsinah', with the view 'sarvam khalu idham brahma', that is, they see everything as equal because they are endowed with the wisdom that all this is Brahman. They meet each other to the mutual delight as Gitacharya says, 'bodhayanthah paraspam kaThayanthah cha mAm nithyam thushyanthi cha ramanthi cha' They talk to each other about the glory of the Lord and revel in it- (Utthamur swamin).

Then Rudra who was guarding the fortress of Bana came to fight with Krishna. (Bana did penance on Siva and acquired him as his guard and protector).

Rudra was described as 'sithAchalemerum iva jvalantham', shining like a Meru on Himalayas due to his golden colour and mounted on the white bull. The shakthyayaudha of Skandha was quelled by Prdhyumna and the jvara (a missile) of Siva was overpowered by Krishna with his Vaishnava jvara. Then Krishna sent JrmbhaNasthra which induced sleep to Rudra.

Bana then fought with his thousand arms but all his missiles were deactivated by the wind from the wings of Garuda. The shower of arrows that came from the bow Sarnga of Krishna was intolerable for the asuras. Here the kavithaarkika kesari compares it to the situation when the ignorant do not tolerate the meaningful words coming out of a kavi who has infallible eloquence.





Those who were killed in the battle, says Desika, gave their life which is worthless as an interest and received great fame like a large amount of money. Finally Krishna took his chakra on hand to stop the havoc created by Bana with his thousand arms in the army of yadhavas and cut off the extra arms of Bana in front of Rudra who gave him the boon. Desika says, 'kim va viDhou vairiNi kena rakshyam'. When the Lord Himself becomes the enemy who can save the offender?'

But Bana was not to be stopped and went on fighting with his rest of the arms and when it looked as though Krishna may kill him Rudra intervened and reminded Krishna that Bana was the son of Mahabali and should be protected by him (as he had promised Prahladha earlier that he will not kill the descendents of his devotee)

Rudra praised Krishna as the Brahman who is the creator, protector and annihilator and Garuda is the embodiment of the Vedas. Having him as the vehicle the Lord is the essence of the vedas. Brahma and Rudra are appointed by him to do their work and all the devas are like SAKhaikadheSeshu SakunthkalpAh, like birds on the branches of the Vedas. Rudra said that Krishna has incarnated to lessen the burden of the earth and is known for his mercy and patience which are like his two consorts Lakshmi and Bhoomi and requested him to pardon Bana who has sinned against him due to arrogance.

Krishna pardoned Bana and told Rudra that since Bana was a devotee of Rudra he has become the devotee of Krishna as well and granted him the boon that he will live to play his mrdhangam to please Rudra.

Bana repenting agreed to give his daughter Usha to Aniruddha in marriage and prayed to be considered as a servant. Here Appayyadhikshitha quotes Raghuvamsa of Kalidasa where he says the clan of the bride becomes the servant of the bridegroom. Janaka says in Raghuvamsa, 'bhrthyabhAvi dhuhithuh parigrahAth veekshyathAm kula idham nimerithi' (RV-11.89) But in actuality this may mean that Bana gave up his hatred and became the servant





of the Lord.

Aniruddha became suited to his name, being released from imprisonment and returned to Dvaraka with Usha and lived happily.





CHAPTER 21

THE EPISODES OF POUNDRAKAVASUDEVA, SALVA AND OTHERS

The king of Poundraka called himself Vasudeva and made for himself the panchayuDha of the Lord, srivatsa and kousthubha and two extra arms like Krishna and through the gimmicks of magic, disguise etc. proclaimed that he himself is the real Vasudeva and the exploits of Hari belonged to his early lives. Thus like an actor wearing a costume he dressed and acted like Krishna and was praised by his courtiers as such became an object of ridicule and pity for the wise.

He became drunk with his own importance and sent a messenger to Krishna who went to Dvaraka and spoke in the court of Krishna in a brazen manner.

The commentary for the four slokas which the messenger had spoken is given by Sri Srinivasagopalacharya as the original commentary of Appayya dhikshitha was available only for the subsequent slokas.

The messenger advised Krishna on his own first, before conveying the command of Poundraka Vasudeva. He said that Krishna should listen to him for his own benefit. Poundrka Vasudeva is the supreme purusha and the lord of the earth.

The messenger said, 'niSchaleekrtha hithAhithaseemna jishNunA yadhukulasya vibhoothyai' which means "by you who wishes victory to the yadus and responsible for maintaining the boundary of dharma." The very words which were said to indicate the importance of accepting the supremacy of Poundraka seems to imply that Krishna should win him to guard the limits of dharma through the chamatkara of the kavi.

Then the messenger conveyed the command of Poundraka to Krishna. He said that





Krishna could not be the Supreme Lord but only a vassal of Poundraka. There are so many deities described in the Vedas but no one is considered as the supreme Lord. Hence there is no valid authority for holding Krishna as the Supreme Lord. He is also bound by merit and sin like the ordinary individuals and also the one who was bound by the gopis for his misdeeds cannot be the one who secures release from bondage. Poundraka proclaimed that he alone was the supreme purusha and Krishna should accept his sovereignty and give up his paraphernalia of shanka, chakra etc.

As devil quoting the scripture Poundraka by four slokas advises Krishna as follows:

Considering that these are the words of Desika it seems to refer to Poundraka himself.

The ideas outlined in the slokas are as follows:

1. One who forgets that he is dependent on the Lord and considers himself as the Lord will be punished like a servant who acts as the king.
2. The theft of the self is the worst kind of sin that is, to consider that the self belongs to you when it is the property of the Lord.
3. One who wishes for power not due to him will come to harm.
4. Even though one commits sin due to destiny with discrimination he can get out of it.

Saying thus Poundraka demanded Krishna should surrender in order to save himself.

Krishna laughed and replied sarcastically saying 'paThyam adhya vachanam thava manye yadhbraveeshi chiralipsitham ethath', which means that the words of Poundraka is beneficial and desired for a long time. As the Lord knows everything He welcomes the opportunity provided by POundraka for his





own punishment.

ugrasenabhrathakAayam ethe
na eeSithAra ithi vibhramanthah
samprathi thvadhupadheSa mahimnA
bhAvayemahi thava eeSvarabhAvam

The literal meaning of this sloka is,

"We do not consider ourselves as masters, being the servants of Ugrasena. Now hearing your advice we look upon you as our lord and master." But the actual meaning is "since all individual selves, who have the fierce army (ugrasena) of sense organs, are our (meaning I) dependents we (I) do not have a mistaken notion that we are (I am) the eesvara because I know that I am the eesvara. Now due to your offense in the form of advice I will show my status as eesvara to you."

Krishna said that Poundraka is superior to the supreme, 'parasmAth parah' which really means that he is the enemy of the Supreme Lord as the word para also means an enemy. Further Krishna said that it is indeed the great fortune that he sent word to them like this, meaning, it is good that he created an opportunity for the world to know the real worth of Krishna and the insignificance of Poundraka. Krishna then sent word through the messenger that they will themselves come to see Poundraka.

Krishna advanced against Poundraka and the king of Kasi who was his associate and destroyed them and them both fell beside him like the twin trees that Krishna uprooted in his childhood.

Desika says that Poundraka was only imitating the appearance of Krishna earlier but now also got his gait, 'anvabhooth kila gathim cha thadheeyAm'. There is pun on the word gathi which means both gait and the status attained after death.





After this Krishna went back to Dvaraka and once when he was playing dice game, which Desika mentions as 'bhAvibhArathamahAhava siddheh soochanam', being the sign of the Mahabharatha war later, the son of the king of Kasi sent a demon produced from a yajna. Krishna was playing unperturbed and his sudharsana chakra drove the demon away and it went and destroyed those who sent it and the sudarsana burnt the whole city of Kasi. Desika says that it looked as though the Lord wanted to purify the city and make it fit for securing mukthi for the devotees.

There were two monkeys among those who helped Rama in the previous yuga and one of them called Dhivividha (the other was Maindha) became corrupted and started causing destruction to the world and came to fight with Balarama and entering the place where he was enjoying himself it started irritating him. Balarama hit the monkey with his plough with which he once dragged the whole city of Hasthinapura into the Ganges and killed it. (Once Sambha the son of Jamabhavathi won the daughter of Duryodhana in svayamvara and Duryodhana arrested him and Balarama, to punish Duryodhana, when he did not listen to the conciliatory words and insulted them, dragged the city with his plough and it started falling in the Ganges. The elders intervened and Samba was married to the daughter of Duryodhana)

Desika briefly mentions the destruction of Dhanthavakra, king of Salvas and who was the other dvarapalaka of vaikunta cursed by the sages Sanaka etc. and was born for three births to be killed by the Lord. In this birth the two were born as Sisupala and Dhanthavakra.

Krishna then induced Ugrasena to arrange for dhikvijaya and the next chapter describes the dhikvijaya of the yadhavas.





CHAPTER 22

THE DHIGVIJAYA - THE CONQUEST

Krishna called the allies of yadhavas and told them that they should march against those who shun the path of dharma. He gave a lecture on dharma and the duty of those who uphold it.

In the night called indiscrimination the Lord has given a lamp called neethi sasthan which helps one to avoid stepping into the mire of adharma and it serves as the hand of the Lord to rescue those who go down.

The advice of the wicked is like an upturned umbrella which will not protect from the rain of calamities.

To walk along the beaten track of the good is to avoid pitfalls, said Krishna and told them to march into the world to conquer all except Kouravas and Pandavas (because Krishna had other plans for them!)

Krishna advised them to discard false ego, dhurahankara, which destroys all good conduct and is contrary to the world and sasthan. Here the KavithArkika simha says through the words of Krishna that the dhurahankara is the life force of the pAshandamatha, the schools of Philosophy that are against the vedas, meaning Buddhism and Jainism, because they cling to their concepts with obstinacy and arrogance.

Krishna cautioned them to be careful of arrogance born out of ego as the one who is at the cliff-top is wary of falling down.

The body, mind and intellect are like three kinds of friends to be handled properly.





This has reference to the words suhrd, mithra and banDhu mentioned in the Gita. Suhrd is one who has friendship without reason and out of goodness of heart. Mithra is the one who is friendly with a purpose and banDhu is the relation who is friendly because of the relation ship. There are three ways to impress a friend, by welcoming him from a distance, by opening your heart to him and by gifts depending on which kind of friend he is.

Krishna further said that to believe those who are easily excitable and not have faith in those who love you, both are like thorns in your path to prosperity and to be uprooted

The prosperity itself is like a cobra which can be worn on the body when the poison is taken out. Like the manthra to remove the poison there are five limbs to establish the seven aspects of the kingdom to bring prosperity.

The five limbs mentioned here are, sahAya, assistance, sADhanopAya, means of ensuring success, dhesakAla vibhAga, right apportioning of time and place, viptthipratheekAra, antidote for calamities and siddhi, success. The seven aspects of a kingdom are, The king, ministers, country, fort, treasury, army and allies.

pramAdhasapthakam thyakthva prayujyopAyasapthakam

angasapthaka sampatthya jayatha dhveepasapthakam (Yad.22.29)

Krishna told them to give up seven ills, employ the seven means, acquiring the seven limbs of the kingdom overpower the seven islands.

The seven ills - Hunting, dice, women, drink, harsh speech, character assassination and cruel punishment

The seven means - sama, peace, dhana, gift, bhedha, creating rift, dhanda, punishment, mAyA deluding, upekshA, indifference and indhrajAla, magic.

The seven limbs of kingdom have been mentioned earlier.





The seven dhveepas - jambu, plaksha, SAlmali, kuSa, krouncha, SAKha and pushkara.

To conquer and rule the earth first one has to win his internal enemies namely, Kama krodha etc. Next they need six kinds of strength, hereditary, from servants, army, that given by friend, and by enemy's enemy. But the most important one is the inner strength without which nothing is of any use.

The life is like movable tree. The childhood is the sprouts, the youth is the flower and the sanathana dharma is the fruit. The life ebbs away whether you are awake or sleeping. So one should amass immutable wealth in the form of spiritual discipline.

So long Desika has been handing out the treasures from the neethi sasthra and dharma sasthra. Now Krishna concludes his advice and starts talking about his generals like Sathyaki.

Krishna compares Sathyaki to his sword Nandhaka. Like the sword Sathyaki pleases him and the similarities mentioned between them are,

parivAreNa sampannah - Sathyaki is surrounded by his men and the sword is also covered with the scabbard.

thyakthakoSah kAryathah - gives away the treasures when necessary and the sword leaves its scabbard when needed.

Sathrujith - winning the enemy.

All of them drank thirstily the words, sarasvathee, of Krishna, which was SruthisoursbhA, fragrant of the Vedas, priyahithA, sweet as well as beneficial and pariSuddhA, pure.

Then Sathyaki started with his army like a second Krishna for the Dhikvijaya. He subdued the regions of Gujarath, Persia, Mathyadhesa and the adjacent ones, and fought the yavanas. Thus conquering all the places in the west he





advances towards northwest and won over the regions of Sind, kamboja and Kashmir. Then he over powered the Himalayan region and advanced to Nepal and conquered Bengal and the regions in the east won over Kalinga and through Andhra which surrendered, he went to Tamilnadu. Entering into Kanchi and was impressed by it which resembled Svethadhveepa, at the centre of the milky ocean, seeing the devotees of Narayana there. Then he went to the chola and pandya kingdoms and enjoyed the sanctity there. Kerala and Ceylon and all the regions surrendered to the rule of Krishna and sathyaki returned to Dvaraka victorious.





CHAPTER 23

MAHABHARATHA WAR

In this chapter Desika traces the circumstances that led to the mahabharatha war and describes the role of Krishna in it.

The Pandavas were supposed to be the Indras of the earlier kalpas. They resorted to Krishna for support to win the Kouravas. They knew Krishna as he is in reality owing to the instructions of their preceptors and through the study of the Vedas. They became very dear to Krishna who said 'mamaprANA hi pAndavAh', Pandavas are my life, to Dhuryodhana. In the Gita Krishna says, 'priyo hi jnAnino athyarTham sa eva mamapriyah' and 'jnAnee thu Athmaiva me matham'

To those who know Him in reality the Lord is the dearest and they are dearest to Him and the wise man is the Lord Himself. Thus Pandavas were dear to Krishna as they surrendered to Him, worshipped Him and accepted Him as their master and always they were protected by Him, as mentioned in the Gita, 'macchitthA madhgathaprANAh.'

thahASrayAh thathpraNiDheyakrthyAh

thenAiva nAThena sadhA sanAThAh.

(Yad.23.3)

Krishna protected them from fire, water and poison when Dhuryodhana plotted to kill them.

Then Dhuryodhana, instructed by Sakuni, along with his brother Dhussasana and Karna who had enmity with Arjuna, disgraced Droupadhi in the court of kings, after enslaving her under the pretext of winning her in the game of dice and she, finding her husbands helpless to protect her cried for help to Krishna who protected her by giving her heaps and heaps of silks to guard her honour.





After the thirteen years of exile Pandavas wishing to gain their kingdom which was deceitfully taken away from them through the playing of dice, surrendered to Krishna, who, on account of his souSeelya, agreed to undertake the duty of a messenger for them and became Pandavadhootha. Desika says,

Sa thAdhrSeem Adhriyatha thrihAmA
preshyakriyAm preshitha dhevabrndhah
nanu prabhooNAm nirapekshabhoomnAm
prasADhanam bhakthajane guNathvam (Yad.23.12)

The Lord who has all the devas as his servants and has the three supreme abodes, namely, Vaikunta, Ksheerasagara and the Bhoomandala, wished to go as a messenger for His devotees. To the great who do not depend on anything else for their glory, to be bhakthaparAdheena, serving the needs of their devotees, becomes the greatest ornament. This attribute of the Lord is praised by the wise even more than His powers of creation, sustenance and annihilation because, says Desika, 'nAThochitham nnthrushu pArathanthryam', it is fitting for the soulabhya of the Lord to be ready to do the bidding of His devotees.

This act of going as a messenger is not in any way demeaning to the Lord says Desika because He is known to take birth for the protection of the devotees, even though He is birth-less. 'ajanmanhjanmabhrthasya Soureh swAmithva samvAdhi babhoova dhouthyam'

Krishna then went to Hasthina pura.

Khadhyothavath dharSitha khanjadheeptheen
prajnAdhrSo bhoomobhrthah sabhAyAm
prApthodhayo bhAnuriva thriDhAmA
pracchAdhayAmAsa kuroon svaDhAmnA (Yad.23.13)

Krishna entered the court of blind Dhrtharashtra and eclipsed the glory of the





Kouravas by his brilliance that became like fireflies in front of the Sun.

The influence of the presence of Krishna was so great that the Kouravas honoured him as though they have forgotten the enmity (towards Pandavas)

Dhuryodhana got angry at the words of Krishna trying to advice him for his own good and tried to bind him but failed. (the Lord showed His visvarooopa and everyone except the wise like Bhishma and Vidhura were blinded by the brilliance) This Desika illustrates with a beautiful sloka.

Ulookale bhakthaguNe cha baddham

gunotthare gopavaDhoosthnecha

iyeshabanDhum jagathekabanDhum

dhuryoDhano dhusthyajamrthyupASah

(Yad.23.18)

The Lord allowed Himself to be bound in the mortar out of love for His devotees and he was bound by the love of the gopis. (Bound by their gunas as with guna - a rope) How could and with what DhuryoDhana could bind him as he was devoid of gunas? He actually wished to bind himself without release with the ropes of death.

Krishna returned to the Pandavas and allowed them to fight the war as the Kouravas never listened to him.

Desika describes the act of Krishna becoming ParThasArathy by next few slokas.

narAmSajushtena Dhananjayena

raThee bhvan sAraThirAthmanAcha

DhanurbhrthAthothrabrthAcha bheje

Prthakthvam aikyam cha yaThA pramANam

To Arjuna, who was a part of Nara of the two, Nara-Narayana, wielding the bow, and hence was the owner of the chariot, Krishna took the horse-whip in





his hand and became the charioteer, thus exhibiting the identity as well as the difference between the two of them as seen in the pramana. The identity is due to the part of Nara in Arjuna and the difference is due to the human aspect of Arjuna. The pramana referred to is that the individual soul experiences difference from the Paramathman seeing itself as embodied but from the viewpoint of the inner Self who is the Lord in everything, there is identity. This is the essence of the mahavakya 'thatthvamasi' as elucidated by Ramanuja.

raThADhirooDam cha raTham cha rakshan

yaThArThatho dharsayathi sma yanthA

thrappanthachinthA nirapeksham eeSah

thatthAdhrsam thatthvam vibhAgam Adhyam

This sloka illustrates the thatthva thraya of Visishtadvaita philosophy, namely, EeSvara, the Lord, jeeva, the sentient beings and jagath, the insentient Universe.

Krishna acting as Parthasarathy, made explicit the thatthva thraya, without the study of the Vedas, by being the protector of the chariot as well as the one inside the chariot, He Himself the charioteer. That is, the Lord is the controller within, the chariot is the body and Arjuna is the individual soul.

One is reminded by this sloka of the text in Katopanishad,

AthmAnam raThinam viddhi Sareeram raThameva thu

Buddhim thu sArathim viddhi manah pragrahameva cha

IndhriyANi hayAnyAhuh vishayAh theshu gocharAn (kato.1.3/4)

It means that the body is the chariot and the jeeva is the one traveling in it and intellect is the charioteer, the mind is the reins, the indhriyas are the horses and the sense objects are the distractions on the path. As long as the reins are in hands of the charioteer the horses behave well and take the o





passenger to his destination. For this the intellect should be established in the Lord and this is what is signified by the Parthasarthy role of the Lord.

The next sloka mentions the chariot as a portrayal of the PraNava. Krishna is the first to be seen and later Arjuna is perceived, showing that he is associated with Krishna. Those who know the meaning of pranava from the Vedas see the Lord in front as the 'a' kara, the last letter 'ma' being the jeeva and the middle letter 'u' showing their connection.

purasThithe gopthari visvahethou

paSchAth avasThAyini thathpravarthye

ananyayogAth sa aTho babhAra

prADheethavedhyAm praNavapravrtthim

(Yad.23.23)

The moment Krishna appeared on the chariot of Arjuna with the reins and the horse-whip in his hands, the army defended by Bhishma was as good as dead.

This sloka hints at the words which Krishna was going to utter later in his discourse of Gita that he has killed the enemies and Arjuna is only a pretext, 'mamaivaithe nihathAh poorvameva nimitthamAthram bhava savyasAchin' (BG.11.33) which is vouch-safed by Sanjaya at the end of the discourse.

Yahra yogeSvarah Krishnah yathrapArTho DhanurDharh

Thathra sreeh vijayo bhoothih dhruvAneehih mathirmama

(BG.18.78)

Wherever there is Krishna, the yogesvara and where Arjuna is with his bow ready for action, there the victory and good fortune and prosperity reigns.

Desika then mentions the sudden despondency of Arjuna and Krishna infusing wisdom into him by his discourse of Gita. He calls it Githopanishad which was given out to the world by the Lord Himself in the form of Vyasa. Desika extols the Gita by saying,





abhanjaneeyAm paradharmasatthAm
anaSvareem bhArathasooryadheepthim
Vidhuh SrutheenAm anaghAm vayasyAM
geethAm asmmooDajanAvigeethAm

Gita, the everlasting brilliance of the Sun called Mahabharatha and the faultless companion of the Vedas is the irrefutable essence of self realization and valued by the wise.

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Arjuna sees bhagavAn's virAt svarUpam
(Courtesy: Sow. R.Chitralkha)





Then Desika refers to the virAtroopa of the Lord which Arjuna saw with his divine eyes endowed by Krishna, and seeing all the universe and the devas in the cosmic form of the Lord he realised that the Supreme Self is the only agent of all action and the Kouravas were seen by him as already annihilated.

Then the war started and Arjuna freed from his delusion fought valiantly aided by Krishna. Desika says that it was the Lord who controlled everything and secured victory for Pandavas, being the inner self of all and controlling their indhriyas like the horses. He is unparalleled, 'nAnyena nidharSaneeyah' Arjuna understood the glory of his charioteer in a portion of whom the whole universe is contained and comes out distinctly at creation and who was now sitting in one part of his chariot.



pArthasArathy

(Courtesy: www.glimpseofkrishna.com)

The Desika briefly describes the various events of the war, like Krishna advancing against Bhishma with Chakra in hand in order to make true the vow of his devotee (Bhishma) that he will make Krishna wield a weapon in the war,





being sure of his own infallible valour. This says Desika is not in any way against the vow of Krishna not carry arms in the war because He is ever free and nothing can limit His actions. Moreover everything happens through His will only.

Krishna made good the vow of Arjuna also that he will cut off the head of Jayadhratha who was instrumental in the killing of Abhimanyu before sunset, failing which he will jump into the fire, by causing the sunset before its time which made Jayadhratha come out of his hiding and was killed. (Krishna removed the chakra by which he hid the Sun to make Jayadhratha come out thinking it was night fall.)

All the eighteen akshouhini of the Kouava army were destroyed and Desika wonders that it was like the pralayaleela of the Lord before the time. It was like the fall of puppets on a string being pulled by the one who holds the string. Thus Arjuna crossed the great ocean of the war like that of samsara with the help of the Supreme Lord.

Then Desika mentions about the protection Krishna gave to the foetus in the womb of Uttara, wife of Abimanyu from the missile sent by AsvatthAma, son of Drona to destroy the progeny of Pandavas and giving the infant life when he was born charred with the heat of the missile.

The bed of arrows supplied to Bhishma by Arjuna was like a yogasana for the great soul.

Then Krishna brought the chariot back from the warfront and embraced Arjuna fondly, which act seemed, says Desika as though Krishna wanted to reabsorb his power that was with Arjuna so long.

After causing the exposition on dharma by Bhishma Krishna returned to Dvaraka.





CHAPTER 24

KRISHNA THE HUSBAND

Krishna returning to Dvaraka was intent in pleasing his wives who got him as their husband due to the merits acquired in their previous lives.

He is described By Desika thus:

Krthuvithiniyathah api akarmavaSyah

Parichitha kAmaraso api veetharAgah

Nagaravasathih api aSeshavAsah

kaThamiva kena sa vibhuh varNaneeyah

(Yad.24.2)

He was not bound by karma even though he was performing the sacrificial rites according to kshathriyadharma. That is, his sacrifices were not done for the fruit ordained in the Vedas. He was enjoying married life but was detached. That is, he was not influenced by desire. He was living in Dvaraka but yet he was present everywhere. Hence, says Desika, how and by who can be described as being such and such?

His conduct and story of his life was like that of a rajarshi and extolled by the sages. Dvaraka became rich in treasures and superior to the three abodes of the Lord described in the Vedas. Namely, Vaikunta, ksheerasagara and the region of the Sun. (This may be because His soulabhya, easy accessibility out of love excelled His parathva, supremacy.)

Krishna established dharma with the association of the sages. He looked after the royal duties with the help of those who were well versed in the Vedas. With his superhuman power took many forms and pleased his many wives. Desika says that





even the yogis who have superhuman powers can do so but their doings will be subjected to their karma and their enjoyment will be dependent on their indhriyas. But Krishna, being the supreme purusha did not need His indhriyas because he is atheendhriya, beyond the senses. (in manthraraja padha sthothra it is said 'sarvendhriyairapi vinA sarvam sarvathra sarvadha yo jAnAthi namAmi Adhyam tham aham sarvathomukham'- that is, He knows everything everywhere and always without the need of the indhriyas.)

Naturally Krishna being the one who gives everything and also moksha to those who always contemplate on nothing but Him only, fulfilled all the desires of His wives. Since he took many forms and pleased his wives simultaneously, says Desika, even Narada could not stage any of his kalahas to create misunderstanding among his wives.

Krishna not only gave them his love but also instill devotion which will destroy the fear of samsara.

Krishna played with his wives who were fortunate, by making swings for them from ropes (gunas) resembling the three gunas of his maya. The implication is that like the motion of the swing up and down the Lord makes the good souls ascend to heaven and descend to be born in good wombs by the play of the three gunas.

By drenching them with coloured water he created anuraga (red colour as well as love) on them in and out.

Anukrtha nija Sakthibhih priyAbhih

Saha gunabanDhavibhaktha sanniveSaih

Muhuriha nipathathbhih uthpathathbhih

karaNavaSairiva kanshykaih adheevyath

(Yad.24.32)

With his wives like his three shakthis, Sri, Bhoo and NeelA, Krishna played with the balls tied to the ropes and which rose and fall. It was like His leela





with the jivas tied to the three gunas which he enjoys with his three consorts.

When Krishna, who hides in his three heavenly abodes played hide and seek with his wives he only bound their eyes but they never bound his eyes thinking that to do so will create blindness to the three worlds.

Krishna, who instructed the sages like Sanaka in his incarnation as Hayagreeva and Hamsa, was also adept in the instruction of love to his wives. It was like Upanishad for the women whatever he told them in private.

Krishna made himself many and was present in the house of every one of his wives and they took away his footwear to prevent him from leaving them and hence he could not move anywhere!

Describing the various ways in which the wives of Krishna enjoyed his company, Desika exclaims

Ajanishatha kutho nu bhAgaDheyAth
thribhuvanamangaldheepikAh SubhAngyah
yadhupathi sahadharmachArineebhih
sukham anagham bhuvi yAbhih anvabhAvi (Yad.24.63)

Whatever was the good merit acquired by these women who were born to become the wives of Krishna and experienced the unparalleled joy in this life! They considered him as human not knowing that he was the supreme purusha whose consort is Sridevi and who used to sleep in the bed of Adhishesha.

Yathibhih anububhooshithah sah thAbhih
yadhupathih adhbhutharoopavesha Seelah
nirupaDhika rasAmrthougha sinDhuh
sathatham aporvam apoorvam anvabhAvi (Yad.24.67)

Krishna, with whom the sages who have controlled their senses wished to enjoy, assumed wonderful forms and qualities and was the ocean of limitless





stream of the nectar of love, and was enjoyed by the women as though he is ever new (nithyayuva). To see the glory of those women the yogis who have achieved the superhuman powers ridiculed their achievement.



SrI Krishna - the paramapurusha

Desika describes the experience of the women as

Sarithah iva mrgeedhrsah tham ekam

Mahitha guNougha mahodhaDhim bajanthyah

avibharuh anapAyam aikarasyam

munigaNithascha sa eva mukthabhogah

(Yad.24.69)

The wives of Krishna merged with him, who is the ocean of auspicious qualities, in their love, like the rivers joining the sea and acquired the state of ekarasya. That is, as the rivers leave their individual tastes and become salty joining with the sea the women were filled with only one feeling that is the love for Krishna. This, says Desika, is what has been described as the state of sAyuja





mukthi by the sages.

They proved false the common criticisms that are leveled against women in general such as they are fickle, always oppose, harsh and insincere etc. They were the beacons of madhurabhakthi in the world which devotees like Meera and Andal followed. Desika says that even those who portray this by means of acting, dance, singing etc. also get engrossed in devotion of the Lord.

Krishna lived happily in Dvaraka as he was in Vaikunta with Rukmini and Bhama as his divine consorts, Lakshmi and Bhoodevi and yadhavas serving as the nithyasooris, Sesha, Vishvaksena Garuda etc. and caused the joy of heaven as well as moksha to those around him.

Desika concludes his kavya by these words:

nAreedhrshtyAniyamithaDhiyah nAkanATheSvarathvam
sambhoge cha pravaNamansahSASvatham brahmacharyam
athraikasyAm puri nivasathah sarvalokADhikathvam
niDhyAyanthah thvaritham atharandhustharAm thasya mAyAm (Yad.24.93)

Krishna while he seemed to be bound by the beautiful eyes of his women, remained the overlord of the devas, while enjoying the company of the women he maintained his brahmacharya and thus displayed his status of transience and imminence as the Supreme Self, who, though seen in Dvaraka, was present in all beings and was all pervading. Those who contemplate on the Lord thus transcend His Maya which is otherwise difficult to transcend.

Gurubhih anaghachitthah AhithodhArabhoomA
Surabhitharasam ethath soonrtham venkateSah
Vyathanutha yadhuveeraapreethim icchan prabhoothAm
kavikaTham kamrgendhrah kshemadham kAvyarathna (Yad.24.95)





kavitArkika simham

The glory of this kavya is described thus:

1. The content of the kavya is the gift of the great masters like Vyasa and others to humanity.





2. It is composed by the mighty lion of debate and poet Venkatesa (Desika) to please the Lord.
3. It is full of the fragrance of the essence of kavithva and devotion as it abounds in richness of word and meaning and devotional fervour.
4. It is composed with the welfare of the world at heart and is beneficial, pleasing and true.

॥श्रीयादवाभ्युदयम् संपूर्णम् ॥

||SriyAdavAbhyudayam sampUrNam||

कवितार्किकसिम्हाय कल्याणगुणशालिने

श्रीमतेवेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरुवे नमः

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