

## Shri Krishna's wives and Radha

|| shrI gurubhyo namaH hariH OM ||

|| shrImadAnandatIrthabhagavatpAdAchAryagurubhyo namaH ||

narasimho.akhilAjnAnamatadhvAntadivAkaraH |

jayatyamitasajj~nAnasukhashaktipayonidhiH ||

Radha is a popular gopikA strI who married Lord Krishna when he was in gokula. Her father's name is Vrishabhaanu, one of the gopas in Vraja. Some recent Maadhvaas consider her as incarnation, an avataara of Lakshmi. The article below assesses that position from the standpoint of Maadhva literature and concludes that she is not Lakshmi's avataara but only has Lakshmi's Avesha.

The article is split into 3 sections.

- The first section is a compilation of all that Srimad Anandatirtha Bhagavatpadaacharya, the master of our school, the guardian and preacher of truth, the ultimate guru who manifests the Lord to every sAdhaka in that sAdhaka's heart, has to say about Krishna's wives. Srimad Acharya has not mentioned anything about Radha. But fortunately he has said enough to oppose the theory that Radha is Lakshmi's avataara.
- The second section is a discussion and analysis about Radha's mention in some puranas, some daasarapadas and literature belonging to other schools.
- The third section considers different possibilities to samanvaya (reconciliation) and concludes.

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### I. Srimad Acharya on Lord Krishna's wives:

Lord Krishna is widely held to have had 16108 wives. But he had more. 2 of these wives, Rukmini and Satyabhama, were Lakshmi herself. About the rest, it is important to note Sri Vedavyasa's words when Satyavati requests him to further the kuru race. Sri Vedavyasa says:

R^ite ramAM jAtu mamAN^gayogayogyA.aN^ganA naiva surAlaye.api.

He says there is nobody, except ramA (Lakshmi), even in the abode of gods, who is eligible to have physical union with him. That applies to all avataaras of Vishnu. Wherever the Lord has

blessed other souls with physical union, it must be understood that there was Lakshmi's Avesha in that lady.

1. **Marriage with Niila:** Shri Krishna married Niila first. She obtained a boon to that effect, as a result of her tapas.

yA pUrvajanmani tapaH prathamaiva bhAryA bhUyAsamityacharadasya hi saN^gamo me |  
syAt kR^iShNajanmani samastavarAN^ganAbhyaH pUrvaM tviti sma tadimAM prathamaM sa  
Apa || -- Mahabharata Tatparya Nirnaya 13.49

Niila is one of the shanmahishis (6 queens). Their position in the taaratamya is mentioned later.

2. **Marriage with Gopikas:** The Lord then married many gopikaas. The count is not given. They were all apsaraas, who had obtained a boon from the Lord, of having sanga with him before upanayana samskaara:

agre dvijatvata upAvahadeSha nIIAM gopAN^ganA api purA varamApire yat.h |  
samskArataH prathamameva susaN^gamo no bhUyAt taveti paramApsarasaH purA yAH ||  
MBTN 13.50

These Gopikas were all apsaras.

- 3a. **Marriage with some more gopis:** These kanyas had undertaken the kAtyAyani vrata to obtain the Lord as a husband.

3b. The Lord also gave joy to some other gopikaA stris, who were married to others.

kAtyAyanIvrataparAH svapatitvahetoH kanyaA uvAha bhagavAnaparAshcha gopIH |  
anyairdhR^itA ayugabANasharAbhinunnAH prAptA nishAsvaramayachchhashirAjitAsu ||  
- MBTN 13.73

4. **Anga-sanga with trivakra:** Her bent back was cured by the Lord, when he went to Mathura to kill kamsa. She requests him to love her. The Lord promises her that on a later date and he keeps his promise. She gives birth to a son called Vishoka.

5. **Marriage with Rugmini, Jambavati, Satyabhaama.** Of these, Rugmini is shrI ruPa of Lakshmi and Satyabhaama is bhU ruPa of Lakshmi.

Srimad Acharya says the following in MBTN (17th chapter):

ramaiva sA hi bhUriti dvitilyamUrtiruttama |  
babhUva satrajitsutA samastalokasundarl || 217 ||

6. **Marriage with Kalindi, Niila, Mitravrinda, Bhadraa and LaxaNaa** (in that order). These five are the remaining of the ShaN-mahiShis of the Lord (the first being Jambavati).

Acharya says the following about the 8 queens (including Satyabhama and Rugmini) in MBTN 20th chapter:

bhaiShml satyA chaikatanurdvidhaiva jAtA bhUmau prakR^itirmUlabhUtA |  
tayaivAnyAH sarvadA.anupravishhTAsAsAM madhye jAmbavatI pradhAnA || 20.60||  
rAmeNa tulyA jAmbavatI priyatve kR^ishhNasyAnyAH kiJNchidUnAshcha tasyAH |  
yadA.a.avesho bahulaH syAd.h ramAyAstadA tAsu prlyate keshavo.alam.h || 20.61||

yadA.a.avesho hrAsamupaiti tatra pradyumnato viMshaguNAdhikAH syuH |

Rugmini and Satyabhama are indeed Chitprakriti (Lakshmi) herself. She has her Avesha in other queens. Among other queens, Jambavati is predominant because Lakshmi's Avesha is stronger and always present. So because of persistent Lakshmi's Avesha, Jambavati is equal to Balaraama, and others are slightly lower to her. When the Avesha in these queens recedes, they are 20 guNas higher to Pradyumna (i.e. Krishna's son, who is kaamadeva).

7. **Marriage with 16100 women** after saving them from Narakaasura: These are said to be agniputras, who undertook severe penance to be married to the Lord. These wives are equal to Ajanadevatas in all aspects intrinsically, but superior because of Lakshmi's Avesha. Acharya's words in MBTN 20th chapter 114 --

AjAnadevaiH sarvaguNaiH samAstAH svabhAvato.athendirAveshato.ataH |  
guNAdhikAstAH

Kasheru is said to be superior among them. She is originally Agniputra named pAvaka, who, some people say, is at the same level as karmadevata.

### 8. These wives were superior to gopi wives

Shrimad Acharya mentions another pramANa in his Bhagavata-tatparya 11th skandha. This quote from antaryAmi-samhitA gives a hierarchy of people based on their devotion:

kR^iShNapriyAbhyo gopIbhyo bhaktito dviguNAdhikAH ||  
mahiShyo.aShTau vinA yAstAH kathitAH kR^iShNavallabhAH ||  
tAbhyaH sahasrasamitA yashodA nandagehinI ||  
tato.apyabhyadhikA devI devakI bhaktitastataH ||

vasudevastato jiShNus tato rAmo mahAbalaH ||  
na tato.abhyadhikaH kashchidbhaktyAdau puruShottame ||  
vinA brahmaNamlsheshaM sa hi sarvAdhikaH smR^itaH' ityantaryAmisaMhitAyAm ||

“Excluding the 8 wives of Krishna (Rugmini, Satyabhama and 6 queens), the (16100) wives of Krishna are two-fold superior to the gopii wives of the Lord. Yashoda, Nanda’s wife, is many times more devoted than them. Devaki’s devotion is superior to Yashoda’s. Even greater than her devotion, was that of Vasudeva. Further greater was devotion of Arjuna (jiShNu), and the devotion of Balarama is greater to that. Except for Chaturmukha Brahma, the Lord of Lords, there is none who is equal to him in devotion”.

This quote explicitly mentions the exclusion of 8 wives while considering the difference in devotion between the ladies the Lord married in Gokula, and those that he married after killing Narakasura. If Radha was among the gopis and she was Lakshmi, it becomes mandatory for the exception to include her.

This quote also fixes the position of gopikas who undertook Katyaayani vrata. They too were two-fold lesser in devotion to these 16100 ladies. So Radha cannot be one of them.

#### Summary so far:

| Wife / Wives  | Svarupa   |
|---|---|
| <b>Rugmini, Satyabhama</b>                                      | <b>Lakshmi avataara</b>   |
| <b>Jambavati, Bhadra, Kalindi, Mitravrinda, LakshaNa, Neela</b> | <b>the 6 queens of Krishna (Shanmahishis) with Lakshmi’s Avesha. Jambavati has greater Lakshmi’s avesha</b>                                     |
| <b>Neela along with some gopis</b>                              | <b>Neela is one of the Shanmahishis. Others are apsaras.</b>  |
| <b>Another set of gopis, who undertook the kAtyAyani-vrata</b>  | <b>They are 2-guNas lesser than the 16100 wives of the Lord. Some opine that they were also apsaras, based on the quote given in 2nd point.</b> |
| <b>16100 wives</b>  | <b>agni putras, equal to Ajanaja devatas, but superior to them when Lakshmi’s avesha is there.</b>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | <b>Tvashtra's daughter Kasheru is greater than others.</b> |
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**Now we assess various possibilities for Radha:**

**Radha is NOT Lakshmi**

Srimad Acharya says that Only Rugmini and Satyabhama are Lakshmi herself. He also says that only these TWO were dearest to the Lord among all his wives:

ramaiva sA hi bhUriti dvitlyamUrtiruttamA |  
babhUva satrajitsutA samastalokasundarl || 217 ||  
tato hi sA cha rugmiNI priye priyAsu te.adhikam.h |  
janArdanasya te hareH sadA.aviyoginI yataH || 218 ||

This verse says that the **two of** Rugmini and Satyabhaama were dearest to the Lord among his wives. Please note the usage of dual number in Sanskrit (priye). If Radha had married Krishna and if she was Lakshmi herself, Acharya must have used plural number to indicate that, or atleast said that these 3 - Rugmini, Satyabhama and Radha - were dearest to the Lord amongst his wives.

But Acharya uses a dual number, which is 'niravakAsha'. If it was a single number, one could have used ideas such as 'jAtyaikavachanam' to indicate multiplicity despite usage of singular number. But a dual-number usage makes it very specific and incapable of any other interpretation (niravakAsha). There is no 'Adi' pada either, to give scope for extensions. So Radha, who was one of the gopikas, cannot be Lakshmi herself.

As a side note, durgA rupa of Lakshmi had taken avataara as Sri Krishna's sister. But since the context here is about Krishna's wives, Acharya has not counted her. This gives the dual number usage an additional significance.

**Radha is not one of the Shanmahishis:**

The only possibility is Niila because she was also present as a gopika. But Radha's father is Vrushabhanu, while Niila's father is Kumbhaka. Kumbhaka is Yashoda's brother whereas Vrushabhanu is not related to Nanda or Yashoda.

Radha cannot be any of the remaining Shanmahis because they all get married to Krishna after he leaves Vrindavana.

### **One exception but not the other??**

Moreover, the 8th point mentioned above, where it is said that the 16100 wives of the Lord were superior to gopi wives by two-fold makes it impossible that Radha is one of the 8 mahishis. How is it possible that Acharya mentions one exception but not the other?

### **So Radha is one of the gopikas**

That leaves us with the possibility of Radha being one of the gopikas who married Krishna. Either she is an apsara or she is one of the women who undertook Katyayani vrata. Whatever be the case, she cannot be Lakshmi herself. Indeed, much like other wives of the Lord, she must have had Lakshmi's Avesha during union with the Lord.

Here are other pramANas relevant to the matter at hand.

9. **Only Lakshmi's Avesha was present in Gopika women.** In Bhagavata 4th skandha 14th adhyaaya, the birth of Prithu and his twin sister sudatl is described as Vishnu's amsha and Lakshmi's Amsha. While explaining that, Srimad Acharya says -

tatra sannihitA shrIshcha yatra sannihito hariH |  
nAsya sannidhimAtreNa ramA patnItvamAvrajat |  
sAkShAdeva tu sAkShAchcha hareH sannidhitaH kvachit |  
gopyAdirUpA bhavati viparItaM na tu kvachit' iti cha ||

Wherever Hari is present as Avesha, Shri too is present as Avesha. Just because of her Avesha being there, she does not become that person's wife. Wherever Hari's own avataaras are there, she either takes her own avataaras, or is present as Avesha **\*as in the case of gopikas etc.\***. But never is the reverse possible i.e. she takes avatara, but hari is just present as Avesha in the person she marries.

This explanation is according to Sri Yadavarya's commentary on Bhagavata.

This quote considers all gopis - without a named exception - to having Avesha of Lakshmi only.

So Radha is again proved not to be sakshat Lakshmi herself.

Now, we will consider the manner in which these wives of the Lord react after hearing Krishna's avataara-samaapti.

### **10. Rugmini and Satyabhama - these two do not discard their bodies.**

The following quote is given in Bhagavata-tatparya-nirnaya towards the end of 11th skandha.

agnAvantardadhe bhaiShml satyabhAmA vane tathA ||  
na tu dehaviyogo.asti tayoH shuddhachidAtmanoH' iti cha || 19- 20 ||

Rugmini disappeared in fire and Satyabhaama disappeared in a forest. They do not discard their bodies, because their bodies are of pure consciousness. (Lakshmi, like her husband, has only aprAkrita-body).

### **Gopikas discard their bodies!**

kR^iShNakAmAstadA gopyastyaktvA dehaM divaM gatAH || (BTN 10th skandha) as mentioned in skandapurana. They discarded their bodies and went to the heavens. So it is impossible that Lakshmi herself was present among these gopikas, to discard her body. Interestingly, the same quote qualifies these gopikas' knowledge as that they knew, \*most of the times\*, about Krishna being parabrahma. If Lakshmi was present herself among them, it would be incumbent to mention the exception. Since the exception is not mentioned, none of gopis were Lakshmi herself, instead had her Avesha.

### **11. anukti (non-mention) is not a problem BUT nyunata (omission) is. In case of Radha, nyUnata leads to asadupAsana.**

Objection: Acharya has not mentioned many other people's svarupas. He has not mentioned the svarupas of Dasharatha, Subhadra (or trijaTa) etc. So his non-mention (anukti) of Radha is NOT a problem.

Answer: nyUnataa is defined thus in Pramana-paddhati - 'avashyavaktavyasya ekadeshamaTravachanaM nyUnam'. When something should be mandatorily told, mentioning it partially is nyuunata - omission. Not mentioning Radha, if she were Lakshmi herself, as an exception in the above quotes will bring forth nyUnataA flaw to Srimad Acharya. Why is it mandatory to mention Radha as exception among the gopis or wives of Krishna? Because it leads to asad-upaasana. AsadupAsana is worship based on false-knowledge. If the exception is not mentioned, all followers of Acharya would consider Radha as one of the gopikas, certainly much lesser than Lakshmi and the Shanmahishhis. Whereas in cases such as Subhadra, since he has not mentioned anything, there is no scope for asadupAsana. There are no possibilities mentioned in case of Subhadra etc., whereas Radha is clubbed along with other gopis. If she were Lakshmi, categorizing her along with gopis would lead to asadupaasana. Therefore, it is mandatory for Acharya (or his sources) to mention Radha as the exception among gopikas.

Therefore, not mentioning that exception would lead to nyUnataA.

Since Acharya is omniscient and free of deceit (sarvajnatvAt avipralambhakatvachcha - says

tattvapradiipakaara Sri Trivikrama Panditacharya), his works are free from such flaws of nyuunata. Therefore, the natural conclusion is that Lakshmi was present only as Avesha, not as Avataara among the gopikAs.

**A sidenote:** It is natural for some of us to feel it impossible that Srimad Acharya, who mentions the svarupas of so many characters in the Mahabharata and Ramayana, would not mention the avataara of Lakshmi herself. Acharya may not have mentioned the svarupas of people like Subhadra etc. but that cannot be extended to Lakshmi's avatara.

While this objection has some merit, it is not entirely logical. The argument that Acharya will certainly mention all avataras of Lakshmi, if it happened in Mahabharata, is still an argument based on expectations. What is the basis for this expectation? Acharya, for example, has explicitly denied mentioning the Lord's forms present in our nADis. He has not mentioned the 24 lakshmi's forms corresponding to the 24 forms of the Lord. So this expectation is not right. Yes, it is plausible to expect that Acharya mentions a sAkShat Lakshmi avatara because of the contextual requirement, but it cannot be a logical demand.

## II. Dasarapadas and Puranas on Radha

Srimad Anandatirtha Bhagavatpadacharya has given many opportunities for his commentators, successors to reveal points not told by him. This is to allow his commentators (devataamshas) to do their seva, and for others to develop bhakti on them accordingly. For example, Sri Narayana Panditacharya mentions, in his 'amshAvatAra', that Padmapurana mentions that Dasharatha is Svayambhu Manu himself:

rAjA dasharathaH pUrvaM manuH svAyambhuvaH smR^itaH ||  
vyaktaM padmapurANe tu avatAraprasaN^gataH ||

So is it likely that some of his commentators or successors have mentioned that Radha is Lakshmi's avatara? None.

None of Acharya's immediate disciples or commentators - Sri Padmanabha tirtha, Sri Narahari Tirtha, Sri Trivikrama Panditacharya, Sri Narayana Panditacharya have mentioned it. Sri Vadiraja tirtha, who is laataavya-incarnate, wrote Rugminiisha-vijaya of 19 chapters covering Shri Krishna's activities including his marriage with Rugmini. This too, does not contain a single reference to Radha, much less a reference that says Radha is Lakshmi's avataara.

There are daasarapadas and stotras, however, which refer to the Lord as 'Raadhaa ramana'.



Some of these songs were written by Aparoxa-jnAnis like Sri Vijayadasaru. However, even these songs do NOT say that Radha is Lakshmi's avatara.

**Puranic references:** Let's look at the purANic references on Radha, in extant versions:

### **Padmapurana**

4.7 gives details of Radhaashtami - which is not followed in the sampradaaya. It also says that Radha is Vrushabhanu's daughter. Niila is Kumbhaka's daughter. Therefore, the guess that Niila could be \*possibly\* referred as Radha is wrong. Radha is said to have been seen in Vrushabhanu's yajnabhumi, just like Seeta.

5.69 and 5.70 gives a more detailed picture.

In 5.69, Parvati asks Rudra to describe the place which is much beyond the infinite brahmaandas. So Rudra describes this goloka or Vrindavana to be situated above brahmANDa.

Later in the chapter, Rudra says that Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara are an infinitesimal amshas of Krishna. The chapter ends with saying - tasyAnghrirajaHsparshaat koTiviShNuH prajAyate! From the touch of his feet dust, a crore viShNus are born.

In 5.70, Parvati asks Rudra to give a description of Krishna's parishat in Vrindavana. So this section describes Radha and some other gopikas to be pradhAna prakritis surrounding the Lord immediately. This circle is surrounded by a set of Krishna's friends, which is then surrounded by the Lord's 8 queens - 2 of whom, Srimad Acharya referred, as the dearest to Krishna!!

The next chapter 5.71 is most interesting and relevant. Rudra describes Narada's exploration in the Vraja households. Narada thinks thus - In such a place filled by Narayana and his people,

Lakshmi too must have certainly taken her avataara here: asya kAntA bhagavatI laxmlr nArAyaNe harau | vidhAya gopikArUpaM krIDArthaM shArngadhanvanaH | avashyaM avatIrNA sA bhaviShyati na samshayaH | and he then sets out to search for that household where she has taken birth. After an unsuccessful search, he meets a rich gopa, by the name bhAnu. The gopa first introduces his son with auspicious characteristics. Narada is pleased to meet the boy and about to leave, when Bhanu requests him to bless his daughter, who is an inactive, deaf and blind girl. Bhanu opines that just his look (Narada's look) will make his daughter stable. Narada is then curious. Bhanu goes in and lifts his daughter and gets her to Narada. Narada is then mesmerized, goes into a trance, experiences bliss and then 'returns' to his waking state. He says the following - I have the ability to go wherever I want. I have been to BrahmaloKa, Rudraloka, Indraloka but have not seen so much beauty. I have seen Parvati

myself, and she is nowhere near this girl in her beauty. I have seen Lakshmi, Saraswati and such great higher ladies. They (or their beauty) are ineligible to touch this girl's shadow, much less even see her. I have seen Vishnu's mohini form, which deluded Hara (Rudra). How can that form be anywhere near this girl's beauty? He then sends the father out and starts singing Krishna's praises. Suddenly, he finds her in her divine form surrounded by many other ladies. They tell him that her form cannot be seen even by Brahma, Rudra and other exalted devotees of the Lord. And by some unknown fortune, he was able to see the form of Hari's wife, Lakshmi. They ask him to do pradakshina to them because this form will not be visible any further, mostly.

The chapter proceeds to give more details about this Lakshmi's avataara. Let's proceed with our analysis.

- a. Narada seeing a form that is unavailable to Brahma and Rudra is against Taratamyā.  
Siddhanta-viruddha.
- b. Srimad Acharya says that content written in darshana-bhAShA has contradictions with the beginning and end: AdyantayorviruddhaM yad darshanaM tadudAhRutam. This serves as a good example. Here, it is first told that Lakshmi's beauty is nothing compared to that of this girl, and this girl eventually turns out to be Lakshmi herself!
- c. Here, Lakshmi's avataara is said to be more beautiful than Hari's mohinii-rupa. That is siddhaanta-viruddha.
- d. Even if the 'hari-vallabhA' mentioned in the upasamhaara is said to be rAdha, who is higher than Lakshmi, that too is contradictory to siddhaanta.
- e. Even if some forced samanvaya is done, the whole chapter is sAvakAsha. Since Lakshmi's Avesha among gopis is accepted in the siddhanta, the above episode can be explained as referring to Lakshmi's Avesha.

To summarise, none of the chapters are powerful to prove that Lakshmi's avataara existed in Gokula, Vraja. In fact, all of these are interpolated chapters. We will see if it is just some convenient reasoning or otherwise.

Now from other purANas:

**Brihannaradiya Purana (printed version):**

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Sri Sanatkumararu gives the 'sahasranAma' for Radha and Krishna together (paThennAmasahasraM tu yugalAkhyam mahAmune). In that he praises Radha as

'ramArAdhya' (worshipped by Ramaa!) and 'kR^iShNArAdhya' (worshipped by Krishna!).

Let's grant that the above names will interpreted in terms of bahuvRihi (instead of tatpuruSha) i.e. that, for whom ramA / Krishna are Aradhya, and somehow escape the obvious. Let's go little further when Sri sanat कुमारaru tells the srishti process:

yA tu rAdhA mayA prokTA kR^iShNArddhAN^gasamudbhavA // NarP\_1,83.10 //  
golokavAsinI sA tu nityA kR^iShNasahAyinI /

kR^iShNasya vAmabhAgAttu jAtO nArAyaNaH svayam // NarP\_1,83.12 //  
rAdhikAyAshca vAmAN^gAnmahAlakShmIrbabhUva ha /

So, here the purANa says that Narayana himself was born out of Krishna and Mahalakshmi was born out of Radhika (!). Where was Krishna and Radha before Narayana and Mahalakshmi were born? They were in goloka! They (Krishna and Radhika) then get Mahalakshmi and Narayana married to each other - tataH kR^iShNo mahAlakShmIM dattvA nArAyaNaya ca, and then placed the newly wed couple in Vaikunta (nityaloka!) and then instructed Narayana to do stithikarma -- vaikuNThe sthApayAmAsa shashvatpAlanakarmaNi... Then the purANa tells us that they created many beings in goloka. Then came durgA (also called Vishnumaayaa) from Krishna. What happened to her? Shiva requests Krishna that she be married to him: tataH pashcAtpaJNcavaktraM kR^iShNaM prAha mahAmate, durgAM gR^ihANa vishvesha shivaloke tapashvara. Then later Saraswati comes out of Radha, and goes to marry Brahma! The purANa also says - evaM paJNcavidhA jAta sA rAdhA sR^iShTikAraNam (Radha manifested herself in five ways in the above manner - Radha, Lakshmi, Durga (shiva's wife), Saraswati and many gopikAs in the nitya-goloka!

Not just that, it gives a maNDala in which Radha is seated in the middle and others (including the wife of Narayana!) are in the corners.

This is atyanta-siddhaanta-viruddha.

### **Brahmanda purana (printed version):**

This purANa talks of Parashurama doing tapas for the grace of Krishna and Shankara (along with their wives!). So the four deities - Krishna, Radha, Shankara and Parvati appear in front of Parashurama. What does Parashurama seek from Radha and Parvati: In whatever thousand births I take, please ensure that I become the devotee of you four - Krishna, Radha, shankara and Parvati. He also admits to see non-difference between all four!

Again this is against siddhAnta!

**Brahmavaivarta purANa (printed version):**

The Radhikopakhyana occurs in 48th chapter, where Narayana tells the kathaa. He narrates the discussion that Shiva has with Parvati. When Parvati asks him about Radha and her origin, though the story is extremely guhya and not so easily found in purANAs (confessions of the prakShiptakAra?), Rudra meditates on Krishna and tells Parvati that Krishna had asked him not to tell the story to anybody, but since Parvati is ardhaanga-svarUpiNi, he will tell the story since Krishna has given the permission. Rudra also says - This secret story that I know, is not known by Brahma or Shesha (yajjAnAmi rahasyaM cha na tadbrahma na phaNIshvaraH) ! He then tells a story which is immaterial to us. Rudra says that Krishna got excited seeing Radha - dRShTvA kAntAM jagatkAnto babhUva ramaNotsukaH... then what - rAdhA bhajati taM kRShNaM sa cha tAM cha parasparaM (they worship each other!). Not just that - ubhayoH sarvasAmyaM cha sadA santo vadanti cha - The equality of these two - Radha and Krishna - are professed by sajjanas always!

The story then proceeds to tell how Sudama cursed Radha to be separated from Krishna, how she cries at it, then how she was born of Vrishabhaanu (a vaishya), how they got married (Krishna married neela first!), then tells the same story as mentioned in brihannaradiya.

Rudra also proceeds to caution us - Adau rAdhAM samucchArya pashchAtkRSNaM vadedbudhaH, vyatikrame brahmahatyAM labhate nAtra samshaya. Doubtless, one must take Radha's name before Krishna's name! otherwise, they will obtain brahmahatyaa dosha. Then comes another wonderful portion - Narayana (who resides in vaikunta) does pooja of Radha in Goloka, and wears a kavacha: chakaara pUjAM rAdhAyA... tatkavachaM hariH, dadhAra kaNThau bAhau cha! Not just that, our Narayana then eats the tAmbula, which is already

partially eaten by Radha: rAdhA-charvita-tAmbUlaM chakAdha madhusUdanaH.

This is not the end of it. Rudra then proceeds to tell a story where Radha becomes invisible to Krishna! What happens then - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva become braShTa-aishvarya (devoid of their glories) - sarve babhUvuH devAshcha brahmaviShNushivAdayaH, braShTaishvarya nishrlkA

bhAryAhInA hyupadratAH. They (including Narayana) pray to Krishna to get their wives back. Krishna then instructs Radha to give her amshas back (who are the wives of respective devatas)!

Again we can see that this is fully against siddhAnta.

**A brief note on ‘Adhika-maasa-paddhati’ and Kartika snanaarghya mantra:**

In a discussion with a scholar on this matter, he showed me a printed copy of Adhika-masa-paddhati, which is claimed to be sourced from Brihannaradiya purana. The text mentions the pooja to be dedicated to Radha-Purushottama. Similar is the case with kaartika-snaana-arghya-mantra, which mentions ‘rAdhayA sahito hare’.

Now some proponents of Radha-Lakshmi identity theory hold these texts as the sAdhaka pramANa for their theory. They are willing to ignore Srimad Acharya’s explicit words (or quotes) which says all gopikas (except Neela) were 2 guNas inferior to Agni-putras (who are equal to Ajanaja devataas). They ask - how can the purANas give such high status to an ordinary gopika? and add their nirNaya on the top of Srimad Acharya’s nirNaya.

Irrespective of whether those sections of puranas are worthy of consideration (i.e. their being praxipta, they being in darshana bhAShA), the question of ‘high status to an ordinary gopika’ is a wrong one. Such people are using inference (without the support of Agama) to decide svarUpas, and that is wrong in principle. When the Lord can give them the ‘wife’ status, why not make lower manushyas do pooja to Him through her? Even this counter-argument is based on ‘tarka’, and not Agama, and leads to a deadlock. So the question itself is not decisive in favor of the R=L theory.

For those who cannot still accept that ‘an ordinary gopika gets high status’, there is abhyupagamvAda possible. Sri Jagannatha Dasa’s Harikathaamrtasaara says the following in 21st sandhi 44th shloka :

kRuShNavaRthmana sutharoLage shathadhvyashaShtasAvira  
sthriyaralli praviShtaLAgI ramAmba thaththanmAmarUpadhali  
kRuShna mahiShiyaroLage ippaLu thvaShtrus puthri kashEru  
ivaroLu shrEshTalenipaLu uLidha RuShigaNagOpikAsamaru

While pointing out that Lakshmi is present in the gopikas stris, he says that Lakshmi’s Avesha has the same name and same form as Krishna’s wife. So this implies that the Lakshmi’s Avesha in Radha is called by the name ‘Radha’.

The above fact makes it easier to interpret adhika-mAsa-paddhati and kArtika-snaana-mantra as referring to Lakshmi’s Avesha rupa and nAma, instead of the gopika.

### III. Approaches to Samanvaya

Let us assume that the above puranic quotes are valid i.e. they are not interpolations. We will revisit this assumption in the later part of the document. Now, since purANas are pramANas in general, there are TWO approaches to samanvaya (harmonization) with Srimad Acharya's words:

1. **Modify Acharya's nirNaya** (considered conclusions). That is, hold the idea that Acharya's nirNaya considered rAdhA implicitly and never explicitly; so all his statements are exclusive of rAdhA. For example, if Acharya said that Rugmini and Satyabhama are the two dearest of all queens, he has implicitly (i.e. without explicit mention) excluded Radha from the scope, and hence stated only two to be dearest.

Apparently, some mAdhvas think themselves capable of modifying Acharya's nirNaya. That is just another unfortunate event in this kaliyuga.

2. **Consider Acharya's words as nirNayaka (final authority)** . That leaves us with two possibilities:

a. The above purANic passages as mohaka. In which case, they cannot establish that Radha is Lakshmi. But that would need an explicit pramANA to that effect.

a. Another is to make the above (esp in Padmapurana 5.71) as sAvakAsha, which they truly are. It is not new in Puranic literature to refer to an Avesha as Amsha. Balarama has been referred as Vishnu's avataara whereas Acharya's clarifies that it is only Avesha. We already saw that Prithu is mentioned as Vishnu's amsha, whereas Acharya clarifies that he only has Vishnu's Avesha. So these passages can be interpreted as Radha having Lakshmi's avasha.

There is a more important possibility; that of the above purANic quotes being interpolations. It is not at all uncommon - even at the time of Srimad Acharya - to have interpolations in purANic texts.

But how do we evaluate the possibility of these passages being interpolations? Indeed, we need to have our evaluation criteria free of bias. It is not just in the matter of Radha that purANic quotes are given. The internet is full of quotes in favor of Chaitanya being Krishna's avatara. The Swami Narayan sect also gives a skanda purANA quote in favor of the avataarahood of its chief proponent. Sri Vijayindra tirtharu himself gives a list of purANic quotes in support of Srimad

Acharya being vAyu's avatara.

And many of the quotes are not available in extant versions. How is to one decide which of the above quotes are authentic and which are interpolated?

For that, we should adopt the criterion mentioned by Srimad Anandatirtha in his VTVN to remove the possibility of an authored sentence being paraded as a vedic sentence. He says vedic sentences have paramparA. Though he refers to adhyayana paramparA (sequence of learning from teacher to student), the same can be extended to grantha-paramparA. Though the same is said of Vedic sentences, the same can be applied to purANic quotes.

If a purANic sentence or paragraph is quoted in early texts, greater the possibility of it being authentic. Earlier the better, because it indicates 'paramparA'.

And if these quotations were given in vAda-granthas amidst a debate, greater the possibility of such quotes being from authentic puranas. Similarly if these quotes are on controversial topics, given amidst a highly informed audience, greater the possibility of authenticity of such quotes. It does not matter if those are found in current versions or not.

Now, does an absence of an early citation imply the converse i.e. lesser likelihood of it being original? That is very difficult to say. However it has one exception condition:

Consider the Gaudiya school writers like Jiiva Goswami, who wanted to prove that Radha is Lakshmi herself. In his Sat-sandarbha, he quotes all of above puranas (padma, brihannaradiya) to prove other percepts but what does he find to substantiate his tenet? In Krishna-sandarbha, he tries to prove that Radhika is svayam Lakshmi - shrI vR^indAvane shrI rAdhikAyAm eva svayaM lakShmltvam, but he finds not a single relevant passage from the purana. Padma purana 5.70 is so close to proving his tenet, but he does not quote that. He quotes a later chapter, which only says Radha was most important gopika in Vrindaavana, without mentioning her svaruupa. He does not mention any of these direct mentions in his priiti-sandarbha either.

Scholars of some other school not mentioning these passages is plausible. But these passages are important to a gauDiya scholar, because they convey a tenet that he explicitly states and wishes to prove. His references to the other sections in the same purana indicate that he was conversant with this purANa. Despite all that, if he does not quote these 'obvious references', the only possible explanation for that is they were absent in his times and interpolated later.

Even the references that he gets, which he tags as 'shaunaka-nArada-samvAda' have now become 'Parvati-Ishvara' samvAda, thus again corroborating the fact that these are interpolated

passages.

So instead of depending on such interpolations or mohaka purana vakyas, it is simpler to go by Srimad Anandatirtha Bhagavatpaadacharya's nirNaya that only Lakshmi's avेशha was present among gopikAs; and Radha was one such gopikA.

**shri madhveshakR^iShNArpaNamastu**