

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 140

31.
The minds of
those gopis are absorbed
in Me.
Their lives are ever devoted
to Me.

tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā
mad-arthe tyakta-daiḥikāḥ
ye tyakta-loka-dharmāś ca
mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham

↑ take it upon
myself to sustain them

→ They have abandoned everything related to their bodies for me

“The minds of those gopīs (tā manaskāḥ) are always absorbed in Me (mat), and their very lives (prāṇā) are ever devoted to Me (mat). For My sake (mat-arthe) they have abandoned (ye tyakta) everything related to their bodies (daiḥikāḥ), including ordinary happiness in this life and the religious duties needed for happiness in the next (tyakta-loka-dharmāś ca). Therefore I (aham) take it upon Myself to sustain (bibharmi) those gopīs in all circumstances (tān).

In this verse Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava why the gopīs need to be so carefully consoled.

He also explains why He feels so obliged to them and what attributes set them apart as His greatest devotees.

Because the gopīs always think about Kṛṣṇa, they appear as if possessed by insanity.

And because Kṛṣṇa is their very life and soul, whenever He goes any distance away from them they seem on the verge of death.

In the past they expressed their unalloyed devotion for Him by making great sacrifices.

For His sake they gave up the company of their husbands, children, and homes.

But now that they live in Vraja without Him they feel desolate,
because they cannot resort to any other shelter than Him.

If the gopīs have actually sacrificed everything for Kṛṣṇa, why
don't they just go to Mathurā to be with Him?

They don't because He promised He would soon return to
Vraja.

That promise, as well as their concern for Kṛṣṇa's happiness,
keeps them from abandoning their physical responsibilities to
their husbands, children, and so on and keeps them nicely
dressing and ornamenting themselves.

Otherwise the gopīs would simply walk away from their
families and cast aside their fine clothing and the jewelry
Kṛṣṇa sent them from Mathurā.

The gopīs have no attachment to any of these.

For the sake of Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs have put aside all hopes for success in this life and the next.

They have abandoned all expectations of material happiness (loka) and spiritual happiness (dharma).

Kṛṣṇa confesses that because the gopīs are so perfectly surrendered to Him, He takes it as His duty to maintain them, give them strength, and assure their happiness.

Kṛṣṇa alone is the real source of happiness for the gopīs, and
He is their real protector, much more than their husbands.

Therefore Uddhava should agree to carry Kṛṣṇa's message to
Vraja.

Here Kṛṣṇa uses the masculine forms of the pronouns ye and
tān because, man or woman, any devotee who has such pure
love deserves His protection.

Nonetheless, the gopīs, through their womanly nature,
manifest unique qualifications: they have made what for
women is the supreme sacrifice by abandoning for Kṛṣṇa's
sake their social connections (loka) and their feminine virtues
of shyness and chastity (dharma).

Uddhava may worry that the gopīs, having abandoned
everything, must be wandering aimlessly in the wilderness.
How then will he be able to find them?

And furthermore, since they have rejected all social ties, they must have become like madwomen haunted by ghosts.

How then will he be able to reason with them?

Kṛṣṇa assures Uddhava that even though the gopīs have for His sake abandoned loka and dharma, He watches over them and protects them.

He continues to provide them the same worldly and superworldly benefits they have rejected.

Thus when Uddhava reaches Vṛndāvana he will find the gopīs at home with their husbands and children, and of sane mind.

What's more, Kṛṣṇa personally continues to provide even for the husbands and children the gopīs have mentally abandoned.

There is no need to worry that the families of the gopīs might be uncared for, or that the community might have ostracized the husbands for having wives who have abandoned religious principles.

Kṛṣṇa is protecting the gopīs' families, and of course He is protecting the gopīs themselves and their religious principles.

Through His personal energies, Kṛṣṇa provides for the needs of the husbands and children, so what doubt can there be that He maintains the gopīs?

He supplies their worldly needs (loka), maintains the integrity of their religious duties as women (strī-dharma), and keeps them strongly engaged in their primary interest and highest dharma—nāma-saṅkīrtana and the other essential aspects of devotional service to Him.

According to the rules for Sanskrit euphony, ye tyakta may be read as the elided form of ye atyakta, and when we take the liberty to restore the prefix a- (“not”), another meaning of the last two lines of this verse comes out:

“Only for My sake have the gopīs not abandoned their worldly responsibilities [loka-dharma].”

Therefore, dear Uddhava, since you are virtually equal to Me, you should go to Vraja, make the gopīs happy, protect their sanity and natural humility, and do the same for their husbands, their children, and everyone else in Vraja.”

Text 141

mayi tāḥ preyasām preṣṭhe
dūra-sthe gokula-striyah
smarantyo 'ṅga vimuhyanti
virahautkaṅṭhya-vihvalāḥ

① → for these
② → cherished
③ → all the
④ → when they remember Me
⑤ → they are overwhelmed with
⑥ → anxiety of separation.

“My dear Uddhava (aṅga), for those women of Gokula (gokula-striyah) I (mayi) am the most cherished (preṣṭhe) object of love (preyasām). Thus when they (tāḥ) remember Me (smarantyah), who am so far away (dūra-sthe), they are overwhelmed (vimuhyanti) by the anxiety (autkaṅṭhya-vihvalāḥ) of separation (viraha).

Here Kṛṣṇa speaks to His friend Uddhava with deep concern for the gopīs.

Never, He tells Uddhava, has He seen in anyone such distress as the gopīs now suffer, nor has He ever heard of such misery in any historical or literary account.

At every moment the gopīs are so beside themselves in the bewilderment of separation that they seem ready to leave their bodies for the abode of Death.

In this world one's spouse, children, and friends are generally very dear.

Yet more dear is one's own body, and still more dear the vital air of life.

More dear than life is dharma, still more dear is mokṣa, and even more dear is kṛṣṇa-bhakti, pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa-bhakti finds its perfect culmination in unalloyed prema,
and because the gopīs are more advanced in kṛṣṇa-prema than
anyone else, they are most dear to the Supreme Lord and His
devotees.

For the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa Himself is the most dear object of attraction.

When He goes far away to Mathurā and remains there, the gopīs
nearly drown in the anxiety of separation, and stay alive only by
the faint hope that He will come back to them.

Unable to think and act coherently, they become as if insane.

They fall into obsessive remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, thinking about how they used to associate with Him.

And they become so confused and distant from reality that it becomes difficult to verify that they are still alive.

The gopīs suffer greatly when Kṛṣṇa leaves them for even a moment, but when He leaves Vṛndāvana for Mathurā they approach the extreme limit of distress.

Yet even though the greatness of their pain often overwhelms their minds, the gopīs cannot help but remember Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa calls Uddhava aṅga, “dear friend,” to remind Uddhava, “I am depending on your skills as a messenger and counselor to save the lives of the gopīs by delivering My message.”