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## **The Blazing Forest Fire And the Burning Ghata**

Singapore: February 15, 2001

Once, Krsna went cowherding with His cowherd friends and thousands and lakhs of cows. There were innumerable cows with Krsna. They all went to Bandiravan, one of twelve prominent vanas, forests, of Vrndavana. They roamed from one forest to another, and when they reached Bandiravana, they all began to play. Rama and Krsna and all their friends, like Dama, Sudama, Sridama, Vasudama, Lavanga, Stokakrsna and so many others, were totally absorbed in playing.

Although Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose manifestation of the manifestation creates this world, Krsna has nothing to do with this creation. He simply wished, and everything came about. Although He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is always playing in Vrndavana, performing His sweet pastimes with the gopals, the gopis, Mother Yasoda, Nanda Baba, and other associates. By His simple wish, 'all are trembling.' "Due to fear of Him the wind blows, due to fear of Him Brahma does the work of creation, due to fear of Him Siva destroys these worlds, Durga acts as the jail-warden of the material world, and all the other demigods perform their universal functions." You should not think that Krsna was very weak, He never knew anything, He was quite ignorant, and He was an ordinary boy playing with the cowherd boys.

Krsna was quite absorbed, playing with Rama, Sridama, Subala, and all others. They were so absorbed that the cows grazing there became independent. Krsna always used to watch them, and their faces were always directly in front of Him. They were never behind. But that day was different. As the cows were grazing, they began to see very beautiful green grass in front of them. After going some distance, they saw more and more, and thus they quickly ran there, passing all the other grasslands. If you go to the bank of the Yamuna, you will see so many pigs that an elephant would not be able to figure out how to make his way. Moreover, there is only dessert-like sand. On hot days, there are the hot rays of the sun from above, and from below only 'boiling' sand. It is very difficult to remain there.

While Krsna was playing with the cowherd boys, the cows began to weep loudly, as though they are burning. Not knowing where their cows had gone, the boys became very worried. They were thinking, "These cows are our only wealth. Without them, how we will we be able to show our faces to our fathers and mothers?" The boys did not consult Krsna and Baladeva. Instead, they began to follow the cows. By seeing their footprints and grazed grasses, they discovered the way, and gradually reached the cows.

There were three types of cows: cows that have not given birth to any calves, cows that have given birth, and black cows; and now the friends of Krsna reached all those cows. Both the cows and friends were feeling very hot, burning sensations. Somehow fire came, and in a moment it spread everywhere. The whole forest of long, dry grass began to burn with high flames. When the boys and cows were just about to die, they called out, "O Baladeva! O Krsna! You are powerful. Save us. Save us. Save us. We

are going to die." As soon as they called Krsna and Rama, They at once appeared there. Krsna said, "Don't fear, don't fear. I am here now. All of you should close your eyes."

Why did Krsna ask them to close their eyes? Krsna remembered, "Once I ate some clay at Brahmanda Ghata, and the boys complained to My mother. She then ordered Me, "Show me what is in Your mouth." If I do not tell them to close their eyes, they will again complain. Or, when they see that I am swallowing this fire, they will give up their lives." He therefore told them to close their eyes. Then, after a moment, Krsna said, "Now everything is done. You can open your eyes."

What did they see? They saw themselves where they had been first playing under the shade of the banyan tree on the bank of the Yamuna — and it was very cool. All the cows were also sitting there — and chewing. They all forgot what had actually happened and wondered if they had been seeing a dream.

The purport of this story is significant. The lila actually took place, but it also has symbolic meaning. Go, meaning cows, also means senses. Krsna is the master of the senses. If you engage all your senses to serve Krsna, you are happy. If you forget Krsna and engage your senses in sense gratification, you will never be happy. This world is made only of problems. According to the activities of your past lives, impressions are coming, and due to these impressions you have this body. Because of this body you will have to grow old and face many other calamities. Although there are so many problems, still you think that you are happy.

If you are serving Krsna, you are okay. If you are not serving Krsna, but rather engaging in your sense gratification, then you will burn to ashes. You can never be happy. The cows and friends were burning, but when they came to Krsna, when they came in the sight of Krsna, they became happy. They forgot everything.

If you do not engage your senses, your body, your mind, and your tongue in Krsna consciousness, one day you will have to die. Your friends and relatives will take you to the burning ghata. They will set your body ablaze, and you will burn to ashes. This will certainly take place. Then, when you take birth again, you will again go through the same thing. Since time immemorial you have been taking birth and dying, over and over again — like an endless chain.

By His causeless mercy, Krsna gave us these human bodies — only to serve Him and to chant and remember Him. We are engaging all things for our sense gratification, however, and that is the problem of life. When you die, you will give up your husband, children, position, wealth, and even your body. So why not chant and remember Krsna? If you are chanting and remembering, you will see that you have crossed the endless chain of birth, death and everything else. You are in Goloka Vrndavana, serving Krsna happily like the gopas and gopis. You will see that you were dreaming. You did not go to this world.

You should maintain your family, but don't forget Krsna. Along with your wife, husband, children, father, and mother, in morning or evening, you should do kirtana: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. If you don't play harmonium, no harm. If you don't know mrdanga, karatalas will suffice. If you don't use karatalas, no harm. Clap and chant the Hare Krsna Mantra.

Then, in the evening, Krsna called all his cows with His vamsi. Dhavali, Syamali Tungi, Kalindi, and all the other cows assembled, and Krsna took them to Vraja. When the elder gopis saw their children coming, Yasoda and all the other mothers took Krsna in

their laps. They were totally absorbed. Whenever they would meet Krsna, one hundred thousand years would become like a moment, and without Krsna, a moment was like thousands and thousands of yugas in separation.

The gopis have so much attraction for Krsna. When they were at home, they always thought of Krsna. When they were brooming or doing any duty in their homes, they sang, "Govinda Damodara, Madhaveti." When they were cleaning their houses, they remembered the very sweet and powerful pastimes of Krsna. Their minds were not empty, nor were they thinking of worldly things. When they placed their children on swings, they didn't say, "Go to sleep." They sang, "Govinda Damodara Madhaveti." They were churning butter, not for their families but for Krsna, and always remembering Him. They thought, "How beautiful Krsna is. Even when He is naked, He is very beautiful." Thus remembering His sweet pastimes, they were churning and singing Govinda, Damodara, Madhaveti.

Why can't we do this? If you do this, you will be happy in this life and also in your next lives. Surely. If this were not true, then Srimad Bhagavatam, Gita, Vedas, and Upanisads would be false.

If you don't spend your money for Krsna's service, your sons and daughters and their future generations will come and drink and engage in sense gratification with that wealth. You can use it for Krsna consciousness — for you. Sometimes you can call other devotees, and they will come and do krsna-kirtana. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

If you want to be happy forever, follow this very easy method. Don't take drugs, meat, or wine. Only eat what you can offer to Krsna. Chant and remember Krsna and maintain your family. You will be happy forever. This is guaranteed. There is no other way except this. Harinama harinama harinama eva kevalam.