

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 148

kvemāḥ striyo vana-carīr vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ
kṛṣṇe kva caiṣa paramātmāni rūḍha-bhāvah
nanv īśvaro 'nubhajato 'viduṣo 'pi sāksāc
chreyas tanoty agada-rāja ivopayuktah

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How could such sophisticated
love manifest in the hearts
of such simple souls who would
How could such pure love manifest
in beings with such
spoiled behavior.

→ Indeed → the SPG Himself awards blessings even to an ignorant worshiper

“How amazing it is that these (kva imāḥ) simple women (striyah) who wander about the forest (vana-carīr), seemingly spoiled (duṣṭāḥ) by wayward behavior (vyabhicāra), have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love (rūḍha-bhāvah) for Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇe), the Supreme Soul (parama-ātmani)! Indeed, it is true (nanu) that the Supreme Lord (īśvaraḥ) Himself (sāksāt) awards (tanoti) His blessings (śreyah) even to an ignorant worshiper (aviduṣah anubhajataḥ api), just as the best medicine (agada-rāja iva) works even when taken by a person ignorant of its ingredients (upayuktah).

It is obviously with irony that Uddhava speaks these words.

He considers himself unqualified to have the company of the gopīs, which he has achieved only by the undeserved mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Contrasting himself with the gopīs, Uddhava thinks that they are Kṛṣṇa's dearest devotees whereas he has deviated in so many ways from the path of devotion: he has committed serious aparādhas, refused to carry out Kṛṣṇa's instructions, and failed to develop confidence in the process of bhakti-yoga.

According to him, compared to the gopīs he is especially
fallen.

The gopīs are “roamers of the forest.”

In other words, their intense love for Kṛṣṇa impels them to
wander about the Vṛndāvana forest, where so many of His
pastimes took place.

And in the agony of separation from Kṛṣṇa they live in the most secluded part of the Vṛndāvana forest, where they wander about in the impassable wilderness.

These transcendental goddesses of fortune in Śrī Nanda's cowherd community are now totally helpless under the sway of their incomparable prema.

Uddhava's life is nothing like that of the gopīs: He is male and lives in a bustling metropolis, where his residence is fixed; he enjoys all comforts and is therefore unfit to wander about the Vṛndāvana forest; he is proud of knowing philosophically who Kṛṣṇa is and so cannot gain the topmost treasure, the gopīs' love for Kṛṣṇa.

Thus Uddhava judges himself a most fallen wretch compared with the gopīs, whose saintly qualities are inexhaustible.

He thinks he will never deserve their association.

Uddhava refers to himself in the plural (duṣṭāḥ) either because of the honor he gained by the slight association he had with the gopīs in Vṛndāvana or else because he speaks on behalf of Śrī Nārada and Akrūra also.

He does not refer to the gopīs directly but simply calls them “these women” (imāḥ), thus indicating the awe he feels in their presence.

Certainly nowhere but in the hearts of the gopīs can such
elevated pure love for Kṛṣṇa be seen.

And certainly, Uddhava thinks, only by the special power of
devotional service to Kṛṣṇa could such a foolish person as
himself have had the privilege of witnessing the glories of the
gopīs.

Kṛṣṇa is īśvara, the independent supreme controller, free to give suitable rewards for any service done for Him.

He can reciprocate with His devotees however He wishes.

He can shower His kindness even on an ignorant person who knows nothing of His greatness and the greatness of His servants, a person who sees devotees and devotional service with material vision but who somehow has rendered a little service to one of His devotees.

If any person, by approaching Kṛṣṇa's devotee, takes even a slight step toward accepting service to Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa at once reciprocates with all kinds of assistance and blessings.

Just as a powerful medicine is effective even on patients completely ignorant of its properties, the Lord's mercy acts on anyone who comes in touch with Him.

The word nanu ("certainly") can alternatively be understood as two separate words, nā ("not") and nū ("indeed").

Indeed, because Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead,
whatever He wants to do He can, and whatever He does not
want to do He can refrain from.

Or He can transform reality; in other words, He can undo any
situation to change it to whatever He prefers.

He has unlimited, all-powerful energies, by which He fulfills
all His desires.

Thus He can award the highest perfection of life to anyone—to the wise saint who worships Him constantly without deviation (anubhajataḥ), to someone who has worshiped Him irregularly (na anubhajataḥ), or even to someone who has never worshiped Him but has by some good fortune or other come in touch with His devotees.

And if Kṛṣṇa wants, He can award this causeless mercy without delay (sākṣāc chreyas tanoti).

He can make His mercy visible to all, not just a select few.

He can make His mercy so obvious that one need not search for it by speculative philosophical conjectures.

Kṛṣṇa's mercy thus acts like a rare, most potent medicine, effective even if not swallowed and digested but merely brought near the patient and smelled.

Text 149

nāyam śriyo 'nga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādah

sva-ṛyoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ

rāsotsave 'sya bhujā-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha-

labdhāśiṣām ya udagād vraja-sundarīnām

for the.

“When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the gopīs in the rāsa-līlā (rāsotsave), the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord (bhujā-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha). This transcendental favor (ayam prasādah) was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world (na śriyah). Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets (na svar-yoṣitām), whose bodily luster and aroma resemble those of the lotus (nalina-gandha-rucām). And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful by mundane estimation (kuto anyāḥ)?”

When Lord Kṛṣṇa was dancing in the Rāsa-līlā, the gopīs were embraced by the arms of the Lord. (ayam prasādah) never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. (na śriyah) Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets. (na svar-yoṣitām) whose bodily luster and aroma resemble those of the lotus. (nalina-gandha-rucām) And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful by mundane estimation. (kuto anyāḥ)?

Uddhava is astonished that although Mahā-lakṣmī, the consort of Lord Nārāyaṇa, is famous as His beloved, she cannot enjoy the Supreme Lord's favor in the same way as the gopīs of Vraja.

If the supreme goddess of fortune is less fortunate than these gopīs, what can be said of everyone else?

This verse has already been explained by Śrī Nārada Muni in an earlier chapter of Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta (2.5.189–191).

Text 150

āśām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām

④
The G's have
Given up status - easy
Partner & all such things - difficult
to give up things → Just to
Worship Mukunda.

Give their dust.

→ ∴ let me become a blade of grass in (v) so that the G's can trample my leaf

“The gopīs of Vṛndāvana (āśām) have given up (hitvā) the association of their husbands, sons, and other family members (sva-janam), who are very difficult to give up (yā dustyajam), and have forsaken the path of chastity (ārya-patham ca hitvā), to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa (bhejur mukunda-padavīm), which one should search for by Vedic knowledge (śrutibhir vimṛgyām). Oh (aho), let me be fortunate enough (ahaṁ syām) to be one of the bushes, creepers, or herbs in Vṛndāvana (vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām), because the gopīs trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet (carāṇa-reṇu-juṣām).”

By observing the glories of the gopīs, by describing those glories in his own words, and by meeting the gopīs in person, Uddhava is now completely absorbed in the gopīs' special mood of loving Kṛṣṇa.

In this exalted state, he has now discovered his true heart's desire, which in this verse he prays to achieve as the final fruit of all the service he has done for Kṛṣṇa.

In his next life, he hopes to become any of the plants in Vr̥ndāvana who receive the dust from the gopīs' feet.

The enthusiasm Uddhava gains from expressing this wish inspires him to say more about the greatness of the gopīs.

For the service of Śrī Mukunda's lotus feet, the gopīs have abandoned things impossible for young women to give up—husbands, children, and other relatives, and the Vedic standards of behavior.

Casting aside everything ordinarily precious, they have chosen to devote themselves utterly to mukunda-padavīm, the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Or, understanding padavīm in its more literal sense of “footpath,” every day the gopīs eagerly go out, morning and evening, to watch the path Kṛṣṇa will use to go to the forest and return.

Or else mukunda-padavīm is the spiritual path of bhakti-yoga.

The gopīs have abandoned their families and religious principles just to engage in Kṛṣṇa's service, even without expecting to obtain Him.

For such unique surrender, they should be acknowledged as supremely glorious.

But why have these gopīs, whose feet are worshiped by all respectable persons, set a bad example by abandoning the noble life of dedication to their husbands and fathers?

Why have they defied the authority of the Vedas in that way?

Uddhava answers that the Vedas themselves consider devotional service to Kṛṣṇa the most important goal in life and aspire for the service of Śrī Mukunda's lotus feet.

The word vimṛgyām indicates that the Vedas can only strive to achieve the prema of the gopīs, not achieve it.

Therefore, even though the Vedas are the teachers of all principles of religion and spiritual knowledge, it is perfectly fitting that the gopīs take no heed of Vedic authority and in fact abandon the Vedic principles for the sake of obtaining the most precious thing—something the Vedas themselves can hardly obtain.

Indeed, for the gopīs to observe the religious principles upon which their families insist would only prevent the gopīs from properly worshiping the lotus feet of Mukunda.

On this matter, Lord Kṛṣṇa has given His own opinion:

traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedā
nistrai-guṇyo bhavārjuna

“The Vedas deal mainly with the subject of the three modes of material nature (traī-guṇya-viṣayā vedā). O Arjuna (arjuna), become transcendental to those three modes (nistrai-guṇyo bhava).” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.45)

And here in Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta we have just read, in Text 147, Uddhava's own words from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.58), **kim brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya:** “For one who has tasted the narrations of the infinite Lord, what is the use of taking birth as a high-class brāhmaṇa, or even as Lord Brahmā himself?”

In other words, any real attraction to the topics of Lord Ananta exempts one from having to follow the Vedic injunctions that regulate thought and behavior.

The gopīs, moreover, have earned this exemption even more
certainly than have others because the only desire the gopīs
have is to follow the path of their beloved Mukunda.

Alternatively, Uddhava's statement may be understood as his
answer to another doubt.

The Vedas, the śrutis, are the supreme object of reverence
even for Brahmā and the other demigods, who receive their
knowledge from the Vedas.

This we hear from the very words of the śrutis themselves.

How then are the gopīs justified in disregarding the Vedic instructions?

In response to this query, Uddhava says that the scope of Vedic authority is limited to the field of ordinary religious life whereas the gopīs have completely transcended that jurisdiction by taking exclusive shelter of Kṛṣṇa.

The Vedas can merely seek Kṛṣṇa, but the gopīs already possess Him.

In the opinion of some authorities, the Upaniṣads earned the right to become gopīs out of intense hankering to worship Kṛṣṇa in the gopīs' special mode of prema.

But this should be rejected as an untenable theory. Why?

Because the Upaniṣads are inferior in devotion even to the goddess Lakṣmī.

Thus the Upaniṣads, on their own merit, do not deserve the good fortune of becoming gopīs.

Only on the strength of Kṛṣṇa's special mercy could any of them ever attain that perfection.