

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

2.3.60

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
tad ākarṇya prahr̥ṣṭo 'ham
aicchaṁ tasmān maheśvarāt
prasādaṁ kam api prāptum
ātmano hr̥dayaṅ-gamma

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: Delighted to hear this (**tad ākarṇya prahr̥ṣṭah**), I was eager (**aham aicchaṁ**) to obtain (**prāptum**) Lord Śiva's grace (**tasmād maheśvarāt kam api prasādaṁ**) and fulfill a long-cherished desire (**ātmano hr̥dayaṅ-gamma**).

Gopa-kumāra was eager to understand how Lord Śiva is nondifferent from Śrī Madana-gopāla-deva.

Although Gopa-kumāra's natural inclination was toward the lotus feet of Madana-gopāla, he also found himself unavoidably attracted to this amazing person Lord Śiva, whom he was seeing for the first time.

Gopa-kumāra would be grateful if Lord Śiva were to enlighten him about how Lord Śiva and Lord Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent.

2.3.61

jñātvā bhagavatā tena
dr̥ṣṭyādiṣṭasya nandinaḥ
upadeśena śuddhena
svayaṁ me 'sphurad añjasā

Lord Śiva (**bhagavatā**), reading my thoughts (**tena jñātvā**), ordered Nandīśvara with a knowing glance (**dr̥ṣṭyā nandinaḥ ādiṣṭasya**), and through Nandīśvara's pure guidance (**śuddhena upadeśena**) the facts easily revealed themselves to me (**svayaṁ me añjasā asphurad**).

Lord Śiva, the best of mystics, knew at once what Gopa-kumāra was thinking and simply by glancing at Nandīśvara conveyed his desire that Nandīśvara explain the matter.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says in his commentary to this verse that *nandinaḥ* can refer to Nandīśvara, the principal attendant of Lord Śiva, or else to the bull Nandī, Lord Śiva's carrier, who was born from a partial expansion of the Supreme Lord.

2.3.62

śrīman-madana-gopālān
nija-prāṇeṣṭa-daivatāt
abhinnah śrī-maheśo 'yam
uta tad-bhāva-vardhanah

This Lord Śiva (**ayam śrī-maheśah**), I realized, is nondifferent (**uta abhinnah**) from Madana-gopāla (**śrīmad-madana-gopālāt**), the Deity I worship, the Lord more dear to me than life itself (**nija-prāṇa iṣṭa-daivatāt**). Lord Śiva serves the cause of love for my Lord by promoting it everywhere (**tad-bhāva-vardhanah**).

There is nothing wrong with being attracted to Lord Śiva.

Since he is nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa, devotion offered to him is also devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

More precisely, when one satisfies Lord Śiva by pure devotion to him, Lord Śiva helps one become more devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

2.3.63

tad-gaṇa-madhye 'ham
praviṣṭaḥ prīṇito 'khilaiḥ
śaivaiḥ śrī-nandino 'śrauṣam
vṛttam etad vilakṣaṇam

I happily entered (**aham sukham praviṣṭaḥ**) among Lord Śiva's companions (**tad-gaṇa-madhye**) and was treated with affection (**prīṇitaḥ**) by all his devotees (**akhilaiḥ śaivaiḥ**). From Śrī Nandīśvara (**śrī-nandino**) I heard (**aśrauṣam**) these unique facts (**etad vilakṣaṇam vṛttam**):

2.3.64

sadaika-rūpo bhagavān śivo 'yam
vasan sva-loke prakāṭaḥ sadaiva
vilokyate tatra nivāsa-tuṣṭais
tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ satataṁ niṣṭhaiḥ

The great Lord Śiva (**ayam bhagavān śivah**) has one eternal transcendental form (**sadā eka-rūpah**). Dwelling in his own abode (**vasan sva-loke**), he is always visible (**sadaiva prakāṭaḥ vilokyate**) to his exclusive worshipers (**satataṁ nija iṣṭaiḥ tad-eka-niṣṭhaiḥ**), who are pleased to live there (**tatra nivāsa-tuṣṭaiḥ**).

According to Śrī Nandīśvara, Lord Śiva remains always in one form, meaning that he is not like Lord Mahākāla, sometimes formless and sometimes having a personal form, nor does he expand himself as Lord Viṣṇu does, into the different forms of a fish, a tortoise, and so on.

In the pastimes Lord Śiva performs for the pleasure of his devotees, he sometimes appears disguised as a hunter or a fisherman, but he does not transform into different species of life.

Because Lord Śiva's followers can rest assured he is not going to change his appearance, they are always satisfied.

He is always visible on his planet, not like Lord Viṣṇu, who often leaves His abodes to visit other places.

Lord Śiva's dear devotees can always see their lord, unlike the devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrī Yajñeśvara, and the other incarnations of the Personality of Godhead on Svargaloka, Maharloka, Tapoloka, and Satyaloka.

This is the explanation given by Śrī Nandīśvara, but more precisely Lord Śiva is always in the same form in the sense that his body is always purely spiritual, sac-cid-ānanda, and never subject to change.

He is always present in his own abode, beyond the material creation, and so is always visible in that abode for the pleasure of his devotees.

2.3.65

svābhinna-bhagavad-bhakti-
lāmpaṭyaṃ grāhayann iva
sadā ramayati svīyān
nṛtya-gītādi-kautukaiḥ

With festivals of singing, dancing, and so on (**nṛtya-gītādi-kautukaiḥ**), he always gives pleasure to his companions (**sadā ramayati svīyān**), as if to make them greedy (**lāmpaṭyaṃ grāhayann iva**) for the Supreme Lord's devotional service (**bhagavad-bhakti**), in which they see that he and Lord Viṣṇu are nondifferent (**sva abhinna**).

Lord Śiva's festivals resound with congregational chanting of Lord Viṣṇu's names, and his devotees can be heard crying out in great reverence and love for Lord Viṣṇu.

It appears that Lord Śiva holds such festivals for the benefit of others, to induce them to take up worship of Lord Viṣṇu as nondifferent from himself, but in fact Lord Śiva is himself fully absorbed in viṣṇu-bhakti because like Nārada Muni he is a bhaktāvatāra, an empowered incarnation of the Lord in the role of the Lord's devotee.

2.3.66

**bhagavantam sahasrāsyam
śeṣa-mūrtim nija-priyam
nityam arcayati premṇā
dāsa-vaj jagad-īśvaraḥ**

Although he is the lord of the universe (**jagad-īśvaraḥ**), he always lovingly worships (**nityam premṇā arcayati**) his favorite form of the Supreme Lord, Śeṣa (**nija-priyam bhagavantam śeṣa-mūrtim**), He of a thousand faces (**sahasra āsyam**), as if a humble servant (**dāsa-vad**).

Lord Śiva feels a special affinity with the Ananta Śeṣa expansion of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa because both Lord Śiva and Śeṣa are presiding lords of the mode of ignorance.

This is depicted in the Fifth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.17.16), in the account of how Lord Viṣṇu is worshiped on Ilāvṛta-varṣa:

**bhavānī-nāthaiḥ strī-gaṇārbuda-sahasrair avarudhyamāno bhagavataś catur-
mūrter mahā-puruṣasya turīyām tāmasīm mūrṭim prakṛtim ātmanah
saṅkarṣaṇa-samjñām ātma-samādhi-rūpeṇa sannidhāpyaitad abhigṛṇan
bhava upadhāvati.**

In Ilāvṛta-varṣa, Lord Śiva is always encircled (**avarudhyamānah**) by ten billion maidservants of goddess Durgā (**bhavānī-nāthaiḥ strī-gaṇa arbuda-sahasrair**). Uttering the following mantra (**etad abhigṛṇan**) in meditation (**ātma-samādhi-rūpeṇa sannidhāpya**), Śiva worships (**bhava upadhāvati**) Saṅkarṣaṇa (**saṅkarṣaṇa-samjñām**), his source (**prakṛtim ātmanah**), the spiritual form in charge of ignorance (**turīyām tāmasīm mūrṭim**), among the four forms of the Lord (**bhagavatah mahā-puruṣasya catur-mūrteh**).

As stated by Lord Śiva in his prayers in the Fifth Canto, the manifestation of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa as Ananta Śeṣa has thousands of hoods.

And so this form is different in appearance from the form of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa worshiped in the covering shell of ahaṅkāra, false ego.

In Lord Śiva's abode, the region of ahaṅkāra, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa has four arms, like Śrī Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Lord Śiva's abode is thus a very special place.

2.3.67

Hearing about
the unique stories
of Śivaloka → I felt
very happy
But, my heart was not full

jñātvemaṃ śiva-lokasya
viśeṣaṃ sarvato 'dhikam
paramaṃ paramaṃ prāpto
'py apūrṇaṃ hṛd alakṣayam

Learning about (jñātvā) this unique excellence of Śivaloka (imam śiva-lokasya sarvato adhikam viśeṣaṃ), I felt exceedingly happy (paramaṃ paramaṃ prāptaḥ). Yet my heart (hṛd apy), I knew (alakṣayam), was not full (apūrṇaṃ).

Hearing all this made Gopa-kumāra eager to see Śivaloka, but his persistent desire to find Śrī Madana-gopāla constrained him.

2.3.68

tan-nidānam anāsādyā
sadyo 'jñāsisam āmṛśan
śrīman-guru-prasādāpta-
vastu-sevā-prabhāvatah

Initially I
could not understand
the cause of that dissection
But by the mercy of guru &
power of mantra → I quickly
understood

I couldn't discern (anāsādyā) the cause of that feeling (tan-nidānam), but by the mercy of my divine spiritual master (śrīman-guru-prasāda) I had received the transcendental mantra (āpta), and by the power of my service to the mantra (vastu-sevā-prabhāvatah), after some reflection (āmṛśan) I quickly understood (sadyo ajñāsisam).

By virtue of constantly meditating with full sincerity on the ten-syllable gopāla-mantra, Gopa-kumāra could understand in a moment the essence of his predicament.

2.3.69

śrīman-madana-gopāla-
deva-pāda-sarojayoh
līlādy-anubhavābhāvo
mām ayaṁ bād hate kila

The Gop of
disturbance - way
forgetting the lotus feet
of Mh & His attractive
pastimes

I was disturbed (mām kila bād hate) because of forgetting (abhāvo)
the lotus feet of Śrīmān Madana-gopāla (śrīman-madana-gopāla
deva-pāda-sarojayoh), and His pastimes and other attractive
features (līlādy-anubhava).

In this circumstance Gopa-kumāra was unable to focus his mind on
Śrī Madana-gopāla's pastimes, beauty, sweetness, and compassion.

I told my mind
that it is Lord Śiva
who performs these pastimes
as Lord Gopāla

2.3.70

abodhayam mano 'nena
maheśenaiva sā khalu
līlā-viśeṣa-vaicitrī
kṛtā mūrti-viśeṣataḥ

I told my mind (manah abodhayam) that it is Lord Śiva himself
(anena maheśena eva) who performs (sā khalu kṛtā) these
wonderfully varied pastimes (līlā-viśeṣa-vaicitrī) in the special
form of Lord Gopāla (mūrti-viśeṣataḥ).

2.3.71

tathāpy asvastham ālakṣya
sva-cittam idam abruvam
yady asmin nānubhūyeta
sā tad-rūpādi-mādhurī

But seeing (tathāpy ālakṣya) my mind still unsettled (sva-cittam asvastham), I told it (idam abruvam), “If you fail to perceive something in Lord Śiva (yady asmin na anubhūyeta), it must be the rare sweetness of Gopāla’s beauty and His other such qualities (sā tad-rūpādi-mādhurī).”

But seeing that
my mind was still disturbed,
I told it
If you fail to perceive something
in Lord Śiva, it must be the
rare sweetness of Gopāla's beauty
& other qualities

Golakaṅga fulleḥ
tells his mind.
" By Lord's mercy
your dīrgha-vāñchā will be
fulfilled".

2.3.72

tathāpi dīrgha-vāñchā te
'nugrahād asya setsyati
acirād iti manyasva
sva-prasāda-viśeṣataḥ

“Nonetheless (tathāpi), by Lord Śiva's mercy (asya anugrahād)
your long-held desire (te dīrgha-vāñchā) will soon be fulfilled
(acirād setsyati). By his special favor toward you (sva-prasāda-
viśeṣataḥ), be assured, this will be so (iti manyasva).”

2.3.73

My mind was
thus appeased & I was
happy to stay by Ś's side
↓
For some reason, Ś decided
to rest in BT before returning
his journey

evam tuṣṭa-manās tasya
tatra kenāpi hetunā
viśrāntasya maheśasya
pārśve 'tiṣṭham kṣaṇam sukham

My mind was thus appeased (evam tuṣṭa-manāh), and I was happy to stay a while (kṣaṇam sukham atīṣṭham) by the side of Lord Śiva (maheśasya pārśve), who for some reason (kenāpi hetunā) chose to take rest (viśrāntasya) before going on with his journey (tasya tatra).

Why Lord Śiva rested in Mahākāla-pura before proceeding to Kailāsa is disclosed in the next verses.