

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

- ① Vairāgye
- ② Jñāna
- ③ bhajane.
- ④ Vaikunthe.

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

TEXT 159

ato na bimba-pratibimba-bhedato

vicitratā sā salile raver iva

kintv eṣa kha-stho 'dvaya eva sarvataḥ

sva-sva-pradeśe bahudheksyate yathā

This variety of
is real & it is not like
difference b/w an object &
its reflection.
But it is like one sun
seen in different places
in different ways.

Therefore (ataḥ) this variety (sā vicitratā) does not arise from the difference between an object and its reflected image (na bimba-pratibimba-bhedataḥ), as with the sun reflected in water (salile raver iva). Rather (kintu), the Lord's forms (eṣa) are like the one sun standing undivided in the sky (yathā kha-stho advaya eva), seen everywhere (sarvataḥ ikṣyate) but in different ways (bahudhā) in different places (sva-sva-pradeśe).

The variety of the Supreme Lord's appearances cannot be understood by the logic of an object and its reflection, because every one of the Lord's forms is eternal and real.

In the object-reflection model, the only object that would be eternal and real would be the original, the avatārī, the form of the Lord from which all His other forms expand; all the other forms of the Lord would be temporary and unreal, like mere reflections.

In effect, the expanded personal forms of the Lord would be products of illusion.

The theory of expanding by reflection, therefore, is untenable; the Supreme Person in all His forms is the same original object, complete in eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

The sun may be reflected in various bodies of water, or any object may be reflected in several mirrors.

The one then appears to be many because of its images in various places.

But the variety among the Supreme Lord's own forms is not like that.

For the varieties shown by the Lord, the more fitting analogy cited here is that of one object, the sun, being viewed differently by people in different places.

Each person, from where he stands, sees the sun appearing differently against the backdrop of nearby objects—trees, hills, and so on.

Similarly, the diverse worshipers of the Supreme Lord see Him with different forms, complexions, and qualities according to their individual ecstatic moods.

One devotee sees the Lord as a brilliant sphere of light, another as having four arms and a red complexion, and yet another as having two arms holding a pair of lotus flowers.

None of these different visions are illusory, because they are perceived by pure devotees, whom the Lord has no reason to deceive.

TEXT 160

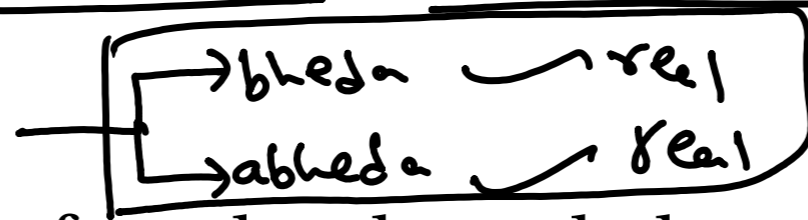
yathaiva ca prthag jñānam
sukham ca prthag eva hi
tathāpi brahma-tādātmye
tayor aikyam su-sidhyati

The Lord's forms
are one even though
separate
Because they are both
aspects of the same Lord

The Lord's various forms are one (tayor aikyam su-sidhyati), just as knowledge and happiness (yathā eva jñānam sukham ca), though separate entities (prthag eva hi), are one (tathāpi aikyam) because they are both aspects of the same Absolute Truth (brahma-tādātmye).

Anyone can understand from experience that since knowledge is the cause of happiness, happiness and knowledge are two separate entities.

This difference is real, (not illusory), because both knowledge and happiness are distinct and real aspects of Brahman, the Absolute Truth.



But then again, due to the very fact that knowledge and happiness belong to the essential nature of the Absolute, the two are really one.

According to the Taittirīya and other Upaniṣads, Brahman's identity is knowledge and also happiness; and since Brahman is always one, nondual, its aspects knowledge and happiness are also essentially one.

Demonstrably, knowledge and happiness are one and different and real because the Absolute Truth is Himself both one and many and He is real in the variety He exhibits.

Thus we read in the Varāha Purāṇa:

na tasya prākṛto mūrtir
māmsa-medo-'sthi-sambhavā
na yogitvād īśvaratvāt
satya-rūpo 'cyuto vibhuḥ

“The Supreme has no material form (na tasya prākṛto mūrtih) made of flesh, marrow, and bones (māmsa-medo-'sthi-sambhavā). He has His form not by virtue of practicing yoga (na yogitvād) but because He is the Absolute Lord (īśvaratvāt). The personal form (rūpah) of the infallible, all-powerful Lord (acyutah vibhuḥ) is real (satyah).”

Another Purāṇa, the Mahā-varāha Purāṇa, also states:

sarve nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca
dehās tasya parātmanah
hānopadāna-rahitā
naiva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit

“All the bodies (sarve dehāḥ) of the Supreme Soul (tasya parātmanah) are eternal and unchanging (nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca). They never undergo loss or gain (hāna upadāna-rahitā), and they are never creations of material nature (naiva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit).

paramānanda-sandohā
jñāna-mātrās ca sarvataḥ
sarve sarva-guṇaiḥ pūrṇāḥ
sarva-doṣa-vivarjitāḥ

“In all conditions (sarvataḥ) they are full of the greatest intense bliss (paramānanda-sandohā) and pure consciousness (jñāna-mātrās ca), endowed with all auspicious qualities (sarve sarva-guṇaiḥ pūrṇāḥ) and devoid of all faults (sarva-doṣa-vivarjitāḥ).

anyūnānadhikāś caiva
guṇaiḥ sarvaiś ca sarvataḥ
dehi-deha-bhidā cātra
neśvare vidyate kvacit

“The bodies of the Supreme are all free from defects (anyūna), unsurpassed in excellence (anadhikāś caiva), and full in all transcendental qualities (guṇaiḥ sarvaiś ca sarvataḥ). Thus the supreme controller’s body and soul are never different from one another (īśvare dehi-deha-bhidā na vidyate kvacit).

tat-svīkārādi-śabdas tu
hasta-svīkāra-vat smṛtaḥ
vailakṣaṇyān na vā tatra
jñāna-mātrārtham īritam

“When scripture records that He accepts bodies (and maintains them and gives them up) (tat-svīkārādi-śabdas tu), those arrangements are to be understood as casual and external, just like accepting someone’s hand in friendship (hasta-svīkāra-vat smṛtaḥ). Saying that He is different from everyone else (vailakṣaṇyān) does not mean (tatra na artham īritam) that He is nothing but pure consciousness (jñāna-matra).

kevalaiśvarya-saṁyogād
īśvaraḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
jāto gatas tv idam rūpaṁ
tad ity-ādi vyavasthitiḥ

“By consorting with His exclusive potencies (kevala aiśvarya-saṁyogād), the Supreme Lord (īśvaraḥ) transcends material nature (prakṛteḥ paraḥ), assumes forms like this one (idam rūpaṁ jāto gataḥ), and in various other ways maintains His unique status (ity-ādi vyavasthitiḥ).”

Eventhough
the Lord, His devotees
His abode, His devotees
seen different etc
of different places
of different states of consciousness
etc.
But still they are one although very
different. They are always real.
When one of His forms is
satisfied, all His other forms
are also satisfied.

TEXTS 161-162

evam vicitra-deśeṣu
svapnādāv apy anekadhā
drśyamānasya kṛṣṇasya
pārśadānām padasya ca

ekatvam apy anekatvam
satyatvam ca su-saṅgatam
ekasmims toṣite rūpe
sarvaṁ tat tasya tuṣyati

Thus although (evam) Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇasya), His associates (pārśadānām), and His abode (padasya ca) are seen (drśyamānasya) in various forms (anekadhā) in different places (vicitra-deśeṣu), and in dreams and other special states of consciousness (svapnādāv apy), they are with perfect consistency (su-saṅgatam) one although many (ekatvam apy anekatvam), and they are always real (satyatvam ca). When any one of His forms is satisfied (ekasmims toṣite rūpe), so too are all His others (sarvaṁ tat tasya tuṣyati).

If one worships Kṛṣṇa in any of His forms, whether they reside in Vaikunṭha
or in any other of His abodes, one satisfies all His expansions.

All the devotees of the Lord's plenary expansions therefore have great
fondness and regard for one another.

TEXT 163

eko vaikunṭha-nātho 'yaṁ
śrī-kṛṣṇas tatra tatra hi
tat-tat-sevaka-harṣāya
tat-tad-rūpādinā vaset

The one Lord of (V)
Sri K → resides in various
places & appears in many
forms just to give pleasure
to all His servants

That one Lord of Vaikunṭha (ekah ayam vaikunṭha-nāthah), Śrī Kṛṣṇa (śrī-kṛṣṇah), resides in various places (tatra tatra hi) and appears in many forms (tat-tad-rūpādinā vaset) just to give pleasure to all of His multitude of servants (tat-tat-sevaka-harṣāya).

The Supreme Lord has a multitude of devotees to satisfy, and that is the
fundamental reason He appears in so many different forms.

He assumes forms like Dharma-nandana and resides in abodes like
Badarikāśrama to give pleasure to devotees such as Śrī Nārada.

And as implied by the suffix -ādi (in tat-tad-rūpādinā), He displays various
kinds of bodily ornaments, pastimes, and so on.

Nārada ascribes such greatness to the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha because Lord
Nārāyaṇa, like Kṛṣṇa in Goloka, is avatārī, a source of expansions and
incarnations.

With this idea in mind, Nārada in this verse calls Lord Nārāyaṇa by the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The use of the name Kṛṣṇa subtly implies that Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka is the most glorious of all the Lord's forms.

TEXT 164

etac ca vṛndā-vipine 'gha-hantur
hṛtvārbha-vatsān anubhūtam asti
śrī-brahmaṇā dvāravatī-pure ca
prāsāda-vargeṣu mayā bhramitvā

Proof of
Personality to the
9) Brahmī is the
6) NY in the Vayfow
Palaces in Dwārakā

Śrī Brahmā (śrī-brahmaṇā) perceived this truth (anubhūtam asti) when he stole (hṛtvāv) Kṛṣṇa's boys and calves ('gha-hantur arbha-vatsān) in the forest of Vṛndāvana (etac ca vṛndā-vipine), and I realized it (mayā) while wandering (bhramitvā) among His many palaces (prāsāda-vargeṣu) in the city of Dvārakā (dvāravatī-pure).

Nārada now strengthens his presentation by citing the personal experiences of self-realized authorities, namely himself and his father, Lord Brahmā.

As described in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Brahmā stole Kṛṣṇa's young cowherd friends and calves.

The one Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa then expanded Himself into the forms of all the boys and calves just to keep their mothers happy, the gopīs and cows.

One year later, Brahmā returned and saw each of the boys and calves suddenly assume the form of Lord Viṣṇu.

No one should think that only the original form of Kṛṣṇa was real and His expanded forms as boys and calves were mere reflections produced by Māyā.

Brahmā's own perception contradicts that idea:

satya-jñānānanta-
mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah
asprṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā
api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām

“The viṣṇu-mūrtis all had eternal (satya), unlimited forms (ananta-
mūrtayah), full of knowledge and bliss (jñāna-ānanda-mātra) and existing
beyond the influence of time (eka-rasa). Their great glory (bhūri-māhātmyā)
was not even to be touched (asprṣṭa api hy) by the jñānīs engaged in
studying the Upaniṣads (upaniṣad-dṛśām).” (Bhāgavatam 10.13.58)

As this incident confirms, the Supreme Lord is always real, whether He be one or many.

Brahmā thus prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.18), after being baffled in his attempt to fool Kṛṣṇa:

adyaiva tvad rte 'sya kim mama na te māyātvam ādarśitam
eko 'si prathamam tato vraja-suhṛd-vatsāḥ samastā api
tāvanto 'si catur-bhujās tad akhilaiḥ sākam mayopāsītās
tāvanty eva jaganty abhūs tad amitam brahmādvayam śiṣyate

“Have You not shown me today (**kim na te adyaiva mama ādarśitam**) that both You Yourself (**tvad rte**) and everything within this creation (**asya**) are manifestations of Your inconceivable potency (**māyātvam**)? First You appeared alone (**ekah asi prathamam**), and then You manifested Yourself (**tato asi**) as all of Vrndāvana’s calves and as the cowherd boys, Your friends (**samastāḥ vraja-suhṛd-vatsāḥ**). Next You appeared as an equal number of four-handed Viṣṇu forms (**tāvanto catur-bhujāḥ asi**), who were worshiped by all living beings (**tad akhilaiḥ upāsītāḥ**), including me (**mayā sākam**), and after that You appeared as an equal number of complete universes (**tāvanty eva jaganty abhūt**). Finally, You have now returned to Your unlimited form as the Supreme Absolute Truth (**tad amitam brahma śiṣyate**), one without a second (**advayam**).”

In other words, Brahmā that day asked Lord Kṛṣṇa whether Kṛṣṇa had not indeed shown him the illusory nature of the material world.

Kṛṣṇa is personally present in this world created by Māyā, which is insubstantial like a dream or a flight of fancy.

And He displays Himself within this world of Māyā in not only one but many different forms.

But that day, by disguising Himself as His cowherd friends and calves, Kṛṣṇa made Brahmā see the world as if Kṛṣṇa were not present, even though He always is.

Every form Kṛṣṇa assumes is real because He and His expansions are the Supreme Absolute Truth.

First Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa alone, then in the form of all the cowherd boys and calves, and these then became four-armed Viṣṇu forms, worshiped by all the beings of creation, subtle and gross, including Brahmā.

Brahmā saw as many Viṣṇus as there were boys and calves.

And each Viṣṇu was being served by all the causal elements and visible objects of the entire universe.

In effect, then, Brahmā saw a universe for each boy and each calf.

And finally he saw only the unlimited Supreme, one without a second, as all the forms of Viṣṇu merged back into one, leaving only Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Brahman.

relativa → eblada.

Lord Brahmā realized that all these appearances were equivalent, since they were all untouched by the illusion of Māyā and her energies.

When Nārada visited the thousands of palaces of Kṛṣṇa's queens in Dvāravatī-purī, he too saw for himself the simultaneous oneness and variety of the Supreme Person.