

# Śrī Hamsaduta

By Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

1. Let my heart become the abode of that eternally delightful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is attired in garments more lustrously yellow than orpiment, the bottoms of whose feet are comparable only to crimson *jaba* flowers and whose lotus face perpetually radiates indescribable and extraordinary beauty through a graceful smile.

2. Since the day Hari left His father King Nanda's house and started for Mathurā in the accompaniment of Gandhīni's son, Akrūra, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī has been thrown into a fathomless river of reminiscence which is filled with waters of suffering and is distinguished by whirlpools of dizziness.

3. One day Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī went to the bank of the Yamunā with Her dearest friends, being desirous of extinguishing the fire of separation in which She was burning. However, upon seeing a cottage which was the site of Her many meetings with Kṛṣṇa, She again became intensely absorbed in those memories. At that time Her friend Susupti (deep sleep) came and rendered Her unconscious to protect Her from the agony of remembrance.

4. Rādhārāṇī's *sakhīs* lay Her motionless body on a bed of soft lotus stems and, surrounding Her, began to fan Her with lotus leaves. Due to their intense love for Her they began to fear that some great adversity was imminent and they began to cry with such intensity that the waves of the Yamunā began to break higher and higher with their tears.

5. Lalitā then held the quiet Rādhā against her breast and sprinkled Her with the Yamunā's water from the lotus leaf with which she was fanning. Rādhā's throat quivered with the faintest signs of breathing at which sight the *sakhīs*, relieved, rejoiced loudly.

6. Lalitā then put Śrīmatī down to lie on the lotus bed and rose to bring water for Her from the river. As she stepped forward, she saw a beautiful dazzling white swan moving towards her most gracefully while making a sweet sound.

7. Lalitā became a little encouraged at the sight of the charming bird and welcomed it respectfully. Stepping lightly towards it, out of curiosity she became more and more eagerly hopeful and began to believe that this bird was a suitably qualified messenger to convey the depressed state of their minds to Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā.

8. Thinking of Kṛṣṇa's cruel departure to Mathurā and abandonment of Rādhā and the other cowherd girls, Lalitā felt intolerant. In this mood of loving enviousness she began to explain her heartfelt wishes to the swan. One should not think that there is any fault in her appealing to a dumb animal like this, for the nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is that it makes the soul innocent and thus, seeing Kṛṣṇa everywhere, the devotee has faith in everyone in the whole universe.

9. Lalitā then addressed the swan, saying, “O king of the birds! You reside in the pure water of the holy sites of pilgrimage and you take pleasure in feeding on the stems of the lotuses and are hardly interested in the ephemeral things of this world. Thus we recognise you to be a great soul. With this belief in mind and considering your magnanimity. I seek your help, for I am a very distressed and weak woman. Kindly oblige me, for I know that one who seeks the shelter of a noble person is never disappointed.

10. Kṛṣṇa is famous for His romantic nature, but we know that this is His deception. He has thrown us into oblivion so long ago and gone to live happily in the city of Mathurā while we are here being constantly scorched by the fire of separation. Please take pity on us and immediately rush to Mathurā and narrate the condition of our pained hearts to Him.

11. O my dear swan! I bless you that your journey to Mathurā will be safe and God speed your way. Kindly have compassion on us and don’t delay a moment. Spread your wings in the sky with a joyous heart and let the playful children of the cowherd men run beneath you with their eyes cast up at you flying above.

12. O king of the birds! Please give me your attention, as I shall explain to you the route to be traversed. Follow the universally famous road to Mathurā along which the merciless Akrūra speedily led the most beautiful youth who is the master of our lives.

13. O bird! Go along that path upon which you see the *gopīs* whose cheeks are drenched in the tears gushing from their doe-like eyes. Even now they are suffering from intense absorption in the desire to be re-united with their lover. Follow that road which is marked with the wheels of the chariot which exalted at the touch of His lotus feet.

14. O friend! Please drink the fragrant waters of the Yamunā which are as blue as the *jambu* fruit and satisfy yourself with some tender lotus stems which are soft and as cooling as camphor. Then rest a while under the deep shadows of this large-branched tree before starting for Mathurā.

15. O feathered friend! When Akrūra charioted away the master of our hearts, the *gopīs* followed to a great distance, grieving loudly. Follow the path they took on that day and I guarantee you that your achievement of the highest perfection of spiritual life will be assured. Then you shall truly become worthy of the name ‘*parama-haiṁsa*’.

16. O dear swan! One day Kṛṣṇa suddenly stole our garments while we were bathing in the Yamunā and climbed up a *kadamba* tree. Then He made us reveal our theretofore secret love for Him. You may enjoy resting on the branches of that tree whose thick foliage prevents the sun’s scorching rays from penetrating therein.

17. In this place Kṛṣṇa distributed the loveliness of His form in the ten directions as He began the *rāsa* dance by playing sweetly on the simple flute which kissed His lips, expanding waves of supreme joy. He wore His peacock feathered head-dress and a most precious silk cloth which glowed like gold, His body was a glossy black like the *tamāla* tree. How sweet was He and the sound of His flute on that day!

18. That site of Hari's *rāsa-līlā* is decorated by the black musk which dripped from the bodies of the cowherd maidens as they danced, engrossed in those loving pastimes with their Lord. That place where the *gopīs* danced in circles is still shining with pulverised *mālatī* flowers. O swan! When you see this *rāsa-sthalī*, you will experience divine beatitude.

19. Nearby to the *rāsa* playground stands Govinda's passion pavilion, shaded with creepers of *mādhavī* flowers. I forewarn you, do not cast your eyes at that retreat of Hari's, lest your heart should erupt in celestial joy—for then you would become rooted to the spot and shall never be able to proceed to Mathurā. If that should happen, we *gopīs* would surely die.

20. No no! Never mind! Take a look at that place of Kṛṣṇa's most intimate pastimes, because such a vision will purify your heart. Even though your being delayed will interfere with the speedy fulfilment of our desire, still it will not go in vain, for anything, any quality is only of value if it helps us to remain conscious of Kṛṣṇa always.

21. Upon hearing the irresistible sounds of His melodious flute only once, the *gopīs* used to hastily rush towards Govardhana Hill to meet with Kṛṣṇa. There many flowered cottages cover the hill just for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment of the intimate loving companionship of the *gopīs* and thus Govardhana is an eye-witness of all these going-ons.

22. Kṛṣṇa used to lie on the large stones of the hill when taking the cows out to pasture there, for Govardhana is the well-wisher of the cows. Feast your eyes on that mount, for it will arise great delight in you at a single glance. Govardhana became a knower of *rāsa* due to having received the touch of Kṛṣṇa's hand. We believe that Govardhana Hill is the greatest of all the mountains on Earth. He established the truth of his name when he vanquished the enemy of his own clan, Indra (who had cut off the wings of the mountains who were previously able to fly).

23. At the foot of Govardhana is a *tamāla* tree upon seeing which the tribal women have become agitated; their bodies have become impassioned due to constantly remembering Govinda. When you fly past them, the wind stirred by your wings moistened by Yamunā water will instantly soothe them, even if only for a moment.

24. Not far from there is another grove of *kadamba* trees where Rādhā's lover displayed His expertise in the arrangement of exciting ways of dealing with women by demanding taxes from the *gopīs* in a spirit of amorous altercation. If you rest under those *kadamba* trees for even a moment, you will experience rapturous bliss. If not, your reputation as an enjoyer of *rasas* will be in vain.

25. On the outskirts of Vṛndāvana you will see the dried skull of the Aristā demon, as white as the clouds of the autumn season. These decaying bones are often mistaken for the mountains of Kailāśa by the servants of Kuvera and companions of Śiva who try to ascend to its peaks.

26. The condition of the *gopīs* has become extremely acute due to their separation from their Lord—seeing them, one would not think that they are still alive. I humbly request you to proceed to Mathurā calling sonorously, as that sound will pass for the sound of Hari's ankle bells which, when heard by the *gopīs*, will cause the return of the life airs which have now all but deserted their bodies.

27. Dear messenger! I request you to dwell upon for some time the deep-blue coloured branches of the *bhāṇḍīra* tree which looks so brilliantly beautiful in the bright sunshine. While you sit there inundated by the sun's rays, it will appear as if Nārāyaṇa has appeared holding the conch and discus and is about to cover the sky in His form as Trivikrama. (The tree here is being compared to Nārāyaṇa, the swan to His conch and the sun to His discus.)

28. O most clever one! If you go to the place where the grasses were sprinkled with the pure tears of love which flowed from Brahmā's eight eyes as he sang Kṛṣṇa's praises, then the forest sylphs will assume that Brahmā himself has returned on his swan carrier.

29. On the occasion of Kṛṣṇa's fight with the serpent Kāliya, the *gopīs* rushed anxiously to the Yamunā to see what was going on, but the path became so slippery from the tears which spurted in streams from their eyes that they became unable to proceed steadily as they stumbled and fell. Thus delayed, their anxiety increased so much that the state of their minds became quite indescribable.

30. But Murāri was simply dancing on the heads of that monstrous serpent Kāliya, displaying His superhuman talents as well as heroicism. At that time the ruby-red jewels from the snake's foreheads fell into the Yamunā's bluish waters, producing a beautiful violet effect. O dear one, please taste the holy waters of that lake, which is scented by the fragrant pollen of the *kadamba* trees which stand on its banks.

31. In a spot near Kāliya lake you will come across the goddess Vṛndādevī who lives there in the shape of a *tulasī* plant. Her body is wilting due to the fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa; her lamentation increases when she sees the new flowerbuds appearing on her branches (for she knows that Kṛṣṇa is not here to enjoy them). Only she can really appreciate the anguish of the *gopīs* and therefore you must honour her with all humility and reverence.

32. Thus you will traverse the eleven groves of Śrī Kṛṣṇa where the peacocks' melodies are echoing and you shall reach the twelfth forest known as Madhuvana, which is densely shaded by mango trees. There stands gloriously the capital of the Yadu dynasty, whose fame purifies the earth.

33. There in that city you shall find innumerable grand mansions as tall and glorious as Mount Kailāśa adorned pleasingly with colourful stone pillars. The gardens there are resplendent with flowering trees and you will derive great delight when you see this pleasing abode of the Yadus beautifying the banks of the Yamunā.

34. At some place in that city of Mathurā, you will see the bull on whom Lord Śiva mounts, Nandīśvara, grazing on tender grasses. Elsewhere, Lord Brahmā's swan carrier is eating the stems of the lotus flowers. Somewhere you will find the peacock mount of Kārttikeya grappling venomous serpents and in another place again you will be able to see the elephant carrier of Lord Indra, Airavata, happily munching the leaves of the *sallaki* tree.

35. When Kṛṣṇa first entered Mathurā, the ladies of the town were heard to speak in the following way: "O dear one, can't you feel that your apparel has loosened? Aren't you aware that the jewels from your necklace are sliding off one by one and falling on the road? The litany of Govinda's glorious acts has inebriated you so much that even the town-harlots will mock at your hard-earned reputation of chastity."

36. Another Mathurā beauty said, “O foolish one, there is no more need of dressing-up now! Stop, I know that my left foot has not been painted with vermillion. Even so, I must go right away. I can hear the loud hubbub of the crowds of women out in the street as they come to look at Vṛndāvana’s personified Cupid come passing by.”

37. Looking at Kṛṣṇa, one maiden said, “When the destroyer of Kāmsa adorned with lustrous *aśoka* flowers rides His chariot, the avenues of the town are flooded with ecstasy by His glances.” Hearing her, her girlfriends said, “O dearest one! Why are you pushing us aside to occupy the entire window, alone gazing with fixed eyes? Won’t you allow us to also have a glance at what you see?”

38. “Dear friend, what are your eager eyes searching for in the void? What are you absorbed in, sitting here alone? You don’t heed the hundreds of messages spoken to you by your friends. O lotused-eyed one, from such gestures we surmise that youthful Śyāmasundara, who is the colour of a beautiful new black cloud, has crossed the field of your vision.”

39. “Dear friend! Don’t allow the helpless tears to roll down your cheeks anymore—Kṛṣṇa will shortly come to accept your affectionate glances.” In this way, the ladies of Mathurā talked amongst themselves when Kṛṣṇa came into the town on the first day He arrived there.

40. O dear swan, the women of Mathurā can always see the eternally delightful form of Hari and thus enjoy heavenly bliss, little caring that they have placed the burden of endless calamities squarely on the heads of the cowherd maidens of Vṛndāvana. A view of these women is sure to make you happy, giving all satisfaction to your eyes.

41. O dear swan, passing by the palace of the Vṛṣṇis you will find your way into the interior of Kṛṣṇa’s house, so famous for the complexities of its construction. Its glamour is increased by the countless banners atop it fluttering in the wind and decorating the sky.

42. Along the pinnacles of the turrets on that splendid palace are a great number of crystal swans whose beaks and feet are beset with gems. When Brahmā comes to town, his swan carrier takes them to be his brothers and offers them the proper greetings and respects.

43. The *gopīs* gave a pair of parrots to Uddhava to be presented to Kṛṣṇa to remind Him of them. That parrot couple can still be heard in the streets of Mathurā plaintively repeating this conversation from Vṛndāvana: “When will I see that killer of the Mura demon again? He couldn’t be found by the continuously searching *gopīs* in the forests on the Yamunā’s banks where He surely went to hide. O friend, when will He, who upon seeing me, would break into a smile which would sway the whole universe with joy, appear before me again?” “O Rādhē! Shake off Your mood of depression! Kṛṣṇa promised that He would be coming back—He wouldn’t lie to us. Very shortly the light of Your heart is sure to be re-united with You, sporting a new peacock feather in His hair.”

44. On the top of Hari’s palace you will see the whirling vine-like clouds of incense smokes, so dark and blue that the peacocks mistake them for rain clouds and greet them heartily. O prudent swan! If by this sight you become fearful of the imminent thunderbolts of the rainy season and wish to fly off to Mana-sarovara like all swans do at that time, then I’ll be able to understand that you have been living in the association of dull-brained persons.

45. Thus you should proceed to the inner portion of the palace where you will find Kṛṣṇa's private pleasure chambers. The windows are bedecked with swaying locks of pearls and there are white crystal pillars; around the edges of the walls, descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes have been engraved in gold.

46. At one end of the veranda to His private quarter is a perch made of emeralds meant for the peacocks who sleep away the night on it. Free from anxiety and thus resting, they wait for a suitable opportunity to speak with the Lord of the Yadus.

47. O dear swan, there you will notice Hari, the fountainhead of all beautiful things in the universe, sitting on a bed with sublime and sparkling white cotton sheets. He is relaxing there, leaning slightly to the left with both elbows resting on the moon-like pillows behind Him. Charming jewelled earrings in the shape of dolphins are gracing His cheeks; the splendour of His silken dress eclipses the lustre of gold and His blackish bodily hue is as pleasing as the black waters of the Kālindi. Should you chance to see all this beauty of Mukunda's, an ecstatically maddening ambrosia will flood your eyes.

48. There you will find Bikadru, one of the elders of the family, sitting near Him singing many amusing things from the Purāṇas. By the side of a dazzling pillar you will see the hard-hearted Akrūra (the very utterance of whose name sends a shiver of fear down the breasts of the *gopīs*) elaborately chanting the history of the Kurus.

49. You will also see Sātyaki, the most glorious of the Sini clan of Yadu fighters, as well as the renowned Kṛtavarma fanning Kṛṣṇa gracefully with royal *cāmaras*. Bṛhaspati's disciple Uddhava will surely be massaging Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet as he kneels on the floor before Him.

50. There you will find Garuḍa with folded hands and a heart brimming with love and veneration, awaiting the order to go off somewhere quickly. When that great bird flies on his missions, the students of the town desert their arguments on the correct pronunciation of Vedic *mantra* upon hearing the sound of his flapping wings.

51. When even one as clever as Brahmā finds himself unable to properly depict the magnificence and beauty of even a single toenail of Dāmodara's feet, then how could an ordinary woman like myself ever hope to portray it? It is only because my intelligence has been addled by His transcendental charms that I venture to do it.

52. Hari's feet are gleaming gracefully. Lord Brahmā himself fell before the tips of those toes covering them with the upper part of his crowns when he was plagued with guilt over the act of purloining the cowherd children and calves. The discreet sage Nārada laments for those poor souls who have attained liberation but have been deprived of the great ecstasy which is derived by looking at those lotus feet for just a moment.

53. The lotus flowers are envious of the rosy hue of Kṛṣṇa's beautiful lotus feet, and so have taken the vow of performing austerities living in the water. All glories to the winter season, which comes every year and punishes them for their improper attachments by causing them to wilt until finally they lose their lives.

54. The glaze of Hari’s legs outshines the glamour of emerald coloured banana trees, destroying their pride in their own beauty. Though intensely restless, the hearts of the *gopīs* are bound to them, in the same way that the powerful and restless wild elephants are bound by force to a stout pillar.

55. O dearest of birds! The lake of Madhusūdana’s navel is the prime source of life for the *gopīs*’ minnow-like eyes. Before creation of this universe, a lotus grew in that lake; in that lotus’s stem, the fourteen worlds have been accommodated, and Brahmā also took his birth in the whorl.

56. When Mother Yaśodā tied Kṛṣṇa up with a piece of rope, it left a mark of three lines which still beautify His belly. Within that belly, she was twice favoured to have a look at the entire universe populated by men, gods, and serpents when she looked into His mouth.

57. When the slender beauties of the creation gaze upon Kṛṣṇa’s chest, then Cupid immediately appears in their minds. The *kaustubha* jewel sits there, and although it possesses a radiance equal to that of millions of suns, upon His brilliant chest it appears to be no brighter than a firefly.

58. His arms are more brilliant than two sapphire pillars set with precious gems—these arms remove the darkness of the whole world. It was with these arms that he annihilated the demon Keśī, and the mark of that demon’s teeth still makes a decorative band around His bicep. With these arms He always used to embrace the necks of the *gopīs*, and they diffuse the perfume of musk.

59. His face conquers the empire of the most wonderful waves of nectarean loveliness which flow throughout the entire universe; His sweet smile is the abode of ever-new ambrosial mellows and it unfolds a wreath of glittering pearl-like teeth. His eyebrows dance like a vine in the breeze and one can see he is happily absorbed in romantic thoughts. When you go to Mathurā, you will have the fortune to behold such a visage.

60. O friend, in short, the sum and substance of what I have to say here is this: you can understand that He whose slightest view instantaneously inundates your heart with supreme delight is none other than our Kṛṣṇa, the defeater of Madhu.

61. O dear swan, you yourself are well acquainted with the intrigues of the heart through your experiences with your sweet singing lady-swan friends. You may find Kṛṣṇa similarly absorbed in such affairs with new women He has become involved with since arriving in Mathurā. If so, you should not narrate our sufferings to Him, because He will not be interested in us who are inexpert village girls. That person who has once tasted nectar never wishes to give it up to drink whey.

62. O feathered friend, if on the other hand the cuckoos should have encircled Him singing melodiously and cool breezes blow gently carrying the fragrance of Govardhana’s flowers scenting the air, and if all these things remind Him of the sweetness of Vṛndāvana, then only should you convey to Him the distress of our hearts.

63. This is my message—please repeat to Him exactly what I say to you now: “O Lord of the *gopīs*! Please lend Your ears to that which is now being submitted to you by Lalitā, who is the dearest friend of that *gopī* whom You loved above all others when You resided here in Vṛndāvana. She pays Her respectful obeisances at Your feet.

64. “Murāri, the calf You so carefully reared by feeding her the fresh leaves and stems of lotus flowers has now given birth to her first calf and the weight of her udder is so great that the teats hang down below her knees. How beautiful she looks.

65. “Do You remember that *mādhavī* sapling You took from the *kadamba* grove and replanted by the mango tree, as if to make it the mangos’ lifelong wife-like companion? It was only little then, a foot high with two or three leaves on it. Now it has grown so big. Yet, in Your absence she sheds tears constantly in the form of sap which gushes down her side; seeing her deplorable condition, we are also pushed to the brink of tears.

66. “There was once a child who took birth in the womb of Yaśodā and who was to become the abode of the greatest happiness for the cowherds of Vṛndāvana. Another child was born in the stone-like womb of Gandhīni who was to...O Śiva! O Śiva!...put an end to the glory of the land of Gokula.

67. “O Murāri! The demons You killed seem to have returned one by one: Aristāsura seems to have shaken the beautiful-eyed *gopī* girls and thrown them to the brink of calamity; Tṛṇāvarta has returned as the grasses covering the disused playgrounds of the Lord and Vyomāsura has returned by making the whole area of Vṛndāvana seem as empty as outer space.

68. “O Kṛṣṇa, under no circumstance should You come to Vṛndāvana, for its trees have become so dreadfully poisonous that the whole place is a danger area. If that were not so, then why is it that the *gopīs* seem to be falling unconscious just by breathing the perfumed air? It must be toxic fumes from the flowers—what else could it be?

69. “O Yadunātha! We are but ordinary country women, and therefore You should not waste Your time thinking of us when the princesses of Mathurā are at Your service. Gone is that time when You would wander in the forests at night, secretly making Your way into our houses to meet with us or even just to catch a glimpse of us.

70. “O Lord! We do not blame You for having forsaken us, because persons possessing a dark complexion can rarely give up their deceitfulness. Just consider the case of the cuckoos—the crow rears them from the time of their incubation, but even so, as soon as the cuckoo’s wings have developed and they become able to fly, they forget even such a dear benefactor as the crow forever.

71. “O undisputed Lord of Vṛndāvana! I have finished my preamble. Now listen to the drama which is even now being enacted there. First, however, I must ask You one question: do You remember the two unfortunate syllables, ‘Rā-dhā’?

72. “O Kṛṣṇa! You used to be so attached to Your ‘household affairs’ in the caves of Govardhana and the forest groves. What anguish is it for me that everyone is whispering about the misfortune of the *gopīs*, for She who was formerly supreme in Your estimation has now been reduced to nothing more than any other common-place woman.

73. “O foremost of the Yadu clan, it is impossible for Śrīmatī Rādhikā to live if You remain forgetful of Vṛndāvana. She is thinking that if death does not favour Her soon, then how will She be able to pass the days seeing the picturesque landscape which was formerly the abode of joy for Her but is now simply a source of endless torture in Your absence.



74. “But death does not favour Her either. Her tears have formed a river whose waves have become even more forceful than those of the Yamunā, which in comparison looks wan. Considering this, Yamarāja, the Yamunā’s elder brother, has become envious and does not oblige Śrīmatī even when She cries out, ‘O Lord of Death, please have mercy on Me, as I do not wish to live another moment!’

75. “Our dearest friend Rādhā saw Your inexplicably attractive form engaged in different sporting activities only once and immediately She lost Her sense of discrimination as to what is beneficial or harmful for Her. Like a moth speedily enters into a flame, She has entered helplessly into a blazing fire of love for You, giving up all hopes of ever being happy again.

76. “O Kṛṣṇa, You are to the residents of Vṛndāvana what the moonlight is to the waterlilies. I cannot say anything more than that Rādhikā is a victim of Her own foolishness, for even now She has not been able to remove from Her heart even slightly the memory of that person who is responsible for Her distress. All these afflictions of Hers are self-imposed.

77. “Kubjā now freely enjoys the pleasure of carefree residence in Your heart, so who can be more fortunate than she? My simple friend Rādhā has somehow become bereft of Her pious activities because She is no longer able to enter into that abode for even a moment.

78. “O destroyer of the Mura demon! When Śrīmatī faints at the whistling sound of the bamboos in the wind (remembering the sound of Your flute), the elderly persons become puzzled and search for the cause of Her malady. Some fear that She has been possessed by spirits while some apprehend that she was bitten by some cruel serpent (not knowing that actually, yes, She has been bitten by that snake Akrūra). Others ascribe the cause to epilepsy, but no-one actually knows.

79. “O most beautiful one! Your form is like honey for the starving eyes of the world. You left for Mathurā so long ago and Rādhā has become most anxious due to not receiving any news of You. Lately, new waves of ominous fear are dancing constantly in the inner chambers of Her mind.

80. “Listen, I will tell You how She passes Her days. Sometimes She offers Her respects to those sages whose words are known to be unfailing in hopes of getting advice as to how She can get You back; She sometimes tries to please the mystics who know various spells (thinking that there must surely be some *mantra* She can chant which will force You to come back); sometimes She humbly renders service to those who know the art of using potions in order to get their help; on occasion She prays to Pārvatī-devī for the benediction of seeing You again. O Kṛṣṇa! That poor girl sees nothing of merit anywhere in this world due to being upset by Your absence.

81. “O enemy of Kamsa! My dearest friend spends all Her time these days by Nandīśvara, worshipping You as She remembers You as the protector of the animals in Vṛndāvana, as one sporting a fresh peacock feather in His headdress, as one engaged in such whimsical sports as would cause the cupidity of all women to increase, as one whose form is more beautiful than that of a new rain cloud and who is always enjoying new loving affairs. All She wants is to be able to have You by Her side again and that is all She prays for—either to You directly or to Śiva or any other god.

82. “Rādhā has become so confused that, drawing a captivating image of You on the ground with the juice of the *tamāla* tree, She embraces the neck of that image with Her vine-like arms and falls to the ground unconscious. Alas! She is no longer able to distinguish reality from non-reality.

83. “O Kṛṣṇa, thinking of You has completely stunned the senses of Rādhā and often She even thinks that She has become You! Even so, the fire of separation does not stop burning Her—this intolerable suffering does not let up for even a moment.

84. “Although You have cruelly thrown Rādhikā into a pile of sufferings, still She thinks of You and Your activities even now. That most perfect of chaste women thinks that Your heart must be broken due to separation from Her, and thus Her own heart breaks day by day.

85. “O destroyer of Kāmsa! Our sweetest friend Rādhā has become absorbed in deep *yogic* trance because She has heard that You always reveal Yourself to such meditators. She is preparing Herself for the hardest of austerities because She thinks that in this way people are favoured by Your appearance before them.

86. “O Kṛṣṇa! Our dearest friend causes all Her associates to become despondent because She remains constantly bathed in tears as She calls out Your names: ‘O Murāri! Mukunda! Hari! O son of Nanda!’ She also sings of Your qualities: ‘The hue of Your body is no different from that of a blue lotus blooming in the waters of the Yamunā. You are the delight of the house of Nanda Mahārāja and You are the jewel amongst the gods.’

87. “The blazing conflagration of separation from You is burning up the forest of Rādhā’s body; it has surrounded the doe of Her life, and to make matters worse, Cupid is like a hunter mercilessly shooting his arrows at Her. All these circumstances have become so overpowering that I fear this doe shall be forced to abandon the forest of Rādhā’s body within a day or two. (Therefore, if You wish to see Her again in this life, You had better come quickly, for there’s not much time left.)

88. “Rādhikā has now surrendered Herself fully to Śiva, whose body is the white colour of the foam on the ocean of milk and who is crowned by the moon. Since he is the subduer of Cupid, it is beyond the power of Eros to do Her any harm. Only You for some reason remain tormenting Her constantly for the sake of Your own amusement.

89. “O jewel of the Yadu dynasty! You do not know the intensity of the feelings of the cowherd maidens; neither do we know what magic causes us to go on loving You despite Your cruelty. Your friend Uddhava (who was known as a madman in his childhood because of his absorption in love for You) has tried to mitigate our sufferings with many spiritual teachings from the scriptures, but frankly, such utterances only aggravate the anguish of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

90. “That Uddhava who is a true follower of his teacher Bṛhaspati now holds the post of prime minister in the Yadu court. Our friend Yamunā is the sister of the Lord of Yamarāja. These two are therefore no longer actively pursuing our interests—and O chief of the Yadus, who else is there known to us in Your court who will be able to properly narrate Rādhikā’s sorrows and thus appease You?

91. “Due to throwing Herself on the ground in agony, Śrīmatī Rādhikā has become bruised externally as well as internally. She is enwrapped in great hopes that have yet to be fulfilled and Her bodily colour has become wan. She finds no joy in anything and thus even Her conversation and amusements in the association of Her girlfriends have come to an end. O Kṛṣṇa, You are like the moon—when will You come and revive Rādhā with the touch of Your feet, just as the moon revives the lily with the touch of its rays?

92. “O Hero! For so long my *sakhī* has hoped against hope for reunion with You, and only for that reason did she make any effort to protect Her life against innumerable threats. Now, however, the faintest hope for such a reunion has deserted Her, as the expected date of Your return has long since passed. She is calmly gazing at the mango buds in expectation of a quick demise. (Previously She would not dare to look at things which promote the memory of You, Her beloved, but now She is looking at them thinking they will expedite Her expiry.)

93. “Rādhikā’s end is near and Her friends have long since given up efforts to save Her, for they can see that Cupid has causelessly chosen to make Her his enemy and torment Her and it is impossible to do anything at all to help Her. Only one friend still remains by the side of the lotus-eyed Rādhā to preserve Her life, and that is the hope of Your return.

94. “O Kṛṣṇa! Expert enjoyer of the *rāsa* dance! If you have truly forsaken that Rādhā with whom You once created a love which deepened in intensity at every moment, then curses on this swab of cotton which we are holding before Her nose and which indicates that there is still some slight bit of life within Her.

95. “O Mukunda! Who on the earth can narrate the hundreds of things that Rādhārāṇī prattles in Her delirious state? O Lord! Let me repeat some of those utterances. Please make these statements enter into Your beautiful ears which are decorated by dolphin-shaped earrings.

96. “Rādhā says, ‘O Lalitā! When Kṛṣṇa was in Vṛndāvana, His ever-increasing love for Me made Me easily consider My religious duties to My husband as something exceedingly insignificant. How painful it is that He no longer loves Me. I’m embarrassed that I am still maintaining My life in this body which has now become an unbearable burden.

97. “I do not know the words which most effectively can be used in a message to Him. If I say, ‘I love You more than My very self’ then He will consider it pretentious. If I say, ‘I cannot live without You’ it speaks of My selfishness and fades the glory of love, and if I say, ‘Why do You not come back to Vṛndāvana?’ then it will reveal that we are always thinking of Him.

98. “O *sakhī*! Before, when Kṛṣṇa loved Me, these forest groves gave Me such pure joy and these trees were then the cause of unlimited pleasure to Me. Now that He has become indifferent, all of them are simply causes of suffering. When her Lord ignores her, then what girl would not look upon the whole of creation with distaste?

99. “O dear Lalitā! Will Kṛṣṇa ever call Me away again by force from the assembly of beautiful-eyed women, all unsettled by feelings of love for Him due to the sounding of the sweet melodious notes of His flute? Will I ever gaze with a look of maddened love into the eyes of that Lord of Mine whose dancing eyebrows have ruined the religious vows of all the chaste girls of Vraja?

100. “O well-wishing friend, long past is the day when that naughty Kṛṣṇa, so greatly eager to enjoy with Me, found Me in a cave in Govardhana where I was playfully hiding from Him. He grabbed hold of Me suddenly, pulling Me to His chest as I feigned anger. In the end My breasts were left marked with hundreds of half-moon shaped scratches.

101. “When in the beginning of the sweet autumn season, filled with the sounds of buzzing bees in mountain forests whitened by waves of silver moonlight, will I ever wrap that Govinda tightly in these arms as We battle one another in Cupid’s erotic war games?”

102. “My mind is burning up! How terrible! What should I do? I can see no shore on either side of this great ocean of suffering into which I have fallen. I am making this prayer to you with My head bowed—somebody please tell Me how I can cross over, or at least how I can have the patience to tolerate, the situation.

103. “If Kṛṣṇa has really become the foremost of the hard-hearted by leaving Me, then let it be so—He is free. As for Me, My only hope is to apply Myself to My marriage duties (or for death to come and take Me). But who could endure His coming here to Vṛndāvana on the pretext of My dreams and forcefully ravishing Me against My will?”

104. “This improper behaviour of His is giving great distress to My mind, so you should go immediately to Mathurā and stop that irresponsible and cheeky boy from acting in that way. O friend, do it quickly before He comes again and at the beginning of My dreams tears off My waist-bells in a frenzy of lusty passion.

105. “Listen: it’s not just in dreams that He comes either. Don’t suddenly disbelieve Me, thinking that I’ve gone mad, but listen to what I’ve experienced directly. How surprised I was when your friend Kṛṣṇa unexpectedly came to the forests by the side of Govardhana and started to demonstrate His professionalism in the game of love.

106. “I ran away from His touch, trying to escape into the deeper woods where it was dark and He would not be able to see Me, but He could tell where I had gone by the sound of My ankle-bells, which only tinkled louder as I quickened my step in fear of being caught. Then He came near Me and playfully moved to touch Me. So eager was He that His eyes positively gleamed in excitement and He became unaware that His flute had slipped from His hand and fallen to the ground.

107. “O *sakhī*! Then, being unable to get away from Him, I covered Myself with the thick vines decorated with smile-like flowers and began to whimper in trepidation, saying, ‘Don’t touch Me, You fiend!’ Then that friend of yours started laughing and jokingly lifted My head so that He could kiss Me with His lips, which glowed as bright as the *bimba* fruit.

108. “I had hidden the flute in My braid, and so being afraid of discovery, I feigned anger and began to slowly walk away towards the mountain, but then He pulled My hair to stop Me from going. Thus discovering the flute He said, ‘Ha! I’ve caught You now, You thief!’ and began to carry Me off by force to imprison Me in a nearby cave.

109. “Another time I was in the grove of *mādhavī* vines when that impertinent youth crept up from behind and forcefully covered My eyes with His hands. I became irritated and went to snatch His fingers and push them away, but as I did so, He suddenly disappeared. O *sakhī*, I don’t know where that king of cheaters has gone and hidden.

110. “O simple one! These are all incidents of the past. Enough of them—look before you, your friend is here now, His face decorated with a honey-like smile and like an ocean of erotic love-sports, He is throwing a red *banduka* flower at Me and making suggestive motions with His pillar-like arms that He will come to embrace Me right now.

111. “O friend, don’t be shy! Get up quickly and tie that miscreant up with Your thick necklace of pearls before He runs off to Mathurā again!’ Speaking in this way, She suddenly falls to the ground in a stupor born of all these intense emotions coming from Her ever-expanding love for You. You see, in this way She is making all Her girlfriends cry ceaselessly.

112. “Oh, what pain it gives me to think what a wicked-hearted woman I am! Since our childhood days I always advised Her to play hard-to-get and put on a pretence of indifference towards You. O Lord, You are the teacher of the *gopīs* in the art of love. Because of me She was never able to fully enjoy the embraces of Your flawless arms, even though She never wanted anything else from the very first time She saw You.

113. “When will I be able to serve Her by fanning Her with a clump of fresh branches as She lies with Her eyes closed, experiencing the happiness of undisturbed sleep while resting in Your arms on the veranda of Your garden-house playground scented by the fragrant breezes carrying the odour of the Yamunā’s lotus flowers, Her hair full of the fragrance of *mādhavī* flowers.

114. “Hiding secretly nearby, I see Her in one edge of the Vṛndāvana woods in great joy after having spent the autumn night in love-sporting with You, all the flower decorations in Her hair bruised and faded and Her arms wrapped around Your shoulders. Seeing You both like this, I will laugh in great happiness.

115. “When will the day come when I will be able to say to Her, ‘Sakhī, I am now going to pick flowers over there, some distance away. You go ahead to the river bank where there are so many nice *tulasī* trees and pick their leaves and flowers.’ In this way I will cunningly send Her to the place where You have hidden Yourself, O lover of the *gopīs*, so that the two of You may fulfil all of Your desires.”

116. So my dear swan, after you have thus submitted all these Gokula messages at His feet, you must offer our respects to all the intimate associates of the Lord and incur their pleasure, for those ornaments and so forth that the Lord carries on His own body are the recipients of His special mercy and love.

117. O lover of the she-swans! First you should speak to the forest flower garland which so attractively adorns His chest. After inquiring after her health, you should say to her as follows: “O highly-qualified one! Have you forgotten the doe-eyed Rādhā, who for so long accompanied you, being adhered to the breast of the enemy of Kāmsa?”

118. “O garland! You are experienced in amorous affairs. Don’t you remember the time by Govardhana when my friend Rādhā, incensed at the Lord of Gokula for His infidelity, held on to you and pulled so strongly that His peacock feathered crown toppled from His head and His eyes rolled in fear?”

119. Then you should turn to His dolphin-shaped earrings and say, “What is the necessity of asking a fortunate entity such as yourself as to Kṛṣṇa’s well-being, for You are always kissing His smiling cheeks and being touched by the darting glances from the corners of His eyes?”

120. “O goddess! Listen to me. I am taking shelter of you with a heart full of love because I know that you live at the base of His vine-like ears. When there are no Vṛṣṇis about to overhear you, please whisper into those ears of His all of these pleas of ours; convey the sufferings Rādhārāṇī experiences in separation from Him.”

121. O best of the birds! Then you must kindly give the following notification to the Kaustubha jewel, speaking with all humility. After conveying to him my loving embrace, say, “O friend, it seems you have completely forgotten even Rādhā, one who was so dear to You. It must be due to your always remaining on Hari’s chest—this has made you always fickle and everyone knows how foolish it is to love the fickle.

122. “O jewel of the gods! Because you abide on His chest, you know His heart. Therefore, I am asking you whether we will ever see His wild dancing on the banks of the Yamunā along with musical expertise as He plays His flute to the accompaniment of the jingling waist and anklebells, bracelets, and other ornaments of the dancing *gopīs*.

123. “O conchshell! You are a newcomer and have never met us *gopīs*. Thus, you haven’t got the slightest conception of the glories of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Even so, we appeal to you, telling you of the pain within our hearts, for those who are of a generous nature are always affectionate to those who are pained and weary.

124. “You are the offspring of the ocean’s heart! O friend! Please come one time for a visit to the precincts of Vṛndāvana—bringing Govinda with you, of course. You will enjoy residing there. But then again, how will you be able to make the land of cows dear when the glories of the flute’s fortune are being sung everywhere constantly?”

125. After you have thus spoken to each of these intimate associates of the Lord, then brother, speak to Him once again, telling Him the tales of His own ten incarnations in words which are sweet and loving, but mixed with a good dose of anger also.

126. O Great Fish! My *sakhī* baited the hook of Her heart with the delicacy of love just to catch You, throwing it into the water of affection. But You swallowed the bait and the hook and pulled the string of Her ability to reason so that She has completely submerged in those waters. Alas, what can the poor girl do now?

127. O Kṛṣṇa! My lamentable friend came closer to You when She saw Your attractive form and dalliances. She was both curious and enlivened greatly, but You immediately behaved like a tortoise, hiding Your beautiful limbs and showing only a hard shell. Is such behaviour proper?

128. O enemy of Kaiśa! Once again You have demonstrated the behaviour of a hog by taking Kubjā, a servant girl of a low class, to Your heart while she was making sandalwood paste for King Kaiśa. Thus You made her Your wife, just as in Your boar incarnation You picked up the earth from the mud at the bottom of the universe and made her Your wife.

129. Although Your pastimes as half-man and half-lion are long since past, still You have not abandoned the mood of that incarnation. At that time You showed favour to Prahlāda while to others You displayed extreme cruelty, tearing open their hearts. This time also You are showing attachment for Akrūra while You tear open our hearts by leaving us in this heartless way.

130. O Vāmana! Just like Bali ignored his *guru*, so Rādhā also ignored the wishes of Her elders, thinking Her love was sufficiently powerful and that thus You were Hers. In this way, She surrendered Herself along with the kingdom of Her mind to You completely. Well, She got Her just deserts, for You have shackled Her in the bonds of unfulfilled love and thrown Her far away from You, just as Vāmana bound Bali in chains and exiled him to the lower planets.

131. O Lord! My girlfriend wants to jump from the mountain and commit suicide and thus it is logical for You to be very hard on Her—O Bhṛgupati! It is very difficult to understand Your activities when You have even forgotten Your father Nanda Mahārāja, who is so dear to You. From the point of view of Bhṛgupati, O Lord, Rādhā is trying to conquer Your capital city and so You are naturally cruel to Her. Still Your activities are hard to understand, for You abandoned even Your own *guru* Śiva when You became unable to maintain the bow he had given You, being defeated by Rāmacandra.

132. O Lord of the Rādhā dynasty! Now that You have left Vraja, all the cows are greatly oppressed by different miseries (or the demon Dasana who was killed by Rāma); similarly, the area surrounding Govardhana appears to be drying up (or taking on the nature of Rāvaṇa's brother Khara); the land of Vraja will soon be bereft of Śrīmatā Rādhikā, who is dying in separation for You (or the land is being subjugated by Viradha, another demon killed by Rāma); it can be seen that now a great plague is fearfully dancing in the once happy land (or the demon Marica is dancing fearfully). How can You remain indifferent when all these demons You once killed are thus dancing in delight at Your absence?

133. O holder of the plough! You are the enjoyer of many pleasures. The time has come for You to perform the *rāsa* dance again. We have not yet lost Rādhārāṇī, who is the main cause for Your enjoyment of that dance—somehow or other She is still maintaining Her life. So why don't You come to Vṛndāvana, with Your bodily lustre like the autumn sky filled with fluffy white clouds?

134. O Buddha! Omniscient one! You are always merciful to all, but why are You not sympathetic to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is never attached to anything but You? She is inimical to the god of lust and opposes everything which interferes with the attainment of Her desired goal, always remaining absorbed in meditation on You.

135. O Kalki! Come here and with the sword of Your loving sidelong glances cut apart the infidel suffering born of Your separation. Come and show Your love for the cowherd men and make the land of Vṛndāvana a place with a happy Rādhārāṇī once again.

136. O Lord of the birds! In this way you should repeat these messages of love to Kṛṣṇa, wetting your face and body with the tears pouring from your eyes. Then, with your head lowered, look at His lotus feet and wait attentively for His reply.

137. O Lord of the swans! Please don't hesitate—just think how rare a sight is the form of Nanda Mahārāja's son. Shouldn't you go and see Him at least once? The *gopīs* are the glory of this world—don't you think you should do this little favour for them? It will only take a few hours. Please brother, don't doubt or delay.

138. O enchanter of the female swans! Your mind is absorbed in the desire to appreciate the finer points of romantic dealings. You are the most discerning of persons, for you are able to separate just the milk from a solution of milk and water. Therefore, I ask you, do you think it is proper for you to delay in such an important and romantic affair as going to Mathurā to speak to Kṛṣṇa on our behalf?”

139. All glories to my spiritual master! Just like Śukadeva Muni was devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa from his very birth, being constantly absorbed in discussion of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and thus very dear to the devotees, so too was he always indifferent to the pleasure of material life, being fully aware of the sweetness of devotional life. He is the foremost of those scholars who concern themselves with the esoteric aspects of the scriptures dealing with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal affairs. All glories to him, who is known in the world by the name ‘Sakar’ (Sanātana Gosvāmī).

140. This poem is concerned with the most confidential and profound of Kṛṣṇa’s *līlās* and is therefore glorious. Those persons who are both knowledgeable in and sensitive to such transcendental subjects will never criticise either the external merits and defects of the work from a crass technical standpoint, nor will they find fault in the activities of the Lord Himself, who is the only true friend of the world. May this short opus therefore be dedicated to Him, and may it be the cause of deep and ever-increasing joy to Him.