Loving attachment has a particular nature that is extraordinary. Within the heart of the lover, a yearning may spontaneously arise to hear from his beloved's mouth about the excellence of her love for him and the inferiority of his love for her.

Early one morning, under the control of such love, Vrajendranandana Śrī Śyāmasundara, the unrestricted, carefree enjoyer of rasa, disguised Himself as a young woman of heart-stealing beauty, and went to the courtyard of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the dear, darling daughter of Vṛṣabha-nandana Mahārāja. Covering His lotus-like face with a crimson veil, He appeared before Śrīmatī Rādhikā, His eyes bashfully lowered.

When Vṛṣabha-nandana Śrīmatī Rādhikā saw this charming young woman in the distance, She addressed Her dear friend, Śrī Lalitā. “O sakhi Lalitā, look, just look! Who is this beautiful young woman adorned with astonishing ornaments? The glow of Her lotus-like face rebukes the lustre of lotus flowers, and the radiance of Her syāma-complexioned body illuminates our courtyard. Our whole house appears to be decorated with sapphires.”

On hearing Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s words, Lalitā and Viśākhā quickly approached the young maiden and inquired, “O slenderwaisted girl, who are You? Where have You come from and why have You come here? Please remove our curiosity by answering these questions.” But that young girl did not reply.

When She did not answer, Śrī Rādhikā became even more curious. After careful thought, She came before the disguised Śrī Kṛṣṇa and inquired, “O beautiful one, who are You? The lustre of Your limbs has stolen our minds. Are You a divine maiden? Upon beholding You, it seems that You have appeared before us embodying the entirety of the world’s beauty.”
Still, the pretty young maiden did not reply. “O Bhāvinī (beautiful woman),” Śrī Rādhikā said, “it is You who have come here to us, so please introduce Yourself at once and remove our curiosity. O shy one, in our company, there is no reason to be timid or reserved. Please understand that we consider You to be our intimate friend.”

When the young maiden – Śrī Kṛṣṇa – heard Śrīmāti Rādhikā’s words, She sighed deeply. Actually, mere words cannot describe Her response. She turned Her face away and continued to remain silent. Upon seeing the girl's condition, Śrī Rādhā asked, “O beautiful one, I understand that Your heart is certainly in pain, otherwise You would not act like this.

“O lotus-faced one, with full trust in us, please openly and clearly tell us about Your pain. I will try My best to nullify the cause of Your anguish. When, within the heart, a deep wound of despair opens, the unbearable anguish one suffers can be mitigated by revealing it to intimate friends.

“Are You now suffering separation from Your beloved? Or have You become exceedingly perturbed upon discovering some shortcoming in him? Or have You committed some great offence that has shattered the affection of Your beloved? Is that why You are fearful? Perhaps, in order to destroy the love and affection that Your beloved has for You, some wicked person has falsely accused You of a misdeed, although You have actually done no wrong. Is that why You are unhappy?

“Is it that You have realized that the one You have wed is dull and unlucky? Is it that You would never have married him if You had known before, and now that You do know, You are disinclined toward him? Or has Your heart become attached to a most wonderful person who is unattainable? Alas, alas, do You feel dejected because, like Me, You are subject to the constant harsh reproach of scornful elders?”

The continued silence of the beautiful young damsel only served to increase Śrī Rādhā’s apprehension. “O comely one,” She said, “has Your co-wife become proud, intoxicated by her tiny drop of good fortune? Has her intelligence become corrupt and as a result, has she pierced Your heart with the arrows of her sharp
words? No, surely this could not happen to You. I cannot believe there is a young woman in the entire universe more fortunate than You. You could not possibly have a co-wife. Why would a man who is married to a wife endowed with all good qualities ever abandon her to marry another?

“O moon-faced one, we have heard from Bhagavati Paurnamāsi-devi that there was once an incarnation of the Supreme Lord named Mohini, who was so extraordinarily lovely that She could enchant the great Śrī Mahādeva (Lord Śiva). Are You that Mohini? Tell Me, who is it that You hope to infatuate with Your fascinating beauty by coming here unexpectedly? It is true that Śrī Mahādeva was captivated by You, and that You were not in the least attracted to him, but if Your side-long glance were to pierce Śrī Hari, and if He were to shoot a side-long glance back at You, You would surely become utterly bewildered. There is nothing to compare with Your beauty nor with the beauty of our Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that crown jewel of the kings of gallants. If You saw one another, You would both become so enamoured by each other’s beauty that You would violate the boundaries of selfcomposure, and an exceptional and amazing rasa would appear from Your mutual attraction.”

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa disguised as a celestial damsel continuously drank the nectarean words flowing from the lotus mouth of inquisitive Śrī Rādhikā, He felt a transcendental rapture well up in His heart, and the hairs of His body stood up in ecstasy. In order to hide this, He covered His limbs with His veil. When Śrī Rādhikā saw this, She imagined that the damsel must have some kind of bodily ailment. “O sakhi,” She asked, “are You experiencing some discomfort in Your body? Are You feeling some pain in Your chest, Your back or Your head?”

In this way, Śrī Rādhikā guessed about the young maiden’s illness. “O friend Viśākhā,” She said, “My honourable father fondly sent Me a precious medicinal oil that is a sure remedy for all kinds of ailments. Please quickly bring it from the house. The nature of love and affection is such that if an article dear to oneself is used for one who is near and dear, its very existence becomes meaningful.

“O sakhi Viśākhā, I feel a deep affection for this sakhi who has just arrived. This oil, which removes all diseases, is a manifestation of My father’s love for Me; hence, I will use it to
massage this beautiful girl’s entire body with My own hands. I will also skilfully massage Her head, then all Her suffering will be relieved.

“And listen, bring some warm water mixed with the finest healing ingredients for Me to bathe Her in. I will alleviate Her suffering and then Her lotus-like face will appear happy. Perhaps then She will speak with Me.

“O sakhi, I have spoken sweet and gentle words to this girl, and I am ready to personally give Her an oil-massage and other beneficial treatments. With an open heart, I have honoured Her and shown Her sincere affection. Still, I have not heard a single word from Her lips. She is being deceptive about the nature of Her ailment and just sits here with a doleful face.

“Now I shall administer a new treatment for this lovely girl’s disease. Just as the divine nectar- tonic given to Me by Dhanvantari cures any disease, this remedy will remove, within a second, all the diseases of Her body, life force, mind and senses. It will especially serve to nourish Her body.

“Listen, and I will tell you more about this new treatment. Until now, this sakhi has been sitting here, overcome by some incurable disease and incapable of uttering a single word. However, if Her whole chest were touched by the lotus-like palms of the Lord of our kuïja, She would soon start to talk, giggle and sob. Having experienced the indescribable pleasure of the touch of rasika-şêkhara Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s hand, She would murmur indistinct sounds. What more can I say? She would assume such a radiance that we would all laugh without end. Her body would manifest all the signs of having met with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by His touch, all kinds of exceptional symptoms would manifest. This would make us happy.”

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was disguised as a heavenly damsel, heard Śrīmati Rādhikā speak in this way, a gentle smile appeared on His face. He concealed His smile, and then slightly raised His lowered lotus-like face. With the charming fingers of His left hand, He gently brushed a stray curl from His forehead, and pulled His veil down over His head a little further.
The disguised Śrī Kṛṣṇa assumed the sweet voice of a young lady and showered alluring words as sweet as nectar upon all those present. Like cakorī birds, Śrī Rādhā and Her sakhis drank every word with eager hearts. In this way, they experienced supreme bliss and felt such astonishment that mere words cannot describe. Upon hearing the sweet talk of the beautiful new girl, they revelled in a bliss equalled only by the rapture they felt upon hearing the talk of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

The new sakhi said, “O beautiful Śrī Rādhā, I am a damsel from the heavenly planets. Please hear why I have come to You with such an agitated heart. I have a desire to know something about a particular matter, and who but You can fulfil My desire?”

Upon hearing these words, Śrī Rādhikā said, “O lovely one, You have introduced Yourself as a heavenly damsel. This is surely not false. In fact, I had guessed as much even before You spoke, because no woman of this mortal world can rival You in beauty. Your beauty is incomparable and unprecedented; indeed, You are in a class of Your own.

“O You whose face resembles an autumnal lotus, I have considered many possible reasons for Your sadness, such as feeling separation from Your husband, and I have told You of them, but actually, I was joking. Please do not take offence to My words. Now You have become affectionate toward Me, and I have become Yours.”

The celestial damsel said, “Rādhā, You are My sakhi. Why are You so reserved? Although I am a heavenly damsel, I have become Your subordinate. Do not doubt it. I constantly yearn to be Your maidservant so that I may experience one drop of the ocean of Your love, beauty and qualities.

“Please listen carefully while I tell You why My heart feels such anguish, and then dispel the doubt that causes Me this despair. Your nectar-sweet words have fallen like soft rain upon My heart, but they have not even slightly soothed the distress within it.
“O sakhī, the flute-song that is heard in Śrī Vṛndāvana has also entered our heavenly abode. Its power is such that the chaste ladies there no longer wish to embrace their husbands. In fact, the mere thought of doing so disgusts them. When the Lord of the universe, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, attracts their minds and hearts, their thoughts no longer run toward their mortal husbands. Anything connected with Śrī Kṛṣṇa has this power. The slightest connection with Him completely removes the desire to enjoy anything material.

“This flute sound is as sweet as nectar, but it is mixed with deadly poison. Anyone who hears it feels an unprecedented joy as if they are tasting nectar; but afterwards, when they have not attained Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they suffer sharp pains as if they have been poisoned. The moment that sound enters the ears of the heavenly damsels, they desire to enjoy with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in every way. Bewildered by the high fever of amorous love, their bodies blaze like fiery coals. Their husbands embrace their burning bodies but quickly release them. ‘What sudden ailment is causing her high temperature?’ they wonder. As soon as anyone hears the sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the desire to meet with Him manifests in their heart, making them restless. This is the power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute-song.

“One of the names of our heavenly city is Tridaśālaya, meaning a place where the inhabitants experience only three stages of life: childhood, adolescence and youth. They never grow old. Since none of the women ever age, they all feel attracted to the sound of the flute. Who, then, is in a position to rebuke others or joke at their expense? The sound of the flute destroys the heavenly damsels’ chastity and defeats each and every one of them.

“In this way, the influence of the flute-song spread day by day among the heavenly damsels. Then one day, filled with wonder, I thought to Myself, ‘From where does this sweet sound come? Who is playing that flute?’

“After due consideration, I was able to trace the sound of the flute from the heavenly planets, and in that way I came down to this Earth. I happily stayed at Vamśivaṭa for some days. There I witnessed the unequalled pastimes performed by You and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and I became acquainted with His dear, beloved sakhīs.”
After hearing the words of the heavenly damsel, Śrī Rādhā spoke sweetly and jokingly. "O most fortunate one, I consider You the most clever of all heavenly damsels in the celestial realm, because only You, Your mind cut asunder by the sword of Your strong eagerness to meet the flute-player, are trying to find out the source of the flute-song. The other damsels are not trying to trace this source. For this reason, only You can really be called Sumanā, for only You have an undisturbed mind. (In other words, You are Sumanā because like Me, You have become attached to para-puruṣārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa.)"

When the celestial damsel heard Śrī Rādhā's delightful joking words, a sweet and effulgent smile came upon Her lips, and Her eyebrows danced slightly. "Rādhā," She said, "do not consider other women to be like You. Do not think that My attachment to Your lover Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like Yours. Now that I am here, will Your lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, be able to control Me in the same way He controls You?"

Śrī Rādhikā replied, "I do not know Your reason for coming here, but in any case, while You are here, please try to experience Śrī Kṛṣṇa's confidential, loving pastimes. What is the need of a relationship with any other man? Anyway, what was it that You wanted to ask Me? Until now I have just been joking and playing with You, because You have accepted Me as Your friend."

The heavenly damsel replied, "O sakhi, please continue to joke. Who can defeat You in this art? O Rādhā, You are more than just a friend to Me; You are as dear to Me as My very life-air. It is true that You are only a human being, but nonetheless, the young heavenly damsels bow their heads when they hear about Your purifying qualities."

The heavenly damsel then said, "Sakhi, I will never lie to You, so please do not be embarrassed by My praise. My ornamented language was not spoken just to flatter You, and I am not joking out of indifference to You. Really, Your beauty, fortune and other qualities cannot be equalled even by Pārvatī, nor by Śrī Lakṣmī, the daughter of the ocean."
The heavenly damsel continued, “Listen, and I will tell You more. Is any woman as courageous as You in loving affairs, even in the Vaikuṇṭha planets far beyond the three material worlds? Is there a woman who can even imagine that she is Your equal? These words of praise do not come from My imagination; I have heard Your glories in the assembly of Pārvatī-devī atop of Mount Kailāsa.

“When I heard of Your qualities, I developed an intense desire to meet with You. It is true that seeing You has fulfilled My desire, but still My heart is burning with distress. The only reason My heart has not shattered in its fire is because it is so hard.”

Śrī Rādhikā, who is most loving, heard the heavenly damsel's words, which were full of unbearable agony, and asked, “My friend, what has caused Your intense and intolerable suffering? Please tell Me straightaway.” Tears flowed incessantly from the damsel's eyes, Her throat choked up and She was unable to speak. Śrī Rādhikā gently wiped the damsel's face and eyes with Her own, soft veil.

The heavenly damsel remained in that mood for a moment, and then calmly and patiently replied, “O innocent one, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a licentious debauchee. How could You fall in love with such a lusty person? In this world, Your prema is unequalled. Because it is causeless, it is indestructable, and because it is so powerful, nothing can check it. Yet those who knowingly make something that is unworthy the object of their loyalty only cause distress to themselves and their dear ones.

“Let Me tell You something more. It is true that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete with sweet beauty, bravery, matchless fortune, fame and other opulences, and that He is adorned with all jewel-like qualities; nevertheless, He has one fault that nullifies all these opulences: He is quite unable to discriminate in matters of prema, because He has so many amorous desires. It is never appropriate to find refuge in such a person.

“Just listen. On that day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa played with You in various ways. With eagerness, He repeatedly displayed an artificial love for You. But later, O simple-hearted woman, that falsehearted
cheat abandoned You to enjoy with another young woman, even though He had arranged to meet with You that night in a kuñja.

“Your sakhiś were distressed when they heard You lamenting, and even the creepers, animals and birds of the forest cried in pain. At that time, I also became filled with mental anguish, for I was hiding at Vaṁśīvata, watching.”

The heavenly damsel then said, “On the night of the rāsa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa abandoned all the other vraja-sundarīs to take You with Him, to sport with You, and to show You profuse affection. However, after a short while, when You became tired from Your amorous, loving sports, He suddenly left You all alone in the forest.

“At that time You displayed various conditions of Your body and heart – You lamented loudly and fainted over and over again. Your movements showed that You were confused; they were not natural. Alas, seeing You in that condition was so painful I will never forget it. Even in future births, as I pass through the eight stages of life, such as birth, old age and death, Your anguish will ceaselessly pierce My heart like a sharp iron spear.

“O glorious one, is it possible for pain to remain in My heart? After all, I am a damsel from the heavenly planets. But alas, at an inauspicious moment, a yearning to see You suddenly manifested. It was that desire alone that brought Me here, and now, O sakhi, it is piercing My heart like a sharp iron spear. Indeed, I cannot see how to remove it at all.”

“Sakhi,” continued the heavenly damsel, “My heart has become so bound to Yours that when I see You suffer, I become powerless to return to the heavenly planets. At the same time, I cannot remain here bearing such heavy grief in My heart. Since I cannot find peace, I have come to see You to express the feelings aroused by what is revolving in My mind.

“What is more, I am very afraid of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because He has no sense of religion, or moral principles, nor does He fear public opinion. He is so hard-hearted that He has never stepped foot on the path of mercy. When He was just a little baby, He killed
a woman, the rāksā Śūlī. In His youth He killed the bull Vṛṣṇiśūra, and in His boyhood He killed the calf Vatsāsūra. So, as You can see, from His very childhood He has engaged in violent, irreligious acts."

When Śrī Rādhikā heard the heavenly damsel speak such words of criticism about Kṛṣṇa, She said, “O most fortunate one, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beloved of My life. His potency to attract My heart is unparalleled. Although He has hurt Me time and again, I am unable to sever My heart’s attachment to Him.

“Often I decide to stop talking to Him because of His improper behaviour, but the moment I see Him again, I forget everything. I see a power in You similar to the power I see in Him, because even though You are criticizing Śrī Vrajārāja-kumāra (the son of the king of Vraja), who is more dear to Me than millions of My own lives, You still attract My heart, making Me attached to You. Surely it is unnatural to feel affection for someone who criticizes a loved one, unless one comes under the control of some supernatural power; then, maybe it could happen. The nature of unconditional love is such that once it manifests it is not easily destroyed. This love is so firm and so vast that it never wavers, nor can it ever be annihilated even after hearing criticism of the loved one.”

Śrīmatī Rādhikā continued, “O Sundarī, if You really consider Yourself My sakhī, do not return to the heavenly planets. Stay with Me in this land of Vraja for all time, and then I will be able to open My treasure chest to show You the amazing jewel of prema. It is not possible to understand the prema that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and I have for each other just by talking about it. It is only possible to understand by observing it. If You and I do not live together, how will I ever make You understand this prema, and how will I be able to remove Your doubt? Stay with Me, and I will be able to make You understand clearly why I cannot become indifferent toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even though I suffer so greatly because of Him.”

When the disguised Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard the words of Śrī Rādhikā, He said, “Alas, alas, You still lack faith in Me, even though We now know each other. Rādhā, You want Me to be Your sakhī, but that is something for the distant future. At the moment, I am just Your maidservant. Please be happy with Me, and control Me in every way. O Rādhā, I swear by Śrī Viṣṇu that You are My one and only shelter, whether You punish Me or show Me mercy.”
When Vṛṣabhānu-nandini Śrī Rādhikā heard this, She said,
“O My friend, if You desire to hear about My prema, then listen:
Anyone who says, ‘This is the extent of prema’, ‘this is prema’,
‘this is the nature of prema’ or ‘this is not the nature of prema’
knows nothing about prema, even if they have studied the Vedas
and all other scriptures.

“O sakhi, suppose someone wants to grasp the nature of
prema and tries to explain it to another, even though he has no
realization of it himself. In that case, he who tries to explain it is
cheating, and any realization resulting from those words is simply
a fraud. Prema is the most excellent of topics, and it cannot
be described in words. It disappears upon being analysed and
becomes even more concealed when it is not.

“When the heart is filled with rāga – attachment to Kṛṣṇa with
affection – a mood naturally reigns in which there is no other
desire than to give happiness to one’s beloved. And when one
makes the beloved happy, even though one’s tendency of heart is
neither to deliberate on how to do so nor to neglect it, happiness
naturally arises. At this time, prema becomes visible in one’s
innate activities.

“Just as a lion defeats elephants and nourishes itself by eating
them, similarly this extremely powerful prema nourishes itself
by conquering the unlimited and difficult miseries caused by
conditions in this world, by other planets, by family members,
by enemies, by one’s own body or by matters related to the
body, and even by troubles caused by one’s beloved that are as
insurmountable as Mount Sumeru.

“The proud, confident and graceful lion sleeps fearlessly
without disturbance. Similarly, that prema which brims with
affection, exhibits pride due to the rise of māna and reaches the
stage of pranāya, can never be destroyed. In that prema, the pride
of possessiveness – ‘he is mine; he is exclusively my beloved’ – is
firmly situated within the heart of the lover.
Just as a lion considers a dog to be insignificant, so prema
does not recognize insignificant, dog-like obstacles. Just as a
lamp’s glow becomes brighter in the darkness, so the glory of
prema becomes more lustrous in the face of obstacles. With those
obstacles conquered, prema becomes more radiant than before.
Thus situated, it never diminishes.
“Sakhi, through lascivious desire, this *prema* makes one continually relish the beloved in new and fresh ways. Like the moon, it pleases the three worlds with excessive intoxication, and it also burns like the sun at the time of universal devastation.

“My dear *sakhi*, in the entire universe, in the upper planetary systems such as Maharloka, and in the lower planetary systems such as Rasātala, is anyone worthy of receiving this *prema* other than Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Krṣṇa? It is only in this land of Vraja that some doe-eyed girls taste this *prema*, according to their various individual *bhāvas*.

“Sometimes *prema* manifests externally as *kāma*, or transcendental lust, from which the beloved, Śrī Krṣṇa, obtains unlimited happiness. And sometimes mere lust is portrayed as *prema*. Only the crown jewel of clever personalities and the abode of all arts, Śrī Krṣṇa, is able to understand its true nature.”

Śrī Rādhikā continued, “*Sakhi*, when a young woman says, ‘I am burning in the fire of lust; please take me quickly to the lord of my life,’ she cannot be called lusty, because at that time, the nature of her heart is firmly fixed in giving pleasure to her beloved. The passionate mood that manifests to give happiness to her beloved cannot be called mere lust (*kāma*); rather, it is true love, or *prema*.

“*Sakhi*, Śrī Vrajendra-nandana is both an ocean of *prema* and a mine of jewel-like qualities. His deceitfulness, fickleness, crookedness and other such qualities are extremely charming. He devises how to increase women’s love for Him by presenting His *prema* – in the semblance of lust – before them all.”

Are hundreds and thousands of beautiful girls, intoxicated by youthful lust, able to satisfy, by their various kinds of endeavours, Śrī Krṣna’s desire for an amorous meeting? Śrī Krṣṇa is selfsatisfied (*ātmārāma*) and free from material desires (*āptakāma*), so no one can enchant Him by their lust. He is only controlled by pure *prema*. Therefore, Śrīmatī Rādhikā says, “*Sakhi*, stay in Śrī Vṛndāvāna. Experience for Yourself how the *vraja-ramantis’ prema* for Śrī Krṣṇa is free from any desire for personal happiness, and
how Śrī Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by such prema.

“Although the prema of all the beautiful young girls of Vraja is unconditional, everyone knows that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is much more attracted to Me than to all others. Indeed, this is true, because Śrī Kṛṣṇa feels My prema to be as boundless as Mount Sumeru, and the prema of the other girls like a few mustard seeds.

“O friend, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is attracted toward other nāyikās and can sport with them according to the extent of their prema for Him. This is not a fault of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If this principle were ever to be transgressed by a gopi, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa would not become satisfied, and I also would feel distress.

“When Śrī Kṛṣṇa indicates that I should meet with Him, I go to Our assigned meeting place. But if He does not arrive there, it is only due to some obstacle. Although He is completely enchanted by Me, He still may sport with another beautiful girl, being bound by her request. But in doing so He feels no pleasure, because all night long the forest fire of remembering My suffering causes Him distress.

“Sakhi, while He sports with other young girls of Vraja, He thinks about My suffering, and because of this My mind becomes afflicted by His unhappiness. When that happens, I lament, ‘Everything – My dress, My ornaments, My coquetry and My beautiful appearance are all useless. Alas, alas, they cannot give pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.’

“You have heard Me weeping at such a time.

“When Śrī Kṛṣṇa came the next morning and beseeched Me to forgive Him, I chastised Him angrily, saying, ‘Go back to that beloved mistress of Yours and enjoy with her some more!’ This anger was actually for Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s happiness. Internally, I was asking Myself why He would go to a place where He finds no pleasure. My anger was only due to prema, which consists wholly and solely of the endeavour to give Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleasure. Reflect upon the loving affairs in Śrī Vrindāvana in the light of this consideration. These affairs are transcendental and most astonishing.
“‘You rogue, why did You leave Me so You could go and sport with other women?’ With such language I repeatedly expressed My own desire for enjoying. His lusty activities were evident by the love-marks on His transcendental body, so He had to admit His fault.

“O my friend, *prema* is like a lamp. The hearts of both the *rasika nāyaka* and *nāyikā* are like a chamber, and the mouth is like a door. As long as the lamp of *prema* illuminates only the chamber, it will remain steady, but if its light is allowed to shine out through the door, the lamp will quickly become fainter or even go out.

“The splendour of the lamp of *prema* in the pavilions of the lover's and beloved's hearts shines through the lattice of their window-like eyes. It illuminates their lips, cheeks, foreheads and breasts in a most wondrous way, and reveals its unique and inexpressible beauty to one who is experienced in regard to the nature of *prema*.

“The following words, however, would issue from the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lover of so many young damsels: ‘My beloved, I love You so much; You alone are My very life.’ In this way, He would continuously express His love, yet still, His love would not diminish. This is because it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's habit to only speak very clever words of falsity. This habit immediately veils His *prema* like a curtain and makes it appear as lust. In other words, all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's declarations, which are to be taken as false, actually cover His *prema* to make it appear merely as lust.

“When one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beloveds starts to sulk, He tells her, ‘O My beloved, I love you alone. Could any other young girl attain a place in My heart?’ And when I become jealous (*khaṇḍitā*) on seeing the marks made by another *nāyikā* on His body, He pacifies Me with words of a similar nature.

“In this situation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa glorifies the beauty, matchless grace and sweetness of My face and eyes, and in His intense eagerness to sport with Me, He speaks words such as, ‘You alone are My life.’ With such talk He covers His *prema* for Me, and instead shows lust.
“O sakhi, despite all this, if a beloved gopi is burning in the fire of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and if her eagerness has evaporated the ocean of her gravity to a palmful of water, she will reveal her prema through words.

“Although the movement of the life-air is checked when one is in the darkness of the suffering of separation, the lamp of profound prema shines long and bright with the oil of abundant affection.

“During the rāsa dance, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave up the company of all the other gopīs and sported with Me alone, but after that He left Me as well, and I will tell You why. There is no fault in Vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the ocean of prema. He accepts Me alone as His most beloved.

“The basis of this statement is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa seated Me on a divine jewelled throne of matchless fortune, decorated Me with the ornaments of various playful pastimes, and enjoyed with Me as We roamed from forest to forest. At that time, He did not remember His other beloveds.

“Then, I began to think, ‘Alas, My sakhis are not able to experience this vast and fathomless ocean of ecstatic nectar. They are burning in the fever of separation from Me, and I do not know where they are wandering in their search for Me.

“‘My sakhis are roaming about here and there, and if We sit here for just a moment, they will soon reach this spot and find Us.’ Thinking in this way, I said, ‘O My beloved, I cannot walk any more. Let Us rest here for a while.’

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa fully understood My inner mood at that time, because He is vidagdha-sīromani, the crest jewel of clever personalities. Being extremely cunning, and matchless in His ability to relish divine mellows, He thought to Himself,
“If Śrī Rādhikā and I roam in the groves alone, She will not feel the slightest happiness. Rather, Her heart will be full of pain because She will be aware of the possible distress of the sakhris. As long as She bears such pain in Her heart, there can be no pleasure in Our union. However, if I do stop here for a short while, the sakhris will be jealous of the fact that We are together. They will look at Me with crooked eyebrows and reproach Śrī Rādhikā, thus interrupting the loving exchange between Us. Then they will all go home angrily, and we will not be able to delight in the rāsa dance tonight.’

“O sakhi, Śrī Kṛṣṇa then thought further: ‘Previously Śrī Rādhikā made this request: “O beloved, I desire to see how You embrace innumerable virtuous gopīs at the same time. Kindly satisfy My curiosity.” If the rāsa dance with the gopīs does not take place, Śrī Rādhikā’s desire will not be fulfilled. Now, if I leave Rādhikā for a moment, that will remove Her pride born of good fortune. It will make Her humble and free from blame in the eyes of the other gopīs. I will accept all the blame. I will show the other young ladies of Vraja that the fault is all Mine, and not Śrī Rādhikā’s. But if I leave Rādhikā, I will not be able to serve Her and thereby reciprocate with Her affection for Me. As a result I will become indebted to Her, and all the gopīs will become affectionate toward Her.

“I will plunge the other vraja-sundarīs into an ocean of astonishment by revealing the boundless and incomparable agony that Rādhikā feels when She is separated from Me. They will then come to understand the depth of Her prema for Me, and that will dissolve the pride that appeared in their hearts when they thought that I loved them more than anyone else. After that, all the gopīs will firmly trust and believe that Śrī Rādhikā is supreme and beyond compare.

“All the other beautiful young women will understand that just as the mellow of union (sambhoga-rasa) finds its absolute summit in Śrī Rādhikā, so Her feeling of separation from Me is incomparably greater than that of all the other gopīs. Only in Rādhikā is the transcendental mellow of amorous love (śṛṅgārarasa) nourished to the utmost point by union with Me and separation from Me. Thus the other vraja-sundarīs will become ashamed, and they will clearly see Rādhikā as their guru.’

“O friend, Śrī Kṛṣṇa also had another thought in His heart:
The angry gopīs call Me lusty because I left them to play secretly with Rādhikā. They think that they are more loving toward Me than Śrī Rādhikā is, and this saddens Lalitā and the other gopīs in Rādhikā's own group. The angry gopīs accuse both Rādhikā and Me of having many faults. I will show them how the flames of Rādhikā's prema increase a millionfold when She is separated from Me. If those gopīs come close to Rādhikā while She is feeling such separation, they will be burnt by these flames. Thus they will be able to recognize that their own prema glows like an insignificant lamp in comparison.

"When the other vraja-ramaēés see Rādhā crying in separation from Me, they will become sympathetic toward Her. Then, all of them will come together to search for Me, and that is just what I desire. Finally, at the time of the rāsa dance, they will all dance in a circle, and they will not feel any jealousy when they see Rādhikā shining brilliantly by My side, in the centre of the circle.

"People make their eyes appear bright and beautiful by applying collyrium to them, even though that collyrium may cause them some discomfort. Similarly, well-wishers may create temporary difficulties for their friends that ultimately result in their friends' wealth or happiness. Even though I will cause pain to Rādhā by abandoning Her for some time, She will experience the highest bliss when We meet again.'

"O devī, as My beloved was deliberating in this way, He tenderly lifted Me up and carried Me for a few steps. Then He put Me down in a soft place, saying, 'My dear one, please sit here for a moment.' At that point He disappeared.

"Sakhī, My beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa became perturbed when He saw My grief in separation from Him, and He wanted to come before Me again. But, just at that moment My sakhi and the other gopīs arrived. They were extremely distressed to see My suflering, and they tried to console Me.

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa was not at fault in killing the bull-demon Aristāsura, the crane-demon Bakāsura, the snake-demon Aghāsura, the calf-demon Vatsāsura, or the deceptive rākṣasī Pūtānā. It is the divine potency of Lord Viṣṇu, the protector of all virtuous men, that kills demons, and that potency is within Śrī
On the occasion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony, the sage Garga-cārya told Vraja-rāja Śrī Nanda, ‘O King of Vraja, your son is just like Nārāyaṇa.’

‘O devī, at Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony, Garga-muni, the best of sages, did not say that Śrī Nārāyaṇa’s form, qualities, sweetness and other attributes will never be able to equal those of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Agha. But naturally it seems like that in My mind.’

The words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beloved Śrī Rādhikā were blissful nectar to His ears, and caused Him great joy. Still disguised as a heavenly damsel, He said with great curiosity, ‘Rādhā, now I can fully understand that You alone are the shelter of the symptoms of the prema that You have been explaining.

‘My dear sakhi, You have explained to Me the following characteristics of prema: even the faults of the beloved may be perceived as good qualities; the many troubles given by the beloved may appear to be nectar; one with prema is unable to bear even the slightest difficulty felt by the beloved; one with prema is unable to give up the body even if he wishes to; and at every step one perceives unprecedented glories in the beloved, even where there are none. Rādhā, this prema is in You alone. I have heard this earlier in the assembly at Haimavati, and today I am witnessing it directly.

‘But sakhi, I am telling You without any doubt that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has no prema. Please understand this to be true. I have concluded this after seeing His behaviour. The proof of this is found in Your sakhis and in the flames of Your intense lamentation, which have scorched My life-air.

‘You have told Me the reasons why He left You at the time of rāsa, but how can I believe what You say? You have not heard this from His mouth, nor from any of His friends. And even if You did hear it from them, so what? Have any of them ever spoken a true
śrī rādhikā then said, “sakhi, i am aware of all the moods in the heart of my beloved śrī krṣṇa as soon as they arise.” to this the heavenly damsel replied, “rādha, have you studied the scriptures that delineate the means by which one can meet with acyuta – the scriptures on acyuta-yoga which describe how you are able to enter śrī krṣṇa’s body and mind?”

śrī rādhā replied, “you are a celestial damsel, so you are always eager to cultivate the perfection of acyuta-yoga. i am just a human being; how can i be like you? are you asking me how i can possibly know the mind of my beloved? i shall tell you everything if you have faith that what i say is true; if not, why should i waste my words?”

hearing this, that heavenly damsel answered, “o rādha, if you can convince me with logic, and if you can awaken my faith, then why would i not believe you? it is true that your beloved śrī krṣṇa is an ocean of good qualities, but it is only your own personal opinion that he has prema.”

śrī rādhikā said, “my dear sakhi, you joke most cleverly. you say that you have acquired expertise in the art of entering the body and mind of the lover or anyone else, but now you are realizing that actually you are unable to understand the mind of your lover.”

the celestial damsel said, “o rādha, if you know the mind and heart of your beloved śrī krṣṇa, why were you lamenting so loudly when he left you? if you knew his heart, why did you not become happy?” śrī rādhikā replied, “devī, your point is valid, but please listen carefully. i truly know śrī krṣṇa’s heart, but still, when i was in separation from him, an indescribable potency arose and overwhelmed me. it stole all my discrimination and caused me to lose consciousness and all awareness of my mind and body.”

śrī krṣṇa disguised as a heavenly damsel said, “gāndharvikā, i am not questioning whether or not you know śrī krṣṇa’s mind;
rather, I want to know whether He knows Your mind.”
Śrī Rādhikā replied, “Sākhī, have You as yet inquired whether or not Śrī Krṣṇa knows My mind? Listen and I will tell You the secret of this. It is generally impossible to speak of this, but today I will reveal everything to You because Your prema has made Me restless.”

“Rādhā,” the heavenly damsel said, “I have expressed My desire to hear the secret behind this matter, and in so doing, I have revealed My arrogance. I am only asking You this because Your love has made Me eager to hear it. I know that this is most confidential, but still, it is most appropriate to carefully tell everything to Your eager sakhī; it is not appropriate to withhold this information.”

Śrī Rādhikā then spoke: “Common people say, ‘Rādhā and Krṣṇa are eternally present in each others’ hearts, and that is why They know each others’ minds.’ Factually, the real truth is this: We are one soul. It is not possible for one soul to become two.

“In a lake, two lotuses – one blue and one yellow – may bloom from a single stem. In the same way, Our two bodies, one blue and one yellow, are connected as one life. They are one supremely profound soul composed of topmost rasa. As bodies We are separate, but by nature We are one. Krṣṇa is by nature blissful (ānanda) and I by nature am joyful (hlāḍīnī). Just as fire and its burning potency are one, there is no difference between the potency (sakti) and the possessor of the potency (saktimān). “We cannot be distinguished from each other when seen as a person and the person’s potency, but for the sake of rasa, We manifest in separate forms as Rādhā and Krṣṇa. Without pastimes, We cannot relish each other; and without form, We cannot perform pastimes.

“When a container filled with oil has a wick that is lit at both ends, the two flames dispel the darkness in both directions. Similarly, Our two bodies are joined together as one soul, destroying the darkness of each others’ distress, and also giving pleasure to the sakhīs present with Us.

“Sākhī, due to the blowing wind of separation from each other, the flames of Our two bodies tremble and We both faint at the
same time. The sakhis, all of whom are expert, anxiously try to stop this wind from blowing. They remove all Our distress and restore Our peaceful condition by arranging for Us to enter the house of happiness in each others’ company.

“O Kalyāṇi (auspicious one), today I have completely opened up the most precious treasure chest of My heart and shown You the supremely secret jewel of prema. May this remove the darkness of Your doubts completely. Always keep it in Your heart and never reveal it to anyone.”

The celestial damsel (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) said, “My friend, I have clearly understood all that You have told Me, and I will keep it within My heart. But this crooked mind of Mine yearns to test the truth of Your words. How can I help this?

“Sakhī, as You sit here, Your beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa may be in His father’s house or in the forest tending the cows. I do believe that You are one soul in two bodies, but only by testing it can it be actually proven.

“O Sumukhī (beautiful-faced one), if right now, at this very place, I directly perceive that Śrī Kṛṣṇa instantaneously and precisely knows what You are thinking, then O friend, My belief will become resolute.

“Whether Your beloved is near here or far away, just think of Him and meditate on this: ‘Please, come here quickly.’ When I see Him present here before You, I will happily accept once and for all that You two are united as one soul.

“However, I will not say anything if the two of You are fully absorbed in thinking of each other but cannot meet because obstacles have arisen, such as the sudden arrival of a demon or Your having to obey the orders of elders.

“O sakhi, O You with intoxicated eyes (Madirākṣi), I know very well that when You are confined to the home of Your elders out
of fear of them, You cannot call Śrī Kṛṣṇa to come to You. Your meeting with Him takes place far from Your home; You never desire that He come to You for Your own pleasure. “But, now, My dear friend, O beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in accordance with My request, please remember Him just once. I would be overjoyed to see Him if He appeared here, especially since there is no reason to suspect the arrival of Your superiors. Please remove this painful doubt of Mine without hesitation.”

Śrī Rādhikā, the dear darling daughter of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, duly deliberated upon the heavenly damsel’s request and said, “O sakhi, do not make Me the object of ridicule. If I cannot satisfy Your request, I shall feel ashamed of My prema and thus I will be miserable forever.

“O Lord, who are worshipped by the demigods, O You who give pleasure to the living entities in all three worlds, O You who fulfil all My desires, O merciful one, O Padmānīsa, O witness to all that is true and false, O My worshipful Lord, O Bhagavān Śūryadeva, if people speak the truth when they say ‘Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally one soul’, may Śrī Kṛṣṇa appear directly before My eyes so as to give pleasure to My intimate associates.”

Saying this, Vṛṣabhānu-nandini Śrī Rādhikā closed Her eyes and meditated upon Her lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She sat down like a yoginī, subduing the functions of Her senses and observing full silence. In a moment Śrī Kṛṣṇa removed His disguise, thus revealing His identity to the other sakhiṣ. With the movement of His eyebrows He conveyed His desire that they play along with Him, and then He embraced His beloved Śrī Rādhikā and began to kiss Her freely again and again.

Śrī Rādhikā’s whole body began to horripilate, and tears of joy flowed from Her eyes. As soon as She understood in Her meditation that Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa had come, She opened Her eyes. Seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa before Her, She became immersed in an ocean of rapturous bliss. Śrī Rādhikā appeared like a yoginī directly meeting brahma. The tears from Her eyes washed away Her collyrium.

After a few moments, beautiful-eyed Śrī Rādhikā returned to
Her senses and shamefully covered Her face with the end of Her garment. Śrī Lalitā addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that crest jewel of all gallant lovers, “O sportive one, it is most astonishing that You have come here undetected.

“Only the women of the family are allowed entrance into this private, inner chamber of the house. Even the wind cannot enter here. That male who comes here without fear must be the crest jewel of courageous men.

“You are forcibly touching the body of Śrī Rādhikā, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, even though She is constantly guarded by fierce sakhiṣ like me. Her fame is like the sacred river Mandākini, in which chaste women ritually bathe by engaging in the purification of hearing and chanting. In other words, She is the best of chaste women. Even Arundhatī desires to attain Her chastity.

“After Śrī Rādhikā took Her bath, She sat with closed eyes to worship Mitradeva, the Sungod. [ That is, on the pretext of worshipping the Sungod She meditated upon satisfying Her most beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.] You do not know the meaning of shame. Have You no fear of the Sungod? Have You no regard for social etiquette and moral virtues?

“O Mādhava, I praise Your good fortune that Śrī Rādhikā’s mother-in-law Jatilā and Her angry husband are not at home. We sakhiṣ are but frail and weak women. How can we oppose You? O topmost amongst all debauchees, today by Your good fortune You have skilfully protected Yourself from this danger.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied, “Lalitā, I am not to blame for what has happened. I was playing in the courtyard of the cowshed, when I suddenly remembered Śrī Rādhikā, and then some demigod instantly brought Me here.”

Śrī Rādhikā said, “My dear friend Lalitā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa came here simply as a result of My remembering Him. But where has that celestial damsel gone? Does She believe Me now that She has witnessed this?” Lalitā replied, “When that heavenly damsel saw the two of You meet, all doubt left Her and the pain in Her heart was dispelled. She is inside, arranging for our happiness.”
Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “Please introduce Me to this heavenly damsel.” When Śrī Lalitā did not reply, He said, “Aah, now I understand. Now, by good fortune, I have come to understand your cunningness.

“Some adept young lady endowed with supernatural power, or some aerial demigoddess, must have come to your home, and your friend Rādhikā must have learned some supernatural mantra from her. Now Rādhikā has rendered Me weak and helpless, even though I am not controlled by anyone. Every day She forcefully allures Me and wants to make Me Her servant.

“O Bhāvinī, O Śrī Rādhā, please arrange for this heavenly damsel to give Me a mantra too. I eagerly surrender unto You. Please take Me to a solitary place and make Me Your disciple.”

Śrī Rādhikā said, “In Your hand You hold Your shining flute, which is endowed with supernatural power and which can attract supremely chaste young married women to fulfil Your desires. Why do You need any other mantra?” “The flute cannot always fulfil My task,” Śrī Kṛṣṇa answered. “How can it help Me when you people steal it?”

Lalitā replied, “O Kṛṣṇa, the celestial damsel became shy when She saw You so She hid in the house. Why would She teach You a mantra? If You are so eager, go into the house. If the heavenly damsel is merciful, She will certainly fulfil Your desires.”

Hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered the house. Śrī Rādhikā asked, “Lalitā, what are you doing? Tell Me clearly. I do not understand what is going on, but I have a suspicion.” Lalitā replied, “My friend Rādhā, do not hesitate. Let us go into the house and observe Your friend meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Thereafter, the seed of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s skilful words was sown in the field of Śrī Rādhikā’s heart. It sprouted and, showered with sweet laughter from the clouds of Śrī Lalitā and the other sakhīs, it grew into a tree of knowledge that gave fruits that were filled
Śrī Lalitā said, “It seems that the heavenly damsel has disappeared from this place or gone outside. Let us immediately go and search for Her. O friend Rādhā, please impart knowledge of the *mantra* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and make Him happy.” Thereupon, the *sakhīs* hastily left.

Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa decorated Themselves with the jewels of amorous pastimes from the treasure chest of *prema*, and by so doing defeated millions of Cupids. This is not astonishing. Saintly devotees hear and chant about these gems of transcendental, amorous pastimes and meditate on them to attain service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Thus, they attain supreme bliss and eternally overcome lust.

This poem about Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, entitled *Śrī Premasampuṭa*, was manifested in the month of Phālguna in year 1606 of the Śakābda Era (AD 1684) on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kūḍa and Śrī Śyāma-kūḍa by one who is fully nourished by drinking the sweet, nectarean words of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.