

SNEH - GEETA

(In Praise of Love)

By

SADGURU NISHKULANAND SWAMI

Sadguru Nishkulanand Muni has been very thoughtful in regard to the future of this *Satsang* and therefore, he has enriched our *Satsang* literature with a very large stock of sacred scriptures written and recited by him. These holy books are like the eternal stream of nectar strengthening devotion and affection.

Swami has preached to householders to live detached of *Grihastashram* and worldly relations for a brighter and more luminous stage of life as a householder. Shreeji Maharaj preaches not to inflict pain to others through our thoughts, speech or actions. To act at the will of God is the first step forward on the path of devotion and worship. To live a decent and well-cultured life is the second step. Prudence and decorum are the foundations of the axiomatic religion.

Shreeji Maharaj has created an army for the Axiomatic religion

The scholar poets like Brahmanand Swami, the *yogis* like Gopalanand Swami, the orators and readers like Muktanand Swami, the scholars of the Sanskrit literature, such as Pragji Dave and the secretaries like Shukanand Swami, great musicians, painters, writers and the alert attendants like celibate Swami Mukunandji have adorned the eternal court of Lord Shreeji Maharaj. This large force of 'armed guards' has acted like an army of crusaders.

God incarnates himself on the earth to liberate living beings through His holy company. The fulfillment of the four *Purusharthas* (cardinal attainments of the lifetime) has resulted in the incarnation of Lord Swaminarayan, with his splendid retinue of *Paramhansas* and devotees. Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami wrote the scripture of "Sneh Geeta" to strengthen the devotional fervour and the spirit of affection among aspirants and devout souls.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami narrates here the subliminal love of the devotees for God. Sneh Geeta is the scripture of eternal love and affection:

Sneh Geeta is a wonderful scripture

Sneh Geeta nurtures and strengthens love for God. It is a scripture of universal humanity. Sneh Geeta is like a water hut that satisfies the thirst of mankind without any discrimination between colour, creed or sect. But there should be real thirst for God. Listen to *katha-varta* with real thirst. Unreal thirst will not help an aspirant to quench his satisfaction. Such a person would be tempted to criticise the water-hut or even the water! A soul with real thirst – true aspiration – would like to drink water. He would not find any fault in regard to its taste or temperature. He would drink the water happily.

Once, a boy at the railway station was distributing water to the passengers of a train. A man was sitting near the window looking out at the platform. The boy passed by him with water to sell. The passenger waived his hand and called the boy near to him. The water-boy came to him carrying a small earthen pot and a glass to distribute the water.

The passenger asked him, "What is price?"

"Fifty *paise* per glass," said the boy.

The *sheth* tried to bargain and asked with a smile, "How about twenty five *paise* for a glass?"

The boy smiled at him without any answer and walked away to cover other prospective buyers.

A saint was observing this. He found it a bit unusual. He came down from the coach and asked the boy, "Why haven't you entertained that customer? Why have you smiled mildly instead of a reply? Why did you leave with just a smile?"

The boy's answer was most intelligent. He said, "Why should I insist? He is not thirsty. A thirsty passenger never inquires about the price and never bargains for a glass of water. Another person asked for the glass of water without any bargaining. He said he was thirsty and insisted for a glass of water without delay. As the first person was not thirsty, I left him with a smile instead of a bargain."

The satsang of Shree Hari is like a water-hut. A thirsty soul receives here the cool and nectar-like water in the form of *katha, kirtan*

and *dev darshan*. The Gopis were thirsty for darshan – holy company - of Lord Shree Krishna. They ran to him hastily to quench their thirsty to meet Shree Krishna. They stopped nowhere in between until they found Shree Krishna.

Sneh Geeta sings with love the praises of Lord Shree Hari. Sneh Geeta is not merely an object or a book, but it is life - the colourful episodes of one's personal life. It is a school to learn the lessons of life. It strengthens our love and affection for God. These are the songs of affection and devotional love.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami begins the scripture with a *Mangalacharan* (auspicious prayer). To remember God is the most auspicious among all acts. Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami has presented here the essence of his devotional experiences.

Kadavun - 1

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami narrates here in his unique style the *Katha* of *Dashama Skandha* of Shreemad Bhagwat:

(Shreeji Maharaj is the idol form of auspiciousness. Lord Vrajraj is the soul and heart of the residents of Vraj. O Lord! Please be kind to me. I desire to sing your praises.)

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami begins the scripture of Sneh Geeta with due blessings of Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan. Auspicious beginning is the rise of virtuous will. To walk on the path of devotion is itself a blessing of God. Devotion is not possible without the blessings of God.

A soul receives devotional pleasure of holy company (*Satsang*) through the *punyas* of his last many births. The *Katha* of Sneh Geeta sang by Sadguru Niskulanand Muni himself is supreme in our Satsang. The scripture of Sneh Geeta showers on mankind the blissful light of eternal enlightenment. The story begins with the *pooja* (worship) of the Holy Scripture. Why do we do *pooja* and worship of this scripture? We do it because it treasures the divine *leelas* of God.

Sneh Geeta has two wings. *Shraddha* (faith) and *Bhavna* (devotional sentiments). A bird can fly with its two wings. Similarly,

Shraddha (faith) invokes true knowledge in our intelligence and *Bhavna* purifies our mind and destroys sin.

God is attainable through firm faith. Three things, namely love for God, faith in God and trust in God are a must to attain God.

The scripture teaches us love and affection towards our personal God – Lord Shree Hari. Swami says, 'O God! I desire earnestly to sing your praises. One cannot sing the praises of God without His mercy.'

(I desire to sing your devotional songs. I desire it utmost. I wish to sing *Sneh Geeta* in accordance to my spiritual wisdom.)

Those who desire to please God should rise early in the morning. There are many benefits to rising early. One can attend comfortably to mental worship, *gurumantra japa*, *pradakshina*, *darshan* of early morning *aarti* and first salute to one's personal God. One can listen attentively to early morning *katha* sessions held at the temple.

A man planning a visit to another town rises early in the morning, readies himself for the journey and reaches the railway station quite early, before the time of his departure. A man puts in best efforts for a comfortable tour. Similarly, a man who has to travel a long way for his ultimate destination – Akshardham – needs to do daily *poojan*, *archan*, *katha-satsang*, *japa* and *kirtan*, by rising early in the morning.

(Now listen to this *katha* of sublime love and affection.) I have considered everything from all angles, I have thought much about *japa* (holy chants), *tapa* (penance) *tiratha* (pilgrimage of holy shrines), *yoga* (meditational concentration) and *yagya* (holy-fire), but come to the singular conclusion that devotional love has no alternative.)

Spicy vegetables are tasteless if we have forgotten to add a pinch of salt. Similarly, devotion and spiritual wisdom look dull without devotional love. Though beautiful by being bedecked with ornaments, jewelry and precious attires, she still look ugly and repulsive if she is without a nose.

Install God constantly in the seat of your heart

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami insists for devotional love and love for God. The attributes like donations, nine kinds of devotion, *poojan*, sacred scriptures, *satsang* and *samaiya*, bear no fruit in absence of devotional love. *Satsang* will be dry and rough without devotional love. It would be like a meal cooked without butter oil.

A body has no value without the soul. The world has no value without devotional love. Rain in a saline land yields no fruits and a most fertile land yields nothing in the absence of rain. Similarly, devotion is futile in absence of devotional love.

Love instills power in devotion. Act to your best ability to increase your love for God – devotional love.

(A lake is dry without water.
Flowers are useless without fragrance. The
heart is lonely without love.)

A dry lake is of no use. Fresh and colourful flowers are of no use without their fragrance. The heart would be dry and lonesome without the moisture of devotional love arising from *satsang*, *katha* and *kirtan*. Devotion is dry and lifeless without selfless love. Don't do dry devotion. Do devotion with love.

If the *kirtan* “~Pt{ , {u Ęt[wk TMtywk” (O Shyam! You are real wealth...) was sang loudly, it may reach the temple but it still would not reach God. If you want it to reach God, you have to attach your heart and soul to that song. Similarly, a scholar of scriptures would be consigned to infernal regions if his knowledge were not wedded to devotional love. Shreeji Maharaj himself says so in his sacred scripture of Shikshapatri.

Dry devotion cannot be relished. Knowledge, deep study of the scriptures, virtuous attributes and knowledge of the scriptures are futile if there is no love in your devotion for God. There may be many mango trees in an orchard, but those trees will be of no use if they do not bear any fruits. By chewing the leaves and branches of a mango tree you cannot enjoy mango juice! Only the fruits – the real mangoes - have juice and flavour within them.

Pooja where you think only of God in your *japa* and worship is the best. If you thought about your householder chores or thought

about the world and your relations during *pooja*, then this would be classed as inferior.

Spend your morning hours in *dhyana* (meditation), *pooja*, *mala* (chanting on rosary beads) and prayer. If we remember God only for two hours a day, God will remember us for the whole day.

(Plain knowledge is dry without devotional love. A heart without love is like a marriage party without a groom.)

Don't miss the Groom

The son of a village head – Patel - was marrying. The marriage party was getting ready to visit the village of the bride. All were busy in preparation. Modern vehicles were not available in those days. People were used to traveling by horse, camel, chariot and bullock cart. The Marriage party travelled on bullock carts. The town where the bride resided in was very far, about 80 km away. The fifteen bullock carts carried the marriage party in different groups. The groom and his best friend with the music band rode a special bullock cart. The marriage party was very enthusiastic for a grand welcome and feast meals.

In ancient times, farmers used to take good care of their bullocks by offering to them wholesome oil cakes and pure butter oil. The bullock carts began their journey by competing with their companions. Unfortunately the bullocks pulling the groom's cart, though looking healthy, were actually quite weak in terms of maintaining speed. The cart would not pick up speed. The bullock carts of the marriage party over took the cart of the groom and travelled much ahead of the groom's cart. Nobody bothered about the groom and his cart. The marriage party was in a high spirit, looking forward to the forthcoming pleasure available to them as honoured guests. The exhausted bullocks trailed the carts for some time and stopped finally somewhere – a little away from the town. The cart driver said, "The bullocks are tired. What shall we do now? All have travelled ahead and left us here. The auspicious time of marriage is almost over. If we continued by travelling with such a slow speed, it will take the whole day to reach the bride's village. We cannot bear thirst and hunger for such a long

time. If you don't mind, may we go back home? Our village is near. We will get some food and water."

The groom's cart came back home.

The scene was quite different at the place of the in-laws. The marriage party had arrived at the outskirts of the village and the in-laws were informed of the arrival of the marriage party. Youths and elders of the marriage party were in a happy mood, cheering their successful journey. Some enthusiastic youths went in a group to the house of the bride and asked them to arrange cool drinking water and refreshments to comfort the marriage party.

The bride's father said, "It is so nice of you to come. You have come to us at an appointed time. I am very happy to receive you at our place. Let us first go to receive the groom." The youths and elders looked at each other when the bride's father desired to meet the groom. Nobody knew the whereabouts of the groom and his cart. Some hopeful youths climbed the trees and checked the road afar. But there was no visible sign of the cart or the groom. They came back to the bride's father. The bride's father said, "You will all be honoured, in the company of the groom. You may have meals and hospitality in the company of our honoured groom. But the groom himself is missing. You cannot expect anything if the groom is not with you. It is better if you go back and come here with the groom."

Exhausted and hungry, the group came back to the groom's village. Their journey of 160 km to and from turned futile in the absence of the groom. This story carries a meaningful teaching. God is Lord and master of all living things. God is the groom for all of us. All our efforts, ego and wealth is worthless in absence of God. Don't forget God. Stay with God to escape the 84-lakh births. You are safe and secure only in the presence of God.

Shreeji Maharaj shows the key to happiness

Shreeji Maharaj says that the pleasure attained by concentrating on the blissful image of God is the best and supreme amongst the pleasures available in all the *lokas*.

(Surrender your mind with
devotional love. Love heartily. The Lord of

Nishkulanand Swami lives eternally with his darling devotees.)

Life is worthless without devotional love. Nothing will be needed further, if your heart is filled with devotional love. The Soul cannot be at peace in absence of selfless love. Wealth, power, honour and charms are of no use if not wedded to devotional love. They become a shackle or prison in absence of devotional love.

If you thought and talked constantly about this matter, your heart and soul would be crushed under the weight of the matter. A cashier in a factory possesses the keys of the treasury. Mere possession of the key cannot make him the master and owner of the wealth. Similarly, you cannot claim to be a lord or master yourself, simply because you own some wealth. Wealth and progeny is worthless in absence of devotional love.

Nobody is able to redeem us in the absence of devotional love. Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami says, "Try your best and try at your earliest to fill your heart with devotional love – sublime love. Don't allow the dirt of material desires to rule upon your heart." This is the core of the teachings.

True devotional love thrills the heart, soul and body and only then do the tears of blissful pleasure roll from one's eyes. Do devotion with love. Attach yourself to the divine image of God. Stay away from material desires.

Kadavun – 2

The Lord Manifest himself at Gokul

Krishnavatara is a most majestic incarnation. Devotees of *Bharat Khanda* (greater India) are most fortunate to celebrate the auspicious birthday of God every year on Ramnavami and Krishna Janmashtami.

The readers of *katha* are rather more fortunate than others, because others celebrate these events once a year whilst the readers of *katha* are able to celebrate the event every month.

Both these days are revolutionary.

Devki – the daughter of King Devak – was married to Vasudevji. Elder brother Kansa, escorted his sister Devki in her travel to the house of her in-laws. Vasudeva and Devaki sat in a royal chariot

and her brother Kansa held the reins as the charioteer. Surrounded by auspicious music and singing, when he rode the chariot, a deep and thundering forecast was announced from the sky warning him, "O foolish Kansa! The one who you carry in your chariot will be the cause of your death. The eighth child from them will kill you!"

Kansa roared in anger when he heard that mysterious warning from the sky. He jumped down from the chariot, rushed towards Devaki, pulled her down by her hair and unsheathed his sword to kill her. Wise Vasudeva came to her help. Vasudeva said to Kansa, "O Kansa! Your sister is not the cause of your death. It is her child that may kill you. But I assure you an oath, that the children to be born to her will be handed over to you on their birth. I will adhere to my promise. Please spare her life. Don't be a killer of a woman. Don't kill your own sister."

As time passed Devaki gave birth to children. Kansa killed them on the spot as and when a child was born to her. Her seventh conception was exchanged mysteriously and child Balram was born to Rohini.

Vasudeva and Devaki were imprisoned under the tight security of Kansa. Devout souls Vasudeva and Devaki spent the time in devotion of God. The Supreme Lord manifested himself in Devaki and divine luminosity emanated from her body. God himself dwelled in her womb. The *lokas* prospered with wealth, peace and prosperity. The deities and demigods did prayers to welcome God upon the earth. Auspicious physical signs appeared on the personage of Devaki. It was a sign of a suitable time of birth. The Lord of the universe, Almighty God Supreme graced the prison and spread his divine light. It was midnight of the eighth day of the dark half of the month of *Shravana*. God manifested first in his *chaturbhuj* image in front of them. Vasudeva and Devakiji prayed, "O God! O All-knower! O Infinite and Eternal Lord! We are very happy with your blissful *darshan*." The Supreme Lord later incarnated himself as the darling child of Devaki.

Bhagwan desired to them, "Take me to the house of Nandrai at Gokul and bring his daughter here." God was born in a jail at Mathura, but the birth would be celebrated at Gokul.

Vasudeva thought about the circumstances. It was raining and midnight and high security was posted everywhere in the prison and outside the building. The gates and doors were securely locked. River

Yamuna was flowing bank-to-bank across the way to Gokul. How could he reach Gokul and Nandrai? He brushed off those scary thoughts, took a basket, arranged tiny bedding at the bottom of the basket and installed Bal Krishna in it. He placed the basket on his head, ready to leave. Miraculously, the gates opened automatically and the shackles imprisoning him broke free like a raw thread. The ropes and shackles break automatically in the presence of God. The security guards and soldiers slipped into a mysterious sleep.

Divine serpent Sheshnag grabbed the opportunity of service and protected Balkrishna by spreading his majestic hood over Bal Krishna like an umbrella. Yamuna desired to touch the holy feet of Lord Krishna. Shree Krishna favoured her by extending his feet from the basket. Holy touch calmed her impatient water!

Vasudeva came to Gokul with Balkrishna. Nandrani was in deep sleep. Her daughter was sleeping by her side. Nobody knew about Vasudeva. Vasudeva took her with him and placed Balkrishna there at the side of Nandrani. Tears appeared in his eyes whilst leaving his son.

Vasudeva came back to the jail with the girl. The gates and doors locked automatically when he went inside. Maya brings ties and shackles when she comes into our life. Mother Devaki played lovingly with her and said, "Dear daughter! Be wise and cry not. Your maternal uncle will not know about your birth. I will take good care of you within this prison for your good up bringing." But she cried loudly to alert the jail security.

The prison head and his assistant woke up and ran to the cell of Vasudeva Devaki. They knew that a child was born. They informed Kansa about the birth of the child. Kansa came to the prison and demanded, "Devaki! Give me your child."

Devki said with tears in her eyes, "Brother! This is my daughter." Kansa was initially a bit confused in regard to a female child.

He thought, "My killer should be a man, then why this girl?" Regardless, he thought it fit to still kill her. That was the safest approach. With such resolute he grabbed the child from Devakiji, held her up with his hand and threw her on a slab to kill her. But Maya disappeared in the space and said in a thundering voice, "O Fool! O Sinner! Who are you to kill me? Your killer is already safe in Gokul."

Meanwhile back in Gokul, mother Yashoda did darshan of Balkrishna when she woke up in morning. Sunandji came to the help of Yashodaji and broke the auspicious news, "Brother! A male child has been born to your wife. You have got a son! Brother Nandrai honoured her by gifting a diamond necklace. There was no limit to his joy. He donated cash gifts to Brahmins and the Gods from the heavens welcomed Shree Krishna with celestial music by heavenly musicians, singers and dancers. They showered flowers from the sky.

(There was pleasure and happiness in the house of Nandrai. Horse, chariots, elephants and palanquin riders, guests and visitors came to the house of Nandrai to cheer the birth of Kanaiyalal (Lord Balkrishna). Naradji played the tunes of devotional pleasure on his *veena* and Lord Shiva played his *damaru* to welcome the incarnation of Lord Balkrishna. The lofty mace of Lord Hanuman and the Manjiras (a musical instrument) of Meeraji played sweet tunes of devotion to welcome the manifestation of Shree Krishna.)

The Gopas and Gopis flocked to the house of Nandrai to welcome Balkrishna. The saints, celibates, hermits and *Rishis* gathered at the palatial house of Nandrai to do *darshan* of Balkrishna. The cows stood there raising their head and their tails to express love and affection. There was no limit to the pleasure and happiness of mankind, the gods and the deities. Celestial singers played heavenly tunes from the sky. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami sings:

(All were in high spirits of celebration at the house of Nandrai. The Almighty himself has manifested on the earth to liberate his devotees. God himself was born and the *Lokas* were very happy with the incarnation of the supreme God. Demonic souls like Kansa, were sad.

Thirty-three *crore* wives of the deities and Gods graced the house of Nandrai to facilitate Shree Krishna and mother Jashoda. *Munis* and saints did *jaijalkar* of Shree Balkrishna. The house was decorated with auspicious sandalpaste, *torana* (door frame decorations and wall hangings of various kinds). Lord Balkrishna of Brahmanand Swami was loved by every one.)

Nand Baba donated cows and clothes to celebrate the birth of his son. Lord Balkrishna stole the hearts and minds of the Gopis. They concluded hurriedly their household chores and ran to the house of Nandrai. They offered gifts to Yashodaji and Balkrishna. Yashodaji honoured their feelings with costlier return gifts of jewellery and ornaments, but the Gopis refused it politely and desired only to play with Balkrishna.

Mother Yashodaji placed Balkrishna in the lap of the Gopis. The Gopis kissed him on his forehead and embraced him with their heart. They found themselves most fortunate. They had waited for this moment for thousands of past births. Their unfulfilled wishes were granted today.

(Shree Hari is an ocean of sublime pleasure. Hearts and souls were at tranquil bliss through *darshan* of Lord Shree Hari. Shree Hari stole the minds of his devout *Munis*.)

Nand Baba donated two *lakh* cows each bedecked with gold and silver ornaments and silken clothes. The Brahmins received the donations happily with hearty blessings to Balkrishna.

The Gopas were in a mood of celebration. They decorated their cows and bullocks by bedecking them with turmeric paste. Golden covers were placed on the tips of the horns, golden bells and golden chains around the neck and colourful silken clothes on their backs. The calves were dancing to the jingling tunes of the bells. The minds of the yogis, who were in deep meditational concentration, were attracted to the divine image of Lord Shree Krishna.

(The vision of Lord Shree Krishna's image drew the minds of the *Munis*.)

Lord Shiva broke his Samadhi and came to Gokul to do *darshan* of God. Lord Shiva appeared in front of them in the guise of a hermit holding a begging bowl and said "Jai Sachidanand!" Mother Yashoda rushed with a plate of jewels, pearls and diamonds to gift it to the ascetic. Lord Shiva refused it with due decorum and prayed, "Mother! I don't want such *bhiksha*. I have not come here with such desire, but have come here at the will of God. Please, let me have a *darshan* of your darling son."

Mother Yashoda said, "You may wish for anything else, but not my son. I will not bring him out to you. My child will be scared of your fearful appearance."

Lord Shiva said, "Your son is not scared of anything. Nothing instils fear in him. He is supreme controller of *Kala*. He is *Kala* of all *Kalas*. He instils fear in others. You may be scared of me, but your son will not be. Therefore, let me have a *darshan* of him."

Mother Yashoda disapproved the request and refused it out rightly. Disheartened Shiva sat steadfast in the courtyard in front of the house. He submitted politely, "Mother! I will not leave this place without *darshan* of Balkrishna."

Balkrishna thought about his devotee who had come down from his residence of Mt. Kailash and thought a while about his mother not allowing him *darshan*. Balkrishna applied his *baal leela* and cried loudly to draw the attention of his mother. Worried mother Yashoda ran to the child, hugged him lovingly and her best to pacify him. But the child was not ready to stop crying. All were upset and worried. The Gopis among them prayed to Yashodaji, "Mother Yashoda! The Yogi in the courtyard holds divine powers and celestial luminosity. It is better if we take him to the *yogi*. He will be able to pacify him."

Mother Yashoda stepped out from the room with his crying son Balkrishna and walked across the corridor to approach the ascetic. Child Balkrishna stopped crying as soon he saw Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva arose happily and walked forward to facilitate Lord Balkrishna.

The thrill of ultimate bliss and divine happiness brought tears in his eyes. He found himself fully satiated with blissful *darshan* of Lord Balkrishna. Lord Shiva said. "Maa! Yogis have been left unattended

without darshan of Lord Shree Hari in the seclusion of the forests. They envy your devotional power as the Supreme Lord Purushottam Narayan has manifested himself in your house." Lord Shiva enjoyed blissful darshan of the Lord of Lord Shiva and he returned to Kailash.

Lord Shreeji Maharaj says:

"Jeenabhai, Devram and Prabhashankar possess that intense knowledge which has helped them to realise God. Those, who like the Gopis of Vraj, enjoy the pangs of love, are said to be attached to God with intense love and devotion." (Gadhada Vachanamrit Last-1.)

(For the Gopas, Gopis and cows, God is dearer to them than even their own souls. They are attached eternally to God with a strong tie of devotional love.)

God is very dear to the Gopas, Gopis and cows of Gokul. Gopis are considered to be the Acharyas of the doctrine of affection - doctrine of devotional love. If you desire to love intensely your God, then concentrate intensely and meditate upon the image of God.

The Gopis were not happy without darshan of Lord Shree Krishna. They used to early in the morning to the house of Yashodaji. Yashodaji would scold them with love, "You mad girls! Why have you come so early? My darling son is sleeping. You should not come so early."

The Gopis would say, "Mother! We cannot be at peace without darshan of Shree Krishna. He is our heart, soul and life. We have come here to begin our day with darshan of his *baal-leelas*. We will do all your domestic chores to assist you in your work, but allow us to rock the cradle and permit us to sing cradle-songs to please him."

Sadguru Brahmanand Swami sings:

(The Gopies are singing the cradle song. Lord Shree Hari loves cradle songs. Lord Purushottam is sleeping in the cradle. His forehead emits divine luminosity. With his child-like innocent smile, he brings pleasure to the women of Vraj. He opens his mouth wide to have sweets, butter and treacle. At times, he cries obstinately to get the moon from the sky.)

Kadavun – 3

Water is life for a fish. The Moon is life for a *Chakora* (Indian red-legged partridge). Similarly, the son of Shree Nandrai is the soul and life of the Gopis. His darshan is their eternal pleasure and blissful happiness. They think and meditate eternally on the blissful image of Shree Krishna.

Install the image of God in the seat of your heart

One Gopi said, "Look! How beautiful and shining his hair is?" Another Gopi said, "Look at his fingers. How tender and charming they are! We like to play with them." Another said to her friend, "How endearing are the feet of Lala! I'd love to caress them." Then said the fourth Gopi, "His lips are so sweet and red! I'm unable to draw my eyes away from them." These are not words spoken by the Gopis, but the words of the devotion and affection inherent within them.

To strengthen devotion and love for God, concentrate steadily on each organ and limb of God. Concentrate your eyes steadily on the eyes, lips or face of God. This is true devotion. Devotion will not be fruitful without devout worship of the image of God. The Gopis are absorbed mentally in the image of God whilst doing domestic chores. Even in their dream state, they do darshan of God.

(The Gopis remember Shree Krishna in their domestic duties. They are possessed by devotional love. They have lost the sense of discrimination between day and night. They have lost consciousness in the divine love of Lord Shree Krishna. Whether they eat, drink or walk, they act unconsciously. They wake up suddenly from deep sleep and chant loudly the names of Shree Krishna.)

The Gopis have merged their heart and soul in the blissful image of Shree Krishna. Wherever they look, they see there the blissful image of Shree Krishna. Do darshan of Lord Thakorji in all your acts, if desired such oneness with the supreme Lord. God should be visible in all your acts, if desired oneness with the supreme Lord. God is visible in all objects. Do darshan of God dwelling in those objects.

Shreeji Maharaj says in his Vachanamrits: It is great to have love for God. All their acts lead to devotional love for God.

(In every walk of life, their body and mind is attached to Lord Shree Krishna. They have put aside social decorum and Vedic rituals to be with Shree Krishna.)

The Gopis have lost physical consciousness by falling in love with God

One Gopi's father-in-law was having his meal. He asked "Daughter! Please give me some *Murabba* (jam)." She took the bottle from the hanger and served a spoonful of *Murabba* to her father-in-law. While serving it, she remembered Shree Krishna and his liking for jam. She desired earnestly to serve jam to Shree Krishna and how it would be if he came there to have a meal. She lost her mind in such reminiscence of Shree Krishna and instead of the bottle; she placed her child back in the hanger! The child cried loudly to get himself out.

The father-in-law witnessed the scene and said to her, "Dear daughter! Work consciously. Look where you have placed your son!" He stopped having the meals and brought the child down from the hanger. She returned to conscious state when she saw her father-in-law helping the young one down from the hanger. Thus the Gopis had lost their mental presence whilst carrying out household chores and had become lost mentally in the divine form of Shree Krishna.

(Imaginary echoes reflect in their ears and in front of their eyes, they envisage and see Lord Shree Krishna. They feel like having a face-to-face dialogue with Balkrishna.)

The Gopis' absorption and concentration are wonderful. They are so attached mentally to Shree Krishna that they find themselves absorbed eternally in the divine presence of Shree Krishna.

Though spoken by someone else, the words resemble the sweet dialogue of Balkrishna. This is similar to how we as householders would often mistake the words spoken by others for our own son's

words when we are waiting for him. When the Gopis talked to others they felt like they were talking to Shree Krishna.

Due to the oneness in Shree Krishna's image, the Gopis are not able to attend properly to their domestic chores. They have lost themselves in the love of Shree Krishna and therefore they act bizarrely and speak out of context. The true devotees of God should bear such love and oneness in Shree Krishna's image. That is the right kind of devotion.

To remember God is real greatness

Lord Shreeji Maharaj at Vadatal Dhaam graced a grand assembly of saints and senior devotees. Meanwhile, Gunatitanand Swami came there. Other saints at the *sabha* said "Please spread a carpet for Gunatitanand Swami." Shreeji Maharaj looked at them and said, "He is not great because of a carpet, but because of the divine abode of Akshardham. He dwells eternally in the divine memory of God."

Greatness received in a temple or in an association or received due to knowledge and other attributes is nothing but material – ephemeral. Real greatness – true greatness - rises through the unbroken memory of God.

I will not leave you unredeemed

An old lady happened to live in a small house at the back of the temple at Kariyani. She never came to the temple to do *darshan* of God and never attended any *aarti* or *pooja*. She never did *japa* of any kind or penance. She never tried to join in holy company or *Satsang* sessions. She never remembered God. She spent time gossiping about others instead.

Shreeji Maharaj knew about this and desired to get her to say "Swaminarayan" for her own salvation.

Next morning, Shreeji Maharaj asked Bhaguji to throw one rupee coins on the roof of her house. Bhaguji took a few coins and threw them on the roof. The rupees landed on the roof making stone-like noises.

The old lady shouted in anger, "These Swaminarayan followers have crossed all limits. They are throwing stones on my tiled roof." She rushed to the small courtyard of the house to check the stones thrown on the roof, but was taken aback when she found the one-rupee

coins rolling off from the roof. She picked up the coins from the ground and said, "Swaminarayan has given me money!"

Shreeji Maharaj found his resolute fulfilled when she admittedly spoke the name of Swaminarayan. Shreeji Maharaj said to Bhaguji, "I have accomplished my vow. I was expecting her to speak 'Shree Swaminarayan', now I will take her to my Akshardham."

Usually in our villages, people warn each other by saying "I will not spare you, if uttered my name." On the other side, Lord Shree Hari says, "I will not spare you (in terms of leaving you unemancipated), if spoken my name – Swaminarayan." This is the basic difference between God and human beings. The Swaminarayan *Mahamantra* is majestic and divine.

Kadavun – 4

A devotee attains eternal happiness by chanting the divine name of God with the knowledge of its majesty and divinity. He attains the divine abode of Akshardham. Shreeji Maharaj assures us about this. The image that is received from the Acharya should be worshipped with faith and trust like a faithful married woman worships her husband. We should concentrate and meditate upon the image of God. We should worship our personal God.

We should be firm in devotion like great Sati Parvatiji:

(I will do penance for one hundred years. Either I will marry Lord Shiva or will die unmarried.)

Just like the oath of Parvatiji, our faith in the image of God should be firm and matured.

There are four kinds of people on this earth; *Pamara* (insignificant), *Vishayi* (slaves of the sense objects), *Mumukshu* (aspirants) and *Mukta* (released souls.)

Who is insignificant? One, who earns through unethical means and spends it immorally is an insignificant soul. He never donates, never salutes God, and never attends any *pooja* sessions or religious lectures. He concentrates on money and money making. He dislikes saints and temples. Such souls are insignificant.

Who is a slave of the sense objects? He who earns through ethical means but spends it for personal pleasure. He is happy with his life, enjoying only the sense objects. He is not interested in donation, *punyas*, *pooja*, sacred-reading, saints or Brahmins. He himself consumes his wealth for his own personal pleasure. He never thinks beyond his physical being – his body. His spiritual domain is null and void. Such a soul is a slave of the sense objects.

Who is an aspirant? One who desires earnestly to relieve himself from the shackles of the world is a true aspirant.

Who is a released soul? He who is free from the ties of wealth and women. He has merged himself in the devotion of God and helps others to do devotion. He has renounced women and wealth. He is free from the ties of the world. Such is a released soul.

(They cannot live for a fraction of a second without *darshan* of Vrajraj – Balkrishna. They roam street-to-street and lane-to-lane without any shame in search of Balkrishna.)

It is very easy to forget the world. In the state of sound sleep, we forget the world, but the world surrounds us again, when we return to waking state. Our brain and mind flows with the thoughts related to the householder world.

The remembrance of Lord Purushottam Narayan should rise and the remembrance of the world should diminish. *Nirodh* (restraint) is a constant state, wherein one forgets the world and remembers God. The Gopis do not forget God for even a second. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami lived at such a spiritual plane. He lived happily, constantly engrossed in the divine image of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He cannot live without *darshan* of God. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami Sings:

(My heart and soul is at peace. My mind is attached to the flute of Lord Shree Krishna. I cannot detach from it for even a while.)

A true devotee cannot bear separation from God. The householder world permits us to chant the names of God but permits

not the entry of God in our heart. A hearty *japa* purifies our mind and soul.

Power of Constant Concentration in God

Shree Parvatbhai of Agatrai lived constantly concentrating in the blissful form of Shreeji Maharaj. His thoughts were immediately translated into action, as soon as he thought of anything. Once he thought about the incarnation of Nrisimha with curiosity about that incarnation. As he thought so, all twenty-four incarnations manifested in front of him and merged one after another into divine image of Lord Purushottam Narayan. God lives forever with the one who worships heartily the image of God.

Nath Bhagat of Vadodara was a true devotee of Shree Hari. When he performed his worship, God himself manifested before him to receive *pooja* from his favoured soul. Swami Vyapakanandji made a dead horse alive on strength and power of Shree Hari's name. Similarly, he awarded the lease of new life to the dead son of a Brahmin. These are the examples of divinity and majesty of Shree Hari's name.

(They cast their impatient eyes at the forest, houses, pathways and orchards and look impatiently at the water of Yamuna to do darshan of Shree Krishna. They are restless for darshan of Shree Krishna.)

Carrying earthen pots on their head, the Gopis remember Krishna when they fetched the water of Yamuna. They discuss amongst themselves the charms of Bal Krishna. They narrate amongst themselves the curly hairs, his colourful peacock feathers, his flute upon his lips, his earrings in the shape of a crocodile, his yellow *pitamber* and his tinkling anklets. They desire darshan of Balkrishna accompanying mother Yashoda.

As soon as they desired this, they found Bal Shree Krishna at the riverside. They ran to him and hugged him heartily. Their minds were attached to Shree Krishna. Balkrishna was actually present there long before to fulfil their wishes:

(Darling Balkrishna stands at the bank of Yamuna. His charming image sits in my heart. He has saffron paste upon his forehead. He has won my eyes and my sight is lost in his blissful image. I love his curved eyebrows. I will go to him even leaving my domestic chores.)

The Gopis weep and cry profusely when they don't see Shree Krishna. The Gopis are like Sanyasis of divine love. What did the Gopis have? They had love - selfless love. One, who lives within God's love, is a Sanyasi. The Gopis are happy in love with Balkrishna.

Pada - 1

The ways of love are unique. Only a lover, bound by such love, knows much about it. Others have no idea about it. A *Chakor* (a bird by that name) loves the moon. There is no end to the pains of a Chakor, if the moon has not appeared. A fish loves water. Fishes convulse in pain and die instantly if they are deprived of water. Butterflies love fire. They jump into the flames and sacrifice their own life for their loved one. A *Chataka* (a bird by that name) loves rainwater. He drinks the water droplets from a raining cloud. The Chatak prefers death through thirst in the absence of rain. The Gopis are like those lovers. They cannot live without their God - Shree Krishna. Their attachment is firm.

Kadavun - 5

(God is bound to love. God incarnates himself upon the earth to give devotional pleasure to his devotees. The Gopis of Vraj have love for Shree Krishna.)

It is really great to love God. Why does God incarnate himself upon the earth? What is aim of his incarnation? God incarnates himself to free his devotees from the torments of the world. God fulfills the wishes of his devotees.

(God incarnates himself age after age, on the earth, to relieve his saintly souls and to destroy demons. He installs ethical duties through his manifestation.)

God manifests himself on the earth to exchange love with his saints and devotees. God incarnates himself to give devotional pleasure to his devotees.

Shreeji Maharaj says: 'God incarnates himself upon the earth to enforce the ethical duties of single-minded devotees.'

Manki (the mare) Loves Shree Hari

Shreeji Maharaj and *Kathi* horse riders were on a religious tour of the region. Shreeji Maharaj was riding his Manki. Manki's young was also following her mother. Shreeji Maharaj said, "Sura Khachar! Manki loves me more, than her young."

Sura Khachar said, "Maharaj! That is impossible. Animals love their young more than anything else. A mother's love for her child is greater than her love for others. Though engaged physically in domestic chores, her mind dwells constantly in her child. A mother's heart is full of love for his child. It is a wonderful creation of God. Motherly love for a child is a natural phenomenon."

Shreeji Maharaj said, "Sura Khachar! Do you want to test this?"

Sura Khachar said, "Maharaj! If you wish."

Shreeji Maharaj said, "Sura Khachar! Hold the rein of Manki and do not leave it until I instruct you to do so." Shreeji Maharaj alighted from the back of the mare and left Manki's young at a distance of one step from the mother. He himself stood at a distance of four steps from the mare. Manki's young began to call for her mother and right at that moment, they released Manki to go to either of the two - her young or Shreeji Maharaj. Manki ignored the screams of her young and ran swiftly to Shree Hari. The mare came to Shreeji Maharaj and licked the sacred feet of Shree Hari. Shreeji Maharaj said, "Look at her love for me. She loves me even more than her young!"

Manki had selfless love for Shree Hari. The mare stopped having grass and water when she learned of Shree Hari's departure from this earth. She fought hunger for eleven days without anything in her stomach and finally ascended to Akshardham to meet and serve

Shree Hari. Manki is believed to be the incarnation of deity Garuda – the heavenly eagle.

Manki's memorial at Lakshmiwadi in Vadtal, is a source of devotional inspiration for all devotees.

The Gopis forget their domestic chores in their love for God. Lord Balkrishna's love was not limited to the Gopis. Bal Krishna loved his mother Yashoda and conveyed his tender feelings in his child-like ways. Mother Yashoda kept Balkrishna busy in playful ways by giving him toys and other games to keep him indoors during her domestic engagements. But Bal Krishna was an active child. He liked change. Balkrishna left the corridor of the house and walks away to enjoy the shade of a cow. Mother Yashoda, though busy in her domestic works, had her eyes constantly on Shree Krishna. She ran in fear when she realised Balkrishna was missing from his place. She searched here and there for him but found him nowhere.

When she peeped into the *Gaushala*, she found Shree Krishna holding with both his hands the horns of a grazing cow. She took him away and hugged him impatiently fearing the cow had hurt him. But the cow lamented painfully on separation of Shree Krishna from her. Mother Yashoda ran impatiently, hugging her darling and came happily to the house, seeing him safe and uninjured. Mother Yashoda had also merged herself in the divine love of Bal Krishna.

The Gopis thought constantly about Balkrishna. Their world ended in the divine ways of Balkrishna. They used excuses to visit the house of Yashodaji. They would say such things as, "He is a thief." But to steal was in his nature. The Sanskrit word "Hari" literally means stealing or taking away. One who steals is Hari. But what does he steal?

(The name Narayan is famed or synonymous with a thief. He steals the accumulated sins of a person when he pronounces the name Narayana.)

Lord Shree Hari steals the sins of man if he remembers the name of Shree Hari. He attracts the mind of the Gopis to absorb them in his divine form. *Japa* of "Hari, Hari" purifies our mind and soul. Shreeji Maharaj says, "one consigns himself to the eternal *brahmic* state by his

guna-free devotion and love for Shree Hari. (Gadhada Vachanamrit M-43)

(The Gopis lost their sense of eating and attires. They wore ornaments clumsily and lost consciousness whilst in love with Balkrishna.)

What kind of oneness did the Gopis have with Shree Balkrishna? They forgot to have meals and water. They had lost all knowledge of wearing ornaments properly and wore anklets on arms and armllets on their feet. They had lost normal state of sensible mind. They were merged in the blissful memories of Shree Krishna.

The Gopis were not able to tend to domestic duties properly. A Gopi cooked sweet dishes while singing Kirtans of Balkrishna. She thought of Balkrishna and how blessed a visit of his to her house would be. She thought to offer him butter and sugar whilst having a pleasant dialogue with him. Her mind dwelled in Shree Krishna whilst her body remained in the kitchen, to cook the sweet dishes.

In the spur of devotional emotion whilst cooking, she forgot to put sugar and put instead salt into the sweet dish of *shira*. But her father and mother-in-law found the dish most tasty when they came to have their meals. Her father-in-law admired her culinary skills and said, "Dear daughter! Your meals taste like nectar, therefore, we could not resist and ate more than the required quantity. I pray to God to give my sons a wife like you in all his future births."

The Gopi was very happy to receive such admiration. She served the dish to herself when all had had their meals. As she took the first morsel of the sweet, she found it extremely salty. She realised that there was salt in place of sugar and felt very sorry for her mistake. But God had saved her by instilling a relishing sweet taste in the meal. This showed the love that Krishna had for her faithful Gopis.

God dwells in every molecule of the Gopis. It was actually God himself who cooked the meals, through the Gopi. Poison becomes nectar in the presence of God. Nothing is impossible with the grace of God.

Japa is majestic

Rana gave poison to Mirabai. Mirabai took it whilst chanting the names of God. God transformed the poison into nectar and saved the life of Mirabai!

Deadly poison surfaced on the sea when gods and demons churned the sea. Lord Shiva drank it while chanting the names of God. Deadly poison became nectar through the chants of God's name!

Some jealous souls added deadly poison into the meals of Muktanand Swami. Shreeji Maharaj transformed it into nectar, when Swami began his lunch with the name of Shreeji Maharaj! God's name wields divine power.

God acts with love at the will of his faithful devotees. God removes the pains, worries and torments of every kind and extends eternal bliss to his devotees. The name of Shree Hari holds majesty and divinity and blesses mankind if they chant the names with or even without knowledge.

Sneh Geeta helps the aspirants to attach himself to the divine image of God. Lord Shree Hari is the eternal seat of supreme pleasure - divine pleasure. Those who have received Shree Hari in their heart are most fortunate and the happiest. Our heart soaks in the colour of affection when we remember the blissful name of Shree Hari.

Shreeji Maharaj says, "One who is detached from others, cultivates within himself attachment for God. Such attachment and love for God helps one's mind to repose in God without interruption. Such state is a state of great spiritual enlightenment." (Gadhada Vachanamrit M-36) The Gopis' repose in God was like this, without any interruption. Their mind and thoughts are merged in the thoughts of God:

(While churning curd, they await
impatiently for Shree Balkrishna. The
Gopis are expecting a call from Balkrishna.)

A Gopi carried a pot of butter to sell it to villagers. Instead of "Makkhan" (butter) she was selling it as "Madhava", and announced sweetly "please buy sweet Madhava...please hurry and buy it." Bhagwan Balkrishna came to her and asked, "O Gopi! What are you doing? Why are you selling me (Madhava), instead of butter? What are you saying? Please check your pot." The Gopi brought down her

pot to inspect the Makkhan contained in the pot. She found there Madhava in place of Makkhan!

God said, "I am Madhava. Give me Makkhan to eat."

She said to tease him, "Go away from here. I am not giving it to you. It is to be sold at Mathura."

Saying this she walked ahead abruptly to leave Kanaiya puzzled. As she turned her side from him, Balkrishna grabbed the end of her *chunari* to stop her. The Gopi turned at him and said, "Krishna! Don't be mischievous. My mother-in-law will scold me if she learns about this."

She pushed him away by freeing her *chunari* and walks ahead. But in her mind she thought about Balkrishna and looked back to have sight of him. She found him stood sulking there. She went back to him and said, "Kanaiya! Have this butter. This is for you!" Balkrishna refused to have it. The Gopi carried back her butter container and walked away from him. Balkrishna took a small pebble and broke the earthen pot of butter and forced her to bathe in the butter which was pouring on her body:

She ran to Yashoda Maiya to lodge a complaint:

(He broke our earthen pot and spilled the milk products. He hid himself in the shade of a cow and freed the calves from their pegs.)

Kadavun - 6

An increase in the love for God causes subtle feelings in the core of one's heart. It is a thrilling experience of divine bliss. The heart and soul are lost in the divine image of God. The Gopis are mad in love for Balkrishna. Instead of cooking meals they tend to the calves and the milking of the cows. The boiling milk spills on the flaming stove. They have lost their mind and senses in the blissful thoughts of Balkrishna. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami says that Lord Shree Hari has stolen his wit and wisdom:

(O God! I have lost my wit and wisdom in your divine ways. I have renounced everything for your divine charms. I love your beautiful peacock feather. It works magic on me.)

Shree Hari steals the heart and mind of Sadguru Brahmanand Swami. Like the Gopis, he also has devotional love for Shree Hari. Love is a two-way street between God and his devotee; they love each other.

Prayer and meditation are the roots of eternal pleasure

Shreeji Maharaj admires in his discourses of Vachanamrit (Gadhada F-56) the devotional love of the Gopis. Those who have accomplished their meditational means, who have developed in them the devotional love befitting that of a Gopi, such a devotee who has unbroken faith and devotional love for God pleases Shree Hari. God is never pleased by dry devotion.

Nandrai and the Gopas had shifted to Vraj due to violent disturbances at Gokul. Child Balkrishna was the tender age of six years at the time. Balkrishna prayed to Mother Yashoda, "Maa! I wish to serve the cows grazing the hills of the countryside. I will go with my group of *Gopa* friends to tend to the herds."

Mother Yashoda spoke to Nandrai about Balkrishna's plans to serve the cows. Nandrai consulted with Rishi Shandilya and prayed to him, "O Great Rishi! Please fix a *Muhurta* (auspicious time) to send Balkrishna to tend to the herds."

Rishi Shandilya referred to his horoscopes and fixed the auspicious eighth day of the bright half of the month of Kartika. The Gopa boys readied themselves for this grand event. Balkrishna got up early in the morning, concluded morning rituals, readied himself and did *poojan* of the cow. He then came to his mother and found her weeping.

"Mother! Why are you crying?" said Shree Krishna to her.

"My child! What else can I do? I am not at peace if I don't see you for a while. Now you will go with the cows for the whole of the day, only to return in the evening. How will I pass the day without seeing you? The whole day will be a painful time for me. You are my life and soul. A day is like an age to me in your absence."

Balkrishna hid himself in the *saree* of his mother, and said, "Mother! I don't like it when you cry. I will not go with the cows."

Nandrai said, "Devi! Allow Shree Krishna to go happily. Let him go to tend to the herds." Mother reluctantly gave her permission

and Balkrishna saluted his mother and went to the hills with his Gopa friends and cows.

The Gopis came to the house of Nandrai to meet Balkrishna. But Balkrishna was nowhere to be seen. They lamented in their separation from Shree Krishna. They desired to visit the hills as a pretext to do *darshan* of Balkrishna.

(They carried on their head the pot of buttermilk and walked to trace them on their way to Mathura. They were anxious to do *darshan* of Balkrishna.)

The Gopis were anxious to see Shree Balkrishna. Mathura and the buttermilk were mere excuses to see Lord Balkrishna. Their life was miserable without *darshan* of Balkrishna. They are not able to think of anything except Shree Krishna.

Kadavun - 7

The Rishis have come on the earth in the guise of Gopis. The Gopis are actually great Rishis. The *Shrutis* have been unable to play with Shree Krishna despite singing for centuries the praises of God. Those sixteen thousand shrutis have descended to the earth in the form of the Gopis to have such pleasure with Balkrishna. The released soul Shukdevji has often admired the selfless love of the Gopis.

(Balkrishna plays his flute in the forest to test the love of the Gopis.)

Once, Balkrishna came to Vrindavan. The full moon had risen in the sky. Lord Balkrishna played sweet tunes upon his flute to attract the Gopis at the banks of the river Yamuna. His soulful music disturbs even the Rishis from their meditational concentration.

The Gopis rushed out from their homes and left their work unattended. The entire cosmos merged itself in the celestial tunes of the divine music. Lord Sheshnaag swayed his majestic hood on tune to Balkrishna. Animals, birds and other living beings were drawn to the divine melody of Shree Krishna. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami sings:

(Lord Balkrishna played melodious tunes on his flute. His tunes have penetrated my body and soul. I am eager to meet my Lord. Lord Shree Krishna has tempted us with his sweet songs. I am drawn to him. I will not leave him. The Lord of Brahmanand has favoured me by holding my hand in assuring support.)

The Gopis ran to the hillside to do darshan of Shree Krishna. Their relatives and welwishers tried to stop them, but the Gopis did not stop even for a moment. One such Gopi's husband tried to stop his wife and locked her in a room, but her lamentation and commotion forced her husband to unlock her. They ran swiftly panting, dashing and falling on the ground. They finally reached Shree Krishna to have soulful darshan. One from them was trailing behind in exhaustion and the frustration of not being able to run faster. Depressed extremely, she left her elemental body with chants of "O Krishna! O Krishna!" and her devout soul fled away swiftly to do darshan of Shree Krishna.

Devout soul Navalbai was also obstructed by her husband from her devotional ways. Navalbai was a virtuous lady and true Satsangi of Lord Swaminarayan. She was a resident of Prantij - Sabarkantha. She did devotion like a Gopi and lived a virtuous life. Navalbai was a true Satsangi but her husband was not like her. He always opposed Satsang. Though living at a different wavelength, Navalbai did her best to have a peaceful householder life - a vehicle cannot move smoothly if both wheels are not equal in their shape and size!

Prantij is a *prasadi* town of Lord Shree Hari and in those days, Lord Shree Hari was gracing Prantij. Navalbai wished to do darshan of Shreeji Maharaj, but her husband was not ready to permit her. What should she do? She requested him repeatedly, but he refused to permit her darshan of Shreeji Maharaj.

He locked his wife in a room, stopped supply of meals and water and compelled her to stay indoors. But God-fearing Navalbai merged herself in *Dhoon* and devotion of Lord Shree Hari. She withdrew from concentration, wept profusely for her helplessness and spent fifteen days without food and water.

Once she peeped through a small window and found a lady on the street corner. Navalbai asked her softly, "Sister! Where is

Swaminarayan Bhagwan? Is he here these days at Prantij or has he left for the elsewhere?"

The lady said, "Maharaj is here at Prantij. He dwells these days at the house of Kashibhai. He will leave tomorrow in the early morning."

Navalbai was very sad because of her helplessness. Lord Swaminarayan has been in her town for the last fifteen days and he is still here at the house of Kashibhai to favour devotees with his darshan. But unfortunate as she was, she was deprived of his darshan. He was to leave the next morning. If she didn't put in any effort to do darshan of Maharaj, she may not be able to have darshan. She lamented on her misfortune and banged on the window to appease her inner pain. It was midnight. The town was covered under a blanket of deep sleep. As she hit at the window, the shutters and the frame came off from the wall! She jumped from the gap of the window and ran to the house of Kashibhai.

The Parshads were guarding the chamber of Shreeji Maharaj. They refused her entry, as Maharaj was in deep sleep. She requested, "Brothers! I am longing for darshan. Since the last fifteen days and after a fortnight of such anxiety and continuous effort, I have finally got a chance today at such odd hours to escape imprisonment. I would be obliged, if I were given the chance to do darshan of Shree Hari. Please permit me." As soon as she concluded the request, she cried and lamented profusely to give way to her pains of separation – her ardent longing for darshan.

Lord Shreeji Maharaj woke up suddenly because of her lamentation and came out from his chamber to inquire about the commotion.

Navalbai ran to Maharaj when she saw Shreeji Maharaj standing before them. She paid a humble salute. Her heart and soul were at peace through darshan of Shree Hari. Shreeji Maharaj blessed her by placing his hand on her head. Shreeji Maharaj said, "Navalbai! How are you?"

Navalbai said, "Maharaj! You are the all knower and omnipresent God. The soul in separation has come to you after such a long time. I surrender in your benign refuge. My husband does not allow me to practice Satsang and devotion - please guide me. Please

help me to do devotion and Satsang.” She cried profusely at the end of her prayer.

Shreeji Maharaj said, “Navalbai! Don’t worry. Go back to your home. All will be fine in days to come. Do devotion and meditate upon my image. Sing devotional songs when you cook meals for your family. The family members will become virtuous by having such holy meals. There will be nothing to worry about.” Navalbai saluted the lotus-like feet of Shree Hari and went back to her house.

She followed the orders of Shree Hari and cooked the meals with devotion. Her husband and other family members had sacred meals. Demonic thoughts vanished with such sacred morsels of food. Once, enlightened husband desired to his wife, “Swaminarayan Bhagwan has organised a samaiya at Karjisan. We should all go for darshan of Bhagwan.” Navalbai was very happy with such positive change in attitude of her husband.

She looked inwardly at the image of Shree Hari dwelling in her heart and said, “O God! Please favour my husband and bless him with virtuous wisdom so that he engages himself in devotion along with me and my family.” In this way, a virtuous daughter from a satsangi family helps her in-laws on the path of devotion and satsang. She helps them to live a wholesome and virtuous life.

Both came to Karjisan to participate in Samaiyas. They did darshan of Shreeji Maharaj. Shreeji Maharaj initiated *mantra deeksha* with *Vartaman Niyam* and tied *Kanthi* to the husband of Navalbai. The family of Navalbai lived a wholesome life as faithful satsangis.

It is easy to bring change in attires and external appearance, but it is most difficult to bring changes in thinking. Spiritual wisdom is a precondition to grasp the teachings of Sneh Geeta. We like love. We like delightful conversation. We like people smiling at us. We like people when they respect us. If you like such things, it is better to repay such tendency back in a similar manner. Be kind to them and be friendly in all your dealings.

Kadavun - 8

We like people to respect us with love. We too should respect and love them. There should be tenderness and warmth in your conversation.

Animals are tied with a rope.
Birds are tied with a cage.
Souls are tied with desires.
God is tied with love.

The anxious and impatient Gopis ran swiftly to meet Lord Shree Krishna. Nothing could stop them. The attractions of family, children, husband, parents and in-laws were unable to stop them.

God welcomed them happily: $S_{\pm\alpha x\alpha}, \phi_{\pm\alpha i}$ } $\alpha\tilde{\alpha}\alpha|\alpha\alpha x\alpha\alpha$:
"O most fortunate Gopis! I welcome you." Thus, those who are mad after God will be received and welcomed happily by God.

Those who possess cars, a garden, estates, wealth or powers are not fortunate or lucky. Such wealth is mortal and not everlasting. Only those who are in love with God are most fortunate.

Lord Shree Krishna asked them, "Why have you come here late at night? Is Vraj in trouble? Is there any problem? It is dark and there is a dense forest between here and Vraj. You should not come all alone like this by leaving your husband and children at home. It is better if you to go back."

(He played his divine flute and invoked the pains of separation. The majestic music drew the depressed ladies to the dense forest. There he criticised them, but the ladies had no complaint for him.)

God said, "O Gopis! It is not good for you to roam all alone at night in the dark forest. You should not leave your family and house at such late hour of the night. You should go back to your house and do my devotion there. The Gopis were shocked with such advice of Shree Krishna. They cried and said, "You called us to come here. Now, you are sending us back! O Krishna! Please don't leave us. The soul that is tormented by the cycle of birth and death has come here for benign refuge. Please don't push us away. O God! Who else would support us if rejected by you? We cannot go back. You have stolen our heart and soul. Give it back to us, if you want us to go back!"

God said, "Your soul and heart are merged in me. It cannot be given back now. Just as sugar that has dissolved in the milk cannot be separated from the milk."

The Gopis prayed, "O Shree Krishna! Our feet are not ready to take a backward step from the refuge of your lotus-like feet. How can we go back?"

God said, "O Gopis! I know about your love, but leave at once for your home, at least for this moment."

The Gopis said, "Why are you asking us repeatedly to leave for our homes? We will not to go back at any cost. We will leave our life, but not you!"

God realised the love and devotional affection of the Gopis. It was pure and unpolluted. They desired nothing else from God.

God then submitted, "O Gopis! Let us play *Raas* – this is what you want isn't it?" *Raas leela* then began. In the first round of raas leela there was one Krishna for every Gopi and they formed pairs so that all the Gopis in such pairs could play raas with Krishna. It was divine and majestic. In the second round of raas leela, Lord Shree Krishna with Radhikaji stood in centre of the circle and the Gopis played raasa about them in a circle. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami captures this event beautifully:

(Lord Shree Krishna played group raas with the Gopis in the charming moonlight of *Poonam*. The atmosphere was charged with tender feelings of devotional love. The musical tunes of the jingling anklets were the added attractions of the dance. Lord Shree Krishna played tricks to attract the hearts of the Gopis. The night of the full moon of *Sharad* is great and great are the Gopis who play there the *Raas-Leela*. Lord Girdhar loves them heartily. Gopis are swinging to the devotional music by holding the arm of Shree Krishna. Lord Shree Krishna of Brahmanand Swami is pleased by the Gopis of Vraj.)

But the Gopis lost Shree Krishna all of sudden, when they were proud of their loving exchanges with God. Lord Shree Krishna knew about their vanity and disappeared from there to remove their ego. The raas halted all of a sudden.

(They played raas with Shree Krishna, but he disappeared all of sudden. The Gopis were separated from Shree Krishna in the forest. They spent the whole night lamenting for Shree Krishna. But they were not perturbed by it.)

Shree Krishna had disappeared. They searched for him. The stream of love breaks through false ego or pride. The Gopis enquired to the trees, creepers, plants and rocks of the whereabouts of Shree Krishna, but Krishna was nowhere to be found. Meanwhile said a Gopi, "God cannot be attained through such search. We should do hearty prayer to gain him back. Come, let us pray together."

This tender song narrates the pains of their separation from Shree Krishna and is known as '*Gopi Geet*'.

O Shree Krishna! We are tormented by your separation. Nothing can cheer us, except darshan of thee. Please be kind to us and gift us your blissful darshan. Mere darshan will be enough to remove our grief. They prayed amidst lamentation. The tears from their eyes washed off the ego and pride from their heart.

(Lord of Vrindavan and the Raas-leela, Lord Shree Krishna manifested himself amidst the group of the Gopis.)

The Gopis got a new lease of life through darshan of Shree Krishna. They rose from their place and ran hurriedly to Shree Krishna. They held his hands and asked, "O Krishna! O my life and soul! Where did you go? We searched for you for so long. Where were you?"

Shree Krishna said, "I was here. I was behind that tree."

"Why were we not able to see you?" They asked him anxiously.

Shree Krishna said, "Your eyes were covered with the curtain of ego. That curtain did not allow you to see me. Now it is molten in the tears shed by thee." In this way the Gopis had submitted their ultimate happiness to Lord Shree Krishna.

Pada - 2

Sneh Geeta is a story of the sacred union of the individual consciousness with the supreme consciousness.

(Love is incomparable.
Householders, recluses and ascetics do
penance in the seclusion of the forest to
develop divine love for God.)

God has said that he believes only in selfless love. He believes in devotional love and not in caste, lineage, strength or power. He measures a man by the measurement of love. God is interested only in a man's love for Him.

It is the nature of water that it flows towards the lower levels. In our life too there will be no need to search vehemently for God - we just need to live the polite life of a disciple – of a devotee. God will come to us automatically, seeing our devotion.

Some do *yoga*, some do pilgrimage, some wear sets of rosaries and decorate their forehead with various symbols, some sustain life by drinking the water of Ganga and some do non-stop *japa* by counting the beads of the rosary, but their lifetime of efforts will be of no use if they did so without love for God. It will turn futile. God acts always with the love of his devotees at heart.

The Gopis sustain their *brahmic* relation by remembering the *leelas* of Shree Krishna. This is the best way to sustain a relationship. Remember God constantly during all your actions. God lives forever in the heart of the devotee who remembers him constantly. God's presence in one's heart helps the soul to rationalise worldly relations.

Shreeji Maharaj says (Vachanamrit G.M.55) "An *Ekantika Bhakta* should always engage his mind in meditation of God. He should sing the glory and majesty of God; he should serve God with his own hands. His ears should hear nothing but the stories of God."

There is very little time and yet we are supposed to accomplish all these auspicious acts of devotion. God has given us this garden-like human body to do devotion. This body is absolutely suitable for devotion. The saints have said repeatedly that the delusive souls forget frequently the most attainable assignment - the assignment of ultimate benediction.

Contemporary man has forgotten about the ultimate aim of life, *Moksha*. Pollution has rotted his mind. The soul in his journey through the innumerable births has forgotten the supreme aim of life. He roams here and there without any aim. He doesn't do what he is supposed to do. Sadguru Devanand Swami explains this in poetry:

(You did nothing of what you were supposed to do. You never gave an ear to listen to the name of God. You have attained nothing from your worldly life. You have not known Lord Jagdish. Your tasks are unfinished.)

God's episodes make us forget the world. We are supposed to live in this world and yet supposed to forget the world. How can we do this? Where can we go in an attempt to leave this world? Wherever we go, the world will always be there with us! Therefore, we are not required to leave the world, but we are supposed to renounce the world in our mind. We have to free ourselves from the bonds of the world. God's episodes (divine leelas) help us to forget the world.

Kadavun - 9

Emancipation means to forget the world with constant memory of God.

We have not come here to stretch and spread ourselves beyond our capacity in the worldly ways. We are here to shrink ourselves to attach to God and devotion. Extroverts like to associate themselves with the worldly ways. Introverts like to live in the company of God. Don't put such speed and force into your worldly life such that it wipes all memory of God from your mind. Devotees should decorate their houses with the photo images of God and not with cheap and distasteful photos. We are in this holy fellowship of Shree Hari and therefore we should act wisely.

We listen to *katha* and discourses and most of us listen to it everyday. But how much do we imbibe from them? To what extent have we come closer to God? It is most important to evaluate each such sitting.

(His days and nights are most pleasant. He lives happily. Hunger for worldly pleasures ran away after *darshan* of God.)

Those who are tempted by worldly pleasures will not be able to recognise the divine pleasures of God. Surrender to Lord Shree Hari. Even though you may not chant the names of God or visit places of worship, your sins will still be destroyed if you salute in the direction where a *katha* is being conducted even at a distance of some miles. This shows the majesty of holy company – Satsang.

Daily we pray, 'Let there be rise in devotional love. Let it be the name of God that we speak rather than the names of others.' Our life will be fulfilled if such prayer is granted.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami preaches firmly. It is okay if we know nothing; just sing the names of God and remember God always chanting "Swaminarayan" "Swaminarayan". Do *Japa* of his name. The time is not always favourable for doing difficult worship. Go for simple and easy ways to please God.

(Lord Shree Hari desired to test devotional love. He made up his mind to visit Mathura. He lived for a long time with the Gopis in Gokul to give them blissful pleasure but desired thereafter to live away from them.)

Kadavun - 10

Once Shree Hari thought that the Gopis loved him because of his presence there with them. They remembered him because he was with them. Shree Hari then thought to test them to see whether they would remember him even when separated. He then made up his mind to leave for Mathura.

The pot of Kansa's sins was almost full. Kansa desired to organise 'Dhanuryagna' as a conspiracy to kill Shree Krishna. He said, "O Akrura! You go and invite Shree Krishna and Balram from Gokul to participate in the holy fire ceremony." Akrura rode a golden chariot and came to Gokul to invite Lord Krishna and Balram. He recalled the

divine *leelas* of Shree Krishna during the journey and forgot to drive his chariot. His mind and soul were merged in devotion to Shree Krishna.

Remember God while you walk

People are in habit of looking at the outfits of others whilst walking. They look here and there unsteadily like a stranger. Such look or gaze yields nothing. The scenes fixed in the mind may harm or pollute the mind. A polluted mind cannot be cured easily. It would therefore be better to remember God during walk or travel. Each of our steps in such memory will yield virtuous rewards of *Pradakshina*. Akruraji teaches us the right way of travelling.

A sinner commits a sin, when he walks. He looks here and there with dirt in his mind. A virtuous soul engages himself in virtuous acts while he walks or travels. He looks at others with kindness and selfless love. Remember God in each step taken. It is a form of devotion. It is not important how much and how long we have lived but what matters is the quality of life that we have lived.

Life improves for the better, if we think good thoughts and act virtuously whilst walking. Such thoughts and acts purify our mind and soul. It encourages the soul to act virtuously. Akrura thought himself to be a humble servant of Lord Shree Krishna. In terms of family relations, he was a friend of Vasudeva's and also his cousin. Therefore, as per householder relationships, he was the uncle of Shree Krishna. He thought Shree Krishna would not address him by his first name, as he was senior in age and relationship. He would therefore say, "O uncle! Please come and sit beside me." He thought to himself that this would fulfil his life. Akrura desired earnestly to establish warm relations with Shree Krishna. He thought further and constantly about the various aspects of his meeting with Shree Krishna. The horses and chariot halted midway due to the mental concentration of Akrura. Akrura had travelled from Mathura early in the morning, but not reached Gokul till late in the evening, despite a short distance between the two places.

Akrura saw on his way the signs of Shree Krishna. He saw the sacred footprints of Shree Krishna. He came down from his chariot and did darshan of the sacred footprints. He saw the auspicious marks of divine lotus, flag, goad and others, adorning the footprints. He paid obeisance by placing the dust of Vraj upon his head. He saluted the

sacred footprints and the land of Vraj. At late evening, he finally arrived at the house of Nandrai:

(He stopped the chariot at the courtyard of Nand Bhavan. The Gopis rushed to the house of Nandrai and thought amongst themselves about the newcomer and his chariot)

Lord Shree Krishna was serving the cows in the *goshala*. Akrura ran to him and saluted him by spreading his body on the earth. He soaked the lotus feet of Shree Krishna with the tears flowing from his eyes. Lord Shree Krishna conveyed his blessings by placing his palm on the head of Akrura.

Akrura wished in his heart that Krishna would address him as uncle; he would place, in amnesty, his palm upon his head and would embrace him with love and affection. All knower Shree Krishna looked affectionately at his uncle and said, "O Uncle! You are most welcome. Please hug me with your loving embrace." Shree Krishna hugged happily his uncle.

There was no limit to the devotional pleasure of Akrurji. Tears of blissful pleasure rolled from the eyes of Akrura. Lord Shree Krishna had granted his wishes and prayers. Akrura received love and respect from Lord Shree Krishna. Worldly respect holds no value against the love and respect granted by God.

Nandrai offered a grand feast to his cousin brother – Akrura. Akrura said, "O Nandrai! Kamsa has organised a magnificent Dhanuryagya in the capital city of Mathura. He has sent me here to invite Krishna and Balram and escort them to the festivities. Kamsa has sent with me a golden chariot for Shree Krishna and Balram.

The Gopis saw the majestic chariot of Gold and they rushed to the palace of Nandrai to inquire about the royal vehicle and royal visitor. When they saw the chariot, they thought, "Who could he be? Why has that old man come here?" They consulted among themselves and desired to know from him the aim of his visit. They thought to take him to some lonely corner to probe his intentions. Akrura was like an enemy to them. Was he here to take Shree Krishna away with him?

(The Gopis thought amongst themselves to hide Shree Krishna somewhere so that the visitor could not find him)

The Gopis desired to hide Shree Krishna in the same way as we hide things of our precious liking to protect and save it from the eyes of others. Those that are dear should be protected well with good care. Lord Shree Krishna was very dear to the Gopis.

Another Gopi said, "Our life would be like hell, if we lost him." A third Gopi said, "The old man has come with a chariot. We should ask him what his name is and what he has come here for?"

Kadavun - 11

The Gopis smelt a conspiracy when they saw Akrura having an intimate dialogue with Shree Krishna. There were now positive that Akrura was to take Shree Krishna to Mathura with him.

The Gopis asked Akrura directly, "Why have you come here with a chariot?"

Akrura said, "I have come here to take Shree Krishna and Balram with me to Mathura." The Gopis were most upset on hearing such merciless answer. They accused him angrily and said that though he was named Akrura (which literally means not-cruel), there was no sign of mercy in him. He was like the material form of violence – *Krura*. They thought, "Why had he come here to snatch away Shree Krishna from us? He should go back in the first instance. We will not give up our Krishna." That was the unanimous reaction from the Gopis. The Gopis further said that he had come to them to make them cry, and Vraj would be made a burial place in the absence of Shree Krishna. If he desired to take someone from Vraj, he should take Balram with him instead of Shree Krishna. The Gopis conveyed firmly that they would not part with Shree Krishna at any cost as they cannot live without Shree Krishna.

Kadavun - 12

Akrura finds it very difficult to persuade the Gopis to release Shree Krishna from them. Akrura himself cried after reflecting over the pains endured by the Gopis. The Gopis scold the God of Creation:

(The God of Creation had lost all his wisdom when he wrote the future. He created a pair and then broke it unwittingly. What kind of mind set has he?)

“O God of creation! You are merciless. You have made us love Shree Krishna and now you are compelling us to live separated.” Mother Yashoda knew about the intentions of Akrura and Kansa. Her motherly heart feared the unforeseen future. She said to Nandrai, “O worthy husband! If you desire to honour the invitation, you should go happily but go alone, without Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna should not go with you and Akrura. I will not allow it.”

Nandrai said, “O virtuous lady! I shall be with them. Don’t worry for Shree Krishna. We shall be there for two or three days and shall be back home without any problem.”

All are in deep sleep at night, but sleepless mother Yashodaji turns on her bed in unforeseen worry. Krishna is to leave for Mathura the next morning. What would be her condition in the absence of her darling son? Krishna is shy in nature. Who will help him there to have meals properly and on time? Confronted by worries and gripped in unbearable tension, she leaves her bed to enjoy the free open air of the courtyard. She cries silently sitting there in the courtyard.

Krishna was beside her, sleeping with his mother. He woke up at midnight and walked to the courtyard in search of his mother. He found her there sitting in deep grief. Krishna came to her and wiped her eyes with his *pitamber*. He inquired politely, “O Mother! Why are you crying?”

Mother said, “My Son! What else should I do? I cannot live without you. How will I pass the time without seeing your moon like face? I lived my life by looking at you everyday. Now my life will be a punishment for me. My son! Please don’t go to Mathura.”

Lord Shree Krishna cried in love for his mother. He comforted her and assured her that he would return as soon as he could to be with her. Mother Yashoda held Shree Krishna and had auspicious morning bath. She dressed him with love and affection. She said in melancholy, “O Dear Son! O My Krishna. This appears to be the last time I will dress you with my own hands. When will I see again your lovely face?” Her heart and soul are not within her control. She feeds

him with her own hand, morsel after morsel. She cries and weeps while helping him take the meal. Helpless Yashodaji laments loudly, "O Krishna! Who will help you there to have meals?" The Gopis too cried in the pains of separation, "O Krishna! O Krishna!"

Pada - 3

(O Krishna! O Lord! Don't go to Mathura. Don't leave us without any support. If it a must to visit Mathura, please take us with you.)

(You have loved us. Now don't leave us in separation. Please be kind to us and allow us to live with you. We have lost our patience in fear of separation. Be kind to our sorrowful state.)

The Gopis pray in lamentation, "O Krishna! Take us along with you if you are going to Mathura. O Krishna! You are our precious wealth. The great hooded serpent would become blind if he lost his unearthly jewel. A businessman would be sad and poor if he lost his wealth or business. O Krishna! Likewise, you are our most precious wealth. You are everything to us. Therefore, don't leave us without any support, by leaving for Mathura."

Kadavun - 13

The Gopis lament further, "O Akrura! You have come here to draw away our life and soul. Don't you realise this? How can we survive without vital breath?"

(Many aged seniors of the Yadava lineage have expired long before. Then why have enemies like Akrura, been left to harass us ladies! Those who are very old in their age, have no mercy in their heart. They are cruel and heartless. They never feel pain in their heart.)

Akrura finds it very difficult to have an amicable dialogue with the Gopis.

Lord Shree Krishna initiates a dialogue with them. Shree Krishna says, "O Gopis! I am heading for Mathura to reduce the burden upon the earth. Many devotees are waiting there for my darshan. I am going there to favour them with my darshan. Please don't cry. Don't worry about me. Live here in peace. Remember the episodes I had with you in past."

"Though, leaving you visibly, O Gopis, my form of eternal pleasure will always be with you forever. Take this flute of mine. Whenever you play the flute, I will be here to accompany you."

"O Gopis! You are dearer to me than even my life. You are my life and soul. But allow me this moment to leave this place. Allow me to do my duty. Make my departure auspicious with a pleasant smile on your face. I am not away from you for even a moment."

Lord Shree Krishna tried his best to console the Gopis and got ready to ride the chariot with a goodbye to them. The Gopis renounced their decorum and wept loudly:

(He will start soon his chariot, hurry and stop him! Shout loudly and blame openly that he is running away by robbing us.)

The Gopis surrounded the chariot and shouted loudly to stop the chariot. "Why have you robbed from us our dear one? Why have you tortured us with such separation?"

Kadavun - 14

The Gopis lament, "Elderly villagers, Nand and Yashoda have lost their wisdom. Why have they permitted Krishna to leave for Mathura? They haven't thought clearly how Vraj would be robbed with such act and how people would continue to live without Shree Krishna? Earlier or later, everyone has to die, but it will be most welcome if someone from the village dies today. I would be thankful to such a man, as Krishna will then stay back in Vraj due to such sudden demise."

Amidst such dialogue, Lord Shree Krishna graces his chariot:

(Look! Krishna is sitting in his chariot. Now run quickly without delay and stop the chariot.)

The Gopis ran to the chariot and held it firmly from all the sides by surrounding it. Some of them pulled it back and some tried to push it from the front. Some Gopis obstructed the road by laying themselves on the ground. They wept and said, "O Krishna. Don't go to Mathura. Please come out from the chariot. Vrinadavan will look lonesome in your absence. O Govinda! O Madhava! Don't ruin Gokul."

Water from the outside is not useful in washing the mind. Only tears can wash the mind. The scene is so melancholic that Akrura too cries profusely with them. Akrura was stunned by the love of the Gopis. The cows were gazing sadly at the chariot. The Gopis would not allow the chariot to move forward.

Kadavun - 15

Shree Krishna then said, "O Gopis! Stop crying. Don't create commotion. Be secretive in regard to love:

(Krishna asks them to have patience. He asks them not to create a scene in front of others. Love should be kept secret in the heart. There should be no disclosure about it.)

"O Gopis! Conceal your love for me in your heart. Don't reveal it to others:"

(Conceal your love for me. Don't make it public. Be discriminative and stop talking about your love. It should not be subject to insults by others.)

"Act as per my advice. Go back home. Have solace and patience in the heart. Nothing in the three *lokas* is dearer to me than your selfless love."

(I am bound by selfless love, O Gopis! This is the only truth. I love heartily those who love me. This is the eternal truth.)

God says that He belongs to Love

Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit (G.M.28) 'I bestow upon those who serve with devotion the devotees of God, my supreme benediction. However, the most benevolent attribute that I possess is the sense of service with all humility towards the devotees of God. And I feel that one who does not possess such a sense of service, does not deserve to be great.'

There is a beautiful port city of Mangrol on the coastline of the Arabian Sea. Devout trader Govardhanbhai lived in Mangrol. He was a firm and faithful *satsangi*. He was a true devotee of Shree Hari. He dwelled constantly in the divine form of God. He always saw Shree Hari when he looked anywhere. He was in the sublime state of pure consciousness. He saw God in all gross elements.

He was a merchant who traded in large quantities. But he never forgot God in his trading and business. He saw God in all his customers. He always bought the goods in association with Swaminarayan and sold his goods similarly. He did his business with constant communion with Lord Swaminarayan.

If his customers purchased the goods on credit, Goverdhanbhai credited the entry to the name of Swaminarayan. Thus, the cash and credit accounts were in the name of Swaminarayan. The names of the customers never appeared in his accounts.

Swaminarayan Bhagwan knew that Goverdhan sold the goods to his customer by crediting it to his name. Shree Hari decided to contact the customers personally to collect the credited amounts. Shreeji Maharaj disguised himself in the form of Goverdhan Sheth to recover and collect the money for his faithful devotee. Business went on smoothly and Goverdhan Sheth knew nothing about this. He carried on with his business and his mental worship of Lord Swaminarayan.

Lord Swaminarayan Bhagwan collected and credited all the money for his single-minded devotee! His devotee sat peacefully in his business centre and God ran here and there to work for him! God

executes the responsibilities of his devotee, if he surrenders absolutely to God. We devotees have forgotten this truth.

It is alright, if God desires so

Shreeji Maharaj once said to Shukanand Muni, "Swami, please write letters to all villages. Inform them about a forthcoming drought. There will be harsh drought in the following years. Devotees should maintain enough stock of food grains, water and money to overcome such adverse times." Swami wrote letters to all the devotees living in different villages and towns, but no letter was issued to Natha Bhagat of Vadodara.

Muktanand Swami said, "O Maharaj! You have forgotten our Natha Bhagat of Vadodara. Should we write to him or not?"

Shreeji Maharaj said, "We don't need to write a letter to him."

The saints were taken aback by such harsh answer of Maharaj. All devotees were warned against the drought and were guided categorically in regard to storage and safety. Then why was he not instructing the writing of a letter to Natha Bhagat? They thought that God was not willing to disclose this to Natha Bhagat and warn him.

Next year was most adverse due to the dry famine. There was no rain; no showers not a single drop of water! The forests dried in want of water. Cattle were destroyed in want of grass and water. People died in hunger and thirst. Theft and robberies panicked the town's people.

Natha Bhagat was very poor, even in his best days. So how could he manage to buy and store food without any money?

Well, Shreeji Maharaj paid daily visits to his house to serve breakfast in the morning, lunch in the afternoon and supper at night. Shreeji Maharaj served him for twelve months without any lapse.

Remember this well satsangis! Lord Shreeji Maharaj sustains our daily life by giving us food and water. A devotee has nothing to worry about himself because Lord Shreeji Maharaj takes good care of his faithful devotees. Shreeji Maharaj has said, "If you live by remembering me, I will be there when you need me." So forget about the world and do devotion.

Remembrance of God is the root of eternal peace

God says, "I belong to those who belong to me." This is the real truth. Shreeji Maharaj says in his Vachanamrit (G.M.63), "I feel that the

state of devotional service offered to God and His single-minded devotees is far higher than the state of spiritual pure consciousness. I however hesitated to consolidate the state of pure consciousness, which would inhibit further human births. Therefore, there is no state more elegant than the state in which a devotee takes births again and again and prefers to remain in the midst of devotees, and offers devotional service to them.”

Dear Devotees! This is the benedictory attribute of Shreeji Maharaj. This is the sovereign will of God. Though, He himself is supreme Lord, God appeals to the devotional love of his devotees. Think about this and determine yourself how much you do for God, for Satsang and for the soul. To what extent are we free from the baser instincts? Probe into the deepest thoughts and examine this.

Balanced diet, exercise and work are a must for physical fitness. Similarly, study of the scriptures, meditation and prayer are a must for mental fitness and spiritual strength.

Kadavun - 16

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami narrates the pains of the Gopis. The Gopis cried profusely and lamented in deep pain of separation when they returned to their conscious state. They tried their best to keep Shree Krishna with them, but they failed to stop the journey. Now when would they see Shree Krishna again? It was almost dusk.

(Their feet refused to walk homeward. They walked hesitantly homeward and drew back their feet. The sight of Krishna’s footprints gave them pinching pain of separation. With love and respect they took the dust of the sacred prints and in obeisance they put it on their head. They saluted it repeatedly by bowing their body and praying to him to come soon.)

Their feet refused to walk homeward. The footprints of God reminded them about the separation. To pay respect, they put the dust on their head. They prayed collectively for his quick return.

Pada - 4

(There is no remedy upon this earth or else how do we remove the pains of love.)

(There is no medicine to cure a *Chakravaak*. A *Chakravaak* (a bird by that name) suffers great pain in the light of the sun, a man pains through nectar and an elephant burns in the cool water of Ganga).

What else would give pleasure if a man is pained by nectar and an elephant receives burns in the cool water of Ganga? The Gopis believe that Shree Krishna is the eternal source of devotional pleasure. The unconscious Gopis collapse on the earth while remembering Shree Krishna. They arise and lament again and again in separation when they come back to conscious state.

Kadavun - 17

“As we have gathered in our unconscious state, Lord Shree Krishna has promised us to come back. But when are we to meet him again? This may be a false promise. We should look for auspicious signs (*shukan*) to learn of his return.”

(Interpret collectively the auspicious signs and assess and assume about his return. Is he to come to us or will he ask us to go to him?)

“Observe the auspicious signs. Is he to return? Should we go there to meet him?” They recall amidst themselves the ancient episodes. Who will eat their butter? They have loved him heartily. They have scolded him many times for his mischief. They have fabricated at times the pretexts to invite him to their place:

(O Son of Nandrai! Please come to our house and talk to us with your charming

smile. O Krishna! You are the worthy son of Nandrai. O Hari! Please sit in the seat of my heart. You are bedecked with a beautiful turban on your head. Your turban has many colourful twists and decorative pearl strings add loftiness. Your charming image dwells forever in my heart. You are the darling of Brahmanand Swami. O Dear God! Please come and dwell in my house.)

The Gopis are crying in the memory of Krishna. Their souls and minds are merged in the image of Krishna. They are therefore, detached absolutely from their clan, family and wealth.

We are often careful about our money, wealth and other belongings. We cannot afford to forget them; we cannot afford to miss them. But the Gopis are unique in regard to their wealth and prized possessions. God is their wealth and the sweet memories of God are their prized possessions. They are not ready to forget these. They incline to possess them at any cost. This is the unique difference between the Gopis and other people. The Gopis are in love with God and we too are required to love God, the love founded on the strong foundation of faith and trust. We should hold the image in our heart firmly and with trust.

Shreeji Maharaj says, "The devotees of God should desire nothing except God. God is like a philosopher's stone. Everything is attainable by the grace of God."

Sneh Geeta is the nectar of *Dashama Skandha*

Lord Shreeji Maharaj remembers devotional love - affection - of the Gopis, in his nectar like Vachanamrit (G.M.10): "Accumulated *Punyas* of the past many births causes the rise of such devotional love, faith and trust, which the Gopis possessed in their devotion of Lord Shree Krishna. Man has nothing more to yield if he possesses such devotional fervour."

Kadavun - 18

The Gopis thought day and night about Shree Krishna. They were merged mentally in the divine memories of Krishna. The Gopis were merged and lost in Shree Krishna. When they went to milk the

cows at dusk, they thought and aspired to offer milk to Shree Krishna and instead of churning curd, they churned milk!

One such mother-in-law said to her daughter-in-law, "Dear Daughter! Why are you churning buttermilk for such a long time at such late hour? You have churned it for two hours, now take off the butter from it." When she tried to take away the butter, she found that she was churning the milk instead! Thus, they were confused totally in their routines. They were absent mentally, during their work.

(They like nothing except praising their darling Krishna. They burn in their heart when there is talk about others.)

The Gopis disliked any talk not connected to Krishna. They were sad and unhappy if people talked to them about other things. Rustic talk and gossip are harmful to devotion. God is not pleased with gossipers. The Gopis are not interested in worldly talk. They pay no attention to it:

(The state of this weaker sex was most pitiable due to the pains of separation. They call helplessly their loved one with tears and lamentation. They convulse pitifully for their unseen lover.)

"O Krishna! O Govinda! O Madhava! Please come here and pacify my heart. Please talk to me in your nectar like speech."

(Please come to talk about the sweet moments of love. This seclusive silence has become unbearable for me. Please come and talk to me. Why have you deserted me? Why have you changed your mind? Forget it now and come back to us to have pleasant dialogues of love.)

"O Krishna! Your silence and separation is intolerable. O Krishna! Please come to me. Are you hurt with our taunting words? We have called you a 'thief' only to tease you."

(Please forget and forgive and come to play with us. Let us enjoy a good time together.)

“O Krishna! Please come and play *Sharad Purnima Raas* with us. Please grant our prayers.”

The Gopis remembered the past episodes when Shree Krishna had meals with them and other pleasant exchanges. If desired to love anyone then love God and do devotion of God. There would be an addition to your problems and worries if you loved intensely your relations and wealth. Your worries would be destroyed with your love for God.

A rich merchant was in love with a prostitute. He used to walk behind her holding an umbrella over her head when she went shopping. Once, the merchant and the prostitute passed by a temple when she went window-shopping. It was a majestic temple and Ramanujacharya was dwelling there. Ramanujacharya saw them in the street. Saints are benevolent and they show the path of truth to sinful souls, returning them to adopting ethical duties.

Shree Ramanujacharyaji sent a message to the merchant and invited him the next day to have a meeting with him. Ramanujacharya explained to him the subtle value of love and affection and admired his love for that prostitute. While expressing his happiness, he brought to the notice of the merchant the grim part of his love story. Ramanujacharya said, “O Sethji! You are wise and intelligent. I admire your love for the prostitute. I am happy you are in intimate love with her. But there is a pinch of pain. Your love for her shall be short lived. It is temporary and mortal. Her youthful body is nothing but a container of blood, meat and excreta. Her body will perish and love will end abruptly. This cheerful scene of love will turn into tragic lamentation. Your love will end with her withered and ugly body.”

While explaining further to him, Ramanujacharya said, “God is more beautiful than a prostitute. His charms and love are unmatched and unique. Divert your love and affection to God instead of loving her. This will be benedictory for you. Only God deserves to be truly loved.”

Ramanujacharya slapped him during the talk. That shocking slap sent him into instant Samadhi state. He did darshan of God. The accumulated sins of the past many births were destroyed through

darshan of a true saint. Here the saint was Ramanujacharya and such a great saint touched that sinful merchant. The slap of the saint shook the merchant from his slumber of ignorance and he returned to a virtuous life.

Sadguru Muktanand Swami sings:

(Though they compel us to sleep on
the pointed blade of a spear, we should live
insistently with saints)

Take God into the seat of your heart using the roads of your eyes and ears to get there. God enters in our heart through the pathways, namely the ears and the eyes. The Gopis had become skeletons in the pains of separation. They had ignored their physical needs.

Kadavun - 19

Love increases exponentially when in a state of separation from God. Their eyes had become red due to weeping. They recalled the episodes of Krishna, when they meet each other at the riverside of Yamuna, "Krishna was obstructing me here," said one Gopi to her friend, "He ran to me and stopped here to help me to put the water pot on my head."

"Bhagwan came to me in his divine form and told me that he was with me forever. With such assuring words, God helped me keep the water pot on my head." Another Gopi said to her friend, "Do you know? There at that riverside, he had pulled my *chunari* to stop me going home. "

Sadguru Brahmanand Swami sings:

(Dear friend! Krishna had pulled my
chunari. He was not shy in the presence of
my other friends, who accompanied me to
fetch the water of Yamuna. The Gopis are
merged in the sweet memories of Shree
Krishna. They knew not what they spoke to
each other. Brahmanand Swami sees in
them their spiritual wisdom.)

The Gopis were remembering the ways of Shree Krishna. They remembered the secret signs he made at the time of helping them to carry a water pot on their head. They remembered the occasions when Krishna used to come to their house. The Gopis thus weep in seclusion. Presently, they look like a statue when they fetch water from Yamuna. They are unaware of the weight of the pot on their head.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami sings:

(What can I say about their love? They are merged in love of Shree Krishna. It is very difficult for Nishkulanand to describe their pains of separation. They are disintegrated mentally in their separation of Shree Krishna)

Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit (K-11), "And when Shree Krishna went to Mathura which was six miles away from Gokul, even then the Gopis did not go to Mathura for his darshan, as Shree Krishna did not desire that they should go to Mathura. They thought, "If we go to Mathura disobeying His orders, he would surely be displeased." Love therefore demands implicit obedience to the wishes of God. If, however God, whom they love greatly, desires that He should be away from them, then they should gracefully undergo such forced separation. A devotee, who has intense love for God, would always willingly abide by all His orders but would never act against His wishes."

The Gopis had true and absolute love for God. They never went for darshan, without permission from Shree Krishna. They kept their promise. To act as per the will of God is the attribute of true love and devotion. Attachment to worldly life is called Maya and attachment and affection to God is known as devotion.

God says that he has many homes. The homes of all his devotees are His own homes. God is drawn to the homes of his devotees through their devotional love. Tukaram invited Him, Narsinh Maheta invited Him, Kachara Bhagat welcomed Him to his house, Karaniba and other devotees called Him to visit their homes. Lord Shree Hari graced the homes of his most faithful devotees. Shree Hari says that those are His own houses.

Krishna went to the homes of the Gopis to have butter. God enjoys meals at those homes where there is true love. God does not

like meals and services without love. Love - true love – manifests itself in the tender forms of taste, liking and attachment.

Vidurji was waiting anxiously for a visit from God for so long. He was desirous to welcome him with tasty meals and decent hospitality. Vidurji and Sulbhaji used to sing jointly the devotional praises of God. God likes devotional song and devotional music. This is evident from how Lord Shree Hari would often come down from his throne and slip gradually closer to Premanand Swami to sing and enjoy the devotional songs with him.

God used to sit beside Surdasji whenever he recited devotional songs. If one's life is pure and unpolluted then God will come without any invitation. Krishna knocked on the door of Vidurji, "Uncle! Please open the door." Vidurji opened the door. Krishna favoured him with His blissful darshan. Vidurji forgot to offer a seat in the emotion of love and affection. Krishna himself took a carpet of Darbha to sit on. He held with respect the hand of Vidura and helped him to grace a seat. Those who were respected by God, received everlasting honour.

God said, "Uncle! I am very hungry. Please give me something to eat." But God wasn't hungry for anything really. He is Almighty Supreme Lord of the universe – sustainer of the Lokas. God provides food to all and sustains the whole world. God desires to eat and is hungry for the devotional fervour of his devotees.

God desired to have something. He was hungry! But Vidurji was most worried when he knew about this. Vidur and Sulbha was a poor couple. There was nothing in the home to eat. They sustained their own lives by consuming boiled leaves of Vegetables – *bhaaji*. Vidurji worried about what to do about *thaal* for Shree Krishna.

All knowing Supreme Lord Shree Krishna read the mind of his devotee. He knew about the worries of his devotee. Lord Krishna went to the cooking stove and picked up the container of boiled leaves. He served it to himself and had it happily. Vidura cried in excessive love and devotion, when he saw the Lord of the universe having meals of boiled leaves. Vidura was very sorry for himself. He found himself helpless in providing a decent meal to Shree Krishna. God understood the devotional feelings of his faithful devotee.

The Lord said, "O Uncle! O Great Devotee! Don't worry. I have enjoyed the tastes of royal feast meals in your *bhaaji*. Uncle! I am not hungry for food, I am hungry for pure and selfless love." God

loves his single-minded devotees. God dislikes anger, ego, envy or conspiracy. Be an ego free devotee by discarding the inner enemies.

Kadavun - 20

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami finds words incapable of describing the love and tender feelings of the Gopis. It is impossible to sing the praises of their selfless love. The Gopis were longing for darshan of Shree Krishna. Many days had passed in painful separation. Mathura is not so far from Gokul. It is only five miles away. The Gopis thought to visit Mathura to do darshan of Shree Krishna, but lovers are used to respecting the feelings of each other. A lover will not hurt the feelings of her loved one. Krishna had told them earlier that he himself would return at least once and that too on his own, to see them personally. The Gopis found it improper to ignore the order of their loved one. Such an act may hurt him:

(The Gopis were impatient in their heart. They were anxious to do darshan of Shree Krishna. The impatient Gopis thought to check the forest to look for Shree Krishna there.)

The Gopis assumed that Shree Krishna was in the forest. They desired to screen the forest to do darshan of Shree Krishna. They said to their mother-in-law, "O Baajee! We are leaving for Mathura to sell the curd." They put the containers on their head and went in a group from grove to grove in the forest of Brindavan:

(They roam grove to grove in the pretext of selling curd. They inquire amidst them for the whereabouts of Krishna. The pain of separation has become unbearable for them.)

If they find anybody, they inquire impatiently with them about Shree Krishna. They sit and cry together in their strenuous search of Shree Krishna. They recall the past occasions and narrate to their friends: "This is the place where Krishna had played *raas* with us. It was the happiest moment of our life. Today, the place looks sad and

gloomy.” The Gopis visited all those places where they had enjoyed such pleasant times with Krishna, remembering those joyous events and lamenting in their separation at such places!

(O Krishna! I am waiting for you. O Son of Nandrai, why haven't you come? You have cheated us by sending misguiding messages in Kartak. You have not yet come to Vraj. Even though a confirmed liar, we still love you heartily. We Gopis are very sad in the month of Magshar. We have surrendered our body and soul; we have crossed the limiting line of worldly decorum. O Shree Krishna! Please come soon.)

The Gopis are counting desperately the days and months of their separation from Shree Krishna. Love is experienced less during times of togetherness, but its intensity is realised more in the state of separation. To intensify love for God, read and listen to the episodes of God. Read stories of the incarnations of God. Read and think upon it. Detach yourself from the world and the worldly ways. Detachment is a must in devotion of God. Devotion will not be pleasurable without detachment.

The Gopis devotion is not selfish. They are free from desire. *Gyan* (divine knowledge) and *Vairagya* (detachment) are the fruits of desire-free devotion. The Gopis' love for Shree Krishna is pure and unselfish. Shree Krishna has tested the love of the Gopis.

Shree Krishna at Dwarika was bed ridden due to prolonged ailments. Eight principal queens tried their best to serve him, but there was no improvement in his health. Krishna said to them, "There is a sure cure. If a devotee of mine gives the dust from his feet to place on my body, I shall be freed from this ailment. The touch of this dust will cure me."

The queens were devotees of Shree Krishna. Krishna was their husband – their God. How could anyone come forward and give the dust from their feet. Such act by a wife of giving "*Charan-Raj*" to their husband is surely a sinful act for a chaste wife. Such a major sin would

consign her to the lowest hell. The queens therefore refused to give *charanraj*.

Meanwhile Narada came there to inquire about Shree Krishna's health. Shree Krishna explained to him about the ailment and suggested remedy. A devotee's charnraj was enough to cure him. Shree Krishna asked him to give charanraj, but even Narada, though a devotee of Shree Krishna, found it most risky. Submission of charanraj would consign him to hell and hell was not a place of his liking! Narada slipped away silently from there and came to Vrindavan to break the news. The Gopis cried in pain when Narada narrated the agonies of Shree Krishna. Narada then explained to them the sure cure – Charanraj of a devotee but cautioned them about consignment to hell in doing so. However the Gopis said without any hesitation, "O Narad! Our Krishna is unwell. Take our Charanraj immediately and give it to him. We are ready for hell, if it will cure Krishna of his ailment. Hell will be nothing for us, if our Krishna is comfortable."

Narada came to Vaikuntha with the Charanraj of the Gopis. Narada said, "O Maharaj! Please receive this Charanraj of the Gopis." Tears of love dropped from the eyes of Shree Krishna. This shows the greatness of the Gopis and their love for Shree Krishna. The Gopis desire nothing in return for their devotion. They desire only to please Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna recovered instantly with the Charanraj. The Gopis passed the test!

The Gopis longed for Shree Krishna:

(I am impatient to meet my Mohan, I am eager to hug him. I cannot sleep at night nor eat anything during the day. My soul and mind are merged in devotional praises of God. My eyes are tempted to see Him. My heart longs for God, for darshan of his face. I desire to embrace him. O Lord of Nishkulanand! When will I hug you?)

The heart should be free from sin and free from desire to engage in such devotion. The Gopis' devotion is pure and unpolluted. Devotion is not possible if the soul is sunk in desires and worldly relations. Such polluted souls cannot enjoy the eternal pleasures of

devotion – the soul will not progress towards God, if the mind is polluted with desires.

Desire is the cause of rebirth

There was once a *Chauba*. Brahmin priests from Mathura are known as chaubas. This chauba of Mathura was a confirmed addict. Once he went from Mathura to Gokul by boat. He sat in the boat under heavy intoxication and rowed it constantly for the whole night. He spent the whole night rowing his boat.

In the daylight he saw people at the bank of the river. He asked them, "Which place is this?"

They answered him, "This is Vishram Ghat of Mathura."

The chauba said to himself, "What is this nonsense? I have spent a whole night rowing my boat from Mathrua and I'm still here at the same place?"

When he checked his boat, he found that it was tied tightly there to the bank! Similarly, the ropes of desire should be untied to reach one's destination. Delusion and desire should be removed to walk on the path of devotion. The soul will not attain God if tied down with such ropes of desire. *Japa* and *tapa* from ones lifetime will be fruitless, if such ropes of desire are not removed. Untie the ropes and do devotion. Desire is the cause of rebirth. Burn your desires!

Pada - 5

(O God! Why am I alive in this pain of separation? It is better to die if a loved one is not with us. O Lord! Please grant my prayer and allow me to die.)

The Gopis have lost all solace. They wish to die instead of living with the pain of separation in the same way a serpent would not be happy if his jewel is lost or a rich man would prefer to die if he has lost his wealth.

Life is meaningless for an ascetic if he has lost his saintly attributes. The life of a sati would be meaningless if she lost her chastity. Similarly, the Gopis said, "Our Lord is not with us. Life is meaningless for us without him."

(A barren woman has no life. Her life is meaningless. God is separated from me and a desired death is not available)

A banana tree looks dull and lifeless after bearing crop. It will not be useful after bearing fruits. The Gopis pray, "O Krishna! We have become dull and without substance in your absence. What else can we do by living? Death is better than such life. But a wishful death is not available to us." The Gopis are very disturbed and uneasy.

Kadavun - 21

(We desire to see the face of Mohan.
We are not happy without his darshan)

O Krishna! Please show at least once your lotus like face. We are longing for your darshan.

The bond of love is the best

Shreeji Maharaj describes love as the tenth type of devotion. Devout soul Punjabhai made up his mind to either to do darshan of God or to give up his life. He went to Gopnath and embraced the lingam, rising from the sea. The high tide of the sea threw him out. Punjabhai repeated again and again his attempt of embracing the Lingam. Finally, unsuccessful, he walked then to the deep sea to sacrifice himself.

He heard from the sky, "Don't kill yourself. Go back home. You will attain your God." He came back happily and saw some saints of Swaminarayan camping at the temple. He went to them and did Satsang with them. He received the teachings of the Sampraday and learnt *Nitya Niyam* to become a devotee of the sampraday.

Once, Satsangi Punjabhai said to Vasta Khachar, "Please send me a message, if Shreeji Maharaj comes to Kariyani." Shreeji Maharaj graced Kariyani after some time. As promised, Vasta Khachar sent a message to Punja Bhagat. It was summer time and Punjabhai was at his farm. Punjabhai got the message at about noon. He sent his bullocks homeward and ran swiftly to Kariyani. He ran for five miles in the extreme heat of the sun. He was swift like a river flowing toward the sea. The devotee was anxious to meet his Lord!

Bhagwan was dwelling in Kariyani. There, he felt thirst and felt it repeatedly. Mukund Brahmchari served him cool water again and again to quench the thirst, but there was no end to Maharaj's thirst. Muktanand Swami said, "O Maharaj! Why are you having lots of water and keep drinking it repeatedly?"

Shreeji Maharaj said, "Swami! My dear devotee Punjabhai is on his way to me, running fast in the hot summer to meet me soon. He is thirsty, but not stopping anywhere to drink water. He aspires impatiently to meet me at the earliest moment. My thirst will not be quenched unless his thirst is also quenched. Therefore, bring me a pot of cool water. I will walk to him with the pot to receive him with the cool drinking water.

Shreeji Maharaj himself ran hurriedly to his dear devotee. Punja Bhagat ran in the scorching heat without bothering about his thirst and the burning rays of heat. Shreeji Maharaj coming from Kariyani finally met mid way with Punja Bhagat coming from the countryside. Shreeji Maharaj took his devotee under a tree and helped him to sit comfortably beside him, beneath the shade. Shreeji Maharaj himself served cool water to quench his thirst. This shows the oneness of God and his devotees.

Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit, 'If he is a faithful and trustworthy devotee of God, I shall be a devotee of his. I do devotion of such faithful devotees. This is my principal virtue. This is my cardinal attribute. Greatness of any kind will not be adorable in absence of this virtue.'

The Gopis were calling out helplessly. They want nothing except darshan of Bhagwan – darshan of their loved one. They desire desperately and pray to Krishna to remove their grief of separation:

(O Loved one! O Krishna! Please come soon. I love you very much. You are aware of my tender feelings. O loved one! Please come. I am torn by the pains of separation. This seclusion is unbearable for me. You have deserted us with your sudden departure to Mathura. We humble Gopis of Mathura long desperately for your blissful darshan. Please remove our pains

with your blissful presence. Let us enjoy again the *Raas leela* as we had before. O Lord of Brahmanand Swami! Please grant our prayer. What more is there to say? Please come to us.)

The Gopis hate themselves for this pitiable condition of theirs. They try now to locate their own faults. They are arguing amidst themselves, "He had loved us, but what good did we do? We always opposed him when he was with us. When he came to our house, we had forced him to dance by tempting him with a lump of butter. We have accused him of being a thief and thieving the butter. At times, we had taken him to Yashoda Maiya to complain about his mischievous ways of teasing us. But he always loved us despite such complaints."

(He has loved us to help and save us in this ocean of life by holding our hand.)

They are crying in pain as they talk about Shree Krishna. They would have drowned deep in the ocean of life, if they had not been helped by Shree Krishna.

(He has showered his pleasure by taking good care of us. He has acted accordingly to cheer us. When we sulked, he had pleased us with his unique ways.)

The Gopis are recollecting the happy times of the past. They were compelling Shree Krishna to join them in activities of their liking and choice. Krishna used to do things according to their wish. They remembered the occasion when they got Krishna tied tightly with a rope. But Krishna loved them without any limit. "Instead of appreciating his love for us, we Gopis have reacted harshly to him. O Friends! When will Shree Krishna come to replay those happy moments?"

They are refreshing their memory with such benedictory episodes. Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachnamrit (G.M.35): 'You should recollect such divine occasions, visualise the divine episodes I had with you all in such sessions and reverently narrate them before others. If at the time of death, one reminisces of these divine incidents, he is sure to

attain the divine abode of God. Therefore, such divine episodes from my life and the chanting of my names are all means of redemption.'

Kadavun – 22

The Gopis said amongst themselves: "O God! You have blessed us with eternal pleasure, but we fools have not been able to realise its majesty." They recall one past incident and laments in the pain of separation."

(We are most unwise. We have always called him 'blackey'. Only on the rarest occasion have we tried to please him by agreeing with his views.)

The Gopis blamed themselves for their senseless behaviour. They used to calling Him 'blackey'. Balram too would call him the same. Once, Shree Krishna sulked because of such insulting address and said to Mother Yashoda, "Maa! I will no longer look after the cows grazing in the hillside. Elder brother Balram calls me 'blackey' all day long and orders me with an address of 'blackey': "O Blackey! Go and get water for me. O Blackey! Bring back the calves." Therefore, I am not going to go with him anymore:

(Take this stick and blanket of yours.

I will not mind the cows anymore)

Mother Yashoda scolds Balram and asks him to stop such mischief. She advises them to behave properly.

The Gopis say, "Instead of respecting him, we have insulted him repeatedly. We have abused him harshly by branding him a 'liar' and a 'cheat'. Krishna overlooked our insulting ways and loved us always."

"A child often looks at us angrily if we blame him as a cheater or a liar. But here, Lord Shree Krishna showers us his majesty and eternal pleasure for such misbehaviour of the Gopis":

(Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma worship His divine majesty. The Vedas have proclaimed their inability to describe his glory and majesty. We are the most ignorant of fools to have taken him as an ordinary lover.)

Kadavun – 23

God's pleasure is divine. The Gopis thought that they had misunderstood Lord Shree Krishna. Lord Shiva, Brahma, Indra and other deities act in accordance to the will of Lord Shree Krishna. They are devotees of Shree Krishna.

Goodness Saraswati sings the eternal praises of Lord Shree Krishna. God is free from desire and acts like an ocean of everlasting pleasure and happiness. The Gopis are like wells, lakes and rivers; they are full of the nectar of life. They have ignored their joy and never gave any pleasure to Shree Krishna. The Gopis were sad because of this. They pained in their heart when they remembered their rudeness towards Shree Krishna.

God should be supreme and the world should be lesser

Shree Swaminarayan Bhagwan says in the Vachanamrits, 'O Devotees! You are my own and therefore nothing will be left unattended for your perfection.' There shall be complete perfection - nothing less. Shreeji Maharaj says: "You are my own." We all should confess to this fact - this truth. Do we not belong to Swaminarayan Bhagwan? Don't forget this truth. It is good to belong to the Lord.

Those who have surrendered to God are the happiest. Take this as words of wisdom. A bandmaster receives feast meals like an honoured guest, because he is part of a marriage party accompanying the groom. Maybe, you don't belong to God, but if you are in the holy fellowship with fellow Satsangis, you will be treated like them to receive everlasting pleasure. Lord Shreeji Maharaj has assured us fullness of life because we belonged to him.

The Swaminarayan Sampradaya is not a talkative sect. This sect believes in action. Words are translated into action. Whatever we preach to others should reflect fully in our action and life. *Katha-Satsang* will not benefit you, if they are not implemented into your life.

Listen to the discourses and apply it into your life. God should be supreme and the world should be insignificant in our life as a householder. The world and the worldly ways were inconsequential for the Gopis.

Kadavun - 24

(Our darling Krishna has deserted us. We are ignorant and unintelligent. We do not possess good qualities to attract him.)

The Gopis are looking for their own faults. They find themselves weak and unintelligent. They felt that they didn't have any good qualities in them to attract Shree Krishna. They were not courteous nor had the right manners. There was no refinement in their speech or conversations. They were harsh to Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna had deserted them because of this.

The Gopis are lamenting in grief, "O God! O Krishna! We are your humble servants. Please overlook our drawbacks and forget us not. We yearn to see your face and to listen to your sweet speech.

(O God! Please don't forget us. We are your humble servants. Please be kind to us and favour us with your blissful darshan. We trust in you. We cannot live without you. Pleasure is like pain to us when we do not have your darshan. O Lord of Nishkulanand! Please tell us how to maintain solace without your darshan?)

The Gopis have lost their physical consciousness. They are not at peace. Don't forget God in your race in life. Remember Him carefully.

A gentleman drove his car from his house. His wife saw him going out. She asked, "Where are you going?"

The husband said, "I don't know where I will go! All I know is I am just in my car to drive away somewhere."

His wife said, "Don't talk nonsense. Act wisely!"

We must know about our destination. How will you go somewhere without knowing where to go? Define your destination. Determine in your mind to get there. Don't waste time in senseless roaming.

A man has come into the world with his car-like body. He has to decide where he desires to go. Where he intends to go. Have you determined your destination? Where will you go after death? Where? The divine abode? The Lokas? Or the world? The body will have to adhere to the limits of life - the limits of time. Life has to end at some time and one will have to leave the world at an appointed time and day. A reference or introduction is a must when we meet Him at the final destination. Where will you go without this information and knowledge? Therefore, maintain a good rapport in relation to God.

Scholars have praised the pure and selfless love of the Gopis:

(A philosopher's stone cannot be compared to a piece of glass and the gold cannot be compared to a cheap baser metal. He does not like us, due to our attributes.)

The Gopis recall blissful episodes of Shree Krishna and while savouring those happy moments, they realise their own faults. For the Gopis, Krishna is like gold or the philosopher's stone. God is pure and precious like gold. The Gopis feel that they were cheap and ordinary like baser metals or pieces of glass and Krishna disliked them because of that. Their happiness and pleasure were short lived. The Gopis pain is unbearable.

Pada - 6

The Gopis dwell (in terms of their body and mind) at a higher plane. Their love for Shree Krishna intensifies in the fire of separation. The inner torment chokes them and compels them to cry. They complain to each other, "O Sister! Neither he nor a message from him has come to us":

(The Gopis are waiting for a message. There is no message from Him. Why is our soul and vital breath still in our body? Why should we continue to live? There is no message from Him.)

Fish dies without water. A goose leaves its homeland after laying eggs. The young emerge from eggs hatched by their own will. The young wait for the mother goose for a period of six months and die when separated from their mother:

(The young of a goose wait for six months after their birth, to see their mother. They wait impatiently and die instantly when their mother has not come to them).

The Gopis compare themselves to the young of a goose and how their life will also end like the lives of those young ones, if Shree Krishna does not come back to them: "O Krishna! Vital breath will leave our body in your absence. Our soul is impatient to do your darshan. Please come to us."

(It is not proper to live without life. Lord Shree Krishna is our life - he is our vital breath. Why do we not leave this body in the absence of the Lord of Nishkulanandji?)

The Gopis say, "It is meaningless to live without life. We are helpless. There is no message from Shree Krishna." All-knower Shree Krishna knows everything; he reads the mind of the Gopis.

Kadavun - 25

Lord Shree Krishna listened to the hearty prayers of the Gopis and desired to send a message to them. Shree Krishna sat often in the balcony of the palace at Mathura and stared in the direction of Gokul. He cried profusely in the memory of the selfless love of the Gopis. Love dominates in Gokul and majesty dominates in Mathura. God remembered the hearty love of the residents of Vraj.

The tastes such as butter enjoyed there in Vraj were not available to him in the sumptuous royal feasts at the palace. He recalled his crying mother – Yashodaji and concluded that he had left her crying there, "What would she be doing? My Gopis must be starving in my absence. I have left my cows weeping. All must be convulsing in the pain of separation. My Gokul is the land of love and affection. The people here extend due honour and respect but the real love is left in Gokul. I am not hungry for respect or power. I am hungry for love."

Lord Shree Krishna cried in the memory of Gokul. Uddhavji arrived here and found Shree Krishna crying in seclusion. Uddhavji

prayed, "O Lord! Why are you lamenting here at this lonely place when all the pleasures and power is at your disposal? Is there any shortcoming in our service? O God! Please feel free to draw our attention to such disservice."

Lord Shree Krishna said nothing to him. He was choked with inner grief. He wiped his eyes and said, "O Uddhava! What can I say about the love of my people in Vraj? Even a little remembrance of their love, makes me cry in separation. Everything is here, but not the love! Uddhava! The people here respect me, but I am not hungry for respect and honour. I am hungry for love."

"Uddhava! You must visit Gokul"

Uddhavji prayed, "O Krishna! Forget the love and affection of your parents. Forget those cows, those meadows and that forestland. Forget your occasions with the Gopis; forget everything about Gokul. You will have to forget them all, only then will you be able to enjoy this royal life in Mathura."

Bhagwan Krishna said, "O Uddhava! It is better instead if you visit the Gopis and Gokul and try to make them forget me. Unless they forgot me, I will not be able to forget them."

Uddhava prayed, "O Maharaj! It will be very easy to handle those illiterate, ignorant and innocent Gopis. I will handle them easily." Shree Krishna was astonished and upset with the remarks passed by Uddhava about the Gopis. He smelt the ego of knowledge in the remarks of Uddhava. Shree Krishna thought that the Gopis would teach him a good lesson when Uddhav goes to teach them.

Shree Krishna said, "O Uddhava! My Gopis are not educated, but they are flags of victory when it comes to devotional affection. They know how to love God. O Uddhava! I would suggest that you live there with them for a few days at Gokul. Spend some time with them for the five nights you are there. Help and support them with your wise counsel. My Gopis do not pass a glance at other men. To ensure a personal dialogue with them, wear my *pitamber*. My *pitamber* will convince them that you are there in front of them to convey my message; otherwise they will pay no attention to you."

Kadavun: 26

(Uddhavji obeys the orders of Shree Krishna. He paid humble salute to Shree Krishna and left for Vraj in a chariot)

Uddhavji got himself ready in the morning and came to Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna blessed him with the *prasadi* of his *Pitambara* and *Vaijayanti Mala*. Uddhava wore the pitambara and placed the garland of Vaijayanti flower around his neck. He paid obeisance to Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna knew that egoistic souls do not bow before anybody. They are stiff in the intoxication of knowledge. They are proud of their learning and wisdom. Uddhavji passed salutations to Shree Krishna and left for Vraj.

(Uddhava salutes Shree Krishna and rides his chariot. Shree Krishna gives a message and asks Uddhava to pay humble obeisance on His behalf to His parents - Nandrai and Yashodaji. Krishna asks him to pray to them that Krishna is very sorry for not repaying His obligations. He is thankful to them for their elderly favour.)

Shree Krishna says, "O Uddhava! On my behalf, please pay a humble salute to my mother and father. Please convey to them my feelings and love." Krishna tries to hide the tears in his eyes and said, "O Uddhava! They have taken good care of me despite my naughtiness. In my childhood I was very naughty, but they never scolded me for my mischief."

"My mother Yashodaji has not separated me from her for even a single moment. Many complaints were sent to my home because of my mischief but they ignored them and always loved me. I am mischievous by nature. I broke pots of curd to distribute it to monkeys, I broke milk containers to spill the milk, but my parents never scolded me."

"What can I say about them? I cannot forget their love and care. Uddhava! Here, I have everything, but not that love and affection of my parents. Nandrai and Yashodaji are not here with me. I don't enjoy living here without them. I don't like to have meals in their absence. This separation pains me a lot. I miss their greatness and love."

(O Uddhava! I am not able to narrate their virtues and greatness. It pains me a lot that I have missed the opportunity to offer service to them.)

Shree Krishna says, "O Uddhava! I am not able to narrate the greatness of my parents. What can I say about their greatness? But it pains me a lot that I have not served my parents. I was supposed to serve them. Please help them to bear this separation." Shree Krishna cries in the memory of Vraj.

Like a tall palm tree, Uddhava will stand upright among the Gopis. Ego does not allow for humbleness, even to elders. He will not bow to them. He will not be liberated, if he does not salute the Gopis. God, therefore said to him:

(Salute them politely and submit your head at their feet. Salute them on my behalf and bow your head repeatedly. Please convey my regard to the residents of Vraj and take good care of them.)

Shree Krishna said, "O Uddhava! Bow to them repeatedly with due respect. Be polite to them and submit your head at their lotus like feet. Please convey my regards to my parents and the residents of Vraj."

God said, "O Uddhava! You are most fortunate. You are visiting the land of love." Uddhava saluted Shree Krishna and sat in his chariot. Shree Krishna looked at the chariot rushing towards Vraj, disappearing in the dusty clouds.

The cows have not consumed a straw of grass since the departure of Shree Krishna. They have become thin and weak like goats. They stare in the direction of Mathura in the memory of their master. The pains of separation have become unbearable for the residents of Vraj. Nandrai and Yashoda have stopped taking meals. They have taken up fasting to ensure their son returns home. Their soul is not at peace due to sleepless nights. Both remember the innocent ways of Shree Bal Krishna. Mother Jashoda remembers the cradle songs she sang to Krishna to make him fall asleep. She

remembers Shree Krishna having butter from the bowl. She remembers his clothes and attires. She touches it to her forehead.

Kadavun - 27

The chariot rolls on smoothly in the direction of Vraj. Uddhava thinks deeply about his assignment. The chariot enters Vraj. The birds and animals in Vraj are divine. The birds do not chirp but they sing sweetly the holy names of Radhe Krishna – Radhe Krishna. Gopa children wait daily for Shree Krishna’s return. Today they see a chariot coming to them. They announced loudly, “Our Krishna has come.... Our Krishna has come!” They run to the chariot, but find someone else sitting in the chariot. Krishna was not there. He would have jumped impatiently, if it were Shree Krishna. He would have held our hands with love and affection. At about dusk, the chariot came to the house of Nandrai.

(The chariot came to the main street of Gokul and stopped at the house of Nandrai. They hugged each other and saluted with due respect.)

Nandrai ran to the chariot and spoke loudly to his wife, “O Devi! Our Krishna has come.” Jashodaji ran to the chariot, but the disheartened lady collapsed on the ground with tears in her eyes. That was someone else, not our Shree Krishna. She cried and chanted “Shree Krishna” “Shree Krishna”.

Stupefied Uddhava found everyone chanting “Shree Krishna” “Shree Krishna”. Why did they speak so? Uddhava was not able to understand their strange behaviour! Confused Uddhava came to Nandrai and Yashodaji. He saluted them and sat beside Shree Nandrai. Nandrai welcomed him sweetly and said, “O Uddhava! You are most welcome here. It is so nice of you to come. Tell me, how are my sons, Balram and Krishna? Do they remember us or not?” Uddhava said:

(Uddhava salutes again Nandrai and Yashodaji when they asked him about Shree Balram and Krishna. Uddhava told them

that Krishna has not forgotten them even for a moment. Moreover, he has conveyed his regards to them. I am bowing before you on his behalf. Krishna has asked me to pay obeisance on his behalf.)

Nandrai said, "O Uddhava! Why has Krishna not come to see us?"

Uddhava said, "O Nandrai! Krishna himself was going to come here but his engagement in the matters of state has compelled him to stay back. He looks after the administration of Mathura state." The whole night passes swiftly this way in such discussion.

Kadavun - 28

Uddhava went to the banks of Yamuna to have early morning bath. The Gopis were singing devotional songs at their homes. The whole village was humming the sweet tunes of devotional music:

(Child Krishna asks for curd and butter. He is just woken up from his sleep. His eyes are still sleepy. Hungry Krishna quarrels for food. The Gopis have come to see Shree Krishna. Krishna does not allow them to milk the cows. He threatens his mother and says that he will spill the curd and break the pot.)

Uddhava is amazed with their sweet voice. He assumes about the sweetness of their heart. The residents of Vraj are most fortunate, their mind and soul are attached to Shree Krishna. The Gopis salute the house of Nandrai everyday, when they churn the curd at home. Today they saw a chariot parked at the courtyard of Nandrai.

"O Gopi! Perhaps Akrura has come again with a chariot." The impatient Gopis rush to the house of Nandrai:

(They saw Uddhava. They greeted him warmly and inquired with him about Shree Krishna.)

They saluted him with folded hands. They asked him politely, "O Uddhavji! Is there a message for us? Why has Krishna not come? Does he dislike us? Is he bored of us? Uddhavji, please tell us the truth. You are a good friend of his. Is he remembering us or not? Whom does he love in Mathura?"

Pada - 7

Please deliver quickly the message of his:

(O Uddhavji! Now tell us about Shree Krishna. We are weak women and your message will help sustain our life. Some messages are peaceful and some ignite burning fire. Please act wisely, and tell us with compassion.)

"O Brother! Tell us something to cool our heart and soul."

Uddhavji said, "O Gopis! You are very dear to Shree Krishna. Krishna has told me many things to convey to you. O devout ladies! God remembers you day and night."

Kadavun - 29

(Shree Krishan worries about his Gopis. He thinks constantly about you in his waking, sleep and dream state, throughout the day and night. He often utters 'Gopi – Gopi' to call you to him.)

Uddhavji said, "O Gopis! You are very dear to Shree Krishna. The whole world remembers God, but God Shree Krishna remembers you. He always thinks and says, 'What might my Gopis be doing in their homes!' Devotees of God wake up from sleep, remembering God, but God - Shree Krishna, wakes up daily and chants 'O Gopis! O Gopis!' This shows his love for you."

God should be at the centre of love

Only those who are *sadhus*, who remember God without any interruption and who are called *Sants*, are remembered constantly by

God. The word 'Sant' is very great. A true sant lives in any kind of attire – saffron, coloured or otherwise, but his heart is coloured in the fast colour of devotion.

Only God deserves to be loved. The loves of man change colour according to his mind set and circumstance. Worldly love does not give peace and satisfaction. In his childhood, a man loves his mother, then he loves his toys in his boyhood or girlhood, then he begins to love his friends and in a married life he loves his spouse! Thus the objects that are loved change in accordance to time and circumstance. These love bound relations are fragile and non-permanent.

Grasp the reality. Grasp the truth. Make your love permanent by installing God at the centre of love. There should be no requirement to change your loved one:

(Lord Shiva and Lord Brahma worship Him with devotional love. But supreme Lord Shree Krishna remembers you with devotional love. I am not able to understand this.)

Uddhava said, "Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma, the thirty three *crore* deities and eighty eight thousand Rishis worship Shree Krishna, with devotional love. But it is most surprising that Lord Shree Krishna loves you most ardently. He remembers you without any interruption. He does'nt forget you for even a moment. I marvel about the *punyas* of your past births. Shree Krishna talks and thinks only about Vraj and the Gopis. Now I will disclose to you the secrets of his heart. O Gopis! Listen to me. I am explaining it for your pleasure and peace." The Gopis listened to him with great attention.

Kadavun – 30

"O Gopis! You are worshipping him as God, but the supreme Lord is omnipresent, who dwells everywhere in space and the universe. Being omnipresent in his diffused form, he is never away from you. He is within us, he is beside us and he is in front of us. God dwells in the universe and the universe dwells in God. God is everywhere. God pervades each atom and the finest molecule."

“Withdraw yourself inwardly and concentrate in God. Realise God dwelling in your heart, think that God has not gone to Mathura, but dwells here with you. He dwells in each dust particle of this place – Vraj. This is the essence of the Vedas. God dwells everywhere.”

“Withdraw yourself from the world of the sense objects. Concentrate in yogic meditation. Concentrate steadily and firmly. Realise God present in the form of luminosity. God will be before you in his divine form.” Uddhavji talked in the higher language of philosophy. He thought that he was at the higher plane of yogic philosophy, but did not know that the Gopis lived at the highest spiritual plane. The Gopis were enlightened souls who need no external illumination to do darshan of Shree Krishna. They do blissful darshan of Lord Shree Krishna everywhere and in everything.

(Live beyond the limits of cognitive senses and renounce the desires of the sense objects. Lord Shree Krishna asks you to practise *yoga*)

Kadavun – 31

The Gopis could not control themselves. They said, “O Uddhava! What are you talking about? We don’t living in the physical plane. We are detached from our householder ways. We are not conscious about the senses and the sense objects. We are free from desire. We have renounced desire through worship of God. O Uddhava! Think twice before you speak. We are innocent village girls. As we understand it, a woman separated from her husband may be interested in dialogues about *Nirguna* and *Saguna* (formless and with form), but we Gopis are not separated from our Krishna. We are in oneness with him. We don’t need such information. We are attached to God without any Yogic practice.

Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit, “Do *Yoga Yagya*.” What is this Yoga-Yagya? To withdraw the ten sense organs and the mind from the sense objects and place them as sacrifice into the holy fire of *Brahman* (pure consciousness). This is called *yoga-yagya*.

Samadhi in waking state

What are the fruits of Yoga-Yayga? The merit is that Lord Purushottam Narayana will manifest himself in his heart.

What is *Antardrishti* (inward vision, introspection)? To concentrate meditatively on the idol of God dwelling in the seat of our heart is called *Antardrishti*. To do poojan and worship of that idol is called *Antardrishti*.

The Gopis said, "O Uddhavji! You are asking us to practise Samadhi by closing our eyes. This needs to be understood well. It is possible that our mind will run to the world and the sense objects when we open our eyes. Therefore, we need to shut our eyes for tranquil state of Samadhi. But we Gopis are enjoying Samadhi state with our eyes open."

Yogis meditate by closing their eyes. Their mind concentrates steadily till their eyes shut. Their agile mind runs and chases the sense objects as soon they open their eyes and the mind begins to think about those objects.

Great Yogi Vishwamitra did meditational penance for sixty thousand years with his eyes shut. But as soon as he opened the eyes from meditational trance, he was trapped in the alluring charms of Menka. The Gopis said, "The meditational trance attained with open eyes is the truest meditational concentration. It is not good to control the mind forcibly. It should be disciplined in its natural course."

The Gopis have attained meditational concentration in their waking state. Their vision is in oneness with God. Wherever they look, they see Shree Krishna.

(Wherever dwells the mind,
meditational concentration shall be there.)

Uddhava asked them to worship *Nirguna – Brahman*. The Gopis countered him, "We have already realised Shree Krishna – *brahman* as dwelling everywhere in human form. We have already realised him thus, then why should we worship Nirgun Brahman? The Gopis further said:

(There is nothing concrete in what
you have said to us. For how long have you

been striving for such incomplete knowledge?)

“O Uddhava! How much of your life has been spent in acquiring the knowledge that you have passed on to us? How much penance have you done to attain such knowledge? How many means have you used to attain it? Despite such effort and time, still you are adhering firmly to ignorance. You are talking like an ignorant child. The visible Lord plays like a child in front of us, but you are advising us to attain Him through meditational concentration? Why should we shut our eyes to see Him when we are able to see him with our open eyes?

Kadavun – 32

The Gopis said, “O Uddhav! We Gopis are a servant and slave to our Lord Shree Krishna. Who would leave a heap of grains to take some bran? Who would give up gold for a lump of mud? Who would wear a string of shells instead of a diamond necklace? Who would accept ashes instead of fragrant sandalwood? Who would wear deerskin instead of precious dresses? Who would leave sumptuous sweets to eat poisonous leaves? Who would give up their bed to sleep on the bare ground of a place of burial? Who would chew the tasteless branch of *Aaval* (a wild bush) after having a *Tambul* (a tasty mouth freshener)?

(How could we consume *Aaval* – a wild bush – when we have already consumed tasty *Tambul* – a delicious mouth freshener? How could we allow something else in our heart in place of Shree Krishna?)

Only God should reside in our heart. Nothing shakes firm and faithful devotees. Be firm in your mind and heart. Love nothing except God. Attach yourself to God. Sadguru Muktanand Swami sings:

(I am in love with Shree Krishna. O my friend! I am mad after him. I have accepted the everlasting life of a married

woman and all my illusions are removed by playing *raas* with Him. Muktanand Muni says that he will not leave his God even for a moment. Son of Nand is not available easily even at the cost of life.)

Sneh Gita teaches us to merge the self in the blissful form of God. To listen to *Katha Varta* is the subject of virtuous reward – *Punyas*. The fruits or rewards of a virtuous act can be had after a long time, but the fruits of listening to Sneh Gita are available instantly. *Katha-Parayan* helps us to forget the world. It helps us to concentrate on God. Wealth and body are not important on the path of devotion, but the mind is most important in the devotional ways.

A word of wisdom

Do devotion within the limits of ethical duties. Ethical duties are a must on the path of devotion. The duties assigned by God, should be executed perfectly. Devotion cannot be successful, if it is without ethical duties. God will not accept the service of a Brahmin devotee if he has ignored his ethical duties of receiving and transmitting knowledge and learning.

A husband was ailing at home. He asked his wife not to leave him unattended. But the wife ignored her husband and visited a temple to do devotion and stayed there for two hours by leaving her husband alone at home. The devotion in such case will not be accepted by God. God says that ethical duties are very dear to him.

Devotion and ethical duties should go hand in hand. Concentrate absolutely in the image of God. This is true devotion. Worldly wisdom involves counting money to determine a person's wealth. They do not count *Japa* of God's name. Worldly wealth does not accompany man in his journey after death, but the wealth of *Japa* will surely go with him! What would be more important? Wealth or worship?

***Japa* is the best**

Japa is the cardinal means to attain God. The Gopis said to Uddhav:

(Our body and mind are submitted
to Shree Krishna. Nothing is in our

possession. We would prefer death if not able to chant Shree Krishna - Shree Krishna. We will not do anything else.)

God's name and Japa of the name are the true wealth of a devotee. Japa sustains a truthful life. To do Japa is true living. God hides his perceptible person but exhibits his name.

There is no end to the Gopi's waiting. There is no limit to their solace. The Gopis said, "Krishna has promised us that he would come back. He will come back on any day. O Uddhava!":

(Our tongue speaks nothing else. It chants 'Shree Krishna'. Even after our death, if we were to be tested by making a pipe or a flute from the bones of our bodies, then it would sound 'Krishna', nothing else.)

"O Uddhava! Perhaps we will die remembering Shree Krishna. If our bodies are tested after death, the body without soul would speak out Krishna, Krishna." The Gopi's mind is merged in the memory of Shree Krishna. They chant day and night the names of Shree Krishna. Sadguru Brahmanand Swami sings:

(My heart remembers day and night the blissful form of Sahajanand.)

God dwells forever with the devotee who chants the divine names of God. Only brave people can walk on the path of devotion. There is no room for cowardice. Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit (G.M. 33): 'I am not at all away from the devotee who is firm and free from desire. And my love for him never recedes.' Here is a story to explain this subtle issue:

In his religious tours, Shreeji Maharaj graced once the village Ganf and sat there on a bedstead to favour his devotees with his blissful Darshan. His faithful devotees paid obeisance with humble salute and sat before him to receive his nectar like preachings. Shreeji Maharaj preached to them to make best use of their life as a human being. He asked them to adhere to their personal ethical duties and the tenets of Shikshapatri. He told them that these were the best means for emancipation.

Devout lady Avalbai was a faithful follower of Lord Shree Hari. She prayed to Maharaj, "Shreeji Maharaj! My Lord! Please grace my home to have a meal." Shreeji Maharaj consented to her prayer. Avalbai came back to her home to prepare *thaal* for Shree Hari. Her mother came to know about the forthcoming graceful visit of Shreeji Maharaj. She said to her daughter, "My Daughter! You are used to cooking *thaal* meals for Maharaj. I have never had a chance to serve Shree Hari. I will cook the *thaal* meals for Shree Hari today." The God-fearing daughter consented happily to her request.

Her mother cooked the complete *thaal* of *chapatis*, *daal*, vegetables and rice. Shreeji Maharaj graced their dwellings at the appointed time and had *thaal* meals. But after the meals he went to the backyard and vomited out the meal. Avalbai was worried about the health of Maharaj and assumed something wrong in the prepared food.

Worried Avalbai ran to Maharaj and prayed with the folded hands, "Maharaj! My Lord! Is there anything wrong with the food?"

Maharaj said, "There is no lapse in the food, but there is serious lapse in *Vartamaan* of your mother.

I am unable to take food from such a defiled person. I repulse it. Avalbai was very sorry for Shreeji Maharaj. She requested him to wait for a while so that fresh meals could be prepared by her to serve to Maharaj. Shreeji Maharaj said with compassion, "My child! It doesn't matter. Just cook supper. I will come again in the evening to have your *thaal*." Shreeji Maharaj graced her house in the evening and had *thaal*-meals from Avalbai. The core of the episode is: God likes services from desire-free devotees. He dislikes the service offered by a slave to desires.

Shreeji Maharaj says in Vachanamrit, "Mulji Brahmchari is a desire-free soul. I enjoy the services rendered by him. I don't enjoy services received from others. The desire-free devotees who practise *vartmaan* are very dear to me. I have a good rapport with them in this loka and in my divine abode." We devotees need to attach our mind in devotion and devotional music.

The Gopis said to Uddhava:

(Our minds are typical. If they like something, they will like it forever without

change. We are attached to Shree Krishna and this oneness is forever.)

The Gopis explain to Uddhava, the typical ways of a woman's mind. A Woman's love is natural and steady, without any break or change.

Pada - 8

(We are attached to Shree Krishna. O Uddhava! We cannot survive without him. A minute in his separation becomes unending like an era. We cannot survive without Shree Krishna.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! We cannot live without Shree Krishna. A minute without him is long like an era. His blissful episodes reside in our heart. Our heart burns without his darshan. There is no medicine to heal the pain in our heart." Unfathomable love is evident in the Gopis' devotion.

Intense love is the first condition of devotion and affection.

Jivuba, daughter of Ebhal Khachar, was a single-minded devotee from her childhood. She was a devotee of Shree Hari. Her father, Ebhal Khachar, tried occasionally to reduce the intensity of devotion in her, but it continued to be stronger and firmer as time passed. Bhagwan himself used to come personally in his visible form, to have thaal, presented by Jivuba. She would not consume the food, if Shreeji Maharaj missed an appointed day and time in his return journey to Gadhada. This showed the intensity of her love.

Because of the selfless love of Dada Khachar and both the sisters – Laduba and Jivuba – Shreeji Maharaj dwelled always at Gadhada.

Detachment is the basic requirement on the path of ultimate knowledge and love is the basic necessity on the path of devotion. As seen in the Gopis, we too, will have to love heartily, our God. We will have to follow the devotional path of Laduba and Jivuba. This will strengthen our devotional fervour.

An aspirant came to Sant Eknathji. He saluted the saint and took a seat before him. He then prayed with his folded hands, "O Holy Man! Your mind dwells steadily in God. It is steady and firm. When I

visit, I have found you to be absolutely detached, firm and steady in your innermost."

"My mind and senses are so agile and unsteady that they cannot concentrate steadily even for a moment. They roam here and there during *pooja* and worship of God. Kindly teach me to control and discipline my mind and sense organs." Eknathji Maharaj gave thought to the predicament and resolved to teach him through practice. Eknathji believed a demonstration to be worthwhile here. He stared silently at the aspirant and said, "That is not important at this moment. I am afraid your death is very near. It is better if you renounce your desires and family relations of your householder life. Discard your desires. Discard relationships. Desire will spoil your life after death. The soul will be very sorry. Come to me after a week."

The aspirant lost his sense when he heard about his forthcoming death. The world and worldly relations now looked dry and illusive to him. Affection and attachment receded. The journey was inevitable. Death was nearing him steadily. He was a God fearing man – a true aspirant and therefore was positive that worldly wealth and relatives would not accompany him in his final journey to the ultimate destination. Devotion and worship were the true companions in this final journey. He withdrew himself from the world and concentrated steadily in the divine form of God. He steadily did *poojan* and worship of God. His lifestyle and mental powers were changed into total perfection in meditational concentration and devotional worship. He concentrated fully during *poojan* and devotion. The cognitive senses were within his control. He concentrated easily in the image of God and prayed, "O God! Please receive me forever in your benign refuge. Please hold me firm at your lotus like feet." Now he was a true *Sadhaka* ruling over his body, mind and the sense organs.

The aspirant came back to Eknathji after a long period of one week. He saluted the holy man and prayed for his blessings. Eknathji said to him, "What did you do during the week?"

The aspirant said, "Maharaj! The fear of death has discarded all my relations. It has removed my delusion and ephemeral pleasure. I am now able to control my mind and sense organs. I am concentrating well in devotion and meditation. Now, my sense organs and mind are concentrating fully in the image of God."

Eknathji said, "My child! This is the secret of my meditational concentration. I remember daily my death. I do devotion by placing death in front of me. Fear of death helps me to concentrate absolutely in the blissful image of God. That fear withdraws my mind from the alluring sense objects and concentrates it in God."

There is nothing to worry about if meditation and worship are less, but there should be no increase in the pleasures of the sense objects. Force your mind to face the fear of death, if it fails to concentrate in God. The mind will concentrate steadily in God. Devotion is the greatest benefit in human life."

Shreeji Maharaj has preached five major points to educate his devotees and aspirants. We should learn them well. Shreeji Maharaj has said that he is in constant touch of these five major points:

1. Death is immanent and unpredictable. The soul has to leave this body without prior notice.
2. What have you already accomplished and what remains unattended before your death?
3. Have you destroyed the desires for the sense objects before death?
4. Have my senior saints renounced the desires or not? I should observe their hearts constantly to ensure their desires are eradicated.
5. All have to die, but devotion is the biggest benefit of the life that we live.

Shreeji Maharaj has preached these points in his Vachanamrit.

Kadavun – 33

The Gopis said to the Uddhavji:

(Shree Krishna has sent the message to complete his unfinished task. At first he slew our hearts and took them with him to Mathura and now with this message of his, he calls for our life and soul.)

The Gopis said, “O Uddhavji! How much solace should we show as a weaker sex? Moreover, you are here with such a merciless message. Shree Krishna has already taken our hearts away; only the vital air remains in our bodies. Now what would he do by extracting the vital air from us? Let him kill us in the manner he had killed earlier his aunt, wrestlers and his maternal uncle. Why does he betray us by staying away?” The Gopis are not speaking this but it is their devotional love that speaks for them.

Do devotion and service with good intention. The thrill of devotional fervour should prevail in your rituals of pooja and worship. Tears of blissful joy should appear in your eyes during pooja. Devotional service is not a mechanised process, but a love soaked occasion – an exciting celebration. If a devotee enjoys his devotional service then the devotion would surely touch the heart of God. Devotional service should begin with meditational concentration.

Don't talk during pooja. Attach your mind to God. Love the image of God as you love your body. Sense of servitude and love generates humbleness. Do service with love. Offer a prayer at the end of pooja. Pray to God to protect you from your inner enemies.

Bhakta Prahlad prayed to Bhagwan, “O Lord! O My Master! You have protected me, but I don't accept it as true protection. You have protected my mortal body and therefore such protection is of no use to me. I don't care whether the body is saved or not. It is therefore better if you protect Me – my consciousness, from my inner enemies – my sense organs and mind. This shall be protection in its truest sense. Help me to do your constant devotion.”

True devotees are neither happy nor sad if they are protected physically. The ways of devotee are unique and unparalleled. They do devotion without any expectation. They fear only their inner enemies,

because the sense organs and the mind are the real obstacles in their devotional ways. There should be no hindrance in devotion. All the cognitive senses should be soaked in the nectar of devotional fervour. This is the core teaching of Sneha Gita.

(No man hits a woman, despite the many faults in her. Krishna is well educated and wise. Why is he not giving thought to us?)

The Gopis said, "Man does not kill a woman, despite her faults and crimes. Krishna is well educated and wise. Why does he not think this way? A butcher kills an animal to benefit from the skin and meat of the animal, but nothing from us will be of use to our killer. Why does he stay away from us during his killer attacks."

(We will die in unfulfilled pleasure, but our faith and desire will stay with Him. We shall not be separated from the Lord of Nishkulanand Muni.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! We are hopeful to live with Shree Krishna. We wish to play with him, we wish to help him to have meals and we aspire for many good things in his blissful company. We hate to be separated from him. O Hari! Please fulfil our wishes."

(O Krishna! We are hopeful to meet you. Our soul and vital air are in your possession. We are sad when we can't see you. We long to see your face.)

The Gopis said, "O Krishna! We desire to do your darshan. We convulse in the thirst of your vision:

(His charming face is most pleasurable. A pleasant smile appears on his sweet lips. I am so excited to hug my Lord with a warm and hearty embrace.)

"O Shree Hari! Your charming face is most pleasurable. O Dear God! Please come soon to hug us. All our aspirations and desires dwell at the lotus feet of Shree Hari. Let there be constant chant of

Shree Krishna's name in our speech and words. May our eyes engage themselves in blissful darshan of Shree Krishna." The Gopis dislike their separation from God.

Attach yourself to God

The lotus flower blooms in water. The lotus flower looks fresh and its leaves look green and shiny, when the stem of the plant is attached to the earth. If it is detached from the land, the flower will die and the leaves will be decayed. The water sustaining the flower becomes the killer, when the plant is uprooted.

Why does it decay? It decays due to the detached stem. This is the state of all living beings. A soul fades and dies when it is separated from God. The soul separated from God will be unhappy and sad. Be attached to God and enjoy eternal pleasures. There will be nothing to worry about if you are attached well to God.

A rusted and damaged carriage still reaches Delhi if it is attached firmly to an engine. But an air-conditioned and new carriage is still unable to move an inch, if it is not connected to an engine. Even the poorest soul attains Akshardham, if it is attached firmly to an engine, such as God.

Even a most educated person, a minister or even a king are like an unattached carriage and will not go anywhere, if their stem like souls are not attached to God. Such unattached souls will be consigned to the Loka of Yama.

Sneh Gita is a unique scripture. It warns confused souls to stay connected at all costs. Attach yourself to God.

Kadavun – 34

Shreeji Maharaj says in his Vachanamrit (G.M.10), 'It is most difficult to attain the kind of devotional fervour that was seen in the devotion of the Gopis. The *Punyas* (virtuous rewards) of the last one or two births, cannot create such devotional fervour. The accumulated *Punyas* of many past births may cause such intense devotional fervour. Such devotion or love is *Parampada* (the highest attainment).'

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 su{ Vα ¾tE ¾,, ,su ,Á ,u{ f]»ýS ...ý yu{ fhu.

(A bumblebee leaves a flower after relishing the sweet fragrance from it and a

bird deserts a tree after having fruits from it. Shree Krishna has acted like them, by leaving us.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Krishna behaves like a bumblebee and a bird that leaves the flower plants and trees on fulfilling their selfish motive. Krishna has deserted us like the deer that desert the forest and meadows burning in a wild fire. He has deserted us like a disciple who leaves his Guru after receiving knowledge from him and has acted like a *brahmin* who deserts his host after receiving cash gifts. Similarly, Shree Krishna has abandoned us and left us unsatisfied when his intentions were fulfilled. He has drawn from us our vital air by loving us. How could we expect solace and happiness in his absence?"

Love is not possible without a relationship

Devotees love God, but love is not possible without a relationship. Many people may be ailing in a town, but we never pay a courteous visit to them. Relationships are the cause of feelings. If there is no relation then there is no feeling. Relationships create feelings. If a relative is indisposed, we will see him immediately. This is human nature. Love and affection are founded on a relationship. Try to establish a relationship with God.

God is my master! He is my master and Lord. He is my sustainer – my father. God is everything for me. None else except He, is related to me. God was with me before my birth, God is with me at present, God will be with me after my death. Hold trust and faith in God like this. Establish a firm relationship with God. Be connected. To be connected is the essence of Yoga. Those who are connected are called Yogis.

To establish good connection with God is a necessity of the present times. People try their best to establish good contact with rich and powerful people, but they hardly think of such contact with God or saints. Remember this well, contact with God and saints are always beneficial.

Robber Valio became Rishi Valmiki through his good contact with Narada. Robber Joban Pagi become a devotee of God through his contact with Shree Hari. Vaghri Sagram became Sagram Bhagat in the holy company of Shree Hari.

Discard the delusive world by treating it like a fake coin. True happiness is available only in hearty devotion and *Katha-Satsang*. Do it with love.

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava, we are not happy without Shree Krishna."

(We are not happy in the absence of Shree Krishna. We don't like our relatives or our house. We don't like to have meals and we spend nights on end without sleep. Our mind is attached to Shree Krishna. We cannot live without Shree Krishna.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! We are not happy, we like nothing else. We don't like to have food and we spend nights without sleep. We long only for our loved one - Shree Krishna. We chant the names of Shree Krishna to call him to us. O Krishna! Please come back to us."

Kadavun – 35

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Why have you come here all alone? Why haven't you brought Shree Krishna with you? Krishna is our solace and peace. Why had he protected us, when he really intended to kill us with such torment of separation? Why has he given us so much pain after loving us?" The Gopis are very sad. They recall and narrate the *leelas* of Shree Krishna.

(Shree Krishna had protected us with love. He had protected us by killing Shakatasura, Trinavarta and Vyomasura.)

God likes festivals

God likes festivals. Shree Nandrai had celebrated "*Angaparivartana Celebrations*" when Shree Krishna had achieved the age of 108 days. The entire villiage of Gokul was invited by Yashodaji to celebrate this grand event. She desired to celebrate it because child Shree Krishna had turned independently on his side in the cradle!

Nand-Yashodaji had kept the cradle beneath a bullock cart in their courtyard. They were distributing gifts to the villagers and

brahmins to earn blessings for Bal Krishna. Pots of milk and curd were laid on the cart and the cradle was nestled safely beneath the cart. Mother Yashoda forgot her child in her chores of hospitality of the visiting guests. Bal Krishna thought that this was not proper, that they should forget him in his own celebration! He desired to attract attention with his child like *leelas*. Child Krishna cried loudly to attract the attention of his mother, but the commotion of festivity suppressed his voice.

Mother could not hear him. The music and songs were blocking the cries of Shree Krishna. Meanwhile, there came Shakatasura – a demon – to kill Shree Krishna by crushing him under the weight of the cart. Shree Krishna knew about this. Shakatasura sat on the cart to crush both of them – the loaded cart and Krishna. Balkrishna knew Shakatasura’s wicked intentions and while changing side in the cradle, he kicked the cart with his foot. It tossed both of them up in the sky and they crashed on the ground with a thundering sound. Shakatasura was crushed under the broken cart. The Gopis and villagers ran to Krishna’s cradle only to find him in a cheery mood.

The Gopis said, “O Uddhava! Shree Krishna had protected us from many such demons. He had protected us from Vatsasura, Bakasura, Aghasura and other demons. We are indebted to him. He is our soul and life. He dwells forever eternally in our heart.”

“Shree Krishna has protected us twice to save our life from the wild fire. He consumed the wild fire to protect the residents of Vrindavan.”

(Angry Indra sent stormy rains and
the region of Vraj sank in stormy water.
Vraj was lost in deep darkness and
lightning.)

The Gopis said, “O Uddhava! Vraj *vasis* (residents of Vraj) used to worship Indra, but Shree Krishna asked them to do worship of Mount Goverdhan, instead of Indra – the king of the heavenly deities. Indra felt this was an insult to him and got angry with the residents of Vraj. Indra, the God of rain ordered all his clouds to lash heavy rain and storm upon the land of Vraj. He roared to them, “Wipe Vraj off the face of the earth with floods, rain and storm. Finish them all off with heavy rain and stormy floods. A small time pastoral boy has

insulted me by stopping worship of my power and majesty. Go and kill them all."

The month of *Kartika* is the beginning of winter, not the rainy season, but heavy rain lashed the village and surrounding territories. It rained constantly and heavily. The tormented villagers ran to Krishna to determine a solution to save the animals, land and human life. Shree Krishna said, "Don't worry at all. Trust in the Lord of Goverdhan. He will protect us." While assuring them with his words, Shree Krishna took the entire hillock of Goverdhan on his little finger and the inhabitants and villagers took shelter beneath the umbrella like shelter of Mt. Goverdhan. The cows, calves, domesticated animals, birds, Gopas, Gopis, children and elders enjoyed the protective shelter of Goverdhan. They lived there happily without any fear of rain or flood. A boy of seven years held a large hill on his little finger to save the lives of his devotees and other such souls!

They spent seven days in the protective fold of Lord Balkrishna. Vrajvasis thought fit to share the responsibility of holding the mount. After all, Krishna was a mere boy! As elders, it was their duty to help him in his task. They said to Bal Krishna, "O Krishna! You must be tired with this big burden. Kanaiya! Should we join you to support the mount above? It is our duty to help you."

Shree Krishna said, "O My Friends and seniors! Come and support it with me." They tied their waists firmly to ready themselves, took strong sticks and supported the hillock above them.

They then said, "Krishna! Now you may withdraw your support and remove your supportive hand. We will hold the mount collectively from now on!"

Bhagwan said to them, "Support it firmly. Be careful and take care of yourself and the hill. I am withdrawing my hand now." And as he withdrew his hand slightly, the hill started to stumble unsteadily. "O Kanaiya! Catch it and hold it up. It will crush us under its weight!" The Vraj-Vasis started to scream in panick. Bal Krishna held it instantly.

Bhagwan Krishna sheltered them in his protective refuge. They passed seven days under the protective shade of the mount. Indra realised the powers of the small child and knew now that that he was none else but the incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Indra came down to the earth and prayed for pardon. He saluted Shree Bal Krishna and

prayed, "O Lord! Please forgive me for my misbehaviour. I am your humble servant. Please, receive me in your benign refuge." Thus Shree Krishna removed the ego and the false pride of Indra.

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Lord Krishna has saved us many times. It is not possible to narrate his divine attributes. O Uddhava! What else is left to say? You know us very well and you know our heart and soul. Krishna has pained much for us, but now he has forgotten us."

Kadavun – 36

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! You are a good friend of Krishna. Please come with us and see for yourself the places where we had been with Shree Krishna." Uddhava visited the sacred places in the company of the love-torn Gopis:

(The Gopis took him to the sacred meadow where Krishna used to man his grazing cows. They took him then to the other places where they had occasions with Shree Krishna.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Krishna used to graze his cows here at the meadow. He used to stand over there, cross-legged, playing the sweet music of his flute. Here is the bank of river Jamuna, where he used to pull our *chunaris*, and there at that place he broke our pots of fresh curd. Uddhava! There is the holy tree of Kadamba. He is still there on that branch and calls to us to join in raas sports with him. Look at him, look carefully. Look back and see Shree Krishna chasing us."

"O Uddhava! When will there be a time again to enjoy such happy occasions? When will he come to meet us?" Uddhava thinks deep about his own self and finds himself in somewhat a tight spot. He had spent his whole life preaching the eternal knowledge of the supreme consciousness. He had preached repeatedly about the omniscient and omnipresent Lord, but the omniscience and omnipresence were experienced fully by the Gopis, not by him! This was a confusing riddle for Uddhava.

Great Yogis spend years in penance and meditational trance to forget and renounce the world, but they cannot forget it. They cannot renounce it from their innermost. These pastoral ladies have forgotten the world forever. They have not forgotten Krishna, for even a moment. Krishna pervades their heart and soul. Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami sings:

(Shree Krishna has captured my heart and soul. He dwells there firmly. I saw him and at once, I liked his mischievous ways. He dwells in my heart. I cannot forget him even if I try my best. I have surrendered to him - Lord Krishna.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Shree Krishna has played here with us the divine sports of *Raas Leela*:

(He played his flute at this place and here at this place he played *raas* with us. Here at this spot he deserted us and ran away to leave us in grief and sorrow.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! We are not capable of narrating the charms of *Raas Leela*. Gods and deities had come down upon the earth in guise of human beings to play *raas* with Him. Cool fragrant breeze and pleasant atmosphere were most conducive for devotional love and affection. We were all lost in *Raas Leela* and engrossed in the blissful music of His flute. But all of a sudden, he disappeared. The clever Gopi Radha had however gone with him. *Raas* had halted abruptly."

Radha walked further into the forest with Shree Krishna. She was a bit tired and was not able to walk further. She said to Krishna, "Krishna! I am tired. I cannot walk anymore. Please carry me on your shoulder." Shree Krishna consented to her request and carried her on his shoulder. Krishna carried Radha but Radha then thought herself to be most fortunate, because Shree Krishna loved her the most. Such thought gave air to her ego.

Shree Krishna is all knowing. He thought that such ego and pride would not be good for Radha. Shree Krishna said to her, "Radha! O Radha! I am hurt with a thorn and it has pierced deep in

the sole of my foot. Please hold tight the tree branch above you. I am bending down to pull out the thorn."

"As soon she held the branch, Shree Krishna disappeared from there."

Uddhavji asks them with laughter, "Then what happened to her?"

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! We Gopis found them both missing in the Raas. Radhaji was hung to a branch, screaming madly to help her. We went to her following the footprints of Krishna. We saw her there clung to the branch of a tall tree. We helped her down to the ground." The Gopis cried profusely by remembering that incident:

(They showed him those places. Past memories made them weep. They looked helplessly at Uddhava and asked him to show a means to stop the tears of pain.)

Uddhava cried on listening to these divine episodes. The Gopis saw Shree Krishna everywhere with their eyes and heart.

The Gopis said, "O Uddhavji! You have been with him for the last three or four months. But we Gopis have been his slaves and servants for the past many births. We are poor villagers with a pastoral background. What can we say to such an enlightened and well-read person such as you! You are a scholar of philosophy. We are illiterate and ignorant."

Pada - 9

(Krishna has deserted us. O Uddhava! He has snatched away his benign shelter to leave us alone and without support. Shree Krishna has left us. He is now master and lord of Kubja.)

The Gopis said, "O Uddhava! Bhagwan has forgotten us. He dwells in Mathura as the darling of Kubja.

Kadavun – 37

Uddhva loses his pride of knowledge

Uddhavji realised the power of devotional love. His own devotion became divine in the holy company of the Gopis. Knowledge is useless without devotion and love. Uddhavji realised this fact with the practical knowledge that love is better than knowledge.

Uddhavji did not like to leave Gokul. He had come there to stay for five days but stayed there for six months! He prays with a humble salute to them:

(Uddhava salutes them politely and praises their spiritual wisdom. The Gopis' love is true and unshakable. They are the body and the organs of Shree Krishna. Uddhava finds himself most fortunate to have had blissful darshan of the Gopis and believes that it was a result of his *punyas* that granted him opportunity to be with them.)

Uddhavji is a well-read scholar of eternal knowledge, but his mind was now coloured in the colour of devotion and love.

Uddhavji prayed to them with folded hands, "O Gopis! You are great and great is your devotion. Our devotion is nothing in comparison to your devotional love. I find myself most fortunate to have had your blissful darshan. O Gopis! You are released souls of Goloka."

(I am most fortunate. Shree Krishna has favoured me by sending me here to you. I am amazed with your nectar like discourse.)

Uddhavji said, "O Mothers! I am really very lucky that Shree Krishna chose me to convey his message to you. My heart is coloured in the colour of devotion by your nectar like speech. O Devout Ladies! The dust of your feet is sacred like the dust of the feet of Shree Krishna." Uddhava bowed to their lotus like feet to receive earth particles on his forehead:

(I am tempted to pray for your *charanraj*. O Great ladies! Please bless me with similar affection that you have to do service of Shree Krishna.)

Uddhavji was fulfilled by placing the *charanraj* upon himself. He said, "O God! Please give me birth as a human being in the sacred region of Vrindavan. If my *punyas* are not enough to be born as a human being, then please send me here as a creeper, a plant or a tree to receive the earth particles of this holy place. This would be enough for my ultimate benediction."

Shreeji Maharaj remembers Uddhava in his Vachanamrit (G.L.28) while explaining the majesty of devotion with knowledge. Shreeji Maharaj says, "Uddhava was wise and intelligent. He was the spokesman of Lord Shree Hari. He knew the greatness and majesty of God and therefore he prayed for birth as a creeper or a plant in Vraj to receive holy *charanraj* (earth particles from the feet of the Gopis – single-minded devotees of Shree Krishna).

Uddhavji said, "O Gopis! In my childish way, I have spoken much more than what was needed. Please don't take offense. I am your humble servant. You are like my mother. Please forgive me, as I am your child. Please bless me with your single-minded devotion.

Uddhavji prayed:

(Please be kind to me. Please order me to serve you. Please permit me to return to Shree Hari, Lord of Sadguru Nishkulanand Muni.)

"O Mothers! Please allow me to go back to Shree Krishna. I will narrate to Him your devotional love."

Kadavun – 38

("Please order me to report to Lord Jagdish." The Gopis consented, "O Brother! You may go there. We wish you a happy and safe journey.)

The Gopis said, "O Brother! You may go back to Shree Krishna, but take these gifts from us to submit to Shree Krishna." The Gopis went to their homes and brought different gifts to send to Shree Krishna. Some brought butter, some came with curd and milk. Some came with sweet dishes like *Tal Sakari* and *Laddus* and some brought *pitambar* and *dhoti*. They filled the chariot with those gifts:

(Some asked him to take Krishna's feet on his chest. Some asked him to embrace him with love. Some asked him to embrace him heart-to-heart. Some Gopis prayed to him to lay himself prostrate at the feet of Shree Krishna. Some Gopis asked him to kiss Shree Krishna's feet and a few asked him to pull his cheeks with love. Some Gopis asked him to pray on their behalf to receive them as his own people. The Gopis had disclosed their love for Shree Krishna through their personal messages.)

Shreeji Maharaj says in his *Vachanamrit* (G.F.76): 'Tied tight with our words and forced by us to give up the sense objects of his choice, there will be no recede in his devotional faith till the end of his life. Such a devotee is a true Satsangi and I love him heartily. Though I express intensely my tender feelings, I cannot love in my heart those devotees deprived of these attributes.'

Shreeji Maharaj loves only a true devotee of God. God loves his Gopis, because the Gopis love is pure and selfless. They are true devotees – single-minded devotees. Krishna has put them to much inconvenience by leaving them alone in Vrindavan, but the Gopis have never visited Mathura by disobeying the orders of Krishna.

What about our devotion? To some extent we love our world of the sense objects and to some extent we love God. This cannot be called devotion. Love should be exclusively for God and God's service. There should be no attachment to the world. But our love is divided between God and the world.

Clean your heart and mind. Dust off the particles of worldly affection. Such dust and soil can spoil the good taste of devotion and

devotional love. Do devotion like the Gopis. Do devotion like Laduba and Jivuba. Be firm and faithful to do devotion and Satsang.

We should not spoil our life. We should not waste our life as a faceless person. Householders should live like King Janak and we Sadhus should live like Jada Bharat. Install and impose yourself as a true devotee – a firm devotee. Do Satsang of great saints and great scriptures. Greatness calls for the holy company of a great Satpurusha. Live in the company of a Satpurusha and imbibe their virtuous attributes.

We have involved ourselves in an enormous task. A large industry or big business needs extra attention and good care. If not managed well, the owner may incur big losses. If worldly business and the factories are risky then what about the risks involved in the huge plan of ascent to the divine abode of God? Thus the act of devotion is not a small thing, it is the biggest task of all.

We are supposed to break the eight covers and desires for sense objects. We are required to renounce all our sins and sinful acts. We are required to transform ourselves into pure consciousness to belong to God. When we have attained such a difficult task, God is sure to grant us entry to Akshardham. This is not an insignificant matter. It is a lifetime's attainment.

The aim is too high to attain in a few births. Devotee will have to spend a large number of births, toiling hard towards the ultimate attainment. This toil is in the form of devotion and love for God. Carelessness has no room in love and devotion. Take good care of yourself and do devotion of God.

Kadavun – 39

Uddhavji thinks:

(The Gopis love is unfathomable.
Uddhava worries about their life in the
absence of Shree Krishna.)

Uddhavji readies himself for his return journey to Mathura. He thinks about how the Gopis will sustain their life? They are lamenting in the absence of Shree Krishna. Some are weeping and murmuring

softly "Krishna..... Krishna" and some are staring at sky to meet Shree Krishna. Uddhav said to them:

(Sisters! Please control yourselves. Have solace and patience. God will give you the pleasures of your choice. Wipe off the tears from your eyes.)

He said, "O Gopis! Please don't cry. Have solace. God will bless you with pleasures and happiness." The Gopis said in tears, "Brother! We have lost all hope and solace":

(What else can we do to prevent the tears from our eyes? You too are leaving us for us to bear alone the pain of separation. You have comforted us for a long while by allowing us to narrate episodes of Shree Krishna. Who will be here with us to share our unhappy moments of separations now you are leaving?)

The charming Gopis said with a sigh of agony, "O Uddhava! O Brother! You have consoled us by narrating cheerful episodes of Shree Krishna. Now who would be with us to narrate such episodes in your absence?"

"O Uddhava! You are most fortunate. You are blessed with the opportunity of doing darshan of Shree Krishna. You are most fortunate to touch the lotus-like feet of Shree Krishna."

Meanwhile Yashodaji asks him to take butter for Shree Krishna. She asks him to convey her message to Shree Krishna. She asks her son to come back soon. She feels that they also cannot live without Shree Krishna. Krishna is their soul and life. Uddhava assures them, "Don't worry. I will come here soon with Shree Krishna."

(Uddhava seeks departure by saluting the Gopis and rides his chariot.)

Uddhava pays obeisance to the Gopis and with due permission from them, he rides back on his chariot in the direction of Mathura. Mother Yashoda and the Gopis could not bear the scene of his departure. They hid their tearful eyes in the veil of their *chunari* and

wept silently. Uddhava too could not hold himself together in such emotion packed moments. Tears rolled from his eyes. He admired the devotional fervour of the Gopis. He saluted the holy land of Gokul and Vrindavan. On his way to Mathura, Uddhava reflected and pondered upon the devotional fervour and love of the residents of Vraj and compared them to himself.

Uddhava thought, "I always believed that Lord Krishna is the ocean of mercy and kindness, but in fact he is cruel and merciless. The Gopis are dying in their separation from him, but He has not come here to meet them. Not only the Gopis, but also his mother Yashoda has become a pray to his merciless acts. I will ask him to visit Mathura immediately, I will persuade him to the best of my ability." Engrossed in the surge of melancholic sentiments and shaken inwardly by the agonies faced by Yashodaji and the Gopis, the spiritually wise Uddhava came to the imperial capital of Mathura and drove his chariot straight to the palace to meet Shree Krishna.

Krishna ran to him when he saw the chariot of Uddhava. Shree Krishna is omniscient and omnipresent. He is all knowing. Shree Krishna knew that Uddhava would scold him for not honouring the tender feelings of the *Vraj-Vaasis*. Shree Krishna said, "O Uddhava! I am not rude or merciless. I am tender and sentimental. The Gopis are my soul and life." With these love soaked words, he placed his blessed palm on the head of Uddhava.

Uddhava fell instantly into meditational trance and did darshan of the supreme Lord Shree Krishna. Omnipresent Lord Shree Krishna was present in Mathura and at the same time he dwelled in Gokul and played Raasa with the Gopis, manifesting in plurality. He saw Shree Krishna sleeping on the lap of mother Yashoda, manning the cows grazing in the meadows and at the same time playing in the lap of Nand Baba. This was a wonderful experience for Uddhava. Uddhava held devoutly the lotus like feet of Shree Hari when he returned to waking state, "O Shree Krishna! Your divine *leelas* are beyond the limits of human perception. My doubts are resolved as you are forever with the Gopis":

(Uddhava came there and hugged
Shree Krishna with devotional fevour. He
satisfied the thirst in his eyes with blissful

darshan of Shree Krishna. Shree Krishna welcomed him.)

Uddhava embraced the Lord with love and affection. He looked at Bhagwan constantly to quench his thirst of darshan. Bhagwan asked him, "O Uddhava! Please tell me. How are my Gopis in Vraj?"

"O Lord! What should I say about the Gopis? They have lost worldly sense after your separation. They have stopped taking food or water and they remember only you constantly. They see nothing except you. They are not aware of their physical state."

It is possible to perform *Yoga, Yagya, Japa, Tapa, Tirtha* and difficult Vedic rituals, but very few in the world have the capacity to do devotion like the Gopis.

Kadavun – 40

True devotion rises on renouncing ego

Uddhavji said:

(I have lost my false pride of knowledge after seeing the love of the Gopis. I went to teach and preach, but I have instead come back having learnt a lot more from them.)

Uddhavji said, "O Lord! I went there to preach and advise the Gopis. I was proud of my knowledge and thought it would be very easy to persuade those illiterate villagers – the Gopis. O Lord! It was my biggest mistake to take them as illiterate. They are highly enlightened souls knowing the core of the teachings of the Vedas and other scriptures. My Lord! The omnipresence of God was the subject of my talk – mere verbal, but I had never experienced it. But the Gopis live to feel, experience and see the omnipresent supreme Lord. They are with you forever. I have learnt from them the truest way of devotion. My devotion is dry compared to the Gopis' whose devotion is full of love and affection."

(God is omnipresent. God manifests himself through the devotional love of his devotees. The sense objects receding in

detachment act like a veil to obstruct such darshan or experience. God loves his desire-free devotees.)

Uddhava said, "I have come back with a nutritious tiffin of devotional love. Words are not capable of narrating the Gopis love for You. They are supreme in devotional fervour and selfless love":

(The Gopis cannot survive without you but still they live because they hope for your return some day.)

Uddhavji said, "The Gopis are sure of your return. They are awaiting you with unbroken faith. This hope of your return sustains their life." Uddhava then submitted the gifts sent by the Gopis:

(He presents *poojan archan* and the gifts and submits that those gifts have been sent with love by the Gopis. The Gopis have asked him to hug Shree Krishna with love and affection on their behalf.)

Uddhava presents the gifts to Shree Krishna and sits there quietly.

Pada - 10

(Uddhavji prayed to Shree Krishna, "O Lord! I don't know how they have sustained their life! I never saw their eyes without tears. Whenever I did see them, I found them lamenting with tears.)

Uddhava said, "O God! I lived there with them for six months and never saw them without tears in their eyes. They weep constantly in your separation. Their eyes are swollen and red due to constant weeping. They have become weak and withered bodily, but have not lost hope of seeing you. Please send some message to console them."

Kadavun – 41

(Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! They are in deep love with me. They have renounced their bodies and belongings. They are detached from the sense objects. The Gopis of Vraj hold firm faith and trust in me.)

Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! It is true. The Gopis have firm faith and trust in me. The sense objects are most repulsive to them. Though living a householder life they are absolutely detached to the sense objects and the world. They are ascetics in the guise of householders!"

Shree Krishna admired the selfless love of the Gopis and said, "O Uddhava! The Gopis are unparalleled in their devotional love":

(The ten sense organs and the mind of the Gopis are lost in my divine form. They live in the world of devotional love.)

Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! Their mind and the ten sense organs are attached to me. They dream not of their householder life. They live forever in my devotional love."

Sublime souls are free from ominous dreams

Live a simple life to discard the desires of the sense objects. Desires are ominous. Unfulfilled desire agitates and destabilises the mind. If those desires were fulfilled, they would become stronger and more powerful by such fulfilment. Those who have controlled their sense organs are the happiest amongst people. Those whose sense organs are free and unrestricted are the most tormented.

Like an animal, I have chased the sense objects

Once, great Rishi Narada narrated the *katha* of great devotee Prahlad. Yudhishtira listened to the *katha* in his royal court. He appeared a bit worried, despite this enlightening Satsang with Rishi Narada. That looked a bit strange to Narada. Narada said, "O Yudhishtira! Are you not interested in this discourse? Why such a depressed mood? Devotional sessions should be attended happily."

Yudhishtira said, "O Great hermit! I admire the devotional fervour of child Prahlad. Great is Prahlad and great is his devotion. His faith and trust are unique. It was his faith and trust that led to

God's manifestation from the pillar. He did darshan of God at the tender age of five years. This showed his strength of detachment and devotion. I am in my late fifties. After a long journey of fifty-five years, what have I attained? Nothing - a big zero. I haven't even had a small glimpse of God! This is most shameful on my part."

"I have spent my life like an animal chasing the sense objects. I am a slave to my sense organs and rendered such slavery to them by eating, drinking and sleeping. I have lost my precious life in such futile pursuit. I have spent my life like dogs and cats."

"Prahlad realised God at a young age of five years! Think of the devotional fervour of Prahlad! Bhagwan himself came to him and manifested himself from the pillar to prove the truth of the words of his devotee – Prahlad."

"O Narada! I have earned wealth, power, majesty and imperial grace in my life, but I haven't attained God. My life is fruitless - good for nothing, without devotion or devotional fervour. I am lamenting in my heart and am not at peace. I have wasted my whole life running after undesirable objects and did nothing for the most desirable object of all - I did nothing to realise God."

Yudhishtira was very sad for himself, and therefore he looked disenchanted during the Katha session.

Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! Feel the devotional fervour of the Gopis":

(Their vital air is slave to my love.
Their mind and sense organs are merged in
me. They have burnt their desires by loving
me.)

Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! The Gopis mind and soul are merged in me. They are free from the gross matter (Maya).

Discard ephemeral pleasures to ascend to the spiritual plane

The souls are trapped in the maze of ephemeral pleasure. Gross matter has no end. Wherever one goes, Maya will be there to lure the mind and soul. Just as a worker at a coalmine cannot escape staining, we too will have to live in this world – the world of illusion – Maya. Look upon Maya by treating it like fire. Control its effect through spiritual wisdom. Fire is most indispensable, yet nobody would hold

fire in his hands. Be extra careful when handling Maya, just as you would be careful when handling fire.

The external world is not so obstructive in devotion, but the world within, the world encroaching the mind, is a most harmful hurdle in our devotional ways. The mind is overpowered with the gross matter within, thinks always and thinks constantly about wealth, children, wife and power. It leaves no room for devotion and devotional fervour. Therefore, discard the gross matter from the mind. Wealth and woman are two powerful forms of Maya. If the mind is stuck to any one of these two, then it will never be attached to God or devotion. Hold your mind firmly - hold it consciously. An enlightened devotee takes good care of his mental processes and diverts them directly to devotion and God.

A punishment is a must for sins committed by us. Whether it was with our body or with the mind, but a sin is a sin and it is liable to be punished. Wealth and woman cause such sins. Withdraw your mind from them and do devotion of God.

Shree Hari said, "O Uddhava! The Gopis have no desires. They are free from desire; they have disowned their heavenly abode and ultimate emancipation for the sake of me! They have renounced all their pleasures. I love their devotional fervour. I am a slave to their love." Shree Hari said further:

(I love those who love me and follow behind them always. The rope of love ties me to them. I do whatever they ask me to do.)

Kadavun – 42

Devotion with love is better than penance and knowledge. God showers his pleasure on worldly souls. But man is so unwise that he fails to love God. Remember repeatedly the favours granted by God and strengthen your devotional fervour.

Love is best for devotion

Jayadeva was a great devotee of the Lord. Devout poet Jayadeva and his wife – Padamavati – were a god-fearing couple, engaged in devotion and service of God. Jayadeva was a scholar of

literature and scriptures. He was an enlightened soul who is renowned for composing the scripture 'Gita – Govinda' (the praises of Lord Govinda). In those days he composed a song in praise of Lord Govinda, but despite his repeated efforts, he was unable to complete it in suitable diction. He finally decided to leave the *shloka* incomplete to try again later and went to the river to have a refreshing bath.

His wife was busy cooking the meals when he left the house to bathe. Meanwhile, Bhagwan in guise of Jayadeva, went to the house of his devotee to help him by composing the *shloka* on his behalf. Padmavati saw him coming back to the house. She asked him, "Have you come back without bathing?"

Bhagwan in guise of Jayadeva said to her, "Devi! It is true. I have come back in a hurry to get my inspiration noted before I forget it. You know, I have spent a good many hours to complete the *shloka*, but the words chosen earlier were not fit for the *shloka*. Now, I will complete it," and he completed the *shloka* with his own hand.

Padmavati said, "You were much upset before but now it seems to have settled. Now please go back quickly to have the holy bath as the meal is ready. You must be hungry."

Padmavati didn't realise that he was not her husband, but God himself was in front of her. The Lord in guise of Jayadeva, said to her, "Devi! I am very hungry. It is better if you serve me the meal now."

She arranged a dish for him and served Roti, Daal, Vegetable and rice. God sat there to have his meal. She too sat beside him to serve the meal. She was a bit confused by her husband. He never had a meal without bathing. Then why did he do so today? Regardless, he was her husband and whatever he thought fit was perfectly welcome. She pushed away the nagging thoughts from her mind with due respect for her husband. God had the meal in the guise of Jayadeva, walked into the inner room and disappeared from there.

Meanwhile, Jayadeva came there singing and chanting sacred *shlokas*. Padmavati was shocked in bewilderment when she saw him. She could not believe it. Jayadeva came to her and said, "Devi! What are you thinking about? Why do you look so perplexed? Please serve to me the meal. I am very hungry after having the refreshing dip."

Padmavati uttered in astonishment, "What is this? You only just had the meal. Your plate of leftovers is still there. And you want to have a meal again?"

“Devi! What are you saying? I have just come here, after my holy bath.”

“O My Husband! Please try to recall. You wrote your incomplete shloka just now. Please refresh your memory.”

“Devi! I have come just now, not before.”

“Then, who was he?” Said she.

“Devi! Bhagwan has favoured you with his blissful darshan.”

They were both thrilled with such miracle. When they checked his scripture, Jayadeva found the shloka completed by the Lord!

Jayadev came back to the kitchen and added some water to the dish graced by God. He had the leftovers as *prasadam* of Bhagwan.

Jayadeva said, “O Lord! I salute your love for your devotees. You manifest yourself in different forms to favour your devotees. You have favoured my wife with your blissful darshan. But I am not as fortunate. You have left me without your darshan.” Tears rolled from his eyes when Jayadeva concluded his prayer.

God manifested himself and placed his blessed hands on the head of his devotee. “Jayadeva! Please stop crying. I have come here for you. Devotees are very dear to me. Now complete your Gita-Govinda. Don’t hesitate to call me to help you in your devotional service.” Bhagwan disappeared from there with these assuring words.

Shree Hari said, “O Uddhava! There are many kinds of devotion to attain me, but the devotion with love and affection, is the best amongst all these.”

(I remember my loved ones. My loved ones remember me. We love each other, like love between the soul and the body. I dwell in people – my dear devotees – who are simple, innocent and affectionate.)

Shree Hari said, “O Uddhava! My devotees take good care of me and I take good care of my devotees. There is absolute oneness between us. It is the kind of oneness that exists between the soul and body. I dwell eternally in the heart of my devotees who are simple, innocent and affectionate. I am bound by their love.

God obeys Love

Namdev was a devotee of God. Since his early childhood, Namdev learnt and imbibed devotion from his father. His father taught him *poojan* and meditation of God. Once, he said to his son, "My Son! I am going on a short tour. Do daily *poojan* and serve *thaal* to Lord Thakorji. Serve milk as *thaal* and have *prasad* from it. Don't drink it without serving it to God." Namdev was very happy with such assignment. The boy could not sleep in excitement of serving meals to the Lord. He saw God standing in front of his eyes.

Namdev got up early in the morning, concluded daily rituals, had a ritual bath and prepared boiled milk to serve to God. He did *pooja* and presented *aarti* with sweetened milk as *thaal*. He kept the milk bowl in front of God and prayed:

(O Maharaj! I am serving this boiled milk. Please drink it lovingly.)

Namdev prayed to him with love. He prayed heartily and said, "O Lord! My father has asked me to take good care of you, by serving *poojan* and *thaal*. He has asked me to have milk only after serving it to you. O Lord! I am hungry. Why are you not drinking the milk? Please have it quickly."

"O Lord! Have I committed any mistake? I am a small boy. There may be some mistake in sweetening it. Should I add some more sugar?" Namdev then added some sugar to make the milk sweeter. He then prayed again "Please drink it now. Why are you not saying anything? Don't you like it? Are you shy? Should I shut my eyes?" Namdev shut his eyes, but God still did not drink the milk! Child Namdev thought for a while and said to Thakorji. "O Lord! Have it all alone. I will hide somewhere to give you privacy. Now be quick and drink it." He left the room for a while and came back to receive *prasad*, but found the milk unconsumed. The bowl was still full and Lord Thakorji had not touched it!

Dispirited, Namdev cried in front of Thakorji and said, "O Vitthal! O Vitthal! I will not drink the milk either if you do not consume it right now. I will crush my head by pounding it upon your threshold." As he tried to pound his head, Lord Vitthal manifested himself before him and took the bowl to drink the milk!

Namdev danced in joy when he saw Lord Vitthal having milk from his bowl. "Finally you are drinking the milk. For so long I have

been requesting you to drink the milk.” Then he took the hand of God and asked him not to finish the whole bowl. He prayed politely to leave some milk as prasad. He too was hungry waiting for prasad. Lord Vitthal pleased with his innocent ways and devotional love, took him on his lap and helped him to have the prasadi of milk. God said, “My child Namdev! I love devotees like you. You are very dear to me.”

God answers our ardent prayers. The omnipresent Lord manifests himself to answer our hearty call. He is not away from us for even a second. Devotion cannot succeed without dedicated devotional service. Devotional love holds the power to transform an image into the real Lord.

Shree Hari said to Uddhava:

(I cannot live with such a devotee who is dry in his heart and mind and his eyes are without any feelings of love. Even though they may do devotion day and night, I still won't go to see them personally.)

Devotion is an ornament of knowledge

A saint was conducting *Katha-Satsang* at a village. His discourses were very interesting and appealing. Hundreds of villagers were gathered there to attend his Satsang session, but none were interested in the *Katha-Varta*. Some of them were dozing, some were snoring and some were looking here and there. None were concentrating in the discourse. A few of them left the session to enjoy rustic talk and backbiting.

Almost all of them left the session except for one, who was sat upright looking straight at the reader priest. The reader priest concluded his discourse and addressed the lone Satsangi, “Gentleman! I appreciate your dedication. You have real thirst for the ultimate knowledge. You know well the majesty and glory of this *Katha-Satsang*. This is why you are here with solace and peace. I admire your devotion and dedication.”

The listener then said to him, “Maharaj! The carpet you are sitting on belongs to me. I was merely waiting impatiently for the end

of your katha. I will be comforted only when I have collected that carpet. I'm hardly interested in your katha session. I don't like listening to such discourses. I was here just to guard my carpet!"

Devotion and devotional love cannot penetrate such dry and selfish hearts. A mere presence will be futile if attention and concentration are missing. Food is useless, if it cannot be digested. Holy company will not be of any use if it cannot touch our heart and soul.

Devotion and the devotional sessions call for spiritual strength, and such spiritual strength cannot be had without the knowledge of the majesty of devotion. One cannot fight the eternal entity or gross matter (Maya), without spiritual strength and enlightenment. God manifests himself to his truest devotees. God is bound by the devotional love of his devotees.

Always think that God is with you. Think that he dwells with you. Realise that God joins you in all your works and acts.

Kadavun – 43

The Gopis' love is pure and selfless. God takes good care of them. God praises their love and admires their dedicated service. All our scriptures have admired the devotional love of the Gopis. Shruti scriptures have sung their praises. The Gopis are actually Rishis from the ancient years. In ancient times, they had spent centuries doing penance and absorbed in meditational trance to attain God. They have been born as Gopis of Vraj and God has showered his pleasure by living with them. God dwells with them forever.

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami admires the devotional love of the Gopis. Swami admires their mind, heart and soul for such dedicated devotion. God dwells everywhere and in every molecule of the Gopis. Brahmanand Swami sings:

(How fortunate are the Gopis of Vraj!
They love Shree Krishna and Lord Krishna
loves them. They are most fortunate to
taste the nectar of the lips of Shree Krishna.
They have come to see the lotus-like face of
Shree Krishna, but at home their families

think that they have gone to milk the cows. The Gopis' life is fulfilled. Lord Krishna graces her home. Brahmanand Swami admires the good fortunes of the Gopis. Lord Krishna dwells with them.)

Vraj is the land of devotional love. Vrindavan is the sacred land of divine *leelas* of Shree Krishna. Rishi Shandilya lived there. He used to arise early in the morning during the last quarter of nighttime. He concluded daily rituals and attended *poojan* worship of God. He worshiped Panchadev, read holy Geeta, chanted Gayantri Japa, read Vishnu Sahasra Naam, recited Shreemad Bhagwat and performed twenty one thousand Japa of the sacred names of God. The whole day passed in such devotional service. He consumed food once during the day, and that too a meal of fruits at late night. He spent the whole day in devotion and worship of God.

We should do devotion by practicing *nitya niyama* and the tenets of this axiomatic sect. We should read everyday the scriptures of Shikshapatra, Vachanamrit, Narayankavach, Janmangal and the devotional songs written and composed by Nand sants. Nitya Niyams are a must for sanctity of life. Mental peace and solace are attainable by a simple and well-disciplined life.

Shandilya was poor like Sudama, but he was rich and wealthy with the wealth of devotion, meditation and knowledge. His wealth was divine and majestic. Purnamasi was his wife and Madhumangal was his son. They were a happy family.

Krishna and Madhumangal were good friends. They used to play together. Shree Krishna desired in his heart to have meals from this holy family. Krishna with this intention proposed a feast to have meals together. He asked all his friends and Madhumangal, to bring tiffins from each of their homes.

Madhumangal came home and asked his mother to fix something for his tiffin. But poor mother Purnamasi only managed to give a pot of buttermilk to her son to take with him for the feast. The buttermilk had however become sour by the next morning. The boys at the meadow were arriving with tiffins of sweets, delicacies and other tasty eatables. They all sat together to share the meals among themselves.

Madhumangal was very shy of his buttermilk. He thought that the boys might make a joke of his tiffin, if he disclosed it to them. He decided to drink it hurriedly to finish off the pot. Krishna stopped him when he saw Madhumangal drinking something from the pot. Krishna said, "Don't drink it all alone by yourself! Give it to me, I want to have some." But Madhumangal emptied his pot. The buttermilk streamed from either side of his mouth so Krishna began to lick the buttermilk from Madhumangal's mouth! Madhumangal prayed to him to stop licking.

At this time, Brahma had come there to do darshan of God. He saw them from the sky. He was shocked by such behaviour of Shree Krishna and thought that, though hailed universally as the Supreme God, Shree Krishna acted in front of him like a pastoral boy, lacking common decency. God cannot act so clumsily. He was merely a villager, illiterate and uncivilized. Brahma desired to test him; "I will take him as God, only if he creates a world like I have."

With his divine powers, Brahma stole the calves in the herd. He took them to Brahm Loka (divine abode of the God of creation), and waited there for the next move of Shree Krishna. The pastoral boys remembered their calves after they had their meals and found them missing from the herd. They said, "Kanaiya! Our calves are missing from the herd. Where have they gone?"

Krishna said, "Friends! Don't worry about them. Have your meals leisurely. I will get them for you." Krishna left his group to search for the calves. Brahma grabbed the opportunity and consigned those children to his Brahma Loka.

Krishna is the omniscient supreme Lord. He knew that Brahma was responsible for the missing calves and the children. He manifested himself in plurality to duplicate each child and calf. The children and calves were recreated as per their actual number. Now Krishna was playing with Krishna! Krishna was enjoying pleasures with Krishna! The cows were feeding their calves who were actually Krishna!

Brahmaji waited for some time in his abode to study the situation and came back to the world to satisfy himself. He came to the meadows of Vrindavan and saw from the sky, the entire group of children playing with Shree Krishna and saw the cows feeding their young. Nothing was amiss!

Brahmaji was puzzled with such vision. What was true? What he saw before him or the calves he stole with the children in Brahmloka? When he gave good thought to the developments, he realised Shree Krishna dwelled in all the children and calves.

Brahmaji prayed, "O Lord! Please forgive me. Who am I to test you, but in a state of delusion I have ventured to test your good self. Please pardon me for my sin. You are the supreme God of the universe. You can create, sustain and destroy the cosmoses at your own free will. Your divine powers are unfathomable. You are omniscient and omnipresent. O Supreme Lord Shree Krishna! Please forgive me."

Shree Krishna had defeated the deities with his divine *leelas*. With this *leela* of calves, he destroyed the ego of Brahma. With his Govardhan *leela*, Shree Krishna had destroyed the ego of Indra and with his *raas leela*, he had destroyed the ego of Kamdeva (deity of carnal desires.)

We hail the land, forest, meadows, Gopas, Gopis, children, cows and residents of Vraj, because Shree Krishna had graced them with his blessed presence. Shreeji Maharaj remembers the holy place of Vrindavan in his Vachanamrit: (J-5) and says, 'I have performed many holy fires in Jetalpur. I have graced repeatedly with my saints the river of Dev Sarovar. I have graced personally the homes in Jetalpur and I have graced them hundreds of times. I have had feast meals at those homes of my devout followers. Therefore the region of Jetalpur has become holy like Vrindavan.'" As the dialogue progressed, the three Gods came to do darshan of Shree Hari. Shreeji Maharaj said, "Brahma (god of creation), Vishnu (god of sustenance) and Shiva (god of destruction) come here regularly to do darshan of this holy-fellowship and me. You too are blessed with darshan of them." Sadguru Badrinathanandji sings:

(How fortunate the town of Jetalpur
is! No holy place is comparable to it. The
dust of Jetalpur purifies the soul. Servant
Badrinath sings the praises of Jetalpur.)

Nishkulanand Swami says:

(The Gopis have earned credit through their selfless love. Householders and saints praise their virtuous attributes. In the past, present or future, nothing stands equal to devotional love and affection. Lord of Nishkulanand Swami likes nothing except love.)

The Gopis have won the world with their devotional love. Devotion means to love Shree Krishna with the knowledge of his majesty.

Sneh Gita narrates the greatness of Bhakti Yoga

To concentrate on each organ of God, is called meditational concentration. To retain God in the heart through meditation is called retention. Daily worship and meditation helps the soul to forget the world and the body. Love is a must in devotion. Devotional love is the best among the yogic ways:

(Recitation of this scripture and listening to Sneh Geeta gives eternal pleasure. It narrates the divine ways and lifestyle of Shree Krishna. It is like nectar for the devotees of Shree Hari.)

Kadavun – 44

Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami conveys his blessings. Eternal pleasure rises in the heart by listening to or singing this scripture. Sneh Gita is sweet and tasty like nectar. Devotees love to read it repeatedly. God dwells eternally in the heart of such devout souls. The lamp of knowledge and devotion kindles in the heart of listeners and readers of Sneh Gita. Sneh Gita cleans the mind and soul.

(God destroys desires and fulfils the means through his blissful presence. Shrutis have declared this truth repeatedly.)

Nishkulanand Swami says, "Desires burn to ashes through the fire of meditation. Devotion with love makes our life holy. Man or woman, educated or illiterate, upper caste or lower caste, whoever

comes to God, whoever becomes free bodily, comes closer and nearer to the supreme Lord.”

Do devotion and meditation with daily *Japa*, sing devotional songs in devotional fervour and listen to the discourses to discard Maya and its adverse influence. These will destroy desires.

Eternal happiness dwells in our heart, but not in any ephemeral pleasures of the world. How do we know there is a rise in eternal happiness of God? The joy of *kirtans*, *raas*, *pooja* and *satsang-samaiya*, indicates a rise in the eternal happiness of God. The soul realises the pleasures of Akshardham by concentrating on the divine image of God. Live in the company of God. Live with pride of such company.

(The eternal Supreme Lord desired of his own free will to sing the scripture of Sneh Gita. Nishkulanand is merely an instrument in the hand of God to deliver this scripture).

Sneh Gita is a means to attaining God. Sneh Gita aims for absolute detachment and devotional love.

There are eleven Padas and forty-four Kadavans. The scripture was concluded on the auspicious fourth day of the bright half of *Vaishakha* in V.S. 1872.

Pada - 11

Nothing is comparable to devotional love. Devotional love is supreme. *Japa*, *Tapa*, *Tirtha*, *Yoga*, *Sadhana*, *Yagya* and others are futile without devotional love. *Upavasa* (fasting), *Tyaga* (renunciation) and *Tapa* (penance) are not fruitful without devotional love.

(Love is the lifeline of devotional service. Nothing can be compared to sublime love.)

Penance, *vratas* and meditation are not fruitful without devotion and love. Millions of souls are engaged in such dry penance and futile meditation. Shree Krishna has not favoured them with his blissful darshan, but has surrendered himself to the love soaked affection of the Gopis:

(Shree Krishna has surrendered to the love of the residents of Vraj. He has sported *raas leela* with them. He loves them heartily and gives them eternal pleasure. Lord Sahajanand, the Lord and Master of Nishkulanand, surrenders to selfless love and devotion.)

Lord Purushottam Narayan has displayed many leelas in his human form by having meals with his devotees and saints. He is bound to the devotional fervour of his devotees. I salute humbly to the lotus like feet of Lord Sahajanand Swami.

Darshan, listening or recitation of Sneh Gita, relieves the soul from the burden of sins and consigns the soul to the divine abode of God.

Sneh Gita is a scripture of love

The scripture of Sneh Gita aims to resurrect devotion with detachment and knowledge. This knowledge and detachment augments through reading and listening to Sneh Gita. Knowledge and detachment are very much in our heart, but they are in dormant state, wrapped in Maya. Sneh Gita helps them to rise and grow by shattering the bonds of Maya. Sneh Gita is a rousing call for all aspirants. Devotion rises and grows from knowledge and detachment.

Sneh Gita helps us to lament and cry. We can cry for our pitiable state by listening to the love soaked episodes of the Gopis. Sneh Gita helps us to awaken from the deep sleep of householder life. Sneh Gita improves our quality of life. It brings a revolution in our stagnated life.

The wheat flour in a sweet dish of *Shira* is of lesser value. Its cost is less and therefore is a very cheap ingredient, but theoretically, the wheat flour in *Shira* is highly valuable like butter oil, because a dish of *Shira* cannot be made without wheat flour. Thus the ingredients of wheat flour, sugar and *Ghee* (butter oil) are equally important for a sumptuous dish of *Shira*. Similarly, the ingredients like knowledge, detachment, devotion and ethical duties are equally important for ultimate salvation. These are the virtuous attributes of a true devotee. The Gopis had perfect knowledge, devotion, detachment and practice of ethical duties.

Sneh Gita is a scripture of selfless love. It teaches us to love our God. It helps us to forget the gross body and develop devotional love for God. Once we have developed such love, there is no question of God manifesting himself in front of us, his loved ones.

| | Thus ends here Sneh Gita | |