

## Shree Radha-Astami - 11th September 2024

(The Appearance Day of Srimati Radharani)



In the bright half phase of the moon on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (Ashtami) in the Vaishnava month of Hrishikesh celebrates the most important and auspicious appearance day of Srimati Radharani, the eternal consort of Bhagavan Shree Krsna. This year this most auspicious day falls on the **11th September 2024**. This most auspicious day is rarely even mentioned and seems to be quite forgotten yet this day in my very humble opinion is THEE most important day for a Hindu. This is the appearance day of the eternal consort of Shree Krsna - Srimati Radharani. Jai Shree Radhe.

Over five thousand years ago, when Lord Krishna appeared on this planet to perform His divine pastimes, and so to Srimati Radharani also appeared. Srimati Radharani appeared in Rawal, a village about 8 km from Vrindavan, near New Delhi, India. There are a number of accounts of her parentage. "On a half-moon night in the month of Bhadra, King Vrishabhanu came to the Jamuna River to bathe and found himself engulfed in a golden aura, the golden aura of pure love. It was emanating from a lotus, which had a baby girl standing on its whorl. When the king returned to the palace with the baby, Queen Kirtida was delighted. She was also shocked that the child was blind." Lord Krishna's mother, Yashoda, heard that her best friend Kirtida had a baby, so she came to visit along with her husband and her son. Lord Krishna crawled up to the cradle and pulled Himself up and looked in. At that moment, Srimati Radharani's eyes fluttered and opened wide and blossomed like lotuses. It seems that she did not want to see anything of this world, only the form of Shree Krishna. Everyone was so delighted.

WHAT IS THE TIME OF RĀDHĀRĀNĪ'S APPEARANCE?: If anyone has been to Varsana to celebrate Radhashtami, they would know that Her abhisheka is performed during the mangala-arati, preceded by night-long kirtanas and bhajans. At other places, Her abhisheka is performed around 8 a.m. And still, at some other places, Her appearance time is considered as noon and Her abhisheka is performed then. So what is the mystery behind this?

When it comes to Krishna Janma ashtami, everyone unanimously knows and celebrates it at midnight; there is no other consideration than this. However, when it comes to celebrating the appearance of Radharani, there is a difference of opinion.

Kirtida-devi sighted the baby girl in the early morning and thus that time is considered by some as Her birth time. She took Radharani home and showed Her to Vrshabhanu Maharaja and the news spread fast across Raaval that a beautiful baby girl had been born to Vrshabhanu Maharaja and Kirtida-devi. This caused a lot of commotion as everyone came to see this beautiful new-born girl, Vrshabhanu-nandini. The time, when everyone got to know of Her birth, is considered by some as Her appearance time.

Radharani, however, had not opened Her eyes yet and for this reason, everyone was morose and the samskaras traditionally performed at birth, like the father of the new-born along with all the elderly family members giving charity to the brahmanas, and so on, had not been done. At noon, when Krishna arrived with Mother Yashoda and touched Radharani, She opened Her eyes and at that very moment, there was a celebration of happiness - ananda Mahotsav. This is another consideration of Her birth time, which is accepted by our guru-varga. Hence we celebrate the appearance of Radharani at noon by performing Her abhisheka at that time.

"Srimati Radharani is the mother of the universe, the spiritual mother of all souls. And the concept of mother is the most sacred symbol—that of purity, selflessness, caring, sharing, nurturing, and love. That is why our sacred mantra is the holy names. It is the holy names in the vocative, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

"'Hare' means Mother 'Hara' or 'Radhe' (Narada-pancaratra 5.5.59). It is a desperate cry for the mother. 'Radhe! Please wake us up from this nightmare of mortal life! Remind us of our father (who is Lord Krishna) we have forgotten and take us home!'" In other words, it is through Shree Radhe that one more easily attains Shree Krishna and service to Shree Krishna. This is the advantage of approaching Lord Krishna through Srimati Radharani. In the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement, devotees carefully worship Srimati Radharani as the bestower of devotional service to Lord Krishna, by attentively chanting Her divine name in the maha-mantra, by worshiping Her deity form, and by following the instructions of the most merciful Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who is the combined form of Shree Radha and Shree Krishna. "(Therefore) Shree Radha is parama-devata, the Supreme Goddess, and She is worshippable for everyone. She is the protectress of all, and She is the mother of the entire universe." - Caitanya Caritamrita, Adi Lila 4.89

In Vrndavana Srimati Radharani importance surpasses even the importance of Shree Krishna. Shree Radha's love for Shree Krishna is held within Gaudiya Vaishnavism as the most perfect primarily because of its endless and unconditional nature. Thus She is the most important consort of Shree Krishna, 'His heart and soul', and His 'hladini-shakti' (spiritual pleasure potency). In the Brihad-Gautamiya Tantra, Srimati Radharani is described as follows: "The transcendental Srimati Radharani is the direct counterpart of Lord Shree Krishna. She is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. She possesses all the attractiveness to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead. She is the primeval internal potency of the Lord."

The Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana is most important of all Vedic scriptures; it's 18000 verses are actually glorifying Srimati Radharani. But the speaker Srila Sukadeva Goswami could not say Her name directly because if he did then he would have gone into a trance like state for many weeks (the Srimad Bhagavatam had to be completed in 7 days). Why you would ask? It's because he is the personal and favourite parrot of Srimati Radharani in the spiritual world. The attachment that he has for Srimati Radharani has no bounds. Srimati Radharani's other most auspicious names Srimati Radharani has many names

according to Her qualities and characteristics. Some of the names that Srimati Radharani is known by include:

Govinda-anandini - She who gives pleasure to Lord Govinda (Lord Krishna)

Govinda-mohini - She who mystifies Lord Govinda

Govinda-sarvasva - the all-in-all of Lord Govinda

Shiromani Sarva-kanta - the crown jewel of all the Lord's consorts

Krishnamayi - the one who sees Lord Krishna both within and without

Radhika - Her worship of the Lord consists of fulfilling His desires

Aradhana - The root name of Radharani, meaning one who excels in worshiping the Lord

Sarva-lakshmi - The original source of all the goddesses of fortune

Sarva-kanti - all beauty and luster rest in Her body & all the desires of Lord Krishna rest in Her.

Madan-Mohan-Mohini - the enchanter of the enchanter of Cupid. Lord Krishna is said to be the enchanter of, and more beautiful than Cupid, the master enchanter. But Shree Radhe is the enchanter of Lord Krishna, Madan-Mohan-Mohini.

Vrshabanu-nandini - daughter of Maharaja Vrishabhanu

Vrndavaneshvari - Queen of Vrndavana

Lalita-Sakhi - friend of the gopi (cowherd girl) Shree Lalita

Gokula-Taruni - She whom all young girls of Gokula (Vrndavana) worship

Damodara Rati - She who dresses herself to please Lord Damodara [Lord Krishna]

Information regarding Srimati Radharani is very scarce amongst Vedic literature. Apart from a brief mention in Mahabharata and Srimad Bhagavatam Her kathas is largely unmentioned in written detail. The reason for this is the esoteric nature of Her position, thus details of Her topmost devotion to Lord Krishna was a closely guarded secret within Vaishnava circles. It's very easy to misunderstand Her and thus causing serious offenses.

Many commit offenses to other devotees and this is sad because they are destroying their spiritual life. APARADHA - means APA - no RADHA - Radharani. So when one commits offenses he does not receive the blessings of the most important person and that of Srimati Radharani. Without Her blessings we cannot succeed in our spiritual sadhana.

Srimati Radharani is the Supreme Goddess. She is most always seen with Lord Krishna. It is described that She is the chief associate and devotee of Lord Krishna, and topmost of all goddesses. Her name means that She is the most excellent worshiper of Lord Krishna. However, She is also an expansion of the Lord's energy. Since She is also an extension of Lord Krishna, She is the feminine aspect of Godhead. Thus, in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, God is both male and female. They are one, but Lord Krishna expands into two, Himself and Radharani, for the sake of divine loving pastimes. If They remained as one, then there is no relationship, there are no pastimes, and there can be no dynamic exchange of love. (Caitanya-Caritamrita, Adi-lila, 4.55-56)

Srimati Radharani is the source of the other goddesses. Just as Lord Krishna is the source of all other manifestations and incarnations of God, Srimati Radharani is the source of all expansions of the energies of God - the shaktis, or other goddesses. Thus, Lord Vishnu, Shree Raam, even Lord Shiva are all expansions of the one Supreme Being, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Shree Krishna, and similarly Mother Lakshmi, Mother Sita, and Mother Durga are all expansions of this Supreme Feminine form of God, Srimati Radharani.

It is explained that the beloved consorts of Lord Krishna are of three kinds, namely the goddesses of fortune or Lakshmis, His queens, and the milkmaids of Vraja called the gopis. All of them proceed from Srimati Radharani. The Lakshmis are partial

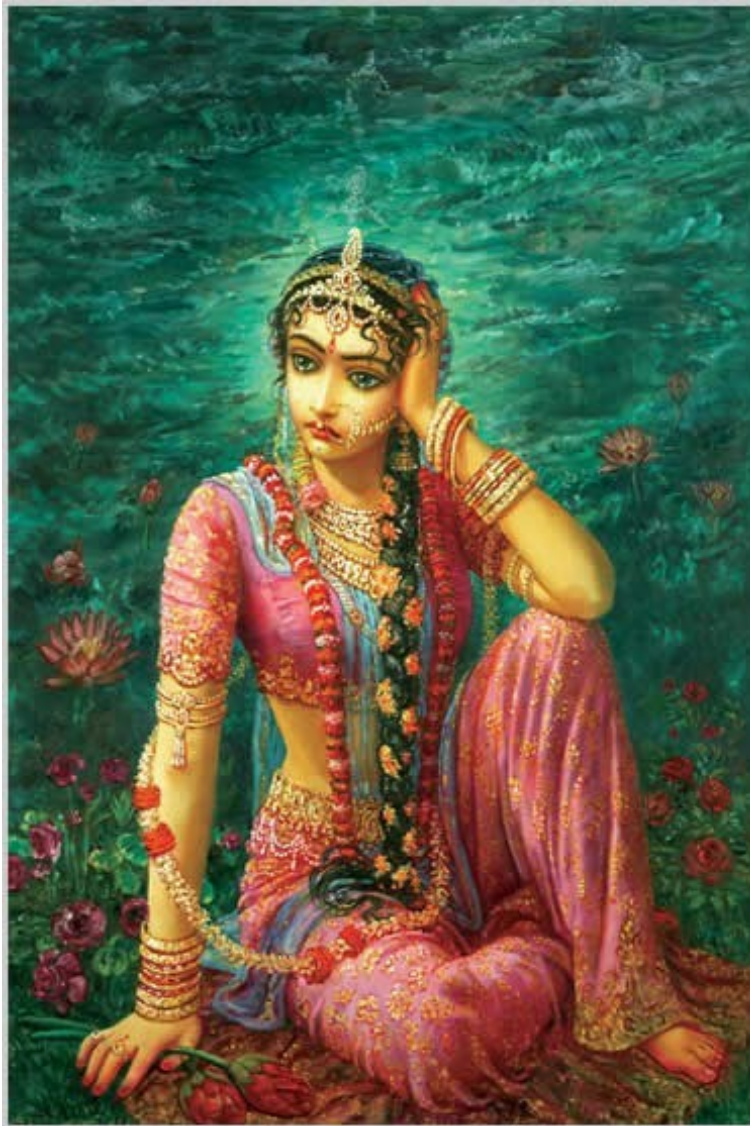
manifestations, or plenary portions, of Srimati Radharani, while the queens in Vaikuntha and in Dvaraka are reflections of Her image. The Vraja-devis or gopis are Her expansions and assist in the increase of rasa, or the divine loving pastimes. Among them there are many groups that have various sentiments and moods, which help Lord Krishna, taste the sweetness of the rasa dance and other pastimes. (Caitanya Caritamrita Adi-lila. 4. 75-81)

Without Shree Radha there is no meaning to Shree Krishna and without Shree Krishna there is no meaning to Shree Radha. Because of this, in the Vaishnava tradition we always pay respects first to the Lord's internal energy in the form of Shree Radha, and then to Shree Krsna. Thus They are referred to as Shree Shree Radha-Krishna, or in other names as Sita-Rama, Lakshmi-Narayana, and so on. In this way, Shree Radha and Shree Krishna are one, but when Lord Krishna wants to enjoy, He manifests Himself as Radharani. Otherwise, there is no energy in which Lord Krishna can attain pleasure outside Himself.

The descriptions of the beauty of Srimati Radharani are wonderfully poetic and descriptive. Actually, the residents of Vrindavana care more for Srimati Radharani than they do for Lord Krishna. They know that Lord Krishna can be influenced through Srimati Radharani. They know that Shree Radha can bring one to Shree Krishna. She is also the compassionate nature of the Lord, and thus more easily approached than trying to reach Lord Krishna directly. And when we read these descriptions of Shree Radha, it is no wonder why they are devoted to Her. For example, it is explained that Srimati Radharani has unlimited transcendental qualities, of which twenty-five are principal. To understand Himself through the agency of Shree Radha, the Lord manifests Himself as Lord Chaitanya, who is Lord Krishna but with the super-excellent emotions of Shree Radharani's love toward Lord Krishna. To fully taste His own sweetness, the Lord accepts the position and emotions of a devotee. Appearing over 530 years ago in West Bengal, India, Lord Chaitanya propagated the chanting of the Hare Krishna Mantra as the only means to experience Shree Radha's love for Shree Krishna. In describing Srimati Radharani, it is also said in the Vidagdha-madhava (1.32) by Rupa Goswami, "The beauty of Srimati Radharani's eyes forcibly devours the beauty of newly grown blue lotus flowers, and the beauty of Her face surpasses that of an entire forest of fully blossomed lotuses. Her bodily luster seems to place even gold in a painful situation. Thus the wonderful, unprecedented beauty of Srimati Radharani is awakening Vrindavana."

"Although the effulgence of the moon is brilliant initially at night, in the daytime it fades away. Similarly, although the lotus is beautiful during the daytime, at night it closes. But, O My friend, the face of My most dear Srimati Radharani is always bright and beautiful, both day and night. Therefore, to what can Her face be compared?" (Vidagdha-madhava 5.20)

Shree Radhe feeling separation from Lord Krishna "When Srimati Radharani smiles, waves of joy overtake Her cheeks, and Her arched eyebrows dance like the bow of Cupid. Her glance is so enchanting that it is like a dancing bumblebee, moving unsteadily due to intoxication. That bee has bitten the whorl of My heart." (Vidagdha-madhava 2.5)



The spiritual exchange of divine love between Shree Radha and Shree Krishna is the display of the internal energy of the Lord, and is very confidential and difficult to understand. No mundane materialist can begin to understand this topic of the relationship between Srimati Radharani and Lord Krishna. But the more we awaken our dormant love for God, which is natural state of being for a fully awakened soul, then the more we can comprehend and actually enter into such spiritual loving exchanges.

Jai Shreeeeeeeeee Radhe

### How to observe Shree Radha-Astami

On this most auspicious day one should at least abstain from meat. Many devout devotees abstain from salt or even water until noon (midday). I would highly recommend this. For those that are diabetic well try your best to observe the fast to the best of your abilities. In the morning or at midday on this very auspicious day after having a bath and wearing clean clothes offer to a picture/Deity of Shree Radha-Krsna prayers. Below is a simple Lord Vishvaksena (Vaishnavas {devotees of Lord Vishnu} worship this Lord instead of Lord Ganesh) and Radha-Krsna.



Lord Vishvaksena



Radha-Krishna

At the prayer place, place a Lord Vishvaksena photo {photo provided above} and Radha Krishna. Firstly offer an agarbatti, lamp (with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor) and a flower (or all three on a tray) to Lord Vishvaksena (turn seven times clockwise around the photo), and pray to Lord Vishvaksena, praying to him to remove all obstacles in the path of your prayer. Pray to Lord Vishvaksena asking him to please accept your prayers.

### **Lord Vishvaksena Prayers**

Now chant the following:

Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

1) Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Vishvaksena-ye namah  
(Swagatam means O Lord Vishvaksena I welcome you.)

Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Lord Vishvaksena's photo.

2) Om idam pushpam - Om Vishvaksena-ye namah

Then offer one or three incense sticks (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Lord Vishvaksena's photo.

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Vishvaksena-ye namah

Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around the photo.

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Vishvaksena-ye namah

Then offer cut fruit or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the photo and bring the bowl near the lips of Lord Vishvaksena suggesting he partakes the food offering. Then leave this in front of the photo. This is later consumed by the family as the Lord's Prashad.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Vishvaksena-ye namah

6) Then in a cup (lota/chumbhu) which has only water turn the lota seven times clockwise around the photo and bring the lota near the lips of the Lord suggesting he drink the water offering.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha  
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to Lord Vishvaksena. Ask Lord Vishvaksena for whatever you desire (within reason) and the Lord being so merciful will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for.

Bow down in front of the Lord's photo.

### **Radha-Krishna Prayers**

Now chant the following:

Hold your palms in the Namaste position and chant:

1) Om swagatam su swagatam - Om Radha-Krishna-ye namah  
(Swagatam means O Radha-Krishna I welcome you.)

Then offer flower (pushpam) or flower petals by turning it seven times clockwise around Radha-Krishna's photo.

2) Om idam pushpam - Om Radha-Krishna-ye namah

Then offer one or three incense sticks (dhoopam) by turning it seven times clockwise around Radha-Krishna's photo.

3) Om tato dhoopam aghraa-payaami - Om Radha-Krishna-ye namah

Then offer a clay or brass lamp (deepam) with either ghee or oil with a wick or a small piece of camphor by turning it seven times clockwise around the photo.

4) Om prat-yaksha deepam darshayaami - Om Radha-Krishna-ye namah

Then offer cut fruit or sweet rice (Naivedyam). It should be in a small bowl with a teaspoon. Turn the bowl seven times clockwise around the photo and bring the bowl near the lips of Radha-Krishna suggesting They partakes the food offering. Then leave this in front of the photo. This is later consumed by the family as Prashad.

5) Om naivedyam samar-payaami - Om Radha-Krishna-ye namah

6) Then in a cup (lota/chumbhu) which has only water turn the lota seven times clockwise around the photo and bring the lota near the lips of the Divine Couple suggesting They drink the water offering.

7) Offer prayers for forgiveness

Om yaani kaani cha papani janmaantara kritaani cha  
taani sarvaani nashyanti pradakshina pade pade //

Then offer your personal prayers to Radha-Krishna. Ask Radha-Krishna for whatever you desire (within reason) and Radha-Krishna being so merciful, they will grant what you desire. But be careful what you desire for.

Bow down in front of the Radha-Krishna's photo.

Optional: You may chant the Maha Mantra 108 (or as many times as you desire) times thereafter.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare  
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

You can break your salt-less fast just after midday with food that has been offered to Shree Radha-Krsna. It has been said by the residents of Vrndavan (Vrajvasis) that Srimati Radharani favourite food is Malpura. It would be rather nice to offer Shree Radhe the Malpura dessert offerings. If you so desire to offer Malpura for Shree Radhe we have provided a recipe below. Thereafter read these pastimes or any other pastimes that you have on Srimati Radharani. You can after that, visit your local temple in the morning or in the evening. Offer Shree Radha-Krsna prayers with faith and devotion that They may remove all the obstacles that you may have in your path.

### Malpura (Sweet Dumplings in Fruit Yogurt)

PREPARATION AND COOKING TIME: 40 minutes

Mix and set aside for 15 minutes:

1 cup white/powdered sugar;

2 cups ripe crushed berries or fruit;

Add to 2 1/2 cups wet yogurt and set aside;

Mix to a thick batter that clings to a spoon and let rest for 15 min:

1 1/2 cups self-raising flour;

1 cup powdered sugar;

1/2 tsp baking powder;

1/2 cup milk; 1/4 cup yogurt; Spoon into 3" of 325 F ghee until golden brown (3-4 min).

Should be crisp on outside and cooked but soft on inside.

Drain and add to yogurt; refrigerate for 30 mins before serving.

Radharani's favourite curry (Madumbi/Madumbe/Arbi/Yam/Gabi/Taro Root) to offer Her on Radhastami.

#### Ingredients:

10-12 Madumbi, 1/2 tsp jeera, 1/2 tsp turmeric powder, 1/2 tsp garam masala powder, 2 tbsp oil or cow butter ghee, 2 cups water, kosher salt as required, some mint and dhania for garnishing for making the paste:

3 medium size tomatoes, 1 green chili, 1/2 inch ginger, 1 tsp cumin

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Wash the Madumbi well. Pressure cook or boil the Madumbi till fairly soft. Drain and let the Madumbi cool. Then cool, peel the skin and slice the Madumbi in to 2 or 4 pieces vertically or round. Grind all the ingredients mentioned for making the paste to a smooth paste. Heat oil or ghee and then add the Jeera and braise and then add the tomato paste.





Stir and add all the spice powders and then braise the tomato paste till the oil/ghee separates. This should take about 6-7 minutes. Then add water, rock salt and the boiled Madumbi pieces. Simmer for some 6-7 minutes till the gravy becomes smooth and thickens a little bit. Garnish with mint or coriander leaves.

## Radha Vallabhi Puri Recipe



Clean and wash urad dal, then soak in water for 3 to 4 hours, remove excess water grind coarse and make paste.

In a mixing bowl take refined flour, 1/2 tsp salt, 1 tbsp oil. Mix well. Add water in small quantity and knead medium soft dough. Once Dough is ready, Cover and keep for 20 minutes.

### For spice mix,

Heat pan add cumin seeds, fennel seeds, nutmeg. Slightly roast the spices until brown, add dry red chillies. Once masala is roasted take it out and keep in plate. Grind to a fine powder.

### For Stuffing

Heat oil in a pan, add asafoetida, coarsely ground urad dal, sugar powder, salt, add the roasted spices too. Mix the dal and spices and roast for 2 minutes.

After 20 minutes Dough is also ready, Divide the dough into parts for the puri.

Make dough balls, meanwhile heat the oil.

Lift a dough ball, expand it. Give a bowl like shape and fill with 1.5 to 2 tsp stuffing. Close stuffing and flatten it. Press and flatten it well with hands. Cover and keep the rest of the dough to prevent it from drying up.

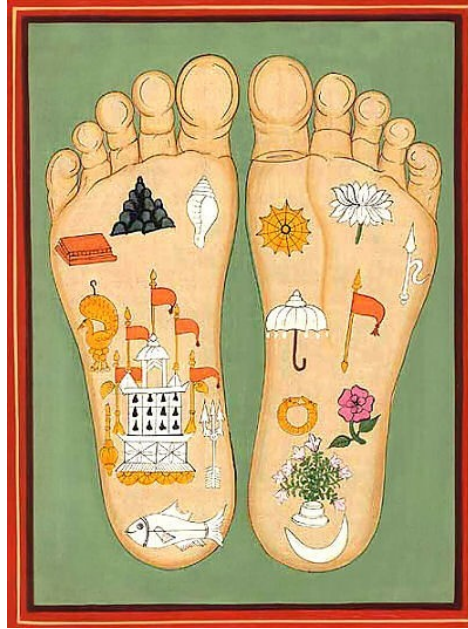
Grease the rolling board with some oil. Lightly roll out the puris, pressing the edges, Roll out the puris 5 inch in diameter, keep slightly thick.

Check oil if it is high hot, Put the puris to fry, Press and puff up the puris, flip it.

Fry the puris well until golden brown, then reduce flame, flip and fry.

Stuff , roll out and fry the puris likewise.

Radha Vallabhi puri are ready to be served, relish it with any of your favourite sabzi (curry) any-time.



Shree Radha's most auspicious lotus feet.

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