

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 5

Prema- Love of God

But still, by
His mercy I will
say something about it.
Pis listen carefully.

Text 141

athāpi tat-prasādasya
prabhāveṇaiva kiñcana
yathā-śakti tad ākhyāmi
bhavatv avahito bhavān

Still (athāpi), by the power of the Lord's mercy (tat-prasādasya prabhāvena eva) I will say something about it (tad kiñcana ākhyāmi), as far as I am able (yathā-śakti). Please listen carefully (bhavān avahitah bhavatu).

Text 142

The words of Upanisads & Vedas come from the lips of the Lord. But simply by the touch of His lips created a sound more nectarean than the words of the Vedas.

na śrī-mukhenopanīṣan-mukhaiḥ kṛtaṁ
yad veda-vākyair aparair vaco-'mṛtaiḥ
tat tasya bimbādhara-yoga-mātrataḥ
sā dāravī mohana-vamśikā 'karot

The words (vaco-amṛtaiḥ) of the Upanisads (upanīṣad-mukhaiḥ) and the other Vedic texts (yad aparaiḥ veda-vākyaiḥ) come forth from the Lord's own divine mouth (śrī-mukhena kṛtaṁ). But simply by contact with His bimba-red lips (tasya bimbādhara-yoga-mātrataḥ), that wooden object (tat dāravī), the all-enchanting little bamboo flute (sā mohana-vamśikā), has created a sound (akarot) more nectarean than the words of the Vedas and any other form of speech (implied).

Nārada has great admiration for Kṛṣṇa's flute, and so he calls it by the affectionate diminutive name vaṁśikā (“little bamboo flute”).

At the same time, however, he cannot help but feel jealous of the flute's intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa, which someone like himself can never have; therefore he also uses the somewhat derogatory term dāravī (“wooden object”).

Text 143

vimāna-yānāḥ sura-siddha-saṅghāḥ
samaṁ vadhūbhiḥ praṇayād amuhyan
mahendra-rudra-druhiṇādayas tu
mugdhā gatā vismṛta-tattvatām te

Hearing the
Sound of the flute
All the demigods
became bewildered, etc. etc.

Hearing that sound of the flute (**implied**), all the demigods and perfected mystics (**sura-siddha-saṅghāḥ**) flying in their airplanes (**vimāna-yānāḥ**) were bewildered in divine love (**praṇayād amuhyan**), and so were their wives (**samaṁ vadhūbhiḥ**). Indra, Śiva, Brahmā, and other demigods (**mahendra-rudra-druhiṇa ādayas tu**) were so confused (**mugdhā gatā**) they could no longer tell fact from illusion (**vismṛta-tattvatām te**).

Flying over the earthly Vṛndāvana, the demigods and sages in their vimānas, the subtle vehicles that carry them all over the universe by the power of air, were helplessly attracted by Kṛṣṇa's flute, and their wives succumbed to the charms of Cupid.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.12) the gopīs describe that scene:

kṛṣṇam nirīkṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlam
śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītam
devyo vimāna-gatayah smara-nunna-sārā
bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyah

“Kṛṣṇa’s beauty and character create a festival for all women (vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlam). Indeed, when the demigods’ wives flying in airplanes with their husbands (devyo vimāna-gatayah) catch sight of Him (kṛṣṇam nirīkṣya) and hear (śrutvā ca) His resonant flute-song (tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītam), their hearts are shaken by Cupid (smara-nunna-sārā), and they become so bewildered (mumuhuh) that the flowers fall out of their hair (bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā) and their belts loosen (vinīvyah).”

When the demigods and sages in their vimānas approached Vṛndāvana, they first heard the faint sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute from a distance.

Then, as they came closer and the sound became more audible, even Brahmā, Śiva, and Indra were bewildered:

vividha-gopa-caraneṣu vidagdhō
veṇu-vādyā urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ
tava sutah sati yadādhara-bimbe
datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ

savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ
śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ
kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ

“O pious Mother Yaśodā (sati), your son (tava sutah), who is expert in all the arts of herding cows (vividha-gopa-caraneṣu vidagdhah), has invented many new styles (urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ) of flute-playing (veṇu-vādyā). When He takes His flute (yadā datta-veṇuh) to His bimba-red lips (adhara-bimbe) and sends forth harmonious tones in variegated melodies (anayat savanaśas svara-jātīḥ), Brahmā, Siva, Indra, and other chief demigods (śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ sureśāḥ) become confused (kaśmalaṁ yayuh) upon hearing the sound (tad upadhārya). Although they are the most learned authorities (kavaya), they cannot ascertain the essence of that music (aniścita-tattvāḥ), and thus they bow down their heads and hearts (ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ).” (Bhāgavatam 10.35.14–15)

The principal demigods and sages were so confused they
couldn't even remember their own identities.

They thought,

“Now we can no longer be certain whether the Brahman we
know from the Upaniṣads is actually the Absolute Truth.
Perhaps the sound of this flute is the Absolute Truth instead,
because it seems to be the supreme embodiment of pure
ecstasy.”

Text 144

samādhi-bhaṅgo 'tha mahā-muninām
vikāra-jātasya ca janma teṣu
tat-kāla-cakra-bhramaṇānuvarti-
candrādi-nityāśu-gateḥ nirodhaḥ

meditation
The system
break hearing the flute
sound of they would
ecstatic they would
Moon & other planets
strictly follow according
to the
Kala-cakra
stop hearing the
flute sound

The great sages (mahā-muninām), their meditations breaking (atha samādhi-bhaṅgaḥ), felt transformations of ecstasy (vikāra-jātasya ca) arising within themselves (janma teṣu). And the motions of the moon and other planets (candrādi), swift and unceasing (nitya āśu-gateḥ), which strictly follow (anuvarti) the whirling wheel of time (tat-kāla-cakra-bhramaṇa), just stopped (nirodhaḥ).

Not only the faithful theists among the demigods and sages but also the self-contented impersonalists were enchanted by Kṛṣṇa's flute.

Those impersonalists also experienced the sāttvika-bhāvas of love of God—trembling, horripilation, floods of tears, and so on—which they could never have dreamt of while philosophizing on the bliss of Brahman.

And apart from those independent sages, also overcome by prema were the planets in space, whose motions are normally dictated by the rule of time.

The planets felt the sāttvika-bhāva of being stunned, as indicated by the words of the gopīs:

“Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, and other chief demigods become confused upon hearing the sound.” (Bhāgavatam 10.35.15)

The “other chief demigods” referred to include Candra, Sūrya, and the other rulers of the planets.

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī also mentions the ecstasy of the planets in his account of the rāsa-līlā:

kṛṣṇa-vikrīḍitaṁ vīkṣya
mumuhuh khe-cara-striyah
kāmārditāḥ śaśāṅkaś ca
sa-gaṇo vismito bhavat

“The wives of the demigods (khe-cara-striyah), observing Kṛṣṇa’s playful activities from their airplanes (kṛṣṇa-vikrīḍitaṁ vīkṣya), were entranced (mumuhuh) and became agitated with lust (kāmārditāḥ). Indeed, even the moon (śaśāṅkaś ca) and his entourage, the stars (sa-gaṇah), became astonished (vismitah abhavat).” (Bhāgavatam 10.33.18)

Text 145

gopāś ca kṛṣṇe 'rpita-deha-daihikā-
tmano nijācāra-vicāra-cañcalāh
loka-dvayārtheṣv anapekṣitādr̥tā
bhāryām api svasya namanti tat-priyām

The cowherds (gopāh) dedicated to Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇe arpita) everything they had—their bodies (deha), families, and property (daihikā) and their very selves (ātmanah). Those cowherds, indifferent to their own customs and needs (nija ācāra-vicāra-cañcalāh), paying no regard (anapekṣita-ādr̥tā) to success in this world or the next (loka-dvaya artheṣu), had so much respect for Kṛṣṇa that they even bowed down to their own wives (svasya bhāryām api namanti), because those wives were dear to Him (tat-priyām).

The Gopas
dedicated everything
to Kṛṣṇa
They were
their own help, success for
for help, success etc.
even that they
bowed down to their wives because they were dear to Him.

Persons unfamiliar with Kṛṣṇa were not the only ones bewildered by His charms; even His own close friends and family members were confused.

The gopas of Vraja offered everything they had to Kṛṣṇa, including their children and wives.

Thus in the Hari-vamśa (2.12.46) the gopas tell Śrī Nanda Mahārāja:

adya-prabhṛti gopānām
gavām goṣṭhasya cānagha
āpatsu śaraṇam kṛṣṇaḥ
prabhuś cāyata-locanaḥ

“From today onward (adya-prabhṛti), O sinless one (anagha), in dangerous situations (āpatsu) broad-eyed Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇaḥ āyata-locanaḥ) will be the shelter (śaraṇam) for the cowherds (gopānām), the ~~cows~~ (gavām), and our whole community (goṣṭhasya). He will be the master of us all (prabhuś ca).”

The phrase “our whole community” implies that the gopas
meant to include in their statement the young gopīs but were
too embarrassed to mention Kṛṣṇa’s relationship with them
directly.

As the gopas well know, even their own wives belong to
Kṛṣṇa; therefore, when the gopas refer to them as bhāryā, the
women they are responsible to maintain, they mean for
Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment, not their own.

Text 146

tad-bālakāḥ saṅga-ratā hi tasya
chāyā ivāmuṁ kṣaṇam apy adr̥ṣṭvā
dūre gataṁ kautukataḥ kadācid
ārtā ramante tvarayā spr̥santaḥ

So attached to Kṛṣṇa's company (saṅga-ratā hi tasya) were the cowherds' little sons (tad-bālakāḥ) that they acted just like His shadow (chāyā iva). If even for a moment they couldn't see Him (amum kṣaṇam apy adr̥ṣṭvā)—if He sometimes went away (kadācid dūre gataṁ) on a whim (kautukataḥ)—they were filled with distress (ārtā). And when He returned they would rejoice (ramante) and rush to touch Him (tvarayā spr̥santaḥ).

So attached
were the cowherds to
that they were like His
shadow.
↓
could not see Him for a moment, they
drifted off. → they would
return to Him → they would
rejoice.
↓
if even for a moment, they
couldn't see Him, they
would be
in distress.

Kṛṣṇa's cowherd friends were with Him constantly.
Sometimes, however, Kṛṣṇa would leave them for a short
while to pursue some other interest, like seeing the beautiful
sights of Vṛndāvana.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.12.6) Śukadeva Gosvāmī
describes how when Kṛṣṇa returned from those excursions
His friends would greet Him:

yadi dūram gataḥ kṛṣṇo
vana-śobhekṣaṇāya tam
aham pūrvam aham pūrvam
iti saṁsprīya remire

“Sometimes Kṛṣṇa (yadi kṛṣṇah) would go to a somewhat distant place (dūram gataḥ) to see the beauty of the forest (vana-śobha ikṣaṇāya). Then all the other boys would run to meet Him, each one saying, ‘I shall be the first to run and touch Kṛṣṇa (tam aham pūrvam)! I shall touch Kṛṣṇa first (aham pūrvam)!’ In this way (iti) they enjoyed life (remire) by repeatedly touching Kṛṣṇa (saṁsprīya).”

rādhādyās tāḥ parama-bhagavatyas tu paty-ātmajādīn

lokān dharmān hriyam api parityajya bhāvaṁ tam āptāḥ

yenājasraṁ madhura-kaṭukair vyākulās tad-vikārair

mugdhāḥ kiñcit taru-gatim itā nānusandhātum īśāḥ

→ In that ~~colleagues~~ they went through ~~up~~ levels in which they ~~sometimes~~ lost consciousness.

RR & other
Gopīs
they husband
etc
love
which was of ecstatic
always they were
distracted

Śrī Rādhā and the other ~~supremely fortunate~~ gopīs (rādhādyās tāḥ parama-bhagavatyas tu) abandoned (parityajya) their husbands, children, and ~~other~~ relatives (paty-ātmajā ādīn), their goals for the next life (lokān), their religious principles (dharmān), and even their shyness (hriyam api); and the states of ecstatic love they attained (bhāvaṁ tam āptāḥ) left them always distracted (ajasraṁ vyākulāḥ). In such states (yena) they complained pitifully in sweet voices (madhura-kaṭukaiḥ) and went through upheavals (tad-vikāraiḥ) in which they sometimes lost consciousness (kiñcit mugdhāḥ), stunned like trees (kiñcit taru-gatim itāḥ), unable to understand anything (na anusandhātum īśāḥ).

Śrī Rukmiṇī and the other queens of Dvārakā are the consorts of Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead, but the gopīs headed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī are the favorite devotees of Parama-bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead in His highest feature.

Their love for Kṛṣṇa drives them to extreme states of ecstasy, as they tell in their own words:

nija-padābja-dalair dhvaja-vajra-
nīrajāṅkuśa-vicitra-lalāmaih
vraja-bhuvah śamayan khura-todaṁ
varṣma-dhurya-gatir īḍita-venuh

vrajati tena vyaṁ sa-vilāsa-
vīkṣaṅarpita-manobhava-vegāḥ
kuja-gatiṁ gamitā na vidāmah
kaśmalena kavaraṁ vasaṁ vā

“As Kṛṣṇa strolls through Vraja (vrajati tena) with His lotus-petal feet (nija-padābja-dalaih), marking the ground with the distinctive emblems (vicitra-lalāmaih) of flag, thunderbolt (dhvaja-vajra), lotus, and elephant goad (nīraja aṅkuśa), He relieves the distress (śamayan) the ground feels (vraja-bhuvah) from the cows’ hooves (khura-todaṁ). As He plays His renowned flute (īḍita-venuh), His body moves with the grace of an elephant (varṣma-dhurya-gatih). Thus we gopīs (vyaṁ), who become agitated by Cupid (arpita manobhava-vegāḥ) when Kṛṣṇa playfully glances at us (sah-vilāsa-vīkṣaṇa), stand as still as trees (kuja-gatiṁ gamitāḥ), unaware (na vidāmah) that our hair and garments (kavaraṁ vasaṁ vā) are becoming loose (kaśmalena).” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.35.16–17)

Nārada speaks of the gopīs' complaints as madhura-katukaih,
bittersweet, for those who hear them are overwhelmed both
by joy and by sorrow.

Everyone living in Vraja during Kṛṣṇa's presence was
constantly immersed in intense prema, but when Kṛṣṇa
played His flute the ecstasy of that prema grew unlimitedly,
affecting not only those already in love with Kṛṣṇa, but all
beings, living and inert.

Text 148

āścaryam vai śrṇu paśu-gaṇā buddhi-hīnatvam āptā
gāvo vatsā vrsa-vana-mṛgāḥ pakṣiṇo vṛkṣa-vāsāḥ
dūre krīḍā-rata-jala-khagāḥ sthāvarā jñāna-śūnyā
nadyo meghā api nija-nijaṁ tatyajus taṁ svabhāvam

Listen (śrṇu), and I will tell you the most wonderful thing (āścaryam vai):
Upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute (**implied**), the many animals (paśu-gaṇā), born
without intelligence (buddhi-hīnatvam āptā), abandoned their own natures
(tatyajus taṁ nija-nijaṁ svabhāvam). The cows, and the bulls and calves (gāvo
vatsā vṛṣa), and the wild beasts of the forest (vana-mṛgāḥ), and the birds living
in the trees (pakṣiṇo vṛkṣa-vāsāḥ), and the water birds (jala-khagāḥ) sporting
in distant lakes (dūre krīḍā-rata), and so too did the trees and plants (sthāvarā)
and even the inanimate beings (jñāna-śūnyā) like rivers and clouds (nadyo
megha api).

Listen & I
will tell you the
most wonderful thing.
Upon hearing
Kṛṣṇa's flute,
many animals
& trees etc.
→ all animals, trees, birds, etc.
left own
nature

One would expect the Vraja-vāsīs, expert in the arts of rasa,
to respond ecstatically to the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute.

What is amazing is that dull animals and even lesser beings
shared that ecstasy.

The creatures of Vṛndāvana mentioned in this verse are listed
in order of decreasing intelligence.

Along with the cows, bulls, and calves, the village animals also included buffaloes, sheep, and goats.

Those domestic animals kept company with Kṛṣṇa every day. The deer and other forest animals saw Him less often, but even they tasted the ecstasies of prema when they heard Kṛṣṇa's flute.

The birds frequenting the Vṛndāvana forest, who knew Kṛṣṇa from the times He had rested beneath their trees, and even the birds who lived in lakes far away, had the divine intelligence to come nearby when Kṛṣṇa played His flute.

The unmoving creatures—the trees, bushes, and vines—and
even the nonliving rivers also joined this festival of ecstasy
initiated by Kṛṣṇa's flute song.

And apart from all the beings present in Vraja on the surface
of the earth, those who joined in that festival included even
the clouds in the sky.

Text 149

The moving
creatures became
immobile
beings moved & their nature
beings lost consciousness
constantly they were
themselves in a
flood of Prema-rasa
etc.

carāḥ sthiratvam caratām sthirā gatāḥ
sa-cetanā moham acetanā matim
nimajjitāḥ prema-rase mahaty aho
vikāra-jātākramitāḥ sadābhavan

The moving creatures (carāḥ) became immobile (sthiratvam gatāḥ), the inanimate beings moved (caratām sthirā); the conscious beings (sa-cetanā) lost consciousness (moham), and the unconscious (acetanā) gained it (matim). Constantly (sadā), indeed (aho), these creatures and objects were submerged (nimajjitāḥ abhavan) in a vast flood of prema-rasa (mahaty prema-rase), overwhelmed (ākramitāḥ) by many transformations of ecstasy (vikāra-jātā).

Animals, stunned by ecstasy, lost their power to move.

Trees and other plants became mobile, trembling and erupting with new leaves.

Conscious creatures no longer showed external expressions of life, and unconscious logs and stones appeared to come alive by sprouting leaves and rolling about in the wind.

All these extraordinary phenomena were signs of the ecstasy evoked by the song of Kṛṣṇa's flute.

In the words of the gopīs:

gā gopakair anu-vanam nayator udāra-
venu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhrtsu sakhyah
aspandanam gati-matām pulakas tarūṇām
niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram

“My dear friends (sakhyah), as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through the forest (anu-vanam nayator) with Their cowherd friends, leading Their cows (gā gopakaih), They carry ropes to bind the cows’ rear legs at the time of milking (niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayoh). When Lord Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute (venu-svanaiḥ), the sweet music (kala-padaih) makes the moving living entities (gati-matām tanu-bhrtsu) become stunned (aspandanam) and the nonmoving trees tremble with ecstasy (pulakah tarūṇām). These things are certainly very wonderful (vicitram).” (Bhāgavatam 10.21.19)