

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 5

Prema- Love of God

Text 78

śrī-nārada uvāca

gopāla-deva-priya gopa-nandana

śrīmān ito dūra-taro virājate

goloka-nāmopari sarva-sīma-go

vaikuṅṭhato deśa-viśeṣa-śekharaḥ

Śrī Nārada said: Dear devotee of Lord Gopāladeva (gopāla-deva-priya), O son of a cowherd (gopa-nandana), far away from here (itah dūra-taro) lies (virājate) the most exalted of all places (deśa-viśeṣa-śekharaḥ), called Goloka (goloka-nāma). It is full of all splendor (śrīmān) and beyond the borders of all other regions (upari sarva-sīma-gah), including Vaikuṅṭha (vaikuṅṭhato).

Oh Gopala kumhara!
Far away from here
is the most exalted of
all places called Goloka.

Gopa-kumāra is gopāla-deva-priya in two ways: Lord Gopāla is dear to him, and he is dear to Lord Gopāla.

This is because Gopa-kumāra is gopa-nandana, a young cowherd boy from Śrī Govardhana Hill.

Goloka stands above all the other spiritual planets because it is superior in every way.

The Brahma-saṁhitā (5.43) states:

goloka-nāmni nija-dhāmni tale ca tasya
devī-maheśa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu
te te prabhāva-nicayā vihitāś ca yena
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

I worship the supreme lord Govinda (govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi) by whom (yena) respective powers are given (te te prabhāva-nicayā vihitāh ca) to the abodes of Durgā, Śiva and Viṣṇu (devī-maheśa-hari-dhāmasu teṣu teṣu), which are situated below his own planet of Goloka (tasya goloka-nāmni nija-dhāmni tale).

The eight coverings of the universe over which Durgā presides, and the abode of Lord Śiva, and the Vaikunṭha kingdom of Lord Hari all stand below Goloka.

Text 79

That same
Goloka takes the
form of divine
bhava-vrindavana in Mathurā
district.
The city of Mathurā is
unable to stay apart
from Vraja (its own
essence) also there

sa māthura-śrī-vraja-bhūmi-rūpas
tatraiva devī mathurā-purī ca
vrndāvanādi-vraja-bhūmim ātma-
sāram vinā sthātum apārayantī

That same Goloka (sa) takes the form of the divine Vraja-bhūmi of the district of Mathurā (māthura-śrī-vraja-bhūmi-rūpah). And the city of Mathurā (mathurā-purī ca) is also there (tatraiva), unable to stay (sthātum apārayantī) apart from (vinā) her own essence (ātma-sāram)—Vrndāvana and the other forests of Vraja-bhūmi (vrndāvana ādi-vraja-bhūmim).

According to this statement, Mathurā is not separate from
Vraja-bhūmi like Ayodhyā and other abodes of the Lord.

One might ask: “Although the district of Mathurā is
nondifferent from Śrī Goloka, what about the city of
Mathurā?”

Mathurā City is devī in the sense that she is “effulgent” and
“splendid,” and she is included in Goloka.

Even though Mathurā has her own distinct identity, she cannot bear to be apart from the forests of Vraja-bhūmi.

According to the spiritual geography of Goloka, the Mathurā district includes Vṛndāvana and the other Vraja forests, which are the most essential parts of Mathurā.

Because the entire region
of Mathurā is a land of cows
→ it is called Goloka.
Even though it is a confidential place
→ it is famous everywhere.

Text 80

sā go-pradhāna-deśatvāt
sarvā śrī-mathurocyate
goloka iti gūdhō 'pi
vikhyātaḥ sa hi sarvataḥ

Because the entire region of Śrī Mathurā (sarvā śrī-mathurā) is a land
of cows (go-pradhāna-deśatvāt), it is called Goloka (sā goloka iti
ucyate). Though a confidential place (gūdhah api), it is famous
everywhere (sa hi sarvataḥ vikhyātaḥ).

The transcendental abode that includes the city of Ayodhyā is also called Ayodhyā.

Why then is the abode that includes the city of Mathurā called Goloka rather than Mathurā?

The answer is that the entire Mathurā district, with its city, towns, and forests, is full of cows.

Furthermore, the Goloka of the spiritual world is famous by that name.

The intimate pastimes of the Personality of Godhead are a well-kept secret, but the name Goloka is known everywhere.

Lord Indra, for example, refers to Goloka by name in his prayers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Hari-varṇā.

So there is no reason to doubt the glories of Goloka on the grounds that it is an obscure, unknown place.

That abode can
be attained only
by following the
pure sentiments of the
yogītika bhaktis

Text 81

sa ca tad-vraja-lokānām
śrīmat-premānuvartinā
kṛṣṇe śuddha-tareṇaiva
bhāvenaikena labhyate

That abode (sah) can be reached (labhyate) only (ekena) through the purest sentiments (śuddha-tareṇaiva bhāvena), in which one follows (anuvartinā) the sublime love (śrīmat-premā) held for Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇe) by the residents of Vraja (tad-vraja-lokānām).

Goloka can be reached only by prema free of fault, untouched by jñāna, karma, or any other material endeavor, and concentrated on the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

And to learn this kind of prema, one must carefully study the examples of Vraja-vāsīs like Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā, and especially the ideal example of Śrī Rādhā and Her companions.

Text 82

tādr̥g bhagavati premā
pāramaiśvarya-dr̥ṣṭitah
sadā sampadyate naiva
bhaya-gaurava-sambhavāt

Such pure love for
achieved by never be
on aishvarya concentrating
bcos by such concentration,
one feels fear &
reverence

Such pure love for the Personality of Godhead (tādr̥g bhagavati premā) one can never achieve (sadā na eva sampadyate) by concentrating on His supreme power (pārama aiśvarya-dr̥ṣṭitah), because in that mood one invariably feels fear and reverence (bhaya-gaurava-sambhavāt).

Text 83

kevalam laukika-prāṇa-
suhṛd-buddhyā sa sidhyati
lokālokottaro yo 'sāv
ati-lokottaro 'pi yaḥ

One can achieve
that love only by
thinking of the Lord as
one's ordinary dear friend.
That love is higher than
what is found in the
material world & even
the sp. world.

One achieves that love (sah sidhyati) only by thinking of the Lord as one's ordinary dear friend (kevalam laukika-prāṇa-suhṛd-buddhyā). That love (yaḥ asāu) is higher than found in the material worlds and the outer coverings of the universe (loka-aloka-uttarah), and higher than in the spiritual kingdom beyond (ati-loka uttarah api yaḥ).

Only by considering Kṛṣṇa one's lifelong friend in one of the spiritual relationships can a devotee rise to the level of the pure love known only in Vraja.

This vraja-prema is not an inferior version of love of God; it is not love in the mode of worldly affection.

It is in fact superior to any feeling known in loka (the fourteen worlds of the material universe), aloka (the elemental coverings of the universe), or ati-loka (the Vaikuṅṭha planets beyond those coverings).

Vraja-prema is the essential nature of the highest of all worlds; the Lord who is its object is supreme, and the sweetness it embodies is also supreme.

Text 84

lokānugāpi sānyonyam

priyatātīta-laukikā

madhurāty-adbhutaiśvarya-

laukikatva-vimiśritā

Although that reciprocal affection (sā anyonyam priyatā) seems to follow the ways of the ordinary world (loka anugā api), it is beyond the world (atīta-laukikā). It combines (vimiśritā) intimate sweetness (madhurā), amazing opulence (aty-adbhuta aiśvarya), and worldly simplicity (laukikatva).

Although that
reciprocal affection
seems to follow the
worldly affection the
beyond the world. It is
It combines intimate sweetness,
amazing opulence &
worldly simplicity.

Goloka's Lord and its residents care for one another as do
people of the material world, yet their prema transcends the
limits of mundane love.

The loving dealings of Vraja are like nothing ever seen in this
world.

When Mother Yaśodā simply remembers Kṛṣṇa, milk flows
from her breasts.

And Nanda Mahārāja is constantly drenched in a flood of his own tears of love for Kṛṣṇa.

The cowherd men use everything they have, even their wives and children, only for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, never their own.

And some of the old ladies of Vraja adopt the mood of Yaśodā, while others disguise themselves as their own young daughters to please Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa's friends are constantly desirous of seeing Him, so much so that they cannot tolerate even the momentary obstruction caused by Kṛṣṇa's passing behind a tree.

And the blessed cowherd girls have no interest in life other than Him; whether separated from Him, or going out to meet Him, or enjoying His company, they relish all sorts of extraordinary ecstasy.

In these ways the prema of Vraja is both amazing and sweet,
combining within itself the majestic opulence of the spiritual
world and the simple sweetness of the material world.

The devotees of Vraja possess superworldly opulence, and at
the same time they are the most simple people.

By their opulent power they are expertly able to understand
and take part in all the various aspects of the Lord's countless
pastimes.

And like ordinary people, the Vraja-vāsīs, it is well known from the accounts of their lives, enjoy food and drink, the company of friends and relatives, and so on.

And even the Personality of Godhead, though showing His opulence, shows it in the pastimes of an ordinary child.

During His infant pastimes, for example, Kṛṣṇa drank milk from the breast of Pūtanā and sucked out the life air from that powerful witch, who had never suspected He could do so.

And in countless other ways also, the Lord, though showing His opulence, acted like an ordinary human being.

As the narration of Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta continues, this will all be thoroughly explained.

With such ideas in mind, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:

evam nigūḍhātma-gatiḥ sva-māyayā
gopātmajatvaṁ caritair viḍambayan
reme ramā-lālita-pāda-pallavo
grāmyaiḥ samam grāmya-vad īśa-ceṣṭitaḥ

“In this way (**evam**) the Supreme Lord, whose soft lotus feet (**pāda-pallavaḥ**) are personally attended by the goddess of fortune (**ramā-lālita**), concealed His transcendental opulences (**nigūḍha ātma-gatiḥ**) by His internal potency (**sva-māyayā**) and acted (**caritaiḥ viḍambayan**) like the son of a cowherd (**gopa ātmajatvaṁ**). Yet even while enjoying (**reme**) like a village boy (**grāmya-vad**) in the company of other village residents (**grāmyaiḥ samam**), He often exhibited feats only God could perform (**īśa-ceṣṭitaḥ**).” (Bhāgavatam 10.15.19)

The word vidambayan in this Tenth Canto verse is a form of the verb vidamb (“to imitate”) as a present participle (“imitating”).

This participle form, however, can also sometimes mean “for the purpose of,” as it does here—“for the purpose of imitating.”

Thus the verse can be construed to say that Kṛṣṇa hides His supremacy (nigūḍhātma-gatiḥ) by His own special potencies (svamāyayā) for the purpose of imitating or assuming the nature of a cowherd boy (gopātmajatvam).

He hides His godly powers (ātma-gati) so that He can act like an ordinary human, but His absolute power is still discernible in the extreme limit of the perfect sweetness He displays in each of His pastimes.

He enjoys having His feet massaged by the supreme goddess of fortune, and He does things only God can do (īśa-ceṣṭitaḥ), and yet He plays like an ordinary village boy (grāmya-vat) in the company of other villagers.

Text 85

vyavahāro 'sya tesām ca
so 'nyonyam prema-varadhanah
vaikunṭhe paramaiśvarya-
pade na kila sambhavet

In Goloka
Increase their mutual love
in a way that is not possible

In Goloka the dealings between the Lord and His devotees (asya tesām vyavahārah) increase their mutual love (anyonyam prema-varadhanah) in a way not possible (na kila sambhavet) in Vaikunṭha (vaikunṭhe), the abode of supreme opulence (parama aiśvarya-pade).

Nārada has said that Goloka lies far away from Vaikuṅṭha, and
now he explains why.

The Supreme Lord simply cannot behave with His devotees in
Vaikuṅṭha with the same familiarity as in Goloka.