

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 108

① is spreading
the glories of earth
→ having & earth
treasure of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.
The peacocks are dancing
madly hearing His flute
& the other animals, watching this from the hill tops, become stunned.

vr̥ndāvanam sakhi bhuvō vitanoti kīrtim
yad devakī-suta-padāmbuja-labdha-lakṣmi
govinda-veṇum anu matta-mayūra-nr̥tyam
prekṣyādri-sānv-avaratānya-samasta-sattvam

“O friend (sakhi), Vṛndāvana (vr̥ndāvanam) is spreading (vitanoti) the glory (kīrtim) of the earth (bhuvah), having (yat) obtained (labdha) the treasure (lakṣmi) of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa (pada-ambuja), the son of Devakī (devakī-suta). The peacocks (mayūra) dance (nr̥tyam) madly (matta) when they hear (anu) Govinda’s (govinda) flute (veṇum), and upon seeing (prekṣya) them from the hilltops (adri-sānu) other (anya) creatures (sattvam) all (samasta) become stunned (avarata).”

Simply mentioning the gopīs' special love for Kṛṣṇa has put Parīkṣit Mahārāja in their mood.

Thus he is inspired to recite some of the prayers the gopīs sang in praise of the great personalities of Vraja, beginning with the Vṛndāvana forest itself.

When a group of gopīs heard the song of Kṛṣṇa's all-enchanting flute as He entered the Vṛndāvana forest, they were immersed in the rasas of pure love and shared their thoughts with one another.

In this verse (Bhāgavatam 10.21.10) one of them says to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that Vṛndāvana has made the earth more glorious than Indra's heaven or, in other words, more glorious than all the other planets in the universe.

Kṛṣṇa, by marking Vṛndāvana with His unique auspicious footprints, has bestowed upon every creature in Vṛndāvana the rarely found prize jewel of all goals of life—bhakti-yoga, the treasure of blissful devotional service to Him.

Kṛṣṇa marked Vṛndāvana not with His shoes but with His bare feet, which are compared to lotuses because of being very tender.

The ground of Vṛndāvana, therefore, is exceedingly lucky to be touched by Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet despite being strewn with pebbles and thorns.

Vṛndāvana is most fortunate because of Kṛṣṇa's presence.

Though Lord Viṣṇu and other forms of Godhead appear in Svargaloka and other places, they are only avatāras of Kṛṣṇa, but Devakī-nandana, who appeared in Vṛndāvana, is the source of all avatāras.

Therefore to establish Kṛṣṇa as avatārī, the source of all expansions of God, the gopīs need only call Him Devakī-suta, the son of Devakī.

Saying this is enough to prove that Vṛndāvana has raised the earth to a status higher than that of the heavenly planets, for even when Kṛṣṇa appears as other incarnations on other planets of the universe those planets never become as blessed with opulence (labdha-lakṣmi) as the earth does when He appears in Vṛndāvana.

In other incarnations Kṛṣṇa behaves like the supreme controller, and this makes it difficult for Him to leave His bare footprints freely here and there.

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Although the gopīs know everything there is to know, their overwhelming ecstatic love forces them to see the Supreme Lord as the son of Yaśodā, and no one else.

They call Him Devakī-suta only because it was Devakī who brought Him, the original avatārī, into this world.

Only in Vṛndāvana does the Supreme Person appear as Govinda, the Lord of the cows (gavām indraḥ), who delights in playing with the cows and cowherds, wears a peacock feather and guñjā berries on His head, decorates Himself with a garland of kadamba flowers and other forest ornaments, and holds in His hand His constant friend the flute.

As soon as the peacocks in Vṛndāvana hear the murmuring of Govinda's flute, they conclude that a dark cloud is announcing the approach of rain and begin to dance.

And seeing the peacocks dancing, all the other living beings gathered in groups on the peaks of the hills stop whatever they are doing and just stand there, stunned in ecstasy.

Thus Vṛndāvana makes the earth more glorious than any other realm, even Vaikuṅṭha.

The words veṇum anu (“following the flute”) mean that as soon as the peacocks drink with their ears a few drops of the nectar coming from Kṛṣṇa’s distant flute they burst into wild dancing.

But the words can be split differently. Veṇu-manu (“the mantra chanted by the flute”) indicates that the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute has the mystic power to enchant the peacocks and make them dance in intoxication.

That powerful mantra produces various peculiar effects throughout Vṛndāvana.

The peacocks are the first to respond to it, but its echoes reach even the peaks of the hills, which are attractive (prekṣya) to everyone and are the source of the birth of the bamboo flute.

Hearing this mantra, all the living beings standing on the peaks
cease their activities.

Another possible reading is that the peak of Govardhana Hill is
prekṣya, most beautiful and always visible to the people of Vraja.

At the outset of the Govardhana-pūjā, as the multitude of
offerings were being presented to feed Govardhana, the Supreme
Personality of Godhead seated Himself on Govardhana's peak and
announced, śailo 'smi: "I am this hill."

The words avaratānya-samasta-sattvam mean that all other creatures become stunned.

But these words also apply to Vṛndāvana in the sense that the lower material modes—passion and ignorance—cannot act there and only the perfectly pure mode of viśuddha-sattva prevails.

As confirmed in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.35.9), even the trees and creepers in Vṛndāvana have attained the status of pure goodness:

vana-latās tarava ātmani viṣṇum
vyañjayantya iva puṣpa-phalādhyāḥ
praṇata-bhāra-viṭapā madhu-dhārāḥ
prema-hrṣṭa-tanavo vavṛṣuḥ sma

“The trees and creepers in this forest (vana-latās tarava) are so luxuriant with fruits and flowers (puṣpa-phalādhyāḥ) that they seem to be manifesting (vyañjayantya iva) Lord Viṣṇu within their hearts (ātmani viṣṇum). As their branches bend low with the weight (praṇata-bhāra-viṭapā), the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect in the ecstasy of love of God (prema-hrṣṭa-tanavaḥ), and both the trees and the creepers pour down (vavṛṣuḥ sma) a rain of sweet sap (madhu-dhārāḥ).”

Viśuddha-sattva is the substance of Vaikuṅṭha, as described in the Bhāgavatam's
Second Canto (2.9.10):

pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoh
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla-vikramaḥ
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ

In Vaikuṅṭha (yatra) there is no (na pravartate) rajas or tamas (rajas tamas), and no sattva mixed with rajas and tamas (sattvaṁ ca tayoh miśraṁ). There is no influence of time (na ca kāla-vikramaḥ). There is no influence of māyā at all (na yatra māyā), what to speak of its products such as material elements (kim uta apare). In Vaikuṅṭha the inhabitants are fully dedicated to the Lord (yatra harer anuvratā) and are worshippable by the devas, asuras and devotees (sura asūra arcitāḥ).

In other words, the mode of sattva in Vaikuṅṭha is never mixed with rajas or tamas; it is always viśuddha, completely pure.

Thus in Vaikuṅṭha there is no material goodness, which is a product of Māyā.

Na yatra māyā kim utāpare: “Māyā and her products have no presence in Vaikuṅṭha.”

The transcendental nature of Vaikuṅṭha is called sattva only because the behavior of Vaikuntha's residents resembles in some ways that of persons influenced by the material sattva-guṇa; Vaikunṭha has demigods, for example, who resemble their sāttvika counterparts in the material world.

And since Vṛndāvana on earth equals and surpasses Vaikuṅṭha, Vṛndāvana too is permeated by viśuddha-sattva.

And there is yet another way to understand prekṣyādri-sānv-
avaratānya-samasta-sattvam: When the creatures of
Vṛndāvana hear Kṛṣṇa playing His flute, many of them faint
from ecstasy and fall on top of one another, and stacked in
piles they resemble the peaks (sānus) of Govardhana and
Vraja's other beautiful hills (prekṣya-adri).

Others respond to the sound of the flute by standing still and
staring into the distance to try to locate Kṛṣṇa.

Actually, apart from the peacocks, all living beings at once
cease their external activity when they hear Kṛṣṇa's flute, but
transcendentally they respond in various ways.

When the peacocks dance wildly, the other animals remain
motionless to fix their minds on hearing the flute and to look
for Kṛṣṇa.

↓
Every one of them, however, experiences the greatest limit of
ecstasy.

There is also another possible reading: All the living beings of Vraja who were standing in high places (sānu) were intently engaged (avarata) in offering their services to Kṛṣṇa.

The birds, for example, were mildly chirping for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, and all other beings were happily absorbed in their own personal services.

Or else by standing in high places to better view Śrī Kṛṣṇa the various creatures were arranging for their protection (ava) from the terrible pain of being separated from Kṛṣṇa, and they were busily absorbed (ratāni) in their own services for Kṛṣṇa.

Not only the dancing peacocks but all the other animals (anya-
samasta-sattvam)—the kokila birds, for example—were busily
engaged in service.

And for the mischievous and violent animals the main way to
serve Kṛṣṇa was to put aside their natural proclivities.

Alternatively, the logical connection of the phrases in this verse can be understood in a different order: First Kṛṣṇa saw the peacocks dancing, and then responded by playing His flute.

1st flute → 2nd dance of the peacocks → 3rd stunned and

When the peacocks first noticed Kṛṣṇa entering the forest, they saw the friend of all peacocks—the one with a peacock feather always decorating His head—pick up their feathers from the ground.

They then became mad with joy and began to dance.

Seeing the peacocks dance, Kṛṣṇa happily raised His flute to
His lips and played.

All the living beings on the mountain peaks responded to the
sound by stopping all activity other than looking at Kṛṣṇa and
listening to His flute.

And as implied by the word samasta (“all”), the peacocks as
well stopped dancing.

At first they manifested the ecstasy of dancing, and then after
hearing the flute they were stunned, overcome by ecstasy.

Such a scene is never observed in Vaikuṅṭha.