

# Rasha Purnami



The first full moon day of the month of Ashwin is known as Sharad Purnima. It is also referred to as Rasa Purnima, or Sharath Purnima. The festival is also referred as Kaumudi Festival, Kaumudi meaning moonlight. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is stated that the rāsa dance took place on the full moon night of the śarat season. From Vedic literature it appears that when a theatrical actor dances among many dancing girls, the group-dance is called a rāsa dance. When Kṛṣṇa saw the full moon night of the śarat season, He decorated Himself with various seasonal flowers, especially the mallikā flowers, which are very fragrant, He remembered the gopīs' prayers to goddess Kātyāyanī, wherein they prayed for Kṛṣṇa to be their husband. He thought that the full night of the śarat season was just suitable for a nice dance. So their desire to have Kṛṣṇa as their husband would then be fulfilled. The specific word used in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is yogamāyām upāśritaḥ, which means that this dancing with the gopīs is on the platform of yogamāyā, not mahāmāyā. The dancing of young boys and girls within this material world is in the kingdom of mahāmāyā, or the external energy. The rāsa dance of Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs is on the platform of

yogamāyā. It appears that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the rāsa dance with the gopīs when He was eight years old. At that time, many of the gopīs were married, because in India, especially in those days, girls were married at a very early age. There are even many instances of a girl giving birth to a child at the age of twelve. Under the circumstances, all the gopīs who wanted to have Kṛṣṇa as their husband were already married. At the same time, they continued to hope that Kṛṣṇa would be their husband. Actually, Kṛṣṇa is the husband of everyone because He is the supreme enjoyer. The gopīs wanted Kṛṣṇa to be their husband, but factually there was no possibility of His marrying all the gopīs. But because they had that natural tendency to accept Kṛṣṇa as their supreme husband, the relationship between the gopīs and Kṛṣṇa is called parakīya-rasa. This parakīya-rasa is ever-existent in Goloka Vṛndāvana in the spiritual sky where there is no possibility of the inebriety which characterizes parakīya-rasa in the material world. In the material world, parakīya-rasa is abominable, whereas in the spiritual world it is present in the superexcellent relationship of Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs. There are many other relationships with Kṛṣṇa viz. master and servant, friends and friend, parent and son, and lover and beloved. Out of all these rasas, the parakīya-rasa is considered to be the topmost. The appearance of the moon increased Kṛṣṇa's desire to dance with the gopīs. The forests were filled with

fragrant flowers. The atmosphere was cooling and festive. When Lord Kṛṣṇa began to blow His flute, the gopīs all over Vṛndāvana became enchanted. Their attraction to the vibration of the flute increased a thousand times due to the rising full moon, the red horizon, the calm and cool atmosphere, and the blossoming flowers. All these gopīs were by nature very much attracted to Kṛṣṇa's beauty, and when they heard the vibration of His flute, they became apparently lustful to satisfy the senses of Kṛṣṇa. Immediately upon hearing the vibration of the flute, they all left their respective engagements and proceeded to the spot where Kṛṣṇa was standing. While they ran very swiftly, all their earrings swung back and forth. They all rushed toward the place known as Varṁśīvaṭa. Some of them were engaged in milking cows, but they left their milking business half finished and immediately went to Kṛṣṇa. One of them had just collected milk and put it in a milk pan on the oven to boil, but she did not care whether the milk overboiled and spilled—she immediately left to go see Kṛṣṇa. Some of them were breast feeding their small babies, and some were engaged in distributing food to the members of their families, but they left all such engagements and immediately rushed towards the spot where Kṛṣṇa was playing His flute. Some were engaged in serving their husbands, and some were themselves engaged in eating, but neither caring to serve their husbands nor eat, they immediately left. Some of them wanted to decorate their faces with cosmetic ointments and to dress themselves very nicely before going to Kṛṣṇa, but unfortunately they could not finish their cosmetic decorations nor put on their dresses in the right way because of their anxiety to meet Kṛṣṇa immediately. Their faces were decorated hurriedly and were haphazardly finished; some even put the lower part of their dresses on the upper part of their bodies and the upper part on the lower part. While all the gopīs were hurriedly leaving their respective places, their husbands, brothers and fathers were all struck with wonder to know where they were going. Being young girls, they were protected either by husbands, elderly brothers or fathers. All their guardians forbade them to go to Kṛṣṇa, but they disregarded them. When a person becomes attracted by Kṛṣṇa and is in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he does not care for any worldly duties, even though very urgent. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so powerful that it gives everyone relief from all material activities. Thus, finally Rasa Lila took place in the full moon night. It is stated in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that one should not imitate this parakīya-rasa even in dream or imagination. Those who do so drink the most deadly poison.