

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

## **LALITA-DEVI'S APPEARANCE DAY**

| September 10, 2005

[On the day before Radhastami, Srila Narayana Maharaja and the assembled devotees observed the appearance day of Sri Radha's most intimate sakhi, Srimati Lalita-devi. The following is a transcription of the class given in her glorification, which also explains her significance in our personal lives:]

Lalita-devi was born in the village of Karehla, and later on her father brought her to Uccagaon. Uccagaon is known as the place of her pastimes. There are still many remains of her having lived there, like a rock containing the imprints of her lotus feet. There are also imprints of some small utensils she used when she and the other sakhis fed Lord Krsna, when He would come to visit them. When the sun-rays fall on the imprints of those pots and plates, they glitter and shine. All the sakhis used to play with Krsna and Lalita in Uccagaon, and there are many places there where you can see their footprints to this day.

On the hill there is a slippery rock showing where a specific pastime was enacted in a marriage arena. There, the gopis arranged a special kind of marriage between Lalita and Krsna. This should not be misunderstood as a real marriage, but rather a play marriage, like the marriage that was once enacted between Srimati Radhika and Krsna. This is technically known as a Gandharva marriage.

In that pastime, Krsna was sitting beside Lalita, and the sakhis began to play mischievously. Visakha and some of the other sakhis tied Sri Lalita's veil to Krsna's pitambara (yellow shawl). Then suddenly, on the indication of Srimati Radhika, Rangadevi and other sakhis started to sing wedding songs, while Tungavidya and others uttered wedding mantras. The remaining sakhis showered flowers on Sri Krsna and Lalita. When Lalita noticed that something tricky was being done to her, she tried to run away; but because she was tied to Krsna's pitambara she could not do so. All the sakhis then surrounded the couple and married them.

Even today, one can see the signs of the slide on the hill, as well as the markings of 'alta' (red lac) from the gopi's feet. Although this pastime took place 5000 years ago, you can still visualize these signs with your own eyes.

Lalita is 27 days elder than Radharani. [According to the 'tithi' astrological calculation, Lalita-devi's appearance day falls on the day before Srimati Radhika's appearance day.] She generally used to have the same loving mood towards both Radha and Krsna, yet she is more inclined to Srimati Radhika.

Sri Lalita-astakam:  
composed by Srila Rupa Gosvami.

radha-mukunda-pada-sambhava-gharma-bindu

nirmanchanopakarani-krta-deha-laksam  
uttunga-sauhrda-visesa-vasat pragalbham  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto the haughty Sri Lalita-devi who is charmingly endowed with many beautiful, sweet qualities (sulalita). She has natural expertise in all arts (lalita), thus her seva self-manifests. She wipes away the glittering drops of perspiration which appear upon the lotus feet of Sri Radha and Madhava when They meet; and she is perpetually immersed in the most elevated mellow of sauhrda-rasa, or undivided absorption in fulfilling the heart's desire of her intimate friend Srimati Radhika. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 1)]

There are four types of sakhis: svapaksa, vipaksa, tatastha and suhrt. Svapaksa means those sakhis who are totally favorably disposed towards Srimati Radhika. Vipaksa means those gopis who are totally favorably disposed towards Candravali and opposed to Radhika. Tatastha means those who are neutral towards Srimati Radhika and more favorably disposed towards Candravali. Suhrt means those who are more favorably disposed towards Srimati Radhika and neutral towards Candravali. Suhrt gopis never do anything unfavorable towards Srimati Radhika.

Lalita-devi and Visakha-devi are examples of gopis who are svapaksa to Srimati Radhika, Candravali is vipaksa, Bhadra is tatastha, and Syamala is suhrt.

The mood of Lalita is that she is always favorable towards the pastimes of Radha and Krsna, and she always tries to please Them. She engages in millions upon millions of endeavors to please Them, and to serve the droplets of Their activities. When Radha and Krsna meet and engage in amorous pastimes, Lalita wipes away the droplets of perspiration on Their lotus feet. This means that she is engaged day and night in the service of Their sweet pastimes.

There are two types of services in madhurya-rasa (conjugal rasa). One is in the mood of the manjaris and the other in the mood of the sakhis. Lalita always serves in the mood of a sakhi. One of her qualities is that she has some controlling nature. She can command both Radha and Krsna, but at the same time she is friendly disposed towards Them.

She is always immersed in the ocean of love. She is very beautiful and very sweet, but at the same time very sober and composed. Her heart is so sweet that she attracts the heart of all others, but at the same time she is pragalbha, which means she can speak harsh words and can thus control both Radha and Krsna.

raka-sudha-kirana-mandala-kanti-dandi  
vaktra-sriyam cakita-caru-camuru-netram  
radha-prasadhana-vidhana-kala-prasiddham  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto Sri Lalita-devi whose beautiful face mocks the brilliance of the full moon, whose eyes are ever-restless like those of a startled doe, who is famous for her extraordinary expertise in the art of dressing Srimati Radhika, and who is the treasure-house of unlimited feminine qualities. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 2)]

This verse begins by describing Srimati Lalita-devi's beauty. She is so beautiful that her beauty surpasses the combined beauty of millions of moons. Her eyes are said to be so restless that they can defeat the restlessness of the eyes of a female deer. Her specific quality is that she is very expert in applying make-up, and especially in arranging the hair decoration of Srimati Radhika. Although all the eight principle sakhis are very famous in putting on the bodily decorations and applying the make-up of Srimati Radhika, Lalita and Visakha are the most expert. Moreover, of these two, Lalita is considered the most proficient.

The pastime of decorating Srimati Radhika by Lalita and the other sakhis is described in "Govinda-lilamrta", written by Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, and in "Krsna-bhavanamrta," written by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. Those who want to serve Radha and Krsna in the mood of a manjari should seriously take help from these scriptures. Sadhakas (devotional practitioners) can find pastimes such as the above-mentioned in those books, and they can try to be absorbed in them at the time of their devotional practices.

With reference to the verse above, Lalita and the other sakhis tell Srimati Radhika, "When you go to meet with Krsna, this is how You should behave with Him." They want Sri Krsna to be totally under the spell of Srimati Radhika.

While they are applying kajal, black eyeliner, they remind Srimati Radhika of Her previous pastimes with Sri Krsna. For example, once, when She was going out to meet Krsna, She forgot to put kajal on one of Her eyes, and Krsna Himself put it on, upon Her arrival. Similar pastimes are brought to the attention of Srimati Radhika at the time of putting on Her make-up, and in that way Her mood of bringing pleasure to Krsna is enhanced. When the gopis put the tilaka mark on Her forehead, they recite the kamantra, which still further inspires Her in Her mood of service to Krsna.

All these pastimes are arranged by Lalita-devi, and therefore she is described as the fountainhead of various wonderful qualities.

lasyollasad-bhujaga-satru-patatra-citra  
pattamsukabharana-kanculikancitangim  
gorocana-ruci-vigarhana-gaurimanam  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto Sri Lalita-devi whose body is adorned with a splendid sari as brilliant as the multi-colored tail-feathers of an ecstatically dancing peacock, whose breast is covered with an exceedingly attractive blouse (kanculi), whose hair part is decorated with shimmering red vermilion, and who wears various necklaces and other

jeweled ornaments. Her golden complexion defeats that of even gorocana ) ( a bright golden pigment that comes when rain-water from the svati-naksatra constellation hits the hoof of a cow) and she possesses innumerable good qualities. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 3)]

In this verse a resemblance is given with a peacock. At the commencement of the rainy season, the peacock becomes very happy. The peacock has been especially gifted by God to have beautiful colors on his feathers. He expresses his happiness on seeing the clouds by spreading his wings. Srimati Lalita-devi's dresses are so beautifully ornamented and colored, that they express the mood of a peacock showing his happiness by spreading his wings. Her sari, her various kinds of necklaces and all her ornaments brilliantly glitter, and all this glittering combined with the luster of her own body give a profound impression.

The word gorocana is also mentioned in this verse. In that connection there is a particular constellation called svati-naksatra. When rain water hits the hoof of a cow it becomes yellow, like the color of turmeric. This very special yellow color defeats even the shimmer of gold. The substance gorocana is also considered very costly.

This is the impression Lalita gives when she is serving Srimati Radhika with all her paraphernalia, ornaments and beauty.

dhurte vrajendra-tanaye tanu susthu-vamyam  
ma daksina bhava kalankini laghavaya  
radhe giram srnu hitam iti siksayantim  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto Sri Lalita-devi, the charming treasure-house of all good qualities, who instructs Srimati Radhika in this way: "O Kalankini (unchaste one)! Radhe! Listen to my good instructions which are favorable for you! Vrajendra-nandana is very crafty (dhurta). Don't display Your mood of gentle submission (daksina bhava) to Him; instead, in all circumstances be contrary." (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 4)]

radham abhi vraja-pateh krtam atmajena  
kutam manag api vilokya vilohitaksim  
vag-bhangibhis tam acirena vilajjayantim  
devim gunaih sulalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto the abode of all good qualities, the supremely charming Sri Lalita-devi, who, upon hearing Sri Krsna speak even a few sly words to Srimati Radhika, immediately becomes furious and shames Krsna with her biting, sarcastic remarks, "You are so truthful and simple-hearted, and such a chaste lover!" (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 5)]

Srimati Radhika is controlled by the extreme love of Lalita-sakhi. When She is with Lalita-sakhi, Lalita can even chastise Her: "When Krsna comes, You should remain very unsubmitive and enter a sulky mood." Radhika may reply, "What can I do? As soon as I see Krsna in the distance, My sulky mood goes away. I cannot maintain it." Then with a

raised finger, Lalita says, "Don't give up your unsubmissive mood. You should chastise Krsna, for He has so many bad qualities. He is crooked and unchaste. He is a cheater. He will come to You early in the morning – and what will He do? He will hold onto Your feet and beg forgiveness. But don't believe anything He says. Don't become submissive. Instead, You should chastise Him!"

Sakhis are of two types and two moods: (1) daksina – right wing or submissive. This is called ghrta-sneha (like ghee), and it is a quality of Candravali's group. (2) vama – contrary or unsubmissive. This is called madhu-sneha (like honey), and it is a quality of Radhika's group. [Ghee is wholesome, but without much taste, whereas honey is wholesome and also sweet]

Radhika's mood is called vama (left-wing, contrary, or unsubmissive) and Candravali's mood is called daksina (right-wing, or submissive). Only those gopis in the mood of vama can completely control Krsna. The two groups, that is, Radhika's group and Candravali's group, do not appreciate each other. Candravali criticizes Srimati Radhika and Her group, saying, "How can they dare to do maan (be in a sulky mood) towards Krsna? He is so sweet and lovely!" Srimati Radhika and Her group think, "Why does Candravali become so submissive towards Krsna!?" Srimati Radhika says, "One must apply a weapon to control Krsna. Why doesn't Candravali control Him like us? How can she serve Him if she is not like us?" Thus, both groups cannot appreciate each other's moods.

Lalita is the siksa-guru of all the gopis in Radhika's group, and also of Radhika Herself. Srila Rupa Gosvami writes: Lalita-devi sometimes chastises Radhika, saying, "Oh Kalankini, Oh unchaste one, [She will be called unchaste by Her in-laws, and for that reason She may try to be contrary, but Lalita-devi is telling Her here that no matter what others say, She should still be contrary to Krsna.] don't become submissive to Krsna."

In this song, Srila Rupa Gosvami repeatedly offers his prostrated obeisances to Srimati Lalita-devi. If Sri Krsna approaches Srimati Radhika and uses some clever cheating words, Lalita-devi cannot tolerate it. In nisanta-lila, Srimati Radhika has been waiting all night for Krsna to come, and yet He doesn't come. He finally comes very early in the morning, with signs on His divine body that He has been with other gopis. Lalita-devi tells Him, "Don't come here. We don't want Your service. Where is Your beloved? You should go to her." His eyes are very red and other symptoms are there. Lalita then chastises Him, saying, "Yes, I know You, Krsna. You are very chaste, simple and honest." By her sharp and harsh words, she makes Krsna ashamed and causes Him to be shy. This is described in "Sri Krsna-bhavanamrta".

Krsna sometimes challenges the gopis in the forest: "Why have you come here? Don't you know I am Vrajendra, the King of Vrndavana? By picking flowers here, you are destroying My Vrndavana!"

At that time Lalita-devi says, "We know what kind of 'protector' You are. Actually you have never planted one seed or watered one tree. Instead, with Your hundreds of

thousands of cows, it is You who destroys Vrndavana. We are the real owners of Vrndavana. We have planted every seed and watered every tree."

Krsna then says, "Don't you know who I am? I am a very religious person and I have never told a lie."

Then Srimati Lalita-devi says, "Yes, we know what type of religious person You are. We heard that when You were only seven days old, You killed a woman named Putana, who came as a mother to You. And which house in Vrndavana have You not stolen from? Are You the same religious person who stole all the clothing of the gopis? Are You the same religious person who performed rasa-lila with all the married gopis of Vrndavana?" Krsna then becomes ashamed.

vatsalya- vrnda- vasatim pasupala-rajnyah  
sakhyanusiksana-kalasu gurum sakhinam  
radha-balavaraja-jivita-nirvisesam  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto the supremely charming Sri Lalita-devi, who possesses all divine qualities; who is also the recipient of Yasoda-devi's parental affection; the guru of all the sakhis, instructing them in the art of friendship; and the very life of both Srimati Radhika and the younger brother of Baladeva. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 6)]

Without the presence of vatsalya-rasa (parental love), the glories of madhurya-rasa (conjugal love) do not manifest. One example occurs when Srimati Radhika goes with all Her sakhis to Nandagaon to cook. Mother Yasoda is there, but there is no disturbance. When Srimati Radhika goes to Nanda-bhavana with Lalita and the asta-sakhis (Radhika's eight most intimate friends), Yasoda-devi exhibits intense parental love towards Her – not less than the parental love she has towards her son Krsna. She also shows great affection to all the other sakhis and manjaris, because of their relation with Her.

All the asta-sakhis have so many excellent qualities, and therefore Srila Rupa Gosvami writes, "Of all the gopis, the asta-sakhis are the topmost." For example, Srimati Tungavidya-devi can speak with all types of birds and animals. She understands their language and can communicate with them. What can be greater than performing services to Srimati Radhika under the guidance of Lalita and Visakha and the other asta-sakhis? Lalita and Visakha are the siksa-gurus of all the gopis in the group of Srimati Radhika.

Lalita-devi's life and soul is Srimati Radhika and Krsna. Srila Rupa Gosvami prays, "I offer pranama again and again unto Srimati Lalita-devi."

yam kam api vraja-kule vrsabhanu-jayah  
preksya sva-paksa-padavim anurudhyamanam  
sadyas tad- ista-ghatanena krtarthayantim  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

["I offer pranama unto the supremely charming Sri Lalita-devi, the treasure house of all good qualities. Upon seeing any young maiden anywhere in Vraja and discerning that she is inclined towards her priya-sakhi Srimati Radhika, Lalita immediately tells Radha that She must accept this person in Her own party (svapaksa). Radha obeys Lalita, who thus fulfills that maiden's desires." (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 7)]

Lalita has many charming qualities. What is Her greatest quality – Her quality that is most favorable for the sadhakas of this world? If she sees in Vrndavana any gopi, or anyone who has even a slight touch of a scent of desire to serve Srimati Radhika, she immediately fulfills that gopi's desire and gives her the unlimited wealth of the service of Srimati Radhika's lotus feet. If one has a one-pointed desire to perform service to Srimati Radhika under the direct guidance of Srimati Lalita-devi, and furthermore under the shelter of Sri Rupa Manjari, that devotee may know that Lalita-devi's shelter is the only path by which one can achieve this.

radha-vrajendra-suta-sangama-ranga-caryam  
varyam viniscitavatim akhilotsavebhyah  
tam gokula-priya-sakhi-nikuramba-mukhyam  
devim gunaih sulalitam lalitam namami

[I offer pranama unto Sri Lalita-devi, the embodiment of all divine virtues and the foremost of all the favorite sakhis of Gokula. Her primary task is providing pleasure for Sri Radha-Govinda by arranging Their meetings – this delightful seva surpasses the enjoyment of all the best festivals combined together. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 8)]

Without the mercy of Lalita-devi, Giriraja or Yamuna, it is not possible to enter rasa-lila. The first and greatest is Srimati Lalita-devi herself, the second is Giriraja Govardhana and the third is Yamuna or Visakha-devi.

Lalita is the same age as Srimati Radhika, or she is twenty-seven days older. [It may happen one way in one yuga (millennium) and one way in another.] Like Radhika, Lalita also has all the qualities of being a yuthesvari – able to control her own group of subservient gopis. Why is she qualified to be a yuthesvari? If Bhadra, Syamala or Candravali can become yuthesvaris, then what to speak of Lalita-devi? However, despite being the same age as Radhika and having the qualification of a yuthesvari, still, the only goal of her life is to serve Srimati Radhika and to facilitate the meeting of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna. Her only happiness is the meeting of Radha and Krsna, and to achieve that goal, she never considers any amount of discomfort or suffering.

Sri Raghunatha dasa Gosvami prays,

padabjayos tava vina vara-dasyam eva  
nanyat kadapi samaye kila devi yace  
sakhya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityam  
dasya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam

[O Goddess! I shall never pray to You for anything but the excellent service of Your lotus feet. I offer my constant obeisances unto the idea of becoming Your friend, but I truly relish the idea of becoming Your maidservant. (Vilap-kusumanjali text 16)]

"Oh, I offer my obeisances millions of times to the position of a sakhi of Srimati Radhika. But my only real desire, birth after birth, is to attain the service of Srimati Radhika in the mood of a manjari. I have no desire to become equal to Radhika, like the sakhis."

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami also prays, "I will never leave the feet of Radhika to go to Krsna. Even if Krsna goes to Dvaraka and calls me there, I will not go. However, if out of some madness Radhika has somehow gone to Dvaraka, I will fly even faster than Garuda to serve Her there." (Svaniyama dasakam, verses 3 and 4)

nandann amuni lalita-guna-lalitani  
padyani yah pathati nirmala-drstir astau  
pritya vikarsati janam nija-vrnda-madhye  
tam kirtida-pati-kulojjvala-kalpa-valli

[If a person with a cheerful and pure heart recites this astakam in praise of Lalita-devi, he will be affectionately brought into Srimati Radhika's own group of sakhis. Lalita-devi is superbly ornamented with beauty, grace and charm, and, along with Srimati Radhika, is the effulgent wish-fulfilling creeper (kalpa-valli) of Vrsabhanu Maharaja's family that winds around the kalpa-vrksa of Krsna. (Sri Lalitastakam, verse 9)]

In conclusion, Srimati Lalita-devi is the wish-fulfilling tree of the prema-seva (service in love) of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna. Whoever chants this Lalita-astakam will make Radha and Krsna happy. Moreover, Lalita-devi herself will be happy, and all our desires will be fulfilled.

Editorial Advisors: Sripad Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanatha dasa

Translators: Sripad Damodara Maharaja and

Editors: Krsna Kamini dasi and Syamarani dasi

Transcriber: Vasanti dasi

Typist: Janaki dasi

Proofreader: Krsna-kamini dasi