

Gopi Geet: Song of the Cowherd Women

(Shrimad Bhagwatam, 10.31.1-19)

गोय ऊचुः

gopy ucuḥ:

The *gopis* said . . .

जयति तेऽधिकं जन्मना ब्रजः श्रयत इन्दिरा शश्वदत्र हि ।
दयित दृश्यतां दिक्षु तावकास्त्वयि धृतासवास्त्वां विचिन्वते ॥ १ ॥

jayati te'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ śrayata indirā śaśvadatra hi ।
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakāstvayi dhṛtāsavāstvām vicinvate ॥1॥

Your birth here in Braj has made it surpassingly glorious. For Your sake, Goddess Lakshmi eternally serves this land, by decorating it with her presence [in the form of wealth and prosperity]. We, Your *gopis*, have been searching for You everywhere! [Though our bodies burn in separation,] we survive only because we have centred our life-force in You. O Beloved! Please appear again before us!

शरदुदाशये साधुजातसत्सरसिजोदरश्रीमुषा दृषा ।
सुरतनाथ तेऽशुल्कदासिका वरद निघ्नतो नेह किं वधः ॥ २ ॥

śaradudāśaye sādhujātasatsarasijodaraśrīmuṣā dṛṣā ।
suratanātha te'śulkadāsikā varada nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ ॥2॥

Your thieving eyes, which stole the beauty of the blooming lotuses of autumn, have struck us and left us for dead. O Lord of love's delights! O generous One! Isn't it a crime to thus murder Your own maidservants, who have offered themselves to You as slaves without price?

विषजलाप्ययाद् व्यालराक्षसाद् वर्षमारुताद् वैद्युतानलात् ।
वृषमयात्मजाद् विश्वतोभयादृषभ ते वयं रक्षिता मुहुः ॥ ३ ॥

viṣajalāpyayād vyālarākṣasād varṣamārutād vaidyutānalāt ।
vṛṣamayātmajād viśvatobhayādṛṣabha te vyaṁ rakṣitā muhuḥ ॥3॥

O great Hero! You saved us from death by poisoned water, from the terrible demons Agha and Vyomasur, from the bull-demon (Arishtasur), the windstorm-demon (Trinavart), and from the great rains and lightning sent by Indra. You always used to protect us from every danger!

न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भवानखिलदेहिनामन्तरात्मदृक् ।
विखनसार्थितो विश्वगुप्तये सख उदेयिवान् सात्वतां कुले ॥४॥

na khalu gopikānandano bhavānakhiladehināmantarātmadṛk ।
vikhanasārthito viśvaguptaye sakha udeyivān sātvatām kule ॥4॥

You are not [just] the Son of a *gopi*, but the indwelling Witness in the hearts of all beings. You are the answer to Brahma's prayers, come in Satvata's dynasty to save the world.

विरचिताभयं वृष्णिधुर्य ते चरणमीयुषां संसृतेर्भयात् ।
करसरोरुहं कान्त कामदं शिरसि धेहि नः श्रीकरग्रहम् ॥५॥

viracitābhayaṁ vṛṣṇidhurya te caraṇamīyūṣāṁ saṁsṛterbhayāt ।
karasaroruhāṁ kānta kāmadaṁ śirasi dhehi naḥ śrīkaragraham ॥5॥

O Greatest of Vṛshni's descendants! Your lotus hand protects all those who seek refuge at Your feet, and makes them fearless. Beloved One! Please place upon our heads Your hand, which holds the hand of Goddess Shri, and which grants everyone's desires.

ब्रजजनार्तिहन् वीर योषितां निजजनस्मयध्वंसनस्मित ।
भज सखे भवत्किङ्करीः स्म नो जलरुहाननं चारु दर्शय ॥६॥

vrajajanārtihan vīra yoṣitām nijajanasmayadhvaṁsanasmita ।
bhaja sakhe bhavatkiṅkarīḥ sma no jalaruhānanam cāru darśaya ॥6॥

O Valiant One! Destroyer of the Brajwasis' pain, whose smile crushes the pride of your lovers! O Friend! Please grant shelter to us, Your own maidservants, and show us Your beautiful lotus face.

प्रणतदेहिनां पापकर्शनं तृणचरानुगं श्रीनिकेतनम् ।
फणिफणार्पितं ते पदाम्बुजं कृणु कुचेषु नः कृन्धि हृच्छयम् ॥७॥

praṇatadehinām pāpakarśanam trṇacarānugam śrīniketanam |
phaṇiphaṇārpitam te padāmbujam kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ kṛndhi hṛcchayam ||7||

Your lotus feet, which destroy the sins of all who come to their shelter, are an empire of auspiciousness and beauty. Please place those feet, which crushed the serpent Kaliya, upon our breasts and thus crush the passion of our hearts.

मधुरया गिरा वल्गुवाक्यया बुधमनोज्ञ्यया पुष्करेक्षण ।
विधिकरीरिमा वीर मुह्यतीरधरसीधुनाऽऽप्याययस्व नः ॥८॥

madhurayā girā valguvākyayā budhamanojñyayā puṣkarekṣaṇa |
vidhikarīrimā vīra muhyatīradharasīdhunā”pyāyayasva naḥ ||8||

O Lotus-eyes! By Your sweet speech which delights the great poets, we, Your handmaids, have been rendered senseless. Please revive us with the immortal nectar of Your kisses.

तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनं कविभिरीडितं कल्मषापहम् ।
श्रवणमङ्गलं श्रीमदाततं भुवि गृणन्ति ते भूरिदा जनाः ॥९॥

tava kathāmṛtam taptajīvanam kavibhirīḍitam kalmaṣāpaham |
śravaṇamaṅgalam śrīmadātataṁ bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūridā janāḥ ||9||

Your ambrosial stories soothe the burning of life’s afflictions. Celebrated by the sages, they dispel all sin and grant all benedictions to those who hear. Indeed, those who recite Your stories and spread them in this world are the greatest givers.

प्रहसितं प्रिय प्रेमवीक्षणं विहरणं च ते ध्यानमङ्गलम् ।
रहसि संविदो या हृदिस्पृशः कुहक नो मनः क्षोभयन्ति हि ॥१०॥

prahasitam priya premavīkṣaṇam viharāṇam ca te dhyānamaṅgalam |
rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdispṛśaḥ kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi ||10||

Your laughter, Your love-filled eyes, and Your sweet lovemaking bless our meditations, and the sweet words You spoke to us in confidence touch our hearts! But, O Cheater! At the same time, those same memories afflict our minds to the extreme.

चलसि यद् व्रजाञ्चारयन् पशून् नलिनसुन्दरं नाथ ते पदम् ।
शिलतृणांकुरैः सीदतीति नः कलिलतां मनः कान्त गच्छति ॥११॥

calasi yad vrajāccārayan paśūn nalinasundaram nātha te padam ।
śilatṛṇāmkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ kalilatām manaḥ kānta gacchati ॥11॥

When You go out to graze the cows, it makes our hearts ill to think that Your soft feet, which are like two beautiful lotus flowers, might get scratched by the hairs that grow from the wheat florets, the grass, or the new sprouts that rise from the earth.

दिनपरिक्षये नीलकुन्तलैर्वनरुहाननं बिभ्रदावृतम् ।
धनरजस्वलं दर्शयन् मुहुर्मनसि नः स्मरं वीर यच्छसि ॥१२॥

dinaparikṣaye nīlakuntalairvanaruhānanam bibhradāvṛtam ।
dhanarajasvalam darśayan muhurmanasi naḥ smaram vīra yacchasi ॥12॥

At the end of the day, You appear before us. [By turning this way and that to call the cows and speak with Your friends,] You repeatedly show us Your beautiful face, like a lotus flower surrounded by the black bees of Your curly hair, smeared thickly with the pollen of dust raised by the cows' hooves. By Your actions, You inject our hearts with desire, o Hero!

प्रणतकामदं पद्मजार्चितं धरणिमण्डनं ध्येयमापदि ।
चरणपङ्कजं शन्तमं च ते रमण नः स्तनेष्वर्पयाधिहन् ॥१३॥

praṇatakāmadam padmajārcitam dharaṇimaṇḍanam dhyeyamāpadi ।
caraṇapaṅkajam śantamam ca te ramaṇa naḥ staneṣvarpayādhihan ॥13॥

Your lotus feet, which grant the wishes of those who bow down; Your lotus feet, adored by Brahma; Your lotus feet, Earth's jeweled adornments; Your lotus feet, object of meditation in times of danger! O Raman! O Lover! Destroyer of distress! Please place Your lotus feet upon our breasts.

सुरतवर्धनं शोकनाशनं स्वरितवेणुना सुष्ठु चुम्बितम् ।
इतररागविस्मारणं नृणां वितर वीर नस्तेऽधरामृतम् ॥१४॥

suratavardhanam śokanāśanam svaritaveṇunā suṣṭhu cumbitam |
itararāgavismāraṇam nṛṇām vitara vīra naste'dharāmṛtam ||14||

The ambrosia of Your lips, which magnifies love's delights; the ambrosia of Your lips, which destroys all grief; the ambrosia of Your lips, which sings through Your flute when You kiss her; the ambrosia of Your lips, which makes memory resign all other longings to oblivion! Please bestow that ambrosia of Your lips upon us.

अटति यद् भवानह्नि काननं त्रुटिर्युगायते त्वामपश्यताम् ।
कुटिलकुन्तलं श्रीमुखं च ते जड उदीक्षतां पक्ष्मकृद् दृशाम् ॥ १५ ॥

aṭati yad bhavānahni kānanam truṭiryugāyate tvāmapaśyatām |
kuṭilakuntalam śrīmukhaṁ ca te jaḍa udīkṣatām pakṣmakṛd dṛśām ||15||

When You go out into the woods and we cannot see You, a fraction of a second becomes an eon for us. And when You reappear, foolish lord Brahma repeatedly obstructs our vision with his intolerable creation, our eyelids!

पतिसुतान्वयभ्रातृबान्धवानतिविलङ्घ्य तेऽन्त्यच्युतागताः ।
गतिविदस्तबोद्धीतमोहिताः कितव योषितः कस्त्यजेन्निशि ॥ १६ ॥

patisutānvayabhrātṛbāndhavānativilaṅghya te'ntyacyutāgatāḥ |
gatividastavodgītāmohitāḥ kitava yoṣitaḥ kastyajenniśi ||16||

O Invincible One! Entranced by Your flutesong, we abandoned our husbands, children, elders, brothers and all other relatives absolutely. You know good and well why we came to You. Who but You would leave women alone in the forest at night, o Cheater?

रहसि संविदं हृच्छयोदयं प्रहसिताननं प्रेमवीक्षणम् ।
बृहदुरः श्रियो वीक्ष्य धाम ते मुहुरतिस्पृहा मुह्यते मनः ॥ १७ ॥

rahasi samvidam hṛcchayodayam prahasitānanam premavīkṣaṇam |
bṛhaduraḥ śriyo vīkṣya dhāma te muhuratisprhā muhyate manaḥ ||17||

As we remember Your passionate love-talks, Your smiling face, Your loving glances and Your broad chest, the home of Goddess Shri, again and again, our minds become dazzled with overwhelming eagerness.

ब्रजवनौकसां व्यक्तिरङ्ग ते वृजिनहन्त्यलं विश्वमङ्गलम् ।
त्यज मनाक् च नस्त्वत्स्पृहात्मनां स्वजनहृद्गुजां यन्निषूदनम् ॥१८॥

vrajavanaukasām vyaktiraṅga te vṛjinahantryalaṁ viśvamaṅgalam ।
tyaja manāk ca nastvatsprhātmanām svajanahṛdrujām yanniṣūdanam ॥18॥

O Beloved! Your all-blissful presence cures the afflictions of those who dwell here in Braj. Please dispense a drop of that medicine to us, Your own lovers, who are tormented by the heart-disease of longing for You.

यत्ते सुजातचरणाम्बुरुहं स्तनेषु
भीताः शनैः प्रिय दधीमहि कर्कशेषु ।
तेनाटवीमटसि तद्व्यथते न किंस्वित्
कूर्पादिभिर्भ्रमति धीर्भवदायुषां नः ॥१९॥

yatte sujātacaraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu ।
tenāṭavīmaṭasi tadvyathate na kiṁsvit
kūrpādibhirbhramati dhīrbhavadāyusaṁ naḥ ॥19॥

Dear One! Your lotus feet are so soft that when we embrace them to our hearts, we do so very gently, fearing that our firm breasts might harm them. Our minds are reeling to think that those same feet are now walking the rough forest ground, vulnerable to injury by stones and sharp pebbles.