

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 137

prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyam
gobhiḥ samaṁ kvaṇayato 'sya niśamya veṇum
nirgatya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ
paśyanti sa-smita-mukhaṁ sadayāvalokam

#44
28.
When the young gopīs hear His flute sound either while leaving by going back to their houses or while rushing out of their houses to see Him.

experience His smiling face & merciful glances.

→ They must have performed many pious acts to be able to see Him &

“When the young gopīs (abalāḥ) hear (niśamya) Kṛṣṇa playing (kvaṇayataḥ) His (asya) flute (veṇum) as He leaves Vraja (vrajāt vrajata) in the morning (prātaḥ) with His cows (gobhiḥ samaṁ) or returns with them at sunset (sāyam āviśataḥ ca), they quickly (tūrṇam) come out of their houses to see Him (nirgatya). They must have performed many (bhūri) pious activities (puṇyāḥ) to be able to see Him (paśyanti) as He walks on the road (pathi), His smiling (sa-smita) face (mukhaṁ) mercifully (sa-daya) glancing upon them (avalokam).”

“We ladies of Mathurā may also have the privilege of seeing Kṛṣṇa in all His glory, and we too may be able to glorify Him in saṅkīrtana while we engage in our activities—at least after He kills Kāmsa and remains here with us.

But the experience will never be the same for us as for the gopīs of Vraja.

For only they can watch Kṛṣṇa in the morning as He leaves for the forest and in the evening as He returns home.

Only they can see Him surrounded by His cows and His cowherd friends.

As soon as the gopīs hear His flute, they come outside, onto the road on which He will walk.

They may be powerless women (abalāḥ), devoid of independent strength, but still they are the most fortunate and pious of human beings.”

When Kṛṣṇa comes into view, the gopīs not only see Him but also hear His flute song and the jingling of His foot bells as He walks with the grace of a skilled dancer.

Kṛṣṇa's face is always adorned with merciful glances, and no one ever sees it not smiling.

The gopīs, however, even while gazing on Kṛṣṇa's beauty, are in anxiety because they know that He will soon be out of sight.

What is so fortunate about seeing Kṛṣṇa go off to the forest?

What is so auspicious about being left in the anguish of separation?

In fact, however, anything in connection with Kṛṣṇa is auspicious, even when it superficially appears to be a cause for suffering.

The gopīs may see Him leave in the morning, but they also see Him return in the late afternoon.

Having languished in their homes during the day, like lotuses almost dead from being overexposed to sunlight, the gopīs rush out of their houses as soon as the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute song enters their ears.

Each time they see Kṛṣṇa is like a festival for them.

Every morning they make various excuses to come early to
Mother Yaśodā's house to see Kṛṣṇa and follow Him as He
leaves for the forest.

They are completely absorbed, morning and evening, in
meditating on how to get out of their houses to be near
Kṛṣṇa—but when they hear Him playing His flute they at once
run outside, for the sound of the flute arouses in them the
urges of Cupid, rendering them helpless and weak (abalāḥ).

As repeatedly explained in Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, the gopīs receive the greatest mercy of the Personality of Godhead when they are immersed in the mood of separation.

Nonetheless, the women of Mathurā limit themselves to describing the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, because the sublime subject of the gopīs' feelings of separation is beyond their grasp.

And they dare not even mention the supreme glories of Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā.

Since the wonder of merely seeing Kṛṣṇa is difficult for the Mathurā women to describe, what can they tell about the gopīs' greatest fortune—being able to dance with Kṛṣṇa in the rāsa-līlā?

The Mathurā women lament, “Because our stock of pious credits is so meager, we will never be able to see Kṛṣṇa in this same way.”

Text 138

na pāraye 'ham niravadya-saṁyujām
sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvr̥ścyā tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā

∴ PLS be satisfied
with UR own
glorious service.

→ U have worshiped Me while cutting all the domestic ties →

“I am not able to repay My debt (na pāraye aham) for your spotless service (vaḥ sva-sādhu-kṛtyaṁ), even within a lifetime of Brahmā (vibudha āyusā api). Your connection with Me is beyond reproach (niravadya-saṁyujām). You have worshiped Me (yā mām bhajan), cutting off (saṁvr̥ścyā) all domestic ties (geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ), which are difficult to break (durjara). Therefore (tad) please let your own glorious deeds (vaḥ sādhunā) be your compensation (pratiyātu).”

29
I cannot repay
my debt even within
a life span of Brahmā
Ur connection with Me
is beyond reproach.

This verse (Bhāgavatam 10.32.22) describes the most exalted position of the gopīs, earned by their pure love for the Personality of Godhead.

When Kṛṣṇa suddenly disappeared at the beginning of the rāsa dance, the gopīs cried in great pain.

But then He reappeared, sat comfortably in their midst, and listened to their eager questions.

The present verse is Kṛṣṇa's answer to those questions.

Texts 138 through 146 tell of the Supreme Lord's special love for the gopīs.

In these nine verses the Lord Himself, from His own lotus mouth, explains this wonderful aspect of His own glories.

The gopīs are faultless in their love for Kṛṣṇa.

Neglecting all considerations other than making Him happy,
they submerge their minds in thoughts of Him in spotless
prema.

Surely these girls should not be criticized for approaching
Kṛṣṇa with lust, even though followers of the smṛti-śāstras
may want to criticize them.

Their “lust” for Kṛṣṇa is in fact a great virtue, since it is the cause of their faultless association with Him.

As previously shown in this book, the gopīs’ attraction to Kṛṣṇa is an exceptional development of their fully matured love of God.

In fact, Kṛṣṇa considers Himself unable to repay the gopīs for their devotion, even in a lifetime of the intelligent demigods or sages or the supremely intelligent Lord Brahmā.

If we read sva-sādhu-kr̥tyam to mean “proper compensation,” the Lord says that He is unable to repay the gopīs for their devotion.

And if we read it, alternatively, to mean “one’s own saintly behavior,” the Lord says that He cannot act with the same exceptionally saintly devotion for them as they have for Him.

Kṛṣṇa is amazed by how strongly committed to Him the gopīs are.

They have cut the insurmountable knots of attachment to home and husband and children and the multitude of duties centered on them.

Severing these attachments, the gopīs have worshiped Kṛṣṇa fully, whereas Kṛṣṇa, because He has ties of love to so many devotees, feels He can never be as exclusively dedicated.

Therefore He can only suggest to the gopīs that their own saintliness might repay His debt to them.

There is nothing He can do in kind to reciprocate.

Dividing the phrase sva-sādhu-krtyam differently yields yet another understanding.

Su-asādhu-kṛtyam (which changes to sv-asādhu-kṛtyam)
means “very unvirtuous acts.”

Thus Kṛṣṇa indicates that even the things the gopīs do that
lack virtue, such as behaving cruelly toward Him, are glorious.

Even those acts, Kṛṣṇa suggests, contribute to absolving His
debt, so what then of the pious things the gopīs do?

Kṛṣṇa says this to the gopīs out of greed to enjoy with them in all situations, no matter how they treat Him.

Unfortunately, Kṛṣṇa cannot properly repay the service of the gopīs, who have offered Him their faultless bodies (niravadya-samyujām).

Kṛṣṇa is encumbered by various household duties of His own, like His constant duty to tend the cows.

He cannot abandon His responsibilities and serve the gopīs properly (mā bhajan).

And Kṛṣṇa's other obligations are unbreakable (durjarāḥ), like strong metal chains (śṛṅkhalāḥ).

As implied by the prefix sam (“completely”) in the word samvr̥ścya (“completely cutting off”), Kṛṣṇa might be able to put aside His inner attachment to these other engagements, but He cannot avoid being externally involved in them.

Kṛṣṇa thinks that unless He offers Himself to the gopīs completely, as they have offered themselves to Him—unless He worships them in absolutely exclusive devotion, disregarding everything else—He cannot requite their love.

He remains in debt because in His dealings with them He has broken the vow He made in Bhagavad-gītā (4.11) **ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham**: “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.”

In all humility, Kṛṣṇa sweetly requests the gopīs that for their saintly behavior they agree to be repaid by their own saintly qualities (sādhunā).

Or, if we take the word sādhunā to mean “by a saintly devotee,” Kṛṣṇa suggests that although He Himself cannot reciprocate adequately, perhaps in the future some of His devotees will become followers of the gopīs and serve them faithfully.

Text 139

gacchoddhava vrajaṁ saumya

pitror naḥ prītim āvaha

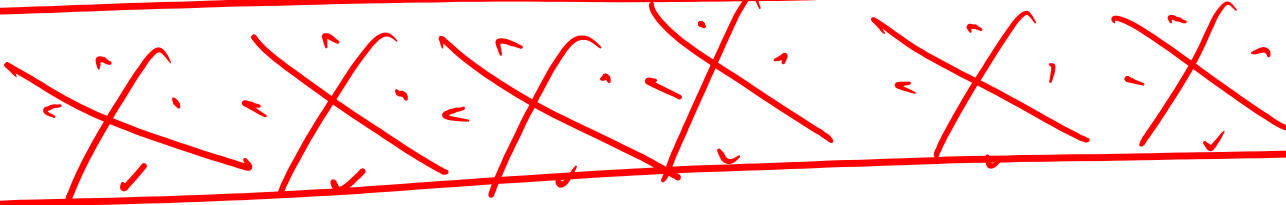
gopīnām mad-viyogādhiṁ

mat-sandēśair vimocaya

“Dear gentle (saumya) Uddhava (uddhava), go (gaccha) to Vraja (vrajaṁ) and give (āvaha) pleasure (prītim) to Our (naḥ) parents (pitroḥ). And also relieve (vimocaya) the gopīs (gopīnām), suffering (ādhiṁ) in separation (viyoga) from Me (mat), by giving them My (mat) message (sandēśaiḥ).

Dear gentle (U)
→ Go to (V) & give
pleasure to our parents.
& relieve the G's suffering
& separation from Me
by giving My message

Texts 139 through 146 were spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to His dear servant and best of advisors, Uddhava.



What we say about another person when that person is absent usually indicates our true feelings more reliably than what we say in his presence.

Therefore Kṛṣṇa's confidential statements to Uddhava about the gopīs confirm that Kṛṣṇa does indeed feel as indebted to them as He claimed while speaking with them.

Kṛṣṇa wanted to do what would most help the gopīs obtain His full mercy, so instead of going to Vr̥ndāvana Himself, He dispatched Uddhava.

He hoped that the message Uddhava was to convey would pacify the Vraja-vāsīs, whose feelings of separation were burning them like an uncontrolled forest fire.

Kṛṣṇa's message was meant to sprinkle on them the nectar of His company and give them some hope that they might see Him again.

This verse and the three that follow come from the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.46.3–6).

In the first half of this verse, Kṛṣṇa follows the way of ordinary dealings by asking Uddhava to console His mother and father.

In the second half, He directs Uddhava to give special attention to the gopīs.

The name Uddhava means “festival,” so by using this name
Kṛṣṇa implies that just by meeting Uddhava the Vraja-vāsīs
should feel very much encouraged.

And Kṛṣṇa refers to Himself by using the plural pronoun naḥ
either because He feels proud to be the son of Nanda and
Yaśodā or else because He thinks that since Nanda and Yaśodā
accept Balarāma also as their son, they should accept Uddhava
the same way.

Surely Uddhava deserves this treatment.

He is amply endowed with saintly humility and with pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa, so he should give Nanda and Yaśodā great satisfaction by his uncontrived skill in delivering Kṛṣṇa's message.

Uddhava is saumya, very mild by nature.

Or else saumya indicates that since Uddhava is as beautiful as the moon (soma), Nanda and Yaśodā will be very much pleased just by seeing Him.

To pacify the gopīs, however, will require more than merely Uddhava's finesse.

The gopīs feel the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa so deeply that to relieve them His own words must be conveyed.

Or else Kṛṣṇa is saying that nothing less than His own words,
with their pleasing tone and special connotations, will pacify
both His parents and the gopīs.

Still, though by hearing His message His mother and father
will become happy, the gopīs will feel only limited relief.

So great is their love for Him that they can never feel content
in His absence.