

Gaura-līlā is oceanic. Its sacred wonder is beyond comprehension. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, *śrī gaurāṅga mahāprabhoś caraṇayor yā keśa śeṣādibhiḥ sevāgamyatayā*: the gods, goddesses, and even Ananta Śeṣa cannot comprehend the wonder of *gaura-līlā*. As Śrī Vyāsarāya has written, this is true for *kṛṣṇa-līlā* as well, *muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*. The many *līlās* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are comparable to rivers flowing in all directions, but the fountain from which they flow is the *līlā* of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Mahāśaya writes:

kṛṣṇa-līlā amṛta-sāra, tāra śata śata dhāra,
daśa-dike vahe yāhā haite
se caitanya-līlā haya, sarovara akṣaya,
mano-haṁsa carāha ’tāhāte

“*Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is the essence of eternal nectar flowing in hundreds of branches in all ten directions from the inexhaustible lake of *caitanya-līlā*. May the swan of my mind swim in that lake.”

How can we approach that lake? It is the property of Gaura’s devotees and they can give it to us, *sva-bhakta-vihitā sānyair-yayā labhyate*. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has dug a channel from the bottomless lake of *gaura-līlā* to our ears in the form of his *Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-stotra*, and if we listen to this *stotra* with faith, it will enter our hearts through our ears and flood any prospect for material enjoyment, drowning our souls in Gaura *līlā*.

Let us offer our obeisances to the endearing character of the Lord who takes birth in Navadvīpa Dhāma and to his daily *līlā*, *naumi pratyāhikaṁ tadīya-caritaṁ śrīman-navadvīpa-jam*.

In Nadīyā, many perfect devotees reside in their fully spiritualized, perfected *sādhaka-dehas*. Ever-youthful, surrounded by their disciples, and under the shelter of their gurus, they serve Śrī Gaurāṅga, Nityānanda Prabhu, Śrī Advaita Acārya, and their *pārśadas*. There are innumerable *asramas* dotting the landscape of Navadvīpa Dhāma. Our guru’s *asrama* in this

world is a particular manifestation of the magnanimous abode of Śrī Gaurāṅga. *Sadhakas* who think of themselves as servants of Śrī Guru and *sevakas* of Śrī Guru's *asrama* can perfect themselves and enter the eternal *lilā* of the moon of Gauḍa Maṇḍala in the form of *brāhmaṇa-kiśora*. Meditating on the daily *lilā* of Śrī Gauracandra and engaging in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, they enter Gaura *lilā*, and as Nīmāi Paṇḍita in the course of his eightfold daily *lilā* enters the trance of Kṛṣṇa *lilā*, they follow him in their self-realized forms as Vraja *gopīs* or *gopas*.

Gaura-lilā is always tempered by a degree of reverence. Even the most intimate devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa show reverence for Śrī Caitanya-deva when they appear in Gaura *lilā*. However, for the *sādhaka*, reverence—*dāsya-bhakti*—for Śrī Gaurāṅga leads naturally to love of God in intimacy—*Vraja-bhakti*.

The following song was composed by a prominent disciple of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. The sincere *sādhaka* should sing it daily and contemplate its meaning.

Niśānta (3:36 – 6:00 AM)

*niśi-śeṣe gorā ghumera āveśe śayana pālaṅkopare
heno-jana nāhi, je bārek se śobhā heriyā parāṇa dhare*

niśi-śeṣe—at the end of the night; *gorā*—Gaura; *ghumera āveśe*—absorbed in mystic slumber; *śayana*—lies; *pālaṅkopare*—upon a fine bedstead; *heno-jana nāhi*—there is no such person; *je bārek*—who but once; *se śobhā heriyā*—beholding such splendor; *parāṇa dhare*—could maintain his life breath.

At the end of the night, Gaura lies upon a fine bedstead absorbed in mystic slumber. No one could behold such splendor and maintain his life breath!

Commentary

Śrī Gaurāṅga awakens at 3:36 AM to the sounds of peacocks, parrots, and other beautiful birds of all variety. Śuka, the male parrot, sings the glories of Madana-mohana thus:

*vamśī-dhārī jagan-nārī-
citta-hārī sa śārike
vihārī gopa-nārībhir
jīyān madana-mohanaḥ*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa carries a flute and enchants the hearts of all women throughout the universe. He is specifically the enjoyer of the beautiful *gopīs*, and he is the enchanter of Cupid also. Let him be glorified!”

To which Śārī, the female parrot, replies:

*rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti
tadā ‘madana-mohanaḥ’
anyathā viśva-moho ’pi
svayaṁ ‘madana-mohitaḥ’*

“When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhā, only then is he the enchanter of Cupid; otherwise, when he is alone, he himself is enchanted by erotic feelings, even though he enchants the whole universe.”

In this way Gaurāṅga Rāya is awakened from his mystic slumber to the glories of Rādhā-Madana-mohana. He lies in bed in all his splendor, served by the expansion of Nityānanda Rāma in the form of his bed and sacred thread, awaiting further service from Nityānanda Prabhu in the form of his shoes and umbrella, *dvija-maṇi bakṣe tava jhala-mala-sutra paduka paraye dvare āra atapatra*. Nitai serves Gaura from head to toe and then some.

No one can attain the service of Rādhā-Madana-mohana without the mercy of Nityānanda

Prabhu, *heno bine nitāi bhāi rādhā-kṛṣṇa pāite nāi*. Nityānanda Prabhu is responsible for the entirety of existence, the playground for the *śṛṣṭi-līlā* of this world as well as the landscape of Vaikuṅṭha. He is the source of the serving ego in all of us.

*bhakta-abhimāna mūla śrī-balarāme
sei bhāve anugata tānra amśa-gaṇe.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that Balarāma is the root of the serving ego and thus all those who emanate from him, both *svāmśa* and *vibhinnāmśa*, also have this ego inherent within them. This same Balarāma is Nityānanda Prabhu, who does more than anyone else to facilitate the surfacing of that serving ego in Gaura *līlā*.

Were it not for Nitāi, we would not have *Caitanya Bhāgavata*. Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura writes, *antaryāmī nityānanda balilā kautūke caitanya-caritra kichu likhite pustake*: “Nityānanda Prabhu, in the form of the Supersoul, joyfully instructed me to write a book on the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya.” Similarly Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has revealed that Nityānanda Prabhu gave him entrance into Vṛndāvana, where he received the service of writing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Without these two *granthas*, what would we know of Śrī Caitanya-deva, and without Śrī Caitanya, who could understand even the theoretical truth about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa? Therefore, let us pray to Nityānanda Rāma that he will bless us and make our material desires vanish, *āra kabe nitāicānder karuṇa haibe saṁsāra vasana mora kabe tuccha habe*. Only when we get his mercy and our heart is cleansed will it be possible to fully meditate on Gaura *līlā*. Only by his mercy can one become a resident of the *dhāma*. Let us pray, “O Nitāicānda, be merciful to me and grant me power to serve Śrī Guru selflessly. Allow me to perfect my *sādhaka-deha* and realize the transcendental nature of Gaura *dhāma* and Gaura *līlā*. Only then will I be able to enter *kṛṣṇa-līlā* in my *siddha-deha* as a Vrajavāsī.”

There is no possibility of meditating on *gaura-līlā* and not simultaneously meditating on *kṛṣṇa-līlā* because Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu himself is fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. As he lies on his bed during his *niśānta-līlā*, his mind is absorbed in the *niśānta-līlā* of Rādhā-Govinda,

āṅkhi muḍi śayyopari boṣo rātri śeṣe rādhā-kṛṣṇa raho-lilā smari' rasāveṣe.

As Gaurāṅga lies in bed remembering Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśānta-lilā*, his intimate associates, headed by Nityānanda Prabhu, arrive in the courtyard, just as Balarāma blows his buffalo horn and all of Kṛṣṇa's *sakhas* arrive in the courtyard of Nanda Mahārāja. Nityānanda Rāma arrives at Jagannātha Miśra's house accompanied by devotees like Śrīdhara, Śuklāmbara, and Śrīvāsa, all of whom serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in fraternal love, *nitāi bhāi cale āse tabe śuklāmbara hāse saba narma bandhu śrīvāsa śrīdhara*. As the devotees assemble, Śacī Mātā awakens Gaura, the elderly ladies of Nadīyā also arrive, and *ārati* is performed. In this way Nitāi oversees the mellows of *sākhya* and *vātsalya-bhāva*.

After Gaura arises he speaks with Viṣṇupriyā-devī. Viśvanātha Cakravartī says, *śrī viṣṇu-priyayā samam rasa-kathām sambhāṣya santosya tām*: “He engages in very satisfying *rasa-kathā* with Śrī Viṣṇupriyā-devī.” Where has he been the entire night? Gaura is her very life, but he has another life that she cannot enter, just as Lakṣmī or Queen Rukmiṇī of Dvāraka cannot enter the *rāsa-lilā*. Lord Gaurāṅga has been performing *rasa-kīrtana* with Gadādhara and the rest into the wee hours of the morning, tasting Vraja *rasa*. Thus these talks of Gaura and Viṣṇupriyā are very confidential.

If one just once glimpses the splendor of this *niśānta-lilā* of Gaura, anything outside of *kṛṣṇānuśilana*—even the energy spent in breathing—will be considered a great loss.

Gaura's preoccupation at the time of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśānta-lilā* has been summarized by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* thus:

*rātry-ante trasta-vṛnderita-bahu-viravair bodhitau kīra-śārī-
padyair hṛdyair ahṛdyair api sukha-śayanād utthitau tau sakhībhiḥ
drṣṭau hṛṣṭau tadātvodita-rati-lalitau kakkhāṭī-gīḥ-saśaṅkau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau sa-tṛṣṇāv api nija-nija-dhāmny āpta-talpau smarāmi*

“I remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at night’s end, awakened by the panic-stricken Vṛndā, who prompts the forest creatures to make a great ruckus. After hearing the songs of the parrot and mynah bird, both pleasing and displeasing, the divine pair are pulled out of their comfortable bed by the *sakhīs*. They look at each other and, becoming excited again, start to make love. Finally made anxious by the warnings of Kakkhaṭi, the she-monkey, they make their way back to their own houses where they climb into their own beds.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*dekhiyā aruṇodaya vṛndā devī vyasta haya
kuñje nānā rava karāila
śuka śārī padya śuni’ uṭhe rādhā nīla-maṇi
sakhī-gaṇa dekhi’ hr̥ṣṭa haila*

*kālocita sulalita kakkhaṭīra rabe bhīta
rādhā-kṛṣṇa satṛṣṇa haiyā
nija nija gr̥he gelā nibhṛte śayana kailā
duñhe bhaji se līlā smariyā*

“When Vṛndā-devī sees that dawn is breaking, she becomes busy, causing various birds to fill the *kuñja* with sound. When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa hear the verses recited by the parrot and mynah, they get up. Seeing them, the *sakhīs* feel thrilled.

“Kakkhaṭi makes a sound, appropriate to the situation, which frightens them. Despite being eager to make love again, they go back to their own homes, where they go to bed. Remembering these pastimes, I worship the divine couple.”

*ei līlā smara āra gāo kṛṣṇa-nāma
kṛṣṇa-līlā prema-dhana pābe kṛṣṇa-dhāma*

“Remember this pastime and sing Kṛṣṇa’s name. You will attain Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, love for the divine couple, and Kṛṣṇa’s abode.”

Prāta (6:00 – 8:24 AM)

*prabhāte jāgiyā nija-parikara veṣṭita aṅgane vasi’
jaga-jana mana helāya hariyā hiyāte thākaye paśi’
danta-dhāvanādi sari sura-nadī snānādi ānandāveśe
nija-grhe gaṇa saha je bhojana, kautuka śayana śeṣe*

prabhāte—in the early morning; *jāgiyā*—after waking; *nija-parikara*—own associates; *veṣṭita*—surrounded; *aṅgane*—in the courtyard; *vasi’*—sitting; *jaga-jana*—all people; *mana*—mind; *helāya*—effortlessly; *hariyā*—stealing; *hiyāte*—(lost) forever; *thākaye*—remains; *paśi’*—after entering; *danta-dhāvanādi*—after brushing his teeth and so forth; *sari sura-nadī*—the celestial Ganges; *snānādi*—*bath*, etc.; *ānandāveśe*—absorbed in ecstasy; *nija-grhe*—at his own house; *gaṇa saha*—with his friends; *je bhojana*—he takes breakfast; *kautuka*—joke; *śayana*—lying down; *śeṣe*—at the end.

After waking in the morning, he sits in the courtyard surrounded by his associates. Effortlessly enchanting the minds of everyone in the universe, he enters their hearts and stays there protecting them.

After brushing his teeth and so forth, he bathes in the celestial Ganges, absorbed in ecstasy. He takes breakfast at his own house with his friends amidst much joking and playfulness. Then he takes a nap.

Commentary

This verse describes the time of *aruṇodaya*. Ecstatic, the sun leaps above the horizon appearing like a reddish-brown ball of fire as Viśvambhara Miśra’s dear friends, who have assembled in the courtyard of Jagannātha Miśra, anxiously wait for him to start the day. **Following the ecstasy of Çré Gauracandra** we are transported to the courtyard of Nanda Baba where Balarāma, after blowing his buffalo horn, has assembled all the cowherds. Subala *sakha*, Śrīdāmā, and others cry out, “Uṭho uṭho, kothay Kṛṣṇa,” “Wake up, wake up! Kṛṣṇa, where are you?” Friends like Subala sometimes enter Kṛṣṇa’s sleeping chamber, where telltale signs of his previous night’s tryst with Rādhā need to be interpreted away. The other cowherds remain outside waiting for their beloved Kṛṣṇa to appear and lead them to the cowshed for milking the cows.

Meanwhile Śrī Rādhā has also awakened from her own bed after getting practically no rest at all. She is then assisted in her bath by her maidservants, and in Nadīyā, Gaurasundara takes his bath in the celestial Ganges. He is assisted by his eternal associates, and *brāhmaṇa* boys attend to various details, such as offering flower garlands, scented oils, sandalwood paste, and so on.

Gaura Rāya returns home and his devotees return to their respective homes. At home, Gaura worships Nārāyaṇa with the assistance of Śrī Viṣṇupriyā, who has been preparing the *bhoga* offering under Śacimātā’s direction and accompanied by Mālinī-devī and other devotees’ wives. Sitā Ṭhākuraṇī is also present as an advisor.

Meanwhile, the devotees return to Jagannātha Miśra’s house and sometimes Gadādhara recites the Bhāgavata before Gaura and all the devotees, headed by Śrīvāsa. Then all the devotees honor Viṣṇu *prasāda* with great delight. They remember how Rādhā cooks for Śyāma every morning under the direction of Yaçodamayi and Rohini-devi and how the two brothers Rāma and Kṛṣṇa playfully enjoy their meal with all of their cowherd friends. On Kṛṣṇa’s left sits Subala and Madhumaṅgala.

On his right sits Balarāma, Śrīdāmā, and the rest.

Upon finishing his breakfast, Gauracandra takes rest. In his Vraja *līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa also takes rest after his morning meal before leaving home with his friends to herd his father's cows.

These pastimes of Vrajendra-nandana are beyond description, laden with all varieties of love: *dāśya*, *sākhya*, *vātsalya*, and *mādhurya*. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Mahāśaya has described them thus:

*rādhām snāta-vibhūṣitām vrajapayāhūtām sakhībhiḥ prage
tad-gehe vihitānna-pāka-racanām kṛṣṇāvaśeṣāsanām
kṛṣṇaṁ buddham avāpta-dhenu-sadanam nirvyūḍha-go-dohanam
su-snātam kṛta-bhojanam saharais tām cātha tam cāśraye*

“I take shelter of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who in the morning takes her bath and gets dressed and decorated. She is called by the queen of Vraja, Mother Yaśodā, and goes to her house with her girlfriends, where she cooks various preparations for Kṛṣṇa and eats his remnants.

“I also take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, who after getting up goes to the cattle pen where he milks the cows. He takes his bath and then eats his morning meal with the cowherd boys.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*rādhā snāta vibhūṣita śrī-yaśodā samāhūta
sakhī-saṅge tad gr̥he gamaṇa
tathā pāka viracana śrī-kṛṣṇāvaśeṣāśana
madhye madhye duñhāra milana*

“Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī takes her bath and gets dressed and decorated. She is called by Mother Yaśodā and goes to her house, where she cooks various preparations and then eats Kṛṣṇa’s remnants. During this time, she sometimes meets with Kṛṣṇa.”

*kṛṣṇa nidrā parihari’ goṣṭhe go-dohana kari’
snānāsana sahacara saṅge
ei lilā cintā kara nāma-prema garagara
prāte bhakta-jana saṅge raṅge*

“Kṛṣṇa wakes up and then goes to the cattle pen, where he milks the cows. He takes his bath and then eats his morning meal with the cowherd boys. Remember these pastimes in the morning in the company of devotees, while chanting the Holy Name, your voice trembling with love.”

*ei lilā cinta āra kara saṅkīrtana
acire pāibe tumi bhāva uddīpana*

“Remember these pastimes and chant the Holy Name. The first ecstasies of transcendental emotion will soon come to you.”

Pūrvāhna (8:24 –10:48 AM)

*pūrvāhna samaye śuklāmbara ādi bhakata-gaṇera ghare
premera āveṣe avaśa hoiyā vividha vilāsa kore*

pūrvāhna samaye—in the forenoon; *śuklāmbara ādi*—Śuklāmbara and others; *bhakata-gaṇera*—of the devotees; *ghare*—in the home; *premera āveṣe*—immersed in ecstatic love; *avaśa hoiyā*—being helpless; *vividha*—various; *vilāsa kore*—he sports.

In the forenoon Gaura visits the homes of Śuklāmbara and other devotees. Overwhelmed by and immersed in ecstatic love, he sports in various pastimes.

Commentary

Leaving his own house, Gauracandra goes to the houses of Śuklāmbara *brahmacārī* and other friends, singing and dancing in Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana*. At the house of Śuklāmbara, he sees charming young cowherds herding beautiful cows of various colors along the Ganges delta. The beautiful forest is filled with exotic birds and the trees beckon and bow, offering their fruits and flowers to Gaurasundara. At once he is transported to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *goṣṭhi-līlā*. There in the midst of cowherding, Śrī Kṛṣṇa also makes plans with Madhumaṅgala, Subala, and other *priyanarma-sakhas* to separate from the other cowherds, leaving them with Rāma as he steals away on a false pretext to meet with Rādhā at her *kuṇḍa*.

Absorbed in Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana*, Gaura's devotees follow him as he proceeds along the Ganges, as if it were the Yamunā, to the house of Śrīdhara. They also follow him in terms of his inner experience of tasting *sākhya-prema* and other devotional mellows.

After arriving at Śrīdhara's house, he sings in *prema-saṅkīrtana* with his dearest friends. Thus he meets with various devotees like Śuklāmbara and Śrīdhara, who in *kṛṣṇa-līlā* are forever tasting *sākhya-rasa*.

The words *vividha vilāsa kore* indirectly refer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's innumerable boyhood pastimes involving spontaneous invention, competitive games, and so on. Śrī Kṛṣṇa fearlessly plays such games with his friends throughout the various forests of Vraja, and as Śrī Gaurahari, he remembers these *līlās* in *prema-saṅkīrtana* during the mid-morning.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes this *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa thus:

*pūrvāhne dhenu-mitrair vipinam anusṛtaṁ goṣṭha-lokānuyātaṁ
 kṛṣṇaṁ rādhāpti-lolaṁ tad-abhisṛti-kṛte prāpta-tat-kuṇḍa-tīram
 rādhāṁ cālokya kṛṣṇaṁ kṛta-grha-gamanāryayārkārcanāyai
 diṣṭāṁ kṛṣṇa-pravṛtṭyai prahita-nija-sakhī-vartma-netrāṁ smarāmi*

“I remember Kṛṣṇa in the forenoon, when he heads off to the Vṛndāvana forest to pasture the cows. As he leaves, he is followed by the residents of the cowherd community. Then, eager to meet Rādhā, he heads off to the banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa, where she will be coming for their rendezvous.

“I also remember Rādhā as she watches Kṛṣṇa leaving his house. She then goes to her husband’s home in Yavat, where her mother-in-law instructs her to worship the sun god. Then she waits, watching the path from which her *sakhīs*, whom she has sent to learn of Kṛṣṇa’s plans, will come.”

Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*dhenu sahacara saṅge kṛṣṇa vane jāya raṅge
 goṣṭha-jana anuvrata hari
 rādhā-saṅga lobhe punaḥ rādhā-kuṇḍa taṭa vana
 jāya dhenu saṅgī parihari’*

*kṛṣṇera ṅgita pāñā rādhā nija gāhe jāñā
 jaṭilājñā laya sūryārcane
 gupte kṛṣṇa-patha lakhi kata-kṣaṇe āise sakhī
 vyākulitā rādhā smari mane*

“I remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa as he joyfully enters the forest with the cowherd boys and the cows, being followed by Nanda Mahārāja, Yaśodā, and the other Vrajavāsīs. Eager to have Rādhā’s

company, Kṛṣṇa leaves the cowherd boys and cows and goes to the wooded banks of Rādhā Kuṇḍa.

“I also remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who returns to her home after getting Kṛṣṇa’s signal. Her mother-in-law, Jaṭilā, orders her to worship the sun god. She secretly watches the path for Kṛṣṇa’s arrival and, after some time, the *sakhīs* come.”

Madhyāhna (10:48 AM –3:36 PM)

*madhyāhna-kālete, ati manohara, puṣpera kānana-mājhe
kota kota raṅge, taraṅge vibhora, saṅge pāriṣada sāje*

madhyāhna-kālete—at midday; *ati manohara*—extremely enchanting; *puṣpera kānana-mājhe*—in a flower garden; *kota kota raṅge*—in many playful; *taraṅge*—in waves; *vibhora*—absorbed; *saṅge pāriṣada sāje*—along with his intimate associates.

At midday Gaura goes to a very enchanting flower garden, where he becomes absorbed in riding the sportive waves of limitless pastime after pastime, along with his intimate associates.

Commentary

On the bank of the Ganges within a beautiful forest filled with the scent and sight of colorful flowers, Gaurasundara tastes Rādhā-Mādhava’s midday Śyāma Kuṇḍa and Rādhā Kuṇḍa *līlās*. Revelation of these *līlās* and the supreme position of Rādhā Kuṇḍa are the unique contribution of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to the religious world. They are a great treasure, which otherwise remains sealed.

The flower garden of love-sports in which Gaura tastes these *līlās* is hidden from the general public. Groups of tall *kadamba* trees surround it in all four directions, and at the base of these trees, dense thorn bushes grow. These thorn bushes discourage others from going there. The

love life of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is sweeter than roses, but we will have to pass through the sharp thorns of renunciation to appreciate its scent.

Love is not realized without risk. The meeting of Rādhā-Govinda at midday is very risky, and their devotees take great risk to bring it about. During these pastimes both the *gopīs* and *priya-narma gopas* are prepared to give their lives for the union of Rādhā-Madana-gopāla. They cannot bear the pain of Rādhā's separation from Kṛṣṇa, nor Kṛṣṇa's separation from Priyājī, yet for them to meet under the midday sun is next to impossible without some kind of intrigue. Thus we pray at midday, *yugala milana sukhera kārana jīvana chāḍite pari*: “To bring about the reunion of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, I am prepared to give up my life.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes them thus:

*madhyāhne 'nyonya-saṅgodita-vividha-vikārādi-bhūṣā-pramugdhau
vāmyotkanṭhātilolau smara-makha-lalitādy-āli-narmāpta-sātau
dolāraṇyāmbu-varṁśī-hāti-rati-madhupānārka-pūjādi-līlau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau sa-trṣṇau parijana-ghaṭayā sevyamānau smarāmi*

“I remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at midday, as they enchant each other with the ornaments of various ecstatic reactions arising out of their union. Rādhā first plays hard to get, while Kṛṣṇa shows great eagerness. The two of them perform their sacrifice to the god of love and are entertained by Lalitā and the other *sakhīs*' witticisms. Then, overcome by desire, they engage in many other dalliances—making love, swinging, roaming in the forest, playing in the water, hiding Kṛṣṇa's flute, drinking intoxicating beverages, and worshiping the sun god, at every moment accompanied and assisted by their friends.”

Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

rādhā-kuṇḍe sumilana vikārādi vibhūṣaṇa

*vāmyotkaṇṭhā mugdha bhāva līlā
sambhoga narmādi rīti dolā khelā vaṁśī-hāti
madhu-pāna sūrya-pūjā khelā*

*jala-khelā vanyāśana chala supti vanyāṭana
bahu līlānande dui jane
parijana suveṣṭita rādhā kṛṣṇa susevita
madhyāhna-kālete smari mane*

“I remember Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as they meet at Rādhā Kuṇḍa, decorated by their ecstatic responses, going through the gamut of emotions as Rādhā resists Kṛṣṇa’s eager advances. They make love, flirt, swing, Rādhā steals Kṛṣṇa’s flute, they drink intoxicating beverages, and then Rādhā goes to worship the sun god. They play in the water, have a picnic in the woods, pretend to sleep, wander through the forest, enjoying its beauty. They engage in these and many other joyous pastimes, all the while surrounded and served by their intimate associates.”

Aparāhna (3:36 –6:00PM)

*aparāhna-kāle priya-gaṇa mili’ bhuvana-mohana veśa
nadiyā-nagare phire ghare ghare śobhāra nāhiko śeṣa*

aparāhna-kāle—in the afternoon; *priya-gaṇa mili’*—having met his dear friends; *bhuvana-mohana veśa*—dressed to enchant the entire world; *nadiyā-nagare*—in the town of Nadiyā; *phire ghare ghare*—around from house to house; *śobhāra nāhiko śeṣa*—endless glory.

In the afternoon Gaura meets with his dear friends, dressed to enchant the entire world. Wandering throughout Nadiyā, he visits each and every house, displaying a glory that has no end.

Commentary

At the prompting of his intimate devotees, Nīmāi, flanked on either side by Nitāi and Gadādhara, begins his homeward march, drawn by the love of Śacī and others who have waited the entire day for his return. At this time Gaurasundara meets his friends who did not accompany him at midday, just as Kṛṣṇa reunites with his *priya-sakhas* who remained in the care of Balarāma during the Rādhā Kuṇḍa *līlās*. Along with his friends, Gaurasundara tours the town of Navadvīpa performing *saṅkīrtana*.

Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa says, *navadvīpa je heno mathurā rāja-dhani*: “This Navadvīpa is just like the opulent capital of Mathurā.” No one can describe its beauty and the nature of its inhabitants, all of whom are absorbed in love of Gaurāṅgasundara. Thus they sing, *amara gaurāṅga sundara nace, amara gaurāṅga sundara nace*, following him through the streets of Nadīyā. The same cowherd Kṛṣṇa, who leads his cows homeward during *go-dhūli* (the hour of “cow dust”), now sings, swoons, dances, and falls down in the ecstasy of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The same Rāma and Kṛṣṇa who paraded themselves boldly through the town of Mathurā in route to kill the demoniac Kamsa walk fearlessly through the streets of Navadvīpa, the cynosure of all, even the blind. They enter each and every house, offer their *praṇāma* to each and every Deity, and in this way capture each and every heart.

At *go-dhūli* Rāma and Kṛṣṇa call their cows, driving them home from Govardhana. They bugle, play their flutes, and sing. As the cows head homeward, the cowherds form a circle behind them with Rāma and Keśava dancing in the center to the sound of the cowherds singing madly: “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.” Similarly, arriving at the bank of the Gaṅgā, the cows and cowherds of *gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmī* express their joy upon having Gaura and Nityānanda’s *darśana*, and they follow them as they cross the sacred Ganges.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *aparāhna-līlā* thus:

*śrī-rādhām prāpta-gehām nija-ramaṇa-kṛte klpta-nānopahārām
susnātām ramya-veśām priya-mukha-kamalāloka-pūrṇa-pramodām
kṛṣṇam caivāparāhṇe vrajam anucalitam dhenu-vāndair vayasyaiḥ
śrī-rādhāloka-tṛptam pitṛ-mukha-militam mātṛ-mṛṣṭam smarāmi*

“I remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who in the afternoon returns to her home and cooks many sweet preparations for her beloved. She bathes and dresses nicely in beautiful clothes and ornaments and is filled with joy on seeing the lotus face of her dear one.

“I also remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who returns to the cowherd village followed by the cows and cowherd boys. He sees Śrī Rādhā and feels satisfied; he is met by the elders of the community, led by Nanda Mahārāja, and is then bathed and dressed by mother Yaśodā.”

Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

*śrī-rādhikā gṛhe gelā kṛṣṇa lāgi viracilā
nānā-vidhā khādya upahāra
snāta ramya veśa dhari’ priya-mukhekṣaṇa kari’
pūrṇānanda pāila apāra*

*śrī-kṛṣṇāparāhṇa-kāle dhenu mitra lañā cale
pathe rādhā mukha nirakhiyā
nandādi milana kari’ yaśodā mārjita hari
smara mana ānandita hañā*

“Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī goes home and prepares various kinds of foodstuffs for Kṛṣṇa. She bathes and dresses in beautiful clothes and ornaments; she is filled with ecstasy seeing the lotus face of her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa when he returns from the forest to the cowshed.

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa, too, in the afternoon, sees Rādhā as he comes along the path with his cows and friends. He meets Nanda and other Vrajavāsīs and is then cleansed by mother Yaśodā. O mind! Remember this pastime in ecstasy.”

Sāyam (6:00 – 8:24 PM)

*sandhya-kāle nija-bhavane gamana, ati aparūpa rīta
deva vandanādi, koraye jatane, jāhāte māyera prīta*

sandhya-kāle—at dusk; *nija-bhavane*—to his own home; *gamana*—going; *ati aparūpa rīta*—in the most astonishing manner; *deva*—God; *vandanādi koraye* —offers prayers, etc.; *jatane*—with care; *jāhāte*—by which thing; *māyera*—of his mother; *prīta*—pleased.

At dusk, Gaura returns home in the most astonishing manner and with great care he worships the Deity, which pleases his mother very much.

Commentary

Śrī Gaurāṅga-deva arrives home at dusk, and as directed by Śacimātā, he is attended to by his male servants as he prepares to offer *ārati* to the Deity. In this worship he is assisted by Viṣṇupriyā-devī. Seeing him engaged in Viṣṇu-*bhakti*, Śacimātā is very pleased with her son, and she looks lovingly at his lotus face, just as Yaśodāmāyī looks upon Vrajendra-nandana after being reunited with him at the end of the day. As Gaurahari performs the *ārati* to Śacī's delight, Rohiṇī-devī performs *ārati* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the same delight.

However, Nīmāi is not content to remain at home, and suddenly he becomes obsessed with the desire to go to Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's house. Similar thoughts of meeting with Śrī Rādhā arise in the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa at this time of the day in their *nitya-līlā*. As these thoughts overtake Śrī Gaurāṅga, the *dhāma-vāsīs* light the path with brilliant lamps and make music as Gaurāṅga makes his way to the Śrīvāsāṅgana, just as various arrangements are made for

Kṛṣṇa to meet with Rādhā in the Vṛndāvana-līlā.

About Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *sāyam-līlā* Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes:

*sāyam rādhā sva-sakhyā nija-ramaṇa-kṛte preṣitāneka-bhojyām
sakhyānīteṣa-śeṣāśana-mudita-hṛdam tām ca tam ca vrajendum
susnātam ramya-veśam gṛham anu jananī-lālitam prāpta-goṣṭham
nirvyūdhosrāli-dohaṁ sva-gṛham anu punar bhuktavantam smarāmi*

“I remember Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who in the evening sends one of her girlfriends with many food preparations for her lover. On tasting Kṛṣṇa's remnants brought back by her messenger friend, her heart fills with pleasure.

“I also remember Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛndāvana moon, who after bathing at home and being nicely dressed, receives Mother Yaśodā's affectionate attention. He then goes to the cattle pen, where he milks the cows, after which he goes back to the house to take another meal.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*śrī-rādhikā sāyam kāle kṛṣṇa lāgi' pāṭhāile
sakhī-haste vividha miṣṭānna
kṛṣṇa-bhukta śeṣa jāni sakhī dila sukha māni
pāñā rādhā haila prasanna

snāta ramya-veśa dhari yaśodā lālita hari
sakhā-saha go-dohana kare*

*nānā-vidhā pakva anna pāñā haila parasanna
smari āmi parama ādare*

“In the evening, Rādhā sends various sweetmeats to Kṛṣṇa through her *sakhīs*. When the *sakhīs* come back with Kṛṣṇa’s leftovers, Rādhā joyfully takes them to her great satisfaction.

“Kṛṣṇa bathes and dresses nicely, receives Mother Yaśodā’s affectionate attention, and then goes to the cattle pen with his friends. There he milks the cows, after which he goes back to the house to take another meal of various cooked foods. I remember all these pastimes with great affection.”

Pradoṣa (6:24 – 10:48 PM)

*pradoṣe śrīvāsa-mandire praveśa, adhika ullāsa hiyā
tathā priya-gaṇa mana anurūpa koraye adbhuta kriyā*

pradoṣe—in the evening; *śrīvāsa-mandire*—in Śrīvāsa’s house; *praveśa*—entering; *adhika*—blossoming; *ullāsa*—delight; *hiyā*—heart; *tathā*—there; *priya-gaṇa*—dear ones; *mana*—mind; *anurūpa*—in accordance with; *koraye*—performs; *adbhuta kriyā*—wonderful deeds.

In the evening Gaura goes to the house of Śrīvāsa, his heart blossoming in great delight. There he performs wonderful pastimes in accordance with the desires of his dear friends.

Commentary

As Gaurahari arrives at Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura’s house, all of his devotees also assemble there and Gaura *ārati* is performed. The devotees dance and chant in abandon, but the gate to the

courtyard of Śrīvāsa's house remains closely guarded. No one can enter without Gaura's express permission. Śacīmātā and her daughter-in-law along with the wives of other devotees assemble outside from where they can still have Gaura's *darśana*.

In his Caitanya Bhāgavata, the most merciful Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has described many of the wonderful *līlās* that Gaurasundara enacted in the courtyard of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura. In many of these *līlās*, Śrī Gauracandra revealed how well he knew the hearts of his devotees, often better than they knew their own hearts. He revealed their relationship with him in other *līlās*, especially his *Vraja-līlā*. In Kṛṣṇa dāsa's song, he sings, *adhika ullasa hiya*. This implies that Śrī Gaurasundara's heart was filled with delight in knowing his devotee's hearts, which were full of love for him. However, more significant than the fact of his omniscience is the fact that their hearts were laden with the wealth of love such that they completely purchased him and caused him to enact wonderful pastimes. The words *mana anurupa* mean that Śrī Gaurasundara acted in ways that corresponded with the hearts of his devotees. This is indeed wonderful.

The Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* of Nadiyā's dearmost began in the house of Śrīvāsa. There Nīmāi Paṇḍita, in the mood of a *parama-vaiṣṇava*, tasted *Vraja-rasa* in *kīrtana* with his most intimate associates. From there the overflow of that intimate *rasa-kīrtana* eventually reached the streets in a form suitable for cleansing the hearts of even the most unqualified. If we partake of this *saṅkīrtana* with all of our hearts, one day we will be able to enter the courtyard of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura during the *pradoṣa-līlā* of Nīmāi Paṇḍita. At that time in our spiritualized *sādhaka-deha* with only love of Gaura and Kṛṣṇa in our hearts, Nīmāi Paṇḍita will surely show us our *Vraja-svarūpa*, as he did to all of his associates.* Unqualified as I am, I know of no more desirable thing than to enter the *kīrtana* at the most holy Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. The entire *prakāṣa-līlā* of Gaura Rāya, his *ācārya-līlā*, points in this direction: to the *saṅkīrtana* in Śrīvāsa Aṅgana. The preparation for *saṅkīrtana* takes place during the *pradoṣa-līlā* and it begins during the following *niśa-līlā*.

In the *pradoṣa-līlā* of *Vraja*, both Śrī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra prepare to steal into the

night to meet one another while the rest of Vraja sleeps with one eye open. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is assisted by Subala or Madhumaṅgala, who sometimes spend the night at Kṛṣṇacandra's house, while the other cowherds have already retired to their own homes. Similarly, Śrī Rādhikā is assisted by her dearest friends. If the moon is full, Rādhā's friends dress her in white. If the moon is dark, they dress her in midnight blue. In great anticipation she treads the forest path in night's shadows to rendezvous with Kṛṣṇa at the place designated for their tryst earlier in the day.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes this *līlā* thus:

*rādhām sālī-gaṇām asita-sita-niśāyogyā-veśām pradoṣe
dūtyā vāndopadeśād abhisṛta-yamunā-tīra-kalpāga-kuñjām
kṛṣṇam gopaiḥ sabhāyām vihita-guṇi-kalālokanam snigdha-mātrā
yatnād ānīya saṁśāyitam atha nibhṛtam prāpta-kuñjam smarāmi*

“I meditate on Śrī Rādhā encircled by her friends in the late evening. She dresses herself in clothes in accordance with whether it is the dark or light fortnight pleasure (dark clothes from the new moon night and white from the full moon). Then, on Vṛndā-devī's signal, she makes her way to a grove of desire trees on the banks of the Yamunā and waits for Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by a single messenger friend.

“I also meditate on Kṛṣṇa, sitting with the cowherds in the regular evening assembly to watch various artists performing. His affectionate mother takes him home and makes him go to bed, but Kṛṣṇa sneaks away to go to the forest bower.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*rādhā vṛndā upadeśe yamunopakūla-deśe
sāṅketika kuñje abhisare
sitāsita niśā-yogyā dhari veśa kṛṣṇa-bhogyā*

sakhī saṅge sānanda antare

gopa-sabhā mājhe hari nānā-guṇa-kalā heri'

māṭṭṛ-yatne karila śayana

rādhā-saṅga soṅāriyā nibhṛte bāhira haiyā

prāpta-kuñja kariye smarāṇa

“On Vṛndā-devī’s instruction, Rādhā goes to the banks of the Yamunā, to the forest bower that has been designated for her meeting with Kṛṣṇa. For the *abhisara*, she wears either light or dark clothing, depending on the fortnight, all to be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa. She and her girlfriends are in joyful spirits.

“In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa goes to the evening assembly of cowherd men, where he watches various artists perform. Then, at the insistence of his mother, he goes to bed. However, remembering his appointment with Rādhā, he secretly gets up and leaves the house and makes his way to the *kuñja*.

*Note: Here I am merely emphasizing the efficacy of Gaura *līlā-smarāṇa*—it can give everything. However, the normal course is that one’s Vraja *līlā-seva* is revealed and cultivated in advanced stages of *bhakti* along with the cultivation of one’s Gaura *līlā-seva*, rather than cultivating one’s Gaura *līlā-seva* until perfection and then realizing one’s Vraja *līlā-seva* in Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura’s courtyard during Śrī Gaurasundara’s *prema-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. While theoretically there is no reason why one could not take this latter course, it is not one that has been emphasized, although at least since the time of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura there has been an emphasis on prefacing any Kṛṣṇa *līlā-smarāṇa* with appropriate Gaura *līlā-smarāṇa*.

Furthermore, what I am engaging you all in here is merely an acquaintance with an outline of Mahāprabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's daily *nitya-līlā*. All of you can bring this to mind as much as

you are able to in an effort to remember something about our ideal, but a life of *nirjana-bhajana* in *lilā-smaraṇa* is reserved for very advanced devotees.

Niśa (10:48 PM – 3:36 AM)

*niśaye sakala, parikāra saha, sukhe saṅkīrtana kori’
punaḥ āsi nija-priyāra mandire bhane gaurahari dāsa*

niśaye sakala—at night; *parikāra saha*—along with his associates; *sukhe*—happily; *saṅkīrtana kori’*—performing *saṅkīrtana*; *punaḥ āsi*—coming back; *nija-priyāra*—of his dear one; *mandire*—to the home; *bhane*—narrates; *gaurahari dāsa*—the servant of Gaurahari.

At night Gaura happily performs *saṅkīrtana* along with his associates, after which he goes home to his beloved. Thus narrates the servant of Gaurahari.

On Śrī Gaurāṅga’s order, all the devotees begin *saṅkīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa *nāma*, and their *rasa-kīrtana* extends into the wee hours of the morning. Śrī Gaura and Gadādhara taste the *rasa-līlā* of Vraja and all the devotees relish their respective sentiments of Vraja Maṇḍala through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Sometimes, tired from his ecstatic *kīrtana*, Śrī Gaurāṅga rests in a flower bed arranged by his intimate devotees and at another time he returns to his house where Śrī Viṣṇupriyājī waits up for him. During the hot summer nights, he first bathes in the sacred Ganges before returning home, and doing so he remembers the bathing of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the Yamunā during their *rāsa-līlā*.

Śacīmātā has prepared many nice edibles, and Gaura Rāya tastes them along with Nityānanda Prabhu before retiring to his bedroom. There he discusses very esoteric topics with Viṣṇupriyā-devī, after which she retires to her own bedroom. Sometimes Gadādhara also spends the night at Nīmāi Paṇḍita’s house, relishing the *niśa-līlā* of Vraja with his beloved Gaurasundara.

Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's *niśa-līlā* thus:

*tāv utkau labdha-saṅghau bahu-paricaraṇair vṛndayārādhyamānau
preṣṭhālībhir lasantau vipina-viharaṇair gāna-rāsādi-lāsyaiḥ
nānā-līlā-nitāntau praṇayi-sahacarī-vṛnda-samsevyamānau
rādhā-kṛṣṇau niśāyām su-kusuma-śayane prāpta-nidrau smarāmi*

“I meditate on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at night, how they are both anxious to see each other and how they finally reach the trysting place where they find each other. Vṛndā-devī worships them both with many types of service, and then they begin dancing with their beloved *sakhīs*. They go walking through the forest, enjoying its beauty, then singing and dancing the *rāsa-līlā* together. They pass the night in various other activities, being served by their dear friends until finally they lie down on a flower bed and go to sleep.”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

*vṛndā paricaryā pāñā preṣṭhāli-gaṇere lañā
rādhā-kṛṣṇa rāsādika-līlā
gīta-lāsyā kailā kata sevā kailā sakhī jata
kusuma-śayyāya duñhe śuilā*

*niśā-bhāge nidrā gela sabe ānandita haila
sakhī-gaṇa parānande bhāse
e sukha śayana smari' bhaja mana rādhā hari
sei līlā praveśera āše*

“After being greeted by Vṛndādevī, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa take their *sakhīs* with them to perform the *rāsa-līlā*. They indulge themselves in singing and dancing through the night, served by the *sakhīs*, until finally they lie down on a bed made of flower petals.

“After they have fallen asleep, everyone feels great joy, especially the *sakhīs*, who are immersed in supreme ecstasy. Meditate on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s joyful rest, O mind, and worship them in the hope of entering their eternal pastimes.”