

of birds, she was reborn as the daughter of Himādri and Menakā. Rudra was designated as Aurva.

Be celibate, asked by Brahmā thus Rudra remained celibate.

71. But when Rudra married the daughter of Himādri he became attached to her. Hence, he got the designation *Para*.

72. Rudra had ten brothers. Among these, the three, viz. Sadāśiva Saumitrya and Rauhiṇeya—were inferior to Rudra and his consort by one hundred merits.

Garuḍa said :

73. O compassionate lord, please tell me about the Eternal Bliss (*ānanda*), explaining its nature to satisfy my curiosity and for enlightening the seekers after truth.

74. O lord, please tell me, since I am your disciple, just for lifting me up, and out of compassion for me. Since you are fully satiated, you have no desire to be fulfilled.

75. Thus addressed by the lord of birds, the lotus-eyed lord was pleased and spoke with compassion.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said:

76-77. Śatānanda was born of Gāyatrī, Ekānanda of Brahmā. Śatānanda belonged to Brahmā, Śeṣa and Sarasvatī, O best of birds, while Ekānanda belonged to Bhāratī, O son of Vinatā.

78. O bird, such is the information about *Ānanda*. I have told you all. What more do you desire to know?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Episode of Nilā

Garuḍa said :

1. O lord Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, you have said that Brahmāṇi and Bhāratī are superior to Rudra by hundred merits, O best of gods.

2-3. O lord of gods, I have heard all what Brahmā has said of the gods and goddesses ending with Umā, about the *anśas* of Ānanda found missing to the extent of a thousand.

4-5. O all-pervasive, supreme lord, please tell me your ideas on Knowledge, Bliss, Strength, etc., including Vāyu at the last and the proportion of amśas in them reaching a thousand. Considering the views of your predecessors on this topic, you proclaim your judgment, O Govinda, since you are omniscient, O lord.

Thus accosted by Garuḍa, Vāsudeva said in reply.

Lord Kṛṣṇa said :

6-7. O lord of birds, by the degrees of Ānanda present in each, I have explained to you the superiority and inferiority of jñāna, bhakti, etc. Brahmā has declared that if hundred per cent Ānanda is felt, there would be endless guṇas.

8-11. Accordingly, Ānanda is thousandfold in jñāna, hundredfold in Bhakti, of the same proportion in Bhāratī, Māruti and Vāyu.

12-15. Just as the flame of fire hundredfold more powerful than the earthen lamp is not so illuminating as the lamp itself or just as the wide-spread fire is not so refulgent as the Sun, just as the moon, twice as large as the Sun is not so refulgent as the Sun, in the same way, O lord, know the relative gradation of Ānanda in jñāna, bhakti, etc. I know my qualities, O lord of birds, which are endowed with many specialities and which possess subtle forms. There is nothing which remains unknown to me.

16. Goddess Lakṣmī too knows me in all my incarnations.

17. She knows my indivisible subtle qualities endowed with many specialities, through Brahmā or by my grace.

18. Goddess Lakṣmī knows her own subtle form endowed by special traits.

19. Brahmā too perceives the all-pervading Vāsudeva endowed with noble qualities proportionately larger than those of Vāyu. Ears do not know the qualities of the lord which are subtle and special.

20. Except lord Brahmā even the gods, until and unless they are released, are ignorant. Brahmā and Vāyu know their Self and the Supreme Self endowed with special traits.

21. Sarasvatī perceives my special qualities who am a self-born lord but not beyond my form as Kṛṣṇa constituted of three guṇas.

22. O lord of birds, Śeṣa and Rudra perceive me stationed in the tamogūṇa. But they do not know my other *guṇas* and their special traits. O dear, I have told you the truth.

23. Umā, Suparnā and Vāruṇī—the three know me very well as I am stationed (in their heart). But, O lord of birds, my special traits perceived by Rudra are not known to them at any place or time.

24. O lord of birds, Indra and other gods know me as pervading the Ego; Dakṣa and other Prajāpatis as pervading the intellect. So also Soma and Sūrya.

25-26. Others know me pervading the elements; Others know me as pervading the Cosmic Egg; others as present in the heart of devotees like yourself, others as existing (in the form of Ātman) in the heart of all.

O lord of birds, you should realize me as such. Now hear what I tell you about my six wives.

27. Rukmiṇī, etc. are my six principal queens. O lord of birds, amongst them Nilā was the daughter of Agni in the previous creation. I make no distinction in sexual enjoyment with them.

28. As a maiden she cherished to wed Kṛṣṇa (my form), She relished what she conceived in mind. O lord of birds, Agni tried his best to marry her with one of the pitṛs.

29. But the maiden did not agree to any proposal, her mind being extremely set on Kṛṣṇa.

30. Then, the fire-god spoke to his daughter. O silly one, why don't you marry? Thereupon, the maiden spoke to her father thus.

O father, in this life, accompanied by all facilities, there can be no husband without Hari. He alone can be my husband.

31-33. In this world, there are several women who though married are always widows. Those who do not regard Hari as their husband—Hari who is beginningless, eternal, the quintessence of the universe, beautiful, bestower of liberation and accomplisher of desires—are always widows.

O father, leaving Kṛṣṇa, I shall not seek for the hand of any person, though forced by misfortune. He may be only an apparent cause (of producing children). As he is devoid of devotion for the lord, as he is impure, pouring forth impurities

from nine doors,¹ emitting bad smell and contemptible, he is not acceptable to me. For such a despicable person I have no love, O my father, when as an option lord Kṛṣṇa is there.

34. The celestial women abandon their husbands and enjoy intercourse with the lord who stays with them (in heaven). As these women find their husbands in the lord, they are honoured by the people. There can be no second thinking in this respect.

35. If they get husbands devoted to Viṣṇu, their life becomes fruitful. They can get husbands devoted to Viṣṇu by the aggregate of merits accumulated in several births.

36-37. Those who have husbands not devoted to Viṣṇu should immediately cast off their bodies. If at the time of giving up their bodies they remember lord Viṣṇu in the form of Kṛṣṇa as their husband, they do not incur the sin of committing suicide—this is the statement of the Śāstras.

The women should desert their husbands if they are averse to Viṣṇu.

38. If they have stored merit accruing from their pious acts performed in previous lives, their husbands can be devoted to Viṣṇu.

39. Rare are the devotees of Viṣṇu in Kali age. Rare is a devotion for the lord. Rare is the narrative of the lord to be heard in the mortal world. Initiation in the cult of Viṣṇu is rare, very rare. Rare is the company of the devotees of Hari.

40. Rare is the chance for circumambulating the lord or for homage to Hari. Rare is the means for maintaining his devotees. Rare is the gift of food to them.

41. Rare is the tantric worship conducted for the lord. Rare is the recitation of his name. Rare is the worship of his devotees. Rare is the dialogue with him.

42. Rare is the touch of Śālagrāma stone,² or the sight of the pious Vaiṣṇavas. Rare is the holy touch of the cow

1. *Nine doors*—apertures of human body, are nine : two eyes, one mouth, two ears, two nostrils, the organ of excretion and the generating organ.

2. A stone emblem of Viṣṇu. There are about nineteen classes of Śālagrāma. See P.E. under Śālagrāma.

or the singing of holy chants. Rare is the noble and good preceptor.

43. Rare are the people with faithful wives and worthy sons. Rare is the sight of the lord on the mountain Śeṣa. Rare is the sight of Raṅganātha¹ on the Kāverī.² Rare is the sight of the Ganges.³

44. Rare is the worship of Varadarāja⁴ in Kāñci.⁵ Rare is the sight of Rāmā's bridge.⁶ Rare is the ability to understand Madhva philosophy.⁷

45-46. Rare is the sight of Viṣṇu on Bhīmā,⁸ Revā⁹ (Narmadā), Gayā¹⁰ or Badarī.

On the Śeṣa mountain, or the holy hermitage of Śrīnivāsa, the ascetics are very rare on the mortal soil.

47. At Prayāga,¹¹ rare is the sight of Mādhava.

48. Hence, I do not desire a husband other than lord Kṛṣṇa. Having uttered such words to her father she went to the mountain Śeṣa.

49-50. At the sacred place Kapila, she ascended the great mountain. She saw Śrīnivāsa therein. She paid homage, abstained from food for three days, went to the holy spot—the destroyer of sin. In order to secure a worthy husband she went to a solitary place for meditation.

51. To the north of it, at the distance of two Krośas at Mahātāla, she commenced a great penance in a solitary pit.

52. She meditated upon Nārāyaṇa for one thousand divine years. At the end of this period, she began to praise the lord.

1. *Raṅganātha*—a tutelary deity.

2. *Kāverī*—a river, rises in the western ghats, flows south-east through Mysore and falls into the Bay of Bengal.

3. *Ganges*—a famous river of Northern India.

4. *Varadarāja*—a tutelary deity.

5. *Kāñci*—modern Conjeeveram in Madras.

6. *Rāmā's bridge*.

7. *Madhva philosophy*—Unqualified Dualism.

8. *Bhīmā*—A river in Southern India.

9. *Revā*—Narmadā river.

10. *Gayā*—a famous city in Bihar, a place of pilgrimage.

11. *Prayāga*—a celebrated place of pilgrimage at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā near Allahabad.

The maiden said :

53-54. You are my mother, father, husband, friend, son, preceptor, brother, sister and my darling. Throughout this vast universe, O lord, I have been trying to know Reality but have not succeeded in my attempt. Father, mother, etc. are just artificial relations. You are the sole true relation, my lord.

55. Hence, I shall be your wife. This is my vow. O you of attractive form, I pray, I may not be united with a person I do not desire.

56. O lord, ward off from my sight the people who have offended you, who have tried to frustrate my desire to become your devotee, who bear malice to their preceptors and your worshippers.

57. O lord, you ward off my talk with those who hate you. You establish my contact with your lotus feet. Homage to you, O lord who inhabit Śrī Śaila¹ and who are the abode of Lakṣmī, your loving consort.

58. O lord of Lakṣmī, the superior and inferior, the primary cause of creation, I have not seen you since long. Of you, the four-armed god, the vision is possible only by the aggregate of merits accumulated in several previous lives.

59. Polluted by all sorts of sins, O lord, how can I have your vision. O lord of birds, I am your devotee, the devotee of your devotees. O abode of the universe, be pleased with me.

60. Thus praised, the compassionate lord Varadarāja was pleased by her devotion. He appeared before her and said:

61. O good lady, express your desire. I have come to you to fulfil the same.

On hearing the words of Viṣṇu, her face was brightened with smile.

62. She spoke to Hari, the abode of Lakṣmī and the lord of the universe with great devotion. O lord with a lovely face, may I become your wife.

1. *Śrīśaila* : A hill to the south of Kṛṣṇā river.

63. On hearing her words, the lord spoke to her in gentle words.

The lord said :

“O blessed maiden, I shall become your husband when I incarnate as Kṛṣṇa on earth.”

64-66. Thus addressed by the lord, the maiden who was extremely pleased spoke to Hari, the depository of merits, in the joyously faltering voice.

The maiden said :

May I become your wife when you incarnate on earth as Kṛṣṇa, on the day previous to our marriage. May I precede other women in enjoying intercourse with you :

The lord agreed and spoke to her again.

The Lord Said :

67. Since you as a maiden have sought for my favour which I bestowed upon you, O pretty maid, as a result of it, the other maidens will also reap the fruit of their cherished desire.

68-69 Thus after bestowing the boon on the maiden the lord disappeared all at once. The maiden gave up her body there and then and was born in the house of Kumbhaka and was called Nīlā. Kumbhaka was the brother-in-law of Nandaśobha.

70-71. He was the first who carried Kavya to the pitṛs. He was abiding on the mount Vṛṣabha, at that time. I went to his house, O best of birds. Being unconquerable, by the boon conferred by lord Śiva, I killed him and was married to Nīlā.

72-74. In her second birth, Nīlā was born as the daughter of Nāgnijit, Kavyavāha. In the *Svayaṃvara* of Nīlā, I controlled seven bulls who by the favour of lord Śiva were uncontrollable by gods and mortals. I conquered kings who had assembled at the ceremony. I married her.

75. Thus Nīlā was born twice on earth and married to me. I shall now tell you the birth of Bhadrā. Please hear the narrative, O lord of birds.

1. *Kavya*—oblations meant for Pitṛs.