

NĪLĀCALE VRAJA MĀDHURĪ

By Rasika Mohan Vidyābhūṣaṇa

Ākṣepānurāga (Sorrowful Passion)

After seeing the Ratha Yātrā some of the Bengali devotees returned home while some devotees, yearning for the company of Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara, stayed on in Nīlācala until the month of Bhādra (August-September). However, in the month of Āśvina they also returned home on the order of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Day after day the agitation of love-in-separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa increased in Śrī Gaurasundara's heart. He could somehow spend the days with His devotees, but at night His unsteadiness increased. Finally He would lose Himself and weep out *hā kṛṣṇa* at length like a young separated girl.

One day the Lord wandered around in the evening and arrived at the beach. In rapt attention He sat down on the sand, accompanied by Rāmānanda and Śikhi Māiti, shortly after joined by Govinda dāsa and Śrīpāda Svarūpa. The beach is naturally very beautiful in autumn evenings. Although the ocean is the great witness of the past it is as if ever new and ever young.

Mahāprabhu's eyes were fixed on the ocean— who knows what feelings arose in His heart when He beheld the blue ocean-water, the gentle and peaceful atmosphere of the ocean, the fresh sweetness of the beach-sand and the bright blue sky? Looking at His two eyes it seems as if He was bereft of external consciousness. Seeing these feelings of the Lord, Rāmānanda and Śikhi Māiti became so upset that they could not even understand the words that Svarūpa and Govinda dāsa spoke. Thinking that the Lord's mood would later subside, Svarūpa and Govinda silently sat on the sand. A little while later Rāya Rāmānanda looked behind himself for some reason and saw Svarūpa and Govinda dāsa.

Svarūpa hinted to Rāya Rāmānanda not to say anything. Ahead of them was the endless blue horizon of the ocean. Everyone waited silently, thirstily glancing at Śrī Gaurāṅga's lotus-face. Gradually Śrī Gaurāṅga's eyes became soaked with tears, teardrops trickled down His cheeks— the beauty of His lotus-face in the red evening-sunlight was indescribable. His lips, that defy the beauty of Bimba-fruits, trembled, as

if He wanted to say something, but couldn't express it. After a short while only one very sweet word was indistinctly audible — *to-mā-ra*.

The word was taken from the tune of a song. The tears in His eyes had meanwhile dried up. The Lord checked His feelings and softly began to sing—

tomāra preme bandī hoilām śuno śyāma rāya

("Listen, O Śyāma Rāy! I am bound by Your love!")

This gentle tune aimed at eternity, floating over the endless paths of the blue ocean. Rāma Rāya indicated to Svarūpa that the Lord's fingers were twitching. It was as if the song could not fully emanate from His throat, so it came to His fingers and played around there. Again the tune of the song became audible—

*tomāra preme bandī hoilām śuno śyāma rāy
tomā vine mora cite kichui nā bhāy
śayane svapane āmi tomāra rūpa dekhi*

"Hear me, O Śyāma Rāy! I am bound by Your love! My heart does not care for anything else but You. I see Your form both in sleep and in dreams!"

The tune of the song again fall silent, but its resonance continued to resound up and down the hearts of the Lord's *pārśadas*. The Lord's eyes were closed, His voice was silent — like the great meditation of a great *yogī*. Small streams of tears trickled from His eyes and it was as if His body were to tumble over, so Rāy Rāmānanda quickly came to hold Him. Svarūpa is forever the Lord's second form. He began to sing a song in such a tune that it was as if it emanated from the Lord's own throat —

*śayane svapane āmi tomāra rūpa dekhi
bharamē tomāra rūpa dharaṇīte lekhi
gurujana mājhe yadi thākiye bosiyā
parasaṅge nāma śuni daravaye hiyā
pulake pūraye aṅga āṅkhe bhara jala
tāhā nivārite āmi hoiye vikala
niśi dina tomāre bandhu pāśarite nāri
caṇḍī dāsa kohe hiyā rākho sthira kori*

"In sleep and in dreams I see Your form and out of bewilderment I draw Your form in the sand. If I sit among My superiors and accidentally hear Your name, My heart melts. My body is studded with goosebumps and My eyes are filled with tears—I am very agitated when I try to stop them! O friend! I cannot forget You either in the day or at night! Caṇḍi dās says: "Keep your heart calm!"

As soon as Śrīpāda Svarūpa's song was finished Bosu Rāmānanda anxiously said: "Śrīpāda, find some way to bring the Lord back to external consciousness! I greatly suffer to see His beautiful form greyed with beach-sand— my heart breaks when I see it!"

Govinda said: "Bosu Mahāśaya! I suppose the Creator has created me to tolerate this harsh suffering!"

Rāy Rāmānanda used his hands to wipe the tears from his own eyes and continued to breathe heavy sighs. In a grave mood Svarūpa said: "The Lord's trance can be broken with great effort— but His ecstasy lies in here! In these different transcendental trances He relishes the flavours of *līlā*. If we try to break His *bhāvāveśa* (ecstatic trance), His suffering will increase! In this condition He told us many times:

keno vā jāgāle more vṛthā koṣṭa dite; pāiyā kṛṣṇera rūpa nā pāinu dekhite

"Why have you given Me vain pain by awakening Me? I attained Kṛṣṇa's form but could not behold it!"

His *ānanda* is our *ānanda*! Mother Śacī herself understood this also! If it were not so, would she ever have given Him permission to take *sannyāsa*? The Lord will return to external consciousness soon. Let us sing a few songs in the mean time— what do you say, Bosu Mahāśaya?"

Rāma Bosu: "All right. I suppose that *ākṣepānurāga* (sorrowful passion) is now strong within the Lord's heart!"

Svarūpa: "That can be understood from the song that emanated from His divine mouth! Shall I sing another song on *ākṣepānurāga*?"

Rāma Bosu:

*rāti koinu divasa divasa koinu rāti
bujhite nārinu bondhu tomāra pīriti
ghara koinu bāhir bāhir koinu ghar
pora koinu āpan āpan koinu por*

"I made night into day and day into night— O friend! I cannot understand Your love! I made the outside my home and my home the outside, I made others my own and my own I made into others."

"Did you want to sing that song?"

Svarūpa: "That is also a good song to sing— but I was thinking of another song, this one:

kānu parivāda, mone chilo sādha
saphala korilo vidhi
kujana vacane, chāribo kemone
se heno guṇera nidhi

"Fate has fulfilled My long-standing wish to be slandered in connection with Kṛṣṇa. How can I give up such an ocean of qualities and the words of the wicked?"

Rāma Bosu: "This is perfect. People fear being slandered, but Śrīmatī eagerly longs for *kānu parivāda* (Kṛṣṇa-slander). All glories to Śrī Rādhā's love! What after that?"

Svarūpa: "What more is there to say after this? I will tell you some more things—

hiyā dara dara, kore nirantara,
yāre nā dekhile mori
hiyāra bhitorē, ki śela paśilo
bolo nā ki buddhi kori
āmarā akhala, hṛdaya sarala,
kathāya bhūliyā genu
porera kathāya, pirīti koriyā,
janama kāndiyā manu

"My heart is throbbing constantly and I die when I don't see Him. Has a javelin pierced my heart? Tell me what is happening? We are simple-hearted and honest— we have forgotten everything after hearing about Him! We have fallen in love through hearsay and are thus weeping life-long."

Rāma Bosu: "So it is Śrīpāda! The gopīs don't love Kṛṣṇa after due consideration or on purpose! They love Him because they have heard about His beauty from others. Behold the burning love of these simple-hearted cowherd girls— they have forgotten

about everyone else and fell in love with Him— is there thus only misery in loving Kṛṣṇa?"

Svarūpa: "What else is it, on final account? Hence the *padakartās* also say:

*sakala phule, bhramarā bule,
ki tāra āpana par
caṇḍīdāsa kohe, kānura pīriti,
kevala dukhera ghara*

"The bee goes from flower to flower. Does he think in terms of 'mine' and 'others'? Caṇḍī dāsa says: "Love for Kṛṣṇa is the abode of pure misery."

But even in that misery they cannot give up loving Kṛṣṇa. The fly scorches to death when it flies into a flame, but still it runs towards the flame!"

Rāma Bosu: "Wonderful passion for Kṛṣṇa, most wonderful! Our Buro Ghoṣa Mahāśaya used to sing:

*kāhāre kohibo, marama vedana,
kebā yābe paratīta
kānura pīriti, jhuri dibā rāti,
sadāi camake cita
soi! chārite nāri je kālā!
kula teyagiyā, dharama chāriyā,
loibo kalaṅkera ḍālā*

"To whom shall I tell of My heartache? Who will believe Me? I am in love with Kṛṣṇa day and night, and this constantly astonishes My heart! O *sakhi*, I cannot give up this black boy! I will give up My family and virtuous reputation and I will accept infamy!"

Svarūpa: "This surely depicts passionate love for Śyāma! When I studied Vedānta in Kāśī, my fellow *sannyāsa*-students mocked me for worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus I told them:

*bole boluk more manda āche joto jan; chārite nāribo āmi śyāma cikaṇa dhana
se rūpa lāvaṇi mora hiyāya lāgi āche; hiyā hoite pāñjara kāṭi loiyā jāy pāche*

"Let them all call me a fool— I won't give up the glossy treasure called Śyāma! His beautiful form is fixed in my heart. They will try to tear a rib from my heart to take Him out!"

Rāma Bosu: "Śrīpāda! That means that you are also suffering from *kānu parivāda* (Kṛṣṇa-slander)?"

Svarūpa: "Where is my qualification for that? Is it possible for me to be so fortunate? *kānu parivāda* is the inexhaustible treasure of Vraja-rasa— a boundless ocean of *anurāga*! There is no limit to love for Śyāma! Śrīmatī said:

piyāra pīṛiti lāgi yoginī hoinu; tabu to dāruṇa cite soyāsti nā pānu

"For the love of My sweetheart I became a *yoginī*— still My hard heart cannot find peace."

Rāma Bosu: "The Lord is still absorbed in His ecstatic experience, it is as if His lotus-face is blossoming with *ānanda rasa*. Now sing another song."

On Bosu Mahāśaya's request Śrīpāda Svarūpa began to sing another song with a soft voice, absorbed in ecstasy:

*sukhera lāgiyā, ei ghara bāndhinu,
anale puṛinu gelo
amiya sāgare, sināna korite,
sakali garala bhelo*

"I constructed this house, hoping for happiness, but instead I was scorched by fire. I came to bathe in an ocean of nectar, but everything turned into poison."

As Svarūpa's voice sang the final line of the song, the Lord awoke and got up, singing *hā kṛṣṇa hā kṛṣṇa! hṛdayera sakhā!* in a plaintive tune. When Svarūpa had commenced the song the Lord was in a half-external state. At the beginning of the song His awareness returned. Clutching Rāya Rāmānanda's neck He anxiously exclaimed— "Rāma Rāya, I thought that I would soothe My scorching heart by jumping into the ocean of blissful Śyāma-prema and thus drinking the nectar of this prema, but I am so unlucky that this nectar turned into poison instead. Svarūpa has spoken well— My friend revealed Himself and attracted Me out of My house by playing on His flute, but now I cannot find Him anymore despite searching for Him. I think I will wander from forest to forest. I thought I had fallen on the beach of the ocean when I could not find

Him. But where is that Muralī-vadana, who has left Me floating without any shore-support? Now My heart is burning day and night!" Svarūpa again sang:

sakhi ki mora kapāle lekhi
śītala boliyā, o cānda sevinu
bhānura kiraṇa dekhi
ucala boliyā, acale corinu,
poṛinu agādha jale
lachamī cāhite, dāridrya beḍhalo
māṇika hārānu hele

"O *sakhi*, what was written on My forehead? I served this moon, taking it to be cool, but instead I beheld the rays of the sun. I climbed a mountain, taking it to be high, but instead I fell into deep water. I wanted wealth and an end to poverty, but instead I lost My jewel."

Then the autumnal moon arose within the blue sky, and the moonbeams diffused an amazing beauty of sweet nectar over the beach-sand and the ocean's blue water. This plain pale beauty was again increased by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the manifest golden form of Śrī Rādhā's love, along with His associates. Agitated by Svarūpa's song Prabhu said: "Svarūpa, the tune of Your song has snatched My heart away, I won't obstruct anymore — the nectar of Your songs is the final resort of My burning heart. And after that, Svarūpa?"

Then another stream of nectar emanated from Svarūpa's throat:

piyāsa lāgiyā, jalade sevinu,
bajara poṛiyā gelo
kohe caṇḍidāsa, śyāmera pirīti,
maraṇa adhika śela

"I served a raincloud because I was thirsty, but was hit by a thunderbolt instead. Caṇḍī dāsa says: 'Love for Śyāma is a javelin that hurts even more than death.'"

Mahāprabhu said: 'Svarūpa, can My thirst be quenched after hearing so little? Kṛṣṇa-kathā is naturally sweet— the *līlā rasa* is crystallised by Your song and has taken possession of My heart. My eyes are just anxiously seeking Him across the endless blue

horizon of the peaceful ocean. It is as if I am bereft of Him even while seeing Him, and My heart is flapping in a fire. How can I ever pass this time?"

Then the nectar of Svarūpa's voice resounded once more and the Lord and the devotees listened with anxious hearts—

*viṣera gāgāri, kṣīra mukhe bhoṛi,
kebā āni dilo āge
korinu āhāra, nā kori vicāra,
e vadha kāhāra lāge
mīna lobhi mṛgī, ānande dhāite,
vyādha śara dilo buke
jalera sapharī, āhāra korite,
baraśī lāgalo mukhe
nava ghana heri, piyāse cātakī
caṣcu pasāralo āśe
vārika vāraṇa, korilo pavana,
kuliśa milalo śeṣe*

"Who has placed a jug of poison at My mouth, as if it were milk? I drank it without thinking— who is responsible for this murder? A doe blissfully ran, greedy for fish, but the hunter pierced her heart with an arrow. The fish in the water wants to eat, but gets a hook with bait in her mouth. Seeing a fresh cloud the Cātakī becomes thirsty and extends her beak, hoping to catch some water. However, the wind stops the water from falling and in the end she is hit by a thunderbolt."

Seeing that Mahāprabhu's eagerness increased, Svarūpa suddenly became silent. Rāya Rāmānanda said: "Suppose there is no reason to continue singing now." However, with a wink of His hand the Lord ordered Svarūpa to sing. Svarūpa sang:

*kṣīra lāḍu kori, viṣā miśāiya
abalā bālāke dilo
susvāda pāiyā, khāite khāite
nikaṭe maraṇa bhelo*

"He took a milk-*laḍḍu* and mixing it with poison, gave it to this weak girl. Finding it tasty, she ate it again and again, thus approaching death."

Weeping, Mahāprabhu said: "Alas! What has happened to you innocent Vraja-girls, having fallen into such cruel hands? The love of Śyāma is not just nectar — it is poison mixed with nectar — you didn't know that. And even if you knew, then what? No one can ever resist this temptation."

agni jaiche nija dhāma, dekhāiyā abhirāma
pataṅgīre ākarṣiyā māre
kṛṣṇa aiche nija guṇa, dekhāiyā hare mana,
śeṣe duḥka samudrete dāre

"Just as the fire kills flies by attracting it to its own delectable hearth, Kṛṣṇa steals the heart with His own attractive attributes, which results in an ocean of misery."

Saying this Mahāprabhu exclaimed *gopī! gopī!* and wept. Rāma Rāy carefully wiped the tears from the Lord's eyes and said: "Doyāmoy, be calm— we cannot remain steady if we see how upset You are. Look! Bosu Mahāśaya is weeping streams of tears when he sees You in this mood, and Your eternal servant Govinda dās has fallen into the dust like a madman!"

Saying this, Rāy Rāmānanda wiped the tears from the Lord's eyes. He was stunned, for He could not find the proper words to console the Lord. Mahāprabhu controlled His feelings and became somewhat calm again. Svarūpa said: "Prabhu, go now please, and see the *ārati* of Śrī Śrī Nilācala-candra within the Mandir."

The Lord said with faltering voice: "I thought of suppressing My feelings that rage like a fire and not hurting anyone by revealing those feelings, but I just cannot remain calm. Svarūpa, you will have to sing another song. I will listen calmly; after that I will join you and go to the Mandir."

Svarūpa anxiously and humbly said: "Which song, Prabhu?"

Mahāprabhu thought for a while and then said: "O, the one you sang in the Gambhīrā once— *navīna pāusera mīna maraṇa nā jāne* — remember that one, Svarūpa? Your emotion-filled, gentle and pitiful voice always touched My heart— even now its resonance touches the heart. It is as if *vraja virahiṇī* is sitting within Caṇḍīdāsa's throat and reveals *viraha bhāva* within the mortal world. How captivating is that *pada*!

Humbly Svarūpa said: "Not all the songs always come out well— unless a wave of feelings descends from above and touches the heart, no song can reveal *rasa*. Anyway, I remember one song." Saying this, Svarūpa commenced a tune:

*ki hoilo ki hoilo mora kānura pirīti
ākhi jhore hiyā pore, prāṇa kānde niti
śuile soyāsti nāi, niṇda gelo dūre
kānu kānu kori prāṇa niravadhi jhure
navīna pāusera mīna maraṇa nā jāne
nava anurāge prāṇa dhairaya nā māne
ehi rasa ye nā jāne se nā āche bhālo
hṛdaye vidhilo mora kānu prema śelo
nigūḍha pirīti khāni āratira ghara
ithe caṇḍidāsa kavi hoilo phāṇpara*

"What happened to Me, what happened to Me out of love for Kṛṣṇa? Tears flow from my eyes, My heart burns and My life airs weep. If I recline I cannot find peace—sleep has gone far from Me. My heart is constantly yearning for Kṛṣṇa. A fish in the beginning of monsoon does not know death; similarly My heart knows no patience with this new love. Anyone who does not know this rasa is not well. My heart was pierced with love for Kṛṣṇa. Thus secret love enters the abode of eagerness, and this flabbergasts the poet Caṇḍidāsa."

When the song was completed, Mahāprabhu held Rāya Rāmānanda's hand and said: "Here that song is coming out even more clearly than when Rāma Rāya sang that it in the Gambhīrā the other day. Only one sound reverberates in My ears— *navīna pāusera mīna maraṇa nā jāne*. Rāma Rāya, I don't know whether you saw it or not, but this is the same scenery — In a village there is a pond with cultivated fish. In the scorching summer heat the water of the pond begins to parch and this causes them to suffer severely. One poet said that this suffering is just like that of the life airs of the agitated fishes. When, after this severely scorching summer, streams of monsoon rains begin to refill the pond, it is called *ḍhala* (flood) or *pāusa*. Some fish come on land due to the overflow of this flood. When we see this flood it seems as if an endless stream of water faces us. The fish completely forget their suffering in the tiny pond in the scorching summer months, jump on the land through the monsoon flood and fall into the hands of fish-eaters to die. Alas! Alas! This is also the condition of the girls of Vraja when they fall into the deluge of love for Kṛṣṇa."

As Mahāprabhu said this, His two eyes were filled with tears. Suddenly He got up and went to see the ārati of Śrī Jagannātha deva with His associates. (Pages 175-188 of the *mūla*)

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ŚRĪ ŚRĪ MAHĀ RĀSA

On the full moon night of Kārtika Mahāprabhu went to the Guṇḍicā garden with some of His intimate associates. The sylvan sweetness of this Guṇḍicā garden naturally awakens the remembrance of Śrī Vṛndāvana. The tender beauty of the natural environment of extensive, unordered clusters of ever-blue vines and trees remains in this large Guṇḍicā garden as its eternal treasure. It's impossible to know who made this garden and when, but at present it assumes the form of a natural forest. The trees grow naturally, without external support, extending their dense foliage as if arrogantly challenging the sky. The Guvāka- (betel), Kharjura (date)-, Tāla (palm)- and Nārikela- (coconut) trees were at one time planted in rows, and even now they can be recognised, but the Priyāla, Palāśa, Amra (mango) and Panasa (jackfruit) trees stand around entirely at random. The Parkaṭī (fig)-, Kovidara- and Aśvattha- (Banyan) trees are very old. Most of the place is filled and beautified with vine-abodes at the roots of the trees, that stand close together. The Saptaparnī-trees proudly stand in their own dignity. Apart from that Jambū-, Arka-, Bilva-, Bokul-, Kadamba-, Nīpa-, Nimba- and many other trees in this ever-green place in Nīlācala remind the devotees' hearts of the sweetness of Vraja's forests. The abundance of flowery trees and vines increase the beauty of this forest a hundred times. At some places fresh sprouts, fragrant buds, soft pods or blossoming flowers beautify the trees and vines. At different places Guṇḍicā, who is the embodiment of Tulasī-forests in purity, awakens a pure, tender and holy feeling with its black garden-treasure. The tree-abodes are the images of the sacred hermitages of India's ever-glorious holy men.

Mahāprabhu took His intimate associates along into this tree-abode in a solitary corner of the garden. On all four sides were Tulasī-gardens and different small and large flower-trees. Beside the abode, on the southern side, were some Bakula-, Tamāla- and Chātima-trees, and on the eastern side was a relatively uncovered abode facing the east.

Mahāprabhu sat on the base of a Bokul-tree and told Śrīla Rāma Rāya— "Rāma Rāya, I like to hear some Rāsa-līlā from your mouth, but am I qualified to hear Rāsa-līlā? Such qualification only arises as the result of many austerities. How many austerities do there not exist? But not all austerities grant access to understanding the Rāsa-līlā. I think that unless the heart is pure, satisfied, most tender and radiant through the loving and delicious worship of the Lord, the desire to hear the Rāsa-līlā is simply a mockery. I am a dry renunciant, so I am not qualified— despite knowing this, I still

yearn to hear the Rāsa-līlā. There is no place where desire cannot go. Can I attain qualification for this?"

Rāma Rāya: "Prabhu, is the glory of the servant increased in this manner? This fallen sense enjoyer is the unqualified servant of Your lotus feet. These truths are hidden to him — this is a mere deception. Perhaps Your talk on humility and qualification are a mere pretext to teach people at large."

Mahāprabhu: "Svarūpa, Premamaya Śyāmasundara has revealed this delicious pastime in the flowery arbours to fulfill His desire to be with the young girls of Vraja — how captivating is this great meeting — what a great wave in a deluge of delight! Can anyone stay calm and not dance in ecstasy, Svarūpa? The Rāsa-līlā is a great, great love-festival full of dance — a high tidal wave in the boundless and deep ocean of ecstasy. This ecstasy is indescribable— it cannot be described. You and Rāmānanda must find a way to make Me relish even one drop of this ecstasy. I am eternally indebted to you."

Rāmānanda laughed and said: "What should I say? Please take shelter of my throat and tell me. The instrument plays the way its player does, where is the fear here?"

*mora jihvā viṇā yantra tumi viṇādhārī
tomāra mone jāhā uṭhe, tāhāi uccāri*

"My tongue is the Viṇā-instrument and You are the Viṇā-player. Whatever arises in Your mind I will pronounce."

Mahāprabhu: "When the girls of Vraja hear the flute they are agitated and they come into the forest to see Śyāma, what do you say, Rāma Rāya?"

Rāma Rāya: "Yes, Prabhu! The flute is Kṛṣṇa's own messenger— can anyone ever remain calm when Śyāmasundara's flute resounds? The stones melt, Yamunā flows upwards, the trees and vines show goosebumps and even the animals and birds of the forest become attracted to Śyāma's lotus feet. The course of the sun, the moon and the stars is stopped and the entire universe resounds with this sweet sound."

Mahāprabhu: "How can the girls of Vraja then still remain calm?"

Rāma Rāya: "Yes, Prabhu, even when no one in this universe can hear this sound, they still become moved by it. They are housewives under a vow to stay calmly at home, but when they hear this flute it becomes impossible to keep this vow."

As Mahāprabhu thus conversed with Rāma Rāya, I ātmārāma stayed in a hiding like a thief in a *kuñja*, and as I overheard this I remembered a few more very new songs. With a humming voice I sang —

ogo śono ke bājāy
banaphuler madhugandha vāmśīr tāne miśe jāy
adhara chuye vāmśī khāni, curi kore hāsikhāni
bañdhur hāsi madhura gāne prāṇera pāne bhese jāy
ogo śono ke bājāy
kunjabaner bhramar bujhi bāmśīr mājhe gunja re
bakul koli ākula hoye bāmśīr gāne muñja re
yamunāri kalatāna kāne āse kāñde prāṇ
ākāśe ai madhura vidhu kāhār pāne hese cāy
ogo śono ke bājāy

"O listen, who is playing? The tune of this flute mixes with the honey-scent of the sylvan flowers. The lips touch the flute, which steals His smile. When the life airs drink the sweet songs and smiles of My friend they float away. O listen, who is playing? I understand that the groves' bees hum along with the singing flute. The Bokul-buds become agitated and blossom due to the flute-song. When this song enters the ears of Yamunā her heart begins to weep. At whose glances is the sweet moon in the sky smiling? O listen, who is playing?"

"I thought that Svarūpa would call me closer if he heard my song. Nothing of it. I did not get a reaction from anyone. Again I thought perhaps they did not like it. Hence I sang another song—

bājilo kāhār vāmśī madhura svare
āmāra nibhṛta nava jīvana pore
prabhāta kamala sama phuṭilo hṛdaya mama
kār duṭi nirupama caraṇa tare
bhese uṭhe sab śobhā sab mādhurī
palake palake hiyā pulake puri
kothā hote samīraṇa, āne nava jāgaraṇa
parāṇera āvaraṇa mocana kore
bājilo kāhār vāmśī madhura svare
lāge buke sukhe duḥke koto je vyathā

kemone bujhābe koto nā jāni kothā
āmāra vāsanā āji, tribhuvane uṭhe rāji
kāṁpe nadī vanarāji vedanā bhore
bājilo kāhār vāmśī madhura svore

"Whose flute resounded so sweetly there upon My new intimate life? My heart blossomed like a morning lotus— whose two matchless feet are these? All this beauty and sweetness emerges and submerges and My heart trembles at every moment. From where the breeze brings a new wakefulness, uncovering the shells of My heart? Whose flute resounded so sweetly there, giving so much pain, happiness and distress to the heart? How can that be explained? I don't know how to express it. Today My desires are arising in the three worlds and the forests and rivers tremble of anguish. Whose flute sang so sweetly?"

After singing the song I fell silent. Again I got no response— I could not even recognise any living being in this vine-grove. Not even a drop of the sweet song I heard could reach my earholes. I thought they were absorbed in the flavours of my song. Becoming encouraged, I sang yet another song —

mori lo mori
āmāra vāmśīte ḍekeche ke
bhevechilām ghare robo, kothāo jābo nā
ai je bāhire bājilo vāmśī bolo ki kori?
śunechi kon kuñja-vane yamunā tīre
sājera belā bāje vāmśī dhīra samīre
ogo torā jānis jadi patha bole de,
āmāy vāmśīte ḍekeche ke
dekhi go tāra mukher hāsi
(tāre) phuler mālā porīye āsi
(tāre) bole āsi tomāra vāmśī
(āmār) prāṇe bejeche

"I am dying, I am dying! Who has called Me with this flute? I thought of staying home and not going anywhere. But now what can I do? A flute resounded outside. I heard that this flute resounded in an arbour on the bank of Yamunā, carried by a calm breeze as I put on My make-up. O! You will know it if you show Me the way. Who has

called Me with this flute? Oh I see the smile on His face. I go there to offer Him a flower garland and I tell Him that I come because of His flute. This resounds within My heart."

What? It is completely quiet! No one has called me! A few moments later I thought— the words of this song of mine are certainly not made of the material of that kingdom— thus I understand it is not fit to attain that kingdom. Thus I could not make the Lord of my heart hear the song of this flute. But alas, what did I do? I did not hear about this ambrosial Rāsa dance because I went to play this flute— my mind is filled with great regret. Let me peek in — no one anywhere. What an offence! I sat down quietly under a tree and began to practise *japa* of the holy name of Śrī Gaurāṅga to attain His forgiveness. After a while I saw the sweet rays of the golden Gaura-moon through the corners of my contracted eyes. When I looked well I saw that everyone was there and *kathā* was going on as before. Svarūpa Ṭhākura sang a song of Caṇḍī dāsa indicating the glories of the flute —

śyāmera bāṁśarī, dupure ḍākāti
saba rasa hari nilo
hiyā ḍagadagi parāṇa pāgali
keno vā emati koilo
emati je bhāva, nā bujhi tāhāra
pirīti tāhāra sane
gopata koriyā, keno nā rākhilo
bekata korilo kene
khāite śuite, ān nāhi cite
badhira korilo vāṁśī
sab parihari, korilo bāurī,
mānaye yemona dāsī
kulera karama, dhairaja dharama
sarama marama phāṁsi
caṇḍī dāsa bhāṇe, ei se kāraṇe,
kānu saravasa vāṁśī

"The call of Śyāma's flute took everything away from me. My heart began to palpitate and My life-airs went mad. Why did He do that? In this way I don't know in what mood I love Him. Why has He not kept it hidden? Why did He reveal it? I think of nothing else, either while eating or while sleeping. The flute has deafened Me, taking

everything away from Me and making Me mad, considering Me a maidservant. It is strangling My family duties, patience, virtue, welfare and feelings." Caṇḍī dāsa said: "All this is caused by Kṛṣṇa's flute."

Mahāprabhu became absorbed in Śrīpāda Svarūpa's sweet song. His forehead was studded with beads of sweat, His face blossoming with joy. Rāma Rāya subtly observed the scene and told Śrīpāda Svarūpa with a soft voice— "Oh look, Prabhu has opened His eyes, but is bereft of external sense — observe more closely, the Lord's face occasionally lights up with the *kīla kiñcit bhāvas*. I presume that the Lord is totally overwhelmed by relishing the mellows of the Rāsa-dance. Āhā, this *rasa* is not explicable through words, it is simply a topic of relish — and that relish is just like the relish of the dumb. From all sides of the great ocean of bliss rivers of bliss met with this great dance of bliss, making high gurgling waves— and everyone thinks the great ocean is mine! The Lord was absorbed in relishing the nectar of this Rāsa-līlā. Śrīpāda, I have never seen the Lord's face in such a blossoming blissful state. How radiant— how sweet— how most blissful!

Svarūpa: "I thought of singing a song about the Rāsa-meeting, but it is in vain. Seeing the mood on the Lord's beautiful face, the words of the song were stunned. The Lord is now absorbed in the experience of His own bliss. And why should our ecstasy be less? We have obtained the privilege of beholding the mellows of the Rāsa on the Lord's divine countenance. We perceive this as long as we are so fortunate to do so."

Saying this, Śrīpāda Svarūpa and Śrīla Rāma Rāya perceived the endless bliss on Śrī Śrī Gaurasundara's countenance for a prolonged period, like the meditation of a great yogī. One *daṇḍa* after the other passed. The night was almost over— slowly, slowly external awareness returned to Mahāprabhu. Anxiously He said— "Svarūpa, where have you brought Me? Should You awaken Me from such full ecstasy? How full of beauty, sweetness and bliss is this meeting and dancing in the Rāsa-dance! Innumerable forms of bliss came from all directions to surround Śyāmasundara. But such is the prowess of Śyāma that He also stood in innumerable forms, as many as there were *gopīs*. Each and every girl of Vraja got Śyāmasundara at her side and met with Him. The Rāsa dance began in a tidal wave of ecstasy, like a fresh raincloud within a lightning strike— how sweet, how beautiful, how captivating — what to say, what to say?" As Mahāprabhu said this His voice got stunned. He suddenly stood there in a frenzy, pulling at Śrīpāda Svarūpa with one hand and pulling at Śrīla Rāma Rāya with the other hand, Himself remaining in their midst. Keeping His most intimate associates

on both sides Mahāprabhu said *jaya jaya gopījana ballabha* in surging bliss and began various artful dances.

As I beheld this I became overwhelmed and fell in a swoon at the base of a tree. When I returned to consciousness I saw that there was nothing and nobody there. Everyone had disappeared— slowly I returned to the Gambhīrā, where I saw the Lord in the middle of the room, weeping in an agitated state of separation, accompanied by Śrīpāda Svarūpa and Śrīla Rāma Rāya. (Pages 199-207 of the *mūla*)