

# Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta

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Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

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## Foreword

THE *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* by Sanātana Gosvāmī is a consummate rendering in Sanskrit verse of Vaiṣṇava devotional spirituality as inspired by Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya, or simply Caitanya (1486–1533). Analogous in some respects to Dante’s *Paradiso* and more closely akin to John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, it depicts not one but two parallel spiritual odysseys. The first is of Nārada, the paradigm of the devout Vaiṣṇava saint/sage; the other is of Gopa-kumāra, a simple lad in search of God. The former travels across India and into heavenly realms in search of those devotees, human or divine, to whom God Kṛṣṇa has been most merciful. In the course of his quest, Nārada encounters ever more profound and dedicated embodiments of devotion (*bhakti*) to Kṛṣṇa. Each of these deferentially redirects him to others yet more devout—and yet more favored by Kṛṣṇa—than themselves. The dialogues en route—subtly interpreted in an extensive auto-commentary—are so designed as to instruct, edify, and inspire devout readers or listeners. The lad, Gopa-kumāra, likewise, provides the occasion for progressive spiritual discovery as one follows his pilgrimage from one realm to another in search of ever more sublime and quintessential manifestations of the divine.

Nārada’s search culminates in the paradoxical revelation that the devotees most favored by Kṛṣṇa—those whose devotion to Him is most perfect and intense—are *gopīs*, simple (though divine) cowherd girls who are in torment when their beloved Kṛṣṇa is absent from them. Gopa-kumāra’s quest leads to the discovery that God Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself most perfectly in the idyllic heavenly realm of Goloka (and in the terrestrial Vṛndāvana), where He sports eternally as youthful lover

of the *gopīs* and playmate of the cowherd boys.

Within the framework of this dual spiritual odyssey and an extensive commentary, *Dig-darśinī*, the sixteenth-century author, Sanātana Gosvāmī, analyzes with delicate nuances and orchestrates in masterly fashion the theology-cum-psychology of loving devotion (*prema-bhakti*) to Kṛṣṇa as epitomized by Caitanya. To readers already familiar with the Purāṇic Hindu pantheon and imagery and appreciative of the Vaiṣṇava commitment to *prema-bhakti* to God Kṛṣṇa, the luxuriant transcendental scenes and unrestrained displays of ecstatic devotion need not seem exotic. But the vividness and novelty of many vignettes and the poignant emotional vulnerability of Kṛṣṇa may evoke surprise and wonder even among seasoned Vaiṣṇava devotees. If, of course, one does not see the point of what Sanātana was doing, one need not read on. But even the reader new to the cosmology, mythology, and theology of Vaiṣṇava devotion, if reasonably patient and attentive, may find in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and *Dig-darśinī* a remarkably incisive, consistent, and revealing exploration of human spirituality and religious psychology.

For Vaiṣṇava devotees in the tradition of Caitanya, the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and its commentary constitute a foundational text of great value. Sanātana Gosvāmī was the most senior of the authoritative scholar-devotees deputed by Caitanya to formulate the appropriate theology of *prema-bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. Sanātana's poetic narrative, supplemented by its commentary, is the most thorough and penetrating statement of his theological ideas and spiritual sensibilities. Significantly, I think, this, his most ambitious work, takes the form of narrative and dialogue. Though the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is carefully structured in its organization, it is dramatic and imaginative in its overt form. Though based on the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, of which it aspires to express the essence, or nectar (*amṛta*), it is not in the form of a commentary as such. It is itself a *Purāṇa*-like tale which, though composed by Sanātana, is told as if an ancient discourse by King Parikṣit to his mother, Uttarā. Like a *Purāṇa*, it presents exemplary personages, memorable incidents, and striking imagery. All of this serves to nourish the reflection and meditation, i.e., the *smaraṇa* (lit. remembering), of

devout readers or hearers. The content of the text is words, but these are picture words rather than book words. They evoke the experiential basis upon which secondary theoretical and practical elaboration may be built. By expressing his own conception of loving devotion to God in the form of the dual odysseys of Nārada and Gopa-kumāra, Sanātana was in effect endorsing literary narrative of a poetic and dramatic sort as a preferred means for passing on to subsequent generations the crucial experience (*anubhūti*) of loving devotion.

For devotees of Kṛṣṇa in the modern world who are not fluent in Sanskrit, access to Sanātana's foundational poem must be by translations or paraphrase. There are several in Bengali and Hindi and perhaps in some other Indian languages. In English there is a translation of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* by Śrīmān Bhakti Prajñan Yati Maharaja from the Sree Gaudiya Math (Madras), but none, so far as I know, of the *Digdarśinī*. The present edition includes translations by Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa of both the basic poem and its commentary (plus appendices, glossary, etc.). This is an extraordinary labor of love! The *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* alone contains some 2,500 Sanskrit verses, each requiring painstaking care even when (wisely) being rendered into idiomatic English prose rather than metrical verse. The commentary is considerably longer and, although in Sanskrit prose, is far from easy to convey in readable accurate English. Yet the task has been done and done well, an impressive achievement indeed.

When I began to examine the proofs for this book, I was pleased to find that Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa's English prose version reads clearly and crisply. Moreover, it conveys the excitement, wonder, and devotion of spiritual discovery that animates Sanātana's own composition. The more I read, the more fascinated I became with Sanātana's novel and brilliant retelling of themes emanating from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (but developed into much that is not found explicitly in that revered text). Depictions of progressively more intense and intimate modes of loving devotion build to a climax in the remarkable portrayal of Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā, depressed and anguished in absence from Rādhā and the *gopīs* and restored to "normal" consciousness only by an artful ruse.

The further I read, the less was I conscious that I was reading a

translation, so naturally does one unit of the narrative flow into the next. When I did shift to the task of comparing portions of the translation with the Sanskrit, I was pleased to discover that the English prose is indeed very faithful to the Sanskrit original. One might quibble over the choice of certain idiomatic English phrases, but even these convey the basic sense. From the literal meaning of the original, little is left out, and very little is added, in the passage from Sanskrit to English. Inevitably, of course, some resonance is lost in any transition from poetic verse to prose translation. But, fortunately, because the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is mostly narrative and dialogue, it lends itself more readily to prose rendering than would other types of poetic verse. I would like to think that Sanātana Gosvāmī would welcome his modern prose translator as a kindred spirit and an able expositor of his work.

The *Dig-darśinī*, being itself prose, but prose in the peculiar form of Sanskrit textual commentary, presents the translator with a different set of challenges. In size, it is twice the length of the document which it interprets. In form and function, it resembles the complex footnotes of modern scholarship. In orientation, it assumes broadly ranging acquaintance with traditional Vaiṣṇava themes, Sanskrit religious literature, and technical points of devotional aesthetics, theology, and philosophy. Faced with such challenges, many a translator — and, if not he or she, then the publisher — would resort to a paraphrase that drastically cuts down the size and simplifies the scholarship of the commentary and perhaps introduces an ersatz ideological or rhetorical interpretation in place of the more demanding and sophisticated orientation of the author.

Not so the present translator and publisher. Both Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa and the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust are to be commended for respecting Sanātana's auto-commentary as it is, in all its bulk and sophistication. The *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* and *Dig-darśinī* together comprise a classic of religious literature whose integrity ought not be compromised. On a narrow scale, it is a classic in that it is the template for the theology and spiritual psychology that have remained authoritative for the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition. And though till now scarcely known beyond that tradition and those who study it, it is—or

merits being so recognized—a classic on a global scale as well. Sanātana Gosvāmī's chef d'oeuvre is a masterful exploration, grounded in Vaiṣṇava devotional faith, of human spirituality and religious psychology, for the first time being made accessible in its entirety to the English-reading world.

As the translator acknowledges, the English version of the *Digdarśinī* is a paraphrase, not a line-by-line translation. As such, it does not replace a close reading of the Sanskrit original for scholars equipped to do one. But, as the translator points out (and illustrates in the appendices), the paraphrasing is largely a matter of arrangement, not of selective excision or augmentation. From the portions of Volume One that I have compared closely, it is evident that Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa has managed to retain virtually all of the content of the original commentary, though with considerable rearrangement to facilitate reading. Were it his aim to produce a rigorously literal English rendering, some of his paraphrasing of Sanātana's formulations might well have to be revisited. But, all things considered, he has done an admirable job of conveying the informational content and spiritual verve of the author — without bowdlerizing or truncating — in an idiom understandable to patient and attentive (though not necessarily expert) readers. I presume that the level attained in Volume One has been maintained through Volumes Two and Three.

There is a special significance to this publication over and above its making accessible to readers of English a Sanskrit classic of spiritual literature. This is the first publication by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust of a major Vaiṣṇava theological text which disciples of the late Swami A.C. Bhaktivedanta Prabhupāda have accomplished without his immediate presence. It follows the widely disseminated versions of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in many languages and multi-volume translations of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, each of which is accompanied by an elaborate commentary. These prior publications were substantially the work of Prabhupāda himself, with certain of his Sanskrit-trained devotees, including Gopīparāṇadhana Dāsa, serving as apprentices. The appearance of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* thus marks a new phase of textual theological scholarship by members of the



International Society for Krishna Consciousness. They have, as it were, come into their maturity as responsible for faithful transmission of the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition of *prema-bhakti*, loving devotion to God Kṛṣṇa. What better way to assure fidelity to the words and spirit of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his circle of immediate disciples than to enable devotees and attentive seekers to read, hear, and visualize the foundational texts of those very scholar-devotees who had experienced the charismatic presence of Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya himself!

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## Preface

THE HERO'S QUEST for the extraordinary — an ever-recurring theme in literature — reflects the urge of every heart at its noblest to discover the full possibilities of life. Anyone dissatisfied with the scant potential of mundane existence is naturally stimulated by the prospect of finding, even vicariously, a world of greater liberty. There should be some better place for the soul. Why should happiness be so elusive, and why should confusion and resentment always shroud the mind's eye, making it unable to see clearly what's in front of it?

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is a gemlike example of the quest genre, but different from the sort commonly encountered in fable and fiction. Nārada and Gopa-kumāra, the respective heroes of this book's two parts, are searching for a key to fulfillment much subtler than wealth, influence, mundane love, the Fountain of Youth, or even the Holy Grail. Nārada has vast experience of the cosmos, Gopa-kumāra is illiterate and naive, yet they share the same vision of what is most valuable. What both want is not to conquer or exploit on any level, but

to explore the mystery of selfless service. As Nārada already knows, and Gopa-kumāra will gradually learn, the superior mode of life they seek is personal and defined by the interplay of those who take part in it, rather than by material laws of nature.

The cynosure of the spiritual world in which Sanātana Gosvāmī and his protagonists feel at home is one special person, the object of the selfless love Nārada and Gopa-kumāra value above all. Nārada knows this special person, Kṛṣṇa, as the prince of the Yadus, and Gopa-kumāra contemplates Him as a young cowherd like himself. Śrīla Sanātana takes it for granted that Kṛṣṇa-Gopāla is supreme, that Kṛṣṇa is the creator and controller of everything, and leaves the task of proving it to his brother Rūpa Gosvāmī, who later takes it up in his *Laghu-* (“smaller”) *bhāgavatāmṛta*. Here in the *Bṛhad-* (“bigger”) *bhāgavatāmṛta* the main questions are in whom and in what realm is love for the Supreme Person most intimately known.

At first glance the structure of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* may to modern readers seem repetitious, but the plot does have a logic of its own, which it develops the way classical Indian music develops themes, repeating them again and again with subtle embellishments. In Part One, for example, the same thing happens to Nārada over and over: He goes to someone who is supposed to be Kṛṣṇa’s most favored devotee, praises that person, and is rebuked, refuted, and redirected to someone else. Yet in this cyclic repetition we discern a progress, although not a linear one aiming at a single point. We learn much more than the simple fact that someone in particular is the greatest lover of God. Yes, the young *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana are unquestionably Kṛṣṇa’s best devotees, but for neophytes still addicted to material lust, merely establishing the *gopīs* as a distant ideal is of little practical use, and may even be dangerous. By understanding that to emulate the *gopīs*’ perfect devotion is extremely difficult, honest persons might feel frustrated, and the dishonest will imitate anyway and degrade themselves. Therefore Nārada in his encounters with various devotees carefully traces out the real foundations and natural progress of pure devotion, in a way that readers can follow according to their own spiritual disposition.

Unlike the material existence we all know, in which survival depends

on our ability to jockey ourselves into better positions than competitors and garner our share of the limited resources for control and enjoyment, on the transcendental plane of love of God the resources are unlimited, and everyone competes instead to prove that others are better than themselves. This remarkable quality, unknown in material life, is evident even in the sincere beginners in devotional practice whom Nārada meets first, the *brāhmaṇa* of Prayāga and the southern king. They and the more and more elevated devotees of Kṛṣṇa Nārada visits—the king of heaven Indra, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Prahlāda, Hanumān, the Pāṇḍavas, the Yadus, and Uddhava—deprecate themselves, not from lack of self-esteem but out of complete honesty, in which they appraise from their own points of view who really has Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Nārada, as an itinerant preacher, is the best person to undertake this survey of devotional attitudes. Not tied down to any particular place or situation, he is accustomed to meeting different ways of seeing things. And he has the good humor to tolerate being rebuffed by every saintly person he tries to glorify.

Gopa-kumāra, the main character of the second part of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, is an innocent young cowherd from the vicinity of Kṛṣṇa’s favorite hill, Govardhana. After a mysterious *brāhmaṇa* initiates him into the ten-syllable Gopāla *mantra*, a yearning to search out Lord Gopāla awakens in Gopa-kumāra’s heart. Like Nārada in Part One, Gopa-kumāra searches throughout the material universe; but he also travels beyond, into the kingdom of God, Vaikuṇṭha, and yet further to the most confidential realms of the kingdom of God—Ayodhyā, Dvārakā, and Goloka. The final message of the second part of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is the superexcellence of Goloka Vṛndāvana, the personal abode of Kṛṣṇa in His original identity as the darling son of the cowherds, the lover of the *gopīs*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who regarded his elder brother Śrīla Sanātana as his spiritual master, acknowledged indebtedness to *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* in his definitive textbook on devotional service, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.13):

*śrīmat-prabhu-padāmbhojaiḥ*

sarvā bhāgavatāmṛte  
vyaktī-kṛtāsti gūḍhāpi  
bhakti-siddhānta-mādhurī

“Our divine master has revealed in his *Bhāgavatāmṛta* all the sweet conclusions of devotional philosophy, including its most confidential secrets.”

This edition of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is not the first English translation of the work, but is the first attempt to present in English the entirety of the author’s own commentary, which he called *Dig-darśinī*. This commentary is invaluablely helpful for studying *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* deeply. I have not translated the *Dig-darśinī* verbatim, but have given a close paraphrase that includes almost all of Śrīla Sanātana’s points, with a few explanatory additions of my own. Typically for a Sanskrit scriptural commentary, the *Dig-darśinī* includes grammatical and syntactic analysis of the text, which I have incorporated in the translation. The rest of the commentary is also uncongenial to being translated literally, because Sanskrit commentaries are written in a stylized prose whose meaning is more suitably conveyed in English by careful paraphrase than by literal translation. Readers who would like to see a sample of how my commentary derives from the *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā* may refer to page 763 in the appendixes.

The text I translated comes from three printed editions, those of Purīdāsa, Bhakti-śāstrī Gosvāmī of the Saurī Prapannāśrama, and Bhakti-śrīrūpa Bhāgavata Mahārāja of the Caitanya Maṭha. All three editions are printed in the Bengali script and include the *Dig-darśinī* commentary (in the Caitanya Maṭha edition only for the second part). Sanātana Gosvāmī too wrote his original manuscript in the Bengali alphabet, but we have chosen to print our Sanskrit text in the more widely known Devanāgarī. Our proofreaders and I carefully compared the three texts I consulted (one of which, Purīdāsa’s, notes variant readings from two manuscripts), and when different readings arose I made my own choices on which to use. I found that in each case the alternative readings almost never made an important difference in meaning, and the commentary and the logic of the text itself helped me choose. For those interested, I have noted in “Variant Readings of Śrī-

*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*” the alternative readings of the editions consulted.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, in his commentary and sometimes in the verses of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, cites hundreds of verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures, especially various *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*. In several instances, the *Bhāgavatam* verses as quoted by Śrīla Sanātana differ slightly from the text of the *Bhāgavatam* published by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. Again, these differences almost never significantly change the meaning. I have used the author’s readings of these verses, even when they differ from the BBT version, and have listed the variants in “Readings of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Verses that Differ from the BBT Edition.” Verses quoted from other *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* I have simply given as Śrīla Sanātana presents them, with chapter and verse numbers taken from the Venkateśvara Press edition of the *Purāṇas* (reprinted by Nag Publishers and others) and the Pune critical edition of the *Mahābhārata*. The other sources I have consulted are listed in the Bibliography.

While working on this book I have had the undeserved good fortune to be living at the location of Gopa-kumāra’s story, Śrī Govardhana, first on the shore of Mānasī-gaṅgā next door to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *bhajana-kuṭīra*, and more recently by the very side of Girirāja at Dāna-ghāṭī. I hope that some flavor of these all-ecstatic holy abodes has penetrated my ignorance and found its way onto these pages.

I am only a very imperfect servant of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and his servants. I cannot pretend to have any profound understanding of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s revelation of the most sublime spiritual truths. I am also a clumsy writer. Only because this book has been expertly edited by my dear godbrothers Keśava Bhāratī Prabhu and Jayādvaita Swami is it now as readable as it is. They have worked hard to turn my crude manuscript into something that does justice to the original text, and for this I will be forever indebted. After dedicating nearly thirty years to the preaching mission of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Keśava Bhāratī Prabhu has now started an editing career that is already bearing wonderful fruit. Jayādvaita Swami was Śrīla Prabhupāda’s own editor and is the one person who best knows the high standards of

Bhaktivedanta Book Trust publishing. I am confident that anything passing his scrutiny must be acceptable to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his predecessors.

I am also very thankful to my wife, Arcā-mūrti, my old friend Draviḍa Prabhu, and Śrīmatī Viśākhā-priyā for their editorial comments, to Kṣamā Dāsī for skillful proofreading, to Durmada Prabhu for assistance in compiling “Variant Readings of the Text of *Śrī-Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*” and locating scriptural citations, and to Rasa-varṣī Prabhu for helpful research. My thanks to our BBT publisher Brāhma Muhūrta Prabhu for his encouragement and commitment, to our production manager Govinda Mādhava Prabhu, to our artist Dīna-bandhu Prabhu, and to the other BBT devotees working on the book’s production in Sweden and elsewhere. My life belongs to the BBT, and I am grateful to be working under its shelter.

My thanks also to Pūrṇānanda Prabhu, Brāhma Muhūrta Prabhu, and Madhupati Prabhu for their Financial contributions toward the First printing of this book.

I pray to the Vaiṣṇava readers of this translation for their blessings and their tolerance of my faults. I want only that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, and undeviating devotion to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-gopāla receive the proper glorification they deserve.

Gopīparāṇadhana  
at Girirāja  
Śrī Rāma-navamī, April 12, 2000

Dāsa  
Govardhana

## Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT the life of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*’s author comes to us mostly from Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja’s biography of Lord Caitanya, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and from Narahari Cakravartī’s account of the lives of Lord Caitanya’s followers, *Bhakti-ratnākara*. These two sources inform us that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī was a chief direct

disciple of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the great apostle of love of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Sanātana (circa 1488–1558) was the seniormost of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, an exalted group who helped establish the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, the school of devotion to Kṛṣṇa that accepts Lord Caitanya to be nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa.

*Bhakti-ratnākara* traces six generations of Śrī Sanātana's lineage. He was born into a family of respectable Sārasvata *brāhmaṇas* from the southern province of Karṇāṭaka. His great-grandfather Rūpeśvara, after a quarrel with his brother Harihara, migrated to the east, and his grandfather Padmanābha settled on the bank of the Gaṅgā at Naihati, West Bengal. Sanātana's father, Śrī Kumāra, moved further east, into what is now the Jessore district of Bangladesh, and had several sons, the last three of whom he named Amara (later Sanātana), Santoṣa (later Rūpa), and Vallabha (Anupama). These three brothers were from childhood attracted to devotional service. Amara and Santoṣa were especially attracted to Kṛṣṇa, Vallabha to Lord Rāmacandra. Amara had an affinity for the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In his boyhood, we are told, he once dreamed that a *brāhmaṇa* was presenting him a copy of that scripture. The next morning, the same *brāhmaṇa* he had seen actually came to his house and gave him the book. From that time on, Amara was always immersed in *bhāgavatāmṛta*, the nectar of the *Bhāgavatam*.

As adults the brothers proved extremely competent scholars and managers. Impressed by their ability, the Mogul tyrant of Bengal, Nawab Hussain Shah, compelled them into government service. Amara was appointed the Nawab's prime minister, Santoṣa the chief assistant minister, and Vallabha the state treasurer. In this way the Nawab freed himself for military expeditions by turning most of the responsibilities of governing over to the three brothers, who established their residence in the town of Rāmakeli, near the Nawab's capital. By this time Santoṣa was known by his official title Dabira Khāsa, and Amara was called Sākara Mallika. But despite their powerful positions, their only real joy in life lay in serving Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. They made their wealthy estate a suitable place for remembering Kṛṣṇa by planting groves of *kadamba* and other trees that grow in Vṛndāvana, the site of Kṛṣṇa's

pastimes, and by building replicas of Kṛṣṇa's favorite ponds, the sacred Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa. The brothers also hosted many learned *paṇḍitas*, and discussions of the *Bhāgavatam* and other *śāstras* went on constantly in their assembly.

The three brothers had heard about Lord Caitanya, who was still living as a family man in Navadvīpa, and, despite feeling utterly unqualified, were eager to meet Him. They considered themselves degraded and untouchable, for though their father, Kumāradeva, had been so strict in his brahminical principles that if he even saw the face of a meat-eater he would fast for the day, they were now paid servants of a meat-eater, the *yavana* king. Nonetheless, their enthusiasm impelled them to begin corresponding with Lord Caitanya. And in one letter the Lord encouraged them to be patient:

*para-vyasaninī nārī  
vyagrāpi grha-karmasu  
tad evāsvādayaty antar  
nava-saṅga-rasāyanam*

“If a woman is attached to a man other than her husband, she will appear very busy in household affairs, though within her heart always relishing the company of her paramour.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 1.211)

Soon after Caitanya Mahāprabhu left home to enter the renounced order, He decided to go to Vṛndāvana. Followed by large crowds, He proceeded north and stopped at Rāmakeli. Meanwhile, Hussain Shah received news that this *sannyāsī* was creating a stir in the countryside. But by consulting with Dabira Khāsa and other ministers, the Nawab decided that Caitanya was a worthy saint, or even God Himself, and ordered that no one interfere with His doings. Still, Dabira Khāsa worried that Hussain Shah, capricious as he was, could change his mind and turn against Lord Caitanya. Thus, in the middle of the night, Dabira Khāsa went incognito with Sākara Mallika to warn the Lord of the potential danger.

The two approached Lord Caitanya with straws between their teeth



as a sign of humility, bowed prostrate before Him, and with plaintive prayers confessed their unfitness to receive His mercy. In response the Lord showered them with affection:

*śuni' mahāprabhu kahe,——śuna, dabira-khāsa  
tumi dui bhāi—mora purātana dāsa*

“After hearing their prayer, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘My dear Dabira Khāsa, you two brothers are My old servants.

*āji haite duñhāra nāma ‘rūpa’ ‘sanātana’  
dainya chāḍa, tomāra dainye phāṭe mora mana*

“My dear Sākara Mallika, from this day your names will be changed to Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana. Now please abandon your humility, for My heart is breaking to see you so humble.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 1.207–8)

Sanātana advised that Lord Caitanya not go to Vṛndāvana with so many people, and Lord Caitanya accepted the advice and returned to His base at Purī. The three brothers—Rūpa, Sanātana, and Anupama—then made plans to abandon their material life and join Him, and they engaged *brāhmaṇas* in performing purificatory rituals to help them quickly realize this hope. Soon Rūpa and Anupama loaded the bulk of their wealth on a large boat and left Rāmakeli for their hometown, leaving their senior brother Sanātana alone to deal with Hussain Shah. In case Sanātana might need emergency funds, Rūpa deposited a large sum with a merchant in Rāmakeli and informed Sanātana about this in a letter. The rest of their wealth he distributed among *brāhmaṇas*, Vaiṣṇavas, and their own family members.

On the plea of illness, Sanātana began to ignore his government duties and stayed home studying *Bhāgavatam* in his assembly of *paṇḍitas*. The Nawab, however, sent his physician to check on Sanātana and received a report that nothing was wrong with Sanātana’s health. The Nawab himself then went to Rāmakeli to confront Sanātana, and when Sanātana refused to resume his responsibilities, Hussain Shah put him in prison.

Rūpa and Anupama got news that Lord Caitanya was making a second attempt to visit Vṛndāvana, and they started traveling in that direction. By then Lord Caitanya was already on His way back from Vṛndāvana, and the brothers met Him at Prayāga. There Lord Caitanya instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī for ten days and blessed Him with the power to disseminate pure devotional service. Rūpa wanted to accompany the Lord back to Purī, but the Lord ordered him instead to go to Vṛndāvana and gave him what for him and Sanātana would be their life's mission—to discover the forgotten places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and write books to establish the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the modern age. Soon, He promised, the brothers could visit Him in Purī.

Rūpa and Anupama went on to Vṛndāvana, which was then a wild jungle. While waiting for Sanātana, they took up a new life of extreme renunciation and intense, blissful meditation on the Supreme Lord's pastimes. As the time approached for Lord Jagannātha's cart festival in Purī, which Lord Caitanya celebrated yearly with His Orissan and Bengali devotees, Rūpa and Anupama started the long walk to Purī. During the journey, on the banks of the Gaṅgā, Anupama passed away. Only after considerable time would Rūpa and Sanātana be able to reunite, to spend the rest of their lives in Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra, an eminent poet among Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's devotees, has written (in *Caitanya-candrodaya* 9.29, 38):

*yaḥ prāg eva priya-guṇa-gaṇair gāḍha-baddho 'pi mukto  
 gehādhyāsād rasa iva paro mūrta evāpy amūrtaḥ  
 remālāpair dṛḍhatara-pariṣvaṅga-raṅgaiḥ prayāge  
 taṁ śrī-rūpaṁ samam anupamenānujagrāha devaḥ*

“From the very beginning, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was bound by attraction to the qualities of his beloved Lord yet free from the false identification of family life. Although Śrīla Rūpa had no material body, he was the embodiment of the transcendental tastes of devotional service. At Prayāga the Lord bestowed mercy on Rūpa and his brother Anupama, holding loving conversations with them and embracing them with wholehearted pleasure.”

*kālena vṛndāvana-keli-vārtā  
lupteti tām khyāpayitum viśiṣya  
kṛpāmṛtenābhiṣiṣeca devas  
tatraiva rūpaṁ ca sanātanaṁ ca*

“In the course of time, the transcendental news of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vṛndāvana was almost lost. To carry out the work in Vṛndāvana of explicitly enunciating those pastimes, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu empowered Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī with the nectar of His mercy.”

Using the money left by Rūpa, Sanātana bribed the jail keeper and gained release from prison. He then at once headed north to join Rūpa in Vṛndāvana. Overcoming various difficulties, he arrived disheveled and travel-worn at Benares, where he learned that Lord Caitanya was staying at the house of a devotee named Candrasekhara. Sanātana found his way to Candrasekhara’s door and sat down, not daring to ask to be allowed inside. But Lord Caitanya knew without being told that Sanātana had arrived and requested Candrasekhara to invite into the house the saintly Vaiṣṇava waiting at the door. Candrasekhara looked outside but saw only what he thought was a dirty Muslim beggar. Lord Caitanya sent Candrasekhara back to let the beggar in, and the Lord embraced Sanātana like a lost son.

For two months the Lord kept Sanātana in Benares and instructed him in all the important aspects of pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. And the Lord empowered Sanātana, as He had Rūpa, to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world. As described in the drama *Caitanya-candrodaya* (9.34–35):

*gauḍendrasya sabhā-vibhūṣaṇa-maṇis tyaktvā ya ṛddhām śriyam  
rūpasyāgraja eka eva taruṇīm vairāgya-lakṣmīm dadhe  
antar-bhakti-rasena pūrṇa-hṛdayo bāhyāvadhūtākṛtiḥ  
śaivālaiḥ pihitaṁ mahā-sara iva prīti-pradas tad-vidām*

“Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Rūpa’s elder brother, was the prize jewel of the court of the king of Gauḍa. Yet Sanātana gave up his fabulous wealth and power to accept the youthful goddess of renunciation. Although his

heart was filled with the ecstatic tastes of devotion, he externally appeared like an outcaste mendicant. Thus he resembled a great lake covered with moss. He was very affectionate to those who knew the tastes of devotion.

*taṁ sanātanam upāgatam akṣṇor  
dṛṣṭa-mātram atimātra-dayārdraḥ  
ālilinga parighāyata-dorbhyāṁ  
sānukampam atha campaka-gaurah*

“As soon as Sanātana arrived and Lord Caitanya saw him, the Lord’s eyes at once overflowed with tears of compassion. And with both arms, broad like war clubs, the *campaka*-golden Lord embraced him with merciful kindness.”

In Vṛndāvana Rūpa and Sanātana were fully immersed in the mood of separation, remembering Kṛṣṇa and His eternal devotees. The brothers gave up all material indulgences, wandered about the holy land with no fixed residence, and almost completely forgot to eat and sleep. Sometimes staying together and sometimes moving separately, they constantly searched for the forgotten places of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and wrote books on advanced topics of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, guided always by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other devotional scriptures.

Sanātana was not yet thirty years old when he arrived in Vṛndāvana, and he stayed there for more than forty years, up to the end of his life. He traveled all around the holy district, treating the residents of each village with great affection, because he considered all the Vraja-vāsīs dear to Kṛṣṇa. Though a renunciant normally has no business with material affairs, he would show honest concern for all the villagers, asking them whom their sons and daughters were going to marry, how much milk their cows were giving, and so on. And the Vraja-vāsīs loved him like their own father.

While staying at Mahāvana, where Kṛṣṇa had played as an infant, Sanātana rediscovered one of the three presiding Deities of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Madana-mohana. Observing some boys playing near the bank of the Yamunā at Mahāvana, Sanātana noticed that one of the boys was especially attractive. That night the same boy came to Sanātana in a

dream and said he wanted to come live in Sanātana's hut. In the morning Sanātana stepped outside to find the Deity of Madana-mohana standing by the door. He took Madana-mohana to Dvādaśāditya Hill in Vṛndāvana forest, where Śrī Advaita Ācārya Prabhu had earlier worshiped the same Deity, and began to serve Madana-mohana as best he could in his humble circumstances. It pained him, however, to be unable to offer Madana-mohana anything better than dry *capātis* to eat — without even salt.

To relieve Sanātana Gosvāmī's anxiety, Madana-mohana Himself arranged for His own opulent worship. While bringing a boatload of merchandise to Mathurā, a rich merchant from Multan, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kapūr, ran aground on the shore of the Yamunā at Dvādaśāditya Hill. Kṛṣṇadāsa went to Sanātana to beg his blessings, and Sanātana assured him that Kṛṣṇa would help him get his goods safely to market. That same day, a rainstorm swelled the Yamunā and freed the boat, and Kṛṣṇadāsa, after selling his goods, offered the proceeds to Sanātana. Śrīla Sanātana asked him to use the money to build a temple and establish proper royal worship for Madana-mohana. The splendid temple of Madana-mohana was a prime attraction of Vṛndāvana for two centuries and, though desecrated near the end of the seventeenth century by Emperor Aurangzeb, still stands beautifully today.

Sanātana Gosvāmī spent his last years on the side of Govardhana Hill, at Mānasī-gaṅgā lake next to Cakaleśvara, one of four deities of Lord Śiva that protect the four directions of Vṛndāvana. Every day, Sanātana would walk the longer of the paths around Govardhana, some forty kilometers, although the physical exertion was difficult. Unable to tolerate Sanātana's austerities, Kṛṣṇa appeared to him in person and gave him a large stone from Govardhana, marked with His own footprint. Kṛṣṇa asked Sanātana to simply walk around this *śilā* daily, and that would be equal to circumambulating the whole hill. When Śrīla Sanātana passed away at Mānasī-gaṅgā, men in the villages all over Vraja shaved their heads, as if their own father had died. Sanātana's nephew, Śrī Jīva, brought Sanātana's remains to Vṛndāvana and installed them in a *samādhi* (sacred tomb) at the Madana-mohana temple. And Sanātana's Govardhana *śilā* he brought for worship in his

own temple, that of Rādhā-Dāmodara.

Sanātana Gosvāmī wrote four major books. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, composed under the direct order of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is the standard *smṛti*, or handbook of devotional practices, for the followers of Mahāprabhu. *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* (*Daśama-ṭīpannī*) is Śrīla Sanātana's elaborate commentary, full of sublime realizations about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, on the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Kṛṣṇa-līlā-stava*, also known as *Daśama-carita*, is a concise poetic summary of the first half of the Tenth Canto, describing Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. And *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is a set of two stories, presenting in 2,514 verses the essential teachings of the *Bhāgavatam*.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, in his purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 5.203), remarks, “Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī Prabhu, the teacher of the science of devotional service, wrote several books, of which the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is very famous; anyone who wants to know about the subject matter of devotees, devotional service, and Kṛṣṇa must read this book. Sanātana Gosvāmī also wrote a special commentary on the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* known as the *Daśama-ṭīpannī*, which is so excellent that by reading it one can understand very deeply the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in His exchanges of loving activities.”

In another purport to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Antya 4.81), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to accomplish many purposes through the exegetical endeavors of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. First Sanātana Gosvāmī compiled the book called *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* to teach people how to become devotees, execute devotional service and attain love of Kṛṣṇa. Second, he compiled the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, wherein he collected authoritative scriptural injunctions regarding how a Vaiṣṇava should behave. Only by the endeavors of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī were all the lost places of pilgrimage in the Vṛndāvana area excavated. He established Madana-mohana, the first Deity in the Vṛndāvana area, and by his personal behavior he taught how one should act in the renounced order, completely devoted to the service of the Lord. By his personal example, he taught people how to stay in Vṛndāvana to execute devotional service. The principal

mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Mathurā and Vṛndāvana are the abodes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore these two places are very dear to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and He wanted to develop their glories through Sanātana Gosvāmī.”

# Part One

*Śrī-bhagavat kṛpā-sāra-nidhāra*

Finding the Essence of the Supreme Lord's  
Mercy

## 1. Bhauma: On the Earth

### Maṅgalācaraṇa invocation

जयति निजपदाब्जप्रेमदानावतीर्णो  
विविधमधुरिमाब्धिः कोऽपि कैशोरगन्धिः ।  
गतपरमदशान्तं यस्य चैतन्यरूपाद्  
अनुभवपदमाप्तं प्रेम गोपीषु नित्यम् ॥

*jayati nija-padābja-prema-dānāvatīrṇo  
vividha-madhurimābdhiḥ ko 'pi kaiśora-gandhiḥ  
gata-parama-daśāntaṁ yasya caitanya-rūpād  
anubhava-padam āptaṁ prema gopīṣu nityam*

*jayati*—all glorifies; *nija*—of His own; *pada-abja*—lotus feet; *prema*—love; *dāna*—for giving; *avatīrṇaḥ*—to Him who descended; *vividha*—of various; *madhurima*—kinds of sweetness; *abdhiḥ*—an ocean; *kaḥ api*—a

certain; *kaiśora*—of youth; *gandhiḥ*—who has the fragrance; *gata*—who has obtained; *parama*—of the topmost; *daśā*—stage; *antam*—the extreme; *yasya*—whose; *caitanya*—of Śrī Caitanya; *rūpāt*—by the form; *anubhava*—of transcendental experience; *padam*—the situation; *āptam*—who has obtained; *prema*—the love; *gopīṣu*—residing in the *gopīs*; *nityam*—eternally.

**All glories to that inconceivable Lord who descended to bestow the gift of perfect love for His own lotus feet. He is an ocean filled with many kinds of sweetness, and He always bears the fragrance of fresh youth. In His form as Śrī Caitanya He has realized the last extreme of transcendental experience, the love residing eternally in the gopīs.**

The purpose of this book is to explain *bhakti*, pure devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the bestower of *bhakti*. He also bestows both material enjoyment and liberation, or oneness with the Supreme, but one who has *bhakti* relishes an abundance of happiness far greater than even the ecstasy of liberation, what to speak of the petty happiness of material enjoyment.

Moreover, the devotion described here focuses solely on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of the *gopīs* of Śrī Nanda-vraja, or Vṛndāvana. Such *bhakti* consists of *prema*, pure love of God, and not only ordinary *prema* but the special kind that follows the mood of the residents of Vṛndāvana. That *prema* is the ultimate perfection of love, in which the devotee has absolutely no interest in anything separate from Kṛṣṇa. As the last chapters of this book will show, the devotees who worship the Lord with such pure devotion achieve the highest possible success: they live forever in the world called Goloka, far above Vaikuṇṭha, the official kingdom of God. There in Goloka, according to their pleasure, they freely enjoy the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Nanda-kīśora.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī will fully present all these ideas as this narration unfolds, but first he invokes auspiciousness in this verse and the following nine verses. As if begging for his Lord's rarely obtained mercy, he praises the Lord's supreme greatness. The first word, *jayati*, "all glories," indicates that the author's most worshipable Lord excels



everyone else. Although the words *jaya* and *jayati* are commonly used to glorify practically anyone or anything, here *jayati* expresses excellence in its most unrestricted sense, the final limit of perfection, in which the Supreme Lord freely distributes devotion for His own all-attractive lotus feet. He does this by revealing the charm of His beauty, personal qualities, and pleasure pastimes. Although the devotion He gives away is imbued with pure *prema*—the rarest of treasures meant for the most elevated souls—He grants it even to those who are fallen and wretched.

Who is this most generous Lord? He can never be adequately described, for He is an unlimited ocean of various kinds of attractiveness—beauty, fine character, and so on. His attractive features, therefore, are fathomless, all-expansive, and perpetual. Describing the attraction of the Lord’s beauty, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī states that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has the fragrance of youth, a constant special presence like the scent of a flower. In other words, even as an infant and a child He exhibits the perfect beauty of full-blown youth. Thus Lord Kapiladeva said to His mother in the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.28.17):

*apīcya-darśanam śaśvat  
sarva-loka-namaskṛtam  
santam vayasi kaiśore  
bhṛtyānugraha-kātaram*

“The Lord is eternally very beautiful, and He is worshipable by all the inhabitants of every planet. He is ever youthful and always eager to bestow His blessings upon His devotees.”

Since the possessor of such eternal youth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, enjoys His private pastimes in the remote realm of Goloka, one might doubt whether contact with Him is possible for souls conditioned by material nature. Is it not beyond the scope of good fortune for ordinary persons to hear about and understand the uniqueness of devotion to Kṛṣṇa? Since this book attempts to make public the secret glories of Kṛṣṇa, one might therefore ask whether writing such a book is not a hopeless endeavor. The author answers that doubt conclusively in this verse.

Before mentioning Śrī Kṛṣṇa's other unique qualities, he first refers to the Lord's exceptional generosity. Lord Kṛṣṇa descended from Goloka to the earth five thousand years ago, to the district of Mathurā, to charitably give pure love for His own lotus feet. By thus appearing personally, the Lord made His special mercy readily obtainable. Although one may also correctly say that He descended to kill Kāṁsa and other evil kings, He has unlimited energies that could achieve such a minor purpose. Making pure love of God available by appearing Himself was therefore His primary purpose because no deputized person could have done it on His behalf. Queen Kuntī therefore says in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.8.20):

*tathā parama-hamsānām  
munīnām amalātmanām  
bhakti-yoga-vidhānārtham  
katham paśyema hi striyaḥ*

“You Yourself descend to propagate the transcendental science of devotional service unto the hearts of the advanced transcendentalists and mental speculators, who are purified by being able to discriminate between matter and spirit. How, then, can we women know You perfectly?” Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has paraphrased this prayer in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “How can we women see You, who have appeared as an *avatāra* to make even self-satisfied saints take to devotional service by attracting them with Your personal qualities?”

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has first referred to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's magnanimity in this invocation verse. Now he continues to describe Kṛṣṇa's characteristics and how they contribute to His purpose of distributing pure love of Godhead. The second half of the verse indicates the sweet charm of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure pastimes. Kṛṣṇa is the darling of the young cowherd women of Vraja, whose love for Him never fails. By alluding to this love, the verse hints at the meaning of the exalted ten-syllable Gopāla *mantra*, which will play an important role in the second part of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Not only has the Lord freely distributed *prema* to many fortunate

souls, but He always has great love for His devotees, beginning with the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana (*prema gopīṣu nityam*). In general, Lord Kṛṣṇa feels affinity for His devotees in response to the particular ways they love Him. But because the love the *gopīs* feel for Him is completely unconditional, natural, unmotivated, and causeless, they have always been more dear to Him than anyone else, and they always will be. The *gopīs*' unsurpassed spiritual status should therefore never be questioned. As shown by the word *nityam* ("eternally"), He is never indifferent to the *gopīs* or dissatisfied with them. Śrī Nārada and other authoritative devotees will confirm this in their own words later in Śrī *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, in the description of "The Glories of Goloka."

Again, someone may doubt the possibility of ever understanding the Vṛndāvana *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, as long as one's mind is even slightly affected by lust, anger, and greed, one cannot begin to appreciate the sublime purity of their love. But by the powerful mercy of Kṛṣṇa in His most recent appearance on earth, these impediments can be overcome with wonderful ease.

Although Caitanya Mahāprabhu is none other than Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, He has descended to exhibit the true nature of *prema-bhakti*. Thus He manifests in Himself the ecstatic mood of the *gopīs*, their ever-increasing love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is reflected proportionately in Kṛṣṇa's ever-expanding love for them. This revelation is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's priceless contribution to the world's welfare, by which He becomes the only real friend of the unhappy and degraded. He has thus allowed persons of our modern times to directly experience the mutual love of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. And those who can understand the *gopīs*' perfect love can properly understand the superexcellence of Lord Kṛṣṇa. By mentioning these matters, Śrīla Sanātana is outlining the basic theme of his book. The first part of Śrī *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* will pursue the question of where the Lord's mercy ultimately resides. The conclusion is that the *gopīs* are His most beloved devotees and that their love for Him is the highest achievement of life. Since the author has personally experienced this truth, it will not be difficult for him to describe it for our benefit. There are no grounds for doubt. Therefore Vaiṣṇavas should hear everything in this book with full confidence.

श्रीराधिकाप्रभृतयो नितरां जयन्ति  
गोप्यो नितान्तभगवत्प्रियताप्रसिद्धाः ।  
यासां हरौ परमसौहृदमाधुरीणां  
निर्वक्तुमीषदपि जातु न कोऽपि शक्तः ॥

śrī-rādhikā-prabhṛtayo nitarām jayanti  
gopyo nitānta-bhagavat-priyatā-prasiddhāḥ  
yāsām harau parama-sauhṛda-mādhurīṇām  
nirvaktum iṣad api jātu na ko 'pi śaktaḥ

śrī-rādhikā—Śrī Rādhikā; prabhṛtayaḥ—beginning with; nitarām—especially; jayanti—all glories; gopyaḥ—to the gopīs; nitānta—very much; bhagavat—to the Lord; priyatā—as being dear; prasiddhāḥ—those who are famous; yāsām—whose; harau—for Lord Hari; parama—supreme; sauhṛda—of the affection; mādhurīṇām—the charm; nirvaktum—to begin describing; iṣat—a little; api—even; jātu—possibly; na kaḥ—no one; api—even; śaktaḥ—is capable.

**All glories above all to the gopīs, headed by Śrī Rādhikā, who are famous as the Lord's dearest devotees. No one can even begin to properly describe the charm of their supreme affection for Śrī Hari.**

Because one can achieve the favor of the Personality of Godhead only by pleasing His dearest devotees, this verse describes the supreme excellence of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. Among them, Śrī Rādhikā is the best, and therefore Her name is mentioned first. The gopīs should be offered special honor because although the Supreme Lord may sometimes lose interest in other devotees or become dissatisfied with them, He never becomes uninterested in the gopīs. All pure devotees therefore acknowledge the supremacy of the gopīs' pure devotion. The Lord Himself tells the gopīs:

na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujām  
sva-sādhū-kṛtyāṁ vibudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ  
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ

*saṁvṛścyā tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā*

“I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of Brahmā. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.32.22)

The *gopīs* are famous as the dearest devotees of the Lord. The deep affection with which Śrī Kṛṣṇa cherishes them is generally considered so clearly self-evident that the supremacy of their devotion is beyond any need to prove. Still, in exuberant devotion for the *gopīs*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī mentions here that no one can describe even an atomic particle of the sweet intimate love the *gopīs* feel for the all-attractive Kṛṣṇa. So wonderful is their reciprocation with Him that Kṛṣṇa Himself does not have the words to describe it.

स्वदयितनिजभावं यो विभाव्य स्वभावात्  
सुमधुरमवतीर्णो भक्तरूपेण लोभात् ।  
जयति कनकधामा कृष्णचैतन्यनामा  
हरिर्हि यतिवेशः श्रीशचीसूनुरेषः ॥

*sva-dayita-nija-bhāvaṁ yo vibhāvya sva-bhāvāt  
su-madhuram avatīrṇo bhakta-rūpeṇa lobhāt  
jayati kanaka-dhāmā kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā  
harir iha yati-veśaḥ śrī-śacī-sūnur eṣaḥ*

*sva*—His own; *dayita*—of the beloved devotees; *nija*—their; *bhāvam*—ecstasy; *yaḥ*—who; *vibhāvya*—noticing; *sva-bhāvāt*—than His own ecstasy; *su-madhuram*—even sweeter; *avatīrṇaḥ*—has descended; *bhakta*—of His own devotee; *rūpeṇa*—in the form; *lobhāt*—out of greed; *jayati*—all glories; *kanaka*—golden-colored; *dhāmā*—with an effulgence; *kṛṣṇa-caitanya*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya; *nāmā*—with the name; *hariḥ*—to Lord Hari; *iha*—in this world; *yati*—of a renunciant; *veśaḥ*—whose dress; *śrī-śacī*—of Mother Śacī; *sūnuḥ*—the son; *eṣaḥ*—this.

Realizing that the ecstasy of His beloved devotees is even sweeter than His own, out of greed the Lord descended to this world in the form of His own devotee. Dressed as a renunciant, golden in effulgence, He bears the name Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. All glories to that Lord Hari, who has appeared as the son of Mother Śacī!

The doubt raised in the first two verses might again be raised here: “How, then, can you describe this love?” Anticipating this question, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī replies that Śrī Caitanyadeva is the only deliverer of the most fallen and wretched souls. As the supreme spiritual master, He has descended in His most attractive form to distribute the transcendental taste of *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of His own holy names. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī wants the mercy of Lord Caitanya and therefore glorifies Him in this verse.

Greater than Lord Kṛṣṇa’s love for His devotees is the love His most intimate devotees feel for Him. Having noted that exceptional sweetness, the Lord wants to taste it. His eagerness drives Him to assume the form of His own devoted servant. He then descends to earth, in the province of Gauḍa and city of Navadvīpa, as Śacīdevī’s beloved son, Gaurasundara, the most beautiful golden form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī uses the proximate pronoun *eṣaḥ* (“this”) to indicate that Lord Caitanya was present around the time this book was composed and that the author thus had the privilege of the Lord’s personal association.

Lord Caitanya experiences what Kṛṣṇa was unable to describe about the love of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana, and furthermore reveals this experience to His followers. This marks Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the supreme appearance of God.

The Lord has higher regard for His devotees than for Himself. As He has said:

*nirapekṣaṁ munim śāntaṁ  
nirvairam sama-darśanam  
anuvrajāmy ahaṁ nityaṁ  
pūyeyety aṅghri-reṇubhiḥ*

“With the dust of My devotees’ lotus feet I desire to purify the material worlds, which are situated within Me. Thus I always follow in the footsteps of My pure devotees, who are peaceful, free from all personal desire, rapt in thought of My pastimes, devoid of feelings of enmity, and of equal disposition everywhere.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.16) That the Lord thinks like this is vividly demonstrated by the *avatāra* of Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*Bhakta-rūpeṇa* means “in the form of His own devotee.” But there is also a second, poetically disguised meaning. When Lord Kṛṣṇa descends from His eternal kingdom as Lord Caitanya, one of the companions He brings is born as the son of Śrī Kumāra in an old *brāhmaṇa* family of renowned spiritual masters from the southern province Karṇāṭaka. This is Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī (*bhakta-rūpa*), the brother of Śrī Sanātana.

In the more obvious, literal sense, *bhakta-rūpa* means that Lord Caitanya, taking the dress of a *sannyāsī*, appears as a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. In this role as a renounced mendicant, Śrī Śacī-nandana disseminates the methods of relishing devotion to Himself. He demonstrates the transcendental chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names and how to worship and offer prayers to Kṛṣṇa. By these activities the otherwise inaccessible secrets of *prema-bhakti* have been released throughout the world for the benefit of those who live in the spiritually fallen modern age. Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya has eloquently depicted Lord Caitanya’s merciful gift to the world:

*kālān naṣṭam bhakti-yogaṁ nijam yaḥ  
prāduṣkartuṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā  
āvirbhūtas tasya pādāravinde  
gāḍham gāḍham līyatām citta-bhṛṅgaḥ*

“Let my consciousness, which is like a honeybee, take shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has just now appeared as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the ancient system of devotional service rendered to Himself. This system had almost been lost due to the influence of time.”

जयति मथुरादेवी श्रेष्ठा पुरीषु मनोरमा  
परमदयिता कंसारातेर्जनिस्थितिरञ्जिता ।  
दुरितहरणान् मुक्तेर्भक्तेरपि प्रतिपादनाज्  
जगति महिता तत्तत्क्रीडाकथास्तु विदूरतः ॥

*jayati mathurā-devī śreṣṭhā purīṣu mano-ramā  
parama-dayitā kaṁsārāter jani-sthiti-rañjitā  
durita-haraṇān mukter bhakter api pratipādanāj  
jagati mahitā tat-tat-kṛīḍā-kathāstu vidūrataḥ*

*jayati*—all glories; *mathurā-devī*—to goddess Mathurā-devī; *śreṣṭhā*—the best; *purīṣu*—of holy cities; *manaḥ-ramā*—attractive to the mind; *parama-dayitā*—most dear; *kaṁsa-arāteḥ*—to Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Kāṁsa; *jani-sthiti*—with His birthplace; *rañjitā*—adorned; *durita*—misfortune; *haraṇāt*—due to dispelling; *mukteḥ*—of liberation; *bhakteḥ*—and devotion; *api*—also; *pratipādanāt*—due to the providing; *jagati*—throughout the world; *mahitā*—acclaimed; *tat-tat*—various; *kṛīḍā*—of His pastimes; *kathā*—the mentioning; *astu*—let it remain; *vidūrataḥ*—distant.

All glories to goddess Mathurā-devī, the best of holy cities! She enchants the mind, she is most dear to the enemy of Kāṁsa, and she is adorned with the Lord's birthplace. The city of Mathurā is acclaimed throughout the world for dispelling misery and bestowing liberation and devotion, not to mention the various pastimes the Lord has played there.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has great affection for the holy land of Mathurā because it is adorned with the sites of many of His favorite eternal pastimes. Mathurā District is therefore the one place in the material universe where the perfection of all human endeavor—pure love of God—can be easily obtained. To gain the favor of Śrī Mathurā-devī, the author praises her in this verse.

*Devī* means “a ruling goddess,” or “one who is perpetually effulgent.” Because Mathurā has the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa always present within her



borders, she is untouched by fear from time and other causes of destruction. Thus she is the best of the seven principal holy cities — Kāśī, Kāñcī, Avantī, Mathurā, Ayodhyā, Māyāpurī (Haridvāra), and Dvārakā — which can each award liberation, as we learn from the authority of the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Kaśī-khaṇḍa* 6.68). Certainly she is better than all the other cities throughout the universe, high and low, belonging to humans, demigods, and even the incarnations of God. Śrī Mathurā is supremely attractive, and she pleases the mind of anyone who comes in contact with her, for she fulfills all categories of desires. In this regard the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Vaiṣṇava-khaṇḍa* 5.17.52) states:

*tri-varga-dā kāmīnām yā  
mumukṣūṇām ca mokṣa-dā  
bhakticchor bhakti-dā kaś tām  
mathurām nāśrayed budhaḥ*

“To those who have material desires, Mathurā gives the three aims of human work [religiosity, economic development, and sense gratification]. To those who want liberation, Mathurā grants liberation. And to those rare souls who want pure devotion, Mathurā gives pure devotion. What intelligent person, therefore, would not take shelter of Mathurā?”

For these reasons Mathurā is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the wicked king Kāṁsa. She indeed has received Kṛṣṇa’s special favor: after Kṛṣṇa killed Kāṁsa, the residents of Mathurā hardly ever suffered fear or distress. Kṛṣṇa’s greatest favor to Mathurā, however, is that He takes birth and resides within her precincts. *Mathurā bhagavān yatra/ nityam sannihito hariḥ*: “Lord Hari is eternally present in Mathurā.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.1.28) Adorned with the Supreme Lord’s birthplace and residence, Mathurā dispels all misfortune and bestows both liberation and pure devotion. For this she is glorified throughout the world. But the glory Mathurā District gains when Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibits His *rāsa-līlā* and other intimate pastimes is beyond anyone’s power to describe.

Many *Purāṇas* confirm that Mathurā frees from karmic misfortune those who come to her. The *Varāha Purāṇa* (165.57–58) states:

*anyatra yat kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ  
tīrtham āsādyā naśyati  
tīrthe tu yat kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ  
vajra-lepo bhaviṣyati*

*mathurāyāṁ kṛtaṁ pāpaṁ  
mathurāyāṁ vinaśyati  
eṣā purī mahā-puṇyā  
yatra pāpaṁ na tiṣṭhati*

“The reaction from a sin committed elsewhere can be dissolved when one visits a holy place of pilgrimage, whereas a sin committed at such a holy *tīrtha* creates an irremovable diamond-hard shell to cover the sinner. But the reaction from a sin committed in Mathurā can be done away with in Mathurā itself. Mathurā is therefore the most auspicious of holy cities, where sinful reactions do not persist.” The same *Purāṇa* (176.71–72) also states:

*jñānato 'jñānato vāpi  
yat pāpaṁ samuṣarjitam  
su-kṛtaṁ duṣkṛtaṁ vāpi  
mathurāyāṁ praṇaśyati*

“Whatever sinful reactions one may have accrued in the past, knowingly or unknowingly, are all destroyed in Mathurā, along with all one’s pious and impious *karma*.” According to the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Vaiṣṇava-khaṇḍa* 5.17.44):

*kāśy-ādi-puryo yadi nāma santi  
tāsāṁ tu madhye mathuraiva dhanyā  
yā janma-mauñjī-vrata-mṛtyu-dāhair  
nṛṇāṁ caturdhā vidadhāti mokṣam*

“Among the various holy cities like Kāśī, Mathurā is most auspicious because she bestows liberation upon human beings in four ways: in Mathurā they may attain liberation by birth, by vows of initiation, by

death, or by cremation.” And in the words of the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*anyeṣu puṇya-kṣetreṣu  
muktir eva mahā-phalam  
muktaiḥ prārthyā harer bhaktir  
mathurāyām hi labhyate*

“In other holy places, liberation is the greatest reward one can achieve. But in Mathurā one can gain what is prayed for by the liberated — devotional service to Lord Hari.”

जयति जयति वृन्दारण्यमेतन् मुरारेः  
प्रियतममतिसाधुस्वान्तवैकुण्ठवासात् ।  
रमयति स सदा गाः पालयन् यत्र गोपीः  
स्वरितमधुरवेणुर्वर्धयन् प्रेम रासे ॥

*jayati jayati vṛndāraṇyam etan murāreḥ  
priya-tamam ati-sādhū-svānta-vaikuṇṭha-vāsāt  
ramayati sa sadā gāḥ pālayan yatra gopīḥ  
svarita-madhura-veṇur vardhayan prema rāse*

*jayati jayati*—all glories, all glories; *vṛnda-aranyam*—to Vṛndāvana forest; *etat*—this; *murāreḥ*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *priya-tamam*—most dear; *ati*—more; *sādhū*—of elevated saints; *sva-anta*—in their hearts; *vaikuṇṭha*—in Vaikuṇṭha; *vāsāt*—than residing; *ramayati*—gives pleasure; *saḥ*—He (Kṛṣṇa); *sadā*—always; *gāḥ*—the cows; *pālayan*—while tending; *yatra*—where; *gopīḥ*—to the gopīs; *svarita*—is sounded; *madhura*—sweetly; *veṇuḥ*—whose flute; *vardhayan*—increasing; *prema*—pure love; *rāse*—in the mood of the *rāsa* dance.

All glories, all glories to this place where we are living, Lord Murāri’s Vṛndāvana forest! He prefers residing here to residing in Vaikuṇṭha or in the hearts of elevated saints. In Vṛndāvana, while always tending His cows, He gives pleasure to the gopīs, whose love for Him in the mood of

**the rāsa dance He increases by sweetly playing His flute.**

Śrī Vraja-bhūmi, the most sacred part of Mathurā District, is where the Supreme Personality of Godhead displays His exceptionally sweet pastimes. Within Vraja-bhūmi, three places are very special. The Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* first mentions these three places when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma move from Mahāvana to avoid the dangers developing there:

*vṛndāvanam govardhanam  
yamunā-pulīnāni ca  
vīkṣyāsīd uttamā prītī  
rāma-mādhavayor nṛpa*

“O King Parīkṣit, when Rāma and Kṛṣṇa saw Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, and the banks of the river Yamunā, They both enjoyed great pleasure.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.11.36)

Since these three places are most dear to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī praises them, beginning with Śrī Vṛndāvana, in the hope of getting their mercy.

*Jayati* (“all glories”) is repeated in this verse to express the superexcellence of Vṛndāvana and the great joy the author feels in glorifying Vṛndāvana. Again the proximate pronoun is used, *etat* (“this”), to indicate that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī was living in Vṛndāvana forest while writing this book.

In Vṛndāvana the Supreme Lord displays a special beauty and loving mood He shows nowhere else; therefore the Lord’s most expert devotees are more pleased by His presence in Vṛndāvana than by His presence in Vaikuṇṭha or in the hearts of *yogīs*. Kṛṣṇa is eternally perceivable for His perfect devotees in Vṛndāvana, which is supremely attractive for them because of His unequaled beauty and the endless flow of the all-attractive pastimes He displays there. No such overwhelming ecstatic experience is found in the heart of a *yogī* or in the official kingdom of God.

Sometimes the Personality of Godhead is present in His other abodes without showing Himself, but never so in Vṛndāvana. As mentioned in

regard to Text 4, Lord Hari is always present in Mathurā (*nityam sannihito hariḥ*). But the word for “present” —*sannihitaḥ*— can also be understood to mean “hidden.” In Mathurā the Lord, although present, may be hidden. In contrast, even after Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma transferred Themselves to Mathurā the ladies of Mathurā described the Lord’s wandering through-out Vraja-bhūmi in the present tense, implying that He was still manifest there, as He is now and always:

*puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayaṁ nṛ-liṅga-  
gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyah  
gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayaṁś ca veṇuṁ  
vikrīḍayāñcati giritra-ramārcitāṅghriḥ*

“How pious are the tracts of land in Vraja, for there the primeval Personality of Godhead, disguising Himself with human traits, wanders about, enacting His many pastimes! His feet are worshiped by Lord Śiva and the goddess Ramā. Adorned with wonderfully variegated forest garlands, He vibrates His flute as He tends the cows in the company of Balarāma.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.44.13)

As described by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in the current verse, Kṛṣṇa is always busy tending His cows in the Vṛndāvana forest. At the same time, He manages to keep the *gopīs*, headed by Śrī Rādhikā, immersed in complete happiness by always finding opportunities to engage with them in the *rāsa* dance and other loving pastimes. When He plays His flute, whose charming sound attracts the entire universe, His outward purpose is to call the cows, but simultaneously He awakens the *gopīs*’ anticipation of their later enjoyment with Him. Certainly His main purpose in playing His flute is to increase the *gopīs*’ ecstasy, since expanding the enjoyment of loving exchanges with devotees in this and other relationships is the ultimate reason for His appearance on earth. Herding cows and flirting with young girls are but means to this end.

जयति तरणिपुत्री धर्मराजस्वसा या  
कलयति मथुरायाः सख्यमत्येति गङ्गाम् ।  
मुरहरदयिता तत्पादपद्मप्रसूतं

## वहति च मकरन्दं नीरपूरच्छलेन ॥

*jayati taraṇi-putrī dharma-rāja-svasā yā  
kalayati mathurāyāḥ sakhyam atyeti gaṅgām  
mura-hara-dayitā tat-pāda-padma-prasūtaṁ  
vahati ca makarandaṁ nīra-pūra-cchalena*

*jayati*—all glories; *taraṇi-putrī*—to the daughter of the sun-god; *dharma-rāja*—of the lord of death; *svasā*—the sister; *yā*—who; *kalayati*—has established; *mathurāyāḥ*—with Mathurā District; *sakhyam*—friendship; *atyeti*—who exceeds; *gaṅgām*—the river Gaṅgā; *mura-hara*—to the killer of Mura; *dayitā*—beloved; *tat*—from His; *pāda-padma*—lotus feet; *prasūtaṁ*—which is generated; *vahati*—she carries; *ca*—and; *makarandaṁ*—the nectar; *nīra-pūra*—a body of water; *cchalena*—on the pretext of being.

All glories to Śrī Yamunā, the daughter of the sun-god and sister of Yamarāja. She is beloved of Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Mura. She has made friends with Mathurā District and has exceeded the greatness of Gaṅgādevī. On the pretext of being a river, she carries the nectar flowing from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Yamunā, the holiest of rivers, is the ornament of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. As the daughter of Vivasvān, the sun-god, she has inherited the power to illuminate the world, and as the sister of Yamarāja, the king of death, she is also the dispenser of perfect justice. Tracing an attractive winding path through Mathurā District, she befriends that holy land on several sides. She is the greatest of all holy bathing sites, exceeding in sanctity the Gaṅgā, as Lord Varāha describes in the *Varāha Purāṇa* (152.30–31):

*gaṅgā śata-guṇā proktā  
māthure mama maṇḍale  
yamunā viśrutā devi  
nātra kāryā vicāraṇā*

*tasyāḥ śata-guṇā proktā  
yatra keśi nipātitaḥ  
keśyāḥ śata-guṇā proktā  
yatra viśramito hariḥ*

“One hundred times more sacred than the Gaṅgā, O goddess Earth, is the Yamunā in My own abode, Mathurā. No one need doubt this. More sacred than Mathurā by a hundred times is the place on the Yamunā where the Keśi demon fell, and one hundred times more sacred than that Keśi-tīrtha is the spot nearby where Kṛṣṇa rested after the demon was killed.”

Why is the river Yamunā so exceptional? Because she is especially dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. She assists in His pastimes in Gokula, in Mathurā, and even in Dvārakā. She originates from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and so on the pretext of carrying her current of water, she distributes the honey of intimate Kṛṣṇa devotion, honey that has a rare sweet taste. Anyone who somehow or other takes shelter of her is at once blessed with relief from material distress and nourished with spiritual satisfaction.

गोवर्धनो जयति शैलकुलाधिराजो  
यो गोपिकाभिरुदितो हरिदासवर्यः ।  
कृष्णेन शक्रमखभङ्गकृतार्चितो यः  
सप्ताहमस्य करपद्मतलेऽप्यवात्सीत् ॥

*govardhano jayati śaila-kulādhirājo  
yo gopikābhir udito hari-dāsa-varyaḥ  
kṛṣṇena śakra-makha-bhaṅga-kṛtārcito yaḥ  
saptāham asya kara-padma-tale 'py avātsīt*

*govardhanaḥ*—to Govardhana; *jayati*—all glories; *śaila-kula-adhirājaḥ*—the emperor of aristocratic mountains; *yaḥ*—who; *gopikābhiḥ*—by the gopīs; *uditaḥ*—called; *hari-dāsa*—of Hari’s servants; *varyaḥ*—the best; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *śakra*—for Indra; *makha*—of the sacrifice; *bhaṅga*—by the disruption; *kṛta-arcitaḥ*—who was worshiped; *yaḥ*—

who; *sapta-aham*—for a week; *asya*—His; *kara-padma-tale*—in the lotus palm; *api*—and; *avātsīt*—resided.

**All glories to Govardhana, the emperor of lordly mountains! The Lord's dear gopīs called him the best servant of Hari, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa disrupted the sacrifice for worship of Indra to worship Govardhana instead, and then the hill resided for a week on the Lord's lotus palm.**

Although Śrī Govardhana currently appears as a long, low hill, he is actually the greatest of mountains, surpassing in glory the Himālayas, Sumeru, and all other mighty ranges and peaks. Exceeding the power of any mere mountain, he serves Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇa's personal abode in several intimate ways. He pleases Kṛṣṇa so much that the gopīs of Vraja have singled him out for praise:

*hantāyam adrīr abalā hari-dāsa-vāryo  
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ  
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayoṛ yat  
pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kanda-mūlaiḥ*

“Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O friends, for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their calves, cows, and cowherd friends, this hill supplies all necessities—caves, fruits, flowers, vegetables, water for drinking, and very soft grass. In this way the hill offers respects to the Lord. Being touched by the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Govardhana Hill appears very jubilant.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.21.18)

Though the residents of Nanda-vraja had arranged offerings for the annual sacrifice to Indra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa reciprocated with Giri Govardhana by diverting these offerings to the unprecedented Govardhana-pūjā, in which the residents of Vraja worshiped Govardhana, the cows, and the *brāhmaṇas* by offering mountains of food and circumambulating Govardhana Hill. When Indra felt insulted and tried to destroy Vraja-bhūmi with a terrible rainstorm, Kṛṣṇa easily lifted Govardhana with His left hand and held Govardhana aloft for seven days to protect His devotees. Thus He proved that Govardhana Hill is greater than the king



of heaven. This wonderful pastime is elaborately described in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, chapters 24 through 27.

जयति जयति कृष्णप्रेमभक्तिर्यदङ्घ्रिं  
निखिलनिगमतत्त्वं गूढमाज्ञाय मुक्तिः ।  
भजति शरणकामा वैष्णवैस्त्यज्यमाना  
जपयजनतपस्यान्यासनिष्ठां विहाय ॥

*jayati jayati kṛṣṇa-prema-bhaktir yad-aṅghriṁ  
nikhila-nigama-tattvaṁ gūḍham ājñāya muktiḥ  
bhajati śaraṇa-kāmā vaiṣṇavaiḥ tyajyamānā  
japa-yajana-tapasyā-nyāsa-niṣṭhāṁ vihāya*

*jayati jayati*—all glories, all glories; *kṛṣṇa*—to Kṛṣṇa; *prema-bhaktiḥ*—to pure devotional service in mature love; *yat*—whose; *aṅghrim*—feet; *nikhila*—all; *nigama*—of the Vedas; *tattvam*—the truth; *gūḍham*—confidential; *ājñāya*—knowing which; *muktiḥ*—liberation personified; *bhajati*—worships her; *śaraṇa*—shelter; *kāmā*—being eager to have; *vaiṣṇavaiḥ*—by the devotees of the Supreme Lord; *tyajyamānā*—having been abandoned; *japa*—on mantra chanting; *yajana*—Vedic sacrifices; *tapasyā*—penances; *nyāsa*—and renunciation; *niṣṭhām*—her dependence; *vihāya*—giving up.

All glories, all glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa-prema-bhakti! Knowing that the feet of Prema-bhakti secretly comprise all the truths of the Vedas, Liberation herself has come to worship her. Indeed, Liberation, abandoned by the Vaiṣṇavas, has now given up her dependence on mantras, penance, sacrifice, and renunciation and is eager to have the shelter of Prema-bhakti.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now glorifies Bhaktidevī, personified devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and begs her favor. Devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is always rendered with *prema*, pure love. In fact, in its essence *bhakti* is composed of *prema*. The lesser goal of life aimed at by impersonalists, namely liberation from the cycle of birth and death,

offers herself to Bhakti as a maidservant. Liberation humbly approaches Bhaktidevī's feet, unable even to look at her face. In other words, liberation follows even the partial practice of devotional service, represented here by the feet of Bhaktidevī. Regardless of a person's motives, even briefly resorting to one of the standard devotional methods—hearing, chanting, and so on—very soon guarantees liberation from material existence. And without some contact with devotional service, no other effort can earn liberation.

Mukti, liberation personified, is eager to surrender to Bhakti-devī because Mukti realizes Bhakti's superiority. *Bhakti* is the essential teaching of the Vedic literature. Liberation therefore rejects the spiritual practices that persons in the four stages of Vedic cultural development use to try to attain her. Traditionally, young celibate students practice *japa* (the recitation of *mantras*), householders perform ritual sacrifices, retired forest-dwellers observe strict penances, and members of the renounced order of life vow never to re-enter family entanglement. But Liberation refuses to submit herself even to those who correctly execute these practices with complete sincerity. She makes herself easily available, however, to devotees of Kṛṣṇa, even though they consider her unimportant and show her little respect. Vaiṣṇavas—not only fully realized devotees but also those who have merely received Vaiṣṇava initiation—have the rare insight that liberation is not very valuable compared with devotional service. Liberation submits herself to the Vaiṣṇavas as a humble servant, but they simply ignore her. This has been so in the past, continues to be so in the present, and will continue to be so in the future (as indicated in this verse by the present tense of the word *tyajyamānā*).

Why, then, does Liberation worship the feet of devotional service? Because she hankers for Bhakti's shelter. Rejected by the Vaiṣṇavas and having nowhere else to go, she is anxious for refuge, fearful she might perish. To those who have made even a casual attempt to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, Liberation readily offers herself. But to the foolish materialists who strive to achieve Liberation she shows no favor. She will not even turn her glance toward them. Thus their chanting, sacrifices, austerities, and renunciation are useless for gaining her. Persons who strive for

liberation by these means alone, neglecting devotional service, are most unfortunate, for they have failed to understand the essential truth of the Vedic scriptures.

जयति जयति नामानन्दरूपं मुरारेर्  
विरमितनिजधर्मध्यानपूजादियत्नम् ।  
कथमपि सकृदात्तं मुक्तिदं प्राणिनां यत्  
परमममृतमेकं जीवनं भूषणं मे ॥

*jayati jayati nāmānanda-rūpaṁ murārer  
viramita-nija-dharma-dhyāna-pūjādi-yatnam  
katham api sakṛd āttam mukti-dam prāṇinām yat  
paramam amṛtam ekam jīvanam bhūṣaṇam me*  
*jayati jayati*—all glories, all glories; *nāma-ānanda*—as the all-ecstatic name; *rūpaṁ*—to the form; *murāreḥ*—of Lord Murāri (Kṛṣṇa); *viramita*—giving up; *nija*—of one's own; *dharma*—social duties; *dhyāna*—meditation; *pūjā-ādi*—ritual worship and so on; *yatnam*—the endeavors; *katham api*—somehow or other; *sakṛt*—just once; *āttam*—taken; *mukti-dam*—giving liberation; *prāṇinām*—to living entities; *yat*—which; *paramam*—the greatest; *amṛtam*—eternal nectar; *ekam*—the only; *jīvanam*—means of livelihood; *bhūṣaṇam*—ornament; *me*—my.

**All glories, all glories to Lord Murāri in the form of His all-ecstatic name! If any living being puts aside such tasks as meditation, ritual worship, and social duties and even once takes the Lord's holy name, the name will grant him liberation. That holy name is the greatest source of eternal pleasure and is my very life and ornament.**

Among the various practices of devotional service, the most important is chanting of the holy names of the Lord. Chanting the Lord's name is *ānanda-rūpaṁ*, pure bliss, because it makes ecstasy rise in the heart. Chanting the holy names is also *ānanda-rūpaṁ* in the sense that it is the essence of ecstasy and it makes everything it touches

ecstatic.

In this verse the author again repeats the exclamation *jayati*, indicating that *hari-nāma*, the name of the Lord, is the greatest manifestation of the Supreme Lord's attractiveness and mercy. One who realizes the value of *hari-nāma* will choose to rely on chanting *hari-nāma* rather than on other kinds of spiritual effort. Performing prescribed duties within the *varṇāśrama* system is troublesome. Persons who have lost interest in the ritual duties of *varṇāśrama* cultivate yogic meditation, either for impersonal perfection or as a means of devotional service, but in either case this too is troublesome because it involves the difficulty of subduing the mind and senses. Worship of the Deity of the Lord is troublesome because the worshiper must purify all the items to be offered, and his own body and heart as well. And also troublesome are the other devotional practices, such as hearing, which can be correctly performed only after one fulfills difficult prerequisites, such as finding a suitably qualified Vaiṣṇava to hear from. Therefore, putting aside concern about success in these methods, an intelligent devotee will simply focus his attention on *hari-nāma*, and thus he will easily achieve the results of all the above methods.

Devahūti, the mother of Lord Kapiladeva, confirms this in a prayer to her son:

*aho bata śva-ṭaco 'to garīyān  
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam  
teṇus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā  
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te*

“Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if born in the families of dog-eaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all kinds of austerities and fire sacrifices and achieved all the good manners of the Āryans. To be chanting the holy name of Your Lordship, they must have bathed at holy places of pilgrimage, studied the *Vedas*, and fulfilled everything required.” (*Bhāgavatam* 3.33.7)

Similarly, in *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (6.2.17) we find the following

statement:

*dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais  
tretāyām dvāpare 'rcayan  
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti  
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam*

“What was accomplished in the Kṛta Age by meditation, in the Tretā Age by ritual sacrifices, and in the Dvāpara Age by worship of the Deity of the Lord is accomplished in this Kali Age by loud chanting of the names of Keśava.”

A doubting person may question the ease of success by *hari-nāma*: “One might earn religious credit, economic success, and material enjoyment by *hari-nāma*,” he might say, “but liberation is something else. Liberation can be gained only by those who are spiritually fit. At best, devotees who chant *hari-nāma* with perfect faith and devotion may achieve liberation through long practice.” Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī refutes this doubt, declaring here that if any living being even once chants Lord Hari’s name, even unintentionally or in ridicule, jest, or material distress, the holy name will surely grace that person with liberation. This chanting may be performed without true realization — it may be a mere reflection or shadow (*namābhāsa*) — but still it will result in liberation. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* confirms this again and again:

*etāvataḥlam agha-nirharaṇāya puṁsām  
saṅkīrtanam bhagavato guṇa-karma-nāmnām  
vikruśya putram aghavān yad ajānilo 'pi  
nārāyaṇeti mriyamāṇa iyāya muktim*

“One is easily relieved from all sinful reactions by chanting the holy name of the Lord and chanting of His qualities and activities. This is the only process recommended for relief from sinful reactions. Even if one chants the holy name of the Lord with improper pronunciation, one will achieve relief from material bondage if one chants without offenses. Ajāmila, for example, was extremely sinful, but while dying he merely chanted the holy name, and although calling his son he achieved

complete liberation because he remembered the name of Nārāyaṇa.”  
(*Bhāgavatam* 6.3.24)

*citraṁ vidūra-vigataḥ sakṛd ādadīta*  
*yan-nāmadheyam adhunā sa jahāti bandham*

“It is amazing that even a person beyond the jurisdiction of the four castes—in other words, an untouchable—is immediately relieved of bondage to material existence if he utters the holy name of the Lord even once.” (*Bhāgavatam* 5.1.35)

*yan-nāma-sakṛc-chravaṇāt*  
*pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt*

“Merely by hearing the holy name of Your Lordship only once, even *caṇḍālas*, men of the lowest class, are freed from all material contamination.” (*Bhāgavatam* 6.16.44)

The *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* also states:

*madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām*  
*sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam*  
*sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā*  
*bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*

“O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest of the sweet and the most auspicious of the auspicious. It is the transcendental fruit of all the *Vedas* and is purely spiritual. Whoever chants it but once, whether with faith or with contempt, is liberated.”

Although we normally think of chanting as being the business of the tongue, all of one’s conscious faculties can be engaged with *hari-nāma*. The mind can contemplate the syllables of the Lord’s names and their meanings, and the external senses can interact with *hari-nāma* each in their own way. Speech and hearing are obviously involved in *hari-nāma*, but the sense of touch can also feel the name written in sacred clay on one’s body, the eyes can see the name written in various places, the hands and legs can work to carry a banner inscribed with the name, and so on.

At the end of this verse, Śrīla Sanātana describes his own relationship with *hari-nāma*. It is everything to him. Nothing else is important. For him *hari-nāma* is the nectar of immortality, the happiness of true liberation. Countless times greater than the satisfaction of impersonal *mukti*, *hari-nāma* is also greater than the bliss of *Vaikuṇṭha*. It is sweeter than all other attractive things. It is Sanātana Gosvāmī's very life and only ornament, a limitless reservoir of auspiciousness, the entire focus of his attention.

नमः श्रीकृष्णचन्द्राय निरुपाधिकृपाकृते ।  
यः श्रीचैतन्यरूपोऽभूत् तन्वन् प्रेमरसं कलौ ॥

*namaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-candrāya*  
*nirupādhi-kṛpā-kṛte*  
*yaḥ śrī-caitanya-rūpo 'bhūt*  
*tanvan prema-rasaṁ kalau*

*namaḥ*—obeisances; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-candrāya*—to Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra; *nirupādhi*—unconditional; *kṛpā*—of mercy; *kṛte*—to the giver; *yaḥ*—who; *śrī-caitanya*—of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *rūpaḥ*—in the form; *abhūt*—appeared; *tanvan*—distributing; *prema-rasaṁ*—the taste of pure love; *kalau*—in this modern age.

**I bow down to Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra, the bestower of unconditional mercy. In the modern age He has appeared as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to distribute the taste of pure love.**

To conclude his *maṅgalācaraṇa* invocation, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī offers respects to his worshipable Deity, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the first spiritual master of the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Lord Caitanya dispenses His causeless mercy to all living entities, whether they deserve it or not. He distributes the taste of *rasa*, intimate emotional exchanges between God and His devotees, the rarest commodity of the spiritual world. Very few persons in the material realm know what *rasa* is. Among the varieties of *rasas* in the spiritual world, the *rasa* found at the lotus feet of Caitanya Mahāprabhu is most

precious and exquisite. It should therefore be extremely difficult for anyone in the modern world to obtain. But Lord Caitanya, being supremely compassionate, gives away this *rasa* to unappreciative, reluctant conditioned souls. Intelligent and fortunate persons will accept His mercy, voluntarily serving His *saṅkīrtana* mission.

भगवद्भक्तिशास्त्राणामयं सारस्य सङ्ग्रहः ।  
अनुभूतस्य चैतन्यदेवे तत्प्रियरूपतः ॥

*bhagavad-bhakti-śāstrāṇām  
ayam sārasya saṅgrahaḥ  
anubhūtasya caitanya-  
deve tat-priya-rūpataḥ*

*bhagavat-bhakti-śāstrāṇām*—of the scriptures teaching devotional service rendered to the Supreme Lord; *ayam*—this; *sārasya*—of the essence; *saṅgrahaḥ*—the collection; *anubhūtasya*—which (essence) was realized; *caitanya-deve*—under the auspices of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *tat*—His; *priya*—from the dear devotee; *rūpataḥ*—Śrī Rūpa.

**This book collects the essence of the scriptures teaching devotional service rendered to the Supreme Lord. These essential teachings I have personally realized under the shelter of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I received them from His dear devotee Śrī Rūpa.**

Having praised Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His best devotees, His personal abode, and His devotional service, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now introduces the theme of his book. *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is not speculative fiction or fantasy. It is authoritative because it distills from the Vedic literature the essential teachings that describe the pure science of rendering loving service to the Supreme Person. *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* sometimes quotes scriptural texts directly, sometimes interweaves selected phrases and words, and sometimes paraphrases to express scriptural ideas.

The author, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, an unalloyed devotee with no material motives, has fully realized the science of *prema-bhakti*. He has



expertly molded the presentation in elegant poetry, transparently, without superfluous impositions of his own. In trying to translate and explain this great work in English, and in trying to understand it properly, we can only pray to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī for the spiritual strength to carry out in good faith our respective responsibilities as translator and as readers.

How has Śrīla Sanātana been able to collect the gist of many devotional scriptures under one title? For years he diligently engaged his mind in studying many scriptures and engaged his heart in devotional meditation. He conducted this outward and inward research under the compassionate guidance and protection of the Lord of consciousness (*caitanya-deva*), Kṛṣṇa's expansion as the Supersoul, Śrī Vāsudeva. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī imbibed the full mercy of Lord Vāsudeva by meditating upon Him and actively serving Him in His transcendental activities as the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Nanda-nandana, who enjoys playing His flute and whose charming body bends in three places. By the causeless mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one can successfully fix one's attention on Him and with higher vision see for oneself the purports of all revealed knowledge.

An alternative and more confidential understanding of *caitanya-deva* and *tat-priya-rūpataḥ* is that Lord Kṛṣṇa is now conducting His *saṅkīrtana* mission as the son of Śacīdevī. One obtains His complete mercy by meditating intensely on His all-attractive golden form (*priya-rūpa*), which is dressed in the saffron of a *sannyāsī*. Or *tat-priya-rūpataḥ* may refer to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the very dear servant of Lord Caitanya and devotional co-worker of Śrī Sanātana. Although Śrī Rūpa considered his elder brother, Sanātana, his spiritual master, here Śrīla Sanātana credits Rūpa with helping him find his way on the path of *prema-bhakti*. One can ascertain the essence of spiritual truth only by the kind mercy of the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees.

## The ancient history of this book

शृण्वन्तु वैष्णवाः शास्त्रमिदं भागवतामृतम् ।  
सुगोप्यं प्राह यत्प्रेम्णा जैमिनिर्जनमेजयम् ॥

*śṛṇvantu vaiṣṇavāḥ śāstram*  
*idaṁ bhāgavatāmṛtam*  
*su-gopyaṁ prāha yat premṇā*  
*jaiminir janamejayam*

*śṛṇvantu*—may they hear; *vaiṣṇavāḥ*—the Vaiṣṇavas; *śāstram*—scripture; *idaṁ*—this; *bhāgavata-amṛtam*—Śrī Bhāgavatāmṛta; *su-gopyam*—most confidential; *prāha*—spoke; *yat*—which; *premṇā*—with love; *jaiminiḥ*—Jaimini Ṛṣi; *janamejayam*—to King Janamejaya.

**May the Vaiṣṇavas kindly hear this confidential scripture, Śrī Bhāgavatāmṛta. Jaimini Ṛṣi spoke it to King Janamejaya in the enthusiasm of pure love.**

Unlike books of fiction, this book carries the authority of revealed scripture. Its purpose is not to entertain the readers or edify them with some pious ethical message, but to teach the highest principles of spiritual life and to help those who faithfully read it enter the path to absolute perfection. The name *Bhāgavatāmṛta* is appropriate because this book consists of the most relishable essence (*amṛta*) of revealed texts concerning devotion to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavān*). Gradually we shall see more clearly how appropriate this name is.

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī says that only the Vaiṣṇavas, devotees of God, should read this book, because others will misunderstand it. He says this out of compassion for the nondevotees. Because persons who have no taste for the personal service of Lord Viṣṇu have impure hearts, most likely they will disbelieve what is spoken here and react offensively. Furthermore, although the term *vaiṣṇava* technically refers to anyone initiated into the worship of the Supreme Lord, in its present context the word *vaiṣṇava* refers to a more restricted group — the devotees who know the taste of devotional reciprocations and are eager to enjoy the nectar found at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the darling son of Nanda Mahārāja.

The standard definition of *vaiṣṇava* is given in the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Svarga-khaṇḍa* 31.112–113):

*sāṅgam sa-mudram sa-nyāsam  
sa-ṛṣi-cchanda-daivatam  
sa-dīkṣā-vidhi sa-dhyānam  
sa-yantram dvādaśākṣaram*

*aṣṭākṣaram athānyam vā  
ye mantram samupāsate  
jñeyās te vaiṣṇavā lokā  
viṣṇu-arcana-ratāḥ sadā*

“Vaiṣṇavas should be understood to be those who regularly worship Lord Viṣṇu and chant either the twelve-syllable *viṣṇu-mantra*, the eight-syllable *mantra*, or some other *mantra* of His. They should have properly received the *mantra* through initiation and, along with the *mantra*, should have been instructed in the secondary rituals and the hand gestures and bodily markings pertaining to the *mantra*. Such Vaiṣṇavas should know about the meter in which the *mantra* is recited, the sage who transmitted the *mantra*, the Deity the *mantra* worships, the method of preliminary meditation on the *mantra*, and the symbol by which the *mantra* is visually represented.” In general we may accept any initiated worshiper of Viṣṇu as a Vaiṣṇava, or even more liberally any monotheist, but we can expect only the pure devotees of Śrī Nanda-kīśora to relish much pleasure in reading *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

“May the Vaiṣṇavas kindly hear”: Although Śrīla Sanātana is close to the Vaiṣṇavas, always engaged in their intimate service, he addresses them in this formal, somewhat distant language because he has great respect for the Lord’s servants and considers himself unworthy to approach them.

The confidential message of the first part of this book will be conveyed through an ancient conversation between two exalted Vaiṣṇavas—Jaimini Ṛṣi and King Janamejaya. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.22) Lord Kṛṣṇa affirms the sage Jaimini’s reputation as a great

devotee. *Vedānām sāma-vedo 'smi*: “Among the *Vedas* I am the *Sāma Veda*.” Jaimini became the first teacher of this best of the four *Vedas* under the authority of Śrīla Veda-vyāsa. This means that Vyāsadeva recognized him as an expert knower of the purport of the *Sāma Veda*, which centers on devotional service to the Supreme Lord. Jaimini’s teachings strongly emphasize the execution of sacrificial duties, but they do so to help materialistic *brāhmaṇas* gradually prepare themselves for the higher, devotional understanding of the *Vedas* revealed in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedānta-sūtra*. Jaimini is known, too, for his description of the glories of Lord Jagannātha, the celebrated Deity form of Kṛṣṇa worshiped at Purī in Orissa. Śrī Janamejaya, a worthy son of Mahārāja Parikṣit, was also a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa; he had an ardent affinity for hearing about Lord Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. Out of eager love for the Personality of Godhead and His devotees, Jaimini spoke the confidential topics of the *Bhāgavatāmṛta* to Janamejaya. No material motive would have justified discussing such secret matters publicly.

मुनीन्द्राजैमिनेः श्रुत्वा भारताख्यानमद्भुतम् ।  
परीक्षिन्नन्दनोऽपृच्छत्तत्खिलं श्रवणोत्सुकः ॥

*munīndrāj jaimineḥ śrutvā  
bhāratākhyānam adbhutam  
parikṣin-nandano 'pṛcchat  
tat-khilaṁ śravaṇotsukah*

*muni-indrāt*—from the best of sages; *jaimineḥ*—Jaimini; *śrutvā*—having heard; *bhārata-ākhyānam*—the narration of the *Mahābhārata*; *adbhutam*—wonderful; *parikṣit-nandanaḥ*—the son of Parikṣit; *apṛcchat*—inquired; *tat*—of that; *khilam*—about the supplement; *śravaṇa-utsukah*—eager to hear.

After Janamejaya, the son of Parikṣit, heard the wonderful *Mahābhārata* recited by the great sage Jaimini, Janamejaya was still eager to hear more, and so he inquired about the supplement to that epic.

Here we are told when and under what circumstances Jaimini spoke

this narration to Janamejaya. The *Mahābhārata*, compiled by Vyāsadeva, is the history of the pious royal dynasty of the Bhāratas. In the only version available in modern times, the narrator, Vaiśampāyana, states that other authentic versions of this history were spoken besides his. One of these other *Mahābhāratas* was narrated by Jaimini Ṛṣi to the same Janamejaya who had heard the *Mahābhārata* from Vaiśampāyana. Hearing this second version had a wonderful effect on Janamejaya, for it was like nothing he had ever heard before. He therefore eagerly inquired if there was some supplement he could also hear, and Jaimini was able to fulfill his request. As *Hari-vamśa* is the *khila* (supplement) to Vaiśampāyana's *Mahābhārata*, *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* is the *khila* to Jaimini's.

**श्रीजनमेजय उवाच  
न वैशम्पायनात्प्राप्तो ब्रह्मन् यो भारते रसः ।  
त्वत्तो लब्धः स तच्छेषं मधुरेण समापय ॥**

*śrī-janamejaya uvāca  
na vaiśampāyanāt prāpto  
brahman yo bhārate rasaḥ  
tvatto labdhaḥ sa tac-cheṣam  
madhureṇa samāpaya*

*śrī-janamejayaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Janamejaya said; *na*—not; *vaiśampāyanāt*—from Vaiśampāyana; *prāptaḥ*—obtained; *brahman*—O brāhmaṇa; *yaḥ*—which; *bhārate*—from the *Mahābhārata*; *rasaḥ*—relishable taste; *tvattaḥ*—from you; *labdhaḥ*—obtained; *saḥ*—that; *tat*—its; *śeṣam*—appendix; *madhureṇa*—with sweetness; *samāpaya*—please complete.

**Śrī Janamejaya said: O brāhmaṇa, by hearing the Mahābhārata from Vaiśampāyana I never obtained the same relish I have now obtained by hearing from you. Please complete this recitation with perfect sweetness.**

King Janamejaya preferred the second version of the *Mahābhārata*, the version he had heard from Jaimini Ṛṣi, because it more openly revealed the transcendental tastes of loving service rendered to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Dvaipāyana Vyāsa had presented his other *Mahābhārata* to appeal to the widest possible audience—frivolous women, uncultured men, and materialistic *brāhmaṇas*—and so in the course of telling his epic he had for the most part hidden Lord Kṛṣṇa’s glories. In the *Mahābhārata* narrated by Vaiśampāyana, Kṛṣṇa usually acts subordinate to the Pāṇḍavas, as their friend and adviser, rarely showing His supremacy. On the testimony of Janamejaya, recorded for us by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jaimini’s *Mahābhārata* is by contrast a purely devotional scripture on the sublime level of Vyāsadeva’s later masterpiece *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Sanātana is a transcendental genius, an eternal resident of Goloka Vṛndāvana, and an intimate companion of the Personality of Godhead’s internal pleasure potency. He can easily perceive anything he wants to, in the past, present, or future, including lost scriptures from previous ages. If we have confidence in this, we shall discover in Śrī *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* more than the subtle sense gratification sometimes called “nectar” by immature devotees; we shall discover our own eternal selves.

Janamejaya addresses Jaimini with the word *brahman*, which ordinarily means “O *brāhmaṇa*.” But here it can also appropriately mean “O personification of Brahman, the Vedic sound.”

The king makes a request an audience has a right to make of a speaker — that the recitation end with something especially delightful. *Madhureṇa samāpayet* (“One should end on a sweet note”) is a common saying among connoisseurs of devotional poetry. Here the element of *madhura* asked for is specifically *rasa*, the ecstatic taste known only between the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees in their various personal reciprocations. Janamejaya’s hearing from Jaimini will aptly conclude with this *rasa*, just as a good meal ends well with a dessert like *śrikāṇḍa*.

Uttarā inquires from her son, Parīkṣit

श्रीजैमिनिरुवाच

शुकदेवोपदेशेन निहताशेषसाध्वसम् ।  
सम्यक्प्राप्तसमस्तार्थं श्रीकृष्णप्रेमसम्प्लुतम् ॥

सन्निकृष्टनिजाभीष्टपदारोहणकालकम् ।  
श्रीमत्परीक्षितं माता तस्यार्ता कृष्णतत्परा ॥

विराटनयैकान्तेऽपृच्छदेतन् नृपोत्तमम् ।  
प्रबोध्यानन्दिता तेन पुत्रेण स्नेहसम्प्लुता ॥

śrī-jaiminir uvāca  
śuka-devopadeśena  
nihatāśeṣa-sādhvasam  
samyak-prāpta-samastārtham  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-prema-samplutam

sannikṛṣṭa-nijābhīṣṭa-  
padārohaṇa-kālakam  
śrīmat-parīkṣitam mātā  
tasyārtā kṛṣṇa-tatparā

virāṭa-tanayaikānte  
'prcchad etan nṛpottamam  
prabodhyānanditā tena  
putreṇa sneha-samplutā

śrī-jaiminiḥ uvāca—Śrī Jaimini said; śukadeva—of Śukadeva;  
upadeśena—by the instructions; nihata—destroyed; aśeṣa—all;  
sādhvasam—whose fear; samyak—perfectly; prāpta—obtained;  
samasta—all; artham—whose ambitions; śrī-kṛṣṇa—for Śrī Kṛṣṇa;  
prema—in pure love; samplutam—immersed; sannikṛṣṭa—being  
imminent; nija—his own; abhīṣṭa—desired; pada-ārohaṇa—of elevation  
to the destination; kālakam—the time; śrīmat-parīkṣitam—Śrīmān

Parīkṣit; *mātā*—mother; *tasya*—his; *ārtā*—distressed; *kṛṣṇa-tat-parā*—fully devoted to Kṛṣṇa; *virāṭa-tanayā*—the daughter of King Virāṭa; *ekānte*—in a secluded place; *apṛcchat*—asked; *etat*—this; *nṛpa-uttamam*—of the most excellent king; *prabodhya*—being consoled; *ānanditā*—being pleased; *tena*—by him; *putreṇa*—her son; *sneha*—in affection; *samplutā*—immersed.

Śrī Jaimini said: By hearing the instructions of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrīmān Parīkṣit was relieved of all fear. All his ambitions satisfied, he was absorbed in pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Now, as the time came near for the king to ascend to the destination he desired, his mother, Virāṭa's daughter, a surrendered devotee of Kṛṣṇa, approached him in great distress while he was alone. After Parīkṣit had consoled and pleased her by his greetings, she asked of him as follows, immersed in love for her son.

To satisfy King Janamejaya's sincere desire, Jaimini recalls how Janamejaya's saintly father, Parīkṣit, some years before, had finished hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī and the hour had come for Parīkṣit to prepare for his fated death. Jaimini Ṛṣi here divulges that Mahārāja Parīkṣit's mother came to see her son just at that moment. Even though Parīkṣit was sitting several miles from his palace and very little time remained, his mother, Uttarā, was impelled to see him just once more, knowing she would never see him again and eager not to lose the last opportunity to hear from him topics about Kṛṣṇa.

After Śukadeva taught *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Parīkṣit no longer feared the monstrous snake-bird, nor any material illusion. He was *śrīmān*, blessed by the Lord's divine consort Śrī. He had effortlessly achieved the benefits of each of the essential human endeavors — religiosity, economic development, sense enjoyment, and liberation. And beyond those benefits, he was immersed in a flood of *prema-rasa* at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His mother approached him while he was absorbed in that ecstasy.

A mother about to lose her son is naturally forlorn. But Uttarā's sorrow was eclipsed by her eagerness to hear what her son had just heard



from Śukadeva Gosvāmī about Lord Kṛṣṇa's glories. Because she wanted to hear the confidential essence of Śukadeva's instructions, she approached her son as he sat alone. With a pacifying greeting and a brief philosophical reminder about the illusory nature of birth and death, Mahārāja Parīkṣit quickly dispelled whatever motherly anxiety she felt. Thus she was now joyful and fixed in affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and for her son, the great devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

श्रीउत्तरोवाच  
यच्छुकेनोपदिष्टं ते वत्स निष्कृष्य तस्य मे ।  
सारं प्रकाशय क्षिप्रं क्षीराम्बोधेरिवामृतम् ॥

śrī-uttarovāca  
yac chukenopadiṣṭam te  
vatsa niṣkṛṣya tasya me  
sāram prakāśaya kṣipram  
kṣīrāmbhodher ivāmṛtam

*śrī-uttarā uvāca*—Śrīmatī Uttarā said; *yat*—which; *śukena*—by Śukadeva; *upadiṣṭam*—taught; *te*—to you; *vatsa*—dear son; *niṣkṛṣya*—extracting; *tasya*—of it; *me*—for me; *sāram*—the essence; *prakāśaya*—please show; *kṣipram*—quickly; *kṣīra-ambhodheḥ*—from the Milk Ocean; *iva*—like; *amṛtam*—the nectar.

**Blessed Uttarā said: My dear son, please extract the essence of what Śukadeva has taught you and quickly reveal it to me, as if churning the nectar of immortality from the Ocean of Milk.**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is “the ripe fruit of the Vedic desire tree” (*nigama-kalpataror galitam phalam*). Everything spoken by Śrī Śukadeva to Mahārāja Parīkṣit is essential. It represents the best of the Vedic teachings, chosen and arranged to guide students of the *Bhāgavatam* quickly and surely toward pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. But Uttarā does not have seven days to hear the whole *Bhāgavatam* from her son; only if he can condense for her the essence of this essence and speak it to her in the short time remaining will her hankering for the unalloyed

nectar of *prema-bhakti* be satisfied.

Someone might suggest that Parīkṣit need only repeat to her a single confidential pastime of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, but that would be inappropriate. One can properly relish the most intimate loving dealings of the Lord only after first submitting one's heart to a thorough cleansing. Therefore Śukadeva Gosvāmī spoke nine cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* just to prepare Parīkṣit Mahārāja for full understanding before beginning to narrate Kṛṣṇa's *vṛndāvana-līlā*. Mother Uttarā now soberly asks her son to use his discrimination to remove her misunderstandings and elevate her to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As a farmer takes several canes of sugar to extract a cup of sweet juice, Parīkṣit should carefully consider his realization of the entire *Bhāgavatam* and extract its essence. Or, using Uttarā's own metaphor, his narration should be like the nectar of immortality that the demigods and demons churned with great effort from the Ocean of Milk.

श्रीजैमिनिरुवाच

उवाच सादरं राजा परीक्षिन् मातृवत्सलः ।

श्रुतात्यद्भुतगोविन्दकथाख्यानरसोत्सुकः ॥

śrī-jaiminir uvāca  
uvāca sādaram rājā  
parīkṣin mātṛ-vatsalah  
śrutāty-adbhuta-govinda-  
kathākhyāna-rasotsukah

śrī-jaiminiḥ uvāca—Śrī Jaimini said; *uvāca*—spoke; *sa-ādaram*—with respect; *rājā parīkṣit*—King Parīkṣit; *mātṛ-vatsalah*—affectionate to his mother; *śruta*—which he had heard; *ati-adbhuta*—very wonderful; *govinda*—of Lord Govinda; *kathā-ākhyāna*—of recounting the narrations; *rasa*—to relish the taste; *utsukah*—eager.

Śrī Jaimini said: King Parīkṣit, feeling affection for his mother, answered her respectfully, eager to enjoy recounting the wonderful narrations he had just heard about Lord Govinda.

Because the *Bhāgavatam* had aroused in him a transcendental attraction, Parīkṣit was quite willing to satisfy his mother's request. Added to his already great enthusiasm to keep hearing and chanting the *Bhāgavatam*, his natural affection for his mother made him all the more eager to speak. In this mood he was ready to reveal the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

श्रीविष्णुरात उवाच  
मातर्यद्यपि कालेऽस्मिंश्चिकीर्षितमुनिव्रतः ।  
तथाप्यहं तव प्रश्नमाधुरीमुखरीकृतः ॥

*śrī-viṣṇurāta uvāca*  
*mātar yady api kāle 'smimś*  
*cikīrṣita-muni-vrataḥ*  
*tathāpy ahaṁ tava praśna-*  
*mādhurī-mukharī-kṛtaḥ*

*śrī-viṣṇurātaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Viṣṇurāta (Parīkṣit) said; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *yady api*—although; *kāle*—at the time; *asmin*—this (just before one's death); *cikīrṣita*—is desirable; *muni-vrataḥ*—a vow of silence; *tathā*—nonetheless; *aham*—I; *tava*—your; *praśna*—of the question; *mādhurī*—by the charm; *mukharī-kṛtaḥ*—made inclined to speak.

Śrī Parīkṣit, known as Viṣṇurāta, said: Mother, at a time like this one should observe silence, but your delightful question impels me to speak.

गुरोः प्रसादतस्तस्य श्रीमतो बादरायणेः ।  
प्रणम्य ते सपुत्रायाः प्राणदं प्रभुमच्युतम् ॥

तत्कारुण्यप्रभावेण श्रीमद्भागवतामृतम् ।  
समुद्धृतं प्रयत्नेन श्रीमद्भागवतोत्तमैः ॥

मुनीन्द्रमण्डलीमध्ये निश्चितं महतां मतम् ।

## महागुह्यमयं सम्यक् कथयाम्यवधारय ॥

*guroḥ prasādatas tasya  
śrīmato bādarāyaṇeḥ  
praṇamya te sa-putrāyāḥ  
prāṇa-dam prabhum acyutam*

*tat-kāruṇya-prabhāveṇa  
śrīmad-bhāgavatāmṛtam  
samuddhṛtaṁ prayatnena  
śrīmad-bhāgavatottamaiḥ*

*munīndra-maṇḍalī-madhye  
niścitaṁ mahatām matam  
mahā-guhya-mayaṁ samyak  
kathayāmy avadhāraya*

*guroḥ*—of my spiritual master; *prasādataḥ*—by the mercy; *tasya*—his; *śrīmataḥ bādarāyaṇeḥ*—of Śrīmān Bādarāyaṇi (Śukadeva); *praṇamya*—offering obeisances; *te*—of you; *sa-putrāyāḥ*—along with your son; *prāṇa-dam*—who granted the gift of life; *prabhum*—to the Lord and master; *acyutam*—Śrī Acyuta; *tat*—His; *kāruṇya-prabhāveṇa*—by the compassionate grace; *śrīmat-bhāgavata-amṛtam*—Śrīmad-bhāgavatāmṛta; *samuddhṛtam*—distilled; *prayatnena*—with great effort; *śrīmat-bhāgavata-uttamaiḥ*—by the best of His pure devotees; *muni-indra*—of the chief sages; *maṇḍalī-madhye*—in the community; *niścitaṁ*—decided; *mahatām*—by the great souls; *matam*—favorably judged; *mahā-guhya-mayaṁ*—full of confidential truths; *samyak*—faithfully; *kathayāmi*—I shall recite; *avadhāraya*—please give your attention.

I shall speak by the mercy of my spiritual master, Śrīmān Bādarāyaṇi [Śukadeva Gosvāmī]. First let me offer respects to our Lord and master, Śrī Acyuta, who granted the gift of life to you and your son. His compassionate grace inspired the best of His pure devotees in the great effort to extract the nectar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The greatest sages

have approved this resulting work, which is full of confidential truth. Please listen with attention as I faithfully repeat it to you.

The original Vedic *śrutis* and their derivative *smṛtis* mostly reflect the general interests of human beings, who strive for material progress, rarely inquiring philosophically into the purpose of life. The confidential science of pure devotional service is taught explicitly only in a few Vedic scriptures little known to the public. Among these rare texts are the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, the *Nārada Pañcarātra*, the *Garga Saṁhitā*, the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *Hari-vaṁśa Upapurāṇa*, the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*, and the *Bhāgavata Mahā-purāṇa*. Parikṣit Mahārāja now offers to recite to his mother what he calls *Śrīmad-bhāgavatāmṛta*: the relishable cream of all the Vedic scriptures that teach pure *bhakti*. These exceptional scriptures are *śrīmat*—rich in spiritual value—and have the potency to give knowledge, renunciation, and devotion. The distilled essence of these scriptures is *amṛta*, a heavenly beverage that bestows immortality, like the nectar churned from the Milk Ocean, from which all sorts of priceless treasures spontaneously arose.

During the seven days in which Parikṣit Mahārāja had prepared for death, Śukadeva Gosvāmī had spoken only *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But because *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the sum and substance of all *bhakti* scriptures, those scriptures revealed their conclusions during the discussion. Uttarā wants to hear the essence of all devotional literature, and her son will answer accordingly.

The *Bhāgavatam* spoken by Śrī Śukadeva is all-beautiful, both in text and in purport. Nothing in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is superfluous:

*nigama-kalpataror galitaṁ phalaṁ  
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam  
pibata bhāgavataṁ rasam ā-layaṁ  
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

“O expert and thoughtful men, relish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more

tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.1.3)

Authorities like Sūta Gosvāmī testify to this truth from their own experience. Nonetheless, perfect devotees may feel inclined to listen to some parts of the *Bhāgavatam* more than others. The extraordinary Vaiṣṇavas who have developed an unquenchable thirst for the honey flowing directly from Śrī Gopīnātha’s lotus feet feel no attraction for hearing anything other than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, just as even beginners in the process of devotional service no longer want to hear about *jñāna-yoga* and impersonal liberation, or as those striving for liberation lose interest in topics of material development and worldly pleasures. Every discussion in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in fact glorifies Kṛṣṇa, the lover of the *gopīs*. But pure devotees sometimes consider the passages not directly describing those intimate glories less important. The self-realized Vaiṣṇavas must be allowed their preferences, but neophyte devotees should not cheaply imitate them. Devotees not free from faults should strictly follow the complete course of the instructions of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, from the first chapter of Canto One through the last chapter of Canto Twelve. By repeated systematic study of the entire *Bhāgavatam* and its authorized explanations, devotees can aspire to gradually become fit to taste the immortal nectar hidden within it.

Śukadeva, Nārada, and other Vaiṣṇavas of their caliber contributed to this *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and it is approved by great sages like Parāśara and Vyāsadeva. It presents the Absolute Truth clearly, not vaguely like some textbooks on *mantras* and *yoga*, or dishonestly like unauthorized pseudospiritual works. It presents the truth thoroughly, not superficially like the works of unqualified authors who have little to say and who say less, out of fear of losing their readers’ attention. The essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as explained by Mahārāja Parīkṣit to his mother forms the ultimate summary of Vedic knowledge.

## Worshiping Lord Mādhava at Prayāga

एकदा तीर्थमूर्धन्ये प्रयागे मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।  
माघे प्रातः कृतस्नानाः श्रीमाधवसमीपतः ॥

उपविष्टा मुदाविष्टा मन्यमानाः कृतार्थताम् ।  
कृष्णस्य दयितोऽसीति श्लाघन्ते स्म परस्परम् ॥

*ekadā tīrtha-mūrdhanye  
prayāge muni-puṅgavāḥ  
māghe prātaḥ kṛta-snānāḥ  
śrī-mādhava-samīpataḥ*

*upaviṣṭā mudāviṣṭā  
manyamānāḥ kṛtārthatām  
kṛṣṇasya dayito 'sīti  
ślāghante sma parasparam*

*ekadā—once; tīrtha-mūrdhanye—at the best of pilgrimage places; prayāge—Prayāga; muni-puṅgavāḥ—exalted sages; māghe—during the month of Māgha; prātaḥ—after sunrise; kṛta-snānāḥ—having taken a bath; śrī-mādhava—Śrī Mādhava; samīpataḥ—in front of; upaviṣṭāḥ—seated; mudā āviṣṭāḥ—full of happiness; manyamānāḥ—considering; kṛta-arthatām—the goals of their life fulfilled; kṛṣṇasya—of Kṛṣṇa; dayitaḥ—the recipient of the mercy; asi—you are; iti—thus; ślāghante sma—they were praising; parasparam—one another.*

Once a group of exalted sages were at Prayāga, the best of pilgrimage sites, during the month of Māgha. The sages had taken their bath and were happily seated before the Deity of Śrī Mādhava. Feeling satisfied, as if all their goals in life had been fulfilled, they were praising one another, saying, “You are the recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.”

These sages at Prayāga were humble devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Each of them disliked hearing himself praised and was thus trying to divert the praise to someone else. Appreciative of one another’s good qualities, they could



honestly tell one another, “You are the Lord’s dearest devotee.” When Vaiṣṇavas are friendly to one another like this, their community prospers.

Prayāga is called *tīrtha-mūrdhanya*, the chief of holy places, because it is located at the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The sages were there at the most auspicious time for bathing — the month of Māgha (January-February). As Dattātreya, the incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, has explained:

*vrata-dāna-tapobhiś ca  
na tathā prīyate hariḥ  
māghe majjana-mātreṇa  
yathā prīṇāti mādhabaḥ*

“The Supreme Lord Mādhava is not as pleased by vows, charity, or austere penances as by one’s simply taking a bath in the month of Māgha.” (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 126.8) Śrī Mādhava is the presiding Deity of Prayāga-tīrtha. After bathing, the sages were sitting in front of Lord Mādhava feeling extremely fortunate to be together in such a sacred place at such a time.

**मातस्तदानीं तत्रैव विप्रवर्यः समागतः ।  
दशाश्वमेधिके तीर्थे भगवद्भक्तितत्परः ॥**

*mātas tadānīm tatraiva  
vipra-varyaḥ samāgataḥ  
daśāśvamedhike tīrthe  
bhagavad-bhakti-tatparaḥ*

*mātaḥ*—dear mother; *tadānīm*—at that time; *tatra eva*—there; *vipra-varyaḥ*—a first-class *brāhmaṇa*; *samāgataḥ*—arrived; *daśāśvamedhike tīrthe*—at the site called Daśāśvamedha-tīrtha; *bhagavat-bhakti*—in the practice of devotional service to the Supreme Lord; *tat-paraḥ*—fixed.

**Dear mother, at that time a first-class brāhmaṇa arrived at that holy site, called Daśāśvamedha-tīrtha. He was fully absorbed in devotional service**



to the Supreme Lord.

सेवितोऽशेषसम्पद्भिस्तद्देशस्याधिकारवान् ।  
वृतः परिजनैर्विप्रभोजनार्थं कृतोद्यमः ॥

sevito 'śeṣa-sampadbhis  
tat-deśasyādhikāra-vān  
vṛtaḥ parijanair vipra-  
bhojanārtham kṛtodyamaḥ

sevitaḥ—served; aśeṣa—by all; sampadbhiḥ—assets; tat-deśasya—of that region; adhikāra-vān—the possessor of spiritual authority; vṛtaḥ—surrounded; parijanaiḥ—by subordinates; vipra—the brāhmaṇas; bhojana-artham—for feeding; kṛta-udyamaḥ—making preparations.

Richly endowed with all assets, he was the spiritual leader of that region. His retinue surrounded him as he prepared to distribute food to the local brāhmaṇas.

विचित्रोत्कृष्टवस्तूनि स निष्पाद्य महामनाः ।  
आवश्यकं समाप्यादौ संस्कृत्य महतीं स्थलीम् ॥

vicitrotkṛṣṭa-vastūni  
sa niṣpādyā mahā-manāḥ  
āvaśyakam samāpyādau  
saṁskṛtya mahatīm sthalīm

vicitra—various; utkṛṣṭa—excellent; vastūni—items; saḥ—he (the brāhmaṇa); niṣpādyā—collecting; mahā-manāḥ—generous; āvaśyakam—what was required; samāpya—executing; ādau—first; saṁskṛtya—purifying; mahatīm—large; sthalīm—an area.

Having collected all sorts of valuable items for worship of the Lord, the generous brāhmaṇa then saw to the preliminaries, first by purifying a large area on the ground.

सत्वरं चत्वरं तत्र मध्ये निर्माय सुन्दरम् ।  
उपलिप्य स्वहस्तेन वितानान्युदतानयत् ॥

*satvaram catvaram tatra  
madhye nirmāya sundaram  
upalipya sva-hastena  
vitānāny udatānayat*

*satvaram*—rapidly; *catvaram*—an altar; *tatra*—there; *madhye*—in the middle; *nirmāya*—building; *sundaram*—handsome; *upalipya*—smearing it; *sva-hastena*—with his own hand; *vitānāni*—canopy covers; *udatānayat*—he spread.

**There he swiftly built a handsome altar, which he smeared with mud with his own hand and covered with a canopy.**

The unnamed *brāhmaṇa* who came to conduct public worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa at Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa was the acknowledged spiritual authority of that area. Although rich and influential, with ample means for a comfortable life, he was a fully surrendered Vaiṣṇava. Everything he had he used only for Lord Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. By his heartfelt service, he satisfied the Lord and everyone else. At this same Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa at Prayāga, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī later received personal instructions from Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu for ten days.

शालग्रामशिलारूपं कृष्णं स्वर्णासने शुभे ।  
निवेश्य भक्त्या सम्पूज्य यथाविधि मुदा भूतः ॥

*śālagrāma-śilā-rūpam  
kṛṣṇam svarṇāsane śubhe  
niveśya bhaktyā sampūjya  
yathā-vidhi mudā bhūtaḥ*

*śālagrāma-śilā*—of the Śālagrāma-śilā; *rūpam*—in the form; *kṛṣṇam*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *svaṇa-āsane*—on a golden throne; *śubhe*—auspicious; *niveśya*—seating; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *sampūjya*—worshiping;

*yathā-vidhi*—following the prescribed rules; *mudā bhṛtaḥ*—full of joy.

Next he placed Lord Kṛṣṇa's form as the Śālagrāma-śilā on an auspicious golden throne and worshiped the Lord with great devotion. Joyfully he performed the prescribed rituals.

The Śālagrāma-śilā is a sacred stone worshiped by Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* as a Deity form of Lord Viṣṇu. The stones are found only in the Gaṇḍakī River near the village of Śālagrāma in the Himālayan foothills. So precise is the science of *arcana* that an expert *brāhmaṇa* can recognize each Śālagrāma-śilā as a specific incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu by unique markings.

भोगाम्बरादिसामग्रीमर्पयित्वाग्रतो हरेः ।  
स्वयं नृत्यन् गीतवाद्यादिभिश्चक्रे महोत्सवम् ॥

*bhogāmbarādi-sāmagrīm*  
*arpayitvāgrato hareḥ*  
*svayaṁ nṛtyan gīta-vādyā-*  
*dibhiś cakre mahotsavam*

*bhoga-ambara-ādi*—of food, clothing, and so on; *sāmagrīm*—offerings; *arpayitvā*—presenting; *agrataḥ*—in front; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *svayaṁ*—himself; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *gīta-vādyā-ādibhiḥ*—with singing, instrumental music, and so on; *cakre*—he made; *mahā-utsavam*—a great festival.

In front of Lord Hari he placed food, clothes, and other offerings. He made a one-man festival by dancing, singing, playing music, and so on.

When worshiping the Deity of the Supreme Lord, one should first greet Him as an honorable guest with water for washing His feet, scented water for drinking, and other items prescribed by standard etiquette. One should feed the Deity nicely and offer gifts of cloth and other valuables such as perfumes and incense. The lamp offered in the *ārati* ceremony represents the light one would show at the entrance of one's house for a guest arriving at night (*ā-rātrikam*).

ततो वेदपुराणादिव्याख्याभिर्वादकोविदान् ।  
विप्रान् प्रणम्य यतिनो गृहिणो ब्रह्मचारिणः ॥

*tato veda-purāṇādi-  
vyākhyābhir vāda-kovidān  
viprān praṇamya yatino  
gṛhiṇo brahma-cāriṇaḥ*

*tataḥ*—then; *veda-purāṇa-ādi*—of the Vedas, Purāṇas, and so on; *vyākhyābhiḥ*—by explanations; *vāda*—in argument; *kovidān*—who were expert; *viprān*—to the brāhmaṇas; *praṇamya*—offering respects; *yatinaḥ*—to the sannyāsīs; *gṛhiṇaḥ*—the householders; *brahma-cāriṇaḥ*—and the brahmacārīs.

He then offered homage to the brāhmaṇas present who were expert in arguing from the Vedas, Purāṇas, and other texts. He also offered respects to the sannyāsīs, house-holders, and brahmacārīs.

वैष्णवांश्च सदा कृष्णकीर्तनानन्दलम्पटान् ।  
सुबहून् मधुरैर्वाक्यैर्व्यवहारैश्च हर्षयन् ॥

*vaiṣṇavāṁś ca sadā kṛṣṇa-  
kīrtanānanda-lampāṭān  
su-bahūn madhurair vākyair  
vyavahāraiś ca harṣayan*

*vaiṣṇavān*—devotees of the Supreme Lord; *ca*—and; *sadā*—always; *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana-ānanda*—for the bliss of glorifying Kṛṣṇa; *lampāṭān*—who were always greedy; *su-bahūn*—many; *madhuraiḥ*—sweet; *vākyaiḥ*—with words; *vyavahāraiḥ*—and behavior; *ca*—and; *harṣayan*—pleasing.

And he honored the Vaiṣṇavas, who were always greedy to enjoy the bliss of glorifying Kṛṣṇa. Thus he encouraged the many respectable persons there with attractive words and behavior.

पादशौचजलं तेषां धारयन् शिरसि स्वयम् ।  
भगवत्यर्पितैस्तद्वद्नादिभिरपूजयत् ॥

*pāda-śauca-jalam teṣām  
dhārayan śirasi svayam  
bhagavaty arpitais tadvad  
annādibhir apūjayat*

*pāda-śauca*—that had washed the feet; *jalam*—the water; *teṣām*—their; *dhārayan*—placing; *śirasi*—on his head; *svayam*—personally; *bhagavati*—to the Supreme Lord; *arpitaiḥ*—which was offered; *tadvat*—likewise; *anna-ādibhiḥ*—with the food and so on; *apūjayat*—he worshiped them.

After placing on his head the water that had washed their feet, he worshiped those persons with the food and other items he had presented to the Supreme Lord.

One class of learned *brāhmaṇas* like to display their knowledge by defeating others in argument. But another class of *brāhmaṇas*, the pure Vaiṣṇavas, prefer to use their energy to hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa.

Some Vaiṣṇavas are also *brāhmaṇas* by birth and external behavior, but pure Vaiṣṇavas of any social status, even those who come from lower castes, are always better situated spiritually than ordinary *brāhmaṇas*. Pure Vaiṣṇavas bother to enter debates only when the cause of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be advanced, when criticisms of other Vaiṣṇavas or the Supreme Lord have to be answered, or when victims of misconceptions have to be saved.

The *brāhmaṇa* Vaiṣṇava conducting this festival honored the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas with pleasant, encouraging words and with respectful behavior — bowing down to them, washing their feet, offering them *ārati*, and so on.

भोजयित्वा ततो दीनानन्त्यजानपि सादरम् ।  
अतोषयद्यथान्यायं श्वशृगालखगक्रिमीन् ॥

bhojayitvā tato dīnān  
antya-jān api sādaram  
atoṣayat yathā-nyāyam  
śva-śṛgāla-khaga-krimīn

bhojayitvā—feeding; tataḥ—then; dīnān—wretched persons; antya-jān—outcastes; api—even; sa-ādaram—respectfully; atoṣayat—he satisfied; yathā-nyāyam—in suitable ways; śva—dogs; śṛgāla—jackals; khaga—birds; krimīn—and worms.

**Next he respectfully fed everyone else, including the most fallen outcastes. In suitable ways, he satisfied even the dogs, jackals, birds, and insects.**

Śūdras and outcastes are commonly considered fallen, and men who are poor and hungry are usually identified as wretched, but the real criterion of a person's fallen, wretched condition is his lack of devotion to the Supreme Lord. *Amāninā māna-dena/ kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* ("Śikṣāṣṭaka 3): One who wants to worship Lord Hari perpetually by *nāma-saṅkīrtana* must give up demanding respect for himself and must practice showing respect to every living creature. But the respect one shows must be appropriate for each individual. Only a fool would embrace a hungry tiger in the name of brotherly love. And so a devotee endeavoring for pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness should keep a respectful distance from persons of dubious character and faith.

**एवं सन्तर्पिताशेषः समादिष्टोऽथ साधुभिः ।  
परिवारैः समं शेषं सहर्षं बुभुजेऽमृतम् ॥**

evam santarpitāśeṣaḥ  
samādiṣṭo 'tha sādhubhiḥ  
parivāraiḥ samam śeṣam  
sa-harṣam bubhuje 'mṛtam

evam—thus; santarpita—having satisfied; aśeṣaḥ—everyone; samādiṣṭaḥ—invited; atha—then; sādhubhiḥ—by the holy men; parivāraiḥ—with his family and followers; samam—together; śeṣam—

the remnants; *sa-harṣam*—with delight; *bubhuje*—he enjoyed; *amṛtam*—nectarean.

When he had thus satisfied everyone, the holy men invited him to take the remnants of the sacrifice. With his family and followers, that leader of brāhmaṇas then enjoyed the nectarean prasāda with great delight.

Only after every living being in the vicinity was fed and pleased did the host, with his family and servants, honor Lord Mādhava's prasāda. This food was now *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality, a sheer delight to taste, because it had been offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa in devotional sacrifice.

ततोऽभिमुखमागत्य कृष्णस्य रचिताञ्जलिः ।  
तस्मिन्नेवार्पयामास सर्वं तत्फलसञ्चयम् ॥

tato 'bhimukham āgatya  
kṛṣṇasya racitāñjaliḥ  
tasminn evārpayām āsa  
sarvaṁ tat-phala-sañcayam

tataḥ—then; *abhimukham*—in front; *āgatya*—going; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *racita-añjaliḥ*—with joined palms; *tasmin*—to Him; *eva*—alone; *arpayām āsa*—he offered; *sarvaṁ*—all; *tat*—by this (performance); *phala*—of pious credits; *sañcayam*—the accumulation.

After this, he again went before the Śālagrāma Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And with folded hands he offered to the Lord all the pious credit he had earned by the sacrifice.

In sacrificial offerings, the *mantras* chanted declare that the oblations, after being offered, belong to the deities being worshiped: *idam indrāya na mama* (“This is for Indra; it is no longer mine”). But most performers of Vedic rituals, even while verbally declaring surrender, maintain the subtle ambition to possess not only the oblations themselves but the fruits, the outcome, of the sacrifice. Pure devotional service begins when one makes offerings only for the pleasure of the Supreme, with no hidden motive.

सुखं संवेश्य देवं तं स्वगृहं गन्तुमुद्यतम् ।  
दूराच्छ्रीनारदो दृष्टोत्थितो मुनिसमाजतः ॥

*sukham saṁveśya devam tam  
sva-grham gantum udyatam  
dūrāc chrī-nārado dṛṣṭvo-  
tthito muni-samājataḥ*

*sukham*—comfortably; *saṁveśya*—putting to rest; *devam*—the Deity; *tam*—Him; *sva-grham*—to his own residence; *gantum*—to go; *udyatam*—prepared; *dūrāt*—from a distance; *śrī-nāradaḥ*—Śrī Nārada Muni; *dṛṣṭvā*—who had been watching; *utthitaḥ*—stood up; *muni-samājataḥ*—from the assembly of sages.

The leader of the brāhmaṇas put the Deity comfortably to rest and got ready to return home. Śrī Nārada, however, had been watching him at a distance from within the—assembly of sages. Just then Nārada stood up.

Nārada praises the Prayāga brāhmaṇa

अयमेव महाविष्णोः प्रेयानिति मुहुर्ब्रुवन् ।  
धावन् गत्वान्तिके तस्य विप्रेन्द्रस्येदमब्रवीत् ॥

श्रीकृष्णपरमोत्कृष्टकृपाया भाजनं जनम् ।  
लोके विख्यापयन् व्यक्तं भगवद्रक्तिलम्पटः ॥

*ayam eva mahā-viṣṇoḥ  
preyān iti muhur bruvaṇ  
dhāvaṇ gatvāntike tasya  
viprendrasyedam abravīt*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-paramotkṛṣṭa-*



*kṛpāyā bhājanam janam  
loke vikhyāpayan vyaktam  
bhagavad-bhakti-lampataḥ*

*ayam*—this person; *eva*—truly; *mahā-viṣṇoḥ*—of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu; *preyān*—the most dear devotee; *iti*—thus; *muhuh*—again and again; *bruvan*—saying; *dhāvan*—running; *gatvā*—coming; *antike*—close; *tasya*—to him; *vipra-indrasya*—the chief of *brāhmaṇas*; *idam*—the following; *abravīt*—he spoke; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *parama-utkrṣṭa*—the greatest; *kṛpāyāḥ*—of the mercy; *bhājanam*—recipient; *janam*—this person; *loke*—to the world; *vikhyāpayan*—proclaiming; *vyaktam*—openly; *bhagavat-bhakti*—in devotional service to the Lord; *lampataḥ*—greedy.

Again and again Nārada announced, “This is the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu’s most dear devotee!” Then he ran up to the *brāhmaṇa* and declared him the recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s highest mercy. Nārada proclaimed this openly to all, beside himself with eagerness for devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Nārada had been enjoying the festival incognito, but the ecstasies he was tasting in pure love impelled him to announce his realizations. All the Lord’s devotees are dear to the Lord, as implied here by the word *janam*, which can mean either “people” in general or some specific person. Nārada knows whom the Lord most favors, and thus the word *janam* also expresses a more confidential idea in Nārada’s mind. He is ultimately referring to the dearest servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The *brāhmaṇa* and the other devotees Nārada will praise are also aware of their own lesser devotional standing. Nārada here speaks mainly to enlighten the public but also to gain the impetus for his expedition to the far ends of the universe in search of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s best devotees.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
भवान् विप्रेन्द्र कृष्णस्य महानुग्रहभाजनम् ।

यस्येदृशं धनं द्रव्यमैदार्यं वैभवं तथा ॥

śrī-nārada uvāca  
bhavān viprendra kṛṣṇasya  
mahānugraha-bhājanam  
yasyedṛśam dhanam dravyam  
audāryam vaibhavam tathā

śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; *bhavān*—your good self; *vipra-indra*—O leader of the *brāhmaṇas*; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *mahā-anugraha*—of the great favor; *bhājanam*—the recipient; *yasya*—whose; *īdṛśam*—such; *dhanam*—wealth; *dravyam*—property; *audāryam*—generosity; *vaibhavam*—personal opulence; *tathā*—and.

Śrī Nārada said: O leader of the *brāhmaṇas*, it is you who have received Lord Kṛṣṇa’s greatest favor. After all, you have such wealth, property, generosity, and personal opulence.

सद्धर्मापादकं तच्च सर्वमेव महामते ।  
दृष्टं हि साक्षादस्माभिरस्मिंस्तीर्थवरेऽधुना ॥

sad-dharmāpādakam tac ca  
sarvam eva mahā-mate  
dṛṣṭam hi sākṣād asmābhir  
asmimś tīrtha-vare ’dhunā

*sat-dharma*—pure religiosity; *āpādakam*—serving to establish; *tat*—these; *ca*—and; *sarvam*—all; *eva*—only; *mahā-mate*—O wise one; *dṛṣṭam*—seen; *hi*—certainly; *sākṣāt*—directly; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *asmin*—in this; *tīrtha-vare*—best of holy places; *adhunā*—now.

O wise one, in this best of holy places we have now seen for ourselves that you are using all these assets exclusively to establish pure religion.

The *brāhmaṇa*’s “personal opulence” is the paraphernalia showing his status—his vehicles, special items of clothing, and so on—and his entourage of family members, associates, and subordinates. His “pure

religion” is devotional service to the Personality of Godhead. The *brāhmaṇa* did not abuse any of his apparently material assets by employing them for material purposes. These assets had come to him as by-products of his devotional service, without his striving for them. He could hardly keep them hidden, as Nārada here remarks, but still he was happy to put them to transcendental use.

### The brāhmaṇa refutes Nārada’s praise

विद्वद्वरेण तेनोक्तो नन्विदं स महामुनिः ।  
स्वामिन् किं मयि कृष्णस्य कृपालक्षणमीक्षितम् ॥

*vidvad-vareṇa tenokto  
nanv idam sa mahā-muniḥ  
svāmin kiṁ mayi kṛṣṇasya  
kṛpā-lakṣaṇam īkṣitam*

*vidvat-vareṇa*—by the most learned person; *tena*—the *brāhmaṇa*; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *nanu*—indeed; *idam*—thus; *saḥ*—he; *mahā-muniḥ*—the best of sages; *svāmin*—O master; *kiṁ*—what; *mayi*—in me; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā*—of the mercy; *lakṣaṇam*—sign; *īkṣitam*—seen.

That most learned *brāhmaṇa* then replied to the best of sages: O master, what signs of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy have you seen in me?

अहं वराकः को नु स्यां दातुं शक्नोमि वा कियत् ।  
वैभवं वर्तते किं मे भगवद्भजनं कुतः ॥

*aham varākaḥ ko nu syām  
dātum śaknomi vā kiyat  
vaibhavam vartate kiṁ me  
bhagavad-bhajanam kutaḥ*

*aham*—I; *varākaḥ*—a wretched person; *kaḥ*—who; *nu*—but; *syām*—am; *dātum*—to give; *śaknōmi*—I am able; *vā*—or; *kiyat*—how much; *vaibhavam*—riches; *vartate*—are there; *kim*—what; *me*—my; *bhagavat-bhajanam*—worship of the Supreme Lord; *kutaḥ*—where.

**Who am I but a most wretched person? How much charity am I able to give? What opulence do I have? And how have I ever reciprocated with the Lord in devotional service?**

Any true devotee of Kṛṣṇa considers himself insignificant, thinking himself one of countless *jīvas* who are mere sparks of God's splendor. The devotee is sorry for having foolishly rebelled against his creator. And reflecting on this rebellion, he thinks that his relative influence among other fallen *jīvas* means little.

The brāhmaṇa sends Nārada to the southern king

किन्तु दक्षिणदेशे यो महाराजो विराजते ।  
स हि कृष्णकृपापात्रं यस्य देशे सुरालयाः ॥

*kintu dakṣiṇa-deśe yo*  
*mahā-rājo virājate*  
*sa hi kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-pātram*  
*yasya deśe surālayāḥ*

*kintu*—but; *dakṣiṇa-deśe*—in South India; *yaḥ*—who; *mahā-rājaḥ*—a great king; *virājate*—is gloriously present; *saḥ*—he; *hi*—certainly; *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy; *pātram*—the recipient; *yasya*—whose; *deśe*—in the country; *sura-ālayāḥ*—temples of God and demigods.

**But in the southern country there lives a great ruler whose kingdom has many temples of God and the demigods. He is the true recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy.**

सर्वतो भिक्षवो यत्र तैर्थिकाभ्यागतादयः ।  
कृष्णार्पितान्नं भुञ्जाना भ्रमन्ति सुखिनः सदा ॥

*sarvato bhikṣavo yatra  
tairthikābhyāgatādayaḥ  
kṛṣṇārpitānnaṁ bhuñjānā  
bhramanti sukhinaḥ sadā*

*sarvataḥ*—from everywhere; *bhikṣavaḥ*—saintly mendicants; *yatra*—where; *tairthika*—along with pilgrims; *abhyāgata*—other visitors; *ādayaḥ*—and so on; *kṛṣṇa-arpita*—which has been offered to Kṛṣṇa; *annam*—food; *bhuñjānāḥ*—eating; *bhramanti*—they wander around; *sukhinaḥ*—happily; *sadā*—always.

Saintly mendicants come to his kingdom from all directions, along with pilgrims and other visitors. They wander happily, sustained by food that has been offered to Kṛṣṇa.

The *brāhmaṇa* describes the great king as a *mahārāja*, a ruler of several other kings in his area. He was not the emperor of the entire continent, the *cakravartī*; that higher position was occupied at the time by the Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira. Later in this chapter, the southern king will also be called *sārvabhauma* because his kingdom occupied a large area. Many accomplished saints migrated to his kingdom, attracted by its spiritual features. Other people also came, including ordinary visitors, renounced pilgrims traveling to purify themselves, and distressed persons in search of food and shelter. All of them took advantage of the sacred, delicious *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* freely available throughout the kingdom.

राजधानीसमीपे च सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ।  
साक्षादिवास्ते भगवान् कारुण्यात्स्थिरतां गतः ॥

*rājadhānī-samīpe ca  
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ  
sākṣād ivāste bhagavān  
kāruṇyāt sthīratām gataḥ*

*rājadhānī*—the royal palace; *saṁīpe*—near; *ca*—and; *sat*—of eternity; *cit*—knowledge; *ānanda*—and bliss; *vigrahaḥ*—in His form; *sākṣāt*—directly; *iva*—as if; *āste*—present; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kāruṇyāt*—out of His mercy; *sthīratām*—a nonmoving appearance; *gataḥ*—having assumed.

**Near this king's palace, the Personality of Godhead resides as if directly in His original form of eternal existence, knowledge, and bliss. He has kindly assumed a nonmoving appearance.**

The Lord's incarnation as the Deity in a temple is stationary, at least to ordinary eyes. He is the same absolute person who lives in the spiritual world, yet He assumes a special form to make Himself visible to everyone. The Lord's pastime incarnations, who move about displaying adventures with Their devotees, are rarely seen in this cosmic manifestation. But the Viṣṇu Deity in this king's capital was so potent and attractive that the citizens almost forgot He was a nonmoving Deity.

**नित्यं नवनवस्तत्र जायते परमोत्सवः ।  
पूजाद्रव्याणि चेष्टानि नूतनानि प्रतिक्षणम् ॥**

*nityaṁ nava-navas tatra  
jāyate paramotsavaḥ  
pūjā-dravyāṇi ceṣṭāni  
nūtanāni prati-kṣaṇam*

*nityam*—constantly; *nava-navaḥ*—ever fresh; *tatra*—there; *jāyate*—is being celebrated; *parama-utsavaḥ*—the greatest festival; *pūjā*—of worship; *dravyāṇi*—paraphernalia; *ceṣṭāni*—and acts of presentation; *nūtanāni*—new; *prati-kṣaṇam*—at each moment.

**In that kingdom a joyous, ever-fresh festival is always being celebrated. At each moment there are new offerings and performances of worship.**

The worship in the main temple of the capital never became stale and ritualistic. New items of worship were constantly introduced, and, more important, the devotees' interest in pleasing the Lord was also ever

fresh. Thus the displays of worship pleased both the Deity and the public.

विष्णोर्निवेदितैस्तैस्तु सर्वे तद्देशवासिनः ।  
वैदेशिकाश्च बहवो भोज्यन्ते तेन सादरम् ॥

*viṣṇor niveditais tais tu  
sarve tad-deśa-vāsinah  
vaideśikāś ca bahavo  
bhojyante tena sādaram*

*viṣṇoḥ*—of Lord Viṣṇu; *niveditaiḥ*—with the remnants of offerings; *taiḥ*—those; *tu*—and; *sarve*—all; *tad-deśa*—of that country; *vāsinah*—the residents; *vaideśikāḥ*—the foreign visitors; *ca*—and; *bahavaḥ*—many; *bhojyante*—are fed; *tena*—by him (the king); *sa-ādaram*—respectfully.

**The king respectfully feeds all the residents of his country and the many foreign visitors with the remnants of Lord Viṣṇu’s worship.**

To accommodate all the residents and travelers, the king maintained many Viṣṇu temples throughout the country. But the main temple in the capital was especially famous for its worship and *prasāda*.

पुण्डरीकाक्षदेवस्य तस्य दर्शनलोभतः ।  
महाप्रसादरूपान्नाद्युपभोगसुखासितः ॥

साधुसङ्गतिलाभाच्च नानादेशात्समागताः ।  
निवसन्ति सदा तत्र सन्तो विष्णुपरायणाः ॥

*puṇḍarīkākṣa-devasya  
tasya darśana-lobhataḥ  
mahā-prasāda-rūpānnādy-  
upabhoga-sukhāptitaḥ*

sādhū-saṅgati-lābhāc ca  
nānā-deśāt samāgatāḥ  
nivasanti sadā tatra  
santo viṣṇu-parāyaṇāḥ

*punḍarīka-akṣa*—lotus-eyed; *devasya*—of the Lord; *tasya*—Him; *darśana*—for the audience; *lobhataḥ*—out of eagerness; *mahā-prasāda*—which are the Lord’s kind gifts to His devotees; *rūpa*—the beauty of His form; *anna*—the remnants of food offered to Him; *ādi*—and so on; *upabhoga*—from enjoying afterward; *sukha*—happiness; *āptitaḥ*—due to obtaining; *sādhū-saṅgati*—association of spiritually advanced persons; *lābhāt*—because of achieving; *ca*—and; *nānā-deśāt*—from various countries; *samāgatāḥ*—coming; *nivasanti*—they reside; *sadā*—constantly; *tatra*—there; *santaḥ*—saintly; *viṣṇu-parāyaṇāḥ*—devotees of Lord Viṣṇu.

**Saintly devotees of Lord Viṣṇu come from various countries to reside permanently in the kingdom. They come out of eagerness to see the lotus-eyed Deity of the Lord, to relish the food and other special remnants from the Lord, and to obtain the association of spiritually advanced persons.**

Besides pure devotees of Viṣṇu, other spiritualists also came. Those dressed as holy men but spiritually not fully qualified were also treated with respect. Even cats and dogs should receive Lord Kṛṣṇa’s *prasāda*, but for spiritual guidance one should approach only bona fide followers of the Vaiṣṇava *paramparā*.

देशश्च देवविप्रेभ्यो राजा दत्तो विभज्य सः ।  
नोपद्रवोऽस्ति तद्देशे कोऽपि शोकोऽथवा भयम् ॥

deśaś ca deva-viprebhyo  
rājñā datto vibhajya saḥ  
nopadravo 'sti tad-deśe  
ko 'pi śoko 'tha vā bhayam

*deśaḥ*—the kingdom; *ca*—and; *deva*—to the demigods; *viprebhyaḥ*—and the *brāhmaṇas*; *rājñā*—by the king; *dattaḥ*—has been given; *vibhajya*—



dividing it; *saḥ*—he; *na*—never; *upadravaḥ*—social disruption; *asti*—there is; *tat-deśe*—in that kingdom; *kaḥ api*—any; *śokaḥ*—sorrow; *atha vā*—or; *bhayam*—fear.

**The king has given his kingdom away to the demigods and brāhmaṇas, dividing it among them. His kingdom is completely free from sorrow, social disruption, and fear.**

The king granted to the presiding deities of local temples and to the brāhmaṇas of each region official title to the various parts of the country. He considered himself merely the caretaker of the kingdom, under authority from its legal owners.

**अकृष्टपच्या सा भूमिर्वृष्टिस्तत्र यथासुखम् ।  
इष्टानि फलमूलानि सुलभान्यम्बराणि च ॥**

*akṛṣṭa-pacyā sā bhūmir  
vṛṣṭis tatra yathā-sukham  
iṣṭāni phala-mūlāni  
su-labhāny ambarāṇi ca*

*akṛṣṭa*—without being tilled; *pacyā*—yielding crops; *sā*—that; *bhūmiḥ*—land; *vṛṣṭiḥ*—the rain; *tatra*—in that kingdom; *yathā-sukham*—only as wanted; *iṣṭāni*—which are desired; *phala-mūlāni*—fruits and roots; *su-labhāni*—easily available; *ambarāṇi*—clothing; *ca*—also.

**In that kingdom, the earth yields crops without being tilled, rain falls just enough for people’s comfort, and whatever fruits, vegetables, and clothing one desires are easily to be had.**

In the Bible (Genesis 3:19) we read that God punished Adam for rebellion by cursing him that outside the Garden of Eden he would have to till the earth to earn his food “by the sweat of his face.” Previously, the Bible tells us, Adam and Eve had enjoyed the fruits of Eden without having to farm. The same ideal condition prevailed thousands of years ago in this South Indian kingdom. Rain fell just enough to make good crops, but mostly at night, when it would least disturb the citizens.

स्वस्वधर्मकृतः सवाः सुखिन्यः कृष्णतत्पराः ।  
प्रजास्तमनुवर्तन्ते महाराजं यथा सुताः ॥

*sva-sva-dharma-kṛtaḥ sarvāḥ  
sukhinyaḥ kṛṣṇa-tatparāḥ  
prajāś tam anuvartante  
mahā-rājaṁ yathā sutāḥ*

*sva-sva-dharma*—each his own social duties; *kṛtaḥ*—performing; *sarvāḥ*—all; *sukhinyaḥ*—happy; *kṛṣṇa-tat-parāḥ*—devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa; *prajāḥ*—the citizens; *tam*—him; *anuvartante*—they follow; *mahā-rājam*—the king; *yathā*—like; *sutāḥ*—children.

The citizens all happily follow the king as if they were his children. They perform their own social duties and are devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Like children who love and respect their parents, the citizens not only obeyed the king's directions but also wanted to follow the example of his good character.

स चागर्वः सदा नीचयोग्यसेवाभिरच्युतम् ।  
भजमानोऽखिलान् लोकान् रमयत्यच्युतप्रियः ॥

*sa cāgarvaḥ sadā nīca-  
yogya-sevābhir acyutam  
bhajamāno 'khilān lokān  
ramayaty acyuta-priyaḥ*

*saḥ*—he; *ca*—and; *agarvaḥ*—prideless; *sadā*—always; *nīca*—for a menial servant; *yogya*—suitable; *sevābhiḥ*—with services; *acyutam*—Lord Acyuta; *bhajamānaḥ*—worshiping; *akhilān*—all; *lokān*—the people; *ramayati*—pleases; *acyuta-priyaḥ*—dear to Lord Acyuta.

The king is always prideless. Worshiping Lord Acyuta with services a menial assistant would perform, he pleases all the people and is dear to the Lord.

So vast and rich a domain and such a reputation for religious accomplishments would make an ordinary king proud, but this *mahārāja* was a pure Vaiṣṇava. He was happy to serve the Supreme Lord in the humblest ways—washing and decorating the floors of His temples, keeping the temple lamps filled with oil, and so on. As the term *acyuta-priya* indicates, he did this not to make a show of humility but purely out of devotional enthusiasm.

तस्याग्रे विविधैर्नामगाथासङ्कीर्तनैः स्वयम् ।  
नृत्यन् दिव्यानि गीतानि गायन् वाद्यानि वादयन् ॥

भ्रातृभार्यासुतैः पौत्रैर्भृत्यामात्यपुरोहितैः ।  
अन्यैश्च स्वजनैः साकं प्रभुं तं तोषयेत्सदा ॥

*tasyāgre vividhair nāma-  
gāthā-saṅkīrtanaiḥ svayam  
nṛtyan divyāni gītāni  
gāyan vādyāni vādayan*

*bhrātr̥-bhāryā-sutaiḥ pautrain  
bhṛtyāmātya-purohitaiḥ  
anyaiś ca sva-janaiḥ sākam  
prabhum tam toṣayet sadā*

*tasya*—of Him (the Deity); *agre*—in front; *vividhaiḥ*—various; *nāma-gāthā*—consisting of singing the Lord’s names; *saṅkīrtanaiḥ*—with vocal glorification; *svayam*—himself; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *divyāni*—wonderful; *gītāni*—songs; *gāyan*—singing; *vādyāni*—instruments; *vādayan*—playing; *bhrātr̥*—with his brothers; *bhāryā*—wives; *sutaiḥ*—sons; *pautrain*—grandsons; *bhṛtya*—servants; *amātya*—ministers; *purohitaiḥ*—and priests; *anyaiḥ*—others; *ca*—and; *sva-janaiḥ*—subordinates; *sākam*—along with; *prabhum*—the Lord; *tam*—Him; *toṣayet*—he tries to satisfy; *sadā*—always.

He always tries to satisfy the Lord. He himself performs saṅkīrtana before the Lord's Deity, chanting the Lord's names composed in various attractive arrangements. He dances, sings wonderful songs, and plays instruments. His sons, wives, brothers, grandsons, priests, servants, ministers, and other subordinates—he has them also take part.

The king did not have to force his relatives and assistants to take part in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, because they were all first-class Vaiṣṇavas.

ते ते तस्य गुणव्राताः कृष्णभक्त्यनुवर्तिनः ।  
संख्यातुं कति कथ्यन्ते ज्ञायन्ते कति वा मया ॥

te te tasya guṇa-vrātāḥ  
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-anuvartinaḥ  
saṅkhyātum kati kathyante  
jñāyante kati vā mayā

*te te*—each of these; *tasya*—his; *guṇa-vrātāḥ*—many good qualities; *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*—of his devotion for Kṛṣṇa; *anuvartinaḥ*—consequences; *saṅkhyātum*—to count; *kati*—how many; *kathyante*—can be described; *jñāyante*—can be known; *kati*—how many; *vā*—or; *mayā*—by me.

**These good qualities arise from his devotion for Kṛṣṇa. How many of them can I count, describe, or even be aware of?**

The *brāhmaṇa*'s logic is as follows: "The king's good qualities I have mentioned are all signs of his being the true recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. I do not have the same mercy because I do not have the same good qualities." Each of the devotees approached by Nārada will argue in a similar way. In fact, however, all these devotees are very fortunate, even if they stand on different levels of perfection. The differences recognized by Nārada and those with whom he speaks are spiritual differences, not determined by material rank or position; the devotee *brāhmaṇa* would not have called the king from the south a better Vaiṣṇava than himself had the *brāhmaṇa* held the prejudice that *brāhmaṇas* are always better than *kṣatriyas*.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततो नृपवरं द्रष्टुं तद्देशे नारदो ब्रजन् ।  
देवपूजोत्सवासक्तास्तत्र तत्रैक्षत प्रजाः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tato nṛpa-varam draṣṭum  
tad-deśe nārado vrajan  
deva-pūjotsavāsaktās  
tatra tatraikṣata prajāḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tataḥ*—then; *nṛpa-varam*—the best of kings; *draṣṭum*—to see; *tat*—his; *deśe*—in the country; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *vrajan*—moving about; *deva*—of the Lord; *pūja-utsava*—in festive worship; *āsaktāḥ*—absorbed; *tatra tatra*—in various places; *aikṣata*—he observed; *prajāḥ*—the citizens.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Nārada then went to the country of that best of kings to see him. Wherever Nārada went he found the people absorbed in festive worship of the Lord.

हर्षेण वादयन् वीणां राजधानीं गतोऽधिकम् ।  
विप्रोक्तादपि सम्पश्यन् सङ्गम्योवाच तं नृपम् ॥

*harṣeṇa vādayan vīṇām  
rājadhānīm gato 'dhikam  
viproktād api sampaśyan  
saṅgamya uvāca tam nṛpam*

*harṣeṇa*—with delight; *vādayan*—vibrating; *vīṇām*—his *viṇā*; *rājadhānīm*—to the capital; *gataḥ*—he came; *adhikam*—greater; *vipra-uktāt*—than what was described by the *brāhmaṇa*; *api*—even; *sampaśyan*—seeing; *saṅgamya*—approaching; *uvāca*—he said; *tam*—to

him; *nṛpam*—the king.

Nārada arrived at the capital, vibrating his *vīṇā* with delight. Seeing even greater splendor than the *brāhmaṇa* had described, he approached the king and spoke.

Nārada praises the southern king

श्रीनारद उवाच  
त्वं श्रीकृष्णकृपापात्रं यस्येदुग्राज्यवैभवम् ।  
सल्लोकगुणधर्मार्थज्ञानभक्तिभिरन्वितम् ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*tvam śrī-kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-pātram*  
*yasyedṛg rājya-vaibhavam*  
*sal-loka-guṇa-dharmārtha-*  
*jñāna-bhaktibhir anvitam*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *tvam*—you; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā-pātram*—recipient of the mercy; *yasya*—whose; *īdṛk*—like this; *rājya*—of the kingdom; *vaibhavam*—the opulence; *sat-loka*—with the best people; *guṇa*—qualities; *dharma*—religiousness; *artha*—prosperity; *jñāna*—knowledge; *bhaktibhiḥ*—and devotion; *anvitam*—endowed.

Śrī Nārada said: You are the real recipient of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy! After all, your kingdom is so opulent. It has the best citizens, endowed with the most excellent character, religiousness, prosperity, knowledge, and devotion to God.

A sure sign of a ruler’s virtue is the good qualities of his subjects. The people of this kingdom were not merely decorated with a veneer of culture; they were actually civilized according to Vedic standards. The good citizens did their prescribed duties responsibly. They contributed to the general welfare by working, each as he was able, to introduce Kṛṣṇa

conscious practices everywhere. Abandoning pride and other godless tendencies, they gave charity by feeding *sannyāsīs* and hungry people, used extra wealth for offerings in worship of the Supreme Lord, and studied the Vedic scriptures, from which they learned the value of liberation and devotional service. The people aspired to become pure devotees of the Lord. Thus they realized all the goals of human life—religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, liberation, and pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तत्तद्विस्तार्य कथयन्नाश्लिष्यन् भूपतिं मुहुः ।  
प्रशशंस गुणान् गायन् वीणया वैष्णवोत्तमः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tat tad vistārya kathayann*  
*āśliṣyan bhūpatiṁ muhuḥ*  
*praśaśaṁsa guṇān gāyan*  
*vīṇayā vaiṣṇavottamaḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat tat*—all these; *vistārya*—elaborating; *kathayan*—describing; *āśliṣyan*—embracing; *bhū-patiṁ*—the king; *muhuḥ*—repeatedly; *praśaśaṁsa*—he praised; *guṇān*—his qualities; *gāyan*—singing; *vīṇayā*—to the accompaniment of the *vīṇā*; *vaiṣṇava-uttamaḥ*—the best of Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Nārada, the best of Vaiṣṇavas, singing along with his *vīṇā*, thus expansively described the king, praising his greatness. And Nārada embraced him again and again.

सर्वभौमो मुनिवरं सम्पूज्य प्रश्रितोऽब्रवीत् ।  
निजश्चाघाभराज्जातलज्जानमितमस्तकः ॥

*sārvabhaumo muni-varaṁ*  
*sampūjya praśrito 'bravīt*  
*nija-ślāghā-bharāj jāta-*

*lajjā-namita-mastakaḥ*

*sārvabhaumaḥ*—the ruler of a vast region; *muni-varam*—the topmost sage; *sampūjya*—worshiping; *praśritaḥ*—humbly; *abravīt*—replied; *nija*—his own; *ślāghā*—of the praise; *bharāt*—due to the weight; *jāta*—created; *lajjā*—by the embarrassment; *namita*—bent down; *mastakaḥ*—whose head.

The king, that ruler of a vast region, then worshiped the topmost sage and humbly replied, his head bowed down in embarrassment by the weight of hearing his own praise.

The king refutes Nārada's praise

देवर्षेऽल्पायुषं स्वल्पैश्वर्यमल्पप्रदं नरम् ।  
अस्वतन्त्रं भयाक्रान्तं तापत्रयनियन्त्रितम् ॥

कृष्णानुग्रहवाक्यस्याप्ययोग्यमविचारतः ।  
तदीयकरुणापात्रं कथं मां मन्यते भवान् ॥

*devarṣe 'lpāyuṣaṁ svalpai-*  
*śvāryam alpa-pradaṁ naram*  
*asvatantraṁ bhayākrāntaṁ*  
*tāpa-traya-nīyantritam*

*kṛṣṇānugraha-vākyasyāpy*  
*ayogyam avicārataḥ*  
*tadīya-karuṇā-pātraṁ*  
*kathaṁ mām manyate bhavān*

*deva-rṣe*—O sage among the demigods; *alpa-āyuṣaṁ*—short-lived; *su-*  
*alpa-aiśvāryam*—with very little opulence; *alpa-pradam*—able to give  
little; *naram*—a mere man; *asvatantram*—not independent; *bhaya-*



*ākrāntam*—attacked by fear; *tāpa-traya*—by the threefold miseries; *niyantritam*—ruled; *kṛṣṇa-anugraha*—concerning Kṛṣṇa’s mercy; *vākyasya*—of words; *api*—even; *ayogyam*—unworthy; *avicārataḥ*—due to wrong judgment; *tadīya*—His; *karuṇā*—of the compassion; *pātram*—a recipient; *katham*—why; *mām*—me; *manyate*—considers; *bhavān*—your good self.

The king said: O sage among the demigods, I am a human being with a short life span, little opulence, and little to give others. I have no independence. I am constantly attacked by fear and ruled by the threefold miseries of material life. I would not even deserve Kṛṣṇa’s word that in the future He might show me His mercy. Why do you wrongly consider me an object of His compassion?

The king thought Nārada could have mistaken him to be a favored devotee of Kṛṣṇa’s only by failing to use his natural good discretion. Before becoming a pure devotee one has to free oneself from illusion, but the king’s opinion of himself was that he was still Māyā’s slave, subject to the tyranny of ritual duties. What to speak of having realized his relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa, he felt he did not even deserve that the Lord promise “I will show you My favor someday.” Or, understanding *kṛṣṇānugraha-vākyasya* in another sense, he did not deserve to have anyone say, “This person is favored by Kṛṣṇa.”

The king directs Nārada to the demigods

देवा एव दयापात्रं विष्णोर्भगवतः किल ।  
पूज्यमाना नरैर्नित्यं तेजोमयशरीरिणः ॥

*devā eva dayā-pātram*  
*viṣṇor bhagavataḥ kila*  
*pūjyamānā narair nityaṁ*  
*tejo-maya-śarīriṇaḥ*

*devāḥ*—the demigods; *eva*—really; *dayā-pātram*—recipients of the mercy; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Viṣṇu; *bhagavataḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *kila*—indeed; *pūjyamānāḥ*—worshiped; *naraiḥ*—by men; *nityam*—always; *tejah-maya*—effulgent, made of subtle matter; *śarīriṇaḥ*—whose bodies.

The demigods are the real objects of the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu's mercy. They have effulgent bodies and are always worshipable by men.

निष्पापाः सात्त्विका दुःखरहिताः सुखिनः सदा ।  
स्वच्छन्दाचारगतयो भक्तेच्छावरदायकाः ॥

*niṣpāpāḥ sāttvikā duḥkha-  
rahitāḥ sukhinaḥ sadā  
svacchandācāra-gatayo  
bhaktecchā-vara-dāyakāḥ*

*niṣpāpāḥ*—sinless; *sāttvikāḥ*—fixed in goodness; *duḥkha-rahitāḥ*—free from distress; *sukhinaḥ*—happy; *sadā*—always; *sva-cchanda*—according to their desire; *ācāra*—whose behavior; *gatayaḥ*—and movements; *bhakta-icchā*—according to their devotees' desires; *vara*—of benedictions; *dāyakāḥ*—givers.

They are sinless, fixed in goodness, free from distress, and always happy. They act and travel however they like. They give their blessings by granting what their devotees desire.

येषां हि भोग्यममृतं मृत्युरोगजरादिहृत् ।  
स्वेच्छयोपनतं क्षुत्तृड्बाधाभावेऽपि तुष्टिदम् ॥

*yeṣāṁ hi bhogyam amṛtaṁ  
mṛtyu-roga-jarādi-hṛt  
svecchayopanataṁ kṣut-tṛḍ-  
bādhābhāve 'pi tuṣṭi-dam*

*yeṣāṁ*—whose; *hi*—indeed; *bhogyam*—food; *amṛtam*—the nectar of immortality; *mṛtyu*—death; *roga*—disease; *jarā-ādi*—old age and so on;

*hṛt*—which removes; *sva-icchayā*—by their own sweet will; *upanatam*—partaken; *kṣut*—of hunger; *tṛṭ*—and thirst; *bādhā*—of the obstruction; *abhāve*—in the absence; *api*—even; *tuṣṭi-dam*—which gives them great satisfaction.

Their food is the nectar of immortality, which does away with such miseries as death, disease, and old age. Though not forced by hunger or thirst, the demigods enjoy great satisfaction in partaking of this nectar by their own sweet will.

वसन्ति भगवन् स्वर्गे महाभाग्यबलेन ये ।  
यो नृभिर्भारते वर्षे सत्पुण्यैर्लभ्यते कृतैः ॥

*vasanti bhagavan svarge*  
*mahā-bhāgya-balena ye*  
*yo nṛbhir bhārate varṣe*  
*sat-puṇyair labhyate kṛtaiḥ*

*vasanti*—they live; *bhagavan*—O godly Nārada; *svarge*—in the realm of heaven; *mahā-bhāgya*—of their great fortune; *balena*—on the strength; *ye*—who; *yaḥ*—which (heaven); *nṛbhiḥ*—by humans; *bhārate varṣe*—on the earth; *sat-puṇyaiḥ*—perfectly pious; *labhyate*—is obtained; *kṛtaiḥ*—by endeavors.

O godly Nārada, on the strength of their good fortune they live in the realm of heaven, which humans on the earth can attain only by perfect pious work.

The saintly king proposes that the demigods are the most favored devotees of Kṛṣṇa. To demonstrate this, he contrasts them with ordinary human beings. Humans like himself acknowledge the superiority of the demigods and worship them in Vedic sacrifices. The demigods, less encumbered than humans by physical restraints, are free to travel as they like, even flying in the sky without vehicles. Some rich and powerful humans may be famous for charity, but the demigods have universal powers by which they can fulfill all their worshipers' desires.

The *soma* nectar the demigods drink frees them from death, disease, and old age — and, as implied by the word *ādi* (“and so on”) also from fatigue, perspiration, bodily odor, and other embarrassments. Since the demigods are never hungry or thirsty, one might question what benefit they derive from drinking their *soma*. The king answers that they enjoy *soma* very much; their pleasure is more subtle than the *anna-maya* gratification of ordinary eating and drinking. Compared with the mortals of earth, the inhabitants of heaven seem immortal and independent; they must therefore be most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The king points out Indra as the best demigod

मुने विशिष्टस्तत्रापि तेषामिन्द्रः पुरन्दरः ।  
निग्रहेऽनुग्रहेऽपीशो वृष्टिभिर्लोकजीवनः ॥

*mune viśiṣṭas tatrāpi*  
*teṣām indraḥ purandaraḥ*  
*nigrahe 'nugrahe 'pīśo*  
*vṛṣṭibhir loka-jīvanaḥ*

*mune*—my dear sage; *viśiṣṭaḥ*—the most distinguished; *tatra api*—there; *teṣām*—among them; *indraḥ purandaraḥ*—Purandara Indra; *nigrahe*—in punishing; *anugrahe*—in awarding favor; *api*—both; *īśaḥ*—capable; *vṛṣṭibhiḥ*—by the rain; *loka-jīvanaḥ*—who gives the world life.

My dear sage, the most distinguished of these demigods is Purandara Indra. He has full power to reward and punish, and he gives the world life by providing rain.

Purandara is the name of the current king of heaven.

त्रिलोकीश्वरता यस्य युगानामेकसप्ततिम् ।  
याश्चमेधशतेनापि सार्वभौमस्य दुर्लभा ॥

tri-lokīśvaratā yasya  
yugānām eka-saptatim  
yāśvamedha-śatenāpi  
sārvabhaumasya durlabhā

*tri-loka*—of the three planetary systems; *īśvaratā*—rulership; *yasya*—whose; *yugānām*—of celestial ages; *eka-saptatim*—seventy-one; *yā*—which (rulership); *aśvamedha*—horse sacrifices; *śatena*—by one hundred; *api*—even; *sārvabhaumasya*—for a mundane king; *durlabhā*—virtually impossible to obtain.

He rules the three planetary systems for seventy-one celestial ages, a length of sovereignty no mundane king could earn, even by one hundred horse sacrifices.

हय उच्चैःश्रवा यस्य गज ऐरावतो महान् ।  
कामधुग्गौरुपवनं नन्दनं च विराजते ॥

haya uccaiḥśravā yasya  
gaja airāvato mahān  
kāma-dhug gaur upavanam  
nandanam ca virājate

*hayaḥ*—horse; *uccaiḥśravā*—Uccaiḥśravā; *yasya*—whose; *gajaḥ*—elephant; *airāvataḥ*—Airāvata; *mahān*—great; *kāma-dhuk*—who can be milked for any desire; *gauḥ*—his cow; *upavanam*—his garden; *nandanam*—Nandana; *ca*—and; *virājate*—is resplendent.

**Uccaiḥśravā is his horse, and Airāvata his mighty elephant. His cow can be milked for any desire, and his garden is the resplendent Nandana.**

The king proposes that among all the demigods in heaven, their king, Indra, is the most special recipient of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Indra is free to curse or bestow benedictions as he likes, whereas other demigods can only respond to the specific requests of their devotees. The king says, "I am just the ruler of a few districts, but the king of heaven gives life to the universe. He rules the three worlds for a span of time unimaginable

to a small king like me.” Theoretically one can attain the post of Indra by performing one hundred faultless Aśvamedha sacrifices, but even the rare king competent to attempt such performances is almost sure to commit some mistake in the course of them.

Indra’s horse and elephant are greater than all others because they were born from the churning of the Milk Ocean.

पारिजातादयो यत्र वर्तन्ते कामपूरकाः ।  
कामरूपधराः कल्पद्रुमाः कल्पलतान्विताः ॥

*pārijātādayo yatra  
vartante kāma-pūrakāḥ  
kāma-rūpa-dharāḥ kalpa-  
drumāḥ kalpa-latānvitāḥ*

*pārijāta-ādayaḥ*—the *pārijāta* and so on; *yatra*—where; *vartante*—are present; *kāma*—all desires; *pūrakāḥ*—which fulfill; *kāma*—according to any desire; *rūpa*—various forms; *dharāḥ*—which assume; *kalpa-drumāḥ*—desire trees; *kalpa-latā*—with desire-fulfilling creepers; *anvitāḥ*—adorned.

In that garden are desire trees like the *pārijāta*, whose flowers yield whatever one may wish. Those trees, adorned with desire-yielding creepers, assume whatever forms one may like.

येषामेकेन पुष्पेण यथाकामं सुसिध्यति ।  
विचित्रगीतवादित्रनृत्यवेशाशनादिकम् ॥

*yeṣām ekena puṣpeṇa  
yathā-kāmam su-sidhyati  
vicitra-gīta-vāditra-  
nṛtya-veśāśanādikam*

*yeṣām*—among them; *ekena*—by just one; *puṣpeṇa*—flower; *yathā-kāmam*—however one desires; *su-sidhyati*—is completely fulfilled; *vicitra*—of various kinds; *gīta*—singing; *vāditra*—instrumental

accompaniment; *nṛtya*—dancing; *veśa*—clothing; *aśana*—food; *ādikam*—and so on.

Even a single flower from those trees can fully satisfy one's desires, whether for wonderful songs and music, splendid dances, bright clothing and ornaments, good food, or anything else.

आः किं वाच्यं परं तस्य सौभाग्यं भगवान् गतः ।  
कनिष्ठभ्रातृतां यस्य विष्णुर्वामनरूपधृक् ॥

*āḥ kiṁ vācyam param tasya*  
*saubhāgyam bhagavān gataḥ*  
*kaniṣṭha-bhrāṭṛtām yasya*  
*viṣṇur vāmana-rūpa-dhṛk*

*āḥ*—ah; *kiṁ*—what; *vācyam*—can be said; *param*—the greatest; *tasya*—of him (Indra); *saubhāgyam*—good fortune; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *gataḥ*—has become; *kaniṣṭha*—younger; *bhrāṭṛtām*—the brother; *yasya*—whose; *viṣṇuḥ*—Lord Viṣṇu; *vāmana-rūpa*—the form of Vāmana; *dhṛk*—assuming.

And, oh, how can I even describe Indra's greatest fortune: The Personality of Godhead Viṣṇu has taken the form of Vāmanadeva and become his younger brother!

आपद्भ्यो यमसौ रक्षन् हर्षयन् येन विस्तृताम् ।  
साक्षात्स्वीकुरुते पूजां तद्वेत्ति त्वमुतापरम् ॥

*āpadbhyo yam asau rakṣan*  
*harṣayan yena vistr̥tām*  
*sākṣāt svī-kurute pūjām*  
*tad vetsy tvam utāparam*

*āpadbhyaḥ*—from dangers; *yam*—whom (Indra); *asau*—He (Vāmanadeva); *rakṣan*—protecting; *harṣayan*—encouraging; *yena*—by whom; *vistr̥tām*—elaborately offered; *sākṣāt*—in person; *svī-kurute*—He

accepts; *pūjām*—the worship; *tat*—this; *vetṣi*—know; *tvam*—you; *uta*—and besides this; *aparam*—other things.

**Lord Vāmanadeva encourages Indra by shielding him from dangers and by accepting in person the elaborate worship Indra offers. But of course you already know this, and much more.**

Lord Vāmana is not Indra's brother only in theory. He acts as a younger brother should, allowing Indra the pleasure of taking care of Him. Indra insists on worshiping Him as God, but Vāmanadeva reciprocates by gracefully accepting the offerings in person.

*Thus ends the first chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled "Bhauma: On the Earth."*

## 2. Divya: In Heaven

Nārada sees Vāmanadeva and Indra

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
प्रशस्य तं महाराजं स्वर्गतो मुनिरैक्षत ।  
राजमानं सभामध्ये विष्णुं देवगणैर्वृतम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*praśasya taṁ mahā-rājaṁ*  
*svar-gato munir aikṣata*  
*rājamānaṁ sabhā-madhya*  
*viṣṇuṁ deva-gaṇair vṛtam*  
*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *praśasya*—praising; *taṁ*—him;



*mahā-rājam*—the great king; *svaḥ*—to heaven; *gataḥ*—going; *muniḥ*—the sage; *aikṣata*—saw; *rājamānam*—present in all His brilliance; *sabhā-madhye*—in the assembly hall; *viṣṇum*—Lord Viṣṇu; *deva*—by demigods; *gaṇaiḥ*—in various groups; *vṛtam*—surrounded.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said:** After praising the great king, Nārada made his way to heaven. There in the assembly hall he saw Lord Viṣṇu in all His brilliance, surrounded by hosts of demigods.

In the first chapter, Nārada Muni began his search for the dearest devotee of Kṛṣṇa by investigating comparative excellence in the devotional service found on earth. In this second chapter, Nārada sees the superior devotion of Lord Indra and Lord Brahmā.

विचित्रकल्पद्रुमपुष्पमाला-  
विलेपभूषावसनामृताद्यैः ।  
समर्चितं दिव्यतरोपचारैः  
सुखोपविष्टं गरुडस्य पृष्ठे ॥

*vicitra-kalpa-druma-puṣpa-mālā-  
vilepa-bhūṣā-vasanāmṛtādyaiḥ  
samarcitaṁ divyataropacāraiḥ  
sukhopaviṣṭaṁ garuḍasya pṛṣṭhe*

*vicitra*—various; *kalpa-druma*—from desire trees; *puṣpa*—of flowers; *mālā*—with a garland; *vilepa*—with sandalwood pulp; *bhūṣā*—with ornaments; *vasana*—and clothing; *amṛta*—divine; *ādyaiḥ*—and so on; *samarcitam*—worshiped; *divya-tara*—most heavenly; *upacāraiḥ*—with offerings; *sukha-upaviṣṭam*—sitting comfortably; *garuḍasya*—of Garuḍa; *pṛṣṭhe*—on the back.

He was decorated with sandalwood pulp, divine ornaments and garments, and a garland made of varied flowers from desire trees. Sitting comfortably on the back of Garuḍa, He was worshiped with celestial offerings.

बृहस्पतिप्रभृतिभिः स्तूयमानं महर्षिभिः ।  
लात्यमानमदित्या तान् हर्षयन्तं प्रियोक्तिभिः ॥

*br̥haspati-prabhṛtibhiḥ*  
*stūyamānaṁ maharṣibhiḥ*  
*lālyamānaṁ adityā tān*  
*harṣayantaṁ priyoktibhiḥ*

*br̥haspati*—by Bṛhaspati; *prabhṛtibhiḥ*—and others; *stūyamānaṁ*—being praised; *maharṣibhiḥ*—by the exalted sages; *lālyamānaṁ*—being pampered; *adityā*—by Mother Aditi; *tān*—them; *harṣayantaṁ*—delighting; *priya-uktibhiḥ*—with affectionate comments.

Bṛhaspati and other exalted sages praised His glories, and Mother Aditi pampered Him. He in turn delighted each of them with His affectionate comments.

सिद्धविद्याध्रगन्धर्वाप्सरोभिर्विविधैः स्तवैः ।  
जयशब्दैर्वाद्यगीतनृत्यैश्च परितोषितम् ॥

*siddha-vidyādhra-gandharvā-*  
*apsarobhir vividhaiḥ stavaiḥ*  
*jaya-śabdair vādya-gīta-*  
*nṛtyaiś ca paritoṣitam*

*siddha*—by Siddhas; *vidyādhra*—by Vidyādharas; *gandharva*—by Gandharvas; *apsarobhiḥ*—by Apsarās; *vividhaiḥ*—with various; *stavaiḥ*—prayers; *jaya-śabdaiḥ*—with cries of “all glories to You”; *vādya*—with instrumental music; *gīta*—singing; *nṛtyaiḥ*—and dancing; *ca*—also; *paritoṣitam*—being satisfied.

Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Gandharvas, and Apsarās recited prayers. They cried “All glories to You!” and sang, danced, and played music, all for His pleasure.

शक्रायभयमुच्चोक्त्या दैत्येभ्यो ददतं दृढम् ।  
कीर्त्यार्प्यमाणं ताम्बूलं चर्वन्तं लीलयाहृतम् ॥

*śakrāyābhayam uccoktyā  
daityebhyo dadatam dṛḍham  
kīrtyārpyamāṇam tāmbūlam  
carvantam līlayāhṛtam*

*śakrāya—to Indra; abhayam—freedom from fear; ucca—loud; uktyā—with words; daityebhyaḥ—from the Daityas; dadatam—giving; dṛḍham—certain; kīrtyā—by Kīrtidevī; arpyamāṇam—being offered; tāmbūlam—betel nut; carvantam—chewing; līlayā—elegantly; āhṛtam—taken.*

**In words that all could hear, the Lord assured Indra that he need not be afraid of the Daityas. Kīrtidevī offered the Lord betel nut, which He gracefully accepted and chewed.**

Nārada saw the demigods worshiping Lord Vāmanadeva in the assembly hall of Indra, the Lord's elder brother. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that the demigods were following one of two standards described in old textbooks on Deity worship like *Viṣṇu-bhakti-candrodaya*: the common standard, in which sixteen items are offered for the Lord's pleasure, beginning with *pādya* and *arghya* waters, or, alternatively, a more elaborate worship, with sixty-four items. While the worship was being performed, the Lord's mother, Aditi, held His soft hands and cared for Him in various ways. The Siddhas recited prayers for His satisfaction, the Vidyādharas played musical instruments, the Gandharvas sang, and the Apsarās danced. The Lord told Indra not to fear the Daityas, for the Lord would protect him, if necessary by killing all the demons. As He said this, He raised His right lotus hand in the gesture of fearlessness, *abhaya-dāna-mudrā*. Then Kīrtidevī, Lord Vāmana's wife, lovingly offered Him some betel nut she had carefully prepared. He happily took it between His thumb and first finger and elegantly placed it in His mouth.

Seeing all this, Nārada was very much pleased. Although he had come to the court of heaven to meet Indra, he was first able to see the

Supreme Lord worshiped by the assembled demigods. The worship was appropriate because Lord Vāmana is the most important resident of the heavenly region. In this scene the Lord not only showed His supremacy but also revealed His favor toward Indra by accepting his worship.

शक्रं च तस्य माहात्म्यं कीर्तयन्तं मुहुर्मुहुः ।  
स्वस्मिन् कृतोपकारांश्च वर्णयन्तं महामुदा ॥

*śakram ca tasya māhātmyam  
kīrtayantam muhur muhuḥ  
svasmin kṛtopakārāṁś ca  
varṇayantam mahā-mudā*

śakram—Indra; ca—and; tasya—His; māhātmyam—glories;  
kīrtayantam—chanting; muhuḥ muhuḥ—repeatedly; svasmin—to  
himself; kṛta-upakārāḥ—assistance rendered; ca—and; varṇayantam—  
describing; mahā—great; mudā—with joy.

Continuously chanting the Lord's glories, Indra described with great joy  
the ways the Lord had helped him in the past.

सहस्रनयनैरश्रुधारा वर्षन्तमासने ।  
स्वीये निषण्णं तत्पार्श्वे राजन्तं स्वविभूतिभिः ॥

*sahasra-nayanair aśru-  
dhārā varṣantam āsane  
svīye niṣaṇṇam tat-pārśve  
rājantam sva-vibhūtibhiḥ*

sahasra—from a thousand; nayanaiḥ—eyes; aśru—of tears; dhārāḥ—a  
downpour; varṣantam—shedding; āsane—on the throne; svīye—his own;  
niṣaṇṇam—sitting; tat-pārśve—next to Him; rājantam—shining forth;  
sva-vibhūtibhiḥ—with his own opulences.

Indra shone forth in his own opulence as he sat on his own throne next to  
the Lord, shedding from his thousand eyes a downpour of tears.

It was natural for Indra, the ruling king of heaven, to have his own throne in his assembly hall. Yet while his servants stood by, holding his royal paraphernalia—his umbrella, *cāmara* fans, and so on—Indra worshiped the Supreme Lord in the person of his younger brother. Indra loudly chanted the Lord’s glories, describing the Lord’s kindness to His devotees and His other attractive qualities. Indra then recalled the special favors repeatedly shown him by the Lord, such as the Lord’s regaining for him the rulership of heaven, which had been seized by Bali Daityarāja.

अथ विष्णुं निजावासे गच्छन्तमनुगम्य तम् ।  
सभायामागतं शक्रमाशस्योवाच नारदः ॥

*atha viṣṇum nijāvāse  
gacchantam anugamya tam  
sabhāyām āgataṁ śakram  
āśasyovāca nāradaḥ*

*atha—then; viṣṇum—Lord Viṣṇu; nija—His own; āvāse—to the residence; gacchantam—proceeding; anugamya—following; tam—Him; sabhāyām—to the assembly hall; āgataṁ—returning; śakram—Indra; āśasya—greeting; uvāca—spoke; nāradaḥ—Nārada.*

**Lord Viṣṇu then proceeded to His own residence. Indra followed Him for some distance and then returned to the assembly hall, where Nārada greeted him and began to speak.**

It would have been inappropriate for Nārada to disclose his mind to Indra while Indra was worshiping Lord Viṣṇu. Now that the Lord had left, Nārada greeted Indra, saying, “Glories to you! Please accept my blessings.”

**Nārada praises Indra**

**श्रीनारद उवाच**

कृतानुकम्पितस्त्वं यत्सूर्यचन्द्रयमादयः ।  
तवाज्ञाकारिणः सर्वे लोकपालाः परे किमु ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*kṛtānukampitas tvam yat*  
*sūrya-candra-yamādayaḥ*  
*tavājñā-kāriṇaḥ sarve*  
*loka-pālāḥ pare kim u*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *kṛta-anukampitaḥ*—having received the mercy; *tvam*—you; *yat*—because; *sūrya*—the sun-god; *candra*—the moon-god; *yama*—the lord of death; *ādayaḥ*—and so on; *tava*—your; *ājñā-kāriṇaḥ*—order carriers; *sarve*—all; *loka-pālāḥ*—rulers of planets; *pare*—other; *kim u*—what to speak of.

Śrī Nārada said: You have surely received the Supreme Lord's mercy, because demigods like Sūrya, Candra, and Yama, what to speak of the other rulers of planets, all obey your orders.

मुनयोऽस्मादुशो वश्याः श्रुतयस्त्वां स्तुवन्ति हि ।  
जगदीशतया यत्त्वं धर्माधर्मफलप्रदः ॥

*munayo 'smādrśo vaśyāḥ*  
*śrutayas tvām stuvanti hi*  
*jagad-īśatayā yat tvam*  
*dharmādharma-phala-pradaḥ*

*munayaḥ*—sages; *asmādrśaḥ*—like me; *vaśyāḥ*—subordinate subjects; *śrutayaḥ*—the Vedas; *tvām*—you; *stuvanti*—praise; *hi*—indeed; *jagat*—of the universe; *īśatayā*—as the Lord; *yat*—since; *tvam*—you; *dharmādharma*—of religion and irreligion; *phala-pradaḥ*—the bestower of the fruits.

Sages like me are your subjects, and the Vedas praise you as the lord of the universe, for you bestow the fruits of religion and irreligion.

The principal demigods, among them the Vasus, Maruts, Rudras, and Ādityas, all obey the orders of Indra. In the first of *śrutis*, the *Ṛg Veda*, many of the hymns are prayers to Indra and descriptions of his glories. These *Ṛk-sūktas*, the *Aindra* hymns, praise him as the lord of the universe. Nārada agrees that this is fitting and in his own words gives evidence of Indra's sovereignty—his power to send pious souls to heaven and sinners to hell.

अहो नारायणो भ्राता कनीयान् यस्य सोदरः ।  
सद्धर्मं मानयन् यस्य विदधात्यादरं सदा ॥

*aho nārāyaṇo bhrātā  
kanīyān yasya sodaraḥ  
sad-dharmam mānayan yasya  
vidadhāty ādaram sadā*

*aho*—oh; *nārāyaṇaḥ*—Lord Nārāyaṇa; *bhrātā*—brother; *kanīyān*—younger; *yasya*—whose; *sa-udaraḥ*—born of the same womb; *sat-dharmam*—the principles of civilized behavior; *mānayan*—obeying; *asya*—your; *vidadhāti*—displays; *ādaram*—respect; *sadā*—always.

**How wonderful that Lord Nārāyaṇa has become your younger brother, born of the same womb. Honoring the ways of civilized life, He always treats you with respect.**

Indra's greatness is spiritual as well as material, because the Lord of all lords becomes his brother. Not only is the Lord born of the same womb, but He accepts the inferior role of a younger brother. In that role, He teaches rules of behavior by His own example, showing for instance how a younger brother should respect his elder brother. Lord Vāmanadeva submissively does what Indra tells Him.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इत्थमिन्द्रस्य सौभाग्यवैभवं कीर्तयन् मुहुः ।  
देवर्षिर्वादयन् वीणां श्लाघमानो ननर्त तम् ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
ittham indrasya saubhāgya-  
vaibhavam kīrtayan muhuḥ  
devarṣir vādayan vīṇām  
ślāghamāno nanarta tam

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; ittham—thus; indrasya—of Indra; saubhāgya—of the good fortune; vaibhavam—the opulence; kīrtayan—declaring; muhuḥ—repeatedly; deva-ṛṣiḥ—the sage of the demigods, Nārada; vādayan—playing; vīṇām—his vīṇā; ślāghamānaḥ—while praising; nanarta—he danced; tam—him (Indra).

Śrī Parīkṣit said: The sage among the demigods thus profusely declared the extreme good fortune of Indra. As he chanted Indra’s glories, he played his vīṇā and danced.

Remembering the southern king’s declaration “The demigods are the real recipients of Lord Viṣṇu’s mercy,” Nārada took this opportunity to speak out on the topic.

### Indra refutes Nārada’s praise

ततोऽभिवाद्य देवर्षिमुवाचेन्द्रः शनैर्ह्रिया ।  
भो गान्धर्वकलाभिज्ञ किं मामुपहसन्नसि ॥

tato ’bhivādya devarṣim  
uvācendraḥ śanair hriyā  
bho gāndharva-kalābhijña  
kim mām upahasann asi

tataḥ—then; abhivādya—welcoming; devarṣim—Nārada; uvāca—said; indraḥ—Indra; śanaiḥ—in a soft voice; hriyā—humbly; bhoḥ—my dear; gāndharva-kalā-abhijña—expert in the arts of the Gandharvas; kim—why; mām—me; upa-hasan—making fun of; asi—you are.



Indra then welcomed Nārada and in a soft voice humbly said: My dear Nārada, expert in the arts of the Gandharvas, why are you making fun of me?

The Gandharvas are clever and tricky. A person well trained in their arts certainly knows how to manipulate others with false praise and ridicule. Indra knows that Nārada is not an ordinary Gandharva, but Indra is enjoying a humorous exchange.

अस्य न स्वर्गराज्यस्य वृत्तं वेत्ति त्वमेव किम् ।  
कति वारानितो दैत्यभीत्यास्माभिर्न निर्गतम् ॥

*asya na svarga-rājyasya  
vṛttam vetsyi tvam eva kim  
kati vārān ito daitya-  
bhītyāsmābhir na nirgatam*

*asya*—of this; *na*—not; *svarga-rājyasya*—of the kingdom of heaven; *vṛttam*—the activity; *vetsyi*—know; *tvam*—you; *eva*—even; *kim*—whether; *kati*—how many; *vārān*—times; *itaḥ*—away from here; *daitya-bhītyā*—out of fear of the Daitya demons; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *na*—not; *nirgatam*—fleeing.

**Are you unfamiliar with what ruling heaven means? Don't you know how many times we demigods have had to flee heaven in fear of the Daityas?**

Nārada may deny praising Indra in vain or making fun of him. Anticipating Nārada's objections, Indra here begins to argue against the praise that he is the dearest devotee of the Lord. Nārada certainly knows the troubles the demigods have in holding on to their power. The demigods have many times been driven out by their rivals, forced to flee disguised as *sannyāsīs*, to hide themselves on the earth, and so on. Indra thus refutes the statements Nārada heard from the king that the demigods “on the strength of their good fortune live in the realm of heaven” and “act and travel however they like.”

आचरन् बलिरिन्द्रत्वमसुरानेव सर्वतः ।  
सूर्येन्द्राद्यधिकारेषु न्ययुङ्क्त क्रतुभागभुक् ॥

*ācaran balir indratvam  
asurān eva sarvataḥ  
sūryendv-ādy-adhikāreṣu  
nyayunṅkta kratu-bhāga-bhuk*

*ācaran*—performing; *baliḥ*—Bali; *indratvam*—the function of Indra; *asurān*—demons; *eva*—only; *sarvataḥ*—all; *sūrya*—of the sun-god; *indu*—moon-god; *ādi*—and so on; *adhikāreṣu*—to the posts; *nyayunṅkta*—appointed; *kratu*—of sacrifice; *bhāga-bhuk*—the enjoyer of the shares.

One of them, Bali, once even took over as Indra. He appointed demons to all the posts like sun-god and moon-god and took for himself my shares of sacrifice.

Nārada has just told Indra, “The sun-god and other rulers of planets obey your orders.” To counter this, Indra questions the value of the demigods’ controlling power, which the demigods are always in anxiety of losing. He also questions whether he is actually glorified by having such uncertain rulers as his order-carriers. Indra ashamedly remembers how he almost died from hunger and thirst while Bali usurped and enjoyed Indra’s shares of sacrifice. Indra thus responds to the southern king’s statement “Their food is the nectar of immortality.”

ततो नस्तातमातृभ्यां तपोभिर्विततैर्दृढैः ।  
तोषितोऽप्यंशमात्रेण गतो भ्रातृत्वमच्युतः ॥

*tato nas tāta-māṭṛbhyām  
tapobhir vitatair dṛḍhaiḥ  
toṣito 'py aṁśa-mātreṇa  
gato bhrāṭṛtvam acyutaḥ*

*tataḥ*—at that time; *naḥ*—by our; *tāta-māṭṛbhyām*—father and mother;

*tapobhiḥ*—with austerities; *vitataiḥ*—extensive; *ḍṛḍhaiḥ*—and severe; *toṣitaḥ*—satisfied; *api*—although; *aṁśa-mātreṇa*—as a mere partial expansion; *gataḥ*—assumed; *bhrātr̥tvam*—the role of brother; *acyutaḥ*—the infallible Supreme Lord.

**Our father and mother then performed many severe austerities, by which they satisfied the Supreme Lord Acyuta. The Lord responded by appearing as my brother in a mere partial expansion of Himself.**

Indra makes light of the Lord's reciprocation with him, since the Lord answered the request of Indra's parents only after some delay and then was unwilling to manifest Himself fully in His original form.

**तथाप्यहत्वा ताञ्छत्रून् केवलं नस्त्रपा कृता ।  
मायायाचनयादाय बले राज्यं ददौ स मे ॥**

*tathāpy ahatvā tāñ chatrūn*  
*kevalam nas trapā kṛtā*  
*māyā-yācanayādāya*  
*bale rājyam dadau sa me*

*tathā api*—even then; *ahatvā*—not killing; *tān*—those; *śatrūn*—enemies; *kevalam*—only; *naḥ*—our; *trapā*—embarrassment; *kṛtā*—was created; *māyā-yācanayā*—by a deceptive request for charity; *ādāya*—taking away; *baleḥ*—from Bali; *rājyam*—the kingdom; *dadau*—gave; *saḥ*—He; *me*—my.

**And even then, instead of killing those enemies, He only embarrassed me, returning my kingdom after taking it from Bali with a deceptive request for charity.**

An aristocratic lord like Indra might well feel demeaned by such treatment. Instead of fighting for the demigods' rightful property in an honorable way, Lord Acyuta resorted to tricks. He disguised Himself as a dwarf, asked Bali for just as much land as three of His steps could cover, and, when He obtained that charity on a pretext, made Himself larger than the universe.

स्पर्धासूयादिदोषेण ब्रह्महत्यादिपापतः ।  
नित्यपातभयेनापि किं सुखं स्वर्गवासिनाम् ॥

*spardhāsūyādi-doṣeṇa*  
*brahma-hatyādi-pāpataḥ*  
*nitya-pāta-bhayenāpi*  
*kiṁ sukhaṁ svarga-vāsinām*

*spardhā-asūyā-ādi*—of competitiveness, jealousy, and so on; *doṣeṇa*—because of the faults; *brahma-hatyā-ādi*—such as killing *brāhmaṇas*; *pāpataḥ*—because of the sins; *nitya*—constantly; *pāta*—of falling from their positions; *bhayena*—because of fear; *api*—also; *kim*—what; *sukham*—happiness; *svarga-vāsinām*—for the residents of heaven.

**We residents of heaven are tainted with faults like rivalry and jealousy. For such acts as killing brāhmaṇas, we get entangled in the reactions of sin. And we live in constant fear of losing our posts. So what happiness do we truly enjoy?**

The southern king had said that the demigods are “always worshipable by men.” He had cited several reasons for this, but here Indra answers. He refutes the statement that the demigods are “fixed in goodness” by reminding Nārada that they are quarrelsome. He defeats the statement that they are “sinless” by recalling how he killed Vṛtra, Viśvarūpa, and others. And he dismisses that “their bodies are effulgent” by pointing out that the opposite is true because the demigods constantly anticipate some fall from their positions. As Lord Kṛṣṇa commented to His friend Uddhava:

*ko nv arthaḥ sukhay*  
*aty enaṁkāmo vā mṛtyur antike*  
*āghātaṁ nīyamānasya*  
*vadhyasyeva na tuṣṭi-daḥ*

“Death is not at all pleasing, and since everyone is exactly like a condemned man being led to the place of execution, what possible

happiness can people derive from material objects or the gratification they provide?” (Bhāgavatam 11.10.20)

Therefore, according to Indra, the demigods are undeserving of worship because they are hardly better than ordinary men.

किं च मां प्रत्युपेन्द्रस्य विद्वद्युपेक्षां विशेषतः ।  
सुधर्मा पारिजातं च स्वर्गान् मर्त्यं निनाय सः ॥

*kiṁ ca mām praty upendrasya  
viddhy upekṣām viśeṣataḥ  
sudharmām pārijātaṁ ca  
svargān martyaṁ nināya saḥ*

*kim ca*—and furthermore; *mām*—me; *prati*—toward; *upendrasya*—of Lord Upendra (Vāmanadeva); *viddhi*—please know; *upekṣām*—the indifference; *viśeṣataḥ*—particular; *sudharmām*—the Sudharmā assembly hall; *pārijātaṁ*—the *pārijāta* flower; *ca*—and; *svargāt*—from heaven; *martyam*—to the earth; *nināya*—brought; *saḥ*—He.

**You must also know that my brother Lord Upendra intentionally disregarded me by taking from heaven the Sudharmā hall and the pārijāta flower and bringing them to the earth.**

Here Indra refutes the claim that among the demigods he has the special favor of the Lord. The Supreme Person whom Indra knows as his brother Upendra appeared on earth in His original identity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To favor the Yadus and His wives in Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa removed from heaven the Sudharmā assembly hall and the *pārijāta*, the flower that grows only in Indra’s realm. These affronts were particularly intolerable because Kṛṣṇa brought the Sudharmā and *pārijāta* to Dvārakā on earth, a planet of lesser beings where death is prominent. The imperishable Sudharmā and *pārijāta* should not have been subjected to such indignities. Nārada had used Indra’s possessing the *pārijāta* flower as a reason for praising him, but Indra retorts that he has only been embarrassed because of the flower. Kṛṣṇa’s having stolen these two treasures proves that Kṛṣṇa is more favorable to the devotees in Dvārakā

than to Indra, whom He does not hesitate to shame.

For a devotee to feel dissatisfied with himself is a natural part of devotional service. Indra expresses natural humility here, and the other Vaiṣṇavas Nārada will meet will speak similarly. Each devotee thinks that Lord Kṛṣṇa only seemingly favors him but really acts to satisfy devotees who are dearer. When someone praises a devotee for being a recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, the devotee normally tries to refute the praise, but even if he sometimes doesn't, for that we should not fault him.

Devotees speak from the transcendental humility of pure devotion, and the most intimate devotees sometimes speak from the transcendental anger called *praṇaya-roṣa*. In any case, devotees can never conclusively prove that Kṛṣṇa does not favor them, because the opposite is true. He is actually pleased with them.

गोपालैः क्रियमाणां मे न्यहन् पूजां चिरन्तनीम् ।  
अखण्डं खाण्डवाख्यं मे प्रियं दाहितवान् वनम् ॥

*gopālaiḥ kriyamāṇām me  
nyahan pūjām cirantanīm  
akhaṇḍam khāṇḍavākhyam me  
priyam dāhitavān vanam*

*gopālaiḥ*—by the cowherds; *kriyamāṇām*—performed; *me*—my; *nyahan*—He spoiled; *pūjām*—the worship; *ciranta-nīm*—old; *akhaṇḍam*—uninterrupted; *khāṇḍava-ākhyam*—named Khāṇḍava; *me*—my; *priyam*—favorite; *dāhitavān*—He burned down; *vanam*—the forest.

**He ruined the worship the cowherds had been offering me for many years, and He burned down my favorite forest, the vast Khāṇḍava.**

Kṛṣṇa persuaded the cowherds of Vraja, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, to worship Govardhana Hill with the offerings collected for Indra's *yajña*. And to cure Agni of a stomachache, Kṛṣṇa destroyed Indra's Khāṇḍava forest with the help of Arjuna, Indra's own son.

त्रैलोक्यग्रासकृद्वृत्रवधार्थं प्रार्थितः पुरा ।  
औदासीन्यं भजंस्तत्र प्रेरयामास मां परम् ॥

*trai-lokya-grāsa-kṛd-vṛtra-  
vadhārtham prārthitaḥ purā  
audāsīnyam bhajaṁs tatra  
prerayām āsa mām param*

*trai-lokya*—the three worlds; *grāsa-kṛt*—who was devouring; *vṛtra*—the demon Vṛtra; *vadha-artham*—for the sake of killing; *prārthitaḥ*—prayed to; *purā*—long ago; *audāsīnyam*—indifference; *bhajan*—assuming; *tatra*—in that instance; *prerayām āsa*—He sent; *mām*—me; *param*—only.

**When the Lord was entreated to kill Vṛtra, who was devouring the three worlds, the Lord responded indifferently, merely sending me on His behalf.**

Indra's killing of Vṛtra, described in the hymns of the *Ṛg Veda*, occurred when the planets were being formed by Brahmā and his assistants. Vṛtra had interfered with the universal construction by keeping the oceans trapped inside mountains. The sages of the *Ṛg Veda* glorify Indra profusely for killing Vṛtra, thus freeing the waters of the universe. But here Indra belittles the incident. The Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* discloses that Vṛtra, under his demonic exterior, was a pure Vaiṣṇava. Indra's killing him was more tragic than glorious.

उत्साद्य मामवज्ञाय मदीयाममरावतीम् ।  
सर्वोपरि स्वभवनं रचयामास नूतनम् ॥

*utsādyā mām avajñāya  
madīyām amarāvatīm  
sarvopari sva-bhavanam  
racayām āsa nūtanam*

*utsādyā*—destroying; *mām*—me; *avajñāya*—disregarding; *madīyām*—

my; *amarāvatīm*—capital city Amarāvatī; *sarva-upari*—above all others; *sva-bhavanam*—a residence for Himself; *racayām āsa*—He built; *nūtanam*—new.

**With no regard for me, He destroyed my capital, Amarāvatī, and built a new residence, above all others, for Himself.**

Indra alludes here to an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu named Vaikuṇṭha, whom Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes in the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.5.4–5):

*patnī vikuṇṭhā śubhrasya  
vaikuṇṭhaiḥ sura-sattamaiḥ  
tayoh sva-kalayā jajñe  
vaikuṇṭho bhagavān svayam*

*vaikuṇṭhaḥ kalpito yena  
loko loka-namaskṛtaḥ  
ramayā prārthyamānena  
devyā tat-priya-kāmyayā*

“From the combination of Śubhra and his wife, Vikuṇṭhā, there appeared the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vaikuṇṭha, along with demigods who were His personal plenary expansions. Just to please the goddess of fortune, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vaikuṇṭha, at her request, created another Vaikuṇṭha planet, which is worshiped by everyone.”

The eternal spiritual planet Lord Vaikuṇṭha manifested within the material world is called Ramāpriya, “dear to the goddess of fortune.” It is located above all other planets, even Lord Brahmā’s. Strictly speaking, this spiritual kingdom displayed within the material universe is never created or destroyed. But because from our point of view the planet Ramāpriya appeared at a certain time and place, we consider it “new” compared with the eternal manifestation of the same kingdom of God outside the material realm. The Lord may pretend to “create” it as His pastime, but He is only unveiling before material eyes what normally



cannot be seen in this world.

Indra also mentions the incarnation *Vaikuṇṭha* in *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa* (2.70.37). Speaking after *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* stole the *pārijāta* flower and defeated him in battle, Indra says:

*idam bhaṅktvā madīyaṁ ca  
bhavanaṁ viṣṇunā kṛtam  
upary upari lokānām  
adhikaṁ bhuvanaṁ mune*

“O sage, Lord Viṣṇu sacked my capital city and then built a new planet above all others.”

As described in the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord *Vaikuṇṭha* appeared during the period of the fifth Manu, *Raivata*. This was a long time before our speaker, *Purandara*, assumed the post of *Indra*. *Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī* presents two possible explanations of how *Indra* could have met Lord *Vaikuṇṭha*. Either the *avatāra* mentioned in the Eighth Canto is an earlier one and met *Indra* in a previous day of *Brahmā*, or during fifth *manv-antara* Lord *Vaikuṇṭha* only conceived the idea of His new planet (*kalpito yena lokaḥ*) but constructed it later, during the seventh *manv-antara*, now current.

आराधनबलात्पित्रोराग्रहाच्च पुरोधसः ।  
पूजां स्वीकृत्य नः सद्यो यात्यदृश्यं निजं पदम् ॥

*ārādhana-balāt pitror  
āgrahāc ca purodhasaḥ  
pūjām svī-kṛtya naḥ sadyo  
yāty adṛśyaṁ nijam padam*

*ārādhana*—of the worship; *balāt*—on the strength; *pitroḥ*—of our parents; *āgrahāt*—because of the zeal; *ca*—and; *purodhasaḥ*—of the presiding priest; *pūjām*—the worship; *svī-kṛtya*—accepting; *naḥ*—our; *sadyaḥ*—immediately; *yāti adṛśyam*—disappears; *nijam*—to His own; *padam*—abode.

He accepts our worship on the strength of our parents' devotion and at the insistence of my priest. And then, after taking our offerings, He at once disappears, returning to His own abode.

Nārada might have suggested to Indra that he consider how kind the Lord is no matter what the Lord does. After all, the Lord's mind, being deeper than a million oceans, cannot be fathomed, and so His pastimes are inconceivable. Because the distress of others causes Him great anxiety, He always shows compassion in whatever way He can. Indra should try to understand in this higher sense Lord Vāmana's apparent neglect of him.

"That is all right," Indra replies in this verse. "The Lord would indeed be showing me His compassion if He would just stay here with me permanently, accepting my worship. Then I could tolerate everything else He does. But much of the time He doesn't even let me see Him."

Indra's parents, Kaśyapa and Aditi, intensely worshiped Lord Viṣṇu in their previous lives, and they continue to worship Him now. Indra's priest, Bṛhaspati, is also an enthusiastic worshiper of Viṣṇu. Indra reasons, therefore, "When the Lord appears in order to take my offerings, He does so not from compassion for me but to reciprocate with the devotion of others. And in any case, He stays only long enough to take His offerings and then goes away." This answers the southern king's statement that Lord Viṣṇu accepts in person the elaborate worship Indra offers.

पुनः सत्वरमागत्य स्वार्घ्यस्वीकरणाद्वयम् ।  
अनुग्राह्यास्त्वयेत्युक्तोऽस्मानादिशति वञ्चयन् ॥

यावन् नाहं समायामि तावद् ब्रह्मा शिवोऽथवा ।  
भवद्भिः पूजनीयोऽत्र मत्तो भिन्नौ न तौ यतः ॥

*punaḥ satvaram āgatya  
svārghya-svī-karaṇād vayam  
anugrāhyās tvayety ukto*

'smān ādiśati vañcayan

yāvan nāhaṁ samāyāmi  
tāvad brahmā śivo 'tha vā  
bhavadbhiḥ pūjanīyo 'tra  
matto bhinnau na tau yataḥ

punaḥ—again; satvaram—abruptly; āgatya—returning; sva—our; arghya—water offered to a respected guest; svī-karaṇāt—because of accepting; vayam—we; anugrāhyāḥ—have become obliged; tvayā—by You; iti—thus; uktaḥ—said; asmān—us; ādiśati—He addresses; vañcayan—deceiving; yāvat—as long as; na—not; aham—I; samāyāmi—come; tāvat—then; brahmā—Brahmā; śivaḥ—Śiva; atha vā—or; bhavadbhiḥ—by you; pūjanīyaḥ—should be worshiped; atra—here; mattaḥ—from Me; bhinnau—different; na—not; tau—both of them; yataḥ—because.

Then He suddenly comes back. I tell Him, “We are very much obliged to You for accepting our offerings of arghya,” but He cunningly replies, “Whenever I am not here to accept your offerings, you may worship Brahmā or Śiva instead. Indeed, both of them are nondifferent from Me.

एकमूर्तिस्त्रयो देवा रुद्रविष्णुपितामहाः ।  
इत्यादिशास्त्रवचनं भवद्विर्विस्मृतं किमु ॥

eka-mūrtis trayo devā  
rudra-viṣṇu-pitāmahāḥ  
ity-ādi-śāstra-vacanāṁ  
bhavadbhir vismṛtaṁ kim u

eka-mūrtiḥ—comprising one body; trayaḥ—three; devāḥ—deities; rudra—Śiva; viṣṇu—Viṣṇu; pitāmahāḥ—and Brahmā; iti-ādi—like this; śāstra—of scripture; vacanam—statements; bhavadbhiḥ—by your good self; vismṛtam—forgotten; kim u—whether.

“According to scriptural statements, ‘The three deities Rudra, Viṣṇu, and

**Brahmā are embodiments of the same Supreme Being.’ Have you forgotten?”**

From Indra’s standpoint these words are simply deceitful. Śrī Vāmanadeva knows very well that Indra is attracted to worshiping only the Supreme Lord. Yet He teases Indra by quoting from scripture, trying to persuade him to worship someone else. And Indra, compelled by the reverence he feels for Lord Vāmana, is forced to honor His request. Thus we see that sometimes festivals are held in heaven for worshiping Lord Śiva.

**वासोऽस्यानियतोऽस्माभिरगम्यो मुनिदुर्लभः ।  
वैकुण्ठे ध्रुवलोके च क्षीराब्धौ च कदाचन ॥**

*vāso ’syāniyato ’smābhir  
agamyo muni-durlabhaḥ  
vaikuṇṭhe dhruva-loke ca  
kṣīrābdhau ca kadācana*

*vāsaḥ—the living place; asya—His; aniyataḥ—undetermined; asmābhiḥ—by us; agamyāḥ—unapproachable; muni-durlabhaḥ—difficult for sages to attain; vaikuṇṭhe—in Vaikuṇṭha; dhruva-loke—on Dhruva’s planet; ca—and; kṣīra-abdhau—within the Milk Ocean; ca—and; kadācana—sometimes.*

**We cannot be certain where He lives. His abode is unapproachable, difficult for even sages to attain. Sometimes He is in Vaikuṇṭha, sometimes on Dhruva’s planet, and sometimes within the Ocean of Milk.**

Nārada might ask, “Then why don’t you join your Lord?” Indra answers that he is unsure where the Lord is. He might be in Vaikuṇṭha, beyond the material world, or else on the Vaikuṇṭha planet Ramāpriya, inside this universe. He might be on Dhruva’s planet, known as Viṣṇupada, or He might be on the island of Śvetadvīpa, in the Ocean of Milk.

**सम्प्रति द्वारकायां च तत्रापि नियमोऽस्ति न ।**

## कदाचित्पाण्डवागारे मथुरायां कदाचन ॥

*samprati dvārakāyām ca  
tatrāpi niyamo 'sti na  
kadācit pāṇḍavāgāre  
mathurāyām kadācana*

*samprati*—now; *dvārakāyām*—in Dvārakā; *ca*—and; *tatra api*—and even there; *niyamaḥ*—certainty; *asti na*—there is not; *kadācit*—sometimes; *pāṇḍava-āgāre*—in the house of the Pāṇḍavas; *mathurāyām*—in Mathurā District; *kadācana*—sometimes.

And now He is in Dvārakā, but even about this there is no certainty. Sometimes He goes from there to the house of the Pāṇḍavas, and sometimes to Mathurā.

## पुर्यां कदाचित्त्रापि गोकुले च वनाद्वने । इत्थं तस्यावलोकोऽपि दुर्लभो नः कुतः कृपा ॥

*puryām kadācit tatrāpi  
gokule ca vanād vane  
ittham tasyāvaloko 'pi  
durlabho naḥ kutaḥ kṛpā*

*puryām*—in the district of the holy city (Mathurā); *kadācit*—sometimes; *tatra api*—furthermore; *gokule*—in Gokula; *ca*—and; *vanāt vane*—from forest to forest; *ittham*—thus; *tasya*—of Him; *avalokaḥ*—the sight; *api*—even; *durlabhaḥ*—difficult to have; *naḥ*—for us; *kutaḥ*—what to speak of; *kṛpā*—His mercy.

In Mathurā, furthermore, He is sometimes in the city and sometimes wandering in Gokula from forest to forest. So it is difficult for us to see Him, what to speak of obtaining His mercy.

Indra should be able to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa very easily, because when Indra speaks this verse Kṛṣṇa is appearing on earth. But the appearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very confidential. Indra has difficulty understanding why the

Lord he knows as his brother descended to earth. *Śrī Hari-vamśa* (2.69) states that when Nārada had come previously as Kṛṣṇa's messenger to ask Indra for the *pārijāta* flower for Queen Satyabhāmā, Indra had expressed concern that his brother Kṛṣṇa seemed to have become degraded by association with the residents of earth. In particular, Indra thought that Kṛṣṇa was coming too much under the control of women.

Indra is confused by Kṛṣṇa's constant wandering on earth. The Lord spends a short time in Gokula sporting in Mahāvana, Vṛndāvana, and other forests. He then lives a few years in Mathurā and finally settles down in Dvārakā. Still, from there He constantly travels—to Mithilā, to Hastināpura to visit the Pāṇḍavas, and also back to Vraja-bhūmi.

Kṛṣṇa does in fact sometimes return from Dvārakā to Vṛndāvana, as the residents of Dvārakā testify:

*yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān  
kurūn madhūn vātha suhṛd-didṛkṣayā  
tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved  
ravim vinākṣnor iva nas tavācyuta*

“O lotus-eyed Lord, whenever You go away to Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, or Hastināpura to meet Your friends and relatives, every moment of Your absence seems like a million years. O infallible one, at that time our eyes become useless, as if bereft of the sun.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.11.9)

### Indra directs Nārada to Lord Brahmā

परमेष्ठिसुतश्रेष्ठ किन्तु स्वपितरं हरेः ।  
अनुग्रहपदं विद्धि लक्ष्मीकान्तसुतो हि सः ॥

*parameṣṭhi-suta-śreṣṭha  
kintu sva-pitaram hareḥ  
anugraha-padam viddhi  
lakṣmī-kānta-suto hi saḥ*

*parame-sthi*—of the head of the universe, *Brahmā*; *suta-śreṣṭha*—O best son; *kintu*—but; *sva-pitaram*—your father; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *anugraha*—of the favor; *padam*—the recipient; *viddhi*—please know; *lakṣmī-kānta*—of Lord Viṣṇu, the husband of Lakṣmī; *sutaḥ*—the son; *hi*—indeed; *saḥ*—he.

**But you should know, O best son of Brahmā, that your own father is the true recipient of the favor of Lord Hari. He is directly the son of Lord Viṣṇu, the husband of Lakṣmī.**

The four Kumāras, headed by Sanaka, are senior to Nārada by age, as are several other sons of Brahmā, but Nārada is superior by virtue of his pure devotion to Lord Lakṣmī-kānta. But even better than the best son is the father, born not from Mother Lakṣmī's womb but directly from the navel of the Supreme Person.

**यस्यैकस्मिन् दिने शक्रा मादृशाः स्युश्चतुर्दश ।  
मन्वादियुक्ता यस्याश्च चतुर्युगसहस्रकम् ॥**

*yasyaikasmin dine śakrā  
māḍṛśāḥ syuś caturdaśa  
manv-ādi-yuktā yasyāś ca  
catur-yuga-sahasrakam*

*yasya*—his; *ekasmin*—in one; *dine*—day; *śakrāḥ*—Indras; *māḍṛśāḥ*—like me; *syuḥ*—there will be; *caturdaśa*—fourteen; *manu-ādi*—by Manus and other sages and demigods; *yuktāḥ*—joined; *yasyāḥ*—in which (day of Brahmā); *ca*—and; *catuḥ-yuga*—of cycles of four ages; *sahasrakam*—a thousand.

**In one day of Brahmā, fourteen Indras like me come and go, along with different sets of Manus and all the demigods. That one day equals one thousand cycles of earthly ages.**

**निशा च तावतीत्यं याहोरात्राणां शतत्रयी ।  
षष्ट्युत्तरा भवेद्वर्षं यस्यायुस्तच्छतं श्रुतम् ॥**

niśā ca tāvatīttham yā-  
ho-rātrāṇām śata-trayī  
ṣaṣṭy-uttarā bhaved varṣam  
yasyāyus tat-chataṁ śrutam

niśā—his night; ca—and; tāvatī—as long as; ittham—equal; yā—which; ahaḥ-rātrāṇām—of days and nights; śata-trayī—three hundred; ṣaṣṭi-uttarā—and sixty; bhaved—is; varṣam—a year; yasya—whose; āyuh—life span; tat—of such years; śatam—one hundred; śrutam—heard from revealed scripture.

**According to the scriptures, Brahmā's night is of the same duration. Three hundred and sixty of such days and nights make one of his years, and his life lasts a hundred years.**

Fourteen times in each day of Brahmā, different Indras, sages, demigods, Manus, sons of Manu, and special incarnations of the Supreme Lord come and go.

manv-antaram manur devā  
manu-putrāḥ sureśvarāḥ  
ṛṣayo 'mśāvatārāś ca  
hareḥ ṣaḍ-vidham ucyate

“In each reign of Manu, six manifestations of Lord Hari appear: Indra, the chief demigods, the ruling Manu, the sons of Manu, the great sages, and the partial incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (Bhāgavatam 12.7.15) Purandara Indra has heard about all this but is too short-lived to have realized it directly.

**लोकानां लोकपालानामपि स्रष्टाधिकारदः ।  
पालकः कर्मफलदो रात्रौ संहारकश्च सः ॥**

lokānām loka-pālānām  
api sraṣṭādhikāra-daḥ  
pālakaḥ karma-phala-do  
rātrau saṁhārakaś ca saḥ



*lokānām*—of the planets; *loka-pālānām*—of the rulers of the planets; *api*—also; *sraṣṭā*—the creator; *adhikāra-daḥ*—and the appointer of their positions; *pālakaḥ*—the protector; *karma-phala*—of the fruits of *karma*; *daḥ*—the giver; *rātrau*—during his night; *saṁhārakaḥ*—the destroyer; *ca*—and; *saḥ*—he.

He is the creator of the planets and the rulers he assigns them. He is the world's chief protector, the dispenser of the fruits of karma, and at the onset of his night the destroyer of the world.

सहस्रशीर्षा यल्लोके स महापुरुषः स्फुटम् ।  
भुञ्जानो यज्ञभागौघं वसत्यानन्ददः सदा ॥

*sahasra-śīrṣā yal-loke*  
*sa mahā-puruṣaḥ sphuṭam*  
*bhuñjāno yajña-bhāgaugham*  
*vasaty ānanda-daḥ sadā*

*sahasra-śīrṣā*—with a thousand heads; *yat*—on whose (Brahmā's); *loke*—planet; *sa*—He; *mahā-puruṣaḥ*—the Mahāpuruṣa form of the Supreme Lord; *sphuṭam*—directly visible; *bhuñjānaḥ*—enjoying; *yajña-bhāga*—of shares of the offerings made in sacrifice; *ogham*—a vast amount; *vasati*—He resides; *ānanda-daḥ*—giving delight; *sadā*—always.

The Mahāpuruṣa, the thousand-headed form of the Lord, is always directly visible on Brahmā's planet, personally accepting the countless oblations offered Him and thus always giving delight to His devotees.

At the beginning of each day of his life, Lord Brahmā appoints qualified candidates to serve as Indra, the sages, the Prajāpatīs, and other demigods. Also, he protects the universe from chaos by establishing Vedic sacrifice and the social laws for individual classes of human beings. Thus Brahmā not only creates the universe but maintains it as well. Indra also says that he destroys it, because when Lord Brahmā goes to sleep at night a break in his meditation partially devastates the universe.

When Hiraṇyakaśipu worshiped Brahmā with the demonic aim of subverting the universal order, he glorified Brahmā similarly:

*kalpānte kāla-sṛṣṭena  
yo 'ndhena tamasāvṛtam  
abhivyanag jagad idaṁ  
svayaṁ-jyotiḥ sva-rociṣā*

*ātmanā tri-vṛtā cedam  
sṛjaty avati lumpati  
rajaḥ-sattva-tamo-dhāmne  
parāya mahate namaḥ*

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the supreme lord within this universe. At the end of each day of his life, the universe is fully covered with dense darkness by the influence of time, and then again, during his next day, that self-effulgent lord, by his own effulgence, manifests, maintains, and destroys the entire cosmic manifestation through the material energy, which is invested with the three modes of material nature. He, Lord Brahmā, is the shelter of those modes of nature—*sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*, and *tamo-guṇa*.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.3.26–27)

Living together with Brahmā on his planet is the incarnation of the Supreme Lord called the Mahāpuruṣa. He is the thousand-headed “First incarnation,” Mahā-viṣṇu, whose further expansion is Garbhodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu. Both of these forms are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the first and second cantos:

*ādyo 'vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya*

“The first descent of the Supreme into the material world is the Mahāpuruṣa.” (*Bhāgavatam* 2.6.42)

*jagrhe pauruṣaṁ rūpaṁ  
bhagavān mahad-ādibhiḥ  
sambhūtaṁ ṣoḍaśa-kalam*

*ādaṁ loka-siṣṛkṣayā*

“In the beginning of the creation, the Lord first expanded Himself in the universal form of the Puruṣa incarnation and manifested all the ingredients for the material creation. And thus at first there was the creation of the sixteen principles of material action. This was for the purpose of creating the material universe.

*yasyāmbhasi śayānasya  
yoga-nidrām vitanvataḥ  
nābhi-hradāmbujād āsīd  
brahmā viśva-sṛjām patiḥ*

“A part of the Puruṣa lies down within the water of the universe, from the navel lake of His body sprouts a lotus stem, and from the lotus flower atop this stem, Brahmā, the master of all engineers in the universe, becomes manifest.

*yasyāvayava-saṁsthānaiḥ  
kalpito loka-vistaraḥ  
tad vai bhagavato rūpam  
viśuddham sattvam ūrjitam*

“It is believed that all the universal planetary systems are situated on the extensive body of the Puruṣa, but He has nothing to do with the created material ingredients. His body is eternally in spiritual existence par excellence.

*paśyanty aḍo rūpam adabhra-cakṣuṣā  
sahasra-pāḍoru-bhujānanādbhutam  
sahasra-mūrdha-śravaṇākṣi-nāsikam  
sahasra-mauly-ambara-kuṇḍalollasat*

“The devotees, with their perfect eyes, see the transcendental form of the Puruṣa who has thousands of legs, thighs, arms, and faces — all extraordinary. In that body there are thousands of heads, ears, eyes, and noses. They are decorated with thousands of helmets and glowing

earrings and are adorned with garlands.

*etan nānāvatārāṇām  
nidhānam bījam avyayam  
yasyāṁśāṁśena sṛjyante  
deva-tiryaṅ-narādayaḥ*

“This form is the source and indestructible seed of multifarious incarnations within the universe. From the particles and portions of this form, different living entities like demigods, men, and others are created.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.3.1–5)

Lord Mahāpuruṣa is the support of material nature, and so He is described as the original source of the basic causes of creation—the five gross elements and eleven senses. He performs His pastime of creation while lying in the ocean that fills the bottom half of the universe. From His navel appears a lotus stem, from which all the forms and configurations of material existence will be manifest, and at the top of the stem grows a flower, where Brahmā, the chief engineer of creation, is born.

Brahmā discovered inside the lotus stem of his birth the detailed plans of creation:

*tad vilokya viyad-vyāpi  
puṣkaram yad-adhiṣṭhitam  
anena lokān prāg-līnān  
kalpitāsmīty acintayat*

“Brahmā saw that the lotus on which he was situated was spread throughout the universe, and he contemplated how to create all the planets, which were previously merged in that very same lotus.

*padma-kośam tadāviśya  
bhagavac-chakti-coditaḥ  
ekam vyabhāṅkṣīd urudhā  
tridhā bhāvyaṁ dvi-saptadhā*

“Thus engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Brahmā entered into the whorl of the lotus, and as it spread all over the universe he divided it into three divisions of worlds and later into fourteen divisions.” (*Bhāgavatam* 3.10.7–8)

In meditation, Brahmā discovered the thousand-headed Mahāpuruṣa, who at first had been invisible to him from his lotus seat. He offered prayers to that Lord and made a special request: “My dear Lord, may You come and live on my planet in this very form.” Thus the first Lord of creation became Brahmā’s constant guest.

The Mahāpuruṣa is called *viśuddham* (“all-pure”) because even while giving shelter to the material energy He remains untouched by the faults of matter. He is *sattvam* (“substantial reality”) because He is the all-pervading Absolute Truth. He is an incarnation of Godhead, but is also called the fountainhead of all other incarnations; this can be said because He is the total support of material nature and as such He is almost as complete a manifestation of the Supreme as the master of Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Nārāyaṇa. In addition, almost all the incarnations of Nārāyaṇa appear in this world during the rule of the Mahāpuruṣa’s appointed servant, Brahmā.

The Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.4.3–4) describes Lord Mahāpuruṣa:

*bhūtair yadā pañcabhir ātma-sṛṣṭaiḥ  
puraṁ virājaṁ viracayya tasmin  
svāmśena viṣṭaḥ puruṣābhidhānam  
avāpa nārāyaṇa ādi-devaḥ*

“When the primeval Lord Nārāyaṇa created His universal body out of five elements produced from Himself, and then entered within that universal body by His own plenary portion, He thus became known as the Puruṣa.

*yat-kāya eṣa bhuvana-traya-sanniveśo  
yasyendriyais tanu-bhṛtām ubhayendriyāṇi  
jñānam svataḥ śvasanato balam oja ihā*

“Elaborately arranged within His body are the three planetary systems of this universe. His transcendental senses generate the knowledge-acquiring and active senses of all embodied beings. His consciousness generates conditioned knowledge, and His powerful breathing produces the bodily strength, sensory power, and conditioned activities of the embodied souls. He is the prime mover, through the agency of the material modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance. And thus the universe is created, maintained, and annihilated.”

The Mahāpuruṣa produced the total body of the universe and entered it as His pastime, but He did not do so for His own enjoyment. Rather, the enjoyer of the universal body is the most pious of conditioned beings, Brahmā. The Lord in His creative feature is called Puruṣa because He lays down (*śete*) within the “city” (*pūr*) of the universal shell. His beautiful body accommodates all the three worlds, and His pastimes consist of creation, maintenance, and annihilation.

As Indra is stating, Lord Mahāpuruṣa on Brahmāloka consumes the offerings made in sacrifice, which resemble a constantly flowing river because on Brahmāloka so many sacrifices are always being performed. Thanks to the Lord’s being satisfied by these offerings, the inhabitants of Brahmā’s planet are perpetually blissful. It is true that Lord Mahāpuruṣa is sometimes absent when He merges into Śrī Kṛṣṇa to join Him in Mathurā-dhāma on earth, and the ecstasy on Brahmāloka is accordingly interrupted, but time on Brahmāloka is so expansive that the duration of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s descent is barely noticeable. In effect, on Brahmāloka Lord Mahāpuruṣa is seen constantly.

इत्थं युक्तिसहस्रैः स श्रीकृष्णस्य कृपास्पदम् ।  
किं वक्तव्यं कृपापात्रमिति कृष्णः स एव हि ॥

*itthaṁ yukti-sahasraiḥ sa  
śrī-kṛṣṇasya kṛpāspadam  
kiṁ vaktavyaṁ kṛpā-pātram  
iti kṛṣṇaḥ sa eva hi*

*ittham*—thus; *yukti*—of logical arguments; *sahasraiḥ*—by thousands; *saḥ*—he (Brahmā); *śrī-kṛṣṇasya*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā-āspadam*—recipient of the mercy; *kim*—what; *vaktavyam*—needs to be said; *kṛpā-pātram*—recipient of mercy; *iti*—in such terms; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *saḥ*—he; *eva hi*—actually.

I could give you thousands of other reasons why Brahmā is the real object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. What more needs to be said—he is in fact Kṛṣṇa Himself!

तच्छ्रुतिस्मृतिवाक्येभ्यः प्रसिद्धं ज्ञायते त्वया ।  
अन्यच्च तस्य माहात्म्यं तल्लोकानामपि प्रभो ॥

*tac chruti-smṛti-vākyaebhyaḥ*  
*prasiddham jñāyate tvayā*  
*anyac ca tasya māhātmyam*  
*tal-lokānām api prabho*

*tat*—that; *śruti-smṛti-vākyaebhyaḥ*—from the statements of *śruti* and *smṛti*; *prasiddham*—well known; *jñāyate*—is also known; *tvayā*—by you; *anyat*—other; *ca*—and; *tasya*—his (Brahmā’s); *māhātmyam*—glories; *tat-lokānām*—of those who reside on his planet; *api*—also; *prabho*—my lord.

You know this, since it is proclaimed in both *śruti* and *smṛti*. You must also be familiar, my lord, with other aspects of Brahmā’s greatness and the greatness of the residents of his planet.

Many scriptures, including *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, teach that Lord Brahmā is an empowered incarnation of Viṣṇu:

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*aham brahmā ca śarvaś ca*  
*jagataḥ kāraṇam param*  
*ātmeśvara upadraṣṭā*  
*svayaṁ-dṛg aviśeṣaṇaḥ*

*ātma-māyām samāviśya  
so 'haṁ guṇa-mayīm dvija  
sṛjan rakṣan haran viśvaṁ  
dadhre samjñām kriyocitām*

“Lord Viṣṇu said: Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and I are the supreme cause of the material manifestation. I am the Supersoul, the self-sufficient witness. But impersonally there is no difference between Brahmā, Lord Śiva, and Me. My dear Dakṣa Dvija, I am the original Personality of Godhead, but in order to create, maintain, and annihilate this cosmic manifestation, I act through My material energy, and according to the different grades of activity My representations are differently named.” (Bhāgavatam 4.7.50–51)

*trayāṇām eka-bhāvānām  
yo na paśyati vai bhidām  
sarva-bhūtātmanām brahman  
sa śāntim adhigacchati*

“One who does not consider Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, or the living entities in general to be separate from the Supreme, and who knows Brahman, actually realizes peace; others do not.” (Bhāgavatam 4.7.54)

### Nārada sees the Mahāpuruṣa on Brahmaloḥka

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इन्द्रस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा साधु भोः साध्विति ब्रुवन् ।  
त्वरान् ब्रह्मणो लोकं भगवान् नारदो गतः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
indrasya vacanaṁ śrutvā  
sādhū bhoḥ sādhu iti bruvan  
tvarāvān brahmaṇo lokaṁ*



*bhagavān nārado gataḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *indrasya*—of Indra; *vacanam*—the words; *śrutvā*—hearing; *sādhū*—well said; *bhoḥ*—sir; *sādhū*—well said; *iti*—thus; *bruvan*—speaking; *tvarā-vān*—with haste; *brahmaṇaḥ lokam*—to Brahmā’s planet; *bhagavān nāradaḥ*—godly Nārada; *gataḥ*—went.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Having heard these words from Indra, godly Nārada replied, “Well said, sir, well said!” and hastily went to Brahmā’s planet.

यज्ञानां महतां तत्र ब्रह्मर्षिभिरनारतम् ।  
भक्त्या वितायमानानां प्रघोषं दूरतोऽशृणोत् ॥

*yajñānām mahatām tatra*  
*brahmaṛṣibhir anāratam*  
*bhaktyā vitāyamānānām*  
*praghoṣam dūrato ’śṛṇot*

*yajñānām*—of Vedic sacrifices; *mahatām*—great; *tatra*—there; *brahma-ṛṣibhiḥ*—by the sages of Brahmaloḥka; *anāratam*—incessantly; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *vitāyamānānām*—being elaborately performed; *praghoṣam*—the din; *dūrataḥ*—from a distance; *aśṛṇot*—he heard.

There Nārada first heard from a distance the huge sound of the many great sacrifices performed unceasingly and with great devotion by the sages on Brahmaloḥka.

Vedic sacrifices may be performed simply or elaborately, according to the resources and ambitions of the performers. More than any other *brāhmaṇas* in the universe, the residents of Brahmā’s planet are willing and able to carry out the longest, most complex sacrifices. Thus Nārada’s first impression of Brahmaloḥka, from the din of the many sacrifices being performed, was of a very busy place.

ददर्श च ततस्तेषु प्रसन्नः परमेश्वरः ।  
महापुरुषरूपेण जटामण्डलमण्डितः ॥

*dadarśa ca tatas teṣu  
prasannaḥ parameśvaraḥ  
mahā-puruṣa-rūpeṇa  
jaṭā-maṇḍala-maṇḍitaḥ*

*dadarśa*—he saw; *ca*—and; *tataḥ*—then; *teṣu*—among them (the sages); *prasannaḥ*—pleased; *parama-īśvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *mahā-puruṣa-rūpeṇa*—in the form of the Mahāpuruṣa; *jaṭā*—of matted locks; *maṇḍala*—with crowns; *maṇḍitaḥ*—decorated.

He then beheld among the sages the Supreme Lord in His Mahāpuruṣa form, looking very much satisfied, decorated with crowns of matted locks.

सहस्रमूर्धा भगवान् यज्ञमूर्तिः श्रिया सह ।  
आविर्भूयादद्वागानानन्दयति याजकान् ॥

*sahasra-mūrdhā bhagavān  
yajña-mūrtiḥ śriyā saha  
āvirbhūyādadaḥ bhāgān  
ānandayati yājakān*

*sahasra-mūrdhā*—with a thousand heads; *bhagavān*—the Lord; *yajña-mūrtiḥ*—the personification of sacrifice; *śriyā saha*—with His consort, the goddess of fortune; *āvirbhūya*—having appeared; *ādadaḥ*—accepting; *bhāgān*—the shares of sacrifice; *ānandayati*—He delights; *yājakān*—His worshipers.

The Lord in His thousand-headed form, the personification of sacrifice, had appeared there with His consort just to accept the offerings and delight His worshipers.

Lord Mahāpuruṣa is the originator of sacrifices and is their presiding Deity. As described in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* of the *Ṛg Veda*, at the beginning of creation the first sacrifice in the universe was performed, and for this sacrifice Lord Mahāpuruṣa provided the sacrificial ingredients from His own body. The Lord reveals Himself in this form on Brahmaloḥa not simply to take His offerings but to please His worshipers. He enjoys

personally distributing the results of sacrifice.

पद्मयोनेः प्रहर्षार्थं द्रव्यजातं निवेदितम् ।  
सहस्रपाणिभिर्वक्त्रसहस्रेष्वर्पयन्नदन् ॥

*padma-yoneḥ praharṣārtham  
dravya-jātam niveditam  
sahasra-pāṇibhir vaktra-  
sahasreṣv arpayann adan*

*padma-yoneḥ*—Brahmā, the lotus-born; *praharṣa-artham*—for the sake of enlivening; *dravya-jātam*—all the things; *niveditam*—which are offered; *sahasra-pāṇibhiḥ*—with His thousand hands; *vaktra-sahasreṣu*—into His thousand mouths; *arpayan*—placing; *adan*—He was eating.

To enliven lotus-born Brahmā, the Lord consumed all the items offered Him, placing them into His thousand mouths with His thousand hands.

दत्त्वेष्टान् यजमानेभ्यो वरान् निद्रागृहं गतः ।  
लक्ष्मीसंवाह्यमानाङ्घ्रिर्निद्रामादत्त लीलया ॥

*dattveṣṭān yajamānebhyo  
varān nidrā-grham gataḥ  
lakṣmī-saṁvāhyamānāṅghrir  
nidrām ādatta līlayā*

*dattvā*—giving; *iṣṭān*—desired; *yajamānebhyāḥ*—to the sacrificers; *varān*—with benedictions; *nidrā-grham*—to His sleeping quarters; *gataḥ*—He went; *lakṣmī*—by the goddess Lakṣmī; *saṁvāhyamāna*—being massaged; *aṅghriḥ*—His feet; *nidrām*—sleep; *ādatta*—He assumed; *līlayā*—as a pastime.

After awarding the performers of the sacrifices the benedictions they desired, Lord Mahāpuruṣa went to His sleeping quarters. As the goddess Lakṣmī massaged His feet, He entered His pastime of sleep.

To relieve the worshipers of any doubt as to whether He was enjoying

the oblations, Lord Mahāpuruṣa ate the oblations with relish and without hesitation, as long as the offerings continued. When the offerings were finished, the Lord blessed the sages with benedictions fulfilling their desires, such as the desire that they always be able to perform similar sacrifices. Lord Mahāpuruṣa and the goddess of fortune then went to their private quarters to rest. At this time He was no longer visible to the residents of Brahmaloḥa.

The two principal pastimes of Lord Mahāpuruṣa on Brahmaloḥa—His accepting sacrifices and His sleeping—are described by Vaiśampāyana Ṛṣi in the *Mahābhārata*, at the end of the account of the killing of Kālanemi. Vaiśampāyana says:

*sa dadarśa makheṣv ājyair  
ijyamānaṁ maharṣibhiḥ  
bhāgaṁ yajñīyam aśnānaṁ  
svaṁ deham āparaṁ sthitam*

“He saw the Lord in yet another of His forms, consuming His share of the oblations of ghee offered in sacrifices by great sages.”

*sa tatra praviśann eva  
jaṭā-bhāraṁ samudvahan  
sahasra-śiraso bhūtvā  
śayanāyopacakrame*

“The thousand-headed Lord, His heads covered with matted locks, entered that room and lay down to sleep.”

According to Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s account at the beginning of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, at the end of Dvāpara-yuga Lord Brahmā and the other demigods, on the request of the earth personified, approached Lord Viṣṇu on Śvetadvīpa from the shore of the Milk Ocean. One might ask why they needed to travel to Śvetadvīpa if Lord Viṣṇu is always present in Brahmā’s own domain. Although this journey was strictly speaking unnecessary, during some days of Brahmā the pastime of entreating Lord Kṛṣṇa to descend unfolds in this way. During other days of Brahmā, such as the one described in *Śrī Hari-*

*vaṁśa*, Lord Viṣṇu is approached on Brahmāloka itself.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī suggests that Brahmā and the others may have gone to Śvetadvīpa because they felt reluctant to disturb Lord Mahāpuruṣa's privacy while He was enjoying His sleep. Or else Brahmā may have calculated that if Lord Mahāpuruṣa were to descend to earth at his request, Brahmāloka would be bereft of His presence for the duration of the *avatāra*; it would be better, therefore, to go to the Milk Ocean and ask Lord Viṣṇu there to become the *avatāra*.

In any case, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends, all the expansions of Godhead appear within Him, including Lord Mahāpuruṣa and the Lord of Śvetadvīpa. Thus to say that Kṛṣṇa descends through one form of Viṣṇu or another makes little difference; Kṛṣṇa alone is the ultimate source of all *avatāras*.

तदाज्ञया च यज्ञेषु नियुज्यर्षीन् निजात्मजान् ।  
ब्रह्माण्डकार्यचर्चार्थं स्वं धिष्यं विधिरागतः ॥

*tad-ājñayā ca yajñeṣu*  
*niyujyarṣīn nijātmajān*  
*brahmāṇḍa-kārya-carcārtham*  
*svam dhiṣṇyam vidhir āgataḥ*

*tad-ājñayā*—by His order; *ca*—and; *yajñeṣu*—in the sacrifices; *niyujya*—engaging; *rṣīn*—sages; *nija*—his (Brahmā's) own; *ātma-jān*—sons; *brahmāṇḍa*—of the universe; *kārya*—the necessary business; *carcā-artham*—to discuss; *svam*—his; *dhiṣṇyam*—to the seat of rulership; *vidhiḥ*—Brahmā; *āgataḥ*—went.

**At the Lord's request, Brahmā then instructed his sons to continue the sacrifices while he went to his own royal court to deliberate on the management of the universe.**

Just before Lord Mahāpuruṣa went to His quarters to rest, He advised Brahmā to turn the sacrifices over to his sons. This deputing of Brahmā's sons as authorities in Vedic sacrifice confirms the Supreme Person's eternal instructions recorded in the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* describe that

Brahmā is the first Vedic priest, followed by his sons, who teach the methods of sacrifice, thereafter, to the people of the universe.

### Nārada praises Brahmā

पारमेष्ठ्यासने तत्र सुखासीनं निजप्रभोः ।  
महिमश्रवणाख्यानपरं सास्त्राष्टनेत्रकम् ॥

विचित्रपरमैश्वर्यसामग्रीपरिसेवितम् ।  
स्वतातं नारदोऽभ्येत्य प्रणम्योवाच दण्डवत् ॥

*pārameṣṭhyāsane tatra  
sukhāsīnaṁ nija-prabhoḥ  
mahima-śravaṇākhyāna-  
param sāsrāṣṭa-netrakam*

*vicitra-paramaiśvarya-  
sāmagrī-parisevitam  
sva-tātaṁ nārado 'bhyetya  
praṇamyovāca daṇḍa-vat*

*pārameṣṭhya-āsane*—on his universal throne; *tatra*—there; *sukha-āsīnam*—comfortably seated; *nija-prabhoḥ*—of his master (Lord Mahāpuruṣa); *mahima*—the glories; *śravaṇa*—in hearing; *ākhyāna*—and reciting; *param*—absorbed; *sa-asra*—tearful; *aṣṭa*—eight; *netrakam*—whose eyes; *vicitra*—various; *parama-aiśvarya*—of supreme power; *sāmagrī*—with the paraphernalia; *parisevitam*—being personally served; *sva*—his; *tātam*—father; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *abhyetya*—approaching; *praṇamya*—bowing down to offer respects; *uvāca*—spoke; *daṇḍa-vat*—like a stick.

**As Brahmā sat comfortably on his universal throne, absorbed in hearing**

and reciting the glories of his Lord, tears flowed from his eight eyes. Surrounding Lord Brahmā in attendance were the personified powers of universal rulership. Nārada came close, offered respects to his father by falling to the ground like a stick, and then spoke.

While the Supreme Lord was present, Nārada did not speak his mind. Either he thought that speaking would be improper, or he found no opportunity to say anything until after the Lord had left. Only then could Nārada offer full obeisances to his father, because one is generally forbidden to bow down to anyone else in the presence of the Supreme Lord. Since Brahmā is both Nārada's father and his spiritual master, Nārada may have bowed only his head to Brahmā in front of Lord Viṣṇu but bowed down with his whole body after Lord Viṣṇu had left. Brahmā's attention was now fixed on hearing about the great qualities of Lord Viṣṇu, such as His exceptional kindness to His devotees.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
भवानेव कृपापात्रं ध्रुवं भगवतो हरेः ।  
प्रजापतिपतिर्यो वै सर्वलोकपितामहः ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*bhavān eva kṛpā-pātram*  
*dhruvaṁ bhagavato hareḥ*  
*prajāpati-patir yo vai*  
*sarva-loka-pitāmahaḥ*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *bhavān*—your good self; *eva*—certainly; *kṛpā-pātram*—the recipient of the mercy; *dhruvam*—true; *bhagavataḥ hariḥ*—of Lord Hari; *prajā-pati*—of the masters of the population of the universe; *patiḥ*—the master; *yaḥ*—who; *vai*—indeed; *sarva*—of all; *loka*—the worlds; *pitāmahaḥ*—the grandfather.

Śrī Nārada said: It is you who have truly received the mercy of Lord Hari! After all, you are the master of all masters of the living beings of the universe, the grandfather of all the worlds.

एकः सृजति पात्यति भुवनानि चतुर्दश ।  
ब्रह्माण्डस्येश्वरो नित्यं स्वयम्भूर्यश्च कथ्यते ॥

*ekaḥ sṛjati pāty atti  
bhuvanāni caturdaśa  
brahmāṇḍasyeśvaro nityam  
svayam-bhūr yaś ca kathyate*

*ekaḥ*—alone; *sṛjati*—creates; *pāti*—maintains; *atti*—devours;  
*bhuvanāni*—the worlds; *caturdaśa*—fourteen; *brahmāṇḍasya*—of the  
universe; *īśvaraḥ*—the ruler; *nityam*—constantly; *svayam-bhūḥ*—the  
self-born; *yaḥ*—who; *ca*—and; *kathyate*—is called.

**You alone create, maintain, and devour the fourteen worlds. You forever rule the universe, and you are known as the self-born.**

In texts <sup>iii</sup>46 through 52, Nārada enumerates the reasons for Brahmā's being the most favored devotee of the Lord. Brahmā's reign is not limited like those of Indra and other demigods; he maintains his position uninterrupted by the many partial annihilations that affect the lower regions of the universe.

सभायां यस्य विद्यन्ते मूर्तिमन्तोऽर्थबोधकाः ।  
यच्चतुर्वक्त्रतो जाताः पुराणनिगमादयः ॥

*sabhāyām yasya vidyante  
mūrtimanto 'rtha-bodhakāḥ  
yac-catur-vaktrato jātāḥ  
purāṇa-nigamādayaḥ*

*sabhāyām*—in the assembly; *yasya*—whose; *vidyante*—are present;  
*mūrti-mantaḥ*—in person; *artha-bodhakāḥ*—who express the truth;  
*yac*—whose; *catur-vaktrataḥ*—from the four mouths; *jātāḥ*—born;  
*purāṇa*—the Purāṇas; *nigama*—Vedas; *ādayaḥ*—and other scriptures.

**Present in person in your assembly are the Vedas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures, the revealers of truth, who were born from your four mouths.**



Although the four *Vedas* are eternal, they enter the material world periodically, at the beginning of each day of *Brahmā*, when one *Veda* appears from each of his four mouths. *Brahmā*, therefore, is not the author of the *Vedas*, which include all spiritual and material knowledge, but he is *ādi-kavi*, the first authority on Vedic knowledge in this universe.

यस्य लोकश्च निश्छिद्रस्वधर्माचारनिष्ठया ।  
मदादिरहितैः सद्गिरभ्यते शतजन्मभिः ॥

*yasya lokaś ca niśchidra-  
sva-dharmācāra-niṣṭhayā  
madādi-rahitaiḥ sadbhir  
labhyate śata-janmabhiḥ*

*yasya*—whose; *lokaḥ*—world; *ca*—and; *niśchidra*—faultless; *sva-dharma*—of prescribed duty; *ācāra*—execution; *niṣṭhayā*—by strictly maintaining; *mada-ādi*—from pride and other disqualifications; *rahitaiḥ*—who are free; *sadbhir*—by saintly persons; *labhyate*—is attained; *śata-janmabhiḥ*—after one hundred lifetimes.

**Your world can be attained only by saintly persons who faultlessly perform their prescribed social duties, free from pride and other vices, for one hundred lifetimes.**

*Brahmā*'s character is exalted and his planet glorious. Saintly persons who follow prescribed duties for one hundred lives, without error and without falling prey to pride, deceit, and other causes of deviation, become eligible for birth on *Brahmaloka*. As Lord *Śiva* says in his instructions to the *Pracetās*, *sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān/viriñcatām eti*: “A person who executes his occupational duty properly for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of *Brahmā*.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.24.29) The position of *Brahmā* earned by pious workers normally consists in being an associate of *Brahmā*; receiving a universe of one's own to rule is much more rare.

यस्योपरि न वर्तेत ब्रह्माण्डे भुवनं परम् ।  
लोको नारायणस्यापि वैकुण्ठाख्यो यदन्तरे ॥

*yasyopari na varteta  
brahmāṇḍe bhuvanam param  
loko nārāyaṇasyāpi  
vaikuṇṭhākhyo yad-antare*

*yasya*—than which; *upari*—higher; *na varteta*—does not exist;  
*brahmāṇḍe*—within the universe; *bhuvanam*—a planet; *param*—higher;  
*lokaḥ*—the planet; *nārāyaṇasya*—of Lord Nārāyaṇa; *api*—also;  
*vaikuṇṭha-ākhyah*—named Vaikuṇṭha; *yad-antare*—within which.

Within the universe there is no higher world than yours. Even Lord Nārāyaṇa's Vaikuṇṭha planet is found inside your world.

यस्मिन् नित्यं वसेत्साक्षान् महापुरुषविग्रहः ।  
स पद्मनाभो यज्ञानां भागानश्नन् ददत्फलम् ॥

*yasmin nityam vaset sākṣān  
mahā-puruṣa-vigrahaḥ  
sa padmanābho yajñānām  
bhāgān aśnan dadat phalam*

*yasmin*—where; *nityam*—always; *vaset*—resides; *sākṣāt*—directly visible;  
*mahā-puruṣa-vigrahaḥ*—in the form of the Mahāpuruṣa; *saḥ*—He;  
*padma-nābhaḥ*—the lotus-naveled Lord; *yajñānām*—of sacrifices;  
*bhāgān*—shares; *aśnan*—eating; *dadat*—granting; *phalam*—results.

On Brahmaloḥ Lord Nārāyaṇa resides always in His manifest form as the lotus-naveled Mahāpuruṣa. He eats His shares of sacrifice and grants the sacrificial results.

परमान्वेषणायासैर्यस्योद्देशोऽपि न त्वया ।  
पुरा प्राप्तः परं दुष्टस्तपोभिर्हृदि यः क्षणम् ॥

paramānveṣaṇāyāsair  
yasyoddeśo 'pi na tvayā  
purā prāptaḥ param dṛṣṭas  
tapobhir hṛdi yaḥ kṣaṇam

*parama*—extreme; *anveṣaṇa*—of searching; *āyāsaiḥ*—with efforts; *yasya*—whose; *uddeśaḥ*—location; *api*—even; *na*—not; *tvayā*—by you; *purā*—in the distant past; *prāptaḥ*—found; *param*—only; *dṛṣṭaḥ*—seeing; *tapobhiḥ*—by austerities; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *yaḥ*—who; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment.

**Although in the distant past you made many attempts and were unable to find Him, after performing austerities you finally saw Him just for a moment in your heart.**

The Supreme Lord, from whose navel Brahmā was born, is extremely difficult to find. Brahmā's having obtained the virtually unobtainable is evidence that the Lord has special regard for him. Lord Brahmā, to search for his origin, first entered the stem of his lotus seat. For a long time he traced the stem back, searching for its source, even in the ocean that fills the lower regions of the universe, but he could find nothing. What to speak of identifying his Lord and understanding Him, Brahmā failed even to locate Him physically. Lord Viṣṇu then graced him with a simple spoken instruction: "Do penance." Brahmā obeyed, and after long meditation received a short vision of the Lord. This history is described in detail in the second and third cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

तत्सत्यमसि कृष्णस्य त्वमेव नितरां प्रियः ।  
अहो नूनं स एव त्वं लीलानानावपुर्धरः ॥

tat satyam asi kṛṣṇasya  
tvam eva nitarām priyaḥ  
aho nūnam sa eva tvam  
līlā-nānā-vapur-dharaḥ

*tat*—therefore; *satyam*—for certain; *asi*—are; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tvam*—you; *eva*—alone; *nitaram*—very much; *priyaḥ*—dear; *aho*—ah;

*nūnam*—surely; *saḥ*—He; *eva*—and no other; *tvam*—you; *līlā*—for pastimes; *nānā*—various; *vapuḥ*—bodies; *dharaḥ*—assuming.

Therefore you are surely the dearest devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, you are none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself, appearing in various bodies for your pastimes.

Brahmā might object to being called Kṛṣṇa Himself. He might argue, “The Lord is sitting right here in His Mahāpuruṣa form, with thousands of heads. Besides this form He has countless others. But I am someone different, a finite living being with only four heads.” Nārada therefore says that among the Lord’s infinite pastime appearances are the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the material creation—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva—each of them nondifferent from the original Supreme Person.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इत्थं माहात्म्यमुद्गायन् विस्तार्य ब्रह्मणोऽसकृत् ।  
शक्रप्रोक्तं स्वदृष्टं च भक्त्यासीत् नमन् मुनिः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*itthaṁ māhātmyam udgāyan*  
*vistārya brahmaṇo 'sakṛt*  
*śakra-proktaṁ sva-dṛṣṭaṁ ca*  
*bhaktyāsīt taṁ naman muniḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *itthaṁ*—thus; *māhātmyam*—glorification; *udgāyan*—loudly singing; *vistārya*—elaborating; *brahmaṇaḥ*—of Brahmā; *asakṛt*—over and over again; *śakra*—by Indra; *proktaṁ*—spoken; *sva-dṛṣṭaṁ*—seen by himself; *ca*—and; *bhaktyā*—with great devotion; *āsīt*—he was; *naman*—bowing down; *muniḥ*—the sage Nārada.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Thus loudly praising Brahmā, bowing before him with great devotion again and again, the sage Nārada expansively sang Brahmā’s glories, as he had heard them from Indra and seen them with his own eyes.

Indra had told Nārada, “Brahmā is the very son of Lord Viṣṇu, husband of Lakṣmī,” and had mentioned several of Brahmā’s glories. Nārada knew from scriptures other glories of Brahmā, and now was seeing even more.

### Lord Brahmā refutes Nārada’s praise

शृण्वन्नेव स तद्वाक्यं दासोऽस्मीति मुहुर्वदन् ।  
चतुर्वक्त्रोऽष्टकर्णानां पिधाने व्यग्रतां गतः ॥

*śṛṇvann eva sa tad-vākyam  
dāso ’smīti muhur vadan  
catur-vaktro ’ṣṭa-karṇānām  
pidhāne vyagratām gataḥ*

*śṛṇvan*—hearing; *eva*—merely; *saḥ*—he (Brahmā); *tad-vākyam*—what was said by him (Nārada); *dāsaḥ*—a servant; *asmi*—I am; *iti*—thus; *muhur*—repeatedly; *vadan*—saying; *catur-vaktraḥ*—the four-faced lord; *aṣṭa-karṇānām*—of his eight ears; *pidhāne*—to cover; *vyagratām*—anxiously busy; *gataḥ*—became.

Merely by hearing what Nārada said, Brahmā grew disturbed. He anxiously covered his eight ears and said over and over again, “I am just a servant.”

अश्रव्यश्रवणाज्जातं कोपं यत्नेन धारयन् ।  
स्वपुत्रं नारदं प्राह साक्षेपं चतुराननः ॥

*aśravya-śravaṇāj jātam  
kopaṁ yatnena dhārayan  
sva-putraṁ nāradaṁ prāha  
sākṣepaṁ catur-ānanaḥ*

*aśravya*—what should not be heard; *śravaṇāt*—from hearing; *jātam*—

generated; *kopam*—anger; *yatnena*—with some effort; *dhārayan*—checking; *sva-putram*—to his son; *nāradam*—Nārada; *prāha*—he said; *sa-ākṣepam*—with rebuke; *catuḥ-ānanaḥ*—four-headed Brahmā.

**With some effort, the four-headed Brahmā checked the anger stirred within him by hearing what no one should hear and rebuked his son Nārada.**

Having to work with the material mode of passion, Lord Brahmā is sometimes briefly affected by anger. Here, because his son praised him inaptly as the independent Supreme Lord, he almost lost his temper.

**श्रीब्रह्मोवाच**

**अहं न भगवान् कृष्ण इति त्वं किं प्रमाणतः ।  
युक्तिश्च मयाभीक्ष्णं बोधितोऽसि न बाल्यतः ॥**

*śrī-brahmovāca*  
*aham na bhagavān kṛṣṇa*  
*iti tvam kiṁ pramāṇataḥ*  
*yuktitaś ca mayābhikṣṇam*  
*bodhito 'si na bālyataḥ*

*śrī-brahmā uvāca*—Śrī Brahmā said; *aham*—I; *na*—not; *bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ*—the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa; *iti*—thus; *tvam*—you; *kiṁ pramāṇataḥ*—on what authority; *yuktitaḥ*—by what logic; *ca*—and; *mayā*—by me; *abhikṣṇam*—constantly; *bodhitaḥ*—instructed; *asi*—you have been; *na*—not; *bālyataḥ*—since childhood.

**Śrī Brahmā said: I am not the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa! On what authority and by what logic do you say this? Haven't I constantly taught you about this since you were a little boy?**

In brahminical culture one should not make any claim unless it is upheld by the *Vedas* or their authorized supplements. Thus Brahmā rightly demands the scriptural evidence for Nārada's statements. As the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* recounts, Brahmā had carefully educated his son in spiritual science.

तस्य शक्तिर्महामाया दासीविक्षापथे स्थिता ।  
सृजतीदं जगत्पाति स्वगुणैः संहरत्यपि ॥

*tasya śaktir mahā-māyā  
dāsīvekṣā-pathe sthitā  
sṛjatīdam jagat pāti  
sva-guṇaiḥ saṁharaty api*

*tasya*—His; *śaktiḥ*—personal energy; *mahā-māyā*—Mahā-māyā; *dāsī iva*—as a menial maidservant; *ikṣā*—of sight; *pathe*—within the path; *sthitā*—standing; *sṛjati*—creates; *idam*—this; *jagat*—universe; *pāti*—protects; *sva-guṇaiḥ*—with her modes; *saṁharati*—annihilates; *api*—and.

His personal energy Mahā-māyā stands within His sight like a maidservant. It is she who deploys her material modes to create, maintain, and demolish this world.

By the power of *rajo-guṇa* Mahā-māyā creates, by *sattva-guṇa* she maintains, and by *tamo-guṇa* she destroys. These are her potencies, and she is their controller.

तस्या एव वयं सर्वेऽप्यधीना मोहितास्तया ।  
तन्न कृष्णकृपालेशस्यापि पात्रमवेहि माम् ॥

*tasyā eva vyaṁ sarve  
'py adhīnā mohitās tayā  
tan na kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-leśasya-  
āpi pātram avehi mām*

*tasyāḥ*—to her; *eva*—only; *vayaṁ*—we; *sarve*—all; *api*—also; *adhīnāḥ*—subservient; *mohitāḥ*—bewildered; *tayā*—by her; *tat*—therefore; *na*—do not; *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*—of Kṛṣṇa's mercy; *leśasya*—of a trace; *api*—even; *pātram*—the recipient; *avehi*—think; *mām*—me.

All of us are subject to her and bewildered. So you should not think me

the recipient of even a trace of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

“All of us” means Brahmā, his sons, and their descendants—or in other words, everyone born into material existence. “You are also one of us bewildered souls,” Brahmā here implies, “and so you are speaking erroneously like this.”

तन्माययैव सततं जगतोऽहं गुरुः प्रभुः ।  
पितामहश्च कृष्णस्य नाभिपद्मसमुद्भवः ॥

तपस्व्याराधकस्तस्येत्याद्यैर्गुरुमदैर्हतः ।  
ब्रह्माण्डावश्यकापारव्यापारामर्शविह्वलः ॥

भूतप्रायात्मलोकीयनाशचिन्तानियन्त्रितः ।  
सर्वग्रासिमहाकालाद्भीतो मुक्तिं परं वृणे ॥

*tan-māyayaiva satatam  
jagato 'ham guruḥ prabhuḥ  
pitāmahaś ca kṛṣṇasya  
nābhi-padma-samudbhavaḥ*

*tapasvy ārādhakas tasyetye-  
ādyair guru-madair hataḥ  
brahmāṇḍāvaśyakāpāra-  
vyāpārāmarśa-vihvalaḥ*

*bhūta-prāyātma-lokiya-  
nāśa-cintā-niyantritaḥ  
sarva-grāsi-mahā-kālād  
bhīto muktiṁ param vṛṇe*

*tat-māyayā*—by His Māyā; *eva*—indeed; *satatam*—always; *jagataḥ*—of the universe; *aham*—I; *guruḥ*—the spiritual master; *prabhuḥ*—controller; *pitāmahaḥ*—grandfather; *ca*—and; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa;



*nābhi*—from the navel; *padma*—lotuslike; *samudbhavaḥ*—who am born; *tapasvī*—ascetic; *ārādhakaḥ*—worshiper; *tasya*—of Him; *iti*—thus; *ādyaiḥ*—and so on; *guru*—heavy; *madaiḥ*—by intoxications; *hataḥ*—beset; *brahmāṇḍa*—of the universe; *āvaśyaka*—obligatory; *apāra*—unlimited; *vyāpāra*—of the affairs; *āmarśa*—with thought; *vihvalaḥ*—overwhelmed; *bhūta-prāya*—imminent; *ātma-lokīya*—of my own planet; *nāśa*—about the destruction; *cintā*—by worry; *niyantritaḥ*—ruled; *sarva-grāsi*—all-devouring; *mahā-kālāt*—of the time of annihilation; *bhītaḥ*—afraid; *muktim*—liberation; *param*—only; *vṛṇe*—I choose.

**By the power of Kṛṣṇa's Māyā, I am always deluded by various conceits. I think myself the controller, grandfather, and spiritual master of the universe. Proud of my birth from Kṛṣṇa's lotus navel, I think myself a great ascetic, His great worshiper. I am overwhelmed by the countless duties of universal management. Worrying about the imminent destruction of my planet, I live in terror of the all-devouring end of time. All I want for myself is liberation.**

According to Brahmā, being the lord of all creatures in the universe is not a sign of Kṛṣṇa's favor. On the contrary, it is a cause of great trouble. His worldly responsibilities, he says, fill him with false pride and expose him to all kinds of anxiety. Brahmā is bewildered by various kinds of *abhimāna*, false identity. He thinks himself everyone's progenitor, protector, and regulator, as if he alone were the beginning, middle, and end of creation. He sees himself as the first teacher of the *Vedas* and all other scriptures, and the highest authority, who appoints the demigods to their posts. He may be called self-born, but that name is not literally true, since he was born from a lotus growing from the navel of Garbhodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu. That the personified *Vedas* and other principal scriptures attend Lord Brahmā in his court does not prove that the Supreme Lord favors him; rather, the presence of the revealed scriptures means that Brahmā is all the more bound to follow their dictates in managing the universe. These scriptures may praise Brahmā, but Brahmā is acutely aware that his planet is soon to be destroyed. He may long outlive the demigods headed by Indra, but he

still has to die; and anticipating the end of the world and the end of his life keeps Brahmā always afraid.

तदर्थं भगवत्पूजां कारयामि करोमि च ।  
आवासो जगदीशस्य तस्य वा न क्व विद्यते ॥

*tad-arthaṁ bhagavat-pūjām  
kārayāmi karomi ca  
āvāso jagad-īśasya  
tasya vā na kva vidyate*

*tad-arthaṁ*—for that purpose; *bhagavat-pūjām*—worship of the Supreme Lord; *kārayāmi*—I have others perform; *karomi*—I perform; *ca*—and; *āvāsaḥ*—the residence; *jagat-īśasya*—of the Lord of the universe; *tasya*—His; *vā*—or; *na*—not; *kva*—where; *vidyate*—is present.

**For this purpose of liberation, I engage others in worshiping the Lord and also worship Him myself. Since He is the Lord of the universe, is there any place where He does not reside?**

In effect Brahmā is saying, “I worship the Lord for liberation, not from the sheer joy of devotional service. So you should not regard this worship as a sign of my being favored. You said that God resides on my planet, but that is nothing exceptional, since the Lord of the universe lives inside and outside everything.”

वेदप्रवर्तनायासौ भागं गृह्णाति केवलम् ।  
स्वयंसम्पादितप्रेष्ठयज्ञस्यानुग्रहाय च ॥

*veda-pravartanāyāsau  
bhāgaṁ grhṇāti kevalam  
svayaṁ-sampādita-preṣṭha-  
yajñasyānugrahāya ca*

*veda-pravartanāya*—for promulgating the Vedas; *asau*—He; *bhāgaṁ*—sacrificial shares; *grhṇāti*—accepts; *kevalam*—only; *svayaṁ*—by Himself; *sampādita*—established; *preṣṭha*—very dear; *yajñasya*—of the sacrificial

performance; *anugrahāya*—to benefit; *ca*—also.

**He accepts sacrificial offerings from me only to promote the Vedic teachings and show special favor to the sacrifices themselves, which are dear to Him because He is their original creator.**

The Vedic sacrifices are dear to the Supreme Lord because they benefit all living beings, engaging them in-directly in His service. The Lord, after all, is forever eager to have the wayward souls come back to Him. In Brahmā's opinion, the Lord reciprocates with him because of the Lord's concern for the welfare of the universe, not because He is particularly interested in Brahmā or the other sacrificers. Brahmā thus expresses the limited thoughts of ritualistic religion, placing God at a formal distance and ignoring the Lord's constant compassion for every living being. In fact, the Supreme Lord cares in an intimate, personal way for all living beings, including those who have chosen to forget Him since time immemorial.

**विचाराचार्य बुध्यस्व स हि भक्त्येकवल्लभः ।  
कृपां तनोति भक्तेषु नाभक्तेषु कदाचन ॥**

*vicārācārya budhyasva  
sa hi bhakty-eka-vallabhaḥ  
kṛpām tanoti bhakteṣu  
nābhakteṣu kadācana*

*vicāra*—of rational thought; *ācārya*—O professor; *budhyasva*—please consider; *saḥ*—He; *hi*—indeed; *bhakti*—to devotional service; *eka*—only; *vallabhaḥ*—dear; *kṛpām*—mercy; *tanoti*—He gives; *bhakteṣu*—to His devotees; *na*—not; *abhakteṣu*—to nondevotees; *kadācana*—ever.

**Just consider this, my dear professor of logic: He loves only devotion. He shows His mercy only to His devotees, never to nondevotees.**

This statement by Brahmā is confirmed by many statements spoken by the Supreme Lord. For example, *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*: “I can be realized only by devotional service.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21)

भक्तिदूरेऽस्तु तस्मिन्मे नापराधा भवन्ति चेत् ।  
बहु मन्ये तदात्मानं नाहमागःसु रुद्रवत् ॥

*bhaktir dūre 'stu tasmin me  
nāparādhā bhavanti cet  
bahu manye tad ātmānam  
nāham āgaḥsu rudra-vat*

*bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *dūre*—far aside; *astu*—leave; *tasmin*—to Him; *me*—my; *na*—not; *aparādhāḥ*—offenses; *bhavanti*—there are; *cet*—if; *bahu*—highly; *manye*—I can regard; *tad*—in that case; *ātmānam*—myself; *na aham*—I am not; *āgaḥsu*—in the matter of transgressions; *rudra-vat*—like Lord Śiva.

Forget about my having any devotion for Him. I would be happy if only it were true that I never offend Him. I cannot expect Him to tolerate my offenses as He does Lord Śiva's.

मदाप्तवरजातोऽसौ सर्वलोकोपतापकः ।  
हिरण्यकशिपुर्दुष्टो वैष्णवद्रोहतत्परः ॥

*mad-āpta-vara-jāto 'sau  
sarva-lokopatāpakah  
hiraṇyakaśipuḥ duṣṭo  
vaiṣṇava-droha-tatparaḥ*

*mat*—from me; *āpta*—obtained; *vara*—because of the benedictions; *jātaḥ*—became; *asau*—that person; *sarva-loka*—of all the worlds; *upatāpakah*—the tormentor; *hiraṇyakaśipuḥ*—Hiraṇyakaśipu; *duṣṭaḥ*—wicked; *vaiṣṇava-droha*—to violence against Vaiṣṇavas; *tat-paraḥ*—dedicated.

With benedictions obtained from me, the wicked Hiraṇyakaśipu became the tormentor of all the worlds, dedicated to violence against Vaiṣṇavas.

श्रीमन्नृसिंहरूपेण प्रभुणा संहतो यदा ।  
तदाहं सपरिवारो विचित्रस्तवपाटवैः ॥

स्तुवन् स्थित्वा भयादूरेऽपाङ्गदृष्ट्यापि नादृतः ।  
प्रह्लादस्याभिषेके तु वृत्ते तस्मिन् प्रसादतः ॥

*śrīman-nṛsimha-rūpeṇa  
prabhuṇā samhṛto yadā  
tadāhaṁ sa-parivāro  
vicitra-stava-pāṭavaiḥ*

*stuvan sthitvā bhayād dūre  
'pāṅga-dr̥ṣṭyāpi nādr̥taḥ  
prahlādasyābhiṣeke tu  
vṛtte tasmin prasādataḥ*

*śrīmat-nṛsimha-rūpeṇa*—in the form of Śrīmān Nṛsimha; *prabhuṇā*—by the Lord; *samhṛtaḥ*—killed; *yadā*—when; *tadā*—then; *aham*—I; *sa-parivāraḥ*—with my entourage; *vicitra*—various; *stava*—of offering prayers; *pāṭavaiḥ*—with skillful attempts; *stuvan*—praising; *sthitvā*—standing; *bhayāt*—out of fear; *dūre*—far away; *apāṅga-dr̥ṣṭyā*—by a sidelong glance; *api*—even; *na*—not; *ādr̥taḥ*—honored; *prahlādasya*—of Prahlāda; *abhiṣeke*—the anointment; *tu*—however; *vṛtte*—when it occurred; *tasmin*—then; *prasādataḥ*—because of His being satisfied.

After the Lord in His form as Nṛsimhadeva destroyed Hiraṇyakaśipu, I and my entourage stood fearful at a distance, trying to praise the Lord with skillful prayers, but He would not even honor us with a sidelong glance. Yet when Prahlāda was inaugurated king, the Lord at once became pacified.

शनैरुपसृतोऽभ्यर्णमादिष्टोऽहमिदं रुषा ।  
मैवं वरोऽसुराणां ते प्रदेयः पद्मसम्भव ॥

śanair upasṛto 'bhyarṇam  
ādiṣṭo 'ham idam ruṣā  
maivam varo 'surāṇām te  
pradeyaḥ padma-sambhava

śanaiḥ—slowly; upasṛtaḥ—approaching; abhyarṇam—near; ādiṣṭaḥ—advised; aham—I; idam—this; ruṣā—angrily; mā—do not; evam—in this way; varaḥ—benedictions; asurāṇām—to demons; te—by you; pradeyaḥ—should be given; padma-sambhava—O lotus-born.

Then I slowly approached Him, and He angrily ordered me, “You should not give such benedictions to demons, O lotus-born!”

तथापि रावणादिभ्यो दुष्टेभ्योऽहं वरानदाम् ।  
रावणस्य तु यत्कर्म जिह्वा कस्य गृणाति तत् ॥

tathāpi rāvaṇādibhyo  
duṣṭebhyo 'ham varān adām  
rāvaṇasya tu yat karma  
jihvā kasya gṛṇāti tat

tathā api—even so; rāvaṇa-ādibhyaḥ—to Rāvaṇa and others; duṣṭebhyaḥ—wicked persons; aham—I; varān—benedictions; adām—gave; rāvaṇasya—of Rāvaṇa; tu—but; yat—what; karma—done; jihvā—tongue; kasya—whose; gṛṇāti—mentions; tat—that.

Nonetheless, I kept on giving benedictions to wicked demons like Rāvaṇa. Whose tongue can even mention the sins Rāvaṇa has done?

In texts <sup>iv</sup>67 through 78, Brahmā elaborates on the offenses against the Lord for which he considers himself responsible. Having mentioned the killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu, Brahmā goes on to tell of Lord Nṛsimha's dissatisfaction at Brahmā's mistakes. The promise of invincibility Brahmā gave Hiraṇyakaśipu resulted in offenses to the Lord's pure devotee. The Lord takes such offenses more seriously than offenses directly against Himself. After Lord Nṛsimha killed Hiraṇyakaśipu, Brahmā and other demigods tried to pacify the Lord. They thought they

might deserve the Lord's kind glance and perhaps blessings expressed by the touch of His feet on their heads. But for some time Lord Nṛsiṃha remained so furious that He would not even recognize the demigods standing before Him. Thus He expressed His displeasure; and when Brahmā finally got the courage to approach Him, the Lord also expressed displeasure by His words. Finally, only by the prayers of Prahlāda was Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva calmed. Seeing this, Brahmā thought, "Now that He is pacified He will be ready to respond gracefully to my prayers." Lord Nṛsiṃha, however, was still annoyed enough to rebuke Brahmā. His original words are recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.10.30):

*maivam vibho 'surāṇām te  
pradeyaḥ padma-sambhava  
varaḥ krūra-nisargāṇām  
ahinām amṛtaṁ yathā*

"My dear Lord Brahmā, O great lord born from the lotus, just as it is dangerous to feed milk to a snake, so it is dangerous to give benedictions to demons, who are by nature ferocious and jealous. I warn you not to give such benedictions to any demon again."

Lord Nṛsiṃha was not going to excuse Brahmā for his bad judgment just because Brahmā had been born from the Lord's own navel. After all, Brahmā was still a finite *jīva* with the tendency to make mistakes. The Lord's judgment was later confirmed when Brahmā gave Rāvaṇa supernatural power. Misusing that power, Rāvaṇa disturbed the world, offended Lord Rāmacandra by kidnapping Mother Sītā, and committed other odious crimes.

**मया दत्ताधिकाराणां शक्रादीनां महामदैः ।  
सदा हतविवेकानां तस्मिन्नागांसि संस्मर ॥**

*mayā dattādhikārāṇām  
śakrādīnām mahā-madaiḥ  
sadā hata-vivekānām  
tasminn āgāṁsi saṁsmara*

*mayā*—by me; *datta-adhikārāṇām*—appointed to their positions; *śakra-ādīnām*—of Indra and others; *mahā-madaiḥ*—by the excessive pride; *sadā*—constantly; *hata*—distorted; *vivekānām*—whose discrimination; *tasmin*—against Him; *āgāṁsi*—offenses; *saṁsmara*—please remember.

Remember the offenses committed against the Lord by Indra and other demigods I appointed. The excessive pride of those demigods constantly perverts their discrimination.

वृष्टियुद्धादिनेन्द्रस्य गोवर्धनमखादिषु ।  
नन्दाहरणबाणीयधेन्वदानादिनाप्तेः ॥

*vr̥ṣṭi-yuddhādinendrasya*  
*govardhana-makhādiṣu*  
*nandāharaṇa-bāṇīya-*  
*dhenv-adānādināp-pateḥ*

*vr̥ṣṭi*—by rain; *yuddha*—battle; *ādinā*—and so on; *indrasya*—of Indra; *govardhana-makha-ādiṣu*—during the sacrifice to Govardhana and on other occasions; *nanda-āharaṇa*—kidnapping Nanda Mahārāja; *bāṇīya*—belonging to Bāṇa; *dhenu*—cows; *adāna*—by the failure to give; *ādinā*—and so on; *ap-pateḥ*—by the lord of the waters.

Indra sent rain to retaliate for the Govardhana sacrifice, sometimes fought against the Lord, and committed other offenses. The lord of the waters, Varuṇa, offended the Lord by kidnapping Nanda Mahārāja, by failing to return the cows belonging to Bāṇa, and so on.

यमस्य च तदाचार्यात्मजदुर्मरणादिना ।  
कुवेरस्यापि दुश्चेष्टशङ्खचूडकृतादिना ॥

*yamasya ca tad-ācāryā-*  
*tmaja-durmāraṇādinā*  
*kuverasyāpi duśceṣṭa-*  
*śaṅkhacūḍa-kṛtādinā*



yamasya—of Yamarāja; *ca*—and; *tat-ācārya*—of His teacher; *ātma-ja*—the son; *durmāraṇa*—by the wrongful death; *ādinā*—and so on; *kuverasya*—of Kuvera; *api*—also; *duṣceṣṭa*—evil; *śaṅkhacūḍa*—of Śaṅkhacūḍa; *kṛta*—by the deeds; *ādinā*—and so on.

Yamarāja made mistakes like allowing the wrongful death of the son of the Lord’s teacher. And Kuvera was responsible for the wicked misdeeds of Śaṅkhacūḍa and others.

अधो लोके तु दैतेया वैष्णवद्रोहकारिणः ।  
सर्पाश्च सहजक्रोधदुष्टाः कालियबान्धवाः ॥

*adho loka tu daiteyā*  
*vaiṣṇava-droha-kāriṇaḥ*  
*sarpāś ca sahaja-krodha-*  
*duṣṭāḥ kāliya-bāndhavāḥ*

*adhaḥ loka*—in the lower planetary systems; *tu*—and; *daiteyāḥ*—the Daityas; *vaiṣṇava*—against Lord Viṣṇu’s devotees; *droha-kāriṇaḥ*—who act inimically; *sarpāḥ*—serpents; *ca*—and; *sahaja*—natural; *krodha*—with anger; *duṣṭāḥ*—contaminated; *kāliya*—of Kāliya; *bāndhavāḥ*—friends.

In the lower planetary systems live the Daityas, who always attack Lord Viṣṇu’s devotees, and also living there are the serpent friends of Kāliya, who by nature are contaminated by anger.

Indra had mentioned to Nārada that Brahmā appoints the rulers of the planets. Brahmā now turns this praise around, showing that the same fact is a reason for him to feel ashamed. These universal rulers have committed numerous offenses against Lord Viṣṇu, and Brahmā considers the offenses of his subordinates his own. Nārada is familiar with these incidents, but Brahmā is asking him to remember them for a moment.

Indra offended Kṛṣṇa by trying to destroy Vṛndāvana in the wake of the Govardhana-pūjā, and he fought Kṛṣṇa when Kṛṣṇa took away a *pārijāta* flower tree for His queen Satyabhāmā. At various times Indra

dared criticize Kṛṣṇa, not fully respecting His supremacy. Although, in an earlier conversation with Nārada, Indra mentioned some of his own offenses, his memory of other offenses he had committed was covered by subtle pride.

Varuṇa arrested Kṛṣṇa's father, Nanda, for bathing in the Yamunā at a forbidden time, during the last minutes of the night at the beginning of the Dvādaśī. And Varuṇa ordered Nanda Mahārāja bound and brought to his court. Varuṇa is also known to have failed to return some cows that belonged to Bāṇa and to have sometimes spoken duplicitously.

Yama, the lord of death, took away the young son of Kṛṣṇa's teacher, Sāṇḍīpani Muni, allowing the demon Pañcajana to kill the *brāhmaṇa* boy. *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (5.21.30) and other scriptures furthermore describe Yamarāja's becoming an opponent of Kṛṣṇa in battle.

Kuvera's servant Śaṅkhacūḍa tried to kidnap Kṛṣṇa's cowherd girlfriends, and as described in the *Purāṇas* the two sons of Kuvera cursed by Nārada to become trees were implicated in collaborating with King Kāṁsa.

Besides the demigods Indra, Varuṇa, Yama, and Kuvera, who are the superintendents of the four principal directions, many minor demigods are also guilty of offenses against Kṛṣṇa. And the subterranean serpents come in for blame simply because they are blood relatives of Kālīya.

सम्प्रत्यपि मया तस्य स्वयं वत्सास्तथार्भकाः ।  
वृन्दावने पाल्यमाना भोजने मायया हृताः ॥

*sampraty api mayā tasya  
svayaṁ vatsās tathārbhakāḥ  
vṛndāvane pālyamānā  
bhojane māyayā hṛtāḥ*

*samprati*—just recently; *api*—also; *mayā*—by me; *tasya*—His; *svayaṁ*—by myself; *vatsāḥ*—calves; *tathā*—and; *arbhakāḥ*—young boys; *vṛndāvane*—in Vṛndāvana; *pālyamānāḥ*—being watched after; *bhojane*—while eating; *māyayā*—by magic; *hṛtāḥ*—taken away.

And recently by my magic I stole the calves and young friends the Lord was watching after in Vṛndāvana. I took them all away while the boys were having lunch.

In Brahmā's opinion, this last offense—his own—was worse than all the transgressions committed by the other demigods. While Kṛṣṇa was enjoying lunch with His friends in the sacred forest of Vṛndāvana, Brahmā disturbed Him by stealing the cows and boys Kṛṣṇa was personally protecting. Resorting to mystic power, Brahmā removed them from Kṛṣṇa's presence and hid them in a cave.

ततो वीक्ष्य महाश्चर्यं भीतः स्तुत्वा नमन्नपि ।  
धृष्टोऽहं वञ्चितस्तेन गोपबालकलील्या ॥

*tato vīkṣya mahāścaryam  
bhītaḥ stutvā namann api  
dhṛṣṭo 'haṁ vañcitas tena  
gopa-bālaka-līlayā*

*tataḥ*—subsequently; *vīkṣya*—seeing; *mahā-āścaryam*—most amazing wonders; *bhītaḥ*—frightened; *stutvā*—offering prayers; *naman*—bowing down; *api*—and; *dhṛṣṭaḥ*—audacious; *aham*—I; *vañcitaḥ*—deceived; *tena*—by Him; *gopa-bālaka*—as a cowherd boy; *līlayā*—who plays.

I then saw some most amazing wonders and became frightened. Offering prayers and bowing down to the Lord, I thought, “I am so arrogant! But now, in His pastime as a cowherd boy, He has tricked me.”

Kṛṣṇa arranged for Brahmā to see that He had continued playing with the boys and calves for a whole year, even after Brahmā had supposedly kidnapped them. Brahmā saw each of the boys and calves assume the spiritual form of the Personality of Godhead, each holding within Himself all the universes. Suddenly realizing the seriousness of his offense, Brahmā became afraid. He thought himself arrogant because he had now dared approach with prayers and obeisances the Lord he had repeatedly offended. Brahmā focused his mind on Lord Kṛṣṇa standing before him as a small cowherd boy holding a handful of chipped rice and

yogurt from someone else's plate, and Brahmā was astounded. The Lord had defeated him, and now the Lord was not even responding to his prayers.

तस्य स्वाभाविकास्याब्जप्रसादेक्षणमात्रतः ।  
हृष्टः स्वं बहु मन्ये स्म तत्प्रियव्रजभूगतेः ॥

*tasya svābhāvikāsyābja-  
prasādekṣaṇa-mātrataḥ  
hṛṣṭaḥ svam̐ bahu manye sma  
tat-priya-vraja-bhū-gateḥ*

*tasya*—His; *svābhāvika*—spontaneous; *āsyā*—from His face; *abja*—lotuslike; *prasāda*—of satisfaction; *ikṣaṇa*—by the glance; *mātrataḥ*—merely; *hṛṣṭaḥ*—joyful; *svam*—myself; *bahu*—highly; *manye sma*—I regarded; *tat*—His; *priya*—dear; *vraja-bhū*—the land of Vraja; *gateḥ*—because of having visited.

**Simply by the spontaneous glance of favor upon me from His lotus face, I became joyful. I realized how fortunate I was to have visited the land of Vraja, which is so dear to Him.**

Nārada might wonder how everything seemed all right with Brahmā so soon after Brahmā's blunder and embarrassment. How was he now sitting happily in his own abode? One answer Brahmā gives here is that he at once felt the purpose of his life fulfilled just by seeing the Lord's ever-smiling face. And he had also received the rare opportunity to stay a short time in Śrī Vraja-dhāma. Vraja is the most sacred land, and Kṛṣṇa is the only shelter of its residents; thus Brahmā felt that after having mistreated the calves and cowherd boys of Vraja it was best for him to leave quickly and go back to Brahmāloka.

तत्रात्मनश्चिरस्थित्यापराधाः स्युरिति त्रसन् ।  
अपासरं किमन्यैस्तन् निजासौभाग्यवर्णनैः ॥

*tatrātmanaś cira-sthityā-*

*parādhāḥ syur iti trasan  
apāsaram kim anyais tan  
nijāsaubhāgya-varṇanaiḥ*

*tatra*—there (in Vraja-bhūmi); *ātmanaḥ*—my; *cira*—long; *sthityā*—by stay; *aparādhāḥ*—offenses; *syuḥ*—there might be; *iti*—thus; *trasan*—fearing; *apāsaram*—I went away; *kim*—what need is there; *anyaiḥ*—for more; *tat*—therefore; *nija*—my; *asaubhāgya*—of the ill fortune; *varṇanaiḥ*—descriptions.

**Fearing I would commit more offenses if I stayed there too long, I then went away. What else need I tell you about my ill fortune?**

Vraja-bhūmi is the place of the Supreme Lord's intimate dealings with His dearest devotees. Materialistic persons should not stay there longer than a few days, long enough to gain transcendental benefit from contact with the holy *dhāma* but not long enough to become offensive toward the *dhāma* and its residents. Brahmā, thinking himself one of the ordinary conditioned souls, had returned quickly to his own place. Now he had nothing more to say about his own shortcomings, since he felt he had adequately refuted each point of Nārada's praise.

**अथ ब्रह्माण्डमध्येऽस्मिन् तादृङ् नेक्षे कृपास्पदम् ।  
विष्णोः किन्तु महादेव एव ख्यातः सखेति यः ॥**

*atha brahmāṇḍa-madhye 'smin  
tādṛṅ nekṣe kṛpāspadam  
viṣṇoḥ kintu mahādeva  
eva khyātaḥ sakheti yaḥ*

*atha*—actually; *brahmāṇḍa*—the universe; *madhye*—within; *asmin*—this; *tādṛk*—such; *na īkṣe*—I do not see; *kṛpā-āspadam*—a recipient of the mercy; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Lord Viṣṇu; *kintu*—but; *mahā-devaḥ*—Mahādeva Śiva; *eva*—only; *khyātaḥ*—famous; *sakhā*—the friend; *iti*—thus; *yaḥ*—who.

**In fact, in this universe I see no object of Lord Viṣṇu's mercy equal to**

**Mahādeva Śiva. He is famous as the dear friend of the Lord.**

Other than Lord Śiva, everyone in every part of the universe—upper, middle, and lower—is imperfect. Although certain persons like Prahlāda will be described later in this book as greater devotees of Kṛṣṇa than Lord Śiva, strictly speaking they are not residents of the material world. Because the character of a devotee like Prahlāda is untouched by material contamination, anywhere he resides is spiritual. Thus Lord Brahmā is not speaking inconsistently.

Because Brahmā and Śiva are both *guṇa-avatāras*, the Supreme Lord deals with them similarly. Brahmā can understand Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy on Lord Śiva because it resembles something within his own experience. But the exceptional mercy obtained by a person much greater than himself is beyond Brahmā's ability to understand. Only things in some way similar can be meaningfully compared as greater and lesser. For example, the weight of a blade of grass is so extremely different from that of a mountain that one cannot sensibly compare them. Thus when goddess Gaṅgā, as we are told in *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa*, declares the ocean more fortunate than herself, she does not compare herself with Brahmā, who is much more fortunate still. In the same way, Brahmā here compares himself with Lord Śiva and not with even greater Vaiṣṇavas like Prahlāda, what to speak of the cowherd boys and other inhabitants of Vraja.

**यश्च श्रीकृष्णपादाब्जरसेनोन्मादितः सदा ।  
अवधीरितसर्वार्थपरमैश्वर्यभोगकः ॥**

*yaś ca śrī-kṛṣṇa-pādābja-  
rasenonmāditah sadā  
avadhīrita-sarvārtha-  
paramaiśvarya-bhogakah*

*yaḥ*—who; *ca*—and; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pāda-abja*—of the lotus feet; *rasena*—by the transcendental taste; *unmāditah*—because of being intoxicated; *sadā*—always; *avadhīrita*—disregarding; *sarva*—all; *artha*—normal goals of life; *parama-aiśvarya*—of universal supremacy;

*bhogakaḥ*—the facilities for enjoyment.

Lord Śiva is always intoxicated by the taste found at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. He therefore has no interest in any of the normal goals of life, even up to rulership of the universe and the sense enjoyment such rulership provides.

अस्मादृशो विषयिणो भोगासक्तान् हसन्निव ।  
धुस्तूरार्कास्थिमालाधृग् नग्नो भस्मानुलेपनः ॥

*asmādr̥śo viṣayiṇo*  
*bhogāśaktān hasann iva*  
*dhustūrārkāsthi-mālā-dhṛg*  
*nagno bhasmānulepanaḥ*

*asmādr̥śaḥ*—like myself; *viṣayiṇaḥ*—materialists; *bhoga-āśaktān*—addicted to sense gratification; *hasan*—laughing at; *iva*—as if; *dhustūra*—of *dhustūra*, an intoxicating weed; *arka*—*arka* leaves; *asthi*—and bones; *mālā*—garlands; *dhṛk*—wearing; *nagnaḥ*—naked; *bhasma*—with ashes; *anulepanaḥ*—smeared.

As if ridiculing materialists like me, who are simply addicted to sense enjoyment, he goes around naked, wearing garlands of *dhustūra*, *arka*, and bones and smeared all over with ashes.

विप्रकीर्णजटाभार उन्मत्त इव घूर्णते ।  
तथा स्वगोपनाशक्तः कृष्णपादाब्जशौचजाम् ।  
गङ्गां मूर्ध्नि वहन् हर्षान् नृत्यंश्च लयते जगत् ॥

*viprakīrṇa-jatā-bhāra*  
*unmatta iva ghūrṇate*  
*tathā sva-gopanāśaktaḥ*  
*kṛṣṇa-pādābja-śauca-jām*  
*gaṅgām mūrdhni vahan harṣān*  
*nṛtyamś ca layate jagat*

*viprakīrṇa*—scattered; *jaṭā*—of matted locks; *bhāra*—with a mass; *unmattaḥ*—a madman; *iva*—like; *ghūrṇate*—wanders about; *tathā*—nonetheless; *sva*—himself; *gopana*—to conceal; *aśaktaḥ*—unable; *kṛṣṇa-pāda-abja*—Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet; *śauca-jām*—born of the water that washes; *gaṅgām*—the Gaṅgā; *mūrdhni*—on his head; *vahan*—carrying; *harṣāt*—out of joy; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *ca*—and; *layate*—he destroys; *jagat*—the universe.

**His matted locks scattered about, he moves around aimlessly like a madman, yet he is unable to conceal his glories. With joy he carries on his head the Gaṅgā, born from the water that washed Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. When he dances he destroys the universe.**

Lord Śiva rejects with disdain the ambitions of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation. He has no desire to be an independent controller and enjoyer. The satisfaction others derive from worldly pursuits and the achievement of supremacy does not attract him. He identifies himself fully as a servant of Kṛṣṇa.

In Lord Śiva’s view, demigods like Brahmā and Indra are addicted to sense enjoyment. Their celestial garlands, ornaments, and perfumes last only a short time and so leave them dissatisfied. Better than the decorations of the demigods are his own garlands, made of bones and intoxicating weeds, which at least cause no disappointment when they decay. These strange ornaments, Lord Śiva thinks, are no less substantial than Indra’s and Brahmā’s divine garlands. But these are only Lord Śiva’s external decorations; his real ornament and his real enjoyment are found in the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Humbly thinking himself bereft of that mercy, he feels fit to wear weeds and bones. With such ideas in mind, the great Lord Śiva conducts himself in his own peculiar way.

**कृष्णप्रसादात्तेनैव मादृशमधिकारिणाम् ।  
अभीष्टार्पयितुं मुक्तिस्तस्य पन्नयापि शक्यते ॥**

*kṛṣṇa-prasādāt tenaiva  
mādr̥śām adhikāriṇām*



*abhīṣṭārpayitum muktis  
tasya patnyāpi śakyate*

*kṛṣṇa-prasādāt*—due to Kṛṣṇa’s grace; *tena*—by him; *eva*—indeed; *māḍṛśām*—like myself; *adhikāriṇām*—to fit candidates; *abhīṣṭā*—desirable; *arpayitum*—to be awarded; *muktiḥ*—liberation; *tasya*—his; *patnyā*—by the wife; *api*—also; *śakyate*—able.

**By Kṛṣṇa’s grace, Lord Śiva and his wife are able to award liberation to candidates like me who eagerly want it.**

Principal demigods like Indra and Brahmā enjoy high posts in the administration of the universe. But after carrying out extensive duties for many millions of years, they may tire of this burden. Thus liberation from material existence begins to look more and more attractive to them. In the midst of all the pomp and luxury of heavenly rulership, many demigods quietly harbor the desire for liberation. Here Lord Brahmā groups himself with lesser demigods, even though he is an empowered incarnation of the Personality of Godhead. Speaking from humility, he describes himself as just another appointed administrator with selfish motives of his own.

**अहो सर्वेऽपि ते मुक्ताः शिवलोकनिवासिनः ।  
मुक्तास्तत्कृपया कृष्णभक्ताश्च कति नाभवन् ॥**

*aho sarve ’pi te muktāḥ  
śiva-loka-nivāsinaḥ  
muktās tat-kṛpayā kṛṣṇa-  
bhaktāś ca kati nābhavan*

*aho*—ah; *sarve*—all; *api*—and; *te*—they; *muktāḥ*—liberated; *śiva-loka*—on Lord Śiva’s planet; *nivāsinaḥ*—those who live; *muktāḥ*—liberated souls; *tat-kṛpayā*—by his mercy; *kṛṣṇa-bhaktāḥ*—devotees of Kṛṣṇa; *ca*—and; *kati*—how many; *na abhavan*—have not become.

**Indeed, everyone who lives on Lord Śiva’s planet is liberated. By his mercy, so many persons have become liberated souls and even pure**

### devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Śiva is *nitya-mukta*, eternally liberated, and his devotees are liberated also. Many other fortunate souls living on lower planets like the earth have also been blessed by his mercy and instructions, which have given these souls the strength to advance spiritually in various ways.

कृष्णाच्छिवस्य भेदेक्षा महादोषकरी मता ।  
आगो भगवता स्वस्मिन् क्षम्यते न शिवे कृतम् ॥

*kṛṣṇāc chivasya bhedekṣā*  
*mahā-doṣa-karī matā*  
*āgo bhagavatā svasmin*  
*kṣamyate na śive kṛtam*

*kṛṣṇāt*—from Kṛṣṇa; *śivasya*—of Śiva; *bheda-ikṣā*—seeing as different; *mahā-doṣa*—of grave error; *karī*—the cause; *matā*—is considered; *āgaḥ*—sin; *bhagavatā*—by the Personality of Godhead; *svasmin*—against Himself; *kṣamyate*—is tolerated; *na*—not; *śive*—against Lord Śiva; *kṛtam*—committed.

**To consider Lord Śiva different from Kṛṣṇa is a serious spiritual deviation. The Personality of Godhead tolerates offenses against Himself but not against Lord Śiva.**

Lord Śiva is described as a recipient of Lord Viṣṇu’s mercy, but this does not mean that the two Lords are different from one another in the same way that Lord Viṣṇu differs from the *jīvas*. The *Padma Purāṇa* includes the *Nāmāparādha-bhañjana-stotra*, a list of ten offenses against chanting Lord Viṣṇu’s names. Therein it is said:

*śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi sakalaṁ*  
*dhiyā bhinnam paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karaḥ*

“One who sees differences between any of Lord Śiva’s qualities and names and those of Śrī Viṣṇu is an antagonist to *hari-nāma*.” (*Padma Purāṇa*, *Brahma-khaṇḍa* 25.15) Lord Viṣṇu cannot tolerate offenses

against Lord Śiva, because Lord Śiva is the greatest of Lord Viṣṇu's empowered incarnations. Lord Śiva is especially empowered to distribute in the material world the elevated tastes of pure devotional service.

शिवदत्तवरोन्मत्तात् त्रिपुरेश्वरतो मयात् ।  
तथा वृकासुरादेश्च सङ्कटं परमं गतः ॥

शिवः समुद्धृतोऽनेन हर्षितश्च वचोऽमृतैः ।  
तदन्तरङ्गसद्भक्त्या कृष्णेन वशवर्तिना ।  
स्वयमाराध्यते चास्य माहात्म्यभरसिद्धये ॥

*śiva-datta-varonmattāt  
tripureśvarato mayāt  
tathā vṛkāsurādeś ca  
saṅkaṭam paramam gataḥ*

*śivaḥ samuddhṛto 'nena  
harṣitaś ca vaco-'mṛtaiḥ  
tad-antaraṅga-sad-bhaktyā  
kṛṣṇena vaśa-vartinā  
svayam ārādhyate cāśya  
māhātmya-bhara-siddhaye*

*śiva*—by Lord Śiva; *datta*—given; *vara*—because of the benediction; *unmattāt*—intoxicated; *tripura-īśvarataḥ*—due to the master of Tripura; *mayāt*—Maya Dānava; *tathā*—also; *vṛka-asura-ādeḥ*—due to the demon Vṛka and others; *ca*—and; *saṅkaṭam*—danger; *paramam*—extreme; *gataḥ*—experienced; *śivaḥ*—Lord Śiva; *samuddhṛtaḥ*—saved; *anena*—by Him; *harṣitaḥ*—encouraged; *ca*—and; *vacaḥ*—by the words; *amṛtaiḥ*—nectarean; *tat*—to Him; *antaḥ-aṅga*—intimate; *sat*—pure; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *vaśa-vartinā*—who acted under his control; *svayam*—himself; *ārādhyate*—is worshiped; *ca*—and; *asya*—his; *māhātmya*—of the glories; *bhara*—the completion; *siddhaye*—to effect.

When Maya, the master of Tripura, grew intoxicated with pride by Lord Śiva's benediction and placed Lord Śiva in danger, and when Lord Śiva was troubled by other demons, like Vṛkāsura, the Supreme Lord saved him and encouraged him with nectarean words. And sometimes, to broadcast Lord Śiva's glories, Lord Kṛṣṇa takes the role of his subordinate and worships him with intimate devotion.

Lord Śiva once empowered Maya Dānava to construct for the demons of Tripura a well of heavenly nectar that could revive the dead. On another occasion, Lord Śiva granted Vṛkāsura the power to crack anyone's head into pieces by merely touching it with his hand. Lord Śiva also granted great strength and influence to demons like Rāvaṇa. Each of these demons became intoxicated with his acquired perfections and created trouble for Lord Śiva. Maya made it difficult to destroy Tripura, Vṛka tried to test his power on Lord Śiva's head, compelling Lord Śiva to flee for his life, and Rāvaṇa moved Kailāsa Mountain from its base. Each time, Lord Kṛṣṇa came to save Lord Śiva. He drank up Maya Dānava's well, beguiled Vṛka into touching his own head, and, as Śrī Rāmacandra, killed Rāvaṇa with bow and arrows. These famous episodes, briefly alluded to here, are elaborately described in various scriptures, including Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Brahmā points out that although Lord Nṛsimhadeva had rebuked him, the Supreme Lord did not treat Lord Śiva's offenses the same way. Instead, responding to Lord Śiva's remorse, the Lord generally tried to encourage him, saying for example about Vṛkāsura:

*aho deva mahādeva pāpo  
'yaṁ svena pāpmanā*

*hataḥ ko nu mahatsv īśa  
jantur vai kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ  
kṣemī syāt kim u viśveśe  
kṛtāgasko jagad-gurau*

“Just see, O Mahādeva, My lord, how this wicked man has been killed by his own sinful reactions. Indeed, what living being can hope for good

fortune if he offends exalted saints, what to speak of offending the lord and spiritual master of the universe?” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.88.38–39)

The Supreme Lord in His incarnation as Paraśurāma worships Lord Śiva in loving reciprocation by advertising Lord Śiva’s greatness.

तिष्ठतापि स्वयं साक्षात् कृष्णेनामृतमन्थने ।  
प्रजापतिभिराराध्य स गौरीप्राणवल्लुभः ॥

समानाय्य विषं घोरं पाययित्वा विभूषितः ।  
महामहिमधाराभिरभिषिक्तश्च तत्स्फुटम् ॥

*tiṣṭhatāpi svayaṁ sākṣāt*  
*kṛṣṇenāmṛta-manthane*  
*prajāpatibhir ārādhya*  
*sa gaurī-prāṇa-vallabhaḥ*

*samānāyya viṣaṁ ghoram*  
*pāyayitvā vibhūṣitaḥ*  
*mahā-mahima-dhārābhir*  
*abhiṣiktaś ca tat sphuṭam*

*tiṣṭhatā*—who was present; *api*—although; *svayaṁ*—in person; *sākṣāt*—visibly; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *amṛta*—of nectar; *manthane*—at the churning; *prajā-patibhiḥ*—by the rulers of the universe; *ārādhya*—being worshiped; *saḥ*—he; *gaurī-prāṇa-vallabhaḥ*—the life and soul of Gaurī; *samānāyya*—collecting; *viṣaṁ*—poison; *ghoram*—terrible; *pāyayitvā*—drinking; *vibhūṣitaḥ*—ornamented; *mahā-mahima*—of topmost glory; *dhārābhiḥ*—by floods; *abhiṣiktaḥ*—ceremonially bathed; *ca*—and; *tat*—thus; *sphuṭam*—visibly.

Although Kṛṣṇa was personally present at the churning of nectar from the Milk Ocean, He and the rulers of the universe chose to worship Lord Śiva, the life and soul of Gaurī. Lord Śiva collected and drank the terrible poison, which thereafter became his ornament. He was then ceremonially

bathed in the presence of everyone assembled and was glorified with floods of praise.

In the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa the demigods had no need to fear destruction from the Halāhala poison churned from the Ocean of Milk. Kṛṣṇa chose, however, not to counteract the poison Himself but to give Lord Śiva an opportunity to show his prowess. The Supreme Lord and the Prajāpatis honored Lord Śiva with Vedic hymns and other prayers, entreating him to save them. Their request was so strongly presented that Lord Śiva took the risk of drinking all the poison, ignoring the objections of his dear wife, Gaurī. The demigods praised Lord Śiva for a feat even Lord Viṣṇu had not performed. From then on, the blue marks made on Lord Śiva's throat by the poison became renowned as his unique ornament.

पुराणान्येव गायन्ति दयालुत्वं हरेर्हरे ।  
ज्ञायते हि त्वयाप्येतत् परं च स्मर्यतां मुने ॥

*purāṇāny eva gāyanti  
dayālutvaṁ harer hare  
jñāyate hi tvayāpy etat  
paraṁ ca smaryatām mune*

*purāṇāni*—the *Purāṇas*; *eva*—certainly; *gāyanti*—sing; *dayālutvaṁ*—about the compassion; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *hare*—toward Lord Hara (Śiva); *jñāyate*—it is known; *hi*—certainly; *tvayā*—by you; *api*—also; *etat*—this; *param*—more; *ca*—and; *smaryatām*—please just remember; *mune*—O thoughtful sage.

The *Purāṇas* sing of Lord Hari's compassion toward Lord Hara. You surely know all this and more, O thoughtful sage. To recall these glories, you need only exercise your memory.

Lord Hari's attitude toward Lord Hara is something like a father's affection for his son. Nārada can remember other instances of Lord Śiva's displaying his glories—for example, when he blessed Lord Kṛṣṇa to have an excellent son, Sāmba.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
गुरुं प्रणम्य तं गन्तुं कैलासं गिरिमुत्सुकः ।  
आलक्ष्योक्तः पुनस्तेन स्वपुत्रः पुत्रवत्सले ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*gurum praṇamya taṁ gantum*  
*kailāsaṁ girim utsukaḥ*  
*ālakṣyoktaḥ punas tena*  
*sva-putraḥ putra-vatsale*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *gurum*—to his spiritual master; *praṇamya*—bowing down; *taṁ*—there; *gantum*—to go; *kailāsaṁ girim*—to Kailāsa Mountain; *utsukaḥ*—eager; *ālakṣya*—noticing; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *punaḥ*—again; *tena*—by him (Brahmā); *sva-putraḥ*—his son; *putra*—to your son; *vatsale*—O you who are affectionate.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: O dear mother, affectionate protector of your son, Nārada bowed down to his spiritual master, Lord Brahmā. And when Brahmā saw his son Nārada eager to set off for Kailāsa, Brahmā then told him something more.

A father should be honored as a kind of spiritual master, all the more if he has given essential instructions in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Brahmā is the father of all fathers among the living entities, and he personally taught his youngest son, Nārada, the science of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Because Brahmā is omniscient within the material universe, he knew that Nārada wanted to go to Mount Kailāsa, Lord Śiva's abode in the universe. Noticing that Nārada was glancing down from Brahmāloka in the direction of Kailāsa, Brahmā decided to suggest a better idea.

श्रीब्रह्मोवाच  
कुवेरेण पुराराध्य भक्त्या रुद्रो वशीकृतः ।  
ब्रह्माण्डाभ्यन्तरे तस्य कैलासेऽधिकृते गिरौ ॥

*śrī-brahmovāca*

*kuvereṇa purārādhya  
bhaktyā rudro vaśī-kṛtaḥ  
brahmāṇḍābhyantare tasya  
kailāse 'dhikṛte girau*

*śrī-brahmā uvāca*—Śrī Brahmā said; *kuvereṇa*—by Kuvera; *purā*—in ancient times; *ārādhya*—being worshiped; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *rudraḥ*—Lord Śiva; *vaśī-kṛtaḥ*—brought under control; *brahmāṇḍa-abhyantare*—within the universe; *tasya*—his (Kuvera's); *kailāse*—on Kailāsa; *adhikṛte*—appointed; *girau*—on the mountain.

Śrī Brahmā said: Kuvera once earned the gratitude of Lord Śiva by devotedly worshiping him. From then on, within this universe, Lord Śiva has submitted to Kuvera's authority, on Kuvera's Mount Kailāsa.

**तद्विदिक्पालरूपेण तद्योग्यपरिवारकः ।  
वसत्याविष्कृतस्वल्पवैभवः सन्नुमापतिः ॥**

*tad-vidik-pāla-rūpeṇa  
tad-yogya-parivārakaḥ  
vasaty āviṣkṛta-svalpa-  
vaibhavaḥ sann umā-patiḥ*

*tat*—his; *vidik*—of the sub-direction; *pāla-rūpeṇa*—as the guardian; *tat*—for him (Lord Śiva); *yogya*—suitable; *parivārakaḥ*—having attendants; *vasati*—he lives; *āviṣkṛta*—manifest; *su-alpa*—slight; *vaibhavaḥ*—his opulence; *san*—thus present; *umā-patiḥ*—the husband of Umā.

Lord Śiva, the husband of Umā, lives there as the guardian of Kuvera's side of the heavenly sphere. Accompanied by suitable attendants, he shows but a small fraction of his opulence.

Kuvera, the appointed treasurer of heaven, rules the northeast. Pleased with Kuvera, Lord Śiva, despite his own elevated position, takes up menial service as Kuvera's guard. Lord Śiva's wife, Umā, and several of his associates and servants accompany Lord Śiva in Kailāsa, which,



compared with his eternal abode, outside the universe, is modest in opulence and entourage. Brahmā implies, “If you go see Lord Śiva on Kuvera’s Kailāsa, you will not be able to understand fully how much greater Lord Śiva is than I.”

यथा हि कृष्णो भगवान् मादृशां भक्तियन्त्रितः ।  
मम लोके स्वरादौ च वसत्युचितलीलया ॥

*yathā hi kṛṣṇo bhagavān  
mādr̥śām bhakti-yantritaḥ  
mama loke svar-ādau ca  
vasaty ucita-līlayā*

*yathā*—as; *hi*—indeed; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *mādr̥śām*—of persons like me; *bhakti*—by the devotion; *yantritaḥ*—brought under control; *mama*—my; *loke*—on the planet; *svaḥ*—in heaven; *ādau*—elsewhere; *ca*—and; *vasati*—lives; *ucita*—appropriate; *līlayā*—with pastimes.

**Just as the Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, brought under control by the devotion of servants like me, resides on my planet, and in heaven and elsewhere, Lord Śiva lives in Kailāsa, displaying suitable pastimes.**

The Supreme Lord reciprocates with His best devotees in this world—Brahmā, Kaśyapa, and so on—by living with them personally in heaven, below heaven on the earth, above heaven on Maharloka, and elsewhere. In each incarnation, the Lord appears with suitable pastimes, paraphernalia, family, and friends.

अथ वायुपुराणस्य मतमेतद् ब्रवीम्यहम् ।  
श्रीमहादेवलोकस्तु सप्तावरणतो बहिः ॥

*atha vāyu-purāṇasya  
matam etad bravīmy aham  
śrī-mahādeva-lokas tu  
saptāvaraṇato bahiḥ*

*atha*—now; *vāyu-purāṇasya*—of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*; *matam*—opinion; *etat*—this; *bravīmi*—shall speak; *aham*—I; *śrī-mahā-deva*—of Śrī Mahādeva; *lokaḥ*—the planet; *tu*—and; *sapta-āvaraṇataḥ*—the seven coverings (of the material universe); *bahiḥ*—outside.

**Now let me tell you the opinion of the *Vāyu Purāṇa*: The abode of Śrī Mahādeva lies outside the seven coverings of the universe.**

The material universe is enclosed within seven concentric shells made of earth and the other basic elements. Outside them all lies the imperishable realm of Lord Śiva. In contrast to all the planets inside the shells, planets that are temporary products of material nature, this abode of Lord Śiva's is not a creation of *Māyā*. In *Śivaloka* there is no unhappiness. That world is attained by the best of Lord Śiva's devotees—the ones who understand him to be nondifferent from Śrī Kṛṣṇa—not the Śaivites who are *karmīs* or *jñānīs* or who worship Lord Śiva as an independent supreme controller.

नित्यः सुखमयः सत्यो लभ्यस्तत्सेवकोत्तमैः ।  
समानमहिमश्रीमत्परिवारगणावृतः ॥

महाविभूतिमान् भाति सत्परिच्छदमण्डितः ।  
श्रीमत्सङ्कर्षणं स्वस्मादभिन्नं तत्र सोऽर्चयन् ।  
निजेष्टदेवतात्वेन किं वा नातनुतेऽद्भुतम् ॥

*nityaḥ sukha-mayaḥ satyo*  
*labhyas tat-sevakottamaiḥ*  
*samāna-mahima-śrīmat-*  
*parivāra-gaṇāvṛtaḥ*

*mahā-vibhūtimān bhāti*  
*sat-paricchada-maṇḍitaḥ*  
*śrīmat-saṅkarṣaṇaṁ svasmād*  
*abhinnam tatra so 'rcayan*

*nijeṣṭa-devatātvena  
kim vā nātanute 'dbhutam*

*nityaḥ*—eternal; *sukha-mayaḥ*—full of happiness; *satyaḥ*—substantially real; *labhyaḥ*—attainable; *tat*—his; *sevaka-uttamaiḥ*—by the best servants; *samāna*—equal; *mahima*—with glories; *śrīmat*—opulent; *parivāra-gaṇa*—by associates; *āvṛtaḥ*—surrounded; *mahā-vibhūti-mān*—possessed of great splendor; *bhāti*—is manifest; *sat*—transcendental; *paricchada*—with regalia; *maṇḍitaḥ*—adorned; *śrīmat-saṅkarṣaṇam*—Śrīmān Saṅkarṣaṇa; *svasmāt*—from Himself; *abhinna*—non-different; *tatra*—there; *saḥ*—he; *arcayan*—worshiping; *nija*—his own; *iṣṭa-devatātvena*—as the personal Deity; *kim*—what; *vā*—or; *na*—does not; *ātanute*—display; *adbhutam*—wonderful.

**Eternal and full of happiness, that abode is absolutely real. It can be attained by the best of Lord Śiva's servants. There Lord Śiva, served by the most excellent regalia, reveals himself in his full splendor, surrounded by companions who share opulence and beauty equal to his. As his personal Deity he worships Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, nondifferent from himself. What amazing wonders does Lord Śiva in this manifestation not display?**

In his original abode, Lord Śiva displays his full opulence, including ever-existing palaces and airplanes and his unequalled personal assets of religion, wealth, sense enjoyment, liberation, and devotion to the Supreme Lord. His emblems of rulership, such as his jewelry, *cāmara* fans, and royal umbrella, surpass those of Brahmā and the other demigods. On Śivaloka Lord Śiva always worships the Personality of Godhead in His form as Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa, who has thousands of serpent hoods. Both Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and His expansion Lord Śiva are incarnations of the Supreme Godhead, and so they are nondifferent. When the time comes for the material universe to be annihilated, Rudra the destroyer appears from Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa. That Rudra is the specific aspect of Lord Śiva who presides over the material mode of ignorance.

Everyone who sees Lord Śiva worshiping Saṅkarṣaṇa — one expansion of the Supreme worshiping another — becomes astonished, especially when Lord Śiva dances in ecstasy and offers wonderful

prayers. Lord Śiva's worship of Śrī Saṅkarṣaṇa can also be seen in the earthly planetary system, in Ilāvṛta-varṣa, as Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes in the Fifth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Chapter Seventeen.

तत्र गन्तुं भवाञ्छक्तः श्रीशिवे शुद्धभक्तिमान् ।  
अभिगम्य तमाश्रित्य कृपां कृष्णस्य पश्यतु ॥

*tatra gantum bhavāñ chaktaḥ*  
*śrī-śive śuddha-bhaktimān*  
*abhigamya tam āśritya*  
*kṛpām kṛṣṇasya paśyatu*

*tatra*—there; *gantum*—to go; *bhavān*—you; *śaktaḥ*—capable; *śrī-śive*—for Lord Śiva; *śuddha-bhakti-mān*—endowed with pure devotion; *abhigamya*—approaching; *tam*—him; *āśritya*—taking shelter; *kṛpām*—the mercy; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *paśyatu*—please see.

**You have the power to go there because you have pure devotion for him. Therefore go, take shelter of him, and see the real mercy of Kṛṣṇa.**

Because Nārada respects Lord Śiva properly, as an expansion nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa, and therefore loves Lord Śiva with spontaneous devotion, there is no bar to his entering Śivaloka. If Nārada is to go there and take shelter of Lord Śiva by offering respects and praise, he will be able to see the mercy of Kṛṣṇa in the ecstasy and opulences of Lord Śiva.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इत्येवं शिक्षितो मातः शिव कृष्णेति कीर्तयन् ।  
नारदः शिवलोकं तं प्रयातः कौतुकादिव ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*ity evaṁ śikṣito mātāḥ*  
*śiva kṛṣṇeti kīrtayan*  
*nāradaḥ śiva-lokaṁ taṁ*  
*prayātaḥ kautukād iva*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *iti*—in these words; *evam*—thus; *śikṣitaḥ*—instructed; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *śiva kṛṣṇa*—“Śiva! Kṛṣṇa!”; *iti*—thus; *kīrtayan*—chanting; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *śiva-lokam*—to Śivaloka; *tam*—there; *prayātaḥ*—gone; *kautukāt*—with great eagerness; *iva*—as.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: My dear mother, after Nārada received these instructions he departed for Śivaloka with joyful anticipation, chanting “Śiva! Kṛṣṇa!”**

The gist of Brahmā’s advice to Nārada is that he should have faith in Lord Śiva as nondifferent from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Even though this advice was familiar to Nārada, he was inspired to hear it. He welcomed the opportunity Brahmā was giving him to show the world the extent of Lord Śiva’s glories. He was also curious about what he would find when he arrived at Śivaloka.

*Thus ends the second chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled “Divya: In Heaven.”*

### 3. Prapancatita: Beyond the Material World

Nārada visits Śivaloka

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
भगवन्तं हरं तत्र भावाविष्टतया हरेः ।  
नृत्यन्तं कीर्तयन्तं च कृतसङ्कर्षणार्चनम् ॥

भृशं नन्दीश्वरादींश्च श्लाघमानं निजानुगान् ।  
प्रीत्या सजयशब्दानि गीतवाद्यानि तन्वतः ॥

देवीं चोमां प्रशंसन्तं करतालीषु कोविदाम् ।  
दूराद्दृष्ट्वा मुनिर्हृष्टोऽनमद्वीणां निनादयन् ॥

परमानुगृहीतोऽसि कृष्णस्येति मुहुर्मुहुः ।  
जगौ सर्वं च पित्रोक्तं सुस्वरं समकीर्तयत् ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
bhagavantam haram tatra  
bhāvāviṣṭatayā hareḥ  
nṛtyantam kīrtayantam ca  
kṛta-saṅkarṣaṇārcanam

bhṛśam nandīśvarādīnś ca  
ślāghamānam nijānugān  
prītyā sa-jaya-śabdāni  
gīta-vādyāni tanvataḥ

devīm comām praśamsantam  
kara-tālīṣu kovidām  
dūrād dṛṣṭvā munir hṛṣṭo  
'namad vīṇām ninādayan

paramānugṛhīto 'si  
kṛṣṇasyeti muhur muhuḥ  
jagau sarvam ca pitroktam  
su-svaram samakīrtayat

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; bhagavantam—godly; haram—Lord Śiva; tatra—there; bhāva—of devotional love; āviṣṭatayā—in a trance; hareḥ—for Śrī Hari; nṛtyantam—dancing; kīrtayantam—chanting; ca—

and; *kṛta*—having performed; *saṅkarṣaṇa-arcanam*—worship of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa; *bhṛṣam*—enthusiastically; *nandīśvara-ādīn*—Nandīśvara and others; *ca*—and; *ślāghamānam*—praising; *nija-anugān*—his own followers; *prītyā*—affectionately; *sa-jaya-śabdāni*—with shouts of “Jaya”; *gīta*—song; *vādyāni*—and instrumental music; *tanvataḥ*—who were vibrating; *devīm*—the goddess; *ca*—also; *umām*—Umā; *praśamsantam*—praising; *kara-tālīṣu*—in styles of hand-clapping; *kovidām*—expert; *dūrāt*—from a distance; *drṣṭvā*—seeing; *munīḥ*—the sage Nārada; *hṛṣṭaḥ*—delighted; *anamat*—he bowed down; *vīṇām*—his *vīṇā*; *ninādayan*—and sounding it; *parama*—supremely; *anugṛhītaḥ*—favored; *asi*—you are; *kṛṣṇasya*—by Kṛṣṇa; *iti*—thus; *muhuh muhuh*—again and again; *jagau*—he sang; *sarvam*—all; *ca*—and; *pitṛā*—by their father (Brahmā); *uktam*—spoken; *su-svaram*—in a sweet voice; *samakīrtayat*—he recounted.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said:** Arriving in Śivaloka, from a distance the sage Nārada saw Lord Śiva, Śrī Hara, who had just finished his worship of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, Śrī Hari. Entranced in ecstatic love, Lord Śiva was dancing and loudly singing the glories of his Lord, while his associates played instrumental music and shouted “Jaya! Jaya!” With great affection he praised his assistants like Nandīśvara, as well as the goddess Umā, who was expertly clapping her hands. The sight of all this delighted Nārada. Vibrating his *vīṇā* and nodding his head to show respect, he called out several times, “You are the greatest recipient of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy!” and in a sweet voice he recounted to Lord Śiva everything just told him by their father, Lord Brahmā.

Lord Śiva had just finished worshipping his Deity, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa. The rituals of his worship were similar to those Nārada had witnessed on earth at Prayāga, but at the end of the worship Lord Śiva displayed the symptoms of ecstasy described in this verse. Worship of the Supreme Lord’s Deity attracts both neophytes and advanced souls, but Vaiṣṇavas who are fully self-realized enjoy intimate relationships with their worshipable Deity. For such Vaiṣṇavas the Lord’s acceptance of even the

simplest act of devotion brings profound devotional ecstasies.

Thus Nārada found Lord Śiva in a trance of *saṅkīrtana*, reciting prayers to Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa similar to those recorded in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.17.18):

*bhaje bhajanyāraṇa-pāda-paṅkajam  
bhagasya kṛtsnasya param parāyaṇam  
bhakteṣv alam bhāvita-bhūta-bhāvanam  
bhavāpaham tvā bhava-bhāvam īśvaram*

“O my Lord, You are the only worshipable person, for You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of all opulences. Your secure lotus feet are the only source of protection for all Your devotees, whom You satisfy by manifesting Yourself in various forms. O my Lord, You deliver Your devotees from the clutches of material existence. Nondevotees, however, remain entangled in material existence by Your will. Kindly accept me as Your eternal servant.”

Since Lord Śiva is an incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, and Lord Śiva and the Personality of Godhead are therefore nondifferent, Lord Śiva does not need to worship Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa to become purified from material illusion. Lord Śiva performs worship externally with standard paraphernalia to educate the world about the transcendental tastes of devotional service.

Brahmā is also considered an incarnation of Godhead, but Śiva and Brahmā are not equal in status. Lord Śiva is nondifferent from Viṣṇu in a more literal sense: the post of Brahmā is almost always occupied by a *jīva*, whereas no *jīva* can ever become *śiva-tattva*.

Many statements from revealed scriptures characterize Lord Śiva as nondifferent from Lord Viṣṇu. For example, in the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Brahma-khaṇḍa* 25.15), in the description of the ten offenses against Lord Viṣṇu’s holy names, we read:

*śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi-sakalam  
dhiyā bhinnam paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karaḥ*

“One who sees differences between any of Lord Śiva’s qualities and



names and those of Śrī Viṣṇu is an antagonist to *hari-nāma*.” There are no similar injunctions about the nondifference of Brahmā and Viṣṇu.

Authorized scriptures state that persons like Vasiṣṭha, who are certainly finite *jīvas*, will become Lord Brahmā in their own universes in future lives. Theoretically any *jīva* soul can attain the post of Brahmā. As Lord Śiva told the Pracetās:

*sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān  
viriñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām*

“A person who strictly executes his occupational duty, without deviation, for one hundred births becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā, and if he becomes more qualified he can approach me, Lord Śiva.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.24.29) These words state that a *jīva* can join Lord Śiva, not that he can become Śiva. Nārada has included Lord Śiva in his search for recipients of the Supreme Lord’s mercy because Lord Śiva is a special incarnation of the Lord in the form of His own devotee.

The followers of Lord Śiva whom Nārada saw on Śivaloka were all great Vaiṣṇavas who deeply imbibed their master’s mood of *viṣṇu-bhakti*. Lord Śiva praised them for their artistic accompaniment, especially his consort Pārvatī for her hand-clapping, because their performance was manifested directly from pure devotion.

Witnessing all this, Nārada also became ecstatic. He danced so enthusiastically that he was unable to offer prostrate obeisances, and since he did not want to stop playing his *vīṇā*, he showed respect simply by nodding his head. Then, wanting to say something to show approval of Lord Śiva’s behavior, he proceeded to recount what Brahmā had told him about Lord Śiva’s glories.

अथ श्रीरुद्रपादाब्जरेणुस्पर्शनकाम्यया ।  
समीपेऽभ्यागतं देवो वैष्णवैकप्रियो मुनिम् ॥

आकृष्याश्लिष्य सम्मत्तः श्रीकृष्णरसधारया ।  
भृशं पप्रच्छ किं ब्रूषे ब्रह्मपुत्रेति सादरम् ॥

atha śrī-rudra-pādābja-  
reṇu-sparsana-kāmyayā  
samīpe 'bhyāgataṁ devo  
vaiṣṇavaika-priyo munim

ākṛṣyāśliṣya sammattaḥ  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-rasa-dhārayā  
bhṛśaṁ papraccha kim brūṣe  
brahma-putreti sādaram

atha—then; śrī-rudra—of Śrī Rudra; pāda-abja—of the lotus feet; reṇu—the dust; sparsana—of touching; kāmyayā—the desire; samīpe—near; abhyāgataṁ—came; devaḥ—Lord Śiva; vaiṣṇava—of the devotees of Lord Viṣṇu; eka-priyaḥ—the best friend; munim—the sage; ākṛṣya—drawing close; āśliṣya—and embracing; sammattaḥ—wild; śrī-kṛṣṇa—related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; rasa—of transcendental taste; dhārayā—by a flood; bhṛśaṁ—suddenly; papraccha—asked; kim—what; brūṣe—are you saying; brahma-putra—O son of Brahmā; iti—thus; sa-ādaram—respectfully.

Nārada came closer, hoping to touch the dust of the lotus feet of Lord Śiva, the best friend of the Vaiṣṇavas. But as the sage came near, Lord Śiva, a flood of Kṛṣṇa conscious pleasure driving him wild, forcibly drew Nārada closer and embraced him. Without hesitating he asked Nārada with respect, “Dear son of Brahmā, what are you saying?”

Totally absorbed in ecstasy, Lord Śiva, when turning to greet Nārada, at first found what Nārada was telling him difficult to understand.

ततः श्रीवैष्णवश्रेष्ठसम्भाषणरसाप्लुतम् ।  
सन्त्यक्तनृत्यकुतुकं मितप्रियजनावृतम् ॥

पार्वतीप्राणनाथं तं वृष्ट्यां वीरासनेन सः ।  
आसीनं प्रणमन् भक्त्या पठन् रुद्रषडङ्गकम् ॥

tataḥ śrī-vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha-  
sambhāṣaṇa-rasāplutam  
santyakta-nṛtya-kutukam  
mita-priya-janāvṛtam

pārvatī-prāṇa-nātham tam  
vṛṣyām vīrāsanena saḥ  
āśīnam praṇaman bhaktyā  
paṭhan rudra-ṣaḍ-aṅgakam

tataḥ—then; śrī-vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha—with the best of saintly Vaiṣṇavas; sambhāṣaṇa—of conversing; rasa—in the taste; āplutam—absorbed; santyakta—leaving aside; nṛtya—of dancing; kutukam—his sport; mita—gentle; jana—by associates; āvṛtam—surrounded; pārvatī-prāṇa-nātham—the life and soul of Pārvatī; tam—him (Lord Śiva); vṛṣyām—on a straw mat; vīra-āsanena—in the “hero’s posture”; saḥ—he (Nārada); āśīnam—seated; praṇaman—bowed down; bhaktyā—with devotion; paṭhan—reciting; rudra-ṣaḍ-aṅgakam—the six-syllable Rudra mantra.

Absorbed in the taste of talking with that superlative Vaiṣṇava Nārada, Lord Śiva then stopped his playful dancing and sat down. He sat on a straw mat in the vīrāsana posture, and a few of his gentle companions seated themselves around him. With devotion Nārada bowed down to Lord Śiva, the life and soul of Pārvatī, and chanted the six-syllable Rudra mantra.

One who is observing a serious vow should sit on a *kuśa* mat, called a *vṛṣī*, assuming the meditative “hero’s posture,” which expresses one’s firm determination. This *āsana* is defined in the *yoga-śāstras*. The *Rudra-ṣaḍ-aṅgaka* is a mantra of the Vedas. It begins with the words *namas te*.

जगदीशत्वमाहात्म्यप्रकाशनपरैः स्तवैः ।  
अस्तौद्विवृत्य तस्मिंश्च जगौ कृष्णकृपाभरम् ॥

jagad-īśatva-māhātmya-

*prakāśana-paraiḥ stavaiḥ  
astaut vivṛtya tasmimś ca  
jagau kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-bharam*

*jagat*—of the universe; *īśatva*—as the supreme controller; *māhātmya*—glories; *prakāśana-paraiḥ*—revealing; *stavaiḥ*—with prayers; *astaut*—he praised; *vivṛtya*—elaborately; *tasmin*—upon him; *ca*—and; *jagau*—he glorified; *kṛṣṇa*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā*—of the mercy; *bharam*—the fullness.

Nārada then recited prayers glorifying Lord Śiva as the supreme controller of the universe and elaborately proclaimed the fullness of the mercy bestowed upon Śiva by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Nārada praises Lord Śiva, who becomes angry

कर्णौ पिधाय रुद्रोऽसौ सक्रोधमवदद्गुशम् ।  
सर्ववैष्णवमूर्धन्यो विष्णुभक्तिप्रवर्तकः ॥

*karṇau pidhāya rudro 'sau  
sa-krodham avadat bhr̥śam  
sarva-vaiṣṇava-mūrdhanyo  
viṣṇu-bhakti-pravartakaḥ*

*karṇau*—his ears; *pidhāya*—covering; *rudraḥ*—Lord Rudra; *asau*—he; *sa-krodham*—with anger; *avadat*—said; *bhr̥śam*—forcefully; *sarva*—all; *vaiṣṇava*—among the Vaiṣṇavas; *mūrdhanyaḥ*—the chief; *viṣṇu-bhakti*—of the process of devotional service to Viṣṇu; *pravartakaḥ*—the initiator.

Lord Rudra, the best of Vaiṣṇavas, the initiator of devotional service to Viṣṇu, at once covered his ears and angrily replied.

*Vaiṣṇavānāṁ maheśvaraḥ*: “Of all Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Maheśvara is the greatest.” He is the greatest Vaiṣṇava because he initiates the teaching of pure devotional service. He founded the Rudra-sampradāya, one of

the four authentic Vaiṣṇava schools. He is more famous as a Vaiṣṇava than as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

श्रीरुद्र उवाच  
न जातु जगदीशोऽहं नापि कृष्णकृपास्पदम् ।  
परं तद्दासदासानां सदानुग्रहकामुकः ॥

*śrī-rudra uvāca*  
*na jātu jagad-īśo 'haṁ*  
*nāpi kṛṣṇa-kṛpāspadam*  
*paraṁ tad-dāsa-dāsānām*  
*sadānugraha-kāmukaḥ*

*śrī-rudraḥ uvāca*—Śrī Rudra said: *na*—not; *jātu*—at all; *jagat*—of the universe; *īśaḥ*—the Lord; *aham*—I; *na api*—nor; *kṛṣṇa*—of Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā-āspadam*—a recipient of the mercy; *paraṁ*—rather; *tad*—His; *dāsa-dāsānām*—of the servants of the servants; *sadā*—always; *anugraha*—for the favor; *kāmukaḥ*—hankering.

Śrī Rudra said: “I am not the Lord of the universe, nor an object of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy! I am just a poor soul always hankering for the favor of the servants of His servants.”

“I can only hanker for the mercy of Kṛṣṇa’s servants, because I am not fortunate enough to have it.”

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
सम्भ्रान्तोऽथ मुनिर्हित्वा कृष्णेनैक्येन तत्स्तुतिम् ।  
सापराधमिवात्मानं मन्यमानोऽब्रवीच्छनैः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*sambhrānto 'tha munir hitvā*  
*kṛṣṇenaikyena tat-stutim*  
*sāparādhm ivātmānaṁ*  
*manyamāno 'bravīc chanaiḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *sambhrāntaḥ*—shocked; *atha*—then; *munīḥ*—the sage; *hitvā*—stopping; *kṛṣṇena*—from Kṛṣṇa; *aikyena*—in terms of his being nondifferent; *tat*—of him; *stutim*—the praise; *sa-aparādham*—offensive; *iva*—as if; *ātmānam*—himself; *manyamānaḥ*—considering; *abravīt*—he said; *śanaiḥ*—in a soft voice.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Upon hearing this, the sage Nārada was shocked. Thinking he had acted offensively, he at once stopped praising Lord Śiva's nondifference from Kṛṣṇa and began to speak in a soft voice.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
सत्यमेव भवान् विष्णोर्वैष्णवानां च दुर्गमाम् ।  
निगूढां महिमश्रेणीं वेत्ति विज्ञापयत्यपि ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*satyam eva bhavān viṣṇor*  
*vaiṣṇavānām ca durgamām*  
*nigūdhām mahima-śreṇīm*  
*vetti vijñāpayaty api*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *satyam eva*—truly; *bhavān*—your good self; *viṣṇoḥ*—of Lord Viṣṇu; *vaiṣṇavānām*—of His devotees; *ca*—and; *durgamām*—difficult to understand; *nigūdhām*—and confidential; *mahima*—of glories; *śreṇīm*—the abundance; *vetti*—knows; *vijñāpayati*—explains to others; *api*—also.

Śrī Nārada said: You certainly know the confidential, mysterious glories of Lord Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas. And you expertly explain those glories.

Although the greatness of the Lord and His devotees is a fathomless mystery, Lord Śiva and other empowered Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* are able to help ordinary conditioned souls understand it. Nārada hopes Lord Śiva will accept praise at least on this account.

अतो हि वैष्णवश्रेष्ठैरिष्यते त्वदनुग्रहः ।

कृष्णश्च महिमानं ते प्रीतो वितनुतेऽधिकम् ॥

*ato hi vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭhair  
iṣyate tvad-anugrahaḥ  
kṛṣṇaś ca mahimānam te  
prīto vitanute 'dhikam*

*ataḥ—therefore; hi—certainly; vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭhaiḥ—by the best Vaiṣṇavas; iṣyate—is aspired for; tvat—your; anugrahaḥ—mercy; kṛṣṇaḥ—Lord Kṛṣṇa; ca—and; mahimānam—glory; te—your; prītaḥ—with affection; vitanute—spreads; adhikam—extensively.*

**The best Vaiṣṇavas therefore aspire for your mercy. Lord Kṛṣṇa also has great regard for you and extensively spreads your glories.**

Kṛṣṇa spreads the fame of Lord Śiva, sometimes through representatives and sometimes Himself.

कति वारांश्च कृष्णेन वरा विविधमूर्तिभिः ।  
भक्त्या भवन्तमाराध्य गृहीताः कति सन्ति न ॥

*kati vārāṁś ca kṛṣṇena  
varā vividha-mūrtibhiḥ  
bhaktyā bhavantam ārādhya  
gṛhītāḥ kati santi na*

*kati vārān—how many times; ca—and; kṛṣṇena—by Kṛṣṇa; varāḥ—boons; vividha—various; mūrtibhiḥ—in incarna-tions; bhaktyā—with devotion; bhavantam—you; ārādhya—worshiping; gṛhītāḥ—accepted; kati—how many; santi—there are; na—not.*

**Has Kṛṣṇa not worshiped you many times in His various incarnations and taken from you many boons?**

Those who want to see examples of Lord Śiva's bestowing a boon upon Kṛṣṇa can read the *Dāna-dharma* section and other parts of the *Vāmana Purāṇa*, which describe how Śrī Kṛṣṇa received the Sudarśana *cakra* and how Sāmba became His son.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इति श्रुत्वा तु सहसा धैर्यं कर्तुमशक्नुवन् ।  
लज्जितो द्रुतमुत्थाय नारदस्य मुखं हरः ।  
कराभ्यां पिदधे धाष्टर्यं मम तन् न वदेरिति ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
iti śrutvā tu sahasā  
dhairyaṁ kartum aśaknuvan  
lajjito drutam utthāya  
nāradasya mukhaṁ haraḥ  
karābhyāṁ pidadhe dhārṣṭyaṁ  
mama tan na vader iti*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; iti—thus; śrutvā—hearing; tu—and; sahasā—suddenly; dhairyaṁ—soberness; kartum—to maintain; aśaknuvan—unable; lajjitaḥ—feeling ashamed; drutam—quickly; utthāya—standing up; nāradasya—of Nārada; mukham—the mouth; haraḥ—Lord Śiva; karābhyām—with his hands; pidadhe—covered; dhārṣṭyaṁ—arrogance; mama—my; tat—that; na vadeḥ—you should not speak about; iti—thus.*

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Hearing this, Lord Śiva could no longer maintain his gravity. Ashamed, he sprang to his feet, covered Nārada's mouth with both hands, and said, "Don't even mention that arrogance of mine!"

Lord Śiva felt embarrassed to be reminded that he had offered benedictions to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

अनन्तरमुवाचोच्चैः सविस्मयमहो मुने ।  
दुर्वितर्क्यतरं लीलावैभवं दृश्यतां प्रभोः ॥

*anantaram uvācoccaiḥ  
sa-vismayam aho mune  
durvitarkya-taraṁ līlā-*



*vaibhavam dṛśyatām prabhoḥ*  
*anantaram*—after this; *uvāca*—he said; *uccaiḥ*—loudly; *sa-vismayam*—  
with surprise; *aho*—oh; *mune*—my dear sage; *durvitarkya-taram*—most  
incomprehensible; *līlā*—of the pastimes; *vaibhavam*—the influence;  
*dṛśyatām*—just see; *prabhoḥ*—of the Supreme Lord.

**He then boldly told Nārada with surprise in his voice, “Just see the most incomprehensible power of the pastimes of the Supreme Lord!**

Putting aside his embarrassment, Lord Śiva pointed out to Nārada the wonderful uniqueness of the pastimes the Supreme Lord enacts with His devotees, in which the Lord takes upon Himself many severe vows and penances just to win the devotees’ blessings.

**अहो विचित्रगम्भीरमहिमाब्धिर्मदीश्वरः ।  
विविधेष्वपराधेषु नोपेक्षेत कृतेष्वपि ॥**

*aho vicitra-gambhīra-*  
*mahimābdhir mad-īśvaraḥ*  
*vividheṣv aparādheṣu*  
*nopekṣeta kṛteṣv api*  
*aho*—oh; *vicitra*—of all kinds; *gambhīra*—deep; *mahima*—of greatness;  
*abdhīḥ*—an ocean; *mat-īśvaraḥ*—my Lord; *vi-vidheṣu*—various;  
*aparādheṣu*—offenses; *na upēkṣeta*—he does not reject me; *kṛteṣu*—  
when they have been committed; *api*—even.

**“Oh, my Lord is so sober. He is such a deep and varied ocean of great qualities. Even though I have committed many kinds of offenses against Him, He still does not reject me.”**

The ocean is too deep for one to measure, what to speak of diving into it and reaching its bottom. The ocean cannot be moved from its fixed place, and the opposite shore is far beyond anyone’s vision. Similarly, the Supreme Lord’s qualities are countless, they include every possible kind of greatness, and each of His qualities is unrestricted and boundless.

Lord Śiva considered himself offensive to have shown off his own power before Lord Kṛṣṇa by offering Him benedictions. Other offenses he had committed against the Lord were too painful for him to recall. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa never considers anything done by Lord Śiva offensive, since Lord Śiva always acts in this world only to promote the cause of Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, either directly or indirectly.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
परमानन्दितो धृत्वा पादयोरुपवेश्य तम् ।  
नारदः परितुष्टाव कृष्णभक्तिरसप्लुतम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*paramānandito dhṛtvā*  
*pādayor upaveśya tam*  
*nāradaḥ parituṣṭāva*  
*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-plutam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *parama*—supremely; *ānanditaḥ*—pleased; *dhṛtvā*—grasping; *pādayoḥ*—his feet; *upaveśya*—making sit down; *tam*—him (Lord Śiva); *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *parituṣṭāva*—appeased; *kṛṣṇa*—for Kṛṣṇa; *bhakti*—of pure devotion; *rasa*—in the transcendental mood; *plutam*—absorbed.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Seeing Lord Śiva completely absorbed in the transcendental taste of pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa, Nārada, pleased beyond limit, grasped Lord Śiva's feet, made him sit down again, and spoke to appease him.

Nārada argues that Śiva is very dear to Kṛṣṇa

श्रीनारद उवाच  
नापराधावकाशस्ते प्रेयसः कश्चिदच्युते ।

कदाचिल्लोकदृष्ट्यापि जातो नास्मिन् प्रकाशते ॥

śrī-nārada uvāca  
nāparādhāvakāśas te  
preyasaḥ kaścīd acyute  
kadācil loka-dṛṣṭyāpi  
jāto nāsmiṇ prakāśate

śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; na—no; aparādha—for offense; avakāśaḥ—opportunity; te—for you; preyasaḥ—who are very dear; kaścīd—any; acyute—against Lord Acyuta; kadācit—ever; loka—of ordinary people; dṛṣṭyā—in the eyes; api—even; jātaḥ—has arisen; na—nor; asmiṇ—from His point of view; prakāśate—it is visible.

Śrī Nārada said: You are so dear to Lord Acyuta. Is it possible you could ever offend Him? Though people sometimes see what they think are your offenses, He never sees them at all.

स्वबाहुबलदुर्मस्य साधूपद्रवकारिणः ।  
मायाबद्धानिरुद्धस्य युध्यमानस्य चक्रिणा ॥

हतप्रायस्य बाणस्य निजभक्तस्य पुत्रवत् ।  
पालितस्य त्वया प्राणरक्षार्थं श्रीहरिः स्तुतः ॥

sva-bāhu-bala-dṛptasya  
sādhūpadrava-kāriṇaḥ  
māyā-baddhāniruddhasya  
yudhyamānasya cakriṇā

hata-prāyasya bāṇasya  
nija-bhaktasya putra-vat  
pālitasya tvayā prāṇa-  
rakṣārthaṁ śrī-hariḥ stutaḥ

sva-bāhu—of his arms; bala—of the strength; dṛptasya—who was proud;

*sādhū*—for saintly persons; *upadrava-kāriṇaḥ*—who created disturbances; *māyā*—by his magic powers; *baddha-aniruddhasya*—who arrested Aniruddha; *yudhyamānasya*—who fought; *cakriṇā*—against Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the disc; *hata-prāyasya*—who was on the verge of being killed; *bāṇasya*—of Bāṇa; *nija*—your; *bhaktasya*—devotee; *putra-vat*—like a son; *pālitasya*—protected; *tvayā*—by you; *prāṇa*—his life; *rakṣā-artham*—for the sake of saving; *śrī-hariḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *stutaḥ*—was offered prayers.

Bāṇa was a cause of trouble for saintly persons. Too proud of the strength of his arms, he used magic to arrest Aniruddha and fight against Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the disc. When you saw that Bāṇa, your devotee, whom you had maintained like a son, was on the verge of being killed, to save his life you offered prayers to Śrī Hari.

सद्यो हित्वा रुषं प्रीतो दत्त्वा निजस्वरूपताम् ।  
भवत्पार्षदतां निन्ये तं दुरापां सुरैरपि ॥

*sadyo hitvā ruṣam prīto*  
*dattvā nija-svarūpatām*  
*bhavat-pārṣadatām ninye*  
*taṁ durāpām surair api*

*sadyaḥ*—at once; *hitvā*—putting aside; *ruṣam*—anger; *prītaḥ*—pleased; *dattvā*—giving; *nija*—his (Bāṇa's) own; *sva-rūpatām*—a form like His (the Lord's); *bhavat*—of you (Lord Śiva); *pārṣadatām*—to the position of a personal associate; *ninye*—He brought; *taṁ*—him; *durāpām*—rarely obtained; *suraiḥ*—by demigods; *api*—even.

At once, Lord Kṛṣṇa put aside His anger. Now pleased, the Lord gave Bāṇa a form like His own and raised him to being one of your associates, a position rarely obtained even by demigods.

In the fight against Bāṇāsura, Lord Kṛṣṇa had already lifted His Sudarśana disc to kill Bāṇa, His son's enemy, but at that moment Lord

Śiva interceded. Despite Bāṇa's long list of offenses against Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, Bāṇa had the one credit of being Lord Śiva's sincere devotee. This impressed Lord Kṛṣṇa so much that He gave Bāṇa a four-armed form of his own. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then told Lord Śiva:

*catvāro 'sya bhujāḥ śiṣṭā  
bhaviṣyaty ajarāmarah  
pārṣada-mukhyo bhavato  
na kutaścid-bhayo 'surah*

“This demon, who still has four arms, will be immune to old age and death, and he will serve as one of your principal attendants. Thus he will have nothing to fear on any account.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.63.49)

**भवांश्च वैष्णवद्रोहिगार्ग्यादिभ्यः सुदुश्चरैः ।  
तपोभिर्भजमानेभ्यो नाव्यलीकं वरं ददे ॥**

*bhavāṁś ca vaiṣṇava-drohi-  
gārgyādibhyaḥ su-duṣcaraiḥ  
tapobhir bhajamānebhyo  
nāvyaalikam varam dade*

*bhavān*—you; *ca*—and; *vaiṣṇava-drohi*—who were enemies of the Vaiṣṇavas; *gārgya-ādibhyaḥ*—to Gārgya and others; *su-duṣcaraiḥ*—most difficult to perform; *tapobhiḥ*—by penances; *bhajamānebhyaḥ*—who were worshiping; *na avyalikam*—not without loopholes; *varam*—benedictions; *dade*—gave.

**When such enemies of the Vaiṣṇavas as Gārgya worshiped you by severe penances, the benedictions you gave them were not without loopholes.**

Because Gārgya and others were inimical to the Yādavas and Pāṇḍavas, who were all staunch Vaiṣṇavas, Lord Śiva rewarded their worship with imperfect boons. According to the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1), Gārgya Bālāki was a learned son of the sage Garga who was too proud of his acquired knowledge. By Lord Śiva's blessing, Gārgya obtained a son, but not one who could destroy the Yadu dynasty, as

Gārgya had wanted—only one who could frighten and frustrate the Yadus. Similarly, Jayadratha received the limited boon that he could only once defeat each of the Pāṇḍavas, except Arjuna. Sudakṣiṇa was allowed to destroy any enemy of his choice who was not a proper follower of brahminical culture, but this power ultimately turned against him. The full stories of these hapless devotees of Lord Śiva are recorded in Śrī Hari-vaṁśa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

चित्रकेतुप्रभृतयोऽधियोऽप्यंशश्रिता हरेः ।  
निन्दका यद्यपि स्वस्य तेभ्योऽकुप्यस्तथापि न ॥

*citraketu-prabhṛtayo*  
*'dhiyo 'py aṁśāśritā hareḥ*  
*nindakā yady api svasya*  
*tebhyo 'kupyas tathāpi na*

*citraketu-prabhṛtayaḥ*—Citraketu and others; *adhiyaḥ*—un-intelligent; *api*—even; *aṁśa*—of plenary portions; *āśritāḥ*—who took shelter; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *nindakāḥ*—criticizers; *yady api*—although; *svasya*—of you; *tebhyaḥ*—at them; *akup-yaḥ*—you became angry; *tathā api*—nonetheless; *na*—not.

Although Citraketu and others like him foolishly dared criticize you, you never became angry at them, because they were surrendered devotees of plenary portions of Lord Hari.

It is foolish for anyone to criticize Lord Śiva. When Citraketu committed this mistake he was not yet a pure Vaiṣṇava; otherwise he would not have exercised his discrimination so wrongly. But Citraketu, even as a neophyte, had a connection with Lord Śeṣa, an expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, Balarāma. So Lord Śiva was not offended by Citraketu's laughing when Lord Śiva sat with Pārvatī on his lap in the presence of a group of sages.

कृष्णस्य प्रीतये तस्माच्छ्रैष्ठ्यमप्यभिवाञ्छता ।  
तद्भक्तैव चातुर्यविशेषेणार्थिता त्वया ॥

*kṛṣṇasya prīṭaye tasmāc  
chraiṣṭhyam apy abhivāñchatā  
tad-bhaktataiva cātura-  
viśeṣeṇārthitā tvayā*

*kṛṣṇasya*—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *prīṭaye*—for the satisfaction; *tasmāt*—to Him; *śraiṣṭhyam*—a superior position; *api*—even; *abhivāñchatā*—who was desiring; *tad-bhaktatā*—the status of being His devotee; *eva*—only; *cātura*—by cleverness; *viśeṣeṇa*—exceptional; *arthitā*—was requested; *tvayā*—by you.

**Once, just to please Lord Kṛṣṇa, you expressed the desire to become even greater than He. But then you very cleverly modied your request, asking Him instead to make you His devotee.**

This in Lord Śiva's opinion was a particularly egregious offense, based on the desire to be worshiped. He confesses in the *Bṛhat-sahasra-nāma-stotra* (*Padma Purāṇa*, *Uttara-khaṇḍa* 71.102):

*alabdhvā cātmanah pūjām  
samyag ārādhito hariḥ  
mayā tasmād api śraiṣṭhyam  
vāñchatāhaṅkṛtātmanā*

“When I didn't receive the worship I wanted, I served Lord Hari thoroughly in devotional service, but with the egotistic motive of becoming even greater than He.” In this way Lord Śiva berates himself, but the truth is that even then he acted only for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. He thought that Kṛṣṇa would be displeased by a direct request that Lord Śiva become His servant. Since Kṛṣṇa is self-effacing by nature, He does not like exalted persons like Śiva to act subordinate to Him. So Lord Śiva instead submitted what seemed the opposite request. Kṛṣṇa has declared His servant greater than Himself. *Mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā*: “More important than worshiping Me is worshiping My devotee.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.19.21) Therefore Lord Śiva cleverly asked for that greater position. Lord Śiva had also once overheard Kṛṣṇa, while playing dice with His queen Rukmiṇī, declare His devotee even more glorious

than Himself, in order to allure the dice into acting as His devotees by serving Him nicely.

अतो ब्रह्मादिसम्प्रार्थ्यमुक्तिदानाधिकारिताम् ।  
भवते भगवत्यै च दुर्गायै भगवानदात् ॥

*ato brahmādi-samprārthya-  
mukti-dānādhikāritām  
bhavate bhagavatyai ca  
durgāyai bhagavān adāt*

*ataḥ*—therefore; *brahma-ādi*—by Brahmā and others; *samprārthya*—suitable to be prayed for; *mukti*—of liberation; *dāna*—in the granting; *adhikāritām*—authority; *bhavate*—to your good self; *bhagavatyai*—to the goddess; *ca*—and; *durgāyai*—Durgā; *bhagavān*—the Supreme Lord; *adāt*—gave.

Therefore the Supreme Lord granted you and the goddess Durgā the authority to give liberation, the liberation for which Brahmā and many others pray.

Without Lord Viṣṇu's personal sanction, no one can become free from the cycle of birth and death: *harim vinā naiva sṛtiṁ taranti* (*Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* 10.87.27). Moreover, Lord Viṣṇu abides by such statements from the Vedic *śāstras*, which constitute His own laws. But having promised Lord Śiva a position even better than His own, Lord Viṣṇu deputed to both Lord Śiva and his wife the power to bestow liberation on His behalf.

अहो ब्रह्मादिदुष्प्राप्ये ऐश्वर्ये सत्यपीदृशे ।  
तत्सर्वं सुखमप्यात्म्यमनादृत्यावधूतवत् ॥

*aho brahmādi-duṣprāpye  
aiśvarye saty apīdṛśe  
tat sarvaṁ sukham apy ātmyam  
anādr̥tyāvadhūta-vat*



*aho*—oh; *brahma-ādi*—by Brahmā and other demigods; *duṣprāpye*—which is unobtainable; *aiśvarye*—controlling power; *sati*—there being; *api*—even though; *īdṛśe*—such; *tat*—that; *sarvam*—all; *sukham*—happiness; *api*—also; *ātmyam*—personal; *anādr̥tya*—disregarding; *avadhūta-vat*—like a holy madman.

Just see! Though you have power and opulence unobtainable by Brahmā and the other demigods, you disregard your material happiness and live like a holy madman.

भावाविष्टः सदा विष्णोर्महोन्मादगृहीतवत् ।  
कोऽन्यः पत्न्या समं नृत्येद् गणैरपि दिगम्बरः ॥

*bhāvāviṣṭaḥ sadā viṣṇor*  
*mahonmāda-grhīta-vat*  
*ko 'nyaḥ patnyā samam nṛtyed*  
*gaṇair api dig-ambaraḥ*

*bhāva-āviṣṭaḥ*—fixed in a trance of devotion; *sadā*—always; *viṣṇoḥ*—for Lord Viṣṇu; *mahā-unmāda*—extreme insanity; *grhīta-vat*—as if seized; *kaḥ*—who; *anyaḥ*—else; *patnyā samam*—with his wife; *nṛtyet*—would dance; *gaṇaiḥ*—with attendants; *api*—and; *dik-ambaraḥ*—naked.

Always fixed in a trance of devotion for Lord Viṣṇu, you appear totally insane. Who else but you would go dance—naked!—with his wife and attendants?

दृष्टोऽद्य भगवद्भक्तिलाम्पट्यमहिमाद्भुतः ।  
तद्भवानेव कृष्णस्य नित्यं परमवल्लभः ॥

*dr̥ṣṭo 'dya bhagavad-bhakti-*  
*lāmpaṭya-mahimādbhutaḥ*  
*tad bhavān eva kṛṣṇasya*  
*nityam parama-vallabhaḥ*

*dr̥ṣṭaḥ*—seen; *adya*—today; *bhagavat-bhakti*—for the Supreme Lord's

devotional service; *lāmpaṭya*—of the uncontrollable eagerness; *mahimā*—the greatness; *adbhutaḥ*—amazing; *tat*—therefore; *bhavān*—you; *eva*—alone; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *nityam*—perpetually; *parama*—the supreme; *vallabhaḥ*—beloved.

**Today I have finally seen your amazing uncontrollable eagerness to serve the Supreme Lord in pure devotion. No wonder Kṛṣṇa always loves you the most.**

आः किं वाच्यानवच्छिन्ना कृष्णस्य प्रियता त्वयि ।  
त्वत्प्रसादेन बहवोऽन्येऽपि तत्प्रियतां गताः ॥

*āḥ kiṁ vācyānavacchinnā  
kṛṣṇasya priyatā tvayi  
tvat-prasādena bahavo  
'nye 'pi tat-priyatām gatāḥ*

*āḥ*—ah; *kiṁ*—what; *vācyā*—is to be said; *anavacchinnā*—uninterrupted; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *priyatā*—affection; *tvayi*—upon you; *tvat-prasādena*—by your mercy; *bahavaḥ*—many; *anye*—others; *api*—also; *tat-priyatām*—dearness to Him; *gatāḥ*—attained.

**What more can I say? Kṛṣṇa's love for you is never interrupted. And by your mercy many others have become dear to Him.**

Nārada is amazed that the greatest master of *yoga* discipline, the chief of self-satisfied sages, the husband of material nature, completely disregards common standards of cultured behavior; he does not even walk and dance normally.

Lord Śiva's natural expressions of his inner feelings, if exhibited by anyone else, would be considered unacceptable or insane. Nārada understands, however, that Lord Śiva's unusual behavior is a sign of his exceptional greatness as a Vaiṣṇava who deeply tastes the ecstasies of devotional exchanges with the Supreme Person. Therefore many serious aspirants for spiritual perfection, such as the ten Pracetās, have taken shelter of Lord Śiva to obtain the rare gift of *viṣṇu-bhakti*.

पार्वत्याश्च प्रसादेन बहवस्तत्प्रियाः कृताः ।  
तत्त्वाभिज्ञा विशेषेण भवतोरियमेव हि ॥

*pārvatyāś ca prasādena  
bahavas tat-priyāḥ kṛtāḥ  
tattvābhijñā viśeṣeṇa  
bhavator iyam eva hi*

*pārvatyāḥ*—of Mother Pārvatī; *ca*—and; *prasādena*—by the mercy; *bahavaḥ*—many persons; *tat-priyāḥ*—dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa; *kṛtāḥ*—have become; *tattva*—of the reality; *abhijñā*—who knows well; *viśeṣeṇa*—in particular detail; *bhavatoḥ*—of you two; *iyam*—she; *eva hi*—indeed.

By Mother Pārvatī's mercy, also, many other persons have become dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. She knows in detail the true nature of both Lord Kṛṣṇa and you.

The *Purāṇas* tell of persons like Janaśarmā who by Pārvatī's mercy became great Vaiṣṇavas. Janaśarmā's story will be told in the Second Part of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

कृष्णस्य भगिनी वैषा स्नेहपात्रं सदाम्बिका ।  
अत एव भवानात्मारामोऽप्येतामपेक्षते ॥

*kṛṣṇasya bhaginī vaiṣā  
sneha-pātram sadāmbikā  
ata eva bhavān ātmā-  
rāmo 'py etām apekṣate*

*kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *bhaginī*—the sister; *vā*—indeed; *eṣā*—she; *sneha*—of the affection; *pātram*—the recipient; *sadā*—always; *ambikā*—Ambikā; *ataḥ eva*—therefore; *bhavān*—you; *ātma-ārāmaḥ*—self-satisfied; *api*—although; *etām*—her; *apekṣate*—pay regard to.

Mother Pārvatī, Ambikā, is Kṛṣṇa's own sister, who always receives His affection. That is why you care for her even though fully satisfied in yourself.

Pārvatī is a nondifferent expansion of Yogamāyā, who appeared on earth from the womb of Yaśodā-devī at the same time that Kṛṣṇa was born from Devakī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa therefore regards Pārvatī as His sister.

विचित्रभगवन्नामसङ्कीर्तनकथोत्सवैः ।  
सदेमां रमयन् विष्णुजनसङ्गसुखं भजेत् ॥

*vicitra-bhagavan-nāma-  
saṅkīrtana-kathotsavaiḥ  
sademāṁ ramayan viṣṇu-  
jana-saṅga-sukhaṁ bhajet*

*vicitra*—wonderful; *bhagavat-nāma*—the names of the Supreme Lord; *saṅkīrtana*—of congregational chanting; *kathā*—and of descriptive narrations; *utsavaiḥ*—by festivals; *sadā*—always; *imām*—her; *ramayan*—gratifying; *viṣṇu-jana*—of Lord Viṣṇu's devotees; *saṅga*—of the association; *sukham*—the happiness; *bhajet*—she experiences.

You give her pleasure by always holding wonderful festivals with singing of Lord Viṣṇu's names and recitation of His glories. At those times she enjoys the company of Lord Viṣṇu's devotees.

Lord Śiva refutes Nārada's praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततो महेश्वरो मातस्त्रपावनमिताननः ।  
नारदं भगवद्रक्तमवदद्वैष्णवाग्रणीः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*

tato maheśvaro mātāḥ  
trapāvanamitānanaḥ  
nāradaṁ bhagavad-bhaktam  
avadat vaiṣṇavāgraṇīḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tataḥ—then; mahā-īśvaraḥ—Lord Śiva; mātāḥ—O mother; trapā—due to embarrassment; avanamita—lowered; ānanaḥ—whose face; nāradaṁ—to Nārada; bhagavat-bhaktam—the devotee of the Lord; avadat—he said; vaiṣṇava-agraṇīḥ—the foremost of Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Dear mother, Lord Śiva was so embarrassed by hearing this that he lowered his face. Then that leader of the Vaiṣṇavas answered the great devotee Nārada.

Lord Śiva's first reaction was to feel ashamed at hearing himself praised. Then he began to think that since the praise was altogether untrue, Nārada might be making fun of him.

श्रीमहेश उवाच  
अहो बत महत्कष्टं त्यक्तसर्वाभिमान हे ।  
क्वाहं सर्वाभिमानानां मूलं क्व तादृशेश्वरः ॥

śrī-maheśa uvāca  
aho bata mahat kaṣṭam  
tyakta-sarvābhimāna he  
kvāhaṁ sarvābhimānānām  
mūlaṁ kva tādṛśeśvaraḥ

śrī-maheśaḥ uvāca—Śrī Maheśa said; aho bata—oh; mahat kaṣṭam—very painful; tyakta—who are free; sarva—from all; abhimāna—false pride; he—O you; kva—where; aham—I; sarva—of every kind; abhimānānām—of false pride; mūlam—the root; kva—where; tādṛśa—such; īśvaraḥ—the Lord.

Śrī Maheśa said: Oh, how painful this is! My dear Nārada, free of every trace of false pride, how can you compare me, the root of all pride, to

### Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of prideless sages?

Lord Śiva presides over the material force of *ahaṅkāra*, by which everyone from the rulers of planets on down thinks himself very important. And so Lord Śiva has some reason to blame himself for the false ego that pervades the material universe. Nārada, in contrast, is free from the influence of *ahaṅkāra* and so should not be idolizing Lord Śiva. At the opposite end to Lord Śiva in the spectrum of egotism, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the source of pure pridelessness. Lord Śiva implies by this comparison that no real relationship can exist between himself and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who are so opposite in nature.

लोकेशो ज्ञानदो ज्ञानी मुक्तो मुक्तिप्रदोऽप्यहम् ।  
भक्तो भक्तिप्रदो विष्णोरित्याद्यहङ्क्रियावृतः ॥

*lokeśo jñāna-do jñānī*  
*mukto mukti-prado 'py aham*  
*bhakto bhakti-prado viṣṇor*  
*ity-ādy-ahaṅ-kriyāvṛtaḥ*

*loka-īśaḥ*—lord of the universe; *jñāna-daḥ*—giver of knowledge; *jñānī*—knower of everything; *muktaḥ*—liberated; *mukti-pradaḥ*—giver of liberation; *api*—and; *aham*—I; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *bhakti-pradaḥ*—giver of devotion; *viṣṇoḥ*—to Viṣṇu; *iti*—thus; *ādi*—and so on; *aham-kriyā*—by material ego; *āvṛtaḥ*—covered.

**I am covered by many false identities. I consider myself the lord of the universe, the all-knowing giver of knowledge, the liberated bestower of liberation, the devoted granter of devotion for Viṣṇu.**

One might think that the universal controller of false ego should be immune to its influence. Lord Śiva now denies this, describing himself as subject to *ahaṅkāra*. He says he also considers himself a dear devotee of Viṣṇu and a recipient of Viṣṇu's special mercy; and such a mentality, he thinks, is but another influence of false ego.

सर्वग्रासकरे घोरे महाकाले समागते ।

## विलुजेशेषसंहारतामसस्वप्रयोजनात् ॥

*sarva-grāsa-kare ghore  
mahā-kāle samāgate  
villaje 'śeṣa-saṁhāra-  
tāmasa-sva-prayojanāt*

*sarva-grāsa-kare*—all-devouring; *ghore*—fearful; *mahā-kāle*—when the time of annihilation; *samāgate*—comes; *villaje*—I am ashamed; *aśeṣa*—of all; *saṁhāra*—destruction; *tāmasa*—based on the mode of ignorance; *sva*—my; *prayojanāt*—of the responsibility.

When the fearful time of annihilation arrives, in which everything must be devoured, I am obliged by the mode of ignorance to destroy the entire cosmos. When I think of this, I feel ashamed.

मयि नारद वर्तेत कृपालेशोऽपि चेद्धरेः ।  
तदा किं पारिजातोषाहरणादौ मया रणः ॥

*mayi nārada varteta  
kṛpā-leśo 'pi ced dhareḥ  
tadā kiṁ pārijātoṣā-  
haraṇādaḥ mayā raṇaḥ*

*mayi*—upon me; *nārada*—O Nārada; *varteta*—there were; *kṛpā*—of mercy; *leśaḥ*—a drop; *api*—even; *ced*—if; *hareḥ*—Lord Hari's; *tadā*—then; *kiṁ*—why; *pārijāta*—of the *pārijāta* flower; *uṣā*—and of Ūṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa; *haraṇa*—in the taking away; *ādaḥ*—and so on; *mayā*—with me; *raṇaḥ*—battle.

Dear Nārada, if I had even a drop of the mercy of Lord Hari, why did He fight me when He took away the *pārijāta* flower, when Aniruddha stole Ūṣā, and on other such occasions?

मां किमाराधयेद्दासं किमेतच्चादिशेत्प्रभुः ।

## स्वागमैः कल्पितैस्त्वं च जनान् मद्विमुखान् कुरु ॥

*mām kim ārādhayed dāsam  
kim etac cādiśet prabhuḥ  
svāgamaiḥ kalpitais tvam ca  
janān mad-vimukhān kuru*

*mām*—me; *kim*—why; *ārādhayet*—would He worship; *dāsam*—His servant; *kim*—why; *etat*—this; *ca*—and; *ādiśet*—would order; *prabhuḥ*—the Lord; *sva*—your own; *āgamaiḥ*—with scriptures; *kalpitaiḥ*—concocted; *tvam*—you; *ca*—and; *janān*—the general populace; *mat-vimukhān*—indifferent to Me; *kuru*—make.

**Why would He worship me, His servant, and why would He order me, “Turn people away from Me by concocting your own versions of scripture”?**

Here Lord Śiva tries to prove not only that Śrī Kṛṣṇa hardly cares for him but that the Lord actually holds him in contempt. Otherwise, Lord Śiva argues, Kṛṣṇa would not have opposed him in battle on several occasions, as when Kṛṣṇa stole Indra’s *pārijāta* flower and when Aniruddha stole Ūṣā, the daughter of Bāṇāsura.

Furthermore, when a master pretends to worship a servant, that servant is actually insulted and exposed to public ridicule. The pretense may even indicate that the master secretly holds some grudge against the servant and wants to humiliate him. This may have been the case in such instances as when Kṛṣṇa worshiped Śiva to obtain an excellent son. Lord Śiva thus concludes that Kṛṣṇa’s asking benedictions from him indicates not Kṛṣṇa’s favor but Kṛṣṇa’s contempt.

Rather than overlook Lord Śiva’s transgressions, Kṛṣṇa punishes him in subtle ways. Lord Śiva is supposed to be a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa because he teaches pure devotional service, yet Kṛṣṇa ordered him to teach Māyāvāda atheism. Of course, Lord Śiva is actually a pure devotee and a recipient of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s favor; even his teaching atheism is done for the sake of protecting the confidentiality of devotional service. But a pure devotee, naturally dissatisfied with himself, may often claim to



have no spiritual status.

The last two lines of this verse are a quotation from the *Bṛhat-sahasra-nāma* of the *Padma Purāṇa* (Uttara 71.107).

आवयोर्मुक्तिदातृत्वं यद्भवान् स्तौति हृष्टवत् ।  
तच्चातिदारुणं तस्य भक्तानां श्रुतिदुःखदम् ॥

*āvayor mukti-dātṛtvam  
yad bhavān stauti hr̥ṣṭa-vat  
tac cāti-dāruṇam tasya  
bhaktānām śruti-duḥkha-dam*

*āvayoh*—of the two of us (Śiva and Pārvatī); *mukti-dātṛtvam*—the power to bestow liberation; *yad*—which; *bhavān*—you; *stauti*—praise; *hr̥ṣṭa-vat*—joyfully; *tac*—that; *ca*—also; *ati-dāruṇam*—extremely distasteful; *tasya*—His; *bhaktānām*—to the devotees; *śruti*—by being heard; *duḥkha-dam*—causing unhappiness.

**You joyfully praise the power of me and my wife to bestow liberation. But we think this power terrible, because the Lord’s devotees feel distressed to hear of it.**

Vaiṣṇavas do not like to hear that anyone other than Lord Viṣṇu can award liberation.

Lord Śiva sends Nārada to the residents of Vaikuṇṭha

तत्कृष्णपार्षदश्रेष्ठ मा मां तस्य दयास्पदम् ।  
विद्धि किन्तु कृपासारभाजो वैकुण्ठवासिनः ॥

*tat kṛṣṇa-pārṣada-śreṣṭha  
mā mām tasya dayāspadam  
viddhi kintu kṛpā-sāra-  
bhājo vaikunṭha-vāsinaḥ*

*tat*—therefore; *kṛṣṇa-pārṣada*—of Kṛṣṇa’s associates; *śreṣṭha*—O best; *mā*—do not; *mām*—me; *tasya*—His; *dayā*—of the compassion; *āspadam*—a receiver; *viddhi*—understand; *kintu*—rather; *kṛpā-sāra*—of the essence of His mercy; *bhājāḥ*—the recipients; *vaikuṇṭha-vāsinaḥ*—the residents of Vaikuṇṭha.

**Therefore, O best of Kṛṣṇa’s associates, do not think me a recipient of His compassion. Rather, those who have obtained the essence of His mercy are the residents of Vaikuṇṭha.**

Because Nārada is himself one of Lord Viṣṇu’s principal attendants in Vaikuṇṭha, he should not have to be told that the Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs are true recipients of the Lord’s mercy. In the next six verses (texts <sup>v</sup>43 through 48) Lord Śiva specifies their qualifications.

**यैः सर्वं तुणवत्या ॥ भक्त्याराध्य प्रियं हरिम् ।  
सर्वार्थसिद्धयो लब्ध्वापाङ्गदृष्ट्यापि नादृताः ॥**

*yaiḥ sarvaṁ tṛṇa-vat tyaktvā  
bhaktyārādhyā priyaṁ harim  
sarvārtha-siddhaya labdhvā-  
pāṅga-dṛṣṭyāpi nādr̥tāḥ*

*yaiḥ*—by whom; *sarvaṁ*—everything; *tṛṇa-vat*—like straw; *tyaktvā*—being given up; *bhaktyā*—in pure devotion; *ārādhyā*—worshiping; *priyaṁ*—their dear; *harim*—Lord Hari; *sarva-artha*—of all goals; *siddhayaḥ*—the achievements; *labdhvā*—being gained; *apāṅga-dṛṣṭyā*—by a sidelong glance; *api*—even; *na*—not; *ādr̥tāḥ*—respected.

**They have given up everything as worthless straw. Worshiping their dear Lord Hari in pure devotion, they have no respect for the desirable achievements of this world; they will not even glance at those perfections.**

Some devotees have always been residents of Vaikuṇṭha, and others are elevated to Vaikuṇṭha from the material world. Even the process of self-surrender by which the *sādhana-siddha* Vaiṣṇavas attain Vaikuṇṭha is glorious. The successful *sādhakas* attract the favor of Lord Viṣṇu by

focusing their devotion on Him alone, ignoring every other means of success, including the religious principles of the *Vedas* and the mystic perfections of *yoga*. When material perfections come automatically to advanced Vaiṣṇavas, as secondary effects of exclusive devotion, the Vaiṣṇavas pay no attention to them, as if these treasures that others struggle to obtain were worthless garbage.

त्यक्तसर्वाभिमाना ये समस्तभयवर्जितम् ।  
वैकुण्ठं सच्चिदानन्दं गुणातीतं पदं गताः ॥

*tyakta-sarvābhimānā ye*  
*samasta-bhaya-varjitam*  
*vaikuṇṭham sac-cid-ānandam*  
*guṇātītam padam gatāḥ*

*tyakta*—have abandoned; *sarva-abhimānāḥ*—all varieties of false pride; *ye*—those who; *samasta*—of all; *bhaya*—fear; *varjitam*—devoid; *vaikuṇṭham*—Vaikuṇṭha; *sat-cit-ānandam*—the place of eternal knowledge and bliss; *guṇa-atītam*—beyond the material modes; *padam*—the abode; *gatāḥ*—they attained.

**Those devotees have abandoned every kind of false pride. And they have attained the world beyond the material modes and devoid of all fear: Vaikuṇṭha, which is sac-cid-ānanda—full of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.**

The residents of Vaikuṇṭha are greater not only than the materialists, the candidates for liberation, and the liberated, but even than Lord Śiva, the giver of liberation. According to his own view of himself, Lord Śiva is subject to the influence of false ego, whereas the devotees in Vaikuṇṭha are free from this defect. By virtue of this freedom from false pride, Vaiṣṇavas attain Vaikuṇṭha, which in spite of being a particular place is not temporary and illusory like the places of the material world. The eternal existence of Vaikuṇṭha is full of pure consciousness and unlimitedly satisfying bliss. It has none of the restrictions of material existence.

Many *Purāṇas* describe the absolute perfection of *Vaikuṇṭha*. For example, in the conversation between *Brahmā* and *Nārada* in *Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra*, we can read, in the *Jitam-te-stotra*:

*lokaṁ vaikuṇṭha-nāmānaṁ  
divya-ṣaḍ-guṇa-saṁyutam  
avaiṣṇavānām aprāpyaṁ  
guṇa-traya-vivarjitam*

*nitya-siddhaiḥ samākīrṇaḥ  
tan-mayaiḥ pañca-kālikaiḥ  
sabhā-prāsāda-saṁyuktaṁ  
vanaiś copavanaiḥ śubham*

*vāpī-kūpa-taḍāgaiś ca  
vṛkṣa-ṣaṇḍaiḥ su-maṇḍitam  
aprākṛtaḥ surair vandyam  
ayutārka-sama-prabham*

“Impossible to attain for non-Vaiṣnavas, the world called *Vaikuṇṭha* is devoid of the three material modes and full in the six divine traits. It is rich with eternally perfect souls, who all have those same six traits and who appear in the five different ages of life. All-auspicious *Vaikuṇṭha* is beautied by many palaces and assembly halls and by wells, tanks, ponds, gardens, forests, and groves of trees. That transcendental world, worshiped by the demigods, is more brilliantly effulgent than ten thousand suns.”

In the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*:

*tam ananta-guṇāvāsaṁ  
mahat-tejo durāsadam  
apratyakṣaṁ nirupamaṁ  
parānandam atīndriyam*

“It is the abode of countless spiritual qualities, a world of un-

approachable supreme light. It cannot be perceived by material senses, nor compared to anything known. It is supremely ecstatic and beyond the scope of the senses.”

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Second Canto (2.9.9–10):

*tasmai sva-lokaṁ bhagavān sabhājitaḥ  
sandarśayām āsa paraṁ na yat-param  
vyapeta-saṅkleśa-vimoha-sādhvasaṁ  
sva-dṛṣṭavadbhiḥ puruṣair abhiṣṭutam*

*pravartate yatra rajas tamas tayoh  
sattvaṁ ca miśraṁ na ca kāla-vikramaḥ  
na yatra māyā kim utāpare harer  
anuvratā yatra surāsurārcitāḥ*

“Very much satisfied with the penance of Lord Brahmā, the Personality of Godhead was pleased to manifest His personal abode, Vaikuṇṭha, the supreme planet above all others. This transcendental abode of the Lord is adored by all self-realized persons freed from all miseries and fear of illusory existence. In that personal abode of the Lord, the material modes of ignorance and passion do not prevail, nor have they any influence in goodness. There is no predominance of the influence of time, so what to speak of the illusory, external energy; it cannot enter that region. Without discrimination, both the demigods and the demons worship the Lord as devotees.”

And in the Tenth Canto (10.28.14–15):

*iti sañcintya bhagavān  
mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ  
darśayām āsa lokaṁ svaṁ  
gopānām tamasaḥ param*

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad  
brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam  
yad dhi paśyanti munayo*

“Thus deeply considering the situation of the cowherd men, the all-merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari revealed to them His abode, which is beyond material darkness. Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious, and eternal. Sages see that spiritual existence in trance, when their consciousness is free of the modes of material nature.”

These verses identify *Vaikuṇṭha* with the *brahma-jyotiḥ*, the effulgent light of the all-pervading Supreme—that is, with the same absolute existence described in the *Upaniṣads* under the name Brahman. With the eye of intelligence, self-satisfied sages (*munis*) envision *Vaikuṇṭha*, but they are not fit to achieve it.

तत्र ये सच्चिदानन्ददेहाः परमवैभवम् ।  
सम्प्राप्तं सच्चिदानन्दं हरिसार्ष्टिं च नाभजन् ॥

*tatra ye sac-cid-ānanda-  
dehāḥ parama-vaibhavam  
samprāptam sac-cid-ānandam  
hari-sārṣṭim ca nābhajan*

*tatra*—there; *ye*—who; *sat*—composed of eternity; *cit*—knowledge; *ānanda*—and bliss; *dehāḥ*—whose bodies; *parama*—supreme; *vaibhavam*—opulence; *samprāptam*—obtained; *sat-cit-ānandam*—on the level of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; *hari-sārṣṭim*—the perfection of equal power with Lord Hari; *ca*—and; *na abhajan*—they have not accepted.

In *Vaikuṇṭha* the residents have *sac-cid-ānanda* bodies and may avail themselves of the supreme opulence of Lord Hari. They have *sac-cid-ānanda* powers, equal to His. But the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha* do not like to accept such equality with the Lord.

The residents of *Vaikuṇṭha* have individual bodily forms, but these are not forms of material illusion. As Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja said in a

question to Nārada Muni, *dehendriyāsu-hīnānām/ vaikuṇṭha-pura-vāsinām*: “The bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikuṇṭha are completely spiritual, having nothing to do with the material body, senses, or life air.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.1.35)

The Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs are transcendental, and so also are their external opulences. Each resident has more power and wealth than are available in millions of material universes and their covering shells. These opulences, which the Vaikuṇṭha residents achieve without effort and without limitations, are spiritual, eternal, and absolutely real; they are expansions of the Supreme Lord’s divine energy, and so they are all infinitely desirable and full of variety. Logical and scriptural evidence of these facts will be presented later in *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

**हरेर्भक्त्या परं प्रीता भक्तान् भक्तिं च सर्वतः ।  
रक्षन्तो वर्धयन्तश्च सञ्चरन्ति यदुच्छया ॥**

*harer bhaktyā param prītā  
bhaktān bhaktim ca sarvataḥ  
rakṣanto vardhayantaś ca  
sañcaranti yadṛcchayā*

*hareḥ*—to Hari; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *param*—simply; *prītāḥ*—pleased; *bhaktān*—the devotees; *bhaktim*—the devotional service; *ca*—and; *sarvataḥ*—everywhere; *rakṣantaḥ*—protecting; *vardhayantaḥ*—promoting; *ca*—and; *sañcaranti*—they travel; *yadṛcchayā*—as they desire.

**They are satisfied simply to worship Lord Hari with devotion. They travel freely wherever they want, protecting and promoting the cause of the Lord’s devotees and the Lord’s devotional service.**

The devotees in Vaikuṇṭha do not want to equal Lord Viṣṇu, because they want to serve Him in loving devotion. Nothing other than *bhakti* gives them pleasure. In Lord Viṣṇu’s own words, *mayā santuṣṭa-manasaḥ/ sarvāḥ sukha-mayā diśaḥ*: “One whose mind is completely satisfied in Me finds only happiness wherever he goes.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.13)

These eternally liberated *Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs* are always helping others. Acting in the material world, they protect sincere persons from misunderstanding the principles of devotional service and thereby falling down and being punished by the agents of *Yamarāja*. The *Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs* encourage the descent of advanced devotees into saintly families, act for the increased prosperity and influence of those devotees, and render unseen help to the devotees' preaching, by which more and more conditioned *jīvas* are brought back to *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. As instructing spiritual masters, the *Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs* and their representatives remove the obstacles of attachment to *karma* and *jñāna* and inspire their disciples in various ways to dedicate themselves fully to *Kṛṣṇa*'s service. Because the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha* are free from the restrictions of *karma*, their efforts never go in vain.

मुक्तानुपहसन्तीव वैकुण्ठे सततं प्रभुम् ।  
भजन्तः पक्षिवृक्षादिरूपैर्विविधसेवया ॥

*muktān upahasantīva*  
*vaikuṇṭhe satataṁ prabhum*  
*bhajantaḥ pakṣi-vṛkṣādi-*  
*rūpair vividha-sevayā*

*muktān*—at liberated persons; *upahasanti*—they laugh; *iva*—as if; *vaikuṇṭhe*—in *Vaikuṇṭha*; *satatam*—always; *prabhum*—the Supreme Lord; *bhajantaḥ*—worshiping; *pakṣi*—of birds; *vṛkṣa*—trees; *ādi*—and so on; *rūpaiḥ*—in the forms; *vividha*—various; *sevayā*—with services.

Always worshiping the Lord in *Vaikuṇṭha*, they seem amused by those who are merely liberated. The *Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs* are always busy in various services, for which they even take on forms like those of birds and trees.

कमलालत्यमानाङ्घ्रिकमलं मोदवर्धनम् ।  
सम्पश्यन्तो हरिं साक्षाद् रमन्ते सह तेन ये ॥

*kamalā-lālyamānāṅghri-*



*kamalaṁ moda-varadhanam  
sampaśyanto hariṁ sākṣād  
ramante saha tena ye*

*kamalā*—by the goddess Lakṣmī; *lālyamāna*—lovingly tended; *aṅghri-*  
*kamalam*—whose lotus feet; *moda-varadhanam*—the inspirer of pleasure;  
*sampaśyantaḥ*—directly seeing; *hariṁ*—Lord Hari; *sākṣāt*—in person;  
*ramante*—they enjoy; *saha tena*—with him; *ye*—who.

**They can always see Him in person, Lord Hari, who inspires everyone's  
pleasure and whose lotus feet are cared for by the goddess of fortune.  
Their life in His company is pure joy.**

Those who have attained liberation from material existence enjoy boundless varieties of loving service. Only foolish, unfortunate persons ignore such an opportunity and instead pursue an impersonal idea of liberation. The devotees in Vaikuṇṭha feel compassion for the impersonalists, but it seems that while exuberantly serving Lord Nārāyaṇa the devotees ridicule the impersonalists by taking on the forms of animals, birds, and plants. Impersonalists cannot understand the difference between the tāmasic forms of lower life in the material world and the transcendental varieties of life in Vaikuṇṭha. Still, Vaikuṇṭha devotees never actually make fun of others to belittle them, because devotees are always kind to the fallen. The Vaikuṇṭha devotees never indulge in useless frivolity, which is a deviation from the mood of pure devotion.

That many kinds of animals and plants live in Vaikuṇṭha, and that they all enthusiastically serve the Supreme Person, is confirmed by the description of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.15.18–19):

*pārāvatānyabhṛta-sārasa-cakravāka-  
dātyūha-haṁsa-śuka-tittiri-barhiṇām yaḥ  
kolāhalo viramate 'cira-mātram uccair  
bhṛṅgādhipe hari-kathām iva gāyamāne*

*mandāra-kunda-kurabotpala-campakārṇa-  
punnāga-nāga-bakulāmbuja-pārijātāḥ*

*gandhair yute tulasikābharaṇena tasyā  
yasmims tapaḥ sumanaso bahu mānayanti*

“When the king of bees hums in a high pitch, singing the glories of the Lord, there is a temporary lull in the noise of the pigeon, the cuckoo, the crane, the *cakravāka*, the swan, the parrot, the partridge, and the peacock. Such transcendental birds stop their own singing simply to hear the glories of the Lord. The flowering plants like the *arṇa*, *kunda*, *utpala*, *campaka*, *bakula*, *ambuja*, *mandāra*, *punnāga*, *kurabaka*, *pārijāta*, and *nāgakeśara* are full of transcendental fragrance; but still they are conscious of the austerities performed by *tulasī*, for *tulasī* is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with *tulasī* leaves.”

Lord Śiva uses the present verb form *sampaśyantaḥ* (“seeing”) to indicate that *Vaikuṇṭha* devotees see the Lord without interruption. By this he implies that he, in contrast, can see Lord Viṣṇu infrequently, and then only within his heart.

अहो कारुण्यमहिमा श्रीकृष्णस्य कुतोऽन्यतः ।  
वैकुण्ठलोके योऽजस्रं तदीयेषु च राजते ॥

*aho kārūṇya-mahimā  
śrī-kṛṣṇasya kuto 'nyataḥ  
vaikuṇṭha-loke yo 'jasraṁ  
tadīyeṣu ca rājate*

*aho*—oh; *kārūṇya*—of the compassion; *mahimā*—the greatness; *śrī-kṛṣṇasya*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kutaḥ*—where; *anyataḥ*—else; *vaikuṇṭha-loke*—in *Vaikuṇṭha-loka*; *yaḥ*—which; *ajasram*—constantly; *tadīyeṣu*—among the residents; *ca*—and; *rājate*—is manifest.

Ah, where else can one see compassion so exalted as that which Śrī Kṛṣṇa showered constantly on the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha-loka*?

यस्मिन् महामुदाश्रान्तं प्रभोः सङ्कीर्तनादिभिः ।  
विचित्रामन्तरा भक्तिं नास्त्यन्यत्प्रेमवाहिनीम् ॥

*yasmin mahā-mudāśrāntam  
prabhoḥ saṅkīrtanādibhiḥ  
vicitrām antarā bhaktim  
nāsty anyat prema-vāhinīm*

*yasmin*—where; *mahā-mudā*—with great enthusiasm; *aśrāntam*—incessantly; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *saṅkīrtana*—by the collective glorification; *ādibhiḥ*—and so on; *vicitrām*—various; *antarā*—other than; *bhaktim*—pure devotional service; *na asti*—there is not; *anyat*—anything else; *prema-vāhinīm*—delivering pure love of God.

**In Vaikuṇṭha nothing exists but devotional service, rendered through saṅkīrtana and in many other forms. It goes on incessantly, with great enthusiasm, spreading the ecstasy of pure love.**

Devotees in the spiritual world never tire of chanting the Supreme Lord's glories and singing and dancing for His pleasure. There, *prema-bhakti* is the only activity. Anything anyone does in Vaikuṇṭha is pure service and nothing else, because all the residents are fixed unswervingly in *bhakti*.

**अहो तत्परमानन्दरसाब्धेर्महिमाद्भुतः ।  
ब्रह्मानन्दस्तुलां नार्हेद् यत्कर्णार्धांशकेन च ॥**

*aho tat-paramānanda-  
rasābdher mahimādbhutaḥ  
brahmānandas tulām nārhet  
yat-kaṇārdhāṁśakena ca*

*aho*—oh; *tat*—of that; *parama*—transcendental; *ānanda-rasa*—of blissful spiritual experience; *abdheḥ*—the ocean; *mahimā*—the greatness; *adbhutaḥ*—amazing; *brahma-ānandaḥ*—the bliss of experiencing oneness with the Absolute Truth; *tulām*—comparison; *na arhet*—does not deserve; *yat*—that; *kaṇā*—of a drop; *ardha*—of half; *amśakena*—with a fraction; *ca*—and.

**How amazing is that supremely great ocean of transcendental bliss! The**

bliss of Brahman cannot compare to even a fraction of half a drop of it.

*Brahmānanda* is the happiness derived from realizing one's spiritual identity. Compared to the joy of sharing one's personal relationship with the supreme spirit, *brahmānanda* is insignificant.

स वैकुण्ठस्तदीयाश्च तत्रत्यमखिलं च यत् ।  
तदेव कृष्णपादाब्जपरप्रेमानुकम्पितम् ॥

*sa vaikunṭhas tadīyāś ca  
tatratyam akhilaṁ ca yat  
tad eva kṛṣṇa-pādābja-  
para-premānukampitam*

*saḥ*—that; *vaikunṭhaḥ*—Vaikuṇṭha world; *tadīyāḥ*—its residents; *ca*—and; *tatratyam*—the things existing there; *akhilam*—all; *ca*—and; *yat*—whatever; *tat*—that; *eva*—only; *kṛṣṇa*—of Kṛṣṇa; *pāda-abja*—for the lotus feet; *para*—transcendental; *prema*—by love; *anukampitam*—graced.

**That Vaikuṇṭha world, its residents, and everything there are blessed by the mercy of pure love for the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.**

In contrast, Lord Śiva implies, his own planet and other material worlds do not have the blessings of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

तादृक्कारुण्यपात्राणां श्रीमद्वैकुण्ठवासिनाम् ।  
मत्तोऽधिकतरस्तत्तन्महिमा किं नु वर्ण्यताम् ॥

*tādṛk-kāruṇya-pātrāṇām  
śrīmad-vaikunṭha-vāsinām  
matto 'dhika-taras tat-tan-  
mahimā kiṁ nu varṇyatām*

*tādṛk*—of such; *kāruṇya*—mercy; *pātrāṇām*—of the recipients; *śrīmat*—divine; *vaikunṭha-vāsinām*—of the residents of Vaikuṇṭha; *mattaḥ*—than me; *adhika-taraḥ*—greater; *tat-tat*—various; *mahimā*—glories;

*kim*—what; *nu*—indeed; *varṇyatām*—can be described.

**As recipients of such mercy, the divine residents of Vaikuṇṭha are much greater than I in many ways. How can I adequately describe their glories?**

Every resident of Vaikuṇṭha is *śrīmān*, entirely favored by the goddess of fortune, the consort of the Supreme Lord. Each of them, therefore, has access to the full wealth and power found in millions of universes. But because the Vaikuṇṭha-*vāsīs* are pure devotees, they prefer not to take advantage of these blessings for anything but the opportunity to serve their Lord. This distinguishes them from the conditioned souls of the material world.

**पाञ्चभौतिकदेहा ये मर्त्यलोकनिवासिनः ।  
भगवद्भक्तिरसिका नमस्या मादृशां सदा ॥**

*pāñca-bhautika-dehā ye  
martya-loka-nivāsinaḥ  
bhagavad-bhakti-rasikā  
namasyā mādrśāṁ sadā*

*pāñca-bhautika*—composed of the five elements; *dehāḥ*—having bodies; *ye*—those who; *martya-loka*—of the material world; *nivāsinaḥ*—residents; *bhagavat-bhakti*—the Supreme Lord’s devotional service; *rasikāḥ*—experts in tasting; *namasyāḥ*—worshipable; *mādrśāṁ*—by persons like me; *sadā*—always.

**Though living within the material world, in bodies composed of the five elements, persons expert in relishing devotional service to the Lord are always worshipable for persons like me.**

Wherever in the material world the mood of Vaikuṇṭha is found, Lord Śiva worships the carriers of that mood as his superiors. He expresses this same attitude in the *Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava* of the *Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra*:

*ye tyakta-loka-dharmārthā*

*viṣṇu-bhakti-vaśam gatāḥ  
bhajanti paramātmānaṁ  
tebhyo nityaṁ namo namaḥ*

“To those who have come under the influence of pure devotion for Viṣṇu, and have therefore abandoned their worldly religious duties and profitable endeavors just to worship the Soul of souls, I constantly offer my repeated respects.”

**श्रीकृष्णचरणाम्भोजार्पितात्मानो हि ये किल ।  
तदेकप्रेमलाभाशक्त्यक्तार्थजनजीवनाः ॥**

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇāmbhojā-  
rpitātmāno hi ye kila  
tad-eka-prema-lābhāśā-  
tyaktārtha-jana-jīvanāḥ*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *caraṇa-ambhoja*—to the lotus feet; *arpita*—offered; *ātmānaḥ*—whose selves; *hi*—certainly; *ye*—who; *kila*—indeed; *tat*—for Him; *eka*—exclusive; *prema*—love; *lābha*—of obtaining; *āśā*—with the hope; *tyakta*—having abandoned; *artha*—wealth; *jana*—families; *jīvanāḥ*—and lives.

Such expert relishers surrender themselves fully to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Hoping to obtain exclusive love for Him, they abandon their wealth, their families, and their very lives.

**ऐहिकामुष्मिकाशेषसाध्यसाधननिस्पृहाः ।  
जातिवर्णाश्रमाचारधर्माधीनत्वपारगाः ॥**

*aihikāmuṣmikāśeṣa-  
sādhya-sādhana-nisprhāḥ  
jāti-varṇāśramācāra-  
dharmādhīnatva-pāragāḥ*

*aihika*—of this world; *amuṣmika*—and of the next world; *aśeṣa*—in all;

*sādhya*—ends of success; *sādhana*—and means of success; *niṣprhāḥ*—not interested; *jāti*—in terms of birth in a particular species; *varṇa*—occupation; *āśrama*—and level of detachment; *dharma*—to religious principles; *adhīnatva*—subordination; *pāra-gāḥ*—who have gone beyond.

They are not interested in any of the means and ends of success, in this world or the next. They have gone beyond subservience to the rules that apply according to birth, occupation, and spiritual status.

ऋणत्रयादनिर्मुक्ता वेदमार्गातिगा अपि ।  
हरिभक्तिबलावेगादकुतश्चिद्रयाः सदा ॥

*ṛṇa-trayād anirmuktā*  
*veda-mārgātigā api*  
*hari-bhakti-balāvegād*  
*akutaścīd-bhayāḥ sadā*

*ṛṇa-trayāt*—from the three kinds of debts; *anirmuktāḥ*—not completely freed; *veda-mārga*—the Vedic path; *atigāḥ*—transgressing; *api*—even though; *hari-bhakti*—of devotion to Hari; *bala-āvegāt*—by the power; *akutaścīd-bhayāḥ*—fearless; *sadā*—always.

Even if they have not repaid their three debts and are therefore transgressing Vedic principles, by the power of their devotion to Lord Hari they are ever fearless.

नान्यत्किमपि वाञ्छन्ति तद्वक्तिरसलम्पटाः ।  
स्वर्गापवर्गनरकेष्वपि तुल्यार्थदर्शिनः ॥

*nānyat kim api vāñchanti*  
*tad-bhakti-rasa-lampaṭāḥ*  
*svargāpavarga-narakeṣv*  
*api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

*na*—not; *anyat*—else; *kim api*—anything; *vāñchanti*—do they desire;

*tat*—to Him; *bhakti-rasa*—for the taste of devotion; *lampaṭāḥ*—greedy; *svarga*—in heaven; *apavarga*—liberation; *narakeṣu*—and hell; *api*—also; *tulya-artha*—as all the same; *darśinaḥ*—viewing.

**Greedy to taste the pleasure of devotion to Him, they have no desire for anything else. To them liberation, heaven, and hell all appear the same.**

Fearlessness and freedom from selfish desires are spontaneous symptoms of those who enjoy the transcendental tastes of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The residents of Vaikuṇṭha are already perfect, but they humbly think themselves only potential candidates for *prema-bhakti*. Aspiring to be awarded exclusive love of God, they abandon attachment to property and family. They are not even interested in protecting themselves from threats to their lives. Since they have no desire for the worldly goals of prestige, security, and sense enjoyment, they have no urge to work to earn the money and pious credits required for obtaining these objects of desire. And as a further consequence of their freedom from material ambition, they have transcended identifying the self in terms of material social divisions, the *brāhmaṇa* caste and other occupational designations, and even human and demigod species. They have risen above the regular and occasional obligations of all these categories.

From the very day of one's birth, one is encumbered with three kinds of debts. To the demigods, who provide the basic needs of life, one owes the performance of sacrifice; to the parents, from whom one inherits the good *karma* and cultural heritage of one's family, one owes offspring; and to the sages, who teach how to fulfill the spiritual potential of human life, one owes study of the *Vedas*. One who fails to absolve oneself from these debts by doing what is required and avoiding what is forbidden can expect severe punishment from Yamarāja, the judge of the sinful:

*ṛṇais tribhir dvijo jāto  
devarṣi-pitṛṇām prabho  
yajñādhyayana-putrais tāny  
anistīrya tyajan patet*



“Dear Prabhu, a member of the twice-born classes is born with three kinds of debts—those owed to the demigods, to the sages, and to his forefathers. If he leaves his body without first liquidating these debts by performing sacrifice, studying the scriptures, and begetting children, he will fall down into a hellish condition.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.84.39)

The residents of *Vaikuṇṭha*, however, are immune from the reactions for neglecting the laws of material nature. These *Vaikuṇṭha* residents need not perform ritual sacrifices, beget sons, or study the texts of the *Vedas*. They have no fear of karmic retribution. Nothing they do can be sinful. They can act confidently, however they wish, on the strength of their pure devotion to Lord Viṣṇu.

Pure devotional service exempts *Vaiṣṇavas* from the karmic obligations of nondevotees, as Lord Kṛṣṇa has explained to two of His most trustworthy devotees, *Uddhava* and *Arjuna*:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta  
na nirvidyeta yāvatā  
mat-kathā-śravaṇādaṁ vā  
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

“As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ*, one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.20.9)

*sarva-dharmān parityajya  
mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja  
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpēbhyo  
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

“Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66)

Śrī Nārada also gave the same instruction to *Vyāsadeva*:

*tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer  
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi*

*yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kim  
ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ*

“One who has forsaken his material occupations to engage in the devotional service of the Lord may sometimes fall down while in an immature stage, yet there is no danger of his being unsuccessful. On the other hand, a nondevotee, though fully engaged in occupational duties, does not gain anything.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.5.17)

The fearless residents of *Vaikuṇṭha* are also free from all selfish concerns. They have no interest in transcendental perfections such as a personal form like the Supreme Lord's, what to speak of the refined sense enjoyment of the residents of Lord *Brahmā*'s planet, or the happiness of impersonal *nirvāṇa*. In the eyes of the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha*, everything other than pure love of God is not only insignificant but also detrimental to the advancement of *bhakti*. Thus they consider impersonal liberation and being elevated to heaven the same as being sent to hell. Speaking here to *Nārada*, Lord *Śiva* echoes his own words from the Sixth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (6.17.28):

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve  
na kutaścana bibhyati  
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv  
api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

“Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *Nārāyaṇa*, never fear any condition of life. For them the heavenly planets, liberation, and the hellish planets are all the same, for such devotees are interested only in the service of the Lord.”

**भगवानिव सत्यं मे त एव परमप्रियाः ।  
परमप्रार्थनीयश्च मम तैः सह सङ्गमः ॥**

*bhagavān iva satyaṁ me  
ta eva parama-priyāḥ  
parama-prārthanīyaś ca*

*mama taiḥ saha saṅgamaḥ*

*bhagavān*—the Supreme Lord; *iva*—just as; *satyam*—truly; *me*—to me; *te*—they; *eva*—indeed; *parama*—limitlessly; *priyāḥ*—dear; *parama*—highest; *prārthanīyaḥ*—ambition; *ca*—and; *mama*—my; *taiḥ saha*—with them; *saṅgamaḥ*—association.

**Truly I tell you, such devotees are as limitlessly dear to me as the Supreme Lord Himself. My highest ambition is to have their company.**

Lord Śiva has higher regard for pure Vaiṣṇavas than for his own associates, headed by Nandīśvara. As Lord Śiva told the ten Pracetā brothers:

*atha bhāgavatā yūyaṁ  
priyāḥ stha bhagavān yathā  
na mad bhāgavatānām ca  
preyān anyo 'sti karhicit*

“You are all devotees of the Lord, and so I appreciate that you are as respectable as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. I know that the devotees also respect me in this way and that I am dear to them. Thus no one can be as dear to the devotees as I am.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.24.30)

**नारदाहमिदं मन्ये तादृशानां यतः स्थितिः ।  
भवेत्स एव वैकुण्ठो लोको नात्र विचारणा ॥**

*nāradāham idam manye  
tādṛśānām yataḥ sthitiḥ  
bhavet sa eva vaikuṇṭho  
loko nātra vicāraṇā*

*nārada*—dear Nārada; *aham*—I; *idam*—this; *manye*—consider; *tādṛśānām*—of such persons; *yataḥ*—where; *sthitiḥ*—the location; *bhavet*—may be; *saḥ*—that; *eva*—only; *vaikuṇṭhaḥ lokaḥ*—the spiritual world; *na*—there is not; *atra*—in this matter; *vicāraṇā*—room for argument.

**In my opinion, dear Nārada, anywhere such devotees are found is actually Vaikuṇṭha-loka. Arguing against this fact would be useless.**

For Lord Śiva, pure Vaiṣṇavas living on earth or anywhere else are no less glorious than the residents of Vaikuṇṭha. Vaiṣṇavas should never be judged by whether they live in Lord Viṣṇu's kingdom or not, because one who possesses the treasure of *prema-bhakti* always has the Lord living with him. The Personality of Godhead Himself has said:

*nāhaṁ vasāmi vaikuṇṭhe  
na yogi-hṛdaye ravau  
mad-bhaktā yatra gāyanti  
tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada*

“I do not live in Vaikuṇṭha, in the hearts of the yogīs, or inside the sun. Rather, My dear Nārada, I am present wherever My devotees sing about Me.” (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa* 92.21–22)

**कृष्णभक्तिसुधापानाद् देहदैहिकविस्मृतेः ।  
तेषां भौतिकदेहेऽपि सच्चिदानन्दरूपता ॥**

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-sudhā-pānād  
deha-daihika-vismṛteḥ  
teṣāṁ bhautika-dehe 'pi  
sac-cid-ānanda-rūpatā*

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti*—of devotion to Kṛṣṇa; *sudhā*—the nectar; *pānāt*—because of drinking; *deha*—of their material bodies; *daihika*—and material relationships; *vismṛteḥ*—because of forgetting; *teṣāṁ*—their; *bhautika-dehe*—in material bodies; *api*—even; *sat-cit-ānanda*—of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; *rūpatā*—the nature.

**Having drunk the nectar of devotion to Kṛṣṇa, those devotees forget their material bodies and relationships. Thus even while living in material bodies, they assume the transcendental nature of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.**

One might question how devotees living on earth and in *Vaikuṇṭha* can be equal. Don't the residents of earth have bodies made of material energy, while the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha* have transcendental bodies? But Lord Śiva confirms the equality of these devotees nonetheless. *Vaiṣṇavas* pay little attention to their gross and subtle material bodies and to bodily relationships; *Vaiṣṇavas* do not consider the body their own property and so are indifferent in this regard. Having overcome the obstacles of bodily attachment, the devotees living in the material world enjoy the nectar of *prema-bhakti* without distraction and are therefore equal to the residents of *Vaikuṇṭha*. Even while living in material bodies, the *Vaiṣṇavas* lead an existence that is completely spiritual, *sac-cid-ānanda*.

A devotee's material body may literally transform into a spiritual one, like the body of Dhruva Mahārāja just before his ascent to *Vaikuṇṭha*. As described by Maitreya Ṛṣi:

*parītyābhycya dhiṣṇyāgryam*  
*pārṣadāv abhivandya ca*  
*īyeṣa tad adhiṣṭhātum*  
*bibhrad rūpam hiraṇmayam*

“Before getting aboard the *Vaikuṇṭha* airplane, Dhruva Mahārāja worshiped and circumambulated it, and also offered obeisances to the associates of Viṣṇu. In the meantime he became as brilliant and illuminating as molten gold. He was thus completely prepared to board the transcendental plane.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.12.29) Commenting on this verse, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī explains *hiraṇmayam* as meaning “full of effulgence.” In other words, Dhruva Mahārāja obtained a new body made of pure spiritual energy. To thus obtain a better body is quite possible. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī mentions that even drinking a special herbal tonic can give one a more attractive material body; then what to speak of the attractive form one can attain by always drinking the transcendental tonic of *bhakti-rasa*.

**परं भगवता साकं साक्षात्क्रीडापरम्पराः ।**

सदानुभवितुं तैर्हि वैकुण्ठोऽपेक्ष्यते क्वचित् ॥

*param bhagavatā sākam  
sākṣāt krīḍā-paramparāḥ  
sadānubhavitum tair hi  
vaikuṇṭho 'pekṣyate kvacit*

*param*—only; *bhagavatā sākam*—together with the Personality of Godhead; *sākṣāt*—direct; *krīḍā*—of pleasure pastimes; *paramparāḥ*—the sequence; *sadā*—always; *anubhavitum*—in order to experience; *taiḥ*—by them; *hi*—indeed; *vaikuṇṭhaḥ*—Vaikuṇṭha; *apekṣyate*—is preferred; *kvacit*—sometimes.

**But in Vaikuṇṭha devotees always relish ongoing pleasure pastimes in the very company of the Lord. Therefore devotees sometimes prefer to live there.**

Why single out Vaikuṇṭha and its residents for praise if devotees of Viṣṇu on the earth are equally glorious? Because although the pure Vaiṣṇavas reveal on earth the glories of devotional service, only in Vaikuṇṭha do the devotees enjoy the company of the husband of the goddess of fortune in endless varieties of ecstatic pastimes. These loving reciprocations appear in Vaikuṇṭha and nowhere else. For that reason, Vaikuṇṭha has received its name. It is the world where no one ever feels the anxiety (*kuṇṭhatā*) of not tasting the perpetual flow of devotional *rasa*. When the Personality of Godhead momentarily disappears from the external or internal sight of His devotees in Vaikuṇṭha, His disappearance only increases their eagerness to see Him and be with Him. In Vaikuṇṭha even the Lord's absence increases His devotees' awareness of Him and their enjoyment of *rasa*.

अतो हि सर्वे तत्रत्या मयोक्ताः सर्वतोऽधिकाः ।  
दयाविशेषविषयाः कृष्णस्य परमप्रियाः ॥

*ato hi sarve tatratyā  
mayoktāḥ sarvato 'dhikāḥ*

*dayā-viśeṣa-viṣayāḥ*  
*kṛṣṇasya parama-priyāḥ*  
*ataḥ—thus; hi—certainly; sarve—all; tatrāṇi—the residents of that*  
*place; mayā—by me; uktāḥ—are said to be; sarvataḥ—than everyone*  
*else; adhikāḥ—greater; dayā—of mercy; viśeṣa—special; viṣayāḥ—*  
*recipients; kṛṣṇasya—of Kṛṣṇa; parama-priyāḥ—the most beloved*  
*devotees.*

**That is why I say that the residents of Vaikuṇṭha are greater than everyone else. As the objects of Kṛṣṇa's special mercy, they are His most beloved devotees.**

The Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs are greater than liberated Vaiṣṇavas in the material world, among whom Lord Śiva counts himself. The reason for their various manifest glories, Lord Śiva argues, must be Lord Viṣṇu's favoring them more than others. They must be His dearest servants.

### Pārvatī praises the goddess Śrī

श्रीपार्वत्युवाच  
तत्रापि श्रीविशेषेण प्रसिद्धा श्रीहरिप्रिया ।  
तादृग्वैकुण्ठवैकुण्ठवासिनामीश्वरी हि या ॥

*śrī-pārvatī uvāca*  
*tatrāpi śrīr viśeṣeṇa*  
*prasiddhā śrī-hari-priyā*  
*tādṛg-vaikuṇṭha-vaikuṇṭha-*  
*vāsinām īśvarī hi yā*  
*śrī-pārvatī uvāca—Śrī Pārvatī said; tatra api—furthermore in that*  
*regard; śrīḥ—the goddess Śrī; viśeṣeṇa—especially; prasiddhā—famous;*  
*śrī-hari-priyā—dear to Śrī Hari; tādṛk—such; vaikuṇṭha—of Vaikuṇṭha;*  
*vaikuṇṭha-vāsinām—and of the Vaikuṇṭha residents; īśvarī—the ruling*  
*goddess; hi—indeed; yā—who.*

Śrī Pārvatī said: Furthermore, among them all, the goddess Śrī is famous as especially dear to the Lord. She is indeed the ruling goddess of Vaikuṇṭha and its residents.

Lord Śiva's consort Devī is a partial expansion of Lord Viṣṇu's consort Śrī. When Pārvatī heard her husband praise Vaikuṇṭha without mentioning the queen of Vaikuṇṭha, Pārvatī became somewhat disturbed. She therefore took the liberty to speak out.

Everyone who knows the goddess Śrī knows that she is the beloved wife of Lord Viṣṇu; indeed, one of her names is Haripriyā. She is worshiped with reverence by all the Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs. To uphold the claim that Lord Viṣṇu's consort Śrī is His most favored devotee, Pārvatī will now describe her greatness in more detail.

यस्याः कटाक्षपातेन लोकपालविभूतयः ।  
ज्ञानं विरक्तिर्भक्तिश्च सिध्यन्ति यदनुग्रहात् ॥

*yasyāḥ kaṭākṣa-pātena  
loka-pāla-vibhūtayāḥ  
jñānam viraktir bhaktiś ca  
sidhyanti yad-anugrahāt*

*yasyāḥ*—whose; *kaṭa-akṣa*—of the sidelong glance; *pātena*—by the fall; *loka-pāla*—of the rulers of the planets; *vibhūtayāḥ*—the powers; *jñānam*—knowledge; *viraktiḥ*—detachment; *bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *ca*—and; *sidhyanti*—come into being; *yad*—whose; *anugrahāt*—by the mercy.

**Her mercy expands wherever she casts her sidelong glance. Thus the rulers of the various planets obtain their powers, their knowledge, their detachment, and their devotion.**

According to Mother Pārvatī, the demigods are powerful only by the blessings of the goddess Śrī. It is thanks to Śrī that the demigods correctly understand the relative positions of God and the finite living entities, that they have given up interest in material enjoyment and liberation, and that they have become devotees of the Personality of Godhead. As Durvāsā Muni told Indra in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.9.29):



yataḥ sattvaṁ tato lakṣmīḥ  
sattvaṁ bhūty-anusāri ca  
niḥśrīkānām kutaḥ sattvaṁ  
vinā tena guṇāḥ kutaḥ

“Where there is patience, opulence arises, and patience also follows opulence. But how can those not favored by the goddess Śrī have patience, and without patience how can they have good qualities?”

In the same chapter of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.9.120), Lord Indra offered the following prayer to Lakṣmī:

yajña-vidyā mahā-vidyā  
guhya-vidyā ca śobhane  
ātma-vidyā ca devī tvam  
vimukti-phala-dāyinī

“O resplendent goddess, you personify the mystic knowledge of sacrifice, of material nature, of the secrets of devotional service, and of perfection for the soul. You are the giver of ultimate liberation.” Ultimate liberation is pure devotional service, which is ruled by the consort of the Supreme Person and gained by a fortunate soul only when she recommends that soul to the Lord.

या विहायादरेणापि भजमानान् भवादृशान् ।  
वव्रे तपोभिराध्य निरपेक्षं च तं प्रियम् ॥

yā vihāyādareṇāpi  
bhajamānān bhavādṛśān  
vavre tapobhir ārādhya  
nirapekṣam ca taṁ priyam

yā—who; vihāya—leaving aside; ādareṇa—with great respect; api—even; bhajamānān—who are worshiping; bhavādṛśān—persons like you (Nārada); vavre—she chose; tapobhiḥ—by severe penances; ārādhya—worshiping; nirapekṣam—who was indifferent; ca—and; tam—Him; priyam—her beloved.

Ignoring people like you who worship her with great respect, she vowed to undergo severe penances to worship her beloved Lord, even though He was indifferent to her.

Only devotional service to the Supreme Lord can attract the attention of the goddess Lakṣmī, who worships Lord Nārāyaṇa with pure devotion. She willingly accepts any difficulty and any menial service to please Him, although He, being satisfied in Himself, does not need anyone's help to fulfill His desires. Many Vaiṣṇavas look to Mother Lakṣmī's example of perfect surrender, hoping to follow in her footsteps. The wives of the Kāliya snake, for example, prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe  
tavāṅghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ  
yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo  
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā*

“O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kāliya has attained this great opportunity of being touched by the dust of Your lotus feet. For this end, the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.16.36)

The supreme goddess Mahā-lakṣmī is the eternal beloved of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha; she does not have to worship Him to achieve Him. But her expansions descend as *avatāras* to accompany the various incarnations of Nārāyaṇa, and some of these *avatāras* of Mahā-lakṣmī, such as the daughter of Bhṛgu Muni, are described in Vedic scriptures as performing penances to obtain the Lord as their husband.

करोति वसतिं नित्यं या रम्ये तस्य वक्षसि ।  
पतिव्रतोत्तमाशेषावतारेष्वनुयात्यमुम् ॥

*karoti vasatiṁ nityaṁ  
yā ramye tasya vakṣasi  
pati-vratottamāśeṣā-  
vatāreṣv anuyāty amum*

*karoti*—does; *vasatim*—residence; *nityam*—perpetually; *yā*—who; *ramye*—beautiful; *tasya*—His; *vakṣasi*—on the chest; *pati-vrata*—of chaste wives; *uttamā*—the most perfect; *aśeṣa*—in all; *avatāreṣu*—His incarnations; *anuyāti*—she follows; *amum*—Him.

**This most perfect of chaste wives resides forever on His beautiful chest and follows Him in all His incarnations.**

One of Śrī Mahā-lakṣmī’s expansions is the Lakṣmī who controls and dispenses the opulences of this material world. Those who seek this Lakṣmī’s grace know from their experience that she is fickle, *cañcalā*. But the original Lakṣmī is never unsteady in her devotion to Lord Nārāyaṇa. She always stays in His company, residing on His chest and following wherever He goes:

*evam yathā jagat-svāmī  
deva-devo janārdanaḥ  
avatāram karoty eṣa  
tathā śrīs tat-sahāyinī*

“Just as the Lord of the universe, the God of gods Janārdana, descends to this world, so does His helpmate the goddess Śrī.”

*devatve deva-deheyam  
manuṣyatve ca mānuṣī  
viṣṇor dehānurūpām vai  
karoty eṣātmanas tanūm*

“When He appears as a demigod she appears as a goddess, and when He becomes a human man she becomes a human woman. She accepts for herself a body that exactly corresponds to whatever body Lord Viṣṇu assumes.” (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 1.9.142, 145)

**Nārada wants to visit Vaikuṇṭha**

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततः परमहर्षेण क्षोभितात्मा लपन् मुनिः ।  
जय श्रीकमलाकान्त हे वैकुण्ठपते हरे ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tataḥ parama-harṣeṇa  
kṣobhitātmā lapan muniḥ  
jaya śrī-kamalā-kānta  
he vaikuṇṭha-pate hare*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tataḥ—then; parama-harṣeṇa—with extreme delight; kṣobhita—agitated; ātmā—his mind; ālapan—exclaiming; muniḥ—the sage; jaya—glories to You; śrī-kamalā-kānta—O husband of the goddess Kamalā; he vaikuṇṭha-pate—O Lord of Vaikuṇṭha; hare—O Hari.*

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Then the sage, his mind vibrating with extreme delight, called out, “Glories to You, O husband of the goddess Kamalā, O Hari, Lord of Vaikuṇṭha!

जय वैकुण्ठलोकेति तत्रत्या जयतेति च ।  
जय कृष्णप्रिये पद्मे वैकुण्ठाधीश्वरीत्यपि ॥

*jaya vaikuṇṭha-loketi  
tatratyā jayateti ca  
jaya kṛṣṇa-priye padme  
vaikuṇṭhādhīśvarīty api*

*jaya—glories to you; vaikuṇṭha-loka—O Vaikuṇṭha-loka; iti—thus; tatratyāḥ—O those who live there; jayata—glories to you; iti—thus; ca—and; jaya—glories; kṛṣṇa-priye—O beloved of Kṛṣṇa; padme—Padmā; vaikuṇṭha-adhīśvari—presiding goddess of Vaikuṇṭha; iti—thus; api—also.*

“Glories to you, O Vaikuṇṭha world! Glories to all who live there! And

glories to you, O Padmā, Lord Kṛṣṇa's beloved, O presiding goddess of Vaikuṇṭha!"

Having heard Lord Śiva and Pārvatī's description of the glories of Vaikuṇṭha, its residents, and its presiding goddess, Nārada was overwhelmed with ecstasy. Although the Supreme Person was currently present on earth in Dvārakā, Nārada forgot this and wanted to go at once to Vaikuṇṭha. Expressing his ecstasy, first praised Lord Nārāyaṇa, then His kingdom and its residents, and last the greatest devotee in Vaikuṇṭha, Śrī Mahā-lakṣmī.

अथाभिनन्दनायास्या वैकुण्ठे गन्तुमुत्थितः ।  
अभिप्रेत्य हरेणोक्तः करे धृत्वा निवार्य सः ॥

*athābhinandanāyāsyā  
vaikuṇṭhe gantum utthitaḥ  
abhipretya hareṇoktaḥ  
kare dhṛtvā nivārya saḥ*

*atha*—then; *abhinandanāya*—for the purpose of offering respects; *asyāḥ*—to her; *vaikuṇṭhe*—to Vaikuṇṭha; *gantum*—in order to go visit; *utthitaḥ*—having stood up; *abhipretya*—being noticed; *hareṇa*—by Lord Śiva; *uktaḥ*—was told; *kare*—by the hand; *dhṛtvā*—being taken hold of; *nivārya*—being stopped; *saḥ*—he.

Then, wanting to visit Vaikuṇṭha and personally offer respects to the goddess of fortune, Nārada stood up. Seeing this, Lord Śiva took him by the hand to stop him. Lord Śiva then spoke.

From the words Nārada was speaking and from how he turned his eyes upward, Lord Śiva could understand that Nārada intended to visit Vaikuṇṭha and personally offer respects to the goddess Mahā-lakṣmī. But by doing this, Nārada would neglect an even better opportunity.

Śiva reminds Nārada that Kṛṣṇa is present on earth

श्रीमहेश उवाच  
कृष्णप्रियजनालोकोत्सुकताविहतस्मृते ।  
न किं स्मरसि यद्भूमौ द्वारकायां वसत्यसौ ॥

*śrī-maheśa uvāca*  
*kṛṣṇa-priya-janālokot-*  
*sukatā-vihata-smṛte*  
*na kiṁ smarasi yad bhūmau*  
*dvārakāyām vasaty asau*

*śrī-maheśaḥ uvāca*—Lord Śiva said; *kṛṣṇa-priya-jana*—the dearest devotees of Kṛṣṇa; *āloka*—for seeing; *utsukatā*—due to eagerness; *vihata*—lost; *smṛte*—whose memory; *na*—not; *kim*—whether; *smarasi*—you remember; *yat*—the fact that; *bhūmau*—on the earth; *dvārakāyām*—in Dvārakā; *vasati*—is residing; *asau*—He.

**Śrī Maheśa said:** My dear Nārada, because of your eagerness to see the dearest devotees of Kṛṣṇa, you have lost your memory. Don't you remember that the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha is living right now on earth, in Dvārakā?

Nārada is not to be blamed for being distracted by the glories of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha and His consort, because Nārāyaṇa and Mahā-lakṣmī are indeed the all-attractive supreme couple. But Nārada could now see the same Nārāyaṇa and Mahā-lakṣmī without having to travel so far.

रुक्मिणी सा महालक्ष्मीः कृष्णस्तु भगवान् स्वयम् ।  
तस्या अंशावतारा हि वामनादिसमीपतः ॥

*rukmiṇī sā mahā-lakṣmīḥ*  
*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*  
*tasyā aṁśāvatārā hi*  
*vāmanādi-samīpataḥ*

*rukmiṇī*—Rukmiṇī; *sā*—she; *mahā-lakṣmīḥ*—the supreme goddess of fortune; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *tu*—but; *bhagavān svayam*—the original

Personality of Godhead; *tasyāḥ*—her; *aṁśa-avatārāḥ*—partial incarnations; *hi*—indeed; *vāmana-ādi*—of Lord Vāmana and other incarnations of Viṣṇu; *samīpataḥ*—in the company.

**Queen Rukmiṇī is the supreme goddess of fortune herself, and Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead. Rukmiṇī's partial incarnations accompany Lord Vāmana and the other avatāras of the Lord.**

In case Nārada has any doubt that the goddess Mahā-lakṣmī is appearing with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord Śiva reminds Nārada that she has descended as the daughter of King Bhīṣmaka. Still, Nārada might raise the doubt that Śrī Mahā-lakṣmī never leaves the side of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. Lord Śiva answers this by quoting the assertion given in the *Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: Kṛṣṇa as He appears on earth is that original Personality of Godhead. But why then is Lakṣmī sometimes seen in the company of incarnations of the Lord such as Śrī Vāmana, the thousand-headed Mahāpuruṣa, and Kapiladeva? Because these Lakṣmīs are *avatāras* of Mahā-lakṣmī. That original goddess of fortune, the dearest devotee of the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha, has descended to Dvārakā as Queen Rukmiṇī.

**सम्पूर्णा परिपूर्णस्य लक्ष्मीर्भगवतः सदा ।  
निषेवते पदाम्भोजे श्रीकृष्णस्यैव रुक्मिणी ॥**

*sampūrṇā paripūrṇasya  
lakṣmīr bhagavataḥ sadā  
niṣevate padāmbhoje  
śrī-kṛṣṇasyaiva rukmiṇī*

*sampūrṇā*—perfectly complete; *paripūrṇasya*—of the perfectly complete; *lakṣmīḥ*—the divine consort; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *sadā*—always; *niṣevate*—serves; *pada-ambhoje*—at the lotus feet; *śrī-kṛṣṇasya*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *eva*—indeed; *rukmiṇī*—Rukmiṇī.

**Rukmiṇī is the perfectly complete divine consort of the complete Personality of Godhead. She always serves at Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.**

Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not a mere incarnation of Viṣṇu but the source of all incarnations, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī is equally supreme. She is the source of all goddesses of fortune.

### Lord Śiva praises Prahlāda

तस्मादुपविश ब्रह्मन् रहस्यं परमं शनैः ।  
कर्णे ते कथयाम्येकं परमश्रद्धया शृणु ॥

*tasmād upaviśa brahman  
rahasyam paramam śanaiḥ  
karṇe te kathayāmy ekam  
parama-śraddhayā śṛṇu*

*tasmāt—therefore; upaviśa—please sit down; brahman—O brāhmaṇa; rahasyam—a secret; paramam—supreme; śanaiḥ—softly; karṇe—in the ear; te—you; kathayāmi—I shall tell; ekam—one; parama—absolute; śraddhayā—with confidence; śṛṇu—please listen.*

**So sit down, my dear brāhmaṇa, and I shall whisper in your ear a great secret. Please hear this with absolute confidence.**

Since the original Personality of Godhead and His original consort have appeared on earth, Nārada should put aside his eagerness to run off to Vaikuṇṭha and should just sit for a minute to hear what more Lord Śiva has to say. Nor should Nārada run immediately to Dvārakā without first listening to Lord Śiva's confidential advice. Because what Lord Śiva wishes to say should not be heard by everyone, not even by his personal associates, he wants to whisper it into Nārada's ear, thus also avoiding the possibility of displeasing Pārvatī, who is a close friend of Mahā-lakṣmī's.

त्वत्ताततो मद्गुरुडादितश्च  
श्रियोऽपि कारुण्यविशेषपात्रम् ।



## प्रह्लाद एव प्रथितो जगत्यां कृष्णस्य भक्तो नितरां प्रियश्च ॥

*tvat-tātato mad garuḍāditaś ca  
śriyo 'pi kārūṇya-viśeṣa-pātram  
prahlāda eva prathito jagatyām  
kṛṣṇasya bhakto nitarām priyaś ca*

*tvat*—your; *tātataḥ*—than the father (Brahmā); *mat*—than me; *garuḍa-āditaḥ*—than Garuḍa and so on; *ca*—and; *śriyaḥ*—than the goddess of fortune; *api*—also; *kārūṇya*—of mercy; *viśeṣa*—special; *pātram*—the recipient; *prahlādaḥ*—Prahlaḍa; *eva*—alone; *prathitaḥ*—renowned; *jagatyām*—throughout the world; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *bhaktaḥ*—devotee; *nitaram*—exceptionally; *priyaḥ*—dear; *ca*—and.

**There is a greater recipient of Kṛṣṇa's mercy than your father, me, and other servants like Garuḍa, and even than the goddess of fortune. His name is Prahlaḍa. He is famous throughout the world as the dearest devotee of Kṛṣṇa.**

“Do not expect to fulfill your intentions by visiting Dvārakā just now,” Lord Śiva is telling Nārada. “There is a devotee in this world even greater than the supreme goddess of fortune, and that is Prahlaḍa. Before going anywhere else you should visit him.” Because Prahlaḍa's devotion to the Supreme Lord is so deep, he is exceptionally dear to the Lord. He is greater than all the Lord's servants in Vaikuṇṭha, including Garuḍa and Viṣvaksena and even Lakṣmī.

## भगवद्वचनानि त्वं किं नु विस्मृतवानसि । अधीतानि पुराणेषु श्लोकमेतं न किं स्मरेः ॥

*bhagavad-vacanāni tvaṁ  
kiṁ nu viśmṛtavān asi  
adhītāni purāṇeṣu  
ślokaṁ etaṁ na kiṁ smareḥ*

*bhagavat*—of the Supreme Lord; *vacanāni*—the words; *tvam*—you; *kim*—whether; *nu*—indeed; *vismṛtavān asi*—have forgotten; *adhītāni*—read; *purāṇeṣu*—in the *Purāṇas*; *ślokaṃ*—verse; *etam*—this; *na*—not; *kim*—whether; *smareḥ*—you remember.

Surely you haven't forgotten the Supreme Lord's words about this. You must have read them in the *Purāṇas* and must remember the following verse:

नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैः साधुभिर्विना ।  
श्रियमात्यन्तिकीं वापि येषां गतिरहं परा ॥

*nāham ātmānam āśāse*  
*mad-bhaktaiḥ sādhubhir vinā*  
*śriyam ātyantikīm vāpi*  
*yeṣāṃ gatiḥ ahaṃ parā*

*na*—not; *aham*—I; *ātmānam*—Myself; *āśāse*—hold in high regard; *mat-bhaktaiḥ*—My devotees; *sādhubhiḥ*—the saintly persons; *vinā*—without; *śriyam*—the goddess Lakṣmī and the opulences she provides; *ātyantikīm*—ultimate; *vā*—or; *api*—even; *yeṣāṃ*—for which (devotees); *gatiḥ*—the destination; *aham*—I; *parā*—final.

**“Without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I do not desire to enjoy My transcendental bliss or My supreme opulences.”**

This verse, spoken by the Supreme Lord to Durvāsā Muni in the Ninth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.64), is cited here to establish the greatness of the Vaiṣṇavas in general. The Personality of Godhead derives great satisfaction from His pure devotees on the earth and elsewhere, and in contrast He is not as much attracted to His own consort in Vaikuṇṭha or the imperishable opulences she creates for His pleasure. Nor is He as much attracted by His own beauty. As the Lord further told Durvāsā:

*aham bhakta-parādhīno*

*hy asvatantra iva dvija  
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo  
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ*

“I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotees, even the devotees of My devotees are very dear to Me.”

*mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ  
sādhavaḥ sama-darśinaḥ  
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā  
sat-striyaḥ sat-patiṁ yathā*

“As chaste women bring their gentle husbands under control by service, pure devotees, who are equal to everyone and completely attached to Me in the core of the heart, bring Me under their full control.” (*Bhāgavatam* 9.4.63, 66)

Uddhava heard similar words from Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*na tathā me priya-tama  
ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ  
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr  
naivātmā ca yathā bhavān*

“My dear Uddhava, neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune, nor indeed My own self is as dear to Me as you.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.15) Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in this verse from the *Bhāgavatam*, meant to make the general statement that no one else is as dear to Him as His pure devotees, but because Kṛṣṇa became so ecstatic thinking about the specific glories of His devotees, instead of saying “My devotee” He unintentionally said “you, Uddhava.”

**मदादिदेवतायोनिर्निजभक्तविनोदकृत् ।  
श्रीमूर्तिरपि सा येभ्यो नापेक्ष्या को हि नौतु तान् ॥**

mad-ādi-devatā-yonir  
nija-bhakta-vinoda-kṛt  
śrī-mūrtir api sā yebhyo  
nāpekṣyā ko hi nautu tān

mat-ādi—beginning with me; devatā—of the demigods; yoniḥ—the source; nija—His own; bhakta—to devotees; vinoda-kṛt—the giver of pleasure; śrī-mūrtiḥ—His divine personal form; api—also; sā—that; yebhyaḥ—compared to which (devotees); na apekṣyā—is not held in high regard; kaḥ—who; hi—indeed; nautu—can praise; tān—them.

**The Lord’s divine personal form is the source of all the demigods, including me, and gives great pleasure to His devotees. But the Lord considers His own body worthless compared to the value of His devotees. Who is fit to praise the Lord’s devotees?**

The demigods, headed by Śiva, Brahmā, and Indra, all originate from the creator of the universe, the Supreme Lord’s Mahāpuruṣa incarnation. That Mahāpuruṣa form of Viṣṇu is a direct expansion of Lord Nārāyaṇa. In another sense of the word yoni, Nārāyaṇa Himself is the shelter of all created and noncreated beings. His personal form is superior, therefore, to the glorious worshipable forms of all the demigods. The Lord’s all-attractive beauty delights His servants like Śeṣa and Garuḍa, who enjoy taking part in His pastimes. The opulence and sweetness of the Lord’s śrī-mūrti cannot be completely described in words. However, in the opinion of the Personality of Godhead Himself, His own opulence and sweetness are unworthy of attention compared to the greatness of His pure devotees. Who can adequately glorify the unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas? No one.

**तत्राप्यशेषभक्तानामुपमानतयोदितः ।  
साक्षाद्भगवतैवासौ प्रह्लादोऽत्कर्षभाग्यवान् ॥**

tatrāpy aśeṣa-bhaktānām  
upamānatayoditaḥ  
sākṣād bhagavataivāsau

*prahlādo 'tarkya-bhāgyavān*  
*tatra api*—moreover; *aśeṣa-bhaktānām*—among all the devotees;  
*upamānatayā*—as an example; *uditaḥ*—is described; *sākṣāt*—personally;  
*bhagavatā*—by the Supreme Lord; *eva*—indeed; *asau*—he; *prahlādaḥ*—  
Prahāda; *atarkya*—inconceivable; *bhāgya-vān*—possessor of good  
fortune.

**Moreover, among those countless devotees Prahāda stands out as the example of perfection. The Lord Himself has described him in this way. Prahāda's good fortune is inconceivable.**

Prahāda is one of the rare Vaiṣṇavas, described in the previous verse, who have no trace of material motivation. The Supreme Lord cherishes such pure devotees more than His own self, what to speak of Brahmā and other demigods. Furthermore, as the present verse states, Prahāda's surrender is especially complete, conferring on him a devotional position superior to that of pure devotees such as Śeṣa and Garuḍa. His good fortune is unique among Vaiṣṇavas, as the Lord has declared to him:

*bhavanti puruṣā loke*  
*mad-bhaktās tvām anuvratāḥ*  
*bhavān me khalu bhaktānām*  
*sarveṣāṁ pratirūpa-dhṛk*

“Those who follow your example will naturally become My pure devotees. You are the best example of My devotee, and others should follow in your footsteps.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.10.21)

**तस्य सौभाग्यमस्माभिः सर्वैर्लक्ष्याप्यनुत्तमम् ।  
साक्षाद्विरण्यकशिपोरनुभूतं विदारणे ॥**

*tasya saubhāgyam asmābhiḥ*  
*sarvair lakṣmyāpy anuttamam*  
*sākṣād dhirāṇyakaśīpor*  
*anubhūtaṁ vidāraṇe*  
*tasya*—his; *saubhāgyam*—good fortune; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *sarvaiḥ*—all;

*lakṣmyā*—by the goddess Lakṣmī; *api*—also; *anuttamam*—unexcelled; *sākṣāt*—directly; *hiraṇyakaśipuḥ*—of Hiraṇyakaśipu; *anubhūtam*—experienced; *vidāraṇe*—at the time of the tearing apart.

**When the Lord tore apart Hiraṇyakaśipu, I, all the demigods, and the goddess Lakṣmī witnessed with our own eyes the incomparable good fortune of Prahlāda.**

Lord Śiva, Brahmā, and many other demigods and devotees, headed by Lakṣmīdevī and Garuḍa, witnessed the killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu by Lord Nṛsimha. With such substantial first-hand evidence for the Lord’s special kindness to Prahlāda, no one should think that Prahlāda’s birth in a family of demons disqualified him from being a Vaiṣṇava. The Lord’s appearance for the sake of Prahlāda is further described in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Chapter Eight.

**पुनः पुनर्वरान् दित्सुर्विष्णुमुक्तिं न याचितः ।  
भक्तिरेव वृता येन प्रह्लादं तं नमाम्यहम् ॥**

*punaḥ punar varān ditsur  
viṣṇur muktiṁ na yācitaḥ  
bhaktir eva vṛtā yena  
prahlādam taṁ namāmy aham*

*punaḥ punaḥ*—repeatedly; *varān*—benedictions; *ditsuḥ*—wanting to give; *viṣṇuḥ*—Lord Viṣṇu; *muktiṁ*—liberation; *na*—not; *yācitaḥ*—asked for; *bhaktiḥ*—pure devotion; *eva*—only; *vṛtā*—chosen as a boon; *yena*—by whom; *prahlādam*—to Prahlāda; *taṁ*—him; *namāmi*—bow down; *aham*—I.

**“Lord Viṣṇu several times tried to offer him boons, but Prahlāda refused to ask to be liberated. Instead he chose only pure devotion. I bow down before him.”**

This verse, quoted from the *Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava*, highlights the exclusiveness of Prahlāda’s devotion to the Supreme Lord. Lord Nṛsimha tried hard to entice Prahlāda with liberation, just to let others see

Prahlāda’s resolve to stay fixed in pure devotion. The words *punaḥ punaḥ* (“again and again”) can be understood in several logical contexts. The idea may be, as given in this translation, that Lord Nṛsimha offered Prahlāda liberation several times. Or else it may be that Prahlāda repeatedly asked for pure devotion. Or else Prahlāda asked for pure devotion in his repeated future births. Prahlāda expresses this last idea in his prayer to Lord Nṛsimha recorded by Parāśara Muni in *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.20.38):

*nātha yoni-sahasreṣu  
yeṣu yeṣu vrajāmy aham  
teṣu teṣv acyutā bhaktir  
acyutāstu sadā tvayi*

“O master, in all the thousands of births through which I must wander in this world, please let me have unfailing devotion to You, the infallible Supreme Lord.” Prahlāda’s readiness to be born again thousands of times means he is not at all interested in liberation.

मर्यादालङ्घकस्यापि गुर्वादेशाकृतो मुने ।  
असम्पन्नस्ववाग्जालसत्यतान्तस्य यद्वलेः ॥

द्वारे तादृगवस्थानं तुच्छदानफलं किमु ।  
रक्षणं दुष्टबाणस्य किं नु मत्स्तवकारितम् ॥

*maryādā-laṅghakasyāpi  
gurv-ādeśākṛto mune  
asampanna-sva-vāg-jāla-  
satyatāntasya yad baleḥ*

*dvāre tādṛg avasthānaṁ  
tuccha-dāna-phalaṁ kim u  
rakṣaṇaṁ duṣṭa-bāṇasya  
kiṁ nu mat-stava-kāritam*

*maryādā*—etiquette; *laṅghakasya*—of one who had transgressed; *api*—even; *guru-ādeśa*—the order of his spiritual master; *akṛtaḥ*—who had failed to follow; *mune*—O sage; *asampanna*—who had not achieved; *sva-vāk*—of his own words; *jāla*—of the network; *satyatā*—of truthfulness; *antasya*—the completion; *yat*—which; *baleḥ*—of Bali; *dvāre*—at the door; *tādṛk*—such; *avasthānam*—being stationed; *tuccha*—insignificant; *dāna*—of charity; *phalam*—the consequence; *kim*—whether; *u*—indeed; *rakṣaṇam*—protection; *duṣṭa-bāṇasya*—of the wicked Bāṇa; *kim*—whether; *nu*—indeed; *mat*—my; *stava*—by the offering of prayers; *kāritam*—effected.

**My dear sage, Bali violated spiritual etiquette by disobeying the order of his spiritual master and failing to be true to his own words. Still, as we know, the Lord agreed to become the guard at Bali's door. Was that simply the fruit of Bali's insignificant charity? The Lord also granted protection to the wicked Bāṇa. Was that the result of my offering the Lord prayers?**

Because the Personality of Godhead blessed Bali Mahārāja by becoming his doorkeeper, someone might suggest that Bali received more mercy than Prahlāda. But according to Lord Śiva this is not true. Rather, Lord Viṣṇu favored Bali only because Bali was Prahlāda's grandson. Fighting for the demons against the demigods, Bali overturned the law of the universe, set by Lord Brahmā, that the demigods should rule heaven, the demons the subterranean Pātāla-loka. By invading heaven, usurping the throne of Indra, and awarding the posts of various demigods to demons, Bali violated this natural order.

Bali also disobeyed specific instructions from his spiritual master, Śukrācārya. Śukra warned Bali not to give anything to Vāmanadeva, even though Bali had offered Lord Vāmana His choice of gifts in charity. By committing the worst possible crime of denying one's spiritual master's order, Bali earned Śukrācārya's curse. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes this in the *Bhāgavatam* (8.20.14):

*evam aśraddhitam śiṣyam*



*anādeśa-karam guruḥ  
śaśāpa daiva-prahitaḥ  
satya-sandham manasvinam*

“The spiritual master, Śukrācārya, inspired by the Supreme Lord, cursed his exalted disciple Bali Mahārāja, who was so magnanimous and fixed in truth that instead of respecting the spiritual master’s instructions he wanted to disobey them.”

After being cursed for agreeing to give Lord Vāmana what He had asked, Bali could not even provide the charity he had offered. Vāmanadeva covered the entire universe with only two steps, and no land remained on which He could place His third. Thus Bali’s elegant words promising charity became an empty promise. He had told the Lord:

*yad yad vaṭo vāñchasi tat pratīccha me  
tvām arthinaṁ vipra-sutānutarkaye  
gām kāñcanaṁ guṇavad dhāma mṛṣṭam  
tathānna-ṭṭeyam uta vā vipra-kanyām  
grāmān samṛddhāṁs turagān gajān vā  
rathāṁs tathārhat-tama sampratīccha*

“O son of a *brāhmaṇa*, it appears that You have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You want You may take from me. O best of those who are worshipable, You may take from me a cow, gold, horses, elephants, chariots, a furnished house, prosperous villages, palatable food and drink, the daughter of a *brāhmaṇa* for Your wife, or whatever You desire.” (*Bhāgavatam* 8.18.32) When Vāmanadeva submitted a request that seemed too modest, Bali laughed at Him and said:

*aho brāhmaṇa-dāyāda  
vācas te vṛddha-sammataḥ  
tvām bālo bālīśa-matiḥ  
svārtham praty abudho yathā*

“O son of a *brāhmaṇa*, Your instructions are as good as those of learned and elderly persons. Nonetheless, You are a boy, and Your intelligence is insufficient. Thus You are not very prudent in regard to Your self-interest.” (*Bhāgavatam* 8.19.8) And when Vāmanadeva insisted that He wanted nothing more than as much land as He could cover with three steps, Bali replied with confidence. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.19.28):

*ity uktaḥ sa hasan prāha  
vāñchātaḥ pratigṛhyatām*

“When the Lord had thus spoken, Bali smiled and told Him, ‘All right. Take whatever You like.’” But when his promise proved impossible to fulfill, these proud words became a reason for Bali to be ashamed.

It seems that Bali did not give away anything very important, just the three insignificant material worlds and then his own body. *Padam tṛtīyaṁ kuru śīrṣṇi me nijam*: “Please place Your third lotus footstep on my head.” (*Bhāgavatam* 8.22.2) Vāmanadeva’s becoming Bali’s doorkeeper could not have been the result of just this meager charity, Lord Śiva proposes. The Lord must have reciprocated with Bali in this way because Bali’s grandfather Prahlāda was a great soul and a dear devotee of Viṣṇu. Bali did not deserve this benediction, because he was a violator of the universal order, a transgressor of his *guru*’s order, and a breaker of promises. We see in this world that, as a general rule, in exchange for worthless trifles nothing substantial can be obtained. Bali’s petty charity, therefore, could not have purchased the Personality of Godhead, who is the embodiment of eternal knowledge and bliss. That charity certainly could not have resulted in the Lord’s entering Bali’s household entourage. The only feasible explanation for Bali’s good fortune is the intimate exchange of *prema-bhakti* between Prahlāda Mahārāja and his worshipable Lord.

In defense of Bali, someone might argue from the statements of *śāstra* that Prahlāda had blessed Bali with the gift of pure devotion for the Lord and on the strength of that devotion he achieved the Lord. Another example is therefore given here, that of Bāṇāsura, a much more wicked person. Other than the Lord’s compassion for Prahlāda, there

can be no reason for Bāṇa's salvation. Not even Lord Śiva's intercession on Bāṇa's behalf could have saved Bāṇa's life when Kṛṣṇa was about to kill him, nor could Bāṇa have achieved the perfection of having all but four of his arms removed, nor would Lord Kṛṣṇa have made Bāṇa Lord Śiva's eternal associate.

Bāṇāsura was so wicked that he even dared challenge Lord Śiva, his object of worship:

*namasye tvām mahādeva  
lokānām gurum īśvaram  
puṁsām apūrṇa-kāmānām  
kāma-pūrāmarāṅghripam*

*doh-sahasraṁ tvayā dattaṁ  
paraṁ bhārāya me 'bhavat  
tri-lokyām pratiyoddhāraṁ  
na lebhe tvad ṛte samam*

“O Lord Mahādeva, I bow down to you, the spiritual master and controller of the worlds. You are like the heavenly tree that fulfills the desires of those whose desires are unfulfilled. These one thousand arms you bestowed upon me have become merely a heavy burden. Besides you, I find no one in the three worlds worthy for me to fight.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.62.5–6) Bāṇa had also abandoned the devotion to Lord Viṣṇu that was traditional in his family; instead he became an enemy of the Vaiṣṇavas, demigods, and *brāhmaṇas* like an ordinary demon. He arrested Lord Kṛṣṇa's grandson Aniruddha, fought against Kṛṣṇa, and committed other offenses, described in various *Purāṇas*.

Lord Śiva here asks, “Was it because of my prayers that Śrī Kṛṣṇa excused Bāṇa for all his nonsense?” Of course not, Lord Śiva insists. Only because of Prahlāda's pure devotion did Lord Kṛṣṇa deliver Bāṇāsura. Offenses against Vaiṣṇavas such as those Bāṇa committed can be absolved only by the Vaiṣṇavas' mercy. It was by Prahlāda's grace that his grandson Bali and great-grandson Bāṇa were dealt with favorably by the Lord. The only reason the Lord pardoned them for their offenses

and elevated them was to please Prahlāda.

केवलं तन्महाप्रेष्ठप्रह्लादप्रीत्यपेक्षया ।  
किं ब्रूयां परमत्रास्ते गौरी लक्ष्म्याः प्रिया सखी ॥

*kevalam tan-mahā-preṣṭha-  
prahlāda-prīty-apekṣayā  
kim brūyām param atrāste  
gaurī lakṣmyāḥ priyā sakhī*

*kevalam*—only; *tat*—His (Lord Viṣṇu's); *mahā-preṣṭha*—most beloved; *prahlāda*—for Prahlāda; *prīti*—His love; *apekṣayā*—by virtue of; *kim*—what; *brūyām*—can I say; *param*—more; *atra*—here; *āste*—is present; *gaurī*—Gaurī; *lakṣmyāḥ*—of the goddess Lakṣmī; *priyā-sakhī*—the dear friend.

**No, in both cases the Lord acted out of affection for Prahlāda, His most beloved devotee. But what more about this can I say in the presence of Gaurī, the close friend of the goddess Lakṣmī?**

Nārada might like to hear more about the glories of Prahlāda Mahārāja, but Lord Śiva is afraid to arouse the anger of his wife. If he says much more in praise of Prahlāda, he will doubtlessly fall into an ecstatic trance. If he then speaks too loudly, Pārvatī might hear what he is saying. She is a good friend of Mahā-lakṣmī's and would not like to hear about Prahlāda's being a greater devotee than the Supreme Lord's consort. If Pārvatī becomes annoyed, Lord Śiva worries, she will react disrespectfully toward himself and Nārada, and that will not be good for her.

Reason dictates that a newcomer to devotional service like Prahlāda could not surpass the goddess Lakṣmī, who eternally resides on the chest of Lord Nārāyaṇa, yet still Prahlāda received special mercy from the Lord to put him in that unlikely standing. When Brahmā gave Hiraṇyakaśipu the boons that made him the scourge of the three worlds, the Supreme Lord was concerned that His devotees not have their confidence in devotional service weakened by seeing their enemy

allowed to become so powerful. To help dispel the Vaiṣṇavas' anxieties and doubts, Lord Nṛsiṃha, right after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, blessed Prahlāda to become greater than all other devotees, past and present—including the residents of Vaikuṇṭha, His personal attendants, and His beloved consort Lakṣmī. With this benediction in mind, Lord Śiva has said about Prahlāda in Text 75, “There is a greater recipient of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy than your father, me, and other servants like Garuḍa, and even than the goddess of fortune. His name is Prahlāda. He is famous throughout the world as the dearmost devotee of Kṛṣṇa.” And in Text 80: “When the Lord tore apart Hiraṇyakaśipu, I, all the demigods, and the goddess Lakṣmī witnessed with our own eyes the incomparable good fortune of Prahlāda.” Thus, by the Lord’s sweet will, Prahlāda became the greatest Vaiṣṇava, which would otherwise have been impossible.

Sometimes the Personality of Godhead declares other “recent” devotees like Prahlāda dearer to Himself than Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, Mahā-lakṣmī, and other great personalities of the eternal kingdom of Vaikuṇṭha. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava:

*na tathā me priya-tama  
ātma-yonir na saṅkaraḥ  
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr  
naivātmā ca yathā bhavān*

“Neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune, nor indeed My own self is as dear to Me as you.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.15) Lord Nārāyaṇa similarly tells Durvāsā Muni:

*nāham ātmānam āśāse  
mad-bhaktaiḥ sādhubhir vinā  
śriyam ātyantikīm vāpi  
yeṣāṃ gatiḥ ahaṃ parā*

“Without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I am not attracted to My own self or to My supreme consort, the goddess Śrī.” (*Bhāgavatam* 9.4.64) One reason why the Supreme Lord speaks like this is that although His eternal associates—Saṅkarṣaṇa, Mahā-lakṣmī, and

so on—are ever established in unswerving devotion, they underwent no tribulations to gain it, whereas His “new” devotees in the material world have sacrificed all comforts and security to gain pure devotional service. For the trouble such devotees have taken, Lord Kṛṣṇa is especially grateful. Besides this, the Lord wants to encourage all His devotees to surrender themselves more fully, and to accomplish this He emphatically praises devotees like Prahlāda who have taken great risks for His satisfaction.

One might ask how Prahlāda can be greater than Brahmā, Indra, and other demigods. The demigods, on one hand, are frequently able to have the audience of Lord Viṣṇu, which is the final perfection of all spiritual practices. Śrī Prahlāda, on the other hand, associates with the Lord mostly by remembering Him. We will hear Prahlāda say about himself in the next chapter of the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Text 20):

*hanūmad-ādi-vat tasya  
kāpi sevā kṛtāsti na  
param vighnākule citte  
smaraṇam kriyate mayā*

“I have never performed any real service for the Lord like Hanumān and others. I have only remembered the Lord sometimes, when my mind was troubled.” Nonetheless, we should remember that Prahlāda does in fact see the Lord constantly, and according to the description of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Fifth Canto, Chapter Eighteen) Prahlāda offers Him incessant prayers on the planet Hari-varṣa. Prahlāda’s grandson Bali has also inherited from him the right to see the Lord constantly, and thus Śrī Vāmanadeva stays with Bali in his palace. If Prahlāda criticizes himself for only being able to remember the Lord and not see Him directly, that is simply dissatisfaction with himself due to the humility that such a perfect Vaiṣṇava naturally feels. Despite what he says about himself, he is dearer to the Supreme Lord than even the Lord’s eternal associates in Vaikuṇṭha.

In some manuscripts of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, the following verse is inserted between texts 84 and 85:

*garbha-stho yady api tvat ke-  
nopadeśena bhaktimān  
sa jātas tad api tvaṁ ca  
tasmāt sukham avāpsyasi*

“Granted, the reason he became endowed with pure devotion was that you gave him certain instructions while he was still in the womb. But all the same he was born as a pure devotee, and so you deserve to be awarded with happiness in the future.”

**तद्गत्वा सुतले शीघ्रं वर्धयित्वाशिषां गणैः ।  
प्रह्लादं स्वयमाश्लिष्य मदाश्लेषावलिं वदेः ॥**

*tad gatvā sutale śīghram  
vardhayitvāśiṣām gaṇaiḥ  
prahlādam svayam āśliṣya  
mad-āśleṣāvalim vadeḥ*

*tat*—therefore; *gatvā*—going; *sutale*—to Sutala; *śīghram*—quickly; *vardhayitvā*—encouraging; *āśiṣām*—of blessings; *gaṇaiḥ*—with a multitude; *prahlādam*—Prahāda; *svayam*—in person; *āśliṣya*—embracing; *mat-āśleṣa*—of my embrace; *āvalim*—a series; *vadeḥ*—please relate.

**Go quickly to Sutala. Offer Prahāda your countless blessings, embrace him, and tell him I embrace him again and again.**

At the time of Lord Śiva’s speaking, Prahāda was residing on Sutala, the third Pātāla planet, ruled by Bali Mahārāja. When Prahāda had come to witness Bali’s encounter with Lord Vāmana, the Lord had invited Prahāda to visit Sutala-loka and enjoy His own association there for some time:

*vatsa prahlāda bhadram te  
prayāhi suta-lālayam  
modamānaḥ sva-pautreṇa  
jñātīnām sukham āvaha*

*nityam draṣṭāsi mām tatra  
gadā-pāṇim avasthitam  
mad-darśana-mahāhlāda-  
dhvasta-karma-nibandhanaḥ*

“My dear son Prahlāda, all good fortune unto you. For the time being, please go to the place known as Sutala and there enjoy happiness with your grandson and your other relatives and friends. You shall be able to see Me there in My usual feature with disc, club, lotus, and conchshell in My hands. Because of your transcendental bliss from always personally seeing Me, you will have no further bondage to fruitive activities.” (Bhāgavatam 8.23.9–10)

**अहो न सहतेऽस्माकं प्रणामं सज्जनाग्रणीः ।  
स्तुतिं च मा प्रमादी स्यास्तत्र चेत्सुखमिच्छसि ॥**

*aho na sahate 'smākaṁ  
praṇāmaṁ saj-janāgraṇīḥ  
stutiṁ ca mā pramādī syās  
tatra cet sukham icchasi*

*aho*—oh; *na sahate*—he does not tolerate; *asmākaṁ*—our; *praṇāmaṁ*—bowing down; *sat-jana*—of saintly persons; *agra-nīḥ*—the foremost; *stutiṁ*—praise; *ca*—also; *mā*—do not; *pramādī*—careless; *syāḥ*—be; *tatra*—about this; *cet*—if; *sukham*—comfort; *icchasi*—you want.

**Unfortunately, that best of saintly persons will not tolerate our bowing down to him or praising him. If you want to avoid getting into trouble, do not neglect this fact.**

Lord Śiva warns Nārada not to be careless and show any respect to Prahlāda. If he does, Prahlāda will become unhappy and refuse to talk with Nārada, or even see him.

*Thus ends the third chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled “Prapañcātīta: Beyond the Material*



World.”

## 4. Bhakta: The Devotee

### Nārada visits Prahāda in Sutala-loka

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
श्रुत्वा महाश्चर्यमिवेशभाषितं  
प्रह्लादसन्दर्शनजातकौतुकः ।  
हृद्यानतः श्रीसुतले गतोऽचिराद्  
धावन् प्रविष्टः पुरमासुरं मुनिः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*śrutvā mahāścaryam iveśa-bhāṣitam*  
*prahlāda-sandarśana-jāta-kautukaḥ*  
*hṛd-yānataḥ śrī-sutale gato 'cirād*  
*dhāvan praviṣṭaḥ puram āsuram muniḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *śrutvā*—having heard; *mahā-āścaryam*—most amazing; *iva*—indeed; *īśa*—of Lord Śiva; *bhāṣitam*—the words; *prahlāda-sandarśana*—for seeing Prahāda; *jāta*—born; *kautukaḥ*—his eagerness; *hṛt*—of the heart; *yānataḥ*—by the path; *śrī-sutale*—to Śrī Sutala; *gataḥ*—he traveled; *acirāt*—quickly; *dhāvan*—running; *praviṣṭaḥ*—he entered; *puram*—the city; *āsuram*—belonging to the demons; *muniḥ*—the sage.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: After the sage Nārada heard Lord Śiva’s words, which impressed him as most amazing, he was eager to see Prahāda in person. He at once, therefore, traveled to Śrī Sutala by the path of the heart and

entered running into the city of the demons.

In this chapter, despite Lord Śiva's warning, Nārada glorifies Prahlāda. After refuting Nārada's glorification, Prahlāda in turn unfulfilled Hanumān. Nārada then visits Hanumān, who also denies Nārada's praise and recommends instead the Pāṇḍavas.

The “path of the heart” Nārada traveled is the mind itself; in other words, as soon as he desired “I want to go to Sutala,” he at once arrived.

तावद्विविक्ते भगवत्पदाम्बुज-  
प्रेमोलुसद्भुचानविषक्तचेतसा ।  
श्रीवैष्णवाग्रयेण समीक्ष्य दूरतः  
प्रोत्थाय विप्रः प्रणतोऽन्तिकं गतः ॥

*tāvad vivikte bhagavat-padāmbuja-  
premollasad-dhyāna-viṣakta-cetasā  
śrī-vaiṣṇavāgryeṇa samīkṣya dūrataḥ  
protthāya vipraḥ praṇato 'ntikaṁ gataḥ*

*tāvat*—at that moment; *vivikte*—in a secluded place; *bhagavat*—of the Supreme Lord; *pada-ambuja*—for the lotus feet; *prema*—with pure love; *ullasat*—shining; *dhyāna*—in meditation; *viṣakta*—absorbed; *cetasā*—with his heart; *śrī-vaiṣṇava*—of transcendental Vaiṣṇavas; *agryeṇa*—by the foremost; *samīkṣya*—being seen; *dūrataḥ*—from a distance; *protthāya*—standing up; *vipraḥ*—the *brāhmaṇa* (Nārada); *praṇataḥ*—bowed down; *antikaṁ*—close; *gataḥ*—came.

Prahlāda, the best of Vaiṣṇavas, was in a secluded place, absorbed in loving meditation on the Supreme Lord's lotus feet. Seeing the *brāhmaṇa* Nārada approaching from a distance, Prahlāda quickly stood up and then offered prostrate obeisances as Nārada came close.

Without receiving information from his external senses, Prahlāda, though deep in meditation, became aware that Nārada was approaching. Prahlāda's meditation was exceptionally wonderful because he was meditating on the Personality of Godhead's lotus feet, not on some

impersonal conception of the Supreme. His concentration was so fixed that when he became aware that Nārada was approaching he could not respond at once. By the time Prahlāda stood up, Nārada was already nearby.

पीठे प्रयत्नादुपवेशितोऽयं  
पूजां पुरावद्विधिनार्प्यमाणाम् ।  
सम्भ्रान्तचेताः परिहृत्य वर्षन्  
हर्षास्रमाश्लेषपरोऽवदत्तम् ॥

*pīṭhe prayatnād upaveśito 'yaṁ  
pūjām purā-vad vidhinārpyamāṇām  
sambhrānta-cetāḥ parihṛtya varṣan  
harṣāsram āśleṣa-paro 'vadat tam*

*pīṭhe*—on a seat; *prayatnāt*—with effort; *upaveśitaḥ*—made to sit; *ayaṁ*—he (Nārada); *pūjām*—the worship; *purā-vat*—as previously; *vidhinā*—according to standard procedures; *arpyamāṇām*—being offered; *sambhrānta*—filled with reverence; *cetāḥ*—his heart; *parihṛtya*—refusing; *varṣan*—raining down; *harṣa*—of joy; *asram*—tears; *āśleṣa-paro*—trying to embrace; *avadat*—he (Nārada) told; *tam*—him (Prahlāda).

With some effort, Prahlāda induced Nārada to accept a seat and then began, like others before, to worship him in accordance with standard rules. But Nārada, feeling great reverence for Prahlāda, refused the worship. He shed tears of joy and tried to embrace Prahlāda. Then he spoke as follows.

Because Nārada was reluctant to accept the seat Prahlāda offered, Prahlāda had to force him to take it. Prahlāda brought water to wash Nārada's feet, and brought *arghya* and all the other paraphernalia for full worship, but Nārada stopped him, being interested only in embracing Prahlāda.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
दृष्टश्चिरात्कृष्णकृपाभरस्य  
पात्रं भवान् मे सफलः श्रमोऽभूत् ।  
आबाल्यतो यस्य हि कृष्णभक्तिर्  
जाता विशुद्धा न कुतोऽपि यासीत् ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*dr̥ṣṭaś cirāt kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-bharasya*  
*pātram bhavān me sa-phalaḥ śramo 'bhūt*  
*ā-bālyato yasya hi kṛṣṇa-bhaktir*  
*jātā viśuddhā na kuto 'pi yāsīt*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *dr̥ṣṭaḥ*—seen; *cirāt*—after a long time; *kṛṣṇa*—of Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā*—of the mercy; *bharasya*—of the greatest amount; *pātram*—the recipient; *bhavān*—your good self; *me*—my; *sa-phalaḥ*—fruitful; *śramaḥ*—labor; *abhūt*—has become; *ā-bālyataḥ*—beginning from childhood; *yasya*—whose; *hi*—certainly; *kṛṣṇa*—for Kṛṣṇa; *bhaktiḥ*—devotion; *jātā*—endowed; *viśuddhā*—perfectly pure; *na*—never; *kutaḥ api*—anywhere at all; *yā*—which; *āsīt*—existed.

Śrī Nārada said: Now, after so long, I have finally seen you—the true recipient of Kṛṣṇa’s full mercy! Now my efforts have borne fruit! From your very childhood you have been endowed with pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Such spontaneous love has never been seen anywhere before.

Nārada had diligently studied the revealed scriptures to learn about the Lord’s most intimate devotees, and recently he had taken the trouble to visit Prayāga, the southern country, and Śivaloka. Now he felt so satisfied meeting Prahlaḍa that all his efforts seemed worthwhile.

यया स्वपित्रा विहिताः सहस्रम्

उपद्रवा दारुणविघ्नरूपाः ।  
जितास्त्वया यस्य तवानुभावात्  
सर्वेऽभवन् भागवता हि दैत्याः ॥

*yayā sva-pitrā vihitāḥ sahasram  
upadravā dāruṇa-vighna-rūpāḥ  
jitās tvayā yasya tavānubhāvāt  
sarve 'bhavan bhāgavatā hi daityāḥ*

*yayā*—because of which (pure devotion); *sva-pitrā*—by your father; *vihitāḥ*—imposed; *sahasram*—thousands; *upadravāḥ*—outrages; *dāruṇa*—terrible; *vighna*—of obstacles; *rūpāḥ*—in the form; *jitāḥ*—conquered; *tvayā*—by you; *yasya*—of whom; *tava*—you; *anubhāvāt*—by the influence; *sarve*—all; *abhavan*—became; *bhāgavatāḥ*—Vaiṣṇavas; *hi*—indeed; *daityāḥ*—the demons.

**By virtue of that pure devotion, you overcame terrible obstacles, the thousands of outrages your father committed against you. And by your influence all the demons became Vaiṣṇavas.**

Prahlāda's father, Hiraṇyakaśipu, was the greatest antagonist of Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees. Prahlāda insisted on joining the party of Hiraṇyakaśipu's enemies, and therefore Hiraṇyakaśipu tried to kill him. But because the Lord fully protected Prahlāda, his demon father failed to kill him despite many attempts. This is related in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.42–44):

*prayāse 'pahate tasmin  
daityendraḥ pariśaṅkitāḥ  
cakāra tad-vadhoṣāyān  
nirbandhena yudhiṣṭhira*

*dig-gajair dandaśūkendrair  
abhicārāvapātanaḥ  
māyābhiḥ sannirodhaiś ca*

*gara-dānair abhojanaiḥ*

*hima-vāyav-agni-salilaiḥ*

*parvatākramaṇair api*

“My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira, when all the attempts of the demons to kill Prahlāda Mahārāja proved futile, the king of the demons, Hiraṇyakaśipu, being most fearful, began contriving other means to kill him. Hiraṇyakaśipu could not kill his son by throwing him beneath the feet of big elephants, throwing him among huge, fearful snakes, employing destructive spells, hurling him from the top of a hill, conjuring up illusory tricks, administering poison, starving him, exposing him to severe cold, winds, fire, and water, or throwing heavy stones to crush him.”

Lesser Vaiṣṇavas would not be able to endure as staunchly as Prahlāda the severe kinds of distress imposed by Hiraṇyakaśipu. In the face of such torments, anyone not as fully surrendered and absorbed in remembrance of the Personality of Godhead would lose the courage and determination to continue serving the Lord. But none of these tests distracted Prahlāda from his devotional service. Being solidly fixed in *bhakti-yoga*, Prahlāda was empowered to preach effectively; the sons of the demon enemies of Viṣṇu became Vaiṣṇavas by hearing Prahlāda’s instructions and even just by touching or seeing him. Therefore in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (13.7), which is part of the *Nārada Purāṇa*, the goddess of the earth, Dharaṇī-devī, thus glorifies Prahlāda’s special potency:

*aho kṛtārthaḥ sutarām nṛ-loko*  
*yasmin sthito bhāgavatottamo ’si*  
*spṛśanti paśyanti ca ye bhavantam*  
*bhāvāṁś ca yāṁś te hari-loka-bhājāḥ*

“Ah, this human world is now especially fortunate since you, the best of Vaiṣṇavas, are present. Everyone who touches you or sees you and the symptoms of your ecstatic emotions will become entitled to take up residence in Hariloka.”

कृष्णाविष्टो योऽस्मृतात्मेव मत्तो  
नृत्यन् गायन् कम्पमानो रुदंश्च ।  
लोकान् सर्वान् उद्धरन् संसृतिभ्यो  
विष्णोर्भक्तिं हर्षयामास तन्वन् ॥

*kṛṣṇāviṣṭo yo 'smṛtātmeva matto  
nṛtyan gāyan kampamāno rudamś ca  
lokān sarvān uddharan saṁsṛtibhyo  
viṣṇor bhaktim harṣayām āsa tanvan*

*kṛṣṇa*—in thought of Kṛṣṇa; *āviṣṭaḥ*—absorbed; *yaḥ*—who; *asmṛta*—having forgotten; *ātmā*—himself; *iva*—as if; *mattaḥ*—maddened; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *gāyan*—singing; *kampamānaḥ*—trembling; *rudan*—calling out loudly; *ca*—and; *lokān*—the worlds; *sarvān*—all; *uddharan*—delivering; *saṁsṛtibhyaḥ*—from the cycle of material life; *viṣṇoḥ*—to Viṣṇu; *bhaktim*—pure devotional service; *harṣayām āsa*—you made joyful; *tanvan*—spreading.

While immersed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa, you seemed to forget your own existence. Like a madman you danced and sang and called out loudly, your body trembling. In this way you spread devotional service unto Lord Viṣṇu, delivering all the worlds from the cycle of material life and filling them with joy.

When a pure devotee is inspired by remembering Kṛṣṇa, he sometimes behaves in such unusual ways that ordinary people may think him either intoxicated or insane. The word *matta* in this verse can be understood in either of these two senses. But behaving outside socially acceptable norms does not in itself make one a saint. Prahlāda Mahārāja was not simply acting in strange ways; he was able to free anyone who saw him from the sufferings of material life. The logician Bhāsarvajña in his *Nyāsa-sāra* (3.39) enumerates twenty-one sources of material misery—the body, the six senses, the objects of each sense, judgment based on these six kinds of sensation, and pleasure and pain themselves.

Describing Prahlāda's influence on persons who witnessed his ecstatic

symptoms, Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (15.1–2) states:

śrutvāty-adbhuta-vairāgyāj  
janās tasyojjvalā girah  
aśrūṇi mumucuḥ kecid  
vikṣya ke 'py anamaṁś ca tam

līlayānye pare hāsyād  
bhaktyā kecana vismayāt  
janās taṁ saṅghaśo 'paśyan  
sarvathāpi hatainasah

“Upon hearing his brilliant words, some people felt an extra-ordinary sense of detachment from material life and began to shed tears. Others who saw him responded by bowing down to him. Others were amazed to see him playfully laugh and simply stood in groups watching him. All these persons were relieved of worldly contamination.” Prahlāda delivered ordinary people not only by freeing them from unhappiness but also by giving them the highest happiness of pure devotional service to Viṣṇu.

कृष्णेनाविर्भूय तीरे महाब्धेः  
स्वाङ्गे कृत्वा ललितो मातृवद्यः ।  
ब्रह्मेशादीन् कुर्वतोऽपि स्तवौघं  
पद्मां चानादृत्य सम्मानितो यः ॥

kṛṣṇenāvirbhūya tīre mahābdheḥ  
svāṅke kṛtvā lālito mātṛ-vad yaḥ  
brahmeśādīn kurvato 'pi stavaughaṁ  
padmāṁ cānādr̥tya sammānito yaḥ

kṛṣṇena—by Kṛṣṇa; āvirbhūya—appearing; tīre—on the shore; mahā-abdheḥ—of the ocean; sva-aṅke—on His lap; kṛtvā—being placed; lālitaḥ—caressed; mātṛ-vat—like a mother; yaḥ—who; brahma-īśā-ādīn—Brahmā, Śiva, and other demigods; kurvataḥ—doing; api—even



though; *stava-ogham*—recitation of many prayers; *padmām*—the goddess Padmā (Lakṣmī); *ca*—and; *anādṛtya*—ignoring; *sammānitaḥ*—honored; *yaḥ*—who.

**When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on the shore of the ocean, He placed you on His lap and caressed you like a mother. Thus He honored you, ignoring Brahmā, Śiva, and the other demigods offering prayers, and even ignoring the goddess Padmā.**

After killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Lord Nṛsiṃha was still furious. No one could pacify Him. The Lord's personal servants, headed by His wife Lakṣmī, by Garuḍa, and by Brahmā and other demigods, were standing at a distance awestruck, too afraid to come near Him. Brahmā then requested Prahlāda to try to appease the Lord. *Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (14.13) describes the Lord's reaction:

*tataḥ kṣitāv eva nivīśya nāthaḥ  
kṛtvā tam anke sva-janaika-bandhuḥ  
śanair vidhunvan kara-pallavena  
spṛśan muhur mātṛ-vad āliliṅga*

“The Lord, who is friendly only to His devotees, then sat down on the ground and put Prahlāda on His lap. Gently rocking back and forth, He patted Prahlāda with His lotus hand and embraced him repeatedly as a mother embraces her child.” Thus the Supreme Lord attended to Prahlāda, disregarding the many other exalted persons present.

**वित्रस्तेन ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थितो यः  
श्रीमत्पादाम्भोजमूले निपत्य ।  
तिष्ठन्नुत्थाप्योत्तमाङ्गे कराब्जं  
धृत्वाङ्गेषु श्रीनृसिंहेन लीढः ॥**

*vitrastena brahmaṇā prārthito yaḥ  
śrīmat-pādāmbhoja-mūle nipatya  
tiṣṭhann utthāpyottamāṅge karābjaṁ*

*dhṛtvāṅgeṣu śrī-nṛsimhena līdhaḥ*  
*vitrastena*—who was terried; *brahmaṇā*—by Brahmā; *prārthitaḥ*—  
begged; *yaḥ*—who; *śrīmat*—divine; *pāda-ambhoja*—of the (Lord’s) lotus  
feet; *mūle*—at the base; *nīpatya*—falling down; *tiṣṭhan*—standing up;  
*utthāpya*—being lifted; *api*—and; *uttama-aṅge*—on the head; *kara-*  
*abjam*—His lotus hand; *dhṛtvā*—being placed; *aṅgeṣu*—on his various  
limbs; *śrī-nṛsimhena*—by Śrī Nṛsimha; *līdhaḥ*—licked.

**Brahmā, terrified, begged you to approach Śrī Nṛsimha. And when you  
fell at the Lord’s divine lotus feet, the Lord stood up and raised you from  
the ground. He put His lotus hand upon your head and began to lick your  
entire body.**

When Lord Nṛsimha burst from the pillar, He seemed so angry at  
Hiraṇyakaśipu for abusing His devotee Prahlāda that Brahmā thought  
the Lord might be ready to destroy the entire universe. Therefore  
Brahmā entreated Lord Nṛsimha to mercifully reduce His anger. That  
prayer unanswered, Brahmā asked Prahlāda to intercede:

*tāta praśamayopehi*  
*sva-pitre kupitaṁ prabhum*

“My dear son, Lord Nṛsimhadeva is extremely angry at your demonic  
father. Please go forward and appease the Lord.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.9.3)

Prahlāda threw himself at the Lord’s feet in full surrender, but the  
Lord picked him up and showered him with affection:

*sva-pāda-mūle patitaṁ tam arbhakaṁ*  
*vilokya devaḥ kṛpayā pariplutaḥ*  
*utthāpya tac-chīrṣṇy adadhāt karāmbujaṁ*  
*kālāhi-vitrasta-dhiyām kṛtābhayaṁ*

“When Lord Nṛsimhadeva saw the small boy Prahlāda Mahārāja  
prostrated at the soles of His lotus feet, He became most ecstatic in  
affection toward His devotee. Raising Prahlāda, the Lord placed His  
lotus hand upon the boy’s head because His hand is always ready to

create fearlessness in all of His devotees.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.9.5)

Similarly, the *Bṛhan-narasimha Purāṇa* states, *lilīhe tasya gātrāṇi/ svapotasyeva keśarī*: “Lord Nṛsimha licked Prahlaḍa’s limbs as an ordinary lioness grooms her cub.”

यश्चित्रचित्राग्रहचातुरीचयैर्  
उत्सृज्यमानं हरिणा परं पदम् ।  
ब्रह्मादिसम्प्रार्थ्यमुपेक्ष्य केवलं  
वव्रेऽस्य भक्तिं निजजन्मजन्मसु ॥

yaś citra-citrāgraha-cāturī-cayair  
utsṛjyamānaṁ hariṇā paraṁ padam  
brahmādi-samprārthyam upekṣya kevalam  
vavre ’sya bhaktiṁ nija-janma-janmasu

yaḥ—who; citra-citra—most attractive; āgraha—of enticements; cāturī-cayaiḥ—with several clever attempts; utsṛjyamānam—being offered; hariṇā—by Lord Hari; paraṁ padam—the supreme destination; brahmādi—by Brahmā and everyone else; samprārthyam—prayed for; upekṣya—ignoring; kevalam—only; vavre—you chose; asya—His; bhaktim—devotional service; nija—your; janma-janmasu—in repeated births.

When Lord Hari, with most attractive and clever enticements, tried to offer you the supreme abode, you showed no interest in liberation, which is prayed for by Brahmā and by everyone else. Rather, you asked only devotion to the Lord, birth after birth.

Lord Nṛsimha offered Prahlaḍa *paraṁ padam*, the most exalted position of an eternal associate in Vaikuṇṭha, but Prahlaḍa was not inclined to accept even this. He simply wanted to continue practicing devotional service, no matter how many lifetimes his service would take to perfect.

The Lord tried to entice Prahlaḍa with kind words, as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.52) describes:

*prahlāda bhadra bhadraṁ te  
prīto 'haṁ te 'surottama  
varam vṛṇīṣvābhimataṁ  
kāma-pūro 'smy ahaṁ nṛṇām*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Prahlāda, most gentle one, best of the family of the *asuras*, all good fortune unto you. I am very much pleased with you. It is My pastime to fulfill the desires of all living beings, and therefore you may ask from Me any benediction you desire.”

Similarly Lord Nṛsiṁha tells Prahlāda in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.20.17):

*kurvatas te prasanno 'haṁ  
bhaktim avyabhicāriṇīm  
yathābhilaṣito mattaḥ  
prahlāda vriyatām varaḥ*

“Prahlāda, because you have been offering Me devotional service without deviation, I am very much pleased with you. Please choose any benediction you would like from Me.”

The Lord also tells Prahlāda in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (14.28–32):

*sa-bhayaṁ sambhramaṁ vatsa  
mad-gaurava-kṛtaṁ tyaja  
naiṣa priyo me bhakteṣu  
svādhīna-praṇayī bhava*

*api me pūrṇa-kāmasya  
navam navam idaṁ priyaṁ  
niḥśaṅkaḥ praṇayād bhakto  
yaṁ mām paśyati bhāṣate*

*sadā mukto 'pi baddho 'smi  
bhaktena sneha-rajjubhiḥ  
ajito 'pi jito 'haṁ tair*

*avaśyo 'pi vaśī-kṛtaḥ*

*tyakta-bandhu-dhana-sneho  
mayi yaḥ kurute ratim  
ekas tasyāsmi sa ca me  
na hy anyo 'sty āvayoḥ suhṛt*

*nityaṁ ca pūrṇa-kāmasya  
janmāni vividhāni me  
bhakta-sarveṣṭa-dānāya  
tasmāt kiṁ te priyaṁ vada*

“My dear child, please give up this attitude of fearful respect that your reverence toward Me has produced in you. I do not so much like this sentiment in My devotees. Instead, just feel free to express your love for Me. When a devotee looks at Me without hesitation and speaks to Me affectionately, My pleasure grows with every new moment. Although I am eternally free from all limitations, such behavior binds Me with ropes of love. Although I am unconquerable, My devotees can conquer Me. And although I am subject to no one's control, I become their subordinate subject. I belong only to him who has shown his love for Me by giving up all affection for family and possessions, and such a devotee also belongs to Me. Neither he nor I has any other true friend. My desires are always automatically fulfilled, but I take various births in this world just to bestow on My devotees the satisfaction of all their desires. So please tell Me what you would like from Me.”

After Prahlāda answered, refusing all material benedictions, Lord Nṛsimha continued:

*satyaṁ mad-darśanād anyad  
vatsa naivāsti te priyam  
ata eva hi samprītis  
tvayi me 'tīva vardhate*

*api te kṛta-kṛtyasya*

*mat-priyaṁ kṛtyaṁ asti hi  
kiñcic ca dātum iṣṭaṁ me  
mat-priyārthaṁ vṛṇuṣva tat*

“Yes, of course, My dear child, nothing is dear to you but the opportunity to see Me. And so I feel more and more affection for you. But still I would like to do some favor for you, even though you are already successful in all respects. I want to give you something. So kindly choose some benediction, just to please Me.”

**यः स्वप्रभुप्रीतिमपेक्ष्य पैतृकं  
राज्यं स्वयं श्रीनरसिंहसंस्तुतौ ।  
सम्प्रार्थिताशेषजनोद्धृतीच्छया  
स्वीकृत्य तद्व्यानपरोऽत्र वर्तते ॥**

*yaḥ sva-prabhu-prītim apekṣya paitṛkaṁ  
rājyaṁ svayaṁ śrī-narasimha-saṁstutau  
samprārthitāśeṣa-janoddhṛticchayā  
svī-kṛtya tad-dhyāna-paraḥ 'tra vartate*

*yaḥ*—who; *sva-prabhu*—of your Lord; *prītim*—the love; *apekṣya*—considering; *paitṛkaṁ*—belonging to your father; *rājyaṁ*—the kingdom; *svayaṁ*—your; *śrī-narasimha*—Śrī Nṛsimha; *saṁstutau*—in prayers; *samprārthita*—requested; *aśeṣa*—of all; *jana*—people; *uddhṛti*—for the deliverance; *icchayā*—with the desire; *svī-kṛtya*—accepting; *tat*—upon Him; *dhyāna-paraḥ*—fixed in meditation; *atra*—here; *vartate*—are present.

**Responding to your Lord’s love, you agreed to assume your father’s throne. And as you told Lord Nṛsimha in your prayers, by doing this you wished to help deliver all people. You are still on that royal seat, fixed in meditation on Lord Nṛsimha.**

Considering the Lord’s unconditional affection toward him, Prahlāda finally agreed to sit on the throne of his father. He intended to use the

vast wealth of Hiraṇyakaśipu's kingdom for preaching. If he could arrange for the deliverance of everyone in the universe, Prahlaḍa calculated, that might satisfy the Lord.

It certainly seems curious that Prahlaḍa at first refused elevation to the spiritual kingdom but later accepted a limited kingdom in the material world. But Prahlaḍa did this because of a special hankering in his heart—his desire to free the people of the world from their distress. He did not worry that by involvement in politics his own spiritual interests would be endangered, since he was confident that his unbroken meditation on the Personality of Godhead would always protect him. Thus Prahlaḍa prayed to Lord Nṛsiṃha:

*evam sva-karma-patitam bhava-vaitaraṇyām  
anyonya-janma-maraṇāśana-bhīta-bhītam  
paśyañ janam sva-para-vigraha-vaira-maitram  
hanteti pāra-cara pīṇhi mūḍham adya*

“My dear Lord, You are always transcendently situated on the other side of the river of death, but because of the reactions of our own activities, we are suffering on this side. Indeed, we have fallen into this river and are repeatedly suffering the pains of birth and death and eating horrible things. Now kindly look upon us—not only upon me but also upon all others who are suffering—and by Your causeless mercy and compassion, deliver us and maintain us.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.9.41)

Material existence is like the river Vaitaraṇī, the gateway to the court of Death. In general, material life on earth is full of suffering, no less so than life in the subterranean realms of hell. Therefore, although immune to these dangers, for our benefit Prahlaḍa speaks as if fearing the troubles he can expect in various births and deaths, and he presents himself as befooled like most people, who deal with one another either as enemies or as friends and who are thereby bewildered in all circumstances.

Prahlaḍa addresses Lord Nṛsiṃha as *pāra-cara*, He who is situated on the other side of the Vaitaraṇī River, or in other words, in the eternally free realm of Vaikuṇṭha. Expressing his own pain at seeing the suffering

of other souls in the material world, Prahlāda requests the Lord to please carry them across the Vaitaraṇī to safety. He then further prays:

*ko nv atra te 'khila-guro bhagavan prayāsa  
uttāraṇe 'sya bhava-sambhava-lopa-hetoḥ  
mūḍheṣu vai mahad-anugraha āṛta-bandho  
kiṁ tena te priya-janān anusevatām naḥ*

“O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, original spiritual master of the entire world, what is the difficulty for You, who manage the affairs of the universe, in delivering the fallen souls engaged in Your devotional service? You are the friend of all suffering humanity, and for great personalities it is necessary to show mercy to the foolish. Therefore I think that You will show Your causeless mercy to persons like us, who engage in Your service.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.9.42)

Here Prahlāda addresses Lord Nṛsiṃha as the spiritual master of all souls, implying that it is quite fitting for Him to show mercy to everyone without exception. For the Lord to deliver every soul in existence should not be a great endeavor, because He creates, maintains, and destroys universes as a mere sport. And even less difficult should it be for the Lord to deliver His own devotees and their servants, like Prahlāda, who considers himself a fallen demon with the one good qualification of being Nārada Muni’s faithful disciple.

यः पीतवासोऽङ्घ्रि-सरोजदृष्ट्यै  
गच्छन् वनं नैमिषकं कदाचित् ।  
नारायणेनाहवतोषितेन  
प्रोक्तस्त्वया हन्त सदा जितोऽस्मि ॥

*yaḥ pīta-vāso-’ṅghri-saroja-dṛṣṭyai  
gacchan vanaṁ naimiṣakaṁ kadācit  
nārāyaṇenāhava-toṣitena  
proktas tvayā hanta sadā jito ’smi*

*yaḥ*—who; *pīta-vāsaḥ*—of the Lord in yellow dress; *aṅghri*—the feet;



*saroja*—lotuslike; *dṛṣṭyai*—in order to see; *gacchan*—going; *vanam*—to the forest; *naimiṣakam*—Naimiṣa; *kadācit*—once; *nārāyaṇena*—by Lord Nārāyaṇa; *āhava*—in combat; *toṣitena*—who was satisfied; *proktaḥ*—told; *tvayā*—by you; *hanta*—ah; *sadā*—always; *jitaḥ*—conquered; *asmi*—I am.

**You once went to the Naimiṣa Forest to have darśana of Nārāyaṇa, who is known as “the Lord in yellow dress.” While on the road you satisfied the Lord in combat, and He told you, “Yes, I am always conquered by you!”**

This incident is recounted in a number of scriptures, including the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (7). Once Prahlāda took a trip to Naimiṣāraṇya to see Lord Pītavāsā, the beautiful form of the Supreme Lord. While traveling on the road he met a strange person, who was dressed like an austere renunciant but was carrying a warrior’s bow and arrows. Prahlāda assumed from this person’s contradictory attire that he must be some hypocrite abusing the true principles of religion. Therefore Prahlāda started a fight with the *sannyāsī*, vowing “I swear I shall defeat you!” But even after several days of dueling, Prahlāda could not subdue this adversary.

Early one morning before resuming the battle, Prahlāda worshiped his personal Deity. He then saw his opponent standing nearby, wearing the same garland he had just offered the Deity. Prahlāda suddenly recognized that the stranger was Lord Pītavāsā, Nārāyaṇa Himself. Thereupon, offering prayers to that opponent with all the competence at his command, Prahlāda tried to satisfy Him. In response, the Lord touched him with His lotus hand, which relieved Prahlāda from the fatigue of fighting and from all anxiety. Prahlāda asked Lord Pītavāsā what to do about having transgressed the duty of a *kṣatriya* by having made a promise—namely to defeat his opponent—and not having fulfilled it. The Lord, fully satisfied by the sport of fighting with Prahlāda, told him, “But I am always defeated by you!”

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच**

एवं वदन् नारदोऽसौ हरिभक्तिरसार्णवः ।  
तन्मर्मसेवको नृत्यन् जितमस्माभिरित्यरौत् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*evam vadan nārado 'sau*  
*hari-bhakti-rasārṇavaḥ*  
*tan-narma-sevako nṛtyan*  
*jitam asmābhir ity araut*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *evam*—thus; *vadan*—speaking; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *asau*—he; *hari-bhakti*—in the devotional service of Lord Hari; *rasa*—of the ecstasies; *arṇavaḥ*—the ocean; *tat*—His; *narma-sevakaḥ*—intimate servant; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *jitam*—conquered; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *iti*—thus; *araut*—he shouted.

**Śrī Parīkṣit continued:** Having said this, Nārada, the ocean of ecstasies in devotion to Lord Hari, began to dance. That intimate servant of the Lord shouted, “Conquered by us!”

The words *jitam asmābhiḥ* (“conquered by us”) imply that Nārada claimed victory not just for himself and Prahlāda but for all the devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
भो वैष्णवश्रेष्ठ जितस्त्वयेति किं  
वाच्यं मुकुन्दो बलिनापि निर्जितः ।  
पौत्रेण दैतेयगणेश्वरेण ते  
संरक्षितो द्वारि तव प्रसादतः ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*bho vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha jitas tvayeti kiṁ*  
*vācyaṁ mukundo balināpi nirjitaḥ*  
*pautreṇa daiteya-gaṇeśvareṇa te*  
*saṁrakṣito dvāri tava prasādataḥ*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *bhoḥ*—O; *vaiṣṇava-śreṣṭha*—best of Vaiṣṇavas; *jitaḥ*—conquered; *tvayā*—by us; *iti*—thus; *kim*—why; *vācyam*—should be said; *mukundaḥ*—Lord Mukunda; *balinā*—by Bali; *api*—also; *nirjitaḥ*—defeated; *pautreṇa*—the grandson; *daiteya*—of the demons; *gaṇa-īśvareṇa*—the chief; *te*—your; *saṁrakṣitaḥ*—kept; *dvāri*—at the door; *tava*—your; *prasādataḥ*—by the grace.

**Śrī Nārada then said: O best of Vaiṣṇavas, why should I say that Lord Mukunda has been conquered only by you? Your grandson Bali, chief of the Daityas, has also conquered Him. By your grace, Bali keeps the Lord as his doorman.**

Bali conquered the Lord in the sense of gaining control over Him, by which Lord Vāmanadeva now serves always as Bali's doorkeeper. Since Bali was a leader of the Daityas, the enemies of Lord Viṣṇu's devotees, he could have obtained this influence only by the Lord's special favor. Śrī Prahlāda himself explained this while offering prayers to Lord Vāmana:

*nemaṁ viriṅco labhate prasādaṁ  
na śrīr na śarvaḥ kim utāpare ye  
yan no 'surāṇām asi durga-pālo  
viśvābhivandyair abhivanditānghriḥ*

“O Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are universally worshiped; even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva worship Your lotus feet. Yet although You are such a great personality, You have kindly promised to protect us, the demons. I think that such kindness has never been achieved even by Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, or the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, what to speak of other demigods or common people.” (*Bhāgavatam* 8.23.6)

The *Prahlāda-saṁhitā* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, in the chapters describing the glories of Dvārakā-dhāma, also relates the following history. When Dvārakā City was once attacked by ten powerful Daityas, a committee of residents, headed by Durvāsā Ṛṣi, went in great distress to the abode of Bali Daityarāja. There the sage Durvāsā beseeched Lord Vāmanadeva to come to Dvārakā to defend them, but the Lord replied:

*parādhīno 'smi viprendra  
bhakti-krīto 'smi nānyathā  
baler ādeśa-kārī ca  
daityendra-vaśa-go hy aham*

*tasmāt prārthaya viprendra  
daityam vairocanaṁ balim  
asyādeśāt kariṣyāmi  
yad abhīṣṭam tavādhunā*

“O best of *brāhmaṇas*, I am not independent. Because I am purchased by pure devotion and by that alone, I am now the order carrier of Bali. I am completely controlled by that king of the Daityas. So, my dear excellent *brāhmaṇa*, please go ask the demon Bali, son of Virocana, and if he orders I shall at once do whatever you want.” (*Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 4.19.2–3) But when Durvāsā submitted his request to Bali Mahārāja, Bali refused to give permission for Lord Vāmana to leave Sutala-loka. Even after Durvāsā expressed the intention to fast until death, Bali told him:

*yad bhāvyam tad bhavatu te  
yaj jñāsi tathā kuru  
brahma-rudrādi-namitam  
nāham tyakṣye pada-dvayam*

“Let whatever you intend come about. Whatever you have in mind, please do that. But I shall never give up the two feet at which Brahmā, Rudra, and all other demigods bow down.” (*Skanda Purāṇa* 7.4.19.16)

**इतः प्रभृति कर्तव्यो निवासो नियतोऽत्र हि ।  
मयाभिभूय दक्षादिशापं युष्मत्प्रभावतः ॥**

*itaḥ prabhṛti kartavyo  
nivāso niyato 'tra hi  
mayābhibhūya dakṣādi-*

*śāpam yuṣmat-prabhāvataḥ*  
*itaḥ prabhṛti*—from now on; *kartavyaḥ*—should be done; *nivāsaḥ*—  
residence; *niyataḥ*—fixed; *atra*—here; *hi*—certainly; *mayā*—by me;  
*abhibhūya*—being overcome; *dakṣa-ādi*—of Dakṣa and others; *śāpam*—  
the curses; *yuṣmat*—your; *prabhāvataḥ*—by the influence.

**From now on I intend to stay here permanently with you. By your power I shall certainly be able to overcome the curses I received from Dakṣa and others.**

Not only Dakṣa but others also have cursed Nārada to be unable to stay in one place for more than a short time. Dakṣa cursed him as follows:

*tantu-kṛntana yaṁ naś tvam*  
*abhadram acarāḥ punaḥ*  
*tasmāl lokaṣu te mūḍha*  
*na bhaved bhramataḥ padam*

“You have made me lose my sons once, and now you have again done the same inauspicious thing. Therefore you are a rascal who does not know how to behave toward others. You may travel all over the universe, but I curse you to have no residence anywhere.” (*Bhāgavatam* 6.5.43) In the allegorical story of King Purañjana, Old Age, the daughter of Time, also curses Nārada:

*sthātum arhasi naikatra*  
*mad-yācñā-vimukho mune*

“Because you refused my request [to marry me], you will not be able to stay in one place for a long time.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.27.22)

**Prahlāda refutes Nārada’s praise**

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच**

स्वश्लाघासहनाशक्तो लज्जावनमिताननः ।  
प्रह्लादो नारदं नत्वा गौरवादवदच्छनैः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*sva-ślāghā-sahanāśakto*  
*lajjāvanamitānanaḥ*  
*prahlādo nāradaṁ natvā*  
*gauravād avadac chanaiḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *sva*—his own; *ślāghā*—praise; *sahana*—to tolerate; *aśaktaḥ*—unable; *lajjā*—from embarrassment; *avanamita*—turned downward; *ānanaḥ*—his face; *prahlādaḥ*—Prahāda; *nāradaṁ*—to Nārada; *natvā*—bowing down; *gauravāt*—with great respect; *avadat*—addressed; *śanaiḥ*—softly.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Unable to tolerate hearing his own praise, Prahāda lowered his face in embarrassment, bowed down before Nārada, and respectfully addressed him in a quiet voice.

Prahāda was ashamed to hear himself praised. He began to think that by speaking such impossible things Nārada must be teasing him. Still, he spoke gently because he had great respect for Nārada, his *dīkṣā-guru*. Had Prahāda not been addressing such a revered person, Prahāda might have expressed anger by replying in a louder voice.

श्रीप्रह्लाद उवाच  
भगवन् श्रीगुरो सर्वं स्वयमेव विचार्यताम् ।  
बाल्ये न सम्भवेत्कृष्णभक्तेर्ज्ञानमपि स्फुटम् ॥

*śrī-prahlāda uvāca*  
*bhagavan śrī-guro sarvaṁ*  
*svayam eva vicāryatām*  
*bālye na sambhavet kṛṣṇa-*  
*bhakter jñānam api sphuṭam*

*śrī-prahlādaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Prahāda said; *bhagavan*—my lord; *śrī-guro*—O

worshipable spiritual master; *sarvam*—everything; *svayam*—yourself; *eva*—indeed; *vicāryatām*—please consider; *bālye*—in childhood; *na sambhavet*—cannot be possible; *kṛṣṇa-bhakteḥ*—of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa; *jñānam*—knowledge; *api*—simply; *sphuṭam*—clear.

**Śrī Prahlāda said: My lord and spiritual master, please reconsider everything you have said. A young boy simply cannot understand correctly the science of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa.**

Proper execution of devotional service requires mature understanding, since *bhakti-yoga* is not only an external practice but the natural employment of all the faculties of the self. As a general rule, young children before the awakening of intelligent discrimination cannot have the understanding required to engage in devotional service. There may be individual exceptions in the highly cultured families of sages and saintly devotees, but Prahlāda, considering himself an uncivilized demon, would hardly claim to be such an exception.

**महतामुपदेशस्य बलाद्बोद्धोत्तमे सति ।  
हरेर्भक्तौ प्रवृत्तानां महिमापादकानि न ॥**

**विघ्नानभिभवो बालेषूपदेशः सदीहितम् ।  
आर्तप्राणिदया मोक्षस्यानङ्गीकरणादि च ॥**

*mahatām upadeśasya  
balād bodhottame sati  
harer bhaktau pravṛttānām  
mahimāpādakāni na*

*vighnānabhibhavo bāleṣ-  
ūpadeśaḥ sad-īhitam  
ārta-prāṇi-dayā mokṣa-  
syānaṅgī-karaṇādi ca*

*mahatām*—by great souls; *upadeśasya*—of the instructions; *balāt*—by

the power; *bodha-uttame*—higher understanding; *sati*—when there is; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *bhaktau*—in devotional service; *pravṛttānām*—for those engaged; *mahima-āpādakāni*—symptoms of greatness; *na*—not; *vighna*—of obstacles; *anabhibhavaḥ*—perseverance; *bāleṣu*—of children; *upadeśaḥ*—spiritual instruction; *sat*—saintly; *īhitam*—behavior; *ārta*—distressed; *prāṇi*—upon living beings; *dayā*—compassion; *mokṣasya*—of liberation; *anaṅgī-karaṇa*—the nonacceptance; *ādi*—and so on; *ca*—also.

Still, when one receives instructions from great souls, those instructions have the power to awaken one’s higher understanding. And then one can engage in devotional service to Lord Hari. Therefore, it is not a sign of greatness that ordinary persons like me can persevere despite terrible disturbances, give spiritual enlightenment to children, behave like saintly persons, show compassion to suffering souls, or refuse the boon of liberation.

Prahlāda has personal experience of the incalculable benefits of associating even briefly with a pure devotee of the Lord. Thus he ascribes all his spiritual assets to the mercy of Nārada, who blessed him with transcendental knowledge and guided him on the proper path of devotional service.

A person has matured in his understanding when he realizes that the four basic goals of life—mundane religiosity, economic development, sense enjoyment, and impersonal liberation—are ultimately inadequate. As a natural consequence of this realization, one begins to recognize the great value of devotional service to the Supreme Lord and the Supreme Lord’s devotees.

Prahlāda was not crushed by his father’s persecution. He preached vigorously to the sons of the Daityas. He behaved like a self-realized saint, dancing and singing in ecstasy. He was merciful to the suffering conditioned souls. And he refused liberation when Lord Nṛsiṃha offered it. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī comments, also, that the final word *ca* (“and”) implies that Prahlāda pleased all kinds of people. Prahlāda argues here, however, that these are not always signs of a person engaged



in devotional service, what to speak of someone advanced in devotion. Thus Prahlāda means to refute Nārada's statement (in Text 4) about Prahlāda's having been a great devotee of the Lord since early childhood.

In analyzing Prahlāda's words, we have to consider that he denies only some of Nārada's claims about his greatness; others he simply shows in a different light. Prahlāda argues that as a child he could not have possessed pure devotion, because a child does not have the strength to understand things or act properly. Prahlāda admits he was able to withstand the torments imposed by Hiraṇyakaśipu, but he could withstand them only because of the protection afforded to all devotees by the internal potency of the Lord. Yes, some Daityas became Vaiṣṇavas due to Prahlāda's preaching, but he was deputized to preach to them only because truly great souls are not supposed to instruct immature children; and in any case, "talk is cheap," or, as the traditional saying goes, *paropadeśe pāṇḍityam/ sarveṣāṃ su-karam nṛṇām*: "It is easy enough for anyone to make himself sound like an expert when advising others."

In this verse Prahlāda does not even mention Nārada's depicting him as fully absorbed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa (Text 6); the comment would be too embarrassing to acknowledge openly. He does, however, admit to dancing and singing in ecstasy, but even practicing neophytes often show these outward symptoms. Beginners in *sādhana-bhakti* should dance and sing as a matter of duty. In other words, each item Nārada offers as a sign of Prahlāda's greatness is simply a natural effect of pure devotional service. Pure devotional service becomes manifest only when one's intelligence has become mature, and that occurs only when one has received instructions from great saints, who causelessly bestow their mercy. So Prahlāda argues that the way he behaved is no reason to credit him with laudable spiritual qualities. Lord Nṛsiṃha and Śrī Nārada deserve all the credit.

कृष्णस्यानुग्रहोऽप्येभ्यो नानुमीयेत सत्तमैः ।  
स चाविर्भवति श्रीमन्नधिकृत्यैव सेवकम् ॥

*kṛṣṇasyānugraho 'py ebhya  
nānumīyeta sattamaiḥ  
sa cāvirbhavati śrīmann  
adhikṛtyaiva sevakam*

*kṛṣṇasya*—Kṛṣṇa's; *anugrahaḥ*—mercy; *api*—also; *ebhyaḥ*—from these; *na anumīyeta*—is not likely to be deduced; *sat-tamaiḥ*—by the best of saints; *saḥ*—he; *ca*—and; *āvir-bhavati*—appears; *śrīman*—O blessed Nārada; *adhikṛtya*—deserving; *eva*—only; *sevakam*—in a servant.

**Merely from these symptoms, the best of saints do not conclude that Kṛṣṇa has given a person His mercy. Kṛṣṇa's mercy, blessed Nārada, appears only in a truly worthy servant.**

The most advanced saints are pure Vaiṣṇavas, who understand the power of devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. "I could not have received Kṛṣṇa's special mercy," Prahlāda says, "because He gives that only to a devotee who deserves it. You, Nārada, are blessed by the Lord's internal potency. You have received His mercy. So you know very well that only a proper candidate can obtain it. The Lord's mercy is infinite, beyond the limits of time and space, but in the material world it becomes visible only at certain times in certain suitable devotees."

**हनूमदादिवत्तस्य कापि सेवा कृतास्ति न ।  
परं विघ्नाकुले चित्ते स्मरणं क्रियते मया ॥**

*hanūmad-ādi-vat tasya  
kāpi sevā kṛtāsti na  
param vighnākule citte  
smaraṇam kriyate mayā*

*hanūmat-ādi*—by Hanumān and others; *vat*—as; *tasya*—His; *kā api*—any at all; *sevā*—service; *kṛtā*—done; *asti na*—is not; *param*—rather only; *vighna*—by obstacles; *ākule*—troubled; *citte*—in my mind; *smaraṇam*—remembrance; *kriyate*—has been done; *mayā*—by me.

**I have never performed any real service for the Lord like Hanumān and**

others. I have only remembered the Lord sometimes, when my mind was troubled.

“But you *are* a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu,” Nārada might interject, “and so you do deserve His mercy.” Prahlāda replies by contrasting himself with others, like Hanumān, who serve the Lord actively. “Even now,” Prahlāda says, “I am only practicing meditation. I have not yet become proficient even as a passive meditator.” Nārada might argue in return that fixing one’s mind on the Lord is one of the nine methods of pure devotional service. Remembering the Lord’s names, forms, and pastimes is on the highest level of self-realization in *bhakti-yoga*. Because *sevā* means devotional service, Prahlāda should not use this word to deny that he has ever served the Lord.

Prahlāda answers this by characterizing himself as disturbed by material anxieties, a condition that automatically disqualifies him from *nāma-smaraṇa*, *rūpa-smaraṇa*, and *līlā-smaraṇa*. A further argument is also implicit here, that remembrance is not the best form of devotional service, since it depends on the functions of the mind, which are subject to distraction by anxiety and other emotions. This argument will be elaborated more fully later on, in “The Glories of Goloka.”

यन्मद्विषयकं तस्य लालनादि प्रशस्यते ।  
मन्यते मायिकं तच्च कश्चिल्लीलायितं परः ॥

yan mad-viṣayakam tasya  
lālanādi praśasyate  
manyate māyikam tat tu  
kaścil līlāyitam paraḥ

yat—which; mat-viṣayakam—having me as its object; tasya—by Him; lālanā-ādi—caressing and so on; praśasyate—has been praised; manyate—considers; māyikam—an exhibition of illusion; tat—that; tu—but; kaścit—someone; līlāyitam—an exhibition of pastimes; paraḥ—else.

You praise me because He caressed me and showed other signs of

affection. But some consider such affectionate behavior merely a false show of Māyā, and others just a display of His pastimes.

The Advaita-vādīs of the Śaṅkarācārya school judge the loving dealings of the Supreme Person with His devotees to be illusory. The Advaita-vādīs hold that the Supreme Absolute Truth cannot become involved in such duality. But others, the Vaiṣṇavas of the devotional schools, affirm that these are the Lord's pastimes; far from being illusory, they constitute the highest spiritual reality. The Personality of Godhead is full in all transcendental qualities of *sac-cid-ānanda*—eternity, knowledge, and bliss—and with the help of His *sac-cid-ānanda* potencies He can easily engage in *sac-cid-ānanda* pastimes.

Here Śrī Prahlāda's idea is that even though the Lord's displays of affection may be considered real, He has acted in these ways only to fulfill the purposes of His own enjoyment. Prahlāda thinks that Lord Nṛsimha only pretended to care about him.

स्वाभाविकं भवादुक् च मन्ये स्वप्नादिवत्त्वहम् ।  
सत्यं भवतु वाथापि न तत्कारुण्यलक्षणम् ॥

*svābhāvikaṁ bhavādṛk ca  
manye svapnādi-vat tv aham  
satyaṁ bhavatu vāthāpi  
na tat kārūṇya-lakṣaṇam*

*svābhāvikaṁ*—natural; *bhavādṛk*—someone like you; *ca*—and; *manye*—I consider; *svapna-ādi-vat*—like a dream and so on; *tu*—but; *aham*—I; *satyaṁ*—real; *bhavatu*—let it be granted; *vā*—or; *atha api*—nevertheless; *na*—not; *tat*—that; *kārūṇya*—of mercy; *lakṣaṇam*—evidence.

You regard those affectionate displays as natural symptoms of His love, but I consider them no more real than a dream. And even if we accept them as real, they are still not evidence of His mercy.

In the opinion of Nārada, an expert authority on the glories of the Personality of Godhead, Lord Nṛsimha's display of affection toward

Prahlāda arose from the Lord's intrinsic compassion. One might argue that this does not mean that the Lord had any special feeling for Prahlāda, since He bestows His mercy indiscriminately on everyone, just as a fire relieves everyone near it from feeling cold. But still, Nārada may counter, the Lord showed His favor toward Prahlāda. Prahlāda replies that he considers the Lord's mercy on him to be like a dream. In other words, it is as good as unreal. The Māyāvādīs say that the Supreme Person's merciful dealings are illusory products of Māyā, but Prahlāda here says instead that the Lord's mercy on him was unreal in the sense of being short-lived, just like a dream.

Again Prahlāda might be asked why he considers dreamlike a display of affection which is famous throughout the world, which many demigods, sages, and other reputable persons witnessed, and which he himself vividly experienced. Taking into account that Prahlāda's spiritual understanding was already fully awakened in his boyhood years, his saintly behavior and other exalted qualities are obvious symptoms of the Lord's great favor on him. Why should he try to hide this fact? Prahlāda can only answer that, yes, the Lord's show of affection was real, but still it was not evidence of the Lord's mercy particularly on him. Prahlāda completes this argument in the next verse.

**विचित्रसेवादानं हि हनूमत्प्रभृतिष्विव ।  
प्रभोः प्रसादो भक्तेषु मतः सद्भिर्न चेतरेत् ॥**

*vicitra-sevā-dānam hi  
hanūmat-prabhṛtiṣv iva  
prabhoḥ prasādo bhakteṣu  
mataḥ sadbhir na cetarat*

*vicitra*—various kinds; *sevā*—of service; *dānam*—the granting; *hi*—certainly; *hanūmat-prabhṛtiṣu*—to Hanumān and others; *iva*—as; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *prasādaḥ*—the mercy; *bhakteṣu*—on His devotees; *mataḥ*—is considered; *sadbhiḥ*—by saintly persons; *na*—not; *ca*—and; *itarat*—anything else.

**The Lord truly gives His mercy, saintly authorities believe, when He**

grants the right to render various kinds of service, a blessing He gives to such devotees as Hanumān. Nothing else counts as His mercy.

Small displays of affection are not proof of the Personality of Godhead's favor, Prahlaḍa says. But when a devotee becomes mature and has realized his eternal relationship with the Supreme Lord, the Lord gives opportunities to serve Him. There are numerous examples of favored devotees, among them Lord Rāmacandra's monkey devotees like Hanumān and Sugrīva, and Lord Kṛṣṇa's Yadu associates like the Pāṇḍavas. Thus Prahlaḍa tries to deny the validity of Nārada's glorifying him as the recipient of the Supreme Lord's special mercy. He especially tries to deny the relevance of what Nārada has described in Text 7, Lord Nṛsiṃha's having placed Prahlaḍa on His lap and cuddled Him as a mother cuddles her child.

श्रीमन्नृसिंहलीला च मदनुग्रहतो न सा ।  
स्वभक्तदेवतारक्षां पार्षदद्वयमोचनम् ॥

śrīman-nṛsiṃha-līlā ca  
mad-anugrahato na sā  
sva-bhakta-devatā-rakṣāṁ  
pārṣada-dvaya-mocanam

śrīmat-nṛsiṃha—of Śrīmān Nṛsiṃha; līlā—the pastimes; ca—and; mat—toward me; anugrahataḥ—because of His favor; na—not; sā—these; svabhakta—who are His devotees; devatā—of the demigods; rakṣāṁ—the protection; pārṣada—of His eternal servants; dvaya—of a pair; mocanam—the deliverance.

Furthermore, Śrīmān Nṛsiṃha performed His pastimes not to favor me but to protect the demigods, His devotees, and deliver two of His eternal servants.

ब्रह्मतत्तनयादीनां कर्तुं वाक्सत्यतामपि ।  
निजभक्तिमहत्त्वं च सम्यग्दर्शयितुं परम् ॥

*brahma-tat-tanayādīnām  
kartum vāk-satyatām api  
nija-bhakti-mahattvam ca  
samyag darśayitum param*

*brahma*—of Brahmā; *tat*—and his; *tanaya-ādīnām*—sons and others; *kartum*—to effect; *vāk*—of the words; *satyatām*—truthfulness; *api*—also; *nija*—His; *bhakti*—of devotional service; *mahattvam*—the greatness; *ca*—and; *samyak*—fully; *darśayitum*—to show; *param*—only.

**He also wished to uphold the truth of the words of Brahmā and of others, such as Brahmā’s sons, and fully display the greatness of devotional service. These were the only reasons for His pastimes.**

The Personality of Godhead assumed His amazing half-lion, half-man form to save Prahlāda from Hiraṇyakaśipu, the most terrible opponent of Lord Viṣṇu’s devotional service. Isn’t this evidence enough that He favors Prahlāda? No, Prahlāda replies, the Supreme Lord’s appearance as Nṛsimha and His disposing of Hiraṇyakaśipu served other purposes. The Lord enacted this pastime to protect Indra and the other demigods, who are His faithful devotees. He also descended in this form to free His two Vaikuṇṭha associates Jaya and Vijaya from the curse of Sanaka and his brothers. In addition, the Lord felt obliged to fulfill the words of several of His devotees: Brahmā had predicted the Supreme Lord’s appearance as Nṛsimha; Brahmā’s sons, the four Kumāras, had predicted the Lord’s killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu; Hiraṇyakaśipu himself, who is an incarnation of Lord Nārāyaṇa’s doorkeeper Jaya, had also made statements that the Lord had to make true; and Nārada’s and Prahlāda’s predictions also needed to be realized.

A detailed description of how Lord Nṛsimha had to fulfill the words of His various devotees is found in Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.8.17, a verse beginning *satyam vidhātum nija-bhṛtya-bhāṣitam*, “To make true what was spoken by His servants...” When Hiraṇyakaśipu asked Prahlāda whether his Lord Viṣṇu was also present in a pillar of the palace, Prahlāda answered, “Yes, of course. He is present everywhere.” Lord Nṛsimha emerged from the pillar to fulfill this statement of Prahlāda’s, and Prahlāda’s previous statement

(*Bhāgavatam* 7.6.20) that the Lord is “also present in the varieties of material creations and in the material elements” (*bhūteṣv atha mahatsu ca*). The Personality of Godhead burst forth from the pillar in the terrifying form of Nṛsimha to dispatch Hiraṇyakaśipu quickly and thus fulfill the request of the four Kumāras that Jaya and Vijaya be reinstated in their positions in Vaikuṇṭha after only three births in the material world.

Lord Nṛsimha’s form, neither human nor animal, was like nothing ever seen before in Brahmā’s creation, and He appeared at the doorway of Hiraṇyakaśipu’s court. This unprecedented appearance fulfilled Hiraṇyakaśipu’s choice of benedictions from Brahmā (*Bhāgavatam* 7.3.35–36): *bhūtebhyas tvad-visṛṣṭebhyo/ mṛtyur mā bhūn mama prabho* (“O my lord, please let me not meet death from any of the living entities created by you”), *nāntar bahiḥ* (“either indoors or outdoors”), and *na narair na mṛgair api* (“from either men or beasts”). Brahmā had answered this request, “So be it.” Hiraṇyakaśipu later said:

*aprameyānubhāvo ’yam  
akutaścid-bhayo ’maraḥ  
nūnam etad-virodhena  
mṛtyur me bhavitā na vā*

“I can see that this boy’s strength is unlimited, for he has not feared any of my punishments. He appears immortal. Therefore, because of my enmity toward him, I shall die. Or maybe this will not take place.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.5.47) And when Indra had wanted to kill the unborn Prahlāda in the womb of Hiraṇyakaśipu’s wife, Nārada had warned him:

*ayam niṣkilbiṣaḥ sākṣān  
mahā-bhāgavato mahān  
tvayā na prāpsyate saṁsthām  
anantānucarō balī*

“The child within this woman’s womb is faultless and sinless. Indeed, he is a great devotee, a powerful servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore you will not be able to kill him.” (*Bhāgavatam*



7.7.10)

All these words had to be fulfilled by the Lord. And as implied by the word *ca* (“and”) in this verse spoken by Prahlāda (Text 25), the Personality of Godhead also had to fulfill His own words from *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.31) *kaunteya pratijānīhi/ na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati* (“O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes”) and (12.7) *teṣāṃ ahaṁ samuddhartā/ mṛtyu-saṁsāra-sāgarāt* (“I quickly deliver My devotees from the ocean of birth and death”).

Therefore, Prahlāda concludes, what Lord Nṛsimha did during His short appearance does not prove that Prahlāda is the Lord’s favored devotee. Even though the Lord made a show of neglecting Brahmā and the other demigods by showering affection on Prahlāda alone, that display should not be taken to indicate the Lord’s true feelings. Otherwise, as Prahlāda’s logic goes, one could infer that the Supreme Lord has no affection either for His Vaikuṇṭha associates like Garuḍa or for the goddess of fortune, whom He also neglected on that occasion. Lord Nṛsimha only wanted to draw attention to the greatness of pure devotional service by showing that even a demon like Prahlāda can earn the Lord’s reciprocation by steadfastly meditating on His mercy in the face of all dangers.

This argument is Prahlāda’s answer to Nārada’s statements in texts 7 and 8 that Lord Nṛsimha had showered special affection on Prahlāda while “ignoring Brahmā, Śiva, and the other demigods offering prayers, and even ignoring the goddess Padmā.”

परमाकिञ्चनश्रेष्ठ यदैव भगवान् ददौ ।  
राज्यं मह्यं तदा ज्ञातं तत्कृपाणुश्च नो मयि ॥

*paramākiñcana-śreṣṭha*  
*yadaiva bhagavān dadau*  
*rājyaṁ mahyaṁ tadā jñātaṁ*  
*tat-kṛpāṇuś ca no mayi*

*parama*—totally; *akiñcana*—of those detached from material possessions; *śreṣṭha*—O greatest one; *yadā eva*—when; *bhagavān*—the

Personality of Godhead; *dadau*—gave; *rājyam*—a kingdom; *mahyam*—to me; *tadā*—then; *jñātam*—it was understood; *tat*—His; *kṛpā*—of the mercy; *aṇuḥ*—even an atom; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *u*—indeed; *mayi*—on me.

**O greatest of devotees who have nothing material to possess, when the Personality of Godhead gave me a kingdom, I understood that I had not received even one atom of His mercy.**

Self-realized sages are called *paramahamṣas* when they have given up all material ambitions. But the greatest *paramahamṣas* are those who have also abandoned the desire for liberation and the sense of being self-satisfied in impersonal realization. Nārada is the best of such Vaiṣṇava *paramahamṣas*. Prahlāda addresses him like this to imply that Nārada should certainly understand the fallen condition of one who becomes entangled in political responsibilities. Thus Prahlāda asserts, “Lord Nṛsiṃha hardly blessed me with His favor. By giving me my father’s kingdom He actually punished me severely.”

**तं भ्रंशयामि सम्पद्भ्यो यस्य वाञ्छाम्यनुग्रहम् ।  
इत्याद्याः साक्षिणस्तस्य व्याहारा महतामपि ॥**

*taṁ bhraṁśayāmi sampadbhyaḥ  
yasya vāñchāmy anugrahaṁ  
ity-ādyāḥ sākṣiṇas tasya  
vyāhārā mahatām api*

*taṁ*—him; *bhraṁśayāmi*—I make fall; *sampadbhyaḥ*—from his opulence; *yasya*—whose; *vāñchāmi*—I want; *anugrahaṁ*—the favoring; *iti*—thus; *ādyāḥ*—and so on; *sākṣiṇaḥ*—evidence; *tasya*—His; *vyāhārāḥ*—statements; *mahatām*—of exalted devotees; *api*—also.

**As the Lord says, “When I wish to favor someone I make him lose his opulence.” Such statements as this are evidence, and so also are the statements of His exalted devotees.**

In the first half of this verse, Prahlāda cites *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

(10.27.16), where Śrī Kṛṣṇa advises the repentant Indra. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has made the same point in other contexts, as in His comment to Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja (*Bhāgavatam* 10.88.8) *yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi/hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ*: “If I actually favor someone, I gradually make him lose all his wealth.” The same point is also made by devotees like Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa and Vṛtrāsura. In the words of Sudāmā:

*bhaktāya citrā bhagavān hi sampado  
rājyaṁ vibhūtīr na samarthayaty ajāḥ  
adīrgha-bodhāya vicakṣaṇaḥ svayaṁ  
paśyan nīpātāṁ dhanināṁ madodbhavam*

“To a devotee who lacks spiritual insight, the Supreme Lord will not grant the wonderful opulences of this world—kingly power and material assets. Indeed, in His infinite wisdom the unborn Lord well knows how the intoxication of pride can cause the downfall of the wealthy.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.81.37) And as stated by Vṛtra:

*pumsām kilaikānta-dhiyām svakānām  
yāḥ sampado divi bhūmau rasāyām  
na rāti yad dveṣa udvega ādhir  
madaḥ kalir vyasanam samprayāsaḥ*

“Persons who fully surrender at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and always think of His lotus feet are accepted and recognized by the Lord as His own personal assistants or servants. The Lord never bestows upon such servants the brilliant opulences of the upper, lower, or middle planetary systems of this material world. When one possesses material opulence in any of these three divisions of the universe, his possessions naturally increase his enmity, anxiety, mental agitation, pride, and belligerence. Thus one goes through much endeavor to increase and maintain his possessions, and he suffers great unhappiness when he loses them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 6.11.22)

**पश्य मे राज्यसम्बन्धाद् बन्धुभृत्यादिसङ्गतः ।  
सर्वं तद्भजनं लीनं धिग्धिङ् मां यन्न रोदिमि ॥**

*paśya me rājya-sambandhād  
bandhu-bhṛtyādi-saṅgataḥ  
sarvaṁ tad-bhajanam līnam  
dhig dhiṁ mām yaṁ na rodimi*

*paśya*—see; *me*—my; *rājya*—to ruling my kingdom; *sambandhāt*—because of the attachment; *bandhu*—of family members; *bhṛtya-ādi*—servants and others; *saṅgataḥ*—because of association; *sarvaṁ*—all; *tad*—of the Lord; *bhajanam*—worship; *līnam*—eclipsed; *dhik dhik*—repeated condemnation; *mām*—on me; *yaṁ*—because; *na rodimi*—I am not crying.

**Just see how my worship of the Lord has been eclipsed by my attachment to ruling my kingdom and by my ties to family members, servants, and others! For not crying over this in remorse, I should be condemned again and again!**

Nārada might suggest that material facilities are dangerous for immature devotees whereas those who are fully self-realized need not fear becoming distracted from their worship of the Lord. Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa had talked about neophyte devotees “who lack spiritual insight” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.81.37) and whom the Personality of Godhead has to protect from the danger of too much material opulence. But Prahlāda is a fully self-realized devotee with mature insight into the true value of the Supreme Lord’s devotional service; mere sense gratification and political power are not going to distract him. As Lord Kṛṣṇa told King Mucukunda, *na dhīr ekānta-bhaktānām/ āśīrbhir bhidyate kvacit*: “The intelligence of My unalloyed devotees is never diverted by material blessings.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.51.59) He similarly said to Uddhava, *prāyaḥ pragalbhayā bhaktyā/ viṣayair nābhibhūyate*: “One who has unflinching devotion for Me will never be defeated by sense gratification.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.18)

Prahlāda replies here that he *has* been distracted and deviated from pure devotion, a fact that proves that he never actually received the full mercy of the Supreme Lord. According to Prahlāda’s lament, his concentrated meditation on being protected by the Lord has now become completely eclipsed. He carefully says “eclipsed” rather than

“destroyed” because he knows very well that *bhagavad-bhakti* is purely spiritual; it is eternal and can never be destroyed, only temporarily covered by material contamination of the soul’s consciousness.

अन्यथा किं विशालायां प्रभुणा विश्रुतेन मे ।  
पुनर्जातिस्वभावं तं प्राप्तस्येव रणो भवेत् ॥

*anyathā kim viśālāyām  
prabhuṇā viśrutena me  
punar jāti-svabhāvaṁ taṁ  
prāptasyeva raṇo bhavet*

*anyathā*—otherwise; *kim*—why; *viśālāyām*—at Viśālā; *prabhuṇā*—with the Lord; *viśrutena*—renowned; *me*—by me; *punaḥ*—again; *jāti*—of my birth; *svabhāvaṁ*—conditioning; *taṁ*—that; *prāptasya*—who obtained; *iva*—as if; *raṇaḥ*—battle; *bhavet*—would occur.

**Why else would I have fought against the renowned Lord at Viśālā, as if I had reverted to the low conditioning of my birth?**

In this verse Prahlāda resorts to the kind of logic technically known as *anyathā-anupapatti*, or “negative hypothesis.” This form of logic works as follows: Devadatta is fat, but we do not see him eating during the day. Therefore he must be eating at night while everyone else is asleep. We cannot explain his fatness without presuming his eating at night. Similarly, Prahlāda argues here that there is no way to explain his fighting against Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa but to accept that his devotion to the Lord has become eclipsed.

The dual incarnation of the Personality of Godhead in the forms known as Nara-Nārāyaṇa appeared in order to teach how to perform devotional austerity. They reside in the Himālayas, at the place variously called Viśālā and Badarikā. The first and fourth cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* discuss this incarnation:

*turye dharma-kalā-sarge  
nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī*

*bhūtvātmopaśamopetam  
akarod duścaram tapah*

“In the fourth incarnation, the Lord became Nara and Nārāyaṇa, the twin sons of the wife of King Dharma. Thus He undertook severe and exemplary penances to control the senses.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.3.9)

*evam sura-gaṇais tāta  
bhagavantāv abhiṣṭutau  
labdhāvalokair yayatur  
arcitau gandhamādanam*

“Thus the demigods worshiped with prayers the Supreme Personality of Godhead appearing as the sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa. The Lord glanced upon them with mercy and then departed for Gandhamādana Hill.” (*Bhāgavatam* 4.1.58)

Prahlāda refers to “the conditioning of my birth”; his being a descendant of demons, the natural enemies of Lord Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, was too distasteful for him to mention directly. Even more unmentionable was his being the son of one of the staunchest haters of Viṣṇu.

आत्मतत्त्वोपदेशेषु दुष्पाण्डित्यमयासुरैः ।  
सङ्गान्नाद्यापि मे शुष्कज्ञानांशोऽपगतोऽधमः ॥

*ātma-tattvopadeśeṣu  
duṣpāṇḍitya-mayāsuraiḥ  
saṅgān nādyāpi me śuṣka-  
jñānāmśo 'pagato 'dhamah*

*ātma-tattva*—about the truth of the self; *upadeśeṣu*—in my teachings; *duṣpāṇḍitya-maya*—inclined to bad scholarship; *asuraiḥ*—with demons; *saṅgāt*—because of association; *na*—not; *adya api*—even today; *me*—my; *śuṣka*—dry; *jñāna*—of knowledge; *amśah*—the element; *apagataḥ*—removed; *adhamah*—degraded.

The demons, in their teachings, are always inclined to bad scholarship about the truth of the self. Because of my association with such demons, even today my understanding is not free from the degraded element of dry speculation.

Prahlāda insists that even before he fell into materialistic sense gratification by becoming a king, he had never been completely free from demonic qualities. In particular he was expert, like other demons, in expounding impersonal theories about the eternal soul. Such theories, full of bad scholarship, try to establish the perfection of life in impersonal knowledge without devotion to the Supreme. Prahlāda thinks that by living with the Daityas and imbibing their attitudes he became infected with this taste for impersonal speculation. This taste is *adhama*, base and contemptible, because it subverts the ecstatic personal exchanges of *bhakti-rasa*.

कुतोऽतः शुद्धभक्तिर्मे यया स्यात्करुणा प्रभोः ।  
ध्यायन् बाणस्य दौरात्म्यं तच्चिह्नं निश्चिनोमि च ॥

*kuto 'taḥ śuddha-bhaktir me  
yayā syāt karuṇā prabhoḥ  
dhyāyan bāṇasya daurātmyam  
tac-cihnam niścinomi ca*

*kutaḥ*—from where; *ataḥ*—thus; *śuddha-bhaktiḥ*—pure devotion; *me*—in me; *yayā*—by which; *syāt*—there would be; *karuṇā*—the mercy; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *dhyāyan*—pondering; *bāṇasya*—of Bāṇāsura; *daurātmyam*—the wickedness; *tat*—of that (mercy of the Lord); *cihnam*—a sure sign; *niścinomi*—I discern; *ca*—and.

So how can any pure devotion appear in me that would signify the Lord's mercy? I see proof of my lack of devotion when I ponder the wickedness of Bāṇāsura.

Pure devotional service is free from predominance by *karma* and *jñāna*. The author Vopadeva has explained pure devotion in his book *Muktā-phalam* by citing the words of Lord Kapiladeva (*Bhāgavatam*



3.29.12) *ahaituky avyavahitā/ yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*: “Pure devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is causeless and uninterrupted.” Prahlāda is intensely aware of the meaning of pure devotion, as shown by his mindfulness of the bad character of his great-grandson Bāṇāsura. Bāṇa rejected the worship of his family’s traditional Deity, Śrī Viṣṇu, and instead took shelter of Lord Śiva. He also abused Kṛṣṇa’s grandson Aniruddha by arresting Him. Prahlāda argues: How can anyone with such a wicked person in his family possess pure devotion for the Lord? By this Prahlāda means to refute Lord Śiva’s argument that Kṛṣṇa’s sparing Bāṇa was a sign that Prahlāda had received Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy; in fact, Prahlāda thinks, killing Bāṇa would have been better than sparing him.

**बद्ध्वा संरक्षितस्यात्र रोधनायास्त्यसौ बलेः ।  
द्वारीति श्रूयते क्वापि न जाने कुत्र सोऽधुना ॥**

*baddhvā saṁrakṣitasyātra  
rodhanāyāsty asau baleḥ  
dvārīti śrūyate kvāpi  
na jāne kutra so 'dhunā*

*baddhvā*—being arrested; *saṁrakṣitasya*—who was imprisoned; *atra*—here; *rodhanāya*—for keeping; *asti*—is present; *asau*—He; *baleḥ*—of Bali; *dvāri*—the doorman; *iti*—thus; *śrūyate*—is heard; *kva api*—somewhere; *na jāne*—I do not know; *kutra*—where; *saḥ*—He; *adhunā*—now.

**I have heard some say that now, after arresting and imprisoning Bali, the Lord stays here in Sutala as the doorman just to keep him captive. In any case, I cannot say where the Lord is now.**

Nārada met Prahlāda on the planet Sutala, the domain of Bali Mahārāja. As mentioned before, Prahlāda was staying there for some time on the invitation of Lord Vāmana. Prahlāda has heard from reputable sages that Śrī Vāmanadeva stays at Bali’s gate just to keep Bali from escaping Sutala-loka. This opinion is expressed to Bāṇāsura by his



friend Kuṣmāṇḍa in Śrī Hari-vamśa (2.116.44). There Kuṣmāṇḍa depicts Bali as a prisoner in Sutala:

*balir viṣṇu-balākrānto  
baddhas tava pitā nṛpa  
salilaughād viniḥsṛtya  
kvacid rājyam avāpsyati*

“My dear king, your father Bali has been defeated by the strength of Viṣṇu and is now in captivity. But in the future he will be able to escape through the vast ocean and somewhere obtain a kingdom.” Bali’s residence in Sutala is further described as imprisonment in the section of the *Uttara-kāṇḍa* (23) of Vālmiki’s *Rāmāyaṇa* that narrates Rāvaṇa’s conquests in the region of Pātāla. By this argument, Prahlāda counters Nārada’s words (in Text 13) “O best of Vaiṣṇavas, why should I say that Lord Mukunda has been conquered only by you? Your grandson Bali, chief of the Daityas, has also conquered Him.”

Nārada might respond by pointing out that Prahlāda has the opportunity to see Lord Viṣṇu in Sutala-loka whenever he wants, whereas even Śiva, Brahmā, and the other great demigods can rarely see Him. Prahlāda here anticipates and defeats this idea by saying “It would be evidence of the Lord’s mercy on me if I could see Him always, but at the moment I do not even know where He is. And if I do not know, how can I freely have His audience? Sometimes He shows Himself here, but not continuously.”

**कदाचित्कार्यगत्यैव दृश्यते रावणादिवत् ।  
दुर्वाससेक्षितोऽत्रैव विश्वासात्तस्य दर्शने ॥**

*kadācit kārya-gatyaiva  
dṛśyate rāvaṇādi-vat  
durvāsasekṣito ’traiva  
viśvāsāt tasya darśane*

*kadācit*—sometimes; *kārya-gatya*—in response to special requirements; *eva*—only; *dṛśyate*—He is seen; *rāvaṇa-ādi-vat*—as by Rāvaṇa and

others; *durvāsasā*—by Durvāsā; *ikṣitaḥ*—seen; *atra eva*—in this very place; *viśvāsāt*—because of (Durvāsā's) faith; *tasya*—His; *darśane*—in the possibility of being seen.

**On rare occasions some persons like Rāvaṇa can see the Lord here. The Lord shows Himself only when it suits His own purpose. He thus showed Himself in this very place to Durvāsā because Durvāsā had strong faith in being able to see the Lord.**

While invading the region of Pātāla, Rāvaṇa came to the entrance of Bali Mahārāja's capital, but Lord Vāmana, standing at the gate with club in hand, refused to let Rāvaṇa enter and neglectfully kicked him far away. Prahlāda argues that this is not proof of Śrī Vāmana's constant presence at Bali's door. The Lord appeared there on this one occasion for the special purpose of protecting Bali from being conquered by Rāvaṇa.

On another occasion Durvāsā, who was living at Kuśasthalī, the site of the future city of Dvārakā, was troubled by the demon Kuśa and his cohorts, Kuśasthalī's ancient guardians. Durvāsā went to Sutala to ask Lord Vāmana for help. As related in the *Dvārakā-māhātmya* of the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa* 4.18), it was Nārada who had advised Durvāsā to go to Lord Vāmana in Sutala and had assured Durvāsā he would indeed find Lord Vāmana there. Because Durvāsā had trusted Nārada's words, Lord Vāmana upheld their truth by allowing Durvāsā His *darśana*.

**यस्य श्रीभगवत्प्राप्तावुत्कटेच्छ यतो भवेत् ।  
स तत्रैव लभेतामुं न तु वासोऽस्य लाभकृत् ॥**

*yasya śrī-bhagavat-prāptāu  
utkaṭecchā yato bhavet  
sa tatraiva labhetāmum  
na tu vāso 'sya lābha-kṛt*

*yasya*—whose; *śrī-bhagavat*—of the Personality of Godhead; *prāptau*—for achieving; *utkaṭa*—intense; *icchā*—desire; *yataḥ*—wherever;

*bhavet*—there might be; *saḥ*—that person; *tatra eva*—at that particular place; *labheta*—can obtain; *amum*—Him; *na*—not; *tu*—but; *vāsaḥ*—residence; *asya*—of Him; *lābha-kṛt*—reason for achieving.

**Wherever one develops an intense desire to achieve the Supreme Lord, there one can obtain Him. But the Lord's merely residing in a certain place does not grant one His association.**

The Personality of Godhead does not give Himself away to those whose desires are not absolutely pure. Only perfect love can induce Him to reveal Himself. If the Lord's presence in a place were a sufficient cause for realizing Him, then every living being throughout the universe should already have attained Him, since in His form of Śrī Vāsudeva, the Supersoul, He is all-pervading.

Pure devotees are convinced that the Lord is permanently present in His eternal abodes that have appeared on earth. That conviction, however, is born of the devotees' fervent eagerness to realize their personal relationship with the Lord. Without that strong desire, one will not have much faith in His presence. It is true that in Śrī Vṛndāvana and some other abodes of the Supreme Lord even devotees with immature faith are sometimes granted a vision of the Lord and His pastimes. But we should understand that this occurs only by the special potency of these places, which are exceptionally dear to the Personality of Godhead. Nowadays the Lord does not reveal Himself as easily in every holy place where He appeared in the past.

प्राकट्येन सदात्रासौ द्वारे वर्तेत चेत्प्रभुः ।  
किं यायां नैमिषं दूरं द्रष्टुं तं पीतवाससम् ॥

*prākāṭyena sadātrāsau*  
*dvāre varteta cet prabhuḥ*  
*kiṁ yāyāṁ naimiṣaṁ dūraṁ*  
*draṣṭuṁ taṁ pīta-vāsasam*

*prākāṭyena*—in a directly visible form; *sadā*—always; *atra*—here; *asau*—He; *dvāre*—at the door; *varteta*—were present; *cet*—if; *prabhuḥ*—the

Lord; *kim*—why; *yāyām*—would I go; *naiṣam*—to Naimiṣāraṇya; *dūram*—a long distance; *draṣṭum*—to see; *tam*—Him; *pīta-vāsasam*—wearing yellow garments.

If my Lord were always present here in person, why would I have traveled all the way to Naimiṣāraṇya to see Him as Lord Pītavāsā, the yellow-garbed form of Nārāyaṇa?

भवताद्भवतः प्रसादतो  
भगवत्स्नेहविजृम्भितः किल ।  
मम तन्महिमा तथाप्यणुर्  
नवभक्तेषु कृपाभरेक्षया ॥

*bhavatād bhavataḥ prasādato*  
*bhagavat-sneha-vijṛmbhitaḥ kila*  
*mama tan-mahimā tathāpy aṇur*  
*nava-bhakteṣu kṛpā-bharekṣayā*

*bhavatāt*—it must be; *bhavataḥ*—of your good self; *prasādataḥ*—because of the mercy; *bhagavat*—of the Supreme Lord; *sneha*—due to the affection; *vijṛmbhitaḥ*—developed; *kila*—indeed; *mama*—my; *tat*—that; *mahimā*—greatness; *tathā api*—nonetheless; *aṇuḥ*—a tiny speck; *nava*—newer; *bhakteṣu*—on His devotees; *kṛpā*—of mercy; *bhara*—the heaps; *īkṣayā*—by seeing.

We can say that by your mercy the Supreme Lord developed some love for me and so I appear glorious. But my greatness is just like a tiny speck before the heaps of mercy the Lord bestows on His newer devotees.

Out of humility and respect for his *guru*, Nārada, Prahlāda now realizes that he should not have contradicted Nārada's statements. Therefore he now approaches the question from another angle, acknowledging Nārada's words but reinterpreting them. Newer devotees like Hanumān, Prahlāda says, were favored by the Supreme Lord much more. After a person has seen the great ocean, the sight of a small lake

will no longer impress him.

निरुपाधिकृपार्द्रचित्त हे  
बहुदौर्भाग्यनिरूपणेन किम् ।  
तव शुग्जननेन पश्य तत्-  
करुणां किम्पुरुषे हनूमति ॥

*nirupādhi-kṛpārdra-citta he  
bahu-daurbhāgya-nirūpaṇena kim  
tava śug-jananena paśya tat-  
karuṇām kimpuruṣe hanūmati*

*nirupādhi*—unconditional; *kṛpā-ārdra*—overflowing with compassion; *citta*—whose heart; *he*—O you; *bahu*—of many; *daurbhāgya*—aspects of misfortune; *nirūpaṇena*—of the description; *kim*—what is the use; *tava*—your; *śuk*—of unhappiness; *jananena*—by generating; *paśya*—please consider; *tat*—His; *karuṇām*—mercy; *kimpuruṣe*—on the Kimpuruṣa; *hanūmati*—Hanumān.

**O Nārada, your heart overflows with causeless compassion. Why should I go on describing all my misfortunes, which simply make you unhappy? Instead please consider the Lord’s mercy on Hanumān of the Kimpuruṣas.**

Since Nārada is naturally compassionate to all suffering souls, Prahlāda thinks Nārada has been speaking just to encourage him with words of exaggerated praise. And so Prahlāda thinks that to continue describing his own misfortune will distress Nārada, his spiritual master, thus resulting in *guru-aparādhā*. Nārada cannot tolerate unhappiness in anyone, especially his own disciple.

Since Nārada is intent on finding the true recipient of the Supreme Lord’s mercy, Prahlāda tries to divert Nārada’s attention by proposing Hanumān as an alternative. He tells Nārada, *paśya*: “Don’t just accept my word on this. Please go witness his glories for yourself.”

भगवन्नवधेहि मत्पितुर्

हननार्थं नरसिंहरूपभृत् ।  
सहसाविरभून् महाप्रभुर्  
विहितार्थोऽन्तरधात्तदैव सः ॥

*bhagavann avadhehi mat-pitur  
hananārtham narasimha-rūpa-bhṛt  
sahasāvirabhūn mahā-prabhur  
vihitārtho 'ntaradhāt tadaiva saḥ*

*bhagavan*—my lord; *avadhehi*—please note; *mat-pituḥ*—of my father; *hanana*—of killing; *artham*—for the purpose; *narasimha-rūpa*—the form of Narasimha; *bhṛt*—assuming; *sahasā*—suddenly; *āvirabhūt*—appeared; *mahā-prabhuḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *vihita*—having fulfilled; *arthaḥ*—His purpose; *antaradhāt*—disappeared; *tadā eva*—just then; *saḥ*—He.

Please note, my lord, that the Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared suddenly in His form of Narasimha just to kill my father. And as soon as the Lord fulfilled His purpose He at once disappeared.

यथाकाममहं नाथं सम्यग्द्रष्टुं च नाशकम् ।  
महोदधितटेऽपश्यं तथैव स्वप्नवत्प्रभुम् ॥

*yathā-kāmam aham nātham  
samyag draṣṭum ca nāśakam  
mahodadhi-taṭe 'paśyam  
tathaiva svapna-vat prabhum*

*yathā-kāmam*—however desired; *aham*—I; *nātham*—my Lord; *samyak*—directly; *draṣṭum*—to see; *ca*—and; *na aśakam*—have not been able; *mahā-udadhi*—of the ocean; *taṭe*—on the shore; *apaśyam*—I saw; *tathā eva*—exactly in that way; *svapna-vat*—like a dream; *prabhum*—the Lord.

I haven't been able to see my Lord directly whenever I wanted. So when I saw Him once on the shore of the ocean, it was just like seeing a dream.

Prahlāda claims that since the time he saw Lord Nṛsimha, when the

Lord appeared from a pillar to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu, Prahlāda has not had much opportunity to see Him again, what to speak of serve Him and develop a personal relationship. When Nṛsimhadeva first appeared, Prahlāda's spontaneous devotion was hampered by the novelty and shock of the moment, and by his own fear and reverence. The dramatic setting in the palace on the shore of the ocean and the presence of many demigods and sages made it difficult for Prahlāda to freely express his love. This is described in some detail in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (14).

### Prahlāda directs Nārada to Hanumān

हनूमांस्तु महाभाग्यस्तत्सेवासुखमन्वभूत् ।  
सुबहूनि सहस्राणि वत्सराणामविघ्नकम् ॥

*hanūmāṁs tu mahā-bhāgyas*  
*tat-sevā-sukham anvabhūt*  
*su-bahūni sahasrāṇi*  
*vatsarāṇām avighnakam*

*hanūmān*—Hanumān; *tu*—however; *mahā-bhāgyaḥ*—greatly fortunate; *tat-sevā*—of serving Him; *sukham*—the happiness; *anvabhūt*—experienced; *su-bahūni*—very many; *sahasrāṇi*—for thousands; *vatsarāṇām*—of years; *avighnakam*—without obstruction.

**But Hanumān is much more fortunate. For many thousands of years he has enjoyed serving the Lord constantly, without obstruction.**

According to Śrī Rāmāyaṇa, Hanumān stayed with Lord Rāmacandra on this earth for more than eleven thousand years. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, however, says that he served his Lord directly for more than thirteen thousand years. In the Ninth Canto (9.11.18, 36) the *Bhāgavatam* states:

*ata ūrdhvaṁ brahma-caryam*  
*dhārayann ajuhot prabhuḥ*  
*trayodaśābda-sāhasram*

*agnihotram akhaṇḍitam*

“After Mother Sītā entered the earth, Lord Rāmacandra observed complete celibacy and performed an uninterrupted Agnihotra-yajña for thirteen thousand years.”

*bubhūje ca yathā-kālam  
kāmam anyān apīḍayan  
varṣa-pūgān bahūn nṛṇām  
abhidhyātāṅghri-pallavaḥ*

“Without transgressing the religious principles, Lord Rāmacandra, whose lotus feet are worshiped by devotees in meditation, enjoyed with all the paraphernalia of transcendental pleasure for as long as needed.” Hanumān remained with Lord Rāmacandra all this time.

**यो बलिष्ठतमो बाल्ये देववृन्दप्रसादतः ।  
सम्प्राप्तसद्वरातो जरामरणवर्जितः ॥**

*yo baliṣṭha-tamo bālye  
deva-vṛnda-prasādataḥ  
samprāpta-sad-vara-vrāto  
jarā-maraṇa-varjitaḥ*

*yaḥ*—who; *baliṣṭha-tamaḥ*—most powerful; *bālye*—in childhood; *deva-vṛnda*—of all the demigods; *prasādataḥ*—by the favor; *samprāpta*—obtained; *sat-vara*—of benedictions; *vrātaḥ*—a series; *jarā*—from old age; *marāṇa*—and death; *varjitaḥ*—free.

**He is the most powerful person. When he was just a child, the demigods favored him with several wonderful benedictions. Thus he became immune to old age and death.**

Hanumān’s unique strength and his other qualities mentioned in this verse and the next enhance his unimpeded service to Lord Rāmacandra. How he received the demigods’ benedictions is explained in Śrī Rāmāyaṇa (Uttara-kāṇḍa 35–36). As soon as Hanumān was born, he saw



the sun rising over his head and thought it to be some ripe fruit hanging from a tree. He jumped up to catch it, and would have done so had Indra not intervened to protect the sun by hurling the thunderbolt weapon, striking Hanumān in the jaw and felling him unconscious to the earth. Hanumān's father, Vāyu, greatly angered, decided to withhold the force of breath all over the universe, and all the denizens of the universe began to suffocate. To save the universal population, Brahmā and the other chief demigods came to Hanumān, revived him, and granted him various benedictions.

अशेषत्रासरहितो महाव्रतधरः कृती ।  
महावीरो रघुपतेरसाधारणसेवकः ॥

*aśeṣa-trāsa-rahito*  
*mahā-vrata-dharaḥ kṛtī*  
*mahā-vīro raghu-pater*  
*asādhāraṇa-sevakaḥ*

*aśeṣa*—of all; *trāsa*—fear; *rahitaḥ*—devoid; *mahā-vrata*—of great vows; *dharaḥ*—a maintainer; *kṛtī*—a doer of great deeds; *mahā-vīraḥ*—a great hero; *raghu-pateḥ*—of the Lord of the Raghus; *asādhāraṇa*—exceptional; *sevakaḥ*—a servant.

**He is free of all fear, he maintains great vows, and he performs auspicious deeds. Outstanding among heroes, he is an exceptional servant of the Lord of the Raghus.**

Among the vows of Hanumān, the greatest was his strict celibacy. His auspicious deeds included thoroughly studying all the Vedic literature and acquiring the skills of a poet. His heroism was proven by his exploits in battle. He was a hero in every sense of the word, as described by Bharata Muni, the authority on poetry:

*dāna-vīraṁ dharma-vīraṁ*  
*yuddha-vīraṁ tathaiva ca*  
*rasaṁ vīraṁ api prāha*

*brahmā tri-vidham eva hi*

“Lord Brahmā has defined three kinds of *vīra*, or hero: the hero in charity, the hero in religion, and the hero in battle. There is also a mood of personal reciprocation called *vīra*, or heroism.”

हेलाविलङ्घितागाधशतयोजनसागरः ।  
रक्षोराजपुरस्थार्तसीताश्वासनकोविदः ॥

*helā-vilaṅghitāgādha-  
śata-yojana-sāgaraḥ  
rakṣo-rāja-pura-sthārta-  
sītāśvāsana-kovidaḥ*

*helā*—with disrespect; *vilaṅghita*—who jumped; *agādha*—fathomless; *śata-yojana*—hundreds of *yojanas* in extent; *sāgaraḥ*—the ocean; *rakṣaḥ*—of the Rākṣasas; *rāja-pura*—in the capital; *stha*—located; *ārta*—distressed; *sītā*—Mother Sītā; *āśvāsana*—in consoling; *kovidaḥ*—expert.

With playful disregard he jumped across thousands of miles of fathomless ocean. Expertly, in the capital of the Rākṣasa king, he comforted Mother Sītā in her distress.

वैरिसन्तर्जको लङ्कादाहको दुर्गभञ्जकः ।  
सीतावार्ताहरः स्वामिगाढालिङ्गनगोचरः ॥

*vairi-santarjako laṅkā-  
dāhako durga-bhañjakaḥ  
sītā-vārtā-haraḥ svāmi-  
gāḍhāliṅgana-gocaraḥ*

*vairi*—of the enemies; *santarjakaḥ*—the threatener; *laṅkā*—of the city Laṅkā; *dāhakaḥ*—the burner; *durga*—of the citadel; *bhañjakaḥ*—the destroyer; *sītā-vārtā*—news of Sītā; *haraḥ*—who brought back; *svāmi*—of his master; *gāḍha*—deep; *āliṅgana*—the embrace; *gocaraḥ*—who

experienced.

He boldly threatened his enemies, burned Laṅkā, and destroyed its citadel. When he brought back news of Sītā, he received his master's deep embrace.

Hanumān audaciously challenged Rāvaṇa and the other Rākṣasas by killing everyone Rāvaṇa sent to stop him from destroying the *aśoka* grove—first eighty thousand Rākṣasa soldiers, then the great demon Jambumālī, then the seven sons of Rāvaṇa's ministers, the five commanders of Rāvaṇa's armies, and Rāvaṇa's own son Akṣaya-kumāra. When Hanumān delivered to Lord Rāmacandra the news that Sītā was safe, the Lord was extremely pleased with him. In texts 43 and 44 Prahlāda has listed Hanumān's accomplishments in order of increasing importance; each additional deed was a more significant reason for Lord Rāmacandra's accepting Hanumān as His personal associate.

स्वप्रभोर्वाहकश्रेष्ठः श्वेतच्छत्रिकपुच्छकः ।  
सुखासनमहापृष्ठः सेतुबन्धक्रियाग्रणीः ॥

*sva-prabhor vāhaka-śreṣṭhaḥ*  
*śveta-cchatrika-pucchakaḥ*  
*sukhāśana-mahā-ṣṭhaḥ*  
*setu-bandha-kriyāgrāṇīḥ*

*sva-prabhoḥ*—of his Lord; *vāhaka*—the carrier; *śreṣṭhaḥ*—best; *śveta*—white; *chatrika*—serving as an umbrella; *pucchakaḥ*—whose tail; *sukha*—comfortable; *āśana*—a seat; *mahā*—large; *ṣṭhaḥ*—whose back; *setu-bandha*—of bridge-building; *kriyā*—of the work; *agra-nīḥ*—the leader.

It was Hanumān who acted as his Lord's best carrier, his tail serving as a royal white umbrella, his broad back a comfortable seat for the Lord. And it was Hanumān who directed the project of bridging the ocean.

Hanumān is the best of all the Lord's carriers, including Garuḍa. When his master needed to travel from Kiṣkindha to the southern shore

of the ocean, Hanumān carried Him all the way on his broad, beautiful soft back.

In modern times people take the liberty to carry umbrellas of any color they like, but traditionally only kings were allowed to use white umbrellas. To equip Lord Rāmacandra with this symbol of royalty while in the forest, where manufactured umbrellas were not available, Hanumān provided his own white tail. Hanumān took a major part in building the bridge to Laṅkā, and he inspired the monkey labor force by hurling the largest boulders into place.

विभीषणार्थसम्पादी रक्षोबलविनाशकृत् ।  
विशल्यकरणीनामौषौध्यानयनशक्तिमान् ॥

*vibhīṣaṇārtha-sampādī*  
*rakṣo-bala-vināśa-kṛt*  
*viśalya-karaṇī-nāmau-*  
*ṣaudhy-ānayana-śaktimān*

*vibhīṣaṇa*—of Vibhīṣaṇa; *artha*—of the purposes; *sampādī*—the fuller; *rakṣaḥ*—of the Rākṣasas; *bala*—of the military force; *vināśa-kṛt*—the destroyer; *viśalya-karaṇī-nāma*—named *viśalya-karaṇī*; *auṣaudhi*—the herb; *ānayana*—for bringing; *śakti-mān*—having the power.

**He fulfilled the desires of Vibhīṣaṇa. He destroyed the military force of the Rākṣasas. And he had the special power to deliver the healing herb called viśalya-karaṇī.**

Vibhīṣaṇa, even though Rāvaṇa’s brother, always wanted to become a servant of Lord Rāmacandra. Early on, Hanumān furthered Vibhīṣaṇa’s cause by telling the Lord about his saintly behavior. And when Vibhīṣaṇa defected and crossed the ocean, Hanumān arranged for him to meet with the Lord.

The acts of Hanumān mentioned up to this point correspond to those narrated in *Śrī Rāmāyaṇa* in the *Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa* and *Sundara-kāṇḍa*. From here on, beginning with the phrase *rakṣo-bala-vināśa-kṛt* (“destroyer of the Rākṣasa’s military force”) through the phrase in Text

49 *sītā-pramodanaḥ* (“encourager of Sītā”), the accomplishments of Hanumān in the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* are briefly described. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī assumed that his readers were familiar with Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa* and therefore left out further details of these stories, to avoid needlessly increasing the size of his book.

During the battle between Lord Rāmacandra’s armies and those of Rāvaṇa, Rāvaṇa’s son Indrajit attacked in the middle of the night, resorted to magic, and made all the monkey soldiers unconscious. At that time Śrī Lakṣmaṇa also played the pastime of becoming unconscious in order to fulfill a prediction by Brahmā. On the advice of the physician Suṣeṇa, Hanumān set out to find the herb *viśalya-karaṇī*, which alone could save the lives of Lakṣmaṇa and the *vānara* soldiers. He was able to bring the herb from Gandhamādana Mountain not only once but twice. In the course of this he had to defeat an army of Gandharvas, uproot the entire mountain because he couldn’t distinguish which plant was the correct one, and swiftly return before it was too late.

स्वसैन्यप्राणदः श्रीमत्सानुजप्रभुहर्षकः ।  
गतो वाहनतां भर्तुर्भक्त्या श्रीलक्ष्मणस्य च ॥

*sva-sainya-prāṇa-daḥ śrīmat-  
sānuja-prabhu-harṣakaḥ  
gato vāhanatām bhartur  
bhaktyā śrī-lakṣmaṇasya ca*

*sva-sainya*—of his own soldiers; *prāṇa-daḥ*—the giver of life; *śrīmat*—divine; *sa-anu-ja*—along with His younger brother; *prabhu*—to the Lord; *harṣakaḥ*—the giver of delight; *gataḥ*—who assumed; *vāhanatām*—the role of a carrier; *bhartuḥ*—for his master; *bhaktyā*—with devotion; *śrī-lakṣmaṇasya*—for Śrī Lakṣmaṇa; *ca*—and.

He was the very life of his soldiers. Always giving great pleasure to his divine Lord and the Lord’s younger brother Lakṣmaṇa, he devotedly served as carrier for Them both.

जयसम्पादकस्तस्य महाबुद्धिपराक्रमः ।  
सत्कीर्तिवर्धनो रक्षोराजहन्तुर्निजप्रभोः ॥

*jaya-sampādakas tasya  
mahā-buddhi-parākramah  
sat-kīrti-vardhano rakṣo-  
rāja-hantur nija-prabhoḥ*

*jaya*—of victory; *sampādakaḥ*—the producer; *tasya*—His; *mahā-buddhi*—supremely intelligent; *parākramah*—and valorous; *sat*—spotless; *kīrti*—of fame; *vardhanaḥ*—the increaser; *rakṣaḥ-rāja*—of the king of the Rākṣasas; *hantuḥ*—of the killer; *nija-prabhoḥ*—his own Lord.

Supremely intelligent and valorous, he brought victory for Lord Rāmacandra. He added to the spotless fame of his Lord, who killed the king of the Rākṣasas.

Hanumān showed his intelligence in giving strategic advice, and his prowess in opposing the enemy on the battlefield, especially during the confrontations with Indrajit and Rāvaṇa. During those battles both Rāmacandra and Lakṣmaṇa rode on his back. Hanumān increased Lord Rāmacandra's fame in various ways—by jumping over the ocean, helping set the stage for the killing of Rāvaṇa, and so on.

सीताप्रमोदनः स्वामिसत्प्रसादैकभाजनम् ।  
आज्ञयात्मेश्वरस्यात्र स्थितोऽपि विरहासहः ॥

*sītā-pramodanaḥ svāmi-  
sat-prasādaika-bhājanam  
ājñayātmeśvarasyātra  
sthito 'pi virahāsaḥ*

*sītā-pramodanaḥ*—the encourager of Sītā; *svāmi*—of his master; *sat*—true; *prasāda*—of the favor; *eka*—the only; *bhājanam*—recipient; *ājñayā*—by the order; *ātma-īśvarasya*—of the Lord of his life; *atra*—here; *sthitaḥ*—remaining; *api*—even; *viraha*—separation; *asaḥ*—not

easily tolerating.

**It was Hanumān who encouraged Mother Sītā. And by the Lord's order, this Hanumān, the one true recipient of his master's favor, still lives in this world, though unable to bear separation from the Lord.**

After Lord Rāmacandra killed Rāvaṇa in battle, Hanumān brought this news to Mother Sītā in the *aśoka* garden. This brought Sītā back to life, and her life became full in happiness when Hanumān took her to meet her husband. Thus Hanumān rendered many kinds of welcome service to Lord Rāma and His dear devotees. After describing this, Prahlāda next mentions the rewards Hanumān enjoyed for his service. When Lord Rāmacandra was anointed King of Ayodhyā, He particularly favored Hanumān by presenting him Mother Sītā's gold necklace. More than this, He granted Hanumān unflinching pure devotion to Him.

Since Hanumān's life with Lord Rāmacandra after the victory was so fortunate, one might ask how Hanumān could ever have left the Lord's association. Why did he not return with Lord Rāma to the eternal Ayodhyā in Vaikuṇṭha along with the other residents of the kingdom? The answer is that his Lord specically asked him to stay behind on earth. *Ātmeśvara* means "his own Lord," and it also means "the Lord of all *ātmās*." In other words, by staying in this world Hanumān gave all its inhabitants a much better chance to take to the path of pure devotional service. Lord Rāmacandra ordered Hanumān to make this severe sacrifice because the Lord wanted to bestow such mercy on the conditioned souls. Living in separation from the Lord is Hanumān's most difficult and glorious service.

**आत्मानं नित्यतत्कीर्तिश्रवणेनोपधारयन् ।  
तन्मूर्तिपार्श्वतस्तिष्ठन् राजतेऽद्यापि पूर्ववत् ॥**

*ātmānam nitya-tat-kīrti-  
śravaṇenopadhārayan  
tan-mūrti-pārśvatas tiṣṭhan  
rājate 'dyāpi pūrva-vat*

*ātmānam*—himself; *nitya*—constantly; *tat*—His; *kīrti*—glories;

*śravaṇena*—by hearing; *upadhārayan*—keeping alive; *tat*—His; *mūrti*—of the Deity; *pārśvataḥ*—by the side; *tiṣṭhan*—standing; *rājate*—he is present with splendor; *adya api*—even today; *pūrva-vat*—as previously.

**He keeps himself alive by constantly hearing the glories of Lord Rāma. Staying by the side of the Lord’s Deity, He is present even today with the same splendor as always.**

The pain of separation from Lord Rāmacandra would be unbearable for Hanumān, but he has survived by staying always absorbed in the ecstasy of *śravaṇam kīrtanam*. Expert singers among the Kimpuruṣas like Ārṣṭiṣeṇa support Hanumān by providing sweet recitations of Lord Rāmacandra’s glories for him to hear. Hanumān stays in Kimpuruṣa-loka, near the permanently installed Deity of Lord Rāma. He regularly worships that Deity in various ways, offering the same personal services he used to perform when together with his Lord. This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.19.1–2):

*kimpuruṣe varṣe bhagavantam ādi-puruṣam lakṣmaṇāgrajam sītābhirāmaṁ  
rāmaṁ tac-caraṇa-sannikarṣābhirataḥ parama-bhāgavato hanumān saha  
kimpuruṣair avirata-bhaktir upāste. ārṣṭiṣeṇena saha gandharvair  
anugīyamānām parama-kalyāṇīm bharṭṛ-bhagavat-kathām samupaśṛṇoti  
svayaṁ cedam gāyati.*

“My dear king, in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa the great devotee Hanumān is always engaged with the inhabitants of that land in devotional service to Lord Rāmacandra, the elder brother of Lakṣmaṇa and dear husband of Sītādevī. A host of Gandharvas is always engaged in chanting the glories of Lord Rāmacandra. That chanting is always extremely auspicious. Hanumānjī and Ārṣṭiṣeṇa, the chief person in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, constantly hear those glories with complete attention. Hanumān chants various *mantras*.”

**स्वामिन् कपिपतिर्दास्ये इत्यादिवचनैः खलु ।  
प्रसिद्धो महिमा तस्य दास्यमेव प्रभोः कृपा ॥**



*svāmin kapi-patir dāsyē  
ity-ādi-vacanaiḥ khalu  
prasiddho mahimā tasya  
dāsyam eva prabhoḥ kṛpā*

*svāmin*—my dear spiritual master; *kapi-patiḥ*—the chief of monkeys; *dāsyē*—in servitude; *iti*—thus; *ādi*—and so on; *vacanaiḥ*—by statements; *khalu*—indeed; *prasiddhaḥ*—well known; *mahimā*—the greatness; *tasya*—his; *dāsyam*—servitude; *eva*—indeed; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *kṛpā*—the mercy.

**My dear spiritual master, Hanumān’s greatness is well known from scriptural statements like “The chief of the monkeys became perfect by acting as the Lord’s servant.” His servitude is proof of the Lord’s mercy.**

Prahlāda quotes the phrase *kapi-patir dāsyē* from a famous verse:

*śāraṅgi-śravaṇe parīkṣid abhavad vaiyāsakiḥ kīrtane  
prahlādaḥ smaraṇe tad-aṅghri-bhajane lakṣmīḥ pṛthuḥ pūjane  
akrūras tv abhivandane kapi-patir dāsyē ’tha sakhye ’rjunah  
sarva-svātma-nivedane balir abhūd bhaktaḥ katham varṇyate*

“Parīkṣit became perfect simply by hearing, the son of Vyāsa by chanting, Prahlāda by remembering, and Lakṣmī by serving the Lord’s feet. Pṛthu became perfect by Deity worship, Akrūra by offering prayers, and the chief of the monkeys by acting as a servant. Arjuna attained perfection by friendship, and Bali by surrendering everything he owned. How then can there be one description for what it means to be a devotee of the Lord?”

In Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s opinion, Śrīdhara Svāmī’s interpretation of the word *dāsyam* as “offering the Lord the fruits of one’s work” only partially describes Hanumān’s relationship with Lord Rāma. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says that *dāsyam*, rather, should be understood to indicate the perpetual relationship of loving service, an exalted variety of transcendental *rasa*. *Dāsyā* is complete service; it involves all the senses even on the physical level. Just as all the senses of the physical body are purified by a bath, they are all naturally engaged by a devotee’s

absorption in *dāsyā-rasa*. Therefore a relationship of servitude like Hanumān's can be said to be superior to mere remembrance of the Lord. Prahlāda considers his own service of *smaraṇa* inferior because it is only an inner activity of the mind.

यदृच्छया लब्धमपि विष्णोर्दाशरथेस्तु यः ।  
नैच्छन् मोक्षं विना दास्यं तस्मै हनूमते नमः ॥

*yadṛcchayā labdham api*  
*viṣṇor dāśārathes tu yaḥ*  
*naicchan mokṣam vinā dāsyam*  
*tasmai hanūmate namaḥ*

*yadṛcchayā*—without effort; *labdham*—obtained; *api*—although; *viṣṇoḥ*—from Lord Viṣṇu; *dāśāratheḥ*—the son of Daśaratha (Rāmacandra); *tu*—but; *yaḥ*—who; *na icchan*—not wanting; *mokṣam*—liberation; *vinā*—without; *dāsyam*—servitude; *tasmai*—to him; *hanūmate*—Hanumān; *namaḥ*—I offer obeisances.

“Although Hanumān obtained from the son of Daśaratha the boon of liberation without striving for it, he never wanted to accept liberation without the opportunity to serve. To that Hanumān I offer my obeisances.”

This is another verse Prahlāda quotes from scripture, from *Śrī Nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava*, as proof of Hanumān's greatness. Liberation became available to Hanumān without his even trying for it, but still he did not want to accept it. He wanted only service to Lord Rāma, and nothing else. He thought, “Even if the cycle of birth and death is broken for me, I must continue serving my Lord!”

मदनुक्तं च माहात्म्यं तस्य वेत्ति परं भवान् ।  
गत्वा किम्पुरुषे वर्षे दृष्ट्वा तं मोदमाप्नुहि ॥

*mad-anuktaṁ ca māhātmyam*  
*tasya vetti param bhavān*

gatvā kimpuruṣe varṣe  
dṛṣṭvā taṁ modam āpnuhi

mat—by me; *anuktam*—unspoken; *ca*—and; *māhātmyam*—glories; *tasya*—his; *vetti*—you know; *param*—other; *bhavān*—you; *gatvā*—going; *kimpuruṣe varṣe*—to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa; *dṛṣṭvā*—seeing; *taṁ*—him; *modam*—joy; *āpnuhi*—please obtain.

**You certainly know glories of his that I haven't mentioned. Why not go to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, see him yourself, and be enlivened?**

Prahlāda did not have to give Nārada a long theoretical account of Hanumān's exclusive devotion to Śrī Raghunātha's lotus feet, because Nārada already knew of Hanumān's devotion very well. For complete appreciation of Hanumān, Nārada must now only meet him in person.

### Nārada meets Hanumān

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
अये मातरहो भद्रमहो भद्रमिति ब्रुवन् ।  
उत्पत्यासनतः खेन मुनिः किम्पुरुषं गतः ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
aye mātaraḥ bhadram  
aho bhadram iti bruvaṇ  
utpatyāsanaṭṭhaḥ kṛṇa  
muniḥ kimpuruṣaṁ gataḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *aye*—O; *mātaraḥ*—mother; *aho bhadram*—how wonderful; *aho bhadram*—how wonderful; *iti*—thus; *bruvaṇ*—saying; *utpatya*—jumping up; *āsanaṭṭhaḥ*—from his seat; *kṛṇa*—through the sky; *muniḥ*—the sage; *kimpuruṣaṁ*—to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa; *gataḥ*—went.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: O dear mother, the sage Nārada then jumped up from**

his seat and flew through the sky to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, all the while repeating, “How wonderful! How wonderful!”

तत्रापश्यद्धनूमन्तं रामचन्द्रपदाब्जयोः ।  
साक्षादिवार्चनरतं विचित्रैर्वन्यवस्तुभिः ॥

*tatrāpaśyad dhanūmantam  
rāmacandra-padābjayoḥ  
sākṣād ivārcana-ratam  
vicitrair vanya-vastubhiḥ*

*tatra*—there; *apaśyat*—he saw; *hanūmantam*—Hanumān; *rāmacandra*—of Lord Rāmacandra; *pada-abjayoh*—of the lotus feet; *sākṣāt*—in person; *iva*—as if; *arcana*—in worshiping; *ratam*—absorbed; *vicitraiḥ*—with various; *vanya*—from the forest; *vastubhiḥ*—with objects.

There in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, Nārada saw Hanumān absorbed in worshiping Lord Rāmacandra’s lotus feet with varied items from the forest, as if serving the Lord personally as before.

Hanumān’s mode of worship was so personal he could hardly remember he was standing in front of his Lord’s installed Deity. He felt as if living with the Lord in the forest just as before.

गन्धर्वादिभिरानन्दाद् गीयमानं रसायनम् ।  
रामायणं च शृण्वन्तं कम्पाश्रुपुलकाचितम् ॥

*gandharvādibhir ānandād  
gīyamānam rasāyanam  
rāmāyaṇam ca śṛṇvantam  
kampāśru-pulakācitam*

*gandharva-ādibhiḥ*—by Gandharvas and others; *ānandāt*—in ecstasy; *gīyamānam*—being recited; *rasa-āyanam*—nectarean; *rāmāyaṇam*—to the Rāmāyaṇa; *ca*—and; *śṛṇvantam*—listening; *kampā*—with trembling; *aśru*—tears; *pulaka*—and erect bodily hairs; *ācitam*—marked.

Listening to the nectarean Rāmāyaṇa recited by Gandharvas and other celestial singers, Hanumān was in ecstasy. His limbs trembled, tears poured from his eyes, and the hair on his body stood on end.

These bodily symptoms of ecstasy are natural effects of maturely hearing the Lord's glories in the perfect consciousness of *prema*. The Gandharvas living on Kimpuruṣa-loka regularly sang from Śrī Rāmāyaṇa the glories of Lord Rāmacandra, which Hanumān and his *rasika* associates experienced as *rasāyana*, a storehouse full of the blissful tastes of the nine kinds of loving relationships with the Supreme Lord. Or, taking another sense of *rasāyana*, these recitations were like a sweet-tasting medicine, most effective for curing the disease of material existence and strengthening the natural life function of *prema-bhakti*.

विचित्रैर्दिव्यदिव्यैश्च गद्यपद्यैः स्वनिर्मितैः ।  
स्तुतिमन्यैश्च कुर्वाणं दण्डवत्प्रणतीरपि ॥

*vicitrair divya-divyaiś ca  
gadya-padyaiḥ sva-nirmitaiḥ  
stutim anyaiś ca kurvāṇam  
daṇḍavat-praṇatīr api*

*vicitraiḥ*—various; *divya-divyaiḥ*—most divine; *ca*—and; *gadya-padyaiḥ*—with verses and prose compositions; *sva-nirmitaiḥ*—of his own authorship; *stutim*—praise; *anyaiḥ*—by others; *ca*—and; *kurvāṇam*—doing; *daṇḍa-vat*—prostrate; *praṇatīḥ*—obeisances; *api*—also.

He glorified the Lord with various prayers, in prose and verse, most excellent compositions of his own. He also recited prayers composed by others. And he repeatedly offered prostrate obeisances.

Some of Hanumān's prayers were his own compositions, and others he borrowed from the *Purāṇas* and other scriptures.

चुक्रोश नारदो मोदाञ्जय श्रीरघुनाथ हे ।  
जय श्रीजानकीकान्त जय श्रीलक्ष्मणाग्रज ॥

cukrośa nārado modāj  
jaya śrī-raghunātha he  
jaya śrī-jānakī-kānta  
jaya śrī-lakṣmaṇāgraja

*cukrośa*—cried out; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *modāt*—out of joy; *jaya*—glories; *śrī-raghunātha*—to Śrī Raghunātha; *he*—O; *jaya*—glories; *śrī-jānakī-kānta*—to the beloved of Śrī Jānakī; *jaya*—glories; *śrī-lakṣmaṇa-agraja*—to the elder brother of Śrī Lakṣmaṇa.

Nārada cried out in joy, “Glories to You, Śrī Raghunātha! To the beloved of Śrī Jānakī, all glories! Glories to the elder brother of Śrī Lakṣmaṇa!”

Approaching his destination and seeing the ecstasy of Hanumān, Nārada spontaneously expressed his own ecstasy in this way.

निजेष्टस्वामिनो नाम कीर्तनश्रुतिहर्षितः ।  
उत्प्लुत्य हनूमान् दूरात्कण्ठे जग्राह नारदम् ॥

nijeṣṭa-svāmino nāma-  
kīrtana-śruti-harṣitaḥ  
utplutya hanūmān dūrāt  
kaṇṭhe jagrāha nāradam

*nija*—his own; *iṣṭa-svāminaḥ*—of the worshipable Lord; *nāma-kīrtana*—glorification of the names; *śruti*—by hearing; *harṣitaḥ*—delighted; *utplutya*—jumping up; *hanūmān*—Hanumān; *dūrāt*—from a distance; *kaṇṭhe*—by the neck; *jagrāha*—he grabbed; *nāradam*—Nārada.

Delighted to hear glorified the names of the Lord he worshiped, Hanumān jumped from where he stood and caught hold of Nārada by the neck.

तिष्ठन् वियत्येव मुनिः प्रहर्षान् नृत्यन्  
पदाभ्यां कलयन् कराभ्याम् ।  
प्रेमाश्रुधारां च कपीश्वरस्य

## प्राप्तो दशां किञ्चिदवोचदुच्चैः ॥

*tiṣṭhan viyaty eva muniḥ praharṣān  
nṛtyan padābhyām kalayan karābhyām  
premāśru-dhārām ca kapiśvarasya  
prāpto daśām kiñcid avocat uccaiḥ*

*tiṣṭhan*—standing; *viyati*—in the sky; *eva*—indeed; *muniḥ*—the sage; *praharṣāt*—from great joy; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *padābhyām*—with his feet; *kalayan*—wiping away; *karābhyām*—with his hands; *prema-aśru*—of tears of love; *dhārām*—the downpour; *ca*—and; *kapi-īśvarasya*—of the lord of monkeys; *prāptaḥ*—having obtained; *daśām*—the mood; *kiñcit*—something; *avocat*—he said; *uccaiḥ*—in a loud voice.

Standing in the sky, Nārada was overjoyed. With his feet he danced, and with his hands he wiped away the flood of loving tears from the eyes of the lord of the monkeys. Sharing Hanumān's unique mood of loving ecstasy, Nārada spoke in a loud voice.

Nārada could use only his feet for dancing because Hanumān held him by the neck and because Nārada's hands were busy wiping away Hanumān's tears.

### Nārada praises Hanumān

श्रीनारद उवाच  
श्रीमन् भगवतः सत्यं त्वमेव परमप्रियः ।  
अहं च तत्प्रियोऽभूवमद्य यत्त्वां व्यलोकयम् ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca  
śrīman bhagavataḥ satyaṁ  
tvam eva parama-priyaḥ  
aham ca tat-priyo 'bhūvam*

*adya yat tvām vyalokayam*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *śrīman*—O blessed one; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead; *satyam*—in truth; *tvam*—you; *eva*—only; *parama-priyaḥ*—the dearest devotee; *aham*—I; *ca*—and; *tat*—to Him; *priyaḥ*—dear; *abhūvam*—have become; *adya*—today; *yat*—because; *tvām*—you; *vyalokayam*—I have seen.

**Śrī Nārada said: O blessed one, truly you are the dearest devotee of the Supreme Lord! Today just by seeing you I too have become dear to the Lord.**

Śrī is the goddess of fortune, Lord Viṣṇu's consort. Her blessings have descended on Hanumān in the form of the treasure of pure devotional service. A devotee who has gained the favor of the goddess Śrī is sure to please the Personality of Godhead. And anyone who obtains the grace of such a *śrīmān* devotee will also reach the same perfection.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
क्षणात्स्वस्थेन देवर्षिः प्रणम्य श्रीहनूमता ।  
रघुवीरप्रणामाय समानीतस्तदालयम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*kṣaṇāt svasthena devarṣiḥ*  
*praṇamya śrī-hanūmatā*  
*raghu-vīra-praṇāmāya*  
*samānītas tad-ālayam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *kṣaṇāt*—in the blink of an eye; *svasthena*—(by Hanumān) who regained his normal condition; *deva-ṛṣiḥ*—the sage among the demigods; *praṇamya*—bowing down; *śrī-hanūmatā*—by Śrī Hanumān; *raghu-vīra*—to the hero of the Raghus (Lord Rāmacandra); *praṇāmāya*—for the purpose of offering obeisances; *samānītaḥ*—brought; *tat*—His; *ālayam*—to the temple.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: In the blink of an eye Hanumān became sober and bowed down to show respect to the sage among the demigods. Hanumān**



greeted him with reverence and brought him to the temple of Lord Rāmacandra, the hero of the Raghus, so that Nārada could offer obeisances.

कृताभिवन्दनस्तत्र प्रयत्नादुपवेशितः ।  
सम्पत्तिं प्रेमजां चित्रां प्राप्तो वीणाश्रितोऽब्रवीत् ॥

*kṛtābhivandanas tatra  
prayatnād upaveśitaḥ  
sampattiṁ prema-jām citrām  
prāpto vīṇāśrito 'bravīt*

*kṛta-abhivandanaḥ*—having paid respects; *tatra*—there; *prayatnāt*—carefully; *upaveśitaḥ*—seated; *sampattim*—the good fortune; *prema-jām*—born from pure love of God; *citrām*—amazing; *prāptaḥ*—having obtained; *vīṇā*—his *vīṇā*; *āśritaḥ*—taking; *abravīt*—he said.

Nārada paid respects to the Lord in Hanumān's temple, and Hanumān carefully arranged for Nārada to be seated. Nārada felt he had now obtained an amazing treasure born from pure love for the Lord. He picked up his *vīṇā* and spoke.

After offering prostrate obeisances to the Deity of Lord Rāmacandra, Nārada felt multiple ecstasies, which involuntarily appeared in his body as trembling, perspiration, horripilation, and choking of his voice. In such a condition he started to play his *vīṇā* but could not produce even a note. Instead, he began leaning on the *vīṇā*, fearing he would fall to the ground.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
सत्यमेव भगवत्कृपाभर-  
स्यास्पदं निरुपमं भवान् परम् ।  
यो हि नित्यमहहो महाप्रभोश्  
चित्रचित्रभजनामृतार्णवः ॥

śrī-nārada uvāca  
satyam eva bhagavat-kṛpā-bhara-  
syāspadam nirupamam bhavān param  
yo hi nityam ahaho mahā-prabhoś  
citra-citra-bhajanāmṛtārṇavaḥ

śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; satyam—yes; eva—indeed; bhagavat-kṛpā—of the Personality of Godhead’s mercy; bharasya—of the abundance; āspadam—a recipient; nirupamam—incomparable; bhavān—your good self; param—topmost; yaḥ—who; hi—certainly; nityam—perpetually; ahaho—ah; mahā-prabhoḥ—of the Supreme Lord; citra-citra—newer and newer; bhajana-amṛta—of the ecstatic worship; arṇavaḥ—an ocean.

Śrī Nārada said: Yes, you are the greatest recipient of the mercy of the Supreme Lord. No one can compare to you. Ah! You are always immersed in an ocean of ecstatic worship of the Lord, enjoying it as newer and newer at every moment.

Prema-bhakti-rasa is called amṛta because it destroys the disease of material existence and is unimaginably sweet. Hanumān always swims in an ocean of such nectar.

दासः सखा वाहनमासनं ध्वज-  
च्छत्रं वितानं व्यजनं च वन्दी ।  
मन्त्री भिषग्योधपतिः सहाय-  
श्रेष्ठो महाकीर्तिविवर्धनश्च ॥

dāsaḥ sakhā vāhanam āsanam dhvaja-  
cchatram vitānam vyajanam ca vandī  
mantrī bhiṣag yodha-patiḥ sahāya-  
śreṣṭho mahā-kīrti-vivardhanaś ca

dāsaḥ—servant; sakhā—friend; vāhanam—carrier; āsanam—seat; dhvaja—flag; chatram—and umbrella; vitānam—canopy; vyajanam—fan; ca—and; vandī—bard; mantrī—adviser; bhiṣak—physician; yodha—

*patiḥ*—general; *sahāya*—of helpers; *śreṣṭhaḥ*—most excellent; *mahā-kīrti*—of the great glories; *vivardhanaḥ*—expander; *ca*—and.

**You are the Lord’s servant, His friend, His carrier, His seat, His flag, His umbrella, His canopy, His fan. You are His bard, His adviser, His doctor, His general, His best helper, the expander of His infinite glories.**

Here Nārada summarizes Prahlāda’s description of Hanumān’s glories. Hanumān serves Lord Rāmacandra in various ways. As the Lord’s friend, he enjoys the Lord’s confidence and affection. Unless Hanumān had this special relationship with Lord Rāma, the Lord would never have dispatched him to Laṅkā to deliver His message and His ring to Sītā. Just like a battle flag, Hanumān always stood by the Lord’s side. He was so tall that everyone could see him even from a great distance. Seeing Hanumān first from afar, one could know that Lord Rāmacandra was present. And when Hanumān served as the Lord’s vehicle, his mighty tail waved behind like a flag. The same tail also served as a royal umbrella, a sunscreen canopy, and a fan. In the role of the Lord’s bard, Hanumān sang the Lord’s glories for His pleasure. Sometimes Hanumān carried out medical services also, treating the Lord’s battlefield wounds. Thus Hanumān was the most adept of all Lord Rāma’s monkey assistants.

समर्पितात्मा परमप्रसादभृत्  
तदीयसत्कीर्तिकथैकजीवनः ।  
तदाश्रितानन्दविवर्धनः सदा  
महत्तमः श्रीगरुडादितोऽधिकः ॥

*samarpitātmā parama-prasāda-bhṛt*  
*tadīya-sat-kīrti-kathaika-jīvanaḥ*  
*tad-āśritānanda-vivardhanaḥ sadā*  
*mahat-tamaḥ śrī-garuḍādito 'dhikaḥ*

*samarpita-ātmā*—who had completely surrendered himself; *parama*—supreme; *prasāda*—of satisfaction; *bhṛt*—the bearer; *tadīya*—His; *sat*—transcendental; *kīrti*—of the glory; *kathā*—discussion; *eka*—only;

*jīvanaḥ*—whose very life; *tat*—by Him; *āśrita*—of those who are sheltered; *ānanda*—the ecstasy; *vivardhanaḥ*—who increases; *sadā*—always; *mahat-tamaḥ*—the best of saints; *śrī-garuḍa-āditāḥ*—than Garuḍa and others; *adhikaḥ*—greater.

**Having surrendered yourself entirely to the Lord, having received His highest mercy, having dedicated your life to topics of His transcendental glories, you always increase the bliss of the devotees sheltered by Him. You are the best of saints, greater even than others like Garuḍa.**

Hanumān employed all his senses and abilities in Lord Rāmacandra's service. Nothing was dear to him but that service. He had no attachment to his body or anything related to his body. But the pure glories of his Lord Rāma he cherished more than even life itself. Had he been deprived of hearing and chanting those glories while separated from his Lord, he would have died an instant death. Indeed, it is well known that wherever *rāma-kathā* is recited, Hanumān comes to listen. He makes every endeavor to increase the bliss of Lord Rāmacandra's devotees, both in ancient times and today. Among the Supreme Lord's personal attendants, Hanumān is the most glorious, even greater than Garuḍa. The exalted Vaiṣṇava Yāmunācārya Ālabandaru says:

*dāsaḥ sakhā vāhanam āsanam dhvajo  
yas te vitānanam vyajanam trayī-mayaḥ  
upasthitam te purato garutmatā  
tvad-aṅghri-sammardakiṇāṅka-śobhinā*

“You, Hanumān, are the Lord's servant, friend, carrier, seat, flag, canopy, and fan. You embody the three *Vedas*. Even in the presence of Garuḍa, you are graced with the honor of massaging the Lord's feet.”  
(*Stotra-ratna* 41)

**अहो भवानेव विशुद्धभक्तिमान्  
परं न सेवासुखतोऽधिमन्य यः ।  
इमं प्रभुं वाचमुदारशेखरं**

## जगाद तद्वक्तगणप्रमोदिनीम् ॥

*aho bhavān eva viśuddha-bhaktimān  
param na sevā-sukhato 'dhimanya yaḥ  
imaṁ prabhuṁ vācam udāra-śekharam  
jagāda tad-bhakta-gaṇa-pramodinīm*

*aho*—oh; *bhavān*—your good self; *eva*—indeed; *viśuddha*—absolutely pure; *bhakti-mān*—possessor of devotion; *param*—other; *na*—not; *sevā*—of serving; *sukhataḥ*—than the pleasure; *adhimanya*—considering valuable; *yaḥ*—who; *imaṁ*—this; *prabhuṁ*—to the Lord; *vācam*—words; *udāra*—of generous persons; *śekharam*—to the crest jewel; *jagāda*—you spoke; *tat*—His; *bhakta-gaṇa*—to all the devotees; *pramodinīm*—which gave delight.

**Indeed, your devotion for the Lord is absolutely pure, for you consider nothing more valuable than the pleasure of serving Him. You delighted all His devotees by speaking to that best of generous Lords these words:**

Śrī Rāmacandra is the most charitable Lord, ready to sacrifice everything for His devotees. The following verse spoken by Hanumān delights the Lord's devotees because it expresses the exclusive wish for the Lord's service, and contempt for impersonal liberation.

**भवबन्धच्छिदे तस्यै स्पृहयामि न मुक्तये ।  
भवान् प्रभुरहं दास इति यत्र विलुप्यते ॥**

*bhava-bandha-cchide tasyai  
sprhayāmi na muktaye  
bhavān prabhur ahaṁ dāsa  
iti yatra viluḥpyate*

*bhava*—of material existence; *bandha*—the bondage; *cchide*—which destroys; *tasyai*—for it; *sprhayāmi na*—I do not aspire; *muktaye*—for liberation; *bhavān*—You; *prabhuḥ*—the master; *aham*—I; *dāsaḥ*—the servant; *iti*—thus; *yatra*—in which; *viluḥpyate*—is lost.

“Even though liberation destroys the bondage of material existence, I have no desire for liberation, in which I would forget that You are the master and I am Your servant.”

The source of this famous verse is unknown. In *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.49), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī cites it merely as *prasiddham śrī-hanumad-vākya*m, “a well-known statement by Hanumān.”

### Hanumān refutes Nārada’s praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततो हनुमान् प्रभुपादपद्म-  
कृपाविशेषश्रवणेन्धनेन ।  
प्रदीपितादोविरहाग्नितप्तो  
रुदन् शुचार्तो मुनिनाह सान्त्वितः ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tato hanūmān prabhu-pāda-padma-  
kṛpā-viśeṣa-śravaṇendhanena  
pradīpitādo-virahāgni-tapto  
rudan śucārto munināha sāntvitaḥ

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tataḥ*—then; *hanūmān*—Hanumān; *prabhu*—of his master; *pāda-padma*—of the lotus feet; *kṛpā*—about the mercy; *viśeṣa*—special; *śravaṇa*—of hearing; *indhanena*—by the fuel; *pradīpita*—set ablaze; *adaḥ*—from Him; *viraha-agni*—by the fire of separation; *taptaḥ*—burned; *rudan*—crying; *śucā-ārtaḥ*—lamenting; *muninā*—to the sage; *āha*—he said; *sāntvitaḥ*—calmed.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Hanumān was now burning in a fire of separation from his master, the Supreme Lord, and the fuel of hearing about the special mercy of the Lord’s lotus feet had brought that fire to a blaze. For a while he cried sorrowfully, and then, calmed by the sage, he spoke.

As dry rewood kindles quickly, Hanumān's ecstatic pangs of separation at once increased when he heard the Lord's special glories, especially the accounts of how the Lord had mercifully engaged him in personal service. Nārada was able to console him with soothing words, and after crying for some time Hanumān regained his composure.

श्रीहनुमान् उवाच  
मुनिवर्य कथं श्रीमद्रामचन्द्रपदाम्बुजैः ।  
हीनं रोदयसे दीनं नैष्ठुर्यस्मारणेन माम् ॥

*śrī-hanūmān uvāca*  
*muni-varya katham śrīmad-*  
*rāmacandra-padāmbujaiḥ*  
*hīnam rodayase dīnam*  
*naiṣṭhurya-smāraṇena mām*

*śrī-hanūmān uvāca*—Śrī Hanumān said; *muni-varya*—O best of sages; *katham*—why; *śrīmat-rāmacandra*—of Śrīmān Rāmacandra; *padāmbujaiḥ*—of the lotus feet; *hīnam*—devoid; *rodayase*—you make cry; *dīnam*—the wretch; *naiṣṭhurya*—of the neglect; *smāraṇena*—by reminding; *mām*—me.

**Śrī Hanumān said:** O best of sages, why are you doing this to such a wretch, devoid of the lotus feet of Śrīmān Rāmacandra? Why do you make me cry by reminding me of how the Lord has neglected me?

Because Lord Rāmacandra appears like a human being, with two hands and two legs, we would expect His lotus feet to be described by the dual form *padāmbujābhyām* instead of by the plural *padāmbujaiḥ*. In Sanskrit, plural forms are normally used to indicate more than two. But Hanumān here employs poetic license by using the plural form out of extreme reverence for his Lord.

The word *hīnam* means not only “devoid” but “intentionally rejected.” In the complex transformations of ecstasy, Hanumān lovingly reproaches Lord Rāmacandra for being cruel. Technically, *naiṣṭhuryam* means “hardness of the heart.”

यदि स्यां सेवकोऽमुष्य तदा त्यजेय किं हठात् ।  
नीताः स्वदयिताः पार्श्वं सुग्रीवाद्याः सकोशलाः ॥

*yadi syām sevako 'muṣya  
tadā tyajyeya kiṁ haṭhāt  
nītāḥ sva-dayitāḥ pārśvam  
sugrīvādyāḥ sa-kośalāḥ*

*yadi*—if; *syām*—I were; *sevakah*—a servant; *amuṣya*—of Him; *tadā*—then; *tyajyeya*—I would be abandoned; *kim*—why; *haṭhāt*—by force; *nītāḥ*—brought; *sva-dayitāḥ*—His dear devotees; *pārśvam*—to His side; *sugrīva-ādyāḥ*—Sugrīva and others; *sa-kośalāḥ*—along with the residents of Kośala.

If I am really the Lord's servant, then why did He forcibly abandon me when He took with Him to His spiritual kingdom His dear devotees, including Sugrīva and all the residents of Kośala?

सेवासौभाग्यहेतोश्च महाप्रभुकृतो महान् ।  
अनुग्रहो मयि स्निग्धैर्भवद्विरनुमीयते ॥

*sevā-saubhāgya-hetoś ca  
mahā-prabhu-kṛto mahān  
anugraho mayi snigdhair  
bhavadbhir anumīyate*

*sevā*—of service; *saubhāgya*—of the good fortune; *hetoḥ*—for the reason; *ca*—and; *mahā-prabhu*—by the Supreme Lord; *kṛtaḥ*—done; *mahān*—great; *anugrahaḥ*—favor; *mayi*—on me; *snigdhaiḥ*—who are affectionate; *bhavadbhiḥ*—by your good self; *anumīyate*—it is deduced.

You are very kind to me. Because I have had the good fortune to engage in His service, you conclude that the Lord has given me His favor.

Hanumān directs Nārada to the Pāṇḍavas



सोऽधुना मथुरापुर्यामवतीर्णेन तेन हि ।  
प्रादुष्कृतनिजैश्वर्यपराकाष्ठाविभूतिना ॥

कृतस्यानुग्रहस्यांशं पाण्डवेषु महात्मसु ।  
तुल्यार्हति नो गन्तुं सुमेरुं मृदणुर्यथा ॥

so 'dhunā mathurā-puryām  
avatīrṇena tena hi  
prāduṣkṛta-nijaiśvarya-  
parā-kāṣṭhā-vibhūtinā

kṛtasyānugrahasyāṁśam  
pāṇḍaveṣu mahātmasu  
tulayārhati no gantum  
sumerum mṛd-aṇur yathā

sah—He; adhunā—now; mathurā-puryām—in Mathurā-purī; avatīrṇena—who has descended; tena—by Him; hi—indeed; prāduṣkṛta—manifested; nija-aiśvarya—of His personal opulences; parā-kāṣṭhā—the ultimate extreme; vibhūtinā—and His expanded energies; kṛtasya—shown; anugrahasya—of the mercy; aṁśam—a small fraction; pāṇḍaveṣu—on the Pāṇḍavas; mahā-ātmasu—saintly; tulayā—in comparison; arhati na u—is not at all worthy; gantum—to come; sumerum—Sumeru Mountain; mṛt—of earth; aṇuḥ—a molecule; yathā—just as.

But now He has descended to Mathurā-purī, where He displays the summit of His opulences and powers. All the mercy He has shown me cannot equal even a speck of the mercy he has shown the saintly Pāṇḍavas, any more than a molecule of earth can equal Mount Sumeru.

Out of respect for the great sage, Hanumān finally acknowledges that what Nārada said about Lord Rāmacandra's favoring him cannot all be false. Lord Rāma's order that Hanumān stay in this world in separation

from Him seemed cruel, but at least before that order the Lord had allowed Hanumān to serve Him in various ways. It is only because of softheartedness, Hanumān says, that Nārada considers him a favored devotee of the Lord. Hanumān thinks that if Nārada's judgment were less emotional, Nārada would have concluded differently.

Like every other Vaiṣṇava whom Nārada has approached, Hanumān wants to divert the sage's glorification to someone else. As the object of this diversion he chooses the Pāṇḍavas. Hanumān compares the Lord's mercy on them to the huge golden mountain Sumeru, and the Lord's mercy on him to a speck of dust.

स येषां बाल्यतस्तत्तद्विषाद्यापङ्गणेरणात् ।  
धैर्यं धर्मं यशो ज्ञानं भक्तिं प्रेमाप्यदर्शयत् ॥

*sa yeṣāṁ bālyatas tat-tad-  
viṣādy-āpad-gaṇeraṇāt  
dhairyaṁ dharmam yaśo jñānam  
bhaktim premāpy adarśayat*

*saḥ—He; yeṣāṁ—their; bālyataḥ—from the childhood; tat-tat—one after another; viṣa-ādi—poison and so on; āpat-gaṇa—of many disasters; īraṇāt—by the sending; dhairyam—the patient determination; dharmam—religious principles; yaśaḥ—fame; jñānam—wisdom; bhaktim—devotion; prema—ecstatic love; api—and; adarśayat—He demonstrated.*

**By sending poison and many other calamities, one after another, to trouble the Pāṇḍavas from their childhood, the Lord deliberately showed their determination, religion, fame, wisdom, devotion, and ecstatic love.**

As the invisible Supersoul, Lord Kṛṣṇa arranged for the Pāṇḍavas to undergo many troubles. He did this, however, only to broadcast their glories forever throughout the world. The Lord's pure devotees never perish, and what seems to be their suffering in this world is only for their benefit and glorification.

सारथ्यं पार्षदत्वं च सेवनं मन्त्रिदूतते ।  
वीरासनानुगमने चक्रे स्तुतिनतीरपि ॥

*sārathyam pārṣadatvam ca  
sevanam mantri-dūtate  
vīrāsanānugamane  
cakre stuti-natīr api*

*sārathyam*—service as a chariot driver; *pārṣadatvam*—service as a court attendant; *ca*—and; *sevanam*—personal attendance; *mantri*—service as an advisor; *dūtate*—and as a messenger; *vīra-āsana*—serving as a guard at night; *anugamane*—and following; *cakre*—He did; *stuti*—praise; *natīh*—and bowing down; *api*—also.

**He acted as their servant, adviser, messenger, charioteer, and court attendant. He kept watch for them at night, followed them on processions, and even offered them praise and obeisances.**

Not only did Lord Kṛṣṇa look after the Pāṇḍavas as the invisible Supersoul, but He also dealt with them in various public exchanges of love. Sometimes He drove Arjuna's chariot. In Yudhiṣṭhira's court He sat as the head of the assembly of advisers. Like an intimate servant, He anticipated the Pāṇḍavas' wishes, and at the Rājasūya sacrifice He humbly washed the feet of every guest. He gave personal counsel to Yudhiṣṭhira and carried messages for him. On occasion he would stand guard all night with sword in hand. And He would follow Yudhiṣṭhira in procession and offer words of praise like an ordinary subordinate.

All Vaiṣṇavas take delight in hearing these glories of the Pāṇḍavas. But one who has a special relationship with the Pāṇḍavas, like their grandson Parīkṣit, spontaneously feels special ecstasy from such hearing. As Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī describes in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.16.16):

*sārathya-pāraṣada-sevana-sakhya-dautya-  
vīrāsanānugamana-stavana-praṇāmān  
snigdheṣu pāṇḍuṣu jagat-praṇatim ca viṣṇor*

*bhaktim karoti nṛpatiś caraṇāravinde*

“Mahārāja Parīkṣit heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa [Viṣṇu], who is universally obeyed, out of His causeless mercy rendered all kinds of service to the malleable sons of Pāṇḍu. The Lord accepted posts ranging from chariot driver to president to messenger, friend, and night watchman, according to the will of the Pāṇḍavas, obeying them like a servant and offering obeisances like one younger in years. When Mahārāja Parīkṣit heard this, he became overwhelmed with devotion to the lotus feet of the Lord.”

The verse spoken here by Hanumān does not explicitly mention the friendship between Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas, because all their exchanges were effects of this underlying relationship.

**किं वा सस्नेहकातर्यात्तेषां नाचरति प्रभुः ।  
सेवा सख्यं प्रियत्वं तदन्योन्यं भाति मिश्रितम् ॥**

*kiṁ vā sa-sneha-kātaryāt  
teṣāṁ nācarati prabhuḥ  
sevā sakhyam priyatvam tad  
anyonyam bhāti miśritam*

*kiṁ*—what; *vā*—else; *sa-sneha*—mixed with affection; *kātaryāt*—because of His anxious concern; *teṣāṁ*—for them; *na ācarati*—does not do; *prabhuḥ*—the Lord; *sevā*—service; *sakhyam*—companionship; *priyatvam*—and close friendship; *tad*—that; *anyonyam*—mutually; *bhāti*—is perceivable; *miśritam*—combined.

**Out of His affectionate concern for them, what would the Lord not do? He was seen taking the combined roles of their servant, companion, and dearest friend, and they took the same roles for Him.**

For the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa tolerated Bhīṣma’s attacking and wounding Him. For the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa broke His promise not to fight at Kurukṣetra. In fact, for the Pāṇḍavas Kṛṣṇa would do anything. But a skeptic might ask, “Although God is kind to all His creatures and certainly can be friendly to His devotees, why should He demean

Himself by trusting ordinary mortals and acting as their servant?” Here Hanumān resolves such doubts: Kṛṣṇa’s various services for the Pāṇḍavas were not a supercial show but expressions of His true feelings. He was not at one moment posing as a friend but being unwilling to serve; at another moment appearing willing to serve but not showing friendship; at another moment making a show of friendship but without genuine concern; and at another showing loving concern but not actually being a friend. Such inconsistent reciprocations are seen in material life, where there is no true love. Kṛṣṇa’s dealings with the Pāṇḍavas, however, were always free from duplicity. And the feelings were mutual; the Pāṇḍavas were ready to sacrifice anything for the happiness of Kṛṣṇa.

यस्य सन्ततवासेन सा येषां राजधानिका ।  
तपोवनं महर्षीणामभूद्वा सत्तपःफलम् ॥

*yasya santata-vāsena  
sā yeṣāṁ rājadhānikā  
tapo-vanam maharṣiṇām  
abhūt vā sat-tapaḥ-phalam*

*yasya*—whose; *santata*—constant; *vāsena*—by the residence; *sā*—it; *yeṣāṁ*—their; *rājadhānikā*—capital city; *tapo-vanam*—a forest where austerities are performed; *mahā-ṛṣiṇām*—of great sages; *abhūt*—has become; *vā*—or; *sat*—proper; *tapah*—of austerities; *phalam*—the pious benefits.

Because the Lord resides constantly with the Pāṇḍavas, their capital city has become like a sacred forest where great sages perform austerities, and residing in that city awards one the same pious benefits as performing austere acts of penance.

Many renounced sages visited the Pāṇḍavas’ capital, Hastināpura, to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa because they knew very well that seeing Him is the perfection of all austerities. As Nārada told Yudhiṣṭhira:

*yūyam nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā*

*lokān punānā munayo 'bhiyanti  
yeṣāṁ grhān āvasatīti sākṣād  
gūḍhaṁ param brahma manuṣya-liṅgam*

“All of you Pāṇḍavas are extremely fortunate, for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, lives in your palace just like a human being. Great saintly persons know this very well, and therefore they constantly visit this house.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.10.48)

For devotees of Kṛṣṇa, *tapas* refers not so much to troublesome austerities of the body as to one-pointed concentration of the mind. And for His pure devotees, fixing the mind on Kṛṣṇa is not an austerity at all, but the highest pleasure. For the Vaiṣṇavas in Hastināpura the invaluable fruit of *tapas* (*sat-tapaḥ-phalam*) was to be able to see Him constantly, sometimes physically but always in their hearts.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
शृण्वन्निदं कृष्णपदाब्जलालसो  
द्वारवतीसन्ततवासलम्पटः ।  
उत्थाय चोत्थाय मुदान्तरान्तरा  
श्रीनारदोऽनृत्यदलं सहूङ्गतम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
śṛṇvann idam kṛṣṇa-padābja-lālaso  
dvāravatī-santata-vāsa-lampṭaḥ  
utthāya cotthāya mudāntarāntarā  
śrī-nārado 'nṛtyad alam sa-hūṅkṛtam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *śṛṇvan*—hearing; *idam*—this; *kṛṣṇa*—of Kṛṣṇa; *pada-abja*—for the lotus feet; *lālasaḥ*—eager; *dvāravatī*—in Dvārakā; *santata*—perpetual; *vāsa*—for residence; *lampṭaḥ*—greedy; *utthāya*—standing up; *ca*—and; *utthāya*—standing up again; *mudā*—joyful; *antarā antarā*—within; *śrī-nāradaḥ*—Śrī Nārada; *anṛtyat*—danced; *alam*—unreservedly; *sa-hūṁ-kṛtam*—along with loud cries.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Upon hearing these words, Śrī Nārada became uncontrollably eager to see the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. He simply wanted to go to Dvārakā and live there forever. He stood up, sat down, and stood up again. He danced enthusiastically, filled with inner joy, and made loud cries.

Hearing the description of the glories of Kṛṣṇa and His beloved devotees, Nārada remembered how much he had enjoyed staying in Dvārakā whenever he could:

*govinda-bhuja-guptāyām  
dvārakāyām kurūdvaha  
avātsin nārado 'bhīkṣṇam  
kṛṣṇopāsana-lālasaḥ*

“Eager to engage in the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa, O best of the Kurus, Nārada Muni stayed for some time in Dvārakā, which was always protected by the arms of Govinda.” (Bhāgavatam 11.2.1)

Though Hanumān was still speaking, Nārada could not help but interrupt him with shouts of joy. By this time, Nārada’s ecstasy had become uncontrollable.

पाण्डवानां हनूमांस्तु कथारसनिमग्नहृत् ।  
तन्नुत्यवर्धितानन्दः प्रस्तुतं वर्णयत्यलम् ॥

*pāṇḍavānām hanūmāns tu  
kathā-rasa-nimagna-hṛt  
tan-nṛtya-varḍhitānandaḥ  
prastutam varṇayaty alam*

*pāṇḍavānām*—about the Pāṇḍavas; *hanūmān*—Hanumān; *tu*—but; *kathā*—the talking; *rasa*—in transcendental tastes; *nimagna*—immersed; *hṛt*—whose heart; *tat*—by that; *nṛtya*—dancing; *varḍhita*—increased; *ānandaḥ*—whose ecstasy; *prastutam*—the topic under discussion; *varṇayati*—he described; *alam*—elaborately.

Hanumān's heart was immersed in transcendental tastes from speaking about the Pāṇḍavas. With his ecstasy raised even higher by Nārada's dancing, he continued to speak about the topics.

Hanumān did not join Nārada in dancing, because Hanumān's ecstasy lay in speaking to glorify the Pāṇḍavas more and more. His attraction to this *kathā* was not a mundane urge to speak for self-satisfaction but a *rasa*, a transcendental sweet taste known only to pure Vaiṣṇavas. This *kathā-rasa* acts like an intoxicating liquor. It makes those who drink it forget the pain of material life by immersing them in complete satisfaction and happiness. Hanumān was not annoyed when Nārada interrupted his speech with ecstatic dancing and shouts of joy. Quite the opposite, his ecstasy increased, and he felt inspired to go on speaking more and more.

श्रीहनूमानुवाच  
तेषामापङ्गणा एव सत्तमाः स्युः सुसेविताः ।  
ये विधाय प्रभुं व्यग्रं सद्यः सङ्गमयन्ति तैः ॥

*śrī-hanūmān uvāca*  
*teṣām āpad-gaṇā eva*  
*sattamāḥ syuḥ su-sevitāḥ*  
*ye vidhāya prabhum vyagram*  
*sadyaḥ saṅgamayanti taiḥ*

*śrī-hanūmān uvāca*—Śrī Hanumān said; *teṣām*—their; *āpat-gaṇāḥ*—many calamities; *eva*—indeed; *sat-tamāḥ*—most auspicious; *syuḥ*—were; *su-sevitāḥ*—very desirable; *ye*—which; *vidhāya*—making; *prabhum*—the Personality of Godhead; *vyagram*—anxious; *sadyaḥ*—quickly; *saṅgamayanti*—caused Him to associate; *taiḥ*—with them.

Śrī Hanumān said: All the calamities that befell the Pāṇḍavas were most auspicious and desirable because those calamities made the Personality of Godhead anxious to join the Pāṇḍavas quickly.

Whenever Kṛṣṇa heard that the Pāṇḍavas were in danger, He would



want to drop whatever He was doing and go at once to help them. And since the Pāṇḍavas' misfortune was auspicious, how much more auspicious was their good fortune! Kṛṣṇa helped the brothers kill Jarāsandha and then washed the feet of everyone at Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice. So who can adequately describe the glory of the Pāṇḍavas' loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa? Before, Hanumān had said that the Pāṇḍavas' troubles were not real, that they were only a show arranged by Kṛṣṇa to advertise the Pāṇḍavas' steadfastness and other saintly qualities. Now Hanumān speaks differently. Even taking for granted that the calamities were real, as they seemed to ordinary eyes, those troubles brought the Pāṇḍavas the greatest good fortune.

**अरे प्रेमपराधीना विचाराचारवर्जिताः ।  
नियोजयथ तं दौत्ये सारथ्येऽपि मम प्रभुम् ॥**

*are prema-parādhīnā  
vicārācāra-varjitāḥ  
niyojayatha taṁ dautye  
sārathye 'pi mama prabhum*

*are*—O Pāṇḍavas; *prema*—of pure love; *para-adhīnāḥ*—under the control; *vicāra*—of discrimination; *ācāra*—and etiquette; *varjitāḥ*—devoid; *niyojayatha*—you engage; *taṁ*—Him; *dautye*—in being a messenger; *sārathye*—in being a chariot driver; *api*—even; *mama*—my; *prabhum*—Lord;

**O Pāṇḍavas, pure love has subdued you! Ignoring discrimination and etiquette, you engage my Lord as your messenger and charioteer.**

In his trance of *kīrtana* ecstasy, Hanumān addresses the Pāṇḍavas as if they were present before him. He is astounded at their behavior with Kṛṣṇa. Violating the proprieties that forbid servants from giving orders to their master, the Pāṇḍavas failed even to consider that menial services like carrying messages are not tasks in which to engage Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the entire universe, the supervisor of Brahmā and all the demigods. The Supreme Lord submits to such treatment only with His dearest devotees.

नूनं रे पाण्डवा मन्त्रमौषधं वाथ किञ्चन ।  
लोकोत्तरं विजानीध्वे महामोहनमोहनम् ॥

*nūnaṁ re pāṇḍavā mantram  
auśadhaṁ vātha kiñcana  
lokottaraṁ vijānīdhve  
mahā-mohana-mohanam*

*nūnam*—certainly; *re pāṇḍavāḥ*—O Pāṇḍavas; *mantram*—a mantra; *auśadham*—herb; *vā atha*—or else; *kiñcana*—some; *loka-uttaram*—superworldly; *vijānīdhve*—you must know; *mahā-mohana*—the most powerful enchanter; *mohanam*—which can enchant.

**Ah, you Pāṇḍavas must know some transcendental herb or mantra that can enchant the most powerful enchanter.**

Because the Pāṇḍavas are under the sway of *prema*, they can be excused for transgressing reason and etiquette. But why does the Personality of Godhead agree to be dealt with lightly? Hanumān surmises that the brothers must know some magic that can hypnotize the Lord. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme magician, the enchanter of everyone else, so whatever can enchant Him must be extraordinary. No such magic herb or *mantra* is to be found anywhere in this world.

The real identity of this magic will be revealed by Hanumān in Text 85: Kṛṣṇa is enchanted only by the perfect love of His intimate devotees.

इत्यु॥ । हनूमान् मातः पाण्डवेयशस्विनि ।  
उत्प्लुत्योत्प्लुत्य मुनिना मुहुर्नृत्यति वक्ति च ॥

*ity uktvā hanūmān mātāḥ  
pāṇḍaveya-yaśasvini  
utplutyotplutya muninā  
muhur nṛtyati vakti ca*

*iti*—thus; *uktvā*—saying; *hanūmān*—Hanumān; *mātāḥ*—O mother; *pāṇḍaveya*—of the son of the Pāṇḍava Arjuna; *yaśasvini*—O celebrated

wife; *utplutya utplutya*—jumping several times; *muninā*—together with the sage; *muhuh*—for some time; *nṛtyati*—dances; *vakti*—says; *ca*—and.

[Parīkṣit Mahārāja said:] O mother, O celebrated wife of the son of the Pāṇḍavas, after Hanumān said this he repeatedly jumped up into the air, higher and higher, joining the sage Nārada in dancing. He then continued to speak.

When pure devotees are glorified, everyone in relation to them is glorified, including their families and disciples. Uttarā, to whom Parīkṣit is speaking, is both his mother and the wife of Abhimanyu, who is referred to here as Pāṇḍaveya because he was the son of Arjuna and Subhadrā. Thus Śrīmatī Uttarā shared in the Pāṇḍavas' glory, by marriage and by being Parīkṣit's mother.

अहो महाप्रभो भक्तवात्सल्यभरनिर्जित ।  
करोष्येवमपि स्वीयचित्ताकर्षकचेष्टित ॥

*aho mahā-prabho bhakta-  
vātsalya-bhara-nirjita  
karoṣy evam api svīya-  
cittākarṣaka-ceṣṭita*

*aho*—ah; *mahā-prabho*—O master of all masters; *bhakta-vātsalya*—of affectionate concern for Your devotees; *bhara*—by the burden; *nirjita*—who are conquered; *karoṣi*—You act; *evam*—in this way; *api*—indeed; *svīya*—of Your devotees; *citta*—of the hearts; *ākarṣaka*—attracting; *ceṣṭita*—whose acts.

**O master of all masters, You are conquered by Your great affection for Your devotees! This is how You attract their hearts.**

Now Hanumān addresses Lord Kṛṣṇa: “You are the Lord of all the lords of the universe, but You become a chariot driver and order carrier for the Pāṇḍavas! This is certainly possible, because Your love for Your devotees makes You its slave. Having lost Your independence, You are forced to do whatever Your devotees want.” On various occasions the

Personality of Godhead has admitted His dependence on His devotees. For example, He once confessed to Durvāsā Muni:

*aham bhakta-parādhīno  
hy asvatantra iva dvija  
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo  
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ*

“I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the core of their hearts. What to speak of My devotees, even the devotees of My devotees are very dear to Me.” (Bhāgavatam 9.4.63)

But doesn’t the Lord’s loss of independence pain the hearts of the devotees who love Him? No, everything the Personality of Godhead does attracts the devotees’ hearts, which He fills with pleasure. He acts only for the satisfaction of His devotees and is always careful to avoid causing them anxiety. In the Lord’s own words cited above, He is *bhakta-jana-priya*, affectionately concerned for the happiness of His devotees. The Vaiṣṇavas are more than happy to see Kṛṣṇa driving Arjuna’s chariot and treating Yudhiṣṭhira with respect, because these exchanges of love between Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas glorify both the Lord and the servants He chooses to serve. Like an attentive parent, the Supreme Lord constantly fosters His devotee’s spiritual development by everything He does:

*muhūrtenāpi saṁhartum  
śakto yady api dānavān  
mad-bhaktānām vinodārthaṁ  
karomi vividhāḥ kriyāḥ*

*darśana-dhyāna-saṁsparśair  
matsya-kūrma-vihaṅgamāḥ  
svāny apatyāni puṣṇanti  
tathāham api padmaja*

“Although fit to annihilate all the Dānavas within a few minutes, I perform various pastimes just to entertain My devotees. Just as the fish, the tortoise, and the bird nourish their offspring by respectively watching them, meditating on them, and keeping them in physical contact, so do I maintain My devotees, O lotus-born Brahmā.” (*Padma Purāṇa*)

ममापि परमं भाग्यं पार्थानां तेषु मध्यमः ।  
भीमसेनो मम भ्राता कनीयान् वयसा प्रियः ॥

*mamāpi paramam bhāgyam  
pārthānām teṣu madhyamaḥ  
bhīmaseno mama bhrātā  
kanīyān vayasā priyaḥ*

*mama*—my; *api*—also; *paramam*—greatest; *bhāgyam*—good fortune; *pārthānām*—of the sons of Pṛthā, or Kuntī; *teṣu*—these; *madhyamaḥ*—the middle one; *bhīmasenaḥ*—Bhīmasena; *mama*—my; *bhrātā*—brother; *kanīyān*—younger; *vayasā*—by age; *priyaḥ*—dear.

**It is my greatest fortune that Pṛthā’s middle son, Bhīmasena, is also my dear younger brother.**

Hanumān has just finished describing himself as unfortunate, but by speaking about the Pāṇḍavas he now considers himself transformed into a most fortunate person. He praises his own good fortune, remembering that he and Bhīma are both sons of the wind-god. Bhīma is the second eldest of the five Pāṇḍavas; but among the Pārthas, the three sons of Pāṇḍu’s first wife, Pṛthā, his place by birth is in the middle. Mother Pṛthā is herself an intimate devotee of Kṛṣṇa, so Hanumān is even more honored to remember that she is his aunt. By saying that Bhīma is *kanīyān vayasā* (“inferior to himself in age”), he subtly implies that Bhīma is his superior in character. Hanumān admires Bhīma so much because he considers Bhīma the better devotee.

स्वसुदानादिसख्येन यः सम्यगनुकम्पितः ।

तेन तस्यार्जुनस्यापि प्रियो मद्वपवान् ध्वजः ॥

*svasṛ-dānādi-sakhyena  
yaḥ samyag anukampitaḥ  
tena tasyārjunasyāpi  
priyo mad-rūpavān dhvajah*

*svasṛ*—of His sister; *dāna*—consisting of the charity; *ādi*—and so on; *sakhyena*—by the friendship; *yaḥ*—who; *samyak*—fully; *anukampitaḥ*—shown mercy; *tena*—by Him (Kṛṣṇa); *tasya*—his; *arjunasya*—Arjuna’s; *api*—also; *priyah*—dear; *mat*—my; *rūpa-vān*—having the image; *dhvajah*—flag.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, by acts of friendship like giving His sister in marriage to the Pāṇḍava Arjuna, showed Arjuna full mercy. And that Arjuna bears my image on the treasured flag of his chariot.

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s sister Subhadrā is a direct expansion of His internal potency, and the Lord approved her marriage to Arjuna. Later, in the Kurukṣetra war, the Lord agreed to drive Arjuna’s chariot. These favors distinguish Arjuna as the most dear to Kṛṣṇa among the Pāṇḍavas. Therefore Hanumān is proud to have his own image on Arjuna’s battle flag.

प्रभोः प्रियतमानां तु प्रसादं परमं विना ।  
न सिध्यति प्रिया सेवा दासानां न फलत्यपि ॥

*prabhoḥ priya-tamānām tu  
prasādam paramam vinā  
na sidhyati priyā sevā  
dāsānām na phalaty api*

*prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *priya-tamānām*—of the most beloved friends; *tu*—but; *prasādam*—the mercy; *paramam*—unconditional; *vinā*—without; *na sidhyati*—is not successful; *priyā*—loving; *sevā*—service; *dāsānām*—of the Lord’s devotees; *na phalati*—does not bear fruit; *api*—either.

**Without the unconditional mercy of the Lord's most beloved friends, a devotee's loving service can never succeed or bear fruit.**

By now Hanumān's ecstasy in unalloyed *prema* has awakened to such an extent that he feels stirred to go see the Pāṇḍavas at once. And he is about to propose to Nārada just that. One can never become a recognized servant of the Lord—in other words, one can never enter the *rasa* of *dāśya*—without the blessings of perfect devotees like the Pāṇḍavas. Even if one externally makes a show of such service, one will not reap the fruit of satisfying Kṛṣṇa and enjoying transcendental ecstasy. Pure devotional service proceeds completely under the authority of the Lord's beloved devotees.

**तस्माद्भागवतश्रेष्ठ प्रभुप्रियतमोचितम् ।  
तत्र नो गमनं तेषां दर्शनाश्रयणे तथा ॥**

*tasmād bhāgavata-śreṣṭha  
prabhu-priyatamocitam  
tatra no gamanaṁ teṣāṁ  
darśanāśrayaṇe tathā*

*tasmāt*—therefore; *bhāgavata-śreṣṭha*—O best of the Vaiṣṇavas; *prabhu*—of the Lord; *priya-tama*—O most dear devotee; *ucitam*—suitable; *tatra*—there; *naḥ*—our; *gamanam*—going; *teṣāṁ*—of them; *darśana*—seeing; *āśrayaṇe*—taking shelter; *tathā*—also.

**Therefore, O best of Vaiṣṇavas, most dear devotee of the Lord, let us go together to see the Pāṇḍavas and take shelter of them.**

Hanumān's words indicate that he considers Nārada as blessed as the Pāṇḍavas in receiving Lord Kṛṣṇa's favor. Since both Hanumān and Nārada are servants in the *dāśya* mood, it is entirely fitting for them to visit the Pāṇḍavas at their residence and even stay with them to learn about devotional service. Apart from being fit to see the Pāṇḍavas, Hanumān and Nārada should be able to receive from them special mercy by rendering such services as standing guard for them at night.

अयोध्यायां तदानीं तु प्रभुणाविष्कृतं न यत् ।  
मथुरैकप्रदेशे तद् द्वारकायां प्रदर्शितम् ॥

परमैश्वर्यमाधुर्यवैचित्र्यं वृन्दशोऽधुना ।  
ब्रह्मरुद्रादिदुस्तर्क्यं भक्तभक्तिविवर्धनम् ॥

*ayodhyāyām tadānīm tu  
prabhuṇāviṣkṛtaṁ na yat  
mathuraika-pradeśe tad  
dvārakāyām pradarśitam*

*paramaiśvarya-mādhurya-  
vaicitryam vṛndaśo 'dhunā  
brahma-rudrādi-dustarkyaṁ  
bhakta-bhakti-vivardhanam*

*ayodhyāyām*—in Ayodhyā; *tadānīm*—then; *tu*—but; *prabhuṇā*—by the Lord; *āviṣkṛtaṁ na*—not exhibited; *yat*—which; *mathurā*—of Mathurā; *eka-pradeśe*—in a certain subdistrict; *tat*—that; *dvārakāyām*—in Dvārakā; *pradarśitam*—revealed; *parama*—supreme; *aiśvarya*—of opulence; *mādhurya*—and sweetness; *vaicitryam*—varieties; *vṛndaśaḥ*—numerous; *adhunā*—now; *brahma-rudra-ādi*—by Brahmā, Rudra, and other demigods; *dustarkyaṁ*—unfathomable; *bhakta*—of the Lord's devotees; *bhakti*—the devotion; *vivardhanam*—which expands.

Never in Ayodhyā did the Lord disclose what He now reveals in the district of Mathurā known as Dvārakā: countless varieties of supreme opulence and sweetness, one after another, which Brahmā, Rudra, and other demigods can hardly fathom. These glories expand the love of His devotees.

As Hanumān looks forward to the inestimable benefit he and Nārada will achieve in Dvārakā, he reaches the peak of eagerness.

During the ancient time when the Madhu demon ruled Mathurā,



that kingdom extended all the way to the western ocean and included the region of Dvārakā. Śrī Hari-vaṁśa confirms this in the words of Madhu himself, spoken to the son-in-law of Vikadru:

*svāgataṁ vatsa haryaśva  
prīto 'smi tava darśanāt  
yad etan mama rājyaṁ vai  
sarvaṁ madhu-vanaṁ vinā*

*dadāmi tava rājendra  
vāsaś ca pratigrhyatām  
pālayainaṁ śubhaṁ rāṣṭraṁ  
samudrān upabhūṣitam*

*go-saṃṛddhaṁ śrīyā juṣṭam  
ābhīra-prāya-mānuṣam  
atra te vasatas tāta  
durgaṁ giri-ṭpuraṁ mahat*

*bhavitā pārthivāvāsaḥ  
surāṣṭra-viśayo mahān  
anupaviśayaś caiva  
samudrānte nirāmayah*

*ānartaṁ nāma te rāṣṭraṁ  
bhaviṣyaty āyataṁ mahat*

“Welcome, dear boy Haryaśva! I am happy to see you. Let me give you this, my entire kingdom, except for the Madhuvana forest. Please agree to live here and rule this splendid kingdom. Graced by the shores of the ocean, it is rich with cows and peopled mostly by Ābhīra cowherds. During your stay here, in the district of Saurāṣṭra there will come to be a great mountain fortress, fit for the residence of kings and unequaled by any other royal estate. Your vast kingdom will be called Ānarta.”

Sometimes, of course, the land of Mathurā is measured as being smaller. In the *Varāha Purāṇa* (158.1), for example, we hear the Supreme Lord refer to “My district of Mathurā, extending for twenty *yojanas*” (*vimśati-yojanānām tu/ māthuraṁ mama maṇḍalam*). The smaller Mathurā-maṇḍala is the area marked by the footprints of Śrī Nanda-nandana, who frequently wanders and plays there tending His cows.

The supreme opulences of the Personality of Godhead are manifest in Dvārakā because Dvārakā is part of the greater Mathurā. So glorification of Dvārakā is also, in effect, glorification of Mathurā.

### Hanumān declines to go to Hastināpura

श्रीनारद उवाच  
आः किमुक्तमयोध्यायामिति वैकुण्ठतोऽपि न ।  
उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ तत्तत्र गच्छावः सत्वरं सखे ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*āḥ kim uktam ayodhyāyām*  
*iti vaikuṇṭhato 'pi na*  
*uttiṣṭhottiṣṭha tat tatra*  
*gacchāvaḥ satvaram sakhe*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *āḥ*—ah; *kim*—what; *uktam*—said; *ayodhyāyām*—in Ayodhyā; *iti*—thus; *vaikuṇṭhataḥ*—than Vaikuṇṭha; *api*—even; *na*—not; *uttiṣṭha uttiṣṭha*—get up, get up; *tat*—therefore; *tatra*—there; *gacchāvaḥ*—we should go; *satvaram*—immediately; *sakhe*—my friend.

Śrī Nārada said: Ah, what are you saying? Something unseen in Ayodhyā? It's not seen even in Vaikuṇṭha! Get up, get up, my friend! We should go there at once.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that Nārada is ready to go either to Dvārakā or to the Pāṇḍavas' capital, Hastināpura. Both are equally

good destinations. With the interjection *āḥ*, Nārada gives voice to distress at not having seen such splendor in Ayodhyā or Vaikuṇṭha, and with the repeated request *uttiṣṭha uttiṣṭha* he expresses extreme eagerness to go.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
अथ क्षणं निश्वास हनूमान् धैर्यसागरः ।  
जगाद नारदं नत्वा क्षणं हृदि विमृश्य सः ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
atha kṣaṇam niśaśvāsa  
hanūmān dhairya-sāgarah  
jagāda nāradaṁ natvā  
kṣaṇam hṛdi vimṛśya saḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *atha*—then; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment; *niśaśvāsa*—sighed; *hanūmān*—Hanumān; *dhairya*—of soberness; *sāgarah*—the ocean; *jagāda*—he said; *nāradaṁ*—to Nārada; *natvā*—bowing down; *kṣaṇam*—for a short time; *hṛdi*—in his heart; *vimṛśya*—contemplating; *saḥ*—he.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Hanumān, the ocean of sobriety, then sighed for a moment, and after a brief time in thought he bowed down to Nārada and spoke.**

Hanumān's strict loyalty to Lord Rāmacandra made him reconsider what he had been thinking. He concludes that to go running off to Dvārakā, leaving aside his regular worship, would violate his exclusive devotion. So he bows down to Nārada to ask forgiveness before saying no to what Nārada has suggested.

**श्रीहनूमानुवाच  
श्रीमन्महाप्रभोस्तस्य प्रेष्ठानामपि सर्वथा ।  
तत्र दर्शनसेवार्थं प्रयाणं युक्तमेव नः ॥**

śrī-hanūmān uvāca  
śrīman-mahā-prabhoḥ tasya  
preṣṭhānām api sarvathā  
tatra darśana-sevārtham  
prayāṇam yuktam eva naḥ

śrī-hanūmān uvāca—Śrī Hanumān said; śrī-mat—together with the goddess of fortune; mahā-prabhoḥ—of the Personality of Godhead; tasya—His; preṣṭhānām—of the dearmost devotees; api—after all; sarvathā—in all respects; tatra—there; darśana—of seeing; sevā—and serving; artham—for the sake; prayāṇam—travel; yuktam—fitting; eva—indeed; naḥ—for us.

**Śrī Hanumān said: Certainly it would be fitting for us to visit Dvārakā to see the Pāṇḍavas and offer them service, for they are in all respects most dear to the Personality of Godhead and His consort.**

Two good reasons to visit the Pāṇḍavas are to see them and to offer them service. Or the reason is actually one, because seeing them (*darśana*) is itself personal service and transcendental worship.

किन्तु तेनाधुनाजस्रं महाकारुण्यमाधुरी ।  
यथा प्रकाश्यमानास्ते गम्भीरा पूर्वतोऽधिका ॥

kintu tenādhunājasram  
mahā-kāruṇya-mādhurī  
yathā prakāśyamānās te  
gambhīrā pūrvato 'dhikā

kintu—but; tena—by Him; adhunā—currently; ajasram—uncommonly; mahā-kāruṇya—intense mercy; mādhurī—and sweetness; yathā—such as; prakāśyamānā—being exhibited; te—these; gambhīrā—deep; pūrvataḥ—than before; adhikā—greater.

**But the Lord is now displaying uncommonly intense mercy and sweetness, more confidential than anything He has ever shown before.**

विचित्रलीलाभङ्गी च तथा परममोहिनी ।  
मुनीनामप्यभिज्ञानं यया स्यात्परमो भ्रमः ॥

*vicitra-līlā-bhaṅgī ca  
tathā parama-mohinī  
munīnām apy abhijñānām  
yayā syāt paramo bhramaḥ*

*vicitra*—wonderful; *līlā*—in pastimes; *bhaṅgī*—playful sports; *ca*—also; *tathā*—also; *parama*—supremely; *mohinī*—enchanting; *munīnām*—of sages; *api*—even; *abhijñānām*—self-realized; *yayā*—by which; *syāt*—there; *paramaḥ*—complete; *bhramaḥ*—bewilderment.

**Those wonderful playful pastimes are so supremely enchanting that they bewilder even self-realized sages.**

Hanumān is about to admit his fear of offending Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Even in Dvārakā, what to speak of Vṛndāvana, the mood of devotional service in the company of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is more relaxed than Hanumān is accustomed to. So he is worried about becoming confused and doing something wrong. At the same time, he readily acknowledges that the charm of Dvārakā and the intensity of Kṛṣṇa's mercy there have never been shown anywhere else, even in Ayodhyā.

अहो भवादृशां तातो यतो लोकपितामहः ।  
वेदप्रवर्तकाचार्यो मोहं ब्रह्माप्यविन्दत ॥

*aho bhavādṛśām tāto  
yato loka-pitāmahaḥ  
veda-pravartakācārya  
mohaṁ brahmāpy avindata*

*aho*—oh; *bhavādṛśām*—of someone like your good self; *tātaḥ*—the father; *yataḥ*—since; *loka*—of the whole world; *pitāmahaḥ*—the grandfather; *veda*—of the Vedic teachings; *pravartaka-ācāryaḥ*—the founder-ācārya; *mohaṁ*—confusion; *brahmā*—Brahmā; *api*—also;

*avindata*—obtained.

**Just see how even your father, Brahmā, grandfather of the world, founder-ācārya of the Vedic teachings, was confused by the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.**

Brahmā is the first of all the Vedic ācāryas—the Manus, the Vyāsas, and so on. But when he kidnapped Kṛṣṇa’s friends and calves, he was shown such a display of Kṛṣṇa’s supreme magic that he lost his power to act and to think.

**वानराणामबुद्धीनां मादुशां तत्र का कथा ।  
वेत्सि त्वमपि तद्वृत्तं तद्विशङ्केऽपराधतः ॥**

*vānarāṇām abuddhīnām  
mādrśām tatra kā kathā  
vetsi tvam api tad-vṛttam  
tad viśaṅke 'parādhataḥ*

*vānarāṇām*—of forest monkeys; *abuddhīnām*—unintelligent; *mādrśām*—like me; *tatra*—in this matter; *kā*—what; *kathā*—discussion; *vetsi*—know; *tvam*—you; *api*—also; *tad*—of these (pastimes); *vṛttam*—the workings; *tad*—therefore; *viśaṅke*—I fear; *aparādhataḥ*—committing offenses.

**So what can be said about foolish forest monkeys like me? Because of how strangely Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes unfold (as you also know), I am afraid of committing offenses.**

“If Brahmā could become bewildered in Kṛṣṇa’s presence,” Hanumān thinks, “then I will lose my intelligence the moment I see Him.” Someone might try to explain to Hanumān, “But those who are bewildered like that are *jñānīs*, sages attached to dry knowledge. Brahmā became confused because of attachment to his knowledge and high position. But pure devotees won’t succumb to the same bewilderment.” Hanumān’s answer is that Nārada himself became bewildered when he visited Dvārakā and saw in each of sixteen thousand palaces a different

Kṛṣṇa.

आस्तां वानन्यभावानां दासानां परमा गतिः ।  
प्रभोर्विचित्रा लीलैव प्रेमभक्तिविवर्धिनी ॥

*āstām vānanya-bhāvānām  
dāsānām paramā gatiḥ  
prabhor vicitrā līlaiva  
prema-bhakti-vivardhinī*

*āstām*—let it be; *vā*—even; *ananya*—exclusive; *bhāvānām*—of those whose loving mood; *dāsānām*—His servants; *paramā*—supreme; *gatiḥ*—the destination; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *vicitrā*—wonderfully various; *līlā*—pastimes; *eva*—indeed; *prema-bhakti*—loving devotional service; *vivardhinī*—which increase.

Let the wonderfully varied pastimes of the Lord be the very life of His servants who think of nothing but Him. For such devotees, those pastimes always increase the ecstasy of love of God.

To remember the pastimes of the Personality of Godhead is not only His devotees' *gati*, the aim of all their endeavors; it is *paramā gati*, their only resort and protection from all dangers.

अथापि सहजाव्याजकरुणाकोमलात्मनि ।  
अवक्रभावप्रकृतावार्यधर्मप्रदर्शके ॥

एकपत्नीव्रतधरे सदा विनयवृद्धया ।  
लज्जयावनतश्रीमद्वदनेऽधोविलोकने ॥

जगद्रञ्जनशीलाढ्येऽयोध्यापुरपुरन्दरे ।  
महाराजाधिराजे श्रीसीतालक्ष्मणसेविते ॥

भरतज्यायसि प्रेष्ठसुग्रीवे वानरेश्वरे ।  
विभीषणाश्रिते चापपाणौ दशरथात्मजे ॥

कौशल्यानन्दने श्रीमद्रघुनाथस्वरूपिणि ।  
स्वस्मिन्नात्यन्तिकी प्रीतिर्मम तेनैव वर्धिता ॥

*athāpi sahajāvyāja-  
karuṇā-komalātmāni  
avakra-bhāva-prakṛtāv  
ārya-dharma-pradarśake*

*eka-patnī-vrata-dhare  
sadā vinaya-vṛddhayā  
lajjayāvanata-śrīmad-  
vadane 'dho-vilokane*

*jagad-rañjana-śīlāḍhye  
'yodhyā-pura-purandare  
mahā-rājādhirāje śrī-  
sītā-lakṣmaṇa-sevite*

*bharata-jyāyasi preṣṭha-  
sugrīve vānareśvare  
vibhīṣaṇāśrite cāpa-  
pāṇau daśarathātmaje*

*kauśalyā-nandane śrīmad-  
raghunātha-svarūpiṇi  
svasminn ātyantikī prītir  
mama tenaiva vardhitā*

*atha api*—nevertheless; *sahaja*—natural; *avyāja*—not pretended;  
*karuṇā*—with compassion; *komala*—tender; *ātmani*—whose heart;  
*avakra*—not crooked; *bhāva*—a loving mood; *prakṛtau*—whose nature;



*ārya*—of civilized persons; *dharma*—the religious duties; *pradarśake*—who shows; *eka-patnī*—of having only one wife; *vrata*—the vow; *dhare*—who maintains; *sadā*—always; *vinaya*—by humility; *vṛddhayā*—developed; *lajjayā*—with shyness; *avanata*—bowed; *śrīmat*—beautiful; *vadane*—whose face; *adhaḥ*—downward; *vilokane*—whose sight; *jagat*—the world; *rañjana*—pleasing; *śīla-āḍhye*—who is endowed with character; *ayodhyā-pura*—of the city Ayodhyā; *purandare*—the ruler; *mahā-rāja*—of powerful kings; *adhirāje*—the supreme king; *śrī-sītā*—by Śrī Sītā; *lakṣmaṇa*—and Lakṣmaṇa; *sevite*—served; *bharata*—of Bharata; *jyāyasi*—the elder brother; *preṣṭha*—the best friend; *sugrīve*—of Sugrīva; *vānara*—of the monkeys; *īṣvare*—the Lord; *vibhīṣaṇa*—by Vibhīṣaṇa; *āśrite*—taken shelter of; *cāpa*—a bow; *pāṇau*—in whose hand; *daśaratha-ātma-je*—the son of Daśaratha; *kauśalyā-nandane*—the joy of Mother Kauśalyā; *śrīmat-raghunātha*—of Śrī Raghunātha; *svarūpiṇi*—in His eternal identity; *svasmin*—to my own Lord; *ātyantikī*—unlimited; *prītiḥ*—loving attraction; *mama*—my; *tena*—by this; *eva*—indeed; *vardhitā*—increased.

Even so, I simply feel more attracted to the Supreme Lord in His eternal identity as Śrī Raghunātha, the son of Daśaratha and joy of Mother Kauśalyā. His heart always tender with natural, unaffected compassion, He is spontaneously attracted to loving exchanges with His devotees, exchanges free from any tinge of duplicity. He demonstrates how to follow properly the religious duties of a civilized people, and He upholds the strict vow of having only one wife. In the shyness of innate humility, His face always looks downward, His eyes fixed on the ground. His exalted character is pleasing to all. He stands with bow in hand, the king of kings, the hero of the city Ayodhyā, served by Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, and with Bharata as His older brother. He rules the race of monkeys as the dear friend of Sugrīva and gives shelter to Vibhīṣaṇa. By my hearing of the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the unlimited loving attraction I feel toward my own master has increased.

तस्मादस्य वसाम्यत्र तादृग्रूपमिदं सदा ।  
पश्यन् साक्षात्स एवेति पिबंस्तच्चरितामृतम् ॥

*tasmād asya vasāmy atra  
tādṛg rūpam idaṁ sadā  
paśyan sākṣāt sa eveti  
pibāṁs tac-caritāmṛtam*

*tasmāt*—therefore; *asya*—His; *vasāmi*—I shall stay; *atra*—here; *tādṛk*—such; *rūpam*—form; *idaṁ*—this; *sadā*—constantly; *paśyan*—seeing; *sākṣāt*—directly; *saḥ*—He; *eva*—only; *iti*—it; *piban*—drinking; *tat*—His; *carita*—of the pastimes; *amṛtam*—the nectar.

**Therefore I think I shall stay here, constantly seeing Him in this form and drinking the immortal nectar of His pastimes.**

In essence, Hanumān says he is not independent. He cannot go anywhere or do anything on his own whim. Even though he knows that Lord Rāma is an expansion of Śrī Devakī-nandana, he must continue to worship Lord Rāmacandra.

यदा च मां कमप्यर्थमुद्दिश्य प्रभुराह्वयेत् ।  
महानुकम्पया किञ्चिदातुं सेवासुखं परम् ॥

*yadā ca mām kam apy artham  
uddiśya prabhur āhvayet  
mahānukampayā kiñcid  
dātum sevā-sukhaṁ param*

*yadā*—when; *ca*—and; *mām*—me; *kam api*—some; *artham*—purpose; *uddiśya*—indicating; *prabhuḥ*—the Lord; *āhvayet*—may call; *mahānukampayā*—out of great mercy; *kiñcit*—some; *dātum*—to give; *sevā*—of service; *sukham*—happiness; *param*—highest.

**And when the Lord may sometimes call me for some purpose, by His great mercy He might allow me the transcendental happiness of serving**

**Him.**

“If the Lord desires, then I shall go here or there.” Hanumān needs to stay in Kimpuruṣa-loka to be ready to answer any special request from Lord Rāmacandra. And if Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes kindly calls for Hanumān to assist—for example, to appear on the Kurukṣetra battlefield to frighten the Kaurava soldiers—Hanumān, of course, will gladly come at once to Hastināpura or Dvārakā.

**किं वा मद्विषयस्नेहप्रेरितः प्राणतो मम ।  
रूपं प्रियतमं यत्तत् सन्दर्शयितुमीश्वरः ॥**

*kiṁ vā mad-viṣaya-sneha-  
preritaḥ prāṇato mama  
rūpaṁ priya-tamaṁ yat tat  
sandarśayitum īśvaraḥ*

*kim vā*—or else; *mat-viṣaya*—having me as its object; *sneha*—by affection; *preritaḥ*—inspired; *prāṇataḥ*—than the air of life; *mama*—my; *rūpaṁ*—His form; *priya-tamaṁ*—more dear; *yat*—which; *tat*—that; *sandarśayitum*—to show; *īśvaraḥ*—the Lord.

**Or, inspired by affection for me, the Lord may call me just to show me the beautiful form I love more than my own life.**

Nārada could now reply that since Śrī Kṛṣṇa in fact wants the two of them to come to Dvārakā, Hanumān should agree, to fulfill the Lord’s desire. Anticipating this, Hanumān presents another reason for not leaving his post in Kimpuruṣa-loka. Easier for him than leaving Lord Rāmacandra would be simply to give up his life. In Kimpuruṣa-loka, Hanumān serves his Lord in separation and cannot fully enjoy at every moment the Lord’s beauty and the charm of His pastimes. But if called to Lord Rāmacandra’s side in Ayodhyā, if only for some short assignment, Hanumān would leave Kimpuruṣa-loka at once, without a thought. He could never leave for any other purpose.

A curious story further explains this service attitude. Once Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā wanted to break the pride of Garuḍa and others by

showing the steadfast exclusiveness of Vaiṣṇava devotion. So he called Garuḍa to His lotus feet and told him, “Please hear My command. You should bring Hanumān from Kimpuruṣa-loka.” Garuḍa went, approached Hanumān, and told him, “The Personality of Godhead, King of the Yādavas, is calling you, my dear Hanumān. Go to Him at once.” But Hanumān, exclusively devoted to Śrī Raghunātha, ignored Garuḍa’s request. Angered, Garuḍa tried to take Hanumān to Kṛṣṇa by force, but Hanumān, with the tip of his tail, pushed him effortlessly away.

Garuḍa fell through the sky and landed at Dvārakā, where Kṛṣṇa, amused to see him, said, “Dear Garuḍa, go back to Hanumān and tell him that Śrī Raghunātha is calling him.” After dispatching Garuḍa again, Kṛṣṇa turned Himself into Lord Rāmacandra and made Śrī Balarāma become Lakṣmaṇa. When Queen Satyabhāmā seemed unable to turn into Sītādevī, Kṛṣṇa, laughing, had Śrī Rukmiṇī become Sītā instead and placed her at His left side. Then the three of them stood waiting for Hanumān at Dvārakā.

When Garuḍa met Hanumān and told him of the Lord’s request, Hanumān, filled with ecstasy, responded by running to meet his Lord. He took *darśana* of the disguised Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Rukmiṇī and offered prayers in devotion. Very much satisfied with Hanumān, the Lord bestowed on him whatever benedictions Hanumān chose.

तदा भवेयं तत्राशु त्वं तु गच्छाद्य पाण्डवान् ।  
तेषां गृहेषु तत्पश्य परं ब्रह्म नराकृति ॥

*tadā bhaveyam tatrāśu*  
*tvam tu gacchādya pāṇḍavān*  
*teṣāṃ gr̥heṣu tat paśya*  
*param brahma narākṛti*

*tadā*—then; *bhaveyam*—I must present myself; *tatra*—there; *āśu*—immediately; *tvam*—you; *tu*—but; *gaccha*—please go; *adya*—now; *pāṇḍavān*—to the Pāṇḍavas; *teṣāṃ*—their; *gr̥heṣu*—in the residence; *tat*—that; *paśya*—see; *param brahma*—the Supreme Absolute Truth; *nara-ākṛti*—in His humanlike appearance.

I must be ready to present myself before Him without delay, whenever He might call. But now you please go visit the Pāṇḍavas at their home and see the Supreme Absolute Truth in His appearance like a human being.

Having heard Hanumān declare his devotion for Lord Rāmacandra, Nārada might now want to stay with Hanumān in Kimpuruṣa-loka. But Hanumān suggests that Nārada take the opportunity to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the company of the Pāṇḍavas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in His most attractive two-armed form, is the origin of Lord Nārāyaṇa. Since the beauty and charm of Kṛṣṇa cannot ultimately be described, Nārada should go see Lord Kṛṣṇa for himself. Moreover, to know fully Kṛṣṇa's kindness toward the Pāṇḍavas one must personally see it.

स्वयमेव प्रसन्नं यन् मुनिहृद्वागगोचरम् ।  
मनोहरतरं चित्रलीलामधुरिमाकरम् ॥

*svayam eva prasannaṁ yaṁ  
muni-hṛd-vāg-agocaram  
manohara-taraṁ citra-  
līlā-madhurimākaram*

*svayam*—in Himself; *eva*—only; *prasannaṁ*—satisfied; *yaṁ*—who; *muni*—of sages; *hṛt*—to the hearts; *vāg*—and words; *agocaram*—inaccessible; *manaḥ-hara-taram*—the greatest enchanter; *citra*—wonderful; *līlā*—of pastimes; *madhurima*—of the sweetness; *ākaram*—the mine.

**Lord Kṛṣṇa is fully satisfied in Himself. Even great sages cannot perceive Him in their hearts or describe Him with their words. He is the supreme enchanter because His wonderful pastimes are the source of endless attraction.**

The Pāṇḍavas did not follow any *sādhana* for self-realization, yet Lord Kṛṣṇa was so satisfied with their devotional attitude that He bestowed on them His full mercy, rarely obtained even by accomplished sages. Thus the Pāṇḍavas forever enjoy the most exclusive good fortune.

They live in intimate friendship with the supremely attractive Personality of Godhead, whose pastime activities are full of sweet variety and who is the source of all other attractive persons, including Cupid.

बृहद्व्रतधरानस्मांस्तांश्च गार्हस्थ्यधर्मिणः ।  
साम्राज्यव्यापृतान् मत्वा मापराधावृतो भव ॥

*bṛhad-vrata-dharān asmāṁs  
tāmś ca gārhasṭhya-dharmināḥ  
sāmrājya-vyāpṛtān matvā  
māparādhāvṛto bhava*

*bṛhat-vrata*—staunch celibacy; *dharān*—maintaining; *asmān*—ourselves; *tān*—them; *ca*—and; *gārhasṭhya-dharmināḥ*—householders; *sāmrājya*—by political affairs; *vyāpṛtān*—distracted; *matvā*—thinking; *mā*—do not; *aparādha*—by offense; *āvṛtaḥ*—enveloped; *bhava*—become.

**Please do not let your intelligence become shrouded by the offensive idea that you and I are staunch celibates and the Pāṇḍavas mere householders, distracted by political affairs.**

In this verse, Hanumān lays to rest any doubt by which one might think that because the Pāṇḍavas are wealthy sense gratifiers, renunciants like him and Nārada should avoid associating with them. Hanumān here uses the plural form *asmān* to include by implication the four Kumāras and other lifelong celibates. Simply to think that the Pāṇḍavas are materialists, even without saying anything against them, is a grave offense against pure Vaiṣṇavas, an offense from which the offender might never be able to recover. Therefore Nārada should not start thinking in this way.

**Hanumān praises the Pāṇḍavas, especially Yudhiṣṭhira**

निस्पृहाः सर्वकामेषु कृष्णपादानुसेवया ।

ते वै परमहंसानामाचार्यार्च्यपदाम्बुजाः ॥

*nispr̥hāḥ sarva-kāmeṣu  
kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā  
te vai parama-haṁsānām  
ācāryārcya-padāmbujāḥ*

*nispr̥hāḥ*—free of desire; *sarva-kāmeṣu*—for all material objects of attraction; *kṛṣṇa-pāda*—of Kṛṣṇa’s feet; *anusevayā*—by the regular service; *te*—they; *vai*—indeed; *parama-haṁsānām*—of liberated transcendentalists; *ācārya*—by the spiritual masters; *arcya*—worshiped; *pada-ambujāḥ*—whose lotus feet.

**Those Pāṇḍavas never desire anything material, because they constantly serve Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. And indeed their own lotus feet are worshiped by the spiritual masters of the paramahaṁsas.**

As powerful kings in an age when royal status meant much more than now, the Pāṇḍavas commanded immense resources for control and enjoyment. But the Pāṇḍavas were attracted only by pure devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. And so their own feet were worshiped by the greatest of renounced sages. Many men commonly honored as self-realized saints are in fact polluted by impersonalism and subtle desires for fame and power. True *paramahaṁsas* are extremely rare in this world, especially in modern times. Even five thousand years ago, the ecstatic devotion of the Pāṇḍavas distinguished them as saints among saints.

तेषां ज्येष्ठस्य साम्राज्ये प्रवृत्तिर्भगवत्प्रियात् ।  
अतो बहुविधा देवदुर्लभा राज्यसम्पदः ॥

*teṣāṁ jyeṣṭhasya sāmrajye  
pravṛttir bhagavat-priyāt  
ato bahu-vidhā deva-  
durlabhā rājya-sampadaḥ*

*teṣāṁ*—among them; *jyeṣṭhasya*—of the eldest; *sāmrajye*—in ruling the

state; *pravṛttiḥ*—involvement; *bhagavat-priyāt*—out of love for the Personality of Godhead; *ataḥ*—therefore; *bahu-vidhāḥ*—of many varieties; *deva*—by demigods; *durlabhāḥ*—rarely obtained; *rājya*—of his kingdom; *sampadaḥ*—opulences.

**The eldest of these brothers rules the state out of love for the Personality of Godhead. Thus his kingdom is rich in all sorts of assets rarely enjoyed by the demigods.**

If the Pāṇḍavas had no interest in royal opulence, why were they so entangled in it? Only as a burden of love, King Yudhiṣṭhira accepted the responsibilities of the throne because they afforded great opportunities for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He knew that two special kinds of service available only in the material world—killing demons and preaching to conditioned souls—please the Supreme Lord even when they involve what seems to be material entanglement. Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī says:

*apīpalad dharma-rājāḥ  
pitṛ-vad rañjayan prajāḥ  
nispr̥hāḥ sarva-kāmebhyaḥ  
kṛṣṇa-pādānusevayā*

“Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira administered generously to everyone during his reign. He was exactly like his father. He had no personal ambition and was free from all sorts of sense gratification because of his continuous service unto the lotus feet of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.12.4)

*Rañjayan prajāḥ* (“gratifying the citizens”) does not mean that Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja pacified them with bread and circuses or a booming materialistic economy. It means he encouraged them to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and made all practical arrangements toward that end. The pleasure of pure devotional service is the only real source of satisfaction for all human beings. As Nārada tells Śaunaka Ṛṣi in *Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (1.51):



*aho 'ti-dhanyo 'si yataḥ samasto  
janas tvayeśa prabalī-kṛto 'yam  
utpādayed yo 'tra bhavārditānām  
bhaktim harau loka-pitā sa dhanyaḥ*

“Ah, you are most extremely fortunate, because the entire population is being empowered by you spiritually. The truly fortunate leader of society is one who can instill devotion for Lord Hari in the hearts of people tormented in material existence.”

Thus Sūta Gosvāmī further says about King Yudhiṣṭhira:

*sampadaḥ kratavo lokā  
mahiṣī bhrātaro mahī  
jambū-dvīpādhipatyam ca  
yaśaś ca tri-divam gatam*

*kiṁ te kāmāḥ sura-spārhā  
mukunda-manaso dvijāḥ  
adhijahrur mudam rājñāḥ  
kṣudhitasya yathetare*

“News even reached the celestial planets about Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira’s fame, his queen, his stalwart brothers, his extensive land, his worldly possessions, his sovereignty over the planet earth, and the sacrifices by which he would attain a better destination. O *brāhmaṇas*, the opulence of the king was so enchanting that the denizens of heaven aspired for it. But because he was absorbed in the service of the Lord, nothing could satisfy him except the Lord’s service.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.12.5–6)

In Vedic civilization, the ruler of a kingdom had the right to claim one sixth of the citizens’ total wealth to maintain the government and his personal household. A king also received one sixth of the people’s karmic reactions, which in a pious domain like that of the Pāṇḍavas meant a great stock of good *karma*.

Following the lead of King Yudhiṣṭhira, his younger brothers helped

him rule the kingdom but were not attracted to material enjoyment. The five brothers are universally famous for their cooperative spirit and their zeal in upholding the highest principles of human civilization.

राजसूयाश्वमेधादिमहापुण्यार्जितास्तथा ।  
विष्णुलोकादयोऽत्रापि जम्बुद्वीपाधिराजता ॥

*rājasūyāśvamedhādi-  
mahā-puṇyārjitās tathā  
viṣṇu-lokādayo 'trāpi  
jambu-dvīpādhirājatā*

*rājasūya-aśvamedha-ādi*—of the Rājasūya, Aśvamedha, and other sacrifices; *mahā-puṇya*—by the great pious credits; *arjitāḥ*—earned; *tathā*—also; *viṣṇu-loka*—the world of Lord Viṣṇu; *ādayaḥ*—and other spiritual benefits; *atra*—in this world; *api*—even; *jambu-dvīpa-adhirājatā*—rulership of the whole of Jambudvīpa.

**By sacrifices like the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha, he has earned pious credits great enough for attaining the world of Lord Viṣṇu. And while still in this world, he rules the entire sphere of Jambudvīpa.**

Vedic sacrifices usually earn their performers material benefits, up to the attainment of heaven. But because Yudhiṣṭhira conducted the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha sacrifices in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and offered all the fruits to satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the benefits Yudhiṣṭhira derived were transcendental. His engagement in sacrificial rituals only increased his exclusive devotion for Kṛṣṇa. By performing the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha sacrifices, Yudhiṣṭhira earned the privilege to enter Vaikuṇṭha. Included automatically in this privilege was the right to visit the heavenly planet of Indra and every other material planet. The joy of life in Vaikuṇṭha automatically includes all the joys found in Svargaloka and elsewhere. And in addition to these benefits for the next life, Yudhiṣṭhira prospered in this life as well.

त्रैलोक्यव्यापकं स्वच्छं यशश्च विषयाः परे ।

सुराणां स्पृहणीया ये सर्वदोषविवर्जिताः ॥

*trai-lokya-vyāpakam svaccham  
yaśaś ca viṣayāḥ pare  
surāṇām sprhaṇīyā ye  
sarva-doṣa-vivarjitāḥ*

*trai-lokya*—the three worlds; *vyāpakam*—pervading; *svaccham*—pure; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *ca*—and; *viṣayāḥ*—possessions; *pare*—superior; *surāṇām*—by the demigods; *sprhaṇīyāḥ*—desirable; *ye*—which; *sarva-doṣa*—from all faults; *vivarjitāḥ*—free.

His pure fame is known throughout the three worlds. His faultless possessions evoke the envy of the gods.

कृष्णप्रसादजनिताः कृष्ण एव समर्पिताः ।  
नाशकन् कामपि प्रीतिं राज्ञो जनयितुं क्वचित् ॥

*kṛṣṇa-prasāda-janitāḥ  
kṛṣṇa eva samarpitāḥ  
nāśakan kām api prītim  
rājño janayitum kvacit*

*kṛṣṇa-prasāda*—by Kṛṣṇa's mercy; *janitāḥ*—generated; *kṛṣṇe*—to Kṛṣṇa; *eva*—alone; *samarpitāḥ*—offered; *na aśakan*—they have been unable; *kām api*—any at all; *prītim*—pleasure; *rājñaḥ*—for the king; *janayitum*—to engender; *kvacit*—ever.

The king achieved all this opulence by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, and has offered it all to Kṛṣṇa. It never had any power to please him.

Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja had at his command all that a civilized gentleman might like to enjoy in this world. Even the demigods on higher planets could only dream of such opulence. And he not only enjoyed fabulous opulence in this life but could expect still more in the next. Because Yudhiṣṭhira was a pure devotee, even his material riches were faultless. In contrast to the wealth, knowledge, and other assets of

people in this world, his assets were permanent because their source was Śrī Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction rather than the material course of *karma*. When Yudhiṣṭhira offered his assets back to Kṛṣṇa, no possibility remained that they would corrupt him. Those assets, being dedicated to Kṛṣṇa in selfless love, could only further enhance the virtue of Yudhiṣṭhira's character.

कृष्णप्रेमाग्निदन्द्ध्यमानान्तःकरणस्य हि ।  
क्षुदग्निविकलस्येव वासःस्रक्चन्दनादयः ॥

*kṛṣṇa-premāgni-dandahya-  
mānāntaḥ-karaṇasya hi  
kṣud-agni-vikalasyeva  
vāsaḥ-srak-candanādayaḥ*

*kṛṣṇa-prema*—of love for Kṛṣṇa; *agni*—in the fire; *dandahyamāna*—constantly burning; *antaḥ-karaṇasya*—of him whose heart; *hi*—indeed; *kṣut*—of hunger; *agni*—by the fire; *vikalasya*—of one who is troubled; *iva*—as; *vāsaḥ*—fine garments; *srak*—garlands; *candana*—sandalwood pulp; *ādayaḥ*—and so on.

Since his heart always burns in the fire of love for Kṛṣṇa, those garlands, fine garments, and sandalwood pulp attract him no more than they would attract a man afflicted by the fire of hunger.

The slightest touch of pure *prema*, love for Kṛṣṇa, destroys all faults in a devotee. It satisfies the devotee so completely that nothing inferior can divert his attention. To outsiders, the effects of *prema* may seem painful: the devotee seems to burn in torment while separated from the Lord, and even while enjoying the Lord's company he burns in apprehension of separation to come. But in fact *viraha-bhāva*, devotional service in separation, is the highest essence of loving ecstasy. The intimate devotees of Kṛṣṇa in Śrī Vṛndāvana constantly experience *viraha-bhāva*. As Śukadeva Gosvāmī says in describing the fall season in Vṛndāvana:

*āśliṣya sama-śītoṣṇam*

*prasūna-vana-mārutam  
janās tāpaṁ jahur goṇyo  
na kṛṣṇa-hṛta-cetasaḥ*

“Except for the *gopīs*, whose hearts had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, the people could forget their suffering by embracing the wind from the flower-filled forest. This wind was neither hot nor cold.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.20.45) The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana were so intensely absorbed in *viraha-bhāva* that the cool breezes of autumn only increased the burning in their hearts, because this was the time of year when the fever of their hankering to be with Kṛṣṇa reached its peak. Hanumān cites the analogy of a man suffering from hunger: The fire of extreme hunger dries up all the elements of his body, so that he can no longer enjoy the pleasure of clothes or other objects of enjoyment or even the association of family and friends. Possessing worldly things merely adds to his frustration. Only when his hunger is removed will he be relieved of anxiety. Similarly, the *gopīs* can be satisfied only by the company of Kṛṣṇa.

**अहो किमपरे श्रीमद्द्रौपदी महिषीवरा ।  
तादृशा भ्रातरः श्रीमद्भीमसेनार्जुनादयः ॥**

*aho kim apare śrīmad-  
draupadī mahiṣī-varā  
tādṛśā bhrātaraḥ śrīmad-  
bhīmasenārjunādayaḥ*

*aho*—just see; *kim*—what to speak of; *apare*—others; *śrīmat-draupadī*—the blessed Draupadī; *mahiṣī*—royal consort; *varā*—the best; *tādṛśāḥ*—such; *bhrātaraḥ*—brothers; *śrīmat-bhīmasena*—the blessed Bhīmasena; *arjuna*—Arjuna; *ādayaḥ*—and so on.

**Just see, his superlative queen is none other than Śrīmatī Draupadī, and his brothers are such men as the blessed Bhīmasena and Arjuna.**

**न प्रिया देहसम्बन्धान् न चतुर्वर्गसाधनात् ।  
परं श्रीकृष्णपादाब्जप्रेमसम्बन्धतः प्रियाः ॥**

na priyā deha-sambandhān  
na catur-varga-sāadhanāt  
param śrī-kṛṣṇa-pādābja-  
prema-sambandhataḥ priyāḥ

na—not; priyāḥ—dear; deha-sambandhāt—because of bodily connection; na—nor; catuḥ-varga—of the four goals of material life; sāadhanāt—because of being means of achieving; param—rather; śrī-kṛṣṇa—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; pāda-abja—to the lotus feet; prema—of love; sambandhataḥ—because of the connection; priyāḥ—dear.

**They are dear to him not because of bodily ties or because they help him reach the four goals of material life but because of their loving bond with the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.**

It is true that Yudhiṣṭhira was very much attached to his brothers and wife, but that attachment was not material. It was based not on identification with material bodies, but on the pure spiritual identities of him and his family as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīmatī Draupadī was the most excellent queen any emperor could have, and she was empowered with the beauty and other transcendental qualities of Lord Viṣṇu's consort, Lakṣmīdevī. But Yudhiṣṭhira's affection for her was not due to being attracted by these qualities. He was completely immune to such attraction. Yudhiṣṭhira's brothers and wife also offered him valuable assistance in fulfilling his responsibilities for *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. These four material aims of life, however, were also powerless to distract him from his attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. He cherished his connection with Bhīma, his other brothers, and Draupadī only because they had pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa.

Anything or anyone associated with Kṛṣṇa is dear to a pure Vaiṣṇava. So when Vaiṣṇavas come together in either casual or lifetime relationships, they naturally develop love for one another. They relish great pleasure tasting together the *rasas* of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Their spiritual assets expand as each devotee's good qualities magnify those of his or her spiritual companions. In the family of the Pāṇḍavas, the wife and younger brothers especially benefited from following the lead of Yudhiṣṭhira.

वानरेण मया तेषां निर्वक्तुं शक्यते कियत् ।  
माहात्म्यं भगवन् वेत्ति भवानेवाधिकाधिकम् ॥

*vānareṇa mayā teṣāṃ  
nirvaktum śakyate kiyat  
māhātmyaṃ bhagavan veti  
bhavān evādhikādhikam*

*vānareṇa*—by a monkey; *mayā*—me; *teṣāṃ*—about them; *nirvaktum*—to be said; *śakyate*—is possible; *kiyat*—how much; *māhātmyam*—glories; *bhagavan*—Your Lordship; *veti*—knows; *bhavān*—you; *eva*—indeed; *adhika-adhikam*—much more.

**But what can a forest monkey like me say about the Pāṇḍavas? Your Lordship already knows much more than I about their glories.**

Hanumān is not actually the subhuman creature he presents himself to be. He speaks in this way only from deep humility. By calling Nārada *bhagavān*, the best of spiritual masters, virtually equal to God, he acknowledges that Nārada already knows very well the greatness of the Pāṇḍavas. So Hanumān suggests that Nārada, rather than spend more time listening to him, should at once proceed to the kingdom of the Kurus.

*Thus ends the fourth chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled "Bhakta: The Devotee."*

## 5. Priya: The Beloved

The Pāṇḍavas greet Nārada

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तत्र श्रीनारदो हर्षभराक्रान्तः सनर्तनम् ।  
कुरुदेशं गतो धावन् राजधान्यां प्रविष्टवान् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tatra śrī-nārado harṣa-*  
*bharākrāntaḥ sa-nartanam*  
*kuru-deśam gato dhāvan*  
*rājadhānyām praviṣṭavān*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tatra*—there; *śrī-nāradaḥ*—Śrī Nārada; *harṣa-bhara*—by an excess of joy; *ākrāntaḥ*—overcome; *sa-nartanam*—while dancing; *kuru-deśam*—to the kingdom of the Kurus; *gataḥ*—went; *dhāvan*—running; *rājadhānyām*—the capital city; *praviṣṭavān*—entered.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Śrī Nārada, beside himself with joy, arrived dancing at the kingdom of the Kurus and raced into their capital city.**

In this chapter the Pāṇḍavas refute Nārada's glorification of them by instead glorifying the Yadus, especially Uddhava.

After the annihilation of Duryodhana's army at Kurukṣetra, Yudhiṣṭhira assumed his rightful throne and began ruling at Hastināpura. Thus Nārada went to Hastināpura to see the Pāṇḍavas.

तावत्कस्यापि यागस्य विपत्पातस्य वा मिषात् ।  
कृष्णमानाय्य पश्याम इति मन्त्रयता स्वकैः ॥

धर्मराजेन तं द्वारि तथा प्राप्तं महामुनिम् ।  
निशम्य भ्रातृभिर्मात्रा पत्नीभिश्च सहोत्थितम् ॥

*tāvat kasyāpi yāgasya*  
*vipat-pātasya vā miṣāt*  
*kṛṣṇam ānāyya paśyāma*



*iti mantrayatā svakaiḥ*

*dharmarājena taṁ dvāri  
tathā prāptam mahā-munim  
niśamya bhrātṛbhir mātṛā  
patnībhiś ca sahotthitam*

*tāvat*—just then; *kasya api*—one or another; *yāgasya*—of a sacrifice; *vipat-pātasya*—calamity; *vā*—or; *miṣāt*—on the pretext; *kṛṣṇam*—Kṛṣṇa; *ānāyya*—bringing; *paśyāmaḥ*—we shall see; *iti*—thus; *mantrayatā*—who was consulting; *svakaiḥ*—with his associates; *dharmarājena*—by Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira; *taṁ*—him; *dvāri*—at the door; *tathā*—and; *prāptam*—obtained; *mahā-munim*—the great sage; *niśamya*—seeing; *bhrātṛbhiḥ*—with his brothers; *mātṛā*—with his mother; *patnībhiḥ*—with his wives; *ca*—and; *saha*—together; *utthitam*—stood up.

**Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira was just then consulting his inner circle about how to see Kṛṣṇa by bringing Him on the pretext of some sacrifice or calamity. When the king heard that the great sage was at the door, he at once stood up with his brothers, mother, and wives.**

When Nārada arrived dancing at the palace gate, the doorkeepers immediately informed King Yudhiṣṭhira. The king and his family at once stood up to greet Nārada, even though they had been busy deliberating on how to induce Kṛṣṇa to come to Hastināpura. One idea had been to send Bhīma or someone else to invite Kṛṣṇa to an Aśvamedha sacrifice, but the assembly thought this wouldn't make Kṛṣṇa come soon enough, because sacrifices take a long time to arrange. A second proposal was to ask Kṛṣṇa to help defend Hastināpura from enemy attack. Even though there was no need for another sacrifice and no threat of attack on the city, the Pāṇḍavas were scheming to get Kṛṣṇa's association by whatever means. In general, the Supreme Lord's devotees encounter two kinds of danger, one created by the Lord to proclaim His devotees' glories, the other simulated by the Lord's devotees when they are intensely anxious to see Him.

**ससम्भ्रमं धावता तु सोऽभिगम्य प्रणम्य च ।**

## सभामानीय सत्पीठे प्रयत्नादुपवेशितः ॥

*sa sambhramam dhāvatā tu  
so 'bhigamya praṇamya ca  
sabhām ānīya sat-pīṭhe  
prayatnād upaveśitaḥ*

*sa-sambhramam*—eagerly; *dhāvatā*—as he (Yudhiṣṭhira) was rushing; *tu*—but; *saḥ*—he (Nārada); *abhigamya*—coming close; *praṇamya*—bowing down; *ca*—and; *sabhām*—to the assembly hall; *ānīya*—being brought; *sat-pīṭhe*—on a seat of honor; *prayatnāt*—with endeavor; *upaveśitaḥ*—made to sit.

As Yudhiṣṭhira eagerly rushed forward to meet him, Nārada came close and bowed down. Yudhiṣṭhira brought him into the assembly hall and with some effort made him accept a seat of honor.

Nārada praises Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas

## राज्ञा पूजार्थमानीतैः पूर्ववद् द्रव्यसञ्चयैः । मातस्त्वच्छ्वशुरानेव सभृत्यानार्चयत्स तान् ॥

*rājñā pūjārtham ānītaiḥ  
pūrva-vad dravya-sañcayaiḥ  
mātas tvac-chvaśurān eva  
sa-bhṛtyān ārcayat sa tān*

*rājñā*—by the king; *pūjā-artham*—for performing worship; *ānītaiḥ*—brought; *pūrva-vat*—as done before; *dravya-sañcayaiḥ*—with the collected items; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *tvac*—your; *śvaśurān*—fathers-in-law; *eva*—indeed; *sa-bhṛtyān*—with their servants; *ārcayat*—worshiped; *saḥ*—he; *tān*—them.

As others had done before, dear mother, the king brought a large

assortment of items for worshipping Nārada. But Nārada took those items and instead worshiped your fathers-in-law and their servants.

Before the Pāṇḍavas could reach Nārada at the door, the sage had already come close and offered his prostrate obeisances. Yudhiṣṭhira then at once arranged for paraphernalia for worship of Nārada. Although other devotees, like Prahlāda, had also tried to worship Nārada, Yudhiṣṭhira had the means to offer the opulence of royal worship. But as soon as Yudhiṣṭhira began the worship, Nārada stopped him, seized the items, and used them to worship the entire Pāṇḍava household, including the servants. Parīkṣit Mahārāja's mother, being a close relative of the Pāṇḍavas, could feel special pride in hearing this account.

हनूमद्गदितं तेषु कृष्णानुग्रहवैभवम् ।  
मुहुः सङ्कीर्तयामास वीणागीतविभूषितम् ॥

*hanūmad-gaditam teṣu  
kṛṣṇānugraha-vaibhavam  
muhuh saṅkīrtayām āsa  
vīṇā-gīta-vibhūṣitam*

*hanūmat-gaditam*—spoken by Hanumān; *teṣu*—upon them; *kṛṣṇa-anugraha*—of Kṛṣṇa's favor; *vaibhavam*—the precious treasure; *muhuh*—extensively; *saṅkīrtayām āsa*—he glorified; *vīṇā-gīta*—by the music of his *vīṇā*; *vibhūṣitam*—accompanied.

Nārada chanted at length the glories of the precious treasure of which Hanumān had spoken—Kṛṣṇa's favor on the Pāṇḍavas. Nārada accompanied his words by playing his *vīṇā*.

Kṛṣṇa's favor towards the Pāṇḍavas, like a vast treasure of material wealth, was precious and too extensive to measure. Nārada sang the glories of the Pāṇḍavas in a sweet voice, embellishing the verses of his song with accompaniment from his musical instrument, the *vīṇā*.

श्रीनारद उवाच

यूयं नृलोके बत भूरिभागा  
येषां प्रियोऽसौ जगदीश्वरेशः ।  
देवो गुरुर्बन्धुषु मातुलेयो  
दूतः सुहृत्सारथिरुक्तितन्त्रः ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*yūyam nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā*  
*yeṣāṁ priyo 'sau jagad-īśvareśaḥ*  
*devo gurur bandhuṣu mātuleyo*  
*dūtaḥ suhṛt sārathir ukti-tantraḥ*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *yūyam*—you; *nṛ-loke*—on the earth; *bata*—indeed; *bhūri-bhāgāḥ*—the most fortunate; *yeṣāṁ*—whose; *priyaḥ*—dear friend; *asau*—He; *jagat*—of the universe; *īśvara-īśaḥ*—the Lord of lords; *devaḥ*—God; *guruḥ*—spiritual master; *bandhuṣu*—among blood relations; *mātuleyaḥ*—maternal cousin; *dūtaḥ*—messenger; *suhṛt*—well-wisher; *sārathiḥ*—chariot driver; *ukti-tantraḥ*—order carrier.

**Śrī Nārada said: You are indeed the most fortunate persons on earth! The Lord of all lords of the universe is your dearest friend. He is your God, your spiritual master, your blood relation, your maternal cousin. He is your messenger, well-wisher, order carrier, and charioteer.**

In texts <sup>vi</sup>7 through 44, Nārada tells of Kṛṣṇa's special grace on the Pāṇḍavas. He begins in this verse by indicating the various ways the Pāṇḍavas enjoyed personal association with Kṛṣṇa. Because of these manifold relationships with Kṛṣṇa, the Pāṇḍavas should be considered the most fortunate Vaiṣṇavas on earth. This world of human beings is actually the most suitable place to cultivate pure devotion for Kṛṣṇa. On higher planets like Svarga-loka greater power and sense gratification are easily to be had, but such material resources, though attractive to conditioned souls, are obstacles to renunciation and pure devotion. The Pāṇḍavas are fortunate, therefore, to be with Kṛṣṇa in His descent upon earth.

The Pāṇḍavas' good fortune is *bhūri*, virtually unlimited. The word

*bhāga* means “good fortune” (*bhāgadheyam*), and it also means “worship” (*bhajanam*). In this second sense, *bhūri-bhāgāḥ* means that the Pāṇḍavas’ worship of Kṛṣṇa is exceptionally exalted. Another meaning of *bhāga* is “part.” The Pāṇḍavas enjoy a small share of the Supreme Lord’s special favor, since the Lord has many other devotees besides them, but even that small part of His favor is great beyond measure.

Although the Pāṇḍavas are richly endowed with love and compassion for one another and for all creatures, the prime focus of their love and affection is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. The Pāṇḍavas are exceptionally fortunate because the same Kṛṣṇa who is the sole object of their love is the supreme controller of the lords of the universe — Brahmā, Rudra, and the other demigods. The Pāṇḍavas not only love Kṛṣṇa as their friend but also worship Him as their eternal master and protector. He is their spiritual master, guiding them in all matters of life. He becomes one of their family members, specically on their mother’s side; Kuntī, the Pāṇḍavas’ mother, is the sister of Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa’s father, both of them being children of King Śūrasena. And maternal cousins are normally affectionate to one another.

Kṛṣṇa sometimes becomes the Pāṇḍavas’ messenger. For example, they once sent Him to Hastināpura from the city of Upaplava in the kingdom of Virāṭa to convey a message to Duryodhana’s court. Kṛṣṇa is also the Pāṇḍavas’ well-wisher (*suhṛt*), their unmotivated benefactor who never expects any reward for His services. And sometimes He drives Arjuna’s chariot, as He did during the Battle of Kurukṣetra. Arjuna said, *senayor ubhayor madhye/ ratham sthāpaya me ’cyuta*: “O Acyuta, please draw up my chariot in the midst of both armies.” (Bg 1.21)

On such occasions Kṛṣṇa obeys the Pāṇḍavas’ orders without question. Thus Kṛṣṇa is called *ukti-tantra*, subordinate to the words of His pure devotees. In a broader sense, also, all of Kṛṣṇa’s dealings with the Pāṇḍavas display His eagerness to submit Himself to their control. He readily agrees to whatever they wish Him to do. This implies the other ways Hanumān had mentioned to Nārada that Kṛṣṇa helps the Pāṇḍavas — His standing guard for them at night and so on. *Ukti-tantra* is also a polite synonym for the word *sevaka* (“servant”), which Nārada may have considered an unsuitably discourteous word for describing

Lord Kṛṣṇa.

All these relationships between Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are pervaded by intimate affection. For the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa is the eternal object of worship, but more than that He is their eternal friend. Arjuna and his brothers also worship demigods like Lord Śiva and spiritual masters like Droṇa, but the Pāṇḍavas' worship of Kṛṣṇa is unique because it comes forth from unalloyed *prema*.

यो ब्रह्मरुद्रादिसमाधिदुर्लभो  
वेदोक्तितात्पर्यविशेषगोचरः ।  
श्रीमान्नृसिंहः किल वामनश्च  
श्रीराघवेन्द्रोऽपि यदंशरूपः ॥

yo brahma-rudrādi-samādhi-durlabho  
vedokti-tātparya-viśeṣa-gocaraḥ  
śrīmān nṛsimhaḥ kila vāmanaś ca  
śrī-rāghavendro 'pi yad-aṁśa-rūpaḥ

yaḥ—who; *brahma-rudra-ādi*—of Brahmā, Rudra, and others; *samādhi*—in the advanced meditation; *durlabhaḥ*—difficult to realize; *veda-ukti*—of the statements of the *Vedas*; *tātparya*—by the purport; *viśeṣa*—special; *gocaraḥ*—who can be perceived; *śrīmān nṛsimhaḥ*—Śrīmān Nṛsimha; *kila*—indeed; *vāmanaḥ*—Śrī Vāmana; *ca*—and; *śrī-rāghavendraḥ*—Śrī Rāghavendra (Rāmacandra); *api*—also; *yat*—whose; *aṁśa-rūpaḥ*—plenary expansion.

For Brahmā, Rudra, and other demigods He is difficult to realize even in advanced meditation. He can be known through the words of the *Vedas* only when one understands their special purport. Śrīmān Nṛsimha, Śrī Vāmana, and Śrī Rāghavendra are His plenary expansions.

The supremely charming transcendental person Śrī Kṛṣṇa is difficult to understand. Great demigods may know His supremacy theoretically, but they cannot begin to taste *kṛṣṇa-prema*. All Vedic texts are ultimately descriptions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, yet His all-attractive charm is not

obvious in the literal meaning of the Vedic *mantras* nor in their ritualistic explanations. One must discover the secret purport of the *Vedas*, which is possible only by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees. *Jñānīs* follow the process of *atan-nirasana*, negating all inessential concepts, to find the Supreme gradually in His impersonal feature; but to obtain a more confidential understanding of the Personality of Godhead this *neti neti* method is inadequate.

Vaiṣṇavas adore the Supreme Brahman in various aspects of His personality. They worship Him at different times as the *avatāras* Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Rāmacandra, and so on. Each Vaiṣṇava has his own favorite form of the Lord, his *iṣṭa-deva*. Even though Lord Nṛsimha is frightening and prone to anger, He has many devotees, who constantly remember how He cared for Prahlāda and protected him from all dangers. Lord Vāmana is also popular even though a dwarf; His devotees remember how He covered the universe with three steps and displayed His universal form to Bali. Countless devotees for millions of years have revered Lord Rāmacandra, remembering His example as a perfect monarch. But the attraction of each of these *avatāras* is but a reflection of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supreme attractiveness. All the *avatāras* of Godhead, finally, are His partial expansions. Each of them is the absolutely potent Supreme Person, but none of them exhibits all the aspects of His potency. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests completely the glories of God.

By the word *kila* ("indeed") Nārada indicates that Kṛṣṇa's primacy among the forms of Godhead is a well-known fact, established by scripture. In particular, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28) declares:

*ete cāmśa-kalāḥ pumsaḥ*  
*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*

"These *avatāras* are all parts, and parts of parts, of the Supreme Person, but Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead."

Kṛṣṇa is superior to Lord Nṛsimha, Lord Vāmana, and Lord Rāghavendra, and therefore the Pāṇḍavas are superior to Śrī Prahlāda, Bali, and Hanumān.

अन्येऽवताराश्च यदंशलेशतो  
ब्रह्मादयो यस्य विभूतयो मताः ।  
माया च यस्येक्षणवर्त्मवर्तिनी  
दासी जगत्सृष्ट्यवनान्तकारिणी ॥

*anye 'vatārāś ca yad-amśa-leśato  
brahmādayo yasya vibhūtayo matāḥ  
māyā ca yasyekṣaṇa-vartma-vartinī  
dāsī jagat-sṛṣṭy-avanānta-kāriṇī*

*anye—other; avatārāḥ—incarnations; ca—and; yat—whose; amśa—of plenary portions; leśataḥ—as mere sparks; brahma-ādayaḥ—Brahmā and so on; yasya—whose; vibhūtayaḥ—material opulences; matāḥ—considered; māyā—material nature; ca—and; yasya—whose; īkṣaṇa—of the glance; vartma—on the path; vartinī—standing; dāsī—a maidservant; jagat—of the universe; sṛṣṭi—of the creation; avana—protection; anta—and destruction; kāriṇī—the doer.*

**All other incarnations of Godhead expand from mere portions of His plenary portions. Great gods like Brahmā are considered His material opulences. And material nature is His maidservant. Standing always in view ready to serve Him, she enacts the creation, protection, and destruction of the universe.**

Incarnations like Matsya and Kūrma manifest Kṛṣṇa's potency less than fully, those like Pṛthu Mahārāja are *jīvas* empowered by small sparks of His splendor, and Brahmā and the other demigods are material reflections of Kṛṣṇa's creative powers. Authorities on the Vedic scriptures generally do not label as pastime incarnations the demigods and other material *vibhūtis* of Kṛṣṇa. Their reasoning is that the Lord's pastime of creating the material universe is not on the same transcendental level as His personal pleasure pastimes, in which He reciprocates with loving devotees like Prahlāda and Hanumān. Brahmā explains this to Nārada in the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.6.43–46):



*aham bhavo yajña ime prajeśā  
dakṣādayo ye bhavad-ādayaś ca  
svar-loka-pālāḥ khaga-loka-pālā  
nṛ-loka-pālās tala-loka-pālāḥ*

*gandharva-vidyādhara-cāraṇeśā  
ye yakṣa-rakṣoraga-nāga-nāthāḥ  
ye vā ṛṣiṇām ṛṣabhāḥ pitṛṇām  
daityendra-siddheśvara-dānavendrāḥ  
anye ca ye preta-piśāca-bhūta-  
kūṣmāṇḍa-yādo-mṛga-pakṣy-adhīśāḥ*

*yat kiñca loke bhagavan mahasvad  
ojaḥ-sahasvad balavat kṣamāvat  
śrī-hrī-vibhūty-ātmavad adbhutārṇam  
tattvaṁ param rūpavad asvarūpam*

“Whether in form or formless, any being in the material world exceptionally possessed of strength, power, beauty, riches, breeding, modesty, forgiveness, or mental and perceptual dexterity may appear to be the specific truth and the form of the Lord, but actually is not so. This applies to me [Brahmā], Lord Śiva, Lord Viṣṇu, and great generators of living beings like Dakṣa and Prajāpati. It applies to you [Nārada and the Kumāras] and to heavenly demigods like Indra and Candṛa. It applies to the leaders of the Bhūrloka planets, the earthly planets, the lower planets, and the Gandharva, Vidyādhara, and Cāraṇa planets. It applies to the leaders of the Yakṣas, Rakṣas, and Uragas. And it applies to the great sages, the great demons, the great atheists, and the great spacemen, as well as to the dead bodies, evil spirits, satans, jinn, Kūṣmāṇḍas, great aquatics, great beasts, and great birds. They are only fragments of the transcendental potency of the Lord.

*prādhānyato yān ṛṣa āmananti  
līlavatārāṇ puruṣasya bhūmnaḥ*

*āpīyatām karṇa-kaṣāya-śoṣān  
anukramiṣye ta imān su-pekṣān*

“O Nārada, now I shall state, one after another, the transcendental incarnations of the Lord known as *līlā-avatāras*. Hearing of their activities counteracts all foul matters accumulated in the ear. These pastimes are pleasing to hear and are to be relished. Therefore they are in my heart.”

Commenting on these verses of the Second Canto, Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that many opulent expansions of the Supreme Person exist in this world and each of them displays part of the Supreme Lord’s potency. Some display great *mahas* (physical strength), others display *ojas* (sensory strength), and yet others display *sahas* (mental power), *bala* (steadfastness), *śrī* (beauty), *hrī* (avoidance of karmic entanglement), *vibhūti* (wealth), *ātmā* (intelligence), or *adbhuta-arṇa* (amazing effulgence).

Brahmā mentions the *guṇa-avatāras* (himself, Viṣṇu, and Śiva) among the material opulences of the Supreme Person, in the same way that Kṛṣṇa does in the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. But starting with the verse beginning *prādhānyato yān*, Brahmā separately describes the transcendental pastime incarnations of the Lord. Brahmā enumerates only the most prominent of these *līlā-avatāras*, because there are many lesser-known pastime *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, more than could ever be listed. As Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī states:

*avatārā hy asaṅkhyeyā  
hareḥ sattva-nidher dvijāḥ  
yathāvidāsinaḥ kulyāḥ  
sarasaḥ syuḥ sahasraśaḥ*

“O *brāhmaṇas*, the incarnations of the Lord are innumerable, like rivulets flowing from inexhaustible sources of water.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.3.26) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *sattva-nidhi*, the original source of all *sattva*, which Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī defines here as “compassion.” The Lord expresses this compassion by descending to the material world in numerous forms, which are all secondary “rivulets” flowing from Him,

their “inexhaustible source.”

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are incarnations of the Personality of Godhead for ruling the modes of nature; the three Lords are not mere material opulences. But because Brahmā and Śiva take the role of devotees and work as preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are sometimes counted among Kṛṣṇa’s *vibhūti*s. Lord Viṣṇu appears from time to time as the companion of Brahmā and Śiva, and therefore He also is sometimes described as a material *vibhūti* of the Supreme. For example, Lord Viṣṇu incarnates in each *manvantara* in His forms of Yajña and so on. Strictly speaking, Yajña and the other *manvantara-avatāras* are pastime incarnations, but they are also considered *vibhūti*s because they collaborate with Brahmā and Śiva to uphold the reigns of the various Manus and because they sometimes accept the post of Indra.

All the incarnations and *vibhūti*s of the Supreme Lord have their source in Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Māyā, the controller of material existence, cannot have an intimate loving relationship with Him but must constantly attend Him as a maidservant. She appears prior to the *guṇa-avatāras*, and she is the creator, maintainer, and destroyer of the universe. Thus Brahmā and Śiva, being subordinate to her, are humbly situated as servants of the servant of the Personality of Godhead.

यस्य प्रसादं धरणीविलापतः  
क्षीरोदतीरे व्रतनिष्ठया स्थिताः ।  
ब्रह्मादयः कञ्चन नालभन्त  
स्तुत्वाप्युपस्थानपराः समाहिताः ॥

yasya prasādam dharaṇī-vilāpataḥ  
kṣīroda-tīre vrata-niṣṭhayā sthitāḥ  
brahmādayaḥ kañcana nālabhanta  
stutvāpy upasthāna-parāḥ samāhitāḥ

yasya—whose; prasādam—favor; dharaṇī—of Mother Earth; vilāpataḥ—because of the lamenting; kṣīra-uda—of the Milk Ocean; tīre—on the shore; vrata—of vows; niṣṭhayā—with strict observance; sthitāḥ—

standing; *brahma-ādayaḥ*—Brahmā and the other demigods; *kañcana*—any; *na alabhanta*—could not obtain; *stutvā*—reciting prayers; *api*—although; *upasthāna*—in worshiping; *parāḥ*—absorbed; *samāhitāḥ*—with complete concentration.

**When Brahmā and other demigods responded to the lamenting Mother Earth, together they all stood on the shore of the Milk Ocean, observing strict vows. They recited prayers and worshiped the Supreme Lord, meditating with full concentration. Nonetheless, they were unable to obtain His favor.**

At the end of Dvāpara-yuga, when armies of godless kings burdened the earth, the rulers of the universe found out for themselves that the Supreme Person cannot be easily seen by focusing the heart's attention in yogic *samādhi*. To relieve Mother Earth of her distress, the demigods accepted severe vows, restricting their eating and even their breathing to sharpen their mental concentration. They then approached the shore of the Ocean of Milk, which surrounds the island on which Lord Kṣīrodaka-śāyī Viṣṇu resides. They recited the *Puruṣa-sūkta* and other Vedic prayers for His pleasure and tried to fix their external and internal senses on Him. But after all this, they obtained no sign of His satisfaction—not a single word or gesture to reassure them. From this experience, recorded in the Tenth Canto, first chapter, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the demigods learned that mechanical meditation is not an effective means for achieving personal association with the Supreme Lord.

**ब्रह्मणैव समाधौ खे जातामधिगतां हृदि ।  
यस्य प्रकाश्य तामाज्ञां सुखिता निखिलाः सुराः ॥**

*brahmaṇaiva samādhau khe  
jātām adhigatām hṛdi  
yasya prakāśya tām ājñām  
sukhitā nikhilāḥ surāḥ*

*brahmaṇā*—by Brahmā; *eva*—only; *samādhau*—in trance; *khe*—in the

sky; *jātām*—generated; *adhigatām*—perceived; *hṛdi*—in his heart; *yasya*—whose; *prakāśya*—manifesting; *tām*—that; *ājñām*—command; *sukhitāḥ*—satisfied; *nikhilāḥ*—all; *surāḥ*—the demigods.

**Brahmā then perceived in his heart the Lord’s command, which he heard as an unembodied voice in the sky. He repeated that command to the demigods, and they all became satisfied.**

Because sincere worship of the Personality of Godhead never goes in vain, the demigods did receive their answer. But because their worship was formal and reverential the Lord chose not to answer them in person. He wanted to remind them that official worship alone does not satisfy Him. Brahmā received the Lord’s order, but only in the core of his heart and after he had carefully withdrawn all the external functions of his senses and mind. Furthermore, he was able to hear the order only as a voice in the sky from an unseen speaker. What Brahmā heard in his meditation and repeated to the demigods is now famous. Lord Brahmā said:

*puraiva puṁsāvadhṛto dharā-jvaro  
bhavadbhir aṁśair yaduṣūpajanyatām  
sa yāvad urvyā bharam īśvareśvaraḥ  
sva-kāla-śaktyā kṣapayaṁś cared bhuvi*

“Before we submitted our petition to the Lord, He was already aware of the distress on earth. Consequently, for as long as the Lord moves on earth to diminish its burden by His own potency in the form of time, all of you demigods should appear through plenary portions as sons and grandsons in the family of the Yadus.

*vasudeva-gr̥he sākṣād  
bhagavān puruṣaḥ paraḥ  
janiṣyate tat-priyārtham  
sambhavantv amara-striyaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has full potency, will personally appear as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore all the

wives of the demigods should also appear in order to satisfy Him.

*vāsudeva-kalānantaḥ  
sahasra-vadanaḥ sva-rāṭ  
agrato bhavitā devo  
hareḥ priya-cikīrṣayā*

“The foremost manifestation of Kṛṣṇa is Saṅkarṣaṇa, who is known as Ananta. He is the origin of all incarnations within this material world. Previous to the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa, this original Saṅkarṣaṇa will appear as Baladeva, just to please the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in His transcendental pastimes.

*viṣṇor māyā bhagavatī  
yayā sammohitaṁ jagat  
ādiṣṭā prabhuṇāṁśena  
kāryārthe sambhaviṣyati*

“The potency of the Lord, known as Viṣṇu-māyā, who is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will also appear with Lord Kṛṣṇa. This potency, acting in different capacities, captivates all the worlds, both material and spiritual. At the request of her master, she will appear with her different potencies in order to execute the work of the Lord.” (Bhāgavatam 10.1.22–25)

कस्मिन्नपि प्राज्ञवरैर्विविक्ते  
गर्गादिभिर्यो निभृतं प्रकाश्यते ।  
नारायणोऽसौ भगवाननेन  
साम्यं कथञ्चिद्भुते न चापरः ॥

*kasminn api prājña-varair vivikte  
gargādibhir yo nibhṛtaṁ prakāśyate  
nārāyaṇo 'sau bhagavān anena  
sāmyaṁ kathañcil labhate na cāparaḥ*

*kasmin*—in some place; *api*—only; *prājña*—of wise men; *varaiḥ*—by the

most excellent; *vivikte*—secluded; *garga-ādibhiḥ*—by Garga and others; *yaḥ*—who; *nibhṛtam*—privately; *prakāśyate*—is divulged; *nārāyaṇaḥ*—Nārāyaṇa; *asau*—He; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *anena*—with Him; *sāmyam*—equal; *kathañcit*—in some aspects; *labhate na*—cannot be found; *ca*—and; *aparaḥ*—another.

Only in some confidential meetings did wise sages like Garga divulge who Kṛṣṇa really is: He whom the Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa only partly equals, no one else even coming close.

अतः श्रीमधुपुर्यां यो दीर्घविष्णुरिति श्रुतः ।  
महाहरिर्महाविष्णुर्महानारायणोऽपि च ॥

*ataḥ śrī-madhu-puryām yo*  
*dīrgha-viṣṇur iti śrutaḥ*  
*mahā-harir mahā-viṣṇur*  
*mahā-nārāyaṇo 'pi ca*

*ataḥ*—thus; *śrī-madhu-puryām*—in Śrī Mathurā City; *yaḥ*—who; *dīrgha-viṣṇuḥ*—Dīrgha Viṣṇu; *iti*—thus; *śrutaḥ*—heard of; *mahā-hariḥ*—Mahā-hari; *mahā-viṣṇuḥ*—Mahā-viṣṇu; *mahā-nārāyaṇaḥ*—Mahā-nārāyaṇa; *api ca*—also.

Thus we hear of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's presence in Mathurā City as the Deity called Dīrgha Viṣṇu, Mahā-hari, Mahā-viṣṇu, and Mahā-nārāyaṇa.

We should not surmise that when Kṛṣṇa appeared in response to the request of the demigods He did so only as another *avatāra* of Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the original Godhead, superior to Nārāyaṇa, and Kṛṣṇa's devotees like the Pāṇḍavas are superior to Nārāyaṇa's devotees, including Garuḍa and the Lord's other attendants in Vaikuṇṭha.

Nārada mentions that Garga Muni revealed Kṛṣṇa's identity "in some confidential meetings." Nārada prefers not to mention that these meetings had been with Nanda Mahārāja; Nanda's position as a recipient of Kṛṣṇa's mercy is so advanced that his name should not be mentioned until later, when the discussion reaches a higher level.

Garga Muni only tactfully alluded to Kṛṣṇa's supremacy. He said that Kṛṣṇa and the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa are equal in some ways. These words imply that although Nārāyaṇa is like Kṛṣṇa in the sense of also being the source of all incarnations and having a divine body, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha is not equal to Kṛṣṇa in all respects.

Garga referred to Lord Nārāyaṇa as *bhagavān*, and according to Parāśara Ṛṣi's definition *bhagavān* refers to that person who fully possesses all authority, strength, fame, opulence, knowledge, and renunciation. *Nārāyaṇa* means the Personality of Godhead who casts His merciful glance (*ayate*) on the multitude of living beings (*nāra*). By this glance He bestows the potencies of knowledge and action, thus engaging the *jīvas* in useful and sanctifying activities. Only Lord Nārāyaṇa equals Kṛṣṇa in some respects; the secondary expansions of Godhead do not even begin to equal Kṛṣṇa.

The creative Puruṣa form of Viṣṇu is glorified as the source of all *avatāras*:

*etan nānāvatārāṇām  
nidhānam bījam avyayam*

“This Puruṣa is the source and indestructible seed of multifarious incarnations within the universe.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.3.5) But in spite of belonging to the exclusive category of *avatārī* (“source of incarnations”), the Puruṣa Viṣṇu does not display all-attractive, supremely sweet pleasure pastimes like Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Only Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha exhibits personal pastimes somewhat resembling Kṛṣṇa's, but these *līlās* of Vaikuṇṭha cannot match the charm and intimacy of Kṛṣṇa's sports in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

As we read in the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (10.8.19), Garga Muni specifically told Nanda Mahārāja:

*tasmān nandātmajo 'yaṁ te  
nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ  
śrīyā kīrtyānubhāvena  
gopāyasva samāhitaiḥ*



“O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is therefore as good as Nārāyaṇa. In His transcendental qualities, opulence, name, fame, and influence, He is exactly like Nārāyaṇa. You should all raise this child very carefully and cautiously.” The real meaning of Garga’s words is hidden: Nārāyaṇa is similar to Kṛṣṇa in the qualities that define the status of God, but He does not share the unbounded sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s appearance and attire, His pastimes, and so on. Outwardly Garga encourages Nanda to take great care in raising and protecting Kṛṣṇa, but secretly the word *gopa-āya-sva* has another interpretation: Because of Kṛṣṇa there will be a constant increase (*āya*) of the cowherds’ ecstatic love, and also because of Him all their desires and needs (*sva*) will be fulfilled.

यस्य प्रसादः सन्मौनशान्तिभक्त्यादिसाधनैः ।  
 प्रार्थ्यो नः स स्वयं वोऽभूत्प्रसन्नो वशवर्त्यपि ॥

*yasya prasādaḥ san-mauna-  
 śānti-bhakti-ādi-sādhanaḥ  
 prārthyo naḥ sa svayaṁ vo 'bhūt  
 prasanno vaśa-varty api*

*yasya*—whose; *prasādaḥ*—satisfaction; *sat*—first-class; *mauna*—by silence; *śānti*—peacefulness; *bhakti*—devotion; *ādi*—and so on; *sādhanaḥ*—by these disciplines; *prārthyāḥ*—prayed for; *naḥ*—by us; *saḥ*—that (satisfaction); *svayaṁ*—automatically; *vaḥ*—for you; *abhūt*—arose; *prasannaḥ*—satisfied; *vaśa-vartī*—submitting to control; *api*—even.

**We can only pray to satisfy Him through our disciplines of silence, peace, and devotion. But being naturally satisfied with you, He has even submitted Himself to your control.**

Comparing the Pāṇḍavas with world-renowned sages like himself, Nārada finds the Pāṇḍavas greater. Nārada and other great sages worship the Supreme Lord with serious intent. They are self-satisfied, free from material entanglement, and strict in their execution of the

nine kinds of devotional practice. But by all their proper *sādhana*, self-controlled sages can only hope to obtain the Lord's mercy in the distant future. Even though Nārada is in fact a first-class Vaiṣṇava, he humbly includes himself among impersonalist sages who have not yet received the Supreme Lord's mercy.

The Pāṇḍavas, however, have gained Kṛṣṇa's favor without having undergone spiritual disciplines. So strong and spontaneous is their love for Kṛṣṇa that He falls under its sway, obeying His devotees' commands like a menial servant. As described in the Seventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, during one visit to Hastināpura Nārada discussed this at length with Yudhiṣṭhira while telling him the history of Prahlāda. At the end of this narration, Nārada assured Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers that they were no less exalted than Prahlāda:

*yūyaṁ nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā  
lokaṁ punānā munayo 'bhiyanti  
yeṣāṁ grhān āvasatīti sākṣād  
gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam*

“My dear Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, all of you [the Pāṇḍavas] are extremely fortunate, for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, lives in your palace just like a human being. Great saintly persons know this very well, and therefore they constantly visit this house.

*sa vā ayaṁ brahma mahad-vimṛgya-  
kaivalya-nirvāṇa-sukhānubhūtiḥ  
priyaḥ suhṛd vaḥ khalu mātuleya  
ātmārhaṇīyo vidhi-kṛd guruś ca*

“The impersonal Brahman is Kṛṣṇa Himself because Kṛṣṇa is the source of the impersonal Brahman. He is the origin of the transcendental bliss sought by great saintly persons, yet He, the Supreme Person, is your most dear friend and constant well-wisher and is intimately related to you as the son of your maternal uncle. Indeed, He is always like your body and soul. He is worshipable, yet He acts as your servant and sometimes as your spiritual master.

*na yasya sākṣād bhava-padmajādibhī  
rūpaṁ dhiyā vastutayoḥpavarṇitam  
maunena bhaktyoḥśamena pūjitaḥ  
prasīdatām eṣa sa sātvatām patiḥ*

“Exalted persons like Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā could not properly describe the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa. He is always worshiped as the protector of all devotees by great saints who observe vows of silence, meditation, devotional service, and renunciation. May that Supreme Lord be pleased with us.” (*Bhāgavatam* 7.10.48–50)

While finishing the account of Prahlāda’s deliverance by Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, Nārada had observed that the Pāṇḍavas seemed a little discouraged, as if they had no hope of receiving from the Lord the same mercy as Prahlāda. To pacify this anxiety, Nārada spoke these three verses. The life of the Pāṇḍavas could not factually be as hopeless as they considered it; after all, venerated sages from all over the universe came to their home just to visit Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa’s living always with the Pāṇḍavas shows the Pāṇḍavas’ great fortune and Kṛṣṇa’s extreme favor upon them. Nārada’s father, Brahmā, and other great mystics like the four Kumāras can only strive to realize Kṛṣṇa with a dim hope of future success.

The unconditional bliss of oneness hinted at in the *Vedas* is actually embodied in the personality of Kṛṣṇa, and He associates with the Pāṇḍavas in the most intimate ways. He is their most dear friend, always showing them affection. He is their constant well-wisher, acting for their benefit without any calculation of profit. And He is their worshipable Lord and the executor of their orders. He is not a distant goal of perfection, but is directly present in the Pāṇḍava assembly. By using the proximate pronoun *ayam* (“this person close by”), Nārada implies that Kṛṣṇa is ready to reciprocate with the Pāṇḍavas at their pleasure. Nārada thus indicates that by Kṛṣṇa’s presence in their royal court the supreme good fortune of the Pāṇḍavas overflows and floods the whole world.

A skeptic may ask, “If Kṛṣṇa in fact is the Absolute Truth, then why

does He become attached to sixteen thousand wives, and why does He obey ordinary religious principles?” In the third of these Seventh Canto verses, Nārada answers: Do not expect to understand everything about Kṛṣṇa. Even Lord Śiva, Brahmā, and other great mystics cannot describe Him completely. They cannot even fully describe the beauty of any one of His limbs. They cannot put these transcendental facts into words, nor even conceive them in their minds. “And if such exalted authorities are frustrated in trying to explain Kṛṣṇa,” Nārada implies, “what can someone like me do?” The Pāṇḍavas, however, have a special relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by which they know Him much more intimately than do any of the demigods. Kṛṣṇa is obviously satisfied with the Pāṇḍavas, whereas the demigods, by various spiritual practices, must still endeavor to obtain His satisfaction.

The Absolute Truth does not live in the house of Prahāda, and therefore sages do not regularly visit Prahāda’s house to see the Lord. The Personality of Godhead does not assume the role of Prahāda’s maternal uncle, nor constantly show Prahāda His satisfaction in so many ways. Therefore, Nārada argues, the Pāṇḍavas should admit that they are more fortunate than everyone else — the sages, demigods, and other devotees.

**अहो शृणुत पूर्वं तु केषाञ्चिदधिकारिणाम् ।  
अनेन दीयमानोऽभून् मोक्षः स्थितिरियं सदा ॥**

*aho śṛṇuta pūrvam tu  
keṣāñcid adhikāriṇām  
anena dīyamāno 'bhūn  
mokṣaḥ sthitir iyaṁ sadā*

*aho*—oh; *śṛṇuta*—please hear; *pūrvam*—previously; *tu*—but; *keṣāñcit*—for a few; *adhikāriṇām*—qualified candidates; *anena*—by Him; *dīyamānaḥ*—being given; *abhūt*—there came about; *mokṣaḥ*—liberation; *sthitir*—the rule; *iyam*—this; *sadā*—always.

**Please just hear what I have to say: Before, Kṛṣṇa gave the gift of liberation only to a qualified few. And this has always been the rule.**

In texts 15 through 24, Nārada traces the cause of the Pāṇḍavas' superior devotional position: the special influence of their worshipable Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The Personality of Godhead in His multitude of incarnations rarely gave liberation. Most demons killed by Kṛṣṇa's *avatāras* had to take birth again to be further purified.

कालनेमिर्हिरण्याक्षो हिरण्यकशिपुस्तथा ।  
रावणः कुम्भकर्णश्च तथान्ये घातिताः स्वयम् ॥

मुक्तिं न नीता भक्तिर्न दत्ता कस्मैचिदुत्तमा ।  
प्रह्लादाय परं दत्ता श्रीनृसिंहावतारतः ॥

*kālanemir hiraṇyākṣo  
hiraṇyakaśipuḥ tathā  
rāvaṇaḥ kumbhakarṇaś ca  
tathānye ghātītāḥ svayam*

*muktim na nītā bhaktir na  
dattā kasmaicid uttamā  
prahlādāya param dattā  
śrī-nṛsiṃhāvatārataḥ*

*kālanemiḥ*—Kālanemi; *hiraṇyākṣaḥ*—Hiraṇyākṣa; *hiraṇyakaśipuḥ*—Hiraṇyakaśipu; *tathā*—and; *rāvaṇaḥ*—Rāvaṇa; *kumbhakarṇaḥ*—Kumbhakarṇa; *ca*—and; *tathā*—also; *anye*—others; *ghātītāḥ*—killed; *svayam*—personally; *muktim*—to liberation; *na*—not; *nītāḥ*—led; *bhaktiḥ*—devotional service; *na*—not; *dattā*—given; *kasmaicit*—to anyone; *uttamā*—pure; *prahlādāya*—to Prahlāda; *param*—only; *dattā*—given; *śrī-nṛsiṃha-avatārataḥ*—by the incarnation Śrī Nṛsiṃha.

Kālanemi, Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, and others were killed by the Supreme Lord, but none of them received liberation. And pure devotional service was given to no one but Prahlāda, who received it from the incarnation Śrī Nṛsiṃha.

Kālanemi was killed by the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha during a battle between the demigods and demons. Hiraṇyākṣa was killed by Lord Varāha, Hiraṇyakaśipu by Lord Nṛsimha, and the two brothers Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarna by Lord Rāmacandra. Other Daityas and Rākṣasas, including relatives of the demons mentioned in these verses, also met death at the hands of the Supreme Lord. Nonetheless we know that upon being killed by the Lord none of them attained liberation, since history records that they all took birth again. Only in the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa did many demons obtain liberation.

Lord Viṣṇu's *avatāras* rarely give liberation, but they even more rarely bestow pure devotional service. This is confirmed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*. The *Purāṇas* describe only one case in which pure devotional service was granted—when Lord Nṛsimha blessed Prahlāda—and that devotion, at least according to Prahlāda's own testimony, was mixed with the tendency to cultivate knowledge.

हनूमान् जाम्बुवान् श्रीमान् सुग्रीवोऽथ विभीषणः ।  
गुहो दशरथोऽप्येते नूनं कतिपये जनाः ॥

रघुनाथावतारेऽस्माच्छुद्धां भक्तिं तु लेभिरे ।  
विशुद्धस्य च कस्यापि प्रेम्णो वार्तापि न स्थिता ॥

hanūmān jāmbuvān śrīmān  
sugrīvo 'tha vibhīṣaṇaḥ  
guho daśaratho 'py ete  
nūnam katipaye janāḥ

raghunāthāvatāre 'smāc  
chuddhām bhaktim tu lebhire  
viśuddhasya ca kasyāpi  
preṃṇo vārtāpi na sthitā

hanūmān—Hanumān; jāmbuvān—Jāmbavān; śrīmān sugrīvaḥ—blessed Sugrīva; atha—and; vibhīṣaṇaḥ—Vibhīṣaṇa; guhaḥ—Guha;

*daśarathaḥ*—Daśaratha; *api*—also; *ete*—these; *nūnam*—indeed; *katipaye*—few; *janāḥ*—people; *raghunātha-avatāre*—during the incarnation of Lord Raghunātha; *asmāt*—from Him; *śuddhām*—pure; *bhaktim*—of devotion; *tu*—but; *lebhire*—they obtained; *viśuddhasya*—of the utmost pure stage; *ca*—and; *kasya api*—for anyone; *premaṇaḥ*—of *prema*; *vārtā*—mention; *api*—even; *na*—not; *sthitā*—found.

**Later, the incarnation Lord Raghunātha bestowed pure devotion upon a few—Guha, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, Vibhīṣaṇa, Daśaratha, and the blessed Sugrīva. But in relation to those devotees we never hear of prema, the utmost stage of pure devotion.**

Some of the participants in Lord Rāmacandra's *līlās* were not finite living entities. Lord Rāma's three brothers were incarnations of the masters of Vaikuṇṭha—Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. The Lord's wife, Sītādevī, was directly the goddess Lakṣmī. These infallible persons need not rise to the level of love of God, because they are situated on that level eternally. But some of Lord Rāmacandra's servants who are *jīvas*, His *janas* (personal dependents), reaped from His association the benefit of pure *bhakti*. Love of God is pure when free from the material motives of *karma* and *jñāna*. Lord Devakī-nandana in His appearance as the Lord of the Raghus granted such *bhakti* to only a few of His devotees.

Guha, a king of the Niṣādas, became a friend of Lord Rāmacandra's.

Here Nārada says that “even Daśaratha” (*daśaratho 'pi*) obtained *bhakti* from Lord Rāma. Nārada qualifies his statement in this way to answer a potential doubt—that Daśaratha was an unfortunate person. After all, Daśaratha had been cursed by a *brāhmaṇa* to suffer separation from his son, and that separation led to his dying untimely and in lamentation. Still, he was blessed with pure *bhakti* by virtue of his intense attachment to his son Rāma. His apparent suffering is properly understood to be an ecstatic symptom of transcendental separation from the Personality of Godhead.

**इदानीं भवदीयेन मातुलेयेन नो कृताः ।**

## मुक्ता भक्तास्तथा शुद्धप्रेमसम्पूरिताः कति ॥

*idānīm bhavadīyena  
mātuleyena no kṛtāḥ  
muktā bhaktās tathā śuddha-  
prema-sampūritāḥ kati*

*idānīm*—nowadays; *bhavadīyena*—your; *mātuleyena*—by the maternal cousin; *na*—not; *u*—indeed; *kṛtāḥ*—made; *muktāḥ*—liberated; *bhaktāḥ*—devotees; *tathā*—also; *śuddha-prema*—with pure *prema*; *sampūritāḥ*—filled; *kati*—how many.

**But now so many persons have been granted liberation, made devotees, and filled with pure prema, all by your maternal cousin!**

Even persons who came into casual contact with Kṛṣṇa gained liberation and pure devotion, what to speak of the Pāṇḍavas, who lived with Kṛṣṇa constantly as His intimate friends. The Pāṇḍavas should not imagine themselves bereft of these benefits.

## आत्मना मारिता ये च घातिता वार्जुनादिभिः । नरकार्हाश्च दैतेयास्तन्महिम्नामृतं गताः ॥

*ātmanā mārītā ye ca  
ghātītā vārjunādibhiḥ  
narakārḥāś ca daiteyās  
tan-mahimnāmṛtaṁ gatāḥ*

*ātmanā*—by Himself; *mārītāḥ*—being killed; *ye*—who; *ca*—and; *ghātītāḥ*—being caused to be killed; *vā*—and; *arjuna-ādibhiḥ*—by Arjuna and others; *naraka-arḥāḥ*—fit to be sent to hell; *ca*—and; *daiteyāḥ*—demons; *tat*—His; *mahimnā*—by the glory; *amṛtaṁ*—immortality; *gatāḥ*—attained.

**And by the power of His glory, demons fit for hell have become immortal after being slain by Him or by such companions as Arjuna.**

From infancy Kṛṣṇa killed many demons, beginning with the witch



Pūtanā. Arjuna and other devotees also killed demons, and kings who were partial incarnations of demons, like Karṇa and Duryodhana. These demons and inimical kings were candidates for punishment in hell because they were active opponents of the Vaiṣṇavas. But despite being destined for hell, by the transcendental influence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa they obtained liberation. In the words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.7.34–35):

*ye ca pralamba-khara-dardūra-keśy-ariṣṭa-  
mallebha-kaṁsa-yavanāḥ kuja-pauṇḍrakādyāḥ  
anye ca śālva-kapi-balvala-dantavakra-  
saptokṣa-sambara-vidūratha-rukmi-mukhyāḥ*

*ye vā mṛdhe samiti-śālina ātta-cāpāḥ  
kāmbōja-matsya-kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikayādyāḥ  
yāsyanty adarśanam alam bala-pārtha-bhīma-  
vyājāhvayena hariṇā nilayaṁ tadīyam*

“Many demonic enemies fought vigorously either against the Lord Hari directly or against Him under His names such as Baladeva, Arjuna, and Bhīma. Among such demons were Baka, Keśī, Pralamba, Dhenuka, Ariṣṭa, Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, and the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa. Others were Kaṁsa, Kālayavana, Pauṇḍraka, Narakāśura, and great marshals like Śālva. Still others were Rukmī, Balvala, Śambara, Dantavakra, Vidūratha, the seven bulls, and Dvidida the monkey. And there were also great warriors like Kuru, Matsya, Sṛñjaya, Kāmboja, and Kekaya. All such demons attained either the impersonal *brahma-jyotiḥ* or the Lord’s personal abode in the Vaikuṇṭha planets.”

Lord Balarāma killed Dhenuka, Dvidida, Balvala, and others; Pradyumna killed Śambara; Mucukunda killed Kālayavana; and Bhīma, Arjuna, and other devotees killed enemies like the king of Kāmboja. But actually Kṛṣṇa Himself killed these demons. Kṛṣṇa simply acted through the agency of His devotees to let them share the glories of His acts.

**तपोजपज्ञानपरा मुनयो येष्वर्थासाधकाः ।  
विश्वामित्रो गौतमश्च वशिष्ठोऽपि तथा परे ॥**

ते कुरुक्षेत्रयात्रायां गत्वा कृष्णप्रसादतः ।  
भक्तिं तं प्रार्थ्य तां प्राप्याभवंस्तद्भक्तितपराः ॥

*tapo-japa-jñāna-parā  
munayo ye 'rtha-sādhakāḥ  
viśvāmitro gautamaś ca  
vaśiṣṭho 'pi tathā pare*

*te kurukṣetra-yātrāyām  
gatvā kṛṣṇa-prasādataḥ  
bhaktim taṁ prārthya tām prāpyā-  
bhavaṁs tad-bhakti-tatparāḥ*

*tapāḥ—*austerities; *japa—*mantra meditation; *jñāna—*and spiritual knowledge; *parāḥ—*intent on cultivating; *munayaḥ—*sages; *ye—*whose; *artha—*aims of life; *sādhakāḥ—*as their goals; *viśvāmitraḥ—*Viśvāmitra; *gautamaḥ—*Gautama; *ca—*and; *vaśiṣṭhaḥ—*Vasiṣṭha; *api—*and; *tathā—*also; *pare—*others; *te—*they; *kurukṣetra—*to Kurukṣetra; *yātrāyām—*on holy pilgrimage; *gatvā—*going there; *kṛṣṇa-prasādataḥ—*by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *bhaktim—*for pure devotion; *taṁ—*to Him; *prārthya—*praying; *tām—*it; *prāpya—*obtaining; *abhavan—*they became; *tat-bhakti—*to His devotional service; *tat-parāḥ—*fully dedicated.

Thoughtful sages like Viśvāmitra, Gautama, and Vasiṣṭha were intent on austerities, mantra meditation, and spiritual knowledge. They had various goals in life. But while they were on pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mercifully inspired them to pray to Him for pure devotion. Thus they obtained it and became fully dedicated to His devotional service.

Viśvāmitra is an especially austere sage, Gautama an expert chanter of *mantras*, and Vasiṣṭha a deep knower of spiritual philosophy. Prior to meeting Lord Kṛṣṇa, they were not pure devotees but were seeking success on the paths of mundane religiosity, prosperity, enjoyment, and liberation. Purified and inspired by seeing Kṛṣṇa at the holy site of

Kurukṣetra, these three and other sages submitted a transcendental request, which we find recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.84.26):

*tasyādya te dadṛśimāṅghrim aghauḡha-marṣa-  
tīrthāspadam hṛdi kṛtaṁ su-vipakva-yogaiḥ  
utsikta-bhakty-upahatāśaya-jīva-kośāś  
cāpur bhavad-gatim athānugrhāṇa bhaktān*

“Today we have directly seen Your feet, the source of the holy Ganges, which washes away volumes of sins. Perfected yogīs can at best meditate upon Your feet within their hearts. But only those who render You wholehearted devotional service and in this way vanquish the soul’s covering—the material mind—attain You as their final destination. Therefore kindly show mercy to us, Your devotees.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī explains in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the sages considered their audience with Kṛṣṇa the ultimate reward for their accumulated religious achievements. Aware of their exceptional good fortune, they dared to ask Kṛṣṇa for the favor of pure devotional service. In case Kṛṣṇa might try to dissuade them, saying, “Why do you need devotional service? Just continue performing austerities as you always have,” they reminded Kṛṣṇa that in the past the coverings of the gross and subtle bodies were transcended only by His pure devotees, not by impersonalist ascetics.

**स्थावराश्च तमोयोनिगतास्तरुतादयः ।  
शुद्धसात्त्विकभावाप्त्या तत्प्रेमरसवर्षिणः ॥**

*sthāvarāś ca tamo-yoni-  
gatās taru-latādayaḥ  
śuddha-sāttvika-bhāvāptyā  
tat-prema-rasa-varṣiṇaḥ*

*sthāvarāḥ*—immobile creatures; *ca*—and; *tamaḥ*—in the mode of ignorance; *yoni-gatāḥ*—born into species; *taru-latā-ādayaḥ*—trees, creepers, and so on; *śuddha-sāttvika*—of pure goodness; *bhāva*—of the ecstatic mood; *āptyā*—by the attainment; *tat-prema*—of pure love for

Him; *rasa*—the nectar-sap; *varṣiṇaḥ*—raining down.

Even immobile creatures in species covered by the mode of ignorance—trees, creepers, and so on—have been raised to the consciousness of pure goodness. Now those trees and creepers are raining down a nectar-sap of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Plant life is understood to be in the mode of ignorance, because living entities coming to the plant species lose the power of their active senses. The trees and creepers of Vṛndāvana, however, are pure devotees transcendental to the three modes of material nature, no more covered by ignorance than any of the inhabitants of that sacred place. Still, Nārada follows the general idea of plant life by describing them as covered by ignorance. Or, alternatively, he may be describing the plant life outside Vṛndāvana in areas such as Hastināpura.

Queen Kuntī referred to the condition of the trees and plants in Hastināpura in her prayers to Kṛṣṇa:

*ime janapadāḥ sv-ṛddhāḥ  
supakvausadhi-vīrudhāḥ  
vanādri-nady-udanvanto  
hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*

“All these cities and villages are flourishing in all respects because the herbs and grains are in abundance, the trees are full of fruits, the rivers flowing, the hills full of minerals, and the oceans full of wealth. And this is all due to Your glancing over them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.8.40) Although originally covered by *tamo-guṇa*, the trees and plants of Hastināpura flourished, achieving the highest treasure of love of God, because Kṛṣṇa simply looked at them. These sub-animal species were uplifted to the pure consciousness called *śuddha-sattva*, in which Vaiṣṇavas realize Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Or, taking another meaning of the word *śuddha-sāttvika-bhāva*, the trees and plants of Hastināpura manifested the *sāttvika* ecstasies of being stunned, having one’s bodily hair stand on end, and so on. They constantly rained down love for Kṛṣṇa, in tears of love disguised as sweet sap.

हे कृष्णभ्रातरस्तस्य किं वर्णोऽपूर्वदर्शितः ।  
रूपसौन्दर्यलावण्यमाधुर्याश्चर्यतामरः ॥

*he kṛṣṇa-bhrātaras tasya  
kim varṇyo 'pūrva-darśitaḥ  
rūpa-saundarya-lāvaṇya-  
mādhuryāścaryatā-bharaḥ*

he—O; *kṛṣṇa-bhrātarah*—brothers of Kṛṣṇa; *tasya*—His; *kim*—how; *varṇyaḥ*—is to be described; *apūrva-darśitaḥ*—never before seen; *rūpa-saundarya*—of bodily beauty; *lāvaṇya*—effulgence; *mādhurya*—and charm; *āścaryatā*—of the amazing character; *bharaḥ*—the abundance.

**O Kṛṣṇa's brothers, how can the infinite wonders of His bodily beauty, His effulgence, and His charm be properly described? Features so attractive have never been seen in anyone else.**

Why are liberation and pure devotion obtained more easily from Kṛṣṇa than from any other form of Godhead? Because He is supremely attractive. The beauty of His all-attractive features has never been seen in anyone else—not in the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha nor in any of the incarnations of Viṣṇu. In Nārada's opinion, even to try to describe Kṛṣṇa's unique beauty would be futile.

अपूर्वत्वेन तस्यैव यो विस्मयविधायकः ।  
तथा लीला गुणाः प्रेमा महिमा केलिभूरपि ॥

*apūrvatvena tasyaiva  
yo vismaya-vidhāyakaḥ  
tathā līlā guṇāḥ premā  
mahimā keli-bhūr api*

*apūrvatvena*—being unprecedented; *tasya*—of Him; *eva*—alone; *yaḥ*—which; *vismaya*—astonishment; *vidhāyakaḥ*—generating; *tathā*—in addition; *līlā*—His pastimes; *guṇāḥ*—and qualities; *premā*—the pure love; *mahimā*—the glorious virtues; *keli*—of His sports; *bhūḥ*—the

places; *api*—also.

**Those unprecedented attractive features of Kṛṣṇa leave one struck with amazement. So also do His pastimes, His qualities, His pure love, His glorious virtues, and the places where He sports.**

Everything about Kṛṣṇa is attractive, not only His physical beauty. Everything He does is playful and full of variety. His virtues like compassion are all perfect and unlimited. And He loves His devotees unconditionally, as they love Him. He exhibits all the traits of noble character, like concern for unfortunate persons, and submission to the desires of His devotees. Śrī Vṛndāvana forest and His other pleasure grounds also attract the hearts of all who enter. The Pāṇḍavas, whom Nārada has addressed as “Kṛṣṇa’s brothers,” have certainly realized these truths and are therefore most fortunate among human beings.

**मन्येऽत्रावतरिष्यन् न स्वयमेवमसौ यदि ।  
तदास्य भगवत्तैवाभविष्यत्प्रकटा न हि ॥**

*manye 'trāvatarīṣyan na  
svayam evam asau yadi  
tadāsyā bhagavattaivā-  
bhaviṣyat prakatā na hi*

*manye*—I think; *atra*—here; *avatarīṣyat na*—had not descended; *svayam*—in His original form; *evam*—in this way; *asau*—He; *yadi*—if; *tadā*—then; *asya*—His; *bhagavattā*—status of being the Personality of Godhead; *eva*—even; *abhaviṣyat*—would have been; *prakatā*—manifested; *na*—not; *hi*—indeed.

**I think that had He not descended in His own original form, the world would never have known His true identity as the Personality of Godhead.**

There is a logical dilemma in this description: If the Supreme Lord’s superlative charm did not exist before Kṛṣṇa’s appearance, that charm would not be eternal. If it did exist, then Kṛṣṇa would not be superior to the other forms of Godhead. This apparent contradiction, however, is

easily resolved: Before Kṛṣṇa appeared in Mathurā five thousand years ago, His eternal complete attractiveness had not been seen in this world for a very long time. It had been forgotten, even by the Vedic sages and demigods. Thus without the advent of Kṛṣṇa Himself, no one would have had any idea of the extent of His perpetual glories.

इदानीं परमां काष्ठां प्राप्ताभूत्सर्वतः स्फुटा ।  
विशिष्टमहिमश्रेणीमाधुरीचित्रताचिता ॥

*idānīm paramām kāṣṭhām  
prāptābhūt sarvataḥ sphuṭā  
viśiṣṭa-mahima-śreṇī-  
mādhurī-citratācitā*

*idānīm*—now; *paramām*—topmost; *kāṣṭhām*—the limit; *prāptā*—reaching; *abhūt*—has become; *sarvataḥ*—everywhere; *sphuṭā*—visible; *viśiṣṭa*—exceptional; *mahima*—of glories; *śreṇī*—by a series; *mādhurī*—and of sweetness; *citratā*—by varieties; *ācitā*—marked.

Now His identity as God has been shown, for He has appeared in all His splendor, adorned with His unique glories and the varied wonders of His charming sweetness.

As long as Kṛṣṇa stayed on earth everyone could see His supreme greatness and charm. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal source of all incarnations, but because for 125 years His full glories, rarely seen, were manifest on earth, Kṛṣṇa is also considered a special incarnation. In a way that transcends ordinary logic, the extremes of divine opulence and simple charm are simultaneously visible in Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

कृष्णस्य कारुण्यकथास्तु दूरे  
तस्य प्रशस्यो बत निग्रहोऽपि ।  
कंसादयः कालियपूतनाद्या  
बल्यादयः प्रागपि साक्षिणोऽत्र ॥

*kṛṣṇasya kārūṇya-kathās tu dūre  
tasya praśasyo bata nigraho 'pi  
kaṁsādayaḥ kālīya-pūtanādyā  
baly-ādayaḥ prāg api sākṣiṇo 'tra*

*kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *kārūṇya*—about the kindness; *kathāḥ*—discussion; *tu*—but; *dūre*—putting aside; *tasya*—by Him; *praśasyaḥ*—praiseworthy; *bata*—indeed; *nigrahaḥ*—punishment; *api*—even; *kaṁsa-ādayaḥ*—Kaṁsa and others; *kālīya-pūtanā-ādyāḥ*—Kālīya, Pūtanā, and others; *bali-ādayaḥ*—Bali and others; *prāk*—previously; *api*—and; *sākṣiṇaḥ*—witnesses; *atra*—in this matter.

**We speak of Kṛṣṇa's kindness, but even the punishments He metes out are worthy of praise. To this there have been many witnesses—including Kaṁsa, Kālīya, and Pūtanā and, in the more distant past, Bali and others.**

While Kaṁsa was ruling Mathurā, the dread of being killed by Kṛṣṇa tormented him constantly. But as a side-effect of this involuntary meditation, Kaṁsa became completely Kṛṣṇa conscious. Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes:

*āsīnaḥ samviśaṁs tiṣṭhan  
bhuñjānaḥ paryaṭan piban  
cintayāno hr̥ṣīkeśam  
apaśyat tan-mayaṁ jagat*

“While sitting on his throne or in his sitting room, while lying on his bed, or indeed while situated anywhere, and while eating, sleeping, walking, or drinking, Kaṁsa saw only his enemy, the Supreme Lord, Hṛṣīkeśa. In other words, by thinking of this all-pervading enemy, Kaṁsa became unfavorably Kṛṣṇa conscious.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.2.24)

At the time of Kaṁsa's death, Kṛṣṇa dragged him from his platform in the arena and jumped on his chest. Thus, as Kaṁsa left his body he was able to feel Kṛṣṇa's foot on his chest and see Kṛṣṇa's blessed face. After Kaṁsa's death, Kṛṣṇa arranged a royal funeral, attended by the Yadu princes, the cowherds of Vraja, and Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Like a dear friend of the family, Kṛṣṇa further consoled Kaṁsa's widows and



granted the vacant throne to Kāṁsa's father, Ugrasena.

Being punished by Kṛṣṇa also spiritually benefited many allies of Kāṁsa, including the wrestlers of Mathurā and kings like Jarāsandha. Only the most malevolent enemies of the Lord, namely Śiśupāla and Dantavakra, failed to obtain His full mercy during their lives. These two demons displeased Kṛṣṇa by committing offenses against *brāhmaṇas*, but because the demons were actually His eternal servants in disguise, in the end they also received His mercy.

Opponents like the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika were less culpable. Fighting against Kṛṣṇa under Kāṁsa's orders, they had become infected by Kāṁsa's envious spirit. Still, the wrestlers were allowed to enjoy the favor of being embraced by Kṛṣṇa during combat, just like the cowherd boys of Vraja in their mock fights with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa also honored the wrestlers by conducting their funerals:

*rāja-yoṣita āśvāsya  
bhagavāl loka-bhāvanaḥ  
yām āhur laukikīm samsthām  
hatānām samakārayat*

“After consoling the royal ladies, Lord Kṛṣṇa, sustainer of all the worlds, arranged for the prescribed funeral rites to be performed.”  
(*Bhāgavatam* 10.44.49)

Lord Balarāma repeatedly captured Jarāsandha in combat but each time released him, just to glorify Jarāsandha's prowess. Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Their friends paid a personal visit to Jarāsandha's palace to forever establish his reputation as a great follower of brahminical culture and a great giver of charity. Pauṇḍraka and other enemies of the Lord received similar merciful treatment. In Text 21, by the words *ātmanā mārītāḥ* (“all killed by Him in person”), Nārada has implied that they all attained liberation. Nārada further confirmed this in a conversation with Kṛṣṇa's father, Vasudeva:

*vaireṇa yaṁ nṛ-patayaḥ śiśupāla-pauṇḍra-  
śālvādayo gati-vilāsa-vilokanādyaiḥ*

*dhyāyanta ākṛti-dhiyaḥ śayanāsanādau  
tat-sāmyam āpur anurakta-dhiyām punaḥ kim*

“Inimical kings like Śiśupāla, Pauṇḍraka, and Śālva were always thinking about Lord Kṛṣṇa. Even while lying down, sitting, or engaging in other activities, they enviously meditated upon the bodily movements of the Lord, His sporting pastimes, His loving glances upon His devotees, and other attractive features displayed by the Lord. Being thus always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, they achieved spiritual liberation in the Lord’s own abode. What then can be said of the benedictions offered to those who constantly fix their minds on Lord Kṛṣṇa in a favorable loving mood?” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.5.48)

Demons who invaded Kṛṣṇa’s sacred land of Gokula obtained from Kṛṣṇa even greater mercy than the kings who opposed Him in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Kāliya was blessed with the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s limbs more thoroughly than the wrestlers in Kamsa’s arena. While Kṛṣṇa enthusiastically danced on Kāliya’s heads, the serpent received Vṛndāvana dust directly from Kṛṣṇa’s feet, a benefit that Kāliya’s wives praised in ecstasy:

*kasyānubhāvo ’sya na deva vidmahe  
tavāṅghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ  
yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo  
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā*

“O Lord, we do not know how the serpent Kāliya has attained this great opportunity of being touched by the dust of Your lotus feet. For this end, the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.16.36) Thus Kāliya received special mercy, for Kṛṣṇa used each one of Kāliya’s heads as a dancing stage. Kṛṣṇa also accepted worship and prayers from Kāliya, issued him personal orders, and granted him the island of Ramanaka, where he could live free from fear of his archenemy Garuḍa. Indeed, by leaving the mark of the Sudarśana disc on Kāliya’s heads, Kṛṣṇa arranged for Kāliya to gain Garuḍa’s friendship and respect.

Kṛṣṇa allowed Pūtanā to enter Gokula respectably, appearing among the cowherds dressed as a first-class lady. At the beginning of Śukadeva Gosvāmī's description of Pūtanā's encounter with Kṛṣṇa, we are told:

*na yatra śravaṇādīni  
rakṣo-ghnāni sva-karmasu  
kurvanti sātvatām bhartur  
yātudhānyaś ca tatra hi*

“My dear king, wherever people in any position perform their occupational duties of devotional service by chanting and hearing [śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ], there cannot be any danger from bad elements. Therefore there was no need for anxiety about Gokula while the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally present.” (Bhāgavatam 10.6.3)

In other words, the witch Pūtanā posed no threat to the inhabitants of Gokula. Kṛṣṇa allowed her to enter simply to give her His mercy. Kṛṣṇa placed His lotus feet, the object of Lord Brahmā's meditation, on Pūtanā's lap and allowed her to caress Him. By this, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were greatly astonished:

*tām tikṣṇa-cittām ati-vāma-ceṣṭitām  
vikṣyāntarā koṣa-paricchadāsi-vat  
vara-striyam tat-prabhayā ca dharṣite  
nirīkṣyamāṇe jananī hy atiṣṭhatām*

“Pūtanā Rākṣasī's heart was fierce and cruel, but she looked like a very affectionate mother. Thus she resembled a sword in a sheath. Although seeing her within the room, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, overwhelmed by her beauty, did not stop her, but remained silent because she treated the child like a mother.” (Bhāgavatam 10.6.9)

Thanks to having the opportunity to treat Kṛṣṇa as her infant, Pūtanā became His mother eternally, as several authorities in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam affirm. According to Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

*pūtanā loka-bāla-ghnī*

*rākṣasī rudhirāśanā  
jighāṁsayāpi haraye  
stanam dattvāpa sad-gatim*

“Pūtanā was always hankering for the blood of human children, and with that desire she came to kill Kṛṣṇa; but because she offered her breast to the Lord, she attained the greatest achievement.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.6.35)

As Lord Brahmā said to Lord Kṛṣṇa, *sad-veśād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā*: “You have already arranged to give Yourself to Pūtanā and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.14.35)

And in the words of Śrī Uddhava:

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam  
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī  
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam  
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema*

“Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of mother to a she-demon [Pūtanā] although she was unfaithful and she had prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?” (*Bhāgavatam* 3.2.23)

Even Pūtanā's dead body, restored to the horrible form of a witch, was sanctified as Kṛṣṇa's playground:

*bālam ca tasyā urasi  
krīḍantam akuto-bhayam  
gopyas tūrṇam samabhyetya  
jagṛhur jāta-sambhramāḥ*

“Without fear, the child Kṛṣṇa was playing on the upper portion of Pūtanā Rākṣasī's breast, and when the *gopīs* saw the child's wonderful activities, they immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Him up.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.6.18) And when her corpse was burned, it gave off a fragrance like precious *aguru*, which spread in all directions:

*dahyamānasya dehasya  
dhūmaś cāguru-saurabhaḥ  
utthitaḥ kṛṣṇa-nirbhukta-  
sapady āhata-pāpmanaḥ*

“Because of Kṛṣṇa’s having sucked the breast of the Rākṣasī Pūtānā, when Kṛṣṇa killed her she was immediately freed of all material contamination. Her sinful reactions automatically vanished, and therefore when her gigantic body was being burnt, the smoke emanating from her body was fragrant like *aguru* incense.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.6.34)

Other persons who came to Gokula also obtained special mercy from Kṛṣṇa. The sons of Kuvera entrapped in the bodies of *arjuna* trees found themselves in the midst of the wonderful pastimes of Dāmodara. Kṛṣṇa released these two sons from Nārada’s curse, listened to their prayers, and bestowed upon them *prema-bhakti*. Aghāsura was graced by Kṛṣṇa’s entrance into Agha’s huge mouth along with the cowherd boys and calves. And Agha obtained liberation from Kṛṣṇa in a way that astounded the whole world. His dead body served as an attraction in Vraja:

*rājann ājagaraṁ carma  
śuṣkaṁ vṛndāvane ’dbhutam  
vrajaukasāṁ bahu-tithaṁ  
babhūvākṛīḍa-gahvaram*

“O King Parīkṣit, when the python-shaped body of Aghāsura dried up into merely a big skin, it became a wonderful place for the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana to visit, and it remained so for a long, long time.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.12.36)

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would also punish His loving devotees in Vraja, as when He abandoned the *gopīs* during the *rāsa* dance. This He did to increase the intensity of their love for Him. Because Kṛṣṇa was enchanted by the *gopīs*’ love, His prime reason for abandoning them was to hear them speak like madwomen, in separation from Him. As He explained:

*nāhaṁ tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn  
bhajāmy amīṣāṁ anuvṛtti-vṛttaye  
yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe  
tac-cintayānyan nibhṛto na veda*

“The reason I do not at once reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O *gopīs*, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else.

*evaṁ mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda-  
svānāṁ hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye 'balāḥ  
mayāparokṣaṁ bhajatā tirohitaṁ  
māsūyitum mārhatha tat priyaṁ priyāḥ*

“My dear girls, understanding that simply for My sake you had rejected the authority of worldly opinion, of the *Vedas*, and of your relatives, I acted as I did only to increase your attachment to Me. Even when I removed Myself from your sight by suddenly disappearing, I never stopped loving you. Therefore, My beloved *gopīs*, please do not harbor any bad feelings toward Me, your beloved.

*na pāraye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujāṁ  
sva-sādhū-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyusāpi vaḥ  
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ  
saṁvṛścyā tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā*

“I am not able to repay My debt for your spotless service, even within a lifetime of *Brahmā*. Your connection with Me is beyond reproach. You have worshiped Me, cutting off all domestic ties, which are difficult to break. Therefore please let your own glorious deeds be your compensation.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.32.20–22)

The mercy of Kṛṣṇa's punishment was evident not only when He appeared in His original form in Gokula, but also in many of His incarnations. As Śrī Vāmana, for example, when the Lord arrested Bali

Daityarāja and humiliated him, the Lord declared to the world the strength of Bali's sober determination. Then, having taken away from him the throne of heaven, Lord Vāmana gave him in exchange the greater kingdom of Sutala-loka with all its riches. The Lord took up the post of doorkeeper at Bali's palace and defended the palace gates from the incursion of Rāvaṇa, and when Durvāsā begged Lord Vāmana to leave Bali for some time and defend Durvāsā against the demon Kuśa, Lord Vāmana refused to do so without Bali's permission.

In yet other incarnations, the Personality of Godhead killed demons like Madhu, Kaiṭabha, and Kālanemi, who had enjoyed the pleasure of opposing the Lord in battle. They received great mercy from Him. These histories are recounted in various *Purāṇas*. The mercy shown by Śrī Kṛṣṇa through His incarnations is a natural reflection of the supreme mercy He displays in His original form. The source of incarnations is glorified by the glories of each of His expansions.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इति प्रगायन् रसनां मुनिर्निजाम्  
अशिक्षयन् माधवकीर्तिलम्पटाम् ।  
अहो प्रवृत्तासि महत्त्ववर्णने  
प्रभोरपीति स्वरदैर्विदश्य ताम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*iti pragāyan rasanām munir nijām*  
*aśikṣayan mādharma-kīrti-lamṭāṁ*  
*aho pravṛttāsi mahattva-varṇane*  
*prabhor apīti sva-radair vidaśya tām*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *iti*—thus; *pragāyan*—while singing; *rasanām*—tongue; *munir*—the sage; *nijām*—his own; *aśikṣayat*—instructed; *mādhava*—of Lord Mādhava; *kīrti*—about the glories; *lamṭāṁ*—greedy; *aho*—oh; *pravṛttā*—busy; *asi*—you are; *mahattva*—of the greatness; *varṇane*—with describing; *prabhoḥ*—of our master; *api*—indeed; *iti*—thus saying; *sva-radair*—with his teeth; *vidaśya*—

biting; *tām*—it.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: While singing enthusiastically in this way, the sage instructed his own tongue, which was greedy to chant the glories of Lord Mādhava, “Oh, you are too busy talking about the greatness of our master!” To stop that tongue, he then seized it with his teeth.

In jest, Nārada chastised his tongue for misbehaving. His tongue was sincerely relishing the pleasure of glorifying the moon born from the ocean of the Madhu dynasty, but there was little hope to accomplish much by this attempt. Brahmā with his four tongues and Ananta with his thousands had failed to fully describe the glories of Śrī Mādhava. How then could Nārada’s one insignificant tongue be so impudent as to try?

रसने ते महद्भाग्यमेतदेव यदीहितम् ।  
किञ्चिदुच्चारयैवैषां तत्प्रियाणां स्वशक्तिः ॥

*rasane te mahad bhāgyam*  
*etat eva yad īhitam*  
*kiñcid uccārayaivaiṣāṁ*  
*tat-priyāṇāṁ sva-śaktiḥ*

*rasane*—dear tongue; *te*—your; *mahat*—great; *bhāgyam*—fortune; *etat*—this; *eva*—indeed; *tat*—that; *īhitam*—attempt; *kiñcit*—something; *uccāraya*—please speak; *eva*—indeed; *eṣāṁ*—about these; *tat-priyāṇām*—beloved devotees of His; *sva-śaktiḥ*—according to your ability.

“Dear tongue,” he then acknowledged, “this effort of yours attests to your great fortune. As far as you are able, just go on speaking something about these beloved devotees of Kṛṣṇa.”

To avoid discouraging his tongue, Nārada gave it some practical advice: “If you cannot adequately praise Kṛṣṇa, then at least try to praise His devotees. If you cannot describe the devotees’ transcendental glories, then simply describe their activities. If you cannot describe everything



about those activities, then just describe something. Even if you cannot speak with full realization, speak anyway. The attempt to say something will be all-auspicious.”

Nārada proposes to his tongue: “You would do better to glorify the Lord’s devotees than to glorify the Lord.” Although the greatness of the devotees is also ultimately indescribable, the Lord’s greatness has no beginning or end, defeats all attempts at analysis and classification, and cannot be fully understood even by the Lord Himself. To Nārada, however, the Lord’s devotees appear similar to human beings; he has seen them, so his tongue should be able to describe their deeds. If his tongue offends the devotees by making false statements about them or by distorting accounts of their activities, the devotees will easily overlook those mistakes, because devotees are always compassionate to unfortunate persons. Therefore Nārada recommends glorifying the Vaiṣṇavas as the best engagement for his tongue.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
महानुभावा भवतां तु तस्मिन्  
प्रतिस्वकं यः प्रियताविशेषः ।  
भवत्सु तस्यापि कृपाविशेषो  
धृष्टेन नीयेत स केन जिह्वाम् ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*mahānubhāvā bhavatām tu tasmin*  
*prati-svakam yaḥ priyatā-viśeṣaḥ*  
*bhavatsu tasyāpi kṛpā-viśeṣo*  
*dhr̥ṣṭena nīyeta sa kena jihvām*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Nārada said; *mahā-anubhāvāḥ*—O great self-realized souls; *bhavatām*—of you; *tu*—but; *tasmin*—for Him; *prati-svakam*—on the part of each individually; *yaḥ*—which; *priyatā*—love; *viśeṣaḥ*—unique; *bhavatsu*—for all of you; *tasya*—His; *api*—also; *kṛpā*—mercy; *viśeṣaḥ*—special; *dhr̥ṣṭena*—arrogant; *nīyeta*—can bring; *saḥ*—it; *kena*—by whom; *jihvām*—to the tongue.

Śrī Nārada continued: O great saintly Pāṇḍavas, is anyone bold enough to let his tongue describe the unique love for Kṛṣṇa that each of you has or the special mercy He bestows upon you?

Feeling himself unfit, Nārada indicates that only a shameless person would dare attempt to elaborate on the greatness of each of the Pāṇḍavas. But Nārada cannot stop, because his tongue is reluctant to speak about anything else and refuses to remain silent.

माता पृथेयं यदुनन्दनस्य  
स्नेहार्द्रमाश्वासनवाक्यमेकम् ।  
अक्रूरवक्त्रात्प्रथमं निशम्य  
प्रेमप्रवाहे निममज्ज सद्यः ॥

*mātā pṛtheyaṁ yadu-nandanasya  
snehārdram āśvāsana-vākyaṁ ekam  
akrūra-vaktrāt prathamam niśamya  
prema-pravāhe nimamajja sadyaḥ*

*mātā*—the mother; *pṛthā*—Pṛthā; *iyam*—this; *yadu-nandanasya*—of the darling son of the Yadus; *sneha*—by affection; *ārdram*—moistened; *āśvāsana*—of consolation; *vākyaṁ*—statement; *ekam*—one; *akrūra*—of Akrūra; *vaktrāt*—from the mouth; *prathamam*—at first; *niśamya*—hearing; *prema-pravāhe*—in a flowing current of transcendental love; *nimamajja*—she became submerged; *sadyaḥ*—immediately.

Your mother, Pṛthā, once heard from the mouth of Akrūra a single statement by Kṛṣṇa, sweet with affection and meant to console her. As soon as she heard it, she plunged into a swiftly flowing current of prema.

On one occasion in Mathurā, as recounted in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Kṛṣṇa asked Akrūra to visit the Pāṇḍavas to see how they were withstanding Duryodhana's harassments. Kṛṣṇa told Akrūra:

*sa bhavān suhṛdām vai naḥ*

*śreyān śreyaś-cikīrṣayā  
jijñāsārtham pāṇḍavānām  
gacchasva gajasāhvayam*

“You are indeed the best of Our friends, so please go to Hastināpura and, as the well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas, find out how they are doing.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.48.32) During this visit, the Pāṇḍavas’ mother, Pṛthā, met with Akrūra. Because Akrūra was a pure Vaiṣṇava, the very first words she heard him speak kindled in her heart the ecstasies of love for Kṛṣṇa.

**विचित्रवाक्यैर्बहुधा रुरोद  
स्फुटेनृणां यच्छ्रवणेन वक्षः ।  
भवत्स्वपि स्नेहभरं परं सा  
ररक्ष कृष्णप्रियतामपेक्ष्य ॥**

*vicitra-vākyair bahudhā ruroda  
sphuṭeṇ nṛṇām yac-chravaṇena vakṣaḥ  
bhavatsv api sneha-bharam param sā  
rarakṣa kṛṣṇa-priyatām apekṣya*

*vicitra*—vivid; *vākyaiḥ*—with words; *bahudhā*—variously; *ruroda*—she lamented; *sphuṭet*—could shatter; *nṛṇām*—of men; *yac*—which; *śravaṇena*—by hearing; *vakṣaḥ*—the chests; *bhavatsu*—for you; *api*—also; *sneha-bharam*—the burden of love; *param*—only; *sā*—she; *rarakṣa*—maintained; *kṛṣṇa*—to Kṛṣṇa; *priyatām*—your dearness; *apekṣya*—considering.

**She often lamented with poignant words that could shatter the heart of anyone who heard them. And she bore the burden of love for all of you, staying tied to you only because you are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.**

Mother Pṛthā fully trusted Kṛṣṇa’s protection because she was a surrendered devotee. Her complaints and expressions of anxiety did not arise from a materially contaminated consciousness, but rather were her own special symptoms of ecstasy. She did not hesitate to open her heart

directly to Kṛṣṇa, as she did during the reunion at Kurukṣetra:

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin  
viśvātman viśva-bhāvana  
praṇannām pāhi govinda  
śiśubhiś cāvasīdatīm*

*nānyat tava padāmbhojāt  
paśyāmi śaraṇam nṛṇām  
bibhyatām mṛtyu-saṁsārād  
īśvarasyāṇavargikāt*

“Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! O great yogī! O Supreme Soul and protector of the universe! O Govinda! Please protect me, who have surrendered to You. I and my sons are being overwhelmed by trouble. For persons fearful of death and rebirth, I see no shelter other than Your liberating lotus feet, for You are the Supreme Lord.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.49.11–12)

Naturally for a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Pṛthā wanted to give all her love to Him, forgetting material attachments to family and everything else. But because her sons were also exclusive devotees of Kṛṣṇa, she maintained her affection for them.

चिरेण द्वारकां गन्तुमुद्यतो यदुजीवनः ।  
काकुस्तुतिभिरावृत्य स्वगृहे रक्ष्यतेऽनया ॥

*cireṇa dvārakām gantum  
udyato yadu-jīvanah  
kāku-stutibhir āvṛtya  
sva-gr̥he rakṣyate 'nayā*

*cireṇa*—for a long time; *dvārakām*—for Dvārakā; *gantum*—to leave; *udyataḥ*—attempting; *yadu-jīvanah*—the life of the Yadus; *kāku*—plaintive; *stutibhiḥ*—with prayers; *āvṛtya*—being enveloped; *sva-gr̥he*—in her home; *rakṣyate*—is kept; *anayā*—by her.

**Kṛṣṇa, the life of the Yadus, tried for a long time to leave for Dvārakā,**

but by enveloping Him with plaintive prayers she kept Him in her home.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had stayed with the Pāṇḍavas throughout the war between Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana. But He was also *yadu-jīvana*, the life of the Yadus, so without His presence the residents of Dvārakā seemed almost dead. Kṛṣṇa tried to leave Hastināpura to return to the Yadus, but Mother Pṛthā dissuaded Him with her prayers and induced Him to stay a few months longer. Those prayers of Pṛthā are included in the First Canto, Chapter Eight, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

युधिष्ठिरायापि महाप्रतिष्ठा  
लोकद्वयोत्कृष्टतरा प्रदत्ता ।  
तथा जरासन्धवधादिना च  
भीमाय तेनात्मन एव कीर्तिः ॥

*yudhiṣṭhirāyāpi mahā-pratiṣṭhā*  
*loka-dvayotkrṣṭatarā pradattā*  
*tathā jarāsandha-vadhādinā ca*  
*bhīmāya tenātmāna eva kīrtiḥ*

*yudhiṣṭhirāya*—to Yudhiṣṭhira; *api*—also; *mahā-pratiṣṭhā*—high prestige; *loka-dvaya*—in the two planetary systems; *utkrṣṭa-tarā*—the most exalted; *pradattā*—bestowed; *tathā*—in addition; *jarāsandha*—of Jarāsandha; *vadha-ādinā*—by the killing and so on; *ca*—and; *bhīmāya*—to Bhīma; *tena*—by Him; *ātmanaḥ*—of his own only; *eva*—indeed; *kīrtiḥ*—fame.

Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon Yudhiṣṭhira the highest prestige, greater than that of anyone else in the upper and lower worlds. And by favors like allowing Bhīma to kill Jarāsandha, Kṛṣṇa granted Bhīma unequalled fame.

To enhance the reputation of King Yudhiṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa encouraged him to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. Kṛṣṇa helped the Pāṇḍavas dispose of Jarāsandha, who was the major obstacle to this sacrifice, by giving Bhīma the honor of defeating Jarāsandha in one-to-one combat. During Jarāsandha's repeated attacks on Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa Himself had

gotten many opportunities to kill him, but Kṛṣṇa patiently waited for the suitable opportunity so that the credit would go to Bhīma.

भगवानयमर्जुनश्च तत्-  
प्रियसख्येन गतः प्रसिद्धताम् ।  
न पुराणशतैः परैरहो  
महिमा स्तोतुममुष्य शक्यते ॥

*bhagavān ayam arjunaś ca tat-  
priya-sakhyena gataḥ prasiddhatām  
na purāṇa-śataiḥ parair aho  
mahimā stotum amuṣya śakyate*

*bhagavān*—the godly person; *ayam*—he; *arjunaḥ*—Arjuna; *ca*—and; *tat*—with Him; *priya-sakhyena*—by virtue of intimate friendship; *gataḥ*—achieved; *prasiddhatām*—fame; *na*—not; *purāṇa-śataiḥ*—by hundreds of *Purāṇas*; *paraiḥ*—other; *aho*—oh; *mahimā*—glories; *stotum*—to praise; *amuṣya*—of Him; *śakyate*—can be done.

**Saintly Arjuna became renowned throughout the world for his intimate friendship with Kṛṣṇa. I can never sing all the glories of Arjuna even if I recite hundreds of Purāṇas.**

Nārada calls Arjuna *bhagavān* out of great respect. This term is usually reserved for God, but the sage could justify using it by citing this scriptural definition:

*utpattiṁ pralayaṁ caiva  
bhūtānām āgatiṁ gatiṁ  
vetti vidyām avidyām ca  
sa vācya bhagavān iti*

“A person who knows about the creation and destruction of the universe, the karmic comings and goings of embodied creatures, and the forces of enlightenment and illusion may be called *bhagavān*.” (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 6.5.78)

नकुलः सहदेवश्च यादृक्प्रीतिपरौ यमौ ।  
अग्रपूजाविचारादौ सर्वैस्तद्वृत्तमीक्षितम् ॥

*nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca  
yādr̥k-prīti-parau yamau  
agra-pūjā-vicārādau  
sarvais tad vṛttam īkṣitam*

*nakulaḥ*—Nakula; *sahadevaḥ*—Sahadeva; *ca*—and; *yādr̥k*—of which sort; *prīti*—love; *parau*—fixed in; *yamau*—the twins; *agra-pūjā*—of the initial worship of the most respectable person attending the sacrifice; *vicāra*—in the decision; *ādau*—and in other matters; *sarvaiḥ*—by everyone; *tat*—their; *vṛttam*—behavior; *īkṣitam*—witnessed.

And as for Nakula and Sahadeva, everyone has seen many times how fixed they are in love for Kṛṣṇa, as shown, for example, by how those twins behaved in the deliberations on whom to worship first in the Rājasūya.

The twins Nakula and Sahadeva worked together so closely that whatever either of them did could as well have been done by the other. And everything either of them did was impelled by pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

श्रीद्रौपदी च हरिणा स्वयमेव राज-  
सूयादिषूत्सववरेष्वभिषिक्तकेशा ।  
सम्बोध्यते प्रियसखीत्यवितात्रिपुत्र-  
दुःशासनादिभयतो हृतसर्वशोका ॥

*śrī-draupadī ca hariṇā svayam eva rāja-  
sūyādiṣūtsava-vareṣv abhiṣikta-keśā  
sambodhyate priya-sakhīty avitātri-putra-  
duḥśāsanādi-bhayato hṛta-sarva-śokā*

*śrī-draupadī*—Śrī Draupadī; *ca*—and; *hariṇā*—by Lord Hari; *svayam*—personally; *eva*—indeed; *rājasūya*—at the Rājasūya; *ādiṣu*—and other;

*utsava*—festivals; *vareṣu*—most important; *abhiṣikta*—anointed; *keśāḥ*—whose hair; *sambodhyate*—is called; *priya-sakhi*—dear friend; *iti*—thus; *avitā*—protected; *atri-putra*—of the son of Atri (Durvāsā); *duḥśāsana-ādi*—and of Duḥśāsana and others; *bhayataḥ*—from fear; *hṛta*—removed; *sarva*—all; *śokā*—whose sorrow.

Lord Hari personally sanctified Śrī Draupadī's hair during the Rājasūya sacrifice and other special festivals. He would call Draupadī “dear friend.” He relieved her of fear of Atri's son Durvāsā and fear of others, including Duḥśāsana. He removed all her sorrow.

During the Rājasūya and other sacrifices, Kṛṣṇa with His own hand sprinkled Queen Draupadī's hair with water from the ritual vessel sanctified by *mantras*. He spoke to her with the affection reserved for intimate family members. He protected her in frightening situations involving Durvāsā Muni, the temperamental son of Atri, and saved her from the shame of being disrobed by Duḥśāsana in the royal assembly. Finally, Kṛṣṇa relieved all her pain by destroying Duḥśāsana and his friends at Kurukṣetra.

आस्वादनं श्रीविदुरौदनस्य  
श्रीभीष्मनिर्याणमहोत्सवश्च ।  
तत्तत्कृतत्वादुशपक्षपात-  
स्यापेक्षयैवेति विचारयध्वम् ॥

*āsvādanam śrī-viduraudanasya*  
*śrī-bhīṣma-niryāṇa-mahotsavaś ca*  
*tat-tat-kṛta-tvādrśa-pakṣa-pāta-*  
*syāpekṣayaiveti vicārayadhvam*

*āsvādanam*—the tasting; *śrī-vidura*—of Śrī Vidura; *odanasya*—of the porridge; *śrī-bhīṣma*—of Śrī Bhīṣma; *niryāṇa*—of the passing away; *mahā-utsavaḥ*—the festival; *ca*—and; *tat-tat*—in each such instance; *kṛta*—taken; *tvādrśa*—your; *pakṣa-pātasya*—of the choice of taking the side; *apekṣayā*—taking into account; *eva*—indeed; *iti*—thus;



*vicārayadhvam*—please judge.

**Kṛṣṇa relished Śrī Vidura’s porridge and organized the celebration of Śrī Bhīṣma’s passing away. Please, therefore, judge your own standing from how in many controversies both Vidura and Bhīṣma took your side.**

Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared partial to both Vidura and Bhīṣma. Even though Vidura was the son of a lowborn *śūdrāṇī*, Kṛṣṇa happily shared Vidura’s humble food, praising it as very tasty. And Kṛṣṇa graced Bhīṣma with His presence as Bhīṣma was passing away on the battlefield. *Niryāṇa* means “the soul’s exit from the body,” but as applied to a perfect transcendentalist like Bhīṣma it also means “merging into the existence of God.” For devotees of the Lord, merging into His existence can only mean attaining a spiritual body and entering the eternal kingdom of Vaikuṇṭha. Because Grandfather Bhīṣma saw Kṛṣṇa before his eyes at the moment of death, Bhīṣma certainly achieved the Vaikuṇṭha liberation deserved only by pure devotees.

It appears, then, that Kṛṣṇa highly favored Vidura and Bhīṣma, even more than He favored the Pāṇḍavas. But here Nārada corrects that popular misunderstanding. Why indeed were Vidura and Bhīṣma so dear to Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa was pleased with them not only because of their own devotional service, which was not that exceptional, but mainly because they served the Pāṇḍavas, protecting them from Duryodhana and other enemies. Vidura and Bhīṣma earned high esteem in the opinion of the Lord by giving shelter and affection to sons of Pṛthā when they were helpless.

**अहो बत महाश्चर्यं कवीनां गेयतां गताः ।  
भवदीयपुरस्त्रीणां ज्ञानभक्त्युक्तयो हरौ ॥**

*aho bata mahāścaryam  
kavīnām geyatām gatāḥ  
bhavadīya-pura-strīṇām  
jñāna-bhakti-uktayo harau*

*aho*—oh; *bata*—indeed; *mahā-āścaryam*—most amazing; *kavīnām*—by poets; *geyatām*—the status of being sung; *gatāḥ*—achieved; *bhavadīya*—

your; *pura*—of the city; *strīṇām*—of the women; *jñāna*—joined with transcendental knowledge; *bhakti*—and devotion; *uktayaḥ*—the words; *harau*—about Lord Hari.

**Truly, the words spoken by the ordinary women of your city amaze me. Those words, focused on Kṛṣṇa and imbued with transcendental knowledge and devotion, are praised in songs by accomplished poets.**

Generally speaking, the citizens of a state are virtuous when their rulers are virtuous. As Vyāsadeva and other sages depict in their epics, everyone in Hastināpura under the administration of Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers was saintly and learned. In the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the women standing on the roofs of Hastināpura spoke to one another while Kṛṣṇa was passing on the road. Their first comments sounded like those of profound scholars:

*sa vai kilāyaṁ puruṣaḥ purātano  
ya eka āsīd aviśeṣa ātmani  
agre guṇebhyo jagad-ātmanīśvare  
nimīlitātman niśi supta-śaktiṣu*

“Here He is, the original Personality of Godhead as we definitely remember Him. He alone existed before the manifested creation of the modes of nature, and in Him only, because He is the Supreme Lord, all living beings merge, as if sleeping at night, their energy suspended.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.10.21) Then the women began speaking like Vaiṣṇavas steeped in devotional ecstasy:

*aho alaṁ ślāghya-tamaṁ yadoḥ kulam  
aho alaṁ puṇya-tamaṁ madhor vanam  
yad eṣa puṁsām ṛṣabhaḥ priyaḥ śriyaḥ  
sva-janmanā caṅkramaṇena cāñcati*

“Oh, how supremely glorious is the dynasty of King Yadu, and how virtuous the land of Mathurā, where the supreme leader of all living beings, the beloved husband of the goddess of fortune, has taken His birth and wandered in His childhood.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.10.26)

Since the Pāṇḍavas were the leaders of a community in which the ordinary people spoke like this, the Pāṇḍavas must have been exceptionally saintly.

सहैकपौत्रेण कयाधुनन्दनो  
ऽनुकम्पितोऽनेन कपीन्द्र एकलः ।  
ससर्वबन्धुः स्वजना भवादूशा  
महाहरेः प्रेमकृपाभरास्पदम् ॥

*sahaika-pautreṇa kayādhū-nandano*  
*'nukampito 'nena kapīndra ekalaḥ*  
*sa-sarva-bandhuḥ sva-janā bhavādr̥śā*  
*mahā-hareḥ prema-kṛpā-bharāspadam*

*saha*—along with; *eka-pautreṇa*—one grandson; *kayādhū-nandanaḥ*—the son of Kayādhū (Prahāda); *anukampitaḥ*—shown mercy; *anena*—by Him; *kapi-indraḥ*—the best of monkeys (Hanumān); *ekalaḥ*—alone; *sa*—along with; *sarva*—all; *bandhuḥ*—their family members; *sva-janāḥ*—along with their subordinates; *bhavādr̥śāḥ*—such as you; *mahā-hareḥ*—of the Supreme Lord Hari; *prema*—of the love; *kṛpā*—and mercy; *bhara*—of the full extent; *āspadam*—the recipients.

**When Prahāda, the son of Kayādhū, obtained the Supreme Lord's grace, he did so along with a grandson. The best of monkeys was favored alone. But you rare souls have received the complete love and mercy of the great Lord Hari with all your family members and subordinates.**

Here Nārada confirms the assertions by Prahāda and Hanumān that the Pāṇḍavas are greater devotees. Other than Prahāda, the only pure devotee among Hiraṇyakaśipu's descendants was Prahāda's grandson Bali. Hanumān alone in his family received Lord Rāmacandra's mercy, since Hanumān was a lifelong *brahmacārī* and so had no offspring. The Pāṇḍavas, in contrast, shared Kṛṣṇa's mercy with their entire family and entourage. According to one interpretation, *bandhu* in this verse means the Pāṇḍavas' sons, wives, and other relatives, while *sva-janāḥ* means

their ministers and the residents of their capital. Or, alternatively, *bandhu* means the relations of the Pāṇḍavas by marriage, like King Drupada and King Virāṭa, *svāḥ* means their blood relatives, including Duryodhana and his brothers, and *janāḥ* means their servants and citizens. Either way, everyone associated with the Pāṇḍavas obtained the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-attractive source of all expansions of Godhead.

उद्दिश्य यान् कौरवसंसदं गतः  
 कृष्णः समक्षं निजगाद मादृशाम् ।  
 ये पाण्डवानां सुहृदोऽथ वैरिणस्  
 ते तादृशा मेऽपि ममासवो हि ते ॥

*uddiśya yān kaurava-saṁsadam gataḥ  
 kṛṣṇaḥ samakṣam nijagāda mādrśām  
 ye pāṇḍavānām suhr̥do 'tha vairiṇas  
 te tādṛśā me 'pi mamāsavo hi te*

*uddiśya*—referring to; *yān*—whom; *kaurava*—of the Kauravas; *saṁsadam*—to the court; *gataḥ*—having come; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *samakṣam*—in their presence; *nijagāda*—said; *mādrśām*—of persons like me; *ye*—those who; *pāṇḍavānām*—of the Pāṇḍavas; *suhr̥daḥ*—well-wishing friends; *atha*—or; *vairiṇaḥ*—enemies; *te*—they; *tādṛśāḥ*—likewise; *me*—to Me; *api*—also; *mama*—My; *asavaḥ*—life airs; *hi*—indeed; *te*—they.

Once, in the court of the Kauravas, with me and other sages present, Kṛṣṇa said of you, “A friend of the Pāṇḍavas is My friend, and their enemy My enemy. The Pāṇḍavas are My very life airs.”

Whatever Kṛṣṇa says must be absolutely true, especially what He says in the presence of pious sages like Nārada. So by making this declaration in such a respectable public forum, Kṛṣṇa ensured that His feelings for the Pāṇḍavas would become well known throughout the world. Just as the five *prāṇas* maintain the spirit soul in a living body, the five

Pāṇḍavas assisted Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes; and as the life air is very dear to the soul, the Pāṇḍavas were very dear to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa therefore says in the *Mahābhārata* (*Udyoga-parva* 89.28):

*yas tān dveṣṭi sa mām dveṣṭi  
yas tān anu sa mām anu  
aikātmīyam āgataṁ viddhi  
pāṇḍavair dharma-cāribhiḥ*

“He who hates the Pāṇḍavas hates Me, and he who follows them follows Me. Know that I am one in spirit with the righteous Pāṇḍavas.” And Kṛṣṇa elsewhere says:

*dviṣad-annaṁ na bhoktavyaṁ  
dviṣantaṁ naiva bhojayet  
pāṇḍavān dviṣase rājan  
mama prāṇā hi pāṇḍavāḥ*

“One should not eat the food of one who is hateful, nor should one feed a hateful person. You, O king, hate the Pāṇḍavas, and the Pāṇḍavas are My very life airs.”

धाष्ट्यं ममाहो भवतां गुणान् किल  
ज्ञातुं च वक्तुं प्रभवेत्स एकलः ।  
निर्णीतमेतत्तु मया महाप्रभुः  
सोऽत्रावतीर्णो भवतां कृते परम् ॥

*dhārṣṭyaṁ mamāho bhavatām guṇān kila  
jñātum ca vaktum prabhavet sa ekalaḥ  
nirṇītam etat tu mayā mahā-prabhuḥ  
so 'trāvatīrṇo bhavatām kṛte param*

*dhārṣṭyam*—arrogance; *mama*—my; *aho*—oh; *bhavatām*—your; *guṇān*—good qualities; *kila*—indeed; *jñātum*—to be aware of; *ca*—and; *vaktum*—to describe; *prabhavet*—is capable; *saḥ*—He (Kṛṣṇa); *ekalaḥ*—

alone; *nirṇītam*—denitely decided; *etat*—this; *tu*—but; *mayā*—by me; *mahā-prabhuḥ*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *saḥ*—He; *atra*—here; *avatīrṇaḥ*—descended; *bhavatām*—of you; *kṛte*—for the sake; *param*—only.

**Just see my arrogance! Only Kṛṣṇa can adequately know and describe your good qualities. But at least I am convinced that the Supreme Lord has descended to this world only for the sake of you.**

It is evident from Kṛṣṇa's dealings with the Pāṇḍavas that Kṛṣṇa understood their sublime character. No one but Kṛṣṇa was fully qualified to reciprocate with them. Nārada, ashamed to have impudently tried to glorify the brothers, apologizes by submitting one fact of which he is certain: Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended to this world only to please the Pāṇḍavas and spread their fame.

### Yudhiṣṭhira refutes Nārada's praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
अथ क्षणं लज्जयेव मौनं कृत्वाथ निःश्वसन् ।  
धर्मराजोऽब्रवीन् मातृभ्रातृपत्नीभिरन्वितः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*atha kṣaṇam lajjayeva*  
*maunam kṛtvātha niḥśvasan*  
*dharma-rājo 'bravīn mātṛ-*  
*bhrāṭṛ-patnībhir anvitaḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *atha*—then; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment; *lajjayā*—with embarrassment; *iva*—as if; *maunam*—silence; *kṛtvā*—maintaining; *atha*—and then; *niḥśvasan*—sighing; *dharma-rājaḥ*—the king of religion (Yudhiṣṭhira); *abravīt*—spoke; *mātṛ*—by his mother; *bhrāṭṛ*—brothers; *patnībhiḥ*—and wife; *anvitaḥ*—joined.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: For a moment, Dharmarāja Yudhiṣṭhira remained quiet, and then he sighed, as if embarrassed. At last he spoke, followed in turn by his brothers, wife, and mother.

Hearing his own praise embarrassed Yudhiṣṭhira, or so it seemed. Closer to the truth, however, is that he took this exaggerated praise to be false and thought that Nārada was teasing him. In either case, Yudhiṣṭhira felt sufficiently moved to sigh audibly, even in front of his mother and younger brothers.

वावदूकशिरोधार्य नैवास्मासु कृपा हरेः ।  
विचार्यभीक्ष्णमस्माभिर्जातु काप्यवधार्यते ॥

*vāvadūka-śiro-dhārya*  
*naivāsmāsu kṛpā hareḥ*  
*vicāryābhīkṣṇam asmābhir*  
*jātu kāpy avadhāryate*

*vāvadūka*—of brilliant speakers; *śiraḥ-dhārya*—O crest jewel; *na eva*—not at all; *asmāsu*—for us; *kṛpā*—mercy; *hareḥ*—of Lord Hari; *vicārya*—being considered; *abhīkṣṇam*—for a long duration; *asmābhir*—by us; *jātu*—at all; *kā api*—any; *avadhāryate*—is ascertained.

Yudhiṣṭhira said: O crest jewel of brilliant speakers, Lord Hari has no mercy for us. We cannot remember any mercy He has shown us, even after we consider this for a long time.

By calling Nārada an eloquent speaker, Yudhiṣṭhira subtly accused him of distorting the truth. In Yudhiṣṭhira's opinion, proof that Kṛṣṇa blessed him and his brothers with special favor cannot be found.

प्राकृतानां जनानां हि मादृगापद्गणेश्या ।  
कृष्णभक्तौ प्रवृत्तिश्च विश्वासश्च ह्यसेदिव ॥

*prākṛtānām janānām hi*  
*mādr̥g-āpad-gaṇeśayā*

*kṛṣṇa-bhaktau pravṛttiś ca  
viśvāsaś ca hrased iva*

*prākṛtānām*—materialistic; *janānām*—of persons; *hi*—indeed; *mādrk*—like us; *āpat*—of disasters; *gaṇa*—the multitude; *ikṣayā*—by observing; *kṛṣṇa-bhaktau*—for devotional service to Kṛṣṇa; *pravṛttiḥ*—the inclination; *ca*—and; *viśvāsaḥ*—faith; *ca*—and; *hraset*—might diminish; *iva*—as if.

**If ordinary materialists see the many calamities that have come upon us, their faith and their inclination to serve Kṛṣṇa are likely to wither.**

In texts <sup>vii</sup>47 through 56, King Yudhiṣṭhira refutes the idea that the Pāṇḍavas possess Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Simple people believe, "Kṛṣṇa's devotees never suffer misfortune." Yudhiṣṭhira says that when such people see the Pāṇḍavas' extreme adversities, this faith will be spoiled. But since he knows that the opposite is true—that by hearing about Kṛṣṇa's loving dealings with the Pāṇḍavas people gain faith—Yudhiṣṭhira qualifies his statement with the word *iva* ("as if").

**एतदेवातिकष्टं नस्तदेकप्राणजीविनाम् ।  
विनान्नं प्राणिनां यद्वन् मीनानां च विना जलम् ॥**

*etad evāti-kaṣṭam nas  
tad-eka-prāṇa-jīvinām  
vinānnam prāṇinām yadvan  
mīnānām ca vinā jalam*

*etad*—this; *eva*—certainly; *ati-kaṣṭam*—extremely painful; *naḥ*—for us; *tat*—He; *eka*—only; *prāṇa*—as the breath; *jīvinām*—whose lives; *vinā*—without; *annam*—food; *prāṇinām*—of living beings; *yadvat*—just as; *mīnānām*—of fish; *ca*—and; *vinā*—without; *jalam*—water.

**This would surely cause us great distress, for we have dedicated our life and breath only to Him. We would suffer like embodied creatures without food or like fish deprived of water.**

The Pāṇḍavas do not resent having been subjected to so many



troubles, but they feel responsible for diminishing the faith of other devotees, and this makes them sad. Only the force of Kṛṣṇa's affection keeps the Pāṇḍavas alive.

अतोऽर्थितं मया यज्ञसम्पादनमिषादिदम् ।  
निष्ठां दर्शय भक्तानामभक्तानामपि प्रभो ॥

*ato 'rthitam mayā yajña-  
sampādana-miṣād idam  
niṣṭhām darśaya bhaktānām  
abhaktānām api prabho*

*ataḥ—therefore; arthitam—requested; mayā—by me; yajña—of a sacrifice; sampādana—of the arranging; miṣāt—on the pretext; idam—this; niṣṭhām—position; darśaya—please demonstrate; bhaktānām—of the devotees; abhaktānām—of the nondevotees; api—and; prabho—O master.*

**Therefore, on the pretext of arranging a sacrifice, I begged Him, “Dear master, please show how the fortunes of the devotees and the nondevotees differ.**

Yudhiṣṭhira did not undertake the demanding Rājasūya-yajña for the power and fame it would earn him. He and his brothers were untouched by such material motives. He wanted only to help the world better understand the glories of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees:

*tad deva-deva bhavataś caraṇāravinda-  
sevānubhāvam iha paśyatu loka eṣaḥ  
ye tvām bhajanti na bhajanty uta vobhayeṣām  
niṣṭhām pradarśaya vibho kuru-sṛñjayānām*

“Therefore, O Lord of lords, let the people of this world see the power of devotional service rendered to Your lotus feet. Please show them, O almighty one, the position of those Kurus and Sṛñjayas who worship You, and the position of those who do not.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.72.5)

लोकयन्तो यतो लोकाः सर्वे त्वद्भक्तसम्पदः ।  
ऐहिकामुष्मिकीश्चित्राः शुद्धाः सर्वविलक्षणाः ॥

भूत्वा परमविश्वस्ता भजन्तस्त्वत्पदाम्बुजम् ।  
निर्दुःखा निर्भया नित्यं सुखित्वं यान्ति सर्वतः ॥

*lokayanto yato lokāḥ  
sarve tvad-bhakta-sampadaḥ  
aihikāmuṣmikiś citrāḥ  
śuddhāḥ sarva-vilakṣaṇāḥ*

*bhūtvā parama-viśvastā  
bhajantas tvat-padāmbujam  
nirduḥkhā nirbhayā nityam  
sukhitvam yānti sarvataḥ*

*lokayantaḥ—seeing; yataḥ—because of which; lokāḥ—people; sarve—all; tvat-bhakta—of Your devotees; sampadaḥ—the assets; aihika—in this world; āmuṣmikiḥ—and in the next; citrāḥ—wonderful; śuddhāḥ—pure; sarva-vilakṣaṇāḥ—all-together unique; bhūtvā—becoming; parama—completely; viśvastāḥ—convinced; bhajantaḥ—worshiping; tvat—Your; pada-ambujam—lotus feet; nirduḥkhāḥ—free from misery; nirbhayāḥ—free from fear; nityam—eternally; sukhitvam—the state of being happy; yānti—they will attain; sarvataḥ—in all respects.*

“By this sacrifice, all people will see the wonderful assets that belong to Your devotees in this life and the next, opulences all-pure and utterly distinct from material assets. Then, gaining absolute trust in You, people will worship Your lotus feet, become ever free of misery and fear, and achieve happiness in all respects.”

People tend to be strongly influenced by the example of their leaders. The Pāṇḍavas fulfilled their sovereign responsibilities perfectly. By the devotion and precise care with which they carried out the Rājasūya

sacrifice, by the perfect justice of their administration in this life, and by the exalted position among the demigods they were sure to attain in the next, the Pāṇḍavas inspired the innocent people to follow the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Everyone could see that the extraordinary wealth and power of the Pāṇḍavas was untainted by material faults because that wealth and power was intended only for the service of Kṛṣṇa.

सम्प्रत्यभक्तानस्माकं विपक्षांस्तान् विनाश्य च ।  
राज्यं प्रदत्तं यत्तेन शोकोऽभूत्पूर्वतोऽधिकः ॥

*sampraty abhaktān asmākaṁ  
vipakṣāṁs tān vināśya ca  
rājyaṁ pradattaṁ yat tena  
śoko 'bhūt pūrvato 'dhikaḥ*

*samprati*—now; *abhaktān*—nondevotees; *asmākaṁ*—our; *vipakṣān*—antagonists; *tān*—them; *vināśya*—having destroyed; *ca*—and; *rājyaṁ*—kingdom; *pradattaṁ*—given; *yat*—in that; *tena*—by this; *śokaḥ*—unhappiness; *abhūt*—became; *pūrvataḥ*—than before; *adhikaḥ*—greater.

**Now our nondevotee enemies have been destroyed, our kingdom returned to us—and our grief made greater than ever before.**

After the Rājasūya sacrifice and the Kurukṣetra war, Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Duryodhana, and their allies were all dead, but in fact their existence had been “annihilated” in an even fuller sense, because they were never to take birth again. And although the Pāṇḍavas, after long years of suppression, were free to rule, in Yudhiṣṭhira’s opinion they had been happier when struggling against one threat of destruction after another.

द्रोणभीष्मादिगुरवोऽभिमन्युप्रमुखाः सुताः ।  
परेऽपि बहवः सन्तोऽस्मद्वेतोर्निधनं गताः ॥

*droṇa-bhīṣmādi-guravo*

'bhimanyu-pramukhāḥ sutāḥ  
pare 'pi bahavaḥ santo  
'smad-dhetor nidhanam gatāḥ  
droṇa-bhīṣma-ādi—Droṇa, Bhīṣma, and others; guravaḥ—venerable  
teachers; abhimanyu-pramukhāḥ—headed by Abhimanyu; sutāḥ—sons;  
pare—others; api—also; bahavaḥ—many; santaḥ—saintly persons;  
asmat-hetoḥ—on our account; nidhanam—demise; gatāḥ—met.

**It is our fault that many saintly persons met their demise, including venerable teachers like Droṇa and Bhīṣma, and sons like Abhimanyu.**

This is why gaining the kingdom brought no happiness to the Pāṇḍavas. Most of their noble relatives, many of them saintly devotees of Kṛṣṇa, had been killed in the conflict for sovereignty. Yudhiṣṭhira blamed himself for these deaths, since the war had been fought to install him on the throne.

**स्वजीवनाधिकप्रार्थ्यश्रीविष्णुजनसङ्गतेः ।  
विच्छेदेन क्षणं चात्र न सुखांशं लभामहे ॥**

sva-jīvanādhika-prārthya-  
śrī-viṣṇu-jana-saṅgateḥ  
vicchedena kṣaṇam cātra  
na sukhāṁśam labhāmahe  
sva-jīvana—than our own lives; adhika—more; prārthya—desirable; śrī-  
viṣṇu-jana—of the devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu; saṅgateḥ—of the association;  
vicchedena—because of the deprivation; kṣaṇam—a single moment;  
ca—and; atra—here; na—not; sukha—of happiness; aṁśam—a  
fragment; labhāmahe—we can find.

**The company of those devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu is more desirable to us than life itself. Deprived of that association, we can no longer find any happiness.**

**श्रीकृष्णवदनाम्भोजसन्दर्शनसुखं च तत् ।**

## कदाचित्कार्ययोगेन केनचिज्जायते चिरात् ॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-vadanāmbhoja-  
sandarśana-sukham ca tat  
kadācit kārya-yogena  
kenacij jāyate cirāt*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vadana-ambhoja*—the lotus face; *sandarśana*—from seeing; *sukham*—the happiness; *ca*—and; *tat*—that; *kadācit*—once in a while; *kārya-yogena*—because of some obligation; *kenacit*—somehow; *jāyate*—arises; *cirāt*—after a long time.

**We enjoy the pleasure of seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face only once in a while, when after long times absent He visits us on some business.**

Kṛṣṇa did return to Hastināpura a few times after the Kurukṣetra war, as when Yudhiṣṭhira invited Him to attend the Aśvamedha sacrifices. But these few visits were far too short to allay the pain of separation the Pāṇḍavas suffered most of the time.

## यादवानेव सद्बन्धून् द्वारकायामसौ वसन् । सदा परमसद्भाग्यवतो रमयति प्रियान् ॥

*yādavān eva sad-bandhūn  
dvārakāyām asau vasan  
sadā parama-sad-bhāgya-  
vato ramayati priyān*

*yādavān*—the Yādavas; *eva*—alone; *sat*—true; *bandhūn*—His friends; *dvārakāyām*—in Dvārakā; *asau*—He; *vasan*—residing; *sadā*—always; *parama*—supreme; *sat-bhāgya-vataḥ*—who possess good fortune; *ramayati*—He gives satisfaction; *priyān*—to His dear friends.

**The Yādavas alone are His true friends. Living always with them in Dvārakā, He is always busy satisfying those dear and supremely fortunate friends.**

Nārada might suggest to the Pāṇḍavas that Kṛṣṇa will soon finish His

business and return to them, because to Kṛṣṇa they are dearer than anyone else. No, Yudhiṣṭhira replies, the Yādavas are even more dear. Kṛṣṇa very much favors the Yādavas simply because they are the most exalted members of the Lord's own dynasty. Moreover, the Yādavas are endowed with the priceless treasure of pure love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Kṛṣṇa goes out of His way to keep them always happy. Yudhiṣṭhira reasons that since the Yādavas are enjoying Kṛṣṇa's company and the Pāṇḍavas are not, the Yādavas must be more favored.

अस्मासु यत्तस्य कदापि दौत्यं  
सारथ्यमन्यच्च भवद्विरीक्ष्यते ।  
तद्भूरिभारक्षपणाय पाप-  
नाशेन धर्मस्य च रक्षणाय ॥

*asmāsu yat tasya kadāpi dautyam  
sārathyam anyac ca bhavadbhir īkṣyate  
tad bhūri-bhāra-kṣapaṇāya pāpa-  
nāśena dharmasya ca rakṣaṇāya*

*asmāsu*—in connection with us; *yat*—which; *tasya*—His; *kadā api*—on occasions; *dautyam*—carrying messages; *sārathyam*—driving chariots; *anyat*—other engagements; *ca*—and; *bhavadbhiḥ*—by your good self; *īkṣyate*—are seen; *tat*—that; *bhūri*—heavy; *bhāra*—of debts; *kṣapaṇāya*—for the absolving; *pāpa*—of sinful reactions; *nāśena*—by the destroying; *dharmasya*—of religious principles; *ca*—and; *rakṣaṇāya*—for the protecting.

From time to time you have observed Him carrying messages, driving chariots, and doing other services for us. But He does these things only to absolve Himself of His debts to us, destroy our sins, and protect our religious principles.

In addition to acting as the Pāṇḍavas' messenger, charioteer, and general servant, Kṛṣṇa also offered them advice as a royal counselor and killed irreligious miscreants on their behalf. But in Yudhiṣṭhira's opinion

the impartial Supreme Lord never acted out of preference toward the Pāṇḍavas.

### Bhīma refutes Nārada's praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
अथ श्रीयादवेन्द्रस्य भीमो नर्मसुहृत्तमः ।  
विहस्योच्चैरुवाचेदं शृणु श्रीकृष्णशिष्य हे ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*atha śrī-yādavendrasya*  
*bhīmo narma-suhṛttamaḥ*  
*vihasyocair uvācedaṁ*  
*śṛṇu śrī-kṛṣṇa-śiṣya he*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *atha*—then; *śrī-yādava-indrasya*—of the Lord of the Yādavas; *bhīmaḥ*—Bhīma; *narma-suhṛt-tamaḥ*—the closest bosom friend; *vihasya*—laughing; *uccaiḥ*—loudly; *uvāca*—said; *idam*—this; *śṛṇu*—please listen; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *śiṣya*—disciple; *he*—O.

**Śrī Parīkṣit continued:** Then Bhīma, the bosom friend of the Lord of the Yādavas, laughed loudly and said, Please listen, my dear disciple of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The word *narma* denotes natural joking between intimate friends. Bhīma was so intimate with Kṛṣṇa that Bhīma could pretend to discern in Nārada's character the faults the sage had acquired in Kṛṣṇa's association. For example, Nārada must have learned from Kṛṣṇa how to cleverly juggle the meaning of words, just as Kṛṣṇa always juggled words Himself.

अमुष्य दुर्बोधचरित्रवारिधेर्  
मायादिहेतोश्चतुरावलीगुरोः ।

## प्रवर्तते वाग्व्यवहारकौशलं न कुत्र किं तन्न वयं प्रतीमः ॥

*amuṣya durbodha-caritra-vāridher  
māyādi-hetoś caturāvalī-guroḥ  
pravartate vāg-vyavahāra-kauśalam  
na kutra kiṁ tan na vyaṁ pratīmaḥ*

*amuṣya*—of Him; *durbodha*—difficult to understand; *caritra*—of activities; *vāri-dheḥ*—who is an ocean; *māyā*—of deception; *ādi*—original; *hetoḥ*—who is the source; *catura*—of clever deceivers; *āvalī*—of the disciplic succession; *guroḥ*—who is the preceptor; *pravartate*—proceeds; *vāk*—of words; *vyavahāra*—and actions; *kauśalam*—expertise; *na*—not; *kutra*—whence; *kiṁ*—whether; *tat*—therefore; *na*—do not; *vayaṁ*—we; *pratīmaḥ*—believe.

**Kṛṣṇa is the original source of illusion, the guru of all clever deceivers. His acts are fathomless like an ocean. We have little faith in the many crafty things He says and does. Doesn't He have all sorts of motives?**

*Māyā* means “magic,” and it also means “material nature,” the source of illusion in the created world. Kṛṣṇa is the source of *māyā* in both senses of the word. In Bhīma's opinion, Kṛṣṇa is too unpredictable and deceptive to trust. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa acts just for His personal enjoyment, sometimes He manufactures illusions out of mere curiosity, and sometimes He uses His wit to intentionally bewilder His devotees. In any case, His motive is never simple affection, and the games He plays are not real. Since Bhīma and his brothers are experienced men of the world, they are not going to put any trust in such behavior.

Arjuna refutes Nārada's praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
सशोकमवदन् मातस्ततो मम पितामहः ।



कृष्णप्राणसखः श्रीमानर्जुनो निःश्वसन् मुहुः ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
sa-śokam avadan mātāḥ  
tato mama pitāmahaḥ  
kṛṣṇa-prāṇa-sakhaḥ śrīmān  
arjuno niḥśvasan muhuḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; sa-śokam—sadly; avadat—spoke; mātāḥ—O mother; tataḥ—then; mama—my; pitāmahaḥ—paternal grandfather; kṛṣṇa—of Kṛṣṇa; prāṇa-sakhaḥ—the intimate friend; śrīmān—blessed; arjunaḥ—Arjuna; niḥśvasan—sighing; muhuḥ—again and again.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Then, dear mother, my grandfather Śrīmān Arjuna, the intimate friend of Kṛṣṇa, dejectedly spoke, sighing again and again.

Bhīma was Kṛṣṇa's *narma-sakha*, the Lord's bosom friend, but Arjuna was Kṛṣṇa's *prāṇa-sakha*; that is, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna were dearer to one another than life. Arjuna was glorious, *śrīmān* (blessed by the goddess of fortune), because of his intimate friendship with Kṛṣṇa. It was painful for Arjuna to think about the friend he now rarely saw.

श्रीभगवानर्जुन उवाच  
भवत्प्रियतमेशेन भगवन्नमुना कृतः ।  
कृपाभरोऽपि दुःखाय किलास्माकं बभूव सः ॥

śrī-bhagavān arjuna uvāca  
bhavat-priyatameśena  
bhagavann amunā kṛtaḥ  
kṛpā-bharo 'pi duḥkhāya  
kilāsmākaṁ babhūva saḥ

śrī-bhagavān arjunaḥ uvāca—the holy Arjuna said; bhavat—your; priya-tama—most beloved; īśena—by the Lord; bhagavan—O godly one (Nārada); amunā—by Him; kṛtaḥ—bestowed; kṛpā—of mercy; bharaḥ—

great extent; *api*—even; *duḥkhāya*—leading to sorrow; *kila*—actually; *asmākam*—for us; *babhūva*—has become; *saḥ*—it.

**Blessed Arjuna said: O godly Nārada, the great mercy your beloved Lord supposedly bestowed upon us has in fact become the cause of our sorrow.**

Arjuna's relationship with Kṛṣṇa is more intimate than Bhīma's. Whereas Bhīma discounted Kṛṣṇa's kindness as a mere pretense that served other aims of His pastimes, Arjuna had to acknowledge that Kṛṣṇa's affection for the Pāṇḍavas was real. According to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa's intentions when He drove Arjuna's chariot and served the Pāṇḍavas in various ways were sincere, yet somehow the results were usually contrary.

स्वधर्मैकपरैः शुष्कज्ञानवद्भिः कृता रणे ।  
भीष्मादिभिः प्रहारा ये वर्ममर्मभिदो दूढाः ॥

ते तस्यां मत्कृते स्वस्य श्रीमूर्तौ चक्रपाणिना ।  
वर्यमाणेन च मया सोढाः स्वीकृत्य वारशः ॥

*sva-dharmaika-paraiḥ śuṣka-  
jñānavadbhiḥ kṛtā raṇe  
bhīṣmāḍibhiḥ prahārā ye  
varma-marma-bhido dṛḍhāḥ*

*te tasyāṁ mat-kṛte svasya  
śrī-mūrtau cakra-pāṇinā  
varyamāṇena ca mayā  
soḍhāḥ svī-kṛtya vāraśaḥ*

*sva-dharma*—in their personal religious principles; *eka-paraiḥ*—exclusively interested; *śuṣka*—dry; *jñāna-vadbhiḥ*—influenced by mental speculation; *kṛtāḥ*—made; *raṇe*—on the battlefield; *bhīṣma-āḍibhiḥ*—by Bhīṣma and others; *prahārāḥ*—attacks; *ye*—which; *varma*—armor; *marma*—and flesh; *bhidaḥ*—piercing; *dṛḍhāḥ*—forceful; *te*—they;

*tasyām*—upon that; *mat-kṛte*—for my sake; *svasya*—His own; *śrī-mūrtau*—divine body; *cakra-pāṇinā*—by the wielder of the Sudarśana *cakra*; *varyamāṇena*—being checked; *ca*—even; *mayā*—by me; *soḍhāḥ*—tolerated; *svī-kṛtya*—being accepted; *vāraśaḥ*—repeatedly.

**Swayed by dry speculation, concerned only with their own dharma, Bhīṣma and others on the field of war fiercely attacked Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, piercing His armor and flesh. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the Sudarśana cakra, tolerated for my sake those repeated attacks on His divine body, although I tried to stop Him.**

In texts <sup>viii</sup>62 through 70, Arjuna explains how Kṛṣṇa's good intentions often brought the Pāṇḍavas to grief. During the eighteen days of battle at Kurukṣetra, even though Kṛṣṇa had promised to take up no weapons Himself, warriors like Bhīṣma more than once attacked Him. Because Kṛṣṇa wanted Arjuna victorious at all costs, Kṛṣṇa never turned away from these attacks, but repeatedly exposed to the danger of injury His tender body, more precious to Arjuna than his own.

Bhīṣma and the others who tried to harm Kṛṣṇa justified themselves on the grounds that they were following principles of righteous warfare: *pitr-ādayo 'pi hantavyāḥ/ kṣatriyeṇa raṇāṅgane* (“On the battlefield, a *kṣatriya* should be ready to kill even his father or other relatives”). But since Kṛṣṇa is the aim of all true religious principles, the attacks on Him were unrighteous. Arjuna says that the warriors who attacked Kṛṣṇa did so because their understanding was dry and impersonal. They reasoned that since Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth He cannot feel pain when pierced by weapons, so attacking Him is not wrong. This means, Arjuna implies, that they were not pure devotees and had no real understanding of the sweet honey taste of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

The blows Kṛṣṇa received in battle seemed to penetrate His skin and draw blood. The attacks were earnest and forceful enough to have been fatal for a human fighter. More likely, however, the so-called blood flowing from Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body was actually perspiration, an ecstatic symptom of His compassion for His devotees. Kṛṣṇa's purpose was to show the world how much concern He always feels for His

devotees.

Arjuna tried to dissuade Kṛṣṇa from facing these challenges. He told Kṛṣṇa, “My Lord, since You promised not to join the fight, why are You advancing to kill Bhīṣma? Why are You accepting the blows of Bhagadatta and others while I am here to protect You?” Speaking like this, Arjuna grabbed hold of Kṛṣṇa’s feet and tried to stop Him from attacking Bhīṣma.

Ultimately, Kṛṣṇa’s sweet will is supreme. He is Cakrapāṇi, the wielder of the Sudarśana disc. With this eternal weapon He could have effortlessly warded off all attacks and killed all opponents whenever He wished. But He bore the blows of various enemies just to increase Arjuna’s fame.

तन्मे चिन्तयतोऽद्यापि हृदयान्नापसर्पति ।  
दुःखशल्यमतो ब्रह्मन् सुखं मे जायतां कथम् ॥

*tan me cintayato 'dyāpi  
hṛdayān nāpasarpati  
duḥkha-śalyam ato brahman  
sukhaṁ me jāyatām katham*

*tat*—this; *me*—of me; *cintayataḥ*—who am remembering; *adya api*—even today; *hṛdayāt*—from the heart; *na apasarpati*—does not come out; *duḥkha*—of lamentation; *śalyam*—the arrow; *ataḥ*—therefore; *brahman*—O brāhmaṇa; *sukham*—happiness; *me*—my; *jāyatām*—can arise; *katham*—how.

Even today, O brāhmaṇa, as I remember those incidents, I cannot remove the arrow of grief from my heart. How then can I feel any happiness?

कर्मणा येन दुःखं स्यान् निजप्रियजनस्य हि ।  
न तस्याचरणं प्रीतेः कारुण्यस्यापि लक्षणम् ॥

*karmaṇā yena duḥkhaṁ syān  
nija-priya-janasya hi*

na tasyācaraṇam prīteḥ  
kāruṇyasyāpi lakṣaṇam

karmaṇā—because of action; yena—which; duḥkham—unhappiness; syāt—comes about; nija—one's own; priya-janasya—for the beloved; hi—certainly; na—not; tasya—his; ācaraṇam—behavior; prīteḥ—of affection; kāruṇyasya—of compassion; api—or; lakṣaṇam—a sign.

Acts that bring pain to a dear one are not a sign of compassion or love.

भीष्मद्रोणादिहननान् निवृत्तं मां प्रवर्तयन् ।  
महाज्ञानिवरः कृष्णो यत्किञ्चिदुपदिष्टवान् ॥

यथाश्रुतार्थश्रवणाच्छुष्कज्ञानिसुखप्रदम् ।  
महादुःखकृदस्माकं भक्तिमाहात्म्यजीविनाम् ॥

bhīṣma-droṇādi-hananān  
nivṛttam mām pravartayan  
mahā-jñāni-varaḥ kṛṣṇo  
yat kiñcid upadiṣṭavān

yathā-śrutārtha-śravaṇāc  
chuṣka-jñāni-sukha-pradam  
mahā-duḥkha-kṛd asmākaṁ  
bhakti-māhātmya-jīvinām

bhīṣma-droṇa-ādi—of Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and others; hananāt—from the killing; nivṛttam—who was withdrawn; mām—me; pravartayan—inducing to act; mahā-jñāni—of wise scholars; varaḥ—the best; kṛṣṇaḥ—Kṛṣṇa; yat kiñcit—what little; upadiṣṭavān—He instructed; yathā-śruta—literal; artha—the meaning; śravaṇāt—by hearing; śuṣka—dry; jñāni—to scholars; sukha—pleasure; pradam—giving; mahā-duḥkha—great pain; kṛt—giving; asmākaṁ—to us; bhakti-māhātmya—the glories of pure devotional service; jīvinām—whose very life.

When I refused to kill Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and others, Kṛṣṇa, the best of wise scholars, taught me something to induce me to go ahead and kill them. Hearing only the literal meaning of what Kṛṣṇa taught may please dry scholars, but to us whose life and soul lies in glorifying pure devotional service, those instructions by the Lord give great pain.

The *Upaniṣads* convey the essence of Vedic knowledge, and *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* conveys the essence of the *Upaniṣads*. Various exalted sages became the receivers, or *ṛṣis*, of each of the *Upaniṣads*, but Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa chose to speak His own *Gītā* directly to His friend and devotee Arjuna. Because Arjuna is too humble to think himself great and is disappointed by Kṛṣṇa's having left the Pāṇḍavas, he does not consider himself a favored devotee of Kṛṣṇa's. Therefore he tries to deny the transcendental value of the *Gītā*. This is only a ploy, however, to distract Nārada; Arjuna's argument here is not valid. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa teaches pure devotional service, and He chose to speak it to Arjuna because Arjuna is one of His purest devotees:

*sarvopaniṣado gāvo  
dogdhā gopāla-nandanah  
pārtho vatsaḥ su-dhīr bhoktā  
dugdham gītāmṛtaṁ mahat*

“This *Gītā*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the essence of all the *Upaniṣads*, is just like a cow, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is famous as a cowherd boy, is milking this cow. Arjuna is just like a calf, and learned scholars and pure devotees are to drink the nectarean milk of *Bhagavad-gītā*.” (*Gītā-māhātmya* 6)

तात्पर्यस्य विचारेण कृतेनापि न तत्सुखम् ।  
किञ्चित्करोत्युतामुष्य वञ्चनां किल बोधनात् ॥

*tātparyasya vicāreṇa  
kṛtenāpi na tat sukham  
kiñcit karoty utāmuṣya  
vañcanām kila bodhanāt*

*tātparyasya*—of the purport; *vicāreṇa*—by careful consideration; *kṛtena*—made; *api*—even; *na*—not; *tat*—that; *sukham*—happiness; *kiñcit*—any; *karoti*—creates; *uta*—rather; *amuṣya*—His; *vañcanām*—deception; *kila*—indeed; *bodhanāt*—due to remembrance.

**Even carefully studying the purport of those instructions has not made me any happier. Rather, His words only make me remember how He deceived me.**

According to all the Vaiṣṇava commentators—including Śrīdhara Svāmī, Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Jīva Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa—the purport of *Bhagavad-gītā* is that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Truth and that the perfection of life is to serve Him with devotion. But in the ecstasy of separation, Arjuna reads the purport otherwise: He thinks Kṛṣṇa spoke these instructions just to trick him into agreeing to kill his teachers Bhīṣma and Droṇa.

**यत्सदा सर्वथा शुद्धनिरुपाधिकृपाकरे ।  
तस्मिन् सत्यप्रतिज्ञे सन्मित्रवर्ये महाप्रभौ ॥**

**विश्वस्तस्य दृढं साक्षात्प्राप्तात्तस्मान् मम प्रियम् ।  
महामनोहराकारान् न परब्रह्मणः परम् ॥**

*yat sadā sarvathā śuddha-  
nirupādhi-kṛpākare  
tasmin satya-pratijñe san-  
mitra-varye mahā-prabhau*

*viśvastasya dṛḍham sākṣāt  
prāptāt tasmān mama priyam  
mahā-manoharākārān  
na para-brahmaṇaḥ param*

*yat*—which; *sadā*—always; *sarvathā*—in all ways; *śuddha*—pure; *nirupādhi*—unconditional; *kṛpā-ākare*—for the reservoir of mercy;

*tasmin*—Him; *satya*—true; *pratijñe*—whose promise; *sat*—true; *mitra*—of friends; *varye*—the best; *mahā-prabhau*—the supreme controller; *viśvastasya*—who have faith; *dṛḍham*—firmly; *sākṣāt*—in person; *prāptāt*—due to delivering; *tasmāt*—than Him; *mama*—to me; *priyam*—dear; *mahā-manah-hara*—all-enchanting; *ākārāt*—whose form; *na*—not; *para-brahmaṇaḥ*—than the Supreme Brahman; *param*—greater.

**No one is dearer to me than the Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa, with His all-enchanting beautiful form. He has given Himself to me, who have complete faith in Him. He is the reservoir of pure unconditional mercy, the upholder of His word, the best of well-wishing friends, the omnipotent Lord of all.**

Here Arjuna admits His firm trust in Kṛṣṇa. This solid faith is the reality underlying Arjuna's ecstatic consciousness. His contrary expressions of apparent distrust are countercurrents of secondary ecstasies, which increase his pleasure, the pleasure of his beloved Lord, and the pleasure of the *rasika* devotees like Nārada to whom he divulges these feelings. In this verse Arjuna states four reasons for His complete trust in Kṛṣṇa: First, Kṛṣṇa is merciful unconditionally. Second, He always fulfills His promises, such as the one He made to Arjuna before the Battle of Kurukṣetra: *na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati* ("My devotee never perishes"). Third, He is the most reliable friend and benefactor. And fourth, He is the Supreme Lord, able to do anything.

Remembering these qualities of Kṛṣṇa — and His exquisite beauty and the intimate friendship He kindly shared — Arjuna confesses that for him Kṛṣṇa is everything. But for this very reason, Arjuna cannot bear to consider that Kṛṣṇa would intentionally deceive him into killing his teachers on the pretext of giving him spiritual instructions.

**Nakula and Sahadeva refute Nārada's praise**

**श्रीनकुलसहदेवावूचतुः**



यद्विपद्गणतो धैर्यं वैरिवर्गविनाशनम् ।  
अश्वमेधादि चास्माकं श्रीकृष्णः समपादयत् ॥

यच्च तेन यशो राज्यं पुण्याद्यप्यन्यदुर्लभम् ।  
व्यतनोद्भगवंस्तेन नास्य मन्यामहे कृपाम् ॥

*śrī-nakula-sahadevāv ūcatuḥ  
yad vipad-gaṇato dhairyaṁ  
vairi-varga-vināśanam  
aśvamedhādi cāsmākaṁ  
śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ samapādayat*

*yac ca tena yaśo rājyaṁ  
puṇyādy apy anya-durlabham  
vyatanod bhagavaṁs tena  
nāsyā manyāmahe kṛpām*

*śrī-nakula-sahadevau ūcatuḥ*—Śrī Nakula and Sahadeva said; *yat*—which; *vipat-gaṇataḥ*—in the face of many dangers; *dhairyaṁ*—steadfastness; *vairi-varga*—of our numerous enemies; *vināśanam*—the destruction; *aśva-medha-ādi*—the Aśvamedha and other sacrifices; *ca*—and; *asmākaṁ*—our; *śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *samapādayat*—arranged for; *yat*—which; *ca*—and; *tena*—by Him; *yaśaḥ*—fame; *rājyaṁ*—kingdom; *puṇya-ādi*—pious credits and so on; *api*—also; *anya*—by others; *durlabham*—difficult to obtain; *vyatanot*—He expanded; *bhagavan*—O godly one; *tena*—by this; *na*—not; *asya*—His; *manyāmahe*—we consider; *kṛpām*—mercy.

Śrī Nakula and Sahadeva said: Yes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave us steadfastness in the face of many dangers. He arranged for the doom of all our enemies and for our success in the Aśvamedha and other sacrifices. He expanded our fame, kingdom, and pious credits, which others could hardly hope to attain. But, O godly Nārada, we do not deem this evidence of His mercy.

किन्त्वनेकमहायज्ञोत्सवं सम्पादयन्नसौ ।  
स्वीकारेणाग्रपूजाया हर्षयेन्नः कृपा हि सा ॥

*kintv aneka-mahā-yajño-  
tsavam sampādayann asau  
svī-kāreṇāgra-pūjāyā  
harṣayen naḥ kṛpā hi sā*

*kintu—rather; aneka—multiple; mahā-yajña—of sacrifices; utsavam—  
for the festival; sampādayan—arranging; asau—He; svī-kāreṇa—by the  
acceptance; agra-pūjāyāḥ—of the first worship; harṣayet—He delighted;  
naḥ—us; kṛpā—mercy; hi—really; sā—that.*

Rather, He gave us His real mercy when, in the festival of many great sacrifices He had arranged, He delighted us by accepting the first worship.

अधुना वञ्चितास्तेन वयं जीवाम तत्कथम् ।  
तद्दर्शनमपि ब्रह्मन् यन्नोऽभूदतिदुर्घटम् ॥

*adhunā vañcitās tena  
vayaṁ jīvāma tat katham  
tad-darśanam api brahman  
yan no 'bhūd ati-durghaṭam*

*adhunā—now; vañcitāḥ—cheated; tena—by Him; vāyam—we; jīvāma—  
can continue to live; tat—that; katham—why; tat—of Him; darśanam—  
the sight; api—even; brahman—O brāhmaṇa; yat—which; naḥ—for us;  
abhūt—there was; ati-durghaṭam—very difficult to obtain.*

Now He has cheated us by going away, so how can we continue to live? Before, O brāhmaṇa, at least we had the sight of Him, so difficult to obtain!

Like their brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva judge Kṛṣṇa's mercy on them by whether or not He gives them His personal association. They

could think themselves fortunate only as long as they could be with Him and see Him, at the Rājasūya sacrifice and on other occasions.

### Draupadī refutes Nārada's praise

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्छ्रुत्वा वचनं तेषां द्रौपदी शोकविह्वला ।  
संस्तभ्य यत्नादात्मानं क्रन्दन्त्याह सगद्गदम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tac chrutvā vacanam teṣām*  
*draupadī śoka-vihvalā*  
*saṁstabhya yatnād ātmānam*  
*krandanty āha sa-gadgadam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat*—those; *śrutvā*—hearing; *vacanam*—words; *teṣām*—of theirs; *draupadī*—Draupadī; *śoka*—with sorrow; *vihvalā*—overwhelmed; *saṁstabhya*—calming; *yatnāt*—with effort; *ātmānam*—her mind; *krandantī*—crying; *āha*—she said; *sa-gadgadam*—with a choking voice.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Hearing the words of the Pāṇḍavas, Draupadī was overwhelmed with sorrow. Calming herself with great effort, she spoke, crying, in a choked voice.

श्रीकृष्णोवाच  
श्रीकृष्णेन मम प्राणसखेन बहुधा त्रपा ।  
निवारणीया दुष्टाश्च मारणीयाः किलेदृशः ॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇovāca*  
*śrī-kṛṣṇena mama prāṇa-*  
*sakhena bahudhā trapā*

*nivāraṇīyā duṣṭāś ca  
māraṇīyāḥ kiledṛśaḥ*

*śrī-kṛṣṇā uvāca*—Śrī Kṛṣṇā (Draupadī) said; *śrī-kṛṣṇena*—by Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *mama*—my; *prāṇa-sakhena*—intimate friend; *bahudhā*—repeatedly; *trapā*—shame; *nivāraṇīyā*—averted; *duṣṭāḥ*—evil persons; *ca*—and; *māraṇīyāḥ*—killed; *kila*—indeed; *īdṛśaḥ*—who were like this.

Śrī Kṛṣṇā [Draupadī] said: So many times my intimate friend Śrī Kṛṣṇa saved me from shame, and so many times He killed wicked rascals like the Kauravas!

कर्तव्योऽनुग्रहस्तेन सदेत्यासीन्मतिर्मम ।  
अधुना पतितास्तातभ्रातृपुत्रादयोऽखिलाः ॥

*kartavyo 'nugrahas tena  
sadety āsīn matir mama  
adhunā patitās tāta-  
bhrātr-putrādayo 'khilāḥ*

*kartavyaḥ*—will be shown; *anugrahaḥ*—mercy; *tena*—by Him; *sadā*—always; *iti*—thus; *āsīt*—was; *matih*—opinion; *mama*—my; *adhunā*—now; *patitāḥ*—fallen; *tāta*—father; *bhrātr*—brother; *putra-ādayaḥ*—sons and others; *akhilāḥ*—all.

I thought He would always show us mercy, but now my father, brother, and sons have all fallen in battle.

तत्रापि विदधे शोकं न तदिच्छानुसारिणी ।  
किन्त्वैच्छं प्राप्नुमात्मेष्टं किञ्चित्तत्तच्छलात्फलम् ॥

*tatrāpi vidadhe śokaṁ  
na tad-icchānusāriṇī  
kintv aicchaṁ prāptum ātmeṣṭaṁ  
kiñcit tat-tac-chalāt phalam*

*tatra api*—nonetheless; *vidadhe*—expressed; *śokaṁ*—lamentation; *na*—

not; *tat*—His; *icchā*—desire; *anusāriṇī*—following faithfully; *kintu*—but; *aiccham*—I hoped; *prāptum*—to achieve; *ātma-iṣṭam*—personal desire; *kiñcit*—some; *tat-tat-chalāt*—on one pretext or another; *phalam*—the fruit.

**Nonetheless I don't lament, for by nature I accept whatever He may desire. But I had hoped that on one pretext or another He would arrange for my desires to be fulfilled.**

Duryodhana, Duḥśāsana, and their friends had tormented Draupadī with their unspeakably wicked behavior. Draupadī knows that Kṛṣṇa alone saved her and her husbands from this abuse. Although her husbands, by their arms, had killed their many enemies, it was Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potencies that had drawn the doomed warriors into fratricidal combat, and Kṛṣṇa's will that had sealed their fate. Even after Draupadī's father, Drupada, her brother Dhṛṣṭadyumna, and her five sons, headed by Prativindhya, had all perished at Kurukṣetra, she hoped against hope that Kṛṣṇa would somehow make her happy again.

तेन सान्त्वयितव्याहं हतबन्धुजना स्वयम् ।  
श्रीकृष्णेनोपविश्यात्र मत्पार्श्वे युक्तिपाटवैः ॥

tena sāntvayitavyāham  
hata-bandhu-janā svayam  
śrī-kṛṣṇenopaviśyātra  
mat-pārśve yukti-pāṭavaiḥ

*tena*—by Him; *sāntvayitavyā*—being pacified; *aham*—I; *hata*—killed; *bandhu-janā*—whose family members; *svayam*—personally; *śrī-kṛṣṇena*—by Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *upaviśya*—sitting; *atra*—here; *mat-pārśve*—at my side; *yukti*—of logical arguments; *pāṭavaiḥ*—with expert means.

**After my family members were killed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally sat here at my side and expertly consoled me with persuasive arguments.**

तानि तानि ततस्तस्य पातव्यानि मया सदा ।

## मधुराणि मनोज्ञानि स्मितवाक्यामृतानि हि ॥

*tāni tāni tatas tasya  
pātavyāni mayā sadā  
madhurāṇi manojñāni  
smīta-vākyāṁṛtāni hi*

*tāni tāni*—each of the various; *tataḥ*—thus; *tasya*—His; *pātavyāni*—imbibed; *mayā*—by me; *sadā*—always; *ma-dhurāṇi*—charming; *manajñāni*—pleasing to the mind; *smīta*—with smiles; *vākya*—words; *amṛtāni*—immortal; *hi*—indeed.

**I always drink the immortal nectar of those charming words, so pleasing to the mind, and the smiles that went with them.**

With His sweet, compassionate words, Kṛṣṇa had filled Draupadī's heart with new hope. Despite the material disaster and loss, Draupadī could be consoled by recalling how Kṛṣṇa had sat and talked with her in concern, and how attractive His words and smiling face had been.

### Kuntī refutes Nārada's praise

तदस्तु दूरे दौर्भाग्यान् मम पूर्ववदप्यसौ ।  
नायात्यतो दया कास्य मन्तव्या मयका मुने ॥

*tad astu dūre daurbhāgyān  
mama pūrva-vad apy asau  
nāyāty ato dayā kāsya  
mantavyā mayakā mune*

*tat*—that; *astu*—let it be; *dūre*—at a distance; *daurbhāgyāt*—due to the misfortune; *mama*—my; *pūrva-vat*—as before; *api*—even; *asau*—He; *na āyāti*—does not come; *ataḥ*—therefore; *dayā*—mercy; *kā*—what; *asya*—His; *mantavyā*—should be thought; *mayakā*—upon me; *mune*—O sage.

Even so, it is my misfortune that He no longer comes here. So how, dear sage, can I think He has shown me any mercy?

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच

शोकार्तेव ततः कुन्ती कृष्णदर्शनजीवना ।  
सास्रं सकरुणं प्राह स्मरन्ती तत्कृपाकृपे ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*śokārteva tataḥ kuntī*  
*kṛṣṇa-darśana-jīvanā*  
*sāsraṁ sa-karuṇaṁ prāha*  
*smarantī tat-kṛpākṛpe*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *śoka*—by sorrow; *ārtā*—tormented; *iva*—as if; *tataḥ*—then; *kuntī*—Kuntī; *kṛṣṇa-darśana*—the sight of Kṛṣṇa; *jīvanā*—whose very life; *sa-asram*—tearfully; *sa-karuṇam*—pitifully; *prāha*—she spoke; *smarantī*—remembering; *tat*—His; *kṛpā*—mercy; *akṛpe*—and lack of mercy.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Mother Kuntī, for whom the sight of Kṛṣṇa was life, seemed tormented with sorrow, remembering how Kṛṣṇa had at times shown His mercy and at other times not. She then spoke, pitifully, with tears in her eyes.

Like her sons and their wife, Kuntī is a transcendental soul, blessed with the full mercy of Kṛṣṇa. This is the truth, no matter what she says. The ecstasy of separation, *vipralambha-bhāva*, impelled her to complain sorrowfully as if an ordinary woman. Parīkṣit Mahārāja qualifies his description here by saying *śokārtā iva*, “as if lamenting,” to help clarify the real situation.

श्रीपृथोवाच

अनाथायाः सपुत्राया ममापङ्गणतोऽसकृत् ।  
त्वरया मोचनात्सम्यग्देवकीमातृतोऽपि यः ।

## कृपाविशेषः कृष्णस्य स्वस्यामनुमितो मया ॥

śrī-pr̥thovāca  
anāthāyāḥ sa-putrāyā  
mamāpad-gaṇato 'sakṛt  
tvarayā mocanāt samyag  
devakī-mātṛto 'pi yaḥ  
kṛpā-viśeṣaḥ kṛṣṇasya  
svasyām anumito mayā

śrī-pr̥thā uvāca—Śrī Pṛthā said; anāthāyāḥ—who had no protector; sa-putrāyāḥ—along with her sons; mama—of me; āpat-gaṇataḥ—from the many calamities; asakṛt—repeatedly; tvarayā—without delay; mocanāt—because of being freed; samyak—complete; devakī-mātṛtaḥ—more than Mother Devakī; api—even; yaḥ—which; kṛpā—mercy; viśeṣaḥ—special; kṛṣṇasya—of Kṛṣṇa; svasyām—on myself; anumitaḥ—was inferred; mayā—by me.

Śrī Pṛthā [Kuntī] said: I had no husband to protect me, but Kṛṣṇa always interceded just in time to save me and my sons from calamity. From this I understood that Kṛṣṇa's mercy on me was special, greater even than His mercy on His mother, Devakī.

Queen Kuntī, in her famous prayers to Kṛṣṇa, compares her relation with Kṛṣṇa to Devakī's:

yathā hṛṣikeśa khalena devakī  
kaṁsena ruddhāti-ciraṁ śucārpitā  
vimocitāhaṁ ca sahātmajā vibho  
tvayaiva nāthena muhur vipad-gaṇāt

“O Hṛṣikeśa, master of the senses and Lord of lords, You have released me and my children and Your mother, Devakī, who was long imprisoned and distressed by the envious King Kaṁsa, from a series of constant dangers.

viśān mahāgneḥ puruṣāda-darśanād



*asat-sabhāyā vana-vāsa-kṛcchrataḥ  
mṛdhe mṛdhe 'neka-mahā-rathāstrato  
drauṇy-astrataś cāsma hare 'bhirakṣitāḥ*

“My dear Kṛṣṇa, Your Lordship has protected us from a poisoned cake, from a great fire, from cannibals, from the vicious assembly, from sufferings during our exile in the forest, and from the battle where great generals fought. And now You have saved us from the weapon of Aśvatthāmā.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.8.23–24)

Śrīmatī Kuntī here implies that Kṛṣṇa's mercy on her differs from His mercy on Devakī. Kṛṣṇa saved Devakī from Kāṁsa's persecution, but only after Devakī had been imprisoned for a long time. Moreover, He released Devakī only once, and even when freed she was still unhappy because Kṛṣṇa had not rescued the first six of her sons from murder by Kāṁsa. But Kṛṣṇa saved Kuntī repeatedly, together with her sons. Kṛṣṇa always came to their rescue without delay—when Duryodhana tried to feed Bhīma a poisoned cake, when Duryodhana tried to burn the Pāṇḍavas alive in a palace made of lac, when the brothers had to face man-eating Rākṣasas like Hiḍimba, when they were cheated by the Kauravas in gambling, and on numerous other occasions. Devakī had protectors other than Kṛṣṇa, including her husband and other Vṛṣṇi heroes, whereas for Kuntī, Kṛṣṇa was the only shelter. Kuntī therefore considered her own dependence on Kṛṣṇa more complete.

**स चाधुनात्मनोऽन्येषामपि गेहेषु सर्वतः ।  
स्त्रीणां निहतबन्धूनां महारोदनसंश्रुतेः ।  
मनस्यपि पदं जातु न प्राप्नोति कियन्मम ॥**

*sa cādhunātmano 'nyeṣām  
api geheṣu sarvataḥ  
strīṇām nihata-bandhūnām  
mahā-rodana-saṁśruteḥ  
manasy api padam jātu  
na prāpnoti kiyan mama*

*saḥ*—that (special mercy); *ca*—and; *adhunā*—now; *ātmanaḥ*—my own;

*anyeṣām*—and of others; *api*—also; *geheṣu*—in the homes; *sarvataḥ*—all around; *strīṇām*—of the women; *nihata*—slain; *bandhūnām*—whose relatives; *mahā-rodana*—the loud crying; *saṁśruteḥ*—by hearing; *manasi*—in the mind; *api*—even; *padam*—place; *jātu*—at all; *na prāpnoti*—does not find; *kiyat*—any; *mama*—my.

**But now the thought that Kṛṣṇa is merciful to me never enters my mind, for everywhere, in our home and the homes of our neighbors, I hear the loud mourning of the women whose relatives have been slain.**

In the aftermath of the devastating battle at Kurukṣetra, Kuntī cannot even think to herself that Kṛṣṇa has special affection for her family. Certainly while speaking to others she is reluctant to say anything about Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

**अतस्तद्दर्शनत्यक्ताः सम्पदः परिहृत्य वै ।  
आपदः प्रार्थितास्तस्मिन्मया तद्दर्शनापिकाः ॥**

*atas tad-darśana-tyaktāḥ  
sampadaḥ parihṛtya vai  
āpadaḥ prārthitās tasmin  
mayā tad-darśanāpikāḥ*

*ataḥ*—therefore; *tat-darśana*—of seeing Him; *tyaktāḥ*—deprived; *sampadaḥ*—riches; *parihṛtya*—taking away; *vai*—certainly; *āpadaḥ*—calamities; *prārthitāḥ*—prayed for; *tasmin*—from Him; *mayā*—by me; *tat-darśana*—the sight of Him; *āpikāḥ*—which cause.

**Therefore, deprived of seeing Him, I begged Kṛṣṇa to take away our wealth and give us more calamities to bring Him again within our sight.**

Though her family has won back their kingdom, Kuntī still sees no happiness, because they no longer can see Kṛṣṇa. They were happier when struggling against one danger after another. Thus Kuntī prayed to Kṛṣṇa:

*vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śaśvat*

tatra tatra jagad-guro  
bhavato darśanam yat syād  
apunar-bhava-darśanam

“I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated births and deaths.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.8.25)

A devotee who has seen the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa is guaranteed liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee sees also that this liberation (*apunar-bhava-darśanam*) is nothing compared with the pleasure of serving Kṛṣṇa in one's own relationship with Him.

दत्त्वा निष्कण्टकं राज्यं पाण्डवाः सुखिता इति ।  
मत्वाधुना विहायास्मान् द्वारकायामवस्थितम् ॥

dattvā niṣkaṇṭakam rājyam  
pāṇḍavāḥ sukhitā iti  
matvādhunā vihāyāsmān  
dvārakāyām avasthitam

*dattvā*—delivering; *niṣkaṇṭakam*—freed from thorns; *rājyam*—their kingdom; *pāṇḍavāḥ*—the Pāṇḍavas; *sukhitāḥ*—are satisfied; *iti*—thus; *matvā*—thinking; *adhunā*—now; *vihāya*—abandoning; *asmān*—us; *dvārakāyām*—in Dvārakā; *avasthitam*—is residing.

Kṛṣṇa gave the Pāṇḍavas their kingdom, freed from thorny opponents. Now, thinking the brothers satisfied, He has abandoned us and resides in Dvārakā.

अतोऽत्र तस्यागमनेऽप्याशा मेऽपगता बत ।  
मन्येऽधुनात्मनः शीघ्रमरणं तदनुग्रहम् ॥

ato 'tra tasyāgamane  
'py āśā me 'pagatā bata

manye 'dhunātmanah śīghra-  
maraṇam tad-anugraham  
ataḥ—thus; atra—here; tasya—His; āgamane—for the coming; api—  
even; āśā—hope; me—my; apagatā—dispelled; bata—alas; manye—I  
think; adhunā—now; ātmanah—my; śīghra—quick; maraṇam—death;  
tat—His; anugraham—mercy.

So I have given up hope that He will ever come back. Now I think His  
real mercy would be my quick death.

### Kuntī directs Nārada to the Yādavas

बन्धुवत्सल इत्याशातन्तुर्यश्चावलम्बते ।  
स त्रुट्येद्यदुभिस्तस्य गाढसम्बन्धमर्शनात् ॥

bandhu-vatsala ity āśā-  
tantur yaś cāvalambate  
sa truṭyed yadubhis tasya  
gāḍha-sambandha-marśanāt  
bandhu—to friends and relatives; vatsalaḥ—He is compassionate; iti—  
thus; āśā—of hope; tantuḥ—the thread; yaḥ—which; ca—and;  
avalambate—hangs down; saḥ—it; truṭyet—would break; yadubhiḥ—  
with the Yadus; tasya—His; gāḍha—intense; sambandha—connection;  
marśanāt—because of considering.

My last thread of hope—that Kṛṣṇa is always compassionate to His  
friends and relatives—can easily break if I simply consider how strongly  
He is attached to the Yadus.

Yudhiṣṭhira reached this same conclusion, that the Pāṇḍavas cannot  
hope to compete for Kṛṣṇa's attention with the Yādavas of Dvārakā. The  
Yādavas, as Kṛṣṇa's family members, have first claim on Kṛṣṇa. They are  
His uncles, cousins, and sons. And from Kuntī's point of view, the

Yādavas, much more strongly than the Pāṇḍavas, are connected with Kṛṣṇa as His loving servants.

तद्याहि तस्य परमप्रियवर्गमुख्यान्  
श्रीयादवान् निरुपमप्रमदाब्धिमग्नान् ।  
तेषां महत्त्वमतुलं भगवंस्त्वमेव  
जानासि तद्वयमहो किमु वर्णयेम ॥

*tad yāhi tasya parama-priya-varga-mukhyān  
śrī-yādavān nirupama-pramadābdhi-magnān  
teṣāṁ mahattvam atulaṁ bhagavaṁs tvam eva  
jānāsi tad vāyam aho kim u varṇayema*

*tat*—therefore; *yāhi*—you should go; *tasya*—His; *parama*—topmost; *priya-varga*—of beloved associates; *mukhyān*—principal; *śrī-yādavān*—to the divine Yādavas; *nirupama*—incomparable; *pramada*—of joy; *abdhi*—in an ocean; *magnān*—who are immersed; *teṣāṁ*—their; *mahattvam*—greatness; *atulaṁ*—unequaled; *bhagavan*—O saintly Nārada; *tvam*—you; *eva*—indeed; *jānāsi*—know; *tat*—that; *vāyam*—we; *aho*—oh; *kim*—how; *u*—indeed; *varṇayema*—can explain.

Therefore, go see the divine Yādavas, the Lord's most beloved associates, who live immersed in a vast, unequaled ocean of joy. My lord Nārada, you know very well how great they are. What can I tell you about their glories?

Nārada, Kuntī says, should go to Dvārakā to see the Yādavas, follow the example of their devotion, and achieve the mercy of their association. They are the best of all the Supreme Lord's exalted devotees, including Brahmā and the other demigods in the heavenly planets, Garuḍa and the other *pārśadas* of Vaiṣṇava, and Prahlāda, Hanumān, and other Vaiṣṇavas in the world of mortals. Kuntī thinks that because the Yādavas are absorbed in ecstasy, Nārada's ecstasy will certainly increase in their company. Remaining with Kuntī and the Pāṇḍavas, however, will only drag him down into misery.

In case Nārada suggests he can derive enough satisfaction simply by hearing about the Yādavas from Kuntī and her sons, Kuntī reminds him that he already knows the residents of Dvārakā better than the Pāṇḍavas do. Since Nārada has visited Dvārakā many times, what can Kuntī tell him that he does not already know? He should just go to Dvārakā, where he can see Kṛṣṇa's full mercy.

### Nārada sees the Yādavas in Dvārakā

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
 भो यादवेन्द्रभगिनीसुतपत्नि मातः  
 श्रीद्वारकां मुनिवरस्त्वरयागतोऽसौ ।  
 दण्डप्रणामनिकरैः प्रविशन् पुरान्तरं  
 दूराद्दर्श सुभगान् यदुपुङ्गवांस्तान् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*

*bho yādavendra-bhaginī-suta-patni mātah  
 śrī-dvārakām muni-varas tvarayāgato 'sau  
 daṇḍa-praṇāma-nikaraiḥ praviśan purāntar  
 dūrād dadarśa su-bhagān yadu-puṅgavāms tāt*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *bhoḥ*—O; *yādava-indra*—of Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the Yādavas; *bhaginī*—of the sister (Subhadrā); *suta*—of the son (Abhimanyu); *patni*—O wife; *mātah*—O mother; *śrī-dvārakām*—at Śrī Dvārakā; *muni-varaḥ*—the best of sages; *tvarayā*—quickly; *āgataḥ*—arrived; *asau*—he; *daṇḍa-praṇāma*—of prostrate obeisances; *nikaraiḥ*—with a multitude; *praviśan*—entering; *pura-antaḥ*—the inner city; *dūrāt*—from a distance; *dadarśa*—he saw; *su-bhagān*—fortunate; *yadu*—of the Yadus; *puṅgavān*—the heroes; *tāt*—them.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: O mother, O wife of Lord Yādavendra's nephew, the exalted sage Nārada swiftly arrived at Śrī Dvārakā. He entered the inner

city, repeatedly offering prostrate obeisances, and saw from a distance the fortunate Yadu heroes.

Śrīmatī Subhadrā is the sister of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the worshipable Lord of the Yadu dynasty. And Uttarā, the wife of Subhadrā's son Abhimanyu, gave birth to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Therefore, if the Yadus are as fortunate as the Pāṇḍavas describe, Parīkṣit's mother also shares in their blessedness by being a member of the family.

सभायां श्रीसुधर्मायां सुखासीनान् यथाक्रमम् ।  
निजसौन्दर्यभूषाढ्यान् पारिजातस्रगाचितान् ॥

*sabhāyām śrī-sudharmāyām*  
*sukhāsīnān yathā-kramam*  
*nija-saundarya-bhūṣāḍhyān*  
*pārijāta-srag-ācitān*

*sabhāyām*—in the assembly hall; *śrī-sudharmāyām*—the blessed Sudharmā; *sukha*—at ease; *āsīnān*—sitting; *yathā-kramam*—in order of importance; *nija*—their own; *saundarya*—with the bodily beauty; *bhūṣā*—and ornaments; *āḍhyān*—resplendent; *pārijāta*—of *pārijāta* flowers; *srag*—with garlands; *ācitān*—adorned.

He beheld them sitting at ease in the blessed assembly hall Sudharmā. Ranked in order of importance, they sat resplendent with the ornaments of their own bodily beauty, and were further adorned with garlands of *pārijāta*.

Texts <sup>ix</sup>91 through 96 describe the splendor of the Yadus. Nārada found the Yadu rulers convened in the hall Sudharmā, which had belonged originally to the heavenly kingdom of Indra. Under the Yadus, however, the glory of Sudharmā had increased. Now, even more than while in Svargaloka, it manifested *śrī*, the opulence and favor of Lakṣmīdevī, the supreme goddess of fortune.

Free from envy and petty rivalry, the Yadus sat happily in order of seniority by age. Although they were all fabulously rich and powerful, they had no desires for anything material. Their treasure in life was the

prize of their dynasty, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They accepted the trappings of royalty only because these were suitable for their service to Kṛṣṇa and gave Him pleasure. The heavenly hall Sudharmā and the priceless jewels, garments, and *pārijāta* garlands added nothing to the natural beauty of their transcendental bodies, which shone with the splendor of their pure love for Kṛṣṇa and for one another.

दिव्यातिदिव्यसङ्गीतनृत्यादिपरमोत्सवैः ।  
सेव्यमानान् विचित्रोक्त्या स्तूयमानांश्च वन्दिभिः ॥

*divyāti-divya-saṅgīta-  
nṛtyādi-paramotsavaiḥ  
sevyamānān vicitroktyā  
stūyamānāṁś ca vandibhiḥ*

*divya-ati-divya*—most celestial; *saṅgīta*—of singing; *nṛtya*—dancing; *ādi*—and so on; *parama*—excellent; *utsavaiḥ*—with festivals; *sevyamānān*—being served; *vicitra*—wonderful; *uktyā*—with words; *stūyamānāḥ*—being praised; *ca*—and; *vandibhiḥ*—by bards.

**They were being regaled by festive song and dance in the most celestial style, and praised by bards in splendidly tasteful words.**

The music, dance, and drama performed in the Yadu assembly were *divya*, equal to those heard and seen in Indra's Svarga, and also *ati-divya*, equal to those in Lord Nārāyaṇa's Vaikuṇṭha. All perfections of this world and the kingdom of God attended the Yadus like menial servants.

अन्योन्यं चित्रनर्मोक्तिकेलिभिर्हसतो मुदा ।  
सूर्यमाक्रामतः स्वाभिः प्रभाभिर्माधुरीमयान् ॥

*anyonyam citra-narmokti-  
kelibhir hasato mudā  
sūryam ākrāmataḥ svābhiḥ  
prabhābhir mādhuri-mayān*

*anyonyam*—among one another; *citra*—bright; *narma-ukti*—with jokes;



*kelibhiḥ*—and sporting; *hasataḥ*—laughing; *mudā*—happily; *sūryam*—the sun; *ākrāmataḥ*—eclipsing; *svābhiḥ*—their own; *prabhābhiḥ*—by the effulgences; *mādhurī-mayān*—who were full of charm.

**The Yādavas laughed among one another and exchanged clever jokes and quips, the effulgence of their bodies surpassing that of the sun, their personalities full of charm.**

Although the light radiating from the bodies of the Yadus was more brilliant than the sun, that effulgence, unlike the sun globe's, did not pain the eyes, because of the Yadus' very gentle and pleasing natures.

नानाविधमहादिव्यविभूषणविचित्रितान् ।  
कांश्चित्प्रवयसोऽप्येषु नवयौवनमापितान् ।  
श्रीकृष्णवदनाम्भोजसुधातुसानभीक्षणशः ॥

*nānā-vidha-mahā-divya-  
vibhūṣaṇa-vicitritān  
kāṁścit pravayasa 'py eṣu  
nava-yauvanam āpitān  
śrī-kṛṣṇa-vadanāmbhoja-  
sudhā-tr̥ptān abhīkṣaśaḥ*

*nānā-vidha*—of various kinds; *mahā-divya*—very precious; *vibhūṣaṇa*—with ornaments; *vicitritān*—decorated; *kāṁścit*—some; *pravayasaḥ*—elderly; *api*—even; *eṣu*—among them; *nava-yauvanam*—new youth; *āpitān*—having obtained; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vadana-ambhoja*—of the lotus face; *sudhā*—by the nectar; *tr̥ptān*—satisfied; *abhīkṣaśaḥ*—constantly.

**Many kinds of precious ornaments decorated the Yādavas. And even some of the most elderly members of the assembly had obtained new youth by constantly enjoying the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face.**

The perpetual youth of even the oldest among the Yadus is affirmed by Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

tatra pravayaso 'py āsan  
yuvāno 'ti-balaujasah  
pibanto 'kṣair mukundasya  
mukhāmbuja-sudhām muhuḥ

“Even the most elderly residents of the city appeared youthful, full of strength and vitality, for with their eyes they constantly drank the elixir of Lord Mukunda’s lotus face.” (Bhāgavatam 10.45.19)

उग्रसेनं महाराजं परिवृत्य चकाशतः ।  
प्रतीक्षमाणान् श्रीकृष्णदेवागमनमादरात् ॥

ugrasenam mahā-rājam  
parivṛtya cakāśataḥ  
pratīkṣamāṇān śrī-kṛṣṇa-  
devāgamanam ādarāt

*ugrasenam*—Ugrasena; *mahā-rājam*—the ruling monarch; *parivṛtya*—surrounding; *cakāśataḥ*—glowing; *pratīkṣamāṇān*—awaiting; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-deva*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva; *āgamanam*—the arrival; *ādarāt*—respectfully.

**Surrounding Mahārāja Ugrasena, the Yādavas glowed brilliantly, as with reverent eagerness they awaited the arrival of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.**

King Ugrasena sat on his throne in the midst of the assembly, served with his white umbrella, yak-tail fans, and other royal emblems. Reflecting the king’s imperial potency, all the Yādava princes glowed brilliantly, like many suns in the sky. But even though commanding so much material power, every one of them wanted nothing but to see Kṛṣṇa and be with Him. Kṛṣṇa joined them every day in their assembly, yet every day they awaited His arrival with great eagerness. He was their *deva*, their only object of worship.

तदन्तःपुरवर्त्मक्षव्यग्रमानसलोचनान् ।  
तत्कथाकथनासक्तानसंख्यान् कोटिकोटिशः ॥

*tad-antaḥ-pura-vartmekṣā-  
vyagra-mānasa-locanān  
tat-kathā-kathanāsaktān  
asaṅkhyān koṭi-koṭīśaḥ*

*tat*—His; *antaḥ-pura*—to the inner palace; *vartma*—toward the path; *īkṣā*—whose glances; *vyagra*—excited; *mānasa*—minds; *locanān*—and eyes; *tat*—about Him; *kathā*—topics; *kathana*—in discussing; *āsaktān*—absorbed; *asaṅkhyān*—innumerable; *koṭi-koṭīśaḥ*—millions upon millions.

**Countless millions of Yādavas waited, absorbed in talk about Kṛṣṇa, their minds and eyes anxiously focused on the path from Kṛṣṇa’s inner palace.**

Just as anyone who feels at ease talks about what is on his mind, the Yādavas naturally discussed Kṛṣṇa—the pastimes He had performed on various occasions and also the business at hand with Him in the royal assembly. The Yādavas had no inclination to talk or think about anything not involving Kṛṣṇa.

The dynasty of the Yādavas was so populous that Śukadeva Gosvāmī thought them practically uncountable:

*yadu-vaṁśa-prasūtānām  
puṁsām vikhyāta-karmaṇām  
saṅkhyā na śakyate kartum  
api varṣa-śatair nṛpa*

*tisraḥ koṭyaḥ sahasrāṇām  
aṣṭāśīti-śatāni ca  
āsan yadu-kulācāryāḥ  
kumārāṇām iti śrutam*

“The Yadu dynasty produced innumerable great men of famous deeds. Even in hundreds of years, O king, one could never count them all. I have heard from authoritative sources that the Yadu family employed 38,800,000 teachers just to educate their children.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.90.40–41)

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī explains that the number of teachers cited by Śukadeva Gosvāmī is a conservative estimate, obtained from hearsay, but the number might be much higher. Since teachers often take responsibility for dozens of students, the total number of school-aged boys in the Yadu family is beyond estimation, and they are only a fraction of the whole family.

ज्ञात्वा तं यदवोऽभ्येत्य धावन्तः सम्भ्रमाकुलाः ।  
उत्थाप्य प्रसभं पाणौ धृत्वा निन्युः सभान्तरम् ॥

*jñātvā taṁ yadavo 'bhyetya  
dhāvantaḥ sambhramākulāḥ  
utthāpya prasabhaṁ pāṇau  
dhṛtvā ninyuḥ sabhāntaram*

*jñātvā*—discovering; *taṁ*—him (Nārada); *yadavaḥ*—the Yadus; *abhyetya*—coming forward; *dhāvantaḥ*—running; *sambhrama*—by respectful eagerness; *ākulāḥ*—agitated; *utthāpya*—raised him; *prasabham*—quickly; *pāṇau*—his hands; *dhṛtvā*—taking; *ninyuḥ*—they led him; *sabhā*—the assembly hall; *antaram*—inside.

As soon as the Yadus learned that Nārada had arrived, they came running out in a flurry. They quickly raised him from the ground, took him by his hands, and led him into the assembly hall.

महादिव्यासने दत्तेऽनुपविष्टं तदिच्छया ।  
भूमावेवोपवेश्यामुं परितः स्वयमासत ॥

*mahā-divyāsane datte  
'nupaviṣṭaṁ tad-icchayā  
bhūmāv evopaveśyāmuṁ  
paritaḥ svayam āsata*

*mahā*—large; *divya*—heavenly; *āsane*—on a seat; *datte*—offered; *anupaviṣṭam*—not sitting; *tat*—his (Nārada's); *icchayā*—by the desire; *bhūmau*—on the ground; *eva*—only; *upaveśya*—seating; *amum*—him;

*paritaḥ*—surrounding; *svayam*—themselves; *āsata*—sat.

They offered him a large heavenly seat, but he refused to sit on it. Yielding to his desire, they gave him a place to sit on the ground, and they all sat down around him.

### Nārada praises the Yādavas

देवर्षिप्रवरोऽमीभिः पूजाद्रव्यं समाहृतम् ।  
नत्वा साञ्जलिरुत्थाय विनीतो मुहुराह तान् ॥

*devarṣi-pravaro 'mībhiḥ*  
*pūjā-dravyam samāhṛtam*  
*natvā sāñjalir utthāya*  
*vinīto muhur āha tān*

*deva-ṛṣi*—of sages among the demigods; *pravaraḥ*—the chief; *amībhiḥ*—by them; *pūjā*—for worship; *dravyam*—the paraphernalia; *samāhṛtam*—brought forward; *natvā*—bowing; *sa-añjaliḥ*—with folded hands; *utthāya*—standing up; *vinītaḥ*—humbly; *muhur*—at some length; *āha*—he spoke; *tān*—to them.

When they brought paraphernalia for worship, the chief sage among the gods bowed his head to it with folded hands. He then stood up and humbly spoke to them at length.

श्रीनारद उवाच  
भोः कृष्णपादाब्जमहानुकम्पिता लोकोत्तरा मामधुना दयध्वम् ।  
युष्माकमेवाविरतं यथाहं कीर्तिं प्रगायन् जगति भ्रमेयम् ॥

*śrī-nārada uvāca*  
*bhoḥ kṛṣṇa-pādābja-mahānukampitā*  
*lokottarā mām adhunā dayadhvam*

*yuṣmākam evāviratam yathāham  
kīrtim pragāyan jagati bhrameyam*  
śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; *bhoḥ*—O; *kṛṣṇa-pāda-abja*—of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet; *mahā-anukampitāḥ*—greatest recipients; *loka-uttarāḥ*—O you who transcend the material world; *mām*—to me; *adhunā*—today; *dayadhvam*—please be merciful; *yuṣmākam*—your; *eva*—indeed; *aviratam*—incessantly; *yathā*—so that; *aham*—I; *kīrtim*—the glories; *pragāyan*—singing constantly; *jagati*—throughout the universe; *bhrameyam*—may wander.

Śrī Nārada said: O greatest receivers of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, you are all transcendental persons. Today please be merciful to me. Please bless me that I may wander always throughout the universe, constantly singing your glories.

Nārada would rather not waste time glorifying anyone but the Yādavas.

अहो अलं श्लाघ्यतमं यदोः कुलं  
चकास्ति वैकुण्ठनिवासितोऽपि यत् ।  
मनुष्यलोको यदनुग्रहादयं  
विलङ्घ्य वैकुण्ठमतीव राजते ॥

*aho alam ślāghya-tamam yadoḥ kulam  
cakāsti vaikuṇṭha-nivāsito 'pi yat  
manuṣya-loko yad-anugrahād ayam  
vilaṅghya vaikuṇṭham atīva rājate*  
*aho*—oh; *alam*—indeed; *ślāghya-tamam*—most praiseworthy; *yadoḥ*—of the Yadus; *kulam*—the family; *cakāsti*—they are radiant; *vaikuṇṭha-nivāsitaḥ*—than the residents of Vaikuṇṭha; *api*—even; *yat*—in that; *manuṣya-lokaḥ*—the human race; *yat*—whose; *anugrahāt*—by the grace; *ayam*—this; *vilaṅghya*—surpassing; *vaikuṇṭham*—Vaikuṇṭha; *atīva*—extremely; *rājate*—is glorious.

Indeed, this family of the Yadus is most praiseworthy! You are more radiant than the residents of Vaikuṇṭha! By your grace this world of men has surpassed Vaikuṇṭha and attained supreme glory.

In Vaikuṇṭha the Personality of Godhead has many splendid associates, whose character and opulence are universally praiseworthy and attractive. Nārada is surprised to see that the earthly inhabitants of Dvārakā are still more exalted than Garuḍa and other Vaikuṇṭha associates. The Yādavas have mercifully spread pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa throughout Martyaloka, the world of short-lived human beings. Thus they have made this mortal realm more splendorous than Vaikuṇṭha. The devotees of Vaikuṇṭha are certainly favored by the Supreme Lord, but not as much as the devotees of Dvārakā.

वृत्ता धरित्रि भवती सफलप्रयासा  
यस्यां जनुर्वसतिः केलिचयः किलैषाम् ।  
येषां महाहरिरयं निवसन् गृहेषु  
कुत्रापि पूर्वमकृतै रमते विहारैः ॥

*vṛttā dharitri bhavatī saphala-prayāsā  
yasyām janur vasatiḥ keli-cayaḥ kilaiṣām  
yeṣām mahā-harir ayam nivasan grheṣu  
kutrapī pūrvam akṛtai ramate vihāraiḥ*

*vṛttā*—well-situated; *dharitri*—O earth; *bhavatī*—being; *sa-phala*—fruitful; *prayāsā*—whose endeavor; *yasyām*—upon whom; *januḥ*—the birth; *vasatiḥ*—residence; *keli*—of pastimes; *cayaḥ*—abundance; *kila*—indeed; *eṣām*—of them (the Yādavas); *yeṣām*—whose; *mahā-hariḥ*—Lord Hari; *ayam*—this; *nivasan*—dwelling; *grheṣu*—in the homes; *kutra api*—anywhere; *pūrvam*—previously; *akṛtaiḥ*—never performed; *ramate*—He enjoys; *vihāraiḥ*—with pastimes.

Most fortunate Mother Earth, by your fruitful endeavors these Yadus have manifest upon your surface their birth, residence, and pleasing acts. The Supreme Lord Hari resides in their homes and enjoys with them

**unprecedented transcendental pastimes.**

Nārada's shifting moods of ecstasy lead him momentarily to stop addressing the Yādavas and turn instead to the planet earth, upon whom Śrī Dvārakā-dhāma has descended. The presiding goddess of the earth is certainly familiar with the *līlās* of Lord Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha and the *līlās* of His various *avatāras*. She has witnessed many of these pastimes, and from the *Purāṇas* she knows others. But what she sees now in the sacred district of Dvārakā is altogether unprecedented: the Lord of the spiritual and material universes consorting with His servants as their intimate relative.

येषां दर्शनसम्भाषास्पर्शानुगमनासनैः ।  
भोजनोद्वाहशयनैस्तथान्यैर्देहिकैर्दुर्दैः ॥

दुश्छेदैः प्रेमसम्बन्धैरात्मसम्बन्धतोऽधिकैः ।  
बद्धः स्वर्गापवर्गेच्छां छित्त्वा भक्तिं विवर्धयन् ॥

कृष्णो विस्मृतवैकुण्ठो विलासैः स्वैरनुक्षणम् ।  
नवं नवमनिर्वाच्यं वितनोति सुखं महत् ॥

*yeṣāṁ darśana-sambhāṣā-  
sparśānugamanāsanaiḥ  
bhojanodvāha-śayanais  
tathānyair daihikair dṛḍhaiḥ*

*duśchedaiḥ prema-sambandhair  
ātma-sambandhato 'dhikaiḥ  
baddhaḥ svargāpavargecchām  
chittvā bhaktiṁ vivardhayan*

*kṛṣṇo viśmṛta-vaikuṇṭho  
vilāsaiḥ svair anu-kṣaṇam*



*navam navam anirvācyam  
vitanoti sukham mahat*

*yeṣām—of whom; darśana—by the seeing; sambhāṣā—talking; sparśa—touching; anugamana—walking behind; āsanaiḥ—and sitting; bhojana—by eating; udvāha—marriages; śayanaiḥ—and sleeping; tathā—also; anyaiḥ—by other; daihikaiḥ—bodily activities; dṛḍhaiḥ—firm; duśchedaiḥ—unbreakable; prema-sambandhaiḥ—by loving relationships; ātma-sambandhataḥ—than meditational relationships in the heart; adhikaiḥ—which are greater; baddhaḥ—bound; svarga—for heaven; apavarga—and liberation; icchām—the desires; chittvā—severing; bhaktim—devotion; vivardhayan—increasing; kṛṣṇaḥ—Kṛṣṇa; vismṛta—who has forgotten; vaikunṭhaḥ—Vaikunṭha; vilāsaiḥ—by the pastimes; svaiḥ—His own; anu-kṣaṇam—at every moment; navam navam—ever-fresh; anirvācyam—indescribable; vitanoti—He spreads; sukham—pleasure; mahat—great.*

**Kṛṣṇa has now forgotten Vaikunṭha, for He is bound by intense, unbreakable loving exchanges with these Yadus. He sees the Yadus, touches them, talks with them, sits with them. He eats and sleeps with them, follows them when they walk, takes part in their marriage ceremonies, and shares in their other activities of embodied life. These relations are more tangible than the yogīs' union with Him in meditation. Thus, by His pastimes Kṛṣṇa spreads among the Yadus infinite pleasure, ever fresh and indescribable, destroying any desire they might have for heaven or liberation, and increasing more and more their devotion to Him.**

Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended to earth not only for His own enjoyment but also to give pleasure to His devotees. Some of the Yadus might once have harbored desires to attain the higher celestial worlds and associate with Kṛṣṇa there. Some of the Yadus, in fact, had descended from the planets of the demigods, so in their human pastimes they might naturally have felt an urge to return to heaven. But after they lived for some time with Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā such unsuitable desires in their hearts dissolved. The

Yadus lost every trace of interest in liberation from the cycle of *samsāra*, because they wanted never to be deprived of the opportunity to take birth again and again in the company of Kṛṣṇa.

The Yadus' meditation on Kṛṣṇa is much more strongly focused than the *dhāraṇā* and *samādhi* of *yogīs*. Whereas impersonal meditators fall prey to various distractions even in their so-called perfection of *samādhi*, Kṛṣṇa's devotees in Dvārakā, in their *kṛṣṇa-samādhi*, cannot be shaken in any way, at any time, by anyone or anything. Nothing can distract their meditation, because at every moment they experience the incomparable happiness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

To achieve limited versions of spiritual perfection, with dimensions of happiness that are monotonous and meager compared to pure devotional service, conditioned souls must undergo disciplines like the eightfold *yoga* process. The Yadus, however, have purely spiritual bodies and therefore have no need to submit their bodies and minds to *yoga* discipline. They are eternal friends of Yogeśvara, the master of all *yoga*. Instead of struggling to cultivate some inward meditation, in the company of Kṛṣṇa they effortlessly enjoy in various ways with all their senses. As recorded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.82.29–30), King Yudhiṣṭhira tells the Yādavas:

*yad-viśrutih śruti-nutedam alaṁ punāti  
pādāvanejana-payaś ca vacaś ca śāstram  
bhūḥ kāla-bharjita-bhagāpi yad-aṅghri-padma-  
sparśottha-śaktir abhivarṣati no 'khilārthān*

*tad-darśana-sparśanānupatha-prajalpa-  
śayyāsanāśana-sayauna-sapiṇḍa-bandhaḥ  
yeṣāṁ gr̥he nīraya-vartmani vartatām vaḥ  
svargāpavarga-viramaḥ svayam āsa viṣṇuḥ*

“The water that has washed His feet, the words He speaks in the form of the revealed scriptures, and His fame, as broadcast by the *Vedas*—these thoroughly purify this universe. Although the earth's good fortune was ravaged by time, the touch of His lotus feet has revitalized her, and

thus she is raining down on us the fulfillment of all our desires. The same Lord Viṣṇu who makes one forget the goals of heaven and liberation has now entered into marital and blood relationships with you, who otherwise travel on the hellish path of family life. Indeed, in these relationships you see and touch Him directly, walk beside Him, converse with Him, and together with Him sit at ease, lie down to rest, and take your meals.”

In these two verses, spoken during the meeting of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees at Kurukṣetra, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira congratulates the Yādavas for the supreme fortune of their intimacy with Kṛṣṇa. The water that has washed Kṛṣṇa’s feet, in the form of the river Gaṅgā, purifies the whole universe of its sins. His instructions, in the form of the *Vedas*, educate human society to the standard of natural spiritual life, free from illusion. But despite His constant presence in these two forms, in course of time the earth picks up, from the creatures she supports, more sinful contamination than she can bear. Her glory then becomes a mere shadow of what it was. To deliver the earth from misfortune, therefore, Kṛṣṇa appears in the Yadu dynasty. Just by the touch of His lotus feet she regains her former strength and can once again shower the Lord’s devotees with the fulfillment of their needs and desires. The Yadus especially are so satisfied living on the earth with Kṛṣṇa that they entirely forget about heaven and liberation. They prefer to stay entangled in their relations with Him through marriage (*sa-yauna*) and birth (*sa-piṇḍa*).

**शय्यासनाटनालापक्रीडास्नानाशनादिषु ।  
वर्तमाना अपि स्वान् ये कृष्णप्रेम्णा स्मरन्ति न ॥**

*śayyāsanāṭanālāpa-  
krīḍā-snānāśanādiṣu  
vartamānā api svān ye  
kṛṣṇa-premṇā smaranti na*

*śayyā*—in sleeping; *āsana*—sitting; *aṭana*—walking; *ālāpa*—speaking; *krīḍā*—playing; *snāna*—bathing; *aśana*—eating; *ādiṣu*—and other activities; *vartamānāḥ*—being engaged; *api*—although; *svān*—their own

(possessions and families); *ye*—who; *kṛṣṇa-premṇā*—because of their pure love for Kṛṣṇa; *smaranti na*—do not remember.

**While eating, sleeping, sitting, walking, speaking, bathing, enjoying diversions, the Yadus are so absorbed in pure love for Kṛṣṇa that they even forget their own families and possessions.**

Love for Kṛṣṇa is a deep ocean, in which His pure devotees dive to their hearts' content. Thus fully immersed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the Yadus were oblivious of their material assets, including their families and their own bodies. All the riches in this world could not divert their attention.

This statement by Nārada parallels Śukadeva's words at the end of the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (10.90.46):

*śayyāsanāṭanālāpa-  
krīḍā-snānāśanādiṣu  
na viduḥ santam ātmānam  
vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasah*

“The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing, eating, and so on they forgot their own bodies.” Thus Kṛṣṇa once told His wife Satyā:

*ete hi yādavāḥ sarve  
mad-gaṇā eva bhāmini  
sarvadā mat-priyā devi  
mat-tulya-guṇa-śālinah*

“Dear willful goddess, every one of these Yādavas is My eternal associate. They are always dear to Me, and their virtues are equal to My own.”

**महाराजाधिराजायमुग्रसेन महाद्भुतः ।  
महासौभाग्यमहिमा भवतः केन वर्ण्यताम् ॥**

*mahā-rājādhirājāyam  
ugrasena mahādbhutaḥ  
mahā-saubhāgya-mahimā  
bhavataḥ kena varṇyatām*

*mahā-rāja*—of great kings; *adhirāja*—O sovereign king; *ayam*—this; *ugrasena*—O Ugrasena; *mahā-adbhutaḥ*—most astonishing; *mahā-saubhāgya*—of the great fortune; *mahimā*—the glory; *bhavataḥ*—your; *kena*—by whom; *varṇyatām*—can be described.

**O Ugrasena, king of exalted kings! Who can describe the extent of your astonishing great fortune?**

Many other kings, including Yudhiṣṭhira, are subordinate to Mahārāja Ugrasena. The special favor Kṛṣṇa has shown him is visible to all but cannot be adequately described.

**अहो महाश्चर्यतरं चमत्कारभराकरम् ।  
पश्य प्रियजनप्रीतिपारवश्यं महाहरेः ॥**

*aho mahāścaryataram  
camatkāra-bharākaram  
paśya priya-jana-prīti-  
pāra-vaśyam mahā-hareḥ*

*aho*—oh; *mahā-āścarya-taram*—most completely amazing; *camatkāra*—of wonderment; *bhara*—of an excess; *ākaram*—the mine; *paśya*—just see; *priya-jana*—of dear devotees; *prīti*—to the love; *pāra-vaśyam*—the subservience; *mahā-hareḥ*—of the Supreme Lord Hari.

**Oh, just see the utterly amazing, infinitely wonderful ways in which the Supreme Lord Hari submits to the love of His dear devotees!**

Kṛṣṇa's mercy is the *ākara*, or birthplace, of everything wondrously appreciable. His selfless concern for His devotees is always astonishing, especially when He willingly submits to their control.

**यदुराज भवन्तं स निषण्णं परमासने ।**

अग्रे सेवकवत्तिष्ठन् सम्बोधयति सादरम् ॥

yadu-rāja bhavantam sa  
niṣaṇṇam paramāśane  
agre sevaka-vat tiṣṭhan  
sambodhayati sādaram

yadu-rāja—O king of the Yadus; bhavantam—you; saḥ—He; niṣaṇṇam—sitting; parama-āsane—on your great throne; agre—in front; sevaka-vat—like a servant; tiṣṭhan—standing; sambodhayati—addresses; sa-ādaram—with reverence.

O king of the Yadus, as you sit on your great throne, that same Hari stands before you like a servant and addresses you with reverence.

भो निधारय देवेति भृत्यं मामादिशेति च ।  
तद्वद्वचो नमोऽभीक्ष्णं भवत्सम्बन्धिने नमः ॥

bho nidhāraya deveti  
bhṛtyam mām ādiśeti ca  
tad bhavadbhyo namo 'bhikṣṇam  
bhavat-sambandhine namaḥ

bhoḥ—O; nidhāraya—please consider; deva—My lord; iti—thus saying; bhṛtyam—your servant; mām—Me; ādiśa—please order; iti—thus; ca—and; tat—therefore; bhavadbhyāḥ—to you; namaḥ—obeisances; abhikṣṇam—constantly; bhavat—your; sambandhine—to the relatives; namaḥ—obeisances.

He says, “My lord, please consider... Please order Me, your servant.” I therefore offer constant obeisances to you and to all your relatives.

The word bhṛtya means “servant” in two senses: “order carrier” and “maintained dependent.” Kṛṣṇa played both roles in relation to His great-grandfather Ugrasena. On one occasion Kṛṣṇa told him:

mayi bhṛtya upāsīne

*bhavato vibudhādayaḥ  
balim haranty avanatāḥ  
kim utānye narādhipāḥ*

“Since I am present in your entourage as your personal attendant, all the demigods and other exalted personalities will come with heads bowed to offer you tribute. What, then, to speak of the rulers of men?” (Bhāgavatam 10.45.14) Uddhava also told Vidura:

*tat tasya kainkaryam alaṁ bhṛtān no  
viglāpayaty aṅga yad ugrasenam  
tiṣṭhan niṣaṇṇaṁ parameṣṭhi-dhiṣṇye  
nyabodhayad deva nidhārayeti*

“Kṛṣṇa used to stand before King Ugrasena, who was sitting on the royal throne, and submit explanations before him, saying, ‘O My lord, please let it be known to you.’ Does it not pain us, Kṛṣṇa’s servitors, when we remember this?” (Bhāgavatam 3.2.22)

Nārada concludes that of all the Vaiṣṇavas he has visited thus far, Ugrasena is the greatest. Nārada offers homage to him and to everyone who has any relationship with him.

### The Yādavas direct Nārada to Uddhava

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततो ब्रह्मण्यदेवानुवर्तिनो यदवोऽखिलाः ।  
सपादग्रहणं नत्वा मातरुर्चुर्महामुनिम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tato brahmaṇya-devānu-  
vartino yadavo 'khilāḥ  
sa-pāda-grahaṇaṁ natvā  
mātar ūcur mahā-munim*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tataḥ*—then; *brahmaṇya-deva*—of the Supreme Lord, who favors the *brāhmaṇas*; *anuvartinaḥ*—followers; *yadavaḥ*—the Yādavas; *akhilāḥ*—all; *sa*—with; *pāda-grahaṇam*—touching of His feet; *natvā*—bowing; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *ūcuḥ*—they said; *mahā-munim*—to the great sage.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: The Yādavas were all faithful followers of the Supreme Lord, the Lord who favors the *brāhmaṇas*. Dear mother, those Yādavas then bowed down together to the great sage, touched his feet, and spoke to him as follows.

श्रीयादवा ऊचुः  
श्रीकृष्णस्यापि पूज्यस्त्वमस्मदीयमहाप्रभोः ।  
कथमस्मान् महानीचान् नीचवन् नमसि प्रभो ॥

*śrī-yādavā ūcuḥ*  
*śrī-kṛṣṇasyāpi pūjyas tvam*  
*asmadīya-mahā-prabhoḥ*  
*katham asmān mahā-nīcān*  
*nīca-van namasi prabho*

*śrī-yādavāḥ ūcuḥ*—the fortunate Yadus said; *śrī-kṛṣṇasya*—by Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *api*—even; *pūjyaḥ*—worshipable; *tvam*—you; *asmadīya*—of persons like us; *mahā-prabhoḥ*—who is the supreme master; *katham*—why; *asmān*—to us; *mahā-nīcān*—most lowly; *nīca-vat*—like a lowly person; *namasi*—you are offering respects; *prabho*—O venerable one.

The fortunate Yādavas said: Even our supreme master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, worships you. Why then, O venerable sage, are you acting like a lowly person by offering respects to us, the most lowly?

जितवाक्पतिनैपुण्य यदिदं नस्त्वयोदितम् ।  
तदसम्भावितं न स्याद्यादवेन्द्रप्रभावतः ॥



jita-vāk-pati-naipuṇya  
yad idam nas tvayoditam  
tad asambhāvitam na syād  
yādavendra-prabhāvataḥ

*jita*—who has defeated; *vāk-pati*—the master of all speech, Brahmā; *naipuṇya*—the expertise; *yad*—what; *idam*—this; *naḥ*—to us; *tvayā*—by you; *uditam*—spoken; *tad*—that; *asambhāvitam*—impossible; *na*—not; *syāt*—can be; *yādava-indra*—of the Lord of the Yadus; *prabhāvataḥ*—by the power.

**You can defeat the wit of even Brahmā, the master of speech. And so, by the power of our Lord Yādavendra, what you have said to us cannot be untrue.**

On one hand, the Yādavas listening to Nārada are inclined to discount Nārada's description of themselves as exaggerated flattery. Thus they call Nārada the most expert word juggler. On the other hand, when Kṛṣṇa is personally involved, anything is possible. They are His family members, and Nārada is one of His eternal Vaikuṇṭha associates. So they are forced to accept Nārada's statements as true.

तस्य केनापि गन्धेन किं वा कस्य न सिध्यति ।  
महादयाकरो योऽयं निरुपाधिसुहृत्तमः ॥

tasya kenāpi gandhena  
kim vā kasya na sidhyati  
mahā-dayākaro yo 'yam  
nirupādhi-suhṛttamaḥ

*tasya*—of Him; *kena api*—by any; *gandhena*—fragrance; *kim*—what; *vā*—or; *kasya*—by whom; *na sidhyati*—is not achieved; *mahā*—great; *dayā*—of mercy; *ākaraḥ*—reservoir; *yaḥ*—who; *āyam*—He; *nirupādhi*—unconditional; *suhṛt-tamaḥ*—best friend.

**If one has even a slight trace of a touch with Kṛṣṇa, is there anything one cannot achieve? Kṛṣṇa is a boundless reservoir of mercy and one's**

### unconditional best friend.

True compassion originates in Kṛṣṇa; or in other words, only Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees can be truly compassionate. The special quality in true compassion is that it is unconditional. Kṛṣṇa and the devotees who convey mercy on His behalf never expect any reciprocal favors. They freely distribute mercy to anyone who will take it. This is the meaning of the words *nirupādhi* and *ahaituka*, often seen in descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

महामहिमपाथोधिः स्मृतमात्रोऽखिलार्थदः ।  
दीननाथैकशरणं हीनार्थाधिकसाधकः ॥

*mahā-mahima-pāthodhiḥ*  
*smṛta-mātro 'khilārtha-daḥ*  
*dīna-nāthaika-śaraṇam*  
*hīnārthādhika-sādhakaḥ*

*mahā-mahima*—of extreme greatness; *pāthaḥ-dhiḥ*—the ocean; *smṛta*—remembered; *mātraḥ*—merely; *akhila*—all; *artha*—ambitions; *daḥ*—who grants; *dīna-nātha*—the master of the most fallen; *eka-śaraṇam*—and the only shelter; *hīna-artha*—for those who are deprived of possessions; *artha*—wealth; *adhika*—more than enough; *sādhakaḥ*—who provides.

**He is the ocean of all greatness. Simply remembering Him assures all success. He is the master and only shelter of the most fallen, the provider of everything desirable to those who have nothing to possess.**

Kṛṣṇa is not satisfied with merely fulfilling the ambitions of His devotees; He likes to bestow on His devotees more than they ever desire. Intelligent persons should take shelter of this great quality of His, which is like a vast ocean, deep and certain. Kṛṣṇa's mercy need not take long to achieve, and it pays little regard to the qualifications of those who receive it. As Nārada says here, as soon as one remembers Kṛṣṇa one's success is guaranteed, regardless of the purpose of one's endeavor. Even if one's intentions are off target, when one becomes absorbed in remembering Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates by helping one adjust those

intentions.

In particular, those who have no other shelter can be assured of Kṛṣṇa's protection. Helpless persons hoping against hope to be able to surrender to Kṛṣṇa can be confident of receiving His mercy even if they have no pious credits, philosophical knowledge, or devotional accomplishments. Considering this, the Yādavas present themselves as most fallen and unqualified and thus quite fit to be favored by Kṛṣṇa. "But so many other fallen souls can equally gain Kṛṣṇa's favor," the Yādavas further tell Nārada. "Our position is nothing unique. Your singling us out for praise is just clever word jugglery."

किन्त्वस्मासूद्धवः श्रीमान् परमानुग्रहास्पदम् ।  
यादवेन्द्रस्य यो मन्त्री शिष्यो भृत्यः प्रियो महान् ॥

*kintv asmāsūddhavaḥ śrīmān  
paramānugrahāspadam  
yādavendrasya yo mantrī  
śiṣyo bhṛtyaḥ priyo mahān*

*kintu*—but; *asmāsu*—among us; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *śrīmān*—blessed; *parama*—greatest; *anugraha*—of mercy; *āspadam*—the recipient; *yādava-indrasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *yaḥ*—who; *mantrī*—adviser; *śiṣyaḥ*—disciple; *bhṛtyaḥ*—servant; *priyaḥ*—dear; *mahān*—great.

**But among us, blessed Uddhava has received Kṛṣṇa's greatest mercy. That exalted soul is Lord Yādavendra's adviser, His disciple, His servant, and His extremely dear friend.**

Out of respect for Nārada, the Yādavas feel obliged to put aside their doubts and accept his words as true. Ultimately they cannot deny their own glories, because those glories are all inseparably related to Kṛṣṇa. All the Yādavas can do is try to minimize those glories by presenting the greater glories of a better devotee, Śrīmān Uddhava. When the Yādava princes sit in the royal assembly of Dvārakā, they are accustomed to deliberating with Kṛṣṇa on various important matters of state. But none of the Yādavas can consider himself as valuable an adviser as Uddhava.

अस्मान् विहाय कुत्रापि यात्रां स कुरुते प्रभुः ।  
न हि तद्दुःखमस्माकं दृष्टे त्वस्मिन्नपव्रजेत् ॥

*asmān vihāya kutrāpi  
yātrām sa kurute prabhuḥ  
na hi tad-duḥkham asmākaṁ  
dṛṣṭe tv asminn apavrajat*

*asmān*—us; *vihāya*—abandoning; *kutra api*—somewhere; *yātrām*—a trip; *saḥ*—He; *kurute*—makes; *prabhuḥ*—the Lord; *na*—not; *hi*—certainly; *tat*—that; *duḥkham*—distress; *asmākaṁ*—our; *dṛṣṭe*—being seen; *tu*—even; *asmin*—He; *apavrajat*—does it go away.

Sometimes the Lord abandons us to go on a journey. This gives us such distress that even when we see Him again the pain does not go away.

न जानीमः कदा कुत्र पुनरेष व्रजेदिति ।  
उद्धवो नित्यमभ्यर्णे निवसन् सेवते प्रभुम् ॥

*na jānīmaḥ kadā kutra  
punar eṣa vrajed iti  
uddhavo nityam abhyarṇe  
nivasan sevate prabhum*

*na jānīmaḥ*—we do not know; *kadā*—when; *kutra*—where; *punaḥ*—again; *eṣaḥ*—He; *vrajat*—might go; *iti*—thus; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *nityam*—always; *abhyarṇe*—by His side; *nivasan*—residing; *sevate*—serves; *prabhum*—his master.

We cannot be sure when He might go somewhere else. But Uddhava is always by His side, serving Lord Kṛṣṇa, his master, and residing with Him.

स्वगम्य एव विषये प्रेषयेद्भगवानमुम् ।  
कौरवावृतसाम्बीयमोचनादिकृते क्वचित् ॥

*sva-gamya eva viṣaye  
preṣayed bhagavān amum  
kauravāvṛta-sāmbīya-  
mocanādi-kṛte kvacit*

*sva-gamye*—for which He Himself should go; *eva*—indeed; *viṣaye*—on a matter; *preṣayet*—may send; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *amum*—him (Uddhava); *kaurava*—by the Kauravas; *āvṛta*—captured; *sāmbīya*—of Sāmba; *mocana*—of the releasing; *ādi*—and so on; *kṛte*—for the sake; *kvacit*—sometimes.

Sometimes the Lord, the Personality of Godhead, sends Uddhava on missions on which the Lord Himself should go. For example, the Lord sent him to gain the release of Sāmba, whom the Kauravas had taken captive.

Kṛṣṇa sent Uddhava on various missions—to Gokula, to Hastināpura, and elsewhere. When Sāmba, Kṛṣṇa's son, tried to elope with Duryodhana's daughter, the Kaurava army, headed by Bhīṣma and Duryodhana, captured Sāmba, and Uddhava was instrumental in arranging Sāmba's release. Nārada avoids mentioning the journey to Vraja that Uddhava undertook for Kṛṣṇa, because it is too confidential to discuss in the open assembly at Dvārakā. Uddhava enjoyed Kṛṣṇa's association constantly, but when sent out to either rescue or console the Lord's dear devotees, Uddhava felt more satisfaction than by staying with Kṛṣṇa.

यस्तिष्ठन् भोजनक्रीडाकौतुकावसरे हरेः ।  
महाप्रसादमुच्छिष्टं लभते नित्यमेकलः ॥

*yas tiṣṭhan bhojana-kṛīḍā-  
kautukāvasare hareḥ  
mahā-prasādam ucchiṣṭam  
labhate nityam ekalaḥ*

*yaḥ*—who; *tiṣṭhan*—being present; *bhojana*—of eating; *kṛīḍā*—of the sport; *kautuka*—for the enjoyment; *avasare*—on the occasions; *hareḥ*—

of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *mahā-prasādam*—the *mahā-prasāda*; *ucchiṣṭam*—remnants; *labhate*—he obtains; *nityam*—always; *ekalaḥ*—the only person.

Uddhava stays alone with Kṛṣṇa when the Lord playfully enjoys His meals. So he is the only person who can always obtain the Lord's *mahā-prasāda* remnants.

पादारविन्दद्वन्द्वं यः प्रभोः संवाहयन् मुदा ।  
ततो निद्रासुखाविष्टः शेते स्वाङ्के निधाय तत् ॥

*pādāravinda-dvandvam yaḥ*  
*prabhoḥ saṁvāhayan mudā*  
*tato nidrā-sukhāviṣṭaḥ*  
*śete svāṅke nidhāya tat*

*pāda-aravinda*—of lotus feet; *dvandvam*—the pair; *yaḥ*—who; *prabhoḥ*—of his master; *saṁvāhayan*—massaging; *mudā*—with great pleasure; *tataḥ*—then; *nidrā*—of sleep; *sukha*—the pleasure; *āviṣṭaḥ*—entering; *śete*—he lies down; *sva-aṅke*—on his own lap; *nidhāya*—placing; *tat*—them.

With great pleasure Uddhava massages his master's lotus feet and then happily falls asleep with the Lord's feet on his lap.

रहःक्रीडायां च क्वचिदपि स सङ्गे भगवतः  
प्रयात्यत्रामात्यः परिषदि महामन्त्रमणिभिः ।  
विचित्रैर्नर्मोच्चैरपि हरिकृतश्लाघनभरैर्  
मनोज्ञैः सर्वान् नः सुखयति वरान् प्रापयति च ॥

*rahaḥ-kṛīḍāyām ca kvacid api sa saṅge bhagavataḥ*  
*prayāty atrāmātyaḥ pariṣadi mahā-mantra-maṇibhiḥ*  
*vicitrair narmaughair api hari-kṛta-ślāghana-bharair*  
*manojñaiḥ sarvān naḥ sukhayati varān prāpayati ca*

*rahaḥ-kṛīḍāyām*—in confidential pleasures; *ca*—and; *kvacit*—sometimes; *api*—also; *saḥ*—he (Uddhava); *saṅge*—in the company; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Lord; *prayāti*—he goes out; *atra*—here; *amātyaḥ*—minister; *pariṣadi*—in the assembly; *mahā*—excellent; *mantra*—of advice; *maṇibhiḥ*—by gems; *vicitraiḥ*—wonderful; *narma*—of clever comments; *oghaiḥ*—by floods; *api*—and; *hari*—by Śrī Hari; *kṛta*—made; *ślāghana*—of praise; *bharaiḥ*—by the heaps; *manaḥ-jñaiḥ*—charming; *sarvān*—all; *naḥ*—to us; *sukhayati*—he causes delight; *varān*—benedictions; *prāpayati*—he causes to be granted; *ca*—and.

When the Lord goes out for confidential pleasures, Uddhava sometimes goes with Him. And when Uddhava serves as the Lord's minister in this assembly hall, his precious gems of advice and his flood of witty and charming comments earn abundant praise from Śrī Hari. They also delight all of us and fulfill all our desires.

When Kṛṣṇa visited Kubjā, Uddhava accompanied Him.

किं तस्य सौभाग्यकुलं हि वाच्यं  
वातुलतां प्राप किलायमेवम् ।  
आशैशवाद्यः प्रभुपादपद्म-  
सेवारसाविष्टतयोच्यतेऽज्ञैः ॥

*kim tasya saubhāgya-kulam hi vācyam*  
*vātulatām prāpa kilāyam evam*  
*ā-śaiśavād yaḥ prabhu-pāda-padma-*  
*sevā-rasāviṣṭatayocyate 'jñaiḥ*

*kim*—what; *tasya*—his; *saubhāgya*—of the good fortune; *kulam*—about the whole series; *hi*—indeed; *vācyam*—can be said; *vātulatām*—insanity; *prāpa*—has developed; *kila*—certainly; *ayam*—this person; *evam*—thus; *ā-śaiśavāt*—since childhood; *yaḥ*—who; *prabhu*—of his master; *pāda-padma*—the lotus feet; *sevā-rasa*—in the mood of serving; *āviṣṭatayā*—by being absorbed; *ucyate*—he is called; *ajñaiḥ*—by foolish people.

What can be said of his continuous good fortune? Since childhood he has been so absorbed in the taste of serving his master's lotus feet that foolish people call him a madman.

*Vātula* means “insane,” or, in more exact medical terms, “suffering mentally from imbalance of the vital airs (*vātas*).” When naive persons without spiritual discrimination observed Uddhava in trance, oblivious of his surroundings, or saw him babbling like someone haunted by a ghost, they would judge him such a madman.

अहो सदा माधवपादपद्मयोः  
प्रपत्तिलाम्पट्यमहत्त्वमद्भुतम् ।  
इहैव मानुष्यवपुष्यवाप  
स्वरूपमुत्सृज्य हरेः स्वरूपताम् ॥

*aho sadā mādharma-pāda-padmayoḥ*  
*prapatti-lāmpaṭya-mahattvam adbhutam*  
*ihaiva mānuṣya-vapuṣy avāpa*  
*svarūpam utsṛjya hareḥ svarūpatām*

*aho*—oh; *sadā*—always; *mādhava*—of Lord Mādhava; *pāda-padmayoḥ*—at the lotus feet; *prapatti*—for surrender; *lāmpaṭya*—of his wanton eagerness; *mahattvam*—the greatness; *adbhutam*—amazing; *iha*—in this; *eva*—indeed; *mānuṣya*—human; *vapuṣi*—body; *avāpa*—he assumed; *svarūpam*—close resemblance; *utsṛjya*—abandoning; *hareḥ*—to Śrī Hari; *svarūpatām*—his own form.

Just see how amazing is his great eagerness to surrender always at the lotus feet of Lord Mādhava! He has even forgone the normal bodily features of a human birth and instead assumed a transcendental body closely resembling that of Śrī Hari.

Born as a *kṣatriya* in the middle of India, Uddhava should have had a light complexion. Instead, by his intense affinity for Kṛṣṇa he was born with a body almost exactly like Kṛṣṇa's.



प्रद्युम्नाद्रम्यरूपः प्रभुदयिततरोऽप्येष कृष्णोपभुक्तैर्  
वन्यस्रक्पीतपट्टांशुकमणिमकरोत्तंसहारादिभिस्तैः ।  
नेपथ्यैर्भूषितोऽस्मान् सुखयति सततं देवकीनन्दनस्य  
भ्रान्त्या सन्दर्शनेन प्रियजनहृदयाकर्षणोत्कर्षभाजा ॥

*pradyumnād ramya-rūpaḥ prabhu-dayitataro 'py eṣa kṛṣṇopabhuktair  
vanya-srak-pīta-paṭṭāṁśuka-maṇi-makarottamaṣa-hārādibhis taiḥ  
nepathyair bhūṣito 'smān sukhayati satataṁ devakī-nandanasya  
bhrāntyā sandarśanena priya-jana-hṛdayākaraṇotkarṣa-bhājā*  
*pradyumnāt—than Pradyumna; ramya—more attractive; rūpaḥ—whose  
bodily form; prabhu—of his master; dayita-taraḥ—the most dear; api—  
and; eṣaḥ—he; kṛṣṇa—by Kṛṣṇa; upabhuktaiḥ—enjoyed; vanya-srak—  
garlands made of forest flowers; pīta—yellow; paṭṭa-aṁśuka—with silk  
garments; maṇi—jewels; makara-uttamaṣa—makara-shaped earrings;  
hāra—necklaces; ādibhiḥ—and so on; taiḥ—by these; nepathyaiḥ—items  
of dress; bhūṣitaḥ—decorated; asmān—us; sukhayati—he delights;  
satatam—constantly; devakī-nandanasya—with the darling son of  
Devakī; bhrāntyā—because of confusion; sandarśanena—by being seen;  
priya-jana—of the dear devotees; hṛdaya—the hearts; ākarṣaṇa—in  
attracting; utkarṣa—excellence; bhājā—which manifests.*

Uddhava's body is more beautiful than even Śrī Pradyumna's, and Uddhava is even more dear to Kṛṣṇa than Pradyumna is to Kṛṣṇa. When bedecked with jewels, pearl necklaces, yellow silk dress, forest-flower garlands, makara-shaped earrings, and other ornaments, Uddhava delights us, and we mistake him for the son of Devakī Himself. No one attracts the hearts of Kṛṣṇa's devotees more than Uddhava.

Seeing Uddhava arrayed like Kṛṣṇa was a source of delight for the Yādavas, especially when Kṛṣṇa was absent from Dvārakā and they needed relief from their pain of separation. Among the *prasāda* ornaments Uddhava would receive from Kṛṣṇa, the *vanya-srak* was a garland strung from wild forest flowers, often long enough to touch the

wearer's feet. The jewels Kṛṣṇa gave Uddhava included His own Kaustubha, which in Vaikuṇṭha no one but Lord Nārāyaṇa ever wears. The word *ādi* (“and so on”) implies Kṛṣṇa's sandalwood paste, headdresses, and other ornaments.

*Bhrāntyā* means “by mistake.” When the Yādavas saw Uddhava from a distance, they often thought he was Kṛṣṇa. And even after they realized their mistake, the sight of Uddhava still pleased them, since his exceptional beauty made them remember Kṛṣṇa's beauty. A second possible meaning of *bhrāntyā* is “moving about.” Uddhava was always passing here and there on Kṛṣṇa's business, giving the Dvārakā residents many opportunities to see him.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
मातरित्यादिकं श्रुत्वा महासौभाग्यमुत्तमम् ।  
उद्धवस्य मुनिर्गेहं गन्तुं हर्षप्रकर्षतः ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
mātar ity-ādikaṁ śrutvā  
mahā-saubhāgyam uttamam  
uddhavya munir gehaṁ  
gantum harṣa-prakarṣataḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *iti*—thus; *ādikaṁ*—and more; *śrutvā*—hearing; *mahā-saubhāgyam*—the great fortune; *uttamam*—supreme; *uddhavya*—of Uddhava; *munir*—the sage; *geham*—to the house; *gantum*—to go; *harṣa*—of joy; *prakarṣataḥ*—due to the excess.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Dear mother, after hearing these and other exalted glories of Uddhava, Nārada Muni, overjoyed, became eager to go to Uddhava's house.

**उत्थाय तस्य दिग्भागवर्त्मादातुं समुद्यतः ।  
ज्ञात्वोक्तो यदुराजेन चित्रप्रेमविकारभाक् ॥**

utthāya tasya dig-bhāga-  
vartmādātum samudyataḥ  
jñātvokto yadu-rājena  
citra-prema-vikāra-bhāk

*utthāya*—standing up; *tasya*—of him (Uddhava); *dig-bhāga*—in the direction; *vartma*—the road; *ādātum*—to take; *samudyataḥ*—prepared; *jñātvā*—being noticed; *uktaḥ*—spoken to; *yadu-rājena*—by the Yadu king (Ugrasena); *citra*—various; *prema-vikāra*—symptoms of ecstasy; *bhāk*—manifesting.

**Showing various symptoms of ecstasy, Nārada stood up, ready to set off on in that direction. Noting this, King Ugrasena spoke.**

The shifting ecstasies felt by Nārada produced various symptoms in his body—perspiration, trembling, and standing of the hair on his limbs. He was obviously moved by impulses of spontaneous love, so only transcendental arguments could change his mind.

श्रीमदुग्रसेन उवाच  
भगवन्नुक्तमेवासौ क्षणमेकमपि क्वचित् ।  
नान्यत्र तिष्ठतीशस्य कृष्णस्यादेशतो विना ॥

śrīmad-ugrasena uvāca  
bhagavann uktam evāsau  
kṣaṇam ekam api kvacit  
nānyatra tiṣṭhatīśasya  
kṛṣṇasyādeśato vinā

*śrīmat-ugrasenaḥ uvāca*—Śrīmān Ugrasena said; *bhagavan*—O my lord; *uktam*—it is said; *eva*—indeed; *asau*—he (Uddhava); *kṣaṇam*—moment; *ekam*—one; *api*—even; *kvacit*—ever; *na*—not; *anyatra*—anywhere else; *tiṣṭhati*—does he stand; *īśasya*—of his Lord; *kṛṣṇasya*—Kṛṣṇa; *ādeśataḥ*—the order; *vinā*—without.

**Śrīmān Ugrasena told Nārada: My lord, it is said that without Kṛṣṇa's order Uddhava never leaves Lord Kṛṣṇa's presence even for a moment.**

यथाहं प्रार्थ्य तत्सङ्गस्थितिं नाप्नोमि कर्हिचित् ।  
तन्महालाभतो हीनोऽसत्यया राज्यरक्षया ॥

*yathāham prārthya tat-saṅga-  
sthitim nāpnomi karhicit  
tan-mahā-lābhato hīno  
'satyayā rājya-rakṣayā*

*yathā*—as; *aham*—I; *prārthya*—requesting; *tat*—His; *saṅga*—in the company; *sthitim*—constant presence; *na āpnomi*—do not obtain; *karhicit*—ever; *tat*—of that; *mahā*—greatest; *lābhataḥ*—achievement; *hīnaḥ*—deprived; *asatyayā*—degraded; *rājya*—the kingdom; *rakṣayā*—because of the activity of protecting.

**In contrast, despite my begging to stay in Kṛṣṇa's company, I never obtain that blessing. I am deprived of that achievement because of my degraded occupation of protecting the kingdom.**

By saying that Uddhava never leaves the Lord's presence, Ugrasena indirectly advised Nārada not to look for Uddhava at home. At the same time, he also made the point that he, Ugrasena, was not at all as great as Nārada said he was. At the least, he was not as great as Uddhava, whom Kṛṣṇa kept always by His side. Ugrasena's kingdom was indeed a gift from Kṛṣṇa, granted him after his son Kaṁsa fell from the throne. But the kingdom was a mixed blessing, a kingdom always in danger of conquest by various enemies. To make Ugrasena accept the throne, Kṛṣṇa had resorted to duplicity: He had asked Ugrasena to watch after Mathurā, because the kingdom needed to be guarded against certain threats while the Lord traveled elsewhere. In fact, however, no such threats existed.

We read in *Śrī Hari-vamśa* (2.47.16–17, 21–23) that during Rukmiṇī's *svayamvara* Lord Kṛṣṇa told Ugrasena:

*tiṣṭha tvam nṛpa-sārdūla  
bhrātrā me sahito nṛpa  
kṣatriyā nikṛta-prajñāḥ*

*śāstra-niścita-darśanāḥ  
purīm śūnyām imām vīra  
jaghanyā māśma pīḍayan*

“O tiger among kings, please stay here with My brother. There are many warriors who externally follow the rules of scripture but whose intelligence is perverted. When these kings find the city vacant, with no ruler in place, they will attack it and impose terror.”

Ugrasena replied:

*tvayā vihīnāḥ sarve sma  
na śaktāḥ sukham āsitum  
pure 'smīn viṣayānte ca  
pati-hīnā yathā striyaḥ*

*tvat-sanāthā vyaṁ tāta  
tvad-bāhu-balam āśritāḥ  
bibhīmo na narendrāṇām  
sendrāṇām api māna-da*

*vijayāya yadu-śreṣṭha  
yatra yatra gamiṣyasi  
tatra tvaṁ sahito 'smābhir  
gacchethā yādavarṣabha*

“Without Your presence none of us citizens can live peacefully in this city or its outlying districts, just as women cannot live happily without their husbands. Dear son, we all consider You our master. We depend on the shelter of Your mighty arms. Therefore, O creator of our honor, we fear no earthly kings nor even Indra, king of heaven. Wherever You go to find victory in battle, O first and best of the Yadus, You should please take us with You.”

**आज्ञापालनमात्रैकसेवादरकृतोत्सवः ।**

## यथा च वञ्चितो नीत्वा मिथ्यागौरवयन्त्रणाम् ॥

*ājñā-pālana-mātraika-  
sevādara-kṛtotsavaḥ  
yathā ca vañcito nītvā  
mithyā-gaurava-yantraṇām*

*ājñā*—of the orders; *pālana*—the carrying out; *mātra*—merely; *eka*—only; *sevā*—His service; *ādara*—in honoring; *kṛta*—created; *utsavaḥ*—whose delight; *yathā*—as; *ca*—and; *vañcitaḥ*—cheated; *nītvā*—being led; *mithyā*—false; *gaurava*—of honor; *yantraṇām*—to the torment.

**I delight in only one real honor: being able to carry out Kṛṣṇa’s orders. But the false honor He shows me simply torments me and leaves me feeling cheated.**

Ugrasena’s only happiness lies in receiving Kṛṣṇa’s command, but Kṛṣṇa approaches Ugrasena as a subordinate, praising him: “You are the noble king of the Yadus, our grandfather, the pride of the Āryan race. Sitting on your lion throne, please tell Us what service We should do for you.” Receiving such respect from Kṛṣṇa greatly embarrasses Ugrasena.

In *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa*, Kṛṣṇa is described entering Dvārakā after being anointed “king of kings.” Coming down from His chariot at the city’s gate, Kṛṣṇa saw Ugrasena standing to receive Him. Kṛṣṇa then told Ugrasena:

*yan mayā sv-abhiṣiktas tvam  
mathureśo bhavān iti  
na yuktam anyathā kartum  
mathurādhipate svayam  
arghyam ācamanam caiva  
pādyam cātha niveditam  
na dātum arhase rājann  
eṣa me manasaḥ priyaḥ*

“Because I officially anointed you king of Mathurā, it is improper for

you to act in a contrary way. You should not present Me these offerings of *arghya*, *ācamana*, and *pādyā* waters, dear king. That is My heartfelt wish.” (*Hari-vaṁśa* 2.55.42–43)

Ugrasena is pained by such statements, considering them deceptive. To him they are proof that he is certainly not a fortunate recipient of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

कृष्णेन न तथा कश्चिदुद्धवश्च महासुखी ।  
तत्पार्श्वसेवासौभाग्याद्वञ्चितः स्यात्कदापि न ॥

*kṛṣṇena na tathā kaścīd  
uddhavaś ca mahā-sukhī  
tat-pārśva-sevā-saubhāgyād  
vañcitaḥ syāt kadāpi na*

*kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *na*—not; *tathā*—in the same way; *kaścīd*—someone; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *ca*—and; *mahā-sukhī*—who enjoys the greatest happiness; *tat*—His; *pārśva*—at the side; *sevā*—of service; *saubhāgyāt*—of the fortunate privilege; *vañcitaḥ*—deprived; *syāt*—is; *kadā api*—ever; *na*—not.

No other devotee of the Lord is ever cheated like this. But as for Uddhava, he enjoys the greatest happiness. Privileged to stay always by Kṛṣṇa’s side, He is never deprived of Kṛṣṇa’s association.

तत्तत्र गत्वा भवताशु मादृशां  
सन्देशमेतं स निवेदनीयः ।  
अद्यात्यगादागमनस्य वेला  
स्वनाथमादाय सभां सनाथय ॥

*tat tatra gatvā bhavatāśu mādṛśāṁ  
sandeśam etaṁ sa nivedanīyaḥ  
adyātyagād āgamanasya velā  
sva-nātham ādāya sabhāṁ sa-nāthaya*

*tat*—therefore; *tatra*—there; *gatvā*—going; *bhavatā*—your good self; *āśu*—quickly; *māḍṛśām*—of such persons as us; *sandeśam*—message; *etam*—this; *saḥ*—He; *nivedanīyaḥ*—should be requested; *adya*—today; *atyagāt*—has passed; *āgamanasya*—for coming; *velā*—the appointed time; *sva-nātham*—your master; *ādāya*—bring; *sabhām*—for the assembly; *sa-nāthaya*—please provide the master.

**Therefore please go to Uddhava quickly and convey from us this message: The appointed time today to come to the assembly hall has already passed. Kindly bring Kṛṣṇa and grace the assembly with our master’s presence.**

In the phrase *sabhām sa-nāthaya*, “please grace the assembly hall,” the verb *sa-nāthaya* literally means “please allow to have its master.” The idea implied is that without seeing Kṛṣṇa the Yādavas would be left helpless. They expect and require to see Kṛṣṇa in person every day. Another implication in this verse is that Nārada is more fortunate than the Yādavas because he can freely enter Kṛṣṇa’s private quarters whenever he wants.

*Thus ends the fifth chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled “Priya: The Beloved.”*

## 6. Priyatama: The Most Beloved

Nārada arrives at Kṛṣṇa’s palace

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्छ्रुत्वार्ये महाप्रेमरसावेशेन यन्त्रितः ।  
महाविष्णुप्रियो वीणाहस्तोऽसौ विस्मृताखिलः ॥



सदाद्वारवतीवासाभ्यस्तान्तःपुरवर्त्मना ।  
प्रभुप्रासाददेशान्तःप्रवेशाश्चर्यवाहिना ॥

पूर्वाभ्यासादिवाभ्यासं प्रासादस्य गतो मुनिः ।  
भूताविष्टो महोन्मादगृहीतश्च यथेतरः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tac chrutvārye mahā-prema-*  
*rasāveśena yantritaḥ*  
*mahā-viṣṇu-priyo vīṇā-*  
*hasto 'sau vismṛtākhilaḥ*

*sadā-dvāravatī-vāsā-*  
*bhyastāntaḥ-pura-vartmanā*  
*prabhu-prāsāda-deśāntaḥ-*  
*praveśāścarya-vāhinā*

*pūrvābhyāsād ivābhyāsaṁ*  
*prāsādasya gato muniḥ*  
*bhūtāviṣṭo mahonmāda-*  
*grhītaś ca yathetaraḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tac*—that; *śrutvā*—hearing; *ārye*—O noble lady; *mahā-prema*—of exalted love of God; *rasa*—in the taste; *āveśena*—by his total absorption; *yantritaḥ*—controlled; *mahā-viṣṇu*—of Mahā-viṣṇu; *priyaḥ*—the dear devotee; *vīṇā-hastaḥ*—with his *vīṇā* in hand; *asau*—he; *vismṛta*—having forgotten; *akhilaḥ*—everything; *sadā*—constant; *dvāravatī*—in Dvārakā; *vāsa*—because of his residing; *abhyasta*—familiar; *antaḥ-pura*—to the center of the city; *vartmanā*—by the road; *prabhu*—of the Lord; *prāsāda*—of the palaces; *deśa*—the neighborhood; *antaḥ*—into; *praveśa*—the entrance; *āścarya*—amazing; *vāhinā*—which led; *pūrva*—earlier; *abhyāsāt*—from acquaintance; *iva*—

indeed; *abhyāsam*—to the vicinity; *prāsādasya*—of the palace; *gataḥ*—came; *muniḥ*—the sage Nārada; *bhūta*—by a ghost; *āviṣṭaḥ*—haunted; *mahā-unmāda*—by transcendental insanity; *grhītaḥ*—seized; *ca*—and; *yathā*—like; *itaraḥ*—an ordinary person.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Noble mother, after hearing Ugrasena’s advice, Nārada, the dear devotee of Lord Mahā-viṣṇu, became absorbed in the taste of exalted love of God, which seized him in its grip. Forgetting everything else, he started off, *vīṇā* in hand. Having spent much time before in Dvārakā, Nārada automatically took the familiar roads to the center of the city, amazing roads that led to the neighborhood of the Lord’s palaces, and came to a palace of Kṛṣṇa’s that he knew how to reach from earlier visits. Under the spell of intense transcendental agitation, Nārada seemed like an ordinary person haunted by a ghost.

As this chapter describes, what Nārada says to Uddhava and the other devotees in Dvārakā inspires them to discuss the present situation in Vraja. Overhearing these talks, Kṛṣṇa becomes bewildered in ecstatic love.

When Nārada left Hastināpura for Dvārakā, he could think only of how wonderful are Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. He picked up his *vīṇā* but was too distracted to play it. How, then, did he manage to find his way to Dvārakā and Kṛṣṇa’s palaces? He managed because he had gone there many times before. He took the right roads even without paying attention. As the road to the inner city approached the royal quarters, it assumed a bewildering appearance and took many unusual turns, making it a road ordinarily impossible for nonresidents to follow. Nārada seemed oblivious of what he was doing and managed to arrive at his destination only because he was accustomed to the route. The truth is, however, that when one is conducted “helplessly” under the control of pure love of God, one actually understands everything perfectly; he certainly cannot forget the way to reach the Personality of Godhead.

भूमौ क्वापि स्खलति पतति क्वापि तिष्ठत्यचेष्टः  
क्वाप्युत्कम्पं भजति लुठति क्वापि रोदित्यथार्तः ।

क्वाप्याक्रोशन् प्लुतिभिरयते गायति क्वापि नृत्यन्  
सर्वं क्वापि श्रयति युगपत्प्रेमसम्पद्विकारम् ॥

*bhūmau kvāpi skhalati patati kvāpi tiṣṭhaty aceṣṭaḥ  
kvāpy utkampam bhajati luṭhati kvāpi rodity athārtaḥ  
kvāpy ākrośan plutibhir ayate gāyati kvāpi nṛtyan  
sarvam kvāpi śrayati yugapat prema-sampad-vikāram*

*bhūmau*—on the ground; *kva api*—sometimes; *skhalati*—he stumbles; *patati*—he falls; *kva api*—sometimes; *tiṣṭhati*—he stands up; *aceṣṭaḥ*—unconscious; *kva api*—sometimes; *utkampam*—trembling; *bhajati*—he manifests; *luṭhati*—he rolls around; *kva api*—sometimes; *roditi*—he weeps; *atha*—or; *ārtaḥ*—distressed; *kva api*—sometimes; *ākrośan*—shouting; *plutibhiḥ*—by jumping about; *ayate*—he moves; *gāyati*—he sings; *kva api*—sometimes; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *sarvam*—all; *kva api*—sometimes; *śrayati*—he assumes; *yugapat*—simultaneously; *prema*—of pure love of God; *sampat*—of the complete treasure; *vikāram*—the transformations.

He sometimes tripped and fell to the ground and sometimes stood motionless. Sometimes his body trembled, or he rolled on the ground, or he wept in great distress. He sometimes shouted and jumped about, sometimes sang and danced. And sometimes all the transformations of priceless love of God converged in him at once.

The full manifestations of devotional ecstasy appeared in Nārada's body as trembling, perspiration, standing of the bodily hairs on end, and loud crying. Only devotees advanced in *prema* feel the ecstasies that externally show as these symptoms.

हे मन्मातरिदानीं त्वं सावधानतरा भव ।  
स्थिरतां प्रापयन्ती मां सधैर्यं शृण्विदं स्वयम् ॥

*he man-mātar idānīm tvam  
sāvadhāna-tarā bhava*

*sthiratām prāpayantī mām  
sa-dhairyam śṛṇu idam svayam*

he—O; *mat-mātaḥ*—my mother; *idānīm*—now; *tvam*—you; *sa-avadhāna-tarā*—very attentive; *bhava*—please be; *sthiratām*—soberness; *prāpayantī*—obtaining; *mām*—from me; *sa-dhairyam*—patiently; *śṛṇu*—please listen; *idam*—to this; *svayam*—yourself.

**My dear mother, please now be fully attentive. Listen soberly with steady concentration to what I am about to say.**

Parīkṣit Mahārāja wants his mother to listen carefully so that the Supreme Lord's pastime he is about to describe will enchant her mind and awaken her ecstatic love. Parīkṣit knows from his own experience that the “insanity” of love for Kṛṣṇa is in fact the most natural condition of the soul and that devotees infected with this insanity are more sober and in touch with reality than anyone else.

**तस्मिन्नहनि केनापि वैमनस्येन वेश्मनः ।  
अन्तःप्रकोष्ठे सुप्तस्य प्रभोः पार्श्वं विहाय सः ॥**

**अदूराद्देहलीप्रान्ते निविष्टः श्रीमदुद्धवः ।  
बलदेवो देवकी च रोहिणी रुक्मिणी तथा ॥**

**सत्यभामादयोऽन्याश्च देव्यः पद्मावती च सा ।  
प्रवृत्तिहारिणी कंसमाता दास्यस्तथा पराः ॥**

*tasminn ahani kenāpi  
vaimanasyena veśmanaḥ  
antaḥ-prakoṣṭhe suptasya  
prabhoḥ pārśvaṁ vihāya saḥ*

*adūrād dehalī-prānte  
niviṣṭaḥ śrīmad-uddhavaḥ*

*baladevo devakī ca  
rohiṇī rukmiṇī tathā*

*satyabhāmādayo 'nyāś ca  
devyaḥ padmāvatī ca sā  
pravṛtti-hāriṇī kaṁsa-  
mātā dāsyas tathā parāḥ*

*tasmin*—on that; *ahani*—day; *kena api*—because of a certain; *vaimanasyena*—disturbance in his mind; *veśmanaḥ*—of the residence; *antaḥ-prakoṣṭhe*—in the inner quarters; *suptasya*—who was asleep; *prabhoḥ*—of his Lord; *pārśvam*—the side; *vihāya*—leaving; *saḥ*—he (Uddhava); *adūrāt*—not far away; *dehalī*—of a terrace; *prānte*—on the side; *niviṣṭaḥ*—sitting down; *śrīmat-uddhavaḥ*—Śrīmān Uddhava; *baladevaḥ*—Baladeva; *devakī*—Devakī; *ca*—and; *rohiṇī*—Rohiṇī; *rukmiṇī*—Rukmiṇī; *tathā*—also; *satyabhāmā-ādayaḥ*—Satyabhāmā and so on; *anyāḥ*—others; *ca*—and; *devyaḥ*—queens; *padmāvatī*—Padmāvatī; *ca*—and; *sā*—she; *pravṛtti*—of news of (Kṛṣṇa's) activities; *hāriṇī*—the broadcaster; *kaṁsa-mātā*—Kaṁsa's mother; *dāsyas*—maidservants; *tathā*—and; *parāḥ*—other women.

That day, Lord Kṛṣṇa was for some reason disturbed in mind and asleep in the inner quarters, and Uddhava had left Him and sat down nearby on a terrace at the edge of the palace. There Uddhava was joined by Baladeva, Devakī, and Rohiṇī and queens of Kṛṣṇa like Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, as well as various maidservants and other ladies, including Kaṁsa's mother, Padmāvatī, a lady who had the habit of making public gossip out of Kṛṣṇa's personal affairs.

Precisely why Lord Kṛṣṇa was disturbed, Parīkṣit will reveal to his mother a little further on in his narration. He does not want her to become agitated by hearing this too soon.

Padmāvatī was Ugrasena's wife. The *Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa* (48–51) of the *Padma Purāṇa* describes that after their marriage she stayed a short time in the house of her father, King Satyaketu. At that time a demonic

messenger of Kuvera's named Drumila (or Gobhila) became attracted to her, and by disguising himself as Ugrasena he seduced her. The child born from this illicit connection was Kaṁsa.

तूष्णीम्भूताश्च ते सर्वे वर्तमानाः सविस्मयम् ।  
तत्र श्रीनारदं प्राप्तमैक्षन्तापूर्वचेष्टितम् ॥

*tūṣṇīm-bhūtāś ca te sarve  
vartamānāḥ sa-vismayam  
tatra śrī-nāradaṁ prāptam  
aikṣantāpūrva-ceṣṭitam*

*tūṣṇīm*—silent; *bhūtāḥ*—were; *ca*—and; *te*—they; *sarve*—all; *vartamānāḥ*—present; *sa-vismayam*—bemused; *tatra*—there; *śrī-nāradaṁ*—Śrī Nārada; *prāptam*—arrived; *aikṣanta*—they saw; *apūrva*—unlike ever before; *ceṣṭitam*—whose behavior.

**All of them sat there silent, in shock. They saw that Śrī Nārada had arrived and that he was acting strange.**

These devotees, who would regularly take part in Kṛṣṇa's daily palace activities, were dismayed that Kṛṣṇa was lying in bed way past the time He normally rose. It was obvious to them that something was seriously wrong, but they couldn't discern exactly what. Nonetheless, they now had to attend to Nārada's arrival.

उत्थाय यत्नादानीय स्वास्थ्यं नीत्वा क्षणेन तम् ।  
प्रेमाश्रुक्लिन्नवदनं प्रक्षाल्याहुः शनैर्लघु ॥

*utthāya yatnād ānīya  
svāस्थ्यam nītvā kṣaṇena tam  
premaśru-klinna-vadanam  
prakṣālyāhuḥ śanair laghu*

*utthāya*—standing up; *yatnāt*—carefully; *ānīya*—bringing; *svāस्थ्यam*—to a normal condition; *nītvā*—restoring; *kṣaṇena*—in a minute; *tam*—him; *prema-aśru*—by tears of love; *klinna*—wet; *vadanam*—his face;

*prakṣālya*—wiping dry; *āhuḥ*—they spoke; *śanaiḥ*—gently; *laghu*—and simply.

Standing up, they brought him carefully to where they had been sitting. They took a moment to restore him to a condition closer to normal and wiped dry his face, wet with tears of love. Then they spoke to him, simply and gently.

When the devotees began talking to Nārada, they spoke quietly and in few words, so as not to awaken Kṛṣṇa and also not to agitate Nārada further by saying something wrong.

अदृष्टपूर्वमस्माभिः कीदृशं तेऽद्य चेष्टितम् ।  
आकस्मिकमिदं ब्रह्मंस्तूष्णीमुपविश क्षणम् ॥

*adṛṣṭa-pūrvam asmābhiḥ*  
*kīdṛśam te 'dya ceṣṭitam*  
*ākasmikam idam brahmaṁ*  
*tūṣṇīm upaviśa kṣaṇam*

*adṛṣṭa*—never seen; *pūrvam*—before; *asmābhiḥ*—by us; *kīdṛśam*—like what; *te*—your; *adya*—today; *ceṣṭitam*—behavior; *ākasmikam*—suddenly; *idam*—this; *brahma*—O *brāhmaṇa*; *tūṣṇīm*—quietly; *upaviśa*—please sit; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment.

They said: We have never seen you behave like this. What is this sudden change in you, dear *brāhmaṇa*? Please sit here quietly for a moment.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
सगद्गदमुवाचाश्रुधारामीलितलोचने ।  
यत्नादुन्मीलयन् नत्वा सकम्पपुलकाचितः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*sa-gadgadam uvācāśru-*  
*dhārā-milita-locane*

yatnād unmīlayan natvā  
sa-kamṇa-pulakācītaḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; sa-gadgadam—in a choking voice; uvāca—he said; aśru—of tears; dhārā—with a downpour; mīlita—closed; locane—his eyes; yatnāt—with some difficulty; unmīlayan—opening; natvā—bowing down; saḥ—he; kamṇa—by trembling; pulaka—and horripilation; ācītaḥ—marked.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Nārada replied in a choking voice, tears flowing from his eyes. As he began to speak, he opened his eyes with difficulty and bowed down to offer respects. He was trembling, and the hairs on his body stood erect.

### Nārada praises Uddhava

श्रीनारद उवाच  
मनोज्ञसौभाग्यभरैकभाजनं  
मया समं सङ्गमयध्वमुद्धवम् ।  
तदीयपादैकरजोऽथवा भवेत्  
तदैव शान्तिर्बत मेऽन्तरात्मनः ॥

śrī-nārada uvāca  
manojña-saubhāgya-bharaika-bhājanam  
mayā samam saṅgamayadhvam uddhavam  
tadīya-pādaika-rajo 'tha vā bhavet  
tadaiva śāntir bata me 'ntar-ātmanah

śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; manah-jña—exquisite; saubhāgya—of auspiciousness; bhara—of the heavy burden; eka—the one true; bhājanam—recipient; mayā samam—with me; saṅgamadhvam—please arrange to meet; uddhavam—Uddhava; tadīya—his; pāda—from the feet; eka—one; rajaḥ—particle of dust; atha vā—or else; bhavet—let be;



*tadā*—then; *eva*—only; *śāntiḥ*—peace; *bata*—alas; *me*—my; *antaḥ-ātmanaḥ*—of the heart.

Śrī Nārada said: Please arrange for me to meet with Uddhava, the only true object of exquisite good fortune. Or else let me have from his feet one particle of dust. Then alone will my heart be at peace.

Uddhava was present right in front of Nārada, but the sage, in his ecstasy, failed to notice him. Nārada first begged to be brought before Uddhava, but then reconsidered and thought himself probably unworthy to meet him. By explaining the demands of his heart, Nārada answered the question about the cause of his strange behavior.

पुरातनैराधुनिकैश्च सेवकैर्  
अलब्धमाप्तोऽलमनुग्रहं प्रभोः ।  
महत्तमो भागवतेषु यस्ततो  
महाविभूतिः स्वयमुच्यते च यः ॥

*purātanair ādhunikaiś ca sevakair  
alabdham āpto 'lam anugrahaṁ prabhoḥ  
mahat-tamo bhāgavateṣu yas tato  
mahā-vibhūtiḥ svayam ucyate ca yaḥ*

*purātanaiḥ*—of the distant past; *ādhunikaiḥ*—of the present; *ca*—and; *sevakaiḥ*—by servants; *alabdham*—not obtained; *āptaḥ*—achieved; *alam*—sufficiently; *anugrahaṁ*—mercy; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *mahat-tamaḥ*—the greatest; *bhāgavateṣu*—among the Vaiṣṇavas; *yaḥ*—who; *tataḥ*—therefore; *mahā-vibhūtiḥ*—a special expansion of opulence; *svayam*—personally; *ucyate*—is considered; *ca*—and; *yaḥ*—who.

He has received an abundance of our Lord's mercy never gained by the Lord's other servants, in the past or even now. Because Uddhava is the greatest of all Vaiṣṇavas, the Lord Himself calls Uddhava one of His own special expansions.

In the Eleventh Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.16.29), when Lord

Kṛṣṇa, speaking to Uddhava, describes His own opulent expansions in the material world, He declares Uddhava His representative among the Vaiṣṇavas:

*vāsudevo bhagavatām  
tvaṁ tu bhāgavateṣv aham*

“Among those entitled to the name Bhagavān I am Vāsudeva. And you, Uddhava, indeed represent Me among the devotees.”

पूर्वे परे च तनयाः कमलासनाद्याः  
सङ्कर्षणादिसहजाः सुहृदः शिवाद्याः ।  
भार्या रमादय उतानुपमा स्वमूर्तिर्  
न स्युः प्रभोः प्रियतमा यदपेक्षयाहो ॥

*pūrve pare ca tanayāḥ kamalāsanādyāḥ  
saṅkarṣaṇādi-sahajāḥ suhṛdaḥ śivādyāḥ  
bhāryā ramādaya utānupamā sva-mūrtir  
na syuḥ prabhoḥ priya-tamā yad-apekṣayāho*

*pūrve*—living previously; *pare*—others; *ca*—and; *tanayāḥ*—sons; *kamala-āsana-ādyāḥ*—Brahmā and others; *saṅkarṣaṇa-ādi*—Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and others; *saha-jāḥ*—brothers; *suhṛdaḥ*—friends; *śivādyāḥ*—Śiva and others; *bhāryāḥ*—wives; *ramā-ādayaḥ*—the goddess Ramā and others; *uta*—even; *anupamā*—incomparable; *sva-mūrtiḥ*—His own transcendental body; *na*—not; *syuḥ*—were; *prabhoḥ*—to the Lord; *priya-tamāḥ*—most dear; *yat*—with whom (Uddhava); *apekṣayā*—in comparison; *aho*—indeed.

No one has ever been as dear to the Lord—neither the Lord’s direct sons like Brahmā, nor friends like Śiva, nor brothers like Balarāma, nor the goddess Ramā or the Lord’s other wives. Not even His own unique transcendental body is as dear.

The original Saṅkarṣaṇa is Śrī Balarāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s brother and constant companion. Nārada can dare to say that Uddhava is more dear

to Kṛṣṇa even than Balarāma and other supreme persons, because Kṛṣṇa Himself has said this to Uddhava.

*na tathā me priya-tama  
ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ  
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr  
naivātmā ca yathā bhavān*

“My dear Uddhava, neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, the goddess of fortune, nor indeed My own self is as dear to Me as you.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.14.15)

According to the commentary of Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, when Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the *Bhāgavatam*, spoke this verse He meant to say “as dear to Me as My devotee,” but in the ecstasy of His friendship with Uddhava He at the last moment switched for *bhaktaḥ* (“devotee”) the word *bhavān* (“you”). The Lord’s original intention, however, had been to glorify all of His pure devotees. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, therefore, earlier in his commentary on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.3.84), cited this verse in praise of Prahlāda, and now he cites it again to praise Uddhava.

भगवद्वचनान्येव प्रथितानि पुराणतः ।  
तस्य सौभाग्यसन्दोहमहिम्नां व्यञ्जकान्यलम् ॥

तस्मिन् प्रसादजातानि श्रीकृष्णस्याद्भुतान्यपि ।  
जगद्विलक्षणान्यद्य गीतानि यदुपुङ्गवैः ॥

प्रविश्य कर्णद्वारेण ममाक्रम्य हृदालयम् ।  
मदीयं सकलं धैर्यधनं लुण्ठन्ति हा हठात् ॥

*bhagavad-vacanāny eva  
prathitāni purāṇataḥ  
tasya saubhāgya-sandoha-*

*mahimnām vyañjakāny alam*

*tasmin prasāda-jātāni  
śrī-kṛṣṇasyādbhutāny api  
jagad-vilakṣaṇāny adya  
gītāni yadu-puṅgavaiḥ*

*praviśya karṇa-dvāreṇa  
mamākramya hṛd-ālayam  
madīyam sakalam dhairya-  
dhanam luṅṭhanti hā haṭhāt*

*bhagavat*—of the Supreme Lord; *vacanāni*—the words; *eva*—indeed; *prathitāni*—made known; *purāṇataḥ*—by the *Purāṇas*; *tasya*—of him (Uddhava); *saubhāgya*—of the good fortune; *sandoha*—abundant; *mahimnām*—the glories; *vyañjakāni*—which reveal; *alam*—abundantly; *tasmin*—upon him; *prasāda*—from the mercy; *jātāni*—which were born; *śrī-kṛṣṇasya*—of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *adbhutāni*—amazing; *api*—and; *jagat*—in this world; *vilakṣaṇāni*—unique; *adya*—today; *gītāni*—sung about; *yadu-puṅgavaiḥ*—by the heroes of the Yadus; *praviśya*—entering; *karṇa-dvāreṇa*—through the gateway of the ears; *mama*—my; *ākramya*—invading; *hṛt*—of the heart; *ālayam*—the residence; *madīyam*—my; *sakalam*—all; *dhairya*—of sobriety; *dhanam*—the wealth; *luṅṭhanti*—they plunder; *hā*—alas; *haṭhāt*—forcibly.

The Supreme Lord's own words, disclosed in the *Purāṇas*, tell the abounding glories of Uddhava's good fortune. Those words, born of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy, are unlike any others heard in this world. The Yādava heroes now tell those words in songs. Alas, when those words enter the home of my heart through the gateway of the ears, they steal all my wealth of sobriety.

Nārada is an authorized *ācārya* of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. For him, therefore, the highest evidence by which to prove anything is the expressed opinion of the Personality of Godhead and the effect of the Lord's words on the thought and behavior of His devotees. In regard to

Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa has stated His opinion clearly:

*athaitat paramam guhyam  
śṛṇvato yadu-nandana  
su-gopyam api vakṣyāmi  
tvam me bhṛtyaḥ suhṛt sakhā*

“My dear Uddhava, O beloved of the Yadu dynasty, because you are My servant, well-wisher, and friend, I shall now speak to you the most confidential knowledge. Please hear as I explain these great mysteries to you.” (*Bhāgavatam* 11.11.49)

*noddhavo 'ṇv api man-nyūno  
yad guṇair nārditaḥ prabhuḥ  
ato mad-vayunam lokam  
grāhayann iha tiṣṭhatu*

“Uddhava is not inferior to Me in any way, because he is never affected by the modes of material nature. Therefore he may remain in this world to disseminate specific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead.” (*Bhāgavatam* 3.4.31)

Professional thieves in ancient India were proficient in using narcotic powders to put unsuspecting householders into a stupor so that their houses could be easily robbed. We can read the details of these methods in minor literary works such as Daṇḍī's *Daśa-kumāra-carita*. Nārada alludes to such criminal skills in describing the looting of his own heart by the glories of Uddhava.

**Uddhava praises the Vraja-vāsīs**

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
उद्धवोऽत्यन्तसम्भ्रान्तो द्रुतमुत्थाय तत्पदौ ।  
निधायङ्गे समालिङ्ग्य तस्याभिप्रेत्य हृद्गतम् ॥

हृत्प्राप्तभगवत्तत्प्रसादभरभाञ्जनः ।  
तदीयप्रेमसम्पत्तिविभवस्मृतियन्त्रितः ॥

रोदनैर्विवशो दीनो यत्नाद्धैर्यं श्रितो मुनिम् ।  
अवधाप्याह मात्सर्यात्सात्त्विकात्प्रमुदं गतः ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
uddhavo 'tyanta-sambhrānto  
drutam utthāya tat-padau  
nidhāyāñke samāliṅgya  
tasyābhipretya hṛd-gatam

hṛt-prāpta-bhagavat-tat-tat-  
prasāda-bhara-bhāg-janaḥ  
tadīya-prema-sampatti-  
vibhava-smṛti-yantritaḥ

rodanair vivaśo dīno  
yatnād dhairyaṁ śrito munim  
avadhāpyāha mātsaryāt  
sāttvikāt pramudaṁ gataḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; uddhavaḥ—Uddhava; atyanta—extreme; sambhrāntaḥ—feeling reverence; drutam—suddenly; utthāya—standing up; tat—his (Nārada's); padau—feet; nidhāya—placing; añke—on his body; samāliṅgya—fully embracing; tasya—his; abhipretya—discerning; hṛt-gatam—what was present in the heart; hṛt-prāpta—who remembered; bhagavat—of the Supreme Lord; tat-tat—various; prasāda-bhara—of the great mercy; bhāg—who were recipients; janaḥ—persons; tadīya—of their; prema—love for the Lord; sampatti—of the wealth; vibhava—and their ecstasies; smṛti—by remembrance; yantritaḥ—controlled; rodanaiḥ—with crying; vivaśaḥ—helpless; dīnaḥ—feeling himself fallen; yatnāt—with some effort; dhairyam—gravity; śritaḥ—

resorting to; *munim*—the sage; *avadhāpya*—addressing; *āha*—said; *mātsaryāt*—out of jealousy; *sāttvikāt*—manifesting as a transcendental symptom of ecstasy; *pramudam*—joy; *gataḥ*—experiencing.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said:** Impelled by great respect for Nārada, Uddhava suddenly stood up, held Nārada's feet, and embraced them. Aware of what Nārada was thinking, Uddhava remembered many devotees who had received the Lord's special favor. As Uddhava meditated on those devotees, their love for the Lord, and the wealth of their loving ecstasies, he felt distress, thinking himself fallen, and cried helplessly. Only with some effort was he able to regain his composure. Then he became joyful and spoke to the sage, moved by the *sāttvika* emotion of jealousy.

Uddhava knew that Nārada was thinking about how to find the best recipient of the Supreme Lord's favor; he intelligently deduced this from the way Nārada was acting. This logical conclusion led Uddhava to remember many famous Vaiṣṇavas of the past who had enjoyed the Lord's favor. The ecstasies of pure Vaiṣṇavas, which appear on their bodies as perspiration, trembling, horripilation, and so on, are the priceless treasure of those Vaiṣṇavas, a treasure whose value can be estimated only by Vaiṣṇavas following in their footsteps.

As Uddhava meditated on the great fortune of Kṛṣṇa's devotees, he felt undeserving. He experienced the essential devotional prerequisite of *dainya*, utter humility. For Uddhava to regain his composure required great effort, plus the help of Nārada, Balarāma, and the others. Uddhava was next confronted by the *bhāva* of jealousy, intolerance of others' good fortune. This transcendental jealousy, however, was *sāttvika*, born from pure goodness, untouched by the influence of passion and ignorance. Therefore it was a cause of joy. Having no trace of hatred, this ecstatic jealousy gave no distress to Uddhava or anyone else. Rather, in this jealousy he entered even deeper into the trance of his attraction to Kṛṣṇa, just as devotees in the conjugal mood become even more blissfully attached to Kṛṣṇa when jealous of His other lovers.

**श्रीमदुद्धव उवाच**

सर्वज्ञ सत्यवाक्श्रेष्ठ महामुनिवर प्रभो ।  
भगवद्भक्तिमार्गादिगुरुणोक्तं त्वयेह यत् ॥

तत्सर्वमधिकं चास्मात्सत्यमेव मयि स्फुटम् ।  
वर्तेतेति मया ज्ञातमासीदन्यैरपि ध्रुवम् ॥

śrīmad-uddhava uvāca  
sarva-jña satya-vāk-śreṣṭha  
mahā-muni-vara prabho  
bhagavad-bhakti-mārgādi-  
guruṇoktaṁ tvayeha yat

tat sarvam adhikaṁ cāsmāt  
satyam eva mayi sphuṭam  
varteteti mayā jñātam  
āsīt anyair api dhruvam

śrīmat-uddhavaḥ uvāca—Śrīmān Uddhava said; *sarva-jña*—O knower of everything; *satya-vāk*—of speakers of the truth; *śreṣṭha*—O best; *mahā-muni*—O greatest of sages; *vara*—most excellent; *prabho*—O master; *bhagavat-bhakti*—of devotional service to the Supreme Lord; *mārgā-ādi*—of the means and so on; *guruṇā*—by the preceptor; *uktam*—said; *tvayā*—by you; *iha*—here; *yat*—what; *tat*—that; *sarvam*—all; *adhikam*—more; *ca*—and; *asmāt*—than that; *satyam*—truly; *eva*—thus; *mayi*—to me; *sphuṭam*—self-evidently; *varteta*—is present; *iti*—thus; *mayā*—by me; *jñātam*—known; *āsīt*—has been; *anyaiḥ*—by others; *api*—also; *dhruvam*—with certainty.

Śrīmān Uddhava said: O mighty one, knower of everything, most truthful speaker, greatest of sages, you are the master who teaches the means and the end of bhakti, devotional service to the Supreme Lord. All you just said about me, and more, is self-evident to me. I knew it was true before you said it, and so did others.



“O knower of everything” hints that Nārada is aware of who indeed are Kṛṣṇa’s most favored devotees, led by the divine Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In Uddhava’s judgment, Nārada is the best of eloquent speakers like Yudhiṣṭhira, and the best of eminent sages like Vyāsadeva. Of all who attempt to glorify the Supreme Lord and His devotees, Nārada is the most competent. Uddhava therefore feels obliged to accept anything Nārada says as true, even something awkward to hear, like praise of him. Uddhava acknowledges Nārada as his *prabhu*, or spiritual master.

इदानीं यद् ब्रजे गत्वा किमप्यन्वभवं ततः ।  
महासौभाग्यमानो मे स सद्यश्चूर्णतां गतः ॥

*idānīm yad vraje gatvā  
kim api anvabhavam tataḥ  
mahā-saubhāgya-māno me  
sa sadyaś cūrṇatām gataḥ*

*idānīm*—recently; *yat*—what; *vraje*—to Vraja; *gatvā*—having gone; *kim api*—something; *anvabhavam*—I experienced; *tataḥ*—subsequently; *mahā-saubhāgya*—of being very fortunate; *mānaḥ*—pride; *me*—my; *saḥ*—it; *sadyaḥ*—suddenly; *cūrṇatām*—crushed to dust; *gataḥ*—became.

**What I saw on my recent trip to Vraja took my pride in my special good fortune and suddenly crushed it to dust.**

Uddhava cannot easily describe his impressions of Vraja; therefore he simply says “what I experienced” (*yat kim api anvabhavam*). Before he visited Vraja, his pride in being favored by Kṛṣṇa had been as great as Mount Meru. But when he saw the greater devotion of the Vraja-vāsīs, his pride was quickly reduced to a pile of dust.

तत एव हि कृष्णस्य तत्प्रसादस्य चाद्भुता ।  
तत्प्रेम्णोऽपि मया ज्ञाता माधुरी तद्वृत्तां तथा ॥

*tata eva hi kṛṣṇasya  
tat-prasādasya cādbhutā*

*tat-premṇo 'pi mayā jñātā  
mādhurī tadvatām tathā*

*tataḥ eva—after this; hi—indeed; kṛṣṇasya—of Kṛṣṇa; tat—His; prasādasya—of the mercy; ca—and; adbhutā—amazing; tat—for Him; premṇaḥ—of love; api—also; mayā—by me; jñātā—understood; mādhurī—sweetness; tat—that; vatām—of those who possess; tathā—as well.*

Since then I have understood the amazing sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, of love for Him, and of those who possess that love.

तद्दर्शनेनैव गतोऽतिधन्यतां  
तर्ह्येव सम्यक् प्रभुणानुकम्पितम् ।  
तस्य प्रसादातिशयास्पदं तथा  
मत्वा स्वमानन्दभराप्लुतोऽभवम् ॥

*tad-darśanenaiva gato 'ti-dhanyatām  
tarhy eva samyak prabhuṇānukampitam  
tasya prasādātiśayāspadam tathā  
matvā svam ānanda-bharāpluto 'bhavam*

*tat—this; darśanena—by seeing; eva—simply; gataḥ—achieved; ati-dhanyatām—the highest blessedness; tarhi—then; eva—indeed; samyak—completely; prabhuṇā—by the Lord; anukampitam—favored; tasya—His; prasāda—of the mercy; atiśaya—of the greatest amount; āspadam—a recipient; tathā—thus; matvā—judging; svam—myself; ānanda—of ecstasy; bhara—in a vast expanse; āplutaḥ—inundated; abhavam—I became.*

Just by what I saw in Vraja, I came to be most blessed. I was swept away in an ocean of ecstasy, thinking myself completely favored by the Lord, a recipient of His most extreme mercy.

गायं गायं यदभिलषता यत्ततोऽनुतिष्ठितं यत्

तत्सर्वेषां सुविदितमितः शक्यतेऽन्यन्न वक्तुम् ।  
नत्वा नत्वा मुनिवर मया प्रार्थ्यसे काकुभिस्त्वं  
तत्तद्वृत्तश्रवणरसतः संश्रयेथा विरामम् ॥

*gāyaṁ gāyaṁ yad-abhilaṣatā yat tato 'nutiṣṭhitam yat  
tat sarveṣāṁ su-viditam itaḥ śakyate 'nyan na vaktum  
natvā natvā muni-vara mayā prārthyase kākubhis tvam  
tat-tad-vṛtta-śravaṇa-rasataḥ saṁśrayethā virāmam*

*gāyam gāyam—singing repeatedly; yat—what; abhilaṣatā—desiring;  
yat—what; tataḥ—after this; anutiṣṭhitam—performed; yat—what; tat—  
that; sarveṣāṁ—to all; su-viditam—well known; itaḥ—than this;  
śakyate—is not possible; anyat—more; na—not; vaktum—to say; natvā  
natvā—bowing down repeatedly; muni-vara—O best of sages; mayā—by  
me; prārthyase—is begged; kākubhiḥ—with plaintive cries; tvam—you;  
tat-tat—this and that various; vṛtta—about the activities; śravaṇa—of  
the hearing; rasataḥ—from relishing; saṁśrayethāḥ—please resort;  
virāmam—to cessation.*

Everyone here knows very well what I then sang in my ecstasy, what desires I had, and what I did. Better for now not to speak on those matters further. O best of sages, I bow down to you again and again, and I beseech you: Please curb your eagerness to relish those various affairs.

Uddhava's songs of ecstasy in Vraja are recorded by Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam:

*etāḥ param tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo  
govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ  
vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca  
kiṁ brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya*

“Among all persons on earth, these cowherd women alone have actually perfected their embodied lives, for they have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Lord Govinda. Their pure love is

hankered after by those who fear material existence, by great sages, and by ourselves as well. 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?” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.58)

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

“The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have given up the association of their husbands, sons, and other family members, who are very difficult to give up, and have forsaken the path of chastity, to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, which one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers, or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.61)

Therefore anyone familiar with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* knows very well what Uddhava said and did in Vraja and what confidential ambition he revealed there. It is no secret that Uddhava discovered in Śrī Vrajadhāma that the *gopīs*, headed by Śrī Rādhikā, are much more intimately favored by Kṛṣṇa than himself. But in the present company, Uddhava wanted to avoid pursuing these topics. Śrī Satyabhāmā and other queens of Dvārakā who were there might be displeased to hear the *gopīs*’ superexcellence described. And Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, being reminded of the *gopīs*, might be driven into even worse distress.

Nārada, however, having come to Dvārakā just to hear about the recipients of Kṛṣṇa’s greatest mercy, was intent on fulfilling his mission. Uddhava thus submitted to him a humble request that he bring his eagerness under control to avoid undesirable consequences.

**Rohiṇī blames Kṛṣṇa for the condition of Vraja**

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच**

तद्वाक्यतत्त्वं विज्ञाय रोहिणी सास्त्रमब्रवीत् ।  
चिरगोकुलवासेन तत्रत्यजनसम्मता ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tad-vākya-tattvaṁ vijñāya*  
*rohiṇī sāśram abravīt*  
*cira-gokula-vāsena*  
*tatratya-jana-sammata*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat*—of him (Uddhava); *vākya*—of the words; *tattvam*—the inner meaning; *vijñāya*—understanding; *rohiṇī*—Rohiṇī; *sa-asram*—with tears; *abravīt*—spoke; *cira*—for a long time; *gokula*—in Gokula; *vāsena*—because of her residence; *tatratya*—of that place; *jana*—by the people; *sammata*—esteemed.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Because Rohiṇī had long lived in Gokula, its residents held her in high regard. She knew the inner meaning of Uddhava's words. So with tears in her eyes, she decided to speak.

Despite the precautions taken by Uddhava, there was no way to stop Kṛṣṇa's intimate devotees from unintentionally turning their conversation toward the pure devotion of Vraja. That the people of Śrī Nanda-vraja had exclusive possession of Kṛṣṇa's mercy was an essential truth too irresistibly attractive to be kept covered.

श्रीरोहिण्युवाच  
आस्तान् श्रीहरिदास त्वं महादुर्देवमारितान् ।  
सौभाग्यगन्धरहितान् निमग्नान् दैन्यसागरे ॥

तत्तद्वाडववह्वयर्चिस्ताप्यमानान् विषाकुलान् ।  
क्षणाचिन्तासुखिन्या मे मा स्मृतेः पदवीं नय ॥

*śrī-rohiṇy uvāca*  
*ās tān śrī-hari-dāsa tvam*

*mahā-durdaiva-māritān  
saubhāgya-gandha-rahitān  
nimagnān dainya-sāgare*

*tat-tad-vāḍava-vahny-arcis-  
tāpyamānān viṣākulān  
kṣaṇācintā-sukhinyā me  
mā smṛteḥ padavīm naya*

*śrī-rohiṇī uvāca*—Śrī Rohiṇī said; *āḥ*—ah; *tān*—these; *śrī-hari-dāsa*—O servant of Śrī Hari; *tvam*—you; *mahā-durdaiva*—by their very bad fate; *māritān*—slain; *saubhāgya*—of good fortune; *gandha*—of the last trace; *rahitān*—deprived; *nimagnān*—submerged; *dainya*—of wretchedness; *sāgare*—in an ocean; *tat-tat*—various; *vāḍava-vahni*—of the underwater fire; *arciḥ*—by the flames; *tāpyamānān*—being burned; *viṣa*—by poison; *ākulān*—distressed; *kṣaṇa*—for a moment; *acintā*—of freedom from anxiety; *sukhinyāḥ*—who am feeling the happiness; *me*—me; *mā*—please do not; *smṛteḥ*—of memory; *padavīm*—to the path; *naya*—lead.

**Śrī Rohiṇī said: Alas, dear servant of Śrī Hari, the residents of Vraja have by evil fate been all but slain. They have lost the last trace of good fortune and are drowning in an ocean of gloom. There they suffer, poisoned and scorched, in the flames of an underwater fire. So please do not destroy my moment of happiness by reminding me of them.**

Only a person who is dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and has received His favor should be considered fortunate. The Vraja-vāsīs feel most unfortunate because they view themselves as totally neglected by Kṛṣṇa. The pain of being deprived of Kṛṣṇa’s attention and personal company is like the inextinguishable *vāḍava* fire, which is said to burn within the ocean. Absence from Kṛṣṇa brings the Vraja-vāsīs’ love for Him to a fever pitch, which feels to them like the agony of being poisoned.

Living in Dvārakā, Rohiṇī has been able to forget to some extent the misery of the Vraja-vāsīs, but now Uddhava is stirring her memories. When Uddhava mentioned the songs of ecstasy he sang in Vraja, he was alluding in particular to the suffering of the *gopīs*, but since Rohiṇī is

affectionate toward all the Vraja-vāsīs, here she has used the generic masculine pronoun *tān* (“them”). In the next two verses she will express her special concern for Mother Yaśodā.

अहं श्रीवसुदेवेन समानीता ततो यदा ।  
यशोदाया महार्तायास्तदानीन्तनरोदनैः ॥

ग्रावोऽपि रोदित्यशनेरप्यन्तर्दलति ध्रुवम् ।  
जीवन्मृतानामन्यासां वार्तां कोऽपि मुखं नयेत् ॥

*aham śrī-vasudevena  
samānītā tato yadā  
yaśodāyā mahārtāyās  
tadānīntana-rodanaiḥ*

*grāvo 'pi rodity aśaner  
apy antar dalati dhruvam  
jīvan-mṛtānām anyāsām  
vārtām ko 'pi mukhaṁ nayet*

*aham*—I; *śrī-vasudevena*—by Śrī Vasudeva; *samānītā*—brought; *tataḥ*—from there; *yadā*—when; *yaśodāyāḥ*—of Yaśodā; *mahā-ārtāyāḥ*—who was greatly distraught; *tadānīntana*—at that time; *rodanaiḥ*—by the cries; *grāvaḥ*—a stone; *api*—even; *roditi*—cries; *aśaneḥ*—of lightning; *api*—even; *antaḥ*—the inside; *dalati*—breaks apart; *dhruvam*—certainly; *jīvan*—alive; *mṛtānām*—who are corpses; *anyāsām*—of the other ladies; *vārtām*—news; *kaḥ*—who; *api*—even; *mukham*—to his mouth; *nayet*—will lead.

When Śrī Vasudeva brought me back from Gokula, the cries of the greatly distraught Yaśodā made even stones shed tears, and lightning bolts shatter. And who can let the mouth speak about the other women of Vraja, who after Kṛṣṇa left became like living corpses?

Rohiṇī left Vraja just as the residents were being cast adrift in an

ocean of separation. Yaśodā suffered pitifully, but the young *gopīs* who had known Kṛṣṇa's intimate love suffered even more.

अथागतं गुरुगृहात्त्वत्प्रभुं प्रति किञ्चन ।  
सङ्क्षेपेणैव तद्वृत्तं दुःखादकथयं कुधीः ॥

*athāgataṁ guru-grhāt  
tvat-prabhum̐ prati kiñcana  
saṅkṣepeṇaiva tad-vṛttam̐  
duḥkhād akathayaṁ ku-dhīḥ*

*atha*—subsequently; *āgataṁ*—returned; *guru*—of His spiritual master; *grhāt*—from the house; *tvat*—your; *prabhum*—Lord; *prati*—addressing; *kiñcana*—something; *saṅkṣepeṇa*—in brief; *eva*—only; *tat*—of them; *vṛttam*—the news; *duḥkhāt*—because of my sadness; *akathayaṁ*—I related; *ku-dhīḥ*—being unintelligent.

**But I am not very intelligent. After your Lord returned from the house of His spiritual master, my sadness drove me to tell Him briefly how the Vraja-vāsīs were faring.**

When Rohiṇī arrived in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa was away studying with Balarāma at the *āśrama* of Sāndīpani Muni, but after some days the two brothers returned. Rohiṇī was distraught about the plight of the Vraja-vāsīs, who would not likely survive without Kṛṣṇa. Therefore she decided to inform Kṛṣṇa about their condition, even at the risk of discomposing Him. She tried to tell Him only enough to make Him want to visit Vraja to console His devotees, but not tell Him so much that His own mental stability would be threatened. Rohiṇī, however, seems not to have acted with the best of intelligence. Revealing one's mind generally relieves anxiety, but one should take care to reveal one's mind under favorable circumstances, to avoid disturbing others. Thus Rohiṇī can say in retrospect that it was unwise for her to have risked exposing Kṛṣṇa to the torment of *viraha-bhāva*.

न हि कोमलितं चित्तं तेनाप्यस्य यतो भवान् ।



सन्देशचातुरीविद्याप्रगल्भः प्रेषितः परम् ॥

na hi komalitaṁ cittaṁ  
tenāpy asya yato bhavān  
sandeśa-cāturī-vidyā-  
pragalbhaḥ preṣitaḥ param

na—not; hi—indeed; komalitaṁ—softened; cittaṁ—the heart; tena—by this; api—even; asya—His; yataḥ—because; bhavān—your good self; sandeśa—in delivering messages; cāturī—of cleverness; vidyā—in the art; pragalbhaḥ—proficient; preṣitaḥ—sent; param—only.

This, though, did not soften His heart, since all He did in response was send you, an expert in the clever art of delivering messages.

Much to Rohiṇī's surprise, Kṛṣṇa did not respond with deep concern. And when Uddhava delivered Kṛṣṇa's message to the Vraja-vāsīs, they did not recover from their devastation; on the contrary, they showed even more extreme symptoms of distress.

अयमेव हि किं तेषु त्वत्प्रभोः परमो महान् ।  
अनुग्रहप्रसादो यस्तात्पर्येणोच्यते त्वया ॥

ayam eva hi kiṁ teṣu  
tvat-prabhoḥ paramo mahān  
anugraha-prasādo ya  
tātparyeṇocyate tvayā

ayam—this; eva—only; hi—indeed; kiṁ—whether; teṣu—on them; tvat-prabhoḥ—of your Lord; paramaḥ—the most; mahān—superior; anugraha—favor; prasādaḥ—and mercy; yaḥ—which; tātparyeṇa—by implication; ucyate—has been spoken about; tvayā—by you.

Is this your Lord's greatest favor and mercy on them, as your words imply?

मम प्रत्यक्षमेवेदं यदा कृष्णो ब्रजेऽब्रजत् ।

ततो हि पूतनादिभ्यः केश्यन्तेभ्यो मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

दैत्येभ्यो वरुणेन्द्रादिदेवेभ्योऽजगरादितः ।

तथा चिरन्तनस्वीयशकटार्जुनभङ्गतः ।

को वा नोपद्रवस्तत्र जातो ब्रजविनाशकः ॥

तत्रत्यास्तु जनाः किञ्चित्तेऽनुसन्दधते न तत् ॥

mama pratyakṣam evedam  
yadā kṛṣṇo vraje 'vraja  
tato hi pūtanādibhyaḥ  
keśy-antebhyo muhur muhuḥ

daityebhyo varuṇendrādi-  
devebhyo 'jagarāditāḥ  
tathā cirantana-svīya-  
śakaṭārjuna-bhaṅgataḥ  
ko vā nopadravas tatra  
jāto vraja-vināśakaḥ

tatratyās tu janāḥ kiñcit  
te 'nusandadhate na tat

mama—my; pratyakṣam—direct experience; eva—indeed; idam—this; yadā—when; kṛṣṇaḥ—Kṛṣṇa; vraje—in Vraja; avrajaḥ—wandered; tataḥ—then; hi—indeed; pūtanā-ādibhyaḥ—beginning with Pūtanā; keśi-antebhyaḥ—and ending with Keśi; muhuḥ muhuḥ—again and again; daityebhyaḥ—from demons; varuṇa-indra-ādi—Varuṇa, Indra, and others; devebhyaḥ—from demigods; ajagara-āditāḥ—from creatures like the python; tathā—also; cirantana—for a long time; svīya—His own; śakaṭa—of the cart; arjuna—and of the arjuna trees; bhaṅgataḥ—from the destruction; kaḥ—what; vā—or; na—not; upadravaḥ—calamity;

*tatra*—there; *jātaḥ*—arose; *vraja*—Vraja; *vināśakaḥ*—able to destroy; *tatratyāḥ*—residing there; *tu*—but; *janāḥ*—the people; *kiñcit*—any; *te*—they; *anusandadhate*—paid regard; *na*—not; *tat*—to that.

**My own experience is this: When Kṛṣṇa lived in Vraja, so many calamities threatened to destroy it. Vraja was disturbed by demons, from Pūtanā to Keśī, by demigods like Varuṇa and Indra, by creatures like the python, and by the falling of familiar things at Kṛṣṇa's house like the cart and the arjuna trees. But to these dangers the residents paid no regard.**

The residents of Vraja were simply happy to have Kṛṣṇa in their midst. They did not care what dangers befell them due to Kāṁsa's seeing Kṛṣṇa as an enemy to be destroyed. To kill Kṛṣṇa and ruin Kṛṣṇa's homeland, Kāṁsa sent many demons—those mentioned in this verse, and others like Kāliya, the serpent who on Kāṁsa's order polluted the Yamunā with deadly poison. Besides the friends of Kāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa had yet other adversaries, including powerful rulers of heaven. Nonetheless, the Vraja-vāsīs constantly thought only about how to keep Kṛṣṇa happy; they never considered protecting themselves from the attacks of demigods or demons.

मोहिता इव कृष्णस्य मङ्गलं तत्र तत्र हि ।  
इच्छन्ति सर्वदा स्वीयं नापेक्षन्ते च कर्हिचित् ॥

*mohitā iva kṛṣṇasya*  
*maṅgalaṁ tatra tatra hi*  
*icchanti sarvadā svīyaṁ*  
*nāpekṣante ca karhicit*

*mohitāḥ*—in a trance; *iva*—as if; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *maṅgalam*—the welfare; *tatra tatra*—in each case; *hi*—only; *icchanti*—they want; *sarvadā*—always; *svīyam*—their own; *na apekṣante*—they do not regard; *ca*—and; *karhicit*—ever.

**As if entranced, in each event they wanted only to assure Kṛṣṇa's welfare. They never thought about themselves.**

It was Kṛṣṇa who entranced the residents of Vraja. Acting through His Yogamāyā potency, He diverted them from paying attention to their own safety. At the same time, He completely protected them. Vaiṣṇavas are supposed to cultivate the understanding that Kṛṣṇa will protect them from all dangers: *rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāsaḥ* (*Vaiṣṇava-tantra*). The Vraja-vāsīs, however, manifested the perfection of this surrender spontaneously, without having to practice it.

**स्वभावसौहृदेनैव यत्किञ्चित्सर्वमात्मनः ।  
अस्योपकल्पयन्ते स्म नन्दसूनोः सुखाय तत् ॥**

*svabhāva-sauhṛdenaiva  
yat kiñcit sarvam ātmanaḥ  
asyopakalpayante sma  
nanda-sūnoḥ sukhāya tat*

*svabhāva*—natural; *sauhṛdena*—because of fondness; *eva*—indeed; *yat kiñcit*—whatever; *sarvam*—all; *ātmanaḥ*—their own; *asya*—of Him; *upakalpayante sma*—they dedicated; *nanda-sūnoḥ*—of the son of Nanda; *sukhāya*—to the happiness; *tat*—that.

**In natural fondness for the son of Nanda, they fully dedicated everything they owned to His pleasure.**

So-called love in the material world is always motivated by some selfish desire. But in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma everyone loves Kṛṣṇa without any motive. It may be said that unmotivated love of God is also found in Vaikuṇṭha. But that love is restricted by the devotees' awareness of the supremacy of Lord Nārāyaṇa. In Vṛndāvana, the residents see Kṛṣṇa just as Nanda Mahārāja's darling son, and not the Lord of all existence or even the hero of the Yadu dynasty. Seeing Kṛṣṇa with this attitude allows the Vraja-vāsīs to freely express their unconditional *prema-bhakti*.

**तदानीमपि नामीषां किञ्चित्त्वत्प्रभुणा कृतम् ।  
इदानीं साधितस्वार्थो यच्चक्रेऽयं क्व वच्मि तत् ॥**

tadānīm api nāmīṣām  
kiñcit tvat-prabhuṇā kṛtam  
idānīm sādhita-svārtho  
yac cakre 'yaṁ kva vacmi tat

tadānīm—at that time; api—even; na—not; amīṣām—for them; kiñcit—anything; tvat-prabhuṇā—by your Lord; kṛtam—done; idānīm—now; sādhita—fulfilling; sva—of His own devotees; arthaḥ—the purposes; yat—what; cakre—has done; ayam—He; kva—where; vacmi—I can speak; tat—that.

**Even then your Lord did nothing to help them. And who could bear to hear me say what He has been doing now to accomplish the goals of His other devotees?**

The word *sva* may mean “His own,” indicating that the Lord’s own goals are what He was busy fulfilling. But the word *sva* as used here is best understood to mean “His own devotees.” After Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā, He satisfied His devotees there by killing Kāṁsa and then living with the Yadus for the rest of His life. For the Yadus this was pleasing to hear about, but for the Vraja-vāsīs and their sympathizers it could be intolerable.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्छ्रुत्वा दुष्टकंसस्य जननी धृष्टचेष्टिता ।  
जराहतविचारा सा सशिरःकम्पमब्रवीत् ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tac chrutvā duṣṭa-kāṁsasya  
jananī dhṛṣṭa-ceṣṭitā  
jarā-hata-vicārā sā  
sa-śiraḥ-kampam abravīt

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tat—this; śrutvā—hearing; duṣṭa—wicked; kāṁsasya—of Kāṁsa; jananī—the mother; dhṛṣṭa—bold; ceṣṭitā—whose behavior; jarā—by old age; hata—spoiled; vicārā—whose power of discrimination; sā—she; sa—with; śiraḥ—of her head;

*kampam*—shaking; *abravīt*—said.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Upon hearing this, the mother of the wicked Kāṁsa spoke out, her head shaking, her manner bold, her judgment spoiled by old age.

Padmāvatī was not at all ashamed of being the mother of Kṛṣṇa's great enemy, begotten by the demon Drumila. History records that when Kṛṣṇa killed Kāṁsa she lamented uncontrollably, even though all intelligent persons were pleased at her son's death.

पद्मावत्युवाच  
अहो बताच्युतस्तेषां गोपानामकृपावताम् ।  
आबाल्यात्कण्टकारण्ये पालयामास गोगणान् ॥

*padmāvaty uvāca*  
*aho batācyutas teṣāṁ*  
*gopānām akṛpāvatām*  
*ā-bālyāt kaṇṭakāraṇye*  
*pālayām āsa go-gaṇān*

*padmāvatī uvāca*—Padmāvatī said; *aho*—just see; *bata*—indeed; *acyutaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *teṣām*—of these; *gopānām*—cowherds; *akṛpā-vatām*—merciless; *ā-bālyāt*—since childhood; *kaṇṭaka*—full of thorns; *araṇye*—in the forest; *pālayām āsa*—has guarded; *go-gaṇān*—the many cows.

Padmāvatī said: Just see! Since childhood our Kṛṣṇa has stayed in the forest full of thorns to guard the cows of those merciless cowherds.

As the name Acyuta indicates, Kṛṣṇa never fails to carry out His responsibilities, even when they are troublesome.

पादुके न ददुस्तेऽस्मै कदाचिच्च क्षुधातुरः ।  
गोरसं भक्षयेत्किञ्चिदिमं बध्नन्ति तत्स्त्रियः ॥

*pāduke na dadus te 'smai*

*kadācic ca kṣudhāturaḥ  
go-rasaṁ bhakṣayet kiñcid  
imam badhnanti tat-striyaḥ*

*pāduke*—shoes; *na daduḥ*—did not give; *te*—they; *asmai*—to Him; *kadācit*—ever; *ca*—and; *kṣudhā*—by hunger; *āturaḥ*—tortured; *go-rasam*—of the milk products; *bhakṣayet*—He would eat; *kiñcit*—some; *imam*—Him; *badhnanti*—they tie up; *tat*—their; *striyaḥ*—women.

They never even gave Him shoes! And if when tormented by hunger He sometimes ate a little stuff made from the milk, the cowherd women punished Him by tying Him up.

आक्रोशन्ति च तद्दुःखं कालगत्यैव कृत्स्नशः ।  
कृष्णेन सोढमधुना किं कर्तव्यं बतापरम् ॥

*ākrośanti ca tad duḥkham  
kāla-gatyaiva kṛtsnaśaḥ  
kṛṣṇena soḍham adhunā  
kiṁ kartavyam batāparam*

*ākrośanti*—they scold; *ca*—also; *tat*—that; *duḥkham*—pain; *kāla-gatyā*—because of the movement of time; *eva*—only; *kṛtsnaśaḥ*—completely; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *soḍham*—tolerated; *adhunā*—now; *kim*—what; *kartavyam*—obligation; *bata*—indeed; *aparam*—other.

And they scolded Him abusively. Because He was young, Kṛṣṇa had no choice but to tolerate all this pain. But what does He have to do for those people now?

Angry at Kṛṣṇa's stealing yogurt and buttermilk, Mother Yaśodā's neighbors would come to her and complain:

*vatsān muñcan kvacid asamaye krośa-saṅjāta-hāsaḥ  
steyaṁ svādv atty atha dadhi-payāḥ kalpitaiḥ steya-yogaiḥ  
markān bhokṣyan vibhajati sa cen nātti bhāṇḍam bhinnatti  
dravyālābhe sagṛha-kupito yāty upakrośya tokān*

“Your son sometimes comes to our houses before the milking of the cows and releases the calves, and when the master of the house becomes angry, your son merely smiles. Sometimes He devises some process by which He steals palatable curd, butter, and milk, which He then eats and drinks. When the monkeys assemble, He divides it with them, and when the monkeys have their bellies so full they won’t take more, He breaks the pots. Sometimes, if He gets no opportunity to steal butter or milk from a house, He will be angry at the householders, and for His revenge He will agitate the small children by pinching them. Then, when the children begin crying, Kṛṣṇa will go away.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.8.29)

Padmāvatī says that the abuse Kṛṣṇa tolerated was heaped upon Him because of *kāla-gati*, “the movement of time.” This can mean that because He was only a child He was hardly aware of the impropriety of what the cowherds were doing to Him, and in any case it was a situation He was powerless to change. Or else it can mean He was thinking that as long as He had to stay incognito in Vraja to hide from Kāmsa He would have to tolerate inconveniences.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
प्रज्ञागाम्भीर्यसम्पूर्णा रोहिणी व्रजवल्लभा ।  
तस्या वाक्यमनादृत्य प्रस्तुतं संशृणोति तत् ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
prajñā-gāmbhīrya-sampūrṇā  
rohiṇī vraja-vallabhā  
tasyā vākyam anādr̥tya  
prastutam samśṛṇoti tat*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *prajñā*—of wisdom; *gāmbhīrya*—with the gravity; *sampūrṇā*—fully endowed; *rohiṇī*—Rohiṇī; *vraja-vallabhā*—the darling of Vraja; *tasyāḥ*—her (Padmāvatī’s); *vākyam*—comments; *anādr̥tya*—disregarding; *prastutam*—the topic under discussion; *samśṛṇoti*—made heard; *tat*—that.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Rohiṇī, the darling of Vraja, was fully endowed with**



the gravity of wisdom. Ignoring Padmāvatī's remarks, she went on speaking from where she had left off.

श्रीरोहिण्युवाच  
राजधानीं यदूनां च प्राप्तः श्रीमथुरामयम् ।  
हतारिवर्गो विश्रान्तो राजराजेश्वरोऽभवत् ॥

*śrī-rohiṇy uvāca*  
*rājadhānīm yadūnām ca*  
*prāptaḥ śrī-mathurām ayam*  
*hatāri-vargo viśrānto*  
*rāja-rājeśvaro 'bhavat*

*śrī-rohiṇī uvāca*—Śrī Rohiṇī said; *rājadhānīm*—the capital; *yadūnām*—of the Yadus; *ca*—and; *prāptaḥ*—arrived at; *śrī-mathurām*—Śrī Mathurā; *ayam*—He; *hata*—having killed; *ari-vargaḥ*—an array of enemies; *viśrāntaḥ*—having rested; *rāja-rāja-īśvaraḥ*—king of the rulers of kings; *abhavat*—He became.

Śrī Rohiṇī said: Then He went to Śrī Mathurā, the capital of the Yadus. He killed many enemies, relaxed for a while, and became king of the rulers of kings.

*Viśrānta* (“having rested”) alludes to Kṛṣṇa's resting at Viśrāma-ghāṭa on the shore of the Yamunā after the labor of killing the wrestlers and Kāṁsa. In a previous age, Kṛṣṇa's incarnation Lord Varāha rested at the same spot after killing Hiraṇyākṣa. Also implied by the word *viśrānta* is Kṛṣṇa's dwelling peacefully in the city of Dvārakā, which He built for Himself. The Vraja-vāsīs had little reason to hope He might return to them soon, for He had now become an established king.

निर्जितोपकृताशेषदेवतावृन्दवन्दितः ।  
अहो स्मरति चित्तेऽपि न तेषां भवदीश्वरः ॥

*nirjitopakṛtāśeṣa-*

devatā-vṛnda-vanditaḥ  
aho smarati citte 'pi  
na teṣāṁ bhavad-īśvaraḥ

nirjita—conquered; upakṛta—or else helped; aśeṣa—all; devatā-vṛnda—by the many demigods; vanditaḥ—honored; aho—oh; smarati—He remembers; citte—in His mind; api—even; na—not; teṣāṁ—they; bhavat-īśvaraḥ—your Lord.

Now, honored by countless demigods, whom He has sometimes defeated and sometimes helped, this Lord of yours no longer even thinks about the residents of Vraja.

Kṛṣṇa humiliated Indra by stealing the pārijāta tree from heaven. And He aided the demigods by killing their various opponents like Narakāśura. Thus all the demigods, whether they had pure love for Him or not, had to acknowledge His superior position. Being lavished with so much honor, Kṛṣṇa, according to Mother Rohiṇī, could hardly remember His former life in simple Vṛndāvana.

### Rukmiṇī defends Kṛṣṇa

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तद्वचोऽसहमानाह देवी कृष्णस्य वल्लभा ।  
सदा कृतनिवासास्य हृदये भीष्मनन्दिनी ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tad-vaco 'sahamānāha  
devī kṛṣṇasya vallabhā  
sadā kṛta-nivāsāsyā  
hṛdaye bhīṣma-nandinī

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tat—these; vacaḥ—statements; asahamānā—not tolerating; āha—said; devī—the queen; kṛṣṇasya—of Kṛṣṇa; vallabhā—dear; sadā—always; kṛta—having; nivāsā—residence;

*asya*—His; *hṛdaye*—in the heart; *bhīṣma-nandinī*—the darling daughter of Bhīṣmaka.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Kṛṣṇa's dear queen Rukmiṇī, Bhīṣmaka's daughter, who always lived in Kṛṣṇa's heart, found these words unbearable. And so she spoke up.

Because Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī lived always in Kṛṣṇa's heart and literally on His chest in her expansion as the goddess Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha, she perfectly knew every thought and feeling that passed through His heart. Whatever she said therefore carried the highest degree of authority.

श्रीरुक्मिण्युवाच

भो मातर्नवनीतातिमृदुस्वान्तस्य तस्य हि ।  
अविज्ञायान्तरं किञ्चित्कथमेवं त्वयोच्यते ।  
यूयं शृणुत वृत्तानि तर्हि तर्हि श्रुतानि मे ॥

*śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca*  
*bho mātār nava-nītāti-*  
*mṛdu-svāntasya tasya hi*  
*avijñāyāntaram kiñcit*  
*katham evaṁ tvayocyate*  
*yūyaṁ śṛṇuta vṛttāni*  
*tarhi tarhi śrutāni me*

*śrī-rukmiṇī uvāca*—Śrī Rukmiṇī said; *bhoḥ*—O; *mātaḥ*—dear mother; *nava-nīta*—than new butter; *ati-mṛdu*—much softer; *sva-antasya*—whose heart; *tasya*—His; *hi*—certainly; *avijñāya*—not understanding; *antaram*—the inner feelings; *kiñcit*—at all; *katham*—why; *evam*—thus; *tvayā*—by you; *ucyate*—is said; *yūyam*—you; *śṛṇuta*—please hear; *vṛttāni*—the events; *tarhi tarhi*—then; *śrutāni*—heard; *me*—from me.

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: My dear mother, you don't understand the inner feelings of Kṛṣṇa at all. His heart is softer than newly churned butter. Why are you saying these things? Just hear from me what I have heard.

Even if Rohiṇī did understand Kṛṣṇa's true feelings, she was not revealing what she knew.

किमपि किमपि ब्रूते रात्रौ स्वपन्नपि नामभिर्  
मधुरमधुरं प्रीत्या धेनूरिवाह्वयति क्वचित् ।  
उत सखिगणान् कांश्चिद्गोपान् इवाथ मनोहरां  
समभिनयते वंशीवक्त्रां त्रिभङ्गिपराकृतिम् ॥

*kim api kim api brūte rātrau svapann api nāmabhir  
madhura-madhuram prītyā dhenūr ivāhvayati kvacit  
uta sakhi-gaṇān kāmścid gopān ivātha mano-harām  
samabhinayate vaṁśī-vaktrām tri-bhaṅgi-parākṛtim*

*kim api*—something; *kim api*—something else; *brūte*—He says; *rātrau*—at night; *svapan*—while sleeping; *api*—even; *nāmabhiḥ*—by names; *madhura-madhuram*—most sweetly; *prītyā*—with loving affection; *dhenūḥ*—to His cows; *iva*—as if; *āhvayati*—He calls; *kvacit*—sometimes; *uta*—or; *sakhi-gaṇān*—His girlfriends; *kāmścit*—certain; *gopān*—cowherd boys; *iva*—as if; *atha*—or; *manaḥ-harām*—enchanting; *samabhinayate*—He acts out; *vaṁśī*—a flute; *vaktrām*—having at His mouth; *tri-bhaṅgi*—bending in three places; *para*—excellent; *ākṛtim*—His form.

Sometimes at night He says this and that in His sleep. Sometimes, in a most sweet voice, He utters names as if calling His cows. Sometimes He calls His girlfriends or some of the cowherd boys. And sometimes while asleep He acts as if He were placing His flute to His mouth and assumes His enchanting threefold-bending form.

Kṛṣṇa displays the full extent of His beauty only in Vraja-bhūmi. Elsewhere He does not play the flute or stand in His most attractive pose, with His feet, hands, and head forming an enchanting curve.

कदाचिन्मातर्मे वितर नवनीतं त्विति वदेत्

कदाचिच्छ्रीराधे ललित इति सम्बोधयति माम् ।  
कदापीदं चन्द्रावलि किमिति मे कर्षति पटं  
कदाप्यस्त्रासारैर्मृदुलयति तूलीं शयनतः ॥

*kadācin mātara me vitara nava-nītaṁ tv iti vadet  
kadācic chrī-rādhe lalita iti sambodhayati mām  
kadāpīdaṁ candrāvali kim iti me karṣati paṭaṁ  
kadāpy asrāsārair mṛdulayati tūlīm śayanataḥ*

*kadācit*—sometimes; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *me*—to Me; *vitara*—please give; *nava-nītaṁ*—freshly churned butter; *tu*—and; *iti*—thus; *vadet*—He says; *kadācit*—sometimes; *śrī-rādhe*—O Śrī Rādhā; *lalite*—O Lalitā; *iti*—thus; *sambodhayati*—He addresses; *mām*—me; *kadā api*—sometimes; *idam*—this; *candrāvali*—O Candrāvalī; *kim*—what; *iti*—is this; *me*—my; *karṣati*—He pulls; *paṭam*—the garment; *kadā api*—sometimes; *asra*—of tears; *āsāraiḥ*—with floods; *mṛdulayati*—drenches; *tūlīm*—the pillow; *śayanataḥ*—on the bed.

While asleep He sometimes says, “Mother, give Me some fresh butter.” Sometimes He calls out to me, “O Śrī Rādhā!” or “O Lalitā!” Sometimes He pulls on my garment and asks me, “Candrāvalī, what are you doing?” And sometimes He drenches the pillow on His bed with floods of tears.

स्वप्नादुत्थाय सद्योऽथ रोदित्यार्तस्वरैस्तथा ।  
वयं येन निमज्जामो दुःखशोकमहार्णवे ॥

*svapnād utthāya sadyo 'tha  
rodity ārta-svarais tathā  
vayaṁ yena nimajjāmo  
duḥkha-śoka-mahārṇave*

*svapnāt*—from sleep; *utthāya*—rising; *sadyaḥ*—suddenly; *atha*—then; *roditi*—He cries; *ārta-svaraiḥ*—with pitiful sounds; *tathā*—and; *vayaṁ*—us; *yena*—by this; *nimajjāmaḥ*—drown; *duḥkha*—of pain; *śoka*—and unhappiness; *mahā-arṇave*—in a vast ocean.

Then at times He suddenly wakes up, rises from bed, and cries in a pitiful voice, drowning us in an ocean of pain and grief.

By “us” Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī means all of Kṛṣṇa’s queens. Rukmiṇī’s own unique love for Kṛṣṇa is free from the jealousy usually found among co-wives.

अद्यापि दृष्ट्वा किमपि स्वपन्निशि  
क्रन्दन् शुचासौ विमनस्कतातुरः ।  
दत्त्वाम्बरं मूर्धनि सुप्तवत्स्थितो  
नित्यानि कृत्यान्यपि नाचरद्धत ॥

*adyāpi dṛṣṭvā kim api svapan niśi  
krandan śucāsau vimanaskatāturaḥ  
dattvāmbaram mūrdhani supta-vat sthito  
nityāni kṛtyāny api nācarad bata*

*adya api*—just today; *dṛṣṭvā*—having seen; *kim api*—something; *svapan*—while dreaming; *niśi*—at night; *krandan*—sobbing; *śucā*—out of sorrow; *asau*—He; *vimanaskatā*—by mental distraction; *āturaḥ*—agitated; *dattvā*—placing; *ambaram*—His cloth; *mūrdhani*—on His head; *supta-vat*—as if asleep; *sthitah*—remaining; *nityāni*—daily; *kṛtyāni*—duties; *api*—even; *na ācarat*—He has not performed; *bata*—indeed.

Just last night He must have seen something in a dream, because today He has been weeping sorrowfully and is beside Himself with agitation. Now He is lying in bed as if asleep, His cloth pulled over His head. He has not even performed His morning duties.

Satyabhāmā confirms Kṛṣṇa’s anxiety

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच

ससपत्नीगणा सेष्यं सत्यभामाह भामिनी ।  
हे श्रीरुक्मिणि निद्रायामिति किं त्वं प्रजल्पसि ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*sa-sapatnī-gaṇā serṣyam*  
*satyabhāmāha bhāminī*  
*he śrī-rukmiṇi nidrāyām*  
*iti kim tvam prajalpasi*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *sa-sapatnī-gaṇā*—along with other co-wives; *sa-irṣyam*—with jealous anger; *satyabhāmā*—Satyabhāmā; *āha*—spoke; *bhāminī*—temperamental; *he śrī-rukmiṇi*—O Śrī Rukmiṇi; *nidrāyām*—while asleep; *iti*—thus; *kim*—why; *tvam*—you; *prajalpasi*—are prattling.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Then temperamental Satyabhāmā, surrounded by other wives, answered back in jealous anger. She said, “Dear Śrī Rukmiṇī, why are you prattling on like this? Why talk only about what He does while asleep?

किमपि किमपि कुर्वन् जाग्रदप्यात्मचित्ते  
शयित इव विधत्ते तादृशं तादृशं च ।  
वयमिह किल भार्या नामतो वस्तुतः स्युः  
पशुपयुवतिदास्योऽप्यस्मदस्य प्रियास्ताः ॥

*kim api kim api kurvan jāgrad apy ātma-citte*  
*śayita iva vidhatte tādṛśam tādṛśam ca*  
*vayam iha kila bhāryā nāmato vastutaḥ syuḥ*  
*paśupa-yuvati-dāsyo 'py asmad asya priyās tāḥ*

*kim api*—something; *kim api*—something else; *kurvan*—doing; *jāgrat*—awake; *api*—even; *ātma*—His own; *citte*—in the heart; *śayitaḥ*—asleep; *iva*—as if; *vidhatte*—He enacts; *tādṛśam tādṛśam*—each thing; *ca*—and; *vayam*—we; *iha*—indeed; *kila*—indeed; *bhāryāḥ*—wives; *nāmataḥ*—in

name; *vastutaḥ*—factually; *syuḥ*—are; *paśu-pa*—of the cowherds; *yuvati*—young girls; *dāsyāḥ*—the maidservants; *api*—even; *asmat*—than us; *asya*—to Him; *priyāḥ*—more dear; *tāḥ*—they.

“Even while active and awake, He seems to have His mind on something else, as if dreaming. Indeed, we are His wives only in name; His young cowherd maidservants are in fact more dear to Him than we are.”

As Satyabhāmā and other queens witnessed, even in the middle of the day Kṛṣṇa often acted as if His mind were in Vraja. He would call out to His cows, His friends, and His *gopīs*, just as Rukmiṇī testified He did in His sleep.

**Balarāma blames Kṛṣṇa for not returning to Vraja**

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
अशक्तस्तद्वचः सोढुं गोकुलप्राणबान्धवः ।  
रोहिणीनन्दनः श्रीमान् बलदेवो रुषाब्रवीत् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*aśaktas tad-vacaḥ soḍhum*  
*gokula-prāṇa-bāndhavaḥ*  
*rohiṇī-nandanaḥ śrīmān*  
*baladevo ruṣābravīt*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *aśaktaḥ*—incapable; *tat*—her (Satyabhāmā’s); *vacaḥ*—words; *soḍhum*—of tolerating; *gokula*—of Gokula; *prāṇa-bāndhavaḥ*—the intimate friend; *rohiṇī-nandanaḥ*—the son of Rohiṇī; *śrīmān baladevaḥ*—blessed Baladeva; *ruṣā*—angrily; *abravīt*—spoke.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Blessed Baladeva, the darling son of Rohiṇī and intimate friend of all Gokula, couldn’t tolerate hearing these words. Angrily, He spoke in reply.



Lord Baladeva, siding with His mother, was dissatisfied with the way the other queens had interpreted Kṛṣṇa's behavior.

श्रीबलदेव उवाच  
वधूः सहजतत्रत्यदैन्यवार्ताकथापरान् ।  
अस्मान् वञ्चयतो भ्रातुरिदं कपटपाटवम् ॥

*śrī-baladeva uvāca*  
*vadhvaḥ sahaja-tatratya-*  
*dainya-vārtā-kathā-parān*  
*asmān vañcayato bhrātur*  
*idaṁ kaṭaṭa-pāṭavam*

*śrī-baladevaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Baladeva said; *vadhvaḥ*—O ladies; *sahaja*—natural, real; *tatratya*—of the residents; *dainya*—of the wretched condition; *vārtā*—of the news; *kathā*—in discussion; *parān*—who are absorbed; *asmān*—us; *vañcayataḥ*—cheating; *bhrātuḥ*—of My brother; *idaṁ*—this; *kaṭaṭa*—in deception; *pāṭavam*—the expertise.

**Śrī Baladeva said: Dear ladies, all this is nothing but My brother's clever deception. We are intent upon speaking about the misery of the residents of Vraja—misery all too real—and He is simply cheating us.**

Lord Baladeva called the Vraja-vāsīs' unhappiness *sahaja* ("natural" or "real"). According to Lord Baladeva, the devotees in Kṛṣṇa's Dvārakā entourage had every reason to be concerned about the plight of their counterparts in Vraja. Kṛṣṇa's apparent distress, however, should not be taken seriously, because He obtains pleasure only from deceiving others and will therefore go to any extremes to create an illusion. He has put on a show of being distracted by memories of Vraja just to please His Dvārakā devotees and give them a taste of the ecstasy of separation even while present with them. Everything Kṛṣṇa has said about the Vraja-vāsīs' distress in separation from Him has some basis in reality, but He has manipulated the facts to create a false appearance that He feels similarly about the Vraja-vāsīs.

तत्र मासद्वयं स्थित्वा तेषां स्वास्थ्यं चिकीर्षता ।  
तन्न शक्तं मया कर्तुं वाग्भिराचरितैरपि ॥

*tatra māsa-dvayaṁ sthitvā  
teṣāṁ svāsthyaṁ cikīrṣatā  
tan na śaktaṁ mayā kartum  
vāgbhir ācaritair api*

*tatra*—there (in Vraja); *māsa-dvayaṁ*—for two months; *sthitvā*—staying; *teṣāṁ*—of them; *svāsthyaṁ*—a normal condition; *cikīrṣatā*—trying to effect; *tat*—that; *na śaktaṁ*—was not able; *mayā*—by Me; *kartum*—to be done; *vāgbhiḥ*—by words; *ācaritaiḥ*—by deeds; *api*—and.

**I stayed there in Vraja for two months and tried to restore the Vraja-vāsīs to normal, but nothing I said or did was of any avail.**

While visiting Vraja, Lord Balarāma had tried to console the devotees by assuring them that Kṛṣṇa was very much afflicted by separation from them and that certainly in a few days He would finish killing all the enemies in Mathurā and come back home. Balarāma also did other things to relieve the Vraja-vāsīs' distress. For example, He performed water sports in the Yamunā and constructed new buildings in various places for Kṛṣṇa to enjoy in upon His return.

अनन्यसाध्यं तद्विक्ष्य विविधैः शपथैः शतैः ।  
तान् यत्नादीषदाश्वास्य त्वरयात्रागतं बलात् ॥

*ananya-sādhyaṁ tad vīkṣya  
vividhaiḥ śapathaiḥ śataiḥ  
tān yatnād iṣad āśvāsyā  
tvarayātrāgataṁ balāt*

*ananya*—by no other means; *sādhyaṁ*—achievable; *tat*—that; *vīkṣya*—seeing; *vividhaiḥ*—by various; *śapathaiḥ*—promises; *śataiḥ*—hundreds; *tān*—them; *yatnāt*—with effort; *iṣat*—somewhat; *āśvāsyā*—consoling; *tvarayā*—hastily; *atra*—here; *āgataṁ*—came back; *balāt*—by force.

Seeing no other way to achieve My purpose, I made hundreds of promises to them and with great effort finally consoled them to some extent. Then I managed to pull Myself away and hurried back here.

Lord Balarāma concluded that only Kṛṣṇa's returning to Vraja would forestall disaster. Lord Balarāma had done everything He could to convince the Vraja-vāsīs that Kṛṣṇa would soon be coming. He had told them that now He was going to Dvārakā to bring Kṛṣṇa personally. But even after offering so many assurances, Balarāma had been obliged to pry Himself away from Vraja by force; no one had wanted to let Him leave.

कातर्याद्गदितं कृष्ण सकृद्गोष्ठं कयापि तत् ।  
गत्वा प्रसङ्गसङ्गत्या रक्ष तत्रत्यजीवनम् ॥

*kātaryād gaditaṁ kṛṣṇa  
sakṛd goṣṭhaṁ kayāpi tat  
gatvā prasaṅga-saṅgatyā  
rakṣa tatradya-jīvanam*

*kātaryāt*—out of anxiety; *gaditaṁ*—said; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *sakṛt*—once; *goṣṭhaṁ*—the cowherd village; *kayā api*—one or another; *tat*—to that; *gatvā*—going; *prasaṅga-saṅgatyā*—by a pretext; *rakṣa*—please save; *tatradya*—of the people there; *jīvanam*—the lives.

I anxiously requested, “Kṛṣṇa, please find some excuse to go to Your cowherd village just once and save the lives of the people there.”

The cowherd community was made up of Kṛṣṇa's own people, with whom He had enjoyed the pleasures of His childhood. Now that they were drowning in an ocean of misery He surely ought to be willing to visit Vraja once to save them.

गन्तास्मीति मुखे ब्रूते हृदयं च न तादृशम् ।  
मानसस्य च भावस्य भवेत्साक्षि प्रयोजनम् ॥

*gantāsmīti mukhe brūte*

*hṛdayam ca na tādṛśam  
mānasasya ca bhāvasya  
bhavet sākṣi prayojanam*

*gantā asmi*—I shall go; *iti*—thus; *mukhe*—in the mouth; *brūte*—He said; *hṛdayam*—the heart; *ca*—and; *na*—not; *tādṛśam*—like this; *mānasasya*—mental; *ca*—and; *bhāvasya*—of one’s dispositions; *bhavet*—can be known; *sākṣi*—the witness; *prayojanam*—one’s actions.

From His mouth He said, “Certainly I shall go,” but in His heart He thought otherwise. Indeed, the truth about a person’s mind can be known from how he acts.

Speaking one way while acting in another is proof that one intends to deceive.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इदमाकर्ण्य भगवानुत्थाय शयनाद् द्रुतम् ।  
प्रियप्रेमपराधीनो रुदन्नुच्चैर्बहिर्गतः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
idam ākarṇya bhagavān  
utthāya śayanād drutam  
priya-prema-parādhīno  
rudann uccair bahir gataḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *idam*—this; *ākarṇya*—hearing; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *utthāya*—getting up; *śayanāt*—from His bed; *drutam*—quickly; *priya*—of His dear devotees; *prema*—by the love; *para-adhīnaḥ*—ruled; *rudan*—weeping; *uccaiḥ*—loudly; *bahiḥ*—outside; *gataḥ*—came.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Hearing this, the Personality of Godhead, who is ruled by the love of those dear to Him, suddenly got up from His bed and came outside, loudly weeping.

प्रफुल्लपद्मनेत्राभ्यां वर्षन्नश्रूणि धारया ।  
सगद्गदं जगादेदं परानुग्रहकातरः ॥

*praphulla-padma-netrābhyām*  
*varṣann aśrūṇi dhārayā*  
*sa-gadgadam jagādedam*  
*parānugraha-kātarah*

*praphulla*—blossoming; *padma*—like lotuses; *netrābhyām*—from His eyes; *varṣan*—raining; *aśrūṇi*—tears; *dhārayā*—in a great downpour; *sa-gadgadam*—with a choking voice; *jagāda*—He said; *idam*—this; *para*—for others; *anugraha*—by compassion; *kātarah*—tormented.

**From His fully blossoming lotus eyes rained a flood of tears. With a choking voice, tormented by compassion for others, He spoke as follows.**

An inferior person cares only for His own welfare, whereas a virtuous person thinks about *parānugraha*, compassionate help for others. Kṛṣṇa's *parānugraha* is unlimited. Taking the word *para* in the sense of “enemies,” we can understand that He is compassionate even to those who hate Him. Certainly, therefore, He would not neglect His devotees.

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
सत्यमेव महावज्रसारेण घटितं मम ।  
इदं हृदयमद्यापि द्विधा यन्न विदीर्यति ॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*satyam eva mahā-vajra-*  
*sāreṇa ghaṭitam mama*  
*idam hṛdayam adyāpi*  
*dvidhā yan na vidīryati*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Lord said; *satyam*—truly; *eva*—

indeed; *mahā-vajra*—of solid diamond; *sāreṇa*—from the substance; *ghaṭitam*—is made; *mama*—My; *idam*—this; *hṛdayam*—heart; *adya*—today; *api*—even; *dvidhā*—into two parts; *yat*—inasmuch as; *na vidīryati*—it does not split.

The Supreme Lord said: Yes, it is true. My heart is made of solid diamond. It must be so, because it has not yet split in half.

बाल्यादारभ्य तैर्यत्तत् पालनं विहितं चिरम् ।  
अप्यसाधारणं प्रेम सर्वं तद्विस्मृतं मया ॥

*bālyād ārabhya tair yat tat*  
*pālanam vihitam ciram*  
*apy asādhāraṇam prema*  
*sarvam tad vismṛtam mayā*

*bālyāt*—since very childhood; *ārabhya*—beginning; *taiḥ*—by them; *yat*—what; *tat*—that; *pālanam*—taking care; *vihitam*—done; *ciram*—for a long time; *api*—indeed; *asādhāraṇam*—exceptional; *prema*—love; *sarvam*—all; *tat*—that; *vismṛtam*—forgotten; *mayā*—by Me.

Those devotees took care of Me for so long, from the very beginning of My childhood, and still I have forgotten all about their exceptional love.

अस्तु तावद्वितं तेषां कार्यं किञ्चित्कथञ्चन ।  
उतात्यन्तं कृतं दुःखं क्रूरेण मृदुलात्मनाम् ॥

*astu tāvad dhitam teṣām*  
*kāryam kiñcit kathañcana*  
*utātyantam kṛtam duḥkham*  
*krūreṇa mṛdulātmanām*

*astu tāvat*—be that as it may; *hitam*—benefit; *teṣām*—to them; *kāryam*—needs to be done; *kiñcit*—some; *kathañcana*—somehow; *uta*—indeed; *atyantam*—extreme; *kṛtam*—caused; *duḥkham*—grief; *krūreṇa*—by one who is cruel; *mṛdula-ātmanām*—to the gentle souls.

Be that as it may, I must somehow do something to help them. I have indeed been cruel to have caused those gentle souls such extreme grief.

भ्रातरुद्धव सर्वज्ञ प्रेष्ठश्रेष्ठ वद द्रुतम् ।  
करवाणि किमित्यस्माच्छोकाब्धेर्मां समुद्धर ॥

*bhrātar uddhava sarva-jña  
preṣṭha-śreṣṭha vada drutam  
karavāṇi kim ity asmāc  
chokābdher mām samuddhara*

*bhrātaḥ—O brother; uddhava—Uddhava; sarva-jña—who knows everything; preṣṭha—of My dear friends; śreṣṭha—O best; vada—please tell; drutam—immediately; karavāṇi—I should do; kim—what; iti—thus; asmāt—out of this; śoka—of distress; abdhēḥ—ocean; mām—Me; samuddhara—please lift.*

O brother Uddhava, you know everything, and you are the best of My dear friends. Please tell Me at once what I should do. Please lift Me from this ocean of distress.

Devakī and Padmāvatī advise Kṛṣṇa

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
नन्दपत्नीप्रियसखी देवकी पुत्रवत्सला ।  
आहेदं दीयतां यद्यदिष्यते तैः सुहृत्तमैः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
nanda-patnī-priya-sakhī  
devakī putra-vatsalā  
āhedaṁ dīyatām yad yad  
iṣyate taiḥ suhṛt-tamaiḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; nanda-patnī—of Nanda's wife;*

*priya-sakhī*—the dear friend; *devakī*—Devakī; *putra-vatsalā*—affectionate to her son; *āha*—said; *idam*—this; *dīyatām*—should be given; *yat yat*—whatever; *iṣyate*—is wanted; *taiḥ*—by them; *suhṛt-tamaiḥ*—the best well-wishers.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Devakī was loving to her son and was a dear friend to Nanda's wife. She said, "You should give Your best well-wishers whatever they want!"

Mother Devakī anticipated that Uddhava's reply would likely inspire Kṛṣṇa to leave for Gokula, so she interrupted before Uddhava could speak. She suggested to Kṛṣṇa that He placate the Vraja-vāsīs some other way than by returning.

ततः पद्मावती राज्यदानभीता विमूढधीः ।  
महिषी यदुराजस्य वृद्धा मातामही प्रभोः ॥

अप्युक्ताश्रवणात्पूर्वं राममात्रावहेलिता ।  
स्वभर्तू रक्षितुं राज्यं चातुर्यात्परिहासवत् ॥

व्याहारपरिपाट्यान्यचित्ततापादनेन तम् ।  
यदुवंश्यैकशरणं विधातुं स्वस्थमब्रवीत् ॥

*tataḥ padmāvatī rājya-*  
*dāna-bhītā vimūḍha-dhīḥ*  
*mahiṣī yadu-rājasya*  
*vṛddhā mātāmahī prabhoḥ*

*apy uktāśravaṇāt pūrvam*  
*rāma-mātrāvahelitā*  
*sva-bhartū rakṣitum rājyaṁ*  
*cāturyāt parihāsa-vat*



vyāhāra-paripāṭyānya-  
cittatāpādanena tam  
yadu-vaṁśyaika-śaraṇam  
vidhātum svastham abravīt

tataḥ—then; padmāvatī—Padmāvatī; rājya—of the kingdom; dāna—of giving away in charity; bhītā—afraid; vimūḍha—confused; dhīḥ—whose intelligence; mahiṣī—the queen; yadu-rājasya—of the king of the Yadus (Ugrasena); vṛddhā—old; mātāmahī—the maternal grandmother; prabhoḥ—of the Personality of Godhead; api—and; ukta—what she had said; aśravaṇāt—by having not been heard; pūrvam—before; rāma-mātrā—by the mother of Lord Balarāma; avahelitā—ridiculed; svabhartuḥ—of her husband; rakṣitum—to protect; rājyam—the kingdom; cāturyāt—out of cleverness; pariḥāsa-vat—feigning a joking mood; vyāhāra—of speech; paripāṭyā—with expertise; anya—another; cittatā—of a mood; āpādanena—by evoking; tam—Him; yadu-vaṁśya—of the Yadu dynasty; eka-śaraṇam—the only shelter; vidhātum—to bring; svastham—to a normal condition; abravīt—she spoke.

Then, fearing that the kingdom was about to be given away, old Padmāvatī, the Lord's grandmother, the queen of the Yadu king Ugrasena, gathered her muddled wits and cleverly feigned a joking spirit. To protect her husband's domain, she spoke up again, even though Balarāma's mother had snubbed her by ignoring her previous remarks. Invoking eloquence, Padmāvatī tried to change the mood, to bring Kṛṣṇa, the exclusive shelter of the Yadu dynasty, back to normal.

In her own way, Padmāvatī had good intentions. She saw that unless Kṛṣṇa could be calmed down, the whole Yadu clan faced destruction. He might even offer to turn the rule of Dvārakā over to Nanda and the cowherds. To avert such danger, Padmāvatī tried a humorous distraction.

पद्मावत्युवाच  
त्वयानुत्पद्यते कृष्ण कथं मन्मन्त्रितं शृणु ।

यदेकादशभिर्वर्षेर्नन्दगोपस्य मन्दिरे ॥

द्वाभ्यां युवाभ्यां भ्रातृभ्यामुपभुक्तं हि वर्तते ।  
तत्र दद्यान्न दद्याद्वा गोरक्षाजीवनं स ते ॥

सर्वं तद्गर्गहस्तेन गणयित्वा कणाणुशः ।  
द्विगुणीकृत्य मद्भर्त्रा तस्मै देयं शपे स्वयम् ॥

*padmāvaty uvāca*  
*tvayānutapyate kṛṣṇa*  
*katham man-mantritam śṛṇu*  
*yad ekādaśabhir varṣair*  
*nanda-gopasya mandire*

*dvābhyām yuvābhyām bhrātr̥bhyām*  
*upabhuktam hi vartate*  
*tatra dadyān na dadyād vā*  
*go-rakṣā-jīvanam sa te*

*sarvam tad garga-hastena*  
*gaṇayitvā kaṇāṇuśaḥ*  
*dvi-guṇī-kṛtya mad-bhartrā*  
*tasmai deyam śape svayam*

*padmāvatī uvāca*—Padmāvatī said; *tvayā*—by You; *anutapyate*—lamentation is done; *kṛṣṇa*—Kṛṣṇa; *katham*—why; *mat*—my; *mantritam*—to the advice; *śṛṇu*—please listen; *yat*—what; *ekādaśabhiḥ*—for eleven; *varṣaiḥ*—years; *nanda-gopasya*—of Nanda Gopa; *mandire*—in the home; *dvābhyām*—by the two; *yuvābhyām*—You; *bhrātr̥bhyām*—brothers; *upabhuktam*—enjoyed; *hi*—indeed; *vartate*—there is; *tatra*—there; *dadyāt*—may give; *na dadyāt*—may not give; *vā*—or; *go-rakṣā*—for tending cows; *jīvanam*—the salary; *saḥ*—he (Nanda); *te*—to You; *sarvam*—all; *tat*—that; *garga*—of Garga Muni; *hastena*—by

the hand; *gaṇayitvā*—being calculated; *kaṇā-aṇuśaḥ*—to the smallest fraction; *dvi-guṇī*—double; *kṛtya*—making it; *mat-bhartrā*—by my husband; *tasmai*—to him (Nanda); *deyam*—it will be given; *śape*—I swear; *svayam*—myself.

**Padmāvatī said: Kṛṣṇa, why should You lament? Just listen to my advice. While living eleven years in the home of Nanda Gopa, You two brothers enjoyed various comforts. For that, I swear, my husband will repay Nanda twice over. My husband will see to it that Garga Muni calculates the amount to the smallest fraction and delivers it by his own hand. And if Nanda owes You payment for tending his cows, let him pay You or not, as he wishes.**

For eleven years, Ugrasena's grandson Kṛṣṇa lived and enjoyed in the house of Nanda Mahārāja. Kṛṣṇa might not take seriously Padmāvatī's idea to reimburse Nanda Mahārāja and satisfy him with money, but even if Kṛṣṇa becomes amused by it, her purpose of changing Kṛṣṇa's mood will be achieved. She reminds Kṛṣṇa that her husband, Ugrasena, is very generous and will not hesitate to pay twice whatever might be owed. And even if Nanda fails to remunerate Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for Their cow tending, that is a small concern. In settling the accounts, Nanda may not want to accept anything extra from Ugrasena, and that will be all the better. So there is no need to annoy Nanda Mahārāja over the small amount for the salaries of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Garga Muni is the best person to calculate the payment because he is an excellent astrologer, accustomed to making careful mathematical reckonings of configurations of planets. Moreover, though not saying so, Padmāvatī thinks that if the scrupulous Garga decides the amount to pay and delivers it himself, the cowherds will not get more than they deserve. Since Nanda is only a cowherd, he is not used to having much wealth other than his stock of milk products. The expenses for the two brothers should be repaid, but not those of Rohiṇī and the maidservants who had stayed with her in Vraja, because she had insulted Padmāvatī by ignoring her previous comments.

Padmāvatī is correct in figuring the duration of Kṛṣṇa's stay in Vraja

as eleven years. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.26) confirms this.

*tato nanda-vrajam itaḥ  
pitṛā kaṁsād vibibhyatā  
ekādaśa samās tatra  
gūḍhārciḥ sa-balo 'vasat*

“Thereafter, fearing Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa’s father brought Kṛṣṇa to the cow pastures of Mahārāja Nanda, and there Kṛṣṇa lived for eleven years like a covered flame with His elder brother, Baladeva.” This statement by Uddhava does not imply that after eleven years of living in Vraja incognito Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came out of hiding and continued living in Vraja for several years more. After all, when Akrūra came to take the two brothers away from Gokula, he saw that They were in the *kiśora* age — that is, They were young adolescents:

*dadarśa kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca  
vraje go-dohanaṁ gatau  
pīta-nīlāmbara-dharau  
śarad-amburuhekṣaṇau*

*kiśorau śyāmala-śvetau  
śrī-niketau bṛhad-bhujau*

“He saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the village of Vraja, going to milk the cows. Kṛṣṇa wore yellow garments, Balarāma blue, and Their eyes resembled autumnal lotuses. The two shelters of the goddess of fortune were in the *kiśora* age, one of them with dark-blue complexion and the other white.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.38.28–29) Again, when the two Lords arrived in Mathurā and entered Kaṁsa’s arena to join the wrestling competition, the women of the city described Them as adolescents:

*kva vajra-sāra-sarvāṅgau  
mallau śailendra-sannibhau  
kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau  
kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau*

“The two professional wrestlers have limbs as strong as lightning bolts and bodies resembling mighty mountains. What comparison can there be between those wrestlers and these two young, immature boys with exceedingly tender limbs?” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.44.8)

It is generally understood that the *kiśora* period of youth begins in one’s eleventh year. According to Vedic injunctions, *kṣatriyas* in particular are supposed to receive their sacred-thread initiation in the eleventh year, and so it was that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma took initiation at that age, right after killing Kāmsa.

In the arena after Kāmsa’s death, Kṛṣṇa told Śrī Vasudeva and Devakī,

*nāsmatto yuvayos tāta  
nityotkaṇṭhitayor api  
bālya-pauṇḍra-kaiśorāḥ  
putrābhyām abhavan kvacit*

“Because of Us, your two sons, you always remained in anxiety and could never enjoy Our childhood, boyhood, or youth.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.45.3) Although Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had just entered the *kiśora* age, the supreme heroic prowess They were showing in Mathurā covered the natural charm of Their youth. Thus Vasudeva and Devakī were not able to experience the sweetness of the boys in Their adolescence. In other words, although Kṛṣṇa’s beauty is described as that of a full-grown youth, this does not mean He had passed beyond the *kiśora* age.

As an alternative explanation of Kṛṣṇa’s statement to His parents, we can accept that when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to Mathurā They were actually at the end of the *kiśora* age, in Their fifteenth year. The poetry of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura gives evidence that in some of the later pastimes before leaving Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa manifested symptoms of full-grown youth and even acted as an adult. A child may act like an adult by displaying some special strength or skill. The fifteenth year is especially attractive because at that age the body reaches adulthood, at its peak of youthful beauty. But because Kṛṣṇa was supremely gentle by nature, His fifteenth year seemed like the beginning of His *kaiśora* period. And His

period of debt for enjoying Nanda Mahārāja's milk products is still calculated as only eleven years, since for the first four years He was an infant sucking His mother's breast.

In this way we can reconcile the contradictions that seem to appear among various statements, some saying He was a new adolescent and others a full-grown youth.

### Uddhava advises Kṛṣṇa to return to Vraja

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्च श्रीभगवान् कृत्वा श्रुतमप्यश्रुतं यथा ।  
अजानन्निव पप्रच्छ शोकवेगादथोद्धवम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tac ca śrī-bhagavān kṛtvā*  
*śrutam apy aśrutam yathā*  
*ajānann iva pāpraccha*  
*śoka-vegād athoddhavam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat*—that; *ca*—and; *śrī-bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kṛtvā*—making; *śrutam*—heard; *api*—although; *aśrutam*—unheard; *yathā*—as; *ajānan*—not aware; *iva*—as if; *pāpraccha*—He inquired; *śoka-vegāt*—by the force of lamentation; *atha*—then; *uddhavam*—from Uddhava.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said:** Although the Personality of Godhead must have heard these words, He pretended He had not. Driven by sorrow, He then inquired from Uddhava as though ignorant.

Not holding Padmāvatī's suggestions in high esteem, Kṛṣṇa chose to ignore them. He knew very well what was required of Him and what the Vraja-vāsīs wanted, but because of sharing the distress of His devotees, He seemed unaware of these things. He responded to His own discomfort by asking for Uddhava's advice.

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
भो विद्वद्भ्यः तत्रत्याखिलाभिप्रायविद्वद्भ्यः ।  
तेषामभीष्टं किं तन्मे कथयत्वविलम्बितम् ॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*  
*bho vidvad-vara tatratyā-*  
*khilābhiprāya-vid bhavān*  
*teṣām abhīṣṭam kiṁ tan me*  
*kathayatv avilambitam*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Lord said; *bhoḥ*—O; *vidvat-vara*—best of learned scholars; *tatratya*—of the people there; *akhila*—all; *abhiprāya*—the intentions; *vit*—who knows; *bhavān*—your good self; *teṣām*—of them; *abhīṣṭam*—the desire; *kim*—what; *tat*—that; *me*—to Me; *kathayatu*—please tell; *avilambitam*—without delay.

**The Supreme Lord said: O best of learned scholars, you know all the thoughts of the residents of Vraja. Please tell Me without delay what it is they desire.**

This inquiry stems from Mother Devakī's proposal to offer the Vraja-vāsīs whatever they want. Kṛṣṇa understands that no presentation of gifts will placate the devotees in Vraja, since all they want from Him is that He grace them with His presence. By approaching Uddhava for counsel, however, Kṛṣṇa is able to free Himself of the responsibility for the decision. If Uddhava advises Him to go to Vṛndāvana, no one will be able to stop Him. What first drove Kṛṣṇa to inquire from Uddhava was anxiety, but now a second reason for taking his opinion has come to Kṛṣṇa's mind.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्छ्रुत्वा भगवद्वाक्यमुद्धवो हृदि दुःखितः ।  
क्षणं निश्चस्य विस्मेरः सानुतापं जगाद तम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*

*tac chrutvā bhagavad-vākyam  
uddhavo hṛdi duḥkhiṭaḥ  
kṣaṇam niśvasya vismeraḥ  
sānutāpam jagāda tam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tat—this; śrutvā—hearing;  
bhagavat—of the Lord; vākyam—the words; uddhavaḥ—Uddhava;  
hṛdi—in his heart; duḥkhiṭaḥ—unhappy; kṣaṇam—for a moment;  
niśvasya—sighing; vismeraḥ—surprised; sa-anutāpam—remorseful;  
jagāda—said; tam—to Him.*

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Having heard these words from the Lord, the despondent Uddhava was taken aback. He sighed briefly and then answered, full of remorse.**

In the extreme ecstasy of *prema* this state of affairs evoked, Uddhava's discrimination failed him. Not recognizing the intended meaning of Kṛṣṇa's statement—that He wanted to visit Vraja—Uddhava instead took Kṛṣṇa's words at face value and thought He wanted to placate His devotees with gifts. Thus Uddhava thought that Kṛṣṇa, although all-knowing and supremely merciful, wanted to continue deceiving the Vraja-vāsīs. Uddhava was discouraged to see Kṛṣṇa behaving like this with His loving devotees.

**श्रीमदुद्धव उवाच  
न राजराजेश्वरताविभूतीर्  
न दिव्यवस्तूनि च ते भवत्तः ।  
न कामयन्तेऽन्यदपीह किञ्चिद्  
अमुत्र च प्राप्यमृते भवन्तम् ॥**

*śrīmad-uddhava uvāca  
na rāja-rājeśvaratā-vibhūtīr  
na divya-vastūni ca te bhavattaḥ  
na kāmāyante 'nyad apīha kiñcid  
amutra ca prāpyam ṛte bhavantam*



*śrīmat-uddhavaḥ uvāca*—Śrīmān Uddhava said; *na*—not; *rāja-rāja*—of emperors; *īśvaratā*—the controlling power; *vibhūtīḥ*—or opulent wealth; *na*—not; *divya*—heavenly; *vastūni*—things; *ca*—or; *te*—they; *bhavattaḥ*—from You; *na kāmāyante*—they do not desire; *anyat*—other; *api*—at all; *iha*—in this world; *kiñcit*—anything; *amutra*—in the next world; *ca*—and; *prāpyam*—obtainable; *ṛte*—other than; *bhavantam*—You.

Śrīmān Uddhava said: The people of Vraja don't want from You the power and wealth of emperors, nor the enjoyments found in heaven, nor anything else obtainable in this world or the next. They desire nothing else but You.

अवधानप्रसादोऽत्र क्रियतां ज्ञापयामि यत् ।  
पश्चाद्विचार्य कर्तव्यं स्वयमेव यथोचितम् ॥

*avadhāna-prasādo 'tra*  
*kriyatām jñāpayāmi yat*  
*paścād vicārya kartavyam*  
*svayam eva yathocitam*

*avadhāna*—of attention; *prasādaḥ*—the favor; *atra*—here; *kriyatām*—should be given; *jñāpayāmi*—I tell; *yat*—what; *paścāt*—thereafter; *vicārya*—pondering; *kartavyam*—should be done; *svayam*—Yourself; *eva*—only; *yathā-ucitam*—as is suitable.

Kindly favor me with Your attention. Think over what I am about to say and then act as You see fit.

पूर्वं नन्दस्य सङ्गत्या भवता प्रेषितानि ते ।  
भूषणादीनि दृष्ट्वोचुर्मिथो मग्नाः शुगम्बुधौ ॥

*pūrvam nandasya saṅgatyā*  
*bhavatā preṣitāni te*  
*bhūṣaṇādīni dṛṣṭvocur*

*mitho magnāḥ śug-ambudhau*  
*pūrvam*—previously; *nandasya*—with Nanda; *saṅgatyā*—at the meeting;  
*bhavatā*—by You; *preṣitāni*—sent; *te*—they; *bhūṣaṇa-ādīni*—ornaments  
and so on; *dṛṣtvā*—seeing; *ūcuḥ*—they said; *mithaḥ*—among one  
another; *magnāḥ*—submerged; *śuk*—of grief; *ambudhau*—in an ocean.

**Before, when the cowherds met Nanda and saw the jewels and other gifts  
You had sent with him, they spoke with one another, all of them  
immersed in an ocean of grief:**

The event Uddhava is narrating occurred just after Kṛṣṇa killed  
Kāṁsa. The jewelry Kṛṣṇa sent was meant mainly for the women of  
Vraja—the older *gopīs* headed by Mother Yaśodā and the younger *gopīs*  
headed by Śrī Rādhikā. Uddhava, however, does not here disclose this  
confidential fact.

**अहो बत महत्कष्टं वयमेतदभीप्सवः ।  
एतत्प्रसादयोग्याश्च ज्ञाताः कृष्णेन सम्प्रति ॥**

*aho bata mahat kaṣṭam*  
*vayam etad-abhīpsavaḥ*  
*etat-prasāda-yogyāś ca*  
*jñātāḥ kṛṣṇena samprati*  
*aho bata*—oh; *mahat*—very; *kaṣṭam*—painful; *vayam*—we; *etat*—this;  
*abhīpsavaḥ*—desiring; *etat*—such; *prasāda*—mercy; *yogyāḥ*—deserving;  
*ca*—and; *jñātāḥ*—thought; *kṛṣṇena*—by Kṛṣṇa; *samprati*—now.

**“Oh, how very painful! Kṛṣṇa now thinks we want such presents from  
Him and deserve this kind of mercy.**

Kṛṣṇa seemed to have changed His attitude toward the Vraja-vāsīs.  
Previously He would never have treated them in such an apparently  
uncaring way.

**तदस्मञ्जीवनं धिग्धिक्  
तिष्ठेत्कण्ठेऽधुनापि यत् ।**

नन्दगोपांश्च धिग्धिग्ये  
तं त्यौ तान्युपानयन् ॥

*tad asmaj-jīvanam dhig dhik  
tiṣṭhet kaṇṭhe 'dhunāpi yat  
nanda-gopāṁś ca dhig dhig ye  
tam tyaktvaitāny upānayan*

*tat*—therefore; *asmat*—our; *jīvanam*—lives; *dhik dhik*—damn; *tiṣṭhet*—remain; *kaṇṭhe*—in our throats; *adhunā*—now; *api*—even; *yat*—because; *nanda*—of Nanda; *gopān*—the cowherd men; *ca*—and; *dhik dhik*—damn; *ye*—who; *tam*—Him (Kṛṣṇa); *tyaktvā*—leaving; *etāni*—these things; *upānayan*—have brought.

“Therefore, damn our lives and the breath that still moves in our throats! And damn Nanda and the cowherd men! They should have left these things behind and instead brought Kṛṣṇa Himself.”

Abandoned by Kṛṣṇa, the devotees of Vraja lived on the verge of death. Still they condemned themselves for shamelessly holding on to the last breath of life in their throats while Kṛṣṇa was absent. Affectionate Nanda, of course, could hardly have refused anything his son desired, but he should not have expected the Vraja-vāsīs to be satisfied with Kṛṣṇa’s material gifts.

ततस्त्वद्गमनाशां च हित्वा सह यशोदया ।  
मृतप्राया भवन्मात्रारेभिरेऽनशनं महत् ॥

*tatas tvad-gamanāśām ca  
hitvā saha yaśodayā  
mṛta-prāyā bhavan-mātrā-  
rebhire 'naśanam mahat*

*tataḥ*—thus; *tvat*—Your; *gamana*—of the coming; *āśām*—hope; *ca*—and; *hitvā*—abandoning; *saha-yaśodayā*—including Mother Yaśodā; *mṛta-prāyāḥ*—practically dead; *bhavat-mātrā*—by Your mother;

*ārebhire*—began; *anaśanam*—fasting; *mahat*—complete.

Thus the residents of Vraja, including Your mother Yaśodā, gave up all hope of Your return. Already dead, they now refused to eat at all.

Along with Yaśodā, the Vraja-vāsīs have begun to fast to death, refusing to touch even water.

कृतापराधवन्नन्दो वक्तुं किञ्चिद्दिनत्रयम् ।  
अशक्तोऽत्यन्तशोकार्तो ब्रजप्राणानवन् गतान् ॥

भवतस्तत्र यानोक्तिं ग्राहयन् शपथोत्करैः ।  
दर्शयन् युक्तिचातुर्यममूनेवमसान्त्वयत् ॥

*kṛtāparādha-van nando*  
*vaktum kiñcid dina-trayam*  
*aśakto 'tyanta-śokārto*  
*vraja-prāṇān avan gatān*

*bhavatas tatra yānoktiṁ*  
*grāhayan śapathotkaraiḥ*  
*darśayan yukti-cāturyam*  
*amūn evam asāntvayat*

*kṛta-aparādha*—having committed an offense; *vat*—as if; *nandaḥ*—Nanda; *vaktum*—to say; *kiñcit*—anything; *dina*—for days; *trayam*—three; *aśaktaḥ*—unable; *atyanta*—extremely; *śoka*—by sorrow; *ārtaḥ*—distressed; *vraja*—of Vraja; *prāṇān*—the life airs; *avan*—protecting; *gatān*—departed; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *tatra*—there; *yāna*—about the visit; *uktim*—the words; *grāhayan*—making them accept; *śapatha*—of vows; *utkaraiḥ*—by heaps; *darśayan*—showing; *yukti*—in logical argument; *cāturyam*—skill; *amūn*—them; *evam*—thus; *asāntvayat*—he placated.

Nanda felt like someone who has committed a great offense, and for three days he was so utterly miserable he couldn't say a thing. But then, to save

the lives of the residents of Vraja, he induced those people to believe Your departing words. With many ardent promises, Nanda skillfully used logic to prove Your words true. In this way he placated the Vraja-vāsīs.

To assure Kṛṣṇa that His devotees in Vraja were still holding on to life, Uddhava describes in these verses how Nanda Mahārāja, knowing that his responsibility was to encourage the others, pulled himself out of depression and reminded the Vraja-vāsīs of Kṛṣṇa's promise to return. Soon after killing Kāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa had sent Nanda home from Mathurā with this assurance:

*yāta yūyaṁ vrajaṁ tāta  
vayaṁ ca sneha-duḥkhitān  
jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo  
vidhāya suhṛdāṁ sukham*

“Now, dear father, you should all return to Vraja. We shall come to see you, Our dear relatives who suffer in separation from Us, as soon as We have given some happiness to your well-wishing friends.” (Bhāgavatam 10.45.23) Nanda used the best arguments he could devise to persuade the Vraja-vāsīs that Kṛṣṇa still intended to keep His word.

श्रीनन्द उवाच  
द्रव्याण्यादौ प्रेमचिह्नानि पुत्र  
एतान्यत्र प्राहिणोत्सत्यवाक्यः ।  
शीघ्रं पश्चादागमिष्यत्यवश्यं  
तत्रत्यं स्वप्रस्तुतार्थं समाप्य ॥

*śrī-nanda uvāca*  
*dravyāṇy ādau prema-cihnāni putra*  
*etāny atra prāhiṇot satya-vākyaḥ*  
*śīghraṁ paścād āgamiṣyat avaśyaṁ*  
*tatratyaṁ sva-prastutārthaṁ samāpya*  
*śrī-nandaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nanda said; dravyāṇi—things; ādau—at first;*

*prema*—of love; *cihnāni*—tokens; *putraḥ*—our son; *etāni*—these; *atra*—here; *prāhiṇot*—has sent; *satya-vākyaḥ*—who always speaks the truth; *śīghram*—quickly; *paścāt*—back; *āgamiṣyati*—will come; *avaśyam*—certainly; *tatratyam*—there (in Mathurā); *sva*—His; *prastuta*—current; *artham*—business; *samāpya*—finishing.

**Śrī Nanda said: Our son is an honest person who always speaks the truth. He has first sent us these things, as tokens of His love. He is sure to come back to us quickly, as soon as He finishes what He has to do in Mathurā.**

For Nanda, Kṛṣṇa will always be his son, regardless of Vasudeva's claim. And Nanda believes that his son is honest. Kṛṣṇa sent the gifts not as a calculated attempt to manipulate the sentiments of the Vrajavāsīs, but simply out of love. As Kṛṣṇa promised, He is certain to return. He has been delaying in Mathurā for so long because of the many obligations He has to fulfill there, like removing the threat of Jarāsandha. These will take a little more time to complete, and then He will come back home to Vraja.

श्रुत्वा ते तत्र विश्वस्य सर्वे सरलमानसाः ।  
भवत्प्रीतिं समालोच्यालङ्कारान् दधुरात्मसु ॥

*śrutvā te tatra viśvasya*  
*sarve sarala-mānasāḥ*  
*bhavat-prītiṁ samālocyā-*  
*laṅkāraṇ dadhur ātmasu*

*śrutvā*—hearing; *te*—they; *tatra*—in this regard; *viśvasya*—trusting; *sarve*—all; *sarala-mānasāḥ*—simple-hearted; *bhavat*—Your; *prītiṁ*—loving affection; *samālocya*—considering; *alaṅkāraṇ*—the jewelry; *dadhuḥ*—they placed; *ātmasu*—on their bodies.

**The residents of Vraja, all simple-hearted people, trusted Nanda's words. Thinking about Your loving affection, they accepted the jewelry and put it on their bodies.**

The Vraja-vāsīs felt no special pleasure in adorning their bodies with this jewelry, but they did it anyway to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. It was not in their nature to doubt other people’s motives, and they found it especially hard to distrust Kṛṣṇa.

श्रीकृष्णोऽत्र समागत्य प्रसादद्रव्यसङ्ग्रहात् ।  
वीक्ष्याज्ञापालकानस्मान् नितरां कृपयिष्यति ॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇo 'tra samāgatya  
prasāda-dravya-saṅgrahāt  
vīkṣyājñā-pālakān asmān  
nitarām kṛpayiṣyati*

*śrī-kṛṣṇaḥ—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; atra—here; samāgatya—returning; prasāda—His remnants; dravya—the things; saṅgrahāt—by accepting; vīkṣya—seeing; ājñā—of the orders; pālakān—faithful followers; asmān—on us; nitarām—especially; kṛpayiṣyati—He will show mercy.*

They thought, “When Śrī Kṛṣṇa returns, He will see how we have followed His order by accepting these remnants of His enjoyment. Then He will show us special mercy.”

The Vraja-vāsīs consider themselves already recipients of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, but they know that His mercy can always increase. The more they please Him by their exclusive surrender, the more He will favor them. Therefore, just to please Kṛṣṇa, they feign happiness even in their greatest misery.

भवान् स्वयमगत्वा तु यं सन्देशं समर्प्य माम् ।  
प्राहिणोत्तेन ते सर्वे बभूवुर्निहता इव ॥

*bhavān svayam agatvā tu  
yam sandeśam samarpya mām  
prāhiṇot tena te sarve  
babhūvur nihatā iva*

*bhavān—You; svayam—Yourself; agatvā—not coming; tu—but; yam—*

which; *sandeśam*—message; *samarpya*—conveying; *mām*—me; *prāhiṇot*—sent; *tena*—by that; *te*—they; *sarve*—all; *babhūvuḥ*—became; *nihatāḥ*—killed; *iva*—as if.

**But You never came. You sent me instead. And when they heard the message You had sent with me, they almost died from disappointment.**

Uddhava complains that although the Vraja devotees acted with simple honesty, Kṛṣṇa reciprocated in a completely contrary way. To send through Uddhava a message telling the Vraja-vāsīs to be satisfied with meditating on Him as the all-pervading Supersoul was nothing less than a cruel deception. In the message Uddhava read, Kṛṣṇa told them:

*bhavatīnām viyogo me  
na hi sarvātmanā kvacit  
yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu  
khaṁ vāyav-agnir jalaṁ mahī  
tathā cāhaṁ manaḥ-prāṇa-  
buddhīndriya-guṇāśrayaḥ*

“You are never actually separated from Me, for I am the Soul of all creation. Just as the elements of nature—ether, air, fire, water, and earth—are present in every created thing, so I am present within everyone’s mind, life-air, intelligence, and senses, and also within the physical elements and the modes of material nature.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.29) This message from Kṛṣṇa shattered the Vraja-vāsīs’ hope of His returning.

**तथा दृष्ट्या मया तत्र भवतो गमनं ध्रुवम् ।  
प्रतिज्ञाय प्रयत्नात्तान् जीवयित्वा समागतम् ॥**

*tathā dṛṣṭyā mayā tatra  
bhavato gamanaṁ dhruvam  
pratijñāya prayatnāt tāt  
jīvayitvā samāgatam*

*tathā*—such; *dṛṣṭyā*—because of the seeing; *mayā*—by me; *tatra*—there;



*bhavataḥ*—Your; *gamanam*—coming; *dhruvam*—certain; *pratijñāya*—being promised; *prayatnāt*—with endeavor; *tān*—them; *jīvayitvā*—being kept alive; *samāgatam*—returned.

Seeing them so despondent, I made every effort to keep them alive by promising You would surely come back. Then I returned here.

त्वत्प्राप्तयेऽथ सन्न्यस्तसमस्तविषयाश्रयाः ।  
प्रापुर्यादृगवस्थां ते तां पृच्छैतं निजाग्रजम् ॥

*tvat-prāptaye 'tha sannyasta-*  
*samasta-viṣayāśrayāḥ*  
*prāpur yādṛg-avasthām te*  
*tām pṛcchaitam nijāgrajam*

*tvat*—of You; *prāptaye*—for the attainment; *atha*—then; *sannyasta*—having renounced; *samasta*—all; *viṣaya*—sense enjoyment; *āśrayāḥ*—and shelter; *prāpuḥ*—they obtained; *yādṛk*—of what kind; *avasthām*—state; *te*—they; *tām*—about that; *pṛccha*—just ask; *etam*—this one; *nija*—Your; *agra-jam*—elder brother.

To attain You, these devotees then renounced all enjoyment of the senses and all material shelter. Please ask Your elder brother here what state they are in.

And after all this, Kṛṣṇa only sent Balarāma instead of going to Vraja Himself. Uddhava is loath to describe the effect upon the Vraja-vāsīs of Kṛṣṇa's failure to visit them again, because hearing it will be too painful for Kṛṣṇa Himself and everyone else present. After Uddhava's visit to Vraja, the residents totally gave up gratifying their senses and abandoned their homes to wander the forests. While describing Lord Balarāma's trip to Gokula, the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (10.65.6) says, *kṛṣṇe kamala-patrākṣe/ sannyastākhila-rādhasaḥ*: "The Vraja-vāsīs renounced all material possessions for the sake of the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa."

When Uddhava had come to Vṛndāvana earlier, he had seen the *gopīs* headed by Śrī Rādhikā in a different state, happy and decorated

with fine jewelry, the same ornaments Nanda had brought back from Mathurā. The Tenth Canto (10.46.45–46) describes what Uddhava saw upon arriving in Vraja:

*tā dīpa-dīptair maṇibhir virejū  
rajjūr vikarṣad-bhuja-kaṅkaṇa-srajaḥ  
calan-nitamba-stana-hāra-kuṇḍala-  
tviṣat-kapolāruṇa-kuṅkumānanāḥ*

“Pulling on the churning ropes with bangled arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jewels, which reflected the light of the lamps. Their hips, breasts, and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish *kuṅkuma*, glowed radiantly, the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks.

*udgāyatīnām aravinda-locanaṁ  
vrajāṅganānām divam asprṣad dhvaniḥ  
dadhnaś ca nirmanthana-śabda-miśrito  
nirasyate yena diśām amaṅgalam*

“As the ladies of Vraja loudly sang the glories of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, their songs, blended with the sound of their churning, ascended to the sky and did away with all inauspiciousness in every direction.”

Upon hearing Uddhava’s message, however, the mood of the Vraja residents changed. Their hope for Kṛṣṇa’s return was destroyed, and they became more unhappy than before Nanda had consoled them.

Uddhava suggests that Kṛṣṇa can ask Balarāma about the current state of the Vraja-vāsīs, which Balarāma has seen with His own eyes. “Even if You doubt my words,” Uddhava implies, “surely You will believe Your elder brother.”

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तद्विच्छेदमहादुःखाशङ्कया म्लापितानि सः ।  
देवकीभीष्मजादीनां मुखान्यवनतान्यधः ॥

क्षरदस्त्राणि सस्नेहं विलोक्य मृदुलाशयः ।  
मसीकर्परपत्राणि व्यग्रोऽयाचत संज्ञया ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*tad-viccheda-mahā-duḥkhā-*  
*śaṅkayā mlāpitāni saḥ*  
*devakī-bhīṣmajādīnām*  
*mukhāny avanatāny adhaḥ*

*kṣarad-asrāṇi sa-sneham*  
*vilokya mṛdulāśayaḥ*  
*masī-karpara-patrāṇi*  
*vyagro 'yācata samjñayā*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat*—from Him; *viccheda*—due to the separation; *mahā-duḥkha*—of great suffering; *āśaṅkayā*—out of anticipation; *mlāpitāni*—who became pale; *saḥ*—He; *devakī-bhīṣmajādīnām*—of Devakī, of the daughter of Bhīṣmaka, and of the other ladies; *mukhāni*—the faces; *avanatāni*—turned downward; *adhaḥ*—to the ground; *kṣa-rat*—pouring out; *asrāṇi*—tears; *sa-sneham*—affectionately; *vilokya*—looking; *mṛdula-āśayaḥ*—gentle-hearted; *masī-karpara*—an inkpot; *patrāṇi*—and sheets of paper; *vyagraḥ*—in a hasty mood; *ayācata*—He requested; *samjñayā*—by a gesture.

**Śrī Parīkṣit continued:** From dread of the great pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa, the faces of the ladies like Devakī and Rukmiṇī were pale, downcast, and full of tears. Looking at those women affectionately, gentle-hearted Kṛṣṇa quickly gestured for an inkpot and paper.

Kṛṣṇa was so shaken by Uddhava's statements that He was unable to speak. He could make known His desire for pen and paper only by gesturing. But if Kṛṣṇa was so anxious about the Vraja-vāsīs, why did He not go to Vṛndāvana at once? Because Kṛṣṇa is soft-hearted. Incapable of making His devotees suffer, He was reluctant to leave Mother Devakī and His other beloved devotees who were in Dvārakā.

प्रस्तुतार्थं समाधायात्रत्यानाश्वास्य बान्धवान् ।  
एषोऽहमागतप्राय इति जानीत मत्प्रियाः ॥

एवमाश्वासनं प्रेमपत्रं प्रेषयितुं व्रजे ।  
स्वहस्तेनैव लिखितं तच्च गाढप्रतीतये ॥

*prastutārthaṁ samādhāyā-  
tratyān āśvāsya bāndhavān  
eṣo 'ham āgata-prāya  
iti jānīta mat-priyāḥ*

*evam āśvāsanam prema-  
patraṁ preṣayitum vraje  
sva-hastenaiva likhitaṁ  
tac ca gāḍha-pratītaye*

*prastuta*—at hand; *artham*—the business; *samādhāya*—taking care of; *atratyān*—who reside here; *āśvāsya*—pacifying; *bāndhavān*—My relatives; *eṣaḥ aham*—this very I; *āgata-prāyaḥ*—as good as having arrived; *iti*—thus; *jānīta*—please know; *mat-priyāḥ*—My dear friends; *evam*—in this way; *āśvāsanam*—the consoling; *prema*—loving; *patram*—a letter; *preṣayitum*—to send; *vraje*—to Vraja; *sva-hastena*—by His own hand; *eva*—only; *likhitaṁ*—written; *tat*—that; *ca*—and; *gāḍha*—firmly; *pratītaye*—for convincing.

Kṛṣṇa meant to strengthen the faith of His Vraja devotees by sending them a letter filled with loving sentiments and written by His own hand: “My dear friends, please know that as soon as I settle the duties before Me and satisfy My relatives here, I will return in no time. I will be there.”

तस्येहितमभिप्रेत्य प्राप्तोऽत्यन्तार्तिमुद्धवः ।  
व्रजवासिमनोऽभिज्ञोऽब्रवीत्सशपथं रुदन् ॥

tasyehitam abhipretya  
prāpto 'tyantārtim uddhavaḥ  
vraja-vāsi-mano-'bhijñō  
'bravīt sa-śapatham rudan

*tasya*—His; *īhitam*—intent; *abhipretya*—surmising; *prāptaḥ*—obtaining;  
*atyanta*—extreme; *ārtim*—distress; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *vraja-vāsi*—of  
the Vraja-vāsīs; *manaḥ*—the hearts; *abhijñāḥ*—knowing very well;  
*abravīt*—spoke; *sa-śapatham*—plaintively; *rudan*—crying.

Uddhava surmised what Kṛṣṇa was about to do and was therefore greatly distressed. Knowing the inner hearts of the Vraja-vāsīs, he cried and begged Kṛṣṇa to reconsider His plans.

श्रीमदुद्धव उवाच  
प्रभो सुनिर्णीतमिदं प्रतीहि  
त्वदीयपादाब्जयुगस्य तत्र ।  
शुभप्रयाणं न विनास्य जीवेद्  
व्रजः कथञ्चिन्न च किञ्चिदिच्छेत् ॥

śrīmad-uddhava uvāca  
prabho su-nirṇītam idam pratīhi  
tvadīya-pādābja-yugasya tatra  
śubha-prayāṇam na vināsyā jīved  
vrajaḥ kathañcin na ca kiñcid icchet

*śrīmat-uddhavaḥ uvāca*—Śrīmān Uddhava said; *prabho*—O master; *su-nirṇītam*—properly ascertained; *idam*—to this; *pratīhi*—please give attention; *tvadīya*—Your; *pāda-abja*—of lotus feet; *yugasya*—of the pair; *tatra*—there; *śubha*—auspicious; *prayāṇam*—the journey; *na*—not; *vinā*—without; *asya*—of this (pair of lotus feet); *jīvet*—will survive; *vrajaḥ*—Vraja; *kathañcit*—by any means; *na*—not; *ca*—and; *kiñcit*—anything; *icchet*—wants.

Śrīmān Uddhava said, O master, please turn Your attention to this:

Unless Your two lotus feet make a blessed journey to Vraja, there is no way to assure that Your people of Vraja will survive. Those people want nothing but Your lotus feet.

A mere letter will not save the Vraja-vāsīs from destruction. They do not want a letter from Kṛṣṇa—they want Kṛṣṇa Himself. *Asya jīved vrajaḥ*: Vraja belongs to Kṛṣṇa alone. The devotees living in Vraja recognize as worshipable only Kṛṣṇa, not the Supersoul or any other form of God.

### Padmāvatī and Rohiṇī quarrel

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच

कुमतिः कंसमाताह सहासं धुन्वती शिरः ।  
हुँ हुँ देवकि निर्बुद्धे बुद्धं बुद्धं मयाधुना ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*ku-matiḥ kaṁsa-mātāha*  
*sa-hāsaṁ dhunvatī śiraḥ*  
*hum hum devaki nirbuddhe*  
*buddhaṁ buddhaṁ mayādhunā*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *ku-matiḥ*—befuddled; *kaṁsa*—of Kāṁsa; *mātā*—the mother; *āha*—said; *sa-hāsaṁ*—with laughter; *dhunvatī*—shaking; *śiraḥ*—her head; *hum hum*—aha, aha; *devaki*—O Devakī; *nirbuddhe*—foolish one; *buddhaṁ*—understood; *buddhaṁ*—understood; *mayā*—by me; *adhunā*—now.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: The befuddled mother of Kāṁsa laughed at this, shook her head, and burst out: Aha! Aha, foolish Devakī, now I understand. I understand everything!

Padmāvatī laughed to belittle Uddhava’s words and uttered *hum hum* to show that she was thinking deeply and was unhappy.

चिरं गोरसदानेन यन्त्रितस्योद्धवस्य ते ।  
साहाय्यात्त्वत्सुतं गोपा नाययित्वा पुनर्वने ॥

*ciraṁ go-rasa-dānena  
yantritas-yoddhavyasya te  
sāhāyyāt tvat-sutaṁ gopā  
nāyayitvā punar vane*

*ciraṁ*—for a long time; *go-rasa*—of milk products; *dānena*—with gifts; *yantritasya*—who has been brought under control; *uddhavyasya*—of Uddhava; *te*—they; *sāhāyyāt*—with the help; *tvat-sutaṁ*—your son; *gopāḥ*—the cowherds; *nāyayitvā*—having Him brought; *punaḥ*—back; *vane*—to the forest.

With the help of your Uddhava, whom the cowherds have long controlled by gifts of milk goods, those cowherds want to bring Kṛṣṇa back to the forest.

भीषणे दुर्गमे दुष्टसत्त्वजुष्टे सकण्टके ।  
संरक्षयितुमिच्छन्ति धूर्ताः पशुगणान् निजान् ॥

*bhīṣaṇe durgame duṣṭa-  
sattva-juṣṭe sa-kaṇṭake  
saṁrakṣayitum icchanti  
dhūrtāḥ paśu-gaṇān nijān*

*bhīṣaṇe*—fearsome; *durgame*—difficult to travel in; *duṣṭa*—vicious; *sattva*—by creatures; *juṣṭe*—inhabited; *sa-kaṇṭake*—full of thorns; *saṁrakṣayitum*—to make Him tend; *icchanti*—want; *dhūrtāḥ*—the scoundrels; *paśu-gaṇān*—the animals; *nijān*—their.

In that dangerous forest, hard to travel and full of thorns and vicious beasts, those good-for-nothings want to make Him tend their cows.

It is true that Uddhava had stayed in Vṛndāvana much longer than needed to deliver Kṛṣṇa's message. As confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

(10.47.54):

*uvāsa katicin māsān  
gopīnām vinudan śucaḥ  
kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathām gāyan  
ramayām āsa gokulam*

“Uddhava stayed there several months, dispelling the *gopīs*’ sorrow by chanting the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Thus he brought joy to all the people of Gokula.”

Padmāvatī here accuses Nanda and the other Vraja-vāsīs of enticing Uddhava to prolong his stay by filling him with buttermilk and other milk products. She calls the Vraja-vāsīs scoundrels for wanting to use someone else’s son for dangerous work in a forest full of tigers, lions, and other wild animals.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तच्छ्रुत्वा कुत्सितं वाक्यमशक्ता सोढुमञ्जसा ।  
यशोदायाः प्रियसखी राममाताह कोपिता ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tat chrutvā kutsitaṁ vākyam  
aśaktā soḍhum añjasā  
yaśodāyāḥ priya-sakhī  
rāma-mātāha kopitā*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tat*—this; *śrutvā*—hearing; *kutsitam*—of rebuke; *vākyam*—words; *aśaktā*—unable; *soḍhum*—to tolerate; *añjasā*—easily; *yaśodāyāḥ*—of Yaśodā; *priya-sakhī*—the dear friend; *rāma-mātā*—Lord Balarāma’s mother; *āha*—said; *kopitā*—angered.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Balarāma’s mother Rohiṇī, Yaśodā’s dear friend, couldn’t tolerate hearing these insults. Angrily, she replied.



श्रीरोहिण्युवाच  
आः कंसमातः किमयं गोरक्षायां नियुज्यते ।  
क्षणमात्रं च तत्रत्यैरदृष्टेऽस्मिन् जीव्यते ॥

*śrī-rohiṇy uvāca*  
*āḥ kaṁsa-mātaḥ kim ayam*  
*go-rakṣāyām niyuḥjate*  
*kṣaṇa-mātram ca tatratyair*  
*adr̥ṣṭe 'smin na jīvyate*

*śrī-rohiṇī uvāca*—Śrī Rohiṇī said; *āḥ*—ah; *kaṁsa-mātaḥ*—O mother of Kāṁsa; *kim*—whether; *ayam*—this (Kṛṣṇa); *go-rakṣāyām*—in taking care of the cows; *niyuḥjate*—is to be engaged; *kṣaṇa-mātram*—for a single moment; *ca*—and; *tatratyaiḥ*—by the residents there; *adr̥ṣṭe*—without being seen; *asmin*—Him; *na jīvyate*—life cannot be maintained.

Śrī Rohiṇī said: Indeed, dear mother of Kāṁsa, will they just engage Him in caring for cows? Unless the devotees there see Him, they can't stay alive a single moment!

वृक्षादिभिस्त्वन्तरिते कदाचिद्  
अस्मिन् सति स्यात्सहचारिणां भृशम् ।  
श्रीकृष्ण कृष्णेति महाप्लुतस्वरैर्  
आह्वानभङ्ग्याकुलता सरोदना ॥

*vṛkṣādibhis tv antarite kadācid*  
*asmin sati syāt saha-cāriṇām bhṛśam*  
*śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti mahā-pluta-svarair*  
*āhvāna-bhaṅgyākulatā sa-rodanā*

*vṛkṣa-ādibhiḥ*—by trees and so on; *tu*—but; *antarite*—being obstructed; *kadācit*—sometimes; *asmin*—He; *sati*—O virtuous lady; *syāt*—is; *saha-cāriṇām*—of His companions; *bhṛśam*—suddenly; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—O Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛṣṇa*—Kṛṣṇa; *iti*—thus; *mahā-pluta*—greatly drawn out;

*svaraiḥ*—in voices; *āhvāna*—of calling out; *bhaṅgyā*—with expressions; *ākulatā*—distress; *sa-rodanā*—tearful.

O virtuous lady, if trees or other obstacles block Kṛṣṇa from sight even briefly, His companions at once shed tears and call in anxious, drawn-out voices, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!”

व्रजस्थितानां त्वहरेव काल-  
रात्रिर्भवेदेकलवो युगं च ।  
रविं रजोवर्त्म च पश्यतां मुहुर्  
दशा च काचिन्मुरलीं च शृण्वताम् ॥

*vraja-sthitānām tv ahar eva kāla-  
rātrir bhaved eka-lavo yugam ca  
raviṁ rajo-vartma ca paśyatām muhur  
daśā ca kācin muralīm ca śṛṇvatām*

*vraja*—in Vraja; *sthitānām*—for those who live; *tu*—and; *ahaḥ*—daytime; *eva*—indeed; *kāla-rātriḥ*—the black night (at the time when the universe is destroyed); *bhaved*—becomes; *eka-lavaḥ*—the duration of one blink of an eye; *yugam*—an entire age; *ca*—and; *raviṁ*—at the sun; *rajaḥ*—of dust; *vartma*—the trail; *ca*—and; *paśyatām*—looking; *muhur*—repeatedly; *daśā*—a condition; *ca*—and; *kācit*—certain; *muralīm*—His flute; *ca*—and; *śṛṇvatām*—hearing.

For those who live in Vraja, daytime is like the black night at the end of the universe, and the blink of an eye a millennium. In such a state, they look at the sun and the trails of dust on the road again and again and listen for the sound of the flute.

Rohiṇī’s calling Padmāvatī a virtuous lady (*satī*) is sarcastic, because everyone knows that her virtue was spoiled by the demon Drumila. She therefore should not be so bold as to present herself as an authority on how to serve Kṛṣṇa. Why does she imagine that the Vraja-vāsīs want to make Kṛṣṇa constantly slave for them in the distant forests? The Vraja-

vāsīs, rather, want to see Kṛṣṇa all the time. When He leaves them in the mornings to tend His cows in the forest, time passes for them slowly and painfully, especially for Śrī Rādhikā and the other young gopīs. In the gopīs' own words:

*aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanam  
truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām  
kuṭila-kuntalam śrī-mukham ca te  
jaḍa udikṣatām pakṣma-kṛd dṛśām*

“When You go off to the forest during the day, a tiny fraction of a second becomes like a millennium for us because we cannot see You. And even when we can eagerly look upon Your beautiful face, so lovely with its adornment of curly locks, our pleasure is hindered by our eyelids, which were fashioned by the foolish creator.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.31.15)

Even the boys headed by Śrīdāmā who accompany Kṛṣṇa in watching the cows become anxious when Kṛṣṇa disappears momentarily behind a tree or any other obstruction. The Vraja-vāsīs waiting back in Nanda Mahārāja's village glance frequently up at the sun to see whether it is time for Kṛṣṇa to come home. They look down the road on the horizon to see if dust is being raised by the returning cows. When from time to time they hear a few notes from Kṛṣṇa's distant flute, the Vraja-vāsīs are driven almost to insanity, realizing that for hours He will not return. How, therefore, can Padmāvatī reason that the Vraja-vāsīs will want to exploit Kṛṣṇa by keeping Him working constantly in the forest?

**अयं हि तत्तद्विपिनेषु कौतुकाद्  
विहर्तुकामः पशुसङ्घसङ्गतः ।  
वयस्यवर्गेः सह सर्वतोऽटितुं  
प्रयाति नित्यं स्वयमग्रजान्वितः ॥**

*ayaṁ hi tat-tad-vipineṣu kautukād  
vihartu-kāmaḥ paśu-saṅgha-saṅgataḥ*

*vayasya-vargaiḥ saha sarvato 'ṭitum  
prayāti nityam svayam agrajānvitaḥ*

*ayam*—He; *hi*—indeed; *tat-tat*—various; *vipineṣu*—in forests; *kautukāt*—with enthusiasm; *vihartu*—to play; *kāmaḥ*—desiring; *paśu-saṅgha*—of herds of cows; *saṅgataḥ*—in the company; *vayasya*—of His friends; *vargaiḥ*—with the groups; *saha*—together; *sarvataḥ*—all around; *aṭitum*—to wander; *prayāti*—goes out; *nityam*—daily; *svayam*—Himself; *agra-ja*—by His older brother; *anvitaḥ*—joined.

**Every day, Kṛṣṇa takes His older brother with Him and goes out into the various forests, eager to enjoy with His herds of cows and wander about in the company of His many friends.**

Vraja-dhāma has many attractive forests, in which Kṛṣṇa loves to play with His friends. His favorite among those forests is Vṛndāvana, the forest of Śrī Vṛndādevī, the original ruler of Vraja. Every day, Kṛṣṇa is eager to go out into the forests, where He enjoys ever-fresh pastimes. The daily adventures of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Their friends are an endless festival of wonderful sights and surprises.

**यत्रातिमत्ताम्बुविहङ्गमाला-  
कुलीकृताल्यावलीविभ्रमेण ।  
विचालितानां कमलोत्पलानां  
सरांसि गन्धैर्विलसद्भलानि ॥**

*yatrāti-mattāmbu-vihaṅga-mālā-  
kulī-kṛtāly-āvalī-vibhrameṇa  
vicālitānām kamalotpālānām  
sarāṁsi gandhair vilasaj-jalāni*

*yatra*—where; *ati*—very much; *matta*—maddened; *ambu*—of the water; *vihaṅga*—of birds; *mālā*—by the rows; *ākulī-kṛta*—stirred up; *ali*—of bees; *āvalī*—of the swarms; *vibhrameṇa*—by the agitated movement; *vicālitānām*—which are made to move; *kamala-utpalānām*—of *kamala* and *utpala* lotuses; *sarāṁsi*—lakes; *gandhaiḥ*—with fragrances; *vilasat*—

shining; *jalāni*—whose waters.

In those forests are lakes with sparkling water, where kamala and utpala lotuses spread their fragrance. The lotuses tremble from the movements of swarms of bees, stirred up by rows of excited water birds.

तथा महाश्चर्यविचित्रतामयी  
कलिन्दजा सा व्रजभूमिसङ्गिनी ।  
तथाविधा विन्ध्यनगादिसम्भवाः  
पराश्च नद्यो विलसन्ति यत्र च ॥

*tathā mahāścarya-vicitratā-mayī*  
*kalinda-jā sā vraja-bhūmi-saṅginī*  
*tathā-vidhā vindhya-nagādi-sambhavāḥ*  
*parāś ca nadyo vilasanti yatra ca*

*tathā*—also; *mahā-āścarya*—most amazing; *vicitratā-mayī*—whose multifold splendor; *kalinda-jā*—Yamunā, the daughter of Kalinda; *sā*—she; *vraja-bhūmi*—of the land of Vraja; *saṅginī*—companion; *tathā-vidhāḥ*—similar; *vindhya-naga*—from the Vindhya Hills; *ādi*—and so on; *sambhavāḥ*—born; *parāḥ*—others; *ca*—and; *nadyaḥ*—rivers; *vilasanti*—are splendidly present; *yatra*—where; *ca*—and.

And in those forests flows the river Yamunā, the dearest companion of the land of Vraja. The picturesque splendor of that river, the daughter of Kalinda, astonishes the mind. And besides her, Vraja-bhūmi glistens with other rivers, the offspring of hills like the Vindhya.

The glorious Yamunā flows in the midst of Vraja-bhūmi, and during Kṛṣṇa's manifest presence some of her branches flowed in parts untouched by her today. Thus many of the forests of Kṛṣṇa's land were graced by Śrī Yamunā's water and her grassy tree-lined banks. Other splendid rivers, like the Mānasī-gaṅgā, also passed through Vraja-bhūmi.

तत्तत्तटं कोमलवालुकाचितं

रम्यं सदा नूतनशाद्वलावृतम् ।  
स्वाभाविकद्वेषविसर्जनोलुसन्  
मनोज्ञानानामृगपक्षिसङ्कुलम् ॥

*tat-tat-taṭaṁ komala-vālukācitam  
ramyam sadā nūtana-śādvalāvṛtam  
svābhāvika-dveṣa-visarjanollasan-  
manojña-nānā-mṛga-pakṣi-saṅkulam*

*tat-tat*—of each (of these rivers); *taṭam*—the shores; *komala*—soft; *vāluḥ*—by sand; *ācitam*—marked; *ramyam*—charming; *sadā*—always; *nūtana*—new; *śādvala*—by grass; *āvṛtam*—covered; *svābhāvika*—natural; *dveṣa*—enmity; *visarjana*—by putting aside; *ullasan*—splendid; *manaḥ-jña*—charming; *nānā*—various; *mṛga*—with animals; *pakṣi*—and birds; *saṅkulam*—crowded.

The beautiful shores of those rivers are always heaped with soft sand and covered by newly grown grass. To those shores come many different kinds of charming animals and birds, who put their natural enmity aside.

So much for Padmāvatī's harsh depiction of the forests of Vraja as impenetrable, terrifying places, full of beasts of prey and difficult for the grazing of cows.

दिव्यपुष्पफलपल्लवावली-  
भारनम्रितलतातरुगुल्मैः ।  
भूषितं मदकलापिकोकिल-  
श्रेणिनादितमजस्तुतिपात्रम् ॥

*divya-puṣpa-phala-pallavāvalī-  
bhāra-namrita-latā-taru-gulmaiḥ  
bhūṣitam mada-kalāpi-kokila-  
śreṇi-nāditam aja-stuti-pātram*

*divya*—wonderful; *puṣpa*—of flowers; *phala*—fruits; *pallava*—and

leaves; *āvalī*—of rows; *bhāra*—by the weight; *namrita*—bowing down; *latā*—by creepers; *taru*—trees; *gulmaiḥ*—and bushes; *bhūṣitam*—adorned; *mada*—maddened; *kalāpi*—of peacocks; *kokila*—and cuckoos; *śreṇi*—with groups; *nāditam*—resounding; *aja*—of Lord Brahmā; *stuti*—of the praise; *pātram*—recipient.

Trees, vines, and creepers further decorate the shores, bowing down with the weight of splendid flowers, fruits, and leaves. The shores resound with the calls of maddened peacocks and cuckoos. And those shores receive praise even from Lord Brahmā.

After being defeated in trying to outwit Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā offered this glorification of the forests of Vraja:

*tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyām  
yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhiṣekam  
yaj-jīvitam tu nikhilam bhagavān mukundas  
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajah śruti-mṛgyam eva*

“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*.” (Bhāgavatam 10.14.34)

वृन्दारण्ये व्रजभुवि गवां तत्र गोवर्धने वा  
नास्ते हिंसाहरणरहिते रक्षकस्याप्यपेक्षा ।  
गावो गत्वोषसि विपिनतस्ता महिष्यादियुक्ताः  
स्वैरं भु॥ । सजल्यवसं सायमायान्ति वासम् ॥

*vṛndāraṇye vraja-bhuvi gavām tatra govardhane vā  
nāste hiṁsā-haraṇa-rahite rakṣakasyāpy apekṣā  
gāvo gatvoṣasi vipinatas tā mahiṣy-ādi-yuktāḥ  
svairam bhuktvā sa-jala-yavasam sāyam āyānti vāsam*

*vṛndā-araṇye*—in the forest of Vṛndāvana; *vraja-bhuvi*—in the general area of Vraja; *gavām*—of the cows; *tatra*—there; *govardhane*—at Govardhana Hill; *vā*—and; *na āste*—there is not; *himsā*—from violence; *haraṇa*—and theft; *rahite*—which are free; *rakṣakasya*—of a guarding herder; *api*—even; *apekṣā*—need; *gāvaḥ*—the cows; *gatvā*—going; *uṣasi*—at dawn; *vipinataḥ*—to the forest; *tāḥ*—they; *mahiṣī-ādi*—by the buffaloes and so on; *yuktāḥ*—joined; *svairam*—at liberty; *bhuktvā*—eating; *sa-jala*—with water; *yavasam*—grass; *sāyam*—in the evening; *āyānti*—they return; *vāsam*—to their residence.

**Vṛndāvana Forest, Govardhana Hill, and the whole area of Vraja are free from violence and theft. So one need not bother to watch one's cows. The cows simply go out into the forests in the morning with the other domestic animals like the buffaloes, eat grass and drink water as they like, and then in the evening come home.**

Tending cows is difficult work even in pleasant surroundings, but in Vraja the labor of herding turns into play. Kṛṣṇa and His friends effortlessly cared for many cows, and also other domestic animals, including buffaloes and goats:

*krīḍāsakteṣu gopeṣu  
tad-gāvo dūra-cāriṇīḥ  
svairam carantyo viviśus  
tṛṇa-lobhena gahvaram*

*ajā gāvo mahiṣyaś ca  
nirviśantyo vanād vanam*

“While the cowherd boys were completely absorbed in playing, their cows wandered far away. The cows hungered for more grass, and with no one to watch them they entered a dense forest. The goats, cows, and buffaloes passed from one part of the forest to another.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.19.1–2)

Because all the sacred spots of Vraja are under the special protection



of demigods and other servants of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, evil influences can never prevail. For example, the village of Nanda Mahārāja is protected by Lord Śiva in the form of Nandīśvara. Lord Śiva begged for this service of guarding Kṛṣṇa's home and showed his gratitude for the appointment by giving the blessing that Nandīśvara Hill and Nandagrāma on its peak would never be attacked by Rākṣasas. Many followers of Kāṁsa were able to harass the cowherds of Vraja and try in various ways to kill Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, but that happened only by the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa's Yogamāyā to enhance the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes with His devotees. None of these would-be violators of the peace of Vraja could cause any real harm other than their own deaths.

In modern times, criminals and various materialistic influences seem to have infiltrated Śrī Vraja-dhāma, but that is only a superficial appearance to our unpurified eyes. Yogamāyā still protects the *dhāma* from invasion by Kṛṣṇa's enemies. Materialistic persons may briefly come and go on the thin surface by which Māyā covers the *dhāma* from unworthy eyes. They may even construct "permanent" commercial buildings and roads. But the actual eternal abode remains untouched by their transient interference. To the pure devotees who come to reside in Vṛndāvana-dhāma, the same Yogamāyā grants the vision by which they can see the divine truth.

वृद्धोवाच

अरे बालेऽतिवाचाले तत्कथं ते गवादयः ।

अधुना रक्षकाभावान् नष्टा इति निशम्यते ॥

*vṛddhovāca*

*are bāle 'ti-vācāle*

*tat katham te gavādayaḥ*

*adhunā rakṣakābhāvān*

*naṣṭā iti niśamyate*

*vṛddhā uvāca*—the elderly lady said; *are*—hey; *bāle*—child; *ati-vācāle*—too free with your words; *tat*—therefore; *katham*—why; *te*—your; *gavādayaḥ*—cows and other animals; *adhunā*—now; *rakṣaka*—of a

caretaker; *abhāvāt*—because of the absence; *naṣṭāḥ*—ruined; *iti*—thus; *niśamyate*—it is heard.

**Elderly Padmāvatī said:** You child, you are too free with your words! If what you say is true, then why do we hear that the cows and other animals in Vraja are now in danger of dying because no one is taking care of them?

Actually the cows, bulls, and calves of Vraja needed no caretaker. Rather, they needed Kṛṣṇa. They suffered not from material neglect but from the ecstasy of separation, *vipralambha-bhāva*. They appeared in danger of dying, but even that appearance was false, because *vipralambha-bhāva* is a cause not of death but of the highest perfection of life, achieved only by the most intelligent and competent of those who practice spiritual disciplines. The cows of Vraja were in fact not the dumb, helpless creatures they seemed. Padmāvatī, however, is as usual following her strange style of logic to prove her own understanding of Kṛṣṇa.

### Balarāma appeals to Kṛṣṇa to save Vraja

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
श्रीमद्गोपालदेवस्तच्छ्रुत्वा सम्प्रान्तियन्त्रितः ।  
जातान्तस्तापतः शुष्यन्मुखाब्जः शङ्कयाकुलः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*śrīmad-gopāla-devas tac*  
*chrutvā sambhrānti-yantritaḥ*  
*jātāntas-tāpataḥ śuṣyan-*  
*mukhābjāḥ śaṅkayākulaḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *śrīmat-gopāla-devaḥ*—blessed Gopāladeva; *tat*—this; *śrutvā*—hearing; *sambhrānti*—by concern; *yantritaḥ*—brought under control; *jāta*—arisen; *antaḥ*—within Him;

*tāpataḥ*—because of the burning heat; *śuṣyan*—drying up; *mukha-abjaḥ*—whose lotus face; *śaṅkayā*—by dread; *ākulaḥ*—disturbed.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Having heard all this, the blessed Lord Gopāla felt overwrought with worry for His devotees. Scorching anxiety dried up His lotus face. He was filled with dread.

प्रथमापरकालीनव्रजवृत्तान्तवेदिनः ।  
मुखमालोकयामास बलदेवस्य साश्रुकम् ॥

*prathamāpara-kālīna-  
vraja-vṛttānta-vedinaḥ  
mukham ālokeyām āsa  
baladevasya sāśrukam*

*prathama*—previous; *apara*—and later; *kālīna*—pertaining to times; *vraja*—of Vraja; *vṛttānta*—news; *vedinaḥ*—who knows; *mukham*—at the face; *ālokeyām āsa*—He glanced; *baladevasya*—of Baladeva; *sa-aśrukam*—tearful.

He glanced at the face of Baladeva, who knew all the tidings of Vraja, both past and present, and saw that it was covered with tears.

Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa's older brother, was a constant witness to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, first in Vṛndāvana and then in Mathurā and Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa trusted Baladeva to be a sober judge of facts. So when Kṛṣṇa saw the face of Baladeva, His own anxiety only increased.

रोहिणीनन्दनो भ्रातुर्भावं बुद्ध्वा स्मरन् व्रजम् ।  
स्वधैर्यरक्षणाशक्तः प्ररुदन्नब्रवीत्स्फुटम् ॥

*rohiṇī-nandano bhrātur  
bhāvaṁ buddhvā smaran vrajam  
sva-dhairya-rakṣaṇāśaktaḥ  
prarudann abravīt sphuṭam*

*rohiṇī-nandanaḥ*—the son of Rohiṇī; *bhrātuḥ*—of His brother;

*bhāvam*—the mood; *buddhvā*—understanding; *smaran*—remembering; *vrajam*—Vraja; *sva-dhairya*—His sobriety; *rakṣaṇa*—to protect; *aśaktaḥ*—unable; *prarudan*—crying uncontrollably; *abravīt*—said; *sphuṭam*—distinctly.

Baladeva, the son of Rohiṇī, was unable to keep His composure. Remembering Vraja and understanding His brother's mood, He began crying without control. But then He managed to speak distinctly.

श्रीबलदेव उवाच  
गवां केव कथा कृष्ण ते तेऽपि भवतः प्रियाः ।  
मृगा विहङ्गा भाण्डीरकदम्बाद्याश्च पादपाः ॥

*śrī-baladeva uvāca*  
*gavāṃ keva kathā kṛṣṇa*  
*te te 'pi bhavataḥ priyāḥ*  
*mṛgā vihaṅgā bhāṇḍīra-*  
*kadambādyāś ca pādapāḥ*

*śrī-baladevaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Baladeva said; *gavāṃ*—about the cows; *kā*—what; *iva*—indeed; *kathā*—speaking; *kṛṣṇa*—O Kṛṣṇa; *te te*—all of them; *api*—also; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *priyāḥ*—beloved friends; *mṛgāḥ*—the animals; *vihaṅgāḥ*—the birds; *bhāṇḍīra-kadamba-ādyāḥ*—*bhāṇḍīra*, *kadamba*, and so on; *ca*—and; *pādapāḥ*—the trees.

Śrī Baladeva said: Why speak only about the cows, dear Kṛṣṇa? All the animals in Vraja are Your beloved friends, and so also are the birds, and the trees like the *bhāṇḍīra* and the *kadamba*.

लतानि कुञ्जपुञ्जानि शाद्वलान्यपि जीवनम् ।  
भवत्येवार्पयामासुः क्षीणाश्च सरितोऽद्रयः ॥

*latāni kuñja-puñjāni*  
*śādvalāny api jīvanam*

*bhavaty evārpayām āsuḥ  
kṣīṇāś ca sarito 'drayaḥ*

*latāni*—of the creepers; *kuñja*—bushes; *puñjāni*—the groups; *śādvalāni*—the grassy areas; *api*—also; *jīvanam*—their lives; *bhavati*—unto You; *eva*—only; *arpayām āsuḥ*—have offered; *kṣīṇāḥ*—weakened; *ca*—and; *saritaḥ*—the rivers; *adrayaḥ*—and mountains.

**The grass, the creepers, the lush bushes have all dedicated their lives to You. Now they are all wasting away, and so too are the rivers and mountains.**

In the agony of *vipralambha-bhāva*, the forest deer and the other wild animals in Vraja had all become emaciated, and so had the birds like the peacocks and even the “inanimate” rivers like the Yamunā and mountains like Govardhana. If these residents of Vraja were on the verge of death, then what to speak of the cows, bulls, and calves Lord Kṛṣṇa used to herd?

**मनुष्याः कतिचिद् भ्रातः परं ते सत्यवाक्यतः ।  
जाताशयैव जीवन्ति नेच्छ श्रोतुमतः परम् ॥**

*manuṣyāḥ katicid bhrātaḥ  
param te satya-vākyataḥ  
jātāśayaiva jīvanti  
neccha śrotum ataḥ param*

*manuṣyāḥ*—the human beings; *katicit*—some; *bhrātaḥ*—O brother; *param*—only; *te*—Your; *satya*—true; *vākyataḥ*—because of the word; *jāta*—born; *āśayā*—by the hope; *eva*—indeed; *jīvanti*—live; *na iccha*—You should not want; *śrotum*—to hear; *ataḥ param*—more than this.

**Some of the people, dear brother, live only on the hope that Your promises were true. Better You not ask to hear more news than this.**

This statement has a sober implication—that many residents of Vraja, no longer able to tolerate separation from Kṛṣṇa, had already left their bodies. In their own *svarūpas* they had gone to join Kṛṣṇa in His

pastimes, in Dvārakā or elsewhere. Others kept themselves alive in Vraja, sustaining themselves by remembering Kṛṣṇa and transcendently perceiving His eternal unmanifest pastimes. More than once, Kṛṣṇa had promised the Vraja-vāsīs He would return to them soon. Therefore some of them continued to expect Him, even after others had lost all hope. Lord Balarāma asked Kṛṣṇa not to inquire further into news of Vraja; it would be too painful for the devotees present to hear.

किन्त्विदानीमपि भवान् यदि तान् नानुकम्पते ।  
यम एव तदा सर्वान् वेगेनानुग्रीहीष्यति ॥

*kintv idānīm api bhavān  
yadi tān nānukampate  
yama eva tadā sarvān  
vegenānugrahīṣyati*

*kintu*—but; *idānīm*—now; *api*—indeed; *bhavān*—Your good self; *yadi*—if; *tān*—to them; *na anukampate*—does not show mercy; *yamaḥ*—Yamarāja; *eva*—indeed; *tadā*—then; *sarvān*—all; *vegena*—quickly; *anugrahīṣyati*—will treat kindly.

I can only tell You that if You don't show Your kindness to them soon, Yamarāja will soon show them his.

यत्तत्र च त्वयाकारि निर्विषः कालियो ह्रदः ।  
शोकोऽयं विपुलस्तेषां शोकेऽन्यत्कारणं शृणु ॥

*yat tatra ca tvayākāri  
nirviṣaḥ kāliyo hradaḥ  
śoko 'yaṁ vipulas teṣāṁ  
śoke 'nyat kāraṇaṁ śṛṇu*

*yat*—the fact that; *tatra*—there; *ca*—and; *tvayā*—by You; *akāri*—was made; *nirviṣaḥ*—free from poison; *kāliyaḥ*—of Kāliya; *hradaḥ*—the lake; *śokaḥ*—the misery; *ayaṁ*—this; *vipulaḥ*—vast; *teṣāṁ*—their; *śoke*—of the misery; *anyat*—another; *kāraṇaṁ*—reason; *śṛṇu*—please hear.

**That You rid Kāliya's lake of its poison has only greatedened their misery.  
And please hear of still other reasons for their sorrow.**

The Vraja-vāsīs would consider quick death a merciful relief from their distress. Because of Kṛṣṇa, committing suicide merely by entering Kāliya's poisonous lake was no longer possible, and this made them feel all the more frustrated. Other means of escape from their misery were now also gone, as the next verse relates.

**तत्रत्ययमुना स्वल्पजला शुष्केव साजनि ।  
गोवर्धनोऽभून् नीचोऽसौ स्वःप्राप्तो यो धृतस्त्वया ॥**

*tatratya-yamunā svalpa-  
jalā śuṣkeva sājani  
govardhano 'bhūn nīco 'sau  
svaḥ-prāpto yo dhṛtas tvayā*

*tatratya*—present there; *yamunā*—the Yamunā; *su-alpa*—meager; *jalā*—whose water; *śuṣkā*—dried up; *iva*—as if; *sā*—she; *ajani*—has become; *govardhanaḥ*—Govardhana; *abhūt*—has become; *nīcaḥ*—short; *asau*—he; *svaḥ*—heaven; *prāptaḥ*—reaching; *yaḥ*—who; *dhṛtaḥ*—held; *tvayā*—by You.

**In Vraja the river Yamunā has turned so dry she has hardly any water.  
And Govardhana, who when You held him up touched heaven, has now become short.**

Śrī Yamunā, the site of many of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, was once a great, broad river with mighty waves and swift, deep-flowing currents. Now, in pain over Kṛṣṇa's absence, she had become just a trickle, diminished to almost nothing. To drown oneself now in the meager water of the Yamunā would no longer be feasible. Nor could one still commit suicide by jumping from the top of Govardhana. Not long before, Govardhana's height had been formidable, as testified in Śrī Hari-vamśa (2.18.33, 37):

*śikharair ghūrṇamānaiś ca  
sīdamānaiś ca pādapaiḥ*

*vidhṛtaś coddhataiḥ śṛṅgair  
agamaḥ kha-gamo 'bhavat*

“When Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana, its peaks waved back and forth, the trees upon it trembled, and its inaccessibly high peaks reached outer space.”

*āpluto 'yaṁ giriḥ pakṣair  
iti vidyādharaḥ  
gandharvāpsarasaś caiva  
vāco muñcanti sarvaśaḥ*

“Vidyādhara, Uragas, Gandharvas, and Apsarās complained on all sides that this hill was bumping into their wings.”

But when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, Govardhana began sinking into the earth out of disappointment, and hunks of its peaks fell off and tumbled down its sides.

**न यान्त्यनशनात्प्राणास्त्वन्नामामृतसेविनाम् ।  
परं शुष्कमहारण्यदावाग्निर्भविता गतिः ॥**

*na yānty anaśanāt prāṇās  
tvan-nāmāmṛta-sevinām  
param śuṣka-mahāraṇya-  
dāvāgnir bhavitā gatiḥ*

*na yānti*—they do not leave; *anaśanāt*—because of fasting; *prāṇāḥ*—their life airs; *tvat*—Your; *nāma-amṛta*—the nectar of names; *sevinām*—of those who serve; *param*—rather; *śuṣka*—dry; *mahā*—great; *araṇya*—in a forest; *dāva-agniḥ*—a conflagration; *bhavitā*—will be; *gatiḥ*—their end.

**The devotees who relish the nectar of Your names cannot die of starvation; instead their end will come in a fire in a great dry forest.**

Balarāma is conjecturing how the Vraja-vāsīs are likely to leave their bodies. Because of *vipralambha-bhāva*, the great forests of Vraja like



Bhāṇḍīravana have become parched. So at any time a forest fire is likely, in which the Vraja-vāsīs will take the opportunity for suicide.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
शृण्वन्नसौ तत्परदुःखकातरः  
कण्ठे गृहीत्वा मृदुलस्वभावकः ।  
रामं महादीनवदश्रुधारया  
धौताङ्गरागोऽरुददुच्चसुस्वरम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*śṛṇvann asau tat para-duḥkha-kātarah*  
*kaṇṭhe gṛhītvā mṛdula-svabhāvakaḥ*  
*rāmam mahā-dīna-vad aśru-dhārayā*  
*dhautāṅga-rāgo 'rudat ucca-susvaram*  
*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; śṛṇvan—hearing; asau—He (Kṛṣṇa); tat—this; para—of others; duḥkha—by the suffering; kātarah—tormented; kaṇṭhe—by the neck; gṛhītvā—taking hold of; mṛdula—very gentle; svabhāvakaḥ—whose nature; rāmam—Lord Balarāma; mahā-dīna-vat—like a very wretched person; aśru—of tears; dhārayā—by a flood; dhauta—washed away; āṅga-rāgaḥ—whose cosmetics; arudat—He cried; ucca—loud; su-svaram—in a beautiful voice.*

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Having heard this, Kṛṣṇa, who is gentle by nature and tormented by the suffering of others, grasped Balarāma by the neck and shed a flood of tears, like a person whose life is in ruin. As He cried with loud sobs in His beautiful voice, the tears washed away the cosmetics from His body.

Kṛṣṇa is so kindhearted that He is sorry even when His enemies are in pain. His emotions were not a false show but a true indication of His concern for His devotees.

पश्चाद्भूमितले लुलोठ सबलो मातर्मुमोह क्षणात्

तादृगोदनदुःस्थतानुभवतश्चापूर्ववृत्तात्तयोः ।  
 रोहिण्युद्धवदेवकीमदनसूश्रीसत्यभामादयः  
 सर्वेऽन्तःपुरवासिनो विकलतां भेजू रुदन्तो मुहुः ॥

*paścād bhūmi-tale luloṭha sa-balo mātar mumoha kṣaṇāt  
 tāḍṛg-rodana-duḥsthatānubhavataś cāpūrva-vṛttāt tayoh  
 rohiṇy-uddhava-devakī-madanasū-śrī-satyabhāmādayaḥ  
 sarve 'ntaḥ-pura-vāsino vikalatām bhejū rudanto muhuḥ*  
*paścāt—then; bhūmi-tale—on the ground; luloṭha—He rolled about; sa-*  
*balaḥ—with Balarāma; mātāḥ—O mother; mumoha—He lost*  
*consciousness; kṣaṇāt—for a moment; tāḍṛk—such; rodana—of crying;*  
*duḥsthatā—the bad condition; anubhavataḥ—from perceiving; ca—and;*  
*apūrva-vṛttāt—unprecedented; tayoh—of the two Lords; rohiṇī—Rohiṇī;*  
*uddhava—Uddhava; devakī—Devakī; madana-sū—Rukmiṇī*  
*(Pradyumna's mother); śrī-satyabhāmā—Śrī Satyabhāmā; ādayaḥ—and*  
*others; sarve—all; antaḥ-pura—of the inner palace; vāsinaḥ—the*  
*residents; vikalatām—a distraught condition; bhejuḥ—they obtained;*  
*rudantaḥ—sobbing; muhuḥ—repeatedly.*

Dear mother, He and Balarāma then rolled on the ground and for a moment lost consciousness. Seeing the two Lords crying in this unprecedented, lamentable state, all the residents of the inner palace lost control of themselves. Rohiṇī, Uddhava, Devakī, Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, and all the rest—they all lost control and sobbed again and again.

श्रुत्वान्तःपुरतोऽपुराकलितमाक्रन्दं महार्तस्वरैर्  
 धावन्तो यदवो जवेन वसुदेवेनोग्रसेनादयः ।  
 तत्रागत्य तथाविधं प्रभुवरं दृष्ट्वारुदन् विह्वला  
 विप्रा गर्गमुखास्तथा पुरजनाश्चापूर्वदुष्टेक्षया ॥

*śrutvāntaḥ-purato 'purā-kalitam ākrandaṁ mahārta-svarair  
 dhāvanto yadavo javena vasudevenograsenādayaḥ*

*tatrāgatya tathā-vidham prabhu-varam dṛṣṭvārudan vihvalā  
viprā garga-mukhās tathā pura-janāś cāpūrva-dṛṣṭekṣayā  
śrutvā—*hearing; *antaḥ-purataḥ—*from the inner palace; *apurā—*never  
in the past; *kalitam—*observed; *ākrandam—*crying; *mahā-ārta—*of great  
distress; *svaraiḥ—*because of the sounds; *dhāvantaḥ—*running;  
*yadavaḥ—*Yadus; *javena—*in haste; *va-sudevena—*with Vasudeva;  
*ugrasena-ādayaḥ—*Ugrasena and others; *tatra—*there; *āgatya—*come;  
*tathā-vidham—*in such a condition; *prabhu—*of lords; *varam—*the best;  
*dṛṣṭvā—*seeing; *ārudan—*they sobbed; *vihvalāḥ—*overwhelmed; *viprāḥ—*  
*brāhmaṇas*; *garga-mukhāḥ—*headed by Garga; *tathā—*also; *pura-janāḥ—*  
residents of the city; *ca—*and; *apūrva—*never before; *dṛṣṭa—*seen;  
*ikṣayā—*by the sight.

**When the Yadus heard the sound of distressed crying coming from the inner palace—a sound never heard there before—they quickly came running, headed by Vasudeva and Ugrasena. The brāhmaṇas arrived, led by Garga, along with all the other people of the city. And when they saw their beloved master in this extraordinary state, as they never had before, they too began to cry, overwhelmed.**

Many of the Yadus ran into the palace to find out what was wrong, Vasudeva leading them because among them he was the most intimate with Kṛṣṇa and most competent to give Kṛṣṇa support in a moment of need. Garga, Vasudeva’s family priest, was the first of the *brāhmaṇas* to respond to the cries, but Sāndīpani Muni and others were close behind. These *brāhmaṇa* sages were expert in consoling distressed persons with teachings from the *Vedas*. The general populace of Dvārakā also quickly converged on the palace, because such unhappiness in Kṛṣṇa’s palace was unheard of.

*Thus ends the sixth chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled “Priyatama: The Most Beloved.”*

## 7. Purna: The Complete Perfection

Brahmā arranges for Kṛṣṇa's relief

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इत्थं सपरिवारस्य मातस्तस्यार्तिरोदनैः ।  
ब्रह्माण्डं व्याप्य सञ्जातो महोत्पातचयः क्षणात् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*ittham sa-parivārasya*  
*mātas tasyārti-rodanaiḥ*  
*brahmāṇḍam vyāpya sañjāto*  
*mahotpāta-cayaḥ kṣaṇāt*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *ittham*—thus; *sa-parivārasya*—along with His family; *mātaḥ*—O dear mother; *tasya*—His; *ārti*—in distress; *rodanaiḥ*—by the cries; *brahma-aṇḍam*—the universe; *vyāpya*—filling; *sañjātaḥ*—arose; *mahā*—great; *utpāta*—of omens; *cayaḥ*—a series; *kṣaṇāt*—in a single moment.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said:** Dear mother, as the sound of Kṛṣṇa lamenting with His family members filled the universe, a series of terrible omens quickly ensued.

In this seventh chapter, Brahmā relieves Śrī Kṛṣṇa of His bewilderment, and Kṛṣṇa delights Nārada by describing the supreme position of the *gopīs*.

As the Yadus were running toward Kṛṣṇa's palace, bad omens appeared in the sky, such as meteors, and lightning without rain.

तत्रान्यबोधकाभावात्स्वयमागाच्चतुर्मुखः ।

वृत्तो वेदपुराणाद्यैः परिवारैः सुरैरपि ॥

*tatrānya-bodhakābhāvāt  
svayam āgāc catur-mukhaḥ  
vṛto veda-purāṇādyaiḥ  
parivāraiḥ surair api*

*tatra*—for that; *anya*—another; *bodhaka*—person who can explain; *abhāvāt*—because of not existing; *svayam*—himself; *āgāt*—came; *catur-mukhaḥ*—four-headed Brahmā; *vṛtaḥ*—surrounded; *veda-purāṇa-ādyaiḥ*—by the Vedas, Purāṇas, and so on; *parivāraiḥ*—by his personal attendants; *suraiḥ*—by demigods; *api*—also.

Because four-headed Brahmā could find no one else to explain the cause of these omens, he came to see for himself, accompanied by the Vedas, the Purāṇas, his personal attendants, and various demigods.

Brahmā is indeed a learned person; in fact, his chosen advisers are the Vedas and Purāṇas, who stay in his court, always ready to offer their counsel.

तमपूर्वदशाभाजं प्रेष्ठप्रणयकातरम् ।  
निगूढनिजमाहात्म्यभरप्रकटनोद्धतम् ॥

महानारायणं ब्रह्मा पितरं गुरुमात्मनः ।  
सचमत्कारमालोक्य ध्वस्तधैर्योऽरुदक्ष्णम् ॥

*tam apūrva-daśā-bhājaṁ  
preṣṭha-praṇaya-kātaram  
nigūḍha-nija-māhātmya-  
bhara-prakaṭanoddhatam*

*mahā-nārāyaṇaṁ brahmā  
pitaraṁ gurum ātmanaḥ  
sa-camatkāram ālokya*

*dhvasta-dhairyo 'rudat kṣaṇam*

*tam*—Him; *apūrvā*—unprecedented; *daśā*—a condition; *bhājam*—who assumed; *preṣṭha*—for His beloved friends; *praṇaya*—out of love; *kātaram*—distressed; *nigūḍha*—hidden; *nija*—His own; *māhātmya-bhara*—of all the greatness; *prakaṣaṇa*—in revealing; *uddhatam*—bold; *mahā-nārāyaṇam*—the original Nārāyaṇa; *brahmā*—Brahmā; *pitaram*—the father; *gurum*—and spiritual master; *ātmanaḥ*—of himself; *sacamatkāram*—with surprise; *ālokya*—seeing; *dhvasta*—who had lost; *dhairyaḥ*—his gravity; *arudat*—he cried; *kṣaṇam*—for a moment.

**Brahmā found his own father and spiritual master, the original Nārāyaṇa, in an unprecedented state, distressed by love for His beloved devotees. Seeing the Lord thus boldly revealing His true greatness, normally hidden, Brahmā was astonished. For a moment he too lost his gravity and began to cry.**

Brahmā is not just the main engineer of universal creation but also an intimate loving servant of the Supreme Lord, and that Supreme Lord Himself is not just the ultimate origin of creation but also the greatest loving servant of His devotees. Kṛṣṇa's highest glories are not to be found in His pastime of creating the material world so that rebellious souls may indulge their perverted intentions.

Earlier in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Brahmā had visited Vraja-bhūmi and discovered Kṛṣṇa's true glories in the ecstatic relationships between Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. Now, in Dvārakā, Brahmā is being granted further realization: he is learning that Kṛṣṇa's most wonderful qualities are His concern for His devotees and His submission to their control. Realizing this, Brahmā can now more fully understand Kṛṣṇa's identity as the original Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. Brahmā was not ignorant of these matters before, but seeing in such a helpless state his own progenitor, who had taught him the *Vedas*, shocked Brahmā into a deeper realization. When Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa in distress, he himself could not help but cry.

**संस्तभ्य यत्नादात्मानं स्वास्थ्यं जनयितुं प्रभोः ।**

## उपायं चिन्तयामास प्राप चानन्तरं हृदि ॥

*saṁstabhya yatnād ātmānam  
svāsthyam janayitum prabhoḥ  
upāyam cintayām āsa  
prāpa cānantaram hṛdi*

*saṁstabhya*—bringing under control; *yatnāt*—with some difficulty; *ātmānam*—himself; *svāsthyam*—to normality; *janayitum*—to restore; *prabhoḥ*—the Lord; *upāyam*—a means; *cintayām āsa*—he thought about; *prāpa*—he found; *ca*—and; *anantaram*—soon after; *hṛdi*—in his heart.

With difficulty, Brahmā brought himself under control and started thinking of how to restore his Lord to normal. Soon an idea came into his heart.

## तत्रैव भगवत्पार्श्वे रुदन्तं विनतासुतम् । उच्चैः सम्बोध्य यत्नेन सबोधीकृत्य सोऽवदत् ॥

*tatraiva bhagavat-pārśve  
rudantaṁ vinatā-sutam  
uccaiḥ sambodhya yatnena  
sabodhī-kṛtya so 'vadat*

*tatra*—there; *eva*—indeed; *bhagavat*—of the Lord; *pārśve*—at the side; *rudantaṁ*—crying; *vinatā-sutam*—Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā; *uccaiḥ*—in a loud voice; *sambodhya*—addressing; *yatnena*—with some effort; *sabodhī-kṛtya*—getting his attention; *saḥ*—he; *avadat*—said.

Crying at the Lord's side was Garuḍa, the son of Vinatā. Garuḍa's attention was hard to get, but after calling to him loudly for some time, Brahmā succeeded. Brahmā then spoke.

Kṛṣṇa is brought to Nava-vṛndāvana

श्रीब्रह्मोवाच  
यच्छ्रीवृन्दावनं मध्ये रैवताद्रिसमुद्रयोः ।  
श्रीमन्नन्दयशोदादिप्रतिमालङ्कृतान्तरम् ॥

गोयूथैस्तादृशैर्युक्तं रचितं विश्वकर्मणा ।  
राजते माथुरं साक्षाद् वृन्दावनमिवागतम् ॥

śrī-brahmovāca  
yac chrī-vṛndāvanam madhye  
raivatādri-samudrayoḥ  
śrīman-nanda-yaśodādi-  
pratimālaṅkṛtāntaram

go-yūthais tādṛśair yuktaṁ  
racitaṁ viśvakarmaṇā  
rājate māthuram sākṣād  
vṛndāvanam ivāgatam

śrī-brahmā uvāca—Śrī Brahmā said; yat—which; śrī-vṛndāvanam—Śrī Vṛndāvana; madhye—between; raivata-adri—Raivata Mountain; samudrayoḥ—and the sea; śrīmat-nanda—of Śrīmān Nanda; yaśodā—Yaśodā; ādi—and others; pratimā—with replicas; alaṅkṛta—adorned; antaram—within; go-yūthaiḥ—with herds of cows; tādṛśaiḥ—similar; yuktaṁ—replete; racitaṁ—built; viśvakarmaṇā—by Viśvakarmā; rājate—is manifest; māthuram—in the district of Mathurā; sākṣāt—directly; vṛndāvanam—the Vṛndāvana; iva—as if; āgatam—come.

Śrī Brahmā said: There is another Śrī Vṛndāvana here, between Raivata Hill and the sea. And Nanda, Yaśodā, and others are present within it in replica images, with similar herds of cows. That Vṛndāvana, constructed by Viśvakarmā, appears just like the Vṛndāvana of Mathurā come here to Dvārakā.



तत्रेमं साग्रजं यत्नाद्यथावस्थं शनैर्नय ।  
केवलं यातु तत्रैषा रोहिण्यन्यो न कश्चन ॥

*tatremam sāgrajam yatnād  
yathāvastham śanair naya  
kevalam yātu tatraiṣā  
rohiṇy anyo na kaścana*

*tatra*—there; *imam*—Him (Kṛṣṇa); *sa-agrajam*—along with His elder brother; *yatnāt*—carefully; *yathā-avastham*—in His present condition; *śanaiḥ*—gently; *naya*—take; *kevalam*—only; *yātu*—should go; *tatra*—there; *eṣā*—she; *rohiṇī*—Rohiṇī; *anyaḥ*—another; *na*—not; *kaścana*—any.

**So carefully take Kṛṣṇa and His brother in Their present state and gently carry Them there. But only Rohiṇī should go with Them—no one else.**

Brahmā wants Garuḍa to carry Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma carefully to Nava-vṛndāvana. The two brothers should not find out that They are still in Dvārakā-dhāma, and Their devotees should not be allowed to spoil the illusion by following Them. Rohiṇī can come along, because she knows how to conduct herself intelligently, and especially because she used to live in Vraja-bhūmi and will therefore seem in place. The replica Vṛndāvana was constructed by Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods. But to duplicate the Vraja-vāsīs was beyond his skill. He couldn't make copies of unique devotees like Nanda, Yaśodā, and the other senior cowherd people, Śrī Rādhikā and the other young *gopīs*, or Śrīdāmā and Kṛṣṇa's other *gopa* friends. But he was able to fashion static images of the Vraja-vāsīs lifelike enough to fool even Kṛṣṇa. In the overall impression created, Nava-vṛndāvana was practically indistinguishable from the original, down to the small details of plant and animal life.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
प्रयत्नात्स्वस्थतां नीतो ब्रह्मणा स खगेश्वरः ।

विशारदवरः पृष्ठे मन्दं मन्दं न्यधत्त तौ ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
prayatnāt svasthatām nīto  
brahmaṇā sa khageśvaraḥ  
viśārada-varaḥ pṛṣṭhe  
mandam mandam nyadhatta tau

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; prayatnāt—with difficulty; svasthatām—back to his senses; nītaḥ—brought; brahmaṇā—by Brahmā; saḥ—he; khaga-īśvaraḥ—the lord of birds (Garuḍa); viśārada—of skillful persons; varaḥ—the best; pṛṣṭhe—on his back; mandam mandam—very slowly; nyadhatta—placed; tau—the two of Them.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Thus Brahmā with some effort brought Garuḍa back to his senses, and that most expert servant Garuḍa very slowly placed the two Lords on his back.

Garuḍa was dexterous enough to move Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma without waking Them, and clever enough to understand that this scheme would break the trance of Kṛṣṇa's bewilderment.

स्वस्थानं भेजिरे सर्वे चतुर्वक्त्रेण बोधिताः ।  
संज्ञामिवाप्तो रामस्तु नीयमानो गरुत्मता ॥

sva-sthānam bhejire sarve  
catur-vaktreṇa bodhitāḥ  
saṁjñām ivāpto rāmas tu  
nīyamāno garutmatā

sva—to their own; sthānam—residences; bhejire—returned; sarve—all; catuḥ-vaktreṇa—by four-headed Brahmā; bodhitāḥ—advised; saṁjñām—consciousness; iva—as if; āptaḥ—having gained; rāmaḥ—Lord Balarāma; tu—and; nīyamānaḥ—being carried; garutmatā—by Garuḍa.

Advised by Brahmā, everyone else went back home. Meanwhile, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were being carried by Garuḍa, Balarāma more or less

regained consciousness.

श्रीनन्दनन्दनस्तत्र पर्यङ्के स्थापितः शनैः ।  
साक्षादिवावतिष्ठन्ते यत्र तद्गोपगोपिकाः ॥

*śrī-nanda-nandanas tatra  
paryan̐ke sthāpitaḥ śanaiḥ  
sākṣād ivāvatiṣṭhante  
yatra tad-gopa-gopikāḥ*

*śrī-nanda-nandanaḥ—the darling son of Nanda; tatra—there;  
paryan̐ke—on a bed; sthāpitaḥ—placed; śanaiḥ—gently; sākṣāt—  
directly; iva—as if; avatiṣṭhante—they stood around; yatra—where;  
tat—His; gopa-gopikāḥ—cowherd men and women.*

Upon arriving at Nava-vṛndāvana, Garuḍa and Balarāma gently placed Kṛṣṇa on a bed. The gopas and gopīs of Nava-vṛndāvana stood around Him, as if they were Kṛṣṇa’s real cowherd men and women.

उद्धवेन सहागत्य देवकी पुत्रवत्सला ।  
रुक्मिणीसत्यभामाद्या देव्यः पद्मावती च सा ॥

तादृग्दशागतं कृष्णमशक्तास्त्यक्तुमञ्जसा ।  
दूराद्दृष्टिपथेऽतिष्ठन् निलीय ब्रह्मयाञ्जया ॥

*uddhavana sahāgatya  
devakī putra-vatsalā  
rukmiṇī-satyabhāmādyā  
devyaḥ padmāvatī ca sā*

*tādṛg-daśāgataṁ kṛṣṇam  
aśaktās tyaktum añjasā  
dūrād dṛṣṭi-pathe ’tiṣṭhan  
nilīya brahma-yācñayā*

*uddhavana saha*—together with Uddhava; *āgatya*—coming; *devakī*—Devakī; *putra*—for her son; *vatsalā*—lovingly concerned; *rukmiṇī*—Rukmiṇī; *satyabhāmā-ādyāḥ*—Satyabhāmā and others; *devyaḥ*—queens; *padmāvatī*—Padmāvatī; *ca*—and; *sā*—she; *tādṛk*—such; *daśā*—to a condition; *āgatam*—come; *kṛṣṇam*—Kṛṣṇa; *aśaktāḥ*—unable; *tyaktum*—to abandon; *añjasā*—easily; *dūrāt*—at a distance; *dṛṣṭi*—of their vision; *pathe*—within the scope; *atiṣṭhan*—they stood; *nīliya*—hiding; *brahma*—of Brahmā; *yācñayā*—by the request.

Uddhava came there with Devakī, who dearly loved her son, and also with Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, other queens, and Padmāvatī. They simply couldn't leave Kṛṣṇa in such a state. So at Brahmā's request they hid themselves and took up positions some distance away, from where they could still see Kṛṣṇa.

Some of the devotees hid themselves within the trees, and others resorted to various other kinds of camouflage.

नारदस्तु कृतागस्कमिवात्मानममन्यत ।  
देवानां यादवानां च सङ्गेऽगान्न कुतूहलात् ॥

वियत्यन्तर्हितो भूत्वा बद्धैकं योगपट्टकम् ।  
निविष्टो भगवच्चेष्टामाधुर्यानुभवाय सः ॥

*nāradas tu kṛtāgaskam*  
*ivātmānam amanyata*  
*devānāṁ yādavānāṁ ca*  
*saṅge 'gān na kutūhalāt*

*viyaty antarhito bhūtvā*  
*baddhvaikam yoga-paṭṭakam*  
*niviṣṭo bhagavac-ceṣṭā-*  
*mādhuryānubhavāya saḥ*

*nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *tu*—but; *kṛta*—having committed; *āgaskam*—an offense; *iva*—as if; *ātmānam*—himself; *amanyata*—considered; *devānām*—of the demigods; *yādavānām*—of the Yādavas; *ca*—and; *saṅge*—in the company; *agāt na*—he did not go; *kutūhalāt*—out of curiosity; *viyati*—in the sky; *antarhitaḥ*—hidden; *bhūtvā*—becoming; *baddhvā*—fixing; *ekam*—one; *yoga-paṭṭakam*—meditational sitting posture; *niviṣṭaḥ*—seated; *bhagavat*—of the Personality of Godhead; *ceṣṭā*—of the activities; *mādhurya*—the sweetness; *anubhavāya*—in order to observe; *saḥ*—he.

**Nārada, however, thinking he had committed an offense, did not accompany the demigods and the Yādavas. Instead with great curiosity he hid himself in the midst of the sky, fixing himself in a yoga sitting posture, to observe the sweetness of the Lord's acts.**

It was Nārada who had made Kṛṣṇa so unsettled by mentioning the present state of the Vraja-vāsīs. Nārada therefore thought himself an offender. In fact, however, he had not acted offensively, as Parīkṣit Mahārāja here indicates with the word *iva* (“as if”). Later in this chapter we shall hear Kṛṣṇa explain why Nārada should not blame himself.

**गरुडश्चोपरि व्योमः स्थित्वाप्रत्यक्षमात्मनः ।  
पक्षाभ्यामाचरंश्छायामन्ववर्तत तं प्रभुम् ॥**

*garuḍaś copari vyomnaḥ*  
*sthitvāpratyakṣam ātmanaḥ*  
*pakṣābhyām ācaramś chāyām*  
*anvavartata taṁ prabhum*

*garuḍaḥ*—Garuḍa; *ca*—and; *upari*—above; *vyomnaḥ*—in the sky; *sthitvā*—stationed; *apratyakṣam*—invisibly; *ātmanaḥ*—with his own; *pakṣābhyām*—wings; *ācaran*—making; *chāyām*—shade; *anvavartata*—followed; *taṁ*—Him; *prabhum*—his master.

**Garuḍa positioned himself even higher in the sky, invisibly following his master to provide shade with his wings.**

अथ कृष्णाग्रजः प्राप्तः क्षणेन स्वस्थतामिव ।  
तं सर्वार्थमभिप्रेत्य विचक्षणशिरोमणिः ॥

*atha kṛṣṇāgrajaḥ prāptaḥ  
kṣaṇena svasthatām iva  
taṁ sarvārtham abhipretya  
vicakṣaṇa-śiromaṇiḥ*

*atha*—then; *kṛṣṇa-agrajaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa’s older brother; *prāptaḥ*—achieving; *kṣaṇena*—after a moment; *svasthatām*—normal consciousness; *iva*—as if; *taṁ*—to that; *sarva-artham*—the entire situation; *abhipretya*—understanding; *vicakṣaṇa*—of insightful persons; *śiraḥ-maṇiḥ*—the crest jewel.

After a few minutes, Kṛṣṇa’s brother came back almost to normal consciousness. That best of discerning thinkers understood the entire situation.

Until Kṛṣṇa recovered from His confusion, Balarāma could not feel completely normal; this is expressed here by the word *iva*. But still He recognized Brahmā’s plan and acted accordingly.

क्षिप्रं स्वस्यानुजस्यापि सम्मार्ज्यं वदनाम्बुजम् ।  
वस्त्रोदरान्तरे वंशीं शुङ्गवेत्रे च हस्तयोः ॥

कण्ठे कदम्बमालां च बर्हापीडं च मूर्धनि ।  
नवं गुञ्जावतंसं च कर्णयोर्निदधे शनैः ॥

*kṣipraṁ svasyānujasyāpi  
sammārjya vadanāmbujam  
vastrodarāntare vaṁśīm  
śṅga-vetre ca hastayoḥ*

*kaṇṭhe kadamba-mālām ca*

*barhāpīḍaṁ ca mūrdhani  
navam guñjāvataṁsam ca  
karṇayor nidadhe śanaiḥ*

*kṣipram*—quickly; *svasya*—His own; *anu-jasya*—His younger brother’s; *api*—and; *sammārjya*—wiping clean; *vadana-ambujam*—the lotus faces; *vastra*—of His garment; *udara-antare*—in the waist; *vaṁśīm*—a flute; *śṛṅga*—a buffalo horn; *vetre*—a stick; *ca*—and; *hastayoḥ*—in His hands; *kaṇṭhe*—around the neck; *kadamba-mālām*—a garland of *kadamba* flowers; *ca*—and; *barha-āpīḍam*—a peacock-feather ornament; *ca*—and; *mūrdhani*—on the head; *navam*—new; *guñjā-avataṁsam*—rings of *guñjā* berries; *ca*—and; *karṇayoḥ*—on the ears; *nidadhe*—placed; *śanaiḥ*—gradually.

Balarāma quickly cleaned His own lotus face and that of His younger brother. Then He gently placed a flute in the waist of Kṛṣṇa’s dhotī, a buffalo horn and stick in Kṛṣṇa’s hands, a garland of kadamba flowers around His neck, a peacock-feather ornament on His head, and newly fashioned rings of guñjā berries on His ears.

रचयित्वा वन्यवेशं त्वष्टृकल्पितवस्तुभिः ।  
बलादुत्थापयन् धृत्वाब्रवीदुच्चतरस्वरैः ॥

*racayitvā vanya-veśam  
tvaṣṭṛ-kalpita-vastubhiḥ  
balād utthāpayan dhṛtvā-  
bravīd uccatara-svaraiḥ*

*racayitvā*—arranging; *vanya*—of the forest; *veśam*—an outfit; *tvaṣṭṛ*—by Viśvakarmā; *kalpita*—produced; *vastubhiḥ*—with items; *balāt*—by physical effort; *utthāpayan*—raising Him; *dhṛtvā*—taking hold; *ābravīt*—addressed; *ucca-tara*—very loud; *svaraiḥ*—in a voice.

Thus having arranged a forest outfit for Kṛṣṇa with items made by Viśvakarmā, Balarāma with some effort lifted Kṛṣṇa and then spoke to Him loudly.

While dressing Kṛṣṇa for the forest, Balarāma also dressed Himself. The special items required were native to Vraja and unavailable in Dvārakā, but Viśvakarmā, who had at his disposal all the creative skills of the demigods, had made convincing substitutes for real *kadamba* flowers, *guñjā* berries, and so on.

### Kṛṣṇa talks to Nanda and Yaśodā

श्रीबलदेव उवाच  
श्रीकृष्ण कृष्ण भो भ्रातरुत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ जागृहि ।  
पश्याद्य वेलातिक्रान्ता विशन्ति पशवो वनम् ॥

*śrī-baladeva uvāca*  
*śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa bho bhrātar*  
*uttiṣṭhotttiṣṭha jāgr̥hi*  
*paśyādya velātikrāntā*  
*viśanti paśavo vanam*

*śrī-baladevaḥ uvāca*—Śrī Baladeva said; *śrī-kṛṣṇa*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛṣṇa*—Kṛṣṇa; *bhoḥ*—O; *bhrātaḥ*—dear brother; *uttiṣṭha ut-tiṣṭha*—get up, get up; *jāgr̥hi*—wake from sleep; *paśya*—just see; *adya*—now; *velā*—the hour; *atikrāntā*—has passed; *viśanti*—are entering; *paśavaḥ*—the animals; *vanam*—the forest.

Śrī Baladeva said: Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, My dear brother! Get up, get up! Wake up from Your sleep! Just see, it is now getting late. The cows are already entering the forest.

श्रीदामाद्या वयस्याश्च स्थिता भवदपेक्षया ।  
स्नेहेन पितरौ किञ्चिन्न शक्तौ भाषितुं त्वयि ॥

*śrīdāmādyā vayasyāś ca*  
*sthitā bhavad-apekṣayā*



snehena pitarau kiñcin  
na śaktau bhāṣitum tvayi

śrīdāmā-ādyāḥ—Śrīdāmā and others; vayasāḥ—friends of the same age; ca—and; sthitāḥ—are standing; bhavat—for You; apekṣayā—with expectation; snehena—due to affection; pitarau—Your parents; kiñcit—anything; na—not; śaktau—are able; bhāṣitum—to say; tvayi—to You.

**Śrīdāmā and Your other friends are here waiting for You. And Your parents are so filled with love that they cannot even speak to You.**

Kṛṣṇa's friends are responsible for the cows, so when the impatient cows started to go ahead the boys should have followed them. But Balarāma indicates that the boys were too attached to Kṛṣṇa to leave without Him. Kṛṣṇa's mother and father should have called Kṛṣṇa to get up out of bed and go after the cows, but Nanda and Yaśodā, according to Balarāma, were also distracted by ecstasy. In fact, however, Nanda, Yaśodā, the cowherd boys, and the other Nava-vṛndāvana-vāsīs were unconscious dolls, immobile and unable to say or do anything to respond to any attempts Kṛṣṇa might make to communicate with them.

पश्यन्त्यस्ते मुखाम्भोजमिमा गोप्यः परस्परम् ।  
कर्णाकर्णितया किञ्चिद्वदन्त्यस्त्वां हसन्ति हि ॥

paśyantyas te mukhāmbhojam  
imā gopyaḥ parasparam  
karṇākarṇitayā kiñcid  
vadantyas tvām hasanti hi

paśyantyaḥ—watching; te—Your; mukha-ambhojam—lotus face; imāḥ—these; gopyaḥ—gopīs; parasparam—among one another; karṇākarṇitayā—whispering in the ears; kiñcit—something; vadantyaḥ—saying; tvām—at You; hasanti—they are laughing; hi—certainly.

**These gopīs are watching Your lotus face and laughing at You as they whisper something in one another's ears.**

The gopīs might be commenting to one another about why Kṛṣṇa is

still so tired this late in the morning. They know that Kṛṣṇa must have been awake through most of the night enjoying with His beloved, and they might be noticing signs of this on Kṛṣṇa's lotus face.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच

इत्थं प्रजल्पताभीक्ष्णं नामभिश्च सलालनम् ।  
आहूयमानो हस्ताभ्यां चात्यमानो बलेन च ॥

रामेणोत्थाप्यमानोऽसौ संज्ञामिव चिराद्गतः ।  
वदन् शिव शिवेति द्रागुदतिष्ठत्सविस्मयम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*ittham prajalpatābhikṣṇam*  
*nāmabhiś ca sa-lālanam*  
*āhūyamāno hastābhyām*  
*cālyamāno balena ca*

*rāmeṇotthāpyamāno 'sau*  
*saṁjñām iva cirād gataḥ*  
*vadan śiva śiveti drāg*  
*udatiṣṭhat sa-vismayam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *ittham*—in this way; *prajalpatā*—freely talking; *abhikṣṇam*—for some time; *nāmabhiḥ*—by names; *ca*—and; *sa-lālanam*—with caressing; *āhūyamānaḥ*—being called; *hastābhyām*—with the arms; *cālyamānaḥ*—being moved; *balena*—by force; *ca*—and; *rāmeṇa*—by Balarāma; *utthāpyamānaḥ*—being raised; *asau*—He; *saṁjñām*—to full consciousness; *iva*—as if; *cirāt*—after a long time; *gataḥ*—came back; *vadan*—saying; *śiva śiva*—Śiva, Śiva; *iti*—thus; *drāk*—suddenly; *udatiṣṭhat*—He stood up; *sa-vismayam*—with astonishment.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: In this way Balarāma filled the scene with talk. He called Kṛṣṇa by His various names, caressed Him, and dragged Him

around in His arms until Kṛṣṇa finally got up and came back to some sort of consciousness. Kṛṣṇa uttered the words “Śiva, Śiva!” and suddenly stood up, a look of surprise on His face.

It was not easy to awaken Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma tried kissing and embracing Him, calling Him by His names like Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla, and Govinda, and coaxing Him tenderly. When all else failed, Balarāma resorted to physical force, dragging Kṛṣṇa out of bed. Kṛṣṇa finally woke up, but He was still a little bewildered, as implied by the word *iva*, which indicates that He “seemed” to come back to normal consciousness.

उन्मील्य नेत्रकमले सम्पश्यन् परितो भृशम् ।  
स्मयमानः पुरो नन्दं दृष्ट्वा ह्रीणो ननाम तम् ॥

*unmīlya netra-kamale  
sampaśyan parito bhṛśam  
smayamānaḥ puro nandaṁ  
dṛṣṭvā hrīṇo nanāma tam*

*unmīlya*—opening; *netra-kamale*—His lotus eyes; *sampaśyan*—looking; *paritaḥ*—around; *bhṛśam*—quickly; *smayamānaḥ*—smiling; *puraḥ*—in front; *nandaṁ*—Nanda; *dṛṣṭvā*—seeing; *hrīṇaḥ*—embarrassed; *nanāma*—He bowed down; *tam*—to him.

Kṛṣṇa opened His lotus eyes, smiled, and quickly looked around. Seeing Nanda in front of Him, He felt embarrassed and bowed down to him.

Kṛṣṇa first laughed at Himself for having slept so long, but when He saw His father waiting for Him He felt ashamed. He bowed down because He had been taught to always offer respect to His father immediately after waking.

अब्रवीत्पार्श्वतो वीक्ष्य यशोदां च हसन्मुदा ।  
स्नेहात्तदाननन्यस्तनिर्निमेषेक्षणामिव ॥

*abravīt pārśvato vīkṣya  
yaśodāṁ ca hasan mudā*

snehāt tad-ānana-nyasta-  
nirnimeṣekṣaṇām iva

*abravīt—He said; pārśvataḥ—by the side; vīkṣya—seeing; yaśodām—Yaśodā; ca—and; hasan—laughing; mudā—out of joy; snehāt—lovingly; tat—on her; ānana—face; nyasta—attached; nirnimeṣa—unblinking; īkṣaṇām—whose eyes; iva—as if.*

**Kṛṣṇa saw Mother Yaśodā also standing nearby, her eyes open wide and unblinking as if pasted onto her face. Laughing in joy, He lovingly spoke.**

As far as Kṛṣṇa was concerned, Yaśodā stood with unblinking eyes because she was stunned by natural motherly love. Viśvakarmā's illusion seemed to be working effectively, at least while Kṛṣṇa was still a little bewildered.

**Kṛṣṇa goes to the forest to play**

श्रीभगवानुवाच  
अद्य प्रभाते भो मातरस्मिन्नेव क्षणे मया ।  
चित्राः कति कति स्वप्ना जाग्रतेव न वीक्षिताः ॥

śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
adya prabhāte bho mātār  
asminn eva kṣaṇe mayā  
citrāḥ kati kati svapnā  
jāgrateva na vīkṣitāḥ

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Lord said; adya—today; prabhāte—early in the morning; bhoḥ mātāḥ—O mother; asmin—in this; eva—very; kṣaṇe—moment; mayā—by Me; citrāḥ—amazing things; kati—how many; kati—how many; svapnāḥ—dreams; jāgratā—awake; iva—as if; na—not; vīkṣitāḥ—seen.*

**The Supreme Lord said: Dear mother, this morning during My sleep I**

saw many amazing things in just a short moment, as if I were awake!

Years ago, before coming to Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa had considered Vraja His only real home. Reverting now to that earlier mood, Kṛṣṇa assumes that His experiences in Mathurā and Dvārakā were just a dream.

मधुपुर्यामितो गत्वा दुष्टाः कंसादयो हताः ।  
जरासन्धादयो भूपा निर्जिताः सुखिताः सुराः ॥

*madhu-puryām ito gatvā  
duṣṭāḥ kaṁsādayo hatāḥ  
jarāsandhādayo bhūpā  
nirjitāḥ sukhitāḥ surāḥ*

*madhu-puryām*—to Madhupurī (Mathurā); *itaḥ*—from here; *gatvā*—going; *duṣṭāḥ*—wicked persons; *kaṁsa-ādayaḥ*—Kāṁsa and others; *hatāḥ*—killed; *jarāsandha-ādayaḥ*—Jarāsandha and others; *bhū-pāḥ*—kings; *nirjitāḥ*—defeated; *sukhitāḥ*—satisfied; *surāḥ*—the demigods.

I saw that I had gone from here to Madhupurī. There I saw wicked men like Kāṁsa slain, kings like Jarāsandha vanquished, and the demigods satisfied.

Various deeds Kṛṣṇa performed in Mathurā, like His killing of the demon Naraka, were meant specically to please the demigods.

निर्मिताम्भोनिधेस्तीरे द्वारकाख्या महापुरी ।  
नान्यवृत्तानि शक्यन्तेऽधुना कथयितुं जवात् ॥

*nirmitāmbho-nidhes tīre  
dvārakākhyā mahā-purī  
nānya-vṛttāni śakyante  
'dhunā kathayitum javāt*

*nirmita*—constructed; *ambhaḥ-nidheḥ*—of the ocean; *tīre*—on the shore; *dvārakā-ākhyā*—called Dvārakā; *mahā-purī*—a great city; *na*—not; *anya*—other; *vṛttāni*—occurrences; *śakyante*—can be; *adhunā*—now;

*kathayitum*—described; *javāt*—because of haste.

A great city called Dvārakā was built on the shore of the ocean, and so many other things happened. But now there isn't time enough to tell you about them all.

अनेन स्वप्नविघ्नेन दीर्घेण स्वान्तहारिणा ।  
अन्यवासरवत्काले शयनान् नोत्थितं मया ॥

*anena svapna-vighnena*  
*dīrghēṇa svānta-hāriṇā*  
*anya-vāsara-vat kāle*  
*śayanān notthitaṁ mayā*

*anena*—because of this; *svapna*—of the dream; *vighnena*—distraction; *dīrghēṇa*—long; *sva-anta*—My mind; *hāriṇā*—taking away; *anya*—other; *vāsara*—on days; *vat*—like; *kāle*—on time; *śayanāt*—out of bed; *na*—not; *utthitam*—arising done; *mayā*—by Me.

It's because this long dream distracted Me that I didn't get out of bed on time like every other day.

When Mother Yaśodā said nothing in response but kept staring at Kṛṣṇa with unblinking eyes, He suspected she was worried He might be sick and had therefore overslept. To free Yaśodā of this anxiety, Kṛṣṇa here tells her that it was because of His long dream that He failed to wake up on time. The dream was so exceptionally convincing that it fooled Him into thinking He was already awake.

भो आर्य तन्महाश्चर्यमसम्भाव्यं न मन्यते ।  
भवता चेत्तदारण्ये गत्वा वक्ष्यामि विस्तरात् ॥

*bho ārya tan-mahāścaryam*  
*asambhāvyam na manyate*  
*bhavatā cet tadāraṇye*  
*gatvā vakṣyāmi vistarāt*

*bhoḥ*—O; *ārya*—respected brother; *tat*—this; *mahā-āścaryam*—most wonderful matter; *asambhāvyam*—impossible; *na manyate*—is not thought; *bhavatā*—by You; *cet*—if; *tadā*—then; *araṇye*—to the forest; *gatvā*—going; *vakṣyāmi*—I shall explain; *vistarāt*—in detail.

**Dear respected brother, if You don't think this wonderful matter impossible, I'll explain it to You in detail when We go to the forest.**

Baladeva might think that one could not see such a complex dream in just a few minutes just before waking. Kṛṣṇa therefore assures Him that this was a dream He really had. Later in the morning, Kṛṣṇa says, when They have some time to sit together, He will gladly describe it all.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
एवं सम्भाष्य जननीमभिवन्द्य स सादरम् ।  
वनभोग्येषुरालक्ष्य रोहिण्योक्तोऽत्यभिज्ञया ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*evam sambhāṣya jananīm*  
*abhivandya sa sādaram*  
*vana-bhogyepsur ālakṣya*  
*rohiṇyokto 'ty-abhijñayā*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *evam*—thus; *sambhāṣya*—speaking; *jananīm*—to His mother; *abhivandya*—honoring; *saḥ*—He; *sa-ādaram*—reverentially; *vana*—for the forest; *bhogyā*—of food; *īpsuḥ*—desirous; *ālakṣya*—being noticed; *rohiṇyā*—by Rohiṇī; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *ati-abhijñayā*—who was very expert.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: After speaking in this way, Kṛṣṇa offered His mother proper respects. Then the very expert Rohiṇī sensed that Kṛṣṇa wanted some food to take with Him to the forest.**

While in the forest, one generally eats such simple things as rice mixed with yogurt. By observing the way Kṛṣṇa moved His lotus hands and by other signs of His body language, Rohiṇī, smart and practical, discerned that Kṛṣṇa was thinking about such forest food. She quickly

reasoned that since the artificial Mother Yaśodā could not provide Kṛṣṇa's meal or even say anything, Kṛṣṇa might become suspicious if He were to ask food from Yaśodā and she failed to respond. To avoid this potential disaster, Rohiṇī moved into action before Kṛṣṇa could say anything about being hungry.

**श्रीरोहिण्युवाच  
भो वत्स तव माताद्य तन्निद्राधिक्यचिन्तया ।  
त्वदेकपुत्रा दुःस्थेव तदलं बहुवार्तया ॥**

*śrī-rohiṇy uvāca  
bho vatsa tava mātādyā  
tan-nidrādhikya-cintayā  
tvad-eka-putrā duḥstheva  
tad alam bahu-vārtayā*

*śrī-rohiṇī uvāca—Śrī Rohiṇī said; bhoḥ—O; vatsa—child; tava—Your; mātā—mother; adya—today; tat—this; nidrā—of sleeping; ādhikya—about the excess; cintayā—with worry; tvat—You; eka—whose only; putrā—son; duḥsthā—ill; iva—as if; tat—therefore; alam—enough; bahu—with much; vārtayā—talk.*

**Śrī Rohiṇī said:** Dear child, Your mother has no other son but You. She was so worried today by Your extra sleeping that now she feels a bit ill. So I think we have talked enough.

**Kṛṣṇa talks to Rādhā**

**अग्रतो निःसृता गास्त्वं गोपांश्चानुसर द्रुतम् ।  
मयोपस्कृत्य सद्गोयं वनमध्ये प्रहेष्यते ॥**

*agrato niḥsṛtā gās tvam  
gopāṁś cānusara drutam*



*mayopaskṛtya sad-bhogyam  
vana-madhye praheṣyate*

*agrataḥ—ahead; niḥsṛtāḥ—have gone out; gāḥ—the cows; tvam—You; gopāḥ—the cowherd boys; ca—and; anusara—go follow; drutam—quickly; mayā—by me; upaskṛtya—being prepared; sat—nice; bhogyam—refreshments; vana-madhye—into the forest; praheṣyate—will be sent.*

The cows and the boys tending them have already gone ahead. You should quickly follow them. I will prepare some nice refreshments for You and send them to You in the forest.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
तथा वदन्तीं सुस्निग्धां रोहिणीं चाभिवाद्य सः ।  
स्थितं करतले मातुर्नवनीतं शनैर्हसन् ॥

चौर्येणैव समादाय निजज्येष्ठं समाह्वयन् ।  
अप्राप्याग्रे गवां सङ्गे गतं न बुभुजे घृणी ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tathā vadantīm su-snigdhām  
rohiṇīm cābhivādya saḥ  
sthitam kara-tale mātur  
nava-nītam śanair hasan*

*cauryeṇaiva samādāya  
nija-jyeṣṭham samāhvayan  
aprāpyāgre gavām saṅge  
gataṁ na bubhuje ghrṇī*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; tathā—thus; vadantīm—spoken; su-snigdhām—very affectionate; rohiṇīm—tot Rohiṇī; ca—and; abhivādya—offering respects; saḥ—He; sthitam—situated; kara-tale—in the hand; mātuh—of His mother; nava-nītam—fresh butter; śanaiḥ—*

slowly; *hasan*—smiling; *cauryeṇa*—as theft; *eva*—even; *samādāya*—taking; *nija*—His; *jyeṣṭham*—to the older brother; *samāhvayan*—calling out; *aprāpya*—not reaching; *agre*—ahead; *gavām*—the cows; *saṅge*—the company; *gatam*—gone; *na bubhuje*—He did not eat; *ghṛṇī*—generous.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: Kṛṣṇa offered His respects to Rohiṇī, who had spoken to Him with such love. Then, with a smile on His face, like a thief He stealthily took from Mother Yaśodā's hand the butter she was holding. He then left to join His older brother, calling out His name. Generous Kṛṣṇa did not eat this butter before reaching the cows.

It seems from Kṛṣṇa's cooperative response that He trusted Rohiṇī's word as much as Mother Yaśodā's. He told Rohiṇī "I bow down to your feet" and offered her obeisances. Viśvakarmā knew that Kṛṣṇa loves fresh butter and that Mother Yaśodā therefore often has some in her hand ready to give to Him. Viśvakarmā had fashioned his image of Yaśodā accordingly. While Kṛṣṇa was occupied with Rohiṇī and Yaśodā, Balarāma, thinking that Kṛṣṇa was back to normal, had already gone ahead. He also had a confidential reason for leaving Kṛṣṇa behind, namely to leave Kṛṣṇa free to meet alone with the *gopīs*.

भोग्यं माध्याह्निकं चाटुपाटवेन स्वमातरौ ।  
सम्प्रार्थ्य पुरतो गत्वा गोपीः सम्भाष्य नर्मभिः ॥

*bhogyam mādhyāhnikam cātu-*  
*pāṭavena sva-mātarau*  
*samprārthya purato gatvā*  
*gopīḥ sambhāṣya narmabhiḥ*

*bhogyam*—food; *mādhyāhnikam*—for the midday; *cātu-pāṭavena*—in a clever way; *sva-mātarau*—His two mothers; *samprārthya*—having requested; *purataḥ*—forth; *gatvā*—going; *gopīḥ*—the *gopīs*; *sambhāṣya*—engaging in conversation; *narmabhiḥ*—with joking words.

In expertly pleasing words, Kṛṣṇa had asked His two mothers to make lunch for Him. Then He had set off, and on the way He had met some of

the gopīs and enjoyed some joking talks.

Kṛṣṇa's plaintive way of begging to be fed was devised to give His mothers the greatest pleasure. All of Kṛṣṇa's dealings in Vraja were meant to give pleasure to His devotees.

रुन्धानो वेणुनादैर्गा वर्तमानां सहालिभिः ।  
राधिकामग्रतो लब्ध्वा सनर्मस्मितमब्रवीत् ॥

*rundhāno veṇu-nādair gā  
vartamānām sahālibhiḥ  
rādhikām agrato labdhvā  
sa-narma-smitam abravīt*

*rundhānaḥ*—making stop; *veṇu*—of His flute; *nādaiḥ*—with the vibrations; *gāḥ*—the cows; *vartamānām*—who was present; *sahālibhiḥ*—with Her girlfriends; *rādhikām*—Śrī Rādhikā; *agrataḥ*—ahead; *labdhvā*—finding; *sa-narma*—with witty comments; *smitam*—and smiles; *abravīt*—He spoke.

As He continued walking, playing His flute to keep the cows from wandering off, He then came upon Śrī Rādhikā with Her girlfriends and spoke to Her with witty comments and charming smiles.

The first group of gopīs Kṛṣṇa met was headed by Candrāvalī. After talking a while with them, Kṛṣṇa went on further and met Śrī Rādhā and Her girlfriends. This means that earlier, when the gopīs had left their houses, they had dispersed themselves in various groups on the road to see Kṛṣṇa going to the forest.

The ladies of Mathurā speak of the young gopīs who go out to see Kṛṣṇa:

*prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyam  
gobhiḥ samam kvaṇayato 'sya niśamya veṇum  
nirgatya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ  
paśyanti sasmita-mukhaṁ sadayāvalokam*

“Hearing Kṛṣṇa playing His flute as He leaves Vraja in the morning with His cows or returns with them at sunset, those young girls quickly come out of their houses to see Him. They must have performed many pious activities to be able to see Him as He walks on the road, His smiling face mercifully glancing upon them.” (Bhāgavatam 10.44.16)

श्रीनन्दनन्दन उवाच  
प्राणेश्वरि रहःप्राप्तं भक्तमेकाकिनं च माम् ।  
सम्भाषसे कथं नाद्य तत्किं वृत्तासि मानिनी ॥

*śrī-nanda-nandana uvāca  
prāṇeśvari rahaḥ-prāptaṁ  
bhaktam ekākinam ca mām  
sambhāṣase katham nādyā  
tat kiṁ vṛttāsi mānini*

*śrī-nanda-nandanaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nanda-nandana said; prāṇa-īśvari—O mistress of my soul; rahaḥ—in a secluded place; prāptaṁ—obtained; bhaktam—to Your devotee; ekākinam—alone; ca—and; mām—Me; sambhāṣase—You speak; katham—why; na—not; adyā—today; tat—thus; kim—with what; vṛttā—busy; asi—You are; mānini—proud lady.*

Śrī Nanda-nandana said: O mistress of My soul, why don't You speak to Me, Your devotee, whom You've now met in a secret place? What are You so busy with, My proud lady?

अपराधं मया किं ते नूनं ज्ञातमहो त्वया ।  
सर्वज्ञेऽद्यतनस्वप्नवृत्तं तत्तन्ममाखिलम् ॥

*aparādham mayā kiṁ te  
nūnam jñātam aho tvayā  
sarva-jñe 'dyatana-svapna-  
vṛttaṁ tat tan mamākhilam*

*aparādham—offense; mayā—by Me; kiṁ—what; te—against You; nūnam—indeed; jñātam—known; aho—oh; tvayā—by You; sarva-jñe—*

O knower of everything; *adyatana*—of today; *svapna*—in the dream; *vṛttam*—what happened; *tat tat*—various; *mama*—My; *akhilam*—all.

**How did I offend You? O omniscient one, You must know everything that happened today in My dream.**

There was no other evident reason for Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's being angry at Him, so Kṛṣṇa concluded She must have been upset because of His dream that morning. She must have had the mystic power of knowing everything, past, present, and future, including what He had dreamed, what He had revealed to His mother about His dream, and what He was going to say to Śrī Rādhā about it. Kṛṣṇa began presenting these thoughts to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, hoping to divert Her from Her anger. He was not put off by Her standing silent like a statue, because in the past His girlfriends in Vraja had acted like this many times when the excessive ecstasy of love for Him had left them stunned. They often reacted this way to His joking words when shocked by the strength of His wit. And in His present unusual mood He could easily imagine that Śrī Rādhā was refusing to speak to Him because She was angry.

### The ladies are overwhelmed in love

त्वां विहायान्यतो गत्वा विवाहा बहवः कृताः ।  
तासां क्षितिपपुत्रीणामुद्यतानां मृतिं प्रति ।  
पुत्रपौत्रादयस्तत्र जनिता दूरवर्तिना ॥

*tvām vihāyānyato gatvā  
vivāhā bahavaḥ kṛtāḥ  
tāsāṁ kṣitipa-putrīṇām  
udyatānām mṛtiṁ prati  
putra-pautrādayas tatra  
janitā dūra-vartinā*

*tvām*—You; *vihāya*—leaving; *anyataḥ*—elsewhere; *gatvā*—going;

*vivāhāḥ*—marriages; *bahavaḥ*—many; *kṛtāḥ*—done; *tāsām*—of those; *kṣiti-pa*—of kings; *putrīṇām*—of the daughters; *udyatānām*—preparing; *mṛtim prati*—for death; *putra-pautra-ādayaḥ*—sons, grandsons, and so on; *tatra*—there; *janitāḥ*—begotten; *dūra-vartinā*—by Me, who was in the distant place.

**I left You and went elsewhere. In that distant place, I married many princesses, who had been preparing to end their lives, and I fathered sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons.**

Kṛṣṇa rescued the sixteen thousand princesses kidnapped by Bhaumāśura, but they could not simply thank Kṛṣṇa and return to their families. Since they had already stayed in a man's house, no respectable princes would ever marry them. Only Kṛṣṇa could save them from a shame they could otherwise end only by suicide, and only He could marry them all.

**अस्तु तावदिदानीं तद् गम्यते त्वरया वने ।  
सन्तोषदे प्रदोषेऽद्य मया त्वं मोदयिष्यसे ॥**

*astu tāvad idānīm tad  
gamyate tvarayā vane  
santoṣa-de Pradoṣe 'dya  
mayā tvam modayiṣyase*

*astu*—let that be; *tāvat*—as it may; *idānīm*—now; *tat*—thus; *gamyate*—I have to go; *tvarayā*—quickly; *vane*—to the forest; *santoṣa-de*—O giver of satisfaction; *Pradoṣe*—at dusk; *adya*—today; *mayā*—with Me; *tvam*—You; *modayiṣyase*—will enjoy.

**Anyway, right now I have to go to the forest. Tonight at dusk, O bestower of satisfaction, You will enjoy with Me.**

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
इत्थं सपुष्पविक्षेपं वदन् दृष्ट्वा दिशोऽखिलाः ।**

तां सचुम्बनमालिङ्ग्य गोगोपैः सङ्गतोऽग्रतः ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
ittham sa-puṣpa-vikṣepam  
vadan dṛṣṭvā diśo 'kḥilāḥ  
tām sa-cumbanam āliṅgya  
go-gopaiḥ saṅgato 'grataḥ

śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; ittham—thus; sa—with; puṣpa—of flowers; vikṣepam—a throw; vadan—saying; dṛṣṭvā—looking; diśaḥ—in the directions; akḥilāḥ—all; tām—Her; sa-cumbanam—with kisses; āliṅgya—embracing; go—with the cows; gopaiḥ—and the cowherd boys; saṅgataḥ—to meet; agrataḥ—forward.

Śrī Parīkṣit continued: Having said this, Kṛṣṇa threw a handful of flowers at Śrī Rādhā, looked all around, and then embraced and kissed Her. He then went ahead to meet the cows and cowherd boys.

अदृष्टपूर्वं व्रजवेशमद्भुतं  
महामनोज्ञं मुरलीरवान्वितम् ।  
यदान्वभूत्स्नेहभरेण देवकी  
तदैव वृद्धाप्यजनि स्तुतस्तनी ॥

adṛṣṭa-pūrvam vraja-veśam adbhutam  
mahā-manojñam muralī-ravānvitam  
yadānvabhūt sneha-bhareṇa devakī  
tadaiva vṛddhāpy ajani snuta-stanī

adṛṣṭa—not seen; pūrvam—previously; vraja—of Vraja; ve-śam—His dress; adbhutam—wonderful; mahā-manajñam—all-attractive; muralī—on the flute; rava—by vibration; anvitam—accompanied; yadā—when; anvabhūt—she experienced; sneha-bhareṇa—due to her great love; devakī—Devakī; tadā eva—at that very moment; vṛddhā—elderly; api—although; ajani—she became; snuta—moistened; stanī—her breasts.

As Devakī saw for the first time how wonderfully and all-attractively Kṛṣṇa was dressed for Vraja and how He was playing His flute, milk started flowing from her breasts in great love, even though she was no longer young.

Kṛṣṇa has special ecstatic feelings for His devotees, as described in the previous several verses. This is the ultimate greatness of God. Reciprocally, Kṛṣṇa's devotees have incomparable affection for Him, which they each show in their own individual ways.

### Kṛṣṇa sees the ocean and Dvārakā City

रुक्मिणीजाम्बवत्याद्याः पुरानुत्थेन कर्हिचित् ।  
महाप्रेम्णा गता मोहं धैर्यहान्यापतन् क्षितौ ॥

*rukmiṇī-jāmbavatī-ādyāḥ  
purānutthēna karhicit  
mahā-premṇā gatā moham  
dhairya-hānyāpatan kṣitau*

*rukmiṇī-jāmbavatī-ādyāḥ*—Rukmiṇī, Jāmbavatī, and other queens; *purā*—earlier; *anutthēna*—not arisen; *karhicit*—ever; *mahā-premṇā*—by the intense love; *gatāḥ*—gone; *moham*—to bewilderment; *dhairya*—their composure; *hānyā*—because of losing; *āpatan*—they fell; *kṣitau*—to the ground.

**Rukmiṇī, Jāmbavatī, and other queens, bewildered by an intensity of love they had never felt before, lost their composure, fainted, and fell to the ground.**

Kṛṣṇa's queens were all noble ladies, careful to behave seriously in public. But the exceptional attraction they at this moment felt for Kṛṣṇa defeated their gravity. They were accustomed to seeing Kṛṣṇa dressed as a prince, not a cowherd. Now they could no longer control their emotions and finally could not even retain their outward consciousness.



वृद्धा च मत्ता सह सत्यभामया  
कामस्य वेगादनुकुर्वती मुहुः ।  
आलिङ्गनं चुम्बनमप्यधावद्  
धर्तुं हरिं बाहुयुगं प्रसार्य ॥

*vṛddhā ca mattā saha satyabhāmayā  
kāmasya vegād anukurvati muhuḥ  
āliṅganam cumbanam apy adhāvad  
dhartum harim bāhu-yugam prasārya*

*vṛddhā*—the old lady (Padmāvatī); *ca*—and; *mattā*—intoxicated; *saha-satyabhāmayā*—along with Satyabhāmā; *kāmasya*—of lust; *vegāt*—because of the force; *anukurvati*—acting out; *muhuḥ*—repeatedly; *āliṅganam*—embracing; *cumbanam*—kissing; *api*—and; *adhāvat*—ran after; *dhartum*—to catch; *harim*—Kṛṣṇa; *bāhu-yugam*—her two arms; *prasārya*—extending.

Even old Padmāvatī became intoxicated. Driven by lust, she as well as Satyabhāmā acted out embracing and kissing Kṛṣṇa again and again and ran after Him, arms extended, to try to catch Him.

पुरा तदर्थानुभवादिवासौ  
कथञ्चिदादित्यसुतावलम्ब्य ।  
शमं समं प्राज्ञवरोद्धवेन  
बलाद्विकृष्यावरुोध ते द्वे ॥

*purā tad-arthānubhavād ivāsau  
kathañcid āditya-sutāvalambya  
śamaṁ samaṁ prājña-varoddhavana  
balād vikṛṣyāvarurodha te dve*

*purā*—in earlier times; *tat-artha*—in such matters; *anubhavāt*—because of being experienced; *iva*—indeed; *asau*—she; *kathañcit*—somehow; *āditya-sutā*—Kālindī, the daughter of the sun-god; *avalambya*—

resorting; *śamam*—to calmness; *samam*—along with; *prājña*—of wise persons; *varā*—the best; *uddhavana*—Uddhava; *balāt*—by force; *vikṛṣya*—dragging back; *avarurodha*—she stopped; *te*—them; *dve*—the two.

**Kālindī, the daughter of the sun-god, had seen Kṛṣṇa like this before. Being very intelligent, she somehow calmed herself down. She and Uddhava grabbed Satyabhāmā and Padmāvatī and dragged them back.**

Queen Kālindī in Dvārakā and the river Yamunā in Vṛndāvana are one and the same person. Thus she alone among the Dvārakā queens had known Kṛṣṇa during His cowherding days. This is at least the external reason why Kālindī, in this situation, was able to stay sober; but the fact is that she also had to struggle to remain calm just to help Brahmā carry out his plan for dispelling Kṛṣṇa's bewilderment. Kālindī caught hold of Satyabhāmā, and Uddhava caught Padmāvatī.

गोविन्ददेवस्त्वनुचारयन् गा  
गतः पुरस्तादुदधिं निरीक्ष्य ।  
तं मन्यमानो यमुनां प्रमोदात्  
सखीन् विहाराय समाजुहाव ॥

*govinda-devas tv anucārayan gā  
gataḥ purastād udadhiṁ nirīkṣya  
taṁ manyamāno yamunāṁ pramodāt  
sakhīn vihārāya samājuhāva*

*govinda-devaḥ*—Govindadeva; *tu*—but; *anucārayan*—herding; *gāḥ*—His cows; *gataḥ*—went; *purastāt*—forward; *udadhim*—the sea; *nirīkṣya*—seeing; *taṁ*—that; *manyamānaḥ*—thinking; *yamunām*—the Yamunā; *pramodāt*—with delight; *sakhīn*—His friends; *vihārāya*—for playing; *samājuhāva*—He called.

**Meanwhile Lord Govinda went ahead, tending His cows. When He saw the ocean before Him, He thought it was the Yamunā, and with delight**

He called His friends to come play in the river.

The scene now focuses again on Kṛṣṇa. The Arabian Sea rings Dvārakā like a fortress moat, and its dark blue color made Kṛṣṇa think it was the river Yamunā.

### Balarāma explains the situation

गताः कुत्र वयस्याः स्थ श्रीदामन् सुबलार्जुन ।  
सर्वे भवन्तो धावन्तो वेगेनायान्तु हर्षतः ॥

*gatāḥ kutra vayasyāḥ stha  
śrīdāman subalārjuna  
sarve bhavanto dhāvanto  
vegenāyāntu harṣataḥ*

*gatāḥ—gone; kutra—where; vayasyāḥ—O friends; stha—are you;  
śrīdāman—O Śrīdāmā; subala—O Subala; arjuna—O Arjuna; sarve—  
all; bhavantaḥ—you; dhāvantaḥ—running; vegena—with haste;  
āyāntu—please come; harṣataḥ—happily.*

“My dear friends, where have you gone? O Śrīdāmā, Subala, Arjuna!  
Happily come here, quickly!

कृष्णायां पाययित्वा गा विहराम यथासुखम् ।  
मधुरामलशीताम्बुवाहिन्यामवगाह्य च ॥

*kṛṣṇāyām pāyayitvā gā  
viharāma yathā-sukham  
madhurāmala-śītāmbu-  
vāhinyām avagāhya ca*

*kṛṣṇāyām—in the Kṛṣṇa River; pāyayitvā—making drink; gā—the  
cows; viharāma—let us play; yathā-sukham—as we like; madhura—  
gentle; amala—clear; śīta—and cool; ambu—water; vāhinyām—who is*

carrying; *avagāhya*—submerging ourselves; *ca*—and.

“We can let our cows drink water from this river Yamunā, and we can play as much as we want, swimming in her gently flowing clear cool water.”

एवमग्रे सरन् गोभिरम्बुधेर्निकटं गतः ।  
महाकल्लोलमालाभिः कोलाहलवतोऽच्युतः ॥

*evam agre saran gobhir  
ambudher nikaṭam gataḥ  
mahā-kallola-mālābhiḥ  
kolāhala-vato 'acyutaḥ*

*evam*—thus; *agre*—further; *saran*—going; *gobhiḥ*—with the cows; *ambudheḥ*—to the sea; *nikaṭam*—close; *gataḥ*—He came; *mahā-kallola*—of mighty waves; *mālābhiḥ*—by streams; *kolāhala-vataḥ*—roaring; *acyutaḥ*—Śrī Acyuta.

Thus Lord Acyuta went on further with the cows and neared the sea, where mighty roaring waves came one after another.

सर्वतो वीक्ष्य तत्तीरे प्रकटां स्वां महापुरीम् ।  
आलक्ष्य किमिदं क्वाहं कोऽहमित्याह विस्मितः ॥

*sarvato vīkṣya tat-tīre  
prakaṭām svām mahā-purīm  
ālakṣya kim idam kvāham  
ko 'ham ity āha vismitaḥ*

*sarvataḥ*—all around; *vīkṣya*—looking; *tat*—of it (the sea); *tīre*—on the shore; *prakaṭām*—visible; *svām*—His own; *mahā-purīm*—great city; *ālakṣya*—noticing; *kim*—what; *idam*—this; *kva*—where; *aham*—I; *kaḥ*—who; *aham*—I; *iti*—thus; *āha*—He said; *vismitaḥ*—surprised.

When Kṛṣṇa looked around the seacoast, He noticed His own great city

visible in the distance. Kṛṣṇa was surprised and exclaimed, “What is this? Where am I? Who am I?”

Coming out of the forest and beholding more clearly the vast water before Him, Kṛṣṇa saw the crashing waves and to the side at a distance a huge city. Addressing no one in particular, Kṛṣṇa reacted spontaneously with these questions: “What is the ocean in front of Me? Is there such an ocean in Vraja-bhūmi? Or am I somewhere else? But how can the son of Nanda Mahārāja be somewhere else? Or am I someone else? If I am supposed to be a great prince, then why am I so unsuitably dressed?”

इत्येवं सचमत्कारं मुहुर्जल्पन् महार्णवम् ।  
पुरीं चालोचयन् प्रोक्तः श्रीमत्सङ्कर्षणेन सः ॥

*ity evaṁ sa-camatkāraṁ  
muhur jalpan mahārṇavam  
purīm cālocayan proktaḥ  
śrīmat-saṅkarṣaṇena saḥ*

*iti*—with these words; *evam*—thus; *sa-camatkāram*—in astonishment; *muhur*—over and over; *jalpan*—saying; *mahā-arṇavam*—at the great sea; *purīm*—at the city; *ca*—and; *ālocayan*—looking; *proktaḥ*—told; *śrīmat-saṅkarṣaṇena*—by Lord Balarāma; *saḥ*—He.

**Astonished, He spoke these words again and again as He gazed at the vast ocean and the city. Then Lord Balarāma told Him something.**

Kṛṣṇa was hesitant to decide whether what He was seeing was real or not. His elder brother had to settle the question for Him.

श्रीबलदेव उवाच  
आत्मानमनुसन्धेहि वैकुण्ठेश्वर मत्प्रभो ।  
अवतीर्णोऽसि भूभारहाराय ज्ञापितोऽमरैः ॥

*śrī-baladeva uvāca  
ātmānam anusandhehi*

*vaikuṇṭheśvara mat-prabho  
avatīrṇo 'si bhū-bhāra-  
hārāya jñāpito 'maraiḥ*

*śrī-baladevaḥ uvāca—Śrī Baladeva said; ātmānam—Yourself; anusandhehi—please consider; vaikuṇṭha-īśvara—O Lord of Vaikuṇṭha; mat-prabho—O My master; avatīrṇaḥ—descended; asi—You have; bhū-bhāra—the earth's burden; hārāya—for removing; jñāpitaḥ—requested; amaraiḥ—by the demigods.*

**Śrī Baladeva said: O My master, Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, please consider who You are. You were asked by the demigods to descend to remove the burden of the earth.**

**दुष्टान् संहर तच्छिष्टान् प्रतिपालय सम्प्रति ।  
यज्ञं पैतृस्वसेयस्य धर्मराजस्य सन्तनु ॥**

*duṣṭān saṁhara tac-chiṣṭān  
pratipālaya samprati  
yajñam paitṛ-svaseyasya  
dharma-rājasya santanu*

*duṣṭān—wicked persons; saṁhara—please destroy; tat—other than them; śiṣṭān—the remaining people; pratipālaya—please protect; samprati—now; yajñam—the sacrifice; paitṛ-svaseyasya—of Your cousin; dharma-rājasya—Dharmarāja (Yudhiṣṭhira); santanu—please execute.*

**Now please destroy the wicked and protect everyone else. Your cousin Dharmarāja, King Yudhiṣṭhira, has undertaken a sacrifice. Please see to getting it performed.**

Balarāma here requests Kṛṣṇa to think of Himself as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, and of Balarāma as His aide, Ananta Śeṣa. Even though Kṛṣṇa is indeed the son of Nanda Mahārāja, He should now carry out the mission for which He and Balarāma have descended from Vaikuṇṭha. Of course They had actually descended from Goloka Vṛndāvana, but Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha are in many respects

nondifferent. When Kṛṣṇa descends to this world, He brings within Himself all of His personal expansions, including the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha; thus when He comes from Goloka He is simultaneously coming from Vaikuṇṭha.

Kṛṣṇa's main purpose for descending is to distribute the special kind of pure love found only at His own lotus feet, by playing His pastimes in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. Dvārakā is not the suitable place for this purpose. But if Kṛṣṇa turns His mind to this main objective, Balarāma thinks, He is likely to become completely unsettled again. Therefore Balarāma calls Kṛṣṇa Vaikuṇṭheśvara instead of Golokeśvara, and tactfully points out that Kṛṣṇa's current task is to relieve the earth of its burden by destroying evildoers and protecting law-abiding citizens. Most immediately, Yudhiṣṭhira needs Kṛṣṇa's support for the Rājasūya-yajña. After achieving these secondary aims, Balarāma implies, Kṛṣṇa will be free to absorb Himself in His first aim without impediments.

प्रतिष्ठितस्त्वयैवासौ चक्रवर्ती युधिष्ठिरः ।  
अनुशात्वादिदुष्टानां बिभेति वरविक्रमात् ॥

*pratiṣṭhitas tvayaivāsau  
cakravartī yudhiṣṭhiraḥ  
anuśālvādi-duṣṭānām  
bibheti vara-vikramāt*

*pratiṣṭhitaḥ*—established; *tvayā*—by You; *eva*—indeed; *asau*—he; *cakravartī*—as the emperor; *yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*—Yudhiṣṭhira; *anuśālva*—of Śālva's younger brother; *ādi*—and other; *duṣṭānām*—villains; *bibheti*—is afraid; *vara-vikramāt*—because of their exceptional strength.

**You have established Yudhiṣṭhira as emperor, but he is intimidated by Śālva's younger brother and by other exceedingly powerful villains.**

Yudhiṣṭhira will not dare face the challenge of staging the Rājasūya sacrifice unless Kṛṣṇa encourages Him, and several opponents like King Anuśālva first need to be removed.

तत्तत्र गत्वा तान् हन्तुं यतस्व यदुभिः सह ।  
तवैव वैरतस्ते हि तावकान् पीडयन्ति तान् ॥

*tat tatra gatvā tān hantum  
yatasva yadubhiḥ saha  
tavaiva vairatas te hi  
tāvakān pīḍayanti tān*

*tat*—therefore; *tatra*—there; *gatvā*—going; *tān*—them; *hantum*—to kill; *yatasva*—please try; *yadubhiḥ saha*—together with the Yadus; *tava*—of You; *eva*—alone; *vairataḥ*—because of hatred; *te*—they; *hi*—indeed; *tāvakān*—Your devotees; *pīḍayanti*—are persecuting; *tān*—them.

Please, therefore, go to Yudhiṣṭhira and with the help of the Yadus try to kill his enemies, who are persecuting Your devotees out of hatred for You.

These words are aimed at inducing Kṛṣṇa to put aside the exalted sweet taste of intimate love and assume instead the contrary mood of militant anger. To stir up Kṛṣṇa's fury, Balarāma suggests here that without the help of the Yadus Kṛṣṇa might be unfit to kill these enemies. These enemies are Kṛṣṇa's, since Yudhiṣṭhira does not consider anyone an enemy.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
एवं रसान्तरं नीत्वानुजं स्वस्थयितुं वचः ।  
यदुक्तं बलरामेण श्रुत्वा भावान्तरं गतः ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
evam rasāntaram nītvā-  
nujam svasthayitum vacaḥ  
yad uktam balarāmeṇa  
śrutvā bhāvāntaram gataḥ*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *evam*—thus; *rasa*—to an ecstatic mood; *antaram*—different; *nītvā*—being brought; *anu-jam*—His



younger brother; *svasthayitum*—to bring to a normal state; *vacaḥ*—the words; *yat*—which; *uktam*—spoken; *balarāmeṇa*—by Balarāma; *śrutvā*—hearing; *bhāva*—a mood; *antaram*—different; *gataḥ*—He obtained.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Balarāma spoke these words to change His younger brother's ecstatic mood and bring Him back to normal. Indeed, upon hearing what Balarāma said, Kṛṣṇa did change His mood.**

Before hearing these words, Kṛṣṇa was swimming in the *prema-rasa* of the most confidential loving dealings, but now He was in a heroic mood. Thus in the next verse Parīkṣit will refer to Him as Bhagavān.

**जगाद भगवान् क्रुद्धो भ्रातः शाल्वानुजादयः ।  
के ते वराका हन्तव्या गत्वैकेन मयाधुना ॥**

*jagāda bhagavān kruddho  
bhrātaḥ śālvānujādayaḥ  
ke te varākā hantavyā  
gatvaikena mayādhunā*

*jagāda*—said; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *kruddhaḥ*—becoming angry; *bhrātaḥ*—O brother; *śālva-anu-ja*—Śālva's younger brother; *ādayaḥ*—and the others; *ke*—who; *te*—they; *varākāḥ*—useless creatures; *hantavyāḥ*—fit to be killed; *gatvā*—gone; *ekena*—alone; *mayā*—by Me; *adhunā*—now.

The Personality of Godhead grew angry and said, “Brother, who are those useless creatures—Śālva's younger brother and those like him? I will go by Myself and kill them at once!

**भवान् प्रत्येतु सत्यं मे सप्रतिज्ञमिदं वचः ।  
इत्थं प्रसङ्गसङ्गत्या मुग्धभावं जहौ प्रभुः ॥**

*bhavān pratyetu satyaṁ me  
sa-pratijñam idaṁ vacaḥ  
itthaṁ prasaṅga-saṅgatyā*

*mugdha-bhāvaṁ jahau prabhuḥ*  
*bhavān*—Your good self; *pratyetu*—should believe; *satyam*—true; *me*—My; *sa-pratijñam*—with a promise; *idam*—these; *vacaḥ*—words; *ittham*—thus; *prasaṅga*—of the current moment; *saṅgatyā*—by the circumstances; *mugdha-bhāvaṁ*—His confusion; *jahau*—gave up; *prabhuḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Trust these words of Mine as true. They give My firm promise.” In this way the circumstances of the moment made Lord Kṛṣṇa forget His confusion.

Kṛṣṇa’s bewilderment was in fact His complete rapture in the highest *prema-rasa*, but for now He had to refrain from those ecstasies.

परितो मुहुरालोक्य श्रीमद्द्वारवतीश्वरम् ।  
 श्रीयादवेन्द्रमात्मानं प्रत्यभिज्ञातवांस्तदा ॥

*parito muhur ālokya*  
*śrīmad-dvāravatīśvaram*  
*śrī-yādavendram ātmānaṁ*  
*pratyabhijñātavāṁs tadā*  
*paritaḥ*—around; *muhuḥ*—again; *ālokya*—looking; *śrīmat*—divine; *dvāravatī*—of Dvārakā; *īśvaram*—the master; *śrī*—divine; *yādava*—of the Yadus; *indram*—the king; *ātmānam*—Himself; *pratyabhijñātavān*—He recognized again; *tadā*—then.

Looking around again, Kṛṣṇa remembered that He was the master of Śrī Dvārakā, the divine king of the Yādavas.

प्रासादाभ्यन्तरे सुप्तं सस्माराथ करे स्थिताम् ।  
 वंशीं स्वस्याग्रजस्यापि वन्यवेशं च दृष्ट्वान् ॥

*prāsādābhyantare suptam*  
*sasmārātha kare sthitām*  
*vaṁśīm svasyāgrajasyāpi*

*vanya-veśam ca dṛṣṭavān*

*prāsāda*—the palace; *abhyantare*—inside; *suptam*—asleep; *sasmāra*—remembered; *atha*—then; *kare*—in His hand; *sthitām*—placed; *vaṁśīm*—a flute; *svasya*—of His own; *agra-jasya*—older brother; *api*—also; *vanya-veśam*—the forest dress; *ca*—and; *dṛṣṭavān*—He saw.

He remembered He had been sleeping inside the palace. Then He saw the flute in His hand, and Himself and His older brother dressed like forest dwellers.

पुर्या बहिःप्रयाणेन गोपालनमवेक्ष्य च ।  
विस्मयं संशयं चाप्तो जहास हृदि भावयन् ॥

*purīyā bahiḥ-prayāṇena*  
*go-pālanam avekṣya ca*  
*vismayaṁ saṁśayaṁ cāpto*  
*jahāsa hṛdi bhāvayan*

*purīyāḥ*—of the city; *bahiḥ*—outside; *prayāṇena*—with movement; *go-pālanam*—the tending of the cows; *avekṣya*—seeing; *ca*—and; *vismayaṁ*—surprise; *saṁśayaṁ*—doubt; *ca*—and; *āptaḥ*—experiencing; *jahāsa*—He laughed; *hṛdi*—in His mind; *bhāvayan*—pondering.

Kṛṣṇa perceived He had gone out of the city to tend cows, and this filled Him with surprise and doubt. He laughed as He pondered it.

Now aware of Himself as the prince of Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa had to reckon with the obvious facts that He and Balarāma were dressed like cowherd boys and had been tending cows along the shore of the ocean. He wondered why They were acting like this and whether these things were actually happening or were some sort of illusion. He laughed at His own inability to figure this out and at His long lapse from normal consciousness.

Garuḍa brings the two brothers back to Dvārakā

ततो हलधरः स्मित्वा तदीयहृदयङ्गमः ।  
सर्वं ब्रह्मकृतं तस्याकथयत्तत्सहेतुकम् ॥

*tato haladharah smitvā  
tadīya-hṛdayaṅ-gamaḥ  
sarvaṁ brahma-kṛtaṁ tasyā-  
kathayat tat sa-hetukam*

*tataḥ—then; haladharah—Balarāma; smitvā—smiling; tadīya—His (Kṛṣṇa's); hṛdayam-gamaḥ—understanding the heart; sarvam—all; brahma—by Brahmā; kṛtam—done; tasya—to Him; akathayat—He told; tat—that; sa-hetukam—along with the reasons.*

His brother Balarāma understood what Kṛṣṇa was thinking. Smiling, Balarāma explained that this was all Brahmā's arrangement and told Kṛṣṇa the reasons why it had been done.

Having ascertained from Kṛṣṇa's laughter that Kṛṣṇa had finally calmed down, Balarāma was able to explain to Him how Brahmā had planned this scheme to bring Him back to normal and how Garuḍa and the others had carried out the plan.

ततो ह्रीण इव ज्येष्ठमुखं पश्यन् स्मितं श्रितः ।  
रामेणोद्धृत्य तत्राब्धौ स्नापितो धूलिधूसरः ॥

*tato hrīṇa iva jyeṣṭha-  
mukhaṁ paśyan smitaṁ śritaḥ  
rāmeṇodvartya tatrābdhau  
snāpito dhūli-dhūsaraḥ*

*tataḥ—then; hrīṇaḥ—embarrassed; iva—as if; jyeṣṭha—of His elder brother; mukham—at the face; paśyan—looking; smitam—a smile; śritaḥ—assuming; rāmeṇa—by Balarāma; udvartya—being wiped clean; tatra—there; abdhau—in the sea; snāpitaḥ—bathed; dhūli-dhūsaraḥ—covered with dust.*

Kṛṣṇa then looked at His brother's face and smiled as if embarrassed. And since Kṛṣṇa's body was covered with dust, Balarāma wiped Him clean and bathed Him in the sea.

As indicated by the word *iva*, Kṛṣṇa had no reason to be embarrassed. His behavior all along had been totally praiseworthy. In Kṛṣṇa's own words to Uddhava, *jugupsā hrīr akarmasu*: "Real modesty means being disgusted with improper acts." (*Bhāgavatam* 11.19.40) If one has indulged in illicit acts, one should feel shame and condemn one's own wrong behavior. But Kṛṣṇa felt no shame; He simply looked at Balarāma and smiled.

Balarāma took care to wipe the dust off Kṛṣṇa, dust most likely picked up while Kṛṣṇa was herding the cows in the manufactured Vṛndāvana or else earlier, while Kṛṣṇa was rolling around inside the palace in His uncontrollable ecstasy.

तदानीमेव सम्प्राप्तं भगवद्भावकोविदम् ।  
आरुह्यालक्षितस्तार्क्ष्यं निजप्रासादमागतः ॥

*tadānīm eva samprāptam*  
*bhagavad-bhāva-kovidam*  
*āruhyālakṣitas tārksyam*  
*nija-prāsādam āgataḥ*

*tadānīm eva*—at that very moment; *samprāptam*—who arrived; *bhagavat*—of the Lord; *bhāva*—of the moods; *kovidam*—the expert knower; *āruhya*—mounting; *alakṣitaḥ*—unseen; *tārksyam*—Garuḍa, the son of Tārksya; *nija-prāsādam*—to His palace; *āgataḥ*—went.

At that moment Garuḍa arrived, because he understood the Lord's moods perfectly well. Kṛṣṇa mounted him and returned unseen to His palace.

सर्वज्ञेनोद्धवेनाथ देवकीरुक्मिणीमुखाः ।  
प्रबोध्यान्तःपुरे देव्यो भगवत्पार्श्वमापिताः ॥

*sarva-jñenoddhavanātha*

*devakī-rukmiṇī-mukhāḥ*  
*prabodhyāntaḥ—pure devyo*  
*bhagavat-pārśvam āpitāḥ*

*sarva-jñena*—by the all-knowing; *uddhavana*—Uddhava; *atha*—then; *devakī-rukmiṇī-mukhāḥ*—headed by Devakī and Rukmiṇī; *prabodhya*—being informed; *antaḥ—pure*—to the palace; *devyaḥ*—the queens; *bhagavat*—of the Lord; *pārśvam*—to the side; *āpitāḥ*—were brought.

**The all-knowing Uddhava informed Devakī, Rukmiṇī, and the others what was happening. He brought all the queens back to the palace, to Lord Kṛṣṇa's side.**

Uddhava arranged for the gossip-monger Padmāvatī to attend to some business elsewhere, because she would be out of place in the confidential discussions about to begin.

**माता च देवकी पुत्रमाशीर्भिरभिनन्द्य तम् ।  
भोगसम्पादनायास्य कालाभिज्ञा द्रुतं गता ॥**

*mātā ca devakī putram*  
*āśīrbhir abhinandya tam*  
*bhoga-sampādanāyāsyā*  
*kālābhijñā drutaṁ gatā*

*mātā*—His mother; *ca*—and; *devakī*—Devakī; *putram*—her son; *āśīrbhiḥ*—with blessings; *abhinandya*—greeting; *tam*—Him; *bhoga*—the meal; *sampādanāya*—for preparing; *asya*—His; *kāla*—of the time; *abhijñā*—well aware; *drutam*—quickly; *gatā*—went.

**Mother Devakī greeted her son with blessings. Well aware of what time it was, she quickly went to prepare His meal.**

Devakī's excusing herself from the company of Kṛṣṇa's queens left Kṛṣṇa at liberty to discuss with them frankly the matter which is the essential message of this chapter—the supreme devotion of the young *gopīs* of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa felt too much filial reverence for His mother to talk about this openly in her presence. She knew that it was time to cook for

Kṛṣṇa, and on a deeper level she also understood that now she ought to take her leave.

### The ladies glorify the gopīs of Vraja

स्तम्भाद्यन्तरिताः सत्यो देव्योऽतिष्ठन् प्रभुप्रियाः ।  
सत्यभामा न तत्रागात्तां कृष्णोऽपृच्छदुद्धवम् ॥

*stambhādy-antaritāḥ satyo  
devyo 'tiṣṭhan prabhu-priyāḥ  
satyabhāmā na tatrāgāt  
tām kṛṣṇo 'pṛcchat uddhavam*

*stambha-ādi*—by columns and so on; *antaritāḥ*—hidden; *satyaḥ*—being; *devyaḥ*—the queens; *atiṣṭhan*—stood; *prabhu-priyāḥ*—dear to the Lord; *satyabhāmā*—Satyabhāmā; *na*—not; *tatra*—there; *āgāt*—came; *tām*—about her; *kṛṣṇaḥ*—Kṛṣṇa; *apṛcchat*—asked; *uddhavam*—from Uddhava.

The beloved queens of the Lord stayed hidden behind objects such as columns, not approaching Him. But Satyabhāmā had not come there with the others, so Kṛṣṇa asked about her from Uddhava.

श्रीहरिदास उवाच  
वृन्दावने यदा जातो विजयो रैवतार्चिते ।  
प्रभोस्तदातनं भावमबुधभ्रामकं परम् ॥

कमप्यालोक्य देवीभिः सह तत्रैव दूरतः ।  
स्थिता निलीय दुर्बुद्धिरुचे पद्मावती खला ॥

*śrī-hari-dāsa uvāca  
vṛndāvane yadā jāto  
vijayo raivatārcite*

*prabhos tadātanam bhāvam  
abudha-bhrāmakam param*

*kam apy ālokya devībhiḥ  
saha tatraiva dūrataḥ  
sthitā nilīya durbuddhir  
ūce padmāvatī khalā*

*śrī-hari-dāsaḥ uvāca—Śrī Haridāsa Uddhava said; vṛndāvane—to Vṛndāvana; yadā—when; jātaḥ—occurred; vijayaḥ—the glorious excursion; raivata—by the Raivata Hill; arcite—served; prabhoḥ—of the Lord; tadātanam—of that occasion; bhāvam—the mood; abudha—to the unintelligent; bhrāmakam—bewildering; param—only; kam api—certain; ālokya—being perceived; devībhiḥ saha—along with the queens; tatra—there; eva—indeed; dūrataḥ—at a distance; sthitā—standing; nilīya—hidden; durbuddhiḥ—whose intelligence was bad; ūce—said; padmāvatī—Padmāvatī; khalā—spiteful.*

**The Lord’s servant Uddhava replied: When You took Your glorious excursion to Vṛndāvana, which is embraced by Raivata Hill, Your special mood might have bewildered the unintelligent, but your queens were able to perceive it. They therefore hid themselves, watching from a distance. Then the spiteful, weak-minded Padmāvatī addressed them.**

Uddhava is sometimes called Haridāsa. Śukadeva Gosvāmī therefore says:

*sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr  
vīkṣan kusumitān drumān  
kṛṣṇam saṁsmārayan reme  
hari-dāso vrajaukasām*

“Seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys, and flowering trees of Vraja, Haridāsa Uddhava enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.56)

**देवक्यरे पुण्यहीने रे रे रुक्मिणि दुर्भगे ।**



सत्यभामेऽवरे हन्त जाम्बवत्यादयोऽवराः ॥

पश्यतेदमितोऽर्वाक् स्वमभिमानं विमुञ्चत ।  
आभीरीणां हि दास्याय तपस्यां कुरुतोत्तमाम् ॥

*devaky are puṇya-hīne  
re re rukmiṇi durbhage  
satyabhāme 'vare hanta  
jāmbavaty-ādayo 'varāḥ*

*paśyatedam ito 'rvāk svam  
abhimānam vimuñcata  
ābhīrīṇām hi dāsyāya  
tapasyām kurutottamām*

*devaki are—O Devakī; puṇya-hīne—devoid of pious credits; re—O; re—O; rukmiṇi—Rukmiṇī; durbhage—unfortunate; satyabhāme—O Satyabhāmā; avare—wretched; hanta—alas; jāmbavati—O Jāmbavatī; ādayaḥ—and others; avarāḥ—all wretched; paśyata—just see; idam—this; itaḥ arvāk—henceforth; svam—your; abhimānam—pride; vimuñcata—abandon; ābhīrīṇām—of the Ābhīra nomads; hi—indeed; dāsyāya—to become servants; tapasyām—penances; kuruta—do; uttamām—the greatest.*

**“O Devakī, devoid of pious credits! O unfortunate Rukmiṇī! Wretched Satyabhāmā! Jāmbavatī and you other miserable women! Look here! From now on, you should give up your pride and undergo the greatest penances to become servants of those Ābhīra nomad women.”**

The queens of Dvārakā may have won Kṛṣṇa's hand in marriage, but they should not think they have a stronger hold on His heart than the Vraja *gopīs*. The Ābhīras are a degraded class of nomads, whereas the cowherds of Nanda are respectable twice-born *vaiśyas*. But because Nanda's community is engaged in the same cowherding business as the outcaste nomads, and also just out of spite, Padmāvatī calls Nanda's

gopas Ābhīras. Śukadeva Gosvāmī mentions the Ābhīra tribe in the Second Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.4.18):

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pukkaśā  
ābhīra-kaṅkā yavanāḥ khaśādayaḥ  
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ  
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

“Kirātas, Hūṇas, Āndhras, Pulindas, Pukkaśas, Ābhīras, Kaṅkas, Yavanas, members of the Khaśa races, and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, for He is the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him.”

तद्वर्चो निशम्यादौ देवक्योक्तमभिज्ञया ।  
समस्तजगदाधारभवदाधारभूतया ॥

आश्चर्यमत्र किं मूर्खे पूर्वजन्मनि यत्तपः ।  
समं श्रीवसुदेवेन मयाकारि सुताय तत् ॥

अतोऽयमावयोः प्राप्तः पुत्रतां वरदेश्वरः ।  
अस्मिन्नन्दयशोदाभ्यां भक्तिः सम्प्रार्थिता विधिम् ॥

*tad-durvaco niśamyādan  
devakyoktam abhijñayā  
samasta-jagad-ādhāra-  
bhavad-ādhāra-bhūtayā*

*āścaryam atra kiṁ mūrkhe  
pūrva-janmani yat tapaḥ  
samaṁ śrī-vasudevena  
mayākāri sutāya tat*

*ato 'yam āvayoḥ prāptaḥ*

*putratām vara-deśvaraḥ  
asmin nanda-yaśodābhyām  
bhaktiḥ samprārthitā vidhim*

*tat*—her; *durvacaḥ*—wicked words; *niśamya*—hearing; *ādau*—first; *devakyā*—by Devakī; *uktam*—was said; *abhijñayā*—intelligent; *samasta*—entire; *jagat*—of the universe; *ādhāra*—who are the shelter; *bhavat*—of You; *ādhāra*—the shelter; *bhūtayā*—being; *āścaryam*—wonderful thing; *atra*—here; *kim*—what; *mūrkhe*—O foolish woman; *pūrva*—previous; *janmani*—in our life; *yat*—because; *tapāḥ*—austerity; *samam*—along with; *śrī-vasudevena*—Śrī Vasudeva; *mayā*—by me; *akāri*—was done; *sutāya*—for a son; *tat*—thus; *ataḥ*—for that reason; *ayam*—He; *āvayoḥ*—our; *prāptaḥ*—obtained; *putratām*—the position of the son; *vara-da*—of givers of benedictions; *īśvaraḥ*—the Lord; *asmin*—for Him; *nanda-yaśodābhyām*—by Nanda and Yaśodā; *bhaktiḥ*—pure devotion; *samprārthitā*—prayed for; *vidhim*—to Lord Brahmā.

[Uddhava told Kṛṣṇa:] The wise Devakī shelters You, who shelter the entire world. When she heard those wicked words, she said, “Foolish woman, what is unusual here? Śrī Vasudeva and I, in our previous lives, underwent austerities to get the Lord as our son, and therefore the Lord, the bestower of all boons, accepted that role. But Nanda and Yaśodā prayed to Lord Brahmā for pure devotion.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa surely has special affection for His parents Vasudeva and Devakī, as well as Nanda and Yaśodā. But Nanda and Yaśodā are more intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa. Vasudeva and Devakī, in their previous lives as Sutapā and Pṛṣṇi, strove to attain a parental relationship with God. When they finally achieved the Supreme Lord’s audience, after strict austerities for many years, they submitted to Him their desire, and the Lord agreed to fulfill it. As the Lord later told Devakī:

*tadā vām parituṣṭo ’ham  
amunā vapuṣānaghe  
tapasā śraddhayā nityam*

*bhaktyā ca hṛdi bhāvitāḥ*

*prādurāsaṁ varada-rāḍ  
yuvayoḥ kāma-ditsayā  
vriyatām vara ity ukte  
mādrśo vām vṛtaḥ sutāḥ*

“O sinless mother Devakī, after twelve thousand celestial years, in which you constantly thought of Me within the core of your heart with great faith, devotion, and austerity, I was very much satisfied with you. Since I am the best of all bestowers of benediction, I appeared in this same form as Kṛṣṇa to ask you to take from Me the benediction you desired. You then expressed your desire to have a son exactly like Me.” (Bhāgavatam 10.3.37–38)

Kṛṣṇa is *varada-īśvara*, the best of those who give benedictions. By granting a single boon, He was able to bless Pṛśni and Sutapā to become His parents not only once but three times. But to Nanda and Yaśodā, whose love for Him was even more pure, Kṛṣṇa bestowed a greater reward. In the *rasa* of parental love, they enjoy the topmost perfection of *prema-bhakti*, found only within the realm of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

Nanda, in the role of the Vasu Droṇa, expressed the unconditional purity of his love when he prayed to Brahmā:

*jātayor nau mahā-deve  
bhuvī viśveśvare harau  
bhaktiḥ syāt paramā loko  
yayāñjo durgatiṁ taret*

“Please permit us to be born on the planet earth so that after our appearance the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller and master of all planets, will also appear and spread devotional service, the ultimate goal of life. Thus those born in this material world may very easily be delivered from miserable materialistic life by accepting devotional service.” (Bhāgavatam 10.8.49) Nanda was concerned for the upliftment of the unhappy conditioned souls. He

wanted Kṛṣṇa to exhibit His childhood pastimes so that the world would hear and recite them and regain the taste of love of God.

तस्यैतद्भक्तवर्यस्य तादृशेन वरेण तौ ।  
आवाभ्यामपि माहात्म्यं प्राप्तौ सपरिवारकौ ॥

*tasyaitad-bhakta-varyasya  
tādṛśena vareṇa tau  
āvābhyām api māhātmyam  
prāptau sa-parivārakau*

*tasya*—of him; *etat*—this; *bhakta-varyasya*—best of devotees; *tādṛśena*—such; *vareṇa*—by the blessing; *tau*—they two (Nanda and Yaśodā); *āvābhyām*—than the two of us; *api*—even more; *māhātmyam*—greatness; *prāptau*—obtained; *sa-parivārakau*—along with their whole household.

“By the blessings of that foremost devotee of the Lord, Nanda and Yaśodā along with their whole household became greater than us.

In Devakī’s opinion, Brahmā had the power to make Nanda and Yaśodā the best parents of the Lord because Brahmā himself was the best of all the Lord’s devotees. In the words of Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the Second Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (2.9.5), *sa ādi-devo jagatām paro guruḥ*: “Brahmā is the first of gods, the supreme spiritual master of all the worlds.” Devakī indicates by her comparison of blessings that the Supreme Lord so greatly empowers devotees engaged in His service that the benedictions they give can be even more effective than His own.

ताभ्यां स्नेहभरेणास्य पालनं तत्तदीहितम् ।  
अतोऽस्यैतादृशो भावस्तयोर्युक्तो हि मे प्रियः ॥

*tābhyām sneha-bhareṇāsya  
pālanam tat-tad-īhitam  
ato 'syaitādṛśo bhāvas  
tayor yukto hi me priyaḥ*

*tābhyām*—their; *sneha-bhareṇa*—because of exceptional love; *asya*—of Him; *pālanam*—the raising; *tat-tat*—various; *īhitam*—the activities; *ataḥ*—therefore; *asya*—His; *etādṛśaḥ*—such as this; *bhāvaḥ*—special mood; *tayoḥ*—toward them; *yuktaḥ*—appropriate; *hi*—indeed; *me*—to me; *priyaḥ*—pleasing.

**“Because of their exceptional love, they were allowed to raise the Lord as their child and cherish His many wonderful activities. Therefore His special attitude toward them is fitting, and very much pleasing to me.”**

Nanda and Yaśodā deserved the best reciprocation from Kṛṣṇa. Had Kṛṣṇa not dealt with them in the most intimate way, He would have been guilty of ingratitude.

**अथ श्रीरुक्मिणी देवी सहर्षमिदमब्रवीत् ।  
यद्वाक्यश्रवणात्सर्वभक्तानां प्रेम वर्धते ॥**

*atha śrī-rukmiṇī devī  
sa-harṣam idam abravīt  
yad-vākya-śravaṇāt sarva-  
bhaktānām prema vardhate*

*atha*—then; *śrī-rukmiṇī-devī*—Śrī Rukmiṇī-devī; *sa-harṣam*—happily; *idam*—this; *abravīt*—spoke; *yad*—whose; *vākya*—words; *śravaṇāt*—due to hearing; *sarva-bhaktānām*—of all the devotees; *prema*—the love; *vardhate*—increases.

**[Uddhava continued:] Then Śrī Rukmiṇī-devī brightly spoke. By hearing her words, all the devotees increased in love for Kṛṣṇa.**

Hearing praise of devotees greater than oneself, like the praise about to be spoken by Queen Rukmiṇī, does not cause envy or discouragement for pure Vaiṣṇavas; rather, it increases their eagerness to please the Lord by their own service.

**या भर्तृपुत्रादि विहाय सर्वं  
लोकद्वयार्थाननपेक्षमाणाः ।**

रासादिभिस्तादृशविभ्रमैस्तद्-  
रीत्याभजंस्तत्र तमेनमार्ताः ॥

*yā bharṭṛ-putrādi vihāya sarvaṁ  
loka-dvayārthān anapekṣamāṇāḥ  
rāsāḍibhis tādr̥śa-vibhramais tad-  
rītyābhajaṁs tatra tam enam ārtāḥ*

*yāḥ*—who; *bharṭṛ*—husbands; *putra*—sons; *ādi*—and so on; *vihāya*—abandoning; *sarvaṁ*—all; *loka-dvaya*—of the two worlds; *arthān*—desirable things; *anapekṣamāṇāḥ*—disregarding; *rāsa-āḍibhiḥ*—by the *rāsa* dance and other pastimes; *tādr̥śa*—such; *vibhramaiḥ*—by their enchantments; *tat-rītyā*—in that way; *abhajan*—they worshiped; *tatra*—there; *tam enam*—Him; *ārtāḥ*—very much distressed.

[Śrī Rukmiṇī said:] “Those women gave up everything—their husbands, sons, and all else they had—disregarding their own fortune in this world and the next. Enduring distress, they worshiped the Lord in their own way, enchanting Him in the *rāsa* dance and other pastimes.

अतो हि या नो बहुसाधनोत्तमैः  
साध्यस्य चिन्त्यस्य च भावयागतः ।  
महाप्रभोः प्रेमविशेषपालिभिः  
सत्साधनध्यानपदत्वमागताः ॥

*ato hi yā no bahu-sāadhanottamaiḥ  
sādhyaśya cintyaśya ca bhāva-yogataḥ  
mahā-prabhoḥ prema-viśeṣa-pālibhiḥ  
sat-sādhana-dhyāna-padatvam āgatāḥ*

*ataḥ*—therefore; *hi*—certainly; *yāḥ*—who; *naḥ*—our; *bahu*—many; *sādhana*—by spiritual disciplines; *uttamaiḥ*—excellent; *sādhyaśya*—who is achievable; *cintyaśya*—who can be meditated upon; *ca*—and; *bhāva*—with loving concentration; *yogataḥ*—by fixing the mind; *mahā-*

*prabhoḥ*—for the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *prema*—pure love; *viśeṣa*—exceptional; *pālibhiḥ*—by those who maintain; *sat-sādhana*—advanced levels of practice; *dhyāna*—of meditation; *padatvam*—the stage; *āgatāḥ*—they attained.

**“We can hope to achieve the Supreme Personality of Godhead only by following many rigorous spiritual practices, and we can meditate upon Him only by strictly training the attention of our hearts. But those *gopīs* cherished such exceptional love for Him that they easily attained the success of the most advanced stages of meditation.**

Other devotees can only hope to follow in the footsteps of the Vṛndāvana *gopīs*, and by the sincerest endeavors might begin to approach the perfection that for the *gopīs* was their natural birthright. For the most part, devotees can see Kṛṣṇa only in their hearts, but the *gopīs* serve Him directly with all their senses. Indeed, they permanently hold Kṛṣṇa’s attention. As Uddhava told the *gopīs*:

*viyoginīnām api paddhatiṁ vo  
na yogino gantum api kṣamante  
yad dhyeya-rūpasya parasya puṁso  
yūyaṁ gatā dhyeya-padaṁ durāpam*

“In your mood of separation, you have traversed a path on which even great yogīs cannot go. You have made the Supreme Person the object of your meditation, though other seekers can focus their attention on Him only with great travail.”

**Kṛṣṇa scolds Satyabhāmā**

तास्वेतस्य हि धर्मकर्मसुतपौत्रागारकृत्यादिषु  
व्यग्राभ्योऽस्मदथादरैः पतितया सेवाकरीभ्योऽधिकः ।  
युक्तो भाववरो न मत्सरपदं चोद्धाहभाग्न्यो भवेत्



## संश्लाघ्योऽथ च यत्प्रभोः प्रियजनाधीनत्वमाहात्म्यकृत् ॥

*tāsv etasya hi dharma-karma-suta-pauṭrāgāra-kṛtyādiṣu  
vyagrābhyo 'smad athādaraiḥ patitayā sevā-karībhyaḥ 'dhikaḥ  
yukto bhāva-varo na matsara-padam codvāha-bhāgbhyaḥ bhavet  
saṁślāghyaḥ 'tha ca yat prabhoḥ priya-janādhīnatva-māhātmya-kṛt*  
*tāsu*—for them; *etasya*—His; *hi*—indeed; *dharma*—religious duties;  
*karma*—social obligations; *suta*—children; *pauṭra*—grandchildren;  
*āgāra*—in the home; *kṛtya*—engagements; *ādiṣu*—in such things;  
*vyagrābhyaḥ*—who are engrossed; *asmad*—than us; *atha*—thus;  
*ādaraiḥ*—with expressions of reverence; *patitayā*—as being fallen; *sevā-*  
*karībhyaḥ*—who are maidservants; *adhikaḥ*—greater; *yuktaḥ*—fitting;  
*bhāva*—love; *varaḥ*—exceptional; *na*—not; *matsara*—of envy; *padam*—  
a grounds; *ca*—and; *udvāha*—marriage; *bhāgbhyaḥ*—who enjoy;  
*bhavet*—should be; *saṁślāghyaḥ*—glorious; *atha*—thus; *ca*—and; *yat*—  
which; *prabhoḥ*—of the Lord; *priya-jana*—to His dear devotees;  
*adhīnatva*—His subservience; *māhātmya*—the greatness; *kṛt*—creating.

“It is betting, therefore, that Kṛṣṇa loves them more than us, for we are obsessed with our religious duties, social obligations, children, grandchildren, homes, household affairs, and so on. We are but His maidservants, worshiping Him with reverence like fallen conditioned souls. We married wives should not envy His exceptional love for the gopīs. Rather, we should always glorify that love, for it proves how very subservient He becomes to His beloved devotees.”

Speaking on behalf of all the queens, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī, contrasting their own mode of serving Kṛṣṇa with that of the gopīs, admits that the service of the queens is inferior. Because the queens consider Kṛṣṇa their husband, their exchanges with Him are restricted by social rules. The queens are bound by concerns for various worldly and religious duties, whereas the gopīs have no concern for anything but satisfying Kṛṣṇa. Thus the gopīs serve Kṛṣṇa in such indescribably exquisite sports as the *rāsa* dance, whereas the queens can render only the conventional

services a faithful wife performs for her respected husband.

From the queens' standpoint, only the *gopīs* of Vraja possess the purest type of love. Kṛṣṇa, accordingly, responds to that unique love in unique ways. Sometimes He hides Himself outside a corner of a *gopī*'s house and attracts the *gopī*'s attention by making curious sounds. She quickly rises from bed and steals to the door, careful not to awaken family members such as her mother-in-law. And outside she meets Kṛṣṇa and pleases Him with embraces and kisses. Even during the day, Kṛṣṇa is sometimes busy in a grove selected for a secret meeting on the bank of the Yamunā. While arranging a soft bed from leaves and flowers, He hears the sound of falling leaves, signaling that His beloved has arrived. He turns His face toward the path outside the grove, by which a *gopī*, on the pretext of fetching water from the Yamunā, is coming to fulfill His desires. Sometimes at dusk several *gopīs* become intoxicated by hearing Kṛṣṇa calling them with the song of His flute. They run toward Him hastily, their garments, hair, and ornaments in disarray. But when they meet Him, He tries to turn them back with proud, deceptive words that cast them into despair. After they helplessly beg Him to change His mind, He acquiesces, giving up His pretense. And when they realize that He was only joking with them, they become filled with joy, grab hold of the end of His yellow *dhotī*, and pull Him into a nearby secluded grove.

In such ways the *gopīs* of Vraja enjoy the freedom of worshiping Kṛṣṇa as their paramour, whereas the queens of Dvārakā admit that they are limited to worshiping Him according to the principles of religious household life, subject to Vedic injunctions and social customs. Therefore, the queens declare, the queens should never envy the *gopīs*, for a subordinate should never envy a superior. Maidservants in a noble household, for example, should not be jealous of the mistress they serve.

Rather than envy the Vraja *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa's wives in Dvārakā admire them as perfect exemplars of devotion. Kṛṣṇa's love for the *gopīs* deliberately shows to everyone the greatest feature of His transcendental personality — His voluntary submission to the control of His dearest devotees. Without daring to state it openly, the queens nourish a hope to become like the *gopīs*. The queens minimize the value of their own devotion, blaming themselves for being attached to mundane religious

and social duties, although in truth the queens are free from any material attachment. Even if the queens are attached to their religious and social obligations, that is not a fault but a virtue that enhances their special love for Kṛṣṇa. When the queens speak as Rukmiṇī does here, they do so out of natural humility to express their admiration for the rare fortune of the *gopīs*.

ततोऽन्याभिश्च देवीभिरेतदेवानुमोदितम् ।  
सात्राजिती परं मानगेहं तदसहाविशत् ॥

*tato 'nyābhiś ca devībhir  
etat evānumoditam  
sātrājitī param māna-  
geham tad-asahāviśat*

*tataḥ*—then; *anyābhiḥ*—by the other; *ca*—and; *devībhiḥ*—queens; *etat*—this; *eva*—indeed; *anumoditam*—approved; *sātrājitī*—Sātrājitī; *param*—only; *māna-geham*—her chamber of anger; *tat*—that; *asahā*—unable to tolerate; *āviśat*—entered.

[Uddhava said:] The other queens all agreed. Only Satyabhāmā, Sātrājitī, unable to tolerate those words, entered her chamber of anger.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
श्रीमद्गोपीजनप्राणनाथः सक्रोधमादिशत् ।  
सा समानीयतामत्र मूर्खराजसुता द्रुतम् ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
śrīmad-gopī-jana-prāṇa-  
nāthaḥ sa-krodham ādiśat  
sā samānīyatām atra  
mūrkha-rāja-sutā drutam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parikṣit said; *śrīmat*—blessed; *gopī-jana*—of the *gopīs*; *prāṇa-nāthaḥ*—the Lord of the life; *sa-krodham*—angrily; *ādiśat*—ordered; *sā*—she; *samānīyatām*—should be brought; *atra*—here;

*mūrkhā*—foolish; *rāja*—of the king; *sutā*—the daughter; *drutam*—quickly.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: The blessed Lord of the life of the *gopīs* then ordered angrily, “Bring here at once that daughter of the foolish king!”

In reference to Kṛṣṇa, the epithet *śrīmān* means “endowed with the wealth of supreme love” or else “possessing all beautiful splendor.” He is the Lord of the life of the *gopīs*, headed by Śrī Rādhā; or, alternatively, they are the rulers of His life. Therefore when Satyabhāmā, the daughter of Satrājit, showed displeasure at the glorification of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa demanded she be brought before Him for correction. And Kṛṣṇa angrily reminded His devotees that this wife’s father had been implicated in the scandal over the Syamantaka jewel.

श्रेष्ठा विदग्धास्वभिमानसेवा-  
चातुर्यतो नन्दयितुं प्रवृत्ता ।  
गोपालनारीरतिलम्पटं तं  
भर्तारमत्यन्तविदग्धताढ्यम् ॥

*śreṣṭhā vidagdhāsv abhimāna-sevā-  
cātur্যato nandayitum pravṛttā  
gopāla-nārī-rati-lamṇaṁ tam  
bhartāram atyanta-vidagdhataḍhyam*

*śreṣṭhā*—best; *vidagdhāsu*—among women expert in the arts of amorous love; *abhimāna*—with jealous pride; *sevā*—in service; *cātur्यataḥ*—by her skill; *nandayitum*—to give pleasure; *pravṛttā*—prepared; *gopāla-nārī*—with the cowherd women; *rati*—for intimate enjoyment; *lamṇaṁ*—eager; *tam*—to Him; *bhartāram*—her husband; *atyanta*—completely; *vidagdhataḥ*—with knowledge of the arts of love; *āḍhyam*—endowed.

Satyabhāmā, most expert in the arts of amorous love, was always ready to skillfully serve her husband in the mood of jealous pride, knowing Him

also to be fully conversant with the skills of love and eager to enjoy with the cowherd women.

दासीभ्यस्तादृशीमाज्ञां तस्याकर्ण्य विचक्षणा ।  
उत्थाय मार्जयन्त्यङ्गं त्वरया तत्र सागता ॥

*dāsibhyas tādṛśīm ājñām  
tasyākarṇya vicakṣaṇā  
utthāya mārjayanty aṅgam  
tvarayā tatra sāgatā*

*dāsibhyaḥ*—from her maidservants; *tādṛśīm*—such; *ājñām*—an order; *tasya*—from Him; *ākarṇya*—hearing; *vicakṣaṇā*—intelligent; *utthāya*—getting up; *mārjayantī*—washing; *aṅgam*—her body; *tvarayā*—hastily; *tatra*—there; *sā*—she; *āgatā*—came.

Upon hearing this order from her maidservants, the intelligent Satyabhāmā got up, bathed, and quickly came before Kṛṣṇa.

Satyabhāmā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s very dear wife and would never act in such a way as to disturb His mind. She makes a show of petulance because she knows what gives Kṛṣṇa pleasure. Being at heart a great romantic, He enjoys affectionate quarrels with His beloved queens. Calming the anger of His wives is one of His favorite diversions. And moreover He feels great satisfaction in glorifying the *gopīs* of Vraja, including Candrāvalī and others. He is always eager to relish the sublime taste of their love.

But why does Kṛṣṇa take pleasure in the ignoble sport of struggling to subdue the pride of quarrelsome women? Because He is the topmost connoisseur of conjugal reciprocations. So these dealings give Him unequaled joy.

Kṛṣṇa describes the love of the Vraja-vāsīs

स्तम्भेऽन्तर्धाप्य देहं स्वं स्थिता लज्जाभयान्विता ।

## संलक्ष्य प्रभुणा प्रोक्ता संरम्भावेशतः स्फुटम् ॥

*stambhe 'ntardhāpya deham svam  
sthitā lajjā-bhayānvitā  
saṁlakṣya prabhuṇā proktā  
saṁrambhāveśataḥ sphuṭam*

*stambhe*—behind a pillar; *antardhāpya*—hiding; *deham*—body; *svam*—her; *sthitā*—standing; *lajjā*—shame; *bhayā*—and fear; *anvitā*—filled with; *saṁlakṣya*—being noticed; *prabhuṇā*—by her Lord; *proktā*—addressed; *saṁrambha*—of anger; *āveśataḥ*—in the mood; *sphuṭam*—clearly.

**She hid herself behind a pillar and stood there, filled with shame and fear. Kṛṣṇa noticed her and, still angry, spoke to her in a clear voice.**

Although Satyabhāmā hid herself so that Kṛṣṇa could not see her, He smelled her unique fragrance and noticed other subtle signs of her presence. Satyabhāmā often had fits of jealousy, but now she feared that by showing her temper at an unsuitable moment she might have gone too far. The Supreme Lord's service should never be performed haphazardly, but always with careful attention to satisfying Him with just what He wants and at the time He wants it.

### श्रीभगवानुवाच

अरे सात्राजिति क्षीणचित्ते मानो यथा त्वया ।  
क्रियते रुक्मिणीप्राप्तपारिजातादिहेतुकः ॥

तथा ब्रजजनेष्वस्मन्निर्भरप्रणयादपि ।  
अवरे किं न जानासि मां तदिच्छानुसारिणम् ॥

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
are sātrājiti kṣīṇa-  
citte māno yathā tvayā*

*kriyate rukmiṇī-prāpta-  
pārijātādi-hetukaḥ*

*tathā vraja-janeṣv asman-  
nirbhara-praṇayād api  
avare kiṁ na jānāsi  
mām tad-icchānusāriṇam*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Lord said; *are*—O; *sātrājiti*—Satyabhāmā; *kṣiṇa-citte*—O you whose mind is weak; *mānaḥ*—anger; *yathā*—as; *tvayā*—by you; *kriyate*—was done; *rukmiṇī*—by Rukmiṇī; *prāpta*—obtained; *pārijāta-ādi*—the *pārijāta* flower and so on; *hetukaḥ*—because of; *tathā*—so; *vraja-janeṣu*—for the people of Vraja; *asmat*—Our; *nirbhara*—great; *praṇayāt*—because of love; *api*—also; *avare*—O insignificant one; *kiṁ*—whether; *na jānāsi*—you do not know; *mām*—Me; *tat*—their; *icchā*—to the desires; *anusāriṇam*—obedient.

**The Supreme Lord said: O weak-minded Sātrājītī, just as you grew angry when Rukmiṇī obtained special favors like the pārijāta flower, now you are angry at Our intense love for the people of Vraja. Silly woman, don't you know that I am ruled by their desires?**

Displeased with Satyabhāmā, Kṛṣṇa remembers that her father had sometimes acted foolishly; thus He addresses her as “daughter of Satrājīt” and calls her weak-minded and silly. He refers to Himself in the plural either because He is thinking of Śrī Balarāma and Rohiṇī, who share His feelings for the Vraja-vāsīs, or because He is proud of Himself for having the great treasure of the Vraja-vāsīs' love.

**कृते सर्वपरित्यागे तैर्भद्रं यदि मन्यते ।  
शपे तेऽस्मिन् क्षणे सत्यं तथैव क्रियते मया ॥**

*kṛte sarva-parityāge  
tair bhadraṁ yadi manyate  
śape te 'smiṁ kṣaṇe satyaṁ  
tathaiva kriyate mayā*

*kṛte*—by being done; *sarva*—of everything; *parityāge*—renouncing; *taiḥ*—by them (the Vraja-vāsīs); *bhadram*—as benecial; *yadi*—if; *manyate*—would be thought; *śape*—I promise; *te*—you; *asmin*—at this; *kṣaṇe*—moment; *satyam*—truly; *tathā*—thus; *eva*—only; *kriyate*—will be done; *mayā*—by Me.

**If the people of Vraja thought it good that I renounce everything, I promise You that in a moment I would do just that.**

If we are to take these words seriously, Kṛṣṇa would not hesitate to abandon His wives, His children, and everyone else in Dvārakā if that would make the Vraja-vāsīs happy. But we should also take into account that a solemn vow is usually made only before someone in whom one has firm trust and this means that Satyabhāmā also is very dear to Kṛṣṇa.

**स्तुवता ब्रह्मणोक्तं यद् वृद्धवाक्यं न तन्मृषा ।  
तेषां प्रत्युपकारेऽहमशक्तोऽतो महाऋणी ॥**

*stuvatā brahmaṇoktaṁ yad  
vṛddha-vākyaṁ na tan mṛṣā  
teṣāṁ pratyupakāre 'ham  
aśakto 'to mahā-ṛṇī*

*stuvatā*—who was offering praise; *brahmaṇā*—by Brahmā; *uktam*—spoken; *yat*—what; *vṛddha*—of the venerable person; *vākyaṁ*—the statement; *na*—not; *tat*—that; *mṛṣā*—in vain; *teṣāṁ*—with them; *pratyupakāre*—in reciprocating; *aham*—I; *aśaktaḥ*—incapable; *ataḥ*—therefore; *mahā-ṛṇī*—very much in debt.

**The praise offered by the venerable Brahmā was not spoken in vain: I can never fully repay these devotees, and so I am utterly indebted to them.**

Kṛṣṇa is the all-powerful Supreme Lord. At His command are boundless energies, ready to fulfill His every desire. But He cannot repay His debt of gratitude to His devotees in Śrī Vṛndāvana. Thus He constantly looks for small favors He can do for them as tokens of His affection. As Brahmā stated while praising Kṛṣṇa's superexcellence:



*eṣāṁ ghoṣa-nivāsinām uta bhavān kiṁ deva rātetī naś  
ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad aparāṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati  
sad-veṣād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā  
yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte*

“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 shower upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vṛndāvana. You have already arranged to give Yourself to Pūtanā 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, bodies, children, dear relations, and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You?” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.14.35)

**यदि च प्रीतये तेषां तत्र यामि वसामि च ।  
तथापि किमपि स्वास्थ्यं भाव्यं नालोचयाम्यहम् ॥**

*yadi ca prītaye teṣāṁ  
tatra yāmi vasāmi ca  
tathāpi kim api svāsthyam  
bhāvyaṁ nālocayāmy aham*

*yadi*—if; *ca*—and; *prītaye*—for the satisfaction; *teṣāṁ*—of them; *tatra*—there; *yāmi*—I go; *vasāmi*—I live; *ca*—and; *tathā api*—yet; *kim api*—any; *svāsthyam*—benefit; *bhāvyaṁ*—to be derived; *na ālocayāmi*—do not see; *aham*—I.

**But even if for their pleasure I were to return to live with them, I don’t see how that would help.**

**मदीक्षणादेव विगाढभावो-  
दयेन लब्धा विकला विमोहम् ।  
न दैहिकं किञ्चन ते न देहं  
विदुर्न चात्मानमहो किमन्यत् ॥**

*mad-īkṣaṇād eva vigāḍha-bhāvo-  
dayena labdhā vikalā vimoham  
na daihikam kiñcana te na deham  
vidur na cātmānam aho kim anyat*

*mat*—Me; *īkṣaṇāt*—by seeing; *eva*—merely; *vigāḍha*—very deep; *bhāva*—of ecstasies; *udayena*—by the rising; *labdhāḥ*—obtaining; *vikalāḥ*—becoming distressed; *vimoham*—confusion; *na*—not; *daihikam*—connected with their bodies; *kiñcana*—anything; *te*—they; *na*—not; *deham*—their bodies; *viduḥ*—recognize; *na*—not; *ca*—and; *ātmānam*—themselves; *aho*—oh; *kim*—what; *anyat*—else.

**Just by seeing Me they become so dazed and bewildered by ecstasies from deep within that they fail to recognize their own bodies and everything that has to do with their bodies, what to speak of the rest of the world.**

As soon as the devotees of Vraja see Kṛṣṇa's beauty, their *prema* transforms into intense ecstasies, manifest in their bodies as trembling, perspiring, and other *sāttvika* symptoms. These devotees then enter a trance of bewilderment, losing external consciousness. In this state called *vimoham*, the most exceptional trance (*viśiṣṭam moham*), the Supreme Person reveals Himself in full, with His attributes and associates. This state, therefore, lies far beyond the partial realization of the Truth attained by impersonalists in their ordinary *samādhi*, with its artificial background of voidness.

The masculine pronoun *te* ("they") here indicates all the Vraja-vāsīs, both male and female. Or else Kṛṣṇa is really talking only about His female devotees, the young *gopīs*, but avoids using the feminine pronoun *tāḥ* because in the present company He does not want to talk about them openly.

In either case, when the Vraja-vāsīs see Him they forget their own bodies and everything connected with them — family, social position, responsibilities, and so on. They forget whatever plans they may have had for success in this life and the next. Therefore, since the Vraja-vāsīs, upon seeing Kṛṣṇa again, would lose all contact with reality, Kṛṣṇa sees no hope of restoring them to health by returning. His going back to

them would only make their condition worse.

दृष्टेऽपि शाम्येन्मयि तन्न दुःखं  
विच्छेदचिन्ताकुलितात्मनां वै ।  
हर्षाय तेषां क्रियते विधिर्यो  
दुःखं स सद्यो द्वीगुणीकरोति ॥

*dr̥ṣṭe 'pi śāmyen mayi tan na duḥkham  
viccheda-cintākulitātmanām vai  
harṣāya teṣām kriyate vidhir yo  
duḥkham sa sadyo dvī-guṇī-karoti*

*dr̥ṣṭe*—being seen; *api*—and; *śāmyet*—will be calmed; *mayi*—Me; *tat*—that; *na*—not; *duḥkham*—misery; *viccheda*—in separation; *cintā*—by anxiety; *ākulita-ātmanām*—of those whose minds are agitated; *vai*—indeed; *harṣāya*—for the happiness; *teṣām*—their; *kriyate*—is made; *vidhiḥ*—arrangement; *yaḥ*—which; *duḥkham*—unhappiness; *saḥ*—it; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *dvī-guṇī*—twice as much; *karoti*—makes.

**So their pain won't be relieved even if they see Me. Their hearts will be so disturbed by thoughts of separation from Me that whatever measures I take for their happiness will only double their grief.**

In their trance of separation, the devotees of Vraja are aware of nothing but Kṛṣṇa. Their ecstasy is so deep that as a natural effect of remembering Kṛṣṇa they see Him physically before them. Other pure devotees, whose love for Kṛṣṇa is not on the same level of perfection, have separate experiences of Him internally and externally. Dhruva, for example, concentrated His mind on Lord Viṣṇu in deep meditation, but his internal vision of the Lord did not expand into a vision outside like that of the *gopīs*. Only when Lord Viṣṇu came to Dhruva to offer him special mercy did the Lord disappear from Dhruva's heart to show Himself externally. As described in the Fourth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* (4.9.2):

*sa vai dhiyā yoga-vipāka-tīvrayā*

*hṛt-padma-koṣe sphuritaṁ taḍit-prabham*  
*tirohitaṁ sahasaivopalakṣya*  
*bahiḥ-sthitaṁ tad-avasthaṁ dadarśa*

“The form of the Lord, which was brilliant like lightning and on which Dhruva Mahārāja, in his mature yogic process, was fully absorbed in meditation, all of a sudden disappeared. Thus Dhruva was perturbed, and his meditation broke. But as soon as he opened his eyes he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead personally present, just as he had been seeing the Lord in his heart.”

The full vision of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty relished by the Vraja-vāsīs is the ultimate fruit of spiritual perfection. One might suggest, therefore, that if Kṛṣṇa were to present Himself once more before the Vraja-vāsīs their condition would certainly improve. This might be true, but to recover from the intense pain of separation would take time. And the Vraja-vāsīs, thinking Kṛṣṇa might leave them again, might relapse into their trance of separation. Therefore Kṛṣṇa thinks that returning to them would only cast them deeper into suffering.

The painful anxiety of separation from Kṛṣṇa puts the *ātmās* of the Vraja-vāsīs—meaning their hearts, their bodies, and the very essence of their being—into turmoil. When a person has not eaten for a long time, the vital elements of his body are depleted, so that even after obtaining food he takes time to recover. He does not recover simply by having food placed before him. He has to eat, and in a manner that does not make him sicker. Then he has to wait for the nourishment to be distributed in his body. “Similarly,” Kṛṣṇa thinks, “the Vraja-vāsīs will not recover just by seeing Me. They will have to enjoy pastimes with Me, and not only for a short time but as long as needed to fulfill their desires. I fear that this will prove impossible, since I have too many other things to take care of elsewhere. I am incapable of curing them.”

Even if Kṛṣṇa’s concern were unfounded, if He were to treat their disease of separation by returning to them they would remain susceptible to agitation, thinking He might leave them again. Their anxiety, being an essential part of their very existence, cannot be cured even by His personal *darśana*. As Kṛṣṇa indicates by the word *vai*, He knows this

from His own experience with the devotees of Vṛndāvana, and so also do the devotees He is speaking to in Dvārakā. As Śukadeva Gosvāmī relates in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in the last chapter of the Tenth Canto (10.90.15), after Kṛṣṇa's queens enjoyed water sports with Kṛṣṇa the queens mourned:

*kurari vilapasi tvaṁ vīta-nidrā na śeṣe  
svapiti jagati rātryām īśvaro gupta-bodhaḥ  
vayam iva sakhi kaccid gāḍha-nirbhinna-cetā  
nalina-nayana-hāsodāra-līlekṣitena*

“O *kurarī* bird, at night you are lamenting. Somewhere in this world the Supreme Lord is asleep in a hidden place. But you are wide awake, O friend, unable to fall asleep. Is it that you, like us, have had your heart pierced to the core by the munificent, playful smiling glances of the lotus-eyed Lord?”

While speaking this verse, Kṛṣṇa's queens were not actually separated from Him. Thus they say *rātryām īśvaraḥ*, referring to the night as different from the present moment. In fact they were speaking during the day, and had just finished playing with Kṛṣṇa in the water. Introducing these sports, Śukadeva had said:

*ūcur mukundaika-dhiyo  
gira unmatta-vaj jaḍam  
cintayantyo 'ravindākṣaṁ  
tāni me gadataḥ śṛṇu*

“The queens then became stunned in ecstatic trance, their minds absorbed in Kṛṣṇa alone. Thinking of their lotus-eyed Lord, they spoke as if insane. Please hear their words from me as I relate them.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.90.14) Thus the queens, whose only object of attention was Kṛṣṇa, were momentarily speechless in trance. When their thoughts of Kṛṣṇa impelled them to speak, they spoke slowly, as if recovering from mental imbalance. From their words it is evident that Kṛṣṇa's queens were foreseeing the pain of separation even while enjoying with Him. Śukadeva Gosvāmī chose to end his narration of the Tenth Canto on

this note of especially intense sweetness (*madhureṇa samāpayet*).

Kṛṣṇa may be the omniscient Supreme Lord and the most expert arranger of all things to satisfy His devotees, but these very special devotees, the devotees in Vraja, He feels unable to help. *Teṣām* (“their”) may again refer either to the Vraja-vāsīs in general or else only to the *gopīs*. His sentiments expressed in this verse are betting in either case.

Any attempt to make the Vraja-vāsīs happy will quickly make everything go wrong, just as water thrown on an oil fire makes the fire explode and go out of control. Thus Kṛṣṇa faces a dilemma. On one hand, the Vraja-vāsīs do not know how they can survive in separation from Kṛṣṇa, and on the other hand even if He stays with them a long time they will inevitably worry that at any moment He might leave them again. As this most exquisite agony of *viraha-bhāva* rises in their hearts, it will only worsen their grief. Kṛṣṇa reasons that just as there is no way to remove the natural quality of heat that He imparted to the element fire at the time of creation, there is no way that anyone, even He Himself, could withdraw the ecstatic nature of the Vraja-vāsīs, imparted to them by His unique mercy.

This state of affairs is the greatest glory of the residents of Vraja. Of course, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja feel special ecstasy when they join with Him directly in the spontaneous pastimes found nowhere else. Nonetheless, the special pure love born of separation from Him rises within them most of the time. The Vraja-vāsīs are the special recipients of superexcellent *viraha-bhāva*, which is His greatest mercy (*parama-mahattva*) because it is filled with the highest special happiness, carried to its ultimate extreme. Although everyone in this world lives in separation from Kṛṣṇa, only the Vraja-vāsīs fully experience *viraha-bhāva*. Their special ecstasy of separation from Kṛṣṇa is obtained only by His special mercy, and only after very intimate association with Him.

Kṛṣṇa feels very grateful for the transcendental love of His *gopīs* and His other beloved devotees in Vṛndāvana, so He cannot bear to see the disastrous effects of their *viraha-bhāva*. He therefore cannot return to live in Vṛndāvana again, or even pay a short visit.

अदृश्यमाने च मयि प्रदीप्त-  
वियोगवहेर्विकलाः कदाचित् ।  
मृता इवोन्मादहताः कदाचिद्  
विचित्रभावं मधुरं भजन्ते ॥

*adṛśyamāne ca mayi pradīpta-  
viyoga-vahner vikalāḥ kadācit  
mṛtā ivonmāda-hatāḥ kadācid  
vicitra-bhāvaṁ madhuraṁ bhajante*

*adṛśyamāne*—not being seen; *ca*—and; *mayi*—Me; *pradīpta*—inflamed;  
*viyoga*—of separation; *vahneḥ*—due to the fire; *vikalāḥ*—distraught;  
*kadācit*—sometimes; *mṛtāḥ*—dead; *iva*—as if; *unmāda*—by insanity;  
*hatāḥ*—afflicted; *kadācit*—sometimes; *vicitra*—wonderful; *bhāvaṁ*—  
ecstasies; *madhuraṁ*—sweet; *bhajante*—they experience.

And when they cannot see Me they become so torn that the fire of separation leaves them sometimes as though dead and sometimes as though insane. Thus they partake of the nectar of wonderful ecstasies.

In this verse Kṛṣṇa defends Himself against the accusation that He is ungrateful to have abandoned the residents of Vraja. What the Vraja-vāsīs feel because of Kṛṣṇa's absence is a concentrated agony similar to the burning heat of fire. They lose control of their wits and sometimes seem on the verge of death, showing no external signs of life. At other times they seem afflicted by madness. But Kṛṣṇa explains that these are all signs of the highest devotional ecstasy.

तमिस्रपुञ्जादि यदेव किञ्चिन्  
मदीयवर्णोपममीक्ष्यते तैः ।  
सचुम्बनं तत्परिरभ्यते मद्-

## धिया परं तत्क्व नु वर्णनीयम् ॥

*tamisra-puñjādi yad eva kiñcin  
madīya-varṇopamam īkṣyate taiḥ  
sa-cumbanam tat parirabhyate mad-  
dhiyā param tat kva nu varṇanīyam*

*tamisra-puñja*—a patch of darkness; *ādi*—or something similar; *yat*—what; *eva*—ever; *kiñcit*—something; *madīya*—My; *varṇa*—color; *upamam*—resembling; *īkṣyate*—is seen; *taiḥ*—by them; *sa-cumbanam*—with kissing; *tat*—that; *parirabhyate*—is embraced; *mat-dhiyā*—mistaking it for Me; *param*—further; *tat*—that; *kva nu*—how; *varṇanīyam*—can be described.

**If they see a patch of darkness resembling My complexion, they embrace and kiss it, mistaking it for Me. What more can I describe?**

When the devotees of Vṛndāvana, especially the young *gopīs*, see a shadow or a dark place that reminds them of Kṛṣṇa's spotless dark-blue complexion, they think that Kṛṣṇa is standing before them. What else they do besides trying to kiss and embrace the shadow, Kṛṣṇa would rather not describe, because some of His hearers might be unqualified to understand and others might be plunged into distress. Even if He were to return to His devotees in Vṛndāvana and grace them with His presence, He would be powerless to soothe and enliven them. And even in His absence the Vraja-vāsīs sometimes enjoy His presence on their own by picturing spiritual images of Him within their minds. So Kṛṣṇa feels He cannot do anything to change their situation and must remain an insolvent debtor, as He previously described. He should not be called ungrateful, because the circumstances render Him helpless.

**अत एव मया स्वस्य स्थितिमप्यस्थितेः समाम् ।  
दृष्ट्वा न गम्यते तत्र शृण्वर्थं युष्मदुद्धहे ॥**

*ata eva mayā svasya  
sthitim apy asthiteḥ samām*



*dṛṣṭvā na gamyate tatra*  
*śṛṇu artham yuṣmad-udvahe*

*ataḥ eva*—therefore; *mayā*—by Me; *svasya*—My own; *sthitim*—presence; *api*—even; *asthiteḥ*—to non-presence; *samām*—equal; *dṛṣṭvā*—seeing; *na gamyate*—returning is not done; *tatra*—there; *śṛṇu*—hear; *artham*—the reason; *yuṣmat*—with you; *udvahe*—for the marriage.

**Therefore My staying with them would be equal to My absence. Realizing this, I have not returned there. Now hear the real reason I married you.**

Whether Kṛṣṇa shows Himself to His dearest devotees or remains unseen to them, they will be torn by the ecstasies of separation, and He will suffer the frustration of being unable to help them. Such is the apparent misery of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. But there is another level of this transcendental reality, unseen to ordinary eyes. Kṛṣṇa lives eternally in Vṛndāvana in His “invisible” (*aprakāṣa*) manifestation, endlessly continuing to bestow the enjoyment of His pastimes. In some confidential pastimes, He returns to Vṛndāvana from Dvārakā in His *aprakāṣa* form. Thus at the same time that the devotees of Vṛndāvana suffer separation from Kṛṣṇa’s *prakāṣa* manifestation, they continue to enjoy forever the manifestation in which His pastimes are *aprakāṣa*.

Some subtle hints of this have already been spoken by Kṛṣṇa: “I can never fully repay these devotees, and so I am utterly indebted to them” (Text 93). “Just by seeing Me they become so dazed and bewildered by ecstasies from deep within” (Text 95). And “Whatever measures I take for their happiness will only double their grief” (Text 96).

Elsewhere the evidence for Kṛṣṇa’s secretly returning to Mathurā-maṇḍala is more concrete. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.11.9) the citizens of Dvārakā mention Kṛṣṇa’s trips to Hastināpura and Mathurā-maṇḍala. And the ladies of Hastināpura, referring to Kṛṣṇa’s perpetual presence in Mathurā, speak in the present tense:

*aho alam ślāghya-tamaṁ yadoḥ kulam*  
*aho alam puṇya-tamaṁ madhor vanam*  
*yad eṣa puṁsām ṛṣabhaḥ priyaḥ śriyaḥ*  
*sva-janmanā caṅkramaṇena cāñcati*

“Oh, how supremely glorified is the dynasty of King Yadu, and how virtuous is the land of Mathurā, where the supreme leader of all living beings, the husband of the goddess of fortune, is marking the land by His birth and His wanderings.” (*Bhāgavatam* 1.10.26) The women of Mathurā City also talk about Kṛṣṇa’s being present still in Vraja:

*puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayaṁ nṛ-liṅga-  
gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyah  
gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayaṁś ca veṇuṁ  
vikrīḍayāñcati giritra-ramārcitāṅghriḥ*

“How pious are the tracts of land in Vraja, for there the primeval Personality of Godhead, disguising Himself with human traits, wanders about, enacting His many pastimes! Adorned with wonderfully variegated forest garlands, His feet worshiped by Lord Śiva and the goddess Ramā, He vibrates His flute as He tends the cows in the company of Balarāma.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.44.13) In the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of *Śrī Padma Purāṇa* Lord Śiva relates to his wife an even more explicit account of Kṛṣṇa’s returning to Vraja and remaining there permanently. And in the second part of this *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, “The Glories of Goloka,” the conclusion will demonstrate that Lord Kṛṣṇa always resides in Gokula.

Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa has chosen not to divulge to Śrī Satyabhāmā and His other queens that He returned to Gokula. Hearing about this would distress them, and He cannot tolerate seeing His devotees distressed.

**तासामभावे पूर्व मे वसतो मथुरापुरे ।  
विवाहकरणे काचिदिच्छाप्यासीन्न मानिनि ॥**

*tāsām abhāve pūrvam me  
vasato mathurā-pure  
vivāha-karaṇe kācid  
icchāpy āsīn na mānini*

*tāsām*—of them; *abhāve*—in the absence; *pūrvam*—at first; *me*—My; *vasataḥ*—while living; *mathurā-pure*—in Mathurā-purī; *vivāha-karaṇe*—

for getting married; *kācit*—any; *icchā*—desire; *api*—even; *āsīt na*—there was not; *mānini*—O proud lady.

**My dear proud lady, when living in Mathurā-purī without the gopīs I at first had no desire to marry.**

Kṛṣṇa is now less hesitant to mention to His queens the *gopīs* of Vraja, since the queens have already been drawn to thinking about them. In this verse, therefore, He dares to use the feminine construction *tāsām abhāve* (“in the absence of those women”). But He still refrains from mentioning the names of Śrī Rādhikā and the other *gopīs*.

**मदनाप्त्या तु रुक्मिण्या वाञ्छन्त्याः प्राणमोचनम् ।  
श्रुत्वास्या विप्रवदनादार्तिविज्ञप्तिपत्रिकाम् ॥**

*mad-anāptyā tu rukmiṇyā  
vāñchantyāḥ prāṇa-mocanam  
śrutvāsyā vipra-vadanād  
ārti-vijñapti-patrikām*

*mat-anāptyā*—because of not achieving Me; *tu*—however; *rukmiṇyāḥ*—of Rukmiṇī; *vāñchantyāḥ*—who was desiring; *prāṇa-mocanam*—suicide; *śrutvā*—hearing; *asyāḥ*—about her; *vipra*—of a *brāhmaṇa*; *vadanāt*—from the mouth; *ārti*—her distress; *vijñapti*—which expressed; *patrikām*—her letter.

**But from the mouth of a brāhmaṇa I heard Rukmiṇī’s letter, which told of her distress and her intention to commit suicide if she could not obtain Me.**

In response to what Kṛṣṇa has just said, some-one might wonder why He was so eager to kidnap the daughter of Bhīṣmaka and make her His wife. Here Kṛṣṇa answers that Rukmiṇī was absolutely intent on His marrying her. As she said in her letter,

*yasyāṅghri-pañkaja-rajah-snapanam mahānto  
vāñchanty umā-patir ivātma-tamo-’pahatyai*

*yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādam  
jahyām asūn vrata-kṛṣā śata-janmabhiḥ syāt*

“O lotus-eyed one, great souls like Lord Śiva hanker to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet and thereby destroy their ignorance. If I cannot obtain Your mercy, I become so weak from the severe penances I shall perform that I shall simply give up my life. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.52.43)  
In this letter, she frankly revealed to Kṛṣṇa the distress being caused her by Cupid:

*śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatām te  
nirviśya karṇa-vivarair harato 'nga-tāpam  
rūpam dṛśām dṛśimatām akhilārtha-lābham  
tvayy acyutāviśati cittam āpatrapam me*

“O beauty of the worlds, I have heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears and remove the bodily distress of those who hear. And I have heard of Your beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see. Thus, O Kṛṣṇa, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.52.37)

Confronted with such a determined plea, Kṛṣṇa could not refuse. Rukmiṇī is present with the other devotees listening to Kṛṣṇa's explanation, and if need be she can verify the truth of His testimony.

**महादुष्टनृपश्रेणिदर्पं संहरता मया ।  
पाणिर्गृहीतः सङ्ग्रामे हत्वा राज्ञां प्रपश्यताम् ॥**

*mahā-duṣṭa-nṛpa-śreṇi-  
darpaṁ saṁharatā mayā  
pāṇiḥ gṛhītaḥ saṅgrāme  
hṛtvā rājñām prapaśyatām*

*mahā-duṣṭa*—most wicked; *nṛpa-śreṇi*—of a host of kings; *darpaṁ*—the pride; *saṁharatā*—who removed; *mayā*—by Me; *pāṇiḥ*—the hand; *gṛhītaḥ*—was taken; *saṅgrāme*—in battle; *hṛtvā*—taking away; *rājñām*—

as the kings; *prapaśyatām*—watched.

**So I destroyed the pride of a host of wicked kings in battle, took her hand, and carried her off as all the kings watched.**

Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Rukmī, and Kṛṣṇa’s other rivals were fortunate to have had their pride crushed by Kṛṣṇa at the *svayamvara* of Princess Rukmiṇī. After easily defeating the armed opposition of Rukmī and his friends, Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī on His chariot from Kuṇḍina-pura to Dvārakā, where He married her. Kṛṣṇa here claims that He did what the moment demanded and was not pursuing the pleasure of His heart.

### Kṛṣṇa describes His happiness in Vraja

**अस्याः सन्दर्शनात्तासामाधिक्येन स्मृतेर्भवात् ।  
महाशोकार्तिजनकात्परमाकुलतामगाम् ॥**

*asyāḥ sandarśanāt tāsām  
ādhikyena smṛter bhavāt  
mahā-śokārti-janakāt  
paramākulatām agām*

*asyāḥ*—of her (Rukmiṇī); *sandarśanāt*—by the sight; *tāsām*—of them (the *gopīs*); *ādhikyena*—increased; *smṛteḥ*—of the remembrance; *bhavāt*—because of the generation; *mahā-śoka*—great sorrow; *ārti*—and distress; *janakāt*—which created; *parama*—supreme; *ākulatām*—agitation; *agām*—I experienced.

**But the sight of Rukmiṇī made Me think back on the *gopīs* all the more. And the sorrow and distress this caused Me made Me very much disturbed.**

Living in Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa had been trying to forget His beloved *gopīs*, but Rukmiṇī’s beauty resembled theirs, rekindling within Him the fire of *viraha-bhāva*.

षोडशानां सहस्राणां सशतानां मदाप्तये ।  
कृतकात्यायनीपूजाव्रतानां गोपयोषिताम् ॥

निदर्शनादिव स्वीयं किञ्चित्स्वस्थयितुं मनः ।  
तावत्य एव यूयं वै मयात्रैता विवाहिताः ॥

ṣoḍaśānām sahasrāṇām  
sa-śatānām mad-āptaye  
kṛta-kātyāyanī-pūjā-  
vratānām gopa-yoṣitām

nidarśanād iva svīyam  
kiñcit svasthayitum manaḥ  
tāvatya eva yūyam vai  
mayātraitā vivāhitāḥ

ṣoḍaśānām—sixteen; sahasrāṇām—thousand; sa—plus; śatānām—one hundred; mat-āptaye—for obtaining Me; kṛta—who had executed; kātyāyanī-pūjā—of worshiping Kātyāyanī; vratānām—the vow; gopa-yoṣitām—of the gopīs; nidarśanāt—from the similar sight; iva—as if; svīyam—My own; kiñcit—somewhat; svasthayitum—to bring to a peaceful state; manaḥ—the mind; tāvatyaḥ—the same number; eva—indeed; yūyam—you; vai—indeed; mayā—by Me; atra—here; etāḥ—these; vivāhitāḥ—were married.

**Some 16,100 gopīs had with vows worshiped Kātyāyanī to obtain Me. To bring My mind somewhat to peace by seeing a likeness of them, I married the same number of you queens here in Dvārakā.**

Of the young gopīs in Vraja, sixteen thousand attained Kṛṣṇa's intimate association. The *Mathurā-māhātmya* states, *gopyo gāyanti nṛtyanti/ sahasrāṇi ca ṣoḍaśa*: “Sixteen thousand gopīs were singing and dancing.” The present verse specifies the number of those most fortunate gopīs as 16,100, although the word *ca* implies that there were

actually more. All the *gopīs* were extremely attracted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but only some of them earned Kṛṣṇa's complete satisfaction by undergoing the Kātyāyanī-vrata to obtain Him as their husband. These were the *gopīs* who most zealously wanted Kṛṣṇa as their own. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.22.4) records their prayer:

*kātyāyani mahā-māye  
mahā-yoginy adhīśvari  
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi  
patim me kuru te namaḥ  
iti mantraṁ japantyās tāḥ  
pūjāṁ cakruḥ kumārikāḥ*

“Each of the young unmarried girls performed her worship while chanting the following *mantra*: ‘O goddess Kātyāyanī, great potency of the Lord, O possessor of great mystic power, mighty controller of all, please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband. I offer my obeisances unto you.’”

No one can match the *gopīs*' attractive sway over Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa accepted His queens as substitutes in His pastimes at Dvārakā. The principal queens of Dvārakā are in fact direct expansions of the principal *gopīs*.

**अहो भामिनि जानीहि तत्तन्मम महासुखम् ।  
महिमापि स मां हित्वा तस्थौ तत्रोचितास्पदे ॥**

*aho bhāmini jānīhi  
tat tan mama mahā-sukham  
mahimāpi sa mām hitvā  
tasthau tatrocitāspade*

*aho*—ah; *bhāmini*—O willful woman; *jānīhi*—please understand; *tat tat*—all of this; *mama*—My; *mahā-sukham*—highest pleasure; *mahimā*—greatness; *api*—also; *saḥ*—it; *mām*—Me; *hitvā*—abandoning; *tasthau*—stands; *tatra*—there; *ucita*—suitable; *āspade*—in the location.

Ah, willful woman, please understand. All that I relished in Vraja gave Me the highest pleasure. And though the glory of those times has now abandoned Me, it still resides in that most worthy place.

By saying this, Kṛṣṇa admits that He is not as happy in Dvārakā as He was in Vṛndāvana. He cannot feel fully satisfied when separated from the *gopīs*.

चित्रातिचित्रै रुचिरैर्विहारैर्  
आनन्दपाथोदितरङ्गमग्नः ।  
नाज्ञासिषं रात्रिदिनानि तानि  
तत्तन्महामोहनलोकसङ्गात् ॥

*citrāti-citrai rucirair vihāirair  
ānanda-pāthodhi-taraṅga-magnaḥ  
nājñāsiṣaṁ rātri-dināni tāni  
tat-tan-mahā-mohana-loka-saṅgāt*

*citra*—charming; *ati-citraiḥ*—and more charming; *ruciraiḥ*—attractive; *vihāraiḥ*—by the pastimes; *ānanda*—of ecstasy; *pāthaḥ-dhi*—of the ocean; *taraṅga*—in the waves; *magnaḥ*—submerged; *na ajñāsiṣam*—I was not aware; *rātri*—of the nights; *dināni*—and days; *tāni*—them; *tat-tat*—with each; *mahā-mohana*—all-enchanting; *loka*—of the residents; *saṅgāt*—because of the association.

When submerged in the waves of that ocean of ecstasy, enjoying the ever-fresh charming pastimes of Vraja, I was so attracted to each of the all-enchanting residents that I never noticed the passing of the nights and days.

Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes are *citrāti-citra*, more charming than any other attraction. They can attract the mind of everyone in the universe. Thus the time and place of those pastimes are uniquely sacred. And the spiritual potency of the devotees who take part in Kṛṣṇa's sports in Śrī Nanda-vraja is impossible to measure, for those devotees enchant Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.



बाल्यक्रीडाकौतुकेनैव ते ते  
दैत्यश्रेष्ठा मारिताः कालियोऽपि ।  
दुष्टो निर्दम्याशु निःसारितोऽसौ  
पाणौ सव्येऽधारि गोवर्धनः सः ॥

*bālya-kṛīḍā-kautukenaiva te te  
daitya-śreṣṭhā mārītāḥ kālīyo 'pi  
duṣṭo nirdamyāśu niḥsārito 'sau  
pāṇau savye 'dhāri govardhanaḥ saḥ*

*bālya-kṛīḍā*—of childhood sports; *kautukena*—as the enjoyment; *eva*—merely; *te te*—each of them; *daitya-śreṣṭhāḥ*—most eminent demons; *mārītāḥ*—killed; *kālīyaḥ*—Kālīya; *api*—also; *duṣṭaḥ*—evil; *nirdamya*—being subdued; *āśu*—quickly; *niḥsāritaḥ*—sent into exile; *asau*—he; *pāṇau*—in My hand; *savye*—left; *adhāri*—was held; *govardhanaḥ*—Govardhana; *saḥ*—he.

**As the simple delight of My childhood sports, I killed various eminent demons. I quickly subdued the evil Kālīya and sent him into exile. And in My left hand I held Govardhana Hill.**

Someone may suggest that Kṛṣṇa's childhood must still have been difficult, since He had to struggle with many demons and exert Himself to kill each of them. "Not at all," Kṛṣṇa replies. "Killing those demons was child's play for Me, like a baby's playing with dolls." The friends of Kāmsa were not mere human demons like Śālva and the others whom Kṛṣṇa would meet later, but were powerful mystics who could change their forms as they liked. Pūtanā, for example, turned herself into a beautiful woman although in fact she had a stone-hard body that stretched for twelve miles. Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, however, was not an ordinary child. He easily killed demons like Pūtanā, and He playfully brought the fearsome Kālīya under control. Kṛṣṇa trampled each of Kālīya's many hoods, deprived him of his sovereignty in the lake of the Yamunā, and sent him into exile. This was mere child's play for Kṛṣṇa, and so too was lifting the massive Govardhana with His left hand. For

young Kṛṣṇa nothing was ever fearful or laborious. He took delight in everything He did.

तादृक्सन्तोषार्णवेऽहं निमग्नो  
येन स्तोत्रं कुर्वतां वन्दनं च ।  
ब्रह्मादीनां भाषणे दर्शने च  
मन्वानोऽघं व्यस्मरं देवकृत्यम् ॥

*tādṛk-santoṣārṇave 'haṁ nimagno  
yena stotraṁ kurvatām vandanaṁ ca  
brahmādinām bhāṣaṇe darśane ca  
manvāno 'ghaṁ vyasmaraṁ deva-kṛtyam*

*tādṛk*—like this; *santoṣa*—of satisfaction; *ārṇave*—in the ocean; *aham*—I; *nimagnaḥ*—absorbed; *yena*—by whom; *stotram*—prayers; *kurvatām*—who were offering; *vandanaṁ*—homage; *ca*—and; *brahma-ādinām*—of Brahmā and other demigods; *bhāṣaṇe*—in talking; *darśane*—in watching; *ca*—and; *manvānaḥ*—considering; *agham*—a disturbance; *vyasmaram*—I forgot; *deva-kṛtyam*—My responsibilities on behalf of the demigods.

I was so absorbed in that ocean of contentment that having to talk to such demigods as Brahmā and watch them offer Me prayers and homage seemed a painful disturbance. I forgot the work I had to do for the demigods.

Now and again, demigods and sages like Indra and Nārada had matters to discuss with Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa considered their visits unwanted distractions from His pastimes with His friends. He didn't even want to think about the promise He had made to the demigods, before descending, that He would dispose of evil kings like Kāmsa who were a troublesome burden for the earth.

रूपेण वेषेण स्वामृतेन  
वंश्याश्च पूर्वानुदितेन विश्वम् ।

## सम्मोहितं प्रेमभरेण कुत्सं तिष्ठन्तु दूरे व्रजवासिनस्ते ॥

*rūpeṇa veṣeṇa ravāmṛtena  
vaṁśyāś ca pūrvānuditena viśvam  
sammohitaṁ prema-bhareṇa kṛtsnaṁ  
tiṣṭhantu dūre vraja-vāsinas te*

*rūpeṇa*—by the form; *veṣeṇa*—by the dress; *rava*—by the sound; *amṛtena*—nectarean; *vaṁśyāḥ*—of the flute; *ca*—and; *pūrvā*—before; *anuditena*—never manifest before; *viśvam*—the universe; *sammohitaṁ*—enchanted; *prema-bhareṇa*—with overwhelming love of God; *kṛtsnaṁ*—entire; *tiṣṭhantu*—let them stand; *dūre*—at a distance; *vraja-vāsinas*—the residents of Vraja; *te*—they.

**My beautiful form, My dress, and the nectarean sound of My flute, never heard before, enchanted the whole universe with overwhelming love of God. So what to speak of how these affected the residents of Vraja.**

Kṛṣṇa's beauty never diminishes, even when He leaves Vṛndāvana to reside elsewhere for more than a hundred years. Only in nostalgic retrospect does Kṛṣṇa think He was more beautiful during His youth. But because of Vṛndāvana's special sweet mood, created by the spontaneous attraction between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, there—and nowhere else—Kṛṣṇa feels free to add certain items to His appearance, like the peacock feather in His hair. And only in Vṛndāvana does Kṛṣṇa play His flute. Thus enhanced, Kṛṣṇa's natural charm allures the entire world, creating a transcendental taste that defeats all kinds of material enjoyment and is millions of times more relishable than the impersonal happiness called *brahmānanda*. Everyone in the universe can taste this highest bliss of Vṛndāvana by hearing about it from scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as presented by pure Vaiṣṇavas. Thus the supreme bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is available anywhere. Still, those who can live directly with Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and relish His association not only with their ears but with all their senses are certainly most fortunate. Learned scholars of the *Vedas* therefore conclude that the

greatest perfection of life is to follow successfully in the footsteps of the Vraja-vāsīs and in course of time be invited to take up residence in the Vraja-vāsīs' eternal abode.

आकाशयाना विधिरुद्रशक्राः  
सिद्धाः शशी देवगणास्तथान्ये ।  
गावो वृषा वत्सगणा मृगाश्च  
वृक्षाः खगा गुल्मलतास्तृणानि ॥

नद्योऽथ मेघाः सचराः स्थिराश्च  
सचेतनाचेतनकाः प्रपञ्चाः ।  
प्रेमप्रवाहोत्थविकाररुद्धाः  
स्वस्वस्वभावात्परिवृत्तिमापुः ॥

ākāśa-yānā vidhi-rudra-śakrāḥ  
siddhāḥ śaśī deva-gaṇās tathānye  
gāvo vṛṣā vatsa-gaṇā mṛgāś ca  
vṛkṣāḥ khagā gulma-latās tṛṇāni

nadyo 'tha meghāḥ sa-carāḥ sthirāś ca  
sacetanācetanakāḥ prapañcāḥ  
prema-pravāhottha-vikāra-ruddhāḥ  
sva-sva-svabhāvāt parivṛttim āpuḥ

ākāśa—in the sky; yānāḥ—moving; vidhi—Brahmā; rudra—Rudra; śakrāḥ—and Indra; siddhāḥ—the Siddhas; śaśī—the moon-god; deva-gaṇāḥ—all the demigods; tathā—and; anye—others; gāvaḥ—the cows; vṛṣāḥ—bulls; vatsa-gaṇāḥ—calves; mṛgāḥ—wild animals; ca—and; vṛkṣāḥ—trees; khagāḥ—birds; gulma—bushes; latāḥ—and creepers; tṛṇāni—the grass; nadyaḥ—rivers; atha—and; meghāḥ—clouds; sa-carāḥ—moving; sthirāḥ—stationary; ca—and; sa-cetana—alive; acetanakāḥ—and inert; prapañcāḥ—creations; prema—of ecstatic love;

*pravāha*—from the flowing current; *uttha*—arisen; *vikāra*—by the transformations; *ruddhāḥ*—held in check; *sva-sva*—each their own; *svabhāvāt*—from their natures; *parivṛttim*—change; *āpuḥ*—they obtained.

**Brahmā, Rudra, Indra, Candra, the Siddhas, and other demigods moving in the sky were overcome by changes aroused in them by the current of ecstatic love. So too were the cows, bulls, calves, and wild beasts, the trees, birds, bushes, creepers, and grass. The rivers were overcome, and the clouds, and all other beings, both moving and nonmoving, alive and inert. Each of them underwent a transformation by which their own nature changed into a nature just the opposite.**

From the demigods to the blades of grass, every living being present in Vṛndāvana to see Kṛṣṇa's pastimes became ecstatically transformed. Even nonliving objects gained consciousness and underwent these effects of *prema-bhakti*. In the sky above Vṛndāvana, celestial persons often gathered to watch what was going on, including not only the chief demigods but also sages, Gandharvas, and Vidyādhara. They and the residents of Vraja-dhāma were so powerfully affected by the constant flood of *prema* that their natures changed. Those who were accustomed to staying in heaven were attracted to come down to the earth. Brahmā and the other prominent demigods, the wisest and most respected authorities in all elds of knowledge, lost their power of discrimination and became like simple fools. And the cows and other animals who normally roamed the fields seemed to achieve *samādhi*, the culmination of mystic knowledge. Those animals stood still like immobile plants, whereas the actual plants—the trees, bushes, and creepers—became like animals, trembling and moving about. The lifeless rivers and lakes became as if alive, overflowing with ecstasy; they sometimes stopped their currents completely and sometimes flowed wildly. And in the sky the wind-blown clouds became fixed in one place, assuming the roles of umbrellas shading Kṛṣṇa and His devotees from the sun.

These wonders are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto:

*vividha-gopa-caraṇeṣu vidagdho*

*veṇu-vādyā urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ  
tava sutaḥ sati yadādhara-bimbe  
datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ*

*savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ  
śakra-śarva-ṣameṣṭhi-purogāḥ  
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ  
kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ*

“O pious Mother Yaśodā, your son, who is expert in all the arts of herding cows, has invented many new styles of flute-playing. When He takes His flute to His *bimba*-red lips and sends forth the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, and other chief demigods become confused upon hearing the sound. Although they are the most learned authorities, they cannot ascertain the essence of that music, and thus they bow down their heads and hearts.”  
(*Bhāgavatam* 10.35.14–15)

**एतत्सत्यमसत्यं वा कालिन्दी पृच्छयतामियम् ।  
या तु ब्रजजनस्वैरविहारानन्दसाक्षिणी ॥**

*etat satyam asatyam vā  
kālindī pṛcchyatām iyam  
yā tu vraja-jana-svaira-  
vihārānanda-sākṣiṇī*

*etat*—this; *satyam*—true; *asatyam*—not true; *vā*—or; *kālindī*—Kālindī; *pṛcchyatām*—should be asked; *iyam*—this; *yā*—who; *tu*—but; *vraja-jana*—of the people of Vraja; *svaira*—free; *vihāra*—of the pastimes; *ānanda*—of the bliss; *sākṣiṇī*—a witness.

**You can ask Kālindī whether or not this is true. She witnessed the blissful pastimes freely enjoyed by the people of Vraja.**

No one should think that Kṛṣṇa, out of enthusiastic love for His devotees, is speaking exaggerated praise of them. Queen Kālindī can

vouch for the accuracy of what Kṛṣṇa has said about life in Vṛndāvana, because she was there in the form of the river Yamunā. Śrī Yamunā, being the sister of Yamarāja, the king of religion, always speaks the truth.

अधुना तु स एवाहं स्वज्ञातीन् यादवानपि ।  
नेतुं नार्हामि तं भावं नर्मक्रीडाकुतूहलैः ॥

*adhunā tu sa evāhaṁ  
sva-jñātīn yādavān api  
netum nārhami taṁ bhāvaṁ  
narma-kṛīḍā-kutūhalaiḥ*

*adhunā*—nowadays; *tu*—however; *saḥ*—that; *eva*—indeed; *aham*—Myself; *sva-jñātīn*—in My relatives; *yādavān*—the Yādavas; *api*—also; *netum*—to arouse; *na*—not; *arhāmi*—am able; *taṁ*—that; *bhāvaṁ*—ecstatic mood; *narma*—of joking; *kṛīḍā*—and pastimes; *kutūhalaiḥ*—by the fun.

**But I cannot arouse the same emotions now in My relatives the Yādavas, either with joking or with entertaining pastimes.**

What Kṛṣṇa feels missing outside Vraja is not just the pleasure He enjoyed there. Rather, outside Vraja He feels less capable of satisfying His devotees. In Dvārakā He talks intimately and jokes with His wives, friends, and advisers and entertains them with water sports and other pastimes, but outside Vraja the feelings are never the same. Outside Vraja He evokes reverence from His devotees, so in His dealings with them He can never feel the same freedom of expression.

दुष्करं मे बभूवात्र त्वादृशां मानभञ्जनम् ।  
अतोऽत्र मुरली त्यक्ता लज्जयैव मया प्रिया ॥

*duṣkaraṁ me babhūvātra  
tvādṛśāṁ māna-bhañjanam  
ato 'tra muralī tyaktā*

*lajjayaiva mayā priyā*

*duṣkaram*—difficult to do; *me*—for Me; *babhūva*—has become; *atra*—here; *tvāḍṛśām*—of those like you; *māna*—of the jealous pride; *bhañjanam*—breaking; *ataḥ*—therefore; *atra*—here; *muralī*—My flute; *tyaktā*—has been put aside; *lajjayā*—out of embarrassment; *eva*—simply; *mayā*—by Me; *priyā*—dear.

**Here in Dvārakā I have found it difficult to break the jealous pride of queens like you. Embarrassed, I have therefore put aside My dear flute.**

Kṛṣṇa's queens behave jealously, but they never become inimical to Him in any way or oppose the fulfillment of any of His desires. Therefore it is not actually difficult for Kṛṣṇa to control their pride, which is meant only to please Him. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa cannot take the same liberties in Dvārakā as in Vṛndāvana. He says that in Dvārakā He feels ashamed to play His flute, as if concerned that people will laugh at Him. Perhaps closer to the truth, in Dvārakā He no longer feels the inspiration to create the exquisite music He produced in Vṛndāvana. How much the Lord's glories are manifest varies according to the environment He is in.

### Uddhava changes Kṛṣṇa's mood

अहो बत मया तत्र कृतं यादृक् स्थितं यथा ।  
तदस्तु किल दूरेऽत्र निर्वक्तुं च न शक्यते ॥

*aho bata mayā tatra*  
*kṛtaṁ yāḍṛk sthitaṁ yathā*  
*tad astu kila dūre 'tra*  
*nirvaktum ca na śakyate*

*aho*—oh; *bata*—alas; *mayā*—by Me; *tatra*—there; *kṛtam*—done; *yāḍṛk*—as; *sthitam*—lived; *yathā*—as; *tat*—that; *astu*—let it remain; *kila*—indeed; *dūre*—far away; *atra*—here; *nirvaktum*—to mention; *ca*—



and; *na*—not; *śakyate*—is possible.

**Alas, what I did and how I lived in Vraja seem here so far away that with you I cannot even speak of those things.**

Since Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful and His omnipotence is never diminished by any circumstance, He should be able to take on any appearance and act as He likes, in Dvārakā or anywhere else. He should be able to make His life in Dvārakā just as it was in Vṛndāvana. But Kṛṣṇa's desires change according to the atmosphere in which He lives. Outside Vraja, He simply feels less inspired to express His sentiments freely. In this verse, therefore, Kṛṣṇa utters the words *aho bata*, indicating great disappointment. In Dvārakā He cannot perform the same delightful pastimes of His childhood or surround Himself with His beloved *gopīs* and other Vraja-vāsīs. The Dvārakā environment is so foreign to the intimate mood of Vraja that He cannot even discuss with His Dvārakā associates His earlier days in any but the most vague terms. If He were to speak of these matters with the Dvārakā-vāsīs too explicitly, the Dvārakā-vāsīs would become lost in trance and unable to continue their own service.

एकः स मे तद्व्रजलोकवत्प्रियस्  
तादृङ्महाप्रेमभरप्रभावतः ।  
वक्ष्यत्यदः किञ्चन बादरायणिर्  
मञ्जीविते शिष्यवरे स्वसन्निभे ॥

*ekaḥ sa me tad-vraja-loka-vat priyaḥ  
tādṛk-mahā-prema-bhara-prabhāvataḥ  
vakṣyaty adaḥ kiñcana bādarāyaṇir  
maj-jīvite śiṣya-vare sva-sannibhe*

*ekaḥ*—only; *saḥ*—he; *me*—to Me; *tat*—that; *vraja-loka-vat*—like the devotees of Vraja; *priyaḥ*—dear; *tādṛk*—such; *mahā-prema*—of great love; *bhara*—of the excess; *prabhāvataḥ*—by the power; *vakṣyati*—will speak; *adaḥ*—he; *kiñcana*—something; *bādarāyaṇiḥ*—the son of Badarāyaṇa Vyāsa; *mat*—by Me; *jīvite*—brought to life; *śiṣya-vare*—to

the excellent disciple; *sva-sannibhe*—similar to himself.

Just one person, almost as dear to Me as the devotees of Vraja, will be able to describe those topics—Śukadeva, the son of Badarāyaṇa Vyāsa. By the power of his great love in the mood of the Vraja-vāsīs, he will speak something of those matters to his excellent disciple who resembles him in spiritual qualities and whom I once brought back to life.

If no one ever hears Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes described, how will Kṛṣṇa fulfill the main purpose of His descent, to spread throughout the world the transcendental taste of *prema-rasa*? Anticipating this question, Kṛṣṇa answers it here. The glory of the *prema-rasa* of Śrī Vraja-dhāma will be revealed when Śukadeva Gosvāmī recites *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit. Because Śukadeva's own devotional realizations closely follow the elevated mood of the Vraja-vāsīs, he has the power to convey the glories of Vraja in the ecstatic *Bhāgavatam* poetry emanating from his lips. Even the brief glimpse of the infinite ocean of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa* that Śukadeva will reveal in the *Bhāgavatam* will be enough to impart to any human being who hears with honest intent the highest taste of pure devotion.

Śukadeva will speak *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the most suitable hearer, the great Vaiṣṇava Parīkṣit, whom Kṛṣṇa returned to life when Parīkṣit was in the womb of his mother. According to the narration of the *Mahābhārata*, the *brahmāstra* weapon of Aśvatthāmā actually killed Uttarā's fetus, but Kṛṣṇa entered Uttarā's womb and gave Parīkṣit a new body. And Parīkṣit became *kṛṣṇa-jīvita* not only in the sense that Kṛṣṇa restored him to life but also because every moment of his life was dedicated to remembering Kṛṣṇa. He was a perfect Vaiṣṇava, like his *guru* Śukadeva, and therefore Śukadeva could speak to him the most confidential secrets. By the combined efforts of the most qualified speaker and the most qualified hearer, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can distribute its sublime light even in this blind Age of Kali.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
एतादृशं तद्व्रजभाग्यवैभवं

संरम्भतः कीर्तयतो महाप्रभोः ।  
पुनस्तथाभावनिवेशशङ्कया  
ताः प्रेरिता मन्त्रिवरेण संज्ञया ॥

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca*  
*etādṛśam tad-vraja-bhāgya-vaibhavam*  
*saṁrambhataḥ kīrtayato mahā-prabhoḥ*  
*punaḥ tathā-bhāva-niveśa-śaṅkayā*  
*tāḥ preritā mantri-vareṇa saṁjñayā*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *etādṛśam*—like this; *tat*—His; *vraja*—of Vraja; *bhāgya*—of the good fortune; *vaibhavam*—the splendor; *saṁrambhataḥ*—ardently; *kīrtayataḥ*—praising; *mahā-prabhoḥ*—of the Supreme Lord; *punaḥ*—again; *tathā*—such; *bhāva*—in ecstasy; *niveśa*—of entrance; *śaṅkayā*—out of fear; *tāḥ*—they; *preritāḥ*—prompted; *mantri-vareṇa*—by the best of counselors; *saṁjñayā*—with a gesture.

Śrī Parīkṣit said: As the Supreme Lord continued ardently praising the splendor of the good fortune of Vraja, the expert counselor Uddhava grew anxious, for the special ecstasies of Vraja might again draw the Lord into a trance. With a gesture, therefore, he prompted the ladies to do something.

सर्वा महिष्यः सह सत्यभामया  
भैष्यादयो द्रागभिसृत्य मूर्धभिः ।  
पादौ गृहीत्वा रुदितार्द्रकाकुभिः  
संस्तुत्य भर्तारमशीशमंश्छनैः ॥

*sarvā mahiṣyaḥ saha satyabhāmayā*  
*bhaiṣmy-ādayo drāg abhisṛtya mūrdhabhiḥ*  
*pādaḥ grhītvā ruditārdra-kākubhiḥ*  
*saṁstutya bhartāram aśīśamaṁś chanaiḥ*

*sarvāḥ*—all; *mahiṣyaḥ*—the queens; *saha satyabhāmayā*—including

Satyabhāmā; *bhaiṣmī*—Rukmiṇī; *ādayaḥ*—and the others; *drāk*—suddenly; *abhiṣṛtya*—surrounding; *mūrdhabhiḥ*—with their heads; *pādaḥ*—the feet; *grhītvā*—touching; *rudita*—from sobbing; *ārdra*—wet; *kākubhiḥ*—with plaintive voices; *saṁstutya*—offering prayers; *bhartāram*—their husband; *aśīśaman*—they calmed down; *śanaiḥ*—gradually.

**Satyabhāmā, Rukmiṇī, and the other queens at once surrounded their husband, touching His feet with their heads. By offering prayers with plaintive voices wet with sobs, they gradually calmed Him down.**

The word *saṁrambhataḥ*, used in Text 118, can mean either “ardently,” “furiously,” or “with passionate absorption.” Uddhava saw that Kṛṣṇa was on the verge of again becoming too agitated by memories of Vṛndāvana. So, lest Kṛṣṇa begin crying and lose control of Himself again, Uddhava made a sign to Satyabhāmā and the other queens present, to which they responded without hesitation. Because the queens were always reverent toward Kṛṣṇa, they couldn’t pacify Him the same way as the *gopīs* of Vraja, but in their own ways they did the best they could.

**Kṛṣṇa greets Nārada and thanks him**

**भोजनार्थं च तेनैव देवकी रोहिणी तथा ।  
अन्नपानादिसहिते तत्र शीघ्रं प्रवेशिते ॥**

*bhojanārtham ca tenaiva  
devakī rohiṇī tathā  
anna-pānādi-sahite  
tatra śīghram praveṣite*

*bhojana-artham*—for the meal; *ca*—and; *tena*—by him (Uddhava); *eva*—indeed; *devakī*—Devakī; *rohiṇī*—Rohiṇī; *tathā*—and; *anna*—food; *pāna*—drink; *ādi*—and so on; *sahite*—together; *tatra*—there; *śīghram*—

quickly; *praveśite*—made to enter.

**Uddhava also urged Devakī and Rohiṇī to come in quickly with the food and drink for Kṛṣṇa's meal.**

The most intimate devotees of Kṛṣṇa know His desires before He expresses them. By having lunch brought in, Uddhava wisely changed the whole mood. Earlier, Devakī had anticipated this need and left for the kitchen. And we can understand that Balarāma also removed Himself from the emotion-charged scene on the pretext of going out for His bath.

**बलदेवं कृतस्नानं प्रवेश्य कृतिना तदा ।  
द्वारान्ते नारदस्तिष्ठेदिति विज्ञापितो विभुः ॥**

*baladevaṁ kṛta-snānaṁ  
praveśya kṛtinā tadā  
dvārānte nāradaḥ tiṣṭhet  
iti vijñāpito vibhuḥ*

*baladevam*—Baladeva; *kṛta*—having done; *snānam*—His bathing; *praveśya*—being brought in; *kṛtinā*—by him, who was expert; *tadā*—then; *dvāra-ante*—in the doorway; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *tiṣṭhet*—is standing; *iti*—thus; *vijñāpitaḥ*—was informed; *vibhuḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**The expert Uddhava had Baladeva come in after finishing His bath. Uddhava then informed Lord Kṛṣṇa that Nārada was standing in the doorway.**

**सर्वान्तरात्मदुक् प्राह सस्मितं नन्दनन्दनः ।  
अद्य केन निरुद्धोऽसौ यन्नायात्यत्र पूर्ववत् ॥**

*sarvāntar-ātma-dṛk prāha  
sa-smitaṁ nanda-nandanaḥ  
adya kena niruddho 'sau  
yan nāyāty atra pūrva-vat*

*sarva*—of everyone; *antaḥ-ātma*—of the inner heart; *dṛk*—the seer; *prāha*—said; *sa-smitam*—with a smile; *nanda-nandanaḥ*—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda; *adya*—today; *kena*—why; *niruddhaḥ*—checked; *asau*—he; *yat*—since; *na āyāti*—he is not coming; *atra*—here; *pūrva-vat*—as previously.

**Kṛṣṇa is the all-knowing seer of everyone’s heart, but He asked with a smile, “Why is he being kept standing there? Why doesn’t he come in as usual?”**

Because Kṛṣṇa already knew the answer to His question, He smiled while asking it. Although Nārada had precipitated this entire disturbance by reminding Kṛṣṇa of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa did not become angry. Because Kṛṣṇa is the darling son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa cannot be dissatisfied with Nārada for glorifying the cowherds of Nanda’s pastures. Kṛṣṇa asked why Nārada was waiting at the door, since no one until now had ever impeded Nārada’s free access to Kṛṣṇa’s palaces.

**प्रत्युवाचोद्धवः स्मित्वा प्रभो भीत्यापि लज्जया ।  
ततो ब्रह्मण्यदेवेन स्वयमुक्तः प्रवेश्य सः ॥**

*pratyuvācoddhavaḥ smitvā*  
*prabho bhītyāpi lajjayā*  
*tato brahmaṇya-devena*  
*svayam uktaḥ praveśya saḥ*

*pratyuvāca*—answered; *uddhavaḥ*—Uddhava; *smitvā*—smiling; *prabho*—O Lord; *bhītyā*—out of fear; *api*—even; *lajjayā*—and embarrassment; *tataḥ*—then; *brahmaṇya-devena*—by the Lord who favors the *brāhmaṇas*; *svayam*—Himself; *uktaḥ*—addressed; *praveśya*—brought inside; *saḥ*—he (Nārada).

**Uddhava smiled and answered, “My Lord, because he is afraid and embarrassed.” Then the Lord, who always favors the brāhmaṇas, Himself brought Nārada inside and spoke to him.**

Uddhava could not help smiling when he thought about Nārada’s

curious behavior—his enthusiastic arrival, his uncontrolled symptoms of ecstasy, and his hiding in the sky to watch Kṛṣṇa visit Nava-vṛndāvana. Uddhava told Kṛṣṇa that Nārada was afraid because of the offense he had committed by disturbing Kṛṣṇa’s mind, and when Kṛṣṇa answered that Nārada should never fear Him for any reason, Uddhava added that Nārada was also embarrassed. Pure devotees are usually shy to reveal their private ecstasies when this might disturb others. To pacify Nārada, Kṛṣṇa Himself therefore went to invite Nārada in. Kṛṣṇa approached the sage with due respect, bowed down to him, took him by the hand, and escorted him into the palace.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच  
मत्प्रीत्युत्पादनव्यग्र श्रीनारद सुहृत्तम ।  
हितमेवाकृतात्यन्तं भवान्मे रसिकोत्तम ॥**

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
mat-prīty-utpādana-vyagra  
śrī-nārada suhṛt-tama  
hitam evākṛtātyantam  
bhavān me rasikottama*

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*—the Supreme Lord said; *mat-prīti*—My pleasure; *utpādana*—in generating; *vyagra*—O you who are eager; *śrī-nārada*—dear Nārada; *suhṛt-tama*—O best of friends; *hitam*—benefit; *eva*—indeed; *akṛta*—have done; *atyantam*—extreme; *bhavān*—your good self; *me*—to Me; *rasika*—of those who relish transcendental emotions; *uttama*—O greatest.

**The Supreme Lord said: Nārada, My dearest friend, you are always eager to please Me, and you are the best of those who relish transcendental emotions. You have now done Me a great favor.**

“What you have done here is not offensive,” Kṛṣṇa implies. “Those who know the transcendental tastes of My devotional service behave like this naturally. You have no reason to feel ashamed.”

प्राग्यद्यपि प्रेमकृतात्प्रियाणां  
विच्छेददावानलवेगतोऽन्तः ।  
सन्तापजातेन दुरन्तशोका-  
वेशेन गाढं भवतीव दुःखम् ॥

*prāg yady api prema-kṛtāt priyāṇām  
viccheda-dāvānala-vegato 'ntaḥ  
santāpa-jātena duranta-śokā-  
veśena gāḍham bhavatīva duḥkham*

*prāk*—in the beginning; *yady api*—although; *prema*—by pure love; *kṛtāt*—which is caused; *priyāṇām*—from those one loves; *viccheda*—of separation; *dāva-anala*—of the forest fire; *vegataḥ*—by the force; *antaḥ*—inner; *santāpa*—by the burning; *jātena*—born; *duranta*—irrepressible; *śoka*—of sorrow; *āveśena*—by the mood; *gāḍham*—deep; *bhavati*—comes about; *iva*—as if; *duḥkham*—unhappiness.

It is true that, when one is parted from those one loves, pure love makes one suffer within, as if from a blazing fire. The burning pain creates a remorse that further deepens into irrepressible sorrow. Thus one at first seems wretched.

Nārada may agree that he need not be embarrassed for unavoidably losing control amidst the ecstasies of *bhagavad-bhakti*. Yet he had caused Kṛṣṇa great distress by sending the Lord into a bewildered trance of remembering His devotees in Vṛndāvana. In this verse and the next, Kṛṣṇa therefore tries to convince Nārada that he need not blame himself. The misery of transcendental separation is only apparent; even while outwardly showing many symptoms of mental pain, a person feeling *viraha-bhāva* is absorbed in incomparable bliss. Thus the apparently wretched devotee is actually most fortunate. Whatever momentary distress he may feel will soon give way to complete happiness.

तथापि सम्भोगसुखादपि स्तुतः



स कोऽप्यनिर्वाच्यतमो मनोरमः ।  
प्रमोदराशिः परिणामतो ध्रुवं  
तत्र स्फुरेत्तद्रसिकैकवेद्यः ॥

*tathāpi sambhoga-sukhād api stutaḥ  
sa ko 'py anirvācya-tamo mano-ramaḥ  
pramoda-rāśiḥ pariṇāmato dhruvaṁ  
tatra sphureṭ tad-rasikaika-vedyaḥ*

*tathā api*—nevertheless; *sambhoga*—of union; *sukhāt*—than the happiness; *api*—even more; *stutaḥ*—praised; *saḥ*—it; *kaḥ api*—something; *anirvācya-tamaḥ*—most impossible to describe in words; *manaḥ-ramaḥ*—charming; *pramoda*—of pleasure; *rāśiḥ*—an abundance; *pariṇāmataḥ*—as a result; *dhruvaṁ*—certain; *tatra*—there; *sphureṭ*—becomes manifest; *tat*—these; *rasika*—to those who are expert in tasting the moods; *eka*—only; *vedyaḥ*—understandable.

**But this anguish of separation is praised as greater than the happiness of enjoying with those one loves. Separation is so pleasing to the mind that it cannot be described. It always transforms at last into an abundance of pleasure. Only experts in tasting these moods can understand how this happens.**

The so-called bliss of merging into the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth is often said to be indescribable, but the bliss of pure *prema* is even harder to describe. And most hard to describe is the inconceivable ecstasy of transcendental love in separation, which is born in pain but grows into the greatest possible pleasure. The ecstasy of separation is not the miserable experience it seems to outsiders; it is *mano-rama*, the cause of full satisfaction for the heart. If someone still asks how one can feel happy within misery, he should know that only the *rasikas*, those who have spontaneous eagerness to taste this *prema*, can understand it.

तच्छोकदुःखोपरमस्य पश्चाच्

चित्तं यतः पूर्णतया प्रसन्नम् ।  
सम्प्राप्तसम्भोगमहासुखेन  
सम्पन्नवत्तिष्ठति सर्वदैव ॥

*tac-choka-duḥkhoparamasya paścāc  
cittam yataḥ pūrṇatayā prasannam  
samprāpta-sambhoga-mahā-sukhena  
sampanna-vat tiṣṭhati sarvadaiva*

*tat*—that; *śoka*—due to sorrow; *duḥkha*—of the pain; *upa-ramasya*—the cessation; *paścāt*—after; *cittam*—the heart; *yataḥ*—by which; *pūrṇatayā*—fully; *prasannam*—is satisfied; *samprāpta*—achieving; *sambhoga*—of meeting; *mahā-sukhena*—by the great pleasure; *sampanna-vat*—as if experiencing; *tiṣṭhati*—one remains; *sarvadā*—always; *eva*—indeed.

**After the pain of despair is relieved, one's heart feels fully satisfied, delighting constantly as one enjoys the great pleasure of meeting with one's beloved.**

Those who have not yet realized their natural attraction toward Kṛṣṇa cannot understand the ecstasy of separation. They should not vainly pretend to be expert in things to which they have no real access, but should instead take guidance from the authentic *rasikas* in the line of Vaiṣṇava *paramparā* on how to gradually become fit for understanding the subtleties of devotion. Faithful hearing and service are required.

Still, the material mind is demanding, so neophytes may ask, “Doesn't excessive misery normally result in either delusion or death? Why should unlimited joy arise from misery? Granted, the laws of nature dictate that pleasure is generally followed by pain, and pain by pleasure. But this doesn't mean that pain literally becomes pleasure and vice versa; it means that circumstances in this world are always changing, so that neither pleasure nor pain can long continue without being replaced by the other. To say that some kind of suffering matures into the highest

ecstasy is unreasonable.”

In answer to such demands to justify *viraha-bhāva* by logic, what pure devotees personally experience may be offered as definite evidence. Pure devotees do indeed enjoy ecstasy in separation. And since no other cause for this ecstasy can be ascertained, the cause must be their intense experience of what appears from the outside to be suffering.

To help newcomers to the devotional process understand *viraha-bhāva*, Kṛṣṇa speaks the current verse, comparing the ecstasy of *viraha-bhāva* to the pleasurable sensation of relief from pain, a relief with which everyone is familiar. A person may struggle to achieve some object of satisfaction, and though his struggle may be painful, when he achieves his object the pain turns into joy. The ecstatic distress of *viraha-bhāva* may appear similar to the pleasure that follows pain, but as expressed here by the phrase *sampanna-vat* (“as if experiencing”), this is only the external appearance. In reality the ecstasy of separation comes not from the eventual meeting and enjoying with one’s beloved but from the “pain” of separation itself. That ecstasy is complete satisfaction, in which one never feels any insufficiency. That ecstasy may be compared to the pleasure of gratification after deprivation, but actually it is much more sublime. The mind of an ordinary person is relieved when he can rejoin those he loves and again gratify his senses, but a pure devotee’s greatest ecstasy arises from serving and remembering Kṛṣṇa in separation.

### Nārada accepts boons from Kṛṣṇa

इच्छेत्पुनस्तादृशमेव भावं  
क्लिष्टं कथञ्चित्तदभावतः स्यात् ।  
येषां न भातीति मतेऽपि तेषां  
गाढोपकारी स्मृतिदः प्रियाणाम् ॥

*icchet punas tādṛśam eva bhāvaṁ*

*kliṣṭam kathañcit tad-abhāvataḥ syāt  
yeṣāṁ na bhātīti mate 'pi teṣāṁ  
gādhopakārī smṛti-daḥ priyāṇām*

*icchet*—one may want; *punaḥ*—again; *tādṛśam*—similar; *eva*—indeed; *bhāvam*—a mood; *kliṣṭam*—distressed; *kathañcit*—somehow; *tad-abhāvataḥ*—due to the absence of that; *syāt*—may be; *yeṣāṁ*—of whom; *na bhāti*—is not manifest; *iti*—thus; *mate*—in the opinion; *api*—still; *teṣāṁ*—their; *gāḍha*—most thorough; *upakārī*—helper; *smṛti-daḥ*—reviver of lost memory; *priyāṇām*—of beloveds.

**One may want to feel that separation again, and may indeed feel distressed if one cannot. Thus a person who can remind one of a beloved not present is considered the most sincere and helpful friend.**

The neophyte mind may still be confused. That mind may think, “According to the axiom that pleasure leads to pain, and pain to pleasure, the abundant joy felt by an elevated devotee in *prema-bhakti* is bound to give way to disappointment when circumstances change, as in this world they always do. The more one is elated now, the more one will suffer depression later. *Premānanda* is greater than the ecstasy of worshiping God in mere reverence, and certainly much greater than the ecstasy of impersonal identification with the Supreme. Therefore when the bliss of *prema* is interrupted by the pain of separation, one is plunged into the worst distress.” To dispel this confusion, Kṛṣṇa now conclusively proves that the apparent pain of *viraha-bhāva* is in fact pleasure.

The hearts of devotees absorbed in *viraha-bhāva* are unavoidably compelled to seek more of it. They cannot tolerate losing this ecstasy. Kṛṣṇa’s proof, therefore, is simple: How can anyone’s heart feel the urge to suffer more and more pain unless that pain is really pleasure? Outsiders may perceive a devotee’s ecstasy as suffering, and the devotee may speak and act as if it were, but the truth must be just the opposite. Judging from the strength of the devotee’s urge to continue suffering *viraha-bhāva*, that *bhāva* must in fact be the ultimate happiness.

A material example may help clarify this point: Although the

coldness of ice is the opposite of the heat of fire, ice placed on one's body may feel as hot as burning coal. In this example, the burning sensation from the ice is illusory, the numbing coldness real. Similarly, the pain of *viraha-bhāva* is a false appearance, disguising the reality of indescribable joy. The difference between the ecstasy of separation from Kṛṣṇa and the common sensation of being touched by ice is that the deep feeling of *viraha-bhāva* is known only to a few—to Kṛṣṇa and some of His most intimate devotees.

Kṛṣṇa in this verse is referring specically to His own ecstasy in separation from the residents of Vraja, but His description equally applies to their ecstatic remembrance of Him. Or, to be more correct, it applies to the Vraja-vāsīs with the exception of the young *gopīs*. These *gopīs* are never relieved for a moment from the tension of *viraha-bhāva*, since even when together with Kṛṣṇa they are in anxiety about losing Him. They never lose touch with this ecstasy, and so have no reason to think about regaining it. Yet they do not consider their pain of separation a goal for anyone to strive for, because it burns them more sharply than a million forest fires. In the *gopīs*' own words,

*saric-chaila-vanoddeśā*  
*gāvo veṇu-ravā ime*  
*saṅkarṣaṇa-sahāyena*  
*kṛṣṇenācaritāḥ prabho*

*punaḥ punaḥ smārayanti*  
*nanda-gopa-sutaṁ bata*  
*śrī-niketais tat-pada-kair*  
*vismartuṁ naiva śaknumaḥ*

“Dear Uddhava Prabhu, when Kṛṣṇa was here in the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He enjoyed all these rivers, hills, forests, cows, and flute sounds. All these remind us constantly of Nanda's son. Indeed, because we see Kṛṣṇa's footprints, which are marked with divine symbols, we can never forget Him.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.49–50) As this statement implies, the *gopīs* do not worry about the pain of forgetting Kṛṣṇa, because

forgetting Kṛṣṇa is something they cannot do even if they want to. They sometimes would like to forget Kṛṣṇa to avoid the ever-increasing agony of remembering Him, and certainly they do not need to ask to be put into a fire of separation. The *gopīs* feel the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa constantly and in a unique way. Therefore the happiness they enjoy is actually greater than that of anyone else. They are superior to all other servants of God and to all His other intimate devotees.

कथञ्चन स्मरणमेव तेषाम्  
अवेहि तज्जीवनदानमेव ।  
तेषां यतो विस्मरणं कदाचित्  
प्राणाधिकानां मरणाच्च निन्द्यम् ॥

*kathañcana smāraṇam eva teṣām  
avehi taj-jīvana-dānam eva  
teṣām yato vismaraṇam kadācit  
prāṇādhikānām maraṇāc ca nindyam*

*kathañcana*—somehow or other; *smāraṇam*—reminding; *eva*—thus; *teṣām*—of them; *avehi*—you should understand; *tat*—that; *jīvana*—of life; *dānam*—the gift; *eva*—only; *teṣām*—of them; *yataḥ*—because; *vismaraṇam*—forgetting; *kadācit*—ever; *prāṇa*—than the air of life; *adhikānām*—of those who are more important; *marañāt*—than dying; *ca*—and; *nindyam*—contemptible.

**Please understand:** When somehow made mindful of those one loves, one is given back one's life. Forgetting those more dear than one's own breath is more painful than dying.

न सम्भवेदस्मरणं कदापि  
स्वजीवनानां यदपि प्रियाणाम् ।  
तथापि केनापि विशेषणेन  
स्मृतिः प्रहर्षाय यथा सुजीवितम् ॥

na sambhaved asmaraṇam kadāpi  
sva-jīvanānām yad api priyāṇām  
tathāpi kenāpi viśeṣaṇena  
smṛtiḥ praharṣāya yathā su-jīvitam

na sambhaved—is not possible; asmaraṇam—forgetting; kadā api—ever; sva-jīvanānām—who are one’s very life; yat—inasmuch as; api—even; priyāṇām—of those who are dear; tathā api—still; kena api—by some; viśeṣaṇena—special feature; smṛtiḥ—remembrance; praharṣāya—for making happy; yathā—like; su-jīvitam—a fortunate life.

**Those dear as life one can never forget, but when reminded of them in a special way one feels happy, like one who has lived a life of good fortune.**

Just as one always remembers the most important events in one’s own life, Kṛṣṇa’s devotee always remembers Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa always remembers the devotee. Sometimes, however, that remembrance becomes especially sweet, as when stimulated by the words of an eloquent Vaiṣṇava. This enhanced remembrance is like the satisfaction of a person whose life has been filled with fortunate events, one success after another. In contrast, a humdrum, mediocre existence with no outstanding events is as sad as a life encumbered by poverty. Or, applying this analogy to the matter at hand: without transcendental love, remembrance of dear ones becomes tasteless.

**इत्येवमुपकारोऽद्य भवताकारि मे महान् ।  
तत्तेऽस्मि परमप्रीतो निजाभीष्टान् वरान् वृणु ॥**

ity evam upakāro ’dya  
bhavatākāri me mahān  
tat te ’smi parama-prīto  
nijābhīṣṭān varān vṛṇu

iti—so; evam—in this way; upakāraḥ—benefit; adya—today; bhavatā—by you; akāri—has been done; me—for Me; mahān—great; tat—therefore; te—with you; asmi—I am; parama-prītaḥ—extremely pleased; nija—by you; abhīṣṭān—desired; varān—benedictions; vṛṇu—please

choose.

**So today you have favored Me greatly, and therefore I am delighted with you. Please choose whatever benedictions you would like.**

Nārada reminded Lord Kṛṣṇa of the *gopīs*' absolute attachment to Him, and for this Lord Kṛṣṇa is thankful.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
मुनिर्जयजयोद्धोषैः सवीणागीतमैडत ।  
व्रजक्रीडोत्थनामाढ्यैः कीर्तनैश्च वरप्रदम् ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
munir jaya-jayodghoṣaiḥ  
sa-vīṇā-gītam aiḍata  
vraja-kṛīḍottha-nāmāḍhyaiḥ  
kīrtanaiś ca vara-pradam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca—Śrī Parīkṣit said; muniḥ—the sage; jaya-jaya-udghoṣaiḥ—with shouts of jaya jaya; sa—along with; vīṇā—of his vīṇā; gītam—playing; aiḍata—worshiped; vraja—in Vraja; kṛīḍā—in the pastimes; uttha—arising; nāma—with names; āḍhyaiḥ—filled; kīrtanaiḥ—by songs of praise; ca—and; vara-pradam—the giver of benedictions.*

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: The sage began singing Kṛṣṇa's glories. Playing on His vīṇā and shouting "Jaya! Jaya!" he praised Lord Kṛṣṇa, the giver of benedictions, with songs filled with names arising from His pastimes in Vraja.**

Nārada wanted to ask for a few choice and rarely obtainable benedictions, so he first sang for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure so that Kṛṣṇa would be inclined to grant Nārada's desires. Most pleasing to Kṛṣṇa was Nārada's ecstatic recitation of names Kṛṣṇa had acquired in Vraja, like Gokula-mahotsava, Yaśodā-nandana, Nanda-kumāra, Gopa-gopījana-priya, Gopīgaṇa-manohara, and Pūtanā-mocana.



स्वयं प्रयागस्य दशाश्वमेध-  
तीर्थादिके द्वारवतीपरान्ते ।  
सम्भाषितानां विषये भ्रमित्वा  
पूर्णार्थतां श्रीमदनुग्रहेण ॥

विप्रादीनां श्रोतुकामो मुनीन्द्रो  
हर्षात्कृष्णस्याननादेव साक्षात् ।  
एवं मातः प्रार्थयामास हृद्यं  
तस्मिन् रम्योदारसिंहे वरं प्राक् ॥

*svayam prayāgasya daśāśvamedha-  
tīrthādike dvāravatī-parānte  
sambhāṣitānām viṣaye bhramitvā  
pūrṇārthatām śrīmad-anugraheṇa*

*viprādīnām śrotu-kāmo munīndro  
harṣāt kṛṣṇasyānanād eva sākṣāt  
evam mātāḥ prārthayām āsa hṛdyam  
tasmin ramyodāra-simhe varam prāk*

*svayam*—in person; *prayāgasya*—of Prayāga; *daśāśvamedha-tīrtha*—at Daśāśvamedha-tīrtha; *ādike*—beginning; *dvāravatī*—at Dvārakā; *parānte*—ending; *sambhāṣitānām*—of those with whom he had spoken; *viṣaye*—on the topic; *bhramitvā*—while wandering; *pūrṇa-arthatām*—the success; *śrīmat*—of the blessed Lord; *anugraheṇa*—by the favor; *vipra-ādīnām*—of the *brāhmaṇa* and the others; *śrotu-kāmaḥ*—wanting to hear; *muni-indraḥ*—the king of sages; *harṣāt*—with great pleasure; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *ānanāt*—from the mouth; *eva*—only; *sākṣāt*—directly; *evam*—thus; *mātāḥ*—O mother; *prārthayām āsa*—he begged; *hṛdyam*—what was in his heart; *tasmin*—from Him; *ramya*—among persons who are attractive; *udāra*—and generous; *simhe*—the lion; *varam*—the benediction; *prāk*—first.

From Daśāśvamedha-tīrtha in Prayāga to Dvārakā, Nārada had wandered. And he had spoken with devotees—the brāhmaṇa at Prayāga and all the others—who by the Lord’s divine grace had each achieved perfection. Feeling great pleasure, Nārada, the king of sages, now wanted to hear of this perfection directly from Lord Kṛṣṇa’s own mouth. Dear mother, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the all-attractive lion among generous benefactors. Now, therefore, Nārada begged from Him the first blessing he wished to receive.

Nārada already knew about Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, but he wanted to hear Kṛṣṇa describe it in His own words. Pure Vaiṣṇavas never lose interest in hearing such topics. Nārada had spoken with many devotees, beginning with the brāhmaṇa leader of the devotees at Prayāga and ending with Uddhava in Dvārakā. And from each he had heard the same story—that someone else, not the devotee speaking, was favored by Kṛṣṇa. For a reader with no taste for *śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ*, this simple repetitious plot might be boring. Vaiṣṇavas, however, are perpetually fascinated by the endless varieties of Kṛṣṇa’s reciprocations with His devotees.

Nārada was particularly curious about how the devotees he had met, even though they varied greatly in material status, had perfected their life in all respects. All of them — from the Prayāga brāhmaṇa and the southern king up to Indra, Brahmā, Śiva, and Prahlāda, Hanumān, and Uddhava — had achieved remarkable success in performing religious duties, in acquiring exalted means for enjoyment, in disentangling themselves from illusion, and in perfecting the transcendental art of serving the Supreme Person. All of them had achieved their manifold success by only one cause — Kṛṣṇa’s grace. Nārada had long been curious to better understand how Kṛṣṇa distributes His mercy, and now he was eager to inquire from Kṛṣṇa directly.

श्रीकृष्णचन्द्र कस्यापि तृप्तिस्तु कदापि न ।  
भवतोऽनुग्रहे भक्तौ प्रेम्णि चानन्दभाजने ॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-candra kasyāpi*

*tr̥ptir astu kadāpi na  
bhavato 'nugrahe bhaktau  
premṇi cānanda-bhājane*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-candra*—O Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra; *kasya api*—of anyone; *tr̥ptiḥ*—satiating; *astu*—let there be; *kadā api*—ever; *na*—not; *bhavataḥ*—Your; *anugrahe*—in the mercy; *bhaktau*—in devotional service; *premṇi*—in pure love; *ca*—and; *ānanda*—of ecstasy; *bhājane*—for the reservoir.

**[Nārada said:] Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, please grant that no one will ever feel he has enough of Your mercy, Your devotional service, or pure love for You, the reservoir of ecstasy.**

Nārada wants to be assured by Kṛṣṇa that no matter how much of Kṛṣṇa's favor a devotee may receive, the devotee will never become self-satisfied or complacent. Rather, he will always think himself unworthy of the mercy and in need of more and more. Nārada mentions Kṛṣṇa's mercy, *bhakti-yoga*, and *prema*—all three together—even though they become manifest in a causal sequence, not all at once: Kṛṣṇa's mercy leads to *bhakti*, which develops into *prema*. What Nārada implies is that Vaiṣṇavas on various levels of devotional progress have different needs. A neophyte needs special mercy from Kṛṣṇa and His devotees to begin the process of *bhakti-yoga*; an intermediate *sādhaka* needs ample opportunities for practicing his personal *bhajana*; and a mature devotee, driven by his strong urge, needs to taste *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Let the impersonalists be satisfied with their theoretical self-realization. Nārada and his followers never have enough of the ever-increasing ecstasy of discovering their relationships with Kṛṣṇa.

**श्रीभगवानुवाच**

**विदग्धनिकराचार्य को नामायं वरो मतः ।  
स्वभावो मत्कृपाभक्तिप्रेम्णां व्यक्तोऽयमेव यत् ॥**

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
vidagdha-nikarācārya*

ko nāmāyaṁ varo mataḥ  
svabhāvo mat-kṛpā-bhakti-  
preṇṇām vyakto 'yam eva yat

śrī-bhagavān uvāca—the Supreme Lord said; vidagdha—of clever scholars; nikara—of the multitude; ācārya—O preceptor; kaḥ—what; nāma—indeed; ayam—this; varaḥ—benediction; mataḥ—is considered; svabhāvaḥ—the nature; mat—My; kṛpā—of the mercy; bhakti—of the devotional service; preṇṇām—and of the ecstatic love; vyaktaḥ—obvious; ayam—this; eva—simply; yat—which.

**The Supreme Lord said: O preceptor of all clever scholars, what kind of benediction is this? My mercy, My devotional service, and ecstatic love for Me all have this nature. That should be simply obvious.**

To Kṛṣṇa it sounded ironic that Nārada was asking for something that is already an established fact. Since Nārada knows everything, he must have had some hidden motive, and indeed this was so; he wanted to hear Kṛṣṇa Himself extol the glories of *prema-bhakti*.

प्रयागतीर्थमारभ्य भ्रामं भ्राममितस्ततः ।  
अत्रागत्य च ये दूष्टाः श्रुताश्च भवता मुने ॥

सर्वे समाप्तसर्वार्था जगन्निस्तारकाश्च ते ।  
मत्कृपाविषयाः किञ्चित्तरतम्यं श्रिताः परम् ॥

prayāga-tīrtham ārabhya  
bhrāmam bhrāmam itas tataḥ  
atrāgatya ca ye dṛṣṭāḥ  
śrutāś ca bhavatā mune

sarve samāpta-sarvārthā  
jagan-nistārakāś ca te  
mat-kṛpā-viṣayāḥ kiñcit  
tāratamyam śritāḥ param

*prayāga-tīrtham*—from Prayāga-tīrtha; *ārabhya*—beginning; *bhrāmam bhrāmam*—while wandering; *itaḥ tataḥ*—here and there; *atra*—here; *āgatya*—coming; *ca*—and; *ye*—who; *dr̥ṣṭāḥ*—were seen; *śrutāḥ*—heard of; *ca*—and; *bhavatā*—by you; *mune*—O sage; *sarve*—all; *samāpta*—having completely achieved; *sarva*—all; *arthāḥ*—aims of life; *jagat*—of the whole world; *nistarakāḥ*—deliverers; *ca*—and; *te*—they; *mat*—My; *kṛpā*—of the mercy; *viṣayāḥ*—recipients; *kiñcit*—some; *tāratamyam*—gradation; *śritāḥ*—adhering to; *param*—only.

**O sage, each of the devotees you saw and heard about in your wanderings here and there, from Prayāga-tīrtha to Dvārakā, is perfect in all respects. Each of them can deliver the entire world, and each has truly received My mercy. There exist between them only degrees of perfection.**

In each of the places Nārada had visited, from Prayāga to Dvārakā, he had met with pure devotees who personified the transcendental virtues of *bhakti*, and he had heard about others, like the residents of Śrī Vaikuṇṭha and Śrī Nanda-vraja. By the strength of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, each of these devotees was situated in perfection, and able to elevate others to perfection. This does not mean, however, that their love for Kṛṣṇa lacked individual distinctions. Pure devotional service is by nature full of variety, so no two devotees are exactly alike. A formal ranking among Kṛṣṇa’s devotees does not exist, but still they show some differences in excellence. Ultimately, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her companion *gopīs* are the most excellent devotees. The other pure Vaiṣṇavas acknowledge the supremacy of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī without envy, being satisfied with the unlimited happiness of serving Kṛṣṇa in their own individual ways. The second part of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, “The Glories of Goloka,” will conclusively demonstrate that every pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa enjoys full satisfaction in his own loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa.

**तथापि तेषामेकोऽपि न तुष्यति कथञ्चन ।  
तद्गृहाण वरानन्यान् मत्तोऽभीष्टतरान् वरान् ॥**

*tathāpi teṣām eko ’pi*

na tṛpyati kathañcana  
tad gṛhāṇa varān anyān  
matto 'bhīṣṭa-tarān varān

*tathā api*—nonetheless; *teṣām*—of them; *ekaḥ*—one; *api*—even; *na*—not; *tṛpyati*—is satiated; *kathañcana*—in any way; *tat*—therefore; *gṛhāṇa*—please choose; *varān*—benedictions; *anyān*—other; *mattaḥ*—from Me; *abhīṣṭa-tarān*—more desirable; *varān*—benedictions.

**Yet none of these devotees is ever satiated. Please, therefore, ask from Me some other, more satisfying benedictions.**

Other than the Vraja-vāsīs, no one is closer to Kṛṣṇa than the Pāṇḍavas and Yadus; they are so fortunate that Kṛṣṇa lives with them in close intimacy, and they are able to share this fortune with their entire families. Nonetheless, they also are dissatisfied, thinking themselves unworthy, lacking in pure devotion and surrender. As Kṛṣṇa here indicates, this is simply the peculiar nature of *prema-bhakti*.

श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
नर्तित्वा नारदो हर्षद्वैक्ष्यवत्सद्वरद्वयम् ।  
याचमानो जगादेदं तं वदान्यशिरोमणिम् ॥

śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
nartitvā nārado harṣād  
bhaikṣya-vat sad-vara-dvayam  
yācamāno jagādedaṁ  
taṁ vadānya-śiromaṇim

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *nartitvā*—dancing; *nāradaḥ*—Nārada; *harṣāt*—out of joy; *bhaikṣya-vat*—as if begging for alms; *sat*—excellent; *vara*—of boons; *dvayam*—a pair; *yācamānaḥ*—begging; *jagāda*—he said; *idam*—the following; *taṁ*—to Him; *vadānya*—of charitable persons; *śiraḥ-maṇim*—the crest jewel.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Nārada danced in sheer joy. And like a mendicant asking alms, he begged from Kṛṣṇa two excellent boons. Speaking to the**

**Lord, the crest jewel of charitable persons, this is what Nārada said.**

Nārada was delighted to hear Kṛṣṇa confirm that all the Vaiṣṇavas he had visited had fully received Kṛṣṇa's mercy, and that despite such good fortune these humble devotees were never satisfied with themselves. He danced for a short time and then approached Kṛṣṇa for two specific blessings. Like a beggar folding his hands in supplication and holding out his cloth to ask charity from a rich man, Nārada praised Kṛṣṇa so that Kṛṣṇa would be inclined to grant his request.

**श्रीनारद उवाच  
स्वदानातृप्त वृत्तोऽहमिदानीं सफलश्रमः ।  
त्वन्महाकरुणापात्रजनविज्ञानमाप्तवान् ॥**

*śrī-nārada uvāca  
sva-dānātr̥pta vṛtto 'ham  
idānīm sa-phala-śramaḥ  
tvan-mahā-karuṇā-pātra-  
jana-vijñānam āptavān*

*śrī-nāradaḥ uvāca—Śrī Nārada said; sva-dāna—with Your own charity; atṛpta—O You who are not satisfied; vṛttaḥ—successful; aham—I; idānīm—now; sa-phala—fruitful; śramaḥ—whose labor; tvat—Your; mahā-karuṇā—of the greatest mercy; pātra-jana—about the recipients; vijñānam—practical understanding; āptavān—I have obtained.*

**Śrī Nārada said: O Lord never satisfied with Your own charity, I have now achieved my goal. My labors have borne fruit, for I now understand in a practical way who the objects of Your greatest mercy are.**

Nārada had taken the trouble to journey from the earth to Brahmaloḥka and back, and earlier in his life he had exerted himself in scriptural studies and austere meditation. Now he feels assured that all these efforts were worthwhile, for with his own eyes he has seen the truth of what is told in the Vedic scriptures. Most valuably, he has heard from Kṛṣṇa and His devotees in Dvārakā about the superexcellence of the Vraja gopīs.

अयमेव वरः प्राप्तोऽनुग्रहश्चोत्तमो मतः ।  
याचे तथाप्युदारेन्द्र हार्दं किञ्चिच्चिरन्तनम् ॥

*ayam eva varaḥ prāpto  
'nugrahaś cottamo mataḥ  
yāce tathāpy udārendra  
hārdam kiñcic cirantanam*

*ayam*—this; *eva*—alone; *varaḥ*—benediction; *prāptaḥ*—obtained; *anugrahaḥ*—mercy; *ca*—and; *uttamaḥ*—the greatest; *mataḥ*—considered; *yāce*—I beg; *tathā api*—nonetheless; *udāra-indra*—O king of charitable givers; *hārdam*—desire in my heart; *kiñcit*—a certain; *cirantanam*—old.

**This is the only benediction I need obtain, and for me it is the greatest mercy. But still, O king among those who give charity, I have one long-cherished desire.**

Since Kṛṣṇa insists on being generous, Nārada wants to request a few wonderful benedictions. Although the desire Nārada is about to express has been sitting in his heart for some time, Kṛṣṇa should not worry that it might be impossible to fulfill. Nārada reminds Kṛṣṇa that Kṛṣṇa is, after all, the most competent of all who give charity and therefore no benediction is beyond His ability to grant.

पायं पायं व्रजजनगणप्रेमवापीमराल  
श्रीमन्नमामृतमविरतं गोकुलाब्ध्युत्थितं ते ।  
तत्तद्वेशाचरितनिकरोञ्जुम्भितं मिष्टमिष्टं  
सर्वाल्लोकां जगति रमयन्मत्तचेष्टो भ्रमाणि ॥

*pāyaṁ pāyaṁ vraja-jana-gaṇa-prema-vāpī-marāla  
śrīman-nāmāmṛtam avirataṁ gokulābdhy-utthitaṁ te  
tat-tad-veśācarita-nikarojjṛmbhitaṁ miṣṭa-miṣṭaṁ  
sarvāl lokān jagati ramayan matta-ceṣṭo bhramāṇi*

*pāyam pāyam*—constantly drinking; *vraja-jana-gaṇa*—of all the



residents of Vraja; *prema*—of the love; *vāpī*—in the pond; *marāla*—O swan; *śrīmat-nāma*—of the blessed names; *amṛtam*—the nectar; *aviratam*—without interruption; *gokula-abdhi*—from the ocean of Gokula; *utthitam*—arisen; *te*—Your; *tat-tat*—by the various; *veśa*—of modes of dress; *ācarita*—and activities; *nikara*—numerous; *ujjṛmbhitam*—enhanced; *miṣṭa-miṣṭam*—sweeter than the sweetest; *sarvān*—all; *lokān*—the worlds; *jagati*—in the universes; *ramayan*—delighting; *matta*—like a madman; *ceṣṭaḥ*—whose behavior; *bhramāṇi*—may I wander.

O swan gliding in the lakes of the Vraja-vāsīs' love, I wish that I may wander everywhere always chanting, drinking the nectar of Your names. Those most sweet names arise from the ocean of Gokula and spread the glories of Your infinitely varied dress and ways of acting. As I wander, behaving like a madman, may I distribute joy to everyone in all the worlds.

An emperor swan likes to visit various lakes, where he swims about and enjoys at liberty, unimpeded by lesser birds. And Kṛṣṇa finds His delight in the hearts of His surrendered devotees, each heart a unique treasure house of manifold ecstasies and loving dedication. Nārada wants to serve Kṛṣṇa as an exemplary *parivrājakācārya*, preaching the glories of *hari-nāmāmṛta* throughout the universe. By chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, Nārada will enjoy the highest pleasure and also share that pleasure with everyone else. The bliss of *hari-nāma* will inspire such joy in Nārada and his followers in disciplic succession that they will become like intoxicated madmen, laughing, crying, dancing, singing, and sometimes showing all ecstatic symptoms at once. Thus these devotees will forget their bodily needs and worldly duties.

The names Kṛṣṇa acquires in Gokula are sweeter than the names He acquires anywhere else, including even such names as Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha, Rāmacandra, Mathurānātha, and Yādavendra. The names of Kṛṣṇa in Gokula Vṛndāvana describe qualities of His that cannot be found in any other abode. Only in Vraja-bhūmi does Kṛṣṇa place a peacock feather in His hair, *guñja* ornaments on His ears, and garlands

of *kadamba* flowers around His neck. Only in Vraja does He perform such pastimes as drinking the life air of Pūtanā and breaking the cart in which the demon Śakaṭa was hiding. Only there is He called by such sweet names as Nanda-nandana, Yaśodā-vatsala, Gopikā-manohara, and Vraja-janānanda.

### Nārada joins Kṛṣṇa for lunch

त्वदीयास्ताः क्रीडाः सकृदपि भुवो वापि वचसा  
हृदा श्रुत्याङ्गैर्वा स्पृशति कृतधीः कश्चिदपि यः ।  
स नित्यं श्रीगोपीकुचकलसकाश्मीरविलसत्-  
त्वदीयाद्विद्वन्द्वे कलयतुतरां प्रेमभजनम् ॥

*tvadīyās tāḥ krīḍāḥ sakṛd api bhuvo vāpi vacasā  
hṛdā śrutyāṅgair vā sprśati kṛta-dhīḥ kaścīd api yaḥ  
sa nityam śrī-gopī-kuca-kalasa-kāśmīra-vilasat-  
tvadīyāṅghri-dvandve kalayatu-tarām prema-bhajanam*

*tvadīyāḥ—Your; tāḥ—these; krīḍāḥ—pastimes; sakṛt—once; api—even; bhuvaḥ—in this world; vā—or; api—even; vacasā—by speaking; hṛdā—by thinking; śrutyā—by hearing the glories; aṅgaiḥ—by bodily contact; vā—or; sprśati—touches; kṛta-dhīḥ—whose mind is fixed in determination; kaścīd—anyone; api—at all; yaḥ—who; saḥ—he; nityam—eternally; śrī-gopī—of the blessed gopīs; kuca-kalasa—from the pitcherlike breasts; kāśmīra—with the saffron powder; vilasat—adorned; tvadīya—Your; aṅghri—of the feet; dvandve—at the pair; kalayatu—may he become endowed; tarām—most fully; prema—in pure love; bhajanam—with devotional meditation.*

Whether by speaking, thinking, hearing, or physical contact, if any person in this world comes in touch even once with these pastimes of Yours and is convinced of their importance, may he be endowed eternally

with the power to worship Your feet in pure love, feet resplendent with the saffron dust from the pitcher-like breasts of the blessed gopīs.

Nārada now submits his second request. He wants to be assured by the Lord’s personal promise that anyone in the future who directly or indirectly experiences the transcendental nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s Vṛndāvana pastimes will be blessed to relish the taste of pure love of God. When he says *kaścīd api* (“anyone at all”), Nārada means that prerequisites as to caste or any other qualifications, material or spiritual, should be put aside; because Kṛṣṇa’s glories and Kṛṣṇa’s devotees are all-merciful, simply coming in contact with them should automatically make even the most uncivilized, wretched person pious and fortunate.

Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa naturally arises in the heart of one who meets a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and hears from him about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. The only qualification the hearer of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* needs is that he be *kṛta-dhī*—eager to hear and ready to trust the authority of Kṛṣṇa’s representatives who speak His message. Equipped with this one quality of confident determination to hear with faith, a Vaiṣṇava can remember Kṛṣṇa vividly by listening to accounts of His pastimes and visiting the places where He performed them. As mentioned earlier, the *gopīs* told Uddhava when they met him in Vṛndāvana:

*saric-chaila-vanoddeśā  
gāvo veṇu-ravā ime  
saṅkarṣaṇa-sahāyena  
kṛṣṇenācaritāḥ prabho*

*punaḥ punaḥ smārayanti  
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ bata  
śrī-niketais tat-padakair  
vismartuṁ naiva śaknumaḥ*

“Dear Uddhava Prabhu, when Kṛṣṇa was here in the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He enjoyed all these rivers, hills, forests, cows, and flute sounds. All these remind us constantly of Nanda’s son. Indeed, because we see Kṛṣṇa’s footprints, which are marked with divine symbols, we can

never forget Him.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.49–50)

Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is awakened not only by hearing His glories and the glories of His land Vṛndāvana but also by direct physical contact. Vaiṣṇavas can physically touch Kṛṣṇa’s glories in the form of the book *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, they can hear about Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma from the *Bhāgavatam*, and then, if fortunate enough, they can come to Vṛndāvana to bathe in the dust on which Kṛṣṇa and His dearest devotees have walked.

**श्रीपरीक्षिदुवाच  
ततः श्रीहस्तकमलं प्रसार्य परमादरात् ।  
एवमस्त्विति सानन्दं गोपीनाथेन भाषितम् ॥**

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca  
tataḥ śrī-hasta-kamalam  
prasārya paramādarāt  
evam astv iti sānandam  
gopī-nāthena bhāṣitam*

*śrī-parīkṣit uvāca*—Śrī Parīkṣit said; *tataḥ*—then; *śrī-hasta-kamalam*—His divine lotus hand; *prasārya*—extending; *parama-ādarāt*—with great respect; *evam*—so; *astu*—let it be; *iti*—in these words; *sa-ānandam*—blissfully; *gopī-nāthena*—by Gopīnātha; *bhāṣitam*—said.

**Śrī Parīkṣit said: Lord Gopīnātha then extended His divine lotus hand and with great respect for Nārada blissfully said, “So be it.”**

Kṛṣṇa extended His right hand, the hand normally used to offer benedictions. Nārada wanted explicit verification from Kṛṣṇa; therefore Kṛṣṇa showed His consent in such a way that no one could fail to understand. When Kṛṣṇa enjoys His pastimes as Gopīnātha, the lover of the *gopīs*, He reveals the most confidential desires of His heart, and in this same mood as Gopīnātha He happily accepted Nārada’s two requests.

**ततो महापरानन्दार्णवे मग्नो मुनिर्भृशम् ।**

गायन् नृत्यन् बहुविधं कृष्णं चक्रे सुनिर्वृतम् ॥

*tato mahā-parānandā-  
rṇave magno munir bhṛśam  
gāyan nṛtyan bahu-vidham  
kṛṣṇam cakre su-nirvṛtam*

*tataḥ*—then; *mahā-para*—topmost; *ānanda*—of bliss; *arṇave*—in an ocean; *magnaḥ*—submerged; *munīḥ*—the sage; *bhṛśam*—suddenly; *gāyan*—singing; *nṛtyan*—dancing; *bahu-vidham*—in various ways; *kṛṣṇam*—Kṛṣṇa; *cakre*—he made; *su-nirvṛtam*—very satisfied.

**The sage was suddenly plunged into a vast ocean of supreme bliss. He sang and danced in various ways, thus delighting Lord Kṛṣṇa.**

Only an ecstatic devotee, by the unique power of *prema-bhakti*, can give pleasure to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is full in His own ecstasy, so an ordinary person, anxious and miserable as he is, can never presume to do anything that can please the Lord.

बुभुजे भगवद्भ्यां स परमान्नं सपानकम् ।  
देवकीरोहिणीदुष्टं रुक्मिण्या परिवेषितम् ॥

*bubhuje bhagavadbhyām sa  
paramānnaṁ sa-pānakam  
devakī-rohiṇī-dṛṣṭam  
rukmiṇyā pariveṣitam*

*bubhuje*—partook; *bhagavadbhyām*—with the two Lords; *saḥ*—he; *parama*—first-class; *annaṁ*—of food; *sa-pānakam*—and drink; *devakī-rohiṇī*—by Devakī and Rohiṇī; *dṛṣṭam*—supervised; *rukmiṇyā*—by Rukmiṇī; *pariveṣitam*—distributed.

**Nārada then partook of excellent food and drink with the two Lords, as Devakī and Rohiṇī supervised and Rukmiṇī served.**

Invited by Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa to take lunch with Them, Nārada was served excellent sweet rice and other delicious dishes and various

refreshing drinks. Since Rukmiṇī was the first of Kṛṣṇa's queens, she claimed the right to serve the meal. She went around to each of the three people eating and repeatedly offered a small portion of whatever they wanted.

### Nārada returns to Prayāga

उद्धवेन स्मार्यमाणं वीजितं सत्यभामया ।  
अन्याभिर्महिषीभिश्च रञ्जितं तत्तदीहया ॥

*uddhavana smāryamāṇam  
vījitam satyabhāmayā  
anyābhir mahiṣībhiś ca  
rañjitam tat-tad-īhayā*

*uddhavana*—by Uddhava; *smāryamāṇam*—being offered suggestions; *vījitam*—fanned; *satyabhāmayā*—by Satyabhāmā; *anyābhiḥ*—by the other; *mahiṣībhiḥ*—queens; *ca*—and; *rañjitam*—pleased; *tat-tat*—various; *īhayā*—by services.

**Uddhava suggested to Nārada what was best to eat, Satyabhāmā fanned him, and the other queens pleased him with various kinds of service.**

Uddhava went around commenting, “You haven’t tried this. This other preparation is your favorite. Take some of this, and some of that.” Since the weather was quite hot, Kṛṣṇa’s beloved Satyabhāmā personally fanned the two Lords and the exalted sage. The other queens, headed by Jāmbavatī, busied themselves doing everything they could to make the meal a pleasure. They poured cool water from brimming pitchers, eloquently praised the food, fanned the bodies of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, and Nārada from all sides, and kept the room fragrant by burning *aguru* and other incense.

आचान्तो लेपितो गन्धैर्मालाभिर्मण्डितो मुनिः ।

## अलङ्कारैर्बहुविधैरर्चितश्च मुरारिणा ॥

*ācānto lepito gandhair  
mālābhir maṇḍito muniḥ  
alaṅkārair bahu-vidhair  
arcitaś ca murāriṇā*

*ācāntaḥ*—having washed his mouth; *lepitaḥ*—anointed; *gandhaiḥ*—with fragrant oils; *mālābhiḥ*—with flower garlands; *maṇḍitaḥ*—decorated; *muniḥ*—the sage; *alaṅkāraiḥ*—by ornaments; *bahu-vidhaiḥ*—of various kinds; *arcitaḥ*—worshiped; *ca*—and; *mura-ariṇā*—by Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of the demon Mura.

After the sage finished eating and washed his mouth, Lord Kṛṣṇa worshiped him, anointing him with fragrant oils and adorning him with flower garlands and varied ornaments.

Parīkṣit advises Uttarā to worship Madana-gopāla

अथ प्रयागे गत्वा तान् मदपेक्षाविलम्बितान् ।  
मुनीन् कृतार्थयानीति समनुज्ञाप्य माधवम् ॥

*atha prayāge gatvā tān  
mad-apekṣā-vilambitān  
munīn kṛtārthayānīti  
samanujñāpya mādhasvam*

*atha*—then; *prayāge*—to Prayāga; *gatvā*—going; *tān*—them; *mat*—for me; *apekṣā*—with expectation; *vilambitān*—left waiting; *munīn*—on the sages; *kṛta-arthayāni*—let me bestow perfection; *iti*—thus (thinking); *samanujñāpya*—taking permission to leave; *mādhavam*—from Lord Mādhava.

Nārada then took leave of Mādhava, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and went to Prayāga,

thinking, “Let me bestow perfection on the sages who have waited so long for me to return.”

Kṛṣṇa is called Mādhava because He is the moon that arose from the ocean of the dynasty of King Madhu. Mādhava is also the name of the Deity of Kṛṣṇa at Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa, where Nārada had seen the sages worshiping the Lord and bathing daily at the confluence of the Yamunā, Gaṅgā, and Sarasvatī during the month of Māgha. Nārada wanted to return to Prayāga to share his realizations with those sages, who by taking shelter of Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa had obtained the shelter of Kṛṣṇa.

स्वयं यद्वक्तिमाहात्म्यमनुभूतमितस्ततः ।  
सानन्दं वीणया गायन् स ययौ भक्तिलम्पटः ॥

*svayaṁ yad-bhakti-māhātmyam  
anubhūtam itas tataḥ  
sānandam vīṇayā gāyan  
sa yayau bhakti-lampāṭaḥ*

*svayam*—personally; *yat*—whose; *bhakti*—of the devotional service; *māhātmyam*—the glories; *anubhūtam*—experienced; *itaḥ tataḥ*—here and there; *sa-ānandam*—blissfully; *vīṇayā*—with his *vīṇā*; *gāyan*—singing; *saḥ*—he; *yayau*—went; *bhakti*—to enjoy pure devotional service; *lampāṭaḥ*—greedy.

Thus Nārada started on his journey to Prayāga, intoxicated with eagerness for pure devotion. Wherever he passed he vibrated his *vīṇā* and blissfully sang the glories of the *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* he had seen with his own eyes.

तेऽपि तन्मुखतः सर्वं श्रुत्वा तत्तन्महाद्भुतम् ।  
सारसङ्ग्राहिणोऽशेषमन्यत्सद्यो जहुर्दुढम् ॥

*te 'pi tan-mukhataḥ sarvaṁ  
śrutvā tat tan mahādbhutam  
sāra-saṅgrāhiṇo 'śeṣam*



*anyat sadyo jahur dṛḍham*

*te*—they; *api*—also; *tat*—his; *mukhataḥ*—from the mouth; *sarvam*—all; *śrutvā*—hearing; *tat tat*—various things; *mahā-adbhutam*—most amazing; *sāra*—essential values; *saṅgrāhiṇaḥ*—persons who can grasp; *aśeṣam*—altogether; *anyat*—other things; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *jahuḥ*—they gave up; *dṛḍham*—firmly.

When the sages at Prayāga heard the whole wonderful account from the mouth of Nārada, they once and for all gave up all interest in everything other than Kṛṣṇa's service, for they were able to grasp the essence of what is of value.

Whatever traces of attachment to material work and knowledge still lingered in the hearts of the sages were at once cleansed away when they heard Nārada's account of his travels. They were wise devotees, able to recognize the essential truth in what Nārada told them.

केवलं परमं दैन्यमवलम्ब्यास्य शिक्षया ।  
श्रीमन्मदनगोपालचरणाब्जमुपासत ॥

*kevalam paramam dainyam*

*avalambyāsyā śikṣayā*

*śrīman-madana-gopāla-*

*caraṇābjam upāsata*

*kevalam*—exclusive; *paramam*—complete; *dainyam*—humility; *avalambya*—developing; *asya*—his; *śikṣayā*—according to instructions; *śrīmat-madana-gopāla*—of Śrīmān Madana-gopāla; *caraṇa-abjam*—the lotus feet; *upāsata*—they worshiped.

Entering a mood of great and single-minded humility, they began worshiping the lotus feet of Śrīmān Madana-gopāla according to Nārada's instructions.

It is an axiomatic principle of devotional science that until one rejects everything insubstantial one cannot grasp the essence of reality. The sages at Prayāga, graced by Nārada with ultimate enlightenment,

now obtained the total humility (*dainya*) required for entrance into the mysteries of *prema-bhakti*. By honestly thinking themselves unworthy of worshiping the Personality of Godhead's lotus feet, they earned the priceless treasure of His favor.

मातर्गोपकिशोरं तं त्वं च रासरसाम्बुधिम् ।  
तत्प्रेममोहिताभिः श्रीगोपीभिरभितो वृतम् ॥

अमूषां दास्यमिच्छन्ती तादृशप्रेमभङ्गिभिः ।  
नित्यं भजस्व तन्नामसङ्कीर्तनपरायणा ॥

*mātar gopa-kīśoram taṁ  
tvam ca rāsa-rasāmbudhim  
tat-prema-mohitābhiḥ śrī-  
gopībhir abhito vṛtam*

*amūṣāṁ dāsyam icchantī  
tādṛśa-prema-bhaṅgibhiḥ  
nityaṁ bhajasva tan-nāma-  
saṅkīrtana-parāyaṇā*

*mātaḥ*—O mother; *gopa-kīśoram*—the young cowherd boy; *taṁ*—Him; *tvam*—you; *ca*—and; *rāsa*—of the *rāsa* dance; *rasa*—of nectar; *ambudhim*—the ocean; *tat*—that; *prema*—by pure love; *mohitābhiḥ*—who are enchanted; *śrī-gopībhiḥ*—by the divine *gopīs*; *abhitaḥ*—on all sides; *vṛtam*—surrounded; *amūṣāṁ*—of them; *dāsyam*—becoming the servant; *icchantī*—desiring; *tādṛśa*—with such; *prema*—of pure love; *bhaṅgibhiḥ*—methods; *nityam*—constantly; *bhajasva*—you should worship; *tat*—His; *nāma-saṅkīrtana*—to the *saṅkīrtana* of the names; *parāyaṇā*—being dedicated.

Dear mother, you as well should always worship this young cowherd boy. He is the ocean that yields the nectar of the *rāsa* dance, in which divine *gopīs* fully surround Him, entranced by pure love. You should cherish the

desire to be a servant of these *gopīs*, you should constantly worship Him in pure love as they did, and you should dedicate yourself to the *saṅkīrtana* of His names.

Having finished his story, Parīkṣit Mahārāja is summing up the lesson his mother should learn from it. She ought to absorb herself fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which in all of its countless varieties derives from and reflects the most perfect love of the *gopīs* who join Kṛṣṇa in His *rāsa* dance. God in His original form is a young, playful cowherd, and in this form He enjoys His original pleasure. When the Supreme Lord appears in any other form, that appearance is secondary, manifested to satisfy particular devotees. After hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Parīkṣit understood this transcendental fact, and to make his mother also understand it he has recounted this first part of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Perhaps Mother Uttarā, the widow of Kṛṣṇa's nephew, might feel uncomfortable assuming the mood of the *gopīs*, at least in public. Therefore Parīkṣit advises her more aptly to strive to become a servant of the *gopīs*. As Parīkṣit here points out, the principal method for becoming a servant of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana is *kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana* — immersing oneself in hearing and chanting the names of the divine cowherd boy of Vraja, especially the name Kṛṣṇa. This is the best means to practice worshiping Him in pure love, and it is the symptom of one who has achieved the treasure of *prema*.

गोपीनां महिमा कश्चित्तासामेकोऽपि शक्यते ।  
न मया स्वमुखे कर्तुं मेरुर्मक्षिकया यथा ॥

*gopīnām mahimā kaścit  
tāsām eko 'pi śakyate  
na mayā sva-mukhe kartum  
merur makṣikayā yathā*

*gopīnām*—of the *gopīs*; *mahimā*—feature of the glories; *kaścit*—some; *tāsām*—of them; *ekaḥ*—one; *api*—indeed; *śakyate*—is able; *na*—not; *mayā*—by me; *sva-mukhe*—in my mouth; *kartum*—to be done; *meruḥ*—

Mount Meru; *makṣikayā*—by a mosquito; *yathā*—as.

I cannot describe with my own words even one of the glories of the gopīs, any more than a mosquito can swallow Mount Meru.

अहो कृष्णरसाविष्टः सदा नामानि कीर्तयेत् ।  
कृष्णस्य तत्प्रियाणां च भैष्यादीनां गुरुर्मम ॥

*aho kṛṣṇa-rasāviṣṭaḥ*  
*sadā nāmāni kīrtayet*  
*kṛṣṇasya tat-priyāṇāṁ ca*  
*bhaiṣmy-ādīnāṁ gurur mama*

*aho*—oh; *kṛṣṇa-rasa*—in the tastes of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; *āviṣṭaḥ*—fully absorbed; *sadā*—constantly; *nāmāni*—the names; *kīrtayet*—can glorify; *kṛṣṇasya*—of Kṛṣṇa; *tat*—His; *priyāṇām*—of the beloved devotees; *ca*—and; *bhaiṣmy-ādīnām*—of Rukmiṇī and the others; *guruḥ*—the spiritual master; *mama*—my.

Oh, but my spiritual master is fully absorbed in the loving moods of serving Kṛṣṇa. He can constantly glorify Kṛṣṇa's names and those of Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa's other beloved devotees.

गोपीनां वितताद्भुतस्फुटतरप्रेमानलार्चिश्छटा-  
दग्धानां किल नामकीर्तनकृतात्तासां विशेषात्स्मृतेः ।  
तत्तीक्ष्णज्वलनोच्छिखाग्रकणिकासपर्शेन सद्यो महा-  
वैकल्यं स भजन् कदापि न मुखे नामानि कर्तुं प्रभुः ॥

*gopīnām vitatādbhuta-sphuṭatara-premānalārciś-chaṭā-*  
*dagdhānām kila nāma-kīrtana-kṛtāt tāsām viśeṣāt smṛteḥ*  
*tat-tīkṣṇa-jvalanocchikhāgra-kaṇikā-sparśena sadyo mahā-*  
*vaikalyaṁ sa bhajan kadāpi na mukhe nāmāni kartuṁ prabhuḥ*  
*gopīnām*—of the gopīs; *vitata*—widely spread; *adbhuta*—wondrous; *sphuṭa-tara*—fully manifest; *prema*—of pure love; *anala*—of the fire; *arciḥ-chaṭā*—by the expansive flames; *dagdhānām*—who are burned;

*kila*—indeed; *nāma-kīrtana*—the chanting of the names; *kṛtāt*—by doing; *tāsām*—of them; *viśeṣāt*—of the individual qualities; *smṛteḥ*—due to remembrance; *tat*—of that; *tikṣṇa*—intense; *jvalana*—of the fire; *ucchikha*—high-peaked; *agra*—at the tips; *kaṇikā*—with the sparks; *sparsēna*—by coming in contact; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *mahā-vaikalyam*—great agitation; *saḥ*—he; *bhajan*—experiencing; *kadā api*—ever; *na*—not; *mukhe*—in the mouth; *nāmāni*—their names; *kartum*—to produce; *prabhuḥ*—able.

The *gopīs* were consumed by the expansive flames of the wondrous blazing fire of love for Kṛṣṇa. If my guru chants the names of these *gopīs* and recalls a *gopī*'s distinguishing qualities, he too is touched by sparks shooting forth from the flames of this intense fire, and he at once becomes greatly agitated. Therefore he has to avoid pronouncing the *gopīs*' names.

The *gopīs*' love for Kṛṣṇa is unique. It reaches the ultimate extremes of ecstatic intensity, and so it can be compared to a blazing fire. Everything the *gopīs* experience in their lives shines with the light of their *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and the flamelike ecstasies from their *prema* burns their hearts, as flames burn a person who comes too close. Śukadeva Gosvāmī is intimately attuned to the mood of the *gopīs*, and therefore he is vulnerable to the danger of becoming too ecstatic. In the helpless state of *viraha-bhāva*, he might sometimes become incoherent in chanting the glories of the Lord, the devotional practice that is his own specialty and the only support of his vital force. If Śukadeva utters any of the *gopīs*' names, his heart is at once filled with remembrance of the *gopīs*, and the scorching flames of *viraha-bhāva* make him unable to concentrate on his service. There-fore while reciting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Mahārāja Parīkṣit he avoided mentioning the *gopīs* by name.

Many times in the Tenth Canto of the *Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva speaks of the activities and ecstasies — but not the names — of individual *gopīs*:

*duhantyo 'bhiyayuh kāścid*

*dohaṁ hitvā samutsukāḥ  
payo 'dhiśritya saṁyāvam  
anudvāsyāparā yayuḥ*

“Some of the *gopīs* were milking cows when they heard Kṛṣṇa's flute. They stopped milking and went off to meet Him. Some left milk curdling on the stove, and others left cakes burning in the oven.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.29.5)

*kasyāścit pūtanāyantyāḥ  
kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam  
tokayitvā rudanty anyā  
padāhan śakaṭāyatīm*

“One *gopī* imitated Pūtanā, while another acted like infant Kṛṣṇa and pretended to suck her breast. Another *gopī*, crying in imitation of infant Kṛṣṇa, kicked a *gopī* who was taking the role of the cart demon, Śakaṭāsura.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.30.15)

*tais taiḥ padais tat-padavīm  
anvicchanto 'grato 'balāḥ  
vadhvāḥ padaiḥ su-prktāni  
vilokyārtāḥ samabruvan*

“The *gopīs* began following Kṛṣṇa's path, as shown by His many footprints, but when they saw that these prints were thoroughly intermixed with those of His dearest consort, they became perturbed and spoke.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.30.26)

*ity evaṁ darśayantyas tās  
cerur gopyo vicetasah  
yām gopīm anayat kṛṣṇo  
vihāyānyāḥ striyo vane*

*sā ca mene tadātmānaṁ  
variṣṭhaṁ sarva-yoṣitām*

*hitvā gopīḥ kāma-yānā  
mām asau bhajate priyaḥ*

“As the *gopīs* wandered about, their minds completely bewildered, they pointed out various signs of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. The particular *gopī* whom Kṛṣṇa had led into a secluded forest when He had abandoned all the other young girls began to think Herself the best of women. ‘My beloved has rejected all the other *gopīs*,’ She thought, ‘even though they are driven by Cupid himself. Kṛṣṇa has chosen to reciprocate with Me alone.’ ” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.30.35–36)

*tato gatvā vanoddeśam  
dṛptā keśavam abravīt  
na pāraye ’haṁ calitum  
naya mām yatra te manaḥ*

*evam uktaḥ priyām āha  
skandha āruhyatām iti  
tataś cāntardadhe kṛṣṇaḥ  
sā vadhūr anvatapyata*

“As the two lovers passed through one part of the Vṛndāvana forest, the special *gopī* began feeling proud of Herself. She told Lord Keśava, ‘I cannot walk any further. Please carry Me wherever You want to go.’ Thus addressed, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, ‘Just climb on My shoulder.’ But as soon as He said this, He disappeared. His beloved consort then at once felt great remorse.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.30.37–38)

*kācit karāmbujaṁ śaurer  
jagṛhe ’ñjalīnā mudā  
kācid dadhāra tad-bāhum  
amse candana-bhūṣitam*

“One *gopī* joyfully took Kṛṣṇa’s hand between her folded palms, and another placed His arm, anointed with sandalwood paste, on her shoulder.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.32.4)

*kācit samam mukundena  
svara-jātīr amiśritāḥ  
unninye pūjitā tena  
prīyatā sādhu sādhv iti  
tad eva dhruvam unninye  
tasyai mānam ca bahv adāt*

“One *gopī*, joining Lord Mukunda in His singing, sang pure melodious tones that rose harmoniously above His. Kṛṣṇa was pleased and showed great appreciation for her performance, saying ‘Excellent! Excellent!’ Then another *gopī* repeated the same melody, but in a special metrical pattern, and Kṛṣṇa praised her also.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.33.9)

*kāścīt tat-kṛta-hṛt-tāpa-  
śvāsa-mlāna-mukha-śriyaḥ  
sraṁsad-dukūla-valaya-  
keśa-granthyaś ca kāścana*

“Some *gopīs* felt so pained at heart that their faces turned pale from their heavy breathing. Others were so anguished that their dresses, bracelets, and braids became loose.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.39.14)

*kācin madhukaram vīkṣya  
dhyāyanti kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam  
priya-prasthāpitaṁ dūtaṁ  
kalpayitvedam abravīt*

“One of the *gopīs*, while meditating on Her previous association with Kṛṣṇa, saw a honeybee before Her and imagined that it was a messenger sent by Her beloved. Thus She spoke to the bee.” (*Bhāgavatam* 10.47.11)

Someone might conjecture that reverential respect for the *gopīs* was Śukadeva’s reason for not speaking their names, but Parīkṣit here denies this by specifying that Śukadeva was *kṛṣṇa-rasāviṣṭa*, always intoxicated by the spontaneous bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It was not out of shyness that Śukadeva was reluctant to mention the *gopīs* by name; it was out of fear of losing control of himself.



तासां नाथं बलुवीनां समेतं  
ताभिः प्रेम्णा संश्रयन्ती यथोक्तम् ।  
मातः सत्यं तत्प्रसादान्महत्त्वं  
तासां ज्ञातुं शक्यसि त्वं च किञ्चित् ॥

*tāsām nātham ballavīnām sametaṁ  
tābhiḥ premṇā saṁśrayantī yathoktam  
mātaḥ satyaṁ tat-prasādān mahattvaṁ  
tāsām jñātum śakṣyasi tvam ca kiñcit*

*tāsām*—of them; *nātham*—master; *ballavīnām*—of the *gopīs*; *sametaṁ*—together; *tābhiḥ*—with them; *premṇā*—by pure love; *saṁśrayantī*—taking shelter; *yathā-uktam*—as I have described; *mātaḥ*—O mother; *satyaṁ*—truly; *tat*—His; *prasādāt*—by the mercy; *mahattvaṁ*—of greatness; *tāsām*—their; *jñātum*—to understand; *śakṣyasi*—will be able; *tvam*—you; *ca*—and; *kiñcit*—something.

**If you follow my advice and with pure love take shelter of the *gopīs* and their master, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then, O mother, I promise that by Kṛṣṇa's mercy you will be able to understand something of the *gopīs*' greatness.**

Without first scientifically understanding the special qualities of the *gopīs* that distinguish them from everyone else, one cannot develop the true desire to become a servant of the *gopīs*, nor, beyond that, can one realize the supreme truth of their ecstatic worship of Kṛṣṇa. With this idea in mind, Parīkṣit offers this promise to his mother. In what he had spoken, he could not have explained to her everything about the *gopīs*' glories, nor could she have been expected to understand completely what he had told her. To gradually realize this deep subject matter, she would have to follow the standard process of devotional meditation. First she would have to begin practicing worship of Kṛṣṇa while following in the footsteps of the *gopīs*, as her son had outlined in his narration. By this practice she would acquire some partial understanding. That understanding would help her worship become mature, which in turn would allow her to know the transcendental

reality in more detail, so that finally she would achieve the perfection of *prema-bhajana*. In this way, by worshiping the Supreme Lord one comes to know the greatness of the *gopīs*, and by knowing the greatness of the *gopīs* one advances in worship of the Lord. This *śāstra*, *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, declares throughout that pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa can be realized only by one who has specific knowledge of both the Personality of Godhead and the process of *bhakti*. Nonetheless, when one has learned the glories of the *gopīs*, the greatest of all the Lord's devotees, one will automatically understand the Lord and His devotional service without any other effort.

एतन्महाख्यानवरं महाहरेः  
 कारुण्यसारालयनिश्चयार्थकम् ।  
 यः श्रद्धया संश्रयते कथञ्चन  
 प्राप्नोति तत्प्रेम तथैव सोऽप्यरम् ॥

*etan mahākhyāna-varaṁ mahā-hareḥ  
 kāruṇya-sārālaya-niścayārthakam  
 yaḥ śraddhayā saṁśrayate kathañcana  
 prāpnoti tat-prema tathaiva so 'py aram*

*etat*—this; *mahā*—great; *ākhyāna*—narration; *varam*—excellent; *mahā-hareḥ*—about the Supreme Lord Hari; *kāruṇya*—of compassion; *sāra*—of the essence; *ālaya*—the abode; *niścaya*—definite realization; *arthakam*—which provides; *yaḥ*—whoever; *śraddhayā*—with faith; *saṁśrayate*—takes shelter; *kathañcana*—somehow or other; *prāpnoti*—he obtains; *tat*—for Him; *prema*—pure love; *tathā*—also; *eva*—indeed; *saḥ*—he; *api*—even; *aram*—quickly.

With the help of this most excellent narration about the Supreme Lord, which shows who has received the essence of the Lord's mercy, one can understand Him for certain. Anyone who for any reason takes shelter, with faith, of this narration will quickly attain love for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

To Parikṣit's promise Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now adds his own. By

taking shelter of the Supreme Lord's devotees one can understand their special glories, which further leads one to enter particular methods of devotional worship and finally attain pure love for the Lord. This sequence of perfection is wonderful enough in itself, but even more wonderful is that one can achieve the same perfection simply by hearing this *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* with faith. The purpose of this book is to make known how Śrī Kṛṣṇa-candra, the original Personality of Godhead, acts as the unlimited source of superexcellent compassion. Sincere readers will quickly rise to the goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, especially when they conscientiously follow the authorized principles of *sādhana-bhakti*.

*Thus ends the seventh chapter of Part One of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta, entitled "Pūrṇa: The Complete Perfection."*

THUS ENDS PART ONE.

## How the Commentary Derives from the DIG-DARŚINĪ-ṬĪKĀ

THIS APPENDIX CONSISTS of two sample passages, Text 121 of Chapter Six and texts 7–9 of Chapter Seven. For each passage the transliterated Sanskrit text and its translation are followed by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *ṭīkā*, split into individual sentences in transliterated Sanskrit with translation, each sentence numbered for reference. My commentary follows, with bold numbers in brackets indicating the sentences from which the commentary derives.

*tatratya yamunā svalpa-  
jalā śuṣkeva sājani  
govardhano 'bhūn nīco 'sau  
svaḥ-prāpto yo dhṛtas tvayā*

In Vraja the river Yamunā has turned so dry she has hardly any water. And Govardhana, who when You held him up touched heaven,

has now become short.

[1] *pūrvoktaṁ kṣīṇatvaṁ vivṛṇvan śoka-kāraṇatām evāha, tatreti.*

Elaborating on the previously mentioned debilitation, how it is a reason for lamentation is described in the verse beginning *tatra*.

[2] *vraja-bhūmi-sambandhinī, sā vipula-taraṅgāvalī parama-gāmbhīryādi-yuktā bhavadīya-tat-tat-krīḍā-bhūmir yamunā svalpa-jalā satī śuṣka-prāyābhūt, bhavad-viyogāt tāpāt.*

That Yamunā, who is connected with Vraja-bhūmi, who has ranges of broad waves, who is endowed with great depth and so on, and who is the playground of Your various sports, now has very little water and has become practically dried up, due to the intense suffering caused by separation from You.

[3] *atas tasyāṁ praveśena maraṇaṁ na ghaṭata iti bhāvaḥ.*

Therefore, the idea is, it is not possible to die by entering her.

[4] *bhṛgu-pātenāpi maraṇaṁ na syād ity abhiprāyeṇāha, govardhana iti.*

With the idea in mind that death by “Bhṛgu’s jump” [a suicidal leap] is also not possible, the words beginning *govardhanaḥ* are spoken.

[5] *tvayā kare dhṛtaḥ san yo govardhanaḥ svargaṁ prāpta iti paramoccatā darśitā.*

That Govardhana who reached heaven when held by You in Your hand; this shows how supremely elevated [Govardhana was].

[6] *tathā ca hari-vaṁśe, “śikharair ghūrṇamānaiś ca sīdamānaiś ca pādapaiḥ/ vidhṛtaś coddhataiḥ śṛṅgair agamaḥ kha-gamo ’bhavat” iti.*

Thus in the *Hari-vaṁśa*: “When Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana, its peaks waved back and forth, the trees upon it trembled, and its inaccessibly high peaks reached outer space.”

[7] *tathā ca tatraiva, “āpluto ’yaṁ giriḥ pakṣair iti vidyādharaḥ/ gandharvāpasarasaś caiva vāco muñcanti sarvaśaḥ” ity-ādi.*

And similarly there itself [in the same *Hari-vaṁśa*]: “Vidyādharaḥ, Uragas, Gandharvas, and Apsarās complained on all sides that this hill was bumping into their wings,” and so on.

[8] *asau nīco ’bhūt, bhavad-viraha-duḥkhena bhūmāntaḥ-praveśāt,*

*śṛṅgāvalī-śilā-caya-skhalanāc ca.*

He became low because of entering within the earth in the pain of separation from You, and also because many rocks from his rows of peaks fell down.

### COMMENTARY

[2] Śrī Yamunā, the site of many of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, was once a great, broad river with mighty waves and swift, deep-flowing currents. Now, in pain over Kṛṣṇa's absence, she had become just a trickle, diminished to almost nothing. [3] To drown oneself now in the meager water of the Yamunā would no longer be feasible. [4] Nor could one still commit suicide by jumping from the top of Govardhana. [5] Not long before, Govardhana's height had been formidable, [6] as testified in Śrī Hari-vamśa (2.18.33, 37):

*śikharair ghūrṇamānaiś ca  
sīdamānaiś ca pādapaiḥ  
vidhṛtaś coddhataiḥ śṛṅgair  
agamaḥ kha-gamo 'bhavat*

“When Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana, its peaks waved back and forth, the trees upon it trembled, and its inaccessibly high peaks reached outer space.”

[7]

*āpluto 'yam giriḥ pakṣair  
iti vidyādharaḥ uragāḥ  
gandharvāpsarasaś caiva  
vāco muñcanti sarvaśaḥ*

“Vidyādharas, Uragas, Gandharvas, and Apsarās complained on all sides that this hill was bumping into their wings.”

[8] But when Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā, Govardhana began sinking into the earth out of disappointment, and hunks of its peaks fell off and tumbled down its sides.

## CHAPTER 7, TEXTS 7–9

*śrī-brahmovāca*  
*yac chrī-vṛndāvanam madhye*  
*raivatādri-samudrayoḥ*  
*śrīman-nanda-yaśodādi-*  
*pratimālaṅkṛtāntaram*

*go-yūthais tādṛśair yuktaṁ*  
*racitaṁ viśvakarmaṇā*  
*rājate māthuraṁ sākṣād*  
*vṛndāvanam ivāgatam*

*tatremaṁ sāgrajaṁ yatnād*  
*yathāvasthaṁ śanair naya*  
*kevalaṁ yātu tatraiṣā*  
*rohiṇy anyo na kaścana*

Śrī Brahmā said: There is another Śrī Vṛndāvana here, between Raivata Hill and the sea. And Nanda, Yaśodā, and others are present within it in replica images, with similar herds of cows. That Vṛndāvana, constructed by Viśvakarmā, appears just like the Vṛndāvana of Mathurā come here to Dvārakā. So carefully take Kṛṣṇa and His brother in Their present state and gently carry Them there. But only Rohiṇī should go with Them — no one else.

[1] *raivata-ṣarvata-lavaṇa-samudrayor madhye śrī-vṛndāvanam yad rājate, tatra imaṁ śrī-bhagavantaṁ sāgrajaṁ balarāma-sahitaṁ yathāvasthaṁ mohāvasthaṁ anatikramya ata eva yatnāt chalaṁ nayeti sārḍha-dvayenānvayaḥ.*

To the Śrī Vṛndāvana which shines forth between Raivata Mountain and the salt ocean, please bring this Personality of Godhead [Kṛṣṇa] with His elder brother (that is, with Balarāma). So as to maintain Kṛṣṇa's present condition (meaning not undo His unconsciousness), please

contrive to do this carefully. Such is the logical connection of the words in the two and a half [verses—Text 7, Text 8, and the first half of Text 9].

[2] *kīdṛśaṁ tat? śrīmatām śrīmatībhir vā nandādīnām pratimābhiḥ pratikṛtibhir alaṅkṛtam antaram madhyam yasya.*

What is that [Nava-vṛndāvana] like? [It is the place] whose inside (that is, whose middle) is adorned with either splendid images (that is, models) of Nanda and others or else images of the splendid Nanda and others.

[3] *ādi-śabdena śrī-rādhikādayo gopyaḥ, śrīdāmādayo gopāś ca.*

By the word *ādi* [“and others,” in “Nanda and others”], the *gopīs* headed by Śrī Rādhikā and the cowherd boys headed by Śrīdāmā [are indicated].

[4] *tādṛśaiḥ pratimā-rūpaiḥ. atha vā, bhagavat-pālita-māthura-vraja-varti-sadṛśaiḥ.*

[And adorned with cows] like those [means] similarly appearing as models or else resembling the ones maintained by the Supreme Lord in the Vraja of Mathurā.

[5] *katham evaṁ sambhavatīty atrāha, viśvakarmaṇā racitam iti.*

“How is this possible?” In response it is said, “[The place was] manufactured by Viśvakarmā.”

[6] *anena pratimāsv api sākṣāc-chrī-nandādi-buddhiḥ syād iti dhvanitam.*

By this it is subtly implied that [Kṛṣṇa] will think that these mere models are Śrī Nanda and the others in person.

[7] *ata eva māthuram mathurā-maṇḍala-sambandhi vṛndāvanam sākṣād āgatam iva.*

Thus [this Nava-vṛndāvana will seem] like Māthura-vṛndāvana (that is, the Vṛndāvana belonging to Mathurā-maṇḍala) directly come to this place.

[8] *evaṁ tat-tan-mṛga-pakṣi-vṛkṣādayo 'pi tatra racitā vartanta iti jñeyam.*

And so it is to be understood that even the various animals, birds, trees, and so on [of the original Vṛndāvana] have been manufactured and are present there [in Nava-vṛndāvana].

[9] *tatra racita-vṛndāvane eṣā parama-subuddhi-matī kevalam ekākinī rohiṇī yātu, tasyāḥ pūrvam vraje 'pi vāsāt.*

Only the supremely intelligent Rohiṇī (that is, by herself alone) should go there (to that manufactured Vṛndāvana), since she previously resided in Vraja.

[10] *anyaś ca kaścana ko 'pi jano na yātu.*

And anyone else (that is, anyone else at all) should not go there.

### COMMENTARY

[1] Brahmā wants Garuḍa to carry Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma carefully to Nava-vṛndāvana. The two brothers should not find out that They are still in Dvārakā-dhāma, [10] and Their devotees should not be allowed to spoil the illusion by following Them. [9] Rohiṇī can come along, because she knows how to conduct herself intelligently, and especially because she used to live in Vraja-bhūmi and will therefore seem in place. [5] The replica Vṛndāvana was constructed by Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods. [2] But to duplicate the Vraja-vāsīs was beyond his skill. He couldn't make copies of unique devotees like Nanda, Yaśodā, and the other senior cowherd people, [3] Śrī Rādhikā and the other young *gopīs*, or Śrīdāmā and Kṛṣṇa's other *gopa* friends. [2] But he was able to fashion static images of the Vraja-vāsīs [6] lifelike enough to fool even Kṛṣṇa. [7] In the overall impression created, Nava-vṛndāvana was practically indistinguishable from the original, [8] down to the small details of plant and animal life.

## Variant Readings of ŚRĪ BRHAD-BHĀGAVATĀMṚTA



IN PREPARING THIS EDITION of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, I consulted three printed editions, published by the Caitanya Maṭha, by Purīdāsa Mahāśaya, and by the Saurī Prapannāśrama (see the Bibliography for details). All three editions were published in Bengali script. Listed below are the variants found among those editions. Purīdāsa additionally cites variant readings from two manuscripts he identifies only as being located in Gopīvallabha-pura and Vṛndāvana, and he occasionally cites variants without identifying their source. Apart from a few variants and several corrected typographical errors, the readings of the Purīdāsa edition notably match those of the Saurī edition, first published nineteen years earlier.

The editions and manuscripts are identified in this appendix by the following symbols:

- c Caitanya Maṭha edition
- p Purīdāsa edition
- s Saurī-prapannāśrama edition
- g Gopīvallabha-pura manuscript
- v Vṛndāvana manuscript
- u unidentified manuscript
- \* corroborated by the *Dig-darśinī* commentary

The first column of the listing gives the number for the chapter and verse of the variant, followed by a letter (a, b, c...) to indicate the *pāda* (usually, the quarter verse). (“*Uvāca*” lines are not counted.) The next column gives the reading chosen for this edition, preceded by a \* sign when the choice is shown correct by the author’s *Dig-darśinī* commentary. The last column gives the variant, preceded by one or more letters indicating its source or sources. When the variant is obviously wrong grammatically or syntactically, it is given in brackets.

Before considering variants, I have first transliterated the Sanskrit into Roman characters according to the following standards used by the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust: Pāṇini’s options for doubling consonants are never applied, the optional conversion of *anusvāra* to nasal stops is

applied always inside words and never at the end of words, *avagrahas* are indicated only at the beginning of words and only when they stand for a deleted short *a*, and hyphens are added to indicate compounded words. After transliteration, any texts that don't match count as variants.

## LISTING OF VARIANTS

1.4d	*	<i>mahitā</i>	s	[ <i>mahatā</i> ]
1.4d	*	<i>vidūrataḥ</i>	c	[ <i>vidūrata</i> ]
1.5d	*	<i>-veṇur</i>	s	[ <i>-veṇu</i> ]
1.8a	*	<i>yad-aṅghriṃ</i>	ps	<i>yad-aṅghri-</i>
1.10a		<i>śrī-kṛṣṇa-candrāya</i>	g	<i>śrī-guru-kṛṣṇāya</i>
1.12c	*	<i>su-gopyaṃ</i>	s	[ <i>su-gopaṃ</i> ]
1.12c		<i>premnā</i>	c	[ <i>premnā</i> ] / s [ <i>presnā</i> ]
1.18		<i>śrī-uttarovāca</i>	c	<i>śrīmad-uttarovāca</i>
1.18a		<i>yac chukenopadiṣṭam</i>	c	<i>yat śukenopadiṣṭam</i>
1.22a		<i>tat-kāruṇya-</i>	s	[ <i>tat-kāraṇya-</i> ]
1.26b of edition of <i>samāgataḥ</i> , but the says <i>vīpra-</i>		<i>vīpra-varyaḥ</i>	s	<i>vīpra-varaḥ</i> (The commentary p says <i>vīpra-varyaḥ</i> commentary of edition s <i>varyāḥ samāgatāḥ</i> .)
1.26d		<i>-tatparaḥ</i>	s	<i>-tatpara</i>
1.28b		<i>vastūni</i>	s	<i>vastuni</i>
1.28d		<i>mahatīm</i>	s	<i>mahatī</i>
1.35d		<i>śva-śṛgāla-</i>	c	<i>śva-śṛgālān</i>
1.35d		<i>-khaga-krimīn</i>	s	-[ <i>kha</i> ]- <i>krimīn</i>
1.38b		<i>udyatams</i>		[ <i>udyatan</i> ]
1.38c		<i>chrī-nārado</i>	s	<i>chrī-[nānārado]</i>
1.38d		<i>dṛṣṭvotthito</i>	s	[ <i>dṛṣṭvotthito</i> ]
1.40b		<i>-kṛpāyā</i>	s	<i>-kṛpayā</i>
1.40c		<i>loke</i>	c	[ <i>lokṛe</i> ]
1.43b		<i>nanv</i>	c	<i>na tv</i>
1.55d		<i>ramayat</i>	ps	[ <i>ramayasy</i> ]
1.57d		<i>toṣayet</i>	ps	[ <i>toṣaya</i> ]
1.64a		<i>l'pāyūṣaṃ</i>	s	[ <i>l'pāyūṣaṃ</i> ]
2.4b		<i>-psarobhir</i>	s	[- <i>psaror</i> ]

2.4b		vividhaiḥ	c	[vividhai]
2.6d		mahā-mudā	s	[maha]-mudā
2.9a		kṛtānukampitas	c	kṛtānukalpitas
2.14a		svarga-rājyasya	c	svarga-rājasya
2.15c		sūryendv-ādy-	ps	sūryendrādy-
2.17a		tāñ chatrūn	ps	tān śatrūn
2.17d		rājyaṃ	s	[rājya]
2.21a		trai-lokya-grāsa-	c	trai-lokya-trāsa-
2.26b		rudra-viṣṇu-	c	viṣṇu-rudra-
2.29a		ṇuryāṃ	c	[pūryāṃ]
2.31cd		yasyāś ca catur-	c	yasyāhaś catur- / p [yasyāś catur-]
2.32c		ṣaṣṭy-uttarā	s	[ṣaṣṭhy]-uttarā
2.32d	*	śrutam	c	smṛtam
2.43c		-carcārthaṃ	c	-caryārthaṃ
2.44c	*	mahima-śravaṇākhyāna-	c	mahimāśravaṇākhyāna-
2.46c		prajāpati-patir yos		prajā-patir yo
2.49a		niśchidra-	ps	niśchidraḥ
2.51a		sākṣān	c	sākṣād
2.55c	*	'ṣṭa-	s	['ṣṭra-]
2.59b		mohitās	s	[mohityas]
2.63b		kārayāmi	s	[kāranāmi]
2.63d		tasya vā na kva	s	vā na kva
2.65a		buddhyasva	c	[buddhyasva]
2.65b	*	bhakty-eka-	ps	bhaktyaika-
2.66a		dūre	s	[dūye]
2.68b		saṃhṛto	s	[sat-hṛto]
2.75d		duṣṭāḥ kālīya-	c	[duṣṭā kaliya-]
2.80a		'smīn	s	'smīms
2.80b		tādṛñ	s	tādṛg
2.82a		viṣayiṇo	c	[viṣayino]
2.83c		-gopānāśaktaḥ	c	-gopānāsaktaḥ
2.87b		mayāt	c	bhayāt
2.88a		śivaḥ samuddhṛto...	c	puts this couplet in the
previous verse				
2.88e	*	cāsyā	p	vāsyā / s [vāhasyā]
2.97cd		saṃāna-mahima-...	s	puts this couplet in the
next verse				
2.98ef		nijeṣṭa-...	p	puts this couplet in the next verse

2.99a		<i>bhavāñ chaktaḥ</i>	ps	<i>bhavān śaktaḥ</i>
2.100d	*	<i>prayātaḥ</i>	s	[ <i>prayāta</i> ]
3.5d		<i>vaiṣṇavaika-priyo</i>	c	<i>vaikuṇṭhasya priyam</i>
3.10b		<i>sa-krodham</i>	ps	<i>saṅkrodham</i>
3.11		<i>śrī-rudra uvāca</i>	c	has this line missing
3.14b		<i>tvad-anugrahaḥ</i>	c	<i>tad-anugrahaḥ</i>
3.18d	*	<i>nopekṣeta</i>	p	<i>nāpekṣeta</i> / s [ <i>nāpekṣata</i> ]
3.23a		<i>sadyo</i>	c	[ <i>sadya</i> ]
3.23d		<i>durāpām</i>	c	[ <i>durāpām</i> ]
3.28a		<i>-duṣprāpye</i>	c	<i>duṣprāpe</i>
3.29c		<i>'nyaḥ</i>	s	[ <i>'nyam</i> ]
3.36d	*	<i>tādṛśeśvaraḥ</i>	c	<i>tvādṛśeśvaraḥ</i>
3.38d		<i>tāmasa-sva-prayojanāt</i>	c	<i>tāmasaṁ sva-prayojanāt</i> /
s <i>tāmasa-</i>				[ <i>mva</i> ]- <i>prayojanāt</i>
3.40a		<i>mām kim</i>	c	<i>kim mām</i>
3.41b		<i>hṛṣṭa-vat</i>	v	<i>kṛṣṇa-vat</i>
3.44b		<i>-varjitam</i>	psv	<i>-varjitāḥ</i>
3.45d		<i>hari-sārṣṭim</i>	s	<i>harer sārṣṭim</i>
3.50a	*	<i>mahā-mudāśrāntam</i>	c	<i>mahā-madāśrāntam</i>
3.51c		<i>nārhet</i>	c	[ <i>nārhet</i> ]
3.57b	*	<i>veda-margātigā</i>	u	<i>veda-dharmātigā</i>
3.60b		<i>sthitiḥ</i>	ps	[ <i>sthiti</i> ]
3.60c		<i>vaikuṇṭho</i>	c	<i>vaikuṇṭha-</i>
3.64		<i>śrī-pārvaty uvāca</i>	s	<i>śrī-[pārvatī] uvāca</i>
3.69b		<i>jayateti</i>	s	[ <i>jarateti</i> ]
3.77a		<i>ātyantikīm vāpi</i>	c	<i>cātyantikīm cāpi</i>
3.81a		<i>varān</i>	c	<i>vārān</i>
3.82b	*	<i>gurv-ādeśākṛto</i>	ps	<i>gurv-[ādeśa-kṛto]</i>
3.82d		<i>satyatāntasya yad</i>	p	<i>satyatāntasya ca yad</i>
3.83a		<i>avasthānam</i>	c	[ <i>avasthanām</i> ]
3.84	p	gives, after this verse, an additional verse, in parentheses: <i>garbha-stho yady api tvat ke-/ nopadeśena bhaktimān</i> <i>sa jātas tad api tvaṁ ca/ tasmāt sukham avāpsyasi</i> (See the commentary to 3.84 for the translation.)		
3.86c		<i>syās</i>	c	<i>syāt</i>
4.1b		<i>sandarśana-jāta-</i>	s	[ <i>sandarśa-kautukaḥ na-jāta</i> ] <i>kautukaḥ</i>

4.1d		<i>puram</i>	p	[ <i>param</i> ]	
4.3d		<i>harṣāśram</i>	s	<i>harṣāśrum</i>	
4.4c		<i>ā-bālyato</i>	p	[ <i>ā-bālyāto</i> ]	
4.9b	*	<i>utsrjyamānaṁ</i>	c	[ <i>utsrjyamānām</i> ]	
4.11a		<i>-dṛṣṭyai</i>	ps	<i>dṛṣṭair</i>	
4.15a		<i>-sahanāśakto</i>	s	[ <i>-sahanāśakte</i> ]	
4.16		<i>śrī-prahlāda uvāca</i>	g		gives, after this line, an
additional line:					
				<i>om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya</i>	
4.17d		<i>mahimāpādakāni</i>	na	c	<i>mahimāpādakāni ca</i>
4.18d		<i>mokṣasyānanaṅgī-</i>		c	[ <i>mokṣānanaṅgī-</i> ]
4.26d	*	<i>kṛpānuś</i>	c	<i>kṛpāluś</i>	
4.28d		<i>dhig dhiṅ</i>		c	<i>dhig dhig</i>
4.32a	*	<i>baddhvā</i>	s	[ <i>baddhā</i> ]	
4.32a		<i>saṁrakṣitasyātra</i>	c		<i>saṁrakṣya tasyātra</i>
4.32b		<i>rodhanāyāsty asau</i>		s	[ <i>rodhanāyāstāsau</i> ]
4.45b	*	<i>śveta-cchatrika-</i>	ps		<i>śveta-cchatrita-</i>
4.51a		<i>dāsyē</i>	c	<i>dāsyā</i>	
4.52d		<i>hanūmate</i>		c	<i>hanumate</i>
4.59c		<i>hanūmān</i>		c	<i>hanumān</i>
4.62b		<i>śrī-hanumatā</i>		c	<i>śrī-hanumatā</i>
4.65ab		<i>dhvaja-cchatraṁ</i>	c		[ <i>dhvajah</i> ] <i>chatraṁ</i>
4.67c		<i>imaṁ</i>		c	<i>imām</i>
4.69c		<i>pradīpitādo-</i>		c	<i>pradīpitādau</i>
4.69d		<i>rudan śucārto</i>		c	<i>rudañ chucārto</i>
4.70b	*	<i>-padāmbujaiḥ</i>		c	<i>-padāmbujaiḥ</i>
4.71b	*	<i>tyajyēya</i>	c		<i>tyajeya</i>
4.72a		<i>-saubhāgya-hetoś ca</i>		c	<i>-saubhāgyato yaś ca</i>
4.75b		<i>-viṣādy-āpad-</i>		c	<i>viṣeṣāpad-</i>
4.79d		<i>sa-hūṅkṛtam</i>		c	<i>sa-hūṅkṛtam</i>
4.84a		<i>mātaḥ</i>		c	[ <i>nātaḥ</i> ]
4.86b		<i>pārthānām</i>		s	[ <i>pārthānaṁ</i> ]
4.88d		<i>dāsānām</i>		c	<i>dānānām</i>
4.105a		<i>asya vasāmy atra</i>	c		<i>atra vasāmy asya</i>
4.107a		<i>mad-viṣaya-</i>		s	<i>mad-viṣayaka-</i>
4.111a		<i>niṣpṛhāḥ</i>	cs		<i>niḥspṛhāḥ</i>
5.1a		<i>tatra</i>		c	<i>tataḥ</i>
5.2c		<i>ānāyya</i>		s	<i>ānayya</i>

5.5c		-chvaśurān	p	[-chaśurān]
5.5d		ārcayat	s	[arcayat]
5.6a		hanūmad-gaditaṁ	c	hanumad-gaditaṁ
5.10d	*	upasthāna-parāḥ	s	upasthāna-[parām]
5.15c		dīyamāno 'bhūn	c	dīyamānābhūn
5.15d		mokṣaḥ sthitir	c	mokṣa-sthitir
5.18a		jāmbuvān	c	jāmbavān
5.19d		preṇṇo	c	[preṇno]
5.23a		te kurukṣetra-	cs	taṁ kurukṣetra-
5.23c	*	bhaktiṁ taṁ	c	bhaktitaḥ
5.25b	*	varṇyo	s	[varṇo]
5.31c	*	uccārayaivaiśāṁ	c	uccāraye eśāṁ
5.32		śrī-nārada uvāca	c	has this line missing
5.32a		bhavatāṁ tu	s	bhavatāstu
5.34b		yac-chravaṇena	p	[yac-chavaṇena]
5.35d		rakṣyate	ps	[rakṣate]
5.42c	*	-bandhuḥ sva-janā	c	-bandhu-sva-janā / ps -
bandhuḥ sa-janā				
5.43a		kaurava-saṁsadaṁ	c	kaurava-sampadaṁ
5.45b		niḥśvasan	c	niśvasan
5.46a	*	vāvadūka-	p	vācaspati-
5.48c		vinānnaṁ	p	vinānyaṁ
5.49a		ato	c	tato
5.50a	*	lokayanto yato lokāḥ	ps	loko 'yaṁ tu yato [lokā]
5.51b	*	tvat-padāmbujamp		tat-padāmbujam
5.52b		vināśya	c	vinaśya
5.52d		śoko 'bhūt	s	[śoka 'bhūta]
5.54b		-saṅgateḥ	c	-saṅgatiḥ
5.56b		asau	s	[amau]
5.57b		ikṣyate	c	[ikṣate]
5.57c		bhūri-bhāra-	c	bhūmi-bhāra-
5.60		śrī-parīkṣid uvāca	c	has this line
missing				
5.60d		niḥśvasan	c	niśvasan / s [niḥśvan]
5.68b		na tat sukham	v	ca yat sukham
5.68d		bodhanāt	cv	bodhayet
5.69a		sarvathāps		sarvadā
5.70d		para-brahmaṇaḥ	s	[para-brahmaṇam]

5.72b		<i>puṇyādy c</i>	<i>puṇyād</i>
5.76		<i>śrī-kṛṣṇovāca</i>	<i>s [śrī-kṛṣṇā uvāca]</i>
5.78c		<i>kintv aicchaṁ</i>	<i>c kiṁ caicchaṁ</i>
5.78c		<i>prāptum p</i>	<i>[prāpnum] / s [prāpṇṛm]</i>
5.78c		<i>ātmeṣṭaṁ</i>	<i>s [ātmeṣṭaṁ]</i>
5.86c		<i>vihāyāsmān</i>	<i>s [vihāyāsmāna]</i>
5.86d		<i>avasthitam</i>	<i>s [avasthitama]</i>
5.87c		<i>śighra- cs</i>	<i>śighraṁ</i>
5.88b		<i>cāvalambyate</i>	<i>p cāvalambate</i>
5.89c	*	<i>tvam eva</i>	<i>ps tam eva</i>
5.95b	*	<i>cakāśataḥ</i>	<i>p [cakāśataḥ]</i>
5.95c		<i>pratikṣamāṇān</i>	<i>c [pratikṣyamāṇān]</i>
5.98d	*	<i>āsata c</i>	<i>[āsataḥ]</i>
5.99c		<i>sāñjalir c</i>	<i>sāñjalim</i>
5.100		<i>śrī-nārada uvāca c</i>	has this line missing
5.102b	*	<i>vasatiḥ cps</i>	<i>vasati</i>
5.106d		<i>kṛṣṇa-premṇā</i>	<i>c [kṛṣṇa-premnā]</i>
5.109a		<i>bhavantam sa</i>	<i>c bhavantam yan</i>
5.113a		<i>pati-naipuṇya</i>	<i>s pati-[nnaipuṇya]</i>
5.114d		<i>nirupādhi-</i>	<i>s [nirūpādhi-]</i>
5.115b		<i>-mātro 'khilārtha-daḥ</i>	<i>c -mātrākhilārtha-daḥ</i>
5.117d	*	<i>tv asminn</i>	<i>s tasminn</i>
5.124b	*	<i>prapatti- ps</i>	<i>pravṛtti- (give both readings)</i>
5.125b		<i>-paṭṭāṁśuka-</i>	<i>c [-paṭṭyāṁśuka-]</i>
5.127c	*	<i>jñātvokto</i>	<i>s [jyātvoktā]</i>
5.129b		<i>-sthitim c</i>	<i>[stitim]</i>
5.130		<i>c</i>	has this first line: <i>śrī-parikṣid uvāca</i>
5.130d	*	<i>-yantraṇām</i>	<i>p -mantraṇām</i>
5.131b	*	<i>uddhavaś ca</i>	<i>ps uddhavasya</i>
5.131c	*	<i>tat-pārśva-</i>	<i>s tat-[pārśa]-</i>
6.2a		<i>-dvāravatī-vāsā-</i>	<i>c -dvāravatāvāsā-</i>
6.13a		<i>-bharaika-</i>	<i>s -bhavaika-</i>
6.13b	*	<i>saṅgamayadhvam</i>	<i>c [saṅgamayadhvay] / p</i>
[saṅga-madhvam]			
6.13c		<i>bhavet c</i>	<i>bharet</i>
6.14b		<i>anugrahaṁ</i>	<i>s [anugrahat]</i>
6.16d		<i>mahimnām vyañjakāny</i>	<i>c mahima-vyañjakāny</i>
6.16d		<i>alam s</i>	<i>[alama]</i>

6.18b		mamākramya	cv	samākramya
6.19c	*	nidhāyāñke	p	vidhāyāñke
6.25c		tat-premṇo	c	[tat-premno]
6.27d		virāmam	s	[virāmama]
6.28c		-gokula-vāsenā	s	-gokula-bālena
6.37e		ko vā nopadravas...	c	puts this couplet in the
next verse				
6.43		padmāvaty uvāca	c	śrī-padmāvaty uvāca
6.46d		saṁśṛṇoti	cg	saṁvṛṇoti
6.48d		bhavad-īśvaraḥ	v	bhavatīśvaraḥ
6.50ef		yūyaṁ śṛṇuta...	ps	place this couplet in parentheses /
c gives				this couplet separately
6.51a		nāmabhir	c	[nāmabhiḥ]
6.51d		tri-bhaṅgi-	c	tri-bhaṅga-
6.57d		baladevoc		balarāmo
6.59a		sthitvā	c	sthitā
6.61a		kātaryād gaditaṁ	v	kātāryākulitaṁ
6.65d	*	vidīryati	c	vidīryate
6.67d	*	mṛdulātmanām	s	[mṛdulātmam]
6.72c		yadu-vaṁśyaika-	c	yadu-[vaṁśy]-eka-
6.73		padmāvaty uvāca	c	śrī-padmāvaty uvāca
6.74a		yuvābhyāṁ	c	has this word missing
6.75b		kaṇāṇuśaḥ	c	[kaṇānuśaḥ]
6.78d		jagāda	c	[jagada]
6.79d		amutra	c	[amūtra]
6.81a		nandasya	c	[sandasya]
6.81d		śug-ambudhau	cv	śucāmbudhau
6.83ab		dhig dhik tiṣṭhet	c	[dhik] dhik tiṣṭhet
6.86d		amūn	s	[amun]
6.92b	*	viśayāśrayāḥ	s	[viyayāśrayāḥ]
6.94d		'yācata	c	'yācataḥ
6.99b		hum hum	c	hūm hum
6.107b		-kṛtāly-āvalī-	c	-kṛtāly-āvali-
6.111b		nāste	c	nāsti
6.112		vṛddhovāca	c	śrī-vṛddhovāca
6.112a		bāle 'ti-vācāle	c	bāleti vācāle
6.115b	*	buddhvā	s	[buddhā]
6.119b		nānukampate	c	no 'nukampate



6.120b		<i>kāliyo hradaḥ</i>	c	<i>kāliya-hradaḥ</i>
6.121d	*	<i>svaḥ-prāpto</i>	s	[ <i>svapnāpto</i> ]
6.122d		<i>bhavitā</i>	s	<i>bhāvitā</i>
6.124b	*	<i>cāpūrva-vṛttāt</i>	c	<i>cāpūrva-vṛttām</i>
6.124c	*	<i>-madanasū-</i>	p	<i>-madanabhū- / s [-madanasu-]</i>
6.124d		<i>-duḥsthatānubhavataś</i>	s	<i>-duḥsthatānubhavaś</i>
6.125a		<i>'purā-kalitām ākrandaṁ</i>	c	<i>'py apurā kalitākrandam</i>
7.16a		<i>antarhito</i>	c	<i>antar hṛto</i>
7.16b		<i>baddhvaikaṁ</i>	s	<i>baddhaikaṁ</i>
7.19d		<i>hastayoḥcv</i>		<i>kakṣayoḥ</i>
7.24a		<i>paśyantyas</i>	ps	[ <i>paśyantas</i> ]
7.30b		<i>duṣṭāḥ</i>	c	<i>dṛṣṭāḥ</i>
7.35b		<i>tan-nidrādhikya-</i>	c	<i>tvan-nidrādhikya-</i>
7.40c		<i>labdhvā</i>	c	[ <i>labdhavā</i> ]
7.40d		<i>sanarma-smitam</i>	c	<i>sanarma-[smitar]</i>
7.41b		<i>ekākinam</i>	c	<i>ekāntinam</i>
7.43d		<i>udyatānām</i>	c	[ <i>udyatīnām</i> ]
7.47c		<i>mahā-premṇā</i>	c	[ <i>mahā-premnā</i> ]
7.48c		<i>adhāvad</i>	c	[ <i>adhāvat</i> ]
7.48d	*	<i>dhartuṁ hariṁ bāhu-</i>	s	<i>dhartuṁ bāhu-</i>
7.50d	*	<i>sakhīn</i>	p	[ <i>sakhān</i> ] / s [ <i>sakhāna</i> ]
7.60		<i>śrī-ṣarīkṣid uvāca</i>	c	[ <i>śrī-baladeva uvāca</i> ]
7.66d		<i>tat sa-hetukam</i>	s	<i>taṁ sa-hetukam</i>
7.68c		<i>tārksyam</i>	c	[ <i>tākṣyam</i> ]
7.74d		<i>jāmbavaty-ādayo</i>	c	[ <i>jambavaty-ādayo</i> ]
7.78c		<i>asmin</i>	c	<i>tasmin</i>
7.82b		<i>anapekṣamāṇāḥ</i>	p	<i>anapekṣyamāṇāḥ</i>
7.83a		<i>yā no</i>	p	<i>yā nau</i>
7.84d	*	<i>yat prabhoḥ</i>	c	<i>mat-prabhoḥ</i>
7.86c		<i>samānīyatām</i>	c	<i>samādīyatām</i>
7.91a		<i>vraja-janeṣv</i>	c	[ <i>vrajaneṣv</i> ]
7.95b	*	<i>labdhā</i>	c	<i>labdhvā</i>
7.97d		<i>-viyoga-vahner</i>	s	<i>-viyoga-[vahne]</i>
7.98c	*	<i>sa-cumbanam</i>	c	[ <i>sa-cumbanaḥ</i> ]
7.102b		<i>darpaṁ saṁharatā</i>	c	<i>darpa-saṁharatā</i>
7.103d		<i>agām</i>	c	[ <i>agāt</i> ]
7.113c		<i>yā tu</i>	c	<i>yā tad-</i>
7.115d		<i>priyā</i>	c	[ <i>priya</i> ]

7.117b		tādṛṇ-	ps	tādṛg-
7.119b		bhaiṣmy-ādayo	c	[bhaiṣmādayo]
7.119b		mūrdhabhiḥ	c	[mūrdhabhiḥ]
7.119d	*	aśīśamaṁś	ps	aśīśamac
7.121a		baladevaṁ	c	balarāmaṁ
7.131d		vṛṇu	p	śṛṇu
7.134c		evaṁ	c	etat
7.135d		preṁṇi	c	[preṁni]
7.136d		preṁṇāṁ	c	[preṁnāṁ]
7.138a		samāpta-sarvārthā	p	samasta-sarvārthā
7.143c		-veśācarita-	c	-veśācarita-
7.144c		hṛdā	c	dṛśā
7.146ab		parānandārṇave	s	[parānandarṇave]
7.146b		munir	c	[muni]
7.152d	*	sadyo jahur	p	sarvaṁ jahur
7.153a		paramaṁ dainyam	c	parama-dainyam
7.159b		preṁṇā	c	[preṁnā]
7.158d		prabhuḥ	s	[prabhu]

FOR SOME VERSES of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary gives a text that varies from the one given in the *Bhāgavatam* edition published by the BBT. For each variant reading, column 1 lists the number of the *Bhāgavatam* verse, and (in parentheses) the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* text (or texts) in whose commentary the verse is cited. (A citation given in the text itself is underlined.) Column 2 gives the first words of the cited verse, column 3 the variant words according to *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, and column 4 the corresponding words in the BBT edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. When the first two columns are blank they indicate additional variants in the same verse.

verse	starting	brhad-bhag.bbt edition	
1.10.26 (5.41, 7.99)	aho alam	priyaḥ śriyaḥ	śriyaḥ patih
1.12.4 (4.112)	apīpalad	niṣpṛhaḥ	niḥspṛhaḥ
2.4.18 (7.74–75)	kirāta-hūṇāndhra-	pukkaśā	-pulkaśā
	-kaṅkā	-śumbhā	
	khaśādayaḥ	khasādayaḥ	

- 2.7.34 (5.21) *ye ca pralamba- -dardūra- -dardura-  
kuja-pauṇḍrakādyāḥ kapi-pauṇḍrakādyāḥ  
śālva-kapi- śālva-kuja-  
-sambara- -śambara-*
- 3.10.8 (2.34) *padma-kośam bhagavac-chakti- bhagavat-karma-*
- 3.15.19 (3.48) *mandāra-kunda- gandhair yute gandhe 'rcite*
- 7.9.52 (4.9) *prahlāda bhadra prahlāda prahrāda*
- 7.10.48 (4.78) *yūyam nṛ-loke lokān lokam*
- 8.19.28 (3.82–83) *ity uktaḥ hasan prāha hasann āha*
- 8.23.6 (4.13) *nemaṁ viriṇco utāpare ye utāpare 'nye*
- 8.23.9 (3.85) *vatsa prahlāda prahlāda prahrāda*
- 9.4.64 (3.77, *nāham ātmānam śriyam ātyantikīm śriyam  
cātyantikīm*
- 3.84) *vāpi brahman 9.4.66 (3.77) mayi nirbaddha-  
sama-darśinaḥ sama-darśaṇāḥ*
- 9.11.18 (4.40) *ata ūrdhvaṁ ata tata*
- 9.11.36 (4.40) *bubhuje ca kāmam anyān kāmān dharmam*
- verse starting *brhad-bhag.bbt edition*
- 10.1.23 (5.11) *vasudeva-gr̥he sambhavantv amara-  
samabhavantu sura-*
- 10.2.24 (5.29) *āsinaḥ saṁviśaṁs piban mahīm*
- 10.8.49 (7.76–78) *jātayor nau loko loke*
- 10.30.15 (7.158) *kasyāścit kasyāścit kasyācit  
rudanty rudaty*
- 10.30.26 (7.158) *tais taiḥ padaiḥ anvicchanto anvicchantyo*
- 10.44.16 (7.40) *prātar vrajād nirgatya nirgamya*
- 10.47.11 (7.158) *kācin madhukaram vīkṣya dṛṣṭvā*
- 10.47.29 (6.90) *bhavatīnām viyogotathā cāham tathāham ca  
buddhīndriya- bhūtendriya-*

10.48.32 (5.33) *sa bhavān gajasāhvayam tvaṁ gajāhvayam*  
 10.52.43 (7.101) *yasyāṅghri- vrata-kṛśā vrata-kṛśān*  
 10.62.6 (3.82–83) *doḥ-sahasram lebhe labhe*  
 10.84.26 (5.22–23) *tasyādyā te -kośāś cāpur-kośā āpur*  
 10.90.15 (7.96) *kurari vilāpasi nirbhinna- nirviddha-*  
 10.90.40 (5.96) *yadu-vaṁśa- varṣa-śatair varṣāyutair*  
 10.90.46 (5.106) *śayyāsanāṭanālāpa- snānāśanādiṣu*  
*snānādi-karmasu*  
 11.2.1 (4.79) *govinda-bhuja- dvārakāyāṁ dvāravatīyāṁ*  
 11.5.48 (5.29) *vaireṇa yaṁ ākṛti-dhiyaḥ ākṛta-dhiyaḥ*

## PART ONE

*Śrī-bhagavat-kṛpā-sāra-nidhāra*

Finding the Essence of the Supreme Lord's Mercy

THE VERSES QUOTED in the commentary for this volume are listed here, in English alphabetical order. An entry appears for each set of two *pādas* (that is, usually for each half verse). In each entry, first comes the first few words. Then comes the source from which the verse has been cited. (The verse number is included except in the few instances where we have been unable to locate it. When we have been unable to find the source of a verse, we have left the space for it blank. A list of abbreviations for source scriptures is given below.) Finally comes the chapter-verse reference for the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* text or texts in whose commentary the verse is quoted.

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**SB 10.24.1 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:** While staying in that very place with His brother Baladeva, Lord Kṛṣṇa happened to see the cowherd men busily arranging for a sacrifice to Indra.

**SB 10.24.2 -** Being the omniscient Supersoul, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa already understood the situation, yet He still humbly inquired from the

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elders, headed by His father, Nanda Mahārāja.

SB 10.24.3 - [Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear father, kindly explain to Me what this great endeavor of yours is all about. What is it meant to accomplish? If this is a ritual sacrifice, then for whose satisfaction is it intended and by what means is it going to be executed?

SB 10.24.4 - Please tell Me about it, O father. I have a great desire to know and am ready to hear in good faith. Certainly, no secrets are to be kept by saintly personalities, who see all others as equal to themselves, who have no conception of "mine" or "another's" and who do not consider who is a friend, who is an enemy and who is neutral.

SB 10.24.5 - One who is neutral may be avoided like an enemy, but a friend should be considered like one's own self.

SB 10.24.6 - When people in this world perform activities, sometimes they understand what they are doing and sometimes they don't. Those who know what they are doing achieve success in their work, whereas ignorant people do not.

SB 10.24.7 - Such being the case, this ritualistic endeavor of yours should be clearly explained to Me. Is it a ceremony based on scriptural injunction, or simply a custom of ordinary society?

SB 10.24.8 - Nanda Mahārāja replied: The great Lord Indra is the controller of the rain. The clouds are his personal representatives, and they directly provide rainwater, which gives happiness and sustenance to all creatures.

SB 10.24.9 - Not only we, my dear son, but also many other men worship him, the lord and master of the rain-giving clouds. We offer him grain

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and other paraphernalia of worship produced through his own discharge in the form of rain.

SB 10.24.10 - By accepting the remnants of sacrifices performed to Indra, people sustain their lives and accomplish the threefold aims of religiosity, economic development and sense gratification. Thus Lord Indra is the agent responsible for the fruitive success of industrious people.

SB 10.24.11 - This religious principle is based on sound tradition. Anyone who rejects it out of lust, enmity, fear or greed will certainly fail to achieve good fortune.

SB 10.24.12 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Keśava [Kṛṣṇa] heard the statements of His father, Nanda, and other senior residents of Vraja, He addressed His father as follows, to arouse anger in Lord Indra.

SB 10.24.13 - Lord Kṛṣṇa said: It is by the force of karma that a living entity takes birth, and it is by karma alone that he meets his destruction. His happiness, distress, fear and sense of security all arise as the effects of karma.

SB 10.24.14 - Even if there is some supreme controller who awards all others the results of their activities, He must also depend upon a performer's engaging in activity. After all, there is no question of being the bestower of fruitive results unless fruitive activities have actually been performed.

SB 10.24.15 - Living beings in this world are forced to experience the consequences of their own particular previous work. Since Lord Indra cannot in any way change the destiny of human beings, which is born of their own nature, why should people worship him?

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SB 10.24.16 - Every individual is under the control of his own conditioned nature, and thus he must follow that nature. This entire universe, with all its demigods, demons and human beings, is based on the conditioned nature of the living entities.

SB 10.24.17 - Because it is karma that causes the conditioned living entity to accept and then give up different high-and low-grade material bodies, this karma is his enemy, friend and neutral witness, his spiritual master and controlling lord.

SB 10.24.18 - Therefore one should seriously worship work itself. A person should remain in the position corresponding to his nature and should perform his own duty. Indeed, that by which we may live nicely is really our worshipable deity.

SB 10.24.19 - If one thing is actually sustaining our life but we take shelter of something else, how can we achieve any real benefit? We would be like an unfaithful woman, who can never achieve any actual benefit by consorting with her paramour.

SB 10.24.20 - The brāhmaṇa maintains his life by studying and teaching the Vedas, the member of the royal order by protecting the earth, the vaiśya by trade, and the śūdra by serving the higher, twice-born classes.

SB 10.24.21 - The occupational duties of the vaiśya are conceived in four divisions: farming, commerce, cow protection and moneylending. Out of these, we as a community are always engaged in cow protection.

SB 10.24.22 - The causes of creation, maintenance and destruction are the three modes of nature-namely goodness, passion and ignorance. In particular, the mode of passion creates this universe and through sexual combination causes it to become full of variety.

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SB 10.24.23 - Impelled by the material mode of passion, the clouds pour down their rain everywhere, and by this rain all creatures gain their sustenance. What has the great Indra to do with this arrangement?

SB 10.24.24 - My dear father, our home is not in the cities or towns or villages. Being forest dwellers, we always live in the forest and on the hills.

SB 10.24.25 - Therefore may a sacrifice for the pleasure of the cows, the brāhmaṇas and Govardhana Hill begin! With all the paraphernalia collected for worshiping Indra, let this sacrifice be performed instead.

SB 10.24.26 - Let many different kinds of food be cooked, from sweet rice to vegetable soups! Many kinds of fancy cakes, both baked and fried, should be prepared. And all the available milk products should be taken for this sacrifice.

SB 10.24.27 - The brāhmaṇas who are learned in the Vedic mantras must properly invoke the sacrificial fires. Then you should feed the priests with nicely prepared food and reward them with cows and other gifts.

SB 10.24.28 - After giving the appropriate food to everyone else, including such fallen souls as dogs and dog-eaters, you should give grass to the cows and then present your respectful offerings to Govardhana Hill.

SB 10.24.29 - After everyone has eaten to his satisfaction, you should all dress and decorate yourselves handsomely, smear your bodies with sandalwood paste and then circumambulate the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the sacrificial fires and Govardhana Hill.



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SB 10.24.30 - This is My idea, O father, and you may carry it out if it appeals to you. Such a sacrifice will be very dear to the cows, the brāhmaṇas and Govardhana Hill, and also to Me.

SB 10.24.31 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself powerful time, desired to destroy the false pride of Lord Indra. When Nanda and the other senior men of Vṛndāvana heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa's statement, they accepted His words as proper.

SB 10.24.32-33 - The cowherd community then did all that Madhusūdana had suggested. They arranged for the brāhmaṇas to recite the auspicious Vedic mantras, and using the paraphernalia that had been intended for Indra's sacrifice, they presented offerings to Govardhana Hill and the brāhmaṇas with reverential respect. They also gave grass to the cows. Then, placing the cows, bulls and calves in front of them, they circumambulated Govardhana.

SB 10.24.34 - As the beautifully ornamented cowherd ladies followed along, riding on wagons drawn by oxen, they sang the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and their songs mingled with the brāhmaṇas' chanting of benedictions.

SB 10.24.35 - Kṛṣṇa then assumed an unprecedented, huge form to instill faith in the cowherd men. Declaring "I am Govardhana Mountain!" He ate the abundant offerings.

SB 10.24.36 - Together with the people of Vraja, the Lord bowed down to this form of Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to Himself. Then He said, "Just see how this hill has appeared in person and bestowed mercy upon us!"

SB 10.24.37 - "This Govardhana Hill, assuming any form he wishes, will

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kill any residents of the forest who neglect him. Therefore let us pay our obeisances to him for the safety of ourselves and our cows."

SB 10.24.38 - The members of the cowherd community, having thus been inspired by Lord Vāsudeva to properly execute the sacrifice to Govardhana Hill, the cows and the brāhmaṇas, returned with Lord Kṛṣṇa to their village, Vraja.

SB 10.25.1 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King Parīkṣit, when Indra understood that his sacrifice had been put aside, he became furious with Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men, who were accepting Kṛṣṇa as their Lord.

SB 10.25.2 - Angry Indra sent forth the clouds of universal destruction, known as Sāṁvartaka. Imagining himself the supreme controller, he spoke as follows.

SB 10.25.3 - [Indra said:] Just see how these cowherd men living in the forest have become so greatly intoxicated by their prosperity! They have surrendered to an ordinary human being, Kṛṣṇa, and thus they have offended the gods.

SB 10.25.4 - Their taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa is just like the foolish attempt of men who abandon transcendental knowledge of the self and instead try to cross over the great ocean of material existence in the false boats of fruitive, ritual sacrifices.

SB 10.25.5 - These cowherd men have acted inimically toward me by taking shelter of this ordinary human being, Kṛṣṇa, who thinks Himself very wise but who is simply a foolish, arrogant, overtalkative child.

SB 10.25.6 - [To the clouds of destruction King Indra said:] The

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prosperity of these people has made them mad with pride, and their arrogance is backed up by Kṛṣṇa. Now go and remove their pride and bring their animals to destruction.

SB 10.25.7 - I will follow you to Vraja, riding on my elephant Airāvata and taking with me the swift and powerful wind-gods to decimate the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja.

SB 10.25.8 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: On Indra's order the clouds of universal destruction, released untimely from their bonds, went to the cowherd pastures of Nanda Mahārāja. There they began to torment the inhabitants by powerfully pouring down torrents of rain upon them.

SB 10.25.9 - Propelled by the fearsome wind-gods, the clouds blazed with lightning bolts and roared with thunder as they hurled down hailstones.

SB 10.25.10 - As the clouds released torrents of rain as thick as massive columns, the earth was submerged in the flood, and high ground could no longer be distinguished from low.

SB 10.25.11 - The cows and other animals, shivering from the excessive rain and wind, and the cowherd men and ladies, pained by the cold, all approached Lord Govinda for shelter.

SB 10.25.12 - Trembling from the distress brought about by the severe rainfall, and trying to cover their heads and calves with their own bodies, the cows approached the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

SB 10.25.13 - [The cowherd men and women addressed the Lord:] Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O most fortunate one, please deliver the cows from the wrath of Indra! O Lord, You are so affectionate to Your devotees. Please save us

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also.

SB 10.25.14 - Seeing the inhabitants of His Gokula rendered practically unconscious by the onslaught of hail and blasting wind, the Supreme Lord Hari understood that this was the work of angry Indra.

SB 10.25.15 - [Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Himself:] Because We have stopped his sacrifice, Indra has caused this unusually fierce, unseasonable rain, together with terrible winds and hail.

SB 10.25.16 - By My mystic power I will completely counteract this disturbance caused by Indra. Demigods like Indra are proud of their opulence, and out of foolishness they falsely consider themselves the Lord of the universe. I will now destroy such ignorance.

SB 10.25.17 - Since the demigods are endowed with the mode of goodness, the false pride of considering oneself the Lord should certainly not affect them. When I break the false prestige of those bereft of goodness, My purpose is to bring them relief.

SB 10.25.18 - I must therefore protect the cowherd community by My transcendental potency, for I am their shelter, I am their master, and indeed they are My own family. After all, I have taken a vow to protect My devotees.

SB 10.25.19 - Having said this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Viṣṇu Himself, picked up Govardhana Hill with one hand and held it aloft just as easily as a child holds up a mushroom.

SB 10.25.20 - The Lord then addressed the cowherd community: O Mother, O Father, O residents of Vraja, if you wish you may now come under this hill with your cows.

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SB 10.25.21 - You should have no fear that this mountain will fall from My hand. And don't be afraid of the wind and rain, for your deliverance from these afflictions has already been arranged.

SB 10.25.22 - Their minds thus pacified by Lord Kṛṣṇa, they all entered beneath the hill, where they found ample room for themselves and all their cows, wagons, servants and priests, and for all other members of the community as well.

SB 10.25.23 - Lord Kṛṣṇa, forgetting hunger and thirst and putting aside all considerations of personal pleasure, stood there holding up the hill for seven days as the people of Vraja gazed upon Him.

SB 10.25.24 - When Indra observed this exhibition of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mystic power, he became most astonished. Pulled down from his platform of false pride, and his intentions thwarted, he ordered his clouds to desist.

SB 10.25.25 - Seeing that the fierce wind and rain had now ceased, the sky had become clear of rainclouds, and the sun had risen, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the lifter of Govardhana Hill, spoke to the cowherd community as follows.

SB 10.25.26 - [Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear cowherd men, please go out with your wives, children and possessions. Give up your fear. The wind and rain have stopped, and the rivers' high waters have subsided.

SB 10.25.27 - After collecting their respective cows and loading their paraphernalia into their wagons, the cowherd men went out. The women, children and elderly persons gradually followed them.

SB 10.25.28 - While all living creatures looked on, the Supreme

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Personality of Godhead put down the hill in its original place, just as it had stood before.

SB 10.25.29 - All the residents of Vṛndāvana were overwhelmed with ecstatic love, and they came forward and greeted Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to their individual relationships with Him-some embracing Him, others bowing down to Him, and so forth. The cowherd women presented water mixed with yogurt and unbroken barleycorns as a token of honor, and they showered auspicious benedictions upon Him.

SB 10.25.30 - Mother Yaśodā, mother Rohiṇī, Nanda Mahārāja and Balarāma, the greatest of the strong, all embraced Kṛṣṇa. Overwhelmed with affection, they offered Him their blessings.

SB 10.25.31 - In the heavens, O King, all the demigods, including the Siddhas, Sādhya, Gandharvas and Cāraṇas, sang the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa and showered down flowers in great satisfaction.

SB 10.25.32 - My dear Parīkṣit, the demigods in heaven resoundingly played their conchshells and kettledrums, and the best of the Gandharvas, led by Tumburu, began to sing.

SB 10.25.33 - Surrounded by His loving cowherd boyfriends and Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa then went off to the place where He had been tending His cows. The cowherd girls returned to their homes, singing joyfully about the lifting of Govardhana Hill and other glorious deeds performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had so deeply touched their hearts.

SB 10.26.1 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The cowherd men were astonished when they saw Kṛṣṇa's activities, such as lifting Govardhana Hill. Unable to understand His transcendental potency, they approached Nanda Mahārāja and spoke as follows.

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SB 10.26.2 - [The cowherd men said:] Since this boy performs such extraordinary activities, how could He warrant a birth among worldly men like us-a birth that for Him would seem contemptible?

SB 10.26.3 - How could this seven-year-old boy playfully hold up the great hill Govardhana with one hand, just as a mighty elephant holds up a lotus flower?

SB 10.26.4 - As a mere infant who had hardly yet opened His eyes, He drank the breast milk of the powerful demoness Pūtanā and then sucked out her very life air as well, just as the force of time sucks out the youth of one's body.

SB 10.26.5 - Once, when only three months old, little Kṛṣṇa was crying and kicking up His feet as He lay beneath a huge cart. Then the cart fell and turned upside-down simply because it was struck by the tip of His toe.

SB 10.26.6 - At the age of one, while sitting peacefully He was taken up into the sky by the demon Tṛṇāvarta. But baby Kṛṣṇa grabbed the demon's neck, causing him great pain, and thus killed him.

SB 10.26.7 - Once, His mother tied Him with ropes to a mortar because she had caught Him stealing butter. Then, crawling on His hands, He dragged the mortar between a pair of arjuna trees and pulled them down.

SB 10.26.8 - Another time, when Kṛṣṇa was tending the calves in the forest together with Balarāma and the cowherd boys, the demon Bakāsura came with the intention of killing Kṛṣṇa. But Kṛṣṇa seized this inimical demon by the mouth and tore him apart.

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SB 10.26.9 - Desiring to kill Kṛṣṇa, the demon Vatsa disguised himself as a calf and entered among Kṛṣṇa's calves. But Kṛṣṇa killed the demon and, using his body, enjoyed the sport of knocking kapittha fruits down from the trees.

SB 10.26.10 - Together with Lord Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa killed the jackass demon and all his friends, thereby securing the safety of the Tālavana forest, which abounded with fully ripened palm fruits.

SB 10.26.11 - After arranging for the mighty Lord Balarāma to kill the terrible demon Pralamba, Kṛṣṇa saved Vraja's cowherd boys and their animals from a forest fire.

SB 10.26.12 - Kṛṣṇa chastised the most poisonous serpent, Kāliya, and after humbling him He drove him forcibly from the lake of the Yamunā. In this way the Lord made the water of that river free of the snake's powerful poison.

SB 10.26.13 - Dear Nanda, how is it that we and all the other residents of Vraja cannot give up our constant affection for your son? And how is it that He is so spontaneously attracted to us?

SB 10.26.14 - On the one hand this boy is only seven years old, and on the other we see that He has lifted the great hill Govardhana. Therefore, O King of Vraja, a doubt about your son arises within us.

SB 10.26.15 - Nanda Mahārāja replied: O cowherd men, just hear my words and let all your doubts concerning my son be gone. Some time ago Garga Muni spoke to me as follows about this boy.

SB 10.26.16 - [Garga Muni had said:] Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past He assumed three different



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colors-white, red and yellow-and now He has appeared in a blackish color.

SB 10.26.17 - For many reasons, this beautiful son of yours sometimes appeared previously as the son of Vasudeva. Therefore, those who are learned sometimes call this child Vāsudeva.

SB 10.26.18 - For this son of yours there are many forms and names according to His transcendental qualities and activities. These are known to me, but people in general do not understand them.

SB 10.26.19 - To increase the transcendental bliss of the cowherd men of Gokula, this child will always act auspiciously for you. And by His grace only, you will surpass all difficulties.

SB 10.26.20 - O Nanda Mahārāja, as recorded in history, when there was an irregular, incapable government, Indra having been dethroned, and when honest people were being harassed and disturbed by thieves, this child appeared in order to curb the rogues and to protect the people and enable them to flourish.

SB 10.26.21 - Demons cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to all-auspicious Kṛṣṇa cannot be defeated by enemies

SB 10.26.22 - Therefore, O Nanda Mahārāja, this child of yours is as good as Nārāyaṇa. In His transcendental qualities, opulence, name, fame and influence, He is exactly like Nārāyaṇa. Thus you should not be astonished by His activities.

SB 10.26.23 - [Nanda Mahārāja continued:] After Garga Ṛṣi spoke these words to me and returned home, I began to consider that Kṛṣṇa, who

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keeps us free from trouble, is actually an expansion of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

SB 10.26.24 - [Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Having heard Nanda Mahārāja relate the statements of Garga Muni, the residents of Vṛndāvana became enlivened. Their perplexity was gone, and they worshiped Nanda and Lord Kṛṣṇa with great respect.

SB 10.26.25 - Indra became angry when his sacrifice was disrupted, and thus he caused rain and hail to fall on Gokula, accompanied by lightning and powerful winds, all of which brought great suffering to the cowherds, animals and women there. When Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is by nature always compassionate, saw the condition of those who had only Him as their shelter, He smiled broadly and lifted Govardhana Hill with one hand, just as a small child picks up a mushroom to play with it. In this way He protected the cowherd community. May He, Govinda, the Lord of the cows and the destroyer of Indra's false pride, be pleased with us.

SB 10.27.1 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Kṛṣṇa had lifted Govardhana Hill and thus protected the inhabitants of Vraja from the terrible rainfall, Surabhi, the mother of the cows, came from her planet to see Kṛṣṇa. She was accompanied by Indra.

SB 10.27.2 - Indra was very ashamed of having offended the Lord. Approaching Him in a solitary place, Indra fell down and lay his helmet, whose effulgence was as brilliant as the sun, upon the Lord's lotus feet.

SB 10.27.3 - Indra had now heard of and seen the transcendental power of omnipotent Kṛṣṇa, and his false pride in being the lord of the three worlds was thus defeated. Holding his hands together in supplication, he addressed the Lord as follows.

SB 10.27.4 - King Indra said: Your transcendental form, a manifestation

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of pure goodness, is undisturbed by change, shining with knowledge and devoid of passion and ignorance. In You does not exist the mighty flow of the modes of material nature, which is based on illusion and ignorance.

SB 10.27.5 - How, then, could there exist in You the symptoms of an ignorant person-such as greed, lust, anger and envy-which are produced by one's previous involvement in material existence and which cause one to become further entangled in material existence? And yet as the Supreme Lord You impose punishment to protect religious principles and curb down the wicked.

SB 10.27.6 - You are the father and spiritual master of this entire universe, and also its supreme controller. You are insurmountable time, imposing punishment upon the sinful for their own benefit. Indeed, in Your various incarnations, selected by Your own free will, You act decisively to remove the false pride of those who presume themselves masters of this world.

SB 10.27.7 - Even fools like me, who proudly think themselves universal lords, quickly give up their conceit and directly take to the path of the spiritually progressive when they see You are fearless even in the face of time. Thus You punish the mischievous only to instruct them.

SB 10.27.8 - Engrossed in pride over my ruling power, ignorant of Your majesty, I offended You. O Lord, may You forgive me. My intelligence was bewildered, but let my consciousness never again be so impure.

SB 10.27.9 - You descend into this world, O transcendent Lord, to destroy the warlords who burden the earth and create many terrible disturbances. O Lord, you simultaneously act for the welfare of those who faithfully serve Your lotus feet.

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SB 10.27.10 - Obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the great Soul, who are all-pervading and who reside in the hearts of all. My obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty.

SB 10.27.11 - Unto Him who assumes transcendental bodies according to the desires of His devotees, unto Him whose form is itself pure consciousness, unto Him who is everything, who is the seed of everything and who is the Soul of all creatures, I offer my obeisances.

SB 10.27.12 - My dear Lord, when my sacrifice was disrupted I became fiercely angry because of false pride. Thus I tried to destroy Your cowherd community with severe rain and wind.

SB 10.27.13 - O Lord, You have shown mercy to me by shattering my false pride and defeating my attempt [to punish Vṛndāvana]. To You, the Supreme Lord, spiritual master and Supreme Soul, I have now come for shelter.

SB 10.27.14 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus glorified by Indra, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, smiled and then spoke to him as follows in a voice resonant like the clouds.

SB 10.27.15 - The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Indra, it was out of mercy that I stopped the sacrifice meant for you. You were greatly intoxicated by your opulence as King of heaven, and I wanted you to always remember Me.

SB 10.27.16 - A man blinded by intoxication with his power and opulence cannot see Me nearby with the rod of punishment in My hand. If I desire his real welfare, I drag him down from his materially fortunate position.

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SB 10.27.17 - Indra, you may now go. Execute My order and remain in your appointed position as King of heaven. But be sober, without false pride.

SB 10.27.18 - Mother Surabhi, along with her progeny, the cows, then offered her obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Respectfully requesting His attention, the gentle lady addressed the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was present before her as a cowherd boy.

SB 10.27.19 - Mother Surabhi said: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, greatest of mystics! O Soul and origin of the universe! You are the master of the world, and by Your grace, O infallible Lord, we have You as our master.

SB 10.27.20 - You are our worshipable Deity. Therefore, O Lord of the universe, for the benefit of the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the demigods and all other saintly persons, please become our Indra.

SB 10.27.21 - As ordered by Lord Brahmā, we shall perform Your bathing ceremony to coronate You as Indra. O Soul of the universe, You descend to this world to relieve the burden of the earth.

SB 10.27.22-23 - Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus appealed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, mother Surabhi performed His bathing ceremony with her own milk, and Indra, ordered by Aditi and other mothers of the demigods, anointed the Lord with heavenly Gaṅgā water from the trunk of Indra's elephant carrier, Airāvata. Thus, in the company of the demigods and great sages, Indra coronated Lord Kṛṣṇa, the descendant of Daśārha, and gave Him the name Govinda.

SB 10.27.24 - Tumburu, Nārada and other Gandharvas, along with the Vidyādhara, Siddhas and Cāraṇas, came there to sing the glories of Lord Hari, which purify the entire world. And the wives of the demigods,

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filled with joy, danced together in the Lord's honor.

SB 10.27.25 - The most eminent demigods chanted the praises of the Lord and scattered wonderful showers of flowers all around Him. All three worlds felt supreme satisfaction, and the cows drenched the surface of the earth with their milk.

SB 10.27.26 - Rivers flowed with various kinds of tasty liquids, trees exuded honey, edible plants came to maturity without cultivation, and hills gave forth jewels formerly hidden in their interiors.

SB 10.27.27 - O Parīkṣit, beloved of the Kuru dynasty, upon the ceremonial bathing of Lord Kṛṣṇa, all living creatures, even those cruel by nature, became entirely free of enmity.

SB 10.27.28 - After he had ceremonially bathed Lord Govinda, who is the master of the cows and the cowherd community, King Indra took the Lord's permission and, surrounded by the demigods and other higher beings, returned to his heavenly abode.

*tṛṇād api su-nīcena  
taror iva sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā māna-dena  
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

### SYNONYMS

*tṛṇāt api*—than downtrodden grass; *su-nīcena*—being lower; *taroh*—than a tree; *iva*—like; *sahiṣṇunā*—with tolerance; *amāninā*—without being puffed up by false pride; *māna-dena*—giving respect to all; *kīrtanīyaḥ*—to be chanted; *sadā*—always; *hariḥ*—the holy name of the Lord.

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## TRANSLATION

"One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor yet is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord."

## PURPORT

The grass is specifically mentioned in this verse because everyone tramples upon it yet the grass never protests. This example indicates that a spiritual master or leader should not be proud of his position; being always humbler than an ordinary common man, he should go on preaching the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. (Ādi 17.31)

<sup>iii</sup>Śrī Nārada said: It is you who have truly received the mercy of Lord Hari! After all, you are the master of all masters of the living beings of the universe, the grandfather of all the worlds.

You alone create, maintain, and devour the fourteen worlds. You forever rule the universe, and you are known as the self-born.

Present in person in your assembly are the Vedas, Purāṇas, and other scriptures, the revealers of truth, who were born from your four mouths.

Your world can be attained only by saintly persons who faultlessly perform their prescribed social duties, free from pride and other vices, for one hundred lifetimes.

Within the universe there is no higher world than yours. Even Lord Nārāyaṇa's Vaikuṇṭha planet is found inside your world.

On Brahmaloṇa Lord Nārāyaṇa resides always in His manifest form as the lotus-navel Mahāpuruṣa. He eats His shares of sacrifice and grants the sacrificial results.

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Although in the distant past you made many attempts and were unable to find Him, after performing austerities you finally saw Him just for a moment in your heart.

<sup>iv</sup>With benedictions obtained from me, the wicked Hiraṇyakaśipu became the tormentor of all the worlds, dedicated to violence against Vaiṣṇavas.

After the Lord in His form as Nṛsiṃhadeva destroyed Hiraṇyakaśipu, I and my entourage stood fearful at a distance, trying to praise the Lord with skillful prayers, but He would not even honor us with a sidelong glance. Yet when Prahlāda was inaugurated king, the Lord at once became pacified.

Then I slowly approached Him, and He angrily ordered me, “You should not give such benedictions to demons, O lotus-born!”

Nonetheless, I kept on giving benedictions to wicked demons like Rāvaṇa. Whose tongue can even mention the sins Rāvaṇa has done?

Remember the offenses committed against the Lord by Indra and other demigods I appointed. The excessive pride of those demigods constantly perverts their discrimination.

Indra sent rain to retaliate for the Govardhana sacrifice, sometimes fought against the Lord, and committed other offenses. The lord of the waters, Varuṇa, offended the Lord by kidnapping Nanda Mahārāja, by failing to return the cows belonging to Bāṇa, and so on.

Yamarāja made mistakes like allowing the wrongful death of the son of the Lord’s teacher. And Kuvera was responsible for the wicked misdeeds of Śaṅkhacūḍa and others.

In the lower planetary systems live the Daityas, who always attack Lord Viṣṇu’s devotees, and also living there are the serpent friends of Kāliya, who by nature are contaminated by anger.

And recently by my magic I stole the calves and young friends the Lord



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was watching after in Vṛndāvana. I took them all away while the boys were having lunch.

I then saw some most amazing wonders and became frightened. Offering prayers and bowing down to the Lord, I thought, “I am so arrogant! But now, in His pastime as a cowherd boy, He has tricked me.”

Simply by the spontaneous glance of favor upon me from His lotus face, I became joyful. I realized how fortunate I was to have visited the land of Vraja, which is so dear to Him.

“They have given up everything as worthless straw. Worshiping their dear Lord Hari in pure devotion, they have no respect for the desirable achievements of this world; they will not even glance at those perfections. Those devotees have abandoned every kind of false pride. And they have attained the world beyond the material modes and devoid of all fear: Vaikuṇṭha, which is sac-cid-ānanda—full of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

In Vaikuṇṭha the residents have sac-cid-ānanda bodies and may avail themselves of the supreme opulence of Lord Hari. They have sac-cid-ānanda powers, equal to His. But the residents of Vaikuṇṭha do not like to accept such equality with the Lord.

They are satiated simply to worship Lord Hari with devotion. They travel freely wherever they want, protecting and promoting the cause of the Lord’s devotees and the Lord’s devotional service.

Always worshiping the Lord in Vaikuṇṭha, they seem amused by those who are merely liberated. The Vaikuṇṭha-vāsīs are always busy in various services, for which they even take on forms like those of birds and trees.

They can always see Him in person, Lord Hari, who inspires everyone’s pleasure and whose lotus feet are cared for by the goddess of fortune. Their life in His company is pure joy.

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<sup>vi</sup>Śrī Nārada said: You are indeed the most fortunate persons on earth! The Lord of all lords of the universe is your dearest friend. He is your God, your spiritual master, your blood relation, your maternal cousin. He is your messenger, well-wisher, order carrier, and charioteer.

For Brahmā, Rudra, and other demigods He is difficult to realize even in advanced meditation. He can be known through the words of the Vedas only when one understands their special purport. Śrīmān Nṛsiṃha, Śrī Vāmana, and Śrī Rāghavendra are His plenary expansions.

All other incarnations of Godhead expand from mere portions of His plenary portions. Great gods like Brahmā are considered His material opulences. And material nature is His maidservant. Standing always in view ready to serve Him, she enacts the creation, protection, and destruction of the universe.

When Brahmā and other demigods responded to the lamenting Mother Earth, together they all stood on the shore of the Milk Ocean, observing strict vows. They recited prayers and worshiped the Supreme Lord, meditating with full concentration. Nonetheless, they were unable to obtain His favor.

Brahmā then perceived in his heart the Lord's command, which he heard as an unembodied voice in the sky. He repeated that command to the demigods, and they all became satisfied.

Only in some confidential meetings did wise sages like Garga divulge who Kṛṣṇa really is: He whom the Personality of Godhead Nārāyaṇa only partly equals, no one else even coming close.

Thus we hear of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's presence in Mathurā City as the Deity called Dīrgha Viṣṇu, Mahā-hari, Mahā-viṣṇu, and Mahā-nārāyaṇa.

We can only pray to satisfy Him through our disciplines of silence, peace, and devotion. But being naturally satisfied with you, He has even

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submitted Himself to your control.

Please just hear what I have to say: Before, Kṛṣṇa gave the gift of liberation only to a qualified few. And this has always been the rule.

Kālanemi, Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa, and others were killed by the Supreme Lord, but none of them received liberation. And pure devotional service was given to no one but Prahlāda, who received it from the incarnation Śrī Nṛsimha.

Later, the incarnation Lord Raghunātha bestowed pure devotion upon a few—Guha, Hanumān, Jāmbavān, Vibhīṣaṇa, Daśaratha, and the blessed Sugrīva. But in relation to those devotees we never hear of prema, the utmost stage of pure devotion.

But now so many persons have been granted liberation, made devotees, and filled with pure prema, all by your maternal cousin!

And by the power of His glory, demons fit for hell have become immortal after being slain by Him or by such companions as Arjuna.

Thoughtful sages like Viśvāmitra, Gautama, and Vasiṣṭha were intent on austerities, mantra meditation, and spiritual knowledge. They had various goals in life. But while they were on pilgrimage at Kurukṣetra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa mercifully inspired them to pray to Him for pure devotion. Thus they obtained it and became fully dedicated to His devotional service.

Even immobile creatures in species covered by the mode of ignorance—trees, creepers, and so on—have been raised to the consciousness of pure goodness. Now those trees and creepers are raining down a nectar-sap of kṛṣṇa-prema.

O Kṛṣṇa's brothers, how can the innite wonders of His bodily beauty, His effulgence, and His charm be properly described? Features so attractive have never been seen in anyone else.

Those unprecedented attractive features of Kṛṣṇa leave one struck with amazement. So also do His pastimes, His qualities, His pure love, His

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glorious virtues, and the places where He sports.

I think that had He not descended in His own original form, the world would never have known His true identity as the Personality of Godhead. Now His identity as God has been shown, for He has appeared in all His splendor, adorned with His unique glories and the varied wonders of His charming sweetness.

We speak of Kṛṣṇa's kindness, but even the punishments He metes out are worthy of praise. To this there have been many witnesses—including Kaṁsa, Kāliya, and Pūtanā and, in the more distant past, Bali and others. Śrī Parīkṣit said: While singing enthusiastically in this way, the sage instructed his own tongue, which was greedy to chant the glories of Lord Mādhava, "Oh, you are too busy talking about the greatness of our master!" To stop that tongue, he then seized it with his teeth.

"Dear tongue," he then acknowledged, "this effort of yours attests to your great fortune. As far as you are able, just go on speaking something about these beloved devotees of Kṛṣṇa."

Śrī Nārada continued: O great saintly Pāṇḍavas, is anyone bold enough to let his tongue describe the unique love for Kṛṣṇa that each of you has or the special mercy He bestows upon you?

Your mother, Pṛthā, once heard from the mouth of Akrūra a single statement by Kṛṣṇa, sweet with affection and meant to console her. As soon as she heard it, she plunged into a swiftly flowing current of prema.

She often lamented with poignant words that could shatter the heart of anyone who heard them. And she bore the burden of love for all of you, staying tied to you only because you are very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa, the life of the Yadus, tried for a long time to leave for Dvārakā, but by enveloping Him with plaintive prayers she kept Him in her home.

Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon Yudhiṣṭhira the highest prestige, greater than that of anyone else in the upper and lower worlds. And by favors like allowing

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Bhīma to kill Jarāsandha, Kṛṣṇa granted Bhīma unequaled fame.

Saintly Arjuna became renowned throughout the world for his intimate friendship with Kṛṣṇa. I can never sing all the glories of Arjuna even if I recite hundreds of Purāṇas.

And as for Nakula and Sahadeva, everyone has seen many times how fixed they are in love for Kṛṣṇa, as shown, for example, by how those twins behaved in the deliberations on whom to worship first in the Rājasūya.

Lord Hari personally sanctified Śrī Draupadī's hair during the Rājasūya sacrifice and other special festivals. He would call Draupadī "dear friend." He relieved her of fear of Atri's son Durvāsā and fear of others, including Duṣṣāsana. He removed all her sorrow.

Kṛṣṇa relished Śrī Vidura's porridge and organized the celebration of Śrī Bhīṣma's passing away. Please, therefore, judge your own standing from how in many controversies both Vidura and Bhīṣma took your side.

Truly, the words spoken by the ordinary women of your city amaze me. Those words, focused on Kṛṣṇa and imbued with transcendental knowledge and devotion, are praised in songs by accomplished poets.

When Prahlāda, the son of Kayādhu, obtained the Supreme Lord's grace, he did so along with a grandson. The best of monkeys was favored alone. But you rare souls have received the complete love and mercy of the great Lord Hari with all your family members and subordinates.

Once, in the court of the Kauravas, with me and other sages present, Kṛṣṇa said of you, "A friend of the Pāṇḍavas is My friend, and their enemy My enemy. The Pāṇḍavas are My very life airs."

Just see my arrogance! Only Kṛṣṇa can adequately know and describe your good qualities. But at least I am convinced that the Supreme Lord has descended to this world only for the sake of you.

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<sup>vii</sup>If ordinary materialists see the many calamities that have come upon us, their faith and their inclination to serve Kṛṣṇa are likely to wither.

This would surely cause us great distress, for we have dedicated our life and breath only to Him. We would suffer like embodied creatures without food or like sh deprived of water.

Therefore, on the pretext of arranging a sacrifice, I begged Him, “Dear master, please show how the fortunes of the devotees and the nondevotees differ.

“By this sacrifice, all people will see the wonderful assets that belong to Your devotees in this life and the next, opulences all-pure and utterly distinct from material assets. Then, gaining absolute trust in You, people will worship Your lotus feet, become ever free of misery and fear, and achieve happiness in all respects.”

Now our nondevotee enemies have been destroyed, our kingdom returned to us—and our grief made greater than ever before.

It is our fault that many saintly persons met their demise, including venerable teachers like Droṇa and Bhīṣma, and sons like Abhimanyu.

The company of those devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu is more desirable to us than life itself. Deprived of that association, we can no longer find any happiness.

We enjoy the pleasure of seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face only once in a while, when after long times absent He visits us on some business.

The Yādavas alone are His true friends. Living always with them in Dvārakā, He is always busy satisfying those dear and supremely fortunate friends.

<sup>viii</sup>Swayed by dry speculation, concerned only with their own dharma, Bhīṣma and others on the field of war fiercely attacked Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, piercing His armor and flesh. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the Sudarśana

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cakra, tolerated for my sake those repeated attacks on His divine body, although I tried to stop Him.

Even today, O brāhmaṇa, as I remember those incidents, I cannot remove the arrow of grief from my heart. How then can I feel any happiness?

Acts that bring pain to a dear one are not a sign of compassion or love.

When I refused to kill Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and others, Kṛṣṇa, the best of wise scholars, taught me something to induce me to go ahead and kill them. Hearing only the literal meaning of what Kṛṣṇa taught may please dry scholars, but to us whose life and soul lies in glorifying pure devotional service, those instructions by the Lord give great pain.

Even carefully studying the purport of those instructions has not made me any happier. Rather, His words only make me remember how He deceived me.

No one is dearer to me than the Supreme Brahman, Kṛṣṇa, with His all-enchanting beautiful form. He has given Himself to me, who have complete faith in Him. He is the reservoir of pure unconditional mercy, the upholder of His word, the best of well-wishing friends, the omnipotent Lord of all.

<sup>ix</sup>He beheld them sitting at ease in the blessed assembly hall Sudharmā. Ranked in order of importance, they sat resplendent with the ornaments of their own bodily beauty, and were further adorned with garlands of pārijāta.

They were being regaled by festive song and dance in the most celestial style, and praised by bards in splendidly tasteful words.

The Yādavas laughed among one another and exchanged clever jokes and quips, the effulgence of their bodies surpassing that of the sun, their personalities full of charm.

Many kinds of precious ornaments decorated the Yādavas. And even

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some of the most elderly members of the assembly had obtained new youth by constantly enjoying the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face.

Surrounding Mahārāja Ugrasena, the Yādavas glowed brilliantly, as with reverent eagerness they awaited the arrival of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Countless millions of Yādavas waited, absorbed in talk about Kṛṣṇa, their minds and eyes anxiously focused on the path from Kṛṣṇa's inner palace.