

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 5

Prema- Love of God

Text 106

sad-veṣa-mātrena hi bāla-ghātinīm
tām rāksasīm mātr-gatiṁ nināya saḥ
tad-bāndhavān muktim aghāsurādikān
sādhu-druhas tādrśa-līlayānayat

Simply because Pūtana was
→ the Lord gave her
& gave liberation to her
family.

Simply because Pūtana, the child-killing demoness (bāla-ghātinīm rāksasīm), disguised herself as a respectable person (sad-veṣa-mātrena), the Lord bestowed upon her (tām nināya saḥ) the destination of being His mother (mātr-gatiṁ). By similar pastimes (tādrśa-līlayā) He also gave liberation (muktim anayat) to her family members (tad-bāndhavān)—Aghāsura and others (aghāsurādikān)—even though they were enemies of the pious devotees (sādhu-druhas).

In these pastimes Kṛṣṇa demonstrates the extent of His kindness.

Pūtanā dressed herself very nicely, so that Yaśodā and the other ladies of Vraja would accept her as one of them, a cultured Vaiṣṇava.

This was enough to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, who, even though Pūtanā was a most wicked demon, arranged for her to achieve an auspicious destination equal to that of Mother Yaśodā.

Uddhava therefore declared in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.23):

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāmsayāpāyayat apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātri-ucitāṁ tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema

Oh! Evil Pūtanā (aho asādhvī bakī), who offered her poisonous breast (yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ) to Kṛṣṇa to drink (apāyayat) with the intention of killing him (jighāmsaya api), attained the position (lebhe gatiṁ) of a nurse in the spiritual world (dhātri-ucitāṁ). Who else is so merciful (tatah anyad kaṁ vā dayāluṁ)? I surrender to him (śaraṇaṁ vrajema)!

Not only Pūtanā but also many of her demon friends and relatives, like Agha, Baka, and Kamsa, were liberated simply by being drawn to Kṛṣṇa's supremely charming childhood pastimes.

As described by Lord Brahmā in his prayers to Kṛṣṇa:

eṣām ghoṣa-nivāsinām uta bhavān kim deva rātetī naś
ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad-aparaṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati
sad-vesād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā
yad-dhāmārtha-suhr̥t-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte

My mind (nah cetah) becomes bewildered (muhyati) just trying to think (ayat) of what reward (kim phalaṁ) other than You (tvad-aparaṁ) could be found anywhere (kutrāpy). You are the embodiment of all benedictions (viśva-phalāt), which You bestow (bhavan rātā) upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vṛndāvana (eṣām ghoṣa-nivāsinām). You have already arranged to give Yourself (tvām eva deva āpitā) to Pūtanā (pūtanāpi) and her family members (sa-kulā) in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee (sad-vesād iva). So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana (implied), whose homes, wealth, friends (yad-dhāma-artha-suhr̥t), dear relations, bodies, children (priya-ātma-tanaya) and very lives and hearts (prāṇa āśayāh) are all dedicated only to You (tvat-kṛte)? (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.14.35)

Text 107

go-dāma-vīthābhir udūkhālānghrau
svasyodare bandhanam ādade 'sau
protsāhanena vraja-yoṣitām tan-
nṛtyādikaṁ tām ca nideśa-vartitām

He allowed
His belly to be
tied by My to be
enliven the women to
He danced, & entertained
them in other ways
Even carried out their
orders.

He allowed (asau ādade) His belly (svasya udare) to be tied (bandhanam) to the base of a grinding mortar (udūkhala anghrau) by ropes for tying cows (go-dāma-vīthābhir). And to enliven the women of Vraja (vraja-yoṣitām protsāhanena), He danced, entertained them in other ways (nṛtyādikaṁ), and carried out their orders (tām ca nideśa-vartitām).

In Text 103, when Nārada listed Kṛṣṇa's excellences in Vraja-
bhūmi, he placed Kṛṣṇa's subservience to His devotees last, but
here he takes the opportunity to elaborate on this topic out of
sequence, since it closely bears on the topic of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

When Mother Yaśodā wanted to punish Kṛṣṇa by tying Him
up, she joined all the ropes available, including the ones used
for tying the cows at milking, but still she could not make a
rope long enough to bind her son:

evam sva-geha-dāmāni
yaśodā sandadhaty api
gopīnām su-smayantīnām
smayantī vismitābhavat

Thus mother Yaśodā joined whatever ropes were available in the
household, but still she failed in her attempt to bind Kṛṣṇa (**evam sva-**
geha-dāmāni yaśodā sandadhaty api). Mother Yaśodā's friends, the
elderly gopīs in the neighborhood, were smiling and enjoying the fun
(gopīnām susmayantīnām). Similarly, mother Yaśodā, although
laboring in that way, was also smiling (**smayantī**). All of them were
struck with wonder (**vismitābhavat**). (Bhāgavatam 10.9.17)

Finally Kṛṣṇa agreed to let Himself be tied, but in such a way—with His waist on one end of the rope and a large grinding mortar on the other—that He could later turn the mortar over and climb its wide base to steal more butter.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.18–19) Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī
narrates:

sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ
dr̥ṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane

evam sandarśitā hy aṅga harinā bhṛtya-vaśyatā
sva-vaśenāpi kṛṣṇena yasyedaṁ seśvaram vaśe

Because of mother Yaśodā's hard labor, her whole body became covered with perspiration (sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā), and the flowers and comb were falling from her hair (visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ). When child Kṛṣṇa saw His mother thus fatigued (dr̥ṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ), He became merciful to her and agreed to be bound (kṛpayā āsīt sva-bandhane).

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit (aṅga), this entire universe, with its great, exalted demigods like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and Lord Indra, is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (yasya idaṁ sa īśvaram vaśe). Yet the Supreme Lord has one transcendental attribute: He comes under the control of His devotees (sva-vaśenāpi bhṛtya-vaśyatā). This was now exhibited by Kṛṣṇa in this pastime (kṛṣṇena evam sandarśitā).

The ladies of Vraja delighted in witnessing these pastimes, and Kṛṣṇa further encouraged their love for Him by performing antics for their pleasure and by submitting to their commands.

This too is described by Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

gopībhiḥ stobhito 'nṛtyad
bhagavān bāla-vat kvacit
udgāyati kvacin mugdhas
tad-vaśo dāru-yantra-vat

[The gopīs would say, "If You dance, my dear Kṛṣṇa, then I shall give You half a sweetmeat." By saying these words or by clapping their hands, all the gopīs encouraged Kṛṣṇa in different ways] (kvacit gopībhiḥ stobhito). At such times, although He was the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead (bhagavān), He would smile and dance according to their desire (bālavat anṛtyad), as if He were a wooden doll in their hands (dāru-yantravat). Sometimes He would sing very loudly, at their bidding (udgāyati kvacin mugdhas). In this way, Kṛṣṇa came completely under the control of the gopīs (tad-vaśah).

bibharti kvacid ājñaptaḥ
pīṭhakonmāna-pādukam
bāhu-kṣepaṁ ca kurute
svānām ca prītim āvahan

Sometimes mother Yaśodā and her gopī friends would tell Kṛṣṇa, "Bring this article" or "Bring that article." Sometimes they would order Him (kvacid ājñaptaḥ) to bring a (wooden plank, wooden shoes or a wooden measuring pot) (pīṭhaka-unmāna-pādukam), and Kṛṣṇa, when thus ordered by the mothers, would try to bring them (bibharti). Sometimes, however, as if unable to raise these things, He would touch them and stand there. Just to invite the pleasure of His relatives (svānām ca prītim āvahan), He would strike His body with His arms to show that He had sufficient strength (bāhu-kṣepaṁ ca kurute).

darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka
ātmano bhr̥tya-vaśyatām
vrajasyovāha vai harṣaṁ
bhagavān bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ

To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities (tad-vidāṁ loka), the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa (bhagavān), exhibited (darśaya) how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants (ātmano bhr̥tya-vaśyatām). In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavāsīs (vrajasya harṣaṁ uvāha) by His childhood activities (bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ). (Bhāgavatam 10.11.7–9)

By these pastimes Lord Kṛṣṇa sent a clear message to the jñānīs
who think they know Him very well as the Absolute Truth:

“To achieve Me through the process of knowledge is not at all
easy. Only by bhakti am I readily obtained.”

Text 108

rūpasya tasya mahimānam alam na ko 'pi
vaktum tathāpi kathayāmi yathātma-śakti
tasyāpi vismaya-karam yad udīksya bhāvam
taṁ go-dvija-druma-latā-taravo 'py agacchan

No one can describe (alam na kaḥ api vaktum) the glories of His beauty (tasya rūpasya mahimānam), but still (tathāpi) I shall speak about them (kathayāmi) as far as I am able (yathā ātma-śakti). His beauty amazes even Him (yad tasyāpi vismaya-karam). Seeing Him (taṁ udīksya), the cows, birds, bushes, creepers, and trees (go-dvija-druma-latā-taravo 'py) all became ecstatic (bhāvam agacchan).

No one can describe the glories of His beauty
His beauty amazes even Him
Seeing Him the cows, birds, bushes, creepers, and trees etc
all became ecstatic

Beauty is next in the list of the Supreme Lord's opulences in Gokula.

In texts 108 through 111, Nārada speaks of that beauty.

Because the beauty Kṛṣṇa showed during his appearance in Vṛndāvana had never before been seen in this world, no one was able to explain it in terms of previous experience.

Uddhava describes that astounding beauty in the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.12):

yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā grhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padam bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam

Kṛṣṇa possesses that form suitable for human pastimes (yat martya-
līlā-aupayikaṁ) to show the full capacity of his yoga-māyā (darśayatā
sva-yoga-māyā balaṁ). That form astonishes (vismāpanaṁ) even the
lord of Vaikuṅṭha (svasya). It is the pinnacle of auspicious qualities
(paraṁ padam saubhaga-rddheḥ) and enhances the beauty of his
ornaments (bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇa-aṅgam).

Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa, the moving and nonmoving creatures of Vṛndāvana would show the symptoms of prema, including the sāttvika ecstasies of horripilation, floods of tears, and so on.

As the young gopīs told Kṛṣṇa at the beginning of their rāsa-līlā:

kā stry aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām
trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīksya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran

“Dear Kṛṣṇa (aṅga), what woman (kā stry) in all the three worlds (tri-lokyām) wouldn’t deviate (na calet) from religious behavior (ārya-caritān) when bewildered (sammohita) by the sweet, drawn-out (kala-pada-āyata) melody of Your flute (veṇu-gīta)? Your beauty (idaṁ ca rūpaṁ) makes all three worlds auspicious (trailokya-saubhagam). Indeed, even the cows, birds, trees, and deer (go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ) manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on end (pulakāny abibhran), when they see Your beautiful form (yad nirīksya).” (Bhāgavatam 10.29.40)

Text 109

The vrajā girls
had beauty, character,
virtues & behavior,
superior even to Mahā-lakṣmī
All women would worship
Kṛṣṇa's feet
→ Yet K's beauty robbed them of their sobriety.

yat tāta tāsām api dhairya-moṣakam

yā vai kula-strī-kula-pūjitānghrayaḥ

rūpeṇa śīlena guṇena karmanā

śraiṣṭhyam gatā hanta mahā-śriyo 'pi yāḥ

My dear boy (tāta), in beauty, character (rūpeṇa śīlena), virtues, and behavior (guṇena karmanā) the women of Vraja (yāḥ) excelled (śraiṣṭhyam gatā hanta) even the supreme goddess of fortune (mahā-śriyah api). All women of respectable families (kula-strī-kula) worshiped their feet (pūjita anghrayaḥ). Yet even so, Kṛṣṇa's beauty (yat api) robbed the women of Vraja of their sobriety (tāsām dhairya-moṣakam).

To inspire Gopa-kumāra to listen carefully to this important narration, Nārada here uses the affectionate word tātā (“my dear boy”).

insight

Kṛṣṇa’s beauty shook the gopīs’ determination to uphold their religious principles, but not because the gopīs were simply women, who by nature are supposedly unsteady.

The gopīs of Vraja were reputable cultured ladies in a respectable society, so they were not inclined to careless behavior.

They were equal to Lakṣmī, the best of women, and even better.

They were more beautiful, and more sublime in their gravity and shyness, they were more capable of making proper decisions, maintaining firm determination, and expertly dealing with all kinds of situations, and they were more competent in the various activities of worshiping their beloved.

Nārada therefore uses the interjection hanta (‘indeed’) to express his surprise and delight.

exclamation
↓

Text 110

yad-darśane pakṣma-kṛtaṁ śapanti
vidhiṁ sahasrākṣam api stuvanti
vāñchanti dr̥kṭvaṁ sakalendriyāṇāṁ
kām kām daśām vā na bhajanti lokāḥ

Seeing His
beauty → people curse
& praise Indra for making eyes
become eyes. & desire that all their senses

→ What extraordinary states would anyone not attain upon seeing His beauty?

Seeing His beauty (yad-darśane), people would curse (śapanti)
Brahmā (vidhiṁ), the creator of eyelids (pakṣma-kṛtaṁ), and praise
(stuvanti) Indra, who has a thousand eyes (sahasrākṣam api), and
hanker (vāñchanti) for all their senses (sakala indriyāṇāṁ) to
become eyes (dr̥kṭvaṁ). What extraordinary states (kām kām daśām
vā) would anyone (lokāḥ) not attain upon seeing His beauty (na
bhajanti)?

Śrī Gopāladeva's beauty not only stole the sobriety of the gopīs, His dearest girlfriends, but also drove other people to extraordinary states of consciousness.

The Vraja-vāsīs cursed Brahmā for creating lids on their eyes that made it more difficult to see Kṛṣṇa constantly.

And even though Indra had committed many offenses against Kṛṣṇa and was deformed because of Gautama Rṣi's curse, the Vraja-vāsīs glorified him, for they admired his having a thousand eyes on his body, eyes with which he could enjoy seeing Kṛṣṇa that much more.

The Vraja-vāsīs prayed that all their own senses change into eyes so that with those eyes they could see Kṛṣṇa even more and no competing senses would distract their eyes from the sight of Kṛṣṇa's beauty.

The beauty Śrī Kṛṣṇa displays in Vraja-bhūmi is never seen
anywhere else.

No matter where He goes His transcendental nature is
changeless, and He is always the same person; but devotees in
other places, like Vaikuntha and Dvārakā, do not taste from
seeing Him and being with Him the same exquisite feelings of
love as the Vraja-vāsīs.

Thus we should understand that the Personality of Godhead reveals selected aspects of His special greatness in particular times and places—and Vraja-bhūmi is supremely glorious.

For one reason or another, Kṛṣṇa chooses in some instances to show His eternal glories and in others to allow His personal energies to conceal them.

Nārada's sentiment to this effect was closely paralleled by the words Gopa-kumāra had earlier heard on Janoloka from Pippalayana Ṛṣi:

ānandaka-svabhāvo 'pi
bhakti-māhātmya-darśanāt
bhaktān harṣayitum kuryād
durghaṭam ca sa īśvaraḥ

The Supreme Lord (**sah īśvaraḥ**), by nature the bestower of ecstasy (**ānandaka-svabhāvo 'pi**), creates such unlikely situations (**durghaṭam kuryād**) to delight His devotees (**bhaktān harṣayitum**) by showing them the greatness of devotional service (**bhakti-māhātmya-darśanāt**).
(Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.100)

Nārada has now concluded his description of Kṛṣṇa's special beauty in Vr̥ndāvana.