

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

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Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 7

Jagad-ānanda

The Bliss of the Worlds

Text 102

10-14-36

AS 109 as
people about
us devotees
↓
their w/ attachments → worldly things
↓
their homes → prison houses
↓
their affection → foot shackles.

tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās
tāvat kārā-grhaṁ grhaṁ
tāvan moho 'nghri-nigaḍo
yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ

“My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa), until (na yāvat) people become
Your devotees (te janāḥ), their material attachments and
desires (tāvat rāga-ādayaḥ) remain plunderers (stenāḥ), their
homes (tāvat grhaṁ) remain prisons (kārā-grhaṁ), and their
affectionate feelings for their family members (tāvat mohaḥ)
remain foot-shackles (aṅghri-nigaḍaḥ).

as 109 as

Here Brahmā responds to a question Kṛṣṇa might ask: Why should the Vraja-vāsīs expect any more from Him than do the sannyāsīs, who have renounced everything?

Renunciants who have freed themselves from all material contamination obtain nothing more than Kṛṣṇa, so why shouldn't the Vraja-vāsīs also be happy by having just Him?

Brahmā answers by reminding Krsna that material desires, like thieves, rob their victims of discernment, determination, and other assets, and the home, in which one lives with spouse and children, is a prison that the infatuations of love keep one forever from escaping.

Successful sannyāsīs deserve credit for somehow avoiding these thieves and securing release from the prison of home life.

The Vraja-vāsīs, however, are much more praiseworthy
because their homes, attachments, and desires and the love
they share among themselves actually free them from
bondage.

Brahmā argues, therefore, that the Vraja-vāsīs deserve a greater
reward for their worship of the Supreme than impersonal
sannyāsīs.

As we have already heard from the authoritative statements of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other scriptures, the spiritual achievements of nondevotee renunciants are similar to those of demons like Kāṁsa.

Such demons intensely concentrated on Kṛṣṇa while striving to destroy Him.

Being directly killed by Kṛṣṇa elevated them to the status of liberation, oneness with Brahman, which in effect is attainment of the Supreme Lord because Brahman is one of the Personality of Godhead's own opulences.

But there is still a great difference between this impersonal liberation and the perfection Vaisnavas achieve when they gain entrance into the spiritual kingdom, Vaikunṭha, and reach the lotus feet of the Lord.

Brahmā's apparently simple prayer can be understood in several different ways.

① One is that Brahmā is answering a potential doubt about why the Vraja-vāsīs, full as they are with attachments and desires, are more praiseworthy than more exemplary Vaisṇavas who are renounced both in their external behavior and in the core of their hearts.

Here Brahmā argues that although material attachments corrupt anyone who has not developed a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's devotees have learned the value of devotional service to Him, and so they dovetail those same attachments in a spiritually constructive way.

Without devotion for Kṛṣṇa, strict sannyāsī practice
renunciation in vain, because ultimately none of their
disciplines will bear the desired fruit.

Most likely the results of their labor will be pride and self-
delusion.

In contrast, the unlimited desires held by every devotee of
Kṛṣṇa can never be satiated, for those desires are all in
relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

In particular, the Vraja-vāsīs never feel they have had enough of Kṛṣṇa.

②

Brahmā's statement can also be understood as a response to Kṛṣṇa's suggestion that by sharing with the Vraja-vāsīs the enjoyment of unique loving exchanges Kṛṣṇa can repay them for their devotion.

As Brahmā points out, as long as one does not become Kṛṣṇa's devotee one remains in bondage.

Thus Kṛṣṇa has a more important reason for coming to this world than just to enjoy with His friends: He displays varieties of captivating attachments and desires because He wants to entice all living beings to enter His devotional service.

Therefore, since He performs His pastimes not for the satisfaction of His devotees but for purposes of His own, why should the Vraja-vāsīs consider His debt to them repaid just because He plays with them?

3

Still another explanation of Brahmā's statement, when one reads its grammar differently, is that Kṛṣṇa will be anxious until everyone in the universe becomes His devotee.

Until then Kṛṣṇa's attachments and desires will be like thieves that rob Him of His mental equilibrium and self-satisfaction, and His abodes in Vaikuṅṭha and elsewhere will be like prisons because the company of those who constantly live with Him will restrict His freedom.

The special affection He has for Mahā-lakṣmī and others in Vaikunṭha
will be like foot-shackles that restrict His movement and prevent Him
from always enjoying the company of His dearest devotees.

He will not feel the ecstasies of intimate reciprocation, therefore, but
only the pains of separation.

Thus Brahmā predicts that after Kṛṣṇa leaves the Vraja-vāsīs to go to
Mathurā He will always feel separation from them and always remain
indebted.

Text 103

10.14.37

Although u x
nisprapañca →
Greed & lustre
material life → just
to expand the variety
& enjoyment of
of devotees. → just
variegated
of surrendered

prapañcam niṣprapañco 'pi
viḍambayasi bhū-tāle
prapanna-janatānanda-
sandoham prathitum prabho

“My dear master (prabho), although You have nothing to do with material existence (niṣprapañcaḥ api), You come to this earth (bhū-tāle) and imitate (viḍambayasi) material life (prapañcam) just to expand (prathitum) the varieties of ecstatic enjoyment (ānanda-sandoham) for Your surrendered devotees (prapanna-janatā).

^{Explanation-1}
Kṛṣṇa might explain that He comes to Vraja not only to enjoy pastimes with His devotees but also to become their relative.

In this way, by imitating the ways of material life, He intends to increase the ecstasy of His devotees.

But Brahmā thinks that merely putting on a superficial show of being a son or other family member is not enough to absolve His debt to the Vraja-vāsīs.

EXPLANATION 2

Or else Brahmā's statement, if reinterpreted as a rhetorical question, asks whether Kṛṣṇa's becoming the son or other relative of the Vraja-vāsīs on earth isn't in fact an illusion, a false show.

The answer, Brahmā implies, is "Of course not."

Kṛṣṇa proves the seriousness of His intentions—He shows that He intends to enlighten, not delude—by displaying before Mother Yaśodā His universal form and in other ways revealing to His devotees His identity as the Supreme Lord.

And not only the Vraja-vāsīs but anyone who comes in contact with Kṛṣṇa is relieved of material delusion, for Kṛṣṇa cannot hide His true nature from His devotees.

Kṛṣṇa comes to the earth to share with His devotees the highest degrees of ecstasy, whereas on other planets, like Svarga, the corresponding exchanges, such as those between Aditi and her son Vāmanadeva, are hampered by over-awareness of His supremacy.

If even in Vraja-bhūmi Kṛṣṇa were known to be God, then how would He ever repay His debt to the Vraja-vāsīs?

His attempts to bestow the highest ecstasy on them would be frustrated, just as on Svargaloka.

By Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potencies, devotees who dedicate themselves fully to Kṛṣṇa, who abandon themselves to the control of kṛṣṇa-prema, lose all attachment to material things.

They then give up the main causes of delusion—their family entanglements and the affection for relatives and friends.

But although Kṛṣṇa's association makes material life dissolve, Brahmā tells Kṛṣṇa, "For certain very special devotees, You create an illusion [viḍambayasi] by increasing their attachments and desires. Thus You, O Kṛṣṇa, who are prabhu, capable of doing anything, expand the vast ocean of ecstasy for Your devotees on earth, something You never do in Vaikuṅṭha."

Kṛṣṇa's fully surrendered devotees accept all their worldly assets as His mahā-prasāda and maintain their attachments only for His sake.

Thus their possessions and attachments, which fill them with the variegated sweetness of bhajanānanda, the supreme bliss of pure devotional service, do nothing but enhance their spiritual lives.

What can Kṛṣṇa do for such exalted devotees?

He can only remain in debt to them.