

The Emotions of Devotion in Indian Religion¹

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To begin I would like to share a few questions which prompt my inquiry here. First, what is a 'religious emotion' and how does it (–or does it?) differ from ordinary emotions? How is devotion to God to be understood as an emotion? Thinking about these questions in the context of religions in India make me wonder what is it that makes an emotion—any emotion— 'vicarious'? If we put ourselves in the place of another to 'share' experiences, then can this type of imaginative projection be extended? For example, can aesthetic emotions be vicariously experienced? Can a religious emotion, such as devotion, ever be vicariously experienced? Finally, does 'universalized' aesthetic experience rule out religious devotion?

I will not be able to answer all these questions here, but I will assert right off simply that there is a type of participation that is not 'imagined' and yet also is not 'genuine' or personal because it relates primarily to some other religious commitment. I cannot demonstrate this assertion; I can merely relate that whatever I've come to know from living and learning with south Indians about 'ultimate' things has come to pass by joining in with them in two ways. The first involved studying several Indian languages, classical and modern. The second way meant joining in with them emotionally, and this took place in a variety of contexts while living for a number of years in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

From a methodological perspective, scholars of religion have always struggled to find an appropriate starting point. Since our subject is always of ultimate concern to a certain group of people, situating ourselves in relation to that concern is sure to come under the closest scrutiny. Moreover, no definition of religion has ever been settled, and a

¹ The text of this lecture has been slightly revised since it was delivered on March 21, 1999.

good number of religionists have thought it best to set the issue aside.² Yet even as a methodologically unsophisticated undergraduate, I could see and feel the important difference of being on the ‘inside’ as opposed to being on the ‘outside’. In the remarks that follow I will explore the ways in which religious literature in India has infused the categories ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ with a remarkable flexibility.

Restating my main argument at this point may help: By participating in poetic, dramatic, and other literary works of the Hindu tradition, an outsider can tap into the emotions that accompany and give dimension to the unique religious life of Hindus. My participation has been mainly with ‘twice-born’ Hindus, i.e., brahmins, particularly as they have preserved and presented a set of privileged Sanskrit texts; this involvement brought much interaction with the ‘religious’ practices of all types of south Indian Hindus today. The poems I’ll use as examples are drawn somewhat randomly from India’s vast literature and I hope to make a case for seeing them as relevant to understanding India’s religious heritage.

The parameters of this inquiry are not particularly original. India’s intellectual traditions provide a wide variety of potential points of departure, and I am indebted to one in particular. Some of you might be familiar with the common ‘core concepts’ of religions that got their start in India, —these include words like karma, nirvāṇa and dharma. The term *brahman*, grammatically neuter, is less well known. This word is related to the masculine word *brāhmaṇa*, (anglicized ‘brahmin’) which designates the elite, priestly, and most erudite caste of traditional Indian society. The term *brahman* refers to the ultimate reality, the supreme soteriological goal as characterized in the Upanisads.³ *Brahman* is infinitely transcendent and, simultaneously, what is most intimately within us. The particular Indian idea about *brahman* which informs my treatment here is that aesthetic experience (whether it is watching a play, listening to a poem, reading a novel) provides us with a parallel to our ultimate potential to know *brahman*. Some influential writers in Kashmir between the 8th and 12th centuries developed the analogy that ‘art experience’ is the closest thing to knowing Brahman that

² For one perspective on the current state of the study of religion see Paul J. Griffiths’ “The Very Idea of Religion,” *First Things* 103 (May 2000): pp. 30-35.

³ For a scholarly, readable recent translation, see Patrick Olivelle’s *The Upanisads* (Oxford, 1996).

humans can have. Its greatest drawback, of course, is that the aesthetic ‘forgetting of the self’ lasts only for the duration of our interaction with art.⁴ When the curtain falls, or the last page is turned the spell is broken. It is this idea that got me asking the questions I started out with. They all involve emotion (real, aesthetic, and vicarious) and its relationship to religion. The way in which I got to know the most about this relationship was by paying attention to poetry, and also by memorizing poems, and learning how to recite them in the style of the region where I lived.

In retrospect, I have become convinced that my experience in acquiring tools that develop literary sensitivity served as a point of access for understanding religious sensibilities. This can be the sort of ‘seeing through texts’ which enables the scholar of religion to participate in Indian religious traditions—without minimizing his or her own religious commitments, and without attempting to manufacture and project an artificial ‘neutrality’.⁵ While I won't attempt to test the veracity of this idea in this paper, I will suggest that coming to understand whatever it is that serves as the foundation for our various emotions (or ‘mental states’ as the Sanskrit texts describe them) is sure to have important religious ramifications.

To set the stage for what follows, I would like to present a literary example of how a particular emotion can slip past us when we lack a certain cultural affinity which the narrative presumes. The scene is from the Ramayana, one of India's two great epics. It tells the tale of the righteous king Rama and his devoted wife Sita. These two have taken on a voluntary exile, living in the forest for over a decade, in order to ensure that the promise given by Rama's father Dasaratha to his third wife Kaikeyi would be fulfilled. Rama's youngest brother Laksmana has accompanied them and together the three of them have wandered through the vast forests of India, waiting for an appropriate time for Rama to return to Ayodhya and assume his rightful throne.⁶

⁴ Cf. the excellent set of essays on this topic by M. Hiriyanna in *Art Experience* (Mysore, 1954), especially pp. 1-16.

⁵ Cf. the work of Francis X. Clooney, S.J. of this same name, *Seeing Through Texts. Doing Theology among the Śrīvaiṣṇavas of South India* (SUNY, 1996).

⁶ Two fine abridgements capture the basic tale: William Buck's *Ramayana* (University of California Press, 2000) and A. K. Ramanujan's *The Ramayana. A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic* (Penguin Classics, 1998). The latter springs from the South Indian version of Kamban (12th century).

In the Ramayana's third book, the *Book of the Forest*, we come across a few simple verses which describe Rama listening to the sages of the Dandaka forest voice their fears as they leave their ashrams to seek a safer place to perform their austerities. The terrifying night-crawlers, who threaten their peaceful lifestyle, have multiplied making it unsafe for the sages to remain there. Before heading off the sages warn Rama that he too should avoid this region—especially since he travels with his vulnerable wife Sita. But of course, as the sages depart, the heroic Rama turns and heads directly towards the source of the trouble. The verse in question only hints at his frame of mind which I took to be something like an eagerness to do battle. Rama belongs to the warrior class and a challenge to do battle is something true warriors will never refuse.

Imagine my surprise when the Sanskrit scholar training me said bluntly: “The emotion is shame. He is ashamed.” I was stumped at this, and I remember glancing across the desk to make sure I was on the right page. After allowing me my puzzlement for a moment, Professor Shastri went on to explain that Rama is a world-protector, not just some ordinary territorial king. His duty (his *dharma*) was to enforce the Law (a social law with cosmic implications) and that meant ensuring a safe haven for sages to follow their austere life styles. Rama had failed in this and the sages' fear-filled words stung his royal pride. Their earnest suggestion that he too should flee was like rubbing salt in the wound, and that's why Rama, deeply ashamed, marched ahead with firm resolve.

This first example comes from one of India's great epics, the Ramayana. It affords us an opportunity to see how emotions are tied to human identities. More importantly, it demonstrates clearly how certain identities can attain divinity through the course of time, and through the course of a given narrative. For as the Ramayana became more and more a part of the fabric of Indian life, through retellings, and revised versions, the character of Rama the hero was transformed to Rama the deity, the avatar or incarnation of Vishnu. All the emotions associated with the old epic paragon of kingship were shifted to a more religiously relevant divine persona. The initial characterization of Rama came to be part of a theology of Vishnu. Moreover, the story's influence spanned across religious boundaries to touch not just Vaishnava Hindus, but Shaivas, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims and

many others beyond the borders of India as well.⁷ However, tracing the course of the Ramayana down through the centuries and across Asia is another matter.

Fortunately, India's poetic tradition offers us much briefer, self-contained forms: short 4-line poems which, like a Mughal miniature painting, present scenes rich in emotional detail and even narrative creativity. These are often love poems and to pave the way for the correlation between love and devotion to God a little later on, I'd like to take you through one of these poems drawn from an anthology known as the Amaruśataka (Meter: sārḍūlavikriḍita, 4 lines of 19 syllables each.)

दम्पत्योर्निशिजल्पतोर्गृहशुकेनाकर्णितं यद्वचस्
तत्प्रातर्गुरुसंनिधौ निगदतश्शुत्वैव तारं वधूः /
कर्णालम्बितपद्मरागशकलं वियस्य चञ्चूपुटे
व्रीडार्ता विदधाति दाडिमफलव्यजेन वाग्बंधनम् // ⁸

The poem has to be contextualized: understand a newly married couple living as part of a joint family in the father-in-law's home. The wife is the newest member of the group and her life is, understandably, under considerable scrutiny. Their pet parrot has overheard the pillow talk of the newly-weds and is chattering it back next morning, in front of the wife's in-laws. She's embarrassed and doesn't want this to continue, so she takes a shiny red gemstone out of her earring and offers it to the parrot, who takes it—thinking it's a sweet pomegranate seed. The duped bird is content with trying to crack open the gemstone and speaks no more.

Now the wife's immediate emotion in this verse is not terribly significant, and carries no special religious dimension. She's assumed to be devoted to her husband, 'treating him like a god' —but all that is extraneous to the fact that this is love poetry. Years after I learned this verse, I came across a book which gave a delightful translation by Lee Siegel that goes like this:⁹

⁷ For details, see Paula Richman's *Many Rāmāyanas. The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia* University of California Press, 2000.

⁸ Amaruśataka of Amaru. Bombay: Nirnayasagar Press, 1929, verse 16.

⁹ L. Siegel, *Fires of Love Waters of Peace*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983, p. 30.

**All night the parrot listened to the bride and groom;
In the morning he recited with the family in the room.
"Ooooooh, ahhhhhh, ooooooh, ahhhhhhh," thus did the parrot speak.
Until a ruby earring was placed before its beak.
"Polly wanna a nice red fruit?" so sweetly asked the wife;
The jewel made Polly quiet for it ended Polly's life!**

The translation certainly ‘works’ in that it captures the scene portrayed in the original in a vivid and daring way. It stands on its own as a piece of contemporary poetry, whatever its relation to the original. But apart from that we have a problem in that the pet parrot ends up dead! This final phrase casts forth the grim image of a choking bird. I jotted this poem down and on my next trip to India I showed it to a few literary critics, just waiting for their reaction. I had to explain about ‘Polly’ but they knew the rest. They exploded, castigating the translator with a phrase that roughly means ‘The poem's heart has been ripped out!’ The final image of Polly choking to death served no purpose, it destroyed the poem's charm, and ruined the romantic ambiance underlying the poem's explicit message. The translator had ruined the poem for anyone who read or will read the translation—and also for those would attempt to read the original later on, only to be hounded by the memory of the dying bird. In short, the translator would face many rebirths in lowly realms because of this terrible mistake.

I must admit that I suspected that these most elite of India's literati would not be satisfied with the translation I'd brought back from America. I did not, however, expect such a damning critique. I later came to understand better why their sense of literature was so terribly outraged by one poet's ‘betrayal’ in translation. The digression I'm about to embark upon hearkens back to a theory of aesthetic experience that we first find articulated in a text called the *Nāṭya-śāstra* which is a compilation of teachings on drama.

The story goes that after the Perfect Age had passed, the next Age commenced, marked by hitherto unknown human characteristics: confusion, greed, envy, anger and the like. As these emotions increased, all the gods, led by Indra their chief, approached the Supreme Creator and asked for help. The four Vedas had become insufficient in this new age; people just couldn't make sense of them anymore. Brahmā, the Creator, then fashioned another Veda, a 5th one to which all people (not just the priests and other

'twice-born' castes) could have access. This fifth Veda was not another ritual work, nor was it a philosophical treatise, but rather it was a book on dramaturgy called the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, instructions on how to stage a dramatic performance. In knowing the proper procedures, including building a playhouse, training the actors, developing the story with appropriate stage directions, coordinating the music, the choreography, props, special effects and the rest the result would be something in which the entire audience could take delight. More importantly, the theatrical production would be the best way for them to learn *dharma*, the right way for all types of people to behave in India's society.

The center piece of this large manual, from an intellectual perspective, was its formulation of a principle which makes a dramatic work successful. This principle is called 'rasa'. The word's older, literal sense meant 'sap' or 'essence' and this implied the idea of liquidity or the moisture which accompanies living things. From this the use of 'rasa' to mean 'taste' arose, and it is upon this sense that the *Nāṭya-śāstra* draws when proposing rasa as its central aesthetic principle. The development of an entire rasa-school of poetics would soon follow, but for the early theorists rasa serves as an invariably concomitant attribute of the drama. What makes a drama successful is nothing else but rasa. The rasa sutra is a short formula which runs as follows:

"Rasa arises from the combination of three things:

- (1) characters and special effects,
- (2) tokens or signs of emotional involvement, and
- (3) the secondary emotions, which are temporarily manifested."

The question naturally arises: What do they mean by secondary emotions and what would primary emotions be? For these types of questions the ancients have a ready procedure: first make a list, then create a typology to differentiate features which characterize a given class. The single principle of rasa was seen to derive from eight different human emotions which were deemed basic: love, laughter, grief, anger, competitiveness, fear, disgust, and amazement. When these eight emotions were located in appropriate characters in artful ways, and combined with signs that point to the relationships between characters, along with secondary emotions which befit the scene, a radical change takes place: the basic emotion gets transformed or elevated into an aesthetic category which transcends the particular, local or individual elements involved. So eight aesthetic

categories, or ‘rasas’, correspond to the eight fundamental emotions.¹⁰ Most important, the location of this transformation of the emotion presented on the stage is the heart of the spectator. Rasa is thus interactive, requiring an audience to serve as the medium within which ordinary, mundane emotion gets heightened and universalized.

In the poem with the parrot cited above, the sutra would be applied such that newly-married love is presented poetically in combination with

- (1) a bride and her husband, as they live with his parents,
- (2) signs of her emotion state, e.g., flushed facial color and her swift reaction to the parrot's chattering playback of the previous night's words,

(3) the emotions of embarrassment, paternal inquisitiveness, and the like, to bring about a response involving those who hear the poem, those who share in the actions and emotional interplay and, if it is successful, take delight in the whole process. That unique, aesthetic delight is called rasa. To return to one of my initial questions, namely, ‘Does universalized aesthetic experience rule out religious devotion?’ I can at least let you know that by ‘universalized aesthetic experience’ I am referring to this somewhat distanced literary delight called rasa.

Consider another example; this one which requires a setting. The speaker in the verse is Yaśodā, the mother of Krishna, who is portrayed in this verse as a young child. She's telling him a bedtime story, and he's just nodding off. The bedtime story is the famous one which you all now know, which begins: “Rama and Sita are in the forest...” You might try to listen for the sound ‘hummm’ which is little Krishna's line, repeated three times. (Meter: śārdūlavikrīḍita.)¹¹

¹⁰ Nāṭyaśāstra 6.15; for a lucid elaboration see G. H. Tarlekar's Studies in the Nāṭyaśāstra (Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), pp. 55-60.

¹¹ The Sanskrit translations in this paper are my own, except where otherwise noted.

रमो नाम बभूव हुं तदबला सीतेति हुं तौ पितुर्
वाचा पंचवातीवने विहरतस्तस्याहरद् रावणः /
निद्रार्थं जनकीकथामिति हरेर्हुङ्कारतश्श्रुतः
सौमित्रे क्व धनुर्धनुर्धनुरिति व्यग्रा गिरः पान्तु नः // ¹²

"Once there was a man named Rama." Humm...

"His wife was called Sita." Humm...

**"While they were living in the Pañcavati forest
fulfilling his father's word,
Ravana kidnapped Sita ..."**

**Listening and going "hum" to his mother's bedtime story,
the toddler Krishna cried out:**

"Bow! Bow! Lakshmana! —where is my bow!!"

May these alarmed cries protect us.

The image that emerges for those who know the various stories, is that of a half-asleep Krishna mistakenly identifying himself with Rama, at that moment when Rama learns that Sita has been abducted by the wicked demon king Ravana. Though just a child, Yashoda's story awakens in Krishna a deep seated memory of his former life as Rama—so in fact little Krishna's identification is not at all mistaken. Devotees of Vishnu know all his various incarnations and the poet has tapped into these multiple, shared theologies in presenting the verse's central conceit. For all those who need to be filled in about this, the poem becomes something of a puzzle, and doesn't provide an opportunity for the immediate, aesthetic response that it is able to elicit from the 'target' audience. But this poem offers something for the uninitiated as well, for there is one character within the poem who shares our ignorance: Krishna's mother, Yashoda. She has no way of knowing her little boy's divine nature, and the surprise and curiosity that she must have felt upon hearing Krishna's panicked outburst invests the poem with yet another

¹² Francis Wilson. *The Love of Krishna. The Kṛṣṇakarmāmṛta of Lāśuka Bilamaṅgala*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975: p. 167

emotional facet, a facet that almost mirrors the way in which outsiders too gradually realize the greater significance of who Krishna is. This realization is not a religious awakening, but an aesthetic awakening. I very nearly used the word ‘merely’ to describe this awakening, but I think it is best not to diminish or subordinate aesthetic experience. In fact, a fully developed aesthetic experience was seen to be akin to experiencing the ultimate release of *moksha*, albeit briefly. This brings me back to another of the questions I began with: Are aesthetic emotions vicariously experienced?

My response to this question, too, relates to the way Indian theorists addressed the principle of *rasa*—particularly their decision to view aesthetic emotions as those which are shared throughout an audience by virtue of each individual's ability to set aside their own separate individualities. An imagined participation is *vicarious* when one's own identity is central to the imaginatively projected experience. But when identity is set aside, when personal features (desires, aspirations, histories) are forgotten, art becomes possible.

Another example might help us see how religious devotion and artistic experience can interact. The following poem is devotional, but also somewhat confessional. The speaker's avowed allegiance to one religious tradition carries along with it an important caveat. [Meter: Vasantatilaka, 4 lines of 14 syllables each.]

शैवा वयं न खलु तत्र विचारणीयं पञ्चाक्षरीजपपरा नितरां तथापि /
चेतो मदीयमतसीकुसुमावभासं स्मेराननं स्मरति गोपवधूकिशोरम् // ¹³

¹³ Francis Wilson, op cit., p. 149

We are Shaivites. There is surely nothing to debate.

We are constantly engaged in murmuring

the 5-syllabled prayer, but still...

My thoughts always stray to the milkmaid's child

with his smiling face

shining with the blue beauty of the flax flower.

The milkmaid's child refers to Krishna, and the description of him includes mention of his dark blue complexion and his radiant smile. Krishna is very much the avatar of the common folk, and the most popular and endearing images of him describe him as a baby or young boy, rather than the adult charioteer who counsels Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita. These poems relate the charm of envisioning Krishna as a toddler who got into the butter bowl or who swiped fresh yogurt—yet who also retains a superhuman strength to protect his kinsfolk.

This poem is a good example of the saying: 'Poetry is what's lost in translation.' The original is a marvel of sound mirroring sense, particularly in the way the staccato consonants of the almost creedal first two lines (*khalu, tatra, nitarām, tathā*) are superseded by the softer labials and smoother phrasing of the second half.

Grammatically, the shift from the plural (the 'we' reinforces the identity of a faith community) to the singular ('my thoughts'), aptly reflecting the speaker's confessional tone. This craft of the poet reinforces the emotional shift from the doctrinal commitment of Shiva's orthoprax follower to the heartfelt devotion to Bala-krishna expressed by that same speaker.

It should be easy to see why I have included this verse in my presentation this evening: we have a religiously committed person professing what seems to be a deep and genuine affection for a rival group's deity. Now I suppose we could suppose that this is all just a very clever piece of intra-Hindu missionary work, written by a devious, sectarian follower of Vishnu who wants to portray followers of Shiva as fickle, inconstant and secretly harboring love for the 'their' Krishna, the true Lord.

Perhaps. I should point out, however, that I learned this verse from a staunch Shaiva who was genuinely moved by the verse, in a way that did seem to touch his devotional sensibilities, without threatening his religious identity. This brings me back to another question I posed at the start:

Can a religious emotion, such as devotion, ever be vicariously experienced?

Or, to put it another way, does our ability to *aesthetically* appreciate (through imaginative participation) the Shaiva's admission that Krishna is dear to his heart have troublesome implications vis à vis our own religious affirmations? Do we circumvent these troubles by viewing aesthetic response as 'vicarious'?

To propose an answer to these questions I would like to refer once again to the somewhat technical field of dramatic theory first presented in the *Nāṭya-śāstra*. I referred to the eight fundamental emotions and you might recall that one of them was love. There are also thirty three secondary emotions listed by the ancients. These include, for example, joy, apprehension, anxiety, indignation, cruelty, bashfulness, indecision, eagerness, envy, etc. In the course of time, a thirty fourth secondary emotion was added to the list: love.

A word of explanation as to how one emotion can be seen as belonging to two mutually exclusive types, i.e, both to the class of eight fundamental emotions and to the class of thirty-four secondary emotions. A controversy had arisen after the time of the *Nāṭya-śāstra* about how to classify different types of love. First of all we have romantic love, as with the newlyweds in the poem with the parrot. In this last poem we perceive a love as represented in devotion to God. We all can recognize maternal and paternal love as another variety, as well as simple friendship. Should not all of these be seen as subtypes of one fundamental emotion called love? Somewhat surprisingly, the Indian theorists said no. They viewed romantic love as one of the eight fundamental emotions, having two major sub-types: love-in-union and love-in-separation. Incidentally, the latter served as an important vehicle for allegorically referring to our separation from God. All other types of love were grouped together and classed with the secondary emotions since they tend to be temporary, and do not seem to be innate in the way fundamental emotions are.

The position staked out by later Indian critics is that the fundamental emotions are found in every human being at birth, whereas the secondary emotions are developed, inculcated and fostered to varying degrees within different people. Moreover, they argued that objects that rouse all eight fundamental emotions are within the direct perceptual experience of our senses. A lover rouses love, an enemy rouses anger, a threat rouses fear, and so on. To the contrary, the object of religious devotion is God who does not fall within our perceptive ken.

Now, this was not the only position taken on the status of devotion to God, but it is the one which prevailed in literary and aesthetic circles. And it seems to me, retrospectively, that it can serve as an intriguing analogue for the scholar of religion. For what is most universal about aesthetic delight is that which transcends regional, linguistic and even religious boundaries. This idea offers us a note of high optimism. The aesthetic endeavor recognizes that the ideal can be approximated by the real—sometimes quite closely, and that each one of us can experience such approximations. This optimism with regard to intercultural literary appreciation was perhaps first observed in the German Romantic movement, and is evidenced by Johann Wolfgang Goethe's well-known epigram on classical India's greatest literary achievement, Kalidasa's immortal play *Abhijñānaśākuntala*.¹⁴ And I think that the prospects for the comparative study of religion will be enhanced to the degree in which traditions are located within their own literary worlds, since these tend to preserve intact the complexity of a community's emotional life. Although I have not worked out a synthesis between aesthetics and theology, I can't help but be convinced that the ways that Indians have understood beauty form an integral part of the way they have seen the divine. I mention this here to show how important emotions are to cross-cultural endeavors of all kind. For while it is true that *poetry* is what's lost in translation (especially with regard to puns, literary allusions and alliteration), the heightened emotional life of drama, whether staged or presented in films, *does* translate, and often very successfully. Those who endeavor to formulate a world theology might also consider developing an understanding of what others see as beautiful.

¹⁴ For the text and translation of Goethe's verse see "India and the Modern West" by F. Wilhelm and H. G. Rawlinson in *A Cultural History of India*, A. L. Basham (ed.), Oxford, 1975. p. 475.

Recognizing devotion as part of a second-order emotional set turns out to have great advantages. One of the characterizing features of this set is that they must be cultivated, and it follows from this that they are both most personal and most highly conditioned by our religious settings. To bring back one final question from the group I began with, viz., how is devotion to God to be understood as an emotion? We can see that it depends on both a person and a religious setting, the context within which spiritual sensitivity is made to flourish.

I'd like to leave you with a final poem, which depicts an astonished Yashoda looking into his son's mouth as the narrator/poet then steps in with his benediction.

कृष्णेनाम्ब गतेन रन्तुमधुना मृद्भक्षिता स्वेच्छया
तथ्यं कृष्ण क एवमाह मुसली मिथ्याम्ब पश्याननम् /
व्यादेहीति विदारिते थ वदने दृष्ट्वा समस्तं जगन्
माता यस्य जगाम विस्मयपदं पायात्स वः केशवः // ¹⁵

"Mom! —when Krishna went out to play today, he ate mud like crazy!"

"Is this true, Krishna? "Who said so?"

"Your brother." "It isn't true, mom —Look in my mouth!"

Yashoda made Krishna open his mouth, and saw the entire universe inside.

She was awe-struck.

May Krishna, whose mother was amazed, protect you all.

¹⁵ F. Wilson, op cit., p. 167.

Appendix
Transliteration of Sanskrit Poems

dampatyor nisi jalptor gr̥hasukenākarnītaṃ yad vacas
tat prātar gurusamnidhau nigadataś śrutvaiva tāraṃ vadhūḥ /
karnālambitapadmarāgaśakalaṃ vinyasya cañcūpuṭe
vriḍārtā vidadhāti dāḍimaphalavyājena vāgbandhanam //

rāmo nāma babhūva huṃ tadabalā site 'ti huṃ tāṃ pitur
vācā pañcavaṭivane viharatas tasyā 'harad rāvaṇaḥ /
nidrārthaṃ janakīkathāṃ iti harer huṃkārataḥ śṛṇvataḥ
saumitre kva dhanur dhanur dhanur iti vyagrā giraḥ pāntu naḥ //

śaivā vyaṃ na khalu tatra vicāraṇīyaṃ
 pañcākṣarā japaparā nitarāṃ tathāpi /
ceto madīyam atasīkusumāvabhāsaṃ
 smerānaṃ smarati gopavadhūkiśoram //

kṛṣṇenā 'mba gatena rantum adhunā mṛd bhakṣitā svecchayā
 tathyaṃ kṛṣṇa ka evam āha musalī mithyā 'mba paśyānaṃ /
vyādehī 'ti vidārite 'tha vadane drṣṭvā samastaṃ jagan
 mātā yasya jagāma vismayapadaṃ pāyāt sa vaḥ keśavaḥ //