

Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta

by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

Volume - 2

Śrī-goloka-māhātmya

The Glories of Goloka

Part 7

Jagad-ānanda

The Bliss of the Worlds

Text 116

Blessed are
these foolish deer
as they all
after hearing His flute
saw.

dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-matayo 'pi harīṇya etā
yā nanda-nandanam upāṭṭa-vicitra-veṣam
ākaraṇya veṇu-raṇitam saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ
pūjām dadhur viracitām praṇayāvalokaiḥ

→ Indeed, both the doe & buck → worship with looks of love & affection.

“Blessed (dhanyāḥ sma) are all these (etāḥ) foolish (mūḍha-matayah
api) deer (harīṇya) because they have approached Mahārāja Nanda’s
gorgeously dressed son (yā nanda-nandanam upāṭṭa-vicitra-veṣam)
after hearing (ākaraṇya) Him play on His flute (veṇu-raṇitam). Indeed,
both the doe and the bucks (saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ) worship the Lord
(pūjām dadhuḥ) with looks of love and affection (praṇaya-avalokaiḥ
viracitām).”

In this verse (Bhāgavatam 10.21.11) another gopī glorifies the deer.

The deer, being similar in species to the cows and other creatures tended by the Personality of Godhead, are able to accompany them while grazing.

Dhanyāḥ sma means “they [the deer] are fortunate.”

Or, considering the grammatical license granted to saintly authors like Vyāsadeva, another way to understand dhanyāḥ sma is “we are fortunate.”

This is possible if we allow Śrīla Vyāsa the liberty of leaving off the final letter of the word smaḥ (“we are”), the way it is sometimes left off in the texts of the Vedas.

In other words, “We consider it our great fortune that these deer have responded to the flute song of our beloved Śrī Nanda-nandana by approaching to worship Him with all respect.”

The worship done by the deer was very simple, being performed with nothing more than loving glances.

The deer had no paraphernalia at their disposal for worship,
and other than those loving glances, nothing would have
satisfied Kṛṣṇa.

As expressed by the prefix vi- in the word viracitām (“well
arranged”), the deer’s method of worship was exceptionally
pleasing to Kṛṣṇa.

The deer saw Kṛṣṇa decorated with wonderful forest ornaments like flower garlands and with peacock feathers and guñjā berries in His hair.

Thus even though the deer had taken birth as unintelligent animals (mūḍha-mati), they were supremely fortunate.

Or, understanding the meaning of mūḍha-matayaḥ differently, just by hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute the deer lost their power to think clearly, and their internal and external senses all became stunned.

This is the natural influence of Vraja: even living beings possessed of various skills are deprived of them by the reverberation of Kṛṣṇa's flute and rendered dumb and immobile like inert beings.

The doe normally stay hidden deep within the forest.

But the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute drew them out into the open, where they came near Kṛṣṇa and, beholding His beauty, were bewildered by Cupid.

In that condition, they could think of nothing but Him.

They simply gazed at Him in great love, as if worshiping Him.

And their husbands also reacted the same way to the song of
Kṛṣṇa's flute.

The doe and bucks—those most exalted of animals—were
endowed with such deep love for the Supreme Lord that they
could never become proud of their good fortune; they always
behaved like innocent creatures.

As the gopīs meditate on the devotional service of the deer,
they cannot help but think,

“These deer are fortunate because they can worship Kṛṣṇa along with their husbands.”

But our foolish husbands cannot tolerate our worship of Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, despite being born as human beings, fully able to understand and act, we are unfortunate.

In fact, we are most unfortunate, even though born in the very virtuous and clever cowherd caste, because we cannot follow Kṛṣṇa and listen to His flute while He wanders about in His forest dress.

We cannot gaze at Him with wide-open eyes filled with love and serve Him with pleasing glances.

And even if a few of us can occasionally perform such service for Him, our husbands object.”

The word kṛṣṇa-sāra means “the black deer.”

But the word sāra also means “important.”

So the gopīs think, “The husbands of the deer are called kṛṣṇa-sāras because only Kṛṣṇa is important to them; the attitude of our husbands, however, is just the opposite.”

Actually, the cowherd men are also most fortunate Vaiṣṇavas,
exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa; still, the gopīs, as subordinates, as
wives, feel shy to disclose to their husbands their worship of
Kṛṣṇa.

Constrained by the husband-and-wife relationship, the gopīs have
to worship Kṛṣṇa secretly as a paramour.

This unique style of worship enables the gopīs to achieve the
extreme limit of success—the highest degree of pure love for
Kṛṣṇa.

Text 117

gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha-nirgata-veṇu-gīta-
pīyūṣam uttabhita-karna-putaiḥ pibantyaḥ
śāvāḥ snuta-stana-payah-kavalāḥ sma tasthur
govindam ātmani drśāśru-kalāḥ sprśantyaḥ

The cows
drink the nectar
of their flute-songs
The calves, with their
mouths full of milk
stand still as they
see & embrace Him within their hearts.

“Using their upraised (uttabhita) ears (karna) as vessels (putaiḥ), the cows (gāvaḥ ca) are drinking (pibantyaḥ) the nectar (pīyūṣam) of the flute-song (veṇu-gīta) flowing out (nirgata) of Kṛṣṇa’s mouth (kṛṣṇa-mukha). The calves (śāvāḥ), their mouths full (kavalāḥ) of milk (payah) from their mothers’ moist (snuta) nipples (stana), stand still (tasthur sma) as they take Govinda (govindam) within themselves through their tear-filled eyes (drśā śru-kalāḥ) and embrace Him (sprśantyaḥ) within their hearts (ātmani).”

By far superior to the deer of the Vṛndāvana forest are the cows personally tended by Śrī Gopāladeva.

In this verse (Bhāgavatam 10.21.13) other gopīs glorify Kṛṣṇa's cows.

To the cows, the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute was just like pīyūsa, the nectar created on the moon.

This means that Kṛṣṇa's face seemed to them like the moon.

Anxious not to spill a drop of that nectar, they used their ears like cupped palms to drink it carefully.

In other words, they listened to the flute with rapt attention.

Despite the cowherds' vigilance, the śāvas, or calves, some of them newly born, had somehow joined their mothers and were busy drinking their mothers' milk.

But as soon as the calves heard Kṛṣṇa's flute, they forgot what they were doing; they simply kept their mothers' milk in their mouths without swallowing it.

Or else it may be that the calves were not present and the word śāvāḥ refers to the cows themselves.

The cows were so absorbed in drinking the nectar from Kṛṣṇa's moonlike face that they became motionless like corpses (śāvāḥ).

As love for Kṛṣṇa swelled in the hearts of the cows, milk spontaneously flowed from their udders, and the grass they were eating remained in their mouths because they were unable to chew.

The cows were raised to the highest platform of love of God by seeing Kṛṣṇa with their eyes and embracing Him within their hearts.

They were so moved that drops (kalāḥ) of tears (aśru) appeared in their eyes.

Or, taking kalāḥ to mean “producing,” the cows were
shedding profuse tears.

Hearing this description, the gopīs commented, “Dear friends,
if the cows act like this, then we gopīs, as human beings,
should be excused for being driven to extremes by the force of
prema.”

When Kṛṣṇa vibrates
His flute → groups of
deer, bulls & cows
& stop chewing & get stunned
like pictures by painting.

Text 118

vṛndaśo vraja-vṛṣā mṛga-gāvo
venu-vādyā-hṛta-cetasa ārāt
danta-daṣṭa-kavalā dhṛta-karṇā
nidritā likhita-citram ivāsan

“When Kṛṣṇa vibrates (vādyā) His flute (venu), Vraja’s bulls (vraja-vṛṣāḥ), deer (mṛga), and cows (gāvah), standing in groups (vṛndaśaḥ) at a great distance (ārāt), are all captivated by the sound (hṛta-cetasa), and they stop chewing the food in their mouths (danta-daṣṭa kavalāḥ) and cock their ears (dhṛta-karṇāḥ). Stunned, they appear (āsan) as if asleep, or like figures in a painting (nidritā-likhita-citram iva).”

This verse (Bhāgavatam 10.35.5) describes the rare good fortune shared by the cows and the bulls and the other animals that were with them.

“Dear friends, please now hear something wonderful! When the bulls, deer, and cows hear Kṛṣṇa’s flute, they feel the urge to approach Him. They all come from far away and stand nearby Him, fully enchanted. They forget about the grass in their mouths, and it either stays there unchewed or else falls from their mouths to the ground. Their ears standing upright, the animals remain still, as if asleep or as if not living beings but painted images.”

Thus these animals, bewildered by prema, lose their powers of thought and activity.

2nd explanation

Or, explaining what happens in another way, at first the cows hear Kṛṣṇa's flute from a distance as an indistinct murmur, without embellishments or even a discernable melody.

But simply that faint sound is enough to capture their hearts and completely agitate them.

After a short time, when the cows, bulls, and deer hear the song of Kṛṣṇa's flute more clearly, they feel fear that death might intervene and separate them from Kṛṣṇa.

So to prevent themselves from hearing any more, they lift their front legs and forcibly cover the holes of their ears.

When that fails to stop the sound, they come closer to Kṛṣṇa, holding blades of grass in their mouths as a sign of humble entreaty.

And when that also fails to stop Kṛṣṇa from playing, they all become stunned.

The word citram in this verse is in the singular form because as these animals fell into a stupor they came together into a densely packed group, like figures posed together in a painting.