

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-1

Vairāgya: Renunciation

I stayed in the
company of other boys @
Govardhan & @ other places in Mathurā

2.1.112

tasmin govardhane kṛṣṇā-
tīre vṛndāvane 'tra ca
māthure maṇḍale bālaiḥ
samaṁ vipra-vara sthitaḥ

O best of learned brāhmaṇas (vipra-vara), I stayed (sthitaḥ) in the
company of other boys (bālaiḥ samaṁ) there at Govardhana (tasmin
govardhane), here in Vṛndāvana (atra vṛndāvane), on the banks of
the Yamunā (kṛṣṇā-tīre), and at various other places in the district of
Mathurā (ca māthure maṇḍale).

Now Gopa-kumāra begins his story, which will continue till the end of the sixth chapter.

He was born in a vaiśya community, in a family of cowherds.

Many scriptures, including Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.24.21), describe that vaiśyas may engage in four occupations: trade, banking, farming, and cow protection (kṛṣī-vāṇijya-go-rakṣā kusīdam ca).

As this history unfolds, we shall find that although a long time has passed since Gopa-kumāra was an innocent boy at Govardhana, he has not aged at all.

As he explains later, this was due to a blessing given him by his spiritual master:

tvam etasya prabhāveṇa
cira-jīvī bhavānv-aham
īdṛg-gopārbha-rūpaś ca
tat-phalāpty-arha-mānasah

“By the potency of this mantra (etasya prabhāveṇa), may you live a long time (tvam cira-jīvī bhava), may you always have (anv-aham) the form of a cowherd boy (īdṛg-gopārbha-rūpaś ca), and may you develop the right mentality (arha-mānasah) for tasting the mantra’s fruit (tat-phala āpty).” (Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.1.191)

Gopa-kumāra's tending a herd of his own cows means that his family was relatively well-to-do and independent.

↓ Insights

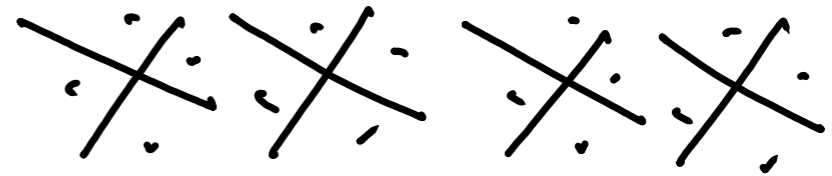
In the course of doing this work, he wandered over the area within the twenty-yojana circumference of Mathurā-mandala.

Among the places he used for cow herding, his special favorites were Govardhana, the forest of Vṛndāvana, and the shores of the Yamunā.

Sometimes he went to other locations in the dhāma, like Mahāvana,
but according to one transcendental opinion Vraja-bhūmi consists
of nothing but Govardhana, Vr̥ndāvana, and the Yamunā, since
these three places pervade the entire dhāma.



In any case, there is no place outside Vraja-dhāma where a cowherd
can get real benefit from his occupation.



Gopa-kumāra addresses his new student by saying “O best of
learned brāhmaṇas” because the student hails from the brāhmaṇa
community of Mathurā.

In the forest
we daily saw a very
renounced Brahmana

2.1.113

vana-madhye ca paśyāmo
nityam ekaṁ dvijottamam
divya-mūrtiṁ virakty-ādhyam
paryaṭantam itas tataḥ

In the forest (vana-madhye) we regularly saw (nityam paśyāmah) a certain first-class brāhmaṇa (ekaṁ dvijottamam), wandering from place to place (paryaṭantam itas tataḥ). He was very renounced (virakty-ādhyam), and his body appeared like that of a god (divya-mūrtiṁ).

This person the boys frequently saw was in truth the best of
brāhmaṇas.

His body was golden and very beautiful.

Sometimes he sang
dances (or) left feet (or) laughed

2.1.114

kīrtayantaṁ muhuḥ kṛṣṇaṁ
japa-dhyāna-rataṁ kvacit
nṛtyantaṁ kvāpi gāyantaṁ
kvāpi hāsa-param kvacit

He was always chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa (kīrtayantaṁ muhuḥ kṛṣṇaṁ). Sometimes he sang and sometimes danced (nṛtyantaṁ kvāpi gāyantaṁ). Sometimes, absorbed in meditation, he chanted his mantra to himself (japa-dhyāna-rataṁ kvacit), and sometimes he gave himself to laughter (kvāpi hāsa-param kvacit).

The outstanding characteristic of this brāhmaṇa was that he always vibrated Kṛṣṇa's glories, either with the two-syllable name Kṛṣṇa or with other names of the Personality of Godhead.

He would sing these names sweetly in various ways.

He sometimes appeared withdrawn into his private japa and dhyāna, which he dutifully performed daily even though he was already perfect in chanting the Lord's holy names.

As the tantras prescribe, even a person who has perfected the chanting of his mantra should continue to perform regular worship through japa and dhyāna to show gratitude to his spiritual benefactors:

siddha-mantra 'pi pūtātmā
tri-sandhyam devam arcayet
niyamenaika-sandhyam vā
japed aṣṭottaram śatam

“Even if one has perfected his mantra (**siddha-mantra 'pi**) and is completely pure in heart (**pūtātmā**), he should still worship the Lord (**devam arcayet**) at the three junctures of the day (**tri-sandhyam**) by the method prescribed (**niyamena**). Or at least at one of these three times he should do this worship (**eka-sandhyam vā**), and 108 times he should chant japa of his mantra (**japed aṣṭottaram śatam**).”

When the brāhmaṇa seemed withdrawn, intent on his prescribed chanting and meditation, in fact his outward senses were inactive not because he was controlling them out of duty but because ecstatic love was swelling up within him.

Sometimes he shouted
sobbed, stumbled & fell down
& slowed all such etc etc
Syllables →

2.1.115

vikrośantam kvacid bhūmau
skhalantam kvāpi matta-vat
luṭhantam bhuvi kutrāpi
rudantam kvacid uccakaiḥ

Sometimes he shouted (vikrośantam kvacid), or loudly sobbed
(rudantam kvacid uccakaiḥ), or stumbled and fell to the ground
(bhūmau skhalantam kvāpi), or rolled about on the ground
(luṭhantam bhuvi kutrāpi) like a madman (matta-vat).

Further eStatic
स्यु-१०-५

2.1.116

visamjñam patitam kvāpi
śleṣma-lālāśru-dhārayā
pañkayantam gavām vartma-
rajāmsi mṛta-vat kvacit

Sometimes he fell unconscious (**visamjñam patitam kvāpi**) and lay
still like a corpse (**mṛta-vat**), the flood of his mucus, saliva, and tears
(**śleṣma-lālā-aśru-dhārayā**) turning the dust on the cow path (**gavām**
vartma rajāmsi) into mud (**pañkayantam**).

Because the brāhmaṇa was practicing such intense chanting of the Lord's names, he would sometimes feel joy so immense that he would lose outward consciousness.

Sometimes he would collapse without wetting the ground as described here, and then he would appear to have died.

2.1.117

Out of curiosity we
would come to see him
by he would bow down to
us with devotion

kautukena vayaṁ bālā
yāmo 'muṁ vīkṣitum sadā
sa tu gopa-kumārān no
labdhvā namati bhaktiḥ

Out of curiosity (kautukena) we cowherd boys (vayaṁ bālā) would often come (sadā yāmo) look at him (amum vīkṣitum). But when he (sah tu) saw (labdhvā) us in front of him (nah gopa-kumārān) he would bow down to us with devotion (namati bhaktiḥ).

He apparently had great respect for the boys, despite their having no special respect for him.

He would heartily
embrace us & kiss us &
not be able to give up
our company

2.1.118

gāḍham āśliṣyati premṇā
sarvāṅgeṣu sa-cumbanam
parityaktum na śaknoti
mādrśān priya-bandhu-vat

He would heartily embrace us (gāḍham āśliṣyati) and affectionately cover us with kisses (premṇā sarvāṅgeṣu sa-cumbanam), as if we were his best friends (priya-bandhu-vat). He was unable to give up (parityaktum na śaknoti) our company (mādrśān).

Immersed in kṛṣṇa-prema, this brāhmaṇa was attracted to these
village boys because they resembled young Kṛṣṇa and His cowherd
friends. Priya-bandhu has several meanings: “best friends,” “close
relatives,” “most dear devotees of the Lord,” and “the Supreme
Lord, who is dear to His devotees.”

He was very pleased
with my services & one day
he embraced me & spoke thus

2.1.119

mayā go-rasa-dānādi-
sevayāsau prasāditaḥ
ekadā yamunā-tīre
prāpyāliṅgya jagāda mām

He was pleased (^{please} asau prasāditaḥ) with my services like giving gifts of milk products (go-rasa-dānādi-sevayā). One day (ekadā), meeting me on the shore of the Yamunā (yamunā-tīre prāpya), he embraced me and spoke in this way (āliṅgya jagāda mām):

Gopa-kumāra gave his new friend presents of milk, yogurt, and other milk products and would also carry his water pot and follow him around.

This kind of voluntary service pleased the great soul, who became disposed to give the boy his mercy.

If you want to
fulfill all your desires
please bathe @ Keśi-ghāṭa
& accept from me the mercy
of the Lord.

2.1.120

vatsa tvam sakalābhīṣṭa-
siddhim icchasi ced imam
prasādam jagad-īśasya
snātvā keśyām gṛhāṇa mat

“My dear child (vatsa), if you want (ced tvam) to fulfill all your desires (sakala abhīṣṭa-siddhim icchasi), please bathe at Keśi-ghāṭa (snātvā keśyām) and then accept from Me (mat gṛhāṇa) this mercy of the Lord of the universe (imam jagad-īśasya prasādam).”

Normally we consider the mercy of the Supreme Lord something intangible, but the saintly brāhmaṇa called it “this mercy” as if it were a tangible object in front of them.

He told Gopa-kumāra “Just take it from me” as if literally placing it in his hands.

After I bathed,
he imparted to me the
same Gopāla mantra

2.1.121

evam etam bhavan-mantram
snātāyopadideśa me
pūrṇa-kāmo 'napekṣyo 'pi
sa dayālu-śiromaṇiḥ

Thus, after I bathed (evam snātāya), he imparted to me (upadideśa me) the same mantra you are chanting (etad bhavad-mantram). Although he was fully satisfied in himself and indifferent to material things (pūrṇa-kāmah anapekṣyah api), he was the crest jewel of all compassionate souls (sah dayālu-śiromaṇiḥ).

Since Gopa-kumāra and his student have been initiated into the same mantra, their relationship should become very friendly.

When Gopa-kumāra got his mantra he should not have thought that this was his guru's way of reciprocating the gifts of buttermilk and yogurt.

His guru, being fully self-satisfied, did not need the service.

Only out of infinite compassion for the fallen souls did the guru show Gopa-kumāra his mercy.