

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Brahmā's Prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa

This chapter describes the prayers Brahmā offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is also known as Nanda-nandana.

For His satisfaction, Brahmā first praised the beauty of the Lord's transcendental limbs and then declared that His original identity of sweetness is even more difficult to comprehend than His opulence. Only by the devotional process of hearing and chanting transcendental sounds received from Vedic authorities can one realize the Personality of Godhead. It is fruitless to try to realize God through processes outside the scope of Vedic authority.

The mystery of the Personality of Godhead, who is the reservoir of unlimited spiritual qualities, is inconceivable; it is even more difficult to understand than the impersonal Supreme. Thus only by the mercy of God can one understand His glories. Finally realizing this, Brahmā repeatedly condemned his own actions and recognized that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ultimate shelter of the universe, is Brahmā's own father, the original Nārāyaṇa. In this way Brahmā begged the Lord's forgiveness.

Brahmā then glorified the inconceivable opulence of the Personality of Godhead and described the ways in which Brahmā and Śiva differ from Lord Viṣṇu, the reason for the Supreme Lord's appearance in various species of demigods, animals and so on, the eternal nature of the pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, and the temporality of the material world. By knowing the Supreme Personality in truth, the individual spirit soul can achieve liberation from bondage. In actuality, however, both liberation and bondage are unreal, for it is only from the living entity's conditioned outlook that his bondage and liberation are produced. Thinking the personal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa illusory, fools reject His lotus feet and look elsewhere to find the Supreme Self. But the futility of their search is the obvious proof of their foolishness. There is simply no way to understand the truth of the Personality of Godhead without His mercy.

Having established this conclusion, Lord Brahmā analyzed the great good fortune of the residents of Vraja and then personally prayed to be born there even as a blade of grass, a bush or a creeper. Indeed, the homes of the

residents of Vṛndāvana are not prisons of material existence but rather abodes envied even by the jñānīs and yogīs. On the other hand, any home without a connection to Lord Kṛṣṇa is in fact a prison cell of material existence. Finally, Brahmā offered his whole self at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and, praising Him again and again, circumambulated Him and took his leave.

Lord Kṛṣṇa then gathered the animals Brahmā stole and led them to the place on the Yamunā's bank where the cowherd boys had been taking lunch. The same friends who had been present before were sitting there now. By the power of Kṛṣṇa's illusory energy, they were not at all aware of what had happened. Thus when Kṛṣṇa arrived with the calves, the boys told Him, "You've returned so quickly! Very good. As long as You were gone we couldn't take even a morsel of food, so come and eat."

Laughing at the words of the cowherd boys, Lord Kṛṣṇa began taking His meal in their company. While eating, Kṛṣṇa pointed out to His young friends the skin of the python, and the boys thought, "Kṛṣṇa has just now killed this terrible snake." Indeed, later they related to the residents of Vṛndāvana the incident of Kṛṣṇa's killing the Agha demon. In this way, the cowherd boys described pastimes that Lord Kṛṣṇa had performed in His bālya age (one to five), even though His pauganḍa age (six to ten) had begun.

Śukadeva Gosvāmī concludes this chapter by explaining how the gopīs loved Lord Kṛṣṇa even more than they loved their own sons.

Text 1:

Lord Brahmā said: My dear Lord, You are the only worshipable Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore I offer my humble obeisances and prayers just to please You. O son of the king of the cowherds, Your transcendental body is dark blue like a new cloud, Your garment is brilliant like lightning, and the beauty of Your face is enhanced by Your guñjā earrings and the peacock feather on Your head. Wearing garlands of various forest flowers and leaves, and equipped with a herding stick, a buffalo horn and a flute, You stand beautifully with a morsel of food in Your hand.

Text 2:

My dear Lord, neither I nor anyone else can estimate the potency of this transcendental body of Yours, which has shown such mercy to me and which appears just to fulfill the desires of Your pure devotees. Although my mind is completely withdrawn from material affairs, I cannot understand Your personal form. How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself?

Text 3:

Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, throw away the process of speculative knowledge and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are vibrated by You personally and by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer Your Lordship, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

Text 4:

My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge, he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result. As a person who beats an empty husk of wheat cannot get grain, one who simply speculates cannot achieve self-realization. His only gain is trouble.

Text 5:

O almighty Lord, in the past many yogīs in this world achieved the platform of devotional service by offering all their endeavors unto You and faithfully carrying out their prescribed duties. Through such devotional service, perfected by the processes of hearing and chanting about You, they came to understand You, O infallible one, and could easily surrender to You and achieve Your supreme abode.

Text 6:

Nondevotees, however, cannot realize You in Your full personal feature. Nevertheless, it may be possible for them to realize Your expansion as the impersonal Supreme by cultivating direct perception of the Self within the heart. But they can do this only by purifying their mind and senses of all conceptions of material distinctions and all attachment to material sense

objects. Only in this way will Your impersonal feature manifest itself to them.

Text 7:

In time, learned philosophers or scientists might be able to count all the atoms of the earth, the particles of snow, or perhaps even the shining molecules radiating from the sun, the stars and other luminaries. But among these learned men, who could possibly count the unlimited transcendental qualities possessed by You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have descended onto the surface of the earth for the benefit of all living entities?

Text 8:

My dear Lord, one who earnestly waits for You to bestow Your causeless mercy upon him, all the while patiently suffering the reactions of his past misdeeds and offering You respectful obeisances with his heart, words and body, is surely eligible for liberation, for it has become his rightful claim.

Text 9:

My Lord, just see my uncivilized impudence! To test Your power I tried to extend my illusory potency to cover You, the unlimited and primeval Supersoul, who bewilder even the masters of illusion. What am I compared to You? I am just like a small spark in the presence of a great fire.

Text 10:

Therefore, O infallible Lord, kindly excuse my offenses. I have taken birth in the mode of passion and am therefore simply foolish, presuming myself a controller independent of Your Lordship. My eyes are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, which causes me to think of myself as the unborn creator of the universe. But please consider that I am Your servant and therefore worthy of Your compassion.

Text 11:

What am I, a small creature measuring seven spans of my own hand? I am enclosed in a potlike universe composed of material nature, the total material energy, false ego, ether, air, water and earth. And what is Your glory? Unlimited universes pass through the pores of Your body just as particles of dust pass through the openings of a screened window.

Text 12:

O Lord Adhokṣaja, does a mother take offense when the child within her womb kicks with his legs? And is there anything in existence — whether designated by various philosophers as real or as unreal — that is actually outside Your abdomen?

Text 13:

My dear Lord, it is said that when the three planetary systems are merged into the water at the time of dissolution, Your plenary portion, Nārāyaṇa, lies down on the water, gradually a lotus flower grows from His navel, and Brahmā takes birth upon that lotus flower. Certainly, these words are not false. Thus am I not born from You?

Text 14:

Are You not the original Nārāyaṇa, O supreme controller, since You are the Soul of every embodied being and the eternal witness of all created realms? Indeed, Lord Nārāyaṇa is Your expansion, and He is called Nārāyaṇa because He is the generating source of the primeval water of the universe. He is real, not a product of Your illusory Māyā.

Text 15:

My dear Lord, if Your transcendental body, which shelters the entire universe, is actually lying upon the water, then why were You not seen by me when I searched for You? And why, though I could not envision You properly within my heart, did You then suddenly reveal Yourself?

Text 16:

My dear Lord, in this incarnation You have proved that You are the supreme controller of Māyā. Although You are now within this universe, the whole universal creation is within Your transcendental body — a fact You demonstrated by exhibiting the universe within Your abdomen before Your mother, Yaśodā.

Text 17:

Just as this entire universe, including You, was exhibited within Your abdomen, so it is now manifested here externally in the same exact form. How could such things happen unless arranged by Your inconceivable energy?

Text 18:

Have You not shown me today that both You Yourself and everything within this creation are manifestations of Your inconceivable potency? First You appeared alone, and then You manifested Yourself as all of Vṛndāvana's calves and cowherd boys, Your friends. Next You appeared as an equal number of four-handed Viṣṇu forms, who were worshiped by all living beings, including me, and after that You appeared as an equal number of complete universes. Finally, You have now returned to Your unlimited form as the Supreme Absolute Truth, one without a second.

Text 19:

To persons ignorant of Your actual transcendental position, You appear as part of the material world, manifesting Yourself by the expansion of Your inconceivable energy. Thus for the creation of the universe You appear as me [Brahmā], for its maintenance You appear as Yourself [Viṣṇu], and for its annihilation You appear as Lord Trinetra [Śiva].

Text 20:

O Lord, O supreme creator and master, You have no material birth, yet to defeat the false pride of the faithless demons and show mercy to Your saintly devotees, You take birth among the demigods, sages, human beings, animals and even the aquatics.

Text 21:

O supreme great one! O Supreme Personality of Godhead! O Supersoul, master of all mystic power! Your pastimes are taking place continuously in these three worlds, but who can estimate where, how and when You are employing Your spiritual energy and performing these innumerable pastimes? No one can understand the mystery of how Your spiritual energy acts.

Text 22:

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one's consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

Text 23:

You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth — self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations. Your happiness can never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.

Text 24:

Those who have received the clear vision of knowledge from the sunlike spiritual master can see You in this way, as the very Soul of all souls, the Supersoul of everyone's own self. Thus understanding Your original personality, they are able to cross over the ocean of illusory material existence.

Text 25:

A person who mistakes a rope for a snake becomes fearful, but he then gives up his fear upon realizing that the so-called snake does not exist. Similarly, for those who fail to recognize You as the Supreme Soul of all souls, the expansive illusory material existence arises, but knowledge of You at once causes it to subside.

Text 26:

The conception of material bondage and the conception of liberation are both manifestations of ignorance. Being outside the scope of true knowledge, they cease to exist when one correctly understands that the pure spirit soul is distinct from matter and always fully conscious. At that time bondage and liberation no longer have any significance, just as day and night have no significance from the perspective of the sun.

Text 27:

Just see the foolishness of those ignorant persons who consider You to be some separated manifestation of illusion and who consider the self, which is actually You, to be something else, the material body. Such fools conclude that the supreme soul is to be searched for somewhere outside Your supreme personality.

Text 28:

O unlimited Lord, the saintly devotees seek You out within their own bodies by rejecting everything separate from You. Indeed, how can discriminating persons appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before them until they refute the illusion that it is a snake?

Text 29:

My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the Vedas for many years.

Text 30:

My dear Lord, I therefore pray to be so fortunate that in this life as Lord Brahmā or in another life, wherever I take my birth, I may be counted as one of Your devotees. I pray that wherever I may be, even among the animal species, I can engage in devotional service to Your lotus feet.

Text 31:

O almighty Lord, how greatly fortunate are the cows and ladies of Vṛndāvana, the nectar of whose breast milk You have happily drunk to Your full satisfaction, taking the form of their calves and children! All the Vedic sacrifices performed from time immemorial up to the present day have not given You as much satisfaction.

Text 32:

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahman, has become their friend.

Text 33:

Yet even though the extent of the good fortune of these residents of Vṛndāvana is inconceivable, we eleven presiding deities of the various senses, headed by Lord Śiva, are also most fortunate, because the senses of these devotees of Vṛndāvana are the cups through which we repeatedly drink the nectarean, intoxicating beverage of the honey of Your lotus feet.

Text 34:

My greatest possible good fortune would be to take any birth whatever in this forest of Gokula and have my head bathed by the dust falling from the lotus feet of any of its residents. Their entire life and soul is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, the dust of whose lotus feet is still being searched for in the Vedic mantras.

Text 35:

My mind becomes bewildered just trying to think of what reward other than You could be found anywhere. You are the embodiment of all benedictions, which You bestow upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vṛndāvana. You have already arranged to give Yourself to Pūtānā and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You?

Text 36:

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, until people become Your devotees, their material attachments and desires remain thieves, their homes remain prisons, and their affectionate feelings for their family members remain foot-shackles.

Text 37:

My dear master, although You have nothing to do with material existence, You come to this earth and imitate material life just to expand the varieties of ecstatic enjoyment for Your surrendered devotees.

Text 38:

There are people who say, “I know everything about Kṛṣṇa.” Let them think that way. As far as I am concerned, I do not wish to speak very much about this matter. O my Lord, let me say this much: As far as Your opulences are concerned, they are all beyond the reach of my mind, body and words.

Text 39:

My dear Kṛṣṇa, I now humbly request permission to leave. Actually, You are the knower and seer of all things. Indeed, You are the Lord of all the universes, and yet I offer this one universe unto You.

Text 40:

My dear Śrī Kṛṣṇa, You bestow happiness upon the lotuslike Vṛṣṇī dynasty and expand the great oceans consisting of the earth, the demigods, the brāhmaṇas and the cows. You dispel the dense darkness of irreligion and oppose the demons who have appeared on this earth. O Supreme Personality of Godhead, as long as this universe exists and as long as the sun shines, I will offer my obeisances unto You.

Text 41:

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus offered his prayers, Brahmā circumambulated his worshipable Lord, the unlimited Personality of Godhead, three times and then bowed down at His lotus feet. The appointed creator of the universe then returned to his own residence.

Text 42:

After granting His son Brahmā permission to leave, the Supreme Personality of Godhead took the calves, who were still where they had been a year earlier, and brought them to the riverbank, where He had been taking His meal and where His cowherd boyfriends remained just as before.

Text 43:

O King, although the boys had passed an entire year apart from the Lord of their very lives, they had been covered by Lord Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency and thus considered that year merely half a moment.

Text 44:

What indeed is not forgotten by those whose minds are bewildered by the Lord's illusory potency? By that power of Māyā, this entire universe remains in perpetual bewilderment, and in this atmosphere of forgetfulness no one can understand his own identity.

Text 45:

The cowherd boyfriends said to Lord Kṛṣṇa: You have returned so quickly! We have not eaten even one morsel in Your absence. Please come here and take Your meal without distraction.

Text 46:

Then Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, smiling, finished His lunch in the company of His cowherd friends. While they were returning from the forest to their homes

in Vraja, Lord Kṛṣṇa showed the cowherd boys the skin of the dead serpent Aghāsura.

Text 47:

Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body was decorated with peacock feathers and flowers and painted with forest minerals, and His bamboo flute loudly and festively resounded. As He called out to His calves by name, His cowherd boyfriends purified the whole world by chanting His glories. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the cow pasture of His father, Nanda Mahārāja, and the sight of His beauty at once produced a great festival for the eyes of all the cowherd women.

Text 48:

As the cowherd boys reached the village of Vraja, they sang, "Today Kṛṣṇa saved us by killing a great serpent!" Some of the boys described Kṛṣṇa as the son of Yaśodā, and others as the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

Text 49:

King Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, how could the cowherd women have developed for Kṛṣṇa, someone else's son, such unprecedented pure love — love they never felt even for their own children? Please explain this.

Text 50:

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, for every created being the dearest thing is certainly his own self. The dearness of everything else — children, wealth and so on — is due only to the dearness of the self.

Text 51:

For this reason, O best of kings, the embodied soul is self-centered: he is more attached to his own body and self than to his so-called possessions like children, wealth and home.

Text 52:

Indeed, for persons who think the body is the self, O best of kings, those things whose importance lies only in their relationship to the body are never as dear as the body itself.

Text 53:

If a person comes to the stage of considering the body “mine” instead of “me,” he will certainly not consider the body as dear as his own self. After all, even as the body is growing old and useless, one’s desire to continue living remains strong.

Text 54:

Therefore it is his own self that is most dear to every embodied living being, and it is simply for the satisfaction of this self that the whole material creation of moving and nonmoving entities exists.

Text 55:

You should know Kṛṣṇa to be the original Soul of all living entities. For the benefit of the whole universe, He has, out of His causeless mercy, appeared as an ordinary human being. He has done this by the strength of His internal potency.

Text 56:

Those in this world who understand Lord Kṛṣṇa as He is see all things, whether stationary or moving, as manifest forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such enlightened persons recognize no reality apart from the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 57:

The original, unmanifested form of material nature is the source of all material things, and the source of even that subtle material nature is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. What, then, could one ascertain to be separate from Him?

Text 58:

For those who have accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the Mura demon, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf’s hoof-print. Their goal is param padam, Vaikuṇṭha, the place where there are no material miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step.

Text 59:

Since you inquired from me, I have fully described to you those activities of Lord Hari that were performed in His fifth year but not celebrated until His sixth.

Text 60:

Any person who hears or chants these pastimes Lord Murāri performed with His cowherd friends — the killing of Aghāsura, the taking of lunch on the forest grass, the Lord’s manifestation of transcendental forms, and the wonderful prayers offered by Lord Brahmā — is sure to achieve all his spiritual desires.

Text 61:

In this way the boys spent their childhood in the land of Vṛndāvana playing hide-and-go-seek, building play bridges, jumping about like monkeys and engaging in many other such games.