

Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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

Part 4

Vaikuntha- The Spiritual Kingdom

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 various
Palaces in Dvārakā

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 sākaṁ 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 sākaṁ**), 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 → relevede.

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.

Wandering from one palace to another, in each palace he saw Kṛṣṇa, in each palace acting in a different way.

This does not mean that Kṛṣṇa was factually only in one palace and appeared in illusory forms in the others.

Did Kṛṣṇa's devoted servants deserve to be cheated in such a way, as if He didn't care enough to be truthful with them?

Would Kṛṣṇa act in such a duplicitous way, the same Kṛṣṇa who is the best of compassionate benefactors, the ever-concerned caretaker of His devotees, and the surrendered servant of His servants?

Surely not. Nor should anyone propose that because different residents of Dvārakā simultaneously saw Kṛṣṇa in different palaces the visible facts disprove that Kṛṣṇa is one.

If Kṛṣṇa were not one, the millions of Yadus could not have cooperated with one another so well to reciprocate with Him.

Moreover, every day when Kṛṣṇa left each of His palaces to attend the Sudharmā assembly, a single Kṛṣṇa, not 16,108 different Kṛṣṇas, arrived at the hall.

When Nārada visited Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa kindly allowed him to witness His daily activities in the palace of each queen.

As Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.69.41):

ity ācarantaṁ sad-dharmān
pāvanān gr̥ha-medhinām
tam eva sarva-geheṣu
santam ekaṁ dadarśa ha

“Thus in every palace (sarva-geheṣu) Nārada saw (dadarśa ha) the same form of the Lord (tam eva santam ekaṁ), carrying out the transcendental principles of religion (ity ācarantaṁ sad-dharmān) that purify those engaged in household affairs (pāvanān gr̥ha-medhinām).”

And at the beginning of the same chapter of the Tenth Canto (10.69.2–3)
Śukadeva says:

citram bataitad ekena
vapuṣā yugapat prthak
grheṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasram
striya eka udāvahat

ity utsuko dvāravatīm
devarsir draṣṭum āgamat

“Nārada thought, ‘It is quite amazing (citram bata) that in a single body (etad ekena vapuṣā) Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married (yugapat udāvahat) sixteen thousand women (dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasram striyah), each in a separate palace (prthak grheṣu).’ Thus the sage of the demigods (ity devarsih) eagerly went (utsuko āgamat) to Dvārakā (dvāravatīm) to see this for himself (draṣṭum).”

Nārada was eager to go to Dvārakā to see Kṛṣṇa in His palaces only because Kṛṣṇa had married sixteen thousand princesses all at the same time, while remaining in one and the same body.

Had Kṛṣṇa married His queens by expanding Himself into sixteen thousand duplicate forms, Nārada's eagerness would not have been so aroused, since Nārada and other masters of mystic yoga like Saubhari are also able to expand themselves into duplicate forms.

It was by sharing in Kṛṣṇa's own mystic power to appear in expansions factually identical that Srī Devakī, Vasudeva, Uddhava, and other devotees had also been present simultaneously with Kṛṣṇa in several different palaces, as Nārada had witnessed.

Therefore Nārada was correct when he told Gopa-kumāra, "Kṛṣṇa, His associates, and His abode...are with perfect consistency one although many, and they are always real."
(Texts 161–162)

TEXT 165

durvitarkyā hi sā śaktir
adbhutā pārameśvarī
kintv asyaikānta-bhaktesu
gūḍham kiñcin na tiṣṭhati

Inconceivable indeed
His Energy
Nothing can be hidden
from His devotees

Inconceivable indeed (durvitarkyā hi) is the amazing energy
(adbhutā śaktih) of the supreme controller (sā pārameśvarī), but
(kintu) nothing can be hidden (kiñcid gūḍham na tiṣṭhati) from His
unalloyed devotees (asya ekānta-bhaktesu).

The apparently contradictory pastimes of the Lord can be relished only by the Lord's devotees who understand them in pure devotion.

Ordinary persons cannot unravel the mysteries of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, but these pastimes kindly reveal themselves to sincere devotees and allow such devotees to gradually develop exclusive devotion.

Brahmājī was at first bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's mystic powers but was later enlightened.

TEXT 166

When loads of
Wives were feeding @
Each wife sees that
He is eating only hers

patnī-sahasrair yugapat pranītam
dravyam sa bhunkte bhagavān yadaikah
paśyanti tany atra yathā prati-svam
ādau mamādatta tad eva me 'tti

When the one Personality of Godhead (yadā ekaḥ bhagavān) simultaneously eats (yugapat bhunkte) the items (dravyam) brought to Him (pranītam) by thousands of wives (patnī-sahasrair), each wife sees (yathā prati-svam paśyanti) that she has fed Him first (tāny atra ādau mama ādatta) and that the only offering He is eating is hers (tad sah me eva atti).

This is a good example of the mysterious nature of the Supreme Lord's pastimes, an example taken from His loving dealings with His beloved consorts.

The phenomenon described in this verse occurs both in Vṛndāvana with the gopīs headed by Śrī Rādhā and in Dvārakā with the queens headed by Śrī Rukmiṇī.

In both abodes, Kṛṣṇa is sometimes fed at the same time by thousands of beloveds, each of whom sees Him accept only her offering.

All of them are absolutely devoted to Him, and so He does not want to disappoint any of them.

By being especially attentive to each one individually, He expertly increases the stimulus for their love. He does this factually, not by some illusory trick.

The best examples of the wonderful ways the Lord receives service from His potencies are found in the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in which both His opulence and His sweetness are fully displayed.

The superexcellence of Kṛṣṇa as the source of all avatāras will be discussed in the later chapters of Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta.

To hint at this conclusion, the name Kṛṣṇa has been used in this chapter in reference to Lord Nārāyaṇa in texts 107, 140, 145, and 161.

TEXT 167

Sometimes certain
energies of the Lord
enter into particular jīvas
& they become His śakti-āveśa
incarnations.
Wise people consider such śāśvats
as good as the Lord Himself.

kvacit keṣv api jīveṣu
tat-tac-chakti-praveśataḥ
tasyāveśāvatārā ye
te 'pi tadvan matā budhaiḥ

Sometimes (kvacit) certain energies of the Lord (tat-tat-śakti) enter (praveśataḥ) into particular jīvas (keṣv api jīveṣu), who then become His śakti-āveśa incarnations (tasya āveśa avatārā ye). The wise consider (matā budhaiḥ) these empowered incarnations as good as the Lord Himself (te api tadvat).

TEXT 168

yādr̥śo bhagavān kṛṣṇo
mahā-laksmīr apīdr̥śī
tasya nitya-priyā sāndra-
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahā

The supreme goddess of fortune (mahā-lakṣmīh api) shares in the glories of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa (yādr̥śo bhagavān kṛṣṇah īdr̥śī). She is eternally His beloved (tasya nitya-priyā), the concentrated embodiment of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (sāndra- sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahā).

Lakṣmī also shares
the same glories of (Kṛṣṇa)
↓
She is eternally His beloved
& she is also sac-cid-ānanda
vigrahā

Mahā-lakṣmī is the consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa, who again is called Kṛṣṇa in this verse.

As the source of all other incarnations, Lord Nārāyaṇa is superior to the other forms of Godhead, such as the Viṣṇus involved with material creation.

He is therefore called Mahā-viṣṇu, and accordingly His principal consort is called Mahā-lakṣmī.

Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.8.17, 1.9.145) states:

nityaiva sā jagan-mātā
viṣṇoḥ śrīr anapāyini
yathā sarva-gato visnus
tathaveyam dvijottama

“O best of brāhmaṇas (dvijottama), the goddess Lakṣmī (sā śrīh) is the eternal mother of the universe (nityaiva jagan-mātā). She never leaves the company of Lord Viṣṇu (viṣṇoḥ anapāyini). Just as Visnu is all-pervading (yathā viṣṇuh sarva-gatah), so is she (tathā eva iyam).”

Explanatory verse
of previous
verse

devatve deva-deheyam
manusyatve ca mānuṣī
viṣṇor dehānurūpām vai
karoty eṣātmanas tanum

“When He appears as a demigod (devatve) she appears as a goddess (deva-deheyam), and when He becomes a human man she becomes a human woman (manusyatve ca mānuṣī). She accepts for herself a body (karoty eṣā ātmanah tanum) that exactly corresponds to whatever body Lord Viṣṇu assumes (viṣṇor deha anurūpām vai).”

TEXT 169

She always resides
in the chest of the
Lord & her incarnations
are non-different from
her. ↓
just as His incarnations
are non-different from
Him

sā sadā bhagavad-vakṣah-
sthale vasati tat-parā
tasyā evāvatārās tāḥ
kṛṣṇasyevāparā hi yāḥ

She always resides (sā sadā vasati) on the Supreme Lord's chest (bhagavad-vakṣah-sthale) and is fully dedicated to the Lord (tat-parā). Her incarnations (tasyā avatārāḥ) are nondifferent from her (tāḥ eva aparā hi yāḥ) just as Lord Kṛṣṇa's are nondifferent from Him (kṛṣṇasya ivā).

On Svargaloka and wherever else Lord Visnu descends, the goddess Lakṣmī joins Him in her incarnations.

Thus having innumerable avatāras, she is equal in status to her husband.

And just as He is one but displays an infinitude of personal forms, the one Lakṣmī has a limitless and elaborate hierarchy of avatāras, some of them seemingly superior to others yet all of them equally transcendental.

TEXT 170

yā mahā-siddhivat tāsu
sarva-sampad-adhīśvarī
mumukṣu-mukta-bhaktānām
upekṣyā saiva bhūti-dā

Amongst her
many expansions
is "Sarva-sampad-adhīśvarī"
But, this form is neglected by
"bhaktas" by "mumukṣa-mukta"

Among those expansions of Laksmī (tāsu) is the controlling deity of all
material opulence (sarva-sampad-adhīśvarī), who has great perfections at her
command (yā mahā-siddhivat). But that bestower of prosperity (sa eva
bhūti-dā) is utterly neglected (upekṣyā) by liberated souls, by candidates for
liberation, and by devotees of the Lord (mumukṣu-mukta-bhaktānām).

The goddess Lakṣmī is glorified in many scriptures, including Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.38.8):

yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ

“The lotus feet of the Lord are worshiped (yad arcitaṁ) by Brahmā, Śiva, and all the other demigods (brahma-bhava ādibhiḥ suraiḥ), by the goddess of fortune (śriyā ca devyā), and also by the great sages (munibhiḥ) and Vaiṣṇavas (sa-sātvataiḥ).”

Such statements indicate that she is more respected among the worshipers of the Supreme Lord than even liberated sages and pure Vaiṣṇavas.

Why then is she sometimes disparaged as material and inferior? In this verse
and the next, Nārada answers this doubt.

Among the many expansions of the goddess of fortune, there is one Lakṣmī
who presides over all the opulences of the material world.

All the residents of the universe, including the rulers of the various planets,
owe their powers to her.

Even the mystic siddhis of yogīs proceed from her.

Mumukṣus (persons striving for liberation) and mukṭas (persons who have already achieved it) neglect this particular form of Lakṣmī because the opulences she bestows are nothing but favors for sense gratification, which to genuine mumukṣus and mukṭas are not at all attractive.

Entanglement in mundane sense gratification is the main obstacle to liberation.

TEXT 171

yasyā eva vilolāyāḥ
prāyaḥ sarvatra kathyate
navānām api bhaktānām
bhagavat-priyatādhikā

Everywhere it is
said that even new
devotees are dearer to
Lakṣmī & that she is
Material expansion
& Lakṣmī

Everywhere it is said (sarvatra kathyate) that even new devotees (navānām api bhaktānām) are dearer to the Personality of Godhead (bhagavat-priyatādhikā) than that form of Lakṣmī (yasyā eva), who is usually very fickle (prāyaḥ vilolāyāḥ).

According to the Purāṇas and other scriptures, even neophytes, what to speak of mature, experienced devotees, are more favored by the Lord than is the material expansion of Lakṣmī.

Why? Because under the pretext that Durvāsā cursed her, or on some other excuse, that Lakṣmī is always disappearing from one place and appearing in another.

Thus at any moment she can abandon persons who have taken shelter of her.

Nonetheless, because she is an incarnation of Mahā-lakṣmī, she has many of the exalted qualities of the original goddess of fortune.

Thus we hear that during the churning of the Milk Ocean, when the material Lakṣmī appeared from it, Lord Viṣṇu accepted her as His wife and she took up residence on His chest.

In contrast with this Lakṣmī, the original Mahā-lakṣmī is Lord Nārāyaṇa's dearest servant.

Always fully dedicated to His service, she remains on His chest eternally and is never fickle.

The Lord's devotees always worship her with the greatest reverence; they never neglect her as they do her material expansion.

Similar to Lakṣmī
eye she deriv & his
other consorts
All His energies are of
the category

TEXT 172

evam dharany api jñeyā
parāś ca bhagavat-priyāḥ
tathaiva bhagavac-chaktir
api sā jñāyatām tvayā

Similar to the original Lakṣmī (sā), you should understand (jñāyatām tvayā), are the goddess of the earth (dharany api) and the other consorts of the Lord (parāś ca bhagavat-priyāḥ), for the Lord's creative energies (bhagavac-chaktih api) are all of one category (tathaiva jñeyā).

Nārada took the liberty to digress from glorifying Lord Nārāyaṇa to glorifying His consort.

Now he digresses further into praise of all the Lord's personal energies.

Dharaṇī (Bhūmi) is Lord Nārāyaṇa's second wife.

There is one original, purely spiritual goddess of fortune, the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha's most beloved, who is always present at His side.

His other energies mentioned in scripture are all expansions of that original Mahā-lakṣmī.

Lord Śiva's consort Durgā is also an expansion of Mahā-lakṣmī, and so are Durgā's multiple expansions with their various forms and names.

The terrible goddess Cāmuṇḍā, the wife of Lord Śiva's frightful expansion Bhairava, is also an incarnation of Lakṣmī, the personal energy of the Supreme Lord.