

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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Volume-2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Chapter-3

Bhajana: Worship

For example, the
Dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa
wanted to taste the rasa of
kṛṣṇa-bhakti, brought his sons
from here to Dvārakā.

2.3.112

dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasārthinā
ito nītāḥ sutās tatra
sa-cātura-viśeṣataḥ

Very cleverly (sa-cātura-viśeṣataḥ), the brāhmaṇa ~~residing in~~
Dvārakā (dvārakā-vāsi-vipreṇa) who wanted to taste the ~~rasa of~~
kṛṣṇa-bhakti (kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa arthinā) brought his sons (sutāḥ
nītāḥ) from here (itah) to Dvārakā (tatra).

Besides scripture, the behavior of respectable persons also proves that sāyujya-
mukti is undesirable for Vaiṣṇavas.



The motive of the Dvārakā brāhmaṇa who came to Kṛṣṇa complaining about
the untimely death of his newborn sons was actually to bring his sons back
from the abode of liberation. → संयुजा.

The residents of Dvārakā during Kṛṣṇa's appearance all had spiritual sac-cid-
ānanda bodies, and on the strength of their loving service to the lotus feet of
Śrī Devakī-nandana they felt contempt for the happiness of impersonal
liberation.

Some persons, in their attempt to explain the Purāṇic histories, say that the residents of Dvārakā were only human beings with bodies made of the five material elements, because the historical accounts describe their births and deaths.

Even in material bodies, these Purāṇic scholars say, the residents of Dvārakā obtained intimate relationships with Kṛṣṇa because of their unique devotion to Him in pure love.

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Even in material bodies, these Purāṇic scholars say, the residents of Dvārakā obtained intimate relationships with Kṛṣṇa because of their unique devotion to Him in pure love.

- ① Materialists → Jada maye vishṇu
- ② Sādhakās → Mano maye vishṇu
- ③ Siddhās/perfectly devoted → Cit maye vishṇu.

These commentators, however, have to concede that the Dvārakā-vāsīs only pretended to act like ordinary materially embodied human beings.

If that is what they actually were they would have been unfit to join in the various pleasure pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, whose bodily form is pure sac-cid-ānanda.

Moreover, it is an established fact that by the power of bhagavad-bhakti one's body becomes completely spiritual, and this principle should certainly apply to the pure devotees of Dvārakā.

Pṛjva - Pakṣa

The scholars may retort that if the devotees of Dvārakā only pretended to have material bodies, then the Lord's having assumed a human form and behaved like a human being must also have been only a pretense.

But this, they say, cannot be so, because after the narration of the brāhmaṇa's complaint the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says that every one of the Supreme Lord's personal forms is eternally real and all-pervading.

Now, what the scholars say should on its surface be granted true.

Certainly the Personality of Godhead's appearances are never false imitations of material life, since all of them are eternal and He reveals Himself perpetually in those very forms to His various worshipers.

Furthermore, again supporting the scholars' view, authoritative scriptures describe that the residents of the Lord's abodes like Dvārakā sometimes abandon their imitation human appearance and assume their purely spiritual sac-cid-ānanda forms.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.9–11) describes, for example, that some of the gopīs who could not join the rāsa dance gave up their human bodies and at once obtained their sac-cid-ānanda bodies:

antar-gr̥ha-gatāḥ kāścīd gopyo 'labdha-vinirgamāḥ
kṛṣṇam tad-bhāvanā-yuktā dadhyur mīlita-locanāḥ

duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha-tīvra-tāpa-dhutāśubhāḥ
dhyāna-prāptācyutāśleṣa-nirvṛtyā kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ

tam eva paramātmānam jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāḥ
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ deham sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ

“Some of the gopīs (kāścīd gopyah), unable to get out of their houses (alabdha-vinirgamāḥ), instead remained home (antar-gr̥ha-gatāḥ) with eyes closed (mīlita-locanāḥ), meditating upon Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇam dadhyuh) in pure love (tad-bhāvanā-yuktā). For those gopīs, intolerable separation from their beloved (duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha) caused an intense agony (tīvra-tāpa) that burned away all impious karma (dhuta aśubhāḥ). By meditating upon Him (acyuta dhyāna) they realized His embrace (prāptā acyuta aśleṣa), and their ecstasy (nirvṛtyā) exhausted their material piety (kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ). Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul (tam eva paramātmānam), these girls simply thought of Him as their male lover (jāra-buddhyāpi) and associated with Him in that intimate mood (saṅgatāḥ). Thus their karmic bondage was nullified (sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ) and they abandoned their gross material bodies (jahur guṇa-mayaṁ deham).”

By giving up their human bodies, these gopīs were able to join the Personality of Godhead in their original forms and enjoy with Him the pleasure pastimes that most attracted them.

Here it seems that that the gopīs regained their spiritual bodies, bodies eternal, blissful, and full of knowledge, bodies just like that of the Lord.

It was in this way that the gopīs were able to be saṅgatāḥ—more intimately associated with Kṛṣṇa.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.37), in the message Uddhava carried to Vṛndāvana, the Lord told of the same incident in a similar way:

yā mayā krīḍatā rātryām
vane 'smin vraja āsthitāḥ
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyaṇyo
māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā

“Although some gopīs had to stay in the cowherd village (yā vraja āsthitāḥ) and were unable to join the rāsa dance (alabdha-rāsāḥ) to sport with Me at night (mayā krīḍatā rātryām) in the forest (asmin vane), they were fortunate nonetheless (kalyāṇyah), for they attained Me (mām āpuh) by thinking of My potent pastimes (mad-vīrya-cintayā).”

Similar to this regaining of spiritual identity by the gopīs was the liberation of Śiśupāla and Dantavakra.

When these former gatekeepers of Lord Nārāyaṇa's kingdom were killed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the curse against them by Sanaka and his brothers ended, and the souls of the former gatekeepers were seen to merge into Kṛṣṇa's effulgence.

This apparent merging, however, was not actually sāyujya-mukti, because for these two persons, who were devotees of the Supreme Lord, and even residents of Vaikuṅṭha, impersonal liberation would have been the worst misfortune.


In the Bhāgavatam (7.1.47), Nārada Muni describes what really happened to Śiśupāla and Dantavakra:

vairānubandha-tīvrena
dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām
nītau punar hareḥ pārśvam
jagmatur viṣṇu-pārṣadau

These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu – Jaya and Vijaya (viṣṇu-pārṣadau) – by meditation with intense, continuous hatred of the Lord (tīvrena vairānubandha dhyānena), entered Kṛṣṇa (acyuta-sātmatām nītau), and then went to the side of the Lord as his two associates in Vaikuṅṭha (jagmatuh punar hareḥ pārśvam).

This fulfilled the word of Lord Viṣṇu. When Jaya and Vijaya, cursed by the four Kumāras, were about to fall from their home in Vaikuṅṭha, Lord Viṣṇu assured them they would return to His abode after only three lifetimes.

And so Jaya and Vijaya gave up their material bodies to resume their posts, in their spiritual bodies, as eternal servants of the Lord.

 Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has thus entertained the theoretical possibility that devotees who live in the Lord's abode during His appearance sometimes have material bodies.

His own opinion, however, is different.

He firmly holds that just as the Lord's appearance, even as a human being within the world of mortals, is always purely transcendental, so also are the "human" bodies of the devotees who take part in His pastimes.

When those devotees appear or disappear, (they are either responding to the needs of the pastimes of their beloved Lord) or (expressing the ecstasies of their fully blossomed prema.)

↓
2 reasons for appearance (or) disappearance of the bodies of nitya-siddhis

This is the way we should understand such phrases as “putting aside their bodies,” which are used in the Purāṇas to describe the disappearance of devotees from this world.

Shri Senatana Goswami's explanation of the gopis
follow

The three verses cited above about the gopīs who could not join the rāsa dance (Bhāgavatam 10.29.9–11) can thus be elucidated as follows: Those gopīs at once gave up their bodies, although those bodies were guna-maya, full of all excellent spiritual qualities, and this means that as a pastime those gopīs disappeared from the sight of this world.

As stated, those particular gopīs were especially qualified, for they had fully achieved the Supreme Soul, having gained His association in the mood of His paramours.

This, indeed, is in all instances the prime cause of the gopīs' perfection.

~~←~~ → thought of Śrīmatī Sakhīdevī Gopānī

Therefore, when the Bhāgavatam (10.29.11) uses the word prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ, this indicates not that the gopīs confined to their homes were released from karma and freed from material bodies but that they achieved the special mercy of the Personality of Godhead, (thereby gaining release from bondage to the duties and prohibitions of the Vedas.)

In the same line of thought, Śrī Nārada states in the Fourth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.46):

yadā yasyānugṛhṇāti
bhagavān ātma-bhāvitaḥ
sa jahāti matim loke
vede ca pariniṣṭhitām

When the Lord (yadā bhagavān) shows mercy to the devotee (ātma-bhāvitaḥ yasya anugṛhṇāti), the devotee gives up (sah jahāti) thinking (pariniṣṭhitām matim) of karma-kāṇḍa and material affairs (loke vede ca).

In speaking of the gopīs locked up in their homes during the rāsa dance, the Bhāgavatam says, hirvṛtyā kṣīna-maṅgalāḥ, which in its most obvious sense means “By their joy their pious karma was destroyed.”

hirvṛtyā akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ

But Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, dividing the words differently, says that Kṛṣṇa’s embrace within their meditation gave them such exceptional joy that their auspiciousness, symbolized by their marks of tilaka, never faded (akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ).

Or else, Śrīla Sanātana suggests, taking a different meaning of akṣīna-maṅgalāḥ, their pious credits and their all-auspicious practice of devotional service were made unshakeable.

And the phrase dhutāśubhāḥ, meaning that their impious karma was removed, may also be taken to mean, instead, that even in such a fortunate condition the intolerable agony of separation from their beloved destroyed quickly (āśu) their effulgence (bhā).

~~dhutāśubhāḥ~~ → dhuta + aśubhāḥ → destroyed impious karma,
→ dhuta + āśu + bhāḥ
destroy quickly effulgence.

Or, alternatively, they were spared the future misfortune (aśubha) of suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa upon His departure from Vṛndāvana for Mathurā.

In speaking of the gopīs locked up in their homes during the rāsa dance, the Bhāgavatam says, nirvṛtyā kṣīna-maṅgalāḥ, which in its most obvious sense means “By their joy their pious karma was destroyed.”

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Or, alternatively, they were spared the future misfortune (aśubha) of suffering separation from Kṛṣṇa upon His departure from Vṛndāvana for Mathurā.

These gopīs had earned Kṛṣṇa's intimate association by considering Him their paramour. (jāra-buddhye saṅgatāḥ)

Śukadeva Gosvāmī does not further elaborate on that subject in these verses, because the topic is too confidential to discuss in an open assembly.

The pāra-kīya mood of the gopīs is told of in detail in various verses of Śrī Gīta-govinda, such as the one beginning nibhṛta-nikuñja-gṛhaṁ gatayā (2.11–12).

Śukadeva Gosvāmī mentions that these gopīs meditated on Kṛṣṇa mīlita-
locanāh—that is, with their eyes half-closed like those of yogīs practicing
dhyāna.

Or, understanding this figuratively, they had closed the two eyes of śruti and
smṛti.

According to the statement śruti-smṛtī ubhe netre, the Vedic scriptures in the
forms of śruti and smṛti are the eyes of knowledge for conditioned souls.

The fully realized gopīs had no more use for scriptural directions.

Thus they closed their eyes to everything external and simply focused their hearts on Kṛṣṇa.

Then, because they were not allowed to leave their homes to join Him in the rāsa dance, they gave up their bodies.

yet, even here in BT
you have seen the Supreme Lord
Why?
By the power of
Mercy led to
strong desire to see
your guru's mercy.
Let
revealing to
Himself

2.3.113

atrāpi bhagavantam yad
dr̥ṣṭavān asi tādr̥śam
sad-guroḥ kṛpayā kṛṣṇa-
didṛkṣā-bhara-kāritam

Yet even here (atrāpi) you have seen the Supreme Lord (bhagavantam dr̥ṣṭavān asi) in this form (tādr̥śam) because your divine guru gave you his mercy (yad sad-guroḥ kṛpayā). That mercy created in you the strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-didṛkṣā-
bhara), which impelled Kṛṣṇa to reveal Himself (kāritam).

In Mahākāla-pura, the same place where many come to experience impersonal liberation, Gopa-kumāra had darśana of the beauty of Lord Mahākāla Viṣṇu.

If by the mercy of guru and the Vaiṣṇavas one is eager to see the Supreme Person, nothing can stand in the way of success.

2.3.114

śrī-gopa-kumāra uvāca
tac-chaṅkara-prasādena
parānanda-bharam gataḥ
kiñcid icchann api brahman
nāśakam vaditum hriyā

Lord Śiva's mercy filled
me with great ecstasy.
I wanted to say something,
but I could not because of
shyness.

Śrī Gopa-kumāra said: O brāhmaṇa (brahman), Lord Śiva's mercy (tac-śaṅkara-prasādena) filled me with the greatest ecstasy (parānanda-bharam gataḥ). I wanted to say something (kiñcid vaditum icchann api), but was unable (nāśakam) because I felt too shy (hriyā).

Gopa-kumāra wanted to inquire from the Vaikuṅṭha messengers, but he couldn't say anything.

2.3.115

bhagavat-pārsadāḥ śrutvā
tām tām vācam umā-pateḥ
praṇamya sādaram prītyā
tam ūcur vinayānvitāḥ

Upon hearing
Lord Śiva's words,
I bowed down
& spoke with joy & humility

Upon hearing (śrutvā) Lord Śiva's words (umā-pateḥ tām tām vācam), the associates of the Supreme Lord (bhagavat-pārsadāḥ) bowed respectfully before him (sādaram praṇamya), and addressed him (tam ūcuḥ) with great pleasure and humility (prītyā vinayānvitāḥ).

Before explaining their reason for having come, the visitors from Vaikuṅṭha first wanted to say something to ease Gopa-kumāra's sorrow.

This accomplished, they could then awaken Gopa-kumāra's love of God, by which he would automatically forget his anxiety.

2.3.116

Oh Lord Siva!
There is no difference
b/w yourself & Lord of Vaikuntha
& no difference b/w Gauri & Ramā

śrī-bhagavat-pārsadā ūcuḥ
tena vaikuṅṭha-nāthena
samaṁ ko 'pi na vidyate
bhagavan bhavato bhedo
gauryāś ca ramayā saha

The associates of the Supreme Lord said: O Lord Śiva (bhagavan), there is no difference (kaḥ api bhedah na vidyate) between (samaṁ) you (bhavato) and the Supreme Lord, the master of Vaikuntha (tena vaikuṅṭha-nāthena), nor between Gaurī and Ramā (gauryāś ca ramayā saha).

Just as Lord Śiva is an incarnation of Lord Vaikunṭha-nātha, the goddess Gaurī is a parallel incarnation of Ramā (Lakṣmī).

It is appropriate
that you both reside
in His abode
because
① You are His dearest friend
② You are His exalted incarnation.

2.3.117

tal-loke bhavato vāso
devyāś ca kila yujyate
khyātaḥ priya-tamas tasyā-
vatāraś ca bhavān mahān

Indeed, it is fitting (kila yujyate) for you and the goddess Gaurī (bhavato devyāś ca) to reside in Lord Viṣṇu's abode (tad-loke vāsaḥ), for you are renowned (bhavān khyātaḥ) as His dearest friend (priya-tamaḥ) and His exalted incarnation (tasyāh-avatāraś ca mahān).

Yet / What you
have spoken is very
appropriate to the mood of
the dearest devotee of the Lord

2.3.118

tathāpi yad idam kiñcid
bhāṣitam bhavatādhunā
svabhāvo bhagavat-preṣṭha-
tamataupayiko hy ayam

Yet (tathāpi) what you have just spoken (yad ayam bhavatā
adhunā idam kiñcid bhāṣitam) suits perfectly (aupayikah hy) the
mood (svabhāvah) of a dearmost devotee of the Lord (bhagavat-
preṣṭha-tamatah).

Glorifying Vaikuṅṭha, Lord Śiva had said that Brahmā, Brahmā's sons, and he himself all strive to attain it.

This sentiment is fitting for a humble Vaiṣṇava, even if not exactly true. Lord Śiva and his wife can enter Vaikuṅṭha any time they want.