

Sarartha Darsini

Unveiling Lord Kṛṣṇa's Loving Exchanges in Vrndavana, Mathura & Dvaraka



Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

Publications

Art of Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa

हरे कृष्ण जप की आदर्श कला

Prabhupada at Radha Damodara

प्रभुपाद, राधा-दामोदर मंदिर में

Appreciating Sri Vrndavana Dhama Radha Kunda Mahima Madhuri

राधा-कुण्ड महिमा माधुरी

Gayatri Mahima Madhuri

गायत्री महिमा माधुरी

Gaudiya Vaisnava Samadhis in Vrndavana

गौड़ीय वैष्णव चरितामृत

Appreciating Navadvipa Dhama Seeing Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in

Jagannatha Puri

Prayers to Lord Nrsimhadeva

श्रीनृसिंहदेव-स्तुति

64 Super Excellent Qualities of Sri Kṛṣṇa

श्री कृष्ण गुण रसनधि

Illuminations on Nama Aparadha

नाम अपराध निवृत्ति

Radha Govinda Meditation Techniques

राधा गोविन्द ध्यानामृतम्

Caitanya Mangala

Gauranga Gita

Sarartha Darsini

Sri Ananda Vrndavana Campu

Sri Madhava Mahotsava

Bhavanasara Sangraha

Kṛṣṇahnika Kaumudi

Sri Sankalpa Kalpadruma

A Tribute of Love

Jagannatha Puri Guide Book

108 Sweet Notes Volume I & II
Radha-Kṛpa-Kataksa, Kṛṣṇa-Kṛpa-Kataksa

Sarartha Darsini

© 2013 Radha Book Trust

All Rights Reserved

To order books & DVDs

www.mnsbooks.com

Cover Design: Ameya Tandel & Harshal Panchakshari

Cover Painting: Anjana Das



Facebook/MahanidhiSwami

Sales profits go to Care For Cows

www.careforcows.org

Dedication

This first English edition of Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's *Sārārtha-darśini* commentaries on the Tenth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is dedicated to Nitya-lila-Pravista Om Visnupada Astottara-sata Sri Srimad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder Acarya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Srila Prabhupada once said, "The Tenth Canto is Kṛṣṇa's beautiful face. Everyone is attracted by the smiling face of Kṛṣṇa." (18/6/76 Toronto)

***Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare***

Acknowledgments

From the core of our heart we sincerely thank Bhanu Swami, our beloved Godbrother and friend, for so painstakingly translating Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura's *Sārārtha-darśini* commentaries (*tikas*) on the Tenth Canto. This was a monumental task because the Tenth Canto has over 4,500 Sanskrit verses, and in many cases Cakravartipada's comments on one verse extend for two or three pages! We also thank Gopīparāṇadhana Prabhu for his translations, which we consulted from time to time. Bhumipati Prabhu helped at a crucial stage. Gopinatha Prabhu deserves special mention for entering all the verses and translations on computer. And finally the gorgeous body of this holy *grantha* known as *Sārārtha-darśini* was decorated with a supremely beautiful dress in the form of Anjana Prabhu's exquisite cover painting of the Divine Couple, Radha-Syamasundara and the final touch of beauty was added by a new cover design by Harshal Panchakshari and Ameya Tandel. I sincerely thank these devotees for their help, and pray that Giridhari-Syama will bless them with Radha-Govinda *prema*.

Introduction

Srila Prabhupada lived and breathed the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and mercifully distributed its nectarean teachings throughout the world. He spent the last fifteen years of his life translating, writing commentaries on and constantly speaking the philosophy of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Everyday Srila Prabhupada would get up in the middle of the night at 1 a.m. to translate the Sanskrit *slokas* of the *Bhagavatam* into English. Then he would write his Bhaktivedanta commentaries after consulting the authorized commentaries of Srila Sridhara Swami, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, Sri Jiva Gosvami and Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. He introduced daily Sanskrit verse recitation and classes on the *Srimad Bhagavatam* in each of the 108 Radha-Kṛṣṇa temples he established. At any time of the day in some country around the globe, Kṛṣṇa devotees are sitting together in ISKCON temples to hear the glories of the *Bhagavata* philosophy in their local languages of English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Japanese, Chinese, Swahili, Telegu and many others. ISKCON's Bhaktivedanta Book Trust has published and distributed millions of copies of *Srimad Bhagavatam* in over fifty languages worldwide.

Srila Rupa Gosvami says hearing the *Bhagavatam* (*bhagavata-sravana*) is one limb of *panca-anga bhakti*, the five most powerful means of attaining *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Realizing this, Srila Prabhupada published the *Kṛṣṇa* book, a translation and commentary on the entire Tenth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, as one of his first books. Indeed, Srila Prabhupada was so fond of the Tenth Canto that he instituted the daily reading of *Kṛṣṇa* book in every ISKCON temple. Every night before taking rest devotees would sit together, honor hot milk *prasadam*, and listen to the *Kṛṣṇa* book. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed hearing the action-packed tales of Sri Kṛṣṇa, the sweet Lord of Vrndavana. Afterwards, the devotees would fall asleep and have happy dreams. Srila Prabhupada introduced such a simple and sublime formula for attaining spiritual

perfection. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

In the Preface to *Kṛṣṇa* book, Srila Prabhupada writes, “We therefore request everyone to take advantage of this great transcendental literary work. One will find that by reading one page after another, an immense treasure of knowledge in art, science, literature, philosophy and religion will be revealed, and ultimately, by reading this one book, *Kṛṣṇa*, love of Godhead will fructify.”

Good fortune brought a *Kṛṣṇa* book into our hands in 1974, and it was love at first reading. The pastimes of Radha-Kṛṣṇa purely presented by Srila Prabhupada melted our hearts and attracted our wayward minds to the peerless path of *bhakti*. Enchanted by this transcendental prankster named Kṛṣṇa, we innocently began a relationship with Him through the pages of the Tenth Canto. Little did we know that thirty years later we would still be following that beautiful blue boy and His glorious golden girlfriend, and worshiping that Divine Couple and Their eternal pastimes so beautifully portrayed in the Tenth Canto. We simply cannot read enough about Radha-Kṛṣṇa. All other topics, hackneyed news and books have become stale and totally unattractive. The Tenth Canto is a gushing fountain of sweet nectar that spins the mind and sends the heart on wings to the lotus feet of Radha-Syama. *Srimad Bhagavatam ki jai!*

The title of this book, *Sārārtha-darśini*, means to see (*darśana*) the essential (*sāra*) object (*ārtha*). It can also mean to understand and realize the essence of everything, namely Sri Kṛṣṇa, His loving service and the attainment of His eternal, blissful abode in Sri Vrndavana. The *Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana* gives the following description of *Sārārtha-darśini*: “This book reveals the most confidential purports of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and gives immense pleasure to the Vaisnavas. With unparalleled genius Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura imparts a deep understanding of the sweet mellows of devotional service. The process of extracting the sublime transcendental mellows and the internal mood of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura is clearly visible in this *tika* (commentary) on *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Among the 130 different

tikas on the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Sri Sanatana Gosvami’s *Vaisnavatosani*, and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s *Sārārtha-darśini* are the best! This work is called *Sārārtha-darśini* because Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura extracted the essence from the explanations of Srila Sridhara Swami, Sri Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami. In several places in his *tika*, Srila Cakravartipada mentions that his commentaries are based on and inspired by Sri Sanatana Gosvami’s *Vaisnavatosani*. Moreover, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura reveals that his very life has become successful simply by drinking the nectarean mellows of devotional service emanating from the lotus mouth of Sri Sanatana Gosvami.”

This first English publication of *Sārārtha-darśinī* is a literal translation of exactly what Sripada Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura wrote in his original commentary on the Sanskrit verses of the Tenth Canto. Nothing has been added, subtracted or left out. To the best of our abilities, Bhanu Swami and I have tried to accurately present Sripada Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s commentary *Sārārtha-darśinī* “as it is”. The readers should note that in many verses Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura cites the commentaries of other exalted *acaryas* such as Srila Sridhara Swami, Sanatana Gosvami and Sri Jiva Gosvami. These particular passages have also been translated and appear alongside of Cakravartipada’s. The *Bhagavatam* verses not commented on by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura are simply presented with their English translation and no commentary, because he did not write one. Based on the verse below that Cakravartipada wrote in his *tika* at the end of the Tenth Canto, contemporary *acaryas* claim that he completed *Sārārtha-darśinī* in 1704 A.D while living on the banks of Sri Radhakunda at Govardhana in Sri Vrndavana Dhama.

*māghasya kṛṣṇa-dvādaśyām,
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sāras-taṭe
daśama-skandha-ṭīkeyam,
apūri kṛpaya prabhoh*

“By the mercy of the Lord, I completed this commentary on the Tenth Canto on the twelfth day of the dark fortnight of Magha (jan.-feb.), along the banks of Radha-kunda.”

By the blessings of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, and the divine arrangement of Radha-Giridhari, the English editing of *Sārārtha-darśinī* was also completed in the month of Magha on Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa Dvadasi on the banks of Radha-kunda. But it was completed in 2004, exactly three-hundred years after Srila Cakravartipada wrote it! Devotees who read *Sārārtha-darśinī*, which is full of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, will remain absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa. This book gives solace for devotees feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa. In the following passage from *Kṛṣṇa* book, Srila Prabhupada mentions the benefits of reading about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the Tenth Canto. Anyone who reads Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s wonderful *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentaries will surely attain the same results: “The transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, are so powerful that simply by hearing, reading and memorizing this book, *Kṛṣṇa*, one is sure to be transferred to the spiritual world, which is ordinarily very difficult to achieve. The description of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa is so attractive that it automatically gives us an impetus to study repeatedly, and the more we study the pastimes of the Lord, the more we become attached to Him. This very attachment to Kṛṣṇa makes one eligible to be transferred to His abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana.” (*Kṛṣṇa* ch. 90)

Since Srila Prabhupada was very fond of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and often quoted his works, we hope our beloved Gurudeva will be pleased with this publication. Hopefully, this English edition of *Sārārtha-darśinī* will inspire the devotees to dive deeply into the nectar ocean of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and *Kṛṣṇa* book. O devotees, please read more, remember more, tell others and become absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-katha*. May everyone become completely attached to Radha-Syamasundara and go back home, back to Godhead!

Readers Note: Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura often gives alternate Sanskrit words to clarify and enhance the meaning of the *Bhagavatam slokas*. For example, when Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura gives the word *ārpita* as a substitute for *dhṛta*, which appears in the *sloka*, we have presented it like this in the commentary: (*dhṛta:ārpita*). In other words, this format indicates that the word *dhṛta* means *ārpita* or worship.

Mahanidhi Swami
Magha 2004, Kṛṣṇa-paksa Dvadasi
Sri Radha-kunda

Bhagavata Stuti

om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya

I offer my obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead Vasudeva.” (SB 1.1.1)

*nārāyaṇam namaskṛtya,
naram caiva narottamam devīm sarasvatīm vyāsam,
tato jayam udīrayet*

Before reciting this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the very means of conquest, one should offer respectful obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, unto Nara-nārāyaṇa Āṣi, the supermost human being, unto mother Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and unto Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author. (SB 1.2.4)

*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu,
nityam bhāgavata-sevayā bhagavatya uttama-śloke,
bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact. (SB 1.2.18)

*kṛṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate,
dharma-jñānādibhiḥ saha kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa,
purāṇārko ‘dhunoditaḥ*

After Lord Kṛṣṇa departed for His abode along with religious principles

and transcendental knowledge, this *Purāṇa*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has arisen like the sun in this Age of Kali to enlighten those who have no spiritual vision. (SB 1.3.43)

*śrīmad-bhāgavatam purāṇam amalam yad vaiṣṇavānām priyam,
yasmīn pāramahaṁsyam ekam amalam jñānam param gīyate,
tatra jñāna-virāga-bhakti-sahitam naiṣkarmyam āviskṛtam,
tac chṛṇvan su-paṭhan vicāraṇa-paro bhaktyā vimucyen narah.*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the spotless *Purāṇa*. It is most dear to the Vaiṣṇavas because it describes the pure and supreme knowledge of the *paramahaṁsas*. This *Bhāgavatam* reveals the means for becoming free from all material work, together with the processes of transcendental knowledge, renunciation and devotion. Anyone who seriously tries to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, who properly hears and chants it with devotion, becomes completely liberated. (SB 12.13.18)

*sarva-vedānta-sāram hi,
śrī-bhāgavatam iṣyate tad-rasāmṛta-triptasya,
nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvacit*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is declared to be the essence of all Vedānta philosophy. One who has felt satisfaction from its nectarean mellow will never be attracted to any other literature. (SB 12.13.15)

*ya etat śrāvayen nityam,
yāma-kṣaṇam ananya-dhīḥ,
ślokaṁ ekam tad-ardham vā,
pādam pādārdham eva vā śraddhāvān yo 'nuśṛṇuyāt,
punāty ātmānam eva saḥ*

One who with undeviating attention constantly recites this *Srimad Bhagavatam* at every moment of every hour, as well as one who

faithfully hears even one verse or half a verse or a single line or even half a line, certainly purifies his very self. (SB 12.12.59)

*kṛṣṇa-tulya bhāgavata—vibhu sarvāśraya,
prati-śloke prati-akṣare,
nānā artha kaya*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, “*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is as great as Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Supreme Lord and the shelter of everything. In each and every verse and syllable of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there are multi-faceted meanings, for it is as infinite as Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.318)

*premamaya bhāgavata,
kṛṣṇera śrī aṅga,
tāhāte kahena yata,
gopya kṛṣṇeraṅga*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, “The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is full of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It is non-different from the beautiful body of Kṛṣṇa and is a part of Kṛṣṇa Himself, for it describes Kṛṣṇa’s confidential pastimes.” (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Antya 3.516)

*ādi-madhya-āntye bhāgavate ei kaya
viṣṇu-bhakti nityasiddha akṣaya avyaya*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, “In the beginning, middle and end, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks only of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. As such, this literature is eternally perfect, infallible, and infinite, because it contains all truths pertaining to the infinite. (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Antya 3.506)

*bhāgavata-śāstre se,
bhaktir tattva kahe teṅi bhāgavata-sama,
kona śāstra nahe*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, “Since the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* speaks exclusively of the truths of pure devotional service, it is unparalleled among the *śāstras*. No other scripture can compare with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. (*Caitanya Bhāgavata*, Antya 3.509)

Contents

Publications

Dedication

Acknowledgments

Introduction

Bhagavata Stuti

Chapter One: The Advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Two: Prayers by the Demigods

Chapter Three: The Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Four: The Atrocities of King Kamsa

Chapter Five: The Meeting of Nanda Maharaja and Vasudeva

Chapter Six: Killing the Demon Putana

Chapter Seven: The Killing of the Demon Trnavarta

Chapter Eight: Lord Kṛṣṇa Shows the Universal Form Within His Mouth

Chapter Nine: Mother Yasoda Binds Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Ten: Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees

Chapter Eleven: The Childhood Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Twelve: The Killing of the Demon Aghasura

Chapter Thirteen: Brahma Stealing the Boys and Calves

Chapter Fourteen: Brahma's Prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Fifteen: The Killing of Dhenuka, the Ass Demon

Chapter Sixteen: Kṛṣṇa Chastises the Serpent Kaliya

Chapter Seventeen: The History of Kaliya

Chapter Eighteen: Lord Balarama Slays the Demon Pralamba

Chapter Nineteen: Swallowing the Forest Fire

Chapter Twenty: The Rainy Season and Autumn in Vrndavana

Chapter Twenty-one: The Gopis Glorify the Song of Kṛṣṇa's Flute (venu-gīta)

Chapter Twenty-two: Kṛṣṇa Steals the Garments of the Unmarried Gopis

Chapter Twenty-three: The Brahmanas' Wives Blessed

Chapter Twenty-four: Worshiping Govardhana Hill

Chapter Twenty-five: Lord Kṛṣṇa Lifts Govardhana Hill

Chapter Twenty-six: Wonderful Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Twenty-seven: Lord Indra and Mother Surabhi Offer Prayers

Chapter Twenty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Rescues Nanda Mahārāja

Chapter Twenty-nine: Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs Meet for the Rāsa Dance

Chapter Thirty: The Gopis Search for Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Thirty-one: The Gopis Songs of Separation (Gopī-gītā)

Chapter Thirty-two: The Reunion

Chapter Thirty-three: The Rasa Dance

Chapter Thirty-four: Nanda Mahārāja Saved and Śaṅkhacūḍa Slain

Chapter Thirty-five: The Gopīs Sing of Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest (Yugala-gītā)

Chapter Thirty-six: The Slaying of Ariṣṭa, the Bull Demon

Chapter Thirty-seven: The Killing of the Demons Keśi and Vyoma

Chapter Thirty-eight: Akrūra's Arrival in Vṛndāvana

Chapter Thirty-nine: Akrura's Vision

Chapter Forty: Akrura's Prayers

Chapter Forty-one: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Enter Mathurā

Chapter Forty-two: The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

Chapter Forty-three: Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

Chapter Forty-four: The Killing of Kāmsa

Chapter Forty-five: Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher's Son

Chapter Forty-six: Uddhava Visits Vrndavana

Chapter Forty-seven: The Song of the Bee (Bhramara-gītā)

Chapter Forty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

Chapter Forty-nine: Akrūra's Mission in Hastināpura

Chapter Fifty: Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

Chapter Fifty-one: The Deliverance of Mucukunda

Chapter Fifty-two: Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Fifty-three: Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmini

Chapter Fifty-four: Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini

Chapter Fifty-five: The History of Pradyumna

Chapter Fifty-six: The Syamantaka Jewel

Chapter Fifty-seven: Satrājīṭ Murdered, the Jewel Returned

Chapter Fifty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Marries Five Princesses

Chapter Fifty-nine: The Killing of the Demon Naraka

Chapter Sixty: Kṛṣṇa Teases Rukmini

Chapter Sixty-one: Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī

Chapter Sixty-two: The Meeting of Üṣā and Aniruddha

Chapter Sixty-three: Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

Chapter Sixty-four: The Deliverance of King Nṛga

Chapter Sixty-five: Balarama goes to Vrndavana

Chapter Sixty-six: auṇḍraka, the False Vasudeva

Chapter Sixty-seven: Lord Balarāma Slays Dvidida Gorilla

Chapter Sixty-eight: The Marriage of Sāmba

Chapter Sixty-nine: Nārada Muni Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa's Palaces in Dvārakā

Chapter Seventy: Lord Kṛṣṇa's Daily Activities

Chapter Seventy-one: Lord Kṛṣṇa Travels to Indraprastha

Chapter Seventy-two: The Slaying of the Demon Jarāsandha

Chapter Seventy-three: Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

Chapter Seventy-four: The Deliverance of Śiśupāla at the Rājasūya Sacrifice

Chapter Seventy-five: Duryodhana Humiliated

Chapter Seventy-six: The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

Chapter Seventy-seven: Lord Kṛṣṇa Slays the Demon Śālva

Chapter Seventy-eight: The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

Chapter Seventy-nine: Lord Balarāma Goes on Pilgrimage

Chapter Eighty: The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā

Chapter Eighty-one: The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

Chapter Eighty-two: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana

Chapter Eighty-three: Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

Chapter Eighty-four: The Sages' Teachings at Kurukṣetra

Chapter Eighty-five: Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

Chapter Eighty-six: Arjuna Kidnaps Subhadrā, and Kṛṣṇa Blesses His Devotees

Chapter Eighty-seven: Prayers by the Personified Vedas

Chapter Eighty-eight: Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

Chapter Eighty-nine: Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna Retrieve a Brāhmaṇa's Sons

Chapter Ninety: Summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Glories

Chapter One: The Advent of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca kathito vaṁśa-vistāro,
bhavatā soma-sūryayoḥ,
rājñām cobhaya-vaṁśyānām,
caritaṁ paramādbhutam*

King Parīkṣit said: My dear lord, you have elaborately described the dynasties of both the moon-god and the sun-god, with the exalted and wonderful character of their kings.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Parikṣit Maharaja praises Sukadeva Gosvami for his previous *Bhagavatam* descriptions. He did this to thank Sukadeva Gosvami and to encourage him to continue speaking *hari-katha*. Being naturally a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Parikṣit Maharaja especially wanted to hear more about the wonderful glories of Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Though the word *surya*, the sun-god, would usually come before *soma*, the moon-god, *soma* is mentioned first. This is because the moon-god Candra (*soma*) is the grandson of Brahma; an *amsa* of Brahma; the deity of the mind, and most importantly Sri Kṛṣṇa appeared in his dynasty, *soma-vamsa*. Though the wonderful activities of Svayambhuva and his dynasty were related in the Fourth Canto, they did not culminate in sweetness. However, sweetness was finally attained with the descriptions of Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in the moon dynasty (*soma-vamsa*) and Lord Rama of the sun dynasty (*surya-vamsa*). Thus, the discussions of these dynasties became very prominent in *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

Text 2

*yadoś ca dharmā-śīlasya,
nitarām muni-sattama,
tatrāmśenāvatīrṇasya,
viṣṇor vīryāṇi śamsa naḥ*

O best of munis, you have also described the descendants of Yadu, who were very pious and strictly adherent to religious principles. Now, if you will, kindly describe the wonderful, glorious activities of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in that Yadu dynasty with Baladeva, His plenary expansion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **yadoś:** “You have also previously described the pious nature of Yadu. Though Yadu disobeyed his father’s order, because of his pure devotion, his exalted character is praised in the Ninth and Eleventh Cantos of *Srimad Bhagavatam*.”

muni-sattama: Parikṣit addresses Sukadeva as the king of the *munis*—*muni sattama*, because as a sage (*muni*) Sukadeva Gosvami is completely knowledgeable, and as a devotee (*sat*) he is the chief since he established the supreme position of *bhakti*. **viṣṇor vīryāṇi:** “Please describe the heroic exploits (*vīryani*) of He who has appeared (*avatīrṇasya*) as that person whose *amsa* is Viṣnu in Vaikuntha.” Another meaning: “Please describe the exploits partially (*amsena*), since it is impossible to completely describe Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.”

Text 3

*avatīrya yador vaṁśe,
bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanah,
kṛtavān yāni viśvātmā,*

tāni no vada vistarāt

The Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the cause of the cosmic manifestation, appeared in the dynasty of Yadu. Please tell me elaborately about His glorious activities and character, from the beginning to the end of His life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja said, “Sukadeva, previously you briefly told how Kṛṣṇa was taken from Kamsa’s prison to Vraja. But you did not explain everything in that description. O *muni*, you described it in only two verses. Now I pray that you describe this incident in many verses.”

bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ: Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa descends to immerse the *jīvas* (*bhūta*) in *prema* (*bhavana*) and to fill all living entities with *bhāva*. Many verses support this point such as *Srimad Bhagavatam* (9.24.64): *vākyaair vikrama-līlayā, nṛlokaṁ ramayām āsa, mūrtyā sarvāṅga-ramyayā*, “By His pleasing smiles, affectionate behavior, instructions and His uncommon heroic pastimes like lifting Govardhana Hill, Sri Kṛṣṇa, appearing in His transcendental body, pleased all of human society.” *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.11) explains how Kṛṣṇa gave pleasure to human society (*avitṛpta-dṛśām nṛṇām*) by revealing His beautiful all-attractive form. Even after tasting Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, however, the people remained unsatisfied. Everyone developed a desire to constantly taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.1.6) says: *sva-mūrtyā loka-lāvanya-nirmuktyā locanaṁ nṛṇām*, “The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty steals the functions of all the senses. The eyes no longer desire to see any other form. Drowning them in the ocean of His beauty, Syamasundara gives them *prema*.”

viśvātmā: Kṛṣṇa is called *viśvātmā*, the Supersoul of the entire universe or Paramatma, because He is the true object of love rather than the body or other *jīvas*. This is explained in Brahma’s prayers in the fourteenth

chapter of the Tenth Canto. **vada vistarāt**: “Please explain extensively (*vistarāt*) or elaborately since my intelligence is slow to grasp the subject.”

Text 4

*nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād,
bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-’bhirāmāt,
ka uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt,
pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt*

Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the *paramparā* system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: I am taking whatever remnants Sridhara Swami and Sanatana Gosvami have left.

King Parikṣit said to Sukadeva Gosvami, “I am a tiny *jīva* bound up by the disease of material life. How can I stop drinking the great medicine of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes recited by you, who are the best of doctors endowed with the greatest fortune?” With this intention Parikṣit Maharaja speaks this verse.

tarṣair: thirst, *tr̥ṣna*, or attachment to material enjoyment.

nivṛtta-tarṣair: By taking the medicine of hearing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes one extinguishes (*nivṛtta*) the thirst (*tr̥ṣna*) for material life. *Nivṛtta-tarṣair* indicates pure devotees, not *jnanis*, because of the use of present

tense and the prefix *upa* in *upagīyamānād*. *Jnanis* meditate but they do not chant Kṛṣṇa's glories. Liberated pure devotees continually glorify the practice of hearing *kṛṣṇa-katha* over *jnana* and other processes.

upagīyamānād: *Upa* indicates intense or continuous glorification. In other words, "We loudly praise this medicine, as it has cured us of our disease. What more can be said about tasting it? You (Sukadeva) are the taster."

bhavauśadhāc: Who could stop drinking the sweet topics of Kṛṣṇa which are like a medicine (*auśadhī*) to cure the disease of material existence (*bhava*)? In other words, those who get the opportunity to hear the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will not stop listening because it cures them of the disease of material existence. **chrotra:** *śrotra*, listener. Because such topics please the mind (*manobhiramat*) neither the speaker of *kṛṣṇa-katha* nor the listener tires of hearing about Kṛṣṇa. **mano-’bhirāmāt:** Unlike other medicines, this medicine does not have a bitter taste. Therefore Parikṣit Maharaja says *mano-’bhirāmāt: kṛṣṇa-katha* gives great pleasure to the ears and mind. Therefore drink the nectar of the *Bhagavata* with both your ears and mind.

paśughnāt: Only people involved in killing animals (*paśughnāt*) in sacrifice with a longing to attain celestial enjoyment on Svargaloka will not listen to these topics. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.3.18) also confirms, *ayājayad dharma-sutam*, that those seeking *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* (religion, wealth and enjoyment) have no taste for the name, qualities and resplendent pastimes of the all-attractive Madhusudana Kṛṣṇa. Another meaning: "Who would give up drinking the topics of Kṛṣṇa that are recited by Sri Guru? Even liberated souls loudly glorify the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. Only those desiring wealth and material enjoyment would stop hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Thus Parikṣit Maharaja says that only a killer of animals (*paśughnāt*) would stop hearing *kṛṣṇa-katha* and no one else.

Texts 5–7

*pitāmahā me samare 'marañjayair,
devavratādyātirathais timiṅgilaiḥ,
duratyayaṁ kaurava-sainya-sāgaram,
kṛtvātaran vatsa-padam sma yat-plavāḥ,
drauṇy-astra-vipluṣṭam idaṁ mad-aṅgam,
santāna-bījaṁ kuru-pāṇḍavānām,
jugopa kuṁṣiṁ gata ātta-cakro,
mātuś ca me yaḥ śaraṇam gatāyāḥ,
vīryāṇi tasyākhila-deha-bhājām,
antar bahiḥ pūruṣa-kāla-rūpaiḥ,
prayacchato mṛtyum utāmṛtaṁ ca,
māyā-manuṣyasya vadasva vidvan*

Taking the boat of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, my grandfather Arjuna and others crossed the ocean of the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra, in which such commanders as Bhīṣmadeva resembled great fish that could very easily have swallowed them. By the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, my grandfathers crossed this ocean, which was very difficult to cross, as easily as one steps over the hoofprint of a calf. Because my mother surrendered unto Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, the Lord, Sudarśana-cakra in hand, entered her womb and saved my body, the body of the last remaining descendant of the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas, which was almost destroyed by the fiery weapon of Aśvatthāmā. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, appearing within and outside of all materially embodied living beings by His own potency in the forms of eternal time—that is, as Paramātmā and as virāṭ-rūpa—gave liberation to everyone, either as cruel death or as life. Kindly enlighten me by describing His transcendental characteristics.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verse 5: “I should also hear the topics of Kṛṣṇa because He is the protector of our dynasty.” Thus Parikṣit

Maharaja speaks this verse.

“My grandfather crossed the ocean of the Kaurava army, though it was difficult to surmount because of Bhishma and others (*devavratādy*), who were like *timingala* fish (*timingilaiḥ*) that could easily swallow or defeat the demigods (*amarañjayair*). Kṛṣṇa made that ocean as insignificant as the water in a calf’s hoof-print.

“The cause was taking shelter of the boat (*yat-plavāḥ*) of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Please speak about that person. Surrender to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet enables one to cross the ocean of material existence.”

Verse 6: “I must certainly hear about Kṛṣṇa because He is my only protector.” With this in mind Parikṣit Maharaja speaks this verse.

ātta-cakro: The holder of the *cakra*, Kṛṣṇa, along with His club, (mentioned in the First Canto), entered into my mother, Uttara, who had surrendered to Him. The Lord easily saved my body from being burned (*vipluṣṭam*) by the heat of Asvatthama’s weapon (*drauṇy astra*).

ca: indicates that Kṛṣṇa also protected the limbs of Parikṣit Maharaja’s mother.

Verse 7: Kṛṣṇa’s topics should be heard because He alone bestows the final goal on all those with material bodies (*akhila deha bhājam*). With this intention the present verse is spoken.

bahiḥ: outside. Kṛṣṇa awards death to those envious (*bahiḥ*) of His devotees. **antar:** Kṛṣṇa gives eternal life to those who are His near and dear devotees (*antar*). **pūruṣa:** To devotees like Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa bestows bliss in His two-handed or four-handed human form.

kāla-rūpaiḥ: To demons like Kamsa, Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of time or death. According to the statements of *Bhagavatam*, Kṛṣṇa’s appearance resembles the prescription of rock candy to a person afflicted with jaundice. Though Kṛṣṇa first appears as time to award death to the demons, He later awards them liberation.

prayacchataḥ: (the giver) is used in present tense to indicate that it is being seen before Parikṣit’s eyes, or to convey the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. **māyā manuṣyasya:** The body of the Supreme Lord

is made of eternal spiritual energy called *māyā*, whereas the body of a human is made of material energy.

The Madhya Bhasya of the *Pramanita Sruti* says, *ato māyāmayam viṣṇum pravadanti manīṣiṇaḥ*: “The sages say the body accepted by Lord Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is called *māyāmaya*. Visnu’s body is not formed of the external energy. Therefore, this *māyā* refers to Kṛṣṇa’s internal spiritual potency, *yogamaya*.

Text 8

*rohinyās tanayaḥ prokto,
rāmaḥ saṅkarṣaṇas tvayā,
devakyā garbha-sambandhaḥ,
kuto dehāntaram vinā*

My dear Śukadeva Gosvāmī, you have already explained that Saṅkarṣaṇa, who belongs to the second quadruple, appeared as the son of Rohiṇī named Balarāma. If Balarāma was not transferred from one body to another, how is it possible that He was first in the womb of Devakī and then in the womb of Rohiṇī? Kindly explain this to me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the next four verses (8-11) Pariksit Maharaja inquires about the details of Kṛṣṇa’s birth. A general description was given in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (9.24.54-55) which describes the birth of Devaki’s seventh child with the words *saṅkarṣaṇam* (Saṅkarṣaṇa) and *ahi-īśvaram* (the supreme controller). Here Pariksit Maharaja says, “Sukadeva Gosvami, elsewhere you have said Sankarsana is the son of Rohini, so how could He come from Devaki’s womb without having to change bodies?”

Text 9

*kasmān mukundo bhagavān,
pitur gehād vrajaṁ gataḥ,
kva vāsaṁ jñātibhiḥ sārdham,
kṛtavān sātvatām patih*

Why did Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, leave the house of His father, Vasudeva, and transfer Himself to the house of Nanda in Vṛndāvana? Where did the Lord, the master of the Yadu dynasty, live with His relatives in Vṛndāvana?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **vraja:** Kṛṣṇa went from Vasudeva’s home (the prison cell) in Mathura to Vraja. Here Vraja means Mahavana. After going to Vraja, Kṛṣṇa left the home of Nanda. Parikṣit Maharaja is asking, “Where did Kṛṣṇa along with the cowherd men go in Vrndavana to establish His home?”

Text 10

*vraje vasan kim akaron,
madhupuryām ca keśavaḥ,
bhrātaram cāvadhīt kaṁsaṁ,
mātur addhātad-arhaṇam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa lived both in Vṛndāvana and in Mathurā. What did He do there? Why did He kill Kaṁsa, His mother’s brother? Such killing is not at all sanctioned in the śāstras.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **Madhupuryām:** refers to Mathura and Dvaraka, the cities of the descendants of Madhu. “Why did Kṛṣṇa

kill His mother’s (Devaki) brother Kamsa? Kṛṣṇa should not have done that, since Kamsa was his mother’s brother.”

Text 11

*dehaṁ mānuṣam āśritya,
kati varṣāṇi vṛṣṇibhiḥ,
yadu-puryām sahāvātsīt,
patnyaḥ katy abhavan prabhoh*

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has no material body, yet He appears as a human being. For how many years did He live with the descendants of Vṛṣṇi? How many wives did He marry, and for how many years did He live in Dvārakā?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: How many years did Kṛṣṇa live with the Yadus?

dehaṁ mānuṣam āśritya: By using this phrase, Parikṣit Maharaja indicates that the years should be in human calculation, not that of the *devas*.

In other places the Lord is referred to as “*paramātmā narakṛtī*” or “*budha parabrahma manusya cihnadhari*.” The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says, *narākṛti para-brahma kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ*: “The Supreme Absolute Truth, for His own purpose, appears in a human-like form, although He is the source of everything.” These *sastric* statements show that the human-like form of Kṛṣṇa is His *svarūpa* or spiritual form. Thus the phrase *dehaṁ mānuṣam* cannot mean that Kṛṣṇa has a material body.

Text 12

*etad anyac ca sarvaṁ me,
mune kṛṣṇa-viceṣṭitam,
vaktum arhasi sarvajña,
śraddadhānāya viśṛtam*

O great sage, who know everything about Kṛṣṇa, please describe in detail all the activities of which I have inquired and also those of which I have not, for I have full faith and am very eager to hear of them.

Text 13

*naiṣātiduḥsahā kṣun mām,
tyaktodam api bādhate,
pibantaṁ tvan-mukhāmbhoja-
cyutaṁ hari-kathāṁṛtam*

Because of my vow on the verge of death, I have given up even drinking water, yet because I am drinking the nectar of topics about Kṛṣṇa, which is flowing from the lotus mouth of Your Lordship, my hunger and thirst, which are extremely difficult to bear, cannot hinder me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Parikṣit, because you are afflicted by hunger and thirst you should rest a while.” In response to Sukadeva’s advice, Parikṣit speaks this verse: “It was due to hunger and thirst that I lost my discrimination, and placed the snake around the neck of the *muni*. Now that I am drinking *hari-kathāṁṛtam*, the nectar of the

pastimes of Hari, I have completely given up food and water. Hunger and thirst no longer afflict me.”

Why is the present tense used here? Because hunger will manifest the moment one stops hearing about Kṛṣṇa. **āmbhoja**: lotus; This word suggests the sweetness and intoxicating effect of the topics of Hari. For this reason, Parikṣit Maharaja has forgotten his intolerable hunger and thirst. The lotus suggests that the mouth of Sukadeva is fragrant like a lotus. **āmṛtam**: nectar; Indicates that the lotus-mouth (*mukhāmbhoja*) of Sukadeva Gosvami is like the moon in that it drips nectar, bestows joy, and destroys the darkness in the hearts of the listeners. It also means that Parikṣit, being thirsty for the pastimes of Hari (*hari-kathāmṛtam*), is like a *cakora* bird longing for the moonlight. All of this expresses Parikṣit Maharaja’s great attachment for hearing the topics of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Text 14

*sūta uvāca, evaṁ niśamya bhṛgu-nandana sādhu-vādam,
vaiyāsakīḥ sa bhagavān atha viṣṇu-rātam,
pratyaṛcya kṛṣṇa-caritaṁ kali-kalmaṣa-ghnaṁ,
vyāhartum ārabhata bhāgavata-pradhānaḥ*

Suta Gosvāmī said: O son of Bhṛgu [Śaunaka Ṁṣi], after Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the most respectable devotee, the son of Vyāsadeva, heard the pious questions of Mahārāja Parīkṣit, he thanked the King with great respect. Then he began to discourse on topics concerning Kṛṣṇa, which are the remedy for all sufferings in this age of Kali.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **bhṛgu-nandana**: Suta Gosvami speaks, “O son of Bhṛgu [Saunaka Rsi].”

kali kalmaṣa ghnaṁ: Sukadeva began describing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa which dispel the sorrows of the *jivas* of *kali-yuga* and destroy the

worst of sins. **viṣṇu rātam**: always protected by Visnu; Sukadeva began describing Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes to Parikṣit (*visnu ratam*).

bhāgavata pradhānaḥ: chief devotee; describes Sukadeva as the chief among devotees, who shows great regard for the book *bhāgavata* and the devotee *bhāgavata*.

Text 15

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
samyag vyavasitā buddhis,
tava rājarsī-sattama,
vāsudeva-kathāyām te,
yaj jātā naiṣṭhikī ratih*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O Your Majesty, best of all saintly kings, because you are greatly attracted to topics of Vāsudeva, it is certain that your intelligence is firmly fixed in spiritual understanding, which is the only true goal for humanity. Because that attraction is unceasing, it is certainly sublime.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **samyag vyavasitā buddhis**: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “You have developed firm attachment to the Lord because (*yat*) your intelligence (*buddhi*) is fixed (*samyag vyavasitā*). **rājarsī sattama**: You previously addressed me as *muni sattama*, the best among the *munis* and devotees. This is my response. O king, you are the best among saintly kings (*rajarsi sattama*) and devotees because of your superior devotion to the Lord. By Kṛṣṇa’s mercy you defeated the power of *brahma teja* (Asvattama’s *astra*) at the time of birth and death.”

Text 16

*vāsudeva-kathā-praśnaḥ,
puruṣāms trīn punāti hi,
vaktāraṁ pracchakaṁ śrotṛiṁs,
tat-pāda-salilaṁ yathā*

The Ganges, emanating from the toe of Lord Viṣṇu, purifies the three worlds, the upper, middle and lower planetary systems. Similarly, when one asks questions about the pastimes and characteristics of Lord Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa, three varieties of men are purified: the speaker or preacher, he who inquires, and the people in general who listen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: pāda salilaṁ yathā: Hari-katha purifies three types of persons, just like the caranamṛta of salagrama or a deity, which purifies three types of persons: those who put it on their head, those who drink it and those who do both. It also means that the topics of Hari are just like the Ganga, which purifies those in the upper, middle and lower worlds. The topics of Hari purify the speaker, the inquirer and the listener in descending order. Hari-katha is most purifying for the speaker, then the inquirer and then the listener.

Text 17

*bhūmir dṛpta-nṛpa-vyāja-,
daityānīka-śatāyutaiḥ,
ākrāntā bhūri-bhāreṇa,
brahmāṇaṁ śaraṇaṁ yayau*

Once when mother earth was overburdened by hundreds of

thousands of military phalanxes of various conceited demons dressed like kings, she approached Lord Brahmā for relief.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Now hear the famous reason for Kṛṣṇa’s appearance.” Sukadeva Gosvami speaks with this intention. **daityānīka:** Due to being afflicted by the burden of the sins of countless soldiers of the *daityās*, demons, who though not born of Diti’s lineage, attained their demoniac status by their actions, the earth personified approached Brahma situated on the peak of Mount Meru.

brahmāṇam śaraṇam yayau: This was not the Brahma who usually stays on Satyaloka. In the Satya-yuga before the appearance of Kṛṣṇa, King Raivata went to Brahma on Satyaloka along with his daughter Revati to ask about his daughter’s marriage. In Brahma’s assembly the Gandharvas Haha and Huhu were singing. During the length of their one song on Satyaloka (Brahmaloka), Satya and Treta *yugas* on earth finished, and Dvapara-yuga also passed. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were about to appear.

Brahma said, “Please give your daughter in marriage to Balarama, who has now appeared on the earth planet. He is a suitable groom.” Thus, situated on Satyaloka, Hiranyagarbha Brahma was listening to the song while Satya, Treta and Dvapara yugas passed by on the earth planet until Kṛṣṇa and Balarama’s appearance.

bhūmiḥ: The deity of the earth could not have approached that Brahma on Satyaloka to make her request. Bhūmi, earth personified, went instead to Vairaja Brahma living on Mount Meru. The great sage Parasara Muni confirms this: *jagama dharini meroh samaje tridivaukasam*, “The goddess of the earth went along with the demigods to Mount Meru.”

Text 18

*gaur bhūtvāsru-mukhī khinnā,
krandantī karuṇam vibhoḥ,*

*upasthitāntike tasmai,
vyasanaṃ samavocata*

Mother earth assumed the form of a cow. Very much distressed, with tears in her eyes, she appeared before Lord Brahmā and told him about her misfortune.

Text 19

*brahmā tad-upadhāryātha,
saha devais tayā saha,
jagāma sa-tri-nayanas,
tīraṃ kṣīra-payo-nidheḥ*

Thereafter, having heard of the distress of mother earth, Lord Brahmā, with mother earth, Lord Śiva and all the other demigods, approached the shore of the ocean of milk.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **tad-upadhāryā:** After hearing from the earth personified and understanding everything rightly, Brahma went to the milk ocean.

atha: The word *atha* is excessive usage if it means “then or thereafter.” It can be explained as follows: Brahma thought: “My work is creation and Visnu’s work is maintenance. For this work of maintenance it is better that we go to Visnu, resting on the milk ocean. We should go and request His help.” After considering in this way, Brahma left for the milk ocean.

sa-tri-nayanas: Lord Siva, who has three eyes. There were two tasks here: protection of the earth and destruction of the demons. Thinking that he could engage Indra in protecting the earth and Siva in destroying

the demons, Brahma went to the milk ocean with Siva and the demigods.

Text 20

*tatra gatvā jagannātham,
deva-devam vṛṣākapim,
puruṣam puruṣa-sūktena,
upatasthe samāhitaḥ*

After reaching the shore of the ocean of milk, the demigods worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the master of the whole universe, the supreme God of all gods, who provides for everyone and diminishes everyone’s suffering. With great attention, they worshiped Lord Viṣṇu, who lies on the ocean of milk, by reciting the Vedic mantras known as the Puruṣa-sūkta.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Why should Brahma go to Visnu? This verse answers the question.

Jagannātham, Deva-devam, Vṛṣākapim: Visnu is Jagannatha, Lord of the universe; Devadeva, the worshipable deity of all the demigods; and also Vrsakapi, He who fulfills all desires and removes all suffering. By visiting Visnu, Brahma and the demigods proclaim their subordination to Visnu’s authority in protecting the earth.

Text 21

*giram samādhau gagane samīritām,
niśamya vedhās tridaśān uvāca ha,
gām paurusīm me śṛṇutāmarāḥ punar,
vidhīyatām āśu tathaiva mā ciram*

While in trance, Lord Brahmā heard the words of Lord Viṣṇu vibrating in the sky. Thus he told the demigods: O demigods, hear from me the order of Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Person, and execute it attentively without delay.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **gagane:** sky; Brahma did not directly see or meet Visnu. In a trance of meditation (*samādhau*) Brahma heard a voice in the sky. From this one can understand that to see Visnu directly is difficult even for Brahma. Thus when Kṛṣṇa, the origin of Visnu, shows Himself directly to all men when He appears on earth, it is a display of extraordinary mercy, not available at any other time. **gāṁ pauṛuṣīm:** means the words of Kṣīrodakasayi Visnu, the supreme *puruṣa* (person)

Text 22

*puraiva pumsāvadhṛto dharā-jvaro,
bhavadbhir aṁśair yaduṣūpajanyatām,
sa yāvad urvyā bharam īśvareśvaraḥ,
sva-kāla-śaktyā kṣapayamś cared bhuvi*

Lord Brahmā informed the demigods: 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma repeats the words of Lord Visnu in four verses (22-25).

pumsā: means Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, because *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes Kṛṣṇa as the person who will appear to relieve the problems of the earth: *kṛṣṇaḥ svayam samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo (Brahma-samhita 5.39)*, Kṛṣṇa Himself who is the supreme being, *pūman*, appeared. **avadhṛtaḥ:** known; Kṛṣṇa already knew the sufferings of the earth. **aṁśair yadu:** The demigods should appear along with the Lord's associates such as Uddhava and Satyaki, who are expansions of the Lord (*aṁśaih*) in the family of Yadu, the Kurus or more specifically the Pandavas. **īśvareśvaraḥ:** Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all lords (*īśvaras*) including Visnu.

Text 23

*vasudeva-grhe sākṣād,
bhagavān puruṣaḥ paraḥ,
janiṣyate tat-priyārtham,
sambhavantu sura-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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **sura-striyaḥ:** wives of the demigods; refers to expansions of Kṛṣṇa's eternal female companions, who were present in the heavenly planets. Examples are the wives of the Manvantara Avatars and Lord Vamana. They performed worship to attain friendship and intimacy with Kṛṣṇa's most dear lovers (Vrajagopis). Because of this worship they took birth (*sambhavantu*) in the Yadu dynasty as different *priya sakhis* of Kṛṣṇa in Bhauma Vrndavana to enrich the Lord's transcendental pastimes.

janiṣyate tat-priyārtham: *Ujjvala-nilamani* says, *nitya priyanam*

amsas tu. When Kṛṣṇa appears in the family of the demigods in partial form, His beloveds also appear in the forms of demigoddesses to please Him. When Kṛṣṇa appeared on earth, these *devis* appeared as young unmarried *gopis*, *priya sakhis* of the *nitya-priya sakhis*.

Text 24

*vāsudeva-kalānantaḥ,
sahasra-vadanaḥ svarāṭ,
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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **vāsudeva-kalānantaḥ:** Ananta is an *amsa* or *kala* (portion) of Baladeva. This is supported with verses like: *evamsena sahasra vadano 'nantah* (whose portion is the thousand-mouthed Ananta), and *yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā jagatī jagataḥ pate*, “O mighty-armed Balarama, with a single portion of Yourself You hold up the universe.” (*Srimad Bhagavatam* 10.65.28) Here Baladeva is described as Ananta who is a portion of Vasudeva.

svarāṭ: usually means independent; he who exists (*rāj or rat*) by himself (*sva*), but here it means He who exists with His own brother Kṛṣṇa (*sva*). **deva:** Baladeva, who is existing with his own brother (*svarat*) will appear first (*agrataḥ bhavitā*).

Text 25

*viṣṇor māyā bhagavatī,
yayā sammohitam jagat,
ādiṣṭā prabhuṇāmsena,
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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to charm the eternal devotees and bewilder the enemies like Kamsa, Kṛṣṇa gave orders to *yogamaya* and *mahamaya*.

viṣṇor māyā: refers to both energies of the Lord, but elsewhere in *Bhagavatam* it is stated that Kṛṣṇa gave orders to *yogamaya*. Being ordered by the Lord, *yogamaya* and her expansion as the external energy *mahamaya*, which bewilders the world, will appear.

The *Sruti Vidya* of *Narada Pancaratra* states that *mahamaya* is an expansion of *yogamaya*: “Yogamaya is the *svarupa sakti* of Lord Visnu. She is completely surrendered and unswerving in devotion to the Lord. Her nature is *prema* and she rules over Gokula like a queen. One immediately attains the Lord by her mercy. Her *āvāraṇikā-śakti* is *mahamaya*, the controller of the material realm. By her influence all *jivas* identify with their bodies and become bewildered. Mahamaya is also called Durga, Eka or Ekanamsa.”

kāryārthe: executing activities; There are two types of activities: those of *yogamaya* and those of *maya*. *Yogamaya* came to the prison when Kṛṣṇa was born, transferred the seventh child from Devaki’s womb, and put Yasoda into deep sleep to exchange the two children. These are

activities of *yogamaya*, not Mahamaya. Mahamaya does not have the power to transfer her master Balarama to another womb.

Yasoda's sleep is not the work of Mahamaya because the scriptures say that beyond the fourth state of consciousness is the fifth state of *prema*. The dreaming of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates occurs in the state of *prema*. Their sleep and dreaming are not caused by the modes of nature. *Mahamaya* cannot exert any influence over the eternal associates of the Lord.

The form of Devaki's daughter that Kamsa tried to kill was Mahamaya not Yogamaya. Yogamaya does not involve herself with such sinful people. Mahamaya slipped from Kamsa's hands, rose up in the sky, and then settled in many places with different names after saying, "I will be born from the womb of Yasoda in Nanda's house in the twenty eighth *yuga* cycle at the end of Vaivasvata Manvantara. As a resident of Vindhya Mountain, I will kill your evil companions."

The bewilderment of the husbands and mothers-in-law of the married *gopis* joining the *rasa-lila* was an action of Yogamaya not Mahamaya because the husbands were not atheistic or unfavorable towards the Lord. If they were under the influence of Mahamaya, then one would certainly observe in them hostility towards the Lord.

The *Bhagavatam*'s first verse describing Kṛṣṇa's *rasa-lila* says *yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ*: "taking shelter of the internal spiritual energy." On the other hand, demons like Duryodhana and Salva never gave respect to the Lord, even though they saw Kṛṣṇa's Visvarupa and Garuda carrier. They thought Kṛṣṇa was one of the wicked Yadavas. This is the action of Mahamaya not Yogamaya, because their actions show hostility toward the Lord.

The bewilderment of the demons is the action of Mahamaya, and the bewilderment of the devotees is the action of Yogamaya. When Yasoda saw the universal form (*visvarupa*) in Kṛṣṇa's mouth, and when Nanda Maharaja saw Kṛṣṇa in Varunaloka, they were completely unaffected by it because of their intense *vatsalya-bhava* (parental affection), even though they saw such majestic aspects of the Lord. This is neither the action of Yogamaya nor Mahamaya. It is the nature of *prema* itself.

Prema covers one’s knowledge of the Lord’s power and majesty (*aisvarya maya-jnana*), and binds up Kṛṣṇa in the hearts of His *premi-bhaktas* more and more with the ropes of spiritual possessiveness. As affection for Kṛṣṇa increases, *prema* completely submerges the devotees in the great ocean of relishing Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness. To convey this unique quality of *prema*, the *Tantra* says: “Kṛṣṇa spread his *vaisnavi-maya* in the form of parental affection.” Extreme affection for a son is the unique quality of *vatsalya-prema*.

In this verse *Yogamaya* is referred to as “*maya*” since it shares the quality of spreading illusion with *Mahamaya*.

Text 26

śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ādiśyāmara-gaṇān,
prajāpati-patir vibhuḥ,
āśvāsya ca mahīm gīrbhiḥ,
sva-dhāma paramam yayau

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After thus advising the demigods and pacifying mother earth, the very powerful Lord Brahmā, who is the master of all other Prajāpatīs and is therefore known as Prajāpati-pati, returned to his own abode, Brahmāloka.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **Iti:** thus; indicates that here the message of *Viṣnu* as related by *Brahma* to the demigods ends.

Text 27

śūraseno yadupatir,
mathurām āvasan purīm,

*māthurāñ chūrasenāś ca,
viṣayān bubhujē purā*

Formerly, Śū rasena, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, had gone to live in the city of Mathurā. There he enjoyed the places known as Māthura and Śū rasena.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **mathurām:** Now begins the description of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in Vasudeva's house in Mathura. First the suitable place of His birth is described.

Text 28

*rājadhānī tataḥ sābhūt,
sarva-yādava-bhūbhujām,
mathurā bhagavān yatra,
nityam sannihito hariḥ*

Since that time, the city of Mathurā had been the capital of all the kings of the Yadu dynasty. The city and district of Mathurā are very intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, for Lord Kṛṣṇa lives there eternally.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **nityam sannihito:** All-perfect Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in His spiritual form in Mathura in the material world. It is there that Kṛṣṇa appears and becomes visible to the people of the world. Kṛṣṇa does not descend from Vaikuntha. But when Kṛṣṇa appears, His expansions from Vaikuntha and Svetadvipa unite with Him. After the pastimes are over, they return to their respective abodes. That they descend from Vaikuntha and later return there is mentioned in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.15): *parāvareśo mahad-amśa-yukto.*

Text 29

*tasyām tu karhicic chaurir,
vasudevaḥ kṛtodvahaḥ,
devakyā sūryayā sārđham,
prayāṇe ratham āruhat*

Some time ago, Vasudeva, who belonged to the demigod family [or to the Śū ra dynasty], married Devakī. After the marriage, he mounted his chariot to return home with his newly married wife.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva mounted the chariot with his newly married wife (*sūryayā*) Devaki to go to his house (*prayāṇe*) the day after the marriage.

Text 30

*ugrasena-sutaḥ kaṁsaḥ,
svasuḥ priya-cikīrṣayā,
raśmīn hayānām jagrāha,
raukmai ratha-śatair vṛtaḥ*

Kaṁsa, the son of King Ugrasena, in order to please his sister Devakī on the occasion of her marriage, took charge of the reins of the horses and became the chariot driver. He was surrounded by hundreds of golden chariots.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **svasuḥ:** In some editions, the word *svasuḥ* is replaced by *bhagnya*. Kamsa took the reins (*raśmīn*) of the horses in order to please his sister (*svasu* or *bhagnya*).

Texts 31–32

*catuḥ-śataṃ pāribarhaṃ,
gajānāṃ hema-mālināṃ,
aśvānāṃ ayutaṃ sārdhaṃ,
rathānāṃ ca tri-ṣaṭ-śataṃ,
dāsīnāṃ sukumārīṇāṃ,
dve śate samalaṅkṛte,
duhitre devakaḥ prādād,
yāne duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ*

Devakī's father, King Devaka, was very much affectionate to his daughter. Therefore, while she and her husband were leaving home, he gave her a dowry of four hundred elephants nicely decorated with golden garlands. He also gave ten thousand horses, eighteen hundred chariots, and two hundred very beautiful young maidservants, fully decorated with ornaments.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **Pāriverhaṃ:** dowry. **Yāne:** at the time of the journey.

Text 33

*śaṅkha-tūrya-mṛdaṅgās ca,
nedur dundubhayaḥ samam,
prayāṇa-prakrame tāta,
vara-vadhvoḥ sumaṅgalam*

O beloved son, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when the bride and bridegroom

were ready to start, conchshells, bugles, drums and kettledrums all vibrated in concert for their auspicious departure.

Text 34

*pathi pragrahiṇaṁ kaṁsam,
ābhāṣyāhāśarīra-vāk,
asyās tvām aṣṭamo garbho,
hantā yām vahase 'budha*

While Kamsa, controlling the reins of the horses, was driving the chariot along the way, an unembodied voice addressed him, “You foolish rascal, the eighth child of the woman you are carrying will kill you!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: āśarīra-vāk: While Kamsa held the reins of the horses in his hand, an unseen voice announced, “The eighth offspring of the woman you are carrying will kill you.”

Out of fear that Kṛṣṇa might not kill Kamsa because of his extreme affection for Devaki, the demigods delivered this message from the sky in order to arouse Kamsa’s anger toward Devaki. Vasudeva had heard from his mother that when he was born, there were sounds of drums announcing the future birth of an incarnation of the Lord. Vasudeva told this to Devaki. Thus hearing the voice from the sky, Devaki became blissful, for she understood that the Lord would appear in her womb. Also through the message it was understood that the six sons of Marici would be delivered from their curse after being killed by Kamsa. **garbho:** pregnancy; is used instead of *putra* (son), so that when Kamsa saw the eighth child to be a daughter he would not be suspicious.

Text 35

*ity uktaḥ sa khalah pāpo,
bhojānām kula-pāmsanaḥ,
bhaginīm hantum ārabdham,
khaḍga-pāṇiḥ kace 'grahīt*

Kaṁsa was a condemned personality in the Bhoja dynasty because he was envious and sinful. Therefore, upon hearing this omen from the sky, he caught hold of his sister's hair with his left hand and took up his sword with his right hand to sever her head from her body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **kula-pāmsanaḥ:** Kamsa, who contaminated his family with sin, prepared to kill Devaki. Out of affection for his sister, Kamsa held the reins of the horse with his left hand. Suddenly he grabbed Devaki's hair in order to kill her. Throwing away the whip from his right hand, he took up his sword. The affection of materialistic people is flickering and easily transforms into hate. They have no regard for religious principles. They are so shameless that even in the eyes of the common man they can commit murder.

Text 36

*taṁ jugupsita-karmāṇam,
nṛśaṁsam nirapatrapam,
vasudevo mahā-bhāga,
uvāca parisāntvayan*

Wanting to pacify Kaṁsa, who was so cruel and envious that he was

shamelessly ready to kill his sister, the great soul Vasudeva, who was to be the father of Kṛṣṇa, spoke to him in the following words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **mahābhāga:** greatly fortunate; Upon seeing that Kamsa was ready to kill his wife, Vasudeva did not show anger because he was an ocean of good qualities such as patience, gravity, forgiveness and cleverness. The question may arise, “How could a cruel person such as Kamsa listen to Vasudeva’s advice?” Therefore he is described as *mahābhāga*. Even tigers and snakes do not create obstacles when they encounter those possessed of good qualities.

Text 37

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca,
ślāghanīya-guṇaḥ sūrair,
bhavān bhoja-yaśaskaraḥ,
sa katham bhaginīm hanyāt,
striyam udvāha-parvaṇi*

Vasudeva said: My dear brother-in-law Kamsa, you are the pride of your family, the Bhoja dynasty, and great heroes praise your qualities. How could such a qualified person as you kill a woman, your own sister, especially on the occasion of her marriage?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva used the diplomatic principles of *sāma*, pacification with kind words invoking relationship and glorification of qualities; *dāna*, personal gain and helping others; and *bheda*, creating dissension.

ślāghanīya guṇaḥ: one with praiseworthy qualities; glorifies Kamsa’s qualities (*sāma*). **bhoja yaśaḥ-karaḥ:** a brilliant star in the Bhoja dynasty; invokes family relationship (*sāma*). **bhaginīm:** sister; by mentioning this word to invoke fear and doubt, Vasudeva employs

dissension or *bheda*. **hanyāt striyam**: “How can you kill?” indicates gain and helping others (*dāna*). “Though Devaki bears your killer, you will gain fame by not killing her since she is a woman. Sparing her life, therefore, is helping others.”

udvāha-parvaṇi: “Afterall, Devaki is a defenseless woman, your sister, and it will happen during her wedding. Presently you are a famous person, but killing her now will bring infamy in this life and hell in the next life.”

Thus Vasudeva indicates two types of *bheda*, problems in this life and next. The real intent of Vasudeva’s words can be understood by taking opposite meanings. Saying Kamsa has praiseworthy qualities, actually indicates that Kamsa does not have those qualities. In the Bhoja dynasty Kamsa is famous for causing problems. By killing his sister Kamsa will destroy his dynasty.

Text 38

*mṛtyur janmavatām vīra,
dehena saha jāyate,
adya vābda-śatānte vā,
mṛtyur vai prāṇinām dhruvaḥ*

O great hero, one who takes birth is sure to die; for death is born with the body. One may die today or after hundreds of years, but death is sure for every living entity.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing no change in Kamsa’s heart, Vasudeva tries logic to advise Kamsa.

“O king! Out of fear of death, you are about to commit murder. Now listen to me. Death is unavoidable.” With this intention, Vasudeva speaks this verse.

janmavatām: one who has taken birth; Factually there is no birth or

death for the soul. Only those who take birth by accepting a material body have death. **saha:** “*Sa*” means it is well known. “*Ha*” indicates that the fact is definite. When will death take place? **vā:** either, or; Two “*vas*” are used to indicate the inability to predict the time of death. Death could come anytime between now and a hundred years.

mṛtyur vai prāṇinām dhruvaḥ: death is certain for all; Vasudeva presents proof by saying this, which resembles a verse in *Gīta* 2.27: *jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur, dhruvam janma mṛtasya ca*, “For one who has taken his birth, death is certain; and for one who is dead, birth is certain.”

“Therefore, O brave one, a courageous warrior like you should not be afraid of death.”

Text 39

*dehe pañcatvam āpanne,
dehī karmānugo ’vaśaḥ,
dehāntaram anuprāpya,
prāktanam tyajate vapuḥ*

When the present body turns to dust and is again reduced to five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—the proprietor of the body, the living being, automatically receives another body of material elements according to his fruitive activities. When the next body is obtained, he gives up the present body.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Birth means accepting a body and death means giving up a body. Both are inevitable. With that intention Vasudeva speaks this verse. When the body is about to die, one receives another body, and then gives up the old body. But one should not lament for the loss of enjoyment along with loss of the body.

Therefore Vasudeva says ***karmanugaḥ... avaśaḥ***, the new body is

decided by one's actions in this life. "If you have *karma* to enjoy in the future, then certainly you will get that enjoyment. Therefore you should give up killing a woman, which will produce suffering in the next body."

Text 40

*vrajāms tiṣṭhan padaikena,
yathaiivaikena gacchati,
yathā tṛṇa-jalaukaivam,
dehī karma-gatiṁ gataḥ*

Just as a person traveling on the road rests one foot on the ground and then lifts the other, or as a worm on a vegetable transfers itself to one leaf and then gives up the previous one, the conditioned soul takes shelter of another body and then gives up the one he had before.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse, Vasudeva gives examples to show how one gives up the present body after attaining the new body (in a subtle form via *karma*). A man puts his foot forward on the ground firmly and then withdraws his back leg from the ground and puts it forward. He does not put both feet forward at the same time. However, in this example the feet are fixing themselves and withdrawing themselves from the same ground. As this may be unsatisfying to the mind, Vasudeva cites the example of the caterpillar, who after taking support of one blade of grass in front of him, gives up the previous blade of grass.

Text 41

*svapne yathā paśyati deham īdrśam,
manorathenābhiniṣṭa-cetanaḥ,
dr̥ṣṭa-śrutābhyām manasānucintayan,
prapadyate tat kim api hy apasmṛtiḥ*

Having experienced a situation by seeing or hearing about it, one contemplates and speculates about that situation, and thus one surrenders to it, not considering his present body. Similarly, by mental adjustments one dreams at night of living under different circumstances, in different bodies, and forgets his actual position. Under this same process, one gives up his present body and accepts another [*tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*].

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva now shows an example from everyday life. In a dream one sees a body similar to the one seen in the waking state (*īdrśam*). Similarly, a person, whose consciousness is deeply absorbed in someone through seeing a king for example, or through hearing about Lord Indra for example, will see oneself as the king or Indra in his dream, and attempt to enjoy like the king or Indra as he forgets his original body.

Text 42

*yato yato dhāvati daiva-coditam,
mano vikārātmakam āpa pañcasu,
guṇeṣu māyā-rociteṣu dehy asau,
prapadyamānaḥ saha tena jāyate*

At the time of death, according to the thinking, feeling and willing of the mind, which is involved in fruitive activities, one receives a particular body. In other words, the body develops according to

the activities of the mind. Changes of body are due to the flickering of the mind, for otherwise the soul could remain in its original, spiritual body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: A question now arises. The mind can only enjoy because of the influence of the demigods over the mind. The demigods enable one to become absorbed in the image of a king or Indra. How is it possible for the mind to get enjoyment meant for someone else? This verse answers the question.

vikārātmakam: changing mentality; Whatever objects produced from the five elements (earth, water, air etc.) that the impressionable mind becomes attracted to, those objects it attains. **dehy asau**: Because of its close association with the mind, the soul also enjoys those objects (*prapadyamānaḥ jāyate*) along with the absorbed mind.

Text 43

*jyotir yathaivodaka-pārthiveṣv adah,
samīra-vegānugataṁ vibhāvyaṭe,
evaṁ sva-māyā-raciteṣv asau pumān,
guṇeṣu rāgānugato vimuhyati*

When the luminaries in the sky, such as the moon, the sun and the stars, are reflected in liquids like oil or water, they appear to be of different shapes—sometimes round, sometimes long, and so on—because of the movements of the wind. Similarly, when the living entity, the soul, is absorbed in materialistic thoughts, he accepts various manifestations as his own identity because of ignorance. In other words, one is bewildered by mental concoctions because of agitation from the material modes of nature.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Now Vasudeva gives an example to

show how the soul, due to association with the mind, attains the same destination.

jyotir: sunlight or moonlight; **vodaka**: (*udaka*) refers to water, oil or ghee. The image of the sun is reflected on the surface of water, but it changes shape as the wind blows the surface and produces ripples. **guṇeṣu**: “In the bodies (*guṇeṣu*) created by the Lord’s *maya* (*svamāyā raciteṣu*), or by one’s own ignorance, the living entity (*pumān*), following the mind which is filled with desires for enjoyment (*rāgānugata*), becomes bewildered and takes up the same desire for enjoyment.

Vasudeva said, “By killing Devaki you will obstruct the soul’s desire to enjoy. Even if you die, you will enjoy in the next body because you will attain an auspicious body since your good deeds must bear result. But killing Devaki will bring you suffering in the future. Your death by the future son of Devaki, which was announced in the sky, is unavoidable as it is under the laws of *karma*. Therefore Kamsa, you should accept that death. All you can do is have Markandeya Rsi perform some ceremonies as preventative measures.”

Text 44

*tasmān na kasyacid droham,
ācaret sa tathā-vidhaḥ,
ātmanaḥ kṣemam anvicchan,
drogdhur vai parato bhayam*

Therefore, since envious, impious activities cause a body in which one suffers in the next life, why should one act impiously? Considering one’s welfare, one should not envy anyone, for an envious person must always fear harm from his enemies, either in this life or in the next.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **sa tathā-vidhaḥ**: A person covered by ignorance should not commit violence. **drogdhur**: envious; For one who commits violence to others, there is fear of harm from Yamaraja and others (*parataḥ*). In this verse Vasudeva uses the diplomatic principle of *bheda* to instill fear in Kamsa.

Text 45

*eṣā tavānujā bālā,
kṛpaṇā putrikopamā,
hantuṁ nārhasi kalyāṇīm,
imām tvaṁ dīna-vatsalaḥ*

As your younger sister, this poor girl Devakī is like your own daughter and deserves to be affectionately maintained. You are merciful, and therefore you should not kill her. Indeed, she deserves your affection.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Following the saying, “By praise the ferocious becomes tamed”, Vasudeva again began praising Kamsa. **putrikā upamā**: daughter; “Devaki deserves your mercy because she is just like your daughter.” The sentence can also mean “Devaki is petrified like a doll out of fear.” **dīna vatsalaḥ**: “You should not kill her because you are compassionate to the suffering.” The real meaning of *dīna vatsalaḥ* however is “one who accepts even a calf from a most poor person as a tax.”

Text 46

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ sa sāmabhir bhedair,*

*bodhyamāno 'pi dāruṇaḥ,
na nyavartata kauravya,
puruṣādān anuvrataḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O best of the Kuru dynasty, Kāmsa was fiercely cruel and was actually a follower of the Rākṣasas. Therefore he could be neither pacified nor terrified by the good instructions given by Vasudeva. He did not care about the results of sinful activities, either in this life or in the next.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: bodhyamāno api: pacified; Though Kāmsa was instructed by Vasudeva with pacifying and fear- instilling words, because he kept company with *rākṣasas* (*puruṣa-adān*, man-eaters) he did not give up his intent to kill her.

Text 47

*nirbandham tasya taṁ jñātvā,
vicintyānakadundubhiḥ,
prāptaṁ kālaṁ prativyoḍhum,
idaṁ tatrānvapadyata*

When Vasudeva saw that Kāmsa was determined to kill his sister Devakī, he thought to himself very deeply. Considering the imminent danger of death, he thought of another plan to stop Kāmsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: dundubhiḥ: “At my birth the demigods sounded drums (*dundubhi*). Therefore nothing unfortunate can happen to me.” With this certainty Vasudeva, whose second name is Anakadundubhi, thought of a way to avoid the imminent danger to

Devaki.

Text 48

*mṛtyur buddhimatāpohyo,
yāvad buddhi-balodayam,
yady asau na nivarteta,
nāparādho 'sti dehinaḥ*

As long as he has intelligence and bodily strength, an intelligent person must try to avoid death. This is the duty of every embodied person. But if death cannot be avoided in spite of one's endeavors, a person facing death commits no offense.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: yāvad buddhi: “As long as a person has power and intelligence, he will try to avoid death. I cannot use strength to avoid Devaki's death at Kamsa's hands, but I can use my intelligence.” **asau:** death.

Texts 49–50

*pradāya mṛtyave putrān,
mocaye kṛpaṇām imam,
sutā me yadi jāyeraṇ,
mṛtyur vā na mriyeta cet,
viparyayo vā kiṁ na syād,
gatir dhātur duratyayā,
upasthīto nivarteta,
nivr̥ttaḥ punar āpatet*

Vasudeva considered: By delivering all my sons to Kaṁsa, who is death personified, I shall save the life of Devakī. Perhaps Kaṁsa will die before my sons take birth, or, since he is already destined to die at the hands of my son, one of my sons may kill him. For the time being, let me promise to hand over my sons so that Kaṁsa will give up this immediate threat, and if in due course of time Kaṁsa dies, I shall have nothing to fear.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva silently speaks this verse: “This is what I will do. I will give my sons to this personification of death (*pradāya mṛtyave*), Kamsa.”

But then Vasudeva thinks, “That is not proper.” With this anxiety he continues to think. “If I don’t have any sons there is no need to worry. If I have sons and Kamsa has not died by then, it is certainly improper. But I must save Devaki now. If Kamsa dies before that time, then there is no need to worry. Or the opposite may happen. If I give my sons to Kamsa, they may become strong and kill Kamsa. But how can infant sons kill strong Kamsa?

“The ways of the Lord are hard to understand but Providence (*dhātuḥ*) has proclaimed, ‘The eighth child will kill Kamsa.’ Therefore it is better to save Devaki from Kamsa’s hands by promising to give the children to him, for Kamsa will also die.”

Text 51

*agner yathā dāru-viyoga-yogayor,
adṛṣṭato ’nyan na nimittam asti,
evam hi jantor api durvibhāvyaḥ,
śarīra-samyoga-viyoga-hetuḥ*

When a fire, for some unseen reason, leaps over one piece of wood and sets fire to the next, the reason is destiny. Similarly, when a

living being accepts one kind of body and leaves aside another, there is no other reason than unseen destiny.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva deliberates further: “What I have decided to do is not improbable, for no living entity can escape its fate (even Kamsa).” To illustrate this Vasudeva gives an example: “When there is a forest fire what causes the fire to burn one tree and not another? There is no other cause than fate. Just as the cause of the trees’ suffering is fate, so the cause of a person accepting and losing his body is fate alone. We cannot determine it with our intelligence.”

Text 52

*evam vimṛśya taṁ pāpaṁ,
yāvad-ātmani-darśanam,
pūjayām āsa vai śaurir,
bahu-māna-puraḥsaram*

After thus considering the matter as far as his knowledge would allow, Vasudeva submitted his proposal to the sinful Kamsa with great respect.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **vimṛśya:** contemplating; After carefully considering the options by using his intelligence to its full capacity to determine the correct path, Vasudeva began to praise the most sinful (*pāpaṁ*) Kamsa.

Text 53

*prasanna-vadanāmbhojo,
nṛśamsaṁ nirapatrapam,*

*manasā dūyamānena,
vihasann idam abravīt*

Vasudeva’s mind was full of anxiety because his wife was facing danger, but in order to please the cruel, shameless and sinful Kāṁsa, he externally smiled and spoke to him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **vihasann**: smiling externally; Vasudeva smiled externally to show Kāṁsa that he was internally satisfied, but factually he was suffering internally.

Text 54

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca,
na hy asyās te bhayaṁ saumya,
yad vai sāhāśarīra-vāk,
putrān samarpayisyē ’syā,
yatas te bhayam utthitam*

Vasudeva said: O best of the sober, you have nothing to fear from your sister Devakī because of what you have heard from the unseen omen. The cause of death will be her sons. Therefore I promise that when she gives birth to the sons from whom your fear has arisen, I shall deliver them all unto your hands.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **āśarīra-vāk**: unembodied voice; “According to the message heard in the sky, you need not fear Devakī, but her eighth child. Don’t worry; I will give you all eight children. Then you can kill the eighth child, whom you fear, or if you wish you can kill all eight.”

Text 55

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
svasur vadhān nivavṛte,
kaṁsas tad-vākya-sāra-vit,
vasudevo 'pi taṁ prītaḥ,
praśasya prāviśad gṛham*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Kāṁsa agreed to the logical arguments of Vasudeva, and, having full faith in Vasudeva's words, he refrained from killing his sister. Vasudeva, being pleased with Kāṁsa, pacified him further and entered his own house.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **sāra-vit:** essence of truth; Kāṁsa understood that Vasudeva was not lying.

praśasya: pacify; Vasudeva praised Kāṁsa by saying that his good character would spread throughout the universe.

Text 56

*atha kāla upāvṛtte,
devakī sarva-devatā,
putrān prasusuve cāṣṭau,
kanyāṁ caivānuvatsaram*

Each year thereafter, in due course of time, Devakī, the mother of God and all the demigods, gave birth to a child. Thus she bore eight sons, one after another, and a daughter named Subhadrā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **sarva devatā:** all demigods; Devaki is

described as *sarva-devata*, the mother of all the demigods, because she is worshipable as the mother of the Lord. **kanyām**: daughter; Subhadra is the daughter. Every year for eight years a son was born. The reason is given in verse fifty-eight.

Text 57

*kīrtimantam prathamajam,
kaṁsāyānakadundubhiḥ,
arpayām āsa kṛcchreṇa,
so 'nṛtād ativihvalaḥ*

Vasudeva was very much disturbed by fear of becoming a liar by breaking his promise. Thus with great pain he delivered his first-born son, named Kīrtimān, into the hands of Kaṁsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **prathamajam**: first-born baby; It was the custom to name the child on the day of his birth. Thus on that day the first child was named Kirtiman.

Text 58

*kiṁ duḥsaham nu sādḥūnām,
viduṣām kiṁ apekṣitam,
kiṁ akāryam kadaryāṇām,
dustyajam kiṁ dhṛtātmanām*

What is painful for saintly persons who strictly adhere to the truth? How could there not be independence for pure devotees who know the Supreme Lord as the substance? What deeds are forbidden for

persons of the lowest character? And what cannot be given up for the sake of Lord Kṛṣṇa by those who have fully surrendered at His lotus feet?

Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Thakura: **sādhūnām**: saint; A question arises, “How can I, who am afraid to tell a lie (*sādhu*), tolerate the murder of my own son before my eyes?” Vasudeva gives the answer in this verse. Is it not intolerable for the *sādhu*? How could Vasudeva offer all the children, even without Kamsa ordering, instead of offering just the eighth child to Kamsa?

It is not reasonable that a householder be indifferent to his children. The next phrase therefore replies. Vasudeva is not ignorant like the normal person in the material world. For a person with knowledge, devotion and detachment like Vasudeva, is this to be expected? On the other hand, can Kamsa kill his child when he brings that child to him? Is there no mercy in his heart?

In answer to this Vasudeva said what can a wicked person not do?

In order to avoid fault, should Vasudeva give up householder *dharma* and not produce any children? Vasudeva answers: “He, who desires to see the Lord in the form of his son, holds the Lord in his heart (*dhr̥ta-ātmanām*), and remains in household life to bear a son. He should have affection for no other son. Let the eighth child be born quickly. Let me willingly offer the other children year after year, and take responsibility for their death, out of eagerness to see the Lord.”

Text 59

*dr̥ṣṭvā samatvaṁ tac chaureḥ,
satye caiva vyavasthitim,
kaṁsas tuṣṭa-manā rājan,
prahasann idam abravīt*

My dear King Parīkṣit, when Kāṁsa saw that Vasudeva, being situated in truthfulness, was completely equipoised in giving him the child, he was very happy. Therefore, with a smiling face, he spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: samatvaṁ: equipoised; Vasudeva was completely calm because he had no attachment to the son.

Text 60

*pratiyātu kumāro 'yaṁ,
na hy asmād asti me bhayam,
aṣṭamād yuvayor garbhān,
mṛtyur me vihitāḥ kila*

O Vasudeva, you may take back your child and go home. I have no fear of your first child. It is the eighth child of you and Devakī I am concerned with because that is the child by whom I am destined to be killed.

Text 61

*tatheti sutam ādāya,
yayāv ānakadundubhiḥ,
nābhyanandata tad-vākyam,
asato 'vijitātmanah*

Vasudeva agreed and took his child back home, but because Kāṁsa had no character and no self-control, Vasudeva knew that he could

not rely on Kamsa's word.

Texts 62–63

*nandādyā ye vraje gopā,
yās cāmīṣām ca yoṣitaḥ,
vṛṣṇayo vasudevādyā,
devaky-ādyā yadu-striyaḥ,
sarve vai devatā-prāyā,
ubhayor api bhārata,
jñātayo bandhu-suhṛdo,
ye ca kaṁsam anuvratāḥ*

The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, headed by Nanda Mahārāja and including his associate cowherd men and their wives, were none but denizens of the heavenly planets, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the descendants of Bharata, and so too were the descendants of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, headed by Vasudeva, and Devakī and the other women of the dynasty of Yadu. The friends, relatives and well-wishers of both Nanda Mahārāja and Vasudeva and even those who externally appeared to be followers of Kamsa were all demigods.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: These verses were spoken by Sukadeva Gosvami, or they can be taken as the words of Narada to Kamsa. When Kamsa gave the child back to Devaki, Narada could see that the appearance of the Lord would be blocked. He therefore appeared to Kamsa at this time and spoke these words. Narada Muni came and spoke confidential words to Kamsa in these two verses for nine reasons: Narada wanted to derive personal joy by seeing his Lord; to give joy to the demigods by provoking Kamsa to violence against the devotees and thereby hasten Lord's advent; to accomplish

the slaying of Kamsa for his violence to the devotees; to shower himself in the intense devotion of Vasudeva and Devaki; and get their blessings by delivering to them a confirmation of Kṛṣṇa's appearance; to increase their eagerness to see the Lord; and to drown them in an ocean of bliss by cutting down their doubts of whether the Lord would really appear; to please Devaki and Vasudeva by making them blissful even in those circumstances of suffering; and to make Kamsa favorable to himself by presenting false friendship.

devatā-prāya: celestial inhabitants; means that though the demigods were born in the Yadu family, some demons were also born among them. **bhārata:** Kamsa is addressed as *bhārata* because *bhā* means desire in the mode of ignorance and *rata* means absorption. Kamsa was engrossed in enjoying in ignorance. (If it is Sukadeva speaking, *bhārata* refers to Pariksit.)

Text 64

*etat kamsāya bhagavāñ,
chaśamsābhyetya nāradaḥ,
bhūmer bhārāyamāñānām,
daityānām ca vadhodyamam*

Once the great saint Nārada approached Kamsa and informed him of how the demoniac persons who were a great burden on the earth were going to be killed. Thus Kamsa was placed into great fear and doubt.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **śaśamsa:** inform; Narada informed Kamsa how the demigods were appearing in various families.

*rṣer vinirgame kaṁso,
yadūn matvā surān iti,
devakyā garbha-sambhūtaṁ,
viṣṇuṁ ca sva-vadhaṁ prati,
devakīm vasudevaṁ ca,
niḡrhya niḡaḍair ḡrhe,
jātaṁ jātaṁ ahan putraṁ,
taylor ajana-śaṅkayā*

After the departure of the great saint Nārada, Kāṁsa thought that all the members of the Yadu dynasty were demigods and that any of the children born from the womb of Devakī might be Viṣṇu. Fearing his death, Kāṁsa arrested Vasudeva and Devakī and chained them with iron shackles. Suspecting each of the children to be Viṣṇu, Kāṁsa killed them one after another because of the prophecy that Viṣṇu would kill him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa heard that Visnu, who had been his enemy in a previous life, would now be born in the womb of Devaki and would kill him. Hearing from the mouth of Narada, Kamsa believed this.

ajana: one who has no birth, Visnu; Out of fear of Visnu, Kamsa killed the children as soon as they were born.

Text 67

*mātaraṁ pitaraṁ bhrātṛn,
sarvāṁś ca suhr̥das tathā,
ghnanti hy asutr̥po lubdhā,
rājānaḥ prāyaśo bhuvi*

Kings greedy for sense gratification on this earth almost always kill their enemies indiscriminately. To satisfy their own whims, they may kill anyone, even their mothers, fathers, brothers or friends.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This was not a surprising action for evil men like Kamsa. That is the intention of this verse. What to speak of killing father, brothers and friends, they will kill even their own mothers. The order of seriousness is from first (mother) to last (friend).

Text 68

*ātmānam iha sañjātam,
jānan prāg viṣṇunā hatam,
mahāsuram kālanemiṁ,
yadubhiḥ sa vyarudhyata*

In his previous birth, Kamsa had been a great demon named Kālanemi and been killed by Viṣṇu. Upon learning this information from Nārada, Kamsa became envious of everyone connected with the Yadu dynasty.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa learned from Narada that in his previous birth as Kalanemi he had been killed by Visnu and was now reborn as Kamsa in Mathura. Thus Kamsa made the Yadus his enemies.

Text 69

*ugrasenam ca pitaram,
yadu-bhojāndhakādhipam,
svayam nigṛhya bubhuje,*

śūrasenān mahā-balaḥ

Kaṁsa, the most powerful son of Ugrasena, even imprisoned his own father, the King of the Yadu, Bhoja and Andhaka dynasties, and personally ruled the states known as Śūrasena.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: śūrasena: indicates Mathura, which is within Śūrasena. **bubhuje:** enjoyed; Thus the statement “He enjoyed Śūrasena” or that “Kamsa enjoyed ruling Mathura and the surrounding lands.”

Chapter Two: Prayers by the Demigods

Text 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
pralamba-baka-cāṇūra-
tṛṇāvarta-mahāśanaiḥ,
muṣṭikāriṣṭa-dvividā-
pūtanā-keśī-dhenukaiḥ,
anyaiś cāsura-bhūpālair;
bāṇa-bhaumādibhir yutaḥ,
yadūnām kadanām cakre,
balī māgadha-saṁśrayaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Under the protection of Magadharāja, Jarāsandha, the powerful Kāmsa began persecuting the kings of the Yadu dynasty. In this he had the cooperation of demons like Pralamba, Baka, Cāṇū ra, Tṛṇāvarta, Aghāsura, Muṣṭika, Ariṣṭa, Dvividā, Pū tanā, Keśī, Dhenuka, Bāṇāsura, Narakāsura and many other demoniac kings on the surface of the earth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verses 1—3: In the second chapter, Devaki’s child is transferred to Rohini by *yogamaya*. Kṛṣṇa appears in Devaki’s womb and the demigods praise the Lord. Kāmsa’s persecution of the Yadus, which was mentioned in the first chapter, is now described in detail. **mahāśanaiḥ**: big eater; means Aghasura.

Text 3

*te pīḍitā niviviśuḥ,
kuru-pañcāla-kekayān,
śālvān vidarbhān niṣadhān,
videhān kośalān api*

Persecuted by the demoniac kings, the Yadavas left their own kingdom and entered various others, like those of the Kurus, Pañcālas, Kekayas, Śālvās, Vidarbhās, Niṣadhas, Videhas and Kośalās.

Texts 4–5

*eke tam anurundhānā,
jñātayaḥ paryupāsate,
hateṣu ṣaṭsu bāleṣu,
devakyā augraseninā,
saptamo vaiṣṇavaṁ dhama,
yam anantaṁ pracakṣate,
garbho babhūva devakyā,
harṣa-śoka-vivardhanaḥ*

Some of their relatives, however, began to follow Kāṁsa’s principles and act in his service. After Kāṁsa, the son of Ugrasena, killed the six sons of Devakī, a plenary portion of Kṛṣṇa entered her womb as her seventh child, arousing her pleasure and her lamentation. That plenary portion is celebrated by great sages as Ananta, who belongs to Kṛṣṇa’s second quadruple expansion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **paryupāsate:** agree; Being eager to see the Lord, some of the Yadus such as Akṛura became cooperative

with Kamsa and lived with him in Mathura.

vaiṣṇavaṁ dhama: plenary expansion of Visnu; After Kamsa killed the first six children, the seventh appeared in Devaki's womb. He is famous as Ananta. What is His description? Ananta is described as *vaiṣṇavaṁ dhama*, which means He is an *amsa*, part of Kṛṣṇa. **harṣa-śoka:** joy and lamentation; Ananta's appearance in Devaki's womb was a cause of jubilation, but that He would be killed by Kamsa was a cause of lamentation.

Text 6

*bhagavān api viśvātmā,
viditvā kaṁsajaṁ bhayaṁ,
yadūnām nija-nāthānām,
yogamāyām samādiśat*

To protect the Yadus, His personal devotees, from Kamsa's attack, the Personality of Godhead, Viśvātmā, the Supreme Soul of everyone, ordered Yogamāyā as follows.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **bhagavān:** Kṛṣṇa, *svayam bhagavan*, gave orders to *yogamaya*, who is the fifth of His nine spiritual energies headed by *vimala*. [The nine *śaktis*, potencies, of the Lord are *vimalā, utkarṣiṇī, jñāna, kriyā, yogamaya, prahvī, satyā, īśānā* and *anugrahā*.]

Text 7

*gaccha devi vrajaṁ bhadre,
gopa-gobhir alaṅkṛtam,
rohiṇī vasudevasya,
bhāryāste nanda-gokule,*

*anyās ca kaṁsa-saṁvignā,
vivareṣu vasanti hi*

The Lord ordered Yogamāyā: O My potency, who are worshipable for the entire world and whose nature is to bestow good fortune upon all living entities, go to Vraja, where there live many cowherd men and their wives. In that very beautiful land, where many cows reside, Rohiṇī, the wife of Vasudeva, is living at the home of Nanda Mahārāja. Other wives of Vasudeva are also living there incognito because of fear of Kaṁsa. Please go there.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After Devakī's six children were killed, Vasudeva, seeing Rohini pregnant, sent her secretly to Nanda Gokula. Out of fear of Kamsa (*kaṁsa saṁvignāḥ*) others lived in secret places (*vivareṣu*)—literally caves.

Text 8

*devakyā jaṭhare garbham,
śeṣākhyam dhāma māmakam,
tat sannikṛṣya rohiṇyā,
udare sanniveśaya*

Within the womb of Devakī is My partial plenary expansion known as Saṅkarṣaṇa or Śeṣa. Without difficulty, transfer Him into the womb of Rohiṇī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **dhāma māmakam:** means that Baladeva is My *amsa*, plenary portion, and Sesa is His portion. This is shown in verses such as SB 10.65.28: *rāma rāma mahā-bāho, na jāne tava vikramam, yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā, jagatī jagataḥ pate,* “Yamunā-

devi said, ‘Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.’” “Though Rohini is the eternal mother of Balarama, because of My (Kṛṣṇa) request, He appeared in Devaki’s womb first. After establishing Sesā, His *amsa*, there as My bed and seat, He desired to go to the womb of His own mother.”

How is it possible that six material children could appear first in the womb of Devaki, who is the internal spiritual energy of the transcendent Lord? Just as the material universes exist within the Supreme Lord but do not contaminate the Lord, the six children could exist within Devaki without contaminating her. This is proven in the *Gīta* 9.2: *mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni, na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ*, “All beings are in Me, but I am not in them.”

The conjunction of material and spiritual in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is there to illustrate the methodical nature of *bhakti*. While devotees perform *sādhana bhakti* in the form of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, they also enjoy the six material sense objects, which is a secondary effect of *bhakti*. At that time, the devotee cries out pitifully, “Oh Kṛṣṇa! Because of this enjoyment I will fall into the dark well of material existence.” When a devotee shows fear of material enjoyment, gradually the tendency to enjoy matter subsides. Then *bhakti* in the form of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names, glorifying His transcendental forms, qualities and pastimes, and serving the Lord in various ways becomes prominent. Finally Kṛṣṇa Himself, the ocean of all wonderful forms and qualities, appears within the devotee.

Bhakti is *suddha-sattva*, pure goodness, by nature and it directly manifests the Lord. The *Sruti* says: *bhaktir evaināṁ darśayati*, “Devotion makes the Lord reveal Himself.” As it is said that Marici appeared from the mind, he can be considered the incarnation of the mind. Marici’s six children are the six objects of the senses: sound, touch, form, taste, smell, and thought.

Since Devaki possesses the power to make the Lord appear, she can be considered the incarnation of *bhakti*. Kamsa can be considered the incarnation of fear, as it is often said “out of fear of Kamsa.” Just as fear

of the material world removes the six sense objects from the womb of *bhakti*, so Kamsa destroyed the six children of Devaki. *Kṛṣṇa-prema*, which is characterized by intense service to the Lord, necessarily appears in the womb of *bhakti* after the desire for sense objects is extinguished. Similarly, Ananta, the personified form of service to the Lord, appeared as the seventh child of Devaki. As Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself appears after *prema-bhakti* appears, so Bhagavan Himself appeared as the eighth child of Devaki after Sesa appeared.

Text 9

*athāham amśa-bhāgena,
devakyāḥ putratām śubhe,
prāpsyāmi tvam yaśodāyām,
nanda-patnyām bhaviṣyasi*

O all-auspicious Yogamāyā, I shall then appear with My full six opulences as the son of Devakī, and you will appear as the daughter of mother Yaśodā, the queen of Mahārāja Nanda.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: amśa-bhāgena: means that knowledge, strength and other secondary qualities (*amsa*) accompany (*bhaga* means *bhajana*) the Lord so that He manifests completely. This is Sridhara Swami’s explanation of the words in *Bhavartha Dipika*. He is perfect in whom all the parts (*amśa*) enter (*bhajana:praveṣa* which means entrance). Another meaning of the words is that *amśa* refers to Brahma and all other servants and *bhāga* refers to auspiciousness. The Lord appears for the auspiciousness of Brahma and others. These are the two meanings of Sanatana Gosvami in *Vaisnava Tosani*.

Or another meaning is as follows. *Bhāga* means *amśa*, “I will appear in the mood of the son of Devaki as a plenary portion, partially manifesting Myself but not completely. Devaki will love Me only

with *aiśvarya bhāva*, a loving mood of respect and majesty. Yasoda, however, will manifest pure parental love (*śuddha-vatsalya-prema*) for Me, devoid of the restriction of *aiśvarya*.

bhaviṣyasi: “But Your Yogamaya will simply appear from Yasoda.” It is not mentioned that she will become the daughter of Yasoda, though it is mentioned that Kṛṣṇa will become the son (*putratām*) of Devaki. Yasoda will not have affection for you as her daughter. This means that her presence in Vraja will not be noticed by anyone.

Text 10

*arciṣyanti manuṣyās tvām,
sarva-kāma-vareśvarīm,
dhūpopahāra-balibhiḥ,
sarva-kāma-vara-pradām*

By sacrifices of animals, ordinary human beings will worship you gorgeously, with various paraphernalia, because you are supreme in fulfilling the material desires of everyone.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Your *aṁśa*, material *maya*, will be taken by Vasudeva to cheat Kamsa. You will be worshiped in various forms in Vindhyacala and other places. All men will worship these forms because you are the supreme (*varam*) goddess (*īśvarīm*) of those who have all types of material desires.”

Texts 11–12

*nāmadheyāni kurvanti,
sthānāni ca narā bhuvi,
durgeti bhadrakālīti,*

*vijayā vaiṣṇavīti ca,
kumudā caṇḍikā kṛṣṇā,
mādhavī kanyaketi ca,
māyā nārāyaṇīśānī,
śāradety ambiketi ca*

Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed Māyādevī by saying: In different places on the surface of the earth, people will give you different names, such as Durgā, Bhadrakālī, Vijayā, Vaiṣṇavī, Kumudā, Caṇḍikā, Kṛṣṇā, Mādhavī, Kanyakā, Māyā, Nārāyaṇī, Īśānī, Śāradā and Ambikā.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **kurvanti:** give; “This word indicates in the future men will call you by various names. By My appearance on earth some men will become Vaisnavas, and by your appearance others will become *śāktas*, worshipers of Durgā.”

Text 13

*garbha-saṅkarṣaṇāt taṁ vai,
prāhuḥ saṅkarṣaṇaṁ bhuvī,
rāmeti loka-ramaṇād,
balabhadraṁ balocchrayāt*

The son of Rohiṇī will also be celebrated as Saṅkarṣaṇa because of being sent from the womb of Devakī to the womb of Rohiṇī. He will be called Rāma because of His ability to please all the inhabitants of Gokula, and He will be known as Balabhadra because of His extensive physical strength.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You will be called Rama.” The word Balabhadra is a *sahasup* compound.

Text 14

*sandiṣṭaivam bhagavatā,
tathety om iti tad-vacaḥ,
pratigrhya parikramya,
gām gatā tat tathākarot*

Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Yogamāyā immediately agreed. With the Vedic mantra om̐, she confirmed that she would do what He asked. Thus having accepted the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, she circumambulated Him and started for the place on earth known as Nanda-gokula. There she did everything just as she had been told.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **tathety om̐:** Saying *tathā* and then *om̐*, which is repetitive, is a sign of great respect for the Lord. Having accepted Kṛṣṇa's words, Yogamāyā circumambulated the Lord and then went to the earth (*gām*).

Text 15

*garbhe praṇīte devakyā,
rohiṇīm yoga-nidrayā,
aho visraṁsito garbha,
iti paurā vicukruśuḥ*

When the child of Devakī was attracted and transferred into the womb of Rohiṇī by Yogamāyā, Devakī seemed to have a miscarriage. Thus all the inhabitants of the palace loudly lamented,

“Alas, Devakī has lost her child!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **visraṁsitaḥ**: lost; The citizens suspected that Kamsa must have done some black magic to cause the “apparent” miscarriage. **vicukruśuḥ**: lament; The citizens of Mathura began to lament out of affection for Devaki.

Text 16

*bhagavān api viśvātmā,
bhaktānām abhayaṅkaraḥ,
āviveśāṁśa-bhāgena,
mana ānakadundubheḥ*

Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul of all living entities and who vanquishes all the fear of His devotees, entered the mind of Vasudeva in full opulence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **viśvātmā**: Supersoul of all living entities; Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *viśvātmā*, the soul of the universe, because He is actually the object of *prema* for the whole universe. **aṁśa**: indicates that all the *avataras* such as the *puruṣavataras* are included within Kṛṣṇa. **bhāga**: refers to the six opulences or all good qualities. Kṛṣṇa appeared in the mind of Vasudeva along with all His expansions and opulences. In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.15), it says: *parāvareśo mahad-aṁśa-yuktohy ajo 'pi jāto bhagavān yathāgniḥ*, “Although the Lord is unlimited and unborn, He took birth along with his *aṁśas*.”

Text 17

*sa bibhrat pauruṣam dhama,
bhrājamāno yathā raviḥ,
durāsado 'tidurdharṣo,
bhūtānām sambabhūva ha*

While carrying the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead within the core of his heart, Vasudeva bore the Lord's transcendently illuminating effulgence, and thus he became as bright as the sun. He was therefore very difficult to see or approach through sensory perception. Indeed, he was unapproachable and unperceivable even for such formidable men as Kāṁsa, and not only for Kāṁsa but for all living entities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **bibhrat:** carried; **pauruṣam dhāma:** spiritual effulgence of the Supreme Person; means that Vasudeva was holding the power (*dhāma*) of the Lord (*pauruṣam*). Or it can mean Vasudeva became effulgent on seeing the appearance of the Lord within himself. According to the *Viśvakośa* dictionary, *dhāma* means body, house, ray, place, birth and influence. **durāsadaḥ:** difficult to look at; means that other living entities could not approach him. **ati durdharṣaḥ:** difficult to approach; means that Kamsa and others could not possibly defeat Vasudeva.

Text 18

*tato jagan-maṅgalam acyutāmśam,
samāhitam śūra-sutena devī,
dadhāra sarvātmakam ātma-bhūtam,
kāṣṭhā yathānanda-karam manastah*

Thereafter, accompanied by plenary expansions, the fully opulent

Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is all-auspicious for the entire universe, was transferred from the mind of Vasudeva to the mind of Devakī. Devakī, having thus been initiated by Vasudeva, became beautiful by carrying Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original consciousness for everyone, the cause of all causes, within the core of her heart, just as the east becomes beautiful by carrying the rising moon.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Kṛṣṇa entered Devaki from Vasudeva. This is described in this verse.

jagan maṅgalaṁ acyutāmśam: who is the very form of auspiciousness for the whole universe; who does not deviate; and who includes all expansions such as Narayana and Narasimha. **sarvātmakam ātma bhūtaṁ:** *Sarva* refers to all the devotees or to Lord Siva. *Ātma* refers to mind and *ka* means happiness. Thus the Lord is described as He who gives happiness to the minds of all the devotees or to Lord Siva. *Ātma bhūtaṁ* means He appears (*bhūta*) on His own, independently (*ātma*). The Lord appeared in Devaki’s mind without the effort that *yogis* exert to envision the Lord.

dadhāra manastah: means Devaki held Kṛṣṇa within the mind. This phrase rules out material conception and birth. **kāṣṭhā:** east; A suitable example is given to support this. It was just like the eastern direction (**kāṣṭhā**) holding the full moon (*ānandakara*). It is understood that several days later Devaki could perceive Kṛṣṇa in her womb, because later in this chapter it is said, *diṣṭyāmba te kuṣi-gataḥ paraḥ pumān*, “O fortunate lady, the Supreme Lord has entered your womb.” (v. 41)

Text 19

*sā devakī sarva-jagan-nivāsa-
nivāsa-bhūtā nitarām na reje,
bhojendra-gehe ’gni-śikheva ruddhā,
sarasvatī jñāna-khale yathā satī*

Devakī then kept within herself the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, the foundation of the entire cosmos, but because she was under arrest in the house of Kaṁsa, she was like the flames of a fire covered by the walls of a pot, or like a person who has knowledge but cannot distribute it to the world for the benefit of human society.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devaki became the shelter of the shelter of all material and non-material worlds, but all people could not take advantage of that bliss-giving form. Only a few close persons could appreciate her condition.

agni-śikheva ruddhā: covered fire; In the prison house of Kamsa (*bhojendra*) Devaki was like a covered fire. When a fire is burning in a house, it does not illuminate the town, but only the objects or persons near it in the house. However when the fire becomes strong it can burn down the restricting house. In this way, Devaki would in due time destroy Kamsa. **sarasvatī jñāna khale:** knowledge not distributed; Knowledge trapped in the hearts of men who do not distribute it (literally cheaters of knowledge), does not flourish and benefit others. That knowledge will eventually destroy its restrictor, who is very sinful. In the same way, Devaki would destroy the offensive Kamsa.

Text 20

*tām vīkṣya kamsaḥ prabhayājitāntarām,
virocayantīm bhavanam śuci-smitām,
āhaiṣa me prāṇa-haro harir guhām,
dhruvam śrito yan na pureyam tādṛśī*

Because the Supreme Personality of Godhead was within her

womb, Devakī illuminated the entire atmosphere in the place where she was confined. Seeing her jubilant, pure and smiling, Kāṁsa thought, “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, who is now within her, will kill me. Devakī has never before looked so brilliant and jubilant.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Devaki, who was holding Visnu within her womb (*ājitāntarām*), filled the room with light. She smiled out of genuine bliss (*śuci smitām*), not in order to deceive Kamsa as previously. Seeing her, Kamsa then addressed her. **harir:** Visnu; Hari can mean lion. Seeing Devaki, Kamsa thought, “Like the lion who kills (*prānahari*) the elephant, Hari, who will take my life, has taken shelter in the womb of Devaki. Certainly this is so, because (*yat*) Devaki did not appear effulgent previously (*pureyam*).”

Text 21

*kim adya tasmin karaṇīyam āśu me,
yad artha-tantro na vihanti vikramam,
striyāḥ svasur gurumatyā vadho 'yam,
yaśaḥ śriyam hantya anukālam āyuh*

Kāṁsa thought: What is my duty now? The Supreme Lord, who knows His purpose [*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām Bg. 4.8*], will not give up His prowess. Devakī is a woman, she is my sister, and moreover she is now pregnant. If I kill her, my reputation, opulence and duration of life will certainly be vanquished.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Kamsa speaks more clearly his intentions: “What should I do about Hari in this situation (*tasmin*)?” Is it proper to kill Him while He is still an embryo? No,

because those interested in their own welfare (*artha tantra*) do not destroy their own good name. If I kill Him now, my reputation of prowess will be destroyed. But if He is born and grows, and then I fight with Him, whether I am victorious or defeated my glory will remain intact. Killing a child in the womb is not an act of bravery. Therefore, such a deed will not only destroy my fame, but *dharma* will also get destroyed.”

Thus Kamsa rightly thinks that by killing a woman, a sister and a fetus he will vanquish his fame, power and lifespan. This temporary restriction to Kamsa’s evil nature was due to fear. Thus Kamsa reflected upon his reputation through careful discrimination.

Text 22

*sa eṣa jīvan khalu sampareto,
varteta yo ’tyanta-nṛśāmsitena,
dehe mṛte taṁ manujāḥ śapanti,
gantā tamo ’ndhaṁ tanu-mānino dhruvam*

A person who is very cruel is regarded as dead even while living, for while he is living or after his death, everyone condemns him. And after the death of a person in the bodily concept of life, he is undoubtedly transferred to the hell known as Andhatama.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa continues his deliberation: “If I kill the child to save my life, I will spend the rest of my life in misfortune. Those who perform cruel acts are dead even while existing within the body. If I commit cruel acts and die, people will curse me, and even while living they will curse me. I will fear even while alive. They will shout in taunting voices, ‘You should go to hell for this.’ Those who are absorbed in the bodily conception of life (*tanu māninaḥ*), and maintain their bodies by committing violence on others

will surely go to hell.”

Text 23

*iti ghoratamād bhāvāt,
sannivṛttaḥ svayaṁ prabhuh,
āste pratīkṣaṁs taj-janma,
harer vairānubandha-kṛt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Deliberating in this way, Kāṁsa, although determined to continue in enmity toward the Supreme Personality of Godhead, refrained from the vicious killing of his sister. He decided to wait until the Lord was born and then do what was needed.

Text 24

*āsīnaḥ saṁviśaṁs tiṣṭhan,
bhuñjānaḥ paryaṭan mahīm,
cintayāno hṛṣīkeśam,
apaśyat tanmayam 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 or walking, Kāṁsa saw only his enemy, the Supreme Lord, Hṛṣīkeśa. In other words, by thinking of his all-pervading enemy, Kāṁsa became unfavorably Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The absorption of Kāṁsa’s mind in the

Lord out of fear born of hatred is described in this verse.

saṁviśams: lying on a bed; means while sleeping. **hr̥ṣīkeśam:** The Lord is called Hṛṣīkeśa, one who controls all the senses. **cintayāno:** always thinking badly; implies that Kamsa was continuously thinking of Hari, so that he saw Hari wherever he looked. Such a vision gives bliss in *prema*, but in fear it yields extreme distress. This is the difference between a devotee and an enemy seeing the Lord.

Text 25

*brahmā bhavaś ca tatraitya,
munibhir nāradādibhiḥ,
devaiḥ sānucaraiḥ sākam,
gīrbhir vṛṣaṇam aiḍayan*

Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, accompanied by great sages like Nārada, Devala and Vyāsa and by other demigods like Indra, Candra and Varuṇa, invisibly approached the room of Devakī, where they all joined in offering their respectful obeisances and prayers to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can bestow blessings upon everyone.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **vṛṣaṇam:** the Lord who blesses all; This word refers to Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa who, like a cloud, rains the nectar of His pastimes. Brahma acts as the chief cultivator in the field of the fourteen worlds. **bhavaś:** or Siva is like the chief peacock with his tail feathers spread, fondly dancing before the rains. **nāradādibhiḥ:** Narada and others (singers) are like *cataka* birds, expressing great longing for the rains of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. **devaiḥ:** demigods; The demigods are like suffering elephants surrounded by the forest fire of Kamsa, Jarasandha and other demons. All these demigods came to the prison house of Kamsa to glorify Lord Hari.

Text 26

*satya-vrataṁ satya-param tri-satyam,
satyasya yoniṁ nihitaṁ ca satye,
satyasya satyam ṛta-satya-netraṁ,
satyātmakam tvāṁ śaraṇam prapannāḥ*

The demigods prayed: O Lord, You never deviate from Your vow, which is always perfect because whatever You decide is perfectly correct and cannot be stopped by anyone. Being present in the three phases of cosmic manifestation—creation, maintenance and annihilation—You are the Supreme Truth. Indeed, unless one is completely truthful, one cannot achieve Your favor, which therefore cannot be achieved by hypocrites. You are the active principle, the real truth, in all the ingredients of creation, and therefore You are known as antaryāmī, the inner force. You are equal to everyone, and Your instructions apply for everyone, for all time. You are the beginning of all truth. Therefore, offering our obeisances, we surrender unto You. Kindly give us protection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You Sri Kṛṣṇa are the only truth in this world. You are understood by devotees but not by others.” This is the meaning of the demigods’ praise.

“You have made a vow to protect Your devotees, and that vow is upheld at all times. Therefore everyone should take shelter of You.” This is the intention of the verse.

“We take shelter of You, whose vows are true.” *Sakṛd eva prapanno yas, tavāsmīti ca yācate, abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai, dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama,* “If one surrenders unto Me sincerely, saying, ‘My Lord, from today I will fully surrendered unto You,’ I will always give him protection. That is My vow.” (*Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddha-kāṇḍa 18.33*)

“Unlike the temporary results obtained from the demigods, surrender to You is *satya param*.” *Satya* here means extending in all place and time, and *param* means the best. “We take shelter of You, who are the best in all time and space.”

Satyam can also refer to His name. “You are supreme and called *satya*.” *Satye pratisthitah kṛṣṇah satyam atra pratisthitam satyato hi govindas tasmāt satyo hi namatah*, “Kṛṣṇa is established in truth and truth is established in Kṛṣṇa.” (*Udyama Parva*) Govinda is more truthful than truth itself. Therefore He is called *satya*.” Kṛṣṇa’s intelligence, strength and all His transcendental qualities are also truth. “The three *saktis* of Kṛṣṇa (*jnana, bala, kriya*) take shelter of You. Therefore You are called *tri satyam*.” The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8 says, *na tasya kāryam karanam ca vidyate na tat samaś cābhyadhikāś ca dṛśyate parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*, “The Supreme Personality of Godhead does not need to do anything personally, for He has such potencies that anything He wants done will be done perfectly well through the control of material nature (*svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*).”

satyasya yoni: The *amsas* of Kṛṣṇa are also *satya*. “We take shelter of You, the source of all *avataras* such as Matsya, Kurma and other eternally true forms.” **nihitam:** entered; “We take shelter of You who are present in *satya*, that is Mathura, Vaikuntha and other spiritual abodes. You are the essence of the essence, the cream of all spiritual objects, *satyasya satyam*.” Or the material world is one *satya* or real thing, but existing only temporarily. “You are the cause of the material world, but You exist in all time, eternally. Therefore You are the *satya* of all *satyas*, the truth of all truths.”

This is similar to the phrase in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.4.18): *prāṇasya prāṇam uta cakṣuśaś cakṣur uta śrotrasya śrotram annasyānnaṁ manaso ye mano viduḥ*, “The Supreme Truth is understood to be the life air sustaining everyone’s life air, the vision of everyone’s eyes, the hearing power of the ear, and the sustenance of food itself.” In his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrīla Madhvācārya has confirmed this by quoting the following statement from the Vedic

śruti-mantras: satyaṁ hy evedaṁ viśvam asṛjata, “This universe, created by the Lord, is real.”

satya netra: “O, form of eternal truth! We surrender unto You who are endowed with all senses headed by the eyes. We surrender to You who are the real form of truth, *satyātmakam*.”

Text 27

*ekāyano 'sau dvi-phalas tri-mūlaś,
catū-rasaḥ pañca-vidhaḥ ṣaḍ-ātmā,
sapta-tvag aṣṭa-viṭapo navākṣo,
daśa-cchadī dvi-khago hy ādi-vṛkṣaḥ*

The body [the total body and the individual body are of the same composition] may figuratively be called “the original tree.” From this tree, which fully depends on the ground of material nature, come two kinds of fruit—the enjoyment of happiness and the suffering of distress. The cause of the tree, forming its three roots, is association with the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. The fruits of bodily happiness have four tastes—religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation—which are experienced through five senses for acquiring knowledge in the midst of six circumstances: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst. The seven layers of bark covering the tree are skin, blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and semen, and the eight branches of the tree are the five gross and three subtle elements—earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego. The tree of the body has nine hollows—the eyes, the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the rectum and the genitals—and ten leaves, the ten airs passing through the body. In this tree of the body there are two birds: one is the individual soul, and the other is the Supersoul.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The Lord then asks a question: “If I, who am endowed with body, senses and *dhama*, am *satya* then is the material world *asatya*, false?”

The demigods answer: “The world is true, but subject to destruction in time, whereas You are not destroyed by time. You are indestructible.” With this intention the demigods recite this verse.

ekāyanaḥ: means that *prakṛti*, the material nature, is the one shelter of the tree of the material world. There are two fruits of the tree of the material world: happiness and misery. There are three roots of the tree: *sattva*, *raja* and *tama*, goodness, passion and ignorance. There are four *rasas*, namely the four *varnas* and *aśramas*. There are five types of knowledge gathered from the five senses. There are six natural qualities (*ātma*) of the tree known as the six whirlpools: lamentation, illusion, old age, death, hunger and thirst. There are seven coverings of the tree: skin, flesh, blood, fat, bone, marrow and semen.

There are eight branches (*viṭapa*): the five gross elements, mind, intelligence and false ego. There are nine holes in the tree: the holes in the body such as two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, mouth, rectum and genital. There are ten leaves: the ten life airs. There are two birds in the tree, the *jīva* and the Lord.

Text 28

*tvam eka evāśya sataḥ prasūtiḥ,
tvam sannidhānaṁ tvam anugrahaś ca,
tvam-māyayā samvṛta-cetasas tvām,
paśyanti nānā na vipāścito ye*

The efficient cause of this material world, manifested with its many varieties as the original tree, is You, O Lord. You are also the maintainer of this material world, and after annihilation You are the one in whom everything is conserved. Those who are covered by

Your external energy cannot see You behind this manifestation, but theirs is not the vision of learned devotees.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “This tree arises from Your energies.” With this intention the verse is spoken. “You are the only (*eka*) creator of this material tree which is real (*sat*). You are the annihilator (*sannidhānam*) and the maintainer (*anugraha*).”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “O *devas*! It is said that Brahma, Visnu and Siva are the masters of this world, so why do you say that I am the creator?”

The next statement of the demigods answers this question: “Those whose minds are covered by Your *maya* see Brahma and others as independent. Those whose minds are not covered see only You, and see Brahma and others as Your expansions only.”

Text 29

*bibharṣi rūpāṅy avabodha ātmā,
kṣemāya lokasya carācarasya,
sattvopapannāni sukhāvahāni,
satām abhadrāṅi muhuḥ khalānām*

O Lord, You are always in full knowledge, and to bring all good fortune to all living entities, You appear in different incarnations, all of them transcendental to the material creation. When You appear in these incarnations, You are pleasing to the pious and religious devotees, but for nondevotees You are the annihilator.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the demigods explain that Lord Kṛṣṇa has many *avataras* such as Matsya and Kurma.

avabodhah: awake; means Kṛṣṇa has a form of pure knowledge.

sattvopapannāni: all the incarnations of Kṛṣṇa are transcendental, pure *sattva*.

khalānām: They destroy the wicked and protect the devoted (*satām*).

Text 30

*tvayy ambujākṣākhila-sattva-dhāmnī,
samādhināveśita-cetasaike,
tvat-pāda-potena mahat-kṛtena,
kurvanti govatsa-padaṁ bhavābhdhim*

O lotus-eyed Lord, by concentrating one’s meditation on Your lotus feet, which are the reservoir of all existence, and by accepting those lotus feet as the boat by which to cross the ocean of nescience, one follows in the footsteps of mahājanas [great saints, sages and devotees]. By this simple process, one can cross the ocean of nescience as easily as one steps over the hoofprint of a calf.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The previous verse spoke of the protection of the Lord. This verse describes the form of protection.

ākṣhila sattvam: means *śuddha sattva* or without material qualities.

dhāmnī: cause of all existence; “The men of discrimination, who meditate on Your name, form qualities and pastimes when You appear in this world, board the boat of Your lotus feet and cross over the material ocean. For such great devotees, crossing the ocean of material existence becomes as easy as stepping over the hoofprint of a calf. They are not even aware of its existence.”

Text 31

*svayam samuttīrya sudustaram dyuman,
bhavārṇavam bhīmam adabhra-sauhrdāḥ,
bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvam atra te,*

nidhāya yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān

O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [vāñchā-kalpataru]. When ācāryas completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **svayaṁ**: personally; indicates that the material ocean is difficult to cross for others, but no trouble at all for the devotees.

dyuman: The Lord is addressed as *dyuman*, the sun. This infers that those within whom the sun of Kṛṣṇa does not remain are in the terrible material ocean of insurmountable darkness. “When You shine on the sunrise mountain of *prema-bhakti*, all darkness automatically disappears. Then easily one can cross the ocean of material existence.”

nāvam atra te nidhāya: Leaving the boat on the bank means that the devotees establish *bhakti* movements and then cross the ocean of material existence. By this act, others are able to cross over the ocean of repeated birth and death. Though the material influence gets completely destroyed, the devotees remain here. This is only an expression of humility in the devotees. For them, the material world is compared to the water in a calf’s hoof-print, because the water in the calf’s hoof-print is actually purifying and praiseworthy. In the same way, the devotee’s impression that he is caught in *samsara* purifies the devotee of the disease of false identification and is therefore praiseworthy.

sad-anugraho bhavān: How are the devotees able to cross the ocean of birth and death? Because You, Sri Kṛṣṇa, (*bhavan*) are merciful (*anugrahaḥ*) to the devotees (*sat*) and not to others.

Text 32

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas,
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ,
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ,
patanty adho 'nādr̥ta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

[Someone may say that aside from devotees, who always seek shelter at the Lord’s lotus feet, there are those who are not devotees but who have accepted different processes for attaining salvation. What happens to them? In answer to this question, Lord Brahmā and the other demigods said:] O lotus-eyed Lord, although nondevotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. They fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they have no regard for Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For Vaisnavas, the ocean of material existence is no bigger than the water in a calf’s hoof-print. But for *jñānis* who do not accept the spiritual form of the Lord, the material ocean is very difficult to cross. The following scriptural statements support this conclusion: Sanat-kumara said in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (4.22.40), *kṛcchro mahān iha bhavārṇavam aplaveśām, śad-varganakraṁ asukhena titṛṣanti, tat tvaṁ harer bhagavato bhajanīyam aṅghriṁ, kṛtvodupam vyasanam utara dustarārṇam*: “The ocean of nescience is very difficult to cross because it is infested with many dangerous sharks. Although those who are non-devotees undergo severe austerities and penances to cross that ocean, we recommend that you simply take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, which are like boats for crossing the ocean. Although the ocean is difficult to cross, by taking shelter of His lotus feet you will overcome all dangers.”
In the *Bhagavad-gita* 12.5, Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *kleśo 'dhikataras*

teṣām, avyaktāsakta-cetasām, avyaktā hi gatih duḥkham, dehavadbhir avāpyate: “For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Supreme, advancement is very troublesome. To make progress in that discipline is always difficult for those who are embodied.”

Narada says, *naiṣkarmyam apy acyuta-bhāva-varjitam, na śobhate jñānam alam nirañjanam*: “Knowledge of self-realization, even though free from all material affinity, does not look well if devoid of a conception of the Infallible [God].” (SB 1.5.12)

The demigods here make a similar statement: “O lotus-eyed Lord, those (*anye*) who do not accept You have no realization of Your sweetness and merciful glance. They think themselves liberated, *vimukti māninah*, though they are completely bound in the material world. This is different from Your devotees, who though liberated, out of humility regard themselves as conditioned.”

asta bhāvād: speculation without knowing Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet; This means because of a lack (*a-sta*) of affection (*bhāva*) for the Lord, they think Him to be illusory. As *Gīta* 9.11 says, *avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*: “Only the fools regard Me as an ordinary person.” **aviśuddha buddhayaḥ**: impure intelligence; Because of such foolishness they are called *aviśuddha buddhayaḥ*. The *jnanis* are not *viśuddha*, really pure, though they have purified their hearts by controlling lust and other material urges. **kṛcchreṇa**: However by cultivation of the knowledge generated from such painful practices such as austerity and sense control (*kṛcchreṇa*), the *jnanis* can attain liberation (*param padam*). It should be understood however, that even the *jnanis* must possess some mixed *bhakti*, for without that they cannot attain even liberation in this life.

Lord Brahma prays, *śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho, kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave*, “My dear Lord, devotional service unto You is the best path for self-realization. If someone gives up that path and engages in the cultivation of speculative knowledge (*jnana*), he will simply undergo a troublesome process and will not achieve his desired result.” (SB 10.14.4)

patanti adaḥ: fall down; Without *bhakti* the goal of *jnana* becomes like a mirage, and eventually the *jnani* falls down into material existence again. **anāḍṛta anghrayaḥ:** neglecting Your lotus feet; If *janis* have some type of *bhakti*, how do they fall down? They fall because they think Your lotus feet are material, and therefore do not respect them. There are two types of *bhakti* practiced as a limb of *jnana*. The *janis* practice *bhakti* a little bit, because the scriptures say that *jnana* cannot be perfected without the touch of *bhakti*. For example, some *janis* worship the deity, but they take it as an illusory form and thus worship with disrespect. Others simply worship because of material attachment, without disrespect. The first type adopt extreme austerities, and after a long time when *bhakti* bestows knowledge to destroy their ignorance and establishes them on the *brahma bhuta* platform (liberated state), they stop their practices of *bhakti*. These *janis* are falsely liberated (*vimukti maninah*). They

cannot be called *jivan mukta*, truly liberated souls.

According to Sri Kṛṣṇa's statement in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.21), *bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyah:* "Only by executing devotional service can one appreciate Me." Because of the absence of *bhakti* and the presence of offenses, the *janis* do not attain the direct association of the Lord. Therefore, the burned up seeds of their *karma* again begin to sprout, and such *janis* fall into the material world again.

An example of this is given in the *Viṣṇu-bhakti-candrodaya* concerning Ratha-yatra: "Even though a person may have burned up all his *karmas* with the fire of knowledge, if out of illusion he does not follow the Lord during Ratha-yatra, he will become a *brahma-rākṣasa*." The *Vasana-bhasya* says: "Even a *jivan mukta* (liberated soul) if he offends the Lord, who is full of inconceivable energies, will fall into the bondage of *karma* again."

The *bhakti* of the second type of *jnani* brings one to the *brahma bhuta* platform also, and it extinguishes both knowledge and ignorance. But *bhakti* does not become extinguished. That type of *jnani* attains the status of *jivan mukta* and achieves a direct meeting with the Lord.

Such a person is described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.54: *brahma-bhūtaḥ*

prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati, “One who is transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful.” And in *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55: *bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*, “Only persons engaged in devotional service can factually know the transcendental position of the Lord.”

Text 33

*tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid,
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhrdāḥ,
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā,
vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, if devotees completely in love with You sometimes fall from the path of devotion, they do not fall like nondevotees, for You still protect them. Thus they fearlessly traverse the heads of their opponents and continue to progress in devotional service.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Bharata, Indradyumna and Citraketu, who were great devotees, are not criticized even though they fell. Then why do the *jnanis* get criticized so heavily?” This verse answers the question. The devotees on the path of *bhakti* do not fall like the pretenders of liberation—what to speak of giving up the Lord’s lotus feet. Even if *bhaktas* fall, in that state they remain firmly attached to Your lotus feet. Though Citraketu, Bharata and Indradyumna fell and took the bodies of demons like Vṛtra and others, their *prema* increased a hundred-fold.

One should see their fall-down as a cause for increasing *prema*. Their fall is not like the fall of the aspirants for liberation, for even in the fallen state they remain firmly attached to Your feet. They remain faithful to the Lord, thinking that their fall has been arranged by the

Lord for their own benefit; for the Lord promises that His devotee will never perish. Being thus convinced of Kṛṣṇa's protection, they tread over the heads of the demigods causing obstacles. In other words, they conquer over all obstacles. Another meaning can be that the devotees hold on their own heads the feet of the Lord which destroy all obstacles.

Text 34

*sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ śrayate bhavān sthitau,
śarīriṇām śreya-upāyanam vapuḥ,
veda-kriyā-yoga-tapaḥ-samādhibhis,
tavārhaṇam yena janaḥ samīhate*

O Lord, during the time of maintenance You manifest several incarnations, all with transcendental bodies, beyond the material modes of nature. When You appear in this way, You bestow all good fortune upon the living entities by teaching them to perform Vedic activities such as ritualistic ceremonies, mystic yoga, austerities, penances, and ultimately samādhi, ecstatic absorption in thoughts of You. Thus You are worshiped by the Vedic principles.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In verse 29 there was mention of the Lord's pure forms appearing in the world of moving and non-moving entities. That verse says that the purpose of the Lord's appearance is to help the devotees. In verse 30-33 the purity of *bhakti* has been mentioned. In verse 32, there is the hint that by attachment to the Lord's feet the devotee also attains liberation as a secondary result. This shows that the real purpose of the Lord's appearance in the world is to establish *bhakti*.

viśuddha: transcendental; indicates that *sattva* is beyond material contamination. "You accept a purely spiritual body." "And what type of form is it?" **sthitau:** maintenance; "In maintaining the world, You

accept a body which brings about benefit (*upāyana*) and supreme auspiciousness (*śreya*) for the living entities.” “What is that benefit?” **veda kriyā yoga tapasa samādhi**: *Brahmacaris* study the *Vedas*. *Grhasthas* perform *kriya yoga*. *Vanaprasthas* perform austerities and *sannyasis* sit in *samadhi*.

ārhaṇam samīhate: Men worship You through their activities in these four *asramas*. Your appearance creates this benefit. If one does not accept Your spiritual form he cannot attain perfection.

Text 35

*sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ nijam bhaved,
vijñānam ajñāna-bhidāpamārjanam,
guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān,
prakāśate yasya ca yena vā guṇaḥ*

O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature. Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Some people conclude that My form is material *sattva guṇa*.” This verse is spoken to answer this challenge. **idam**: this; The demigods point at the womb of Devaki with an index finger and say, “O Lord! If this form of Yours was material *sattva* and not *nijam sattvam* or *suddha sattva* (beyond material contamination), then there would be an absence (*mārjanam apa*) of devotees realizing Your spiritual form.”

vijñānam: transcendental knowledge; “The realization of the devotees

is the proof of the Lord’s spiritual form. What do they realize? By realizing that Your body is completely spiritual, material bondage (*ajñāna*) gets extinguished (*bhidā*).

“One should have no doubt about the reality of their realization. There is also more evidence about the Lord’s spiritual form. By the strong influence of Your qualities, the manifestation of Your mercy in the form of *prema* (*guṇa prakāśaiḥ*), and Your grace appearing in our minds, we must conclude that Your body is not material.”

prakāśate yasya guṇaḥ: reveal Your qualities; “Those qualities manifest from a person possessing spiritual nature, not from matter. It is You who have those qualities. There must be some person to manifest those qualities, for matter alone cannot do that.”

yena vā: by which, either; “It is by the agency of *suddha sattva* that these qualities must manifest, not by the agency of matter.”

Another meaning is this: “If Your *suddha sattva* body were never to manifest, then the realization which destroys ignorance would not take place. If Your body were material, then You could be inferred by the use of material intelligence (*guṇa prakāśaiḥ*). He who possesses matter, and by whose intelligence matter manifests would be called the Lord.”

Text 36

*na nāma-rūpe guṇa-janma-karmabhir,
nirūpitavye tava tasya sākṣiṇaḥ,
mano-vacobhyām anumeya-vartmano,
deva kriyāyām pratiyanty athāpi hi*

O Lord, Your transcendental name and form are not ascertained by those who merely speculate on the path of imagination. Your name, form and attributes can be ascertained only through devotional service.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Not only Your form is *suddha sattva* but also Your name. Your transcendental name and form can be realized only by devotion. There is no other way.” Thus this verse is spoken.

guṇa: attributes; refers to Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form and merciful glance.

karma: pastimes; refers to lifting Govardhana Hill, and artistically standing in a three-fold bending pose. **janma**: appearance; refers to Kṛṣṇa’s role as the son of Nanda and Vasudeva.

“Even by chanting Your name or meditating on Your form, the casual observer (*sākṣiṇaḥ*) cannot discern or realize Your sweetness, nor perceive Your qualities, birth and activities. If one fails to realize the sweetness of Your name or form, he has not attained any realization at all. It is like those afflicted with jaundice: though chewing sugar candy, they cannot taste the sweetness. Similarly, those devoid of devotion cannot realize the sweetness of Your name and form. Therefore, Your name and form must also be *suddha sattva*, purely spiritual.”

sākṣiṇaḥ: can also refer to the Supreme Lord, the supreme witness.

“Because Your name and form are part of Your spiritual nature, those pursuing the path of speculation (*anumeya-vartmano*) cannot know Your true form. However, if one serves You by hearing and chanting Your names with devotion (*kriyāyām*), he will directly realize Your spiritual name and form. This can be inferred through the mind and words of the devotee.”

mano-vacobhyām: mind and words; “By mind (*mano*) the pure qualities of tolerance and humility are inferred. The word (*vacobhyām*) means utterances steeped in devotion, such as *mano ’ravindaksa didrksaye tvam*. **vartmanah**: path; means of the person who has attained *prema-bhakti*.

Text 37

*śṛṇvan gṛṇan saṁsmarayaṁś ca cintayan,
nāmāni rūpāṇi ca maṅgalāni te,
kriyāsu yas tvac-caraṇāravindayor,*

āviṣṭa-cetā na bhavāya kalpate

Even while engaged in various activities, devotees whose minds are completely absorbed at Your lotus feet, and who constantly hear, chant, contemplate and cause others to remember Your transcendental names and forms, are always on the transcendental platform, and thus they can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse points out that practice of hearing, glorifying and remembering the name and form of the Lord is the means for realization of the Lord.

kriyāsu: engaged in devotional service; This word indicates that even in the midst of matters relating to one's material body, the devotee is not affected by the material world, but remains deeply absorbed in the happiness of his realization of the Lord.

Text 38

*diṣṭyā hare 'syā bhavataḥ pado bhuvo,
bhāro 'panītas tava janmaneśituḥ,
diṣṭyāṅkitām tvat-padakaiḥ suśobhanair,
drakṣyāma gām dyām ca tavānukampitām*

O Lord, we are fortunate because the heavy burden of the demons upon this earth is immediately removed by Your appearance. Indeed, we are certainly fortunate, for we shall be able to see upon this earth and in the heavenly planets the marks of lotus, conchshell, club and disc that adorn Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the demigods hint at the

Lord's purpose of relieving the earth's burden.

pada: place; means coming from the feet as the *Sruti* says, *padbhyam bhumi*, "The earth arose from the Lord's feet."

"The burden of the earth, which arose from Your feet, has been removed. We have understood that Kamsa, Jarasandha and others have been killed just by Your appearance. **padakaiḥ**: lotus feet; means very tender feet, and *suśobhanaiḥ* means marked with the flag and thunderbolt. **Gām** means earth and **dyām** means Svarga, heaven. "We are fortunate to see the earth and heaven mercifully marked with Your tender lotus feet."

Text 39

*na te 'bhavasyeśa bhavasya kāraṇam,
vinā vinodaṁ bata tarkayāmahe,
bhavo nirodhaḥ sthitir apy avidyayā,
kṛtā yatas tvayy abhayāśrayātmani*

O Supreme Lord, You are not an ordinary living entity appearing in this material world as a result of fruitive activities. Therefore Your appearance or birth in this world has no other cause than Your pleasure potency. Similarly, the living entities, who are part of You, have no cause for miseries like birth, death and old age, except when these living entities are conducted by Your external energy.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: "We have said that You have appeared for protecting us, but that is only a pretense. You perform Your birth and activities independently for Your own purpose. Though You are unborn (*abhavasya*), You appear in the world. We cannot determine the cause because (*yataḥ*) the creation, maintenance and destruction (*bhavo nirodhah sthitih*) are carried out by *maya* (*avidyayā*), which takes shelter of You (*tvayi āśrayātmani*)."

Sri Kṛṣṇa is called *abhaya* or instilling fearlessness, because by remembering Him the fear of the demons like Kamsa disappears. Therefore there is no necessity of the Lord personally appearing to kill Kamsa.

Text 40

*matsyāśva-kacchapa-nṛsimha-varāha-haṁsa,
rājanya-vīpra-vibudheṣu kṛtāvataṛaḥ,
tvam pāsi nas tri-bhuvanam ca yathādhuneśa,
bhāram bhuvo hara yadūttama vandanam te*

O supreme controller, Your Lordship previously accepted incarnations as a fish, a horse, a tortoise, Narasimhadeva, a boar, a swan, Lord Rāmacandra, Paraśurāma and, among the demigods, Vāmanadeva, to protect the entire world by Your mercy. Now please protect us again by Your mercy by diminishing the disturbances in this world. O Kṛṣṇa, best of the Yadus, we respectfully offer our obeisances unto You.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Please put aside all our talks of suffering caused by our fickle minds. Previously You protected us by taking various forms, so now do the same to remove the burden of the earth. That will be the the same as protecting us.”
Speaking thus, the demigods then touched their heads to the earth in respect.

Text 41

*diṣṭyāmba te kuksi-gataḥ paraḥ pumān,
amśena sākṣād bhagavān bhavāya naḥ,*

*mābhūd bhayaṁ bhoja-pater mumūrṣor,
goptā yadūnām bhavitā tavātmajah*

O mother Devakī, by your good fortune and ours, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, with all His plenary portions, such as Baladeva, is now within your womb. Therefore you need not fear Kāṁsa, who has decided to be killed by the Lord. Your eternal son, Kṛṣṇa, will be the protector of the entire Yadu dynasty.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To console Devaki, the demigods now praise her. “Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa has appeared in your womb along with Baladeva (*aṁśena*).” Or it can mean, “The Lord (*sākṣāt bhagavān*), whose *aṁśa* is the *paraḥ pumān*, and who glances over *prakṛti* has appeared now in your womb.”

bhavāya: means for auspiciousness. “The Lord, whose part is Mahaviṣṇu, has appeared in your womb to bestow auspiciousness on us.”

Text 42

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity abhiṣṭūya puruṣaṁ,
yad-rūpam anidaṁ yathā,
brahmeśānau purodhāya,
devāḥ pratiyayur divam*

After thus offering prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, the Transcendence, all the demigods, with Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva before them, returned to their homes in the heavenly planets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **anidaṁ:** means non-material,

transcendental; **purodhāya**: keep in front; After praising the Lord whose form is transcendental, the demigods, thinking that Brahma and Siva would see some wonderful pastimes that they would miss, kept Brahma and Siva in front and then departed for the heavenly abodes.

Chapter Three: The Birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa

Texts 1–5

*śrī-śuka uvāca atha sarva-guṇopetaḥ,
kālaḥ parama-śobhanaḥ,
yarhy evājana-janmarkṣaṁ,
śāntarkṣa-graha-tārakam,
diśaḥ prasedur gaganam,
nirmaloḍu-gaṇodayam,
mahī maṅgala-bhūyiṣṭha- pura-grāma-vrajākarā,
nadyaḥ prasanna-salilā,
hradā jalaruha-śriyaḥ,
dvi-jāli-kula-sannāda-
stavakā vana-rājayaḥ,
vavau vāyuḥ sukha-sparśaḥ,
puṇya-gandhavahaḥ śuciḥ,
agnayaś ca dvi-jātīnām,
śāntās tatra samindhata,
manāmsy āsan prasannāni,
sādhūnām asura-druhām,
jāyamāne 'jane tasmin,
nedur dundubhayaḥ samam*

Thereafter, at the auspicious time for the appearance of the Lord, the entire universe was surcharged with all the qualities of goodness, beauty and peace. The constellation Rohiṇī appeared, as did stars like Aśvinī. The sun, the moon and the other stars and planets were very peaceful. All directions appeared extremely pleasing, and the beautiful stars twinkled in the cloudless sky.

Decorated with towns, villages, mines and pasturing grounds, the earth seemed all-auspicious. The rivers flowed with clear water, and the lakes and vast reservoirs, full of lilies and lotuses, were extraordinarily beautiful. In the trees and green plants, full of flowers and leaves, pleasing to the eyes, birds like cuckoos and swarms of bees began chanting with sweet voices for the sake of the demigods. A pure breeze began to blow, pleasing the sense of touch and bearing the aroma of flowers, and when the brāhmaṇas engaging in ritualistic ceremonies ignited their fires according to Vedic principles, the fires burned steadily, undisturbed by the breeze. Thus when the birthless Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was about to appear, the saints and brāhmaṇas, who had always been disturbed by demons like Kāṁsa and his men, felt peace within the core of their hearts, and kettledrums simultaneously vibrated from the upper planetary system.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, there is a description of the time and place becoming jubilant for Kṛṣṇa's appearance, a description of the Lord's advent, and the prayers of Vasudeva and Devaki.

Verse 1: When (*yarhi*) the birth constellation (*janma rkṣam*) of the Lord who has no birth (*ajanma*) arrived, time itself became endowed with all good qualities.

ājana janma: can also be taken as the name of the *naksatra*, constellation. *Ājana* means Visnu. *Ājana janma* means he who is born from Visnu; that is Prajapati. Prajapati's *naksatra* is Rohini. The name of the *naksatra* is not mentioned directly because the scriptures enjoin that the birth *naksatra* of a person should not be named directly. At this time also the other *naksatras* such as Asvini, the planets such as the sun and the stars all assumed a peaceful state.

Verse 2: This verse describes how the directions (*diśaḥ*) assumed all good qualities. In this verse the qualities of the autumn season are described even though it was rainy season, because all the elements

such as the earth, water, fire, air and ether were jubilant. The joy above is indicated by the phrase “the stars shone brilliantly in the sky.” The joy on earth is expressed next in the description of the towns, cities and mines.

Verse 3: The joy between earth and sky is expressed in two verses beginning with a description of the water (*prasanna salilā*). The lotus usually blooms during the day and closes at night, but now the lotus bloomed in the night (*jalaruha śriyaḥ*). Night assumed the qualities of the day. The forest resounded with the cries of cuckoos and humming of bees (*dvijāli kula sannāda*), and was resplendent with leaves and flowers. **Verse 4:** Though it was monsoon season, spring’s qualities are described next. The wind (*vavau vāyuh*), which had the coolness of spring’s breezes (*sukha sparśaḥ*), was dust-free (*śuciḥ*) and laden with the fragrance of spring flowers (*punya gandha*). Though the fires had almost all been extinguished (*śāntās*), they now blazed (*samindhata*), turning to the right.

Verse 5: Though it was Dvapara-yuga, the quality of Treta-yuga now manifested. *Manāmsi* (minds) indicates that the mind, intelligence, senses, sense objects, and five gross elements all become joyful. Though previously afflicted by the harassment of the demons, the devotees’ minds, intellects, senses and bodies now became joyful. The devotees rejoiced over the upcoming appearance (*jāyamāne*) of Visnu, the unborn.

Text 6

*jaguḥ kinnara-gandharvās,
tuṣṭuvuḥ siddha-cāraṇāḥ,
vidyādharyaś ca nanṛtur,
apsarobhiḥ samam mudā*

The Kinnaras and Gandharvas began to sing auspicious songs,

the Siddhas and Cāraṇas offered auspicious prayers, and the Vidyādhari, along with the Apsarās, began to dance in jubilation.

Texts 7–8

*mumucur munayo devāḥ,
sumanāmsi mudānvitāḥ,
mandam mandam jaladharā,
jagarjur anusāgaram,
niśīthe tama-udbhūte,
jāyamāne janārdane,
devakyām deva-rūpiṇyām,
viṣṇuḥ sarva-guhā-śayaḥ,
āvirāsīd yathā prācyām,
diśīndur iva puṣkalah*

The demigods and great saintly persons showered flowers in a joyous mood, and clouds gathered in the sky and very mildly thundered, making sounds like those of the ocean’s waves. Then the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, who is situated in the core of everyone’s heart, appeared from the heart of Devakī in the dense darkness of night, like the full moon rising on the eastern horizon, because Devakī was of the same category as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **anusāgaram:** following the ocean; This means the clouds imitated the roaring of the ocean. But previously it was stated that all directions were overjoyed, and the sky was cloud-free and filled with stars. How could there be rumbling of clouds?
tama udbhute: densely dark; Therefore, it is described that deep in the night, everything became covered in darkness. There was thunder at that time because thick clouds covered the sky after six hours of night.

janārdane: The Lord is addressed as Janārdana because He is being requested (*ardana*) by the devotees, *munis* and demigods (*jana*): “O Lord, now is the time for Your birth.”

Then the time came for Kṛṣṇa’s birth from the womb of Devaki, whose eternal body was full of knowledge and bliss (*deva rupinyam*) like Lord Visnu, who sleeps in the hearts of all souls (*sarva guhā śayah*), and who eternally resides in Mathura and Vaikuntha, invisible to the common man, like an inaccessible cave in a mountain. Kṛṣṇa’s birth was not painful like a normal child.

induḥ iva: full moon; Kṛṣṇa appeared like the full moon rising in the eastern sky. The subject of the simile (moon) began to act out the role at that time. Though it was the eighth day of waning at the time, the moon thought in bliss, “The Lord is ornamenting our dynasty with His birth in this world.” Then it became round like the full moon.

puṣkalaḥ: complete in every respect; In this way also Visnu appeared in His full form as *svayam bhagavan* Sri Kṛṣṇa, along with all His *amśās*. According to *Hari-vamśa*, the birth took place in the eighth month of pregnancy, before the expected time, in order to bewilder Kamsa. In the *Kha Manikya*, an astrological work, Kṛṣṇa’s birth is described: The Moon, Mars, Mercury and Saturn were exalted and Taurus was ascendant. Jupiter was in Pisces, Sun was in Leo, Venus in Libra and Rahu in Scorpio. At midnight, on Wednesday with the moon in the Rohini nakshatra, Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa appeared.

Texts 9–10

*tam adbhutam bālakam ambujekṣaṇam,
catur-bhujam śaṅkha-gadādy-udāyudham,
śrīvatsa-lakṣmaṁ gala-śobhi-kaustubham,
pītāmbaram sāndra-payoda-saubhagam,
mahārha-vaidūrya-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala,
tviṣā pariṣvakta-sahasra-kuntalam,
uddāma-kāñcy-aṅgada-kaṅkaṇādibhir,*

Vasudeva then saw the newborn child, who had very wonderful lotuslike eyes and who bore in His four hands the four weapons śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma. On His chest was the mark of Śrīvatsa and on His neck the brilliant Kaustubha gem. Dressed in yellow, His body blackish like a dense cloud, His scattered hair fully grown, and His helmet and earrings sparkling uncommonly with the valuable gem Vaidūrya, the child, decorated with a brilliant belt, armllets, bangles and other ornaments, appeared very wonderful.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verses nine and ten describe the astonishing child that Vasudeva saw; listing the features of astonishment. Baby Kṛṣṇa appeared with lotus eyes, four arms holding conch and club. **vaidurya:** refers to a jewel which shines blue, yellow and red. The Lord wore a triangular-shaped crown studded with *vaidurya* gems.

Text 11

*sa vismayotphulla-vilocano harim,
sutam vilokyānakadundubhis tadā,
kṛṣṇāvatārotsava-sambhramo 'sprṣan,
mudā dvijebhyo 'yutam āpluto gavām*

When Vasudeva saw his extraordinary son, his eyes were struck with wonder. In transcendental jubilation, he mentally collected ten thousand cows and distributed them among the brāhmaṇas as a transcendental festival.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: What was Vasudeva’s wonder?

“With my material eyes I am seeing that form, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is rarely seen by liberated souls. Besides being bound by ignorance as a soul, I am also bound externally in the prison of Kamsa.”

“Although He is the supreme transcendence, the Lord has appeared from the womb of Devakī.”

“When the child came out of the womb, all of His limbs were nicely ornamented with weapons, cloth, belt, earrings and crown.”

“The Supreme Lord, whom fear itself fears, has taken me as a father out of fear.”

The Lord is addressed as Hari (God) and *śuta* (son) because simultaneously Vasudeva knew Him to be the Lord and his son. “On the birth of an ordinary child, a father will celebrate with charity and meditation. What should I do in this condition, when the Lord is born as my son?” Thinking like this respectfully and filled with joy (*mudā*), Vasudeva submerged (*apluta*) in an ocean of bliss, and gave cows in charity to *brahmanas* in his mind (*asprśat*, without touching)

Text 12

*athainam astaud avadhārya pūruṣam,
param natāṅgaḥ kṛta-dhīḥ kṛtāñjaliḥ,
sva-rociṣā bhārata sūtikā-grham,
virocayantam gata-bhīḥ prabhāva-vit*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, descendant of King Bharata, Vasudeva could understand that this child was the Supreme Personality of

Godhead, Nārāyaṇa. Having concluded this without a doubt, he became fearless. Bowing down with folded hands and concentrating his attention, he began to offer prayers to the child, who illuminated His birthplace by His natural influence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Fixing his mind on the Lord (*kṛta-dhīḥ*), Vasudeva thought of Lord Kṛṣṇa with reverence as God and affection as his son. Though out of parental love he was afraid his tender child might be harmed by Kamsa’s weapons, that fear vanished when he realized that his child was the Supreme Lord (*gata-bhīḥ prabhāva-vit*).

Text 13

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca vidito 'si bhavān sākṣāt,
puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ,
kevalānubhavānanda,
svarūpaḥ sarva-buddhi-dṛk*

Vasudeva said: My Lord, You are the Supreme Person, beyond material existence, and You are the Supersoul. Your form can be perceived by transcendental knowledge, by which You can be understood as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I now understand Your position perfectly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Your intention in showing this form is as follows: ‘My father is worried about Me because of Kamsa, therefore I will make him fearless by showing him that I am God.’ “Accordingly, I have become fearless on understanding that You are God.” With this understanding Vasudeva speaks this verse.

“I can understand that You are the Supreme Person, Kāraṇodakśāyī Viṣṇu, who activates the material nature by His glance. You are the soul

of Brahman realization. You are the all-pervading Supersoul (*sarva buddhi drk*). You are all these things because You are directly *svayam bhagavan*.”

Text 14

*sa eva svaprakṛtyedam,
sṛṣṭvāgre tri-guṇātmakam,
tad anu tvam hy apraviṣṭaḥ,
praviṣṭa iva bhāvyaśe*

My Lord, You are the same person who in the beginning created this material world by His personal external energy. After the creation of this world of three guṇas [*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*], You appear to have entered it, although in fact You have not.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O father, you know that I have been born with limitation in your house. But do you know the truth about Me?”

To destroy this doubt, Vasudeva expresses his realization.

sa eva: means “That form of Yours about which I previously spoke, that is You.”

“You create this universe by Your material energy and seem to enter and not enter it simultaneously. Because You are seen inside the universe, we cannot say that You do not enter. Because You are seen outside the universe, we cannot say You do not enter there. You seemed to have entered my house, as You are also present everywhere. You appear to have been born, but we cannot say that either because You are always existing. Thus I know that Kamsa cannot do anything to You, who are all-pervading.”

Texts 15–17

*yatheme 'vikṛtā bhāvās,
tathā te vikṛtaiḥ saha,
nānā-vīryāḥ pṛthag-bhūtā,
virājam janayanti hi,
sannipatya samutpādyā,
dṛśyante 'nugatā iva,
prāg eva vidyamānatvān,
na teṣām iha sambhavaḥ,
evam bhavān buddhy-anumeya-lakṣaṇair,
grāhyair guṇaiḥ sann api tad-guṇāgrahaḥ,
anāvṛtatvād bahir antaram na te,
sarvasya sarvātmana ātma-vastunaḥ*

The mahat-tattva, the total material energy, is undivided, but because of the material modes of nature, it appears to separate into earth, water, fire, air and ether. Because of the living energy [jīva-bhū ta], these separated energies combine to make the cosmic manifestation visible, but in fact, before the creation of the cosmos, the total energy is already present. Therefore, the total material energy never actually enters the creation. Similarly, although You are perceived by our senses because of Your presence, You cannot be perceived by the senses, nor experienced by the mind or words [avāñ-mānasa-gocara]. With our senses we can perceive some things, but not everything; for example, we can use our eyes to see, but not to taste. Consequently, You are beyond perception by the senses. Although in touch with the modes of material nature, You are unaffected by them. You are the prime factor in everything, the all-pervading, undivided Supersoul. For You, therefore, there is no external or internal. You never entered the womb of Devakī; rather, You existed there already.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse gives an example. “You enter into Devakī’s womb just like the undifferentiated *mahat-tattva* and other elements (*ime*) enter the universe but do not enter it, or appear to be created but actually are not. Though You appear to be born, You are not. The *maha-tattva*, possessing within it various distinct elements such as earth, joins with consciousness to create the material universe. Though the elements appear to have entered into the creation (*anugata iva*), because they remain present outside as well, one cannot say they have entered. Though the elements appear to arise within the universe, they actually existed before the universe.”

Verse 17: “The elements are touched by the three modes of nature, but as the supreme cause of everything You are not touched by the modes of nature, though You enter into the universe. Though You are perceived as full of qualities which can be understood by the intelligence, You, being full of bliss, do not accept the qualities of matter, whose essence is suffering.

“Why? Because You are not covered by the three modes of material nature. Those who are covered by the material modes of nature take on those qualities. The modes of nature, however, never contaminate You internally or externally. The living entity however, upon contacting the objects of sound and touch externally, internally experiences lamentation and illusion.

“You, who pervade everything as the Paramātmā (*sarvātmana*), and all the objects related to You in the spiritual world (*ātma vastunaḥ*), such as the devotee, Your abode and pastimes are forever untouched by matter.”

Text 18

*ya ātmano dṛśya-guṇeṣu sann iti,
vyavasyate sva-vyatirekato 'budhaḥ,
vinānuvādam na ca tan manīṣitam,
samyag yatas tyaktam upādadat,
pumān*

One who considers his visible body, which is a product of the three modes of nature, to be independent of the soul is unaware of the basis of existence, and therefore he is a rascal. Those who are learned have rejected his conclusion because one can understand through full discussion that with no basis in soul, the visible body and senses would be insubstantial. Nonetheless, although his conclusion has been rejected, a foolish person considers it a reality.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But can the three modes of material nature bestow some sort of happiness?” This verse gives the answer. “He is foolish and unintelligent who thinks that the objects seen such as a woman, a flower garland and tasty food are enjoyable. In reality, these objects give misery, lamentation and illusion since they can only be possessed temporarily. They keep one trapped in the cycle of repeated birth and death.

“The *karma-mīmāṃsakas* conclude that wealth and possessions are the most valuable things and think themselves intelligent. Their arguments are not without rebuttal. They don’t have true wisdom. What the devotee rejects with scorn, they accept with eagerness.”

Text 19

*tvatto 'sya janma-sthiti-saṁyamān vibho,
vadanty anīhād aguṇād avikriyāt,
tvayīśvare brahmaṇi no virudhyate,
tvad-āśrayatvād upacaryate guṇaiḥ*

O my Lord, learned Vedic scholars conclude that the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the entire cosmic manifestation are performed by You, who are free from endeavor, unaffected

by the modes of material nature, and changeless in Your spiritual situation. There are no contradictions in You, who are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Parabrahman. Because the three modes of material nature—sattva, rajas and tamas—are under Your control, everything takes place automatically.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “From Your statements that You are the creator through *prakṛti*, it is understood that *prakṛti* is Your energy and non-different from You. Although You are the cause of the universe, You never contact the material *gunas* either internally or externally. How is that possible?”

This verse answers the question. “O Lord, the *Sṛuti* says that creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe arise from You, who are without action, quality and change. But how can the creator be inactive? Though You are Brahma and Siva, the creator and destroyer, at the same time You are without action (*anīhā*).

“Indeed, You are the reservoir of contradictory qualities. How? Because You are the shelter of the material modes of nature, the actions of creation and destruction are ascribed to You. Though *prakṛti* is Your energy, it is Your external energy. It is not Your *svarupa* or *svabhava*, personal form. Thus You are not in contact with the *gunas* internally or externally.”

This conclusion is established here. Or a second meaning is, “How can my [Vasudeva] son be Brahma and Siva? Actually You are not Brahma or Siva, but You are the shelter of both. You say this Yourself in the *Bhagavad-gīta* 14.27: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, ‘I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.’

“Lord Brahma says in *Sṛimad Bhagavatam* (2.6.42): *ādyo ’vatāraḥ puruṣaḥ parasya...* ‘Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Viṣṇu is the first incarnation of the Supreme Lord, and He is the master of eternal time and space.’

“Since You are the shelter of Brahma and Siva (*tvaḍ āśrayatvāt*), You are indirectly called the creator and destroyer. The qualities of a person being sheltered are often ascribed to the giver of shelter. Just as when the country is fortunate, the king is called fortunate. In this way You are

Brahma and Siva.

“This is also in accordance with the concept of *rasa*. The form of Kṛṣṇa is distinct in terms of *rasa*, though He is one with other forms of the Lord (*visnu-tattva*). In the ultimate sense, Brahma, Siva and Kṛṣṇa are but one form: *siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi, śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoh, rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa, rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitih*, “According to transcendental realization, there is no difference between the forms of Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa. Yet in Kṛṣṇa there is a special transcendental attraction due to the conjugal mellow, and consequently He surpasses Nārāyaṇa. This is the conclusion of transcendental mellows.” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.59)

Text 20

*sa tvam tri-loka-sthitaye sva-māyayā,
bibharṣi śuklam khalu varṇam ātmanah,
sargāya raktam rajasopabṛmhitam,
kṛṣṇam ca varṇam tamasā janātyaye*

My Lord, Your form is transcendental to the three material modes, yet for the maintenance of the three worlds, You assume the white color of Viṣṇu in goodness; for creation, which is surrounded by the quality of passion, You appear reddish; and at the end, when there is a need for annihilation, which is surrounded by ignorance, You appear blackish.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “A question arises concerning this. It is well known that the creation takes place through Brahma. Then, how are You also the creator? Brahma and others are Your forms alone.” That is the intention of this verse.

śuklam: white; “You, by Your personal energy (*svamāyayā*), manifest Yourself in the form of Visnu. Here *śuklam* cannot mean white because

Visnu is black. At the time of destruction of all people You are black in color, and for creation in the mode of passion You are red. We cannot say that Visnu is nourished or influenced by *sattva guna* and therefore described as white. Unlike Brahma and Siva who have connection with the other *gunas*, Visnu has no contact whatsoever with *sattva guna*, the mode of goodness. Visnu is close to *sattva* but does not touch it.

Srimad Bhagavatam (10.88.5) confirms this: *harir hi nirguṇaḥ sāksāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ...* ‘Lord Hari, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature.’

‘Also the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says: *sattvādayo na santīṣe yatra na prākṛtā gunāḥ, sa śuddhaḥ sarva-śuddhebhyaḥ pumān ādyaḥ prasīdatu,* ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, is beyond the three qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance. No material qualities exist in Him.’

‘The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.11) says: *sāksī cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇas ca,* ‘Though the Supreme Lord has no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.’”

Text 21

*tvam asya lokasya vibho rirakṣiṣur;
gṛhe 'vatīrṇo 'si mamākhileśvara,
rājanya-samjñāsura-koṭi-yūthapair,
nirvyūhyamānā nihaniṣyase camūḥ*

O my Lord, proprietor of all creation, You have now appeared in my house, desiring to protect this world. I am sure that You will kill all the armies that are moving all over the world under the leadership of politicians who are dressed as kṣatriya rulers but who are factually demons. They must be killed by You for the protection of the innocent public.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “O father, in truth you know about Me. But if you know, then say why I have appeared in your house?” This verse answers: “Taking the name of a king, You will kill all the troops directed by the demons in order to protect the devotees and the citizens in general.”

Text 22

*ayam tv asabhyas tava janma nau grhe,
śrutvāgrajāms te nyavadhīt sureśvara,
sa te 'vatāraṁ puruṣaiḥ samarpitaṁ,
śrutvādhunaivābhisaraty udāyudhaḥ*

O my Lord, Lord of the demigods, after hearing the prophecy that You would take birth in our home and kill him, this uncivilized Kāmsa killed so many of Your elder brothers. As soon as he hears from his lieutenants that You have appeared, he will immediately come with weapons to kill You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Though I know all Your glories, I cannot cross the ocean of uncertainty. Now I will inform You all about evil Kāmsa.”

Anticipating that his son will say, “No father, he will not kill Me because he will be overcome with the sweetness of My form,” Vasudeva answers, “But Kāmsa is uncivilized, and has no taste for *rasa*. His servants will inform him of Your birth and he will come here. I can see him coming now, so hide Your form. I am afraid of what will happen when he comes desiring to kill You.”

Text 23

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
athainam ātmajaṁ vīkṣya,
mahā-puruṣa-lakṣaṇam,
devakī tam upādhāvāt,
kaṁsād bhītā suvismitā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thereafter, having seen that her child had all the symptoms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Devakī, who was very much afraid of Kamsa and unusually astonished, began to offer prayers to the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Seeing her husband’s fear, and seeing that her newly born child did not withdraw His form, but was smiling instead, Devaki became completely wonderstruck and thought: “What shall I do? This child, identifying himself as God, has no fear of Kamsa. Of course, in front of the Supreme Lord, Kamsa is nothing. So why should we be afraid? What nonsense we are.”

Text 24

*śrī-devaky uvāca,
rūpaṁ yat tat prāhur avyaktam ādyaṁ,
brahma jyotir nirguṇaṁ nirvikāram,
sattā-mātraṁ nirviśeṣaṁ nirīhaṁ,
sa tvaṁ sākṣād viṣṇur adhyātma-dīpaḥ*

Śrī Devakī said: My dear Lord, there are different Vedas, some of which describe You as unperceivable through words and the mind. Yet You are the origin of the entire cosmic manifestation. You are Brahman, the greatest of everything, full of effulgence like the sun. You have no material cause, You are free from change and

deviation, and You have no material desires. Thus the Vedas say that You are the substance. Therefore, my Lord, You are directly the origin of all Vedic statements, and by understanding You, one gradually understands everything. You are different from the light of Brahman and Paramātmā, yet You are not different from them. Everything emanates from You. Indeed, You are the cause of all causes, Lord Viṣṇu, the light of all transcendental knowledge.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “As it is well known that the devotees control the Lord by praising Him, I will make this child submissive by my prayers and then express my desires.”

Thinking in this way, Devaki speaks: “O Lord, we are afflicted by fear at every second, but You are not fearful at all.” Devaki expresses this in four verses (24-27). Sri Devaki prays, “The *Vedas* describe Your famous form as *avyakta*, not perceivable by the material senses; *ādyam*, without birth, and the one whose bodily effulgence is unchanging and without material qualities”

This statement about Brahman is supported in the scriptures in many places. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.13.55) says: *yasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ, vibhāti sa-carācaram*, “Thus Lord Brahmā saw the Supreme Brahman, by whose energy this entire universe, with its moving and nonmoving living beings, is manifested.”

Srimad Bhagavatam (10.28.15) states: *satyam jñānam anantam yad brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam*, “Lord Kṛṣṇa revealed the indestructible spiritual effulgence, which is unlimited, conscious and eternal.”

Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the *Hari-vaṁśa*: *tat-param paramam brahma, sarvam vibhajate jagat, mamaiva tad ghanam tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata*, “That Supreme Truth, Parabrahman, expands itself into all the variegatedness of this universe. You should know it to be My own concentrated effulgence, O Bhārata.”

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.40) states: *yasya prabhā prabhavato jagadaṇḍa-koṭi, koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnaṁ, tad-brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ, govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*, “I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by whose personal

effulgence the unlimited *brahmajyoti* is manifested. In that *brahmajyoti* there are innumerable universes, and each is filled with innumerable planets.”

Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gita* 14.27: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, “I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.” In relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s *vibhuti* or powers, Sridhara Swami in his commentary on *Gita* mentions that the impersonal feature of the Lord is called Brahman, indicated by the use of the word *param*.

In *Srimad Bhagavatam* (8.24.38), Lord Matsya assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the *Vedas*:

madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca, param brahmeti śabditaṁ, vetsyasy anugrahītaṁ me, sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi, “You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *param brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.” In one *stotra*, Yamunacarya says: *paratparam brahma ca te vibhutayah*, “The Supreme Brahman is Your *vibhuti*” (exceptional opulence or specific powers). The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* states: *tad brahma kṛṣṇa yor aikyam mam kīraṇ arko pamayujor*, “Kṛṣṇa and the Brahman are one as in the example of the sun and its rays.”

sattā mātram: the original substance; Devaki continues, “Kṛṣṇa! Your associates, devotees, holy abode and forms all arise from *suddha sattva*.” **nirviśeṣam**: “You are beyond the particulars of the material world.” **nirīham**: without material desires; “You are without material thirst because You are full and perfect.” Or it can mean, “You are the person who takes away material desire from the devotee’s heart, and gives that devotee the desire to attain the Lord.” The *Amara-kośa* Sanskrit dictionary says the word *īha* means desire, endeavor or thirst. **adhyātma dīpāḥ**: the light of all transcendental knowledge; “You are Visnu because You reveal all truths. Though I am ignorant, I have spoken as You have revealed Yourself to me.”

*naṣṭe loke dvi-parārdhāvasāne,
mahā-bhūteṣv ādi-bhūtaṁ gateṣu,
vyakte 'vyaktaṁ kāla-vegena yāte,
bhavān ekaḥ śiṣyate 'śeṣa-saṁjñāḥ*

After millions of years, at the time of cosmic annihilation, when everything, manifested and unmanifested, is annihilated by the force of time, the five gross elements enter into the subtle conception, and the manifested categories enter into the unmanifested substance. At that time, You alone remain, and You are known as Ananta Śeṣa-nāga.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “For one who is not destroyed during the *maha-pralaya* (annihilation of Brahma and whole universe), what is the question of fear? The five primary elements (*mahabhutam*, earth, water, fire, air, ether) merge into *adibhutam* (subtle elements of sense perception) or *ahankara*. *Ahankara* merges into *vyakta* or *mahat tattva*. The *mahat tattva* merges into *avyakta* or *prakṛti*. Then only You remain.

“Those things mentioned in the previous verse such as the forms of Narayana and others, the *brahmajyoti* and the *dhama* also remain. The Lord’s associates, place and cloth are all eternal. You are called Śeṣa because You remain (*avaśeṣa*). This is a way of deriving the name Śeṣa.”

Text 26

*yo 'yaṁ kālas tasya te 'vyakta-bandho,
ceṣṭām āhuś ceṣṭate yena viśvam,
nimeṣādir vatsarānto mahīyāms,
taṁ tveśānaṁ kṣema-dhāma prapadye*

O inaugurator of the material energy, this wonderful creation works under the control of powerful time, which is divided into seconds, minutes, hours and years. This element of time, which extends for many millions of years, is but another form of Lord Viṣṇu. For Your pastimes, You act as the controller of time, but You are the reservoir of all good fortune. Let me offer my full surrender unto Your Lordship.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the previous verse it appears that time is independent. Thus this verse speaks of time's origin. It speaks of the cause of time as Devaki prays, "Who does not fear fearful time? That time is Your *kriya sakti* or *cesta* (pastime)." Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the inaugurator of *prakṛti* (*avyakta bandho*). "The universe runs by the influence of time. But what is time? Time is *nimeṣa* or moments amounting to years, which again multiply into a day of Brahma (*dvi prarardha*). Because You are fearless You can make me fearless. Therefore, I surrender to You (*tva*)."

Text 27

*martyo mṛtyu-vyāla-bhītaḥ palāyan,
lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat,
tvat pādābjaṁ prāpya yadṛcchayādyā,
susthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apāiti*

No one in this material world has become free from the four principles birth, death, old age and disease, even by fleeing to various planets. But now that You have appeared, My Lord, death is fleeing in fear of You, and the living entities, having obtained shelter at Your lotus feet by Your mercy, are sleeping in full mental

peace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devaki prays, “Since those who take shelter of Your lotus feet become fearless, what to speak of those who meet You face to face. Wandering throughout the universe, one cannot become free from fear. By great mercy (*yadrccchaya*) one receives devotion to You and thereby attains Your lotus feet (*tvat pādābjam*), which act like Dhanvantari, the Lord of medicine. By this medicine a person becomes healthy.” According to the *Medinī* dictionary, the word *abjam* (*tvat pādābjam*) means lotus flower, conch, moon, and Lord Dhanvantari.

Devaki continues, “O Lord, origin of all! Although I am Your devotee and have been accepted by You as Your mother, I am still afflicted by fear of Kamsa.”

Text 28

*sa tvaṁ ghorād ugrasenātmajān nas,
trāhi trastān bhṛtya-vitrāsa-hāsi,
rūpam cedam pauruṣam dhyāna-dhiṣṇyam,
mā pratyakṣam māmsa-dṛśām kṛṣīṣṭhāḥ*

My Lord, because You dispel all the fear of Your devotees, I request You to save us and give us protection from the terrible fear of Kamsa. Your form as Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is appreciated by yogīs in meditation. Please make this form invisible to those who see with material eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devaki prays, “You are fearless and Your devotees are fearless. Then why, O Lord, do You keep Your mother and father in fear?” This is the intention of this verse.

ghorād: terribly fierce; means great fear. Out of fear Devaki does not

mention the name of Kamsa directly but uses the word *ugrasenātmajān*, son of Ugrasena. “You destroy the fears of Your devotees, but why do You not remove our fear?”

Kṛṣṇa replies to Devaki, “O mother, I have appeared to kill Kamsa. Bring Kamsa here and I will kill him right before your eyes.”

Hearing such talk from Kṛṣṇa simply increases Devaki’s fear. Due to motherly affection (*vatsalya-bhava*), Devaki thinks that her small child cannot kill Kamsa. Therefore, she worries about harm coming to Him from Kamsa and becomes more fearful.

“It is not suitable to follow the strategy of showing fear before my child who is showing himself as God. It is a better policy to use words.”

Thinking thus, Devaki began to reason in another way in order to get her child to conceal His four-armed Visnu form. “O master, this splendid form, which is the object of meditation, should not be seen by material eyes.”

Text 29

*janma te mayy asau pāpo,
mā vidyān madhusūdana,
samudvije bhavad-dhetoḥ,
kamsād aham adhīra-dhīḥ*

O Madhusūdana, because of Your appearance, I am becoming more and more anxious in fear of Kamsa. Therefore, please arrange for that sinful Kamsa to be unable to understand that You have taken birth from my womb.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replies, “O mother, if I make this four-armed form disappear, when Kamsa comes he will ask, ‘where is the child?’ Thinking you have stolen the child, he will commit violence against you, will he not?”

To answer this Devaki replies, “I have no fear of that.” Thus she speaks this verse. “Do something so Kamsa (*pāpo*) will not know that You have taken birth from me.”

Kṛṣṇa says, “Having killed the Madhu demon, is it necessary that I kill Kamsa?”

Fearing this question Devaki addresses her son: “O Madhusudana! At present, Kamsa is thousands of times more powerful than Madhu of the past. Let Kamsa beat me for my offense. But I only desire Your safety.”

Kṛṣṇa replies, “You have spoken of My powers in the previous verses, but was all that empty words?”

Devaki answers, “Truly, O son, as Your mother I am unsteady of mind (*adhīra dhīḥ*). Do not be sad. This is my fault and I take full responsibility for it. But out of affection for Your mother, please withdraw Your form.”

Text 30

*upasāmhara viśvātmann,
ado rūpam alaukikam,
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padma-
śriyā juṣṭam catur-bhujam*

O my Lord, You are the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Your transcendental four-armed form, holding conchshell, disc, club and lotus, is unnatural for this world. Please withdraw this form [and become just like a natural human child so that I may try to hide You somewhere].

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Devaki continues, “As You pervade the whole universe and I reside within the universe, You also reside within me. How then has this weakness of heart arisen in me? It must be Your fault.” Thus Devaki addresses the Lord as *viśvātma*, soul of the

universe.

“Withdraw this uncommon four-armed Visnu form and assume a form of a normal human baby, and I will quickly hide You.”

Text 31

*viśvaṁ yad etat sva-tanau niśānte,
yathāvakāśaṁ puruṣaḥ paro bhavān,
bibharti so 'yaṁ mama garbhago 'bhūd,
aho nṛ-lokasya viḍambanaṁ hi tat*

At the time of devastation, the entire cosmos, containing all created moving and nonmoving entities, enters Your transcendental body and is held there without difficulty. But now this transcendental form has taken birth from my womb. People will not be able to believe this, and I shall become an object of ridicule.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa says, “Why should I withdraw this form? You should not become proud to attain the Lord as Your son.”

Fearing such words from the Lord, Devaki speaks, “I do not want fame or position. You hold the universe within the temple of Your body (*sva tanau*) comfortably (*yathā avakāśam*), but You have appeared in my womb. Common people will make fun of me, for how is this possible? The neighbors will joke, ‘O foolish Devaki, the Lord who has a gigantic form of thousands of universes is situated as your son in your little womb. Are you not ashamed to make this claim?’ I will not get any fame for this event.”

Here a question arises: “How is it that Devaki and Vasudeva who realize the Supreme Lord directly with their senses can be afflicted with fear and lamentation arising from ignorance?” One should not raise such a question. Such fear and lamentation is actually an expression of *prema*

arising from *cit-sakti*, Kṛṣṇa's internal spiritual energy, which is the basis of the external energy, material knowledge and ignorance. The fear shown by Vasudeva and Devaki is one of the *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* (thirty-three transitory bodily symptoms manifest in ecstatic love). Their fear did not arise from ignorance. Such an idea would attribute a fault to *prema*.

What is the proof that *prema* is beyond *maya*? If *prema* is *maya* then the Supreme Lord would be controlled by *maya*. By studying the scriptures one will conclude that Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa is only controlled by *prema* not by *maya*. This point is explained in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55: *bhaktiā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ*, and confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21: *bhaktiāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, without *bhakti* one cannot understand the spiritual situation of the Lord. Thus the Lord Himself emphatically declares that He is known only by pure devotion or *prema*.

Bhakti may be considered in three stages, called *guṇī-bhūta*, *pradhānī-bhūta* and *kevala* and the results are also different. From *guṇī-bhūta bhakti* comes *jñāna* (simple knowledge); from *pradhānī-bhūta bhakti* comes *jñānamayī rati* (knowledge mixed with love); and from *kevala bhakti* (pure love) comes *prema*. Through *jñāna* one realizes the Brahman, transcendental bliss without variety (*cit sukha mayam*); through *jñānamayī rati* one realizes the Lord in majesty and opulence (*cid aiśvarya mayam*); and through *prema* one realizes the sweet aspect of Kṛṣṇa, Rama and others (*madhurya maya*).

Although all the forms of God are one (*visnu-tattva*), due to varieties of taste or *rasa* there are different appearances of God. There are seven types of sweetness pertaining to the transcendental form of the Lord: sweetness of form, touch, smell, sound and taste, the sweetness of the Lord's affection for the devotee (*bhakta-vatsalya*), and the sweetness of His pastimes (*lila-madhuri*). The sweetness of Vraja has two additional types of sweetness: Kṛṣṇa's flute (*venu-madhuri*) and His loving exchanges with His associates (*prema-madhuri*). In total there are nine types of sweetness. It is said in the scriptures: "In Vraja, Kṛṣṇa displays four unique types of sweetness: *rupa-madhurya*, *lila-madhurya*, *prema-*

madhurya and *venu-madhurya*.”

There are four types of *prema*: *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *ujjala* or *madhurya*. The glory of *vatsalya-prema* is that it makes Kṛṣṇa the object of pity and extreme attachment. Although Kṛṣṇa’s majesty (*aiśvarya*) is present, the mood of *vatsalya* (affection) covers it in such a way that Kṛṣṇa becomes subservient and bound by the ropes of attachment. In return, Kṛṣṇa gives those devotees a taste of sweetness unavailable to others. The taste (*rasa*) arising from such intense attachment is millions of times more than that experienced through *jñāna* or *jñānamayī rati*.

Because of great attachment a mother derives more pleasure from her son, though he is full of faults and lacking all good qualities, than from seeing the full moon which extinguishes all suffering and bestows all bliss. If that is so, then just imagine the bliss produced from having a son who is the Supreme Lord? This is the difference between *jnana* and *prema*.

Just as ignorance binds the living entity with attachment that gives suffering, similarly *prema* binds Kṛṣṇa, who is the personification of bliss, with attachment that gives rise to great joy. Though a criminal is bound with ropes and chains, a respectable man is honored by binding him with a costly, soft and fragrant turban and coat. One type of bondage gives suffering and the other bondage gives pleasure. The living entity bound by ignorance experiences suffering, whereas Kṛṣṇa experiences great joy being bound by *prema*.

As there are degrees of the five types of suffering experienced by the living entity due to the covering of ignorance, so there are different levels of happiness in *prema* due to the different degrees of covering of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. The *prema* of mother Yasoda and other pure devotees of her caliber mutually binds them to Kṛṣṇa with the ropes of intense attachment and completely covers *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*. This in turn creates a type of happiness not available to devotees like mother Devaki, whose *prema* has less strength due to the mixture of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya* (appreciation of Kṛṣṇa’s power and opulence).

Why do Yasoda and Devaki have different types of *prema*? Although

they are both *nitya-siddha* devotees (eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa), their difference in *prema* is also *nitya-siddha*. There can be no further discussion on this.

Text 32

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tvam eva pūrva-sarge 'bhūḥ,
prśniḥ svāyambhuve sati,
tadāyam sutapā nāma,
prajāpatir akalmaṣaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead replied: My dear mother, best of the chaste, in your previous birth, in the Svāyambhuva millennium, you were known as Prśni, and Vasudeva, who was the most pious Prajāpati, was named Sutapā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Lord said, “O mother, not only in this birth, but in previous births I have appeared in your womb. Why are you thinking yourself so fallen? You are not an ordinary human. During the reign of Svayambhuva Manu you became (*abhūḥ*) Prsni. O Sati (Devaki) and Vasudeva (*āyam*) was your husband Sutapa.”

Text 33

*yuvām vai brahmaṇādiṣṭau,
prajā-sarge yadā tataḥ,
sanniyamyendriya-grāmam,
tepāthe paramam tapaḥ*

When both of you were ordered by Lord Brahmā to create progeny, you first underwent severe austerities by controlling your senses.

Texts 34–35

*varṣa-vātātapa-hima,
gharma-kāla-guṇān anu,
sahamānau śvāsa-rodha,
vinirdhū ta-mano-malau,
śīrṇa parṇānilāhārāv,
upaśāntena cetasā,
mattaḥ kāmān abhīpsantau,
mad-ārādhanam īhatuḥ*

My dear father and mother, you endured rain, wind, strong sun, scorching heat and severe cold, suffering all sorts of inconvenience according to different seasons. By practicing prāṇāyāma to control the air within the body through yoga, and by eating only air and dry leaves fallen from the trees, you cleansed from your minds all dirty things. In this way, desiring a benediction from Me, you worshiped Me with peaceful minds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: ātapaḥ; means intense burning due to the sun's rays and *gharma* means heat.

Text 36

*evam vām tapyatos tīvram,
tapaḥ parama-duṣkaram,
divya-varṣa-sahasrāṇi,*

dvādaśeyur mad-ātmanoḥ

Thus you spent twelve thousand celestial years performing difficult activities of tapasya in consciousness of Me [Kṛṣṇa consciousness].

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura:

mad ātmanoḥ: means “absorbing your minds in Me.”

Texts 37–38

*tadā vām parituṣṭo 'ham,
amunā vapuṣānaghe,
tapasā śraddhayā nityam,
bhaktyā ca hṛdi bhāvitaḥ,
prādurāsam varada-rāḍ,
yuvayoḥ kāma-ditsayā,
vriyatām vara ity ukte,
mādrśo vām vṛtaḥ sutah*

O sinless mother Devakī, after the expiry of twelve thousand celestial years, in which you constantly contemplated 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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Because of your austerities and meditation on Me, I became very pleased to appear in that form (four-handed).”

The austerity performed was constant meditation on the Lord with

devotion and faith. The use of the three words, *śraddhayā*, *nityam* and *bhaktiyā* indicates that the devotion of Prsni and Sutapa was not merely a form of *yoga* practice. Rather their devotion shows total absorption in the Lord, which by itself leads to perfection and *prema*. However, the *bhakti*, devotion, of Prsni and Sutapa was mixed with *jñāna* and *aiśvarya* because they practiced *yoga* and severe austerities. Some also reason that since the *nitya siddha parikaras* (eternal associates of the Lord) Vasudeva and Devaki had *nitya siddha aiśvarya-jnana* mixed *bhakti*, their *amsas* Prsni and Sutapa also had mixed *bhakti*. Their austerities and *yoga* practice were therefore incidental. **bhāvitaḥ**: fixed in determination; This word is used instead of *cintata*. The meditation of Prsni and Sutapa was filled with *bhāva*, transcendental love. In other words, they had genuine pure devotion for the Lord.

Text 39

*ajūṣṭa-grāmya-viṣayāv,
anapatyau ca dam-patī,
na vavrāthe 'pavargam me,
mohitau deva-māyayā*

Being husband and wife but always sonless, you were attracted by sexual desires, for by the influence of devamāyā, transcendental love, you wanted to have Me as your son. Therefore you never desired to be liberated from this material world.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **māyayā**: refers to Devaki and Vasudeva's affection for their son. *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.8.43) says: *vaiṣṇavīm vyatanon māyām, putra-snehamayīm vibhuḥ*, "By the influence of His internal potency, *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa inspired mother Yasoda to become absorbed in intense maternal affection for her son."

mohitau: means that Devaki and Vasudeva were overcome with bliss. “Being childless and detached from material enjoyment, but overcome with bliss by parental affection, you did not pray for liberation.”

Text 40

*gate mayi yuvām labdhvā,
varam mat-sadṛśam sutam,
grāmyān bhogān abhuñjāthām,
yuvām prāpta-manorathau*

After you received that benediction and I disappeared, you engaged yourselves in sex to have a son like Me, and I fulfilled your desire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Desiring in this way for a son, you then engaged in sexual intercourse. According to the Sanskrit dictionary *Amara-kośa*, *grāmyān bhogān* means sex life.

Text 41

*adṛṣṭvānyatamaṁ loke,
śīlaudārya-guṇaiḥ samam,
ahaṁ suto vām abhavaṁ,
pṛśnigarbha iti śrutah*

Since I found no one else as highly elevated as you in simplicity and other qualities of good character, I appeared in this world as Pṛśnigarbha, or one who is celebrated as having taken birth from Pṛśni.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “In My first birth I appeared as Prsnigarbha.” This refers to the Treta-yuga *avatara* mentioned in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.5.26): *viṣṇur yajñāḥ ṛśnigarbhaḥ, sarvadeva urukramaḥ,* “

In Tretā-yuga the Lord is glorified by the names Viṣṇu, Yajña, Ṛśnigarbha, Sarvadeva, Urukrama, etc.”

Text 42

*tayor vām punar evāham,
adityām āsa kaśyapāt,
upendra iti vikhyāto,
vāmanatvāc ca vāmanaḥ*

In the next millennium, I again appeared from the two of you, who appeared as My mother, Aditi, and My father, Kaśyapa. I was known as Upendra, and because of being a dwarf, I was also known as Vāmana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “He who appeared as Vamana to Aditi and Kasyapa has now appeared as your son, Myself.”

Text 43

*ṛtīye 'smin bhave 'ham vai,
tenaiva vapuṣātha vām,
jāto bhūyas tayor eva,
satyaṁ me vyāhṛtaṁ sati*

O supremely chaste mother, I, the same personality, have now

appeared of you both as your son for the third time. Take My words as the truth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “In the present birth I have been born with four arms. I was born in the first birth as Prsnigarbha, in the second birth as Vamana, and now in the third birth I am born.”

This indicates that the birth as Kṛṣṇa is the full, complete form and the previous two are His *amsas*, partial expansions. In verse 31 of this chapter, Kṛṣṇa told Devaki, “You were previously Prsni” but He did not say “Prsni is you.” In verse 45 Kṛṣṇa says, “By knowing I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and by constantly thinking of Me with love as your son, you will go to My spiritual abode.” By these evidences it is shown that Prsni and Sutapa are expansions of Devaki and Vasudeva.

Text 44

*etad vām darśitam rūpaṁ,
prāg-janma-smaraṇāya me,
nānyathā mad-bhavaṁ jñānam,
martya-liṅgena jāyate*

I have shown you this form of Viṣṇu just to remind you of My previous births. Otherwise, if I appeared like an ordinary human child, you would not believe that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, has indeed appeared.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “I have appeared in a four-armed Visnu form because you would not recognize Me as God if I appeared in My complete, original two armed human-like form.”

Text 45

*yuvām mām putra-bhāvena,
brahma-bhāvena cāsakṛt,
cintayantau kṛta-snehau,
yāsyethe mad-gatiṁ parām*

Both of you, husband and wife, constantly think of Me as your son, but always know that I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By thus thinking of Me constantly with love and affection, you will achieve the highest perfection: returning home, back to Godhead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the scriptures describing worship of Kṛṣṇa through *mantras*, Vasudeva is mentioned as the father of Kṛṣṇa. This shows without doubt that Vasudeva is eternally in the position of Kṛṣṇa’s father. But in order to increase their bliss by promising perfection of their *sadhana* in this birth, their status as Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates (*nitya-siddha parikaras*) is hidden in this verse. “By thinking of Me you will attain Me.”

The actual meaning of the verse however is: “I will now go to My most excellent eternal abode of Gokula. After eleven years, I will return to Mathura and you will meet Me at that time. But now I will be separated from you.”

Text 46

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity uktvāsīd dharis tūṣṇīm,
bhagavān ātma-māyayā,
pitroḥ sampāśyatoḥ sadyo,
babhūva prākṛtaḥ śiśuḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After thus instructing His father and mother, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, remained silent. In their presence, by His internal energy, He then transformed Himself into a small human child. [In other words, He transformed Himself into His original form: kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam.]

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: ātma māyayā: own spiritual energy; According to the *Maha Samhita*, *ātma māyayā* means “by one’s own free will.”

babhū va prākṛtaḥ śiśuḥ: became an ordinary human being; means that Kṛṣṇa manifested His eternally perfect, spiritual form as a baby, but not a material baby. *Prākṛtaḥ* means *prākṛti*, *svarūpa* and *svabhāva* (eternal form and personality). In referring to great souls on earth, they are called *prākṛti-siddha*. Thus the word *prākṛtaḥ* here means *svarūpa* or *svabhāva*. It cannot mean material in this context because there are statements like the following from the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10. 9.13) which contradict this:

na cāntar na bahir yasya, na pūrvam nāpi cāparam, pūrvāparam bahiś cāntar, jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ, taṁ matvātmajam avyaktam, martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam, gopikolūkhale dāmnā, babandha prākṛtam yathā

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no beginning and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, He is all-pervading. Because He is not under the influence of the element of time, for Him there is no difference between past, present and future; He exists in His own transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although He is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yaśodā, considering Him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope.”

In this statement it is clear that He who mother Yasoda bound up was like an ordinary material child (*prākṛtā śiśuḥ*), but actually He was not

prākṛta, He was *aprākṛta*, completely spiritual. Therefore the Lord showed His original spiritual form as a human-like baby.

Text 47

*tataś ca śaurir bhagavat-pracoditaḥ,
sutaṁ samādāya sa sūtikā-grhāt,
yadā bahir gantum iyeṣa tarhy ajā,
yā yogamāyājani nanda-jāyayā*

Thereafter, exactly when Vasudeva, being inspired by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was about to take the newborn child from the delivery room, Yogamāyā, the Lord’s spiritual energy, took birth as the daughter of the wife of Mahārāja Nanda.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva was instructed by Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, “If you are afraid, then take Me to Gokula and bring the child of Yasoda, Yogamaya, back here.”

After being instructed, Vasudeva saw that his chains automatically loosened. When Vasudeva was about to leave the prison, Yogamaya took birth in Gokula as the daughter of Yasoda. The *Hari-vaṁśa* says that in the eighth month of pregnancy, before full term, Devaki and Yasoda gave birth at the same time to their children. But the *Bhagavatam* states that Yasoda gave birth after Devaki.

How to correlate these contradictory statements? Exactly when Devaki gave birth to Kṛṣṇa in Mathura, Yasoda also gave birth to Kṛṣṇa in Gokula. After that, as described in this verse, Yasoda gave birth to Yogamaya. Thus two children appeared from Yasoda at different times. This is confirmed in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.4.9), which describes Yogamaya as *ānujā*, the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa. But when Kṛṣṇa appeared from Yasoda it is not stated that He had four hands. Therefore, it is understood that Kṛṣṇa appeared from Yasoda with two hands

because she worshiped Kṛṣṇa without understanding His Godhood. But Vasudeva and Devaki worshiped their son as Visnu.

Texts 48–49

*tayā hr̥ta-pratyaya-sarva-vṛttiṣu,
dvāḥ-stheṣu paureṣv api śāyiteṣv atha,
dvāraś ca sarvāḥ pihitā duratyayā,
bṛhat-kapāṭāyasa-kīla-śṛṅkhalaiḥ,
tāḥ kṛṣṇa-vāhe vasudeva agate,
svayam vyavaryanta yathā tamo raveḥ,
vavarṣa parjanya upāṁśu-garjitaḥ,
śeṣo 'nvagād vāri nivārayan phaṇaiḥ*

By the influence of Yogamāyā, all the doorkeepers fell fast asleep, their senses unable to work, and the other inhabitants of the house also fell deeply asleep. When the sun rises, the darkness automatically disappears; similarly, when Vasudeva appeared, the closed doors, which were strongly pinned with iron and locked with iron chains, opened automatically. Since the clouds in the sky were mildly thundering and showering, Ananta-nāga, an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, followed Vasudeva, beginning from the door, with hoods expanded to protect Vasudeva and the transcendental child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Through her expansion, Yogamaya covered the knowledge gathering senses of the doorkeepers so they fell into deep sleep.

svayam vyavaryanta: automatically opened wide; The doors were insurmountable being made of thick panels, huge bolts and chains. But they opened by themselves just like the sun driving away darkness.
upāṁśu; mildly resound; The clouds began to rumble softly. Śeṣa,

an expansion of Lord Balarama, spread His hood like an umbrella. *Brahmanada Purana* says: *śayyāsana paridhāna pādukā, chatra, camaraiḥ kim nabhus tasya kṛṣṇasya murtibhedais ca murtiṣu,* “Whenever Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa takes different forms, Lord Balarama’s expansion Śeṣa serves Kṛṣṇa as His bed, seat, shoes, umbrella and *camara.*”

Text 50

*maghoni varṣaty asakṛd yamānujā,
gambhīra-toyaugha-javormi-phenilā,
bhayānakāvarta-śatākulā nadī,
mārgam dadau sindhur iva śriyaḥ pateḥ*

Because of constant rain sent by the demigod Indra, the River Yamunā was filled with deep water, foaming about with fiercely whirling waves. But as the great Indian Ocean had formerly given way to Lord Rāmacandra by allowing Him to construct a bridge, the River Yamunā gave way to Vasudeva and allowed him to cross.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The River Yamuna was filled with deep water (*toyaughah*), but she gave way to Vasudeva just as the great Indian Ocean did for Lord Rāma (*śriyaḥ pateḥ*).

Text 51

*nanda-vrajam śaurir upetya tatra tān,
gopān prasuptān upalabhya nidrayā,
sutām yaśodā-śayane nidhāya tat-
sutām upādāya punar grhān agāt*

When Vasudeva reached the house of Nanda Mahārāja, he saw that all the cowherd men were fast asleep. Thus he placed his own son on the bed of Yaśodā, picked up her daughter, an expansion of Yogamāyā, and then returned to his residence, the prison house of Kāmsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking Yasoda’s daughter, Vasudeva returned to the prison. From the mundane point of view it appears unjustified that Vasudeva, who was supposed to be following the highest principles, condoned the sacrifice of another’s child to protect his own. Vasudeva cannot be accused of callousness, however, because his normal sense of discrimination was covered by his paternal love (*vatsalya-prema*) for Lord Kṛṣṇa who had appeared as his son.

Text 52

*devakyāḥ śayane nyasya,
vasudevo ’tha dārikām,
pratimucya padora loham,
āste pūrvavad āvṛtaḥ*

Vasudeva placed the female child on the bed of Devakī, bound his legs with the iron shackles, and thus remained there as before.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **pratimucya:** bind again; Vasudeva placed the chains back on his feet.

Text 53

yaśodā nanda-patnī ca,

*jātaṁ param abudhyata,
na tal-liṅgaṁ pariśrāntā,
nidrayāpagata-smṛtiḥ*

Exhausted by the labor of childbirth, Yaśodā was overwhelmed with sleep and unable to understand what kind of child had been born to her.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **pariśrāntā:** heavy labor; Because of the labor of childbirth Yasoda only knew that she had given birth, but she did not know whether her offspring was a boy or girl. After the birth, Yasoda got relief from the labor pains, fell asleep and forgot everything.

ca: also; The word *ca* also means “everything.” Taking this meaning then, Yasoda, like Devaki, clearly understood that her offspring was *param*, the all-attractive Supreme Person. By tasting Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness Yasoda understood that He was the Supreme. Yasoda realized Kṛṣṇa’s true nature through the potency given by the Lord. Unlike Devaki, Yasoda did not know that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Lord because of His specific bodily features such as four arms, Kaustubha jewel and *cakra*. The fact that Kṛṣṇa was also born to Yasoda is not very well known. Because Yasoda and Devaki were friends, Yasoda gave her fame to Devaki and allowed Devaki to become famous as the mother of Kṛṣṇa. The name Yasoda means to give (*dadāti*) fame (*yaśo*). However, the name Devakī is also another name of mother Yaśodā, as stated in the *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa*: *dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca, ataḥ sakhyam abhūt tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā*, “The wife of Nanda had two names, Yaśodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that she [the wife of Nanda] developed friendship with Devakī, the wife of Śauri [Vasudeva].” This is also in accordance with *Vaisnava Tosani, Ananda Vrndavana Campu* and *Bṛhad-bhagavatamṛta*.

Chapter Four: The Atrocities of King Kamsa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
bahir-antaḥ-pura-dvāraḥ,
sarvāḥ pūrvavad āvṛtāḥ,
tato bāla-dhvaniṁ śrutvā,
gṛha-pālāḥ samutthitāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King Parīkṣit, the doors inside and outside the house closed as before. Thereafter, the inhabitants of the house, especially the watchmen, heard the crying of the newborn child and thus awakened from their beds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter relates Kamsa’s repentance on hearing Maya’s words, Devaki’s forgiving Kamsa, and the evil ministers’ advice to Kamsa.

bāla dhvani: crying of a newborn; means the crying of the infant when he first comes out of the womb. The watchmen were just like dogs protecting a house. On hearing the crying baby, they immediately got up.

Text 2

*te tu tūrṇam upavrajya,
devakyā garbha-janma tat,
ācakhyur bhoja-rājāya,
yad udvignaḥ pratīkṣate*

Thereafter, all the watchmen very quickly approached King Kaṁsa, the ruler of the Bhoja dynasty, and submitted the news of the birth of Devakī's child. Kaṁsa, who had awaited this news very anxiously, immediately took action.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The guards quickly got up and told Kamsa of the birth of Devaki's eighth child (*garbha janma*).

Text 3

*sa talpāt tūrṇam utthāya,
kālo 'yam iti vihvalaḥ,
sūtī-grham agāt tūrṇam,
praskhalan mukta-mūrdhajaḥ*

Kaṁsa immediately got up from bed, thinking, “Here is Kāla, the supreme time factor, which has taken birth to kill me!” Thus overwhelmed, Kaṁsa, his hair scattered on his head, at once approached the place where the child had been born.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The time has come (*kālo ayam*) for killing the child. Or the sentence can mean, “Out of fear, Kamsa was thinking that the birth of the child was his own death (*kāla*).”

Text 4

*tam āha bhrātaram devī,
kṛpaṇā karuṇam sati,
snuṣeyam tava kalyāṇa,*

striyaṁ mā hantum arhasi

Devakī helplessly, piteously appealed to Kamsa: My dear brother, all good fortune unto you. Don't kill this girl. She will be your daughter-in-law. Indeed, it is unworthy of you to kill a woman.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Devaki was shining with satisfaction because she had been able to hide her son.

kr̥paṇā: helplessly; indicates Devaki was suffering because she hoped that the baby girl could be saved.

satī: chaste lady; means Devaki was expert in trying to cheat Kamsa: “This child will be the future bride of your son.” Seeing that Kamsa was going to take the child by force, Devaki then addressed him as *kalayāṇa* (most auspicious) to indicate that he should not produce inauspiciousness by committing the sin of killing a female child.

Text 5

*bahavo hīmsitā bhrātaḥ,
śīśavaḥ pāvakopamāḥ,
tvayā daiva-nisṛṣṭena,
putrikaikā pradīyatām*

My dear brother, by the influence of destiny you have already killed many babies, each of them as bright and beautiful as fire. But kindly spare this daughter. Give her to me as your gift.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Fearing that Kamsa would become angry after she criticized him for his cruelty in killing her previous sons, Devaki said, “It is my fate (*daiva-nisṛṣṭena*). What fault is there in you?” She then expressed her pitiful condition, praying that Kamsa

should not make her arms devoid of the child.

Text 6

*nanv ahaṁ te hy avarajā,
dīnā hata-sutā prabho,
dātum arhasi mandāyā,
aṅgemām caramām prajāṁ*

My lord, my brother, I am very poor, being bereft of all my children, but still I am your younger sister, and therefore it would be worthy of you to give me this last child as a gift.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **aṅga**: here means “O brother.”

Text 7

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
upaguhyātmajāṁ evaṁ,
rudatyā dīna-dīnavat,
yācitas tām vinirbhartsya,
hastād ācicchide khalah*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: piteously embracing her daughter and crying, Devakī begged Kaṁsa for the child, but he was so cruel that he chastised her and forcibly snatched the child from her hands.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **ātmajāṁ evaṁ**: means “as if the child were her own daughter,” since Devaki was aware that it was not her

daughter.

dīna dīnavat: poor woman; Devaki is described as being “like” the most miserable person (*dīna dīnavat*) instead of being the most miserable, because the child was not actually hers. Threatening Devaki, Kamsa grabbed the child from her hands.

Text 8

*tām gṛhītvā caraṇayor,
jāta-mātrām svasuḥ sutām,
apothayac chilā-prṣṭhe,
svārthonmūlita-sauhrdaḥ*

Having uprooted all relationships with his sister because of intense selfishness, Kamsa, who was sitting on his knees, grasped the newborn child by the legs and tried to dash her against the surface of a stone.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **apothayet:** smashed; Kamsa threw the child down with great force.

Text 9

*sā tad-dhastāt samutpatya,
sadyo devy ambaram gatā,
adrśyatānujā viṣṇoḥ,
sāyudhāṣṭa-mahābhujā*

The child, Yogamāyā-devī, the younger sister of Lord Viṣṇu, slipped upward from Kamsa’s hands and appeared in the sky as Devī,

the goddess Durgā, with eight arms, completely equipped with weapons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Yogamaya was falling to the ground, she forcefully leaped into the sky. The *Bhaviṣya-uttara Purāṇa* says that Yogamaya (Durga) put her foot on Kamsa's head as she went up into the sky. She is described here as the younger sister (*anujā*) of Kṛṣṇa, indicating that Kṛṣṇa as well as Yogamaya were born from Yasoda. She held weapons in her eight arms to frighten Kamsa.

Texts 10–11

*divya-srag-ambarālepa-
ratnābharaṇa-bhūṣitā,
dhanuḥ-śūleṣu-carmāsi- śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharā,
siddha-cāraṇa-gandharvair,
apsaraḥ-kinnaroragaih,
upāhṛtoru-balibhiḥ,
stūyamānedam abravīt*

The goddess Durgā was decorated with flower garlands, smeared with sandalwood pulp and dressed with excellent garments and ornaments made of valuable jewels. Holding in her hands a bow, a trident, arrows, a shield, a sword, a conchshell, a disc and a club, and being praised by celestial beings like Apsarās, Kinnaras, Urugas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas and Gandharvas, who worshiped her with all kinds of presentations, she spoke as follows.

Text 12

*kiṁ mayā hatayā manda,
jātaḥ khalu tavānta-kṛt,
yatra kva vā pūrva-śatrur,
mā himsīḥ kṛpaṇān vṛthā*

O Kāmsa, you fool, what will be the use of killing me? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has been your enemy from the very beginning and who will certainly kill you, has already taken His birth somewhere else. Therefore, do not unnecessarily kill other children.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The goddess Durga said, “Kāmsa, what can you gain from killing me? If you kill me, you still cannot prevent your own death. He who will kill you has already been born somewhere else (*yatra kva vā*), which cannot be revealed to you.”

kṛpaṇam: refers to Devaki who is suffering. Another reading is *kṛpaṇān*, which refers to many poor babies. The sentence would then read, “You should not kill poor innocent children,” instead of “You should not kill poor Devaki.”

Text 13

*iti prabhāṣya taṁ devī,
māyā bhagavatī bhuvī,
bahu-nāma-niketeṣu,
bahu-nāmā babhūva ha*

After speaking to Kāmsa in this way, the goddess Durgā, Yogamāyā, appeared in different places, such as Vārāṇasī, and became celebrated by different names, such as Annapūrṇā, Durgā, Kālī and Bhadrā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **niketeṣu**: different places; Mayadevi or goddess Durga became famous by many names in different places such as Varanasi.

Text 14

*tayābhihitam ākarṇya,
kaṁsaḥ parama-vismitaḥ,
devakīm vasudevaṁ ca,
vimucya praśrito 'bravīt*

After hearing the words of the goddess Durgā, Kaṁsa was struck with wonder. Thus he approached his sister Devakī and brother-in-law Vasudeva, released them immediately from their shackles, and very humbly spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **parama vismitaḥ**: wonderstruck; In great astonishment, Kamsa thought, “How could a mere mortal like Devaki give birth to Durga-devi? But then how could Durga’s words be false?”

Text 15

*aho bhaginy aho bhāma,
mayā vām bata pāpmanā,
puruṣāda ivāpatyaṁ,
bahavo himsitāḥ sutāḥ*

Alas, my sister! Alas, my brother-in-law! I am indeed so sinful that

exactly like a man-eater [Rākṣasa] who eats his own child, I have killed so many sons born of you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa tries to pacify Devaki and Vasudeva in the following verses. **bhāma:** brother-in-law; **puruṣāda:** *rākṣasa*, man-eater; “Just as a *rākṣasa* kills his own children, I have killed many of your sons.”

Text 16

*sa tv ahaṁ tyakta-kāruṇyas,
tyakta-jñāti-suhṛt khalah,
kān lokān vai gamiṣyāmi,
brahma-heva mṛtaḥ śvasan*

Being merciless and cruel, I have forsaken all my relatives and friends. Therefore, like a person who has killed a brāhmaṇa, I do not know to which planet I shall go, either after death or while breathing.

Text 17

*daivam apy anṛtam vakti,
na martyā eva kevalam,
yad-viśrambhād ahaṁ pāpaḥ,
svasur nihataavāñ chiśūn*

Alas, not only human beings but sometimes even providence lies. And I am so sinful that I believed the omen of providence and killed

so many of my sister's children.

Text 18

*mā śocatam mahā-bhāgāv,
ātmajān sva-kṛtam bhujah,
jāntavo na sadaikatra,
daivādhīnās tadāsate*

O great souls, your children have suffered their own misfortune. Therefore, please do not lament for them. All living entities are under the control of the Supreme, and they cannot always live together.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **mahā bhāgau:** fortunate; Kamsa said, “Devaki, you are very fortunate because Durga-devi has come as your daughter. You should not lament for your sons who have reaped the results of their actions. Even considering that they lived, living entities cannot remain together for very long.”

Text 19

*bhuvi bhaumāni bhūtāni,
yathā yānty apayānti ca,
nāyam ātmā tathaitesu,
viparyeti yathaiva bhūḥ*

In this world, we can see that pots, dolls and other products of the earth appear, break and then disappear, mixing with the

earth. Similarly, the bodies of all conditioned living entities are annihilated, but the living entities, like the earth itself, are unchanging and never annihilated [na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre [Bg. 2.20]].

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa continues, “You should not lament after considering the difference between the soul and matter. Just as clay pots are created and destroyed, the bodies of the individual living entities are created and destroyed. As the earth itself is not affected by these changes, similarly the living entity is not affected, though the material bodies undergo change.”

Text 20

*yathānevam-vido bhedo,
yata ātma-viparyayah,
deha-yoga-viyogau ca,
saṁsṛtir na nivartate*

One who does not understand the constitutional position of the body and the soul [ātmā] becomes too attached to the bodily concept of life. Consequently, because of attachment to the body and its by-products, he feels affected by union with and separation from his family, society and nation. As long as this continues, one continues his material life. [Otherwise, one is liberated.]

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Due to ignorance of their spiritual identity, most people think they are the body, and thus perceive differences because of different bodies. Because of this (*yatah*) they think that they undergo change with birth and death (*ātma-viparyayah*). Thus they feel happy when united with their sons, and experience suffering when separated from their sons. This is called *saṁsṛti*.”

Text 21

*tasmād bhadre sva-tanayān,
mayā vyāpāditān api,
mānuśoca yataḥ sarvaḥ,
sva-kṛtaṁ vindate 'vaśaḥ*

My dear sister Devakī, all good fortune unto you! Everyone suffers and enjoys the results of his own work under the control of providence. Therefore, although your sons have unfortunately been killed by me, please do not lament for them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa continues, “The sons killed by me are sons from the external point of view due to bodily identification. Therefore do not grieve. I have only killed the bodies of your sons, so I should not be blamed. If you say, ‘I do not have such knowledge of the soul,’ then still you should not grieve. According to the view of the *karma-vādīs* (fruitive workers) taking shelter of ignorance, all souls are forced to experience the results of their actions, even though they do not desire it.

Text 22

*yāvad dhato 'smi hantāsmī-
ty ātmānaṁ manyate 'sva-drk,
tāvat tad-abhimāny ajño,
bādhya-bādhakatām iyāt*

In the bodily conception of life, one remains in darkness, without

self-realization, thinking, “I am being killed” or “I have killed my enemies.” As long as a foolish person thus considers the self to be the killer or the killed, he continues to be responsible for material obligations, and consequently he suffers the reactions of happiness and distress.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From the viewpoint of a *jñāni*, Kamsa tries to show that he is not the killer of her sons. “The ignorant see only the body and they do not see the soul (*a sva dṛk*). Since I do not identify with the body, I incur no sin nor get any bondage of karma for killing the children.”

Text 23

*kṣamadhvaṁ mama daurātmyaṁ,
sādhavo dīna-vatsalāḥ,
ity uktvāśru-mukhaḥ pādau,
śyālah svasror athāgrahīt*

Kamsa begged, “My dear sister and brother-in-law, please be merciful to such a poor-hearted person as me, since both of you are saintly persons. Please excuse my atrocities.” Having said this, Kamsa fell at the feet of Vasudeva and Devakī, his eyes full of tears of regret.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You may choose to continue grieving while blaming me for the death of your sons. But in reality I did not commit this sinful act consciously even though I am a wicked person. My atonement is only by your mercy.” Thus Kamsa says to Vasudeva and Devaki, “Please forgive me.”

śyālah: brother-in-law; the word indicates Kamsa. **svasro:** sister; is a dual form of the word which indicates the sister and her husband,

Devaki and Vasudeva. Kamsa touched both of their feet.

Text 24

*mocayām āsa nigāḍād,
viśrabdhaḥ kanyakā-girā,
devakīm vasudevaṁ ca,
darśayann ātma-sauhṛdam*

Fully believing in the words of the goddess Durgā, Kamsa exhibited his familial affection for Devakī and Vasudeva by immediately releasing them from their iron shackles.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Fully believing in Durga’s words, Kamsa showed his friendship by immediately releasing Vasudeva and Devaki from their iron shackles (*nigada*).

Text 25

*bhrātuḥ samanutaptasya,
kṣānta-roṣā ca devakī,
vyasṛjad vasudevaś ca,
prahasya tam uvāca ha*

When Devakī saw her brother actually repentant while explaining ordained events, she was relieved of all anger. Similarly, Vasudeva was also free from anger. Smiling, he spoke to Kamsa as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **roṣā ca:** anger; indicates lamentation as well as anger. Devaki forgave Kamsa for his offenses and gave up

her anger.

Text 26

*evam etan mahā-bhāga,
yathā vadasi dehinām,
ajñāna-prabhavāham-dhīḥ,
sva-pareti bhidā yataḥ*

O great personality Kāṁsa, only by the influence of ignorance does one accept the material body and bodily ego. What you have said about this philosophy is correct. Persons in the bodily concept of life, lacking self-realization, differentiate in terms of “This is mine” and “This belongs to another.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because of (*yataḥ*) the spell of false identity, one thinks of objects as mine (*sva para iti bhida*). In this way one thinks in terms of duality.

Text 27

*śoka-harṣa-bhaya-dveṣa-
lobha-moha-madānvitāḥ,
mitho ghnantam na paśyanti,
bhāvair bhāvaṁ pṛthag-dṛśaḥ*

Persons with the vision of differentiation are imbued with the material qualities of lamentation, jubilation, fear, envy, greed, illusion and madness. They are influenced by the immediate cause, which they are busy counteracting, because they have no knowledge

of the remote, supreme cause, the Personality of Godhead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those with external material vision cannot see that the Supreme Lord arranges that some entities and forces, such as kings, tigers and disease are killing others such as men and cows.

Text 28

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kaṁsa evaṁ prasannābhyām,
viśuddham pratibhāṣitaḥ,
devakī-vasudevābhyām,
anujñāto 'viśad gṛham*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thus having been addressed in purity by Devakī and Vasudeva, who were very much appeased, Kāṁsa felt pleased, and with their permission he entered his home.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **viśuddham:** purity; Vasudeva and Devaki spoke very sincerely to Kāṁsa with pleasing words (*viśuddham*). Another reading of the word is *visraddham*. In that case, it means that they spoke in such a way to gain Kāṁsa's trust.

Text 29

*tasyām rātryām vyatītāyām,
kaṁsa āhūya mantriṇaḥ,
tebhya ācaṣṭa tat sarvaṁ,
yad uktāṁ yoga-nidrayā*

After that night passed, Kaṁsa summoned his ministers and informed them of all that had been spoken by Yogamāyā [who had revealed that He who was to slay Kaṁsa had already been born somewhere else].

Text 30

*ākarnya bhartur gaditam,
tam ūcur deva-śatravaḥ,
devān prati kṛtāmarṣā,
daiteyā nāti-kovidāḥ*

After hearing their master's statement, the envious asuras, who were enemies of the demigods and were not very expert in their dealings, advised Kaṁsa as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **nati kovidah**: means ignorant. **ati**: refers to qualification. The demons, devoid of the qualification of knowledge, heard Kamsa's words, became angry with the demigods, and then began to speak.

Text 31

*evam cet tarhi bhojendra,
pura-grāma-vrajādiṣu,
anirdaśān nirdaśāms ca,
haniṣyāmo 'dya vai śiśūn*

If this is so, O King of the Bhoja dynasty, beginning today we shall kill all the children born in all the villages, towns and pasturing grounds within the past ten days or slightly more.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **anirdaśān**: means children less than ten days old. **nirdaśān**: refers to children more than ten days old. The demons proclaimed, “Today, we will kill all children, over and under ten days old.”

Text 32

*kim udyamaiḥ kariṣyanti,
devāḥ samara-bhīraṇaḥ,
nityam udvigna-manaso,
jyā-ghoṣair dhanuṣas tava*

The demigods always fear the sound of your bowstring. They are constantly in anxiety, afraid of fighting. Therefore, what can they do by their endeavors to harm you?

Text 33

*asyatas te śara-vrātair,
hanyamānāḥ samantataḥ,
jijīviṣava utsṛjya,
palāyana-parā yayuḥ*

While being pierced by your arrows, which you discharged on all sides, some of them, who were injured by the multitude of arrows

but who desired to live, fled the battlefield, intent on escaping.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Being pierced by your arrows (*asyatah*), the demigods fled (*utsrjya*) the battlefield.”

Text 34

*kecit prāñjalayo dīnā,
nyasta-śastrā divaukasaḥ,
mukta-kaccha-śikhāḥ kecid,
bhītāḥ sma iti vādinaḥ*

Defeated and bereft of all weapons, some of the demigods gave up fighting and praised you with folded hands, and some of them, appearing before you with loosened garments and hair, said, “O lord, we are very much afraid of you.”

Text 35

*na tvam viśmṛta-śastrāstrān,
virathān bhaya-saṁvṛtān, haṁsy anyāsakta-vimukhān,
bhagna-cāpān ayudhyataḥ*

When the demigods are bereft of their chariots, when they forget how to use weapons, when they are fearful or attached to something other than fighting, or when their bows are broken and they have thus lost the ability to fight, Your Majesty does not kill them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demons continue speaking to

Kamsa: “Your sense of righteousness increases the strength of the demigods. Give up this sense of righteousness, for this is not the time for *dharma*.”

Text 36

*kiṁ kṣema-sūrain vibudhair,
asamyuga-vikatthanaiḥ,
raho-juṣā kiṁ hariṇā,
śambhunā vā vanaukasā,
kiṁ indreṇālpā-vīryeṇa,
brahmaṇā vā tapasyatā*

The demigods boast uselessly while away from the battlefield. Only where there is no fighting can they show their prowess. Therefore, from such demigods we have nothing to fear. As for Lord Viṣṇu, He is in seclusion in the core of the hearts of the yogīs. As for Lord Śiva, he has gone to the forest. And as for Lord Brahmā, he is always engaged in austerities and meditation. The other demigods, headed by Indra, are devoid of prowess. Therefore you have nothing to fear.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse is spoken to show that the demons have no fear of the demigods. “The demigods display courage where there is no danger (*kṣema*), and show pride outside the battlefield by boasting and talking uselessly (*asamyuga vikatthanaiḥ*). Because you are stronger, you should have no fear of even Hari or Siva. Hari prefers solitary places (*raho jusa*). Even if the demigods have strength, why do they not come out and fight? Why does Hari hide within the hearts of the people? Why does Siva stay in the forest in Ilavṛta Varsa without mixing with people?”

Text 37

*tathāpi devāḥ sāpatnyān,
nopekṣyā iti manmahe,
tatas tan-mūla-khanane,
niyuñkṣvāsmān anuvratān*

Nonetheless, because of their enmity, our opinion is that the demigods should not be neglected. Therefore, to uproot them completely, engage us in fighting with them, for we are ready to follow you.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demons said to Kamsa, “Though the demigods are weak, the enemy cannot be neglected.” This is according to *Nīti-śāstra* (civic laws).

Text 38

*yathāmayo 'ṅge samupekṣito nṛbhir,
na śakyate rūḍha-padaś cikitsitum,
yathendriya-grāma upekṣitas tathā,
ripur mahān baddha-balo na cālyate*

As a disease, if initially neglected, becomes acute and impossible to cure, or as the senses, if not controlled at first, are impossible to control later, an enemy, if neglected in the beginning, later becomes insurmountable.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “As a disease in the body becomes acute (*rūḍha pada*) when neglected, and as senses not brought under

control in the beginning become uncontrollable, similarly, a neglected enemy can become strong and defeat us.”

Text 39

*mūlam hi viṣṇur devānām,
yatra dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ,
tasya ca brahma-go-viprās,
tapo yajñāḥ sa-dakṣiṇāḥ*

The foundation of all the demigods is Lord Viṣṇu, who lives and is worshiped wherever there are religious principles, traditional culture, the Vedas, cows, brāhmaṇas, austerities, and sacrifices with proper remuneration.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura:

mūlam: root, foundation; that which gives life is the root. “The root of the demigods is Lord Visnu. The root of Visnu is *dharmā*, which is founded upon the *Vedas*.”

Text 40

*tasmāt sarvātmanā rājan,
brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinaḥ,
tapasvino yajña-śīlān,
gāś ca hanmo havir-dughāḥ*

O King, we, who are your adherents in all respects, shall therefore kill the Vedic brāhmaṇas, the persons engaged in offering sacrifices and austerities, and the cows that supply milk, from which clarified

butter is obtained for the ingredients of sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Among these, killing the *brahmana* will bring about the end of religious culture. Therefore the demon speaks this verse: “Ghee, which is necessary for sacrifice (*yajna*), comes from the cows, so we should kill the cows.”

Text 41

*viprā gāvaś ca vedāś ca,
tapaḥ satyaṁ damaḥ śamaḥ,
śraddhā dayā titikṣā ca,
kratavaś ca hares tanūḥ*

The brāhmaṇas, the cows, Vedic knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, control of the mind and senses, faith, mercy, tolerance and sacrifice are the different parts of the body of Lord Viṣṇu, and they are the paraphernalia for a godly civilization.

Text 42

*sa hi sarva-surādhyakṣo,
hy asura-dviḍ guhā-śayaḥ,
tan-mūlā devatāḥ sarvāḥ,
seśvarāḥ sa-catur-mukhāḥ,
ayaṁ vai tad-vadhopāyo,
yad ṛṣṭhāṁ vihiṁsanam*

Lord Viṣṇu, the Supersoul within the core of everyone’s heart, is

the ultimate enemy of the asuras and is therefore known as asura-dviṭ. He is the leader of all the demigods because all the demigods, including Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā, exist under His protection. The great saintly persons, sages and Vaiṣṇavas also depend upon Him. To persecute the Vaiṣṇavas, therefore, is the only way to kill Viṣṇu.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “We can kill Visnu by killing the brahmanas, because the saintly people are the root of Visnu who is the root of all things.”

Text 43

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ durmantribhiḥ kaṁsaḥ,
saha sammantrya durmatih,
brahma-himsām hitam mene,
kāla-pāśāvṛto 'surah*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thus, having considered the instructions of his bad ministers, Kāmsa, who was bound by the laws of Yamarāja and devoid of good intelligence because he was a demon, decided to persecute the saintly persons, the brāhmaṇas, as the only way to achieve his own good fortune.

Text 44

*sandiśya sādhu-lokasya,
kadane kadana-priyān,
kāma-rūpa-dharān dikṣu,*

dānavān gr̥ham āviśat

These demons, the followers of Kāṁsa, were expert at persecuting others, especially the Vaiṣṇavas, and could assume any form they desired. After giving these demons permission to go everywhere and persecute the saintly persons, Kāṁsa entered his palace.

Text 45

*te vai rajaḥ-prakṛtayas,
tamasā mūḍha-cetasah,satām vidveṣam ācerur,
ārād āgata-mṛtyavaḥ*

Surcharged with passion and ignorance and not knowing what was good or bad for them, the asuras, for whom impending death was waiting, began the persecution of the saintly persons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: ārād āgata-mṛtyavaḥ: soon overtaken by death; By these words Sukadeva pacifies the fearful Maharaja Parikṣit. “The passionate followers of Kāṁsa, whose minds were bewildered by ignorance and whose death was fast approaching, began to torment the *brahmanas*.”

Text 46

*āyuh śriyaṁ yaśo dharmam,
lokān āśiṣa eva ca,
hanti śreyāṁsi sarvāṇi,
pumso mahad-atikramaḥ*

My dear King, when a man persecutes great souls, all his benedictions of longevity, beauty, fame, religion, blessings and promotion to higher planets will be destroyed.

Chapter Five: The Meeting of Nanda Maharaja and Vasudeva

Text 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
nandas tv ātmaja utpanne,
jātāhlādo mahā-manāḥ,
āhūya viprān veda-jñān,
snātaḥ śucir alaṅkṛtaḥ,
vācayitvā svastyayanam,
jāta-karmātmajasya vai,
kārayām āsa vidhivat,
pitṛ-devārcanam tathā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Nanda Mahārāja was naturally very magnanimous, and when Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as his son, he was overwhelmed by jubilation. Therefore, after bathing and purifying himself and dressing himself properly, he invited brāhmaṇas who knew how to recite Vedic mantras. After having these qualified brāhmaṇas recite auspicious Vedic hymns, he arranged to have the Vedic birth ceremony celebrated for his newborn child according to the rules and regulations, and he also arranged for worship of the demigods and forefathers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the festivities at Kṛṣṇa’s birth, going to Mathura to pay tax and the conversation between Nanda and Vasudeva.

Although Vasudeva was completely overjoyed over the birth of his son, due to fear of Kamsa he could not celebrate the birth in Mathura with the *jāta karma* ceremony (cutting of the umbilical cord).

nandas tv ātmaja: the birth of Nanda’s son; But (*tu*) when Nanda’s son was born, he joyfully celebrated the birth with *svasti-vācana* and other auspicious ceremonies. The use of the word “*tu*” indicates the difference in the birth celebration, but it also indicates that Kṛṣṇa was born in Nanda’s house as well as in Mathura. This proof is established in the *Hari-vamśa*: “In the eighth month on the eighth *tithi*, before the pregnancy was complete, both Devaki and Yasoda gave birth at the same time.”

The word *tu* is not used merely to complete the meter of the *sloka*, because the meaning of the sentence is complete without the word *tu*. Nor should it be argued that “*tu*” is a meaningless word. The natural conclusion is that the word *tu* means that Kṛṣṇa was born from Yasoda’s womb as the son of Nanda. The *jata karma* ceremony takes place only after cutting the umbilical cord. How could there be a child born with the umbilical cord already cut, which would be the case if Kṛṣṇa were Vasudeva’s child?

The fact that Kṛṣṇa is actually the son of Yasoda is mentioned in many *sastras*. Therefore, it should not be claimed that these statements do not represent the real meaning of the words in this verse. For example, in Chapter Four verse nine of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Mayadevi is mentioned Kṛṣṇa’s younger sister because she was born to Yasoda after Him. In Chapter Eight verse thirty-four, Garga Muni tells Nanda Maharaja that previously Nanda’s son was born in Vasudeva’s house. In Chapter Fourteen verse one, Lord Brahma says that Kṛṣṇa was born from a limb of Nanda. Besides the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, other scriptures address Kṛṣṇa as the son of a cowherd woman. In the *Gautamīya-tantra* Kṛṣṇa is called Yasodanandana, the son of Yasoda. *Krama-dīpikā* refers to Kṛṣṇa as the son of the cowherder named Nanda, “*nanda gopa tanaya*.” Poetic works describe Kṛṣṇa as the son of Nanda, *nanda-putra*. One may argue that these names and others such as Nandanandana, Subala-sakha, Gopikanta are merely expressions of *prema*, indicating Kṛṣṇa’s dear submission to Nanda Maharaja. They do not prove that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja. There are also names such as Vasudevanandana, Arjuna-sakha and Rukminikanta, which

express *prema* mixed with *aisvarya*, majesty. These terms are used simply to express different degrees of love. Otherwise, Varahadeva should be well known as the son of Brahma, and Parikṣit should be known as the son of Uttara. Thus Kṛṣṇa has different names according to the mood of love of His devotee. Therefore, Nanda and Yasoda's referring to Kṛṣṇa as Yasodanandana does not indicate that they believe Kṛṣṇa is their son.

One cannot say however that Nanda and Yasoda's thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their son out of love alone gives rise to these names, because such thinking cannot overpower the actual facts. It cannot be that causeless *prema* is caused simply by causal thinking (of things which are not true). If one thinks of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary *jīva* that does not make the Lord a *jīva*. And speaking what appears to be false, as in the pastime of Kṛṣṇa denying His eating of earth, can give rise to the highest truth for the devotee: the fact that Kṛṣṇa had millions of universes in his mouth. Kṛṣṇa's words, though apparently lies, actually become the highest truth. This is most praiseworthy, worshipable and love-inspiring for the spiritualist.

jatāhlādo: overwhelmed in jubilation; Joy also took birth because of the birth of the child. This word is a literary ornament of metaphor. Nanda had others perform Kṛṣṇa's birth rituals because he was unable to do so, due to being overwhelmed with joy over the birth of his son.

Text 3

*dhenūnām niyute prādād,
viprebhyaḥ samalaṅkṛte,
tilādrīn sapta ratnaugha-
śātakaumbhāmarāvṛtān*

Nanda Mahārāja gave two million cows, completely decorated with cloth and jewels, in charity to the brāhmaṇas. He also gave them

seven hills of grain, covered with jewels and with cloth decorated with golden embroidery.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *niyuta* means twenty times one hundred thousand or two million.

tilādrīn: mountain of sesame seeds; The *Bhaviṣya-uttara Purāṇa* describes this as follows: first class *tiladri* is ten *drones*, second class *tiladri* is five *drones* and third class *tiladri* is three *drones*. 256 *palas* make one *drona* and 4 *tolas* make one *pala*. Thus in one *drona* there are 1024 *tolas*.

Text 4

*kālena snāna-śaucābhyām,
saṁskārais tapasejyā,
śudhyanti dānaiḥ santuṣṭyā,
dravyāṅy ātmātma-vidyayā*

O King, by the passing of time, land and other material possessions are purified; by bathing, the body is purified; and by being cleansed, unclean things are purified. By purificatory ceremonies, birth is purified; by austerity, the senses are purified; and by worship and charity offered to the brāhmaṇas, material possessions are purified. By satisfaction, the mind is purified; and by self-realization, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the soul is purified.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The traditional methods of purification of the new born child are here listed using the literary device of *dīpika alankara* (listing many things to make an idea clear). Articles are purified by time and other means. Time purifies roads and bathing *ghatas*; bathing purifies the body; scrubbing purifies things touched by contaminating substances; Vedic *saṁskāras* purify birth; austerity

purifies the senses; *yajñas* purify *brahmanas*; charity purifies wealth; satisfaction purifies the mind, and self-realization purifies the soul.

Text 5

*saumaṅgalya-giro viprāḥ,
sūta-māgadha-vandinah,
gāyakāś ca jagur nedur,
bheryo dundubhayo muhuḥ*

The brāhmaṇas recited auspicious Vedic hymns, which purified the environment by their vibration. The experts in reciting old histories like the Purāṇas, the experts in reciting the histories of royal families, and general reciters all chanted, while singers sang and many kinds of musical instruments, like bherīs and dundubhis, played in accompaniment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **saumaṅgalya-giro:** most auspicious singing; The *brahmanas*, who had the power to invoke auspiciousness, gave blessings. The Sutas and others sang. A Suta is a professional reciter of the old histories; a Magadha praises the histories of royal dynasties, and a Vandi sings prayers according to the situation.

Text 6

*vrajah sammr̥ṣṭa-samsikta-,
dvārājira-grhāntarah,
citra-dhvaja-patākā-srak-,
caila-pallava-toraṇaiḥ*

Vraja-pura, the residence of Nanda Mahārāja, was fully decorated with varieties of festoons and flags, and in different places, gates were made with varieties of flower garlands, pieces of cloth, and mango leaves. The courtyards, the gates near the roads, and everything within the rooms of the houses were perfectly swept and washed with water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The doors, yards and interiors of the houses of Vraja were first scrubbed, and then sprinkled with sandalwood and flower-scented water. The doors were decorated with colorful flags, and three types of gates made from garlands, cloth and leaves.

Text 7

*gāvo vṛṣā vatsatarā,
haridrā-taila-rūṣitāḥ,
vicitra-dhātu-barhasrag-
vastra-kāñcana-mālinaḥ*

The cows, the bulls and the calves were thoroughly smeared with a mixture of turmeric and oil, mixed with varieties of minerals. Their heads were bedecked with peacock feathers, and they were garlanded and covered with cloth and golden ornaments.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **rū ṣitāḥ**: means anointed with.

Text 8

*mahārha-vastrābharāṇa-,kañcukoṣṇīṣa-bhūṣitāḥ,
gopāḥ samāyayū rājan,
nānopāyana-pāṇayaḥ*

O King Parīkṣit, the cowherd men dressed very opulently with valuable ornaments and garments such as coats and turbans. Decorated in this way and carrying various presentations in their hands, they approached the house of Nanda Mahārāja.

Text 9

*gopyaś cākarnya muditā,
yaśodāyāḥ sutodbhavam,
ātmānaṁ bhūṣayāṁ cakrur;
vastrākalpāñjanādibhiḥ*

The gopī wives of the cowherd men were very pleased to hear that mother Yaśodā had given birth to a son, and they began to decorate themselves very nicely with proper dresses, ornaments, black ointment for the eyes, and so on.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **gopyaś:** refers chiefly to the sisters-in-law of Yasoda, as well as others.

Text 10

*nava-kuṅkuma-kiñjalka-, mukha-pankaja-bhūtayaḥ,
balibhis tvaritaṁ jagmuḥ,
pṛthu-śronyaś calat-kucāḥ*

Their lotuslike faces extraordinarily beautiful, being decorated with

saffron and newly grown kunkuma, the wives of the cowherd men hurried to the house of mother Yaśodā with presentations in their hands. Because of natural beauty, the wives had full hips and full breasts, which moved as they hurried along.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The lotus faces of the *gopis* were splendid with new *kunkuma* powder.

balibhih: indicates putting gold coins, jewel necklaces, expensive cloth, fruits such as coconut, rice, *durva* grass, sandalwood and garlands on a gold tray covered with a golden cloth, and holding it in the left hand. Though the Vraja-gopis had heavy hips, they moved quickly because of joy and enthusiasm to see baby Kṛṣṇa.

Text 11

*gopyaḥ sumrṣṭa-maṇi-kuṇḍala-niṣka-kaṇṭhyaś,
citrāambarāḥ pathi śikhā-cyuta-mālyā-varṣāḥ,
nandālayaṁ sa-valayā vrajatīr virejur,
vyālola-kuṇḍala-payodhara-hāra-śobhāḥ*

In the ears of the gopīs were brilliantly polished jeweled earrings, and from their necks hung metal locket. Their hands were decorated with bangles, their dresses were of varied colors, and from their hair, flowers fell onto the street like showers. Thus while going to the house of Mahārāja Nanda, the gopīs, their earrings, breasts and garlands moving, were brilliantly beautiful.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the beauty of the *gopis* has been described already, because of their great devotion, and because he felt somewhat unsatisfied with that description alone, Sukadeva elaborates further.

śikhā: refers to the *gopis'* tied up hair. **vrajatīh:** means while going.

Text 12

*tā āśiṣaḥ prayuñjānāś,
ciraṁ pāhīti bālake,
haridrā-cūrṇa-tailādbhiḥ,
siñcantyo 'janam ujjaguḥ*

Offering blessings to the newborn child, Kṛṣṇa, the wives and daughters of the cowherd men said, “May You become the King of Vraja and long maintain all its inhabitants.” They sprinkled a mixture of turmeric powder, oil and water upon the birthless Supreme Lord and offered their prayers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Entering the maternity ward, the Vraja-gopis said, “May You protect us.” This means that, Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of the king, should protect them when He assumes the throne. Another reading: Out of parental affection the *gopis* offered Kṛṣṇa a blessing saying, *ciraṁ jiva*, “May You live a long life.” Then going outside, the elderly *gopis* celebrated Kṛṣṇa’s birth by singing loudly, and sprinkling each other with a mixture of oil, water and turmeric.

Text 13

*avādyanta vicitrāṇi,
vāditrāṇi mahotsave,
kṛṣṇe viśveśvare 'nante,
nandasya vrajam āgate*

Now that the all-pervading, unlimited Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of

the cosmic manifestation, had arrived within the estate of Mahārāja Nanda, various types of musical instruments resounded to celebrate the great festival.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **viśveśvare:** lord of the universe; Because the Supreme Lord of the cosmic manifestation had appeared, musical instruments resounded throughout the three worlds: Svarga, earth and hell. **anante:** unlimited; Because Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, unlimited musical instruments began to sound.

Text 14

*gopāḥ parasparam hr̥ṣṭā,
dadhi-kṣīra-ghṛtāmbubhiḥ,
āsiñcanto vilimpanto,
navanītaiś ca cikṣipuḥ*

In gladness, the cowherd men enjoyed the great festival by splashing one another's bodies with a mixture of curd, condensed milk, butter and water. They threw butter on one another and smeared it on one another's bodies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **cikṣipuḥ:** throw. In a joking mood the *gopas* energetically threw milk, yogurt, ghee and water on each other. *Cikṣipuḥ* can mean the cowherd men began to fall on the slippery earth, since *kṣip* means moving the feet as well as the hands.

Texts 15–16

*nando mahā-manās tebhyo,
vāso 'laṅkāra-go-dhanam,*

*sūta-māgadha-vandibhyo,
ye 'nye vidyopajīvinaḥ,
tais taiḥ kāmair adīnātmā,
yathocitam apūjayat,
viṣṇor ārāadhanārthāya,
sva-putrasyodayāya ca*

The great-minded Mahārāja Nanda gave clothing, ornaments and cows in charity to the cowherd men in order to please Lord Viṣṇu, and thus he improved the condition of his own son in all respects. He distributed charity to the sūtas, the māgadhas, the vandīs, and men of all other professions, according to their educational qualifications, and satisfied everyone's desires.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **mahāmanaḥ**: means very generous. Nanda Maharaja, who was very charitable, gave lavishly to all in attendance. **vidyopajīvinaḥ**: educated professionals; refers to those who made a living by dancing, singing and playing instruments, teaching scriptures and the use of weapons. **tais taiḥ kāmair**: means whatever was desired or asked. Nanda Maharaja gave suitably according to the level of one's knowledge and reputation. Since all in attendance were devotees of Visnu, Nanda Maharaja gave them charity in order to please Lord Visnu, and thereby bring happiness and auspiciousness to his newborn child.

Nanda Maharaja thought, "May Visnu be pleased by this charity, and by His pleasure my son will be blessed."

Text 17

*rohiṇī ca mahā-bhāgā,
nanda-gopābhinanditā,
vyacarad divya-vāsa-srak-,kaṅṭhābharaṇa-bhūṣitā*

The most fortunate Rohiṇī, the mother of Baladeva, was honored by Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, and thus she also dressed gorgeously and decorated herself with a necklace, a garland and other ornaments. She was busy wandering here and there to receive the women who were guests at the festival.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: mahā bhāgā: most fortunate; Rohini is addressed as most fortunate, because among all of Vasudeva's wives, she alone attained the opportunity to see Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes. **nanda gopā:** means Nandaraja, for the word *gopa* also means king according to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary. *Go* means earth, as well as cow. *Gopa* means protector of the earth. **ābhinanditā:** honored; This means that Nanda praised Rohini saying, "because of your coming here, my child was born." *Vyacarat* indicates that Rohini went around giving proper respect to the assembled women. Rohini was decorated with beautiful clothing and ornaments given by Nanda and Yasoda. Absorbed in the bliss of celebrating Kṛṣṇa's birth, Rohini forgot about her separation from her husband and her sorrow over her husband's condition in prison.

Text 18

*tata ārabhya nandasya,
vrajaḥ sarva-samṛddhimān,
harer nivāsātma-guṇai,
ramākrīdam abhūn nṛpa*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, the home of Nanda Mahārāja is eternally the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His transcendental qualities and is therefore always naturally endowed

with the opulence of all wealth. Yet beginning from Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance there, it became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It is impossible for even Kuvera to satisfy everyone's desires. How then was it possible for Nanda Maharaja to accomplish this? This verse answers the question. Vraja, which is Kṛṣṇa's eternal place of residence, always increases Kṛṣṇa's qualities by its very nature. This started from the birth of Kṛṣṇa, *tata ārabhya*. Kṛṣṇa's home in Nandagrama became the place of pastimes for all wealth. If all wealth began to play in Nanda's house, how was it possible that anything was lacking to give in charity?

Text 19

*gopān gokula-rakṣāyām,
nirūpya mathurām gataḥ,
nandaḥ kaṁsasya vārṣikyaṁ,
karam dātum kurūdvaha*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Thereafter, my dear King Parīkṣit, O best protector of the Kuru dynasty, Nanda Mahārāja appointed the local cowherd men to protect Gokula and then went to Mathurā to pay the yearly taxes to King Kāṁsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Many days after the birth of the great treasure known as his son, Nanda began to think, "In all good fortune there are many impediments." First Nanda Maharaja satisfied the demigods, forefathers and planets with worship. Then he immediately left for Mathura with gifts of gold coins, jewels and cloth to give to the evil king Kamsa as yearly tax to please him.

Text 20

*vasudeva upaśrutya,
bhrātaraṁ nandaṁ āgatam,
jñātvā datta-karaṁ rājñe,
yayau tad-avamocanam*

When Vasudeva heard that Nanda Mahārāja, his very dear friend and brother, had come to Mathurā and already paid the taxes to Kāṁsa, he went to Nanda Mahārāja’s residence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Devamidha of the Yadu clan (Yadavas) had two wives, one of a *ksatriya* family, the other of a *vaiśya* family. Through the *ksatriya* wife he bore a son named Sura and through the *vaiśya* wife he bore a son named Parjanya. Sura had a son named Vasudeva, a *ksatriya*, and Parjanya had a son named Nanda, a cowherd or *vaiśya*.

Thus Vasudeva and Nanda were brothers or cousins, with the same grandfather (a Yadava) and different grandmothers. Nanda was therefore a Yadava. In *Skanda Purana*, Kṛṣṇa says, “I lifted Govardhana for the benefit of the Yadavas (Nanda and others).” Kṛṣṇa told His brother Baladeva, “Among all the Yadavas (those living in Mathura and Vraja), you are the most dear.”

tad avamocanam: loosen the clothes; This phrase means the place where Nanda was residing.

Text 21

*taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya,
dehaḥ prāṇam ivāgatam,
prītaḥ priyatamaṁ dorbhyām,*

sasvaje prema-vihvalaḥ

When Nanda Mahārāja heard that Vasudeva had come, he was overwhelmed with love and affection, being as pleased as if his body had regained its life. Seeing Vasudeva suddenly present, he got up and embraced him with both arms.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When Nanda saw Vasudeva, he embraced him (*sasvaje*), but did not pay obeisances because he was elder to Vasudeva.

Text 22

*pūjitaḥ sukham āsīnaḥ,
pṛṣṭvānāmayam ādrtaḥ,
prasakta-dhīḥ svātmajayor,
idam āha viśāmpate*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, having thus been received and welcomed by Nanda Mahārāja with honor, Vasudeva sat down very peacefully and inquired about his own two sons because of intense love for them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva spoke after being welcomed by Nanda.

Text 23

*diṣṭyā bhrātaḥ pravayasa,
idānīm aprajasya te,*

*prajāśāyā nivṛttasya,
prajā yat samapadyata*

My dear brother Nanda Mahārāja, at an advanced age you had no son at all and were hopeless of having one. Therefore, that you now have a son is a sign of great fortune.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It would be a lie for Vasudeva to say to Nanda that in old age he had son. To say that he actually had a daughter would not be believed by Nanda. Therefore Vasudeva used the word “*praja*” which can mean offspring, either male or female. This word was also used because Vasudeva was in doubt as to whether Nanda understood that Vasudeva had put his own son in Yasoda’s bed and taken away Nanda’s daughter.

Text 24

*diṣṭyā saṁsāra-cakre ’smin,
vartamānaḥ punar-bhavaḥ,
upalabdho bhavān adya,
durlabham priya-darśanam*

It is also by good fortune that I am seeing you. Having obtained this opportunity, I feel as if I have taken birth again. Even though one is present in this world, to meet with intimate friends and dear relatives in this material world is extremely difficult.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Because I have met you today by good fortune, I have again taken birth in this world. Before meeting you my life was like death.”

Text 25

*naikatra priya-saṁvāsaḥ,
suhṛdāṁ citra-karmaṇām,
oghena vyūhyamānānām,
plavānām srotaso yathā*

Many planks and sticks, unable to stay together, are carried away by the force of a river’s waves. Similarly, although we are intimately related with friends and family members, we are unable to stay together because of our varied past deeds and the waves of time.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating the proposal, “If that is so, then now we can stay together”, Vasudeva speaks this verse: “Dear friend, just as twigs and grass cannot stay together in the flow of the river, we also cannot stay together.”

Text 26

*kaccit paśavyaṁ nirujam,
bhūry-ambu-tṛṇa-vīrudham,
bṛhad vanaṁ tad adhunā,
yatrāsse tvaṁ suhṛd-vṛtaḥ*

My dear friend Nanda Mahārāja, in the place where you are living with your friends, is the forest favorable for the animals, the cows? I hope there is no disease or inconvenience. The place must be full of water, grass and other plants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: **pasavyam**: means beneficial for the animals. *Niirujam* becomes *nirujam* to suit the poetic meter.

Text 27

*bhrātar mama sutaḥ kaccin,
mātrā saha bhavad-vraje,
tātaṁ bhavantaṁ manvāno,
bhavadbhyām upalālitaḥ*

My son Baladeva, being raised by you and your wife, Yaśodādevī, considers you His father and mother. Is he living very peacefully in your home with His real mother, Rohiṇī?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Is my child (Balarama) happy? Does he think of you as His father?”

Text 28

*pūṁsas tri-vargo vihitāḥ,
suhṛdo hy anubhāvitāḥ,
na teṣu kliśyamāneṣu,
tri-vargo ’rthāya kalpate*

When one’s friends and relatives are properly situated, one’s religion, economic development and sense gratification, as described in the Vedic literatures, are beneficial. Otherwise, if one’s friends and relatives are in distress, these three cannot offer any happiness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: To express the fact that his household life was a failure, Vasudeva spoke this verse. “For a man (*pumsas*) three *vargas* (duties) are prescribed by the scripture for the purpose of satisfying his wife and children (*suhṛdah*). In my case, by being separated from wife and child and causing them suffering, and by not raising my son, the three *vargas* are useless. Thus my household life has been a failure.”

Text 29

*śrī-nanda uvāca,
aho te devakī-putrāḥ,
kaṁsena bahavo hatāḥ,
ekāvaśiṣṭāvarajā,
kanyā sāpi divaṁ gatā*

Nanda Mahārāja said: Alas, King Kaṁsa killed so many of your children, born of Devakī. And your one daughter, the youngest child of all, entered the heavenly planets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “You have asked me questions about Vraja, but what answer can I give? Seeing your suffering, I am suffering even more.” With this in mind, Nanda responds to Vasudeva’s inquiries by describing the death of Vasudeva’s sons and his daughter. Vasudeva was relieved and blissful upon hearing the reply, because he now understood that Nanda had not discovered that his child was placed in Yasoda’s bed.

Text 30

nūnaṁ hy adṛṣṭa-niṣṭho ’yam,

*adr̥ṣṭa-paramo janaḥ,
adr̥ṣṭam ātmanas tattvaṁ,
yo veda na sa muhyati*

Every man is certainly controlled by destiny, which determines the results of one’s fruitive activities. In other words, one has a son or daughter because of unseen destiny, and when the son or daughter is no longer present, this also is due to unseen destiny. Destiny is the ultimate controller of everyone. One who knows this is never bewildered.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O brother, though the ocean of calamity is difficult to cross, you can cross it on the boat of discrimination.” With this intention Nanda speaks this verse. “Man is ultimately under the control of destiny (*adr̥ṣṭa-niṣṭho*). Destiny gives happiness from children, but it also takes it away. Fate is supreme. It bestows children and also takes them away. There is no one equal to he who knows fate as the cause of happiness and distress. Therefore you should not be in confusion.”

Text 31

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca,
karo vai vār̥ṣiko datto,
rājñe dṛṣṭā vayaṁ ca vaḥ,
neha stheyam̐ bahu-titham̐,
santy utpātāś ca gokule*

Vasudeva said to Nanda Mahārāja: Now, my dear brother, since you have paid the annual taxes to Kāṁsa and have also seen me, do not stay in this place for many days. It is better to return to Gokula,

since I know that there may be some disturbances there.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After hearing this advice from Nanda, Vasudeva spoke what he had come to say, which was a warning: “Certainly (*vai*) you have paid the annual tax to the king. Do not stay here a long time (*bahu titham*), for there are many disturbances in Gokula.”

Text 32

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti nandādayo gopāḥ,
proktās te śauriṇā yayuḥ,
anobhir anaḍud-yuktais,
tam anujñāpya gokulam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Vasudeva advised Nanda Mahārāja in this way, Nanda Mahārāja and his associates, the cowherd men, took permission from Vasudeva, yoked their bulls to the bullock carts, and started riding for Gokula.

Chapter Six: Killing the Demon Putana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
nandaḥ pathi vacaḥ śaurer,
na mṛṣeti vicintayan,
harim jagāma śaraṇam,
utpātāgama-śaṅkitah*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, while Nanda Mahārāja was on the way home, he considered that what Vasudeva had said could not be false or useless. There must have been some danger of disturbances in Gokula. As Nanda Mahārāja thought about the danger for his beautiful son, Kṛṣṇa, he was afraid, and he took shelter at the lotus feet of the supreme controller.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Putana assumes a beautiful form and appears in Vraja. Upon dying, Putana revealed her actual form of a *rākṣasī*, female-eater of human flesh. Nevertheless, Putana attained liberation by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Her body is burned and Nanda returns to Vraja from Mathura.

Text 2

*kāmsena prahitā ghorā,
pūtanā bāla-ghātinī,
śiśūmś cacāra nighnantī,
pura-grāma-vrajādiṣu*

While Nanda Mahārāja was returning to Gokula, the same fierce Putana whom Kāṁsa had previously engaged to kill babies was wandering about in the towns, cities and villages, doing her nefarious duty.

Text 3

*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 SB 7.5.23], 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse is spoken to allay the fears of Maharaja Parikṣit for Kṛṣṇa's safety. In those places where people engage in scriptural duties like sacrifices without devotional acts such as hearing stories of the Lord, who is the life of the devotees, the *rākṣasīs* become powerful. But *rākṣasīs* have no influence where the primary activities are acts of devotion. What to speak of the place where the Lord is personally present?

Text 4

*sā khe-cary ekadotpatya,
pūtanā nanda-gokulam,
yoṣitvā māyayātmānam,
prāviśat kāma-cāriṇī*

Once upon a time, Putana Rākṣasī, who could move according to her desire and was wandering in outer space, converted herself by mystic power into a very beautiful woman and thus entered Gokula, the abode of Nanda Mahārāja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To enact the pastime of killing Putana, Kṛṣṇa's *lila-sakti* inspired Putana to enter Gokula as if invited by death to be killed. With this intention the verse is spoken. One evening, Putana entered Gokula by flying through the sky (*utpatya*). An alternate reading is *upetya* (arriving). By mystic power Putana took on the form of a beautiful woman (*yoṣitvā*).

All the Vrajavasis were so much enamored by Putana's beauty that they gave her access to all the houses in town. Though the Lord's illusory energy has no desire, by the will of the Lord, Putana displayed her illusions just like a magician to bewilder the eternal devotees of Vraja, and to unfold the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 5–6

*tām keśa-bandha-vyatiṣakta-mallikām,
bṛhan-nitamba-stana-kṛcchra-madhyamām,
suvāsasam kalpita-karṇa-bhūṣaṇa-
tviṣollasat-kuntala-maṇḍitānanām,
valgu-smitāpāṅga-visarga-vīkṣitair,
mano harantīm vanitām vrajaukasām,
amaṁsatāmbhoja-kareṇa rūpiṇīm,*

gopyaḥ śriyaṁ draṣṭum ivāgatām patim

Her hips were full, her breasts were large and firm, seeming to overburden her slim waist, and she was dressed very nicely. Her hair, adorned with a garland of mallikā flowers, was scattered about her beautiful face. Her earrings were brilliant, and as she smiled very attractively, glancing upon everyone, her beauty drew the attention of all the inhabitants of Vraja, especially the men. When the gopīs saw her, they thought that the beautiful goddess of fortune, holding a lotus flower in her hand, had come to see her husband, Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that beautiful woman holding a lotus flower in her hands, the *gopīs* concluded that she was Lakṣmi, the embodiment of all wealth and jewels. She must have come to see her husband Narayana, the worshipable family Deity of Nanda Maharaja. Putana had full hips and large firm breasts which contrasted her thin waist. She was so extremely attractive (*vanita*) that the Vrajavasis let her enter the inner chambers of their houses without obstruction.

Text 7

*bāla-grahas tatra vicinvatī śiśūn,
yadṛcchayā nanda-gr̥he 'sad-antakam,
bālam praticchanna-nijoru-tejasam,
dadarśa talpe 'gnim ivāhitam bhasi*

While searching for small children, Putana, whose business was to kill them, entered the house of Nanda Mahārāja unobstructed, having been sent by the superior potency of the Lord. Without asking anyone's permission, she entered Nanda Mahārāja's room,

where she saw the child sleeping in bed, His unlimited power covered like a powerful fire covered by ashes. She could understand that this child was not ordinary, but was meant to kill all demons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Putana, the killer of children (*bala graha*, baby catcher) saw the child (*śiśūn*) who, though He Himself is the killer of the wicked (*asad antakam*), appeared easy to kill. At that time, Kṛṣṇa concealed His unlimited powers, just as a fire is sometimes covered by ashes.

Text 8

*vibudhya tām bālaka-mārikā-graḥam,
carācarātmā sa nimīlītekṣaṇaḥ,
anantam āropayad aṅkam antakam,
yathoragam sūptam abuddhi-rajju-dhīḥ*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-pervading Supersoul, lying on the bed, understood that Putana, a witch who was expert in killing small children, had come to kill Him. Therefore, as if afraid of her, Kṛṣṇa closed His eyes. Thus Putana took upon her lap Him who was to be her own annihilation, just as an unintelligent person places a sleeping snake on his lap, thinking the snake to be a rope.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse shows an opportunity for the Lord's power of omniscience to render service at the time of an approaching evil. Though Kṛṣṇa fully understood Putana's identity, He lay there with His eyes closed like a normal child.

Why did Kṛṣṇa close His eyes? To show His fearfulness as a small child; to avoid seeing such an inauspicious person; to avoid making the violence auspicious by the touch of His auspicious glance; to avoid the shame of killing a woman posing as a mother; and to avoid seeing the

inauspiciousness of Putana's death.

Then Putana placed Kṛṣṇa in her lap. Kṛṣṇa is called Ananta, which means without end, and Antakam because He brings about the end. This was an opportunity for Kṛṣṇa's destructive energy to operate. Putana held on her lap that person who is without limit in all space and time. *Antakam* and *ananta* are also contradictory words to express this wonderful mellow known as *adbhuta rasa*. As a foolish person picks up a sleeping snake, thinking it is a rope, similarly, Putana foolishly held Kṛṣṇa, thinking Him an ordinary, helpless child.

Text 9

*tām tīkṣṇa-cittām ativāma-ceṣṭitām,
vīkṣyāntarā koṣa-paricchadāsivat,
vara-striyam tat-prabhayā ca dharsite,
nirīkṣyamāṇe jananī hy atiṣṭhatām*

Putana Rākṣasī's heart was fierce and cruel, but she looked like a very affectionate mother. Thus she resembled a sharp sword in a soft 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Why did Yasoda and Rohini not stop Putana? This verse answers the question. Putana acted like a very attentive mother. Externally she was gentle, but inwardly she was cruel. Putana resembled a sharp sword concealed in a soft leather sheath. **tat prabhaya:** Overwhelmed by Putana's influence, Yasoda and Rohini thought that perhaps Ambika, Indrani or Laksmi of the celestial regions had come to feed Kṛṣṇa out of motherly love. Thus they passively watched her pick up the child.

Text 10

*tasmin stanaṁ durjara-vīryam ulbaṇaṁ,
ghorāṅkam ādāya śiśor dadāv atha,
gāḍhaṁ karābhyāṁ bhagavān prapīḍya tat-
prāṇaiḥ samaṁ roṣa-samanvito 'pibat*

On that very spot, the fiercely dangerous Rākṣasī took Kṛṣṇa on her lap and pushed her breast into His mouth. The nipple of her breast was smeared with a dangerous, immediately effective poison, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, becoming very angry at her, took hold of her breast, squeezed it very hard with both hands, and sucked out both the poison and her life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In that place (*tasmin*) the fierce (*ghora*) woman Putana offered her poison-besmeared (*durjaram vīryam*) breast to the baby (*śiśor*). Kṛṣṇa held Putana's breast so tightly with His two hands that she could not pull Him away (*gadham prapīḍya*). Kṛṣṇa was filled with anger knowing that Putana planned to kill all the children of Vraja by offering her breast to them. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's power of destruction, *samhāra śakti*, sucked out her impure life. Kṛṣṇa did not personally do this. Though we say a man cuts down the tree, actually it is the axe held by the man that cuts down the tree. Similarly, it is stated that Kṛṣṇa sucked out Putana's life airs, but actually His *samhāra śakti* performed the work.

Text 11

*sā muñca muñcālam iti prabhāṣiṇī,
niṣpīḍyamānākhila-jīva-marmaṇi,
vivr̥tya netre caraṇau bhujau muhuh,*

prasvinna-gātrā kṣipatī ruroda ha

Unbearably pressed in every vital point, the demon Putana began to cry, “Please leave me, leave me! Suck my breast no longer!” Perspiring, her eyes wide open and her arms and legs flailing, she cried very loudly again and again.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being squeezed by baby Kṛṣṇa in all her sensitive points, Putana began flailing her hands and legs.

Text 12

*tasyāḥ svanenātigabhīra-ramhasā,
sādrir mahī dyauś ca cacāla sa-grahā,
rasā diśaś ca pratinedire janāḥ,
petuḥ kṣitau vajra-nipāta-śāṅkayā*

As Putana screamed loudly and forcefully, the earth with its mountains, and outer space with its planets, trembled. The lower planets and all directions vibrated, and people fell down, fearing that thunderbolts were falling upon them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rasa means Rasatala and other lower planets.

Text 13

*niśā-carītham vyathita-stanā vyasur,
vyādāya keśāmś caraṇau bhujāv api,
prasārya goṣṭhe nija-rūpam āsthitā,*

vajrāhato vṛtra ivāpatan nṛpa

In this way the demon Putanā, very much aggrieved because her breast was being attacked by Kṛṣṇa, lost her life. O King Parīkṣit, opening her mouth wide and spreading her arms, legs and hair, she fell down in the pasturing ground in her original form as a Rākṣasī, as Vṛtrāsura had fallen when killed by the thunderbolt of Indra.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because of the pain of death, Putana Raksasi could not maintain her disguise as a beautiful woman and reverted to her demoniac form.

Text 14

*patamāno 'pi tad-dehas,
tri-gavyūty-antara-drumān,
cūrṇayām āsa rājendra,
mahad āsīt tad adbhutam*

O King Parīkṣit, when the gigantic body of Putana fell to the ground, it smashed all the trees within a limit of twelve miles. Appearing in a gigantic body, she was certainly extraordinary.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to intense pain, Putana ran out of the house, fled the village and fell down to the ground on the outskirts of Vraja. The word “*api*” signifies that not only while living, but even while dying Putana was killing other living entities. All the trees within an area of six *krosas* (twelve miles) were crushed by the falling body of the gigantic witch. It was remarkable that only the trees were crushed and none of the village houses. According to Sri Jiva Gosvami’s *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī-ṭīkā*, these trees, which were laden with pleasurable

fruits, were located in Kamsa's personal garden.

Texts 15–17

*īṣā-mātrogra-damṣṭrāsyam,
giri-kandara-nāsikam,
gaṇḍa-śaila-stanam raudram,
prakīrṇāruṇa-mūrdhajam,
andha-kūpa-gabhīrākṣam,
pulināroha-bhīṣaṇam,
baddha-setu-bhujorv-aṅghri,
śūnya-toya-hradodaram,
santatrasuḥ sma tad vīkṣya,
gopā gopyaḥ kalevaram,
pūrvam tu tan-niḥsvanita-
bhinna-hṛt-karṇa-mastakāḥ*

The Rākṣasī's mouth was full of teeth, each resembling the front of a plow, her nostrils were deep like mountain caves, and her breasts resembled big slabs of stone fallen from a hill. Her scattered hair was the color of copper. The sockets of her eyes appeared like deep blind wells, her fearful thighs resembled the banks of a river, her arms, legs and feet seemed like big bridges, and her abdomen appeared like a dried-up lake. The hearts, ears and heads of the cowherd men and women were already shocked by the Rākṣasī's screaming, and when they saw the fierce wonder of her body, they were even more frightened.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing her hideous body, the cowherd men and women became frightened. Putana's teeth were as large as ploughshares. Her nostrils were as deep as mountain caves, and her waist was like the bank of a river. Putana's hands, feet and thighs were

like bridges and her belly was like a dried up lake. All of this was terrible to see. The hearts, ears and heads of the Vrajavasis were already shattered by Putana’s screaming, and upon seeing her ghastly form they became more frightened.

Text 18

*bālam ca tasyā urasi,
krīḍantam akutobhayam,
gopyas tūrṇam samabhyetya,
jagṛhur jāta-sambhramāḥ*

Without fear, the child Kṛṣṇa was playing on the upper portion of Putana Rākṣasī’s breast, and when the gopīs saw the child’s wonderful activities, they immediately came forward with great jubilation and picked Him up.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Putana’s chest was raised like a hill, suitable for playing. The gopīs entered the maternity ward, but they did not see Kṛṣṇa there. Yasoda and Rohini lay on the ground unconscious. Desiring to see Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs went outside the house and saw Him playing on Putana.

Text 19

*yaśodā-rohiṇībhyām tāḥ,
samam bālasya sarvataḥ,
rakṣām vidadhire samyag,
go-puccha-bhramaṇādibhiḥ*

Thereafter, mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī, along with the other elderly gopīs, waved about the switch of a cow to give full protection to the child Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse mentions that Yasoda, Rohini and the other *gopīs* performed rituals of protection. Yasoda and Rohini did not take a leading role, however, because they were extremely affected by anxiety for Kṛṣṇa’s safety. The elderly *gopīs* waved a cow’s tail around all of Kṛṣṇa’s limbs (*sarvataḥ*) to protect Him. They also offered other items such as mustard seeds, and touched Kṛṣṇa with the edge of the winnowing basket.

Text 20

*go-mūtreṇa snāpayitvā,
punar go-rajasārbhakam,
rakṣām cakruś ca śakṛtā,
dvādaśāṅgeṣu nāmabhiḥ*

The child was thoroughly washed with cow urine and then smeared with the dust raised by the movements of the cows. Then different names of the Lord were applied with cow dung on twelve different parts of His body, beginning with the forehead, as done in applying tilaka. In this way, the child was given protection.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Using cow dung, they protected Kṛṣṇa by marking twelve places on His body while pronouncing twelve names of Visnu starting with the name Kesava on the forehead, as done in applying *tilaka*.

Text 21

*gopyaḥ saṁsprṣṭa-salilā,
aṅgeṣu karayoḥ prthak,
nyasyātmany atha bālasya,
bīja-nyāsam akurvata*

The gopīs first executed the process of ācamana, drinking a sip of water from the right hand. They purified their bodies and hands with the nyāsa-mantra and then applied the same mantra upon the body of the child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* hastily started the rituals of protection without first doing *acamana* because of great fear. After calming down, they did the rituals properly by first performing *acamana* (*samsprsta salila*). They then performed *anga nyasa* and *kara nyasa* on their own bodies and hands. Then they invoked *bija mantras* on Kṛṣṇa’s limbs. The *bija* consists of the first syllable of the name with an *anusvara*. Example: *am namah*, “May Aja protect Your feet.” *Mam namah*, “May Maniman protect Your knees.”

Texts 22–23

*avyād ajo ’ṅghri maṇimāms tava jānv athorū,
yajñō ’cyutaḥ kaṭi-taṭam jātharam hayāsyah,
hṛt keśavas tvad-ura īśa inas tu kaṅṭham,
viṣṇur bhujam mukham urukrama īśvaraḥ kam,
cakry agrataḥ saha-gado harir astu paścāt,
tvat-pārśvayor dhanur-asī madhu-hājanaś ca,
koṅeṣu śaṅkha urugāya upary upendras,
tārksyah kṣitau haladharah puruṣaḥ samantāt*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī informed Mahārāja Parīkṣit that the gopīs, following the proper system, protected Kṛṣṇa, their child, with this mantra.] May Aja protect Your legs, may Maṇimān protect Your knees, Yajña Your thighs, Acyuta the upper part of Your waist, and Hayagrīva Your abdomen. May Keśava protect Your heart, Īśa Your chest, the sun-god Your neck, Viṣṇu Your arms, Urukrama Your face, and Īśvara Your head. May Cakrī protect You from the front; may Śrī Hari, Gadādhari, the carrier of the club, protect You from the back; and may the carrier of the bow, who is known as the enemy of Madhu, and Lord Ajana, the carrier of the sword, protect Your two sides. May Lord Urugāya, the carrier of the conchshell, protect You from all corners; may Upendra protect You from above; may Garuḍa protect You on the ground; and may Lord Haladhara, the Supreme Person, protect You on all sides.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They protected Kṛṣṇa’s limbs using a *mantra*. *Anghri* stands for the two feet. *Maniman* is a particular *avatara* of the Lord. *Janu* stands for both knees. *Hrt* refers to the lotus holding the living entity in the region of the heart. *Uro* means chest.

In verse twenty-three, the directions around Kṛṣṇa are protected. “May the holder of the *cakra* protect You in front. May Sahagada, the holder of the club, protect You from behind. May Madhusudana, holding the bow, and Aja, holding a sword, protect Your sides. May Sankha Urugaya, holding the conch, protect You in the four corners (northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest). May Upendra protect You from above and may Tārksya (Garuda) protect You from below. May Haladhara protect You in all directions.”

Text 24

*indriyāṇi hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ,
prāṇān nārāyaṇo ’vatu,
śvetadvīpa-patiś cittam,*

mano yogeśvaro 'vatu

May Hṛṣikeśa protect Your senses, and Nārāyaṇa Your life air. May the master of Śvetadvīpa protect the core of Your heart, and may Lord Yogeśvara protect Your mind.

Texts 25–26

*ṛṣṇigarbhas tu te buddhim,
ātmānam bhagavān paraḥ,
krīḍantam pātu govindaḥ,
śayānam pātu mādhaveḥ,
vrajantam avyād vaikuṅṭha,
āsīnam tvām śriyaḥ patiḥ,
bhuñjānam yajñabhuk pātu,
sarva-graha-bhayaṅkaraḥ*

May Lord Ṛṣṇigarbha protect Your intelligence, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Your soul. While You are playing, may Govinda protect You, and while You are sleeping may Mādhava protect You. May Lord Vaikuṅṭha protect You while You are walking, and may Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, protect You while You are sitting. Similarly, may Lord Yajñabhuk, the fearful enemy of all evil planets, always protect You while You enjoy life.

Texts 27–29

*ḍākinyo yātudhānyaś ca,
kuṣmāṇḍā ye 'rbhaka-grahāḥ,
bhūta-preta-piśācās ca,
yakṣa-rakṣo-vināyakāḥ,
koṭarā revatī jyeṣṭhā,
pūtanā māṭṛkādayaḥ,
unmādā ye hy apasmārā,
deha-prāṇendriya-druhaḥ,
svapna-dṛṣṭā mahotpātā,
vṛddhā bāla-grahās ca ye,
sarve naśyantu te viṣṇor,
nāma-grahaṇa-bhīravaḥ*

The evil witches known as Ōākinīs, Yātudhānīs and Kuṣmāṇḍas are the greatest enemies of children, and the evil spirits like Bhūtas, Pretas, Piśācas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Vināyakas, as well as witches like Koṭarā, Revatī, Jyeṣṭhā, Putana and Māṭṛkā, are always ready to give trouble to the body, the life air and the senses, causing loss of memory, madness and bad dreams. Like the most experienced evil stars, they all create great disturbances, especially for children, but one can vanquish them simply by uttering Lord Viṣṇu's name, for when Lord Viṣṇu's name resounds, all of them become afraid and go away.

Text 30

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti praṇaya-baddhābhir,
gopībhiḥ kṛta-rakṣaṇam,
pāyayitvā stanam mātā,
sannyaveśayad ātmajam*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: All the gopīs, headed by mother Yaśodā, were bound by maternal affection. After they thus chanted mantras to protect the child, mother Yaśodā gave the child the nipple of her breast to suck and then got Him to lie down on His bed.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus the *gopīs*, being bound by maternal affection, completed the rituals for protection. After offering her breast to Kṛṣṇa, and seeing Him happily sucking her milk, Yasoda could understand that Kṛṣṇa was in good health. Then she lay Kṛṣṇa down to sleep.

Text 31

*tāvan nandādayo gopā,
mathurāyā vrajaṁ gatāḥ,
vilokya pūtanā-dehaṁ,
babhūvur ativismitāḥ*

Meanwhile, all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, returned from Mathurā, and when they saw on the way the gigantic body of Putana lying dead, they were struck with great wonder.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men were astonished: “Perhaps a flying mountain fell from the sky by mistake and crushed all the huge trees. Perhaps we have come to the wrong place under the spell of some witch. Or perhaps this is just a magical illusion.” In this way many doubts arose in their minds.

Text 32

*nūnam batarṣiḥ sañjāto,
yogeśo vā samāsa saḥ,
sa eva dr̥ṣṭo hy utpāto,
yad āhānakadundubhiḥ*

Nanda Mahārāja and the other gopas exclaimed: My dear friends, you must know that Ānakadundubhi, Vasudeva, has become a great saint or a master of mystic power. Otherwise how could he have foreseen this calamity and predicted it to us?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Certainly (*nunam*) Vasudeva is the *rsi* in our family; for being all-knowing, he has predicted correctly. Through practice of *astanga yoga* (*yogesa*) Vasudeva has acquired the power to see the future. Thus his glories forever shine (*samāsa*).”

Text 33

*kalevaram paraśubhiś,
chittvā tat te vrajaukasaḥ,
dūre kṣiptvāvayavaśo,
nyadahan kāṣṭha-veṣṭitam*

The inhabitants of Vraja cut the gigantic body of Putana into pieces with the help of axes. Then they threw the pieces far away, covered them with wood and burned them to ashes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: On the order of Upananda and others, the lower class men (*vrajaukasa*) completely burned Putana’s body out of fear that it would come to life again. The influence of poisonous

creatures is extinguished when their bodies are burned up.

Text 34

*dahyamānasya dehasya,
dhūmaś cāguru-saurabhah,
utthitaḥ kṛṣṇa-nirbhukta-
sapady āhata-pāpmanaḥ*

Because of Kṛṣṇa's having sucked the breast of the Rākṣasī Putana, 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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how Putana's body became sanctified by the touch of Kṛṣṇa's mouth. Her body became purified of all sins (*ahata papma*) the moment (*sapadi*) Kṛṣṇa began drinking from her breast (*kṛṣṇa nirbhukta*).

Texts 35–36

*pūtanā loka-bāla-ghnī,
rākṣasī rudhirāsanā,
jighāmsayāpi haraye,
stanaṁ dattvāpa sad-gatim,
kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayā bhaktyā,
kṛṣṇāya paramātmane,
yacchan priyatamaṁ kiṁ nu,
raktās tan-mātaro yathā*

Putana 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. What then is to be said of those who had natural devotion and affection for Kṛṣṇa as mothers and who offered Him their breasts to suck or offered something very dear, as a mother offers something to a child?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If a person offers service with an attempt to kill the Lord and attains the goal of life, how much more will a person attain who offers with a neutral attitude. How much more will a person attain who offers with faith? How much more will a person attain who offers with pure *bhakti*? If a person worships an *avatara* of the Lord, he will attain the supreme destination. But how much more will a person attain who worships Sri Kṛṣṇa, the source of all *avatars* (*sarva-avatari*)?”

“If one offers a poison breast to Kṛṣṇa and attains the supreme destination, how much more one will attain by offering a more poisonous object? If one offers a dear object certainly one will attain a higher destination. But if one offers a dearer object, then how much more he will attain. And if one offers the dearest object, he will certainly attain the highest destination.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If Putana, a demoniac *raksasi*, could attain the highest destination, then what can be attained by a faithful human being? If one is a devotee, how much more he will attain. And will not a pure devotee of the Lord (*rakta*) attain the highest award? Then what to speak of the elderly *gopis* who had extreme affection for the Lord during the stealing of the calves by Lord Brahma? Paying respects to mother Yasoda from a distance, I have placed her in the highest position. Therefore, I will write no more because her love for Kṛṣṇa is beyond words.

Texts 37–38

*padbhyām bhakta-hṛdi-sthābhyām,
vandyābhyām loka-vanditaiḥ,
aṅgam yasyāḥ samākramya,
bhagavān api tat-stanam,
yātudhāny api sā svargam,
avāpa jananī-gatim,
kṛṣṇa-bhukta-stana-kṣīrāḥ,
kim u gāvo 'numātarāḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is always situated within the core of the heart of the pure devotee, and He is always offered prayers by such worshipable personalities as Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva. Because Kṛṣṇa embraced Putana's body with great pleasure and sucked her breast, although she was a great witch, she attained the position of a mother in the transcendental world and thus achieved the highest perfection. What then is to be said of the cows whose nipples Kṛṣṇa sucked with great pleasure and who offered their milk very jubilantly with affection exactly like that of a mother?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: These two verses describe the greatness of Putana's attainment through the mercy of the Lord. Even though Putana was *rakṣaṣī*, her body was tread upon by Kṛṣṇa's feet which are situated in the hearts of the devotees and worshiped by those worthy of worship (*devatas*). Putana's breast milk was drunk by Kṛṣṇa, and she attained the supreme abode as a mother of the Lord.

bhakta hṛdi sthābhyam: Kṛṣṇa's feet are situated only in the hearts of the devotees. But Putana was neither a devotee nor a non-devotee. She was an enemy of Kṛṣṇa. **vandabhyam loka vanditaiḥ:** Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet are worshiped by worshipable personalities such as Brahma

and Siva. But Putana did not worship Kṛṣṇa's feet, rather she did the opposite. At the time of her death, Putana tried to dislodge Kṛṣṇa's feet from her chest. Unable to do so, she began to beat them with all her strength.

samakramya: completely; Kṛṣṇa stepped on Putana forcefully with His feet, not just touching her.

svargam: heavenly planets; Where did Putana go at the time of her death? She attained Vaikuṅṭha. This is explained in *Bhagavatam* (11.7.1), "Lord Brahma, Lord Śiva and all other planetary rulers are praying to live in Vaikuṅṭha." Lord Brahma says in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.14.35), "Putana attained You along with her family members." According to these two verses, the word *svarga* must mean *svaḥ-vāsam*, Your personal abode or Vaikuṅṭha. The word does not refer to the material heavenly planet called Svarga.

jananī-gatim: destiny of a mother; Which Vaikuṅṭha planet did Putana attain? The verse explains that Putana attained the same planet as mother Yasoda, *jananī gatim*. Therefore, Putana attained Goloka, but her position was predominated by happiness and reverence. She did not attain the place predominated by service in *prema*. One cannot say that she attained the status of a mother. Verse 10.6.36 says that place is reserved for those who are *anuragi (raktas)*, with pure loving attachment for Kṛṣṇa. Here verse thirty-eight says that the cows and motherly *gopis* who fed milk to Kṛṣṇa during the Brahma *vimohana lila* attained a higher destination than Putana.

How could Putana, whose enmity was equal to Kamsa's, though she imitated the dress and emotion of a *gopi*, attain the same status as Yasoda? Therefore Uddhava says in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.23): *lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām*, "Putana attained a status like a nurse." Thus in the present verse some interpret the word *janani* (mother) to be *dhatri* (nurse). But even then one should not say that Putana was a direct nurse of Kṛṣṇa. Rather she attained a form like a nurse in a Goloka filled with *sukhaiśvarya*, reverential happiness.

Texts 39–40

*payāmsi yāsām apibat,
putra-sneha-snutāny alam,
bhagavān devakī-putraḥ,
kaivalyādy-akhila-pradaḥ,
tāsām avirataṁ kṛṣṇe,
kurvatīnām sutekṣaṇam,
na punaḥ kalpate rājan,
saṁsāro 'jñāna-sambhavaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the bestower of many benedictions, including liberation [kaivalya], or oneness with the Brahman effulgence. For that Personality of Godhead, the gopīs always felt maternal love, and Kṛṣṇa sucked their breasts with full satisfaction. Therefore, because of their relationship as mother and son, although the gopīs were engaged in various family activities, one should never think that they returned to this material world after leaving their bodies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By saying that the elderly *gopis* attained more than Putana in going to Vaikuntha, there is a contradiction to the statement that enmity and affection lead to the same goal. That statement taken literally would lead to criticism of the Lord for lack of discrimination. If it is true that the elderly *gopis* attained more than Putana who attained Vaikuntha, then what did they attain? That should be explained. With this in mind the present verse is spoken. Though Kṛṣṇa is the bestower of all sorts of goals such as liberation, He drank Putana’s breast milk with extremely rare awareness (*alam*). Lord Brahma says in the *Bhagavatam* 10.14.31: “Fortunate are the cows and *gopis* whose sweet breast milk Kṛṣṇa drank in great bliss.” With this rare awareness Kṛṣṇa thinks, “Whatever they want I will give, and as well, whatever I want, they are willing to give.” Since whatever

is desired is easily attained, Kṛṣṇa certainly will give to the cows and *gopis* a suitable reward. Higher than Vaikuntha or even Goloka, Kṛṣṇa will grant them Bhauma Vrndavana which is the most attractive of all. Though Kṛṣṇa appeared from Devaki's womb, He did not drink her milk. But He regularly drank the milk of the *gopis*.

devaki putra: son of Devaki; Thus by mentioning Kṛṣṇa as Devaki *putra* in this verse it is implied that the *gopis* were more attractive to Him. **samsāro;** birth and death cycle; One should not think that Kṛṣṇa liberated the *gopis* from *samsara*, for already they had no material bondage. There is no bondage for those engaged in the Lord's service. The *samsara* ensnares those attached to house, husband and sons. Kṛṣṇa drank milk from the *gopis*' breasts and played in their houses. Kṛṣṇa's father was their husband and Kṛṣṇa was their son. This attachment did not breed *samsara*. That is the intent of verse forty.

suteksana means the elderly *gopis* looked on Kṛṣṇa as their son. For them *samsara* did not occur (*na punah kalpate*). *Samsara* is born of ignorance. A *jnani*'s knowledge of Brahman puts an end to *samsara*. However better than that is the *santa bhakta*'s realization of Bhagavan as Brahman. Better yet is the *dasya bhakta* who realizes Lord Kṛṣṇa as his master. By that the Lord becomes controlled. Superior to that is the *sakhya bhakta* who treats the Lord like a friend. Higher than that is the *vatsalya bhakta* who realizes the Lord as a son (mentioned in this verse). Here there is a gradation of release from *samsara* according to the degree of surrender of the Lord to the devotee.

Text 41

*kaṭa-dhūmasya saurabhyam,
avaghrāya vrajaukaṣaḥ,
kim idaṁ kuta eveti,
vadanto vrajam āyayuh*

Upon smelling the fragrance of the smoke emanating from Putana’s burning body, many inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi in distant places were astonished. “Where is this fragrance coming from?” they asked. Thus they went to the spot where Putana’s body was being burnt.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After settling the philosophical issues, Sukadeva returns to the topic at hand.

kata: burning the dead body; **kutah kim idam:** “Where does this smell come from? Is this *aguru* incense coming down from Indrapuri through the earth and trying to enter Sutala? Or is it ascending from Bali’s abode on Sutala through the earth and up to Svarga? Or is it coming from Kuvera’s city in the north or from Varuna’s city in the west?” In this way, the cowherd men entertained many questions.

Text 42

*te tatra varṇitaṁ gopaiḥ,
pūtanāgamanādikam,
śrutvā tan-nidhanam svasti,
śiśoś cāsan suvismitāḥ*

When the inhabitants of Vraja who had come from distant places heard the whole story of how Pūtanā had come and then been killed by Kṛṣṇa, they were certainly astonished, and they offered their blessings to the child for His wonderful deed of killing Pūtanā. Nanda Mahārāja, of course, was very much obliged to Vasudeva, who had foreseen the incident, and simply thanked him, thinking how wonderful Vasudeva was.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The returning cowherd men were very astonished. “Vasudeva has spoken correctly.” In discussing amongst

themselves they said, “Who else but Narayana could protect the baby?”

Text 43

*nandaḥ sva-putram ādāya,
pretyāgatam udāra-dhīḥ,
mūrdhny upāghrāya paramām,
mudam lebhe kurūdvaha*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the Kurus, Nanda Mahārāja was very liberal and simple. He immediately took his son Kṛṣṇa on his lap as if Kṛṣṇa had returned from death, and by formally smelling his son’s head, Nanda Mahārāja undoubtedly enjoyed transcendental bliss.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Returning from his visit (*prosyagataha*) to Mathura, Nanda began to lament: “So much misfortune has occurred in my absence. Why did I go to Mathura?” **udara dhi:** indicates that Nanda began to criticize everyone’s intelligence: “How could the dull doorkeepers not prevent anyone from entering the house?”

Text 44

*ya etat pūtanā-mokṣam,
kṛṣṇasyārbhakam adbhutam,
śṛṇuyāc chraddhayā martyo,
govinde labhate ratim*

Any person who hears with faith and devotion about how Kṛṣṇa,

the Supreme Personality of Godhead, killed Putana, and who thus invests his hearing in such childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, certainly attains attachment for Govinda, the supreme, original person.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anyone who faithfully hears the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇasya arbakam*) and the liberation of Putana, and accepts them as most astonishing, will obtain attraction for Govinda. An alternate reading for *śṛṇuyāc* (hears) is *nisamya* (hearing). Taking that reading, the meaning becomes, “Anyone who hears the childhood pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the liberation of Putana with faith will attain attraction to Govinda and everything related to Govinda.”

Chapter Seven: The Killing of the Demon Trnavarta

Texts 1–2

*śrī-rājovāca,
yena yenāvātāreṇa,
bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ,
karoti karṇa-ramyāṇi,
mano-jñāni ca naḥ prabho,
yac-chṛṇvato 'paity aratir vitṛṣṇā,
sattvaṁ ca śuddhyaty acireṇa pumsaḥ,
bhaktir harau tat-puruṣe ca sakhyaṁ,
tad eva hāraṁ vada manyase cet*

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, all the various activities exhibited by the incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are certainly pleasing to the ear and to the mind. Simply by one's hearing of these activities, the dirty things in one's mind immediately vanish. Generally we are reluctant to hear about the activities of the Lord, but Kṛṣṇa's childhood activities are so attractive that they are automatically pleasing to the mind and ear. Thus one's attachment for hearing about material things, which is the root cause of material existence, vanishes, and one gradually develops devotional service to the Supreme Lord, attachment for Him, and friendship with devotees who give us the contribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you think it fit, kindly speak about those activities of the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The seventh chapter shows the *aiśvarya* (power and majesty) aspect of Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes.

Kṛṣṇa broke the cart after taking His bath and going to sleep. He killed Trnavarta and showed the whole universe to mother Yasoda. By sucking Putana's breast, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His lips. In the pastime of demolishing the cart, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His feet, and by killing Trnavarta, Kṛṣṇa showed the power of His hands. He showed His unlimited powers by revealing the universe twice (in this and the next chapter) to His mother.

“My mind is attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's other *avataras*, but I am especially greedy to hear about Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes.” With this intent, Parikṣit speaks this verse. “Hearing the pastimes of the different *avataras* of the Lord fills me with bliss. But, if you agree then please speak about those pastimes which will destroy one's apathy and lack of taste for hearing them. Hearing Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes creates a hankering to hear more, and it purifies the mind of filthy desires. At first rock candy tastes bitter to a man suffering from jaundice, but eventually one regains the power to taste its sweetness. Similarly, a conditioned soul has no attraction to hearing *hari-katha*, but continual hearing will quickly produce attachment (*asakti*), *rati* (*bhava*) and finally *prema*. In the beginning, one will develop friendship with Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and at the stage of *prema* one will feel love for all living beings.”

Hearing anything about Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa gradually rids one of indifference to hearing about the Lord and helps one attain *prema*. But hearing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's childhood quickly brings about *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Text 3

*athānyad api kṛṣṇasya,
tokācaritam adbhutam,
mānuṣaṁ lokam āsādyā,
taj-jātim anurundhataḥ*

Please describe other pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality, who appeared on this planet earth, imitating a human child and performing wonderful activities like killing Putana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In his enthusiasm, Parikṣit repeats his request to clarify his intention. Being requested by mankind, the Lord appeared on earth (rather than being requested by demigods and appearing on Svarga). In this way Sri Kṛṣṇa especially blessed the humans on earth.

Text 4

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kadācid autthānika-kautukāplave,
janmarkṣa-yoge samaveta-yoṣitām,
vāditra-gīta-dvija-mantra-vācakaiś,
cakāra sūnor abhiṣecanaṁ satī*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When mother Yaśodā's baby was slanting His body to attempt to rise and turn around, this attempt was observed by a Vedic ceremony. In such a ceremony, called utthāna, which is performed when a child is due to leave the house for the first time, the child is properly bathed. Just after Kṛṣṇa turned three months old, mother Yaśodā celebrated this ceremony with other women of the neighborhood. On that day, there was a conjunction of the moon with the constellation Rohiṇī. As the brāhmaṇas joined by chanting Vedic hymns and professional musicians also took part, this great ceremony was observed by mother Yaśodā

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **kadācit:** some time; means this

incident took place within three months of the child's birth. In the *Bhagavatam* (2.7.27) it is mentioned that the breaking of the cart occurred when Kṛṣṇa was three months old: *trai-māsikasya ca padā śakaṭo 'pavṛttah*. The village ladies swelled with joy when baby Kṛṣṇa first rolled over (*autthanik*). When the moon entered Kṛṣṇa's birth star (Rohini), Yasoda and her circle of gopi friends celebrated the event by bathing the child to the accompaniment of music, singing and chanting by the *brahmanas*.

Text 5

*nandasya patnī kṛta-majjanādikam,
vipraiḥ kṛta-svastyayanam supūjitaiḥ,
annādyā-vāsaḥ-srag-abhīṣṭa-dhenubhiḥ,
sañjāta-nidrākṣam aśīśayac chanaiḥ*

After completing the bathing ceremony for the child, mother Yaśodā received the brāhmaṇas by worshiping them with proper respect and giving them ample food grains and other eatables, clothing, desirable cows, and garlands. The brāhmaṇas properly chanted Vedic hymns to observe the auspicious ceremony, and when they finished and mother Yaśodā saw that the child felt sleepy, she lay down on the bed with the child until He was peacefully asleep.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After being honored (*supūjitaiḥ*) by gifts of rice, cloth and money the *brahmanas* performed the auspicious birth rites. Because Kṛṣṇa had sleepy eyes (*sañjāta-nidrākṣam*), He was put to rest (*aśīśayac*). For fear that Kṛṣṇa might wake up, Yasoda held Him in her lap without moving. Then she lay down with her beloved son on a cot under a cart situated in a spacious courtyard. Upon understanding that Kṛṣṇa was fast asleep, Yasoda got up very slowly and carefully.

Text 6

*autthānikautsukya-manā manasvinī,
samāgatān pūjayatī vrajaukaśaḥ,
naivāśṛṇod vai ruditaṁ sutasya sā,
rudan stanārthī caraṇāv udakṣipat*

The liberal mother Yaśodā, absorbed in celebrating the utthāna ceremony, was busy receiving guests, worshipping them with all respect and offering them clothing, cows, garlands and grains. Thus she could not hear the child crying for His mother. At that time, the child Kṛṣṇa, demanding to drink the milk of His mother’s breast, angrily threw His legs upward.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Because Yasoda was busy exchanging pleasantries and giving ornaments, garlands, *candana*, oil and *sindura* to the village ladies who had assembled for the festival, she did not hear Kṛṣṇa crying from hunger (*stanārthī*) upon His waking. In anger, Kṛṣṇa kicked His legs upward while thinking, “Since you cannot hear My crying, maybe the sound of the cart breaking will catch your attention.”

Text 7

*adhah-śayānasya śiśor ano ’lpaka,
pravāla-mṛdv-aṅghri-hataṁ vyavartata,
vidhvasta-nānā-rasa-kupya-bhājanam,
vyatyasta-cakrākṣa-vibhinna-kūbaram*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was lying down underneath the handcart in one

corner of the courtyard, and although His little legs were as soft as leaves, when He struck the cart with His legs, it turned over violently and collapsed. The wheels separated from the axle, the hubs and spokes fell apart, and the pole of the handcart broke. On the cart there were many little utensils made of various metals, and all of them scattered hither and thither.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The cart was struck by the soft lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa as if with very little force. To break the cart Kṛṣṇa did not extend His foot high upward like Vamana in breaking the shell of the universe, nor did Kṛṣṇa's feet become hard like Nṛsimha's nails to tear apart the hard body of Hiranyakasipu. This rare display of power by Kṛṣṇa, which does not contradict the sweetness of His childhood pastimes, shows the completeness of Sri Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndavana. The cart turned upside down and the utensils of gold and silver scattered everywhere. The wheels and axle fell apart and the steering pole broke. The *Brahmanda Purāna* states that because a heavy demon entered the cart, the wheels sank in the earth and the cart's height decreased. Thus Kṛṣṇa's short baby legs could touch the cart.

Text 8

*dr̥ṣṭvā yaśodā-pramukhā vraja-striya,
autthānike karmaṇi yāḥ samāgatāḥ,
nandādayaś cādbhuta-darśanākulāḥ,
katham svayam vai śakaṭam viparyagāt*

When mother Yaśodā and the other ladies who had assembled for the utthāna festival, and all the men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, saw the wonderful situation, they began to wonder how the handcart had collapsed by itself. They began to wander here and there, trying to find the cause, but were unable to do so.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda, Yasoda and the other assembled women and guests became dismayed upon seeing that astonishing event. They asked, “How could the cart fall apart on its own?”

Text 9

*ūcur avyavasita-matīn,
gopān gopīś ca bālakāḥ,
rudatānena pādena,
kṣiptam etan na samśayaḥ*

The assembled cowherd men and ladies began to contemplate how this thing had happened. “Is it the work of some demon or evil planet?” they asked. At that time, the small children present asserted that the cart had been kicked apart by the baby Kṛṣṇa. As soon as the crying baby had kicked the cart’s wheel, the cart had collapsed. There was no doubt about it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The children who had witnessed the event described it to the *gopīs*, who could not discern what had happened. The *gopīs* asked, “Is this the work of some demon or evil planets?”

Text 10

*na te śraddadhire gopā,
bāla-bhāṣitam ity uta,
aprameyaṁ balaṁ tasya,
bālakasya na te viduḥ*

The assembled gopīs and gopas, unaware that Kṛṣṇa is always unlimited, could not believe that baby Kṛṣṇa had such inconceivable power. They could not believe the statements of the children, and therefore they neglected these statements as being childish talk.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men did not believe the statements of the children.

Text 11

*rudantaṁ sutam ādāya,
yaśodā graha-śaṅkitā,
kṛta-svastyayanam vipraiḥ,
sūktaiḥ stanam apāyayat*

Thinking that some bad planet had attacked Kṛṣṇa, mother Yaśodā picked up the crying child and allowed Him to suck her breast. Then she called for experienced brāhmaṇas to chant Vedic hymns and perform an auspicious ritualistic ceremony.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda had the *brahmanas* perform *svastyana*, chanting *mantras* to ward off the demons.

Text 12

*pūrvavat sthāpitam gopair,
balibhiḥ sa-paricchadam,
viprā hutvārcayām cakrur,*

dadhy-akṣata-kuśāmbubhiḥ

After the strong, stout cowherd men assembled the pots and paraphernalia on the handcart and set it up as before, the brāhmaṇas performed a ritualistic ceremony with a fire sacrifice to appease the bad planet, and then, with rice grains, kuśa, water and curd, they worshiped the Supreme Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cart was repaired and placed in its original position by some strong cowherd men. This proves that the cart was very large. The cowherd men worshiped the cart because the cart was one of their main possessions, being the abode of Lakṣmi, and the storehouse of their accumulated wealth.

Texts 13–15

*ye 'sūyānṛta-dambhersā,
himsā-māna-vivarjitāḥ,
na teṣāṃ satya-śīlānām,
āśiṣo viphalāḥ kṛtāḥ,
iti bālakam ādāya,
sāmarg-yajur-upākṛtaiḥ,
jalaiḥ pavitrauṣadhibhir,
abhiṣicya dvijottamaiḥ,
vācayitvā svastyayanam,
nanda-gopaḥ samāhitāḥ hutvā cāgnim dvijātibhyaḥ,
prādād annam mahā-guṇam*

When brāhmaṇas are free from envy, untruthfulness, unnecessary pride, grudges, disturbance by the opulence of others, and false prestige, their blessings never go in vain. Considering this, Nanda

Mahārāja soberly took Kṛṣṇa on his lap and invited such truthful brāhmaṇas to perform a ritualistic ceremony according to the holy hymns of the Sāma Veda, Āg Veda and Yajur Veda. Then, while the hymns were being chanted, he bathed the child with water mixed with pure herbs, and after performing a fire ceremony, he sumptuously fed all the brāhmaṇas with first-class grains and other food.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Knowing that the blessings of *brahmanas* were good for his child's welfare, Nanda spoke this verse. *Mana* means pride. The blessings of qualified *brahmanas* must bear fruit. Kṛṣṇa was sprinkled with water mixed with *sarvausadhi* and *mahausadhi*, and purified by *mantras* from the *Sāma*, *Āg* and *Yajur Veda*. Nanda Maharaja performed a sacrifice, and then fed the *brahmanas* tasty aromatic food (*mahā-guṇam*).

Text 16

*gāvaḥ sarva-guṇopetā,
vāsaḥ-srag-rukma-mālinīḥ,
ātmajābhyudayārthāya,
prādāt te cānvayauñjata*

Nanda Mahārāja, for the sake of the affluence of his own son Kṛṣṇa, gave the brāhmaṇas cows fully decorated with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces. These cows, fully qualified to give ample milk, were given to the brāhmaṇas in charity, and the brāhmaṇas accepted them and bestowed blessings upon the whole family, and especially upon Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja gave cows endowed with all qualities (*sarva-guṇopetā*), which means they gave abundant

milk. Then (*anu*) the *brahmanas* accepted (*ayuñjata*) the cows. .

Text 17

*viprā mantra-vido yuktās,
tair yāḥ proktās tathāśiṣaḥ,
tā niṣphalā bhaviṣyanti,
na kadācid api sphuṭam*

The brāhmaṇas, who were completely expert in chanting the Vedic hymns, were all yogīs fully equipped with mystic powers. Whatever blessings they spoke were certainly never fruitless.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The brahmanas are described here as *yukta*, which means they were great *yogis* (*yoginah*), and thus whatever blessings they gave would come true.

Text 18

*ekadāroham ārūḍham,
lālayantī sutam sati,
garimāṇam śiṣor voḍhum,
na sehe giri-kūṭavat*

One day, a year after Kṛṣṇa’s appearance, mother Yaśodā was patting her son on her lap. But suddenly she felt the child to be heavier than a mountain peak, and she could no longer bear His weight.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “What use are all these things for Me,

the Lord of all wealth?” This event took place when Kṛṣṇa was one year old. The *Bhagavatam* (10.26.6) says: *eka-hāyana āsīno, hriyamāṇo vihāyasā, daityena yas trṇāvartam*, “The demon Trnavarta took away Kṛṣṇa when the Lord was one year old.” Yasoda felt great bliss by placing Kṛṣṇa on her lap and lifting Him up in the air with her two hands. Suddenly Kṛṣṇa became as heavy as a mountain top, and Yasoda could no longer hold Him. Kṛṣṇa knew that Trnavarta wanted to kidnap Yasoda along with Himself. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa displayed His *aiśvarya sakti* in order to prevent any pain coming to Yasoda. Becoming heavier than the heaviest, Kṛṣṇa forced Yasoda to place Him on the ground. “Yasoda can only lift Me a little, but I want to play in the sky.” Desiring like this, Kṛṣṇa let the *asura* take Him away.

Text 19

*bhūmau nidhāya tam gopī,
vismitā bhāra-pīḍitā,
mahā-puruṣam ādadhyau,
jagatām āsa karmasu*

Feeling the child to be as heavy as the entire universe and therefore being anxious, thinking that perhaps the child was being attacked by some other ghost or demon, the astonished mother Yaśodā put the child down on the ground and began to think of Nārāyaṇa. Foreseeing disturbances, she called for the brāhmaṇas to counteract this heaviness, and then she engaged in her other household affairs. She had no alternative than to remember the lotus feet of Nārāyaṇa, for she could not understand that Kṛṣṇa was the original source of everything.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being disturbed, Yasoda put Kṛṣṇa on the ground as she wondered how her son had suddenly become so

heavy. “Maybe some demon has done this?” Fearing this, Yasoda took shelter of Narayana, the Lord of the universe. Yasoda glanced upward to Vaikuntha and in meditation said, “O Lord, You have given this son, so now You must protect Him.” Then in great anxiety, Yasoda went out to call some *brahmanas* to perform the *svastyayana karma* (ceremonies for good fortune).

Text 20

*daityo nāmnā tṛṇāvartaḥ,
kaṁsa-bhrtyaḥ praṇoditaḥ,
cakravāta-svarūpeṇa,
jahārāsīnam arbhakam*

While the child was sitting on the ground, a demon named ṛṇāvarta, who was a servant of Kaṁsa’s, came there as a whirlwind, at Kaṁsa’s instigation, and very easily carried the child away into the air.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just at that time, Trnavarta came and stole the child. By the influence of His *aiśvarya sakti* Kṛṣṇa became so light that Trnavarta could lift Him.

Text 21

*gokulam sarvam āvṛṇvan,
muṣṇamś cakṣūṁṣi reṇubhiḥ īrayan sumahā-ghora,
śabdena pradiśo diśaḥ*

Covering the whole land of Gokula with particles of dust, that

demon, acting as a strong whirlwind, covered everyone’s vision and began vibrating everywhere with a greatly fearful sound.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A tumultuous sound reverberated (*īrayan*) in all directions.

Text 22

*muhūrtam abhavad goṣṭham,
rajasā tamasāvṛtam,
sutaṁ yaśodā nāpaśyat,
tasmin nyastavatī yataḥ*

For a moment, the whole pasturing ground was overcast with dense darkness from the dust storm, and mother Yaśodā was unable to find her son where she had placed Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda did not see baby Kṛṣṇa there (*tasmin*), where (*yataḥ*) she had left Him (*nyastavati*).

Text 23

*nāpaśyat kaścanātmānaṁ,
param cāpi vimohitaḥ,
ṭṛṇāvarta-nisṛṣṭābhiḥ,
śarkarābhir upadrutaḥ*

Because of the bits of sand thrown about by Ṭṛṇāvarta, people could not see themselves or anyone else, and thus they were illusioned and disturbed.

Text 24

*iti khara-pavana-cakra-pāṁśu-varṣe,
suta-padavīm abalāvilakṣya mātā,
atīkaruṇam anusmaranty aśocad,
bhuvi patitā mṛta-vatsakā yathā gauḥ*

Because of the dust storm stirred up by the strong whirlwind, mother Yaśodā could find no trace of her son, nor could she understand why. Thus she fell down on the ground like a cow who has lost her calf and began to lament very pitifully.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda could not see her child (āvilakṣya) because of the thick layers of dust showering down from the whirlwind demon.

Text 25

*ruditam anuniśamya tatra gopyo,
bhṛśam anutapta-dhiyo 'śru-pūrṇa-mukhyaḥ,
rurudur anupalabhya nanda-sūnuṁ,
pavana upārata-pāṁśu-varṣa-vege*

When the force of the dust storm and the winds subsided, Yaśodā's friends, the other gopīs, approached mother Yaśodā, hearing her pitiful crying. Not seeing Kṛṣṇa present, they too felt very much aggrieved and joined mother Yaśodā in crying, their eyes full of tears.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After the gusts of wind blew away the dust, the *gopis* heard crying from Yasoda’s house. They also began crying as they converged on Yasoda’s house from all directions.

Text 26

*ṭṛṇāvartaḥ śānta-rayo,
vātyā-rūpa-dharo haran,
kṛṣṇaṁ nabho-gato gantum,
nāśaknod bhūri-bhāra-bhṛt*

Having assumed the form of a forceful whirlwind, the demon Ṭṛṇāvarta took Kṛṣṇa very high in the sky, but when Kṛṣṇa became heavier than the demon, the demon had to stop his force and could go no further.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At first Kṛṣṇa was as light as a normal child, and Trnavarta lifted Him high in the sky. When Kṛṣṇa became heavy, however, Trnavarta slowed down. Within seconds, Trnavarta could not carry Kṛṣṇa any further so he stopped moving.

Text 27

*tam aśmānaṁ manyamāna,
ātmano guru-mattayā,
gale gṛhīta utsraṣṭum,
nāśaknod adbhutārbhakam*

Because of Kṛṣṇa’s weight, Ṭṛṇāvarta considered Him to be like a

great mountain or a hunk of iron. But because Kṛṣṇa had caught the demon's neck, the demon was unable to throw Him off. He therefore thought of the child as wonderful, since he could neither bear the child nor cast aside the burden.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After fulfilling His desire to fly in sky, and the desire of the celestial ladies of Svarga to see His incomparable beauty, Kṛṣṇa prepared to kill Trnavarta. Kṛṣṇa became so heavy that the demon felt he was carrying a mountain made of iron. Because Kṛṣṇa was holding him by the neck, Trnavarta could not throw off the Lord. Playing the part of a small child, Kṛṣṇa feigned fear of falling from that height and therefore clung to Trnavarta's neck.

Text 28

*gala-grahaṇa-niśceṣṭo,
daityo nirgata-locanaḥ,
avyakta-rāvo nyapatat,
saha-bālo vyasur vraje*

With Kṛṣṇa grasping him by the throat, Tṛṇāvarta choked, unable to make even a sound or even to move his hands and legs. His eyes popping out, the demon lost his life and fell, along with the little boy, down to the ground of Vraja.

Text 29

*tam antarikṣāt patitaṁ śilāyām,
viśīrṇa-sarvāvayavaṁ karālam,
puraṁ yathā rudra-śareṇa viddhaṁ,*

striyo rudatyo dadṛśuḥ sametāḥ

While the gopīs who had gathered were crying for Kṛṣṇa, the demon fell from the sky onto a big slab of stone, his limbs dislocated, as if he had been pierced by the arrow of Lord Śiva like Tripurāsura.

Text 30

*prādāya mātṛe pratihṛtya vismitāḥ,
kṛṣṇam ca tasyorasi lambamānam,
tam svastimantaṁ puruṣāda-nītaṁ,
vihāyasā mṛtyu-mukhāt pramuktam,
gopyaś ca gopāḥ kila nanda-mukhyā,
labdhvā punaḥ prāpur atīva modam*

The gopīs immediately picked Kṛṣṇa up from the chest of the demon and delivered Him, free from all inauspiciousness, to mother Yaśodā. Because the child, although taken into the sky by the demon, was unhurt and now free from all danger and misfortune, the gopīs and cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, were extremely happy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopas* and *gopis* picked up Kṛṣṇa, who was clinging to (*lambamānam*) the chest of the demon, and gave Him to Yasoda. They were astonished to see how the demon had fallen on his back on a stone slab and that Kṛṣṇa was unharmed playing on his chest. Though Kṛṣṇa was taken by the demon (*puruṣāda*, eater of humans) high into the sky (*vihāyasā*), He was miraculously saved from the mouth of death.

Text 31

*aho batāty-adbhutam eṣa rakṣasā,
bālo nivṛttim gamito 'bhyagāt punaḥ,
himsraḥ sva-pāpena vihimsitaḥ khalah,
sādhuḥ samatvena bhayād vimucyate*

It is most astonishing that although this innocent child was taken away by the Rākṣasa to be eaten, He has returned without having been killed or even injured. Because this demon was envious, cruel and sinful, he has been killed for his own sinful activities. This is the law of nature. An innocent devotee is always protected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and a sinful person is always vanquished for his sinful life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa was only a small, delicate child, yet He clearly manifested enormous power to kill such a great demon. This however, did not decrease the affection of Nanda Maharaja and others; rather it increased it. This idea is expressed in three verses.
āty-adbhutam eṣa: Kṛṣṇa's feat was the most astonishing of all possible astonishing things. This was so because baby Kṛṣṇa almost became annihilated (*nivṛttim*). The word *marana*, which means death, is not used because of its inauspicious connotations. Though Kṛṣṇa neared death, He again returned (*'bhyagāt*) to His friends. One of Kṛṣṇa's friends remarked, "But what is so astonishing? The cruel demon was destroyed because of his sin (*sva papena*) of stealing an innocent child. Though Kṛṣṇa is only a child, He is saintly because He regards enemies and friends equally (*samatvena*), and thus He was saved from danger."

Text 32

*kiṁ nas tapaś cīrṇam adhokṣajārcanaṁ,
pūrteṣṭa-dattam uta bhūta-sauhṛdam,
yat samparetaḥ punar eva bālako,
diṣṭyā sva-bandhūn praṇayann upasthitaḥ*

Nanda Mahārāja and the others said: We must previously have performed austerities for a very long time, worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, performed pious activities for public life, constructing public roads and wells, and also given charity, as a result of which this boy, although faced with death, has returned to give happiness to His relatives.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja and others began to speak: “If anything inauspicious had happened to Kṛṣṇa, we all would have died. That Kṛṣṇa is unharmed is a result of heaps of pious activities.” Thus they spoke this verse. How much austerities they must have done (*cīrṇam*); how much worship of the Lord; how much help to other living entities; how many auspicious works such as sacrifices (*istam*) and constructing a well or canal (*purta*)? Because of these good deeds Kṛṣṇa has returned from death to bring life (*pranayan*) to His friends by showing His affection.

Text 33

*dṛṣṭvādbhutāni bahuśo,
nanda-gopo bṛhadvane,
vasudeva-vaco bhūyo,
mānayām āsa vismitaḥ*

Having seen all these incidents in Bṛhadvana, Nanda Mahārāja became more and more astonished, and he remembered the words spoken to him by Vasudeva in Mathurā.

Text 34

*ekadārbhakam ādāya,
svāṅkam āropya bhāminī,
prasnutam pāyayām āsa,
stanam sneha-pariplutā*

One day mother Yaśodā, having picked up Kṛṣṇa and placing Him on her lap, was feeding Him milk from her breast with maternal affection. The milk was flowing from her breast, and the child was drinking it.

Texts 35–36

*pīta-prāyasya jananī,
sutasya rucira-smitam,
mukham lālayatī rājañ,
jṛmbhato dadṛṣe idam,
kham rodasī jyotir-anīkam āśāḥ,
sūryendu-vahni-śvasanāmbudhīmś ca,
dvīpān nagāms tad-duhitṛr vanāni,
bhūtāni yāni sthira-jaṅgamāni*

O King Parīkṣit, when the child Kṛṣṇa was almost finished drinking

His mother’s milk and mother Yaśodā was touching Him and looking at His beautiful, brilliantly smiling face, the baby yawned, and mother Yaśodā saw in His mouth the whole sky, the higher planetary system and the earth, the luminaries in all directions, the sun, the moon, fire, air, the seas, islands, mountains, rivers, forests, and all kinds of living entities, moving and nonmoving.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa had almost completely finished drinking Yasoda’s milk. When Kṛṣṇa yawned, Yasoda saw the entire (*idam*) universe within His mouth (*mukhe*). In another version of *Srimad Bhagavatam* it states that while Yasoda was kissing Kṛṣṇa, she saw the universe in His stomach. Lord Brahma makes the same point in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.14.16): *kṛtsnasya cāntar jaṭhare jananyā*, “O Lord, You exhibited the universe within Your abdomen before Your mother, Yaśodā.”

Though Kṛṣṇa was lying in His mother’s lap, by His inconceivable energy He is also the foundation of the whole universe. At the moment Kṛṣṇa yawned, He displayed the universe with all its details by His inconceivable energy. Yasoda saw the *antariksa* (outer space or the area between Bhūrloka and Bhuvarloka) Bhuvarloka, Svargaloka, Martyaloka and Patalaloka, the three worlds (*rodasi*), the constellations, the directions, the sun, moon, fire, air, Jambudvipa and the other islands (*dvipan*), the trees, forest, the daughters (*duhitr*) of the mountains (*nagan*) the rivers, and all moving and non-moving entities.

Text 37

*sā vīkṣya viśvaṁ sahasā,
rājan sañjāta-vepathuḥ,
sammīlya mṛgaśāvākṣī,
netre āsīt suvismitā*

When mother Yaśodā saw the whole universe within the mouth of her child, her heart began to throb, and in astonishment she wanted to close her restless eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Suddenly or at the same time (*sahasā*) Yasoda began trembling out of fear. She closed her eyes in order to meditate on Viṣṇu. “O Lord, please protect my child from this disturbance.” Yasoda is described as having deer-like eyes, because she glanced around like a frightened deer. In this way, Kṛṣṇa’s display of power in killing the demons did not diminish the *prema* of His intimate devotees like mother Yasoda. Rather, due to the appearance of anxiety, their ocean of *prema* increased. The Vrajavasis believed that Kṛṣṇa was saved because of the abundant pious activities of Nanda and the *gopas*. In this case, however, Kṛṣṇa simply displayed his power, *aiśvarya-śakti*, without cause (not because of demons). Thoroughly surprised, Yasoda thought only this: “What has happened to my child.” Yasoda’s affection did not decrease by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. Yasoda did not need to find a cause for what happened. The cause of her disturbance was deep *prema* alone. This fixed quality of *prema* is continuously glorified. Thus it is described as follows: The energy of the Lord occasionally appeared to test Yasoda, but she made that energy a servant of her *prema*: *prema devya parikṣartham agacchanty antarantara saktir esa hareh kintu taya sa dasi kṛt bhavet*.

Chapter Eight: Lord Kṛṣṇa Shows the Universal Form Within His Mouth

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
gargaḥ purohito rājan,
yadūnām sumahā-tapāḥ,
vrajaṁ jagāma nandasya,
vasudeva-pracoditaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O Mahārāja Parikṣit, the priest of the Yadu dynasty, namely Gargamuni, who was highly elevated in austerity and penance, was then inspired by Vasudeva to go see Nanda Mahārāja at his home.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's name-giving ceremony, His crawling and stealing butter, His eating dirt and displaying the universal form. After telling how Kṛṣṇa killed a series of demons up to Trnavarta, Sukadeva remembered Kṛṣṇa's name-giving ceremony, which took place before the killing of Trnavarta, and then narrated the story.

Text 2

*taṁ drṣṭvā parama-prītaḥ,
pratyuṭthāya kṛtāñjaliḥ,
ānarcādhokṣaja-dhiyā,
pranipāta-puraḥsaram*

When Nanda Mahārāja saw Gargamuni present at his home, Nanda was so pleased that he stood up to receive him with folded hands. Although seeing Gargamuni with his eyes, Nanda Mahārāja could appreciate that Gargamuni was adhokṣaja; that is, he was not an ordinary person seen by material senses.

Text 3

*sūpaviṣṭam kṛtātithyam,
girā sūṅṅṭayā munim,
nandayitvābravīd brahman,
pūrṇasya karavāma kim*

When Gargamuni had been properly received as a guest and was very comfortably seated, Nanda Mahārāja submitted with gentle and submissive words: Dear sir, because you are a devotee, you are full in everything. Yet my duty is to serve you. Kindly order me. What can I do for you?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “Since you are complete and fully satisfied within yourself, what service can we possibly render to you? We can do nothing.” Or taking the word *kim* as a question, the sentence can mean, “Do you want something, though you are perfect within yourself? Please tell us and we will try to do that.”

If we take the first meaning, then Gargamuni would answer, “Coming to your house is pointless.” If we take the second sentence, then Gargamuni would reply, “Since I am perfect, what can you do for me.” But one should not think in this way. In both cases coming to Nanda’s

house is not pointless, for welcoming a saintly person in a house is very valuable. One can see in the scriptures how Sanat-kumara came to Prthu's house, and Vamana came to Bali's house to bestow their mercy. In this mood Nanda speaks verse three.

Text 4

*mahad-vicalanam nṛṇām,
grhiṇām dīna-cetasām,
niḥśreyasāya bhagavan,
kalpate nānyathā kvacit*

O my lord, O great devotee, persons like you move from one place to another not for their own interests but for the sake of poor-hearted gr̥hasthas [householders]. Otherwise they have no interest in going from one place to another.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When great saints leave their *asramas* and travel outside they bring the highest fortune to the householders. Such mercy is beneficial and necessary for the *gr̥hasthas* on earth but not for the *brahmacaris* or the demigods. *Gr̥hasthas* who are humble and think themselves lower than the grass (*dīna-cetasām*) can receive mercy from the wandering mendicants. But proud, hard-hearted *gr̥hasthas* with crooked mentalities can never receive mercy from the saints.

Text 5

*jyotiṣām ayanam sākṣād,
yat taj jñānam atīndriyam,
praṇītam bhavatā yena,*

pumān veda parāvaram

O great saintly person, you have compiled the astrological knowledge by which one can understand past and present unseen things. By the strength of this knowledge, any human being can understand what he has done in his past life and how it affects his present life. This is known to you.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Nanda Maharaja begins to intimate his desire to Gargamuni about the *nama karana* (name- giving ceremony) of his son. Nanda Maharaja said, “Not only do you know the treatise (*ayanam*) about the planets (*jyotisam*) from which (*yat*) one can get knowledge beyond gross sense perception, but you have compiled (*pranita*) it as well. By astrology one can know the past (*avara*) and future (*para*) of any human being. By examining the charts of this son born to me in my old age, and seeing the lines on His hands and feet please tell all the auspicious and inauspicious events of the child’s future.”

Text 6

*tvam hi brahma-vidām śreṣṭhaḥ,
saṁskārān kartum arhasi,
bālayor anayor nṛṇām,
janmanā brāhmaṇo guruḥ*

My lord, you are the best of the brāhmaṇas, especially because you are fully aware of the jyotiḥ-śāstra, the astrological science. Therefore you are naturally the spiritual master of every human being. This being so, since you have kindly come to my house, kindly execute the reformatory activities for my two sons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja continued, “Such a great personality coming to my house is just for my benefit. The benefit is twofold: for the present life and the future life. Of the two, I am now requesting you to deliver the auspiciousness of this present life.” Thus Nanda Maharaja begins to speak: “You are not only the best among astrologers, but you are also the best among those who know God. You are most qualified to perform the necessary *samskaras* (purificatory rites) because you are expert in telling the future and in chanting *mantras*.”

Gargamuni says, “But these functions should be done by the *guru*.” Nanda Maharaja replies, “Just by their birth the *brahmanas* are the spiritual masters for all human beings.”

Text 7

*śrī-garga uvāca,
yadūnām aham ācāryaḥ,
khyātaś ca bhuvī sarvadā,
sutaṁ mayā saṁskṛtaṁ te,
manyate devakī-sutaṁ*

Gargamuni said: My dear Nanda Mahārāja, I am the priestly guide of the Yadu dynasty. This is known everywhere. Therefore, if I perform the purificatory process for your sons, Kāṁsa will consider Them the sons of Devakī.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Garga speaks to advise that the *samskara* must be done secretly because of danger to himself and Nanda from Kamsa: “Nanda Maharaja, you are actually a member of the Yadu dynasty, but you are not known as a Yadu because you are not a *ksatriya*. However, I am well known as the priest of the Yadus.

Therefore, if I don't do this ceremony secretly there will be a lot of doubts.”

Texts 8–9

*kaṁsaḥ pāpa-matiḥ sakhyam,
tava cānakadundubheḥ,
devakyā aṣṭamo garbho,
na strī bhavitum arhati,
iti sañcintayañ chrutvā,
devakyā dārikā-vacaḥ,
api hantā gatāśaṅkas,
tarhi tan no 'nayo bhavet*

Kaṁsa is both a great diplomat and a very sinful man. Therefore, having heard from Yogamāyā, the daughter of Devakī, that the child who will kill him has already been born somewhere else, having heard that the eighth pregnancy of Devakī could not bring forth a female child, and having understood your friendship with Vasudeva, Kaṁsa, upon hearing that the purificatory process has been performed by me, the priest of the Yadu dynasty, may certainly consider all these points and suspect that Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī and Vasudeva. Then he might take steps to kill Kṛṣṇa. That would be a catastrophe.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Gargamuni continued, “Everyone everywhere will think this. Especially Kamsa will pursue this matter.” Nanda Maharaja replied, “But will Kamsa, being a *brahmavadi*, actually kill you?”

Garga: “Yes, because Kamsa is a sinful person (*papamatiḥ*) he will kill people like us. He will certainly do it. Because he has already committed violence against your friend (*sakhyam*) Vasudeva, he will do

the same to you. His demoniac intelligence will begin to act. “When Kamsa heard the words of Devaki’s daughter, he thought: ‘It is not possible that the eighth child of Devaki is a girl. My enemy Visnu has certainly been born to Devaki, but by the arrangement of Vasudeva, He was taken to the house of his friend Nanda. My worshipable deity Durga, who has taken the role of Devaki’s daughter, said that He who will kill me has already taken birth somewhere. Having ambiguously stated that Visnu was not born to Devaki, but somewhere else, Durga has hinted to me that I should search everywhere and quickly kill Him.’ “While thinking in this way and engrossed in looking for his enemy, Kamsa, upon hearing about my performance of the *nama karana*, may conclude that Vasudeva’s son is in Nanda’s house, and he will come here to kill the child. This will then be a great fault on my part.”

Text 10

*śrī-nanda uvāca,
alakṣito ’smin rahasi,
māmakair api go-vraje,
kuru dvijāti-saṁskāraṁ,
svasti-vācana-pūrvakam*

Nanda Mahārāja said: My dear great sage, if you think that your performing this process of purification will make Kamsa suspicious, then secretly chant the Vedic hymns and perform the purifying process of second birth here in the cow shed of my house, without the knowledge of anyone else, even my relatives, for this process of purification is essential.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “By good fortune you have come to my house. When will I again receive such an *acarya* as you? Today we will do only what is minimally required by the *sastras*, and have all the

other festivities with music done on another day.” Thinking in this way, Nanda speaks this verse.

māmakair: indicates that not even Nanda’s brothers should know.

go vraja: the cow pen is a pure place, and therefore it does not need cleaning. **rahasi:** means that they will not allow entrance for the workers who usually come into the sheds to take the cows for pasturing.

dvijāti: indicates that Balarama was a *ksatriya* and Kṛṣṇa a *vaisya*,

so both were eligible for the *nama karana samskaras*. **svasti vacana:** means that the *punyayaha*, *svasti* and *riddhi mantras* should be recited three times. They must be recited before all auspicious rituals.

Text 11

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ samprārthito viprah,
sva-cikīrṣitam eva tat,
cakāra nāma-karaṇam,
gūḍho rahasi bālayoḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Having thus been especially requested by Nanda Mahārāja to do that which he already desired to do, Gargamuni performed the name-giving ceremony for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in a solitary place.

Text 12

*śrī-garga uvāca,
ayaṁ hi rohiṇī-putro,
ramayan suhr̥do guṇaiḥ,
ākhyāsyate rāma iti,*

*balādhikyād balaṁ viduḥ,
yadūnām apr̥thag-bhāvāt,
saṅkarṣaṇam uśanty api*

Gargamuni said: This child, the son of Rohiṇī, will give all happiness to His relatives and friends by His transcendental qualities. Therefore He will be known as Rāma. And because He will manifest extraordinary bodily strength, He will also be known as Bala. Moreover, because He unites two families—Vasudeva’s family and the family of Nanda Mahārāja—He will be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Gargamuni speaks, “O Nanda, because your lineage and Vasudeva’s are the same, and because Balarama will unite your two families, He will be called Sankarsana.”

The *Hari-vamśa* says, “Amongst all the Yadus, you [Nanda Maharaja] are most dear to me.” Garga did not reveal here that Balarama was transferred (*akarsana*) from the womb of Devaki to Rohini, and thus given the name Sankarsana for that reason.

Text 13

*āsan varṇās trayo hy asya,
gr̥hṇato ’nuyugam tanūḥ,
śuklo raktas tathā pīta,
idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ*

Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past, He assumed three different colors—white, red and yellow—and now He has appeared in a blackish color. [In another Dvāpara-yuga, He appeared (as Lord Rāmacandra) in the color

of śuka, a parrot. All such incarnations have now assembled in Kṛṣṇa.]

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Garga tells Nanda that his son is a *mahapurusa*, great personality. “Your son appears in every *yuga* and has assumed three different colors: red, white and yellow.”

Gṛhṇato: indicates that Kṛṣṇa accepts by His own will. “Now (*idānīm*) at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, He has taken the form of Kṛṣṇa.” That is what Garga wants to convey to Nanda.

The actual meaning however is hidden. Pointing his finger at Nanda’s son, Gargamuni indicates that the white, red and yellow color forms are Kṛṣṇa’s parts or *amsas*, and now He has appeared in His full form as the *avatari*, the source of all *avatars* (*kṛṣṇatam gatah*). Or the sentence can mean: “The white, red and yellow forms, indicating all the *manvantara-avatars*, *lila-avatars* and *purusa-avatars*, are all included in Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇatam gatah*). The original form of the Lord has now appeared with all the *amsas* within Himself.”

The Eleventh Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* states that the Lord comes in Satya-yuga in a white color, a red color in Treta-yuga, a blackish color in Dvāpara-yuga, and a black color in Kali-yuga. Specific colors and names are linked to specific *yugas*. Taking that statement into account, then does the yellow color mentioned in this verse belong to an *avatara* or not? One should not say that because the word *āsan* means past tense for three *avatars*, that yellow can refer to a fourth *avatara* appearing in Dvāpara-yuga. We could claim that the word *syama* in the Eleventh Canto should read *pita*, or that *pita* (yellow) in the present verse should mean *syama* by taking the word *apita* (not yellow) from the *sandhi* of *tatha* and *apita* (not yellow or pale), with the meaning of *syama* in the present verse. But then there is still the problem of the three colored forms, white, red and black.

The word *tanuh* is in plural, not singular or dual. Kṛṣṇa appears in three successive *yugas*. He also appears in Dvāpara-yuga out of order, because according to the Eleventh Canto, Kṛṣṇa should be in Kali-yuga. To have the three colors of *avatars* appearing in each of the

previous two *yugas*, and Kṛṣṇa appearing in Dvaparā-yuga, is also not an acceptable proposal. Nor can one claim that *idanim* should mean the first part of Kali-yuga, and that Kṛṣṇa appears in Kali-yuga (in agreement with Canto Eleven). It is well known that Kṛṣṇa appeared at the end of Dvaparā-yuga. According to the *Bhagavatam* (1.18.6), Kali-yuga began the very day and moment Sri Kṛṣṇa left the earth planet. The explanation of the verse above (10.8.13) is as follows: The two words *yatha* and *tatha* occur as a pair. Whether they both appear or only one appears, the other must be understood. In this case, the sentence should read: Just as (*yatha*) now (*idanim*) in Dvaparā-yuga the source of all the *avataras* appears, and attracts all living entities with His beautiful blackish color (*kṛṣṇanata*), in Kali-yuga (*tatha*) as well, during the first part, all the *avataras* appear within Him when He takes a yellow form. *Idanim*, now, is taken in a slightly broad span, from the end of Dvaparā to the first part of Kali-yuga to apply to the appearance of both *avataris*, namely Sri Kṛṣṇa and Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That may be so but did the person with a black color, who is now receiving His *nama karana*, appear in a black form before? Does the word *idanim* now indicate something new and temporary? The black *avatara* is not a temporary phenomenon because He existed before, and now He is making another appearance. Not only the black *avatara*, however, all the *avataras* existed before. But they are making their appearance now. Therefore the past tense is used (*asa*). Just as the three colors appeared previously in the *yugas*, now they manifest. Pointing with his finger, Gargamuni says, “This son of yours (*asya*) is *anuyugam tanu*, He who accepts all the *avatara* forms *yuga* after *yuga*.” Suta Gosvami has stated that the *avataras* are countless (*avatara hy asankheya*). In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.14.21), Lord Brahma says: *kva vā katham vā kati vā*, “O Lord, how do You accept these unlimited forms?” As this is so, in the twenty-eighth *yuga* cycle during Dvaparā and Kali-yuga, the *avatari* appears in black and yellow forms. At this time, the *syama* and *kṛṣṇa yuga avataras* appear within the forms of the *avataris*.

The Lord’s yellow form is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, which

appears in Chapter 189 of the *Dāna-dharma-parva* of *Mahābhārata: suvarṇa-varṇo hemāṅgo varāṅgaś candanāṅgadī*, “In His early pastimes, the Supreme Lord appears as a householder with a golden complexion. His limbs are beautiful, and His body, smeared with the pulp of sandalwood, seems like molten gold.” It further states: *sannyāsa-kṛc chamaḥ śānto niṣṭhā-śānti-parāyaṇaḥ*, “In His later pastimes, the Supreme Lord accepts the *sannyāsa* order, and He is equipoised and peaceful. He is the highest abode of peace and devotion, for He silences the impersonalist nondevotees.”

Though this is mentioned in *Mahabharata*, it is not stated clearly in other places in the *sastra*. The reason is that this is a secret matter. Prahlada Maharaja states this in an indirect way in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (7.9.38): *channaḥ kalau yad abhavas tri-yugo 'tha sa tvam*, “Because the Lord appears in a hidden way in Kali-yuga, He is addressed as Triyuga.” The Lord is hidden because He covers His color and mood with other colors and moods so that contemporary people cannot recognize Him. The reason for this invisibility is that Kṛṣṇa desired to know the sweetness of Radhika’s *prema* by assuming Radha’s body, and taking up Her emotions and color. Although Srimati Radhika is the most hidden and secret of all, the Gaudiya Vaisnavas know this very well.

It is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.5.31-32): *nānā-tantra-vidhānena, kalāv api tathā śṛṇu... kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam*; “Now listen to the *sastric* rules for worshiping the Lord in Kali-yuga. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Intelligent people worship the Lord by loudly chanting His holy names.” The hidden meaning of this *pramana* (evidence) which appears in the discussion of *yugāvatāras* is proved as previously in an esoteric way. There are two meanings to this verse (11.5.31): *kalāv api* can mean in all Kali-yugas. Or it can mean the particular Kali-yuga during the twenty-eighth cycle in Brahma’s day. King Parikṣit was already attentive, but nevertheless Sukadeva further attracts his attention by saying *tathā śṛṇu*, “just hear me.” Because Sukadeva is going to explain the secret meaning of the *avatara* described in the scriptures,

he tells King Parkisit to pay close attention. In Kali-yuga, the *tantras* (supplementary Vedic scriptures) are the predominant proof, therefore, Sukadeva refers to them, *nānā-tantra-vidhānena*.

Considering the *Bhagavatam* verse (11.5.32): *kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam*, it is seen that whenever the Lord appears in Kali-yuga (once in the day of Brahma), He appears with a dark (*śyāma*) complexion. But His transcendental body is not black like a member of the lower class (*śūdra*). Rather Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body radiates a superbly beautiful effulgence (*tviṣā*) which is *ākṛṣṇam*, brighter than a mound of blue sapphires.

A second meaning of the above verse: In the Kali-yuga appearing in the twenty-eighth *yuga* cycle, the Supreme Lord is of the category (*varna*) of Kṛṣṇa but His effulgence is *akṛṣṇa* or *pīta* (yellow). Why yellow? Because in the description of the *yugavataras*, the colors white, red and blackish were previously mentioned. The only color left is *pīta*, yellow. Therefore *kṛṣṇa* and *pīta* combine in one body; inside *kṛṣṇa varna* (the category of Kṛṣṇa) and externally *pīta varna*. Or *kṛṣṇa varna* can mean one who described (*varṇana*) the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. The meaning of the rest of the verse (11.5.32) *sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam*... is clear and the same covered nature described there applies to both interpretations.

Text 14

*prāg ayam vasudevasya,
kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ,
vāsudeva iti śrīmān,
abhijñāḥ sampracakṣate*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Garga informed Nanda that in a previous life (*prāg*) his son was born in a solitary place from Vasudeva and was called Vāsudeva. Not only Garga, but knowledgeable persons also say this. In this way he discloses the fact.

Text 15

*bahūni santi nāmāni,
rūpāṇi ca sutasya te,
guṇa-karmānurūpāṇi,
tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “These names Kṛṣṇa and Vasudeva stated by me are not Your son’s only names. The white and other colored forms spoken by me are not His only forms.” He has other names such as Bhakta-vatsala, Sarvajna and Govardhana-dhari according to the qualities and activities He manifests. In the name Kṛṣṇa, *kṛs* means *sattārtha*, or “existence,” and *na* means *ānanda*, or “bliss.” According to Kesavacarya and others, He is called Kṛṣṇa because His body, which is composed of *mantras*, attracts (*kṛṣ*) the devotees and its color is black (*kṛṣṇa*). He is called Govinda because He herds the cows.

“If I, an astrologer, do not know this, what then can be said of the common man?” From Gargamuni’s words Nanda could understand that his son was a *mahapurusa*, who had undergone many births with many names. Gargamuni knew this because he was omniscient.

Text 16

*eṣa vaḥ śreya ādhāsyad,
gopa-gokula-nandanah,
anena sarva-durgāṇi,
yūyam aṅjas tariṣyatha*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Gargamuni continued, “Your son will produce (*ādhāsyad*) benefit, and give joy (*nandana*) to the cowherd men and the herds of cows (*gokula*).” Or *gopa-gokula-nandana* can refer to Kṛṣṇa’s becoming the son (*nandana*) of all the cowherds and cows by His expansions during the Brahma Vimohana pastime. Or the word *gopa* can be taken as a vocative address to Nanda Maharaja, ‘O cowherd.’

“By your son’s mercy you will very easily and happily cross over all obstacles. Whenever difficulties arise, your son, who is invested with the powers of Narayana, will deliver you. You should therefore take shelter of Him.”

Text 17

*purānena vraja-pate,
sādhavo dasyu-pīditāḥ,
arājake rakṣyamāṅā,
jigyur dasyūn samedhitāḥ*

O Nanda Mahārāja, as recorded in history, when there was an

irregular, incapable government, Indra having been dethroned, and people were being harassed and disturbed by thieves, this child appeared in order to protect the people and enable them to flourish, and He curbed the rogues and thieves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In another birth (*purā*) the demigods (*sādhavo*), who were harassed by the demons (*dasyu*) and bereft of their king (*ārajake*) Indra, were protected and made strong by your son.

Text 18

*ya etasmin mahā-bhāgāḥ,
prītiṁ kurvanti mānavāḥ,
nārayo 'bhibhavanty etān,
viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ*

Demons [asuras] cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to Kṛṣṇa is extremely fortunate. Because such persons are very much affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa, they cannot be defeated by demons like the associates of Kāmsa [or by the internal enemies, the senses].

Text 19

*tasmān nandātmajo 'yaṁ te,
nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ,
śrīyā kīrtyānubhāvena,
gopāyasva samāhitaḥ*

In conclusion, 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. You should all raise this child very carefully and cautiously.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Because your *iṣṭadeva* has been pleased he has given you a son like Narayana.” This is the intent of this verse.

“It is prescribed that you should chant the names Mukunda, Madhusudana and Narayana. In all good things there are obstacles, so therefore at every moment protect (*gopāyasva*) your son carefully. This son whom you protect will in turn protect you from all disturbances just like Narayana.”

Taking the meaning of *nārāyaṇa-samo* to mean “to whom Narayana is equal,” there is an inference of the inferiority of Narayana. The meaning would then be, “You have a son to whom Narayana is equal in qualities, but actually Kṛṣṇa is much more attractive than Narayana in other major qualities, such as granting liberation to the demons, giving *mahābhava* to His devotees, and displaying the *rasa-lila* which is unattainable by Lakṣmi.”

There is an alternative reading to the phrase *gopāyasva samāhitah*. It can mean the same as *gopāyasva*: to protect carefully; or it can also be taken as *gopa āya*: gain of the *gopas*, cowherd men. With *susamāhitah* it would mean, “Kṛṣṇa intently desires gain or good fortune for the cowherds.”

Text 20

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ātmānaṁ samādiśya,
garge ca sva-grhaṁ gate,
nandaḥ pramudito mene,
ātmānaṁ pūrṇam āśiṣāṁ*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: After Gargamuni, having instructed Nanda Mahārāja about Kṛṣṇa, departed for his own home, Nanda Mahārāja was very pleased and considered himself full of all good fortune.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He who attracted the life of Putana and Sakatasura also attracted the mind of the highly qualified Garga. Garga returned home after withdrawing his mind from Kṛṣṇa and directing it back to himself (*ātmānam samādiśya*).

Text 21

*kālena vrajatālpēna,
gokule rāma-keśavau,
jānubhyām saha pāñibhyām,
riṅgamāṇau vijahratuḥ*

After a short time passed, both brothers, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, began to crawl on the ground of Vraja with the strength of Their hands and knees and thus enjoy Their childhood play.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes mixed with *aiśvarya* (grandeur), such as killing Putana, and His *śuddha-madhurya-līla*, pure sweet pastimes, are both presented. Both are worthy of remembrance by Kṛṣṇa’s devotees.

Text 22

tāv aṅghri-yugmam anukṛṣya sarīsrpantau,

*ghoṣa-praghoṣa-ruciram vraja-kardameṣu,
tan-nāda-hṛṣṭa-manasāv anusṛtya lokam,
mugdha-prabhītavat upeyatur anti mātroh*

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, with the strength of Their legs, crawled in the muddy places created in Vraja by cow dung and cow urine, Their crawling resembled the crawling of serpents, and the sound of Their ankle bells was very charming. Very much pleased by the sound of other people’s ankle bells, They used to follow these people as if going to Their mothers, but when They saw that these were other people, They became afraid and returned to Their real mothers, Yaśodā and Rohiṇī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama crawled about the courtyard on Their hands and knees, and in a crooked way They moved through the dirt which was mixed with cow milk and urine. Their ankle bells tinkled pleasantly like the sound of *karatalas* or the voices of the *gopis* and *gopas* (*ghosa praghosa*). The cowherd men became blissful upon hearing Their jingling ankle bells. Sridhara Swami says *ghosa* means bells. When strangers came in the yard, the two boys, thinking they were Their mothers, would joyfully crawl after them. When They realized Their mistake, the two brothers would suddenly become fearful and scamper back to Their mothers.

mugdha bhītavat: enchanted and afraid; The suffix *vat* is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were playing the part of ordinary children who make mistakes and experience fear. But in reality They were not ordinary children.

Text 23

*tan-mātarau nija-sutau ghrṇayā snuvantyaū,
pañkāṅga-rāga-rucirāv upagrhya dorbhyām,*

*dattvā stanam prapibatoḥ sma mukham nirīkṣya,
mugdha-smitālpadaśanam yayatuḥ pramodam*

Dressed with muddy earth mixed with cow dung and cow urine, the babies looked very beautiful, and when They went to Their mothers, both Yaśodā and Rohiṇī picked Them up with great affection, embraced Them and allowed Them to suck the milk flowing from their breasts. While sucking the breast, the babies smiled, and Their small teeth were visible. Their mothers, upon seeing those beautiful teeth, enjoyed great transcendental bliss.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mother Yasoda and Rohini felt tremendous joy upon lifting the two children in their arms. The two mothers took both children as their own, and the two children took both mothers as Their own. Due to motherly affection (*ghṛṇayā*), milk flowed freely (*snuvantyaḥ*) from the breasts of Yasoda and Rohini. The dust on the bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama enhanced Their beauty and attraction just like cosmetics. This is established by using the metaphor of *sundare kim na sundaram*: an ornament looks more beautiful on a beautiful person. Mouth (*mukham*) is in the singular because each mother concentrated on the mouth of one child. The mothers derived great pleasure from seeing one or two small teeth (*ālpa daśanam mukham*) in their innocent, smiling mouths (*mugdha smita*).

Text 24

*yarhy aṅganā-darśanīya-kumāra-līlāv,
antar-vraje tad abalāḥ pragṛhīta-pucchaiḥ,
vatsair itas tata ubhāv anukṛṣyamāṇau,
prekṣantya ujjhita-gṛhā jahṛṣur hasantyaḥ*

Within the house of Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd ladies would enjoy seeing the pastimes of the babies Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The babies would catch the ends of the calves’ tails, and the calves would drag Them here and there. When the ladies saw these pastimes, they certainly stopped their household activities and laughed and enjoyed the incidents.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Kṛṣṇa and Balarama grew in size and beauty, and performed Their childhood pastimes (*kumāra-līlā*), They became very attractive to all the ladies (*aṅganā-darśanīya*). The women of Vraja (*abalāḥ*) became blissful (*jahr̥ṣur*) upon seeing the boys’ enjoying Their pastimes.

What pranks did the divine brothers perform? Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarama would grab the tails of the calves lying on the ground. Startled, the calves would jump up and run away while dragging the boys along the ground behind them. Instead of letting go, the boys would clutch their tails even more tightly out of fear and begin crying. The *gopis* would laugh and say to the boys, “You are weaker than these small calves still taking milk from the udder.” Then they would free Their hands from the calves’ tails.

Text 25

*śṛṅgy-agni-damṣṭry-asi-jala-dvija-kaṅtakebhyah,
krīḍā-parāv aticalau sva-sutau niṣeddhum,
gr̥hyāṇi kartum api yatra na taj-jananyau,
śekāta āpatur alam manaso ’navasthām*

When mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇī were unable to protect the babies from calamities threatened by horned cows, by fire, by animals with claws and teeth such as monkeys, dogs and cats, and by thorns, swords and other weapons on the ground, they were always

in anxiety, and their household engagements were disturbed. At that time, they were fully equipoised in the transcendental ecstasy known as the distress of material affection, for this was aroused within their minds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were very naughty (*aticalau*). Because They wanted to play with the horned creatures (*srngi*) like bulls, creatures with sharp teeth (*damstri*) like dogs, fire, knives and birds (*dvija*), the mothers could not properly perform their household duties. Thus their minds became disturbed (*anavasatha*). This is a *sancari bhava* that nourished the *vatsalya rasa*, motherly love of the elderly *gopis*.

Text 26

*kālenālpēna rājarse,
rāmahaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca gokule,
aghrṣṭa-jānubhiḥ padbhir,
vicakramatur aṅjasā*

O King Parīkṣit, within a very short time both Rāma and Kṛṣṇa began to walk very easily in Gokula on Their legs, by Their own strength, without the need to crawl.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Without scraping Their knees on the ground (*aghrṣṭa janubhiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarama effortlessly (*aṅjasā*) began walking about Gokula. The word *aṅjasā* is sometimes substituted with the word *ojasa*, which means boldly. In other words, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama stopped crawling and started walking boldly around Gokula.

Text 27

*tatas tu bhagavān kṛṣṇo,
vayasyair vraja-bālakaiḥ,
saha-rāmo vraja-strīṇām,
cikrīḍe janayan mudam*

Thereafter, Lord Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, began to play with the other children of the cowherd men, thus awakening the transcendental bliss of the cowherd women.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the pastimes of stealing butter, Kṛṣṇa was the predominant figure. Therefore, in this verse Kṛṣṇa is described as *saha-rāmo*, along with Balarama.

Text 28

*kṛṣṇasya gopyo ruciraṁ,
vīkṣya kaumāra-cāpalam,
śṛṇvantyāḥ kila tan-mātur,
iti hocuḥ samāgatāḥ*

Observing the very attractive childish restlessness of Kṛṣṇa, all the gopīs in the neighborhood, to hear about Kṛṣṇa’s activities again and again, would approach mother Yaśodā and speak to her as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the naughty pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and enjoying (*ruciram*) them very much, the *gopīs* in the neighborhood would approach Yasoda and tell her what they saw. When they would gather in Yasoda’s house, Yasoda would stop her many household chores and listen to the activities of her child. On the pretext of

reprimanding her for not controlling her restless son, the *gopis* would give great joy to mother Yasoda.

Text 29

*vatsān muñcan kvacid asamaye krośa-sañjāta-hāsaḥ,
steyam svādv atty atha dadhi-payah kalpitaiḥ steya-yogaiḥ,
markān bhokṣyan vibhajati sa cen nātti bhāṇḍam bhinnatti,
dravyālābhe sagrha-kupito yāty upakrośya tokān*

Our dear friend Yaśodā, 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 that 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.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Mother Yasoda, just hear about your son’s mischievous deeds! Just before dawn, Your restless son walks around the neighborhood looking for an opportunity to steal some yogurt. Before the milking time (*asamaye*) He releases the calves, and they proceed to drink all their mothers’ milk. When everyone runs hither and thither to catch the calves, Kṛṣṇa stealthily enters their houses, steals yogurt and runs away. One day when that yogurt-thief came, we shouted ‘Beat Him! Tie Him up!’ But He smiled ever so sweetly. Smitten by His intoxicating smile, we forgot everything. Stunned, we just watched Him do His dirty work without

responding. Sitting calmly He ate our milk and butter without even running away, while we stood by totally bewildered.”

Yasoda replied, “In that case why didn’t you just let Him eat till his belly was full?”

Gopis: “He is always being fed by you so He has no hunger. It is not a question of hunger. He has a taste for stealing. He likes to steal milk and yogurt. He does not like it if we give it to Him. Being skillful at releasing the calves and at smiling, Kṛṣṇa steals in two ways: beyond our sight and before our eyes.

“Using His intelligence He finds different ways to steal. One day even before eating the yogurt Himself, He distributed it to the monkeys. When all the monkeys had taken their fill and could eat no more, Kṛṣṇa thought, “Without you what is the use of My eating? So I will not eat.” Then in anger He broke the yogurt pots.

“When He enters a house and does not find any yogurt, He becomes angry at the occupants (*sagrha*) and says, ‘Stay here. I will come back tomorrow morning with a flaming torch in My hand. If you don’t give Me some yogurt, I will burn down your house along with your relatives and children.’ After saying that Kṛṣṇa makes the small children cry by scratching them with His nails.”

Text 30

*hastāgrāhye racayati vidhim pīṭhakolūkhalādyaiś,
chidram hy antar-nihita-vayunaḥ śikya-bhāṇḍeṣu tad-vit,
dhvāntāgāre dhṛta-maṇi-gaṇam svāṅgam artha-pradīpaṁ,
kāle gopyo yarhi gr̥ha-kṛtyeṣu suvyagra-cittāḥ*

When the milk and curd are kept high on a swing hanging from the ceiling and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma cannot reach it, They arrange to reach it by piling up various planks and turning upside down the mortar for grinding spices. Being quite aware of the contents of a

pot, They pick holes in it. While the elderly gopīs go about their household affairs, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sometimes go into a dark room, brightening the place with the valuable jewels and ornaments on Their bodies and taking advantage of this light by stealing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* continue, “Another day He entered a house where the yogurt pot was beyond reach, so He devised a method to get it (*vidhim racayati*). Sometimes He piles up chairs, climbs atop a grinding mortar, or the shoulders of a friend. Just by seeing the exterior of a pot hanging from the ceiling on a string (*sikabhandesu*), He knows (*vayunah*) its contents. If He cannot loot the pot, He makes a hole in it with a pole having a sharp iron point. He is very learned in all this work (*tadvit*): how to put a hole in the pot, how to make the yogurt pour out, and how to open the mouths of the boys so they can take their fill. Even a dark storeroom is no obstacle for Kṛṣṇa and His friends. The brilliant jewels on their bodies (*svangam*) act as lamps to brighten the room. He knows all the tricks of the trade.” Yasoda replies, “Why aren’t you more careful?”

Gopis: “Your son only comes when everyone is busily engaged in household affairs. Though Kṛṣṇa has already stolen our hearts with the bewitching power of His gentle smile, His baby talk, His sweet movements and His beautiful body, still He likes to steal our yogurt on the sly. Before stealing, Kṛṣṇa sends some boys as spies to find out who’s there in the *gopis*’ homes.”

Text 31

*evam dhārṣṭyāny uśati kurute mehanādīni vāstau,
steyopāyair viracita-kṛtiḥ supratīko yathāste,
itthaṁ strībhiḥ sa-bhaya-nayana-śrī-mukhālokinībhir,
vyākhyātārthā prahasita-mukhī na hy upālabdhum aicchat*

When Kṛṣṇa is caught in His naughty activities, the master of the house will say to Him, ‘Oh, You are a thief,’ and artificially express anger at Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will then reply, ‘I am not a thief. You are a thief.’ Sometimes, being angry, Kṛṣṇa passes urine and stool in a neat, clean place in our houses. But now, our dear friend Yaśodā, this expert thief is sitting before you like a very good boy.” Sometimes all the gopīs would look at Kṛṣṇa sitting there, His eyes fearful so that His mother would not chastise Him, and when they saw Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful face, instead of chastising Him they would simply look upon His face and enjoy transcendental bliss. Mother Yaśodā would mildly smile at all this fun, and she would not want to chastise her blessed transcendental child.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: The gopīs continue, “O Yasoda, O famous one, you appear very blissful on hearing the pastimes of your son. It is not only that He steals, He also passes stool and urine (*mehanadini*) in the room set aside for worship (*vastau*) and thus contaminates it. He also pulls the ladies’ braids and *saris*, kicks them and proposes marriage to them. In the future this son will bring you lots of wealth. Now He is stealing yogurt, but when He grows up He will steal others’ money and wives. But now He looks very innocent in front of you (*supratikah*).”

Now the result of the gopīs’ loving criticism is stated. Thinking Yasoda might beat Him, Kṛṣṇa showed fear in His eyes and His beautiful face trembled. The gopīs could not help but look at Kṛṣṇa’s charming face. Everything was told to Yasoda (*vyakhyata artha*), who had become blissful on seeing Kṛṣṇa’s face, which was illuminated with different emotions, and by hearing about His wonderful pranks. Yasoda simply beamed a wide smile (*prahasita mukha*), but she harbored no desire to scold her son.

Yasoda thought, “Let the gopīs drown in bliss by my son’s mischief-making. And when such incidents are reported to me, let these stories drown me in bliss too.” Though not explicitly stated here, this mood should be understood.

Text 32

*ekadā krīḍamānās te,
rāmādyā gopa-dārakāḥ,
kṛṣṇo mṛdam bhakṣitavān,
iti mātṛe nyavedayan*

One day while Kṛṣṇa was playing with His small playmates, including Balarāma and other sons of the gopas, all His friends came together and lodged a complaint to mother Yaśodā. “Mother,” they submitted, “Kṛṣṇa has eaten earth.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The taste of maternal affection (*vatsalya rasa*) by the *gopis* finding fault in Kṛṣṇa has been completed. This verse presents the taste of *vismaya rasa* (astonishment) by the criticisms of Kṛṣṇa’s friends. Kṛṣṇa was not scolded for stealing yogurt, but He was scolded for eating dirt. Both were incited by love.

Text 33

*sā gṛhītvā kare kṛṣṇam,
upālabhya hitaiṣiṇī,
yaśodā bhaya-sambhrānta,
prekṣaṇākṣam abhāṣata*

Upon hearing this from Kṛṣṇa’s playmates, mother Yaśodā, who was always full of anxiety over Kṛṣṇa’s welfare, picked Kṛṣṇa up with her hands to look into His mouth and chastise Him. Her eyes fearful, she spoke to her son as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda held Kṛṣṇa by the hand for fear that He would run away. Though Yasoda scolded him, her intention was to benefit (*hitaisini*) Him. In this case scolding and beating nourish the *prema*; they are not faults. This is the usual habit of a mother towards her son, so it is not unjust. Kṛṣṇa’s eyes were filled with fear. But this fear is an ornament of the Lord caused by *prema*. It is not a fault.

Text 34

*kasmān mṛdam adāntātman,
bhavān bhakṣitavān rahah,
vadanti tāvakā hy ete,
kumārās te 'grajo 'py ayam*

Dear Kṛṣṇa, why are You so restless that You have eaten dirt in a solitary place? This complaint has been lodged against You by all Your playmates, including Your elder brother, Balarāma. How is this?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda said, “O one with restless body and mind! Did You eat dirt? Did You not get sweets in my house? Not in my presence, but stealthily (*rahah*) You have done it. Your friends are saying this, so it cannot be false. You cannot say that they are speaking against You because they want me to beat You, because even Baladeva is saying this. He is standing right here saying this. There is no doubt about it.”

Text 35

nāham bhakṣitavān amba,

*sarve mithyābhiśamsinaḥ,
yadi satya-giras tarhi,
samakṣam paśya me mukham*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied: My dear mother, I have never eaten dirt. All My friends complaining against Me are liars. If you think they are being truthful, you can directly look into My mouth and examine it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I did not eat dirt.” To tell a lie for fear of being beaten is natural for a child, and it nourishes the *vatsalya-bhava*, parental affection. *Vatsalya* and other *rasas* spring from *prema*, and *prema* rests within a devotee’s heart. It arises in the devotee because of Kṛṣṇa’s inherent affection for His devotees (*bhakta vatsala*). The Lord’s quality of *bhakta vatsalya* is greater than any of His other spiritual qualities such as purity, mercy or truthfulness. As Kṛṣṇa’s telling a lie springs from this *bhakta vatsalya*, it is not a fault. Rather it is the crown jewel of all great qualities.

Text 36

*yady evam tarhi vyādehī,
ty uktaḥ sa bhagavān hariḥ,
vyādattāvyāhataiśvaryaḥ,
krīḍā-manuja-bālakah*

Mother Yaśodā challenged Kṛṣṇa, “If You have not eaten earth, then open Your mouth wide.” When challenged by His mother in this way, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, to exhibit pastimes like a human child, opened His mouth. Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, who is full of all

opulences, did not disturb His mother’s parental affection, His opulence was automatically displayed, for Kṛṣṇa’s opulence is never lost at any stage, but is manifest at the proper time.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being afraid of punishment, Kṛṣṇa told a lie so that Yasoda could not detect His fault. However, how could He do this? If Kṛṣṇa were to open His mouth the evidence would be found. The answer is given: Kṛṣṇa possesses unimpeded, non-contradictory power (*āvyāhataiśvaryaḥ*). He whose power is never conquered does not display this power because of the influence of sweetness of love. But looking for service, it finds some opportunity. Inspired by the boy’s power of *satya sankalpa* (whose very desire must be fulfilled), this unimpeded *aiśvarya* on its own manifested the universal form, and Yasoda, lost in astonishment, forgot to scold her son.

Was it necessary for Kṛṣṇa to taste the sweetness of *prema* and thus have to show fear of being beaten? He could have stood there without fear, taking the help of His *aiśvarya sakti*, thinking “I am the Lord.” The answer is found in the words *kṛida pradhana manuja balakah*, which means that Kṛṣṇa specifically took the form of a human child to perform many playful, sweet pastimes in Vraja.

Texts 37–39

*sā tatra dadṛśe viśvaṁ,
jagat sthāsnu ca khaṁ diśaḥ,
sādri-dvīpābdhi-bhūgolaṁ,
sa-vāyva-agnīndu-tārakam,
jyotiś-cakraṁ jalaṁ tejo,
nabhasvān viyad eva ca,
vaikārikāṅīndriyāṇi,
mano mātrā guṇās trayāḥ,
etad vicitraṁ saha-jīva-kāla,
svabhāva-karmāśaya-liṅga-bhedam,*

*sūnos tanau vīksya vidāritāsyē,
vrajaṁ sahātmānam avāpa śaṅkāṁ*

When Kṛṣṇa opened His mouth wide by the order of mother Yaśodā, she saw within His mouth all moving and nonmoving entities, outer space, and all directions, along with mountains, islands, oceans, the surface of the earth, the blowing wind, fire, the moon and the stars. She saw the planetary systems, water, light, air, sky, and creation by transformation of ahaṅkāra. She also saw the senses, the mind, sense perception, and the three qualities goodness, passion and ignorance. She saw the time allotted for the living entities, she saw natural instinct and the reactions of karma, and she saw desires and different varieties of bodies, moving and nonmoving. Seeing all these aspects of the cosmic manifestation, along with herself and Vṛndāvana-dhāma, she became doubtful and fearful of her son's nature.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to the prayers of Lord Brahma, Yasoda did not see the universe in Kṛṣṇa's mouth but in His belly. *Jagat* means moving and *sthasnu* means immobile living entities. *Kham* means *antariksa* or *bhuvar loka*, the celestial sky. *Sādri* refers to the whole earth along with its mountains, islands and oceans. *Savāyuh* refers to the blowing wind which moves the planets. *Nabhasvan* means outer space. *Vaikarikani* is the demigod in charge of the senses. *Gunas trayah* are the three material qualities: *sattva*, *raja* and *tamas*. Yasoda could see these formless things by seeing the form of their presiding deities, and in when they assumed gross forms. At the same time (*saha*) Yasoda saw the *jiva* (living entity) and *kala* (time) which agitates the *gunas*; *svabhava*, the cause of transformation; and *karma āśaya*, the cause of birth and the resultant action and desire for material enjoyment.

Kṛṣṇa showed the variegated universe within which exist all the different forms of bodies. *Tanau* means in Kṛṣṇa's body, but specifically

in His belly. Through Kṛṣṇa’s wide-open mouth, Yasoda saw all these marvelous things in Kṛṣṇa’s belly. She also saw herself along with her son and husband in Vraja. Brahma’s words indicate that this vision was of this particular universe. The universe was simultaneously inside Kṛṣṇa’s belly and outside as well by the inconceivable power of *yogamaya*. By showing Himself within the universe and by pervading the universe at the same time, Kṛṣṇa showed His limited and unlimited natures.

The vision of the Lord in the universe and the universe in the Lord, which was meant for the *santa-bhaktas* (reverential devotees), was shown to Yasoda, whose lotus feet are touched by the heads of the *madhurya-bhaktas* (intimate confidential devotees). Upon attaining this amazing vision, Yasoda began to worry about her son.

Text 40

*kiṁ svapna etad uta devamāyā,
kiṁ vā madīyo bata buddhi-mohaḥ,
atho amuṣyaiva mamārbhakasya,
yaḥ kaścana utpattika ātma-yogaḥ*

[Mother Yaśodā began to argue within herself:] Is this a dream, or is it an illusory creation by the external energy? Has this been manifested by my own intelligence, or is it some mystic power of my child?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Yasoda began to argue within herself about the cause of the vision: “I am not dreaming because my eyes are wide open. Is this some illusion created by the demigods? Why should the demigods delude an insignificant person like me? Is it some mental derangement? No, because my mind is stable and in good working order. This vision must be due to some mystic power (*ātma yoga*) of my

son, since Gargamuni said He would have qualities like Narayana.”

Text 41

*atho yathāvan na vitarka-gocaram,
ceto-manaḥ-karma-vacobhir añjasā,
yad-āśrayam yena yataḥ pratīyate,
sudurvibhāvyaṁ praṇatāsmi tat-padam*

Therefore let me surrender unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead and offer my obeisances unto Him, who is beyond the conception of human speculation, the mind, activities, words and arguments, who is the original cause of this cosmic manifestation, by whom the entire cosmos is maintained, and by whom we can conceive of its existence. Let me simply offer my obeisances, for He is beyond my contemplation, speculation and meditation. He is beyond all of my material activities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda rejected the last reason after seeing her son’s hunger, thirst, naughtiness and innocence. Not finding any real cause of the vision, Yasoda simply offered respects to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, who is the ultimate cause of all things beyond our comprehension, and prayed for His protection.

Yasoda prayed, “The Supreme Lord is the shelter of the visible universe (*yad asraya*). He creates the universe (*yataḥ*), and is the visible cause of the universe (*yena*). But He cannot be understood by persons like me (*durvibhavya*). Let me simply offer my respects to His lotus feet (*tat padam*) with my mind, intelligence, actions and words. May He please remove all disturbances from my child.”

Text 42

*aham mamāsau patir eṣa me suto,
vrajeśvarasyākhila-vittapā satī,
gopyaś ca gopāḥ saha-godhanāś ca me,
yan-māyayettham kumatih sa me gatih*

It is by the influence of the Supreme Lord’s māyā that I am wrongly thinking that Nanda Mahārāja is my husband, that Kṛṣṇa is my son, and that because I am the queen of Nanda Mahārāja, all the wealth of cows and calves are my possessions and all the cowherd men and their wives are my subjects. Actually, I also am eternally subordinate to the Supreme Lord. He is my ultimate shelter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda prayed, “The Supreme Lord maintains and protects my son. If that is so, then what is the use of my foolishly thinking in terms of I and mine?”

Giving up her false conceptions and surrendering to the Lord, Yasoda speaks: “I think that I am the wife of Nanda Maharaja, and the Queen of all the cowherd men and women of Vraja. All the wealth and cows are my possessions. I think that Kṛṣṇa, who is the life of the residents of Vraja, is my son and that I am His maintainer. By daily worship of Visnu, the *brahmanas* and the demigods, by meditation and by giving charity, I myself can give protection to my son.

“This is all misconception. I should not be so proud because actually all of Vraja’s wealth has come by the mercy of Visnu. Similarly, it was Visnu’s mercy that my child was protected at every moment from demons like Putana. I should not think that I, as just another mother among the common cowherds with earthly sentiments, am His protector.”

This type of logic is temporary and not permanent in Yasoda. It is similar to the temporary desire of the confirmed materialist to give up wife and family because of some temporary spiritual urge.

Text 43

*ittham vidita-tattvāyām,
gopikāyām sa īśvaraḥ,
vaiṣṇavīm vyatanon māyām,
putra-snehamayīm vibhuh*

Mother Yaśodā, by the grace of the Lord, could understand the real truth. But then again, the supreme master, by the influence of the internal potency, yogamāyā, inspired her to become absorbed in intense maternal affection for her son.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Discerning the truth in this way (*ittham vidita tattvayam*), Yasoda desired to give up her sense of possessiveness. But then the Lord as a small boy thought, “Who will cuddle and hold Me?” When Kṛṣṇa thought in this way, Yasoda was overcome by the very form of affection for her son (*putrasneha mayīm*). The word *mayīm* in this phrase means affection itself, namely *prema* in the form of parental affection, *vatsalya-bhāva*. The word *māyām* here indicates bewilderment. In other words, Yasoda became blinded by *prema*.

Text 44

*sadyo naṣṭa-smṛtir gopī,
sāropyāroham ātmajam,
pravṛddha-sneha-kalila,
hṛdayāsīd yathā purā*

Immediately forgetting yogamāyā’s illusion that Kṛṣṇa had shown

the universal form within His mouth, mother Yaśodā took her son on her lap as before, feeling increased affection in her heart for her transcendental child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as one quickly forgets a dream, through the influence of *maya*, Yasoda forgot completely about the universal form. In the presence of *aiśvarya jñāna* (knowledge of the Lord's opulence and majesty), intimacy and affection is restricted. Now being unrestricted, Yasoda's affection increased even more. Sukadeva describes Yasoda as *pravṛddha sneha kalila hṛdaya*: one whose heart was completely covered (*kalila*) with increased affection.

Text 45

*trayyā copaniṣadbhiś ca,
sāṅkhya-yogaiś ca sātvatāiḥ,
upagīyamāna-māhātmyam,
hariṁ sāmānyatātmajam*

The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are studied through the three Vedas, the Upaniṣads, the literature of Sāṅkhya-yoga, and other Vaiṣṇava literature, yet mother Yaśodā considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse, Vyāsadeva shows how Yasoda's maternal love was superior to that of Devaki. Yasoda's love remained unrestricted in spite of seeing Kṛṣṇa's powers and hearing about the Lord's powers from the scriptures such as the three *Vedas* which glorify Kṛṣṇa as the *yajna puruṣa* (Lord Viṣnu, the personal beneficiary of all sacrifices). Kṛṣṇa is glorified as the *puruṣa* (Supreme Lord) in the *Saṅkhya sastras*; the Paramātmā in the *Yoga-sutras*, and as Bhagavan in the *Pancaratra* writings (*Satvata*).

Without regard for time or place, mother Yasoda considered the all-powerful Lord, who is glorified directly and indirectly in the scriptures, as an ordinary child. Yasoda thought, “By the mercy of our powerful family deity Lord Narayana, who has been satisfied with the austerities and worship executed by Nanda and me, and who has been satisfied with the many austerities of Parjanya, I have been given this son, who the *karmis* glorify as the Absolute Truth propounded in the scriptures. People accept this because of Gargamuni’s statement that Kṛṣṇa is equal in quality to Narayana, and because of the stories of Kṛṣṇa’s killing gigantic demons like Putana and others. Therefore, everyone believes my son is Narayana. But actually He is just my child. If He does not see me for a moment, He becomes very disturbed. I also become disturbed when separated a moment from Him. Our experience is our proof.” In this way, mother Yasoda thought about Kṛṣṇa.

As the fruitive workers think of the Lord as the *yajna purusa* according to the *Vedas*, similarly, Yasoda thought of the Lord as her son due to her *vatsalya prema*. Just as Kṛṣṇa gives results to the *karmis* who worship Him, He reciprocated with Yasoda’s maternal affection. But Kṛṣṇa could not respond fully to the amount of affection offered by Yasoda. Remaining a debtor, Kṛṣṇa was content to be dependent on Yasoda’s mercy and control and cry for her milk. This will become clear in later chapters.

One should take this verse as a *paribhasa sutra* of *kṛṣṇa-lila*. As a lamp sits in one place in a dark room and lights up the whole room, so that statement in the scriptures which can reveal the meaning of all scriptures or regulate the meaning of the scriptures is called a *paribhasa-sutra*. This verse stands as a regulator for all of the pastimes related to *aisvarya* (displays of power and opulence) shown during Kṛṣṇa’s *kaumara* and *kaisora* (childhood and youthful) ages in Mathura, Kuruksetra and elsewhere.

*śrī-rājovāca,
nandaḥ kim akarod brahman,
śreya evaṁ mahodayam,
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā,
papau yasyāḥ stanam hariḥ*

Having heard of the great fortune of mother Yaśodā, Parīkṣit Mahārāja inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: O learned brāhmaṇa, mother Yaśodā’s breast milk was sucked by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What past auspicious activities did she and Nanda Mahārāja perform to achieve such perfection in ecstatic love?

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing how Yasoda’s love did not diminish in the least even after hearing about and seeing the Lord’s powers, and understanding that Yasoda and Nanda’s love far surpassed that of the *karmis* and even the normal devotees, Parikṣit became greatly astonished and inquired from Sukadeva Gosvami. King Parikṣit asked, “What pious activities (*śreya mahodayam*) Nanda must have performed to get such great results?” Parikṣit refers to Yasoda as *mahābhāga* (most fortunate) because her pious activities were even more.

Text 47

*pitarau nānvavindetām,
kṛṣṇodārār-bhakehitam,
gāyanty adyāpi kavayo,
yal loka-śamalāpaham*

Although Kṛṣṇa was so pleased with Vasudeva and Devakī that He

descended as their son, they could not enjoy Kṛṣṇa's magnanimous childhood pastimes, which are so great that simply chanting about them vanquishes the contamination of the material world. Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, however, enjoyed these pastimes fully, and therefore their position is always better than that of Vasudeva and Devakī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since Kṛṣṇa also drank Devakī's milk, what is the difference between her and Yasoda? This verse answers by saying that Devakī and Vasudeva (*pitaraū*), who are famous in our family, could not enjoy with their eyes (*na avindetam*) Kṛṣṇa's joyful (*udara:* giving happiness) childhood pastimes. The word *udara* (magnanimous) also indicates that Rohini, who took the role of Balarama's mother, and the *gopis*, who acted as Kṛṣṇa mothers during the stealing of the calves, were not excluded from seeing Kṛṣṇa's joyful childhood pastimes whereas Vasudeva and Devakī were.

Text 48

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
droṇo vasūnām pravaro,
dharayā bhāryayā saha,
kariṣyamāṇa ādeśān,
brahmaṇas tam uvāca ha*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: To follow the orders of Lord Brahmā, Droṇa, the best of the Vasus, along with his wife, Dharā, spoke to Lord Brahmā in this way.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because Kṛṣṇa's appearance and His childhood pastimes are eternal, Nanda and Yasoda should also be nitya-siddha, eternally liberated associates of the Lord. A sadhana-siddha is

not qualified to attain the same post as Nanda and Yasoda. Knowing this and that his answer should be suitable to the devotional nature of the question, Sukadeva replied to King Pariksit with an indifferent attitude. Following the order of Brahma means the order to appear as gopas and gopis in Vrndavana.

Text 49

*jātayor nau mahādeve,
bhuvi viśveśvare harau,
bhaktiḥ syāt paramā loke,
yayāñjo durgatiṁ taret*

Droṇa and Dharā said: 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, so that those born in this material world may very easily be delivered from the miserable condition of materialistic life by accepting this devotional service.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse refers to their future lives. Mahādeve means one who has great pastimes. Drona and Dhara would be born on the earth (*bhuvī*) where the Lord would appear. Viśveśvare means the Lord who maintains full power though appearing within the material universe. According to the statement of Uddhava in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.15), Kṛṣṇa, the master of Narayana and Brahma, appeared along with His plenary portions such as Mahavisnu, Matsya and Kurma. In other words, Kṛṣṇa is *purna* or full. Hari means He who steals the mind. According to the logic of “seeing the result one can infer the cause” the words *paramā bhaktiḥ* must mean *vatsalya bhakti* suitable to a mother and father.

“In the future, others who hear about and glorify the services we rendered to the cowherd boy Kṛṣṇa will easily attain that most difficult to obtain liberation.” In this way, Drona and Dhara performed pure *sadhana-bhakti* and prayed for pure *prema bhakti*. It was different from the *bhakti* of Prsni and Sutapa who performed *bhakti* mixed with austerity and *yoga*. This was explained previously. The result of their *bhakti* was also seen.

Text 50

*astv ity uktaḥ sa bhagavān,
vraje droṇo mahā-yaśāḥ,
jajñe nanda iti khyāto,
yaśodā sā dharābhavat*

When Brahmā said, “Yes, let it be so,” the most fortune Droṇa, who was equal to Bhagavān, appeared in Vrajabura, Vṛndāvana, as the most famous Nanda Mahārāja, and his wife, Dharā, appeared as mother Yaśodā.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Drona was born in Vraja as Nanda and Dharā was born as Yasoda. Actually it should be understood that Drona and Dhara, who were sadhana-siddhas, entered into the nitya-siddha forms of Nanda and Yasoda at that time.

Text 51

*tato bhaktir bhagavati,
putrī-bhūte janārdane,
dampatyor nitarām āsīd,
gopa-gopīṣu bhārata*

Thereafter, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, best of the Bhāratas, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead became the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, they maintained continuous, unswerving devotional love in parental affection. And in their association, all the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, the gopas and gopīs, developed the culture of kṛṣṇa-bhakti.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *janā* in *janārdane* means *gopijana*. *Ardana* means asking and tormenting. Kṛṣṇa is called Janardana because He tormented the *gopīs* by stealing butter and other mischief, and by asking for their breast milk. Nanda and Yasoda's (*dampatayor*) devotion for Janardana existed from before (*asit*), and it was superior (*nitaram*) to that of all the other gopas and *gopīs*. It is understood from this that some of the gopas and *gopīs* had also practiced *bhakti* like Drona and Dhara in their previous lives.

Text 52

*kṛṣṇo brahmaṇa ādeśam,
satyaṁ kartuṁ vraje vibhuḥ,
saha-rāmo vasaṁś cakre,
teṣāṁ prītiṁ sva-līlayā*

Thus the Supreme Personality, Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, lived in Vrajabhūmi, Vṛndāvana, just to substantiate the benediction of Brahmā. By exhibiting different pastimes in His childhood, He increased the transcendental pleasure of Nanda and the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to fulfill the benediction of

Brahma: “May you attain *paramā-bhakti*” Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarama, instilled *prema* in the hearts of Nanda, Yasoda and all the other Vrajavasis (*cakre teṣāṁ prītiṁ*) through His wonderful pastimes in Vraja Gokula.

Chapter Nine: Mother Yasoda Binds Lord Kṛṣṇa

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ekadā gṛha-dāsīṣu,
yaśodā nanda-gehinī,
karmāntara-niyuktāsu,
nirmamantha svayaṁ dadhi,
yāni yānīha gītāni,
tad-bāla-caritāni ca,
dadhi-nirmanthane kale,
smarantī tāny agāyata*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: One day when mother Yaśodā saw that all the maidservants were engaged in other household affairs, she personally began to churn the yogurt. While churning, she remembered the childish activities of Kṛṣṇa, and in her own way she composed songs and enjoyed singing to herself about all those activities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa stopped Yasoda from churning yogurt in order to drink her breastmilk, and how Yasoda put Kṛṣṇa down to go elsewhere.

Verse 1: Kṛṣṇa became angry because He was not finished drinking, so He broke the churning pot, stole butter, and was bound up by mother Yasoda.

“You bind up the people who are engulfed in theft, anger and other low qualities and make them cry. Now You, who have become implicated in theft, overwhelmed with anger and bound up by Yasoda, are crying!”

The most astonishing and uncommon parental love (*vatsalya-prema*) wherein Kṛṣṇa became the object (*viṣaya*) and Nanda and Yasoda were the shelter (*āśrayā*) must have been the result of a most extraordinary and unparalleled form of *sadhana*. Parikṣit had asked the question to Sukadeva, but the story of Drona and Dhara did not reveal such extraordinary *sadhana*. Seeing that Parikṣit was not too pleased, Sukadeva told him about Kṛṣṇa's *damodara-lila* to give the real answer to Parikṣit's question: "What past auspicious activities did Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja perform to achieve the perfection of getting Kṛṣṇa as their son?" (SB 10.8.46)

On the Dipavali Day (festival day of lighting ghee lamps), Yasoda began churning yogurt for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. She became absorbed in thought how from among her husband's countless cows, there were seven or eight, who were as rare as a horse with one black ear; who ate the most fragrant grass; and who gave the tastiest, fragrant milk for the satisfaction of her son.

Yasoda personally churned because she wanted to make special butter for her son. How could her servants who often burn the milk do this properly? Driven by a stubbornness arising from *vatsalya-prema*, Yasoda concluded that others could not do the job properly. From that day forward, Yasoda resolved that she would prepare all Kṛṣṇa's butter, milk and other eatables. They would be so tasty that Kṛṣṇa would no longer go to others' houses to steal. Yasoda was churning the best yogurt from among countless samples that she had prepared the day before with her own hands.

Verse 2: The ladies of Vraja poeticized all of Kṛṣṇa's childhood activities. Having collected all these songs, mother Yasoda began to sing these songs in order to pacify her longing to see Kṛṣṇa, who was sleeping in another room.

Text 3

kṣaumaṁ vāsaḥ pṛthu-kaṭi-taṭe bibhratī sūtra-naddham,

*putra-sneha-snuta-kuca-yugam jāta-kampaṁ ca subhrūḥ,
rajiv-ākarsa-śrama-bhuja-calat-kaṅkaṇau kuṅdale ca,
svinnam vaktram kabara-vigalan-mālatī nirmamantha*

Dressed in a saffron-yellow sari, with a belt tied about her full hips, mother Yaśodā pulled on the churning rope, laboring considerably, her bangles and earrings moving and vibrating and her whole body shaking. Because of her intense love for her child, her breasts were wet with milk. Her face, with its very beautiful eyebrows, was wet with perspiration, and *mālatī* flowers were falling from her hair.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse presents the ideal of motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa. Anyone interested in cultivating *vatsalya-bhava*, parental love, should meditate upon the bodily form, qualities, features and affection of mother Yasoda described here.

Yasoda's yellow *sari* (*kṣaumam*) was very fine, being made from fibers of the *atasi* tree. According to the *Krama Dipika*, Yasoda's complexion was blackish. She wore a belt around her full hips while churning the butter. The beauty of all of Yasoda's limbs is indicated just by mentioning her wide hips, moving eyebrows and tinkling bangles. Her arms, tired from churning, and her sweating face both shone. *Malati* flowers fell like drops of rain from Yasoda's beautiful hair, which was blacker than a rain cloud.

Text 4

*tām stanya-kāma āsādyā,
mathnantīm jananīm hariḥ,
gṛhītvā dadhi-manthānam,
nyaśedhat prītim āvahan*

While mother Yaśodā was churning butter, Lord Kṛṣṇa, desiring to drink the milk of her breast, appeared before her, and in order to increase her transcendental pleasure, He caught hold of the churning rod and began to prevent her from churning.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa started crying from hunger upon waking in the morning. Leaving His room, Kṛṣṇa approached Yasoda and held the churning rod to indicate she should stop churning and attend to Him. Yasoda's bliss increased unlimitedly upon perceiving Kṛṣṇa's cleverness.

Text 5

*tam aṅkam ārūḍham apāyayat stanam,
sneha-snutam sa-smitam īkṣatī mukham,
atṛptam utsrjya javena sā yayāv,
utsicyamāne payasi tv adhiśrite*

Mother Yaśodā then embraced Kṛṣṇa, allowed Him to sit down on her lap, and began to look upon the face of the Lord with great love and affection. Because of her intense affection, milk was flowing from her breast. But when she saw that the milk pan on the oven was boiling over, she immediately left her son to take care of the overflowing milk, although the child was not yet fully satisfied with drinking the milk of His mother's breast.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: "Oh how intelligent this child is!" Saying this, Yasoda stopped churning and put Kṛṣṇa on her lap to feed Him her breast-milk. But why did mother Yasoda suddenly get up and leave? She got up to attend to the milk boiling over on the stove. But how could Yasoda show so much interest in the boiling milk that she left Kṛṣṇa unsatisfied and hungry? Yasoda was so concerned for

what Kṛṣṇa would eat and drink that she could temporarily ignore Kṛṣṇa. Only those under the sway of *prema* can understand or talk about the remarkable actions of one impelled by pure love for Kṛṣṇa. No one else can understand these matters.

Text 6

*sañjāta-kopaḥ sphuritāruṇādharam,
sandaśya dadbhir dadhi-mantha-bhājanam,
bhittvā mṛṣāśrur dṛṣad-aśmanā raho,
jaghāsa haiyaṅgavam antaram gataḥ*

Being very angry and biting His reddish lips with His teeth, Kṛṣṇa, with false tears in His eyes, broke the container of yogurt with a piece of stone. Then He entered a room and began to eat the freshly churned butter in a solitary place.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though it was useless (*mṛṣāśrur*), Kṛṣṇa shed tears as this is the nature of a small child. Kṛṣṇa used a stone (*dṛṣad-aśmanā*) to make a hole in the pot without making any sound. Then He went into another room and ate the butter made from the previous day's milk (*haiyaṅgavam*).

Text 7

*uttārya gopī suśrtam payaḥ punaḥ,
praviśya saṁdṛśya ca dadhy-amatrakam,
bhagnaṁ vilokya sva-sutasya karma taj,
jahāsa taṁ cāpi na tatra paśyatī*

Mother Yaśodā, after taking down the hot milk from the oven, returned to the churning spot, and when she saw that the container of yogurt was broken and that Kṛṣṇa was not present, she concluded that the breaking of the pot was the work of Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After removing the hot milk (*suśṛtaṁ payaḥ*) from the stove, Yasoda returned to the churning spot. There she saw the sturdy shiny yogurt pot (*dadhy amatrakam*) lying broken on the floor. The suffix *ka* is added to *amatrakam* out of sympathy for its sorry state. Yasoda concluded that this was definitely the work of her son. Touching her forefinger to her nose, she started laughing.

Text 8

*ulūkhalāṅghrer upari vyavasthitam,
markāya kāmam dadatam śici sthitam,
haiyaṅgavaṁ caurya-viśaṅkitekṣaṇam,
nirīkṣya paścāt sutam āgamac chanaiḥ*

Kṛṣṇa, at that time, was sitting on an upside-down wooden mortar for grinding spices and was distributing milk preparations such as yogurt and butter to the monkeys as He liked. Because of having stolen, He was looking all around with great anxiety, suspecting that He might be chastised by His mother. Mother Yaśodā, upon seeing Him, very cautiously approached Him from behind.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda found Kṛṣṇa by following His butter-smearred footprints, and hearing the jingling sound of His waist bells, and the noises in the other room. Surmising that Kṛṣṇa was eating butter, Yasoda's face broke into a smile. A few seconds later, she decided to go into the room. But by that time Kṛṣṇa had gone out the back door and into the yard. There Kṛṣṇa sat cross-legged on top of an

upside-down wooden mortar for grinding spices due to fear of crows and other animals. The verse describes this.

After stealing the butter pot hanging from the ceiling of the storeroom, Kṛṣṇa brought it there. He was afraid of being beaten by His mother for having stolen the butter, so He was anxiously looking hither and thither (*caurya viśaṅkitekṣaṇaṅ nirīkṣya*) and looking for a path of escape. Seeing Kṛṣṇa from inside the house by craning her neck, Yasoda then very cautiously and silently approached Him from behind so that Kṛṣṇa could not see her and that she could catch Him in her hands.

Text 9

*tām ātta-yaṣṭīm prasamīkṣya satvaras,
tato 'varuhyāpasasāra bhītavat,
gopy anvadhāvan na yam āpa yoginām,
kṣamaṁ praveṣṭuṁ tapaseritaṁ manaḥ*

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw His mother, stick in hand, He very quickly got down from the top of the mortar and began to flee as if very much afraid. Although yogīs try to capture Him as Paramātmā by meditation, desiring to enter into the effulgence of the Lord with great austerities and penances, they fail to reach Him. But mother Yaśodā, thinking that same Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, to be her son, began following Kṛṣṇa to catch Him.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda held a stick in her hand to instill fear in Kṛṣṇa. He is described as very much afraid (*bhītavat*), because He understood the great affection of His mother, although internally Kṛṣṇa had no fear. Or it can mean that Kṛṣṇa stood up and fled in a fearful manner.

Queen Kuntī said in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1.8.31): *gopy ādade tvayi kṛtāgasi dāma tāvad, yā te daśāśru-kalilāñjana-sambhramākṣam,*

*vaktraṁ ninīya bhaya-bhāvanayā sthitasya, sā mām vimohayati bhīr
 api yad bibheti*, “O Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā took up a rope to bind You when You
 committed an offense, and Your perturbed eyes overflowed with tears,
 which washed the mascara from Your eyes. You were afraid, though
 fear personified is afraid of You. This sight is bewildering to me.”
 Yasoda (*gopy*) chased her son who can never be attained (*na yam āpa*)
 even by great mystics and *yogis* (*yoginām*) who perform austerities,
 penances (*tapaseritam*) and meditation (*manah*) to enter (*praveṣṭum*)
 Brahman. This point is made clear in verse 21: *nāyam sukhāpo
 bhagavan*, “Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is not easily attainable.”

Text 10

*anvañcamānā jananī bṛhac-calac-
 chroṇī-bharākrānta-gatiḥ sumadhyamā,
 javena visraṁsita-keśa-bandhana-
 cyuta-prasūnānugatiḥ parāmr̥śat*

**While following Kṛṣṇa, mother Yaśodā, her thin waist
 overburdened by her heavy breasts, naturally had to reduce her
 speed. Because of following Kṛṣṇa very swiftly, her hair became
 loose, and the flowers in her hair were falling after her. Yet she did
 not fail to capture her son Kṛṣṇa.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One should not think that just as the
yogis cannot catch Kṛṣṇa, neither could mother Yasoda. This verse
 explains that Yasoda’s hair came undone, and the flowers in her hair
 fell behind her as if they were following her (*cyuta-prasūna anugatiḥ*).
 Yasoda caught (*amr̥śat*) Kṛṣṇa from behind (*parā*).

Text 11

*kṛtāgasam taṁ prarudantam akṣiṇī,
kaṣantam aṅjan-maṣiṇī sva-pāṇinā,
udvikṣamāṇam bhaya-vihvalekṣaṇam,
haste grhītvā bhiṣayanty avāgurat*

When caught by mother Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa became more and more afraid and admitted to being an offender. As she looked upon Him, she saw that He was crying, His tears mixing with the black ointment around His eyes, and as He rubbed His eyes with His hands, He smeared the ointment all over His face. Mother Yaśodā, catching her beautiful son by the hand, mildly began to chastise Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not only did Yasoda catch Kṛṣṇa who cannot be realized by the best of *yogis*, but she also scolded that Supreme Person, who is constantly praised by Lord Brahma, Siva and other exalted demigods. With a stick in her hand Yasoda instilled fear in Kṛṣṇa, who instills fear in time and death personified. The verse is spoken with this intention.

Kṛṣṇa was rubbing (*kaṣantam*) His eyes (*akṣiṇī*), which were smeared with black ointment (*aṅjan-maṣiṇī*), with the back of His left hand (*sva pāṇinā*). Mother Yasoda held Kṛṣṇa's right hand and threatened Him (*bhiṣayanty*) with a stick. Yasoda mildly chastised Kṛṣṇa: "You have such a restless nature! O friend of the monkeys, the pot breaker! Where will You get butter today? Now I shall bind You so that You cannot steal butter and eat it with Your friends. Are You afraid that I will beat You with this stick?" While rebuking Kṛṣṇa, Yasoda lifted the stick as if to beat Him, though she would never do such a thing.

*tyaktvā yaṣṭim sutam bhītam,
vijñāyārbhaka-vatsalā,
iyeṣa kila tam baddhum,
dāmnāta-d-vīrya-kovidā*

Mother Yaśodā was always overwhelmed by intense love for Kṛṣṇa, not knowing who Kṛṣṇa was or how powerful He was. Because of maternal affection for Kṛṣṇa, she never even cared to know who He was. Therefore, when she saw that her son had become excessively afraid, she threw the stick away and desired to bind Him so that He would not commit any further naughty activities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa pleaded, “Don’t beat Me!”
Yasoda: “If You don’t like getting beaten, why did You break the yogurt pot today?”
Kṛṣṇa: “I won’t do that anymore! But throw down the stick.”
Mother Yasoda began to worry: “Maybe my son will run away to the forest out of fear, anger or distress.” To prevent this Yasoda threw away the stick and decided to tie up Kṛṣṇa. Due to being completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, Yasoda had no knowledge how powerful He was (*ātad vīrya kovidā*).

Texts 13–14

*na cāntar na bahir yasya,
na pūrvam nāpi cāparam,
pūrvāparam bahiś cāntar,
jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ,
tam matvātmajam avyaktam,
martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam,
gopikolūkhale dāmnā,
babandha prākṛtam yathā*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead has no beginning and no end, no exterior and no interior, no front and no rear. In other words, He is all-pervading. Because He is not under the influence of the element of time, for Him there is no difference between past, present and future; He exists in His own transcendental form at all times. Being absolute, beyond relativity, He is free from distinctions between cause and effect, although He is the cause and effect of everything. That unmanifested person, who is beyond the perception of the senses, had now appeared as a human child, and mother Yaśodā, considering Him her own ordinary child, bound Him to the wooden mortar with a rope.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: With the ropes of her intense *prema*, Yasoda tied up Kṛṣṇa, the all-pervading Lord who binds up everyone from Brahma to the blade of grass with the modes of material nature. The verse is spoken with this intention.

Limited objects can be bound by surrounding them on the outside. But where can one tie the rope on He who is greater than the greatest, and who has no inside or outside? The verse establishes that Kṛṣṇa pervades all space and time as well. Kṛṣṇa cannot be limited by past, present and future. The unlimited can bind the limited, but in this case it was the opposite. The entire universe, which is created by His power, cannot bind Kṛṣṇa, then what to speak of an insignificant rope within that universe. One cannot say that a little boy cannot bind up the universe, because Yasoda saw the entire cosmic manifestation within His mouth. How then could Yasoda bind Him?

The answer is given: Kṛṣṇa was bound by the uncommon motherly love of Yasoda who thought of Him as her son (*matvā ātmajam*).

Though Kṛṣṇa is all powerful, by His inconceivable energy He allows Himself to be controlled by love and bound by His beloveds. Kṛṣṇa is called *avyaktam* (unmanifested) because under the control of love He conceals His powers and appears like a human being (*martya liṅgam*),

even though He is beyond material sense perception (*adhokṣajam*). The power of Yasoda’s love bound up the Lord, who is the aggregate of all consciousness, just as one binds an ordinary child (*prākṛtam*).

Text 15

*tad dāma badhyamānasya,
svārbhakasya kṛtāgasah,
dvy-aṅgulonam abhūt tena,
sandadhe ’nyac ca gopikā*

When mother Yaśodā was trying to bind the offending child, she saw that the binding rope was short by a distance the width of two fingers. Thus she brought another rope to join to it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Yasoda could bind her child by love, and though the size of her lap was small, still the small form of the boy was all-powerful. This is shown in three verses.

Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “I cannot be bound up because I must do My daily duties of stealing yogurt and playing with My friends.” Kṛṣṇa’s *vibhuti-sakti* (the power to show or reveal His opulence) inspired by His *satya sankalpa-sakti* (the power to fulfill each and every desire of the Lord) suddenly entered into His body at that time. Thus, the rope remained two fingers too short no matter how many ropes Yasoda tied together.

Text 16

*yadāsīt tad api nyūnaṁ,
tenānyad api sandadhe,
tad api dvy-aṅgulaṁ nyūnaṁ,
yad yad ādatta bandhanam*

This new rope also was short by a measurement of two fingers, and when another rope was joined to it, it was still two fingers too short. As many ropes as she joined, all of them failed; their shortness could not be overcome.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bandhanam means the rope for binding Kṛṣṇa. Whatever ropes Yaśodā joined were two fingers short.

Text 17

*evam sva-geha-dāmāni,
yaśodā sandadhaty api,
gopīnām susmayantīnām,
smayantī vismitābhavat*

Thus mother Yaśodā joined whatever ropes were available in the household, but still she failed in her attempt to bind Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśodā’s friends, the elderly gopīs in the neighborhood, were smiling and enjoying the fun. Similarly, mother Yaśodā, although laboring in that way, was also smiling. All of them were struck with wonder.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: All the elderly gopīs in the neighborhood were laughing (gopīnām susmayantīnām). In her astonishment (vismitā), Yaśodā thought: “A rope of one hundred hastas (150 feet) does not fit around my son’s waist which measures only one fist. His small waist is not getting any bigger, and the rope is certainly not getting any shorter. But still the rope does not reach around Him. This is the first amazing thing. Furthermore, when I tie the ropes together, each time it is two fingers short, not three or four fingers. That

is the second amazing thing.”

Text 18

*sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā,
visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ,
dṛṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ,
kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane*

Because of mother Yaśodā’s hard labor, her whole body became covered with perspiration, and the flowers and comb were falling from her hair. When child Kṛṣṇa saw His mother thus fatigued, He became merciful to her and agreed to be bound.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “As you cannot bind Kṛṣṇa even with all the ropes in the house, then it must be concluded that it is His good fortune that it should not be. Listen Yasoda, give up this attempt!” Though the village women advised in this way, Yasoda was determined: “Even if evening comes and I tie together all the ropes in the whole village, I must find out just once the extent of my son’s waist.” Yasoda wanted to teach a lesson to her son. In her persistence, she would not give up her attempt to bind the Lord. In the competition between Kṛṣṇa and His devotee, the devotee’s determination always prevails. Thus, seeing His mother’s fatigue, Lord Kṛṣṇa gave up His own persistence, became merciful and allowed Himself to be tied. Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, which reigns as the king of all His potencies and illuminates all others, melts the heart of the Lord and turns it into butter. The appearance of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy made His *satya sankalpa* and *vibhūti saktis* immediately disappear. The distance of two fingers was filled by the devotee’s effort and hard work (*pariśramam*) and the Lord’s causeless mercy (*kṛṣṇa kṛpa*). The *bhakta-niṣṭhā* (firm faith of the devotee) seen in his tireless endeavors to serve and worship the Lord,

and the *sva-niṣṭhā* (the steady quality in the Lord), which brings forth His mercy upon seeing the devotee's effort and fatigue caused Kṛṣṇa to be bound. In the absence of these two, the rope will remain two fingers too short. But when *bhakta-niṣṭhā* and *sva-niṣṭhā* are present the Lord can be bound. In this pastime, Kṛṣṇa showed Yasoda and the whole world that only love can bind the Supreme Lord.

Text 19

*evam sandarśitā hy aṅga,
hariṇā bhṛtya-vaśyatā,
sva-vaśenāpi kṛṣṇena,
yasyedaṁ seśvaram vaśe*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, this entire universe, with its great, exalted demigods like Lord Śiva, Lord Brahmā and Lord Indra, is under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet the Supreme Lord has one transcendental attribute: He comes under the control of His devotees. This was now exhibited by Kṛṣṇa in this pastime.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa possesses all possible powers, He is bound and controlled by *prema*. This bondage, however, being the most astonishing attribute of the Lord, is not a fault but a beautiful transcendental ornament in Kṛṣṇa's personality.

By His very nature Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied (*ātma rāma*), yet He suffers from hunger. He is *āpta-kāma* (automatically fulfills all of His desires), yet He is dissatisfied and desirous of *prema*. Though Kṛṣṇa is the personification of peace and pure goodness, He becomes angry. Kṛṣṇa is the master of the goddess of fortune, yet He steals butter like a beggar. Though Kṛṣṇa instills fear in all through time and death, He flees in fear of Yasoda's stick. Though Kṛṣṇa travels at the speed of mind,

He is easily caught by the firm grip of His mother. Though Kṛṣṇa is condensed bliss (*sāndrānanda*), He cries in sorrow. Though Kṛṣṇa is unlimited and all-pervading, He is limited by being tied up.

In all these incidents, Kṛṣṇa was directly revealing to Yasoda His innate quality of being controlled by His devotee. All of this cannot be explained as simply an act or imitation performed by Kṛṣṇa. Such explanations arise from ignorance, and have no proof to support them. Realizing this quality of the Lord, Brahma, Siva and Sanat-kumara became truly astonished.

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.11.9) states: *darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka, ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām, vrajasyovāha vai harṣaṁ, bhagavān bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ*, “To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavāsīs by His childhood activities.”

sva vaśena: within the control only of His own self; Though Kṛṣṇa is independent (*sva vaśena*), where do we see His control? Kṛṣṇa controls the entire universe along with millions of powerful demigods (*yasyedaṁ seśvaram vaśe*). Although Kṛṣṇa is the fully independent, supreme controller, He becomes controlled by the *prema* of His devotees. This *prema*, the essence of Kṛṣṇa’s *cit-sakti*, gives rise to the Lord’s highest bliss. That has been explained previously.

Text 20

*nemaṁ viriñco na bhavo,
na śrīr apy aṅga-saṁśrayā,
prasādaṁ lebhire gopī,
yat tat prāpa vimuktidāt*

Neither Lord Brahmā, nor Lord Śiva, nor even the goddess of

fortune, who is always the better half of the Supreme Lord, can obtain from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the deliverer from this material world, such mercy as received by mother Yaśodā.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse is spoken on seeing the exceptional devotion of the queen of Vraja, who among all the devotees brought Kṛṣṇa under her control. **vimukti:** here means *viśeṣa-mukti*, specialized liberation or *prema*. *Vimuktidāt* means Kṛṣṇa, the giver of *prema*.

virīṅco: Lord Brahma; The inconceivable mercy that Yasoda obtained from Kṛṣṇa, the giver of *prema*, was never received by Brahma, Siva (*bhavo*), or even Lakṣmi-devī (*śrīr*).

This verse contains three negative pronouncements; *nemaṁ, na bhavo and na śrīr*. Three repetitions emphasize the exceeding absence of mercy offered to these personalities. However, with the word “indeed” (*apy*) the sentence can mean that even though they received mercy, it was not to the extent of Yasoda.

Lord Brahma is the son of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa and the *adi-guru* of the devotees, *sa ādi-devo jagatām paro guru* (*Bhag. 2.9.5*). As the topmost Vaisnava (*vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*), Siva is considered superior to Brahma. The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmi, who resides on the chest of Viṣṇu, is superior to even Siva and Brahma, the shelters of *sakhya* and *dasya rasa*.

Nevertheless, mother Yasoda is in the supermost exalted position because she alone obtained such extraordinary mercy from the Lord. It is wrong to think that Yasoda is a *sadhana siddha*, who got a boon from Brahma in her previous lifetime as Dhara. The *prema* of Yasoda cannot be attained as a result of Brahma’s boon, for Brahma himself prays to become a blade of grass in Vraja. Indeed, Brahma is counted in a much, much lower class.

Sukadeva says, “O Parkisit! Although you know about the Nanda and Yasoda who are famous in the scriptures as nitya-siddhas, in answer to your casual question (10.8.46) about their austerities in previous lives I told the story of Drona and Dhara, who are very small expansions of

Nanda and Yasoda.”

Text 21

*nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān,
dehinām gopikā-sutaḥ,
jñāninām cātma-bhūtānām,
yathā bhaktimatām iha*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Yaśodā, is accessible to devotees engaged in spontaneous loving service, but He is not as easily accessible to mental speculators, to those striving for self-realization by severe austerities and penances, or to those who consider the body the same as the self.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *Bhagavatam* propounds *kṛṣṇa-prema* as the highest goal of all human endeavors. *Prema* is permanently situated in Kṛṣṇa’s eternally liberated associates, *nitya-siddha parikaras*. Among *nitya-siddhas*, the Vrajavasis (residents of Gokula), Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja are the best because they control Kṛṣṇa by their *vatsalya-prema*, parental love. One who follows in the footsteps of *nitya-siddhas* like mother Yasoda can easily obtain *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Kṛṣṇa is not available to others. With this intent the verse is spoken.

dehinām gopikā sutaḥ: The son of the gopi, Kṛṣṇa, is not easily attainable by devotees who still identify with the body (*dehinām*), nor by the self-satisfied who no longer identify with the body (*jñāninām*). Although they may sometimes be called *śānta-bhaktas*, or devotees of sorts, they never get the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana. They can attain the qualification to serve Kṛṣṇa only by practicing *sadhana-bhakti* under the guidance of the inhabitants of Vraja.

ātma bhū tānām: Brahma, Siva and Lakṣmi, mentioned in the previous

verse, are *ātma bhūtā* (related with the Lord). Brahma and Siva are *avataras* of Kṛṣṇa, and Laksmi is His *svarupa-sakti*. Yet even these three cannot easily attain Kṛṣṇa, the son of a gopi.

bhaktimatām iha: devotees in this world; This indicates that those who are devoted to Yaśoda or other residents of Vrndavana, who are fixed in *sakhya*, *vatsalya* or *madhurya rasa*, will easily attain Vraja Kṛṣṇa.

The *svarupa* of *bhakti* has been defined in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.87.23): *striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo*, “How can we, the *śrutis*, get bodies like the *gopis*, who hold Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet on their breasts and are embraced by His serpentine arms?” The *śrutis* and *munis* attained Kṛṣṇa in Vraja by serving Him in allegiance to the Vraja-gopis. Brahma, Siva and Laksmi could not become subservient to the Vraja-gopis due to identifying with their positions on their own planets. Others do not surrender and follow the Vrajavasis because of insufficient guidance or a lack of taste.

Text 22

*kṛṣṇas tu gr̥ha-kṛtyeṣu,
vyagrāyām mātari prabhuḥ,
adrākṣīd arjunau pūrvam,
guhya-kau dhanadātmajau*

While mother Yaśodā was very busy with household affairs, the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, observed twin trees known as yamala-arjuna, which in a former millennium had been the demigod sons of Kuvera.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though bound by His devotee, Kṛṣṇa is still able to liberate others as will be seen in Chapter Ten.

Text 23

*purā nārada-śāpena,
vṛkṣatām prāpitau madāt,
nalakūvara-maṇigrīvāv,
iti khyātau śriyānvitau*

In their former birth, these two sons, known as Nalakuvara and Maṇigrīva, were extremely opulent and fortunate. But because of pride and false prestige, they did not care about anyone, and thus Nārada Muni cursed them to become trees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Out of debt to My mother, I have been bound by her. What can I do to clear this debt?” Thinking in this way, Kṛṣṇa liberated the two trees situated in the yard.

Chapter Ten: Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
kathyatām bhagavann etat,
tayoh śāpasya kāraṇam,
yat tad vigarhitam karma,
yena vā devarṣes tamah*

King Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī: O great and powerful saint, what was the cause of Nalakuvara’s and Maṇigrīva’s having been cursed by Nārada Muni? What did they do that was so abominable that even Nārada, the great sage, became angry at them? Kindly describe this to me.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter tells the ancient story of Narada’s cursing the sons of Kuvera. Afterwards, the two sons, Nalakuvara and Manigriva glorified Kṛṣṇa for granting them a special liberation, namely *kṛṣṇa-prema*. The word “*tamah*” in this verse means anger. What degraded activity did Nalakuvara and Manigriva do to incur the wrath of Narada and get cursed?

Texts 2–3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
rudrasyānucarau bhūtvā,
sudṛpta dhanadātmajau,
kailāśopavane ramye,*

*mandākinyām madotkaṭau,
vāruṇīm madirām pītvā,
madāghūrṇita-locanau,
strī-janair anugāyadbhiś,
ceratuḥ puṣpīte vane*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King Parīkṣit, because the two sons of Kuvera had been elevated to the association of Lord Śiva, of which they were very much proud, they were allowed to wander in a garden attached to Kailāsa Hill, on the bank of the Mandākinī River. Taking advantage of this, they used to drink a kind of liquor called Vāruṇī. Accompanied by women singing after them, they would wander in that garden of flowers, their eyes always rolling in intoxication.

Text 4

*antaḥ praviśya gaṅgāyām,
ambhoja-vana-rājini,
cikrīḍatur yuvatibhir;
gajāv iva kareṇubhiḥ*

Within the waters of the Mandākinī Ganges, which were crowded with gardens of lotus flowers, the two sons of Kuvera would enjoy young girls, just like two male elephants enjoying in the water with female elephants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: How did the two sons of Kuvera enjoy in the Mandakini Ganga? They entered the Ganga, which was adorned with clumps of lotuses, and began to play with young girls, just as an

intoxicated elephant sports with his she elephants.

Text 5

*yadṛcchayā ca devarṣir,
bhagavāms tatra kaurava,
apaśyan nārado devau,
kṣībāṇau samabudhyata*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, by some auspicious opportunity for the two boys, the great saint Devarṣi Nārada once appeared there by chance. Seeing them intoxicated, with rolling eyes, he could understand their situation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing them, Devarsi Narada could understand that they were intoxicated (*ksivanau*).

Text 6

*taṁ dṛṣṭvā vr̥ḍitā devyo,
vivastrāḥ śāpa-śaṅkitāḥ,
vāsāmsi paryadhuḥ śīghraṁ,
vivastrau naiva guhyakau*

Upon seeing Nārada, the naked young girls of the demigods were very much ashamed. Afraid of being cursed, they covered their bodies with their garments. But the two sons of Kuvera did not do so; instead, not caring about Nārada, they remained naked.

Text 7

*tau dṛṣṭvā madirā-mattau,
śrī-madāndhau surātmajau,
tayor anugrahārthāya,
śāpaṁ dāsyann idaṁ jagau*

Seeing the two sons of the demigods naked and intoxicated by opulence and false prestige, Devarṣi Nārada, in order to show them special mercy, desired to give them a special curse. Thus he spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada desired to curse Manigriva and Nalakuvara, so that they could meet the Lord directly and thereby get special mercy (*anugraha-arthaya*). When an affectionate mother wants to feed some *kheer* to her son, but finds him deeply sleeping, she will wake him by pinching him. Narada spoke in a loud voice (*jagau*), so that others would also benefit.

Text 8

*śrī-nārada uvāca,
na hy anyo juṣato joṣyān,
buddhi-bhramśo rajo-guṇaḥ,
śrī-madād ābhijātyādir,
yatra strī dyūtam āsavaḥ*

Nārada Muni said: Among all the attractions of material enjoyment, the attraction of riches bewilders one's intelligence more than having beautiful bodily features, taking birth in an

aristocratic family, and being learned. When one is uneducated but falsely puffed up by wealth, the result is that one engages his wealth in enjoying wine, women and gambling.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: For the man absorbed in enjoying (*juṣato*) the attractive objects (*joṣyān*) of the material world, pride in taking birth in an aristocratic family and being learned do not destroy the intelligence as much as being intoxicated with wealth. In other words, the attraction of riches completely destroys one's intelligence. **ābhijāti:** birth in a high family generates excessive pride. **ādir:** knowledge also gives rise to pride. **rajo-guṇaḥ:** Since pride in wealth arises from the mode of passion, *raja guṇa* is mentioned in this verse. Pride in wealth induces one to commit many more sins than pride in family or knowledge. The various sins are mentioned in the following four verses: enjoying wine, women and gambling.

Text 9

*hanyante paśavo yatra,
nirdayair ajitātmabhiḥ,
manyamānair imam deham,
ajarāmṛtyu naśvaram*

Unable to control their senses, rascals who are falsely proud of their riches or their birth in aristocratic families are so cruel that to maintain their perishable bodies, which they think will never grow old or die, they kill poor animals without mercy. Sometimes they kill animals merely to enjoy an excursion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Although one sees old age and death before his eyes, he continues to think he will never die.

Text 10

*deva-saṁjñitam apy ante,
kṛmi-vid-bhasma-saṁjñitam,
bhūta-dhruk tat-kṛte svārtham,
kim veda nirayo yataḥ*

While living one may be proud of one's body, thinking oneself a very big man, minister, president or even demigod, but whatever one may be, after death this body will turn either into worms, into stool or into ashes. If one kills poor animals to satisfy the temporary whims of this body, one does not know that he will suffer in his next birth, for such a sinful miscreant must go to hell and suffer the results of his actions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A man may be a king (*deva-saṁjñitam*), but after death he is eaten by dogs and other creatures. If his sons do not burn him, he is eaten by worms and transformed into worm stool. If he is burned he becomes ashes. One who whimsically kills poor animals does not know he will be punished for that killing and sent to hell.

Text 11

*dehaḥ kim anna-dātuḥ svam,
niṣektur mātur eva ca,
mātuḥ pitur vā balinaḥ,
kretur agneḥ śuno 'pi vā*

While alive, does this body belong to its employer, to the self, to

the father, the mother, or the mother's father? Does it belong to the person who takes it away by force, to the slave master who purchases it, or to the sons who burn it in the fire? Or, if the body is not burned, does it belong to the dogs that eat it? Among the many possible claimants, who is the rightful claimant? Not to ascertain this but instead to maintain the body by sinful activities is not good.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse shows that many contradictions arise from not understanding the rightful owner of the body. **niṣektur:** refers to the father, who discharges semen to create the child. Is this body the wealth (*svam*) of the father, the mother, or father of the mother?

Text 12

*evaṁ sādharmaṇaṁ deham,
avyakta-prabhavāpyayam,
ko vidvān ātmasāt kṛtvā,
hanti jantūn ṛte 'sataḥ*

This body, after all, is produced by the unmanifested nature and again annihilated and merged in the natural elements. Therefore, it is the common property of everyone. Under the circumstances, who but a rascal claims this property as his own and while maintaining it commits such sinful activities as killing animals just to satisfy his whims? Unless one is a rascal, one cannot commit such sinful activities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This body arises from and merges into the *pradhana*, the material cause of the universe. Who but an ignorant person (*asataḥ*) will accept such a body as one's own (*ātmasāt kṛtvā*) and commit violence to animals?

Text 13

*asataḥ śrī-madāndhasya,
dāridryaṃ param añjanam,
ātmaupamyena bhūtāni,
daridraḥ param īkṣate*

Atheistic fools and rascals who are very much proud of wealth fail to see things as they are. Therefore, returning them to poverty is the proper ointment for their eyes so they may see things as they are. At least a poverty-stricken man can realize how painful poverty is, and therefore he will not want others to be in a painful condition like his own.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse gives the remedy for the sickness of pride in wealth. *Param* here means only. Poverty is the only medicine (*param añjanam*) to relieve a person from the blindness arising from pride in wealth. Atheistic fools and rascals who are very much proud of wealth fail to see things as they are. Therefore, returning them to poverty is the proper ointment for their eyes so they may see things as they are. At least a poverty-stricken man can realize how painful poverty is, and therefore he will not want others to be in a painful condition like his own.

Text 14

*yathā kaṇṭaka-viddhāṅgo,
jantor necchati tām vyathām,
jīva-sāmyaṃ gato liṅgair,
na tathāviddha-kaṇṭakāḥ*

By seeing their faces, one whose body has been pricked by pins can understand the pain of others who are pinpricked. Realizing that this pain is the same for everyone, he does not want others to suffer in this way. But one who has never been pricked by pins cannot understand this pain.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By seeing the symptoms (*lingaiḥ*) of one in pain, such as withering of the face, or by having experienced it oneself, one understands the nature of pain and thereby sympathizes with anyone experiencing pain. One who has not experienced being pierced by a thorn (*āviddha kaṇṭakah*) cannot understand the pain of others who are pinpricked.

Text 15

*daridro niraham-stambho,
muktaḥ sarva-madair iha,
kṛcchraṁ yadṛcchayāpnoti,
tad dhi tasya param tapah*

A poverty-stricken man must automatically undergo austerities and penances because he does not have the wealth to possess anything. Thus his false prestige is vanquished. Always in need of food, shelter and clothing, he must be satisfied with what is obtained by the mercy of providence. Undergoing such compulsory austerities is good for him because this purifies him and completely frees him from false ego.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A poor man automatically practices detachment which is necessary to attain liberation from material

existence. This is expressed in three verses. The poor person is devoid of the false prestige that comes from possessing wealth (*nir-aham-stambha*), and free from pride in family and education.

Text 16

*nityam kṣut-kṣāma-dehasya,
daridrasyānna-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ,
indriyāṇy anuśuṣyanti,
himsāpi vinivartate*

Always hungry, longing for sufficient food, a poverty-stricken man gradually becomes weaker and weaker. Having no extra potency, his senses are automatically pacified. A poverty-stricken man, therefore, is unable to perform harmful, envious activities. In other words, such a man automatically gains the results of the austerities and penances adopted voluntarily by saintly persons.

Text 17

*daridrasyaiva yujyante,
sādhavaḥ sama-darśinaḥ,
sadbhiḥ kṣiṇoti taṁ tarṣaṁ,
tata ārād viśuddhyati*

Saintly persons may freely associate with those who are poverty-stricken, but not with those who are rich. A poverty-stricken man, by association with saintly persons, very soon becomes uninterested

in material desires, and the dirty things within the core of his heart are cleansed away.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One should not think that if the poor man has only one desire, that is enough to cause his downfall. He has some relief. Being merciful by nature, Kṛṣṇa's devotees are equal to the rich and poor, and therefore visit both. By associating with the devotee, the poor man gets the opportunity to hear about and worship the Supreme Lord. Thus he becomes fortunate and advances in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. However, a man intoxicated with his wealth derives no benefit from associating with the Lord's devotees. By the power of the devotee's association (*sadbhīh*), the poor man tastes the nectar of devotion and thus loses his desire for material enjoyment. Verse fifteen said that the poor man suffers due to fate (*yadrccchaya*). But the devotee does not get suffering or *bhakti* by *karma*, for the devotee has no *karma*.

Text 18

*sādhūnām sama-cittānām,
mukunda-caraṇaiṣiṇām,
upekṣyaiḥ kiṁ dhana-stambhair,
asadbhir asad-āśrayaiḥ*

Saintly persons [sādhus] think of Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. They have no other interest. Why should people neglect the association of such exalted spiritual personalities and try to associate with materialists, taking shelter of nondevotees, most of whom are proud and rich?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The devotee never develops a relationship with the wealthy man attached to his riches. Devotees give

up (*upeksyaiḥ*) the association of nondevotees (*asadbhiḥ*), who are afflicted by pride due to wealth (*dhana stambhaiḥ*), and who associate with and serve other nondevotees (*asad asrayaiḥ*). However, the devotees do associate with wealthy persons who are devoid of pride and serve the Vaisnavas.

Text 19

*tad ahaṁ mattayor mādhyā,
vāruṇyā śrī-madāndhayoḥ,
tamo-madam hariṣyāmi,
straiṇayor ajitātmanoḥ*

Therefore, since these two persons, drunk with the liquor named Vāruṇī, or Mādhvī, and unable to control their senses, have been blinded by the pride of celestial opulence and have become attached to women, I shall relieve them of their false prestige.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What then is the cure for their disease of pride? After considering, Narada decided on the cure and presented it in four verses. *Madhyā* means sweet. *Tamo* means ignorance. Narada thought, “I will remove the ignorance of these two demigods intoxicated with sweet wine, blinded by pride in wealth and overly attached to women.”

Texts 20–22

*yad imau loka-pālasya,
putrau bhūtvā tamaḥ-plutau,
na vivāśasam ātmānaṁ,
vijānītaḥ sudurmadau,*

*ato 'rhataḥ sthāvaratām,
syātām naivam yathā punaḥ,
smṛtiḥ syān mat-prasādena,
tatrāpi mad-anugrahāt,
vāsudevasya sānnidhyam,
labdhvā divya-śarac-chate,
vṛtte svarlokatām bhūyo,
labdha-bhaktī bhaviṣyataḥ*

These two young men, Nalakuvara and Maṇigrīva, are by fortune the sons of the great demigod Kuvera, but because of false prestige and madness after drinking liquor, they are so fallen that they are naked but cannot understand that they are. Therefore, because they are living like trees (for trees are naked but are not conscious), these two young men should receive the bodies of trees. This will be proper punishment. Nonetheless, after they become trees and until they are released, by my mercy they will have remembrance of their past sinful activities. Moreover, by my special favor, after the expiry of one hundred years by the measurement of the demigods, they will be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva, face to face, and thus revive their real position as devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada thought, “These two demigods deserve to be placed in bodies that cannot move (*sthāvaratām*), such as trees because they are manifesting the qualities of trees: standing naked, not performing any proper action because they do not move, and not speaking. But by my mercy even in the bodies of trees they will retain their memory. After standing as trees for one hundred celestial years (*divya śarac-chate*), they will receive *darsana* of Kṛṣṇa, develop *prema-bhakti*, and attain their original bodies as demigods.”

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam uktvā sa devarṣir,
gato nārāyaṇāśramam,
nalakūvara-maṇigrīvāv,
āsatur yamalārjunau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Having thus spoken, the great saint Devarṣi Nārada returned to his āśrama, known as Nārāyaṇa-āśrama, and Nalakuvara and Maṇigrīva became twin arjuna trees.

Text 24

*rṣer bhāgavata-mukhyasya,
satyaṁ kartuṁ vaco hariḥ,
jagāma śanakais tatra,
yatrāstām yamalārjunau*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to fulfill the truthfulness of the words of the greatest devotee, Nārada, slowly went to that spot where the twin arjuna trees were standing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The preparations for fulfilling the curse are related in this verse.

Text 25

*devarṣir me priyatamo,
yad imau dhanadātmajau,*

*tat tathā sādhaiṣyāmi,
yad gītāṃ tan mahātmanā*

Although these two young men are the sons of the very rich Kuvera and I have nothing to do with them, Devarṣi Nārada is My very dear and affectionate devotee, and therefore because he wanted Me to come face to face with them, I must do so for their deliverance.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “Because (*yat*) Narada is My dear devotee, I will fulfill his words by giving these two demigods whatever (*yad*) was promised by that (*tad*) great soul (*mahātmanā*).”

Text 26

*ity antareṇārjunayoḥ,
kṛṣṇas tu yamayor yayau,
ātma-nirveśa-mātreṇa,
tiryag-gatam ulūkhalam*

Having thus spoken, Kṛṣṇa soon entered between the two arjuna trees, and thus the big mortar to which He was bound turned crosswise and stuck between them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking in this way, Kṛṣṇa went between the two *arjuna* trees so that the mortar turned crosswise and got stuck.

Text 27

*bālena niṣkarṣayatānvag ulūkhalaṁ tad,
dāmodareṇa tarasotkalitānghri-bandhau,
niṣpetatuḥ parama-vikramitātivepa,
skandha-pravāla-viṭapau kṛta-caṇḍa-śabdau*

By dragging behind Him with great force the wooden mortar tied to His belly, the boy Kṛṣṇa uprooted the two trees. By the great strength of the Supreme Person, the two trees, with their trunks, leaves and branches, trembled severely and fell to the ground with a great crash.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Damodara uprooted the two trees by very forcefully pulling the mortar which dragged behind Him. By the tremendous power (*parama vikramita*) of Kṛṣṇa the two trees, with their trunks, leaves and branches trembled severely (*ativepa*) and fell to the ground. According to *Hari-vamśa*, Kṛṣṇa is called Damodara because of being bound up: *sa ca tenaiva nāmnā tu, kṛṣṇo vai dāma-bandhanāt, goṣṭhe dāmodara iti, gopībhīḥ parigīyate.*

Text 28

*tatra śriyā paramayā kakubhaḥ sphurantau,
siddhāv upetya kujayor iva jāta-vedāḥ,
kṛṣṇaṁ praṇamya śirasākhila-loka-nāthaṁ,
baddhāñjalī virajasāv idam ūcatuḥ sma*

Thereafter, in that very place where the two arjuna trees had fallen, two great, perfect personalities, who appeared like fire personified, came out of the two trees. The effulgence of their beauty illuminating all directions, with bowed heads they offered obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, and with hands folded they spoke the

following words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The two persons emerging from the trees (*kujayoh*) lit up the four directions (*kakubhah*) with the beautiful effulgence of their bodies which mixed together like fire personified (*jāta-vedāḥ*).

Text 29

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogimś,
tvam ādyaḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ,
vyaktāvyaktam idaṁ viśvaṁ,
rūpaṁ te brāhmaṇā viduḥ*

O Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Your opulent mysticism is inconceivable. You are the supreme, original person, the cause of all causes, immediate and remote, and You are beyond this material creation. Learned brāhmaṇas know [on the basis of the Vedic statement sarvaṁ khalv idaṁ brahma] that You are everything and that this cosmic manifestation, in its gross and subtle aspects, is Your form.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At this time Kṛṣṇa could have asked them, “Why are you two demigods paying respects to Me, a mere cowherd boy tied to a mortar?” They answer with this verse. The word Kṛṣṇa is repeated twice to indicate that the demigods spoke together. Nalakuvara and Manigriva prayed, “You are the Supreme Person (*paraḥ puruṣaḥ*), Bhagavan. Although appearing as a cowherd boy, You are the original Svayam Bhagavan (*ādyaḥ*). O master of mysticism (*mahā-yogimś*), it is inconceivable how You have become bound. Since You can liberate us, how is it possible for You, who are the very form of the universe, to be bound up?” With this intention they speak this verse.

Texts 30–31

*tvam ekaḥ sarva-bhūtānām,
dehāsv-ātmendriyeśvaraḥ,
tvam eva kālo bhagavān,
viṣṇur avyaya īśvaraḥ,
tvam mahān prakṛtiḥ sūkṣmā,
rajaḥ-sattva-tamomayī,
tvam eva puruṣo 'dhyakṣaḥ,
sarva-kṣetra-vikāra-vit*

You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of everything. The body, life, ego and senses of every living entity are Your own self. You are the Supreme Person, Viṣṇu, the imperishable controller. You are the time factor, the immediate cause, and You are material nature, consisting of the three modes passion, goodness and ignorance. You are the original cause of this material manifestation. You are the Supersoul, and therefore You know everything within the core of the heart of every living entity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nalakuvara and Manigriva continue praying: “No one but You is the cause of bondage. You are the Lord of all because everything is within You. You are thus the Lord of the body, the life force and the ego of every living entity. You are time and the cause of all action. You are material nature. You are also the Supersoul and know everything within the minds of every living entity. Therefore You are the one and only Bhagavan, the controller of everything.”

Text 32

*grhyamāṅais tvam agrāhyo,
vikāraiḥ prākṛtair guṇaiḥ,
ko nv ihārhati vijñāturṁ,
prāk siddham guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ*

O Lord, You exist before the creation. Therefore, who, trapped by a body of material qualities in this material world, can understand You?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You can be seen only by Your mercy. Practically, You are invisible. You are not perceivable by the intelligence and senses because they arise from the modes of nature. Since You are transcendental, no one within this world can know You. You are the cause of the living entity, but he is covered by the modes of material nature. However, Your devotee, who transcends the modes of nature by practicing *bhakti*, can realize something of Your unlimited qualities.”

Text 33

*tasmai tubhyaṁ bhagavate,
vāsudevāya vedhase,
ātma-dyota-guṇaiś channa,
mahimne brahmaṇe namaḥ*

O Lord, whose glories are covered by Your own energy, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are Saṅkarṣaṇa, the origin of creation, and You are Vāsudeva, the origin of the caturvyūha. Because You are everything and are therefore the Supreme Brahman, we simply offer our respectful obeisances unto You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Since You are difficult to know, we simply offer our respects to You.” That is the intention of this verse. “We offer respects to You, the creator of the universe (*vedhase*). Because of the covering of the three modes of nature it is very difficult to know You. As the sun is covered by clouds, which are created by the sun, similarly, Your glory is covered by Your own energy which is created by You (*atma dyota*).”

Texts 34–35

*yasyāvatārā jñāyante,
śarīreṣv aśarīriṇaḥ,
tais tair atulyātiśayair,
vīryair dehiṣv asaṅgataiḥ,
sa bhavān sarva-lokasya,
bhavāya vibhavāya ca,
avatīrṇo 'mśa-bhāgena,
sāmprataṁ patir āśiśām*

Appearing in bodies like those of an ordinary fish, tortoise and hog, You exhibit activities impossible for such creatures to perform—extraordinary, incomparable, transcendental activities of unlimited power and strength. These bodies of Yours, therefore, are not made of material elements, but are incarnations of Your Supreme Personality. You are the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have now appeared, with full potency, for the benefit of all living entities within this material world.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replies to the two demigods, “Yes, I am the Supreme Lord, but by what characteristics do you discern Me as the supreme?” Their answer is given in this verse. Nalakuvara and Manigriva continue, “Though You have no material body, You

can be known through the remarkable exploits (*viryaiah*) You exhibit in various forms like a fish and turtle. You (*sa bhavan*) are the *avatari*, the source of all *avataras*, because while playing as a baby with just a small drop of Your strength You uprooted two trees as strong as Arjuna, which a thousand hands could not uproot. You also gave supernatural strength to the rope and the mortar. You, the fulfiller of all desires (*asisam patih*), have appeared with all Your potencies and different parts and parcels (*amsa bhagena*) such as Siva and Brahma for the elevation and liberation (*bhavaya vibhavaya*) of everyone.”

Text 36

*namaḥ parama-kalyāṇa,
namaḥ parama-maṅgala,
vāsudevāya śāntāya,
yadūnām pataye namaḥ*

O supremely auspicious, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who are the supreme good. O most famous descendant and controller of the Yadu dynasty, O son of Vasudeva, O most peaceful, let us offer our obeisances unto Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “We offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who give the supreme auspiciousness (*parama kalyana*) of *prema-bhakti* to the living entities. Actually everything You do brings the topmost good to all (*parama mangala*).”

Text 37

*anujānīhi nau bhūmaṁs,
tavānucara-kiṅkarau,*

*darśanaṁ nau bhagavata,
ṛṣer āsīd anugrahāt*

O supreme form, we are always servants of Your servants, especially of Nārada Muni. Now give us permission to leave for our home. It is by the grace and mercy of Nārada Muni that we have been able to see You face to face.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “We are Your followers (*anucara*) and the servants (*kinkarau*) of Your most confidential devotee Narada.”

Text 38

*vāṇī guṇānukathane śravaṇau kathāyām,
hastau ca karmasu manas tava pādāyor naḥ,
smṛtyām śiras tava nivāsa-jagat-praṇāme,
dṛṣṭiḥ satām darśane 'stu bhavat-tanūnām*

Henceforward, may all our words describe Your pastimes, may our ears engage in aural reception of Your glories, may our hands, legs and other senses engage in actions pleasing to You, and may our minds always think of Your lotus feet. May our heads offer our obeisances to everything within this world, because all things are also Your different forms, and may our eyes see the forms of Vaiṣṇavas, who are nondifferent from You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Since we are Your followers and Narada’s servants, You should be very merciful to us. We now pray for something rarely given to others. May our words (*vani*) always be engaged in describing Your qualities (*guna kathane*) and nothing else. May our minds always remember Your beautiful lotus feet. May our

heads pay respects to everything within this world and especially to devotees such as Narada.”

Taking the phrase *nivasa jagat* as vocative, it can mean “O abode of the universe (*jagat nivasa*), may our eyes be engaged in seeing Your forms (*bhavat tanuman*) and those of your devotees (*satam*) such as Narada.”

Text 39

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ittham saṅkīrtitas tābhyām,
bhagavān gokuleśvaraḥ,
dāmnā colūkhale baddhaḥ,
prahasann āha guhyakau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: The two young demigods thus offered prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Godhead, is the master of all and was certainly Gokuleśvara, the master of Gokula, He was bound to the wooden mortar by the ropes of the gopīs, and therefore, smiling widely, He spoke to the sons of Kuvera the following words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sankirtitah means completely glorified. *Damna ca* hints at being bound not only by ropes but by *prema* too. *Prahasan* means that Kṛṣṇa smiled very sweetly, while thinking that these two minor demigods had become bound up by His *maya*.

Kṛṣṇa thought, “They are praising Me for freeing them from bondage. But mother Yasoda binds Me up and scolds Me instead of praising Me. Still out of love I stay in Gokula. The chastisements of the Vrajavasis please Me much more than the praises I am receiving from these sons of Kuvera.”

Text 40

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
jñātaṁ mama puraivaitad,
ṛṣiṇā karuṇātmanā,
yac chrī-madāndhayor vāgbhir,
vibhramśo 'nugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The great saint Nārada Muni is very merciful. By his curse, he showed the greatest favor to both of you, who were mad after material opulence and who had thus become blind. Although you fell from the higher planet Svargaloka and became trees, you were most favored by him. I knew of all these incidents from the very beginning.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada gave mercy to Nalakuvara and Manigriva by destroying their opulence through his instructions starting with verse eight.

Text 41

*sādhūnām sama-cittānām,
sutarām mat-kṛtātmanām,
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ,
pumso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā*

When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a sādhu, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material

bondage.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: How is it possible that Narada bestowed mercy upon these two rogues? This verse answers the question. “One is released from material bondage by seeing those whose minds are not disturbed by respect or disrespect (*sama cittanam*), and those who have offered their minds completely to Me (*sutaram matkrt atmanam*).”

Instead of *darsanan no*, there is another reading: *darsan antah*. In that case it means that one’s bondage will continue until he sees (*darsana*) a devotee. Just as the sun destroys the darkness just by rising, one’s bondage is destroyed immediately upon seeing a pure devotee. However, it should be understood from this example that even though the sun rises, the darkness will not be dissipated if a person is blind. Similarly, if one commits *nama-aparadha*, as in the case of the demons, he will not be released from bondage even if he sees Narada Muni.

Text 42

*tad gacchataṁ mat-paramau,
nalakūvara sādanam,
sañjāto mayi bhāvo vām,
īpsitaḥ paramo ’bhavaḥ*

O Nalakuvara and Mañigrīva, now you may both return home. Since you desire to be always absorbed in My devotional service, your desire to develop love and affection for Me will be fulfilled, and now you will never fall from that platform.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Though two brothers were present, Kṛṣṇa spoke to the chief one: “O Nalakuvara! You may now return to your home. But since you desire to serve Me, your domestic life will no

longer entangle you in *maya*.”

Text 43

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity uktau tau parikramya,
praṇamya ca punaḥ punaḥ,
baddholūkhalam āmantrya,
jagmatur diśam uttarām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The Supreme Personality of Godhead having spoken to the two demigods in this way, they circumambulated the Lord, who was bound to the wooden mortar, and offered obeisances to Him. After taking the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they returned to their respective homes.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: **Baddholukhalam:** He who is bound to the mortar.

Chapter Eleven: The Childhood Pastimes of Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
gopā nandādayaḥ śrutvā,
drumayoḥ patato ravam,
tatrājagmuḥ kuru-śreṣṭha,
nirghāta-bhaya-śaṅkitāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, when the yamala-arjuna trees fell, all the cowherd men in the neighborhood, hearing the fierce sound and fearing thunderbolts, went to the spot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes releasing Kṛṣṇa from the mortar, buying fruits, entering Vrndavana, herding the cows in the forest, and killing Vatsasura and Bakasura.

Text 2

*bhūmyām nipatitau tatra,
dadṛśur yamalārjunau,
babhramus tad avijñāya,
lakṣyaṁ patana-kāraṇam*

There they saw the fallen yamala-arjuna trees on the ground, but they were bewildered because even though they could directly perceive that the trees had fallen, they could not trace out the cause

for their having done so.

Text 3

*ulūkhalam vikarṣantaṁ,
dāmnā baddhaṁ ca bālakam,
kasyedaṁ kuta āścaryam,
utpāta iti kātarāḥ*

Kṛṣṇa was bound by the rope to the ulukhala, the mortar, which He was dragging. But how could He have pulled down the trees? Who had actually done it? Where was the source for this incident? Considering all these astounding things, the cowherd men were doubtful and bewildered.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men of Vraja understood that Kṛṣṇa had caused the *yamala-arjuna* trees to fall, but because of *prema* they could not think that it was so. They doubted that such a small boy could do such a thing. They express their doubt in these verses. “Who has done this? Why has this amazing accident happened to this boy? It is our good fortune that Lord Narayana has protected Him.” Thinking in this way, the cowherd men were filled with anxiety.

Text 4

*bālā ūcur aneneti,
tiryag-gatam ulūkhalam,
vikarṣatā madhya-gena,
puruṣāv apy acakṣmahi*

Then all the cowherd boys said: It is Kṛṣṇa who has done this. When He was in between the two trees, the mortar fell crosswise. Kṛṣṇa dragged the mortar, and the two trees fell down. After that, two beautiful men came out of the trees. We have seen this with our own eyes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys said: “Kṛṣṇa went between the trees and the mortar fell crosswise.” The elders did not believe their story, so the boys repeated, “We saw two men emerge from the trees.”

Text 5

*na te tad-uktaṁ jagṛhur,
na ghaṭeteti tasya tat,
bālasyoṭpāṭanam tarvoḥ,
kecit sandigdha-cetasah*

Because of intense paternal affection, the cowherd men, headed by Nanda, could not believe that Kṛṣṇa could have uprooted the trees in such a wonderful way. Therefore they could not put their faith in the words of the boys. Some of the men, however, were in doubt. “Since Kṛṣṇa was predicted to equal Nārāyaṇa,” they thought, “it might be that He could have done it.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda and the cowherd men did not believe the children because their feelings for Kṛṣṇa would not allow them to think that Kṛṣṇa was omnipotent. Some of the men however remembered Gargamuni’s prediction about Kṛṣṇa being equal to Narayana. Though full of affection for Kṛṣṇa, they became uncertain and thought, “Maybe He did it.”

Text 6

*ulūkhalaṁ vikarṣantaṁ,
dāmnā baddhaṁ svam ātmajam,
vilokya nandaḥ prahasad,
vadano vimumoca ha*

When Nanda Mahārāja saw his own son bound with ropes to the wooden mortar and dragging it, he smiled and released Kṛṣṇa from His bonds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Glancing repeatedly over all of Kṛṣṇa’s limbs, Nanda Maharaja smiled as he thought, “Your mother, whose lap You prefer to mine, has bound You up because of some small offense. Therefore, how can I release You? As You bind the living entities with illusion, You bind your mother and father with *prema*.”

Text 7

*gopībhiḥ stobhito ’nṛtyad,
bhagavān bālavat kvacit,
udgāyati kvacin mugdhas,
tad-vaśo dāru-yantravat*

The gopīs would say, “If You dance, my dear Kṛṣṇa, then I shall give You half a sweetmeat.” By saying these words or by clapping their hands, all the gopīs encouraged Kṛṣṇa in different ways. At such times, although He was the supremely powerful Personality of Godhead, He would smile and dance according to their desire, as

if He were a wooden doll in their hands. Sometimes He would sing very loudly, at their bidding. In this way, Kṛṣṇa came completely under the control of the gopīs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Who can describe the good fortune of Kṛṣṇa’s father and mother? Though Kṛṣṇa is the controller of Brahma, Siva and millions of demigods, He is controlled at every step by the inhabitants of Vraja. This is described in three and a half verses. The *gopīs* would say, “If You dance, my dear Kṛṣṇa, I will give you a sweet!” Induced (*stobhitah*) by the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa sometimes danced just like a human child (*balavat*). Overwhelmed (*mugdhas*) by the *gopīs*’ sweet love, Kṛṣṇa would conceal His omnipotence and smile and dance just like a wooden doll in their hands.

Text 8

*bibharti kvacid ājñaptaḥ,
pīṭhakonmāna-pādukam,
bāhu-kṣepaṁ ca kurute,
svānām ca prītim āvahan*

Sometimes mother Yaśodā and her gopī friends would tell Kṛṣṇa, “Bring this article” or “Bring that article.” Sometimes they would order Him to bring a wooden plank, wooden shoes or a wooden measuring pot, and Kṛṣṇa, when thus ordered by the mothers, would try to bring them. Sometimes, however, as if unable to raise these things, He would touch them and stand there. Just to invite the pleasure of His relatives, He would strike His body with His arms to show that He had sufficient strength.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to test Kṛṣṇa’s strength, the *gopīs* would ask Him to bring wooden shoes, and then progressively

heavier objects. Ordered (*ajnapta*) by the *gopis*, Kṛṣṇa would stand up holding the objects over His soft belly. To invite the pleasure of His relatives (*svanam*), Kṛṣṇa would sometimes slap His arms to show that He had sufficient strength.

Text 9

*darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka,
ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām,
vrajasyovāha vai harṣaṁ,
bhagavān bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ*

To pure devotees throughout the world who could understand His activities, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees, His servants. In this way He increased the pleasure of the Vrajavāsīs by His childhood activities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not only Kṛṣṇa’s relatives, but all the Vrajavasis enjoyed unlimited bliss from His childhood pastimes, wherein He allowed Himself to come under their control. Kṛṣṇa showed this aspect of Himself being controlled by His devotees’ love directly to those external devotees like Brahma and Siva who were captivated by Kṛṣṇa’s potency of majestic opulence because it cannot be understood merely by explanations.

Text 10

*krīṇīhi bhoḥ phalānīti,
śrutvā satvaram acyutaḥ,
phalārthī dhānyam ādāya,*

yayau sarva-phala-pradaḥ

Once a woman selling fruit was calling, “O inhabitants of Vrajabhū mi, if you want to purchase some fruits, come here!” Upon hearing this, Kṛṣṇa immediately took some grains and went to barter as if He needed some fruits.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa bestowed bliss upon all the residents of Vrndavana, including the Pulindas who were aborigines or the lowest class among the Vrajavasis. Acyuta is full in every respect and He Himself provides fruits for everyone. Yet desiring some fruits, He quickly went out with a handful of grains, as only that was available at the moment.

Text 11

*phala-vikrayiṇī tasya,
cyuta-dhānya-kara-dvayam,
phalair apūrayad ratnaiḥ,
phala-bhāṇḍam apūri ca*

While Kṛṣṇa was going to the fruit vendor very hastily, most of the grains He was holding fell. Nonetheless, the fruit vendor filled Kṛṣṇa’s hands with fruits, and her fruit basket was immediately filled with jewels and gold.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The fruit seller did not even get a full handful of grains because the grains fell on the path as Kṛṣṇa hastily approached her. Kṛṣṇa exchanged the few grains remaining in His hand for some fruits while saying, “Give Me some fruit.” The Pulinda woman selling fruits became overcome with affection, and filled

Kṛṣṇa's hands with *pilu* and other fruits. Being greedy for the fruits, Kṛṣṇa somehow managed to hold them all in His small hands by the influence of His *aisvarya-sakti*. In return, the Pulinda woman received all types of wealth including the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema* from Sri Kṛṣṇa, who possesses the power to bestow all fruits.

Text 12

*sarit-tīra-gataṁ kṛṣṇaṁ,
bhagnārjunam athāhvayat,
rāmaṁ ca rohiṇī devī,
krīḍantaṁ bālakair bhṛśam*

Once, after the uprooting of the yamala-arjuna trees, Rohiṇīdevī went to call Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, who had both gone to the riverside and were playing with the other boys with deep attention.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: To show how Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were controlled more by Yasoda's affection than by Rohini's, Sukadeva tells another pastime which occurred on the same day after the breaking of the *yamala-arjuna* trees. Rohini called Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, who had both gone to play on the bank of the Yamuna. Yasoda sent Rohini to call the boys because she wanted Them to take lunch.

Text 13

*nopeyātāṁ yadāhūtau,
krīḍā-saṅgena putrakau,
yaśodāṁ preṣayām āsa,
rohiṇī putra-vatsalām*

Because of being too attached to playing with the other boys, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not return upon being called by Rohiṇī. Therefore Rohiṇī sent mother Yaśodā to call Them back, because mother Yaśodā was more affectionate to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa and Balarama did not respond to her call, Rohini sent Yasoda because she knew that Yasoda had more affection for the two boys and therefore could attract Them.

Text 14

*krīḍantaṁ sā sutāṁ bālair,
ativilaṁ sahāgrajam,
yaśodājohavīt kṛṣṇaṁ,
putra-sneha-snuta-stanī*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being attached to Their play, were playing with the other boys although it was very late. Therefore mother Yaśodā called Them back for lunch. Because of her ecstatic love and affection for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, milk flowed from her breasts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda called Kṛṣṇa and Balarama again and again (*ajohavit*). She called the boys from a distance because she feared that They would run away if she came close.

Text 15

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāravindākṣa,
tāta ehi stanāṁ piba,
alāṁ vihāraiḥ kṣut-kṣāntaḥ,*

krīḍā-śrānto 'si putraka

Mother Yaśodā said: My dear son Kṛṣṇa, lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, come here and drink the milk of my breast. My dear darling, You must be very tired because of hunger and the fatigue of playing so long. There is no need to play any more.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda repeated Kṛṣṇa's name several times from far off so that He would hear.

Text 16

*he rāmāgaccha tātāśu,
sānujaḥ kula-nandana,
prātar eva kṛtāhāras,
tad bhavān bhoktum arhati*

My dear Baladeva, best of our family, please come immediately with Your younger brother, Kṛṣṇa. You both ate in the morning, and now You ought to eat something more.

Text 17

*pratīkṣate tvām dāsārha,
bhokṣyamāṇo vrajādhipaḥ,
ehy āvayoḥ priyam dhehi,
sva-grhān yāta bālakāḥ*

Nanda Mahārāja, the King of Vraja, is now waiting to eat. O my dear son Balarāma, he is waiting for You. Therefore, come back to please us. All the boys playing with You and Kṛṣṇa should now go to their homes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Your father is sitting but he will not eat (bhoksyaman) without You. Why are You giving hunger pangs to Your father? All the boys playing with You should now go to their homes. Your parents are also in difficulty like us, so please go and satisfy them.” Yasoda said these things to stop the boys from playing.

Text 18

*dhūli-dhūsaritāṅgas tvam,
putra majjanam āvaha,
janmarkṣam te 'dya bhavati,
viprebhyo dehi gāḥ śuciḥ*

Mother Yaśodā further told Kṛṣṇa: My dear son, because of playing all day, Your body has become covered with dust and sand. Therefore, come back, take Your bath and cleanse Yourself. Today the moon is conjoined with the auspicious star of Your birth. Therefore, be pure and give cows in charity to the brāhmaṇas.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: But Kṛṣṇa still did not come. Then Yasoda tried to kindle His interest in giving charity.

Text 19

*paśya paśya vayasyāms te,
mātr-mṛṣṭān svalaṅkṛtān,*

*tvam ca snātaḥ kṛtāhāro,
viharasva svalaṅkṛtaḥ*

Just see how all Your playmates of Your own age have been cleansed and decorated with beautiful ornaments by their mothers. You should come here, and after You have taken Your bath, eaten Your lunch and been decorated with ornaments, You may play with Your friends again.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa still refused to come, Yasoda tried to awaken His competitive spirit. She pointed out how His playmates were beautifully decorated by their mothers.

Text 20

*ittham yaśodā tam aśeṣa-śekharam,
matvā sutam sneha-nibaddha-dhīr nrpa,
haste grhītvā saha-rāmam acyutam,
nītvā sva-vāṭam kṛtavaty athodayam*

My dear Mahārāja Parīkṣit, because of intense love and affection, mother Yaśodā, Kṛṣṇa’s mother, considered Kṛṣṇa, who was at the peak of all opulences, to be her own son. Thus she took Kṛṣṇa by the hand, along with Balarāma, and brought Them home, where she performed her duties by fully bathing Them, dressing Them and feeding Them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda thought that Ananta, the crest jewel and source of all *avatars*, was her son. Another meaning: Yasoda considered that Kṛṣṇa was not Bhagavan (*a-sesasekharam*). Actually Kṛṣṇa was both. Another meaning could be: Yasoda thought of her son

as the crest jewel of her entire (*asesa*) family. Yasoda took Kṛṣṇa home (*sva batam*) and bathed, dressed and fed Him sumptuously.

Text 21

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
gopa-vṛddhā mahotpātān,
anubhūya bṛhadvane, nandādayaḥ samāgamyā,
vraja-kāryam amantrayan*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Then one time, having seen the great disturbances in Bṛhadvana, all the elderly persons among the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, assembled and began to consider what to do to stop the continuous disturbing situations in Vraja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To fulfill His desire to now play in Vrndavana, Kṛṣṇa inspired Upananda from within the heart to suggest that everyone move from Mahavana (Bṛhadvana) to Vrndavana.

Text 22

*tatropānanda-nāmāha,
gopo jñāna-vayo- 'dhikaḥ,
deśa-kālārtha-tattva-jñāḥ,
priya-kṛd rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ*

At this meeting of all the inhabitants of Gokula, a cowherd man named Upānanda, who was the most mature in age and knowledge and was very experienced according to time, circumstances and

country, made this suggestion for the benefit of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upananda was not only Nanda Maharaja’s elder brother, but he was also a most learned and experienced counselor.

Text 23

*utthātavyam ito ’smābhir;
gokulasya hitaiṣibhiḥ,
āyānty atra mahotpātā,
bālānām nāśa-hetavaḥ*

He said: My dear friends the cowherd men, in order to do good to this place, Gokula, we should leave it, because so many disturbances are always occurring here, just for the purpose of killing Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upananda said, “Thinking of the welfare of all the inhabitants of Vraja (*gokulasya hitaisibhiḥ*), we should move to safer place.”

Text 24

*muktaḥ kathañcid rākṣasyā,
bāla-ghnyā bālako hy asau,
harer anugrahān nūnam,
anaś copari nāpatat*

The child Kṛṣṇa, simply by the mercy of the Supreme Personality

of Godhead, was somehow or other rescued from the hands of the Rākṣasī Putanā, who was determined to kill Him. Then, again by the mercy of the Supreme Godhead, the handcart missed falling upon the child.

Text 25

*cakra-vātena nīto 'yaṁ,
daityena vipadam viyat,
śilāyāṁ patitas tatra,
paritrātaḥ sureśvaraiḥ*

Then again, the demon Tṛṇāvarta, in the form of a whirlwind, took the child away into the dangerous sky to kill Him, but the demon fell down onto a slab of stone. In that case also, by the mercy of Lord Viṣṇu or His associates, the child was saved.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Kṛṣṇa was once taken in the sky (*viyat*) by Trnavarta (*cakravatena*) and nearly killed (*vipadam*). Fortunately He was saved by Visnu (*suressvaraih*).” The word *suressvaraih* is spoken in the plural form to show respect. The word *api* mentioned in the following verse should be understood in this verse also. “Though (*api*) Kṛṣṇa was taken in the sky and dropped on a rock, He was saved by Visnu.”

Text 26

*yan na mriyeta drumayoḥ,
antaram prāpya bālakaḥ,
asāv anyatamo vāpi,*

tad apy acyuta-rakṣaṇam

Even the other day, neither Kṛṣṇa nor any of His playmates died from the falling of the two trees, although the children were near the trees or even between them. This also is to be considered the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Asau* refers to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 27

*yāvad autpātiko ’riṣṭo,
vrajaṁ nābhibhaved itaḥ,
tāvad bālān upādāya,
yāsyāmo ’nyatra sānugāḥ*

All these incidents are being caused by some unknown demon. Before he comes here to create another disturbance, it is our duty to go somewhere else with the boys until there are no more disturbances.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upananda continued, “Previously there was so much *kirtana*, worship and *darsana* of Visnu in this village. Everywhere and at every moment since the birth of Nandananda there has only been *kirtana* and *darsana* of Visnu. Now let us go somewhere where we can worship Visnu, who has always protected us, without being disturbed. We should follow the *Niti-sastra* given by Visnu.”

Text 28

*vanam vṛndāvanam nāma,
paśavyam nava-kānanam,
gopa-gopī-gavām sevyam,
punyādri-tṛṇa-vīrudham*

Between Nandeśvara and Mahāvana is a place named Vṛndāvana. This place is very suitable because it is lush with grass, plants and creepers for the cows and other animals. It has nice gardens and tall mountains and is full of facilities for the happiness of all the gopas and our animals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “We cannot return to our old capital in Nandisvara because we left there out of fear of Aristasura and came to Mahavana. Aristasura is still there. Between Mahavana and Nandisvara is a forest named Vṛndavana. This place is very suitable for living and beneficial for the cows (*paśavyam*) because it is filled with lush foliage and fresh gardens.” Considering like this, Upananda spoke this verse.

Text 29

*tat tatrādyaiḥ yāsyāmaḥ,
śakaṭān yuñkta mā ciram,
godhanāny agrato yāntu,
bhavatām yadi rocate*

Therefore, let us immediately go today. There is no need to wait any further. If you agree to my proposal, let us prepare all the bullock carts and put the cows in front of us, and let us go there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Therefore (*tat*), if it pleases all of you (*bhavatam*), we should immediately go to Vṛndavana (*tatra*).”

Text 30

*tac chrutvaika-dhiyo gopāḥ,
sādhu sādhu iti vādinah,
vrajān svān svān samāyujya,
yayū rūḍha-paricchadāḥ*

Upon hearing this advice from Upānanda, the cowherd men unanimously agreed. “Very nice,” they said, “Very nice.” Thus they sorted out their household affairs, placed their clothing and other paraphernalia on the carts, and immediately started for Vṛndāvana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrajavasis started for Vrndavana after collecting (*samyujan*) all the cows and other animals, and loading their household goods on carts (*rudha paricchandah*).

Texts 31–32

*vṛddhān bālān striyo rājan,
sarvopakaraṇāni ca,
anaḥsv āropya gopālā,
yattā ātta-śarāsanāḥ,
godhanāni puraskṛtya,
śṛṅgāṇy āpūrya sarvataḥ,
tūrya-ghoṣeṇa mahatā,
yayuh saha-purohitāḥ*

Keeping all the old men, women, children and household paraphernalia on the bullock carts and keeping all the cows in

front, the cowherd men picked up their bows and arrows with great care and sounded bugles made of horn. O King Parīkṣit, in this way, with bugles vibrating all around, the cowherd men, accompanied by their priests, began their journey.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Yatta* means carefully.

Text 33

*gopyo rūḍha-rathā nūtna,
kuca-kuṅkuma-kāntayah,
kṛṣṇa-līlā jaguḥ prītyā,
niṣka-kaṅṭhyaḥ suvāsasaḥ*

The cowherd women, riding on the bullock carts, were dressed very nicely with excellent garments, and their bodies, especially their breasts, were decorated with fresh kuṅkuma powder. As they rode, they began to chant with great pleasure the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 34

*tathā yaśodā-rohiṇyāv,
ekam śakaṭam āsthite,
rejatuḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmābhyām,
tat-kathā-śravaṇotsuke*

Thus hearing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great pleasure, mother Yaśodā and Rohiṇīdevī, so as not to be separated from Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for even a moment, got up with Them on

one bullock cart. In this situation, they all looked very beautiful.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yasoda and Rohini held their sons and sat on one cart because Kṛṣṇa and Balarama could not bear to be separated from each other.

Text 35

*vṛndāvanam sampraviśya,
sarva-kāla-sukhāvaham,
tatra cakrur vrajāvāsam,
śakaṭair ardha-candravat*

In this way they entered Vṛndāvana, where it is always pleasing to live in all seasons. They made a temporary place to inhabit by placing their bullock carts around them in the shape of a half moon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They formed a half circle with their bullock carts and stored all their household goods behind the carts. The front area was left open so the cows could easily come and go. This is described in the *Viṣnu Purana*: There was no need to make fences around their temporary residence. The inhabitants were encircled by bullock carts, animals and thorn trees.

Text 36

*vṛndāvanam govardhanam,
yamunā-pulināni 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.**

Text 37

*evam vrajaukasām prītiṁ,
yacchantau bāla-ceṣṭitaiḥ,
kala-vākyaiḥ sva-kālena,
vatsa-pālau babhūvatuḥ*

**In this way, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, acting like small boys and
talking in half-broken language, gave transcendental pleasure to
all the inhabitants of Vraja. In due course of time, They became old
enough to take care of the calves.**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At the suitable time (*sva kalena*), three
years old, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama started taking care of the calves.

Text 38

*avidūre vraja-bhuvah,
saha gopāla-dārakaiḥ,
cārayām āsatur vatsān,
nānā-krīḍā-paricchadau*

**Not far away from Their residential quarters, both Kṛṣṇa and
Balarāma, equipped with all kinds of playthings, played with other**

cowherd boys and began to tend the small calves.

Texts 39–40

*kvacid vādayato veṇuṁ,
kṣepaṇaiḥ kṣipataḥ kvacit,
kvacit pādaiḥ kiṅkiṇībhīḥ,
kvacit kṛtrima-go-vṛṣaiḥ,
vṛṣāyamāṇau nardantau,
yuyudhāte parasparam,
anukṛtya rutair jantūṁś,
ceratuḥ prākṛtau yathā*

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would play on Their flutes, sometimes They would throw ropes and stones devised for getting fruits from the trees, sometimes They would throw only stones, and sometimes, Their ankle bells tinkling, They would play football with fruits like bael and āmalakī. Sometimes They would cover Themselves with blankets and imitate cows and bulls and fight with one another, roaring loudly, and sometimes They would imitate the voices of the animals. In this way They enjoyed sporting, exactly like two ordinary human children.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sometimes using slings (*ksepana yatraih*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarama would throw (*kshipatam*) *amalaki* and *bel* fruits far away. Sometimes they would kick each other with Their banged feet. Covering themselves with blankets, They pretended to be bulls and roared while fighting each other. They would also imitate the voices of swans and peacocks.

Text 41

*kadācid yamunā-tīre,
vatsāṁś cārayatoḥ svakaiḥ,
vayasyaiḥ kṛṣṇa-balayor,
jighāmsur daitya āgamat*

One day while Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Their playmates, were tending the calves on the bank of the River Yamunā, another demon arrived there, desiring to kill Them.

Text 42

*taṁ vatsa-rūpiṇaṁ vīkṣya,
vatsa-yūtha-gataṁ hariḥ,
darśayan baladevāya,
śanair mugdha ivāśadat*

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead saw that the demon had assumed the form of a calf and entered among the groups of other calves, He pointed out to Baladeva, “Here is another demon.” Then He very slowly approached the demon, as if He did not understand the demon’s intentions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With a side-long glance Kṛṣṇa informed Balarama, and then pretending that He did not know (*mugdha iva*), Kṛṣṇa approached (*śadat*) the demon.

Text 43

*gṛhītvāpara-pādābhyām,
saha-lāṅgūlam acyutaḥ,
bhrāmayitvā kapitthāgre,
prāhiṇod gata-jīvitam,
sa kapitthair mahā-kāyaḥ,
pātyamānaiḥ papāta ha*

Thereafter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa caught the demon by the hind legs and tail, twirled the demon's whole body very strongly until the demon was dead, and threw him into the top of a kapittha tree, which then fell down, along with the body of the demon, who had assumed a great form.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Acyutaḥ, the Lord who never falls, grasped the hind legs and tail of Vatsasura, and threw the demon into the top of a kapittha tree to arrange for his fall (*cyuta*) or death from the material world. By throwing the demon in the tree Kṛṣṇa caused the kapittha fruits to fall for the satisfaction of His friends. Kṛṣṇa whirled the demon around very severely until he was dead (*gata jivitam*), and then threw him in the tree (*prahinot*).

Text 44

*taṁ vīkṣya vismitā bālāḥ,
śaśaṁsuḥ sādhu sādhu iti,
devās ca parisantuṣṭā,
babhūvuḥ puṣpa-varṣiṇaḥ*

Upon seeing the dead body of the demon, all the cowherd boys exclaimed, “Well done, Kṛṣṇa! Very good, very good! Thank You.”

In the upper planetary system, all the demigods were pleased, and therefore they showered flowers on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Text 45

*tau vatsa-pālakau bhūtvā,
sarva-lokaika-pālakau,
saprātar-āsau go-vatsāmś,
cārayantau viceratuḥ*

After the killing of the demon, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma finished Their breakfast in the morning, and while continuing to take care of the calves, They wandered here and there. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead, who maintain the entire creation, now took charge of the calves as if cowherd boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: On that day, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, who maintain all living beings throughout the whole universe (*eka palikau*), became the protectors of the calves (*vatsa-palakau*). After taking Their morning breakfast (*pratar asau*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarama played while tending the calves.

Text 46

*svam svam vatsa-kulam sarve,
pāyayiṣyanta ekadā,
gatvā jalāśayābhyāśam,
pāyayitvā papur jalam*

One day all the boys, including Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, each boy taking his own group of calves, brought the calves to a reservoir of water, desiring to allow them to drink. After the animals drank water, the boys drank water there also.

Text 47

*te tatra dadṛśur bālā,
mahā-sattvam avasthitam,
tatrasur vajra-nirbhinnam,
gireḥ śṛṅgam iva cyutam*

Right by the reservoir, the boys saw a gigantic body resembling a mountain peak broken and struck down by a thunderbolt. They were afraid even to see such a huge living being.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demon looked like a mountain peak cut off by a thunderbolt.

Text 48

*sa vai bako nāma mahān,
asuro baka-rūpa-dhṛk,
āgatya sahasā kṛṣṇam,
tīkṣṇa-tuṇḍo 'grasad balī*

That great-bodied demon was named Bakāsura. He had assumed the body of a duck with a very sharp beak. Having come there, he

immediately swallowed Kṛṣṇa.

Text 49

*kṛṣṇam mahā-baka-grastam,
dṛṣṭvā rāmādayo 'rbhakāḥ,
babhūvur indriyāñīva,
vinā prāṇam vicetasah*

When Balarāma and the other boys saw that Kṛṣṇa had been devoured by the gigantic duck, they became almost unconscious, like senses without life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the gigantic duck had swallowed Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and the other cowherd boys became unconscious. Though Balarama could have easily killed the demon, He responded by fainting due to the intensity of brotherly affection. A similar thing happened during the *rukmini-harana lila*, the kidnapping of Rukmini, wherein Balarama displayed His brotherly affection by protecting Kṛṣṇa from the attack of Jarasandha and other soldiers.

Text 50

*tam tālu-mūlam pradahantam agnivad,
gopāla-sūnum pitaram jagad-guroḥ,
caccharda sadyo 'turuṣākṣatam bakas,
tuṅdena hantum punar abhyapadyata*

Kṛṣṇa, who was the father of Lord Brahmā but who was acting as

the son of a cowherd man, became like fire, burning the root of the demon's throat, and the demon Bakāsura immediately disgorged Him. When the demon saw that Kṛṣṇa, although having been swallowed, was unharmed, he immediately attacked Kṛṣṇa again with his sharp beak.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as sugar candy tastes bitter to the tongue of the diseased person, the demon Bakasura felt that his throat was on fire though Kṛṣṇa is as soft as a tender blue lotus. This indicates that Kṛṣṇa's body became as hard as a thunderbolt. It was the fault of the demon's throat not Kṛṣṇa. When Bakasura spit out Kṛṣṇa he saw that Kṛṣṇa was unharmed (*aksata*).

Text 51

*tam āpatantaṁ sa nigrhya tuṅdayor,
dorbhyāṁ bakam kaṁsa-sakhaṁ satām patih,
paśyatsu bāleṣu dadāra līlayā,
mudāvaho vīraṇavad divaukasām*

When Kṛṣṇa, the leader of the Vaiṣṇavas, saw that the demon Bakāsura, the friend of Kaṁsa, was endeavoring to attack Him, with His arms He captured the demon by the two halves of the beak, and in the presence of all the cowherd boys Kṛṣṇa very easily bifurcated Him, as a child splits a blade of vīraṇa grass. By thus killing the demon, Kṛṣṇa very much pleased the denizens of heaven.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the presence of all the cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa firmly grasped (*nigrhya*) Bakasura's beak and bifurcated it like a blade of *virana* grass. This action greatly pleased all the demigods (*mudavahah*).

Text 52

*tadā bakāriṃ sura-loka-vāsināḥ,
samākiran nandana-mallikādibhiḥ,
samīḍire cānaka-śaṅkha-saṁstavais,
tad vīkṣya gopāla-sutā visismire*

At that time, the celestial denizens of the higher planetary system showered mallikā-puṣpa, flowers grown in Nandana-kānana, upon Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Bakāsura. They also congratulated Him by sounding celestial kettledrums and conchshells and by offering prayers. Seeing this, the cowherd boys were struck with wonder.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demigods showered flowers (*samakiran*) everywhere, and praised Kṛṣṇa with selected prayers (*saṁstavaih*).

Text 53

*muktaṁ bakāsyād upalabhya bālakā,
rāmādayaḥ prāṇam ivendriyo gaṇaḥ,
sthānāgatam taṁ parirabhya nirvṛtāḥ,
praṇīya vatsān vrajam etya taj jaguḥ*

Just as the senses are pacified when consciousness and life return, so when Kṛṣṇa was freed from this danger, all the boys, including Balarāma, thought that their life had been restored. They embraced Kṛṣṇa in good consciousness, and then they collected their own calves and returned to Vrajabhumi, where they declared the incident loudly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Just like enlivened senses, the boys regained their lives (*pranam iva*) when Kṛṣṇa returned from the clutches of the demon. Balarama and the boys embraced Kṛṣṇa, and then collected (*praniya*) their calves to return home (*sthanam*). They loudly proclaimed (*jaguh*) the killing of Vatsasura and Bakasura. A second meaning: The cowherd boys set the descriptions of these pastimes to poetic melody and rhythm so they could sing them on other days.

Text 54

*śrutvā tad vismitā gopā,
gopyaś cātipriyādr̥tāḥ,
pretyāgatam ivotsukyād,
aikṣanta tṛṣitekṣaṇāḥ*

When the cowherd men and women heard about the killing of Bakāsura in the forest, they were very much astonished. Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa and hearing the story, they received Kṛṣṇa very eagerly, thinking that Kṛṣṇa and the other boys had returned from the mouth of death. Thus they looked upon Kṛṣṇa and the boys with silent eyes, not wanting to turn their eyes aside now that the boys were safe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopas* and *gopis* were very pleased (*adrtah*) to see their most beloved (*ati priya*) Kṛṣṇa. With eyes thirsting to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty (*trsita iksana*), they glanced at Him (*aikṣantah*), looking over His whole body for fear that He was wounded.

Text 55

*aho batāsyā bālasya,
bahavo mṛtyavo 'bhavan,
apy āsīd vipriyaṁ teṣāṁ,
kṛtaṁ pūrvam yato bhayam*

The cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, began to contemplate: It is very astonishing that although this boy Kṛṣṇa has many times faced many varied causes of death, by the grace of the Supreme Personality of Godhead it was these causes of fear that were killed, instead of Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Three verses (55-58) describe the amazement of the cowherd men in discussing Kṛṣṇa's exploits: "This boy Kṛṣṇa has faced many causes of death (*mṛtyavaḥ*). But these causes of fear were killed and not our innocent boy."

Text 56

*athāpy abhibhavanty enaṁ,
naiva te ghora-darśanāḥ,
jighāmsayainam āsādyā,
naśyanty agnau pataṅgavat*

Although the causes of death, the daityas, were very fierce, they could not kill this boy Kṛṣṇa. Rather, because they came to kill innocent boys, as soon as they approached they themselves were killed, exactly like flies attacking a fire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja innocently thought, "Perhaps this boy Kṛṣṇa formerly killed all these demons, and therefore

in this life they are troubling Him?” This verse answers the question. “If that were true, then they would have been able to destroy Kṛṣṇa. But when they tried to kill Kṛṣṇa, they got killed by Him.”

Text 57

*aho brahma-vidām vāco,
nāsatyāḥ santi karhicit,
gargo yad āha bhagavān,
anvabhāvi tathaiva tat*

The words of persons in full knowledge of Brahman never become untrue. It is very wonderful that whatever Gargamuni predicted we are now actually experiencing in all detail.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The reason for the condition mentioned above is now given. Nanda Maharaja continued, “Gargamuni said that Kṛṣṇa’s qualities would be exactly like those of Narayana.”

Text 58

*iti nandādayo gopāḥ,
kṛṣṇa-rāma-kathām mudā,
kurvanto ramamāñāś ca,
nāvindan bhava-vedanām*

In this way all the cowherd men, headed by Nanda Mahārāja, enjoyed topics about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with great transcendental pleasure, and they could not even perceive material tribulations.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men sat in the meeting room, and repeatedly discussed the naughtiness of the boy and His killing of Vatsasura and Bakasura. They also composed songs which they sang again and again (*katham kurvantah*), and thus they did not perceive the tribulations of material existence (*bhavasya vedanam*).

Other elderly cowherd men coming from distant places informed Nanda about the need to become liberated from the material world: “Half your life is gone. Why do you remain immersed in discussing about child, family and wife? Why don’t you concentrate on knowledge, detachment, austerity and remembrance of Narayana so that you get deliverance from the material world?” Though requested in this way, Nanda Maharaja and the other cowherd men did not pay any attention to that (*na avindan bhavasya vedanam*). To say that this phrase means that “they did not suffer the pains of material life” is not acceptable. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.6.40) describes the exalted nature of the cowherd men and women, who were not touched by the material world born of ignorance. There is no question that they could be affected by the pains of the material world. In this way, whatever appears as material tribulations simply nourishes the pastimes and therefore is called *lila-maya*.

Not only did the cowherd men speak about Kṛṣṇa and His past and future pastimes, but they also enjoyed playing with Kṛṣṇa (*ramamanah*). Thus they did not know the sufferings of materialistic persons (*bhava vedanam*), though they were living in the material world. When the Vrajavasis say “I am suffering from hunger,” that hunger is not related to the material world.

Text 59

*evam vihāraiḥ kaumāraiḥ,
kaumāraṁ jahatur vraje,*

*nilāyanaiḥ setu-bandhair;
markaṭotplavanādibhiḥ*

In this way Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma passed Their childhood age in Vrajabhū mi by engaging in activities of childish play, such as playing hide-and-peek, constructing a make-believe bridge on the ocean, and jumping here and there like monkeys.

Chapter Twelve: The Killing of the Demon Aghasura

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kvacid vanāśāya mano dadhad vrajāt,
prātaḥ samutthāya vayasya-vatsapān,
prabodhayañ chr̥ṅga-raveṇa cāruṇā,
vinirgato vatsa-puraḥsaro hariḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: O King, one day Kṛṣṇa decided to take His breakfast as a picnic in the forest. Having risen early in the morning, He blew His bugle made of horn and woke all the cowherd boys and calves with its beautiful sound. Then Kṛṣṇa and the boys, keeping their respective groups of calves before them, proceeded from Vrajabhū mi to the forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Twelfth Chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's playing with His friends, and their entering the body of the serpent demon Aghasura. To save His friends Kṛṣṇa also entered the demon and killed him by expanding His body.

One day (*kvacit*) Kṛṣṇa decided to enjoy a picnic in the forest (*vanasaya*). Only Kṛṣṇa's name (*hariḥ*) is mentioned, indicating that Rohini forcefully kept Balarama at home in order to bathe Him and perform auspicious rites on His birthday.

Text 2

tenaiva sākam pṛthukāḥ sahasraśaḥ,

*snigdhaḥ suśig-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇavaḥ,
svān svān sahasropari-saṅkhyānvitān,
vatsān puraskṛtya viniryayur mudā*

At that time, hundreds and thousands of cowherd boys came out of their respective homes in Vrajabhumi and joined Kṛṣṇa, keeping before them their hundreds and thousands of groups of calves. The boys were very beautiful, and they were equipped with lunch bags, bugles, flutes, and sticks for controlling the calves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: 2-3 Prthukah refers to the cowherd boys. They were holding sticks, horns, flutes and lunch bags. *Sahasra pari sankhya* means ten thousand. Kṛṣṇa had an *asankhya* number of calves. *Asankhya* is one followed by seventeen zeros. One should not argue however that such a large number of cows could not possibly fit into the thirty-two square mile area of Vṛndavana because the *dhama* is unlimited by the inconceivable energy of the Lord. Even a small portion of the holy *dhama* is sufficient to accommodate billions of universes each measuring fifty million miles in diameter. Kṛṣṇa showed this to Brahma in a later chapter. The *Brhad Bhagavatamṛta* says there is no question of impediments, obstacles or limitations because the Lord, His associates, and His holy *dhama* have inconceivable power (*acintya-saktih*). Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boyfriends were ornamented by their mothers with necklaces of crystal and *gunja* seed beads before entering the forest. Once in the forest, they ornamented themselves with forest fruits and flowers.

Text 3

*kṛṣṇa-vatsair asaṅkhyātair;
yūthī-kṛtya sva-vatsakān,
cārayanto 'rbha-līlābhir,*

vijahrus tatra tatra ha

Along with the cowherd boys and their own groups of calves, Kṛṣṇa came out with an unlimited number of calves assembled. Then all the boys began to sport in the forest in a greatly playful spirit.

Text 4

*phala-prabāla-stavaka,
sumanaḥ-piccha-dhātubhiḥ,
kāca-guñjā-maṇi-svarṇa,
bhūṣitā apy abhūṣayan*

Although all these boys were already decorated by their mothers with ornaments of kāca, guñjā, pearls and gold, when they went into the forest they further decorated themselves with fruits, green leaves, bunches of flowers, peacock feathers and soft minerals.

Text 5

*muṣṇanto 'nyonya-śikyādīn,
jñātān ārāc ca cikṣipuh,
tatratyās ca punar dūrād,
dhasantaś ca punar daduḥ*

All the cowherd boys used to steal one another's lunch bags. When a boy came to understand that his bag had been taken away, the

other boys would throw it farther away, to a more distant place, and those standing there would throw it still farther. When the proprietor of the bag became disappointed, the other boys would laugh, the proprietor would cry, and then the bag would be returned.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys used to steal (*musnantah*) each other's articles. One boy would steal another's food container, take it to a distant place, and hide it under a tree surrounded by thorn bushes and red ants. When the boy whose lunch bag was stolen tried to retrieve it, other boys would throw it farther away. When he ran after it, they would throw it still farther. The boy would cry, and then the other boys would laugh and return his lunch bag.

Text 6

*yadi dūram gataḥ kṛṣṇo,
vana-śobheḥṣaṅāya tam,
aḥam pūrvam aḥam pūrvam,
iti saṁsprśya remire*

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would go to a somewhat distant place to see the beauty of the forest. Then all the other boys would run to accompany Him, each one saying, “I shall be the first to run and touch Kṛṣṇa! I shall touch Kṛṣṇa first!” In this way they enjoyed life by repeatedly touching Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa wandered off to see the beauty of a distant forest, the boys would run after Him, shouting, “I will touch Kṛṣṇa first!” “No, I will.” “No, I will.”

Texts 7–11

*kecid veṇūn vādayanto,
dhmāntaḥ śṛṅgāṇi kecana,
kecid bhṛṅgaiḥ pragāyantaḥ,
kūjantaḥ kokilaiḥ pare,
vicchāyābhiḥ pradhāvanto,
gacchantaḥ sādhu-hamsakaiḥ,
bakair upaviśantaś ca,
nṛtyantaś ca kalāpibhiḥ,
vikarṣantaḥ kīśa-bālān,
ārohantaś ca tair drumān,
vikurvantaś ca taiḥ sākam,
plavantaś ca palāśiṣu,
sākam bhekair vilāṅghantaḥ,
saritaḥ srava-samplutāḥ,
vihasantaḥ praticchāyāḥ,
śapantaś ca pratisvanān ittham satām brahma-sukhānubhūtyā,
dāsyam gatānām para-daivatena,
māyāśritānām nara-dārakeṇa,
sākam vijahruḥ kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ*

All the boys would be differently engaged. Some boys blew their flutes, and others blew bugles made of horn. Some imitated the buzzing of the bumblebees, and others imitated the voice of the cuckoo. Some boys imitated flying birds by running after the birds' shadows on the ground, some imitated the beautiful movements and attractive postures of the swans, some sat down with the ducks, sitting silently, and others imitated the dancing of the peacocks. Some boys attracted young monkeys in the trees, some jumped into the trees, imitating the monkeys, some made faces as the monkeys were accustomed to do, and others jumped from one branch to another. Some boys went to the waterfalls

and crossed over the river, jumping with the frogs, and when they saw their own reflections on the water they would laugh. They would also condemn the sounds of their own echoes. In this way, all the cowherd boys used to play with Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of the Brahman effulgence for jñānīs desiring to merge into that effulgence, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead for devotees who have accepted eternal servitorship, and who for ordinary persons is but another ordinary child. The cowherd boys, having accumulated the results of pious activities for many lives, were able to associate in this way with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How can one explain their great fortune?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Verses Seven-Ten: The cowherd boys blew bugles (*dhmantah*) made of buffalo horns, chased the shadows of the birds and pulled the tails of baby monkeys. They would climb the trees by grabbing the tails of the monkeys hanging from the branches. After imitating the funny faces of the monkeys, the boys would jump from one tree branch to another. They leaped after the frogs into pools of water, which were created by the cascading waterfalls. Upon seeing their reflections on the water, they would laugh heartily. Raising their arms, the boys would shout loudly in a playful mood. Then they would curse their echoes saying, “*Aaare (ahah)*! Who is that speaking?” Hearing a single syllable echo back, the boys would become angry. “What is this?” The echo would reply vibrating “*re—re—re.*” And the boys would say, “Today you will die!” In this way they would curse again and again and never come to an end.

Verse Eleven: After describing the playing of the cowherd boys, this verse shows the unique good fortune of the Vrajavasis as compared with others. There are three types of people in this world: *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *bhaktas*. The word *satam* indicates those *jñānīs* who possess some trace of devotion. The inhabitants of Vraja used to play freely with Kṛṣṇa who is the source of the knowledge and happiness the *jñānīs* seek in Brahman. One can understand from this that Kṛṣṇa’s body, with which the Vrajavasis played, contains the Brahman.

The word *satam* (transcendentalists) cannot apply to those *jnanis* who think that Kṛṣṇa's body is material. The phrase *dasya ganana* refers to all the genuine devotees besides the Vrajavasis, who see Kṛṣṇa as their worshipable Lord. The Vrajavasis were so fortunate that they directly played with Kṛṣṇa who is seen by these other devotees as their reverent Lord.

The Vrajavasis joyfully sported with Kṛṣṇa, who is perceived as an ordinary human (*naradarakena*) by the materialistic sense enjoyers covered by the illusory potency (*mayasritanam*) of the Lord. The *jnanis* have realization of Kṛṣṇa but they cannot play with Him. The *dasya bhaktas*, the Lord's surrendered servants, worship Kṛṣṇa in reverence, but they are not qualified to play with Kṛṣṇa. The *karmis* have no respect for Kṛṣṇa so they neither realize nor worship Him, what to speak of playing with Him.

Although Kṛṣṇa is made of complete bliss, He experienced intense ecstasy playing with the Vrajavasis in various pastimes of love. They too attained the pinnacle of joy in His association. Therefore, the Vrajavasis were more fortunate than all others (*krta punya*). Of course, this is a material viewpoint. For the *nitya siddha* Vrajavasis, Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates who far surpass the *jnanis* and *dasya bhaktas*, the cause of the playing with Kṛṣṇa is not material piety (*punya*). Here the word *punya* (*krta-punya-puñjāḥ*) can only mean activities pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, by which Kṛṣṇa comes under the devotee's control. It does not mean material piety or heaps of good deeds.

Text 12

*yat-pāda-pāmsur bahu-janma-kṛcchrato,
dhṛtātmabhir yogibhir apy alabhyah,
sa eva yad-dṛg-viṣayaḥ svayaṁ sthitaḥ,
kim varṇyate diṣṭam ato vrajaukasām*

Yogīs may undergo severe austerities and penances for many births by practicing yama, niyama, āsana and prāṇāyāma, none of which are easily performed. Yet in due course of time, when these yogīs attain the perfection of controlling the mind, they will still be unable to taste even a particle of dust from the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What then can we describe about the great fortune of the inhabitants of Vrajabhū mi, Vṛndāvana, with whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead personally lived and who saw the Lord face to face?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What to speak of playing with Kṛṣṇa, even establishing a relationship with Kṛṣṇa is very rare. That is the intent of this verse. The *yogis* cannot attain even one particle of dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet (*pada pamsuh*). Nor can the *yogis* attain even one particle of reflected light from the trees of Vṛndavana (*padapa:tree, amsuh:particle*).

Those who fully concentrate their minds (*dhrta-atmabhih*) cannot attain Kṛṣṇa. Thus it was stated earlier that Kṛṣṇa is *sukhapa*, not easily attained. *Svayam sthita* (being self situated) indicates that seeing Kṛṣṇa does not depend even on the performance of *sadhana*.

“Oh what great fortune (*distam atah*)” or “What a happy festival (*dista maho*)!” Who can describe the good fortune or happiness of the Vrajavasis who constantly see Kṛṣṇa? Such fortune is unobtainable by the *yogis*. Though they concentrate their minds for lifetimes, they cannot even attain a particle of dust at Kṛṣṇa’s feet.

Text 13

*athāgha-nāmābhyapatan mahāsuras,
teṣām sukha-kṛīḍana-vikṣaṇākṣamah,
nityam yad-antar nija-jīvitesubhiḥ,
pītāmṛtair apy amaraiḥ pratīkṣyate*

My dear King Parikṣit, thereafter there appeared a great demon named Aghāsura, whose death was being awaited even by the demigods. The demigods drank nectar every day, but still they feared this great demon and awaited his death. This demon could not tolerate the transcendental pleasure being enjoyed in the forest by the cowherd boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the boys were relishing ever-increasing bliss by playing, and that they would not stop playing, and knowing that they would not take time out to eat, and that the eating time had already passed, and seeing that it was also necessary to kill a demon, Kṛṣṇa's *lila-sakti* inspired the Aghasura demon through the Supersoul and brought him near the boys.

Aghasura could not tolerate the fun the boys were having. The various sports they played filled the boys with pleasure, but the demon experienced only suffering. The demigods (*amaraiḥ*) who drink the celestial nectar (*amṛta*) were afraid of being killed by the demon, so they eagerly awaited his death (*yad antaḥ*). *Yad* can also refer to playing and *antaḥ* can mean in the heart. Then the meaning would be: Aghasura could not tolerate the *gopas'* playing, which was meditated upon by the demigods, and which alone gave them the desire to maintain their lives (*nija jivtepsubhiḥ*), though they already drank nectar, *amṛta*.

Text 14

*dṛṣṭvārbhakān kṛṣṇa-mukhān aghāsurāḥ,
kaṁsānuśiṣṭaḥ sa bakī-bakānujaḥ,
ayaṁ tu me sodara-nāśa-kṛt tayor,
dvayor mamaināṁ sa-balaṁ haniṣye*

Aghāsura, who had been sent by Kāmsa, was the younger brother

of Putana and Bakāsura. Therefore when he came and saw Kṛṣṇa at the head of all the cowherd boys, he thought, “This Kṛṣṇa has killed my sister and brother, Putana and Bakāsura. Therefore, in order to please them both, I shall kill this Kṛṣṇa, along with His assistants, the other cowherd boys.”

Text 15

*ete yadā mat-suhr̥dos tilāpah,
kṛtās tadā naṣṭa-samā vrajaukasaḥ,
prāṇe gate varṣmasu kā nu cintā,
prajāsavah̥ prāṇa-bhṛto hi ye te*

Aghāsura thought: If somehow or other I can make Kṛṣṇa and His associates serve as the last offering of sesame and water for the departed souls of my brother and sister, then the inhabitants of Vrajabhū mi, for whom these boys are the life and soul, will automatically die. If there is no life, there is no need for the body; consequently, when their sons are dead, naturally all the inhabitants of Vraja will die.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verses 14-15: Observing all the cowherd boys headed by Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa mukhan*), Aghasura (*sah*), the younger brother of Putana (*baki*) and Bakasura, considered: The second half of verse 14 and verse 15 are Aghasura’s thoughts:

“This person (*ayam tu*) has killed my older sister Putana (*baki*) and my brother (*baka sodara nasa krt*). On their behalf therefore (*atha*), I will kill Kṛṣṇa as a *pinda* offering along with His followers (*sabalām*). If Kṛṣṇa and the other boys become the sacrificial offering (*tilapah*) to the Pretas for my brother and sister (*mat suhr̥doh*), Nanda and the other inhabitants of Vraja will automatically die. If life has left the body, need

we worry any more about the bodies (*varsmasu*)? Living entities (*ye prana bhrtah*) live through their children (*te prajasavah*). Therefore if their beloved child Kṛṣṇa dies, then Nanda, Yasoda and the rest of the Vrajavasis will automatically die without my having to kill them.”

Text 16

*iti vyavasyājagaram brhad vapuḥ,
sa yojanāyāma-mahādri-pīvaram,
dhrtvādbhutam vyātta-guhānanam tadā,
pathi vyaśeta grasanāśayā khalah*

After thus deciding, that crooked Aghāsura assumed the form of a huge python, as thick as a big mountain and as long as eight miles. Having assumed this wonderful python’s body, he spread his mouth like a big cave in the mountains and lay down on the road, expecting to swallow Kṛṣṇa and His associates the cowherd boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking in this way, Aghasura lay on the path in order to devour Kṛṣṇa and His friends. He was one *yojana* (eight miles) in length, and as thick (*pivaram*) as a huge mountain (*mahadri*). His mouth spread open (*vyattam*) like a cave.

Text 17

*dharādharoṣṭho jaladottaroṣṭho,
dary-ānanānto giri-śṛṅga-damṣtraḥ,
dhvāntāntar-āsyō vitatādhva-jihvaḥ,
paruṣānila-śvāsa-davekṣaṇoṣṇaḥ*

His lower lip rested on the surface of the earth, and his upper lip was touching the clouds in the sky. The borders of his mouth resembled the sides of a big cave in a mountain, and the middle of his mouth was as dark as possible. His tongue resembled a broad traffic-way, his breath was like a warm wind, and his eyes blazed like fire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Aghasura’s lower lip rested on the earth and his upper lip touched the clouds. The borders of his mouth resembled the sides of a big mountain cave. The interior of the mouth was as dark as night, and his tongue resembled a wide road. His breath was like a burning fire and his eyes blazed like fire.

Text 18

*dr̥ṣṭvā taṁ tādṛśaṁ sarve,
matvā vṛndāvana-śriyam,
vyāttājagara-tuṅdena,
hy utprekṣante sma līlayā*

Upon seeing this demon’s wonderful form, which resembled a great python, the boys thought that it must be a beautiful scenic spot of Vṛndāvana. Thereafter, they imagined it to be similar to the mouth of a great python. In other words, the boys, unafraid, thought that it was a statue made in the shape of a great python for the enjoyment of their pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: A few boys thought that Aghasura was a big snake, so they started to run away upon seeing it. Other boys however thought that Aghasura was simply a wonderful scenic spot of Vṛndavana. They comforted their fearful friends saying, “O fools, a snake can never be this big. It is just some statue fashioned by the Lord

so that we can appreciate the splendor of Vrndavana even more. Kṛṣṇa made it look like a huge snake with a big gaping mouth.” In this way the cowherd boys thought the Lord’s creation was something like the gaping mouth of the serpent made just for pastimes (*līlaya*).

Text 19

*aho mitrāṇi gadata,
sattva-kūṭam puraḥ sthitam,
asmat-saṅgrasana-vyātta,
vyāla-tuṅḍāyate na vā*

The boys said: Dear friends, is this creature dead, or is it actually a living python with its mouth spread wide just to swallow us all? Kindly clear up this doubt.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some boys called out to their elder friends to confirm their thoughts: “Is this some type of immovable living entity?” The word *kuta* means a peak, indicating some large animal. “Is it some resting tiger or other big animal waiting to devour us with its open mouth?”

Text 20

*satyam arka-karāraktam,
uttarā-hanuvad ghanam,
adharā-hanuvad rodhas,
tat-praticchāyayāruṇam*

Thereafter they decided: Dear friends, this is certainly an animal sitting here to swallow us all. Its upper lip resembles a cloud reddened by the sunshine, and its lower lip resembles the reddish shadows of a cloud.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Agreeing with them, one boy said, “Its upper lip resembles a cloud reddened by the sunshine, and its lower lip appears like the reddish shadows of a cloud.”

Text 21

*pratispardhete sṛkkabhyām,
savyāsavye nagodare,
tuṅga-śṛṅgālayo 'py etās,
tad-damṣṭrābhiś ca paśyata*

On the left and right, the two depressions resembling mountain caves are the corners of its mouth, and the high mountain peaks are its teeth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Look here on the left and right, the two depressions resembling mountain caves are the corners of its mouth, and (pointing with his forefinger) the high mountain peaks are like a serpent’s teeth.”

Text 22

*āstr̥tāyāma-mārgo 'yam,
rasanām pratigarjati,
eṣām antar-gatam dhvāntam,
etad apy antar-ānanam*

In length and breadth the animal’s tongue resembles a broad traffic-way, and the inside of its mouth is very, very dark, like a cave in a mountain.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The animal’s tongue (*rasana*) resembles a wide (*astrtayama*) road. The inside of its mouth is very dark, like a mountain cave.”

Text 23

*dāvoṣṇa-khara-vāto ’yaṁ,
śvāsavad bhāti paśyata,
tad-dagdha-sattva-durgandho,
’py antar-āmiṣa-gandhavat*

The hot fiery wind is the breath coming out of his mouth, which is giving off the bad smell of burning flesh because of all the dead bodies he has eaten.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The hot fiery wind is the breath from his mouth, which is giving off the bad smell of burning flesh because of all the animals he has eaten.”

Text 24

*asmān kim atra grasitā niviṣṭān,
ayaṁ tathā ced bakavad vinaṅkṣyati,
kṣaṇād aneneti bakāry-uśan-mukham,
vīkṣyoddhasantaḥ kara-tāḍanair yauḥ*

Then the boys said, “Has this living creature come to swallow us? If he does so, he will immediately be killed like Bakāsura, without delay.” Thus they looked at the beautiful face of Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Bakāsura, and, laughing loudly and clapping their hands, they entered the mouth of the python.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some of the boys spoke with a little fear: “If this creature is really a snake, he may swallow us if we enter his mouth.”

One boy replied to pacify them: “If that is so, then in an instant (*ksanad*) Kṛṣṇa (*aneti*) will kill him just as He vanquished Baka. Kṛṣṇa is right here, so why should we worry?” Saying this, the boy smiled and looked toward Kṛṣṇa, who was standing some distance away.

Getting this confirmation, all the cowherd boys began to laugh loudly while speaking, “Hey *sakhas!* Let’s find out what is in that mouth.” Then they entered the demon’s mouth out of boyish curiosity. Clapping their hands to show their courage and fearlessness, or to dismiss the snake, the boys ran inside the snake’s gaping mouth. The calves ran after them with their tails raised.

Text 25

*itthaṁ mitho ’tathyam ataj-jña-bhāṣitam,
śrutvā vicintyety amṛṣā mṛṣāyate,
rakṣo vidityākhila-bhūta-hṛt-sthitaḥ,
svānām niroddhum bhagavān mano dadhe*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is situated as antaryāmī, the Supersoul, in the core of everyone’s heart, heard

the boys talking among themselves about the artificial python. Unknown to them, it was actually Aghāsura, a demon who had appeared as a python. Kṛṣṇa, knowing this, wanted to forbid His associates to enter the demon’s mouth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing the boys talk about the snake as if it were something unreal, Kṛṣṇa began to think: “What is actually a snake’s mouth, My friends think is some wonderful scenery of Vṛndavana. This is not just a snake, but the demon named Aghasura.” How did Kṛṣṇa know this? Kṛṣṇa knows everything because He is situated in everyone’s heart (*akhila bhuta hrt sthitah*) as the Supersoul, *antaryami*. Kṛṣṇa then decided to prevent His boyfriends from entering the snake’s mouth.

Text 26

*tāvāt praviṣṭās tv asurodarāntaram,
param na gīrṇāḥ śiśavaḥ sa-vatsāḥ,
pratīkṣamāṇena bakāri-veśanam,
hata-sva-kānta-smaraṇena rakṣasā*

In the meantime, while Kṛṣṇa was considering how to stop them, all the cowherd boys entered the mouth of the demon. The demon, however, did not swallow them, for he was thinking of his own relatives who had been killed by Kṛṣṇa and was just waiting for Kṛṣṇa to enter his mouth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as Kṛṣṇa was deciding to stop them, the boys entered the serpent’s mouth, but the serpent did not swallow them. Why didn’t he swallow them? The demon was remembering the death of his brother and sister (*hata sva kanta smaranena*) at the hands of the Lord so he was waiting for Kṛṣṇa.

One should not think that Kṛṣṇa's *satya sankalpa sakti* (potency that fulfills every desire of the Lord) was thwarted because Kṛṣṇa could not stop the boys from entering the serpent's mouth though He wanted to. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa's devotees had a desire to be saved by Kṛṣṇa if by chance they were swallowed by the demon. Of the two desires, the desire of the devotee prevails, according to the principle that the Lord is controlled by His devotee. This was perfectly arranged by Kṛṣṇa's ever-watchful *lila-sakti*, which harmonizes everything by removing all seeming contradictions.

Text 27

*tān vīkṣya kṛṣṇaḥ sakalābhaya-prado,
hy ananya-nāthān sva-karād avacyutān,
dīnāmś ca mṛtyor jaṭharāgni-ghāsān,
ghṛṇārdito diṣṭa-kṛtena vismitaḥ*

Kṛṣṇa saw that all the cowherd boys, who did not know anyone but Him as their Lord, had now gone out of His hand and were helpless, having entered like straws into the fire of the abdomen of Aghāsura, who was death personified. It was intolerable for Kṛṣṇa to be separated from His friends the cowherd boys. Therefore, as if seeing that this had been arranged by His internal potency, Kṛṣṇa was momentarily struck with wonder and unsure of what to do.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the boys were helplessly beyond His control, like jewels slipping from one's hands, and that they were entering like straws into the fire of the snake's stomach, Kṛṣṇa become filled with compassion (*ghṛṇaya arditah*). Kṛṣṇa was astonished at the actions of His *lila-sakti* (*dista kṛtena*) or of time (*dista*) in making the cowherd boys enter the serpent's mouth.

What was the cause of Kṛṣṇa's astonishment? The Lord thought, "It is

not possible for these cowherd boys to have *prarabdha karma*. Besides, the Supersoul does not give them the tendency for *karma*, because the Supersoul is My expansion and does not do anything unfavorable to Me. Therefore, the *lila-sakti* has made this seemingly unfavorable arrangement with a desire to put Me, who abound in *prema*, in a compassionate mood (*karuna rasa*) on seeing this unfortunate situation. It astonishes Me how she controls Me, the very form of all *rasas* and the king of all *lilas* (*lila purusottama*).”

Though Kṛṣṇa’s sorrow due to separation from His friends remained, it somewhat reduced with the rise of astonishment (*vismaya bhava*). This is the meaning here.

Text 28

*kṛtyam kim atrāsya khalasya jīvanam,
na vā amīṣām ca satām vihiṁsanam,
dvayam katham syād iti samvicintya,
jñātvāviśat tuṅḍam aśeṣa-dṛg ghariḥ*

Now, what was to be done? How could both the killing of this demon and the saving of the devotees be performed simultaneously? Kṛṣṇa, being unlimitedly potent, decided to wait for an intelligent means by which He could simultaneously save the boys and kill the demon. Then He entered the mouth of Aghāsura.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “What should I do in this dangerous situation? How can I kill the demon without harming the boys?” After thinking in this way and finding a solution, Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of the serpent. Kṛṣṇa always knows best what to do in the present and in the future (*asesa drk*), and He takes away (*hari*) danger for His devotee and the life of a demon.

Text 29

*tadā ghana-cchadā devā,
bhayād dhā-heti cukruśuḥ,
jahṛṣur ye ca kamsādyāḥ,
kaunapās tv agha-bāndhavāḥ*

When Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of Aghāsura, the demigods hidden behind the clouds exclaimed, “Alas! Alas!” But the friends of Aghāsura, like Kamsa and other demons, were jubilant.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa entered the mouth of Aghasura, the demigods hiding behind the clouds out of fear of Kamsa exclaimed, “Alas! Alas!” Though the demigods were aware of the Lord’s powers, because they are also devotees they shouted in anxiety for Kṛṣṇa’s safety. The intrinsic nature of *bhakti* is affection, and the nature of affection is to sometimes lose one’s power of discrimination. Kamsa, his *raksasa* friends (*kaunapa* means eaters of corpses), and the sons and brothers of Aghasura rejoiced on hearing the news from their spies.

Text 30

*tac chrutvā bhagavān kṛṣṇas,
tv avyayaḥ sārbha-vatsakam,
cūrṇī-cikīrṣor ātmānam,
tarasā vavṛdhe gale*

When the invincible Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, heard the demigods crying “Alas! Alas!” from behind the clouds,

He immediately enlarged Himself within the demon's throat, just to save Himself and the cowherd boys, His own associates, from the demon who wished to smash them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Hearing the demigods' cries of dismay and the demons' rejoicing, Kṛṣṇa immediately enlarged Himself within the demon's throat to save Himself and the cowherd boys from being crushed in Aghasura's stomach. Kṛṣṇa did this to reverse the sounds of lamentation from the demigods and the demons' shouts of joy. In the pastimes of killing Sakatasura, Trnavarta, and getting tied to the grinding mortar, Kṛṣṇa remained as a small child and manifested His majestic powers. Therefore in the throat of Aghasura, Kṛṣṇa expanded His form to show that He did not lack the power to expand Himself in size. In the *damodara-līlā* and other pastimes the Lord maintained His form as a child because His devotees could taste the full sweetness within that form. Although they experienced astonishment by witnessing Kṛṣṇa's prowess, it did not disturb their conception of the Lord as their child. But here in the absence of His parents who were relishing His sweetness, Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Lord, adopted a more common method of just expanding Himself to kill the demon.

Text 31

*tato 'tikāyasya niruddha-mārgiṇo,
hy udgīrṇa-dṛṣṭer bhramatas tv itas tataḥ,
pūrṇo 'ntar-aṅge pavano niruddho,
mūrdhan vinirbhidya vinirgato bahiḥ*

Then, because Kṛṣṇa had increased the size of His body, the demon extended his own body to a very large size. Nonetheless, his breathing stopped, he suffocated, and his eyes rolled here and there and popped out. The demon's life air, however, could not pass

through any outlet, and therefore it finally burst out through a hole in the top of the demon's head.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demon's throat blocked up (*niruddha margino*), his eyes popped out, and his life air, being trapped in his body with no outlet, finally burst out through the *brahma randhra* (a hole atop his head), and he attained perfection (*purṇah*).

Text 32

*tenaiva sarveṣu bahir gateṣu,
prāṇeṣu vatsān suhrdaḥ paretān,
dṛṣṭyā svayotthāpya tad-anvitaḥ punar,
vaktrān mukundo bhagavān viniryayau*

When all the demon's life air had passed away through that hole in the top of his head, Kṛṣṇa glanced over the dead calves and cowerd boys and brought them back to life. Then Mukunda, who can give one liberation, came out from the demon's mouth with His friends and the calves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowerd boys and calves, who had fainted due to separation from Kṛṣṇa and from the heat of the serpent's belly, were brought back to consciousness by the nectar shower of Kṛṣṇa's glance.

Text 33

*pīnāhi-bhogotthitam adbhutam mahaj,
jyotiḥ sva-dhāmnā jvalayad diśo daśa,
pratīkṣya khe 'vasthitam īśa-nirgamam,*

From the body of the gigantic python, a glaring effulgence came out, illuminating all directions, and stayed individually in the sky until Kṛṣṇa came out from the corpse's mouth. Then, as all the demigods looked on, this effulgence entered into Kṛṣṇa's body.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sridhara Swami says that the effulgence coming out from the python's body became purified, and attained the status of *suddha-sattva*. A demon's getting liberation is displayed here to instill faith in people.

Though the light of the soul, like the great light of the *Parabrahman*, is normally invisible, Kṛṣṇa arranged that the individual effulgence of the soul was visible to everyone to directly show the world the Lord's quality of granting liberation even to a demon. This is Sanatana Gosvami's opinion in *Vaisnava-tosani*.

According to later verses 38 and 39, Aghasura attained *sarupya-mukti*, a completely spiritual body exactly like that of Visnu and attained the Lord's abode. Therefore the light which was visible was the light from Aghasura's spiritual body which he attained at that moment. Because his body was spiritual, it could not be seen with material eyes. Aghasura's entering the Lord's body was just a show as in the case of Sisupala and Dantavakra. Though Sisupala and Dantavakra attained *sarupya-mukti* as eternal associates of the Lord (the former Jaya and Vijaya), when they died a light from their bodies entered the Lord. This is another opinion about the visibility of the light. This happened in the presence of the demigods (*misatam divaukasam*) who were greatly astonished. With the use of genitive absolute it can also mean that Aghasura's soul entered Kṛṣṇa, not caring for the demigods even though they were present.

*tato 'tiharṣṭāḥ sva-kṛto 'kṛtārhaṇam,
puṣpaiḥ sugā apsarasaś ca nartanaiḥ,
gītaiḥ surā vādyā-dharās ca vādyakaiḥ,
stavaiś ca viprā jaya-niḥsvanair gaṇāḥ*

Thereafter, everyone being pleased, the demigods began to shower flowers from Nandana-kānana, the celestial dancing girls began to dance, and the Gandharvas, who are famous for singing, offered songs of prayer. The drummers began to beat their kettledrums, and the brāhmaṇas offered Vedic hymns. In this way, both in the heavens and on earth, everyone began to perform his own duties, glorifying the Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demigods performed (*akṛta*) worship (*arhaṇam*) of Kṛṣṇa, who creates Himself (*sva kṛtaḥ*). *Sugāḥ* refers to the Gandharvas who sing very beautifully. *Vadya dharas* means Vidyadharas, the celestial drummers. *Vipras* means *brahmanas* like Vasistha Muni and others. *Ganah* means everyone else like Garuda.

Text 35

*tad-adbhuta-stotra-suvādyā-gītikā,
jayādi-naikotsava-maṅgala-svanān,
śrutvā sva-dhāmno 'nty aja āgato 'cirād,
dṛṣṭvā mahīśasya jagāma vismayam*

When Lord Brahmā heard the wonderful ceremony going on near his planet, accompanied by music and songs and sounds of “Jaya! Jaya!” he immediately came down to see the function. Upon seeing so much glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was completely astonished.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not one but an infinity of festivals was produced by the wonderful prayers, melodious instrumental music, soft celestial songs and shouts of “Jaya, Jaya!” Even in the higher planetary systems like Janaloka, Maharloka and Tapoloka the festival of glorification of Kṛṣṇa was going on. Brahma heard the singing. While the light of Aghasura’s soul was passing to Vaikuntha, Brahma (*ajah*), being astonished (*vismayam*) at Kṛṣṇa’s glories, came invisibly to Vrndavana. Or it can mean: Coming to Vrndavana and seeing Kṛṣṇa’s glory, Brahma was astonished.

Text 36

*rājann ājagaram carma,
śuṣkaṁ vṛndāvane ’dbhutam,
vrajaukasām bahu-tithaṁ,
babhūvākrīḍa-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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The dry skin of the snake stayed a long time in Vrndavana, and became a wonderful cave in which the children used to sport and play.

Text 37

*etat kaumārajaṁ karma,
harer ātmāhi-mokṣaṇam,*

*mṛtyoḥ paugaṇḍake bālā,
dṛṣṭvocyur vismitā vraje*

This incident of Kṛṣṇa's saving Himself and His associates from death and of giving deliverance to Aghāsura, who had assumed the form of a python, took place when Kṛṣṇa was five years old. It was disclosed in Vrajabhū mi after one year, as if it had taken place on that very day.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There was another astonishing event which you should hear about. Though Kṛṣṇa saved His friends and liberated Aghasura when He was five years old (*kaumara jam*), the cowherd boys reported the incident when they were six years old (*pauganda*). It was disclosed in Vrajabhumi after one year, as if the incident had taken place on that very day.

Text 38

*naitad vicitraṁ manujārbha-māyinaḥ,
parāvarāṅgām paramasya vedhasaḥ,
agho 'pi yat-sparśana-dhauta-pātakāḥ,
prāpātma-sāmyam tv asatām sudurlabham*

Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes. The causes and effects of the material world, both higher and lower, are all created by the Supreme Lord, the original controller. When Kṛṣṇa appeared as the son of Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā, He did so by His causeless mercy. Consequently, for Him to exhibit His unlimited opulence was not at all wonderful. Indeed, He showed such great mercy that even Aghāsura, the most sinful miscreant, was elevated to being one of His associates and achieving sārū pya-mukti, which is actually

impossible for materially contaminated persons to attain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa's form as a human child is His *svarūpa* (*manuja mayīnah*), for the word *maya* is well known to mean *svarūpa* in the *Sruti*s. Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes by His own free will (*vedhasah*), and is the supreme form among all the expansions and expansions of expansions (*para avaranam*). Nothing is impossible for Him.

Therefore, it is not remarkable that Aghasura was purified of all his sins by touching Kṛṣṇa. Or Aghasura was purified of his bad odor by Kṛṣṇa's touch. This second meaning can be taken because Putana's body was also freed of its bad odor by contacting Kṛṣṇa. This must have happened because later Kṛṣṇa and his friends used Aghasura's dead body as a playground. Aghasura also attained a body exactly resembling that of Narayana (*atma samyam*), which is very rare for a demon (*asatam*). *Sayujya-mukti* is rare for the demons, and *sarūpya-mukti* is rarer still (*sudurlabham*), as this is generally reserved for the devotees.

Text 39

*sakṛd yad-aṅga-pratimāntar-āhitā,
manomayī bhāgavatīm dadau gatim,
sa eva nityātma-sukhānubhūty-abhi,
vyudasta-māyo 'ntar-gato hi kim punaḥ*

If even only once or even by force one brings the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead into one's mind, one can attain the supreme salvation by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, as did Aghāsura. What then is to be said of those whose hearts the Supreme Personality of Godhead enters when He appears as an incarnation, or those who always think of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the source of transcendental bliss for all living entities and by whom all

illusion is completely removed?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse speaks of the cause of Aghasura gaining *sarupya-mukti*. This is not such an amazing accomplishment for Kṛṣṇa, whose form (*anga pratima*) should be meditated on (*antarhita*) by the mind (*manomayi*); who awarded the supreme destination (*bhagavati gati*) to King Khatvanga and others; who has directly (*eva*) an eternal body (*nitya atma*); whose direct perception brings the greatest happiness and destroys *maya*; who is the *avatari (paramah)*, and who entered the demon's stomach (*antar gatah*). However, in the case of King Khatvanga and others, the cause of their attaining the Lord was devotion. In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.14.21) Kṛṣṇa says: *bhaktyaham ekaya grahya*, "Only by devotion can I be attained." In Aghasura's case, however, the absence of devotion did not act as a deterrent in attaining the Lord. Though devotion is indeed the general rule, it applies in other cases.

When Kṛṣṇa appears as an *avatara*, anyone can attain His transcendental abode simply by contact, because of the extra surge of His perfect *krpa-sakti* at that time. That is why it is said: "One who approaches Me in a mood of either lust, anger, fear, affection, oneness, friendship or devotion will surely attain love for Me that is of that nature." (SB 10.29.15)

"Do not think that this is astonishing for Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*. He gives liberation not only to humans but also to non-moving entities." (SB 10.29.16) Kṛṣṇa's awarding liberation to His enemies is a remarkable quality in His completeness. Kṛṣṇa reciprocates according to the mood of the person approaching Him. From the statement that Aghasura's body became the playground for the boys for many days, it should be understood that the demon's unfavorable attitude had been transformed into a favorable attitude. Aghasura had attained *sarupya-mukti* in Vaikuntha, but he did not attain a form in Vṛndavana because of his lack of *vraja-bhakti*.

Text 40

*śrī-sūta uvāca,
itthaṁ dvijā yādavadeva-dattaḥ,
śrutvā sva-rātuś caritaṁ vicitram,
papraccha bhūyo 'pi tad eva puṇyam,
vaiyāsakiṁ yan nigrhīta-cetāḥ*

Śrī Suta Gosvāmī said: O learned saints, the childhood pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are very wonderful. Mahārāja Parīkṣit, after hearing about those pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, who had saved him in the womb of his mother, became steady in his mind and again inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī to hear about those pious activities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maharaja Pariksit, who was protected by Kṛṣṇa (*yadava deva datta*), heard the wonderful pastimes of He who gives Himself to His devotees (*svaratuh*). Pariksit fixed his heart on Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (*yad nigrhita cetah*), and asked some more questions to Sukadeva.

Text 41

*śrī-rājovāca,
brahman kālāntara-kṛtaṁ,
tat-kālīnaṁ kathaṁ bhavet,
yat kaumāre hari-kṛtaṁ,
jaguḥ paugṇḍake 'rbhakāḥ*

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O great sage, how could things done in the past have been described as being done at the present? Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed this pastime of killing Aghāsura during His

kaumāra age. How then, during His paugaṇḍa age, could the boys have described this incident as having happened recently?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maharaja Parkisit inquired, “How could things done in the past have been described as being done in the present? How could Kṛṣṇa make the cowherd boys describe the pastimes which happened when they were in their *kaumara* age (five years) as if they happened recently?”

Text 42

*tad brūhi me mahā-yogin,
param kautūhalaṁ guro,
nūnam etad dharer eva,
māyā bhavati nānyathā*

O greatest yogī, my spiritual master, kindly describe why this happened. I am very much curious to know about it. I think that it was nothing but another illusion due to Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Maya* here refers to the Lord’s internal potency or *sakti* which expertly makes unexpected things happen. Because the verse calls it the Lord’s *maya* (*harer maya*) it cannot mean anything else except *yogamaya*. Only this potency of Kṛṣṇa can put His eternal associates into illusion.

Text 43

*vayaṁ dhanyatamā loke,
guro ’pi kṣatra-bandhavaḥ,
vayaṁ pibāmo muhus tvattah,*

O my lord, my spiritual master, although we are the lowest of kṣatriyas, we are glorified and benefited because we have the opportunity of always hearing from you the nectar of the pious activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maharaja Parikṣit says, “O my spiritual master.” This statement implies, “I am your disciple, and because of the rule that ‘the *guru* must teach esoteric topics to the devoted student,’ please tell me what should be told.” Parikṣit’s devotion is indicated by his own efforts, through the words “I drink the nectar.”

Text 44

*śrī-sūta uvāca,
itthaṁ sma pṛṣṭaḥ sa tu bādarāyaṇis,
tat-smāritānanta-hṛtākḥilendriyaḥ,
kṛcchrāt punar labdha-bahir-dr̥śiḥ śanaiḥ,
pratyāha taṁ bhāgavatottamottama*

Suta Gosvāmī said: O Śaunaka, greatest of saints and devotees, when Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired from Śukadeva Gosvāmī in this way, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, immediately remembering subject matters about Kṛṣṇa within the core of his heart, externally lost contact with the actions of his senses. Thereafter, with great difficulty, he revived his external sensory perception and began to speak to Mahārāja Parīkṣit about kṛṣṇa-kathā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva regained external

consciousness with great effort (*krcchrat*) because of the loud chanting of the Lord's name by Narada, Vyasa and others who were in attendance. The phrase *bhagavata uttama uttama*, greatest of all great saintly persons, refers to Saunaka.

Chapter Thirteen: Brahma Stealing the Boys and Calves

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sādhu pṛṣṭam mahā-bhāga,
tvayā bhāgavatottama,
yan nūtanayasīśasya,
śṛṇvann api kathām muhuḥ*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of devotees, most fortunate Parīkṣit, you have inquired very nicely, for although constantly hearing the pastimes of the Lord, you are perceiving His activities to be newer and newer.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes a forest picnic, Brahma’s stealing the calves and cowherd boys, the bewilderment of Brahma, and Kṛṣṇa’s manifesting identical boys and calves from His own form.

Kṛṣṇa, whose portion of a portion causes the creation of universes and the bewilderment of Brahma, showed Himself as the source of delight to all Visnu forms, the cause of bewilderment to Baladeva, and the source of all powers to Brahma. When Sukadeva addresses Parikṣit as the best of the devotees (*bhagavatottama*), the king inquires, “How I am the best among Kṛṣṇa’s devotees?” Sukadeva answers, “Because you always taste the topics of Kṛṣṇa as fresh. Even if you have heard them before, you perceive the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa to be newer and newer.”

Text 2

*satām ayaṁ sāra-bhṛtām nisargo,
yad-artha-vāṇī-śruti-cetasām api,
prati-kṣaṇam navya-vad acyutasya yat,
striyā viṭānām iva sādhu vārtā*

Paramahamsas, devotees who have accepted the essence of life, are attached to Kṛṣṇa in the core of their hearts, and He is the aim of their lives. It is their nature to talk only of Kṛṣṇa at every moment, as if such topics were newer and newer. They are attached to such topics, just as materialists are attached to topics of women and sex.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva continues, “This is natural for those who are *sara bhrtam*, who accept the topics of Kṛṣṇa as the essence and goal of their lives. *Kṛṣṇa-katha* is the center of their words, hearing and thoughts because at every moment they thirst to taste the astonishing names, form and qualities of Acyuta. As a lusty man is attached to topics about women and sex, the *sara bhrtam* is intensely attracted to topics about Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 3

*śṛṇuṣvāvahito rājann,
api guhyam vadāmi te,
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya,
guravo guhyam apy uta*

O King, kindly hear me with great attention. Although the activities of the Supreme Lord are very confidential, no ordinary man being able to understand them, I shall speak about them to you,

for spiritual masters explain to a submissive disciple even subject matters that are very confidential and difficult to understand.

Text 4

*tathāgha-vadanān mṛtyo,
rakṣitvā vatsa-pālakān,
sarit-pulinam ānīya,
bhagavān idam abravīt*

Then, after saving the boys and calves from the mouth of Aghāsura, who was death personified, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, brought them all to the bank of the river and spoke the following words.

Text 5

*aho 'tiramyaṁ pulinaṁ vayasyāḥ,
sva-keli-sampan mṛdulāccha-bālukam,
sphuṭat-saro-gandha-hṛtāli-patrika,
dhvani-pratidhvāna-lasad-drumākulam*

My dear friends, just see how this riverbank is extremely beautiful because of its pleasing atmosphere. And just see how the blooming lotuses are attracting bees and birds by their aroma. The humming and chirping of the bees and birds is echoing throughout the beautiful trees in the forest. Also, here the sands are clean and soft. Therefore, this must be considered the best place for our sporting

and pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Sri Kṛṣṇa describes a most suitable place for a picnic. The riverbank was wide enough to accommodate hundreds of cowherd boys. It had soft, clean sand, perfect for sitting and eating. The Yamuna was full of blossoming lotuses, whose sweet fragrance attracted bees and birds, whose humming and chirping echoed in the forest. The thickly foliated trees provided soothing shade from the scorching sun.

Text 6

*atra bhoktavyam asmābhir,
divārūḍham kṣudhārditāḥ,
vatsāḥ samīpe 'paḥ pītvā,
carantu śanakais tṛṇam*

I think we should take our lunch here, since we are already hungry because the time is very late. Here the calves may drink water and go slowly here and there and eat the grass.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The sun had risen up high in the sky (*diva ruddham*).

Text 7

*tatheti pāyayitvārbhā,
vatsān ārudhya sādvalē,
muktvā śikyāni bubhujuh,
samam bhagavatā mudā*

Accepting Lord Kṛṣṇa’s proposal, the cowherd boys allowed the calves to drink water from the river and then tied them to trees where there was green, tender grass. Then the boys opened their baskets of food and began eating with Kṛṣṇa in great transcendental pleasure.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys tied the calves to trees in a field full of tender green grass (*sadvale*). This means the calves were led to the field but because of greed for that grass, they would not go anywhere else.

Text 8

*kṛṣṇasya viṣvak puru-rāji-maṇḍalair,
abhyānanāḥ phulla-dṛśo vrajārbhakāḥ,
sahopaviṣṭā vipine virejuś,
chadā yathāmbhoruha-karṇikāyāḥ*

Like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals and leaves, Kṛṣṇa sat in the center, encircled by lines of His friends, who all looked very beautiful. Every one of them was trying to look forward toward Kṛṣṇa, thinking that Kṛṣṇa might look toward him. In this way they all enjoyed their lunch in the forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the arrangement for the picnic. Kṛṣṇa sat in the center, encircled by lines of His friends. All the boys sat looking toward the center (*abhyanana*) where Kṛṣṇa was sitting. It was due to love that all the cowherd boys wanted to face Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa fulfilled their desire by employing His *sarva sankalpa sakti* to make His face and limbs appear in all directions at once. Thus each boy thought, “I am sitting in front directly facing Kṛṣṇa. But the

other boys are sitting at a distance with their backs or sides to Kṛṣṇa.” This pastime illustrates a *Bhagavad-gīta* verse (13.14): *sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādaṁ tat, sarvato ’kṣi-śiro-mukham, sarvataḥ śrutimal loke,* “Everywhere are His hands and legs, His eyes, heads and faces, and He has ears everywhere. In this way the Supersoul exists, pervading everything.”

Sahopavista means the cowherd boys sat with no spaces between them. They sat in rows around Kṛṣṇa like the whorl of a lotus flower surrounded by its petals.

Text 9

*kecit puṣpair dalaiḥ kecit,
pallavair aṅkuraiḥ phalaiḥ,
śigbhis tvagbhir dṛṣadbhis ca,
bubhujūḥ kṛta-bhājanāḥ*

Among the cowherd boys, some placed their lunch on flowers, some on leaves, fruits, or bunches of leaves, some actually in their baskets, some on the bark of trees and some on rocks. This is what the children imagined to be their plates as they ate their lunch.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: For fun each boy made his lunch plate out of a different material such as flowers or leaves.

Text 10

*sarve mitho darśayantaḥ,
sva-sva-bhojya-ruciṁ pṛthak,
hasanto hāsayantaś cā,
bhyavajahruḥ saheśvarāḥ*

All the cowherd boys enjoyed their lunch with Kṛṣṇa, showing one another the different tastes of the different varieties of preparations they had brought from home. Tasting one another's preparations, they began to laugh and make one another laugh.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys would taste a little of the different items brought from their homes and then call out to their friends: “O *sakha*, Kṛṣṇa! Sridama! Subala! See how tasty my food is!” Kṛṣṇa and the boys would then taste one another's food and laugh. This is the meaning of *rucim darsyantah*.

Without being seen by anyone one clever boy stuffed some jasmine flowers inside a *samosa* and said, “O friends, please taste this nice *samosa*!” Believing his statement, a boy took the *samosa* and ate it. When he started making faces due to the bitter taste, the giver laughed and the receiver laughed too. “*Ca*” indicates that afterwards the giver would get playfully beaten and run away.

Text 11

*bibhrad veṇuṃ jaṭhara-paṭayoḥ śṛṅga-vetre ca kakṣe,
vāme pāṇau masṛṇa-kavalam tat-phalāny aṅgulīṣu,
tiṣṭhan madhye sva-parisuhṛdo hāsayan narmabhiḥ svaiḥ,
svarge loke miṣati bubhujе yajña-bhug bāla-keliḥ*

Kṛṣṇa is yajña-bhuk—that is, He eats only offerings of yajña—but to exhibit His childhood pastimes, He now sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His tight cloth on His right side and with His horn bugle and cow-driving stick on His left. Holding in His hand a very nice preparation of yogurt and rice, with pieces of suitable fruit between His fingers, He sat like the whorl of a lotus flower,

looking forward toward all His friends, personally joking with them and creating jubilant laughter among them as He ate. At that time, the denizens of heaven were watching, struck with wonder at how the Personality of Godhead, who eats only in *yajña*, was now eating with His friends in the forest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the outstanding qualities of Kṛṣṇa eating with His friends. Kṛṣṇa sat with His flute tucked between His waist and His tight cloth on His right side, and His horn and cow-driving stick on His left. In His left hand Kṛṣṇa held a big lump of yogurt rice. In between His fingers Kṛṣṇa held small pieces of lemon and *amla* pickle to mix with the rice. Or the words can mean that Kṛṣṇa held a lump of rice in His left hand, and then took small amounts with His right hand in order to eat. The cowherd boys sat in a circle facing Kṛṣṇa and chattered as they ate.

Kṛṣṇa addressed a buzzing bumblebee, “O bee, why are you flying near My face? Go to Madhumangala who is just before you and get a drink.” Madhumangala replied, “Hey *sakha*! Do You want the bee to bite me? Hey bee, are you not afraid of killing a *brahmana*?” Another boy exclaimed, “Look at that band of wild monkeys! Though they are hungry and watching us, the boys are eating peacefully. Hey monkeys! Approach stealthily so they don’t see you and then steal their food.” Kṛṣṇa’s *sarva sankalpa sakti* and *lila-sakti* then fulfilled His wish: “O Lord! If You want some obstacle during this lunch for some amusement, then we will go and bring Brahma.”

The celestial residents watched in astonishment at how Kṛṣṇa, who eats only oblations of ghee purified by *mantra* and offered in sacrifice (*yajna bhuk*), was now playing like an ordinary child (*bala keli*). Kṛṣṇa was scolding or praising His friends, and giving and taking half-eaten food with them in the forest.

*bhārataivam vatsa-peṣu,
bhuñjāneṣv acyutātmasu,
vatsās tv antar-vane dūraṁ,
viviśus tṛṇa-lobhitāḥ*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, while the cowherd boys, who knew nothing within the core of their hearts but Kṛṣṇa, were thus engaged in eating their lunch in the forest, the calves went far away, deep into the forest, being allured by green grass.

Text 13

*tān dṛṣṭvā bhaya-santrastān,
ūce kṛṣṇo 'sya bhī-bhayam,
mitrāṅy āśān mā viramate,
hāneṣye vatsakān aham*

When Kṛṣṇa saw that His friends the cowherd boys were frightened, He, the fierce controller even of fear itself, said, just to mitigate their fear, “My dear friends, do not stop eating. I shall bring your calves back to this spot by personally going after them Myself.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa saw that the cowherd boys were frightened over losing sight of their calves, He, who gives fear to fear personified (*asya bhībhayam*), spoke affectionately, “O friends, do not stop eating (*asanat*). I shall go and personally bring your calves back to this spot.”

Text 14

*ity uktvādri-darī-kuñja,
gahvareṣv ātma-vatsakān,
vicinvan bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ,
sapāṇi-kavalo yayau*

“Let Me go and search for the calves,” Kṛṣṇa said. “Don’t disturb your enjoyment.” Then, carrying His yogurt and rice in His hand, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, immediately went out to search for the calves of His friends. To please His friends, He began searching in all the mountains, mountain caves, bushes and narrow passages.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa went out to search for the calves while holding a lump of yogurt rice in His hand (*sa pani kavala*) to eat.

Text 15

*ambhojanma-janis tad-antara-gato māyārbhakasyeśitur,
draṣṭuṁ mañju mahitvam anyad api tad-vatsān ito vatsapān,
nītvānyatra kurūdvahāntaradadhāt khe ’vasthito yaḥ purā,
dr̥ṣṭvāghāsura-mokṣaṇaṁ prabhavataḥ prāptaḥ param vismayam*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Brahmā, who resides in the higher planetary system in the sky, had observed the activities of the most powerful Kṛṣṇa in killing and delivering Aghāsura, and he was astonished. Now that same Brahmā wanted to show some of his own power and see the power of Kṛṣṇa, who was engaged in His childhood pastimes, playing as if with ordinary cowherd boys. Therefore, in Kṛṣṇa’s absence, Brahmā took all the boys and calves to another

place. Thus he became entangled, for in the very near future he would see how powerful Kṛṣṇa was.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma is addressed as “*ambho janma jani*” one who is born from the lotus. This indicates that Brahma, though a living being, has a material birth. The hint is here given that Brahma was so deluded by the material energy that he wanted to test Kṛṣṇa, who is the very source of *mahamaya*. One should not claim that Brahma’s power of illusion could actually exert influence over omniscient Kṛṣṇa and His dear cowherd boys, because a later verse says “*vatsan pulinam aninya*” (as before Kṛṣṇa took the calves to the river bank). Kṛṣṇa’s *lila-sakti* allowed Putana to bewilder Yasoda and Kṛṣṇa in order to produce *vismaya rasa* (astonishment) in the Lord’s transcendental pastimes. Putana could have never caused such bewilderment on her own. Brahma’s power of illusion put the boys to sleep, but this was allowed only for the purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. In actuality the cowherd boys were put to sleep by Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya* potency. This can be understood from the later statement: *kṛṣṇa maya hatatmanam*, “the cowherd boys were bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s *maya*.” One should not claim that after being bewildered by Kṛṣṇa the boys were taken somewhere else by Brahma, because Brahma later said, “These boys are not sleeping by my *maya*. Where did they come from?” Sukadeva says after this that Brahma could not understand which boys were produced by Kṛṣṇa and which were created by the external energy. Sukadeva would not describe the real cowherd boys as being created by the external energy. It is proper to say that Brahma had stolen some other forms of boys created by the external energy. After seeing the killing of Aghasura, Brahma wanted to see more of Kṛṣṇa’s powers, and therefore came to this spot (*tad antargatah*). Brahma removed the cowherd boys and calves from the bank of the Yamuna, hid them elsewhere (*itah*) and then disappeared. The boys and calves that Brahma stole were created by *maya*. Since that *maya* arises from the Lord’s *maya*, one could say that everything was under the Lord’s *maya*. Bewildered by the Lord’s energy, Brahma stole the calves and boys

created by *maya* in order to see Kṛṣṇa’s powers. Brahma was thinking, “When I steal the boys and calves, will Kṛṣṇa show some power and another wonderful pastime? Will He search and find the cows Himself or come to me and pray to get them back? Or will He not be able to understand anything?” Such thoughts were possible only because Brahma was bewildered by the Lord’s energy. Thus when Brahma desired to steal the boys and calves, *yogamaya* hid the real boys and calves and *mahamaya* instantly produced exact replicas for Brahma to steal.

Prabhavata means from Kṛṣṇa. Being astonished upon seeing Kṛṣṇa’s deliverance of Aghasura, Brahma came there.

Text 16

*tato vatsān adr̥ṣṭvaitya,
puline ’pi ca vatsapān,
ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo,
vicikāya samantataḥ*

Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river, but there He was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Thus He began to search for both the calves and the boys, as if He could not understand what had happened.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase “not seeing the calves, Kṛṣṇa returned,” means it was an appearance of not seeing them, for Kṛṣṇa knew exactly where they were. Kṛṣṇa did this to make Brahma believe that he could bewilder anyone including Bhagavan. Then Kṛṣṇa began looking for the boys and calves. Playing the part of a distressed actor, Kṛṣṇa appeared to be looking for them. Later in verse sixty-one it says, “Brahma saw Kṛṣṇa, the actor (*natyam*) in the form of a cowherd boy.”

Text 17

*kvāpy adṛṣṭvāntar-vipine,
vatsān pālāmś ca viśva-vit,
sarvaṁ vidhi-kṛtaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ,
sahasāvajagāma ha*

When Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves and their caretakers, the cowherd boys, anywhere in the forest, He could suddenly understand that this was the work of Lord Brahmā.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse shows why Kṛṣṇa began searching further. Though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, He did not see the calves in any fields nor did He see the boys on the banks of the Yamuna, so He began searching for them. Did Kṛṣṇa understand the theft at the time of stealing, after the theft or after looking for some time? Without having to think, Kṛṣṇa understood immediately (*sahasa*) at the time of the theft that Brahma had done it.

Text 18

*tataḥ kṛṣṇo mudaṁ kartuṁ,
tan-mātṛṇām ca kasya ca,
ubhayāyitam ātmānam,
cakre viśva-kṛd īśvaraḥ*

Thereafter, just to create pleasure both for Brahmā and for the mothers of the calves and cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation, expanded Himself as calves and boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While Brahma, believing that he had bewildered Kṛṣṇa, was being mystified by the Lord’s energy, Kṛṣṇa along with His calves and boyfriends returned home and began performing His usual pastimes such as eating, as if they were never bewildered by Brahma. This is not at all astonishing. In order to show His ability to bewilder everyone including Balarama; to fulfill the desires of the *gopas* and *gopis* to have Kṛṣṇa as their own son; to bewilder Brahma and throw him into the ocean of dismay; to show Brahma thousands of forms of Vasudeva, the object of his devotion, after having taught him the *Bhagavatam*, Kṛṣṇa took the form of all the calves and boys.

To give bliss to Lord Brahma (*ka*) and the mothers, Kṛṣṇa expanded (*ubhayayitam*) Himself into both the calves and boys. Kṛṣṇa could do this because He is the master of the *mahat-tattva* and the creator of the entire cosmic manifestation (*visvakrt isvara*).

Text 19

*yāvad vatsapa-vatsakālpaka-vapur yāvat karāṅghry-ādikaṁ,
yāvad yaṣṭi-viṣāṇa-veṇu-dala-śig yāvad vibhūṣāmbaram,
yāvac chīla-guṇābhidhākṛti-vayo yāvad vihārādikaṁ,
sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ giro 'ṅga-vad ajaḥ sarva-svarūpo babhau*

By His Vāsudeva feature, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously expanded Himself into the exact number of missing cowherd boys and calves, with their exact bodily features, their particular types of hands, legs and other limbs, their sticks, bugles and flutes, their lunch bags, their particular types of dress and ornaments placed in various ways, their names, ages and forms, and their special activities and characteristics. By expanding Himself in this way, beautiful Kṛṣṇa proved the statement samagra-jagad viṣṇumayam: “Lord Viṣṇu is

all-pervading.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This is a more elaborate description of the expanded forms of the calves and boys. It is in the singular because it is describing the class (*jati*). The expanded cowherd boys had very small bodies just like the original boys (*yavat*). They remembered their previous activities and how they acted (*viharadikam*) in relation to their parents. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *ajah* unborn, but it also stands for *ajanya*, an unfavorable portent to be feared (by Brahma). Kṛṣṇa is the original form of all the forms (*sarva svarupa*), and He is the embodied form of the statement *sarvam visnumayam jagat*, the whole universe is Visnu.

Text 20

*svayam ātmātma-govatsān,
prativāryātma-vatsapaiḥ,
krīḍann ātma-vihāraiś ca,
sarvātmā prāviśad vrajam*

Now expanding Himself so as to appear as all the calves and cowherd boys, all of them as they were, and at the same time appear as their leader, Kṛṣṇa entered Vrajabhū mi, the land of His father, Nanda Mahārāja, just as He usually did while enjoying their company.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Five verses describe how Kṛṣṇa continued His usual program of enjoying pastimes in the morning, noon and evening in the village exactly as before. How did Kṛṣṇa, the soul of all (*sarvatma*), enter Vraja? He entered as *svayam atma*, as Himself (the subject), and brought back the calves (the object), who were also Himself (*atma govatsan*), along with the cowherd boys (the means), who were Himself (*atma vatsapaiḥ*), and played with other boys who

were Himself.

The boys would sit on the same bank of the river and eat, the calves would herd in the green meadows, and Kṛṣṇa would wander from forest to forest searching for the calves. In this way, one moment extended for a whole year with Kṛṣṇa acting as everyone. Yet it was unnoticed by all. Kṛṣṇa, the boys and their calves wandered everyday in Vraja enjoying different pastimes untouched by the rain, wind or sun. By the power of Kṛṣṇa's *acintya-sakti* even Baladeva could not detect the difference. After his illusion was ended, Brahma saw that same Kṛṣṇa with a stick and a lump of yogurt rice in His hand. Brahma then offered prayers in all humility.

Text 21

*tat-tad-vatsān pṛthan nītvā,
tat-tad-goṣṭhe niveśya saḥ,
tat-tad-ātmābhavad rajams,
tat-tat-sadma praviṣṭavān*

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Kṛṣṇa, who had divided Himself as different calves and also as different cowherd boys, entered different cow sheds as the calves and then different homes as different boys.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa, playing the role of each calf and cowherd boy (*tat tad atma*), herded each calf into its respective cow shed. In His expanded forms as Sridama, Sudama, Subala and other boys, Kṛṣṇa entered their respective houses.

Text 22

tan-mātarō veṅu-rava-tvarotthitā,

*utthāpya dorbhiḥ parirabhya nirbharam,
sneha-snuta-stanya-payah-sudhāsavam,
matvā param brahma sutān apāyayan*

The mothers of the boys, upon hearing the sounds of the flutes and bugles being played by their sons, immediately rose from their household tasks, lifted their boys onto their laps, embraced them with both arms and began to feed them with their breast milk, which flowed forth because of extreme love specifically for Kṛṣṇa. Actually Kṛṣṇa is everything, but at that time, expressing extreme love and affection, they took special pleasure in feeding Kṛṣṇa, the Parabrahman, and Kṛṣṇa drank the milk from His respective mothers as if it were a nectarean beverage.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O will we ever be like mother Yasoda and have Kṛṣṇa as our child?” This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa fulfilled this desire of the elderly *gopis* without their knowledge. Treating the Kṛṣṇa expansions just like their sons, the mothers put them on their laps and fed their breast milk to them. The word “*uduhya*” is sometimes found in place of *utthapya*. The mothers held their children more affectionately than before, and due to this increased affection more milk flowed (*nirbharam*: excessively) from their breasts than before. Kṛṣṇa, the Parabrahman, drank the milk from His respective mothers as if it were the sweetest nectar because that milk was filled with their intense motherly affection. The word *sudhasavam* indicates that to Kṛṣṇa their breast milk tasted like nectar (*sudha*), and since it was saturated with their *prema* it had the intoxicating effect of wine (*asavam*) so it filled Kṛṣṇa with joy. The elderly *gopis*’ inner ambition was to have Kṛṣṇa as their son, so the Lord fulfilled it in this pastime of bewildering Brahma. Thus for one year Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the special transcendental pleasure created by *yogamaya* between all the mothers and Himself. That is why Brahma said, “In great pleasure they drank the nectar (*payah-sudhāsavam*) from their mothers’ breasts.”

Text 23

*tato nrponmardana-majja-lepanā,
lankāra-rakṣā-tilakāśanādibhiḥ,
samlālitaḥ svācaritaiḥ praharṣayan,
sāyam gato yāma-yamena mādhaveḥ*

Thereafter, O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, as required according to the scheduled round of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa returned in the evening, entered the house of each of the cowherd boys, and engaged exactly like the former boys, thus enlivening their mothers with transcendental pleasure. The mothers took care of the boys by massaging them with oil, bathing them, smearing their bodies with sandalwood pulp, decorating them with ornaments, chanting protective mantras, decorating their bodies with tilaka and giving them food. In this way, the mothers served Kṛṣṇa personally.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to the scheduled round (*yama yamena*) of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa returned in the evening, and entered the house of each cowherd boy. The word Madhava refers to Kṛṣṇa and His expansions as cowherd boys. The mothers took care of the boys by massaging fragrant oil on their bodies (*unmardana*), bathing them (*majja*), smearing their bodies with sandalwood pulp, ornamenting them, chanting protective *mantras*, decorating their bodies with *tilaka* and feeding them sumptuously.

Text 24

*gāvas tato goṣṭham upetya satvaram,
huṅkāra-ghoṣaiḥ parihūta-saṅgatān,*

*svakān svakān vatsatarān apāyayan,
muhur lihantyaḥ sraavad audhasaṁ payaḥ*

Thereafter, all the cows entered their different sheds and began mooing loudly, calling for their respective calves. When the calves arrived, the mothers began licking the calves' bodies again and again and profusely feeding them with the milk flowing from their milk bags.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bewilderment of the cows was similar to that of the mothers. First the cows entered their sheds and began mooing loudly to call for their respective calves. When the calves arrived, the mothers began continuously licking their bodies and feeding them with a constant flow of milk from their milk bags. This hints that their affection was more than before.

Text 25

*go-gopīnām māṛtāsminn,
āsīt snehardhikām vinā,
purovad āsv api hares,
tokatā māyayā vinā*

Previously, from the very beginning, the gopīs had motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, their affection for Kṛṣṇa exceeded even their affection for their own sons. In displaying their affection, they had thus distinguished between Kṛṣṇa and their sons, but now that distinction disappeared.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From the very beginning, the gopīs and cows had more motherly affection for Kṛṣṇa than their own

offspring. But now that Kṛṣṇa had become their sons and calves, their love for their sons and calves became equal to what they previously had for Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's affection as a child toward the mothers was the same as before, but from the commencement of the *brahma-vimohana-lila*, Kṛṣṇa became their sons in actuality (*mayaya vina*). It may be objected that Kṛṣṇa in the form of the cowherd boys should have had the same affection for their mothers as their actual sons, since a previous verse stated that Kṛṣṇa took up exactly the character, dress, form and age as each cowherd boy.

Though Kṛṣṇa is the supreme independent controller, and everyone from Brahma to even His personal expansions is dependent on Him, He is dependent on *prema* and controlled by *prema*. *Prema* is not dependent on Him. Kṛṣṇa cannot control or restrict *prema*.

Sridhara Swami says, "This irregularity is difficult to prevent in Kṛṣṇa." Such uncontrollable *prema* was in the hearts of the mothers towards Kṛṣṇa in the form of their sons. Thus Kṛṣṇa in the form of their sons forgot His powers as God. Since He assumed the role of their sons, He remained dependent on them, like a commander next to the king. One should not say that such dependence on love is a fault; rather it is Kṛṣṇa's ornament. As the living entity's dependence on *maya* is the cause of his sorrow, so Kṛṣṇa's dependence on *prema* is the cause of ever-increasing bliss. This is the realization of the great devotees.

Text 26

vrajaukasām sva-tokeṣu,
sneha-vally ābdam anvaham,
śanair niḥsīma vavṛdhe,
yathā kṛṣṇe tv apūrvavat

Although the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi, the cowherd men and cowherd women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for

their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. There was no limit to the increment of their affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa. Every day they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Previously the Vrajavasis had more love for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children. Now for one year the affection of the mothers for their sons, who were actually Kṛṣṇa, grew like a creeper more and more. Their affection for Kṛṣṇa became ever-increasingly fresh. Here, the word Kṛṣṇa should be understood to be repeated again, though it is mentioned only once in the verse.

Why did the mothers' love for Kṛṣṇa increase even more? Because Kṛṣṇa is the *amsi*, the original possessor of all power and beauty, and His expansions as the cowherd boys are *amsa* in relation to His beauty and other qualities. Therefore, the sentence could read as follows. "As much as they had love for Kṛṣṇa previously (*yatha kṛṣṇe vavrdhe*), their love for their sons increased to that degree (*sva tokesu vavrdhe*). But their love for Kṛṣṇa personally now increased even more (*kṛṣṇe tu apurvavat vavrdhe*). Or the sentence can read: "As much as their love for their sons increased (*yatha sva tokesu vavrdhe*), so their love for Kṛṣṇa increased even more (*kṛṣṇe tu apurvavat vavrdhe*). In this interpretation the word Kṛṣṇa does not need repetition.

Text 27

*ittham ātmātmanātmānam,
vatsa-pāla-miṣeṇa saḥ,
pālayan vatsapo varṣam,
cikrīḍe vana-goṣṭhayoḥ*

In this way, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, having Himself become the cowherd

boys and groups of calves, maintained Himself by Himself. Thus He continued His pastimes, both in Vṛndāvana and in the forest, for one year.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself (*atma*) became the cowherd boys and calves (*vatsa pala misena*), and sustained Himself by Himself. Thus Kṛṣṇa continued His pastimes for one year, both in the forest and in the fields.

Text 28

*ekadā cārayan vatsān,
sa-rāmo vanam āviśat,
pañca-ṣāsu tri-yāmāsu,
hāyanāpūraṇīṣv ajaḥ*

One day, five or six nights before the completion of the year, Kṛṣṇa, tending the calves, entered the forest along with Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This explains how Baladeva entered the forest with Kṛṣṇa five or six nights before the completion of one year. Three *yamas* equal one night.

Text 29

*tato vidūrāc carato,
gāvo vatsān upavrajam,
govardhanādri-śirasi,
carantyo dadṛśus tṛṇam*

Thereafter, while pasturing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some green grass and saw their calves pasturing near Vṛndāvana, not very far away.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While grazing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some tender green grass (*trnam carantah*) and saw their calves pasturing nearby in Vraja.

Text 30

*dr̥ṣṭvātha tat-sneha-vaśo 'smṛtātmā,
sa go-vrajo 'tyātmapa-durga-mārgaḥ,
dvi-pāt kakud-grīva udāsyā-puccho,
'gād dhuṅkṛtair āsru-payā javena*

When the cows saw their own calves from the top of Govardhana Hill, they forgot themselves and their caretakers because of increased affection, and although the path was very rough, they ran toward their calves with great anxiety, each running as if with one pair of legs. Their milk bags full and flowing with milk, their heads and tails raised, and their humps moving with their necks, they ran forcefully until they reached their calves to feed them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the cows saw their own calves from the top of Govardhana Hill, they forgot themselves and ran off. Ignoring their caretakers and the rough pathway, the cows stretched their necks out in longing and ran as if with one pair of legs. Their heads and tails were raised, and their tears and milk flowed in streams.

Text 31

*sametya gāvo 'dho vatsān,
vatsavatyo 'py apāyayan,
gilantya iva cāṅgāni,
lihantyaḥ svaudhasam payaḥ*

The cows had given birth to new calves, but while coming down from Govardhana Hill, the cows, because of increased affection for the older calves, allowed the older calves to drink milk from their milk bags and then began licking the calves' bodies in anxiety, as if wanting to swallow them.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although the cows had given birth to new calves, they had more affection for the older calves. Thus they came down from Govardhana Hill to feed the older calves the milk pouring from their udders (*svaudhasam payaḥ*). In great anxiety they repeatedly licked the calves' bodies as if wanting to swallow them.

Text 32

*gopās tad-rodhanāyāsa,
maughya-lajjoru-manyunā,
durgādhva-kṛcchrato 'bhyetya,
go-vatsair dadṛśuḥ sutān*

The cowherd men, having been unable to check the cows from going to their calves, felt simultaneously ashamed and angry. They crossed the rough road with great difficulty, but when they came down and saw their own sons, they were overwhelmed by great affection.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men tried to stop the

cows with sticks, but failing to check the cows, they felt simultaneously ashamed and angry. With great difficulty they ran down the rough path, but when they saw their sons with the calves they too were overwhelmed with affection.

Text 33

*tad-īkṣaṇotprema-rasāplutāśayā,
jātānurāgā gata-manyavo 'rbhakān,
uduhya dorbhiḥ parirabhya mūrdhani,
ghrāṇair avāpuḥ paramām mudam te*

At that time, all the thoughts of the cowherd men merged in the mellow of paternal love, which was aroused by the sight of their sons. Experiencing a great attraction, their anger completely disappearing, they lifted their sons, embraced them in their arms and enjoyed the highest pleasure by smelling their sons' heads.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: O ignorant men! Why were the cows drawn towards their calves? The elders wanted to scold the cows, but by glancing at their children, they became filled with parental love, *vatsalya-prema*. Experiencing the fifth stage of *prema* (*anuragah*) the cowherd men relished intense attraction and pleasure, and thus completely forgot their anger.

Text 34

*tataḥ pravayaso gopās,
tokāśleṣa-sunirvṛtāḥ,
kṛcchrāc chanair apagatās,
tad-anusmṛty-udaśravaḥ*

Thereafter the elderly cowherd men, having obtained great feeling from embracing their sons, gradually and with great difficulty and reluctance ceased embracing them and returned to the forest. But as the men remembered their sons, tears began to roll down from their eyes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With great difficulty (*krcchrac*) the elderly cowherd men (*pravayaso*) stopped embracing (*apagata*) their children and returned to the forest. As the men remembered their sons, tears flowed from their eyes (*uda srava*).

Text 35

*vrajasya rāmaḥ premardher,
vīkṣyautkaṅṭhyam anukṣaṇam,
mukta-staneṣv apatyēṣv apy,
ahetu-vid acintayat*

Because of an increase of affection, the cows had constant attachment even to those calves that were grown up and had stopped sucking milk from their mothers. When Baladeva saw this attachment, He was unable to understand the reason for it, and thus He began to consider as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because of an increase of *prema* the cows had great attachment (*utkanthyam*) even to those calves that were grown up and had stopped sucking milk from their mothers. Seeing this inexplicable (*ahetuvit*) situation, Baladeva began to think. From the day after the bewilderment of Brahma, all the cows would ignore their newly born calves at the time of milking and feed their calves, which

had stopped taking milk from their udders. Why did Balarama realize this now, after seeing it for so many days, and why didn't the other cowherd men even notice this? It was because they were all covered by *yogamaya* from the day of the *brahma-vimohana-lila*. Therefore, even though they saw the strange behavior of the cows, Baladeva, the *gopis* and the *gopas* did not think to investigate it.

Baladeva is the elder brother of the cause of the universe, and His dear friend, so Kṛṣṇa should not have deceived Him. Though Kṛṣṇa should have revealed everything to Baladeva before this, He did not because He did not want Balarama to suffer any separation from Sridama and His other friends for the period of a year. Kṛṣṇa Himself did not suffer from any separation because He was close to them in an expanded form that searched for their calves. Balarama did not appear in any expanded form during this pastime. Then, after a year passed, when the Lord desired, *yogamaya* gradually withdrew her cover from Balarama. It was done gradually so that Baladeva could take the viewpoint of the devotee, and also to immerse Him in the ocean of the Lord's power.

Text 36

*kim etad adbhutam iva,
vāsudeve 'khilātmani,
vrajasya sātmanas tokeṣv,
apūrvam prema vardhate*

What is this wonderful phenomenon? The affection of all the inhabitants of Vraja, including Me, toward these boys and calves is increasing as never before, just like our affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all living entities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As *yogamaya* relaxed the first part of her influence, Balarama thought about the wonders He was seeing:

“It astonishes Me how the mothers have the same love for their sons as they previously had for Kṛṣṇa?” It was also amazing how Balarama Himself was experiencing the same love He feels for Kṛṣṇa upon seeing those boys.

Text 37

*keyaṁ vā kuta āyātā,
daivī vā nāry utāsuri,
prāyo māyāstu me bhartur,
nānyā me 'pi vimohinī*

Who is this mystic power, and where has she come from? Is she a demigod or a demoness? She must be the illusory energy of My master, Lord Kṛṣṇa, for who else can bewilder Me?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As *yogamaya* removed the second part of her influence, Balarama thought for a moment about this, and invoked His power of omniscience to understand the cause of His surprise. Balarama considered: “It is definitely a display of mystic power or *maya*. But what kind of *maya* and who caused it? Is it the *daivi-maya* of the demigods like Brahma appearing as boys and calves to test their ability to attract us to them? Are these boys not really Sridama and others? Is it *nari-maya* created by the some sages, who are testing their knowledge by assuming the forms of the boys and calves? Is it some *raksasi-maya* employed by the demons like Kamsa, who failing to kill us by their strength, have resorted to some trick to kill us by disguising themselves as the boys and calves?”

As the third portion of *yogamaya* dissolved, Balarama again considered: “The mystical change must have been caused by the *yogamaya* potency of my master Kṛṣṇa. Though other potencies cannot bewilder Me, even

I cannot check the power of Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya*, which is filled with pure knowledge. On the other hand, the *mahamaya* of My expansion Maha-Visnu, who creates the *mahat-tattva*, easily bewilders Brahma and all others.”

Text 38

*iti sañcintya dāśārho,
vatsān sa-vayasān api,
sarvān ācaṣṭa vaikunṭham,
cakṣuṣā vayunena saḥ*

Thinking in this way, Lord Balarāma was able to see, with the eye of transcendental knowledge, that all these calves and Kṛṣṇa’s friends were expansions of the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking thus, Balarama tried to understand it by the eye of transcendental knowledge (*vayunena caksusa*). By Kṛṣṇa’s will the fourth portion of *yogamaya* departed, and Balarama was able to see that all the boys and calves were expansions of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form.

Text 39

*naite sureśā ṛṣayo na caite,
tvam eva bhāsīśa bhid-āśraye ’pi,
sarvaṁ pṛthak tvam nigamāt katham vadety,
uktena vṛttaṁ prabhunā balo ’vait*

Lord Baladeva said, “O supreme controller! These boys are not

great demigods, as I previously thought. Nor are these calves great sages like Nārada. Now I can see that You alone are manifesting Yourself in all varieties of difference. Although one, You are existing in the different forms of the calves and boys. Please briefly explain this to Me.” Having thus been requested by Lord Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa explained the whole situation, and Baladeva understood it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama continued His thoughts: “Now, why did Kṛṣṇa become the calves and boys? Where has He hidden the real boys and calves? Because even after prolonged meditation one cannot perceive this matter, it should be understood that the cause is not *mahamaya*, but rather *yogamaya*, Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental spiritual power. Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya* has such great power that even His personal expansions such as Narayana, though omniscient and omnipresent, do not have any inherent understanding of this power.” Mahavisnu’s stealing the sons of the Dvaraka *brahmana* is the proof given in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, Tenth Canto, chapter eighty-nine.

Thus Balarama could understand all of this only after looking at Kṛṣṇa. With this intent the verse is spoken. Balarama said, “It is not possible that the demigods, sages or the demons became the boys. Actually I see that all these boys and calves are You. Although one, please tell me why You are existing in the different forms of the calves and boys?” Upon inquiring from Kṛṣṇa, Balarama understood everything about the *brahma-vimohana-lila*.

Text 40

*tāvad etyātmabhūr ātma,
mānena truty-anehasā,
purovad ābdam krīḍantam,
dadṛṣe sa-kalam harim*

When Lord Brahmā returned after a moment of time had passed (according to his own measurement), he saw that although by human measurement a complete year had passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after all that time, was engaged just as before in playing with the boys and calves, who were His expansions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After describing the bewilderment of the Vraja gopas and *gopis*, the bewilderment of Brahma is described. Due to fear, Brahma, who is called *atma bhū* (born directly from Hari), returned after one moment, even though one year of human time had elapsed. After all that time, Brahma saw that Kṛṣṇa was playing with the boys and calves, who were actually His expansions. Baladeva, however, as in the previous year, was absent due to being kept home by his mother to perform auspicious rites on His birthday.

Text 41

*yāvanto gokule bālāḥ,
sa-vatsāḥ sarva eva hi,
māyāśaye śayānā me,
nādyāpi punar utthitāḥ*

Lord Brahmā thought: Whatever boys and calves there were in Gokula, I have kept them sleeping on the bed of my mystic potency, and to this very day they have not yet risen again.

Text 42

ita ete 'tra kutratyā,

*man-māyā-mohitetare,
tāvanta eva tatrābdaṁ,
krīḍanto viṣṇunā samam*

A similar number of boys and calves have been playing with Kṛṣṇa for one whole year, yet they are different from the ones illusioned by my mystic potency. Who are they? Where did they come from?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The doubts that arose in Brahma after seeing this are described in two verses (41-42). Lord Brahma thought: “Where have all these boys and calves come from? Are these the ones bewildered by my *maya*? Or are they different boys and calves brought by Kṛṣṇa?”

Brahma pointed with his forefinger as he thought, “Just a short distance from here the boys and calves are playing with Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Gokula. They are different from the ones I put to sleep by my mystic power. Where did these come from and who are they?”

Text 43

*evam eteṣu bhedeṣu,
ciraṁ dhyātvā sa ātma-bhūḥ,
satyāḥ ke katāre neti,
jñātuṁ neṣṭe kathañcana*

Thus Lord Brahmā, thinking and thinking for a long time, tried to distinguish between those two sets of boys, who were each separately existing. He tried to understand who was real and who was not real, but he couldn’t understand at all.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way Brahma was thinking and

investigating for a long time. “Of the two groups, those bewildered by me and those playing here with Kṛṣṇa, which group is real and which is false? Are the sleeping ones bewildered by me the real ones or are they something created by Kṛṣṇa? Or are the ones playing in the distance the real ones or something created by Kṛṣṇa? Or are both merely creations of Kṛṣṇa? After I go to the cave and see that the boys and calves are still there, does Kṛṣṇa remove them and bring them here so that I come here and see them, and does Kṛṣṇa then take them from here and put them back in the cave? Whatever the case may be, I see two different groups in two different places at the same time. Thus I am confused.”

After meditating for some time, Brahma thought, “I will use my power of omniscience to understand this.” But even then, after a long time in *samadhi*, Brahma was still doubtful: “Of the two groups situated in two places, which is the real (*satyah*) group created by the Lord, and which is the false one created by Mayadevi? I cannot understand at all.”

Text 44

*evam sammohayan viṣṇum,
vimohaṁ viśva-mohanam,
svayaiva māyayājo 'pi,
svayam eva vimohitaḥ*

Thus because Lord Brahmā wanted to mystify the all-pervading Lord Kṛṣṇa, who can never be mystified, but who, on the contrary, mystifies the entire universe, he himself was put into bewilderment by his own mystic power.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how Brahma fell into the whirlpool of bewilderment. Though Brahma tried to mystify (*sammohayan*) Kṛṣṇa by stealing the boys and calves, he, though unborn (*ajah*), was bewildered by using his energy (*svaya mayaya*)

against the Lord. Brahma was not bewildered by his own energy, which is the external meaning of the words *svaya mayaya*.

Īmohitah here indicates that Brahma was bewildered in a special way (*vi:visesena mohitah*). The reason for this extreme bewilderment was Brahma's great offense in attempting to use his powers to mystify the Lord. One should not think that Brahma was bewildered by his own *maya*, because *maya* does not have the power to bewilder its shelter. A later verse gives an example to illustrate this.

Text 45

*tamyām tamovan naihāram,
khadyotārcir ivāhani,mahatītara-māyaisyaṃ,
nihanty ātmani yuñjataḥ*

As the darkness of snow on a dark night and the light of a glowworm in the light of day have no value, the mystic power of an inferior person who tries to use it against a person of great power is unable to accomplish anything; instead, the power of that inferior person is diminished.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: No type of mystic power can cover Kṛṣṇa, who is the controller of *mahamaya*. Rather, such an attempt shows the insignificance of the person displaying his mystic power before the Lord. This verse cites two examples to show this.

In the dense darkness of night, the darkness produced by snow has no meaning. Similarly, Brahma's *maya* could not cover the Lord, but rather Brahma became insignificant in the presence of Kṛṣṇa's mystic power. As the example of snow only attributes a little causality to Brahma, another more satisfying example is given. A firefly appears very important at night, but in the daytime its glow has no value. Similarly, Brahma can show his power in some places, but his power became

condemned when he tried to spread it over the Lord. When one tries to defeat a superior power, one's own inferior power becomes destroyed.

Text 46

*tāvat sarve vatsa-pālāḥ,
paśyato 'jasya tat-kṣaṇāt,
vyadrśyanta ghana-śyāmāḥ,
pīta-kaūśeya-vāsasaḥ*

Then, while Lord Brahmā looked on, all the calves and the boys tending them immediately appeared to have complexions the color of bluish rainclouds and to be dressed in yellow silken garments.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura; (Verses 46-48) While Brahma was contemplating these matters, he saw all the calves and cowherd boys (*vatsa palah*), but they gave no heed to him. They said, “O Brahma, the unborn (*aja*) one, resident of Satyaloka. Verily (*satya*), you are a goat! [The word *aja* also means goat.] You create the universe by your intelligence. Now you want to bewilder us with your *maya*. You have no idea at all who we are. Now we will show you! Look! Though we are all the calves grazing on Vrndavana's grass, and all the cowherd boys herding those calves, our real form is only one form.”

Being endowed with spiritual vision, Brahma was able to see (*vyadrśyantah*) that all the calves and cowherd boys had immediately transformed into *visnu-murtis* with four arms, having bluish complexions and wearing yellow garments. All the boys' chests were marked with the line of Laksmi (Srivatsa). They had armbands (*angada*) on their upper arms, and Kaustubha jewels (*ratna*) on their necks. Their hands were ornamented with golden bracelets and their feet with bangles.

Texts 47–48

*catur-bhujāḥ śaṅkha-cakra,
gadā-rājīva-pāṇayah,
kirīṭinaḥ kuṇḍalino,
hāriṇo vana-mālinaḥ,
śrīvatsāṅgada-do-ratna,
kambu-kaṅkaṇa-pāṇayah,
nūpuraiḥ kaṭakair bhātāḥ,
kaṭi-sūtrāṅgulīyakaiḥ*

All those personalities had four arms, holding conchshell, disc, mace and lotus flower in Their hands. They wore helmets on Their heads, earrings on Their ears and garlands of forest flowers around Their necks. On the upper portion of the right side of Their chests was the emblem of the goddess of fortune. Furthermore, They wore armlets on Their arms, the Kaustubha gem around Their necks, which were marked with three lines like a conchshell, and bracelets on Their wrists. With bangles on Their ankles, ornaments on Their feet, and sacred belts around Their waists, They all appeared very beautiful.

Text 49

*āṅghri-mastakam āpūrṇās,
tulasī-nava-dāmabhiḥ,
komalaiḥ sarva-gātreṣu,
bhūri-puṇyavad-arpitaiḥ*

Every part of Their bodies, from Their feet to the top of Their heads, was fully decorated with fresh, tender garlands of tulasī leaves offered by devotees engaged in worshipping the Lord by the greatest pious activities, namely hearing and chanting.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *bhuri punyavad arpitaih* means “worshipping the Supreme Lord by hearing, chanting and remembering.”

Text 50

*candrikā-viśada-smeraiḥ,
sāruṇāpāṅga-vīkṣitaiḥ,
svakāṛthānām iva rajaḥ,
sattvābhyām sraṣṭṛ-pālakāḥ*

Those Viṣṇu forms, by Their pure smiling, which resembled the increasing light of the moon, and by the sidelong glances of Their reddish eyes, created and protected the desires of Their own devotees, as if by the modes of passion and goodness.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The brightness of the smiles of those Visnu forms made the moonlight lament. With the sidelong glances of Their reddish eyes they created and maintained the desires of their devotees. The phrase (*raja-sattvabhyam*) means the Visnu forms distributed mercy with the reddish (*rajas*) tint of their lotus eyes and the white (*sattva*) of their smiles.

Text 51

ātmādi-stamba-paryantair,

*mūrtimadbhiś carācaraiḥ,
nr̥tya-gītādy-anekārhaiḥ,
pṛthak pṛthag upāsītāḥ*

All beings, both moving and nonmoving, from the four-headed Lord Brahmā down to the most insignificant living entity, had taken forms and were differently worshiping those viṣṇu-mūrtis, according to their respective capacities, with various means of worship, such as dancing and singing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma saw that all beings from the four-headed Brahma down to the grass were worshiping those *visnu-murtis* with various means of worship, such as singing and dancing.

Text 52

*aṇimādyair mahimabhir,
ajādyābhir vibhūtibhiḥ,
catur-vimśatibhis tattvaiḥ,
parītā mahad-ādibhiḥ*

All the viṣṇu-murtis were surrounded by the opulences, headed by aṇimā-siddhi; by the mystic potencies, headed by Ajā; and by the twenty-four elements for the creation of the material world, headed by the mahat-tattva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: All the *visnu-murtis* were surrounded by opulences, headed by the eight mystic *siddhis*, and by the twenty four elements of creation starting with the *mahat-tattva*. In this enumeration of the twenty four elements, a distinction is made between *mahat-tattva*, which is the twenty-third element, and *sutra-tattva* (a

state where the three modes are slightly manifested), which becomes the twenty third element instead of *mahat-tattva*. *Tattvaih* means causes for creation of the material world.

Text 53

*kāla-svabhāva-saṁskāra,
kāma-karma-guṇādibhiḥ,
sva-mahi-dhvasta-mahibhir,
mūrtimadbhir upāsitāḥ*

Then Lord Brahmā saw that kāla (the time factor), svabhāva (one’s own nature by association), saṁskāra (reformation), kāma (desire), karma (fruitive activity) and the guṇas (the three modes of material nature), their own independence being completely subordinate to the potency of the Lord, had all taken forms and were also worshiping those viṣṇu-mū rtis.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *visnu-murtis* were being worshiped by time (*kala*) and its assistants: one’s own nature (*svabhava*), reformation (*samskara*), desire (*kama*), fruitive activity (*karma*) and the three modes of material nature (*gunas*). Their own independence, however, was completely subordinate to the potency of the Lord (*sva mahi dhvasta mahibhih*). Time sets the three modes of nature in motion. *Svabhava* is one’s natural state formed by associating with the three modes of material nature. *Samskara* is that which brings remembrance or revelation.

Text 54

satya-jñānānantānanda,

*mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah,
aspr̥ṣṭa-bhūri-māhātmyā,
api hy upaniṣad-dṛśām*

The viṣṇu-mūrtis all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time. Their great glory was not even to be touched by the jñānīs engaged in studying the Upaniṣads.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One should not think that all these forms were just a creation of the Lord’s illusory energy. The boys and calves were all transformed into *visnu-murtis* or Visnu forms made of infinite truth, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss. Or the meaning can be: the calves and boys were the personification of the Vedic statement: *satyaṁ jñānam ānandaṁ brahmeti, ānandaṁ brahmano rūpam*, “Brahman is the Absolute Truth and complete bliss. Brahman is the form of bliss.” (*Taittiriya Upaniṣad* 2.1.3)

One may object that Vedantists never say that Brahman has many forms and variations. But this verse states that the followers of the *Upaniṣads* (*upaniṣad drsam*), however, cannot understand the varieties manifested by Brahman due to their lack of devotion, nor can they even touch the glory of these *visnu-murtis*. This proves that Brahman and Paramatma can actually be understood only through devotion as confirmed by Kṛṣṇa in *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.14.21): *bhaktyaham ekaya grahyah*, “I am obtainable only by devotion.” Sri Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gita* (18.55): *bhaktya mam abhijanati yavan yas casmi tattvatah*, “I am known as I am only by devotion.”

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.3) says: *na caksusa pasyati rupam asya, yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas, tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūṁ svām*, “The Lord’s form cannot be seen by material eyes. The Lord is attainable by one whom the Lord favors. To such a person He manifests His own form.”

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.8), the Supreme is described as *āditya-*

varṇam tamasaḥ parastāt, “He whose self-manifest form is luminous like the sun and transcendental to the darkness of ignorance.” *Ānanda-mātram ajaram purāṇam ekaṁ santam bahudhā dṛśyamānam*: “The Supreme is blissful, with no tinge of unhappiness. Although He is the oldest, He never ages, and although one, He is experienced in different forms.” (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.19) The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.40.7) states: *bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*, “You are the one Supreme Lord manifesting in multiple forms.”

Sarve nityāḥ śāśvatās ca dehās tasya parātmanah: “All the forms of that Supreme Person are eternal.” (*Mahā-varāha Purāṇa*)

Thus there are many statements in the *Sṛuti* and *Smṛti* revealing that Brahman definitely has transcendental form and qualities, which are visible to the eye of devotion by the mercy of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Text 55

*evam sakṛd dadarśajah,
para-brahmātmano 'khilān,
yasya bhāsā sarvam idaṁ,
vibhāti sa-carācaram*

Thus Lord Brahmā saw the Supreme Brahman, by whose energy this entire universe, with its moving and nonmoving living beings, is manifested. He also saw at the same time all the calves and boys as the Lord's expansions.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Yasya* refers to the Supreme Brahman.

Text 56

tato 'ikutukodvṛtya,

*stimitaikā-daśendriyaḥ,
tad-dhāmnābhūd ajas tūṣṇīm,
pūr-devy-antīva putrikā*

Then, by the power of the effulgence of those viṣṇu-mūrtis, Lord Brahmā, his eleven senses jolted by astonishment and stunned by transcendental bliss, became silent, just like a child's clay doll in the presence of the village deity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By the influence of those *visnu-murtis*, Brahma's eleven senses became jolted by astonishment and stunned by transcendental bliss. The word *uddhrta* is sometimes substituted for *udvrtya*. Overwhelmed by the effulgence of those *visnu-murtis*, Brahma fell silent and could not do or say anything, just like a child's clay doll in the presence of the village deity.

Text 57

*itīreṣe 'tarkye nija-mahimani sva-pramitike,
paratrājāto 'tan-nirasana-mukha-brahmaka-mitau,
anīṣe 'pi draṣṭuṁ kim idam iti vā muhyati sati,
cacchādājo jñātvā sapadi paramo 'jā-javanikām*

The Supreme Brahman is beyond mental speculation, He is self-manifest, existing in His own bliss, and He is beyond the material energy. He is known by the crest jewels of the Vedas by refutation of irrelevant knowledge. Thus in relation to that Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, whose glory had been shown by the manifestation of all the four-armed forms of Viṣṇu, Lord Brahmā, the lord of Sarasvatī, was mystified. “What is this?” he thought, and then he was not even able to see. Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding

Brahmā's position, then at once removed the curtain of His yogamāyā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that Brahma could not realize whatever sweet glory He had shown him, and that Brahma was not qualified to view any more of His endless unprecedented glories, Kṛṣṇa didn't show any more of His opulences. Even though Brahma was highly learned and also the husband of the goddess of learning Sarasvati, he said, "Oh, what an amazing thing I have seen." Then being mystified, he could no longer see those forms. Seeing this and knowing Brahma's qualification to understand His powers, Kṛṣṇa immediately withdrew the curtain of *yogamaya* (*aja javanikam*) to make them disappear.

In other words, by the agency of *yogamaya*, Kṛṣṇa covered the cowherd boys, the calves grazing on grass and Himself looking for the calves. Then Kṛṣṇa showed new forms of the same produced from Himself, each having four arms. Then He made that *yogamaya* disappear.

Yogamaya is the potency by which Kṛṣṇa is sometimes manifest and sometimes not manifest. *Mahamaya*, on the other hand, is the potency which covers the actual reality and displays something unreal.

Therefore, in this verse the word *aja* refers to *yogamaya*.

What was the source of Brahma's bewilderment? Brahma was mystified by seeing Kṛṣṇa's opulence (*nija mahimani*). How is Lord Kṛṣṇa described in this verse? Kṛṣṇa is beyond logic (*atarkye*), self-manifest and blissful (*sva-pramitike*). If Kṛṣṇa does not personally reveal Himself, there is absolutely no means, not even by scriptural knowledge, to realize Him. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is beyond logic or argument. He is also beyond the material energy (*paratra ajatah*). Kṛṣṇa is known (*mitau*) by the crest jewels of the *Vedas*, who define Brahman in terms of negation. The phrase *atan-nirasana* means rejecting that which is irrelevant. The word *atat* means "that which is not a fact." In the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (5.8.8), Brahman is described as *asthūlam anaṅv ahrasvam adīrgham*, "that which is not large and not small, not short and not long." In other words, Brahman is

defined in terms of negation by saying *neti neti*, “It is not this, it is not that.” By that form Brahma was bewildered.

Text 58

*tato 'rvāk pratilabdhākṣaḥ,
kaḥ paretavad utthitaḥ,
kṛcchrād unmīlya vai dṛṣṭīr,
ācaṣṭedaṁ sahātmanā*

Lord Brahmā’s external consciousness then revived, and he stood up, just like a dead man coming back to life. Opening his eyes with great difficulty, he saw the universe, along with himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma returned to external consciousness and stood up, just like a dead man coming back to life. Opening his eyes, Brahma saw this universe (*idam*) as the object of his possessiveness along with himself. Or Brahma saw the object of his false identity as the creator of the universe.

Text 59

*sapady evābhitaḥ paśyan,
diśo 'paśyat puraḥ-sthitam,
vṛndāvanam janājīvyā,
drumākīrṇam samā-priyam*

Then, looking in all directions, Lord Brahmā immediately saw Vṛndāvana before him, filled with trees, which were the means of livelihood for the inhabitants and which were equally pleasing in all

seasons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then Kṛṣṇa showed Brahma the wealth of His sweetness. Brahma immediately saw Vṛndavana before him. It was filled with trees, which were nourishing all the living entities, and equally pleasing in all seasons.

Text 60

*yatra naisarga-durvairāḥ,
sahāsan nṛ-mṛgādayaḥ,
mitrāñīvājītvāsa,
druta-ruṭ-tarṣakādikam*

Vṛndāvana is the transcendental abode of the Lord where there is no hunger, anger or thirst. Though naturally inimical, both human beings and fierce animals live there together in transcendental friendship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse further describes the sweetness of Vṛndavana, wherein tigers and men, though naturally inimical (*naisarga durvairah*), live together as friends. Because Vṛndavana is Kṛṣṇa's residence (*ajita avasa*) anger, greed and other undesirable things (*anarthas*) have gone from there (*drutah*).

Text 61

*tatrodvahat paśupa-vamśa-śiśutva-nāṭyam,
brahmādvayaṁ param anantam agādha-bodham,
vatsān sakhīn iva purā parito vicinvad,
ekam sa-pāṇi-kavalaṁ parameṣṭhy acaṣṭa*

Then Lord Brahmā saw the Absolute Truth—who is one without a second, who possesses full knowledge and who is unlimited—assuming the role of a child in a family of cowherd men and standing all alone, just as before, with a morsel of food in His hand, searching everywhere for the calves and His cowherd friends.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Covering up the four-handed *visnu-murti* forms generated from His own form by *yogamaya*, Kṛṣṇa showed Brahma His original form described in the *Srutis* as *akhanda advitiya brahma*. There (*tatra*) in Vṛndavana, Brahma (*paramesthi*) saw (*acasta*) Kṛṣṇa. What did Kṛṣṇa look like? Concealing His majesty, Kṛṣṇa played as a cowherd boy standing with some food in His hand while loitering with His calves and boyfriends. Brahma did not see Kṛṣṇa as *catur-bhuja* Narayana; he simply saw an innocent boy. Yet he understood that Kṛṣṇa was the master of the whole creation. Brahma thought, “Here is the Lord of the universe. I am simply His insignificant servant.” Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *advaya* (without a second) because all the forms that Brahma had seen until he became stunned had now been covered up by *yogamaya*. Because Kṛṣṇa is the root cause of all the other forms, He is called Supreme (*param*). Kṛṣṇa is called *ananta*, unlimited, because He possesses powers thousands of times greater than what He showed to Brahma. Kṛṣṇa is called *agadha bodham*, possessing unlimited knowledge, because not only Brahma but even Baladeva and other expansions find it difficult to understand Him. Because Kṛṣṇa was performing like an actor (*natyam*), He was searching here and there for the calves and boys. One year before, Brahma, under illusion, took that to be the actual fact. But now after seeing the calves grazing on the grass in the pasture and the boys taking lunch on the river bank, and no longer seeing the illusory boys created by *maya* that he had stolen, Brahma became free from his illusion. He understood that Kṛṣṇa’s looking for the calves and boys again was some act of Kṛṣṇa for bewildering him.

Thus in the first verse of the next chapter containing Brahma’s prayers, there is no mention of Kṛṣṇa searching for the calves and boys. Because of *yogamaya*’s covering the four-handed forms coming from Himself, Kṛṣṇa is described in this verse as (*ekam*) alone, all by Himself. Kṛṣṇa performs unlimited pastimes to please His pure devotees; therefore here He appeared sweetly with a lump of yogurt rice in His hand. For less qualified persons Kṛṣṇa shows His formless aspect. Then *yogamaya* covers the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form, qualities, pastimes, abode and associates, and leaves only the revelation of Kṛṣṇa’s formless feature. Though there is an extreme difference in the realization of Brahman and Bhagavan, there is no contradiction in the scriptures describing these features of the one Absolute Truth. Some will claim that the phrase *sisutva-natyam*, means “putting on the dress of a cowherd boy,” therefore, the cowherd boy form is not the eternal form (*svarupa*) of Brahman, but simply a temporary form that illustrates the Lord’s power to bewilder a living entity such as Brahma. Furthermore, the Lord only accepted the form of a cowherd boy as a convenient object of praise for Brahma to offer his prayers as described in Chapter Fourteen verse one: *naumīḍya te ’bhra-vapuṣe*, “I praise the most worshipable one, who has a body the color of a dark rain cloud.” But this is not in agreement with Sridhara Swami’s opinion, because the subject of prayers should never be an unreal thing. Indeed, the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa holding a lump of yogurt rice in His hand exists eternally.

Text 62

*dṛṣṭvā tvareṇa nija-dhoroṇato ’vatīrya,
prṥhyām vapuḥ kanaka-daṇḍam ivābhipātya,
sprṣṭvā catur-mukūṭa-koṭibhir aṅghri-yugmaṁ,
natvā mud-aśru-sujalair akṛtābhiṣekam*

After seeing this, Lord Brahmā hastily got down from his swan carrier, fell down like a golden rod and touched the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa with the tips of the four crowns on his heads. Offering his obeisances, he bathed the feet of Kṛṣṇa with the water of his tears of joy.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Lord Brahma understood that the Absolute Truth, Parabrahman, the root cause of everything, was standing before him in His human form as a cowherd boy of Vraja, he quickly jumped off the back of his swan carrier (*nija dhorantah*) and fell to the earth. There is a famous saying that demigods never touch the earth. Brahma’s breaking this rule indicates that he gave up his prestige as a demigod. Because Brahma’s four heads were facing in four directions, to touch the Lord’s feet, he had to fall on the ground and raise himself again and again. He bathed Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet (*akṛta abhisekam*) with a profuse outpouring of tears. The prefix “*su*” in the word *sujalaih*, which means water, indicates that Brahma’s tears were purified. Therefore, Brahma’s crying was a form of *bhakty-anubhava*, a transformation of transcendental ecstatic love.

Text 63

*utthāyotthāya kṛṣṇasya,
cirasya pādayoḥ patan,
āste mahitvaṁ prāg-dṛṣṭam,
smṛtvā smṛtvā punaḥ punaḥ*

Rising and falling again and again at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa for a long time, Lord Brahmā remembered over and over the Lord’s greatness he had just seen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After paying obeisances many times,

Brahma remained on the ground at Kṛṣṇa's feet for a long time due to being overwhelmed by intense bliss. This verse is in the present tense because Sukadeva was directly experiencing the pastime.

Text 64

*śanair athotthāya vimrjya locane,
mukundam udvīkṣya vinamra-kandharah,
kṛtāñjaliḥ praśrayavān samāhitaḥ,
sa-vepathur gadgadayailatelayā*

Then, rising very gradually and wiping his two eyes, Lord Brahmā looked up at Mukunda. Lord Brahmā, his head bent low, his mind concentrated and his body trembling, very humbly began, with faltering words, to offer praises to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse mentions that Brahma saw the Lord with only two eyes, because all eight of his eyes were brimming with tears. The word *locane* indicates that with his two hands Brahma wiped the two eyes on each of his four faces. Brahma praised Lord Kṛṣṇa with a choked up voice. The word *ailata* in the phrase *gadgadayailatelaya* comes from *aitta* which means to praise. “La” has been added to the word *aitta* to imitate the sound of Brahma's choked voice. The word *gadgadaya* means faltering voice.

Chapter Fourteen: Brahma's Prayers to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-brahmovāca,
naumīdya te 'bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya,
guñjāvataṁsa-paripiccha-lasan-mukhāya,
vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇu,
lakṣma-śriye mṛdu-pade paśupāṅgajāya*

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

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter relates how Brahma, though maintaining a mood of reverence, immersed himself in the great ocean of Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. After praising Sri Kṛṣṇa with great devotion mixed with knowledge, Brahma asks some questions. I am not afraid if the real devotees, who are relishing great bliss by collecting loads of jewels, mock my stance of selling jewels (offering a few jewels). Meditating with determination solely upon the lotus feet of my *guru*, my heart desires to cross the ocean of Brahma's prayers. Now Brahma has directly realized that Nandanandana is the source of all forms of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Having attained firm

devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, Brahma profusely praises the Lord. Brahma said, “My dear Vasudeva! You are the source of countless forms, and are the only worshipable (*idyā*) Lord. You are glorified by everyone in the universe from me down to the grass. In order to attain You, I offer these praises unto You.”

“Or, simply to please You, I glorify You in verse. Your transcendental body, dark blue like a fresh rain cloud, is wrapped in a garment more brilliant than lightning.”

Brahma’s words describing Kṛṣṇa suggest two things: the earth gets relief from the scorching heat of summer through the cloud of Kṛṣṇa’s rain. And the *cataka* bird-like devotees sustain their lives with the mercy pouring from the rain cloud of Kṛṣṇa.

Brahma continues, “*Gunja* berry earrings accent the beauty of Your face, flowers adorn Your hair, and a peacock feather rests atop Your head.” Brahma’s description reveals the superiority of the lowly *gunja* berries of Vraja to the precious jewels of Vaikuntha. The forest garland of wild flowers and leaves around Kṛṣṇa’s neck is superior to those made of the *parijata* flowers from Svargaloka. By mentioning the morsel of yogurt rice in Kṛṣṇa’s hand, His stick and horn, Brahma indicates the superiority of Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd boy form over all others. In mentioning Kṛṣṇa’s soft feet (*mrdu pade*), Brahma indicates that those wandering in the forest of Vrndavana become filled with ecstasy upon seeing Kṛṣṇa’s footprints. By stating that Kṛṣṇa is the son of a cowherd man (*pasupa anga jaya*), Brahma shows the superior fortune of Nanda over Vasudeva.

Text 2

*asyāpi deva vapuṣo mad-anugrahasya,
svecchā-mayasya na tu bhūta-mayasya ko 'pi,
neśe mahi tv avasituṁ manasāntareṇa,
sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteḥ*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing Brahma’s praises, Kṛṣṇa may object: “Listen Lord Brahma! You are the master of all powers in this universe, while I am but the son of a cowherd man in the forest. You are an ancient and exalted personality, and I am but a small boy. You are knowledgeable of all the *Vedas*, and endowed with the most exemplary conduct. But I am an ignorant keeper of cows, and so unaware of proper conduct that I run around with some yogurt rice in My hand. You are the supreme lord, full of bliss, and the controller of all illusion. But I am bewildered by your illusion, and wander about the forest grieving over lost calves. Thus I am not qualified for your praise.”

Fearing such objections from Kṛṣṇa, Brahma spoke this verse, repenting for having offended Kṛṣṇa due to his ignorance. “I cannot estimate (*avasitum*) the greatness of Your transcendental body, engaging in childish play, what to speak of Your pastimes of youth (*kaisora*). If I cannot understand the potency of Your transcendental body, then how could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself by herding the calves. I cannot comprehend the happiness Your cowherd friends feel, what to speak of the happiness You experience by directly playing with them. If a person with a controlled mind cannot understand that happiness, what can be said of those with uncontrolled minds?”

In this way Brahma expressed five levels of ignorance. Brahma described Kṛṣṇa’s body in this way to prove that the Supreme Lord cannot be understood by *yoga*, austerity or *sastric* study. Kṛṣṇa is understood only by mercy.

Brahma continued, “My Lord, although I offended You, due to Your magnanimity You have shown such mercy to me. That mercy consisted of revealing Your sweet human form after showing Your awesome *visnu-murtis*. What is the cause of that mercy? Your body is *sva iccha maya*. It appears in response to the desires of Your pure devotees who want to see and serve You. You show mercy out of affection for Your devotees. Though I am an offender, because I have a semblance of devotion I have become qualified to receive a drop of Your mercy.” Patiently listening to Brahma, Kṛṣṇa replied, “But to fulfill desires and show mercy are traits of human beings also.”

Brahma responded, “But my Lord, Your body is not material (*bhuta mayasya*). Your body is spiritual.”

Brahma Samhita (5.32) says: *aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛttimanti paśyanti pānti kalayanti ciraṁ jaganti*, “Every part of Kṛṣṇa’s body has all the potencies of other parts of the body.” This verse shows not only that the Lord can perform any bodily function with any of His limbs, but also that He can see through the eyes of His Visnu expansions, and similarly that He can hear through the ears of any Visnu expansion. Although the Lord can perform any function with any one of His senses, in His transcendental pastimes as Govinda He generally sees with His eyes, touches with His hands and hears with His ears. Thus Kṛṣṇa acts like the most beautiful and charming young cowherd boy. Brahma continued, “My Lord, You have shown me the form of Vasudeva (*deva vapu*), who bestowed mercy (*mad anugrahasya*) by teaching me the four verses (*catuh-sloki*) of *Bhagavatam*. To fulfill Your desires (*iccha maya*), Your transcendental body is the source of these Vasudeva forms (*sva*). Though Your body fulfills Your desires, it is spiritual and not like our bodies, which are products of matter (*bhuta mayasya*). I cannot estimate the potency of Your spiritual body, even though I have revealed the *Vedas* and studied the fruit of the *Vedas*, *Srimad Bhagavatam*. I cannot even understand the greatness of Your Vasudeva forms, what to speak of the greatness of the original source of those transcendental forms, the two-armed form of Govinda. In this topmost of transcendental forms as an innocent cowherd boy, You

intensely relish the pastimes of stealing butter, drinking the *gopis*’ breast milk, tending the calves, playing Your flute, and enjoying Your childhood pranks, which are extraordinary even in comparison with the activities of Your Visnu expansions.”

Text 3

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva,
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām,
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir,
ye prāyaśo ’jita jito ’py asi tais tri-lokyām*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.8) states: *tam eva viditvā*, “Freedom is possible only by understanding Brahman.” If that is the case, then how can an ignorant person attain liberation? This verse answers the question.

Brahma said, “Your devotees give up all endeavors for knowledge (*prayasam udapasya*). They simply spend their time hearing Your glories (*bhavadīya vartam*) spoken by You and Your pure devotees (*sammukharitam*). Staying in their social positions (*sthane sthitah*), they do not travel around to holy *tirthas*. Without doing anything else, devotees pass their lives hearing topics (*srutigatam*) about Your name, qualities and pastimes, and they offer all respects to these narrations with their bodies, minds and words. They use their intelligence to

grasp the meaning of the subjects heard. In this way, the pure devotees conquer You, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds.

“You are not conquered by those who attain liberation through *jnana*. Indeed, to attain liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death merely by hearing about You is astonishing. By knowledge of Brahman, which is but one aspect of the Absolute Truth, *jnani*s cross the ocean of birth and death. That is the meaning of the *Sruti* statement, ‘Freedom is possible only by understanding Brahman.’”

Text 4

*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho,
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave,
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate,
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One can achieve success by performing any one of the methods of *bhakti* such as hearing and chanting. The *Nrsimha Purana* confirms this, “Since one can easily attain the original Personality of Godhead by worshiping Him with devotion using leaves, flowers, fruits and water, which are freely available, why does one need to endeavor for liberation separately?” Though this is true, those who reject *bhakti* and pursue the path of

speculative knowledge (*jnana*) only gain trouble and botheration. This is the intention of the verse.

Sridhara Swami says that *jnana* is a dry path, whereas *bhakti* is a cool stream flowing like a river of honey. The word *sreyah* (supreme benefit) also refers to all the fruits of all other processes such as *karma* and *jnana*. The path of *bhakti* gives all these fruits, and is thus called the *sreyah srtim*, the path of supreme benefit. The *janis* who reject (*udasya*) the path of auspiciousness (*sreyah srtim*) get only suffering (*klesala*). It is like beating a huge pile of empty husks of rice. The result of the effort is pain in the hands and no rice.

Text 5

*pureha bhūman bahavo 'pi yoginas,
tvad-arpitehā nija-karma-labdhayā,
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā,
prapedire 'ñjo 'cyuta te gatim parām*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the previous two verses, Brahma used negative and positive statements to establish that devotional service is the means of attaining the Lord. The present verse describes the primary activities of *bhakti*, namely hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa.

Brahma said, “O almighty Lord (*bhuman*), in this world there are many who practice *bhakti* (*yoginah*) and offer their activities to You,

engaging all their senses in works of devotion. Being fully absorbed in *bhakti* with faith, and disregarding *varnasrama*, they engage in hearing and chanting only about You. By the *prema-bhakti* which arises from hearing and chanting (*kathopanitaya*), they realize (*vibudhya*) Your form, qualities and pastimes, and thus attain Your eternal association in the spiritual world.”

This verse can also be taken as a rejection of the *yoga* process after having rejected *jnana* in the previous verses. “After practicing *yoga* for a long time one may come to the platform of devotional service and attain firm devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 6

*tathāpi bhūman mahimāguṇasya te,
viboddhum arhaty amalāntar-ātmabhiḥ,
avikriyāt svānubhavād arūpato,
hy ananya-bodhyātmatayā na cānyathā*

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

Text 7

*guṇātmanas te 'pi guṇān vimātuṃ,
hitāvatīṛnasya ka īsire 'sya,*

*kālena yair vā vimitāḥ su-kalpair,
bhū-pāṁśavaḥ khe mihikā dyu-bhāsaḥ*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You possess unlimited, eternal qualities (*gunatmanah*) that arise from Your spiritual form.” This is confirmed in the scripture known as *Brahma-tarka: gunaih svarupa bhutais tu guny asau harir isvarah*, “The Lord possesses qualities which arise from His *svarupa*, personal form.”

Brahma said, “But who can count (*vimatum*) those qualities? No one can.” The *avatars* such as Sankarsana, who descend on earth to extinguish the suffering of the world, actually have counted the number of atoms on the earth, the snowflakes, and even the particles of sunlight. Yet even such a personality as Sankarsana, who has been continuously chanting Kṛṣṇa’s glories since time immemorial, cannot come to an end of enumerating those glories.

There is another meaning of the word *gunatmanah*. The Lord is the protector of the world consisting of the three *gunas*, modes of material nature. “No one can come to an end of counting the qualities of You who engage in pastimes of protecting the universe. What to speak then of being able to describe the most astonishing qualities that You exhibit during Your sweet childhood pastimes in Vṛndavana, wherein You steal yogurt from the Vraja-gopis.”

*tat te 'nukampām su-samīkṣamāṇo,
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam,
hṛd-vāg-vapurahir vidadhan namas te,
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Now that Brahma has rejected other processes and accepted *bhakti* as the means to attain Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa, the process of *bhakti* is described. A devotee understands that the happiness and distress he undergoes due to performing *bhakti* and committing *aparadhas* are special mercy from the Lord. It is like the father who sometimes makes his child drink milk and sometimes makes him drink bitter *neem* juice. Sometimes the father embraces and kisses his son and other times he beats him. The devotee accepts whatever happens to him as the arrangement of Lord acting for his benefit. The devotee thinks, “The Lord certainly knows what is best for me, even if I don’t know. *Karma* and time have no effect on a devotee, so this is Kṛṣṇa’s personal arrangement for me. Out of His mercy, Kṛṣṇa sometimes gives me happiness and sometimes gives me distress, considering how to engage me in His service.”

This point is confirmed in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (4.20.31): *yathā cared bāla-hitam pitā svayam, tathā tvam evārhasi naḥ samīhitum*, “As a father, not waiting for the son’s demand, does everything for the benefit of the son, please bestow upon me whatever You think best for me.” The person who spends his life offering respects with body, mind and words to the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa like Prthu Maharaja while tolerating the suffering of austerities or other hardships becomes the

recipient (*dayabhak*) of two results: liberation from material bondage and service to the Lord (*mukti-pada*).

As the inheritance from the father maintains the life of the son, so the attainment of liberation and service to the Lord maintains the life of the devotee. Thus while living in this world the devotee remains fixed on the path of devotion. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.87.17) says: *ḍṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhr̥to yadi te 'nuvidhā*: “Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows.” One’s life becomes successful by serving Kṛṣṇa with devotion. Otherwise the body is just like a bellows inhaling and exhaling air.

Text 9

*paśyeśa me 'nāryam ananta ādye,
parātmani tvayy api māyi-māyini,
māyām vitatyekṣitum ātma-vaibhavaṁ,
hy ahaṁ kiyān aiccham ivārcir agnau*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma expresses his repentance in this verse. Rather than performing devotional activities, Brahma thinks He has simply committed a great offense to Kṛṣṇa.

The word *arya* means a wise or worthy person. Brahma said, “O Lord, see my *anaryam*, my contemptible behavior and foolishness. You may give suitable punishment or forgiveness; otherwise persons like me will commit further impropriety.”

Brahma continued, “What was my bad conduct? You are my father and the source (*adya*) of everything. Yet I offended You when You were enjoying lunch with Your friends in the forest. What was my foolishness? You have immeasurable (*ananta*) powers and You are the soul of all souls (*paratmani*). Revealing my foolishness, I misused my position to commit an offense against You. I have shown the ultimate foolishness in attempting to mystify You who bewilder even the masters of illusion. I desired to see Your powers by invoking my powers of illusion. But beside You, I am as insignificant as a spark emanating from a huge fire.”

Text 10

*ataḥ kṣamasvācyuta me rajo-bhuvo,
hy ajānatas tvat-prthag-īśa-māninaḥ,
ajāvalepāndha-tamo-’ndha-caḥṣuṣa,
eṣo ’nukampyo mayi nāthavān iti*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma continued, “Though my bad conduct is worthy of punishment, my foolishness is worthy of forgiveness, so please be merciful and pardon me completely. Do not withhold Your mercy from this fallen one. Therefore, I address You as Acyuta, the infallible Lord. You should remember that the most fallen require more mercy, so kindly pardon my offense.”

Brahma then identifies his low qualities. “I haven taken birth in the mode of passion (*rajobhuvah*), and I foolishly think that I am separate from You.”

Brahma explains his identity as a controller: “With great pride I think I am Your son (arising from Your navel), but I am blind (*andha*) in all eight eyes. But my pride will be destroyed when the moon of Your mercy shines upon me.”

How will forgiveness manifest? Kṛṣṇa considers: “This Brahma (*eso*) is worthy of My mercy, because though he shows himself as the master elsewhere, towards Me he is a servant (*nathavan*).” Or the meaning can be: “Out of foolishness, Brahma made a show of independence in front of Me, but in truth Brahma is controlled (*nathavan*) because of dependence on My energy. Therefore I should show him mercy.”

Text 11

*kvāham tamo-mahad-aham-kha-carāgni-vār-bhū,
samveṣṭitāṇḍa-ghaṭa-sapta-vitasti-kāyah,
kvedṛg-vidhāviganitāṇḍa-parāṇu-caryā,
vātādhva-roma-vivarasya ca te mahitvam*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma said, “Though You create the universe, You are not proud. In comparison with that, what powers do I have to be proud of? Your universal form is surrounded by *prakṛti* (*tamas*), *mahat tattva*, *ahankara* (*aham*), ether (*kham*), air, fire, water

(*vah*) and earth (*bhuh*). All the planets from Patala to Satyaloka are situated within that form of Yours. In that expanse, where am I, measuring only seven spans of my own hand? Countless universes pass through the pores of Your skin just as particles of dust pass through the holes of a window screen. Who can possibly measure that greatness?” Here Brahma equates Mahavisnu, the creator of *mahat-tattva*, with Kṛṣṇa, and shows that in comparison to Kṛṣṇa, he is like a small bird compared to Garuda.

Text 12

*utkṣepaṇam garbha-gatasya pādayoh,
kim kalpate mātur adhokṣajāgase,
kim asti-nāsti-vyapadeśa-bhūṣitam,
tavāsti kukṣeḥ kiyad apy anantaḥ*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Brahma equates Kṛṣṇa with Garbhodakasayi Visnu, saying, “As You are mother to the universe, You are also mother to me. Therefore You should forgive my offenses. When the child in the womb kicks the mother, the mother does not take offense. Whether philosophers prove that the universe is true or false, the fact is that it exists within Your belly. I am also within You, just like Your son. Therefore You should forgive my offense.”

This is similar to the *Bhagavad-gita* verse (9.17): *pitāham asya jagato mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ*, I am the father, mother, grandfather and support of this universe.”

Text 13

*jagat-trayāntodadhi-samplavode,
nārāyaṇasyodara-nābhi-nālāt,
vinirgato 'jas tv iti vān na vai mṛṣā,
kintv īśvara tvan na vinirgato 'smi*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The son also comes out of the womb eventually. That is explained in this verse. Brahma said, “It is stated that at the time of dissolution, the three planetary systems are merged into the water. Gradually a lotus flower grows from the navel of Garbhodakasayi Visnu, and Brahma appears upon that lotus flower. Others may or may not come from You, but certainly I am born from You.”

Text 14

*nārāyaṇas tvaṁ na hi sarva-dehinām,
ātmāsy adhīśākhila-loka-sākṣī,
nārāyaṇo 'ṅgam nara-bhū-jalāyanāt,
tac cāpi satyaṁ na tavaiva māyā*

Are You not the original Nārāyaṇa, O supreme controller, since

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa might say, “It is true that you are the son of Narayana. But then who am I, O Brahma?” Brahma answers in this verse: “Are You not Narayana, the supreme controller (*adhisa*) of everything?” The *Bhagavad-gita* states, ‘I pervade everything by one fragment of My energy.’

Brahma: “As the Supersoul of all living entities You observe all action. Narayana is merely a portion of You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But I am called Kṛṣṇa because I am dark in color and live in Vṛndavana. Visnu is called Narayana because He lies in the water (*nara*). How can I be Narayana?”

Brahma: “The word *nara* means water but it also means living entity and *ayana* means shelter. The Lord who dwells in the water is one of Your expansions. Therefore I have appeared from Your womb. Just as the Vasudeva form and Your youthful form as Kṛṣṇa are spiritual not material, so this form of Narayana is also spiritual, existing at all times and places in the state of *suddha-sattva* (pure goodness), beyond the touch of matter. Your forms such as Matsya are also of the same category.”

Text 15

*tac cej jala-stham tava saj jagad-vapuh,
kim me na dr̥ṣṭam bhagavaṁs tadaiva,
kim vā su-dr̥ṣṭam hṛdi me tadaiva,
kim no sapady eva punar vyadarśi*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma thinks, “Is it possible that this spiritual form arises from material water? It is not possible that the unlimited Lord Narayana can exist in the limited waters of Garbhodaka.”

Brahma said, “If Your transcendental body is actually situated upon the water, then why couldn’t I see You even after searching for a long time in the lotus stem? You may answer that You were there but that I could not see You. But then how could I suddenly see You through meditation, and then lose sight of You again? Though You are lying on the water and seem to be localized and therefore limited, You hold all the universes within You and are therefore unlimited. You exist at all times in all places, but by the covering of Your *yogamaya* potency You are sometimes visible and sometimes invisible.”

Text 16

*atraiva māyā-dhamanāvatāre,
hy asya prapañcasya bahiḥ sphuṭasya,
kṛtsnasya cāntar jaṭhare jananyā,
māyātvam eva prakāṣi-kṛtaṁ te*

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

Your abdomen before Your mother, Yaśodā.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It seems like a contradiction to say that Narayana, who lies on the water of the universe, holds the universe within His abdomen. One may find a pot within a house, but one could hardly expect to find the house within the same pot. One may argue that the spiritual body of Narayana holds an illusory universe within it, and is situated within another real universe. But if that is so, then Brahma himself cannot be really situated in the Lord’s abdomen. In order to establish the oneness of the universe within the Lord and that outside the Lord, Brahma speaks this verse.

“O supreme controller of illusion (*maya-dhamana*)! In order to show that the external universe also exists within Your abdomen, You produced an illusion for mother Yasoda. By the influence of Your *yogamaya* potency You appeared within this universe and simultaneously exhibited all the universes within Your body. Similarly though I am within Your abdomen, I arose from Your abdomen and am situated here. Thus You are still my mother.”

Text 17

*yasya kuṣṭhāṁ idaṁ sarvaṁ,
sātmāṁ bhāti yathā tathā,
tat tvayy apītha tat sarvaṁ,
kim idaṁ māyayā vinā*

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

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma said, “Since the external

universe and that within the Lord’s belly are exactly the same, the one within His belly must be one created by the illusion of the Lord. Just as the universe within Your belly became visible, the external universe also remained visible when You showed the universal form to Your mother. Was the universe exhibited within Your belly a reflection of the external universe? How can that be?

“The universe was there along with You. Can a reflection of a mirror be seen in a mirror? As the universe visible within Your belly contained You, so the external universe also contained You. Because there was not even a trace of difference between the two universes, the universe within Your belly could not exist without the work of *maya*. Taking Your mother’s realization and mine as proof, I conclude that I exist within You by Your *yogamaya* potency. Therefore, I pray that You will please forgive me for my offense, as a mother forgives her child who kicks her while residing in the womb.”

Text 18

*adyaiva tvad rte 'sya kim mama na te māyātvam ādarśitam,
eko 'si prathamam tato vraja-suhṛd-vatsāḥ samastā api,
tāvanto 'si catur-bhujās tad akhilaiḥ sākam mayopāsītās,
tāvanty eva jaganty abhūs tad amitam brahmādvayam śiṣyate*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma continued, “The universe You displayed within Your belly and the universe displayed outside that You showed to Your mother, and all the unlimited universes passing in and out of the pores of Your Maha-Viṣṇu form are produced by Your material energy and are therefore designated as *mayika*. This I have already understood. But today I have realized the existence of thousands upon thousands of spiritual universes formed through Your inconceivably powerful *svarūpa-sakti*. There is not one object that exists independent of You in the thousands of universes that You have shown today? For everything is emanating from You.

“O Kṛṣṇa! Today You have shown me that both You Yourself and everything within this creation are manifestations of Your inconceivable potency. First You appeared alone, and then by Your *svarūpa-sakti* You expanded as all the cowherd boys and calves of Vraja. Next by *yogamaya* You covered all the cowherd boys and calves and revealed countless four-handed Viṣṇu forms composed of Your *svarūpa-sakti*. All these *viṣṇu-murtis* were being worshiped by all conscious entities from the blades of grass to all the Brahmas. After that You appeared as an equal number of complete universes. Then by Your desire *yogamaya* covered all this and revealed the one form (*advayam*) of the pure perfect Brahman with immeasurable incomparable beauty. For my benefit You remain uncovered before my eyes through the potency of *yogamaya*.”

Text 19

*ajānatām tvat-padavīm anātmany,
ātmātmanā bhāsi vitatya māyām,
sṛṣṭāv ivāhaṁ jagato vidhāna,
iva tvam eṣo 'nta iva trinetraḥ*

To persons ignorant of Your actual transcendental position, You appear as part of the material world, manifesting Yourself by the

expansion of Your inconceivable energy. Thus for the creation of the universe You appear as me [Brahmā], for its maintenance You appear as Yourself [Viṣṇu], and for its annihilation You appear as Lord Trinetra [Śiva].

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma prayed, “Not understanding anything about Your transcendental position, the impersonalists think You are simply material (*mahamaya*). Persons who think themselves learned, but are ignorant of the path of *bhakti* (*tvat padavim*), say that You (*atma*) disperse Yourself in the material energy (*anatmani*) by Your own will (*atmana*), and though without form, You appear (*bhasi*) with a form in the material world. For creation of the universe You appear as me [Brahma] (*aham*), for its maintenance (*vidhane*) You appear as Yourself [Visnu] (*tvam*), and for destruction You appear as Siva (*trinetrah*).

“Though You are without form, You take a form to appear in the material world as Visnu, Brahma and Siva. Thus the form of Narayana situated in the Garbhodaka Ocean and all the *avatara* forms are all composed of *maya*. Your expansions as the calves, boys and the four-handed forms of Visnu are all *maya*. This is the conception of the ignorant.”

Text 20

*sureṣv ṛṣiṣv īśa tathaiva nṛṣv api,
tiryakṣu yādaḥsv api te 'janasya,
janmāsatām durmada-nigrahāya,
prabho vidhātaḥ sad-anugrahāya ca*

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

human beings, animals and even the aquatics.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma continued, “You thus appear in various places in different *avatara* forms and also show Your original form to prevent Your devotees from being defeated by these mental speculators. You appear in different *avatara* forms for the purpose of subduing the false pride of the nondevotees (*asatam*), and to show mercy to Your faithful devotees (*satam*), so they can remember Your blissful transcendental forms, qualities and pastimes.”

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.2.35), the demigods prayed to Kṛṣṇa within the womb of Devaki, “O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature. Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form.”

Text 21

*ko vetti bhūman bhagavan parātman,
yogeśvarotīr bhavatas tri-lokyām,
kva vā katham vā kati vā kadeti,
vistārayan krīḍasi yoga-māyām*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma prayed, “You come as Rama to kill Ravana, and as Kṛṣṇa to relieve the burden of the universe. Your white, red, black and *syama avataras* appear to institute religion, not to defeat the philosophical wranglers. Actually no one can fully understand where, when, why and how You will appear.

“O Unlimited Lord, cause of all causes! If Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, no one could understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental qualities of Your Lordship, the controller of material nature. O supreme great one! O Personality of Godhead! Although You expand throughout the material universe, You are still full with six opulences. Although You enjoy all opulence, You witness everything in Your expansion as Paramatma.

“O master of all mystic power! You display inconceivable powers by the agency of *yogamaya*. Who can understand when, where, why and how Your spiritual energy acts to display Your transcendental pastimes (*uti*) within the three worlds (*trailokyam*)? Your unlimited spiritual form is full of all opulences, and though it is not material it exists everywhere in the material universe.

“But how is it possible to satisfy simultaneously all Your devotees at all times with Your transcendental pastimes? By Your inconceivable energy, *yogamaya* perfectly carries out the work of presenting different pastimes to Your various devotees at the suitable time.”

Text 22

*tasmād idam jagad aśeṣam asat-svarūpam,
svapnābham asta-dhiṣaṇam puru-duḥkha-duḥkham,
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanāv anante,
māyāta udyad api yat sad ivāvabhāti*

Therefore this entire universe, which like a dream is by nature

unreal, nevertheless appears real, and thus it covers one’s consciousness and assails one with repeated miseries. This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma prayed, “In summary, the universe is material and the medium-sized form of Kṛṣṇa is *suddha-sattva*, completely spiritual. The very essence of the material world is that its existence is temporary (*asat*). It is unreal like a dream, but nevertheless it appears real and covers one’s consciousness (*astadhisanam*). The universe appears real because it is manifested by the illusory energy (*mayata*) of You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of *sandhini-sakti* (*nitya*), *hladini-sakti* (*sukha*) and *samvit-sakti* (*bodha*).”

Another meaning: “O Lord, Your form is full of mercy, whereas this universe is full of inauspiciousness. What is the necessity of considering this universe at all if it is false? But the world is not false (*svapna abham*). From the point of view of material pleasure the ignorant think it is wonderful (*sad iva*), but in reality it is full of misery.”

Text 23

*ekas tvam ātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇaḥ,
satyaḥ svayaṁ-jyotir ananta ādyaḥ,
nityo 'kṣaro 'jasa-sukho nirañjanaḥ,
pūrṇādvayo mukta upādrito 'mṛtaḥ*

You are the one Supreme Soul, the primeval Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth—self-manifested, endless and beginningless. You are eternal and infallible, perfect and complete, without any rival and free from all material designations. Your happiness can

never be obstructed, nor have You any connection with material contamination. Indeed, You are the indestructible nectar of immortality.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma prayed, “Although You do have infinite forms, You are also present in one transcendental form by Your inconceivable energy. You are the one Supreme Soul (*eka atma*), and at the same You expand Yourself as the Supersoul to enter every living being.”

Here Kṛṣṇa may protest: “But the Supersoul has no form. He is not a person. After all, the word ‘person’ generally refers to a being that has a form. You say I am a person. Am I a young person?”

Brahmā replies: “No, You are the oldest.”

Again Kṛṣṇa protests: “I am the son of Nanda Baba and I am a young boy of Vraja. It is not right to say that I am the oldest.”

Brahma: “It is true that You are the son of Nanda, but it is also true that You exist eternally (*satyaḥ*) in all three phases of time. Therefore You are the oldest person (*purusa*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “The supreme person (*purusa*) you describe is the creator of time, karma and everything else. How is it possible that I am He?”

Brahmā: “Please do not argue. You are self-effulgent (*svayam-jyotiḥ*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “Am I like the sun, limited within a certain area of space?”

Brahmā: “No, You are limitless (*ānanta*), not restricted by time and space. Your other *avatars* are also the same.”

Kṛṣṇa: “The Supreme has many incarnations, so am I just one of them?”

Brahma: “You are the source (*ādyah*) of all *avatars*; the root of all incarnations.”

Kṛṣṇa: “In the next lifetime of Brahmā will I again incarnate in this form?”

Brahma: “No, You are *nitya*, eternal. Although the universe is ancient, real and eternal, at the end of my lifetime it is no longer manifested in the same form. Because it will disappear, therefore it is *anitya*, temporary. On the other hand, You will remain eternally in this form as the son of Nanda. Therefore Your form is eternal and unchanging

because You are the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

“The Vedic literatures confirm this by saying: *yo ‘sau saurye tiṣṭhati*, “Lord Kṛṣṇa is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead who formerly appeared in the Sūrya-vamśa [as Lord Rama].” The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* states: *yaḥ sākṣāt para-brahmeti govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam*, “Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, and who sits under a *kalpa-vṛkṣa* tree in Vṛndāvana forest, is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.” You Yourself affirm in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27): *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, ‘I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.’”

Kṛṣṇa: “But those who have bodies are subject to the six transformations, and are therefore disintegrating at every moment. How is it possible that I am like that?”

Brahmā: “No, You are not like that. You are unchanging and indestructible (*akṣarah*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “Those who have bodies also are subject to happiness and distress.”

Brahmā: “You are always full of bliss (*ajasra-sukhaḥ*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “But as a child I was greedy to drink My mother’s breast milk and steal the *gopīs*’ butter and yogurt. As a boy I showed anger toward Kāliya and a host of others. In My teenage years I was lusty to enjoy with the *gopīs*. Therefore I am impure, and contaminated by lust and a host of other vices.”

Brahmā: “That is not true. You are spotless (*nirañjanah*). Your so-called lust and other qualities are all pure and spiritual.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Still, I am dependent on the *gopīs* and many others. Because I need them, therefore I am not perfect and complete.”

Brahmā: “You are perfect and complete (*pūrṇa*). Your being controlled by the *prema* of Your devotees does not negate Your perfection and completeness.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Is there someone else like Me?”

Brahmā: “No one else is like You; You are beyond comparison (*advayah*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “Very well then, because there is no one else like Me, I am therefore the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Still, many people think I am simply a transformation of transcendental knowledge.”

Brahmā: “You are not a transformation of transcendental knowledge (*mukta upādhitah*). The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.24) states: *vidyāvidyābhyaṁ bhinnah*, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead is beyond both knowledge and ignorance.’ This is so because You are beyond all limiting designations. In the *Śruti-śāstra* it is said: *amṛtam śāśvataṁ brahma*, ‘The Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal. He is far beyond any limiting designation.’” In this passage the word *amṛta* may also be interpreted to mean “He who never dies.”

Text 24

*evam-vidham tvāṁ sakalātmanām api,
svātmānam ātmāmatayā vicakṣate,
gurv-arka-labdhopaniṣat-sucakṣuṣā,
ye te tarantīva bhavānṛtāmbudhim*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gist of this verse is: “Even the worshipers of Your feature as the impersonal Brahman can, if they get the good fortune of devotion to Your personal form as Paramatma (*ātmāmatayā*), develop faith in You and attain the status of *santa-bhaktas*, devotees in the *rasa* of neutrality or passive adoration.”
Brahmā prayed, “With devotion they see Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul, who

has a charming, handsome personal form that delights the eyes, mind and heart. They realize that Kṛṣṇa has all the qualities (*evam-vidham*) described in the previous verses, and that He is the Supersoul present in all living entities (*sakalātmānam*).” This is also described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: paramātmatayā kṛṣṇe, jātā śāntī ratir matā*, “By understanding that Sri Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul, one attains the neutral stage of devotional service (*santa-rati*).”

The question may be asked: “How does this take place?”

Brahmā answers, “The spiritual master is like the sun. By studying the *Upanisads* under him and obtaining his mercy, one attains the proper vision to see Kṛṣṇa as Paramatma, and the knowledge to cross over the ocean of illusions known as material existence.”

Text 25

*ātmānam evātmatayāvijānatām,
tenaiva jātam nikhilam prapañcitam,
jñānena bhūyo 'pi ca tat pralīyate,
rajyvām aher bhoga-bhavābhavau yathā*

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

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Do they cross the ocean of *maya* or not? Why do you say “as if” (*iva*) they transcend it? Why did the previous verse say that the material world is false or unreal (*anṛta*)?” Verses 24-25 describe the *vivarta-vāda* theory of the impersonalists, who claim that the material world is unreal and the act of transcending the material world is also unreal or false. That is why the word “as

if’ is sarcastically used here in describing the act of transcending the material world. Those who are unaware (*ātmatayā avijānatām*) that the individual spirit soul (*ātmānam*) is full of knowledge and bliss must enter the material realm. It is because of ignorance that no one can understand the true nature of the soul, and because of ignorance the material world of five elements was created. The word *pralīyate* (disappears) implies that by Sāṅkhya, *yoga*, renunciation, austerity, and devotion (*bhakti*) one attains transcendental wisdom, realizes that the body is different from the soul, and destroys the ocean of material existence. Such a person no longer mistakes a rope for a snake, and with this understanding he is liberated from fear. By ignorance the material world continues, and by knowing Kṛṣṇa the material world ceases.

Text 26

*ajñāna-samjñau bhava-bandha-mokṣau,
dvau nāma nānyau sta ṛta-jña-bhāvāt,
ajasra-city ātmani kevale pare,
vicāryamāṇe taraṇāv ivāhanī*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse states that the ideas of material bondage and liberation are both illusions. When one is situated in transcendental knowledge one knows that they are not different from each other. When one understands that he is a pure spirit soul, different

from the external material body, then he is no longer bewildered by the illusion of material bondage and liberation. As day and night do not exist on the sun, material bondage and liberation do not exist when one understands the spiritual truth.

Text 27

*tvām ātmānam param matvā,
param ātmānam eva ca,
ātmā punar bahir mṛgya,
aho 'jña-janatājñatā*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma prayed, “Those who think they are knowledgeable of spiritual things (but are actually not), do not respect Your transcendental form in Vraja. As previously mentioned, such persons are simply beating empty husks. They think Your supreme spiritual body is material, another manifestation of illusion. They consider the self, which is actually You, to be something material. Thus they search for that supreme soul elsewhere. Just see the ignorance of these foolish people!”

The Vivarta-vadis (evolutionists) and Parinama-vadis (transformationists) debate about the material world instead of the Perfect Lord. The form of this *cit* Brahman is described in several verses of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*: *śabda-brahmātmanas tasya*, “Brahmā is the personal representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the source of transcendental sound and is therefore above

the conception of manifested and unmanifested.” (SB 3.12.48) *yat tad vapur bhāti vibhūṣaṇāyudhair, avyakta-cid-vyaktam adhārayad dhariḥ, babhūva tenaiva sa vāmano vaṭuḥ, sampaśyator divya-gatir yathā nataḥ*, “The Lord appeared in His original form, with ornaments and weapons in His hands. Although this ever-existing form is not visible in the material world, He nonetheless appeared in this form. Then, in the presence of His father and mother, He assumed the form of Vāmana, just like a theatrical actor.” (SB 8.18.12) *satya-jñānānantānanda, mātraika-rasa-mūrtayah*, “The *viṣṇu-mūrtis* [manifested by the *gopa* named Kṛṣṇa] all had eternal, unlimited forms, full of knowledge and bliss and existing beyond the influence of time.” (SB 10.13.54) *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says: *yaḥ sāksāt para-brahmeti govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigraham vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāsīnam*, “The Absolute Truth Himself is Govinda, who has an eternal form of bliss and knowledge and who is sitting beneath the shady desire trees of Vṛndāvana.” The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.36) states: *tāsām madhye sāksād brahma gopāla-purī*, “Among all these [abodes], the residence of Lord Gopāla is directly the Absolute Truth.”

Brahma prayed, “Ignoring these scriptural statements that show Brahman has a body and exists in a spiritual abode [*dhama*], people remain in darkness. They are so fallen that they accept a blind *guru parampara* and discuss *vivartavada*. They are in the most lamentable of all lamentable conditions in my creation.”

Another reading of *ajna janata* (ignorant people) is *jna janata*. In this case it could be translated “what foolishness of so-called learned men.”

Text 28

*antar-bhave 'nanta bhavantam eva,
hy atat tyajanto mṛgayanti santah,
asantam apy anty ahim antareṇa,
santam guṇam taṁ kim u yanti santah*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma prayed, “The *jnanis* think that Your form is an attribute of *maya*. Your saintly devotees (*santah*), however, seek out the pure form of the living entity (*jiva*) free from the covering of *maya*. By rejecting that which is material, not spiritual (*atat*), they seek out the *jiva* who takes birth among countless species (*ananta bhavam*) in various bodies (*antarbhava*). To reject everything material, one must first reject the false conception that ‘I am the material body.’ ”

Next, the procedure is mentioned. Brahma continued, “How can one appreciate the real nature of a rope lying before him until he refutes the illusion that it is a snake? In the *Vedas* it is said *asaṅgo ’yam puruṣaḥ*, “The soul has nothing to do with this body.” Thus the *jiva* has no bodily suffering. But due to ignorance the *jiva* identifies with this body and thus experiences various miseries. Without rejecting everything related to the body, can one realize his spiritual identity just by cultivating transcendental knowledge? No, one cannot know the soul without rejecting all attachments to the material body.”

Text 29

*athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya,
prasāda-leśānugrḥīta eva hi,
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno,
na cānya eko ’pi ciraṁ vicinvan*

My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy

of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the Vedas for many years.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma prayed, “Only by *kṛṣṇa bhakti* is it possible for the living entity, who has discarded his material coverings, to realize the bliss of Brahman. Being blessed with a particle of mercy from Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness (*mahimno*) of Your personality. Matsya *avatara* says: *madīyam mahimānam ca, param brahmeti śabditam*, ‘Advised and favored by Me, you will know everything about My glories (*mahimān*), which are known as Parabrahma, because they will manifest within your heart.’ ” (SB 8.24.38)

Sridhara Swami explains this verse as follows: “By Kṛṣṇa’s mercy one can know the Supreme Brahman. To obtain a particle of the Lord’s mercy means that the *jnani* performed mixed devotional service previously. The Lord bestows the mercy of *bhakti-yoga* to that *jnani* who, giving up *avidya* and *vidya*, accepts pure *bhakti*. However, one who gives up *bhakti* in preference to *jnana* and enthusiastically pursues Brahman, though he is a *guru* for thousands of *janis*, studies scripture and practices *yoga* for a long time, will never know the true nature of the Lord.”

Text 30

*tad astu me nātha sa bhūri-bhāgo,
bhava 'tra vānyatra tu vā tiraścām,
yenāham eko 'pi bhavaj-janānām,
bhūtvā niṣeve tava pāda-pallavam*

My dear Lord, I therefore pray to be so fortunate that in this life

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O Brahma, crest jewel of all knowers of *sadhana* and *sadhya* (practice and goal)! What is your desire after describing *jnana* and *bhakti* in your prayers? Consider carefully Brahma and pray for the most valuable thing!”

Indicating himself as a servant, Brahma replies to Sri Kṛṣṇa, “Oh master (*natha*)! Yes, I have discerned the most auspicious thing of all (*bhūrī bhaga*). Whether I get a high birth as Lord Brahma (*bhava atra*), or a low birth as a deer (*tirascam*) for many births with no chance for liberation since I will lose the opportunity to attain *bhakti*, I pray to take birth as one of Your devotees, either advanced or neophyte.”

The following is an outline of Brahma’s prayers: In the first verse of this chapter Brahma expressed the excellence of the Lord’s sweetness. In the second and thirtieth verses praising the Lord’s power, Brahma exhibited a mixture of *bhakti* and *jnana*. In the third verse (*jnane prayasam*) he concludes that *bhakti* is superior. In the eighth verse he shows the supremacy of pure (*kevala*) *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. In the nineteenth and twenty-seventh verses he derides *kevala-jnana*. In the fourth and fifth verses Brahma shows the uselessness of *kevala-jnana* and the success of *kevala-bhakti*. In the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth verses he discusses *jnana* mixed with *bhakti*. In the twenty-fourth verse he discusses *santa-bhakti* and in the thirtieth verse he discusses *dasya-bhakti*.

From the thirty-first verse, Brahma, having submerged in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, praises the devotees immersed in *vatsalya-raga*, parental love, and other intimate relationships with the Lord.

*aho 'ti-dhanyā vraja-go-ramanyaḥ,
stanyāmṛtaṁ pītam atīva te mudā,
yāsāṁ vibho vatsatarātmajātmanā,
yat-tṛptaye 'dyāpi na cālam adhvarāḥ*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma prayed, “Though totally unqualified, I have prayed to become Your devotee. If You wish, You may fulfill it. Certainly it is not proper for me to pray to attain the elevated stage of Your devotees engaged in the spontaneous attraction of *vatsalya-bhava* and other moods. I can only praise them.” This is expressed in two verses.

Brahma prayed, “The cows and *gopis* of Vraja are supremely fortunate.” The word *aho* expresses extreme surprise.

“You, with Your transcendental body full of eternal bliss and knowledge, have taken the form of the cowherd boys and the calves to drink the nectarean milk from their mothers’ breasts with extreme bliss. With each mouthful You experienced ever-increasing bliss (*atīva mudā*). In Your form as calves You could not even tolerate the time it took to milk the cows. Without taking the form of the cowherd boys it would not have been possible to drink the milk of so many different mothers. O powerful one (*vibho*)! You took many forms out of extreme greed to drink. You could not even miss the nectar from one breast. Since they gave You such bliss, there is no doubt that the bodies of the cows and mothers were transcendental, full of eternal knowledge and bliss. All the Vedic sacrifices performed by myself, Siva and others from time immemorial up to the present day with perfect actions and *mantra* chanting have not given You as much satisfaction.”

Text 32

*aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam,
nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām,
yan-mitram paramānandaṁ,
pūrṇam brahma sanātanam*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After praising the *ragatmika vatsalya-prema* (deep spontaneous parental affection) of the Vrajavasis, Brahma glorified those with *ragatmika sakhya-prema (mitram)*, and all those relishing intimate relationships with the Lord. The neuter case is used instead of the masculine case as a matter of traditional usage.

The word *anandam* indicates Brahman as described in the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (3.9.34): *satyam vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*: “The supreme reality is divine knowledge and bliss.” The word *parama* is used with it to indicate that Kṛṣṇa is the basis of Brahman. The word *purnam* indicates that Sri Kṛṣṇa is distinct from the *avatara* forms who are also Brahma *svarupa*.

Kṛṣṇa is the friend (*mitra*), but not a temporary friend. Kṛṣṇa is the eternal friend (*sanatana*) of Sridama and others (*yat*). From this eternal friendship it is also understood that Sridama and others are also eternal. If I make a statement “He is an excellent *brahmana* because his *brahminical* qualities are excellent”, then the person’s excellence is also understood. Similarly in speaking of the eternality of Kṛṣṇa’s friendship, the friends are also understood to be eternal. This must be

explained since the word *mitra* connotes simply an ordinary friend. All the inhabitants of Vṛndavana ruled by Nanda Maharaja (*nanda gopa vrakaukasam*) down to the birds and beasts were fortunate. What then to speak of Nanda himself and his cowherd men? Who can describe the fortune of those who became the friends of *paramanandam brahma sanatanam*? It is indescribable.

The *gopas* themselves say, “O Nanda! Everyone in Vraja has uncontrollable attraction to your son, and He has natural affection for us. What is the cause?” (SB 10.26.13) The cause is that Kṛṣṇa is *purṇam brahma*, the complete Absolute Truth. Therefore, the inhabitants of Vraja give the topmost bliss to Kṛṣṇa, and receive the topmost bliss in return. Witnessing this exchange of love, Lord Brahma repeats the phrase *aho bhagyam* twice to indicate his extreme bliss and astonishment.

Text 33

*eṣām tu bhāgya-mahimācyuta tāvad āstām,
ekādaśaiva hi vyaṁ bata bhūri-bhāgāḥ,
etad-dhṛṣṭika-caṣakair asakṛt pibāmaḥ,
śarvādayo ’ṅhry-udaja-madhv-amṛtāsavaṁ te*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The inhabitants of Vraja have also made us [the demigods] most fortunate.” That is the intention of this verse.

Brahma prayed, “What to speak of the fortune of the Vrajavasis, we have also become fortunate. Who can describe it? The demigods like Siva and I (*sarvadayo*), who are the eleven deities in charge of the senses, have become most fortunate. Through the senses of the Vrajavasis we have tasted the extremely intoxicating nectar (*madhv-amrtasavam*) of the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa’s ankle bells.”

In this way Brahma expresses his determination to see, hear, touch, taste, smell, sing about and massage the Lord. Besides the ten senses, there is mind, intelligence, false ego, consciousness and their presiding deities. Of these fourteen, the genital and anus are rejected as lowly.

Vasudeva (Kṛṣṇa) is the presiding Lord of consciousness. Excluding these three, leaves the eleven senses and their presiding deities.

Therefore, Brahma prays, “We, the eleven presiding deities of the senses are experiencing Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness through the eleven senses of the inhabitants of Vraja.”

Something else should be considered here. The sun, moon, demigods, men, animals and all the other entities of the spiritual world are *sac-cid-ananda*, eternal, full of bliss and knowledge. The material sun, moon and demigods are all expansions of the spiritual prototypes. The demigods of the material realm are specifically empowered agents of the demigods of the spiritual world. The material senses cannot act independently. Only by the sanction and power of the demigods can the material senses experience material objects. But Sri Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates independently experience the Lord’s form and sound by their own spiritual senses, without any influence of the mundane demigods.

In his enthusiasm, however, Brahma identified his power to control material intelligence with the senses of the inhabitants of Vraja.

Furthermore, the material senses enjoy the objects of the mundane world, but the presiding deities, who facilitate this pleasure, do not enjoy. However, without the presence of Brahma and the other presiding deities in the intelligence, mind, eyes and nose, the senses of even those fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness could not experience the sense objects of form or smell. This is the opinion of those who know the soul.

Because of their eagerness to taste the sweetness, Kṛṣṇa, Brahma and

others were able to experience bliss despite two faults: Though Brahma and the other presiding deities of the senses are mere instigators (*karta*) of the action of the senses, they took on the role of being enjoyers (*bhokta*). Although they are the demigods of the material senses, they took on the role of being demigods of the spiritual senses. These are the contrary actions seen in *kṛṣṇa-prema*. In *Padyavali* it says that one reaches perfection by lying and criticizing. Factually, the senses of the Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates are spiritual like the Lord, so how could material demigods enter their spiritual senses?

There is another meaning of the verse. Sometimes a devotee will praise his own fortune out of greediness to taste Kṛṣṇa's sweetness. "The good fortune of the inhabitants of Vraja is incomparable. But we ten demigods (*dikpalas*) are very fortunate. Why?" Then touching his finger to his senses, Brahma continued, "Hey Kṛṣṇa! With our senses we also experience Your beauty and sweetness as You leave Vraja to herd the calves."

Text 34

*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.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: "I have given up my control of the

universe and the quest for future liberation. But now, how can I get the dust of the feet of the inhabitants of Vraja?” Thinking thus, Brahma speaks with certainty.

Text 35

*eṣāṁ ghoṣa-nivāsinām uta bhavān kiṁ deva rātetī naś,
ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad-aparaṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati,
sad-veṣād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvāṁ eva devāpitā,
yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāsāyās 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 bestow upon these residents of the cowherd community of Vṛndāvana. You have already arranged to give Yourself to Putana and her family members in exchange for her disguising herself as a devotee. So what is left for You to give these devotees of Vṛndāvana, whose homes, wealth, friends, dear relations, bodies, children and very lives and hearts are all dedicated only to You?

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Brahmā may ask: “O Lord, perhaps You do not want to clearly say if I may attain the dust of the feet of inhabitants of Vraja or not. Well then, please answer one other question (*uta*) that is on my mind? What reward will You give the residents of Vraja?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Brahma, though you know all the truths of the Vedas, can’t you understand the answer?”

Brahma said, “Our minds (*naś cetah*) are bewildered about this.” By using the plural form of *naś* (our) Brahmā means “Not only my heart, but also the hearts of Śiva, the four Kumāras, Nārada, and all the wise philosophers are bewildered.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Exactly what is the state of your minds?”

Brahma: “Although with great intelligence we searched in all times and places, our minds have become bewildered trying to think (*ayat*) of what type of reward You could give them. There is no reward (*visvaphala*) superior to You, and You have already given Yourself eternally to the Vrajavasis as their son and other intimate loving relationships. If something better than You existed, then You would have given it to the people of Vraja. However, no such thing exists. That is why our minds are now bewildered.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Brahmā, you are really ignorant of the truth. Knowing that the Vrajavasis would manifest such astonishing spontaneous love for Me, I have in advance given Myself to them as their son, friend or lover, and they are satisfied with this. Others may be grateful for gifts that have already been given, but I am grateful for gifts that will be given in the future, and I reciprocate with these gifts even before they are given.”

Brahma: “That is true, my Lord, You are certainly doing what is proper. But though Putana was sinful, just by imitating a devotee she and all her family attained You personally. But the inhabitants of Vraja, who, out of great affection, gave up all attachments such as house, wealth, friends, pleasurable objects, body and mind for You, also attained You. First You gave Yourself to the degraded sinner Pūtanā, and then You gave Yourself to the Vrajavasis, who are the exalted crest jewels of all saintly persons. Since You have already given Yourself to Pūtanā, You cannot rightly give Yourself again as a gift to someone else. In essence this is highly improper. Therefore You are now in debt to the residents of Vraja.” Brahmā communicated this message by the movements of his nose, eyes, eyebrows and neck.

Text 36

*tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās,
tāvat kārā-grhaṁ grham,
tāvan moho 'ṅhri-nigaḍo,*

yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Lord Kṛṣṇa may protest:

“The *sannyāsīs* will object that the inhabitants of Vraja, who are all householders, have fallen into a network of material life, bound by attachment to wife, children, and a host of other persons and things.” Brahmā replies, “Yes. That is true for most materialistic *grhasthas* (*grham*). However, what to speak of the householders of Vraja, even Your ordinary devotees in other places are superior to these *sannyāsī* critics. Attachment, hatred and other material emotions are great thieves because they steal the great treasure of pure bliss from the soul. The rebellious souls are bound by their karma, placed in the prison cell of household life, and tied with foot-shackles to a host of illusions, so that they cannot criticize the Supreme Lord after having lost their wealth. “O Kṛṣṇa, as long as people do not get the mercy of Your devotees and become Your followers, they remain in this position. However, when they become Your devotees, they develop attachment for *bhakti* and aversion to things obstructing *bhakti*, and then they repose all their love in You. In this way, the thieves of material attraction, hatred and love become sanctified by becoming fixed in You, and then help the devotee by giving him spiritual bliss, knowledge and a host of advantages. “In that way the same home, which was formerly a prison cell created by favorable and unfavorable *karmic* reactions, becomes for Your devotee a place filled with service to You by hearing and chanting Your glories, and a host of other activities meant to please You. These activities carry one to Your eternal abode. Thus when a devotee awakens his affection for You, then the bewilderment (*moha*) from objects such as his wife and sons becomes a cause for expressing

(*anubhavas*) his *prema* for You. How can householders like this be compared to ordinary *sannyāsīs*?

“My son Sanat-kumāra criticizes the non-devotee *sannyāsīs* and praises the superiority of the devotee householders in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.22.40):

*kṛcchro mahān iha bhavārṇavam āplaveśām
ṣaḍ-varga-nakram asukhena titīṛṣanti*

“The ocean of nescience is very difficult to cross because it is infested with many dangerous sharks. Although those who are non-devotees undergo severe austerities and penances to cross that ocean, we recommend that you simply take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, which are like boats for crossing the ocean. Although the ocean is difficult to cross, by taking shelter of His lotus feet you will overcome all dangers.”

“The residents of Vraja have thousands of times more love for You than householders who live in other places. Though You are the *purṇa brahma*, You show Yourself as dependent upon these *premika-bhaktas* by taking the form of their son, friend or lover to become their submissive servant.”

Text 37

*prapañcam niṣprapañco 'pi,
vidambayasi bhū-tale,
prapanna-janatānanda,
sandoham prathitum prabho*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Some think that the *purna-brahma* becoming the son of Nanda Maharaja in Vraja cannot be real or absolute, and that the devotees who accept this are in illusion. In reply to this Brahma recites this verse: “Though You are always beyond the influence of material nature, You are ever situated within the material world. You assume forms and relationships similar to those found in the material world, but Your relationships are not false and temporary like those of material fathers and sons. Your forms and relationships are completely transcendental and eternally existing. Though Your pastimes are eternal and transcendental, they appear similar to material activities. Why do You need to imitate material activities? You appear in the material world to further increase the bliss that Your devotees taste from relishing Your pastimes.”

Just as a lamp does not shine as brightly in sunlight as it does in the shade, or as a diamond does not look as brilliant on a silver platter as it does on a plate of blue glass, Govinda’s pastimes do not appear as astonishing in Vaikuntha as they do in the material world.

Text 38

*jānanta eva jānantu,
kiṁ bahūktyā na me prabho,
manaso vapuṣo vāco,
vaibhavaṁ tava go-carah*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Sri Kṛṣṇa might say: “O Brahma,

if this is all true, then please tell me how many wise philosophers are there like you who can so brilliantly explain everything about My transcendental form, My Vraja devotees, My pastimes and My devotional service?”

Fearing that Sri Kṛṣṇa might say this, Brahma then speaks this verse with shame, fear and repentance. Brahma says, “I am of that category; I am the greatest fool!”

Kṛṣṇa protests, “If that is so, then why have you spoken all these words?”

Brahmā replies, “*Kim bahūktyā*, what is the use of all my words? Speaking too much in Your presence is simply a sign of my foolishness.”

Kṛṣṇa: “My dear Brahma, you are trying to cheat Me with your words.”

Brahma: “Although I have meditated on them, my mind has no power (*na me prabho manaso*) to understand Your opulences. My eyes (*vapuṣā*) cannot grasp Your transcendental form and my words (*vāco*) cannot describe You. As I said previously in verse seven, *guṇātmanas te ‘pi guṇān vimātum*, “who can possibly count Your unlimited transcendental qualities?”

Another meaning is: “I cannot grasp the powers of Your mind with my senses. How, then, could I possibly understand the happiness You experience within Yourself (*sākṣāt tavaiva kim utātma-sukhānubhūteḥ* 10.14.2)? I cannot understand anything about Your body or any of Your words which are the *Vedas*. Indeed, when You are standing before me silently, I cannot speak even a word. In Your presence persons like me are totally insignificant.”

Text 39

*anujānīhi mām kṛṣṇa,
sarvaṁ tvam vetsyi sarva-dr̥k,
tvam eva jagatām nātho,
jagad etat tavārpitam*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa replied, “Very well, perhaps you do not know the full extent of My power and opulence. Still, I do not know the full extent of your power and opulence either.”

Embarrassed, distraught and incapable of answering anymore, Brahma speaks this verse: “Please give me permission to leave (*anuḷānīhi*)? I am not worthy to stay here even for a moment. As I am most fallen I should go to a suitably fallen place like Brahmaloḷka, my dear Kṛṣṇa.” Here the word *kṛṣṇa* means “O Lord, please attract my mind and heart to Vṛndavana.”

Brahma continued, “I have prayed that You make me a blade of grass in Gokula (10.14.34), yet You have not responded, even by so much as a glance. Therefore, what more shall I do standing here? It is better that I quickly go away. For I have become an offender by interrupting Your lunch-pastimes on the bank of the Yamuna. Therefore, I could not taste the nectar of even one word from Your lips. Therefore I will quickly depart and go far away. Now please reclaim Your calves, and finish Your pastimes with Your dear friends, joking and laughing with them on the riverbank. Why should I recklessly repeat my request again and again?”

With this intention Brahma says in this verse, “Indeed, You (*tvam*) know (*vetsi*) everything (*sarvam*) about my mind, body, and senses. Just because I created this universe does not mean that I am its master. You are the master, not only of this one universe but of all universes (*jaḡatām nātho*). Therefore, I now offer to You this very small universe, which is Your property to begin with. Please do with this universe whatever You wish.”

Text 40

*śrī-kṛṣṇa vṛṣṇi-kula-puṣkara-joṣa-dāyin,
kṣmā-nirjara-dvija-paśūdadhi-vṛddhi-kārin,
uddharma-śārvara-hara kṣiti-rākṣasa-dhruḡ,
ā-kalpam ārkam arhan bhagavan namas te*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma said, “O Lord, if You don’t want to speak to me because I am an offender, then at least show me some mercy by giving the nectar of Your glance. By drinking this nectar I will be able to maintain my life for the rest of the *kalpa*.” After expressing this feeling, Brahma offered his respectful obeisances to Kṛṣṇa.

Referring to Kṛṣṇa’s right eye, which is the original form of the sun, Brahmā says, *vṛṣṇi-kula-puṣkara-joṣa-dāyin*, “As the sun, You make the lotus flower of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty bloom and fill them with joy. Then, referring to Kṛṣṇa’s left eye, which is the original form of the moon, Brahmā says, *kṣmā-nirjara-dvija-paśūdadhi-vṛddhi-kārin*, “O moon, who expands the ocean to nourish all the inhabitants of earth, the demigods (*nirjara*) in Svargaloka, and the birds and cows (*dvija-paśūdadhi*) in Vṛndāvana, please mercifully expand the good fortune of me, the lowest of the demigods.

“With Your two eyes as the sun and moon please dispel the blinding darkness of ignorance (*śārvara-hara*) and mercifully destroy my

impiety (*uddharma*), which was seen in my attempt to bewilder even You with my mystic potency. Please remove it so that I will never make such a mistake again.” The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says, *śārvaras tv andha-tamasah*, “*Śarvara* means blinding darkness.”

“Brahmā said, “O Lord, even though You have killed many demons on the earth (*kṣiti-rākṣasa-dhruk*) such as Aghasura, nevertheless You gave them residence in Your own spiritual abode. I am also a demon like them. I am a *brahma-rākṣasa* from Satyaloka, who has come to the earth to disturb You and Your intimate friends and calves. Therefore, as You punished the other demons, You should also purify me with punishment. If he sees that his master is either merciful or cruel, the servant is encouraged to continue living. But if he sees that his master is indifferent and does not care at all, then a servant no longer desires to maintain his life.”

Then Brahmā thought within his heart, “Alas! Alas! Thinking that it was not proper for my master Kṛṣṇa, who is the most exalted Lord of all lords, to hold a stick, be decorated with *guñjā*, mineral dyes, peacock feathers, and other simple ornaments, and enjoy pastimes with cowherd boys, I foolishly committed an offense to Him and to His friends. Let me beg forgiveness from them.”

In the phrase *ā-kalpam ārkam arhanā-kalpam ārkam arhan bhagavan namas te*, “O Supreme Personality of Godhead, as long as this universe exists and as long as the sun shines, I will offer my obeisances unto You,” the word *ā-kalpam* means “including Your *guñjā* necklace and other ornaments;” *ārkam* means “even the lowly *ārka* tree, which bears flowers that cannot be offered to the Lord.”

Here Brahmā says, “Everything in Vraja, including even Your ornaments and even the lowly *ārka* tree are objects of my worship (*arhan*). O Lord who can be merciful or merciless, who can grant me auspiciousness or trouble, I offer my respectful obeisances (*namas te*) to You.” [Concluding Brahma’s prayers, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura offers the following prayer]

sarva-saṁśaya-hṛt sarva-bhakti-siddhānta-santatiḥ astu brahma-stutiś citta-bhittau me cāru-citritā

“May these prayers of Lord Brahma, which remove all doubts and teach all the definitive conclusions of devotion, remain forever impressed upon my heart.”

Text 41

*śrī-śuka uvāca ity abhiṣṭūya bhūmānam,
triḥ parikramya pādayoḥ,
natvābhīṣṭam jagad-dhātā,
sva-dhāma pratyapadyata*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What was Brahma’s desire (*ābhīṣṭam*)? Actually he desired to attain Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndavana. Kṛṣṇa, however, sent Brahmā back to his own home in Brahmāloka, which is very dear to him. Brahmā is the creator of the universe, and if he suddenly abandons his post, the universe would not function properly. In the *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.3.14.33) it is said: *yāvad adhikāram avisthitir adhikārikāṇām*, “Authorities should fulfill the duties of their posts for as long as they are assigned.” Thus, it is understood that after fulfilling his responsibilities in the post of Brahma, Brahma would attain his desired goal of residence in Vṛndavana.

Text 42

tato ’nujñāpya bhagavān,

*sva-bhuvan̄m prāg avasthitān,
vatsān pulinam āninye,
yathā-pūrva-sakham̄ svakam*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By remaining silent, Kṛṣṇa gave Brahma permission to leave. It is said: *maunam sammati-lakṣaṇam*, “Silence means consent.” Brahma had asked permission to go in verse 39: *anujānīhi mām kṛṣṇa*. Kṛṣṇa remained silent through the entirety of Brahmā’s prayers. Seeing the Lord’s silence, Brahma took that as His permission to depart. Kṛṣṇa could not break His silence because He was playing exactly like an innocent young cowherd boy, the son of the king of Vraja, in the pastime of bewildering Brahma. Thus Kṛṣṇa’s silence here was deliberate.

Kṛṣṇa’s searching for the calves and boys was like an actor’s assuming a certain role from the beginning to the end of a play. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.16 it is said:

*tato vatsān adṛṣṭvaitya, puline ‘pi ca vatsapān
ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo, vicikāya samantataḥ*

“Thereafter, when Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves, He returned to the bank of the river, but there He was also unable to see the cowherd boys. Thus He began to search for both the calves and the boys, as if He could not understand what had happened.”

Brahma began his prayers in verse one with the word *naumīḍya*. While the four-headed Brahmā was offering his prayers, Kṛṣṇa maintained His role as a young cowherd boy and thus remained silent. Kṛṣṇa’s silence indicates the following thoughts: “Where did this four-headed Brahmā come from? What is he doing? What are these words he keeps

on speaking? I am busy looking for My calves. I am just a cowherd boy and do not understand all this.”

In this way, by remaining silent throughout Brahmā’s prayers, Kṛṣṇa concluded His dramatic performance. Thus, in the presence of His servant Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa pretended to be ignorant of His own powers and opulences. Kṛṣṇa did this like an actor playing a part on the stage. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.61) says,

*tatrodvahat paśupa-vamśa-śiśutva-nāṭyam brahmādvayam param
anantam agādha-bodham vatsān sakhīn iva purā parito vicinvad ekam
sa-pāṇi-kavalam parameṣṭhy acaṣṭa*

“Then Lord Brahmā saw the Absolute Truth—who is one without a second, who possesses full knowledge and who is unlimited—assuming the role (actor:*nāṭyam*) of a child in a family of cowherd men and standing all alone, just as before, with a morsel of food in His hand, searching everywhere for the calves and His cowherd friends.” (SB 10.13.61)

However, being overwhelmed by the *maha-prema*, great sweetness of love, of Yaśodā and other Vrajavasis in *vātsalya-rasa* and the other *rasas*, Kṛṣṇa sees that His own knowledge of His powers and opulences becomes covered. This ignorance is not a pretense; it is real. Therefore, it is not described as *nāṭyam*, “play-acting.”

Kṛṣṇa brought (*āninye*) the calves, who were absorbed in eating grass (*avasthitān*), back to the same place (*prag*) on the bank (*pulinam*) of the river, where the cowherd boys were sitting in exactly the same positions (*svakam*) taking lunch. In that place were the original cowherd boys (*yathā-pūrva-sakham*), who were different from the cowherd boy expansions who performed pastimes for one year with Kṛṣṇa.

Text 43

*ekasminn api yāte 'bde,
prāṇeśam cāntarātmanaḥ,
kṛṣṇa-māyāhatā rājan,*

kṣaṇārdham menire 'rbhakāḥ

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Four verses (43-46) show how the inconceivable power of *yogamaya* allowed the cowherd boys to be unaware of the passage of one year, and thus conclude their lunch pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, who arrived with a morsel of food in His hand as previously. Without (*antarā*) Kṛṣṇa (*prāṇeśam*), one year became like a moment as they were covered (*āhatā*) by *yogamaya*. Usually in meeting Kṛṣṇa, a long time seems very short, but in this case, separation from Kṛṣṇa seemed very short due to the influence of *yogamaya* (*māyā*).

Text 44

*kiṁ kiṁ na vismarantīha,
māyā-mohita-cetasah,
yan-mohitaṁ jagat sarvam,
abhīkṣṇaṁ vismṛtātmakam*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because it also bewilders the living entity, Kṛṣṇa's external potency Mahāmāyā is given as an example to indicate the power of Kṛṣṇa's spiritual Yogamāyā potency. Here

Brahmā says, “As a conditioned soul forgets his spiritual identity (*vismṛta-ātmakam*) due to being bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s external illusory potency, Mahāmāyā, the cowherd boys and calves for one year forgot the suffering of being separated from the Lord because they were bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s internal illusory potency, Yogamāyā.

Text 45

*ūcuś ca suhṛdaḥ kṛṣṇam,
sv-āgataṁ te 'ti-ramhasā,
naiko 'py abhoji kavala,
ehītaḥ sādhu bhujyatām*

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

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After congratulating (*sv-āgataṁ te*) Kṛṣṇa for having brought the calves back so quickly (*ati-ramhasā*) from the forest, the cowherd boys said (*ūcuḥ*), “We thought You would take at least half an hour to bring back the calves, who had wandered far away, but You have brought them in an instant. Without You we have not eaten a morsel, so please come here.”

Text 46

*tato hasan hr̥ṣīkeśo,
'bhyavahr̥tya sahārbhakaiḥ,
darśayaṁś carmājagaraṁ,
nyavartata vanād vrajam*

Then Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, smiling, finished His lunch in the company of His cowherd friends. While they were returning from the forest to their homes in Vraja, Lord Kṛṣṇa showed the cowherd boys the skin of the dead serpent Aghāsura.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Smiling (*hasan*) to show His joy, Kṛṣṇa ate with the boys. The word *abhyavahrtya*, “after finishing their lunch,” means that even though a year had passed the food did not show any lack of taste. The word *darśayamś*, “showing,” means that Kṛṣṇa told His friends: “Look! Here is the dead snake covered with blood.” Yogamāyā had carefully preserved the snake’s corpse so that the boys would spread the news of the killing of Aghasura in the village of Vraja. Leaving their forest pastimes (*nyavartata vanād vrajam*), Kṛṣṇa and the boys returned home.

Text 47

*barha-prasūna-vana-dhātu-vicitritāṅgaḥ,
proddāma-veṇu-dala-śṛṅga-ravotsavādhyah,
vatsān gṛṇann anuga-gīta-pavitra-kīrtir;
gopī-dṛg-utsava-dṛśiḥ praviveśa goṣṭham*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa affectionately (*gṛṇann*) called

each of the calves by name. Beholding Kṛṣṇa created a feast for the eyes (*gopī-dṛg-utsava-dṛśih*) of the elder cowherd ladies such as mother Yaśodā, who loved Kṛṣṇa with parental affection, *vatsalya-rasa*.

Text 48

*adyānena mahā-vyālo,
yaśodā-nanda-sūnunā,
hato 'vitā vyaṁ cāsmād,
iti bālā vraje jaguḥ*

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

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys sang, “One snake was killed by this child of Yasoda and Nanda, or by this small boy who gives fame and bliss. He also saved us from that awesome snake.” Here the word *yaśodā-nanda-sūnunā* means, “He who is the good fortune (*ānanda* or *yaśaḥ*) of Nanda and Yaśodā. Because this is a *śāka-pārthiva karmadhāraya-samāsa*, its middle word is elided. The words *vyaṁ avitāḥ* mean, “We were protected from a great serpent.”

Text 49

*śrī-rājovāca brahman parodbhave kṛṣṇe,
iyān premā kathāṁ bhavet,
yo 'bhūta-pūrvas tokeṣu,
svodbhaveṣv api kathyatām*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the previous chapter (13) it was said:

vrajaukasām sva-tokeṣu, sneha-vally ābdam anvaham śanaiḥ niḥsīma vavrdhe, yathā kṛṣṇe tv apūrvavat

“Although the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, the cowherd men and cowherd women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. There was no limit to the increment of their affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa. Everyday they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa.”

In this way the parents of Vraja had more love for Kṛṣṇa, who was the son of another, than for their own sons. Here King Parikṣit asks about this, “How is it that this love for Kṛṣṇa appearing as their own sons was not manifested before the pastime of bewildering Brahmā? Usually parents have more love for their own children, even if others’ children have better qualities. What was the cause of this contradiction to normal experience?”

Text 50

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sarveṣām api bhūtānām,
nṛpa svātmaiva vallabhaḥ,
itare ’patya-vittādyās,
tad-vallabhatayaiva hi*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In five verses (50-54) Sukadeva Gosvami explains: “O king, in this material world it is seen that the natural tendency is to love oneself more than one’s children or other persons one may claim as one’s own. By understanding this one will come to understand the final truth.”

The word *vallabhah* (dearest) means “according to material vision, the object of great love.” That love is different for each different body, as is affirmed here by the word *itare* (others).

Text 51

*tad rājendra yathā snehah,
sva-svakātmani dehinām,
na tathā mamatālambi,
putra-vitta-grhādiṣu*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The preference for one’s own self over attachment to sons, wealth or house is natural.

Text 52

*dehātma-vādinām puṁsām,
api rājanya-sattama,
yathā dehaḥ priyatamas,
tathā na hy anu ye ca tam*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Fools consider the self to be the material body (*deha-ātma-vādinām*). To describe the nature of such persons Sukadeva Gosvami here declares that the attachment of such persons for their own body (self) is more than for their sons, wealth and house.

Text 53

*deho 'pi mamatā-bhāḥ cet,
tarhy asau nātma-vat priyaḥ,
yaj jīryaty api dehe 'smin,
jīvitāśā balīyasī*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse explains how the materialists, who affirm that the material body is the self, eventually become wise. Then they also understand that self is the soul, not the material body, and the soul is to be loved, not the material body. The

body is dear only because of the soul.

When a person who thinks “I am this body” becomes a little wise, he begins to understand, “I am not this body. Rather, this body is mine.” At that time the soul becomes dear to him. Then the material body is not as dear as the soul to him. This means the body is only dear because it has a relationship with the soul.

The second half of this verse gives the direct experience of ordinary persons as evidence to prove this. A person may see that the death of the material body is naturally very painful. Thus he will pray, “Let my death not be painful.” Although such a person may intelligently understand that he is actually a spirit soul and not the material body, still his yearning to remain alive in the material body may be even stronger than that knowledge.

Text 54

*tasmāt priyatamaḥ svātmā,
sarveṣām api dehinām,
tad-artham eva sakalām,
jagad etac carācaram*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus it is proved by ordinary vision that everyone loves his own self more than he loves his children or other persons. In the word *carācaram* (moving and nonmoving entities) *cara* refers to wife, children and other persons, and *acara* refers to nonmoving possessions such as one’s clothing, home and household paraphernalia.

Text 55

*kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam,
ātmānam akhilātmanām,
jagad-dhitāya so 'py atra,
dehīvābhāti māyayā*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse establishes the conclusion of the discussion: “When one sees the truth he realizes that the individual spirit soul is only an intermediate object of love. The final, highest object of love is Sri Kṛṣṇa alone.”

Brahma said, “Kṛṣṇa is the soul of the universe and the Supersoul present in the hearts of all conditioned souls.” A person loves children and other persons because they bring pleasure to his own material body. In the same way a person loves his own material body because it brings pleasure to himself, the spirit soul. Also in the same way a person loves his true self, his spiritual identity, because he brings pleasure to the Supersoul. The Supersoul is Sri Kṛṣṇa, whose spiritual form is perfect and complete. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42) Kṛṣṇa declares: *viṣṭabhyāham idam kṛtsnam, ekāmṣena sthito jagat*, “With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire creation.”

The conclusion is that because Kṛṣṇa is the highest object of love, the greatest love is felt for Him. Thus the Vraja-gopis loved Kṛṣṇa even more than they loved their own sons. Furthermore, how can the conditioned souls, who have no love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa, and whose knowledge is covered by *māyā*, directly perceive Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is revealed only by *bhakti*? They cannot directly perceive Kṛṣṇa because

such persons have given all their love to their children and others. However, because Vrajavasis were beyond the touch of *maya* and full of love for Kṛṣṇa they could directly perceive the Lord. Thus it was natural that they showed more love for Kṛṣṇa than their own sons.

When Kṛṣṇa appears in the world to benefit the conditioned souls (*jagad-dhitāya*), the ignorant think He has a material body (*dehīvā*) like their own; a body created by *maya*. But, that is only an appearance, not the fact. Śrī Madhusūdana Sarasvatī explains:

sac-cit-sukaika-vapuṣaḥ puruṣottamasya, nārāyaṇasya mahimā na hi mānam eti

“No one can count all the glories of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss.” He also declares:

cid-ānandākāraṁ jalada-ruci-sāraṁ, śruti-girāṁ vraja-strīṅām hāraṁ
“Kṛṣṇa charms all the women of Vraja. The *Vedas* declare that Kṛṣṇa’s form, dark like a monsoon cloud, is eternal and full of bliss.”

Someone may object: “The Supersoul cannot be seen by the senses, but Kṛṣṇa was easily seen by everyone. Therefore Kṛṣṇa cannot be the Supersoul.” This verse answers: “To benefit the living entities in the material world, Kṛṣṇa appears, by His causeless and inconceivable mercy, to be an ordinary conditioned soul. Thus Kṛṣṇa is directly perceived by the senses of the conditioned souls, although in ordinary circumstances Kṛṣṇa is never perceived by the material senses.

Lord Narayana says in the *Brhad-bhagavatamṛta* that though Kṛṣṇa is eternally unmanifest, He becomes visible by His own desire. Otherwise who can see Him? Sanatana Gosvami says that Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest by His own power, but He is not revealed to the eye as an object of sense perception. Outside of Vrndavana, Kṛṣṇa bestows His sweetness through His mercy to favorable persons. To inimical persons Kṛṣṇa shows His form, but devoid of sweetness for perfecting their meditation involving their material senses. As a result of their meditation, Kṛṣṇa bestows liberation to extinguish their offenses. This is how Kṛṣṇa gives auspiciousness to them.

Although Kṛṣṇa covers His supreme majesty to appear like an ordinary

mortal before the inhabitants of Vraja and before inimical persons, it is improper to call Kṛṣṇa a *jīva* with a material body (*dehi*). Therefore this verse describes Kṛṣṇa as *dehīvābhāti*, appearing to be a soul with a human body. Madhvacarya quotes the *Varaha Purana*: “For the Lord there is no difference between the body and soul (*deha* and *dehi*).”

Text 56

*vastuto jānatām atra,
kṛṣṇam sthāsnu carīṣṇu ca,
bhagavad-rūpam akhilaṁ,
nānyad vastv iha kiñcana*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse states that after considering all the objects of love such as sons, body and soul, the wise conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate object of love.

In this verse the word *vastutaḥ* (in truth) has the sense of “but finally.” Therefore, those who know Kṛṣṇa see Him as the cause of all moving and non-moving entities. Because Kṛṣṇa is the creator of all, in one sense, He is the same as His creation.

Text 57

*sarveṣām api vastūnām,
bhāvārtho bhavati sthitaḥ,
tasyāpi bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ,*

kim atad vastu rūpyatām

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone may ask, “Why is this so?” This verse answers. *Bhāva* means the unmanifested material nature (*pradhana*), which is the cause (*ārtho*) of the material world. Thus *bhāvārtho* means Kṛṣṇa, who is the creator of *pradhana*, which itself is the cause of the material world. Therefore the verse says, *kim atad vastu rūpyatām*, “Who is greater than Kṛṣṇa?”

The word *vastūnām* means the senses and intelligence, and *bhāvārtho* means the *ātmā*, the soul who is the cause of the senses. The cause of the soul is Kṛṣṇa. What can be said to be different from Kṛṣṇa (*kim atad vastu rūpyatām*)? Therefore, because He is the complete whole, Kṛṣṇa is the final object of all service.

Text 58

*samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ,
mahat-padaṁ puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ,
bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ param padam,
padaṁ padaṁ yad vipadām na teṣāṁ*

For those who have accepted the boat of the lotus feet of the Lord, who is the shelter of the cosmic manifestation and is famous as Murāri, the enemy of the Mura demon, the ocean of the material world is like the water contained in a calf’s hoof-print. Their goal is param padam, Vaikuṅṭha, the place where there are no material

miseries, not the place where there is danger at every step.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way it is proved that Sri Kṛṣṇa is the final object of pure spiritual love. Only by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet does one get liberated and finally realize Him. The outstanding position of Kṛṣṇa’s devotee is now made clear.

Devotees take shelter (*asritah*) only of the boat (*plavam*) of the lotus feet (*pada-pallava*) of Kṛṣṇa (*murareh*), whose fame (*yasah*) is charming, beautiful, and pleasing to the heart (*punya*).

Someone may ask, “What is that boat like?” The boat of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet gives shelter to the great devotees (*mahat-padam*) who have taken complete shelter (*sam:samyak:samāśritā*). For these devotees the ocean of the material world (*bhavambudhih*) becomes like the water in a calf’s hoof-print (*vatsa-padam*) that can be crossed without any great effort. Their goal is the supreme transcendental abode (*param padam*) of Vaikuntha or Sri Vrndavana. Great devotees never fall into difficulty (*vipadam*) because their minds are not attached to anything except the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 59

*etat te sarvam ākhyātam,
yat prṣṭo ’ham iha tvayā,
tat kaumāre hari-kṛtam,
paugaṇḍe parikīrtitam*

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

Text 60

*etat suhṛdbhiś caritam murārer,
aghārdanam sādvala-jemanam ca,
vyaktetarad rūpam ajorv-abhiṣṭavam,
śṛṇvan gṛṇann eti naro 'khilārthān*

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

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The words *suhṛdbhiḥ-caritam* (pastimes with His intimate friends) refer to pastimes like this one described in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (10.12.5):

muṣṇanto 'nyonya-śikyādīn, jñātān ārāc ca cikṣipuḥ tatratyās ca punar dūrād, dhasantaś ca punar daduḥ

“All the cowherd boys used to steal one another’s lunch bags. When a boy came to understand that his bag had been taken away, the other boys would throw it farther away, to a more distant place, and those standing there would throw it still farther. When the proprietor of the bag became disappointed, the other boys would laugh, the proprietor would cry, and then the bag would be returned.”

The word *vyaktetarad* means supramundane or transcendental. The phrase *ajorv-abhiṣṭavam* can be broken down as *aja*, Lord Brahmā; *uru*, elaborate; and *abhiṣṭavam*, the offering of prayers. Anyone who hears or chants Brahma’s comprehensive prayers about Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form, His playing with the cowherd boys, killing of Aghasura, and eating with His friends in the forest covered with lush grass will have all his desires fulfilled.

Text 61

*evam vihāraiḥ kaumāraiḥ,
kaumāraṁ jahatur vraje,
nilāyanaiḥ setu-bandhair,
markaṭotplavanādibhiḥ*

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

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Parikṣit had asked the question, *brahman kalantara-kṛtam, tat-kalinam katham bhavet*, “O great sage, how could things done in the past have been described as being done in the present?” (SB 10.12.41) Kṛṣṇa performed the pastime of killing Aghasura during His *kaumara* age. How then, during His *pauganda* age (beginning from the 5th year), could the boys have described this incident as having happened recently? In these chapters that question has been answered. Now Sukadeva Gosvami continues his service of narrating Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

“Kṛṣṇa and Balarama spent Their childhood secretly (*jahatuh*) in Vraja playing hide and seek (*nilayanaiḥ*), and enacting the pastimes (*vihāraiḥ*) of other incarnations such as building the bridge to travel, journeying to Lanka, and churning the milk ocean.”

iti sarartha-darsinyam, harsinyam bhakta-cetasam caturdaso ‘yam dasame, sangatah sangatah satam

“As I [Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura] stay among Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, I have thus concluded this commentary on the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, named *Sarartha-darsini*, which pleases Kṛṣṇa’s devotees.

Chapter Fifteen: The Killing of Dhenuka, the Ass Demon

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tataś ca paugaṇḍa-vayaḥ-śrītau vraje,
babhūvatus tau paśu-pāla-sammatau,
gās cārayantau sakhibhiḥ samam padair,
vṛndāvanam puṇyam atīva cakratuḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Rāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa attained the age of paugaṇḍa [six to ten] while living in Vṛndāvana, the cowherd men allowed Them to take up the task of tending the cows. Engaging thus in the company of Their friends, the two boys rendered the land of Vṛndāvana most auspicious by imprinting upon it the marks of Their lotus feet.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa’s herding the cows and playing with His friends, His praise of Balarama, the killing of Dhenukasura, and protecting the cows from the poison of Kaliya.

At the end of Their fifth year, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were permitted to herd the cows. The first day of herding the cows is described in the *Kārttika-māhātmya* section of the *Padma Purāṇa*: “The eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month of Kārttika is known by authorities as Gopāṣṭamī. From that day, Sri Kṛṣṇa served as a cowherd, whereas previously He had tended the calves.”

Kṛṣṇa and Balarama decorated the land of Vraja with Their beautiful footprints, which had the marks of flag and other symbols. This made Vrndavana extremely auspicious (*puṇyam*). Previously, since Kṛṣṇa’s

feet were very soft and small, the impressions of the flag and other symbols were very faint. However, now the twenty-one marks were very clear. This is indicated by the word *ativa* (extremely). These marks made Vr̥ndavana more beautiful than ever.

Text 2

*tan mādhave veṇum udīrayan vṛto,
gopair gṛṇadbhiḥ sva-yaśo balānvitaḥ,
paśūn puraskṛtya paśavyam āviśad,
vihartu-kāmaḥ kusumākaram vanam*

Thus desiring to enjoy pastimes, Lord Mādhava, sounding His flute, surrounded by cowherd boys who were chanting His glories, and accompanied by Lord Baladeva, kept the cows before Him and entered the Vṛndāvana forest, which was full of flowers and rich with nourishment for the animals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa entered the Vr̥ndavana forest (*tat vanam*) which was rich with nourishment for the cows (*pasavyam*). The prefix “*a*” combined with “*visad*” means that Kṛṣṇa completely entered the forest of Vr̥ndavana, that is, with great absorption. By referring to Kṛṣṇa as Madhava, which means the spring season, Sukadeva indicates that Kṛṣṇa, like spring, caused the forest to rejoice with fragrant flower blossoms.

Text 3

*tan mañju-ghoṣāli-mṛga-dvijākulam,
mahan-manah-prakhya-payaḥ-sarasvatā,
vātena juṣṭam śata-patra-gandhinā,*

nirīkṣya rantum bhagavān mano dadhe

The Supreme Personality of Godhead looked over that forest, which resounded with the charming sounds of bees, animals and birds, and which was enhanced by a lake whose clear water resembled the minds of great souls and by a breeze carrying the fragrance of hundred-petaled lotuses. Seeing all this, Lord Kṛṣṇa decided to enjoy the auspicious atmosphere.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa desired to play upon seeing the beauty of the forest (*tat*) which gave joy to the five senses. How did the forest satisfy the senses? The humming of bees and the melodious singing of deer and birds brought sweet pleasure to the ears. Vṛndavana was served (*justam*) by gentle lotus-scented breezes carrying the cool moisture of transparent lakes filled to the brim with cool, sweet tasting water like the minds of great devotees. The cool winds thrilled the sense of touch. The sweet water stimulated the sense of taste. The beauty and fragrance of lotus flowers brought spiritual bliss to the eyes and nose.

Text 4

*sa tatra tatrāruṇa-pallava-śriyā,
phala-prasūnoru-bhareṇa pādayoḥ,
spṛśac chikhān vīkṣya vanaspatīn mudā,
smayann ivāhāgra-jam ādi-pūruṣaḥ*

The primeval Lord saw that the stately trees, with their beautiful reddish buds and their heavy burden of fruits and flowers, were bending down to touch His feet with the tips of their branches. Thus He smiled gently and addressed His elder brother.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa smiled to see all the trees, with their reddish leaf buds, fruits and flowers, bending down to touch His feet. Kṛṣṇa knew that the trees were actually bowing down to worship Him, but since it was improper to glorify Himself, He smiled in great bliss and praised His elder brother, Balarama. Thus He addresses Balarama as *adi purusa* in verse six.

Kṛṣṇa began to laugh or almost laugh (*smayann iva*) in order to hide His intentions from Balarama. This is explained in the *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*: “When the sweetness of Vṛndavana and its inhabitants became prominent in Kṛṣṇa’s mind, He began glorifying them by making Balarama the object of praise. However, Kṛṣṇa was actually praising Himself because the verses do not depict Balarama’s glories. Out of *sakhya-bhava*, Kṛṣṇa speaks His own glories in a joking way in the name of Balarama.”

Though Kṛṣṇa is the younger brother of Balarama, in this verse Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *adi-purusa* to denote His position as *svayam-bhagavan*, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Text 5

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
aho amī deva-varāmarārcitaṁ,
pādāmbujaṁ te sumanaḥ-phalārhaṇam,
namanty upādāya śikhābhir ātmanas,
tamo-’pahatyai taru-janma yat-kṛtam*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O greatest of Lords, just see how these trees are bowing their heads at Your lotus feet, which are worshipable by the immortal demigods. The trees are offering You their fruits and flowers to eradicate the dark ignorance that has caused their birth as trees.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Knowing the minds of the trees who wanted to worship His lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa glanced at the trees and then spoke to Balarama about their glories as great devotees: “The trees, holding gifts of fruits and flowers on their heads, are bowing down to Your lotus feet with devotion. Why? They bow to purify themselves of their offenses, which caused them to take birth as trees. They are thinking, ‘Because we have committed such great offenses, we have become trees and cannot accompany the Lord in His wanderings throughout Vrndavana.’”

In this way, Kṛṣṇa interprets the trees’ movements, stemming from their attraction to Kṛṣṇa. However, since Brahma prayed to be born as a tree in Vraja, the trees could not have been born there as a result of offenses.

Text 6

*ete 'linas tava yaśo 'khila-loka-tīrtham,
gāyanta ādi-puruṣānupatham bhajante,
prāyo amī muni-gaṇā bhavadīya-mukhyā,
gūḍham vane 'pi na jahaty anaghātma-daivam*

O original personality, these bees must all be great sages and most elevated devotees of Yours, for they are worshiping You by following You along the path and chanting Your glories, which are themselves a holy place for the entire world. Though You have disguised Yourself within this forest, O sinless one, they refuse to abandon You, their worshipable Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In two verses Kṛṣṇa glorifies the birds and beasts of the forest: “These bees are following You here and there because they are attracted to the fragrance of Your body. When You go to secret places for Your intimate pastimes where even Your confidential associates cannot go, these bees cannot give You up, but keep following

You. Although they follow You to secluded places, You do not become offended by them.” For this reason, Kṛṣṇa addresses Balarama as *anagha* (sinless one).

“Therefore they must be Your intimate devotees (*bhavadiya mukhya*). Those who concentrate (*muni-gana*) on Your intimate pastimes have become these bees.” Here there is the hint that Balarama is giving them mercy by permitting them to enter His confidential groves and freely relish the sweet fragrance of His beautiful body.

Text 7

*nṛtyanty amī śikhina īḍya mudā harīṇyaḥ,
kurvanti gopya iva te priyam īkṣaṇena,
sūktaiś ca kokila-gaṇā gṛham āgatāya,
dhanyā vanaukasa iyān hi satām nisargaḥ*

O worshipable one, these peacocks are dancing before You out of joy, these doe are pleasing You with affectionate glances, just as the gopīs do, and these cuckoos are honoring You with Vedic prayers. All these residents of the forest are most fortunate, and their behavior toward You certainly befits great souls receiving another great soul at home.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “As You enter the forest the cuckoos welcome You with sweet sounds (*suktaih*), the peacocks dance, and the deer glance affectionately in an attempt to please You (*priyam kurvanti*). It is the nature (*nisargah*) of a cultured person to receive a saintly person with dance, affectionate glances and sweet words.”

Text 8

*dhanyeyam adya dharaṇī tṛṇa-vīrudhas tvat,
pāda-spr̥śo druma-latāḥ karajābhimṛṣṭāḥ,
nadyo 'drayaḥ khaga-mṛgāḥ sadayāvalokair,
gopyo 'ntareṇa bhujayor api yat-sprhā śrīḥ*

This earth has now become most fortunate, because You have touched her grass and bushes with Your feet and her trees and creepers with Your fingernails, and because You have graced her rivers, mountains, birds and animals with Your merciful glances. But above all, You have embraced the young cowherd women between Your two arms—a favor hankered after by the goddess of fortune herself.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After glorifying Balarama by describing the service of the trees and animals, Kṛṣṇa praised Him by showing how others are attracted to Him for showing them mercy. The phrase “today the earth has become fortunate” means “In material time there is a succession of *avatars* such as Varaha, but nothing can equal the blessings of Kṛṣṇa and His plenary expansion, Balarama. The earth has now become most fortunate because You have touched her grass with Your feet, and plucked her flowers with Your fingernails. The rivers and mountains have become fortunate by Your merciful glances (*sadaya avalokair*), or by Your glances which bring about auspiciousness (*sat aya avalokana*). The dark creepers (*gopyo*) which beauty itself beautifies (*yat sprha srih*) are fortunate because they are touching Your chest.”

The word *gopyo* can also mean the *gopis*. Thus the meaning can also be: “The *gopis* are fortunate because You directly embrace them to Your chest, which is desired even by Laksmi (*sri*).”

The *Puranas* explain that although Laksmi is situated on the chest of Narayana, the Lord of Vaikuntha, she once desired to be embraced on the chest of Sri Kṛṣṇa, and thus she performed severe austerities to

achieve this blessing. Sri Kṛṣṇa informed Lakṣmi that her actual place was Vaikuntha, and that it was impossible for her to dwell upon His chest in Vṛndavana. However, Kṛṣṇa favored Lakṣmi by allowing her to remain on His chest in the form of a golden line.

Text 9

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam vṛndāvanam śrīmat,
kṛṣṇaḥ pṛīta-manāḥ paśūn,
reme sañcārayann adreḥ,
sarid-rodhaḥsu sānugaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus expressing His satisfaction with the beautiful forest of Vṛndavana and its inhabitants, Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed tending the cows and other animals with His friends on the banks of the river Yamunā below Govardhana Hill.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *evam* means “thus describing Vṛndavana in this way,” or “having thus satisfied His older brother.”

Inspired by His own words, “the *gopis* were fortunate for having attained Balarama’s chest,” Kṛṣṇa called out to Balarama, the boys and the cows: “After resting here at Govardhana for a short time, You should all proceed to the bank of the Yamuna and play for sometime. I will come soon.”

Though Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were inseparable during Their *pauganda* age (five to ten), with the appearance of the *kaisora* age (11-15) Kṛṣṇa began His amorous pastimes alone with the *gopis*. This is indicated in this verse by the word “*evam*.” After praising Balarama and sending Him off to herd the cows in the forest of Vṛndavana, Kṛṣṇa, to whom Radha (*śrīmat*) shows Her love (*pṛītaḥ*), came to Manasa (*manah*)

Ganga (*adreh sarit*), and began to enjoy (*reme*) with the *sakhis* (*sa-anuga*). The word “*srimat*” refers to the chief woman of Vraja, Srimati Radhika.

Because this meaning is confidential there is another meaning which covers this jewel like a golden case. *Srimat* can refer to Baladeva. Out of affection for Balarama, Kṛṣṇa began sporting with His friends on the bank of Manasa Ganga.

Texts 10–12

*kvacid gāyati gāyatsu,
madāndhāliṣv anuvrataiḥ,
upagīyamāna-caritaḥ,
pathi saṅkarṣaṇānviṭaḥ,
anujalpati jalpantaṁ,
kala-vākyaiḥ śukaṁ kvacit,
kvacit sa-valgu kūjantam,
anukūjati kokilam,
kvacic ca kāla-hamsānām,
anukūjati kūjitam,
abhinṛtyati nṛtyantaṁ,
barhiṇaṁ hāsayan kvacit,
megha-gambhīrayā vācā,
nāmabhir dūra-gān paśūn,
kvacid āhvayati prītyā,
go-gopāla-manojñayā*

Sometimes the honeybees in Vṛndāvana became so mad with ecstasy that they closed their eyes and began to sing. Lord Kṛṣṇa, moving along the forest path with His cowherd boyfriends and Baladeva, would then respond to the bees by imitating their singing while His friends sang about His pastimes. Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa

would imitate the chattering of a parrot, sometimes, with a sweet voice, the call of a cuckoo, and sometimes the cooing of swans. Sometimes He vigorously imitated the dancing of a peacock, making His cowherd boyfriends laugh. Sometimes, with a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds, He would call out with great affection the names of the animals who had wandered far from the herd, thus enchanting the cows and the cowherd boys.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa would imitate the dancing of the peacocks (*barhinam abhi nrtyati*), the peacocks would dance more enthusiastically and the boys would laugh heartily.

Text 13

*cakora-krauñca-cakrāhva,
bhāradvājāṁś ca barhiṇaḥ,
anurauti sma sattvānām,
bhīta-vad vyāghra-simhayoḥ*

Sometimes He would cry out in imitation of birds such as the cakoras, krauñcas, cakrāhvas, bhāradvājas and peacocks, and sometimes He would run away with the smaller animals in mock fear of lions and tigers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Upon hearing the roar of the tiger and lion (*sattvanam*), Kṛṣṇa appeared fearful (*bhīta-avat*) and fled with the other cowherd boys. This means that when the boys fled on hearing the sounds that Kṛṣṇa made, Kṛṣṇa also fled as if in fear.

Text 14

*kvacit krīḍā-pariśrāntam,
gopotsaṅgopa-barhaṇam,
svayaṁ viśramayaty āryaṁ,
pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ*

When His elder brother, fatigued from playing, would lie down with His head upon the lap of a cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa would help Him relax by personally massaging His feet and offering other services.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Balarama became tired of playing, He lay down using the lap of a cowherd boy as a pillow (*upabaranam*) to rest His head.

Text 15

*nṛtyato gāyataḥ kvāpi,
valgato yudhyato mithaḥ,
grhīta-hastau gopālān,
hasantau praśaśaṁsatuḥ*

Sometimes, as the cowherd boys danced, sang, moved about and playfully fought with each other, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, standing nearby hand in hand, would glorify Their friends' activities and laugh.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama would laugh while glorifying the dancing, singing, jumping and fighting of the cowherd boys.

Text 16

*kvacit pallava-talpeṣu,
niyuddha-śrama-karśitaḥ,
vṛkṣa-mūlāśrayaḥ śete,
gopotsaṅgopabarhaṇaḥ*

Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa grew tired from fighting and lay down at the base of a tree, resting upon a bed made of soft twigs and buds and using the lap of a cowherd friend as His pillow.

Text 17

*pāda-saṁvāhanaṁ cakruḥ,
kecit tasya mahātmanaḥ,
apare hata-pāpmāno,
vyajanaiḥ samavījayan*

Some of the cowherd boys, who were all great souls, would then massage His lotus feet, and others, qualified by being free of all sin, would expertly fan the Supreme Lord.

Text 18

*anye tad-anurūpāṇi,
manojñāni mahātmanaḥ,
gāyanti sma mahā-rāja,
sneha-kinna-dhiyaḥ śanaiḥ*

My dear King, other boys would sing enchanting songs appropriate to the occasion, and their hearts would melt out of love for the Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys sang songs suitable to the particular pastime (*tad anurupani*).

Text 19

*evam nigūdhātma-gatiḥ sva-māyayā,
gopātmajatvaṁ caritair viḍambayan,
reme ramā-lālita-pāda-pallavo,
grāmyaiḥ samam grāmya-vad īśa-ceṣṭitaḥ*

In this way the Supreme Lord, whose soft lotus feet are personally attended by the goddess of fortune, concealed His transcendental opulences by His internal potency and acted like the son of a cowherd. Yet even while enjoying like a village boy in the company of other village residents, He often exhibited feats only God could perform.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa covered His transcendental opulences with His internal potency *yogamaya*, and played as a simple cowherd boy, despite being the son of a king. The word *gopa* can mean protector of the earth as well as protector of the cows. Though His lotus feet are constantly served by the goddess of fortune, Kṛṣṇa hid that fact and played like an ordinary boy with His friends. Kṛṣṇa usually concealed His unlimited powers, but sometimes He displayed amazing prowess (*īśa cestitah*) when engaged in such pastimes as killing demons.

Text 20

*śrīdāmā nāma gopālo,
rāma-keśavayoḥ sakhā,
subala-stokakṛṣṇādyā,
gopāḥ premṇedam abruvan*

Once, some of the cowherd boys—Śrīdāmā, the very close friend of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, along with Subala, Stokakṛṣṇa and others—lovingly spoke the following words.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse begins a description of the power (*isa cestitah*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama mentioned in the previous verse. The word *premna*, “with love,” indicates that the request the cowherd boys are about to make is motivated by love for Kṛṣṇa, not selfish desire. Thus under the guise of wanting to get the *tala* fruits for themselves, the cowherd boys actually wanted to offer the delicious fruits to Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.

Text 21

*rāma rāma mahā-bāho,
kṛṣṇa duṣṭa-nibarhaṇa,
ito 'vidūre su-mahad,
vanam tālāli-saṅkulam*

[The cowherd boys said:] O Rāma, Rāma, mighty-armed one! O Kṛṣṇa, destroyer of the miscreants! Not far from here is a very great forest filled with rows of palm trees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Within a short distance of eight miles from Govardhana, there is a very large forest called Talali.”

The *Varaha Purana* says: “About one *yojana* [eight miles] west of Mathura is the forest known as Talavana.” This should be understood to be southwest, as that is where it actually lies. There is a forest filled with *tala* trees (*tala ali*). Or *ali* can mean bees.

Text 22

*phalāni tatra bhūrīṇi,
patanti patitāni ca,
santi kintv avaruddhāni,
dhenukena durātmanā*

In that Tālavana forest many fruits are falling from the trees, and many are already lying on the ground. But all the fruits are being guarded by the evil Dhenuka.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys said, “The trees are dark in color like honeybees, and thus they must have very tasty fruits. But the fruits are under the control (*avaruddhani*) of Dhenukasura. O Rama, this is a test of Your valor! O Kṛṣṇa, let us see how You vanquish evil. The *sakhya-bhava* we have for You will not be restricted by this show of power, rather Your show of courage (*vira-rasa*) will increase our *sakhya-rasa*.”

Text 23

*so 'ti-vīryo 'suro rāma,
he kṛṣṇa khara-rūpa-dhṛk,*

*ātma-tulya-balair anyair,
jñātibhir bahubhir vṛtaḥ*

O Rāma, O Kṛṣṇa! Dhenuka is a most powerful demon and has assumed the form of an ass. He is surrounded by many friends who have assumed a similar shape and who are just as powerful as he.

Text 24

*tasmāt kṛta-narāhārād,
bhūtair nṛbhir amitra-han,
na sevyate paśu-gaṇaiḥ,
pakṣi-saṅghair vivarjitam*

The demon Dhenuka has eaten men alive, and therefore all people and animals are terrified of going to the Tāla forest. O killer of the enemy, even the birds are afraid to fly there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys incite Kṛṣṇa and Balarama’s fighting spirit by describing the demon’s strength: “But in front of You two, the bravery of the demon and his cohorts will become like flowers in the sky. Let us go, relieve the residents of their fear, and shower Your blessings upon those who want to enjoy the *tala* fruits.” This is the intention of this verse.

Text 25

*vidyante ’bhukta-pūrvāṇi,
phalāni surabhīṇi ca,*

*eṣa vai surabhir gandho,
viṣūcīno 'vagrhyate*

In the Tāla forest are sweet-smelling fruits no one has ever tasted. Indeed, even now we can smell the fragrance of the tāla fruits spreading all about.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “In which direction is the Talavana forest?” This verse answers: “The sweet fragrance of the tala fruits was carried by the easterly winds of the month of Bhadra [August-September]. Thus the forest is east of here.”

Text 26

*prayaccha tāni naḥ kṛṣṇa,
gandha-lobhita-cetasām,
vāñchāsti mahatī rāma,
gamyatām yadi rocate*

O Kṛṣṇa! Please get those fruits for us. Our minds are so attracted by their aroma! Dear Balarāma, our desire to have those fruits is very great. If You think it’s a good idea, let’s go to that Tāla forest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O Kṛṣṇa! Give the fruits to us, because we have a great desire for them.”

Text 27

*evam suhṛd-vacaḥ śrutvā,
suhṛt-priya-cikīrṣayā,*

*prahasya jagmatur gopair,
vṛtau tālavanaṁ prabhū*

Hearing the words of Their dear companions, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma laughed and, desiring to please them, set off for the Tālavana surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “How can a donkey be so strong? That is impossible.” Therefore Kṛṣṇa and Balarama laughed loudly, thinking Their friends must be telling a lie.

Text 28

*balah praviśya bāhubhyām,
tālān samparikampayan,
phalāni pātayām āsa,
mataṅ-gaja ivaujasā*

Lord Balarāma entered the Tāla forest first. Then with His two arms He began forcefully shaking the trees with the power of a maddened elephant, causing the tāla fruits to fall to the ground.

Text 29

*phalānām patatām śabdām,
niśamyāsura-rāsabhaḥ,
abhyadhāvat kṣiti-talam,
sa-nagaṁ parikampayan*

Hearing the sound of the falling fruits, the ass demon Dhenuka ran forward to attack, making the earth and trees tremble.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The earth shook along with the trees (*sa-nagam*) as Dhenukasura ran towards Balarama.

Text 30

*sametya tarasā pratyag,
dvābhyām padbhyām balaṁ balī,
nihatyorasi kā-śabdāṁ,
muñcan paryasarat khalah*

The powerful demon rushed up to Lord Baladeva and sharply struck the Lord's chest with the hooves of his hind legs. Then Dhenuka began to run about, braying loudly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After kicking Balarama in the chest with His hind legs, Dhenuka ran around (*paryasarat*) making ugly braying sounds (*ka-sabda*).

Text 31

*punar āsādyā samrabdha,
upakroṣṭā parāk sthitaḥ,
caraṇāv aparau rājan,
balāya prākṣipad ruṣā*

Moving again toward Lord Balarāma, O King, the furious ass

situated himself with his back toward the Lord. Then, screaming in rage, the demon hurled his two hind legs at Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The furious (*samrabdhah*) ass showed his back toward Balarama and screamed in rage.

Text 32

*sa taṁ grhītvā prapador,
bhrāmayitvaika-pāṇinā,
cikṣepa trṇa-rājāgre,
bhrāmaṇa-tyakta-jīvitam*

Lord Balarāma seized Dhenuka by his hooves, whirled him about with one hand and threw him into the top of a palm tree. The violent wheeling motion killed the demon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama seized Dhenukasura (*taṁ*) by his hooves (*prapadayoh*), whirled him around, and threw him in the top of a *tala* tree (*trṇa rajah*).

Text 33

*tenāhato mahā-tālo,
vepamāno brhac-chirāḥ,
pārśva-sthaṁ kampayan bhagnaḥ,
sa cānyam so 'pi cāparam*

Lord Balarāma threw the dead body of Dhenukāsura into the tallest palm tree in the forest, and when the dead demon landed in

the treetop, the tree began shaking. The great palm tree, causing a tree by its side also to shake, broke under the weight of the demon. The neighboring tree caused yet another tree to shake, and this one struck yet another tree, which also began shaking. In this way many trees in the forest shook and broke.

Text 34

*balasya līlayotsṛṣṭa,
khara-deha-hatāhatāḥ,
tālās cakampire sarve,
mahā-vāteritā iva*

Because of Lord Balarāma’s pastime of throwing the body of the ass demon into the top of the tallest palm tree, all the trees began shaking and striking against one another as if blown about by powerful winds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The heavy body of Dhenakasura made all the *tala* trees shake severely as if blown by strong winds.

Text 35

*naitac citraṁ bhagavati,
hy anante jagad-īśvare,
ota-protam idaṁ yasmiṁs,
tantuṣv aṅga yathā paṭaḥ*

My dear Parīkṣit, that Lord Balarāma killed Dhenukāsura is

not such a wonderful thing, considering that He is the unlimited Personality of Godhead, the controller of the entire universe. Indeed, the entire cosmos rests upon Him just as a woven cloth rests upon its own horizontal and vertical threads.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This was not astonishing for Baladeva, who supports the entire universe just as woven cloth rests upon its own horizontal and vertical threads.

Text 36

*tataḥ kṛṣṇam ca rāmaṁ ca,
jñātayo dhenukasya ye,
kroṣṭāro 'bhyadravan sarve,
samrabdhā hata-bāndhavāḥ*

The other ass demons, close friends of Dhenukāsura, were enraged upon seeing his death, and thus they all immediately ran to attack Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Text 37 *tāms tān āpatataḥ kṛṣṇo,
rāmaś ca nṛpa līlayā,
gṛhīta-paścāc-caraṇān,
prāhiṇot tṛṇa-rājasu*

O King, as the demons attacked, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily seized them one after another by their hind legs and threw them all into the tops of the palm trees.

Text 38

*phala-prakara-saṅkīrṇam,
daitya-dehair gatāsubhiḥ,
rarāja bhūḥ sa-tālāgrair;
ghanair iva nabhas-talam*

The earth then appeared beautifully covered with heaps of fruits and with the dead bodies of the demons, which were entangled in the broken tops of the palm trees. Indeed, the earth shone like the sky decorated with clouds.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The earth appeared splendid with the piles of dark blue *tala* fruits spread out everywhere. The bodies of the dead demons looked like dark blue clouds resting in the broken branches of the *tala* trees, which appeared as splendid as red clouds covering the sky at sunset due to being tinged with the red blood of the demons.

Text 39

*tayos tat su-mahat karma,
niśamya vibudhādayaḥ,
mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi,
cakrur vādyāni tuṣṭuvuḥ*

Hearing of this magnificent feat of the two brothers, the demigods and other elevated living beings rained down flowers and offered music and prayers in glorification.

Text 40

*atha tāla-phalāny ādan,
manuṣyā gata-sādhvasāḥ,
tṛṇam ca paśavaś cerur;
hata-dhenuka-kānane*

People now felt free to return to the forest where Dhenuka had been killed, and without fear they ate the fruits of the palm trees. Also, the cows could now graze freely upon the grass there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Pulindas and other low-class people of Vṛndavana ate the *tala* fruits. Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boys, however, considered the fruits detestable, since they had been contaminated with the blood of the asses.

Text 41

*kṛṣṇaḥ kamala-patrākṣaḥ,
puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ,
stūyamāno 'nugair gopaiḥ,
sāgrajo vrajam āvrajat*

Then lotus-eyed Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are most pious to hear and chant, returned home to Vraja with His elder brother, Balarāma. Along the way, the cowherd boys, His faithful followers, chanted His glories.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s return home to Vraja is described in three verses.

“Kṛṣṇa, who enchants the hearts of all the Vrajavasis, whose lotus-petal eyes attract the eyes of all, and whose flute songs (*kirtana*) create good fortune (*punya*) for the ears (*sravana*) returned home to Vraja amidst the cowherd boys who were chanting His glories.”

Text 42

*tam gorajaś-churita-kuntala-baddha-barha,
vanya-prasūna-rucirekṣaṇa-cāru-hāsam,
veṇum kvaṇantam anugair upagīta-kīrtim,
gopyo didrṣita-dṛśo ’bhyagaman sametāḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s hair, powdered with the dust raised by the cows, was decorated with a peacock feather and forest flowers. The Lord glanced charmingly and smiled beautifully, playing upon His flute while His companions chanted His glories. The gopīs, all together, came forward to meet Him, their eyes very eager to see Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the Vraja-gopis are described in particular. “The young *gopis* came forward to meet Kṛṣṇa, whose locks of hair were powdered with the dust raised by the cows and decorated with forest flowers and a peacock feather, and who glanced charmingly and smiled attractively.”

Another meaning: “Kṛṣṇa’s glance emitted a beautiful smile. The *gopis*’ eyes had a strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa, so they could not follow the order of their minds to give up watching Kṛṣṇa because of shyness. Becoming independent and jealous of the ears’ hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute and the nostrils’ smelling His fragrance, the eyes gave up the shelter of the *gopis* and went to Kṛṣṇa by themselves in order to gain the treasure of Kṛṣṇa’s charming glances. While leaving their houses to go forward

to Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis* said to their husbands, ‘Are you going to stop me or kill me?’”

Text 43

*pītvā mukunda-mukha-sāragham akṣi-bhṛṅgais,
tāpam jahur viraha-jam vraja-yoṣito ’hni,
tat sat-kṛtiṁ samadhigamya viveśa goṣṭham,
savṛṇḍa-hāsa-vinayam yad apāṅga-mokṣam*

With their beelike eyes, the women of Vṛndāvana drank the honey of the beautiful face of Lord Mukunda, and thus they gave up the distress they had felt during the day because of separation from Him. The young Vṛndāvana ladies cast sidelong glances at the Lord—glances filled with bashfulness, laughter and submission—and Śrī Kṛṣṇa completely accepting these glances as a proper offering of respect, entered the cowherd village.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What did the *gopis* do when they approached Kṛṣṇa? This verse answers the question. With their beelike eyes the Vraja-*gopis* drank the honey (*sāragham*) of Mukunda’s beautiful sweet face. The *gopis*, who were not seen by Kṛṣṇa, did not just glance upon Him, but they stared at Kṛṣṇa with wide-open eyes when no one was looking. Then upon catching Kṛṣṇa’s attention, those *gopis* broke into smiles out of joy. But due to bashfulness they stopped their open eyes and smiles by covering their mouths with their left hands and pulling their veils over their eyes. This showed the *gopis*’ sense of submission (*vinayam*). Thus the *gopis* displayed all the moods of chaste girls, who look upon their beloveds with shyness, jubilation and submission.

Taking their gazing as an offering (*tat sat-kṛti*) from their hearts, Kṛṣṇa became aware of the great sweetness of the *gopis*’ love. Fully accepting

(*samadhigamya*) those glances with complete relish, that supreme master of romantic arts entered the village of Vraja.

There is a meaning in the two actions of offering and accepting the bashful smiling. The *gopis'* offering of respect was their bashful laughing, submission and sidelong glances (*apanga moksa*). Kṛṣṇa accepted their offering by responding with enchanting glances.

One can elaborate on the scene as follows. Taking the flower of their glances offered by their servants called the *sancari-bhava* of enthusiasm in the hands of their eyes, and taking the flower of their smiles offered by the servants called the *sancari-bhava* of joy in their hands made of their delicate lips, the Vraja-gopis approached Kṛṣṇa saying, "Please accept these offerings, which are all that we have in our house."

When Kṛṣṇa engaged His servant in the form of His glance to accept the gifts, His crafty glance became eager to steal the gifts, which were previously kept within the *gopis'* houses. Therefore Kṛṣṇa withdrew His glance to Himself. When the *gopis* offered these gifts again, Kṛṣṇa's glance freed itself, and quickly approached the *gopis* to steal the two gifts with the vigor of a warrior.

But then a *sakhi* in the form of bashfulness, who has the power to cover things, suddenly appeared and hid the two gifts. Then another *sakhi* named *vinaya* (submission) arrived, and a fight broke out between them. Kṛṣṇa's servant in the form of His glance, however, forcibly took the gift of the *gopis'* glances along with their bashfulness and submission, and offered them to Kṛṣṇa. Receiving these three like a precious jewel, Kṛṣṇa carefully placed them upon the altar in the temple of His heart. This is the implication of the word *sat-krtim* (offering). Although bashfulness and other words have their own power of implication, because *sat-krtim* and *moksa* have such deep meanings they have been explained here in detail.

Another meaning is as follows: As Kṛṣṇa respectfully (*sat-krtim*) accepted the *gopis'* shy glances (*apanga moksa*), which were like bashfully controlled smiles, and entered the village, the young women of Vraja gave up the pain of separation (*viraha-jam*) they had felt from Him during the day.

Text 44

*tayor yaśodā-rohiṇyau,
putrayoḥ putra-vatsale,
yathā-kāmaṁ yathā-kālaṁ,
vyadhattām paramāśiṣaḥ*

Mother Yaśodā and mother Rohiṇī, acting most affectionately toward their two sons, offered all the best things to Them in response to Their every desire and at the various appropriate times.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mother Yasoda and Rohini lovingly offered varieties of wonderful food (*param asisa*) for the pleasure (*yatha-kamam*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. They also made sure the boys ate at the proper time (*yatha-kalam*), rather than forbidden times like sunset.

Text 45

*gatādhvāna-śramau tatra,
majjanonmardanādibhiḥ,
nīvīm vasitvā rucirām,
divya-srag-gandha-maṇḍitau*

By being bathed and massaged, the two young Lords were relieved of the weariness caused by walking on the country roads. Then They were dressed in attractive robes and decorated with transcendental garlands and fragrances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Actually Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were *aśramau* (not weary) because They are God. However, playing the part of humans They appeared tired and thus the word *śramau* is used. After entering Their house, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were relieved (*gatah*) of Their apparent tiredness from walking on the road (*adhvan*) by bathing and dressing in attractive robes (*nīvīm*).

Text 46

*janany-upahr̥tam prāśya,
svādv annam upalālītau,
samviśya vara-śayyāyām,
sukham suṣupatur vraje*

After dining sumptuously on the delicious food given Them by Their mothers and being pampered in various ways, the two brothers lay down upon Their excellent beds and happily went to sleep in the village of Vraja.

Text 47

*evam sa bhagavān kṛṣṇo,
vṛndāvana-carah kvacit,
yayau rāmam ṛte rājan,
kālindīm sakhībhīr vṛtaḥ*

O King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa thus wandered about the Vṛndāvana area, performing His pastimes. Once, surrounded by His boyfriends, He went without Balarāma to the Yamunā River.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After finishing the description of the Gopastami pastimes in Karttika, the pastimes in summer are told. Balarama was not present because Rohini kept Him home to take a *santi* bath on His birthday.

Text 48

*atha gāvaś ca gopāś ca,
nidāghātapa-pīḍitāḥ,
duṣṭam jalam papus tasyās,
tṛṣṇārtā viṣa-dūṣitam*

At that time the cows and cowherd boys were feeling acute distress from the glaring summer sun. Afflicted by thirst, they drank the water of the Yamunā River. But it had been contaminated with poison.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Ignoring Kṛṣṇa, who was walking slowly behind, the cows ran quickly towards the Yamuna to slake their intense thirst. The cowherd boys ran after them.

Texts 49–50

*viṣāmbhas tad upaspr̥śya,
daivopahata-cetasah,
nipetur vyasavaḥ sarve,
salilānte kurūdvaha,
vīkṣya tān vai tathā-bhūtān,
kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ,
īkṣyamṛta-varṣiṇyā,*

As soon as they touched the poisoned water, all the cows and boys lost their consciousness by the divine power of the Lord and fell lifeless at the water’s edge. O hero of the Kurus, seeing them in such a condition, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all masters of mystic potency, felt compassion for these devotees, who had no Lord other than Him. Thus He immediately brought them back to life by showering His nectarean glance upon them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *daiva* means “belonging to *deva*, the Lord.” The cows and cowherd boys, whose intelligence was covered by Kṛṣṇa’s *lila-sakti*, appeared to lose their lives (*daiva upahata cetasaḥ*), though they are eternal. Kṛṣṇa covered them with His *yogamaya* potency to perfect His pastimes.

Text 51

*te sampratīta-smṛtayah,
samutthāya jalāntikāt,
āsan su-vismitāḥ sarve,
vīkṣamāṇāḥ parasparam*

Regaining their full consciousness, the cows and boys stood up out of the water and began to look at one another in great astonishment.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Returning to consciousness, the cowherd boys thought, “We were dead, so how did we come back to life? What medicine or *mantra* was used to remove the poison?” Thus looking at one another with great surprise, they spoke with their eyes,

“Friend! Do you know the secret?”

Then one *sakha* answered with a glance, “I know how we were saved.”

Then he spoke, “Listen! I remember the name-giving ceremony of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama wherein Gargacarya said, ‘This child will very easily save you from all dangers.’ This is the secret.”

Then with complete absorption (*sam*) all the cowherd boys remembered (*smṛtayah*) Kṛṣṇa, their most lovable object (*pratita*). By this they all became astonished (*su-vismitah*).

Text 52

*anvamamsata tad rājan,
govindānugraheksitam,
pītvā viṣam paretasya,
punar utthānam ātmanah*

O King, the cowherd boys then considered that although they had drunk poison and in fact had died, simply by the merciful glance of Govinda they had regained their lives and stood up by their own strength.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys concluded positively that although they had drunk poison and died, they were revived by the merciful glance of Govinda, who was empowered by Lord Narayana, the worshipable deity of Nanda Maharaja.

Chapter Sixteen: Kṛṣṇa Chastises the Serpent Kaliya

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vilokya dūṣitām kṛṣṇām,
kṛṣṇaḥ kṛṣṇāhinā vibhuḥ,
tasyā viśuddhim anvicchan,
sarpaṁ tam udavāsayat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, seeing that the Yamunā River had been contaminated by the black snake Kāliya, desired to purify the river, and thus the Lord banished him from it.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Sri Kṛṣṇa's pastime of subduing the serpent Kaliya, showing pleasure with the prayers of the Naga-patnis, and banishing Kaliya from the river Yamuna.

In this verse *kṛṣṇām* refers to the Yamuna. Seeing how Kaliya was polluting the Yamuna with poison, Kṛṣṇa decided to banish that black snake.

Text 2

*śrī-rājovāca,
katham antar-jale 'gādhe,
nyagrḥṇād bhagavān ahim,
sa vai bahu-yugāvāsam,*

yathāsīd vipra kathyatām

King Parīkṣit inquired: O learned sage, please explain how the Supreme Personality of Godhead chastised the serpent Kāliya within the unfathomable waters of the Yamunā, and how it was that Kāliya had been living there for so many ages.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: O learned sage! Please tell how Kaliya was able to live there for so many yugas (*bahu-yugavasam*).

Text 3

*brahman bhagavatas tasya,
bhūmnaḥ svacchanda-vartinaḥ,
gopālodāra-caritam,
kas tṛpyetāmṛtam juṣan*

O brāhmaṇa, the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead freely acts according to His own desires. Who could be satiated when hearing the nectar of the magnanimous pastimes He performed as a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Gopala udara caritam* means the magnanimous (*udara*) pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy. However the word “go” can also refer to the senses of the devotees. The word *gopala* then means one who nourishes the senses of the devotees. The word *udara* also means giving happiness. Thus the phrase *gopala udara cairtam* can mean the pastimes of Gopala Kṛṣṇa bring joy and nourish the senses of the devotees. King Parīkṣit said, “Who could ever be satiated when tasting Kṛṣṇa pastimes, which satisfy the senses of the hearer and bring joy to the heart?”

Text 4

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kālindyām kāliyasyāsīd,
hradaḥ kaścid viṣāgninā,
śrapyamāṇa-payā yasmin,
patanty upari-gāḥ khagāḥ*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Within the river Kālindī [Yamunā] was a lake inhabited by the serpent Kāliya, whose fiery poison constantly heated and boiled its waters. Indeed, the vapors thus created were so poisonous that birds flying over the contaminated lake would fall down into it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to *Sri Hari-vamśa*, the Kaliya lake was about one *yojana* wide [eight miles], and situated in the southern part of the Yamuna, apart from the main current of the river. Otherwise the poisonous waters of the lake, which were boiling hot (*śrapyamana*), would have troubled the residents of Mathura and other places farther away.

Text 5

*vipruṣmatā viṣadormi,
mārutenābhimarśitāḥ,
mriyante tīra-gā yasya,
prāṇinaḥ sthira-jaṅgamāḥ*

The wind blowing over that deadly lake carried droplets of water to

the shore. Simply by coming in contact with that poisonous breeze, all vegetation and creatures on the shore died.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Moving and non-moving creatures such as trees died just by contacting (*abhimarsita*) the poisonous breeze, which carried droplets of water (*viprusmata*) from that deadly lake.

Text 6

*taṁ caṇḍa-vega-viṣa-vīryam avekṣya tena,
duṣṭāṁ nadīm ca khala-saṁyamanāvātāraḥ,
kṛṣṇaḥ kadambam adhiruhya tato 'ti-tuṅgam,
āspṛoṭya gāḍha-raśano nyapatad viṣode*

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw how the Kāliya serpent had polluted the Yamunā River with his terribly powerful poison. Since Kṛṣṇa had descended from the spiritual world specifically to subdue envious demons, the Lord immediately climbed to the top of a very high kadamba tree and prepared Himself for battle. He tightened His belt, slapped His arms and then jumped into the poisonous water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *Puranas* state that only the *kadamba* tree on the shore of the Yamuna remained unaffected by the poison of Kaliya because Garuda once sat in the tree drinking some nectar. The *kadamba* tree lived with the hope of being blessed by the touch of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in the future.

Text 7

sarpa-hradaḥ puruṣa-sāra-nipāta-vega,

*sañkṣobhitoraga-viṣocchvasitāmbu-rāśih,
paryak pluto viṣa-kaṣāya-bibhīṣaṇormir,
dhāvan dhanuḥ-śatam ananta-balasya kim tat*

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead landed in the serpent’s lake, the snakes there became extremely agitated and began breathing heavily, further polluting it with volumes of poison. The force of the Lord’s entrance into the lake caused it to overflow on all sides, and poisonous, fearsome waves flooded the surrounding lands up to a distance of one hundred bow-lengths. This is not at all amazing, however, for the Supreme Lord possesses infinite strength.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The force of Kṛṣṇa jumping from the tree into the Yamuna created huge waves, which were four-hundred hands high and flooding all directions (*paryak*). Those fearful waves were colored reddish-yellow (*kaṣāya*) from the poison of the agitated snakes. The word *kaṣāya* also means a thick potion according to Ksira Swami, a commentator on the *Amara-kośa* dictionary.

Text 8

*tasya hrade viharato bhuja-daṇḍa-ghūrṇa,
vār-ghoṣam aṅga vara-vāraṇa-vikramasya,
āśrutya tat sva-sadanābhibhavaṁ nirīkṣya,
cakṣuḥ-śravāḥ samasarat tad amṛṣyamāṇaḥ*

Kṛṣṇa began sporting in Kāliya’s lake like a lordly elephant—swirling His mighty arms and making the water resound in various ways. When Kāliya heard these sounds, he understood that someone was trespassing in his lake. The serpent could not tolerate this and immediately came forward.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa played in the water by swimming, and producing wonderful musical sounds simply by splashing the water with His hands and arms. As Kṛṣṇa churned the water with His mighty arms, a thunderous roar arose. Upon hearing these sounds, Kaliya concluded that there must be some trespasser (*abhibhavam*) in his lake. The snake could not bear this (*tad amrsyamanah*), so he immediately came forward (*samasarat*).

Text 9

*taṁ prekṣaṇīya-sukumāra-ghanāvadātam,
śrīvatsa-pīta-vasanaṁ smita-sundarāśyam,
krīḍantam apratibhayaṁ kamalodarāṅghriṁ,
sandaśya marmasu ruṣā bhujayā cachāda*

Kāliya saw that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who wore yellow silken garments, was very delicate, His attractive body shining like a glowing white cloud, His chest bearing the mark of Śrīvatsa, His face smiling beautifully and His feet resembling the whorl of a lotus flower. The Lord was playing fearlessly in the water. Despite His wonderful appearance, the envious Kāliya furiously bit Him on the chest and then completely enwrapped Him in his coils.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse shows that Kṛṣṇa looked very beautiful; His body glowing like a spotless white cloud. But He appeared just the opposite to the enraged Kaliya.

Text 10

taṁ nāga-bhoga-parivītam adṛṣṭa-ceṣṭam,

*ālokyā tat-priya-sakhāḥ paśupā bhṛśārtāḥ,
kṛṣṇe ṛpitātma-suhṛd-artha-kalatra-kāmā,
duḥkhānuśoka-bhaya-mūḍha-dhiyo nipetuh*

When the members of the cowherd community, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa as their dearest friend, saw Him enveloped in the snake’s coils, motionless, they were greatly disturbed. They had offered Kṛṣṇa everything—their very selves, their families, their wealth, wives and all pleasures. At the sight of the Lord in the clutches of the Kāliya snake, their intelligence became deranged by grief, lamentation and fear, and thus they fell to the ground.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some cowherd men and farmers tending the grains in the fields nearby quickly ran there. They had offered everything for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure, including their wives and friends.

Text 11

*gāvo vṛṣā vatsataryah,
krandamānāḥ su-duḥkhitāḥ,
kṛṣṇe nyastekṣanā bhītā,
rudantya iva tasthire*

The cows, bulls and female calves, in great distress, called out piteously to Kṛṣṇa. Fixing their eyes on Him, they stood still in fear, as if ready to cry but too shocked to shed tears.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because the water in their eyes had dried up from fear, the cows, bulls and female calves could not really weep. Thus they are described “as if ready to cry.”

Text 12

*atha vraje mahotpātās,
tri-vidhā hy ati-dāruṇāḥ,
utpetur bhuvi divy ātmany,
āsanna-bhaya-śamsinaḥ*

In the Vṛndāvana area there then arose all three types of fearful omens—those on the earth, those in the sky and those in the bodies of living creatures—which announced imminent danger.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Three inauspicious signs appeared in Vraja: earthquakes on the earth, meteors falling in the sky, and shivering in the bodies of men along with twitching of the left eye. Though there can be nothing inauspicious for the Lord, in order to indicate the lamentation of the inhabitants of Vraja, the demigods in charge of earthquakes and other disturbances did this. Or being attracted to the sweet and intimate *madhurya* mood of Vraja, the demigods, out of affection for Kṛṣṇa, wanted to cover His *aiśvarya* (majestic opulence), so they produced various omens indicating misfortune for Kṛṣṇa.

Texts 13–15

*tān ālakṣya bhayodvignā,
gopā nanda-purogamāḥ,
vinā rāmeṇa gāḥ kṛṣṇam,
jñātvā cārayitum gatam,
tair durnimittair nidhanam,
matvā prāptam atad-vidaḥ,
tat-prāṇās tan-manaskās te,*

*duḥkha-śoka-bhayāturāḥ,
ā-bāla-vṛddha-vanitāḥ,
sarve 'nga paśu-vṛttayah,
nirjagmur gokulād dīnāḥ,
kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ*

Seeing the inauspicious omens, Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men were fearful, for they knew that Kṛṣṇa had gone to herd the cows that day without His elder brother, Balarāma. Because they had dedicated their minds to Kṛṣṇa, accepting Him as their very life, they were unaware of His great power and opulence. Thus they concluded that the inauspicious omens indicated He had met with death, and they were overwhelmed with grief, lamentation and fear. All the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, including the children, women and elderly persons, thought of Kṛṣṇa just as a cow thinks of her helpless young calf, and thus these poor, suffering people rushed out of the village, intent upon finding Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the inauspicious omens, Nanda Maharaja and other inhabitants rushed out of the village of Gokula. This is described in three verses.

Observing the omens, the Vrajavasis thought Kṛṣṇa had died (*nidhanam matva*). But how can God die? The word *nidhana* also means a great treasure. Indeed, Kṛṣṇa had obtained the great treasure of a joyful sport in the Yamuna. The Vrajavasis were behaving just as an affectionate cow does toward her calf. Overwhelmed with fear and unhappiness, they rushed out of Gokula in great anxiety.

Text 16

*tāms tathā kātarān vīkṣya,
bhagavān mādhave balah,*

*prahasya kiñcin novāca,
prabhāva-jñō 'nujasya sah*

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the master of all transcendental knowledge, smiled and said nothing when He saw the residents of Vṛndāvana in such distress, since He understood the extraordinary power of His younger brother.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to *Hari-vamśa* the word *mādhava* means master (*dhava*) of intelligence (*ma*). Balarama is described here as the master of intelligence because He knew the power (*prabhava jna*) of Kṛṣṇa's *lila-sakti*. Though Balarama had the greatest affection for His younger brother, He understood that Kṛṣṇa desired to cover His opulence (*aisvarya*) with His *lila-sakti*. Therefore, Balarama prevented Nanda and others from drowning themselves in the Yamuna out of grief.

Balarama was laughing (*prahasya*) because He thought, "Kṛṣṇa never cares to play with Me in My form of Sesa Naga, but now He is playing with this common, mundane snake named Kaliya."

Remembering Kṛṣṇa's pastimes as an ordinary mortal, Balarama smiled and said nothing though the situation was beyond tolerance. However, when Balarama smiled the Vrajavasis forgot their fear and lamentation and felt that nothing unfortunate would happen. Filled with the joy of Balarama's smile, they no longer desired to give up their lives.

Text 17

*te 'nveṣamāṇā dayitam,
kṛṣṇam sūcitayā padaiḥ,
bhagaval-lakṣaṇair jagmuḥ,
padavyā yamunā-taṭam*

The residents hurried toward the banks of the Yamunā in search of their dearest Kṛṣṇa, following the path marked by His footprints, which bore the unique signs of the Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrajavasis followed the path marked by Kṛṣṇa's footprints, which bore the unique symbols of the Lord's conch, disc and goad.

Text 18

*te tatra tatrābja-yavāṅkuśāsani,
dhvajopapannāni padāni viś-pateḥ,
mārge gavām anya-padāntarāntare,
nirīkṣamāṇā yayur aṅga satvarāḥ*

The footprints of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the entire cowherd community, were marked with the lotus flower, barleycorn, elephant goad, thunderbolt and flag. My dear King Parīkṣit, seeing His footprints on the path among the cows' hoofprints, the residents of Vṛndāvana rushed along in great haste.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how the Vrajavasis recognized Kṛṣṇa's footprints. *Viś-pateḥ* means the master of the *vaiśyas*, cowherd community, and refers to Kṛṣṇa. Ignoring the cow's hoof prints, they exclusively followed the footprints of Kṛṣṇa. This verse hints of the discerning *yogi*, who follows the path of the *Vedas* in pursuance of the highest truth while rejecting all illusory appearances of truth.

Text 19

*antar hrade bhujaga-bhoga-parītam ārāt,
kṛṣṇam nirīham upalabhya jalāśayānte,
gopāms' ca mūḍha-dhiṣaṇān paritaḥ paśūms' ca,
saṅkrandataḥ parama-kaśmalam āpur ārtāḥ*

As they hurried along the path to the bank of the Yamunā River, they saw from a distance that Kṛṣṇa was in the lake, motionless within the coils of the black serpent. They further saw that the cowherd boys had fallen unconscious and that the animals were standing on all sides, crying out for Kṛṣṇa. Seeing all this, the residents of Vṛndāvana were overwhelmed with anguish and confusion.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse depicts the grief of the *gopas* and *gopis*. Seeing Kṛṣṇa trapped within the clutches of the serpent, the Vrajavasis inquired from the boys, “Tell us what happened. Did Kaliya forcibly drag young Kṛṣṇa from the shore into the water, or did Kṛṣṇa jump from the bank? Was this His idea or someone else’s?” Noticing that the boys were actually unconscious and thus incapable of answering, Nanda and the other Vrajavasis entered a state of shock and panic.

Text 20

*gopyo 'nurakta-manaso bhagavaty anante,
tat-sauhrda-smita-viloka-giraḥ smarantyaḥ,
graste 'hinā priyatame bhṛśa-duḥkha-taptāḥ,
śūnyam priya-vyatihṛtam dadṛśus tri-lokam*

When the young gopīs, whose minds were constantly attached to

Kṛṣṇa, the unlimited Supreme Lord, saw that He was now within the grips of the serpent, they remembered His loving friendship, His smiling glances and His talks with them. Burning with great sorrow, they saw the entire universe as void.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the anguish of the young damsels of Vraja who were attached to Kṛṣṇa in *madhurya-bhava*. The word *bhagavati* here means most beautiful, and *anante* means filled with unlimited qualities. Seeing their most beautiful Kṛṣṇa, who is endowed with infinite attractive qualities, bound in the coils of the serpent, and remembering the love (*tat sauhṛda*) that Kṛṣṇa had for them, His gentle smiles, His furtive glances, and His loving prattles (*girah*) during their amorous affairs (*smara-antya*), the gopis saw the three worlds turn empty and meaningless. Due to the fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa, the entire universe burned to ashes.

Text 21

*tāḥ kṛṣṇa-mātaram apatyam anupraviṣṭām,
tulya-vyathāḥ samanugṛhya śucaḥ sravantyaḥ,
tās tā vraja-priya-kathāḥ kathayantya āsan,
kṛṣṇānane 'rpita-dṛśo mṛtaka-pratīkāḥ*

Although the elder gopīs were feeling just as much distress as she and were pouring forth a flood of sorrowful tears, they had to forcibly hold back Kṛṣṇa's mother, whose consciousness was totally absorbed in her son. Standing like corpses, with their eyes fixed upon His face, these gopīs each took turns recounting the pastimes of the darling of Vraja.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the distress of those in *vatsalya-bhava*, parental love. *Tāḥ* refers to the famous ladies

of Vraja with children. In some editions of *Bhagavatam* the word *prataptam* (torn apart) is used instead of *pravistam*. This would mean that Yasoda was being torn apart upon seeing her son enwrapped in the serpent's coils. Then Yasoda entered the same state that her son appeared to be in and almost fainted.

When Yasoda tried to jump in the Yamuna, the elder gopis forcibly held her back with their arms. Then they affectionately wiped the sweat and tears from Yasoda's face. To revive mother Yasoda, the gopis loudly recited stories about the darling of Vraja (*vraja-priya*). The elderly gopis drowned everyone in the waves from the rivers of their lamentation (*sucāḥ sraṁvāntyaḥ*). The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says *sraṁvanti* means river. Thus everyone became paralyzed like corpses (*mṛtaka pratikāḥ*).

Text 22

*kṛṣṇa-prāṇān nirviśato,
nandādīn vīkṣya taṁ hradam,
pratyāśedhat sa bhagavān,
rāmaḥ kṛṣṇānubhāva-vit*

Lord Balarāma then saw that Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men, who had dedicated their very lives to Kṛṣṇa, were beginning to enter the serpent's lake. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Balarāma fully knew Lord Kṛṣṇa's actual power, and therefore He restrained them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama physically held Nanda and others to keep them from jumping in the river, while saying, “Gargacarya said that you will be saved from all obstacles by this son. Keeping this in mind, don't you think Kṛṣṇa will get released from this danger? Just be patient. If you all jump in the river and drown, who will

maintain and raise Kṛṣṇa when He comes back? Not only that, you will be neglecting Garga’s order to take care of the boy as well.” This was Balarama’s reasoning.

Text 23

*ittham sva-gokulam ananya-gatiṁ nirīkṣya,
sa-strī-kumāram ati-duḥkhitam ātma-hetoḥ,
ājñāya martya-padavīm anuvartamānaḥ,
sthitvā muhūrtam udatiṣṭhad uraṅga-bandhāt*

The Lord remained for some time within the coils of the serpent, imitating the behavior of an ordinary mortal. But when He understood that the women, children and other residents of His village of Gokula were in acute distress because of their love for Him, their only shelter and goal in life, He immediately rose up from the bonds of the Kāliya serpent.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the Vrajavasis had no other goal or shelter (*ananya gatiṁ*), and fully understanding (*ajnaya*) their sorrow, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Kaliya after remaining gripped in his coils for one *muhurta* (forty-eight minutes).

Kṛṣṇa said, “Listen Kaliya, you have shown Me enough of your strength. Now, I will show you a little of My prowess, though I am just a cowherd boy.” Then Kṛṣṇa broke free from the snake (*uranga*) and stood up (*udatisthat*).

Text 24

*tat-prathyamāna-vapuṣā vyathitātma-bhogas,
tyaktvonnamayya kupitaḥ sva-phaṇān bhujāṅgaḥ,*

*tasthau śvasaṅ chvasana-randhra-viṣāmbarīṣa,
stabdheḷḷaṣaṅolmuka-mukho harim īkṣamāṅaḷ*

His coils tormented by the expanding body of the Lord, Kāliya released Him. In great anger the serpent then raised his hoods high and stood still, breathing heavily. His nostrils appeared like vessels for cooking poison, and the staring eyes in his face like firebrands. Thus the serpent looked at the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes Kṛṣṇa’s freeing Himself from the snake and Kaliya’s weakening. Kaliya let go of Kṛṣṇa because he felt pained (*vyathita*) by the expanding body of the Lord (*prathyamana vapusa*), which was previously much smaller. After releasing Kṛṣṇa, Kaliya raised his huge hoods, breathed heavily and stared at Kṛṣṇa. The snake’s nostrils were full of poison, and the glaring eyes in his face resembled firebrands.

Text 25

*taṁ jihvayā dvi-śikhayā parilelihānaṁ,
dve sṛkvaṅī hy ati-karāla-viṣāgni-drṣṭim,
krīḍann amuṅ parisasāra yathā khagendro,
babhrāma so ’py avasaram prasamīkṣamāṅaḷ*

Again and again Kāliya licked his lips with his bifurcated tongues as he stared at Kṛṣṇa with a glance full of terrible, poisonous fire. But Kṛṣṇa playfully circled around him, just as Garuḍa would play with a snake. In response, Kāliya also moved about, looking for an opportunity to bite the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya repeatedly licked His lips

(*dve srkvani pari lelihanam*). Kṛṣṇa moved around Kaliya with such agility that Kaliya, though continually searching this way and that for an opportunity, failed in his attempts to bite the Lord. To avoid Kaliya, Kṛṣṇa continually moved in the opposite direction as the serpent.

Text 26

*evaṁ paribhrama-hataujasam unnatāṁsam,
ānamya tat-pṛthu-śiraḥsv adhirūḍha ādyah,
tan-mūrdha-ratna-nikara-sparśāti-tāmra,
pādāmbujo 'khila-kalādi-gurur nanarta*

Having severely depleted the serpent's strength with His relentless circling, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the origin of everything, pushed down Kāliya's raised shoulders and mounted his broad serpentine heads. Thus Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original master of all fine arts, began to dance, His lotus feet deeply reddened by the touch of the numerous jewels upon the serpent's heads.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Hari-vamsa confirms that with one hand Kṛṣṇa was able to push down Kaliya's raised head, which had gradually become tired from his relentless circling. Mounting the snake's broad heads, Kṛṣṇa began to dance. Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet become red like copper from touching the numerous jewels upon the heads of Kaliya.

As a dancer sometimes demonstrates his expertise by dancing on different objects such as dishes, Kṛṣṇa showed that He is original *guru* of all fine arts (*kalā ādi guruḥ*) by skillfully dancing on the unsteady, moving surface of the serpent's hoods. In addition, Kṛṣṇa's remarkable display of dancing skill was meant to please the young damsels of Vraja, who at this stage of their relationship were seriously falling in love (*purva-raga*) with Him.

Text 27

*taṁ nartum udyatam avekṣya tadā tadīya,
gandharva-siddha-muni-cāraṇa-deva-vadhvaḥ,
prītyā mṛdaṅga-pañavānaka-vādyā-gīta,
puṣpopahāra-nutibhiḥ sahasopaseduḥ*

Seeing the Lord dancing, His servants in the heavenly planets—the Gandharvas, Siddhas, sages, Cāraṇas and wives of the demigods—immediately arrived there. With great pleasure they began accompanying the Lord’s dancing by playing drums such as mṛdaṅgas, paṇavas and ānakas. They also made offerings of songs, flowers and prayers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa danced even without musical accompaniment by personally calling out syllables such as “*thai thai*” to imitate the sound of a musical instrument. The impression given is that Kṛṣṇa, upon seeing the *gopīs*, was considering, “We will meet together to dance like this sometime in the future.” The word *nartum* is a substitute for the word *nartitum*, which means “to dance.”

Text 28

*yad yac chiro na namate ’ṅga śataika-śīrṣṇas,
tat tan mamarda khara-daṅḍa-dharo ’ṅhri-pātaiḥ,
kṣīṅāyuso bhramata ulbaṇam āsyato ’ṣṇ,
nasto vaman parama-kaśmalam āpa nāgaḥ*

My dear King, Kāliya had 101 prominent heads, and when

one of them would not bow down, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who inflicts punishment on cruel wrong-doers, would smash that stubborn head by striking it with His feet. Then, as Kāliya entered his death throes, he began wheeling his heads around and vomiting ghastly blood from his mouths and nostrils. The serpent thus experienced extreme pain and misery.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Śataika here means 101 chief heads, because the thirtieth verse mentions one thousand heads. When one head would not bow down, Kṛṣṇa would suddenly smash that stubborn head with His feet. Blood flowed profusely from Kaliya's mouths and nostrils.

Text 29

*tasyākṣibhir garalam udvamataḥ śiraḥsu,
yad yat samunnamati niḥśvasato ruṣoccaiḥ,
nṛṭyan padānunamayan damayām babhūva,
puṣpaiḥ prapūjita iveha pumān purāṇaḥ*

Exuding poisonous waste from his eyes, Kāliya, would occasionally dare to raise up one of his heads, which would breathe heavily with anger. Then the Lord would dance on it and subdue it, forcing it to bow down with His foot. The demigods took each of these exhibitions as an opportunity to worship Him, the primeval Personality of Godhead, with showers of flowers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kaliya would dare to raise one of his hoods, Kṛṣṇa would dance on it and force it down with the blows from His feet. At that time the Gandharvas and other celestials worshiped Kṛṣṇa with showers of flowers. Being pleased, Kṛṣṇa subdued the serpent for their benefit.

Text 30

*tac-citra-tāṇḍava-virugna-phaṇā-sahasro,
raktam mukhair uru vaman nṛpa bhagna-gātraḥ,
smṛtvā carācara-gurum puruṣam purāṇam,
nārāyaṇam tam arañam manasā jagāma*

My dear King Parikṣit, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful, powerful dancing trampled and broke all of Kāliya’s one thousand hoods. Then the serpent, profusely vomiting blood from his mouths, finally recognized Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the eternal Personality of Godhead, the supreme master of all moving and nonmoving beings, Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Thus within his mind Kāliya took shelter of the Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the seed of devotion (*bhakti-bijam*) had previously been planted in Kaliya’s heart by the mercy of his wives, who were actually exalted devotees of Kṛṣṇa, it could not sprout because of Kaliya’s cruel behavior due to his previous *aparadhas*, just as seeds sown on barren ground cannot sprout.

By the purifying touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, however, Kaliya’s offense was neutralized, and the seed of devotion began to sprout. Kaliya remembered (*smṛtvā*) or realized that he was now fighting an opponent who was thousands of times stronger than his arch-rival Garuda, and therefore this person must be the Supreme Lord.

Kaliya thought (*smṛtvā*), “This is the person my wives had previously described as being approachable by *bhakti*. Taking the position of my *guru*, He placed His feet on my head. Then by displaying His extraordinary power, He made me realize what a fool I am to think that I am god. Now I will take shelter (*araṇam*) of Him (*tam*).”

Text 31

*kṛṣṇasya garbha-jagato 'ti-bharāvasannam,
pārṣṇi-prahāra-parirugna-phaṇātapatram,
dṛṣṭvāhim ādyam upasedur amuṣya patnya,
ārtāḥ ślathad-vasana-bhūṣaṇa-keśa-bandhāḥ*

When Kāliya's wives saw how the serpent had become so fatigued from the excessive weight of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who carries the entire universe in His abdomen, and how Kāliya's umbrellalike hoods had been shattered by the striking of Kṛṣṇa's heels, they felt great distress. With their clothing, ornaments and hair scattered in disarray, they then approached the eternal Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing their husband so oppressed with the heavy weight of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who carries the universe in His belly, Kaliya's wives approached Sri Kṛṣṇa. Previously the wives had been disgusted with their husband because of his demoniac activities and were thinking, "Let this atheist be killed by the Lord. Then as widows we will fully engage in Kṛṣṇa's service." But when Kaliya's wives saw the symptoms of *sancari-bhava* such as humility, remorse, regret, doubt and indifference to his suffering condition manifest in their husband's facial expressions and other bodily features, they thought, "Just see how fortunate we are! Our husband has now become a Vaisnava. Therefore, we must try to save him." Feeling affection for their repentant husband, and being severely distressed (*ārtāḥ*) because of Kaliya's miserable condition, the wives joined together and approached Kṛṣṇa.

Text 32

tās taṁ su-vigna-manaso 'tha puraskṛtārbhāḥ,

*kāyaṁ nidhāya bhuvi bhūta-patiṁ pranemuḥ,
sādhvyaḥ kṛtāñjali-putāḥ śamalasya bhartur,
mokṣepsavaḥ śaraṇa-dam śaraṇaṁ prapannāḥ*

Their minds very much disturbed, those saintly ladies placed their children before them and then bowed down to the Lord of all creatures, laying their bodies flat upon the ground. They desired the liberation of their sinful husband and the shelter of the Supreme Lord, the giver of ultimate shelter, and thus they folded their hands in supplication and approached Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya’s wives offered respects to Sri Kṛṣṇa by paying obeisances on the ground. It is understood that in Kaliya’s lake there was an island, where Kaliya held Kṛṣṇa in his coils. The inhabitants of Vraja could see this. The wives placed their children before them to invoke Kṛṣṇa’s compassion.

Text 33

*nāga-patnya ūcuḥ,
nyāyyo hi daṇḍaḥ kṛta-kilbiṣe ’smims,
tavāvatāraḥ khala-nigrahāya,
ripoḥ sutānām api tulya-drṣṭir,
dhatse damaṁ phalam evāmuśamsan*

The wives of the Kāliya serpent said: The punishment this offender has been subjected to is certainly just. After all, You have incarnated within this world to curb down envious and cruel persons. You are so impartial that You look equally upon Your enemies and Your own sons, for when You impose a punishment on a living being You know it to be for his ultimate benefit.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wives of Kaliya [Naga-patnis] began praising Kṛṣṇa by first approving of His punishment in order to appease His anger.

The Naga-patnis prayed, “One must certainly bear the responsibility of his wicked deeds in the form of violence to the innocent and devoted. You protect the good and punish the wicked without any partiality. You look equally (*tulya-dṛṣṭiḥ*) upon Your enemies and Your own sons. Although Hiranyakasipu was Your enemy, You protected his son Prahlada. Yet You killed Narakasura even though he was Your own son. You do not harbor any animosity while punishing the wicked because You know it will bring the ultimate benefit. After relieving them of their demoniac nature by hellish suffering, You reward them with the eternal happiness of liberation.”

Text 34

*anugraho 'yam bhavataḥ kṛto hi no,
daṇḍo 'satām te khalu kalmaṣāpahā,
yad dandaśūkatvam amuṣya dehinaḥ,
krodho 'pi te 'nugraha eva sammataḥ*

What You have done here is actually mercy for us, since the punishment You give to the wicked certainly drives away all their contamination. Indeed, because this conditioned soul, our husband, is so sinful that he has assumed the body of a serpent, Your anger toward him is obviously to be understood as Your mercy.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis continued, “Thus Your punishment is actually mercy for us, because the punishment You give to the wicked relieves them of all their sins. Due to grievous sins our husband attained the body of a snake and displayed anger and other

bad qualities.”

Text 35

*tapah sutaptam kim anena pūrvam,
nirasta-mānena ca māna-dena,
dharmo 'tha vā sarva-janānukampayā,
yato bhavāms tuṣyati sarva-jīvaḥ*

Did our husband carefully perform austerities in a previous life, with his mind free of pride and full of respect for others? Is that why You are pleased with him? Or did he in some previous existence carefully execute religious duties with compassion for all living beings, and is that why You, the life of all living beings, are now satisfied with him?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “Previously we said that punishment was mercy, but this case is different. Though an object is very difficult to attain, one can easily attain it if he has previously done pious activities.” In this way they reason.

The Naga-patnis continued, “With his mind free from false pride and full of respect for others, Kaliya must have done austerities in a previous life. Such austerity is characteristic of a real Vaisnava, for one does not see this type of austerity practiced by the nondevotees. As the Lord says, ‘I am not pleased with wealth or with austerities’, ordinary austerities do not invoke the mercy of God. In some previous life Kaliya executed religious duties with compassion for all living entities, and thus he is a Vaisnava. Mercy towards all living entities is not seen in the heart of a fruitive worker.

“Because of Kaliya’s *tapas* (penance) and *dharma* (religious duties), he has received the affection of the Lord in the form of holding the Lord’s lotus feet on his head. If a person respects all living entities and treats

them with compassion, then the Supreme Lord, who is the shelter of all entities, becomes satisfied.” That is the meaning of this verse.

What follows is the inferred meaning of the verse: The Naga-patnis said, “If You maintain the existence of all living entities and satisfy them with Your compassion, then why are You kicking our husband on the head?”

Text 36

*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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Actually the mercy given to Kaliya was not a result of his *tapas* or *dharma* (austerities or piety). It was just Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable causeless mercy. This is expressed in three verses.

The Naga-patnis prayed, “We cannot understand what type of pious activity the most sinful Kaliya performed to get this result (*anubhava*). What result? It is very difficult to attain even a particle of dust at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet by any type of pious activity such as austerity. It is even rarer to get the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s feet, what to speak of having them dance on one’s head. Even the goddess of fortune, who is Your intimate consort in Your form as Narayana and a much greater devotee than Brahma, could not fulfill her desire to touch Your feet in Your form as a cowherd boy even after performing severe austerities.”

Text 37

*na nāka-prṣṭham na ca sārva-bhaumam,
na pārameṣṭhyam na rasādhipatyam,
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā,
vāñchanti yat-pāda-rajah-prapannāḥ*

Those who have attained the dust of Your lotus feet never hanker for the kingship of heaven, limitless sovereignty, the position of Brahmā or rulership over the earth. They are not interested even in the perfections of yoga or in liberation itself.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing the Naga-patnis, Kṛṣṇa may have replied, “But what great result will a person get by attaining the dust of My feet?”

The Naga-patnis answer Kṛṣṇa’s question by saying, “No, You cannot say this. The result is greater than anything else. Those who surrender to You do not hanker for residence on Svargaloka. What then to speak of those who have attained the dust from Your feet?”

Text 38

*tad eṣa nāthāpa durāpam anyais,
tamo-janiḥ krodha-vaśo ’py ahīśaḥ,
saṁsāra-cakre bhramataḥ śarīriṇo,
yad-icchataḥ syād vibhavaḥ samakṣaḥ*

O Lord, although this Kāliya, the king of the serpents, has taken birth in the mode of ignorance and is controlled by anger, he has

achieved that which is difficult for others to achieve. Embodied souls, who are full of desires and are thus wandering in the cycle of birth and death, can have all benedictions manifested before their eyes simply by receiving the dust of Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “The dust from Your feet gives the highest result. Simply by receiving that dust conditioned souls can attain all material enjoyments. Somehow Kaliya, the king of the snakes, who is full of ignorance and showed anger towards You, attained Your lotus feet, which even Lakṣmi and others find difficult to achieve.”

Text 39

*namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate,
puruṣāya mahātmane,
bhūtāvāsāya bhūtāya,
parāya paramātmane*

We offer our obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although present in the hearts of all living beings as the Supersoul, You are all-pervasive. Although the original shelter of all created material elements, You exist prior to their creation. And although the cause of everything, You are transcendental to all material cause and effect, being the Supreme Soul.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After glorifying the mercy of the Lord in six verses [33-38], the Naga-patnis bow down to Sri Kṛṣṇa eleven times in the next ten verses [39-48] by devotedly saying *namaḥ* eleven times.

The Naga-patnis prayed, “We offer obeisances unto You, the supreme object of worship for the devotees. You are the Supreme Person with

six transcendental qualities (*bhagavan*), yet You manifest a sweet human-like form (*purusa*). Although You are all-pervasive (*mahā-ātmane*), in Your human-like form You are the object of worship of the *yogis* (*mahātma*). You dwell in all living entities (*bhūtāvāsāya*) as the Supersoul (*paramātma*). And although You are the original shelter of all material elements (*bhūta-āvāsāya*), You exist even prior to their creation (*bhūtāya*).”

Text 40

*jñāna-vijñāna-nīdhaye,
brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye,
aguṇāyāvīkārāya,
namas te prākṛtāya ca*

Obeisances unto You, the Absolute Truth, who are the reservoir of all transcendental consciousness and potency and the possessor of unlimited energies. Although completely free of material qualities and transformations, You are the prime mover of material nature.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the mood of the *jñānis*, the Naga-patnis prayed, “We offer respects to the Absolute Truth, who is the reservoir of all knowledge and *cit-sakti*, spiritual potency (*jñāna-vijñāna*), just as the ocean (*nīdhaye*) is the reservoir of all gems.” In the mood of devotion, the Naga-patnis continued, “We offer respects to You as the ocean of infinite inconceivable powers (*ananta sakti*). We offer respects to You whose transcendental qualities never transform into material qualities (*agunaya avikaraya*). We offer respects to You who have a variety of non-material, spiritual qualities (*aprākṛtāya*).” The idea put forth by foolish persons that the Supreme Lord has material qualities is rejected by the devotees who adore Sri Kṛṣṇa in His irresistibly attractive human-like form.

Text 41

*kālāya kāla-nābhāya,
kālāvayava-sākṣiṇe,
viśvāya tad-upadraṣṭre,
tat-kartre viśva-hetave*

Obeisances unto You, who are time itself, the shelter of time and the witness of time in all its phases. You are the universe, and also its separate observer. You are its creator, and also the totality of all its causes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the Lord appears in time and space, He is not affected by the qualities of material time and space. The Naga-patnis prayed, “We pay respects to You who are time itself (kalaya), the shelter of time (kala nabhaya), the witness of time in all its phases (kala avayava saksi). You witness time but are unaffected by it. We pay respects to You. Although You are the universe (visva), You remain untouched by it as the separate observer. You are its creator and the cause of all causes. What more can be said? We offer respects to You.”

Texts 42–43

*bhūta-mātrendriya-prāṇa,
mano-buddhy-āśayātmane,
tri-guṇenābhimānena,
gūḍha-svātmānubhūtaye,
namo ’nantāya sūkṣmāya,
kūṭa-sthāya vipaścite,*

*nānā-vādānurodhāya,
vācya-vācaka-śaktaye*

Obeisances unto You, who are the ultimate soul of the physical elements, of the subtle basis of perception, of the senses, of the vital air of life, and of the mind, intelligence and consciousness. By Your arrangement the infinitesimal spirit souls falsely identify with the three modes of material nature, and their perception of their own true self thus becomes clouded. We offer our obeisances unto You, the unlimited Supreme Lord, the supremely subtle one, the omniscient Personality of Godhead, who are always fixed in unchanging transcendence, who sanction the opposing views of different philosophies, and who are the power upholding expressed ideas and the words that express them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The Naga-patnis continued, “You are not just the cause, You are the very soul of the material elements. It is most astonishing that by Your arrangement the minute souls, though full of dynamic spiritual potential, appear lifeless like dull matter. You cover the perception (*anubhutaye*) of the living entities (*svātma*) by the three modes of material nature (*tri-guṇena*).”

(Text 43)

*The Naga-patnis prayed,
“What is the conclusion of all this? We cannot find the end to You
(ananta),
because You are difficult to understand (sukṣma).”*

Kṛṣṇa replies, “But intelligent men say that the living entity is different from Me and that I cover the living entities. Therefore how can you say I am non-different from them?”

The Naga-patnis answer, “You are *kutastha*. The dictionary says

kutastha means He who pervades all three phases of time. Thus You remain in one form for all time, whereas the living entities (*jivas*) take various forms for short periods of time. These forms are not their *svarupa*, eternal spiritual form. Therefore You cannot be the same as the *jiva*.

“You know everything (*vipascit*) but the *jivas* know very little. We pay respects to He who, for His own purposes, sanctions all types of philosophies such as the *jiva* is non-different from God; the *jiva* is material; God is consciousness; God is one alone, and the *jivas* are many. All of these opposing views take shelter of scripture. We pay respects to You, by whose desire arises the power of many meanings for many words (*vacya vacaka sakti*).”

Text 44

*namaḥ pramāṇa-mūlāya,
kavaye śāstra-yonaye,
pravṛttāya nivṛttāya,
nigamāya namo namaḥ*

We offer our obeisances again and again to You, who are the basis of all authoritative evidence, who are the author and ultimate source of the revealed scriptures, and who have manifested Yourself in those Vedic literatures encouraging sense gratification as well as in those encouraging renunciation of the material world.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “We pay respects to the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the basis of all authoritative evidence and the topmost scriptural proof (*mula pramana*), and to Vedavyasa, its compiler (*kavaye*). You are personally present in the revealed scriptures. We pay respects to You who are the source (*yonī*) of the revealed scriptures (*sastra*). The same phrase (*sastra yonitvat*)

is seen in the *Vedanta-sutra*. We offer obeisances unto the scriptures, which although propounding *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa*, can be grouped in two categories: *pravrtti* (sense gratification) and *nivrtti* (renunciation). We offer respects unto You who are the origin (*nigama*) of both.”

Text 45

*namaḥ kṛṣṇāya rāmāya,
vasudeva-sutāya ca,
pradyumnāyāniruddhāya,
sātvatām pataye namaḥ*

We offer our obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Rāma, the sons of Vasudeva, and to Lord Pradyumna and Lord Aniruddha. We offer our respectful obeisances unto the master of all the saintly devotees of Viṣṇu.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the Naga-patnis glorify all the forms mentioned in the scriptures, especially Kṛṣṇa’s eternal four-fold plenary expansions, the *catur-vyūha* (Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha). The words *kṛṣṇaya* and *ramaya* indicate Vasudeva and Sankarsana. The word *ca* indicates the son of Nanda. The Naga-patnis prayed, “We offer respects to all these forms, including the son of Vasudeva (*vasudeva suta*) and Nanda’s son as well (*ca*). We offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the protector of Vasudeva and others in the Satvata dynasty (*satvatam pati*).”

Text 46

namo guṇa-pradīpāya,

*guṇātma-cchādanāya ca,
guṇa-vṛtty-upalakṣyāya,
guṇa-draṣṭre sva-saṁvide*

Obeisances to You, O Lord, who manifest varieties of material and spiritual qualities. You disguise Yourself with the material qualities, and yet the functioning of those same material qualities ultimately reveals Your existence. You stand apart from the material qualities as a witness and can be fully known only by Your devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the Nāga-patnīs are addressing Kṛṣṇa as “He who manifests (*pradīpāya*) various material and spiritual qualities (*guṇa-pradīpāya*).” Kṛṣṇa covers Himself with the screen of material nature; therefore He is called *guṇātma-cchādanāya*. But Kṛṣṇa can be recognized by His extraordinary quality of extreme *bhaktavatsalya* (*guṇa-vṛtty-upalakṣyāya*) by which He makes the living entities Kṛṣṇa conscious. No one except *svayam bhagavan* Sri Kṛṣṇa has this quality. Seeing the good qualities (*guṇa-draṣṭre*) in His own (*sva*) devotees and not the faults, Kṛṣṇa allows Himself to be known (*saṁvide*) only by them, and also that ultimately only Kṛṣṇa can know Himself (*saṁvide*) perfectly.

Text 47

*avyākṛta-vihārāya,
sarva-vyākṛta-siddhaye,
hṛṣīkeśa namas te 'stu,
munaye mauna-śīline*

O Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, master of the senses, please let us offer our obeisances unto You, whose pastimes are inconceivably glorious.

Your existence can be inferred from the necessity for a creator and revealer of all cosmic manifestations. But although Your devotees can understand You in this way, to the non-devotees You remain silent, absorbed in self-satisfaction.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “You are called *avyakṛta vihara* because Your pastimes are unfathomable (*avyakṛta*), even by scripture, or because You have pastimes which appear material, or because Your pastimes are devoid of any special formalities or pomp (amorous affairs without marriage etc.). You endow Your devotee with a variety of abilities to serve You with perfection (*sarva vyakṛta siddhi*). You enchant all the senses (*hrsikesa*) of Your devotees. For those devoid of *bhakti* You are *atmarama*, self-satisfied (*muni*). For those who pray for the fulfillment of desires You are silent (*mauna sila*); neither bestowing happiness nor relieving distress.”

Text 48

*parāvara-gati-jñāya,
sarvādhyakṣāya te namaḥ,
aviśvāya ca viśvāya,
tad-draṣṭre 'sya ca hetave*

Obeisances unto You, who know the destination of all things, superior and inferior, and who are the presiding regulator of all that be. You are distinct from the universal creation, and yet You are the basis upon which the illusion of material creation evolves, and also the witness of this illusion. Indeed, You are the root cause of the entire world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “You know the goal to be attained by the devotee (*para*) and the non-devotee

(*avara*). You are the superintendent of all results, and thus knowing what is proper, You bestow results to each according to what He deserves. Though You dispense the fruits of one's *karma*, You are not bound by *karma* because You are distinct from matter (*avisva*). When it is necessary You create this material universe by Your *maya-sakti*, and remain as its overseer (*visva drasta*). Therefore You are the primal cause of the universe, animating it and directing its transformations.”

Text 49

*tvaṁ hy asya janma-sthiti-saṁyamān vibho,
guṇair anīho 'kṛta-kāla-śakti-dhṛk,
tat-tat-svabhāvān pratibodhayan sataḥ,
samīkṣayāmogha-vihāra īhase*

O almighty Lord, although You have no reason to become involved in material activity, still You act through Your eternal potency of time to arrange for the creation, maintenance and destruction of this universe. You do this by awakening the distinct functions of each of the modes of nature, which before the creation lie dormant. Simply by Your glance You perfectly execute all these activities of cosmic control in a sporting mood.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asks, “What is the purpose in creating this universe, giving it life and transformation?”

The Naga-patnis answer, “Simply by glancing upon the material nature after the end of the previous *kalpa*, You wake up the *jivas* resting in the *pradhana* to their previous nature, and then proceed with creation, maintenance and destruction through the three modes of nature (*gunaih*) *rajas*, *sattva* and *tamas*. Though You activate the modes of nature, You are not involved with any material endeavor (*anīhah*). All this is brought about through Your eternal potency of time. Just by Your glance

You execute all these activities in a playful mood.”

Text 50

*tasyaiva te 'mūs tanavas tri-lokyām,
śāntā aśāntā uta mūdha-yonayaḥ,
śāntāḥ priyās te hy adhunāvitum satām,
sthātuś ca te dharma-parīpsayehataḥ*

Therefore all material bodies throughout the three worlds—those that are peaceful, in the mode of goodness; those that are agitated, in the mode of passion; and those that are foolish, in the mode of ignorance—all are Your creations. Still, those living entities whose bodies are in the mode of goodness are especially dear to You, and it is to maintain them and protect their religious principles that You are now present on the earth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa inquires, “What is the intention of Your praises?”

The Naga-patnis reply, “You are the creator of all the material bodies throughout the universe. At the time of creation You awaken the bad qualities within the nondevotees, so how is it possible for Kaliya to give up his cruel nature on his own? Though all the bodies in the universe are created by You, we see that the living entities who take to devotion are dear to You. You are present on the earth to maintain Your devotees, and help them uphold their religious principles.”

Text 51

*aparādhaḥ sakṛd bhartrā,
soḍhavyaḥ sva-prajā-kṛtaḥ,*

*kṣantum arhasi śāntātman,
mūdhasya tvām ajānataḥ*

At least once, a master should tolerate an offense committed by his child or subject. O supreme peaceful Soul, You should therefore forgive our foolish husband, who did not understand who You are.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Naga-patnis prayed, “You should tolerate the offense Kaliya has committed against Your devotees. After having been taught a lesson by You, however, if Kaliya again harasses Your devotees You are not obliged to forgive him. Our husband Kaliya is qualified for forgiveness because he is ignorant and foolish.” Because of their extreme anxiety, the Naga-patnis ask Kṛṣṇa twice to forgive Kaliya. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *santa*, peaceful, because that is the cause of forgiveness.

Text 52

*anugṛhṇīṣva bhagavan,
prāṇāms tyajati pannagaḥ,
strīṇām naḥ sādhu-śocyānām,
patiḥ prāṇaḥ pradīyatām*

O Supreme Lord, please be merciful. It is proper for the saintly to feel compassion for women like us. This serpent is about to give up his life. Please give us back our husband, who is our life and soul.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa says, “I have diagnosed Kaliya’s disease, treated and cured him. But to wipe out the last traces of the disease, I must stomp on His head seven or eight times more. You should permit this.”

The Naga-patnis plead, “We fear that if You give our husband this strong medicine of punishment, which is actually some more mercy to purify him of all his offenses (*aparadha*), he may die; for he is just about to leave his body.”

Kṛṣṇa replies, “What does it matter if he gives up this snake body? What can he do with this body? It is better that that he gets a spiritual body as My devotee.”

Naga-patnis: “If we beautiful women become widows we will be engaged by force to enjoy with another sinful snake. Since Kaliya is now a Vaisnava, he has become the object of our affection and our life and soul.”

Text 53

*vidhehi te kiṅkarṇām,
anuṣṭheyam tavājñayā,
yac-chraddhayānutiṣṭhan vai,
mucyate sarvato bhayāt*

**Now please tell us, Your maidservants, what we should do.
Certainly anyone who faithfully executes Your order is
automatically freed from all fear.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa says, “Then take your husband. I am giving him to you, but you must follow My order.”

The Naga-patnis answer, “Yes, we will follow. Please give us the order (*vidhehi*).” The order is revealed in a later verse.

Text 54

śrī-śuka uvāca,

*ittham sa nāga-patnībhir,
bhagavān samabhiṣṭutaḥ,
mūrcchitam bhagna-śīrasam,
visasarjānghri-kuṭṭanaiḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus praised by the Nāga-patnīs, the Supreme Personality of Godhead released the serpent Kāliya, who had fallen unconscious, his heads battered by the striking of the Lord’s lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After punishing Kaliya with the blows of His feet, Kṛṣṇa immediately jumped down from his hoods and stood before the snake and his wives.

Text 55

*pratilabdhendriya-prāṇaḥ,
kāliyaḥ śanakair harim,
kṛcchrāt samucchvasan dīnaḥ,
kṛṣṇam prāha kṛtāñjaliḥ*

Kāliya slowly regained his vital force and sensory functions. Then, breathing loudly and painfully, the poor serpent addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in humble submission.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because his whole body was suffering from pain, Kaliya merely folded his hands (*krta-anjaliḥ*) with great difficulty, but he could not bow down on the ground before Kṛṣṇa.

Text 56

*kāliya uvāca,
vayaṁ khalāḥ sahotpattyā,
tamasā dīrgha-manyavaḥ,
svabhāvo dustyajo nātha,
lokānām yad asad-grahaḥ*

The serpent Kāliya said: Our very birth as a snake has made us envious, ignorant and constantly angry. O my Lord, it is so difficult for people to give up their conditioned nature, by which they identify with that which is unreal.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya said, “When even learned men, though knowing it is wrong, become influenced by attraction and repulsion to sense objects, then what fault do I have?”

Text 57

*tvayā sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvaṁ,
dhātar guṇa-visarjanam,
nānā-svabhāva-vīryaujo,
yoni-bījāśayākṛti*

O supreme creator, it is You who generate this universe, composed of the variegated arrangement of the material modes, and in the process You manifest various kinds of personalities and species, varieties of sensory and physical strength, and varieties of mothers and fathers with variegated mentalities and forms.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya said, “You have made this universe with great diversity through the interplay of the modes of

nature (*gunair visarjanam*). You manifest a variety of personal natures and species, various kinds of sensory and physical powers, and varieties of mothers and fathers with variegated forms and desires.”

Text 58

*vayam ca tatra bhagavan,
sarpā jāty-uru-manyavaḥ,
katham tyajāmas tvan-māyām,
dustyajām mohitāḥ svayam*

O Supreme Personality of Godhead, among all the species within Your material creation, we serpents are by nature always enraged. Being thus deluded by Your illusory energy, which is very difficult to give up, how can we possibly give it up on our own?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya said, “By nature I am very angry, therefore how can I possibly give up this insurmountable *maya* on my own?”

Text 59

*bhavān hi kāraṇam tatra,
sarva-jño jagad-īśvaraḥ,
anugrahaṁ nigrahaṁ vā,
manyase tad vidhehi naḥ*

O Lord, since You are the omniscient Lord of the universe, You are the actual cause of freedom from illusion. Please arrange for us whatever You consider proper, whether it be mercy or punishment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kaliya said, “You are the cause of freedom from *maya* (*tatra*). Therefore, as You wish, You may be merciful to me or not.”

Text 60

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ākarṇya vacaḥ prāha,
bhagavān kārya-mānuṣaḥ,
nātra stheyam tvayā sarpa,
samudram yāhi mā ciram,
sva-jñāty-apatya-dārādhyo,
go-nṛbhir bhujyate nadī*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing Kāliya’s words, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was acting the role of a human being, replied: O serpent, you may not remain here any longer. Go back to the ocean immediately, accompanied by your retinue of children, wives, other relatives and friends. Let this river be enjoyed by the cows and humans.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: To punish the powerful serpent Kaliya, which Brahma or Siva would find difficulty in doing, Kṛṣṇa easily did just in a human form (*karya-manusa*). Kṛṣṇa did not employ His conch or disc (*sankha, cakra*) for this act. The word *karya* can also mean pastime. Thus *karya-manusa* can mean “He who takes a form of a human for performing sweet pastimes.” Or *karya-manusa* can mean “Brahman which takes the form of a human.” Or *karya-manusa* can mean “the Lord who performs activities among humans.”

Kṛṣṇa addressed Kaliya, “You must go back to the ocean along with Your children and wives, because the cows and cowherd men use this

Yamuna river and its banks filled with grass, leaves and fruits.”

Text 61

*ya etat saṁsmaren martyas,
tubhyaṁ mad-anuśāsanam,
kīrtayann ubhayoḥ sandhyor,
na yuṣmad bhayam āpnuyāt*

If a mortal being attentively remembers My command to you—to leave Vṛndāvana and go to the ocean—and narrates this account at sunrise and sunset, he will never be afraid of you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya said, “May my fame of being punished by receiving Your feet on my head remain as long as the sun and moon endure.”

Because Kṛṣṇa says here, “You will no longer have fear of snakes,” this verse should be considered a *mantra* to ward off snake bites. There is another *mantra* which can also be recited like a spell to protect one from snakes mentioned in the *Āg Veda*:

*yamunā-hrade hi so yāto, yo nārāyaṇa-vāhanaḥ, yadi kālika-dantasya,
yadi kākālīkād bhayam, janma-bhūmi-paritrāto, virviṣo yāti kālikaḥ*
“Garuda, the bird-carrier of Lord Narayana, came to visit the lake in the Yamuna. One need no longer fear the bites of Kaliya nor his deadly poison. The Lord who protects Vrajabhumi has made Kaliya harmless.”

Text 62

*yo 'smin snātvā mad-ākrīde,
devādīms tarpayej jalaiḥ,
upoṣya mām smarann arcet,*

sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate

If one bathes in this place of My pastimes and offers the water of this lake to the demigods and other worshipable personalities, or if one observes a fast and duly worships and remembers Me, he is sure to become free from all sinful reactions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “For these reasons you should leave this lake: In order to free themselves from sins people come here to bathe, offer *tarpana*, fast, meditate and worship Me. But if you stay here they cannot do this.”

Text 63

*dvīpaṁ ramaṇakaṁ hitvā,
hradam etam upāśritaḥ,
yad-bhayāt sa suparṇas tvām,
nādyān mat-pāda-lāñchitam*

Out of fear of Garuḍa, you left Ramaṇaka Island and came to take shelter of this lake. But because you are now marked with My footprints, Garuḍa will no longer try to eat you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You will have no more fear of Garuda.” This is the import of this verse.

Text 64

*śrī-ṛṣir uvāca,
mukto bhagavatā rājan,*

*kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmanā,
taṁ pūjayām āsa mudā,
nāga-patnyaś ca sādaram*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, having been released by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose activities are wonderful, Kāliya joined his wives in worshiping Him with great joy and reverence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa performed a most wonderful activity (*adbhuta karma*) by saving the Vrajavasis from Kaliya, protecting Kaliya from Garuda, and benefiting both the victims of violence and the perpetrator of violence. The word *kṛṣṇena*, “by Kṛṣṇa” refers to *karṣaṇam* which means to withdraw or remove. Kṛṣṇa removed Kaliya’s offense to Garuda and the Vrajavasis because the Naga-patnis worshiped Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion.

Texts 65–67

*divyāmbara-sraṅ-manibhiḥ,
parārdhyair api bhūṣaṇaiḥ,
divya-gandhānulepaiś ca,
mahatyotpala-mālayā,
pūjayitvā jagan-nāthaṁ,
prasādyā garuḍa-dhvajam,
tataḥ prīto ’bhyanujñātaḥ,
parikramyābhivandya tam,
sa-kalatra-suhṛt-putro,
dvīpam abdhher jagāma ha,
tadaiva sāmṛta-jalā,
yamunā nirviṣābhavat,
anugrahād bhagavataḥ,*

Kāliya worshiped the Lord of the universe by offering Him fine garments, along with necklaces, jewels and other valuable ornaments, wonderful scents and ointments, and a large garland of lotus flowers. Having thus pleased the Lord, whose flag is marked with the emblem of Garuḍa, Kāliya felt satisfied. Receiving the Lord’s permission to leave, Kāliya circumambulated Him and offered Him obeisances. Then, taking his wives, friends and children, he went to his island in the sea. The very moment Kāliya left, the Yamunā was immediately restored to her original condition, free from poison and full of nectarean water. This happened by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was manifesting a humanlike form to enjoy His pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In verse sixty-two Kṛṣṇa said that one can become sinless by worshiping and remembering the Lord. Therefore, Kaliya now begins to worship Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Kaliya said, “Although I am the most sinful, You gave me the most mercy. You have not put Your foot on others’ heads and marked them with Your disc and conch. With great respect I, along with my wives, will offer You cooling sandalwood pulp from my hand because Your body was burned by the poison from my fangs.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “But applying these ointments will take time.”

Kaliya said, “Then please sit my Lord.” After making Kṛṣṇa sit down, Kaliya and his wives applied sandalwood to the Lord’s body. Fulfilling their hearts’ desire, Kaliya and his wives attained the mercy of the Lord and then left the Yamuna. This is described in two and half verses.

The Kaustubha gem (*maṇibhiḥ*) which adorned Kṛṣṇa’s neck from His birth was lost in the coils of Kaliya in order to create excitement in His human pastimes of fighting and struggling with Kaliya. Without anyone’s notice, Kṛṣṇa made His Kaustubha gem enter Kaliya’s treasury. Then at the time of worshiping Kṛṣṇa with different jewels and

ornaments, the Naga-patnis, unaware of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental trick, offered the Kaustubha gem to Him, thinking it was just one of their own jewels (*maṇibhiḥ*).

This is described in *Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* by Srila Rupa Gosvami as follows:

*kaustubhākhyo maṇir yena, praviśya hradam auragam kāliya-preyasi-
vr̥nda, hastair ātmopahāritaḥ*

“The Lord had made His Kaustubha jewel enter the serpent’s lake, and then He arranged for it to be presented to Himself by the hands of Kāliya’s wives.”

Being pleased with Kaliya, Kṛṣṇa, whose flag is marked with the emblem of Garuda (*garuda dhvaja*), placed His lotus hand on Kaliya’s head and removed all his pain.

Kaliya said, “O one who rides on Garuda! Now I am the servant of my older brother Garuda. If by chance Garuda is not present to carry You, then just remember me as Your personal carrier. I am the servant of Your servant, and in the wink of an eye I will instantly appear from millions of *yojanas* away.” This is the implication of use of the words *garuḍa-dhvajam*.

The *Puranas* state that in a different *kalpa* when Kamsa orders Kṛṣṇa to come to Mathura for a wrestling match, the Lord sometimes goes there sitting on Kaliya.

The phrase *kr̥ḍā-mānuṣa-rūpiṇaḥ* means that Kṛṣṇa eternally manifests a human-like body for relishing playful pastimes. By Kṛṣṇa’s touch the Yamuna became free of poison and filled with nectar.

Chapter Seventeen: The History of Kaliya

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
nāgālayaṁ ramaṇakam,
katham tatyāja kāliyaḥ,
kṛtam kim vā suparṇasya,
tenaikenāsamañjasam*

[Having thus heard how Lord Kṛṣṇa chastised Kāliya,] King Parīkṣit inquired: Why did Kāliya leave Ramaṇaka Island, the abode of the serpents, and why did Garuḍa become so antagonistic toward him alone?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter relates the reasons for Kaliya's fear of Garuda, Saubhari Muni's curse on Garuda, Kṛṣṇa's reunion with the Vrajavasis, and saving the boys from the forest fire.

Texts 2–3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
upahāryaiḥ sarpa-janair,
māsi māsiṥha yo baliḥ,
vānaspato mahā-bāho,
nāgānām prāṇ-nirūpitaḥ,
svaṁ svaṁ bhāgaṁ prayacchanti,
nāgāḥ parvaṇi parvaṇi,
gopīthāyātmanaḥ sarve,*

suparṇāya mahātmane

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: To avoid being eaten by Garuḍa, the serpents had previously made an arrangement with him whereby they would each make a monthly offering of tribute at the base of a tree. Thus every month on schedule, O mighty-armed King Parīkṣit, each serpent would duly make his offering to that powerful carrier of Viṣṇu as a purchase of protection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Once every fifteen days (*parvani parvani*) the snakes used to individually offer Garuda specially prepared fruits and roots under a tree so that he would not eat them and to insure their protection (*gopithaya*).

Text 4

*viṣa-vīrya-madāviṣṭaḥ,
kādraveyas tu kāliyaḥ,
kadarthī-kṛtya garuḍam,
svayam tam bubhuje balim*

Although all the other serpents were dutifully making offerings to Garuḍa, one serpent—the arrogant Kāliya, son of Kadru—would eat all these offerings before Garuḍa could claim them. Thus Kāliya directly defied the carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya did not offer his share to Garuda, and moreover he ate all the other offerings meant for Garuda. Thus Kaliya directly disrespected (*kadarthi kṛtya*) the bearer of Visnu. The other snakes on Ramanaka Island informed Garuda about Kaliya’s arrogant behavior.

Text 5

*tac chrutvā kupito rājan,
bhagavān bhagavat-priyaḥ,
vijghāmsur mahā-vegaḥ,
kāliyaṁ samapādravat*

O King, the greatly powerful Garuḍa, who is very dear to the Supreme Lord, became angry when he heard of this. Desiring to kill Kāliya, he rushed toward the serpent with tremendous speed.

Text 6

*tam āpatantaṁ tarasā viśāyudhaḥ,
pratyabhyayād utthita-naika-mastakaḥ,
dadbhiḥ suparṇaṁ vyadaśad dad-āyudhaḥ,
karāla-jihrocchvasitogra-locanaḥ*

As Garuḍa swiftly fell upon him, Kāliya, who had the weapon of poison, raised his numerous heads to counterattack. Showing his ferocious tongues and expanding his horrible eyes, Kāliya then bit Garuḍa with the weapons of his fangs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From a great distance Kaliya could spit venom at his enemy, and at short range he could bite with his terrible fangs. Kaliya had a ferocious tongue, loud hissing and terrible eyes.

Text 7

*taṁ tārksya-putraḥ sa nirasya manyumān,
pracaṇḍa-vego madhusūdanāśanaḥ,
pakṣeṇa savyena hiraṇya-rociṣā,
jaghāna kadru-sutam ugra-vikramaḥ*

The angry son of Tārksya moved with overwhelming speed in repelling Kāliya's attack. That terribly powerful carrier of Lord Madhusūdana struck the son of Kadru with his left wing, which shone like gold.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Garuda, the angry son of Kasyapa (*tarksya putra*) and the carrier of Madhusudana, moved quickly to keep Kaliya from biting him.

Text 8

*suparṇa-pakṣābhihataḥ,
kāliyo 'tīva vihvalaḥ,
hradaṁ viveśa kālindyās,
tad-agamyam durāsadam*

Beaten by Garuḍa's wing, Kāliya was extremely distraught, and thus he took shelter of a lake adjoining the river Yamunā. Garuḍa could not enter this lake. Indeed, he could not even approach it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kaliya fled to a lake adjoining the Yamuna which was difficult for others to enter (*durasadam*) because of the depth.

Text 9

tatraikadā jala-caram,
garuḍo bhakṣyam īpsitam,
nivāritaḥ saubhariṇā,
prasahya kṣudhito 'harat

In that very lake Garuḍa had once desired to eat a fish—fish being, after all, his normal food. Although forbidden by the sage Saubhari, who was meditating there within the water, Garuḍa took courage and, feeling hungry, seized the fish.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse explains why Garuda could not enter Kaliya's lake. Saubhari committed two offenses against the great devotee Garuda: first, he dared to give an order to his superior, and second, he obstructed Garuda's happiness. Disobeying Saubhari's order, Garuda committed violence by eating the fish. But this was not an offense because Garuda was superior to Saubhari Muni.

Text 10

mīnān su-duḥkhitān dṛṣṭvā,
dīnān mīna-patau hate,
kṛpayā saubhariḥ prāha,
tatratya-kṣemam ācaran

Seeing how the unfortunate fish in that lake had become most unhappy at the death of their leader, Saubhari uttered the following curse under the impression that he was mercifully acting for the

benefit of the lake's residents.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the third offense to Garuda. Though showing compassion toward the fish, Saubhari displayed anger towards Garuda. Saubhari's attempt to help the fish had the opposite effect because Kaliya moved there and thus spelled doom for all the lake's residents. This verse illustrates that when one's so-called compassion does not tally with the order of the Supreme, it merely creates chaos.

Text 11

*atra praviśya garuḍo,
yadi matsyān sa khādati,
sadyaḥ prāṇair viyujyeta,
satyam etad bravīmy aham*

If Garuda ever again enters this lake and eats the fish here, he will immediately lose his life. What I am saying is the truth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The statement “If Garuda enters this lake and eats the fish, he will immediately die” means that if Garuda entered the lake but did not eat fish, he would not die immediately, but slowly, whereas if he ate the fish, he would die immediately. Being omniscient, Garuda understood that Saubhari had made this curse, and thus he avoided this lake.

Kaliya had heard this story from his relatives residing in that lake, therefore he took shelter there. Due to his bad association with a fish, Saubhari Muni developed attachment and affection, lost his power of discrimination, and cursed an exalted devotee of Lord Visnu.

The Ninth Canto of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* describes that because of false pride Saubhari Muni committed a great offense, and thus lost his

power of austerity and spiritual beauty, and then fell from the bliss of Brahman. Then Saubhari Muni acquired a youthful body because of his accumulated penances, married many beautiful princesses, and thus fell into a hellish existence of material pleasure. However, because he had once become glorious by taking shelter of the Yamuna River in Vrndavana, he was ultimately delivered.

Text 12

*tat kāliyaḥ param veda,
nānyaḥ kaścana lelihaḥ,
avātsīd garuḍād bhītaḥ,
kṛṣṇena ca vivāsitaḥ*

Of all the serpents, only Kāliya came to know of this affair, and in fear of Garuḍa he took up residence in that Yamunā lake. Later Lord Kṛṣṇa drove him out.

Texts 13–14

*kṛṣṇam hradād viniṣkrāntam,
divya-srag-gandha-vāsasam,
mahā-maṇi-gaṇākīrṇam,
jāmbūnada-pariṣkṛtam,
upalabhyotthitāḥ sarve,
labdha-prāṇā ivāsavaḥ,
pramoda-nibhṛtātmāno,
gopāḥ prītyābhirebhire*

[Resuming his description of Kṛṣṇa’s chastisement of Kāliya,

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Kṛṣṇa rose up out of the lake wearing divine garlands, fragrances and garments, covered with many fine jewels, and decorated with gold. When the cowherds saw Him they all stood up immediately, just like an unconscious person’s senses coming back to life. Filled with great joy, they affectionately embraced Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: [After completing this story Sukadeva returns to the main story.] This verse indicates that Kṛṣṇa came out of the lake in a special way. Kṛṣṇa was kicking His feet in the water, and unseen by others, placing His feet upon the heads of other serpents in the water that had been ordered to serve Kṛṣṇa by Kaliya. If this were not so, Kṛṣṇa’s whole body would have again become wet. The description of Kṛṣṇa’s wearing divine flower garlands and fresh cloth would not be appropriate. The boys regained their sense perception just like a dying man regaining his vital force. Their minds were filled with bliss (*pramoda nibhrta atmanah*). *Gopa* here refers to Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd boy friends, not the cowherd men. Because of natural unsteadiness, the boys would have embraced Kṛṣṇa before the elders.

Text 15

*yaśodā rohiṇī nando,
gopyo gopāś ca kaurava,
kṛṣṇaṁ sametya labdhehā,
āsan śuṣkā nagā api*

Having regained their vital functions, Yaśodā, Rohiṇī, Nanda and all the other cowherd women and men went up to Kṛṣṇa. O descendant of Kuru, even the dried-up trees came back to life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Disregarding any embarrassment

or fear of her elders, mother Yasoda exclaimed with great happiness in a choked voice, “My son has been saved!” Rohini and other close friends stood behind Yasoda in a tight circle. Nanda Maharaja stood behind Rohini. Due to impatience over the delay in meeting his son, Nanda Maharaja, overwhelmed in love, abandoned his normal gravity and hastily made his way through the throng of women. Other elder cowherd men and women stood behind this intimate group. Having been saved from death, the elderly gopis returned to life and hurried to Kṛṣṇa. However, the word *ca* indicates that the young damsels of Vraja such as Radhika, who were developing their loving attachment for Kṛṣṇa, glanced upon their darling from a distance.

Text 16

*rāmaś cācyutam āliṅgya,
jahāsāsyaṅubhāva-vit,
preṃṇā tam aṅkam āropya,
punaḥ punar udaikṣata,
gāvo vṛṣā vatsataryo,
lebhire paramām mudam*

Lord Balarāma embraced His infallible brother and laughed, knowing well the extent of Kṛṣṇa’s potency. Out of great feelings of love, Balarāma lifted Kṛṣṇa up on His lap and repeatedly looked at Him. The cows, bulls and young female calves also achieved the highest pleasure.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Smiling, Balarama said, “You have done just the right thing.” Though Balarama was well aware of Kṛṣṇa’s strength, He looked at Him intently (*udaikṣata*) again and again (*punaḥ punaḥ*) in order to see if Kṛṣṇa had incurred any injuries from fighting Kaliya.

Text 17

*nandaṁ viprāḥ samāgatya,
guravaḥ sa-kalatrakāḥ,
ūcus te kāliya-grasto,
diṣṭyā muktas tavātmajaḥ*

All the respectable brāhmaṇas, together with their wives, came forward to greet Nanda Mahārāja. They said to him, “Your son was in the grips of Kāliya, but by the grace of Providence He is now free.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Guravaḥ* refers to Purohitas [family priests] such as Bhaguri Muni, the chief *pandita* in the court of Nanda Maharaja.

Text 18

*dehi dānaṁ dvi-jātīnām,
kṛṣṇa-nirmukti-hetave,
nandaḥ prīta-manā rājan,
gāḥ suvarṇaṁ tadādiśat*

The brāhmaṇas then advised Nanda Mahārāja, “To assure that your son Kṛṣṇa will always be free from danger, you should give charity to the brāhmaṇas.” With a satisfied mind, O King, Nanda Mahārāja then very gladly gave them gifts of cows and gold.

Text 19

*yaśodāpi mahā-bhāgā,
naṣṭa-labdha-prajā sate,
pariṣvajyāṅkam āropya,
mumocāśru-kalām muhuḥ*

The greatly fortunate mother Yaśodā, having lost her son and then regained Him, placed Him on her lap. That chaste lady cried constant torrents of tears as she repeatedly embraced Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After getting back her son who was almost lost (*nasta labdha prajā*), mother Yasoda sat Kṛṣṇa on her lap and tightly embraced Him. Yasoda could not do this before because there were many people around.

Text 20

*tām rātrim tatra rājendra,
kṣut-tṛḍbhyām śrama-karṣitāḥ,
ūṣur vrayaukaso gāvaḥ,
kālindyā upakūlataḥ*

O best of kings [Parīkṣit], because the residents of Vṛndāvana were feeling very weak from hunger, thirst and fatigue, they and the cows spent the night where they were, lying down near the bank of the Kālindī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrajavasis looked at Kṛṣṇa with unblinking eyes and said, “Let us rest here tonight. By good fortune

Kaliya has gone, but if he comes back to take revenge, then all of us can fight him with clubs.” The Vrajavasis situated themselves at another place on the bank (*upakulatah*) of the Yamuna due to fear of the poisonous water in Kaliya’s lake. They found a place where there would be no possibility of being surrounded by fire, and where they could fulfill their desire to keep Kṛṣṇa constantly in their sight.

Text 21

*tadā śuci-vanodbhūto,
dāvāgniḥ sarvato vrajam,
suptam niśītha āvr̥tya,
pradagdhum upacakrame*

During the night, while all the people of Vṛndāvana were asleep, a great fire blazed up within the dry summer forest. The fire surrounded the inhabitants of Vraja on all sides and began to scorch them.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Śuci* means summer. A fire blazed up in the forest dried by the summer heat, and surrounded the sleeping cows and the Vrajavasis. Perhaps a loyal friend of Kaliya had assumed the form of a fire to avenge his friend, or maybe the fire was manifest by a demon follower of Kamsa.

Text 22

*tata utthāya sambhrāntā,
dahyamānā vrajaukaśaḥ,
kṛṣṇam yayus te śaraṇam,
māyā-manujam īśvaram*

Then the residents of Vṛndāvana woke up, extremely disturbed by the great fire threatening to burn them. Thus they took shelter of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, who by His spiritual potency appeared like an ordinary human being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Vrajaukasa* refers to those who lived in Vraja engaged in agricultural work. Kṛṣṇa is described as *manujam*, appearing as a human being, in His original form. The Vedic *mantras* state, *svarūpa-bhūtayā nitya-śaktyā māyākhyayā*: “The Lord’s eternal potency named *māyā* is innate in His original form.” Thus within the eternal spiritual body of Sri Kṛṣṇa there is infinite potency, which effortlessly manipulates all existence according to the omniscient desire of the Lord.

The Vrajavasis took shelter of Kṛṣṇa, thinking, “Lord Narayana will surely empower this darling boy to protect us.” They remembered what Gargacarya had said about Kṛṣṇa during His birth ceremony, “By His power you will easily be able to cross over all obstacles.” (SB 10.8.16) Therefore the Vrajavasis took complete shelter in Kṛṣṇa with full faith that He would save them from the forest fire.

Text 23

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bhaga,
he rāmāmita-vikrama,
eṣa ghoratamo vahnis,
tāvakān grasate hi naḥ*

[Vṛndāvana’s residents said:] Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O Lord of all opulence! O Rāma, possessor of unlimited power! This most terrible fire is about to devour us, Your devotees!

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The Vrajavasis called out to Balarama as well, because He had also shown that He was omniscient. By saying *amita-vikrama*, they infer that Balarama, like Kṛṣṇa, was invested with the supernatural power of some demigod.

Text 24

*su-dustarān naḥ svān pāhi,
kālagneḥ suhṛdaḥ prabho,
na śaknumas tvac-caraṇam,
santyaktum akuto-bhayam*

O Lord, we are Your true friends and devotees. Please protect us from this insurmountable fire of death. We can never give up Your lotus feet, which drive away all fear.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Kalagneh* here means the fire of death. The Vrajavasis prayed, “O Lord! If we die in this fire, we will be separated from Your lotus feet, and this is unbearable for us. Therefore, please save us just so we can keep serving You.”

Text 25

*ittham sva-jana-vaiklavyam,
nirīkṣya jagad-īśvaraḥ,
tam agnim apibat tīvram,
ananto ‘nanta-śakti-dhṛk*

Seeing His devotees so disturbed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the infinite Lord of the

universe and possessor of infinite power, then swallowed the terrible forest fire.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to protect His family members (*sva jana*), Kṛṣṇa's *prema* for them began to search for a suitable power within Kṛṣṇa to finish the forest fire. How can this very young, tender boy swallow such an intense fire? Thus Kṛṣṇa's *samhārikā-śakti* (power of destruction) swallowed the fire. Therefore the description of Kṛṣṇa being the possessor of unlimited potencies (*sakti dhrk*) and thus swallowing the fire is only a figure of speech, since His *samhārikā-śakti* actually did it.

Chapter Eighteen: Lord Balarama Slays the Demon Pralamba

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
atha kṛṣṇaḥ parivṛto,
jñātibhir muditātmabhiḥ,
anugīyamāno nyaviśad,
vrajaṁ gokula-maṇḍitam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Surrounded by His blissful companions, who constantly chanted His glories, Śrī Kṛṣṇa then entered the village of Vraja, which was decorated with herds of cows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the summer season, Kṛṣṇa carrying His friend Dama on His shoulders, and Balarama destroying the demon Pralamba after riding on his shoulders.

Text 2

*vraje vikrīḍator evaṁ,
gopāla-cchadma-māyayā,
grīṣmo nāmartur abhavan,
nāti-preyāñ charīriṇām*

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were thus enjoying life in Vṛndāvana in the guise of ordinary cowherd boys, the summer season gradually appeared. This season is not very pleasing to embodied souls.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s herding cows was just a pretense for going to the forest and playing with His cowherd boy friends. By cheating materialistic men with this pretense, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama actually played with Their personal gopis. In *Ananda Vrndavana Campu*, Kavi-karnapura describes that Balarama had separate gopis from Kṛṣṇa. This will also be described later in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

Text 3

*sa ca vrndāvana-guṇair,
vasanta iva lakṣitaḥ,
yatrāste bhagavān sākṣād,
rāmeṇa saha keśavaḥ*

Nevertheless, because the Supreme Personality of Godhead was personally staying in Vṛndāvana along with Balarāma, summer manifested the qualities of spring. Such are the features of the land of Vṛndāvana.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This and the next three verses describe how Vrndavana manifested the features of spring, even during the summer season. “During the summer in Vrndavana, the resounding of the waterfalls (*nirjhara nirhrada*) covered the crickets’ cacophony. The entire area was beautified by groups of trees constantly moistened by spray from the waterfalls.”

Text 4

yatra nirjhara-nirhrāda,

*nivr̥tta-svana-jhillikam,
śaśvat tac-chīkararjīṣa,
druma-maṇḍala-maṇḍitam*

In Vṛndāvana, the loud sound of waterfalls covered the crickets' noise, and clusters of trees constantly moistened by spray from those waterfalls beautified the entire area.

Text 5

*sarit-saraḥ-prasravaṇormi-vāyunā,
kahlāra-kañjotpala-reṇu-hāriṇā,
na vidyate yatra vanaukasām davo,
nidāgha-vahny-arka-bhavo 'ti-śādvale*

The wind wafting over the waves of the lakes and flowing rivers carried away the pollen of many varieties of lotuses and water lilies and then cooled the entire Vṛndāvana area. Thus the residents there did not suffer from the heat generated by the blazing summer sun and seasonal forest fires. Indeed, Vṛndāvana was abundant with fresh green grass.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Vṛndavana was cool in the summer because of the breezes wafting over the waves of the rivers. The wind, like a thief, silently and invisibly stole the pollen from the lotuses, and then gave relief from the heat with its fragrant, gentle breezes. Though the scorching summer sun usually dries up everything, it did not do so in Vṛndavana, and thus the place was full of tender green grass.”

Text 6

*agādha-toya-hradinī-taṭormibhir,
dravat-purīṣyāḥ pulinaiḥ samantataḥ,
na yatra caṇḍāṁśu-karā viṣolbanā,
bhuvo rasam śādvalitam ca grhṇate*

With their flowing waves the deep rivers drenched their banks, making them damp and muddy. Thus the rays of the sun, which were as fierce as poison, could not evaporate the earth’s sap or parch its green grass.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: No one felt the heat of the summer sun because of the tall shade-giving trees. This verse mentions another reason. “The deep flowing rivers made their banks wet and muddy. Thus the sun could not parch the green grass.”

Text 7

*vanam kusumitam śrīman,
nada-citra-mṛga-dvijam,
gāyan mayūra-bhramaram,
kūjat-kokila-sārasam*

Flowers beautifully decorated the forest of Vṛndāvana, and many varieties of animals and birds filled it with sound. The peacocks and bees sang, and the cuckoos and cranes cooed.

Text 8

*krīdiṣyamāṇas tat kṛṣṇo,
bhagavān bala-samyutaḥ,
veṇuṁ viraṇayan gopair;
go-dhanaiḥ samvṛto 'viśat*

Intending to engage in pastimes, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, accompanied by Lord Balarāma and surrounded by the cowherd boys and the cows, entered the forest of Vṛndāvana as He played His flute.

Text 9

*pravāla-barha-stabaka,
srag-dhātu-kṛta-bhūṣaṇāḥ,
rāma-kṛṣṇādayo gopā,
nanṛtur yuyudhur jaguḥ*

Decorating themselves with newly grown leaves, along with peacock feathers, garlands, clusters of flower buds, and colored minerals, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa and Their cowherd friends danced, wrestled and sang.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Balarama is also addressed as a *gopa* to indicate that even He became absorbed in His identity as an ordinary cowherd boy.

Text 10

*kṛṣṇasya nr̥tyataḥ kecij,
jaguḥ kecid avādayan,
venu-pāñitalaiḥ śṛṅgaiḥ,
praśaśamsur athāpare*

As Kṛṣṇa danced, some of the boys accompanied Him by singing, and others by playing flutes, hand cymbals and buffalo horns, while still others praised His dancing.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the genitive absolute, *kṛṣṇasya nr̥tyataḥ*, appears in place of the locative absolute, *kṛṣṇe nr̥tyati*. “When Kṛṣṇa danced, some boys sang and some played flutes, *karatalas* and buffalo horns, while others gave praise.”

Text 11

*gopa-jāti-praticchannā,
devā gopāla-rūpiṇau,
īḍire kṛṣṇa-rāmau ca,
naṭā iva naṭam nr̥pa*

O King, demigods disguised themselves as members of the cowherd community and, just as dramatic dancers praise another dancer, worshiped Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who were also appearing as cowherd boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If the demigods had appeared in their natural forms, the cowherd boys would have recognized them and worshiped them. Therefore the demigods came as cowherd boys, like Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. In this way, Siva, Narada and other demigods disguised themselves as cowherd boys to taste the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa’s

pastimes. The phrase *gopala-rupinau* means that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama eternally have the forms of cowherd boys.

Text 12

*bhramaṇair laṅghanaiḥ kṣepair,
āspḥoṭana-vikaṛṣaṇaiḥ,
cikrīḍatur niyuddhena,
kāka-pakṣa-dharau kvacit*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played with their cowherd boyfriends by whirling about, leaping, hurling, slapping and fighting. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma would pull the hair on the boys' heads.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys played by arm wrestling (*niyuddhena*), and by making sounds with their palms in their arm pits (*asphoṭana*). According to Sridhara Swami, *kāka pakṣa dharau* means the locks of hair remaining on the sides of the head after the *Cūḍā-karaṇa* ceremony. Others say it means hair tied in three braids, or the locks hanging in front of the ears. [*Cūḍā-karaṇa* is one of the ten *samskāras*, wherein a child's head is shaved to leave a *śikhā*].

Text 13

*kvacin nṛtyatsu cānyeṣu,
gāyakau vādakau svayam,
śaśamsatur mahā-rāja,
sādhu sādhu iti vādinau*

While the other boys were dancing, O King, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma

would sometimes accompany them with song and instrumental music, and sometimes the two Lords would praise the boys, saying, “Very good! Very good!”

Text 14

*kvacid bilvaiḥ kvacit kumbhaiḥ,
kvacāmalaka-muṣṭibhiḥ,
aspr̥śya-netra-bandhādyaiḥ,
kvacin mṛga-khagehayā*

Sometimes the cowherd boys would play with bilva or kumbha fruits, and sometimes with handfuls of āmalaka fruits. At other times they would play the games of trying to touch one another or of trying to identify somebody while one is blindfolded, and sometimes they would imitate animals and birds.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys would throw *bilva*, *kumbha* or *amalaki* fruits into the air and then throw other fruits to try to hit them. *Netra-bandha* (bound eyes) indicates a game in which a blindfolded boy would have to identify a friend simply by feeling the boy’s hands over his blindfolded eyes. In all their games the boys put up wagers for the winner, such as flutes or walking sticks. Sometimes they imitated the various fighting methods of the forest animals, and at other times they would chirp like birds.

Text 15

*kvacic ca dardura-plāvair,
vividhair upahāsakaiḥ,*

*kadācit syandolikayā,
karhicin nrpa-ceṣṭayā*

They would sometimes jump around like frogs, sometimes play various jokes, sometimes ride in swings and sometimes imitate monarchs.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From Sravana Sukla-tritiya, the third day of the waxing phase of the month of Sravana, the cowherd boys would play on swings (*syandolikaya*). The word *nrpa-cestaya* (acting like a king) refers to the following pastime: To cross the Yamuna at certain places in Vr̄ndavana people would have to pay a tax. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and His friends would assemble in this area and prevent the Vraja-gopis from crossing the river, insisting that they had to first pay a tax. Such pastimes were surcharged with joking and laughter.

Text 16

*evaṁ tau loka-siddhābhiḥ,
krīḍābhiś ceratur vane,
nady-adri-droni-kuñjeṣu,
kānaneṣu saraḥsu ca*

In this way Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma played all sorts of well-known games as They wandered among the rivers, hills, valleys, bushes, trees and lakes of Vṛndāvana.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Droni* means the valleys between mountains.

Text 17

*paśūmś cārayator gopais,
tad-vane rāma-kṛṣṇayoh,
gopa-rūpī pralambo 'gād,
asuras taj-jihīṛṣayā*

While Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Their cowherd friends were thus tending the cows in that Vṛndāvana forest, the demon Pralamba entered their midst. He had assumed the form of a cowherd boy with the intention of kidnapping Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were tending the cows, the demon Pralamba approached disguised as a cowherd boy with a desire to kidnap Them. He assumed the form of a particular cowherd boy who on that day had remained home with duties to perform.

Text 18

*tam vidvān api dāśārho,
bhagavān sarva-darśanaḥ,
anvamodata tat-sakhyam,
vadham tasya vicintayan*

Since the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had appeared in the Daśārha dynasty, sees everything, He understood who the demon was. Still, the Lord pretended to accept the demon as a friend, while at the same time seriously considering how to kill him.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though outwardly Kṛṣṇa accepted

Pralamba as a cowherd boy, inwardly He thought, “I will now kill him in this way.”

Text 19

*tatropāhūya gopālān,
kṛṣṇaḥ prāha vihāra-vit, he gopā vihariṣyāmo,
dvandvī-bhūya yathā-yatham*

Kṛṣṇa, who knows all sports and games, then called together the cowherd boys and spoke as follows: “Hey cowherd boys! Let’s play now! We’ll divide ourselves into two even teams.”

Text 20

*tatra cakruḥ parivr̥dhau,
gopā rāma-janārdanau,
kṛṣṇa-saṅghaṭṭinaḥ kecid,
āsan rāmasya cāpare*

The cowherd boys chose Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as the leaders of the two parties. Some of the boys were on Kṛṣṇa’s side, and others joined Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Parivr̥dhau* means the two heroes. Some boys were on Kṛṣṇa’s side and others joined Balarama.

Text 21

*ācerur vividhāḥ krīḍā,
vāhya-vāhaka-lakṣaṇāḥ,
yatrārohanti jetāro,
vahanti ca parājitāḥ*

The boys played various games involving carriers and passengers. In these games the winners would climb up on the backs of the losers, who would have to carry them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The details of their apparent play are described here. One boy would hide, and upon being found would become the loser and have to carry the victor on his shoulders.

Text 22

*vahanto vāhyamānās ca,
cārayantaś ca go-dhanam,
bhāṇḍīrakam nāma vaṭam,
jagmuḥ kṛṣṇa-purogamāḥ*

Thus carrying and being carried by one another, and at the same time tending the cows, the boys followed Kṛṣṇa to a banyan tree known as Bhāṇḍīraka.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They came to a place with a banyan tree called Bhandiraka. Although it was convenient to use the branches of this tree to mount the shoulders of the defeated boys, the boys chose not to and climbed up on each others' shoulders near that place.

Text 23

*rāma-saṅghaṭṭino yarhi,
śrīdāma-vṛṣabhādayaḥ,
krīḍāyām jayinas tāms tān,
ūhuh kṛṣṇādayo nṛpa*

My dear King Parīkṣit, when Śrīdāmā, Vṛṣabha and the other members of Lord Balarāma's party were victorious in these games, Kṛṣṇa and His followers had to carry them.

Text 24

*uvāha kṛṣṇo bhagavān,
śrīdāmānam parājitāḥ,
vṛṣabhaṁ bhadrasenas tu,
pralambo rohiṇī-sutam*

Defeated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa carried Śrīdāmā. Bhadrāsena carried Vṛṣabha, and Pralamba carried Balarāma, the son of Rohiṇī.

Text 25

*aviśahyam manyamānaḥ,
kṛṣṇam dānava-puṅgavaḥ,
vahan drutataram prāgād,
avarohaṇataḥ param*

Considering Lord Kṛṣṇa invincible, that foremost demon [Pralamba] quickly carried Balarāma far beyond the spot where he was supposed to put his passenger down.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking that Kṛṣṇa would be difficult to conquer, Pralamba went on Kṛṣṇa's side in order to carry Balarama away. Pralamba carried Balarama far beyond the spot where he was supposed to carry Him so that he would be out of Kṛṣṇa's sight.

Text 26

*tam udvahan dharāṇi-dharendra-gauravaṁ,
mahāsuro vigata-rayo nijam vapuḥ,
sa āsthitaḥ puraṭa-paricchado babhau,
taḍid-dyumān uḍupati-vāḍ ivāmbudaḥ*

As the great demon carried Balarāma, the Lord became as heavy as massive Mount Sumeru, and Pralamba had to slow down. He then resumed his actual form—an effulgent body that was covered with golden ornaments and that resembled a cloud flashing with lightning and carrying the moon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Only with great difficulty was Pralamba able to carry Balarama, who became heavier than Mount Sumeru upon realizing He was being kidnapped. Pralamba was forced to slow down. Giving up his disguise as a cowherd boy, Pralamba showed a huge body dressed in gold ornaments and that resembled a cloud flashing with lightning and carrying the moon.

Text 27

*nirīkṣya tad-vapur alam ambare carat,
pradīpta-dṛg bhru-kuṭi-taṭogra-damṣṭrakam,
jvalac-chikham kaṭaka-kirīṭa-kunḍala,
tviṣādbhutam haladhara īṣad atrasat*

When Lord Balarāma, who carries the plow weapon, saw the gigantic body of the demon as he moved swiftly in the sky—with his blazing eyes, fiery hair, terrible teeth reaching toward his scowling brows, and an amazing effulgence generated by his armlets, crown and earrings—the Lord seemed to become a little frightened.

Text 28

*athāgata-smṛtir abhayo ripuṃ balo,
vihāya sārtham iva harantam ātmanaḥ,
ruṣāhanac chirasi dṛdhena muṣṭinā,
surādhipo girim iva vajra-ramhasā*

Remembering the actual situation, the fearless Balarāma understood that the demon was trying to kidnap Him and take Him away from His companions. The Lord then became furious and struck the demon’s head with His hard fist, just as Indra, the king of the demigods, strikes a mountain with his thunderbolt weapon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Balarama showed fear of the demon, Kṛṣṇa, who wanted to see some fun, injected knowledge of His godly powers into Balarama. Thus Balarama remembered (*athagata-smṛtir*) His Lordship. In the *Viṣnu Purana*, Kṛṣṇa helps Balarama

recollect His powers by saying, “O soul of all, secret of all secrets, why are You acting like a human now?”

The words *vihaya sartham* can be read as *vihayasa artham*, meaning that the demon was kidnapping Balarama by flying into the heavens (*vihayas*) as if stealing some wealth (*artham*). Balarama’s powerful fist cracked the demon’s head, just like Indra’s thunderbolt smashes a mountain peak into pieces.

Text 29

*sa āhataḥ sapadi viśīrṇa-mastako,
mukhād vaman rudhiram apasmṛto ‘surah,
mahā-ravaṁ vyasur apatat samīrayan,
gīrir yathā maghavata āyudhāhataḥ*

Thus smashed by Balarāma’s fist, Pralamba’s head immediately cracked open. The demon vomited blood from his mouth and lost all consciousness, and then with a great noise he fell lifeless on the ground, like a mountain devastated by Indra.

Text 30

*dr̥ṣṭvā pralambaṁ nihataṁ,
balena bala-śālinā,
gopāḥ su-vismitā āsan,
sādhu sādhu iti vādinah*

The cowherd boys were most astonished to see how the powerful Balarāma had killed the demon Pralamba, and they exclaimed,

“Excellent! Excellent!”

Text 31

*āśiṣo 'bhigṛñantas taṁ,
praśaśamsus tad-arhaṇam,
pretyāgatam ivāliṅgya,
prema-vihvala-cetasah*

They offered Balarāma profuse benedictions and then glorified Him, who deserves all glorification. Their minds overwhelmed with ecstatic love, they embraced Him as if He had come back from the dead.

Text 32

*pāpe pralambe nihate,
devāḥ parama-nirvṛtāḥ,
abhyavarṣan balaṁ mālyaiḥ,
śaśamsuḥ sādhu sādhu iti*

The sinful Pralamba having been killed, the demigods felt extremely happy, and they showered flower garlands upon Lord Balarāma and praised the excellence of His deed.

Chapter Nineteen: Swallowing the Forest Fire

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca krīḍāsakteṣu gopeṣu,
tad-gāvo dūra-cāriṇīḥ,
svairam carantyo viviśus,
tṛṇa-lobhena gahvaram*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While the cowherd boys were completely absorbed in playing, their cows wandered far away. They hungered for more grass, and with no one to watch them they entered a dense forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa saved the cowherd boys from a great fire in the Munjaranya forest while their eyes were closed. Upon opening their eyes, they found themselves at the base of the Bhandira *banyan* tree. While the boys were absorbed in playing, the cows wandered far away (*duracarini*) into a dense forest, driven by their greed for more grass.

Text 2

*ajā gāvo mahiṣyaś ca,
nirviśantyo vanād vanam ,iṣṭkāṭavīm nirviviśuḥ,
krandantyo dāva-tarṣitāḥ*

Passing from one part of the great forest to another, the goats, cows

and buffalo eventually entered an area overgrown with sharp canes. The heat of a nearby forest fire made them thirsty, and they cried out in distress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cows, buffalos and goats roamed from one forest to another until they came to grove of reeds (*isika*). The heat of a nearby forest fire made them thirsty.

Text 3

*te 'paśyantaḥ paśūn gopāh,
kṛṣṇa-rāmādayas tadā,
jātānutāpā na vidur,
vicinvanto gavām gatim*

Not seeing the cows before them, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Their cowherd friends suddenly felt repentant for having neglected them. The boys searched all around, but could not discover where they had gone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not seeing the cows, the boys felt very repentant (*jatanutapa*). Their love for the cows covered their knowledge, so they did not know where the animals had gone.

Text 4

*tṛṇais tat-khura-dac-chinnair,
goṣ-padair aṅkitair gavām,
mārgam anvagaman sarve,
naṣṭājīvyā vicetasah*

Then the boys began tracing out the cows' path by noting their hoofprints and the blades of grass the cows had broken with their hooves and teeth. All the cowherd boys were in great anxiety because they had lost their source of livelihood.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They followed the path of the cows by noting their hoofprints and the grass torn by their teeth. The boys were in great anxiety because they had lost their means of livelihood.

Text 5

*muñjāṭavyām bhraṣṭa-mārgam,
kranda-mānam sva-godhanam,
samprāpya tṛṣitāḥ śrāntās,
tatas te sannyavartayan*

Within the Muñjā forest the cowherd boys finally found their valuable cows, who had lost their way and were crying. Then the boys, thirsty and tired, herded the cows onto the path back home.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Finding the crying cows and other lost animals in a thicket of reeds, they herded them onto the path home.

Text 6

*tā āhūtā bhagavatā,
megha-gambhīrayā girā,
sva-nāmnām ninadam śrutvā,
pratineduḥ praharṣitāḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead called out to the animals in a voice that resounded like a rumbling cloud. Hearing the sound of their own names, the cows were overjoyed and called out to the Lord in reply.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa rescued the cows. When Kṛṣṇa looked at each cow and called out their individual names, they responded by mooing.

Text 7

*tataḥ samantād dava-dhūmaketur,
yadrcchayābhūt kṣaya-kṛd vanaukasām,
samīritaḥ sārathinolbaṇolmukair,
vilehānaḥ sthira-jaṅgamān mahān*

Suddenly a great forest fire appeared on all sides, threatening to destroy all the forest creatures. Like a chariot driver, the wind swept the fire onward, and terrible sparks shot in all directions. Indeed, the great fire extended its tongues of flame toward all moving and nonmoving creatures.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and the cowherd boys were about to take their cows back home, a terrible forest fire (*dava-dhumaketu*) raged out of control and surrounded them. It is said that this fire was actually a friend of Pralamba. Like a chariot driver (*sarathini*), the wind whipped the fire into fierce flames.

Text 8

tam āpatantam parito davāgnim,

*gopāś ca gāvaḥ prasamīkṣya bhītāḥ,
ūcuś ca kṛṣṇam sa-balaṁ prapannā,
yathā hariṁ mṛtyu-bhayārditā janāḥ*

As the cows and cowherd boys stared at the forest fire attacking them on all sides, they became fearful. The boys then approached Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma for shelter, just as those who are disturbed by fear of death approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The boys addressed Them as follows.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Remembering that Garga Muni had said, “This boy will protect you from all dangers,” the cowherd boys asked Kṛṣṇa why this was happening. The phrase *gopas ca gava* (cowherds and cows) can also be read as *gopas sma gava* (the cowherds and certainly the cows), and as *gopas sa gava* (the cowherd boys with cows).

Text 9

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-vīra,
he rāmāmogha vikrama,
dāvāgninā dahyamānān,
prapannāṁs trātum arhathaḥ*

[The cowherd boys said:] O Kṛṣṇa ! Kṛṣṇa! Most powerful one ! O Rāma! You whose prowess never fails! Please save Your devotees, who are about to be burned by this forest fire and have come to take shelter of You!

Text 10

*nūnaṁ tvad-bāndhavāḥ kṛṣṇa,
na cārhanṭy avasāditum,
vayaṁ hi sarva-dharma-jñā,
tvan-nāthās tvat-parāyaṇāḥ*

Kṛṣṇa! Certainly Your own friends shouldn't be destroyed. O knower of the nature of all things, we have accepted You as our Lord, and we are souls surrendered unto You!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys said, “Kṛṣṇa! You should not act so that Your friends experience suffering (*avasaditum*) like other people.”

Text 11

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vaco niśamya kṛpaṇaṁ,
bandhūnām bhagavān hariḥ,
nimīlayata mā bhaiṣṭa,
locanānīty abhāṣata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing these pitiful words from His friends, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa told them, “Just close your eyes and do not be afraid.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “The boys should not see Me swallowing the fire. It should be done without anyone seeing. Since My friends are so hot and tired, I should place them under the cool shade of the beautiful Bhandira tree.” After considering in this way

Kṛṣṇa said, “Just close your eyes and don’t be afraid.”

The cowherd boys replied, “You must be joking! How can we escape from the forest fire just by closing our eyes?”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Do not fear. Today I will use another means to protect you.”

Text 12

*tatheti mīlitākṣeṣu,
bhagavān agnim ulbaṇam,
pītvā mukhena tān kṛcchrād,
yogādhiśo vyamocayat*

“All right,” the boys replied, and immediately closed their eyes. Then the Supreme Lord, the master of all mystic power, opened His mouth and swallowed the terrible fire, saving His friends from danger.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One boy said, “Listen friends! Kṛṣṇa knows everything about the powers of jewels and *mantras* to remove the effects of poison and fire. But these methods are not effective in the presence of others. Therefore, if we close our eyes then Kṛṣṇa will be alone. That is why He is telling us to close our eyes.” Hearing this, the boys agreed and then closed their eyes.

The word *bhagavan* here indicates that Kṛṣṇa was full of all great powers. Thus though the fire was fierce, He was confident He could swallow it.

There is a story that Kṛṣṇa was very thirsty at this time. Therefore, the forest fire, being both afraid and incapable of going against the will of Kṛṣṇa, turned into a very cool and tasty drink. The fire became a small drop on Kṛṣṇa’s tender hand, and then as *yogadhisah* (the supreme controller of all mystic power) He drank it.

Some say that *yogamaya* appeared at this time and she herself took it from Kṛṣṇa's hand and swallowed it, but this interpretation gives sorrow to the truthful devotee. In the word *yogadhiso*, *yoga* refers to *yogamaya* and *adisa* means the master. Therefore Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yogamaya*, swallowed the fire in His mouth.

Mukhena (with His mouth) can also mean method. By what method did Kṛṣṇa swallow the fire? Since Kṛṣṇa is *yogadhisa*, He used the method of *yoga* and employed His *aisvarya-sakti* to swallow the fire. The word (*krcchrat*) indicates the boys were suffering from intense fatigue, hunger and thirst. Kṛṣṇa delivered them from these difficulties by immediately bringing them under the cooling shelter of the Bhandira tree.

Text 13

tataś ca te 'kṣīṇy unmīlya,
punar bhāṇḍīram āpitāḥ,
niśamya vismitā āsann,
ātmānaṁ gāś ca mocitāḥ

The cowherd boys opened their eyes and were amazed to find not only that they and the cows had been saved from the terrible fire but that they had all been brought back to the Bhāṇḍīra tree.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then Kṛṣṇa said, “O friends! You can open your eyes now. I have prevented the fire.” The boys were astonished to see how they and the cows had been saved from the terrible fire.

Text 14

*kṛṣṇasya yoga-vīryam tad,
yoga-māyānubhāvitam,
dāvāgner ātmanaḥ kṣemaṁ,
vīkṣya te menire 'maram*

When the cowherd boys saw that they had been saved from the forest fire by the Lord’s mystic power, which is manifested by His internal potency, they began to think that Kṛṣṇa must be a demigod.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse shows that though the cowherd boys had seen Kṛṣṇa’s amazing power, that awareness could not cover the sweetness of their *sakhya-prema* (ecstatic loving friendship), as was the case of Arjuna and others. *Yogavirya* means the power to attain or achieve extraordinary things. The miracle of getting saved from the fire was caused by Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya-sakti*. After seeing Kṛṣṇa’s supernatural power, the cowherd boys thought Kṛṣṇa might be a demigod (*amara*), since He had done something impossible for a human being. Nevertheless, the boys considered, “Because we are Kṛṣṇa’s friends we are on the same level with Him, therefore, we must also be demigods.” Thinking like this, Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd friends became overwhelmed with bliss.

Text 15

*gāḥ sannivartya sāyāhne,
saha-rāmo janārdanaḥ,
veṇuṁ virañayan goṣṭham,
agād gopair abhiṣṭutaḥ*

It was now late in the afternoon, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied

by Balarāma, turned the cows back toward home. Playing His flute in a special way, Kṛṣṇa returned to the cowherd village in the company of His cowherd friends, who chanted His glories.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Janardana suggests two things. *Ardana* means pain and request. Kṛṣṇa caused pain (*ardana*) to the residents (*jana*) of the forest when He decided to return home. Being anxious to meet the residents (*jana*) of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa made the desire to request (*ardana*) Him to come home arise in their hearts. Janardana, who pained the forest dwellers by leaving them, and who caused the Vrajavasis to request His return, entered the village playing a special tune on His celebrated flute.

Text 16

*gopīnām paramānanda,
āśīd govinda-darśane,
kṣaṇam yuga-śatam iva,
yāsām yena vinābhavat*

The young gopīs took the greatest pleasure in seeing Govinda come home, since for them even a moment without His association seemed like a hundred ages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although everyone was blissful when Kṛṣṇa entered the village, mother Yasoda's bliss was outstanding because of her intense parental affection. This was described in chapter fourteen, verse forty-seven. Now this verse describes the extreme bliss of the Vraja-gopīs (*gopīnām paramānanda*) headed by Radha. In terms of both quality and quantity, the gopīs' love was supreme. *Parama* means there was nothing beyond it.

The uncommon quality of one particular gopi is being described here. This gopi experienced a moment (*kṣaṇam*) of separation (*vinā*) from Kṛṣṇa as a hundred millenniums (*yuga-śatam iva*). To experience a moment as a hundred *yugas* is the quality of *adhirūḍha-mahābhāva*, the highest state of *prema*, attained after proceeding through *rati*, *prema*, *sneha*, *mana*, *pranaya*, *raga*, *anuraga* and *mahabhava*. According to *Ujjvala-nilamani*, only gopis such as Radha possess this type of *mahābhāva*. The word *kṣaṇam* is neuter instead of its regular masculine gender because this is the traditional usage.

Chapter Twenty: The Rainy Season and Autumn in Vr̥ndavana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tayos tad adbhutaṁ karma,
dāvāgner mokṣam ātmanaḥ,
gopāḥ strībhyaḥ samācakhyuḥ,
pralamba-vadham eva ca*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: To the ladies of Vr̥ndāvana, the cowherd boys then related in full detail Kṛṣṇa’s and Balarāma’s wonderful activities of delivering them from the forest fire and killing the demon Pralamba.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To enhance the portrayal of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, Sukadeva Gosvami describes the beauty of the monsoon and autumn seasons in Vraja in this chapter. In metaphorical terms, he depicts the wonderful qualities of the sky, rivers and forests.

Text 2

*gopa-vṛddhās ca gopyās ca,
tad upākṛṇya vismitāḥ,
menire deva-pravarau,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau vrajaṁ gatau*

The elder cowherd men and ladies were amazed to hear this

account, and they concluded that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma must be exalted demigods who had appeared in Vṛndāvana.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After hearing about the extraordinary feats of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the elderly Vrajavasis thought They were two eminent demigods. Due to their strong bond of love they never thought Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were God. These exploits simply nourished the sweetness of their relationship even more. It is not stated anywhere that their *vatsalya-bhava* (parental love) ever decreased a bit. This would have happened, however, if they thought these two boys were God.

Text 3

*tataḥ prāvartata prāvṛṭ,
sarva-sattva-samudbhavā,
vidyotamāna-paridhir,
visphūrjita-nabhas-talā*

Then the rainy season began, giving life and sustenance to all living beings. The sky began to rumble with thunder, and lightning flashed on the horizon.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The onset of the rainy (*pravṛt*) season brought new plants and sustenance to all living beings. Everything which had dried up became renewed with life. *Paridhih* (circumference) refers to the disks of the sun and moon, which became especially bright (*vidyotamana*). The sky began to rumble (*visphurjitam*) with thunder.

Text 4

*sāndra-nīlāmbudair vyoma,
sa-vidyut-stanayitnubhiḥ,
aspaṣṭa-jyotir ācchannaṁ,
brahmeva sa-guṇaṁ babhau*

The sky was then covered by dense blue clouds accompanied by lightning and thunder. Thus the sky and its natural illumination were covered in the same way that the spirit soul is covered by the three modes of material nature.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cloudy sky during the rainy season resembles the pure spirit soul covered by the modes of nature. Lightning is compared to *sattva-guna*, thunder to *raja-guna* and clouds to *tamo-guna*. Conditioned by the three modes of nature, the original brilliant nature of the pure spirit soul (*brahma*) is only dimly reflected through the haze of the material attributes (*gunam*).

Text 5

*aṣṭau māsān nipītaṁ yad,
bhūmyāś coda-mayaṁ vasu,
sva-gobhir moktum ārebhe,
parjanyaḥ kāla āgate*

With its rays, the sun had for eight months drunk up the earth's wealth in the form of water. Now that the proper time had arrived, the sun began releasing this accumulated wealth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By its rays (*svagobhiḥ*) the sun (*parjanya*) draws water from the earth for eight months. When the proper time (*kale*) arrives the sun returns the water. The sun's

evaporating the earth's wealth of water resembles a king's collecting taxes. The sun is compared to a king because it takes and gives water just as the king takes taxes and returns benefits to the tax-paying citizens.

Text 6

*taḍidvanto mahā-meghās,
caṇḍa -śvasana –vepitāḥ,
prīṇanam jīvanam hy asya,
mumucuḥ karuṇā iva*

Flashing with lightning, great clouds were shaken and swept about by fierce winds. Just like merciful persons, the clouds gave their lives for the pleasure of this world.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Agitated by the winds (*svasana*), the clouds released their water (*jivanam*) on the parched earth [*jivanam* also means water]. The clouds are compared to merciful persons (*karuna*). As clouds are agitated (*vepitah*) by the wind, kind-hearted persons are moved by the misery of others. Seeing that suffering, compassionate persons such as Rantideva sacrifice (*mumucuh*) their lives (*jivanam*), or the water (*jivanam*) that keeps them alive and give it to others. This is how the cloud is compared with a compassionate person.

Text 7

*tapah-krśā deva-mīdhā,
āsīd varṣīyasī mahī,
yathaiva kāmya-tapasas,
tanuḥ samprāpya tat-phalam*

The earth had been emaciated by the summer heat, but she became fully nourished again when moistened by the god of rain. Thus the earth was like a person whose body has been emaciated by austerities undergone for a material purpose, but who again becomes fully nourished when he achieves the fruit of those austerities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse, the earth, being dried up by the sun, is compared to a *tapasvi*, a person doing austerities. A *tapasvi* is rewarded (*midha*) by the demigods (*devas*). The earth becomes sprinkled (*midha*) with showers of rain just as the body of a *tapasvi* becomes nourished (*varsīyasi*) by the demigods (*devas*). As the body of a person desiring material results becomes healthy on fulfilling his desires, so the earth becomes nourished by the rains. This example, however, is repugnant to the devotee striving for the ultimate goal, because austerities should be performed only for realizing the Supreme Lord.

Text 8

*niśā-mukheṣu khadyotās,
tamasā bhānti na grahāḥ,
yathā pāpena pāṣaṇḍā,
na hi vedāḥ kalau yuge*

In the evening twilight during the rainy season, the darkness allowed the glowworms but not the stars to shine forth, just as in the age of Kali the predominance of sinful activities allows atheistic doctrines to overshadow the true knowledge of the Vedas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse *pasanda* means *pasanda sastra* (atheistic doctrines). Fireflies shine forth in the evening twilight, but not the twinkling stars and planets. Similarly, in the age of Kali atheistic scriptures become prominent. This verse also uses a negative example.

Text 9

*śrutvā parjanya-ninadam,
maṇḍukāḥ sasṛjur girah,
tūṣṇīm śayānāḥ prāg yadvad,
brāhmaṇā niyamātyaye*

The frogs, who had all along been lying silent, suddenly began croaking when they heard the rumbling of the rain clouds, in the same way that brāhmaṇa students, who perform their morning duties in silence begin reciting their lessons when called by their teacher.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The frogs began croaking on hearing the thunder, just as *brahmana* students begin reciting their lessons when called by their teacher. This is a positive example.

Text 10

*āsann utpatha-gāminyaḥ,
kṣudra-nadyo 'nuśuṣyatīḥ,
puṁso yathāsvatantrasya,
deha-draviṇa -sampadaḥ*

With the advent of the rainy season, the insignificant streams, which had become dry, began to swell and then strayed from their proper courses, like the body, property and money of a man controlled by the urges of his senses.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the rivers swell with water in the rainy season, they cause disturbance to others because they become difficult to cross. For one who acts independently (*sva tantrasya*) without following scriptural rules, his body, property and money become a cause of disturbance for others. This is a negative example.

Text 11

*haritā haribhiḥ śaspair,
indragopaiś ca lohitā,
ucchilīndhra-kṛta-cchāyā,
nṛṇām śrīr iva bhūr abhūt*

The newly grown grass made the earth emerald green, the indragopa insects added a reddish hue, and white mushrooms added further color and circles of shade. Thus the earth appeared like a person who has suddenly become rich.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The earth appeared green from the fresh sprouts of green (*haribhi*) grass (*saspaih*). In some places it appeared reddish because of the small red insects. The white mushrooms were like umbrellas. Thus the earth appeared like a military parade displaying the wealth of a king shaded by parasols. This is a positive comparison.

Text 12

*kṣetrāṇi śaṣya-sampadbhiḥ,
karṣakāṅgām mudam daduḥ,
māninām anutāpam vai,
daivādhīnam ajānatām*

With their wealth of grains, the fields gave joy to the farmers. But those fields created remorse in the hearts of those who were too proud to engage in farming and who failed to understand how everything is under the control of the Supreme.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The proud man proclaims, “Farming is a lowly job which I cannot do.” But when the fields yield abundant crops he regrets, “If I had done some farming I would get wealth during the rainy season.” In this way the fields give joy to the farmer and pain to the lazy man, because such a person does not understand that his suffering is under the law of *karma*. Similarly, seeing the man on *nivṛtti-mārga* (path of renunciation) attain liberation, the man on the path of sense enjoyment (*pravṛtti-mārga*) laments. This example is not attractive to the devotee.

Text 13

*jala-sthalaukaś sarve,
nava-vāri-niṣevayā,
abibhran ruciram rūpam,
yathā hari-niṣevayā*

As all creatures of the land and water took advantage of the newly fallen rainwater, their forms became attractive and pleasing, just as a devotee becomes beautiful by engaging in the service of the

Supreme Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Abibhran* means to take on. Just as one becomes suddenly beautiful on performing devotional service to the Lord, since it is the supreme *dharma* and gives the highest results, similarly, the forms of animals and plants become attractive in the rainy season. This is a positive example.

Text 14

*saridbhiḥ saṅgataḥ sindhuś,
cukṣobha śvasanormimān,
apakva-yogināś cittam,
kāmakṛtāṃ guṇa-yug yathā*

Where the rivers joined the ocean it became agitated, its waves blown about by the wind, just as the mind of an immature yogī becomes agitated because he is still tainted by lust and attached to the objects of sense gratification.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The use of the masculine gender for *sindhu* instead of feminine is traditional usage. The ocean becomes agitated with waves by the merging of many smaller rivers. Similarly, the desires (*kamakṛtam*) in the heart of an immature *yogī* rise up like waves when he contacts material objects (*guṇa yuk*).

Text 15

*girayo varṣa-dhārābhir,
hanyamānā na vivyathuḥ,
abhibhūyamānā vyaśanair,*

yathādhokṣaja-cetasah

Just as devotees whose minds are absorbed in the Personality of Godhead remain peaceful even when attacked by all sorts of dangers, the mountains in the rainy season were not at all disturbed by the repeated striking of the rain-bearing clouds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though struck by torrents of water, the mountain does not shake but rather becomes beautiful, being washed of dirt. Similarly, a devotee afflicted by the pains caused by his body, mind or other entities is not disturbed because his mind is absorbed in the Supreme Lord (*adhokṣaja citta*). The *Srimad Bhagavatam* says that material pains cannot disturb the devotee absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s loving service.

mad-āśrayāḥ kathā mṛṣṭāḥ, śṛṇvanti kathayanti ca, tapanti vividhās tāpā, naitān mad-gata-cetasah

“Taking shelter of Me, they engage in constantly hearing and chanting about Me. The various kinds of material miseries do not affect them because they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.”(SB 3.25.23) Thus a sincere devotee welcomes such difficulties. Because of his humility and surrendered attitude he remains free of pride, envy and other bad qualities.

Text 16

*mārgā babhūvuḥ sandigdḥās,
tṛṇaiś channā hy asaṁskṛtāḥ,
nābhyaśyamānāḥ śrutayo,
dvijaiḥ kālena cāhatāḥ*

During the rainy season the roads, not being cleansed, became

covered with grass and debris and were thus difficult to make out. These roads were like religious scriptures that brāhmaṇas no longer study and that thus become corrupted and covered over with the passage of time.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not studying the scriptures is compared to the unclean roads. The roads becoming overgrown with grass in time are like scriptures which become neglected and corrupted when no longer studied by the *brahmanas*.

Text 17

*loka-bandhuṣu megheṣu,
vidyutaś cala-sauhṛdāḥ,
sthairyam na cakruḥ kāmīnyah,
puruṣeṣu guṇiṣv iva*

Though the clouds are the well-wishing friends of all living beings, the lightning, fickle in its affinities, moved from one group of clouds to another, like lusty women unfaithful even to virtuous men.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A prostitute cannot fix her attention on one man for long, even though the man may have good qualities such as intelligence. Similarly, the lightning moves from one cloud to another without lingering very long. This is a negative analogy.

Text 18

*dhanur viyati māhendram,
nirguṇam ca guṇīny abhāt,
vyakte guṇa-vyatikare,*

'guṇavān puruṣo yathā

When the curved bow of Indra [the rainbow] appeared in the sky, which had the quality of thundering sound, it was unlike ordinary bows because it did not rest upon a string. Similarly, when the Supreme Lord appears in this world, which is the interaction of the material qualities, He is unlike ordinary persons because He remains free from all material qualities and independent of all material conditions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as the Lord, though without material qualities (*agunavan*) appears in the material world to perform pastimes, so the rainbow appears in the sky, which has the quality of sound (*gunini*), without a string (*nirguna*). This is a play on words.

Text 19

*na rarājoḍupaś channah,
sva-jyotsnā-rājitair ghanaiḥ,
aham-matyā bhāsitayā,
sva-bhāsā puruṣo yathā*

During the rainy season the moon was prevented from appearing directly by the covering of the clouds, which were themselves illumined by the moon's rays. Similarly, the living being in material existence is prevented from appearing directly by the covering of the false ego, which is itself illumined by the consciousness of the pure soul.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the rainy season, the moon does not shine, being covered by clouds which are themselves illumined by

the moon. This resembles the Lord (*purusa*) who is not visible, being hidden by His *avidya-sakti*, which rises from Himself. This is a good example for the *jnanis*.

Text 20

*meghāgamotsavā hr̥ṣṭāḥ,
pratyānandañ chikhaṇḍīnaḥ,
gr̥heṣu tapta-nirvinnā,
yathācyuta-janāgame*

The peacocks became festive and cried out a joyful greeting when they saw the clouds arrive, just as people distressed in household life feel pleasure when the pure devotees of the infallible Supreme Lord visit them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The peacocks become happy and cry loudly upon seeing the approaching clouds and hearing the rumbling of thunder. This is just like *grhastha* Vaisnavas who start to sing and dance in bliss after hearing Vaisnava *bhajans*. This example is suitable for devotees.

Text 21

*pītvāpaḥ pādapāḥ padbhir,
āsan nānātma-mūrtayaḥ,
prāk kṣāmās tapasā śrāntā,
yathā kāmānusevayā*

The trees had grown thin and dry, but after they drank the newly

fallen rainwater through their feet, their various bodily features blossomed. Similarly, one whose body has grown thin and weak from austerity again exhibits his healthy bodily features upon enjoying the material objects gained through that austerity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the trees become filled with sprouts, leaves and flowers during the rainy season, so the *tapasvi*, after becoming emaciated by penance, again fattens his body by enjoying material objects. This of course is unfavorable for those practicing detachment.

Text 22

*saraḥsv aśānta-rodhaḥsu,
nyūsur aṅgāpi sārasāḥ,
grheṣv aśānta-kṛtyeṣu,
grāmyā iva durāśayāḥ*

The cranes continued dwelling on the shores of the lakes, although the shores were agitated during the rainy season, just as materialistic persons with contaminated minds always remain at home, despite the many disturbances there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cranes dwell intently on the lake shores, though littered with mud, thorns and weeds. This is similar to the materialistic person remaining home despite so many disturbances. This example is unfavorable.

Text 23

jalaughair nirabhidyaṅta,

*setavo varṣatīśvare,
pāṣaṇḍinām asad-vādair,
veda-mārgāḥ kalau yathā*

When Indra sent forth his rains, the floodwaters broke through the irrigation dikes in the agricultural fields, just as in the Kali-yuga the atheists' false theories break down the boundaries of Vedic injunctions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra, thinking himself the Lord, pours down excessive rains which smash the irrigation walls in the fields; just as in Kali-yuga the materialists destroy *dharma*. Kali is compared to Indra; the activities of the materialists to the rains; and the destruction of Vedic *dharma* to the destruction of dykes. This is an unfavorable example.

Text 24

*vyamuñcan vāyubhir nunnā,
bhūtebhyaś cāmṛtam ghanāḥ,
yathāśiṣo viś-patayaḥ,
kāle kāle dvijeritāḥ*

The clouds, impelled by the winds, released their nectarean water for the benefit of all living beings, just as kings, instructed by their brāhmaṇa priests, dispense charity to the citizens.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as a king (*viś-patayaḥ*) inspired by his priests (*dvijeritāḥ*) fulfills everyone's desires (*āśiṣo*), so the clouds, incited (*nunnā*) by the winds, release rain. The analogy of the king is positive.

Text 25

*evam vanam tad varṣiṣṭham,
pakva-kharjura-jambumat,
go-gopālair vṛto rantum,
sa-balaḥ prāviśad dhariḥ*

When the Vṛndāvana forest had thus become resplendent, filled with ripe dates and jambu fruits, Lord Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by His cows and cowherd boyfriends and accompanied by Śrī Balarāma, entered that forest to enjoy.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After describing the rainy season, Sukadeva Gosvami relates Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the monsoon forests in seven verses. Kṛṣṇa entered the forest of Vṛndavana which was flourishing (*varṣiṣṭham*) with ripe date and *jambu* trees.

Text 26

*dhenavo manda-gāminya,
ūdho-bhāreṇa bhūyasā,
yayur bhagavatāhūtā,
drutam prītyā snuta-stanāḥ*

The cows had to move slowly because of their weighty milk bags, but they quickly ran to the Supreme Personality of Godhead as soon as He called them, their affection for Him causing their udders to become wet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Milk automatically flowed from the cows' udders due to their extreme motherly affection (*prīṭyā*) for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 27

*vanaukaṣaḥ pramuditā,
vana-rājīr madhu-cyutaḥ,
jala-dhārā girer nādād,
āsannā dadṛśe guhāḥ*

The Lord saw the joyful aborigine girls of the forest, the trees dripping sweet sap, and the mountain waterfalls, whose resounding indicated that there were caves nearby.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In the monsoon forests Kṛṣṇa saw the joyful Pulinda women, the honey pouring down the trees, the waterfalls flowing from the mountains, and far off caves, which appeared to be nearby from the echoing sound.

Text 28

*kvacid vanaspati-krode,
guhāyām cābhivarṣati,
nirviśya bhagavān reme,
kanda-mūla-phalāśanaḥ*

When it rained, the Lord would sometimes enter a cave or the hollow of a tree to play and to eat roots and fruits.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When it rained (*abhi varsati*) Kṛṣṇa

would run and enter the hollow of a tree or a cave and amuse Himself by eating radish. There are two types of radish: round ones and long ones.

Text 29

*dadhy-odanam samānītam,
śilāyām salilāntike,
sambhojanīyair bubhuje,
gopaiḥ saṅkarṣaṇānvitah*

Lord Kṛṣṇa would take His meal of boiled rice and yogurt, sent from home, in the company of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and the cowherd boys who regularly ate with Him. They would all sit down to eat on a large stone near the water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Servants would bring food from Kṛṣṇa’s house to a place called “Chak.” Kṛṣṇa sat on a stone slab near the water. Even today people can see that eating place on the bank of a *kunda*.

Texts 30–31

*śādvalopari samviśya,
carvato mīlitekṣaṇān,
tṛptān vṛṣān vatsatarān,
gās ca svodho-bhara-śramāḥ,
prāvṛṭ-śriyaṁ ca tām vīkṣya,
sarva-kāla-sukhāvahām,
bhagavān pūjayām cakre,
ātma-śakty-upabṛmhitām*

Lord Kṛṣṇa watched the contented bulls, calves and cows sitting on the green grass and grazing with closed eyes, and He saw that the cows were tired from the burden of their heavy milk bags. Thus observing the beauty and opulence of Vṛndāvana’s rainy season, a perennial source of great happiness, the Lord offered all respect to that season, which was expanded from His own internal potency.

Text 32

*evam nivasatos tasmīn,
rāma-keśavayor vraje,
śarat samabhavad vyabhrā,
svacchāmbv-aparuṣānilā*

While Lord Rāma and Lord Keśava were thus dwelling in Vṛndāvana, the fall season arrived, when the sky is cloudless, the water clear and the wind gentle.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The description of autumn begins here by saying that the water became clear and the wind blew gently.

Text 33

*śaradā nīrajotpattyā,
nīrāṇi prakṛtiṁ yayuh,
bhraṣṭānām iva cetāṁsi,
punar yoga-niṣevayā*

The autumn season, which regenerated the lotus flowers, also restored the various bodies of water to their original purity, just as the process of devotional service purifies the minds of the fallen yogīs when they return to it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Due to the autumn season, the lotus flowers blossom and the lakes become crystal-clear. Similarly, by engaging in devotional service the heart becomes purified and then Sri Kṛṣṇa appears. The autumn season is compared to devotional service, the lake to the heart; and the appearance of Kṛṣṇa is compared to the lotus. This is a positive example.

Text 34

*vyomno 'bbhram bhūta-sābalyam,
bhuvah pañkam apām malam,
śaraj jahārāśramiṇām,
kṛṣṇe bhaktir yathāśubham*

Autumn cleared the sky of clouds, let the animals get out of their crowded living conditions, cleaned the earth of its covering of mud, and purified the water of contamination, in the same way that loving service rendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa frees the members of the four spiritual orders from their respective troubles.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The autumn season removed the clouds in the sky, the crowded living conditions, the mud from the earth and the cloudy water. This is like *bhakti*, arising through devotional association, which removes the suffering produced by executing one's duties in the four *asramas*. However, when one becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, he is no longer obligated to perform the various duties

of a particular *asrama*, be it *brahmacari*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* or *sannyasa*.

As *bhakti* removes the suffering a *brahmacari* undergoes by humbly serving his *guru* by herding cows and other menial acts, so the autumn season removed the clouds in the sky. As *bhakti* removes the suffering a *grhastha* experiences by associating with his family members during *sraddha* rites and other domestic duties, so the autumn season removed the suffering of living together in close quarters during the inclement weather of the rainy season, by enabling everyone to freely move here and there. As *bhakti* removes the suffering of the *vanaprastha* who covers his body with earth, the autumn season dried up the mud from the earth. *Bhakti* removes the suffering of the *sannyasi* who struggles to meditate on the Brahman (*kleśo 'dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsaktacetasām*: “For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Lord, advancement is exceedingly painful” (Bg.12.5). Similarly, the autumn season removed the dirt and debris from the rivers and lakes. This is a positive series of analogies.

Text 35

*sarva-svaṁ jaladā hitvā,
virejuḥ śubhra-varcaśaḥ,
yathā tyaktaiṣaṅāḥ śāntā,
munayo mukta-kilbiṣāḥ*

The clouds, having given up all they possessed, shone forth with purified effulgence, just like peaceful sages who have given up all material desires and are thus free of all sinful propensities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As *munis* become purified by giving up all sinful propensities (*mukta-kilbiṣāḥ*) and material desires (*tyaktaiṣaṅāḥ*) to attain sons, wealth and followers, similarly after

expelling all their rain, the clouds become pure and white in color. This is a positive analogy.

Text 36

*girayo mumucus toyam,
kvacin na mumucuḥ śivam,
yathā jñānāmṛtam kale,
jñānino dadate na vā*

During this season the mountains sometimes released their pure water and sometimes did not, just as experts in transcendental science sometimes give the nectar of transcendental knowledge and sometimes do not.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jñānāmṛtam here refers to teachings about the Supreme Lord, and *jñāninaḥ* means experts in devotional wisdom such as Narada, Prahlada and Jaḍa Bharata. They gave knowledge to the hunter, Rahugana, and the children of the demons but not to others. They give to those fortunate souls who desire to know. In a similar way, in autumn the clear water from the mountains only flows in some canals.

Text 37

*naivāvidan kṣīyamāṇam,
jalam gādha-jale-carāḥ,
yathāyur anv-aham kṣayyam,
narā mūdhāḥ kuṭumbinaḥ*

The fish swimming in the increasingly shallow water did not at all understand that the water was diminishing, just as foolish family men cannot see how the time they have left to live is diminishing with every passing day.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As an ignorant man attached to his family does not realize that his lifespan is decreasing at every moment, foolish fish play in the shallow water, not realizing that it is decreasing at every moment. This is a negative analogy.

Text 38

*gādha-vāri-carās tāpam,
avindañ charad-arka-jam,
yathā daridraḥ kṛpaṇaḥ,
kuṭumby avijitendriyaḥ*

Just as a miserly, poverty-stricken person overly absorbed in family life suffers because he cannot control his senses, the fish swimming in the shallow water had to suffer the heat of the autumn sun.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As a poor man suffers while supporting a large family, so the fish in scarce water must endure the painful heat of the autumn sun. In the previous verse a wealthy family man was described, whereas here the negative effects of a poor family man are described. Or this verse can be taken to refer to the suffering of the attached family man mentioned in the previous verse.

Text 39

śanaiḥ śanair jahuḥ pañkam,

*sthalāny āmaṁ ca vīrudhaḥ,
yathāhaṁ-mamatām dhīrāḥ,
śarīrādiṣv anātmasu*

Gradually the different areas of land gave up their muddy condition and the plants grew past their unripe stage, in the same way that sober sages give up egotism and possessiveness. These are based on things different from the real self—namely, the material body and its by-products.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the intelligent person gives up everything unrelated to the soul (*anātmasu*), the Paramatma and Kṛṣṇa, namely the body, false ego and possessiveness, and tries to develop attachment to Kṛṣṇa, so the fields give up their muddy condition and plants give up their unripe state.

Text 40

*niścalāmbur abhūt tūṣṇīm,
samudraḥ śarad-āgame,
ātmany uparate samyaṅ,
munir vyuparatāgamaḥ*

With the arrival of autumn, the ocean and the lakes became silent, their water still, just like a sage who has desisted from all material activities and given up his recitation of Vedic mantras.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the sage with a motionless mind stops chanting the *Vedas* (*vyuparata āgamaḥ*), with the coming of autumn, the lakes and ocean become motionless and stop roaring. This refers to a place called Satovasa, west of Mathura. This is a positive

comparison.

Text 41

*kedārebhyas tv apo 'grhṇan,
karṣakā dṛḍha-setubhiḥ,
yathā prāṇaiḥ sravaj jñānam,
tan-nirodhena yoginaḥ*

In the same way that the practitioners of yoga bring their senses under strict control to check their consciousness from flowing out through the agitated senses, the farmers erected strong mud banks to keep the water within their rice fields from draining out.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The farmer keeps the water lying in the fields after the rainy season from running out with dykes, just as the *yogi* controls his senses to prevent his consciousness from flowing out due to agitation of the senses. This is a positive comparison.

Text 42

*śarad-arkāmśu-jāms tāpān,
bhūtānām uḍupo 'harat,
dehābhimāna-jam bodho,
mukundo vraja-yoṣitām*

The autumn moon relieved all creatures of the suffering caused by the sun's rays, just as wisdom relieves a person of the misery caused by his identifying with his material body and as Lord Mukunda relieves Vṛndāvana's ladies of the distress caused by their

separation from Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As knowledge takes away the suffering arising from bodily identification, as Mukunda takes away the suffering of the women of Vraja, so the rising moon takes away the heat of the mid-day sun.

Text 43

*kham aśobhata nirmeghaṁ,
śarad-vimala-tārakam,
sattva-yuktaṁ yathā cittaṁ,
śabda-brahmārtha-darśanam*

Free of clouds and filled with clearly visible stars, the autumn sky shone brilliantly, just like the spiritual consciousness of one who has directly experienced the purport of the Vedic scriptures.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As the heart which directly experiences (*darśanam*) conclusive Vedic wisdom (*śabda-brahmārtha*) is endowed with spiritual goodness (*sattva yuktaṁ*) and shines brilliantly, so the moon and stars shine brightly in the cloudless sky of autumn. The sky is compared to the heart, the absence of clouds is compared to excellence, and the autumn season is compared to the *Vedas*. The stars are compared to *niskama karma*, *jnana-yoga* and *tapa-yoga*. And the moon, the leader of all the stars, is compared to *bhakti*. This is a positive comparison.

Text 44

akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalo vyomni,

*rarājoḍu-gaṇaiḥ śaśī,
yathā yadu-patiḥ kṛṣṇo,
vṛṣṇi-cakrāvṛto bhuvi*

The full moon shone in the sky, surrounded by stars, just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadu dynasty, shone brilliantly on the earth, surrounded by all the Vṛṣṇis.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The full moon (*akhanda mandala*) is compared to *svayam bhagavan* Sri Kṛṣṇa, the full manifestation of the Absolute Truth. As the Lord of the Yadus (*yadu-patih*), Kṛṣṇa was surrounded by prominent members (*vṛṣṇi-cakra*) of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty such as Nanda, Upananda, Vasudeva and Akrūra, who are compared to the stars in the sky. This comparison is favorable for meditation.

Text 45

*āśliṣya sama-śītoṣṇam,
prasūna-vana-mārutam,
janās tāpaṁ jahur gopyo,
na kṛṣṇa-hṛta-cetasah*

Except for the gopīs, whose hearts had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, the people could forget their suffering by embracing the wind coming from the flower-filled forest. This wind was neither hot nor cold.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wind of the autumn is neither hot nor cold (*sama sitosna*). By embracing this wind everyone felt relief from the heat, except the gopīs, who were burning in the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Instead of decreasing their suffering, it increased it. Authorities explain the sequence of analogies in this verse as follows:

Just like the gopis, whose hearts had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, could not embrace Him to reclaim their hearts, so the general masses did embrace the wind to get relief from the heat.

Text 46

*gāvo mṛgāḥ khagā nāryaḥ,
puṣpiṇyaḥ śaradābhavan,
anvīyamānāḥ sva-vṛṣaiḥ,
phalair īśa-kriyā iva*

By the influence of the autumn season, all the cows, doe, women and female birds became fertile and were followed by their respective mates in search of sexual enjoyment, just as activities performed for the service of the Supreme Lord are automatically followed by all beneficial results.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cows, doe and female birds, though unwilling, were forcibly engaged in copulation by their respective mates (*sva vṛsaiḥ*) and became pregnant. This is compared to the worship of the Lord (*īśa-kriyā*), which, though performed without desire for results, yields many material results such as happiness and enjoyment.

Text 47

*udahr̥ṣyan vārijāni,
sūryotthāne kumud vinā,
rājñā tu nirbhayā lokā,
yathā dasyūn vinā nṛpa*

O King Parīkṣit, when the autumn sun rose, all the lotus flowers blossomed happily, except the night-blooming kumut, just as in the presence of a strong ruler everyone becomes fearless, except the thieves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The night-blooming lotus flowers (*kumud*) are compared to thieves (*dasyun*). This idea comes from the syllable *ku*, which means low class, and *mud*, which means joy. Low class fellows like thieves find pleasure at night by stealing. Just as all people except the thieves are happy when a powerful king sits on the throne, when the sun rises in the morning, all the lotuses are happy and bloom, except the night-blooming lotus.

Text 48

*pura-grāmeṣv āgrayañair,
indriyaiś ca mahotsavaiḥ,
babhau bhūḥ pakva-śaśyāḍhyā,
kalābhyām nitarām hareḥ*

In all the towns and villages people held great festivals, performing the Vedic fire sacrifice for honoring and tasting the first grains of the new harvest, along with similar celebrations that followed local custom and tradition. Thus the earth, rich with newly grown grain and especially beautified by the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, shone beautifully as an expansion of the Supreme Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *āgrayañaiḥ* refers to a Vedic sacrifice called Navānna, wherein the freshly harvested grains are offered to the Deity in the temple. The *Smṛti* scriptures say the Navānna ceremony should not be performed on *nanda-tithi*, while

Visnu is sleeping during Caturmasya, during the waning phase of the moon (*kr̥ṣṇa-paksa*), or during the months of Karttika and Pausa. The Navāṅna ceremony occurs in Agrahayana month (Margasirsa, Nov.-Dec.) just after Utthana Ekadasi. However, because it takes place right after the autumn season it is said to take place during the autumn. The word *indriyaiś* refers to sacrifices for Indra to satisfy the senses. This description took place before the year in which Kṛṣṇa stopped Indra's worship. Just as the earth (*bhūḥ*), a potency (*kalā-śakti*) of Lord Hari (*hareḥ*), shone beautifully by the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama (*ābhyām*), so the earth became resplendent with the festivals of Navāṅna and the worship of Indra in the villages. The word *hareḥ* also means moon, so *kalābhyām hareḥ* means by the phases of the moon. Just as the earth became splendid with the festivals held by the king celebrating the phases of the moon on the first and second *tithis* of the waxing moon as it rose in the evening, so the earth became beautified with the many festivals held in the villages.

Text 49

*vaṇiṅ-muni-nṛpa-snātā,
nirgamyārthān prapedire,
varṣa-ruddhā yathā siddhāḥ,
sva-piṅḍān kāla āgate*

The merchants, sages, kings and brahmacārī students, kept in by the rain, were at last free to go out and attain their desired objects, just as those who achieve perfection in this life can, when the proper time comes, leave the material body and attain their respective forms.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The merchants, sages, kings and students, who were confined to their rooms by the rain, left when the

rain stopped (*varsa ruddha*) and attained their desired goals (*arthan*), namely money, independence, power and knowledge. This resembles realized transcendentalists (*siddhāh*) who, at the time of death (*kale*), attain forms (*piṇḍān*) like the eternal associates of the Lord (*sva*).

Chapter Twenty-one: The Gopis Glorify the Song of Kṛṣṇa’s Flute (*venu-gīta*)

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ittham śarat-svaccha-jalam,
padmākara-sugandhinā,
nyaviśad vāyunā vātam,
sa -go-gopālako ‘cyutaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the Vṛndāvana forest was filled with transparent autumnal waters and cooled by breezes perfumed with the fragrance of lotus flowers growing in the clear lakes. The infallible Lord, accompanied by His cows and cowherd boyfriends, entered that Vṛndāvana forest.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how the gopis, being pained by Kṛṣṇa’s flute song, repeatedly sing the glories of that flute. They also praised the animals, demigoddesses and the forest of Vrndavana. Although staying in the village, the gopis relate what they see through the transcendental eyes of their hearts, namely the various charming pastimes Kṛṣṇa enacts upon entering the forest of Vrndavana. After describing the beauty of the autumn season, Sukadeva Gosvami first describes Kṛṣṇa’s entrance into the Vrndavana forest, which is decorated with the sweetness of autumn, before portraying the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa’s flute song which is intimately related to it.

The wind became fragrant and cool (*padmakara sugandhina*) by passing over the lotus-filled lakes. Kṛṣṇa, along with His cows and cowherd boys, entered the forest permeated (*vatam*) by this sweetly

scented breeze. The word *vayuna* (wind) is singular instead of plural to indicate a very gentle breeze. The word *madhu-pati* of the next verse is the subject of this verse if the alternate reading of this verse substitutes the word *vanam* for *acyutah*.

Text 2

*kusumita-vanarāji-śuṣmi-bhr̥ṅga,
dvija-kula-ghuṣṭa-saraḥ-sarin-mahīdhram,
madhupatir avagāhya cārayan gāḥ,
saha-paśu-pāla-balaś cukūja veṇum*

The lakes, rivers and hills of Vṛndāvana resounded with the sounds of maddened bees and flocks of birds moving about the flowering trees. In the company of the cowherd boys and Balarāma, Madhupati [Śrī Kṛṣṇa] entered that forest, and while herding the cows He began to vibrate His flute.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Kṛṣṇa (*madhupati*) entered (*avagahya*) the forest with its mountains, lakes, rivers and flowering groves, He skillfully blended His flute song (*cukuja venum*) with the lovely sounds of Vṛndavana's chirping birds and buzzing bees. The word *madhu-pati* means the Lord of spring (the month of Madhu). The inference is that when Kṛṣṇa, the personification of spring, entered the forests in the autumn, the forests became beautiful with spring flowers. Kṛṣṇa went along with Balarama and the cowherd boys (*sa pasu pala bala*) to herd the cows (*gocarane*), but it is not mentioned here that they played flutes. Only Kṛṣṇa played the flute. Therefore, the *venu-gita* (song of the flute and title of this chapter) came from Kṛṣṇa's flute only.

Text 3

*tad vraja-striya āśrutya,
venu-gītaṁ smarodayam,
kāścit parokṣaṁ kṛṣṇasya,
sva-sakhībhyo 'nvavarṇayan*

When the young ladies in the cowherd village of Vraja heard the song of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which arouses the influence of Cupid, some of them privately began describing Kṛṣṇa's qualities to their intimate friends.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute song, the gopis began describing indirectly (*parokṣam*) to their friends about Kṛṣṇa entering the forest. The word *parokṣa* (indirectly) is used because the gopis were located far away from Kṛṣṇa in the village of Vraja.

Text 4

*tad varṇayitum ārabdhāḥ,
smarantyaḥ kṛṣṇa-ceṣṭitam,
nāśakan smara-vegena,
vikṣipta-manaso nrpa*

The cowherd girls began to speak about Kṛṣṇa, but when they remembered His activities, O King, the power of Cupid disturbed their minds, and thus they could not speak.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the gopis attempted to describe the song of the flute, they could not do so because their hearts became overcome with strong desires for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 5

*barhāpīdam naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ,
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīm ca mālām,
randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair;
vṛndāraṇyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ*

Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue karṇikāra flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the Vaijayantī garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.

Text 6

*iti veṇu-ravaṁ rājan,
sarva-bhūta-manoharam,
śrutvā vraja-striyaḥ sarvā,
varṇayantyo 'bhirebhire*

O King, when the young ladies in Vraja heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, which captivates the minds of all living beings, they all embraced one another and began describing it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the gopis could not speak, Sri Sukadeva Gosvami, being omniscient, began the description of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes according to the mood of their intense love. Kṛṣṇa was

bedecked with a peacock feather (*barhapidam*), and a *karnikara* flower on His ears. *Karnikara* (flower) is singular whereas *karnayoh* (ears) is in the dual form, to indicate that sometimes Kṛṣṇa wore one *karnikara* flower on the left ear and sometimes on the right ear to express the intoxication of His youth. He wore a *vaijayanti* garland made of flowers of five different colors. Thus Kṛṣṇa's beautiful body looked like the best of dancers (*nata-vara-vapuh*). The use of the word *bibhrat* (wore) indicates that Kṛṣṇa purposefully dressed in an artful way to display His youthful charms in order to incite the romantic desires of the gopis. Since the gopis might have criticized the flute for having holes in it, Kṛṣṇa filled the holes with the nectar of His lips. Though the flute is non-living, the touch of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips brought it to life, and empowered it to madden the three worlds. Then, considering the flute to be dull, lifeless and unqualified for such work, the vibration exudes from its holes and enters the ears and minds of the Vraja-gopis. The implication is that the flute vibration makes itself successful in accomplishing its purpose of fully exhibiting its powers by conquering the Vraja-gopis with Cupid.

Text 7

*śrī-gopya ūcuḥ,
akṣaṇvatām phalam idaṁ na paraṁ vidāmaḥ,
sakhyaḥ paśūn anaviveśayator vayasyaiḥ,
vaktraṁ vrajeśa-sutayor anaveṇu-juṣṭaṁ,
yair vā nipītam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*

The cowherd girls said: O friends, those eyes that see the beautiful faces of the sons of Mahārāja Nanda are certainly fortunate. As these two sons enter the forest, surrounded by Their friends, driving the cows before Them, They hold Their flutes to Their mouths and glance lovingly upon the residents of Vṛndāvana. For

those who have eyes, we think there is no greater object of vision.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: My [Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura] only goal in life is the Vraja-gopis, who, being attracted by the nectar shower from Kṛṣṇa’s flute, ran out of their houses, and whose sweet words repeated here enable us to relish that nectar too.

“The gopīs meant to say, ‘O friends, if you simply remain in the shackles of family life in this material world, what will you ever get to see? The creator has granted us these eyes, so let us see the most wonderful thing there is to see, Kṛṣṇa.’”

The gopīs were aware that their mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law might hear their romantic words and disapprove, so to hide their true feelings they said, *akṣaṇvatām phalam*: “To see Kṛṣṇa is the goal for all persons and not simply ourselves.” That is the superficial meaning, but the hidden implication is, “Those faces give bliss to everyone in Vṛndavana forest, even the birds and beasts—but not to us, staying in our houses far away.”

In the *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.5.27) Vasudeva said, “O Nanda, my son (*mama sutaḥ*) Balarama thinks of you as if you were His father (*tātām bhavantaṁ manvāno*).” Also Sukadeva said, “Balarama offered respects to His parents Nanda and Yasoda and they blessed Him.” (SB 10.65.2) By such statements therefore Balarama was commonly known as Nanda’s son. Therefore in this verse the gopis describe Balarama the son of Nanda Maharaja (*vrajeśa-sutayor*).

However, there is a hidden meaning in the phrase *vaktram vrajeśa-sutayor*, “faces of the sons of the king of Vraja, Nanda Maharaja.

The word *vaktram* (face) can mean that face among the two of them, which was turning back (*anu:anaveṇu*), playing the flute. The word *vā* with *nīpītam* (to drink with intensity) also indicates seeing, touching, hearing, smelling or (*va*) tasting that face. If the alternate reading *vai* is used instead of *va*, it means certainly they taste.

In other words, the gopis are saying, “Those who give up all shyness and steadiness to drink the nectar of that face playing the flute, among the two sons herding cows in the forest along with Their friends, have

fortunate senses and not others. Therefore we intend to say, today let us abandon all family tradition, shyness and self-control.”

Another gopi said, “Yes! Let us see, touch, hear and smell Kṛṣṇa, but how is it possible since we are so shy?”

One gopi replied, “That face releases side-long glances (*kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*) upon anyone who becomes lovingly attracted (*anurakta*) to Him. Kṛṣṇa will search you out, and release the arrow of His enchanting glance. When it strikes, you will become agitated with love, forget all your shyness and abandon your self-control. Then you will look without shyness on that face.”

Text 8

*cūta-pravāla-barha-stabakotpalābja,
mālānupṛkta-paridhāna-vicitra-veśau,
madhye virejatur alam paśu-pāla-goṣṭhyām,
raṅge yathā naṭa-varau kvaca gāyamānau*

Dressed in a charming variety of garments, upon which Their garlands rest, and decorating Themselves with peacock feathers, lotuses, lilies, newly grown mango sprouts and clusters of flower buds, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma shine forth magnificently among the assembly of cowherd boys. They look just like the best of dancers appearing on a dramatic stage, and sometimes They sing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi said, “But how will we deal with this disgrace? We should not go.” A second gopi replied, “No, we should go anyway.”

The first gopi said, “Because Kṛṣṇa is with Baladeva, our motive in going will not be fulfilled.”

The second gopi replied, “Therefore while remaining concealed, we can peer through the leaves of the creepers, and taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s

beauty, hear His singing and see His dancing. Then we can quickly return home.” That is the intention of this verse.

Decorating Themselves with tender mango leaf sprouts (*cuta-pravala*), peacock feathers (*barha*) and bunches of flowers (*stabaka*) in Their hair, lotus buds over Their ears, a play lotus in the right hand, a garland around the neck, and wearing sewn garments colored red, yellow and black like those of an actor, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama looked like the best of dancers arrayed in colorful dresses.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarama danced along with the boys and sometimes sang (*gaya manau*). *Gayamanau* can also mean that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were satisfied (*mana*) with the singing (*gaya*) of others who were praising Them. Or it can mean that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were proud of Their own singing: “No one in the three worlds can sing like Us. Who are you insignificant cowherd boys?”

Text 9

*gopyaḥ kim ācarad ayaṁ kuśalaṁ sma veṇur,
dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopikānām,
bhuñkte svayaṁ yad avaśiṣṭa-rasaṁ hradinyo,
hrṣyat-tvaco 'śru mumucus taravo yathāryaḥ*

My dear gopīs, what auspicious activities must the flute have performed to enjoy the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips independently and leave only a taste for us gopīs, for whom that nectar is actually meant! The forefathers of the flute, the bamboo trees, shed tears of pleasure. His mother, the river on whose bank the bamboo was born, feels jubilation, and therefore her blooming lotus flowers are standing like hair on her body.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis said, “This flute has created a problem for us, drowning us in an ocean of disgrace.” That is

expressed in this verse.

Though the words *vamsi* and *murali* are in feminine gender, the word *venu* is masculine, like the word *dāra*, a masculine word meaning wife. “What auspicious activities (*kusalam*) did the *venu* (flute) perform to become Kṛṣṇa’s wife? It did not do anything auspicious because it took birth as a nonmoving creature, a low birth resulting from a lack of piety. Yet that flute drinks the nectar of Damodara’s lips (*damodaradhara*). Can we tolerate that? No, because it is the gopis’ right to taste that nectar (*gopikanam*). After all, Kṛṣṇa was born as a *gopa* and we were born as gopis. Therefore we have the right to taste those lips, not the flute.

“Furthermore the flute has the audacity to manifest as male (*venu*) in form and still enjoy (*bhunkte*) Kṛṣṇa. Moreover this enjoyment is done without marriage, utterly alone and by thievery. The flute then brazenly announces the fact to the real owners of the treasure, namely us, by blowing air. It is not just the ordinary sound of blowing air; it is the cries of the bliss the flute experiences in association with Kṛṣṇa. And we are forced to hear that sound! The flute is enjoying so much that it leaves nothing left, not even a morsel. Though we are the rightful claimants of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, that flute leaves nothing for us, not even his own remnants. Such is his audacity!

“Others who are devoid of piety also act in the same way. Seeing the flute enjoying the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips, the river becomes happy, blooming with lotuses, standing like hair on her body. The trees pouring out their honey seem to be weeping in bliss. Upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s glories, the devotees shed tears of joy and experience horripilation. Similarly, upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute song the rivers and trees are also displaying the symptoms of *bhāva*.

“The rivers are female friends of the flute and the trees are male friends or messengers. Thus the flute, rivers and trees are all our enemies. Therefore where can we hide the flute, so that it does not get the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips?” Here the gopis manifest the *sancari-bhava* of envy, which has arisen from their intense love for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 10

*vṛndāvanam sakhi bhuvo vitanoti kīrtim,
yad devakī-suta-padāmbuja-labdha-lakṣmi,
govinda-veṇum anu matta-mayūra-nṛtyam,
prekṣyādri-sānv-avaratānya-samasta-sattvam*

O friend, Vṛndāvana is spreading the glory of the earth, having obtained the treasure of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. The peacocks dance madly when they hear Govinda’s flute, and when other creatures see them from the hilltops, they all become stunned.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The forest of Vṛndavana has now become even sweeter because it is the place of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. Therefore let us go there to see that place. There is no fault in doing that.” With this in mind one gopi spoke.

“Vṛndavana is spreading (*vi-tanoti* means *visesa bhavena tanoti*) the glories of the earth especially, as being better than Svarga, because (*yat*) the earth is marked with the symbols of the flag and thunderbolt from the lotus feet of Devakinandana (the son of Yasoda).

The name Devaki also refers to mother Yasoda, as stated in the *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca, ataḥ sakhyam abhūt
tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā*

“The wife of Nanda Maharaja had two names, Yasoda and also Devaki. Therefore it was natural that she became friends with Vasudeva’s wife named Devaki.” Thus *devaki-suta* (the son of Devaki) in this verse refers to Yasodanandana, Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Yasoda.

A gopi said, “It is not possible to find the symbols of Kṛṣṇa’s feet decorating the abode of Vaikuntha. Nor is it possible to see such a beautiful cow pasturing area there. In Vṛndavana, the peacocks ask

Kṛṣṇa, ‘Govinda, please make us dance.’ Thus Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, and they surround Him in a circle and dance madly in time with the rhythm of His melody. And while standing in the midst of their dancing, Kṛṣṇa also sings and dances. Then those peacocks, who are fully satisfied with His flute recital, out of gratitude offer for His pleasure, their own divine feathers. In the usual manner of musicians, Kṛṣṇa gladly accepts their offerings and places a peacock feather upon His turban. Gentle animals such as deer and doves greatly relish Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental performance, and to get a good view they flock to the peaks of hills. Then, as they watch the breathtaking program, they become stunned (*avaratanya*) in ecstasy.”

Another gopi said, “O sakhis! We intensely desire to relish Kṛṣṇa’s dancing, singing and flute playing, and to see all those beasts, deer, doves and birds assembled on the hill slopes, who have become stunned in bliss.”

Text 11

*dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-gatayo ‘pi hariṇya etā,
yā nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam,
ākarṇya veṇu-raṇitam saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ,
pūjām dadhur viracitām praṇayāvalokaiḥ*

Blessed are all these foolish deer because they have approached Mahārāja Nanda’s son, who is gorgeously dressed and is playing on His flute. Indeed, both the doe and the bucks worship the Lord with looks of love and affection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A gopi said, “Alas, though we are more intelligent than the deer, our life has become useless since we cannot meet Kṛṣṇa. The less intelligent creatures have made their lives successful by meeting Kṛṣṇa. How is that?” This sentiment is expressed

in this verse.

Sma (certainly) is an exclamation of astonishment or lamentation. “Oh! (*sma*) We do not have such good fortune.” There are two readings: *venu-ranitam* and *venu-riphitam*. The meaning is the same: sound of the flute.

The gopi said, “Hearing the sound of the flute, the does worship (*pujam dadhuh*) Kṛṣṇa with their affectionate glances. Then what can be said of the glances that we intelligent beings have given to Kṛṣṇa?”

The gopis were thinking as follows: “The female deer can approach Kṛṣṇa along with their husbands because Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate object of affection for the male deer. [*kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ* means male deer, and also those who take Kṛṣṇa alone as the object of worship.] Because of their affection for Kṛṣṇa, the bucks are encouraged by seeing their wives attracted to Him and thus consider their household lives fortunate. Indeed, they become joyful upon seeing how their wives are searching after Kṛṣṇa, and, following along, they urge their wives to run to the Lord. On the other hand, our husbands are jealous of Kṛṣṇa, and because of their lack of devotion to Him they cannot even stand to smell His fragrance. Therefore what is the use of our lives?”

Text 12

*kṛṣṇaṁ nirīkṣya vanitotsava-rūpa-śīlam,
śrutvā ca tat-kvaṇita-veṇu-vivikta-gītam,
devyo vimāna-gatayaḥ smara-nunna-sārā,
bhraśyat-prasūna-kabarā mumuhur vinīvyāḥ*

Kṛṣṇa’s beauty and character create a festival for all women. Indeed, when the demigods’ wives flying in airplanes with their husbands catch sight of Him and hear His resonant flute-song, their hearts are shaken by Cupid, and they become so bewildered that the flowers fall out of their hair and their belts loosen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi said, “Since we are ordinary gopis and Kṛṣṇa is a *gopa* from our village, our conjugal attraction for Him is natural. Though He is appearing among the human beings, even the demi-goddesses become mad after Kṛṣṇa. Then what is so astonishing that we poor, earthly women become completely conquered by Kṛṣṇa’s love-laden glances and the nectar of His flute?”

“Seeing the exquisite form and sterling qualities of Kṛṣṇa (*rupa-silam*), the heavenly women become blissful (*vanita utsava*), their hearts overcome with conjugal desire (*smara-nunna-sara*). The flowers fall from their hair as it becomes undone and their belts loosen (*vinivya*). Then they faint (*mumuhuh*) and fall from the laps of their husbands while flying in the sky in their airplanes (*vimana gatayah*).”

The bewildered celestial damsels depicted here are showing the symptoms of an ecstatic transformation (*anubhāva*) known as *moṭṭāyita*. When a heroine sees, remembers, or hears the words of her hero, Kṛṣṇa, lusty desires are aroused in her heart and she hankers for His association. This is the state of *moṭṭāyita*.

A gopi said, “The intelligent demigods, although noting the condition of their wives, do not become envious. Rather, thinking themselves most fortunate, they regularly take their wives along to see Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana. But our husbands are envious. Thus the low-born deer and the high-born wives of the demigods are very fortunate. But we poor humans in an intermediate position are the most unfortunate.”

Text 13

*gāvaś ca kṛṣṇa-mukha-nirgata-veṇu-gīta,
pīyūṣam uttabhita-karṇa-putaiḥ pibantyaḥ,
śāvāḥ snuta-stana-payāḥ-kavalāḥ sma tasthur,
govindam ātmani dṛśāsru-kalāḥ sprśantyaḥ*

Using their upraised ears as vessels, the cows are drinking the nectar of the flute-song flowing out of Kṛṣṇa’s mouth. The calves, their mouths full of milk from their mothers’ moist nipples, stand still as they take Govinda within themselves through their tear-filled eyes and embrace Him within their hearts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A gopi said, “One cannot say that the bewilderment from Kṛṣṇa’s flute song is generated from the conjugal desire of ladies only (*gopis* and *devis*). Even dumb animals like cows and their calves are affected by the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s flute. In fear of spilling the nectar, the cows have raised their ears like cups to hear the sweet sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute. The cause of the cow’s bewilderment is not just their *vatsalya-bhava* (parental love) towards Kṛṣṇa, because their calves, which are devoid of *vatsalya-bhava*, are also bewildered. “The calves, having just drunk their mothers’ milk, perk up their ears to drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s flute song as soon as they hear it. Then they stop sucking their mothers’ nipples. The milk falls from their open mouths and they stand as if stunned. The cows stand still as they take Govinda within their hearts through their tear-filled eyes and embrace Him out of *vatsalya-bhava*, motherly affection. In this way, all living entities have unalloyed pure love for Kṛṣṇa, and are fortunate because they can meet Kṛṣṇa. Only we are unfortunate because of separation from Him.”

Text 14

*prāyo batāmba vihagā munayo vane ‘smin,
kṛṣṇekṣitam tad-uditam kala-veṇu-gītam,
āruhya ye drumā-bhujān rucira-pravālān,
śṛṇvanti mīlita-dṛśo vigatānya-vācaḥ*

O mother, in this forest all the birds have risen onto the beautiful

branches of the trees to see Kṛṣṇa. With closed eyes they are simply listening in silence to the sweet vibrations of His flute, and they are not attracted by any other sound. Surely these birds are on the same level as great sages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi replied, “The calves, who are dumb animals in material consciousness, are only tasting material pleasures. On the other hand, the *atma-rama munis* fixed in transcendental knowledge and renunciation cannot be disturbed by Kṛṣṇa.”

Another gopi said, “No, this is not true. Kṛṣṇa also attracts the *munis* with His sweetness. Oh, (*bata*) it is surprising, mother (*amba*)!” (*Amba*, mother, is an address to an intimate girlfriend used naturally by young ladies caught up in loving affection.)

“All these birds resemble *munis* because they live in the forest, keep their eyes closed, observe silence and remain motionless. Perched on the branches of the trees, they become ecstatic listening to the flute. Thus even great *munis* become maddened by Kṛṣṇa’s flute song, which is a completely spiritual vibration.

“Not only that *sakhi*, even the branches of the trees are transformed in ecstasy when struck by the vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute-song, and begin to sprout new leaves (*rucira-pravālān*) out of ecstasy. The sweet vibrations of His flute (*kala-venu-gitam*), which agitates the whole universe, arises from Kṛṣṇa alone (*tat-uditam*), not from Visnu, Brahma, Siva or Indra. It is impossible for anyone else to produce such enchanting music. Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu, being primordial gods, travel throughout the universe and have extensive knowledge of the science of music, and yet even these great personalities have never heard or composed music like that which emanates from Kṛṣṇa’s flute. “Indeed *sakhi*, the birds are so moved by the unique, blissful sound that in their ecstasy they close their eyes and cling to the branches to avoid falling off the trees. Due to being absorbed in the bliss of Kṛṣṇa, they have given up all other talk, even the talk of *munis* about *brahmānanda*.”

Text 15

*nadyas tadā tad upadhārya mukunda-gītam,
āvarta-lakṣita-manobhava-bhagna-vegāḥ,
āliṅgana-sthagitam ūrmi-bhujair murārer,
grhṇanti pāda-yugalam kamalopahārāḥ*

When the rivers hear the flute-song of Kṛṣṇa, their minds begin to desire Him, and thus the flow of their currents is broken and their waters are agitated, moving around in whirlpools. Then with the arms of their waves the rivers embrace Murāri’s lotus feet and, holding on to them, present offerings of lotus flowers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa is so enchanting that He bewilders each and every member of the female gender. Carrying this fact to its extreme, the gopis speak this verse (rivers are female gender). A gopi said, “All the rivers exhibit whirlpools, indicating that their courses have been interrupted by the disturbance of conjugal attraction for Kṛṣṇa. They stop flowing towards the ocean, their husband, because they have lost all shyness and self-control. As their excess water swells into waves, they embrace the lotus feet of Murari standing motionless on the river bank, and holding on to them present offerings of lotus flowers. Yet the ocean does not harbor any hatred towards those rivers because of their love for Kṛṣṇa, unlike our husbands. Just see how unfortunate we are.”

According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary, the word *kamala* (lotus) can also mean water. Taking this meaning, the sentence can read, “They used their own water (*kamala*) to offer *padya* (a foot bath) to Kṛṣṇa.” The word *kamala* can also mean wealth. “In order to please Kṛṣṇa, they offered all their wealth to Him.”

Text 16

*dr̥ṣṭvātape vraja-pasūn saha rāma-gopaiḥ,
sañcārayantam anu veṇum udīrayantam,
prema-pravṛddha uditaiḥ kusumāvalībhiḥ,
sakhyur vyadhāt sva-vapuṣāmbuda ātapatram*

In the company of Balarāma and the cowherd boys, Lord Kṛṣṇa is continually vibrating His flute as He herds all the animals of Vraja, even under the full heat of the summer sun. Seeing this, the cloud in the sky has expanded himself out of love. He is rising high and constructing out of his own body, with its multitude of flower-like droplets of water, an umbrella for the sake of his friend.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis lament to themselves, “Alas, alas even those who are in the mood of friendship with Kṛṣṇa (*sakhyabhava*) have perfected their lives by serving Him. Out of *prema* for his friends Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the cloud expanded himself to shield Them from the intense heat of the sun. The cloud thinks of himself as Kṛṣṇa’s friend because they are so similar: they both remove distress by downpours of nectar (*rasa*); they are both dark blue in color; and both exhibit lightning and thunder (which in Kṛṣṇa’s case manifested as His yellow *dhoti* and flute playing). Identifying with the mood of friendship, the cloud made a light umbrella (*atapatram*) with his body composed of a collection of water drops (*kusuma-avalibhiḥ*) in order to shield his friend Kṛṣṇa. In this way the cloud gives pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, but we do not get an opportunity to please Him.” Therefore, the gopis idea is, “To hell with us!”

Text 17

*pūrṇāḥ pulindya urugāya-padābja-rāga,
śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena,
tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena,
limpantya ānana-kuceṣu jahus tad-ādhim*

The aborigine women of the Vṛndāvana area become disturbed by lust when they see the grass marked with reddish kuṅkuma powder. Endowed with the color of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, this powder originally decorated the breasts of His beloveds, and when the aborigine women smear it on their faces and breasts, they feel fully satisfied and give up all their anxiety.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Leaving aside the attraction of the flute, this verse speaks of the lotus feet of Vrsabhanunandini Sri Radha, which have the power, by even the slightest contact, to induce complete attraction for Kṛṣṇa, and to raise one to the seventh level of *prema* called *madana* in *mahabhava*.

One gopi said, “The Pulinda women have reached perfection but we have not. Therefore, we want to know what kind of austerities they have performed.” This is the hint in the gopis’ statement about the perfection (*purṇa*) of the Pulinda women.

The gopi continued, “Why are they perfect? They smear their faces and breasts with the *kunkuma* that has dyed the feet of Kṛṣṇa (*urugaya padabja raga*). Where did that *kunkuma* come from? The *kunkuma* came from the breast of the gopi Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with, namely Radhika (*dayita stana manditena*). Though we desire to praise Radhika’s good fortune of having such exalted attraction to Kṛṣṇa, out of shyness we do not specifically mention Her.

“Though that is indeed the *kunkuma* of Radha, due to lust the Pulindas did not even show it proper respect. What did they do? Upon seeing the grass smeared with *kunkuma*, which had fallen from Kṛṣṇa’s feet after He had enjoyed with Radha, the Pulindas became lusty. I can’t imagine what would happen if they see Kṛṣṇa personally.

“Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa from a distance, the Pulindas developed a great desire to smell the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa’s body, so they smeared the *kunkuma* from the grass on their faces. Then, with a desire to relish the enjoyment Kṛṣṇa engaged in, they smeared it on their breasts, thinking that they were being embraced by Kṛṣṇa. By this action the pain (*adhim*) of their lust was pacified. Indeed that *kunkuma* has a special power in it! In all our births we have not received it even once.”

In *Ujjvala Nilamani*, Srila Rupa Gosvami describes *madana* as follows:

“The stage of *madana* is exalted as the topmost perfection, and it inspires the full-blown manifestation of all loving sentiments (*bhāvas*). All enjoyments of meeting directly with Kṛṣṇa and all pleasurable conjugal pastimes exist within *madana*. It is the very essence of the *hladini-sakti* always present in Srimati Radharani.”

This definition should be applied to the present verse. Thus this verse indicates that the gopis experienced enjoyment through pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore from verse six of this chapter, it should be understood that the gopis were embraced by Kṛṣṇa, who suddenly appeared before them, and thus they began speaking in this chapter.

Text 18

*hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo,
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparaśa-pramodaḥ,
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat,
pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ*

Of all the devotees, this Govardhana Hill is the best! O my friends, this hill supplies Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their calves, cows and cowherd friends, with all kinds of necessities—water for drinking, very soft grass, caves, fruits, flowers and vegetables. 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis talk among themselves, “O sakhis! Without taking shelter of a great devotee our desires will never be fulfilled. We have heard from Gargi [daughter of Gargamuni] about the glories of Hari’s devotees, and that Govardhana Hill is the best amongst them. Therefore, let’s go there today, bathe in Manasa Ganga, and take *darsana* of Harideva, the presiding deity of that place. Certainly even our elders will not object to this. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa is playing on the slope of Govardhana.”

Deciding upon this plan, the gopis glorify Govardhana Hill because it fulfills the desires of Kṛṣṇa, His companions, and hopefully will fulfill their desire to meet Kṛṣṇa as well.

There are three chief Haridasa’s (devotees of Lord Hari) mentioned in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*: Yudhisthira, Uddhava and Govardhana. First, Yudhisthira is described: *hari-dāsasya rājarṣe, rājasūya-mahodayam, naivātrīpyan praśamsantaḥ, piban martyo ‘mṛtaṁ yathā*, “As they all glorified the wonderful Rājasūya-yajña performed by that great saintly King and servant of Lord Hari [Yudhisthira], they were not satiated, just as an ordinary man is never satiated when drinking nectar.” (SB 10.75.27)

The second, Uddhava is described: *sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr, vīkṣan, kusumitān drumān, kṛṣṇam, saṁsmārayan reme, hari-dāso vrajaukasām*, “That servant of Lord Hari [Uddhava], seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees of Vraja, enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa. (SB 10.47.56) Of the three servants of Hari, the present verse states that Govardhana is the best, *hari-dasa-varyo*.

From the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet the rocks of Govardhana become as soft as mud in order to preserve the unique marks on Kṛṣṇa’s feet such as the goad, flag and thunderbolt. Contacting Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet causes Govardhana to display symptoms of ecstasy such as perspiration in the form of melting stones, hair standing on end as erect blades of grass, and tears of love as gushing waterfalls.

This verse describes the sweet opulences of Govardhana Hill. *Pānīya* refers to the fragrant, cool water gushing from Govardhana's waterfalls, which Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma drink and use to wash Their feet and mouths. Govardhana also offers tasty beverages, such as honey, mango juice and *pīlu* juice. *Sūyavasa* refers to *dūrvā* grass, used in making ritualistic hand wash, *arghya*. The word *sūyavasa* also refers to Govardhana's soft and succulent grasses which nourish the cows and thereby increase milk- production. Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the boys play, sit and lie down in Govardhana's many caves (*kandara*), which give pleasure when the weather is too hot or cold, or when it rains. Govardhana also offers soft edible roots, jewels to decorate the body, flat rocks for sitting, and mirrors in the form of smooth stones. Externally the phrase *rāma-gopaiḥ* means Balarama. The gopis use this phrase to hide their feelings for Kṛṣṇa. However, for the gopis, *rāma* refers to Kṛṣṇa who is *rāmanīyā*, charming and attractive, and *ramaṇam*, the source of intimate enjoyment. By the touch of Kṛṣṇa's feet such joy springs up in their hearts.

Text 19

*gā gopakair anu-vanaṁ nayator udāra,
veṇu-svanaiḥ kala-padais tanu-bhr̥tsu sakhyaḥ,
aspandanam̐ gati-matām̐ pulakas taruṇām̐,
niryoga-pāśa-kṛta-lakṣaṇayor vicitram*

My dear friends, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through the forest with Their cowherd friends, leading Their cows, They carry ropes to bind the cows' rear legs at the time of milking. When Lord Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute, the sweet music causes the moving living entities to become stunned and the nonmoving trees to tremble with ecstasy. These things are certainly very wonderful.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Furthermore, we should not delay in going to meet this flute player. Since He is following the cows, He may soon wander off to a distant forest (*anu-vanam*).” With this idea the gopīs speak this verse.

To indicate that the cowherd boys were in the mood of serving Kṛṣṇa, the syllable *ka* is added to the word *gopakair* (cowherd boys). Thus the word *gopakair* indicates that the boys were protecting (*gopayanti*) Kṛṣṇa with love. Another indication of the word is that every morning they went with Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśoda brought them together for this purpose. While Kṛṣṇa played the flute they wandered from forest to forest herding the cows. This produced a very wonderful scene. What was so wonderful? When the moving living entities (*gati-matām*) heard that flute sound, they became motionless (*aspandanam*). The nonmoving trees adopted the qualities of humans and trembled in ecstasy.

Niryoga-pāśa is a type of noose used to restrain calves at milking time. That rope (*niryoga-pāśa*), which had clusters of flowers and pearls at both ends, signified Them as cowherd boys. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarama would tie that rope on Their yellow silk turbans as stylish ornaments (*kṛta-lakṣaṇayoḥ*).

Text 20

*evam-vidhā bhagavato,
yā vṛndāvana-cāriṇaḥ,
varṇayantyo mitho gopyaḥ,
krīdās tan-mayatām yayuḥ*

Thus narrating to one another the playful pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He wandered about in the Vṛndāvana forest, the gopīs became fully absorbed in thoughts of Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami summarizes the chapter in this verse. The gopis attained the platform of being filled with Kṛṣṇa (*tan-mayatām*) by describing Kṛṣṇa’s flute playing, forest rambling and cow herding pastimes. The word *mithaḥ* (with one another) infers *mithaḥ rahasi*, meeting one another in a secluded place. Thus, following after their boyfriend, the gopis met their beloved Kṛṣṇa in a private place and actually engaged in different intimate pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. Then afterwards, the gopis attained a state of *tan-mayatām*, absorption in ecstatic meditation upon Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and enchantment in transcendental ecstasy.

Because the gopis say later in *Bhagavatam* (10.29.36), “O lotus eyed one, from the time we touched Your feet with our hands, we could no longer live with our husbands,” it is reasonable to say on this day the gopis enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter Twenty-two: Kṛṣṇa Steals the Garments of the Unmarried Gopis

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
hemante prathame māsi,
nanda-vraja-kamārikāḥ,
cerur haviṣyam bhuiñjānāḥ,
kātyāyany-arcana-vratam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: During the first month of the winter season, the young unmarried girls of Gokula observed the vow of worshiping goddess Kātyāyanī. For the entire month they ate only unspiced khichrī.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the virgin *gopis*’ (*vraja-kumarika*) worship of goddess Katyayani to attain Kṛṣṇa as their husband, Kṛṣṇa’s stealing their clothing, Kṛṣṇa’s conversation with them and fulfilling their desires, and Kṛṣṇa’s praising the trees. After describing the *purva-raga* of the married *gopis* such as Radhika toward Kṛṣṇa in the autumn (Sarada) season, there is a description of the *purva-raga* of the unmarried *nitya-siddha gopis* such as Dhanya in connection with the Hemanta season. [*Purva-raga* is intense loving attachment before meeting the beloved.] Although in fact their loving affection for Kṛṣṇa as an intimate associate was already established, still the *kanya kumaris* (virgin *gopis*), following the ways of ordinary society, performed worship of Katyayani-devi to attain Kṛṣṇa as their husband.

The distinction between these *kumari-gopis* performing a *vrata* in the

month of Margasirsa, and those like Radha is made in the *Hari-vamsa*, *Viṣṇu Purāna* and *Brahma Purāna* in such verses as the following:
“The young, unmarried *gopis* gathered together while it was still dark,”
(*yuvatir gopakanyas ca ratrau sankalya kalavit*).

Texts 2–3

*āplutyāmbhasi kālindiyā,
jalānte codite ‘ruṇe,
kṛtvā pratikṛtiṁ devīm,
ānarcur nṛpa saikatīm,
gandhair mālyaiḥ surabhibhir,
balibhir dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ,
uccāvacaiś copahāraiḥ,
pravāla-phala-taṇḍulaiḥ*

My dear King, after they had bathed in the water of the Yamunā just as the sun was rising, the *gopīs* made an earthen deity of goddess Durgā on the riverbank. Then they worshiped her with such aromatic substances as sandalwood pulp, along with other items both opulent and simple, including lamps, fruits, betel nuts, newly grown leaves, and fragrant garlands and incense.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *balibhir* indicates offerings of cloth, ornaments and food.

Text 4

*kātyāyani mahā-māye,
mahā-yoginy adhīśvari,
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ devi,*

*patim me kuru te namaḥ,
iti mantram japantyas tāḥ,
pūjām cakruḥ kamārikāḥ*

Each of the young unmarried girls performed her worship while chanting the following mantra. “O goddess Kātyāyanī, O great potency of the Lord, O possessor of great mystic power and mighty controller of all, please make the son of Nanda Mahārāja my husband. I offer my obeisances unto you.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* prayed, “O Katyayani! Please make the son of Nanda Maharaja my husband.”

But goddess Katyayani may object, “When you say please do it, what does that have to do with me? You should be allowed to do whatever you wish in this matter. I, on the other hand, shall simply inspire your parents to do the needful in this matter. Therefore, you should rather use the words, ‘Please cause someone to do it, or please give this.’”

Anticipating this objection, the *gopis* say in anxiety, “O great *yogini*! My connection with Kṛṣṇa should be immediately arranged by you, without the unnecessary disturbance of my parents. I am too anxious for this and cannot wait. Besides Kṛṣṇa has not taken *brahminical* initiation yet so He is not ready for marriage. Therefore, Goddess, overlook the proper rituals of marriage, and in the Gandharva style let us marry Kṛṣṇa immediately.” Such is the implication. [Gandharva marriage is a love marriage by personal agreement without parental sanction.]

Katyayani may object, “You are thinking of Kṛṣṇa as your husband and are anxious to have intimate connection with Him even without your parents’ knowing. But how can I possibly fulfill this desire of yours?” The *gopi* replies, “O *adhisvari*! You have all powers; therefore nothing is impossible for you. You are Maha-maya, the supreme enchantress! Therefore, by the power of illusion you should bewilder my parents, so they will not know of my marriage and the secret of my intimate association with Kṛṣṇa.”

Taking the word *devi* to mean *dīvyati* (play), it refers to Kṛṣṇa who plays and causes one to play (*devyati*). Therefore, the *gopi* says, “*Devi* means Kṛṣṇa is indeed the husband, so please make Him so. Such a status of being a husband can be affected without marriage, and thus there is no harm even if I am married to some other cowherd man.” In this way each of the *gopis* separately meditates on the meaning of the mantra chanted to petition goddess Katyayani.

In *Ananda Vrndavana Campu*, the *gopis* pray, “O worshipable *Devi*! Please accept this foot wash (*padya*), and cool off our burning breasts with the water from Kṛṣṇa’s feet. We worship you with this *arghya*, so please give us the association of Kṛṣṇa, who is *mahargha*, most worshipable.”

The goddess *Durgā* mentioned in this verse is not the illusory energy of Kṛṣṇa called *Maha-maya* but rather the internal potency (*cit-sakti*) of the Lord known as *Yoga-māyā*. The distinction between the internal and external potency of the Lord is described in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, in the conversation between Śruti and *Vidyā*:

“Mahavisnu’s inferior potency, known as *Durgā*, is dedicated to His loving service. Being the Lord’s potency, this inferior energy is nondifferent from Him (*mahā-viṣṇu-svarūpiṇī*). There is another, superior potency, whose form is on the same spiritual level as that of God Himself. Simply by scientifically understanding this supreme potency, one can immediately achieve the Supreme Soul of all souls, who is the Lord of all lords. There is no other process to achieve Him. “That supreme potency of the Lord is known as *Gokuleśvarī*, the goddess of *Gokula*. Her nature is to be completely absorbed in love of God (*prema-sarvasva*), and through Her one can easily obtain the primeval God, the Lord of all that be. This internal potency of the Lord has a covering potency (*āvaranika-śakti*) known as *Mahā-māyā*, who rules the material world. In fact she bewilders the entire universe, and thus everyone within the universe falsely identifies himself with the material body.”

We can thus understand that the internal and external potencies of the Supreme Lord are personified as *Yoga-māyā* and *Mahā-māyā*,

respectively. The name Durgā is sometimes used to refer to the internal, superior potency, as stated in the *Pañcarātra*:

“In all mantras used to worship Kṛṣṇa, the presiding deity is the spiritual Durgā.” Thus in the transcendental sound vibrations glorifying and worshipping the Absolute Truth, Sri Kṛṣṇa, the presiding deity of the particular *mantra* or hymn is called Durgā. To confuse the Yoga-maya Durga with the Maha-maya Durga is a mistake.

Furthermore, although the pastimes of Vraja are on the platform of pure transcendence (*suddha-sattva*), they somewhat resemble material pastimes in appearance. Therefore, there is no fault in the *gopis*’ worship of Durga or Maha-maya. Independent thinkers who think that the name of Durga and Maha-maya refer exclusively to the external potency of the Lord have no chance of getting even a touch of the breeze carrying the scent of *prema* on their body. This is from *Vaisnavatōsani*.

Text 5

*evam māsam vratam ceruḥ,
kumāryaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasah,
bhadrakālīm samānarcur,
bhūyān nanda-sutaḥ patiḥ*

Thus for an entire month the girls carried out their vow and properly worshiped the goddess Bhadrakālī, fully absorbing their minds in Kṛṣṇa and meditating upon the following thought: “May the son of King Nanda become my husband.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They worshiped Bhadrakali with the vow, “May the son of Nanda be my husband.”

Text 6

*ūṣasy utthāya gotraiḥ svair;
anyonyābaddha-bāhavaḥ,
kṛṣṇam uccair jagur yāntyah,
kālindyām snātum anvaham*

Each day they rose at dawn. Calling out to one another by name, they all held hands and loudly sang the glories of Kṛṣṇa while going to the Kālindī to take their bath.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse continues the second verse's description of the *gopis* going to the Yamuna for bathing. They called each other by name (*svaih gotraih*): "O Dhanya, Where are you? Why are you late?"

Text 7

*nadyāḥ kadācid āgatya,
tīre nikṣipyā pūrva-vat,
vāsāmsi kṛṣṇam gāyantyo,
vijahruḥ salile mudā*

One day they came to the riverbank and, putting aside their clothing as they had done before, happily played in the water while singing the glories of Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Kadacit* (once) here means on the full-moon day when the *gopis* had completed their one month vow. This was mentioned in the fifth verse. To celebrate the successful completion of their vow, the *vraja-kumaris* invited Vrsabhanunandini, who was

the special object of their affection, along with other main *gopīs* and brought them all to the river to bathe. Their playing in the Yamuna was meant to serve as the *avabhṛtha-snāna*, the ceremonial bath taken immediately upon the completion of a Vedic sacrifice.

Text 8

*bhagavāms tad abhipretya,
kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ,
vayasyair āvṛtas tatra,
gatas tat-karma-siddhaye*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and master of all masters of mystic yoga, was aware of what the *gopīs* were doing, and thus He went there surrounded by His young companions to award the *gopīs* the perfection of their endeavor.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa is the master of all masters of mystic power. Thus being omniscient, Kṛṣṇa easily understood the desires of the *gopīs*, and He would fulfill them. The *gopīs*, like all young girls from respectable families, considered the embarrassment of appearing naked before a young boy to be worse than death. Yet Sri Kṛṣṇa made them come out of the Yamuna and bow down to Him. Although the *gopīs*' bodies were fully developed, and although Kṛṣṇa met them in a secluded place and brought them fully under His control, because Kṛṣṇa is completely transcendental there was not a trace of material desire in His mind. As the ocean of transcendental bliss, Sri Kṛṣṇa wanted to share His bliss with the *gopīs* on the spiritual platform, completely free of mundane lust. This is the import of the word *yogesvaresvara*.

According to *sastric* references the word *vayasyaiḥ* (young companions) means mere toddlers two or three years old. These young

boys were completely naked and were unaware of the difference between male and female. When Kṛṣṇa went out to herd the cows, they followed Him because they were so attached to Kṛṣṇa that they could not bear to be without Him.

The *Krama-dīpikā* says: Kṛṣṇa was surrounded by babies who spoke in broken language, who wore tiger nails around their necks and tinkling bells around their waists, and who had fat thighs. The *Vaisnava-tosani*, quoting from *Gautamiya-tantra*, lists the names of the boys as Dama, Sudama, Vasudama, and Kinkini. They were the very personification of Kṛṣṇa's heart.

Text 9

*tāsām vāsāmsy upādāya,
nīpam āruhya satvaraḥ,
hasadbhiḥ prahasan bālaiḥ,
parihāsam uvāca ha*

Taking the girls' garments, He quickly climbed to the top of a kadamba tree. Then, as He laughed loudly and His companions also laughed, He addressed the girls jokingly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The small boys laughed for no reason. By laughing loudly (*prahasan*) Kṛṣṇa called attention to Himself and then joked with the *vraja-kumaris*.

Kṛṣṇa said, "O young girls of Vraja! Do you know who has put all these clothes on the branch of the *kadamba* tree? While herding the cows I saw them from far away and thought, 'Today the *kadamba* tree is very attractive with colorful flowers and fruits.' To see this astonishing spectacle I came running here and climbed this tree."

The young girls replied, "They are our clothes."

Kṛṣṇa: "That cannot be. If they were yours, how did they get on this

branch high in the tree?”

Gopis: “You have stolen them and put them there.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Are you blaming Me? I am the son of King Nanda. Am I a thief? If you doubt Me, then just go to Mathura and complain to King Kamsa.”

Gopis: “Don’t get angry. Just look closely at the clothing and see if they are women’s or men’s clothing.”

Kṛṣṇa: “According to My understanding, they must be women’s clothing because they are so colorful. But so what? You are not the only women in this universe. Could these not be the clothes of some other women?”

Gopis: “That’s true, but who else besides us can come to this secluded forest?”

Kṛṣṇa: “O girls who like to wander in lonely places! Are you the only women that wander in lonely places and play privately?”

Gopis: “O fool, we did not come here to play. We came to worship Durga, the deity of this *kadamba* tree.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Are you the only young women worshiping Durga? Are there no others?”

Gopis: “There are no others!”

Kṛṣṇa: “O foolish ones! Every night the demigoddesses come here on celestial vehicles to worship Durga.”

Gopis: “Even if they did perform worship here, why would they leave their clothing here and go away?”

Kṛṣṇa: “O young girls, you do not know anything. Tonight they will come again and perform worship. After bathing they will don these clothes. That is why they left them here.”

Gopis: “You do not know the truth. Today we will perform worship. The deity of the forest has placed those clothes high up in the tree for us to wear after bathing.”

*atrāgatyābalāḥ kāmam,
svam svam vāsaḥ pragṛhyatām,
satyam bravāṇi no narma,
yad yūyam vrata-karṣitāḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girls, you may each come here as you wish and take back your garments. I'm telling you the truth and am not joking with you, since I see you're fatigued from executing austere vows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse illustrates how Kṛṣṇa joked with the girls. Kṛṣṇa said, “If these clothes are really yours, then come here if you like and identify them. You can take them after paying Me one small necklace each in order to satisfy Me after you have insulted Me. Each one of you should come individually, not all at once or two or three together, because out of greed for the cloth one woman will take more than one cloth.”

Gopis: “We cannot go there.”

Kṛṣṇa: (Laughing) “O girls (*abala*, weak ones)! You have become weak due to your intense austerities and therefore cannot come here.” Another implication of the word *abala* is, “If you don't do this, I will not give the clothing because I am strong (*bala*). What can you weak women do?”

Gopis: “We do not trust Your crafty words.”

Kṛṣṇa: “I am telling you the truth (*satyam*).” Or Kṛṣṇa said, “I am making a vow to you.” According to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary the word *satyam* can mean truth or vow.

Kṛṣṇa: “I am not joking (*no narma*). I see that you are exhausted from the difficulties of your vows (*vrata-karsita*). Because of your austerities, I am upholding the principles of religion by showing mercy and devotion to you.”

Text 11

*na mayodita-pūrvam vā,
anṛtaṁ tad ime viduḥ,
ekaikaśaḥ pratīcchadhvaṁ,
sahaiveti su-madhyamāḥ*

I have never before spoken a lie, and these boys know it. Therefore, O slender-waisted girls, please come forward, either one by one or all together, and pick out your clothes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* replied to Kṛṣṇa, “Because You are a liar, we don’t believe Your promise.”

Kṛṣṇa bit His tongue while saying, “I have never told any lies. From birth till now, I have not had any occasion to lie. What is the proof? These young boys are the witnesses. They are reliable as witnesses, because they naturally report whatever they see.”

Gopis: “From far away, please throw the clothes to us in the water, or just have the young boys bring them here.”

Kṛṣṇa: “I am unable to discern one woman’s clothes from another. How then can I throw them to you? Being a very religious person, I do not touch the possessions of others, even with My fingernail. Therefore, you must come here, identify your own clothes and take them. It is My firm rule not to touch, take or give the things of others.”

Gopis: “Because You are so impudent, You can embarrass us. Due to this fear and the fact that we are respectable women, we will not come near You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “One of the young girls among you can come forward. If she is not embarrassed and returns to you, then others can come one by one. Or all can come together. If you come as a group it would be impossible to embarrass you. The head is the topmost part of the body, and it is very beautiful. So please show Me your heads. If you can show your heads, then you should not be embarrassed to show Me your other

beautiful limbs, including your beautiful slender waists (*sumadhyama*).”

Text 12

*tasya tat kṣvelitaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā,
gopyaḥ prema-pariplutāḥ,
vr̥ḍitāḥ preksya cānyonyam,
jāta-hāsā na nirayayuḥ*

Seeing how Kṛṣṇa was joking with them, the gopīs became fully immersed in love for Him, and as they glanced at each other they began to laugh and joke among themselves, even in their embarrassment. But still they did not come out of the water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “To make Kṛṣṇa happy, I think we should not be so self-conscious.” Thinking like this the *gopīs* began to joyfully talk among themselves. Glancing at one another they became embarrassed. The *gopīs* were from most respectable families, and they might have argued with Kṛṣṇa: “Why don’t You simply leave our clothes on the bank of the river and go away?”

Kṛṣṇa: “But there are so many of you that some of the girls might take clothes belonging to another.”

Gopīs: “We are honest and never steal anything. We never touch another’s property.”

Kṛṣṇa: “If that’s true, then simply come and get your clothes. What is the difficulty?”

When the *gopīs* saw Kṛṣṇa’s determination, they were filled with loving ecstasy. Although embarrassed, they were overjoyed to receive such attention from Kṛṣṇa. He was joking with them as if they were His wives or girlfriends, and the *gopīs*’ only desire was to achieve such a relationship with Him. At the same time, they were embarrassed to be seen naked by Him. But still they could not help laughing at His joking

words and even began to joke among themselves.

One *gopi* said to another, “O lotus-eyed one, Kṛṣṇa is calling you.” The second *gopi* answered, “O beautiful-faced one! You go first, and let us see if Kṛṣṇa plays any tricks on you. Then we will go later.” In this way they joked amongst themselves, but remained in the water without moving.

Text 13

*evam bruvati govinde,
narmaṇāksipta-cetasah,
ā-kanṭha-magnāḥ śītode,
vepamānās tam abruvan*

As Śrī Govinda spoke to the *gopīs* in this way, His joking words completely captivated their minds. Submerged up to their necks in the cold water, they began to shiver. Thus they addressed Him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way Govinda continued to joke. The word *govinde* here means one who speaks in sweet words (*ga*) such as the following:

Kṛṣṇa: “O dark-eyed girls! If you don’t come here, I will tie all these clothes to a branch of the tree, make a hammock and pillow, and lie down since I am now quite sleepy due to having stayed up all night.”

Gopis: “O Gopāla! Your cows, being greedy for grass, have gone into a mountain cave. You must go quickly to herd them back on the proper path.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Gopabālā, cowherd girls! You should quickly leave here and go to Vraja to do your household duties. You should not make your parents and elders suffer.”

Gopis: “Our dear Kṛṣṇa, we will not go home for an entire month, for it

is by the order of our parents and other elders that we are executing this vow of fasting (*upavasa*), the Kātyāyanī-vrata.

Kṛṣṇa: “My dear austere ladies, I too, by the strength of seeing you, have now developed a surprising mood of detachment from family life. I wish to stay here for a month and execute the vow of dwelling in the clouds (*nabho-vāsa*). If you are merciful to Me, I will come down from the tree and observe the vow of fasting in the water (*jala vāsa vrata*) along with you.”

The gopīs were completely captivated by Kṛṣṇa’s joking words, but out of shyness they submerged themselves in the water up to their necks. Trembling from the cold, and also from their anxiety, joy, and eagerness, the gopis addressed Kṛṣṇa as follows.

Text 14

*mānayaṁ bhoḥ kṛthās tvām tu,
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ priyam,
jānīmo ‘nga vraja-ślāghyaṁ,
dehi vāsāṁsi vepitāḥ*

[The gopīs said:] Dear Kṛṣṇa, don’t be unfair! We know that You are the respectable son of Nanda and that You are honored by everyone in Vraja. You are also very dear to us. Please give us back our clothes. We are shivering in the cold water.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis* try to satisfy Kṛṣṇa by using one of the four diplomatic principles known as *sāma*, pacification. The gopis said, “You are born in a cultured family so You should not do unworthy activities (*unarya*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is obvious that you do not respect Me, for you are not afraid of calling Me bad names.”

Gopis: “We do not know any other places of Vraja. But we know

You, the son of King Nanda.” (The word *gopa* means king as well as cowherd man.) “Furthermore, You are praised and loved by all the Vrajavasis.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O foolish women! If I am a king’s son, then what wrong can I do? If you say the king’s son should not do any wrong actions. Then I say, if I am doing wrong, how can I be praised and loved by everyone in Vraja. It is not possible to praise or love a wrong doer.”

Gopis: “True, we simple women are ignorant of how to speak. Please forgive us, therefore, and give us our clothing. We are shivering with cold.” With these words the *vraja-kumaris* invoke Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

Text 15

*śyāmasundara te dāsyah,
karavāma tavoditam,
dehi vāsāmsi dharma-jña,
no ced rājñe bruvāma he*

O Śyāmasundara, we are Your maidservants and must do whatever You say. But give us back our clothing. You know what the religious principles are, and if You don’t give us our clothes we will have to tell the king. Please!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis* continue their attempts to pacify (*sāma*) Kṛṣṇa. Taking the word *śyāma* with a dental *s* as *syama* is Citsukha’s reading of the word. [Citsukha is an Advaitin commentator on *Bhagavatam*.] With this meaning the *gopis* said, “We, being Your maidservants, will carry out Your word.” The implication is that ‘it is only fitting for us to have an attitude of service to You, who are the king.’ The *gopis* continued, “Moreover because You are very beautiful (*sundara*) we have to become Your servants, and thus under the guise of being servants, we will offer our very selves to You.”

Then the gopis employ the diplomatic principle known *bheda* (process of dividing) by using rough language to weaken Kṛṣṇa. The gopis said, “O knower of religious principles (*dharma-jñā*)! You will be acting irreligiously if you steal the wealth of chastity from women and see them naked.”

Seeing that it was futile to instill fear of irreligion (*adharmā*) in Kṛṣṇa, the gopis then resorted to threats to instill fear: “If you do not give our clothing, we will complain to the king (Nanda or Kamsa.)”

Text 16

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
bhavatyo yadi me dāsyo,
mayoktaṁ vā kariṣyatha,
atrāgatya sva-vāsāṁsi,
pratīcchata śuci-smitāḥ,
no cen nāhaṁ pradāsyē kim,
kruddho rājā kariṣyati*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: If you girls are actually My maidservants, and if you will really do what I say, then come here with your innocent smiles and let each girl pick out her clothes. If you don’t do what I say, I won’t give them back to you. And even if the king becomes angry, what can he do?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After being defeated by their own words, the gopis stood speechless.

Kṛṣṇa then spoke, “We will now test the truthfulness of your words. If you are really My servants, then you will do whatever I say. Please come forward with a smile and take your clothes. If you are not true to your words and fail this test of *dharma*, then I will not return your clothes.”

Śuci-smitāḥ means a smile (*smitah*) expressing conjugal love (*śuci*). Thus the gopis' revealed their true inner feelings toward Kṛṣṇa with their smiles full of conjugal affection.

Kṛṣṇa continued, “As I am stronger, you should use *sāma* instead of *bheda*. If you make the king angry, what can you accomplish?”

Text 17

*tato jalāśayāt sarvā,
dārikāḥ śīta-vepitāḥ,
pāṇibhyām yonim ācchādyā,
protteruḥ śīta-karśītāḥ*

Then, shivering from the painful cold, all the young girls rose up out of the water, covering their pubic area with their hands.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis talked among themselves, “O *sakhis*! We have been defeated by our own words. Now, if we delay any longer some other man may come along, and then we will be sunk in an ocean of shame. Our desire to touch Kṛṣṇa's body has become even stronger, and cannot be put to death even by drowning in the water. Therefore it seems our fate has been written on our foreheads, and we can do nothing to change it. Therefore, yielding to His demands, we must put aside our embarrassment, send our obstinacy to hell and close our eyes. In that darkness we will cover our bodies and rise up from the water.” Thus assuring each other that there was no alternative, the gopis rose up out of the water to meet Kṛṣṇa.

Text 18

bhagavān āhatā vīkṣya,

*śuddha -bhāva-prasāditāḥ,
skandhe nidhāya vāsāmsi,
prītaḥ provāca sa-smitam*

When the Supreme Lord saw how the gopīs were struck with embarrassment, He was satisfied by their pure loving affection. Putting their clothes on His shoulder, the Lord smiled and spoke to them with affection.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa became very satisfied (*prasāditāḥ*) to see the pure unalloyed love (*sudda-bhāva*) of the *gopīs*, who on His order had given up all shyness, which was worse than death for those respectable girls. Kṛṣṇa put the *gopīs*' clothing on His shoulder out of greed to smell the fragrance of their bodies [lingering on their clothes]. By doing this Kṛṣṇa showed His love for the *gopīs*.

Kṛṣṇa thought: “Out of love for Me these *gopīs* have done something which is very difficult for any woman. But there remains something even more difficult, and I wonder if they can do it? Now let Me test the power of their love.”

Kṛṣṇa then smiled affectionately and with great boldness advised the *gopīs*: “O *gopīs*, you have said that you are My servants, and that you will follow My words. Now I am going to test you. If you come out of the water and stand before Me, I will give you your clothing along with My body, mind and soul.”

Text 19

*yūyam vivastrā yad apo dhṛta-vratā,
vyagāhataitat tad u deva-helanam,
baddhvāñjalim mūrdhny apanuttaye 'mhasaḥ,
kṛtvā namo 'dho-vasanam pragṛhyatām*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] You girls bathed naked while executing your vow, and that is certainly an offense against the demigods. To counteract your sin you should offer obeisances while placing your joined palms above your heads. Then you should take back your lower garments.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa: “Oh you have made a great offense. By bathing naked in the water you have definitely (*u*) offended Varuna or Narayana (*deva*).”

Gopis: “This is a local custom. Therefore, being very young girls we have made no offense.”

Kṛṣṇa: “For those performing vows, bathing naked is certainly an offense to the Lord.”

Considering that the fruits of their Katyayani-vrata had become nullified, the gopis became afraid and said, “Oh, we have made such an offense, and now we will not get any results. Since we have failed and have become completely mortified, we should give up our lives.”

Seeing that the *gopis* had performed such severe austerities that their bodies were pale, fatigued and shivering, Kṛṣṇa thought, “Oh, I should be compassionate and prescribe some atonement so that they do not give up their lives.”

Therefore Kṛṣṇa said, “O slender-waisted *gopis*! Don’t be afraid. The *sastras* proclaim that all women are servants of Narayana. Gargamuni has also said that I am similar to Narayana in qualities. Therefore I am now your Narayana. To nullify your offense to Narayana, you should face Me and offer respects to Me. Then you can take back your undergarments. Since I am a man I have no business with the undergarments (*adho vasanam antarīya vastram*) of women. But I am going to keep your upper garments and use Myself as shawls.”

When the gopis simply lowered their heads as an obeisance, Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh no, offering respects with just the head is inferior.” When Kṛṣṇa saw them then using one hand, He objected again “This is also inferior.” Thus Kṛṣṇa made the gopis hold both hands together in prayer. When

Kṛṣṇa saw them folding their hands, but keeping them below their waists to cover their private parts, He said, “Offer obeisances with your palms joined above your heads.”

Text 20

*ity acyutenābhīhitam vrajābalā,
matvā vivastrāplavanam vrata-cyutim,
tat-pūrti-kāmās tad-aśeṣa-karmaṇām,
sākṣāt-kṛtam nemur avadya-mṛg yataḥ*

Thus the young girls of Vṛndāvana, considering what Lord Acyuta had told them, accepted that they had suffered a falldown from their vow by bathing naked in the river. But they still desired to successfully complete their vow, and since Lord Kṛṣṇa is Himself the ultimate result of all pious activities, they offered their obeisances to Him to cleanse away all their sins.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis thought that the results of their *vrata* should not be lost, even if they had to sacrifice their modesty. Therefore, they decided to simply surrender unto Kṛṣṇa. This is explained in this verse. When Kṛṣṇa had pointed out that bathing naked was an offense, the gopis decided that their vow had become useless. Desiring to attain the results of their *vrata*, they offered respects to Kṛṣṇa, who bestows the results of all actions, what to speak of this *vrata*.

The gopis said, “If we satisfy Kṛṣṇa, who is the sum total of all results, then what else remains to be gained?” Someone may argue with the gopis saying, “You may gain the results, but what about the sin incurred? This verse answers the question by saying that Kṛṣṇa is the purifier of all sins (*avadya-mṛg*). Thus there can be no fault for those who obtain the mercy of the Lord.

Text 21

*tās tathāvanatā dṛṣṭvā,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
vāsāmsi tābhyaḥ prāyacchat,
karuṇas tena toṣitaḥ*

Seeing them bow down like that, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, gave them back their garments, feeling compassionate toward them and satisfied by their act.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa then gave back all their garments, rather than just their undergarments, because He was pleased that they had done as He wished.

Text 22

*dr̥dham pralabdhās trapayā ca hāpitāḥ,
prastobhitāḥ krīḍana-vac ca kāritāḥ,
vastrāṇi caivāpahṛtāny athāpy amuṁ,
tā nābhyasūyan priya-saṅga-nirvṛtāḥ*

Although the gopīs had been thoroughly cheated, deprived of their modesty, ridiculed and made to act just like toy dolls, and although their clothing had been stolen, they did not feel at all inimical toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rather, they were simply joyful to have this opportunity to associate with their beloved.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Even though the gopis were treated

contemptuously, they still acted favorably toward their beloved by doing what would have been impossible for others to do. And astonishingly the gopis became blissful by this. The gopis had been deceived to the extreme by Kṛṣṇa's words criticizing their nakedness. After forcing them to give up their modesty, Kṛṣṇa mocked them, insisting that they come get their clothing. He made the *vraja-kumaris* dance like puppets (*kridana-vat*).

When Kṛṣṇa said, "I am telling the truth. This is not a joke," the gopis did not find fault in Him. Nor did they criticize Kṛṣṇa when He told them to hold their folded hands above their heads as atonement. Though all this was done to them, the gopis felt blissful because they got to meet their beloved (*priya*). They actually became even more attached to Kṛṣṇa for doing all these things.

The conclusion is that when one is considered dear (*priya*), whatever that dear one does is experienced with pleasure even if it gives pain.

Text 23

*paridhāya sva-vāsāmsi,
preṣṭha-saṅgama-sajjitāḥ,
grhīta-cittā no celus,
tasmin lajjāyitekṣaṇāḥ*

The gopīs were addicted to associating with their beloved Kṛṣṇa, and thus they became captivated by Him. Thus, even after putting their clothes on they did not move. They simply remained where they were, shyly glancing at Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as Kṛṣṇa had stolen their clothes, He had also stolen their minds and their love. This verse describes the gopis as the reservoir of prema. The gopīs interpreted the whole

incident as proof that Kṛṣṇa was also attached to them. Otherwise, why would He have gone to the trouble of playing with them in this way? Kṛṣṇa had overcome their shyness and forced them to come out of the water naked, but now, having dressed properly, they again became shy in His presence. In fact, this incident increased their humbleness before Kṛṣṇa. They did not want Kṛṣṇa to see them staring at Him, but they cautiously took the opportunity to glance at the Lord. There is the suggestion that the bashfulness pervaded their bodies more than even previously.

Text 24

*tāsām vijñāya bhagavān,
sva-pāda-sparśa-kāmyayā,
dhṛta-vratānām saṅkalpam,
āha dāmodaro 'balāḥ*

The Supreme Lord understood the determination of the gopīs in executing their strict vow. The Lord also knew that the girls desired to touch His lotus feet, and thus Lord Dāmodara, Kṛṣṇa, spoke to them as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopīs could have said here: “O Kṛṣṇa! O topmost enjoyer of loving exchanges! We have now obtained the fruit of our vow because You have created this extraordinary fraud. By that You have driven the very life air out of our bodies. Then again by Your mercy we have become fully satisfied. By making us come out of the water You have used various clever devices to insult us in every way.

“Then after draping our garments over Your wonderful shoulders, You gave them back to us along with the jewel of Your own heart, as expressed in Your words. In response to this we can only give You our

bashful glances. Therefore, because we are simply foolish girls we cannot discern whether this pleases or offends You. Since You know perfectly well the differences of time, place and person, You should please speak whatever You desire to say. We will immediately go home upon hearing that.” Desiring to answer them, the supreme, omniscient Lord then spoke in three verses.

Text 25

*sankalpo viditaḥ sādhyo,
bhavatīnām mad-arcanam,
mayānumoditaḥ so ‘sau,
satyo bhavitum arhati*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O saintly girls, I understand that your real motive in this austerity has been to worship Me. That intent of yours is approved of by Me, and indeed it must come to pass.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O chaste women! Though out of modesty you have not mentioned that your real purpose (*sankalpa*) in worshipping Me (*mad arcanam*) was to please Me, I know and I accept it. Because your desire was pure it will be fulfilled. Since I am controlled by *prema*, nothing is impossible for My *premi-bhaktas* to attain.”

At this point, the *krpa-sakti*, mercy potency, made the Lord’s power more evident among the *gopis*, though the power was still under the control of *prema*, and subject to the pastimes. By this power, Kṛṣṇa understood the *gopis* were performing austerities in the worship of Katyayani to attain Him, and thus He gave them the results. Gargamuni had said that Kṛṣṇa was similar to Narayana, but now the *gopis* thought of Kṛṣṇa as Narayana.

Text 26

*na mayy āveśita-dhiyām,
kāmaḥ kāmāya kalpate,
bharjitā kvathitā dhānāḥ,
prāyo bījāya neśate*

The desire of those who fix their minds on Me does not lead to material desire for sense gratification, just as barleycorns burned by the sun and then cooked can no longer grow into new sprouts.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “If someone worships Me impurely or improperly, I can make that offering pure because I am full of good qualities. What then to say of your absolutely pure desire and pure love? The desire of one absorbed in Me does not lead to material desire for sense enjoyment. Because the object of love is the topmost spiritual entity, it results in the disappearance of material desire. Just as barleycorns roasted in the fire can never grow new sprouts.”

The word *praya* here means “just as.” Another reading of *neśate* is *neśyate*. This is a traditional usage according to Citsukha, the famous impersonalist commentator.

Text 27

*yātābalā vrajaṁ siddhā,
mayemā raṁsyathā kṣapāḥ,
yad uddiśya vratam idaṁ,
cerur āryārcanaṁ satīḥ*

Go now, girls, and return to Vraja. Your desire is fulfilled, for in My

company you will enjoy the coming nights. After all, this was the purpose of your vow to worship goddess Kātyāyanī, O pure-hearted ones.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bearing in mind that the most auspicious time for a lover's first tryst is the night, Kṛṣṇa speaks like this to the gopis.

Kṛṣṇa said, "O women, although you are perfected (siddha) beings, you have taken the role of sadhakas (practicioners) to increase the sweetness of My pastimes on earth. In the near future (īma ksapa) you will enjoy (ramsyaṭha) with Me, and thus fulfill the purpose (yat) for which you undertook austerities in worshipping Durga (arya). O pure women! (sati)."

Text 28

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ādiṣṭā bhagavatā,
labdha-kāmāḥ kumārikāḥ,
dhyāyantyās tat-padāmbhojam,
kṛcchrān nirviviśur vrajam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the young girls, their desire now fulfilled, could bring themselves only with great difficulty to return to the village of Vraja, meditating all the while upon His lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: It was very difficult (*kṛcchrāt*) for the gopis to return to Vraja because Kṛṣṇa had already stolen their hearts, eyes and other senses.

Text 29

*atha gopaiḥ parivrto,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
vṛndāvanād gato dūram,
cārayan gāḥ sahāgrajaḥ*

Some time later Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, surrounded by His cowherd friends and accompanied by His elder brother, Balarāma, went a good distance away from Vṛndāvana, herding the cows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Keeping in mind the glorious display of mercy that Kṛṣṇa had shown to the young *gopis*, Sukadeva Gosvami now wanted to describe the blessings Kṛṣṇa bestowed upon the wives of some ritualistic *brahmanas*. The word *atha* indicates at some other time, namely summer.

Text 30

*nidaghārkātape tigme,
chāyābhiḥ svābhir ātmanaḥ,
ātapatrāyitān vīkṣya,
drumān āha vrajaukasah*

Then the sun's heat became intense, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the trees were acting as umbrellas by shading Him, and thus He spoke as follows to His boyfriends.

*he stoka-kṛṣṇa he aṁśo,
śrīdāman subalārjuna,
viśāla vṛṣabhaujasvin,
devaprastha varūthapa,
paśyataitān mahā-bhāgān,
parārthaikānta-jīvitān,
vāta-varṣātapa-himān,
sahanto vārayanti naḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O Stoka Kṛṣṇa and Aṁśu, O Śrīdāma, Subala and Arjuna, O Vṛṣabha, Ojasvī, Devaprastha and Varūthapa, just see these greatly fortunate trees, whose lives are completely dedicated to the benefit of others. Even while tolerating the wind, rain, heat and snow, they protect us from these elements.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In these verses Kṛṣṇa indicates that even trees who are dedicated to the welfare of others are superior to *brāhmaṇas* who are not. The cowherd boys beginning with Stoka-kṛṣṇa are situated in the eight directions with the duty of protecting Kṛṣṇa. Devaprastha and Varuthapa, who are Kṛṣṇa's umbrella carrier and cleanser of His path, are situated in front and behind. The eleventh boy, Bhadrasena, is the leader of the cowherd boys. He pays attention to all the details and supervises all the boys, but presently he was situated at a distance. Kṛṣṇa observed that while tolerating rain and scorching sunshine, the trees would continue to shelter others from rain and heat.

Text 33

*aho eṣāṁ varam janma,
sarva -prāṇy-upajīvanam,
su-janasyeva yeṣāṁ vai,*

vimukhā yānti nārthinah

**Just see how these trees are maintaining every living entity!
Their birth is successful. Their behavior is just like that of great personalities, for anyone who asks anything from a tree never goes away disappointed.**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The trees were like generous persons (*sujana*) who are intent on serving guests. Whoever approaches them to ask for something (*arthinah*) never goes away disappointed.

Text 34

*patra-puṣpa-phala-cchāyā,
mūla-valkala-dārubhiḥ,
gandha-niryāsa-bhasmāsthi,
tokmaiḥ kāmān vitanvate*

These trees fulfill one's desires with their leaves, flowers and fruits, their shade, roots, bark and wood, and also with their fragrance, sap, ashes, pulp and shoots.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Niryasa* means sap, *asthi* means pulp, and *tokmaiḥ* means the young shoots.

Text 35

*etāvaj janma-sāphalyam,
dehinām iha dehiṣu,
prāṇair arthair dhiyā vācā,*

śreya-ācaraṇam sadā

It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence and words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One should use his life to serve others.

Text 36

*iti pravāla-stabaka,
phala-puṣpa-dalotkaraiḥ,
tarūṇām namra-śākhānām,
madhyato yamunām gataḥ*

Thus moving among the trees, whose branches were bent low by their abundance of twigs, fruits, flowers and leaves, Lord Kṛṣṇa came to the Yamunā River.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They passed among the trees with branches bent low from the heavy weight of fruits, flowers and leaves.

Text 37

*tatra gāḥ pāyayitvāpaḥ,
su-mṛṣṭāḥ śītalāḥ śivāḥ,
tato nṛpa svayaṁ gopāḥ,
kāmaṁ svādu papur jalam*

The cowherd boys let the cows drink the clear, cool and wholesome

water of the Yamunā. O King Parīkṣit, the cowherd boys themselves also drank that sweet water to their full satisfaction.

Text 38

*tasyā upavane kāmāṁ,
cārayantaḥ paśūn nṛpa,
kṛṣṇa-rāmāṁ upāgamyā,
kṣudh-ārtā idam abruvan*

Then, O King, the cowherd boys began herding the animals in a leisurely way within a small forest along the Yamunā. But soon they became afflicted by hunger and, approaching Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, spoke as follows.

Chapter Twenty-three: The Brahmanas' Wives Blessed

Text 1

*śrī-gopa ūcuḥ,
rāma rāma mahā-bāho,
kṛṣṇa duṣṭa-nibarhaṇa,
eṣā vai bādhate kṣun nas,
tac-chāntim kartum arhathaḥ*

The cowherd boys said: O Rāma, Rāma, mighty-armed one! O Kṛṣṇa, chastiser of the wicked ! We are being harassed by hunger, and You should do something about it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how the cowherd boys were disrespected when begging food from some *brahmanas* performing a sacrifice, how Kṛṣṇa showed mercy to the *brahmanas*' wives, and how their husbands felt remorse. The cowherd boys said, "The *Vedas* say that hunger is man's worst enemy. If you can destroy our hunger now, then you will be successful in conquering this enemy." This is the boys' logic.

Text 2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti vijñāpito gopair,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
bhaktāyā vipra-bhāryāyāḥ,
prasīdann idam abravīt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus entreated by the cowherd boys, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, replied as follows, desiring to please certain of His devotees who were brāhmaṇas' wives.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In the phrase *vipra-bhāryāyaḥ* (*brahmanas* 'wives) the word for wife (*bhāryāyaḥ*) is in the singular form signifying a class. Kṛṣṇa spoke in order to give mercy (*prasīdann*) to the wives of the *brahmanas*. Some say that the singular form is used to indicate one particular wife who attained the tenth stage of *prema*. Out of compassion, Kṛṣṇa wanted to show her mercy. *Prasīdann* has two meanings: giving mercy and lamenting.

Text 3

*prayāta deva-yajanaṁ,
brāhmaṇā brahma-vādināḥ,
satram āṅgirasam nāma,
hy āsate svarga-kāmyayā*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Please go to the sacrificial arena where a group of brāhmaṇas, learned in the Vedic injunctions, are now performing the Āṅgīrasa sacrifice to gain promotion to heaven.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sent the boys to the *brahmanas* to teach them that He does not bestow mercy upon those devoid of *bhakti*, even though they are endowed with austerity, knowledge and religious principles. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa showed that He does give mercy to those having *bhakti*, like the *brahmanas*' wives, even though they lacked knowledge and austerity.

Text 4

*tatra gatvaudanaṁ gopā,
yācatāsmad-visarjitāḥ,
kīrtayanto bhagavata,
āryasya mama cābhidhām*

When you go there, My dear cowherd boys, simply request some food. Declare to them the name of My elder brother, the Supreme Lord Balarāma, and also My name, and explain that you have been sent by Us.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You should ask (*yacata*) for rice, calling out Our names. Though those *brahmanas* are supposed to be intelligent, they must be woken from their deep slumber of forgetfulness by calling out Our names. You should call out Baladeva’s name first because those materialistic *brahmanas* will think that Balarama, being a *ksatriya*, is a worthy recipient of charity, whereas I, being a mere *vaisya*, am certainly unworthy. Even if they give a little, it is acceptable.”

Text 5

*ity ādiṣṭā bhagavatā,
gatvā yācanta te tathā,
kṛtāñjali-putā viprān,
daṇḍa-vat patitā bhuvi*

Thus instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the

cowherd boys went there and submitted their request. They stood before the brāhmaṇas with palms joined in supplication and then fell flat on the ground to offer respect.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys approached with folded hands to show their humble attitude. Though they fell on the ground, the cowherd boys appeared more effulgent than the *brahmanas* who were standing upon the land of Vrndavana.

Text 6

*he bhūmi-devāḥ śṛṇuta,
kṛṣṇasyādeśa-kāriṇaḥ,
prāptāñ jānīta bhadram vo,
gopān no rāma-coditān*

[The cowherd boys said:] O earthly gods, please hear us. We cowherd boys are executing the orders of Kṛṣṇa, and we have been sent here by Balarāma. We wish all good for you. Please acknowledge our arrival.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys said, “We are executing the order of Kṛṣṇa, who is more powerful than Balarama because He the son of King Nanda. Since we have been sent by Baladeva, we will give Him the first rice that we receive.”

Text 7

*gāś cārayantāv avidūra odanam,
rāmācyutau vo laṣato bubhuṣitau,
taylor dvijā odanam arthinor yadi,*

śraddhā ca vo yacchata dharma-vittamāḥ

Lord Rāma and Lord Acyuta are tending Their cows not far from here. They are hungry and want you to give Them some of your food. Therefore, O brāhmaṇas, O best of the knowers of religion, if you have faith please give some food to Them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys said, “Please give us some rice.”

The *brahmanas* replied, “Because Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are not *brahmanas*, we cannot give you until after the *brahmanas* have eaten.”

The cowherd boys said, “But Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are hungry. Of course, you know the Vedic injunction, *annasya kṣuditaṁ pātram* (food should be given to those who are hungry).”

Seeing the *brahmanas* unfavorably inclined and not saying anything, they continued: “O *brahmanas*! If you have faith in Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, then give, and if you do not, then say “No” and we will go back. Seeing you remaining silent upon hearing our request to feed Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the sound of whose names causes the entire universe to melt with love, we can understand that your being “twice-born” (*dvijā*) merely means born from two parents (*dvi*-two, *ja*-born).” When the *brāhmaṇas* did not respond to the cowherd boys’ initial request, the boys addressed them with a touch of sarcasm: “Of course you know the highest principles of religion (*dharma-vittamāḥ*), so what can we tell you about *dharma* and *adharmā*?”

The phrase *dharma-vittamāḥ* (best knowers of *dharma*) can also be taken as *dharma-vi-tamaḥ*, which means the ritualistic *brahmanas* were actually totally ignorant of religious principles.

Text 8

dīkṣāyāḥ paśu-saṁsthāyāḥ,

*sautrāmaṇyās ca sattamāḥ,
anyatra dīkṣitasyāpi,
nānnaṃ aśnan hi duṣyati*

Except during the interval between the initiation of the performer of a sacrifice and the actual sacrifice of the animal, O most pure brāhmaṇas, it is not contaminating for even the initiated to partake of food, at least in sacrifices other than the Sautrāmaṇi.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys anticipated the possible objection from the *brāhmaṇas* that they couldn't give the boys any food because they themselves had not yet eaten, and that a priest initiated to perform a sacrifice should not eat. Therefore the boys humbly informed the *brāhmaṇas* about various technicalities of ritualistic sacrifice.

The cowherd boys said, “This rule applies from the beginning of the sacrifice until the animal is killed. But after that there is no fault in taking food. This applies to all sacrifices other than the Sautramani, in which none of the food can be eaten.” It is understood from this verse that the animal was already killed.

Text 9

*iti te bhagavad-yācñām,
śṛṅvanto 'pi na śuśruvuh,
kṣudrāśā bhūri-karmāṇo,
bālīśā vṛddha-māninaḥ*

The brāhmaṇas heard this supplication from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, yet they refused to pay heed. Indeed, they were full of petty desires and entangled in elaborate rituals. Though

presuming themselves advanced in Vedic learning, they were actually inexperienced fools.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the *brahmanas* were knowledgeable of scripture, why didn't they respect Kṛṣṇa and Balarama? This verse answers the question. Actually the *brahmanas* did not know scripture; rather they were ignorant in realizing and imparting scripture. Therefore, for two and a half verses [9-11] Sukadeva Gosvami ridicules them for being full of petty desires, such as aspiring for the heavenly planets. The *brahmanas* thought themselves advanced in knowledge (*vrddha-māninaḥ*), but actually they were only advanced in age (*vrddha*). The word *vrddha* means wisdom and old age.

Texts 10–11

*deśaḥ kālaḥ pṛthag dravyam,
mantra-tantrartvijo 'gnayah,
devatā yajamānaś ca,
kratur dharmas ca yan-mayah,
taṁ brahma paramam sākṣād,
bhagavantam adhokṣajam,
manuṣya-drṣṭyā duṣprajñā,
martyātmāno na menire*

Although the ingredients of sacrificial performance—the place, time, particular paraphernalia, mantras, rituals, priests, fires, demigods, performer, offering and the as yet unseen beneficial results—are all simply aspects of His opulences, the brāhmaṇas saw Lord Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human because of their perverted intelligence. They failed to recognize that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, the directly manifest Personality of Godhead, whom the material senses cannot ordinarily perceive. Thus

bewildered by their false identification with the mortal body, they did not show Him proper respect.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When should a person overlook the rules outlined in scriptures for suitability of place, time and person and give his acquired goods to another person? This verse answers the question. Due to their material vision (*martyatmanah*) the *brahmanas* thought of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth, as an ordinary human. Although Kṛṣṇa cannot be perceived by the material senses (*adhoksaja*), He can be realized by mercy.

Time, place, the sacrificial offerings such as cooked rice (*prthak dravyam*), the rituals (*tantra*), *mantras*, the priests, fires, demigods, sponsors, the sacrifice and religious principles are all simply aspects of Kṛṣṇa's opulence.

Text 12

*na te yad om iti procur,
na neti ca parantapa,
gopā nirāśāḥ pratyetya,
tathocuh kṛṣṇa-rāmayoḥ*

When the brāhmaṇas failed to reply even with a simple yes or no, O chastiser of the enemy [Parīkṣit], the cowherd boys returned disappointed to Kṛṣṇa and Rāma and reported this to Them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking, “How can we give to the cowherds before we have eaten?” the *brahmanas* did not say “yes”. And they did not reject the proposal to give their remnants after the *yajna* by saying “no.” Seeing that Parikṣit Maharaja was becoming angry on hearing this, Sukadeva Gosvami said, “O subduer of enemies (*parantapa*)! If you had been there, even though they were the best of

brahmanas, you would have punished them like enemies.”

Text 13

*tad upākarṇya bhagavān,
prahasya jagad-īśvaraḥ,
vyājahāra punar gopān,
darśayan laukikīm gatim*

Hearing what had happened, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, simply laughed. Then He again addressed the cowherd boys, showing them the way men act in this world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa laughed because it was not proper to show anger towards the ignorant *brahmanas*. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa wanted to teach that a beggar should not become despondent, because it is the nature of begging (*laukikim gatim*) that one is often refused.

Text 14

*mām jñāpayata patnībhyaḥ,
sa-saṅkarṣaṇam āgatam,
dāsyanti kāmam annam vaḥ,
snigdḥā mayy uṣitā dhiyā*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Tell the wives of the brāhmaṇas that I have come here with Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa. They will certainly give you all the food you want, for they are most affectionate toward Me and, indeed, with their intelligence reside in Me alone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Just tell the wives of the *brahmanas* that Balarama and I have come. But don’t tell them I am hungry, for if they hear that these devoted ladies will become severely distressed.”

Cowherd boys: “But how will they give us food, if we do not tell them You are hungry?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Seeing that you are hungry, they will give food for Us.”

Cowherd boys: “But their husbands will prevent them.”

Kṛṣṇa: “The *brahmanas*’ wives have great affection for Me. They will not heed their husbands’ prohibitions. Since their minds dwell in Me (*mayi usita dhiya*), it is only their bodies that are residing in their husbands’ houses.”

Text 15

*gatvātha patnī-śālāyām,
dr̥ṣṭvāsīnāḥ sv-alāṅkṛtāḥ,
natvā dvija-satīr gopāḥ,
praśritā idam abruvan*

The cowherd boys then went to the house where the brāhmaṇas’ wives were staying. There the boys saw those chaste ladies sitting, nicely decorated with fine ornaments. Bowing down to the brāhmaṇa ladies, the boys addressed them in all humility.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The cowherd boys said, “We have been sent here by Kṛṣṇa (*isita*).”

Text 16

*namo vo vipra-patnībhyo,
nibodhata vacāmsi naḥ,
ito 'vidūre caratā,
kṛṣṇeneheṣitā vayam*

[The cowherd boys said:] Obeisances unto you, O wives of the learned brāhmaṇas. Kindly hear our words. We have been sent here by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is passing by not far from here.

Text 17

*gāś cārayan sa gopālaiḥ,
sa-rāmo dūram āgataḥ,
bubhukṣitasya tasyānnaṁ,
sānugasya pradīyatām*

He has come a long way with the cowherd boys and Lord Balarāma, tending the cows. Now He is hungry, so some food should be given for Him and His companions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upon hearing the name of Kṛṣṇa, the *brahmanas*' wives fainted in bliss. To revive them, the boys explained why they had come to their houses, beginning in a gentle way and ending boldly.

The boys said, “Kṛṣṇa and Balarama have come a long way (duram).” Seeing the wives becoming very attentive upon hearing this, the boys decided to inspire them further by mentioning that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama wanted some food. The cowherd boys said, “Kṛṣṇa and His friends are suffering from hunger.”

Text 18

*śrutvācyutam upāyātām,
nityam tad-darśanotsukāḥ,
tat-kathākṣipta-manaso,
babhūvur jāta-sambhramāḥ*

The wives of the brāhmaṇas were always eager to see Kṛṣṇa, for their minds had been enchanted by descriptions of Him. Thus as soon as they heard that He had come, they became very excited.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wives began criticizing their minds on hearing that Kṛṣṇa was hungry: “O you low mind! Although you have heard that your beloved Kṛṣṇa is suffering from hunger, why did you not wake up from fainting?”

Text 19

*catur-vidham bahu-guṇam,
annam ādāya bhājanaiḥ,
abhisasruḥ priyam sarvāḥ,
samudram iva ninnagāḥ*

Taking along in large vessels the four kinds of foods, full of fine tastes and aromas, all the ladies went forth to meet their beloved, just as rivers flow toward the sea.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The four varieties of foods are those that are chewed, sucked, licked and swallowed. The foods were full of rich tastes and aromas (*bahu guna*).

Text 20–21

*niṣidhyamānāḥ patibhir,
bhrātr̥bhir bandhubhiḥ sutaiḥ,
bhagavaty uttama-śloke,
dīrgha-śruta-dhṛtāśayāḥ,
yamunopavane 'śoka,
nava-pallava-maṇḍite,
vicarantam vṛtam gopaiḥ,
sāgrajam dadṛśuḥ striyaḥ*

Although their husbands, brothers, sons and other relatives tried to forbid them from going, their hope of seeing Kṛṣṇa, cultivated by extensive hearing of His transcendental qualities, won out. Along the river Yamunā, within a garden decorated with buds of aśoka trees, they caught sight of Him strolling along in the company of the cowherd boys and His elder brother, Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to conjugal feelings the wives of *brahmanas* went to meet (*abhisasruh*) Kṛṣṇa as if He were their paramour. In order to avoid censure for their conduct, Sukadeva Gosvami compares them to rivers flowing naturally toward the sea, because they had already heard extensively about Kṛṣṇa.

Text 22

*śyāmaṁ hiraṇya-paridhiṁ vanamālya-barha,
dhātu-pravāla-nāṭa-veṣam anavratāmse,
vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjam,
karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam*

His complexion was dark blue and His garment golden. Wearing a peacock feather, colored minerals, sprigs of flower buds, and a garland of forest flowers and leaves, He was dressed just like a dramatic dancer. He rested one hand upon the shoulder of a friend and with the other twirled a lotus. Lilies graced His ears, His hair hung down over His cheeks, and His lotuslike face was smiling.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *brahmanas*' wives saw Kṛṣṇa dressed in a yellow cloth (*hiranya paridhiḥ*). He was decorated with a garland of forest flowers and leaves extending to His feet, a peacock feather in His top knot, *tilaka* and designs of colored clay, fresh leaves tucked in His belt, water lilies over His ears, curls of hair falling over His cheeks, and a beautiful smile on His lotus face. Kṛṣṇa looked like a theatrical artist.

Kṛṣṇa conveyed His intentions by His gestures; resting His left arm on a friend's shoulder and twirling a play lotus (*dhunanam abjam*) in His right hand. By this Kṛṣṇa was telling the ladies, "I have seized within My hand your lotus hearts and am eagerly twirling them about." Or Kṛṣṇa was telling them, "While seeing you, who possess loving sentiment, My lotus heart is twirling out of eagerness. Thus on the pretext of twirling a toy lotus flower, I am revealing to you that My heart is twirling about. This is what you should deduce from how I am acting."

Text 23

*prāyaḥ-śruta-priyatamodaya-karṇa-pūrain,
yasmin nimagna-manasas tam athākṣi-randraiḥ,
antaḥ praveśya su-ciraṁ parirabhya tāpaṁ,
prājñāṁ yathābhimatayo vijahur narendra*

O ruler of men, for a long time those brāhmaṇa ladies had heard about Kṛṣṇa, their beloved, and His glories had become the constant ornaments of their ears. Indeed, their minds were always absorbed in Him. Through the apertures of their eyes they now forced Him to enter within their hearts, and then they embraced Him within for a long time. In this way they finally gave up the pain of separation from Him, just as sages give up the anxiety of false ego by embracing their innermost consciousness.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Their ears had become successful by hearing repeatedly (*prayah*) about the excellent qualities of their beloved, and thus their minds became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. They brought Kṛṣṇa through the doors of their eyes, and made Him lie down upon the lotus flower bed of their hearts. Then by embracing Kṛṣṇa for a long time (*su-ciram*), they gave up their distress. By that embrace they fainted in the bliss of union with Kṛṣṇa. In this way, they became relieved of the pain of separation from Him. This resembles the sages who gain freedom from the pains of false ego by embracing their inner consciousness.

Text 24

*tās tathā tyakta-sarvāśāḥ,
prāptā ātma-didr̥kṣayā,
vijñāyākhila-drg-draṣṭā,
prāha prahasitānanaḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who witnesses the thoughts of all creatures, understood how those ladies had abandoned all worldly hopes and come there simply to see Him. Thus He addressed them as follows with a smile upon His face.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the ladies in such a state (*tah tatha*), standing stunned with the plates of food in their hands, Kṛṣṇa, the witness of everyone’s thoughts, (*akhila drg drasta*) began laughing and spoke.

Text 25

*svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgā,
āsyatām karavāma kim,
yan no didṛkṣayā prāptā,
upapannam idaṁ hi vaḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Welcome, O most fortunate ladies. Please sit down and make yourselves comfortable. What can I do for you? That you have come here to see Me is most appropriate.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa addressed the wives of the *brahmanas*, who were endowed with the greatest prema, in a similar manner that He addressed the *gopis* who came for the *rasa* dance. Kṛṣṇa said, “Your coming is all glorious! And you are very fortunate (*mahabhaga*). Out of desire to see Me, you have overcome many obstacles to come here. But I cannot repay you in any way, so what can I do for you? I can simply remain your debtor. Please rest here for some time and take My *darsana*.”

Text 26

*nanv addhā mayi kurvanti,
kuśalāḥ svārtha-darśinaḥ,
ahaituky avyavahitām,*

bhaktim ātma-priye yathā

Certainly expert personalities, who can see their own true interest, render unmotivated and uninterrupted devotional service directly unto Me, for I am most dear to the soul.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Though the wives were full of the highest *prema*, fulfilling their desires now would not nourish the *rasa*. And without nourishing the *rasa* the pastimes would not be as relishable. Though Kṛṣṇa was moved and controlled by their *prema*, suddenly within His mind His *līla-sakti*, pastime potency, manifested her influence to bring on a mood of *aisvarya*, (the majestic mood of showing Himself as God) which caused Kṛṣṇa to send them home. Although Kṛṣṇa’s opulence (*aisvarya*) does not tend to manifest in the presence of personalities who have pure ecstatic love for Him, still for the purpose of keeping the pastimes perfect, it became manifest to increase the eagerness of their feeling of separation and unalloyed love. Subduing Kṛṣṇa’s *rati*, it brought out His discrimination and thus He spoke in two verses, according to the mood of *aisvarya*.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Not only you have become attached to Me, but other persons as well have developed affection for Me. Who are they? Those who expertly (*kusalah*) see to their own welfare (*sva-artha darsinah*) serve Me without personal motives (*ahaituki*) or the obstructions (*avyavahita*) of mental speculation, just as one affectionately serves one’s own body, husband and other things.”

Text 27

*prāṇa-buddhi-manaḥ-svātma,
dārāpatya-dhanādayaḥ,
yat-samparkāt priyā āsaṁs,
tataḥ ko nv aparāḥ priyaḥ*

It is only by contact with the self that one's vital breath, intelligence, mind, friends, body, wife, children, wealth and so on are dear. Therefore what object can possibly be more dear than one's own self?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: To inspire them with intelligence, Kṛṣṇa uses logic to pacify the *brahmanas'* wives. "It is because (*yat*) of contact (*samparkat*) with the self that one's vital breath, intelligence, mind, friends, body, wife, children and wealth are dear. What can be more dear than the self (*tatah*)?"

Another reading of Kṛṣṇa's statement: "But actually I, the Paramatma, the inner seer, am dearer than one's body, sons, husband and family."

Text 28

*tad yāta deva-yajanaṁ,
patayo vo dvijātayaḥ,
sva-satram pārayiṣyanti,
yuṣmābhir gṛha-medhinaḥ*

You should thus return to the sacrificial arena, because your husbands, the learned brāhmaṇas, are householders and need your assistance to finish their respective sacrifices.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: "Because I am that very Supersoul (Paramatma), as you have heard from Garga Muni, therefore, I am always embracing your bodies. Therefore, return to the sacrificial arena."

The *brahmanas'* wives replied, "That may be but how can we return there, giving up You, who are directly the Paramatma standing before

us?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Your husbands need your assistance to complete the sacrificial rituals which have been explained by Me in the Vedas. Therefore go and perform those activities according to My order, and you will be able to see Me directly there as well.”

Text 29

*śrī-patnya ūcuḥ,
maivaṁ vibho 'rhati bhavān gadituṁ nr-śamsaṁ,
satyaṁ kuruṣva nigamaṁ tava pada-mūlam,
prāptā vayaṁ tulasi-dāma padāvasṛṣṭaṁ,
keśair nivoḍhum atilaṅghya samasta-bandhūn*

The wives of the brāhmaṇas replied: O almighty one, please do not speak such cruel words. Rather, You should fulfill Your promise that You always reciprocate with Your devotees in kind. Now that we have attained Your lotus feet, we simply wish to remain here in the forest so we may carry upon our heads the garlands of tulasī leaves You may neglectfully kick away with Your lotus feet. We are ready to give up all material relationships.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the *brahmanas*’ wives speak the same line that the gopis, Kṛṣṇa’s *parama premi-bhaktas*, said at the beginning of the *rasa* dance when Kṛṣṇa told them to go home as well: *maivaṁ vibho 'rhati bhavān gadituṁ nr-śamsaṁ* (*Bhag.* 10.29.31) The *brahmanas*’ wives said, “O all-powerful Lord! You should not speak such cruel words (*nr-samsam*). The *Chandogya Upanisad* (8.15.1) (*nigama*) says: *na sa punar āvartate*, ‘One who enters the spiritual world never returns to the material world of birth and death.’ You should make Your words true, such as *ye yathā mām prapadyante, tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, “If one surrenders unto Me, I will reward

him” (Bg. 4.11) and *mām eva ye prapadyante, māyām etām taranti te*, “Those who surrender unto Me can easily cross beyond all difficulties.” (Bg. 7.14)

Kṛṣṇa: “You young ladies are members of the aristocratic *brāhmaṇa* community, so how can you surrender at the feet of a mere cowherd boy?”

Wives: “But we have already surrendered by taking the dust of Your lotus feet on our heads. Since we desire to become Your servants, we are obviously not maintaining a false identification as members of the so-called *brāhmaṇa* community. You can easily ascertain this from our words.”

Kṛṣṇa: “I am a cowherd boy, and those who are cowherd girls are suitable to be My maidservants and lovers.”

Wives: “True, let them be so. Let them shine forth if You are embarrassed in front of Your relatives to make *brāhmaṇa* ladies Your maidservants. We certainly don’t want to embarrass You. We will not go to Your village but will rather remain in Vṛndāvana, like presiding deities of the forest. We simply desire to perfect our lives by any contact with You.

“We will be happy to remain at a distance, and simply pick up the *tulasi* leaves that have fallen from Your feet, or which have been crushed by the feet of Your lovers after they have embraced You, or which have fallen under Your flower bed and been mercifully given to us by Your servants. We will bind these *tulasi* leaves in our hair. We do not aspire to become Your intimate girlfriends or maidservants because that position is very difficult to achieve.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But will your family members not object?”

Wives: “If they do, we will reject (*atilanghya*) them and immediately come to You.”

Text 30

grhṇanti no na patayaḥ pitarau sutā vā,

*na bhrāṭṛ-bandhu-suhṛdaḥ kuta eva cānye,
tasmād bhavat-prapadayoḥ patitātmanām no,
nānyā bhaved gatir arindama tad vidhehi*

Our husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, other relatives and friends will no longer take us back, and how could anyone else be willing to give us shelter? Therefore, since we have thrown ourselves at Your lotus feet and have no other destination, please, O chastiser of enemies, grant our desire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The wives of the *brahmanas* said, “From our youth we have heard about the sweetness of Your form and qualities from the flower ladies and betel nut sellers of Vrndavana. Consequently we have fallen in love with You and become indifferent to our household duties. Seeing us deviating, our husbands have become doubtful and no longer deal with us. After this, they will not accept us in the house.” With this in mind they speak this verse.

Suta refers to their married sons, and *anye* means neighbors. Now the *brahmanas*’ wives were ready to formally reject their families and neighbors. Weeping they touched their heads to Kṛṣṇa’s feet and said with choked voices, “As we have no other shelter, You should do something. O killer of enemies (*arindama*)! Please vanquish the obstacles which prevent us from attaining You.”

Text 31

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
patayo nābhyasūyeran,
pitṛ-bhrāṭṛ-sutādayaḥ,
lokāś ca vo mayopetā,
devā apy anumanvate*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead replied: Rest assured that your husbands will not be inimical toward you, nor will your fathers, brothers, sons, other relatives or the general populace. I will personally advise them of the situation. Indeed, even the demigods will express their approval.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replied, “Since you have pure love for Me and are dedicated to My happiness, you should not do something which is against My intentions. Do not be stubborn like this, but return home.”

The wives reply, “O topmost of learned personalities! Being women from aristocratic families, even the sun does not touch us. We have disobeyed our husbands, neglecting them as insignificant as blades of grass, and come a long way from our village to be near You, who are famous throughout Vraja as being licentious. If we try to return home, our husbands and others won’t allow us to enter the village, and out of anger they will surely kill us.”

Anticipating this, Kṛṣṇa answers the *brahmanas*’ wives in this verse: “There is no use in unfounded fears. Your husbands will not find fault with you, what to speak of others, such as mothers and fathers. Why? Even if you were to intimately associate with Me, which you have not done yet, they will not find fault because they know that I am the Supreme Lord of everyone. Your husbands, seeing the demigods at their sacrifice, will ask them about this matter and they will give their approval. The demigods and all learned men of the past are in agreement that I am the Supreme Lord of all living entities.”

Text 32

*na prītaye ‘nurāgāya,
hy aṅga-saṅgo nṛṇām iha,
tan mano mayi yuñjānā,*

acirān mām avāpsyatha

For you to remain in My bodily association would certainly not please people in this world, nor would it be the best way for you to increase your love for Me. Rather, you should fix your minds on Me, and very soon you will achieve Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas*’ wives said, “Then will our desire ever be fulfilled, or not?”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Since you are asking this with your tearful sidelong glances, I will reply thus. The people in this world will not appreciate it if you stay with Me. It is also not the best way to increase your love for Me. Longing in separation will create more intense attraction to Me. Therefore (*tat*), absorb your minds in Me, and you will attain Me very soon.”

Text 33

*śravaṇād darśanād dhyānān,
mayi bhāvo ‘nukīrtanāt,
na tathā sannikarṣeṇa,
pratiyāta tato gṛhān*

It is by hearing about Me, seeing My Deity form, meditating upon Me and chanting My names and glories that love for Me develops, not by physical proximity. Therefore please go back to your homes.

Text 34

*śrī-śuka uvāca ity uktā dvija-patnyas tā,
yajña-vāṭam punar gatāḥ,
te cānasūyavas tābhiḥ,
strībhiḥ satram apārayan*

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus instructed, the wives of the brāhmaṇas returned to the place of sacrifice. The brāhmaṇas did not find any fault with their wives, and together with them they finished the sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wives of the *brāhmaṇas* obeyed Sri Kṛṣṇa's order and returned to their husbands, whereas the Vraja-gopis, although ordered by Kṛṣṇa to go home, remained in the forest to dance with Him through the full-moon night. Both the Vraja-gopis and the *brāhmaṇas*' wives achieved unalloyed *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Text 35

*tatraikā vidhṛtā bhartrā,
bhagavantam yathā-śrutam,
hṛḍopaguhya vijahau,
deham karmānubandhanam*

One of the ladies had been forcibly kept back by her husband. When she heard the others describe the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, she embraced Him within her heart and gave up her material body, the basis of bondage to material activity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The lady restrained here by her husband was especially devoted to Kṛṣṇa. She gave up her material body but she did not give up her spiritual body, which was filled with

prema due to her intense love in separation from Kṛṣṇa. That spiritual body was kept hidden by the Supreme Lord, who manifested Himself to her. In that body, which was purely spiritual and invisible to all, she quickly left that place and went to Kṛṣṇa. After having given up one's husband and other objects of attachment, is it surprising that someone also gives up the material body to meet Kṛṣṇa?

To show the power of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, Kṛṣṇa's *krpa-sakti* (mercy potency) made that one lady, at the time when all the wives went to meet Kṛṣṇa, give up the material body which is the cause of one's bondage to material activity (*karma-ānubandhanam*), and arrange for her to receive her spiritual body, which is one's connection with pure love of God (*prema-anubandha*). Like a touchstone, she (*krpa-sakti*) transformed the other wives' material bodies into pure spiritual bodies as well. Thus from that day forward, the *brahmana* ladies had no more contact with their husbands. In this way, what is impossible for the *krpa-sakti* of Kṛṣṇa? One cannot say whether that one *brahmana* lady was superior in her *bhakti* to the others or not, since there is no indication given in scripture. But in any case, all of them became perfect by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa as described in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: kṛpā-siddhā yajña-patnī-vairocani-śukādayaḥ*, "Those who became perfect by receiving the Lord's mercy, such as the wives of the *brahmanas*, the son of Virocana (Bali Maharaja) and Sukadeva Gosvami."

Text 36

*bhagavān api govindas,
tenaivānnena gopakān,
catur-vidhenāśayitvā,
svayam ca bubhujē prabhujā*

Govinda, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, fed the cowherd boys with that food of four varieties. Then the all-powerful Lord

Himself partook of the preparations.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As Kṛṣṇa is *bhagavan*, the possessor of all powers, in front of Him the *brahmana* lady gave up her material body. Unseen by others she met Govinda in her spiritual body, and then experienced unlimited pleasure (*vindati*) with her transcendental senses (*ga*). That is the significance of the word “*apī*” in this verse.

The food (*tena eva annena*) was inadequate to feed all the cowherd boys. But almighty (*prabhuh*) Kṛṣṇa caused all of their bellies to be completely filled. The *ka* in *gopakan* indicates Kṛṣṇa’s merciful attitude towards the boys. Though Kṛṣṇa had no desire to eat, He also ate to show mercy to the cowherd boys. That is the significance of *svayam ca* (he also). Kṛṣṇa had no desire to eat because He was feeling remorse at having made the *brahmanas*’ wives break their vows.

Text 37

*evam līlā-nara-vapur,
nr-lokam anuśīlayan,
reme go-gopa-gopīnām,
ramayan rūpa-vāk-kṛtaiḥ*

Thus the Supreme Lord, appearing like a human being to perform His pastimes, imitated the ways of human society. He enjoyed pleasing His cows, cowherd boyfriends and cowherd girlfriends with His beauty, words and actions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this way, Kṛṣṇa did not directly enjoy with the wives of the *brahmanas*, but He did enjoy (*reme*) with the wives of the cowherd men. This is the intention of this verse. *Līlā-nara-vapu* means that Kṛṣṇa appeared as a human being to relish His pastimes. It indicates that because of the predominance of the *lila-sakti*

over Kṛṣṇa's other *saktis* such as the *sayta-sankalpa sakti* (potency to fulfill His desires), the pastime with the *brahmanas'* wives did not culminate in direct enjoyment.

Enjoying Himself with the cows, cowherd men and gopis, Kṛṣṇa overwhelmed them with bliss by His form, words and actions. *Gopīnām* refers to the young *gopis* rather than the elderly ones with maternal affection because of the time and context of the verse. Implied here is a refutation to the opinion that prior to the *rasa* dance Kṛṣṇa did not enjoy with the young Vraja-gopis.

Sukadeva Gosvami indicates: "Kṛṣṇa performed many pastimes similar to the *rasa* dance with the Vraja-gopis, but these have not been mentioned by me."

Text 38

*athānusmṛtya viprās te,
anvatapyan kṛtāgasah,
yad viśveśvarayor yācñām,
ahanma nṛ-vidāmbayoḥ*

The brāhmaṇas then came to their senses and began to feel great remorse. They thought, "We have sinned, for we have denied the request of the two Lords of the universe, who deceptively appeared as ordinary human beings."

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* remembered Kṛṣṇa constantly, and became repentant due to the auspicious presence of their wives. This verse speaks of their repentance: "We are offenders because (*yat*) we have ignored the request of the Lord of the universe."

What type of Lord was He? "We were deceived (*nṛ-vidāmbayoḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa and Balarama who requested food from us."

Text 39

*dṛṣṭvā strīṇām bhagavati,
kṛṣṇe bhaktim alaukikīm,
ātmānaṁ ca tayā hīnam,
anutaptā vyagarhayan*

Taking note of their wives' pure, transcendental devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and seeing their own lack of devotion, the brāhmaṇas felt most sorrowful and began to condemn themselves.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the women were their wives, the *brahmanas* now regarded them as their *gurus*, and they criticized themselves for their own lack of devotion. The *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa, of their wives was impossible to see in ordinary society (*alaukikīm*).

Text 40

*dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad,
dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñatām,
dhik kulaṁ dhik kriyā-dākṣyaṁ,
vimukhā ye tv adhokṣaje*

[The brāhmaṇas said:] To hell with our threefold birth, our vow of celibacy and our extensive learning! To hell with our aristocratic background and our expertise in the rituals of sacrifice! These are all condemned because we were inimical to the transcendental Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “Our three births: 1) physical birth, 2) *brahminical* initiation, and 3) initiation into the performance of Vedic sacrifice are all useless. Our vow of celibacy is useless. And our expertise in daily and occasional duties (*nitya* and *naimittika kriya*) is all useless because we were inimical to Sri Kṛṣṇa (*adhoksaja*).”

Text 41

*nūnaṁ bhagavato māyā,
yoginām api mohinī,
yad vyaṁ guravo nṛṇām,
svārthe muhyāmahe dvijāḥ*

The illusory potency of the Supreme Lord certainly bewilders even the great mystics, what to speak of us. As brāhmaṇas we are supposed to be the spiritual masters of all classes of men, yet we have been bewildered about our own real interest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “If the *yogis* who practice *astanga-yoga* also become bewildered, what can be said of us, who are involved in so much *karma*? Although we are the spiritual masters (*guravo*) of others, *maya* has bewildered us about the real goal of our lives.”

Text 42

*aho paśyata nārīṇām,
api kṛṣṇe jagad-gurau,
duranta-bhāvaṁ yo ‘vidhyan,*

Just see the unlimited love these women have developed for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the entire universe! This love has broken for them the very bonds of death—their attachment to family life.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “As their husbands, fathers or fathers-in-law we are superficially the *gurus* or teachers of these women. But these women have attained perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whereas we have fallen in the blind well of ignorance.” That is expressed in this verse.

The *brahmanas* said, “These women possess a love for Kṛṣṇa which is impossible for us to understand (*duranta bhavam*). Just see (*pasyata*) the *prema* they are showing towards Kṛṣṇa.”

The syllable *ha* in *aho* (joy, surprise) indicates that upon returning home the ladies displayed ecstatic symptoms, such as trembling, shedding tears, hairs standing on end, and calling out in choked voices, “O pleasure of my life, O Kṛṣṇa!”

The *brahmanas* continued, “But it is not fitting for a woman to love anyone other than her husband. Though women should regard their husbands as *guru*, what can one say when the Supreme Lord, who is *jagad-guru*, the universal teacher and spiritual master appears directly before them? They have developed their love for the *guru* of the universe (Kṛṣṇa), and now don’t have even a trace of attachment for home, husband, children and so forth. As we no longer see those attachments in them, they are our *gurus*.” From that day on the husbands accepted those ladies as their worshipable spiritual masters and no longer thought of them as their wives or property.

*nāsām dvijāti-saṁskāro,
na nivāso gurāv api,
na tapo nātma-mīmāṁsā,
na śaucam na kriyāḥ śubhāḥ,
tathāpi hy uttamaḥ-śloke,
kṛṣṇe yogeśvareśvare,
bhaktir dr̥dhā na cāsmākaṁ,
saṁskārādimatām api*

These women have never undergone the purificatory rites of the twice-born classes, nor have they lived as brahmacārīs in the āśrama of a spiritual master, nor have they executed austerities, speculated on the nature of the self, followed the formalities of cleanliness or engaged in pious rituals. Nevertheless, they have firm devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are chanted by the exalted hymns of the Vedas and who is the supreme master of all masters of mystic power. We, on the other hand, have no such devotion for the Lord, although we have executed all these processes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “We cannot understand how our wives have developed such extraordinary love for Kṛṣṇa.” That is the intention of this verse.

The *brahmanas* continued, “They did not perform *upanayana samskara*, live as *brahmacaris* in a *guru’s asrama*, perform austerities, meditate on the soul, or execute auspicious rites. The cause of their love is none other than Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic power.”

The cause of their wives’ loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa was hearing about the form, qualities and activities of Kṛṣṇa from the flower ladies and other women of Vraja. But the *brahmanas* did not mention this because they were unaware of it. This is Sukadeva Gosvami’s intention here.

Text 45

*nanu svārtha-vimūḍhānām,
pramattānām gr̥hehayā,
aho naḥ smārayām āsa,
gopa-vākyaiḥ satām gatiḥ*

Indeed, infatuated as we are with our household affairs, we have deviated completely from the real aim of our life. But now just see how the Lord, through the words of these simple cowherd boys, has reminded us of the ultimate destination of all true transcendentalists.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “What mercy the Lord shows, and what selfishness we have.” That is what the *brahmanas* express in this verse.

Text 46

*anyathā pūrṇa-kāmasya,
kaivalyādy-aśiṣām pateḥ,
īśitavyaiḥ kim asmābhir,
īśasyaitad viḍambanam*

Otherwise, why would the supreme controller—whose every desire is already fulfilled and who is the master of liberation and all other transcendental benedictions—enact this pretense with us, who are always to be controlled by Him?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “As Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied and has attained fulfillment in every possible desire, what

does He need from us? It cannot be anything else (*anyatha*) but an expression of His causeless mercy. By sending His friends to humbly beg food from us, He exposed our foolish arrogance.”

Text 47

*hitvānyān bhajate yaṁ śrīḥ,
pāda-sparśāśayāsakṛt,
svātma-doṣāpavargeṇa,
tad-yācñā jana-mohinī*

Hoping for the touch of His lotus feet, the goddess of fortune perpetually worships Him alone, leaving aside all others and renouncing her pride and fickleness. That He begs is certainly astonishing to everyone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone may reply to the brahmanas, “Kṛṣṇa begged rice because He was hungry, not to show mercy. And you should not say that He is self-satisfied, because He performs activities like herding cows for some purpose.” This verse refutes these arguments.

The *brahmanas* said, “The goddess of wealth (Lakṣmi-devi) gives up her natural tendency of fickleness (*sva-atma dosa apavargena*) to constantly (*asakṛt*) worship Kṛṣṇa. Yet that supreme master of the goddess of wealth still begs for food. People like us are certainly bewildered by such actions, and cannot believe therefore, that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord.”

Texts 48–49

deśaḥ kālaḥ pṛthag dravyaṁ,

*mantra-tantrartvijo 'gnayaḥ,
devatā yajamānaś ca,
kratur dharmas ca yan-mayaḥ,
sa eva bhagavān sākṣād,
viṣṇur,
yogeśvareśvaraḥ,
jāto yaduṣv ity āśṛṅma,
hy api mūḍhā na vidmahe*

All the aspects of sacrifice—the auspicious place and time, the various items of paraphernalia, the Vedic hymns, the prescribed rituals, the priests and sacrificial fires, the demigods, the patron of the sacrifice, the sacrificial offering and the pious results obtained—all are simply manifestations of His opulences. Yet even though we had heard that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, the Lord of all mystic controllers, had taken birth in the Yadu dynasty, we were so foolish that we could not recognize Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be none other than Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas*' bewilderment is further explained in these verses.

Text 50

*tasmai namo bhagavate,
kṛṣṇāyākuṅṭha-medhase,
yan-māyā-mohita-dhiyo,
bhramāmaḥ karma-varīmasu*

Let us offer our obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His intelligence is never bewildered,

whereas we, confused by His power of illusion, are simply wandering about on the paths of fruitive work.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Ashamed about their offense against Kṛṣṇa, the *brahmanas* offered obeisances to the Lord.

Text 51

*sa vai na ādyah puruṣah,
sva-māyā-mohitātmanām,
avijñatānubhāvānām,
kṣantum arhaty atikramam*

We were bewildered by Lord Kṛṣṇa’s illusory potency and thus could not understand His influence as the original Personality of God-head. Now we hope He will kindly forgive our offense.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas*, feeling very fallen, then asked forgiveness from the Lord.

Text 52

*iti svāgham anusmṛtya,
kṛṣṇe te kṛta-helanāḥ,
didṛkṣavo vrajam atha,
kamsād bhītā na cācalan*

Thus reflecting on the sin they had committed by neglecting Lord Kṛṣṇa, they became very eager to see Him. But being afraid of King

Kaṁsa, they did not dare go to Vraja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After realizing their offense against Kṛṣṇa, and finally appreciating His almighty position, why did the *brāhmaṇas* not just rush to Vraja and surrender at the lotus feet of the Lord? This verse answers. At that moment, the *brahmanas* were bewildered by grief and guilt, and were not in agreement as to the proper course of action. Thus they did not go to the Asoka grove to meet Sri Kṛṣṇa. And even by the end of the day, although they were all in agreement, they still could not go to Vraja. The word “*ca*” indicates they tried to move but could not. Suddenly at the same time they all felt the presence of Kaṁsa. The *brahmanas* were afraid that Kaṁsa would certainly kill them if his spies reported that they had gone to Kṛṣṇa. The fear of being killed, however, did not create any obstacle for their wives. Being absorbed in ecstatic Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the *brahmanas*’ wives immediately went to Kṛṣṇa, just as the *gopīs*, simply to dance with the Lord, traveled in the dead of night through a forest full of ferocious animals. It should be understood that because the *brahmanas* were not on such an advanced platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the shadow of fear in their minds kept them from seeing the Lord face to face.

Chapter Twenty-four: Worshipping Govardhana Hill

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
bhagavān api tatraiva,
baladevena saṁyutaḥ,
apaśyan nivasan gopān,
indra-yāga-kṛtodyamān*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa talks with His father Nanda Maharaja, stops the sacrifice to Indra, and introduces the worship of Govardhana Hill.

In the village of the *yajnic brāhmaṇas*, Nanda Maharaja and his brothers were somehow or other preparing an elaborate sacrifice to Lord Indra. Upon arriving there and observing the men busy in the preparations, Kṛṣṇa reacted as follows.

Text 2

*tad-abhijño 'pi bhagavān,
sarvātmā sarva-darśanaḥ,
praśrayāvanato 'pṛcchad,
vṛddhān nanda-purogamān*

Being the omniscient Supersoul, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa already understood the situation, yet He still humbly inquired from the elders, headed by His father, Nanda Mahārāja.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa knew all about the sacrifice because He had seen it many times before. As Paramatma (*sarva-atma*) He was inspiring the Vrajavasis to perform the sacrifice. Yet being eager to enact His pastime of lifting Govardhana Hill, Kṛṣṇa cleverly inquired from His father about the imminent sacrifice. Kṛṣṇa is called *sarva-darsanaḥ* because He could see into the future, wherein He would smash Indra's pride and enjoy pastimes with His loving devotees for seven days.

Text 3

*kathyatām me pitaḥ ko 'yam,
sambhramo va upāgataḥ,
kiṁ phalaṁ kasya voddeśaḥ,
kena vā sādhyate makhaḥ*

[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?

Text 4

*etad brūhi mahān kāmo,
mahyam śuśrūṣave pitaḥ,*

*na hi gopyam hi sadhūnām,
kṛtyam sarvātmanām iha,
asty asva-para-dṛṣṭīnām,
amitrodāsta-vidviṣām*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If Nanda Maharaja answered, “We are busy preparing for the sacrifice we are about to perform.” Then Kṛṣṇa would ask, “What is the purpose of this sacrifice? Who is the demigod to be worshiped through this sacrifice? Who will perform it and with what materials?”

Nanda Maharaja said, “You are but a mere child. Why are You asking such questions?”

Kṛṣṇa: “I have a great desire (*mahan-kama*) to know.” Or the meaning can be “As You are showing great expectations, therefore please tell Me because I want to hear.”

Text 5

*udāsīno ‘ri-vad varjya,
ātma-vat suhṛd ucyate*

One who is neutral may be avoided like an enemy, but a friend should be considered like one’s own self.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating that one of the cowherd

men may say, “As this is a private affair, we should not tell a small boy with little intelligence”, Kṛṣṇa utters statements that reveal He is very learned.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Those who are of good character see all other people on the same level as themselves. They do not distinguish between friends, enemies and neutral parties. Therefore, you should trust Me and reveal the entire purpose of the sacrifice.”

Nanda Maharaja: “But we are householders and cannot follow such standards of saintly behavior.”

To answer that objection Kṛṣṇa says, “One who is indifferent may be avoided like an enemy.”

Ujjvala-nilamani defines the *tatastha* or neutral person as “a friend of the opposing group”. The neutral person is not an enemy or a friend, and should not be avoided nor accepted. Therefore he is included among those to be avoided.

Kṛṣṇa continues, “But one should have faith in the friend as one’s very own self. I am more than a friend; I am an intimate family member.”

Text 6

*jñatvājñātvā ca karmāṇi,
jano 'yam anutiṣṭhati,
viduṣaḥ karma-siddhiḥ syād,
yathā nāviduṣo bhavet*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “People should perform a particular ceremony or activity only after thoroughly understanding

it through discussion with friends. We should not be blind followers of tradition.”

Activities refers to the worship and sacrifices that *vaisyas* [farmers] should perform, as well the present and future results.

Text 7

*tatra tāvat kriyā-yogo,
bhavatām kiṁ vicāritaḥ,
atha vā laukikas tan me,
pṛcchataḥ sādhu bhāṇyatām*

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?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating that one of the cowherd men may say, “We are conducting this *yajna* after considering very carefully with knowledge”, Kṛṣṇa replies here with another question: “Is this fruitive endeavor (*kriya yoga*) based on scripture, or is it simply a local custom?”

Text 8

*śrī-nanda uvāca,
parjanya bhagavān indro,
meghās tasyātma-mūrtayaḥ,
te bhivarṣanti bhūtānām,
prīṇanam jīvanam payaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Nanda Maharaja gives the logic behind the worship. Nanda Maharaja said, “This is a local custom. Indra sends the rain which is pleasing and gives life to entities such as grass.”

Text 9

*tām tāta vayam anye ca,
vārmucāṁ patim īśvaram,
dravyais tad-retasā siddhair,
yajante kratubhir narāḥ*

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 and other paraphernalia of worship produced through his own discharge in the form of rain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja is affectionately addressing Kṛṣṇa with the word *tāta* (my dear son). The hint is: “Through the mercy of demigods like Indra, I have attained a qualified son like You. Therefore You should not oppose this action. In this sacrifice there should be no false pride. We worship Indra with materials created by Indra’s rain, just as one worships the Ganga with Ganga water.”

Text 10

*tac-cheseṇopajīvanti,
tri-varga-phala-hetave,
pumsām puruṣa-kārāṇām,
parjanyaḥ phala-bhāvanaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “People sustain their lives by the remnants of sacrifices performed to Indra. Human life is not meant just for sense gratification, but for attaining the goals of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. From rain comes grains, from grains comes sustenance of life, from sustenance of life comes religiosity, and from religiosity comes effort and action. Because the clouds are the root of the *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*, we should worship Indra, the Lord of the clouds.”

Text 11

*ya enam viṣṛjed dharmam,
paramparyāgataṁ naraḥ,
kāmād dveṣād bhayāl lobhāt,
sa vai nāpnoti śobhanam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse speaks of the dire result of not worshipping Indra. If one neglects his religious duties out of lust, greed, fear or enmity, he will not attain any benefit now or in the future.

Text 12

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vaco niśamya nandasya,
tathānyeṣāṁ vrajaukasām,
indrāya manyuṁ janayan,
pitaraṁ prāha keśavaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s aim in provoking Indra’s anger was to break the mountain of his false pride. By lifting Govardhana Hill Sri Kṛṣṇa would thus initiate a blissful annual festival called Govardhana-pūjā, and He would further enjoy the pleasant pastime of dwelling for seven days beneath the hill with all His loving devotees. These are the successive reasons for Kṛṣṇa’s words.

Text 13

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
karmaṇā jāyate jantuḥ,
karmaṇaiva pralīyate,
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhayaṁ kṣemaṁ,
karmaṇaivābhipadyate*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to show pastimes as a human being Kṛṣṇa spoke the philosophy known as Karma-vāda or Karma-mīmāṃsā to minimize the importance of the demigods. Karma-mīmāṃsā is basically atheism with a belief in reincarnation.

Text 14

*asti ced īśvaraḥ kaścit,
phala-rūpy anya-karmaṇām,
kartāraṁ bhajate so 'pi,
na hy akartuḥ prabhur hi saḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But how can inanimate karma alone give results? There must be a dispenser of the results of action, a lord.” This verse answers this objection. “If such a lord exists, he must give results to those who perform actions.”

Then Kṛṣṇa makes His logic stronger by negation. “If there is a supreme controller, He must depend on a performer of activity to reciprocate with and must therefore also be subject to the laws of karma, being obliged to award happiness and distress to conditioned souls according

to the laws of good and evil.”

Text 15

*kim indreṇeha bhūtānām,
sva-sva-karmānuvartinām,
anīśenānyathā kartum,
svabhāva-vihitam nṛṇām*

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?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The demigods have no function at all; they are like the nipples on the neck of a goat.” Thus, Kṛṣṇa says that there is no need to worship Indra because people are simply reaping their inevitable karma. There may be an objection, “Action cannot take place unless the Supersoul instigates it. Thus, how can You say that the demigods have no function?”

Kṛṣṇa answers, “The Supersoul inspires the soul to act on the basis of his previous impressions (*saṁskāras*), and for no other purpose. Since one only acts according to his previous deeds, worship of Indra will have no effect.”

Text 16

*svabhāva-tantro hi janaḥ,
svabhāvam anuvartate,
svabhāva-stham idaṁ sarvaṁ,
sa-devāsura-mānuṣam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa here elaborates upon the argument given in the previous verse. “Since the actions one does in this life depend on his *svabhāva* (conditioned nature), why bother worshipping God or the demigods?”

Text 17

*dehān uccāvacāñ jantuḥ,
prāpyotsṛjati karmanā,
śatrur mitram udāsīnaḥ,
karmaiva gurur īśvaraḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “It is our action (*karma*), which is based on previous impressions, which gives all results. Therefore it is worshipable.” That is the intention of this and half of the next verse.

Text 18

tasmāt sampūjayet karma,

*svabhāva-sthaḥ sva-karma-kṛt,
anjasā yena varteta,
tad evāsya hi daivatam*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa here proposes that our work (*karma*) or occupation is really God and that we should therefore simply worship (*sampujayet*) our work. Though *karma* in general should be respected, *karma* as the cause is also proved through scripture. Those situated in their social position (*varna*) such as *brahmanas*, perform actions according to that *varna* (*svakarmakam*).

Nanda Maharaja said, “But how can there be success of a sacrifice where the ingredients are offered to the demigods without accepting the demigods?”

Kṛṣṇa: “The demigods are only *karmanga*, secondary assistants to the *karma* itself, according to the philosophy of *hetutvad* (causality). In this way the demigods are reconciled. *Karma*, the work by which we live happily, is our deity.”

Text 19

*ājīvyaiikataram bhāvam,
yas tv anyam upajīvati,
na tasmād vindate kṣemam,
jārān nāry asatī yathā*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Kṛṣṇa speaks of the effects of not following His advice.

Text 20

*varṭeta brahmaṇā vipro,
rājanyo rakṣayā bhuvah,
vaiśyas tu vārtayā jīvec,
chūdras tu dvija-sevayā*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “The prescribed duty by which we maintain our lives is our object of worship.” Kṛṣṇa gives examples from the different *varnas*, social positions. Kṛṣṇa continued, “For *brahmanas* the Vedic scriptures are the object of worship. For the *ksatriya* the earth is the object of worship. For the *vaiśya* agriculture, trade, and other occupations are the objects of worship. For the *sudras* the higher castes are the objects of worship.”

Text 21

*kṛṣi-vāñijya-go-rakṣā,
kuśīdam tūryam ucyate,*

*vārtā catur-vidhā tatra,
vayaṁ go-vṛttayo 'niśam*

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.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although Kṛṣṇa mentioned *vaiśyas* in the previous verse, He describes the *vaiśyas* 'duties in more detail in this verse because Nanda and the others were *vaiśyas*.

Kṛṣṇa said, “There are four occupational duties for the *vaiśya*: agriculture, trade, raising cows and lending money. Among those occupations we are continuously raising cows. Even during times of hardship we have not resorted to the alternative occupations. Thus for us cows are worshipable.”

Text 22

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti,
sthity-utpatty-anta-hetavaḥ,
rajasotpadyate viśvam,
anyonyam vividhaṁ jagat*

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.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating the possible objection that a livelihood based on cows certainly depends on Lord Indra,

who supplies rain, Sri Kṛṣṇa here introduces a mechanistic theory of existence in two verses known as atheistic Sāṅkhya. By the mode of passion the universe is created, and men and women unite to produce offspring.

Text 23

*rajasā coditā meghā,
varṣanty ambūni sarvataḥ,
prajāś tair eva sidhyanti,
mahendraḥ kim kariṣyati*

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?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa continues His mechanistic explanation of existence, concluding *mahendraḥ kim kariṣyati*: “Who needs the great Indra, since the rain, sent by the clouds, which in turn are impelled by the mode of passion, is actually producing everyone’s food?” The word *sarvataḥ* indicates that the clouds magnanimously send their rain even on the ocean, rocks and barren land where there is no apparent necessity for such sweet water.

Text 24

*na naḥ purojanapadā,
na grāmā na gṛhā vayam,
vanaukasas tāta nityam,
vana-śaila-nivāsinaḥ*

**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.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *govardhana* means “that which nourishes the cows.” Since Govardhana Hill provides abundant grass to feed the cows, the cowherd men should worship it because their occupation depends on having healthy, well-fed cows. This is explained in two verses.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Our home is not in the city or village. Because we move around herding cows our home is the forest and mountains.”

Text 25

*tasmād gavām brāhmaṇānām,
adreś cārabhyatām makhaḥ,
ya indra-yāga-sambhārās,
tair ayam sādhyatām makhaḥ*

**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.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “The blessings of the *brahmanas* give directly perceivable results to us, therefore we should worship them as well the cows and Govardhana Hill.” Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse after convincing Nanda Maharaja and others. Kṛṣṇa continued, “Let us perform this sacrifice using the ingredients (*sambhara*) meant for Indra.”

Text 26

*pacyantām vividhāḥ pākāḥ,
sūpāntāḥ pāyasādayaḥ,
samāvāpūpa-śaṣkulyaḥ,
sarva-dohaś ca grhyatām*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Pakah* refers to cooked rice and vegetables. *Supantah* refers to hot soups and *payasadayah* means sweet rice. *Samyavah* refers to fried and baked cakes made of wheat flour. *Sarva-doha* refers to products of the cow such as milk and yogurt.

Text 27

*hūyantām agnayaḥ samyag,
brāhmaṇair brahma-vādibhiḥ,
annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁ tebhyo,
deyaṁ vo dhenu-dakṣiṇāḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse to assure the quality of the sacrifice and to inspire faith in everyone. Kṛṣṇa said, “You

should engage the *brahmanas* in performing sacrifices. Afterwards, you should feed them and reward them with cows and money.”

Text 28

*anyebhyaś cāśva-cāṇḍāla,
patitebhyo yathārhataḥ,
yavasam ca gavām dattvā,
giraye dīyatām baliḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse in order to make all classes of Vrajavasis favorable to His proposal: “Feed everyone from the Brahmin Vaisnavas down to the dogs and dog-eaters. You should feed grass to the cows, and worship Govardhana Hill with sandalwood, flowers and other respectful offerings (*baliḥ*).”

Text 29

*sv-alāṅkṛtā bhuktavantah,
sv-anuliptāḥ su-vāśasaḥ,
pradakṣiṇām ca kuruta,
go-viprānala-parvatān*

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.

Text 30

*etan mama mataṁ tāta,
kriyatām yadi rocate,
ayaṁ go-brāhmaṇādrīṇām,
mahyaṁ ca dayito makhaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “This sacrifice will be dear to Me (*mahyam*).”

Text 31

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kālātmanā bhagavatā,
śakra-darpa-jighāmsayā,
proktaṁ niśamya nandādyāḥ,
sādhv agrhṇanta tad-vacaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Bhagavata* (Sri Kṛṣṇa) is addressed as *kala-atmana* (the time force), to indicate that Kṛṣṇa will destroy the sacrifice to Indra. After hearing from Kṛṣṇa, Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men accepted His proposal.

Texts 32–33

*tathā ca vyadadhuh sarvaṁ,
yathāha madhusūdanaḥ,
vācayitvā svasty-ayanam,
tad-dravyeṇa giri-dvijān,
upahr̥tya balīn samyag,
ādr̥tā yavasam gavām,
go-dhanāni puraskṛtya,
giriṁ cakruḥ pradakṣiṇam*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men respectfully (*adr̥ta*) offered the *brahmanas* and Govardhana Hill (*giridvijan*) the items meant for Indra. They also gave grass to the cows (*gavam*), placed the cows in front of them, and circumambulated Govardhana Hill.

*anāmsy anaḍud-yuktāni,
te cāruhya sv-alakṛtāḥ,
gopyaś ca kṛṣṇa-vīryāni,
gāyantyaḥ sa-dvijāśiṣaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After yoking the bulls to the carts, the cowherd men and women went around Govardhana Hill. Their beautiful songs glorifying Kṛṣṇa blended harmoniously with the brahmanas’ prayers of benediction.

Text 35

*kṛṣṇas tv anyatamaṁ rūpaṁ,
gopa-viśrambhaṇaṁ gataḥ,
śailo ‘smīti bruvan bhūri,
balim ādad bṛhad-vapuḥ*

Kṛṣṇa then assumed an unprecedented, huge form to instill faith in the cowherd men. Declaring “I am Govardhana Mountain!” He ate the abundant offerings.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to show the superiority of the sacrifice instituted by Himself, and to increase the faith of all the Vrajavasis in it, Kṛṣṇa appeared in another (*anyatamam*) huge personal form (*rupam*), which was like a second mountain standing atop of

Govardhana. By doing this Kṛṣṇa convinced the cowherd men that He and Govardhana Hill are identical. The Vrajavasis thought, “Kṛṣṇa is the hill!”

“I am Govardhana Mountain” means “I am the presiding master of this region. Being pleased with your devotion, I have appeared. Please ask for anything you desire.” Saying this Kṛṣṇa then accepted the offerings (*balim*) of food made by persons both near and as far away as Nandagrama. Some preparations were seen by the Vrajavasis at Govardhana Hill, but the others that were offered in meditation were invisible to them. With thousands and millions of hands, which were both short and long, He ate all those offerings from every direction. Thus He filled everyone with joy by eating all the food.

Text 36

*tasmai namo vraja-janaiḥ,
saha cakra ātmanātmāne,
aho paśyata śailo ‘sau,
rūpī no ‘nugrahaṁ vyadhāt*

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!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In His form as a child standing among the festival-goers of Vrndavana, Kṛṣṇa led the Vrajavasis in bowing down to His new incarnation as Govardhana Hill, which was nothing but an expanded form of Himself. Then Kṛṣṇa spoke in one and a half verses: “See how this hill has been merciful to us. This Govardhana Hill, assuming any form he wishes (such as snakes) will kill those who disrespect this sacrifice. Therefore we should offer respects to him.”

Text 37

*eṣo 'vajānato martyān,
kāma-rūpī vanaukaśaḥ,
hanti hy asmaī namasyāmaḥ,
śarmaṇe ātmano gavām*

“This Govardhana Hill, assuming any form he wishes, will 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.”

Text 38

*ity adri-go-dvija-makhaṁ,
vāsudeva-pracoditāḥ,
yathā vidhāya te gopā,
śaha-kṛṣṇā vrajaṁ yayuḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although these philosophies are not followed by devotees, Kṛṣṇa cited the atheistic Sāṅkhya and Karma-mīmāṃsā in order to stop the sacrifice to Indra. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, Sri Kṛṣṇa presented six theoretical points in this chapter: 1) that *karma* alone is sufficient to determine one’s destiny;

2) that one's conditioned nature (*svabhāva*) is the supreme controller; 3) that the modes of nature (*gunas*) are the supreme controller; 4) that the Supreme Lord is simply a dependent aspect of karma; 5) that He is under the control of karma; and 6) that one's occupation is the actual worshipable deity.

Sri Kṛṣṇa presented these arguments not because He believed them, but rather because He wanted to stop the impending sacrifice to Indra and divert it to Himself in the form of Govardhana Hill. In this way Kṛṣṇa desired to agitate that falsely proud demigod.

Chapter Twenty-five: Lord Kṛṣṇa Lifts Govardhana Hill

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
indras tadātmanaḥ pūjām,
vijñāya vihatām nṛpa,
gopebhyaḥ kṛṣṇa-nāthebhyo,
nandādibhyaś cukopa ha*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Lord Indra, overcome by anger, sent rain to destroy the people of Vraja. To protect Vraja, Kṛṣṇa held Govardhana Hill in His left hand for seven days. Sukadeva Gosvami immediately reveals the foolishness of Indra and the absurdity of his anger.

Text 2

*gaṇam sāmivartakam nāma,
meghānām cānta-kārīṇām,
indraḥ pracodayat kruddho,
vākyam cāheśa-māny uta*

Angry Indra sent forth the clouds of universal destruction, known as Sāmvartaka. Imagining himself the supreme controller, he spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes Indra’s anger. *Samvartaka* refers to the clouds used for destruction of the universe. *Ca* indicates that the seven winds of destruction such as *āvaha* and *prāvaha* were also sent. Due to excessive pride, Indra arrogantly considered himself to be the supreme controller (*īśa-mānī*).

Text 3

*aho śrī-mada-māhātmyam,
gopānām kānanaukasām,
kṛṣṇam martyam upāśritya,
ye cakrur deva-helanam*

[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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “I am astonished to see the amount of wealth and bliss of these cowherd men!” Being inspired by Goddess Sarasvatī, we can understand that Indra was really saying that the cowherd men had offended him by taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, whom Indra considered to be *martya*, a mortal. Kṛṣṇa is called *martyam* because He appears to give auspiciousness to the ignorant souls of the material world.

Text 4

*yathādr̥ḍhaiḥ karma-mayaiḥ,
kratubhir nāma-nau-nibhaiḥ,
vidyām ānvīkṣikīm hitvā,
titīrṣanti bhavārṇavam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vaisnavas desiring to cross the ocean of material existence take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, and reject the quest for *brahma-jñāna* (knowledge of Brahman). Indra said, “These cowherd men have become absorbed in a sacrifice as a means to cross the ocean of material existence. The Vrajavasis have foolishly taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa in hopes He will reduce the ocean to the water contained in a calf’s hoofprint.”

Text 5

*vācālaṁ bālīsaṁ stabdham,
ajñāṁ paṇḍita-māninam,
kṛṣṇaṁ martyam upāśritya,
gopā me cakrur apriyam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “Kṛṣṇa is over-talkative

(*vācālam*), speaking many audacious arguments in the line of Karma-mīmāṃsā and Sāṅkhya philosophy even though He does not accept these arguments; thus He is *bāliśa*, “foolish.” He is *stabdha* (disrespectful) because He speaks boldly even in the presence of His own father. Because He is ignorant (*ajñam*), all He can do is herd cows, but He thinks Himself a learned man (*paṇḍita-māninam*). Although I am a demigod, they neglect me to honor Him, a mere human being (*martyam*), and thus they offend me.”

Through the insults of Indra, Goddess Sarasvatī is actually praising Kṛṣṇa thus: By Kṛṣṇa’s mercy even a fool (*bāliśa*) becomes expert in speaking (*vācālam*) according to Vedic authority. *Stabdham* means that Kṛṣṇa bows down to no one because there is no one for Him to offer homage to. *Ajñam* means that there is nothing more for Kṛṣṇa to know because He is omniscient, and *paṇḍita-māninam* means that Kṛṣṇa is highly honored by the knowers of the Absolute Truth.

Text 6

*eṣām śriyāvaliptānām,
kṛṣṇenā-dhmāpitātmanām,
dhunuta śrī-mada-stambham,
paśūn nayata saṅkṣayam*

[To the clouds of destruction King Indra said:] The 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “Due to wealth these cowherd men are mad with pride and their minds (*atma*) have been influenced by Kṛṣṇa. You should remove their pride and kill their cows.”

The unintentional inner meaning of Indra’s words is as follows: “The cowherd men are anointed with sandalwood pulp (*sriya avalipta*). You clouds should remove (*dhunuta*) the heat in their bodies with cool rain and refresh the cows, making them tremble in delight. When Kṛṣṇa lifts Govardhana, you should allow Him to make a beautiful place (*saṅyāka kṣayam*) to stay.” The word *kṣayam* means residence as well as destruction.

Text 7

*ahaṁ cairāvataṁ nāgam,
āruhyānuvraje vrajam,
marud-gaṇair mahā-vegair,
nanda-goṣṭha-jighāmsayā*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra spoke to the frightened clouds, “I will also come behind you desiring to destroy (*jighāmsayā*) the cowherd pastures of Nanda.” The real meaning is “I am also coming, desiring to see the cowherd pastures of Nanda.”

Text 8

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
itthaṁ maghavatājñaptā,
meghā nirmukta-bandhanāḥ,
nanda-gokulam āsāraiḥ,
pīḍayām āsur ojasā*

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.

Text 9

*vidyotamānā vidyudbhiḥ,
stanantaḥ stanayitnubhiḥ,
tīvrair marud-gaṇair nunnā,
vavrṣur jala-śarkarāḥ*

Propelled by the fearsome wind-gods, the clouds blazed with lightning bolts and roared with thunder as they hurled down hailstones.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra sent forth the Sāmvartaka clouds which could cover the entire earth with a single vast ocean. Losing his discrimination because of anger, Indra released those clouds without considering the magnitude of their power. Rumbling with thunder (*stanayitnubhiḥ*), the clouds moved (*nunna*) here and there being pushed by *avaha* and *pravaha* winds (*marudganaih*). The clouds poured down hailstones (*jala-śarkarāḥ*).

Text 10

sthūnā-sthūlā varṣa-dhārā,

*muñcatsv abhreṣv abhīkṣṇaśaḥ,
jalaughaiḥ plāvyamānā bhūr,
nādrśyata natonnatam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The clouds poured down torrents of rain in sheets as thick as pillars which flooded the earth with water. Due to the flooding, one could not distinguish high land from low.

Text 11

*aty-āsārāti-vātena,
paśavo jāta-vepanāḥ,
gopā gopyaś ca śītārtā,
govindam śaraṇam yayuḥ*

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.

Text 12

*śiraḥ sutāmś ca kāyena,
pracchādyāsāra-pīḍitāḥ,
vepamānā bhagavataḥ,
pāda-mūlam upāyayuh*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The cows covered the heads of their calves with their own bodies.

Text 13

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bhāga,
tvan-nātham gokulam prabho,
trātum arhasi devān naḥ,
kupitād bhakta-vatsala*

[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 also.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Remembering the prediction of Garga Muni: *anena sarva-durgāṇi yūyam aṅjas tariṣyathā*, “By His grace you will easily cross beyond all difficulties” (*Bhāg.* 10.8.16), the Vrajavasis were confident that in such a time of danger, Lord Narayana would empower Kṛṣṇa to protect them. With this conviction they pray in this verse. The word *devan* refers to Indra.

Text 14

*śilā-varṣāti-vātena,
hanyamānam acetanam,
nirīksya bhagavān mene,
kupitendra-kṛtaṁ hariḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Even before being informed that the rain was created by Indra, Kṛṣṇa understood that Indra was responsible. The severe distress Indra apparently inflicted upon the residents of Vṛndāvana was an arrangement made by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime potency (*līla-sakti*) so that Kṛṣṇa could taste the sweetness of their prema to His full satisfaction. For a hungry person, the pain of hunger increases the happiness he feels when he finally eats excellent food, and thus hunger can be said to enhance the pleasure of eating.

Text 15

*apartv aty-ulbaṇaṁ varṣam,
ati-vātaṁ śilā-mayam,
sva-yāge vihate 'smābhir,
indro nāśāya varṣati*

[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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Understanding that it was Indra's

work, Kṛṣṇa spoke to the Vrajavasis in five verses. The fierce rain full of hailstones (*sila-mayam*) was unseasonable, belonging to a season already passed.

Text 16

*tatra pratividhiṁ samyag,
ātma-yogena sādhye,
lokeśa-māninām mauḍhyād,
dhanīṣye śrī-madam tamah*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I will remedy the situation through My mystic potency (*atma-yogena*). Being falsely proud of their power due to the mode of ignorance, these demigods think of themselves as Lords. I will now destroy this ignorance.” This verse refers not only to Indra, but also to Vayu and the other demigods who assisted him.

Text 17

*na hi sad-bhāva-yuktānām,
surāṅām īśa-vismayaḥ,
matto ‘satām māna-bhaṅgaḥ,
praśamāyopakalpate*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: “I am not going to completely crush this weak Indra out of spite, but I will correct this fault of false pride which has arisen in My devotee.” With this intention Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse.

Text 18

*tasmān mac-charaṇam goṣṭham,
man-nātham mat-parigraham,
gopāye svātma-yogena,
so 'yam me vrata āhitah*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I will protect the cowherd community (*goṣṭham*) from this disturbance created by Indra because Vraja is my home (*mac-charaṇam* means *mat-śaraṇam*) and I am the master (*mat-natha*) of the house.” The *Anekārtha-varga* dictionary says, *śaraṇam grha-rakṣitroh*: “The word *śaraṇam* can mean either home or protector.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Vraja is the place where My father, brother and dear ones (*mat-parigraham*) live. Not only will I protect these people from this disturbance, but I protect all people even at the time of *maha-pralaya*

(annihilation of the universe).” To indicate this, Kṛṣṇa says, “I have taken this vow (*me vrata āhitah*).”

Text 19

*ity uktvaikena hastena,
kṛtvā govardhanā-calam,
dadhāra līlayā viṣṇuś,
chatrākam iva bālakaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hari-vamśa confirms that Śrī Kṛṣṇa picked up Govardhana Hill with His left hand: *sa dhṛtaḥ saṅgato meghair giriḥ savyena pāninā*, “With His left hand Kṛṣṇa picked up that mountain, which was touching the clouds.” With the umbrella of Giriraja, Kṛṣṇa blocked the Samvartaka clouds and created a living space in the form of a house beneath the mountain. Kṛṣṇa held the mountain without any difficulty, just like a child holding a mushroom. When Kṛṣṇa was preparing to lift Govardhana Hill, a partial expansion of His Yogamāyā potency named Saṁhārikī temporarily removed all the rain from the sky so that as Kṛṣṇa ran very swiftly from the porch of His house to the mountain, neither His turban nor other garments became wet.

Text 20

*athāha bhagavān gopān,
he ‘mba tāta vrajaukasah,*

*yathopajoṣaṁ viśata,
giri-gartaṁ sa-go-dhanāḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Now you can all comfortably take shelter under Govardhana Hill.”

The Vrajavasis replied, “But how can our cowherd community, which includes many thousands of cows, calves, bulls and so on fit under Govardhana which is only three miles across?” Here is the answer. Because Govardhana Hill was in ecstasy, being touched by Kṛṣṇa’s hand, it acquired inconceivable power and even felt the hundreds of deadly thunderbolts thrown upon its back by angry Indra to be offerings of soft, fragrant flowers. At times Śrī Govardhana was not even aware that the thunderbolts were striking. Govardhana expanded his form to thirty-two miles so that all the inhabitants, cows, buffalos and other animals could live comfortably beneath his shelter.

In *Hari-vamśa*, Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself says, *traī-lokyam apy utsahate rakṣituṁ kiṁ punar vrajam*: “Śrī Govardhana can give shelter to all the three worlds, what to speak of the simple land of Vraja.” According to *Hari-vamśa*, when Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhana the mountain extended beyond the clouds. The deer, wild hogs, and other animals and birds standing on the hill’s flanks climbed up to Govardhana’s peaks, which were now higher than the clouds, and thus even they did not experience the slightest distress.

Text 21

*na trāsa iha vaḥ kāryo,
mad-dhastādri-nipātanāt,*

*vāta-varṣa-bhayenālam,
tat-trāṇam vihitam hi vaḥ*

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.

Text 22

*tathā nirviviśur gartam,
kṛṣṇāśvāsita-mānasaḥ,
yathāvakāśam sa-dhanāḥ,
sa-vrajāḥ sopajīvinaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They went beneath the mountain with their carts (*sa-vrajāḥ*), and their dependents such as their servants and priests (*sa-upajīvinaḥ*).

Text 23

*kṣut-trḍ-vyathām sukhāpekṣām,
hitvā tair vraja-vāsibhiḥ,
vīkṣyamāṇo dadhārādriṁ,
saptāham nācalat padāt*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrajavasis forgot about hunger and thirst for seven days because they were immersed in the ecstatic bliss of seeing Kṛṣṇa continuously. This is explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

vrajaika-vāsibhir harṣa, vismitākṣair niṛīkṣitaḥ, gopa-gopī-janair hr̥ṣṭaiḥ, prīti-visphāritekṣanaiḥ, samstūyamāna-caritaḥ, kṛṣṇaḥ śailam adhārayat

“Sri Kṛṣṇa held up the mountain while His praises were chanted by the Vrajavasis, all of whom now had the opportunity to dwell together with Him, and who glanced at Him with joyful and amazed eyes. Thus the cowherd men and women were all elated, and out of loving affection they opened their eyes wide.”

It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa stood directly facing everyone. By continuously drinking the nectar of the beauty and sweetness of Kṛṣṇa, the Vrajavasis felt no hunger, thirst or fatigue, and Sri Kṛṣṇa, by seeing the beautiful forms of His beloved gopis, also forgot about eating, drinking and sleeping. The seven days of continuous rain from the Sāmvartaka clouds failed to flood the district of Mathurā because the Supreme Lord, simply by His *iccha-sakti* (Supreme will power), immediately dried up the water as it fell to the ground. For the Vrajavasis the seven days passed as if they were one *ghaṭikā*. [One *ghaṭikā* equals 24 minutes]

Text 24

*kṛṣṇa-yogānubhāvaṁ taṁ,
niśamyendro 'ti-vismitaḥ,*

*nistambho bhraṣṭa-saṅkalpaḥ,
svān meghān sannyavārayat*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: His pride deflated, Indra withdrew the clouds out of fear that Kṛṣṇa would punish him.

Text 25

*khaṁ vyabhram uditādityam,
vāta-varṣam ca dāruṇam,
niśamyoparatam gopān,
govardhana-dharo ‘bravīt*

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.

Text 26

*niryāta tyajata trāsam,
gopāḥ sa-strī-dhanārbhakāḥ,
upāratam vāta-varṣam,
vyuda-prāyāś ca nimnagāḥ*

[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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Vyuda-prāyāś* means the rivers were practically devoid of water.

Text 27

*tatas te niryayur gopāḥ,
svam svam ādāya go-dhanam,
śakaṭoḍhopakaraṇam,
strī-bāla-sthavirāḥ śanaiḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After loading their goods on the carts (*śakaṭo-ḍhopakaraṇam*), the cowherd men emerged from under the mountain.

Text 28

*bhagavān api tam śailam,
sva-sthāne pūrva-vat prabhuh,
paśyatām sarva-bhūtānām,
sthāpayām āsa līlayā*

While all living creatures looked on, the Supreme Personality of Godhead put down the hill in its original place, just as it had stood before.

Text 29

*taṁ prema-vegān nirbhṛtā vrajaukaso,
yathā samīyuh parirambhaṇādibhiḥ,
gopyaś ca sa-sneham apūjayan mudā,
dadhy-akṣatādbhir yuyujuh sad-āśiṣaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Overwhelmed (*nirbhṛtāḥ*) in love, each of the Vrajavasis approached (*samīyuh*) Kṛṣṇa according to his position (*yathā*)—as an inferior, younger member of the community; as an equal; or as a superior—and they dealt with Him accordingly. Kṛṣṇa’s superiors offered auspicious benedictions, lovingly smelled His head, kissed Him, massaged His left arm (which held up the mountain), cracked the fingers of His left hand, and inquired with parental affection as to whether He was tired or pained. Kṛṣṇa’s equals laughed or joked with Him, and those who were younger fell at His feet, massaged His feet, and so on.

The word *ca* in this verse indicates that the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* joined with the cowherd ladies (*gopyah*) to offer auspicious items like

yogurt and unbroken grains. They gave blessings to Kṛṣṇa by saying, “May You subdue the wicked, protect the decent people, give pleasure to Your parents and be enriched with all wealth and opulence.”

Text 30

*yaśodā rohiṇī nando,
rāmaś ca balinām varah,
kṛṣṇam āliṅgya yuyujur,
āśiṣaḥ sneha-kātarāḥ*

Mother Yaśodā, mother Rohiṇī, Nanda Mahārāja and Balarāma, the greatest of the strong, all embraced Kṛṣṇa. Overwhelmed with affection, they offered Him their blessings.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The very special position of Kṛṣṇa’s own mother and other intimate relatives, however, is stated in this verse beginning with Yasoda. It is not unsuitable to include Balarama in the group that feels parental affection (*vatsalya-bhava*) toward Kṛṣṇa, because Balarama acts in that capacity as Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother. One may object saying, “Since Balarama is so affectionate, why didn’t He assume His plenary expansion of Ananta Sesa, since He is already holding up the earth, and Himself enact the great feat of holding up Govardhana Hill on behalf of His younger brother?” The answer is that once Kṛṣṇa made His decision to stop Indra’s sacrifice, to worship Govardhana, and to lift Govardhana Hill in order to protect the Vrajavasis, it would be improper and impossible for His *amsa* (plenary portion), Balarama, to do anything else. Thus Balarama did not show His powers. As Kṛṣṇa is the *saktiman*, the possessor of innumerable potencies, by His desire alone suitable powers will appear when necessary in His *amsa*. In the succeeding verses also this conclusion is mentioned.

In this regard, sometimes ancient paintings show Kṛṣṇa as Giridhari being given butter by His two mothers Yasoda and Rohini while Nanda Maharaja and Balarama hold up Govardhana Hill with their heads or sticks. In the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī says that this occurred due to being overwhelmed by love. Thus in this verse they are described as being beside themselves (*kātarāḥ*) out of their affection (*sneha*) for Kṛṣṇa.

Text 31

*divi deva-gaṇāḥ siddhāḥ,
sādhyā gandharva-cāraṇāḥ,
tuṣṭuvur mumucus tuṣṭāḥ,
puṣpa-varṣāṇi pārthiva*

In the heavens, O King, all the demigods, including the Siddhas, Sādhyas, Gandharvas and Cāraṇas, sang the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa and showered down flowers in great satisfaction.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demigods in heaven were just as jubilant as the Vrajavasis, and thus a great universal festival took place.

Text 32

*śaṅkha-dundubhayao nedur,
divi deva-pracoditāḥ,
jagur gandharva-patayas,
tumburu-pramukhā nṛpa*

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.

Text 33

*tato 'nuraktaiḥ paśupaiḥ pariśrito,
rājan sva-goṣṭham sa-balo 'vrajad dhariḥ,
tathā-vidhāny asya kṛtāni gopikā,
gāyantya t̥yur muditā hṛdi-sprśaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While Kṛṣṇa was lifting Govardhana Hill, Radha and other beloved gopis, unnoticed by others, were intimately associating with Him by exchanging secret glances from a distance. While returning to their homes the gopis lovingly sang about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It should be understood that the gopis had the ability to immediately compose songs about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Gopika hṛdi-sprśaḥ—can mean the gopis who touched Kṛṣṇa in their prema-filled hearts or who always meditated on Kṛṣṇa. Or it can mean some very dear gopis whom Kṛṣṇa embraced to His chest or in His mind. This phrase describes a quality of Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter Twenty-six: Wonderful Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam-vidhāni karmāṇi,
gopāḥ kṛṣṇasya vīkṣya te,
atad-vīrya-vidaḥ procuḥ,
samabhyetya su-vismitāḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Nanda Mahārāja describes Kṛṣṇa’s opulences as he had heard of them from Garga Muni, in order to remove the doubts of the cowherd men about Kṛṣṇa’s powers.

Because all the Vrajavasis were immersed in tasting the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa while He lifted Govardhana Hill, the opportunity to think about Kṛṣṇa’s astonishing power did not arise. Afterwards, when they had returned to their homes, they all began to have a doubt. Thus they thought, “Now we have directly seen child Kṛṣṇa lift Govardhana Hill, and we remember how He killed Pūtanā and other demons, extinguished the forest fire and so on. At the time, we thought that these extraordinary acts occurred because of a benediction from the *brāhmaṇas* or because of Nanda Mahārāja’s great fortune or that perhaps this boy had achieved the mercy of Lord Nārāyaṇa and was thus empowered by Him.

“But all these presumptions are false, because an ordinary seven-year old boy could never hold up the king of mountains for seven whole days. Kṛṣṇa is not a human being. He must be the Supreme Lord Himself.

“But on the other hand, child Kṛṣṇa loves it when we coddle Him, and He becomes morose when we—His father, mother, aunts, uncles and well-wishers, simply worldly cowherd men—do not give Him attention. He appears to become hungry and thirsty, steals yogurt and milk, sometimes plays tricks, blatantly tells lies, chatters childishly and tends the calves. If He is actually the Supreme Lord, why would He do these things? Don’t they indicate that He is an ordinary human child?

“We are totally unable to establish the truth of Kṛṣṇa’s identity.

Therefore let us go and inquire from the highly intelligent King of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja, and he shall free us from our doubts.”

Thinking in this way, the cowherd men entered Nanda Mahārāja’s great assembly hall and questioned him as described in the following verse.

Text 2

*bālakasya yad etāni,
karmāṇy aty-adbhutāni vai,
katham arhaty asau janma,
grāmyeṣv ātma-jugupsitam*

[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?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men said, “Since this boy has performed such astonishing activities, He cannot be an ordinary boy but He must be God. But if that is so, how could He be born in a

cowherd family and become the object of criticism? Even the minor *avataras* are not born in such low family as ours, what to speak of the outstanding *avataras*.”

The use of the word *asau* to denote Kṛṣṇa indicates that He was not present because He had gone to the forest. The full expression of their feelings could take place only in Kṛṣṇa’s absence.

Text 3

*yaḥ sapta-hāyano bālah,
kareṇaikena līlayā,
katham bibhrad giri-varam,
puṣkaram gaja-rāḍ iva*

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?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men said, “If this child is not the Supreme Lord, how could He perform such astonishing feats?” This is the intention of the next twelve verses. How did a seven-year-old boy hold (*bibhrat*) Govardhana in one hand for seven days? The following verses answer this question.

Text 4

*tokenāmīlitākṣeṇa,
pūtanāyā mahaujasah,
pītaḥ stanah saha prāṇaiḥ,
kāleneva vayas tanoḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could a mere infant with half-closed eyes (*ā-mīlita*) so easily kill a very powerful demoness?” Half-closed eyes indicates that this was done unseen by others, just as, unnoticed, the irresistible power of time takes away one’s life.

Text 5

*hinvato 'dhaḥ śayānasya,
māsyasya caraṇāv udak,
ano 'patad viparyastam,
rudataḥ prapadāhatam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa when He was only three months old kick up His feet as He lay beneath a huge cart, and strike it with such force that it turned over and collapsed?”

Text 6

*eka-hāyana āsīno,
hriyamāṇo vihāyasā,
daityena yas tṛṇāvartam,
ahan kaṇṭha-grahāturam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa at the age of one kill the demon Trnavarta after being whisked into the sky?”

Text 7

*kvacid dhaiyaṅgava-stainye,
mātrā baddha udūkhale,
gacchann arjunayor madhye,
bāhubhyāṁ tāv apātayat*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could Kṛṣṇa, who was tied up for stealing butter, crawl away and knock down a pair of arjuna trees?”

Text 8

*vane sañcārayan vatsān,
sa-rāmo bālakair vṛtaḥ,
hantu-kāmaṁ bakam dorbhyām,
mukhato 'rim apāṭayat*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could He hold the beaks of the Baka and bifurcate them?”

Text 9

*vatsesu vatsa-rūpeṇa,
praviśantaṁ jighāmsayā,
hatvā nyapātayat tena,
kapitthāni ca līlayā*

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.

Text 10

hatvā rāsabha-daiteyaṁ,

*tad-bandhūmś ca balānviṭaḥ,
cakre tāla-vanaṃ kṣemaṃ,
paripakva-phalānviṭam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Balarama single-handedly killed Dhenukasura, the jackass (*rāsabha*) demon, in this verse it says that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama killed him. This is to give prominence to Kṛṣṇa's activities.

Text 11

*pralambaṃ ghātayitvogaṃ,
balena bala-śālinā,
amocayad vraja-paśūn,
gopāṃś cāraṇya-vahnitaḥ*

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.

Text 12

*āśī-viṣatamāhīndraṃ,
damitvā vimadaṃ hradāt,
prasahyodvāsya yamunām,*

cakre 'sau nirviṣodakām

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the cowherd men mean to say, “How could this little boy humble the most poisonous king of snakes so that he left the lake?”

Text 13

*dustyajaś cānurāgo 'smin,
sarveṣām no vrajaukasām,
nanda te tanaye 'māsu,
tasyāpy autpattikaḥ katham*

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?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wonderful activities of the child were given as evidence to prove that Kṛṣṇa is God. In this verse the cowherd men speak to show how they are all united in their devotional feelings towards Kṛṣṇa.

They said, “Though Kṛṣṇa is your child not ours, our loving affection (*anurāgaḥ*) toward Him is very strong. We have parental affection for Him, the boys have brotherly love for Him, and all the male and female birds and forest animals have strong affection for Kṛṣṇa too. In all cases that affection is increasing in newer ways at every moment. Our

attraction is natural and we cannot give it up, even though we now see that Kṛṣṇa has the qualities of God.

“One has more affection for one’s own body than wealth and children, and more affection for one’s soul than one’s body, and more affection for the Paramatma than one’s own soul. Thus Kṛṣṇa must be the Paramatma. Otherwise such affection could not be possible if Kṛṣṇa were a mere human being.”

Nanda Maharaja replied, “But if you conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the Paramatma, then how is it possible for Paramatma to have such natural attraction towards the Vrajavasis and the animals of the forest? Being the self-satisfied Paramatma, Kṛṣṇa should be indifferent to everything. How could He feel such constant love for us who are absorbed in material life?”

Text 14

*kva sapta-hāyano bālah,
kva mahādri-vidhāraṇam,
tato no jāyate śaṅkā,
vraja-nātha tavātmaje*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd men have already described Kṛṣṇa’s holding up Govardhana Hill. But they repeat the description again in this verse because of their astonishment.

Text 15

*śrī-nanda uvāca,
śrūyatām me vaco gopā,
vyetu śaṅkā ca vo 'rbhake,
enam kumāram uddiśya,
gargo me yad uvāca ha*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “I will relieve your doubts by reciting what I heard from Garga Muni. Due to my past pious activities, Lord Narayana has entered my son to mercifully deliver me from danger.”

Text 16

*varṇās trayāḥ kilāsyāsan,
gṛhṇato 'nu-yugaṁ tanūḥ,
śuklo raktas tathā pīta,
idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ*

[Garga Muni had said:] Your son Kṛṣṇa appears as an incarnation in every millennium. In the past He assumed three different colors—white, red and yellow—and now He has appeared in a blackish color.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This and the next six verses (17 through 22) are taken from the eighth chapter of this canto, in which Garga Muni instructs Nanda Mahārāja about Nanda’s son Kṛṣṇa.

Text 17

*prāg ayam vasudevasya,
kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ,
vāsudeva iti śrīmān,
abhijñāḥ sampracakṣate*

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.

Text 18

*bahūni santi nāmāni,
rūpāṇi ca sutasya te,
guṇa karmānurūpāṇi,
tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ*

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.

Text 19

*eṣa vaḥ śreya ādhāsyad,
gopa-gokula-nandanah,
anena sarva-durgāṇi,*

yūyam añjas tariṣyatha

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.

Text 20

*purānena vraja-pate,
sādhavo dasyu-pīḍitāḥ,
arājake rakṣyamāṇā,
jigyur dasyūn samedhitāḥ*

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.

Text 21

*ya etasmin mahā-bhāge,
prītiṁ kurvanti mānavāḥ,
nārāyo 'bhibhavanty etān,
viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ*

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**

Text 22

*tasmān nanda kumāro 'yaṁ,
nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ,
śriyā kīrtyānubhāvena,
tat-karmasu na vismayah*

**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.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja wished to remove their present realization of Kṛṣṇa's Godhood (*aisvarya-jnana*) and increase their understanding of Kṛṣṇa as their son, brother and friend. Therefore in repeating Garga's words Nanda Maharaja does not say "your son" but "this boy" (*kumara ayam*) so that the Vrajavasis would feel that Kṛṣṇa was not only his son but theirs as well. Though they had seen Kṛṣṇa's phenomenal powers, they should not give up their affection and should continue to give blessings to Him daily.

Nārāyaṇa-samaḥ—as good as Nārāyaṇa means that Lord Narayana's power had entered Kṛṣṇa, not that Kṛṣṇa was Narayana. It is just like the *sūryakānta* stone which is called thus because of some likeness to the sun. The child was not God, nor was Kṛṣṇa an ordinary human, but He was someone who could perform extraordinary deeds.

Nanda Maharaja said, "This great personality has come as the ornament of our family lineage. Thus at the conclusion of his statement Garga said, 'You should not be bewildered by your son's activities.' Because

of Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful activities you should not think of Him as God. You should make Him the object of your compassion by blessing Him to live a long life. You should not be indifferent to Him.” Nanda Maharaja then repeated Garga’s statement, ‘Protect Him well.’ By removing the cowherd men’s bewilderment, Nanda Maharaja removed their doubts.

Text 23

*ity addhā mām samādiśya,
garge ca sva-grham gate,
manye nārāyaṇasyāmśam,
kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-kāriṇam*

[Nanda Mahārāja continued:] After Garga Ṁṣi spoke these words to me and returned home, I began to consider that Kṛṣṇa, who keeps us free from trouble, is actually an expansion of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja continued, “I consider Kṛṣṇa, who removes our suffering, to be invested with Lord Narayana’s power (*nārāyaṇasya-amśam*).”

Text 24

*iti nanda-vacaḥ śrutvā,
garga-gītaṁ taṁ vrajaukaśaḥ,
muditā nandam ānarcuḥ,
kṛṣṇaṁ ca gata-vismayāḥ*

[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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrajavasis honored Nanda and Kṛṣṇa with love offerings of gold coins, cloth and jewels. Kṛṣṇa was playing in the forest when this conversation took place, so when He returned home the Vrajavasis encouraged Him by decorating Kṛṣṇa with beautiful yellow clothes, necklaces, armlets, earrings and crowns, and by shouting, “All glories, all glories to the jewel of Vrajabhumi! May You live a long life!”

Text 25

*deve varṣati yajña-viplava-ruṣā vajrāsma-varṣānilaiḥ,
sīdat-pāla-paśu-striy ātma-śaraṇam dṛṣṭvānukampy utsmayan
utpātyaika-kareṇa śailam abalo,
līlocchilīndhram yathā,
bibhrad goṣṭham apān mahendra-mada-bhit prīyān na indro gavām*

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. Holding up the hill, 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “O King

Parikṣit! May that Kṛṣṇa who lifted Govardhana and protected the Vrajavasis from the disturbances caused by hunger, hail and rain arising from Indra's wrath, and who expertly initiated the worship of Govardhana to cut down the demigods' pride, be pleased with us. In the same way may He who protects you from the lightning bolt curse of Sṛṅgi's anger with the essence of the *Vedas* in the form of this *Bhagavata*, who is expert at starting the sacrifice of listening to the *Bhagavatam*, and who destroyed the pride of the *brahmanas* devoid of *bhakti*, be pleased with us.”

In this way, by praying for Kṛṣṇa's mercy Sukadeva Gosvami indicates that Maharaja Parikṣit should apply this to himself.

Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Becoming extremely angry over the stopping of his sacrifice, Indra caused torrential rain to inundate Vṛndavana.

Seeing that the animals, men and women who had taken shelter of Him alone were severely afflicted with the rain, hail, lightning and wind, Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly and effortlessly held Govardhana Hill aloft, like a child lifting a mushroom, to protect the land of Vṛndavana. May “the Lord of the cows” (*indro gavam*), who destroyed Indra's false pride, be pleased with you, me and all the assembled listeners.”

Chapter Twenty-seven: Lord Indra and Mother Surabhi Offer Prayers

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
govardhane dhṛte śaile,
āsārād rakṣite vraje,
go-lokād āvrajat kṛṣṇam,
surabhiḥ śakra eva ca*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the prayers Indra recited out of fear, Kṛṣṇa’s mercy on him, and how the Surabhi cow and Indra performed a bathing ceremony for Kṛṣṇa on account of which the Lord is called Govinda.

Seeing that Vraja had been protected from the rain, Indra, nervous and ashamed, fearfully approached Kṛṣṇa. The Surabhi cow came on the order of Brahma to help Indra and bathe Kṛṣṇa. The word *go-lokāt* here indicates the material planet called Goloka which is filled with exceptional cows. Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental Surabhi cows from Vraja Gokula could not be with Indra in the material world.

Text 2

*vivikta upasaṅgamyā,
vrīḍītaḥ kṛta-helanaḥ,
pasparśa pādayor enamḥ,
kirīṭenārka-varcasā*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One morning Kṛṣṇa went alone to see to what extent the lightning bolts of Indra had broken the back of Govardhana. This gave Indra an opportunity to meet Kṛṣṇa in a solitary place (*vivikta*). The specific “solitary place” where Indra approached Śrī Kṛṣṇa is mentioned by the sage Śrī Vaiśampāyana in the *Hari-varṇā* (*Viṣṇu-parva* 19.3): *sa dadarśopaviṣṭam vai govardhana-śilā-tale*. “Indra saw Kṛṣṇa sitting at the base of Govardhana Hill.”

Surabhi had sent Indra with a suggestion: “Go alone without your elephant carrier, and in a humble mood offer obeisances at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet to get relieved from your offense.”

By His glance Kṛṣṇa said, “O king of the demigods! I see that you have unprecedented affection for Me. You have come to show mercy to Me, who have offended you by stopping your worship.” Thus Indra became ashamed (*vriditah*).

Text 3

*dr̥ṣṭa-śrutānubhāvo 'sya,
kṛṣṇasyāmita-tejasah,
naṣṭa-tri-lokeśa-mada,
idam āha kṛtāñjaliḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: First with his own eyes Indra saw the powers of Kṛṣṇa. Later, having understood his offense and desiring to alleviate it, Indra went to Mount Meru, where he heard about Kṛṣṇa's powers from Lord Brahma.

Text 4

*indra uvāca viśuddha-sattvaṁ tava dhāma śāntaṁ,
tapo-mayaṁ dhvasta-rajās-tamaśkaṁ,
māyā-mayo 'yaṁ guṇa-saṁpravāho,
na vidyate te grahaṇānubandhaḥ*

King Indra said: Your transcendental form, a manifestation 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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You know that I was so foolish that I stopped your worship, and on the pretext of worshiping Govardhana I enjoyed the offerings meant for you.” Fearing such words from Kṛṣṇa, Indra said: “O Lord, though I am bewildered by Your *maya*, I now know a little about You by a speck of Your mercy.” This is the intention of this and the next verse.

King Indra said, “Your transcendental form (*dhama*) is undisturbed and ever-peaceful (*santam*). It is full of pure knowledge (*tapo-mayaṁ*). Does it arise from *sattva-guṇa*? No, Your form is *viśuddha-sattva*,

transcendental goodness, *cid-ananda-maya*. Therefore You are totally free from the modes of passion and ignorance (*raja-tamo guna*). Moreover, people can destroy the effects of passion and ignorance (*dvasta raja tamaskam*) simply by remembering Your beautiful transcendental form.

“Though You are not the least bit influenced by the modes of nature like the conditioned souls, sometimes for amusement You accept a role in this world. Someone may object, ‘But isn’t that a fault?’ No, it is not a fault because You have no desire to accept any relation with the material realm.”

Text 5

*kuto nu tad-dhetava īśa tat-kṛtā,
lobhādayo ye ’budha-linga-bhāvāḥ,
tathāpi daṇḍam bhagavān bibharti,
dharmasya guptyai khala-nigrahāya*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “O Lord! If You have no desire to accept the modes of nature, how do their effects such as greed and anger appear within You? How could You stop my worship without the influence of the modes of nature? And without showing greed and anger, how could You punish the wicked to protect the principles of religion (*dharmasya*)?”

Text 6

*pitā gurus tvaṁ jagatām adhīso,
duratyayaḥ kāla upāta-daṇḍaḥ,
hitāya cecchā-tanubhiḥ samīhase,
mānaṁ vidhunvan jagad-īśa-māninām*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “As the Supreme Lord, You are complete, so what purpose do You have in protecting *dharma* by punishing the evil? It is for the auspiciousness of the universe. Due to Your merciful nature, You show affection to those who follow *dharma*, just as the father favors his son and the *guru* his disciple. As *adhisa* (Supreme Controller), You are fully capable of delivering everyone from suffering and bestowing happiness. But for the evil people, You are insurmountable time, which purifies them through punishment. “To benefit both the pious and impious You appear in various incarnations and perform pastimes according to Your own free will (*iccha-tanubhiḥ*). Your pastimes include killing demons like Putana and protecting the devotees. It is also Your pastime to deflate the pride of Your devotees such as Brahma who become intoxicated with the minute power delegated to them by You.”

Text 7

*ye mad-vidhājñā jagad-īśa-māninas,
tvām vīkṣya kāle 'bhayam āśu tan-madam,
hitvārya-mārgam prabhajanty apasmayā,
īhā khalānām api te 'nuśāsanam*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Among those who think themselves lords, I am the lowest.” Indra speaks in this mood. *Mad-vidhājñā* indicates that Indra is the most foolish of the foolish. The comparison (*mad-vidha*-like me) indicates the extreme, as in the example of a face as beautiful as the moon (the moon indicates most beautiful). Indra continued, “Seeing that You are fearless in the face of time, I give up my false identity as a controller.” Or the meaning can be: “Not knowing what kind of punishment I will get, I give up my false identity out of fear of You.”
“Giving up our pride (*apasmaya*), we fully take to (*prabhajanti*) the path (*arya-marga*) of Your devotees. Therefore, this pastime of lifting Govardhana is Your punishment (*anusasanam*) for me.”

Text 8

*sa tvam mamaiśvarya-mada-plutasya,
kṛtāgasas te 'viduṣaḥ prabhāvam,
kṣantum prabho 'hārhasi mūḍha-cetaso,
maivam punar bhūn matir īśa me 'satī*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa might have replied, “I lifted Govardhana Hill to protect Vraja, not to punish you. Now I will call Yamaraja and arrange for your punishment.” Afraid of such a reply, Indra fearfully said, “As the most famous father and *guru*, You are merciful by nature. Therefore, please forgive the offense of this foolish person immersed in pride and ignorant (*aviduṣaḥ*) of Your majesty. You should not purify me by punishment, because I am like a stubborn animal. The moment after the master beats the animal, it again commits the same offense. Instead You should purify me by Your mercy so that my animalistic tendencies do not arise again.”

This prayer is not offered with a completely pure heart, because Indra is exhibiting humility in order to save himself. Indra mentions this in the seventh verse. Later in the tenth canto we find that when Sri Kṛṣṇa once took a *pārijāta* flower from heaven, foolish Indra again reacted violently against the Lord.

Text 9

*tavāvatāro 'yam adhokṣajeha,
bhuvo bharāṇām uru-bhāra-janmanām,
camū-patīnām abhavāya deva,
bhavāya yuṣmac-caraṇānuvartinām*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Indra said, “You have appeared in this world for our benefit because of our prayers. Even knowing this I have been blind and acted foolishly. Now, having been punished, I can see the truth. You descend to destroy the demoniac warlords who harass the earth, and to bring prosperity to those who faithfully serve Your lotus feet. But I am neither of these, so You neither destroy me nor bless me. Alas! It is my great misfortune that You remain neutral towards me.”

Text 10

*namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate,
puruṣāya mahātmane,
vāsudevāya kṛṣṇāya,
sātvatām pataye namaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Indra said, “Therefore let me just surrender to Your lotus feet and offer You respects.” This is expressed in two verses. Uddhava says: “Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord and master of matter and spirit, appears in this world in different *avatars* as portions of Mahaviṣnu, who is also His part.” Therefore in this verse Indra pays respects to all the expanded forms which are within Kṛṣṇa when He appears on earth. “I pay my respects to Lord Narayana (*bhagavate*) of Mahavaikuntha. I pay my respects to Maha-*viṣnu* (*purusaya*), creator of the *mahat-tattva*. I pay my respects to Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul of the total universe (*samaṣṭi-paramātmā, mahātmane*).” After paying respects to the plenary portions of Kṛṣṇa (*amsas*), Indra pays respects to the *amsi*, the source of the *amsas*. “I offer respects to Vāsudeva, the son of Vasudeva. I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of

the Yadu dynasty (*satvatas*).”

Text 11

*svacchandopātta-dehāya,
viśuddha-jñāna-mūrtaye,
sarvasmai sarva-bījāya,
sarva-bhūtātmane namaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “I pay respects to You who accept bodies in order to give happiness to Your *premi-bhaktas* who serve You in the sacred raptures of *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *srngara*. Being non-material, Your transcendental body is completely pure consciousness, without a tinge of illusion. You possess unlimited multifarious energies such as *mahamaya*. You are everything (*sarva*): You are the seed (*sarva-bija*) of everything and the Soul of every creature. Thus I pay respects to You.”

Text 12

*mayedaṁ bhagavan goṣṭha,
nāśāyāsāra-vāyubhiḥ ,ceṣṭitaṁ vihate yajñe,
māninā tīvra-manyunā*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O Indra, I can understand from your recitation of praises that you are My devotee. But without your sanction, the wicked Samvartaka clouds attacked My Vraja. Therefore you should punish them.”

Fearing such an innocent scolding from Kṛṣṇa, Indra thought, “Alas! I cannot be duplicitous with the all-knowing Supersoul.” Therefore in this verse Indra decided to confess that everything was his fault.

Kṛṣṇa and Indra might have had the following conversation:

Kṛṣṇa: “But Indra, how is it possible for My devotee to do this?”

Indra: “I became angry when my worship was stopped.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Though I am Your master and I stopped Your worship, I cannot believe that my servant would do such a thing.”

Indra: “Anything is possible for one who is falsely proud (*manina*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “Though pride may somehow arise in My devotee, he will remove it with intelligence.”

Indra: “But intense anger (*tīvra-manyunā*) destroys all one’s intelligence.”

Text 13

*tvayeśānuḡrḥīto 'smi,
dhvasta-stambho vṛthodyamaḥ,
īśvaraṁ gurum ātmānaṁ,
tvāṁ ahaṁ śaraṇaṁ gataḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indra said, “Though I have caused great disturbance to Vraja, I have received Your mercy, like a sick person being diagnosed and given medicine by a doctor. Thus cured of my disease, I have given up the urge to release my lightning bolts. Because You control everything, You are the Supreme Lord (*isvaram*). Because You give benefit to everyone, You are the spiritual master (*gurum*). Because You are the supreme object of love, You are the Supreme Soul (*atmanam*).”

Text 14

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam saṅkīrtitaḥ kṛṣṇo,
maghonā bhagavān amum,
megha-gambhīrayā vācā,
prahasann idam abravīt*

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.

Text 15

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
mayā te 'kāri maghavan,
makha-bhaṅgo 'nugṛhṇatā,
mad-anusmṛtaye nityam,
mattasyendra-śriyā bhṛśam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa and Indra are herein having a heart-to-heart talk. Indra sincerely revealed his mind to the Lord, and now Kṛṣṇa similarly reveals His own purpose.

Text 16

*mām aiśvarya-śrī-madāndho,
daṇḍa pāṇim na paśyati,
tam bhraṁśayāmi sampadbhyo,
yasya cecchāmy anugraham*

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.

Text 17

*gamyatām śakra bhadraṁ vaḥ,
kriyatām me 'nuśāsanam,
sthīyatām svādhikāreṣu,
yuktair vaḥ stambha-varjitaiḥ*

Indra, you may now go. Execute My order and remain in your appointed position as King of heaven. But be sober, without false pride.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Indra was alone, Kṛṣṇa here addresses him in the plural form (*vaḥ*) because this grave instruction was meant to be a lesson for all the demigods like Varuna, who is mentioned in the next chapter.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Continue in your position, but remain sober (*yuktah*) and without false pride. Otherwise, I will punish you again.” Sri Kṛṣṇa did not promise here that Indra would not be afflicted by pride again. Later to carry out Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of stealing Indra’s *parijata* flower, it was necessary for Indra to show pride.

Text 18

*athāha surabhiḥ kṛṣṇam,
abhivandya manasvinī,
sva-santānair upāmantrya,
gopa-rūpiṇam īśvaram*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The heavenly cow Surabhi affectionately thought of the spiritual cows of Vraja as her own offspring (*sva-santānaiḥ*), though they were offspring of the transcendental cows that play with Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, though Sri Kṛṣṇa actually comes from the dynasty of the spiritual moon (Candra-vaṁśa),

the material moon often thinks of Kṛṣṇa as his offspring. Surabhi, along with the cows of Vraja, respectfully begged Kṛṣṇa for His attention (*upamantrya*) and offered the following prayers.

Text 19

*surabhir uvāca,
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin,
viśvātman viśva-sambhava,
bhavatā loka-nāthena,
sa-nāthā vayam acyuta*

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.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mother Surabhi is feeling great ecstasy so she repeats the words “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.” Surabhi said, “You are called the greatest of *yogis* (*maha-yogin*) because You protected my offspring by lifting Govardhana Hill with Your mystic powers. We accept You as our master, whereas our so-called master, Indra, had tried to kill them.”

Text 20

*tvam naḥ paramakam daivam,
tvam na indro jagat-pate,
bhavāya bhava go-vipra,
devānām ye ca sādhaḥ*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Surabhi said, “You are our worshipable Lord (*daivam*) who gives supreme happiness (*parama ka*). Though You have appeared in a family of cowherd men, You are the master of the universe (*jagat-pate*). You stopped the sacrifice to Indra and easily defeated him. Therefore You are qualified to be our Indra.”

Text 21

*indram nas tvābhiṣekṣyāmo,
brahmaṇā coditā vayam,
avatīrṇo 'si viśvātman,
bhūmer bhārāpanuttaye*

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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Surabhi said, “As You are our Indra, we will install You in the role of Indra with an *abhiseka*.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “By whose order do you want to do this? Is it some independent desire?”

Surabhi: “It has been ordered by Brahma. When Indra was afflicted with fear, he went to Brahma to explain everything about Your *govardhana-lila*. Brahma felt somewhat fearful upon remembering his previous offense to You, so he gave me this order: ‘O Surabhi! You are very dear to the Lord, the protector of your relatives. Therefore you should go to Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, get Indra forgiven for his offense, perform an *abhiseka*, and install Kṛṣṇa as the king (Indra) of the cows.’

“You may ask what is the benefit of an *abhiseka* to You, whose rarely

attained lotus feet are served by Brahma and Siva, and who is the Indra (king) of billions of universes? We want to do this for our own purification. Although You are the invisible Soul of the universe, You appear to relieve the burden of the earth. If You did not appear, how would we ever become fortunate?”

Texts 22–23

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam kṛṣṇam upāmantrya,
surabhiḥ payasātmanaḥ,
jalair ākāśa-gaṅgāyā,
airāvata-karoddhṛtaiḥ,
indraḥ surarṣibhiḥ sākam,
codito deva-māṭṛbhiḥ,
abhyasiñcata dāśārham,
govinda iti cābhyadhāt*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After praying to Kṛṣṇa to accept the post of Indra, Surabhi bathed the Lord with her milk. Because Indra was embarrassed by his blunder of attacking Vṛndāvana, he was reluctant to worship Kṛṣṇa. However, after receiving encouragement from Aditi and the other heavenly mothers, Indra felt authorized and then bathed Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Though Kṛṣṇa had appeared in the Daśārha dynasty, because He had a greater desire to be a cowherd, they named Him Govinda. *Go* means cows and *vinda* means to protect. *Go* can also mean Svarga (heaven). Therefore, Govinda can mean one who enjoys the position of Indra. *Go* also means the senses. Govinda then means one who protects or nourishes (*vind*) the devotees by attracting their senses.

Text 24

*tatrāgatās tumburu-nāradādayo,
gandharva-vidyādhara-siddha-cāraṇāḥ,
jagur yaśo loka-malāpahaṁ hareḥ,
surāṅganāḥ sannanṛtur mudānvitāḥ*

Tumburu, Nārada and other Gandharvas, along with the Vidyādharas, Siddhas and Cāraṇas, came there to sing the glories of Lord Hari, which purify the entire world. And the wives of the demigods, filled with joy, danced together in the Lord's honor.

Text 25

*taṁ tuṣṭuvur deva-nikāya-ketavo,
hy avākiraṁś cādbhuta-puṣpa-vṛṣṭibhiḥ,
lokāḥ parāṁ nirvṛtim āpnuvaṁs trayo,
gāvas tadā gāṁ anayan payo-drutām*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The chief demigods (*deva nikaya ketava*) such as Varuna praised Govinda and covered Him with an amazing shower of multicolored, fragrant flowers. The cows moistened the earth with their milk.

Text 26

*nānā-rasaughāḥ sarito,
vṛkṣā āsan madhu-sravāḥ,
akṛṣṭa-pacyauṣadhayo,
girayo 'bibhran un maṇīn*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The rivers flowed with various tasty liquids such as milk. Without cultivation, the plants yielded mature grains and ripened fruits. The surfaces of the mountains manifested an array of excellent jewels.

Text 27

*kṛṣṇe 'bhiṣikta etāni,
sarvāṇi kuru-nandana,
nirvairāṇy abhavaṁs tāta,
krūrāṇy api nisargataḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After Kṛṣṇa's *abhiṣeka* ceremony all living entities gave up their natural animosities towards each other and became friends.

Text 28

*iti go-gokula-patim,
govindam abhiṣicya saḥ,
anujñāto yayau śakro,
vṛto devādibhir divam*

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.

Chapter Twenty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Rescues Nanda Mahārāja

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
ekādaśyām nirāhāraḥ,
samabhyarcya janārdanam,
snātum nandas tu kālindyām,
dvādaśyām jalam āviśat*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Having worshiped Lord Janārdana and fasted on the Ekādaśī day, Nanda Mahārāja entered the water of the Kālindī on the Dvādaśī to take his bath.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Varuna’s kidnapping of Nanda and his prayers to Kṛṣṇa. Hearing about this incident from Nanda Maharaja, the cowherd men became very surprised. Kṛṣṇa then showed them Goloka Vrndavana in the spiritual world. Sukadeva Gosvami tells this pastime of Kṛṣṇa forgiving Varuna for his offense because he remembered it while narrating the story of Kṛṣṇa forgiving Indra.

Text 2

*taṁ gṛhītvānayaḍ bhṛtyo,
varuṇasyāsure ’ntikam,
avajñāyāsūrīm velām,
praviṣṭam udakaṁ niśi*

Because Nanda Mahārāja entered the water in the dark of night, disregarding that the time was inauspicious, a demoniac servant of Varuṇa seized him and brought him to his master.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The servant of Varuṇa who arrested Nanda Mahārāja is stated here to be a demon for several reasons. First, the servant was foolishly ignorant of Nanda Mahārāja’s position as the pastime father of the Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth. Also, Nanda Mahārāja’s intention was to carry out the injunctions of scripture regarding breaking his Ekadasi fast. Therefore, Varuṇa’s servant should not have arrested Nanda on the technical grounds that he bathed in the Yamunā at an inauspicious time. Later in this chapter Varuṇa himself will say, *ajānatā māmakena mūḍhena*: “This was done by my ignorant servant, who is a fool.”

Text 3

*cukruśus tam apaśyantah,
kṛṣṇa rāmeti gopakāh,
bhagavāms tad upaśrutyā,
pītarām varuṇāhṛtam,
tad-antikam gato rājan,
svānām abhaya-do vibhuḥ*

O King, not seeing Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men loudly cried out, “O Kṛṣṇa! O Rāma!” Lord Kṛṣṇa heard their cries and understood that His father had been captured by Varuṇa. Therefore the almighty Lord, who makes His devotees fearless, went to the court of Varuṇadeva.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Several cowherd men accompanied

Nanda Maharaja as guards when he went to take his bath at night. When Nanda did not come out of the water, they began to cry out. Though Kṛṣṇa was far away sleeping on His bed of flowers, He heard the cowherd men shouting “Kṛṣṇa! Rama!”

The word *upa-srutya* indicates that Kṛṣṇa heard from close by. Because Kṛṣṇa is all-pervading, He is always very near to everyone. Understanding the situation, Kṛṣṇa rushed there, jumped into the water and went to the court of Varuṇa. Kṛṣṇa was determined to free His father and the other cowherd men from the fear of a mere demigod. Kṛṣṇa is called *svanam-abhaya-dah*, “relieving the fear of His associates” because by freeing Nanda from Varuṇa’s clutches, Kṛṣṇa relieved the fear of His relatives.

Text 4

*prāptam vīkṣya hṛṣīkeśam,
loka-pālaḥ saparyayā,
mahatyā pūjayitvāha,
tad-darśana-mahotsavaḥ*

Seeing that the Lord, Hṛṣīkeśa, had arrived, the demigod Varuṇa worshiped Him with elaborate offerings. Varuṇa was in a state of great jubilation upon seeing the Lord, and he spoke as follows.

Text 5

*śrī-varuṇa uvāca,
adya me nibhrto deho,
'dyaivārtho 'dhigataḥ prabho,
tvat-pāda-bhājo bhagavann,*

avāpuḥ pāram adhvanah

Śrī Varuṇa said: Now my body has fulfilled its function. Indeed, now the goal of my life is achieved, O Lord. Those who accept Your lotus feet, O Personality of Godhead, can transcend the path of material existence.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Varuna said, “All the thousands of bodies which I have received till now have been useless because in all those lives I did not see You. Today my body has become successful.” That is the indication of the word *nibhṛtaḥ* which comes from *ni* for *nitaram* (complete, successful) and *bhṛtaḥ* (accepting a body).

Varuna said, “Today I have understood what is most valuable. Though I possess all varieties of jewels, until now I have not obtained such a jewel as You. Those who worship Your lotus feet can cross the ocean (*adhvan:* path) of material existence. How fortunate I am to attain Your *darsana* without any effort.”

Text 6

*namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate,
brahmaṇe paramātmane,
na yatra śrūyate māyā,
loka-sṛṣṭi-vikalpanā*

My obeisances unto You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul, within whom there is no trace of the illusory energy, which orchestrates the creation of this world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Varuna said, “You are approached by the three paths of *bhakti*, *jnana* and *yoga*. I pay my respects to You

as Bhagavan, Brahman and Paramatma. Those who claim that these realizations are tinged with *maya* are wrong. These realizations are not touched by *maya*, which makes the various things of this world (*loka-srsti-vikalpana*).”

Text 7

*ajānatā māmakena,
mūḍhenākārya-vedinā,
ānīto 'yam tava pitā,
tad bhavān kṣantum arhati*

Your father, who is sitting here, was brought to me by a foolish, ignorant servant of mine who did not understand his proper duty. Therefore, please forgive us.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Why are you embarrassing Me by praising Me like this?”

In answer Varuna says, “I have really offended You.” With this mood he speaks this verse.

Varuna continued, “According to the *bhakti-sastras*, one can enter the water before sunrise after an especially short Ekādaśī. Not knowing this (*akārya-vedinā*), one of my foolish servants committed a great offense by bringing Your father here. The offense of my servant is also mine.” Pointing with his hand, Varuna showed Nanda seated on a jeweled throne, which Varuna himself had offered in order to worship Nanda Maharaja, who was internally engaged in remembering Kṛṣṇa, his own worshipable deity.

Varuna continued, “O Kṛṣṇa! You are the ocean of forgiveness, but because I am the ocean of offense, You can punish me suitably if You wish.”

Text 8

*mamāpy anugrahaṁ kṛṣṇa,
kartum arhasy aśeṣa-dṛk,
govinda nīyatām eṣa,
pitā te pitṛ-vatsala*

O Kṛṣṇa, O seer of everything, please give Your mercy even to me. O Govinda, You are most affectionate to Your father. Please take him home.

Text 9

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam prasāditaḥ kṛṣṇo,
bhagavān īśvareśvaraḥ,
ādāyāgāt sva-pitaram,
bandhūnām cāvahan mudam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus satisfied by Lord Varuṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of lords, took His father and returned home, where their relatives were overjoyed to see them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It is understood that Kṛṣṇa returned home with Nanda Maharaja before sunrise.

Text 10

*nandas tv atīndriyaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā,
loka-pāla-mahodayam,
kṛṣṇe ca sannatiṁ teṣāṁ,
jñātibhyo vismito 'bravīt*

Nanda Mahārāja had been astonished to see for the first time the great opulence of Varuṇa, the ruler of the ocean planet, and also to see how Varuṇa and his servants had offered such humble respect to Kṛṣṇa. Nanda described all this to his fellow cowherd men.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja was astonished to see for the first time the fabulous opulence (*mahodayam*) of Varuna, the ruler of the ocean planet (*loka-pala*). The word *tesam* is plural in number to indicate that Varuna and his followers were offering obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. After breaking the fast at the proper time, Nanda Maharaja sat comfortably and spoke to his friends and relatives (*jñātibhyah*).

Text 11

*te cautsukya-dhiyo rājan,
matvā gopās tam īśvaram,
api naḥ sva-gatiṁ sūksmām,
upādhāsyad adhīśvaraḥ*

[Hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes with Varuṇa,] the cowherd men considered that Kṛṣṇa must be the Supreme Lord, and their minds, O King, were filled with eagerness. They thought, “Will the Supreme Lord bestow upon us His transcendental abode?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Realizing that they were in fact dealing with the Supreme Lord, the cowherd men became eager to know if Śrī Kṛṣṇa would take them to His own transcendental abode (*sva-gatim*), Vaikuntha.

The cowherd men said, “O Nanda! Previously you told us that Garga Muni had said that Kṛṣṇa was like Narayana but not identical to Narayana. But now you have concluded that Kṛṣṇa is God by directly hearing Varuna praising Him. We think your son Kṛṣṇa should fulfill the desires of your friends in this material world, because, besides being the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa is also the son of our brother, the son of our sister, and the son of our daughter. We love Kṛṣṇa and He loves us.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “O cowherd men! Please take whatever you desire from the Supreme Lord.”

One cowherd man said, “We should take liberation.”

Another said, “Let us become residents of Vaikuntha.”

Every cowherd man had a different desire. Although the cowherd men were seeing Kṛṣṇa as God, it did not even slightly diminish the intimacy of their relationship with Him. However, that was not the case with Kṛṣṇa’s father Vasudeva and His friend Arjuna whose affectionate relationship was disrupted by observing Kṛṣṇa’s majesty (*aisvarya*).

Once upon meeting Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, Vasudeva said, “You two are not my sons, but the Supreme Lord. Today, I surrender to Your lotus feet.” After seeing Kṛṣṇa’s universal form, Arjuna said, “O my Lord! Please forgive me for whatever I spoke, thinking of You as a friend.”

Text 12

*iti svānām sa bhagavān,
vijñāyākhila-dṛk svayam,
saṅkalpa-siddhaye teṣām,
kṛpayaitad acintayat*

Because He sees everything, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, automatically understood what the cowherd men were conjecturing. Wanting to show His compassion to them by fulfilling their desires, the Lord thought as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Understanding the minds of His relatives (*svanam*), Kṛṣṇa thought how to fulfill their desires, since He knew about all the types of bliss available in Brahman, Vaikuntha and Vrajabhumi (*akhila-drk*). According to the degree of His devotees' prema, Kṛṣṇa usually covers or forgets His majesty, but in this case His *lila-sakti* inspired Him with full awareness of all His majestic forms simultaneously.

Kṛṣṇa thought, “Because of tasting the rich sweetness of *kṛṣṇa-prema* these cowherd men have understood that the attainment of Brahman and Vaikuntha are insignificant. Nevertheless, I will permit them to realize the bliss of Brahman and Vaikuntha in order to fulfill the desires they are manifesting while playing the roles of unintelligent human beings.”

Text 13

*jano vai loka etasminn,
avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ,
uccāvacāsu gatiṣu,
na veda svām gatiṁ bhraman*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa thought:] Certainly people in this world are wandering among higher and lower destinations, which they achieve through activities performed according to their desires and without full knowledge. Thus people do not know their real destination.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although it appears to refer to

conditioned souls, this verse actually applies to the eternally liberated residents of Śrī Vṛndāvana.

Kṛṣṇa thought, “All the desires and actions (*kama-karmabhih*) of My father and the Vrajavasis are solely dedicated for My pleasure. Seeing Me as their helpless child, they are completely unaware (*avidya*) that I am the Supreme God of all the universes. Wandering (*bhraman*) in this land of Vṛndavana, they have no knowledge of the higher destinations. In this way, the Vrajavasis are completely unaware of their own exalted positions as My eternal associates in Sri Vṛndavana dhama (*svam gatim*), which is rarely achieved by others.

“When My father saw the opulence of Varuna, which is only material, he then considered this Vṛndavana, which is the quintessence of Vaikuntha, to be inferior to the planet of Varuna. It is just like the fool, who upon seeing the form and luster of an inferior pearl, considers a valuable first-class pearl to be inferior. Thus the cowherd men see themselves inferior to Varuna, and think attaining liberation and residence in Vaikuntha is greater than the unique sweetness they relish in loving Me as their son. Liberation and Vaikuntha both depend on Me, but I am completely independent. Nevertheless, it is seen that sometimes I am dependent on prema. Though it is evident to all, the Vrajavasis do not recognize it.

“Some people become liberated and realize the happiness of Brahman. *Brahma Samhita* 5.40 says: *yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṇḍa-koṭi*, ‘Brahman is the effulgence coming out of My body.’ Brahman is unlimited and beyond *maya*. I, Myself say in *Bhagavad-gita* 14.27: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, ‘I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.’ Matsya says ‘My greatness is called the Parabrahman.’ Thus Brahman, which is the all-pervading, formless light of My effulgence, is beyond material perception. However, I am also eternally present in various sweet personal forms which can be relished by one whose senses are anointed with prema.

“As for Vaikuntha, *Padma Purana* says, ‘Mathura-mandala is far superior to Vaikuntha. Within Mathura is Vṛndavana, the eternal transcendental pleasure abode of Sri Kṛṣṇa, which remains unaffected

even by the annihilation of the material world. The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says, ‘Of the seven cities on Bhurloka, Gopāla-purī [residence of Lord Gopala] is the very form of Brahman. Gopāla-purī exists on this earth just as a lotus floats on a lake.’ *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa* says, ‘When the universe becomes invisible at the time of devastation, only the infinite, eternal, non-material Vaikuntha remains, spreading its rays of blissful Brahman.’

“Thus though Vrndavana is far superior to both Brahman and Vaikuntha, the cowherd men desire to attain the experience of Brahman and Vaikuntha only because they have not seen them with their eyes. Therefore I will now reveal these to them directly.”

One cannot translate this verse as follows: “The Vrajavasis, who are wandering in various wombs from higher species to lower due to ignorance, desire and action (*avidyā-kāma-karmabhiḥ*), do not know about Brahman liberation and Vaikuntha which will be given by Me.” All the Vrajavasis are *nitya-siddhas* (eternally liberated associates of the Lord), who love Kṛṣṇa in various relationships of intimacy. They are completely unaffected by ignorance, lust or fruitive activity. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* says, “The gopis who regarded Kṛṣṇa as their son were not subject to the ignorance of material life.” Lord Brahma says, “What can you give to these Vrajavasis who will not accept the position of liberation or Vaikuntha even if you offer it.” One should also see the logical explanations given after the killing of the Putana witch (*Bhag.* 10.6 verses 37-40).

Text 14

*iti sañcintya bhagavān,
mahā-kāruṇiko hariḥ,
darśayām āsa lokam svam,
gopānām tamasaḥ param*

Thus deeply considering the situation, the all-merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari revealed to the cowherd men His abode, which is beyond material darkness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Considering (*sancintya*) the situation, Kṛṣṇa, out of His infinite compassion (*maha-karuniko*) for the Vrajavasis, separated the cowherd men from Vṛndavana for a few moments and showed them His own attractively charming spiritual planet (*lokam svam*), Kṛṣṇaloka. Kṛṣṇa did this to show them that the sweetness of Vṛndavana was superior to Brahman and Vaikuntha. However, if the Vrajavasis achieved *sayujya-mukti*, merging in Brahman, it would be impossible for them to come out of it. Then how would they ever again taste the sweetness of Vṛndavana? Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is *vibhu* (all-powerful), He could take them out of *sayujya-mukti* and Vaikuntha, which are both beyond the darkness of matter (*tamasah param*).

Text 15

*satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad,
brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam,
yad dhi paśyanti munayo,
guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Satyam* means all-pervading. *Jnanam* means non-material. *Anantam* means without limit. *Sanatanam* means eternally perfect (*nitya-siddha*). The *jnanis* (*munah*), who transcend the

modes of nature (*gunas*), see the Brahman effulgence (*brahma-jyoti*) in *samadhi*. Brahman and Bhauma Vrndavana both have the nature of unlimited, effulgent bliss. But the people on earth only experience the extreme sweetness of Vrndavana and not its awesome and majestic aspect (*aisvarya*), due to the covering of *yogamaya*. Just as a clay pot conceals a lamp shining within it, Kṛṣṇa revealed the *brahmajyoti* far beyond the material world, and not the spiritual effulgence manifested within Vrndavana on this earth planet.

The form of Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is much sweeter than the impersonal Brahman effulgence. This is confirmed by the realization of *atmaramas* such as Sukadeva Gosvami. Though the form of Bhagavan is also all-pervading, He appeared localized in a form of medium size, human-like. Though Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa is free from the six transformations of material nature, He seems to undergo birth, growth and so on. Bhagavan is free from the six material disturbances of hunger, thirst and so on, yet He seems to undergo hunger and thirst, perspire and become tired, express fear and bewilderment, and receive blows in battle. This is because Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa has unlimited inconceivable energies. Similarly, Vrndavana like the body of the Lord, which spreads itself through millions of universes (as seen by Brahma), is also limited and localized. The Lord says, “This Vrndavana spread over five *yojanas* is like My body.” And though the scriptures proclaim that the moving and nonmoving entities of Vrndavana are free from the six material disturbances [hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, old age and death], one sees to his astonishment that the men, animals, birds and trees in Vrndavana experience hunger, thirst, birth, old age, want and dissolution.

Text 16

*te tu brahma-hradam nītā,
magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhṛtāḥ,
dadṛśur brahmaṇo lokam,*

yatrākrūro 'dhyagāt purā

The cowherd men were brought by Lord Kṛṣṇa to the Brahma-hrada, made to submerge in the water, and then lifted up. From the same vantage point that Akrūra saw the spiritual world, the cowherd men saw the planet of the Absolute Truth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The unlimited spiritual effulgence, called the *brahmajyoti* in Text 15, is compared to a lake called Brahma-hrada, which actually exists in the river Yamuna. Sri Kṛṣṇa submerged the cowherd men in that lake literally, and also in the sense that He submerged them in the awareness of the impersonal Brahman. But then, as indicated by the word *uddhṛtāḥ* (uplift), Kṛṣṇa lifted them up to a higher understanding, that of the Personality of Godhead in His own planet, Kṛṣṇaloka. This is also stated in the *Bhagavatam* (2.7.31): *lokam vaikuṅṭham upaneśyati gokulam sma*, “Kṛṣṇa showed them Gokula, the highest planet in the spiritual sky.”

As the materialist is taken from the lake of matter to the realization of Brahman, so the cowherd men were taken from the lake of Brahman realization to the direct perception of Goloka Vrndavana, Sri Kṛṣṇa’s blissful *prema-dhama*. The bliss of *kṛṣṇa-prema* in Gokula far exceeds the paltry loveless happiness in Brahman.

The pastime involving Akrūra takes place later in the *Bhāgavatam*. The reason Śukadeva Gosvāmī says Akrūra saw Vaikuṅṭha *purā*, “previously,” is that all these incidents took place many years before the conversation between Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Mahārāja Parīkṣit.

Text 17

*nandādayas tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā,
paramānanda-nivṛtāḥ,
kṛṣṇam ca tatra cchandobhiḥ,*

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherd men felt the greatest happiness when they saw that transcendental abode. They were especially amazed to see Kṛṣṇa Himself there, surrounded by the personified Vedas, who were offering Him prayers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing Kṛṣṇaloka in the spiritual world, the cowherd men were amazed and filled with the highest bliss. They experienced Kṛṣṇaloka to be the same as the Vṛndavana on earth. It is just like a millionaire who having lost all his wealth becomes full of bliss on finding some clue to the wealth. They found that Sri Kṛṣṇa, with His lotus face covered with drops of perspiration and worshipable by millions of their life airs, was personally present as the Lord of the spiritual world. In their unique vision they were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa being praised by the personified *Vedas*.

The cowherd men thought, “Where have these effulgent beings come from? They are unknown to us, but we cannot ask them who they are. Though seeing us, Kṛṣṇa does not display His boyish manners, run towards us and embrace us with His two arms. We also feel reluctant to approach Him and take Him on our laps. Today Kṛṣṇa has forgotten hunger and thirst. But how can His mother live without feeding Him?” In this way the cowherd men were astonished (*vismitah*).

Employing her *lila-sakti*, *yogamaya* then brought the Vrajavasis back to earthly Vṛndavana. Rupa Gosvami has explained this fact in a verse in *Stava-mala*: “May you be protected by Mukunda, who, in order to teach the cowherd men that there is no place as sweet as earthly Vṛndavana, effortlessly showed them Kṛṣṇaloka in the spiritual world, and then brought them back to earthly Gokula.”

demigods and demons took birth among human beings and arrogantly harassed the general populace.

Text 18

*tan-nigrahāya hariṇā,
proktā devā yadoḥ kule avatīrṇāḥ kula-śataṁ,
teṣāṁ ekādhikāṁ nṛpa*

To subdue these demons, Lord Hari told the demigods to descend into the dynasty of Yadu. They comprised 101 clans, O King.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *kula-śataṁ ekādhikāṁ*, “A dynasty of one hundred and one clans” is the enumeration of the clans, not of the individual persons, since they were countless.

Text 19

*teṣāṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān,
prabhutvenābhavad dhariḥ ye cānuvartinas tasya,
vavṛdhuḥ sarva-yādavāḥ*

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Yādavas accepted Him as their ultimate authority. And among them, all those who were His intimate associates especially flourished.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those who were Kṛṣṇa’s intimate associates (*anuvartinaḥ*), all in the form of Yadavas, increased (*vavṛdhuḥ*) the numbers of Yadus. Kṛṣṇa alone could count their numbers because such counting was beyond the comprehension of even persons like Lord Brahma.

Text 20

*śayyāsanāṭanālāpa,
krīḍā-snānādi-karmasu na viduḥ santam ātmānam,
vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasah*

The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that they forgot their own bodies while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on.

Text 21

*tīrtham cakre nrponam yad ajani yaduṣu svaḥ-sarit pāda-śaucam
vidviḥ-snigdhaḥ svarūpaṁ yayur ajita-para śrīr yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ
yan-nāmāmaṅgala-ghnam śrutam atha gaditam yat-kṛto gotra-dharmah
kṛṣṇasyaitan na citram kṣiti-bhara-haraṇam kāla-cakrāyudhasya*

The heavenly Ganges is a holy place of pilgrimage because her waters wash Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet. But when the Lord descended among the Yadus, His glories eclipsed the Ganges as a holy place. Both those who hated Kṛṣṇa and those who loved Him attained eternal forms like His in the spiritual world. The unattainable and supremely self-satisfied goddess of fortune, for the sake of whose favor everyone else struggles, belongs to Him alone. His name destroys all inauspiciousness when heard or chanted. He alone has set forth the principles of the various disciplic successions of sages. What wonder is it that He, whose personal weapon is the wheel of time, relieved the burden of the earth?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Summing up the Tenth Canto, the

jewel mine of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal pastimes, Sukadeva mentions five unique qualities distinguishing Sri Kṛṣṇa from all His other expansions, plenary portions and incarnations.

First, Kṛṣṇa’s reputation as a sacred place of pilgrimage (*tīrtham*) eclipsed that of the holy Ganges when He descended into the Yadu dynasty. Previous to this, Ganga-devi was the most sacred of all *tīrthas*, being the water that had bathed Lord Vāmanadeva’s lotus feet.

Second, Kṛṣṇa gave liberation not only to His surrendered devotees but also to His enemies. Loving devotees like the Vraja-gopis attained the opportunity to enjoy pastimes of conjugal love with Kṛṣṇa’s personal form (*svarupam*) in the spiritual world. Whereas, inimical demons like Kamsa, who were killed by Kṛṣṇa, attained the *sāyujya-mukti* of merging into His divine form.

Third, Laksimi-devi, Lord Nārāyaṇa’s constant companion, whom great demigods such as Brahma serve menially to win her slight favor, could not conquer (*ajita*) Kṛṣṇa. Even by severe austerities she could not bring Kṛṣṇa under control and enjoy the *rasa-lila* as the Vraja-gopis did.

Fourth, the name Kṛṣṇa is superior to the name Nārāyaṇa and to the names of all Kṛṣṇa’s other expansions. These two syllables—*kṛṣ* and *ṇa*—combine together to destroy all inauspiciousness and illusion.

Or, chanting that holy name eradicates all ignorance (*nāmāmaṅgala-ghnam*) of Kṛṣṇa’s supreme position, thus capturing even the liberated souls. Recitation of Kṛṣṇa’s holy name is *śruta-matha* in the sense that it totally crushes (*mathnāti*) the excellence of all other spiritual practices described in the revealed scriptures (*śruta*).

In the words of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, *sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām, trir āvṛtyā tu yat phalam ekāvṛtyā tu kṛṣṇasya, nāmaikam tat prayacchati*

“By uttering the single name of Kṛṣṇa just once, one attains the same benefit as that gained by reciting Lord Viṣṇu’s thousand names three times.” Fifth, Kṛṣṇa solidly reinstated *dharma*, the bull of religion (*gotra-dharma*) on his four legs of compassion, austerity, cleanliness and truth. Thus *dharma* could once again become *go-tra*, the protector of the earth. At the end of Dvapara-yuga, *dharma* was lacking three

legs as is stated in the words of mother earth, in the form of a cow, to the personality of religious principles in the form of a bull: *caturbhir vartase yena, pādair loka-sukhāvahaiḥ*, “Once you too were maintained by your four legs, and you increased happiness all over the universe by the mercy of the Lord.” (SB 1.16.25)

Since Kṛṣṇa alone possesses these five wonderful characteristics, His removing the earth’s burden is not at all astonishing; though it may be for the common man.

Text 22

*jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo,
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam sthira-cara-vṛjina-
ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena,
vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāma-devam*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is He who is known as jana-nivāsa, the ultimate resort of all living entities, and who is also known as Devakīnandana or Yaśodā-nandana, the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious, as well as every man who is impious. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the lusty desires of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. May He be all glorious and happy!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If someone says, “Alas! Alas! What misfortune that Kṛṣṇa did not continue to manifest His intimate pastimes down to the present time.” To console such persons, Sukadeva Gosvami has composed this beautiful verse.

“Living (*nivāso*) among human beings (*jana:manuśyeṣu*) such as the cowherds and the Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa remains the most glorious (*jayati*) for

all time.”

The word *jayati*, “He is victorious” means that Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in this world—in His holy abode, His holy name and the recitation of His glories. This is indicated by the word *jayati*, which is in the present tense rather than the past. One should not expect Sukadeva to have used the imperative case, *jayatu* instead of *jayati*, because being Kṛṣṇa’s devotee, it would be improper for him to demand blessings from the Lord. All his desires were already fulfilled because the Lord’s blessings are always available.

Sukadeva Gosvami continued, “It is definitively concluded that Kṛṣṇa took birth from two Devakis, the wives of Nanda and Vasudeva (*devakī-janma-vādo*).” That Devaki is a second name for mother Yasoda is confirmed in *Bṛhad-viṣṇu Purāna*:

dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca ataḥ sakhyam abhūt tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā

“The wife of Nanda had two names, Yaśodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that Yasoda, the wife of Nanda, develop friendship with Devakī, the wife of Śāuri [Vasudeva].”

Sukadeva Himself has said conclusively that Kṛṣṇa was born from both Devakis: *devakyām iva yaśodāyām*. (SB 10.2.9)

Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself states, *vādaḥ pravadatām aham*: “I am the natural conclusion (*vādaḥ*) of all arguments.” (Bg. 10.32) The word *vādaḥ* also refers to “philosophical theory,” as in *ārambha-vāda* (the theory that the creation has no beginning) and *pariṇāma-vāda* (the theory of the creation emanates from the Supreme).

Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates were the best of the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-vara-pariṣat*), some of whom were cowherd men in Vraja and others were *ksatriyas* in Mathura and Dvaraka. With His own arms, or by His devotees like Arjuna who are just like His own arms, Kṛṣṇa kills the demons opposing religion (*asyann adharmam*). Thus Kṛṣṇa destroys the misery (*vṛjina:samsāra-duḥkham*) of material life of all nonmoving and moving entities, and removes the suffering due to separation of the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvaraka.

“With His blissful smiling face, Kṛṣṇa, who is lust personified (*kāma-*

devam), always increases the lusty desires (*vardhayan kāma-devam*) of the damsels of Vraja and the city women of Mathura and Dvaraka, who are completely attracted to Him. In this way Kṛṣṇa remains eternally glorious (*jayati*).” The transcendental Kāmadeva (god of love) is a brilliant spiritual personality arising from Kṛṣṇa’s own internal spiritual nature. The word *devam* in *kāma-devam* means bright or spiritual. Thus Sukadeva Gosvami has stated that all the pastimes occurring in Vraja, Mathura and Dvaraka, which are described in the Tenth Canto, are eternal. The detailed dynamics of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are thoroughly described with logical reasoning in my commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. And at the end of the Eleventh Canto, it will be more elaborately commented under the topic of Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance.

Text 23

*ittham parasya nija-vartma-rirakṣayātta-
līlā-tanos tad-anurūpa-vidambanāni karmāṇi karma-kaṣaṇāni
yadūttamasya,
śrūyād amuṣya padayor anuvṛttim icchan*

To protect the principles of devotional service to Himself, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, accepts the pastime forms that have been glorified here in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. One who desires to faithfully serve His lotus feet should hear of the activities He performs in each of these incarnations—activities that suitably imitate those of the forms He assumes. Hearing narrations of these pastimes destroys the reactions to fruitive work.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having established that the pastimes of Sri Kṛṣṇa are eternal, Sukadeva Gosvami prescribes hearing about them in this verse. How can it be described (verse 47) that all Kṛṣṇa’s eternal

associates became situated in His exclusive abode? This is answered here that even those who merely listen (*śrūyāt*) to the pastimes Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with His associates will also attain eternal residence in the spiritual world.

As previously described, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests His personal forms (*tanos:nija-vigrahaḥ*) in this material world in order to protect His own principles of religion (*nija-vartma*), namely devotional service. Sri Kṛṣṇa appears simply out of His mercy; otherwise He remains imperceptible to everyone. One should hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's various incarnations, which display activities befitting that particular *avatara*. Though these incarnations may appear to be engaged in inferior, mundane activities, nevertheless, one should hear about their pastimes, which actually display unequalled and unexcelled majesty. Such hearing will destroy the reactions (*karma-kaṣaṇāni*) to fruitive work.

Text 24

*martyas tayānusavam edhitayā mukunda,
śrīmat-kathā-śravaṇa-kīrtana-cintayaiti tad dhāma dustara-kṛtānta-
javāpavargaṃ,
grāmād vanam kṣiti-bhujo 'pi yayur yad-arthāḥ*

By regularly hearing, chanting and meditating on the beautiful topics of Lord Mukunda with ever-increasing sincerity, a mortal being will attain the divine kingdom of the Lord, where the inviolable power of death holds no sway. For this purpose, many persons, including great kings, abandoned their mundane homes and took to the forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s Tenth Canto, this verse is the *phala-śruti* (fruit of hearing), the promise of

success. How can one attain the success of entering the spiritual world (*tad dhāma*)? By steadily hearing and chanting about the beautiful topics (*śrīmat-kathā*) of Kṛṣṇa, one will begin to meditate (*cintayaiti*) on them, and then start continuously (*edhitayā:vardhitayā*) thinking, “By what method will I attain Kṛṣṇa and when?” This verse states that Kṛṣṇa’s abode is beyond the influence of time since it destroys (*apavargaḥ:nāśaḥ*) the unavoidable force of death. One method of attaining Sri Kṛṣṇa’s eternal domain is mentioned beginning with the word *grāmāt* (home). The phrase (*kṣiti-bhujāḥ*) “kings” implies that kings such as Svāyambhuva Manu and Priyavrata renounced their homes and kingdoms and went to the forest in search of Kṛṣṇa.

navatitamo ‘trādhyāyo, daśame sārārtha-darśinyām, saṅgata eṣa skandho ‘py astu, satām saṅgato hṛdi me

“The Sārārtha-darśinī commentary on the ninetieth chapter of the Tenth Canto has now gradually reached its completion, and so has the Canto. This has been accomplished by the association given to me by the devotees of the Lord from within my heart.”

mad-gavīr api gopālaḥ, svī-kuryāt kṛpayā yadi, tadaivāsām payaḥ pītvā, hṛṣyeyus tat-priyā janāḥ

“O Gopala, please accept and maintain the cows in the form of my words. Please experience the pleasure of personally drinking that milk, and inspire others to do the same.”

māghasya kṛṣṇa-dvādaśyām, rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sāras-taṭe, daśama-skandha-ṭīkeyam, apūri kṛpayā prabhoḥ

“By the mercy of the Lord, I completed this commentary on the Tenth Canto on the twelfth day (Dvadasi) of the dark fortnight of Māgha (Jan.-Feb.) on the banks of Radha-kunda.”

Chapter Twenty-nine: Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs Meet for the Rāsa Dance

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
bhagavān api tā rātrīḥ,
śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ,
vīkṣya rantuṁ manaś cakre,
yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in all opulences, yet upon seeing those autumn nights scented with blossoming jasmine flowers, He turned His mind toward loving affairs. To fulfill His purposes He employed His internal potency.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: I offer my humble obeisances unto my *guru-parampara* beginning with my *dikṣa-guru* Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa [alias Sri Rama], my *parama-gurudeva* Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa, my *parātpara-gurudeva* Śrī Gaṅgā-narayana, my *parama-parātpara-gurudeva* Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura, to Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī and Lord Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Paying repeated respects to my *dikṣa-guru* Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa-deva, I offer respects to Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy. I take shelter of Sri Sukadeva Gosvami, the eye of the universe and master of the worlds. I offer myself and everything I possess to Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*’ hearts, in hopes of attaining the eternal service of His beloveds.

In the next five chapters (29-33) known as the *rāsa-pañcādhyāya*, which are like the five life airs, Sukadeva Gosvami describes Śrī

Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā*, the prize jewel within the treasury of all His pastimes. All glories to the *rāsa* dance! By the good fortune the Vraja-gopis acquired for themselves by participating in the *rāsa* dance, they relished the topmost manifestation of all divine tastes even while present on this earth. This chapter describes how the thirsty *cataki* birds of the *gopis'* ears became inundated with the harshly poisonous shower from the monsoon cloud of Kṛṣṇa's flute. It also describes the arguments and counter-arguments of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis*, and Kṛṣṇa's playful disappearance from the midst of the *gopis*.

When Kṛṣṇa was seven years old, on the Amavasya [dark moon] day of Karttika month, He preached Karma-mīmāṃsā philosophy to prevent the Indra *yajna* of Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men. On the first day of the waxing moon (*pratipat*) the Vrajavasis worshiped Govardhana Hill. On the second day of the waxing moon Kṛṣṇa honored a feast on the shore of the Yamuna on the occasion of Bhrāṭṛ-dvīṭīyā, a day when sisters honor their brothers. Though this pastime is not described by Sukadeva Gosvami, it is understood that it took place. Then Indra cursed the Vrajavasis, and Kṛṣṇa held up Govardhana Hill from Sukla Tritiya until Navami (seven days). On Sukla Dasami (tenth day) the cowherd men discussed the incident with great surprise. On Karttika Sukla Ekadasi, the heavenly Surabhi cow performed an *abhiseka* of Kṛṣṇa. On the Dvadasi day, Kṛṣṇa went to Varuna-loka to rescue His father Nanda Maharaja. On Purnima the cowherd men had *darsana* of Brahmaloaka (Kṛṣṇaloka) and the autumn season finished. With the next Janmastami, Kṛṣṇa turned eight years old. On the full moon night (*śārada-purnima*) of the Asvina month Sri Kṛṣṇa celebrated *rāsa-līla*. The first verse begins from this point.

Even though Kṛṣṇa is *bhagavān*, full in six varieties of opulences, He turned His mind toward enjoying because of the time, place and persons, which are three *uddipanas* to excite to *rāsa*. The time was the full moon night of autumn (*śārada-purnima*). The place was the forest of Vrndavana, and the persons were the lovely damsels of Vraja. All three served to enflame the passion of enjoyment by their supreme capacity to attract Kṛṣṇa's mind with their sweetness.

The attraction of the autumn night:

Kṛṣṇa became desirous of relishing with His own ears and other senses the variegated charms of the topmost experts among billions of women in the arts of amorous love. He wanted to enjoy with His own senses the sweet sounds of the *gopis*' voices, their beauty and fine fragrance, tenderness, cleverness and skill in dancing and playing music. Kṛṣṇa also wanted the *gopis* to relish with their own ears and other senses the sweet sound of His voice.

Kṛṣṇa's Yogamaya potency, under the influence of pure love, and impelled to act by Kṛṣṇa's *satya-sankalpa sakti* (potency to instantly fulfill desires), brought millions of other nights, which were all needed for carrying out such loving pastimes, into that single night of merely four *praharas* (twelve hours). Therefore the word for nights (*rātrīḥ*) is plural in this verse. This fact is confirmed later in the *Bhagavatam* (10.33.38): *brahma-rātra upāvṛtte*, "After an entire night of Brahmā had passed." In other words, this night (*śārada-purnima*) became the length of Brahma's night. Previously when Kṛṣṇa stole the clothing of the virgin *gopis*, He said, "On all the future nights you will enjoy with Me." Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana says *rātrīḥ* is plural to indicate the numerous demigods in charge of the night, who came there to perform service.

The attractiveness of the place:

Śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ—Although out of season, the jasmine (*mallikāḥ*) flowers were blossoming in the autumn. In the next chapter, verse eleven also states, "At the time of the *rasa* dance, the garland of jasmine (*kunda*) flowers on Kṛṣṇa's neck became tinged with the *kunkuma* from Radha's breasts." Thus it should be understood that the jasmynes were blossoming out of season in the autumn. Verse forty-five of this chapter says, "The gentle wind bore the fragrance of lotus flowers (*kumudāmoda-vāyunā*)." Although lotuses do not bloom at night, it is understood that on this special night the lotuses also blossomed. Such is the superexcellent charm of Vrndavana, that there lotus flowers open even during the night. If we take an alternate reading of *śāradotphulla-mallikāḥ*, it means that both *śārada* and *mallikāḥ*

flowers were blooming.

Attractiveness of the Vraja-gopis:

Sri Kṛṣṇa got ready to enjoy those nights. In this regard, some may interpret the word *reme* (take pleasure [ref. SB 10.33.16]) as meaning that since Kṛṣṇa is actually self-satisfied and innately full in all desires, this apparent enjoyment on His part with young women is only an external show, a false imitation of human life. It is in reply to such a possible interpretation that the phrase *rantum manaś cakre* is used to inform us that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed internally within His mind (*manaś*), not externally.

Very well, someone may say in agreement, this enjoyment is internal, but only for the cowherd damsels of Vraja because they are Kṛṣṇa's devotees. To refute such an idea the word *cakre* is intentionally used in *ātmanepada* [verb conjugation] instead of *parasmaipada* to express that this enjoyment is for Kṛṣṇa's own satisfaction. This moreover shows the Vraja-gopis had such an incredible degree of *kṛṣṇa-prema* that the Supreme Lord Himself, although already fulfilled in all possible pleasures, was thinking of enjoying with them. The phrase *ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ* (the wonderful qualities of Lord Hari) in the famous *ātmārāmāś ca munayo* verse from the *Bhagavatam* (1.7.10) establishes the superexcellence of the Vraja-gopis.

The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says, "Lord Madhu-sudana, even though free from all flaws of passion and imperfect qualities, fulfilled His youth (*kaisora* age) by enjoying with the beautiful women of Vraja in the night." *Hari-vamśa* says, "Sri Kṛṣṇa brought together in the night all the young cowherd girls, both married and unmarried, and fulfilled the purpose of His youth (*kaisora* age) by enjoying with them."

If Kṛṣṇa failed to enjoy with the Vraja-gopis, His youthfulness (*kaisora* age) would have been fruitless. Therefore, great authorities such as Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī state: *kaiśoram saphalī-karoti kalayan kuñje vihāram hariḥ*, "Lord Hari perfects His youth (*kaiśoram*) by arranging loving pastimes in the bushes of Vrndavana" (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 2.1.231). Such statements by realized *acaryas* of devotion subtly hint at the topmost supremacy of the young ladies of Vraja by revealing their

supremely attractive qualities.

By using the word *yogamāyām* which means that this was an action of Kṛṣṇa's personal, inconceivable spiritual potency (*cit-sakti*), Sukadeva Gosvami reconciles everything contradictory and clarifies everything left unsaid. The prefix *upa* (fully) in the word *upāśritaḥ* (resorting to) indicates that Kṛṣṇa took shelter in a most profound and complete manner. The fact that Kṛṣṇa resorted to *yogamāyā*, out of all the potencies that lie at His disposal, pronounces the good fortune of *yogamāyā*.

Text 2

*tadoḍurājah kakubhaḥ karair mukhaṁ,
prācyā vilimpann aruṇena śantamaḥ,
sa carṣaṇīnām udagāc chuco mṛjan,
priyaḥ priyāyā iva dīrgha-darśanaḥ*

The moon then rose, anointing the face of the western horizon with the reddish hue of his comforting rays, and thus dispelling the pain of all who watched him rise. The moon was like a beloved husband who returns after a long absence and adorns the face of his beloved wife with red kuṅkuma.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa became inclined to enjoy under the spell of the time and place, at that moment the moon, finding an opportunity to render service, rose of its own will in the eastern direction with its pleasing rays of light. The rising of the moon, the king of the stars (*uḍu-rājah*), was another cause for the enflaming of passionate desires. In addition to being a stimulator (*uddipana*) of conjugal feelings, the moon also served Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* by illuminating their pleasure pastimes with its brilliant light.

When a lover meets his beloved after a long separation, he colors

her face with *kunkuma* (*aruṇena*, reddish color) with his own hand. Similarly, the rising moon colored the face of the western direction with the reddish hue of its pleasing rays (*karaiḥ*). The word *sa* expresses that he has already been mentioned.

The moon removed the discomfort caused by the heat of the sun from all men (*carṣaṇīnām*). The word *carṣaṇīnām*, which is in the genitive case, means “of humankind” according to the *Bhagavatam* (6.6.42): *aryamṇo māṭṛkā patnī, tayoś carṣaṇayaḥ sutāḥ, yatra vai mānuṣī jātir, brahmaṇā copakalpitā*

“From the womb of Māṭṛkā, the wife of Aryamā, were born many learned scholars (*carṣaṇayaḥ*). Lord Brahma arranged for these *carṣaṇayaḥ* to be the forefathers of the human race.”

The idea of this verse is as follows: The moon-god, the very founder of the dynasty in which Kṛṣṇa appeared (Candra-vaṁśa) and the most ancient leader of the *brahmana* community, possesses many wives of his own who were all quite fit to be enjoyed, yet he is touching the face of the western direction, who is another’s wife, namely Indra. By touching her, the moon-god is also making her attracted to him. This verse hints that if this is the case with the moon-god, the leader of Kṛṣṇa’s dynasty, then certainly there is no fault in Kṛṣṇa, a descendent of his dynasty, enjoying with the *gopis*. After all, Kṛṣṇa is a fresh youth intoxicated with the beauty of His human form, and He is an unmarried member of the cowherd community. Besides, Kṛṣṇa is so uniquely enchanting that He excites all the women in the universe!

Text 3

*dṛṣṭvā kumudvantam akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalam,
ramānanābhaṁ nava-kuṅkumāruṇam,
vanam ca tat-komala-gobhī rañjitaṁ,
jagau kalaṁ vāma-dṛśāṁ manoharam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the unbroken disk of the full moon glowing with the red effulgence of newly applied vermilion, as if it were the face of the goddess of fortune. He also saw the kumuda lotuses opening in response to the moon’s presence and the forest gently illumined by its rays. Thus the Lord began to play sweetly on His flute, attracting the minds of the beautiful-eyed gopīs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa succumbed to romantic desires upon seeing the rising moon. Keeping in mind the saying, “whatever great men do others will follow” (*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas, tat tad evetaro janaḥ*), and seeing the behavior of the founder of His own dynasty, Kṛṣṇa felt free to make a definite effort to attract others’ wives there to enjoy without fear.

This verse indicates the two elements of *vibhava* (causes of love for Kṛṣṇa to appear): *ālabhana* (the shelter of *rasa*) and *uddīpana* (excitants to love). The moon is the *uddīpana* and Kṛṣṇa’s form is the *alambana*.

Uddīpana: *Kumut* is the same as *kumuda*, as stated in the *Viśvakośa* dictionary, *kumude ’pi kumut proktam*, that moon in whose presence the *kumuda* lotuses can open. Another interpretation can also be given for this: The presence of the moon (and Kṛṣṇa) gave pleasure (*mud*) to the earth (*ku*). This also applies to Kṛṣṇa, since actually in this context the specific antecedent modified and the modifier is left unstated. The full moon manifested a form resembling an unbroken disk (*akhaṇḍa-maṇḍalam*).

The moon is the brother of *Ramā* (Lakṣmī) because both were born from the churning of the Milk Ocean, therefore his face resembles hers. Or the word *ramā* refers to *Rādhā*, the original Lakṣmī, as we find in the *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra: sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva, kāntiḥ sammohinī parā*, “Radha, the source of all Lakṣmīs, possesses all the attractiveness to attract the all-attractive Personality of Godhead.”

The *gopīs* are also *ramā* because they enjoy (*ramante*) and give pleasure (*ramayanti*) to Kṛṣṇa. Sri Kṛṣṇa became absorbed in remembering the *gopīs’* faces upon seeing that moon. According to one

interpretation, the faces of those *ramās* (*gopis*) exhibited wonderfully effulgent complexions that revealed their inner transformations of love. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa saw Himself as red as a ball of *kunkuma* powder in the reflection of that shining moonlight (of the *gopis*’ faces). Or that moon (of the *gopis*’ faces) was red due to the recent application of *kunkuma*, and Kṛṣṇa’s face had become colored (*rañjitaṁ*) by the gentle rays (*komala gobhiḥ*) of that moon.

Otherwise the compound can be divided to give the word *abhira-jitam*. According to yet another interpretation, the forest was tinged red (*abhira-jita*) by the famous rays of Kṛṣṇa’s own bodily effulgence, or else by the cows (*gobhiḥ*) that He was tending. The absence of the expected inflectional ending *t’aj* is a poetic license of the sages.

Alambana: Seeing these two opulent manifestations of the enflaming power of Cupid, Sri Kṛṣṇa played sweetly on His flute. Verse forty says, “Is there any woman in the three worlds who can maintain her chastity on hearing the sweet melodious sounds of Kṛṣṇa’s flute?” In what manner did Kṛṣṇa play His flute? This verse answers by saying that Kṛṣṇa played in such a way as to captivate even those young girls with enchanting eyes (*vāma-dṛśāṁ manoharam*). The *Sruti* confirms, *gayantam striya kama yanta*, “The women became full of desire from that singing.”

From this it should be concluded that Kṛṣṇa used the flute to utter the *kāma-bīja*, *klīm*—the seed *mantra* of transcendental love. The word *kalam* (sweetly) indicates “K” and “L” coming from the two consonants *ka-kāra* and *la-kāra*. By removing the grammatical inflection from *vāma-dṛśāṁ*, we get *vāma-drk*, which is the name for the fourth vowel “I”. With that vowel Kṛṣṇa’s flute vibrated the fifteenth sound of the alphabet “M.” The word *manaḥ* (mind) indicates the moon, the lord of the mind, which represents the *candra bindu* “Ā.” The word *hara* (*manoharam*) means to attract or to combine. Thus the *kama-bija mantra* “*Klīm*” is indicated here. In other words, Kṛṣṇa’s flute vibrated the *kāma-bīja*, the original *mantra* of Cupid which has the mysterious power to attract and enchant the minds of all the young damsels of Vraja.

Text 4

*niśamya gītām tad anaṅga-vardhanam,
vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-grhīta-mānasāḥ,
ājagmur anyonyam alakṣitodyamāḥ,
sa yatra kānto java-lola-kunḍalāḥ*

When the young women of Vṛndāvana heard Kṛṣṇa’s flute song, which arouses romantic feelings, their minds were captivated by the Lord. They went to where their lover waited, each unknown to the others, moving so quickly that their earrings swung back and forth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* went towards Kṛṣṇa as if they were puppets pulled by the strings of His flute song. That dulcet song was not only alluring, but it also increased their love (*ananga*). Kṛṣṇa instigated a terrible act of thievery in Vṛndāvana when He played on His flute. The song of Kṛṣṇa’s flute passed through the ears of the *gopīs*, and entered the treasure chamber of their hearts. That wonderful music stole all their most valuable possessions—their sobriety, shyness, fear and discrimination, along with their very minds—and in a split second this music delivered all these goods to Kṛṣṇa. Thus afflicted each beautiful *kiśorī* was thinking, ‘I have to capture that great thief,’ and thus they went forward, each unknown to the others. They began to chase the thief to catch Him and retrieve their property. Where did they go? The *gopis*’ earrings were swinging as they rushed to that place where their beloved was standing. The word *kunḍalāḥ* (earrings) also indicates their bracelets and anklets were swinging too. It appears that thief did not consider the *gopis*’ external ornaments worthy of stealing.

Text 5

*duhantyo 'bhiyayuh kāścid,
dohaṁ hitvā samutsukāḥ,
payo 'dhiśritya saṁyāvam,
anudvāsyāparā yayuh*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Three verses (5-7) describe the *gopis*’ complete absence of attachment to their duties in their haste to meet Kṛṣṇa. The *gopis* could not wait a second, so they neglected all their duties based on “I and mine.” Some of them even left aside the particular duties of their social class. The *gopis* engaged in milking the cows abandoned this work and went off. Some *gopis* left pots of milk boiling on the stove, and others left wheat cakes baking in the oven.

Texts 6–7

*pariveṣayantyas tad dhivā,
pāyayantyaḥ śiśūn payaḥ,
śuśrūṣantyaḥ patīn kāścid,
aśnantyo 'pāsya bhojanam,
limpantyaḥ pramṛjantyo 'nyā,
añjantyaḥ kāśca locane,
vyatyasta-vastrābharanāḥ,
kāścit kṛṣṇāntikam yayuh*

Some of them were getting dressed, feeding milk to their infants

or rendering personal service to their husbands, but they all gave up these duties and went to meet Kṛṣṇa. Other gopīs were taking their evening meals, washing themselves, putting on cosmetics or applying kajjala to their eyes. But all the gopīs stopped these activities at once and, though their clothes and ornaments were in complete disarray, rushed off to Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: These two verses describe how the *gopīs* gave up their duties as wives and mothers. While engaged in dressing they abandoned that business and failed to dress themselves adequately. Some stopped bringing warm water to their husbands, and rendering other services such as serving food. While cleansing their bodies with oils, bathing, and anointing themselves with turmeric and sandalwood paste, they dropped everything and hurried out of their homes.

Some *gopīs* were in such a rush that they could not distinguish hand from foot or nose from ear, and thus put their ornaments in the wrong place as shown by the word (*vyatyasta*:disarray). Their behavior indicates *vibhrama* (bewilderment), one of the *anubhavas*, bodily transformations indicating ecstatic love.

Vibhrama is described in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, Anubhāva-prakaraṇa (Text 34):

vallabha-prāpti-velāyām, madanāveśa-sambhramāt, vibhramo hāra-mālyādi, bhūṣā-sthāna-viparyayaḥ

“Hastily preparing to meet her lover, the bewildered heroine may place her necklace, flower-garland, and other ornaments in the wrong places. This is called *vibhrama*.”

Text 8

*tā vāryamānāḥ patibhiḥ,
pitṛbhir bhrāṭṛ-bandhubhiḥ,
govindāpahṛtātmāno,*

na nyavartanta mohitāḥ

Their husbands, fathers, brothers and other relatives tried to stop them, but Kṛṣṇa had already stolen their hearts. Enchanted by the sound of His flute, they refused to turn back.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Out of extreme love the *gopis* gave up all duties. That is expected but how could their husbands and other relatives give up their concern about them?" This is replied to in this verse.

Though the husbands tried to stop their wives and the fathers tried to stop their unmarried daughters, they could not dissuade them from going because their very souls had been stolen by Govinda (*govinda-apahrta-ātmānaḥ*), what to speak of the *gopis*' fear, shame and self-control. Thus the Vraja-gopis moved as if they were in trance (*mohitāḥ*), like puppets pulled by strings.

How could their husbands, who out of fear of losing their reputation, would ordinarily never allow even the young girls' dead bodies to go alone into the forest at night, tolerate letting their wives go away in such a crazed state? This being true, Kṛṣṇa's internal potency, Yogamaya, unfolded the entire romantic episode without interference. Yogamaya did this by producing replica bodies of the *gopis*, who then stayed in their husbands' homes, while the original spiritual bodies of *gopis* ran into the forest to dance with Govinda.

Text 9

*antar-grha-gatāḥ kāścid,
gopyo 'labdha-vinirgamāḥ,
kṛṣṇam tad-bhāvanā-yuktā,
dadhyur mīlita-locanāḥ*

Some of the gopīs, however, could not manage to get out of their houses, and instead they remained home with eyes closed, meditating upon Him in pure love.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Rupa Gosvami describes in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* that there are two categories of *gopīs*: the eternally perfect (*nitya-siddhas*) and those who have become perfect by practicing *bhakti-yoga* (*sādhana-siddhas*). The *sādhana-siddhas* are of two categories: those who belong to special groups and those who do not. There are also two classes of the *gopīs* belonging to special groups: namely the *śruti-cārīs*, who come from the group of the personified *Vedas*, and the *ṛṣi-cārīs*, who come from the group of sages who saw Lord Rāmacandra in the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest.

This same four-fold categorization of the *gopīs* is given in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*gopyas tu śrutayo jñeyā, ṛṣi-jā gopa-kanyakāḥ deva-kanyās ca
rājendra, na mānuṣyāḥ kathañcana*

“It is understood that some of the *gopīs* are personified Vedic literatures, while others are reborn sages, daughters of cowherds, or demigod maidens. But by no means, my dear King, are any of them ordinary humans.” Here we are informed that although the *gopīs* appeared to be human cowherd girls, they actually were not. Thus the contention that they are mortals is refuted. The daughters of cowherds, referred to here as *gopa-kanyās*, must be eternally perfect, since we never hear of them having executed any *sādhana*. Their apparent *sādhana* of worshiping goddess Kātyāyanī in the role of *gopīs* merely manifests their manner of playing like human beings. The *Bhāgavatam* narrates the account of this worship only to show how they had fully taken on the role of cowherd girls.

That the *gopa-kanyā gopīs* are actually *nitya-siddhas*, eternally perfect devotees of the Lord, is established by a statement in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37): *ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ*, which proves that the *gopīs* are Sri Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual pleasure potency. Similarly, we have

the words of the *Gautamīya-tantra*, *hlādinī yā mahā-śaktiḥ*. Further corroboration of their eternal perfection is that these *gopīs*, being co-eternal with their beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, are mentioned along with Him in the eighteen-syllable *kṛṣṇa mantra*, the ten-syllable *mantra* and others. Moreover, the worship of these *mantras*, and also the *Śrutis* that present them, has been in existence since time immemorial.”

The *deva-kanyās*, daughters of the demigods, who are mentioned in the verse beginning *sambhavas tv amara-striyaḥ*, are explained in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī* as partial expansions of the *nitya-siddha gopīs*. That the *śruti-cārī gopīs*, the personified *Vedas*, are *sādhana-siddha* is understood from the following words of theirs quoted in the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*:

kandarpa-koṭi-lāvanye, tvayi dṛṣṭe manāmsi naḥ, kāmīnī-bhāvam āsādyā, smara-kṣubdhānya-samśayāḥ, yathā tval-loka-vāsinyāḥ, kāmā-tattvena gopikāḥ bhajanti ramaṇam matvā, cikīrṣājaninas tathā

“Since we have seen Your face, which possesses the beauty of millions of Cupids, our minds have become lusty after You like those of young girls, and we have forgotten all other allurements. We have developed the desire to act towards You as do the *gopīs* who dwell on Your transcendental planet and who manifest the nature of Cupid by worshiping You with the idea that You are their paramour.”

The *ṛṣi-cārī gopīs* are also *sādhana-siddha*, as stated in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*: *gopālopāsakāḥ pūrvam aprāptābhīṣṭa-siddhayāḥ*. Previously they were all *mahārṣis* living in the Daṇḍaka forest. We find evidence for this in the *Padma Purāṇa*, Uttara-khaṇḍa:

dṛṣṭvā rāmaṁ hariṁ tatra, bhoktum aicchan su-vigraham, te sarve strītvam āpannāḥ, samudbhūtās ca gokule hariṁ samprāpya kāmēna, tato muktā bhavārṇavāt

This verse says that upon seeing Lord Rāmacandra, the sages in the Daṇḍaka forest desired to enjoy Lord Hari (Kṛṣṇa). In other words, the sight of Lord Rāma’s sweet beauty reminded them of Lord Hari, Gopāla, their personal object of worship, and they then wanted to enjoy with Him. But out of embarrassment they did not act on that desire, whereupon Lord Śrī Rāma, who is like a desire tree, gave His

mercy to them, even though they had not voiced their request. Thus their desire was fulfilled, as stated by the words beginning *te sarve*. By means of their lusty attraction they became freed from the ocean of material existence, and coincidentally they got the association of Hari in conjugal love.

“In the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam* we understand that it was the *gopīs* who had children who were kept forcibly at home. This fact is clear from verses yet to come: *mātarāḥ pitarāḥ putrāḥ* (SB 10.29.20), *yat-paty-apatya-suhr̥dām anuvṛttir aṅga* (SB 10.29.32) and *pati-sutānvaya-bhr̥tṛ-bāndhavān* (SB 10.31.16).

In his comments on the Tenth Canto, Śrīla Kavi-karṇapūra Gosvāmī also states that those *gopīs* who had children were prevented from going to meet Kṛṣṇa, as seen from later verses such as these: Kṛṣṇa said, “Your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are searching for you.” The *gopīs* replied, “But You have advised us that the proper religious duty for women is to faithfully serve their husbands, children and other relatives. Giving up husbands and sons, we have come to You.” Without trying to repeat all his thoughts on this verse, we will give the gist of his purport:

Upon seeing the sweetness of Lord Rama, the sages who were worshipers of Lord Gopāla immediately became elevated to the mature platform of spontaneous devotion, automatically reaching the stages of *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti* and *bhāva* (firm faith, attraction, attachment and ecstatic devotion). However, they had not yet attained perfection and become completely freed of all material contamination. Nevertheless, Śrī Yogamāyā-devī arranged for them to take birth in Gokula from the wombs of *gopīs* and become cowherd girls. By associating with Sri Radha and other eternally perfect (*nitya-siddha*) *gopīs*, some of these new *gopīs* fully manifested *pūrva-raga*, loving attraction for Kṛṣṇa as soon as they reached puberty. (This kind of attraction develops even before one meets the beloved.) When these new *gopīs* attained the direct association of Kṛṣṇa, all their remaining contamination became burned up, and they achieved the advanced stages of *prema*, *sneha* and so on. Even though they were in the company of their cowherd husbands, by

the power of Yogamāyā the *gopīs* remained unsullied by sexual contact with them; rather, they were situated in purely spiritual bodies that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed. On the night they heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, their husbands tried to stop them, but by the merciful assistance of Yogamāyā the *sādhana-siddha gopīs* were able to go forth to their beloved together with the *nitya-siddha gopīs*.

Other *gopīs*, however, because of not getting the good fortune of associating with Radha and other *nitya-siddha gopīs*, had not achieved the stage of *prema*, and so their contamination was not completely burned away. They enjoyed intimately with their cowherd husbands and gave birth to children. But a short time later even these *gopīs* developed their *pūrva-raga* by hankering intensely for the intimate physical association of Kṛṣṇa—a hankering they acquired by associating with the advanced *gopīs*. Becoming worthy recipients of the mercy of the perfected *gopīs*, they assumed spiritual bodies fit to be enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa. When Yogamāyā failed to help them overcome their husbands’ attempts to keep them from going out, they felt themselves cast into the worst calamity. Viewing their husbands, brothers, fathers and other family members as enemies, they came close to dying. Just as other women might remember their mothers or other relatives at the time of death, these *gopīs* remembered the sole friend of their very life, Kṛṣṇa, as stated in the present verse of the *Bhāgavatam*, beginning with the word *antar*.

It is implied that those *gopīs* were not able to exit because they were held back by their husbands, who were standing before them with sticks in their hands, scolding them. Although these *gopīs* were perpetually absorbed in love for Kṛṣṇa, at that particular time they meditated upon Him and cried out within: “Alas, alas, O only friend of our life! O ocean of artistic skills within the Vṛndāvana forest! Please let us become your girlfriends in some future life, because at this time we cannot see Your lotus-like face with our eyes. So be it; we shall look upon You with our minds.” Lamenting in this way, the *gopīs* shut their eyes and meditated deeply upon Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Texts 10–11

*duḥsaha-preṣṭha-viraha,
tīvra-tāpa-dhutāśubhāḥ,
dhyāna-prāptācyutāśleṣa,
nirvṛtyā kṣīṇa-maṅgalāḥ,
tam eva paramātmānam,
jāra-buddhyāpi saṅgatāḥ,
jahur guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ,
sadyaḥ prakṣīṇa-bandhanāḥ*

For those gopīs who could not go to see Kṛṣṇa, intolerable separation from their beloved caused an intense agony that burned away all impious karma. By meditating upon Him they realized His embrace, and the ecstasy they then felt exhausted their material piety. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul, these girls simply thought of Him as their male lover and associated with Him in that intimate mood. Thus their karmic bondage was nullified and they abandoned their gross material bodies.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to hide the intimate attainment of the *gopīs* from the gross materialists, Sukadeva Gosvami presents an external meaning in this verse. While at the same time he reveals the internal meaning to the confidential devotees well versed in the scientific conclusions of devotion.

From this verse the materialist can understand that Kṛṣṇa gave the *gopīs* liberation. All inauspicious things (*dhutāśubhāḥ*) were removed from the *gopīs*’ hearts by enduring the suffering of intense separation from Kṛṣṇa. And all their auspicious *karmic* reactions (*ksīṇa maṅgala*) were removed by their blissfully embracing Kṛṣṇa in meditation. Having thus destroyed all their *prarabdha karmas* (manifest acts caused by previous deeds), the *gopīs* thought of Kṛṣṇa as their paramour, attained the

Paramatma and gave up their bodies.

Kṛṣṇa's devotees, however, understand the verse from the following internal perspective: By meditation on Kṛṣṇa the gopis experienced both meeting and separation, unlimited happiness and distress, and at last attained their desire. The intense pain caused by intolerable separation from Kṛṣṇa removed all the inauspiciousness (*dhutāsubhāḥ*) from within the *gopis*. Seeing the intense agony the gopis endured due to separation from Kṛṣṇa, thousands of inauspicious things—things even as fearsome as the subterranean fires of millions of universes or the powerful *kalakuta* poison swallowed by Lord Śiva, gave up their identity as tortuous elements, being defeated by the pain experienced by the gopis, and began to tremble.

When the *gopīs* meditated on Kṛṣṇa, He manifested personally before them. Now endowed with the appropriate identity and mood, the gopis experienced infinite bliss by embracing the astonishing transcendental body of Acyuta, which was full of transcendental love for them.

That joy made all their good fortune (*maṅgalāḥ*), both material and spiritual, seem insignificant (*kṣīṇa*). In other words, seeing the extreme bliss generated in the gopis by embracing Kṛṣṇa through meditation, all the sensual pleasures found in millions of universes and even the supersensory pleasure of spiritual bliss (*brahmānanda*) became withered, inferior and insignificant (*kṣīṇa*).

To say that because sin (*pāpa:āsubhāḥ*) and piety (*punya:maṅgalāḥ*) can only be destroyed by experiencing pain and pleasure, the gopis' *pāpa* and *punya* were destroyed by the distress and joy arising from their separation and union with Kṛṣṇa is not acceptable to the Vaisnavas, because separation from Kṛṣṇa is not caused by sin and meeting with Kṛṣṇa is not caused by piety. Thus the first meaning of the verse is rejected. According to authorities, the destruction of *karmic* reactions (*prarabdha:āsubhāḥ, maṅgalāḥ*) occurs during the stage of *bhajana* when a devotee reaches the level of *anartha-nivṛtti*.

The word *paramātmānam* here means He who possesses the highest (*parama*) *prema*. The *gopis* directly achieved (*samyak gataḥ*) the supreme goal of *prema* (*paramatma*) by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their illicit

lover (*jara buddhya*). The *gopīs* realized Kṛṣṇa in an even fuller sense than did Rukmiṇī and His other queens, who thought of Him most respectfully as their husband. An unpredictable excellence of prema is manifest by thinking of Kṛṣṇa as a paramour instead of a husband. This is shown in words of Uddhava: *yā dustyajam sva-janam ārya-patham ca hitvā*, “Though the gopis abandoned their families and the path of proper conduct, which is very difficult to do, they worshiped Kṛṣṇa who is sought by the *Vedas*.” (SB 10.47.61)

In Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes on earth He often turns the most lowly things into the most elevated. As Bhīṣma stated, Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of acting as Arjuna’s chariot driver was even more elevated than the pastimes in which He acted as a mighty King of kings: *vijaya-ratha-kuṭumba ātta-totre, dhṛta-haya-raśmini tac-chriyeskṣaṇīye*, “I concentrate upon the chariot driver of Arjuna, who stood with a whip in His right hand and a bridle rope in His left, and who very carefully protected Arjuna’s chariot by all means” (SB 1.9.39).

Similarly, in Kṛṣṇa’s *vraja-lila* we see that the normally inferior *śṛṅgāra-rasa* (conjugal love) becomes better than the normally superior mood of *śānta-rasa* (passive adoration); and in *śṛṅgāra-rasa* the socially unacceptable attitude of loving a paramour becomes superior to the loving exchange between legitimate spouses. In the same way, Kṛṣṇa’s decorations of lowly *guñjā* berry necklaces, red oxide paste and peacock feathers are superior to the most valuable jeweled ornaments. The word *saṅgatāh* (directly meeting Kṛṣṇa) implies that some of those *gopīs* who were restrained by their husbands or fathers eventually escaped and met Kṛṣṇa on the night of the *rasa* dance, or that some of them were able to meet Kṛṣṇa on another night. It may be objected, however, that it is not proper for the Supreme Lord to sport with women whose bodies have already been enjoyed by other men. This objection is replied to by the words beginning *jahuḥ* (gave up). The word *deham* (body) is used here in the singular form to indicate unity of category, even though the *gopīs* are many. Some authorities say that by the power of Yogamāyā the *gopīs*’ bodies disappeared in a way no one noticed. Others say that the ‘body’ referred to in this context is the inferior body

composed of the modes of material nature. Thus by the prominence of the adjective *guṇa-mayam*, it is understood that before the *gopīs* heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute their bodies had been two-fold, material and spiritual, and upon hearing the flute they gave up the material bodies, which their husbands had enjoyed.

In this regard the following should be considered. When devotees practice devotional service under the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master, they engage their ears and other senses in acts of pure devotion by hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, remembering Him, offering obeisances and personally serving His Deity form. Thus the devotees make the Lord’s transcendental qualities the objects of their senses, as stated by the Lord Himself: *nirguṇo mad-apāśrayaḥ*, “The devotees who take shelter of Kṛṣṇa transcend the material modes.” (SB 11.25.26) Yet sometimes the devotees may take as their sense objects mundane sounds and tastes and that is material. Thus a devotee’s body can have two aspects, transcendental (*nirguṇa*) and material (*guṇa-mayam*). According to one’s level of devotional service, to that degree the transcendental aspects of one’s body become prominent and the material aspects diminish. This transformation is described in the following verse from the *Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42):

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir, anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus, tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo ’nu-
ghāsam*

“With each bite of food that a person takes, three effects occur simultaneously: he obtains satisfaction, nourishment, and cessation of hunger. Similarly, surrendered souls engaged in *bhajana* simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of *bhakti* aiming at *prema*, direct manifestation of the Lord’s beloved form, and detachment from material objects.”

Thus those who eat only a little food will derive a little satisfaction, a little nourishment and slight relief from hunger. Similarly, those who perform only a little hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa will attain a little *bhakti*, some realization of the Lord and a little detachment. However, when one achieves unalloyed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the material portions of

the body disappear and the body becomes completely spiritualized. Nonetheless, so as not to disturb the false opinions of atheists and to protect the confidentiality of devotional service, Sri Kṛṣṇa usually has His illusory energy exhibit the demise of the gross body. An example of this is the disappearance of the Yādavas during the Mauṣala-līlā. Sometimes, however, to proclaim the superiority of *bhakti* there is no death as in the case of a devotee like Dhruva Mahārāja, who Kṛṣṇa allowed to go to the spiritual world in his selfsame body. We can cite evidence for this point from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Eleventh Canto (Text 32):

*yeneme nirjitāḥ saumya, guṇā jīvena citta-jāḥ bhakti-yogena man-
niṣṭho, mad-bhāvāya prapadyate*

“By practicing *bhakti-yoga* a devotee conquers over the *gunas* in the heart, and being My (Kṛṣṇa) *nirguna-bhakta* (unalloyed devotee) He attains a form or mood like Mine.”

Kapiladeva also speaks of the transcendental nature of *bhakti*. As *bhakti* is transcendental, the ingredients of worship such as flowers, incense and ghee also become transcendental by the touch of the limbs of *bhakti*. Thus the defeat and destruction of that which is composed of the modes of material nature can be brought about only by the process of devotional service.

The word *dhutāśubhāḥ* can also mean: by the pain caused by intolerable separation from Kṛṣṇa the gopis cast off (*vidhuta*) their *guṇa-mayaṁ dehaṁ*, inauspicious (*āśubhāḥ*) material bodies. By the ecstasy the *gopīs* felt by embracing Kṛṣṇa in meditation their auspicious (*maṅgalāḥ*) spiritual bodies, far from being destroyed, simply increased (*ākṣiṇa*) and became more prominent because of bliss. Yogamaya helped the gopis get free from the restraints of their husbands and from the bondage of ignorance because all their *karma* was completely destroyed (*prakṣiṇa-bandhanāḥ*). However, we should not make the mistake of thinking that the *gopīs* died. As the Lord Himself states: *yā mayā krīḍatā rātryām, vane ’smin vraja āsthitāḥ, alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo, māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā*

“All those auspicious *gopīs*, who were locked in their houses by their

husbands and could not attend the *rasa-lila* on the full moon night of autumn, attained Me by remembering My potent pastimes.” (SB 10.47.37)

By using the word *kalyāṇyaḥ* in this verse, Kṛṣṇa implies, “Even though these *gopīs* wanted to give up their bodies because of their husbands’ prohibitions and the torment of separation from Me, for them to die at the very beginning of the most auspicious festival of the *rāsa* dance would have been displeasing to Me and thus inauspicious (*ākalyāṇyaḥ*). Therefore, they did not die, rather they became fortunate (*kalyāṇyaḥ*).” More evidence that the *gopīs* who were prevented from going to see Kṛṣṇa did not physically die is provided by Śrī Śukadeva’s later in this Canto (10.47.38): *tā ūcur uddhavaṁ prītās tat-sandēśāgata-smṛtīḥ*, “Then the *gopīs* replied to Uddhava, feeling satisfied because His message had reminded them of Kṛṣṇa.” The word *tā* here refers to those *gopīs* restrained from the *rasa-lila* by their husbands. Yet they remained alive, and were now present speaking with Uddhava while Kṛṣṇa was living in Mathura. In other words, the *gopīs* gave up their material (*gunamaya*) bodies without dying. Parched by the intense heat of separation, the *gopīs* gave up the *gunamaya* nature of their bodies and attained pure spiritual bodies, just like the bodies of such great devotees as Dhruva Mahārāja. This is the meaning of the *gopīs*’ “giving up their bodies.”

Verse ten and several others in the *Bhagavatam* indicate that the *gopīs* remained home without dying and only attained Kṛṣṇa’s association in meditation: *dhyāna-prāpta-acyuta-āsleṣa*, by meditation the *gopīs* obtained the embrace of Acyuta Kṛṣṇa (10.29.10); *alabdha-vinirgamāḥ*, not obtaining any exit (10.29.9); *vraje-āsthītāḥ*, remaining in the village of Vraja (10.47.37); and *mā-āpuḥ mat-vīrya-cintayā*, the *gopīs* achieved Me by meditation upon My valorous pastimes (10.47.37).

However, here verse eleven says *saṅgatāḥ*, “The *gopīs* got Kṛṣṇa’s direct association.” Whereas *Bhagavatam* 10.47.37 says *alabdha-rāsāḥ*, “The *gopīs* did not attain the *rasa* dance.” Therefore it should be understood that among the *gopīs* who were locked in their houses there were two types.

The following analogy illustrates the statuses of the various *gopīs*: By observing seven or eight ripe mangoes on a tree, a wise servant can ascertain that all the fruits on the tree are ripe. Then he will pick them also and bring them home, where in due course the sun's rays and other agents will make them fine-looking, fragrant and delicious—fit to be offered to the king for his enjoyment. When the time comes for the king to take his meal, a discriminating servant can choose those fruits ready to offer him. From the appearance of the fruits the servant can tell which are ripe in the middle but still raw on the outside and thus not yet fit for the king. After two or three days the remaining fruits will become ripe, and then they too will be ready to offer to the king.

Similarly, among the *muni-cārī gopīs* who took birth in Gokula, those who had completely given up their *guna-maya* bodies and very early in life achieved purely spiritual bodies were able to remain untouched by any other man; thus Yogamāyā allowed them to join the *nitya-siddha* and other advanced *gopīs* when they went to meet Kṛṣṇa. Other *muni-cārī gopīs* still retained some connection with the external material body, but even they, after experiencing the pain of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, gave up their conception of their material (*guna maya*) bodies and assumed perfectly transcendental bodies, purified of all taint of contact with other men. On the night of the *rāsa* dance, Yogamāyā sent some of these *gopīs* out behind those who had already gone out; others, who Yogamāyā saw still had a slight amount of contamination, she kept back to further purify with the heat of separation, and then she sent them out on some other night.

After enjoying the pleasures of the *rāsa* dance and other pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, the *muni-cārī gopīs* who had participated went back to their homes when the night was over, as did the *nitya-siddha* and other advanced *gopīs*. Now Yogamāyā protected these *muni-cārī gopīs* from the material association of their husbands. In other words, these *gopīs* became detached from their husbands, sons and daughters, and their love for Kṛṣṇa increased more and more. Since these *gopīs* were thoroughly immersed in the great ocean of love for Kṛṣṇa, their breasts dried up so that they could not feed their infants. Becoming

disinterested in raising their children, their family members thought they were possessed by ghosts. In conclusion, it is not unseemly that the *gopīs* who were previously in material association joined in the *rāsa* dance.

Some *acaryas* conclude that the *gopīs* locked in their homes did not have children. According to them whenever such words as *apatya* “children” are used in verses yet to come, these words refer to the children of co-wives, to adopted children or to nephews and nieces.

Text 12

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca,
kṛṣṇam viduḥ param kāntam,
na tu brahmatayā mune,
guṇa-pravāhoparamas,
tāsām guṇa-dhiyām katham*

Śrī Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O sage, the gopīs knew Kṛṣṇa only as their lover, not as the Supreme Absolute Truth. So how could these girls, their minds caught up in the waves of the modes of nature, free themselves from material attachment?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Though Parikṣit Maharaja understood the meaning of Sukadeva Gosvami’s words, he noticed the expressions on the faces of some of the more materialistic persons present there and realized the doubt lurking in their hearts. To remove their doubts he asked this question: “O sage, O knower of everything! Although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality (*parama*), the *gopīs* knew Kṛṣṇa only as their lover (*kāntam*). How did the *gopīs* become free from the modes of nature by thinking, ‘Let us enjoy with Kṛṣṇa.’ ”

Sukadeva Gosvami answered, “The *sastras* explain that only knowledge of the Supersoul can award liberation: *tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti,*

nānyaḥ panthā vidyate 'yanāya, ‘One can attain the perfect stage of liberation from birth and death simply by knowing the Supreme Lord, and there is no other way to achieve this perfection.’ (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.8) Also *svātmānam ātmāmatayā vicakṣate*, ‘The individual soul can only realize the Supreme Soul when he recognizes His transcendental position.’” (SB 10.14.24)

Text 13

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
uktaṁ purastād etat te,
caidyah siddhiṁ yathā gataḥ,
dviṣann api hr̥ṣīkeśam,
kim utādhokṣaja-priyāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: This point was explained to you previously. Since even Śiśupāla, who hated Kṛṣṇa, achieved perfection, then what to speak of the Lord’s dear devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the king of sages knew this was not Parikṣit’s question, he made a pretense of scolding him in order to chastise others for their foolishness. Sukadeva Gosvami said, “You must have no intelligence at all to be asking such a question. Previously in the Seventh Canto, I told you that Sisupala attained liberation though he hated the Lord. If he could attain *sayujya-mukti* with that unfavorable attitude, what can we say of the *gopis*’ favorable attitude characterized by conjugal desire?”

The word *hr̥ṣīkeśam* indicates that Kṛṣṇa personally descends to this world by His unconditional, causeless mercy. Even though Kṛṣṇa is inaccessible to the senses (*hr̥ṣīka*) of such persons as Brahma, nevertheless He makes Himself visible by His inconceivable divine potency, and allows Himself to be seen by the senses of even the lowest

of men. Kṛṣṇa does this to deliver them, and thus exhibit the power of His compassion. These *gopis*, on the other hand, are the objects and subjects of affection for *adhokṣaja* Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental Lord who lies beyond the purview of ordinary senses.

Why did Sukadeva reject the recent example of Aghasura achieving perfection in Vrndavana, and instead cite an example from Kṛṣṇa's *mathura-lila* concerning the most degraded Caidya? By citing Sisupala (Cediraja), Sukadeva Gosvami reveals a confidential truth to King Parikṣit. Just as the *gopis* who were kept in their houses eventually attained spiritual bodies, similarly, Sisupala assumed his eternal spiritual body as an associate of the Lord, at the removal of his *guna-maya* (material) body attained by a sage's curse because of his extreme materialistic illusion.

In reality, Sisupala's spiritual body as a personal associate of the Lord was always present hidden within. It is stated in the *Bhagavatam* (7.1.46): *kṛṣṇa-cakra-hata-amhasau*, "By the *cakra* of Kṛṣṇa the sins of Dantavakra and Sisupala were removed." In other words, the *cakra* removed their sins rather than killing them, and then they attained the perfection (*siddim gatah*) of returning to their positions as attendants of the Lord in Vaikuntha. This is also stated in reference to Jaya and Vijaya, who appeared as Sisupala and Dantavakra in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. *vairānubandha-tīvreṇa, dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām nītau punar hareḥ pārśvam, jagmatur viṣṇu-pārśadau*

"These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu—Jaya and Vijaya—maintained a feeling of enmity for a very long time. Because of always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in this way, they regained the shelter of the Lord, having returned home, back to Godhead." (SB 7.1.47)

Text 14

*nṛṇām niḥśreyasārthāya,
vyaktir bhagavato nṛpa,
avyayasyāprameyasya,*

nirguṇasya guṇātmanah

O King, the Supreme Lord is inexhaustible and immeasurable, and He is untouched by the material modes because He is their controller. His personal appearance in this world is meant for bestowing the highest benefit on humanity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world to show mercy to the devotees and demons alike. Kṛṣṇa appears here with this idea in His mind, “I shall deliver all those persons who have even a little personal connection with Me, even though they have not embarked on any path of spiritual advancement. This point is explained in verses 14-15.

Kṛṣṇa comes to bestow “the highest benefit” (*niḥśreyasa*), which for some means merging into God’s existence (*sayujya-mukti*), or liberation to Vaikuntha (*salokya-mukti*), or pure love of God (*prema-bhakti*). Kṛṣṇa does not have to personally appear to kill an insignificant demon like Kamsa, since by the mere movement of His eyebrows He can destroy millions of universes.

Kṛṣṇa is called *avyayasya* (inexhaustible) because though He gives Himself to each and every devotee, He is never depleted. “But in what way is Kṛṣṇa so?” someone may ask. The answer is given beginning with the word *aprameyasya*, which means immeasurable. Kṛṣṇa is immeasurable because He is untouched by material qualities (*nirguṇasya*) and filled with unlimited transcendental qualities (*guṇa-atmanah*).

Text 15

*kāmaṁ krodhaṁ bhayaṁ sneham,
aikyaṁ sauhṛdam eva ca,
nityaṁ harau vidadhato,*

yānti tan-mayatām hi te

Persons who constantly direct their lust, anger, fear, protective affection, feeling of impersonal oneness or friendship toward Lord Hari are sure to become absorbed in thought of Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Sukadeva Gosvami says, “Therefore Parikṣit, you should understand the conclusion clearly. The Vraja-gopis and others worshiped Kṛṣṇa with a mood of lust (*kāma*); Sisupala worshiped Kṛṣṇa with a mood of anger (*krodha*); Kamsa, a mood of fear (*bhayam*); Nanda Maharaja, a mood of parental love (*sneha*); the self-satisfied sages, a mood of oneness (*aikya*); the Vrsnis, Pandavas and others, a mood of friendship (*sauhrdam*). In whichever mood they worshiped Sri Kṛṣṇa; they realized the respective eternal pastimes (*tan-mayatām*) of the Lord. This tells us that the various pastimes of all these persons are eternal. Even today anyone who maintains any of these individual moods toward Kṛṣṇa will achieve Him. Just as one attached to women is called *strī-maya*, the *gopis* are called *tan-maya*, which means “totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa.” For the others *tan-mayatām* means *sayujya*, merging in the *brahmajyoti*.

Text 16

*na caivam vismayaḥ kāryo,
bhavatā bhagavaty aje,
yogeśvareśvare kṛṣṇe,
yata etad vimucyate*

You should not be so astonished by Kṛṣṇa, the unborn master of all masters of mystic power, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. After all, it is the Lord who liberates this world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Though others may be amazed, it should not be astonishing for you, who have been well aware of Kṛṣṇa’s glories from within your mother’s womb.” Though Kṛṣṇa appears as a cowherd boy, He is Bhagavan. Though Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devaki, He is unborn (*aje*). Though Kṛṣṇa flirts with the damsels of Vraja, He is the ultimate master of all masters of mystic *yoga* (*yogeśvareśvare*), and the original source of all incarnations. It is not astonishing that Kṛṣṇa liberates (*yata etad vimucyate*) all the moving and nonmoving creatures in the entire universe, as explained in Sridhara Swami’s commentary. *Etad vimucyate* can also mean that although this universe is distinct from the transcendental paraphernalia of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, still by remembering the moods of *kāma* and *sneha* of Kṛṣṇa’s various devotees, even today anyone in the universe can become freed from the flux of the modes of nature.

Text 17

*tā dṛṣṭvāntikam āyātā,
bhagavān vraja-yoṣitaḥ,
avadad vadatām śreṣṭho,
vācaḥ peśair vimohayan*

Seeing that the girls of Vraja had arrived, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best of speakers, greeted them with charming words that bewildered their minds.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having thus reconciled an apparent contradiction by establishing the spiritual nature of the *gopīs*’ love for Kṛṣṇa, Śukadeva Gosvāmī proceeds with his narration. Even though the *gopīs* (*tā*) were already bewildered by the resonant sound of His flute, Kṛṣṇa, who is the most expert user of speech (*vadatām śreṣṭho*)

in regards to proper time, place and person, bewildered the *gopis* even more by His use of words. *Peśair* means “with limbs” or different aspects of fine speech, including expressions designating that which is named, referenced or indirectly implied, with aspects that are varyingly “dry” (harsh) and “moist” (affectionate).

Kṛṣṇa is going to fulfill three of His desires by speaking harsh words to the *gopis*. Kṛṣṇa thinks, “First of all I want to show the world the purity of the *gopis*’ love. Even when the *gopis* see that I, the beloved object of their affection, am indifferent, still their affection does not decrease the slightest bit. When I meet with the *gopis*, I will act in a contrary way.

I will take up the role of the proud, headstrong lover (*vamya-bhava*), which is usually reserved for the woman in *srngara-rasa*. I will make them take up the role of the eager, submissive man (*dakṣiṇa-bhāva*).

“Further, because of the natural stiffness of young girls who are extremely shy, which makes them act just the opposite of how they actually feel, the *gopis* are surely going to make Me listen to their interjected words meant to forestall our association. Although, as it is understood by experts in the science of *rasas*, in the same way as the breasts and other bodily parts of attractive women make a more striking impression by being hidden under clothing, similarly the inner hankerings of such women inspire more wonder when they are kept covered by their contrary behavior. When these are brashly exhibited they do not create the same effect.

“Nonetheless, the male lover sometimes desires to see the uncovered limbs of a woman he is trying to enjoy, similarly he may wish to hear her words of eagerness, which are usually hidden by external pride. But he never wants to see or hear these things in front of even his intimate friends what to speak of others.”

In this way, Sri Kṛṣṇa now wishes to see all the hidden bodily features of the beautiful young *gopis*, and to hear their intimate words without the covering of duplicity. Thus, we can understand that Kṛṣṇa was not in association of His cowherd friends at that time.

Text 18

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
svāgataṁ vo mahā-bhāgāḥ,
priyaṁ kiṁ karavāṇi vaḥ,
vrajasyānāmayaṁ kaccid,
brūtāgamana-kāraṇam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa said: O most fortunate ladies, welcome. What may I do to please you? Is everything well in Vraja? Please tell Me the reason for your coming here.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the loving exchanges between experienced men and women, the usual custom is that the woman will not like it and become angry if the man openly reveals his eagerness for conjugal enjoyment. With this in mind Kṛṣṇa first addresses the *gopis* in accordance with the standard manner of mellow dealings, saying, “Welcome. Was your trip here pleasant? You are greatly fortunate (*mahabhaga*) ladies, in that in your whole lives you have never had to look misery in the face.”

These words can also have another, less affectionate meaning: “Your coming has been splendid because everything is accomplished, so now you can go home.”

Kṛṣṇa continues, “Please tell Me what gratifying hospitality I can offer to you young girls who have come to Me as I pass the night alone in this secluded forest? Kindly tell Me in simple terms what will give you pleasure, since I am indeed eager to satisfy you. Then without a doubt I will carry it out.”

Kṛṣṇa expects the *gopis* to say, “O bold one! Aren’t You ashamed to speak to us, who are faithful to our husbands, in such an audacious way? Don’t You have any fear of God’s laws or of the king?”

Overwhelmed with shyness, however, the *gopis* remain silent. Kṛṣṇa takes this to be a sign of their agreement to have physical contact,

which He implied by asking them, “What can I do to please you?” Thus Kṛṣṇa thinks, “As in union there is pleasure in the reversal of roles, so in the act of meeting contrariness is also pleasing. If these girls are not going to resort to their normal tricks tonight, then I am going to play a few tricks of My own to conceal My own actual eagerness. Because these girls have lost control of themselves due to hearing My enchanting flute, they are acting against their natures and have become submissive.

“Therefore I should be compassionate with the gopis, since I have not lost control of Myself. I should favor them by externally pretending to be contrary to increase the taste in the pastimes. Then later I will show My natural eagerness to enjoy with them.”

Considering these ideas, Kṛṣṇa brings the conversation to the level of contrariness by inquiring from the *gopis* with concern and apprehension. Kṛṣṇa says, “Is everything alright in Vraja? Has Indra or anyone else created a disturbance, which has filled you with fear and sent you here seeking My protection?”

Hearing this, the *gopis*, with faces both smiling and dismayed, silently conjecture, “Is He going to play the cheater again today?” Kṛṣṇa says, “From your silence I conclude there is no disturbance. Then please tell Me, why did you come? I cannot understand.”

Text 19

*rajany eṣā ghora-rūpā,
ghora-sattva-niṣevitā,
pratiyāta vrajaṁ neha,
stheyam strībhiḥ su-madhyamāḥ*

This night is quite frightening, and frightening creatures are lurking about. Return to Vraja, slender-waisted girls. This is not a proper place for women.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* thought, “Alas, alas, even after shattering our family responsibilities, our sobriety and our shame and enjoying us day after day, and after now dragging us here by the sound of His flute, Kṛṣṇa is asking us why we have come!”

As the *gopīs* cast sidelong glances at one another, Kṛṣṇa said, “If you try to tell Me that you have come to get night-blooming flowers to use in the worship of God, and that it is these flowers you are looking at with your sidelong glances, I will have to reject your excuse as unacceptable, since neither the time, place nor persons involved are appropriate.”

Or Kṛṣṇa might have said, “Even though there is abundant moonlight, this time of night is very fearsome because many snakes, scorpions and other dangerous creatures too small for you to see are lying beneath the creepers, roots and twigs. Therefore this is not a good time to pick flowers. Not only the time but also this place is unsuitable for you to gather flowers, because at night terrible creatures such as tigers are abroad here. Therefore you should go back to Vraja.”

Vraja-gopīs: “But let us just rest for a few minutes, and then we will go.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Women shouldn’t remain in this kind of place. In other words, because of the time and place, it is wrong for persons like you to stay here even for a moment.”

“O slender-waisted (*su-madhyamāḥ*) ones! You are beautiful young girls, and I am a beautiful young boy. Because you are all very chaste and I am a *brahmacārī*, as confirmed by the words *kṛṣṇo brahmacārī* in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, there should be no fault in our being in the same place. Nonetheless, the mind can never be trusted—neither yours nor Mine.”

Kṛṣṇa’s inner eagerness is quite obvious if we read His words between the lines, as follows: “If out of shyness you cannot tell Me the reason you’ve come, then don’t speak. I already know it anyway, so just listen as I tell it to you.”

The following hidden meaning emerges when the Sanskrit words are

separated in a different way.

Kṛṣṇa: “The all-pervading moonlight has created a serene atmosphere here in the forest, devoid of fear. Hence, there are only peaceful creatures such as deer (*aghora-sattvaiḥ*), and the ferocious beasts like tigers are now harmless because of Vraja’s naturally nonviolent atmosphere. Consequently this night should not frighten you. Don’t be afraid that your husbands or other relatives may come here looking for you. Fearing the dangerous animals, they will definitely not come near this place. Please do not go back to Vraja (*na pratiyāta*), but stay here in My company (*iha stheyam*).”

Vraja-gopis: “Will you keep any type of women with you?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Only women like you, who are young and beautiful with slender waists (*su-madhyamāḥ*), should stay here with Me and not others.”

Thus by reading the Sanskrit differently, one can see that Kṛṣṇa’s words are full of considerate as well as neglectful sentiments. In this wonderful exchange of love, Kṛṣṇa simultaneously teases and enchants the *gopīs* with His clever words.

Text 20

*mātarahḥ pitarahḥ putrā,
bhrātarahḥ patayaś ca vaḥ,
vicinvanti hy apaśyanto,
mā kṛdhvaṁ bandhu-sādhvasam*

Not finding you at home, your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands are certainly searching for you. Don’t cause anxiety for your family members.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vraja-gopis said, “Even though we are young girls meeting with You at night in a lonely forest, still no

one will gossip about us, or question our chastity because we have come here together in a large group.”

“Granted,” Kṛṣṇa replies, “But your friends will be terribly worried about you, and will now be searching everywhere for you. Your mothers, fathers, sons, brothers and husbands will be looking for you. Don’t put them in anxiety. However, your children, being only two or three months of age, will not be looking because they are not expert in the skill of searching for lost persons.”

The age of their children is indicated in verse six: “They gave up feeding their babies milk” and verse twenty-two: “Go home, for the calves and children are crying.” Nonetheless, because Kṛṣṇa has caused each of the *gopis* to forget this fact about their children, He manages to plausibly make this statement: “Don’t cause anxiety for your relatives due to their not finding you (*mā kṛḍhvam bandhu-sādhvasam*).”

Taking another meaning, Kṛṣṇa says, “Don’t worry. Even while searching for you, your relatives will not be able to see you (*vicinvanti hy apaśyanto*) deep in this dense forest. Don’t be afraid of your family members. Just spend the night here enjoying freely with Me.”

Texts 21–22

*dṛṣṭam vanam kusumitam,
rākeśa-kara-rañjitam,
yamunānila-līlajāt,
taru-pallava-śobhitam,
tad yāta mā ciram goṣṭham,
śuśrūṣadhvam patīn satīh,
krandanti vatsā bālāś ca,
tān pāyayata duhyata*

Now you have seen this Vṛndāvana forest, full of flowers and resplendent with the light of the full moon. You have seen the

beauty of the trees, with their leaves trembling in the gentle breeze coming from the Yamunā. So now go back to the cowherd village. Don't delay. O chaste ladies, serve your husbands and give milk to your crying babies and calves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the *gopis* began looking all around in embarrassment, Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh, I understand that you have come here to see the forest.”

When the *gopis* glanced upwards, Kṛṣṇa said, “I understand you are admiring the beauty of the forest bathed in the rays of the full moon.” When they looked towards the Yamuna, Kṛṣṇa said, “The flowering buds of the trees are trembling from the gentle touch of the breeze blowing over the Yamuna.” The implication in this statement is, “Now that your desire of seeing the forest has been fulfilled, please return home without delay.”

In text twenty-one, Kṛṣṇa might have said, “This Vṛndāvana is the best place in the universe and this is a full-moon night. Furthermore, we have the Yamunā on all sides, and there are cool, gentle, fragrant breezes blowing. These transcendental features excite (*uddipana*) the taste for love. Since I am also here as the foremost ecstatic object of love (*visaya-alambana*)—let's now test your skill in relishing *rasas*.” In text twenty-two, Kṛṣṇa said, “Now that your desire to see the beauty of the forest has been fulfilled, do not delay, but go immediately. O chaste ladies! You should serve Your husbands to help them complete their religious duties.” After saying this to the married *gopis*, Kṛṣṇa said to the unmarried *gopis*, “Go milk the cows, for the calves are crying.” Then to the *muni-cara-gopis* Kṛṣṇa said, “Your babies are crying, so go feed them milk.”

The alternate explanation which follows shows Kṛṣṇa in a mood of petitioning the *gopis*: “Don't leave, but rather stay here and enjoy with Me throughout the night. Don't go serve your husbands, children, mothers-in-law and other relatives. It would not be fitting for you to waste such beauty and youth, which are gifts of the creator. Nor should you milk the cows or give milk to the calves and babies. What do you,

who are so full of ecstatic love for Me, have to do with these affairs?”

Text 23

*atha vā mad-abhisnehād,
bhavaṭyo yantritāśayāḥ,
āgatā hy upapannaṁ vaḥ,
prīyante mayi jantavaḥ*

On the other hand, perhaps you have come here out of your great love for Me, which has taken control of your hearts. This is of course quite commendable on your part, since all living entities possess natural affection for Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh, I have made a mistake in assuming the causes of your coming. Now I understand the cause. Your increasing affection for Me has completely subjugated your hearts and forcibly drawn you to Me. In seeing Me, this affection has been satisfied. Actually it is My natural quality that all living beings, without any endeavor, have affection for Me (*prīyante mayi jantavaḥ*). Thus your affection for Me is ordinary, just like everyone else. It is not a special kind of affection induced by Cupid.”

The alternate explanation: Kṛṣṇa said, “Your intense *śṛṅgāra-prema* has forcibly brought you before Me and fully captivated My mind.” Another explanation: “You girls have attracted Me to you by the ropes of your minds (*manas-yantrita*). Therefore your coming here is quite fitting, and not without good cause. All living entities have affection for Me, so what to speak of yourselves, who possess transcendental *bhava*.”

Text 24

*bhartuḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ strīṇāṁ,
paro dharmo hy amāyayā,
tad-bandhūnāṁ ca kalyāṇaḥ,
prajānāṁ cānupoṣaṇam*

The highest religious duty for a woman is to sincerely serve her husband, behave well toward her husband’s family and take good care of her children.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis reply, “But if we, as You say, have great love for You, then why are You repeatedly telling us to return home? It is not possible for one who is the loving subject to give up the person who is the object of that love.”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is true that you are full of affection, but I must speak to uphold religious principles. Therefore, please listen as I advise you according to the scriptures. Serving the husband with complete steadiness is the wife’s supreme duty (*para dharma*). You should also serve the husband’s parents.”

The alternate meaning is as follows:

Kṛṣṇa: “For you, the beautiful women (*strīṇāṁ*) of Vraja, serving the husband is not your duty; it is others’ duty (*para dharma*). For the scriptures say:

*vidharmaḥ para-dharmaś ca, ābhāsa upamā chalaḥ adharmā-sākhāḥ
pañcemā, dharmā-jñō ’dharmavat tyajet*

‘There are five branches of irreligion: 1) irreligion (*vidharma*); 2) religious principles for which one is unfit (*para-dharma*); 3) pretentious religion (*ābhāsa*); 4) analogical religion (*upa-dharma*); 5) cheating religion (*chala-dharma*). One who is aware of real religious life must abandon these five as irreligious.’ (SB 7.15.12)

“Since I am Visnu and you are all Vaisnavas, worshiping Me alone is your proper religious duty. Anything else is simply irreligious (*para-dharma*) and therefore not your duty. According to the verse: *dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān, māṁ bhajeta sa tu sattamaḥ* (SB 11.11.32), the

best activity is to give up all other duties (*dharmas*) and worship Me.”

Text 25

*duḥśīlo durbhago vṛddho,
jaḍo rogy adhano 'pi vā,
patiḥ strībhir na hātavyo,
lokepsubhir apātakī*

Women who desire a good destination in the next life should never abandon a husband who has not fallen from his religious standards, even if he is obnoxious, unfortunate, old, unintelligent, sickly or poor.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vraja-gopis replied, “How can we, who have such affection for You, serve husbands who are unappealing, unfavorable and unsuitable?”

Kṛṣṇa: “If your husbands are not of good character, but not sinful, then you should still serve them. For the scriptures say: *patim tv apatitam bhajet*, ‘One should serve the husband who is not fallen.’ (SB 7.11.28) In other words, a fallen husband should be abandoned because he will be a cause of the wife’s own falldown.”

The word *lokepsubhir* means “by those who want the happiness of achieving the same planets as their husbands in their next lives.”

The alternate explanation: Kṛṣṇa said, “Husbands should not be rejected by women who are concerned with the insignificant reputation and happiness found in this world and the next. But because you *gopis* have already rejected both worlds, and are instead frolicking in the vast ocean of enjoying My sweetness, from the very beginning you have given up the service of your husbands.”

Text 26

*asvargyam ayaśasyaṁ ca,
phalgu kṛcchraṁ bhayāvaham,
jugupsitaṁ ca sarvatra,
hy aupapatyaṁ kula-striyaḥ*

For a woman from a respectable family, petty adulterous affairs are always condemned. They bar her from heaven, ruin her reputation and bring her difficulty and fear.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse inspired the following dialogue:

Kṛṣṇa: “You good girls have ordinary affection for Me by your very natures, but any special affection which is contrary to the principles of religion should be given up. Illicit connections do not lead to Svargaloka (*asvargyam*).”

Vraja-gopis: “We do not care for Svargaloka.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But it will also destroy your reputation (*ayaśasyaṁ*).”

Vraja-gopis: “We don’t care for reputation.”

Kṛṣṇa: “You are speaking falsely” (*phalgu mithyaiva*).”

Vraja-gopis: “No! What we are saying is not false, because we consider it to be of the utmost importance.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Such affairs are troublesome and full of difficulties (*kṛcchraṁ*) due to the prohibitions of your husbands and others.”

Vraja-gopis: “That trouble is rather the cause of the greatest happiness for girls like us who are full of *raga*. This is confirmed in the *sastra*: *vāmatā durlabhatvaṁ ca, strīṅāṁ ya ca nivāraṇā, tad eva pañca-bāṇasya, manye paramam āyudham*, ‘Contrariness, difficulty of attainment and rejection by women, I consider Kāmadeva’s greatest weapons.’ (*Pṛiti-sandarbhā Anuccheda 279*)

Kṛṣṇa: “This creates fear (*bhayāvaham*) for the body and for one’s next life on account of its being forbidden both by worldly custom and by

scriptures.”

Vraja-gopis: “How can that be? This so-called fear is rather a foundation for experiencing *rasas*, as stated in scripture:

yatra niṣedha-viśeṣaḥ, su-durlabhatvaṁ ca yan, mṛgākṣiṇām tatraiva nāgarāṇām, nirbharam āsajjate hṛdayam

“When love is forbidden and the doe-eyed beloved is difficult to attain, then the passionate lover’s heart becomes very attached to his beloved.”
(*Pṛiti-sandarbhā Anuccheda 279*)

Kṛṣṇa: “In all times and places, adulterous affairs (*aupapatyam*) are always condemned (*jugupsitam*) for respectable women. Even if you readily consent to bear all condemnation to fulfill your desires, how can I do anything that will cause you, the objects of My love, to become condemned. Therefore I say, please return to Vraja.”

The alternate interpretation is as follows.

Kṛṣṇa: “Everywhere in the world illicit affairs are condemned. But you *gopis* have heard from the mouth of Garga that I am equal to Narayana. Thus there is nothing contemptible in having Me as a paramour, since I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I transcend ordinary auspicious and inauspicious activities.”

Text 27

*śravaṇād darśanād dhyānān,
mayi bhāvo ’nukīrtanāt,
na tathā sannikarṣeṇa,
pratiyāta tato gṛhān*

Transcendental love for Me arises by the devotional processes of hearing about Me, seeing My Deity form, meditating on Me and faithfully chanting My glories. The same result is not achieved by mere physical proximity. So please go back to your homes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The Vraja-gopis replied, “Why do You have such thoughts. We did not come for physical contact with You. Rather, we understand from the words of Garga Muni, that You are Narayana Himself. Thus, we have come with the desire to attain devotion to You. Therefore, let us stay here tonight and serve Your lotus feet.”

Fearing this statement, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse, “It is well known that the pure devotees do not even desire the perfections of *samīpya* (transcendental wealth), *salokya* (residence on the same planet) or other benefits, but rather they desire to always hear and chant about the Lord. As devotees you must have heard about this.”

The alternate meaning is: “The processes such as hearing about Me do not give rise to intense conjugal love (*bhava*) as much as direct contact with Me. Therefore do not go home, but go to the place with no houses, the groves.”

Text 28

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti vipriyam ākarṇya,
gopyo govinda-bhāṣitam,
viṣaṅṅā bhagna-saṅkalpās,
cintām āpur duratyayām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing these unpleasant words spoken by Govinda, the gopīs became morose. Their great hopes were frustrated and they felt insurmountable anxiety.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Govinda means one who enjoys playing with words (*gaḥ vindate*). *Bhasitam* indicates manifest verbal expression. Taking the external meaning of Govinda’s words, the *gopīs* thought they indicated His lack of affection and thus they felt dejected.

Even though they could fully understand with their intelligence that Kṛṣṇa’s unspoken words (*avyakta-vakyam*) were actually favorable. The *gopis* could not see a reason for Kṛṣṇa’s rough words, and they were doubtful of the hidden affection in His unspoken words. Due to the feelings of humility which arose from their *sthayi-bhava*, the *gopis* became morose and lost in thought: “That person for whom we have neglected everything—our husbands and parents’ families, our religious duties, our gravity, fear and shame—is now neglecting us because we are not good enough for Him.”

Seeing their aspirations smashed to pieces, the *gopis* became very anxious, thinking, “Should we make a show of very humbly holding Kṛṣṇa’s feet and crying piteously, begging to remain here? Or should we try our best to remain sober, and feigning aloofness return to Vraja, and somehow force our minds to stay grave? Or perhaps we should just give up our lives, either in His presence or else secretly by drowning in the Yamuna or by some other means? But if we end our lives, how will we be able to see Kṛṣṇa’s sweet face again? Then again how will we be able, as He has ordered us, to eat the vomit of service to our husbands and other relatives? How can we maintain ourselves, where will we go and what will we do?”

The *gopis* were like *cataki* birds upon whom Kṛṣṇa poured the poison of His flute’s vibration. Becoming overwhelmed, the *gopis* trusted Him and willingly drank that poison without hesitation. Did Kṛṣṇa suddenly give up His normal quality of being easily approachable?

Text 29

*kṛtvā mukhāny ava śucaḥ śvasanena śuśyad,
bimbādharaṇi caraṇena bhuvahḥ likhantyaḥ,
asrair upāṭṭa-masibhiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāni,
tasthur mrjantya uru-duḥkha-bharāḥ sma tūṣṇīm*

Their heads hanging down and their heavy, sorrowful breathing drying up their reddened lips, the gopīs scratched the ground with their toes. Tears flowed from their eyes, carrying their kajjala and washing away the vermilion smeared on their breasts. Thus they stood, silently bearing the burden of their unhappiness.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse expresses what the *gopis* experienced in their anxiety. Their lowered heads indicate the *gopis*’ shame. The *gopis* felt, “We gave up our natural shyness at the invitation of *prema*, but now again shyness has returned. *Prema* made us cast away our shyness and such *prema* is praiseworthy. *Prema* is defined as that which controls the object of one’s love. If Kṛṣṇa, the object of our love, has not been conquered by our love, then our love must not be genuine. If that is the fact, then what is the purpose of our abandoning all shyness?”

In this way the Vraja-gopis felt remorse and embarrassment, which was expressed in their faces. Their reddish lips were drying up because of the hot breathing that arose from their lamentation. When the hot sun dries ripe red *bimba* fruits, dark spots appear on them and they grow soft. The beautiful lips of the *gopīs* similarly changed in appearance. The sign of their shame is indicated by their scratching on the earth with their left big toes. The *gopis* thought, “O mother earth, please open up so that we can enter within you.”

The *gopis*’ sorrow and remorse are further described: The *gopis*’ tears mixed with their *kajjala*, and fell in two parallel lines to smear the *kunkuma* on their breasts. It was as if the increasing torment of separation, like a saw, was cutting the *gopis* in two with those black lines. By using the plural form in the word *asraih* (tears) and the present tense in the word *mrjantyah* (washing away) indicates that excessive tears were flowing.

It can be surmised, though it has not been stated, that all these tears did not soak their inner garments. This is because the rivers of tears from their eyes and the fire of remorse raging in their hearts started a war opposing the functions of wetting and drying up. Overcome with great

sadness, the *gopis* stood silently (*tusnim*). Because they could not bear the burden of sorrow, they began to lose consciousness. Thus they stood still like lifeless puppets.

Text 30

*preṣṭham priyetaram iva pratibhā-śamānam,
kṛṣṇam tad-artha-vinivartita-sarva-kāmāḥ,
netre vimṛjya ruditopahate sma kiñcit,
saṁrambha-gadgada-giro 'bruvatānuraktāḥ*

Although Kṛṣṇa was their beloved, and although they had abandoned all other objects of desire for His sake, He had been speaking to them unfavorably. Nonetheless, they remained unflinching in their attachment to Him. Stopping their crying, they wiped their eyes and began to speak, their voices stammering with agitation.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O *gopis*, what is the use of crying in the forest? Why don’t you just put a smile on your faces and return home.” As if Kṛṣṇa was shouting this in their ears, the *gopis* woke up from their dazed state and began to plead with Kṛṣṇa in these verses. The *gopis* addressed Kṛṣṇa as *preṣṭham* (beloved) on account of their previously having had frequent physical contact with Him. Yet still, without any reason, Kṛṣṇa was now speaking as if just the opposite of a beloved (*priyetaram*), harshly saying such unfavorable things as “You should just go serve your husbands.” This would be impossible because for Kṛṣṇa’s sake the *gopis* had put aside all objects of material pleasure in such a thorough way that they could never again have any relation with them.

The phrase *sarva kamah nivartita* indicates that the *gopis* did not have even a trace of material lust or desire. Their desire to please Kṛṣṇa was

not based on *kāma*, selfish material desire. That is Sukadeva Gosvami’s intention by using *sarva* in this phrase.

The statement that the *gopis* rubbed their eyes which had been blinded with tears implies they were thinking, “Now our end has come. Let us take a good look at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face before we die.”

The *gopis* were agitated, thinking, “Alas, alas! Even though we were supposedly dear to Kṛṣṇa and have not committed any offense, how could He bring us to the stage of death?” If it is imagined that the *gopis* were not upset, but rather thought, “Because we have no suitable beauty or qualities, we are not fit to associate physically with Kṛṣṇa. Let us simply give Him up,” Sukadeva Gosvami states to the contrary that their voices were stammering with agitation.

It may be said that in either case we deduce that the *gopis* lacked pure love of Godhead, and thus should have desisted. This objection, however, is refuted by the word (*anuraktah*), implying that those who are blinded by ecstatic attraction (*anurāga*) cannot tolerate logical arguments. In other words, the *gopis* were totally saturated with intense love for Kṛṣṇa, and were thus beyond any mundane considerations.

Text 31

*śrī-gopya ūcuḥ,
maivam vibho ‘rhati bhavān gaditum nṛ-śamsam,
santyajya sarva-viṣayāms tava pāda-mūlam,
bhaktā bhajasva duravagraha mā tyajāsmān,
devo yathādi-puruṣo bhajate mumukṣūn*

The beautiful gopīs said: O all-powerful one, You should not speak in this cruel way. Do not reject us, who have renounced all material enjoyment to render devotional service to Your lotus feet. Reciprocate with us, O stubborn one, just as the primeval Lord, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, reciprocates with His devotees in their endeavors for

liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Kṛṣṇa is instructing us in religious principles, while He Himself indulges in all kinds of sinful activity.” With this intention the *gopis* speak this verse.

The *gopis* said, “You should not speak such cruel words, since You are the son of Nanda Maharaja, who is famous everywhere for his religiousness.” Rather, the *gopis* imply, “Only someone who has a reputation among everyone as a murderer might properly speak like this.” The *Amara-kośa* Sanskrit dictionary says *nṛ-śamsam* means “murderous” or “cruel.”

The *gopis* continued, “Though we are numbering in the millions, You have fired Your arrow-like words upon all of us, so that we will now give up our bodies and go to the abode of Yamaraja, rather than the cowherd village You have advised us to return to. You, on the other hand, can go back to Vraja, taking with You the sinful reactions for murdering millions of women. If You don’t want to be implicated in the sinful reaction of killing women then You should reciprocate with us, who have given up everything to serve Your lotus feet.” By using the phrase *sarva-viṣayāṁs* (all sense objects) instead of *anya-viṣayā* (other sense objects), the *gopis* indicate that the physical association of Kṛṣṇa is not an object of sense gratification.

“But,” Kṛṣṇa may ask the *gopis*, “My dear desirous ladies! Have you come here to worship Me because your husbands have not satisfied your lust?”

Vraja-gopis: “O *duravagraha* (stubborn one)!” The famous grammarian Pāṇini says *avagraho vṛṣṭi pratibandhaḥ*, “The proper usage of the word *avagraha* is to mean ‘the stopping of rain.’” Thus the word *duravagraha* can only be explained as metaphorically comparing Kṛṣṇa to something else, namely a rain cloud, which is faulty for not providing rain. This explanation is further corroborated by the presence of the prefix *dur*.

Thus we get the meaning, “O cloud that rains only poison. Even though You are far away, You, the Kṛṣṇa cloud, are the friend of us *cataki*

birds. But today You happen to be raining poison. If, because of drought (*avagraha*), You are not giving rain, then go ahead and don't give rain. We shall instead drink the poison You rain down and die. But we will not drink the water of the lakes or any other reservoir, even though they are close by. Indeed You know that this is our nature. Consequently please do not reject us, if You have any sense of gratitude at all."

Kṛṣṇa: "O *gopis*! The *catakis* depend on the cloud, as you have said, but the cloud does not depend on the *catakis*. For the cloud, it does not matter whether the *cataki* birds live or die."

Vraja-gopis: "All right, but You are not a lifeless cloud! Rather You are the most exalted of chivalrous persons, just like Narayana Himself. (They indicate this by the word *deva*). Therefore You should act as Narayana acts. Narayana reciprocates with those who have given up everything by awarding liberation, because He is under the control of His devotee. But You do not reciprocate with us, who have renounced all kinds of sense gratification for Your sake."

Text 32

*yat paty-apatya-suhr̥dām anuvṛttir aṅga,
strīṅām sva-dharma iti dharmā-vidā tvayoktam,
astv evam etad upadeśa-pade tvayīśe,
preṣṭho bhavāms tanu-bhṛtām kila bandhur ātmā*

Our dear Kṛṣṇa, as an expert in religion You have advised us that the proper religious duty for women is to faithfully serve their husbands, children and other relatives. We agree that this principle is valid, but actually this service should be rendered to You. After all, O Lord, You are the dearest friend of all embodied souls. You are their most intimate relative and indeed their very Self.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse is spoken by some of the

more guileless *gopis* hoping to defeat Kṛṣṇa with His own statements. The Vraja-gopis said, “You have said that a woman’s duty is to serve her husband and other relatives. This remains valid as far as it applies, and we have no argument against this. We have been doing that all the time.”

Kṛṣṇa asks, “In what way?”

Vraja-gopis: “We are always engaged in serving You, the originator of instructions on *dharma* meant for us. This is according to the reasoning that first one should serve the *acarya* who teaches *dharma*, and then one should execute the instructions given. The scriptures state that only by following the *acarya* without duplicity can one’s religious duties be successfully prosecuted. Furthermore, if the *acarya* is the Supreme Lord Himself, how much more we should follow? On account of Your being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, You are also the Soul of all embodied beings (*tanu-bhrtam*). On account of Your being the Supreme Soul, You are also the dearmost, and because of being the dearmost You are one’s true relative.

“In other words, the scriptures say that the wife should serve the Paramatma who resides within one’s husband and others. When the Paramatma leaves, the body is taken out of the house and burned on the river bank. Therefore by following You, who are the personal manifestation of the Paramatma, the following of one’s husband and other relatives is automatically accomplished. What need do we have of other husbands and relatives, who are devoid of their souls because they stand in opposition to our following You, and who have thus already had their faces burned in the funeral pyre?”

The preliminary manifestations of pure love of God (*purva-prema*) cover a devotee’s awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s Godhood. Therefore, one may question, since the *gopis* were certainly experiencing such *purva-prema*, how was it that they thought of Kṛṣṇa as God (Paramatma)? The characteristics of *prema* mentioned in the *Nārada-pañcarātra* and other scriptures are explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. *Prema* constantly manifests natural symptoms, both hot and cold, which reflect the devotees’ simultaneous experience of both union with and separation

from the Lord. *Prema* that is due to the waves of bliss brings about tears, shivering and other symptoms in the body.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.38):

brahmānando bhaved eṣa, cet parārdha-guṇī-kṛtaḥ, naiti bhakti-sukhāmbhodheḥ, paramāṇu-tulām api

“If *brahmānanda*, the bliss of merging in the Brahman effulgence, were multiplied one hundred trillion times, it would still not equal even an atomic fragment of the ocean of transcendental bliss felt in devotional service.”

This verse indicates that the bliss tasted in devotional service is infinitely greater in magnitude than the bliss of Brahman realization. The pain experienced by the *premi-bhakta* during separation (*viraha*) from Kṛṣṇa burns with more brilliance than millions of sunrays. This all-illuminating sun of separation reveals all of Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful transcendental qualities, including those related to Kṛṣṇa’s opulence (*aisvarya-guna*) as well as those related to His sweetness (*madhurya-guna*). Thus the experience of devotion in separation does not cover any of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities.

Devotion in union (*sambhoga*), on the other hand, is more pleasure-giving than millions of nectar-filled moonbeams, and reveals only those qualities of Kṛṣṇa which manifest His tasty sweetness (*madhurya*). Since direct association with Kṛṣṇa is like the nectar-rays of the moon, that intoxicating nectar covers Kṛṣṇa’s opulence (*aisvarya*).

But in a case when even in union or meeting with Kṛṣṇa His opulences remain revealed, we must assume that the devotee’s love is not yet mature. *Prema* shrinks or becomes less perfect during union or meeting if Kṛṣṇa’s opulence (*aisvarya*) is revealed. Although in this instance the *gopis* are meeting with Kṛṣṇa, they are expecting separation, and thus they have a realization of Kṛṣṇa’s *aisvarya* caused by their perfectly pure love. This is the mysterious working of *prema* itself. Even when love is imperfect it reveals Kṛṣṇa’s glories, then what to speak of when it is completely perfect. Thus the magnitude of the *gopis*’ experience of Kṛṣṇa’s greatness is the measure of the greatness of their love.

This same idea is exemplified in Sri Jiva Gosvāmipada’s commentary

on the history of the original King Bharata in his *Pṛiti-sandarbhā*: “The Vraja-gopis’ ecstatic love (*prema*) for Sri Kṛṣṇa is the most exalted love. But love mixed with awareness of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s power and opulence (*aiśvarya-jñāna*) is not the most exalted.”

Text 33

*kurvanti hi tvayi ratim kuśalāḥ sva atman,
nitya-priye pati-sutādibhir ārti-daiḥ kim,
tan naḥ prasīda parameśvara mā sma chindyā,
āśām dhṛtām tvayi cirād aravinda-netra*

Expert transcendentalists always direct their affection toward You because they recognize You as their true Self and eternal beloved. What use do we have for these husbands, children and relatives of ours, who simply give us trouble? Therefore, O supreme controllers grant us Your mercy. O lotus-eyed one, please do not cut down our long-cherished hope to have Your association.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Some other *gopis* strengthen their argument by citing the behavior of saintly persons in this verse. Vraja-gopis: “Anyone who develops love for You, who are endowed with the eight good qualities, is not defeated by the enemies such as lust, just as the followers of Viṣṇu are not defeated by the demons. We heard this from Garga Muni:

ya etasmin mahā-bhāgāḥ, pṛītim kurvanti mānavāḥ, nārāya
'bhibhavanti etān, viṣṇu-pakṣān ivāsurāḥ

“Demons cannot harm the demigods, who always have Lord Viṣṇu on their side. Similarly, any person or group attached to Kṛṣṇa is extremely fortunate. Because such persons are very much affectionate toward Kṛṣṇa, they cannot be defeated by demons like the associates of Kāmsa (or by the internal enemies, the senses).” (SB 10.8.18)

“Those who have faith in this statement are truly intelligent, and those who are intelligent have love for You. This love is natural and eternally present in their hearts. You are the object of possession for them (*sva*), and You (*atman*) are eternally the object of affection (*nitya-priya*) for them. Whereas the affection they have for husbands, sons and family is only conditional and therefore temporary.

“But we do not have any such affection for these relatives. They only give us misery and trouble by preventing us from meeting You. What is the need of them at all? Therefore be merciful and save our lives. You may not want to let the married gopis live, but why make the unmarried gopis cry? You already granted their desire when you stole their clothing and promised: *saṅkalpo viditaḥ sādhyo, bhavatīnām mad-arcanam...* “O saintly girls I understand your vow to attain Me, and I will enjoy with you on future nights.” (SB 10.22.25)

But Kṛṣṇa may reply, “I gave them mercy because of their worship of Katyayani. For what reason can I give mercy to you? You are telling Me to be merciful without good reason.” The gopis pitifully beg, “Then give us Your mercy even without any reason. O Paramesvara! You are under no one’s control but Your own, and are thus free to do anything You wish. At the very beginning of our youth when we first caught sight of You, the seed of this creeper of our hopes, known as *bhāva*, was sent by Your lotus-like eyes (*aravinda-netra*) and entered through the openings of our eyes to become planted in the field of our hearts. This creeper of desire grew by the process of hearing about Your qualities and seeing Your beautiful form.” According to the *rasa sastra*, love develops in stages beginning with attraction by glancing, then meeting in the heart, and then anticipating desire develops.

The Vraja-gopis continue, “That creeper has now fructified, so why, while it is affording abundant fruits to be enjoyed and will give yet more fruits to enjoy in the future, should it be cut down with the axe of Your harsh words? Surely You must know the rule that one should never cut down a full-grown tree even if it is filled with poisonous fruits.”

This thought is implied by the two words *chindyā* and *cirād*.

Text 34

*cittam sukkena bhavatāpahṛtam gṛheṣu,
yan nirviśaty uta karāv api gṛhya-kṛtye,
pādaḥ padam na calatas tava pāda-mūlād,
yāmaḥ katham vrajam atho karavāma kiṃ vā*

**Until today our minds were absorbed in household affairs, but
You easily stole both our minds and our hands away from our
housework. Now our feet won't move one step from Your lotus feet.
How can we go back to Vraja? What would we do there?**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Other *gopis* reveal their intense love by saying, “O king of thieves! We did not come here with any other purpose than to recover the treasure that You stole from us. You have stolen our minds, but unlike other thieves You did not have to make any great endeavor. You did this simply by blowing on Your flute. “The treasure of our minds is not some cheap thing either. Our minds were absorbed completely in our household affairs, and by stealing them the whole house has been plundered.”

The actual subtle implication of this exaggeration by the *gopis* is:

“Because our minds are not at all absorbed in our homes we don't care if they burn down or prosper. Actually our minds are absorbed in that which brings about the perfection of all our *gṛhas* (senses or homes), and without which all our senses become useless. Thus by stealing our minds You have stolen all of our senses, including our hands, which were absorbed in household work, and also (*uta*) our eyes and ears.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But My dear *gopīs*, just go home for now. Let Me consider the situation for a day or two, and then I will return your minds.”

Vraja-gopis: “Our feet refuse to move even one step. Please give back our minds, accept us and then we will go.”

Text 35

*siñcāṅga nas tvad-adharāmṛta-pūrakeṇa,
hāsāvaloka-kala-gīta-ja-hṛc-chayāgnim,
no ced vayam virahajāgny-upayukta-dehā,
dhyānena yāma padayoḥ padavīm sakhe te*

Dear Kṛṣṇa, please pour the nectar of Your lips upon the fire within our hearts—a fire You ignited with Your smiling glances and the sweet song of Your flute. If You do not, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation from You, O friend, and thus like yogīs attain to the abode of Your lotus feet by meditation.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At this time Kṛṣṇa thought, “Ah! When I desired to see the naked bodies of these beautiful young girls other than at the time of intimate association, I did so on the day I stole their clothing. Though now I want to hear them speak shamelessly like they do at the time of our directly enjoying conjugal nectar, I cannot hear them speak thus.

“I have made them mad with the intoxicating music of My flute, and totally bewildered them with My clever words. I have even stolen their minds, by depending on which their shyness, discretion, sense of religious duty and soberness were sustained. But even after all that, they are still speaking with all shyness, not even now revealing their inner thoughts.”

While Kṛṣṇa was thus thinking, some of the leading *gopis*, whose normal natures had become overturned by the predominant effect of the *sancari-bhava* (transitory emotion) known as *unmāda* (transcendental madness), began to speak in a contradictory way.

Gopi: “O Kṛṣṇa! Please extinguish with the flood of nectar from Your lips the fire of lust in our hearts that has burst into flames from Your smiling glance and sonorous flute.”

The *gopis* are implying that if the same person who has started a blazing fire regains his common sense and puts it out, he can cancel the effect of his offensive act. Otherwise he who has set the fire must accept the sinful reactions which accrue to such crimes as arson. Although the word *kāmam* (lust) is not used here, it is indirectly implied by the use of the word *hṛt-śaya* (sleeping in the heart). In other words, the *gopis* are saying, “Our lust is lying dormant within our hearts and no one but You can awaken it.”

Gopi: “With the sound of the flute You have entered our hearts through our ears and awakened the dormant fire of our desire. Then with the ghee of Your smile and the honey of Your glance, as well as with the wind of the flute’s melodious song, You inflamed that fire, threatening to devour our life airs.

“Therefore if You are afraid of the sinful reaction for starting such a fire, You should extinguish it. After all it is no labor for You to either incite it or extinguish it, since it is Your smiling glance which inflames that fire, and the nectar of Your lips that puts it out. Both these things reside in Your moon-like face. We have often seen the play of this mischievous prince, lighting and extinguishing fires. It is not just today that You are playing the game of starting fires.”

Kṛṣṇa: “This smiling glance and sweet flute-song of Mine arise spontaneously. If they have inflamed you young girls, then please tell Me how much of the remedy, which is the nectar of My lips, should I administer?”

Gopi: “Yes, after You have murdered thousands of other women, You may feel some remorse for Your crime and Your impudence may subside. If You do not extinguish the fire, we will consign our bodies to the fire of separation. While our bodies burn, we will meditate like *yogis* and instantly attain Your lotus feet.

“We surmise that we have not been accepted by You because we did not perform any pious acts in our previous lives. Therefore, for the sake of doing austerities we will not resort to the external fires of this world. Rather, we will utilize the fire of desire and separation from You which already reside in our hearts. Of the two, the extremely powerful fire of

separation has smothered the sleeping fire of our desire. Therefore, we will offer our life airs as oblations into that fire of separation with the following prayer:

“O fire of separation (*viraha-agni*) from Kṛṣṇa! We now throw our life airs into you with the aspiration of attaining the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Without anyone’s notice, place our bodies on the path in such a way that Kṛṣṇa’s feet will step on our breasts instead of the ground (*padayoh padavim*, pathway for His feet). With the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, the fire of lust in our hearts will subside and our desire will be fulfilled.”

Another gopi addresses Kṛṣṇa: “Moreover, You will receive pleasure from touching our breasts with Your feet, even if You don’t want it. O friend, and though You do not desire it, You will get relief from Your sin of killing women, as we will be satisfied by the touch of Your feet on our breasts. If You torment Your girlfriends, then how can we refrain from tormenting You, our boyfriend? But the pain of remorse we make You feel will spoil our love, and will simply reflect back on us a million times magnified. Alas! What can we do, since this shame has been forced upon us by Providence?

“Therefore, O You who disregard material consequences! O ocean of mercy! Why are You sowing the seed of the creeper of Your own remorse? Why are You making us eat its fruit? Give up your stubbornness and accept us.” In this way there are many inferences from this verse.

Text 36

*yarhy ambujākṣa tava pāda-talam ramāyā,
datta-kṣaṇam kvacid aranya-jana-priyasya,
asprākṣma tat-prabhṛti nānya-samakṣam añjaḥ,
sthātums tvayābhiramitā bata pārayāmaḥ*

O lotus-eyed one, the goddess of fortune considers it a festive occasion whenever she touches the soles of Your lotus feet. You are very dear to the residents of the forest, and therefore we will also touch those lotus feet. From that time on we will be unable even to stand in the presence of any other man, for we will have been fully satisfied by You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Then you should go to your respective husbands, and they can extinguish the fire of your desire with the touch of their lips.” To this the gopis reply, “O lotus-eyed one (*ambujākṣa*)! From the moment we saw Your lotus eyes, we have been residing there like honeybees.”

Here the *gopis* reveal a kind of *pūrva-raga* called “*lajjā-ccheda*” (breaking the shyness). This is one kind of *sambhoga*, which has three features described in Srīla Rupa Gosvami’s *Uj्ज्वाला-nīlamaṇi*, *Śṛṅgāra-bheda-prakaraṇa*, Text 66: *nayana-prītiḥ prathamam, cintā-saṅgas tato ‘tha saṅkalpaḥ*—1. *nayana-prīti* (falling in love by seeing the beloved) 2. *cintā* (thinking of the beloved) 3. *saṅkalpa* (deciding to pursue the beloved).

Gopis: “Seeing Your beautiful eyes has invoked our initial desire. But what will happen the moment that You place Your lotus feet upon our breasts in the groves of Govardhana or elsewhere? Just the touch of Your feet, which are desired even by Lakṣmi, Narayana’s dearest consort in Vaikuntha, can create a festival full of desires for intimate pleasure.”

The *gopis* understood this point by hearing from Garga Muni about the Nagapatnis, who said, *yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo, vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā*: “To attain Your lotus feet, the goddess of fortune (Lakṣmi) performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (SB 10.16.36)

Gopis: “Therefore these feet will also create a festival full of desires for us, who dwell in the forest. Then is it so surprising that we cowherd women would not be attracted to them?”

Kṛṣṇa: “What is your qualification to achieve the object which Lakṣmi

hankered for?”

The Vraja-gopis reply to Kṛṣṇa’s question in this verse. “Your feet are very dear to the cowherds who dwell in the forests (*aranya-jana-priyasya*). From the very moment that our breasts touch Your lotus feet, we will not be able to stand in the presence of our husbands. Just the sight of our husbands will fill us with contempt. Furthermore, not only will we touch Your feet, but we will be enjoyed in all ways by You (*abhi-ramita*). You will bless us with the highest limits of enjoyment, and we will become completely fulfilled. Therefore, please do not send us away.” It is understood that the *gopis* cried out pitifully with these words while falling at Kṛṣṇa’s feet.

Text 37

*śrīr yat padāmbuja-rajāś cakame tulasyā,
labdhvāpi vakṣasi padaṁ kila bhṛtya-juṣṭam,
yasyāḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa utānya-sura-prayāsas,
tadvad vyaṁ ca tava pāda-rajāḥ prapannāḥ*

Goddess Lakṣmī, whose glance is sought after by the demigods with great endeavor, has achieved the unique position of always remaining on the chest of her Lord, Nārāyaṇa. Still, she desires the dust of His lotus feet, even though she has to share that dust with Tulasī-devī and indeed with the Lord’s many other servants. Similarly, we have approached the dust of Your lotus feet for shelter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “In this way You have made us Your lovers, but we desire simply the service of Your lotus feet.” In this verse the *gopis* cite the example of the goddess of fortune: “As Laksmi desires the dust from the lotus feet of Narayana, we surrender unto the dust of Your lotus feet, since You are just like

Narayana (*tadvat*). According to Garga Muni’s words, You resemble Narayana, therefore, we must be similar to Laksmi. Though Laksmi-devi attained the topmost place on Your chest, she hankered after the dust of Your lotus feet, which is the position of a co-wife, Tulasi, and which are served by crowds of male attendants.

“Abandoning her shyness and her natural mood of a consort, Laksmi desired and accepted a position inferior to her own. Just as Laksmi desires to give up her position as the dearmost to become Your menial servant, we feel likewise. Giving up all embarrassment, we desire to join Your servants like Raktaka, Patraka and others in massaging Your feet. Similarly, we are ready to accept positions lower than our own, like the Pulindas (aboriginal women) of Vrndavana, who rub the blades of grass tinged with the red *kunkuma* from Your feet on their foreheads. “Furthermore, Lord Narayana, being satisfied with Laksmi-devi, granted her eternal residence upon His own chest, whereas You, the crest jewel of all skillful lovers, have not allowed us to even remain in the vicinity of the soles of Your feet for even a moment. This is a great blow to our self-esteem. If You want the fame of being considered equal to Narayana as per Garga Rsi’s words, You should also carry us on Your chest.” (A suggestion of deep love is also hinted here by the *gopis*.) Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may jokingly object saying, “Just as Goddess Laksmi is unsteady, you should also become unpredictable by going from house to house among different pious persons.”

The *gopis* reply, “Is Laksmi fickle like a fool? She is the most steadfast of ladies. For the sake of receiving her merciful glance, which is full of motherly compassion, Brahma and other demigods, who are like her sons, make great endeavor. Yet still she hardly ever even glances upon them. Nevertheless, by one of her *saktis* (potencies) Laksmi delivers whatever they desire.”

Text 38

tan naḥ prasāda vrjinārdana te ’nghri-mūlam,

*prāptā visṛjya vasatīś tvad-upāsanāśāḥ,
tvat-sundara-smita-nirīkṣaṇa-tīvra-kāma,
taptātmanām puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa dehi dāsyam*

Therefore, O vanquisher of all distress, please show us mercy. To approach Your lotus feet we abandoned our families and homes, and we have no desire other than to serve You. Our hearts are burning with intense desires generated by Your beautiful smiling glances. O jewel among men, please make us Your maidservants.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vraja-gopis said, “Giving up our families, we desire to be Your servants like the devotees of Narayana. As You are similar to Narayana, You should be pleased with us.” Kṛṣṇa: “But you girls have some bad *karma* which causes suffering, and stands in the way of My favoring you. Therefore, how can you receive My mercy? Does Lord Narayana grant His mercy to just anyone?” Vraja-gopis: “O one who vanquishes distress (*vrjinardana*)! Please remove our suffering. It is well known in the scriptures that Narayana takes away the suffering of those who take shelter of Him. Similarly, without any ulterior desire we have renounced our homes (*visṛjya-vasatīḥ*) to take shelter of Your lotus feet.”

Kṛṣṇa: “We surmise that you must be expecting some pleasure from Me in exchange for abandoning the happiness of your family life.”

Vraja-gopis: “Our aspiration is only to worship You (*tvad upasana*) for Your pleasure not ours.” The idea underlying the *gopis*’ argument is as follows: If, in the course of pleasing You, we circumstantially become happy by seeing Your face, what is the fault in that?

Kṛṣṇa: “Then why are you *gopis* improperly asking Me to extinguish the fire in your hearts?”

Vraja-gopis: “This is not improper, it is the truth. You are the cause of that fire’s flaring up. Our souls burn with intense desires created by Your beautiful, smiling glances. To remove that fault, You should simply grant us the position of Your maidservants, rather than the status

of wives.”

Sripada Vallabhacarya comments on this as follows: “The *gopis* prayed for the position of maidservants, not Kṛṣṇa’s wives, because to be married Kṛṣṇa would need to have received *upanayana samskara* (*brahmin* thread), which He got later in *mathura-lila*.

Vraja-gopis continue, “Thus there is no harm in our being unmarried maidens or being married to other men. For neither of these conditions preclude a relationship of servitude with You.”

Sanatana Gosvampada says in his commentary that service to the husband in married life does not give as much happiness as service to a paramour lover. This point is also corroborated in his *Brhad-bhagavatamṛta*. Since being a servant is more desirable, the *gopis* pray in this verse, “May we become Your maidservants.”

Vraja-gopis: “Because You are a vast ocean of desires, the proper worship of You, who are a woman-hunter, by us young girls should be executed with our own bodies to bring You satisfaction. Consequently, our prayer to extinguish the fire in our hearts is actually a prayer to worship You. The fire of our lust is the chief instrument of that worship.”

Thus it is fitting that the Vraja-gopis address Kṛṣṇa with the phrase *puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa*, “O jewel among men.” By this the *gopis* meant to say, “O jewel of all males, please decorate our golden bodies with the dark blue gems of Your limbs.”

Text 39

vīkṣyālakāvṛta-mukhaṁ tava kuṇḍala-śrī,
gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudhaṁ hasitāvalokam,
dattābhayaṁ ca bhujā-daṇḍa-yugaṁ vilokya,
vakṣaḥ śrīyaika-ramaṇaṁ ca bhavāma dāsyah

Seeing Your face encircled by curling locks of hair, Your cheeks

beautified by earrings, Your lips full of nectar, and Your smiling glance, and also seeing Your two imposing arms, which take away our fear, and Your chest, which is the only source of pleasure for the goddess of fortune, we must become Your maidservants.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this regard Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* had the following conversation:

Kṛṣṇa: “You want to become My servants; so do I have to buy you with some payment, or are you giving yourselves freely?”

Gopis: “Since the beginning of our youthful womanhood You have been purchasing us with a payment millions and millions of times more than enough. That payment is the precious *cintamani* jewel of Your smiling glance, which we have never heard about or seen anywhere else. Thus purchasing us, You brought us home to Your palace among the bushes of Vrndavana. Then You showed us Your personal treasury filled with the priceless jewels of Your beautiful bodily limbs. Indeed, Your vast wealth far surpasses the opulence of Alaka, the capital of Kuvera. “You possess great heaps of pearls and blue emeralds set in golden ornaments shaped like *makaras* (Kṛṣṇa’s shark-shaped earrings). There are many grand emerald pillars marking the hall where the goddess Laksmi sports (Kṛṣṇa’s chest and arms). The floors are made of *cintamani* gems (Kṛṣṇa’s face). Jewels of *nila-nidhi* (blue sapphires) and *padma-nidhi* (rubies) cast their light in all directions (Kṛṣṇa’s eyes). Thus showing us these treasures, each day You make us partake of a nectarean sight unattainable even by the demigods.

“When You put Your golden turban on Your head, Your maidservant will serve as Your valet by arranging Your hair with a comb. With Your hands You will tuck in the curls of hair under Your turban. These curls are visible only on the left and right sides of Your forehead, and they do not cover Your face. Similarly, when You place the jewel on Your turban, Your maidservant will see the locks of hair pushed to the left and right sides of Your forehead. Whenever You are being massaged with oil, or engaging in intimate pastimes we will see Your face completely covered by Your hair. Thus we, Your maidservants, will

relish Your abundant sweetness with our eyes.

“What is this face like? Sometimes the earrings (*kundala*) are completely visible, partially visible or completely covered by locks of hair. Sometimes the earrings are stationary, slightly moving, or completely agitated. In this way Kṛṣṇa’s earrings reveal various types of beauty (*sri*). Whenever Kṛṣṇa smiles and laughs, His cheeks become obscured by the widened corners of His mouth. Thus the nectar that normally comes from His lips seems to be coming from His cheeks as well.

“The *cakori* birds of the *gopis*’ eyes have climbed upon Your cheeks to drink the nectar of Your lips. At various intimate times, however, the nectar of Your lips appears on the cheeks of the *gopis*. Sometimes the nectar from the *gopis*’ lips appears on Your cheeks.”

An alternate interpretation is that Kṛṣṇa’s face accents the beauty and splendor of His shimmering earrings, and His face also exhibits the nectar from His lips. All these descriptions apply to Kṛṣṇa’s face as a compound adjective (namely *kundala-śrī gaṇḍa-sthalādhara-sudham*) modifying a single noun *mukham*, His face.

Gopis: “Kṛṣṇa’s face is filled with smiling glances, which cause the blossoming of the *gopis*’ smiles and the night-blooming lotuses.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Your husbands will not tolerate this behavior of ours. They will complain bitterly to King Kaṁsa, thus producing a fearful situation for Me and for you as well.”

Gopis: “But Kṛṣṇa, Your two mighty arms make us fearless (*dattam abhayam*), just as they did when You held up Govardhana Hill to protect us from the pride of Mahendra. Those arms will certainly kill that beast Kaṁsa.” In this way their *srngara-rasa* (conjugal love) is nourished by a hint of *virya-rasa* (chivalry).

Kṛṣṇa: “As I follow the path of *dharma*, I cannot make others’ wives My maidservants.” Pointing His index finger at Himself, Kṛṣṇa asks, “Do you understand who I am?”

Gopis: “Yes, of course we do. You are the crest jewel of religious personalities. You may say that You refuse to make the cowherds’ wives Your maidservants, but by force You have already taken Lakṣmī, the

wife of Nārāyaṇa, from Vaikuṅṭha and are carrying her around on Your chest. Out of modesty, she has assumed the form of a golden line and sports prominently (*sriyaika ramanam*) on Your chest.

“Besides, we know this for certain that within all the fourteen worlds and even above these worlds—in Vaikuṅṭhaloka, beyond this universe—You never reject any beautiful woman, no matter who she is or whom she belongs to.”

Text 40

*kā stry aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta,
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām,
trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīksya rūpaṁ,
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran*

Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn't deviate from religious behavior when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of Your flute? Your beauty makes all three worlds auspicious. Indeed, even the cows, birds, trees and deer manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on end when they see Your beautiful form.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Since You have given up as dead the path of duty, what effect will that have on other women who are faithful to their husbands? You will corrupt them by the logic of the statement, ‘A shameless person contaminates not only himself, but also everyone else he contacts.’ On seeing this splendid golden line which appears by chance on My chest, you insulted Lakṣmi herself, who is the most excellent of chaste women. Why are you offending Lakṣmi-devi?” Gopis: “We are not blaming Lakṣmi-devi at all. Rather it is You who have been sent by the Creator to destroy the religious principles throughout the three worlds.” The *gopis* say this with angry

naughtiness.

Gopis: “O Kṛṣṇa, all women are bewildered by the sweet tones of Your flute.” Another version of this verse reads *kala padayata murcchitena* which means “bewildered by the particular kind of drawn-out melody of Your flute.”

“Thus a woman is not herself at fault, but rather the flute-song You have produced is to blame. Not only does she deviate from proper Aryan behavior and her own prescribed duty of faithfulness to her husband, but she becomes deviant in all respects. Thus, You are the cause of her abandoning religious principles.

“Not only do You have the bad quality of destroying our *dharma*, but Your beautiful form enchants all the people in both the spiritual and material world and destroys their *dharma* as well. This is no one’s fault except Yours. The natural lust of women cannot be said to be the cause of their bewilderment, because all moving and non-moving entities are also bewitched by Your form and flute song.”

“Therefore, what more can be said about this? Even the most expert knowers of the truth are astonished by Your fabulous flute song and gorgeous divine form. Lastly we understand that You also amaze Your own self.” This point is mentioned by Sukadeva Gosvami in the *Bhagavatam* (3.2.12): *vismāpanam-svasya*, “Kṛṣṇa even produces wonder for Himself.” [In chapter twenty-one, *venu-gītā* (song of the flute), it states that Brahma, Indra and Siva were totally enthralled by Kṛṣṇa’s flute.]

Text 41

vyaktam bhavān vraja-bhayārti-haro 'bhijāto,
devo yathādi-puruṣaḥ sura-loka-goptā,
tan no nidhehi kara-paṅkajam ārta-bandho,
tapta-staneṣu ca śiraḥsu ca kiṅkarīṇām

Clearly You have taken birth in this world to relieve the fear and distress of the people of Vraja, just as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the primeval Lord, protects the domain of the demigods. Therefore, O friend of the distressed, kindly place Your lotus hand on Your maidservants' heads and burning breasts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vraja-gopis said, “Enough of this show of cleverness! Now stop trying to hide Your true feelings.” This statement is made directly without hidden intentions (*vyaktam*).

“You removed the Vrajavasis’ fear of the forest fire, and their distress (*arti-harah*) due to the rain storms. You appeared in the house of Nanda from the womb of Yasoda (*abhi jata*), just as Narayana took birth from the womb of Aditi (*devo yathadi-purusa*). Everyone in the world knows this fact. But if millions of these *gopis* die today, their parents will experience great grief, thinking, ‘How have these girls, for whom there was only one worshipable God, met their death in the forest?’ They will feel very fearful over the fact that in just one day they all died in the forest.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then what do you want?”

Gopis: “O friend of the distressed! Please place Your lotus hands on our burning breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then My tender hands will get burned.”

Gopis: “Though the breasts of Your servants (*kinkarinam*) are burning, these instruments of service will not burn Your hands, just as the scorching sun does not cause pain to the lotus. Rather they will fill Your hands with pleasure. Please place Your hand on our heads, and bless us that in the future we will have no fear of rejection by You.”

Text 42

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti viklavitaṁ tāsāṁ,
śrutvā yogeśvareśvaraḥ,*

*prahasya sa-dayam gopīr,
ātmārāmo 'py arīramat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Smiling upon hearing these despondent words from the gopīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of mystic yoga, mercifully enjoyed with them, although He is self-satisfied.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Having heard the words expressing their dejection, and having His own desires fulfilled, Kṛṣṇa smiled and said, “O My beloveds! Whenever we meet, you always show obstinacy. Today on this one occasion I boldly exhibited a little obstinacy, but actually even that bears the seed of My magnanimity toward you. Becoming disturbed like this, you have thrown away your modesty, and therefore I am smiling. In conquering you, I have turned the vast ocean of your obstinacy into a drop of water.

“O girls, who think yourselves the best of intelligent persons, you should acknowledge your defeat and give up the shyness and sobriety which are checking you. You should become a garland of gold and jewels around My neck, and let Me drink the nectar of your sweet lips. For a long time I have been extremely thirsty for this.”

Even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He derived great pleasure from joking affectionately with His beloveds. Just see how astonishing is the love of the *gopīs*! In the *ātmārāmās ca munayo* verse of the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1.7.10), the line *ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ* glorifies the magnificent qualities of Kṛṣṇa. In the present verse the greatness of the *gopīs' prema* is glorified. Because the *gopīs* are the *hladini-sakti* (manifestations of Kṛṣṇa's internal pleasure potency) arising directly from Kṛṣṇa, they are also the *ātma* (manifestations of His own self) of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it was possible for Kṛṣṇa to sport with them.

Thus although Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied (*ātmārāmā*), He derives more joy from His devotees than even from His own self as confirmed in His own words: “My dear Uddhava, neither Lord Brahmā, Lord Siva, Lord

Sankarsana, the goddess of fortune nor indeed My own self are as dear to Me as you are.” (SB 11.14.15)

“O best of the *brahmanas*, without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I do not desire to enjoy My transcendental bliss and My supreme opulences.” (SB 9.4.64)

Since the Vraja-gopis are the supreme amongst all His devotees, Kṛṣṇa, though He is self-satisfied, enjoys with them in order to increase His bliss. But, it may be objected, since such authoritative sources as the *Krama-dipika* state that there were millions of *gopis* in the *rasa* dance, how was it possible for one man at one time in one place to enjoy with many millions of ladies?

In replying, we must remember that Saubhari Rsi and others were masters of mystic *yoga*, and personalities like Rudra were their masters. Saubhari expanded his body into fifty duplicate images in order to enjoy with fifty princesses. Kṛṣṇa is *yogesvaresvara*, the topmost master of all masters of mystic *yoga*. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is so unique that He need not expand Himself to enjoy millions of *gopis*. This is confirmed in the words of Narada Muni: “It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace.” (SB 10.69.2)

Text 43

*tābhiḥ sametābhir udāra-ceṣṭitaḥ,
priyekṣaṇotphulla-mukhībhir acyutaḥ,
udāra-hāsa-dvija-kunda-dīdhatir,
vyarocataiṅkā ivoḍubhir vṛtaḥ*

Among the assembled gopīs, the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared just like the moon surrounded by stars. He whose activities are so magnanimous made their faces blossom with His affectionate glances, and His broad smiles revealed the effulgence of His

jasmine-bud-like teeth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa is called *udāra-ceṣṭitaḥ*, one with magnanimous activities, because by His pastimes (*ceṣṭitaḥ* means *līlā*) Kṛṣṇa generously (*udāra*) gave conjugal pleasure to the *gopīs*, and to the *bhava-bhaktas* who hear these pastimes Kṛṣṇa liberally gives *prema*. Kṛṣṇa is called *acyuta*, infallible, because without failure He enjoyed individually with each and every *gopī*. Kṛṣṇa’s smiles (*hāsa*) were *udāra*, meaning either that they liberally gave joy to the *gopīs*, or they were broad revealing His teeth, which are brilliant white like jasmine flowers.

Text 44

*upagīyamāna udgāyan,
vanitā-śata-yūthapaḥ,
mālām bibhrad vaijayantīm,
vyacaran maṇḍayan vanam*

As the *gopīs* sang His praises, that leader of hundreds of women sang loudly in reply. He moved among them, wearing His Vaijayantī garland, beautifying the Vṛndāvana forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Radha, Candravali and other *gopīs* began to sing (*upagiyamana*) in an especially pleasing way (*upa*) with *raga*, *svara* (melody) and *tala* (beat). They sang the following song in “*tīn tala*” (three beats):

*vadanam madhuma-sadanam, calanam dalanam kandra-kīrtinām
hasitam sudṛgbhir laṣitam, tava savayaḥ pātu mām aniṣsam*

“O dear friend! Your face is the abode of sweetness. Your movements, which defeat the fame of the king of elephants, and Your gentle smiles are desired by all beautiful women. Please protect me always.”

Kṛṣṇa Himself, who protects thousands of groups of *gopis*, the chief of whom are Radha and Candravali, sang in the same pattern as they were singing, loudly glorifying each *gopi*. Sometimes they would sing back and forth in unison. As a reply to the verse above Kṛṣṇa sang:

*tvad-vadanam sadanam madhumnam, tatra hanta dṛganta-vilāsāḥ teśv
asamām suśamām upajagmuḥ, sunda kāma-kalāḥ sakalās tāḥ*

“O beautiful one! Your face is the abode of all kinds of sweetness, and thereupon the corners of your eyes are sporting. Within those playful glances all the skills of Cupid have come to serve you, who are both contrary and submissive.”

The *gopis* sang responsively:

*kānte tvad-āsyodaya-dattam indu, mṛga-cchalād duryaśa eva dhatte
janopahāsā saha no ‘tha vā kim, dvijo ‘pi mūḍho garalam jaghāse*

“O beloved! You hold some imperfection in Your moon-like face, like the image of the deer in the moon. But what do we care for the ridicule of people in general? Though Your teeth are twice-born (*dvija*), they are foolish because they are drinking poison.”

When Kṛṣṇa sang the word *sunda*, a *gopi* would reply singing the word *sundara* instead of *sunda*. When Kṛṣṇa sang the word *kānte* some *gopi* would sing *kānta*. In this way Kṛṣṇa’s girlfriends sang along with Him. Kṛṣṇa’s Vijayanti garland is made from five different colored flowers, since the word *vaijayantīm* means “five colors.”

Texts 45–46

*nadyāḥ pulinam āviśya,
gopībhir hima-vālukam,
juṣṭam tat-taralānandi,
kumudāmoda-vāyunā,
bāhu-prasāra-parirambha-karālakoru,
nīvī-stanālabhana-narma-nakhāgra-pātaiḥ,
kṣvelyāvaloka-hasitair vraja-sundarīṇām,
uttambhayan rati-patiṁ ramayām cakāra*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa went with the gopīs to the bank of the Yamunā, where the sand was cooling and the wind, enlivened by the river’s waves, bore the fragrance of lotuses. There Kṛṣṇa threw His arms around the gopīs and embraced them. He aroused Cupid in the beautiful young ladies of Vraja by touching their hands, hair, thighs, belts and breasts, by playfully scratching them with His fingernails, and also by joking with them, glancing at them and laughing with them. In this way the Lord enjoyed His pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Made joyful by the waves” (*taralā ānanda*) means that the wind afforded bliss by its coolness and gentleness, and by carrying the sweet fragrance of the night-blooming lotuses. Kṛṣṇa derived great pleasure from that wind. The word *reme* is sometimes seen in this verse instead of *justam*. However, the word *justam* logically connects this verse to the next wherein the main verb is *ramayām cakāra*. Sometimes there are also alternate readings for the words *taralānandi* and *kumudāmoda*.

The *gopīs* had their arms crossed over their breasts in a *svastika* shape. The “throwing of arms” (*bāhu prasāra*) means that Kṛṣṇa opened up the *gopīs*’ arms and made them embrace Him. Besides embracing them, Kṛṣṇa touched their hands, hair, thighs, breasts and belts, and playfully scratched them with His fingernails. With His glances, smiles and funny words Kṛṣṇa incited His and their amorous desires (*rati-patim*). In this way, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with each and every *gopi*.

It may be questioned, how was it possible for Kṛṣṇa to enjoy with millions of young women on the limited bank of the river where there was no privacy or love-beds available? It was definitely possible because the personal form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the land of Vṛndavana are both unlimitedly powerful. Even a piece of land in Vṛndavana as small as a sesame seed can expand into a vast area, full of unlimited private pleasure groves, replete with fragrant flower beds, betel nuts, sandalwood paste, perfumes, cool drinking

water and flower garlands. Everything was manifested by Kṛṣṇa's Yogamaya potency acting as the *aghaṭana-ghaṭana-sakti*, the power to make the impossible possible. When the pastimes were finished, Yogamaya again withdrew everything. In this way everything was perfectly adjusted for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and His *premi-bhaktas*.

Text 47

*evam bhagavataḥ kṛṣṇāl,
labdha-mānā mahātmanah,
ātmānam menire strīṇām,
māninyo hy adhikam bhuvi*

The gopīs became proud of themselves for having received such special attention from Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and each of them thought herself the best woman on earth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The following situation was manifested by Kṛṣṇa's *līlā-śakti* for the purpose of enhancing the sacred rapture in accordance with the logic presented in Bharata Muni's *Nāṭyaśāstra*:

*na vinā vipralambhena, sambhogah puṣṭim aśnute, kāṣāyite hi
vastrādaḥ, bhūyān evābhivardhate*

“Just as one cannot redden cloth or some other object without the use of red dye, in the same way the happiness of conjugal love (*sambhogah*) cannot reach its fullness (*puṣṭim*) without the experience of separation (*vipralambhena*).”

The pretense for creating this separation is described in this verse. After having obtained the respect of Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Personality of Godhead, who is the best among all men (*mahā-ātmanah*), and because of being able to enjoy intimately with Him, each gopi became proud (*māninyo*) thinking, “I am the most fortunate

woman on the surface of the earth.”

Text 48

*tāsām tat-saubhaga-madam,
vīkṣya mānam ca keśavaḥ,
praśamāya prasādāya,
tatraivāntaradhīyata*

Lord Keśava, seeing the gopīs too proud of their good fortune, wanted to relieve them of this pride and show them further mercy. Thus He immediately disappeared.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because Kṛṣṇa was enjoying equally with all the *gopīs*, Vrsabhanunandini (Radha), the leading *gopi*, manifested a haughty feeling (*māna*) with angry eyes. The lesser ranking *gopīs* became intoxicated (*madam*) with pride over their good fortune. Objecting to this, Kṛṣṇa rectified the situation as described in this verse.

The word *tāsām* (of them) can also be divided into *ta* indicating “them—the women of Vraja” and *sa* “She—Radha.” Thus the phrase should read: “Seeing the pride (*saubhaga madam*) of the women of Vraja and the anger (*mānam*) of Radha.” Another reading is *tām saubhaga madam* instead of *tat saubhaga madam*.

Kesava disappeared in order to nullify the pride of the *gopīs* and to show special favor to the angry Radha. The word *keśava* can be analyzed as *ka*, *isa* and *vayate*. *Ka* means Lord Brahma, *isa* means Siva, and *vayate* means to rule or control. For Kesava, who rules both Brahma and Siva, what effort is necessary to curb the pride of the *gopīs*? The word *keśava* also suggests *keśan vayate*, one who cleans the hair, or Kesava (Kṛṣṇa) who is expert at dressing Radha’s hair. *Antaradhiyata* (a passive form) is an archaic usage meaning the same

as *antardadhat* (disappeared). From later verses, it can be understood that Kṛṣṇa forcibly removed Vṛṣabhānandinī from the midst of the other *gopis*. To fulfill Kṛṣṇa's desire Yogamaya immediately arranged everything in such a way that the other *gopis* did not even notice Radha's departure.

Chapter Thirty: The Gopis Search for Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
antarhite bhagavati,
sahasaiiva vrajāṅganāḥ,
atapyams tam acakṣāṅāḥ,
karīṇya iva yūthapam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Lord Kṛṣṇa disappeared so suddenly, the gopīs felt great sorrow at losing sight of Him, like a group of female elephants who have lost their mate.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the *gopīs*’ madness in separation, their inquiring from the trees about Kṛṣṇa, and their imitation of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. It also tells how Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Radhika and then abandoned Her.

The word *acakṣāṅāḥ* (not seeing) means the same as *apasyantaḥ*. Not seeing Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* became filled with pain like female elephants losing their mate.

Text 2

*gatyānurāga-smita-vibhramekṣitair,
mano-ramālāpa-vihāra-vibhramaiḥ,
ākṣipta-cittāḥ pramadā ramā-pates,
tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛḥus tad-ātmikāḥ*

As the cowherd women remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa, their hearts were overwhelmed by His movements and loving smiles, His playful glances and enchanting talks, and by the many other pastimes He would enjoy with them. Thus absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Ramā, the gopīs began acting out His various transcendental pastimes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* began searching for Kṛṣṇa here and there, and not finding Him, their agony of separation increased more and more. The *sancari-bhava* of *unmada* (divine madness), which appeared due to this pain of separation, is described in two verses in its manifest and unmanifest state.

First, Kṛṣṇa, *ramā-pateḥ* (the master of all beauty and opulence), approaches the *gopīs* with the natural movements of His feet. Coming before the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa shows His affectionate gentle smiles and glances, in which the pupils of His eyes dart about in a special way. After attracting the *gopīs*’ minds, Kṛṣṇa captivates them with charming conversations such as the following:

Kṛṣṇa: “O lotus lady! Are you going to offer your honey to this very thirsty honeybee or not?”

Gopi: O bee! The husband of the lotuses is the sun, not the bee. How can we allow You to drink our honey?”

Kṛṣṇa: “But My dear lotus, the very nature of you lotuses is that you don’t give your honey to your husband, the sun, but rather to your paramour, the bee.” Defeated by Kṛṣṇa’s words, the gopi would laugh and then let Kṛṣṇa drink the honey of her lips.”

To another gopi Kṛṣṇa said, “Ah, I can understand that as you approached this *kadamba* tree standing here, you were bitten by an audacious snake. Its venom has already reached your chest, but since you are a respectable maiden you haven’t asked Me to cure you. Still I’ve come, being merciful by nature. Now, while I massage your body, I’ll chant a mantra to counteract the serpent’s poison.”

Gopi: “But, my dear snake charmer, no snake has bitten me. Go

massage the body of some girl who actually has suffered a snake bite.” Kṛṣṇa: “Come now, My dear respectable girl, from your trembling voice I can tell that you are experiencing a feverish reaction to poisoning. Knowing this, if I don’t take care of you I’ll be guilty of killing an innocent woman. So let Me treat you.” Saying this Kṛṣṇa scratched her breasts with His fingernails.

Then Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* would enjoy (*vihara*) pastimes of union (*samprayoga*). After that there would be *vibhrama*, madness due to love. The scriptures say, *citta-vṛtty-anaṣṭhānam sṛṅgārād vibhramo mataḥ*: “Failure of the mind to function on account of conjugal feelings (*sṛṅgara-rasa*) is called *vibhrama*.” As the *gopīs*, in their state of separation, remembered these ecstatic moments with Kṛṣṇa, their minds became overwhelmed (*ākṣipta*).

“Ah, what are you doing here? Go out again and look for the darling of your life!” In this way, the *gopīs* chastised their own minds, which were on the verge of leaving their bodies.

They acted like this because they were in *pramada*, a state of extreme madness due to the loss of one’s mind. Then rising to the stage of *unmāda* (complete madness), the *gopīs*’ minds became totally absorbed (*tad-ātmika*) in Kṛṣṇa. At this time, the *gopīs* intelligently imitated the wonderful pastimes (*tās tā viceṣṭā jagṛhus*) of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 3

*gati-smita-prekṣaṇa-bhāṣaṇādiṣu,
priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍha-mūrtayaḥ,
asāv ahaṁ tv ity abalās tad-ātmikā,
nyavediṣuḥ kṛṣṇa-vihāra-vibhramāḥ*

Because the beloved *gopīs* were absorbed in thoughts of their beloved Kṛṣṇa, their bodies imitated His way of moving and smiling, His way of beholding them, His speech and His other

distinctive features. Deeply immersed in thinking of Him and maddened by remembering His pastimes, they declared to one another, “I am Kṛṣṇa!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The verse describes the mature state of the *gopis*’ condition of *unmada*. Absorbed in the gait and other characteristics of Kṛṣṇa mentioned in the previous verse, the *gopis* imitated the Lord. First the actions of Kṛṣṇa entered the senses and mind of *gopis*’ bodies, and then the *gopis*’ bodies entered into the various actions and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Due to madness the *gopis* lost all sense of distinction and considered, “I am Kṛṣṇa” and “Kṛṣṇa is me.” As the *gopis* reached the topmost limits of tasting this *rasa* they became *tad-ātmika* in the sense that their selves assumed a likeness to Kṛṣṇa as they announced to each other “I am Kṛṣṇa” (*asava aham*). But they did not adopt the mood of *ahaṅgrahopāsanā* (thinking oneself one with the Supreme) as is established by the words *priyāh-priyasya*. None of the *gopis* were conscious at all that they were women of Vraja. They had attained a unique state of madness, *unmada* or *vibhramah*, in which they identified completely with Kṛṣṇa in His pastimes.

Text 4

*gāyantya uccair amum eva saṁhatā,
vicikyur unmattaka-vad vanād vanam,
papracchur ākāśa-vad antaram bahir;
bhūteṣu santam puruṣam vanaspatīn*

Singing loudly of Kṛṣṇa, they searched for Him throughout the Vṛndāvana forest like a band of madwomen. They even asked the trees about Him, who as the Supersoul is present inside and outside of all created things, just like the sky.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When that *unmada* passed its peak and began to subside, the *gopīs* began to search for Kṛṣṇa in a half-conscious state. That is described in this verse. Grief-stricken because of separation from their beloved, they thought, “we must search for Kṛṣṇa.” Coming together in a group, they wandered from forest to forest singing loudly of Kṛṣṇa. Lost in the madness of love, the *gopīs* even asked the trees about Kṛṣṇa. This is a symptom of their *unmada* state.

Someone may argue, “We know that Kṛṣṇa was enjoying with Radha, the chief *gopī*, at that time. Therefore, was He even aware of the questions that the *gopīs* were asking in their state of *unmada*?” This doubt is clarified by the words describing Kṛṣṇa as pervading inside and outside of all entities (*antaram bahir bhutesu*) like the sky (*akasa*). In other words, although Kṛṣṇa’s original personal form remains undivided, He is also omnipresent. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa heard the *gopīs*’ questions in those places, though unnoticed by them.

Text 5

*dr̥ṣṭo vaḥ kaccid aśvattha,
plakṣa nyagrodha no manah,
nanda-sūnur gato hṛtvā,
prema-hāsāvalokanaiḥ*

[The *gopīs* said:] O aśvattha tree, O plakṣa, O nyagrodha, have you seen Kṛṣṇa? That son of Nanda Mahārāja has gone away after stealing our minds with His loving smiles and glances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopīs* pose nine questions about Kṛṣṇa’s whereabouts in verses five through fifteen. “Because the *plakṣa*, *aśvattha* and other trees are so tall, they surely must see Kṛṣṇa even if

He is far away”, thinking this, the *gopis* inquire from the trees in this verse. The *plaksa* tree is the *pilu* and the *nyagrodha* is the *banyan* tree. Fearing the trees would say, “Why are you asking?” the *gopis* said, “Though Kṛṣṇa is the son of the pious Nanda Maharaja, He has stolen the hearts of us women and run away. He sent His servants as thieves in the form of His sweet smiles and bold glances along with a special bewildering potion of *prema* which maddens everyone. Passing through the gates of our eyes into the city of our hearts, these thieves have stolen the jewel of our minds and run off.”

Standing silently for a short time in expectation of an answer, the *gopis* thought, “Oh, these trees are useless! They are so proud that they simply ignore us, refusing to give any answer. We have had enough of these trees, who have meager fruits and are ignorant of their religious duty of helping others. Besides, their buds aren’t blossoming and their hearts are impure.” Thinking in this way, the *gopis* left the trees and went elsewhere.

Text 6

*kaccit kurabakāśoka,
nāga-punnāga-campakāḥ,
rāmānujo māninīnām,
ito darpa-hara-smitaḥ*

O kurabaka tree, O aśoka, O nāga, punnāga and campaka, has Balarāma’s younger brother, whose smile removes the audacity of all proud women, passed this way?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Entering a flower garden, the *gopis* thought, “Ah, yes, it is better to ask from these trees which have pure hearts, and are graciously honoring their guests (the bees) by serving them their honey.” Thus the *gopis* approached the *kurubaka* and other

trees. The *kurubaka* (amaranth) has red, unfading flowers. *Naga* means *nagakesara*.

Meeting the trees, the *gopis* asked, “Where has Kṛṣṇa gone?” or “Where is He hiding?” Fearing the trees would ask, “Why do you want to know?” the *gopis* said, “Using His smile Kṛṣṇa has stolen the false pride of us women, whose wealth is our pride, and has run away depriving us of all our wealth.”

When the wind shook the tips of the branches, the *gopis* thought, “Oh, they are shaking their heads, saying they do not know. What use do we have for these hard-hearted males?” Thinking thus, they went elsewhere.

Text 7

*kaccit tulasi kalyāṇi,
govinda-carana-priye,
saha tvāli-kulair bibhrad,
dr̥ṣtas te 'ti-priyo 'cyutaḥ*

O most kind tulasī, to whom the feet of Govinda are so dear, have you seen that infallible one walk by, wearing you and encircled by swarms of bees?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Approaching the *tulasi*, *malati* and other plants, the *gopis* thought, “These plants, being female, will understand the agony of a woman’s heart and surely be merciful, so let us inquire from them.” Thinking like this, they approached the chief plant, *tulasi* and asked, “You are fortunate, being dear to the feet of Govinda (*govinda-carana-priye*), but we are unfortunate because Kṛṣṇa has left us.” The phrase *govinda-carana-priye* can also mean “dear to the respectable Govinda” because the word *carana* indicates respect, as in the expression *ācārya-caranaḥ*, the respectable teacher.

“You *gopis* are also dear to Govinda’s feet.” Expecting such an answer, the *gopis* said, “True, but you are more fortunate than us because of the additional attractive quality of never experiencing separation. Carrying you around His neck, Kṛṣṇa has gone off. This proves the magnitude of your great fortune. “Encircled by swarms of bees” implies that Kṛṣṇa carries you even though that means having to ignore the disturbance created by many thousands of bees. Thus we must conclude that He, who is fond of fine fragrances, has not accepted us because we do not have any such fine fragrance.”

Text 8

*mālaty adarśi vaḥ kaccin,
mallike jāti-yūthike,
prītim vo janayan yātaḥ,
kara-sparśena mādhaveḥ*

O mālati, O mallikā, O jāti and yū thikā, has Mādhava gone by here, giving you pleasure with the touch of His hand?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Ah, this *tulasī* is intoxicated by pride in her good fortune, so she will not even look at us. Therefore let us ask from these fragrant jasmine (*malati*) flowers, the co-wives of *tulasī*, who, like us, do not have such good fortune.”

Saying this, the *gopis* went off in another direction and spoke this verse. “Because Kṛṣṇa has touched you while picking your flowers, you are now blooming fully in the rainy and autumn seasons.” *Jāti* and *mālatī* are both species of jasmine flowers, but one blossoms most fully in the rainy season and the other in the fall.

Text 9

*cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra,
jambv-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāḥ,
ye 'nye parārtha-bhava-kā yamunopakūlāḥ,
śamsantu kṛṣṇa-padavīm rahitātmanām naḥ*

O cuta, O priyāla, O panasa, āsana and kovidāra, O jambu, O arka, O bilva, bakula and āmra, O kadamba and nīpa and all you other plants and trees living by the banks of the Yamunā who have dedicated your very existence to the welfare of others, we gopīs have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Just see these jasmines are afraid of Kṛṣṇa and their co-wife *tulasī*, so even though they know they do not speak. What use do we have with them, since they are dependent on others?” Saying this, the *gopīs* went elsewhere.

“Just see these mango and *piyala* trees standing motionless on the bank of the Yamuna. We can deduce that they must be meditating on Visnu, so they will surely not lie to us.” With this faith, the *gopīs* inquired from the trees.

“O *cuta* (a mango creeper), O *āmra* (a mango tree), O *nīpa* (dust *kadamba* with large flowers), O *kadamba* (smaller flowers with sweet fragrance), O *piyala* (type of *śala* tree), O *āsana* (a yellow *śala* tree), O *kovidara* (mountain ebony tree tree), O coconut, betel-nut tree and *arka*, we *gopīs* have lost our minds, so please tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone.” Even though the *arka* plant is very insignificant, it always grows near Gopīśvara Mahadeva [a major Śiva deity in Vṛndāvana] because it is dear to him.

The trees reply, “Why should we tell you?”

Gopīs: “Because you are living on the bank of the Yamuna just to benefit others (*para-artha*).

Text 10

*kim te kṛtaṁ kṣiti tapo bata keśavāṅghri,
sparśotsavotpulakitāṅga-ruhair vibhāsi,
apy aṅghri-sambhava urukrama-vikramād vā,
āho varāha-vapuṣaḥ parirambhaṇena*

O mother earth, what austerity did you perform to attain the touch of Lord Keśava’s lotus feet, which has brought you such great joy that your bodily hairs are standing on end? You appear very beautiful in this condition. Was it during the Lord’s current appearance that you acquired this ecstatic symptom, or was it perhaps much earlier, when He stepped upon you in His form of the dwarf Vāmanadeva, or even earlier, when He embraced you in His form of the boar Varāhadeva?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One *gopi* said, “Perhaps these trees and plants did not hear our question because they were in trance, meditating on Lord Viṣṇu. Or perhaps, since they will not tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone, they are hard-hearted even though they live in a holy place. Anyway, what is the use of unnecessarily criticizing the residents of a holy place? We cannot ascertain whether they know the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa or not. Therefore, we should ask that person who has actually seen Kṛṣṇa and can tell us the truth.”

The other *gopis* asked, “O sakhi! Do you know that person?” Addressed thus, the first *gopi* replied by pointing her forefinger at the earth.

The other *gopis* said, “Yes, what you say is true. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is, He is somewhere on the earth. Since Kṛṣṇa always walks on the earth, she is never separated from Him and thus cannot understand how much His parents, girlfriends and servants suffer in His absence. Therefore we cannot simply direct the same sort of inquiry at her as we made to others previously. Rather we should ask her what austerities she did long ago to get this good fortune. If we know that, then we also can

do the same austerities and become freed from our extreme state of suffering in separation from Kṛṣṇa.”

Considering in this way, they then asked, “O earth, what austerities did you perform by which you shine with bliss born from the touch of Kesava’s feet? Because your “bodily hairs” in the form of grass and sprouts are standing on end, we understand that Kṛṣṇa has touched you with His feet. Wherever Kṛṣṇa may be, He stands there touching you with His feet. Thus you have the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa’s physical contact day and night. Please tell us what austerities you performed that brought about this condition. Hearing that, our lives will become successful.” Seeing the earth failing to reply, the *gopis* remembered her past and presented their conjectures. “Your power was shown when you bore the great burden of Vamana’s foot as he stretched his other foot from Patala to Svarga. By what austerity did you get that strength?” The word *vā* stands for *vai* “certainly” or else it completes the rhythm of the verse. “Or what austerity did you do to get the firm embrace of Varaha? That austerity by which you get happiness rarely achieved by others is also joyfully performed because it brings you, a woman, into contact with a man. Thus there is no woman more fortunate than you.”

Text 11

*apy eṇa-patny upagataḥ priyayeha gātrais,
tanvan dr̥śām sakhi su-nirvṛtim acyuto vaḥ,
kāntāṅga-saṅga-kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjitāyāḥ,
kunda-srajaḥ kula-pater iha vāti gandhaḥ*

O friend, wife of the deer, has Lord Acyuta been here with His beloved, bringing great joy to your eyes? Indeed, blowing this way is the fragrance of His garland of kunda flowers, which was smeared with the kuṅkuma from the breasts of His girlfriend when He embraced Her.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not hearing any answer the *gopis* said, “Ah, alas! How will she (earth), who is relishing the pleasure of having her body marked by her consort (Kṛṣṇa’s footprints with the symbols of a flag, thunderbolt and elephant goad), who has brought her husband under her own control, and who is blinded by the intoxication of pride, reply to us?”

Moving forward, the *gopis* saw a doe and spoke to her. “O friend, O wife of the deer! Has Kṛṣṇa come into your vicinity? Though you are the wife of a deer, like us, you are dear to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa is dear to you. From the bliss in your clear eyes we can tell that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has expanded your joy (*nirvṛtim* means *ānandam*) with the beauty of His face, hands, limbs and smile. Having attained such bliss of the eyes, you follow Him everywhere and therefore Kṛṣṇa never falls (*acyuta*) from your vision.”

The word *dṛśām* “sight” is plural to show respect. The name Acyuta implies, “Because of your [deer] greed to gain ecstasy for your own eyes you are following Kṛṣṇa, and for that reason He is never lost (*vicruta*) to you.”

Seeing the doe continue to walk in her natural way, the *gopis* exclaimed, “Oh, are you telling us that you have seen Kṛṣṇa? Look! As this deer walks she constantly turns her head back to us, as if to say, ‘I will show Him to you; just follow me and I will show you Kṛṣṇa.’ In this merciless Vṛndāvana, she is the only merciful person.”

As the *gopīs* follow the doe they happen to lose sight of her, and they cry out, “Oh, why can’t we see the deer who is showing us the way to Kṛṣṇa?”

In answer to this question one *gopi* says, “Kṛṣṇa must be somewhere in the vicinity and that the deer, being afraid of Kṛṣṇa, must have hidden herself to avoid the possible mistake of revealing His presence.”

Reasoning in this way, the *gopīs* detect a fragrance that has by chance blown their way, and they repeatedly declare with great glee, “Yes! Yes! This is it! By embracing His girlfriend, Kṛṣṇa’s jasmine garland was smeared with the *kuṅkuma* powder on her breasts, and the fragrances of

all these things are reaching us.” Thus the *gopīs* smelled the aroma of the two lovers’ bodies, of Kṛṣṇa’s jasmine garland, and of the *kunkuma* powder on His lover’s breasts.

The *gopīs* continue, “Giving up His position as the Lord of thousands of *gopīs* (*kula-pater*), Kṛṣṇa is now enjoying with a single girlfriend. Just see His injustice!”

Text 12

*bāhuṁ priyāṁsa upadhāya gṛhīta-padmo,
rāmānujas tulasikāli-kulair madāndhaiḥ,
anvīyamāna iha vas taravaḥ praṇāmaṁ,
kiṁ vābhinandati caran praṇayāvalokaiḥ*

O trees, we see that you are bowing down. When the younger brother of Rāma walked by here, followed by intoxicated bees swarming around the tulasi mañjarīs decorating His garland, did He acknowledge your obeisances with His affectionate glances? He must have been resting His arm on the shoulder of His beloved and carrying a lotus flower in His free hand.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopīs*, discussing further clues that Kṛṣṇa was right there, saw that the trees, bent over with abundant fruits and flowers, were offering obeisances to Sri Kṛṣṇa.

The *gopīs* said, “O trees! When Kṛṣṇa passed by here did He acknowledge or not with His loving glances the obeisances of you, his subjects, who were offering your fruits and other gifts into His hands? Alas, alas! Why is that only saintly persons like you, who are in the mode of goodness, get the opportunity to have Kṛṣṇa’s affectionate glances?”

Speaking with jealousy, the *gopīs* continued, “This younger brother of Balarama, who is well known for His intoxicated love affairs, must be

similarly intoxicated, so He is resting His left arm on the pillow of His beloved's soft shoulder due to the fatigue of loving exchanges. Kṛṣṇa must be carrying a blue lotus in His right hand to drive away the bees eagerly trying to attack His beloved's face after smelling its sweet aroma. Therefore, being exclusively absorbed in serving His beloved, how could Kṛṣṇa glance upon you trees?

“The maddened bees have left the tender *tulasi* groves to follow the two lovers. Therefore Kṛṣṇa must be hiding here somewhere enjoying His pastimes. Let's follow these swarms of bees.”

Other *gopis* reply, “It is not proper for respectable persons to follow after those who are blinded by intoxication.”

Text 13

*pr̥chatemā latā bāhūn,
apy āśliṣṭā vanaspateḥ,
nūnam tat-karaja-spr̥ṣṭā,
bibhraty utpulakāny aho*

Let us ask these creepers about Kṛṣṇa. Even though they are embracing the arms of their husband, this tree, they certainly must have been touched by Kṛṣṇa's fingernails, since out of joy they are manifesting eruptions on their skin.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Other *gopis*, pointing out another sign of Kṛṣṇa's presence, said, “O friends, ask these creepers who bear signs of having the association of Kṛṣṇa. You should not say that because they are still embracing the trees, these creepers did not meet Kṛṣṇa. Even though they are fully embracing the arms of their husband, the tree, just see the excess of their lust! They must have been touched by the nails of Kṛṣṇa, and out of jubilation their hairs are standing on end. This would not occur just from contacting their husbands. Therefore, because we

see this symptom, they cannot tell us a lie like all the others saying, ‘We did not see Kṛṣṇa.’ ”

Text 14

*ity unmatta-vaco gopyaḥ,
kṛṣṇānveṣaṇa-kātarāḥ,
līlā bhagavatas tās tā,
hy anucakrus tad-ātmikāḥ*

Having spoken these words, the gopīs, distraught from searching for Kṛṣṇa, began to act out His various pastimes, fully absorbed in thoughts of Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Stunned in ecstasy, these trees cannot speak”, the *gopis* concluded.

Asking such questions to inanimate objects and ascribing material desires and so forth to them shows the internal love of the *gopis* had developed to the stage of *unmāda*, madness. While in the midst of searching for Kṛṣṇa, each of the *gopis* thought “I should take the opportunity to make myself appear like Kṛṣṇa and act out His pastimes so as to give some momentary pleasure to myself and these distraught *gopis* too.”

As the *gopis* remembered each one of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, their minds became absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*tad atmika*), and they began to enact those pastimes beginning with the killing of Pūtanā. In this context, it should be understood that Yogamaya took the form of another *gopi* within their company to act in those pastimes which were inconsistent with the *gopis*’ mood. While the *gopis* themselves acted out those pastimes which were favorable to their loving mood.

Text 15

*kasyācit pūtanāyantyāḥ,
kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam,
tokayivā rudaty anyā,
padāhan śakaṭāyatīm*

One gopī imitated Pū tanā, 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The imitation of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is described in four verses. One gopi acted as Putana and another as Kṛṣṇa, pretending to drink milk from her breast. One gopi cried like a baby and kicked another gopi imitating the cart.

Text 16

*daityāyivā jahārānyām,
eko kṛṣṇārbha-bhāvanām,
riṅgayām āsa kāpy aṅghrī,
karṣantī ghoṣa-niḥsvanaiḥ*

One gopī took the role of Trṇāvarta and carried away another, who was acting like infant Kṛṣṇa, while yet another gopī crawled about, her ankle bells tinkling as she pulled her feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi imitated the demon Trnavarta (*daityayitva eka*) who stole another gopi acting like infant Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇarbha bhavanam*).

Text 17

*kṛṣṇa-rāmāyite dve tu,
gopāyantyaś ca kāścana,
vatsāyatīm hanti cānyā,
tatraikā tu bakāyatīm*

Two gopīs acted like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the midst of several others, who took the role of cowherd boys. One gopī enacted Kṛṣṇa’s killing of the demon Vatsāsura, represented by another gopī, and a pair of gopīs acted out the killing of Bakāsura.

Text 18

*āhūya dūra-gā yadvat,
kṛṣṇas tam anuvartatīm,
veṇuṁ kvaṇantīm krīḍantīm,
anyāḥ śamsanti sādhv iti*

When one gopī perfectly imitated how Kṛṣṇa would call the cows who had wandered far away, how He would play His flute and how He would engage in various sports, the others congratulated her with exclamations of “Well done! Well done!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopī acted like Kṛṣṇa, playing the flute to call the cows, who had wandered far off, and made them follow Him.

Text 19

*kasyāñcit sva-bhujam nyasya,
calanty āhāparā nanu,
kṛṣṇo 'ham paśyata gatim,
lalitām iti tan-manāḥ*

Another gopī, her mind fixed on Kṛṣṇa, walked about with her arm resting on the shoulder of a friend and declared, “I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In four verses (19-22) Sri Sukadeva Gosvāmī describes how the *gopīs*, who were totally absorbed in meditating upon and acting out Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, came under the sway of the *sañcāri-bhāva* known as *unmāda*. Thus they lost their own self-awareness and totally identified themselves with Kṛṣṇa, exclaiming, “I am Kṛṣṇa and walk around with My arm resting on the shoulders of Subala. Just see My graceful actions!”

Text 20

*mā bhaiṣṭa vāta-varṣābhyām,
tat-trāṇam vihitam maya,
ity uktvaikena hastena,
yatanty unnidadhe 'mbaram*

“Don’t be afraid of the wind and rain,” said one gopī. “I will save you.” And with that she lifted her shawl above her head.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to graphically depict the

Govardhana pastime, one gopi took her upper cloth and carefully raised it above her head to imitate Kṛṣṇa’s lifting Govardhana Hill.

Text 21

*āruhyaikā padākramya,
śirasy āhāparām nṛpa,
duṣṭāhe gaccha jāto ’ham,
khalānām nanu daṇḍa-kṛt*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O King, one gopī climbed on another’s shoulders and, putting her foot on the other’s head, said, “Go away from here, O wicked snake! You should know that I have taken birth in this world just to punish the envious.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Duṣṭa-ahe* (wicked snake) indicates the serpent Kaliya.

Text 22

*tatraikovāca he gopā,
dāvāgnim paśyatolbanam,
cakṣūṁṣy āśv apidadhvaṁ vo,
vidhāsyē kṣemam aṅḡjasā*

Then another gopī spoke up: My dear cowherd boys, look at this raging forest fire! Quickly close your eyes and I will easily protect you.

Text 23

*baddhānyayā srajā kācit,
tanvī tatra ulūkhale,
badhnāmi bhāṇḍa-bhettāraṁ,
haiyaṅgava-muṣaṁ tv iti,
bhūtā su-dṛk pidhāyāsyam,
bheje bhīti-vidāmbanam*

One gopī tied up her slender companion with a flower garland and said, “Now I will bind this boy who has broken the butter pots and stolen the butter.” The second gopī then covered her face and beautiful eyes, pretending to be afraid.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the predominance of *unmāda* became suddenly subdued, the *gopis*’ self-identification with Kṛṣṇa slackened and they resumed their identities as *gopis*. When one gopī showed enthusiasm in imitating Kṛṣṇa’s stealing butter and breaking the yogurt pots, Yogamaya played the role of Yasoda and performed the required actions saying, “O naughty child, You have stolen butter and run away. I will tie You up.” Then Yogamaya tied up that gopī with a garland. Out of fear, the gopī hid her face with her two hands. This is described in this verse.

Text 24

*evaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ pṛcchamānā,
vr̥ṇḍāvana-latās tarūn,
vyacakṣata vanoddeśe,
padāni paramātmanaḥ*

While the gopīs were thus imitating Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and asking Vṛndāvana’s creepers and trees where Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, might be, they happened to see His footprints in a corner of the forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this way (*evam*) the *gopīs* searched for Kṛṣṇa in forest after forest, asking His whereabouts from the trees. The *sancari-bhava* called *unmada* which appears in the state of separation is characterized by identity with the object of affection when it is in its most intense state of self forgetfulness. This has been described in three verses beginning with (*priyāḥ priyasya pratirūḍha-mūrtayaḥ* (10.30.3) and *kṛṣṇa ‘ham paśyata gatim* (10.30.19).

In the medium stage of *unmāda* there is imitation of the beloved’s behavior with some self awareness, as in the following statement in the story of Prahlaḍa: “*kvacit tad-bhāvanā-yuktas, tanmayo ‘nucakāra ha*, “Sometimes being fully absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, Prahlaḍa Maharaja felt oneness and imitated the pastimes of the Lord.” (SB 7.4.40) In this chapter we have a similar statement: “One gopi imitated Putana, while another acted like infant Kṛṣṇa and pretended to suck her breast. Another gopi, crying in imitation of infant Kṛṣṇa, kicked a gopi who was taking the role of the cart demon, Sakatasura.” (SB 10.30.15) In the weakest stage of *unmada*, the *gopīs* regain their self-awareness and inquire from the creepers and other unconscious living beings.

Text 25

*padāni vyaktam etāni,
nanda-sūnor mahātmanah,
lakṣyante hi dhvajāmbhoja,
vajrāṅkuśa-yavādibhiḥ*

[The gopīs said:] The marks of a flag, lotus, thunderbolt, elephant goad, barleycorn and so forth on these footprints clearly distinguish them as belonging to that great soul, the son of Nanda Mahārāja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Having thus described their three-fold madness (*unmada*), the *gopīs* unexpectedly find the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and joyfully speak this verse.

In the following verses, the *Skanda Purāṇa* states the particular places on His feet where Kṛṣṇa carries the mark of the flag and also other marks, and the reasons for these marks: “At the base of the large toe on Kṛṣṇa’s right foot, the unborn Lord carries the mark of a disc, which cuts down the six mental enemies (lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion, intoxication) of His devotees.

“At the bottom of the middle toe of that same foot Lord Acyuta has a lotus flower, which increases the greed for Kṛṣṇa in the minds of the bee-like devotees who meditate on His feet.

“At the base of Kṛṣṇa’s small toe is a thunderbolt, which smashes the mountains of His devotees’ reactions to past sins. In the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s heel is the mark of an elephant goad, which brings the elephants of His devotees’ minds under control. The joint of Kṛṣṇa’s right large toe bears the mark of a barleycorn, representing all kinds of enjoyable opulences. A thunderbolt is found on the right side of Kṛṣṇa’s right foot, and an elephant goad below that.”

The *ācāryas* of the Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* explain that since the particular feet under discussion are Lord Kṛṣṇa’s, we should know that the thunderbolt is at the base of His small toe and the elephant goad below the thunderbolt. An elephant goad on the heel belongs rather to Lord Nārāyaṇa and other *viṣṇu-tattva* expansions.

Thus the *Skanda Purāṇa* describes six marks on Kṛṣṇa’s right foot—the disc, flag, lotus, thunderbolt, elephant goad and barleycorn. The *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* mentions even more marks: a vertical line beginning at the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s foot and continuing as far as the juncture between His big toe and second toe; an umbrella below the disc; at the base of the middle of Kṛṣṇa’s foot, a group of four *svastikas* in the four cardinal

directions; at the four points where each *svastika* meets the next, four rose apples; and in the middle of the *svastikas*, an octagon. This makes eleven marks on Kṛṣṇa's right foot.

The marks on Kṛṣṇa's left foot are as follows: At the base of the large toe is a conchshell with its mouth facing the toe. At the base of the middle toe are two concentric circles, representing the inner and outer sky. Below this mark is Cupid's unstrung bow, at the base of the bow is a triangle, and surrounding the triangle is a group of four water pots. At the base of the triangle is a half-moon with two more triangles touching its points, and below the half-moon is a fish. All together, then, there are nineteen distinguishing marks on the soles of Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Text 26

*tais taiḥ padais tat-padavīm,
anvicchantyo '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 as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* then saw the footprints of Kṛṣṇa mixed (*suprktani*) with those of Radha.

Text 27

*kasyāḥ padāni caitāni,
yātāyā nanda-sūnunā,*

*aṁsa-nyasta-prakoṣṭhāyāḥ,
kareṇoḥ kariṇā yathā*

[The gopīs said:] Here we see the footprints of some gopī who must have been walking along with the son of Nanda Mahārāja. He must have put His arm on Her shoulder, just as an elephant rests His trunk on the shoulder of an accompanying she-elephant.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “These are the footprints of some *gopī* upon whose shoulders Kṛṣṇa has placed His left arm.”

Text 28

*anayārādhito nūnam,
bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ,
yan no vihāya govindaḥ,
prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

Certainly this particular gopī has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, Govinda, since He was so pleased with Her that He abandoned the rest of us and brought Her to a secluded place.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* in the *suhṛd-pakṣa* (friendly group) such as Lalita recognized the footprints of Radha and were internally enlivened, but since they were amongst many different kinds of *gopīs*, they pretended externally not to recognize those footprints. Without mentioning Radha’s name, they joyfully declared Her good fortune in this verse.

The *gopīs* said, “Certainly Lord Narayana (*bhagavan*), who takes

away (*hari*) the sorrow of the devotees, and who is capable (*isvara*) of fulfilling their desires, has been worshiped by (*ārādhitaḥ*) this (*anaya*) fortunate woman. But He has not been worshiped by us, so after rejecting us, He has run away alone with Her.” In this statement the word *ārādhitaḥ* refers to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The sage Sukadeva Gosvami has tried with all endeavor to keep Radha’s name hidden, but now it is automatically shining forth from the moon of Sukadeva Gosvami’s mouth. This is indeed Radha’s mercy, and it is like the rumbling of a kettledrum sounded to announce Her great fortune. The *Puranas* say the name Radhika means one who satisfies the desires of Kṛṣṇa by Her worship. Throughout the *Vedas*, Srimati Radharani’s name is directly mentioned. The *Puruṣa-bodhinī Upaniṣad* of the *Atharva Veda* says, “In the supreme abode of Gokula in the district of Mathurā, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrīmatī Candrāvālī-devī stand at the left and right side of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” The *Gautamīya Tantra* says: *devī kṛṣṇamayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā*, Srimati Radhika, who shines brilliantly, is different from Lord Kṛṣṇa and She is the most worshipable. The *Kṛṣṇopaniṣad* says: *vamanga sahita devī rādhā vṛndāvaneśvarī*, “Beautiful Radha, the queen of Vṛndavana, is always on the left side of Kṛṣṇa.”

Another meaning of this verse is as follows. “O unfortunate *gopis* (*anaya*), uselessly you are thinking yourselves equal to that fortunate woman, and are wandering around thinking yourselves mistreated. It is a fact (*numan*) that Hari has obtained Radha at this secret place (*rahaḥ*). This handsome person, who is full of lust and proclaiming His own glories (*bhagavan*), and who is capable of cheating (*isvara*), has abandoned (*vihāya*) us beautiful girls and taken Her senses in order to enjoy them. Or that He is skillfully giving pleasure (*vindayati*) to all the senses (*gah*) of that *gopi*, therefore He is Govinda. With a satisfied heart (*pṛitah*) He has taken Her off alone.”

Srila Rupa Gosvami describes the beautiful footprints of Srimati Radhika in his *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī*: “At the base of the large toe of Radha’s left foot is the mark of a barleycorn, below that mark is a disc, below the disc is an umbrella, and below the umbrella is a bracelet. A

vertical line extends from the middle of Radha’s foot to the juncture of Radha’s large and second toes. At the base of the middle toe is a lotus, below that is a flag with a banner, and below the flag is a creeper, together with a flower. At the base of Radha’s small toe is an elephant goad, and upon Her heel is a half-moon. Thus there are eleven marks on Radha’s left foot.

“At the base of the large toe of Radha’s right foot is a conchshell, and below that a spear. At the base of the small toe of Radha’s right foot is a sacrificial altar, below that an earring, and below the earring a spear. Along the base of the second, third, fourth and small toe is the mark of a mountain, below which is a chariot, and on the heel is a fish.

“Thus all together there are nineteen distinguishing marks on the soles of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s lotus feet.”

Text 29

*dhanyā aho amī ālyo,
govindāṅghry-abja-reṇavaḥ,
yān brahmeśau ramā devī,
dadhur mūrdhny agha-nuttaye*

O girls! The dust of Govinda’s lotus feet is so sacred that even Brahmā, Śiva and the goddess Ramā take that dust upon their heads to dispel sinful reactions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The neutral *gopis*, who were unaware of what Radha’s sakhis perceived, saw the footprints of Kṛṣṇa and then spoke. “Blessed is the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet, for Brahma and Siva hold that dust on their heads in order to remove the sorrow they feel in separation from the Lord. Every evening at about five o’clock, Kṛṣṇa returns from the cow pastures with His cowherd boyfriends. At that time great demigods like Brahmā and Śiva come down from heaven

to take the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet on their heads. This is mentioned in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.35.22): “The various Upadevas, standing on all sides of Kṛṣṇa like panegyrists, offer their music, singing and gifts of tribute.” The *gopis* thought, “Although it is seen that the demigods offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa’s foot dust, we cannot because of the restraints of modesty. Consequently we are sinking further into sin.”

Text 30

tasyā amūni naḥ kṣobham,
kurvanty uccaiḥ padāni yat,
yaikāpahṛtya gopīnām,
raho bhūṅkte ‘cyutādharam,
na lakṣyante padāny atra,
tasyā nūnam tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ,
khidyat-sujātāṅghri-talām,
unninye preyasīm priyaḥ

These footprints of that special gopī greatly disturb us. Of all the gopīs, She alone was taken away to a secluded place, where She is enjoying the lips of Kṛṣṇa. Look, we can’t see Her footprints over here! It’s obvious that the grass and sprouts were hurting the tender soles of Her feet, and so the lover lifted up His beloved.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse is spoken by the *gopis* who are rivals (*prati-paksa*) of Srimati Radhika.

“The footprints of this gopī give us great sorrow. She has stolen the lips of Acyuta which should be tasted by all of us *gopis*, and is alone enjoying them. By some unknown pious acts that lusty woman brought Kṛṣṇa under Her control, so that Kṛṣṇa abandoned us, who have actual love for Him, and has taken Her far away.

“O *gopis* afflicted with the great sickness of envy, do not lament. Here

we do not see Radha’s footprints.” With this intention Radha’s intimate sakhis like Lalita speak. The rival *gopis*, however, reply negatively, gleefully looking at the other *gopis* and quietly speaking to them with ironic conjecture in the words beginning *nūnam*.

“Embracing Her with His two arms, Kṛṣṇa has lifted (*unninye*) Her to His chest, because being most dear (*preyasīm*) to Him, He could not bear the pain to Her tender feet.” By this Radha gave Her own group of intimate sakhis two types of bliss: the happiness arising from seeing Her good fortune, and happiness arising from seeing the sorrow of Her rivals (*vipaksa-sakhis*).

Text 31

*imāny adhika-magnāni,
padāni vahato vadhūm,
gopyaḥ paśyata kṛṣṇasya,
bhārākrāntasya kāmīnaḥ,
atrāvaropitā kāntā,
puṣpa-hetor mahātmanā*

Please observe, my dear gopīs, how in this place lusty Kṛṣṇa’s footprints are pressed more deeply into the ground. Carrying the weight of His beloved must have been difficult for Him. And over here that intelligent boy must have put Her down to gather some flowers.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “O unobservant *gopis* ! Do not grieve. Why are you saying all of this? You are speaking without thinking. Actually the disappearance of Her footprints is even more distressful for us than their appearance, because it brings to mind the disappearance of our own life airs.” With this implication in mind, the *vipaksa-sakhis* (rival *gopis*) such as Candravali speak the words beginning *imāni*.

“Here Kṛṣṇa’s footprints are more prominently visible in the earth. Though not married to Her, Kṛṣṇa is treating Her as if She were His bride, and is wandering about with an extra burden like a householder with his family. Because Kṛṣṇa has rejected us, who are filled with genuine love, we can understand that He is just filled with lust, not sincere love. Thus, He has carried away this lusty woman. Otherwise how could the heir prince of Vraja, being very tender in strength Himself, become the carrier of some cowherd girl?”

Again the dear friends (*sva-paksa sakhis*) of Srimati Radhika speak with the words beginning *atrāvaropitā*. The word *mahātmanā* (great soul) means by the crown jewel of valiant lovers. Or else, by Him whose heart (*ātmā*) was absorbed in the festivity of decorating Her (*mahe* means *tat-prasāadhanotsave*). “He put Her down to gather flowers” means that Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “As soon as this *asoka* tree was touched by Radhika’s foot, it burst into bloom. Now I would like to decorate Radha with these flowers.” Therefore Kṛṣṇa is called very intelligent (*mahatmana*).

Text 32

*atra prasūnāvacaḥ,
priyārthe preyasā kṛtaḥ,
prapadākramaṇa ete,
paśyatāsakale pade*

Just see how in this place dear Kṛṣṇa collected flowers for His beloved. Here He has left the impression of only the front part of His feet because He was standing on His toes to reach the flowers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Here Kṛṣṇa has picked flowers from the branch of the *asoka* tree for His beloved. To pluck the flowers on the branches beyond His reach, Kṛṣṇa raised Himself on His toes. Thus

only part of His feet, not all (*asakale*) is visible in the foot prints.”
Flowers don’t appear on the lower branches of this tree.

Text 33

*keśa-prasādhanam tv atra,
kāmīnyāḥ kāmīnā kṛtam,
tāni cūḍayatā kāntām,
upaviṣṭam iha dhruvam*

Certainly Kṛṣṇa sat down here with His girlfriend to arrange Her hair. The lusty boy must have made a crown for that lusty girl out of the flowers He had collected.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the signs that She had sat down between Kṛṣṇa’s knees, the rival *gopis* again speak. “Here Kṛṣṇa sat down and dressed that girl’s hair, using a comb supplied by the *vanadevis*, forest goddesses. This girl is filled with lust not love, because She has cheated Her own friends, and gone off alone with Her lover. Kṛṣṇa too is filled with lust, because He has neglected us *gopis*, who are filled with pure love for Him and tormented by the pain of separation. While sitting here He made a crown of flowers for His lusty girlfriend, or else He jokingly combed Her hair into a topknot (*cūḍayatā*) to resemble a man. Thus, they engaged in playful conversation in this secluded place.”

Text 34

*reme tayā cātma-rata,
ātmārāmo ’py akhaṇḍitaḥ,
kāmīnām darśayan dainyam,*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with that gopī, although He enjoys only within, being self-satisfied and complete in Himself. Thus by contrast He showed the wretchedness of ordinary lusty men and hardhearted women.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After showing the extreme degree of Radha’s good fortune through the statements of the *gopis*, Sukadeva himself concludes with his own words.

“Even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He enjoyed with Radha because His own pleasure increases in Her company. In other words, Kṛṣṇa does not experience the same happiness in His own self-satisfaction as He does in association with Radhika.”

There is another reading *taya cātma-rata*. However in that version *atma ratah* would have the same meaning as *atmarama*, and thus there would be the fault of repetition or redundancy (*punar ukti*). Thus the phrase would have to be explained as follows. *Ca* means certainly, *taya* means with Radha and *atma-rata* means to enjoy with eagerness. The word *atma* means intelligence, eagerness, effort and determination according to the *Amarakosa* dictionary. “Kṛṣṇa takes great effort to eagerly enjoy with Radha because He does not obtain the same happiness from His inner self-satisfaction (*atmarama*).”

It may be questioned, “If this is so, does this not indicate that Kṛṣṇa is incomplete?”

“Kṛṣṇa is unbroken and never incomplete (*akhandita*). Radha is Kṛṣṇa’s *hladini-sakti* (pleasure potency), arising from His very own form (*svarūpa-bhūtā*). Though Radha is the form of *hladini-sakti*, during pastimes Her form transforms into the essence of joy called *prema*, and *prema* reaches its highest pinnacle as *mahābhāva*. Thus Kṛṣṇa enjoys more happiness with Radha, the topmost essence of all joy, than from the happiness arising from His own quality as *atmarama*. The *Sanat-kumara Samhita* (Text 298) says:

hlādinī ya mahā-śaktiḥ, sarva-śakti-varīyasi tat-sara-bhava-rūpa śrī, rādhikā parikīrtitā

“The great *sakti* called *hladini* is the supreme *sakti*. The essence of that *sakti* is in the form of *mahābhāva* embodied in Radha, who is supreme in all qualities.” Also *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.3) states: *mahābhāva-svarūpeyam, guṇair ativarīyasī*, “Among the cowherd girls, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is the topmost because She is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*, the highest stage of transcendental love of Godhead. No other cowherd girl possesses such high qualities as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.” Thus the logical connection of the words is that even though Kṛṣṇa is self-satisfied, He is eager to enjoy with Radha. Even though Kṛṣṇa derives personal pleasure from Radha, He remains unbroken and perfectly complete. In this way Kṛṣṇa enjoys His transcendental pastimes.

By this display of enjoyment Kṛṣṇa also benefits the materialistic thinkers who are ignorant of the truth about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He also hides the truth of His personal pleasure pastimes from them, as stated by Sukadeva Gosvami in the words beginning *kāminām*. In other words, Sri Kṛṣṇa taught the world that these confidential pastimes cannot be understood by persons who are under the sway of lust and women. If a man is controlled by lust, he becomes miserable and degraded. If a man is degraded, the woman becomes hard-hearted.

Therefore, to establish this idea, Kṛṣṇa and His dear *gopis* like Srimati Radhika demonstrated the example through Their actions as they jokingly talked while going here and there. Thus they hid the true nature of their *ujjala-prema-rasa*, the most radiant form of pure, transcendental conjugal love. This explanation implies two ideas; that Radha and Kṛṣṇa both revealed the facts of Their *prema-rasa* and also concealed them.

Another meaning: Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Radha so that all suffering lovers seeing Kṛṣṇa’s condition could understand their own miserable conditions, and all women, seeing the nature of Radha, could see their own hard-hearted conditions, according to the logic of *ātmavan*

manyate jagat, “Everyone thinks of others according to his own position.”

Another meaning: Kṛṣṇa acted as He did to show (*darśayan*) *rasikas* (those who can understand and taste transcendental mellows) that the man becomes subservient in pleading for satisfaction and the woman responds by showing reluctance. This is all done for the nourishment of *rasa*.

Texts 35–36

*ity evaṁ darśayantyas tās,
cerur gopyo vicetasah,
yām gopīm anayat kṛṣṇo,
vihāyānyāḥ striyo vane,
sā ca mene tadātmānam,
variṣṭham 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. He has chosen to reciprocate with Me alone.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After describing the union aspect of Radha’s conjugal *rasa*, now separation will be described. The words *sā ca* (she also) indicate that previously all the other *gopīs* were intoxicated with pride over their good fortune on associating with Kṛṣṇa, and now Radha has also become so. The reason for this is stated

by the words beginning with *hitvā* (rejecting). Radha felt like that because Kṛṣṇa had given up all the other *gopis* who had come to fulfill their lusty desires (*kāma-yānāḥ*), or who did activities to invoke their desire, and began to serve only Her. In other words, the anger (*pūrvamāna*) that Radha previously felt towards the other *gopis* over their good fortune had now vanished.

Text 37

*tato gatvā vanoddeśam,
drptā keśavam abravīt,
na pāraye 'ham calitum,
naya mām yatra te manaḥ*

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.”

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Divine Couple went to a particularly attractive region (*uddesa*) of the forest. Then Radha, in a mood of pride (*drpta*), had Kesava undo the topknot that He had made earlier in jest, and tie Her hair in braids to hide Her playful dealings from Her friends. Such pride in an independent girl who has brought her boyfriend under her control is understood to enhance the conjugal mood.

Radha said, “I cannot go any further. I am tired from so much wandering in the forest.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O lovely woman! We still have to reach another beautiful spot further on.”

Radha: “Carry (*naya*) Me like before and We can go there.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Should I bring You to a flower bed inside a secluded grove up

ahead where no one else can enter? Or should I take You to a flower garden to decorate You with flowers?”
Anticipating this question Radha said, “Take Me wherever You want.”

Text 38

*evam uktaḥ priyām āha,
skandha āruhyatām iti,
tataś cāntardadhe kṛṣṇaḥ,
sā vadhūr anvatapyata*

Thus addressed, Lord Kṛṣṇa replied, “Just climb on My shoulder.” But as soon as He said this, He disappeared. His beloved consort then immediately felt great remorse.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Radha spoke like this, Kṛṣṇa began to consider as follows: “I see that Radha has given up Her natural behavior of being bashful and uncooperative. A proper girlfriend does not readily consent when her lover tries to bring her to a flower bed. If She has abandoned Her contrary (*vamya*) nature, then why should I not give up My nature as a cooperative lover who faithfully follows in obedience a girlfriend He has enjoyed? This becomes necessary now. If both lovers show the same nature of being cooperative or uncooperative, there can be no tasting of *rasa*. Therefore, those who are experts in the art of love are not going to criticize Me if I give up My nature now.

“*Rasa* becomes tasteful when it properly follows the emotions of the woman. Moreover, now is the opportunity to see Radha, who possesses the utmost love, in the special condition that is brought about by separation from Me. This is something which I have desired to see for a long time.

“These *gopis* have perceived the greatness of Radha’s good fortune

when She is embracing Me. Now let the other *gopis* see the exceptional condition Radha attains in separation from Me. By seeing the extraordinary state of Radha's mental anguish, generated from Her extreme *prema* in separation, they will all drown in the ocean of amazement. Let the subterranean fire of Radha's separation from Me later ignite the flame of separation in all of them.

“Then, when Radha has experienced the fullness of both direct union and separation, this sweet mellow of conjugal love (*srngara-rasa*) will have become complete. When by My expertise I have made Radha feel separation, then after My dispelling all Her pain of separation, all the *gopis* will share the same mood, and I will be able to properly inaugurate the *rasa* dance tonight. Otherwise, if I were to appear in front of the other *gopis* after having enjoyed privately with only Radha, their minds would not be settled.”

Considering all these factors, Kṛṣṇa then spoke with a desire to suddenly disappear. “He disappeared” means that even as Radha watched Kṛṣṇa standing there He removed Himself from Her vision. When Vrsabhanunandini said “Carry Me wherever You want”, She had been thinking as follows: “Since I am tired from playing and wandering through the forest, I want to take some rest. If Kṛṣṇa spends the whole night without any sleep that will be inauspicious, and cause His unhappiness. If He is leading Me to a flower bed, let Him do so. We can take rest there together.” For this reason Radha did not disagree. We should understand that in this case Kṛṣṇa's *lila-sakti*, who is full of the mood of *prema-rasa*, covered over Kṛṣṇa's awareness of what was going on in Srimati Radhika's mind in order to perfect His various pastimes. *Anvatapyata* means “Radha lamented over and over.”

Text 39

*hā nātha ramaṇa preṣṭha,
kvāsi kvāsi mahā-bhuja,
dāsyās te kṛpaṇāyā me,*

**She cried out: O master! My lover! O dearest, where are You?
Where are You? Please, O mighty-armed one, O friend, show
Yourself to Me, Your poor servant!**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Radha’s lamentation is described in this verse. Radha and Kṛṣṇa had the following moving exchange:

Radha: “*Ha nātha!* O Lord, I am being burned in the great fire of separation from You, and My life air is about to leave My body. Even with the greatest endeavor I cannot maintain My life. But You are the Lord of My life, and so You can quickly save Me simply by glancing upon Me. Please do so immediately. I beg You to save My life, not for My sake but rather for Yours. After giving up all the other *gopīs*, You’ve brought Me so far to a secluded place in the forest just to enjoy special pleasure with Me. If I die You will not be able to find conjugal happiness anywhere else. You will remember Me and thus lament in Your sorrow.”

Kṛṣṇa: “So let Me become unhappy. What does that matter to You?”

Radha: “But You are My dearest (*preṣṭha*). I will feel Your unhappiness millions of times more than You. Even if I’ve already died, I still will not be able to tolerate the pain that even one spot on the nails of Your lotus feet may experience. Indeed, to prevent such pain I am ready to throw My life away millions and millions of times. Kindly show Yourself and drive away that unhappiness.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if Your life air is on the verge of leaving Your body, what can I do to stop that?”

Radha: “Simply by the touch of Your arms (*mahā-bhuja*), which are a medicinal herb with the power to revive the dead, My body will return to its healthy, normal condition, and My life air will automatically come back and remain in My body.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But You know the forest path Yourself without My help, so why did You order Me, the king’s son and a very young and gentle boy who

is to be respected? Why did You command, ‘Take Me wherever You wish’? Why do You anger Me like this?”

Radha cries out, “Please show Yourself to Your wretched maidservant. Be merciful to Me! Be merciful! When I ordered You, I was overcome by sleepiness. I was so tired from playing with You. Therefore please excuse what Your poor servant said. Please don’t be angry. It was only because You treated Me like such a close friend, though I am unworthy, that I spoke like that to You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “All right, My love, I am very pleased with You, so please come to Me.”

Radha: “But I’ve been blinded by lamentation. I can’t see where You are. Please tell Me where You are.”

Lamenting in this way in a dizzy state generated from separation, Radha fell in a swoon on the earth. This is established in the next verse by the word *mohitam* (bewildered).

Text 40

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
anvicchantyo bhagavato,
mārgam gopyo ’vidūritaḥ,
dadṛśuḥ priya-viśleṣān,
mohitām duḥkhitām sakhīm*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While continuing to search out Kṛṣṇa’s path, the gopīs discovered their unhappy friend close by. She was bewildered by separation from Her lover.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While searching and searching, the *gopis* then saw Radha from far off, because Her effulgence is as brilliant as lightning. All the *sakhis* of both parties saw Radha as a friend (*sakhim*). By seeing the intense pain that their friend (*sakhim*)

Radha was enduring due to separation, even rivals like Candravali felt a rising of affection for Her. Also the nature of the conjugal *rasa* is that enmity and hatred among competitors turns into affection when they all experience the disturbance of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The scripture says in this regard: *ata eva hi viśleṣe snehas tāsām prakāśate*, “separation reveals externally a spontaneous affection in their hearts.”

Text 41

*tayā kathitam ākarṇya,
māna-prāptim ca mādhavāt,
avamānam ca daurātmyād,
vismayaṁ paramaṁ yayuḥ*

She told them how Mādhava had given Her much respect, but how She then suffered dishonor because of Her misbehavior. The gopīs were extremely amazed to hear this.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Radha regained consciousness due to the loud wailing of the *gopīs* and their services of fanning, the *gopīs* asked Her, “Ah, sakhi! Please tell us what happened to You?” Radha replied, “Ah, sakhis! How have I allowed Myself to become separated from You? I am so foolish and independent. I simply do not know what is best for Me. Rather I must conclude that it is because of My hard-hearted nature that I have received both honor and dishonor. Neglecting all of You, who have thousands of times more love for Him than Me, and causing you to burn in the fire of separation from Him, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with Me alone. But this was simply His wickedness. “And it was simply wickedness for Me, being a stupid fool, to tell that mischievous son of the king, ‘I cannot walk any further; just carry Me wherever You want.’ That was My hard-heartedness, for by saying this I have obtained such dishonor. In this way My mind fell into the greatest

sorrow for two reasons (His wickedness and Mine).”

Radha thus exhibited enmity toward Her lover, humility before the *gopis*, and wretchedness toward Herself. When Sukadeva Gosvami uses the word *dauratmya* (wickedness) he is simply repeating the words of Radha, like a parrot. The word *duratma* actually means one whose body (*atma*) is far away (*dur*) from Kṛṣṇa, or she from whom Kṛṣṇa is far. One who possesses this feeling is called *dauratmya*. Therefore, this word indicates Radha’s ecstatic sentiments (*bhāva*), which are based on Her separation from Kṛṣṇa.

Being completely amazed, the *gopis* said, “O sakhi! It was quite fitting that Kṛṣṇa gave special treatment to You alone. It was not hard-heartedness on Kṛṣṇa’s part. Your adopting a mood of controlling Your consort and ordering Him around when You were fatigued from loving pastimes is not wickedness on Your part, but rather served to enhance the loving mood. But for the favorable lover to ignore the order of a woman after enjoying her, and to then bring her to such a miserable state certainly leads to an unfortunate situation, and is an obstruction to the loving mood. This is the sign of His wickedness. Alas, alas, how has the greatest of expert lovers and the most loving ocean of mercy done such a thing?” Thus the Vraja-gopis expressed their astonishment.

Text 42

*tato ’viśan vanam candra,
jyotsnā yāvad vibhāvyaṭe,
tamaḥ praviṣṭam ālakṣya,
tato nivavṛtuḥ striyaḥ*

In search of Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs then entered the depths of the forest as far as the light of the moon shone. But when they found themselves engulfed in darkness, they decided to turn back.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Then the *gopīs* along with Radha, who in Her anxiety was clutching the hand of a friend for support, began to search for Kṛṣṇa. Even though it was a full-moon night, the forest was completely dark because of the dense covering of trees. This is explained in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*praviṣṭo gahanam kṛṣṇaḥ, padam atra na lakṣyate, nivartadhvam
śaśāṅkasya, naitad dīdhiti-gocaraḥ*

“One *gopī* said, ‘Kṛṣṇa has entered such a dark part of the forest that we cannot possibly see His footprints. Therefore let us turn back from this area, which even the light of the moon cannot reach.’”

That the *gopīs* returned because of the darkness is the external meaning. Actually they returned for the following reason. “O friends, drowning in the ocean of distress, you are shrinking back out of fear that you will not be able to see the cloud-like black body of Kṛṣṇa in this dense darkness. But don’t be embarrassed. After all, wherever you go to look for Kṛṣṇa He will simply slink away and go elsewhere. Let us not waste our time any longer, because all our endeavors will just tire His tender body.” Thinking thus, they desisted.

Text 43

*tan-manaskās tad-alāpās,
tad-viçeṣṭās tad-ātmikāḥ,
tad-guṇān eva gāyantyō,
nātmagārāṇi sasmaruḥ*

Their minds absorbed in thoughts of Him, they conversed about Him, acted out His pastimes and felt themselves filled with His presence. They completely forgot about their homes as they loudly sang the glories of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental qualities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: While the *gopīs* filled their minds with

thoughts (*tan-manaskās*) of Kṛṣṇa, as they previously did, their madness (*unmāda*) became subdued, and they engaged in conversing about Him (*tad ālāpās*). They said, “O *asvattha* tree, have you seen Kṛṣṇa?”

When the *gopis*’ madness manifested to a moderate degree (the medium state of *unmāda*), they imitated Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (*tad-viceṣṭās*) as in the verse *kṛṣṇāyanty apibat stanam*, “one *gopi* imitated Kṛṣṇa drinking milk.” When their madness reached its peak (the full state of *unmāda*), the *gopis* forgot themselves and identified totally (*tad-ātmikāḥ*) with Kṛṣṇa, as in the verse *kṛṣṇo ‘ham paśyata gatim*, One *gopi* said, “I am Kṛṣṇa, see the way I walk.”

In this way the *gopis* forgot their identities and merged with Kṛṣṇa’s identity. Under the influence of their past habit the *gopis* loudly sang (*gāyantyō*) about Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful qualities (*tad-guṇān*) as is described in the fourth verse of this chapter: *gāyantya uccair amum eva samhatā*.

Text 44

*punaḥ pulinam āgatya,
kālindyāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ,
samavetā jaguḥ kṛṣṇam,
tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ*

The *gopīs* again came to the bank of the Kālindī. Meditating on Kṛṣṇa and eagerly hoping He would come, they sat down together to sing of Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* spoke among themselves, “Alas, alas, wherever we go to find Kṛṣṇa, He runs away from there. Why should we trouble ourselves needlessly by wandering about the forest? Without Kṛṣṇa’s wish, we can never attain Him, as is stated in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.23), *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ*: ‘Kṛṣṇa

reveals Himself only to that person whom He chooses.’

“In other words, only by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy can we see Him. By chanting His name we will surely attain Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.” Thinking thus the gopis returned (*punaḥ*) to the bank of the Yamuna, where they had previously associated with Kṛṣṇa, and engaged in singing (*kṛṣṇa jaguh*) and meditating upon Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ*). By their behaviour the Vraja-gopis established the philosophical conclusion that Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself according to His free will.

Chapter Thirty-one: The Gopis Songs of Separation (*Gopī-gītā*)

[Editor’s note: This chapter relates how the *gopīs*, overwhelmed by feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa, sat down on the bank of the Yamunā after continuously searching for Kṛṣṇa for a long time. Each *gopi* began addressing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personal manifestation of all enjoyable tastes, according to her individual mode of ecstasy and praying for His merciful *darsana*. As the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa spontaneously arose in the minds of the *gopīs*, whose consciousness was fully imbued with His presence, they sang their song (*Gopī-gītā*), which relieves the agony of those suffering from the burning pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa and which bestows supreme auspiciousness.

Although the *Srimad Bhagavatam* says that Kṛṣṇa was not physically present before the *gopīs* while they were speaking, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, by the power of His *prema*-filled vision, reveals some extremely charming dialogues between Sri Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. He also describes the beautiful thoughts of the *gopīs* while they were crying out to Kṛṣṇa. In presenting Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s commentaries on each verse, we have given Sri Kṛṣṇa’s direct responses to the *gopīs*’ questions and statements, rather than introducing Kṛṣṇa’s words with phrases such as, “In response to the *gopi*’s question, Kṛṣṇa might have replied as follows.” In this regard, some *acaryas* state that Kṛṣṇa was hiding in the bushes just beside the *gopīs* listening to their every love-filled utterance.]

Text 1

gopya ūcuḥ,
jayati te ’dhikaṁ janmanā vrajah,
śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi,
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakās,
tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvām vicinvate

The gopīs said: O beloved, Your birth in the land of Vraja has made it exceedingly glorious, and thus Indirā, the goddess of fortune, always resides here. It is only for Your sake that we, Your devoted servants, maintain our lives. We have been searching everywhere for You, so please show Yourself to us.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter shines forth with the *Gopī-gīta*, the songs of the *gopīs*, which are like a group of lotus flowers fragrant with the honey of *prema*, that manifest their sweetness in graceful melodies and rhythms. These lotus songs attract the bee named Kṛṣṇa.

With the blessings of Sanatana Gosvami, Sridhara Svami and the *gurus* in my line, whose remnants are the sustenance of my life, I will now begin to explain the *Gopī-gīta*. In the last verse of the previous chapter it was mentioned that the *gopīs* sang. The question may be raised, “What did they sing?” The answer is given in this verse beginning with the words *gopyaḥ ūcuḥ*.

The *gopīs* sang, “O beloved, because of Your birth, Vraja has become glorious.” By not mentioning more glorious than what, the implication is that Vraja is more glorious than all other planets or places. In order to refute the idea that “Vaikuntha is just as glorious,” the *gopīs* use the adverb *adhikam*, to indicate that Vraja is exceedingly (*adhikam*) more glorious than even Vaikuntha. In other words, though Vaikuntha is wonderful, Vraja is the most wonderful and best of all places.

The *gopīs* state another symptom of Vraja’s unique position: “Maha Laksmi, the goddess of fortune (*indirā*), who is served by all in Vaikuntha, is always residing in Vraja rendering service. Therefore Vraja is complete in all kinds of opulences even more so than Vaikuntha itself. Thus in this Vraja, which is filled with such topmost happiness, only Your beloved girlfriends are experiencing the most intolerable agony unheard of or unseen by anyone at any time. However, we are not begging You to remove that suffering, but please look (*drsyaṭam*) just

once at this (*atra*) Vrndavana, which is filled with happiness.”

Kṛṣṇa asks, “What should I look at?”

Gopis: “In this happy Vrndavana, those dedicated to You are dying in separation as they search for You. What a remarkable scene! Why are You putting Your devotees into danger? You should not think, ‘How have I put you in difficulty?’ We have offered (*dhr̥ta:ārpita*) all our life airs to You. We would have been happy if the life airs, which have been maddened by You, remaining within our bodies had burned in the fire of separation and we had died. But instead, our life airs are happily residing within You, their joyful master.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if your life airs are happily situated, how can your bodies be in danger?”

Gopis: “It seems that You derive constant happiness from seeing our misery.”

In this verse the second syllable (*ya*) of each line is the same. Also, for most of the verses in the *Gopi-gītā*, in each line the first and seventh syllables begin with the same consonant, as do the second syllables of all four lines. This has been described in the *Muktā-phala-Tīkā* of Vopadeva.

Text 2

*śarad-udāśaye sādhu-jāta-sat,
sarasijodara-śrī-muṣā dr̥śā,
surata-nātha te ’śulka-dāsikā,
vara-da nighnato neha kiṁ vadhaḥ*

O Lord of love, in beauty Your glance excels the whorl of the finest, most perfectly formed lotus within the autumn pond. O bestower of blessings, You are killing the maidservants who have given themselves to You freely, without any price. Isn’t this murder?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “How can you insinuate that I want to make you unhappy?”

Gopīs: “Not only do You want to see us suffer, but You are killing us.” That is the intention of this verse.

Gopīs: “Your glances beg us for amorous pleasure (*surata natha*) and give us (*vara-da*) happiness. Moreover, Your glances, which are emanating the blazing fire of *prema*, are killing (*nighnataḥ*) Your maidservants who were purchased for free (*asulka dasika*). Is this not murder on Your part? Is only killing with a weapon actual murder, while murder with one’s eyes is not murder? Rather it certainly is.

“Therefore O Varada [giver (*da*)] of benedictions (*vara*)! You have ruined (*da* from *di* to destroy) our happiness in this world and the next (*vara*). Furthermore, if we were in fact Your property, then there would be no fault in Your throwing away or burning up Your own possessions. But actually You did not buy us with any payment, nor have You accepted us in marriage. We are just free maidservants. Due to our innocent foolishness, we became Your slaves out of our own free will.”

In describing the beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s glance, the *gopīs* indicate the cause of Kṛṣṇa’s power to enchant, madden and to expertly steal their hearts.

Gopīs: “Your glance steals the beauty of the best blooming lotus (*sat sarsi ja*) growing in the clear lakes of autumn in the saintly land (*sādhu jatam*) of Vraja.” In this way the *gopīs* describe the extraordinary beauty, fragrance, coolness and gentleness of Kṛṣṇa’s eyes by comparing them to the superexcellent autumnal lotus flower.

Gopīs: “Indeed, that glance of Yours has trespassed into the private inner chambers of such a respectable person of good upbringing, which are completely inaccessible to the common man, and stolen the treasure. By sprinkling a powder (a standard technique of Vedic burglars) of *mohana* (bewilderment) and *unmāda* (madness), Your thieving eyes made us crazy, and thus we freely turned over the treasure of our intimate love and also our life airs. Having our treasures stolen, we are now dying. By this theft You are willingly accepting the sin of killing thousands of women. Out of fear of this sin You should reveal Yourself to us.”

Text 3

*viṣa-jalāpyayād vyāla-rākṣasād,
varṣa-mārutād vaidyutānalāt,
vṛṣa-mayātmajād viśvato bhayād,
ṛṣabha te vyaṁ rakṣitā muhuḥ*

O greatest of personalities, You have repeatedly saved us from all kinds of danger—from poisoned water, from the terrible man-eater Agha, from the great rains, from the wind demon, from the fiery thunderbolt of Indra, from the bull demon and from the son of Maya Dānava.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa may object, “If I wanted to kill you, then why did I repeatedly protect you from so many dangers? After acting so it would be inappropriate for Me to kill you now.” The *gopis* reply to this in the current verse. “You saved us from destruction by Kaliya’s poison (*viṣa-jalāpyayād*); from the vicious man eating snake Aghasura (*vyāla-rākṣasād*); from Indra’s torrential downpour (*varṣa*); from Trnavarta’s typhoon (*mārutāt*); from Indra’s thunderbolt (*vaidyuta-analāt*); from the bull demon Aristasura (*vṛṣa*) and from Vyomasura (*maya-ātmajāt*).

“You have always protected us from all types of fear (*viśvato-bhayād*). O best of men (*ṛṣabha*)! On numerous occasions You personally saved us, whose lives are dedicated solely to You. You have protected all of Vraja from the deluge of Indra and other calamities. Putting our faith in You as our protector, we came to You for relief from the burning pain of being pierced by the five arrows of Cupid. If You neglect us, we will die in the blazing fire of separation from you which is millions of times more intense than that other fire. Are You not afraid of killing those who place their trust in You?”

Although the killing of Arista and Vyoma are yet to occur, it is mentioned here because the *gopis*, having heard about Kṛṣṇa's horoscope from the sages Garga and Bhāguri, knew that Kṛṣṇa would kill these demons in the future.

Text 4

*na khalu gopīkā-nandano bhavān,
akhila-dehinām antarātma-dṛk,
vikhanasārthito viśva-guptaye,
sakha udeyivān sātvatām kule*

You are not actually the son of the gopī Yaśodā, O friend, but rather the indwelling witness in the hearts of all embodied souls. Because Lord Brahmā prayed for You to come and protect the universe, You have now appeared in the Sātvata dynasty.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “My dear *gopis*, who are repeatedly talking irrationally, please maintain your composure. I, the son of Nanda, give happiness to everyone (*sarvānanda-kanda*). Yet you accuse Me of the sin of killing women and betraying the faith of those who trust Me. Therefore, I will leave this place and hide Myself so that for many births you will not see Me.”

Fearing such a response from Kṛṣṇa, the repentant *gopis* began to praise Kṛṣṇa in order to please Him.

Gopis: “You are not the son of a cowherd woman, but rather the soul within each living entity, the form of Vasudeva who inspires the living entities' internal faculties and witnesses (*dṛk*) everything. In other words, You are the indwelling Supersoul (*antaryāmī*). We have heard this from Bhāguri, Gārgi, Paurṇamāsi and others.

“Thus, we are only speaking whatever You, the Supersoul, inspire us to speak. Therefore do not be angry with us, but be pleased with us. We

have also heard about the cause for Your appearance. Because Brahma (*vikhanas*) prayed to You to protect the universe (*visva-guptaye*), You appeared in the Sātvata dynasty in the family of Yadu. In other words, You have appeared on the sunrise-mountain of mother Yasoda's womb."

Kṛṣṇa: "If you know all this, then why are you speaking such harsh words to Me?"

Fearing such a comment by Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis* said, "O friend (*sakhe*)! You have submerged us in the ocean of loving friendship (*sakhya-rasa*) with You. As a friend You protect the whole universe, so You should also protect us who reside within the universe."

Another meaning:

Gopis: "No one, among men, demigods, animals or birds can bear to see the suffering of those who are dear to them. In that You remain happy even while observing our misery, we must conclude that You are outside these four categories of creatures. It is not possible that You were born from the womb of the gopi Yasoda, because her heart melts at even the slightest distress felt by another. But we do not see any of her good qualities in You."

Kṛṣṇa: "Then who am I?"

Gopis: "We surmise that You are the indwelling controller (*antaryami*) of all living beings. Though seeing all the sufferings of the living entities, You remain passive sitting happily within their hearts as the Supersoul. Therefore, we cannot understand why You, the crest-jewel of indifferent persons, have appeared in this world. Requested by Vikhanas, Brahma, who desired to increase his own creation, You descended to this universe to protect it. But, bearing in mind that by devotion to You the living entities will become liberated, You stay hidden (*visva guptaye*), so that no one will recognize You as the Supreme Lord.

"As Lord Brahma once said, 'What to speak of ordinary men, who disregard You as the Lord in Your human-like pastimes, even those surrendered to You, like Jarasandha, will take on the role of demons. Thus I will be able to increase the scope of my creation.' To fulfill this desire of Brahma, You accept actions contrary to *dharma* such

as stealing the wives and possessions of others, and showing envy, pride and violence to hide Your true nature. Thus rejecting Your own irrefutable laws of religious behavior, You have appeared in the Sātvata family in Gokula. By Your stealing of other men’s wives You have become our friend (*he sakhe*).”

Text 5

*viracitābhayaṃ vṛṣṇi-dhūrya te,
caraṇam īyusām saṁsṛter bhayāt,
kara-saroruham kānta kāma-dam,
śirasi dhehi naḥ śrī-kara-graham*

O best of the Vṛṣṇis, Your lotuslike hand, which holds the hand of the goddess of fortune, grants fearlessness to those who approach Your feet out of fear of material existence. O lover, please place that wish-fulfilling lotus hand on our heads.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O wonderful speakers! I disappeared only to drink the nectar of your words of loving anger. Now I that have fulfilled that desire, you can take any boon you wish from Me.”

Thinking of such merciful words from Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis*, being relieved, began to voice their individual desires in four verses (5-8).

Gopis: “O best of the Vṛṣṇis! O light-giving sun to the lotuses of Your family! Please place Your lotus hand on our heads?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why?”

Gopis: “The touch of Your hand vanquishes Cupid (*kāma-dam*), in fear of whose arrows we have surrendered unto You. Though ironically that hand again makes us lusty (another meaning of *kāma-dam*), You cannot say that You are powerless to do this, since Your hand bestows fearlessness to men who have surrendered to you out of fear of material

existence. You are the one who protects everyone from the fear of *samsara*, so what effort would it take to protect a person from the fear of lust?”

Kṛṣṇa: “If that is so, may I then place My lotus hand on your breasts? My mind desires to put My hands there instead.”

Gopis: “No, Your hands are already held by the hands of Laksmi (*sri-kara-graham*) in order to prevent You from placing Your hands on her breasts, so we must also prevent that.”

Text 6

*vraja-janārti-han vīra yoṣitām,
nija-jana-smaya-dhvaṁsana-smīta,
bhaja sakhe bhavat-kiṅkarīḥ sma no,
jalaruhānanam cāru darśaya*

O You who destroy the suffering of Vraja’s people, O hero of all women, Your smile shatters the false pride of Your devotees. Please, dear friend, accept us as Your maidservants and show us Your beautiful lotus face.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Other *gopis* said, “You take away the pain arising from the arrows of Cupid in the women of Vraja by Your smile, but not the pain of the women in Svarga and elsewhere.” This is mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* (10.35.3): *vyoma-yāna-vanītāḥ kaśmalam yayur apasmṛta-nīvyah*, “The women of Svarga riding in their planes in the sky fainted from the pain of lust and their belts loosened.”

Gopis: “O hero, who vanquishes the invincible Cupid! You do not tolerate the pride stemming from our good fortune and the haughtiness which is characteristic of our coquettish (*vāmya*) nature. Your smile destroys the pride of Your devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then quickly choose your desired boon”

Gopis: “Please serve us, Your maidservants.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if you are My maidservants, then why are you ordering Me to engage in your menial service?”

The *gopis* answer by saying, “O friend (*sakhe*)!”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then tell me what service you want Me to perform?”

Gopis: “Please serve us by showing us Your beautiful lotus face (*jalaruhānanam*).”

Text 7

*praṇata-dehinām pāpa-karṣaṇam,
tṛṇa-carānugam śrī-niketanam,
phaṇi-phaṇārpitaṁ te padāmbujam,
kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ kṛndhi hṛc-chayam*

Your lotus feet destroy the past sins of all embodied souls who surrender to them. Those feet follow after the cows in the pastures and are the eternal abode of the goddess of fortune. Since You once put those feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kāliya, please place them upon our breasts and tear away the lust in our hearts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Other *gopis* said, “Please place Your lotus feet upon our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why should I do that?”

Gopis: “In order to shatter the lust in our hearts.”

Here these *gopis*, who by the fact of having such intimate relations with Kṛṣṇa are understood as possessing the highest form of pure *kṛṣṇa-prema*; who have no desire to avoid pain or obtain happiness for themselves, and whose every activity of their bodies, minds and words is only for Kṛṣṇa’s happiness, are describing their own beauty, youthfulness and torment by lust only for the sake of inciting Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment of conjugal pleasure.

Being the most skillful of women, the *gopis* are not actually diminishing the mood of pure love by their verbal levity. When a friend sees that a certain gluttonous friend of his wants to eat, he will busy himself in acquiring all four kinds of first-class food with the desire of feeding his friend. But when questioned by his friend, he will say, “Oh, I am endeavoring for my own sake, not yours.” At that time love becomes very intense. If the friend were to say, “All this endeavor on my part is for your pleasure, although it is actually for my own benefit, since it is being done without motive”, that would diminish the mood of love. This is stated in the *Prema-samputa* Text 68:

premā dvayo rasikayor ayi dīpa eva, hṛd-veṣma bhāsayati niścala eva bhāti, dvārād ayaṁ vadanatas tu bahis-kṛtaś cet, nirvāti śīghram athavā laghutām upaiti

“Pure love is like a lamp that burns steadily within the house of two lovers’ hearts who know how to relish confidential mellows. But if that lamp light is let out through the doorway of the mouth, it is at once dimmed or extinguished.”

The fact that the *gopis* have no interest in their own pleasure, and that Sri Kṛṣṇa is under their control is indicated by the Lord’s own words *na pārāye ’ham*, “I can never repay My debt to you.” (SB 10.32.22) All the revealed scriptures state that Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by pure love, not lust.

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may say, “If I place My feet on your breasts, I fear that I will commit sin”, the *gopis* say, “Since You are the destroyer of the sins of all embodied beings who surrender to You, how can there be any question of Your sinfulness?”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if I place My tender feet on your hard breasts, I will get pain.”

Gopis: “You follow the cows that go to very rough places to eat grass. If Your feet can tolerate that, then You cannot say that our breasts are too hard.”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is inappropriate to place My feet on your breasts which are decorated with many costly jewels and ornaments.”

Gopis: “Your lotus feet, the very abode of all opulence (*sri nīketana*),

will be the best ornament on our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But I am afraid of your husbands.”

Gopis: “If You were not afraid when You placed Your feet on the hoods of the great serpent Kaliya, then why should You be afraid of our weak husbands?”

Text 8

*madhurayā girā valgu-vākyayā,
budha-manojñayā puṣkarekṣaṇa,
vidhi-karīr imā vīra muhyatīr,
adhara-sīdhunāpyāyayasva naḥ*

O lotus-eyed one, Your sweet voice and charming words, which attract the minds of the intelligent, are bewildering us more and more. Our dear hero, please revive Your maidservants with the nectar of Your lips.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O *gopis*, who are more dear to Me than My own life. O jewel-like lovers! I can never be indifferent to you, who are My only reason for living. Why do you not have faith in this servant who is bound by the golden chains of your pure love? Please trust Me, and understand Me to be like the brilliant gold bangles on your auspicious hands.”

Hearing such words from Kṛṣṇa, other *gopis* said, “We have become overcome with bliss on tasting the sweetness of Your words, which are composed of sweet (*madhuraya*) syllables containing various meanings in each beautiful phrase. Moreover, Your wonderful words bewilder those who are intelligent and expert in conjugal affairs, namely these maidservants of Yours. We *gopis* are becoming bewitched by continually relishing Your sweetness. Please rejuvenate us bewildered women by letting us again (*punah*) drink the nectar of Your lips.”

Another meaning: “Please let us bewildered women drink the nectar of Your lips, and again (*punah*) put us into bewilderment.”

Text 9

*tava kathāmr̥taṁ tapta-jīvanam,
kavibhir īḍitam kalmaṣāpaham,
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ,
bhuvī gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ*

The nectar of Your words and the descriptions of Your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one’s sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Who can describe the sweetness of the words coming from Your mouth? It is indescribable. Even words glorifying Your name and form coming from the mouths of other people are also more relishable than celestial nectar (*svarga-amṛta*) or liberation (*moksa*).” This is the import of this verse.

Gopis: “Discussions about You deliver the highest nectar.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What kind of nectar?”

Gopis: “Topics about You give life to those who are tormented by the cycle of birth and death, terrible diseases, and other causes of suffering (*tapta jivanam*). They give life to those who are suffering in separation from You. Thus *hari-kathā* is better than both the nectar of heaven and the nectar of liberation. This is confirmed by great devotees (*kavibhir iditam*) like Prahlada and Dhruva, who said: *yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtām tava pāda-padma, dhyānād bhavaj-jana-kathā-śravaṇena vā*

syāt, sā brahmaṇi sva-mahimany api nātha mā bhūt, “My Lord, the transcendental bliss derived from meditating upon Your lotus feet or hearing about Your glories from pure devotees is so unlimited that it is far beyond the stage of *brahmānanda*.” (SB 4.9.10)

“Since *brahmānanda* is also defeated by the transcendental bliss derived from devotional service, then what to speak of the temporary joy of elevating oneself to the heavenly planets, which is ended by the separating sword of time? Although one may be elevated to the heavenly planets, he falls down in due course of time.

“The nectar of Your topics destroys (*kalmasa apaharanam*) the effects of all stages of sin [*aprārabdha, kuta, bija* and *prārabdha*, (sinful reactions from which one is suffering at present)]. The nectar of Svarga does not destroy sins, but rather it increases lusty desire, which is a cause for sin. Even the nectar of liberation does not destroy *prārabdha-karma*, though it destroys *apraradha, kuta* and *bija*. The nectar of hearing about You is most auspicious (*sravana mangalam*) because just by hearing one becomes attracted to You and attains the ultimate goal of life. This is not so with the nectar of Svarga or *moksa*.

“The nectar of Your topics, being constantly broadcast (*ātātam*) by Your devotees, bestows all wealth (*śrīmat*) up to *prema*. The other two nectars cannot do this. Those who glorify You in *kirtana (grṇanti)* are bestowing the greatest treasure. Though one may give that person everything he owns, he can never repay him.”

Another meaning of the verse: “Songs about Your name, form and pastimes are sweet if they are accompanied by the sight of You. Otherwise they create very undesirable consequences and become a cause of death (*kathā mṛtam*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “How is that?”

Gopis: “By hearing those descriptions one’s life becomes full of pain in separation (*tapta jivanam*).” Another meaning of *jivana* is water. “By those descriptions we become scalded like water (*jivana*) sprinkled on hot oil (*tapta*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then why are these topics praised in the *Puranas* and other scriptures?”

Gopis: “Only poets (*kavibhir iditam*) like Vyasa praise You and no one else because that is the natural habit of poets. Hearing about You subjects one to the burning pain of separation. By this suffering one burns up his previous sins (*kalmasa apaham*). It is auspicious (*maṅgalam:svasty-ayanam*) for ordinary people to listen to these topics, and thus the narrations about You do not stop. If the people concerned are intelligent, however, they will see that hearing about You brings suffering and then they will refuse to listen. Then the narrations will cease.

“Topics about You are disseminated (*atatam*) by evil men who, blinded by the intoxication of their wealth (*srimat*), hope that everyone will die by hearing about You. To accomplish this they spend money lavishly by going from country to country and village to village, hiring *pandits* to narrate the *Purāṇas*. Therefore those *pandits* who sing Your glories in this world cause the death (*da—dyanti:khaṇḍayanti:mārayanti*) of many people (*bhūrīn*). Thus, while spreading their trap of these topics and sitting peacefully as if they were gentle souls, these *pandits* are actually committing genocide.

“For this reason, intelligent persons avoid these *pandits*, keeping them at a further distance than even a contagious disease.”

This point is explained in the *Bhagavatam* (10.47.18):

yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ, sakṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ, sapadi gṛha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā, bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryām caranti

“For those who relish just a single drop of the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s daily pastimes, their dedication to material duality is ruined. Many such persons have suddenly given up their wretched homes and families and, themselves becoming wretched, traveled here to Vṛndāvana to wander about like birds, begging for their living.”

This dialogue of the *gopis* is glorification on the pretext of condemnation. Using the ploy of criticism, the *gopis* are actually expressing the super excellence of topics about Sri Kṛṣṇa and also of the *pandits* who narrate them.

Text 10

*prahasitaṁ priya-prema-vikṣaṇaṁ,
viharaṇaṁ ca te dhyāna-maṅgalaṁ,
rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdi sprśaḥ,
kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi*

Your smiles, Your sweet, loving glances, the intimate pastimes and confidential talks we enjoyed with You—all these are auspicious to meditate upon, and they touch our hearts. But at the same time, O deceiver, they very much agitate our minds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “When we do not see You, then anything that is related to You becomes a source of suffering for us. Even though we want to forget You because You give us sorrow, we cannot because You have touched our hearts (*hrdi sprśaḥ*) with Your sweet smile (*prahasitaṁ*) and love-filled glances, Your intimate exchanges (*viharaṇaṁ:samprayogaḥ*), and all Your joking conversations (*saṁvidaḥ:samlāpa-narmāṇi*). It is a fact that meditation gives the highest bliss (*dhyāna-maṅgalaṁ*), but thinking of these four things (Your smile, glances, exchanges and conversations) agitates (*kṣobhayanti*) our minds.

“As soon as these enter our minds, they immediately give pleasure, but then a moment later they give the most intense sorrow. Therefore, You are the greatest cheater (*kuhaka*)! When the rogue feeds you poison cakes, at first they seem tasty, but after some time they give intense pain and then kill you.”

Text 11

calasi yad vrajāc cārayan paśūn,

*nalina-sundaram nātha te padam,
śila-trṇāṅkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ,
kalilatām manaḥ kānta gacchati*

Dear master, dear lover, when You leave the cowherd village to herd the cows, our minds are disturbed with the thought that Your feet, more beautiful than a lotus, will be pricked by the spiked husks of grain and the rough grass and plants.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Furthermore, You are not only making us miserable today, but on other occasions You also try to give us sorrow, even at the cost of making Yourself unhappy. Our minds become pained (*kalilatam*) when we think of Your feet, which are more beautiful and tender than a lotus, being pricked by the spikes of wheat, dry grass and fresh sprouts in the pasture grounds as You walk behind the cows.”

The word *kalilatam* also means accepting (*lāti*) quarrel (*kali*).

Gopis: “Thus we quarrel with our minds as follows: ‘O mind, why are you uselessly lamenting? If Kṛṣṇa gets pain from walking in the forests, then why does He daily go into the forest from Vraja?’

Mind: “Ah, foolish cowherd maidens! The soles of Kṛṣṇa’s feet are more tender than even a land lotus (*sthala-padma*), and the forest is filled with thorns, grass, sprouting plants and pebbles. How then will Kṛṣṇa not experience pain?”

Gopis: “O foolish mind! Kṛṣṇa is walking on very soft sandy pathways.”

Mind: “O undiscerning cowherd women! The cows are wandering on those paths eating the grass, not Kṛṣṇa.”

Gopis: “O mind, blinded by love! Doesn’t Kṛṣṇa have eyes to see the stones and thorns? Why would He step on them?”

Mind: “Ah, you girls lack even a touch of *prema*! What will happen if by mistake or because of haste, Kṛṣṇa steps on those sharp things?”

Gopis: “O mind, our dear brother! You speak correctly. The creator has

given us life only to make us experience all this misery.”
Mind: “My dear miserable girls, you should remain alive. But now I, along with your life airs, am going to leave Your bodies.”

Text 12

*dina-parikṣaye nīla-kuntalair,
vanaruhānanam bibhrad āvṛtam,
ghana-rajasvalam darśayan muhur,
manasi naḥ smaram vīra yacchasi*

At the end of the day You repeatedly show us Your lotus face, covered with dark blue locks of hair and thickly powdered with dust. Thus, O hero, You arouse lusty desires in our minds.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Even when we meet, You are not willing to make us happy,” the *gopis* state in this verse. The *gopis* said, “In the late afternoon (*dina parikṣaye*), You satisfy us by showing us Your lotus face, decorated with pollen from swaying garlands, with dark blue locks swaying in the gentle breeze, and covered with the dust (*rajasvalam*) raised by the cows’ (*dhana*) hooves. Knowing that the sight of You generates the highest bliss, You become visible to us as You collect the cows or look here and there for the cowherd boys. At this time You consider, ‘I will drown these girls in an ocean of distress’, and then You enflame our erotic desires (*smaram yaccasi*) but deny us Your association.

“That same person who has made us consider the path of religiosity of well-bred women to be like a feverish poison and has made us madly intoxicated, is now making us cry and attracting us to join Him in the forests. O hero (*vira*)! You shoot us with Cupid’s arrows in order to destroy the religious principles of us women of Vraja.”

Text 13

*praṇata-kāma-dam padmajārcitam,
dharāṇi-maṇḍanam dhyeyam āpadi,
caraṇa-paṅkajam śantamam ca te,
ramaṇa naḥ staneṣv arpayādhi-han*

Your lotus feet, which are worshiped by Lord Brahmā, fulfill the desires of all who bow down to them. They are the ornament of the earth, they give the highest satisfaction, and in times of danger they are the appropriate object of meditation. O lover, O destroyer of anxiety, please put those lotus feet upon our breasts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If you are always thinking that I give you sorrow, then I am not going to have anything more to do with you.” Fearing that Kṛṣṇa will become angry like this, the *gopis* repent saying, “Alas, alas, blinded by the suffering inflicted by our karma, we are falsely finding fault with our beloved.”

Then in order to please Kṛṣṇa the *gopis* praise Him as the person who gives all happiness. After affirming that He is their goal, they then pray that Kṛṣṇa relieve them of their suffering in two verses.

The *gopis* said, “Though Kaliya was an offender, when he surrendered (*praṇata*) You gave him the most desired thing (*kāma-dam*), Your lotus feet. Brahma (*padma-ja*) also offended You, but he was forgiven when he worshiped (*arcitam*) Your lotus feet. Therefore we pray that You also forgive our offense.

“As Your feet decorate the earth (*dharini mandanam*), You should also decorate our breasts by placing Your feet on them. Garga Muni predicted, ‘This boy will easily protect you from all dangers.’ Accordingly we pray that You deliver us from this misfortune. For all these reasons, You are most auspicious and the very form of happiness (*śantamam*). O destroyer of distress (*adhi han*)! By putting Your feet on

our breasts, You will not become tired, but rather You will feel pleasure (*ramana*) and Your lusty desires will be fulfilled.”

Text 14

*surata-varḍhanam śoka-nāśanam,
svaraṭa-veṇunā suṣṭhu cumbitam,
itara-rāga-vismāraṇam nṛṇām,
vitara vīra nas te 'dharāmṛtam*

O hero, kindly distribute to us the nectar of Your lips, which enhances conjugal pleasure and vanquishes grief. That nectar is thoroughly relished by Your vibrating flute and makes people forget any other attachment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “O Kṛṣṇa, You exactly resemble Dhanvantari, the crest-jewel of physicians. Please give us some medicine, for we are fainting from the disease of lust. The medicinal nectar of Your lips enhances (*varḍhanam*) erotic pleasure (*surata*), and removes the pain of separation (*soka nasanam*). You should not say, ‘How can I give such valuable medicine for free’, because You are a great hero (*vīra*) in giving charity. Therefore, You should give it away freely, even to the most wretched persons. Consider that we are losing our lives and that now You can save us by giving us that nectar. After all, even Your flute, which is just a hollow bamboo stick, fully tastes the nectar of Your lips, and then exhales sweet melodies (*svaraṭa venuna*).”

Kṛṣṇa: “But the people in this world follow a very unhealthy diet of attachment to wealth, family, followers and so forth. I will not give the particular medicine you’ve requested to such people.”

Gopīs: “But the medicinal nectar of Your lips makes one forget (*vismaranam*) all other (*itara*) attachments (*raga*). We have directly

experienced that this remarkable medicine acts like a powerful herbal drug which counteracts bad dietary habits. Therefore, please give that nectar to us, O hero, since You are most charitable.”

Text 15

*aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanam,
truti yugāyate tvām apaśyatām,
kuṭila-kuntalam śrī-mukham ca te,
jaḍa udīkṣatām pakṣma-kṛd drśām*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Moreover, Kṛṣṇa, our bad destiny alone is the cause of our grief. What can You do about it?” The Vraja-gopis convey this idea in this verse.

Gopis: “When You go to the forest of Vṛndavana, a *truti* (1/1700 of a second) seems like a millennium (*yugāyate*) for us because we cannot see You. The pain of separation makes the eight hours You are away in the forest seem like three months for the other inhabitants of Vraja. But for us *gopis*, this eight hour-period seems as long as a billion ages. There is no cause for this except our bad fortune. Even when we get the opportunity to see Your face at the end of the day, the foolish creator makes us suffer by giving us eyelids to interrupt our vision of You. Thus even in seeing You we are thrown into an insurmountable ocean of suffering. The fraction of a second that an eyelid blinks is an interruption to our sight of You. Although it only takes nine hundred *trutis* for the eye to blink (*nimesa*), it seems like nine hundred *yugas* to

us. Thus we are so unfortunate that we suffer whether we see You or not.”

According to Maitreya Rsi, “The time duration needed for the integration of three *trasareṇus* is called a *truṭi*, and one hundred *truṭis* make one *vedha*. Three *vedhas* make one *lava*. The duration of time of three *lavas* is equal to one *nimeṣa*, the combination of three *nimeṣas* makes one *kṣaṇa*.” (SB 3.11.6)

There is another meaning of the phrase *paksma krt*. The first meaning refers to Lord Brahma as the maker (*krt*) of the eyelid (*paksma*).

Another meaning of *paksma krt* is “cutting off the eyelid.”

Gopis: “Those who are intelligent (*ajada*) would cut off their eyelids so they could see Kṛṣṇa continuously. Being unintelligent, we *gopis* cannot do that.”

Text 16

pati-sutānvaya-bhrātr-bāndhavān,
ativilaṅghya te 'nty acyutāgatāḥ,
gati-vidas tavodgīta-mohitāḥ,
kitava yoṣitaḥ kas tyajen niśi

Dear Acyuta, You know very well why we have come here. Who but a cheater like You would abandon young women who come to see Him in the middle of the night, enchanted by the loud song of His flute? Just to see You, we have completely rejected our husbands, children, ancestors, brothers and other relatives.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* who, at the time of hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute, were locked in the inner rooms of their houses by their husbands, now speak jealously in this verse.

“Knowing (*vidas*) the tenth and last stage (*gati*), we have reached the

end of our lives and come to You. Though we are in this exalted state, You have disappointed us and failed to let us see You. Though You are called Acyuta (infallible), how have You now become fallen?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Then why have You come here?”

Gopis: “Bewildered by hearing the loud song (*udgita*) of Your flute, we lost all discrimination (*mohitah*) and rushed here.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Ah, foolish girls! If that is so, then just try to tolerate the pain.”

Fearing such a statement, the *gopis* said, “O cheater, no one except a merciless person like You would reject gentle ladies, who of their own accord, have come to see Him at night.”

Another meaning: “O mad man (*kitava*)! What young man would reject young women who come to see him in the middle of the night? Thus though You are a cheater (*kitava*), You have been cheated (of enjoyment).” According to the *Medinī* dictionary, the word *kitava* can refer to a cheater, a mad man or a thorn apple.

Text 17

*rahasi samvidam hr̥c-chayodayam,
prahasitananam prema-vikṣanam,
bṛhad-urah śriyo vikṣya dhāma te,
muhur ati-sprhā muhyate manah*

Our minds are repeatedly bewildered as we think of the intimate conversations we had with You in secret, feel the rise of lust in our hearts and remember Your smiling face, Your loving glances and Your broad chest, the resting place of the goddess of fortune. Thus we experience the most severe hankering for You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “What can be done? With five elements of illusion, like the five arrows of Cupid, You have entered through our eyes and ignited a blazing fire in our hearts. First,

there are Your prayerful petitions for conjugal pleasure. Second, there is the rise of passion in us caused by Your glances. Third, there is Your smiling face. Fourth, there is Your loving glances, and fifth is Your broad chest endowed with all splendor. Considering all of this again and again, our hankering increases, our minds become completely bewildered and out of great eagerness we faint.”

Text 18

*vraja-vanaukasām vyaktir aṅga te,
vrjina-hantry alaṁ viśva-maṅgalam,
tyaja manāk ca nas tvat-sprhātmanām,
sva-jana-hṛd-rujām yan niṣūdanam*

O beloved, Your all-auspicious appearance vanquishes the distress of those living in Vraja’s forests. Our minds long for Your association. Please give to us just a bit of that medicine, which counteracts the disease in Your devotees’ hearts.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Furthermore, Your intention in regard to us innocent, respectable girls, whom You have entranced and drawn into the forest in the middle of the night, is not simply to burn us to death in the fire of anxious expectation, but rather to save our lives by giving us Your intimate association.”

In this verse the *gopis* give the reasoning behind the statement above. “Your auspicious appearance is for all the residents of Vraja without discrimination and it removes all distress. Therefore, for the sake of us, whose minds are hankering to fulfill that desire which arose in You on seeing us, You should give a little of that something to us without being miserly.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What thing is that?”

Gopis: “It is the medicinal lotus flower of Your feet which pacifies the

heart diseases of Your devotees (*sva jana hrd rujam*). If You can apply that medicine on our breasts, we can save our lives by fulfilling Your desire.”

Text 19

*yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuham staneṣu,
bhūtāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaṣeṣu,
tenātavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kim svit,
kūrpādibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyusām naḥ*

O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replied, “O women experienced in love! Those feet for which you have prayed are now absorbed in the pleasure of wandering about the forest. Therefore there is no chance that they can be placed on your breasts.”

The *gopis* tearfully spoke this verse in reply. “Those extremely tender (*sujātam:ati-kumāram*) lotus feet, which we hesitate to place upon our breasts for fear of injuring them, are wandering about in the forest.”

With pitiful words, they express this feeling, “Alas, alas, what an improper and rashly unfair thing to do!”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why are you girls afraid?”

Gopis: “Our reason for fear is the hardness of our breasts.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then why do you hold My feet on them?”

Gopis: “O dear one (*he priya*)! We hold them because we see that You gain satisfaction when Your feet are held on our breasts. Seeing that You derive pleasure from pressing Your feet on our breasts, we accept that,

but we experience grief imagining that Your tender feet are feeling pain. Therefore, we will hold them very carefully (*sanaih dadhimahi*).”

The *gopis*’ feeling of grief in fearful anticipation of the beloved’s distress, even in the midst of a mood of intimacy, is a symptom of *mahā-bhāva*. Due to this feeling, the *gopis* implicitly speak. “Though we are Your friends, we are troubled because of the fear of hurting You. In other words, even in meeting with You, we have the misfortune of suffering. What is to be done now? If we perform severe austerities while praying to the creator to make our breasts softer, that will undo Your happiness. But since our breasts are hard, Your feet feel pain. All right, let us suffer difficulty in this way in both meeting and separation. “Though You are independent, how do You tolerate such difficulties? What is the purpose in wandering in the forest? Are Your feet equipped for wandering from forest to forest?” In this way the *gopis* scold Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa: “I will do whatever is on My mind. What business is this of yours?”

Gopis: “Do Your feet not hurt? Certainly they must, but just as You are merciless to us, so You are also merciless to Your own body. Do You endure the pain with the intention of making us suffer, knowing that if You suffer we suffer? Or do You regard Your pain as bliss, since You get bliss from seeing us suffer? Or according to the principle that association breeds either good or bad qualities, originally Your heart was very soft, but by contacting our hard breasts You have now become hard-hearted. In the same way Your tender feet have become hard by associating with our breasts, so they should not feel any pain from the stones and spikes of dry grass. Or have all the stones and other hard objects become soft by contact with Your glorious feet?

“Or is mother earth, being merciful or out of greed to taste Your sweetness, holding her tongue out as a resting place wherever Your feet fall? Or else maybe by chance You have fallen into the ocean of love for us, as we have for You, and gone mad due to separation from us, and therefore cannot feel the pain in Your feet? Thinking of so many causes, our intelligence has become confused and we cannot conclude anything.”

Kṛṣṇa: “That suffering which you display is suffering in name only. I don’t consider that suffering real suffering since you are still alive.”

Gopis: “Our lives are only in You, for our life is You (*bhavad ayusam*). As long as You are comfortable, then even if we have to suffer this much tribulation, we will remain alive. The idea behind this is that just like You, the creator is engaged in trying to make us miserable, and he is reasoning as follows: ‘If I leave their life-spans with themselves, their life spans will burn up in the blazing torment of conjugal attraction and they will immediately die. Then who could I give suffering to? Therefore I will place their life-spans in the care of my like-minded friend Kṛṣṇa, so they will remain alive and I will be free to continue making them suffer.’ Because of this arrangement we are not dying.”

There is another way of understanding the phrase *bhavad ayusam*: “Our intelligence cannot determine anything and is becoming bewildered, for it is certain that our life airs are now leaving our bodies while You stand and watch.”

Kṛṣṇa: “How can you die when your life-span is intact?”

Gopis: “The durations of our lives have now been offered to You (*bhavad ayusam*). May You use them to enjoy playing in Vraja for a long time.”

Chapter Thirty-two: The Reunion

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti gopyaḥ pragāyantyah,
pralapantyaś ca citradhā,
ruruduḥ su-svaraṁ rājan,
kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, having thus sung and spoken their hearts out in various charming ways, the gopīs began to weep loudly. They were very eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Sri Kṛṣṇa returned to His beloved *gopis*. They worshiped Kṛṣṇa and He honored them in return, acknowledging that He was in debt to them. Longing for Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis* sang (*pragayantyah*) the most wonderful (*citradha*) rhythms and tunes, and talked garrulously (*pralapantyah*) due to impulse of love. Then they cried with sweet voices.

Text 2

*tāsām āvirabhūc chauriḥ,
smayamāna-mukhāmbujah,
pītāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī,
sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ*

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, a smile on His lotus face, appeared before the gopīs. Wearing a garland and a yellow garment, He directly appeared as one who can bewilder the mind of Cupid, who himself bewilders the minds of ordinary people.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The name “*chauriḥ*” (*śauriḥ*) is spoken by Sukadeva Gosvami out of jealousy toward Kṛṣṇa, since he, Sukadeva, is taking the side of the *gopīs*. The word *śauriḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa is a *ksatriya*. Because Kṛṣṇa took His birth among the royal order [Vasudeva is a *ksatriya*], who are hard-hearted by nature, He displayed that characteristic by giving sorrow to the *gopīs*, who possessed pure love for Him. If Kṛṣṇa had taken birth in the cowherd community, whose hearts are soft and honest, He would not have acted like this. This is the hint Sukadeva Gosvami gives by using the word *chauri* or *śauriḥ*.

Kṛṣṇa was broadly smiling (*smayamāna*) even while the *gopīs* were suffering. Actually, however, Kṛṣṇa is smiling just to give them pleasure. Although Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face (*mukhāmbujah*) blossomed with a smile, the suffering of the *gopīs* pained His lotus heart.

Kṛṣṇa appeared before the *gopīs* with a yellow shawl (*pitambara*) draped across His shoulders and hanging down on both sides of His chest. Folding His hands, Kṛṣṇa begged them for forgiveness. He wore a garland to show the *gopīs* what Radha had given Him.

Sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ means that Kṛṣṇa was directly Cupid. Even though Cupid bewilders the whole world, when he came to bewilder Kṛṣṇa by taking the form of a woman, Cupid himself became struck by his own arrows of love and fainted in bewilderment upon seeing the enchanting beauty of Kṛṣṇa. By this we understand that when Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* enjoy together, they are being struck by the arrows of that Cupid emanating from Kṛṣṇa Himself.

The *gopīs* were not impelled by the arrows of the mundane Cupid, who bewilders the entire world, because he has no domain in their transcendental affairs. We should also understand that when Kṛṣṇa appeared before the *gopīs*, He took this particular form of the

bewilderer of Cupid (*manmatha-manmathaḥ*) revealing His own enchanting sweetness, in order to make the *gopis* forget their intense sorrow of separation from Him.

Text 3

*taṁ vilokyāgataṁ preṣṭhaṁ,
prīty-utphulla-dr̥śo 'balāḥ,
uttasthur yugapat sarvās,
tanvaḥ prāṇam ivāgatam*

When the *gopīs* saw that their dearest Kṛṣṇa had returned to them, they all stood up at once, and out of their affection for Him their eyes bloomed wide. It was as if the air of life had reentered their bodies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs*’ life airs returned (*āgatam*) to their hands, feet (*tanvaḥ*) and other limbs, and then they stood up on seeing Kṛṣṇa return (*āgatam*). The word *āgatam* is repeated to make it clear that the swooning *gopīs* recovered only because of Kṛṣṇa’s return.

Text 4

*kācit karāmbujam śaurer,
jagrhe 'ñjalīnā mudā,
kācid dadhāra tad-bāhum,
am̐se 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The next five verses (4-8) describe the personal expressions of ecstatic love of some of the principal *gopis*. “His lotus hand” (*kara-ambujam*) means in particular Kṛṣṇa’s right hand, as will be made clear in the second half of the verse. “She seized” (*jaḡrhe*) implies that she did this out of explicit eagerness to touch Kṛṣṇa, based on her shy affection for Him. Since this *gopi* touched Kṛṣṇa with reverence, it can be understood that she belonged to the submissive (*daksina*) “right-wing” group of *gopis*, fully subservient (*paradhina*) to Kṛṣṇa. Such a *gopi* has a kind of affection which is called *ghṛta sneha* (ghee-like), thinking herself as belonging to Kṛṣṇa with reverence. Because she is mentioned first, it may be concluded that she was the seniormost of that group, namely Candravali.

The other *gopi* put Kṛṣṇa’s other hand, decorated with sandalwood paste, on her shoulder. That would be Kṛṣṇa’s left hand, since it is fitting that she should stand on the left side of her lover. Since this *gopi* is taking it upon herself to embrace Kṛṣṇa while still retaining a semblance of reverence, she displays the kind of affection known as *madhu-sneha* (honey-like), possessiveness mixed somewhat with *ghṛta sneha* (ghee-like) reverence. Thus she acted independently, as if her lover were under her control, and yet remained submissive (*daksina*) at the same time by standing on Kṛṣṇa’s left side. That *gopi* was Śyamā, a *suhṛt-pakṣa sakhi* (group friends of Radha).

Text 5

*kācid añjalināḡrḥṇāt,
tanvī tāmbūla-carvitam,
ekā tad-aṅghri-kamalam,
santaptā stanayor adhāt*

A slender gopī respectfully took in her joined hands the betel nut He had chewed, and another gopī, burning with desire, put His lotus feet on her breasts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: One *gopī* took Kṛṣṇa’s chewed betel-nut (*tāmbūla-carvitam*) in her joined palms. She was a member of the “right-wing” (*daksina*) group, considering herself subservient to her lover, but having a friendship with Kṛṣṇa based mainly in the mood of servitude (*dasya-bhava*). Another *gopī*, sitting on the ground, took Kṛṣṇa’s right lotus foot in her hands and placed it on her breast. Kṛṣṇa supported Himself with His left arm resting on the shoulder of a *gopī*, and His left foot fixed on the ground. The seated *gopī* was in a mood of servitude (*dasya-bhava*) predominated by friendship. She also considered herself subservient to her lover and was “right-wing.” Both *gopīs* had *ghṛta-sneha*, reverential affection, thinking of themselves as belonging to Kṛṣṇa, as they were the chief *sakhīs* of Candravali, namely Padma and Saibya.

Text 6

*ekā bhru-kuṭīm ābadhya,
prema-saṁrambha-vihvalā,
ghnantīvaikṣat kaṭākṣepaiḥ,
sandaṣṭa-daśana-cchadā*

One gopī, beside herself with loving anger, bit her lips and stared at Him with frowning eyebrows as if to wound Him with her harsh glances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: One *gopī*, overwhelmed with the depth of Her love, arched her eyebrows like a full-drawn bow and out of Her affectionate anger struck Kṛṣṇa with the arrows of Her sidelong glances.

“O crest-jewel of deceivers! You have given Me the *halahala* poison of pure love for You, and it has had its full effect. Now that My life airs are about to leave my body, why are You again approaching Me to burn them even more? I can understand very well who You are.” This was the mood She revealed while glancing at Kṛṣṇa.

She also bit Her lower lip while hiding them with Her hands as an expression of Her anger. This *gopi* showed jealousy (*māna*), arising from Her *madhu-sneha* (honey-like love), which is the affectionate mood of possessing Kṛṣṇa and thinking of Kṛṣṇa as Hers. This *gopi* exhibited *vāmya-svabhāve*, a quarrelsome and crooked nature full of contrariness, which is characteristic of “left-wing” (*vāmya*) *gopis*. This *gopi* is none other than Srimati Radhika.

Text 7

*aparānimiṣad-dṛgbhyām,
juṣāṇā tan-mukhāmbujam,
āpītam api nātrpyat,
santas tac-caraṇam yathā*

Another *gopī* looked with unblinking eyes upon His lotus face, but even after deeply relishing its sweetness She did not feel satiated, just as mystic saints are never satiated when meditating upon the Lord’s feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One *gopi* gazed at Kṛṣṇa with unblinking eyes, due to being stunned with bliss. Her eyes were like maddened bees eager to taste the honey of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face. Though repeatedly relishing that nectar, they were still not satisfied.

This verse can be interpreted in another way: Because of the angry glance of Radha mentioned in the previous verse, Kṛṣṇa’s face was trembling with fear and remorse. Therefore that *gopi* could not be

satisfied, though constantly drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face with her two eyes. Although the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's face was drunk and its sweetness fully relished, the natural sweetness of His lotus face increased without limit. Nevertheless because of being struck with the arrow glances of the leader of her group (Radha), the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa's face then increased manifold, being mixed with the *sañcāri-bhāvas* of Her fear, despair, humility, shyness and so forth. Thus this *gopi's* thirst became even greater and she could not be satiated. For lack of any proper analogy, a partially applicable analogy is spoken by the words beginning *santaḥ* (saints). Just as devotees situated in the *dasya* and *sakhya-bhavas* (mood of loving servitude and friendship), continually serve Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, still they cannot be completely satisfied, so this *gopi* also could not be satisfied. It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa is giving His full glance and attention only to that *gopi* (Radha) who was glaring at Him with furrowed brows, and did not divert Himself to any one else at all. Seeing Kṛṣṇa was inattentive to herself, the *gopi* mentioned in verse seven, Lalita-sakhi, did not become ashamed, but rather continued looking at Kṛṣṇa willfully with fully opened eyes. It should be understood from this that the *gopi* (Radha, verse six), who was pouring down upon Kṛṣṇa the arrows of Her sidelong glances, is the most fortunate of all the *gopis*.

Text 8

*taṁ kācin netra-randhreṇa,
 hṛdi kṛtvā nimīlya ca,
 pulakāṅgy upaguhyāste,
 yogīvānanda-samplutā*

One gopī took the Lord through the aperture of her eyes and placed Him within her heart. Then, with her eyes closed and her bodily

hairs standing on end, she continuously embraced Him within. Thus immersed in transcendental ecstasy, she resembled a yogī meditating upon the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Hr̥di-kṛtvā means “leading into her heart,” which indicates this *gopi* was thinking, “May this fickle lover, Kṛṣṇa, whom I have found by great fortune, not leave me again.”

Thinking Kṛṣṇa would escape through her eye holes, she closed her eyes. Her body then erupted in goose bumps of ecstasy because of the unobstructed enjoyment of union with Kṛṣṇa. She stood there in a pose of embracing Kṛṣṇa to her breasts with her arms. All her gravity was lost due to the intense hankering she felt now that the period of intense separation was over. Her shyness also failed to manifest due to the absence of any outsider’s curious gaze.

The three *gopis* mentioned in verses six, seven and eight, because they did not go to the side of their beloved, are understood to be of the uncooperative type (*vāma*, “left-wing *gopis*.”) They thought, “Kṛṣṇa should come to us, we should not go to Him.” This mentality shows that these three *gopis* are full of possessiveness (*madiyata-bhāva*) toward Kṛṣṇa, and this quality transforms their affection into *madhu-sneha* “honey-like affection” for Kṛṣṇa. Because these *gopis* think, “Kṛṣṇa belongs to me”, they are very intimate companions of Kṛṣṇa who have fully brought their lover under their control. Among these three, Sri Radha, the leader of all the *gopis*, is mentioned in verse six. Verses seven and eight describe Radha’s principal sakhis, Lalita and Visakha. The *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* says the *gopis* mentioned in verses 4-8 are Candrāvalī, Śyāmalā (v.4), Padmā, Śaibyā (v.5), Śrī Rādhā (v.6), Lalitā (v.7) and Viśākhā (v.8). The eighth *gopi* is understood to be Bhadrā as mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāna*:

*kācid āyantam alokya, govindam ati-harṣitā
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti, prāha nānyad udairayat*

“One *gopi* looking at Govinda became extremely joyful and began to repeatedly sing His name, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” She could say nothing else.”

Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī itself quotes a verse from the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Dvārakā-māhātmya* section of the *Prahlāda-saṁhitā*) that declares these eight *gopīs* to be the principal among the three billion *gopīs*. Detailed information about the hierarchy of *gopīs* is available in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

The *Padma Purāṇa* confirms that Śrī Rādhā is the foremost of the *gopīs*:

yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos, tasyāḥ kuṇḍam priyam tathā, sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā, viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā

“Just as Radha is most dear to Kṛṣṇa, so also is Her *kunda* (Radha-kunda). Of all the *gopīs*, Radha is the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa.”

The *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra* also names Radhika as Kṛṣṇa's foremost consort:

devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā, rādhikā para-devatā, sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva, kāntiḥ sammohinī parā

“Sri Radha is the most beautiful, supremely worshipable goddess.

Radha is always totally absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. Radha is the central figure for all the goddesses of fortune. Radha fulfills all of Kṛṣṇa's desires, and completely enchants His mind. Radha is the inseparable internal potency of Kṛṣṇa.”

The *Āg-pariśiṣṭa* (a supplement to the *Āg Veda*) says: *rādhayā mādhave devo mādhavenaiva rādhikā vibhrājante janeṣu* “Madhava together with Radha, and Radhika together with Madhava are the most radiantly attractive persons in the whole universe.”

Text 9

*sarvās tāḥ keśavāloka,
paramotsava-nirvṛtāḥ,
jahur viraha-jam tāpaṁ,
prājñam prāpya yathā janāḥ*

All the gopīs enjoyed the greatest festivity when they saw their beloved Keśava again. They gave up the distress of separation, just as people in general forget their misery when they gain the association of a spiritually enlightened person.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As people (*janah*) who are suffering the pains of material existence give up suffering on meeting a topmost devotee (*prājñam*), so the *gopis* got released from their suffering by seeing Kṛṣṇa. This is similar to the *Bhagavatam*'s description of the rainy season: *grheṣu tapta-nirvinṇā yathācyuta-janāgame*, “Those feeling the distress of household life become blissful when the Lord’s topmost devotees visit them.” (SB 10.20.20)

Text 10

*tābhir vidhūta-śokābhir,
bhagavān acyuto vṛtaḥ,
vyarocatādhikam tāta,
puruṣaḥ śaktibhir yathā*

Encircled by the gopīs, who were now relieved of all distress, Lord Acyuta, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, shone forth splendidly. My dear King, Kṛṣṇa thus appeared like the Supersoul encircled by His spiritual potencies.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Saktibhiḥ* means with the potencies of all the senses. A person attains splendor when endowed with the power of all his senses, and appears miserable if there is a disorder of his senses. In the same way, when the *gopis* were distressed, Kṛṣṇa Himself also felt distressed and did not shine forth so much. But when the *gopis* were relieved of all their unhappiness of separation and felt renewed attraction to Him, Kṛṣṇa looked even more beautiful than ever.

Just as a person experiences pleasure when his own senses feel pleasure and feels distress when his own senses feel distress, similarly, Kṛṣṇa feels happy when the *gopis* are happy and sad when they are sad. This establishes the truth that Kṛṣṇa had pure transcendental love for the *gopis*, and that they were direct emanations from Kṛṣṇa’s personal form (*svarupa-bhuta*).

This point is described in the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purāṇa*: “There were sixteen-thousand *gopis* assembled at the *rasa* dance. In their midst, like the best of swans, was the Paramātmā, Janardana Kṛṣṇa. O Parvati-devi! These *gopis* are glorified as the sixteen *saktis*, personal potencies of Kṛṣṇa. Sri Kṛṣṇa is compared to the moon and these sixteen principal *gopis* are His phases. When they come together they are like a garland of the sixteen phases of the moon. These sixteen parts are each further divided into sixteen more *gopis*, each existing with separate bodies and emotions.”

The *Agamas* say: “At the *rasa mandala*, Kṛṣṇa appeared most splendid surrounded by three billion beautiful *gopis*.” Among them sixteen thousand were prominent. Of those, one thousand were more prominent. Out of these one thousand, eight *gopis* were the most principal, and among these eight, two, namely Radha and Candravali, were by far the best. Of these two, Sri Radha is the most superexcellent. This is the conclusion of the devotional scriptures.

Texts 11–12

*tāḥ samādāya kālindyā,
nirviśya pulinaṁ vibhuḥ,
vikasat-kunda-mandāra,
surabhy-anila-ṣaṭpadam,
śarac-candrāmśu-sandoha,
dhvasta-doṣā-tamaḥ śivam,
kṛṣṇāyā hasta-taralā,
cita-komala-vālukam*

The almighty Lord then took the gopīs with Him to the bank of the Kālindī, who with the hands of her waves had scattered piles of soft sand upon the shore. In that auspicious place the breeze, bearing the fragrance of blooming kunda and mandāra flowers, attracted many bees, and the abundant rays of the autumn moon dispelled the darkness of night.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Holding the hands of the *gopīs* and laughing, Kṛṣṇa looked especially wonderful as He approached the bank of the Yamuna. The splendor of the riverbank is described in one and a half verses. The breeze along the Yamuna’s bank was fragrant with blossoming *kunda* and *mandara* flowers. We can infer that the wind, coming off the river, was cool and it was also gentle because bees were circling within it. The abundant rays of the autumn full moon dispelled the darkness. The river bank was most auspicious and gave great pleasure (*sivam*). With the hands of her waves Yamuna-devi had spread out soft sand for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 13

*tad-darśanāhlāda-vidhūta-hṛd-rujo,
manorathāntam śrutayo yathā yayuḥ,
svair uttarīyaiḥ kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitair,
acīkṣṇann āsanam ātma-bandhave*

Their heartache vanquished by the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs, like the personified Vedas before them, felt their desires completely fulfilled. For their dear friend Kṛṣṇa they arranged a seat with their shawls which were smeared with the kuṅkuma powder from their breasts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the *gopis*’ services rendered to Kṛṣṇa in pure love befitting their attitude of intimate friendship (*ātma-bandhave*). All the distress in the minds of the young girls of Vraja was removed by the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa. They arranged a seat for their dear friend by using their shawls, which were sprinkled with the *kunkuma* from their breasts. The *śrutis* attained the highest platform of desire fulfillment (*mano-rathantam*). Upon seeing Kṛṣṇa enjoying with the *gopis*, the *śrutis* thought, “When will we become Vraja-gopis and offer the *kunkuma*-tinged shawls from our breasts as seats for Kṛṣṇa?” The *Brhad-Vamana Purana* says the *śrutis*, following in the footsteps of the *gopis*, executed severe austerities in order to attain bodies of *gopis*.

Therefore the *śrutis*, or personified *Vedas*, prayed in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.87.23) as follows:

striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo, vayam api te samāḥ samadr̥śo ’nghri-saroja-sudhāḥ

“The women of Vraja attained the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet after having their intelligence vanquished by the sharp poison of His beautiful serpentine arms. By following in their footsteps, we too will become *gopis* and serve Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”

The *śrutis* had seen Kṛṣṇa during His appearance in the previous day of Brahmā and had become full of the most intense desire to associate with Him. Then in this *kalpa* they became *gopīs*. Since the *Vedas* are eternal in human society, the *śrutis* in this *kalpa* also become full of desire for Kṛṣṇa and in the next *kalpa* they too will become *gopīs*.

Text 14

*tatropaviṣṭo bhagavān sa īśvaro,
yogeśvarāntar-hṛdi kalpitāsanah,
cakāsa gopī-pariṣad-gato ’rcitas,
trailokya-lakṣmy-eka-padam vapur dadhat*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for whom the great masters of mystic meditation arrange a seat within their hearts, took His seat in the assembly of gopīs. His transcendental body, the exclusive abode of beauty and opulence within the three worlds, shone brilliantly as the gopīs worshiped Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sat upon the various seats laid out by the successive groups of *gopīs*. But, it may be questioned, how could Kṛṣṇa sit upon so many seats with only one body? Because Kṛṣṇa is the controller (*isvara*), He expanded His form into many without anyone noticing, in order to fulfill His desires (*bhagavan*). The word *bhaga* means desire (*kāma*) as well as wealth and glory according to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary. Therefore, here the word *bhagavan* means *kāmavān*, one who possesses desires. As soon as Kṛṣṇa's *aisvarya-sakti* (*isvara*) noted His desire to sit on all the seats, these forms were manifested by His *yogamaya* potency.

The indestructible, most valued sitting place of the Lord which is difficult to attain by anyone in the three worlds is established deep in the hearts of the masters of mystic meditation like Siva and Ananta Sesa. The Vraja-gopīs, however, having conquered the Lord by their intense, selfless love, arranged a seat for Kṛṣṇa outside of their hearts with their own garments, which were fragrant with the perfumes they had used. Kṛṣṇa accepted those seats and appeared most resplendent (*cakāsa*) as He sat on them. He who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and whom even such personal associates as Brahma and Siva must approach with prayers at the shore of the Milk Ocean, whereupon He mystically appears within their minds for a single moment, has now become the personal associate of the *gopīs* (*gopi parisad gata*).

The word *arcitas* means that Kṛṣṇa was honored by presentations of betel nut, joking words, smiles and sidelong glances. In some cases the word *arcitas* (worshiped) is replaced by the word *acyuta*, which means that Kṛṣṇa sat there for a long time accepting worship.

Why did Kṛṣṇa appear among the *gopis*? He whose transcendental body (*vapuh*) is the exclusive (*ekam*) reservoir (*padam*) of the manifold opulences of beauty (*laksmi*), wealth, power and fame, which are found in His own infinite expansions throughout the lower, middle and upper regions (*traī-lokya*) of the material and spiritual worlds was nourished by immersing in the sweet ocean of the *gopis*’ radiant beauty, soft smiles and sidelong glances.

Another meaning: From the very moment Kṛṣṇa sat shining amongst the *gopis* on the bank of the Yamuna, the masters of mystic *yoga* like Lord Siva brought Kṛṣṇa into their own hearts by meditation (*yogeśvarāntar-ḥṛdi kalpitāsanah*), characterized by Kṛṣṇa appearing beautifully in the midst of the *gopis* and exhibiting various talks and joking gestures.

Text 15

*sabhājayitvā tam anaṅga-dīpanam,
sahāsa-līlekṣaṇa-vibhrama-bhruvā,
saṁsparśanenāṅka-kṛtāṅghri-hastayoḥ,
saṁstutya īṣat kupitā babhāṣire*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had awakened romantic desires within the gopīs, and they honored Him by glancing at Him with playful smiles, gesturing amorously with their eyebrows, and massaging His hands and feet as they held them in their laps. Even while worshiping Him, however, they felt somewhat angry, and thus they addressed Him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the actions of *gopis* who did not want to submit to Kṛṣṇa’s advances for conjugal love. Glancing with explicit movements of their eyebrows expressing their individual feelings, the *gopis* honored Kṛṣṇa, who incites lust (*anaṅga-dīpanam*) within them. *Sabhājayitvā* means that the *gopis* were

honoring Kṛṣṇa with appropriate emotions in order to conceal their affectionate anger, thinking, “Previously Kṛṣṇa abandoned us, and now He has come for His own enjoyment.” To hide their anger they began to praise Kṛṣṇa while taking His feet and hands in their laps. *Āṅka-kṛtā* can also indicate that the *gopis* placed their hands and feet on Kṛṣṇa’s lap.

Pleased with the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s hands and feet, the *gopis* praised Him: “Ah! Your feet and hands are extraordinarily cool. Having relieved us of the painful fire of separation, You are truly the pleasing moon, who knows no distress or sorrow.” After praising Kṛṣṇa with such sarcastic words, the *gopis* became slightly angry. Even though their anger had somewhat reduced due to the ecstasy of seeing Kṛṣṇa, still a trace remained in their minds. In this mental state they began to speak.

Text 16

*śrī-gopya ūcuḥ,
bhajato ’nubhajanty eka,
eka etad-viparyayam,
nobhayāṁś ca bhajanty eka,
etan no brūhi sādhu bhoḥ*

The gopīs said: Some people reciprocate the affection only of those who are affectionate toward them, while others show affection even to those who are indifferent or inimical. And yet others will not show affection toward anyone. Dear Kṛṣṇa, please properly explain this matter to us.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Each of the *gopis* personally considered within her mind, “Since Kṛṣṇa has put us, who are the crest-jewel of all His loving devotees, into such an unfortunate condition we

should ask Him why He did it.”

Other *gopis* thought, “O Kṛṣṇa, do you have love for us, indifference to us, or enmity towards us? Even though there are these three possibilities, we cannot ascertain which is the fact. Moreover, is Your love conditional or unconditional? It cannot be conditional, because the person with conditional love gratifies those who help him fulfill his desires, and therefore does not neglect them or subject them to misery. You however, have tried to kill us by burning us in the fire of separation from You.

“And neither is Your love unconditional, since You abandoned us in the dense, fearful forest in the middle of the night. Though seeing our suffering, You were not at all bereaved. In that we see some motive, so it cannot be unconditional. We can also understand that You are not indifferent to us, because we see that You try to make us both happy and sad. Neither is it enmity, which would have to be either permanent dislike or enmity in a particular connection with some unfavorable reciprocation. It is not permanent dislike, because we don’t see it in You. Neither is it from unfavorable actions, because we have done nothing inimical toward You.

“Rather, You serve as the example of a person who has that sort of perverted enmity symptomized by the vicious desire to harm those who trust one. We should not state this openly with our own mouths, but we will ask such questions in the form of riddles, so that Kṛṣṇa Himself will give the appropriate answer, and thus the truth of this matter will become evident.”

Because the *gopis* were feeling the same sentiment within each of their hearts, they all reflected in a similar way. Then these *gopis* of similar mind spoke: “O most intelligent one, O Kṛṣṇa, please answer this riddle of ours. There are some people who only respect those who respect them. Their respect is conditional. They give respect expecting something, and if they do not get that, then they no longer give respect. This is conditional love. Quite to the contrary of this, there are those who give respect to those who do not respect them. They have unconditional respect. Not expecting any results for themselves, they

have unconditional love.

“The third type of people are those who do not respect anyone, whether that person respects them or not. There is no question of conditional or unconditional love here. Those persons are indifferent. Hatred and enmity are also non-reciprocation, so persons who are hateful and inimical also fall in the category of non-respect.”

Though not clearly mentioned here, it will become somewhat evident in Kṛṣṇa’s answers. The *gopis* said, “Kṛṣṇa, Please say something to explain this matter as to who reciprocates with whom and who fails to do so? You should answer correctly (*sādhu*) without deviating from the subject.”

Text 17

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
mitho bhajanti ye sakhyah,
svārthaikāntodyamā hi te,
na tatra sauhrdam dharmah,
svārthārtham tad dhi nānyathā*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: So-called friends who show affection for each other only to benefit themselves are actually selfish. They have no true friendship, nor are they following the true principles of religion. Indeed, if they did not expect benefit for themselves, they would not reciprocate.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Understanding the intention of the *gopis*, Kṛṣṇa answered. “Those who reciprocate with one another based on expectation of return for their assistance are endeavoring exclusively for the sake of their own rewards in the present and future. They are indeed worshiping only themselves and no one else. Their mutual reciprocation would not occur otherwise. They are selfish persons

with conditional love, and are full of lusty desires. Consequently these people have no love (*sauhṛdam:prema*). Nor do they have any *dharma* (faultless religiousness).”

Text 18

*bhajanty abhajato ye vai,
karuṇāḥ pitarau yathā,
dharmo nirapavādo 'tra,
sauhṛdam ca su-madhyamāḥ*

My dear slender-waisted gopīs, some people are genuinely merciful or, like parents, naturally affectionate. Such persons, who devotedly serve even those who fail to reciprocate with them, are following the true, faultless path of religion, and they are true well-wishers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa here answers the second question. “Those who honor those who do not honor them are showing unconditional respect. They are of two categories: those with family relationship, such as the father and mother, and those who are merciful by nature. Specifically, the “merciful” are the pure devotees like Prahlada Maharaja who manifest unconditional mercy. Both these types are not concerned with personal gain. Whether they are happy or miserable, they continue to reciprocate with the other person, and even after death they do not give up their respect. Among these the pure devotees are the best, and the mother and father are second class. The religiousness (*dharma*) of both these classes is faultless (*nirapavādaḥ*), because it is free from expectation of material results. Their undying friendship and pure love (*sauhṛda:prema*) is also faultless. “O slender-waisted ones (*su-madhyamāḥ*)!” The word *su-madhyamāḥ* implies indirectly that the middle (*madhyama*) question of the *gopīs* is the most excellent (*su*). Because they apply to dishonorable examples,

the first and last questions are not as respectable.” Or it can mean, “This middle answer actually is directed towards you *gopis*, who are the personification of the middle question’s answer.”

Text 19

*bhajato 'pi na vai kecid,
bhajanty abhajataḥ kutaḥ,
ātmārāmā hy āpta-kāmā,
akṛta-jñā guru-druhaḥ*

Then there are those individuals who are spiritually self-satisfied, materially fulfilled or by nature ungrateful or simply envious of superiors. Such persons will not love even those who love them, what to speak of those who are inimical.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa answers the third question of the *gopis* in this verse.

“Since some persons do not respect or respond to those who respect them, what is the question of respecting those who do not respect them? There are of four types, mentioned in sequence from greater to lesser. The first is the *ātmārāmā*, who delights in the self alone and forever looks within. The second type is the *āpta-kāmā*, who though seeing externally, has satisfied all his material desires, and therefore does not seek enjoyment from others. The third type is the ungrateful person (*akṛta-jñā*). Even though they desire sense gratification from others, they do not recognize when others help them.

The fourth type is the *guru-druhaḥ*, who is inimical to his superiors. He does not acknowledge what others have done for him, and rather shows excessive hatred towards them for no good reason. Those who have a reason for being inimical are called *alpa-druhaḥ*, a lower degree class of *guru-druhaḥ*. In addition, those who show hatred toward one who

renders protection are *guru-druhaḥ*, and those who injure one who is faithful are *guru-druhaḥ*. These three types of *guru-druhi* are those who do not respect others.

In this way, we have had one example (the selfish person) for first question, two examples (Prahlada, the mother and father) for second, and six examples for the third, making a total of nine examples.

Text 20

*nāham tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn,
bhajāmy amīṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye,
yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe,
tac-cintayānyan nibhrto na veda*

But the reason I do not immediately 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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “Kṛṣṇa, You are not among the examples given in Your answers to the first and second questions. For You are not a selfish materialist, not a merciful devotee, nor a mother or father. Please tell us then which of the four types of *guru-druhi* You belong to?”

Kṛṣṇa answered, “You want to hear My defeat from My own mouth? O sakhis, smiling and glancing at each other in glee! Please hear Me. In as much as I am Narayana, I am self-satisfied (*ātmārāmā*) and full in all desires (*purṇa-kāma*), but as the son of Nanda, I am neither of these. As a simple cowherd boy, not having studied the *Nīti-sāstras*, I am *akṛta-jñā* (ignorant), but as Narayana I am *kṛta-jñā*, all knowing and also grateful. I am *guru-drohi* for having hurt you by once abandoning

you after having shown favor to you many times by enjoying pastimes with you. Nevertheless, I am not *guru-drohi*, for I gave you the ecstasy of seeing Me again.”

Gopis: “Then to which class do You belong?”

Kṛṣṇa: “To none of these (*nāham*).” Here the word *tu* (on the other hand) expresses the introduction of a contrary idea. “I do not respond to any living entity that respects or worships Me.”

Gopis: “But how is this different from the group (*guru-drohi*) You previously explained?”

Kṛṣṇa: “For those surrendered souls who worship Me through *nama-kirtana* and other means, I do not respond in order to make their worship more perfect. O *gopis* (*abalā-gana*) who cannot understand My real intention! Not seeing Me, those surrendered souls develop deep humility, feeling, ‘Alas, alas, everything I have done has been useless. Because I am an offender, Kṛṣṇa has not shown even the slightest favor toward me. Let me be damned!’

“By constantly thinking in this way, those who have not yet developed mature love for Me will become free from lust and anger and awaken pure devotion full of power and brilliance. However, the nature of those who already have mature love (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) for Me is different. For them, I do not respond in order to increase their attachment to Me. I appear and then disappear, in order to deepen their loving attachment.”

In this regard an analogy to those who already have *prema* is given by the words beginning *yathā*. When a poor man gains wealth and then loses it, he becomes filled (*nibhṛtaḥ*) with thoughts of that wealth, and cannot think of anything else, such as eating and drinking. Those who have attained *prema*, and then lose the Lord react similar to this.

Kṛṣṇa: “In this way I am actually merciful. It is desirable for My worshipers to have this complete attachment to Me. Thus to increase that attachment more and more, I, even though externally failing to reciprocate with them, invisibly reciprocate very much with them.

“Although you *gopis* are the ideal examples of those who worship even those who do not worship them, I too am actually very merciful, as much as you are, since I have given you the gift of My *darsana*.

One should not think that only if I am present that I respond, and if I am absent I do not respond. For then My promise, *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, ‘I will respond accordingly as they worship Me’ (*Bg. 4.11*) would be broken.”

Text 21

*evam mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda,
svānām hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye 'balāḥ,
mayāparokṣam bhajatā tirohitam,
māsūyitum mārhatha tat priyam 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.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “It is true that You fully respond both to the devotees who have not achieved *prema* and to those who have achieved *prema*. Now You have counted us among these ordinary living beings, since You are also acting in this manner with us.”

Anticipating these doubtful words of the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa said, “O dearly beloveds! The dust of your lotus feet is more dear to Me than countless millions of My own lives. Please forgive My wickedness for treating you like ordinary persons today.” This is the meaning of *evam*. Or *evam* can mean “in this way.”

“For My sake You gave up worldly (*loka*) opinion by ignoring what is proper and improper, and also the *Vedas* (*veda*) by ignoring what is religious and irreligious. In addition, you gave up your affection

for relatives (*svanam*), wealth and friends to come to Me. In order to increase your loving propensity (*anuvṛttaye*), I have responded to you invisibly as I do with My ordinary devotees. I disappeared from your sight with a desire to hear your love-filled lamentations.”

With such pitiful exclamations of repentance Kṛṣṇa states that He has done a great injustice. Kṛṣṇa said, “Devotees such as you have never existed either in the past, present or in the future. There are no other devotees like you, whose attraction for Me is so great that it never decreases even by one atom. Please, therefore, forgive this injustice of Mine, which I did to show the other *premi-bhaktas* the great glory of your love in separation. Please forgive Me for My lack of consideration of you. You should not be inimical (*asūyitum*) or find fault with Me because I am dear (*priya*) to you. Certainly lovers do not take to heart the faults of their beloved (*priyam*).”

Text 22

*na pāraye 'ham niravadya-saṁyujām,
sva-sādhu-kṛtyam 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Now please hear what is going on in My mind. Your association with Me is faultless and unconditional (*niravadya-saṁyujām*). It does not depend on any condition of material desire (*kāma*), fruitive work (*karma*),

worldly opinion (*loka*), religious codes (*dharmā*) or the injunctions of scripture (*śāstra*). You are all saintly (*sva-sādhu*) simply by the good deeds (*kṛtyam*) you have done. It is not by coming into contact with something that you have become sanctified. I am incapable of properly reciprocating with you, even if I were to attain a lifetime of the demigods.” The word *kṛtyam* is in the singular to suggest that even one such action of the *gopis* can never be repaid.

“Completely cutting off (*samvṛścyā*) the chains of attachment to relatives (*geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ*) such as husbands, sisters-in-law, fathers and brothers, which should not be cut, you worshipped Me (*mābhajan*).” Another meaning of *mā abhajan* is as follows: *Mā* is used as a negative in this case meaning, “You cut off all bonds to your family and after attaining Me, you no longer reciprocate with them, unlike immature *yogis*, who still maintain some family attachment.”

“I, on the other hand, worship you but at the same time continue having affection for My parents, brothers and friends. Even though I have promised to reciprocate equally with those who surrender unto Me (*ye yathā mām prapadyante*), I failed to carry out that promise in regards to you. I did not respond as you did by giving up My father, mother, brother and friends. It is impossible for Me to repay you for what you have done. Therefore let your own pure character be the reward. Although your good character makes you forgive Me for My fault and relieve Me of My debt, still I remain forever indebted to you.”

The *gopis* then considered in their minds, “Even though Kṛṣṇa, being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is full of all transcendental qualities, devoid of the slightest trace of any fault, and knows all about our love for Him, in order to establish the superiority of our love for Him, and to make Himself indebted to us, He has performed this act of giving us up. We, who wanted to defeat Kṛṣṇa and criticize Him for His conduct with our riddles, have been most immoral in our intent, whereas He desired only to establish our exalted position. We could never act like that! Thus in effect we have become conquered by Kṛṣṇa’s love.”

Chapter Thirty-three: The Rasa Dance

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
itthaṁ bhagavato gopyaḥ,
śrutvā vācaḥ su-peśalāḥ,
jahur viraha-jaṁ tāpaṁ,
tad-aṅgopacitāśiṣaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the cowherd girls heard the Supreme Personality of Godhead speak these most charming words, they forgot their distress caused by separation from Him. Touching His transcendental limbs, they felt all their desires fulfilled.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the *rasa* dance, various amusements and playing in the Yamuna. There is also an exchange of questions and answers between Sukadeva Gosvami and King Parikṣit.

The *gopis*’ desires (*āśiṣaḥ:kāmāḥ*) were fulfilled by touching Kṛṣṇa’s limbs and by hearing His charming (*su-peśalāḥ*) words. Another meaning: “The *gopis* gave up their pain of separation upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s enchanting words, and Kṛṣṇa increased His joy by touching their bodies.”

Thus it is implied that after hearing Kṛṣṇa’s replies to their questions, the *gopis*’ minds were pacified, and the pastimes of embracing and kissing commenced.

Text 2

*tatrārabhata govindo,
rāsa-krīḍām anuvrataiḥ,
strī-ratnair anvitaḥ prītair,
anyonyābaddha-bāhubhiḥ*

There on the Yamunā's banks Lord Govinda then began the pastime of the rāsa dance in the company of those jewels among women, the faithful gopīs, who joyfully linked their arms together.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the actions of singing, dancing, kissing and embracing combine together they produce *rāsa*. Amusement composed of *rāsa* is called *rāsa-krīḍām* or the *rāsa* dance. Joyfully entwining their arms together, Kṛṣṇa played with those *gopīs*, the jewels among women, who were now favorably disposed (*anuvrataiḥ*).

Text 3

*rāsotsavaḥ sampravṛtto,
gopī-maṇḍala-maṇḍitah,
yogeśvarena kṛṣṇena,
tāsām madhye dvayor dvayoḥ,
praviṣṭena gṛhītānām,
kaṇṭhe sva-nikaṭam striyah,
yam manyeran nabhas tāvad,
vimāna-śata-saṅkulam,
divaukasām sa-dārāṇām,
autsukyāpahṛtātmanām*

The festive rāsa dance commenced, with the gopīs arrayed in a circle. Lord Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself and entered between each

pair of gopīs, and as that master of mystic power placed His arms around their necks, each girl thought He was standing next to her alone. The demigods and their wives were overwhelmed with eagerness to witness the rāsa dance, and they soon crowded the sky with their hundreds of celestial airplanes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how Kṛṣṇa consorted with the *gopis*. The *rāsa* dance is called a festival (*rāsa-utsavaḥ*) because it was full of music, singing and dancing, merry-making and wonderful food in the form of blissful nectar for the *cataka* birds of the devotee’s eyes and minds. The festival began in a perfectly arranged way (*sampravṛtto:samyak*) with Kṛṣṇa entering between each pair of *gopis* who were standing in a circle. One should not think that this verse means that Kṛṣṇa initiated the *rāsa-kṛīḍa*. Kṛṣṇa was not the doer; the *rāsa-līlā* was the doer. Kṛṣṇa gave the *rāsa-līlā* the independence to initiate the action.

Kṛṣṇa was present as one of the ingredients of the festival. In this way, more than Kṛṣṇa Himself, more than all His energies and more than all His other pastimes, the supreme position of the *rāsotsavaḥ* is proclaimed throughout the universe. Therefore even such personalities as goddess Lakṣmī, though greedily hankering to achieve these pastimes, could not do so.

How was Kṛṣṇa positioned between the *gopis*? Kṛṣṇa entered between the *gopis* embracing their necks on either side. In this regard, the sixth verse of this chapter states, *madhye mañinām haimānām mahā-marakato yathā*, “Kṛṣṇa was like a great emerald among all the golden jewels.” Since the word *madhye* (middle) and also the singular form of the word *marakata* (emerald) are used, and since in the previous verse it is not explicitly stated that Kṛṣṇa was present in individual forms together with each *gopi*, we understand that Kṛṣṇa was actually present in the center of all the *gopis* like the whorl of a lotus flower.

This demonstrates the dexterity of Kṛṣṇa’s movement that He was able to dance next to each pair of *gopis*. In the flash of a second, Kṛṣṇa left the middle where He was standing, and danced with and embraced

the three hundred million *gopis* who were standing in the *rāsa* circle, and then again He returned to the middle. Kṛṣṇa’s movement was quicker than a fire brand, because at that time everyone could see Kṛṣṇa standing in the center, and also situated between the *gopis* in the circle of the *rāsa* dance. In this connection, Bilvamangala Thakura has said:

*aṅganām aṅganām antarā mādhave, mādhaveṁ mādhaveṁ
cāntareṇāṅganāḥ
ittham ākalpīte maṅḍale madhya-gaḥ, sañjagau veṇunā devakī-
nandanāḥ*

“Madhava was between each pair of *gopis*, and also each *gopi* was between two Madhavas. Devakinandana (Kṛṣṇa) also appeared in the middle of the circle, playing upon His flute and singing.”

The basic cause for this extraordinary event is indicated by the word *yogeśvareṇa*, meaning that Kṛṣṇa is the perfect master of all methods of artistic skills and the means of acting thus. The *Amara-koṣa* dictionary says that the word *yoga* means “method.” Or *yoga* can refer to *yogamaya*, the great potency who is expert in doing the impossible for her Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa desired to embrace all the *gopis* simultaneously, *yogamaya* manifested a Kṛṣṇa for each *gopi* to solve this problem.

There are two ways of understanding the phrase “Kṛṣṇa entered between each pair of *gopīs*.” The first understanding is that Kṛṣṇa expanded as two forms on the two sides of each *gopi*. The second understanding is that one Kṛṣṇa entered between each pair of *gopis*. In the first explanation, each *gopi* would have Kṛṣṇa on each shoulder, which would be contradictory for her. But this is not a problem, because the great *yogamaya-sakti* made each *gopi* aware that only one Kṛṣṇa was touching her. There is however, no contradiction in the second explanation.

Being maddened by love, each *gopi* thought, “Kṛṣṇa is here embracing me alone. Even though we see Him dancing all around, it is simply because of His unique expertise in the art of dancing.”

The *Vaisnava acaryas* say that Devakinandana stood in the center of the *rāsa* dance along with Srimati Radharani, because She is the most

excellent of the *gopis*, and the very cause of the *rāsa-līlā* as stated in the *Radha Sata-nāma Stotra: rāsa-kṛīḍām kāraṇam*.

At that moment (*tāvat*), the sky became crowded with hundreds of airplanes belonging to the denizens of heaven, headed by Brahma. They eagerly watched Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa* dancing, but they were not qualified to witness Kṛṣṇa's confidential pastimes with the *gopis* because they are *dasya-bhaktas*, worshiping Him in the mood of servitude. *Yogamaya* thus arranged everything so expertly that the men of heaven could see the dancing of Kṛṣṇa but not His beloved *gopis*.

Text 4

*tato dundubhayo nedur,
nīpetuḥ puṣpa-vṛṣṭayaḥ,
jagur gandharva-patayaḥ,
sa-strīkās tad-yaśo 'malam*

Kettledrums then resounded in the sky while flowers rained down and the chief Gandharvas and their wives sang Lord Kṛṣṇa's spotless glories.

Text 5

*valayānām nūpurāṇām,
kiṅkiṇīnām ca yoṣitām,
sa-priyāṇām abhūc chabdā,
tumulo rāsa-maṇḍale*

A tumultuous sound arose from the armlets, ankle bells and waist

bells of the gopīs as they sported with their beloved Kṛṣṇa in the circle of the rāsa dance.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bangles, ankle bells and waist bells of the *gopīs* who were with Kṛṣṇa (*sa-priyāṇām*) made a great sound. *Ca* (and) indicates that musical instruments such as various types of drums were also played. However, indicating them only by *ca* means that they were not the principal instruments, and did not cover the sound of the *gopīs*’ bangles and other ornaments.

Text 6

*tatrātīśuśubhe tābhir,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
madhye mañīnām haimānām,
mahā-marakato yathā*

In the midst of the dancing gopīs, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared most brilliant, like an exquisite sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Even though Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devaki (*devakī-sutaḥ*), a member of the *kṣatriya* community, and even though He is *Bhagavān*, full in all six opulences, He appeared especially beautiful in the midst of the lovely cowherd damsels of Vraja. Though Kṛṣṇa’s complexion resembles a blue sapphire, by mixing with the golden bodies of the *gopīs*, He manifested a splendid emerald (*marakata-mani*) color. The word *maha* is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa’s beauty was extraordinary. Other authorities say that the word *marakata* means blue sapphire. Thus the word *mahā-marakato*, means appearing like an emerald or like a sapphire in some versions of the text.

Text 7

*pāda-nyāsair bhujā-vidhutibhiḥ sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair,
bhajyan madhyaiś cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ kuṇḍalair gaṇḍa-lolaiḥ,
svidyan-mukhyaḥ kavara-rasanāgranthayaḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo,
gāyantyās taṁ taḍita iva tā megha-cakre virejuḥ*

As the gopīs sang in praise of Kṛṣṇa, their feet danced, their hands gestured, and their eyebrows moved with playful smiles. With their braids and belts tied tight, their waists bending, their faces perspiring, the garments on their breasts moving this way and that, and their earrings swinging on their cheeks, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s young consorts shone like streaks of lightning in a mass of clouds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Just as Kṛṣṇa appeared more beautiful in the *gopīs*’ presence, they appeared even more so in His association. The foot movements of the *gopīs* matched the mood and rhythm of the songs. In this way the *gopīs* manifested more and more colorful dances and songs along with the shaking of their arms (*bhujā-vidhutibhiḥ*), which were locked together. Furthermore, sometimes they would let go of each other’s interlocked arms and dexterously display different *mudras* (hand movements) to act out the meaning of the songs, along with various kinds of evocative gestures with their smiling eyebrows (*sa-smitair bhrū-vilāsair*). This was done to convey their transcendental moods and to show their own expertise.

Bhajyan madhyaiś means that the *gopīs*’ waists were bending, either because of their natural slenderness or because of the swirling movements of their dancing. The *gopīs* picked up the cloths (*cala-kuca-paṭaiḥ*) that they had previously laid on the ground for Kṛṣṇa to sit on, and waved them in the air while they sang.

According to the *Ēānārtha-varga* dictionary, the word *vadhū* can mean wife, sister-in-law or else a woman in general. Therefore,

kṛṣṇa-vadhvaḥ means “the woman enjoyed by Kṛṣṇa.” If we take the meaning of *vadhū* as wife, it would contradict the words of Bhisma who said, *prakṛtim agan kila yasya gopa-vadhvaḥ*, “Let me surrender to Kṛṣṇa whose mood was attained by the wives of the *gopas* (*gopa-vadhvaḥ*) during the *rāsa-līlā*.” (SB 1.9.40) Bhisma did not say “wives of Kṛṣṇa”, so we should not give such an interpretation. In *Vaisnava-toṣani*, Sri Sanatana Gosvami also does not interpret *vadhū* as wife in this verse. He says the golden-limbed *gopis* are the *vadhūs* “wives” of beautiful dark-blue Kṛṣṇa in the sense that, just like wives, the *gopis* are embraced only by Kṛṣṇa, sheltered only by Kṛṣṇa and enjoyed only by Kṛṣṇa.

Text 8

*uccair jagur nṛtyamānā,
rakta-kaṅṭhyo rati-priyāḥ,
kṛṣṇābhimarśa-muditā,
yad-gītenedam āvṛtam*

Eager to enjoy conjugal love, their throats colored with various pigments, the *gopis* sang loudly and danced. They were overjoyed by Kṛṣṇa’s touch, and they sang songs that filled the entire universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word (*nṛtyamānā*) means dancing, honor or respect. Kṛṣṇa honored the *gopis* for their dancing and singing. *Rakta-kaṅṭha* means the *gopis*’ throats were tinged with various *ragas*. *Saṅgīta-sāra*, an authoritative book on music, says *tāvanta eva rāgāḥ sūryāvatyō jīva-jātayah, teṣu ṣoḍaśa-sāhasrī purā gopī-kṛtā varā*: “There are as many musical *rāgas* (melodies) as there are species of life. Among those *ragas*, the sixteen thousand sung by the *gopis* are the foremost.”

The *gopis* were very attached to the affection (*rati-priyāḥ*) shown by Kṛṣṇa. Becoming blissful from Kṛṣṇa’s touch (*abhimarśa:sparśa*), they did not feel any fatigue from dancing. Their singing (*yad-gītena*) pervaded (*āvṛtam*) the entire universe (*idam*). The words *yad-gītenedam āvṛtam* also indicate that even today devotees throughout the world sing the praises of Kṛṣṇa, following the example of the *gopīs*.

Text 9

*kācit samam mukundena,
svara-jātīr amiśritāḥ,
unninye pūjitā tena,
prīyatā sādhu sādhu 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *svaras* (seven notes of the scale) are born from the *srutis*. These seven *svaras* correspond somewhat to the cries of the peacock, *cataka*, goat, crane, cuckoo, stork and elephant. There are eighteen *jātis* (chromatic tones) which arise from these *svaras*. *Jātis* are the source of *rāgas*. There are two types of *jātis*: pure and distorted. The pure *jātis* are the seven harmonic tones known as *sadja*, *rsabha*, *gandhara*, *madhyama*, *pancama*, *dhaiyata* and *nisada*. When they are transformed (flattened or sharpened) they are known as distorted *vikṛta*.

Though they all sang, Kṛṣṇa did not sing at the same time (*amiśritāḥ*) as the *gopis*. Another meaning of *amiśritāḥ* is that the *gopis* sang with pure *jātis*, not mixed with any intermediate tones. This was possible because the *gopi* was singing only these pure harmonic tones, due to her supreme expertise. Although she was performing this difficult feat, she vibrated them excellently. Appreciating the skillful singing of this *gopi*, Kṛṣṇa honored her by giving His yellow *cādara*. Authorities conclude that this *gopi* was Visakha.

Another *gopi* expertly performed the *ālāpa* of one song with *dhruva tāla*. Kṛṣṇa honored her with ornaments such as finger rings, jewel-studded necklaces and His own slippers. This *gopi* displayed even more excellence than Visakha and was none other than Lalita-sakhi. Seeing that the *gopis* were reluctant to bring the *ragas* and *rāginīs* they sung to even greater levels of beauty, Radha Herself then sang. From this we can understand that among all the *gopis*, Radha was endowed with the most excellent and attractive of all qualities.

Text 10

*kācid rāsa-pariśrāntā,
pārśva-sthasya gadā-bhṛtaḥ,
jagrāha bāhunā skandham,
ślathad-valaya-mallikā*

When one *gopī* grew tired from the *rāsa* dance, She turned to Kṛṣṇa, standing at Her side holding a baton, and grasped His shoulder with Her arm. The dancing had loosened Her bracelets and the flowers in Her hair.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After alluding to the excellent singing and dancing of Lalita and Visakha, the most prominent *gopi*, Sri Radha, is indicated by describing Her good fortune. *Gadā-bhṛtaḥ* refers to

Kṛṣṇa, as the person who held or encouraged discussions (*gadam*) about the various merits of the two *gopis*’ singing. One *gopi* leaned upon Kṛṣṇa’s shoulder with Her right arm. Her bracelets, ornaments and the flowers in Her hair all became loose. This special *gopi* was Vrsabhanunandini Sri Radha, because as an independent lover She is showing the mentality of being superior to Her boyfriend.

Text 11

tatraikāmsa-gataṁ bāhum,
kṛṣṇasyotpala-saurabham,
candanāliptam āghrāya,
hṛṣṭa-romā cucumba ha

Upon the shoulder of one *gopī* Kṛṣṇa placed His arm, whose natural blue-lotus fragrance was mixed with that of the sandalwood pulp anointing it. As the *gopī* relished that fragrance, her bodily hair stood on end in jubilation, and she kissed His arm.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One *gopi* then kissed the arm resting on her shoulder (*āmsa-gataṁ bāhum*), which was anointed with sandalwood paste. Even though that arm was anointed with sandalwood pulp, the prominent aroma of lotuses, which naturally emanates from Kṛṣṇa’s body, covered the fragrance of the sandalwood pulp. Since this *gopi* is acting in the same way as the *gopi* described in verse (10.32.4), she is indeed Śyāmalā-sakhi.

Text 12

kasyāścin nāṭya-vikṣipta,
kuṇḍala-tviṣa-maṇḍitam,

*gaṇḍam gaṇḍe sandadhatyāḥ,
prādāt tāmbūla-carvitam*

Next to Kṛṣṇa’s cheek one gopī put her own, beautified by the effulgence of her earrings, which glittered as she danced. Kṛṣṇa then carefully gave her the betel nut He was chewing.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One *gopi*, whose swinging earrings reflected brightly on her cheeks, touched her cheek to Kṛṣṇa’s cheek on the pretense of fatigue. Kṛṣṇa offered some of His chewed betel-nut by passing over as He kissed her. The word *prādāt* comes from *pra* in *prakṛsta* “in a special way,” and *ādāt* “He gave.” This is Śaibyā, the *gopi* referred to in verse five of the last chapter.

Text 13

*nṛtyatī gāyatī kācit,
kūjan nūpura-mekhalā,
pārśva-sthācyuta-hastābjam,
śrāntādhāt stanayoḥ śivam*

Another gopī became fatigued as she danced and sang, the bells on her ankles and waist tinkling. So she placed upon her breasts the comforting lotus hand of Lord Acyuta, who was standing by her side.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While dancing and singing one *gopi* placed Kṛṣṇa’s lotus hand upon her breast. This particular *gopi* is Candrāvalī, who seized Kṛṣṇa’s hand in (10.32.4). Padma-sakhi held Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet on her breast (10.32.5). Though there is a difference between holding Kṛṣṇa’s hands and feet, in both cases the *gopi* did this

to relieve herself of the love pains in her breast. Thus the present verse can also refer to Padma-sakhi. Though the eighth *gopi*, namely Bhadrā, is not mentioned here, she is mentioned in the *Visnu Purana*.

Text 14

*gopyo labdhvācyutam kāntam,
śriya ekānta-vallabham,
grhīta-kaṅṭhyas tad-dorbhyām,
gāyantyās tam vijahrire*

Having attained as their intimate lover Lord Acyuta, the exclusive consort of the goddess of fortune, the gopīs enjoyed great pleasure. They sang His glories as He held their necks with His arms.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way, other *gopis* enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa according to their individual ecstatic sentiments. The wives of Kaliya said that Laksmi performed severe penances to attain Kṛṣṇa but could not attain Him [*yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo* (SB 10.16.36)]. Uddhava also said that Laksmi could not get the same mercy as the Vraja-gopis achieved [*nāyam śriyo ’nga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ*. (SB 10.47.60)] The *Brhad-bhagavatamṛta* says that Laksmi became greedy to attain Kṛṣṇa upon seeing His beauty. Even though she performed severe penances, still she could not attain Him (*śri prekṣya kṛṣṇa-saundaryam tatra lubdhvācarat tapaḥ*). From these verses it must be concluded that Laksmi did not attain Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the phrase *śriya ekānta-vallabham* in this verse cannot mean “Kṛṣṇa was the exclusive lover of Laksmi.”

Instead the meaning is as follows: Attaining the most attractive Acyuta Kṛṣṇa as their exclusive lover (*ekānta*), the *gopis* encircled His neck with their arms and enjoyed with Him. The word *śriyaḥ* can mean “who were just like goddesses of fortune”. Just as Laksmi enjoys being held

upon the chest of Lord Narayana, similarly the Vraja-gopis enjoyed having their necks encircled by the arms of Kṛṣṇa. Or else, because Kṛṣṇa is one with Narayana, Kṛṣṇa is also the beloved of the goddess of fortune.

Text 15

*karnōtpalālaka-ṛiṭaṅka-kapola-gharma,
vaktra-śriyo valaya-nūpura-ghoṣa-vādyaiḥ,
gopyaḥ samam bhagavatā nanṛtuḥ sva-keśa,
srasta-srajo bhramara-gāyaka-rāsa-goṣṭhyām*

Enhancing the beauty of the gopīs' faces were the lotus flowers behind their ears, the locks of hair decorating their cheeks, and drops of perspiration. The reverberation of their armllets and ankle bells made a loud musical sound, and their chaplets scattered. Thus the gopīs danced with the Supreme Lord in the arena of the rāsa dance as swarms of bees sang in accompaniment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After describing the splendid excellence of their dancing and singing, Sukadeva Gosvami now describes the magnificent beauty of the *gopis'* faces, which were enhanced by swaying earrings, scattered hair and the drops of perspiration on their foreheads. All of this intensified the loveliness of their faces as they danced. The melodious tinkling of their bangles and ankle bells surpassed the music of the drums, flutes and other instruments that were playing. The presiding deities of the instruments all appeared there to make their lives successful. Amazingly, the instruments sounded without anyone having to play them. The fragrant flower garlands tied in the *gopis'* hair loosened and fell to the ground, as if their hairstyles, pleased with the skilful dance steps of the *gopis*, were offering flowers in appreciation of their talent.

Text 16

*evam pariṣvaṅga-karābhimarśa,
snigdhekṣaṇoddāma-vilāsa-hāsaiḥ,
reme rameśo vraja-sundarābhir,
yathārbhakaḥ sva-pratibimba-vibhramah*

In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Lord Nārāyaṇa, master of the goddess of fortune, took pleasure in the company of the young women of Vraja by embracing them, caressing them and glancing lovingly at them as He smiled His broad, playful smiles. It was just as if a child were playing with his own reflection.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: All these elements of song, dance and beauty brought Kṛṣṇa's play of love to perfection. During the *rasa* dance Kṛṣṇa relished varieties of enjoyment in direct association with the *gopis*. When the dance reached a climax, Kṛṣṇa touched (*ābhimarśa*) the *gopis*' left breasts with His right hand (*kara*) and counted the *tāla* of the music on their breasts by tapping His fingers to the beat. The phrase *snigdha-ikṣaṇa* means that Kṛṣṇa glanced lovingly or looked at the private parts of *gopis*' bodies as they danced. *Hāsaiḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa's face bloomed with smiles after receiving the *gopis*' sweet kisses.

Kṛṣṇa is addressed as *rameśo*, which means He is the master of all opulences. It can also mean Kṛṣṇa is the exclusive lover (*ramana*) of the *gopis*. Enchanted by the pure love of the *gopis*, Kṛṣṇa sported with them just like a frolicsome boy plays with his own shadow (*pratibimba*). But how could one person enjoy with thousands of *gopis*? Kṛṣṇa expanded His form into many to delight (*vibhramah*) with each *gopi* who was also an expansion of His own form (*bimba*). The *gopis* were

the *hladini-sakti*, pleasure potencies, expanded from Kṛṣṇa’s personal form (*svarupa*). Similarly *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.2.11) states that *sva-bimbaṁ* refers to Kṛṣṇa’s own form. Therefore the meaning of the verse is: “Kṛṣṇa, expanding Himself in unlimited, fully potent forms (*prābhava-prakāśa-rupa*), enjoyed with each of the *gopis* who were manifested from His own internal potency.” The phrase *sva-pratibimba* (His own reflection) cannot be explained in any other way. To say that *bimba* means shadow is inappropriate.

Text 17

tad-aṅga-saṅga-pramudākulendriyāḥ,
keśān dukūlaṁ kuca-paṭṭikām vā,
nāñjah prativyodhum alaṁ vraja-striyo,
visrasta-mālābharaṇāḥ kurūdvaha

Their senses overwhelmed by the joy of having His physical association, the gopīs could not prevent their hair, their dresses and the cloths covering their breasts from becoming disheveled. Their garlands and ornaments scattered, O hero of the Kuru dynasty.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The touch of Kṛṣṇa’s body (*tad-aṅga-saṅga*) thrilled the *gopis* with ecstasy. As a result, their hair, bodices, dresses, garlands and ornaments all became disheveled.

Text 18

kṛṣṇa-vikrīḍitaṁ vīkṣya,
mumuhuḥ khe-cara-striyaḥ,
kāmārditāḥ śasāṅkaś ca,
sa-gaṇo vismito ’bhavat

The wives of the demigods, observing Kṛṣṇa’s playful activities from their airplanes, were entranced and became agitated with lust. Indeed, even the moon and his entourage, the stars, became astonished.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The heavenly women became agitated by lusty desires (*kāmārditāḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa. The moon along with the constellations became astonished. In one version the word *kāmārdita* is in the masculine form modifying the moon, which is male. Thus the moon, taking up the mood of a woman, was also tormented by lust for Kṛṣṇa.

The demigoddesses traveling in the sky (*khe-cara-striyaḥ*) could see the *rasa-lila*. But Yogamaya covered the vision of the males watching the *rasa* dance, so they could not see the bodies of the Vraja-gopis and their intimate pastimes with Kṛṣṇa.

Text 19

*kṛtvā tāvantam ātmānaṁ,
yāvatīr gopa-yoṣitaḥ,
reme sa bhagavāms tābhir,
ātmārāmo 'pi līlayā*

Expanding Himself us many times as there were cowherd women to associate with, the Supreme Lord, though self-satisfied, playfully enjoyed their company.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa then expanded Himself into as many forms as there were *gopis* to enjoy privately with each one in a separate grove. It has already been explained that Sri Kṛṣṇa is eternally

free from all material desire, and perfectly situated on the platform of spiritual self-satisfaction (*ātmārāmaḥ*).

Text 20

*tāsām rati-vihāreṇa,
śrāntānām vadanāni saḥ,
prāmṛjat karuṇaḥ premṇā,
śantamenāṅga pāṇinā*

Seeing that the gopīs were fatigued from conjugal enjoyment, my dear King, merciful Kṛṣṇa lovingly wiped their faces with His comforting hand.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There are two versions of this verse: *tāsām rati-vihāreṇa śrāntānām* meaning “fatigued from conjugal enjoyment”, and *tāsām ati-vihāreṇa śrāntānām* meaning “fatigued from enjoying excessively with them”. Seeing how the *gopīs* were tired from conjugal enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa stopped sporting and lovingly touched their faces with His comforting hand. The word *prāmṛjat* (wiped) implies Kṛṣṇa also fanned the *gopīs*, massaged their tired bodies with scented oils, applied sandalwood paste and offered them betel-nuts.

Text 21

*gopyaḥ sphurat-puraṭa-kunḍala-kuntala-tviḍ,
gaṇḍa-śriyā sudhita-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇena,
mānaṁ dadhatya ṛṣabhasya jaguḥ kṛtāni,
punyāni tat-kara-ruha-sparśa-pramodāḥ*

The gopīs honored their hero with smiling glances sweetened by the beauty Or their cheeks and the effulgence of their curly locks and glittering golden earrings. Overjoyed from the touch of His fingernails, they chanted the glories of His all-auspicious transcendental pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: After displaying the mood of controlling their lover by having Kṛṣṇa adorn them with ornaments, the gopīs emerged from their love groves. They gathered in a group to sing auspicious songs signifying the completion of the *rāsa* dance. The *gopīs* honored Kṛṣṇa with their golden bangles, locks of hair, cheeks lit by their glittering earrings, and their sweet, smiling glances. Thrilled with the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s nails, they sang of His all-auspicious (*puṇyāni*) transcendental pastimes.

Text 22

*tābhir yutaḥ śramam apohitum aṅga-saṅga,
ghṛṣṭa-srajaḥ sa kuca-kuṅkuma-rañjītāyāḥ,
gandharva-pālibhir anudruta āviśad vāḥ,
śrānto gajībhir ibha-rāḍ iva bhinna-setuḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s garland had been crushed during His conjugal dalliance with the gopīs and colored vermilion by the kuṅkuma powder on their breasts. To dispel the fatigue of the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa entered the water of the Yamunā, followed swiftly by bees who were singing like the best of the Gandharvas. He appeared like a lordly elephant entering the water to relax in the company of his consorts. Indeed, the Lord had transgressed all worldly and Vedic morality just as a powerful elephant might break the dikes in a paddy field.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: After the *rāsa utsava* Kṛṣṇa and

the *gopis* played in the Yamuna, just as a husband and wife take an *avabhṛta* bath to complete a *soma yajña*. To dispel His fatigue, Kṛṣṇa, followed by bees that were the best of singers (*gandharva-pālibhir*), entered the waters of the Yamuna along with the *gopis*, whose bodies had become stained with the *kunkuma* from their breasts during their conjugal dalliance, and whose garlands were crushed by Kṛṣṇa's limbs. Kṛṣṇa appeared like a bull elephant breaking all the embankments to enter the water and enjoy with his bevy of female elephants. *Bhinna-setuḥ* also means Kṛṣṇa broke the walls or transgressed the boundaries of worldly morality by enacting the *rasa* dance with His beloved *gopis*.

Text 23

*so 'mbhasy alam yuvatibhiḥ pariṣicyamānaḥ,
preṃṅekṣitaḥ prahasatībhir itas tato 'nga,
vaimānikaiḥ kusuma-varṣibhir īdyamāno,
reme svayam sva-ratir atra gajendra-līlaḥ*

My dear King, in the water Kṛṣṇa found Himself being splashed on all sides by the laughing gopīs, who looked at Him with love. As the demigods worshiped Him by showering flowers from their airplanes, the self-satisfied Lord took pleasure in playing like the king of the elephants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There are two versions: *preṃṅekṣitaḥ* (glancing with *prema*), and *preṃṅokṣita* (moistened with *prema*). The *gopis* gazed at Kṛṣṇa and laughed loudly as they splashed Him with water, or moistened Him with their love. As Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied lover (*sva-ratiḥ*), enjoyed with the *gopis*, the demigods in the sky worshiped Him with showers of flowers.

Text 24

*tataś ca kṛṣṇopavane jala-sthala,
prasūna-gandhānila-juṣṭa-dik-taṭe,
cacāra bhṛṅga-pramadā-gaṇāvṛto,
yathā mada-cyud dviradaḥ kareṇubhiḥ*

Then the Lord strolled through a small forest on the bank of the Yamunā. This forest was filled to its limits with breezes carrying the fragrances of all the flowers growing on the land and in the water. Followed by His entourage of bees and beautiful women, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared like an intoxicated elephant with his she-elephants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After playing in the water, drying and massaging their bodies, and dressing in their favorite clothing and ornaments supplied by the *manjaris*, Kṛṣṇa and the *gopis* entered the countless groves on the bank of the Yamuna for special pastimes. The groves had wide horizons served by breezes carrying the aroma of flowers growing in the water. Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by buzzing bees and love-filled *gopis*, ambled along like a maddened elephant (*mada-cyut*) as He entered the groves.

Text 25

*evam śaśāṅkāmśu-virājitā niśāḥ,
sa satya-kāmo 'nuratābalā-gaṇaḥ,
siṣeva ātmany avaruddha-saurataḥ,
sarvāḥ śarat-kāvya-kathā-rasāśrayāḥ*

Although the *gopīs* were firmly attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose desires are always fulfilled, the Lord was not internally affected by

any mundane sex desire. Still, to perform His pastimes the Lord took advantage of all those moonlit autumn nights, which inspire poetic descriptions of transcendental affairs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: In summarizing the *rasa-līla*, which occurred on the full moon night of the autumn season, the *Bhagavatam* indicates that similar pastimes with the same variety and splendor took place on other nights of the year.

By the influence of *yogamāyā*, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the whole night, which extended for a night of Brahma, under the soothing rays of the full moon (*śasāṅkāmśu-virājītā*). Kṛṣṇa took advantage (*siṣeve*) of the Vṛndavana nights to relish conjugal pastimes with His beloved *gopīs*. The word *siṣeve* comes from the root *sev* (to serve). This implies that all the nights, which were suitable for the *rasa-līla*, were thereby enjoyed or served in the most respectful way. This is similar to the expression “the devotees enjoyed or honored *mahā-prasadam*”.

Because Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal sports (*kāma*) with the *gopīs* were not material, Kṛṣṇa is called *satya-kāmaḥ* (one whose desires are always fulfilled). *Satya* means the form of the Absolute Truth and *kāma* means pastimes of love. In other words, Kṛṣṇa engaged in pastimes of love which are the Absolute Truth, and the source of all pure selfless love. Though Kṛṣṇa is the original source of all loving enjoyment, He made the *gopīs* the cause of that enjoyment.

Thus, Kṛṣṇa is described as *anurata-abalā-gaṇaḥ*, one who followed after the pleasure of the *gopīs*. Though Kṛṣṇa causes everyone’s pleasure, He Himself was attracted to the *gopīs* for pleasure. The word *abalā* also suggests that the *gopīs* were unmatched in their strength or power to express pure love.

Kṛṣṇa’s mind was completely absorbed in conjugal pastimes during the *rasa* dance. Therefore Kṛṣṇa is described as *ātmany avaruddha-saurataḥ*, one whose mind (*ātmā*) was completely absorbed in everything related to conjugal activity (*saurataḥ*), such as the erotic emotions, gestures, indifference, insults, the *vyabhicari-bhāvas* like perverseness, eagerness and joy, the *sattvika-bhāvas* such as being

stunned, sweating, change of color, and the *anubhāvas* of seeing, touching, talking and embracing.

The same usage of the word *saurataḥ*, indicating the many elements of conjugal love, appears in the following verse:

evam saurata-samlāpair, bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ, sva-rato ramayā reme, nara-lokaṁ viḍambayan

“Thus the self-satisfied Supreme Lord of the universe enjoyed with Rukmini, engaging her in erotic love talks (*saurata-samlāpa*) and thus imitated the ways of human society.” (SB 10.60.58) The word *samlāpa* included in the verse above is descriptive of the enjoyment. The word *saurata* is devoid of a descriptive element, except to indicate all the other romantic expressions and emotions involved in conjugal relationships.

Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the *rasa-līla* every night for twelve months (*sarvāḥ*). What kind of nights were they? In the phrase *sarvāḥ-śarat-rasāśrayāḥ* the word *śarat* can mean just the month of autumn or the period of one year according to the *Amara-koṣa* dictionary. Thus these nights were nights endowed with the virtues of all the six seasons in a year, of which all the *rasas* expressed in poetic works (*kāvya-kathā*) take shelter (*āśrayāḥ*). *Rasa* indicates the spiritual bliss one derives from his loving relationship with Sri Kṛṣṇa. This ecstatic bliss is relished between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees during various transcendental pastimes.

Great Vaiṣṇava poets like Vyāsa, Parāśara, Jayadeva, Līlāśuka (Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura), Govardhanācārya and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, being inspired by those beautiful autumn nights, have wonderfully described Kṛṣṇa’s *rasa-līla* and His conjugal affairs (*srngara-rāsa*) with the Vraja-gopis, which are most difficult to comprehend. Since I am incapable of describing these affairs completely, I have given only a synopsis here.

Texts 26–27
śrī-parīkṣid uvāca,
saṁsthāpanāya dharmasya,

*praśamāyetarasya ca,
avatīrṇo hi bhagavān,
amśena jagad-īśvaraḥ,
sa katham dharmā-setūnām,
vaktā kartābhirakṣitā,
pratīpam ācarad brahman,
para-dārābhimarśanam*

Parīkṣit Mahārāja said: O brāhmaṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord of the universe, has descended to this earth along with His plenary portion to destroy irreligion and reestablish religious principles. Indeed, He is the original speaker, follower and guardian of moral laws. How, then, could He have violated them by touching other men’s wives?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Maharaja Parikṣit detected many *karmīs* and *jñānīs* in that assembly who were harboring doubts about Kṛṣṇa’s activities, because their own hearts were contaminated with mundane desires. Therefore, he asked a question: “In order to establish *dharma* and destroy *adharmā* (irreligion), *svayam bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa, whose expansion is Visnu (*amśena jagad-īśvaraḥ*) has appeared. Or *svayam bhagavan* Kṛṣṇa has appeared with His *amśena*, Balarama. How then can Kṛṣṇa perform acts contrary (*pratīpam*) to *dharma*? If you say that Kṛṣṇa can act contrary to *dharma* because He is the independent Lord (*īśvaraḥ*), then He should also accept the sinful reaction, just as He sometimes gets cursed and accepts the result.”

Text 28

*āpta-kāmo yadu-patiḥ,
kṛtavān vai jugupsitam,
kim-abhiprāya etan naḥ,*

O faithful upholder of vows, please destroy our doubt by explaining to us what purpose the self-satisfied Lord of the Yadus had in mind when He behaved so contemptibly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Parikṣit continues his inquiry: “If you argue that for the Supreme Lord there is no *adharmā* (irreligion), then why would He perform such abominable acts? One cannot answer that He does so to fulfill His desires, because His desires are already fulfilled (*āpta-kāmaḥ*).”

Sukadeva Gosvami replied, “But in this *avatara*, Kṛṣṇa must do these condemned activities.”

Parikṣit Maharaja: “Then how could Kṛṣṇa be the head of the Yadus (*yadu-patiḥ*) who follow the highest *dharma*? This is not only our (*naḥ*) doubt (*śamśayaṁ*) but the doubt of many people. Sri Kṛṣṇa is *āpta-kāmaḥ* and *ātmā-rāma*, yet He enjoyed enthusiastically with the *gopis*, who were the very form of *prema* and bliss. This is a very deep concept, so naturally people will have doubts. You yourself are totally committed to proper conduct (*su-vrata*), still you have become fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes portraying such condemned behavior. This too creates another doubt (*śamśayaṁ*).”

Text 29

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
dharma-vyatikramo dr̥ṣṭa,
īśvarāṇām ca sāhasam,
tejīyasām na doṣāya,
vahneḥ sarva-bhujo yathā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The status of powerful controllers is not harmed by any apparently audacious transgression of morality we may see in them, for they are just like fire, which devours everything fed into it and remains unpolluted.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the demigods sometimes perform irreligious activities (*adharmā*), they do not get reactions for them. What then to speak of the Supreme Lord? Sukadeva Gosvami answers Parikṣit Maharaja’s first question in six verses (29-34). “Though powerful controllers such as Siva (*īśvarāṇām*) commit immoral or irreligious acts (*dharma-vyatikramo*) out of rashness (*sāhasam*), they do not need to atone for those acts.”

Text 30

*naitat samācarej jātu,
manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ,
vinaśyaty ācaran maudhyād,
yathārudro ’bdhi-jam viṣam*

One who is not a great controller should never imitate the behavior of ruling personalities, even mentally. If out of foolishness an ordinary person does imitate such behavior, he will simply destroy himself, just as a person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja might object, “If the demigods commit immoral acts then others, adopting the principle of following a great man’s example, will also commit irreligious acts.” Sukadeva Gosvami replies in this verse: “Upon seeing the immoral acts of the demigods, an ordinary mortal should not even think of committing such sinful acts. Doing so will bring his ruination, just as a

person who is not Rudra would destroy himself if he tried to drink an ocean of poison. On the other hand, when Siva drinks the poison, he enhances his beauty by attaining a blue throat.”

Text 31

*īśvarāṇām vacaḥ satyaṁ,
tathaiṅvacaritaṁ kvacit,
teṣāṁ yat sva-vaco-yuktaṁ,
buddhimāṁs tat samācaret*

The statements of the Lord’s empowered servants are always true, and the acts they perform are exemplary when consistent with those statements. Therefore one who is intelligent should carry out their instructions.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja said, “All right, then when can we apply the rule that whatever a great man does others should follow?”

Sukadeva Gosvami replied, “The instructions of the demigods or great personalities are always auspicious for the devotees to follow. When the Lord performs pastimes as Rāma, one should follow His instructions. One should perform only those acts which do not contradict the orders given by the demigods or great persons. But even those instructions must be approved by scriptures. Then one can act, otherwise not. An intelligent person should conduct himself in this way.

“Kṛṣṇa ordered Arjuna to kill Asvatthama, who had killed Arjuna’s sleeping children in the night.” (SB 1.7.35) Arjuna however, did not follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions to kill Asvatthama, because elsewhere Kṛṣṇa said a *brahmana* should never be killed even if he is sinful. Another instruction is that one should kill a person armed to kill others. Though acting as a *ksatriya*, Asvatthama was still a *brahmana* and he

was not armed to kill. Therefore according to the scriptural injunctions he should not have been killed. Kṛṣṇa was actually testing Arjuna’s knowledge of religious principles by ordering him to kill Asvatthama.”

Text 32

*kuśalācaritenaiṣām,
iha svārtho na vidyate,
viparyayeṇa vānartho,
nirahānkāriṇām prabho*

My dear Prabhu, when these great persons who are free from false ego act piously in this world, they have no selfish motives to fulfill, and even when they act in apparent contradiction to the laws of piety, they are not subject to sinful reactions.

Text 33

*kim utākhila-sattvānām,
tiryak-martya-divaukasām,
īṣituś ceṣitavyānām,
kuśalākuśalānvayaḥ*

How, then, could the Lord of all created beings—animals, men and demigods—have any connection with the piety and impiety that affect His subject creatures?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “As the demigods cannot be blamed if they transgress *dharma*, then what to

Speak of Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 34

*yat-pāda-paṅkaja-parāga-niṣeva-trptā,
yoga-prabhāva-vidhutākhila-karma-bandhāḥ,
svairam caranti munayo 'pi na nahyamānās,
tasyecchayāta-vapuṣaḥ kuta eva bandhaḥ*

Material activities never entangle the devotees of the Supreme Lord, who are fully satisfied by serving the dust of His lotus feet. Nor do material activities entangle those intelligent sages who have freed themselves from the bondage of all fruitive reactions by the power of yoga. So how could there be any question of bondage for the Lord Himself, who assumes His transcendental forms according to His own sweet will?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Even the devotees of the Lord are not bound by religion or irreligion. Satisfied with their exclusive service to the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, the devotees become liberated from the bondage of *karma* (*karma-bandhāḥ*) by the power of *bhakti-yoga* (*yoga-prabhāva*). What is the question of bondage for the Lord of those devotees, who accepted (*āta*) the transcendental bodies (*vapuṣaḥ*) of others’ wives by His unrestricted free will (*icchayā*)?”

Text 35

*gopīnām tat-patīnām ca,
sarveṣām eva dehinām,
yo 'ntaś carati so 'dhyakṣaḥ,*

krīdaneneha deha-bhāk

He who lives as the overseeing witness within the gopīs and their husbands, and indeed within all embodied living beings, assumes forms in this world to enjoy transcendental pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After considering that Kṛṣṇa had no fault in embracing others’ wives, this verse points out that there is no one superior to Kṛṣṇa who pervades every inch of creation. Sukadeva Gosvami said, “What is Kṛṣṇa’s fault in embracing the *gopis* externally since He is constantly embracing them within their hearts (*sarveṣām-dehinām-antaḥ*)? What is Kṛṣṇa’s fault in seeing the external bodies of the *gopis* when internally He is constantly observing their mind and intelligence (*adhyakṣaḥ*)? What is the fault of Kṛṣṇa who served the bodies of the *gopis* (*deha-bhāk*) by various playful gestures such as wiping away the perspiration from their faces after *rāsa-līlā* (*krīdanena*)?”

Text 36

*anugrahāya bhaktānām,
mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ,
bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīda,
yāḥ śrutvā tat-paro bhavet*

When the Lord assumes a humanlike body to show mercy to His devotees, He engages in such pastimes as will attract those who hear about them to become dedicated to Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse answers Parikṣit Maharaja’s second question (v. 28, *kim-abhiprāyaḥ*), “What was Kṛṣṇa’s purpose in

doing such forbidden activities?”

Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Kṛṣṇa acted in this way to show mercy (*anugrahāya*) to His devotees. By hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s love dalliance with the *gopis*, the living entities situated in human bodies (*mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ*) will become believers in these topics. Thus it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa’s sweet *rasa* dance, the quintessence of all His pastimes, is like a powerful medicine consisting of *mantras* and jewels. Kṛṣṇa’s *rasa-lila* has an inconceivable spiritual potency to attract the polluted hearts of conditioned souls. The chief qualification to attain this level of devotion involving *madhurya-rasa* is to have a human body (*mānuṣaṁ deham āsthitaḥ*).”

It is an undeniable fact that any pure-hearted person who hears about Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal affairs with the damsels of Vraja will become attracted to the sweet lotus feet of the Lord and gradually become a loving servant of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 37

*nāsūyan khalu kṛṣṇāya,
mohitās tasya māyayā,
manyamānāḥ sva-pārśva-sthān,
svān svān dārān vrajaukasah*

The cowherd men, bewildered by Kṛṣṇa’s illusory potency, thought their wives had remained home at their sides. Thus they did not harbor any jealous feelings against Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating Parikṣit Maharaja might ask, “When Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with the *gopis* every night of the year, how was it that their husbands, not seeing their wives at home, did not become angry with Kṛṣṇa?”

Sukadeva Gosvami replied in this verse: “Everything was perfectly

arranged by Kṛṣṇa’s internal potency of *yogamaya*, not His external *mahāmāyā* potency. *Mahāmāyā* has no jurisdiction over the intimate devotees of Sri Kṛṣṇa. Those bewildered by *mahāmāyā* are all opposed to the Lord, whereas the *gopis* of Vraja had not a particle of opposition to the Lord. Therefore, *yogamaya* created as many exact replicas (“doubles”) of the *gopis* as there were *gopis* who went to meet Kṛṣṇa for the *rasa* dance, and showed these to the cowherd men. Thus the cowherd men thought that their wives were by their sides.

Ujvala-nīlamaṇi supports this statement:

*māyā-kalpita-tādrk-strī, śīlanenānusūyubhiḥ na jātu vraja-devīnām,
patibhiḥ saha saṅgamaḥ*

“Those replicas of the cowherd women created by *Yogamaya* did not have any sexual contact with their husbands.”

As *yogamaya* is a transcendental energy, her effects must all be eternal and spiritual. Since there was a complete absence of material *maya*, even the replica *gopis* remaining by their husbands, though playing the roles of wives, were actually all spiritual entities. Playing the role of wives was their perfection in executing the will of *yogamaya*. These wives manufactured by *yogamaya* had absolutely no physical contact with their husbands. It would have been unfitting even for these replica *gopis*, who have forms similar to the original *gopis*, to be enjoyed by any other men.

Therefore, the verse says *sva-pārsva-sthān*, “The *gopis* who were standing by their sides,” rather than “The *gopis* who were in their own beds.” *Yogamaya* personally reconciled everything, and ensured that their husbands never experienced any lust for them. When the real *gopis* returned to their individual homes after the *rasa* dance, *yogamaya* made the replica *gopis* disappear.

Text 38

*brahma-rātra upāvr̥tte,
vāsudevā-numoditāḥ,*

*anicchantyo yayur gopyah,
sva-gṛhān bhagavat-priyāḥ*

After an entire night of Brahmā had passed, Lord Kṛṣṇa advised the gopīs to return to their homes. Although they did not wish to do so, the Lord’s beloved consorts complied with His command.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After an entire night of Brahma (one thousand *yuga* cycles) passed, the *gopīs* returned to their houses. Kṛṣṇa, whose every desire is fulfilled, wanted His pastimes of singing, dancing and sporting with the *gopīs* to last for a night of Brahma, therefore, one thousand ages entered within a single twelve-hour night. These one thousand *yuga* cycle also fits within the duration of the four *praharas* (eight hours) of human time calculation at the site of the *rasa* dance. This inconceivable compression of time compares with the fact that within the ten mile area of Vrndavana, Brahma saw the universe which measures billions of miles during the pastime of his stealing Kṛṣṇa’s cows.

Or one may consider that mother Yaśodā could not encircle the small abdomen of child Kṛṣṇa with thousands of ropes, and at another time Kṛṣṇa manifested the entire universe within His mouth. Therefore one should not think that the *rasa* dance could not possibly last for such a long duration of time. The transcendental power of spiritual reality is concisely explained in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Laghu-bhagavatāmṛta: evaṁ prabhoḥ priyāṅgām ca, dhāmnas ca samayasya ca, avicintya-prabhāvatvād, atra kiñcin na durghaṭam*

“Nothing is impossible for the Lord, His dear devotees, His transcendental abode or the time of His pastimes; for all these entities are inconceivably powerful.” The word *vāsudevānumoditāḥ* indicates that Lord Kṛṣṇa advised the *gopīs*, “To assure the success of these pastimes, you and I should keep our love secret.” The word *vāsudeva*, a name of Kṛṣṇa, also indicates Kṛṣṇa’s plenary expansion who acts as the presiding Deity of consciousness. When the word *vāsudeva* is

understood in this context, the word *vāsudevānumoditāḥ* indicates that Vāsudeva, the presiding Deity of consciousness, manifested embarrassment and fear of their elders within the *gopīs*' hearts, and therefore it was only with great reluctance that the young girls returned home.

Text 39

*vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ,
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ,
bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam,
hr̥d-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Anyone who faithfully hears or describes the Lord's playful affairs with the young gopīs of Vṛndāvana will attain the Lord's pure devotional service. Thus he will quickly become sober and conquer lust, the disease of the heart.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One who hears and chants about Kṛṣṇa's *rasa-līla*, which is the crest-jewel of all pastimes, gets the crest-jewel of all results, namely *kṛṣṇa-prema* (*bhaktim parām*). One who continuously hears (*anusr̥ṇuyat*), glorifies or writes poetry (*varṇayet*) about this autumnal *rasa-līla* (*idam*) and similar pastimes of Kṛṣṇa described by other poets (*ca*), first of all, even if he has the heart disease of material lust, becomes imbued with *prema*; then, by its effect the disease of the heart is destroyed. Thus it is understood here that this *prema* is independent; it is not weak or dependent like *jñāna-yoga*. Here *kāmam hr̥d-rogam* refers to the heart disease of material lust. When the word is used in relation to Kṛṣṇa, however, this meaning is excluded. In relation to Kṛṣṇa *kāmam* is *prema*, pure love, and it has the opposite effect of material lust, *kāmam*.

One who faithfully hears and glorifies Kṛṣṇa's *rasa* dance is described

as learned (*dhīraḥ pandita*), for he does not foolishly doubt, “How can *kṛṣṇa-prema* appear if material lust is present?” *Kṛṣṇa-prema* will definitely appear in that person who is devoid of foolishness (*dhīraḥ*), and who accepts the statements of scripture with full faith. However, *kṛṣṇa-prema* will not appear within those who have no faith in Kṛṣṇa or who offend Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. The divine *rāsa-līlā* is like the loving smile of the intimate devotee of Kṛṣṇa, who is victorious and glorified for his ability to conquer Kṛṣṇa by his pure love.

Chapter Thirty-four: Nanda Mahārāja Saved and Śaṅkhacūḍa Slain

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ekadā deva-yātrāyām,
gopālā jāta-kautukāḥ,
anobhir anaḍud-yuktaiḥ,
prayayus te 'mbikā-vanam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day the cowherd men, eager to take a trip to worship Lord Śiva, traveled by bullock carts to the Ambikā forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa delivered Nanda Maharaja from being swallowed by a snake. Kṛṣṇa also killed Śaṅkhacūḍa, the son of Kuvera, and took his crown jewel. After describing the *rasa-lila* in autumn and before describing the *holī-lila* of spring, Sukadeva described the celebration of Śiva-rātri. On Phalguna Kṛṣṇa Caturdasi, the Vrajavasis went to Ambikāvana on the bank of the Sarasvatī River, northwest of Mathurā. Ambikāvana is notable for its deities of Lord Śiva and his wife, goddess Umā. Some authorities say that Ambikāvana was located at Siddhapura in Gujarat.

Text 2

*tatra snātvā sarasvatyām,
devam paśu-patiṁ vibhum,*

*ānarcur arhaṇair bhaktyā,
devīm ca ṛṣpate 'mbikām*

O King, after arriving there, they bathed in the Sarasvatī and then devotedly worshiped with various paraphernalia the powerful Lord Paśupati and his consort, goddess Ambikā.

Text 3

*gāvo hiraṇyam vāsāmsi,
madhu madhv-annam ādṛtāḥ,
brāhmaṇebhyo daduḥ sarve,
devo naḥ prīyatām iti*

The cowherd men gave the brāhmaṇas gifts of cows, gold, clothing and cooked grains mixed with honey. Then the cowherds prayed, “May the lord be pleased with us.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Gavaḥ* is used for the normal form of the feminine plural accusative case *gah* (cows). Nanda and others gave cows, gold, honey *prasāda* from Siva’s *abhiseka*, and cooked rice sprinkled with honey to the *brahmanas*.

Text 4

*ūṣuḥ sarasvatī-tīre,
jalām prāśya yata-vratāḥ,
rajanīm tām mahā-bhāgā,
nanda-sunandakādayaḥ*

Nanda, Sunanda and the other greatly fortunate cowherds spent that night on the bank of the Sarasvatī, strictly observing their vows. They fasted, taking only water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sunanda was Nanda’s younger (*ka*) brother. After sipping water and observing vows, the Vrajavasis spent the night on the bank of the river.

Text 5

*kaścin mahān ahis tasmin,
vipine ’ti-bubhukṣitaḥ,
yadṛcchayāgato nandaṁ,
śayānam ura-go ’grasīt*

During the night a huge and extremely hungry snake appeared in that thicket. Slithering on his belly up to the sleeping Nanda Mahārāja, the snake began swallowing him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Mahan-ahih* means a boa constrictor. The word *ura-ga* meaning “moving on his belly”, is an adjective expressing how the serpent was invisible.

Text 6

*sa cukrośāhinā grastaḥ,
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahān ayam,
sarpo mām grasate tāta,
prapannaṁ parimocaya*

In the clutches of the snake, Nanda Mahārāja cried out, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, my dear boy! This huge serpent is swallowing me! Please save me, who am surrendered to You!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “He shouted” (*saḥ-cukrośa*) implies that Nanda Maharaja remembered the words of Garga Muni, “Kṛṣṇa would save the inhabitants of Vraja from all dangers.”

Text 7

*tasya cākranditaṁ śrutvā,
gopālāḥ sahasotthitāḥ,
grastaṁ ca dṛṣṭvā vibhrāntāḥ,
sarpaṁ vivyadhur ulmukaiḥ*

When the cowherd men heard the cries of Nanda, they immediately rose up and saw that he was being swallowed. Distraught, they beat the serpent with blazing torches.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing Nanda’s cries, the cowherd men began beating the snake with blazing torches (*ūlmukaiḥ*) made from logs.

Text 8

*alātair dahyamāno ’pi,
nāmuñcat tam uraṅgamaḥ,
tam asprśat padābhyetya,
bhagavān sātvatām patih*

But even though the firebrands were burning him, the serpent would not release Nanda Mahārāja. Then the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, master of His devotees, came to the spot and touched the snake with His foot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though beaten by those torches (*ālātaiḥ*), the snake did not let go of Nanda.

Text 9

*sa vai bhagavataḥ śrīmat,
pāda-sparśa-hatāśubhaḥ,
bheje sarpa-vapur hitvā,
rūpaṁ vidyādhārārcitam*

The snake had all his sinful reactions destroyed by the touch of the Supreme Lord’s divine foot, and thus he gave up his serpent body and appeared in the form of a worshipable Vidyādhara.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The words *rūpaṁ vidyādhārārcitam* indicate that the erstwhile snake appeared in a beautiful form worshipable among the demigods called Vidyādharas, because he was freed from offenses by the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s foot and thus became the best of the Vidyadhara.

Text 10

*tam aprcchad dhr̥ṣṭikeśaḥ,
praṇatam samavasthitam,*

*dīpyamānena vapuṣā,
puruṣam hema-mālinam*

The Supreme Lord Hṛṣīkeśa then questioned this personality, who was standing before Him with his head bowed, his brilliantly effulgent body bedecked with golden necklaces.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa inquired from the Vidyadhara in order to instill fear of disrespecting *brahmanas* in all the pilgrims who had gathered there from various villages. Kṛṣṇa is addressed *hṛṣīkeśa*, the controller of all the senses, to show that He wanted to focus everyone’s exclusive attention on the words of the demigod.

Text 11

*ko bhavān parayā lakṣmyā,
rocate ’dbhuta-darśanaḥ,
katham jugupsitām etām,
gatim vā prāpito ’vaśaḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear sir, you appear so wonderful, glowing with such great beauty. Who are you? And who forced you to assume this terrible body of a snake?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “How did you get (*praptah*) this condemned body?” It suggests “Who did this?”

Texts 12–13
*sarpa uvāca,
aham vidyādharaḥ kaścit,*

*sudarśana iti śrutah,
śriyā svarūpa-sampattyā,
vimānenācaran diśah,
ṛṣīn virūpāṅgirasah,
prāhasam rūpa-darpitaḥ,
tair imām prāpito yonim,
pralabdhaiḥ svena pāpmanā*

The serpent replied: I am the well-known Vidyādhara named Sudarśana. I was very opulent and beautiful, and I used to wander freely in all directions in my airplane. Once I saw some homely sages of the lineage of Aṅgirā Muni. Proud of my beauty, I ridiculed them, and because of my sin they made me assume this lowly form.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The serpent replied, “I was a well known (*sruta*) Vidyadhara named Sudarsana. I used go on pleasure excursions here and there (*disah acaran*) in my airplane (*vimānena*). Overly conceited due to my beauty (*darpitaḥ-rupa*), I laughed (*prāhasam*) at some sages, and they cursed me to become a snake because of my sin (*svena papmana*).”

Text 14

*śāpo me 'nugrahāyaiva,
kṛtas taiḥ karuṇātmabhiḥ,
yad aham loka-guruṇā,
padā spr̥ṣṭo hatāśubhaḥ*

It was actually for my benefit that those merciful sages cursed me, since now I have been touched by the foot of the supreme spiritual master of all the worlds and have thus been relieved of all

inauspiciousness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudarsana continued, “Because (*yat*) of this curse I have been touched by Your foot and attained the supreme benefit.”

Text 15

*taṁ tvāhaṁ bhava-bhītānām,
prapaṇṇānām bhayāpaham,
āpṛcche śāpa-nirmuktaḥ,
pāda-sparśād amīva-han*

My Lord, You destroy all fear for those who, fearing this material world, take shelter of You. By the touch of Your feet I am now freed from the curse of the sages. O destroyer of distress, please let me return to my planet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudarsana continued, “O destroyer of all distress (*amīva-han*)!” The word *āpṛcche* (I request) means that Sudarśana humbly begged for permission to go back to his own planet.

Text 16

*prapaṇno 'smi mahā-yogin,
mahā-puruṣa sat-pate,
anuḷānīhi mām deva,
sarva-lokeśvareśvara*

O master of mystic power, O great personality, O Lord of the devotees, I surrender to You. Please command me as You will, O supreme God, Lord of all lords of the universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudarsana continued, “O *mahā-yogi*, O greatest of all possessors of mystic power! On one hand I was a very envious serpent devouring your father. What has my position become now that I have regained proper discrimination and am praising You? How inconceivable is the mystic power of Your *yoga*! “O Lord of the saintly persons (*sat-pate, satām:sādhūnām*) headed by Nanda Maharaja and other great persons (*mahā-puruṣa*)! This is a display of Your immeasurable mercy that You delivered me from this snake body, and protected Your own devotees. Know me (*anujanihi*) to be one of Your followers.”

Text 17

*brahma-daṇḍād vimukto 'ham,
sadyas te 'cyuta darśanāt,
yan-nāma grhṇann akhilān,
śrotṛṇ ātmānam eva ca,
sadyaḥ punāti kim bhūyas,
tasya sprṣṭaḥ padā hi te*

O infallible one, I was immediately freed from the brāhmaṇas' punishment simply by seeing You. Anyone who chants Your name purifies all who hear his chanting, as well as himself. How much more beneficial, then, is the touch of Your lotus feet?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudarsana continued, “Just by seeing You I became liberated from the snake body; what to speak of being touched by Your lotus foot? If just by a single chanting of Your holy

name a person becomes purified, what should I attain, having seen You and been touched by Your lotus foot?”

Text 18

*ity anujñāpya dāsārham,
parikramyā-bhivandya ca,
sudarśano divaṁ yātaḥ,
kṛcchrān nandaś ca mocitaḥ*

Thus receiving the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the demigod Sudarśana circumambulated Him, bowed down to offer Him homage and then returned to his heavenly planet. Nanda Mahārāja was thus delivered from peril.

Text 19

*niśāmya kṛṣṇasya tad ātma-vaibhavam,
vrajaukaso vismita-cetasas tataḥ,
samāpya tasmīn niyamam punar vrajam,
ṅrpāyayus tat kathayanta ādr̥tāḥ*

The inhabitants of Vraja were astonished to see the mighty power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Dear King, they then completed their worship of Lord Śiva and returned to Vraja, along the way respectfully describing Kṛṣṇa’s powerful acts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The inhabitants of Vraja were astonished at this and discussed among themselves: “Can this boy

whom we fondle with affection, and who cannot be peaceful for a moment without us, be the Supreme Lord? If that is so, then all of us, mothers and fathers, are also great personalities. Thus we are greatly fortunate, as Garga Muni first told us that Kṛṣṇa is equal to Narayana. Indeed, we have heard this from the mouths of both Varuna and the Vidyadhara.”

Text 20

*kadācid atha govindo,
rāmaś cādbhuta-vikramaḥ,
vijahratur vane rātryām,
madhya-gau vraja-yoṣitām*

Once Lord Govinda and Lord Rāma, the performers of wonderful feats, were playing in the forest at night with the young girls of Vraja.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After observing the vow of Siva-ratri, Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and their friends met with the *gopis* on the night of Holikā-pūrṇimā (also known as Gaura-pūrṇimā) to celebrate Holī, according to *Sri Vaisnava-toṣani*.

Text 21

*upagīyamānau lalitām,
strī-janair baddha-sauhṛdaiḥ,
sv-alan̄kṛtānuliptāṅgau,
sragvinau virajo- 'mbarau*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wore flower garlands and spotless garments, and Their limbs were beautifully decorated and anointed. The women sang Their glories in a charming way, bound to Them by affection.

Text 22

*niśā-mukhaṁ mānayatāv,
uditoḍupa-tārakam,
mallikā-gandha-mattāli,
juṣṭam kumuda-vāyunā*

The two Lords praised the nightfall, signaled by the rising of the moon and the appearance of stars, a lotus-scented breeze and bees intoxicated by the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They honored the beginning of night (*niśā-mukham:niśārambham*), which was fragrant with lotus-scented breezes (*kumuda-vāyunā*), served by the rising moon and stars, and by bees maddened from the fragrance of jasmine flowers.

Text 23

*jagatuḥ sarva-bhūtānām,
manaḥ-śravaṇa-maṅgalam,
tau kalpayantau yugapat,
svara-maṅḍala-mūrcchitam*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma sang, producing the entire range of musical

sounds simultaneously. Their singing brought happiness to the ears and minds of all living beings.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since they must be vibrated separately, it is impossible for other persons to produce all the musical tones simultaneously. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were exhibiting at one time a melody consisting of the entire range of musical notes (*svara-maṇḍala-mūrcchitam*) in such a way as to create auspiciousness for the mind and the ears.

Text 24

*gopyas tad-gītam ākarṇya,
mūrcchitā nāvidan nṛpa,
sraṁsad-dukūlam ātmānam,
srasta-keśa-srajam tataḥ*

The gopīs became stunned when they heard that song. Forgetting themselves, O King, they did not notice that their fine garments were becoming loose and their hair and garlands disheveled.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* who were dear to Kṛṣṇa and Balarama fainted on hearing those melodies. Such was their state that their clothing slipped from their bodies and flowers fell from their hair.

Text 25

*evam vikrīḍatoḥ svairam,
gāyatoḥ sampramatta-vat,
śaṅkhacūḍa iti khyāto,
dhanadānucaro 'bhyagāt*

While Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma thus played according to Their own sweet will and sang to the point of apparent intoxication, a servant of Kuvera named Śaṅkhacuḍa came upon the scene.

Text 26

*tayor nirīkṣato rājams,
tan-nāthaṁ pramadā-janam,
krośantaṁ kālayām āsa,
diśy udīcyām aśaṅkitaḥ*

O King, even as the two Lords looked on, Śaṅkhacū ḍa brazenly began driving the women off toward the north. The women, who had accepted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as their Lords, began to cry out to Them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In front of Kṛṣṇa and Balaramas’ eyes, Śaṅkhacūḍa drove away the *gopis*, who were shouting and crying “O Rama, O Kṛṣṇa, please protect us.” The demon whirled a big stick before the beautiful young girls, and drove them toward the north. But he did not actually touch the *gopis*, as is corroborated by the following verse.

Text 27

*krośantaṁ kṛṣṇa rāmeti,
vilokya sva-parigraham,
yathā gā dasyunā grastā,*

bhrātarāv anvadhāvatām

Hearing Their devotees crying out “Kṛṣṇa! Rāma!” and seeing that they were just like cows being stolen by a thief, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma began to run after the demon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As cowherds protect their cows from being taken by a thief (*dasyunā:caureṇa*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarama pursued Sankhacuda.

Text 28

*mā bhaiṣṭety abhayārāvau,
śāla-hastau tarasvīnau,
āsedatus taṁ tarasā,
tvaritaṁ guhyakādhamam*

The Lords called out in reply, “Do not fear! “Then They picked up logs of the śāla tree and quickly pursued that lowest of Guhyakas, who swiftly ran away.

Text 29

*sa vīkṣya tāv anuprāptau,
kāla-mṛtyū ivodvijan,
viśṛjya strī-janaṁ mūḍhaḥ,
prādravaj jīvitecchayā*

When Śaṅkhacuḍa saw the two of Them coming toward him like the personified forces of Time and Death, he was filled with anxiety. Confused, he abandoned the women and fled for his life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Like time (*kāla-mṛtyū*), the inspirer, and death (*mṛtyū*), the inspired, Balarama, the inspirer, said, “Kill him quickly!” and Kṛṣṇa, the inspired, said, “Yes I will kill him.”

Text 30

*tam anvadhāvad govindo,
yatra yatra sa dhāvati,
jihīṛṣus tac-chiro-ratnam,
tasthau rakṣan striyo balaḥ*

Lord Govinda chased the demon wherever he ran, eager to take his crest jewel. Meanwhile Lord Balarāma stayed with the women to protect them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama stayed with the *gopis*, who were tired from running, to comfort and protect them as they rested.

Text 31

*avidūra ivābhyetya,
śiras tasya durātmanaḥ,
jahāra muṣṭinaivāṅga,
saha-cūḍa-maṇim vibhuh*

The mighty Lord overtook Śaṅkhacuḍa from a great distance

as if from nearby, my dear King, and then with His fist the Lord removed the wicked demon’s head, together with his crest jewel.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the demon was very far away, in a moment Kṛṣṇa caught up to Sankhachuda and decapitated the demon with His fist.

Text 32

*śāṅkhacūḍam nihatyaivam,
maṇim ādāya bhāsvaram,
agrajāyādadāt prītyā,
paśyantīnām ca yoṣitām*

Having thus killed the demon Śāṅkhacuḍa and taken away his shining jewel, Lord Kṛṣṇa gave it to His elder brother with great satisfaction as the gopīs watched.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To prevent rivalry among the *gopīs*, who were thinking “Kṛṣṇa will give the jewel to me because I am the most favorite”, Kṛṣṇa happily gave the jewel to Balarama. However, later, Balarama gave the effulgent jewel to Radha, the most favored object of Kṛṣṇa’s affection.

Chapter Thirty-five: The Gopīs Sing of Kṛṣṇa as He Wanders in the Forest (*Yugala-gītā*)

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
gopyaḥ kṛṣṇe vanam yāte,
tam anudruta-cetasaḥ,
kṛṣṇa-līlāḥ pragāyantyo,
ninyur duḥkhena vāsarān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Whenever Kṛṣṇa went to the forest, the minds of the gopīs would run after Him, and thus the young girls sadly spent their days singing of His pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, the *gopis*, pining in separation from Kṛṣṇa, spend their days remembering Him by reciting twelve pairs of verses known as the *Yugala-gītā*.

The *gopis' prema*, in order to nourish itself, divided itself into two parts: the coolness of direct enjoyment with Kṛṣṇa in the moonlight, and the heat of separation from Him in the day time. The *gopis* spent their nights as previously described, directly associating with Kṛṣṇa by singing and dancing, conversing, kissing and relishing conjugal *rasa*. In the daytime, they could only associate with Kṛṣṇa by thinking of Him. Drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's flute song, the *gopis* became immersed in the *rasa* of separation. When Kṛṣṇa went to the forest to herd the cows, the *gopis' minds* chased after Him (*tam anudruta-cetasaḥ*).

*śrī-gopya ūcuḥ,
vāma-bāhu-kṛta-vāma-kapolo,
valgita-bhrur adharārpita-veṇum,
komalāṅgulibhir āśrita-mārgaṁ,
gopya īrayati yatra mukundaḥ,
vyoma-yāna-vanitāḥ saha siddhair;
vismitās tad upadhārya sa-lajjāḥ,
kāma-mārgaṇa-samarpita-cittāḥ,
kaśmalaṁ yayur apasmṛta-nīvyāḥ*

The gopīs said: When Mukunda vibrates the flute He has placed to His lips, stopping its holes with His tender fingers, He rests His left cheek on His left arm and makes His eyebrows dance. At that time the demigoddesses traveling in the sky with their husbands, the Siddhas, become amazed. As those ladies listen, they are embarrassed to find their minds yielding to the pursuit of lusty desires, and in their distress they are unaware that the belts of their garments are loosening.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While herding His cows in the Vrndavana forest, Kṛṣṇa played His flute to announce His arrival and to console the trees, creepers, birds and beasts suffering in separation from Him. The *gopīs*, overwhelmed in waves of ecstasy from hearing that flute sound, spoke to their friends in twelve pairs of verses. Kṛṣṇa rested His left cheek on His left shoulder in order to play the *gamakas* (vibrato) in the ascending and descending modes of the *rāgas*. At that time Kṛṣṇa placed His right shank over His left shank to assume a charming three-fold bending form, which enchanted the three worlds. Kṛṣṇa tilted His neck, rested the flute on His lower lip, and made His eyebrows dance to attract the attention of Subala and others to the skillfulness of His songs. What type of flute was it? It was equipped with seven holes which were covered by Kṛṣṇa’s fingers. Because Kṛṣṇa

never worked, His lotus petal-like fingers were softer than those of other men, but they were somewhat harder than His other limbs. The wives of the Siddhas flying in the sky, though accompanied by their husbands, became astonished upon hearing the sound of the flute. “We have never heard such enchanting flute playing before, which totally bewilders us, even though we are chaste ladies!” Their husbands thought, “Even though we are men, this flute bewilders us too, and makes us assume the mentality of women.”

The celestial women became embarrassed in the presence of their husbands and thought, “Our husbands, seeing our agitation, will have doubts about us.” The husbands on the other hand became embarrassed, thinking, “Having given up our male identity and adopted female identities, our wives will have doubts about us.”

The celestial ladies and their husbands the Siddhas then succumbed to the arrows of lust. Seeing the arrows of love for Kṛṣṇa approaching quickly the wives said, “O arrows of love for Kṛṣṇa! Quickly pierce these hearts which have been offered to you. Let us give up our faithfulness to our husbands and let Kṛṣṇa enjoy with us!” The husbands said, “As we have given up our manhood and our status as demigods, immediately turn us into *gopis* and enjoy with us.” Both the women and their husbands became stunned due to the torment of the arrows of lust. The same feelings appeared in both parties at once. Therefore, the women’s belts became loosened without their knowing, and the men’s clothes and hair became loose without their knowing.

Thus the *gopis* imply, “If the demigoddesses and even the demigods reach such an unprecedented state, then why are we, who are human beings, and moreover cowherd girls living with Kṛṣṇa in the same village, and who have already had His intimate association, standing here without His company? Therefore, my dear sakhis, even while our husbands and relatives watch and scold us, let us enter the forest of Vrndavana and enjoy with the beloved of our lives.” This is the implication at the end of each pair of verses.

Texts 4–5

*hanta citram abalāḥ śṛnutedaṁ,
hāra-hāsa urasi sthira-vidyut,
nanda-sūnur ayam āṛta-janānām,
narma-do yarhi kūjita-veṇuḥ,
vṛndaśo vraja-vṛṣā mṛga-gāvo,
veṇu-vādya-hṛta-cetasa āṛāt,
danta-daṣṭa-kavalā dhṛta-karṇā,
nidritā likhita-citram ivāsan*

O girls! This son of Nanda, who gives joy to the distressed, bears steady lightning on His chest and has a smile like a jeweled necklace. Now please hear something wonderful. When He vibrates His flute, Vraja’s bulls, deer and cows, standing in groups at a great distance, are all captivated by the sound, and they stop chewing the food in their mouths and cock their ears. Stunned, they appear as if asleep, or like figures in a painting.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What to speak of the intelligent wives of the demigods, who are the most expert practitioners of social niceties, even the foolish animals became completely captivated by Kṛṣṇa’s flute.

Another *gopi* spoke, “Ah, this is wonderful, more amazing than the most amazing thing! O weak girls (*abalāḥ*)! From the very beginning, Kṛṣṇa has stolen the strength of your chastity toward your husbands. On Kṛṣṇa’s cloud-like chest, effulgent with a pearl necklace resembling a row of flying cranes, flashes the golden line of Lakṣmī, like stationary lightning. O *gopis*, the sunlight of your faithfulness toward your husbands has become obscured by that cloud of Kṛṣṇa’s chest with its lightning and flying cranes. Kṛṣṇa makes you who are suffering become the object of ridicule for society.

“How does He do this? Kṛṣṇa does this simply by vibrating His flute

(*kūjita-veṇuḥ*). When you hear the seductive song of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the knots of your undergarments loosen and the garlands in your hair fall down. You then attain the state of *unmāda* (madness in love) and become the objects of everyone’s ridicule.

“What to speak of humans like us; even dumb animals become stunned by the vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute. When the bulls, cows and forest animals hear the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute they become stunned, and cannot swallow the grass that they are chewing. The sound of the flute steals their minds and stops the functioning of their senses so that they appear as if asleep. The chewed grass remains in their mouths without falling to the ground. As the *sañcārī-bhāva* of *jadya* (being stunned) becomes even stronger, they become completely immobilized and their breathing almost stops. Then rather than appearing like statues, they look like painted pictures. This gives rise to the mellow of wonder or amazement known as *adbhuta-rasa*.”

Texts 6–7

barhiṇa-stabaka-dhātu-palāśair,
baddha-malla-paribarha-vidambah,
karhicit sa-bala āli sa gopair,
gāḥ samāhvayati yatra mukundaḥ,
tarhi bhagna-gatayaḥ sarito vai,
tat-padāmbuja-rajo ’nila-nītam,
sprhayatīr vayam ivābahu-puṇyāḥ,
prema-vepita-bhujāḥ stimitāpaḥ

My dear gopī, sometimes Mukunda imitates the appearance of a wrestler by decorating Himself with leaves, peacock feathers and colored minerals. Then, in the company of Balarāma and the cowherd boys, He plays His flute to call the cows. At that time the rivers stop flowing, their water stunned by the ecstasy they feel as

they eagerly wait for the wind to bring them the dust of His lotus feet. But like us, the rivers are not very pious, and thus they merely wait with their arms trembling out of love.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse the *gopīs* state, “What to speak of conscious beings such as the bulls and deer, even the unconscious entities become stunned on hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute.”

One other *gopī* spoke, “When Mukunda is decorated with mineral powders such as red earth and leaves, peacock feathers, or peacock feathers and flowers, He imitates the attire of wrestlers yet mocks them with His incomparably brilliant beauty. When Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and the cowherd boys call the cows by name, ‘O Kalindi, Gange, Sarasvatī!’ then rivers such as the Yamuna, Manasa Ganga, Sarasvatī and others in Vraja, even though they are unconscious, attain consciousness, thinking, ‘Oh, what good fortune we have! Kṛṣṇa is calling us in order to bathe and dive in our waters. Let us break our banks with strong currents and flow towards Him.’ Though desiring in this way, because of being stunned with bliss, their natural movement is checked and their currents stop flowing.”

The hidden implication of the phrase *bhagna-gatayaḥ* (broken movement) is that the rivers’ worldly progress was spoiled (*bhagna*) because of failing to attain the happiness of physical association with Kṛṣṇa, and because they became the laughing stock of other rivers. Their progress in the next life was also spoiled because of transgressing the vows of chastity to their husbands (the ocean). Just see the misfortune of these rivers!

“But this is to some extent good fortune also that the rivers were hankering for the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, which was carried to them by a favorable breeze. But even after attaining it, they cannot be satisfied and desire more. Like us *gopīs* who sometimes get Kṛṣṇa’s association and sometimes are deprived of it, the rivers do not have bad fortune, but have only a little good fortune (*ābahu-puṇyāḥ*).

“The waves (arms) of the river shake out of love, just as our arms also tremble with *prema*. Though their waters become solidified (*stimita-*

āpah) because of being stunned, again they liquefy. We also experience the water in our eyes drying up and solidifying, just like one who is lighting a sacrificial fire experiences his eyes drying up from the fire. In the same way, our movements were checked by our husbands, brothers and other relatives who prevented us from meeting Kṛṣṇa, and thus we have lost our goal in life. Because of being ridiculed by the general populace, and for transgressing the rules of chastity, we have lost our fame and the chances for our future lives also. Like the rivers, we also hanker for the dust from Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”

Texts 8–11

*anucaraiḥ samanuvārṇita-vīrya,
 ādi-pūruṣa ivācala-bhūtiḥ,
 vana-caro giri-taṭeṣu carantīr,
 veṇunāhvayati gāḥ sa yadā hi,
 vana-latās tarava ātmani viṣṇum,
 vyañjayantya iva puṣpa-phalādhyāḥ,
 praṇata-bhāra-viṭapā madhu-dhārāḥ,
 prema-hṛṣṭa-tanavo vavrṣuḥ sma,
 darśanīya-tilako vana-mālā,
 divya-gandha-tulasī-madhu-mattaiḥ,
 ali-kulair alaghu gītām abhīṣṭam,
 ādriyan yarhi sandhita-veṇuḥ,
 sarasi sārasa-haṁsa-vihaṅgās,
 cāru-gītā-hṛta-cetasa etya,
 harim upāsata te yata-cittā,
 hanta mīlita-dṛśo dhṛta-maunāḥ*

Kṛṣṇa moves about the forest in the company of His friends, who vividly chant the glories of His magnificent deeds. He thus appears just like the Supreme Personality of Godhead exhibiting

His inexhaustible opulences. When the cows wander onto the mountainsides and Kṛṣṇa calls out to them with the sound of His flute, the trees and creepers in the forest respond by becoming so luxuriant with fruits and flowers that they seem to be manifesting Lord Viṣṇu within their hearts. As their branches bend low with the weight, the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect out of the ecstasy of love of God, and both the trees and the creepers pour down a rain of sweet sap.

Maddened by the divine, honeylike aroma of the tulasī flowers on the garland Kṛṣṇa wears, swarms of bees sing loudly for Him, and that most beautiful of all persons thankfully acknowledges and acclaims their song by taking His flute to His lips and playing it. The charming flute song then steals away the minds of the cranes, swans and other lake-dwelling birds. Indeed they approach Kṛṣṇa, close their eyes and, maintaining strict silence, worship Him by fixing their consciousness upon Him in deep meditation.

(Text 8-9) “It is natural that the rivers should react in this way, because although they are unconscious, they are eternally perfect beings in the form of demigods. But just see how even the most dull entities like trees who have taken a low birth due to their previous karma relish transcendental mellows from hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute.” In this way another group of gopis spoke.

“Although Kṛṣṇa is endowed with unchanging opulence (*ācala-vibhūtiḥ*) similar to Narayana (*ādi-pūruṣa*), nonetheless He wanders through the forest with His cowherd boyfriends because of His affection for the living entities dwelling there. At that time, just as household Vaisnavas and their wives become ecstatic when they hear a *sankirtana* party approaching and offer obeisances, similarly the creepers of the forest, who are female, and the trees, who are their husbands, bowed low with their branches and vines, as if revealing Lord Visnu within their minds. They weep abundant tears in the form of streams of honey. “The trees appeared beautiful, rich with flowers and fruits. The flowers

represent the *sañcārī-bhāva* of “joy,” and the fruits represent the *sthāyī-bhāva* called *rati*. Their completely bent branches indicate the *anubhāva* of paying obeisances. The statement that the filaments on their trunks and vines stand erect out of ecstatic love indicates the *sattvika-bhāva* of *romanca* (ecstatic symptom of hair standing on end).”

(Text 10-11) After describing the Vaisnava status of the trees and creepers, like that of *grhastha* devotees who are still attached to the pleasures of household life, the *gopis* describe the swans and cranes as self-satisfied sages (*ātmārāmas*) worshiping Visnu upon hearing His flute.

Kṛṣṇa wore attractive *tilaka* markings (*darśanīya-tilakaḥ*) made from red mineral clays. The phrase can also mean that Kṛṣṇa is like the *tilaka* of all extremely beautiful persons worth seeing. Kṛṣṇa wore a *vaijayanti* flower garland with flowers of five different colors interspersed with divinely fragrant *tulasī*, whose honey was sought by greedy bees, humming loudly (*alaghu:uccaiḥ*) due to intoxication (*mattaiḥ*).

There may be an objection. Usually lotus, jasmine and *naga-kesara* flowers are described as fragrant by ordinary people. Though the glories of *tulasī* are much greater, she is not normally considered an especially fragrant plant. The objection is answered as follows. Ordinary people cannot perceive *tulasī*'s fragrance, but early in the morning spiritually advanced persons can experience her fragrance as greater than that of the lotus. The bees who are privileged to swarm about the flower garlands on Kṛṣṇa's neck certainly appreciate this fragrance. Actually the most sublime fragrance of *tulasī* is only fully appreciable to the superexcellent and most perfect sense of smell of Kṛṣṇa Himself. By the covering of *yogamaya*, *tulasī*'s fragrance cannot be appreciated by anyone else.

The *Bhāgavatam* explains that the most fragrant plants in Vaikuṅṭha also appreciate the special qualifications of Tulasī-devī.

mandāra-kunda-kurabotpala-campakārṇa,
punnāga-nāga-bakulāmbuja-pārijātāḥ
gandhe 'rcite tulasikābharāṇena tasyā,
yasmimś tapaḥ sumanaso bahu mānayanti

“Although flowering plants like the *mandāra*, *kunda*, *kurabaka*, *utpala*, *campaka*, *arṇa*, *punnāga*, *nāgakeśara*, *bakula*, *lily* and *pārijāta* are full of transcendental fragrance, they are still conscious of the austerities performed by *tulasī*, for *tulasī* is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with *tulasī* leaves.” (SB 3.15.19)

The word *abhīṣṭam* (desirable) indicates that when Kṛṣṇa thought about what pitch He would play on His flute, the bees would buzz, and Kṛṣṇa would thankfully acknowledge (*ādriyan*) them, “Excellent, excellent, My dear bees, I see this is the correct note,” and play His flute according to that pitch.

The word *sandhita-veṇuḥ* means that Sri Kṛṣṇa placed His flute firmly upon His lips. The melody emanating from that flute was certainly the most enchanting of sounds, as the *gopīs* describe in this chapter. Hearing that sweet song, the water birds left the lakes, approached Kṛṣṇa, and worshiped the Lord by looking at Him, listening and meditating on Him. The phrase *mīlita-dṛśaḥ*, “they closed their eyes” indicates the birds were absorbed in the rapture of relishing *rasa*. Closing one’s eyes due to relishing transcendental mellows is an *anubhāva*, a sign of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

Texts 12–13

*saha-balaḥ srag-avataṁsa-vilāsaḥ,
sānuṣu kṣiti-bhr̥to vraja-devyaḥ,
harṣayan yarhi veṇu-raveṇa,
jāta-harṣa uparambhati viśvam,
mahad-atikramaṇa-śaṅkita-cetā,
manda-mandam anugarjati meghaḥ,
suhṛdam abhyavarṣat sumanobhiś,
chāyayā ca vidadhat pratapatram*

O goddesses of Vraja, when Kṛṣṇa is enjoying Himself with

Balarāma on the mountain slopes, playfully wearing a flower garland on the top of His head, He engladdens all with the resonant vibrations of His flute. Thus He delights the entire world. At that time the nearby cloud, afraid of offending a great personality, thunders very gently in accompaniment. The cloud showers flowers onto his dear friend Kṛṣṇa and shades Him from the sun like an umbrella.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having described the joy the conscious and unconscious entities on the earth felt from hearing the flute, the *gopis* now describe the bliss of the unconscious entities in the sky. *Saha-balaḥ* means accompanied by Balarama and a troop of cowherd boys. Kṛṣṇa looked gorgeous as He playfully draped garlands on the top of His head, on His chest, and as ornaments over His ears. Kṛṣṇa stood on the slope of a mountain, and joyfully vibrated His flute to inundate the universe with bliss.

The clouds in the sky began to rumble gently, so that their sound would not disrupt the great cloud of Kṛṣṇa. The thundering of the clouds blended favorably with the flute sound, not disturbing it in any way. The cloud was a dear friend (*suhṛdam*) of Kṛṣṇa, because both are of dark color and act to remove people's distress. The cloud then sprinkled fine particles of ice, which were just like tiny flowers, and made an umbrella (*pratapatram*) from its own shadow to relieve his friend from the scorching heat of the sun. *Pratapatram* means that which delivers (*trayate*) one from intense heat (*pra-tapa*).

Here we can understand that Kṛṣṇa is the cloud standing on the slope of the mountain. His garland and earrings are the cranes flying in the sky, His yellow *dhoti* is the lightning, and the song of His flute is the rain showering the essence of delicious nectar.

Texts 14–15

vividha-gopa-caraneṣu vidagdho,

*veṇu-vādyā urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ,
tava sutaḥ sati yadādhara-bimbe,
datta-veṇur anayat svara-jātīḥ,
savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ,
śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Late in the afternoon, some *gopis* presented logical reasons why their beloved, who was supposed to be returning to Vraja at this time, had remained absent from their sight for so long. On some pretext they went to mother Yasoda's house and mixed with the elders, young girls and children to talk about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, activities and power. Mother Yasoda listened intently and also related numerous pastimes of her darling son. In order to pacify Yasoda, who was becoming overwhelmed with separation from Kṛṣṇa, and also to appease their own minds, the *gopis* told her about the power of Kṛṣṇa's flute song in this verse.

The *gopis* said, "O Yasoda, your son is expert at herding the cows, caring for them and milking them. He holds the flute to His cherry red lips and plays the tones of the harmonic scale in variegated melodies, which were all self-taught. When all the demigods led by *śakra* (Lord Indra) such as Upendra, Agni and Yamarāja, and those led by *śarva* (Lord Śiva) such as Kātyāyanī, Skanda and Gaṇeśa, and those led

by *parameṣṭhi* (Lord Brahmā) such as the four Kumāras and Nārada, as well as the best composers of songs, hear that song and taste its sweetness, they bow down their necks and minds. Incapable of comprehending the *raga* and *tala*, they become completely bewildered by the dulcet flute song and lose their ability to understand the real identity of the musical scales. If such illustrious demigods become bewildered, then what can we say of ordinary mortals? In this way, your son bewilders the whole universe.”

Texts 16–17

*nija-padābja-dalair dhvaja-vajra,
nīrajāṅkuśa-vicitra-lalāmaiḥ,
vraja-bhuvah śamayan khura-todaṁ,
varṣma-dhurya-gatir īḍita-veṇuḥ,
vrajati tena vayaṁ sa-vilāsa,
vīkṣaṅārpita-manobhava-vegāḥ,
kuja-gatiṁ gamitā na vidāmaḥ,
kaśmalena kavaraṁ vasaṇaṁ vā*

As Kṛṣṇa strolls through Vraja with His lotus-petal-like feet, marking the ground with the distinctive emblems of flag, thunderbolt, lotus and elephant goad, He relieves the distress the ground feels from the cows’ hooves. As He plays His renowned flute, His body moves with the grace of an elephant. Thus we gopīs, who become agitated by Cupid when Kṛṣṇa playfully glances at us, stand as still as trees, unaware that our hair and garments are slackening.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In these verses, the gopis are no longer in the company of mother Yaśodā, so they freely describe their confidential conjugal attraction to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The gopis said, “The soft touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus-petal feet, marked with a conch, flag and goad pacifies mother earth from the pain she feels from the hooves of the cows returning to Vraja in the late afternoon. As Kṛṣṇa walks by with the gait of a maddened elephant, He agitates our hearts with lust by His playful glances, and thus we become stunned and immobilized like the trees. In our bewilderment we fail to notice that the garlands in our hair and our garments are slipping off. On one hand Kṛṣṇa removes the distress of the earth, but for us, the beautiful-browed *gopis* of Vraja, He agitates our minds by glancing at us with His beautiful lotus eyes. Such is our misfortune.”

Texts 18–19

*maṇi-dharaḥ kvacid āgaṇayan gā,
mālayā dayita-gandha-tulasyāḥ,
praṇayino ’nucarasya kadāṁse,
prakṣipan bhujam agāyata yatra,
kvaṇita-veṇu-rava-vañcita-cittāḥ,
kṛṣṇam anvasata kṛṣṇa-grhīṇyaḥ,
guṇa-gaṇārṇam anugatya harīṇyo,
gopikā iva vimukta-grhāsāḥ*

Now Kṛṣṇa is standing somewhere counting His cows on a string of gems. He wears a garland of tulasī flowers that bear the fragrance of His beloved, and He has thrown His arm over the shoulder of an affectionate cowherd boyfriend. As Kṛṣṇa plays His flute and sings, the music attracts the black deer’s wives, who approach that ocean of transcendental qualities and sit down beside Him. Just like us cowherd girls, they have given up all hope for happiness in family life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis* describe the

bewilderment of the deer in the forest upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s flute, which is similar to the bewilderment they experience while remaining in the village.

For each of the four colors of cows—white, red, black and yellow—there are twenty-five subdivisions, making a total of one hundred colors. Such qualities as being colored like sandalwood-pulp *tilaka* [speckled] or having a head shaped like a *mṛdaṅga* drum create eight further groups. To count these 108 groups of cows, distinguished by color and form, Kṛṣṇa uses a string of 108 jewel-beads.

Thus when Kṛṣṇa calls out “Hey Dhavalī,” [the name of a white cow], a whole group of white cows comes forward, and when He calls “Hamsī, Candanī, Gaṅgā, Mukṭā” and so on, the twenty-four other groups of white cows come. The reddish cows are called Aruṇī, Kuṅkuma and Sarasvatī; the blackish ones: Śyāmalā, Dhūmalā and Yamunā, and the yellowish ones: Pītā, Piṅgalā and Haritālikā. Those in the group with *tilaka* marks on their foreheads are called Citritā, Citra-tilakā, Dīrgha-tilakā and Tiryak-tilakā, and there are groups known as Mṛdaṅga-mukhī [mṛdaṅga-head], Simha-mukhī [lion-head] and so on.

The *gopis* said, “Thus being called by their names, the cows come forward, and in this way Kṛṣṇa would not forget even one of them. He also wears a *tulasi* garland bearing the fragrance of His beloved. Leaning on the shoulder of a friend, Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, and that sound steals the hearts of the female black deer and brings them near Him, the ocean of all transcendental qualities. These deer have given up their hopes for family life, just like us cowherd girls.

Texts 20–21

*kunda-dāma-kṛta-kautuka-veṣo,
gopa-godhana-vṛto yamunāyām,
nanda-sūnur anaghe tava vatso,
narma-daḥ praṇayiṇām vijahāra,
manda-vāyur upavāty anakūlaṁ,*

*mānayan malayaja-sparśena,
vandinas tam upadeva-gaṇā ye,
vādyā-gīta-balibhiḥ parivavruḥ*

O sinless Yaśodā, your darling child, the son of Mahārāja Nanda, has festively enhanced His attire with a jasmine garland, and He is now playing along the Yamunā in the company of the cows and cowherd boys, amusing His dear companions. The gentle breeze honors Him with its soothing fragrance of sandalwood, while the various Upadevas, standing on all sides like panegyrists, offer their music, singing and gifts of tribute.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When the *gopis* assembled at mother Yasoda’s house in the afternoon they saw that she was disturbed over Kṛṣṇa’s late return, so they pacified Yasoda by telling her the reason for Kṛṣṇa’s delay in this verse.

The *gopis* said, “After bathing in the Yamuna to relieve His fatigue, Kṛṣṇa sat down on her bank and dressed in a festive way to please His cowherd boyfriends, who were eagerly waiting to meet Him. A gentle breeze blew to refresh Kṛṣṇa as He played in the water with His foot. To engadden His friends Kṛṣṇa told jokes and listened to theirs.

“O sinless Yasoda, you never committed any sins previously or in this life, by which danger could come to your son. Why do you, who are endowed with the most spotless fame (*yasoda*), uselessly worry about danger from demons if Kṛṣṇa is a little late? He is the son of Nanda, who is famous as the crest-jewel of all pious men, and He is your darling son (*vatsa*, object of affection). We see that children fall into danger only when the parents have bad *karma*. Therefore no danger can befall your son.

“Listen as we tell you the reason for Kṛṣṇa’s being late as we have heard it from His friends. The wind, which has acquired its fine fragrance and coolness by touching the sandalwood trees growing on the Malaya Hill, is blowing very pleasantly to honor your son. The

Upadevas (minor demigods) like the Gandharvas [famous for their celestial music and dancing] have surrounded Kṛṣṇa and are worshipping Him by playing musical instruments and praising His qualities. In order to acknowledge them, Kṛṣṇa is delaying a bit according to the logic that “Those of quality delight in seeing persons with good qualities.” Therefore there is no need to worry about your son. Actually it is your great fortune that the Upadevas are honoring your son in this manner.”

Texts 22–23

*vatsalo vraja-gavām yad aga-dhro,
vandyamāna-caranaḥ pathi vṛddhaiḥ,
kṛtsna-go-dhanam upohya dinānte,
gīta-veṇur anugēdita-kīrtiḥ,
utsavam śrama-rucāpi dṛśīnām,
unnayan khura-rajāś-churita-srak,
ditsayaiti suhrd-āsiṣa eṣa,
devakī-jaṭhara-bhūr uḍu-rājah*

Out of great affection for the cows of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa became the lifter of Govardhana Hill. At the end of the day, having rounded up all His own cows, He plays a song on His flute, while exalted demigods standing along the path worship His lotus feet and the cowherd boys accompanying Him chant His glories. His garland is powdered by the dust raised by the cows’ hooves, and His beauty, enhanced by His fatigue, creates an ecstatic festival for everyone’s eyes. Eager to fulfill His friends’ desires, Kṛṣṇa is the moon arisen from the womb of mother Yaśodā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Seeing that my son, who is so eager to play, has not come back at the end of twilight, I will now kill myself.” Fearing such a response from mother Yasoda, the *gopis* try

to console her by giving reasons why Kṛṣṇa will come quickly in this verse.

The *gopis* said, “Kṛṣṇa is affectionately remembering how the bulls and the calves tied up in Vraja are suffering in separation from Him, so He will quickly come back, even at the risk of neglecting the Gandharvas and other demigods. One cannot say that for a cowherd boy like Kṛṣṇa the expert singing of such extremely insignificant singers as these Gandharvas is more attractive than seeing the cows, feeding them grass, touching them and scratching their necks. Kṛṣṇa showed how much affection He has for His cows by lifting Govardhana Hill just to protect them. Though the Gandharvas may have heaps of good qualities, Kṛṣṇa has not even a trace of affection for them.”

Mother Yasoda replied, “If that is so, then by this time Kṛṣṇa should have returned home.”

Replying to that objection, the *gopis* present yet another reason for Kṛṣṇa’s delay: “Brahma, Siva, Indra and other chief demigods are now offering their respects to your son while standing along the path. Attracted by the sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the demigods come from their own abodes and remain all day in the sky watching Kṛṣṇa in great bliss. When Kṛṣṇa returns to Vraja in the evening, the demigods also return to their celestial abodes, but not before descending to earth to worship the lotus feet of your son in order to obtain His mercy. What can Kṛṣṇa do in this circumstance? Kṛṣṇa’s extended delay is caused by His taking time to bless the demigods. Why don’t you see your own great fortune, that the feet of your son are being honored even by Brahma, Siva and the other chief demigods? Therefore, why are you so distressed?”

In a tearful choking voice, Yasoda said, “O, dear young girls of Vraja! Please run to the watchtowers and tell me how far away my son is?”

On Yasoda’s order the tallest of the beautiful young *gopīs* climbed up the watchtower to see when Kṛṣṇa would arrive. She said, “Kṛṣṇa is now coming home to fulfill the desires of His well-wishers. With the sweet sound of His flute He has collected all the cows in one place.

The fatigue of cow herding has brilliantly enhanced Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form. His garland is sprinkled with the dust raised by the cows’ hooves.

Indeed, seeing Kṛṣṇa in this way creates a festival (*utsavam*) of ecstasy for the eyes of the entire world.”

Beyond the perception of Yasoda, the *gopi* hints here that Kṛṣṇa is casting love-filled sidelong glances toward His intimate girlfriends. Though dust is mentioned in relation to Kṛṣṇa’s garland, there was no dust anywhere else on His body because His friends repeatedly wiped off the dust with their own *cadaras*. There was some dust on Kṛṣṇa’s garland, however, because the boys were afraid of breaking the petals so they did not remove the dust completely.

Kṛṣṇa did not discard this garland even though it had become dirty, and neither did He put on a new garland which a servant kept ready in the fold of his cloth. This indicates that Kṛṣṇa wanted very much to exhibit this favorite garland hanging from His neck because it was fashioned by His beloved Radhika with Her own hands and given to Him in the forest by one of Her *sakhis*.

The word *devakī* in the phrase *devakī jaṭhara* (womb) refers to Yasoda. Kṛṣṇa appeared like the moon (*udu-raja*) rising from the milk ocean of Yasoda’s womb. In *Radha-Kṛṣṇa Gannodesa Dipika*, Srila Rupa Gosvami cites the *Adi Purana* which states that Nanda Maharaja’s wife had two names: Devaki and Yasoda.

Texts 24–25

*mada-ighūrṇita-locana īṣat,
māna-daḥ sva-suhrdām vana-mālī,
badara-pāṇḍu-vadano mṛdu-gaṇḍam,
maṇḍayan kanaka-kuṇḍala-lakṣmyā,
yadu-patir dvirada-rāja-vihāro,
yāminī-patir ivaiṣa dinānte,
mudita-vaktra upayāti durantam,
mocayan vraja-gavām dina-tāpam*

As Kṛṣṇa respectfully greets His well-wishing friends, His eyes roll slightly as if from intoxication. He wears a flower garland, and the beauty of His soft cheeks is accentuated by the brilliance of His golden earrings and the whiteness of His face, which has the color of a badara berry. With His cheerful face resembling the moon, lord of the night, the Lord of the Yadus moves with the grace of a regal elephant. Thus He returns in the evening, delivering the cows of Vraja from the heat of the day.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis* say, “Please hear the reason why even now, as Kṛṣṇa reaches the outskirts of the town, He is a little delayed.”

Kṛṣṇa’s eyes are rolling about in intoxication due to the bliss of seeing His father and other loved ones, or due to the love generated from seeing His beloved *gopis*. The first meaning is for those in the mood of parental affection (*vatsalya-rasa*), and the second meaning is for those in the mood of conjugal love (*madhurya-rasa*). This will be understood from a later description.

The *gopis* said, “To His own well-wishers (*sva-suhrdām*) such as His family priests, maternal grandparents, brothers, servants, and betel-nut bearers, who are each greeting Kṛṣṇa and giving benedictions according to his position, Kṛṣṇa shows only slight respect by nodding His head, since, though a prince, He is still young and not obliged to strictly follow the etiquette according to scriptural rules (*Niti-sastra*). This is another reason for His delay.”

The phrase *sva-suhrdām* (well-wishers) can also refer to Kṛṣṇa’s beloved girlfriends, who have climbed up the watch towers to worship Him with the blue lotuses of their smiling sidelong glances. Unseen by others, Kṛṣṇa honored (*māna-dah*) the *gopis* with sidelong glances signifying that He would soon fulfill their desires.

Kṛṣṇa’s face was slightly flushed like a ripe *badari* fruit, due to thirst, hunger and fatigue from wandering in the forest. Or Kṛṣṇa’s face was flushed due to experiencing prolonged separation from His dear *gopis*. This is an *anubhāva*, a symptom of ecstasy. His tender cheeks were

illuminated with the effulgence of His trembling golden earrings. Kṛṣṇa is addressed as the Lord of the Yadus (*yadu-patir*), which here means Lord of the cowherd men. Previously in chapter five, verse twenty it was explained that the cowherds are Yadavas. Kṛṣṇa walked slowly like the king of the elephants. The word *gavām* refers to cows or senses. Thus as Kṛṣṇa, His face blossoming with joy, came closer He relieved the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana from the distress their eyes and other senses felt in separation from Him during the day.

Text 26

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ vraja-striyo rājan,
kṛṣṇa-līlānugāyatīḥ,
remire 'haḥsu tac-cittās,
tan-manaskā mahodayāḥ*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, thus during the daytime the women of Vṛndāvana took pleasure in continuously singing about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, and those ladies' minds and hearts, absorbed in Him, were filled with great festivity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: My dear King Parikṣit! The *gopis'* minds (*tat-manaskāḥ*) were absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa's mind was absorbed in them. Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa and His beloved *gopis* shared both roles of being the object (*aśraya*) and the subject of love (*visaya*), they concentrated their minds on each other. Thus, because they continually relished each other at every moment both in separation and meeting through their minds, it is said in this verse that the *gopis* enjoyed (*remire*) the separation during the day.

Prema has two states: union and separation. Though the person absorbed in Kṛṣṇa appears to be suffering when He is separated from

Kṛṣṇa, actually He is internally relishing the highest state of bliss. On the spiritual platform, the so-called pain of separation is simply a different variety of transcendental ecstasy. Thus pure love of God is the crown jewel of all goals of human endeavor.

Chapter Thirty-six: The Slaying of Ariṣṭa, the Bull Demon

Text 1

*śrī bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
atha tarhy āgato goṣṭham,
ariṣṭo vṛṣabhāsurah,
mahīm mahā-kakut-kāyah,
kampayan khura-vikṣatām*

Śukadeva Goswāmī said: The demon Ariṣṭa then came to the cowherd village. Appearing in the form of a bull with a large hump, he made the earth tremble as he tore it apart with his hooves.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the killing of Aristasura, and Kamsa’s contemplation of the necessity of destroying Kṛṣṇa and Balarama after learning from Narada that They are actually the sons of Vasudeva. Kamsa responds by ordering Akrura to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarama to Mathura.

As *tarhi* (then) is used in this sentence, the word *yada* should also be supplied. Thus the meaning is that when (*yada*) Kṛṣṇa began His *rasa-lila* in the evening, then (*tarhi*) Aristasura came. The *Viṣṇu Purāna* confirms that Aristasura entered Kṛṣṇa’s village at twilight, as the Lord prepared to dance with the *gopīs*:

*pradoṣārdhe kadācit tu, rāsāsakte janārdane, trāsayan sa-mado
goṣṭham, ariṣṭaḥ sampāgataḥ*

“Once, midway through the period of dusk (*pradoṣa-kala* 8:24 p.m.-10:48 p.m.), when Lord Janārdana was eager to perform the *rāsa* dance, Ariṣṭāsura madly entered the cowherd village, terrifying everyone.”

Therefore the word *atha* (next) is spoken here to present a different idea

in contrast to the mood of enjoying the *rāsa* dance. Arista had the form of a bull with a very high (*mahat*) hump on his back. The stomping of his hooves made the earth tremble.

Text 2

*rambhamānaḥ kharataram,
padā ca vilikhan mahīm,
udyamya puccham vapraṇi,
viṣāṅgreṇa coddharan,
kiñcit kiñcic chakṛn muñcan,
mūtrayan stabdha-locanaḥ*

Ariṣṭāsura bellowed very harshly and pawed the ground. With his tail raised and his eyes glaring, he began to tear up the embankments with the tips of his horns, every now and then passing a little stool and urine.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Roaring very loudly and harshly, Arista scraped the earth with his hooves. He dug out the embankments of the fields with his horns and passed stool here and there.

Texts 3–4

*yasya nirhrāditenāṅga,
niṣṭhureṇa gavām nṛṇām,
patanty akālato garbhāḥ,
sravanti sma bhayena vai,
nirviśanti ghanā yasya,
kakudy acala-śaṅkayā,
taṁ tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgam udvīkṣya,*

gopyo gopās ca tatraśuḥ

My dear King, clouds hovered about sharp-horned Ariṣṭāsura’s hump, mistaking it for a mountain, and when the cowherd men and ladies caught sight of the demon, they were struck with terror. Indeed, the strident reverberation of his roar so frightened the pregnant cows and women that they lost their fetuses in miscarriages.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arista’s loud roaring made the cows and women have miscarriages. The Vedic literature categorizes miscarriages as follows: *ā-caturthād bhavet srāvaḥ pātaḥ pañcama-śaṣṭhayoḥ/ ata ūrdhvaṁ prasūtiḥ syāt.* “Up to the fourth month a premature delivery is called *srāva*, in the fifth and sixth months it is called *pāta*, and after this it is considered a birth (*prasūti*).”

Text 5

*paśavo dudruvur bhītā,
rājan santyajya go-kulam,
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti te sarve,
govindam śaraṇam yayuḥ*

The domestic animals fled the pasture in fear, O King, and all the inhabitants rushed to Lord Govinda for shelter, crying, “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa!”

Text 6

*bhagavān api tad vīkṣya,
go-kulam bhaya-vidrutam,
mā bhaiṣṭeti girāśvāsya,
vṛṣāsuraṁ upāhvayat*

When the Supreme Lord saw the cowherd community distraught and fleeing in fear, He calmed them, saying, “Don’t be afraid.” Then He called out to the bull demon as follows.

Text 7

*gopālaiḥ paśubhir manda,
trāsitaiḥ kim asattama,
mayi śāstari duṣṭānām,
tvad-vidhānām durātmanām*

You fool! What do you think you’re doing, you wicked rascal, frightening the cowherd community and their animals when I am here just to punish corrupt miscreants like you!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “What do you gain by frightening the cows?” Addressing the demon as “most sinful one” (*asattama*), Kṛṣṇa suggests that no sin would be incurred by killing this demon bull, though normally killing a cow or bull is the most heinous sin.

Text 8

ity āsphotyācyuto ’riṣṭam,

*tala-śabdena kopayan,
sakhyyur amse bhujābhogaṁ,
prasāryāvasthito hariḥ*

Having spoken these words, the infallible Lord Hari slapped His arms with His palms, further angering Ariṣṭa with the loud sound. The Lord then casually threw His mighty, serpentine arm over the shoulder of a friend and stood facing the demon.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa slapped His arms with His palms to indicate His prowess in challenging the bull demon. Furthermore, Kṛṣṇa showed His contempt for the ignorant demon by nonchalantly throwing His serpentine arm onto the shoulder of His friend Subala.

Text 9

*so 'py evaṁ kopito 'riṣṭaḥ,
khureṇāvanim ullikhan,
udyat-puccha-bhraman-meghaḥ,
kruddhaḥ kṛṣṇam upādravat*

Thus provoked, Ariṣṭa pawed the ground with one of his hooves and then, with the clouds hovering around his upraised tail, furiously charged Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arista showed his power by raising and twitching his tail, so that it disturbed the clouds in the sky.

Text 10

*agra-nyasta-viṣānāgrah,
stabdhāsrg-locano 'cyutam,
kaṭākṣipyādravat tūrṇam,
indra-mukto 'śanir yathā*

Pointing the tips of his horns straight ahead and glaring menacingly at Lord Kṛṣṇa from the corners of his bloodshot eyes, Ariṣṭa rushed toward Him at full speed, like a thunderbolt hurled by Indra.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bull's glaring eyes were blood-red with arrogance. He scolded Kṛṣṇa with his sidelong glances (*kaṭa-ākṣipya*).

Text 11

*grhītvā śṛṅgayos taṁ vā,
aṣṭādaśa padāni saḥ,
pratyapovāha bhagavān,
gajaḥ prati-gajam yathā*

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa seized Ariṣṭāsura by the horns and threw him back eighteen steps, just as an elephant might do when fighting a rival elephant.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa threw (*pratyapovāha*) the bull in the opposite direction.

Text 12

*so 'paviddho bhagavatā,
punar utthāya satvaram,
āpatat svinna-sarvāṅgo,
niḥśvasan krodha-mūrcchitaḥ*

Thus repulsed by the Supreme Lord, the bull demon got up and, breathing hard and sweating all over his body, again charged Him in a mindless rage.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bull got up after being thrown backwards.

Text 13

*tam āpatantaṁ sa nigrhya śṛṅgayoḥ,
padā samākramya nipātya bhū-tale,
niṣpīḍayām āsa yathārdram ambaraṁ,
kṛtvā viṣāṇena jaghāna so 'patat*

As Ariṣṭa attacked, Lord Kṛṣṇa seized him by the horns and knocked him to the ground with His foot. The Lord then thrashed him as if he were a wet cloth, and finally He yanked out one of the demon's horns and struck him with it until he lay prostrate.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa forcefully seized the demon by his horns. Then Kṛṣṇa beat him like a piece of wet cloth, extracted his left horn and stuck him with it.

Text 14

*asṛg vaman mūtra-śakṛt samutsṛjan,
kṣipamś ca pādān anavasthitekṣaṇaḥ,
jagāma kṛcchraṁ nirṛter atha kṣayaṁ,
puṣpaiḥ kiranto harim īḍire surāḥ*

Vomiting blood and profusely excreting stool and urine, kicking his legs and rolling his eyes about, Ariṣṭāsura thus went painfully to the abode of Death. The demigods honored Lord Kṛṣṇa by scattering flowers upon Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arista underwent great difficulty, and then Yamaraja came to kill him, rather than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Nevertheless he immediately attained liberation. The demigods praised Kṛṣṇa by showering flowers (*puṣpaiḥ kiranto*).

Text 15

*evaṁ kukudmināṁ hatvā,
stūyamānaḥ dvijātibhiḥ,
viveśa goṣṭhāṁ sa-balo,
gopīnām nayanotsavaḥ*

Having thus killed the bull demon Ariṣṭa, He who is a festival for the gopīs' eyes entered the cowherd village with Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Nayana-utsavaḥ* means a personified festival for the eyes.

Text 16

*ariṣṭe nihate daitye,
kṛṣṇenādbhuta-karmaṇā,
kaṁsāyāthāha bhagavān,
nārado deva-darśanaḥ*

After Ariṣṭāsura had been killed by Kṛṣṇa, who acts wonderfully, Nārada Muni went to speak to King Kaṁsa. That powerful sage of godly vision addressed the King as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The term *deva-darśana*, a name for Nārada Muni, indicates that Nārada has attained the perfection of seeing God, and that he knows or sees the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Knowing that Kṛṣṇa’s *vraja-līla* was ending, Narada spoke to Kamsa to induce him to bring Kṛṣṇa to Mathura.

In twenty verses the *Puranas* describe how Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda appeared after the killing of Aristasura as a result of a joking conversation between Radha and Kṛṣṇa.

Radha said, “O sinful killer of a bull! Do not touch Me today.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “O foolish woman! This is not a bull, but a terrible demon disguised as a bull.”

Radha: “O Kṛṣṇa that may be true. But even though Ariṣṭa was a terrible demon, still he was a male cow, so You will have to undergo atonement, just as Lord Indra did after killing the demon Vṛtrāsura, who was a *brahmana*.”

Kṛṣṇa: “O Radha! What should I do to atone for this act?”

Radha: “You can purify Yourself by bathing in every single holy place in the three worlds.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why should I have to wander throughout the entire universe? I will at once bring all the countless pilgrimage places here and take My bath in them. Just watch!”

Saying that, Mukunda struck His heel on the ground to make a hole and said, “Come here”. Then all the holy waters in the universe and their presiding deities came there along with the Bhogavatī River, coming

from the Pātāla region.

Kṛṣṇa: “Hey *sakhis*! Behold all the holy waters!”

But the *gopis* did not believe Kṛṣṇa’s words. Then those best of holy places, joining their palms in supplication, came forward and introduced themselves.

“I am the salt ocean. I am the ocean of milk. I am the Amara-dīrghikā. I am the river Śoṇa. I am the Sindhu. I am the Tāmraparṇī. I am the holy place Puṣkara. I am the river Sarasvatī. We are the Godāvārī, Yamunā and Revā rivers and the confluence of rivers at Prayāga. Just see our waters!”

After purifying Himself by bathing, Kṛṣṇa became quite arrogant and said, “I have made one lake containing all the various holy places, but none of you have performed such pious work.”

Hearing this, Radha said to her friends, “I must create an even more beautiful lake. Go to work and construct one with great care.” West of Kṛṣṇa’s *kunda*, where Arista’s hooves had made a hole, the *gopis* began digging up lumps of soft mud with their hands, and in the short span of an hour (*ghaṭikā-dvayena*) made a beautiful, divine *kunda*.

Astonished to see the lake the *gopis* produced, Kṛṣṇa thought of enjoying *rasa* and said, “O lotus-eyed Radha, please take some of the holy water from My *kunda* and fill up Your *kunda*.”

Radha said, “No, no, no, no! This is impossible, since the water of Your lake is contaminated by Your terrible sin of killing a cow. My countless *sakhis* will bring billions of pots of pure water from Mānasa-gaṅgā to fill up My *kunda*. By this My fame will be spread throughout the universe.”

At that time Sri Kṛṣṇa gestured to a heavenly personality who was an intimate associate of all the holy places. Suddenly that person rose up out of Kṛṣṇa’s *kunda* and bowed down to Vṛṣabhānundini. Then, with folded hands and tears in her eyes, she began to offer praises.

“O goddess, even Lord Brahmā himself, the knower of all scriptures, cannot understand Your glories, nor can Lord Śiva or Lakṣmī. Only Kṛṣṇa, the best of men, can understand them, and thus He feels obliged to personally wipe the perspiration from Your limbs when You are

fatigued. Kṛṣṇa is always anointing Your lotus feet with nectarean *cāru* and *yāvaka* and decorating them with ankle bells. Kṛṣṇa rejoices and feels most fortunate simply by serving Your lotus feet. On Kṛṣṇa’s order we have immediately come here to live in this most excellent lake, which He created by one stroke of His heel. But only if You now feel satisfied with us and bestow upon us Your merciful glance will the tree of our desire bear fruit.”

Being satisfied with the praises spoken by the representative of all the holy places, Radha said, “So, kindly tell Me your desire.”

The holy places clearly stated their desire: “Our lives will be successful if we can enter Your *kunda*. This is the boon we pray for.”

Glancing at Her beloved from the corners of Her eyes, Vṛṣabhānundini replied with a smile, “Please come”.

Radha’s *sakhis* all agreed with Her decision and became immersed in the ocean of happiness. Indeed, all the moving and non-moving creatures became enlivened. Thus gaining the mercy of Radha, the holy rivers and lakes in Śrī Kṛṣṇa-kuṇḍa forcibly broke through its boundary walls and swiftly filled Rādhā-kuṇḍa with their waters.

Kṛṣṇa said, “O most beloved! May Your *kunda* become more famous in the world than Mine. I will come here daily to bathe and to enjoy My water pastimes. Indeed, Your *kunda* is as dear to Me as You are.”

Radha replied, “I will bathe daily in Your *kunda* as well, even though You may kill hundreds of Ariṣṭa demons here. In the future, anyone who has intense devotion for this *kunda*, which is on the spot where You chastised Ariṣṭāsura, and who bathes or resides here is sure to become very dear to Me (*snāyād vāsen mama sa eva mahā-priyo ’stu*).”

That night a brilliant flash of beautiful lightning in the form of Sri Radhika, whose glory is spread throughout the three worlds, caused a shower of blissful *rasa* to fall from the Kṛṣṇa cloud by performing a *rasa* dance on the banks of Radha-kunda.

*yaśodāyāḥ sutām kanyām,
devakyāḥ kṛṣṇam eva ca,
rāmam ca rohiṇī-putram,
vasudevena bibhyatā,
nyastau sva-mitre nande vai,
yābhyām te puruṣā hatāḥ*

[Nārada told Kāmsa:] Yaśodā’s child was actually a daughter, and Kṛṣṇa is the son of Devakī. Also, Rāma is the son of Rohiṇī. Out of fear, Vasudeva entrusted Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to his friend Nanda Mahārāja, and it is these two boys who have killed your men.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If one asks what Narada Muni said to Kamsa, the answer is given in the present verse. Narada said, “The girl, who is known as the eighth child born to Devaki, is actually the daughter of Yasoda. The son of Rohini, Rāma, is the seventh child of Devaki. Or else, he also said that Rāma, who is known as the son of Nanda, is actually the son of Rohini, the wife of Vasudeva.” Kamsa said, “If Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are Vasudeva’s children, who brought them to Vraja?” Narada replied, “They were brought by Vasudeva.”

Text 18

*niśamya tad bhoja-patiḥ,
kopāt pracalitendriyaḥ,
niśātam asim ādatta,
vasudeva-jighāmsayā*

Upon hearing this, the master of the Bhojas became furious and lost control of his senses. He picked up a sharp sword to kill Vasudeva.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa took up his sword, but not in the presence of Vasudeva.

Text 19

*nivārito nāradena,
tat-sutau mṛtyum ātmanaḥ,
jñātvā loha-mayaiḥ pāśair,
babandha saha bhāryayā*

But Nārada restrained Kamsa by reminding him that it was the two sons of Vasudeva who would cause his death. Kamsa then had Vasudeva and his wife shackled in iron chains.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada prevented Kamsa from killing Vasudeva by giving the following advice: “If you kill Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama will flee in terror. Do not reveal to Vasudeva that you want to kill Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. If you tell him, he will tell his friend Nanda, who will flee with his sons. Therefore on some pretext imprison Vasudeva and Devaki, and bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarama to Mathura.” One should not think that in saying this, Narada was being cruel to Devaki and Vasudeva. Rather, this was a sign of affection. Indeed, Narada received hundreds of benedictions offered by Vasudeva and Devaki when they experienced the joy of seeing with great anticipation the face of their arriving son. Thus there was no fault in Narada’s suggesting that they be imprisoned.

Text 20

pratiyāte tu devarṣau,

*kāmsa ābhāṣya keśinam,
preṣayām āsa hanyetām,
bhavatā rāma-keśavau*

After Nārada left, King Kāmsa summoned Keśī and ordered him, “Go kill Rāma and Kṛṣṇa.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kāmsa ordered Kesi, “Go to Vraja and kill (*hanyetām*) Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.” According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, *hanyetām* also means “you should meet Them”, or in other words, “you should be killed”.

Text 21

*tato muṣṭika-cāṇūra,
śala-tośalakādikān,
amātyān hastipāṁś caiva,
samāhūyāha bhoja-rāṭ*

The King of the Bhojas next called for his ministers, headed by Muṣṭika, Cāṇū ra, Śala and Tośala, and also for his elephant-keepers. The King addressed them as follows.

Texts 22–23

*bho bho niśamyatām etad,
vīra-cāṇūra-muṣṭikau,
nanda-vraje kilāsāte,
sutāv ānakadundubheḥ,*

*rāma-kṛṣṇau tato mahyam,
mṛtyuḥ kila nidarśitaḥ,
bhavadbhyām iha samprāptau,
hanyetām malla-līlayā*

My dear heroic Cāṇū ra and Muṣṭika, please hear this. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the sons of Ānakadundubhi [Vasudeva], are living in Nanda's cowherd village. It has been predicted that these two boys will be the cause of my death. When They are brought here, kill Them on the pretext of engaging Them in a wrestling match.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “My death has been predicted (*nidarśitaḥ*) by Narada.”

Text 24

*mañcāḥ kriyantām vividhā,
malla-raṅga-pariśritāḥ,
paurā jānapadāḥ sarve,
paśyantū svaira-saṁyugam*

Erect a wrestling ring with many surrounding viewing stands, and bring all the residents of the city and the outlying districts to see the open competition.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “Furthermore, in order to deceive Kṛṣṇa and Balarama and increase Their enthusiasm to fight, a great festival should be arranged. Otherwise They will run away.”

Text 25

*mahāmātra tvayā bhadra,
raṅga-dvāry upanīyatām,
dvipaḥ kuvalayāpīḍo,
jahi tena mamāhitau*

You, elephant-keeper, my good man, should position the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa at the entrance to the wrestling arena and have him kill my two enemies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “O elephant keeper! Place Kuvalayapida at the entrance of the arena to kill my two enemies (Kṛṣṇa and Balarama), who are not beneficial (*ahitau*) to me.”

Text 26

*ārabhyatām dhanur-yāgaś,
caturdaśyām yathā-vidhi,
viśasantu paśūn medhyān,
bhūta-rājāya mīḍhuṣe*

Commence the bow sacrifice on the Caturdaśī day in accordance with the relevant Vedic injunctions. In ritual slaughter offer the appropriate kinds of animals to the magnanimous Lord Śiva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “For my prosperity, you should behead some goats and offer them to Lord Siva (*bhūta-rājāya*), the giver of benedictions.”

Text 27

*ity ājñāpyārtha-tantra-jñā,
āhūya yadu-puṅgavam,
grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇim,
tato 'krūram uvāca ha*

Having thus commanded his ministers, Kamsa next called for Akrū ra, the most eminent of the Yadus. Kamsa knew the art of securing personal advantage, and thus he took Akrū ra's hand in his own and spoke to him as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa knew about *artha-sastra* (*ārtha-tantra-jñā*), the art of securing personal interest, and *kāma*, sense gratification. But Kamsa knew nothing about *dharma* and *moksa* (religion and liberation).

Text 28

*bho bho dāna-pate mahyam,
kriyatām maitram ādṛtaḥ,
nānyas tvatto hitatamo,
vidyate bhoja-vṛṣṇiṣu*

My dear Akrū ra, most charitable one, please do me a friendly favor out of respect. Among the Bhojas and Vṛṣṇis, there is no one else as kind to us as you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “To satisfy (*mahyam*) me, Akrura, please do this as an act of friendship (*maitram*).”

Text 29

*atas tvām āśritaḥ saumya,
kārya-gaurava-sādhanam,
yathendro viṣṇum āśritya,
svārtham adhyagamad vibhuḥ*

Gentle Akrū ra, you always carry out your duties soberly, and therefore I am depending on you, just as powerful Indra took shelter of Lord Viṣṇu to achieve his goals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “I have come to you because among my relations you can execute the task most perfectly.”

Text 30

*gaccha nanda-vrajaṁ tatra,
sutāv ānakadundubheḥ,
āsāte tāv ihānena,
rathenānaya mā ciram*

Please go to Nanda’s village, where the two sons of Ānakadundubhi are living, and without delay bring Them here on this chariot.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kamsa said “on this chariot (*rathena*)”, he pointed with his index finger to a brand-new, attractive chariot. Kamsa thought that since Akrūra was innocent by nature, when he saw this fine, new vehicle he would naturally want to drive it and quickly bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarama back to Mathura. The actual reason why Akrura accepted the new chariot was that he knew that it would have been clearly inappropriate to bring Kṛṣṇa in something enjoyed

previously by the wicked Kamsa.

Text 31

*nirṣṭaḥ kila me mṛtyur,
devair vaikunṭha-saṁśrayaiḥ,
tāv ānaya samam gopair;
nandādyaiḥ sābhyupāyanaiḥ*

The demigods, who are under the protection of Viṣṇu, have sent these two boys as my death. Bring Them here, and also have Nanda and the other cowherd men come with gifts of tribute.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “These two boys have been especially sent as my death by the demigods who have taken shelter of Visnu.”

Text 32

*ghātayiṣya ihānītau,
kāla-kalpena hastinā,
yadi muktau tato mallair;
ghātaye vaidyutopamaiḥ*

After you bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, I will have Them killed by my elephant, who is as powerful as death itself. And if by chance They escape from him, I will have Them killed by my wrestlers, who are as strong as lightning.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “Kṛṣṇa and Balarama

will be killed by these wrestlers who are as strong as thunderbolts (*vaidyuta*).

Text 33

*tayor nihatayos taptān,
vasudeva-purogamān,
tad-bandhūn nihanisyāmi,
vṛṣṇi-bhoja-daśārhakān*

When these two have been killed, I will kill Vasudeva and all Their lamenting relatives—the Vṛṣṇis, Bhojas and Daśārhas.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “After these two boys are killed, I will kill Vasudeva, the Vrsnis, and their friends in the Bhoja and Dasarha dynasties.”

Text 34

*ugrasenam ca pitaram,
sthaviram rājya-kāmukam,
tad-bhrātaram devakam ca,
ye cānye vidviṣo mama*

I will also kill my old father, Ugrasena, who is greedy for my kingdom, and I will kill his brother Devaka and all my other enemies as well.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “I will also kill all my other enemies.”

Text 35-36

*tataś caiṣā mahī mitra,
bhavitrī naṣṭa-kaṇṭakā,
jarāsandho mama gurur,
dvivido dayitaḥ sakhā,
śambaro narako bāṇo,
mayy eva kṛta-sauhrdāḥ,
tair ahaṁ sura-pakṣīyān,
hatvā bhokṣye mahīm nṛpān*

My elder relative Jarāsandha and my dear friend Dvivida are solid well-wishers of mine, as are Śambara, Naraka and Bāṇa. I will use them all to kill off those kings who are allied with the demigods, and then I will rule the earth.

Then, my friend, this earth will be free of thorns.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It may be objected, “How will the world be without thorns if Jarasandha and others are present?” Kamsa answers in this verse, “Jarasandha is my father-in-law (*guru*).”

Text 37

*etaj jñātvānaya kṣipraṁ,
rāma-kṛṣṇāv ihārbhakau,
dhanur-makha-nirīkṣārthaṁ,
draṣṭuṁ yadu-pura-śriyam*

Now that you understand my intentions, please go at once and bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to watch the bow sacrifice and see the opulence of the Yadus' capital.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa said, “You should not tell this secret plot to others, but you should speak as follows, inviting the boys to the *dhanur-yajna* (*dhanur-makha*), bow sacrifice.”

Text 38

*śrī-akrūra uvāca,
rājan manīṣitam sadhryak,
tava svāvadya-mārjanam,
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samam kuryād,
daivam hi phala-sādhanam*

Śrī Akṛū ra said: O King, you have expertly devised a process to free yourself of misfortune. Still, one should be equal in success and failure, since it is certainly destiny that produces the results of one's work.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akṛura replied, “Kamsa, you have thoroughly considered how to avoid your death. Now hear the injunctions of *Niti-sastra*. In regards to success or failure, one should perform action with a cool head, since fate alone will determine the result.”

Text 39

*manorathān karoty uccair,
jano daiva-hatān api,*

*yujyate harṣa-śokābhyām,
tathāpy ājñām karomi te*

An ordinary person is determined to act on his desires even when fate prevents their fulfillment. Therefore he encounters both happiness and distress. Yet even though such is the case, I will execute your order.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Ordinary persons (*jano*) perform activities with expectations that are sometimes fulfilled and sometimes unfulfilled, leading to happiness or distress. I will carry out your orders so that you will be happy.” This is the external meaning, but the implied idea is: “You are no different from a low animal (*jano:jantu*).”

Another meaning is: “I will execute this order of yours, since you are indeed fortunate and are going to become joyful.” This is the external meaning. The implied idea is that, “Although it is not fitting to execute the order of you, who are about to die, I will do so because you are the king and I am your subject.” Another meaning is: “Though your desires will not be fulfilled, mine will be fulfilled, so I will carry out your order.”

Text 40

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam ādiśya cākrūram,
mantriṇaś ca viṣṛjya saḥ,
praviveśa gṛham kamsas,
tathākrūraḥ svam ālayam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed Akrū ra, King

**Kaṁsa dismissed his ministers and retired to his quarters, and
Akrū ra returned home.**

Chapter Thirty-seven: The Killing of the Demons Keśi and Vyoma

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
keśī tu kaṁsa-prahitaḥ khurair mahīm,
mahā-hayo nirjarayan mano-javaḥ,
saṭāvadhūtābhra-vimāna-saṅkulam,
kurvan nabho heṣita-bhīṣitākhilah,
taṁ trāsayantam bhagavān sva-gokulam,
tad-dheṣitair vāla-vighūrṇitāmbudam,
ātmānam ājau mṛgayantam agra-ṇīr,
upāhvayat sa vyanadan mṛgendra-vat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The demon Keśī, sent by Kaṁsa, appeared in Vraja as a great horse. Running with the speed of the mind, he tore up the earth with his hooves. The hairs of his mane scattered the clouds and the demigods’ airplanes throughout the sky, and he terrified everyone present with his loud neighing.

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead saw how the demon was frightening His village of Gokula by neighing terribly and shaking the clouds with his tail, the Lord came forward to meet him. Keśī was searching for Kṛṣṇa to fight, so when the Lord stood before him and challenged him to approach, the horse responded by roaring like a lion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the killing of Kesi, Narada’s praising of Kṛṣṇa’s future pastimes, Kṛṣṇa’s pastime of playing cops and robbers and the killing of Vyomasura.

Kṛṣṇa called out to the demon that had been sent by Kamsa. Kesi made the earth tremble with the stomping of his hooves. Shaking his mane, he disturbed the clouds and the airplanes of the demigods. His loud neighing instilled fear in all people. He shook the clouds with His tail.

Text 3

*sa taṁ niśāmyābhimukho makhena khaṁ,
pibann ivābhyadravad aty-amarṣaṇaḥ,
jaghāna padbhyāṁ aravinda-locanaṁ,
durāsadaś caṇḍa-javo duratyayah*

Seeing the Lord standing before him, Keśī ran toward Him in extreme rage, his mouth gaping as if to swallow up the sky. Rushing with furious speed, the unconquerable and unapproachable horse demon tried to strike the lotus-eyed Lord with his two front legs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kesi, whom no one could approach (*durasadam*) or defeat (*duratyayah*), charged at Kṛṣṇa.

Text 4

*tad vañcayitvā taṁ adhokṣajo ruṣā,
pragrhya dorbhyāṁ parividhya pādayoḥ,
sāvajñam utsrjya dhanuḥ-śatāntare,
yathoragaṁ tārksya-suto vyavasthitaḥ*

But the transcendental Lord dodged Keśī's blow and then with His arms angrily seized the demon by the legs, whirled him around in the air and contemptuously threw him the distance of one hundred

bow-lengths, just as Garuḍa might throw a snake. Lord Kṛṣṇa then stood there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kesi kicked his hind legs, Kṛṣṇa dodged him, grabbed Kesi's extended legs with His hands, twirled him around, and threw him six-hundred feet away. Astonishingly, Kṛṣṇa did all this while standing in one place.

Text 5

*sah labdha-samjñah punar utthito ruṣā,
vyādāya keśi tarasāpatad dharim,
so 'py asya vaktre bhujam uttaram smayan,
praveśayām āsa yathoragam bile*

Upon regaining consciousness Keśi angrily got up, opened his mouth wide and again rushed to attack Lord Kṛṣṇa. But the Lord just smiled and thrust His left arm into the horse's mouth as easily as one would make a snake enter a hole in the ground.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kesi stood up after regaining consciousness (*labdha-samjñah*), opened his mouth wide and charged again. Kṛṣṇa just laughed, showed His left thumb and said, "Do you want to eat something? Here, eat this!" Kṛṣṇa then thrust His left arm into Kesi's open mouth to kill him, just as a snake easily enters a hole to kill a mouse.

Text 6

*dantā nipetur bhagavad-bhuja-sprśas,
te keśinas tapta-maya-sprśo yathā,*

*bāhuś ca tad-deha-gato mahātmano,
yathāmayah saṁvavṛdhe upekṣitah*

Keśī’s teeth immediately fell out when they touched the Supreme Lord’s arm, which to the demon felt as hot as molten iron. Within Keśī’s body the Supreme Personality’s arm then expanded greatly, like a diseased stomach swelling because of neglect.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Alas, alas! How could Kṛṣṇa place His arm, tender as the stem of a blue lotus, into the mouth of Kesi, which was filled with fierce teeth?” Anticipating such an objection by the disturbed Parikṣit Maharaja, Sukadeva Gosvami answers in this verse.

As Kesi’s teeth touched Kṛṣṇa’s arm to chew on it, they became uprooted and fell out, just as if contacting a red-hot iron. Although Kṛṣṇa’s arm is softer and more cooling than a blue lotus, to Keśī it felt as hard and hot as a thunderbolt, just as a jaundiced person perceives sugar candy as bitter. Kṛṣṇa’s arm expanded within Kesi’s mouth until He died, just as Kṛṣṇa expanded His body within the mouth of Aghasura.

Text 7

*samedhamānena sa kṛṣṇa-bāhunā,
niruddha-vāyuś caraṇāṁś ca vikṣipan,
prasvinna-gātraḥ parivṛtta-locanaḥ,
papāta laṅḍam viśrjan kṣitau vyaśuḥ*

As Lord Kṛṣṇa’s expanding arm completely blocked Keśī’s breathing, his legs kicked convulsively, his body became covered with sweat, and his eyes rolled around. The demon then passed stool

and fell on the ground, dead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Expelling stool (*landam*), Kesi expired.

Text 8

*tad-dehataḥ karkaṭikā-phalopamād,
vyasor apākṛṣya bhujam mahā-bhujah,
avismoito 'yatna-hatārikah suraiḥ,
prasūna-varṣair varṣadbhir īditaḥ*

The mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa withdrew His arm from Keśī's body, which now appeared like a long karkaṭikā fruit. Without the least display of pride at having so effortlessly killed His enemy, the Lord accepted the demigods' worship in the form of flowers rained down from above.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kesi's body burst open like an over-ripe melon. In spite of killing the big demon, Kṛṣṇa was not proud, since He did it very easily. The demigods sprinkled flowers and fine drops of water to dispel Kṛṣṇa's fatigue.

Text 9

*devarṣir upasaṅgamyā,
bhāgavata-pravarō nṛpa,
kṛṣṇam akliṣṭa-karmāṇam,
rahasy etad abhāṣata*

My dear King, thereafter Lord Kṛṣṇa was approached in a solitary place by the great sage among the demigods, Nārada Muni. That most exalted devotee spoke as follows to the Lord, who effortlessly performs His pastimes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Now that Your *vraja-lila* is completed, please show Your *mathura-lila*.” Thus requesting Sri Kṛṣṇa, Narada Muni, the sage among the demigods, praised his Lord and master.

Narada is called *bhagavata-pravara* because he fulfilled the exalted desires (*varo:manoratha-siddhih*) of the devotees in Mathura. He spoke to Kṛṣṇa who effortlessly killed (*akliṣṭa-karmāṇam*) the ferocious Kesi demon.

Texts 10–11

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman,
yogeśa jagad-īśvara,
vāsudevākhilāvāsa,
sātvatām pravara prabho,
tvam ātmā sarva-bhūtānām,
eko jyotir iva idhasām,
gūḍho guhā-śayaḥ sākṣī,
mahā-puruṣa īśvaraḥ*

[Nārada Muni said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, unlimited Lord, source of all mystic power, Lord of the universe! O Vāsudeva, shelter of all beings and best of the Yadus ! O master, You are the Supreme Soul of all created beings, sitting unseen within the cave of the heart like the fire dormant within kindling wood. You are the witness within everyone, the Supreme Personality and the ultimate controlling Deity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Narada called out Kṛṣṇa’s name twice (*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇā*) out of great bliss, while thinking himself as just a semblance of a devotee who praises the Lord by the *sankīrtana* of His names.

Narada Muni said, “No one can measure or understand Your mind (*atma:manah*). Therefore who can ascertain what’s on Your mind, whether You intend to remain in Vraja giving joy to Your parents and the other Vrajavasis, or whether You will go to Mathura? As the controller of *yogamaya* (*yogesa*), You can easily stay in both places without difficulty. And as the master of the universe (*jagat-īśvara*), You must kill the demons who burden the earth.

“You are famous as the son of Nanda, but now You should become known as the son of Vasudeva (*vāsudeva*), thus generating his good fortune. Therefore come live in Mathura and relieve all Your devotees there from their fear of Kamsa. You are the best (*pravara*) fulfiller of desires and the best among the Yadus (*sātvatām*). Thus, O master (*prabho*), You can do anything!”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “I act according to My desires, so why are you making a request from Me?”

Narada answered, “You are the Supersoul within me (*tvam ātmā*), who gave me the inspiration to request You, so what can I do? You dwell not only in My heart, but within the hearts of all living beings (*sarva-bhūtanam*). You remain hidden just like fire within wood. Just as You rest in the caves of Govardhana as Nanda’s son, You rest within the heart as the Supersoul. Though You are resting in the heart, You are the witness (*saksi*) of everything. Thus You are the greatest person (*mahapurusa*) with the power to do anything. Generally, even great persons have someone above them with more power. But You alone are the Supreme Controller (*īśvara*) of everyone.”

*ātmanātmāśrayaḥ pūrvam,
māyayā saṣṛje guṇān,
tair idaṁ satya-saṅkalpaḥ,
ṣṛjasy atsy avasīsvaraḥ*

You are the shelter of all souls, and being the supreme controller, You fulfill Your desires simply by Your will. By Your personal creative potency You manifested in the beginning the primal modes of material nature, and through their agency You create, maintain and then destroy this universe.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If You had not created myself, my intelligence and the rest of the universe, then I would not be able to make any request from You.” With this intention Narada speaks. Narada said, “You are independent and the shelter of all souls (*atma-asrayaḥ*). By Your energies, which are non-different from You (*atmana*), You create the elements starting from *mahat-tattva*. As You create this world, You also inspire everyone to fulfill their desires. In this way, although I am another separate person, I am trying to request You.”

Text 13

*sa tvam bhūdhara-bhūtānām,
daitya-pramatha-rakṣasām,
avatīrṇo vināśāya,
sādhunām rakṣanāya ca*

You, that very same creator, have now descended on the earth to annihilate the Daitya, Pramatha and Rākṣasa demons who are posing as kings, and also to protect the godly.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada continued, “Therefore I have come today to make a request. You are the creator mentioned in the previous verse, and You have appeared to protect the devotees and destroy the demons posing as kings.”

Text 14

*diṣṭyā te nihato daityo,
līlayāyam hayākṛtiḥ,
yasya heṣita-santrastās,
tyajanty animiṣā divam*

The horse demon was so terrifying that his neighing frightened the demigods into leaving their heavenly kingdom. But by our good fortune You have enjoyed the sport of killing him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “You have destroyed this demon for the benefit (*distya*) of the people.”

Texts 15–20

*cānūram muṣṭikam caiva,
mallān anyāms ca hastinam,
kaṁsam ca nihataṁ drakṣye,
paraśvo 'hani te vibho,
tasyānu śankha-yavana,
murānām narakasya ca,
pārijātāpaharaṇam,
indrasya ca parājayam,
udvāhaṁ vīra-kanyānām,*

*vīrya-śulkādi-lakṣaṇam,
nṛgasya mokṣaṇam śāpād,
dvārakāyām jagat-pate,
syamantakasya ca maṇer,
ādānam saha bhāryayā,
mṛta-putra-pradānam ca,
brāhmaṇasya sva-dhāmataḥ,
pauṇḍrakasya vadham paścāt,
kāśi-puryāś ca dīpanam,
dantavakrasya nidhanam,
caidyasya ca mahā-kratau,
yāni cānyāni vīryāṇi,
dvārakām āvasan bhavān,
kartā drakṣyāmy aham tāni,
geyāni kavibhir bhuvī*

In just two days, O almighty Lord, I will see the deaths of Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika and other wrestlers, along with those of the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa and King Kaṁsa—all by Your hand. Then I will see You kill Kālayavana, Mura, Naraka and the conch demon, and I will also see You steal the pārijāta flower and defeat Indra. I will then see You marry many daughters of heroic kings after paying for them with Your valor. Then, O Lord of the universe, in Dvārakā You will deliver King Nṛga from a curse and take for Yourself the Syamantaka jewel, together with another wife. You will bring back a brāhmaṇa's dead son from the abode of Your servant Yamarāja, and thereafter You will kill Pauṇḍraka, burn down the city of Kāśi and annihilate Dantavakra and the King of Cedi during the great Rājasūya sacrifice. I shall see all these heroic pastimes, along with many others You will perform during Your residence in Dvārakā. These pastimes are glorified on this earth in the songs of transcendental poets.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “I know the sequence of Your pastimes, having already seen them in Your various previous descents. This is only an outline of Your future pastimes, and is not intended to be a comprehensive account. I will see You kill the Pancajana (*sankha*) demon. I will watch You retrieve the Syamantaka jewel along with Your wife (*bhāryayā*) Jambavati. And You will deliver a *brahmana*’s son from the abode of Yamaraja.”

Text 21

*atha te kāla-rūpasya,
kṣapayiṣṇor amuṣya vai,
akṣauhiṇīnām nidhanam,
drakṣyāmy arjuna-sāratheḥ*

Subsequently I will see You appear as time personified, serving as Arjuna’s chariot driver and destroying entire armies of soldiers to rid the earth of her burden.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “I will see You, who destroys the universe in the form of time, destroy the armies opposing Arjuna.”

Text 22

*viśuddha-vijñāna-ghanam sva-saṁsthayā,
samāpta-sarvārtham amogha-vāñchitam,
sva-tejasā nitya-nivṛtta-māyā,
guṇa-pravāham bhagavantam īmahi*

Let us approach You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for shelter. You are full of perfectly pure spiritual awareness and are always situated in Your original identity. Since Your will is never thwarted, You have already achieved all possible desirable things, and by the power of Your spiritual energy You remain eternally aloof from the flow of the qualities of illusion.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After describing the future pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, Narada offers his respects in two verses: “I offer my respects to You, O Lord, who are the concentrated Brahman or spiritual essence and the ultimate object of pure realization. All the desires of the devotees reside completely in You who exist eternally along with Your associates. You mercifully fulfill all those desires. Through Your potency, or else by the potency of Your pure devotees, You help them everyday (*nityam:prati-dinam*) to avoid the influence of the modes of material nature.”

Text 23

*tvām īśvaram svāśrayam ātma-māyayā,
vinirmitāśeṣa-viśeṣa-kalpanam,
krīḍāṛtham adyātta-manuṣya-vigrahaṁ,
nato 'smi dhuryaṁ yadu-vr̥ṣṇi-sātvatām*

I bow down to You, the supreme controller, who are dependent only on Yourself. By Your potency You have constructed the unlimited particular arrangements of this universe. Now you have appeared as the greatest hero among the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas and have chosen to participate in human warfare.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “There is no one like

You. You have the power to control (*isvara*) all others. You are self-contained (*sva-āśrayam*); not under the shelter of anyone. All others must take shelter of You.” *Sva-āśrayam* means that Kṛṣṇa does not depend on anyone else. Therefore He is not under anyone else’s control. Narada continued, “Kṛṣṇa, You create this variegated universe by *maya*, who is subordinate to You. Your only object is to play. Now You will fight with humans like Kamsa after killing Kesi, who was Kamsa’s very life. I offer respects to You.”

An alternate reading: Narada said, “All this is simply Your play in order to protect Your relatives, the Yadus, Vrsnis and Satvatas.”

Text 24

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam yadu-patiṁ kṛṣṇam,
bhāgavata-pravaro muniḥ,
praṇipatyābhya-nujñāto,
yayau tad-darśanotsavaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadu dynasty, Nārada bowed down and offered Him obeisances. Then that great sage and most eminent devotee took his leave from the Lord and went away, feeling great joy at having directly seen Him.

Text 25

*bhagavān api govindo,
hatvā keśinam āhave,
paśūn apālayat pālaiḥ,*

prītair vraja-sukhāvahaḥ

After killing the demon Keśī in battle, the Supreme Personality of Godhead continued to tend the cows and other animals in the company of His joyful cowherd boyfriends. Thus He brought happiness to all the residents of Vṛndāvana.

Text 26

*ekadā te paśūn pālās,
cārayanto 'dri-sānuṣu,
cakrur nilāyana-krīḍās,
cora-pālāpadeśataḥ*

One day the cowherd boys, while grazing their animals on the mountain slopes, played the game of stealing and hiding, acting out the roles of rival thieves and herders.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cowherd boys acted out hiding stolen objects as thieves and being the protectors of herds of sheep.

Text 27

*tatrāsan katicic corāḥ,
pālās ca katicin nṛpa,
meṣāyitās ca tatraike,
vijahrur akuto-bhayāḥ*

In that game, O King, some acted as thieves, others as shepherds and others as sheep. They played their game happily, without fear of danger.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They played without fear (*akutaḥ-bhayāḥ*) because the thieves, stolen objects, and the protectors were all friends.

Text 28

*māya-putro mahā-māyo,
vyomo gopāla-veṣa-dhṛk,
meṣāyitān apovāha,
prāyaś corāyito bahūn*

A powerful magician named Vyoma, son of the demon Maya, then appeared on the scene in the guise of a cowherd boy. Pretending to join the game as a thief, he proceeded to steal most of the cowherd boys who were acting as sheep.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vyomasura stole almost all of the cowherd boys acting as sheep.

Text 29

*giri-daryām viniḥsipya,
nītam nītam mahāsurah,
śilayā pidadhe dvāram,
catuḥ-pañcāvaśeṣitāḥ*

Gradually the great demon abducted more and more of the cowherd boys and cast them into a mountain cave, which he sealed shut with a boulder. Finally only four or five boys acting as sheep remained in the game.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Finally only four or five boys playing sheep were left.

Text 30

*tasya tat karma vijñāya,
kṛṣṇaḥ śaraṇa-daḥ satām,
gopān nayantaṁ jagrāha,
vṛkaṁ harir ivaujasā*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, who shelters all saintly devotees, understood perfectly well what Vyomāsura was doing. Just as a lion grabs a wolf, Kṛṣṇa forcefully seized the demon as he was taking away more cowherd boys.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa caught Vyomasura just as a lion (*hari*) attacks a wolf.

Text 31

*sa nijam rūpam āsthāya,
girīndra-saḍṛśaṁ balī,
icchan vimoktum ātmānaṁ,
nāśaknod grahaṇāturaḥ*

The demon changed into his original form, as big and powerful as a great mountain. But try as he might to free himself, he could not do so, having lost his strength from being held in the Lord's tight grip.

Text 32

*taṁ niḡṛhyācyuto dorbhyām,
pātayitvā mahī-tale,
paśyatām divi devānām,
paśu-māram amārayat*

Lord Acyuta clutched Vyomāsura between His arms and threw him to the ground. Then, while the demigods in heaven looked on, Kṛṣṇa killed him in the same way that one kills a sacrificial animal.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa killed Vyomasura in the same manner in which a sacrificial animal is slaughtered (*paśu-māram*), namely by suffocation through strangulation, just as Vyomasura had tried to kill the cowherd boys by suffocation when he locked them in a cave.

Text 33

*guhā-pidhānaṁ nirbhidyā,
gopān niḥsārya kṛcchrataḥ,
stūyamānaḥ surair gopaiḥ,
praviveśa sva-gokulam*

Kṛṣṇa then smashed the boulder blocking the cave's entrance and

led the trapped cowherd boys to safety. Thereafter, as the demigods and cowherd boys sang His glories, He returned to His cowherd village, Gokula.

Chapter Thirty-eight: Akrūra's Arrival in Vṛndāvana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
akrūro 'pi ca tām rātrim,
madhu-puryām mahā-matiḥ,
uṣitvā ratham āsthāya,
prayayau nanda-gokulam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After passing the night in the city of Mathurā, the high-minded Akrura mounted his chariot and set off for the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa fulfilled all the desires of Akrura, and welcomed him with appropriate hospitality. King Kāmsa ordered Kesi and Akrūra to go to Vraja on the Ekādaśī of the dark fortnight (Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa) of the Vedic month of Phālguna. The next morning, Kesi was killed in Vṛndavana by Kṛṣṇa, Akrura set off for Vraja, and Narada praised Kṛṣṇa. In the afternoon, Vyomasura was killed and at dusk Akrura entered Vraja.

Tām rātrim means the night of Ekadasi. Akrura is described as greatly intelligent (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he stayed up the whole night of Ekadasi discussing the glories of Kṛṣṇa and worshiping Him. The next morning, without even breaking his Ekadasi fast, Akrura left Mathura.

Text 2

gacchan pathi mahā-bhāgo,

*bhagavaty ambujekṣaṇe,
bhaktim̐ parām upagata,
evam etad acintayat*

As he traveled on the road, the great soul Akrura felt tremendous devotion for the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, and thus he began to consider as follows.

Text 3

*kiṁ mayācaritaṁ bhadraṁ,
kiṁ taptaṁ paramaṁ tapaḥ,
kiṁ vāthāpy arhate dattaṁ,
yad drakṣyāmy adya keśavam*

[Śrī Akrura thought:] What pious deeds have I done, what severe austerities undergone, what worship performed or charity given so that today I will see Lord Keśava?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura happily reflected, “What have I possibly done to be qualified to see the Lord?”

Text 4

*mamaitad durlabhaṁ manya,
uttamaḥ-śloka-darśanam,
viṣayātmano yathā brahma,
kīrtanaṁ śūdra-janmanaḥ*

Since I am a materialistic person absorbed simply in sense gratification, I think it is as difficult for me to have gotten this opportunity to see Lord Uttamaḥśloka as it would be for one born a śū dra to be allowed to recite the *Vedic mantras*.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Overcome with humility, Akrura thought, “It is rare that I, a materialist absorbed in sense gratification, would get the chance to see the Lord, just as it is unusual for a born *sudra* to recite the *Vedas*.”

Text 5

*maivam mamādhamasyāpi,
syād evācyuta-darśanam,
hriyamāṇaḥ kala-nadyā,
kvacit tarati kaścana*

But enough of such thoughts! After all, even a fallen soul like me can have the chance to behold the infallible Supreme Lord, for one of the conditioned souls being swept along in the river of time may sometimes reach the shore.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura subdued his humiliation by his intelligence and determination, and thought, “Though I am low, it is possible (*syād evāhe*) for me to see the Lord.”

Text 6

*mamādyāmaṅgalaṁ naṣṭam,
phalavāṁś caiva me bhavaḥ,*

*yan namasye bhagavato,
yogi-dhyeyānghri-pañkajam*

Today all my sinful reactions have been eradicated and my birth has become worthwhile, since I will offer my obeisances to the Supreme Lord’s lotus feet, which mystic yogīs meditate upon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Becoming more certain, Akrura thought with confidence.

Text 7

*kamso batādyākṛta me ’ty-anugrahaṁ,
drakṣye ’nghri-padmaṁ prahito ’munā hareḥ,
kṛtāvātārasya duratyayaṁ tamaḥ,
pūrve ’taran yan-nakha-maṇḍala-tviṣā*

Indeed, today King Kāṁsa has shown me extreme mercy by sending me to see the lotus feet of Lord Hari, who has now appeared in this world. Simply by the effulgence of His toenails, many souls in the past have transcended the insurmountable darkness of material existence and achieved liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “Furthermore, even though I have been ordered to do this by Kāṁsa, who hates Kṛṣṇa, I have actually gotten a very favorable result. Amazingly, even though Kāṁsa is an envious rascal, today he has been especially merciful to me, because he has sent me to see Kṛṣṇa. Previously such persons as Ambarisa were delivered from the material world by one ray of the effulgent lotus feet of Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 8

*yad arcitaṁ brahma-bhavādibhiḥ suraiḥ,
śriyā ca devyā munibhiḥ sa-sātvataiḥ,
go-cāraṇāyānucaraiś carad vane,
yad gopikānām kuca-kuṅkumāṅkitam*

Those lotus feet are worshiped by Brahmā, Śiva and all the other demigods, by the goddess of fortune, and also by the great sages and Vaiṣṇavas. Upon those lotus feet the Lord walks about the forest while herding the cows with His companions, and those feet are smeared with the kuṅkuma from the gopīs’ breasts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “Today, I will see those lotus feet, which are worshiped by Brahma, Siva and other chief demigods with incessant offerings of flowers, scents and ghee; which follow after the cows along with His companions, and which relish the remnants of *kunkuma* from the breasts of the *gopis*.”

One should not object that it is *rasābhāsa* (incompatible overlapping of mellows) for Akrura, who is in *dasya-bhāva*, to taste the conjugal mellow (*madhurya-rasa*) of his master Sri Kṛṣṇa. After all, Akrura is only thinking these things within himself. It is often seen that parents and other relatives enthusiastically take pleasure within their own minds in the conjugal enjoyments of their own children.

Text 9

*drakṣyāmi nūnaṁ su-kapola-nāsikaṁ,
smitāvalokāruṇa-kañja-locanam,
mukhaṁ mukundasya guḍālakāvṛtaṁ,
pradakṣiṇaṁ me pracaranti vai mrgāḥ*

Surely I shall see the face of Lord Mukunda, since the deer are now walking past me on my right. That face, framed by His curly hair, is beautified by His attractive cheeks and nose, His smiling glances and His reddish lotus eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the auspicious omen of a deer, Akrura ascertains the sure fulfillment of his desire in this verse. Akrura thought, “It is sure that I will see Kṛṣṇa’s smiling face surrounded by His curly locks, lotus eyes, sweet glance, beautiful cheeks and nose.”

Text 10

*apy adya viṣṇor manujatvam t̥yūṣo,
bhārāvātārāya bhuvo nijecchayā,
lāvanya-dhāmno bhavitopalambhanam,
mahyam na na syāt phalam añjasā drśah*

I am going to see the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, the reservoir of all beauty, who by His own sweet will has now assumed a humanlike form to relieve the earth of her burden. Thus there is no denying that my eyes will achieve the perfection of their existence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But,” one may object, “even demons get Kṛṣṇa’s *darsana*, so why do you praise your own good fortune in this matter?”

Akrura thought, “Now, Visnu, whose extraordinary beauty I am realizing in my heart, has appeared by His sweet will within our own dynasty of Vaivasvata Manu (*manujatvam*). The demons may see Him, but they do not perceive His sweetness. Will my eyes not become successful today? Certainly they will.”

Text 11

*ya īkṣitāhaṁ-rahito 'py asat-satoḥ,
sva-tejasāpāsta-tamo-bhidā-bhramah,
sva-māyayātman racitais tad-īkṣayā,
prāṇākṣa-dhībhiḥ sadaneṣv abhīyate*

He is the witness of material cause and effect, yet He is always free from false identification with them. By His internal potency He dispels the darkness of separation and confusion. The individual souls in this world, who are manifested here when He glances upon His material creative energy, indirectly perceive Him in the activities of their life airs, senses and intelligence.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “Now one can see the beautiful human-like form of Kṛṣṇa in Nandagrama, whereas persons like myself perceive Kṛṣṇa always and everywhere in His form as the indwelling supreme controller. The Supersoul witnesses the good and bad actions of all living entities, yet He is devoid of the false ego of thinking, “I am seeing.” The living entity on the other hand is a seer who has the false ego of identifying with his body. The Supersoul, however, who sits within the body as the constant observer, does not identify with the material body.

“How can we distinguish between being free of false ego and being afflicted by it? One may object, ‘If a living entity is situated in a body, he will encounter the unhappiness and confusion that occur within it, just as a person living in a house, whether he be attached to it or not, cannot avoid experiencing the darkness, warmth and cold that occur within it.’ This objection is answered as follows: By His internal potency Kṛṣṇa dispels the darkness of ignorance along with the separateness and bewilderment it produces.”

“That Supersoul, who by His personal potency (*sva-tejasā*) has manifested the vital airs, senses and intelligence within the individual souls, is perceived by these faculties as being their creator. Furthermore, it has been said, *guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān*, “One can realize the beauty of Your form by the awakening of transcendental knowledge.” (SB 10.2.35)

Text 12

*yasyākhilāmīva-habhiḥ su-maṅgalaiḥ,
vāco vimīśrā guṇa-karma-janmabhiḥ,
prāṇanti śumbhanti punanti vai jagat,
yās tad-viraktāḥ śava-śobhanā matāḥ*

All sins are destroyed and all good fortune created by the Supreme Lord’s qualities, activities and appearances, and words that describe these three things animate, beautify and purify the world. On the other hand, words bereft of His glories are like the decorations on a corpse.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Glorification of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa delivers the world. Poetic compositions about Kṛṣṇa’s birth, qualities and activities destroy the sins of all people, give life to the reciter and listener, endow a person with good qualities such as mercy and freedom from illusion, and purify one from the fault of ignorance. On the other hand, those words which do not describe Kṛṣṇa’s birth, activities and qualities, though they may be endowed with good literary qualities and ornaments, are simply like the ornaments decorating a dead body.

Text 13

*sa cāvatīrṇaḥ kila satvatānvaye,
sva-setu-pālāmara-varya-śarma-kṛt,
yaśo vitanvan vraja āsta īśvaro,
gāyanti devā yad aśeṣa-maṅgalam*

That same Supreme Lord has descended into the dynasty of the Sātvatas to delight the exalted demigods, who maintain the principles of religion He has created. Residing in Vṛndāvana, He spreads His fame, which the demigods glorify in song and which brings auspiciousness to all.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Yat* means “which fame.”

Text 14

*taṁ tv adya nūnaṁ mahatām gatim gurum,
trailokya-kāntaṁ dṛśiman-mahotsavam,
rūpaṁ dadhānaṁ śriya īpsitāspadam,
drakṣye mamāsann uṣasaḥ su-darśanāḥ*

Today I shall certainly see Him, the goal and spiritual master of the great souls. Seeing Him brings jubilation to all who have eyes, for He is the true beauty of the universe. Indeed, His personal form is the shelter desired by the goddess of fortune. Now all the dawns of my life have become auspicious.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura considered, “Today my eyes will relish a veritable festival of bliss. I will see Sri Kṛṣṇa whose form is the reservoir of the conjugal attractions of the *rasa* dance, and aspired for by the goddess of fortune who forever resides on Visnu’s chest. The mornings following many nights have brought auspiciousness for me.”

Otherwise, it is implied, “Without so many sleepless nights, this fruit would never have come about.”

Text 15

*athāvarūḍhaḥ sapadīśayo rathāt,
pradhāna-puṁsoś caraṇam sva-labdhaye,
dhiyā dhṛtaṁ yogibhir apy ahaṁ dhruvaṁ,
namasya ābhyām ca sakhīn vanaukaśaḥ*

Then I will at once alight from my chariot and bow down to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the Supreme Personalities of Godhead. Theirs are the same feet that great mystic yogīs striving for self-realization bear within their minds. I will also offer my obeisances to the Lords’ cowherd boyfriends and to all the other residents of Vṛndāvana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akura thought, “As soon as I see Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, I will immediately jump off my chariot, bow down and hold on to Their lotus feet, which *yogis* embrace only with their intelligence in the course of self-realization. I will also bow down to the companions of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, and to all the residents of Vraja.”

Text 16

*apy aṅghri-mūle patitasya me vibhuḥ,
śirasy adhāsyān nija-hasta-paṅkajam,
dattābhayaṁ kāla-bhujāṅga-ramhasā,
prodvejitānām śaraṇaiṣiṇām ṅṛnām*

And when I have fallen at His feet, the almighty Lord will place His lotus hand upon my head. For those who seek shelter in Him because they are greatly disturbed by the powerful serpent of time, that hand removes all fear.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura thought, “And (*apī*) Kṛṣṇa will place (*adhāsyaṇ*) His lotus hand, which bestows fearlessness (*datta-ābhayaṃ*) upon all living entities, on my head.”

Text 17

*samarhaṇaṃ yatra nidhāya kauśikas,
tathā baliś cāpa jagat-trayendratām,
yad vā vihāre vraja-yoṣitām śramaṃ,
sparśena saugandhika-gandhy apānudat*

By offering charity to that lotus hand, Purandara and Bali earned the status of Indra, King of heaven, and during the pleasure pastimes of the rāsa dance, when the Lord wiped away the gopīs’ perspiration and removed their fatigue, the touch of their faces made that hand as fragrant as a sweet flower.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: By offering water to symbolize one’s intention (*sankalpa*) to give charity, Purandara (*kausika*) and Bali perfectly worshiped (*arhyate:pujyate*) that hand and attained the post of Indra to rule over the three worlds. The offerings of water into the Lord’s hand were performed by Purandara during the *avatara* of Sarvabhauma and by Bali during the *avatara* of Vamanadeva. Thus Purandara became Indra and Bali will attain the post in the future. At the time of the *rasa* dance, Kṛṣṇa used His lotus hand to wipe away the drops of perspiration from the limbs of the *gopīs*, which had arisen

from the fatigue of enjoyment. This is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.33.20). This subtly indicates that just as Kṛṣṇa lotus feet, although worshiped by Brahma and other demigods, carry the remnants of *kunkuma* from the *gopis*’ breasts, similarly His lotus hands, even though worshiped by such personalities as Indra and Bali, performed the service of wiping away the perspiration from the faces of *gopis*. Such is the superexcellence of the sweet mood of the Vraja-gopis.

What is the nature of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus hand? The *Purāṇas* call the lotus found in the Mānasa-sarovara Lake a *saugandhika*. Sri Kṛṣṇa’s hand acquired the aroma of this flower by touching the beautiful, fragrant faces of the *gopīs*. Though Akrura was a *dasya-bhakta*, because he is speaking to himself there is no *rasabhasa*.

Text 18

*na mayy upaiśyaty ari-buddhim acyutaḥ,
kamsasya dūtaḥ prahito ’pi viśva-drk,
yo ’ntar bahiś cetasa etad īhitam,
kṣetra-jña īkṣaty amalena cakṣuṣā*

The infallible Lord will not consider me an enemy,, even though Kāmsa has sent me here as his messenger. After all, the omniscient Lord is the actual knower of the field of this material body, and with His perfect vision He witnesses, both externally and internally, all the endeavors of the conditioned soul’s heart.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though all this is true, Akrura still feared that it would be impossible to get Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Therefore he refutes this idea with this verse. Akrura thought, “Though I am Kamsa’s messenger and have been sent by him, Kṛṣṇa will understand that I am not His enemy, because He is present both outside and inside my heart. Kṛṣṇa witnesses not only my activities, but the activities of everyone in

the universe.”

Text 19

*apy aṅghri-mūle 'vahitam kṛtāñjalim,
mām iksitā sa-smitam ārdrayā dṛśā,
sapady apadhvasta-samasta-kilbiṣo,
voḍhā mudam vīta-viśaṅka ūrjitām*

Thus He will cast His smiling, affectionate glance upon me as I remain fixed with joined palms, fallen in obeisances at His feet. Then all my contamination will at once be dispelled, and I will give up all doubts and feel the most intense bliss.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “Will Kṛṣṇa not glance at me with eyes moistened with the nectar of His mercy as I fervently offer respects at His lotus feet? Immediately I will achieve unlimited bliss and all fear will disappear, because the Lord certainly knows my heart.”

Text 20

*suhṛttamaṁ jñātim ananya-daivatam,
dorbhyām bṛhadbhyām parirapsyate 'tha mām,
ātmā hi tīrthī-kriyate tadaiva me,
bandhaś ca karmātmaka ucchvasity atah*

Recognizing me as an intimate friend and relative, Kṛṣṇa will embrace me with His mighty arms, instantly sanctifying my body and diminishing to nil all my material bondage, which is due to

fruitive activities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “Kṛṣṇa will embrace me because we are best of friends, and also because we are relatives (*jñātim*). Among relatives, I am imbued with a mood of exclusive servitude (*ananya-daivatam:aikantika-dasyavantam*) toward Him. By Kṛṣṇa’s embrace my body (*ātmā*) will become pure and act as a holy *tirtha* to purify others. Afterwards, I will become liberated from material existence.”

Text 21

*labdhvāṅga-saṅgam praṇatam kṛtāñjalim,
mām vakṣyate ’krūra tatety uruśravāḥ,
tadā vyaṁ janma-bhṛto mahīyasā,
naivādrto yo dhig amuṣya janma tat*

Having been embraced by the all-famous Lord Kṛṣṇa, I will humbly stand before Him with bowed head and joined palms, and He will address me, “My dear Akrura.” At that very moment my life’s purpose will be fulfilled. Indeed, the life of anyone whom the Supreme Personality fails to recognize is simply pitiable.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura thought, “When Kṛṣṇa calls out to me, ‘O uncle!’ my life will become successful. Otherwise my life is useless. Indeed, one is truly unfortunate if he is not respected by great persons.”

Text 22

na tasya kaścid dayitaḥ suhṛttamo,

*na cāpriyo dveṣya upekṣya eva vā,
tathāpi bhaktān bhajate yathā tathā,
sura-drumo yadvad upāśrito 'rtha-daḥ*

The Supreme Lord has no favorite and no dearest friend, nor does He consider anyone undesirable, despicable or fit to be neglected. All the same, He lovingly reciprocates with His devotees in whatever manner they worship Him, just as the trees of heaven fulfill the desires of whoever approaches them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone may object, “The Supreme Lord should be equal to all at all times. Why should He show special friendship to someone like you?” Akrura responds to this objection in this verse: “Though Kṛṣṇa is neither a dear friend nor enemy of anyone, still He reciprocates with His devotees as stated in His own words in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.29): *samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu, na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ, ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā, mayi te teṣu cāpy aham* “I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend and is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.”

The words *yathā tathā* mean that Kṛṣṇa responds to His devotees according to how they worship Him. This is in accordance with Kṛṣṇa’s statement: *ye yathā mām prapadyante, tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*, “As all surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly.” (Bg. 4.11) The words *sura-drumo yadvad* (like a heavenly desire tree) indicate how the various degrees of fruits awarded correspond to the various degrees of shelter taken. As there is no discrepancy if the *kalpa-vrksa* (desire tree) does not give fruits to a person who does not take shelter of it, similarly it is so in the case of the Supreme Lord. However, whereas the Lord is dependent upon His surrendered devotees, the *kalpa-vrksa* is not dependent on those who take shelter of it. Therefore according to the devotion, Kṛṣṇa shows friendship, enmity or neutrality. For example, Kṛṣṇa showed friendship to Ambarisa and enmity or

indifference to the envious Durvasa.

Text 23

*kim cāgrajo māvanataṁ yadūttamaḥ,
smayan pariṣvajya gr̥hītaṁ añjalau,
gr̥ham praveṣyāpta-samasta-satkṛtaṁ,
samprakṣyate kaṁsa-kṛtaṁ sva-bandhuṣu*

And then Lord Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother, the foremost of the Yadus, will grasp my joined hands while I am still standing with my head bowed, and after embracing me He will take me to His house. There He will honor me with all items of ritual welcome and inquire from me about how Kāṁsa has been treating His family members.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura considered, “Will Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother Balarama clasp my folded palms with His right hand and lead me into His house to speak privately? After finishing His acts of hospitality (*sat-kṛtam*), Balarama will inquire about how Kāṁsa has been treating his family members.”

Text 24

*śrī-śuka uvācaiti,
sañcintayan kṛṣṇaṁ,
śvaphalka-tanayo ’dhvani,
rathena gokulaṁ prāptaḥ,
sūryaś cāsta-giriṁ nrpa*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: My dear King, while the son of

Śvaphalka, traveling on the road, thus meditated deeply on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he reached Gokula as the sun was beginning to set.

Text 25

*padāni tasyākhila-loka-pāla,
kirīṭa-juṣṭāmala-pāda-reṇoh,
dadarśa goṣṭhe kṣiti-kautukāni,
vilakṣitāny abja-yavāṅkuṣādyaiḥ*

In the cowherd pasture Akrura saw the footprints of those feet whose pure dust the rulers of all the planets in the universe hold on their crowns. Those footprints of the Lord, distinguished by such marks as the lotus, barleycorn and elephant goad, made the ground wonderfully beautiful.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura saw Kṛṣṇa's footprints (*padani*) marked with an elephant goad, barleycorn and thunderbolt, which brought astonishing good fortune (*kautakāni:sa-vismaya-saubhagyam*) to the earth (*kṣiti*).

Text 26

*tad-darśanāhlāda-vivṛddha-sambhramah,
preṃṇordhva-romāśru-kalākulekṣaṇah,
rathād avaskandya sa teṣv aceṣṭata,
prabhor amūny aṅghri-rajāṃsy aho iti*

Increasingly agitated by ecstasy at seeing the Lord's footprints, his

bodily hairs standing on end because of his pure love, and his eyes filled with tears, Akrū ra jumped down from his chariot and began rolling about among those footprints, exclaiming, “Ah, this is the dust from my master’s feet!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Seeing Kṛṣṇa’s footprints, Akrura’s eyes flooded with teardrops (*aśru-kalā*), and he jumped from the chariot. Rolling (*aceṣṭata*) in the dust of those footprints while weeping with a choked voice, Akrura said, “What fortune to attain such rare things!”

Text 27

*deham-bhṛtām iyān artho,
hitvā dambham bhīyam śucam,
sandeśād yo harer liṅga,
darśana-śravaṇādibhiḥ*

The very goal of life for all embodied beings is this ecstasy, which Akrura experienced when, upon receiving Kāṁsa’s order, he put aside all pride, fear and lamentation and absorbed himself in seeing, hearing and describing the things that reminded him of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After describing the actions of Akrura’s body, words and mind from the start of his journey in Mathura up to his entrance in Vraja, this verse presents the essential philosophical conclusion which is an example for all. Akrura gave up all false pride by rolling in Kṛṣṇa’s foot dust. This is the goal of human life.

Instantly upon seeing Kṛṣṇa’s footprints, Akrura rolled about in the dust at that very spot, and thus gave up the pride (*hitvā dambham*) of

thinking, “I am Akrura, King Kamsa’s minister. Since I am so greatly honored by the King, how can I roll about in the dust of the feet of a mere cowherd boy?” By openly showing his love and reverence for Kṛṣṇa, Akrura gave up his fear (*hitvā bhīyam*) of punishment by Kamsa, who might be angrily complaining, “Even though Akrura is my messenger, he is rolling about in the dust of the feet of my enemy Kṛṣṇa!” Akrura gave up the sorrow (*hitvā śucam*) of lamenting for his wife, children and home, who might be destroyed by the angry Kamsa. Forsaking all these things, Akrura rolled in the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.

Giving up fear (*hitvā bhīyam*) can also mean giving up the fear of criticism from friends. Giving up lamentation (*hitvā śucam*) can mean giving up the following considerations: “We, being scholarly, aristocratic and well-to-do, are superior to others. How can we fall down in the dust of the Vaisnavas’ feet, who are disrespected by society, poorly dressed and penniless?” He also gave up the fear of being condemned by his own family and the sorrow of being abandoned by them for falling down in the dust of the feet of a Vaisnava, who is the representative of Lord Hari. Or else, the phrase “giving up pride” (*hitva dambham*) applies to the conditioned souls in general and not to Akrura, since he is overwhelmed in pure ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa.

By hearing and remembering the glories of Hari that he had heard from Narada, Akrura expressed an intense desire to serve Kṛṣṇa in the loving mood of servitude (*dasya-rasa*). Similarly, a devotee should think, “When will I serve Kṛṣṇa in this way, and when will I get the good fortune to see My beloved Lord?”

Texts 28–33

*dadarśa kṛṣṇaṁ rāmaṁ ca,
vraje go-dohanaṁ gatau,
pīta-nīlāmbara-dharau,
śarad-amburaheṣaṇau,*

*kiśorau śyāmala-śvetau,
śrī-niketau brhad-bhujau,
su-mukhau sundara-varau,
bala-dvirada-vikramau,
dhvaja-vajrāṅkuśāmbhojaiś,
cihñitair aṅghribhir vrajam,
śobhayantau mahātmānau,
sānukrośa-smitekṣaṇau,
udāra-rucira-krīḍau,
sragviṇau vana-mālinau,
puṇya-gandhānuliptāṅgau,
snātau viraja-vāsasau,
pradhāna-puruṣāv ādyau,
jagad-dhetū jagat-patī,
avatīrṇau jagaty-arthe,
svāmśena bala-keśavau,
diśo vitimirā rājan,
kurvāṇau prabhayā svayā,
yathā mārakataḥ śailo,
raupyaś ca kanakācītau*

Akrura then 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. One of those two mighty-armed youths, the shelters of the goddess of fortune, had a dark-blue complexion, and the other's was white. With Their fine-featured faces They were the most beautiful of all persons. As They walked with the gait of young elephants, glancing about with compassionate smiles, Those two exalted personalities beautified the cow pasture with the impressions of Their feet, which bore the marks of the flag, lightning bolt, elephant goad and lotus. The two Lords, whose pastimes are most magnanimous and attractive, were ornamented with jeweled necklaces and flower garlands, anointed

with auspicious, fragrant substances, freshly bathed, and dressed in spotless raiment. They were the primeval Supreme Personalities, the masters and original causes of the universes, who had for the welfare of the earth now descended in Their distinct forms of Keśava and Balarāma. O King Parīkṣit, They resembled two gold-bedecked mountains, one of emerald and the other of silver, as with Their effulgence They dispelled the sky's darkness in all directions.

(Texts 28-30) Akrura saw the highly exalted Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, whose glances were smiling with compassion, at the place where the cows were milked. Or he saw Kṛṣṇa and Balarama engaged in milking the cows.

(Texts 31-33) *Pradhāna-puruṣau* means those two exalted persons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, appeared as incarnations within matter (*pradhāna*). They divided up (*sva-amśena*) the work of protecting the earth. Thus Kṛṣṇa killed Agha and Baka, whereas Balarama killed Dhenuka and Pralamba. Kṛṣṇa killed Canura and Kamsa, whereas Balarama killed Mustika and Dvidida.

Text 34

*rathāt tūrṇam avaplutya,
so 'krūrah sneha-vihvalaḥ,
papāta caranopānte,
daṇḍa-vad rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ*

Akrura, overwhelmed with affection, quickly jumped down from his chariot and fell at the feet of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma like a rod.

Text 35

*bhagavad-darśanāhlāda,
bāṣpa-paryākulekṣaṇaḥ,
pulakacitāṅga autkaṅṭhyāt,
svākhyāne nāśakan nṛpa*

The joy of seeing the Supreme Lord flooded Akrura’s eyes with tears and decorated his limbs with eruptions of ecstasy. He felt such eagerness that he could not speak to present himself, O King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to ecstatic rapture, Akrura could not introduce himself properly, saying, “I, Akrura, offer my respects to You.”

Text 36

*bhagavāms tam abhipretya,
rathāṅgāṅkita-pāṇinā,
parirebhe ’bhyupākṛṣya,
prītaḥ pranata-vatsalaḥ*

Recognizing Akrura, Lord Kṛṣṇa drew him close with His hand, which bears the sign of the chariot wheel, and then embraced him. Kṛṣṇa felt pleased, for He is always benignly disposed toward His surrendered devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Knowing the purpose (*abhipretya*) for which Akrura had come, Kṛṣṇa used His hand, marked with the sign of a chariot wheel (*rathāṅgāṅkita*), to pull Akrura near Himself. By extending His hand marked with the chariot wheel, or *cakra*, Sri Kṛṣṇa indicated to Akrura His ability to kill Kamsa.

Texts 37–38

*saṅkarṣaṇaś ca praṇatam,
upaguhya mahā-manāḥ,
grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī,
anayat sānujo gṛham,
pṛṣṭvātha sv-āgataṁ tasmai,
nivedya ca varāsanam,
prakṣālya vidhi-vat pādau,
madhu-parkārhaṇam āharat*

As Akrura stood with his head bowed, Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa [Balarāma] grasped his joined hands, and then Balarāma took him to His house in the company of Lord Kṛṣṇa. After inquiring from Akrura whether his trip had been comfortable, Balarāma offered him a first-class seat, bathed his feet in accordance with the injunctions of scripture and respectfully served him milk with honey.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With His right hand Balarama held Akrura's folded hands, just as Akrura had previously desired in verse twenty-three.

Text 39

*nivedya gām cātithaye,
saṁvāhya śrāntam ādṛtaḥ,
annaṁ bahu-guṇaṁ medhyam,
śraddhayopāharat vibhuḥ*

The almighty Lord Balarāma presented Akrū ra with the gift of a cow, massaged his feet to relieve him of fatigue and then with great respect and faith fed him suitably prepared food of various fine tastes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Offering a cow was among the various *upacaras* or items of worship, such as pouring water over the guest's feet. In order to give pleasure to the eyes of one's guest, a beautiful cow is brought forward with the thought: "Please look upon this cow. She is yours." The word *medhyam* means appropriate for the Dvadasi breakfast. In other words, rice was taken on Dvadasi to break the Ekadasi *vrata*.

Kamsa was killed two days later on Caturdasi, on the occasion of worshiping Bhutaraja Lord Siva. There is a rule that one should not break a fast during the night, but Akrura broke the rule because of his eagerness to receive food (*annam bahu-guṇamin*, grains of various tastes) in Kṛṣṇa's home.

Text 40

*tasmai bhuktavate prītyā,
rāmaḥ parama-dharma-vit,
makha-vāsair gandha-mālyaiḥ,
parām prītim vyadhāt punaḥ*

When Akrura had eaten to his satisfaction,, Lord Balarāma, the supreme knower of religious duties, offered him aromatic herbs for sweetening his mouth, along with fragrances and flower garlands. Thus Akrura once again enjoyed the highest pleasure.

Text 41

*papraccha sat-kṛtam nandaḥ,
katham stha niranugrahe,
kamse jīvati dāsārha,
sauna-pālā ivāvayaḥ*

Nanda Mahārāja asked Akrura: O descendant of Daśārha, how are all of you maintaining yourselves while that merciless Kāmsa remains alive? You are just like sheep under the care of a butcher.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja asked, “How are you living (*stha:jivatha*)? You are like sheep whose keeper is a killer of animals. You do not know when you will all be killed.”

Text 42

*yo ’vadhīt sva-svasus tokān,
krośantyā asu-tṛp khalah,
kiṁ nu svit tat-prajānām vaḥ,
kuśalam vimṛśāmahe*

That cruel, self-serving Kāmsa murdered the infants of his own sister in her presence, even as she cried in anguish. So why should we even ask about the well-being of you, his subjects?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “How can one consider asking about the welfare of those who are dependent on one who kills his sister’s baby (*tokān*)?”

Text 43

*itthaṁ sūnṛtayā vācā,
nandena su-sabhājitaḥ,
akrūraḥ pariṣṛṣṭena,
jahāv adhva-pariśramam*

Honored by Nanda Mahārāja with these true and pleasing words of inquiry, Akūrā forgot the fatigue of his journey.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Being treated hospitably as a guest with gentle questions, Akūrā gave up his doubt about obtaining Kṛṣṇa's mercy, and the anxiety due to suffering from that doubt.

Chapter Thirty-nine: Akrura's Vision

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sukhopaviṣṭaḥ paryanke,
rama-kṛṣṇoru-māniṭaḥ,
lebhe manorathān sarvān,
pathi yān sa cakāra ha*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having been honored so much by Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa, Akrura, seated comfortably on a couch, felt that all the desires he had contemplated on the road were now fulfilled.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how the *gopis*, being very disturbed over Kṛṣṇa's departure for Mathura, conversed among themselves. Akrura saw Vaikuntha after submerging himself in the Yamuna.

Text 2

*kim alabhyaṁ bhagavati,
prasanne śrī-niketane,
tathāpi tat-parā rājan,
na hi vāñchanti kiñcana*

My dear King, what is unattainable for one who has satisfied the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, the shelter of the goddess of fortune? Even so, those who are dedicated to His devotional service never want anything from Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Why did Akrura only desire to see and touch Kṛṣṇa, and not desire to attain Brahman or *sayujya-mukti*?” This verse answers the question. If Kṛṣṇa, who is the shelter of Lakṣmī, the goddess of all wealth, who resides in the form of a golden line on His chest, is pleased what more could one desire?

Text 3

*sāyantānāśanam kṛtvā,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
suhṛtsu vṛttam kamsasya,
papracchānyac cikīrṣitam*

After the evening meal, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, asked Akrura how Kāṁsa was treating their dear relatives and friends and what the King was planning to do.

Text 4

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tāta saumyāgataḥ kaccit,
sv-āgataṁ bhadram astu vaḥ,
api sva-jñāti-bandhūnām,
anamīvam anāmayam*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear, gentle Uncle Akrura, was your trip here comfortable? May all good fortune be yours. Are our well-wishing friends and our relatives, both close and distant, happy and in good health?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “O uncle! O gentle one, did you have a comfortable journey? Are all your relatives free from disease (*anāmayarn*) and the sadness of sinful reactions (*amīvam:pāpam:duḥkham*)?”

Sva indicates well-wishing friends. The word *jñāti* indicates relatives belonging to seven future and past generations of the father’s and mother’s families. *Jñātis* are *sa-piṇḍa* relatives, which means that they are so close that they offer *piṇḍa* (oblations) to the forefathers. *Bandhu* indicates those without direct kinship.

Text 5

*kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalam pṛcche,
edhamāne kulāmāye,
kaṁse mātula-nāmnāṅga,
svānām nas tat-prajāsu ca*

But, my dear Akrura, as long as King Kaṁsa—that disease of our family who goes by the name “maternal uncle”—is still prospering, why should I even bother to ask about the well-being of our family members and his other subjects?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O Akrura, it is not very appropriate to even ask about their well-being. How can I ask about the welfare of our relatives when Kamsa, the disease of our family who goes by the name of “maternal uncle” is still alive?”

Text 6

*aho asmad abhūd bhūri,
pitror vṛjinam āryayoḥ,
yad-dhetoḥ putra-maraṇam,
yad-dhetor bandhanam tayoh*

Just see how much suffering I have caused My offenseless parents ! Because of Me their sons were killed and they themselves imprisoned.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Because of Me, their son (*āsmat*), they have suffered unhappiness (*vṛjinam*). Though I am their son, I have caused their sons to be killed.”

Text 7

*diṣṭyādya darśanam svānām,
mahyam vaḥ saumya kāṅkṣitam,
sañjātam varṇyatām tāta,
tavāgamana-kāraṇam*

By good fortune We have today fulfilled Our desire to see you, Our dear relative. O gentle uncle, please tell Us why you have come.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I have desired to see you for a long time. After seeing you I have received a good reason for going to Mathura to kill Kamsa.”

Text 8

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
pr̥ṣṭo bhagavatā sarvaṁ,
varṇayām āsa mādhaveḥ,
vairānubandhaṁ yaduṣu,
vasudeva-vadhodyamam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: In response to the Supreme Lord's request, Akrura, the descendant of Madhu, described the whole situation, including King Kaṁsa's enmity toward the Yadus and his attempt to murder Vasudeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Madhava here indicates Akrura of the Madhu dynasty. Kṛṣṇa asked him about the events in Mathura.

Text 9

*yat-sandeśo yad-arthaṁ vā,
dūtaḥ sampreṣitaḥ svayam,
yad uktaṁ nāradenāsya,
sva-janmānakadundubheḥ*

Akrura relayed the message he had been sent to deliver. He also described Kaṁsa's real intentions and how Nārada had informed Kaṁsa that Kṛṣṇa had been born as the son of Vasudeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura described how he was sent to invite Kṛṣṇa to the Dhanur-yajna so that He would be killed by Canura.

Text 10

*śrutvākrūra-vacaḥ kṛṣṇo,
balaś ca para-vīra-hā,
prahasya nandaṁ pitaraṁ,
rājñā diṣṭaṁ vijajñatuḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, the vanquisher of heroic opponents, laughed when They heard Akrura’s words. The Lords then informed Their father, Nanda Mahārāja, of King Kāmsa’s orders.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The laughing (*prahasya*) of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama indicated that Kamsa’s plan of inviting Them to Mathura would bring about Kamsa’s own death. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama told Nanda Maharaja about the King’s invitation to attend the Dhanur-yajna, but They did not inform him about the more confidential matters.

Texts 11–12

*gopān samādiśat so ’pi,
gr̥hyatām sarva-go-rasaḥ,
upāyanāni gr̥hñīdhvaṁ,
yujyantām śakaṭāni ca,
yāsyāmaḥ śvo madhu-purīm,
dāsyāmo nṛpate rasān,
drakṣyāmaḥ su-mahat parva,
yānti jānapadāḥ kila,
evam āghoṣayat kṣatrā,
nanda-gopaḥ sva-gokule*

Nanda Mahārāja then issued orders to the cowherd men by having the village constable make the following announcement throughout Nanda’s domain of Vraja: “Go collect all the available milk products. Bring valuable gifts and yoke your wagons. Tomorrow we shall go to Mathurā, present our milk products to the King and see a very great festival. The residents of all the outlying districts are also going.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda (*sah*) issued an order to the cowherd men: “We will pay taxes to the king with ghee (*rasan*). Since all the residents of the districts surrounding the city are going, what do we have to worry about.” Nanda then sent one of his security officers (*ksatra*) to inform everyone in Vraja.

Text 13

*gopyas tās tad upaśrutya,
babhūvur vyathitā bhṛṣam,
rāma-kṛṣṇau purīm netum,
akrūraṁ vrajam āgatam*

When the young gopīs heard that Akrura had come to Vraja to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to the city, they became extremely distressed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then (*tat*) the famous *gopis*, whose life and soul was Kṛṣṇa, heard that Akrura had come to take Kṛṣṇa and Balarama to Mathura.

Text 14

kāścit tat-kṛta-hṛt-tāpa,

*śvāsa-mlāna-mukha-śriyaḥ,
sraṁsad-dukūla-valaya,
keśa-granthyas 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The symptoms of the *gopis*’ mental anguish (*hṛt-tāpa*) are described in five verses (14-18). In this verse, Sukadeva Gosvami explains how the beautiful faces of the *gopis* headed by Bhadra paled due to sighing, which was caused by the torment in their hearts from hearing the news. The word *sraṁsad* (loosening) describes the sudden withering of the limbs of Syamala and other sakhis which caused their clothes and ornaments to slip off.

Text 15

*anyās ca tad-anudhyāna,
nivṛttāśeṣa-vṛttayaḥ,
nābhyajānann imaṁ lokam,
ātma-lokaṁ gatā iva*

Other gopīs entirely stopped their sensory activities and became fixed in meditation on Kṛṣṇa. They lost all awareness of the external world, just like those who attain the platform of self-realization.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the *prema* of Candravali and other *gopis*. Absorbed in meditation upon Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis*’ senses stopped functioning. They lost all connection with their bodies and the world around them. The *gopis* resembled persons who

have realized the Supersoul in the sense that they lost all awareness of their material bodies. The Vraja-gopis were not impersonalists, however, because they were actually relishing the sweetest taste of pure love of Godhead. The taste of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is completely different from the bliss of Brahman, like gold compared to glass.

Text 16

*smarantyaś cāparāḥ śaurer;
anurāga-smiteritāḥ,
hr̥di-spṛśās citra-padā,
giraḥ sammumuhuh striyaḥ*

And still other young women fainted simply by remembering the words of Lord Śauri [Kṛṣṇa]. These words, decorated with wonderful phrases and expressed with affectionate smiles, would deeply touch the young girls' hearts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the extremely intense *prema* of Radha and other sakhis. Here Sukadeva Gosvami indicates his inclination toward the *gopis* with the word *śaureḥ* which implies, “Kṛṣṇa, who now thinks of Himself as a *ksatriya* descendant of Surasena (*śaureḥ*), wants to go away to Mathura.” Radha and other *gopis* became bewildered on remembering Kṛṣṇa’s astonishing words and affectionate gentle smiles indicating His attraction for them. Remembering such statements as *na pārāye ’ham niravadya-saṁyujām* (SB 10.32.22), the *gopis* became completely baffled. The previously mentioned *gopis* were bewildered by their concentrated meditation on Kṛṣṇa’s form. These *gopis* however, became totally bewildered (*sammumuhuh*) simply by remembering Kṛṣṇa’s words. This shows the superiority of their *prema*.

Texts 17–18

*gatiṁ su-lalitām ceṣṭām,
snigdha-hāsāvalokanam,
śokāpahāni narmāṇi,
proddāma-caritāni ca,
cintayantyo mukundasya,
bhītā viraha-kātarāḥ,
sametāḥ saṅghaśaḥ procur,
āsru-mukhyo 'cyutāśayāḥ*

The gopīs were frightened at the prospect of even the briefest separation from Lord Mukunda, so now, as they remembered His graceful gait, His pastimes, His affectionate, smiling glances, His heroic deeds and His joking words, which would relieve their distress, they were beside themselves with anxiety at the thought of the great separation about to come. They gathered in groups and spoke to one another, their faces covered with tears and their minds fully absorbed in Acyuta.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way, the Vraja-gopis, tossed by the waves of *prema*, spent the night in the grips of such *sancari-bhavas* as fainting (*murccha*). Gaining external consciousness through the strength of the *sancari-bhava* of anxiety over whether they would ever see Kṛṣṇa again, the *gopis* eagerly gathered at dawn in great longing before Nanda’s door. The *gopis*, who feared even a moment’s (*nimeṣa*) separation from Kṛṣṇa, were now devastated thinking about the approaching lengthy separation. Meeting in different groups, they began conversing. [The *gopis*’ talks (v. 19-31) expressing their love in separation are known as the “*Viraha-gita*.”]

Text 19

*śrī-gopya ūcuḥ,
aho vidhātas tava na kvacid dayā,
saṁyojya maitryā praṇayena dehinaḥ,
tāms cākṛtārthān viyunakṣy apārthakam,
vikṛḍitam te 'rbhaka-ceṣṭitam yathā*

The gopīs said: O Providence, you have no mercy! You bring embodied creatures together in friendship and love and then senselessly separate them before they fulfill their desires. This whimsical play of yours is like a child’s game.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As in the case of meeting Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* could not find any reason for Kṛṣṇa leaving them, so they began to criticize the Creator. “O Creator! Your act of injustice is astonishing.” “What is so unjust?” “You don’t have one drop of mercy. This is very unfair.” “How have you concluded this?” “You bring people together in friendship and intense mutual exchange of mind, life and intellect, and then separate them again without fulfilling their desires for enjoyment. Neither is there any purpose served by this act of separation of yours. Thus your whimsical act is just like the play of a child.”

Text 20

*yas tvam pradarśyāsita-kuntalāvṛtam,
mukunda-vaktram su-kapolam un-nasam,
śokāpanoda-smita-leśa-sundaram,
karoṣi pāroksyam asādhu te kṛtam*

Having shown us Mukunda’s face, framed by dark locks and beautified by His fine cheeks, raised nose and gentle smiles, which eradicate all misery, you are now making that face invisible. This behavior of yours is not at all good.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You should not compare me, the grandfather of everyone, to an inexperienced boy.”

Fearing such a response from the Creator, the *gopis* said, “You give sorrow to the souls of this world. Though you are the Creator, you show us the beautiful, smiling face of Mukunda which removes all suffering, and then make it disappear. That is very bad.”

Text 21

*krūras tvam akrūra-samākhyayā sma naś,
cakṣur hi dattaṁ harase batājiña-vat,
yenaika-deśe ’khila-sarga-sauṣṭhavaṁ,
tvadīyam adrākṣma vayaṁ madhu-dviṣaḥ*

O Providence, though you come here with the name Akrura, you are indeed cruel, for like a fool you are taking away what you once gave us—those eyes with which we have seen, even in one feature of Lord Madhudviṣa’s form, the perfection of your entire creation.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But (Providence might object) Akrura is taking Kṛṣṇa to Mathura, not I.”

The *gopis* reply, “Though you are cruel (*krura*), you have come with a name of the opposite meaning (*akrura*). No one except you could do such cruel work of taking away something you have given. You are taking away the same eyes which you gave us. This is just like a foolish person who, ignorant of piety and sin, takes away something he has

previously given.”

Creator: “But I have come to take Kṛṣṇa, so why do you speak about your eyes?”

Gopis: “In this case, by your taking away Kṛṣṇa, we are being blinded, and thus you are taking away our eyes. What else will we look at with these eyes which have seen the pinnacle of all beauty in the face and eyes of Madhusudana? Therefore we will become blind!”

Text 22

*na nanda-sūnuḥ kṣaṇa-bhaṅga-sauhṛdah,
samīkṣate naḥ sva-kṛtāturā bata,
vihāya gehān sva-janān sutān patīms,
tad-dāsyam addhopagatā nava-priyaḥ*

Alas, Nanda’s son, who breaks loving friendships in a second, will not even look directly at us. Forcibly brought under His control, we abandoned our homes, relatives, children and husbands just to serve Him, but He is always looking for new lovers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Alas, alas! Kṛṣṇa, the sole object of our love and the cause of our life, is indifferent to us. Why are we blaming the Creator? How has He broken this very strong bond of love? Friendship broken in an instant cannot be real friendship. Though Kṛṣṇa has brought us to the point of death, He does not even look at us. He has decided to go to Mathura for His own happiness, even though we will continuously cry and eventually die. To become Kṛṣṇa’s maidservants we gave up our homes, husbands and sons. But now He is giving us up and going away because He has new lovers and we have become useless. Thus in this life we achieve nothing for we have left our husbands and lost Kṛṣṇa, and in the next life we will suffer for having broken the laws of *dharma*.”

Text 23

*sukhaṁ prabhātā rajanīyam āśiṣaḥ,
satyā babhūvuḥ pura-yoṣitām dhruvam,
yāḥ saṁpraviṣṭasya mukhaṁ vrajas-pateḥ,
pāsyanty apāṅgotkalita-smitāsavam*

The dawn following this night will certainly be auspicious for the women of Mathurā. All their hopes will now be fulfilled, for as the Lord of Vraja enters their city, they will be able to drink from His face the nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of His eyes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Ah, this is so astonishing! While we have become unfortunate, the ladies of Mathura have become supremely fortunate. This night will have an auspicious morning for the women of Mathura, but an inauspicious one for the women of Vraja. The blessings given to them by the *brahmanas*, or their long standing aspirations, have been fulfilled, whereas ours have become frustrated. The women of Mathura will relish the intoxicating (*asava*) nectar of the smile emanating from the corners of Kṛṣṇa’s eyes, which intimate a variety of confidential *rasas*. Instantly the women of Mathura will abandon their propriety, shyness and fear to accept these hints. Then at a suitable time unseen by others, they will directly and fully drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s face.”

Text 24

*tāsām mukundo madhu-mañju-bhāṣitair,
grhīta-cittaḥ para-vān manasvy api,
katham punar naḥ pratiyāsyate ’balā,*

grāmyāḥ salajja-smita-vibhramair bhraman

O gopīs, although our Mukunda is intelligent and very obedient to His parents, once He has fallen under the spell of the honey-sweet words of the women of Mathurā and been enchanted by their alluring, shy smiles, how will He ever return to us unsophisticated village girls?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One *gopi* said, “Perhaps Kṛṣṇa will stay there a few days, and then being attracted by our love, He will come back with His parents.” In reply to this they speak this verse. A second *gopi* replied, “O foolish woman! You do not know the truth. Listen! Though Kṛṣṇa is obliged to His parents, being overwhelmed by the honey-sweet words of the women of Mathura and bewildered by their shy enchantments, how will He return to us? Why do you give useless hope to the minds of us village women (*grāmyāḥ*) who are devoid of beauty, arts and strength (*abalā*)?”

First *gopi*: “That may be, but you should have faith that Kṛṣṇa will return out of a sense of duty when He intelligently remembers His parents.”

Second *gopi*: “But Kṛṣṇa will become so bewildered by their shy smiles and amorous suggestions that He will forget all of that.”

Text 25

*adya dhruvaṁ tatra dṛśo bhaviṣyate,
dāśārha-bhojāndhaka-vṛṣṇi-sātvatām,
mahotsavaḥ śrī-ramaṇaṁ guṇāspadaṁ,
drakṣyanti ye cādhvani devakī-sutam*

When the Dāśārhas, Bhojas, Andhakas, Vṛṣṇis and Sātvatas see the

son of Devakī in Mathurā, they will certainly enjoy a great festival for their eyes, as will all those who see Him traveling along the road to the city. After all, He is the darling of the goddess of fortune and the reservoir of all transcendental qualities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A *gopi* said, “Today the people of Mathura will attain the bliss that the inhabitants of Vraja had. There will be a festival for the eyes of the Dasarhas, Bhojas and others, and all who see Kṛṣṇa traveling on the road.”

Text 26

*maitad-vidhasyākaruṇasya nāma bhūd,
akrūra ity etad atīva dāruṇaḥ,
yo 'sāv anāśvāsya su-duḥkhitam janam,
priyāt priyam nesyati pāram adhvanaḥ*

He who is doing this merciless deed should not be called Akrū ra. He is so extremely cruel that without even trying to console the sorrowful residents of Vraja, he is taking away Kṛṣṇa, who is more dear to us than life itself.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis* curse Akrura: “It is not proper that such a person as this (*etat-vidhasya*) has the name Akrura (not cruel), because he is extremely cruel. His name should be Krura. He has not consoled even one of the Vrajavasis, who are suffering on the brink of death, by saying, ‘I will bring Kṛṣṇa back and present Him once again to you.’ This Akrura will accrue the sin of murdering the people of Vraja. He is taking Kṛṣṇa, who is more dear than our life, to a far away place where we cannot go.”

Text 27

*anārdra-dhūr eṣa samāsthito ratham,
tam anv amī ca tvarayanti durmadāḥ,
gopā anobhiḥ sthavirair upekṣitam,
daivam ca no 'dya pratikūlam īhate*

Hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa has already mounted the chariot, and now the foolish cowherds are hurrying after Him in their bullock carts. Even the elders are saying nothing to stop Him. Today fate is working against us.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Just see how Akrura has come to Vraja and spread his cruelty in all directions!”

The *gopis* express this in this verse: “Though seeing us crying, the hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa simply sits on the chariot. Sridama and other cowherd boys are following behind Kṛṣṇa in a cart. But they have become very foolish, because they are not aware that when Kṛṣṇa does not return to Vraja, they will also die in separation. Even the elders do not stop Him from going and thus neglect their own lives. Today fate has been unkind to us. If fate was acting in our favor, it would have produced some obstacle to His going. Thus we can deduce that the inhabitants of Vraja will no longer live.”

Text 28

*nivārayāmaḥ samupetya mādhamam,
kim no 'kariṣyan kula-vṛddha-bāndhavāḥ,
mukunda-saṅgān nimiṣārdha-dustyajād,
daivena vidhvamsita-dīna-cetasām*

Let us directly approach Mādhava and stop Him from going. What can our family elders and other relatives do to us? Now that fate is separating us from Mukunda, our hearts are already wretched, for we cannot bear to give up His association even for a fraction of a second.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After discussing everything thoroughly with one another, the *gopis* became emboldened and openly revealed the ecstasy swirling in their hearts. The *gopis* said, “Let us go right up to Kṛṣṇa and pull at His clothes and hands and insist that He stay here with us. We will tell Him, ‘Our dear one! O exclusive darling of our lives! Get down from the chariot, get down! Don’t bring upon Yourself the sinful reaction for murdering so many women!’”

“But if we do that,” said other *gopīs*, “seeing the extreme boldness of us, who are girls of respectable families, the people will laugh at us, and the village elders will discover our secret love for Kṛṣṇa and abandon us. Seeing all this, our friends will also reject us.”

“But what can they do to us?” replied one *gopi*.

“Yes, our lives are already wretched now that Kṛṣṇa is leaving. We have nothing to lose.”

“That’s right. We will remain in the Vṛndāvana forest just like presiding goddesses, and then we can fulfill our true desire—to stay with Kṛṣṇa in the forest.”

“Yes, and even if the elders and our relatives punish us by beating us or locking us up, we can still live happily with the knowledge that Kṛṣṇa is residing in our village. Some of our girlfriends who are not imprisoned will cleverly find a way to bring us Kṛṣṇa’s *prasadi pān* and garlands, and then we can remain alive. But if Kṛṣṇa is not stopped, we will certainly die.”

Text 29

yasyānurāga-lalita-smita-valgu-mantra,

*līlāvaloka-parirambhaṇa-rāsa-goṣṭhām,
nītāḥ sma naḥ kṣaṇam iva kṣaṇadā vinā taṁ,
gopyaḥ katham̐ nv atitarema tamo durantam*

When He brought us to the assembly of the rāsa dance, where we enjoyed His affectionate and charming smiles, His delightful secret talks, His playful glances and His embraces, we passed many nights as if they were a single moment. O gopīs, how can we possibly cross over the insurmountable darkness of His absence?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “There are other reasons for stopping Him also. During the *rāsa* dance we enjoyed His affectionate playful smiles, attractive intimate talks (*valgu-mantra*) and secret meetings. Without Kṛṣṇa, how can we cross the dark ocean of separation whose far shore cannot be seen? In the bliss of Kṛṣṇa’s company a thousand nights passed in a moment. But in the misery of His separation each moment will feel like a thousand ages. How will we find the strength to pass the many nights that now await us in the future?”

Text 30

*yo ’hnaḥ kṣaye vrajam ananta-sakhaḥ parīto,
gopair viśan khura-rajāś-churitālaka-srak,
veṇuṁ kvaṇan smita-katākṣa-nirīkṣaṇena,
cittam̐ kṣiṇoty amum ṛte nu katham̐ bhavema*

How can we exist without Ananta’s friend Kṛṣṇa, who in the evening would return to Vraja in the company of the cowherd boys, His hair and garland powdered with the dust raised by the cows’ hooves? As He played His flute, He would captivate our minds with

His smiling sidelong glances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “Moreover, we will die this very evening. At the end of the day, Kṛṣṇa, that friend of Balarama, would vibrate His flute while entering Vraja, gaze upon our breasts, and captivate our hearts with His sidelong glances. How will we live without Kṛṣṇa? If we do not receive that glance this evening, how will we maintain our lives?”

Text 31

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam bruvāṇā virahāturā bhṛśam,
vraja-striyaḥ kṛṣṇa-viśakta-mānasāḥ,
viṣṭjya lajjām ruruduḥ sma su-svaram,
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After speaking these words, the ladies of Vraja, who were so attached to Kṛṣṇa, felt extremely agitated by their imminent separation from Him. They forgot all shame and loudly cried out, “O Govinda! O Dāmodara! O Mādhava!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After lamenting and discussing in this way, the *gopīs* gathered together to make Kṛṣṇa get down from the chariot. However, due to the pain of separation they could neither move a step nor utter clear words.

“O Govinda! Please take (*vinda:labhasva*) all of our thousands of senses (*go*) such as our minds and eyes. They are going away in Your association, so please be merciful and take them. Let our senses remain yoked to the bull of Your mind and thus protect them and do not neglect them. If our bodies are not suitable for meeting with You, and You do not return to us, then right here we will give up our bodies.

“If You desire You may incur the sin of murdering women, but don’t kill that mother of Yours, the divine Queen of Vraja, by whose love You even allowed Yourself to be bound with ropes (*damodara*). Yasoda will die for sure if You do not return within two days. Please do not take on the sin of matricide.” The *gopis* express this train of thought by exclaiming, “O Damodara.”

The *gopis* said, “O Mādhava (husband of Laksmi-devi)! You are not our husband (*dhava*), but You are our boyfriend. As our husband, You would not be at fault if You protected or destroyed us, because we would be Your property. But we are others’ property. Therefore, You should not allow Yourself to commit the sin of destroying another’s possessions.”

Text 32

*strīṅām evaṁ rudantīnām,
udīte savitāry atha,
akrūraś codayām āsa,
kṛta-maitrādiko ratham*

But even as the *gopīs* cried out in this way, Akrura, having at sunrise performed His morning worship and other duties, began to drive the chariot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *strīṅām* (women) is in the genitive case to express disrespect. Akrura disrespected the *gopis* by not comforting them and saying, “O Mother Yasoda, please forgive my offense because I am simply the servant of the king. I promise that with my own hand I will bring Kṛṣṇa back to you.” Some expert *rasika* Vaisnavas say that because of this disrespect or offense, Akrura was later separated from Kṛṣṇa during the Syamantaka jewel episode, driven unhappily from Dvaraka, and forced to take up an ignoble residence in

Varanasi.

Completing his morning duties such as bathing, *puja* and *sandhya* rites, Akrura mounted the chariot. Some authorities say that because Sukadeva Gosvami was so absorbed in the *gopis*’ lamentation at this time, he could not describe the lamentation of Yasoda. Other authorities say that Yasoda was repeatedly assured by Nanda, the cowherd men, and her peers among the *Vraja gopis* that there was no need to worry because her son, who was very eager to see the festivities of the Dhanur-yajna, was going in the company of His father.

They said, “When the time comes, Nanda Baba will feed Him, and then Kṛṣṇa will sleep comfortably in His father’s lap. After a day in Mathura, Kṛṣṇa will return to *Vraja* with His father. Why should we be in anxiety?”

Text 33

*gopās tam anvasajjanta,
nandādyāḥ śakaṭais tataḥ,
ādāyopāyanam bhūri,
kumbhān go-rasa-sambhṛtān*

Led by Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men followed behind Lord Kṛṣṇa in their wagons. The men brought along many offerings for the King, including clay pots filled with ghee and other milk products.

Text 34

*gopyaś ca dayitam kṛṣṇam,
anuvrajañnurañjitāḥ,*

*pratyādeśam bhagavataḥ,
kāṅkṣantyāś cāvatasthire*

[With His glances] Lord Kṛṣṇa somewhat pacified the gopīs, and they also followed behind for some time. Then, hoping He would give them some instruction, they stood still.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anuranjitah means that Kṛṣṇa made the *gopis* somewhat happy by His glances as He turned to face them while sitting on the chariot. Seeing the life airs of His darlings about to leave their bodies, Kṛṣṇa spoke to them with His affectionate glances, “O my beloved girls! Do not be sad. After satisfying these people I will return to you.”

The *gopis* became happy, and as their legs became a little mobile they began to follow the chariot along with the cowherd boys who were blissfully walking behind it. Hoping to receive some instruction from Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis* suddenly stood still. As Kṛṣṇa had consoled them with His compassionate glances, the *gopis* desired that He do so with His words as well.

Text 35

*tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya,
sva-prasthāṇe yadūttamaḥ,
sāntvayām asa sa-premair,
āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ*

As He departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the gopīs, were lamenting, and thus He consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: “I will return.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Seeing the gopīs burning in torment (*tapyatīr:santa-pyamānāḥ*), that best of the Yadus, who was now inclined to protect the Yadus, consoled the *gopīs* by sending through messengers thousands of assurances to increase their faith, so that they would regain full consciousness. *Ka* is added to *dautyakaiḥ* to indicate that the messages were full of compassion.

Kṛṣṇa said, “I will return quickly. Just as your hearts are breaking at the thought of our separation, similarly My heart is also breaking. I am dependent on you. When with the tongue of My mind I lick the sweet liquor of Your smiling sidelong glances, which are rarely found in all the three worlds, My life becomes fulfilled. If I do not return the day after tomorrow, then both you and I will lose our lives. But if I live because of a long life span or because of expectations of reunion, this life will be more painful than a million deaths.” Thus Kṛṣṇa solaced the *gopīs* with such words imbued with the nectar of pure love (*sapremair*).

Text 36

*yāvad ālakṣyate ketur,
yāvad reṇū rathasya ca,
anuprasthāpitātmāno,
lekhyānīvopalakṣitāḥ*

Sending their minds after Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs stood as motionless as figures in a painting. They remained there as long as the flag atop the chariot was visible, and even until they could no longer see the dust raised by the chariot wheels.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As long as the flag on the chariot was still visible, the *gopīs* sent their minds after their departing beloved, while they remained standing. To the people around them the stunned

gopis appeared like painted pictures.

Text 37

*tā nirāśā nivavṛtur,
govinda-vinivartane,
viśokā ahanī ninyur,
gāyantyah priya-ceṣṭitam*

The gopīs then turned back, without hope that Govinda would ever return to them. Full of sorrow, they began to spend their days and nights chanting about the pastimes of their beloved.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Giving up the hope that Govinda would turn around and come back to Vraja, the *gopis* left that spot. They gave up the idea that Kṛṣṇa was just fooling them and would actually come back. They passed their days in extreme sorrow.

Text 38

*bhagavān api samprāpto,
rāmākrūra-yuto nṛpa,
rathena vāyu-vegena,
kālindīm agha-nāśinīm*

My dear King, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, traveling as swiftly as the wind in that chariot with Lord Balarāma and Akrura, arrived at the river Kālindī, which destroys all sins.

Text 39

*tatropaspr̥śya pānīyam,
pītvā mṛṣṭam maṇi-prabham,
vṛkṣa-śaṇḍam upavrajya,
sa-rāmo ratham āviśat*

The river's sweet water was more effulgent than brilliant jewels. After Lord Kṛṣṇa had touched it for purification, He drank some from His hand. Then He had the chariot moved near a grove of trees and climbed back on, along with Balarāma.

Text 40

*akrūras tāv upāmantrya,
niveśya ca rathopari,
kālindyā hradam āgatya,
snānam vidhi-vad ācarat*

Akrura asked the two Lords to take Their seats on the chariot. Then, taking Their permission, he went to a pool in the Yamunā and took his bath as enjoined in the scriptures.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura kept Kṛṣṇa and Balarama on the chariot for Their comfort or out of fear of enemies, and then went to the Yamuna.

Text 41

*nimajjya tasmin salile,
japan brahma sanātanam,
tāv eva dadṛṣe 'krūro,
rāma-kṛṣṇau samanvitau*

While immersing himself in the water and reciting eternal mantras from the Vedas, Akrura suddenly saw Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa before him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In Vraja, Akrura saw a form more astonishing than the one that he meditated on with his personal *mantra*, so he became fixed in that form. Now however, since he was no longer hearing the sweet words of the gopis, and had again become fixed in chanting his Vedic *diksa mantra*, Kṛṣṇa showed him Vaikuntha.

Texts 42–43

*tau ratha-sthau katham iha,
sutāv ānakadundubheḥ,
tarhi svit syandane na sta,
ity unmajjya vyacaṣṭa saḥ,
tatrāpi ca yathā-pūrvam,
āsīnau punar eva saḥ,
nyamajjad darśanam yan me,
mṛṣā kim salile tayoh*

Akrura thought, “How can the two sons of Ānakadundubhi, who are sitting in the chariot, be standing here in the water? They must have left the chariot.” But when he came out of the river, there They were on the chariot, just as before. Asking himself “Was the

vision I had of Them in the water an illusion?” Akṛū ra reentered the pool.

Texts 44–45

*bhūyas tatrāpi so 'drākṣīt,
stūyamānam ahīśvaram,
siddha-cāraṇa-gandharvair,
asurair nata-kandharaiḥ,
sahasra-śīrasaṁ devaṁ,
sahasra-phaṇa-maulinam,
nīlāmbaram visa-śvetam,
śṛṅgaiḥ śvetam iva sthitam*

There Akṛura now saw Ananta Śeṣa, the Lord of the serpents, receiving praise from Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Gandharvas and demons, who all had their heads bowed. The Personality of Godhead whom Akṛura saw had thousands of heads, thousands of hoods and thousands of helmets. His blue garment and His fair complexion, as white as the filaments of a lotus stem, made Him appear like white Kailāsa Mountain with its many peaks.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Akṛura submerged himself a second time in the Yamuna, he saw Kṛṣṇa's plenary portion of Sri Visnu, the worshipable Deity of Akṛura's own *mantra*.

In order to fix his mind upon Visnu, Akṛura directly meditated upon the Lord's entourage and His form, from His toenails to the top of His head. At that time Akṛura declared, "My woshipable Deity, the Lord of Vaikuntha, has descended in the home of Vasudeva in Mathura."

Akṛura's Vaikuntha *darsana* of the Lord is described in thirteen verses (44-56). Verses 44-45 describe Ananta Sesa, the expansion of Balarama,

who is as white and towering as Mount Kailasa with its peaks of snow, and has thousands of hoods and crowns. When Akrura went into the Yamuna the second time, he saw Sesa in Vaikuntha. This is in accordance with Sridhara Swami’s comments on *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.28.16) and *Laghu-bhagavatamṛta* Text 20:

vaikuṅṭhe ‘pi yathā śeṣo, nāradaḥ sanakādayaḥ akrūra-dṛṣṭāne came, daśame parikīrtitaḥ

“Exalted individual souls (*jīvas*) into whom Lord Janārdana enters with a portion of His knowledge-potency (*samvit-sakti*) and other potencies are called *āveśas*. Śeṣa, Nārada and the four Kumāras are examples of them in Vaikuṅṭha. They were seen by Akrūra.”

Texts 46–48

*tasyotsaṅge ghana-syāmam,
pīta-kauśeya-vāsasam,
puruṣam catur-bhujam śāntam,
padma-patrāruṅekṣaṇam,
cāru-prasanna-vadanam,
cāru-hāsa-nirīkṣaṇam,
su-bhrūnnasam caru-karṇam,
su-kapolāruṅādharam,
pralamba-pīvara-bhujam,
tuṅgāmsoraḥ-sthala-śriyam,
kambu-kaṅṭham nimna-nābhim,
valimat-pallavodaram*

Akrura then saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead lying peacefully on the lap of Lord Ananta Śeṣa. The complexion of that Supreme Person was like a dark-blue cloud. He wore yellow garments and had four arms and reddish lotus-petal eyes. His face looked attractive and cheerful with its smiling, endearing glance

and lovely eyebrows, its raised nose and finely formed ears, and its beautiful cheeks and reddish lips. The Lord's broad shoulders and expansive chest were beautiful, and His arms long and stout. His neck resembled a conchshell, His navel was deep, and His abdomen bore lines like those on a banyan leaf

Texts 49–50

*bṛhat-kati-tata-śroni,
karabhoru-dvayānvitam,
cāru-jānu-yugaṁ cāru,
jaṅghā-yugala-saṁyutam,
tuṅga-gulphāruṇa-nakha,
vrāta-dīdhitibhir vṛtam,
navāṅguly-aṅguṣṭha-dalair;
vilasat-pāda-paṅkajam*

He had large loins and hips, thighs like an elephant's trunk, and shapely knees and shanks. His raised ankles reflected the brilliant effulgence emanating from the nails on His petal-like toes, which beautified His lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: 46-50. Sukadeva Gosvami describes Kṛṣṇa's partial expansion known as Narayana in these verses. From the beginning of the forty-sixth verse until the verb *vilokya* (behold) in the fifty-sixth verse, there is one sentence. Narayana had high shoulders and a glossy chest, crease lines on His *banyan* leaf-shaped belly. He had a large buttock, strong forearms, thighs like the trunk of an elephant (*karabha*), and slightly raised ankles. His lotus feet had tender petal-like toes.

Texts 51–52

*su-mahārha-maṇi-vrāta,
kirīṭa-kaṭakāṅgadaiḥ,
kaṭi-sūtra-brahma-sūtra,
hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ,
bhrājamānaṃ padma-karaṃ,
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dharam,
śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṃ bhrājat,
kaustubhaṃ vana-mālinam*

Adorned with a helmet, bracelets and armlets, which were all bedecked with many priceless jewels, and also with a belt, a sacred thread, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings, the Lord shone with dazzling effulgence. In one hand He held a lotus flower, in the others a conchshell, discus and club. Gracing His chest were the Śrīvatsa mark, the brilliant Kaustubha gem and a flower garland.

Texts 53–55

*sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ,
parṣadaiḥ sanakādibhiḥ,
sureśair brahma-rudrādyair;
navabhiś ca dvijottamaiḥ,
prahrāda-nārada-vasu,
pramukhair bhāgavatottamaiḥ,
stūyamānaṃ pṛthag-bhāvair,
vacobhir amalātmabhiḥ,
śriyā puṣṭyā girā kāntyā,
kīrtyā tuṣṭyelayorjayā,*

*vidyayāvidyayā śaktyā,
māyayā ca niṣevitam*

Encircling the Lord and worshipping Him were Nanda, Sunanda and His other personal attendants; Sanaka and the other Kumāras; Brahmā, Rudra and other chief demigods; the nine chief brāhmaṇas; and the best of the saintly devotees, headed by Prahlāda, Nārada and Uparicara Vasu. Each of these great personalities was worshipping the Lord by chanting sanctified words of praise in his own unique mood. Also in attendance were the Lord's principal internal potencies—Śrī, Puṣṭi, Gīr, Kānti, Kīrti, Tuṣṭi, Ilā and Ūrjā—as were His material potencies Vidyā, Avidyā and Māyā, and His internal pleasure potency, Śakti.

(Text 53) Each of these exalted personalities was worshipping Narayana by chanting sanctified words of praise in his own unique mood. The personal attendants of Narayana addressed Him as their master. The four Kumaras worshiped Him as Brahman. Brahma and other demigods worshiped Narayana as the Supreme Controller. Marici and others worshiped Him as the Lord of the progenitors. Prahlada and others praised Him as their worshipable Deity.

The associates of Lord Narayana stood around Him in the eight directions. The four Kumaras stood behind Narayana; Brahma and the demigods to the right; Marici and the other *brahmin* sons of Brahma to the left; Prahlada and other great devotees in front; and Narada and Uparicara Vasu were almost in front. All the persons mentioned here are eternally liberated (*nitya-parṣadaiḥ*) associates of Lord Narayana. It should be understood that Brahma and the other demigods seen in this material world are expansions of these transcendental demigods residing in Vaikuntha. This is stated in the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*nityāḥ sarve pare dhāmi, ye cānye ca divaukasah, te vai prākṛta-nāke
'sminn, anityās tridevīśvarāḥ*

“All the demigods who are in the spiritual domain are eternal, whereas the demigods in this material sky are not.”

(Texts 53-55) Narayana was surrounded by His principal internal potencies, who were emanations from His svarupa, personal form. “Śrī is the potency of wealth; Puṣṭi that of strength; Gīr, knowledge; Kānti, beauty; Kīrti, fame; and Tuṣṭi, renunciation. These are the Lord’s six opulences. Ilā is Narayana’s bhū-śakti, also known as sandhinī, the internal potency of whom the element earth is an expansion. Ūrjā is His internal potency for performing pastimes, who expands as the tulasī plant in this world. Vidyā and Avidyā (knowledge and ignorance) are external potencies who cause the living entities’ liberation and bondage, respectively. Śakti is His internal pleasure potency, hlādinī, and Māyā is an internal potency who is the basis of Vidyā and Avidyā. The word ca in this verse indicates the jīva or tatastha-śakti, who is subordinate to Māyā. The prefix ni in niṣevitam means nitya-kāla, or that the Lord is eternally served by all these personified potencies.

Texts 56–57

*vilokya su-bhr̥śam pr̥ito,
bhaktyā paramayā yutaḥ,
hr̥ṣyat-tanūruho bhāva-
pariklinnātma-locanaḥ,
girā gadgadayāstauṣīt,
sattvam ālambya sātvaṭaḥ,
praṇamya mūrdhnāvahitaḥ,
kṛtāñjali-putaḥ śanaiḥ*

As the great devotee Akrura beheld all this, he became extremely pleased and felt enthused with transcendental devotion. His intense ecstasy caused His bodily hairs to stand on end and tears to flow from his eyes, drenching his entire body. Somehow managing

to steady himself, Akrura bowed his head to the ground. Then he joined his palms in supplication and, in a voice choked with emotion, very slowly and attentively began to pray.

Chapter Forty: Akrura's Prayers

Text 1

*śrī-akrūra uvāca,
nato 'smy ahaṁ tvākhila-hetu-hetuṁ,
nārāyaṇaṁ pūruṣaṁ ādyam avyayam,
yan-nābhi-jātād aravinda-koṣād,
brahmāvirāsīd yata eṣa lokaḥ*

Śrī Akrura said: I bow down to You, the cause of all causes, the original and inexhaustible Supreme Person, Nārāyaṇa. From the whorl of the lotus born from Your navel, Brahmā appeared, and by his agency this universe has come into being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Akrura pays respects to Kṛṣṇa, and praises the forms in which He is worshiped and the worshiping process.

Akrura prayed, “The cause of everything is Brahma whose cause is Narayana, the cause of all causes who has the form of an eternal person. Narayana, who is without beginning or end (*ādyam avyayam*), is the origin of Brahma.”

Text 2

*bhūs toyam agniḥ pavanaṁ kham ādir,
mahān ajādir mana indriyāṇi,
sarvendriyārthā vibudhās ca sarve,
ye hetavas te jagato 'ṅga-bhūtāḥ*

Earth; water; fire; air; ether and its source, false ego; the mahat-tattva; the total material nature and her source, the Supreme Lord’s puruṣa expansion; the mind; the senses; the sense objects; and the senses’ presiding deities—all these causes of the cosmic manifestation are born from Your transcendental body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Akrura prayed, “Furthermore, everything that exists is an expansion from the purely conscious and ecstatic original person (*cid-ananda puruṣa*). The earth, water, fire, air, ether and its origin, false ego, *mahat-tattva*, *mayā*, *pradhana*, the living entities (*jīva*), time, action (*karma*), the senses and sense objects all arise from Your transcendental body (*puruṣa*) as stated in the *Srīmad Bhagavatam* (2.6.1): *vācām vahnur mukhaṁ kṣetraṁ*, ‘Lord Brahmā said: The mouth of the *virāt-puruṣa* (the universal form of the Lord) is the generating center of the voice, and the controlling deity is fire.’ ”

Text 3

*naite svarūpaṁ vidur ātmanas te,
hy ajādayo ’nātmatayā gṛhītaḥ,
ajo ’nubaddhaḥ sa guṇair ajāyā,
guṇāt paraṁ veda na te svarūpaṁ*

The total material nature and these other elements of creation certainly cannot know You as You are, for they are manifested in the realm of dull matter. Since You are beyond the modes of nature, even Lord Brahma, who is bound up in these modes, does not know Your true identity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Akrura prayed, “The material

ingredients of creation are generated from You, but they do not know You as the Supersoul because they are covered by matter.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Even if we accept that material things cannot know Me, the conscious living entities will be able to know Me.”

Akrura said, “The living entity cannot know You, even if he becomes Brahma (*ajah*). Why? Due to being covered by the modes of the unborn material nature, he cannot know Your real form which is beyond the three modes of material nature.”

Text 4

*tvām yogino yajanty addhā,
mahā-puruṣam īśvaram,
sādhyātmaṁ sādhibhūtaṁ ca,
sādhidaivam ca sādhaḥ*

Pure yogīs worship You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, by conceiving of You in the threefold form comprising the living entities, the material elements that constitute the living entities’ bodies, and the controlling deities of those elements.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura prayed, “Furthermore, although no one knows You, still, since You are the bestower of all fruitive results, those who are acquiring these various fruits, even while engaged in worshiping different objects, are in truth all worshiping You.”

Akrura first mentions the paths of Sankhya and *yoga*. Brahma and others (*yoginah*) worship the Lord (*īśvaram*) as the Paramatma (*mahā-puruṣam*), the witness of the *ādhyātma*, *ādhibhūtaṁ* and *adhidaivam*.

Text 5

*trayyā ca vidyayā kecit,
tvām vai vaitānikā dvijāḥ,
yajante vitatair yajñair,
nānā-rūpāmarākhyayā*

Brāhmaṇas who follow the regulations concerning the three sacred fires worship You by chanting mantras from the three Vedas and performing elaborate fire sacrifices for the various demigods, who have many forms and names.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus Sankhya and *yoga* have been mentioned, considering them together as one. This verse describes those following the path of fruitive work (*karma*).

Akrura prayed, “The *vaitānikās* (*karma-yogis*) are indeed worshiping You.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “But they perform sacrifices to Indra, Varuna, Vayu and other demigods, not to Me.”

Akrura said, “They are actually offering sacrifices to You by the names (*ākhyayā*) of the various demigods, appearing as Vajrahasta (Indra) and others. The idea behind this is as follows: In the prayers which glorify Indra, Varuna and other demigods, these demigods are shown to have supreme power. But there cannot be many supreme controllers, therefore it is You alone who are being worshiped by various names.

This is confirmed in the *Sruti*:

*sa prathamah sa prakṛtir viśvakarmā, sa prathamo mitrā-varuṇo agnih,
sa prathamo bṛhaspati cikivāms, tasmā indrāya havir ājuhōti*

‘He is first. He is the material nature. He is Visvakarma. He is the first Mitra, Varuna and Agni. He is the first Brhaspati. In this way offerings were made to Indra (the Supreme Lord).’”

*eke tvākhila-karmāṇi,
sannyasyopasamaṁ gatāḥ,
jñānino jñāna-yajñena,
yajanti jñāna-vigraham*

In pursuit of spiritual knowledge, some persons renounce all material activities and, having thus become peaceful, perform the sacrifice of philosophic investigation to worship You, the original form of all knowledge.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes those following the path of knowledge (*jnana*). Akrura prayed, “Through *samadhi* (*jñāna-yajñena*) they worship (*yajanti*) You as the original form of knowledge (*jñāna-svarūpa:jñāna-vigraham*).”

Jñāna-vigraham can also mean the special (*vigraham:viśeṣato*) taste or experience (*grahaṇam:aśvādanam*) of Brahman realization.

Text 7

*anye ca saṁskṛtātmāno,
vidhinābhīhitena te,
yajanti tvan-mayās tvām vai,
bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*

And yet others—those whose intelligence is pure—follow the injunctions of Vaiṣṇava scriptures promulgated by You. Absorbing their minds in thought of You, they worship You as the one Supreme Lord manifesting in multiple forms.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse depicts the path of the Vaisnavas. The word *saṁskṛtātmānaḥ*, “they whose intelligence

is pure”, implies that the worshipers mentioned before have not completely purified their intelligence of material contamination and thus they worship the Lord indirectly. *Vidhinā* means by the opinion of the *Pañcarātra*, which is promulgated by Kṛṣṇa. This is confirmed in the *Smṛti*: *pañcarātrasya sarvasya vaktā tu bhagavān svayam*, “The *Pañcarātras* were all uttered by the Lord Himself.” Thus, since the *Pañcarātra* is the best evidence, it should be respected by everyone. Akrura prayed, “By revealing Yourself to them both internally and externally, they worship You as both having many forms and having only one form.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (1.21) describes this inconceivable potency of Kṛṣṇa as follows: *eko vaśī sarva-gaḥ kṛṣṇa īḍyah*: “That one Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He is worshipable.” And *eko ’pi san bahudhā yo ’vabhāti*, “Although the Lord is one, He is present in innumerable hearts as many.”

Text 8

*tvām evānye śivoktena,
mārgeṇa śiva-rūpiṇam,
bahv-ācārya-vibhedena,
bhagavantarn upāsate*

There are still others, who worship You, the Supreme Lord, in the form of Lord Śiva. They follow the path described by him and interpreted in various ways by many teachers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the Saivites, worshipers of Lord Siva. The words *tvām eva*, “You also”, indicate a relative inferiority, just as in the saying, “The prince is also a king.” In other words, the path of worshiping Lord Śiva is indirect and therefore inferior. *Bahv-ācārya-vibhedena* means that they worship the Supreme

Lord according to the path of the various kinds of Śaivites, such as the Pāśupatas. *Bhagavantam-upāsate* (worship the Lord) or *bhagavan sam-upāsate* are two versions of the last phrase of the verse.

Text 9

*sarva eva yajanti tvām,
sarva-deva-mayeśvaram,
ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā,
yady apy anya-dhiyaḥ prabho*

But all these people, my Lord, even those who have turned their attention away from You and are worshipping other deities, are actually worshipping You alone, O embodiment of all the demigods.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura prayed, “All of these worshipers (*yogīs*, *karmīs* and Śaivites), whose characteristics have been thus described, actually are worshipping You.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “How is this?”

Akrura: “This is because You comprise all the demigods, and also because You are the Supreme Controller.

Kṛṣṇa: “But when asked they will say that they are worshipping Siva, Surya, Ganesa and so on.”

Akrura: “Those who worship the demigods indirectly worship You as the Supersoul in all the demigods, even though that is not the correct way of worshipping You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But if that is so, then how am I being worshiped? They never for even a moment turn their remembrance toward Me.

Akrura: “Though they meditate on the demigods, not You, they are still worshipping You.”

Text 10

*yathādri-prabhavā nadyah,
parjanya-pūritāḥ prabho,
viśanti sarvataḥ sindhum,
tadvat tvām gatayo 'ntataḥ*

As rivers born from the mountains and filled by the rain flow from all sides into the sea, so do all these paths in the end reach You, O master.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa objects, “But if they are worshiping Me, then they should achieve Me.”

Akrura: “No, it is not like this. The worship goes to You, but those worshipers do not attain You. You have stated this Yourself in the *Bhagavad-gīta* (9.23-25):

*ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā, yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ, te 'pi mām eva
kaunteya, yayanty avidhi-pūrvakam, ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānām, bhoktā
ca prabhur eva ca, na tu mām abhijānanti, tattvenātaś cyavanti te, yānti
deva-vratā devān, pitṛn yānti pitṛ-vratāḥ bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā, yānti
mad-yājino 'pi mām*

“Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kuntī, but they do so in a wrong way. I am the only enjoyer and master of all sacrifices.

Therefore, those who do not recognize My true transcendental nature fall down. Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me.”

Akrura: “I am also saying the same thing with an example. The raging rivers, which are born from the mountains, are formed from the water raining upon the mountains from the clouds (*parjanyaena:meghena*). The rivers then flow down in all directions and ultimately enter the sea. Just

as the rivers flow into the ocean, but not the mountains which generate the rivers, so the worship on different paths goes to You, but not the worshipers. This means that because You are the Supersoul within them and the shelter of the demigods, the worship of them goes to You. Worship of them is worship of You.

“As the clouds come from the ocean, so the *Vedas* come from You. The various types of worship, coming from the *Vedas*, are the water, and the worshiper is the mountain. Just as many rivers flow from many places to enter the ocean, so the various types of worship of different worshipers flow from the demigods to Visnu.”

Text 11

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti,
bhavataḥ prakṛter guṇāḥ,
teṣu hi prākṛtāḥ protā,
ā-brahma-sthāvarādayaḥ*

Goodness, passion and ignorance, the qualities of Your material nature, entangle all conditioned living beings, from Brahmā down to the nonmoving creatures.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replies, “If that is so, then why doesn’t everyone worship Me?” Akura answers in this verse. Akura prayed, “All living entities are bound by the three modes of nature. If even Brahma is bewildered by *maya*, then what to speak of all the humans? Therefore, how can they worship You?”

Text 12

tubhyaṁ namas te tv aviṣakta-dṛṣṭaye,

*sarvātmane sarva-dhiyām ca sākṣiṇe,
guṇa-pravāho 'yam avidyayā kṛtaḥ,
pravartate deva-nṛ-tiryag-ātmasu*

I offer My obeisances to You, who as the Supreme Soul of all beings witness everyone’s consciousness with unbiased vision. The current of Your material modes, produced by the force of ignorance, flows strongly among the living beings who assume identities as demigods, humans and animals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura prayed, “I offer my obeisances to You for the purpose of achieving You (*te:tvām prāptum*). You show Your mercy only to Your devotees, and do not turn Your attention to the worshipers of other deities.”

Kṛṣṇa: “How then can you say that I accept worship of the demigods, since one who receives worship from persons becomes inclined toward them?”

Akrura: “Since You are the underlying basis of everything (*sarvātmane*), You receive all the worship offered by various persons. But You do not become obliged to them because they do not worship You directly. Although You dwell in everyone’s heart and witness everything they do, You remain aloof in all circumstances.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Well, can the demigods deliver their worshipers?”

Akrura: “Ignorance and the force of the modes of nature (*guṇa-pravāho*) influence the demigods, humans, animals and birds to assume false bodily identities. Since the demigods are also subject to the three modes of material nature, how can they deliver their own worshipers?”

Texts 13–14

*agnir mukhaṁ te 'vanir aṅghrir īkṣaṇaṁ,
sūrya nabho nābhir atho diśaḥ śrutih,*

*dyauḥ kaṁ surendrās tava bāhavo 'rṇavāḥ,
kukṣir marut prāṇa-balaṁ prakalpitam,
romāṇi vṛkṣauśadhayaḥ śiroruhā,
meghāḥ parasyāsthi-nakhāni te 'drayaḥ,
nimeṣaṇaṁ rātry-ahanī prajāpatir,
meḍhras tu vṛṣṭis tava vīryam iṣyate*

Fire is said to be Your face, the earth Your feet, the sun Your eye, and the sky Your navel. The directions are Your sense of hearing, the chief demigods Your arms, and the oceans Your abdomen. Heaven is thought to be Your head, and the wind Your vital air and physical strength. The trees and plants are the hairs on Your body, the clouds the hair on Your head, and the mountains the bones and nails of You, the Supreme. The passage of day and night is the blinking of Your eyes, the progenitor of mankind Your genitals, and the rain Your semen.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura prayed, “Furthermore, all these demigods are Your limbs when You assume the Vairaja-rupa (a form of Brahma for creation of the universe). Therefore worship of the demigods is actually worship of You.”

Text 15

*tvayy avyayātman puruṣe prakalpitā,
lokāḥ sa-pālā bahu-jīva-saṅkulāḥ,
yathā jale sañjihate jalaukaso,
'py udumbare vā maśakā mano-maye*

All the worlds, with their presiding demigods and teeming populations, originate in You, the inexhaustible Supreme

Personality of Godhead. These worlds travel within You, the basis of the mind and senses, just as aquatics swim in the sea or tiny insects burrow within an udumbara fruit.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “But if this is true, then the worshipers of demigods are also My worshipers. It was seen from the previous verse that the worshipers of demigods are also My worshipers. The scripture also says that those who worship Me surely come to Me. How do you say that the demigod worshipers do not come to Me? Akrura: “The worlds with the demigods and countless living entities move about within Your universal form, like small insects living in the *udumbara* fruit or aquatics in the water. What is that form? They move within Your form composed of material elements such as mind and earth.

“O Lord, whose body is indestructible (*avyayatma*). By this it is understood that those who worship Your original forms, which are eternal and full of knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ananda*), are Your true worshipers. The universal form (*vairaja-rupa*), on the other hand, is Your temporary, illusory form, not Your original personal identity (*svarupa*). Therefore those who worship the demigods who are limbs of that universal form are not Your worshipers. Thus it is correct to say that those who worship the demigods go to the demigods, not to You.” Such is implied by this verse.

Text 16

*yāni yānīha rūpāṇi,
krīḍanārtham bibharṣi hi,
tair āmrṣṭa-śuco lokā,
mudā gāyanti te yaśaḥ*

To enjoy Your pastimes You manifest Yourself in various forms in

this material world, and these incarnations cleanse away all the unhappiness of those who joyfully chant Your glories.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “But then which are My original forms?” Akrura answers in this verse: “For the sake of playing and to give mercy to the conditioned souls You appear in this material world in various forms such as Matsya, who crossed the ocean, or as Hayagrīva, who killed the demons Madhu and Kaitabha. Thus people glorify these eternal forms of Yours and become free from ignorance, illusion and sadness.”

Texts 17–18

*namaḥ kāraṇa-matsyāya,
pralayābdhi-carāya ca,
hayaśīrṣṇe namas tubhyaṁ,
madhu-kaiṭabha-mṛtyave,
akūpārāya bṛhate,
namo mandara-dhāriṇe,
kṣity-uddhāra-vihārāya,
namaḥ śūkara-mūrtaye*

I offer my obeisances to You, the cause of the creation, Lord Matsya, who swam about in the ocean of dissolution, to Lord Hayagrīva, the killer of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, to the immense tortoise [Lord Kurma], who supported Mandara Mountain, and to the boar incarnation [Lord Varāha], who enjoyed lifting the earth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating Kṛṣṇa may ask, “What are those forms?” Akrura describes those forms in six verses (17-22). Akrura prayed, “I pay my respects to the eternal form of Matsya, who swam about in the ocean of dissolution enjoying His pastimes.”

The word *karana*, which means “whose form is the original cause of creation” implies the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s form, and should also apply to all the forms mentioned in the following verses.

“After this, You took the form of Hayagriva to kill Madhu and Kaitabha. I offer respects to the Lord in His form as Kurma, who held up Mandara Mountain.” The *Viśva-kośa* dictionary states that the word *akūpārāya* indicates the king of tortoises.

Text 19

*namas te 'dbhuta-simhāya,
sādhu-loka-bhayāpaha,
vāmanāya namas tubhyaṁ,
krānta-tribhuvanāya ca*

Obeisances to You, the amazing lion [Lord Nṛsiṁha], who remove Your saintly devotees’ fear, and to the dwarf Vāmana, who stepped over the three worlds.

Text 20

*namo bhṛguṇām pataye,
dṛpta-kṣatra-vana-cchide,
namas te raghu-varyāya,
rāvaṇānta-karāya ca*

Obeisances to You, Lord of the Bhṛgus, who cut down the forest of the conceited royal order, and to Lord Rāma, the best of the Raghu dynasty, who put an end to the demon Rāvaṇa.

Text 21

*namas te vāsudevāya,
namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca,
pradyumnāyaniruddhāya,
sātvatām pataye namaḥ*

Obeisances to You, Lord of the Sātvatas, and to Your forms of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha.

Text 22

*namo buddhāya śuddhāya,
daitya-dānava-mohine,
mleccha-prāya-kṣatra-hantre,
namas te kalki-rūpiṇe*

Obeisances to Your form as the faultless Lord Buddha, who will bewilder the Daityas and Dānavas, and to Lord Kalki, the annihilator of the meat-eaters posing as kings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akura glorified the incarnation of Buddha as *śuddhāya* (pure or faultless), even though he promulgated teachings which contradicted the *Vedas*.

Text 23

*bhagavan jīva-loko 'yam,
mohitas tava māyayā,
aham mamety asad-grāho,
bhrāmyate karma-vartmasu*

O Supreme Lord, the living entities in this world are bewildered by Your illusory energy. Becoming involved in the false concepts of “I” and “my,” they are forced to wander along the paths of fruitive work.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After praising the Lord, Akrura now reveals His delusion and the plight of those wandering along the path of fruitive work.

Text 24

*aham cātmātmajāgāra-
dārārtha-svajanādiṣu,
bhramāmi svapna-kalpeṣu,
mūḍhaḥ satya-dhiyā vibho*

I too am deluded in this way, O almighty Lord, foolishly thinking my body, children, home, wife, money and followers to be real, though they are actually as unreal as a dream.

Text 25

anityānātma-duḥkheṣu,

*viparyaya-matir hy aham,
dvandvārāmas tamo-viṣṭo,
na jāne tvātmanah priyam*

Thus mistaking the temporary for the eternal, my body for my self, and sources of misery for sources of happiness, I have tried to take pleasure in material dualities. Covered in this way by ignorance, I could not recognize You as the real object of my love.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura elaborates on his foolishness in this verse: “Those with a backwards (*viparyaya*) mentality think the temporary fruits of action are eternal, the body is the soul, and the miseries of house and home are bliss. Such fools continually suffer the dualities of happiness and distress in this world. Because I am covered by ignorance, I cannot realize that You are the dearest beloved of my soul (*ātmanah priyam*).”

Text 26

*yathābudho jalam hitvā,
praticchannam tad-udbhavaḥ,
abhyeti mṛga-tṛṣṇām vai,
tadvat tvāham parān-mukhaḥ*

Just as a fool overlooks a body of water covered by the vegetation growing in it and chases a mirage, so I have turned away from You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura then illustrates the previous point with an example: “A foolish man will give up water which is covered by grass and run after a mirage. In the same way, due to ignorance, I abandoned You, who appear covered by *maya*, turned away

from You and turned toward my material body.”

Text 27

*notsahe 'ham kṛpaṇa-dhīḥ,
kāma-karma-hataṁ manaḥ,
roddhuṁ pramāthibhiś cākṣair,
hriyamāṇam itas tataḥ*

My intelligence is so crippled that I cannot find the strength to curb my mind, which is disturbed by material desires and activities and constantly dragged here and there by my obstinate senses.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura prayed, “I cannot control my foolish mind, which is being pulled by my powerfully agitated (*pramāthibhiḥ:prakarṣeṇa mathnadbhiḥ*) senses. Due to my crippled intelligence (*kṛpaṇa-dhīḥ*), I cannot even gather the courage (*utsāha*) to try to check my rascal mind.”

Text 28

*so 'ham tavāṅghry-upagato 'smy asatām durāpam,
tac cāpy aham bhavad-anugraha īśa manye,
pumso bhaved yarhi saṁsaraṇāpavargas,
tvayy abja-nābha sad-upāsanayā matiḥ syāt*

Being thus fallen, I am approaching Your feet for shelter, O Lord, because although the impure can never attain Your feet, I think it is nevertheless possible by Your mercy. Only when one’s material life has ceased, O lotus-naveled Lord, can one develop consciousness of

You by serving Your pure devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura prayed, “Though what I have said about myself is true, I surrender unto You. This surrender is hard to attain for the impure, but it is surely possible if I receive Your mercy.”

If Kṛṣṇa asks, “When will you get My mercy?”

Akrura replies, “O lotus-naved one, when one worships Your pure devotees, consciousness of You develops.”

Kṛṣṇa: “When will it happen?”

Akrura: “When a person’s material life is finished.” Kṛṣṇa: “And when is one’s material life finished?”

Akrura: “When He receives Your causeless mercy.”

By this reasoning, first there is the causeless mercy of pure devotees, followed by the beginning of the cessation of material life. Then, by serving pure devotees one develops Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This sequence has been described previously.

Text 29

*namo vijñāna-mātrāya,
sarva-pratyaya-hetave,
puruṣeśa-pradhānāya,
brahmaṇe ’nanta-śaktaye*

Obeisances to the Supreme Absolute Truth, the possessor of unlimited energies. He is the embodiment of pure, transcendental knowledge, the source of all kinds of awareness, and the predominator of the forces of nature that rule over the living being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura surrenders himself to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet in two verses (29-30).

Akrura prayed, “I will be able to understand You in proportion to how

much realization (*vijñāna*) You give me. You are the source of all knowledge (*sarva-pratyaya-hetave*) as well, and You are the Supersoul (*puruṣa*) inspiring all activities. As time You control (*eśa*) everyone and give the result of action. As *maya* (*pradhana*) You bind up the living entity, and as the Supreme Absolute Truth (*brahmaṇe*) You liberate them. As Bhagavan (*ananta-śaktaye*) You give us devotion to Yourself and thus Your work is complete.”

Text 30

*namas te vāsudevāya,
sarva-bhūta-kṣayāya ca,
hṛṣīkeśa namas tubhyaṁ,
prapannaṁ pāhi mām prabho*

O son of Vasudeva, obeisances to You, within whom all living beings reside. O Lord of the mind and senses, again I offer You my obeisances. O master, please protect me, who am surrendered unto You.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura prayed, “O Hrsikesa, please protect me! Please engage my mind and senses in Your service, so that they do not become attached to my wife and sons.”

Chapter Forty-one: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Enter Mathurā

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
stuvatas tasya bhagavān,
darśayitvā jale vapuḥ,
bhūyaḥ samāharat kṛṣṇo,
naṭo nāṭyam ivātmanaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While Akrura was still offering prayers, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa withdrew His form that He had revealed in the water, just as an actor winds up his performance.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa goes to Mathura and enchants the womenfolk. After killing the washerman, Kṛṣṇa awarded the cloth weaver and the garland maker named Sudama. After showing His majestic Viṣṇu form to Akrūra in the Yamuna at Akrura Ghat and receiving Akrūra's prayers, Sri Kṛṣṇa withdrew (*samāharat*) that vision just as an actor winds up his performance. Kṛṣṇa made that form disappear without asking Akrura. This disregard for Akrura is expressed by the use of the sixth case (*tasya*), which expresses informality, instead of the second case (*tam*).

Text 2

*so 'pi cāntarhitam vīkṣya,
jalād unmajya satvaraḥ,
kṛtvā cāvaśyakam sarvaṁ,*

vismīto ratham āgamat

When Akrura saw the vision disappear, he came out of the water and quickly finished his various ritual duties. He then returned to the chariot, astonished.

Text 3

*tam apr̥cchad dhr̥ṣṭikeśaḥ,
kim te dr̥ṣṭam ivādbhutam,
bhūmau viyati toyē vā,
tathā tvām lakṣayāmahe*

Lord Kṛṣṇa asked Akrura: Have you seen something wonderful on the earth, in the sky or in the water? From your appearance, We think you have.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the astonishment on Akrura’s face and in his eyes, Kṛṣṇa asked him, “It appears that you must have seen something very amazing, for your eyes are wide with wonder and full of tears.”

Text 4

*śrī-akrūra uvāca,
adbhutānīha yāvanti,
bhūmau viyati vā jale,
tvayi viśvātmake tāni,
kim me ‘dr̥ṣṭam vipaśyataḥ*

Śrī Akrura said: Whatever wonderful things the earth, sky or water contain, all exist in You. Since You encompass everything, when I am seeing You, what have I not seen?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Kṛṣṇa has shown me all His opulences.” (10.39.44-55) Ascertaining this from Kṛṣṇa’s question, Akrura speaks with gleeful discrimination: “Whatever wonderful things there are on the earth, in the sky or in the water all exist in You. Seeing You before me, what more remarkable sight remains? Rather, everything is indeed seen!”

Text 5

*yatrādbhutāni sarvāṇi,
bhūmau viyati vā jale,
tam tvānupaśyato brahman,
kiṁ me dṛṣṭam ihādbhutam*

And now that I am seeing You, O Supreme Absolute Truth, in whom reside all amazing things on the earth, in the sky and in the water, what amazing things could I see in this world?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “What was amazing was not all the things I saw within You, but that form which contained everything. I am gazing upon You, within whom all amazing things exist. There are many amazing things on the land and in the water, but I realize that Your form standing before me is more amazing than all things of the universe. The form I see here is thousands of times more amazing than the sight of Vaikuntha with Sankarsana and all of Narayana’s attendants. O Brahman, you are the Supreme Absolute

Truth, the Lord of all Lords. By Your mercy my foolishness of thinking that You are simply my nephew has disappeared.”

Text 6

*ity uktvā codayām āsa,
syandanam gāndinī-sutaḥ,
mathurām anayad rāmaṁ,
kṛṣṇam caiva dinātyaye*

With these words, Akrura, the son of Gāndinī, began driving the chariot onward. At the end of the day he arrived in Mathurā with Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Gāndinī-sutaḥ means the son of Gandini, Akrura.

Text 7

*māрге grāma-janā rājaṁs,
tatra tatropasaṅgatāḥ,
vasudeva-sutau vīkṣya,
prītā dṛṣṭim na cādaduḥ*

Wherever they passed along the road, O King, the village people came forward and looked upon the two sons of Vasudeva with great pleasure. In fact, the villagers could not withdraw their eyes from Them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarama passing

on the road, the people could not take their eyes off Them, and they became stunned.

Text 8

*tāvad vrajaukasas tatra,
nanda-gopādayo 'grataḥ,
puropavanam āsādya,
pratīkṣanto 'vatasthire*

Nanda Mahārāja and the other residents of Vṛndāvana, having reached Mathurā ahead of the chariot, had stopped at a garden on the outskirts of the city to wait for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men waited for Kṛṣṇa and Balarama in a garden outside the city of Mathura. Not being able to keep up with the swift chariot of Akrura, Nanda Maharaja and the cowherd men had given up the main road and taken a short cut. Thus they arrived earlier. Besides, Akrura was delayed because of bathing in the Yamuna.

Text 9

*tān sametyāha bhagavān,
akrūrāṃ jagad-īśvaraḥ,
gṛhītvā pāṇinā pāṇinī,
praśritaṃ prahasann iva*

After joining Nanda and the others, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the controller of the universe, took humble Akrura's hand in His own

and, smiling, spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: While seeming to smile, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Akrura with humility (*prasritam*). Kṛṣṇa smiled in order to please Akrura, but internally He was full of grief on seeing the city of Mathura because of remembering His beloved Vraja.

Text 10

*bhavān praviśatām agre,
saha-yānaḥ purīm gṛham,
vayaṁ tv ihāvamucyātha,
tato drakṣyāmahe purīm*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Take the chariot and enter the city ahead of us. Then go home. After resting here a while, we will go to see the city.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You go ahead to your house in the city with the chariot. We will rest (*avamucya*) here and then see the city.”

Text 11

*śrī-akrūra uvāca,
nāhaṁ bhavadbhyām rahitaḥ,
pravekṣye mathurām prabho,
tyaktuṁ nārhasi mām nātha,
bhaktaṁ te bhakta-vatsala*

Śrī Akrura said: O master, without the two of You I shall not enter

Mathurā. I am Your devotee, O Lord, so it is not fair for You to abandon me, since You are always affectionate to Your devotees.

Text 12

*āgaccha yāma gehān naḥ,
sa-nāthān kurv adhokṣaja,
sahāgrajaḥ sa-gopālaiḥ,
suhṛdbhiś ca suhṛttama*

Come, let us go to my house with Your elder brother, the cowherd men and Your companions. O best of friends, O transcendental Lord, in this way please grace my house with its master.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Kṛṣṇa, come to my home along with the Vrajavasis. I will not visit Kamsa and inform him of Your arrival now. How can I announce that he will die the day after tomorrow? I do not have a speck of fear from him because I have seen Your powers in the Yamuna. Also, there will be no lack of things in my house. Therefore let us all go there.”

Text 13

*punīhi pāda-rajasā,
grhān no grha-medhinām,
yac-chaucenānutṛpyanti,
pitarah sāgnayaḥ surāḥ*

I am simply an ordinary householder attached to ritual sacrifices,

so please purify my home with the dust of Your lotus feet. By that act of purification, my forefathers, the sacrificial fires and the demigods will all become satisfied.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “The purified (*chaucenā*) water from washing the dust from Your feet, which will fall on my head and in the courtyard of my house, will satisfy all the demigods, sacrificial fires and my ancestors.”

Text 14

*avanijyāṅghri-yugalam,
āsīt ślokyo balir mahān,
aiśvaryam atulam lebhe,
gatim caikāntinām tu yā*

By bathing Your feet, the exalted Bali Mahārāja attained not only glorious fame and unequalled power but also the final destination of pure devotees.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “By washing Your feet Bali Maharaja attained a position of great fame (*ślokyah*). He attained unrivaled power and the destination of the pure devotees.”

Text 15

*āpas te ’ṅghry-avanejanyas,
trīl lokān śucayo ’punan,
śirasādhatta yāḥ śarvaḥ,
svar yātāḥ sagarātmajāḥ*

The water of the river Ganges has purified the three worlds, having become transcendental by bathing Your feet. Lord Śiva accepted that water on his head, and by that water’s grace the sons of King Sagara attained to heaven.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *āpaḥ* refers to the water of the Ganga. Akrura said, “That spiritual (*śucayo*) water of the Ganga, which washed Your feet, is held upon Siva’s head. It purifies the three worlds and awarded *svarga-mukti* to the descendants of King Sagara.”

Text 16

*deva-deva jagan-nātha,
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtana,
yadūttamottamaḥ-śloka,
nārāyaṇa namo ’stu te*

O Lord of lords, master of the universe, O You whose glories it is most pious to hear and chant! O best of the Yadus, O You whose fame is recounted in excellent poetry ! O Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa, I offer You my obeisances.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “O Devadeva, You shine among all the demigods. Today please illuminate my house. You are the Lord of the universe (*jagannatha*), so now become the Lord of my house. You purify anyone who hears and chants Your glories (*punya-sravaṇa-kīrtana*), so please purify my house today. O best of the Yadus (*yaduttama*), please come to my house, as I am also a Yadu. O Uttamah-sloka, famous as the deliverer of the fallen, please purify my fallen household.”

Text 17

*śrī-bhagavan uvāca,
āyāsyē bhavato geheṃ,
aḥam aṛya-samanvitaḥ,
yadu-cakra-druhaṃ hatvā,
vitarisyē suhṛt-priyam*

The Supreme Lord said: I will come to Your house with My elder brother, but first I must satisfy My friends and well-wishers by killing the enemy of the Yadu clan.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O Akrura, you have correctly called Me the best of the Yadus. Therefore first I will kill Kamsa, the enemy of the Yadu clan, and then I will come to your house.”

Text 18

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam ukto bhagavatā,
so 'krūro vimanā iva,
purīm praviṣṭaḥ kaṃsāya,
karmāvedya gṛhaṃ yayau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed by the Lord, Akrura entered the city with a heavy heart. He informed King Kamsa of the success of his mission and then went home.

Text 19

*athāparāhne bhagavān,
kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkarṣaṇānvitah,
mathurām prāviśad gopair;
didṛkṣuḥ parivāritah*

Lord Kṛṣṇa desired to see Mathurā, so toward evening He took Lord Balarāma and the cowherd boys with Him and entered the city.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the afternoon, Kṛṣṇa along with Balarama and a circle (*parivaritah*) of His cowherd friends entered Mathura to see the city.

Texts 20–23

*dadarśa tām sphāṭika-tuṅga-gopura,
dvārām bṛhad-dhema-kapāṭa-toraṇām,
tāmrāra-koṣṭhām parikhā-durāsadām,
udyāna-ramyopavanopaśobhitām,
sauvarṇa-śṛṅgāṭaka-harmya-niṣkuṭaiḥ,
śreṇī-sabhābhir bhavanair upaskṛtām,
vaidūrya-vajrāmala-nīla-vidrumair;
muktā-haridbhir valabhīṣu vediṣu,
juṣṭeṣu jālāmukha-randhra-kuṭṭimeṣv,
āviṣṭa-pārāvata-barhi-nāditām,
saṁsikta-rathyāpaṇa-mārga-catvarām,
prakīrṇa-mālyāṅkura-lāja-taṇḍulām,
āpūrṇa-kumbhair dadhi-candanokṣitaiḥ,
prasūna-dīpāvalibhiḥ sa-pallavaiḥ,*

*sa-vṛnda-rambhā-kramukaiḥ sa-ketubhiḥ,
sv-alāṅkṛta-dvāra-grhām sa-paṭṭikaiḥ*

The Lord saw Mathurā, with its tall gates and household entrances made of crystal, its immense archways and main doors of gold, its granaries and other storehouses of copper and brass, and its impregnable moats. Beautifying the city were pleasant gardens and parks. The main intersections were fashioned of gold, and there were mansions with private pleasure gardens, along with guildhalls and many other buildings. Mathurā resounded with the calls of peacocks and pet turtledoves, who sat in the small openings of the lattice windows and on the gem-studded floors, and also on the columned balconies and on the ornate rafters in front of the houses. These balconies and rafters were adorned with vaidūrya stones, diamonds, crystal quartz, sapphires, coral, pearls and emeralds. All the royal avenues and commercial streets were sprinkled with water, as were the side roads and courtyards, and flower garlands, newly grown sprouts, parched grains and rice had been scattered about everywhere. Gracing the houses' doorways were elaborately decorated pots filled with water, which were bedecked with mango leaves, smeared with yogurt and sandalwood paste, and encircled by flower petals and ribbons. Near the pots were flags, rows of lamps, bunches of flowers and the trunks of banana and betel-nut trees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Four verses (20-23) describe the city of Mathura. The tall towers and gates as well as the gates of the houses were made of crystal. The door panels and outer doors were made of gold. The storerooms (*koṣṭhām*) for grains were made of brass and copper. Surrounded by moats, the city was difficult to enter. (Texts 21-22) The intersections were made of gold. There were mansions with large gardens and buildings for the different craftsmen to meet, as well as other dwellings. The rafters were inlaid with emeralds

and other jewels. The buildings echoed with the cries of the doves and peacocks which sat on the rafters, floors and balconies. According to Kṣīra Swāmī, *valabhīṣu* refers to the peak of the roof, and according to Halāyudha *valabhī* refers to the roof. According to Trikāṇḍa Śesa, a *valabhī* is a lookout tower. In any case it refers to the top part of the building.

Vediṣu refers to a terrace for relaxing made in front of a house out of bricks and so on. The windows had lattices to let in fresh air. The floors (*kuṭṭimesu*) were inset with mosaics of precious gems. There were main roads (*rathyā*), lanes lined with shops (*āpaṇa*), pathways (*mārga*) and courtyards.

(Text 23) Kṛṣṇa saw that the doors of the houses were nicely ornamented with full water pots, decorated with flowers, and smeared with yogurt and sandalwood paste, and five other auspicious elements. The full water pots were placed in the following manner: On either side of each doorway, above piles of raw rice, is a pot. Encircling each pot are flower petals, on its neck are ribbons and in its mouth are leaves of mango and other trees. Above each pot, on a gold plate, are rows of lamps. On either side of each pot are banana tree trunks. In front and behind each pot is a betel nut tree. Flags are leaning against the pots and ornamental arches are arrayed here and there.

Text 24

*tām sampraviṣṭau vasudeva-nandanau,
vṛtau vayasyair naradeva-vartmanā,
draṣṭuṁ samīyus tvaritāḥ pura-striyo,
harmyāṇi caivāruruhur nṛpotsukāḥ*

The women of Mathurā hurriedly assembled and went forth to see the two sons of Vasudeva as They entered the city on the King's road, surrounded by Their cowherd boyfriends. Some of the

women, my dear King, eagerly climbed to the roofs of their houses to see Them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to see Kṛṣṇa and Balaram entering Mathura on the wide royal road, the women of Mathura came forward (*samīyuh*) in groups. Some ladies climbed onto the roof tops of the mansions.

Text 25

*kāścid viparyag-dhṛta-vastra-bhūṣaṇā,
vismṛtya caikam yugaleṣv athāparāḥ,
kṛtaika-patra-śravanaika-nūpurā,
nāṅktvā dvitīyam tv aparāś ca locanam*

Some of the ladies put their clothes and ornaments on backwards, others forgot one of their earrings or ankle bells, and others applied make-up to one eye but not the other.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse and the next describe the eagerness of the women of Mathura. In rushing out to see Kṛṣṇa, they put their clothing on backwards (*viparyak*) and forgot some ornaments. Thus they appeared with only one earring and one anklet. Some women applied *kajjala* (mascara) only to their left eye.

Text 26

*aśnantya ekās tad apāśya sotsavā,
abhyajyamānā akṛtopamajjanāḥ,
svapantya utthāya niśamya niḥsvanam,
prapāyayantyo 'rbham apohya mātaraḥ*

Those who were taking their meals abandoned them, others went out without finishing their baths or massages, women who were sleeping at once rose when they heard the commotion, and mothers breast-feeding their infants simply put them aside.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Some women gave up eating their meals, and some even interrupted ceremonies (*sa-utsavaḥ*) such as wedding rites and abruptly left without circumambulating their husbands. Others, being massaged with oil by their maidservants, gave up the massage. Without even completing their bath, others left while their bodies were still wet. Women, who were attentively feeding their newborn babies, immediately gave them up and left.

Text 27

*manāmsi tāsām aravinda-locanaḥ,
pragalbha-līlā-hasitāvalokaiḥ,
jahāra matta-dviradendra-vikramo,
dṛśām dadac chrī-ramaṇātmanotsavam*

The lotus-eyed Lord, smiling as He recalled His bold pastimes, captivated those ladies' minds with His glances. He walked with the gait of a lordly elephant in rut, creating a festival for their eyes with His transcendental body, which is the source of pleasure for the divine goddess of fortune.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: With that body (*ātmanā*) which is radiantly beautiful (*śrī:śrīyā:śobhayā*), Kṛṣṇa gave pleasure (*ramaṇa:ramayati*) and playful enjoyment to the ladies of Mathura. His handsome body created a festival (*utsavam*) for their eyes and stole

their minds. This indicates that by pleasing their eyes Kṛṣṇa bewildered them, and without their noticing stole the jewel of their minds.

Text 28

*dṛṣṭvā muhuḥ śrutam anudruta-cetasas taṁ,
tat-prekṣaṇotsmita-sudhokṣaṇa-labdha-mānāḥ,
ānanda-mūrtim upaguhya dṛśātma-labdham,
hr̥ṣyat-tvaco jahur anantam arindamādhim*

The ladies of Mathurā had repeatedly heard about Kṛṣṇa, and thus as soon as they saw Him their hearts melted. They felt honored that He was sprinkling upon them the nectar of His glances and broad smiles. Taking Him into their hearts through their eyes, they embraced Him, the embodiment of all ecstasy, and as their bodily hairs stood on end, O subduer of enemies, they forgot the unlimited distress caused by His absence.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Their hearts melted upon looking at Kṛṣṇa. They felt greatly honored to be sprinkled with the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s sweet smiles and glances. They freely embraced the embodiment of bliss (*ānanda-mūrtim*) whom they had obtained in their minds by glancing at Kṛṣṇa from just one of their eyes. By this they gave up the distress generated from His absence. By the phrase “O subduer of enemies” (*arim-dama*), Sukadeva Gosvami implies that by hearing and meditating on such pastimes as this, one can conquer the enemies of lust, anger, greed and envy.

Text 29

prāsāda-sikharārūḍhāḥ,

*prīty-utphulla-mukhāmbujāḥ,
abhyavarṣan saumanasyaiḥ,
pramadā bala-keśavau*

Their lotus faces blooming with affection, the ladies who had climbed to the roofs of the mansions rained down showers of flowers upon Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The women began to shower flowers (*saumanasyaiḥ*) in the form of their smiles, or they showered flowers in the form of actions indicating that their minds (*su-manasām*) were delighted in love.

Text 30

*dadhy-akṣataiḥ soda-pātraiḥ,
srag-gandhair abhyupāyanaiḥ,
tāv ānarcuḥ pramuditās,
tatra tatra dvijātayaḥ*

Brāhmaṇas standing along the way honored the two Lords with presentations of yogurt, unbroken barleycorns, pots full of water, garlands, fragrant substances such as sandalwood paste, and other items of worship.

Text 31

*ūcuḥ paurā aho gopyas,
tapaḥ kim acarana mahat,*

*yā hy etāṅv anupaśyanti,
nara-loka-mahotsavau*

The women of Mathurā exclaimed: Oh, what severe austerities the gopīs must have performed to be able to regularly see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who are the greatest source of pleasure for all mankind!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word (*paurā*) refers to the women living in the city (*pura*) of Mathura.

Text 32

*rajakam kañcid āyāntam,
raṅga-kāram gadāgrajah,
dṛṣṭvāyācata vāsāmsi,
dhautāny aty-uttamāni ca*

Seeing a washerman approaching who had been dyeing some clothes, Kṛṣṇa asked him for the finest laundered garments he had.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One who washes clothing is called *rajakah*. If he also dyes clothing he is called *rangakara*.

Text 33

*dehy āvayoḥ samucitāny,
aṅga vāsāmsi cārhatoh,
bhaviṣyati param śreyo,
dātus te nātra samśayaḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Please give suitable garments to the two of Us, who certainly deserve them. If you grant this charity, you will undoubtedly receive the greatest benefit.

Text 34

*sa yācito bhagavatā,
paripūrṇena sarvataḥ,
sākṣepaṁ ruṣitaḥ prāha,
bhṛtyo rājñāḥ su-durmadaḥ*

Thus requested by the Supreme Lord, who is perfectly complete in all respects, that arrogant servant of the King became angry and replied insultingly.

Text 35

*īdṛśāny eva vāsāmsī,
nityaṁ giri-vane-carāḥ,
paridhatta kim udvṛttā,
rāja-dravyāny abhīpsatha*

[The washerman said:] You impudent boys! You're accustomed to roaming the mountains and forests, and yet You would dare put on such clothes as these! These are the King's possessions You're asking for!

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Udvṛttāḥ* means one who has deviated (*ut*) from good conduct (*vṛtta*). The washerman said, “O You who have transgressed the bounds of good behavior! O ill-mannered boys! You dare to put on the King’s clothing?”

By the influence of mother Sarasvatī, the washerman’s words can also mean: “O boys of excellent character (*udvṛttāḥ:utkṛṣṭa-caritrāḥ*), who herd cows on Govardhana. Would You ever wear such mundane clothes as these? Certainly not! Therefore, even in play why do You want to don the impure things of a king?”

The *Āmara-koṣa* dictionary says *vṛttam padye caritre ca*, which means the word *vṛttāḥ* can indicate “a footstep” or “activity,” and is used in all three genders.

Text 36

*yātāśu bālīśā maivam,
prārthyam yadi jijīviṣā,
badhnanti ghnanti lumpanti,
dr̥ptam rāja-kulāni vai*

Fools, get out of here quickly! Don’t beg like this if You want to stay alive. When someone is too bold, the King’s men arrest him and kill him and take all his property.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The normal meaning of the verse is clear. However, there is another meaning. The washerman said, “O Bhagavan, who on the pretext of taking three steps of land, claimed the body of Bali (*bālīśā*)! You should not request in this way if You want to keep me alive. Just as Bali fell into danger by giving in charity, if I give You clothes, then my life will be over today. The servants of the King will bind up that person who is not afraid (*dr̥ptam*) of Kamsa, and after informing Kamsa they will kill him and loot his house.”

Text 37

*evam vikatthamānasya,
kupito devakī-sutaḥ,
rajakasya karāgreṇa,
śiraḥ kāyād apātayat*

As the washerman thus spoke brazenly, the son of Devakī became angry, and then merely with His fingertips He separated the man's head from his body.

Text 38

*tasyānujīvināḥ sarve,
vāsaḥ-kośān visrjya vai,
dudruvuḥ sarvato mārgam,
vāsāmsi jagrhe 'cyutaḥ*

The washerman's assistants all dropped their bundles of clothes and fled down the road, scattering in all directions. Lord Kṛṣṇa then took the clothes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The assistants of the washerman dropped the bundles of clothing (*vāsaḥ-kośān*) and fled.

Text 39

*vasitvātma-priye vastre,
kṛṣṇaḥ saṅkaraṣaṇas tathā,
śeṣāṅy ādatta gopebhyo,
visrjya bhuvi kānicit*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma put on pairs of garments that especially pleased Them, and then Kṛṣṇa distributed the remaining clothes among the cowherd boys, leaving some scattered on the ground.

Text 40

*tatas tu vāyakaḥ prītas,
tayor veṣam akalpayat,
vicitra-varṇaiś caileyair,
ākalpair anurūpataḥ*

Thereupon a weaver came forward and, feeling affection for the Lords, nicely adorned Their attire with cloth ornaments of various colors.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *vāyakaḥ* is one who weaves using bamboo. He dressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarama in soft silk cloth of gold color embedded with jewels and ornaments. The word *anurūpataḥ* indicates that the colors matched nicely. *Anurūpataḥ* also means that in Kṛṣṇa and Balarama's pastime of becoming wrestlers, cloth ornaments will be suitable because they will not pain Their bodies.

Text 41

*nānā-lakṣaṇa-veśābhyām,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau virejatuh,
sv-alakṛtau bāla-gajau,
parvaṇīva sitetarau*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked resplendent, each in His own unique, wonderfully ornamented outfit. They resembled a pair of young elephants, one white and the other black, decorated for a festive occasion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were decorated with cloth suitable for Their different colored bodies. They appeared like young processional elephants, one white and the other black (*sitetarau*) at a festival.

Text 42

*tasya prasanno bhagavān,
prādāt sārūpyam ātmanah,
śriyam ca paramām loke,
balaiśvarya-smṛtīndriyam*

Pleased with the weaver, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa blessed him that after death he would achieve the liberation of attaining a form like the Lord's, and that while in this world he would enjoy supreme opulence, physical strength, influence, memory and sensory vigor.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa was very happy so He immediately blessed the weaver with dexterity of the senses, memory, power and strength. After death he would attain the spiritual body of a cowherd.

Text 43

*tataḥ sudāmno bhavanam,
mālā-kārasya jagmatuḥ,
tau dr̥ṣṭvā sa samutthāya,
nanāma śirasā bhuvi*

The two Lords then went to the house of the garland-maker Sudāmā. When Sudāmā saw Them he at once stood up and then bowed down, placing his head on the ground.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how after dressing and putting on ornaments, one puts on a garland.

Text 44

*tayor āsanam ānīya,
pādyam cārghyārhaṇādibhiḥ,
pūjām sānugayoś cakre,
srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ*

After offering Them seats and bathing Their feet, Sudāmā worshiped Them and Their companions with arghya, garlands, pān, sandalwood paste and other presentations.

Text 45

*prāha naḥ sārthakaṁ janma,
pāvitaṁ ca kulaṁ prabho,
pitṛ-devarṣayo mahyaṁ,
tuṣṭā hy āgamanena vām*

[Sudāmā said:] O Lord, my birth is now sanctified and my family free of contamination. Now that You both have come here, my forefathers, the demigods and the great sages are certainly all satisfied with me.

Text 46

*bhavantau kila viśvasya,
jagataḥ kāraṇaṁ param,
avatīrṇāv ihāmśena,
kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca*

You two Lords are the ultimate cause of this entire universe. To bestow sustenance and prosperity upon this realm, You have descended with Your plenary expansions.

Text 47

*na hi vām viśamā dṛṣṭiḥ,
suhṛdor jagad-ātmanoḥ,
samayoḥ sarva-bhūteṣu,
bhajantaṁ bhajator api*

Because You are the well-wishing friends and Supreme Soul of the whole universe, You regard all with unbiased vision. Therefore, although You reciprocate Your devotees' loving worship, You always remain equally disposed toward all living beings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudama said, “Though You are equal to all, You show special mercy to Your devotees (*bhajantaṁ bhajator apī*).” Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gīta* (9.29):

samo 'haṁ sarva-bhūteṣu, na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ, ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā, mayi te teṣu cāpy aham

“I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders service unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him.”

Sudama said, “Actually, You are merciful to that person who worships You, whether he is a *brahmana* or a dog eater, without regard for his birth or caste. Because of this You have granted all success to me, a garland maker, and the weaver.”

Text 48

*tāv ajñāpayataṁ bhṛtyāṁ,
kim ahaṁ karavāṇi vām,
puṁso 'ty-anugraho hy eṣa,
bhavadbhir yan niyujyate*

Please order me, Your servant, to do whatever You wish. To be engaged by You in some service is certainly a great blessing for anyone.

Text 49

*ity abhipretya rājendra,
sudāmā prīta-mānasah,
śastaiḥ su-gandhaiḥ kusumair,
mālā viracitā dadau*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O best of kings, having spoken these words, Sudāmā could understand what Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma wanted. Thus with great pleasure he presented Them with garlands of fresh, fragrant flowers.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O Sudama, do whatever you think is right. That is My order. It will be very good if you do that.” Sudama understood Kṛṣṇa’s command by realizing, “I must give Them garlands since I am a garland maker.” Then he gave an excellent, extremely fragrant garland, which was made of attractive, soft fresh flowers. The singular word *mālā* (garland) is used to indicate that though Sudama gave two garlands, one to each brother, he secretly gave one most beautiful garland to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 50

*tābhiḥ sv-alan̄kṛtau prītau,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau sahānugau,
praṇatāya prapannāya,
dadatur vara-dau varān*

Beautifully adorned with these garlands, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were delighted, and so were Their companions. The two Lords then offered the surrendered Sudāmā, who was bowing down before

Them, whatever benedictions he desired.

Text 51

*so 'pi vavre 'calām bhaktim,
tasminn evākhilātmani,
tad-bhaktesu ca sauhārdaṁ,
bhūtesu ca dayām parām*

Sudāmā chose unshakable devotion for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul of all existence; friendship with His devotees; and transcendental compassion for all living beings.

Text 52

*iti tasmai varam dattvā,
śriyam cānvaya-varhdhinīm,
balam āyur yaśaḥ kāntim,
nirjagāma sahāgrajaḥ*

Not only did Lord Kṛṣṇa grant Sudāmā these benedictions, but He also awarded him strength, long life, fame, beauty and ever-increasing prosperity for his family. Then Kṛṣṇa and His elder brother took Their leave.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa gave the garland maker strength, power, wealth and beauty though he did not desire them. This was a response to his enthusiastic desire to serve Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. Thus,

we understand, in all cases Kṛṣṇa is most affectionate to His devotees.

Chapter Forty-two: The Breaking of the Sacrificial Bow

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
atha vrajan rāja-pathena mādhabaḥ,
striyaṁ grhītāṅga-vilepa-bhājanām,
vilokya kubjām yuvatīm varānanām,
papraccha yāntīm prahasan rasa-pradaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As He walked down the King’s road, Lord Mādhava then saw a young hunchback woman with an attractive face, who carried a tray of fragrant ointments as she walked along. The bestower of the ecstasy of love smiled and inquired from her as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the curing of the hunchback Kubja, breaking the bow, the slaying of Kamsa’s soldiers, Kamsa’s seeing bad omens and the festivity at the wrestling arena. Kṛṣṇa is described as *rasa-pradaḥ*, the bestower of ecstatic mellows. To Kubja, Kṛṣṇa gave *madhurya-rasa* (conjugal love), to His comrades He gave *hasya-rasa* (laughter), and *adbhuta-rasa* (wonder) to the general public.

Kubja was carrying various body ointments such as sandalwood paste. This young hunchbacked girl was actually a partial expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s wife Satyabhāmā. Satyabhāmā is Kṛṣṇa’s internal energy known as Bhū-śakti, and this expansion of hers, known as Pṛthivī, represents the earth, which was bent down by the great burden of countless wicked rulers. Pṛthivī, a topmost devotee, showed her devotion by offering the essence of the earth element, fragrance,

represented by the sandalwood paste to Kṛṣṇa, whom she met on the road.

Accepting the sandalwood with great joy, Kṛṣṇa bestowed *madhurya-rasa* on her and said, “O My devotee earth! Know that the burdens caused by Kamsa and others have now been taken by Me. Therefore now you should stand up straight.” Comforting her in this way, Kṛṣṇa straightened out the blissful Kubja. Some *acaryas* explain the event in this way.

Text 2

*kā tvaṁ varorv etad u hānulepanaṁ,
kasyāṅgane vā kathayasva sādhu naḥ,
dehy āvayor aṅga-vilepam uttamaṁ,
śreyas tatas te na cirād bhaviṣyati*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Who are you, O beautiful-thighed one? Ah, ointment! Who is it for, My dear lady? Please tell Us truthfully. Give Us both some of your finest ointment and you will soon gain a great boon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa addressed Kubja in a joking mood, “O beautiful-thighed one” (*vara-ūru*), He also revealed His inner desire. Kṛṣṇa said, “Who are you? For whom is this ointment meant?”

Text 3

*sairandhry uvāca dāsya asmy ahaṁ sundara kaṁsa-sammataḥ,
trivakra-nāmā hy anulepa-karmaṇi,
mad-bhāvitam bhoja-pater ati-priyam,*

vinā yuvām ko 'nyatamas tad arhati

The maidservant replied: O handsome one, I am a servant of King Kāmsa, who highly regards me for the ointments I make. My name is Trivakrā. Who else but You two deserve my ointments, which the lord of the Bhojas likes so much?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because there is no other modifying word used with Kubja's statement "I am a servant" (*dāsy asmy aham*), "of Yours" is implied by Kṛṣṇa's proximity. The word "your" is not explicitly used because that would have been an untruth and also a disclosure of her feelings. Kubja hints at her conjugal desire for Kṛṣṇa alone by using the singular form of the word *sundara* (O handsome one!). However, she then used the dual form *yuvām*, "for both of You", to try to hide her conjugal sentiment.

Kubja was called Trivakra because her body was bent in three places: neck, chest and waist. The word *hi* (indeed) indicates that, "Because of my hunchback deformity Kamsa respects me only for my work of preparing body ointments, and nothing else." Kubja reveals her purity by this statement. Hence, she was not engaged in any bodily service or intimate relationship with Kamsa.

Text 4

*rūpa-peśala-mādhurya,
hasitālāpa-vīkṣitaiḥ,
dharṣitātmā dadau sāndram,
ubhayor anulepanam*

Her mind overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's beauty, charm, sweetness, smiles, words and glances, Trivakrā gave both Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma

generous amounts of ointment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa’s beauty (*rūpa*), charms (*pesala*) and sweetness, Kubja gave the ointment to Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.

Text 5

*tatas tāv aṅga-rāgeṇa,
sva-varṇetara-śobhinā,
samprāpta-para-bhāgeṇa,
śuśubhāte ’nurañjita*

Anointed with these most excellent cosmetics, which adorned Them with hues that contrasted with Their complexions, the two Lords appeared extremely beautiful.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama appeared splendid when Their complexions changed to match Their moods. Kṛṣṇa spread yellow ointment upon His body, and Balarāma blue ointment upon His. *Samprāpta-para-bhāgeṇa* means the cosmetics exhibited the highest excellence. By the logic of *bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*, we can understand that actually Kṛṣṇa’s ornaments are beautified by contacting His body, rather than the other way around.”

Text 6

*prasanno bhagavān kubjām,
trivakrām rucirānanām,
ṛjvīm kartum manaś cakre,
darśayan darśane phalam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa was pleased with Trivakrā, so He decided to straighten that hunchbacked girl with the lovely face just to demonstrate the result of seeing Him.

Text 7

*padbhyām ākramya prapade,
dry-aṅguly-uttāna-pāṇinā,
pragrhya cibuke 'dhyātmam,
udanīnamad acyutaḥ*

Pressing down on her toes with both His feet, Lord Acyuta placed one upward-pointing finger of each hand under her chin and straightened up her body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pressing down on the front of Kubja's feet with His two feet, Kṛṣṇa held her chin with two upward pointing fingers and pulled her body up.

Text 8

*sā tadarju-samānāṅgī,
bṛhac-chroṇi-payodharā,
mukunda-sparśanāt sadyo,
babhūva pramadottamā*

Simply by Lord Mukunda's touch, Trivakrā was suddenly

transformed into an exquisitely beautiful woman with straight, evenly proportioned limbs and large hips and breasts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Immediately Kubja was transformed into a beautiful woman with straight, even limbs, large hips and full breasts. “By the touch of Mukunda” (*mukunda-sparśanāt*) indicates that this was the primary reason.

Text 9

*tato rūpa-guṇaudārya-
samppannā prāha keśavam,
uttarīyāntam akṛṣya,
smayantī jāta-hṛc-chayā*

Now endowed with beauty, character and generosity Trivakrā began to feel lusty desires for Lord Keśava. Taking hold of the end of His upper cloth, she smiled and addressed Him as follows.

Text 10

*ehi vīra gṛhaṁ yāmo,
na tvām tyaktum ihotsahe,
tvayonmathita-cittāyāḥ,
prasīda puruṣarṣabha*

[Trivakrā said:] Come, O hero, let us go to my house. I cannot bear to leave You here. O best of males, please take pity on me, since You have agitated my mind.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kubja said, “Others are heroes in religiosity and other matters, but You are the hero in destroying the religiosity of women.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Is it for the purpose of dining that you’re inviting Me to your house?”

Kubja: “No, that is not my intention. I cannot tolerate leaving You”.

Kṛṣṇa: “But people here on the King’s road will misconstrue what you’re saying and laugh. Therefore please don’t speak like this.”

Trivakrā: “I can’t help being agitated. You made the mistake of touching me. It’s not my fault.”

Text 11

*evam striyā yācyamānaḥ,
kṛṣṇo rāmasya paśyataḥ,
mukhaṁ vīkṣyānu gopānām,
prahasāms tām uvāca ha*

Thus entreated by the woman, Lord Kṛṣṇa first glanced at the face of Balarāma, who was watching the incident, and then at the faces of the cowherd boys. Then with a laugh Kṛṣṇa replied to her as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Looking at Balarama’s face (*mukhaṁ vīkṣyānu*) means that Kṛṣṇa said with His eyes, “Hey Douji! Why aren’t You and all the boys laughing? Can’t You see that this is not a woman but *hasya-rasa* (laughter) personified, who knowing You to be in a funny mood has come to see You.” Or else Kṛṣṇa is saying, “This is the sum total of laughter within the city of Mathura making itself known here.”

Text 12

*eṣyāmi te grhaṁ su-bhru,
puṁsām ādhi-vikarśanam,
sādhitārtho 'grhāṇām naḥ,
pānthānām tvaṁ parāyaṇam*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O lady with beautiful eyebrows, as soon as I fulfill My purpose I will certainly visit your house, where men can relieve their anxiety. Indeed, you are the best refuge for Us homeless travelers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa then spoke, conveying to Kubja that He was accepting her, and conveying to Balarama and others that He was evading a worldly woman. Kṛṣṇa said, “O beautiful woman, by visiting your house all men can get relief from their anxieties.” Kṛṣṇa spoke of all men to joke with her. “After doing My work of killing Kamsa, I will certainly come to your house.” In this way Kṛṣṇa indicated the time that He would come. “You are the supreme shelter of Us (*naḥ*) unmarried men.” Kṛṣṇa, though one person, used the plural (*naḥ*) to create respect for Himself as a prince in Kubja’s mind. By saying “We are travelers” (*pānthānām*) Kṛṣṇa implies, “In My village of Vṛndavana there are many affectionate Vraja-gopis who have deep love for Me. But I don’t know any one in this Mathura city. You are the only lady I have met who is attracted to Me.” Thus Kṛṣṇa hints that He is attracted to Kubja. By describing Kubja as “one who relieves men of distress” (*ādhi-vikarśanam*), and by using the plural form of travelers (*pānthānām*), Kṛṣṇa deludes Balarama and *gopas*, so that they will think He is insulting and putting off this ignorant lady, and not actually accepting Kubja’s advances.

Text 13

*visrjya mādhyā vāṅyā tām,
vrajan mārge vaṅik-pathaiḥ,
nānopāyana-tāmbūla-
srag-gandhaiḥ sāgrajo 'rcitaiḥ*

Leaving her with these sweet words, Lord Kṛṣṇa walked further down the road. The merchants along the way worshiped Him and His elder brother by presenting Them with various respectful offerings, including pān, garlands and fragrant substances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sent Kubja away with sweet words (*mādhyā vāṅyā*). The merchants along the road worshiped Kṛṣṇa with various articles.

Text 14

*tad-darśana-smara-kṣobhād,
ātmānam nāvidan striyaḥ,
visrasta-vāsaḥ-kavara,
valayā lekhyā-mūrtayaḥ*

The sight of Kṛṣṇa aroused Cupid in the hearts of the city women. Thus agitated, they forgot themselves. Their clothes, braids and bangles became disheveled, and they stood as still as figures in a painting.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wives of the Mathura merchants were the most advanced devotees in the city because they immediately experienced symptoms of conjugal attraction when they saw Kṛṣṇa,

which usually develop after some time and association with the object of love. Theirs was “love at first sight.”

The ten effects of Cupid are described as follows: First comes attraction expressed through the eyes (*cakṣū-rāgaḥ prathamam*), then intense attachment in the mind and heart (*cittāsaṅgas tato*), then determination (*saṅkalpaḥ*), loss of sleep (*nidrā-cchedas*), becoming emaciated (*tanutā*), disinterest in external things (*viṣaya-nivṛttis*), shamelessness (*trapā-nasaḥ*), madness (*unmādo*), becoming stunned (*mūrcchā*) and death (*mṛtir*). These are the ten stages of Cupid’s effects (*smara-daśā daśaiva syuḥ*).

Though these symptoms generally appear in stages, at this time they manifested all at once by seeing the gorgeous body of Kṛṣṇa. The phrase *ātmānam nāvidan striyaḥ* means that the Mathura ladies forgot who they were, where they were and what they were doing. Because of the impulse of Cupid they became thin, and thus the bangles and clothing slipped from their bodies. They were trembling, stretching their limbs, and finally rolling on the ground, which loosened their locks of hair. These are all signs of madness (*unmada*), the eighth effect of Cupid. Standing like painted pictures indicates loss of consciousness, the ninth stage of Cupid’s effects. Because the tenth state of Cupid, death, is inauspicious in relation to Kṛṣṇa, it does not usually manifest in Kṛṣṇa’s *premi-bhaktas*. However, they do manifest the other nine symptoms, culminating in becoming stunned in ecstasy.

Text 15

*tataḥ paurān pṛcchamāno,
dhanuṣaḥ sthānam acyutaḥ,
tasmin praviṣṭo dadṛśe,
dhanur aindram ivādbhutam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then asked the local people where the arena was in

which the bow sacrifice would take place. When He went there He saw the amazing bow, which resembled Lord Indra's.

Text 16

*puruṣair bahubhir guptam,
arcitaṁ paramarddhimat,
vāryamāṇo nṛbhiḥ kṛṣṇaḥ,
prasahya dhanur ādade*

That most opulent bow was guarded by a large company of men, who were respectfully worshipping it. Kṛṣṇa pushed His way forward and, despite the guards' attempts to stop Him, picked it up.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa took the bow with great force (*prasahya*).

Text 17

*kareṇa vāmena sa-līlam uddhṛtaṁ,
sajyaṁ ca kṛtvā nimiṣeṇa paśyatām,
nṛṇām vikṛṣya prababhañja madhyato,
yathekṣu-danḍaṁ mada-kary urukramaḥ*

Easily lifting the bow with His left hand, Lord Urukrama strung it in a fraction of a second as the King's guards looked on. He then powerfully pulled the string and snapped the bow in half, just as an excited elephant might break a stalk of sugar cane.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In front of the onlookers Kṛṣṇa playfully broke the bow, as if calling out to them, “O people, your king was worshiping this famous bow. But just by the touch of My hand it has broken, as if eaten away by termites.”

Text 18

*dhanuṣo bhajyamānasya,
śabdaḥ khaṁ rodasī diśaḥ,
pūrayām āsa yaṁ śrutvā,
kaṁsas trāsam upāgamat*

The sound of the bow’s breaking filled the earth and sky in all directions. Upon hearing it, Kaṁsa was struck with terror.

Text 19

*tad-rakṣiṇaḥ sānucaraṁ,
kupitā ātatāyinaḥ,
grhītu-kāmā āvavrur,
grhyatām vadhyatām iti*

The enraged guards then took up their weapons and, wanting to seize Kṛṣṇa and His companions, surrounded them and shouted, “Grab Him! Kill Him!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Wanting to catch Kṛṣṇa and His friends, the guards surrounded Him saying, “Kill Him! Kill Him!” However the same words can mean, “Men like us should be killed.”

Text 20

*atha tān durabhiprāyān,
vilokya bala-keśavau,
kruddhau dhanvana ādāya,
śakale tāmś ca jaghnatuḥ*

Seeing the guards coming upon Them with evil intent, Balarāma and Keśava took up the two halves of the bow and began striking them down.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking the two broken pieces of the bow, Balarama and Kesava killed the guards.

Text 21

*balaṁ ca kaṁsa-prahitaṁ,
hatvā śālā-mukhāt tataḥ,
niṣkramya ceratur hr̥ṣṭau,
nirīkṣya pura-sampadaḥ*

After also killing a contingent of soldiers sent by Kaṁsa, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma left the sacrificial arena by its main gate and continued Their walk about the city, happily looking at the opulent sights.

Text 22

*tayos tad adbhutam vīryam,
niśāmya pura-vāsinah,
tejah prāgalbhyam rūpaṁ ca,
menire vibudhottamau*

Having witnessed the amazing deed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed, and seeing Their strength, boldness and beauty, the people of the city thought They must be two prominent demigods.

Text 23

*tayor vicaratoḥ svairam,
ādityo 'stam upeyivān,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau vṛtau gopaiḥ,
purāc chakaṭam tīyatuḥ*

As They strolled about at will, the sun began to set, so They left the city with the cowherd boys and returned to the cowherds' wagon encampment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Chakaṭam: śakaṭam is the place known as Sriakaṭāvamocana, on the outskirts of Mathura, where Nanda Maharaja was staying.

Text 24

*gopyo mukunda-vigame virahāturā yā,
āśāsataśiṣa ṛtā madhu-pury abhūvan,
sampaśyatām puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa-gātra-lakṣmīm,*

hitvetarān nu bhajataś cakame 'yanam śrīḥ

At the time of Mukunda's [Kṛṣṇa's] departure from Vṛndāvana, the gopīs had foretold that the residents of Mathurā would enjoy many benedictions, and now the gopīs' predictions were coming true, for those residents were gazing upon the beauty of Kṛṣṇa, the jewel among men. Indeed, the goddess of fortune desired the shelter of that beauty so much that she abandoned many other men, although they worshiped her.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa left Vraja for Mathura, the *gopīs* predicted, "It will be an auspicious morning for the women of Mathura, but a morning filled with sorrow for us. The blessings of their priests have borne fruit, and the blessings of ours have failed. When Kṛṣṇa enters the city they will taste with their glances the sweetness of His moon-like face and His sweet smiles."

Sukadeva Gosvami, being of the same emotional state as the *gopīs*, was overcome with sorrow due to remembrance of their separation from Kṛṣṇa, so he reminded Pariksit of the *gopīs*' previous condition by describing it again in this verse. When Kṛṣṇa was leaving for Mathura, the *gopīs* gave the following blessing: "Today the women of Mathura will enjoy the highest happiness that we should enjoy. Now that has come true, as the women of Mathura gaze at Kṛṣṇa's gorgeous body." How could this not come true?

The word *śrīḥ* refers to all the beauty in the three worlds, and to the presiding deity of all beauty. Desiring the shelter of the beauty of those limbs in order to make herself more beautiful, since Kṛṣṇa's limbs are the ornament of all ornaments (*bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*), the goddess of all beauty of the three worlds gave up all other men, although they worshiped her. The incredible beauty of Kṛṣṇa's body is characterized by the word *ayanam*, which means the shelter of all beauty, both mundane and transcendental.

Text 25

*avaniktāṅghri-yugalau,
bhuktvā kṣīropasecanam,
ūṣatus tām sukham rātrim,
jñātvā kāmśa-cikīrṣitam*

After Kṛṣṇa’s and Balarāma’s feet were bathed, the two Lords ate rice with milk. Then, although knowing what Kāmśa intended to do, They spent the night there comfortably.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After having Their feet washed by some servants, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama ate rice sprinkled with milk. The milk came from some of Kṛṣṇa’s favorite cows in Vraja with one-year old calves, which mother Yasoda had placed on top of the wagon in a pot meant for the sacrificial fire. Because They were fearless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama slept soundly, though knowing that the next day Kāmśa wanted to kill Them. Due to being fast asleep, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama did not hear the words of Their father, Nanda Maharaja, who could not sleep the entire night due to fear.

Nanda Maharaja said, “O my children what have You foolishly done today? Why did You break the bow they were worshiping and then kill the guards? I do not know what angry Kāmśa will do tomorrow. Alas, alas, why have I brought these two young boys here from the cowherd village?”

Texts 26–27

*kāmśas tu dhanuṣo bhaṅgam,
rakṣiṇām sva-balasya ca,
vadham niśamya govinda,*

*rāma-vikr̥ḍitam param,
dīrgha-prajāgaro bhīto,
durnimittāni durmatih,
bahūny acaṣṭobhayathā,
mrtyor dautya-karāṇi ca*

Wicked King Kamsa, on the other hand, was terrified, having heard how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had broken the bow and killed his guards and soldiers, all simply as a game. He remained awake for a long time, and both while awake and while dreaming he saw many bad omens, messengers of death.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After hearing that the killing of his guards and troops was merely the sport of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama and not any display of prowess, Kamsa saw many signs like messengers of his impending death both while waking and sleeping,

Texts 28–31

*adarśanam sva-śirasaḥ,
pratirūpe ca saty api,
asaty api dvitīye ca,
dvai-rūpyam jyotiṣām tathā,
chidra-pratītiś chāyāyām,
prāṇa-ghoṣānupaśrutih,
svarṇa-pratītir vṛkṣeṣu,
svapne preta-pariṣvaṅgaḥ,
khara-yānam viśādanam,
yāyān nalada-māly ekas,
tailābhyakto dig-ambaraḥ,
anyāni cettham-bhūtāni,*

*svapna-jāgaritāni ca,
paśyan maraṇa-santrasto,
nidrām lebhe na cintayā*

When he looked at his reflection he could not see his head; for no reason the moon and stars appeared double; he saw a hole in his shadow; he could not hear the sound of his life air; trees seemed covered with a golden hue; and he could not see his footprints. He dreamt that he was being embraced by ghosts, riding a donkey and drinking poison, and also that a naked man smeared with oil was passing by wearing a garland of nalada flowers. Seeing these and other such omens both while dreaming and while awake, Kamsa was terrified by the prospect of death, and out of anxiety he could not sleep.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The inauspicious omens are explained in three verses. Though Kamsa saw his reflection in the mirror, the reflection was headless. The moon and other planets appeared double for no apparent reason. There were holes in his shadow. He could not hear his heart beat (*prāṇa-ghoṣā*) when covering his ears with his palms, nor see his footprints in the dust or mud. Trees appeared golden in color. These omens were perceived in Kamsa's waking state. Kamsa saw these omens in his dreams: ghosts embracing him, riding a donkey, drinking poison and a naked man covered in oil passing by wearing a garland of *java* flowers. In this way Kamsa saw many astonishing things both in waking and sleeping states.

Text 32

*vyuṣṭāyām niśi kauravya,
sūrye cādbhyaḥ samutthite,
kārayām āsa vai kamsa,*

When the night had finally passed and the sun rose up again from the water, Kamsa set about arranging for the grand wrestling festival.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “When the night broke and the sun rose from the water” refers to a Vedic verse: *ya udagān mahato ‘rṇavād, vibhrajamānaḥ salilasya madhyāt, samā vṛṣabho lohitākṣaḥ, sūryo vipaścin manasā punātu,* “May the red-eyed, most excellent, omniscient sun, rising up from the great ocean, purify the universe.”

Text 33

*ānarcuḥ puruṣā raṅgam,
tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire,
mañcāś cālankṛtāḥ sragbhiḥ,
patākā-caila-toraṇaiḥ*

The King’s men performed the ritual worship of the wrestling arena, sounded their drums and other instruments and decorated the viewing galleries with garlands, flags, ribbons and arches.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa’s servants (puruṣā) decorated the arena with auspicious pots and other things. They began to beat the drums with sticks.

Text 34

teṣu paurā jānapadā,

*brahma-kṣatra-purogamāḥ,
yathopajoṣaṁ viviśū,
rājānaś ca kṛtāsanāḥ*

The city-dwellers and residents of the outlying districts, led by brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas, came and sat down comfortably in the galleries. The royal guests received special seats.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The guests sat down comfortably (*yathā-upajoṣam*).

Text 35

*kaṁsaḥ parivrto 'mātyai,
rāja-mañca upāviśat,
maṇḍaleśvara-madhya-stho,
hrdayena vidūyatā*

Surrounded by his ministers, Kamsa took his seat on the imperial dais. But even as he sat amidst his various provincial rulers, his heart trembled.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kamsa sat down his heart trembled (*vidūyatā*).

Text 36

*vādyamānesu tūryeṣu,
malla-tālottareṣu ca,
mallāḥ sv-alāṅkṛtāḥ drptāḥ,*

sopādhyāyāḥ samāsata

While the musical instruments loudly played in the rhythmic meters appropriate for wrestling matches, the lavishly ornamented wrestlers proudly entered the arena with their coaches and sat down.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The instruments played music in rhythms suitable for a wrestling match.

Text 37

*cāṇūro muṣṭikaḥ kūṭaḥ,
śālas tośāla eva ca,
ta āsedur upasthānam,
valgu-vādyā-praharṣitāḥ*

Enthused by the pleasing music, Canura, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śāla and Tośāla sat down on the wrestling mat.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wrestlers sat down on the mat in the wrestling ring (*upasthānam*).

Text 38

*nanda-gopādayo gopā,
bhoja-rāja-samāhutāḥ,
niveditopāyanās ta,
ekasmin mañca āviśan*

Nanda Mahārāja and the other cowherds, summoned by the King of the Bhojas, presented him with their offerings and then took their seats in one of the galleries.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *samāhutāḥ* indicates that King Kāṁsa respectfully called Nanda Maharaja and the leaders of Vraja forward so that they could make their offerings to the central government.

Kāṁsa assured Nanda as follows: “My dear King of Vraja, you are the most important of my village rulers. Yet even though you have come to Mathurā from your cowherd village, you have not come to visit me. Is that because you are frightened? Don’t think that your two sons are bad because They broke the bow. I invited Them here because I heard They were extremely powerful, and I’ve arranged this wrestling match as a test of Their strength. Please come forward without hesitation. Don’t be afraid.”

Nanda Mahārāja noticed his two sons were not present. Apparently, out of disrespect for King Kāṁsa’s order, They had taken the morning off and gone elsewhere. Thus Kāṁsa delegated some cowherd men, who were affectionate close relatives, to go look for Kṛṣṇa and Balarama and advise Them to behave properly and come back to the wrestling arena. Upananda and others quickly came forward and offered yogurt, ghee, cloth and gold coins to King Kamsa. Not seeing any space on the platform of the King, Nanda and the other cowherd men sat in the galleries.

Chapter Forty-three: Kṛṣṇa Kills the Elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
atha kṛṣṇas ca rāmas ca,
kṛta-śaucāu parantapa,
malla-dundubhi-nirghoṣam,
śrutvā draṣṭum upeyatuh*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O chastiser of enemies, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, having executed all necessary purification, then heard the kettledrums resounding at the wrestling arena, and They went there to see what was happening.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa’s killing of the king of elephants; His causing a downpour of sweetness and opulence when He entered the wrestling arena; and His discussion with the wrestler Canura.

Atha (next) signifies that early in the morning Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, without telling their father and elders, went to the bank of the Yamuna with Their friends. Before washing Their faces and hands they said, “O friends! Listen to the drums announcing the wrestling match. Let us now leave here and go to the arena.” Then everyone quickly went to see the wrestling match.

Text 2

raṅga-dvāraṁ samāsādyā,

*tasmin nāgam avasthitam,
apaśyat kuvalayāpīḍam,
kṛṣṇo 'mbaṣṭha-pracoditam*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa reached the entrance to the arena, He saw the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa blocking His way at the urging of his keeper.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa saw the elephant Kuvalayapida, being instigated by his trainer.

Text 3

*baddhvā parikaram śauriḥ,
samuhya kuṭilālakān,
uvāca hastipam vācā,
megha-nāda-gabhīrayā*

Securely binding up His clothes and tying back His curly locks, Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the elephant-keeper with words as grave as the rumbling of a cloud.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa took off His shirt, tightened His belt, and placed the garlands and other dangling objects over His shoulder. He tucked His curly locks under His turban with His fingers. But fearing that they would become loose at the time of combat, Kṛṣṇa tied back His hair with His upper cloth.

Text 4

*ambaṣṭhāmbaṣṭha mārgam nau,
dehy apakrama mā cīram,
no cet sa-kuñjaram tvādya,
nayāmi yama-sādanam*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said: O driver, driver, move aside at once and let Us pass! If you don't, this very day I will send both you and your elephant to the abode of Yamarāja!]

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I will send you to the abode of Yama (*yama sādhanam*).” The phrase *yama sādhanam* also indicates liberation because it is attained (*sādyate:prāpyate*) by *yama* (control of the mind).

Text 5

*evam nirbhartsito 'mbaṣṭhaḥ,
kupitaḥ kopitaḥ gajam,
codayām āsa kṛṣṇāya,
kālāntaka-yamopamam*

Thus threatened, the elephant-keeper became angry. He goaded his furious elephant, who appeared equal to time, death and Yamarāja, into attacking Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He instigated the elephant to catch Kṛṣṇa. The elephant is described as being like Yamaraja, who brings an end to one's life through the force of time (*kalantaka*). However Kṛṣṇa is the master of time, which is stronger than the elephant. Thus the elephant and his trainer could do no harm to Kṛṣṇa. By using

this phrase, *kālāntaka-yamopamam* “comparable to time, death and Yamarāja” Sukadeva was comforting fearful Parikṣit.

Text 6

*karīndras tam abhidrutya,
kareṇa tarasāgrahīt,
karād vigalitaḥ so ’mum,
nihatyāṅghriṣv alīyata*

The lord of the elephants charged Kṛṣṇa and violently seized Him with his trunk. But Kṛṣṇa slipped away, struck him a blow and disappeared from his view among his legs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Using its trunk the elephant seized the waist of Kṛṣṇa, who was standing there fearlessly. Kṛṣṇa struck the elephant on his trunk with His left fist. As the elephant lost control from that punch, Kṛṣṇa slipped out from his grasp and disappeared between his four legs, which were as big as pillars.

The word *aṅghriṣu* (among his legs) can be explained as follows: First Kṛṣṇa hid behind one leg, and when the elephant used his sense of smell to detect Him, Kṛṣṇa would hide behind another leg. In this way playful Kṛṣṇa cheated the elephant in many ways and showed the public His remarkable daring.

Text 7

*saṅkruddhas tam acakṣāṇo,
ghrāṇa-dṛṣṭiḥ sa keśavam,
parāmrṣat puṣkareṇa,
sa prasahya vinirgataḥ*

Infuriated at being unable to see Lord Keśava, the elephant sought Him out with his sense of smell. Once again Kuvalayāpīḍa seized the Lord with the end of his trunk, only to have the Lord forcefully free Himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Not being able to see Kṛṣṇa, the elephant detected Him with his sense of smell and seized Kṛṣṇa with his trunk once again. With a desire to display His feats to the public and to encourage the beast to keep fighting, Kṛṣṇa allowed Himself to be seized by the elephant’s trunk. When the elephant thought he was successful, Kṛṣṇa forcefully freed Himself saying, “So, you want to show your strength?”

Text 8

*pucche pragṛhyāti-balaṁ,
dhanuṣaḥ pañca-vimśatim,
vicakarṣa yathā nāgaṁ,
suparṇa iva līlayā*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then grabbed the powerful Kuvalayāpīḍa by the tail and playfully dragged him twenty-five bow-lengths as easily as Garuḍa might drag a snake.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa dragged the elephant twenty-five bow lengths [125 feet] or one hundred hand widths distant by his tail. The elephant could not stop this.

Text 9

*sa paryāvartamānena,
savya-dakṣiṇato 'cyutaḥ,
babhrāma bhrāmyamāṇena,
go-vatseneva bālakaḥ*

As Lord Acyuta held on to the elephant's tail, the animal tried to twist away to the left and to the right, making the Lord swerve in the opposite direction, as a young boy would swerve when pulling a calf by the tail.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to encourage the elephant to fight, Kṛṣṇa slightly slackened the force of His pulling. When the elephant regained strength he would turn to the left in order to catch Kṛṣṇa, who was holding his tail. Kṛṣṇa would then move to the right. When the elephant would turn to the right, then Kṛṣṇa would go the left, just as a strong boy is moved about while clutching the tail of a calf.

Text 10

*tato 'bhimakham abhyetya,
pāṇināhatya vāraṇam,
prādravan pātayām āsa,
sprṣyamānaḥ pade pade*

Kṛṣṇa then came face to face with the elephant and slapped him and ran away. Kuvalayāpīḍa pursued the Lord, managing to touch Him again and again with each step, but Kṛṣṇa outmaneuvered the elephant and made him trip and fall.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to play in a different way,

Kṛṣṇa let go of the elephant's tail. Kṛṣṇa then struck the elephant lightly with His hand. If Kṛṣṇa had given him a proper blow it would have killed him immediately and ended the game. After striking the elephant Kṛṣṇa quickly ran away without any effort, but then reduced His speed to encourage the elephant. When the elephant began to touch Him, Kṛṣṇa stumbled as if tired of running to make the elephant fall on the ground.

Text 11

*sa dhāvan kṛīdayā bhūmau,
pativā sahasotthitaḥ,
tam matvā patitaṁ kruddho,
dantābhyām so 'hanat kṣitim*

As Kṛṣṇa dodged about, He playfully fell on the ground and quickly got up again. The raging elephant, thinking Kṛṣṇa was down, tried to gore Him with his tusks but struck the earth instead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To make the elephant forcefully strike the hard stone on the ground, Kṛṣṇa pretended to fall on the ground and slowly rise up. Seeing Kṛṣṇa on the ground, the elephant became determined to kill Him. The elephant fell on his knees and dug the earth with his tusks. At the very fraction of a moment the elephant was hurling his tusks, Kṛṣṇa got up and ran to another spot.

Text 12

*sva-vikrame pratihate,
kuñjarendro 'ty-amarṣitaḥ,
codyamāno mahāmātraih,*

kṛṣṇam abhyadravad ruṣā

His prowess foiled, the lordly elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa went into a frenzied rage out of frustration. But the elephant-keepers goaded him on, and he furiously charged Kṛṣṇa once again.

Text 13

*tam āpatantam āsāḍya,
bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ,
nigrhya pāṇinā hastaṁ,
pātayām āsa bhū-tale*

The Supreme Lord, killer of the demon Madhu, confronted the elephant as he attacked. Seizing his trunk with one hand, Kṛṣṇa threw him to the ground.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Noticing that time was passing, Kṛṣṇa concluded His sporting with Kuvalayapida. Kṛṣṇa nonchalantly caught the elephant's trunk with His left hand.

Text 14

*patitasya padākramya,
mṛgendra iva līlayā,
dantam utpātya tenebhaṁ,
hastipāṁś cāhanad dhariḥ*

Lord Hari then climbed onto the elephant with the ease of a mighty lion, pulled out a tusk, and with it killed the beast and his keepers.

Text 15

*mṛtakam dvīpam utsrjya,
danta-pāṇiḥ samāviśat,
aṁsa-nyasta-viśāṇo 'srñ,
mada-bindubhir ankitah,
virūḍha-sveda-kaṇikā,
vadanāmburuho babhau*

Leaving the dead elephant aside, Lord Kṛṣṇa held on to the tusk and entered the wrestling arena. With the tusk resting on His shoulder, drops of the elephant's blood and sweat sprinkled all over Him, and His lotus face covered with fine drops of His own perspiration, the Lord shone with great beauty.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With the elephant's tusk perched on His shoulder (*aṁsa-nyasta-viśāṇo*), fine particles of perspiration like drops of dew on His lotus face, and the drops of blood and ichor from the elephant, Kṛṣṇa's body glistened with beauty and appeared as the epitome of *vira-rasa* (chivalry or heroism).

Text 16

*vṛtau gopaiḥ katipayair,
baladeva-janārdanau,
raṅgam viviśatū rājan,
gaja-danta-varāyudhau*

My dear King, Lord Baladeva and Lord Janārdana, each carrying one of the elephant's tusks as His chosen weapon, entered the arena with several cowherd boys.

Text 17

*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān,
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām sāstā sva-pitroḥ śiśuḥ,
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virād aviduṣām tattvaṁ paraṁ yoginām,
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ*

The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lightning bolt, the men of Mathurā as the best of males, the women as Cupid in person, the cowherd men as their relative, the impious rulers as a chastiser, His parents as their child, the King of the Bhojas as death, the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form, the yogīs as the Absolute Truth and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse shows that Kṛṣṇa is the personified essential purport of all the *Upanisads*. Kṛṣṇa, who is declared in the *Sṛuti* to be the great original form of all *rasa* (*mahā-rasa-svarūpa*), manifested Himself within the wrestling arena to the different types of people present in accordance with their particular mentalities.

In front of the wrestlers like Canura, who had bodies as big as mountains, Kṛṣṇa was like a thunderbolt. Though Kṛṣṇa has tender, cool and gentle limbs, He appeared to the envious wrestlers to be extremely

hard like a mountain with harsh, pain-inflicting limbs. Though sugar candy is sweet, it tastes bitter to one with jaundice. Though Kṛṣṇa's form was seen by the wrestlers and other similarly inclined spectators, they did not taste the real form (*rasa-svarūpa*) of the Lord, but rather experienced *rasābhāsa* in their hearts.

For the men of Mathura, who were non-envious from their very birth, and endowed with a generalized mood of pure love, Kṛṣṇa appeared as the best of men, possessing the most excellent qualities, and performing the most amazing and extraordinary pastimes. Because the minds of these men were situated in pure goodness they appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity as the best of males, and thus they relished the mellow of astonishment (*vismaya-rasa*).

The young women of Mathura, who were without any trace of material lust and full of *prema*, appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity as the original Cupid. Therefore, within their hearts Kṛṣṇa manifested the mood of conjugal affection (*ujjala-rasa*). By the use of the word *mūrtimān* (incarnation or embodiment) as a modifying adjective for *smaraḥ* (Cupid), it indicates that all other realizations are limbs or expansions of this particular *svarūpa* (Kṛṣṇa's form as the transcendental Cupid, Kamadeva).

The cowherd boys appreciated Kṛṣṇa's true identity (*svarūpa*) as their intimate friend. Thus among them He manifested the moods of friendship (*sakhya-rasa*) and the mellow of humor (*hāsya-rasa*). The impious kings, who were burdening the earth and offending the Lord's devotees, saw Kṛṣṇa as their destroyer. But since being the destroyer is not the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa, who is the well-wisher of all and the reservoir of unlimited pleasure, persons like the wrestlers could not appreciate Kṛṣṇa's true identity. Among them Kṛṣṇa manifested (*rasābhāsa*) in the mood of anger (*raudra-rasa*).

For His parents, Nanda and Vasudeva, or else Vasudeva and Devaki, Kṛṣṇa appeared as a baby, indicating that they appreciated His *svarūpa*, since being the son of Nanda and Vasudeva are both His true identity. Thus they experienced the mood of parental love (*vātsalya-rasa*) and also the mood of compassion (*karuṇa-rasa*) because they saw that there

were persons present who wanted to hurt Kṛṣṇa.

Kamsa, the King of the Bhojas, saw Kṛṣṇa as death. Kṛṣṇa, who is a stream of sweet, intoxicating nectar, does not have a *svarupa* of death. Thus Kamsa did not really taste Kṛṣṇa, but simply got a dim reflection of transcendental taste (*abhāsa*) in the mood of fright (*bhayānaka-rasa*).

To Kamsa's ignorant priests and other offenders Kṛṣṇa appeared as an ordinary mundane person. Such bewildered persons said, "Just see! What sort of Supreme Lord is this that steals others' wives and slaughters cows and other innocent creatures? Indeed, even now His limbs are contaminated with the bones and blood of some living being, which is wicked even for ordinary men. Thus Kṛṣṇa is most repulsive to look at." Since such extremely sinful blasphemers, who were unintelligent and more fallen than demons like Kamsa, had no attraction for Kṛṣṇa, their mood was a *rasābhāsa* of ghastliness (*vībhatsa-rasa*). For the *yogis*, such as Sanaka, Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme Truth in person, the Parambrahma, which means that they did not appreciate Kṛṣṇa's true identity. In them, Kṛṣṇa manifested the mellow of neutrality (*sānta-rasa*). The members of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty saw Kṛṣṇa as their most worshipable Supreme Lord. They tasted His *svarupa* in the mood of servitude (*dāsya-rasa*).

Among the ten types of people described in the arena, four, being inimical to Kṛṣṇa, were unable to appreciate the transcendental moods of relationship with Him and thus could not taste the real *rasa* of Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of all *rasa*. The other six classes of persons relished eight *rasas*. The *Upanisads* say, *raso vai saḥ rasaḥ hy āyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati*: "The Supreme Lord is the very form of *rasa*. Having tasted that *rasa* or most astonishing bliss, the living entity becomes completely blissful." It is confirmed here in the Tenth Canto's description of Kamsa's wrestling match that Kṛṣṇa is that *rasa* (*raso vai saḥ*). The above statement on *rasa* from the *Upanisads* means that though a person may be blissful, if he attains Kṛṣṇa (*tam labdhva*), who is *rasa* personified, he then becomes completely full of bliss (*ananda-bhavati*).

Text 18

*hatam kuvalayāpīḍam,
dṛṣṭvā tāv api durjayau,
kaṁso manasy api tadā,
bhṛśam udvivije nṛpa*

When Kāṁsa saw that Kuvalayāpīḍa was dead and the two brothers were invincible, he was overwhelmed with anxiety, O King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Manasy api* means “even though Kāṁsa was a great hero”. Or else, before Kāṁsa was disturbed with anxiety, and now he became completely overtaken by anxiety.

Text 19

*tau rejatū raṅga-gatau mahā-bhujau,
vicitra-veśābharaṇa-srag-ambarau,
yathā naṭāv uttama-veśa-dhāriṇau,
manaḥ kṣipantau prabhayā nirīkṣatām*

Arrayed with variegated ornaments, garlands and garments, just like a pair of excellently costumed actors, the two mighty-armed Lords shone splendidly in the arena. Indeed, They overpowered the minds of all onlookers with Their effulgences.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama touched (*kṣipantau:sprṣantau*) the minds of those who were looking at Them.

Text 20

*nirīkṣya tāv uttama-pūruṣau janā,
mañca-sthitā nāgara-rāṣṭrakā nṛpa,
praharṣa-vegotkalitekṣaṇānanāḥ,
papur na trptā nayanais tad-ānanam*

O King, as the citizens of the city and the people from outlying districts gazed upon those two Supreme Personalities from their seats in the galleries, the force of the people’s happiness caused their eyes to open wide and their faces to blossom. They drank in the vision of the Lords’ faces without becoming satiated.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The eyes of the people in the galleries opened like lotuses blossoming at sunrise, to drink the sweetness of the faces of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.

Texts 21–22

*pibanta iva cakṣurbhyām,
lihanta iva jihvayā,
jighranta iva nāsābhyām,
śliṣyanta iva bāhubhiḥ,
ūcuḥ parasparam te vai,
yathā-dṛṣṭam yathā-śrutam,
tad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhurya,
prāgalbhya-smāritā iva*

The people seemed to be drinking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with their

eyes, licking Them with their tongues, smelling Them with their nostrils and embracing Them with their arms. Reminded of the Lords' beauty, character, charm and bravery, the members of the audience began describing these features to one another according to what they had seen and heard.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how the Mathura-vasis relished the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. With wide-open eyes they looked, with thirsty tongues they tasted, with flared nostrils they smelled, and with open arms they embraced Sri Kṛṣṇa. They began to speak about what they had seen (breaking the bow) and heard (lifting Govardhana Hill), but not in any chronological order. Kṛṣṇa's body was very attractive with His bluish-black color mixed with red blood and the elephant tusk in His hand. They remembered Kṛṣṇa's qualities of heroism, the varieties of His sweetness such as His laughter and sidelong glances, and His boldness in breaking the bow without hesitation. Having seen or heard these things, they tried to remember them (*smāritāḥ iva*), though they were not qualified, and to talk about them.

Text 23

*etau bhagavataḥ sāksād,
dharer nārāyaṇasya hi,
avatīrṇāv ihāṁśena,
vasudevasya veśmani*

[The people said:] These two boys are certainly expansions of the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa who have descended to this world in the home of Vasudeva.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For the audience, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama

appeared to be plenary expansions (*āśīṣena*) of Narayana.

Text 24

*eṣa vai kila devakyām,
jāto nītaś ca gokulam,
kālam etaṁ vasan gūḍho,
vavṛdhe nanda-veśmani*

This one [Kṛṣṇa] took birth from mother Devakī and was brought to Gokula, where He has remained concealed all this time, growing up in the house of King Nanda.

Text 25

*pūtanānena nītāntaṁ,
cakravātaś ca dānavah,
arjunau guhyakah keśī,
dhenuko 'nye ca tad-vidhāḥ*

He made Pū tanā and the whirlwind demon meet with death, pulled down the twin Arjuna trees and killed Śaṅkhacū ḍa, Keśī, Dhenuka and similar demons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa killed many demons such as Sankhacuda (*guhyaka*).

*gāvaḥ sa-pālā etena,
dāvāgneḥ parimocitāḥ,
kāliyo damitaḥ sarpa,
indraś ca vimadaḥ kṛtaḥ,
saptāham eka-hastena,
dhr̥to 'dri-pravaro 'munā,
varṣa-vātāśanibhyaś ca,
paritrātām ca gokulam*

He saved the cows and the cowherds from a forest fire and subdued the serpent Kāliya. He removed Lord Indra's false pride by holding up the best of mountains with one hand for an entire week, thus protecting the inhabitants of Gokula from rain, wind and hail.

Text 28

*gopyo 'sya nitya-mudita-
hasita-prekṣaṇam mukham,
paśyantyo vividhāms tāpāms,
taranti smāśramam mudā*

The gopīs overcame all kinds of distress and experienced great happiness by seeing His face, which is always cheerful with smiling glances and ever free of fatigue.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because of seeing Kṛṣṇa's face, the *gopis* were easily able to surpass the obstacles and scolding of their husbands, mothers-in-law and other relatives.

Text 29

*vadanty anena vaṁśo 'yaṁ,
yadoḥ su-bahu-viśrutah,
śriyaṁ yaśo mahatvaṁ ca,
lapsyate parirakṣitah*

It is said that under His full protection the Yadu dynasty will become extremely famous and attain wealth, glory and power.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The learned have said that the Yadu family, being protected by Kṛṣṇa, will attain great power and wealth.

Text 30

*ayaṁ cāsyāgrajah śrīmān,
rāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ,
pralambo nihato yena,
vatsako ye bakādayaḥ*

This lotus-eyed elder brother of His, Lord Balarāma, is the proprietor of all transcendental opulences. He has killed Pralamba, Vatsaka, Baka and other demons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: First Kṛṣṇa killed Vatsasura and then Bakasura. Later Balarama vanquished Pralambasura. However, the Mathura-vasis speaking this verse give the wrong sequence and credit Balarama as the annihilator of all these demons. The reason for the mistake is that as news of Kṛṣṇa's exploits spread among ordinary people, the facts became somewhat muddled.

Text 31

*janeṣv evaṁ bruvāṇeṣu,
tūryeṣu ninadatsu ca,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau samābhāṣya,
cāṇūro vākyam abravīt*

While the people talked in this way and the musical instruments resounded, the wrestler Cāṇū ra addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma with the following words.

Text 32

*he nanda-sūno he rāma,
bhavantau vīra-sammatau,
niyuddha-kuśalau śrutvā,
rājñāhūtau didṛkṣuṇā*

[Cāṇū ra said:] O son of Nanda, O Rāma, You two are well respected by courageous men and are both skillful at wrestling. Having heard of Your prowess, the King has called You here, wanting to see for himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: You are skillful in arm-to-arm wrestling (*niyuddha*).

Text 33

*priyaṁ rājñāḥ prakurvatyah,
śreyo vindanti vai prajāḥ,
manasā karmaṇā vācā,
viparītam ato 'nyathā*

Subjects of the King who try to please him with their thoughts, acts and words are sure to achieve good fortune, but those who fail to do so will suffer the opposite fate.

Text 34

*nityaṁ pramuditā gopā,
vatsa-pālā yathā-sphuṭam,
vaneṣu malla-yuddhena,
krīḍantaś cārayanti gāḥ*

It is well known that cowherd boys are always joyful as they tend their calves, and that the boys playfully wrestle with each other while grazing their animals in the various forests.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Cāṇūra explains how Kṛṣṇa and Balarama became expert at wrestling.

Text 35

*tasmād rājñāḥ priyaṁ yūyaṁ,
vayaṁ ca karavāma he,
bhūtāni naḥ prasīdanti,*

sarva-bhūta-mayo nṛpaḥ

Therefore let's do what the King wants. Everyone will be pleased with us, for the king embodies all living beings.

Text 36

*tan niśamyābravīt kṛṣṇo,
deśa-kālocitaṁ vacaḥ,
niyuddham ātmano 'bhīṣṭaṁ,
manyamāno 'bhinandya ca*

Hearing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who liked to wrestle and welcomed the challenge, replied with words appropriate to the time and place.

Text 37

*prajā bhoja-pater asya,
vayaṁ cāpi vane-carāḥ,
karavāma priyaṁ nityaṁ,
tan naḥ param anugrahaḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Although forest-dwellers, We are also subjects of the Bhoja king. We must gratify his desires, for such behavior will confer upon Us the greatest benefit.

Text 38

*bālā vayam tulya-balaiḥ,
krīḍiṣyāmo yathocitam,
bhaven niyuddham mādharmaḥ,
spṛśen malla-sabhā-sadaḥ*

We are just young boys and should play with those of equal strength. The wrestling match must go on properly so that irreligion does not taint the respectable members of the audience.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “We should fight with boys Our own age so that no irreligion will touch the organizers of the match. Any other arrangement would be unfair.”

Text 39

*cāṇūra uvāca,
na bālo na kiśoras tvam,
balaś ca balinām varaḥ,
līlayebho hato yena,
sahasra-dvipa-sattva-bhṛt*

Cāṇū ra said: You aren’t really a child or even a young man, and neither is Balarāma, the strongest of the strong. After all, You playfully killed an elephant who had the strength of a thousand other elephants.

Text 40

*tasmād bhavadbhyām balibhir,
yoddhavyam nānayo 'tra vai,
mayi vikrama vārṣṇeya,
balena saha muṣṭikāḥ*

Therefore You two should fight powerful wrestlers. There's certainly nothing unfair about that. You, O descendant of Vṛṣṇi, can show Your prowess against me, and Balarāma can fight with Muṣṭika.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Canura said, “You should fight with wrestlers who are strong like me, not with boys who do not match Your strength.”

Chapter Forty-four: The Killing of Kamsa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ carcita-saṅkalpo,
bhagavān madhusūdanaḥ,
āśasādātha caṇūrāṁ,
muṣṭikāṁ rohiṇī-sutaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, Lord Kṛṣṇa made up His mind to accept the challenge. He paired off with Cāṇu ra, and Lord Balarāma with Muṣṭika.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the killing of Kamsa and the wrestlers, the consolation of the Kamsa’s wives, and Kṛṣṇa and Balarama’s meeting with Their parents. Thinking with determination (*carcita-saṅkalpo*), “I will kill Canura”, Kṛṣṇa approached him.

Text 2

*hastābhyāṁ hastayor baddhvā,
padbhyāṁ eva ca pādayoḥ,
vicakarṣatur anyonyāṁ,
prasahya vijigīṣayā*

Seizing each other’s hands and locking legs with each other, the

opponents struggled powerfully, eager for victory.

Text 3

*aratnī dve aratnibhyām,
jānubhyām caiva jānunī,
śiraḥ śīrṣṇorasoras tāv,
anyonyam abhijaghnatuḥ*

They each struck fists against fists, knees against knees, head against head and chest against chest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Aratnī* refers to making a fist with all the fingers except the little finger. Wrestling with such a pair of fists is very difficult and thus unheard of, whereas wrestling is generally done with open hands. Nevertheless, just as Kṛṣṇa invented new ways of playing on the flute as stated, *veṇu-vādyā urudhā nija-śikṣāḥ* (SB 10.35.14), He also fought in this novel way with great skill. Though Canura experienced great difficulty with this, he accepted this style out of pride in his own ability as a heroic wrestler.

Text 4

*paribhrāmaṇa-vikṣepa,
parirambhāva-pātanaiḥ,
utsarpaṇāpasarpaṇaiś,
cānyonyam pratyarundhatām*

Each fighter contended with his opponent by dragging him about in

circles, shoving and crushing him, throwing him down and running before and behind him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Paribhrāmaṇa* means grabbing the other by the hands and whirling him around. *Vikṣepa* means shoving. The word *parirambha* indicates crushing one's opponent with one's arms. *Avapātanaiḥ* means throwing down the foe. *Utsarpaṇa* means releasing and running in front of the other, and *apasarpaṇaiḥ* means going behind him. In this way they countered each other's moves.

Text 5

*utthāpanair unnayanaiś,
cālanaiḥ sthāpanair api,
parasparam jigīṣantāv,
apacakratur ātmanaḥ*

Forcefully lifting and carrying each other, pushing each other away and holding each other down, the fighters hurt even their own bodies in their great eagerness for victory.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Utthāpanam* means pressing together the knees and feet of a fallen opponent and picking him up. *Unnayanam* means lifting the opponent with one's hands and carrying him around. *Cālanam* means pushing away the opponent who is holding onto one's throat. At other times they would fix themselves firmly (*sthāpanaiḥ*) so that the opponent could not move them. Thus attacking one another, they injured even their own bodies. Although Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma did not, of course, harm Themselves, it appeared that way to the spectators.

Text 6

*tad balābalavad yuddham,
sametāḥ sarva-yoṣitaḥ,
ūcuḥ parasparam rājan,
sānukampā varūthaśaḥ*

My dear King, all the women present, considering the match an unfair fight between the strong and the weak, felt extreme anxiety due to compassion. They assembled in groups around the arena and spoke to one another as follows.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The women discussed the unfairness of the match between the strong Canura and Mustika and the weak Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. The reason for this was their compassion, which was a symptom of their natural affection for Kṛṣṇa. Because of that they were unaware of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama’s superior strength.

Text 7

*mahān ayaṁ batādharma,
eṣāṁ rāja-sabhā-sadām,
ye balābalavad yuddham,
rājñō ’nvicchanti paśyataḥ*

[The women said:] Alas, what a greatly irreligious act the members of this royal assembly are committing! As the King watches this fight between the strong and the weak, they also want to see it.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The discussion of the women is described in ten verses (7-16). If the king sees a fight between young boys and strong adults he should stop it. When the spectators see that

the king is watching they follow suit and simply watch. The king desires to watch and they imitate him.

Text 8

*kva vajra-sāra-sarvāṅgau,
mallau śailendra-sannibhau,
kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau,
kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau*

What comparison can there be between these two professional wrestlers, with limbs as strong as lightning bolts and bodies resembling mighty mountains, and these two young, immature boys with exceedingly tender limbs?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While describing the soft bodies of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the women pointed with their fingers.

Text 9

*dharmā-vyatikramo hy asya,
samājasya dhruvaṁ bhavet,
yatrādharmah samuttiṣṭhen,
na stheyam tatra karhicit*

Religious principles have certainly been violated in this assembly. One should not remain for even a moment in a place where irreligion is flourishing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The women said, “Certainly there is

irreligion (*dharmā vatikramah*) in this assembly (*samajasya*), so no one should stay here. Therefore we should immediately leave this place.”

Text 10

*na sabhām praviśet prājñāḥ,
sabhya-doṣān anusmaran,
abruvan vibruvann ajño,
naraḥ kilbiṣam aśnute*

A wise person should not enter an assembly if he knows the participants there are committing acts of impropriety. And if, having entered such an assembly, he fails to speak the truth, speaks falsely or pleads ignorance, he will certainly incur sin.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Another group of women spoke, quoting the rules of the scriptures: “We have committed offense by coming here. If someone knows that there is injustice in an assembly and remains silent, or else speaks contrary to religious principles or acts as if ignorant saying, “I don’t know” even though one does in fact know; in any of these cases he will certainly incur sin. Therefore he should not enter the assembly.

“This prohibition against entering the assembly is for the wise person who is concerned with worldly activities, but not for the wise person who is indifferent to such. For example, *Mahabharata* explains that during the gambling match when Draupadi suffered her misfortune in the royal assembly, wise men such as Bhishma, who were concerned with worldly affairs, simply stood silently, whereas the learned Vidura, who was indifferent to ordinary affairs, exclaimed, ‘And you talk about religious duty!’ Thus all the wise persons in the wrestling arena are afraid of Kamsa, because they are overly attached to worldly affairs.”

Text 11

*valgataḥ śatrum abhitaḥ,
kṛṣṇasya vadanāmbujam,
vīkṣyatām śrama-vāry-uptam,
padma-kośam ivāmbubhiḥ*

**Just see the lotus face of Kṛṣṇa as He darts around His foe!
That face, covered with drops of perspiration brought on by the
strenuous fight, resembles a lotus covered with dew.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But Kṛṣṇa and Balarama do not appear to be fatigued. There is no fault in this match since They are seen to be very strong.” Anticipating such an objection, the Mathura ladies speak this verse. “See! Due to being pursued here and there by His opponent Kṛṣṇa is showing fatigue, and has perspiration all over His moon-like face.” *Vadana-ambuja* means moon-face, since the world *ambuja* means lotus, moon or conch. Later in the verse Kṛṣṇa’s face is compared with a lotus.

Text 12

*kiṁ na paśyata rāmasya,
mukham ātāmra-locanam,
muṣṭikam prati sāmarsam,
hāsa-saṁrambha-śobhitam*

**Don’t you see the face of Lord Balarāma, with its eyes copper-red
from His anger toward Muṣṭika and its beauty enhanced by His
laughter and His absorption in the fight?**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The ladies said, “The reason for Balarama’s anger (*samarsam*) is the fatigue brought about by Mustika’s blows. Balarama appeared splendid being absorbed in fighting and laughing.”

Text 13

*puṇyā bata vraja-bhuvo yad ayam nṛ-liṅga,
gūḍhaḥ purāṇa-puruṣo vana-citra-mālyah,
gāḥ pālayan saha-balaḥ kvaṇayamś ca veṇuṁ,
vikṛīdayāñcati 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, He whose feet are worshiped by Lord Śiva and goddess Ramā vibrates His flute as He tends the cows in the company of Bala-rāma.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the wives of the *yajñic brahmanas* in Vraja, or some ladies who share the same mentality, express their *prema* which is mixed with an awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s opulences (*aisvarya-jnana*) due to their torment of not having His association. Becoming intolerant of the unjust behavior of the onlookers, the ladies condemn the city of Mathurā because of their pain at seeing Kṛṣṇa in what they consider an unfair wrestling match. Thus they praise Vraja and its inhabitants, and by that criticize Mathura and its residents.

They said, “How astonishing it is (*bata*)! Materialistic people cannot understand (*gūḍhaḥ*) the human-like form (*nṛ-liṅga*) that Kṛṣṇa displays in Vraja. Kṛṣṇa wanders around engaging in various playful activities

according to His own desires. We in Mathura are most unfortunate because we simply persecute Him like this, and these people are simply watching. Though Vraja is just a forest, it is most fortunate, for there Kṛṣṇa played His flute and blissfully engaged in pastimes as the Vrajavasis looked on with bliss.”

This is the implication of their words. The word *añcati* (wanders) is in the present tense because the women thought that Kṛṣṇa would return to Vraja. Actually however, the words cleverly establish here that the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are eternal, as confirmed in the scriptures.

Text 14

*gopyas tapaḥ kim acaran yad amuṣya rūpaṁ,
lāvanya-sāram asamordhvam ananya-siddham,
dṛgbhiḥ pibanty anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam,
ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śrīya aiśvarasya*

What austerities must the gopīs have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equaled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh and extremely rare.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Those who have accrued heaps of pious activities are born in the land of Vraja! Among them, the *gopīs* are the best.” That is expressed in this verse.

The ladies said, “What austerities did the *gopīs* do? If anyone is omniscient, then please tell us what austerities they performed. We will perform the same austerities and be born as *gopīs* in Vraja. They drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty while we at the arena drink the poison of His injuries. We sit here, filled with fever from the tips of our nails to the tips of our hair.”

By mentioning that as a result of austerities the *gopis* could see the beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s form, they also indicate that it resulted in being embraced by Kṛṣṇa’s arms, which could not be expressed in words on that occasion.

The ladies said, “One should not say that Kṛṣṇa is most excellent because of His superior beauty. Rather, the essence of all beauty is His very *svarupa* (*lavanya saram*).”

But, it may be objected, since Kṛṣṇa’s form is being exhibited on the earth, which is inferior to His own spiritual realms, therefore the beauty of Lord Narayana in Maha-Vaikuntha, the best of worlds, must be even sweeter than this. To this objection the ladies reply with the word *asamordhvam*, indicating that there is no beauty even equal to this, what to speak of any greater. But then from where did Kṛṣṇa acquire this beauty? This they answer with the word *ananya-siddham* (self-perfect), meaning that such beauty is innate in Kṛṣṇa.

That may be so, but if the *gopis* are constantly seeing this one form, it will no longer be so amazing after some time. The ladies reply, “Kṛṣṇa’s form becomes newer at every moment (*anusava-abhinavam*). It is forever increasingly amazing.”

So, if this is the case then the women of all other lands should also go there and take pleasure in seeing Kṛṣṇa. “No,” the ladies reply, “this form is unattainable even for goddess Laksmi.”

Granted, Kṛṣṇa’s beauty is His super-excellent quality. But Narayana and others possess the full measure of six opulences and are designated as Bhagavan. The ladies counter this objection by saying *ekānta-dhāma*, “Kṛṣṇa alone is the exclusive abode and topmost reservoir of all the six opulences beginning with fame (*yaśasaḥ*), beauty (*śriyaḥ*) and so on.”

Text 15

*yā dohane ’vahanane mathanopalepa,
preṅkheṅkhanārbha-ruditokṣaṇa-mārjanādau,
gāyanti cainam anurakta-dhiyo ’śru-kaṅṭhyo,*

dhanyā vraja-striya urukrama-citta-yānāḥ

The ladies of Vraja are the most fortunate of women because, with their minds fully attached to Kṛṣṇa and their throats always choked up with tears, they constantly sing about Him while milking the cows, winnowing grain, churning butter, gathering cow dung for fuel, riding on swings, taking care of their crying babies, sprinkling the ground with water, cleaning their houses, and so on. By their exalted Kṛṣṇa consciousness they automatically acquire all desirable things.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “And even while doing household chores, the *gopis* were not stopped from drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness.” That is the intent of this verse.

The ladies said, “While milking the cows and doing other chores, such as swinging or sprinkling water on the ground, the Vraja-gopis would sing about Kṛṣṇa’s name, form and qualities and have visions of Him. In this way, they taste the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa with both their tongues and their eyes without interruption. Exalted personalities like Brahma keep Kṛṣṇa in their minds. Kṛṣṇa Himself, however, due to being completely attached (*anurakta-dhiyah*) to the Vraja-gopis, always carries them in His heart (*urukrama citta yanah*). This shows the supremacy of the *gopis*’ good fortune.”

Text 16

*prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyam,
gobhiḥ samam kvaṇayato śya niśamya veṇum,
nirgamya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ,
paśyanti sa-smita-mukham sa-dayāvalokam*

When the gopīs hear Kṛṣṇa playing His flute as He leaves Vraja in the morning with His cows or returns with them at sunset, the 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The ladies said, “When Kṛṣṇa goes to the forest from Vraja in the morning and returns in the evening, the *gopīs* hear His flute and run out of their houses. They meet Kṛṣṇa in the small groves situated along the cow paths. Seeing that they are suffering due to separation, Kṛṣṇa mercifully glances upon them to fulfill their desires. This is the fortune of the women of Vraja.”

Text 17

*evam prabhāṣamāṅāsū,
strīṣu yogeśvaro hariḥ,
śatruṁ hantuṁ manaś cakre,
bhagavān bharatarṣabha*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As the women spoke thus, O hero of the Bhāratas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystic power, made up His mind to kill His opponent.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Though the ladies were talking among themselves, Kṛṣṇa, being the best of *yogīs* (*yogeśvaro hariḥ*) could hear it. Thus He decided to kill Canura, in order to keep these ladies, who were very much attached to Him, from suffering.

Text 18

*sa-bhayāḥ strī-giraḥ śrutvā,
putra-sneha-śucāturau,
pitarāv anvatapyetām,
putrayor abudhau balam*

Out of affection for the two Lords, Their parents [Devakī and Vasudeva] became overwhelmed with sorrow when they heard the women’s fearful statements. They grieved, not knowing their sons’ strength.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pitarāv refers to Kṛṣṇa parents, Vasudeva and Devaki, or His two fathers Nanda and Vasudeva. Lamenting over the situation, Kṛṣṇa’s parents thought, “Why didn’t we keep our sons at home? When leaving Vraja why didn’t we tell Akrura not to bring Kṛṣṇa and Balarama to this wrestling arena? Why did we allow Them to participate in this corrupt exhibition?” The parental affection of Kṛṣṇa’s mother and father covered their awareness of their son’s incomparable strength and thus they felt remorse. There is the suggestion that this ignorance of their son’s powers was temporary.

Text 19

*tais tair niyuddha-vidhibhir,
vividhair acyutetarau,
yuyudhāte yathānyonyam,
tathaiva bala-muṣṭikau*

Lord Balarāma and Muṣṭika, expertly displaying numerous wrestling techniques, battled each other in the same way that Lord Kṛṣṇa and His opponent did.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as Kṛṣṇa and Canura (acyutetarau) fought with each, so Balarama fought with Mustika.

Text 20

*bhagavad-gātra-niṣpātair,
vajra-nīṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuraiḥ,
cāṇūro bhajyamānāṅgo,
muhur glānim avāpa ha*

The harsh blows from the Supreme Lord’s limbs fell like crushing lightning bolts upon Cāṇū ra, breaking every part of his body and causing him more and more pain and fatigue.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa injured Canura’s limbs with hard blows crushing like lightning bolts.

Text 21

*sa śyena-vega utpatya,
muṣṭī-kṛtya karāv ubhau,
bhagavantam vāsudevaṁ,
kruddho vakṣasy abādhata*

Furious, Cāṇū ra attacked Lord Vāsudeva with the speed of a hawk and struck His chest with both fists.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Canura struck (abādhata) Kṛṣṇa on the chest with clenched fists.

Texts 22–23

*nācalat tat-prahāreṇa,
mālāhata iva dvipaḥ,
bāhvor niḡṛhya cāñūraṁ,
bahuśo bhrāmayan hariḥ,
bhū-prṣṭhe pothayām āsa,
tarasā kṣīṇa jīvitam,
visrastākalpa-keśa-srag,
indra-dhvaja ivāpatat*

No more shaken by the demon’s mighty blows than an elephant struck with a flower garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa grabbed Cāñū ra by his arms, swung him around several times and hurled him onto the ground with great force. His clothes, hair and garland scattering, the wrestler fell down dead, like a huge festival column collapsing.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *indra-dhvaja* means as follows: “In Bengal, on the occasion of a certain festival, people erect a tall column in the form of a man and decorate it with flags, banners, etc. Canura collapsed on the ground just as such a pole might fall.”

Texts 24–25

*tathaiva muṣṭikaḥ pūrvam,
sva-muṣṭyābhihatena vai,
balabhadreṇa balinā,
talenābhihato bhr̥śam,
pravepitaḥ sa rudhiram,
udvaman mukhato ’rditaḥ,*

*vyasuḥ papātorvy-upasthe,
vātāhata ivāṅghripaḥ*

Similarly, Muṣṭika struck Lord Balabhadra with his fist and was slain. Receiving a violent blow from the mighty Lord's palm, the demon trembled all over in great pain, vomited blood and then fell lifeless onto the ground, like a tree blown down by the wind.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama struck Mustika with His palm and Mustika fell down dead on the earth. Balarama also crushed him with His embrace and uttered foul words as he lay dying.

Text 26

*tataḥ kūṭam anuprāptaṁ,
rāmaḥ praharatām varaḥ,
avadhīl līlayā rājan,
sāvajñam vāma-muṣṭinā*

Confronted next by the wrestler Kū ṭa, Lord Balarāma, the best of fighters, playfully and nonchalantly killed him with His left fist, O King.

Text 27

*tarhy eva hi śalaḥ kṛṣṇa-
prapadāhata-śīrṣakaḥ,
dvidhā vidīrṇas tośalaka,
ubhāv api nipetatuh*

Then Kṛṣṇa struck the wrestler Śāla in the head with His toes and tore him in half. The Lord dealt with Tośāla in the same way, and both wrestlers fell down dead.

Text 28

*cāṇūre muṣṭike kūṭe,
śāle tośalake hate,
śeṣāḥ pradudruvur mallāḥ,
sarve prāṇa-parīpsavaḥ*

Cāṇū ra, Muṣṭika, Kū ṭa, Śāla and Tośāla having been killed, the remaining wrestlers all fled for their lives.

Text 29

*gopān vayasyān ākr̥ṣya,
taiḥ saṁsṛjya vijahratuḥ,
vādyamāneṣu tūryeṣu,
valgantau ruta-nūpurau*

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then called Their young cowherd boyfriends to join Them, and in their company the Lords danced about and sported, Their ankle bells resounding as musical instruments played.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma danced about, celebrating Their victory with Their friends and relatives.

Text 30

*janāḥ prajāhr̥ṣuḥ sarve,
karmaṇā rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ,
ṛte kaṁsaṁ vipra-mukhyāḥ,
sādhavaḥ sādhu sādhu iti*

Everyone except Kāṁsa rejoiced at the wonderful feat Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had performed. The exalted brāhmaṇas and great saints exclaimed, “Excellent! Excellent!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: It is understood that the best among the *brāhmaṇas*, who were Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, were exclaiming “Excellent! Excellent! This is very good!” The worst of the *brahmanas*, however, who were Kāṁsa’s low class priests, were seriously grieving, “Oh what misfortune!”

Text 31

*hateṣu malla-varyeṣu,
vidruteṣu ca bhoja-rāṭ,
nyavārayat sva-tūryāṇi,
vākyam cedam uvāca ha*

The Bhoja king, seeing that his best wrestlers had all been killed or had fled, stopped the musical performance originally meant for his pleasure and spoke the following words.

Text 32

*niḥsārayata durvṛttau,
vasudevātmajau purāt,
dhanam harata gopānām,
nandaṁ badhnīta durmatim*

[Kāṁsa said:] Drive the two wicked sons of Vasudeva out of the city! Confiscate the cowherds' property and arrest that fool Nanda!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, Kāṁsa's statement, "Drive the two wicked sons of Vasudeva out of Mathura" can also mean "Give these boys of unattainable qualities the best position in the city. Protect Kṛṣṇa, the treasure of the cowherd men, who that most intelligent (*durmatim*) Nanda Maharaja has tied up (*badhnīta*) with the ropes of love for Kṛṣṇa, and establish an affectionate relationship with Him."

Text 33

*vasudevas tu durmedhā,
hanyatām āśv asattamaḥ,
ugrasenaḥ pitā cāpi,
sānugaḥ para-pakṣa-gaḥ*

Kill that most evil fool Vasudeva! And also kill my father, Ugrasena, along with his followers, who have all sided with our enemies!

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse can also mean something else. Kamsa said, “Everyone should take shelter of Vasudeva who has unfathomable intelligence. (The word *han* in *hanyatām* means to go as well as to kill.) In comparison to him, there is no one more saintly. You should also take shelter of Ugrasena who has taken shelter of the Supreme Lord (*para-pakṣa-gaḥ*).”

Text 34

*evam vikatthamāne vai,
kaṁse prakupīto 'vyayaḥ,
laghimnotpatya tarasā,
mañcam uttuṅgam āruhat*

As Kamsa thus raved so audaciously, the infallible Lord Kṛṣṇa, intensely angry, quickly and easily jumped up onto the high royal dais.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa became extremely angry (*prakupītaḥ*) upon hearing this enmity addressed to His devotees. Kṛṣṇa, unlike most living entities, does not lose His power of discrimination when He is intensely angry. Kṛṣṇa jumped so quickly on the King’s platform that no one saw Him do it.

Text 35

*tam āviśantam ālokya,
mṛtyum ātmana āsanāt,
manasvī sahasotthāya,
jagṛhe so 'si-carmaṇī*

Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching like death personified, the quick-witted Kāṁsa instantly rose from his seat and took up his sword and shield.

Text 36

*tam khaḍga-pāṇim vicarantam āśu,
śyenam yathā dakṣiṇa-savyam ambare,
samagrahīd durviṣahogra-tejā,
yathoragam tārksya-sutaḥ prasahya*

Sword in hand, Kāṁsa moved quickly from side to side like a hawk in the sky. But Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose fearsome strength is irresistible, powerfully seized the demon just as the son of Tārksya might capture a snake.

Text 37

*pragrhya keśeṣu calat-kirītam,
nīpātya raṅgopari tuṅga-mañcāt,
tasyopariṣṭāt svayam abja-nābhaḥ,
papāta viśvāśraya ātma-tantraḥ*

Grabbing Kāṁsa by the hair and knocking off his crown, the lotus-naveled Lord threw him off the elevated dais onto the wrestling mat. Then the independent Lord, the support of the entire universe, threw Himself upon the King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa threw Himself upon the fallen body of Kamsa, so that His own body would not be injured by hitting the ground. Kṛṣṇa, wanting to kill Kamsa, at that moment thought of Himself (*ātma-tantraḥ*) as the shelter of the universe (*viśvāśraya*) which was burdened by Kamsa.

Text 38

*taṁ samparetam vicakarṣa bhūmau,
harir yathebham jagato vipaśyataḥ,
hā heti śabdaḥ su-mahāms tadābhūd,
udīritaḥ sarva-janair narendra*

As a lion drags a dead elephant, the Lord then dragged Kamsa’s dead body along the ground in full view of everyone present. O King, all the people in the arena tumultuously cried out, “Oh! Oh!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The spectators thought that Kamsa had simply been knocked unconscious when thrown from the lofty dais. They did not think he was dead. Therefore Kṛṣṇa dragged his corpse so everyone would realize that the evil King was indeed dead. The audience expressed their surprise exclaiming “Hā! Hā!” (*hā heti*), because though Kamsa was a great warrior, he had been killed with such disdain. The audience’s astonishment is also mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*: *tato hāhā-kṛtam sarvam, āsīt tad-raṅga-maṇḍalam avajñayā hataṁ dṛṣtvā, kṛṣṇena mathureśvaram*, “Then the entire arena became filled with cries of astonishment as the people saw that the King of Mathurā had been contemptuously killed by Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 39

*sa nityadodvigna-dhiyā tam īśvaram,
pibann adan vā vicaran svapan śvasan,
dadarśa cakrāyudham agrato yatas,
tad eva rūpaṁ duravāpam āpa*

Kaṁsa had always been disturbed by the thought that the Supreme Lord was to kill him. Therefore when drinking, eating, moving about, sleeping or simply breathing, the King had always seen the Lord before him with the disc weapon in His hand. Thus Kaṁsa achieved the rare boon of attaining a form like the Lord's.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although born out of fear, Kaṁsa's constant meditation on Kṛṣṇa eradicated all his offenses, and therefore the demon got liberation. This is the intention of the verse.

Text 40

*tasyānujā bhrātaro 'ṣṭau,
kaṅka-nyagrodhakādayaḥ,
abhyadhāvann ati-kruddhā,
bhrātur nirveśa-kāriṇaḥ*

Kaṁsa's eight younger brothers, led by Kaṅka and Nyagrodhaka, then attacked the Lords in a rage, seeking to avenge their brother's death.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamsa's brothers pursued Kṛṣṇa to absolve the debt (*nirveśa-kāriṇaḥ*) to their brother.

Text 41

*tathāti-rabhasāms tāms tu,
saṁyattān rohiṇī-sutaḥ,
ahan pariḡham udyamya,
paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ*

As they ran swiftly toward the two Lords, ready to strike, the son of Rohiṇī slew them with His club just as a lion easily kills other animals.

Text 42

*nedur dundubhayo vyomni,
brahmeśādyā vibhūtayaḥ,
puṣpaiḥ kirantas taṁ prītāḥ,
śaśaṁsur nanṛtuḥ striyaḥ*

Kettledrums resounded in the sky as Brahmā, Śiva and other demigods, the Lord's expansions, rained down flowers upon Him with pleasure. They chanted His praises, and their wives danced.

Text 43

*teṣāṁ striyo mahā-rāja,
suhṛn-marāṇa-duḥkhitāḥ,
tatrābhīyur vinighnantyaḥ,
śīrṣāṇy aśru-vilocanāḥ*

My dear King, the wives of Kaiṁsa and his brothers, aggrieved by the death of their well-wishing husbands, came forward with tearful eyes, beating their heads.

Text 44

*śayānān vīra-śayāyām,
patīn āliṅgya śocatīḥ,
vilepuḥ su-svaram nāryo,
visrjantyo muhuḥ śucaḥ*

Embracing their husbands, who lay on a hero's final bed, the sorrowful women loudly lamented while shedding constant tears.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *socati* stands for *socantyah* (lamenting).

Text 45

*hā nātha priya dharmajña,
karuṇānātha-vatsala,
tvayā hatena nihatā,
vayam te sa-grha-prajāḥ*

[The women cried out:] Alas, O master, O dear one, O knower of religious principles! O kind and compassionate protector of the shelterless! By your being slain we have also been slain, together

with your household and offspring.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The daughter of Jarasandha and others who were married speak in two verses. “Along with our houses and offspring we also have been killed.”

Text 46

*tvayā virahitā patyā,
purīyaṁ puruṣarṣabha,
na śobhate vāyam iva,
nivr̥ttotsava-maṅgalā*

O great hero among men, bereft of you, its master, this city has lost its beauty, just as we have, and all festivity and good fortune within it have come to an end.

Text 47

*anāgasām tvam bhūtānām,
kṛtavān droham ulbaṇam,
tenemām bho daśām nīto,
bhūta-dhruk ko labheta śam*

O dear one, you have been brought to this state because of the terrible violence you committed against innocent creatures. How can one who harms others attain happiness?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The ladies now speak practical wisdom

because their minds were purified by Kṛṣṇa’s association and the agony of the recent events.

Text 48

*sarveṣām iha bhūtānām,
eṣa hi prabhavāpyayaḥ,
goptā ca tad-avadhyāyī,
na kvacit sukham edhate*

Lord Kṛṣṇa causes the appearance and disappearance of all beings in this world, and He is their maintainer as well. One who disrespects Him can never prosper happily.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The ladies said, “He (*esah*), Kṛṣṇa, is the source (*prabhava*) and ultimate resting place (*apyaya*) of all living entities. Those who disrespect (*tad-avadhyāyī*) Kṛṣṇa never attain happiness.”

Text 49

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
rāja-yoṣita āśvāsya,
bhagavāu loka-bhāvanaḥ,
yām āhur laukikīm saṁsthām,
hatānām samakārayat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After consoling the royal ladies, Lord Kṛṣṇa, sustainer of all the worlds, arranged for the prescribed funeral rites to be performed.

Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Thakura: “O wives of Kamsa! Today you have met with great misfortune. But I am obligated to protect you, so why should you worry?” In this way Kṛṣṇa consoled them.

Text 50

*mātaraṁ pitaraṁ caiva,
mocayitvātha bandhanāt,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau vavandāte,
śirasā spr̥śya pādayoḥ*

Then Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma released Their mother and father from bondage and offered obeisances to them, touching their feet with Their heads.

Viṣvanātha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama touched (*spr̥śya:samyak*) their heads prominently to the feet of Vasudeva and Devaki.

Text 51

*devakī vasudevaś ca,
vijñāya jagad-īśvarau,
kṛta-saṁvandanau putrau,
sasvajāte na śaṅkitau*

Devakī and Vasudeva, now knowing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to be the Lords of the universe, simply stood with joined palms. Being apprehensive, they did not embrace their sons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Remembering the events of Kṛṣṇa's birth and observing His power in killing Kamsa, Vasudeva and Devaki saw Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord and therefore could not embrace Him. Being aware of the custom that parents do not bow to their children, Vasudeva and Devaki did not offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa. Paralyzed from fear, they simply stood there.

Chapter Forty-five: Kṛṣṇa Rescues His Teacher’s Son

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
pītarāv upalabdhārthau,
viditvā puruṣottamaḥ,
mā bhūd iti nijām māyām,
tatāna jana-mohinīm*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Understanding that His parents were becoming aware of His transcendental opulences, the Supreme Personality of Godhead thought that this should not be allowed to happen. Thus He expanded His Yogamāyā, which bewilders His devotees.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa consoles Devaki and Vasudeva, sends Nanda and the cowherdmen back to Vraja, installs Ugrasena as king, and goes to *gurukula* to absorb Himself in study. Understanding that His mother and father were endowed with the treasure of seeing Him as almighty God, Kṛṣṇa began to consider, “Let that perception vanish and let them be covered by the ecstasy of parental love (*vātsalya-rasa*), so that both of us will attain supreme bliss.” That is the meaning of *upalabdhārthau*. Thus thinking, Kṛṣṇa expanded His internal potency, *yogamaya*, to cover their awareness of His godly powers.

The word *jana* may be translated as “devotees,” as in the verse *dīyamānam na grhṇanti vinā mat-sevanam janaḥ* (SB 3.29.13). Thus it refers to that *maya* whose nature is to bewilder the devotees. *Jana* may also be translated as “parents,” since *jana* is derived from the verb

jan, which in its causative form (*janayate*) means “to generate or to give birth to”. In this sense of the word (as in *jananī* or *janakau*), the term *jana-mohinī* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was about to expand His internal illusory potency so that Vasudeva and Devakī would again love Him as their dear child.

Sridhara Swami described Kṛṣṇa’s inner intention: “If I am simply satisfied, then what knowledge is there that will remain inaccessible to them? On the other hand, pure love for Me with the idea that I am their son is indeed difficult to achieve.” Thus Kṛṣṇa’s words in the following verses should not be considered deceptive, because He will speak in such a way as to invoke their parental love.

Text 2

*uvāca pitarāv etya,
sāgrajaḥ sātvataṣabhaḥ,
praśrayāvanataḥ prīṇann,
amba tāteti sādaram*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of the Sātvatas, approached His parents with His elder brother. Humbly bowing His head and gratifying them by respectfully addressing them as “My dear mother” and “My dear father,” Kṛṣṇa spoke as follows.

Text 3

*nāsmatto yuvayos tāta,
nityotkaṇṭhitayor api,
bālya-pauṅḍa-kaiśorāḥ,
putrābhyām abhavan kvacit*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear Father, because of Us, your two sons, you and mother Devakī always remained in anxiety and could never enjoy Our childhood, boyhood or youth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Because of your anxiety for Us, you never experienced the happiness of raising Us through the *balya*, *pauganda* and *kaisora* ages (childhood, boyhood or youth).” It may be objected that the women of Mathura mentioned that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were of *kaisora* age, and had not reached *yauvana*: *kva cāti-sukumārāṅgau kiśorau nāpta-yauvanau*: “Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma have very tender limbs, being still at the *kiśora* stage, not having reached adolescence (*yauvanam*).” (SB 10.44.8) Thus the match between the huge wrestlers and the young boys was unequal. Therefore it cannot be said that They had finished their *kaisora* age.

The definition of the different stages of growing up is given as follows: *kaumāraṁ pañcamābdāntaṁ, paugaṇḍaṁ daśamāvadhi, kaiśoram ā-pañcadaśād, yauvanaṁ tu tataḥ param*

“The *kaumāra* stage lasts until the age of five, *paugaṇḍa* up to age ten and *kaiśora* to age fifteen. From then on, one is known as *yauvana*.” According to this statement, the *kaiśora* period ends at the age of fifteen. Kṛṣṇa was only eleven years old when He killed Kāmsa, as verified by Uddhava’s words: *ekādaśa-samās tatra gūḍhārciḥ sa-balo ’vasat*. “Like a covered flame, Kṛṣṇa remained there incognito with Balarāma for eleven years.” (SB 3.2.26) And since Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma never took *brahminical* initiation in Vraja-bhūmi, it was at the time of Their going to Mathurā that Their *kaiśora* stage began rather than ended.

This objection to Kṛṣṇa’s statement in the present verse—that His parents could not enjoy His *kaiśora* stage—is based on ordinary measurement of age. Yet we should consider the following statement from the *Bhāgavatam* (10.8.26):

kālenālpena rājarṣe, rāmaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca go-vraje, aghṛṣṭa-jānubhiḥ

padbhir, vicakramatur añjasā

“O King Parīkṣit, within a short time Rāma and Kṛṣṇa began to walk very easily in Gokula on Their legs, by Their own strength, without the need to crawl.” Sometimes we see that a prince, even while in his *pauganḍa* stage of life, undergoes exceptional physical growth and exhibits activities appropriate to a *kaiśora*. Then what to speak of Sri Kṛṣṇa, whose exceptional growth is established in the *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ānanda-vṛndavana-campū* and other works? At the age of three years and four months, Kṛṣṇa displayed the qualities of a five year old while spending His *kaumara* age in Mahavana. The period from then to the age of six years and eight months, during which He lived in Vṛndāvana, constitutes His *pauganḍa* stage. The period from the age of six years and eight months through His tenth year, during which time He lived in Nandīśvara (Nandagrāma), constitutes His *kaiśora* stage. Then, at the age of ten years and seven months, on the eleventh lunar day of the dark fortnight of the month of Caitra, Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā, and on the fourteenth day thereafter He killed Kamsa. Thus Kṛṣṇa completed His *kaiśora* period at age ten, and He eternally remains at that age. In other words, we should understand that from this point on Kṛṣṇa remains forever a *kiśora*.

This point is illustrated by the following statement in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.55.28): “When Pradyumna, who was of *kaisora* age, entered the inner apartments of Kṛṣṇa’s palace in Dvaraka, he appeared the same as Kṛṣṇa and the women hid themselves out of shame” (*kṛṣṇaṁ matvā striyo hrītā nililyus tatra tatra ha*). There are also similar statements in the *Agamas* and *Pancaratra*. Thus on the day of killing Kamsa, Kṛṣṇa had both passed the *kaisora* age and not passed it. By this explanation there is harmony between Kṛṣṇa’s statement in this verse that His *kaisora* age had passed, and the statement of the Mathura women that He was in His *kaisora* age.

Text 4

*na labdho daiva-hatayor,
vāso nau bhavad-antike,
yām bālāḥ pitṛ-geha-sthā,
vindante lālitā mudam*

Deprived by fate, We could not live with you and enjoy the pampered happiness most children enjoy in their parents' home.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “We also have been unfortunate (*daiva hatayoh*.)” However, the actual meaning of the words is this: “We have attained good fortune (*bhāgyena prāptayoh*) in not obtaining the happiness of ordinary children.”

Text 5

*sarvārtha-sambhavo deho,
janitaḥ poṣito yataḥ,
na tayor yāti nirveśam,
pitror martyaḥ śatāyusā*

With one's body one can acquire all goals of life, and it is one's parents who give the body birth and sustenance. Therefore no mortal man can repay his debt to his parents, even if he serves them for a full lifetime of a hundred years.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having stated, “Both you and We have suffered because of Our separation”, Kṛṣṇa now states that His and Balarāma's religious principles have been spoiled by Their failure to satisfy Their parents. Kṛṣṇa said, “One cannot repay the debt to the parents who give birth to the body even with a lifetime of a hundred years.”

Text 6

*yas tayor ātmajāḥ kalpa,
ātmanā ca dhanena ca,
vṛttiṁ na dadyāt taṁ pretya,
sva-māṁsaṁ khādayanti hi*

A son who, though able to do so, fails to provide for his parents with his physical resources and wealth is forced after his death to eat his own flesh.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “According to the *karmakanda* rules of the *Vedas*, a son who, even though he is able, does not support his parents, is forced to eat his own flesh after death by the Yamadūtas.”

Text 7

*mātaraṁ pitaraṁ vṛddhaṁ,
bhāryāṁ sādhvīm sutam śiṣum,
guruṁ vipraṁ prapannaṁ ca,
kalpo 'bibhrac chvasan-mṛtaḥ*

A man who, though able to do so, fails to support his elderly parents, chaste wife, young child or spiritual master, or who neglects a brāhmaṇa or anyone who comes to him for shelter, is considered dead, though breathing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “One who does not support

(*abibhrat*) his mother, father and others, though living is considered dead.”

Text 8

*tan nāv akalpayoḥ kaṁsān,
nityam udvigna-cetasoḥ,
mogham ete vyatikrāntā,
divasā vām anarcatōḥ*

Thus We have wasted all these days, unable as We were to properly honor you because Our minds were always disturbed by fear of Kāṁsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Therefore because We were unable to serve you for fear of Kāṁsa (*kaṁsān nityam udvigna-cetaso*), Our days have passed uselessly and We are at fault.” But the real meaning is, “We spent all these days uselessly. Our minds were eager to go to Mathura because we heard about Kāṁsa and We wanted to fight him (*udvigna-cetaso*), but We were not able to go.” In this case *udvigna* means moving or going (*viḥ*). Kṛṣṇa’s saying that He spent His days uselessly (*mogham*) is an expression of regret.

Text 9

*tat kṣantum arhathas tāta,
mātar nau para-tantrayoḥ,
akurvator vām śuśrūṣām,
kliṣṭayor durhṛdā bhṛśam*

**Dear Father and Mother, please forgive Us for not serving you.
We are not independent and have been greatly frustrated by cruel
Kaṁsa.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Please forgive Us for not serving you, who were under the control of evil-minded Kamsa and being tormented by him.”

Text 10

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti māyā-manuṣyasya,
harer viśvātmano girā,
mohitāv aṅkam āropya,
pariṣvayjāpatur mudam*

**Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus beguiled by the words of Lord Hari,
the Supreme Soul of the universe, who by His internal illusory
potency appeared to be a human, His parents joyfully raised Him
up on their laps and embraced Him.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bewildered by the words of Kṛṣṇa, who was deceptively appearing as a human being (*māyā-manuṣyasya*), Vasudeva and Devaki embraced Him.

Text 11

*siñcantāv aśru-dhārābhiḥ,
sneha-pāśena cāvṛtau,
na kiñcid ūcatū rājan,
bāṣpa-kañṭhau vimohitau*

Pouring out a shower of tears upon the Lord, His parents, who were bound up by the rope of affection, could not speak. They were overwhelmed, O King, and their throats choked up with tears.

Text 12

*evam āśvāsya pitarau,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
mātāmahaṃ tūgrasenam,
yadūnām akaron ṅṛpam*

Thus having comforted His mother and father, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appearing as the son of Devakī, installed His maternal grandfather, Ugrasena, as King of the Yadus.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s comforting Vasudeva and Devaki occurred out of the sight of Nanda. Nanda Maharaja said, “My son, fatigued from the fight, has retired to the inner chambers where Vasudeva and others are affectionately feeding Him in great bliss. Since Kṛṣṇa is with them, I will now go to my own rooms without any fear for my son’s safety.” Saying this, Nanda Maharaja went to his quarters in the cowherds’ camp outside Mathura, and therefore did not see the exchange between Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva and Devaki described in these verses.

Text 13

āha cāsmān mahā-rāja,

*prajāś cājñaptum arhasi,
yayāti-śāpād yadubhir,
nāsitavyaṁ nṛpāsane*

The Lord told him: O mighty King, We are your subjects, so please command Us. Indeed, because of the curse of Yayāti, no Yadu may sit on the royal throne.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Ugrasena might have told Kṛṣṇa, “My dear Lord, it is actually You who should sit on the throne.” Anticipating this statement, Kṛṣṇa said, “You should be the king and you should give Us orders. If you say that the Yadus should not sit on the throne because of the curse of Yayati, I say, that though you are a Yadu, there is no fault if I order you to sit on the royal throne.”

Text 14

*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?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If Ugrasena were to object and say that he did not have the power to be the king, Kṛṣṇa says, “If I am engaged as your servant, then all the demigods will also serve you.”

Texts 15–16

*sarvān svān jñati-sambandhān,
digbhyaḥ kaṁsa-bhayākulān,
yadu-vṛṣṇy-andhaka-madhu,
dāśārha-kukurādikān,
sabhājitān samāśvāsyā,
videśāvāsa-karśītān,
nyavāsayat sva-geheṣu,
vittaiḥ santarpya viśva-kṛt*

The Lord then brought all His close family members and other relatives back from the various places to which they had fled in fear of Kāṁsa. He received the Yadus, Vṛṣṇis, Andhakas, Madhus, Dāśārhas, Kukuras and other clans with due honor, and He also consoled them, for they were weary of living in foreign lands. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the universe, resettled them in their homes and gratified them with valuable gifts.

Texts 17–18

*kṛṣṇa-saṅkarṣaṇa-bhujair,
guptā labdha-manorathāḥ,
grheṣu remire siddhāḥ,
kṛṣṇa-rāma-gata-jvarāḥ,
vīkṣanto 'har ahaḥ prītā,
mukunda-vadanāmbujam,
nityam pramuditam śrīmat,
sa-daya-smita-vīkṣaṇam*

The members of these clans, protected by the arms of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, felt that all their desires were fulfilled. Thus they enjoyed perfect happiness while living at home with their families. Because of the presence of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, they no longer suffered from the fever of material existence. Every day these loving devotees could see Mukunda's ever-cheerful lotus face, which was decorated with beautiful, merciful smiling glances.

Text 19

*tatra pravayaso 'py āsan,
yuvāno 'ti-balaujasah,
pibanto 'kṣair mukundasya,
mukhāmbuja-sudhām muhuḥ*

Even the most elderly inhabitants 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those who were old (*pravayasah*) became strong and energetic.

Text 20

*atha nandaṁ samasādyā,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
saṅkarṣaṇas ca rājendra,
pariṣvajyedam ūcatuḥ*

Then, O exalted Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, along with Lord Balarāma, approached Nanda Mahārāja. The two Lords embraced him and then addressed him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After discussing the events of several days, now the day after Kamsa’s death the word *atha* (then) is uttered to introduce a very important but inscrutable topic.

Identifying Himself as his son, Kṛṣṇa approached Nanda Maharaja. The word *devakī-sutaḥ* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was hiding His identity as the son of Devaki. The word *bhagavān* implies that Kṛṣṇa was utilizing His personal opulence potency (*aisvarya-sakti*) to accomplish this.

The phrase *saṅkarṣaṇaś ca* (Balarama) implies that He was demonstrating the etymology of His name, as is stated in the *Bhagavatam* 10.8.12: *yadūnām aprthag-bhāvāt saṅkarṣaṇam uśanty api*, “Garga Muni said, ‘Moreover, because Balarama unites two families—Vasudeva’s family and the family of Nanda Mahārāja—He will be known as Saṅkarṣaṇa.’”

The word “embracing” (*pariṣvajya*) implies that there was no opportunity to offering obeisances because as soon as Nanda Maharaja beheld Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, he submerged in an ocean of ecstasy. Immediately he raised both boys with his two strong arms and held them tightly to his broad chest. Though it was Nanda who embraced Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the embrace is attributed to Them in this verse. When Nanda sat down, still embracing Them, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama spoke humbly to comfort him, after answering many questions and with hesitation revealing their offenses against the Yadus.

Text 21

*pitar yuvābhyām snigdhabhyām,
poṣitau lālitau bhr̥śam,
pitror abhyadhikā prītir,*

ātmajeṣṭv ātmano 'pi hi

[Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma said:] O Father, you and mother Yaśodā have affectionately maintained Us and cared for Us so much! Indeed, parents love their children more than their own lives.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama, being elder, spoke first in two verses. “O father! We were cared for and protected by the two of you (Nanda and Yasoda). Of course, it is natural that mothers and fathers have greater love for their children than even for their own bodies.” By the dual number of the words *poṣitau* (maintained) and *lālitau* (coddled) Balarama indicates that Nanda and Yasoda felt the same affection for both children. “You were as much My parents as you were Kṛṣṇa’s parents.”

By this Balarama also hints that, “Without you two, My loving parents, and without My brother Kṛṣṇa, who is millions of times dearer to Me than My own life, I cannot remain in this city in the house of My unknown parents, Vasudeva and Devaki.”

Text 22

*sa pitā sā ca jananī,
yau puṣṅītām sva-putra-vat,
śiśūn bandhubhir utsṛṣṭān,
akalpaiḥ poṣa-rakṣaṇe*

They are the real father and mother who care for, as they would their own sons, children abandoned by relatives unable to maintain and protect them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda may say, “But, my dear

Balabhadra, actually You are the legitimate son of my friend Vasudeva. How can he, now having attained release from his long-standing dangerous situation, give up his own son? Therefore You must immediately go to Your father's house and stay there. The two of us will somehow carry on living by blocking up our hearts which will be torn apart by separation from You with the stone of discrimination. But I cannot bear to see the suffering of my friend Vasudeva. We, after all, are only Your foster parents.”

Balarama replies in this verse: “Those who care for a child as their own son are the actual mother and father. The seminal father is not the real father, and she who bears the child in her womb is not the real mother. If the father and mother abandon a child and the child dies, can they be called the mother and father? The foster parents who raise the child are more worthy of respect by the discerning child. Therefore I will not be able to stay here. Even if Brahma himself comes and orders Me, he will not be able to change My mind.

“Alas! Alas! O father! Kṛṣṇa will go with you and happily play in Vraja, but I will stay in Mathura burning in the forest fire of separation from Kṛṣṇa. That cannot be! Therefore I make this oath. If Kṛṣṇa leaves Me behind and goes off to Vraja, then My life will be finished.” This is the intention of Balarama's words in this verse.

Text 23

*yāta yūyam vrajam tāta,
vayam ca sneha-duḥkhitān,
jñātīn vo draṣṭum eṣyāmo,
vidhāya suhṛdām sukham*

Now you should all return to Vraja, dear Father. 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After hearing the words of Balarama, Nanda Maharaja thought, “Alas, alas, what can I do? If I take Baladeva back to Vraja, all will rejoice, but the Yadavas and especially Vasudeva will suffer great distress. It would be a great sin for me. Vasudeva will think, ‘Ah, ah! Kamsa killed all my sons, and the one son who was protected from his hands, Balabhadra, has been taken by Nanda to Vraja. Therefore Nanda is not my friend but rather a second Kamsa for me, who am being ruined by Providence.’ Thus thinking, Vasudeva will experience extreme pain and curse me thousands of times. Then how will I or indeed Kṛṣṇa enjoy any happiness at all?”

Seeing Nanda standing silent for several minutes lost in such anxious thoughts, Kṛṣṇa addressed him consolingly with logical reasoning in this verse: “O father, you should now go to Vraja. I, Baladeva and My friends like Madhumangala will go to Vraja later in order to see you, but now We will stay in Mathura for a few days.”

Anticipating that Nanda Maharaja would ask when He would return to Vraja, Kṛṣṇa said, “After giving happiness to your friends headed by Vasudeva, so that no one will find fault with you, We will come home to Vraja. First we will unite Baladeva with His parents so that they can coddle Him and express their affection to their hearts’ content. Then upon completing all necessary work and making everyone happy, We will come back to Vraja.”

Text 24

*evam sāntvayya bhagavān,
nandaṁ sa-vrajaṁ acyutaḥ,
vāso-’laṅkāra-kupyādyair,
arhayām āsa sādaram*

Thus consoling Nanda Mahārāja and the other men of Vraja, the

infallible Supreme Lord respectfully honored them with gifts of clothing, jewelry, household utensils and so on.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa consoled Nanda, “You should not worry about My staying in Mathura a few days longer. My mind is always in Vraja, and I am only staying here by their desires.” Kṛṣṇa honored Nanda Maharaja and gave the Vrajavasis bell metal (*kupya*) pots and other gifts.

Text 25

*ity uktas tau pariṣvajya,
nandaḥ praṇaya-vihvalaḥ,
pūrayann aśrubhir netre,
saha gopair vrajam yayau*

Nanda Mahārāja was overwhelmed with affection upon hearing Kṛṣṇa’s words, and his eyes brimmed with tears as he embraced the two Lords. Then he went back to Vraja with the cowherd men.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although Nanda Maharaja was almost unconscious (*praṇaya-vihvalaḥ*) due to separation from his son, he somehow returned to Vraja. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama went to Vasudeva’s house and lived there happily. Some experts in *rasa*, who cannot tolerate even a slight decrease in *prema*, object to this incident of Kṛṣṇa staying away from Vraja. Later on in this purport we will reconcile their objections with a novel interpretation. May it be accepted by those who appreciate it.

The objection is this: It is clear that the literal meaning of verses 21-25 is unfavorable to *prema*. Even in all the explanations given, *prema* is not established; for there is separation of Nanda and Kṛṣṇa. In this connection Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, whose pastimes are inscrutable,

so He may be able to abandon His father and stay in Mathura. But how could Nanda abandon Kṛṣṇa and go back to Vraja alone? How could Nanda Maharaja give up Kṛṣṇa, who is millions of times more dear to him than his own life, for the cows in Vraja? Why did he not take up residence on the outskirts of Mathura instead?

Furthermore, the reasons given in the verses for Kṛṣṇa and Balarama's staying in Mathura are weak, only meant to pacify Nanda. Even Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were not convinced in their minds of what They spoke. After all, the Tenth Canto only describes that Balarama returned to Vraja (Ch. 65) and not Kṛṣṇa. However, the *Padma Purana*, Uttara khanda states that after killing all the demons that He had to, up to Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa returned to Vraja. There is also evidence in the *Bhagavatam* (1.11.9): *yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān, kurūn madhūn vātha suhr̥d-didr̥kṣayā, tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhaved,* "The residents of Dvaraka said, '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.'"

However these scriptural references do not clearly show the presence of their *prema*. Nevertheless, just consider the statement of Sri Sukadeva Gosvami in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.39.35): *tās tathā tapyatīr vīkṣya, sva-prasthāne yadūttamaḥ, sāntvayām asa sa-premair, āyāsya iti dautyakaiḥ,* "As Kṛṣṇa departed, that best of the Yadus saw how the *gopīs* were lamenting, and thus He consoled them by sending a messenger with this loving promise: 'I will return.'"

The word *dautyakaiḥ* (messenger) is in the plural to indicate that Kṛṣṇa sent many messengers, or one messenger who repeated the same message, "I will return, I will return, I will return." What type of words did Kṛṣṇa use in His message? He used words full of love (*sa premaih*). Kṛṣṇa said, "O *gopīs* ! I am leaving you today only because of King Kamsa's invitation to the Dhanur-yajna, which is difficult to refuse. It is not at all by My own desire. After seeing the Dhanur-yajna, I will return the next day. If some other work comes, I will also finish that tomorrow and quickly return the next day." If these words were really what Kṛṣṇa was thinking, then they can be called *sa-premaih*, filled with love. But if

they are not, then they are deceitful.

We may think that these statements to Nanda Maharaja are similar in purpose to those Kṛṣṇa made to Vasudeva and Devaki in verse four of this chapter to bewilder them: *na labdho daiva-hatayor, vāso nau bhavad-antike, yām bālāḥ piṭṛ-geha-sthā, vindante lālītā mudam*, “Deprived by fate, We could not live with you in Mathura and enjoy the pampered happiness most children enjoy in their parents’ home.”

Perhaps Kṛṣṇa’s words to the *gopis* are similar. But then why does Sukadeva Gosvami use the words “*sa-premaih*” to describe Kṛṣṇa’s words to the *gopis*? If Kṛṣṇa had returned to Vraja the day after killing Kamsa without considering all His other duties such as killing Jarasandha, then one could understand that Kṛṣṇa was concerned with the *gopis*’ love. But if He did otherwise, one can only conclude that He was indifferent to their love. Therefore the word *sa-premaih* (with love) would be false.

The reconciliation of all these objections is as follows: Even though Vasudeva and Devaki are full of *prema* and cannot be neglected, the devotees in Vraja headed by Nanda Maharaja have *prema* which is unequalled and unexcelled. Therefore, it would certainly be all the more improper to ignore them. The purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s appearance to kill the demons and protect the devotees must also be carried out. In addition, Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Dvaraka and other places must be exhibited, such as kidnapping Rukmini, stealing the *parijata* tree, and associating with Yuddhisthira. Kṛṣṇa must also fulfill His promise to the *gopis* to return after seeing the Dhanur-yajna (bow sacrifice). Kṛṣṇa also had to reveal the super excellence of the *gopis*’ love to the world by showing it to Uddhava, the most exalted of the entire retinue of the Lord’s devotees in Mathura and Dvaraka and the crown jewel of the learned. Just as a man places his valuable gold within fire to reveal its purity, Kṛṣṇa placed His most beloved devotees, the Vraja-*gopis*, in the fire of separation from Him in order to manifest the unprecedented quality of their *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Having all these activities to carry out, Kṛṣṇa resorted to His inconceivably powerful *yogamaya* potency, and along with Balarama

came before Nanda. At that time Kṛṣṇa manifested two separate forms of Nanda and the other devotees present and Himself and Balarama as well. Kṛṣṇa's words to Nanda in verses 21-23, and the descriptions of the next two verses (24-25), presented by the first form have been explained.

But Kṛṣṇa and Balarama in their second forms also speak, asking a question. "O father, we have been raised by you with great affection. But are We just your adopted sons and not your actual sons? Please tell Us factually. King Ugrasena and all the Yadavas in this place say that We are only your adopted sons. Therefore Vasudeva and Devaki, thinking Us to be their sons, are showing Us excessive affection and trying to keep Us here in Mathura indefinitely. They don't permit Us to come to see you. Though you are their dear friend, they have not even invited you to dine with them tomorrow according to the rules of etiquette. All this time none of the Yadavas have come to pay you a visit. Being very disturbed, We have run away by force without their knowing to come to see you." This is the meaning of verse twenty-one according to the second form of Kṛṣṇa.

In reply to this the second form of Nanda said, "But, my dear Kṛṣṇa! In a previous life You were Vasudeva's son, as Garga Rsi told me at Your name-giving ceremony, *prāg ayaṁ vasudevasya kvacij jātas tavātmajaḥ* (SB 10.8.14). I would assume that he also told this to Vasudeva.

Therefore even in this lifetime Vasudeva is thinking of You, the ocean of all good qualities, as if You were His son and thus wants to keep You here. I understand, however, that Baladeva is his own proper son, whom he wants to take back home. Now I am asking You a question. Do You think that we, as these people of Mathura say, are only Your foster parents? And are You only our foster sons?"

Kṛṣṇa answered this question (verse twenty-one) with tears in His eyes. "Parents have greater affection for the children born from themselves than they have even for their own bodies and souls. If I were merely your adopted son then how could I have become millions of times more dear to you than your own lives? Therefore I will never again even look upon the face of Vasudeva and these other enemies of yours!"

Then Nanda spoke to Baladeva, “But my darling son Baladeva! Please tell me what You think in this regard?” Baladeva said (verse twenty-two), “Those who raise the children are the real parents. Therefore I will not stay in Vasudeva’s house without you and Kṛṣṇa, even if Brahma himself commands.” This verse has been previously explained in a similar way.

Nanda Maharaja thought, “If I take Baladeva with Me back to Vraja, then Vasudeva and the other devotees in Mathura will become extremely unhappy. The selfish persons in Mathura like Kamsa and other demons have shown enmity to Me but why should I act inimically?” While Nanda was pondering over this, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama suddenly spoke (verse twenty-three): “O father, you should return to Vraja and We will come later. We will not stay here a moment more than necessary. You know the statement of the *Niti-sastra*, ‘If one has a relative what is the need of fire, and if there is a good friend, what is the necessity of medicine?’ If out of your compassion you cannot tolerate the Yadavas’ suffering, then listen. We will visit Vasudeva and your relatives (*jñātīn*), and give happiness to your friends by letting them see Us.”

Thus addressed by Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, Nanda Maharaja embraced them strongly with both arms just as a miser holds his wealth to his chest and does not let it fall away (verse twenty-five). Beside himself with loving affection (*pranaya vihvala*), and his eyes filled with tears of ecstasy (*pūrayann aśrubhir netre*), Nanda Maharaja mounted a golden chariot and went off to Vraja. By the power of *yogamaya*, one Nanda Maharaja separated from Kṛṣṇa and went to Vraja alone, while the other Nanda, invisible to the other, remained in Kṛṣṇa’s association in Vraja. In this same way, all the Vraja-gopis, *gopas*, and their animals expanded into two separate manifestations. One set was immersed in an ocean of suffering with Nanda in separation from Kṛṣṇa, and the other set was immersed in an ocean of bliss along with Nanda in association with Kṛṣṇa. They existed simultaneously in Vraja without seeing or contacting each other.

This is similar to how Narada Muni saw so many separate

manifestations of Kṛṣṇa in Dvaraka. In one place Devaki was happily caring for Kṛṣṇa and feeding Him, and simultaneously at another place Devaki was suffering in separation from Kṛṣṇa, lamenting, “Alas, alas, why has my son, who went out to hunt, not returned yet? He must be pained by hunger and thirst.” This is stated in the *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (5.512):

*āścaryam ekadaikātra, vartamānāny api dhruvam, parasparam
asamprkta, svarūpāny eva sarvathā*

“How astonishing that though two forms were present in the same place at once, each form was unaware of the other form and did not contact it.” *Laghu-bhagavatamṛta* (1.20) further says: *prakāśas tu na bhedeṣu, ganyate sa hi nau pṛthak*, “*Prakāśa-rūpas* are the same form manifest in many places.” Although Kṛṣṇa’s *prakāśa* manifestations are not factually different from Him, still, by the influence of His *līlā-sakti*, a differentiation develops among His self-identities, activities and so on. This will become clear later on, in the chapter on the power of *yogamaya* and in the story of Bahulasva and Srutadeva.

Thus the two separate manifestations have, respectively, two different purposes. Just as one subjects his precious gold to fire in order to reveal its true form, similarly it was in order to show to Uddhava, the chief among His personal associates situated in pure love of God, the supreme position of the Vraja-gopis’ astonishing *prema* with its characteristics of *divyonmada* (divine madness) and *citra-jalpa* (artful chatter), that Kṛṣṇa first of all manifested His particular manifestation in the mood of separation. Upon going to Vraja and witnessing the superiority of this *mahā-prema*, Uddhava would then announce to the world the supreme excellence of the *gopis*’ love in such verses as this: *etāḥ param tanu-bhrto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo, govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ, vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayaṁ ca, kim 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?” (SB 10.47.58)

nāyaṁ śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ, svar-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ, rāsotsave 'sya bhuja-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṅṭha, labdhāsiṣām ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām

“When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the *gopīs* in the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. What to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?” (SB 10.47.60)

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām, vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhīnām, 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 they 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.” (SB 10.47.61)

When these manifested forms of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees in separation later went to Kuruksetra and showed themselves to Vasudeva, Devaki, Rukmini and others, they made them also attain this wonder of *mahā-prema*. When Balarama went to Vraja He also became astonished upon seeing the madness of pure love in the devotees manifesting separation from Kṛṣṇa.

In order to make it known that the *prema* of *gopīs* and the other Vrajavasis, which has Kṛṣṇa as its object, is permanent and unchanging, Kṛṣṇa shows the second manifestation of Himself with His devotees in the mood of direct association. Thus by the dual usage of the word *ahanī* (days and nights) in the verse *viśokā ahanī ninyur gāyantyah*

priya-ceṣṭitam (SB 10.39.37), the *gopis* express that they were separated from Kṛṣṇa only for the duration of two days and not longer than that. It should be understood from this that after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathura, the *gopis* specifically attained Kṛṣṇa’s association by singing about His pastimes for two days. On going to Vraja, Uddhava as well uses the present tense in his statement to Nanda and Yasoda:

hatvā kaṁsaṁ raṅga-madhye, pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām, yad āha vaḥ samāgatya, kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat

“Having killed Kaṁsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill His promise to you by coming back.” (SB 10.46.35) And thus we find in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.46.9-13) when Uddhava first entered Vraja, he saw the forms of the devotees manifesting direct association with Kṛṣṇa. When Uddhava approached Nanda, the cows were mooing loudly with full milk bags and chasing their calves, and the bulls were mooing loudly as they engaged in fighting with each other for enjoying the cows. There was the sound of milking cows and the flute. The cowherd men and women appeared splendid with all their ornaments. As they pulled on the churning ropes with their arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jingling bangles and their jewels, which reflected the lamps’ light. Their hips, breasts and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish *kunkuma*, glowed radiantly with the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks (10.46.45). 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 dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction (10.46.46). By such statements as these, characterizing the ecstasy of direct association with Kṛṣṇa, we understand the purpose of the second manifestation of Kṛṣṇa and attain scriptural proof of this.

Text 26

atha sūra-suto rājan,

*putrayoḥ samakārayat,
purodhasā brāhmaṇaiś ca,
yathāvad dvija-saṁskṛtim*

My dear King, then Vasudeva, the son of Śū rasena, arranged for a priest and other brāhmaṇas to perform his two sons' second-birth initiation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva arranged to have the *upanayana samskara* (brahminical initiation) performed by Garga Muni (*purosadha*) and other *brahmanas*.

Text 27

*tebhyo 'dād dakṣiṇā gāvo,
rukma-mālāḥ sv-alakṛtāḥ,
sv-alakṛtebhyaḥ sampūjya,
sa-vatsāḥ kṣauma-mālinīḥ*

Vasudeva honored these brāhmaṇas by worshiping them and giving them fine ornaments and well-ornamented cows with their calves. All these cows wore gold necklaces and linen wreaths.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cows wore garlands of linen cloth as well as gold garlands.

Text 28

*yāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāma-janmarkṣe,
mano-dattā mahā-matiḥ,*

*tās cādadād anusmṛtya,
kaṁsenādharmato hṛtāḥ*

The magnanimous Vasudeva then remembered the cows he had mentally given away on the occasion of Kṛṣṇa’s and Balarāma’s birth. Kāmsa had stolen those cows, and Vasudeva now recovered them and gave them away in charity also.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At the time of Kṛṣṇa’s appearance Vasudeva was locked in the prison of Kāmsa, who had stolen all of Vasudeva’s cows. Still, Vasudeva was so jubilant over Kṛṣṇa’s birth that he mentally donated ten thousand of his cows to the *brāhmaṇas*. Now upon Kāmsa’s death, Vasudeva went to Kāmsa’s *goshala*, took back his cows, and gave ten thousand of them to worthy *brahmanas*.

Text 29

*tataś ca labdha-saṁskārau,
dvijatvaṁ prāpya su-vratau,
gargād yadu-kulācāryād,
gāyatram vratam āsthitaḥ*

After attaining twice-born status through initiation, the Lords, sincere in Their vows, took the further vow of celibacy from Garga Muni, the spiritual master of the Yadus.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The term *gāyatram vratam* means that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were following the vow of celibacy in student life (*brahmacarya*).

Texts 30–31

*prabhavau sarva-vidyānām,
sarva-jñāu jagad-īśvarau,
nānya-siddhāmalaṁ jñānam,
gūhamānau narehitaiḥ,
atho guru-kule vāsam,
icchantāv upajagmatuḥ,
kāśyaṁ sāndīpaniṁ nāma,
hy avanti-pura-vāsinam*

Concealing Their innately perfect knowledge by Their humanlike activities, those two omniscient Lords of the universe, Themselves the origin of all branches of knowledge, next desired to reside at the school of a spiritual master. Thus They approached Sāndīpani Muni, a native of Kāśī living in the city of Avantī.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Since Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were covering Their innate (*nānya-siddhā:svābhāvikaṁ*) knowledge by Their human-like behavior, They went to the *gurukula* to acquire knowledge.

Text 32

*yathopasādya tau dāntau,
gurau vṛttim aninditām,
grāhayantāv upetau sma,
bhaktyā devam ivādṛtau*

Sāndīpani thought very highly of these two self-controlled disciples, whom he had obtained so fortuitously. By serving him as devotedly as one would serve the Supreme Lord Himself, They showed others

an irreproachable example of how to worship the spiritual master.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In order to teach others (*grahayantau:śikṣayantau*) perfect dealings with the *guru*, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama served (*vṛttim:upasattim*) the *guru* with great devotion according to the scriptural rules. They were also respected by the *guru*.

Text 33

*tayor dvija-varas tuṣṭaḥ,
śuddha-bhāvānuvṛttibhiḥ,
provāca vedān akhilān,
saṅgopaniṣado guruḥ*

That best of brāhmaṇas, the spiritual master Sāndīpani, was satisfied with Their submissive behavior, and thus he taught Them the entire Vedas, together with their six corollaries and the Upaniṣads.

Text 34

*sa-rahasyam dhanur-vedam,
dharmān nyāya-pathāms tathā,
tathā cānvīkṣikīm vidyām,
rāja-nītim ca ṣaḍ-vidhām*

He also taught Them the Dhanur-veda, with its most confidential secrets; the standard books of law; the methods of logical reasoning and philosophical debate; and the sixfold science of politics.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sandipani Muni taught Kṛṣṇa and Balarama the confidential portion of the *Dhanur-veda*, military science, which includes knowledge of the appropriate *mantras* and the presiding deities of warfare. *Dharmān* refers to the *Manu-saṁhitā* and other standard lawbooks (*dharmā-śāstras*). *Nyāya-pathān* refers to the doctrine of Karma-mīmāṁsā and other such theories. *Ānvīkṣikīm* is knowledge of the techniques of logical argument (*tarka*). The six-fold political science is quite pragmatic and includes (1) *sandhi*, making peace; (2) *vigraha*, war; (3) *yāna*, marching; (4) *āsana*, sitting tight; (5) *dvaiddha*, dividing one's forces; and (6) *saṁśaya*, seeking the protection of a more powerful ruler.

Texts 35–36

*sarvaṁ nara-vara-śreṣṭhau,
sarva-vidyā-pravartakau,
sakṛṇ nigada-mātreṇa,
tau sañjagr̥hatur nr̥pa,
aho-rātrais̄ catuḥ-śaṣṭyā,
saṁyattau tāvatīḥ kalāḥ,
guru-dakṣiṇayācāryaṁ,
chandayām āsatur nr̥pa*

**O King, those best of persons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being
Themselves the original promulgators of all varieties of knowledge,
could immediately assimilate each and every subject after hearing
it explained just once. Thus with fixed concentration They learned
the sixty-four arts and skills in as many days and nights. Thereafter,
O King, They satisfied Their spiritual master by offering him guru-
dakṣiṇā.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For details of the sixty-four arts one should consult the *Tantras*. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama satisfied (*chandayām āsatuḥ*) their *guru* by inducing him to accept some remuneration, saying “Please take as *daksina* something that you desire.” According to the *Amara-kosa* dictionary, the word *chanda* means desire or allurement.

Text 37

*dvijas tayos taṁ mahimānam adbhutaṁ,
samlokṣya rājann ati-mānusīm matim,
sammantrya patnyā sa mahārṇave mṛtaṁ,
bālaṁ prabhāse varayām babhūva ha*

O King, the learned brāhmaṇa Sāndīpani carefully considered the two Lords’ glorious and amazing qualities and Their superhuman intelligence. Then, after consulting with his wife, he chose as his remuneration the return of his young son, who had died in the ocean at Prabhāsa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The child of the *brahmana* was swallowed by the conchshell demon while he was playing at Mahā-śiva-kṣetra, the great pilgrimage place of Lord Siva [Prabhāsa].

Text 38

*tathety athāruhya mahā-rathau rathaṁ,
prabhāsam āsādya duranta-vikramau,
velām upavrajya niṣīdatuḥ kṣanaṁ,
sindhur viditvārhanam āharat tayoh*

“So be it,” replied those two great charioteers of limitless might, and They at once mounted Their chariot and set off for Prabhāsa. When They reached that place, They walked up to the shore and sat down. In a moment the deity of the ocean, recognizing Them to be the Supreme Lords, approached Them with offerings of tribute.

Text 39

*tam āha bhagavān āśu,
guru-putraḥ pradīyatām,
yo ’sāv iha tvayā grasto,
bālako mahatormiṇā*

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa addressed the lord of the ocean: Let the son of My guru be presented at once—the one you seized here with your mighty waves.

Text 40

*śrī-samudra uvāca,
na cāhārṣam ahaṁ deva,
daityaḥ pañcajano mahān,
antar-jala-caraḥ kṛṣṇa,
śaṅkha-rūpa-dharo ’surah*

The ocean replied: O Lord Kṛṣṇa, it was not I who abducted him, but a demonic descendant of Diti named Pañcajana, who travels in the water in the form of a conch.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The ocean said, “I have not taken the boy. The demon named Pancajana has taken the boy. He is so powerful I cannot defeat him.”

Text 41

*āste tenāhr̥to nūnaṁ,
tac chrutvā satvaram̐ prabhuḥ,
jalam āviśya taṁ hatvā,
nāpaśyad udare 'rbhakam*

“Indeed,” the ocean said, “that demon has taken him away.” Hearing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the ocean, found Pañcajana and killed him. But the Lord did not find the boy within the demon’s belly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The ocean said, “Pancajana is present moving about in the water.” Such is the implied completion of the thought.

Texts 42–44

*tad-aṅga-prabhavam̐ śaṅkham,
ādāya ratham āgamat,
tataḥ saṁyamanīm̐ nāma,
yamasya dayitām purīm,
gatvā janārdanaḥ śaṅkham̐,
pradadhmau sa-halāyudhaḥ,
śaṅkha-nirhrādam ākarṇya,
prajā-saṁyamano yamaḥ,*

*tayoḥ saparyām mahatīm,
cakre bhakty-upabṛmhitām,
uvācāvanataḥ kṛṣṇam,
sarva-bhūtāśayālayam,
līlā-manuṣyayor viṣṇo,
yuvayoḥ karavāma kim*

Lord Janārdana took the conchshell that had grown around the demon’s body and went back to the chariot. Then He proceeded to Saṁyamānī, the beloved capital of Yamarāja, the lord of death. Upon arriving there with Lord Balarāma, He loudly blew His conchshell, and Yamarāja, who keeps the conditioned souls in check, came as soon as he heard the resounding vibration. Yamarāja elaborately worshiped the two Lords with great devotion, and then he addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, who lives in everyone’s heart: “O Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, what shall I do for You and Lord Balarāma, who are playing the part of ordinary humans?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, and knew that the boy was not in the ocean, He left Balarama on the shore along with the chariot, and on the pretext of searching for the boy went into the ocean to reclaim His own conchshell. One should understand that Pancajana had become a demon in a way similar to that of Jaya and Vijaya. In reality, he was eternally on the spiritual platform as Kṛṣṇa’s devotee.

The phrase *tad-aṅga-prabhavam* (“which had grown from his body”) actually means that the conchshell was lying in the demon’s stomach according to the Avanti-khaṇḍa of the *Skanda Purana*:

*tataḥ pañcajanaṁ hatvā, grāha-rūpaṁ mahāsuram, tan-madhya-stham
sa jagrāha, saṅkha-grastaṁ hi yat pure*

“Having killed Pancajana, the great demon in the form of an aquatic, Kṛṣṇa took the conch which was lying in his belly (*tan madhya stham*).” From this evidence some *acaryas* explain that the conch was residing

within the demon's body, and it merely came out of the demon's body (*tad-aṅga-prabhavam*) when Kṛṣṇa killed him.

Kṛṣṇa loudly blew the conch (*janārdanaḥ śaṅkhaṁ pradadhmau*) and all the inhabitants of hell were delivered on hearing the sound. The *Skanda Purāṇa*, Avanti-khaṇḍa, describes the wonderful things that happened when Kṛṣṇa sounded His conchshell:

*asipatra-vanaṁ nāma, śīrṣa-patram ajāyata rauravaṁ nāma narakam,
arauravam abhūt tada, abhairavam bhairavākhyam, kumbhī-pākam
apācakam*

“The hell known as Asipatra-vana lost the sharp, sword-like leaves on its trees, and the hell named Raurava became free of its *ruru* beasts. The Bhairava hell lost its fearfulness, and all cooking stopped in the Kumbhīpāka hell.”

The *Skanda Purāṇa* further states, *pāpa-kṣayāt tataḥ sarve, vimuktā nārakā narāḥ, padam avyayam āsādya*, “All the inhabitants of hell were purified of their sins and attained Vaikuntha in the spiritual world.”

For the phrase *līlā-manuṣyayor viṣṇo*, we also have the second reading *līlā-manuṣya he viṣṇo*. The sentence can mean, “What service can I do for You two forms of Visnu playing the roles of humans?” Or “O Visnu who plays the pastimes of a human, what service can I do for You two?”

Text 45

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
guru-putram ihānītam,
nija-karma-nibandhanam,
ānayasva mahā-rāja,
mac-chāsana-puraskṛtaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Suffering the bondage of his past activity, My spiritual master's son was brought here to you. O great King, obey My command and bring this boy to Me

without delay.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Though in most cases a person must endure the effects of his past deeds (*nija-karma-nibandhanam:prarabdha*), you should return the son of My *guru*.” According to the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.31.12): *martyena yo guru-sutam yama-loka-nītaṁ*: “Sri Kṛṣṇa brought the son of His *guru* back from the planet of the lord of death in the boy’s selfsame body.” The commentary of Sridhara Swami also mentions this. Kṛṣṇa said to Yamaraja, “There will be no fault in your giving first priority to My order (*mac-chāsana-puraskṛtaḥ*) and bringing him.”

Text 46

*tatheti tenopānītaṁ,
guru-putraṁ yadūttamau,
dattvā sva-gurave bhūyo,
vṛṇīṣveti tam ūcatuḥ*

Yamarāja said, “So be it,” and brought forth the guru’s son. Then those two most exalted Yadus presented the boy to Their spiritual master and said to him, “Please select another boon.”

Text 47

*śrī-gurur uvāca,
samyak sampādito vatsa,
bhavadbhyāṁ guru-niṣkrayaḥ,
ko nu yuṣmad-vidha-guroḥ,
kāmanām avaśiṣyate*

The spiritual master said: My dear boys, You two have completely fulfilled the disciple’s obligation to reward his spiritual master. Indeed, with disciples like You, what further desires could a guru have?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sandipani Muni said, “What desires remain for the *guru* with disciples like You?”

Text 48

*gacchataṁ sva-gr̥haṁ vīrau,
kīrtir vām astu pāvanī,
chandāmsy ayāta-yāmāni,
bhavantv iha paratra ca*

O heroes, now please return home. May Your fame sanctify the world, and may the Vedic hymns be ever fresh in Your minds, both in this life and the next.

Text 49

*guruṇaivam anujñātau,
rathenānila-ramhasā,
āyātau sva-puraṁ tāta,
parjanya-ninadena vai*

Thus receiving Their guru’s permission to leave, the two Lords

returned to Their city on Their chariot, which moved as swiftly as the wind and resounded like a cloud.

Text 50

*samanandan prajāḥ sarvā,
dr̥ṣṭvā rāma-janārdanau,
apaśyantyo bahv ahāni,
naṣṭa-labdha-dhanā iva*

All the citizens rejoiced upon seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, whom they had not seen for many days. The people felt just like those who have lost their wealth and then regained it.

Chapter Forty-six: Uddhava Visits Vrndavana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vṛṣṇīnām pravaro mantrī,
kṛṣṇasya dayitaḥ sakhā,
śiṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād,
uddhavo buddhi-sattamaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The supremely intelligent Uddhava was the best counselor of the Vṛṣṇi dynasty, a beloved friend of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and a direct disciple of Bṛhaspati.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Uddhava visits Vraja and observes that which caused great joy (*uddhavam*) for Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, and also the unhappiness (*anuddhavam*) felt by the Vrajavasis in separation from Them.

Remembering the sorrow of the Vrajavasis who were afflicted with separation from Him, Kṛṣṇa Himself became full of anxiety and reflected, “Who is there in this city of Mathura qualified to deliver My message, which will relieve their suffering, and make known to the world the supreme position of the Vrajavasis’ *prema*? Who is there who has performed thousands of austerities in order to delight in the sweet ocean of the Vrajavasis’ *prema*?”

The present verse singles out Uddhava, who had by chance just appeared before Kṛṣṇa to render some service, and designates him as the right person to do the needful. *Vṛṣṇīnām pravaro* means that Uddhava was respected by all the members of the Vṛṣṇī clan for his exemplary words and deeds. Thus, when Uddhava returns from

Vrndavana after experiencing the Vrajavasis' *prema*, and tells the Vṛṣṇīs how the *prema* of Nanda and Yasoda, and the *gopas* and *gopis* is thousands of times greater even than their own love for Kṛṣṇa, they would believe it, even though they had been thinking that they had the greatest fortune and love for the Lord since He was their own relative, and that the *prema* of Vasudeva and Devaki was the highest, since they have the Lord as their son.

The word *mantrī* indicates that Uddhava was an expert counselor, and therefore would be skillful at consoling the feelings of the Vrajavasis. Uddhava was a beloved of Kṛṣṇa (*dayitaḥ:vallabha*), therefore, he was qualified to drink the nectar of the Vrajavasis' pure love of God. The word *sakhā* (friend) implies that Uddhava is fluent in discussing conjugal love, just like Subala-sakhā in Vrajabhumi. What was in Uddhava's heart would manifest in his words even more than with Kṛṣṇa. Thus it is stated in the *Bhagavatam* (3.4.31): *noddhavo 'ṅv api man-nyūno*, "Uddhava is not even slightly different from Me." Resembling Kṛṣṇa so much, Uddhava was the perfect person to execute the role of Kṛṣṇa's messenger in Vrndavana.

That Uddhava is the direct disciple of Bṛhaspati (*śiṣyo bṛhaspateḥ sākṣād*) indicates that when Bṛhaspati saw the sharpness of Uddhava's intellect he personally taught him all the *śāstras*. However, the suggestion here is that Uddhava lacked knowledge of one particular *śāstra* which was inaccessible to even Bṛhaspati, namely the topmost knowledge of the science of *prema*, which controls Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself. But because Uddhava is so dear to Kṛṣṇa, certainly the Vraja-gopis would instruct him in this *śāstra*.

The word *buddhi-sattama* means that Uddhava is so extremely intelligent that he could understand that knowledge of *prema*, which Sri Kṛṣṇa personally spoke to His chief queens in Dvaraka in the privacy of their personal quarters. The *Bhagavatam* (10.83.43) describes how the queens of Dvārakā appreciated the depth of the *gopis*' love:

vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti, pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ, gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ, pada-sparśam mahātmanaḥ

"We [Dvaraka queens] desire the same contact with Sri Kṛṣṇa's feet that

the young women of Vraja, the cowherd boys and even the aborigine Pulinda women desire—the touch of the dust He leaves on the plants and grass as He tends His cows.”

Śrī Hari-varṁśa states that Uddhava is the son of Vasudeva’s brother Devabhāga: *uddhavo devabhāgasya mahā-bhāgaḥ suto ’bhavat*. In other words, he is Kṛṣṇa’s cousin-brother. In reference to this statement, Nanda addresses Uddhava as *mahā-bhāgaḥ* (greatly fortunate) in verse sixteen of this chapter. The word *uddhava* literally means “a festival of joy.” The words *sākṣād uddhavo* can be taken as one phrase, meaning that Uddhava was actually festivity personified. Thus when the Vrajavasis see him they will become blissful.

Text 2

*tam āha bhagavān preṣṭham,
bhaktam ekāntinam kvacit,
grhītvā pāninā pāniṁ,
prapannārti-haro hariḥ*

The Supreme Lord Hari, who relieves the distress of all who surrender to Him, once took the hand of His fully devoted, dearest friend Uddhava and addressed him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava was not only Kṛṣṇa’s devotee but an exclusive devotee (*ekantinam*). The quality of the *ekanta-bhakta* is mentioned in this verse:

*vihāya pitr-devādīn, pariniśṭhāṅgato harau tad-gāḍha-premabhiḥ
pūrṇa, ekāntīti nigadyate*

“He is an *ekanta-bhakta* who gives up father, mother and other attachments, fixes his mind only on Kṛṣṇa and is filled with deep *prema* for the Lord.”

Furthermore, Uddhava is *preṣṭham* (most dear), even among these

exclusive devotees, and the object of Kṛṣṇa’s special affection. On one occasion, Kṛṣṇa took Uddhava’s hand (*kvacit grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇim*) and spoke to him in a secluded place. This hints at Kṛṣṇa’s own anxiety about the residents of Vraja. Kṛṣṇa takes away the distress (*ārti-haro*) of anyone who merely surrenders to Him, what to speak of taking away the distress of the Vrajavasis, who possessed the topmost form of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Text 3

*gacchoddhava vrajaṁ saumya,
pitror nau prītim āvaha,
gopīnām mad-viyogādhiṁ,
mat-sandేశair vimocaya*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] Dear gentle Uddhava, go to Vraja and give pleasure to Our parents. And also relieve the gopīs, suffering in separation from Me, by giving them My message.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava, “Make My father and mother completely happy (*prītim*).” By the word *vimocaya* Kṛṣṇa indicates, “Uddhava, the mental pain of separation from Me is bound within the gopīs’ hearts with a strong rope. You can release them from this by My messages, not by your expertise in speech. And it will be done by many messages (*sandేశaiḥ* is plural). It is not one message on *jnana-yoga* (analysis and detachment), nor after that by two messages containing instructions on how to attain Me and then words of consolation. These messages will simply burn to ashes in the blazing fire of their *prema*. But the gopīs will finally be freed from sorrow by hearing many confidential instructions indirectly spoken, which should be revealed to them and to no one else.”

Text 4

*tā man-manaskā mat-prāṇā,
mad-arthe tyakta-daihikāḥ,
mām eva dayitam preṣṭham,
ātmānaṁ manasā gatāḥ,
ye tyakta-loka-dharmās ca,
mad-arthe tān bibharmy aham*

The minds of those gopīs are always absorbed in Me, and their very lives are ever devoted to Me. For My sake they have abandoned everything related to their bodies, renouncing ordinary happiness in this life, as well as religious duties necessary for such happiness in the next life. I alone am their dearmost beloved and, indeed, their very Self. Therefore I take it upon Myself to sustain them in all circumstances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “The minds (*mat manaska*) of the Vraja-gopis are fixed on Me alone. I am their very life (*mat prana*). They have given up (*tyakta*) all bodily connections (*daihikāḥ*) such as husbands, sons, mothers, fathers, eating, drinking and sleeping.” The reason for all this is stated: “They have understood (*manasā gatāḥ*) that I alone am dear (*dayitam:priyam*) to them, and not any other husband of their own. Not only am I dear but I am the dearest (*preṣṭham*) of all. Not only I am the dearmost, but they think of Me as their very selves and as the Supersoul. Since I, their soul, am living here in Mathura, they believe that their souls have left their bodies, and only by My inconceivable *yogamaya* potency are they still living. I sustain the neophyte *sadhakas* who renounce this world and its mundane religiosity for My sake, then what to speak of these *gopis*?”

Text 5

*mayi tāḥ preyasām preṣṭhe,
dūra-sṭhe gokula-striyaḥ,
smarantyo 'ṅga vimuhyanti,
virahautkaṅṭhya-vihvalāḥ*

My dear Uddhava, for those women of Gokula I am the most cherished object of love. Thus when they remember Me, who am so far away, they are overwhelmed by the anxiety of separation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: But, someone may object, “If You are the dearest to the *gopis*’ minds and life airs, and their very Self, then why haven’t they come here to Mathura? How can they stay there in Vraja?” This verse answers the question.

Kṛṣṇa said, “The minds of the women in Gokula are fixed in meditation upon Me in the dress of a cowherd boy, adorned with *gunja* berries, colored oxides, flute and peacock feathers, and engaged in playing with them in Gokula. Why should they come to Mathura? Besides, I do not desire to bring them here.”

“Furthermore, whatever is dear to us becomes an object of our possessiveness. Ultimately the dearest object is the soul or our self. Thus things in a favorable relationship to our self also become dear to us, and we try to possess them. Among countless millions of such dear things, I am the dearest of all, even dearer than one’s own self. The Vraja-gopis have realized this fact, and thus they have become stunned in separation from Me due to their intense love for Me. Although they would have given up their lives, they are being kept alive by My inconceivable potency.”

Text 6

*dhārayanty ati-kṛcchreṇa,
prāyaḥ prāṇān kathañcana,
pratyāgamana-sandeśair;
ballavyo me mad-ātmikāḥ*

Simply because I have promised to return to them, My fully devoted cowherd girlfriends struggle to maintain their lives somehow or other.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “With great difficulty the *gopis* are somehow maintaining their lives because of My promise to return. It would be much easier to simply give up their lives.”

But then, someone may question, “How are the *gopis* maintaining their lives?”

Kṛṣṇa answers in this verse, “It was by My statement, ‘I will quickly return (*pratyāgamana*),’ made while leaving Gokula, that the *gopis* have strong hope that I will return. This is all that is maintaining their life airs, which are about to leave their bodies.”

“What is their relation to You?”

This Kṛṣṇa answers with the word *ballavyaḥ*, meaning that, “Even though they are women of the cowherd community, still they belong to Me. Their husbands actually have no contact whatsoever with their supremely attractive qualities of form, taste, fragrance, sound and touch. Rather, their husbands merely presume, ‘These are our wives.’ In order to nourish the taste of *rasa*, the Vraja-*gopis* have always been, from the very beginning, in a self-sustaining conjugal relation with Me as their paramour (*parakiya-bhava*).

“They are to be enjoyed by Me alone because they are manifestations of My own form (*mad atmika*) as incarnations of supreme bliss. They are My own internal energy (*svarupa-sakti*) appearing as the essence of My pleasure potency (*hladini-sakti*). Though I am *atma-rama*, I derive more pleasure from them. For this reason I consider them more deserving of My mercy than even My own self.” (The suffix *ka* in *atmika*, expresses

compassion)

Another meaning of *mad-atmikah*: “These *gopis* are Mine because they are the objects of My enjoyment. Or the *gopis*’ very selves are absorbed in Me, in the sense of their always hankering to give pleasure to My mind.”

Text 7

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ukta uddhavo rājan,
sandeśam bhartur ādṛtaḥ,
ādāya ratham āruhya,
prayayau nanda-gokulam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus addressed, O King, Uddhava respectfully accepted his master’s message, mounted his chariot and set off for Nanda-gokula.

Text 8

*prāpto nanda-vrajam śrīmān,
nimlocati vibhāvasau,
channa-yānaḥ praviśatām,
paśūnām khura-reṇubhiḥ*

The fortunate Uddhava reached Nanda Mahārāja’s pastures just as the sun was setting, and since the returning cows and other animals were raising dust with their hooves, his chariot passed unnoticed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: When Uddhava entered Vraja the sun was setting (*nimlocatī*), and his chariot was covered (*channa yanah*) with dust raised by the hooves of the cows.

Texts 9–13

*vāsītārthe 'bhiyudhyadbhir;
nāditam śuśmibhir vṛṣaiḥ,
dhāvantībhiś ca vāsrābhir,
udho-bhāraiḥ sva-vatsakān,
itas tato vilaṅghadbhir,
go-vatsair maṅḍitam sitaiḥ,
go-doha-śabdābhiravam,
veṅūnām niḥsvanena ca,
gāyantībhiś ca karmāṇi,
śubhāni bala-kṛṣṇayoḥ,
sv-alankṛtābhir gopībhir;
gopaiś ca su-virājitam,
agny-arkātithi-go-vipra,
pitṛ-devārcanānvitaiḥ,
dhūpa-dīpaiś ca mālyaiś ca,
gopāvāsair mano-ramam,
sarvataḥ puṣpita-vanam,
dvijāli-kula-nāditam,
haṁsa-kāraṅḍavākīrṇaiḥ,
padma-ṣaṅḍaiś ca maṅḍitam*

Gokula resounded on all sides with the sounds of bulls in rut fighting with one another for fertile cows; with the mooing of cows, burdened by their udders, chasing after their calves; with the noise of milking and of the white calves jumping here and there; with the loud reverberation of flute-playing; and with the singing of the all-

auspicious deeds of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma by the cowherd men and women, who made the village resplendent with their wonderfully ornamented attire. The cowherds' homes in Gokula appeared most charming with their abundant paraphernalia for worship of the sacrificial fire, the sun, unexpected guests, the cows, the brāhmaṇas, the forefathers and the demigods. On all sides lay the flowering forest, echoing with flocks of birds and swarms of bees and beautified by its lakes crowded with swans, kāraṇḍava ducks and bowers of lotuses.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vraja is described in five verses. Inspired by the desire potency (*icchā-śakti*) of Kṛṣṇa, who thought, “Let Uddhava see the splendor of My Vraja”, *yogamaya* covered the particular manifestation of Vraja, which was merged in grief because of separation from Kṛṣṇa, and undergoing the *sancari-bhāvas* of disinterest (*nirveda*), depression (*visada*) and humility (*dainya*). Instead, *yogamaya* showed Uddhava a typical evening in Vraja in which Kṛṣṇa was present, charming with the positive sentiments of joy, playfulness, eagerness and enthusiasm.

Because the cows were in heat (*vasitah*) the bulls were mad, mooing loudly, and fighting with each other to mate with them. Vraja echoed with the sounds of cows running after their new calves. Along with the sound of milking cows there were shouts in all directions such as “Let the cow loose”, “Don’t let the cow loose”, “Bring the cows here”, “Do this quickly”, “Do this slowly”, “Bring this”, “Take this”, “Give this, receive this.” Vraja also appeared splendid on account of the sound of flutes and the singing of the *gopis*. The performance of sacrifices and worship beautified the homes of the cowherds.

Text 14

*tam āgataṁ samāgamya,
kṛṣṇasyānucaram priyam,*

*nandaḥ prītaḥ pariṣvajya,
vāsudeva-dhiyārcayat*

As soon as Uddhava arrived at Nanda Mahārāja’s home, Nanda came forward to meet him. The cowherd King embraced him in great happiness and worshiped him as nondifferent from Lord Vāsudeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then Uddhava approached the home of Nanda, which was filled with misery due to separation from Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava looked just like Nanda’s son Kṛṣṇa and gave pleasure to anyone who saw him. Thus though Nanda was stunned due to separation from Kṛṣṇa, when he saw Uddhava he became aware of external events and eagerly went out to embrace his exalted visitor. *Vāsudeva-dhiyā* means that Nanda Maharaja thought “My worshipable Deity, Narayana, has come here in the form of this guest.” Thus Nanda worshiped Uddhava with foot wash and other items.

Text 15

*bhojitaṁ paramānnena,
saṁviṣṭaṁ kaśīpau sukham,
gata-śramaṁ paryapṛcchat,
pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ*

After Uddhava had eaten first-class food, been seated comfortably on a bed and been relieved of his fatigue by a foot massage and other means, Nanda inquired from him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda fed Uddhava sweet rice (*paramānnena*). From the day that Kṛṣṇa departed for Mathura, all the

homes of the Vrajavasis were left unswept and dirty, filled with leaves, grass, dust and spider webs. The Vrajavasis were kept alive only by the milk, yogurt and buttermilk brought by people from neighboring villages. They simply lamented, “Alas! Alas! We have died.” But on this day, one particular *brahmana* in Nanda’s entourage understood that the King of Vraja was thinking, “Ah, ah, when Uddhava comes to my house today he should not suffer from hunger.” Thus that *brahmana* took some chipped rice and cooked just enough sweet rice to feed one person. Massaging Uddhava’s feet was performed by a servant, since Uddhava was Nanda Maharaja’s nephew and therefore an inferior.

Text 16

*kaccid aṅga mahā-bhāga,
sakhā naḥ śūra-nandanah,
āste kuśaly apatyādyair,
yukto muktaḥ suhr̥d-vrataḥ*

[Nanda Mahārāja said:] My dear most fortunate one, does the son of Śūra fare well, now that he is free and has rejoined his children and other relatives?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Fearing that if he asked about Kṛṣṇa, his throat would choke up and tears would come to his eyes, Nanda first asked about the welfare of Vasudeva. Vasudeva was now freed from Kamsa’s prison and all sorts of dangers.

Text 17

diṣṭyā kamso hataḥ pāpaḥ,

*sānugaḥ svena pāpmanā,
sādhūnām dharmā-śīlānām,
yadūnām dveṣṭi yaḥ sadā*

Fortunately, because of his own sins, the sinful Kāmsa has been killed, along with all his brothers. He always hated the saintly and righteous Yadus.

Text 18

*api smarati naḥ kṛṣṇo,
mātaraṁ suhṛdaḥ sakhīn,
gopān vrajaṁ cātma-nātham,
gāvo vṛndāvanam girim*

Does Kṛṣṇa remember us? Does He remember His mother and His friends and well-wishers? Does He remember the cowherds and their village of Vraja, of which He is the master? Does He remember the cows, Vṛndāvana forest and Govardhana Hill?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then with tears in his eyes and a choked voice Nanda Maharaja inquired about Kṛṣṇa. Pointing with his forefinger, he said, “Just see the unfortunate condition of Kṛṣṇa’s mother. Just see how Vraja, whose very soul and master (*atma-natham*) was Kṛṣṇa, is now deprived of a master and devoid of beauty.”

Text 19

apy āyāsyati govindaḥ,

*sva-janān sakṛd īkṣitum,
tarhi drakṣyāma tad-vaktraṁ,
su-nasaṁ su-smitekṣaṇam*

Will Govinda return even once to see His family? If He ever does, we may then glance upon His beautiful face, with its beautiful eyes, nose and smile.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By saying “Will He come?” (*āyāsyati*) Nanda Maharaja implies, “O Uddhava, perhaps you know the intention in Kṛṣṇa’s mind?”

Uddhava: “Yes, I am sure Kṛṣṇa will come to console you and stay here again permanently.”

Nanda Maharaja: “Forget about Kṛṣṇa’s coming back here to remain permanently. I beg only to see Him. Will Govinda not come just once to see His own family members (*sva-janan*), who are suffering in the blazing fire of separation, and about to die either today or tomorrow? If Govinda does return, then He can receive (*vinda*) and enjoy millions of cows, gold coins, pearls, diamonds and other jewels, silver and gold plates, varieties of garments, ornaments, sandalwood paste, *aguru* scent and *kunkuma*, as well as many other household objects. If we two (His parents) die then who else will have a right to all these things? So Kṛṣṇa should come and take them. Certainly a person should reside where the things he desires are found.”

Uddhava: “Why are you talking like this? You should know that Govinda is about to come.”

Intolerant of the delay, Nanda Maharaja said, “When (*karhi:tarhi*) will I be able to see Kṛṣṇa’s face, which surpasses the beauty of a million moons, and His incomparable nose, nectar sweet smile, and His long, lotus petal eyes? Now that our lives are about to end; may we see Kṛṣṇa just once and then die.” Thus Nanda Maharaja expresses his extreme anxiety.

Text 20

*dāvāgner vāta-varsāc ca,
vṛṣa-sarpāc ca rakṣitāḥ,
duratyayebhyo mṛtyubhyaḥ,
kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā*

We were saved from the forest fire, the wind and rain, the bull and serpent demons—from all such insurmountable, deadly dangers—by that very great soul, Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “But you will not die. You will live a long time raising your son with affection.”

Nanda Maharaja replied, “Unlike before, we will not be saved from the hands of death.” In saying this, Nanda recounted the previous threats of death: “Kṛṣṇa saved us from the forest fire and Indra’s torrential rains because of His natural affection (*su-mahatmana:mahā-sneha-maya*) for us. But why is He not saving us now from the terrible fire of separation? I cannot understand this.”

Text 21

*smaratām kṛṣṇa-vīryāṇi,
līlāpāṅga-nirīkṣitam,
hasitam bhāṣitam cāṅga,
sarvā naḥ śīthilāḥ kriyāḥ*

As we remember the wonderful deeds Kṛṣṇa performed, His playful sidelong glances, His smiles and His words, O Uddhava, we forget all our material engagements.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said, “Just remembering Kṛṣṇa’s moon-like face produces an intoxicating nectar that removes all kinds of distress.”

Nanda Maharaja replied, “That is true. But even though recollection of Kṛṣṇa removes all suffering, now because of our ill fortune that remembrance creates more suffering. Whenever we remember Kṛṣṇa, we lose all interest in material activities (*naḥ śithilāḥ kriyāḥ*). Only by the force of habit do we continue to bathe, eat, drink and perform other daily activities. In such a state we cannot remain alive!”

Text 22

*saric-chaila-vanoddeśān,
mukunda-pada-bhūṣitān,
ākrīdān īkṣyamāṇānām,
mano yāti tad-ātmatām*

When we see the places where Mukunda enjoyed His sporting pastimes—the rivers, hills and forests He decorated with His feet—our minds become totally absorbed in Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “If this is the case, I can understand that by staying in the house you are remembering Kṛṣṇa too much. Therefore to give up dwelling on Him, you should go outside, and wander along the shore of the Yamuna tending your cows.”

Anticipating such a suggestion, Nanda Maharaja explains here how even this would be unfavorable: “On seeing the rivers, forests and other places (*uddeśān*) where Kṛṣṇa performed pastimes, our mind becomes absorbed (*mano tad-ātmatām*) in Kṛṣṇa. Thus we remember Kṛṣṇa more and the pain of separation increases.”

Text 23

*manye kṛṣṇam ca rāmaṁ ca,
prāptāv iha surottamau,
surāṇām mahad-arthāya,
gargasya vacanam yathā*

In my opinion, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma must be two exalted demigods who have come to this planet to fulfill some great mission of the demigods. Such was foretold by Garga Āṣi.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By the sudden recollection of Kṛṣṇa as the Lord, in contrast to his natural mood of affection in separation, Nanda speaks with a sense of discrimination in this verse: “It was due to the good fortune of me and of Vasudeva that They became our sons and appeared in my house. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama have come to benefit the demigods (*suranam arthaya*) by killing Kamsa and other demons. This is according to the prophetic words of Garga Rsi.”

Text 24

*kamsam nāgāyuta-prāṇam,
mallau gaja-patiṁ yathā,
avadhiṣṭām līlayaiva,
paśūn iva mṛgādhipaḥ*

After all, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma killed Kamsa, who was as strong as ten thousand elephants, as well as the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika and the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa. They killed them all sportingly, as easily as a lion disposes of small animals.

Text 25

*tāla-trayaṁ mahā-sāraṁ,
dhanur yaṣṭim ivebha-rāt,
babhañjaikena hastena,
saptāham adadhād girim*

With the ease of a royal elephant breaking a stick, Kṛṣṇa broke a powerful, giant bow three tālas long. He also held a mountain aloft for seven days with just one hand.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “Kṛṣṇa broke a bow three *tālas* long! And with one hand, just His left hand, Kṛṣṇa held up Govardhana Hill for seven days!” A *tāla* “palm tree” is a measurement of ninety feet. Thus the great bow Kṛṣṇa broke was two hundred seventy feet long.

Text 26

*pralambo dhenuko ’riṣṭas,
tṛṇāvarto bakādayaḥ,
daityāḥ surāsura-jīto,
hatā yeneha līlayā*

Here in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma easily destroyed demons like Pralamba, Dhenuka, Arista, Tṛṇāvarta and Baka, who had themselves defeated both demigods and other demons.

Text 27

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya,
nandaḥ kṛṣṇānurakta-dhīḥ,
aty-utkaṅṭho 'bhavat tūṣṇīm,
prema-prasara-vihvalaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus intensely remembering Kṛṣṇa again and again, Nanda Mahārāja, his mind completely attached to the Lord, felt extreme anxiety and fell silent, overcome by the strength of his love.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Becoming completely attached to Kṛṣṇa by remembering the Lord’s majesty (*aiśvarya*), Nanda Maharaja thought, “Oh, by misfortune, I have been separated from my son, who is the ocean of powerful qualities!” Nanda’s attachment to Kṛṣṇa was such that even in appreciating Kṛṣṇa’s great powers as the Lord, his personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa did not weaken as it did with Vasudeva. Nanda’s mind remained attached to Kṛṣṇa with undiminished firmness. With his mind attracted to Kṛṣṇa in this way Nanda Maharaja became overcome by the sway of paternal affection (*prema-prasara-vihvalaḥ*). In the presence of the supreme *prema* of Nanda, who like Agastya, swallowed the whole ocean, what is the significance of a whole ocean of opulences (*aiśvarya*)?

Text 28

*yaśodā varṇyamānāni,
putrasya caritāni ca,*

*śṛṅvanty aśrūṇy avāsrākṣīt,
sneha-snuta-payodharā*

As mother Yaśodā heard the descriptions of her son’s activities, she poured out her tears, and milk flowed from her breasts out of love.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s father Nanda Maharaja, having thus controlled himself by the strength of his gravity, was now able to honor Uddhava properly as guest, to look at him directly, to recognize him, inquire about his well-being, and to speak about Kṛṣṇa’s godly qualities.

Kṛṣṇa’s mother Yasoda, however, who was drowning in the whirlpools of the ocean of unsteadiness, could not offer any hospitality to Uddhava. This is expressed in this verse. From the very day that Kṛṣṇa had left for Mathura, tears fell continuously from Yasoda’s eyes and milk dripped from her breasts. Even though she was being counseled by hundreds of women and men, Yasoda would just say, “I don’t want to see anything except the face of my son.” At every moment, Yasoda kept her eyes closed and cried constantly drenching her clothing. Thus she could not recognize Uddhava, treat him with parental affection, ask him any questions or give him any message for her son. Her breasts (*payodharā*) flowed profusely with milk out of affection for her son. *Payodharā* also means cloud. Yasoda was like a cloud showering the rain of tears and milk.

Text 29

*tayor itthaṁ bhagavati,
kṛṣṇe nanda-yaśodayoḥ,
vīkṣyānurāgam paramaṁ,
nandam āhoddhavo mudā*

Uddhava then joyfully addressed Nanda Mahārāja, having clearly seen the supreme loving attraction he and Yaśodā felt for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although Uddhava was already familiar with high levels of *prema*, now he clearly observed (*vīkṣya*) Nanda and Yasoda’s intense loving attraction for Kṛṣṇa. Seeing that both in quantity and quality their love was superior to that of Vasudeva and Devaki, Uddhava became filled with bliss and thought, “Now my life has become successful, having seen such love.” Thus Uddhava was joyful even at seeing their anguish, which was actually another form of loving ecstasy.

Text 30

*śrī-uddhava uvāca,
yuvām ślāghyatamau nūnam,
dehinām iha māna-da,
nārāyaṇe ’khila-gurau,
yat kṛtā matir īdṛśī*

Śrī Uddhava said: O respectful Nanda, certainly you and mother Yaśodā are the most praiseworthy persons in the entire world, since you have developed such a loving attitude toward Lord Nārāyaṇa, the spiritual master of all living beings.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “Among all praiseworthy devotees in this world, Vasudeva and Devaki are especially so, but you two are most praiseworthy because of the superiority of your *prema*.” Nanda already said in verse twenty-three that he knew that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were gods. Knowing that Nanda

appreciated Kṛṣṇa’s lordly aspect, Uddhava describes Kṛṣṇa in this verse as Narayana, the *guru* of everyone. He does this to emphasize Kṛṣṇa’s power, and to sympathize with Nanda and Yasoda’s sentiments.

Text 31

*etau hi viśvasya ca bīja-yonī,
rāmo mukundaḥ puruṣaḥ pradhānam,
anvīya bhūteṣu vilakṣaṇasya,
jñānasya ceśāta imau purāṇau*

These two Lords, Mukunda and Balarāma, are each the seed and womb of the universe, the creator and His creative potency. They enter the hearts of living beings and control their conditioned awareness. They are the primeval Supreme.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Uddhava describes how Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are Narayana and the spiritual masters of everyone. As the Lord (*amśī*) and His expansions (*amśa*) are nondifferent, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama (*etau*), though appearing as two entities, are actually one. This is confirmed by Akrura who said, *bahu-mūrty-eka-mūrtikam*, “Kṛṣṇa, though of one form, appears as many.”(SB 10.40.7) Uddhava said, “Both of Them are the seed and the womb of the universe, both of Them assume the forms of the immediate and ingredient cause, and both are the *purusa* and the *pradhana*, since the potency and the potent are essentially one.”

This is as stated in the (SB 11.24.19):

*prakṛtir yasyopādānam, ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ, sato 'bhivyañjakah
kālo, brahma tat tritayaṁ tv aham*

“The material universe may be considered real, having nature as its original ingredient and final state. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus nature,

the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.”

Uddhava said, “Entering as the indwelling Supersoul within all beings, They control the living entity, whose knowledge is separate. They mercifully grant knowledge of the Personality of Godhead (*bhagavan*) to the devotees and knowledge of Brahman (*vilakṣaṇasya-jñānasya*) to the *jnanis*.”

This point is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita* (10.10):

teṣāṃ satata-yuktānām, bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam, dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ, yena mām upayānti te

“To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.”

And in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (8.24.38):

madīyaṃ mahimānaṃ ca, param brahmeti śabditam, vetsyasy anugrhitam me, sampraśnair vivṛtam ḥṛdi

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *param brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.”

The word *ca* implies that Kṛṣṇa also gives mundane knowledge of how to attain heaven (Svargaloka), and other material destinations to the *karmis*.

Texts 32–33

*yasmin janaḥ prāṇa-viyoga-kāle,
kṣanaṃ samāveśya mano ’viśuddham,
nirhṛtya karmāśayam āśu yāti,
parām gatim brahma-mayo ’rka-varṇaḥ,
tasmin bhavantāv akhilātma-hetau,
nārāyaṇe kāraṇa-martya-mūrtau,
bhāvaṃ vidhattām nitarām mahātman,
kim vāvaśiṣṭam yuvayoḥ su-kṛtyam*

Anyone, even a person in an impure state, who absorbs his mind in Him for just a moment at the time of death burns up all traces of sinful reactions and immediately attains the supreme transcendental destination in a pure, spiritual form as effulgent as the sun. You two have rendered exceptional loving service to Him, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the Supersoul of all and the cause of all existence, the great soul who, although the original cause of everything, has a humanlike form. What pious deeds could still be required of you?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said, “After burning up (*nirhṛtya*) all traces of *karma*, one goes to Vaikuntha (*param gatim*) in a pure spiritual body (*brahma-mayah*), bright as the sun (*arka-varṇaḥ*). You two have rendered devotion to Narayana, who is the soul of all and the cause of all causes, even though He appeared in the form of a human. For you, therefore, what activities remain to be done?” The word *su-kṛtyam* (required pious activity) indicates that for Nanda and Yasoda nothing remains to be done. But for Kṛṣṇa there remains the work of consoling and pacifying them, and being obedient to them.

Text 34

*āgamiṣyaty adīrghena,
kālena vrajam acyutaḥ,
priyaṁ vidhāsyate pitror;
bhagavān sātvatām patih*

Infallible Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the devotees, will soon return to Vraja to satisfy His parents.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Our dear child Uddhava! I have heard

that you are very intelligent, but now I see that you are actually foolish because you are praising us. Alas, alas, who else would let such a wonderful son full of good qualities leave His home and go elsewhere? Who is there in the three worlds more unfortunate, degraded and miserable than us? We are to be condemned by everyone!” Anticipating this statement, Uddhava speaks consolingly in this verse. Uddhava said, “Acyuta (one who never falls or breaks His promise), will come very soon to Vraja. Acting as the master and protector of the Yadus (*satvanam patih*), Kṛṣṇa will stay here and fulfill (*priyam:mano-bhīṣtam*) all of your desires.”

Text 35

*hatvā kamsaṁ raṅga-madhye,
pratīpaṁ sarva-sātvatām,
yad āha vaḥ samāgatya,
kṛṣṇaḥ satyaṁ karoti tat*

Having killed Kamsa, the enemy of all the Yadus, in the wrestling arena, Kṛṣṇa will now surely fulfill His promise to you by coming back.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “After killing Kamsa and meeting you at the edge of Mathura, Kṛṣṇa said, ‘You return to Vraja and We will also quickly come there,’ (10.45.23) Kṛṣṇa is certainly doing (*karoti*) that.”

The present tense (*karoti*) is used to indicate that Kṛṣṇa is fulfilling His promise at this very moment. In fact, in another manifestation Kṛṣṇa was actually present in Vraja at that moment, being attentively cared for by Nanda and Yasoda, though unseen by Uddhava. By the influence of Vāg-devī (Sarasvati) Uddhava’s words were actually true.

Text 36

*mā khidyataṁ mahā-bhāgau,
drakṣyathaḥ kṛṣṇam antike,
antar hṛdi sa bhūtānām,
āste jyotir ivaidhasi*

O most fortunate ones, do not lament. You will see Kṛṣṇa again very soon. He is present in the hearts of all living beings, just as fire lies dormant in wood.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “Oh, how great is our misfortune that our son, who would never abandon us and always tells the truth, is delayed in returning to Vraja.” Uddhava speaks this verse to console Kṛṣṇa’s lamenting parents.

Uddhava said, “You should not lament. Very soon you will be able to see Kṛṣṇa.”

Nanda said, “You say we will see Kṛṣṇa but when will that be, tomorrow, the next day or ten days from now? With some consolation we will keep our life airs from leaving our bodies till that day. But if Kṛṣṇa is not coming, you should tell us truthfully. Let our life airs leave us, for we cannot stand the pain of repressing them.”

Hearing Nanda speak like this, Uddhava considered, “Alas, what advice can I give them? If they were suffering in separation from an ordinary, mundane son I could enlighten them by saying: ‘Why are you immersed in the illusion of family attachment like this? False attachment to wife and sons is a cause of trouble. Give that up and attach yourself to the Lord.’

“But how can I give this advice to Nanda, who is attached to Kṛṣṇa as his son? He is not like Vasudeva who, on seeing the godly powers of Kṛṣṇa, weakened his attachment to Kṛṣṇa as his son. Rather, by seeing Kṛṣṇa’s majestic powers Nanda and Yasoda’s attachment to their son

becomes even stronger and they think: ‘Alas, even the parents of an ordinary son die out of misery if they can no longer see him playing in their house. By our good fortune the Lord Himself played about in our house as our son. We lament bitterly if we cannot coddle Kṛṣṇa for even a moment. How will we live without seeing that child in our home? We are most unfortunate, having been separated from such a child.’

“But on the other hand, upon realizing the godly powers of Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva and Devaki think: ‘Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable Lord; He is not our son.’ Thus they refrain from embracing and fondling Him. Not only is the knot of possessiveness tied tightly for Nanda and Yasoda, but Kṛṣṇa has strong possessiveness of them as well, even though He is the Supreme Lord. I have seen Kṛṣṇa’s concern for their sake when He said, ‘Go to Vraja and make My father and mother happy. And remove the pain of separation from the Vraja-gopis by giving them news about Me.’ (SB 10.46.3) I also recall the words of the cowherd men which I previously heard: *dustyajaś cānurāgo ’smin, sarveṣāṁ no vrajaukasām, nanda te tanaye ’smāsu, tasyāpy autpattikaḥ katham*, ‘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 10.26.13)

“But if I go to Mathura and bring Kṛṣṇa here tomorrow, Jarasandha, angered over Kamsa’s wives becoming widows, will come and destroy Mathura. Who then will protect Vasudeva and the other Yadavas? If Kṛṣṇa leaves Vraja again and goes to Mathura to protect them, however, then the Vrajavasis will certainly die. If I tell the Vrajavasis that Kṛṣṇa will come in four or five years, it will be very hard for them to hold on for that long. If I lie, telling them that Kṛṣṇa will come after four or five days, when the time expires and they discover I lied, then also they will die.

“Alas! As there is no other means, I will now weaken their *prema* by discoursing on spiritual knowledge. I will tell them that as the Supersoul, Kṛṣṇa is indifferent to everything, and as the formless, impersonal Brahman Kṛṣṇa has no relationships with birth, father, mother, material activities or the material body. To realize all this I

will teach them how to meditate on the soul. However, if Nanda and Yasoda’s unlimited and unfathomable pure love for Kṛṣṇa not only remains unchecked but rather increases after hearing my discourse, then I will return to Mathura and simply glorify their incomparable *prema* again and again in the grand assembly of Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the others.” Having decided thus, Uddhava meditated on Kṛṣṇa and spoke about Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul.

Uddhava said, “As fire lies dormant within wood, Kṛṣṇa is present within the hearts of all living beings. Just as the fire within wood is not visible without friction, similarly, Kṛṣṇa is not visible without devotion.”

Hearing this, Nanda and Yasoda thought, “Uddhava is telling us if we do not perform devotional activities as the Vaisnavas do for Kṛṣṇa, our son, why should He appear in our house? If that is the case, we must perform devotional service for our son, so that somehow or other He will appear in our house.”

After Uddhava returned to Mathura, Nanda and the cowherd men, their eyes brimming with tears, said:

*manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ, kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ, vāco 'bhidhāyinīr
nāmnām, kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu*

“O fortunate one, may our minds rest on Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, may our voices always sing His names, and may our bodies offer Him respects.”
(SB 10.47.66)

Text 37

*na hy asyāsti priyaḥ kaścin,
nāpriyo vāsty amāninaḥ,
nottamo nādhamo vāpi,
sa-mānasyāsamo 'pi vā*

For Him no one is especially dear or despicable, superior or

inferior, and yet He is not indifferent to anyone. He is free from all desire for respect and yet gives respect to all others.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Noticing that Nanda and Yasoda's *prema* did not diminish after his explanation, Uddhava said, "My dear King of Vraja, Kṛṣṇa is directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, Parabrahman. He is free from the desire for respect and also gives respect to others. No one is dear to Brahman because Brahman has no false identity and is equal to all. Uddhava explained these points in three verses (37-39).

Text 38

*na mātā na pitā tasya,
na bhāryā na sutādayaḥ,
nātmīyo na paraś cāpi,
na deho janma eva ca*

He has no mother, no father, no wife, children or other relatives. No one is related to Him, and yet no one is a stranger to Him. He has no material body and no birth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The direct meaning of the verses which Uddhava revealed to Nanda is obvious. There is a hidden meaning as well.

Text 39

*na cāsya karma vā loke,
sad-asaṁ-miśra-yoniṣu,
krīḍārthaṁ so 'pi sādḥūnām,*

paritrāṇāya kalpate

He has no work to do in this world that would oblige Him to take birth in pure, impure or mixed species of life. Yet to enjoy His pastimes and deliver His saintly devotees, He manifests Himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “That Brahman does not take birth in wombs of goodness, passion or ignorance, because it is without birth, and it has no *karma* nor a material body. Consequently it does not have material activities or material goals. Kṛṣṇa, however, takes birth from those whose natures are purely spiritual, beyond the material modes, such as Yasoda, Devaki and Kausalya. Afterwards, He appears with a body, has a mother and father, performs activities, fulfills responsibilities and has goals.”

However, Uddhava did not want to directly reveal this to Nanda, so he concealed it by saying, “Though Kṛṣṇa is the original form of Brahman, out of His own compassion, He appears in a way suitable to deliver His devotees from suffering.”

Text 40

*sattvaṁ rajasa tama iti,
bhajate nirguṇo guṇān,
krīḍann atīto 'pi guṇaiḥ,
sṛjaty avan hantya ajaḥ*

Although beyond the three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance—the transcendental Lord accepts association with them as His play. Thus the unborn Supreme Lord utilizes the material modes to create, maintain and destroy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “It may be questioned if Kṛṣṇa is equal to all, and no one is dear or not dear to Him, then why does He make some people happy in this world and others unhappy?”

Uddhava said, “The answer is that happiness and distress are produced by the modes of material nature, not by Kṛṣṇa.” That is the intention of this verse. Even though Kṛṣṇa is beyond the material modes of nature (*nirguna*), by glancing at His *maya-sakti* (material energy) He accepts *sattva*, *raja* and *tama gunas*.”

Nanda Maharaja: “For what purpose?”

Uddhava: “For the purpose of playing, even though Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, beyond play.” By this Uddhava intended to make Nanda Maharaja understand that Kṛṣṇa does not even play.

Uddhava: “In truth, however, even though Kṛṣṇa is transcendental, He appears within this world of illusion as Kṛṣṇa and Rama to enjoy pastimes with His devotees. Although Kṛṣṇa transcends the modes, He uses the modes to create the universe, so that the *jivas* from the previous day of Brahma can reap the fruits of their good and bad *karma* and thus enjoy and suffer. What fault is there in Kṛṣṇa for this?”

Text 41

*yathā bhramarikā-drṣṭyā,
bhrāmyatīva mahīyate,
citte kartari tatrātmā,
kartevāham-dhiyā smṛtaḥ*

Just as a person who is whirling around perceives the ground to be turning, one who is affected by false ego thinks himself the doer, when actually only his mind is acting.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said, “Actually Kṛṣṇa is not

the creator of the universe either, since even that is executed by the modes of nature. Due to a defect in the bodily functions, a person may perceive that the earth is turning around (*bhramarikā*) like a potter's wheel. Similarly, though the mind is the doer, the living entity perceives the soul as the doer due to identification with the mind. In the same way, the living entity perceives the universe as the creation of the Lord, though it is actually the creation of the modes of nature (*gunas*). It should be understood however, that though the material universe is not a direct creation of Kṛṣṇa, it is a creation of Kṛṣṇa's *maya-sakti*, coming from the Lord. As Kṛṣṇa and His energy are nondifferent, one can say that the Lord in the form of His *maya-sakti* creates the world."

Text 42

*yuvayor eva naivāyam,
ātmajo bhagavān hariḥ,
sarveṣām ātmajo hy ātmā,
pitā mātā sa īśvarah*

The Supreme Lord Hari is certainly not your son alone. Rather, being the Lord, He is the son, Soul, father and mother of everyone.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said, "You should not think of the creator of the whole universe as your son, or the source of your happiness and suffering. Though Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, if you still think of Him as your son, then listen as I speak the truth." Then Uddhava speaks this verse: "Kṛṣṇa is not just your son, but whoever cultivates a sentiment for Him as their son will have Him as a son. Anyone who thinks of Kṛṣṇa as the most beloved of their souls (*ātma-preṣṭha*) will achieve Him as their dearmost. For those who think of Kṛṣṇa as father, He is their father. Because Kṛṣṇa is the controller (*iśvarah*) nothing is impossible for Him."

Text 43

*dr̥ṣṭam̐ śrutam̐ bhūta-bhavad-bhaviṣyat,
sthāsnus̐ cariṣṇur mahad alpakaṁ ca,
vinācyutād vastu tarām na vācyam̐,
sa eva sarvaṁ paramātma-bhūtaḥ*

Nothing can be said to exist independent of Lord Acyuta—nothing heard or seen, nothing in the past, present or future, nothing moving or unmoving, great or small. He indeed is everything, for He is the Supreme Soul.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said, “Actually, O King of Vraja, you should know that since the whole universe is created by Kṛṣṇa’s energy, it is nondifferent from Him. Therefore, you should bear this in mind whenever you speak about Him. There is nothing in this universe that can be said to exist independently of Lord Acyuta.”

Text 44

*evam̐ niśā sā bruvator vyatītā,
nandasya kṛṣṇānucarasya rājan,
gopyaḥ samutthāya nirūpya dīpān,
vāstūn samabhyarcya dadhīny amanthan*

While Kṛṣṇa’s messenger continued speaking with Nanda, the night ended, O King. The women of the cowherd village rose from bed and, lighting lamps, worshiped their household deities. Then they began churning the yogurt into butter.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the entire night passed in discussion, Uddhava could not pacify Nanda and Yasoda nor get them to accept his advice. Then Nanda considered things in this way: “Uddhava wants to enlighten us by saying that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord. Do we not know that? At Kṛṣṇa’s name-giving ceremony I heard Garga Muni say, ‘Your son will be equal to Narayana in qualities.’ Indeed who else is there more equal to Narayana than Kṛṣṇa? Therefore from Garga we learned that our son is Narayana. Besides that, we also personally experienced our son to be Narayana when He killed Putana, Agha and Baka, lifted Govardhana Hill, stopped the forest fire, and made the ruler of Varunaloka offer respects. Certainly I realize that Kṛṣṇa is Narayana, the Supersoul and the Supreme Brahman. Nevertheless, nothing inhibits me from thinking of Kṛṣṇa as our son. The proof is Garga’s words: *tasmān nandātmajo ’yam te*, “O Nanda, this son of yours.” (SB 10.8.19)

“Even though Kṛṣṇa may be the Supreme Lord, we do not think of Him as an object of worship. We simply think of Kṛṣṇa as our son, and find satisfaction by offering Him the remnants of our chewed betel nut. If He were not our son, our minds would not be satisfied. Before Kṛṣṇa’s birth we could meditate on Narayana, our family deity. But now, as soon as we meditate on Narayana, Narayana appears directly in front of us. This is a sign of the satisfaction in our minds. Therefore acting like this in relation to our son is not a fault. We are certainly Kṛṣṇa’s mother and father.

“Further, Kṛṣṇa’s own realization in this matter is also proof that we two are His parents. We have seen many times that His face becomes sad if we don’t pamper Him by offering Him the remnants of our chewed betel nut, lift Him on our laps, embrace Him, kiss Him and so forth. “If Yasoda were not His mother, how could she tie him up when He broke the yogurt pots? Seeing Him unhappy on being tied up, I freed Him and He smiled with happiness. Because we are His parents, Kṛṣṇa accepts our scolding, commands, and even our tying Him up though He may be the Supreme Lord. If it was not a fact that we are Kṛṣṇa’s

parents then how could the Supreme Personality, the all-pervading Absolute, become bound up by us?

“But now, after Kṛṣṇa has killed Canura, Kamsa and others in Mathura, everyone is telling Him, ‘O Kṛṣṇa, You are certainly the Supreme Lord!’ Moreover, Devaki tells Kṛṣṇa, ‘I am Your mother’, Vasudeva tells Him, ‘I am Your father’, others say, ‘We are Your paternal uncles’, and yet others tell Kṛṣṇa that they are His brothers, relatives and friends. Whenever they try to bring Kṛṣṇa to their various houses by inviting Him there, they simply prolong His stay in Mathura. Then our son, the crest jewel of proper conduct, looks at their faces and falls further into a terrible trap.

“Being incapable of returning to His Vraja because of His benevolent nature, I suppose Kṛṣṇa told everyone: ‘Indeed, I am the Supreme Lord, the creator of the universe. Who can be My mother, who can be My father, and who can be My relative? Just look in all the scriptures and you will see that I belong only to that person who renders devotional service to Me and no one else. Only to his house will I go, and he alone is My father and other relations.’

Nanda Maharaja continued to contemplate, “But this Uddhava is simply a child, even though he may be very intelligent. He cannot fathom the depths of my son’s heart. Taking the literal meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s words as if they were Kṛṣṇa’s real thoughts, Uddhava has come from Mathura and given us this advice. But my son has cleverly spoken quite correctly that ‘He who renders devotion to Me is My father and in his house I reside.’

“Therefore I am sending this message with Uddhava to Kṛṣṇa: ‘My dear Kṛṣṇa, I have devotion for Your lotus feet. Be merciful and be pleased with me, so that I can attain You by the devotional processes of hearing and chanting about You, remembering You and offering obeisances unto You.’ Receiving this message, my son will announce in the assembly of the Yadavas, ‘O men of the Yadu dynasty, You could not exhibit devotion to Me in this place, but Nanda Maharaja is doing so. Therefore Nanda Maharaja is My real father, friend and beloved. I am going to his house.’ Saying this Kṛṣṇa will come here at once.”

At last, Nanda Maharaja forgot all these deliberations and did not send any message to Kṛṣṇa, due to the influence of the *sancari-bhava* of humility (*dainya*). Now, to continue the text: Rising during the *brahma-muhurta* period, the Vraja-gopis lit lamps and worshiped the entrances (*vāstūn samabhyarcya*) of their homes, churned yogurt and performed other domestic duties.

Text 45

*tā dīpa-dīptair maṇibhir virejū,
rajjūr vikarṣad-bhuja-kaṅkaṇa-srajaḥ,
calan-nitamba-stana-hāra-kuṇḍala-
tviṣat-kapolāruṇa-kuṅkumānāḥ*

As they pulled on the churning ropes with their bangled arms, the women of Vraja shone with the splendor of their jewels, which reflected the lamps' light. Their hips, breasts and necklaces moved about, and their faces, anointed with reddish kuṅkuma, glowed radiantly with the luster of their earrings reflecting from their cheeks.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis*' gem-studded armlets, anklets and rows of bangles glittered in the lamp light. As they pulled the churning ropes their breasts, hips and necklaces trembled. Their jeweled earrings lit up their cheeks, and their faces shone with *kunkuma* from the province of Bahlika.

Text 46

*udgāyatīnām aravinda-locanam,
vrajāṅganānām divam aspr̥śad dhvaniḥ,*

*dadhnaś ca nirmanthana-śabda-miśrito,
nirasystate 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 dissipated all inauspiciousness in every direction.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *udgāyatīnām* (loudly singing) indicates that the *gopīs* were absorbed in thinking of lotus-eyed (*aravinda-locanam*) Kṛṣṇa and feeling His presence. Thus they sang loudly in great bliss. Dressing nicely with colorful clothing and ornaments, smearing *kunkuma* on oneself, and singing sweetly do not occur in the state of separation and lamentation. Therefore it is understood that at the end of night Uddhava was seeing the manifestation of Vraja with Kṛṣṇa present there, just as he had seen at the end of the previous day upon arriving in Vraja.

Text 47

*bhagavaty udite sūrye,
nanda-dvāri vrajaukaśaḥ,
drṣṭvā rathaṁ śātakaumbhaṁ,
kasyāyam iti cābruvan*

When the godly sun had risen, the people of Vraja noticed the golden chariot in front of Nanda Mahārāja’s doorway. “Who does this belong to?” they asked.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Vraja-okasaḥ* (residents of Vraja) refers to the *gopīs* who were feeling separation upon seeing the chariot of Uddhava. Here the manifestation of Vraja in separation from Kṛṣṇa

again appears.

Text 48

*akrūra āgataḥ kim vā,
yaḥ kamsasyārtha-sādhakaḥ,
yena nīto madhu-purīm,
kṛṣṇaḥ kamala-locanaḥ*

“Perhaps Akrū ra has returned—he who fulfilled Kamsa’s desire by taking lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* angrily said, “Perhaps Akrura, who took Kṛṣṇa to Mathura to fulfill the purposes of Kamsa, has returned to Vraja.”

Text 49

*kim sādhaiṣyaty asmābhir;
bhartuḥ prītasya niṣkṛtim,
tataḥ strīṇām vadantīnām,
uddhavo ’gāt kṛtāhnikāḥ*

“Is he going to use our flesh to offer funeral oblations for his master, who was so satisfied with his service?” As the women were speaking in this way, Uddhava appeared, having finished his early-morning duties.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “For what purpose has Akrura come again, now that Kamsa has been killed?” Considering this, the *gopis*

propose a reason in this verse. “Is he going to perform the funeral rites of his master Kamsa, who was pleased (*prītasya*) with his work of taking Kṛṣṇa away from Vraja, by using our flesh as an offering to him?” As the *gopis* were speaking like this, Uddhava approached. Sometimes the word *pretasya* (dead Kamsa) is seen instead of *prītasya* (satisfied Kamsa).

Chapter Forty-seven: The Song of the Bee (*Bhramara-gītā*)

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tam vīkṣya kṛṣṇānucaram vraja-striyaḥ,
pralamba-bāhum nava-kañja-locanam,
pītāmbaram puṣkara-mālinam lasan,
mukhāravindam parimṛṣṭa-kunḍalam,
su-vismitāḥ ko 'yam apīvyā-darśanaḥ,
kutaś ca kasyācyuta-veṣa-bhūṣaṇaḥ,
iti sma sarvāḥ parivavrur utsukās,
tam uttamaḥ-śloka-padāmbujāśrayam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The young women of Vraja became astonished upon seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa’s servant, who had long arms, whose eyes resembled a newly grown lotus, who wore a yellow garment and a lotus garland, and whose lotuslike face glowed with brightly polished earrings. “Who is this handsome man?” the gopīs asked. “Where has he come from, and whom does he serve? He’s wearing Kṛṣṇa’s clothes and ornaments!” Saying this, the gopīs eagerly crowded around Uddhava, whose shelter was the lotus feet of Lord Uttamaḥśloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Uddhava hears the ten types of *citra-jalpa* [Radha’s surprising talk or prattling, symptomatic of the highest stage of divine love madness, *mahābhāva*]. He then gives Kṛṣṇa’s message to the *gopis*, praises them and returns to Mathura to report to Kṛṣṇa.

The word *su-vismitāḥ* (very astonished) means that the *gopis* were

surprised thinking, “How did Uddhava obtain Kṛṣṇa’s yellow *dhōti* and His lotus garland?” In some editions, *su-vismitāḥ* is replaced with the word *śuci-smitāḥ*, which means the *gopīs*’ smiles were pure (*śuci:śuddha*) because of the joy arising from seeing Uddhava in a dress which reminded them of Kṛṣṇa.

“Who is this handsome man? Where has he come from and whose servant is he?” Seeing Uddhava, the *gopīs* became excited over the possibility of obtaining news about Kṛṣṇa.

Text 3

*taṁ praśrayeṇāvanatāḥ su-sat-kṛtaṁ,
sa-vrīḍa-hāsekṣaṇa-sūnṛtādibhiḥ,
rahasy apr̥cchann upaviṣṭam āsane,
vijñāya sandeśa-haraṁ ramā-pateḥ*

Bowing their heads in humility, the *gopīs* duly honored Uddhava with their shy, smiling glances and pleasing words. They took him to a quiet place, seated him comfortably and began to question him, for they recognized him to be a messenger from Kṛṣṇa, the master of the goddess of fortune.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopīs* bowed their heads out of humility. Being naturally bashful, they covered their heads with their veils. This bashfulness suddenly appears on its own upon meeting any respectable person. Thinking that Uddhava must be an intimate friend of their beloved, the *gopīs* smiled, looked at him with curious eyes, greeted him with pleasing words (*sūnṛta*) of welcome, and worshiped him with foot wash and other items suitable to the time and place. They then asked Uddhava questions in private (*rahasy*), unseen by outsiders. By his coming promptly to such a place, they understood that Uddhava was bearing news about Kṛṣṇa, the master of Lakṣmi.

Sri Sukadeva Gosvami, siding with the *gopis*, showed some jealousy towards Kṛṣṇa by addressing Him as *ramā-pateḥ*, the husband of Lakṣmi. By this phrase Sukadeva Gosvami implies the following: “The goddess of fortune herself is coming soon to Mathura to make Kṛṣṇa happy. So what purpose could Kṛṣṇa have in making a pretense of sending messages to the cowherd girls?”

Text 4

*jānīmas tvām yadu-pateḥ,
pārśadam samupāgatam,
bhartreha preṣitaḥ pitror,
bhavān priya-cikīrṣayā*

[The *gopīs* said:] We know that you are the personal servant of Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, and that you have come here on the order of your good master, who desires to give pleasure to His parents.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “We know who you are, so we do not have to ask. You are a follower of the Lord of the Yadus.” By the word *yadu-pateḥ* (chief of the Yadus) the *gopis* imply that, “Even though Kṛṣṇa is of the cowherd community, He is now living as the king of the Yadus. Having attained such a big post, why would He want to come back here? Therefore it seems, O Uddhava, that Kṛṣṇa has sent you, not for us, but to pacify His mother and father. In other words, we think Kṛṣṇa has sent you out of fear of criticism from the public who might say, ‘What use has Kṛṣṇa for His parents who are cowherd people? Nanda and Yasoda may cry themselves to death, but Kṛṣṇa will simply stay here in Mathura and rule as King.’”
“O charming fellow! The crest jewel of intelligent persons has sent you to satisfy His parents. Having come here, you should go to Nanda

and Yasoda. Upon receiving you, they will forget about Kṛṣṇa in their ecstasy. Indeed, the sharpness of Kṛṣṇa’s intelligence has come in handy!”

In this way, there are many such implications of criticism hidden in the gopis’ words of false praise, which arise as the subtle, new buds on the tree of their words.

Text 5

*anyathā go-vraje tasya,
smaraṇīyam na cakṣmahe,
snehānubandho bandhūnām,
muner api su-dustyajah*

We see nothing else He might consider worth remembering in these cow pastures of Vraja. Indeed, the bonds of affection for one’s family members are difficult to break, even for a sage.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis said, “We do not see anyone else worthy of remembrance in Vraja. In other words, if Kṛṣṇa has in this way disregarded even His parents Yasoda and Nanda, whom He remembers, then how is it possible for such persons like us to have a place in His memory at all? Even those who take *sannyasa* find it hard to give up the relationship with their father and mother. But Kṛṣṇa has very easily given up His relationship with countless wives of others whom He enjoyed. Ah, just see the severity of Kṛṣṇa’s renunciation!”

Text 6

*anyeṣv artha-kṛtā mairī,
yāvad-artha-vidambanam,*

*pumbhiḥ strīṣu kṛtā yadvat,
sumanaḥsv iva śaṭpadaih*

The friendship shown toward others—those who are not family members—is motivated by personal interest, and thus it is a pretense that lasts only until one’s purpose is fulfilled. Such friendship is just like the interest men take in women, or bees in flowers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: But it may be objected, “Because Kṛṣṇa has no need for a mother, father, brother or anyone, He should not have possessiveness of them. He has some use for you women, however, because of His wantonness, and therefore He should be remembering you all the more.”

The *gopis* respond to the objection in this verse: “Friendship with those other than one’s parents is motivated. Without those motives the relationships do not exist. Thus they should be condemned. Those who make friendship, those who are the object of friendship and those who assist in bringing about friendship are all to be condemned because of the selfish motivation. There is friendship where there is motive, and no friendship where there is no motive. The friendship of men and women is the same.

“Attractive women, like flowers, possess beauty, fragrance, tenderness, sweetness and charm. As bees drink only once a flower’s nectar and then leave it for another, fickle men abandon beautiful and devoted women to pursue other pleasures. Thus, since there is no friendship even when there is motivation, this relationship is even more despicable.”

Text 7

niḥsvam tyajanti gaṇikā,

*akalpam nṛpatim prajāḥ,
adhīta-vidyā ācāryam,
ṛtvijo datta-dakṣiṇam*

Prostitutes abandon a penniless man, subjects an incompetent king, students their teacher once they have finished their education, and priests a man who has remunerated them for a sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The last verse explained that friendships do not exist without motivation. In this verse the *gopis* give a series of examples for logical illumination (*dipaka nyaya*). The *gopis* said, “The prostitute abandons the penniless man. The citizens give up the king who cannot protect them. The priest gives up the sponsor once he has given a donation.”

Text 8

*khagā vīta-phalam vṛkṣam,
bhuktvā cātiṭhayo gṛham,
dagdham mṛgās tathāraṇyam,
jārā bhuktvā ratām striyam*

Birds abandon a tree when its fruits are gone, guests a house after they have eaten, animals a forest that has burnt down, and a lover the woman he has enjoyed, even though she remains attached to him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Birds give up a tree once the fruits are gone. A paramour gives up a woman though she is eager for enjoyment. But as long as she is young he does not give her up. When the motivation disappears the friendship ceases. Therefore,

since Kṛṣṇa’s motives are being fulfilled by the women of Mathura, why should He remember us?” By this they hint at Kṛṣṇa’s not having any love for them.

In this verse the word woman (*striyam*) is singular and paramours (*jārā*) is in the plural form. By this the *gopīs* imply: “It is alright to reject a woman who is involved with many men out of lust. But we are many who are simply devoted to one, and still He has no love for us. Our love is not impelled by lust since we have had love for Kṛṣṇa since our childhood. By neglecting so many of us Kṛṣṇa shows unprecedented cruelty in His heart.”

Texts 9–10

*iti gopyo hi govinde,
gata-vāk-kāya-mānasāḥ,
kṛṣṇa-dūte samāyāte,
uddhave tyakta-laukikāḥ,
gāyantyah prīya-karmāṇi,
rudantyaś ca gata-hriyah,
tasya saṁsmṛtya saṁsmṛtya,
yāni kaiśora-bālyayoḥ*

Thus speaking, the gopīs, whose words, bodies and minds were fully dedicated to Lord Govinda, put aside all their regular work now that Kṛṣṇa’s messenger, Śrī Uddhava, had arrived among them. Constantly remembering the activities their beloved Kṛṣṇa had performed in His childhood and youth, they sang about them and cried without shame.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Tyakta-laukikāḥ means the *gopīs* had abandoned the customs of general society by revealing with their own mouths their indulgence in illicit love. While repeatedly singing about

Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in childhood and youth, the *gopis* forgot all external considerations and wept openly before Kṛṣṇa’s messenger, Uddhava. “Of His childhood and youth” (*kaiśora-bālyayoḥ*) indicates that ever since their childhood, the *gopis*’ love for Kṛṣṇa had been unconditional (*nirupadhika*). It is not the case that in youth the *gopis* love became conditionally motivated by lusty desires (*kamopadhika*).

Text 11

*kācin madhukaram dṛṣtvā,
dhyāyantī kṛṣṇa-saṅgamam,
priya-prasthāpitam dūtam,
kalpayitvedam abravīt*

One of the *gopīs*, while meditating on Her previous association with Kṛṣṇa, saw a honeybee before Her and imagined it to be a messenger sent by Her beloved. Thus She spoke as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to Sanatana Gosvami’s *Sri Vaisnava-tosani*, this *gopi* (*kācit*) is the embodiment of the seventh stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, pure love of Godhead, known as *mahābhāva* [*sneha, māna, pranaya, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, mahābhāva*], which itself is the essence of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure potency (*hladini-sakti*). In other words, this *gopi* is Vrsabhanunandini Sri Radha. Imagining in Her meditation how Kṛṣṇa is associating with the women of Mathura, Radhika experiences the rise of jealous anger (*māna*) within Herself and thinks, “My beloved Sri Kṛṣṇa has sent this messenger to pacify Me.” Thinking in this way, Radha addresses one bumblebee, which had just flown in front of Her. Or else, on the pretense of speaking to the bee, Radha was actually directing her words to Uddhava.

Text 12

*gopy uvāca,
madhupa kitava-bandho mā spr̥śaṅghriṁ sapatnyāḥ,
kuca-vilulita-mālā-kuṅkuma-śmaśrubhir naḥ,
vahatu madhu-patis tan-māninīnām prasādam,
yadu-sadasi viḍambyaṁ yasya dūtas tvam īdr̥k*

The gopī said: O honeybee, O friend of a cheater, don't touch My feet with your whiskers, which are smeared with the kuṅkuma that rubbed onto Kṛṣṇa's garland when it was crushed by the breasts of a rival lover! Let Kṛṣṇa satisfy the women of Mathurā. One who sends a messenger like you will certainly be ridiculed in the Yadus' assembly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the bee buzzing around greedy for the fragrance of Her lotus feet, Sri Radha spoke impulsively (*prajalpa*) due to the influence of divine madness (*divyonmāda*): “O bee, friend of a wicked cheater (*kitava bandho*)!” Radha then enumerates the reasons why Kṛṣṇa should be called a cheater: “Kṛṣṇa said, ‘For My sake (*mad-arthojjhita*) You all have given up everything to come here filled with loving attraction, yet I have given You up. Please forgive Me for this injustice I have done.’ (SB 10.32.21) Kṛṣṇa also said, ‘You have surrendered yourselves to Me with the highest attraction, and it is impossible for Me to repay You’ (*na parāye 'ham*). (SB 10.32.22) And while sitting on Akrura's chariot Kṛṣṇa sent a message to us *gopis*, who were pained by the impending separation from Him, saying, ‘I will quickly come back from Mathura.’ (SB 10.39.35)

“Because these statements are false Kṛṣṇa can rightly be called a cheater. O bee, as a friend of that cheater you are playing the role of a messenger. Don't touch My feet!”

The bee, making a buzzing sound, seemed to say, “What is this? Will

you not let me offer obeisances to You?”

Radha said, “My feet will be contaminated if a drinker of liquor (*madhupa*) touches them, so if you want to pay obeisances then fly away some distance and do it.” Radha used the word *madhupa*, which means “a drinker of liquor.” According to the definition found in the *Anekārtha-varga* dictionary, *madhu madye puśpa-rase*, “*Madhu* can mean either liquor or the sap of a flower.”

The bee seemed to reply, “Why are You accusing me of being drunk when I am faultless?”

Radha said, “This is not just an accusation, it is true. Do not touch Me with your whiskers tinged by the *kunkuma* of the flower garland from another woman’s breasts, which has been crushed by contact with Kṛṣṇa’s chest (or the garland worn by Kṛṣṇa which has been crushed by another woman’s breasts.)” In this way Radhika ascribes such to the natural yellowness of a bee’s whiskers.

Radha continued, “The fact that you have come here to conciliate Me, the maker of that garland, without even first washing off such *kunkuma* is indeed due to a complete lack of discrimination on your part, which is a sure sign of having been drinking liquor. You should have the sense to know that such an exhibition will only increase My jealousy not decrease it.”

As the bee continued to hum, Radha thought that he was again speaking: “In any case, You should be happy.”

Radha replied, “My dear bee, O protector of the liquor (*madhupa:madya-pālaka*)! Go back to your master, guard His store of liquor and drink some yourself. That is a good job for you because you are too stupid to be a qualified messenger.”

While flying around and humming the bee seemed to be saying, “I see You are finding many faults. Why should I listen to all this? Now I am going to Mathura. Let Kṛṣṇa come Himself and make You happy!”

Radha said, “Kṛṣṇa has now become the master of all the Madhus (*madhu-patiḥ*) in general. Although by His birth from Vrajeshvari’s (Yasoda) womb Kṛṣṇa belongs to the cowherd caste, by some good fortune He has become a *ksatriya*. Therefore, let Him always satisfy

those *ksatriya* women in Mathura. What use does Kṛṣṇa have for us low-class cowherd women? But when Kṛṣṇa enjoys one of them, another will become jealous (*māna*), and when He satisfies that second one yet another will become jealous. Thus Kṛṣṇa will have to continuously satisfy them one after the other. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa will have no free time to come here to see Us.” By the plural usage of the word *māninīnām* (jealous women), Radha establishes that the women of the Madhu dynasty are countless, and thus Kṛṣṇa should satisfy each and every one of them.

The bee seemed to say, “You are the ocean of good fortune for Kṛṣṇa. You should not speak like this. If His mind is not fixed on You, why has He sent me here as His messenger?”

Radha answered, “You are the carrier (*dūtas tvam*) of the marks of Kṛṣṇa’s love affairs with the *ksatriya* women. Indeed this will be the cause of Kṛṣṇa being ridiculed (*viḍambyam*) in the assembly of the Yadus (*yadu-sadasi*). When the news of Kṛṣṇa’s transgressions with the Yadu women becomes known their husbands will scorn Him. Or else, there will be ridicule against that assembly of Yadus, who are related to Him who has a messenger like you.

“In other words, the Yadus will be condemned by other *ksatriyas* in different countries because their women were enjoyed by a cowherd man. He who has a messenger like you is also *madhu-pati*, the master of intoxicating liquors (*madhūnām.madyānām*). In this way, Kṛṣṇa must be a drunkard, since it is in the stupor of intoxication that He would have made a bee like you His messenger.”

All the words used in this verse arise from the different emotions experienced by Radha. The word *kitava* (cheater) arises from Radha’s indignation (*asūyā*). The word *sapatnyāḥ* (rival lover) arises from jealousy (*irsya*). The phrase *mā sprśa-aṅghriṁ* (Do not touch My feet) expresses pride (*mada*). The words beginning *vahatu* (let Him bring) comes from Radha’s desire to disrespect (*avadhīraṇam*). The phrase *yadu-sadasi viḍambyam* (scorned in the assembly of Yadus) expresses Radha’s urge to utter harsh words to decry Kṛṣṇa’s tactless treatment of Her.

This and the following nine verses exemplify ten varieties of mad emotional talks (*citra-jalpa*) spoken impulsively by a lover. This verse illustrates the qualities of *prajalpa*, as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.182):

*asūyersyā-mada-yujā, yo 'vadhīraṇa-mudrayā, priyasyākauśalodgārah,
prajalpaḥ sa tu kīrtyate*

“*Prajalpa* is speech that denigrates the tactlessness of one’s lover with expressions of disrespect. It is spoken in a mood of envy, jealousy and pride.”

Text 13

*sakṛd adhara-sudhām svām mohinīm pāyayitvā,
sumanasa iva sadyas tatyaje śmān bhavādṛk,
paricarati katham tat-pāda-padmaṁ nu padmā,
hy api bata hrta-cetā hy uttamah-śloka-jalpaiḥ*

After making us drink the enchanting nectar of His lips only once, Kṛṣṇa suddenly abandoned us, just as you might quickly abandon some flowers. How is it, then, that Goddess Padmā willingly serves His lotus feet? Alas! The answer must certainly be that her mind has been stolen away by His deceitful words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bee seemed to say, “This yellow color of my whiskers is only natural since I am a bee. It is not the *kunkuma* from Kṛṣṇa’s association with another woman. What offense has Kṛṣṇa committed? He thinks only of You, and never looks at any of the women in Mathura, even while dreaming. Why have You become so angry?”

Radha replies, “After making us drink the nectar of His lips just once, Kṛṣṇa has given us up. That is His offense.” Though Kṛṣṇa had actually kissed the *gopis* many times, by saying that Kṛṣṇa kissed them only

once Radha expresses Her extreme loving thirst, out of attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

Radha continued, “Because Kṛṣṇa’s lips are full of nectar, in spite of our suffering We have not died. Kṛṣṇa previously considered, ‘If all the *gopis* die of such torment, then who will be left that I can torture? So to prevent them from dying I will make them drink the nectar of My lips.’ That is the meaning of Radha’s words.

Radha said, “Then after giving us just a taste of that nectar, Kṛṣṇa immediately abandoned us. You should consider that if Kṛṣṇa really wanted to give Us happiness, He would have forcibly made Us drink the nectar repeatedly.”

The buzzing bee said, “But if this is the case, then why do you chaste ladies still desire Him?”

Radha answered, “That nectar destroyed (*mohinam*) Our intelligence. By tasting that nectar Our hopes in this and the next life have all been destroyed. Kṛṣṇa does not consider the saying, ‘One should never cut down a tree one has himself planted, even if it is poisonous.’ What Kṛṣṇa likes and dislikes is astonishing. Just as Visnu made the demigods (*sumanasah:deva-śreṇīṭh*) drink the nectar churned from the ocean, Kṛṣṇa made us drink the nectar of His lips. Yet He also abandoned us just as a bee abandons jasmine flowers (*sumanasah:mālatīṭh*).”

The bee said, “But when Kṛṣṇa abandoned You was it Your fault or His?”

Radha answered, “Just as you abandon flowers, so Kṛṣṇa abandoned Us. Just consider whose fault it is when a bee abandons some jasmine flowers? We are also famous in Vraja as being like the jasmine (*sumanasa*) flowers in fragrance, softness, attractiveness and purity due to our spotlessly clean minds (*su-manas*). Whereas, Kṛṣṇa is famous for being like a fickle bee desiring only His own pleasure.

“This is not just a poetic metaphor. It is Kṛṣṇa’s fault of fickleness that makes Him abandon a multitude of jasmines and become attracted to inferior flowers, only again to detach Himself later from them. Why should We not become angry with Kṛṣṇa out of jealousy (*māna*), just as we would with the bee?”

The bee argued, “It is well known from scriptures that Kṛṣṇa is faultless. After all, Garga Muni, who knows the scriptures, has said that Kṛṣṇa is equal to Narayana (*nārāyaṇa-samah*).”

Radha said, “Well, that may be, but how can that cover up what We see in real life—such as the way He cheats others?”

Pondering this, Radha found a reason why Laksmi serves Kṛṣṇa:

“Laksmi serves Kṛṣṇa because her mind is taken away by any and all glorification of Him (*uttamaḥ-śloka*) submitted by ordinary, garrulous flatterers. Laksmi is thus very simple-minded, but we, on the other hand, having been endowed by the creator with the assets of insight, wit and broad intelligence are not going to act like her.”

In this verse the words *pāyayitvā* (by making us drink) and *mohinīm* (we lose our intelligence) show Kṛṣṇa’s deceptive nature. The word *sadyaḥ* (He instantly gives them up) expresses Kṛṣṇa’s mercilessness in abandoning the *gopis*. The word *bhavādṛk* (like you the bee) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s unsteadiness, and the allusion to Laksmi’s being simple-minded reveals Radha’s cleverness. All the words indicate Kṛṣṇa’s ungrateful nature and complete lack of love for them. This verse is an example of *parijalpa*, which is described in *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (14.184):

prabhor nidayatā-śāṭhya, cāpalyādy-upapādanāt sva-vicakṣaṇatā-vyaktir, bhāṅgyā syāt parijalpitam

“*Parijalpa* is that speech which, through various devices, shows one’s own cleverness by exposing the mercilessness, duplicity, fickleness, ungratefulness and other qualities of one’s Lord.”

Text 14

*kim iha bahu ṣaḍ-aṅghre gāyasi tvam yadūnām,
adhipatim agrhāṇām agrato naḥ purāṇam,
vijaya-sakha-sakhīnām gīyatām tat-prasaṅgaḥ,
kṣapita-kuca-rujas te kalpayantīṣṭam iṣṭāḥ*

O bee, why do you sing here so much about the Lord of the Yadus, in front of us homeless people? These topics are old news to us. Better you sing about that friend of Arjuna in front of His new girlfriends, the burning desire in whose breasts He has now relieved. Those ladies will surely give you the charity you are begging.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Seeing the bee constantly buzzing due to his nature, Radha thought, “Agitated by My criticism of him, he is singing his own glories.”

Radha then said, “Why are you singing in this place, the assembly of cowherd women? The songs of an ignorant bee will not please the *gopis*. Nevertheless you keep on singing! Not only that, but in those songs you are publicizing the glories of the leader of the Yadus (*yadūnām adhipatim*). Moreover, you are doing this right in front of us, who were made by Kṛṣṇa to give up our homes and are now sitting at the edge of the forest. We will not give you even a handful of chickpeas in charity.”

If the bee replies, “Then just give me some old clothing or garlands You have worn.”

Radha replied, “I will not give these to a complete fool like you. Reciting the *Puranas*, you are trying to prove that Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the Yadus. O six-legged creature! (*ṣaṭ-aṅghre*) An animal at least has four legs, but you have six so you are an animal-and-a-half! Thus being so ignorant, you don’t know where or what to sing. And being an animal, how would you know the *Puranas*? So how do you expect to receive any charity? But since you are merely an animal, We won’t become angry with you. Rather, We will advise you where you should sing in order to support yourself. You should sing in front of the girlfriends of that friend of yours who is preeminently victorious (*vijaya sakha*) or defeated by them in the battle of love. You should sing all about those victories and defeats in love.”

Vijaya-sakha can also mean the friend of Arjuna who is also known as Vijaya, the victor. Previously Kṛṣṇa was known as the friend of Subala,

but after He left Vraja He became known as the friend of Arjuna. This pronouncement of things yet to come has spontaneously emanated from Radha's mouth.

Radha said, "Furthermore, the women of Mathura, now relieved of the burning pain in their breasts (*kṣapita-kuca-rujas*), will fulfill your desires (*īṣṭam:vanchitam*), and they will be honored (*iṣṭāḥ:pūjitāḥ*) by hearing your song about Kṛṣṇa."

In this verse we observe in Radha's mood the seed of jealous anger, which arises from an apparent disdain for Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by a sarcastic, sidelong glance directed toward Him. This verse fits the following description of *vijalpa* from the *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.186):
vyaktayāsūyayā gūḍha-māna-mudrāntarālayā, agha-dviṣi kaṭākṣoktir,vijalpo viduṣām mataḥ

"According to learned authorities, *vijalpa* is sarcastic speech criticizing Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Agha. Such speech openly expresses jealousy while at the same time concealing the angry pride in one's heart."

Text 15

*divi bhuvī ca rasāyām kāḥ striyas tad-durāpāḥ,
kapaṭa-rucira-hāsa-bhrū-vijṛmbhasya yāḥ syuḥ,
caraṇa-raja upāste yasya bhūtir vayaṁ kā,
api ca krpaṇa-pakṣe hy uttamaḥ-śloka-śabdaḥ*

In heaven, on earth or in the subterranean sphere, what women are unavailable to Him? He simply arches His eyebrows and smiles with deceptive charm, and they all become His. The supreme goddess herself worships the dust of His feet, so what is our position in comparison? But at least those who are wretched can chant His name, Uttamaḥśloka.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Hearing the buzzing of the bee, Radha

thought he was saying, “O crest-jewel of Kṛṣṇa’s lovers! In Mathura, Kṛṣṇa suffers from the piercing arrows of love. He spends His days and night simply meditating upon You. He can be saved only if You become pleased.”

Radha disdainfully replied to this in this verse: *divi bhuvi ca rasāyām kāḥ striyas tad-durāpāḥ*, “In heaven, on earth or in the subterranean sphere, what women are unobtainable for Kṛṣṇa?”

The meaning is: “I know perfectly well that Kṛṣṇa cannot pass His time without the company of young women. If Kṛṣṇa can’t meet any women in Mathura, then it is good that He meditates upon us and tries to satisfy us by sending a messenger like you to bring us there. Don’t tell us that the women in Mathura, being of the *ksatriya* caste, will not accept a person of cowherd birth, for there is no one unavailable to Kṛṣṇa in all the three worlds. Both the demigoddesses in heaven and the Nagapatnīs in hell will all give up their husbands if by chance Kṛṣṇa appears before them. Then what to speak of the women of Mathura? For obtaining these women Kṛṣṇa does not have to depend on any pious deeds or monetary payment.

“Under false pretenses Kṛṣṇa smiles and arches His eyebrows to enchant (*rucira:sarvāsām manoharau*) all women. As a result, the demigoddesses and other women become the property of Kṛṣṇa and no longer belong to their husbands. Simply for the price of His deceptive smile they sell themselves and abandon their own husbands.”

By the word *kapaṭa* (deceptive) Radha implies, “Kṛṣṇa is deceptive because after enjoying them once, He immediately abandons them and looks for new women. What to speak of the heavenly women, even Lakṣmi (*bhūtīr:Lakṣmi*), the consort of Lord Narayana, worships the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet in order to gain His association, according to the prayers of the Nāgapatnīs which we heard from the mouth of Paurṇamasi. Therefore how can We remain unaffected? After all, We are only humans, mere cowherd women residing in the forest of Vrṇḍavana.”

Although these words are full of humility, actually through the inflection of Radha’s voice and the nodding of Her head they imply a

spiteful attitude due to pride. Through that jealousy (spitefulness) Radha reveals Her superiority to Laksmi and all others in *prema*, beauty, and caste-compatibility with the Lord.

Radha continued, “One is called Uttamaḥśloka if he is merciful to the wretched and fallen. Since Kṛṣṇa lacks this quality, that name (*uttamaḥśloka*) is falsely ascribed to Him. If Kṛṣṇa would be merciful to Me, then He would actually deserve this exalted name.” Thus Radha subtly abuses Kṛṣṇa by addressing Him as Uttamaḥśloka.

Radha’s speech, expressing all the feelings of a disappointed lover, indicates an intensity of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa surpassing even that of Laksmi, the goddess of fortune. In the first half of this verse, Radha accuses Kṛṣṇa of being a cheater by citing His attraction to all women. The third line expresses Radha’s spite or jealousy (*irsa*) born out of pride (*garva*). In the last line Radha finds fault (*ākṣepo*) with Kṛṣṇa’s behavior due to Her indignation (*āsūya*).

Thus this verse contains speech known as *ujjalpa*, described in the following verse from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.188):

hareḥ kuhakatākhyānam, garva-garbhītayerṣayā, sāsūyaś ca tad-ākṣepo, dhīrair ujjalpa īryate

“The declaration of Lord Hari’s duplicitous nature in a mood of spite born of pride, together with jealously spoken insults directed against Him, has been termed *ujjalpa* by the wise.”

Text 16

*viśrja śirasi pādām vedmy ahaṁ cātu-kārair,
anunaya-viduṣas te ’bhyetya dautyair mukundāt,
sva-kṛta iha viśrṣṭāpatya-paty-anya-lokā,
vyasrjad akṛta-cetāḥ kiṁ nu sandheyam asmin*

Keep your head off My feet! I know what you’re doing. You expertly learned diplomacy from Mukunda, and now you come as

His messenger with flattering words. But He abandoned those who for His sake alone gave up their children, husbands and all other relations. He's simply ungrateful. Why should I make up with Him now?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While the bee was flying around it landed on Radha's foot out of greed for Her fragrance. By continually buzzing, it seemed to say, "O lady, worshipable by millions of Laksmis! Truly Kṛṣṇa has offended You, but I say that You should forgive Him." Thinking that the bee was offering his respects to Her, Radha said, "Why are you touching your head to My foot. Please go away! Let go (*visrja:tyaja*) of My foot, which you are holding on your head. In other words, get out of here!"

By saying *Vedmy aham* (I know this) Radha means, "I know you, so you cannot cheat Me like you cheat Laksmi and others. You have learned from Mukunda, and thus are very skilful in humble entreaties, and sending messages with sweet flattering words (*cātu-kāraih:priyoktiracanaih*). Thus I fully understand your behavior, and know that you have learned all this from Kṛṣṇa."

The bee replied, "But, mistress, what is the use of quarreling with Kṛṣṇa who is millions of times dearer to You than Your own life? Rather You should make peace with Him through me."

Radha said, "For Kṛṣṇa's sake, we gave up children, husbands, mothers and fathers, yet He gave us up and left. The *gopis* who were prevented from going to the *rasa* dance gave up their children and went to meet Him. We gave up husbands, and the unmarried girls gave up their parents. But despite all this, what was Kṛṣṇa's response? Being ungrateful (*akṛta-cetāh*), He just abandoned (*vyasṛjat*) us. Should one make peace with such a hard-hearted person? No! Never!"

The first half of the verse shows a gesture of sarcastic criticism and the second half shows Kṛṣṇa's ungratefulness and other qualities like treachery, mercilessness and lack of love. This verse illustrates the qualities of *sañjalpa*, as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the following verse of his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.190):

*solluṅṭhayā gahanayā, kayāpy ākṣepa-mudrayā tasyākṛta-jñatādy-
uktiḥ, sañjalpaḥ kathito budhaiḥ*

“The learned describe *sañjalpa* as that speech which decries with deep irony and insulting gestures the beloved’s ungratefulness.” The word *ādi* in this verse (*jñatādy*) from *Ujjvala-nilamani*, implies the perception in one’s lover of hard-heartedness, of an inimical attitude and of a complete lack of love.

Text 17

*mṛgayur iva kapīndraṁ vivyadhe lubdha-dharmā,
striyam akṛta virūpām strī-jitaḥ kāma-yānām,
balim api balim attvāveṣṭayad dhvāṅkṣa-vad yas,
tad alam asita-sakhyair dustyajas tat-kathārthaḥ*

Like a hunter, He cruelly shot the king of the monkeys with arrows. Because He was conquered by a woman, He disfigured another woman who came to Him with lusty desires. And even after consuming the gifts of Bali Mahārāja, He bound him up with ropes as if he were a crow. So let us give up all friendship with this dark-complexioned boy, even if we can’t give up talking about Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bee seemed to say, “O Radha, as far as I can see in Mathura, soft-hearted Kṛṣṇa is simply meditating upon You.”

Radha replied, “You are simply an inexperienced servant! Because you are new to Mathura you do not know the facts about Kṛṣṇa. Not only is He cruel in this lifetime, but even in many previous lives He has been so, as we have heard from Purnamasi. When Kṛṣṇa appeared as a *ksatriya* in the form of Rama, He transgressed *ksatriya dharma* and mercilessly killed Vali, the king of the monkeys, by hiding behind a tree just like a hunter kills a deer. In this story there is even more impiety

because Kṛṣṇa did not even adhere to the *dharma* of a hunter. The hunter never kills monkeys because their flesh is inedible and no one will buy it.

“Now listen to yet another instance of Kṛṣṇa’s irreligiosity. Overcome with lust, a woman named Surpanakha once desired Rama. But Rama disfigured her by cutting off her nose and ears, so that no one else would want to enjoy with her. That was simply because of His cruel nature. Rama did not perform this cruel act because He was upholding a vow of celibacy while wearing matted locks and the dress of a renunciate. Because at that time Rama was living with Sita, being conquered by Her (*strī-jitah*) love.

“Similarly, when Kṛṣṇa appeared previously as Vamana, a dwarf *brahmana*, He rejected the qualities of the *brahmana* such as peacefulness and straightforwardness. After enjoying (*attvā:bhuktvā*) the offerings (*balim:tat-pūjopahāram*) made by the pious king Bali, Vamana cast Bali down from his lordship of the three worlds into a hole below the earth.”

An alternative reading to this follows: “Kṛṣṇa deceitfully tied up Bali just like a crow. A crow devours the offerings meant for worship, and then, calling other crows, surrounds the woman doing *puja* and mocks her. Similarly, Vamana called His own people, who then surrounded Bali and tormented him.

“Enough of friendships with that black-complexioned (*asita*:Kṛṣṇa) man! For us golden-complexioned women, despite all the varieties of friendship we have had with Kṛṣṇa, not one has proven auspicious. One should be extremely wary of Kṛṣṇa because He has such an impure heart (*asitāḥ:aśuddha-cittāḥ*). Therefore, what use do We have for such a person?”

The bee seemed to say, “But how is Your heart pure if You are constantly criticizing others?”

Radha replied, “Talking about Kṛṣṇa’s activities in His past lives is hard to give up, even though it makes us unhappy. Though We should not be talking about Kṛṣṇa, We cannot stop talking whether We criticize Him or not.”

Another meaning: “Though We have given Him up, We cannot stop talking about Him.” As the subject is not mentioned in the phrase *dustyajas tat-kathārthaḥ* (impossible to give up topics about Him), it infers that even for the best of *munis* it is difficult to give up speaking about Kṛṣṇa.

Radha’s describing the shooting (*vivyadhe*) of Vali indicates Kṛṣṇa’s ruthless cruel nature; being controlled by woman (*strī-jitaḥ*) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s lust; accepting offerings (*balim*) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s fraud; and friendship with that black fellow (*asita-sakhyaiḥ*) indicates fear and malice, and that Kṛṣṇa is not worth becoming attached to.

This speech of Rādhārāṇī’s is called *avajalpa*, as described by Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.192):

harau kāṭhinya-kāmitva-, dhaurtyād āsakti-ayogyatā yatra serṣyā-bhiyevoktā, so ’vajalpaḥ satām mataḥ

“Saintly persons have concluded that when a lover, impelled by jealousy and fear, declares that Lord Hari is unworthy of her attachment because of His harshness, lustiness and dishonesty such speech is called *avajalpa*.”

Text 18

*yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ-,
saktṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ,
sapadi gr̥ha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā,
bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryām caranti*

To hear about the pastimes that Kṛṣṇa regularly performs is nectar for the ears. For those who relish just a single drop of that nectar, even once, their dedication to material duality is ruined. Many such persons have suddenly given up their wretched homes and families and, themselves becoming wretched, traveled here to Vṛndāvana to wander about like birds, begging for their living.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Radha says, “But what is so remarkable about our suffering after establishing a relationship with Kṛṣṇa? After all, just narrations of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes create sorrow for the entire world.”

Radha said, “Just hearing about the pastimes Kṛṣṇa performed at every moment (*anucaritam*) is nectar for the ears, what to speak of the joy one gets by understanding their meaning. Even one drop of this nectar completely destroys (*vidhūtāḥ:viṣeṣeṇa khaṇḍitāḥ*) the propensities of duality, and the propensities of mutual friendship between women and men.

“If a wife hears discussions about Kṛṣṇa, she immediately gives up affection for her husband. And if a husband hears them he gives up affection for his wife. The same is also true for a child in connection with his mother and father. If a mother hears about Kṛṣṇa, she loses all affection for her children. Thus, by this mutual rejection they all become totally ruined (*vināṣṭāḥ*).

“But in their ruination there is not as much misery as in renunciation, as evidenced by the experience of ordinary society. Though the people who develop a taste for Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are soft-hearted, they also become hard-hearted, merciless and ungrateful after hearing the pastimes of hard-hearted Kṛṣṇa. Just by hearing about Kṛṣṇa they immediately give up their homes and families, including even their parents and sisters-in-law who then suffer with no other means of support, and without even enough money for the next day’s food. Or else they abandon their families, who are distraught by this separation, and give them up to death with an offering of *kusa* grass and water.

“Alas! Alas! Even if we disregard that their wives and children may die, even they themselves fail to become happy. They are penniless (*dinah*) after leaving their families, due to having forgotten to tie up even a few coins in their cloth, because of the agitation of their minds while leaving. This is not the case of one man or two, or just three or four people. This has been the case with countless hundreds and thousands of people.” If the alternate reading *dhirah* is taken instead of *dinah*, it

means: “In spite of seeing their wife cry, they are unmoved or hard-hearted.”

But it may be questioned, “How do they maintain their lives?”

Radha answers, “Like (*iva*) birds (*vihāṅgāḥ*), they live by begging, just collecting small amounts of wheat and other grains, rather than taking substantial charity from one person.” The word *iha* is often used instead of *iva*. In that case it means: “They come begging here in Vṛndavana, the place of suffering, and suffer even more in our association.”

But someone may object, “*Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is like a poisonous mixture of sugarcane juice and powdered seeds of the *dhatūra* plant. The speaker of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes is a murderer in the dress of a saint. The *Purānas* are a net. The speaker may be seen wandering from forest to forest with the *Purānas* tucked under his arm. Vyasa and others are the makers of this net, which teaches that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Radha replies, “For this reason Kṛṣṇa has accepted the role of the Supreme thinking, ‘Just like the *gopīs*, I will make all people fall into the ocean of suffering.’ Indeed, seeing others’ suffering is Kṛṣṇa’s only happiness. As a result, Kṛṣṇa must bear the consequence of giving such misery to others, not Vyasa and other sages.”

As we can see there are thousands of implications in this verse. Through condemnation Radha is indirectly praising Kṛṣṇa, and thus establishing the superexcellence of *suddha-bhakti*, pure devotional service. By mentioning the example of the birds Radha shows that it is appropriate to leave Kṛṣṇa because He inflicts pain on innocent people. Such remorseful statements constitute *abhijalpa*, as defined by Sri Rupa Gosvami in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.194:

bhaṅgyā tyāgaucitī tasya, khagānām api khedanāt yatra sānuśayaṃ proktā, tad bhaved abhijalpitam

“When a lover indirectly states with remorse that her beloved is fit to be given up because he is so cruel that he tortures even the innocent birds, such speech is called *abhijalpa*.”

Text 19

*vayam ṛtam iva jihma-vyāhṛtaṁ śraddadhānāḥ,
kulika-rutam ivājñāḥ kṛṣṇa-vadhvo hariṇyaḥ,
dadṛśur asakṛd etat tan-nakha-sparśa-tīvra,
smara-ruja upamantrin bhānyatām anya-vārtā*

Faithfully taking His deceitful words as true, we became just like the black deer’s foolish wives, who trust the cruel hunter’s song. Thus we repeatedly felt the sharp pain of lust caused by the touch of His nails. O messenger, please talk about something besides Kṛṣṇa.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The bee seemed to say, “Why did such intelligent ladies as You establish friendship with such a person as Kṛṣṇa?”

Radha said, “We were so foolish to accept as true (*ṛtam:satyam*) such lying words of His as *na pāraye ‘haṁ iravadya-samyujām*, ‘I can never repay My debt to You.’ (SB 10.32.22) This is just like the wives of the black deer (*kṛṣṇa-vadhvo*), who by having faith in the song of the hunter see the result of his song by feeling the striking of his arrow. Similarly, we also experienced the sharp pangs of lust (*smara-ruja*) with the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s fingernails.

“We have been extremely foolish, since even after once seeing its consequence, we repeatedly (*asakṛt*) trusted Kṛṣṇa and had to again experience the result. This applies to the does as well as to ourselves, who in both cases have had to suffer repeatedly a distressful condition because of their jealous pride. Therefore O jester! Speak of other things which will make Us happy, for news of Kṛṣṇa simply makes Us suffer.”

The word *upamantrin* can mean messenger or jester (*vidūśaka*).

This verse is an example of *ājalpa*, which Sri Rupa Gosvami defines thus:

jaiḥmyam tasyārti-datvaṁ ca, nirvedād yatra kīrtitam bhāṅgyānya-

sukha-datvam ca, sa ājalpa udīritah

“A statement spoken in disgust, describing how the male lover is deceitful and brings one misery, and that one should stop talking about him, and talk about something more pleasant instead is known as *ājalpa*.” (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.196)

Text 20

*priya-sakha punar āgāḥ preyasā preṣitah kim,
varaya kim anurundhe mānanīyo 'si me 'ṅga,
nayasi katham ihāsmān dustyaja-dvandva-pārśvam,
satatam urasi saumya śrīr vadhūḥ sākam āste*

O friend of My dear one, has My beloved sent you here again? I should honor you, friend, so please choose whatever boon you wish. But why have you come back here to take us to Him, whose conjugal love is so difficult to give up? After all, gentle bee, His consort is the goddess Śrī, and she is always with Him, staying upon His chest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the bee was buzzing around near Her, Radha, out of the madness of *prema*, could not find him. Not seeing him for a moment, Radha pondered remorsefully, “Alas, alas! Distressed by My harsh words, that messenger has gone off to Mathura and told everything that has happened to Kṛṣṇa, who has now become indifferent to Me.”

Giving up Her quarrelsome mood, Radha stared at the path to Mathura and said, “Perhaps My beloved, the ocean of divine love and the crown jewel of all transcendental qualities, will again send His messenger here.”

Suddenly seeing the bee, Radha said respectfully, “O friend of My beloved, you have come back again! Though wounded by the arrows

of My words, due to your saintly character you have overlooked My offenses and returned. Can I understand that My beloved, out of intense love for Me, has sent you here again, not considering My thousands of offenses? If that is so, then you should ask for whatever you wish (*anurundhe:kāmayase*) from Me and I will fulfill your desire. O bee, if you say, ‘I want You to go to Mathura’ then I will answer, ‘Yes, I will go to Mathura.’”

After saying that Radha thought, “But if I go to Mathura and see My beloved surrounded by other women, I will become uncontrollably jealous.” Thus Radha said *nayasi katham*, “Why are you taking Me to Kṛṣṇa, who cannot give up loving affairs?”

Thinking the bee said, “I swear that Kṛṣṇa is all alone in Mathura,” Radha replied, “O gentle one of pure intelligence (*saumya*)! Kṛṣṇa’s consort Laksmi (*śrīr vadhūḥ*) is always by His side, and moreover always on His chest taking shelter of the Lord.”

The goddess of fortune, Śrī or Laksmi, has the power to assume many different forms. Thus when Kṛṣṇa enjoys other women, she stays on His chest in the form of a golden line. When Kṛṣṇa is not consorting with other women, Laksmi puts aside this form and gives Him pleasure in Her naturally beautiful form of a young woman.

Although Radhika respects the bee in this verse and accepts his statements as true, She then rejects them after showing how they are inappropriate. This is an example of *pratijalpa* defined thus:

dustyaja-dvandva-bhāve ’smin, prāptir nārhetṃ anuddhatam dūta-sammānanenoktam, yatra sa pratijalpakah

“Humble statements expressing respect for the messenger, but with refusal to meet Kṛṣṇa because of His licentious relationships with other women is called *pratijalpa*.” (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.198)

Text 21

*api bata madhu-puryām ārya-putro ’dhunāste,
smarati sa pitṛ-gehān saumya bandhūmś ca gopān,*

*kvacid api sa kathā naḥ kiṅkarīṇām grṇīte,
bhujam aguru-sugandham mūrdhny adhāsyat kadā nu*

O Uddhava! It is indeed regrettable that Kṛṣṇa resides in Mathurā. Does He remember His father’s household affairs and His friends, the cowherd boys? O great soul! Does He ever talk about us, His maidservants? When will He lay on our heads His aguru-scented hand?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Radha thought, “Oh, in My madness I have been talking, but I did not ask the questions I should have.”

Thus feeling remorse, Radha reverentially spoke this verse: “Is the noble son of Nanda Maharaja now in Mathura? Just as Kṛṣṇa left Vraja, will He also leave Mathura?” Radha did not ask if Kṛṣṇa was happy there, but simply asked if He was there.

At this time Srimati Radhika thought, “Since Kṛṣṇa was once satisfied in Vraja but left for Mathurā City, won’t He also develop a desire to leave that place and go somewhere else? Mathurā is so close to Vṛndāvana that it’s possible Kṛṣṇa may even come back here. Kṛṣṇa is the son of a respectable gentleman, Nanda Mahārāja, so He must be staying in Mathurā because of His sense of obligation to His father, who authorized His going there. On the other hand, while Nanda’s whole life is dedicated exclusively to Kṛṣṇa, Nanda is so innocent that he allowed himself to be tricked by the Yadus, who brought Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā.

Kṛṣṇa must be thinking, ‘Alas, alas! Since even My father could not bring Me back to Vraja, what can I do to return there?’ Thus Kṛṣṇa must be impatient to come back here, and so He has sent you, a messenger.

“It is only because Nanda is so innocent that he allowed his son to leave. If Nanda had allowed Kṛṣṇa’s mother, the queen of Vraja, to do so, she would have climbed onto Akrūra’s chariot and, holding her son by the neck, gone off to Mathurā with Him, followed by all the gopīs. But this was not possible.

“Ever since Kṛṣṇa left, Nanda has been stunned by separation from

Him, and Nanda's treasury rooms, storehouses, kitchens, sleeping quarters and opulent houses are now vacant. Unswept and uncleansed, they are littered with grass, dust, leaves and cobwebs. Does Kṛṣṇa ever remember His father's houses? And does He sometimes remember Subala and His other friends, who are now lying stunned in other neglected houses?

“The women in Mathurā who now associate with Kṛṣṇa cannot know how to serve Him in the way that pleases Him most. When they see He is not satisfied and ask how they can make Him happy, does He tell them about us gopīs? Kṛṣṇa must tell them, ‘You city ladies cannot please Me as much as the gopīs of Vraja. They are most expert in stringing flower garlands, perfuming their bodies with ointments, playing various rhythms and melodies on stringed instruments, dancing and singing in the *rāsa* performance, displaying their beauty, charm and cleverness, and skillfully playing at questions and answers. They are especially expert in the pastimes of meeting one's lover and in all the stages of *prema* such as *sneha*, *mana* and *pranaya*.’ Surely Kṛṣṇa must know this. Therefore He'll probably tell the women of Mathurā, ‘My dear women of the Yadu clan, please go back to your families. I no longer desire to associate with you. In fact, I'm going back to Vraja early tomorrow morning.’

“When will Kṛṣṇa speak like this and come back here to place His hand, fragrant with *aguru*, on our heads? Then He will console us, saying, ‘O beloveds of My heart, I swear to you that I will never abandon you again and go elsewhere. Indeed, I have not been able to find anyone in all the three worlds with even a trace of Your good qualities’ ”

The first line of the verse shows simplicity. The second line shows gravity in not mentioning oneself, and the third and fourth lines show humility, unsteadiness and eagerness. This verse is an example of *sujalpa*, which Rūpa Gosvāmī defines thus:

yatrārjavāt sa-gāmbhīryam, sa-dainyam saha-cāpalam sotkañṭham ca hariḥ prṣṭaḥ, sa sujalpo nigadyate

“When, out of honest sincerity, a lover enquires about Sri Hari with gravity, humility, unsteadiness and intense eagerness, such speech is

known as *sujalpa*.” (*Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 14.200)

There are ten divisions of divine madness (*divyonmāda*), which are expressed by the ten types of *citra-jalpa*, or variegated speech. These ten types of madness appear in Radha in Her manifestation of bewilderment (*mohana*), the most excellent part of *mahābhāva*.

The following verses from Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (14.174, 178–80) explain these ecstasies:

*prāyo vṛndāvaneśvayām, mohano ’yam udañcati, etasya
mohanākhyasya, gatim kām apy upeyuṣaḥ, bhramābhā kāpi vaicitrī,
divyonmāda itīryate, udghūrṇā citra-jalpādyās, tad-bhedā bahavo
matāḥ preṣṭhasya suhr̥d-āloke, gūḍha-roṣābhijṛmbhitāḥ, bhūri-bhāva-
mayo jalpo, yas tīvrotkaṅṭhitāntimāḥ, citra-jalpo daśāṅgo ’yam,
prajalpaḥ parijalpaḥ, vijalpo ’jjalpa-sañjalpaḥ, avajalpo ’bhijalpitam
ājalpaḥ pratijalpaś ca. sujalpaś ceti kīrtitaḥ*

“*Mohana*, the transcendental ecstasy of bewilderment, arises primarily in Radha and reaches an indescribable state, resembling delusion. It is then called *divyonmāda*. It has many aspects such *udghūrṇā* and *citra-jalpa*. This ecstatic talk, induced by seeing a friend of one’s beloved, and filled with covered anger, culminates in extreme eagerness. There are ten types of *citra jalpa* known as *prajalpa*, *parijalpa*, *vijalpa*, *ujjalpa*, *sañjalpa*, *avajalpa*, *abhijalpa*, *ājalpa*, *pratijalpa* and *sujalpa*.” Some authorities say that Kṛṣṇa assumed the form of the messenger bee in order to drink the sweetness of Radha’s *citra-jalpa*.

Text 22

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
athoddhavo niśamyaivam,
kṛṣṇa-darśana-lālasāḥ,
sāntvayan priya-sandeśair,
gopīr idam abhāṣata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having heard this, Uddhava then tried to pacify the gopīs, who were most eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa. He thus began relating to them the message of their beloved.

Text 23

*śrī-uddhava uvāca,
aho yūyam sma pūrṇārthā,
bhavatyo loka-pūjitāḥ,
vāsudeve bhagavati,
yāsām ity arpitam manaḥ*

Śrī Uddhava said: Certainly you gopīs are all-successful and are universally worshiped because you have dedicated your minds in this way to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “Indeed you, whose minds are offered in this way to the Lord, are certainly successful. Other devotees also offer their minds to the Lord, but we do not see their minds offered in this way.”

Text 24

*dāna-vrata-tapo-homa,
japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ,
śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ,
kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate*

Devotional service unto Lord Kṛṣṇa is attained by charity, strict

vows, austerities and fire sacrifices, by japa, study of Vedic texts, observance of regulative principles and, indeed, by the performance of many other auspicious practices.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devotion to Kṛṣṇa can be awakened by various processes (*sadhana*) such as giving charity, if the only aim and objective is the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. *Dāna*: means donations given to Lord Viṣṇu and His devotees. *Vrata*: observing vows such as Ekādaśī. *Tapas*: renunciation of sense gratification for Kṛṣṇa’s sake. *Homa*: fire sacrifices dedicated to Viṣṇu. *Japa*: privately chanting the holy names of the Lord. *Svādhyāya*: study and recitation of Vedic texts such as the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*. Other auspicious practices, (*śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ*), refers to various corollary aspects (*bhakti-angāni*) of devotional service. Since it has already been explained that the other practices, such as charity, austerity and so forth in themselves do not foster devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Text 25

*bhagavaty uttamaḥ-śloke,
bhavatībhir anuttamā,
bhaktiḥ pravartitā diṣṭyā,
munīnām api durlabhā*

By your great fortune you have established an unexcelled standard of pure devotion for the Lord, Uttamaḥśloka—a standard even the sages can hardly attain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Uddhava said to the *gopīs*, “Your *bhakti* is very different from all other types.” The term *pravartitā* (establish) indicates that the *gopīs* brought to this world the most excellent (*anuttama*) standard of pure love of God that was previously

unknown on the earth.

Uddhava continued, “However, following in the footsteps of your spontaneous devotional service (*rāgātmikā-bhakti*), *rāgānuga-bhakti* (advanced *sadhana-bhakti* with attachment) will be spread as a practice in the future. This is for the good fortune (*diṣṭya*) of the people in general.”

Text 26

*diṣṭyā putrān patīn dehān,
sva-janān bhavanāni ca,
hitvāvṛnīta yūyaṁ yat,
kṛṣṇākhyam puruṣam param*

By your great fortune you have left your sons, husbands, bodily comforts, relatives and homes in favor of the supreme male, who is known as Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “It is my good fortune that you have given up your sense of possessiveness toward your husbands, homes and families, and accepted the supreme male named Kṛṣṇa as your enjoyer.”

Text 27

*sarvātma-bhāvo ’dhikṛto,
bhavatīnām adhokṣaje,
virahena mahā-bhāgā,
mahān me ’nugrahaḥ kṛtaḥ*

You have rightfully claimed the privilege of unalloyed love for the transcendental Lord, O most glorious gopīs. Indeed, by exhibiting your love for Kṛṣṇa in separation from Him, you have shown me great mercy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* replied to Uddhava, “How is it fortunate for you that we have given up wealth and family to accept Kṛṣṇa, the supreme male?”

Uddhava answers in this verse: “Pure love for Kṛṣṇa, who cannot be perceived by the material senses (*adhoksaje*), is very rarely attained. You, however, have whole-hearted love (*sarvātma-bhāvo*) for Kṛṣṇa, which is perfectly complete and manifest in all its true aspects. In other words, you possess *mahābhāva*. Just as the sun spreads to all by transference of heat and the moon spreads itself to all people by transference of coolness, so *mahābhāva* spreads itself to all people by transference of its own nature.”

In this verse, the combination of the words *sarvatma* (complete) and *bhāva* (emotion) reveals the characteristics of *mahābhāva*. *Ujvala-nilamani* defines *mahābhāva* thus: “When *anuraga* (fifth stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*) attains states of being conscious of only itself, of its own taste while clearly manifesting various *sattvika-bhavas*, and reaches its maximum possible state, it is called *mahābhāva*.”

Uddhava said, “*Mahābhāva* is the seventh level of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and it manifests in you *gopis* and in no one else, not even Lakṣmi. What is it like? It is a special privilege (*kṛtaḥ:adhikara*) which has been given by Kṛṣṇa to you women alone and no one else. By your manifestation of love in separation, you have mercifully shown me all the various aspects of *mahabhava*, such as *citra jalpa* and *divyonmada*. If you had not experienced separation from Kṛṣṇa, He would have never sent me here, and I would never have seen this great wonder.” In this way Uddhava describes the extent of his good fortune.

*śrūyatām priya-sandeśo,
bhavatīnām sukhāvahaḥ,
yam ādāyāgato bhadrā,
ahaṁ bhartū rahas-karaḥ*

My good ladies, now please hear your beloved’s message, which I, the confidential servant of my master, have come here to bring you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* replied, “O Uddhava! In speaking about *mahabhava* what is the use of praising us and yourself? You came here to pacify us, so do you have some message from Kṛṣṇa which can remove our sorrow? If you have, please tell us.”

Uddhava replies in this verse: “As the executor of confidential duties (*rahas-karaḥ*) for my master, I have brought a message from your beloved which will bring you happiness. So please listen!”

Text 29

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
bhavatīnām viyogo me,
na hi sarvātmanā kvacit,
yathā bhūtāni bhūteṣu,
khaṁ vāyv-agnir jalaṁ mahī,
tathāhaṁ ca manaḥ-prāṇa,
bhūtendriya-guṇāśrayaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: 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 and senses, and also

within the physical elements and the modes of material nature.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s first message, which gives instructions in philosophical knowledge, acts to reveal the unassailable strength of the *gopīs’ prema* to the most intelligent scholars, and to hide the greatness of their love from the dull-minded.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Through Uddhava I am giving the *gopīs* the nectar of knowledge, but it could not extinguish the fire of their love. Rather that knowledge got consumed by the heat of that fire. Just see the power of their love. The *gopīs’ prema* has been proven the strongest, because it has rendered useless the *jñāna-yoga* taught by Me, the Lord of the mind and *yoga*.”

It is the same as the beginning of the *rāsa* dance wherein Kṛṣṇa’s instructions on *karma-yoga* revealed the strength of the *gopīs’ prema* to the confidential devotees. At the same time Kṛṣṇa covered the true glories of their love from fools who presume themselves to be great scholars. Kṛṣṇa cleverly made these “so-called scholars” think, “The Supreme Lord, the benefactor of all, has imparted transcendental knowledge to the *gopīs*, who possess the highest category of love for Him, to make it possible for them to attain liberation.”

Due to the extreme confidentiality of this subject, Kṛṣṇa nourishes the wise devotees by bestowing upon them the nectar of *prema*, while cheating the nondevotees by giving them intoxicating liquor. Thus this verse serves a dual purpose like the Mohini incarnation, who behaved differently in relation to the devotees and the demons.

Now let us continue with the explanation of the verse. “The Supreme Lord said” (*śrī-bhagavān uvāca*) are Uddhava’s words. The reason is as follows: Uddhava thought, “Though I have great love for Kṛṣṇa, I find it difficult to understand the meaning of His words. Therefore I will reveal the Lord’s message to the *gopīs* as if He were directly saying it, keeping the ambiguity of His message intact.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “O *gopīs*! You are never separated from Me, so why are you crying over and over again with a wish to die?”

The *gopīs* responded, “How are You never separate from us?”

Kṛṣṇa’s message [sent through Uddhava]: “I am never separated from you because I am the Supersoul pervading all beings. All the revealed scriptures, the great sages like Gargamuni and the demigods such as Varuna say this. Therefore I am always present as the Supersoul within your bodies, which means that you are never separated from Me.”

In this statement, as with Kṛṣṇa’s instructions on *dharmā* at the beginning of the *rāsa* dance, there are hidden instructions on conjugal dealings in order to prevent the *gopīs* from criticizing Him later. Indeed, the day after the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* criticized Kṛṣṇa saying, “O crest jewel among lusty boys! Why did you give us instructions on morality on the night of the *rāsa* dance?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “O ignorant girls! On that day I was actually giving you instructions on how to enjoy amorous affairs with Me. How did you foolish girls ever conclude that I was teaching about moral principles?” Saying this, Kṛṣṇa then explained the second meaning, as discussing conjugal union, of such statements as *rajany eśā ghorā-rūpā* (SB 10.29.19).

Now in the same way, after being separated from Kṛṣṇa for a long time, at their future reunion the *gopīs* might say, “O Lord of our lives! Why did you send Uddhava to instruct in philosophy when we were dying in separation from You?”

Anticipating that, Kṛṣṇa answers, “O unintelligent girls! I had Uddhava instruct you only in the methods of pure love. How did you conclude that I was teaching about *jnāna*?”

Kṛṣṇa then proceeds to give another explanation of the present verse which indicates *prema* not *jnāna*. “Your separation from Me is not separation in a complete sense, but it is only in terms of the body. Since the word *ātmā* refers to “body,” “mind,” “intelligence” and “soul”, and since pure love is a function of the *ātmā*, My *ātmā*, in the sense of soul, intelligence, mind and senses, is still residing among you all. It was merely My body which I took to Mathurā. Similarly, your senses, intelligence and mind (*atma*) reside with me in Mathura, and only your bodies remain in Vraja.

“All scriptures proclaim that I am subservient to pure love. I am not

independent in the matter of love. Thus the separation between you and Me, who have a bond of *prema*, exists only in the separation of our bodies, and this gives rise to the sentiments of suffering in separation. Now using that vehicle of separation, *prema* desires to increase itself to the utmost. Thus, even though I have great longing, how can I immediately bring My body to Vraja? But when that *prema*, upon reaching its desired level and exhibiting the mood of full separation, ascends to the stage of direct union, only then will I, being dependent on that *prema*, be obliged to bring My body to Vraja.” By this Kṛṣṇa implies that their bodily separation will disappear in the future. The external meaning of the second part of the verse is as follows: “But I am present in all beings, since I am the ingredient cause of creation. Within all moving and nonmoving beings are the gross physical elements (*bhūtāni*). As the supreme cause of everything, I am also the shelter of everything. In other words, I am present in each and every thing, having entered into them.” For the *gopis*, this part of the verse means: “I take shelter of the mind, life air, intelligence, senses and words of you, who are always meditating upon Me in pure love. Taking shelter in each of these, I manifest Myself and thus am always present with you.”

Text 30

*ātmany evātmanātmānam,
 sṛje hanmy anupālaye,
 ātma-māyānubhāvena,
 bhūtendriya-guṇātmanā*

By Myself I create, sustain and withdraw Myself within Myself by the power of My personal energy, which comprises the material elements, the senses and the modes of nature.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Furthermore, I am the subject doing action, the location of action and the object of action. Upon the substratum of Myself, I create the universe which is Myself.” The *gopīs* replied, “But Your form is *sac-cid-ānanda* (full of eternity, knowledge and bliss) and this universe appears to be different than that.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “The universe is created from My *maya-sakti*, which in turn creates all the material elements. Though the external energy, *maya-sakti*, is one of My forms, it is not My original personal form (*svarūpa*).”

For the *gopīs* the meaning is as follows: “I make My appearance (*ātmānaṁ-sṛje*) in your minds (*atmani*) by My own effort (*atmana*) for the sake of conjugal union and other pastimes. I maintain (*anupālaye*) that form for a moment, and then I make that form disappear (*hanmi*).” The *gopīs* ask, “By what particular effort do You do this?”

Kṛṣṇa: “I accomplish this by the power of My *yogamaya* (*ātmā-māyā-anubhāvena*).”

Gopīs: “What is the nature of the self (*atmanam*) that You make appear?”

Kṛṣṇa: “It is that form with all My limbs (*bhūtāni*); My senses (*indriya*) such as eyes; and My qualities (*guṇa*) such as beauty, sweetness, cleverness and intelligence (*atma*).” All of these comprise Kṛṣṇa’s *ātmā*, thus the compound which they comprise is expressed in the singular number.

Text 31

*ātmā jñāna-mayaḥ śuddho,
vyatirikto ’guṇānvayaḥ,
susupti-svapna-jāgradbhir,
māyā-vṛttibhir īyate*

Being composed of pure consciousness, or knowledge, the soul is distinct from everything material and is uninvolved in the entanglements of the modes of nature. We can perceive the soul through the three functions of material nature known as wakefulness, sleep and deep sleep.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: If the *gopīs* ask, “But then how is that the people in general do not know Your original, true identity?” Kṛṣṇa answers, “My original form, which is transcendental to the modes of nature, is perceived everywhere as the indwelling Supersoul. The Supersoul possesses pure spiritual knowledge, which is transcendental to the modes of nature and has no connection with them. Though I am the creator, due to My inconceivable power (*acintya-sakti*) I remain pure, and never directly contact the material modes of nature. Though forever existing within the material bodies, the Supersoul remains distinct (*vyatirikta*). Moreover, even though I am the controller of the modes of nature, I am not involved (*anvayaḥ*) with them. The Supersoul can be inferred through the material functions of the mind during waking, sleeping and dreaming.”

This point is confirmed in *Srīmad Bhagavatam* (SB 10.2.35):
*sattvaṁ na ced dhātar idaṁ nijaṁ bhaved, vijñānam ajñāna-
bhidāpamārjanam guṇa-prakāśair anumīyate bhavān, prakāśate yasya
ca yena vā guṇaḥ*

“O Lord, cause of all causes, if Your transcendental body were not beyond the modes of material nature, one could not understand the difference between matter and transcendence. Only by Your presence can one understand the transcendental nature of Your Lordship, who are the controller of material nature. Your transcendental nature is very difficult to understand unless one is influenced by the presence of Your transcendental form.”

*bhagavān sarva-bhūteṣu, lakṣitaḥ svātmanā hariḥ dr̥śyair buddhy-
ādibhir draṣṭā, lakṣaṇair anumāpakaiḥ*

“The Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in every living being along with the individual soul. And this fact is perceived

and hypothesized in our acts of seeing and taking help from the intelligence.” (SB 2.2.35)

The meaning for the *gopis* is as follows: “Though residing in Mathura, I (*ātmā*), being full of knowledge (*jnana-maya*), am always conscious of you and never forget you. Even though present here, I am free from any fault (*suddha*) of associating with the women of Mathura, because I remain aloof (*vyatiriktaḥ*). I am severely pained by My separation from you, so how could I get pleasure from any other women? I continually dwell on your qualities (*guṇa-ānvayaḥ*) such as your tender beauty and sweet sidelong glances.

“Similarly, you can also always perceive Me with your mental faculties during the three states of sleeping, dreaming and waking. In deep sleep (*susupti*) you can perceive My general form and qualities as the Paramatma. In dreams (*svapna*) You can perceive My particular form and qualities. And in waking consciousness (*jāgradbhir*) you can perceive Me directly with the full manifestation of My laughing, dancing and other characteristics of the sweet pleasures of union (*sambhoga-mādhuryam*).”

Text 32

*yenendriyārthān dhyāyeta,
mṛṣā svapna-vad utthitaḥ,
tan nirundhyād indriyāṇi,
vinidraḥ pratyapadyata*

As a person just arisen from sleep may continue to meditate on a dream even though it is illusory, so by the agency of the mind one meditates on the sense objects, which the senses can then obtain. Therefore one should become fully alert and bring the mind under control.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “This *jñāna-yoga* which I have imparted bears fruit when the mind is restrained.” This verse proposes control of the mind.

“In the waking state a man meditates on material objects in his mind. While dreaming as well, by the mind he meditates on dream objects, even though they are false. Thus, the mind and senses should be restrained. After all, a person who is careful and alert *vinidraḥ: sāvadhānaḥ*) obtains (*pratyapadyata*) knowledge, as is evidenced by the saintly behavior of persons in the past.”

For the *gopīs* this means: “Waking from a swooning condition (*utthitaḥ:mūrcchātaḥ prabuddhaḥ*), persons like yourselves should reject as an unreliable source of knowledge that mind by which they meditate on the objects of the senses such as seeing Me, touching Me, drinking the nectar of My lips and embracing Me. Although these are real because they come from My actual appearance in this world, they are yet false as in a dream state. This is because upon giving up your sleeping (*vinidraḥ*) condition you appeared with eyes and other senses devoid of mascara, eye coloring or sandalwood paste. I understand that though I gave you all sorts of enjoyment, you consider all that enjoyment false, due to being blinded by loving attraction to Me, and having lost all discretion because of your excessive anxiety of separation. All this gives Me great unhappiness. Therefore, I have sent this message to convince you of the reality of all of these pastimes we performed.”

Text 33

*etad-antaḥ samāmnāyo,
yogaḥ sāṅkhyam manīṣiṇām,
tyāgas tapo damaḥ satyam,
samudrāntā ivāpagāḥ*

According to intelligent authorities, this is the ultimate conclusion of all the Vedas, as well as all practice of yoga, Sāṅkhya, renunciation, austerity, sense control and truthfulness, just as the sea is the ultimate destination of all rivers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “All the methods described in all the scriptures have as their purpose control of the mind.” That is the import of this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Control of the mind is the conclusion (*etad-antaḥ*) of all the *Vedas* (*samāmnāyo:sampūrṇo vedaḥ*). And this is sufficient to make one successful in life. *Astanga-yoga*, discriminating spirit from matter (Sankhya), renunciation (*tyāgas:sannyasa*), following one’s prescribed duty (*tapo:sva-dharma*), and subduing the senses (*damah*) are different methods, but they all lead to the same place, namely control of the mind, just as all rivers lead to the ocean.”

For the *gopis* this means: “As one transcends material existence by controlling the mind, similarly, you can transcend the pain of separation from Me by mind-control. It is the uncontrolled mind that makes you perceive your association with Me as illusory, even though it is real.” The meaning of the words is the same in both these interpretations.

Text 34

*yat tv ahaṁ bhavatīnām vai,
dūre varte priyo drśām,
manasaḥ sannikarṣārtham,
mad-anudhyāna-kāmyayā*

But the actual reason why I, the beloved object of your sight, have stayed far away from you is that I wanted to intensify your meditation upon Me and thus draw your minds closer to Me.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “O Uddhava, by this news from Kṛṣṇa you have doubled our pain. Therefore should we call the sender of this message ignorant of the proper time, place and person? Or should we criticize you instead for being so thoughtless? You have brought this burden of *brahma-jnana* this far, but who will buy it in Vraja? Can the *gopis*, who from birth have been drinking the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s beauty, now drink the bitter *neem* sap of *brahma-jnana*? It is better that the women of this place give up their lives if only such an abominable thing is available as food; better they die of starvation.

“Now just listen, you great fool! Just listen! This *brahma-jnana*, which is found in the leaf huts of the hearts of great saintly physicians, is the medicinal herb that can certainly cure the disease of material existence. But can it cure the grave disease of *kṛṣṇa-prema*? Did those doctors ever research this disease? After learning the science of medicine from Sandipani Muni, Kṛṣṇa has taught you and then sent you to us with the herbal cure to relieve the great fever of *prema*. You can now be our messenger Uddhava, and take this medicine back to its sender. Drinking it, Kṛṣṇa will extinguish His fever of *prema* for us. Make sure that no trace of fever remains. As for us, may our great fever of *prema* remain for a hundred births!

“And if you have no such herb with you, then what can be done? Alas, can the torrents of rain that will put out a forest fire extinguish the fire of lightning? If we find within Kṛṣṇa’s message something a little favorable to us, is that His intention or is it just an accident? We cannot place any faith in Him.”

After the *gopis* spoke in this angry mood, Uddhava answered: “O ladies, just listen to me for one moment with attention. I have brought you another message apart from this knowledge of Brahman (*brahma-jnana*).” Then Uddhava related Kṛṣṇa’s statements, which the *gopis* heard with great faith and eagerness.

The general meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s message is as follows: “That I who am so attractive to your eyes am now situated far away from them is simply out of My desire to increase your meditation on Me. By that meditation

your minds are drawn to Me. Therefore, now I am very close to your minds.”

The following is also implied simultaneously: “You *gopis* are also extremely attractive to My eyes, and thus since you are now far from My eyes, please remain near to My mind. Thus it is deduced that an object of attraction is far from the mind when it is in the vicinity of one’s eyes and near the mind when it is far from the eyes. Of the two, the mind is more important. Therefore, I desire that you remain close to My mind. May that be your desire as well.”

Text 35

*yathā dūra-care preṣṭhe,
mana āviśya vartate,
strīṅām ca na tathā cetah,
sannikṛṣṭe ’kṣi-gocare*

When her lover is far away, a woman thinks of him more than when he is present before her.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse considers the relative importance of feeling with the heart and seeing with the eyes. *Ca* (and) indicates that this example holds true for men as well as women. Like women, men become more absorbed in thinking of a beloved woman when she is far away than when she is present before their eyes.

Text 36

*mayy āveśya manaḥ kṛtsnam,
vimuktāśeṣa-vṛtti yat,
anusmarantyo mām nityam,*

Because your minds are totally absorbed in Me and free from all other engagement, you remember Me always, and so you will very soon have Me again in your presence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “O Uddhava, this message also you should keep in the treasure box of your heart. Though now Kṛṣṇa is enjoying the women of Mathura, sometime in the future He will be far from their eyes. At that time you can give this message to them. But right now, this message is unacceptable to the women of Vraja. Previously, even when Kṛṣṇa was present here and visible to our eyes, and then was absent for a moment, that moment felt like a hundred *yugas*. During each minute of that period of absence the *gopis* would have drawn Kṛṣṇa into their minds with thousand-fold feelings of separation.”

When the *gopis* spoke sarcastically in this way, Uddhava replied, “O women, if this message does not appeal to you, then hear another message from me. I have brought many messages.”

Again Uddhava delivered Kṛṣṇa’s words to them as mentioned in this verse. Uddhava said, “As you have completely rejected (*vimukta*) objects like house and husband, and absorbed your minds in constant remembrance of Me, very soon you will attain My personal presence.”

Text 37

*yā mayā krīḍatā rātryām,
vane ’smin vraja āsthītāḥ,
alabdha-rāsāḥ kalyāṇyo,
māpur mad-vīrya-cintayā*

Although some gopīs had to remain in the cowherd village and so could not join the rāsa dance to sport with Me at night in the forest, they were nonetheless fortunate. Indeed, they attained Me by thinking of My potent pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse gives proof of Kṛṣṇa’s personal presence when some *gopīs* were locked in their houses by their husbands on the night of the *rasa* dance, as described in a previous verse.

Kṛṣṇa’s message said, “Why were some *gopīs* not able to sport with Me (*kridata maya*) on the night of the *rasa-līla* in Vṛndavana? They were forcibly kept back in their homes in Vraja (*vraja āsthitāḥ*) by their husbands. Although they wanted to die because their desires could not be fulfilled, and because they experienced great pain in separation from Me, still they were very fortunate (*kalyanyah*). Thus remaining alive they attained Me by remembering the *rasa* dance and other pastimes of Mine. In other words, I appeared directly before them in their homes in Vraja, and enjoyed pastimes with them during that night. After that, on other nights, they entered the *rasa* dance on the bank of the Yamuna.”

Text 38

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam priyatamādiṣṭam,
ākarnya vraja-yoṣitaḥ,
tā ūcur uddhavam prītās,
tat-sandeshāgata-smṛtīḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The women of Vraja were pleased to hear this message from their dearest Kṛṣṇa. His words having revived their memory, they addressed Uddhava as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse was spoken by the *gopīs* mentioned in the previous verse, who had been trapped in their houses. The *gopīs* said, “Uddhava, it’s true! During that night we enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa.” After hearing from Uddhava, these *gopīs* remembered their own experiences which were proof of his words. They then became satisfied with Uddhava and talked politely with him.

Text 39

*gopya ūcuḥ, diṣṭyāhito hataḥ kaṁso,
yadūnām sānugo ’gha-kṛt,
diṣṭyāptair labdha-sarvārthaiḥ,
kuśaly āste ’cyuto ’dhunā*

The gopīs said: It is very good that Kāṁsa, the enemy and persecutor of the Yadus, has now been killed, along with his followers. And it is also very good that Lord Acyuta is living happily in the company of His well-wishing friends and relatives, whose every desire is now fulfilled.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopīs* said, “It is good (*diṣṭya*) that the enemy (*ahitah*) has been killed.”

Text 40

*kaccid gadāgrajaḥ saumya,
karoti pura-yoṣitām,
prītiṁ naḥ snigdha-savrīḍa-
hāsodārekṣaṇārcitaiḥ*

Gentle Uddhava, is the elder brother of Gada now bestowing on the city women the pleasure that actually belongs to us? We suppose those ladies worship Him with generous glances full of affectionate, shy smiles.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some *gopis*, other than those who were prevented from going to the *rasa-lila*, then spoke with jealousy in this verse. The name Gadāgraja indicates Kṛṣṇa, the elder brother (*agraja*) of Gada, the first son of Devarakṣitā, a sister of Devakī’s who was also married to Vasudeva. By addressing Kṛṣṇa in this way, the *gopis* indicate that He now thinks of Himself mostly as the son of Devakī. The implication is that Kṛṣṇa’s connection with Vṛndāvana has now slackened.

The jealous *gopis* said, “We worshiped Kṛṣṇa with our pleasing, shy smiles and generous glances. Is He now stimulating the love of the women of Mathura with His bold glances? Is He worshipping them? O Siva! Siva! Although that glance is meant to be worshiped by us, it has become their worshiper. This is our great misfortune!”

Text 41

*katham rati-viśeṣa-jñāḥ,
priyaś ca pura-yoṣitām,
nānubadhyeta tad-vākyair,
vibhramaiś cānubhājitāḥ*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is expert in all kinds of conjugal affairs and is the darling of the city women. How can He not become entangled, now that He’s constantly adored by their enchanting words and gestures?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O foolish women, why are you asking the same question again? You should have no doubt about this.” In this

way, other *gopis* spoke sarcastically with concealed anger. The *gopis* said, “Because Kṛṣṇa knows everything about love affairs, He has become the darling of the women of Mathura. So how will He not become attached to them? Being constantly worshiped (*anubhajitah*) by their words and services, Kṛṣṇa will respond to them, and be forced to render service to them also. Therefore, we village women have no special conjugal attraction (*rati-viśeṣa*) to offer Him, that most exalted person. We are not skilled in the use of such polite words and proper gestures. Thus we have rightly concluded that Kṛṣṇa has abandoned us on attaining the cultured women of Mathura.” This they imply in their inquiry.

Text 42

*api smarati naḥ sādho,
govindaḥ prastute kvacit,
goṣṭhi-madhya pura-strīṅām,
grāmyāḥ svaira-kathāntare*

O saintly one, does Govinda ever remember us during His conversations with the city women? Does He ever mention us village girls as He freely talks with them?

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Surely Kṛṣṇa has abandoned us because we deserve to be abandoned. Indeed, we are the most insignificant women in the world and have been rejected after having been enjoyed. Still, do we sometimes enter into Kṛṣṇa’s memory on account of some good quality of ours, or even because of something we did wrong? Kṛṣṇa must speak very freely with the city women. “He and they must sing, joke, make riddles and talk about so many things. Does Kṛṣṇa ever say, ‘My dear city women, your sophisticated singing and speech is unknown to the *gopīs* in My home village. They

couldn't understand these things.' Does He ever speak about us even in that way?"

Text 43

*tāḥ kiṁ niśāḥ smarati yāsu tadā priyābhir,
vṛndāvane kumuda-kunda-śaśāṅka-ramye,
reme kvaṇac-caraṇa-nūpura-rāsa-goṣṭhyām,
asmābhir īḍita-manojña-kathaḥ kadācit*

Does He recall those nights in the Vṛndāvana forest, lovely with lotus, jasmine and the bright moon? As we glorified His charming pastimes, He enjoyed with us, His beloved girlfriends, in the circle of the rāsa dance, which resounded with the music of ankle bells.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O dear *gopis*! What is the use of criticizing Kṛṣṇa and the women of Mathura with crooked words? Why don't you speak straightforwardly? Due to the loving expertise of other women and our own misfortune Kṛṣṇa may indeed forget us, but how can He have forgotten His own place of residence?”

In this way some *gopis* spoke while crying: “In the charming forest of Vṛndavana along the Yamuna's banks, which were splendid with brilliant white lotuses, jasmines and moonlight, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with us at the *rasa* arena, which resounded with the sounds of ankle bells. Where is there such a river bank in Mathura? Where else is the music, song and dance so pleasing to Kṛṣṇa? The intimate talks we had with Kṛṣṇa were praised by the heavenly women riding in their airplanes. Do the vile women of Mathura know any such conversations with Him? Who in Mathura knows how to make unguents, flower crowns, garlands, and betel nut preparations for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure? “By remaining in Mathura, Kṛṣṇa's happiness has completely disappeared. We will die in disappointment just thinking of Kṛṣṇa's lack

of bliss. If there were some woman in Mathura like us who could please Kṛṣṇa, then He could enjoy dancing with her, playing His flute and other pastimes. If we heard that such a woman existed, then we could remain in Vrndavana happily, even though separate from Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 44

*apy eṣyatīha dāśārhas,
taptāḥ sva-kṛtayā śucā,
sañjīvayan nu no gātrair,
yathendro vanam ambudaiḥ*

Will that descendant of Daśārha return here and by the touch of His limbs bring back to life those who are now burning with the grief He Himself has caused? Will He save us in that way, just as Lord Indra brings a forest back to life with his water-bearing clouds?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi said, “O sakhis! Because Kṛṣṇa is unhappy, He will immediately return here.”

Believing this, another gopi said, “Will Kṛṣṇa really come to Vraja and bring us, who are burning up with grief because of Him, back to life with the touch of His beautiful hand?”

Text 45

*kasmāt kṛṣṇa ihāyāti,
prāpta-rājyo hatāhitāḥ,
narendra-kanyā udvāhya,
prītaḥ sarva-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ*

But why should Kṛṣṇa come here after winning a kingdom, killing His enemies and marrying the daughters of kings? He’s satisfied there, surrounded by all His friends and well-wishers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing this, one obstinate gopi of the “left-wing” (*vamya*) nature spoke. “Hey sakhis, foolish women! You do not know at all what happiness Kṛṣṇa gets during the *rasa* dance. Hear from me what type of happiness He likes!”

Expressing herself in such crooked words, she speaks this verse: “Why will Kṛṣṇa return to Vraja? Here Kṛṣṇa has to undergo the hardships of tending the cows, and there in Mathura He has obtained a kingdom. Here, Kṛṣṇa can only sport with women from the cowherd caste, and there He can enjoy with ladies of noble descent. So what happiness can Kṛṣṇa enjoy here? Here, Kṛṣṇa is cowherd boy, there Kṛṣṇa is a king. And after some time Kṛṣṇa will get married there.”

This refers to Kṛṣṇa’s marrying Rukmini while living in Mathura, which occurred during some other day of Brahma, according to the *Puranas*.

Further, the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad* 2.48 says:

prāpya mathurām pūriṁ ramyām, sadā brahmadi sevitām śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-sārṅga-, rakṣitām muṣalādibbhiḥ, yatrāsau samsthitaḥ kṛṣṇas, tribhiḥ śaktyā samāhitaḥ rāmāniruddha-pradyumnai, rukmiṇyā sahito vibhuḥ

“Sri Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His three potencies, and by Balarama, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, and Rukmini, stays in delightful Mathura Puri, which is worshiped by Brahma and the other demigods and protected by the conch, *cakra*, club, and *sarṅga* bow.”

Text 46

*kim asmābhir vanaukobhir,
anyābhir vā mahātmanah,
śrī-pater āpta-kāmasya,*

kriyetārthaḥ kṛtātmanaḥ

The great soul Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the goddess of fortune, and He automatically achieves whatever He desires. How can we forest-dwellers or any other women fulfill His purposes when He is already fulfilled within Himself?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O sakhis! Give up this jealousy and enmity toward Kṛṣṇa, who is completely devoid of love for us.” One gopi thus spoke about Kṛṣṇa’s indifference towards everything. It may be questioned, “Since Kṛṣṇa is the master of the goddess of fortune, doesn’t He in fact have love for her?” No, because Kṛṣṇa is *āpta-kāmasya* (fulfilled in all desires) and *kṛtātmanaḥ* (self-complete); for Him who is complete by nature what need does He have for Lakṣmi? Therefore there is no princess in Mathura suitable to marry Him.” This confidential truth is being subtly implied to Uddhava.

Text 47

*param saukhyam hi nairāśyam,
svairiṇy apy āha piṅgalā,
taj jānatīnām naḥ kṛṣṇe,
tathāpy āśā duratyayā*

Indeed, the greatest happiness is to renounce all desires, as even the prostitute Piṅgalā has declared. Yet even though we know this, we cannot give up our hopes of attaining Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi replied, “Therefore you should give up all hopes of attaining Kṛṣṇa.” Another gopi said, “But we cannot give Him up (*duratyayā*) under any

circumstance.”

First gopi: “It is difficult for anyone to give up hope concerning Kṛṣṇa. Pingala had desires for men other than Kṛṣṇa, and therefore she could give up those desires”

Text 48

*ka utsaheta santyaktum,
uttamaḥśloka-saṁvidam,
anicchato 'pi yasya śrīr,
aṅgān na cyavate kvacit*

**Who can bear to give up intimate talks with Lord Uttamaḥśloka?
Although He shows no interest in her, Goddess Śrī never moves
from her place on His chest.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi said, “Though a greedy man may not attain his desired object, he does not give up the desire for the object. Who can bear to give up the experience of Kṛṣṇa’s (Uttamahsloka) beauty and sweetness (*saṁvidam: saundarya-mādhuryādy-upalabdhim*)? No one at all! Though Lakṣmi, the goddess of fortune, is ignored by Kṛṣṇa, she does not give up His chest, but remains there always in the form of a golden line.”

Text 49

*saric-chaila-vanoddeśā,
gāvo veṇu-ravā ime,
saṅkarṣaṇa-sahāyena,
kṛṣṇenācaritāḥ prabho*

Dear Uddhava Prabhu, when Kṛṣṇa was here in the company of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He enjoyed all these rivers, hills, forests, cows and flute sounds.

Text 50

*punaḥ punaḥ smārayanti,
nanda-gopa-sutaṁ bata,
śrī-niketāis tat-padakair,
vismartuṁ naiva śaknumaḥ*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One gopi said, “When the memory of a desired object vanishes, the hopes for it also vanish. However, that will never happen with us, because we can never forget Kṛṣṇa.” This is expressed in three verses (49-51).

A gopi said, “The rivers, hills, forests, cows and flute were resorted to or utilized regularly (*ācaritāḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa. We cannot forget Kṛṣṇa because we see His footprints marked with the divine symbols of a flag and a thunderbolt remaining in the earth and stones.”

Text 51

*gatyā lalitayodāra,
hāsa-līlāvalokanaiḥ,
mādhvyā girā hr̥ta-dhiyaḥ,*

katham tam vismarāma he

O Uddhava, how can we forget Him when our hearts have been stolen away by the charming way He walks, His generous smile and playful glances, and His honeylike words?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava suggested, “If you keep remembering Kṛṣṇa by looking at the rivers, mountains and forests of Vraja, then bind a cloth around your eyes, use your intelligence to lead your minds to some other thought, and thus forget Kṛṣṇa.”

A gopi replies, “O Uddhava! It is not possible to forget Kṛṣṇa because we no longer possess our intelligence, since Kṛṣṇa has taken it away by His supreme beauty, charm, and honey-sweet words (*mādhvyā girā*).”

Text 52

*he nātha he ramā-nātha,
vraja-nāthārti-nāśana,
magnam uddhara govinda,
gokulam vṛjinārṇavāt*

**O master, O master of the goddess of fortune, O master of Vraja !
O destroyer of all suffering, Govinda, please lift Your Gokula out of
the ocean of distress in which it is drowning!**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *gopis*’ feelings become so strong that they disregard Uddhava and, turning toward Mathurā, call out to Kṛṣṇa in pitiful voices: “O Kṛṣṇa (in this text the first phrase is *he nātha he ramā-nātha*), You attract our minds, even though we are unworthy! O lord of Lakṣmi (*ramā-nātha*), we also need to be mastered. O great reservoir of amazing sweetness and tasteful

loving reciprocations, which are begged for (*nathyamana*) even by Laksmi! O master of Vraja (*vraja-nātha*), Vraja needs Your shelter. “O remover of suffering (*ārti-nāśana*), in the past You performed many inconceivable pastimes to protect us, such as lifting Govardhana Hill to free us from the distress caused by Indra. Now, however, we are in an ocean of the most intense suffering (*vṛjina-arṇavāt*) caused by separation from You. Please come of Your own accord and save Gokula which will be destroyed either today or tomorrow. O Govinda, come resume Your duties of protecting the cows and supervising their grazing; enough with this sending of messengers!”

Text 53

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tatas tāḥ kṛṣṇa-sandeśair,
vyapeta-viraha-jvarāḥ,
uddhavaṁ pūjayām cakrur,
jñātvātmānam adhokṣajam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Lord Kṛṣṇa’s messages having relieved their fever of separation, the gopīs then worshiped Uddhava, recognizing him as nondifferent from their Lord, Kṛṣṇa.

Text 54

*uvāsa katicin māsān,
gopīnām vinudan śucaḥ,
kṛṣṇa-līlā-kathām gāyan,
ramayām āsa gokulam*

Uddhava remained there for several months, dispelling the gopis' sorrow by chanting the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Thus he brought joy to all the people of Gokula.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When out of sorrow the *gopis'* hopes for Kṛṣṇa's return grew dim, and they became eager to give up their lives, Uddhava made them happy by speaking yet other messages, even more confidential. That is the significance of the word "after that" (*tatas*). Though Sukadeva Gosvami has not explicitly described those messages, one can understand them by the results they had on the *gopis*. Kṛṣṇa said [message], "O you who are as dear to Me as life, while you are standing before My messenger Uddhava just close your eyes. Just as the cowherd boys closed their eyes and were delivered from the forest fire, close your eyes and I will deliver you from the devastating fire of separation. Witness My mystic power!"

Hearing this, the *gopis* closed their eyes. In a flash of a second, *yogamaya* compressed millions of years of time into a single moment. Kṛṣṇa then appeared on that spot, and in the company of the *gopis* enjoyed the *rasa* dance in the Vrndavana forest, playing dice, drinking honey liquor, water sporting and swing pastimes. By enjoying all these pastimes, the *gopis* forgot all their pains of separation. Seeing that all their limbs were exuberant in ecstasy, Uddhava paused for a moment and then said, "Now ladies, open your eyes again." Upon opening their eyes the *gopis* felt that they had taken a new birth through the bestowal of a thousand-fold bliss as when they had closed their eyes. Recognizing Uddhava as nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa (*adhoksaja*), they then worshiped Uddhava. The syllable *adho* in the word *adhokṣajam* means downward (*adhah*); *akṣa* means eyes; and *ja* means birth. Kṛṣṇa said (message), "O women filled with *prema*! If you give up your lives, I will also give up My life upon hearing this news. Don't doubt it! Swearing a thousand times, I declare that you are My very life! Even though I am trying to go to Vraja at every moment, I am unable to do so. Perhaps I am being kept here because the time of the endeavor is

not right, or else because the love the Mathura-vasis have for Me is an obstacle.”

By such messages the *gopis*’ fever of separation (*viraha-jvarāḥ*) caused by their thinking that Kṛṣṇa had no love for them was completely dispelled (*vyapeta*). Thinking that *adhoksaja* Kṛṣṇa was afflicted by the pain of separation like themselves (*ātmānam:ātma-tulyam*), or else thinking that Kṛṣṇa was their very life (*ātmānam:atma:svā:own, anam:prana:breath*), the *gopis* then worshiped Uddhava.

The *gopis* said, “O Uddhava, you have spoken well. Now even at the cost of suffering the greatest pain we will remain alive. If you had not given this message we would have certainly died, and everything would have been destroyed. Therefore by saving us you have fulfilled our desire to protect everyone involved, and thus we worship you.”

The external meaning that the *gopis* recognized their own souls (*ātmānam*) as one with the transcendental Lord, the Supersoul, is simply a meaning to bewilder the *asuras*. This is not the real meaning. Indeed, this scriptural passage is just like the Mohini incarnation in its effect. For the *prema-bhakta*, oneness of the Lord and the *jīva* is insipid. What to speak then how repulsive it would be for the *gopis*, who are the crest jewel of all unalloyed pure devotees, to think such a thing? Indeed, Sridhara Svami, who knows best the purport of advanced scriptures, has stated:

*tat-kathāmr̥ta-pāthodhau, viharanto mahā-mudaḥ kurvanti kṛtināḥ
kecic, catur-vargaṁ tṛṇopamam*

“Any person who has become mad with bliss by sporting in the nectarean ocean of topics of Kṛṣṇa thinks of the four goals of human life as insignificant as a blade of grass.”

It can be seen that even the most potent knowledge of the soul (*ātmā-jñāna*) can never cover one who has fully developed *kṛṣṇa-prema*. When Vasudeva and Arjuna saw the *mahāīśvarya* aspect (supreme opulence) of Kṛṣṇa, their parental and friendly relationships became covered by *dasya-bhakti* (devotion in the mood of servitude), but not by *brahma-jñāna*, knowledge of Brahman. It has been seen that the Vrajavasis were merged in *brahma-jnana*, but this was only to show

their distaste for knowledge of Brahman.

“Kṛṣṇa brought the Vrajavasis to the lake of Brahman, merged them in it and then brought them out: *te tu brahma-hradam nītā magnāḥ kṛṣṇena coddhṛtāḥ* (SB 10.28.16).” The word *ca-uddhṛtāḥ* (“brought them out” or “delivered them”) is specifically used in the text. Just as living entities are delivered from the ocean of *samsara*, the inhabitants of Vraja were delivered from the repulsive Brahman. Furthermore, if the *gopis* had developed monistic *ātmā-jñāna* (realization of the soul as one with Brahman), then they would not have spoken to Balarama with such unsettled minds as they did when He later returned to Vraja:

gopyo hasantyaḥ papracchū, rāma-sandarśanādṛtāḥ kaccid āste sukham kṛṣṇaḥ, pura-strī-jana-vallabhaḥ

Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Honored to have the personal audience of Lord Balarāma, the young *gopīs*, smiled and asked Him, ‘Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?’” (SB 10.65.9)

“One *gopi* said, ‘It is astonishing that the intelligent women of Mathura have faith in the words of the ungrateful, fickle-hearted Kṛṣṇa.’

“Another *gopi* said, ‘They must have developed faith in His words because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their lust.’” (SB 10.65.13)

Indeed, if the Vraja-*gopis* had attained the stage of *brahma-jnana* they could never speak, as they are going to in the future, such jealous words (as quoted above) indicative of their ignorance of the soul or Brahman.

Text 55

*yāvanty ahāni nandasya,
vraje ’vātsīt sa uddhavaḥ,
vrajaukasām kṣaṇa-prāyāṇy,
āsan kṛṣṇasya vārtayā*

All the days that Uddhava dwelled in Nanda’s cowherd village

seemed like a single moment to the residents of Vraja, for Uddhava was always discussing Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: How did time pass in a moment (*kṣaṇa-prāyāṇy*) in Uddhava's presence? The name Uddhava means extreme bliss, and besides Kṛṣṇa had also empowered Uddhava with the capacity to bestow bliss on others. Thus time passed in a moment for the Vrajavis, who felt extreme happiness in the association of Uddhava, bliss personified.

Text 56

*sarid-vana-giri-droṇīr,
vīkṣan kusumitān drumān,
kṛṣṇaṁ saṁsmārayan reme,
hari-dāso vrajaukasām*

That servant of Lord Hari, seeing the rivers, forests, mountains, valleys and flowering trees of Vraja, enjoyed inspiring the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by reminding them of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 57

*dr̥ṣṭvaivam-ādi gopīnām,
kṛṣṇāveśātma-viklavam,
uddhavaḥ parama-prītas,
tā namasyann idaṁ jagau*

Thus seeing how the gopīs were always disturbed because of

their total absorption in Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava was supremely pleased. Desiring to offer them all respect, he sang as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having observed the transcendental madness (*viklavam*) of the *gopis*, who had attained the highest state of loving ecstasy wherein their minds (*ātmā*) were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-āveśa*), and having seen their other exalted qualities (*evam-ādi gopīnām*), Uddhava loudly sang (*jagau:uccair*) prayers offering all respect (*namasyann*) to them. According to Sridhara Svami, Uddhava spoke loudly to show that it was not improper for one of *ksatriya* birth to pay obeisances to mere cowherd girls.

Text 58

*etāḥ param tanu-bhṛto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo,
govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ,
vāñchanti yad bhava-bhiyo munayo vayam ca,
kim brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya*

[Uddhava sang:] 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?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava describes the outstanding glories of the Vraja-gopis in five verses (58-62).

Uddhava sang, “The *gopis* alone have perfected their lives (*tanu-bhṛto*) by achieving *rūḍha-bhāvāḥ* (*mahābhāva*), which those striving for liberation (*bhava-bhiyo*), those who are liberated (*munayo*) and

devotees such as I (*vayam ca*) desire but cannot attain. Therefore for one who has attraction (*rasa:rāga*) to the topics of the unlimited (*ananta-kathā*) Lord, what is the use of *brahminical* birth (*brahma-janmabhiḥ*), the three-fold births by seminal parenthood, the sacred thread initiation and the sacrificial initiation which pertain to *brahmanas*? There is nothing special about them, since just by attraction to the topics of the unlimited, one can attain the highest achievement. Or else, for one who is not attracted to the topics of the unlimited what is the value of *brahminical* births, since lack of attraction to His topics renders all such births useless.”

Text 59

*kvemāḥ striyo vana-carīr vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ,
kṛṣṇe kva caiṣa paramātmāni rūḍha-bhāvāḥ,
nanv īśvaro 'nubhajato 'viduṣo 'pi sākṣāc,
chreyas tanoty agada-rāja ivopayuktāḥ*

How amazing it is that these simple women who wander about the forest, seemingly spoiled by improper behavior, have achieved the perfection of unalloyed love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul! Still, it is true that the Supreme Lord Himself awards His blessings even to an ignorant worshiper, just as the best medicine works even when taken by a person ignorant of its ingredients.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Therefore the reason for someone being most exalted is devotion alone, and not such factors as performance of austerities and knowledge. Though this devotion is the most exalted, it is not deemed so by the common people. Remaining in such a place, pure devotion makes one its own shelter, making him most exalted, worshipable by all and most rarely approachable. In two verses (59-60), Uddhava speaks about this with astonishment, his hair standing

on end.

Uddhava sang, “These *gopis* are considered lowly on account of their being women, their birth as cowherds and their behavior. Since it is their nature to wander about the forests (*vana-carīr*), they are naturally contaminated by improper behavior. So where (*kva*) have these women attained *mahābhāva* (*rūḍha-bhāvaḥ*) for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, who is the source of all other souls, and superior (*parama*) to all His other forms such as the Lord of Vaikuntha?”

The use of the word *kva* (where) in the first two lines indicates the impossibility of its existence. In other words, where else have such persons as these apparently insignificant and impure *gopīs* attained the highest perfection of life, namely unalloyed pure love for Kṛṣṇa? It seems most astonishing that they could be so spiritually elevated. But on thinking a moment, Uddhava decided, “Ah, it is not so amazing!” Uddhava continued thinking, “Certainly (*nanu*) the Supreme Lord (*isvarah:bhagavan*) can give this most auspicious thing to such persons as this, who are without philosophical knowledge (*aviduṣaḥ*) of *atma* and Brahman, and not just to perfected persons. To devotees like the *gopis* Kṛṣṇa gave liberation from *samsara* and the pure ecstatic taste of His love, which is difficult to attain even for liberated souls. Nectar (*amṛta*), the king of medicines (*agada-rāja*), gives substantial benefits (*chreyas:śreyah*) by bestowing a unique sweet taste along with dispelling a person’s disease, even to one ignorant of its identity. Similarly, why then should Kṛṣṇa not give that most exalted *mahabhava*, which even devotees like Narada cannot attain, to these *gopis* who are perfect in devotion (*bhakti-siddha*) and eternally liberated (*nitya-siddha*)? Besides that, these *gopis* are in full knowledge of Kṛṣṇa’s personal form and identity, qualities, opulences and sweetness. And they have engaged their intelligence in Kṛṣṇa’s service, as well as all the limbs of their bodies, their youth, feminine charms and all their ornaments.”

There are three types of adulterous women (*vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*: corrupted by deviation). The first is a woman who enjoys both her husband and a lover, being faithful to neither. Both ordinary society

and the scriptures condemn this conduct. The second type of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband to enjoy only with her lover. Society and the scriptures also condemn this behavior, although such a fallen woman may be said to at least have the good quality of dedicating herself to a single man. The last kind of adulterous woman is she who abandons her husband and enjoys in the attitude of being a lover of Kṛṣṇa. Although foolish, common people criticize this position, such behavior is glorified by those who are wise in spiritual science. Therefore learned members of society and the revealed scriptures praise such single-minded devotion to the Lord. Such was the *gopīs*' behavior. Thus the term *vyabhicāra-duṣṭāḥ*, "corrupted by deviation," indicates the apparent resemblance between the *gopīs*' behavior and that of ordinary adulterous women. The characteristics of *rūḍha-bhāvaḥ* or *mahābhāva* are described in *Ujjvala-nilamāni*.

Text 60

*nāyam śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ,
 svar-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ,
 rāsotsave 'sya bhūja-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṇṭha,
 labdhāśiṣām ya udagād vraja-vallabhīnām*

When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was dancing with the *gopīs* in the *rāsā-līlā*, the *gopīs* were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess of fortune or other consorts in the spiritual world. Indeed, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets, whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to material estimation?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa, the best of all *avatāras*, exists on the highest platform of purity and morality, and thus He always remained praiseworthy by all, even while accepting worldly criticism for His cow-tending, wandering in the forest, taking meals with young monkeys, stealing yogurt and seducing other men's wives. Similarly, the *gopīs*, who are the essence of Kṛṣṇa's pleasure potency (*hladini-sakti*), achieved the highest standard of purity and auspiciousness, even in comparison to the goddesses of fortune, and thus the *gopīs* are supremely glorious, even though they were criticized by worldly people because they were mere cowherd women living in the forest and behaving in an apparently improper way.

Uddhava said, "Oh, even Lakṣmī, who resides upon the chest of Lord Narayana, and who has enjoyed unlimitedly with Him, never got such mercy. What then to speak of the women of heaven (*sva-yoṣitām*), the wives of Lord Upendra (Vamanadeva) and other incarnations, who possess extraordinary beauty, good qualities and fine fragrance like that of a lotus."

In this verse the supreme position of the *gopīs* is established in that they achieved the rare mercy of being embraced around their necks by the arms of Kṛṣṇa during the *rāsa* dance. This statement also implies that among all auspicious events, the *rāsa* dance is the most excellent.

Text 61

*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 they 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “As it has been proved that the *gopīs*’ love is the most rare to attain, it would be improper to desire it. Therefore it was with lack of judgment that I have said ‘that *mahabhava* which those desiring liberation, the liberated and devotees like me hanker after’ (v. 58). But now with proper consideration, let me correctly express my desire. I want to be born as some low shrub, creeper or grass upon which the *gopīs* will place their feet (*āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu*).”

One may question: “But what is that supreme excellence of the *gopīs*’ worship, that you desire their foot dust, rather than that of such exalted personalities as Lakṣmi?”

Uddhava replies, “I have never seen such intense worship where one can break all the mundane principles of religiosity, shyness and sense control. Every night, the Vraja-gopīs give up all shame, their respectable upbringing and religious codes, which are as hard as thunderbolts to break, and run off to meet Kṛṣṇa. At the time of returning home, they are completely oblivious as to whether they are following the right footpath or not. Then they will place their blessed feet upon my head, which will be present there in the form of some blade of grass. As for now, even though I pitifully beg for it millions of times over, they are not willing to put their feet on my head. Therefore my life will be successful only if I am born as a blade of grass in Vṛndavana!”

Text 62

*yā vai śriyārcitam ajādibhir āpta-kāmaid,
yogeśvarair api yad ātmani rāsa-goṣṭhyām,
kṛṣṇasya tad bhagavataḥ caraṇāravindam,*

nyastam staneṣu vijahuḥ parirabhya tāpam

The goddess of fortune herself, along with Lord Brahmā and all the other demigods, who are masters of yogic perfection, can worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa only within her mind. But during the rāsa dance Lord Kṛṣṇa placed His feet upon these gopīs’ breasts, and by embracing those feet the gopīs gave up all distress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Uddhava again glorifies the *mahabhava* of the *gopis* which is inaccessible to Lakṣmi and others. Uddhava said, “Indeed (*vai*), the *gopis* relieved their mental anguish at the *rasa* arena (*rāsa-goṣṭhyām*) by embracing the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa to their breasts. These are the same lotus feet that Brahma, Lakṣmi and others worship in their minds (*atmani*), but can never touch directly.” This point is explained in such verses as: *yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo, vihāya kāmān su-ciram dhṛta-vratā*, “Desiring to touch Your lotus feet, the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (SB 10.16.36)

Text 63

*vande nanda-vraja-strīṅām,
pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ,
yāsām hari-kathodgītām,
punāti bhuvana-trayam*

I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Mahārāja’s cowherd village. When these gopīs loudly chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After glorifying the *gopis*, Uddhava offers his respects in this verse: Uddhava said, “I offer my respects to the foot dust of the cowherd women of Vraja continuously, as long as I do not get birth as a blade of grass, which will make it easy to get their foot dust. Their loud songs about the form, qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa purify the three worlds, removing the contamination of ignorance.” In the phrase *pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśa*, the affix *śa* indicates “perpetually,” not just three or five times a day.

In relation to this section, Vyasa and other great commentators have concluded as follows: Among all the devotees, those who worship Kṛṣṇa are the best, since Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead (*svayam bhagavan*). Among those devotees, those who are Kṛṣṇa’s immediate associates in His pastimes are more intimate, because of their loyalty in following Him. Among these intimate associates, Uddhava is the best, for it is said about Uddhava: *tvaṁ tu bhāgavateṣv aham*, “Among the devotees I am Uddhava” (SB 11.16.29). And also *noddhavo ’nv api man-nyūno*, “Uddhava is not less than Myself.” (SB 3.4.31)

Despite his extremely elevated position, however, Uddhava himself desired the *bhāva* of the Vraja-gopis and had the greatest regard for them. According to *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Śrī Uddhava did not offer such respect even to Kṛṣṇa’s queens in Dvārakā. Among the *gopis*, Sri Radha is the highest and following Her is the highest achievement.

Text 64

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
atha gopīr anujñāpya,
yaśodām nandam eva ca,
gopān āmantrya dāśārho,
yāsyann āruruhe ratham*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Uddhava, the descendant of Daśārha, then took permission to leave from the gopīs and from mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja. He bade farewell to all the cowherd men and, about to depart, mounted his chariot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Begging their permission (*anujnāpya*), Uddhava bid farewell (*amantrya*) and departed.

Text 65

*taṁ nirgataṁ samāsādyā,
nānopāyana-pāṇayāḥ,
nandādayo ’nurāgeṇa,
prāvocann aśru-locanāḥ*

As Uddhava was about to leave, Nanda and the others approached him bearing various items of worship. With tears in their eyes they addressed him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja and other Vrajavasis held various gifts (*nānā-upāyana*) in their hands. During Kṛṣṇa’s *pauganda* and *kaisora* ages (childhood and youth), they had collected many jewels, gold coins and pearl ornaments, and during Kṛṣṇa’s youth, many clothes. Now, in their feelings of separation, they lost interest in keeping these things, so they offered them as gifts to Uddhava.

Text 66

*manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ,
kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ,
vāco ’bhidhāyinīr nāmnām,*

kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu

[Nanda and the other cowherds said:] May our mental functions always take shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, may our words always chant His names, and may our bodies always bow down to Him and serve Him.

Text 67

*karmabhir bhrāmyamāṇānām,
yatra kvāpīśvarecchayā,
maṅgalācaritair dānai,
ratir naḥ kṛṣṇa īśvare*

Wherever we are made to wander about this world by the Supreme Lord’s will, in accordance with the reactions to our fruitive work, may our good works and charity always grant Us love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja said, “Our dear long-lived Uddhava, we, Kṛṣṇa’s mother and father, have been most hard-hearted toward our son, even though He is a great ocean of beauty, good qualities and character, and we remain so even now. We understand that the abundant affection and care we previously showed Kṛṣṇa now appear to have been artificial, since even in His absence we remain alive.

“King Dasaratha was actually the only real father in this world because he immediately died upon hearing that his son Rāma had gone away. We, on the other hand, do not have even a trace of love for our son Kṛṣṇa. Therefore this omniscient son of ours has rejected us as

unqualified parents. Being the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He has used His inconceivable ingenuity to make Devaki and Vasudeva His parents instead. Therefore, Yasoda and I should be completely condemned as the most unfortunate persons in the three worlds. Nevertheless, perhaps in some future lifetime we may become aware of Kṛṣṇa as He is and become attracted to Him.”

In this way, Nanda Maharaja prays in two verses. (Texts 66-67) Nanda Maharaja’s statement, “May our minds take shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s feet”, is a reversal due to great love. Actually the mind and senses of Nanda and Yasoda were always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa, but they prayed in this way. This indicates the extreme predominance of the *sancari-bhava* of *dainya* or humility within them. Moreover, it is the nature of those who possess *kṛṣṇa-prema* in the friendly (*sakhya-rasa*), parental (*vatsalya-rasa*) or conjugal moods (*madhurya-rasa*) to become indifferent to themselves as repositories (*asraya-ālabhana*) of love for love’s object (*viṣaya-ālabhana*), Kṛṣṇa, due to the extreme hopelessness they feel in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Hence in their excessive humility they forget their own proper moods and instead take up the mood of servitude (*dasya-bhava*).

An example of *sakhya* turning into *daysa* is as follows: When Balarama, near the end of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*, thought that “This Kṛṣṇa, being aloof, is not even now confiding in Us,” He developed *dasya-bhava* and said, *prāyo māyāstu me bhartur*: “This must be the *maya* of My Lord.” (SB 10.13.37)

An example of *dasya-bhava* in *madhura-rasa* is as follows: Radha said, *hā nātha ramaṇa preṣṭha...dāsyās te kṛpaṅāyā me*: “O master, O enjoyer! Bring this wretched maidservant to You.” (SB 10.30.40) And a *gopi* said, “*kvacid api sa kathā naḥ kiṅkarīṅām*: “Does Kṛṣṇa ever talk about us, His maidservants?” (SB 10.47.21)

The present verse gives an example of *dasya-bhava* in *vatsalya-rasa*. The cowherds headed by Nanda Maharaja said, *manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ, kṛṣṇa pādāmbujāśrayāḥ*: “May our mental functions always take shelter of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.” However, although they spoke like this, even in a state of ecstasy Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda would never

give up their parental relationship with Kṛṣṇa and speak like Vasudeva and Devaki who, due to being overcome with an awareness of Kṛṣṇa's opulences (*aisvarya-jnana*), said, *yuvām na naḥ sutau*, "You are not actually our sons." (SB 10.85.18)

Text 68

*evam sabhājito gopaiḥ,
kṛṣṇa-bhaktiyā narādhipa,
uddhavaḥ punar āgacchan,
mathurām kṛṣṇa-pālitām*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O ruler of men, thus honored by the cowherd men with expressions of devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava went back to the city of Mathurā, which was under Kṛṣṇa's protection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *kṛṣṇa-pālitām* indicates that even though Uddhava was very attracted to Vraja, due to being fully devoted to Kṛṣṇa, he returned to Mathura which was being protected by Kṛṣṇa. Sukadeva Gosvami intends to criticize Kṛṣṇa here, for if Kṛṣṇa is protecting Mathura (*mathurām kṛṣṇa-pālitām*), why does He not also protect Vraja by coming there?

Text 69

*kṛṣṇāya praṇipatyāha,
bhakti-udrekam vrajaukasām,
vasudevāya rāmāya,
rājñe copāyanāny adāt*

After falling down to pay his homage, Uddhava described to Lord Kṛṣṇa the immense devotion of the residents of Vraja. Uddhava also described it to Vasudeva, Lord Balarāma and King Ugrasena and presented to them the gifts of tribute he had brought with him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava described how the inhabitants of Vraja had unlimitedly more devotion than the residents of Mathura (*bhakti-udrekaṁ vrajaukasām*).

Uddhava said, “My dear master Kṛṣṇa, all the scriptures conclude that You are controlled by pure devotion, attained by devotion and seen only by devotion. Now I have directly seen that among all Your devotees, the Vrajavasis have the most intense devotion. After all, Your father Nanda has said:

*śvetī-kṛtākhila-janaṁ, virahena tavādhunā gokulaṁ kṛṣṇa devarśeḥ,
śvetadvīpa bhramaṁ dadhe*

‘O Kṛṣṇa, everyone in Gokula has turned white in separation from You. This has even fooled the sage among the demigods, Narada, to mistake Gokula for Svetadvīpa.’ (*Bhakti-rasamṛta sindhu*, southern division, third wave, verse 48)

Uddhava continued, “Kṛṣṇa, Your father Nanda Maharaja was so much bewildered in Your absence that he prayed that his mind would concentrate on You, *manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ* (verse 66). From this You can understand his overwhelming attraction to You. And Your mother Yasoda was so choked up that she could not say anything.”

Hearing this, Kṛṣṇa lost control of His mind and senses, and cried loudly in the midst of the public assembly. That night in a secluded place, Uddhava revealed to Kṛṣṇa the blazing subterranean fire of the gopis’ love for Him. After Uddhava related to Kṛṣṇa just one day of the divine madness (*divyonmada*) of Sri Radha, the crown jewel of His dear gopis, and Her wonderful prattling (*citra-jalpa*), Kṛṣṇa stayed up the whole night burning with fever in separation from Radhika.

Chapter Forty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Pleases His Devotees

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
atha vijñāya bhagavān,
sarvātmā sarva-darśanaḥ,
sairandhryāḥ kāma-taptāyāḥ,
priyam icchan grhaṁ yayau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Next, after assimilating Uddhava’s report, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the omniscient Soul of all that be, desired to satisfy the serving girl Trivakrā, who was troubled by lust. Thus He went to her house.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa gratifies Kujba, visits Akrura and sends him to Hastinapura after hearing his praises. Understanding in detail (*vijñāya:viśeṣo jñātva*) what was spoken by Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa had actually already reconciled everything in that regard. The word *bhagavān* (Supreme Lord) indicates that Kṛṣṇa, by His inconceivable powers and opulences, had already gone to Vraja in a separate manifestation even while continuing to live in Mathura. It is implied that Kṛṣṇa did this to satisfy everyone’s desires, since He is the Supreme Soul of all (*sarvātmā*). To reconcile the situation for Uddhava, Kṛṣṇa appeared as omniscient (*sarva-darśana*), explaining to Him the confidential mystery of His dual manifestations while appearing to Uddhava in His manifestation of separation. Then, in order to keep the promise He had previously made, Kṛṣṇa went with Uddhava to the house of Kubja, as stated in the words beginning *with sairandhryāḥ* (serving girl).

Text 2

*mahārhopaskarair āḍhyaṁ,
kāmapāyopabr̥mhitam muktā-dāma-patākābhir,
vitāna-śayanāsanaiḥ,
dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir dīpaiḥ,
srag-gandhair api maṇḍitam*

Trivakrā's home was opulently appointed with expensive furnishings and replete with sensual accoutrements meant to inspire sexual desire. There were banners, rows of strung pearls, canopies, fine beds and sitting places, and also fragrant incense, oil lamps, flower garlands and aromatic sandalwood paste.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kubja's house was filled with abundant paraphernalia appropriate for sexual enjoyment including explicit sexual pictures and herbal aphrodisiacs to excite lust (*kāma-upāya*).

Text 3

*gṛham tam āyāntam avekṣya sāsanāt,
sadyaḥ samutthāya hi jāta-sambhram,
yathopasaṅgamyā sakhībhir acyutam,
sabhājayām āsa sad-āsanādibhiḥ*

When Trivakrā saw Him arriving at her house, she at once rose from her seat in a flurry. Coming forward graciously with her girlfriends, she respectfully greeted Lord Acyuta by offering Him an excellent seat and other articles of worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kubja offered Kṛṣṇa a suitable (*yatha*) seat and other objects of worship.

Text 4

*tathoddhavaḥ sādhutayābhipūjito,
nyasīdad urvyām abhimṛśya cāsanam,
kṛṣṇo 'pi tūrṇam śayanam mahā-dhanam,
viveśa lokācaritāny anuvrataḥ*

Uddhava also received a seat of honor, since he was a saintly person, but he simply touched it and sat on the floor. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, imitating the manners of human society, quickly made Himself comfortable on an opulent bed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The phrase *nyasīdad urvyām*, “He sat on the ground” implies that Uddhava felt that it was improper for him as Kṛṣṇa’s servant to sit on a seat offered by the hand of His beloved. Therefore, Uddhava touched the *asana* with his hand to honor Kubja’s offer, and then sat on the floor. The word *śayanam* (bed) means that Kṛṣṇa made Himself comfortable on a bed located in the inner chambers of Trivakrā’s home.

Text 5

*sā majjanālepa-dukūla-bhūṣaṇa,
srag-gandha-tāmbūla-sudhāsavādibhiḥ,
prasādhitātmopasasāra mādhamam,
sa-vrīḍa-līlotsmita-vibhramekṣitaiḥ*

Trivakrā prepared herself by bathing, anointing her body, and dressing in fine garments, by putting on jewelry, garlands and perfume, and also by chewing betel nut, drinking fragrant liquor, and so on. She then approached Lord Mādhava with shy, playful smiles and coquettish glances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kubja prepared her body (*atma*) for enjoyment by applying *aguru* perfume (*gandha*) and other items.

Text 6

*āhūya kāntām nava-saṅgama-hriyā,
viśaṅkitām kaṅkaṇa-bhūṣite kare,
praḡḡhya śayyām adhiveśya rāmayā,
reme 'nulepārpaṇa-punya-leśayā*

Calling forward His beloved, who was anxious and shy at the prospect of this new contact, the Lord pulled her by her bangled hands onto the bed. Thus He enjoyed with that beautiful girl, whose only trace of piety was her having offered ointment to the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The two words *nava-saṅgama-hriyā* (shy with a new contact) and *viśaṅkitām* (fearful) indicates that Trivakrā was in fact a virgin girl at this point. Though Kubja was beautiful, she was protected because of her hunchback. Kubja had accumulated a trace of piety because she had offered unguents to Kṛṣṇa. But she did not have heaps of pious credits like the *sadhana-siddha gopis* in Vraja and the women of Mathura.

Text 7

*sānaṅga-tapta-kucayor urasas tathākṣṇor,
jighranty ananta-caranena rujo mṛjantī,
dorbhyām stanāntara-gataṁ parirabhya kāntam,
ānanda-mūrtim ajahād ati-dīrgha-tāpam*

Simply by smelling the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, Trivakrā cleansed away the burning lust Cupid had aroused in her breasts, chest and eyes. With her two arms she embraced between her breasts her lover, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personification of bliss, and thus she gave up her long-standing distress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kubja removed the burning pain of her breasts, chest and eyes by touching and smelling Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.

Text 8

*saivam kaivalya-nātham taṁ,
prāpya duṣprāpyam īśvaram,
aṅga-rāgārpanenāho,
durbhagedam ayācata*

Having thus gotten the hard-to-get Supreme Lord by the simple act of offering Him body ointment, unfortunate Trivakrā submitted to that Lord of freedom the following request.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Śrīmatī Trivakrā prayed to Kṛṣṇa, her exclusive Lord (*kaivalya-nātham*), “Please enjoy only with me and not with any other woman.” Because Kṛṣṇa was not prepared to grant such a benediction, Trivakrā is described here as unfortunate (*durbhagā*).

Text 9

*sahoṣyatām iha preṣṭha,
dināni katicin mayā,
ramasva notsahe tyaktum,
saṅgam te 'mburuhekṣaṇa*

[Trivakrā said:] O beloved, please stay here with me for a few days more and enjoy. I cannot bear to give up Your association, O lotus-eyed one!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Trivakra said, “Please stay for some days in my inner chambers and do not go out. All arrangements have been made in this house for drinking and eating.” There are two readings *saha-uṣyatām* (stay with me) and *aho usyatam* (O please stay).

Text 10

*tasyai kāma-varaṁ dattvā,
mānayatvā ca māna-daḥ,
sahoddhavana sarveśaḥ,
sva-dhāmāgamad ṛddhimat*

Promising her the fulfillment of this lusty desire, considerate Kṛṣṇa, Lord of all beings, paid Trivakrā His respects and then returned with Uddhava to His own supremely opulent residence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The words *kāma-varaṁ dattvā* indicate that Kṛṣṇa promised Trivakrā He would fulfill her lusty desires even though she was a common woman.

“Honoring her” (*māna-daḥ*) means that before leaving, Kṛṣṇa took the opportunity to show her respect and told Kubja, “Continuing to indulge in enjoying unrestrictedly will not be desirable for us, because it will simply create evil gossip.” Kṛṣṇa came and left with Uddhava (*sahoddhavana*) in order to prevent such gossip, since Uddhava was famous everywhere as the crest jewel of proper behavior. From previous explanations, it should be understood that Kubja is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s *bhu-sakti*.

Text 11

*durārdhyaṁ samārādhya,
viṣṇuṁ sarveśvareśvaram,
yo vṛṇīte mano-grāhyam,
asattvāt kumanīṣy asau*

Lord Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord of all lords, is ordinarily difficult to approach. One who has properly worshiped Him and then chooses the benediction of mundane sense gratification is certainly of poor intelligence, for he is satisfied with an insignificant result.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In relation to this incident, Sukadeva Gosvami instructs those persons who are worshiping Kṛṣṇa in the mood of being a lover. The person who worships Kṛṣṇa for material happiness is a fool. However, if one worships Kṛṣṇa with the intent to fully please Kṛṣṇa’s senses, and by so doing if one also gets happiness in the process, there is no fault. In such a situation, it should be understood that one has cut off all material attachment by desiring only pure devotional service.

Text 12

*akrūra-bhavanam kṛṣṇaḥ,
saha-rāmoddhavaḥ prabhuḥ,
kiñcic cikīrṣayan prāgād,
akrūra-prīya-kāmyayā*

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, wanting to have some things done, went to Akrura's house with Balarāma and Uddhava. The Lord also desired to please Akrura.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa went to Akrura's house with a desire to please Akrura and engage him in service (*kiñcic cikīrṣayan*), since the order of the master is pleasing to the servant.

Texts 13–14

*sa tān nara-vara-śreṣṭhān,
ārād vīkṣya sva-bāndhavān,
pratyutthāya pramuditaḥ,
pariṣvajyābhinandya ca,
nanāma kṛṣṇam rāmaṁ ca,
sa tair apy abhivāditaḥ,
pūjayām āsa vidhi-vat,
kṛtāsana-parigrahān*

Akrura stood up in great joy when he saw them, his own relatives and the greatest of exalted personalities, coming from a distance. After embracing them and greeting them, Akrura bowed down to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and was greeted by Them in return. Then, when his guests had taken their seats, he worshiped them in accordance with scriptural rules.

Texts 15–16

*pādāvanejanīr āpo,
dhārayan śirasā nṛpa,
arhaṇenāmbaraīr divyair,
gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ,
arcitvā śirasānamya,
pādāv aṅka-gatau mṛjan,
praśrayāvanato 'krūraḥ,
kṛṣṇa-rāmāv abhāṣata*

O King, Akrura bathed the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma and then poured the bath water on his head. He presented Them with gifts of fine clothing, aromatic sandalwood paste, flower garlands and excellent jewelry. After thus worshiping the two Lords, he bowed his head to the floor. He then began to massage Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet, placing them on his lap, and with his head bowed in humility he addressed Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura put all the water (*ā:sarva:āpaḥ*) that he used to wash Their feet on his head. Then with both hands he gently massaged (*mṛjan*) Their feet.

Text 17

*diṣṭyā pāpo hataḥ kaṁsaḥ,
sānugo vām idaṁ kulam,
bhavadbhyām uddhṛtaṁ kṛcchrād,
durantāc ca samedhitam*

[Akrura said:] It is our good fortune that You two Lords have killed the evil Kamsa and his followers, thus delivering Your dynasty from endless suffering and causing it to flourish.

Text 18

*yuvām pradhāna-puruṣau,
jagad-dhetū jagan-mayau,
bhavadbhyām na vinā kiñcit,
param asti na cāparam*

You both are the original Supreme Person, the cause of the universe and its very substance. Not the slightest subtle cause or manifest product of creation exists apart from You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Why say, ‘this dynasty of Yours’ (*vām idaṁ kulam*, v.17), when You are the cause of the whole universe (*jagad-hetū*)?” Because the one Lord is appearing in two forms, He is addressed in the dual form (*yuvām*).

Akrura said, “Thus, You alone are the *pradhāna* and You alone are the *puruṣa*. You alone are the cause (*jagad-dhetū*) and the effect (*jagan-mayau*).” By negation Akrura expresses the same idea. “Without You, there is no cause and no effect.”

Text 19

*ātma-sṛṣṭam idaṁ viśvam,
anvāviśya sva-śaktibhiḥ,*

*īyate bahudhā brahman,
śru ta-pratyakṣa-gocaram*

O Supreme Absolute Truth, with Your personal energies You create this universe and then enter into it. Thus one can perceive You in many different forms by hearing from authorities and by direct experience.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “The one Supreme Lord, through the form of the universe, becomes many.” That is expressed in this verse. “Having produced (*ātma-sṛṣṭam:sva-kāryam*) this universe, You enter it and reside there (*anvāviśya:praviśya sthitaḥ*). You are perceived through various forms such as the demigods, Gandharvas, humans and cows by direct perception and by hearing from scripture.

Text 20

*yathā hi bhūteṣu carācareṣu,
mahy-ādayo yoniṣu bhānti nānā,
evaṁ bhavān kevala ātma-yoniṣv,
ātmātma-tantro bahudhā vibhāti*

Just as the primary elements—earth and so on—manifest themselves in abundant variety among all the species of mobile and immobile life, so You, the one independent Supreme Soul, appear to be manifold among the variegated objects of Your creation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse uses an analogy to explain how manifold varieties expand from one Lord. Akrura said, “Just as material bodies are manifest with various forms from the causal material elements like earth and water, so You, the one independent

(*ātma-tantraḥ*) Lord, become many as the multitude of visible objects in this universe.”

Text 21

*sṛjasy atho lumpasi pāsi viśvaṁ,
rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇaiḥ sva-śaktibhiḥ,
na badhyase tad-guṇa-karmabhir vā,
jñānātmanas te kva ca bandha-hetuḥ*

You create, destroy and also maintain this universe with Your personal energies—the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness—yet You are never entangled by these modes or the activities they generate. Since You are the original source of all knowledge, what could ever cause You to be bound by illusion?

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Therefore You are the one Supreme Lord of the universe. You are not bound up like the living entities by *karma* and the three modes of nature.”

Kṛṣṇa replies, “How is that I am not bound up?”

Akrura answered, “As You are the embodiment of knowledge (*jñānā-ātmanah*), what is the question of being bound up by ignorance (*te kva ca bandha-hetuḥ*)? Ignorance exists for the living entities but not for You.”

Text 22

*dehādy-upādher anirūpitavād,
bhavo na sākṣān na bhidātmanaḥ syāt,
ato na bandhas tava naiva mokṣaḥ,
syātām nikāmas tvayi no 'vivekaḥ*

Since it has never been demonstrated that You are covered by material, bodily designations, it must be concluded that for You there is neither birth in a literal sense nor any duality. Therefore You never undergo bondage or liberation, and if You appear to, it is only because of Your desire that we see You in that way, or simply because of our lack of discrimination.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “If there is no ignorance in Me, then where does this body of Mine, a product of ignorance, come from?”

Akrura said, “Your body is not designated as coming from ignorance by those who know the scriptures. Therefore You have no birth (*bhavo na*) or material existence like the living entities. If Your body appears to be material, it is only an appearance of birth like the living entities, since You are actually independent. As You do not have a material body born of ignorance, You do not take birth from a father’s semen like an ordinary living entity. Rather, Your birth is just Your divine appearance (*avirbhava*). For You there is no difference between body and soul.

“Your body is You, as is proved by the statement: *deha-dehi-vibhāgo ’yaṁ neśvare vidyate kvacit*, “There is no distinction between the body and the soul of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at any time.”

(*Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* 1.5.342 from *Kurma Purana*) Since You are Brahman, transcendental to knowledge and ignorance, there is no bondage or liberation for You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But My bondage and liberation do occur, as when I am bound to a mortar by My mother or I am delivered from Kaliya’s lake,”

Akrura: “These do indeed occur (*syātām*), but only because You do not prohibit them from occurring. Why do You accept bondage and liberation? You do so out of Your free will (*nikamah*) because of their appropriateness for meditation by us, Your devotees. Since You enact this bondage and liberation in full knowledge (*vivekah*), they are not at all caused by illusion. For Him who is knowledge itself, there is

no bondage to or liberation from this world, which is produced by ignorance.”

Text 23

*tvayodito 'yam jagato hitāya,
yadā yadā veda-pathaḥ purāṇaḥ,
bādhyeta pāṣaṇḍa-pathair asadbhis,
tadā bhavān sattva-guṇam bibharti*

You originally enunciated the ancient religious path of the Vedas for the benefit of the whole universe. Whenever that path becomes obstructed by wicked persons following the path of atheism, You assume one of Your incarnations, which are all in the transcendental mode of goodness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Though Your personality and pastimes transcend the material modes, whenever the ancient (*puranaḥ*) path of *dharma* (*veda-pataḥ*) enunciated by You (*tvaya-udita*) is disturbed by the demons, You appear in the universe to increase *sattva-guna* in order to maintain the righteous by protecting the path of religion.”

Text 24

*sa tvam prabho 'dya vasudeva-gr̥he 'vatīrṇaḥ,
svāmśena bhāram apanetum ihāsi bhūmeḥ,
akṣauhiṇī-śata-vadhena suretarāmśa,
rājñām amuṣya ca kulasya yaśo vitanvan*

You are that very same Supreme Person, my Lord, and You have now appeared in the home of Vasudeva with Your plenary portion. You have done this to relieve the earth’s burden by killing hundreds of armies led by kings who are expansions of the demigods’ enemies, and also to spread the fame of our dynasty.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “You have appeared along with Your expansion Balarama (*svamsena*) in the house of Vasudeva to relieve the burden of the earth by killing the hundreds of demoniac kings, who are expansions of the enemies of the demigods (*suretarāmśa-rājñām*).”

Text 25

*adyeśa no vasatayaḥ khalu bhūri-bhāgā,
yaḥ sarva-deva-pitṛ-bhūta-nṛ-deva-mūrtiḥ,
yat-pāda-śauca-salilam tri-jagat punāti,
sa tvam jagad-gurur adhokṣaja yāḥ praviṣṭaḥ*

Today, O Lord, my home has become most fortunate because You have entered it. As the Supreme Truth, You embody the forefathers, ordinary creatures, human beings and demigods, and the water that has washed Your feet purifies the three worlds. Indeed, O transcendent one, You are the spiritual master of the universe.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Now that You, the Supreme Lord and embodiment of all the demigods, have entered our home it has become blessed.”

Text 26

kaḥ paṇḍitas tvad aparaṁ śaraṇam samīyād,

*bhakta-priyād ṛta-giraḥ suhrdaḥ kṛta-jñāt,
sarvān dadāti suhrdo bhajato 'bhikāmān,
ātmānam apy upacayāpacayau na yasya*

What learned person would approach anyone but You for shelter, when You are the affectionate, grateful and truthful well-wisher of Your devotees? To those who worship You in sincere friendship You reward everything they desire, even Your own self, yet You never increase or diminish.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “What learned person would surrender to anyone other than You, who are true to Your word (*ṛta giraḥ*), having kept Your promise to come to my house after killing Kamsa. You are the well-wisher (*suhrdaḥ*) of Your devotees and act accordingly. You are *kṛta-jñā*, very grateful for whatever little worship a devotee offers, and even if the devotee forgets, You do not. As the friend of he whose mind is spotless and free from material desires, and he who worships You in friendship, You give whatever he desires. Even if they do not desire something, You also give that. Though You give so much, You are not finished, for You give even Yourself.”
Kṛṣṇa may object, “But if I give even Myself, will I not be left with nothing?”

Akrura answers, “No, for You there is never increase or decrease (*upacayāpacayau na*). Even though all the objects in millions of universes are brought to You as offerings by millions of Brahmas and other demigods, still You do not increase. And though You give everything to Your devotees, including even Yourself, You do not decrease. This is because You possess inconceivable, unlimited energy.”

Text 27

diṣṭyā janārdana bhavān iha naḥ pratīto,

*yogēśvarair api durāpa-gatiḥ sureśaiḥ,
chindhy āśu naḥ suta-kalatra-dhanāpta-geha,
dehādi-moha-raśanām bhavadīya-māyām*

It is by our great fortune, Janārdana, that You are now visible to us, for even the masters of yoga and the foremost demigods can achieve this goal only with great difficulty. Please quickly cut the ropes of our illusory attachment for children, wife, wealth, influential friends, home and body. All such attachment is simply the effect of Your illusory material energy.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “By our good fortune we can directly perceive (*praṭīto:pratyakṣī*) You.”

Text 28

*ity arcitaḥ saṁstutaś ca,
bhaktena bhagavān hariḥ,
akrūraṁ sa-smitaṁ prāha,
gīrbhiḥ sammohayann iva*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus worshiped and fully glorified by His devotee, the Supreme Lord Hari smilingly addressed Akrura, completely charming him with His words.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa somewhat (*iva*) bewildered (*sammohayann*) Akrura by increasing his awareness of His opulences.

Text 29

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tvaṁ no guruḥ pitṛvyaś ca,
ślāghyo bandhuś ca nityadā,
vayaṁ tu rakṣyāḥ poṣyāś ca,
anukampyāḥ prajā hi vaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: You are Our spiritual master, paternal uncle and praiseworthy friend, and We are like your sons, always dependent on your protection, sustenance and compassion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “We are like your sons (prajah).”

Text 30

*bhavad-vidhā mahā-bhāgā,
niṣevyā arha-sattamāḥ,
śreyas-kāmair nṛbhir nityaṁ,
devāḥ svārthā na sādhaveḥ*

Exalted souls like you are the true objects of service and the most worshipable authorities for those who desire the highest good in life. Demigods are generally concerned with their own interests, but saintly devotees never are.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Kṛṣṇa said, “O Akrura, even from the ordinary point of view (v. 29) you deserve Our honor. But from the transcendental perspective You are most worshipable because You are a first-class Vaisnava.” This is stated in this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Among those worthy of worship, you are most worshipable (arha-sattama).”

Akrura replied, “But isn’t it a well-established fact that men should worship the demigods?”

Kṛṣṇa: “The demigods are basically self-interested (*svārthā*), but the devotees are not. They are primarily interested in benefiting others.”

Text 31

*na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni,
na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ,
te punanty uru-kālena,
darśanād eva sādhavah*

No one can deny that there are holy places with sacred rivers, or that the demigods appear in deity forms made of earth and stone. But these purify the soul only after a long time, whereas saintly persons purify just by being seen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akura asked, “Are not the holy waters worthy of worship?”

Shaking His head Kṛṣṇa said, “No, though certainly the holy waters and the demigods purify, but that is very different from the purification through the devotees. The holy waters give purification by prolonged service, but the devotees give purification just by seeing them.”

Text 32

*sa bhavān suhṛdām vai nah,
śreyān śreyaś-cikīrṣayā,
jijñāsārtham pāṇḍavānām,
gacchasva tvaṁ gajāhvayam*

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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Because you are Our well-wisher (*suhṛdah*), being Our uncle, and because you act for others’ welfare (*sreyan*), being a devotee, you should do this. Go (*gacchasva*) to Hastinapura for your benefit (*śreyah*).” It may also be taken as *gaccha sva*: “O relative (*sva*:uncle), please go for their benefit.”

Text 33

*pitary uparate bālāḥ,
saha mātrā su-duḥkhitāḥ,
ānītāḥ sva-puraṁ rājñā,
vasanta iti śuśrūma*

We have heard that when their father passed away, the young Pāṇḍavas were brought with their anguished mother to the capital city by King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and that they are now living there.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I have heard that they are living with King Dhṛtarāṣṭra.”

Text 34

*teṣu rājāmbikā-putro,
bhrātr-putreṣu dīna-dhīḥ,
samo na vartate nūnaṁ,
duṣputra-vaśa-go 'ndha-drk*

Indeed, weak-minded Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Ambikā, has come under the control of his wicked sons, and therefore that blind King is not treating his brother's sons fairly.

Text 35

*gaccha jānīhi tad-vṛttam,
adhunā sādhu asādhu vā,
vijñāya tad vidhāsyāmo,
yathā śaṁ suhr̥dām bhavet*

Go and see whether Dhṛtarāṣṭra is acting properly or not. When We find out, We will make the necessary arrangements to help Our dear friends.

Text 36

*ity akrūraṁ samādiśya,
bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ,
saṅkarṣaṇoddhavābhyām vai,
tataḥ sva-bhavanam yayau*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus fully instructing Akrura, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Hari then returned to His residence, accompanied by Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and Uddhava.

Chapter Forty-nine: Akrūra’s Mission in Hastināpura

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sa gatvā hāstinapuram,
pauravendra-yaśo-’ñkitam,
dadarśa tatrāmbikeyam,
sa-bhīṣmam viduram pṛthām,
saha-putram ca bāhlikam,
bhāradvājam sa-gautamam,
karnam suyodhanam drauṇim,
pāṇḍavān suhṛdo ’parān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Akrūra went to Hastināpura, the city distinguished by the glory of the Paurava rulers. There he saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Bhīṣma, Vidura and Kuntī, along with Bāhlika and his son Somadatta. He also saw Droṇācārya, Kṛpācārya, Karṇa, Duryodhana, Aśvatthāmā, the Pāṇḍavas and other close friends.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Akrūra’s visit to Hastinapura and his return to Mathura, after learning about Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s ill treatment of the Pandavas.

The phrase “marked with the fame” (*yaśo-añkitam*) means that the rulers of the Puru dynasty had constructed many temples and homes for the *brahmanas*. Akrūra saw Dhṛtarāṣṭra (*ambikeyah*), Bahlika with his son Somadatta, Drona (*bhāradvājam*), Kṛpa (*gautamam*) and the rest.

Text 3

*yathāvad upasaṅgamyā,
bandhubhir gāndinī-sutaḥ,
sampr̥ṣṭas taiḥ suhr̥d-vārtām,
svayam cāp̥r̥cchad avyayam*

After Akrū ra, the son of Gāndinī, had appropriately greeted all his relatives and friends, they asked him for news of their family members, and he in turn asked about their welfare.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura asked about their welfare (avyayam).

Text 4

*uvāsa katicin māsān,
rājño vṛtta-vivitsayā,
duṣprajasyālpā-sārasya,
khala-cchandānūvartinaḥ*

He remained in Hastināpura for several months to scrutinize the conduct of the weak-willed King, who had bad sons and who was inclined to give in to the whims of mischievous advisers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura wanted to observe the behavior of the king, who had wicked sons (*duṣprajasya: asat-putrasya*), who was weak-willed (*ālpā-sārasya: manda-dhr̥teḥ*), and whose nature was to follow the desires (*chanda*) of mischievous men (*khala*) like Karna.

*teja ojo balam vīryam,
praśrayādīmś ca sad-guṇān,
prajānurāgam pārtheṣu,
na sahadbhiś cikīṣitam,
kṛtam ca dhārtarāṣṭrair yad,
gara-dānādy apesalam,
ācakhyau sarvam evāsmāi,
pṛthā vidura eva ca*

Kuntī and Vidura described to Akrū ra in detail the evil intentions of Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s sons, who could not tolerate the great qualities of Kuntī’s sons—such as their powerful influence, military skill, physical strength, bravery and humility—or the intense affection the citizens had for them. Kuntī and Vidura also told Akrū ra about how the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra had tried to poison the Pāṇḍavas and carry out other such plots.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra could not tolerate the influence (*tejah*), skill with weapons (*oja*), strength (*balam*), courage (*vīryam*) and the other good qualities of the Pandavas. Kunti and Vidura also described the unjust (*apesalam*) acts committed by them against the Pandavas, such as the giving of poison (*gara-dān:viṣa*), and what they intended (*cikīṣitam*) to do in the future.

Text 7

*pṛthā tu bhrātaram prāptam,
akrūram upasṛtya tam,
uvāca janma-nilayam,
smaranty aśru-kalekṣaṇā*

Kuntīdevī, taking advantage of her brother Akrū ra’s visit, approached him confidentially. While remembering her birthplace, she spoke with tears in her eyes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse and those following describe events previous to Queen Kuntī’s description to Akrura in verses five and six. Kuntī had traces (*kale:leśā*) of tears (*aśru*) in her eyes as she spoke.

Text 8

*api smaranti naḥ saumya,
pitarau bhrātaraś ca me,
bhaginyau bhrāṭṛ-putrāś ca,
jāmayah sakhya eva ca*

[Queen Kuntī said:] O gentle one, do my parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, family women and girlhood friends still remember us?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Queen Kuntī said, “Do our parents, brothers, sisters, nephews, girlhood friends and the womenfolk (*jamayah*) still remember us?”

Text 9

*bhrātreḥ bhagavān kṛṣṇah,
śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalah,
paitṛ-ṣvasreyān smarati,
rāmaś cāmburuheksaṇah*

Does my nephew Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality and the compassionate shelter of His devotees, still remember His aunt’s sons? And does lotus-eyed Rāma remember them also?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti’s phrase “His father’s sister’s sons” (*pitṛ-svasreyān*) means “my sons.”

Text 10

*sapatna-madhye śocantīm,
vrkānām hariṇīm iva,
sāntvayiṣyati mām vākyaiḥ,
pitṛ-hīnāmś ca bālakān*

Now that I am suffering in the midst of my enemies like a doe in the midst of wolves, will Kṛṣṇa come to console me and my fatherless sons with His words?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti said, “Will Kṛṣṇa console me who am lamenting among enemies like a doe among wolves (*vrkānām*)?” Immediately after the word *vrkānām* the word *madhye* (among) should be supplied to complete the implied idea.

Text 11

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin,
viśvātman viśva-bhāvana,
prapannām pāhi govinda,
śiśubhiś cāvasīdatīm*

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa! O great yogi! 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The words *mahā-yogin* (great yogi) imply, “Even though You are situated in Mathura, You can hear my words of lamentation! O soul of the universe (*visvatman*), being also in my heart, You can certainly hear me! *Viśva-bhavana* (protector of the universe) implies, “You protect the whole universe, so what trouble is it for You to protect me?” “O Govinda, pleasure of the senses, please become visible before my eyes, so that I may admire You!”

Text 12

*nānyat tava padāmbhojāt,
paśyāmi śaraṇaṁ nṛṇām,
bibhyatām mṛtyu-saṁsārād,
īśvarasyāpavargikāt*

For persons fearful of death and rebirth, I see no shelter other than Your liberating lotus feet, for You are the Supreme Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti said, “I do not see any shelter other than Your lotus feet which can give liberation (*āpavargikāt*).”

Text 13

*namaḥ kṛṣṇāya śuddhāya,
brahmaṇe paramātmāne,
yogeśvarāya yogāya,*

tvām ahaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatā

I offer my obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the supreme pure, the Absolute Truth and the Supersoul, the Lord of pure devotional service and the source of all knowledge. I have come to You for shelter.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *yogāya* (unto Kṛṣṇa) means that Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped by pure devotional service. The word *śuddhāya* (to the pure) means that Kṛṣṇa transcends *maya*, although He is appearing before my eyes. The word *brahmane* means that Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped by various kinds of knowledge. *Parama-ātmane* means Kṛṣṇa is the worshipful object of the *yogis*, since the various kinds of *yoga* are intermediate means toward the goal of attaining Kṛṣṇa (*yoga-īśvaraya*). The word *yogāya* refers to the very means and identity of all these methods.

Text 14

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity anusmṛtya sva-janaṁ,
kṛṣṇaṁ ca jagad-īśvaram,
prārudad duḥkhitā rājan,
bhavatām prapitāmahī*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus meditating on her family members and also on Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the universe, your great-grandmother Kuntīdevī began to cry out in grief, O King.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti, the great grandmother (*prapitamahi*) of Parikṣit, then cried.

Text 15

*sama-duḥkha-sukho 'krūro,
viduraś ca mahā-yaśāḥ,
sāntvayām āsatuḥ kuntīm,
tat-putrotpatti-hetubhiḥ*

Both Akrū ra, who shared Queen Kuntī's distress and happiness, and the illustrious Vidura consoled the Queen by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons had taken birth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vidura and Akrūra, who shared Queen Kuntī's distress and happiness, consoled Queen Kunti by reminding her of the extraordinary way her sons took birth as expansions of Dharma, Vayu, Indra and the Asvini Kumaras. They told Kunti, “No ordinary mortal can possibly vanquish your powerful sons, the Pandavas, since they were fathered by such exalted demigods.”

Text 16

*yāsyān rājānam abhyetya,
viṣamaṁ putra-lālasam,
avadat suhrdām madhye,
bandhubhiḥ sauhr̥doditam*

The ardent affection King Dhṛtarāṣṭra felt for his sons had made him act unjustly toward the Pāṇḍavas. Just before leaving, Akrū ra approached the King, who was seated among his friends and supporters, and related to him the message that his relatives—Lord

Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma—had sent out of friendship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura went along with friends like Vidura and spoke friendly words to Dhṛtarāṣṭra who was situated among his relatives (*suhṛdam*) such as Bhisma.

Text 17

*akrūra uvāca,
bho bho vaicitravīrya tvam,
kurūṇām kīrti-vardhana,
bhrātary uparate pāṇḍāv,
adhunāsanam āsthitaḥ*

Akrū ra said: O my dear son of Vicitravīrya, O enhancer of the Kurus' glory, your brother Pāṇḍu having passed away, you have now assumed the royal throne.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura was speaking ironically, since the young sons of Pāṇḍu should actually have been occupying the throne.

Text 18

*dharmeṇa pālayann urvīm,
prajāḥ śīlena rañjayan,
vartamānaḥ samaḥ sveṣu,
śreyaḥ kīrtim avāpsyasi*

By religiously protecting the earth, delighting your subjects with

your noble character, and treating all your relatives equally, you will surely achieve success and glory.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “Even though you have usurped the throne unjustly, if you now rule according to the principles of *dharma* and behave properly, you will attain perfection.”

Text 19

*anyathā tv ācaraū loke,
garhito yāsyase tamaḥ,
tasmāt samatve vartasva,
pāṇḍaveṣv ātmajeṣu ca*

If you act otherwise, however, people will condemn you in this world, and in the next life you will enter the darkness of hell. Remain equally disposed, therefore, toward Pāṇḍu’s sons and your own.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “But if you act otherwise you will go to hell (*tamaḥ*).”

Text 20

*neha cātyanta-saṁvāsaḥ,
kasyacit kenacit saha,
rājan svenāpi dehena,
kim u jāyātmajāḍibhiḥ*

In this world no one has any permanent relationship with anyone

else, O King. We cannot stay forever even with our own body, what to speak of our wife, children and the rest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “Even your dear sons, such as Duryodhana, will not remain here forever.”

Text 21

*ekaḥ prasūyate jantur,
eka eva pralīyate,
eko ’nubhuñkte sukṛtam,
eka eva ca duṣkṛtam*

Every creature is born alone and dies alone, and alone one experiences the just rewards of his good and evil deeds.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “At the time of birth and death, happiness and distress, one has no real connection with others; he is alone.”

Text 22

*adharmopacitam vittam,
haranty anye ’lpa-medhasaḥ,
sambhojanīyāpadeśair,
jalānīva jalaukasah*

In the guise of dear dependents, strangers steal the sinfully acquired wealth of a foolish man, just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water that sustains the fish.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “Furthermore, when a son steals the hard-earned money of his father, he should be known as a thief with the name son. The dear dependents like the children and relatives steal the wealth of the foolish father under the pretext that it is the father’s duty to support them (*sambhojanīyah*), just as the offspring of a fish drink up the water sustaining the fish (*jala-okasaḥ*).”

Text 23

*puṣṇāti yān adharmeṇa,
sva-buddhyā tam apaṇḍitam,
te ’kṛtārthaṁ prahiṇvanti,
prānā rāyaḥ sutādayaḥ*

A fool indulges in sin to maintain his life, wealth and children and other relatives, for he thinks, “These things are mine.” In the end, however, these very things all abandon him, leaving him frustrated.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura said, “Life, wealth (*rayaḥ*) and sons, which the fool maintains by sinful actions, thinking that they are his, abandon that fool who had not attained his desires.”

Text 24

*svayaṁ kilbiṣam ādāya,
tais tyakto nārtha-kovidāḥ,
asiddhārtho viśaty andhaṁ,
sva-dharma-vimukhas tamaḥ*

Abandoned by his so-called dependents, ignorant of the actual goal of life, indifferent to his real duty, and having failed to fulfill his purposes, the foolish soul enters the blindness of hell, taking his sinful reactions with him.

Text 25

*tasmāl lokam imam rājan,
svapna-māyā-manoratham,
vīkṣyāmyātmanātmānam,
samaḥ śānto bhava prabho*

Therefore, O King, looking upon this world as a dream, a magician’s illusion or a flight of fancy, please control your mind with intelligence and become equipoised and peaceful, my lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura said, “O King! See this world as an illusion, a deception and a dream. It is insubstantial. Use your intelligence to control (*ayamyā*) your mind, and you will become peaceful and equal to all.”

Text 26

*dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca,
yathā vadati kalyāṇīm,
vācam dāna-pate bhavān,
tathānayā na tṛpyāmi,
martyaḥ prāpya yathāmṛtam*

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: O master of charity, I can never be satiated while hearing your auspicious words. Indeed, I am like a mortal who has obtained the nectar of the gods.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dhṛtarāṣṭra thought, “This Akrura, who thinks himself wise, dares to instruct me in the truth.” Dhṛtarāṣṭra was in fact proud and felt he already knew everything Akrūra was speaking, but to maintain diplomatic gravity he spoke as a saintly gentleman.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “O master of charity! Just as you satisfy the hungry in Mathura by donating food to them, so here in Hastinapura you gratify me who am ignorant with your donation of knowledge to satisfy this ignorant person.”

Text 27

*tathāpi sūnṛtā saumya,
hṛdi na sthīyate cale,
putrānurāga-viṣame,
vidyut saudāmanī yathā*

Even so, gentle Akrura, because my unsteady heart is prejudiced by affection for my sons, these pleasing words of yours cannot remain fixed there, just as lightning cannot remain fixed in a cloud.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “These pleasing words (*sunṛta*) of yours cannot remain in my fickle heart, anymore than lightning can remain fixed in a cloud.” According to the *Viśva-kosa* dictionary, *sudama* means cloud and *saudamani* means that which is born from the cloud, lightning.

Text 28

*īśvarasya vidhiṁ ko nu,
vidhunoty anyathā pumān,
bhūmer bhārāvatārāya,
yo 'vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule*

Who can defy the injunctions of the Supreme Lord, who has now descended in the Yadu dynasty to diminish the earth's burden?

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dhṛtarāṣṭra said, “Who can transgress the arrangements (*vidhi*) of the Lord by any method (*anyatha*)? No one can. You are the proof of this. You could not make me have proper judgment, despite all of your instructions.”

Akrura replied, “But that same Supreme Lord is now present in your own dynasty!”

Dhṛtarāṣṭra answered with the word *bhūmer* (earth). “That Lord is present in your house, and has been born in the Yadu family to relieve the burden of the earth. Therefore you should simply go back to Kṛṣṇa, and inform Him that you tried to impress my mind but were unsuccessful.”

Text 29

*yo durvimarśa-pathayā nija-māyayedam,
sṛṣṭvā guṇān vibhajate tad-anupraviṣṭaḥ,
tasmai namo duravabodha-vihāra-tantra-
samsāra-cakra-gataye parameśvarāya*

I offer my obeisances to Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of His

material energy and then distributes the various modes of nature by entering within the creation. From Him, the meaning of whose pastimes is unfathomable, come both the entangling cycle of birth and death and the process of deliverance from it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Dhṛtarāṣṭra then offered his respects to the Lord: “He creates this universe by the inconceivable activity of His material energy. After entering the universe He divides the *gunas* into goodness, passion and ignorance. I offer my respects to the Supreme Lord, who is the deliverer from the wheel of *samsara*, and whose pastimes are difficult to understand.

“Akrura, Kṛṣṇa inspired you to, ‘Enlighten Dhṛtarāṣṭra’, by sending you here to give me knowledge. And Kṛṣṇa also inspired me, ‘Don’t be enlightened.’ Who can fathom the purpose of Kṛṣṇa’s incomprehensible pastimes? And don’t tell me that I have fallen into the wheel of *samsara*, because I know that Kṛṣṇa will also deliver me in the future (*samsara cakra gati*).”

Text 30

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity abhipretya nṛpater,
abhiprāyaṁ sa yādavaḥ,
suhṛdbhiḥ samanujñātaḥ,
punar yadu-purīm agāt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus apprised himself of the King’s attitude, Akrura, the descendant of Yadu, took permission from his well-wishing relatives and friends and returned to the capital of the Yādavas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Akrura returned to Mathura after

ascertaining (*abhiprayam*) the intention of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who would not give up his partiality to his own sons.

Text 31

*śaśamsa rāma-kṛṣṇābhyām,
dhṛtarāṣṭra-viceṣṭitam,
pāṇḍavān prati kauravya,
yad-artham preṣitaḥ svayam*

Akrū ra reported to Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa how Dhṛtarāṣṭra was behaving toward the Pāṇḍavas. Thus, O descendant of the Kurus, he fulfilled the purpose for which he had been sent.

Chapter Fifty: Kṛṣṇa Establishes the City of Dvārakā

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
astiḥ prāptiś ca kamsasya,
mahisyau bharatarṣabha,
mṛte bhartari duḥkhārte,
īyatuḥ sma pitur gṛhān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Kamsa was killed, O heroic descendant of Bharata, his two queens, Asti and Prāpti, went to their father’s house in great distress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: I offer respects to my *guru*, so that I may use my intelligence to explain the second half of the Tenth Canto as I did the first part. In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa defeats Jarasandha seventeen times. Then supposedly out of fear of having to fight with him an eighteenth time, Kṛṣṇa brought His subjects to Dvaraka.

Text 2

*pitre magadha-rājāya,
jarāsandhāya duḥkhite,
vedayām cakratuḥ sarvam,
ātma-vaidhavya-kāraṇam*

The sorrowful queens told their father, King Jarāsandha of

Magadha, all about how they had become widows.

Text 3

*sa tad apriyam ākarṇya,
śokāmarṣa-yuto nṛpa,
ayādavīm mahīm kartum,
cakre paramam udyamam*

Hearing this odious news, O King, Jarāsandha was filled with sorrow and anger, and he began the greatest possible endeavor to rid the earth of the Yādavas.

Text 4

*akṣauhiṇībhir vimśatyā,
tiṣṭbhiś cāpi samvṛtaḥ,
yadu-rājadhānīm mathurām,
nyarudhat sarvato diśam*

With a force of twenty-three akṣauhiṇī divisions, he laid siege to the Yadu capital, Mathurā, on all sides.

Texts 5–6

nirīkṣya tad-balam kṛṣṇa,

*udvelam iva sāgaram,
sva-puraṁ tena samruddhaṁ,
sva-janaṁ ca bhayākulam,
cintayāṁ āsa bhagavān,
hariḥ kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ,
tad-deśa-kālānuṣaṅgaṁ,
svāvatāra-prayojanam*

Although Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the original cause of this world, when He descended to the earth He played the role of a human being. Thus when He saw Jarāsandha’s assembled army surrounding His city like a great ocean overflowing its shores, and when He saw how this army was striking fear into His subjects, the Lord considered what His suitable response should be according to the time, place and specific purpose of His current incarnation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In great wonder Kṛṣṇa observed Jarasandha’s army, which was like a vast ocean overflowing (*udvelam*) its shores. It may be questioned, what is the need for this wondering? There is no need at all for Kṛṣṇa to wonder since He is the original cause (*karana*) of everything. Yet it is happening because Kṛṣṇa is displaying pastimes as an ordinary human being (*manusya*). Kṛṣṇa’s actual thoughts are described in four verses (Texts 7-10).

Texts 7–8

*haniṣyāmi balaṁ hy etad,
bhuvi bhāraṁ samāhitam,
māgadhenā samānītaṁ,
vaśyānām sarva-bhūbhujām,
akṣauhiṇībhiḥ saṅkhyātām,*

*bhaṭāśva-ratha-kuñjaraiḥ,
māgadhas tu na hantavyo,
bhūyaḥ kartā balodyamam*

[The Supreme Lord thought:] Since it is such a burden on the earth, I will destroy Jarāsandha’s army, consisting of akṣauhiṇīs of foot soldiers, horses, chariots and elephants, which the King of Māgadha has assembled from all subservient kings and brought together here. But Jarāsandha himself should not be killed, since in the future he will certainly assemble another army.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “I will destroy Jarasandha’s army which is a burden to the earth. Jarasandha, however, should not be killed because he will enthusiastically bring another army (*balam:sainyam*) of demons for Me to annihilate.”

Text 9

*etad-artho ’vatāro ’yam,
bhū-bhāra-haraṇāya me,
samrakṣaṇāya sādḥūnām,
krto ’nyeṣām vadhāya ca*

This is the purpose of My present incarnation—to relieve the earth of its burden, protect the pious and kill the impious.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “I have come as the Kṛṣṇa *avatara* to relieve the burden of the earth, to protect the devotees and to kill the demons.”

Text 10

*anyo 'pi dharma-rakṣāyai,
dehaḥ sambhriyate mayā,
virāmāyāpy adharmasya,
kāle prabhavataḥ kvacit*

I also assume other bodies to protect religion and to end irreligion whenever it flourishes in the course of time.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “I also assume other bodies such as Varaha to protect religion and destroy irreligion.”

Text 11

*evam dhyāyati govinda,
ākāśāt sūrya-varcasau,
rathāv upasthitau sadyaḥ,
sa-sūtau sa-paricchadau*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] As Lord Govinda was thinking in this way, two chariots as effulgent as the sun suddenly descended from the sky. They were complete with drivers and equipment.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Govinda was thinking in this way, suddenly by His desire two chariots came from Vaikuntha (*ākāśāt*) and stood near (*upasthitau*) Him.

Text 12

*āyudhāni ca divyāni,
purāṇāni yadrcchayā,
dṛṣtvā tāni hṛṣīkeśah,
saṅkarṣaṇam athābravīt*

The Lord’s eternal divine weapons also appeared before Him spontaneously. Seeing these, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the senses, addressed Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa.

Texts 13–14

*paśyārya vyasanam prāptam,
yadūnām tvāvatām prabho,
eṣa te ratha āyāto,
dayitāny āyudhāni ca,
etad-artham hi nau janma,
sādhūnām īśa śarma-kṛt,
trayo-vimśaty-anīkākhyam,
bhūmer bhāram apākuru*

[The Supreme Lord said:] My respected elder brother, see this danger which has beset Your dependents, the Yadus! And see, dear master, how Your personal chariot and favorite weapons have come before You. The purpose for which We have taken birth, My Lord, is to secure the welfare of Our devotees. Please now remove from the earth the burden of these twenty-three armies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “My respected elder brother, You are the Lord of the Yadus who are protected (*avatām*) by You (*tva*). Now just see what has beset Your dependents, the Yadus.”

Text 15

*evam sammantrya dāsārhan,
damśitau rathinau purāt,
nirjagmatuḥ svāyudhādhyau,
balenālpīyasā vṛtau*

After Lord Kṛṣṇa had thus invited His brother, the two Dāsārhas, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, wearing armor and displaying Their resplendent weapons, drove out of the city in Their chariots. Only a very small contingent of soldiers accompanied Them.

Text 16

*śaṅkham dadhmau vinirgatya,
harir dārūka-sārathiḥ,
tato 'bhūt para-sainyānām,
hṛdi vitrāsa-vepathuḥ*

As Lord Kṛṣṇa came out of the city with Dārūka at the reins of His chariot, He blew His conchshell, and the enemy soldiers' hearts began to tremble with fear.

Text 17

tāv āha māgadho vīkṣya,

*he kṛṣṇa puruṣādhama,
na tvayā yoddhum icchāmi,
bālenaikena lajjayā,
guptena hi tvayā manda,
na yotsye yāhi bandhu-han*

Jarāsandha looked at the two of Them and said: O Kṛṣṇa, lowest of men! I do not wish to fight alone with You, since it would be a shame to fight with a mere boy. You fool who keep Yourself hidden, O murderer of Your relatives, go away! I will not fight with You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking the external meaning, Jarasandha said, “O Kṛṣṇa, lowest of men (*puruṣa adhama*)! I am ashamed (*lajjayā*) to fight with You, a mere boy (*balena*) who hides (*guptena*) Himself in Gokula as a *vaisya*. O fool (*manda*)! O killer of Your uncle (*bandu han*)! I will not fight with You. Go away!”

There is another meaning skillfully contained in the same words: Jarasandha said, “O great personality to whom all others are inferior (*purusadhama*)!” [In other words, Jarasandha is saying, “Kṛṣṇa is the *puruṣottama*, best of all living beings.”] I will not fight with You, whose child (*balena*) is Brahma (*ka*); for You are the Lord of all lords. I am ashamed (*lajjayā*) to fight with You because I, having lived a sinful life, am unqualified. You are hidden (*guptena*) in everyone’s heart, and are therefore invisible to material vision, so I do not desire to fight with You.”

According to Sanskrit grammar, the words *tvayā manda* can also be divided as *tvaya āmanda*. In this case Jarāsandha is indicating that Kṛṣṇa is not foolish but rather most alert. The word *bandhu* was used by Jarāsandha in the sense of “relative”, since Lord Kṛṣṇa killed His maternal uncle, Kaṁsa. However, *bandhu* comes from the verb *bandh*, “to bind”, and therefore *bandhu-han* can be understood as “one who destroys the bondage of ignorance.”

Text 18

*tava rāma yadi śraddhā,
yudhyasva dhairyam udvaha,
hitvā vā mac-charaiś chinnam,
dehaṁ svar yāhi mām jahi*

You, Rāma, should gather Your courage and fight with me, if You think You can do it. You may either give up Your body when it is cut to pieces by my arrows, and thus attain to heaven, or else kill me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarāsandha suspected that Balarāma’s body was invincible, and thus he offered what might be a more practical alternative, that Balarāma kill Jarāsandha. Another meaning is: “Go away from me since I am so sinful and go to Vaikuntha, having left aside my body cut by arrows.”

Text 19

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
na vai śūrā vikatthante,
darśayanty eva pauruṣam,
na grhṇīmo vaco rājann,
āturasya mumūrṣataḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: Real heroes do not simply boast but rather show their prowess in action. We cannot take seriously the words of one who is full of anxiety and who wants to die.

Text 20

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
jarā-sutas tāv abhisṛtya mādhavau,
mahā-balaughena balīyasāvṛnot,
sa-sainya-yāna-dhvaja-vāji-sārathī,
sūryānalau vāyur ivābhra-reṇubhiḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Just as the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, the son of Jarā marched toward the two descendants of Madhu and with his huge assemblage of armies surrounded Them and Their soldiers, chariots, flags, horses and charioteers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As the wind covers the sun with clouds or a fire with dust, Jarasandha covered the two Madhavas, who appeared in the Madhu dynasty (*madhavau*), by surrounding Them with his armies. However, this was just an apparent covering; for nothing can cover the sun.

Text 21

*suparṇa-tāla-dhvaja-cihitnau rathāv,
alakṣayantyo hari-rāmayor mṛdhe,
striyaḥ purāṭṭālaka-harmya-gopuraṁ,
samāśritāḥ sammumuhuḥ śucārditaḥ*

The women stood in the watchtowers, palaces and high gates of the city. When they could no longer see Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's chariots, identified by banners marked with the emblems of Garuḍa

and a palm tree, they were struck with grief and fainted.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse particularly mentions that the women (*striyaḥ*) were filled with intense grief (*śucārditaḥ*). This is because of their extraordinary attachment to Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, which far exceeded that of the men.

Text 22

*hariḥ parānīka-payomucām muhuḥ,
śilīmukhāty-ulbaṇa-varṣa-pīditam,
sva-sainyam ālokya surāsura-rcitam,
vyasphūrjayac chārṅga-śarāsanottamam*

Seeing His army tormented by the relentless and savage rain of arrows from the massive opposing forces gathered like clouds about Him, Lord Hari twanged His excellent bow, Śārṅga, which both gods and demons worship.

Text 23

*grḥṇan niśaṅgād atha sandadhac charān,
vikṛṣya muñcan śita-bāṇa-pūgān,
nighnan rathān kuñjara-vāji-pattīn,
nirantaram yadvad alāta-cakram*

Lord Kṛṣṇa took arrows from His quiver, fixed them on the bowstring, pulled back, and released endless torrents of sharp shafts, which struck the enemy's chariots, elephants, horses and

infantrymen. The Lord shooting His arrows resembled a blazing circle of fire.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing His own army afflicted by the extremely fierce downpour of arrows (*śīlīmukha:bāṇāḥ*) from the cloud (*payomucām:meghāḥ*) of the enemy troops, Kṛṣṇa drew His bow. Verse twenty-three answers the question, “In what manner did Kṛṣṇa shoot arrows?” Continuously drawing arrows from His quiver one by one, Kṛṣṇa fixed them on the bow string, pulled back the string and released them, thereby destroying all the chariots and other things. The word continuously (*nirantaram*) modifies all the actions such as picking up the bow, fixing the arrows, pulling, shooting and striking. Although following in a sequential order, all the actions seemed simultaneous to the onlookers. It appeared that Kṛṣṇa was doing millions of actions at once. Thus the bow releasing arrows against the enemy troops, which were surrounding Mathura on all sides, appeared like a firebrand, just as a blazing piece of wood appears like a circle of fire when whirled around.

Text 24

*nirbhinna-kumbhāḥ kariṇo nipetur,
anekaśo 'śvāḥ śara-vṛkṣa-kandharāḥ,
rathā hatāśva-dhvaja-sūta-nāyakāḥ,
padāyataś chinna-bhujoru-kandharāḥ*

Elephants fell to the ground, their foreheads split open, cavalry horses fell with severed necks, chariots fell with their horses, flags, drivers and masters all shattered, and foot soldiers collapsed with severed arms, thighs and shoulders.

Texts 25–28

*sañchidyamāna-dvipadebha-vājinām,
aṅga-prasūtāḥ śataśo 'sṛg-āpagāḥ,
bhujāhayaḥ pūruṣa-śīrṣa-kacchapā,
hata-dvipa-dvīpa-haya grahākulāḥ,
karoru-mīnā nara-keśa-śaivalā,
dhanus-taraṅgāyudha-gulma-saṅkulāḥ,
acchūrikāvarta-bhayānakā mahā,
maṇi-pravekābharaṅśma-śarkarāḥ,
pravartitā bhīru-bhayāvahā mṛdhe,
manasvinām harṣa-karīḥ parasparam,
vinighnatārīn muṣalena durmadān,
saṅkarṣaṇenāparīmeya-tejasā,
balaṁ tad aṅgārṇava-durga-bhairavaṁ,
duranta-pāraṁ magadhendra-pālitam,
kṣayaṁ praṇītaṁ vasudeva-putrayor,
vikrīḍitaṁ taj jagad-īśayoḥ param*

On the battlefield, hundreds of rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the humans, elephants and horses who had been cut to pieces. In these rivers arms resembled snakes; human heads, turtles; dead elephants, islands; and dead horses, crocodiles. Hands and thighs appeared like fish, human hair like waterweeds, bows like waves, and various weapons like clumps of bushes. The rivers of blood teemed with all of these.

Chariot wheels looked like terrifying whirlpools, and precious gems and ornaments resembled stones and gravel in the rushing red rivers, which aroused fear in the timid, joy in the wise. With the blows of His plow weapon the immeasurably powerful Lord Balarāma destroyed Magadhendra's military force. And though

this force was as unfathomable and fearsome as an impassable ocean, for the two sons of Vasudeva, the Lords of the universe, the battle was hardly more than play.

(Text 25-26) Rivers of blood flowed from the limbs of the men, elephants and horses severed by the arrows of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama. The metaphor of the river is described. In that river the arms resembled snakes, the dead elephants appeared to be islands or high areas, and the horses looked like crocodiles. These quivering crocodiles filled up the river. The rivers were dangerous with whirlpools of shields or wheels of chariots. The big jewels and fine ornaments were the stones and gravel in the rivers. These rivers gave joy to the intelligent (*manasvinām*). O king! The army of Jarasandha was as dangerous and hard to cross as an unfathomably deep ocean without a shore. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama crossed this ocean without any effort at all as if They were just playing.

Text 29

*sthity-udbhavāntaṁ bhuvana-trayasya yaḥ,
samīhite 'nanta-guṇaḥ sva-līlayā,
na tasya citraṁ para-pakṣa-nigrahas,
tathāpi martyānuvidhasya varṇyate*

For Him who orchestrates the creation, maintenance and destruction of the three worlds and who possesses unlimited spiritual qualities, it is hardly amazing that He subdues an opposing party. Still, when the Lord does so, imitating human behavior, sages glorify His acts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the universe, how can He derive any pleasure in fighting with the most insignificant

jivas who are no equal to Him? If Kṛṣṇa experiences no taste from this, then what is the use of describing it?” This verse answers the question. “What is so astonishing about Kṛṣṇa’s fighting? For Kṛṣṇa, who appears in human body and performs activities like a human, it is suitable. Kṛṣṇa assumes a human form and behaves accordingly. For Kṛṣṇa to defeat Jarasandha in that form by which He creates the universe would not be relishable, since it would be an uninteresting mismatch. But if Kṛṣṇa becomes a human being and defeats such a mighty personality as Jarasandha, then such a human opponent for a human would be suitable. Nor should one argue that Kṛṣṇa’s human form is not His original form (*svarupa*), because the scriptures say: *narākṛti para-brahma kāraṇa-mānuṣaḥ*, “The Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-brahma*), for His own purpose, appears in a human-like form, although He is the source of everything.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*)

Similarly, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.32) states, *yan-mitram paramānandaṁ pūrṇaṁ brahma sanātanam*, “The eternal Supreme Brahman, the source of transcendental bliss, has become their friend.”

Text 30

*jagrāha viratham rāmo,
jarāsandham mahā-balam,
hatānīkāvaśiṣṭāsūṁ,
siṁhaḥ siṁham ivaujasā*

Jarāsandha, with his chariot lost and all his soldiers dead, was left with only his breath. At that point Lord Balarāma forcibly seized the powerful warrior, just as one lion takes hold of another.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama seized Jarasandha, whose army was killed and whose life airs alone remained.

Text 31

*badhyamānaṁ hatārātim,
pāśair vāruṇa-mānuṣaiḥ,
vārayām āsa govindas,
tena kārya-cikīrṣayā*

With the divine noose of Varuṇa and other, mortal ropes, Balarāma began tying up Jarāsandha, who had killed so many foes. But Lord Govinda still had a purpose to fulfill through Jarāsandha, and thus He asked Balarāma to stop.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Govinda prevented Balarama from tying up Jarasandha, who was almost dead, because He desired that Jarasandha should repeatedly gather together the demoniac armies who were a burden to the earth and needed to be killed. The word *hatārātim* means “who has killed his enemies”, or “through whom his enemies would be killed”.

Texts 32–33

*sā mukto loka-nāthābhyām,
vrīḍito vīra-sammataḥ,
tapase kṛta-saṅkalpo,
vāritaḥ pathi rājabhiḥ,
vākyaiḥ pavitrārtha-padair;
nayanaiḥ prākṛtair api,
sva-karma-bandha-prāpto 'yaṁ,
yadubhis te parābhavaḥ*

Jarāsandha, whom fighters had highly honored, was ashamed after being released by the two Lords of the universe, and thus he decided to undergo penances. On the road, however, several kings convinced him with both spiritual wisdom and mundane arguments that he should give up his idea of self-abnegation. They told him, “Your defeat by the Yadus was simply the unavoidable reaction of your past karma.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Jarasandha was ashamed because others considered him to be valiant (*vīra-sammataḥ*), therefore he should have died in battle.

The word *pavitrāṇī* means “expressing advice as to the reality of the situation”. The word *nayanaiḥ* means “with logical arguments” and *prākṛtaiḥ* means “mundane”.

Jarasandha’s friends stopped him from doing austerities by giving philosophical teachings with mundane moral precepts. The philosophical advice was, “Your defeat was already written on your forehead as a result of your *karma*, so how could you avoid it? After all, the *Smṛti* scripture states, ‘Inevitably you must enjoy the results of acts committed’.”

By a double meaning the same statement gives advice according to moral precepts. “If your defeat was due to *prarabdha karma*, then why should you be ashamed? It cannot be avoided in that case. What intelligent man is going to think that you are weaker than these paltry Yadavas? Therefore, in victory over one of them there is no glory, and in defeat by one of them there is no shame. There is nothing exceptional in the lion Jarasandha winning over the black deer Kṛṣṇa, and no blame incurred if he fails to win. Even when warriors win or lose in battle with equal fighters they should not feel pride or humiliation, so what to speak of when they win or lose with persons who are so inferior?”

*hateṣu sarvānīkeṣu,
nṛpo bārhadrathas tadā,
upekṣito bhagavatā,
magadhān durmanā yayau*

All of his armies having been killed, and himself neglected by the Personality of Godhead, King Jarāsandha, son of Bṛhadratha, then sadly returned to the kingdom of the Magadhas.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The son of Brhadratha, Barhadratha or Jarasandha, went to Magadha.

Texts 35–36

*mukundo 'py akṣata-balo,
nistīrṇāri-balārṇavaḥ,
vikīryamāṇaḥ kusumais,
trīdaśair anumoditaḥ,
māthurair upasaṅgamyā,
vijvarair muditātmabhiḥ,
upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ,
sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ*

Lord Mukunda had crossed the ocean of His enemy's armies with His own military force completely intact. He received congratulations from the denizens of heaven, who showered Him with flowers. The people of Mathurā, relieved of their feverish anxiety and filled with joy, came out to meet Him as professional bards, heralds and panegyrists sang in praise of His victory.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Although not written in the verse, it

is understood that Mukunda entered Mathura where He was greeted as described here.

Texts 37–38

*śaṅkha-ḍundubhayo nedur,
bherī-tūryāṅy anekaśaḥ,
vīṇā-veṇu-mṛdaṅgāni,
puram praviśati prabhau,
sikta-mārgām hṛṣṭa-janām,
patākābhir abhyalaṅkṛtām,
nirghuṣṭām brahma-ghoṣeṇa,
kautukābaddha-toraṇām*

As the Lord entered His city, conchshells and kettledrums sounded, and many drums, horns, vīṇās, flutes and mṛdaṅgas played in concert. The boulevards were sprinkled with water, there were banners everywhere, and the gateways were decorated for the celebration. The citizens were elated, and the city resounded with the chanting of Vedic hymns.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: These verses describe the city of Mathura.

Text 39

*nicīyamāno nārībhir,
mālya-dadhy-akṣatāṅkuraiḥ,
nirīkṣyamāṇaḥ sa-sneham,
prīty-utkalita-locanaiḥ*

As the women of the city affectionately looked at the Lord, their eyes wide open with love, they scattered flower garlands, yogurt, parched rice and newly grown sprouts upon Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The completion of this verse is understood to be: “Upon entering the city, He was sprinkled with flowers.” However the grammar is changed from *praviśati prabhau* (locative absolute) in verse 37 to *prabhuh pravisat* (the Lord entered Mathura). Or else the subject of this verse is in the next verse (40) *prādiśat prabhuh* (the Lord gave to Ugrasena).

Text 40

*āyodhana-gataṁ vittam,
anantaṁ vīra-bhūṣaṇam,
yadu-rājāya tat sarvam,
āhṛtaṁ prādiśat prabhuh*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then presented to the Yadu king all the wealth that had fallen on the battlefield—namely, the countless ornaments of the dead warriors.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa presented Ugrasena with all the jeweled ornaments collected from the bodies of the soldiers, horses and other animals that had fallen on the battlefield (*āyodhana-gataṁ:yuddha-bhūmi*).

Text 41

evam saptadaśa-kṛtvas,

*tāvaty akṣauhiṇī-balaḥ,
yuyudhe māgadho rājā,
yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ*

Seventeen times the King of Magadha met defeat in this very way. And yet throughout these defeats he fought on with his akṣauhiṇī divisions against the forces of the Yadu dynasty who were protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha had a vast army of twenty three *akṣauhiṇīs*.

Text 42

*akṣiṇvaṁs tad-balaṁ sarvaṁ,
vṛṣṇayah kṛṣṇa-tejasā,
hateṣu sveṣv anīkeṣu,
tyakto 'gād aribhir nṛpaḥ*

By the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Vṛṣṇis would invariably annihilate all of Jarāsandha's forces, and when all his soldiers had been killed, the King, released by his enemies, would again go away.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Vrsnis destroyed (*aksinvan*) his army.

Text 43

*aṣṭādaśama saṅgrāma,
āgāmini tad-antarā,*

*nārada-preṣito vīro,
yavanaḥ pratyadr̥śyata*

Just as the eighteenth battle was about to take place, a barbarian warrior named Kālayavana, sent by Nārada, appeared on the battlefield.

Text 44

*rurodha mathurām etya,
tisṛbhir mleccha-koṭibhiḥ,
nṛ-loke cāpratidvandvo,
vṛṣṇīn śrutvātma-sammitān*

Arriving at Mathurā, this Yavana laid siege to the city with thirty million barbarian soldiers. He had never found a human rival worth fighting, but he had heard that the Vṛṣṇis were his equals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demon Kalayavana was “sent by Narada” (*nārada-preṣito*). The story of this is told in the *Visnu Purana* as follows: Once Gargya, the son of Garga Muni, was ridiculed by His brother-in-law as a “eunuch”, and when the Yadavas heard this they laughed heartily. Gargya was infuriated by their laughter. He set out to the South, thinking, “May I have a son who will bring terror to the Yādavas.” He ate powered iron and worshiped Siva for twelve years. Obtaining the boon from Siva, he returned home satisfied, and gave birth to a son through the wife of the childless king of the Yavanas. Kalayavana was the son born to him. Kalayavana, who was as ferocious as Siva the destroyer, inquired from Narada, “Presently on this earth who are most powerful kings?” Narada said, “The Yadavas are the most

powerful.” Thus Kalayavana appeared in Mathura, sent by Narada.

Text 45

*taṁ dr̥ṣṭvācintayat kṛṣṇaḥ,
saṅkarṣaṇa saḥāyavān,
aho yadūnām vṛjinaṁ,
prāptaṁ hy ubhayato mahat*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa saw Kālayavana, Kṛṣṇa thought about the situation and said, “Ah, a great danger now threatens the Yadus from two sides.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Out of affection for the Yadavas, Kṛṣṇa worried, “The Yadus have calamity on both sides, from Kalayavana and Jarasandha.”

Text 46

*yavano 'yaṁ nirundhe 'smān,
adya tāvan mahā-balaḥ,
māgadho 'py adya vā śvo vā,
paraśvo vāgamiṣyati*

“This Yavana is besieging us already, and the mighty King of Magadha will soon arrive here, if not today then tomorrow or the next day.

Text 47

*āvayoḥ yudhyator asya,
yady āgantā jarā-sutaḥ,
bandhūn haniṣyaty atha vā,
neṣyate sva-puraṁ balī*

“If powerful Jarāsandha comes while We two are busy fighting Kālayavana, Jarāsandha may kill Our relatives or else take them away to his capital.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa thought, “If Jarasandha comes while We two are fighting with Kalayavana (*asya*), he may kill our relatives or take them away to his city.”

Text 48

*tasmād adya vidhāsyāmo,
durgam dvipada-durgamam,
tatra jñātīn samādhāya,
yavanam ghātayāmahe*

“Therefore We will immediately construct a fortress that no human force can penetrate. Let Us settle our family members there and then kill the barbarian king.”

Text 49

iti sammantrya bhagavān,

*durgam dvādaśa-yojanam,
antaḥ-samudre nagaram,
kṛtsnādbhutam acīkarat*

After thus discussing the matter with Balarāma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had a fortress twelve yojanas in circumference built within the sea. Inside that fort He had a city built containing all kinds of wonderful things.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa built a fortress within the ocean measuring twelve *yojanas*. Eight barleycorns (*yavas*) make one thumb-length (*angula*), twelve of which make one palm. Three palms are one hand, and two hands are called a *kisku*. Two *kiskus* are called a bow-length (*dhanu*), and two thousand bow-lengths make one *krosa*. Two *krosas* are one *gavyūti*, and two *gavyūtis* are one *yojana*. Kṛṣṇa built a city within the fort.

Texts 50–53

*drśyate yatra hi tvāṣṭram,
vijñānam śilpa-naipuṇam,
rathyā-catvara-vīthībhir,
yathā-vāstu vinirmitam,
sura-druma-latodyāna,
vicitropavanānvitam,
hema-śṛṅgair divi-sprṅgbhiḥ,
sphaṭikāṭṭāla-gopuraiḥ,
rājatārakuṭaiḥ koṣṭhair,
hema-kumbhair alaṅkṛtaiḥ,
ratna-kūtair grḥair hemair,
mahā-mārakata-sthalaiḥ,
vāstoṣpatīnām ca grḥair,*

*vallabh̄bhiś ca nirmītam,
cātur-varṇya-janākīrṇam,
yadu-deva-gr̄hollasat*

In the construction of that city could be seen the full scientific knowledge and architectural skill of Viśvakarmā. There were wide avenues, commercial roads and courtyards laid out on ample plots of land; there were splendid parks, and also gardens stocked with trees and creepers from the heavenly planets. The gateway towers were topped with golden turrets touching the sky, and their upper levels were fashioned of crystal quartz. The gold-covered houses were adorned in front with golden pots and on top with jeweled roofs, and their floors were inlaid with precious emeralds. Beside the houses stood treasury buildings, warehouses, and stables for fine horses, all built of silver and brass. Each residence had a watchtower, and also a temple for its household deity. Filled with citizens of all four social orders, the city was especially beautified by the palaces of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Yadus.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wisdom of Visvakarma (*tvāṣṭram*), manifest as his skill in architecture (*śilpa-naipuṇam*), was seen in the city of Dvaraka. Three and a half verses describe that Dvaraka was constructed with main roads, side roads, yards and houses not extending beyond their designated areas. There were beautiful gardens and parks full of celestial trees and creepers. The horse stables were made of silver, brass and iron, and the houses had gold *kalasas* and spires of rubies and other jewels. It had temples (*vastospatinam grha*) with golden towers (*valabhi*) touching the sky. The city was especially beautified with the palaces of Kṛṣṇa (*yadudeva*).

*sudharmām pārijātām ca,
mahendraḥ prāhiṇod dhareḥ,
yatra cāvasthito martyo,
martya-dharmair na yujyate*

Lord Indra brought Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Sudharmā assembly hall, standing within which a mortal man is not subject to the laws of mortality. Indra also gave the pārijāta tree.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa also placed a *parijata* tree in His Dvaraka residence. Here the past tense is used because it occurred prior to the conversation between Sukadeva Gosvami and Pariksit Maharaja, even though it happened some time after the city’s construction. The word *martya-dharmaiḥ* (laws of mortality) refers to the six pushing agents such as hunger and thirst.

Text 55

*śyāmaika-varṇān varuṇo,
hayān śuklān mano-javān,
aṣṭau nidhi-patiḥ kośān,
loka-pālo nijodayān*

Lord Varuṇa offered horses as swift as the mind, some of which were pure dark-blue, others white. The treasurer of the demigods, Kuvera, gave his eight mystic treasures, and the rulers of various planets each presented their own opulences.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kuvera is the master of the treasury and the eight mystic treasures (*nidhis*), which are described as follows: *padmaś caiva mahāpadmo, matsya-kūrmau tathaudakah nīlo mukundaḥ*

śaṅkhaś ca, nidhayo 'ṣṭau prakīrtitāḥ

“The eight mystic treasures are called Padma, Mahāpadma, Matsya, Kūrma, Audaka, Nīla, Mukunda and Śaṅkha.” The masters of the directions gave their own particular wealth.

Text 56

*yad yad bhagavatā dattam,
ādhipyam̐ sva-siddhaye,
sarvaṁ pratyarpayām āsur;
harau bhūmi-gate nṛpa*

The Supreme Lord having come to the earth, O King, these demigods now offered Him whatever powers of control He had previously delegated to them for the exercise of their particular authority.

Text 57

*tatra yoga-prabhāvena,
nītvā sarva-janaṁ hariḥ,
prajā-pālena rāmeṇa,
kṛṣṇaḥ samanumantritaḥ,
nirjagāma pura-dvārāt,
padma-mālī nirāyudhaḥ*

After transporting all His subjects to the new city by the power of His mystic Yogamāyā, Lord Kṛṣṇa consulted with Lord Balarāma, who had remained in Mathurā to protect it. Then, wearing a

garland of lotuses but bearing no weapons, Lord Kṛṣṇa went out of Mathurā by its main gate.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yoga-prabhāvena refers to Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya-sakti*. The citizens of Mathurā were transferred to Dvārakā by her power. This is stated in the *Uttara-khanda* of the *Padma Purana*: *suṣuptān mathurāyān tu, paurāṁs tatra janārdanaḥ, uddhṛtya sahasā rātrau, dvārakāyām nyaveśayat, prabuddhās te janāḥ sarve, putra-dāra-samanvitāḥ, haima-harmya-tale viṣṭā, vismayam paramam yayuḥ* “In the middle of the night, as the citizens of Mathurā slept, Lord Janārdana suddenly removed them from that city and placed them in Dvārakā. When the men awoke, they were all amazed to find themselves, their children and their wives sitting inside palaces made of gold.”

Kṛṣṇa consulted (*samanumantritaḥ*) with Balarama, “You stay here a short time, and I will use this ploy to kill Jarasandha.”

Chapter Fifty-one: The Deliverance of Mucukunda

Texts 1–6

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
taṁ vilokya viniṣkrāntam,
ujjihānam ivodupam,
darśanīyatamaṁ śyāmaṁ,
pīta-kausēya-vāsasam,
śrīvatsa-vakṣasaṁ bhrājat,
kaustubhāmukta-kandharam,
pṛthu-dīrgha-catur-bāhuṁ,
nava-kañjāruṅekṣaṇam,
nitya-pramuditaṁ śrīmat,
su-kapolaṁ śuci-smitam,
mukhāravindaṁ bibhrāṇam,
sphuran-makara-kunḍalam,
vāsudevo hy ayam iti,
pumān śrīvatsa-lāñchanaḥ,
catur-bhujo 'ravindākṣo,
vana-māly ati-sundaraḥ,
lakṣaṇair nārada-proktair,
nānyo bhavitum arhati,
nirāyudhaś calan padbhyām,
yotsye 'nena nirāyudhaḥ,
iti niścitya yavanaḥ,
prādravad taṁ parān-mukham,
anvadhāvaj jighṛkṣus taṁ,
durāpam api yoginām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kālayavana saw the Lord come out from Mathurā like the rising moon. The Lord was most beautiful to behold, with His dark-blue complexion and yellow silk garment. Upon His chest He bore the mark of Śrīvatsa, and the Kaustubha gem adorned His neck. His four arms were sturdy and long. He displayed His ever-joyful lotuslike face, with eyes pink like lotuses, beautifully effulgent cheeks, a pristine smile and glittering shark-shaped earrings. The barbarian thought, “This person must indeed be Vāsudeva, since He possesses the characteristics Nārada mentioned: He is marked with Śrīvatsa, He has four arms, His eyes are like lotuses, He wears a garland of forest flowers, and He is extremely handsome. He cannot be anyone else. Since He goes on foot and unarmed, I will fight Him without weapons.” Resolving thus, he ran after the Lord, who turned His back and ran away. Kālayavana hoped to catch Lord Kṛṣṇa, though great mystic yogīs cannot attain Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Mucukunda burns up Kalayavana with his glance and satisfies Kṛṣṇa with his prayers. Kṛṣṇa in turn grants a benediction to Mucukunda. Those who are qualified by devotion can appreciate the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. The demons, however, because of their inimical attitude, cannot taste that beauty even if the Lord appears before their eyes. To show that fact, this verse describes the beauty of Kṛṣṇa as He stood before Kalayavana.

Text 7

*hasta-prāptam ivātmānam,
harīṇā sa pade pade,
nīto darśayatā dūram,
yavaneśo 'dri-kandaram*

Appearing virtually within reach of Kālayavana’s hands at every moment, Lord Hari led the King of the Yavanas far away to a mountain cave.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By letting Himself almost get caught, and then running away time and time again Kṛṣṇa led Kalayavana far off to a cave in the mountain.

Text 8

*palāyanam yadu-kule,
jātasya tava nocitam,
iti kṣipann anugato,
nainam prāpāhatāśubhaḥ*

While chasing the Lord, the Yavana cast insults at Him, saying “You took birth in the Yadu dynasty. It’s not proper for You to run away!” But still Kālayavana could not reach Lord Kṛṣṇa, because his sinful reactions had not been cleansed away.

Text 9

*evam kṣipto 'pi bhagavān,
prāviśad giri-kandaram,
so 'pi praviṣṭas tatrānyam,
śayānam dadṛśe naram*

Although insulted in this way, the Supreme Lord entered the mountain cave. Kālayavana also entered, and there he saw another

man lying asleep.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kalayavana saw another person.

Text 10

*nanv asau dūram ānīya,
śete mām iha sādhu-vat,
iti matvācyutaṁ mūḍhas,
taṁ padā samatāḍayat*

“So, after leading me such a long distance, now He is lying here like some saint!” Thus thinking the sleeping man to be Lord Kṛṣṇa, the deluded fool kicked him with all his strength.

Text 11

*sa utthāya ciraṁ suptaḥ,
śanair unmīlya locane,
diśo vilokayan pārśve,
taṁ adrākṣīd avasthitam*

The man awoke after a long sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Looking all about, he saw Kālayavana standing beside him.

Text 12

*sa tāvat tasya ruṣṭasya,
dṛṣṭi-pātena bhārata,
deha-jenāgninā dagdho,
bhasma-sād abhavat kṣaṇāt*

The awakened man was angry and cast his glance at Kālayavana, whose body burst into flames. In a single moment, O King Parīkṣit, Kālayavana was burnt to ashes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By the angry glance from Mucukunda, Kalayavana’s body caught on fire, and then that fire generated from Kalayavana’s own body (*deha-jena-agninā*) burnt him to ashes. This was because of the boon prayed for and received by Mucukunda, which is mentioned in the *Hari-vamśa* as follows:

*prasuptam bodhayed yo mām, tam daheyam aham surāḥ, cakṣuṣā
krodha-dīptena, evam āha punaḥ punaḥ*

“Mucukunda repeatedly said, ‘O demigods, may that person who wakes me from sleep be burned up by my eyes fiery with anger.’”

Mucukunda prayed for the boon of sleep because of the prediction of the ancient sage Garga who said, ‘You will remain asleep, without waking until Kṛṣṇa appears.’ Mucukunda thought, “It is impossible for me, longing for the sight of Kṛṣṇa, to remain awake for the many cycles of four *yugas*. Better that I sleep and then the time will pass in a few moments.”

Mucukunda made this rather morbid request to scare Lord Indra. Otherwise Indra would keep waking him up to request his help in fighting various cosmic enemies. Indra’s consent to Mucukunda’s request is described in *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as follows:

*proktaś ca devaiḥ samsuptam, yas tvām utthāpayiṣyati deha-jenāgninā
sadyaḥ, sa tu bhasmī-kariṣyati*

The demigods declared, “Whoever awakens you from sleep will suddenly be burnt to ashes by a fire generated from his body.”

Text 13

*śrī-rājovāca,
ko nāma sa pumān brahman,
kasya kim-vīrya eva ca,
kasmād guhām gataḥ śiṣye,
kim-tejo yavanārdanaḥ*

King Parīkṣit said: Who was that person, O brāhmaṇa? To which family did he belong, and what were his powers? Why did that destroyer of the barbarian lie down to sleep in the cave, and whose son was he?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja asked, “Whose family (*kasya*) did that destroyer of the Yavana (*yavana-ārdanaḥ*) belong to? Where did he get his power (*kim-vīrya*) from? Whose son (*kim tejah:tejas:semen*) was he?”

Text 14

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sa ikṣvāku-kule jāto,
māndhātṛ-tanayo mahān,
mucukunda iti khyāto,
brahmanyah satya-saṅgareḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda was the name of this great personality, who was born in the Ikṣvāku dynasty as the son of Māndhātā. He was devoted to brahminical culture and always true to his vow in battle.

Text 15

*sa yācitaḥ sura-gaṇair;
indrādyair ātma-rakṣaṇe,
asurebhyaḥ paritrastais,
tad-rakṣām so 'karoc ciram*

Begged by Indra and the other demigods to help protect them when they were terrorized by the demons, Mucukunda defended them for a long time.

Text 16

*labdhvā guhaṁ te svaḥ-pālaṁ,
mucukundam athābruvan,
rājan viramatām kṛcchrād,
bhavān naḥ paripālanāt*

When the demigods obtained Kārttikeya as their general, they told Mucukunda, “O King, you may now give up your troublesome duty of guarding us.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the demigods obtained Karttikeya (*guham*) to protect them, they addressed Mucukunda.

Text 17

*nara-lokaṁ parityajya,
rājyaṁ nihata-kaṅṭakam,
asmān pālayato vīra,
kāmās te sarva ujjihitāḥ*

“Abandoning an unopposed kingdom in the world of men, O valiant one, you neglected all your personal desires while engaged in protecting us.

Text 18

*sutā mahiṣyo bhavato,
jñātayo ’mātya-mantrinaḥ,
prajāś ca tulya-kālīnā,
nādhunā santi kālītāḥ*

“The children, queens, relatives, ministers, advisers and subjects who were your contemporaries are no longer alive. They have all been swept away by time.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demigods said, “Furthermore, your contemporaries have moved on by the force of time (*kalitah*).”

Text 19

*kālo balīyān balinām,
bhagavān īśvaro ’vyayaḥ,
prajāḥ kālayate krīḍan,*

paśu-pālo yathā paśūn

“Inexhaustible time, stronger than the strong, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Like a herdsman moving his animals along, He moves mortal creatures as His pastime.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda asked, “Who has made them move?” This verse answers: time.

Text 20

*varam vṛṇīṣva bhadrām te,
ṛte kaivalyam adya naḥ,
eka eveśvaras tasya,
bhagavān viṣṇur avyayaḥ*

“All good fortune to you! Now please choose a benediction from us—anything but liberation, since only the infallible Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu, can bestow that.”

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Only Visnu can grant that liberation (*tasya*).

Text 21

*evam uktaḥ sa vai devān,
abhivandya mahā-yaśāḥ,
aśayiṣṭa guhā-viṣṭo,
nidrayā deva-dattayā*

Addressed thus, King Mucukunda took his respectful leave of the demigods and went to a cave, where he lay down to enjoy the sleep they had granted him.

Text 22

*yavane bhasma-sān nīte,
bhagavān sāvatarṣabhaḥ,
ātmānaṁ darśayām āsa,
mucukundāya dhīmate*

After the Yavana was burnt to ashes, the Supreme Lord, chief of the Sāvatas, revealed Himself to the wise Mucukunda.

Texts 23–26

*tam ālokya ghana-śyāmaṁ,
pīta-kausēya-vāsasam,
śrīvatsa-vakṣasam bhrājat,
kaustubhena virājitam,
catur-bhujam rocamānaṁ,
vaijayantī ca mālayā,
cāru-prasanna-vadanaṁ,
sphuran-makara-kuṇḍalam,
prekṣaṇīyaṁ nṛ-lokasya,
sānurāga-smitekṣaṇam,
apīvyā-vayasam matta,
mṛgendrodāra-vikramam,*

*paryapṛcchan mahā-buddhis,
tejasā tasya dharṣitaḥ,
śaṅkitaḥ śanakai rājā,
durdharsam iva tejasā*

As he gazed at the Lord, King Mucukunda saw that He was dark blue like a cloud, had four arms, and wore a yellow silk garment. On His chest He bore the Śrīvatsa mark and on His neck the brilliantly glowing Kaustubha gem. Adorned with a Vaijayantī garland, the Lord displayed His handsome, peaceful face, which attracts the eyes of all mankind with its shark-shaped earrings and affectionately smiling glance. The beauty of His youthful form was unexcelled, and He moved with the nobility of an angry lion. The highly intelligent King was overwhelmed by the Lord’s effulgence, which showed Him to be invincible. Expressing his uncertainty, Mucukunda hesitantly questioned Lord Kṛṣṇa as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *śaṅkitaḥ*, “having some doubt”, indicates that Mucukunda was thinking, “Is this indeed the Supreme Lord?” The Lord was unconquerable (*durdharsam*). *Iva* in this case is only a verbal ornament.

Text 27

*śrī-mucukunda uvāca,
ko bhavān iha samprāpto,
vipine giri-gahvare,
padbhyāṁ padma-palāśābhyām,
vicarasy uru-kaṅṭake*

Śrī Mucukunda said: Who are You who have come to this mountain

cave in the forest, having walked on the thorny ground with feet as soft as lotus petals?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda said, “You are walking on the thorny ground with Your tender lotus petal feet.”

Text 28

*kiṁ svit tejasvinām tejo,
bhagavān vā vibhāvasuḥ,
sūryaḥ somo mahendro vā,
loka-pālo paro 'pi vā*

Perhaps You are the potency of all potent beings. Or maybe You are the powerful god of fire, or the sun-god, the moon-god, the King of heaven or the ruling demigod of some other planet.

Text 29

*manye tvām deva-devānām,
trayāṇām puruṣarṣabham,
yad bādhase guhā-dhvāntam,
pradīpaḥ prabhayā yathā*

I think You are the Supreme Personality among the three chief gods, since You drive away the darkness of this cave as a lamp dispels darkness with its light.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda said, “With Your

effulgence You dispel the darkness of this mountain cave, and with Your jewel-like knowledge You destroy the darkness of ignorance in my heart.” In Sanskrit, the heart is sometimes metaphorically referred to as *guha*, “cavern”, a deep and secret place.

Text 30

*śuśrūṣatām avyalyākam,
asmākaṁ nara-puṅgava,
sva-janma karma gotraṁ vā,
kathyatām yadi rocate*

O best among men, if You like, please truly describe Your birth, activities and lineage to us, who are eager to hear.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Mucukunda said, “Please tell us who want to hear.” The plural usage of the word *śuśrūṣatām*, “to us, who are sincerely eager to hear”, indicates Mucukunda’s noble position and his qualification to hear from Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa would not speak if He thought that Mucukunda was a low class, unqualified person.

Text 31

*vayaṁ tu puruṣa-vyāghra,
aikṣvākāḥ kṣatra-bandhavaḥ,
mucukunda iti prokto,
yauvanāśvātmajāḥ prabho*

As for ourselves, O tiger among men, we belong to a family of fallen kṣatriyas, descendants of King Ikṣvāku. My name is Mucukunda,

my Lord, and I am the son of Yauvanāśva.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Mucukunda had indicated his own position, he noted Kṛṣṇa's silence. Therefore he decided to introduce himself, noting his own good qualifications. By saying he was a low class *ksatriya* (*kṣatra-bandhu*), Mucukunda intended to show his humility and thus his good quality.

Text 32

*cira-prajāgara-śrānto,
nidrayāpahatendriyaḥ,
śāye 'smīn vijane kāmāṁ,
kenāpy utthāpito 'dhunā*

I was fatigued after remaining awake for a long time, and my senses were overwhelmed by sleep. Thus I slept comfortably here in this solitary place until, just now, someone woke me.

Text 33

*so 'pi bhasmī-kṛto nūnam,
ātmīyenaiva pāpmanā,
anantaram bhavān śrīmāl,
lakṣito 'mitra-śāsanaḥ*

The man who woke me was burned to ashes by the reaction of his sins. Just then I saw You, possessing a glorious appearance and the power to chastise Your enemies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Mucukunda said, “I consider You the chastiser of enemies. Through me, You destroyed that foolish barbarian.”

Text 34

*tejasā te 'viśahyeṇa,
bhūri draṣṭum na śaknumaḥ,
hataujasā mahā-bhāga,
mānanīyo 'si dehinām*

Your unbearably brilliant effulgence overwhelms our strength, and thus we cannot fix our gaze upon You. O exalted one, You are to be honored by all embodied beings.

Text 35

*evaṁ sambhāṣito rājñā,
bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ,
pratyāha prahasan vāṇyā,
megha-nāda-gabhīrayā*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus addressed by the King, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, origin of all creation, smiled and then replied to him in a voice as deep as the rumbling of clouds.

Text 36

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
janma-karmābhidhānāni,
santi me 'ṅga sahasraśaḥ,
na śakyante 'nusāṅkhyātum,
anantatvān mayāpi hi*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear friend, I have taken thousands of births, lived thousands of lives and accepted thousands of names. In fact My births, activities and names are limitless, and thus even I cannot count them.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Though Mucukunda is completely devoid of pride, he showed his position in order to hear My words. Therefore, although I am also prideless, I will now pronounce My own superiority in accordance with My words: ‘As they surrender to Me, I reward them accordingly.’” Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa spoke this verse.

Text 37

*kvacid rajāṁsi vimame,
pārthivāny uru-janmabhiḥ,
guṇa-karmābhidhānāni,
na me janmāni karhicit*

After many lifetimes someone might count the dust particles on the earth, but no one can ever finish counting My qualities, activities, names and births.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone may count (*vimame*) all the

particles of dust on the earth.

Text 38

*kāla-trayopapannāni,
janma-karmāṇi me nṛpa,
anukramanto naivāntam,
gacchanti paramarṣayah*

O King, the greatest sages enumerate My births and activities, which take place throughout the three phases of time, but never do they reach the end of them.

Texts 39–40

*tathāpy adyatanāny aṅga,
śṛnuṣva gadato mama,
vijñāpito viriñcena,
purāhaṁ dharmā-guptaye,
bhūmer bhārāyamāṅānām,
asurānām kṣayāya ca,
avatīrṇo yadu-kule,
grha ānakadundubheḥ,
vadanti vāsudeveti,
vasudeva-sutaṁ hi mām*

Nonetheless, O friend, I will tell you about My current birth, name and activities. Kindly hear. Some time ago, Lord Brahmā requested Me to protect religious principles and destroy the demons who

were burdening the earth. Thus I descended in the Yadu dynasty, in the home of Ānakadundubhi. Indeed, because I am the son of Vasudeva, people call Me Vāsudeva.

Text 41

*kālanemir hataḥ kamsaḥ,
pralambādyāś ca sad-dviṣaḥ,
ayaṁ ca yavano dagdho,
rājāṁs te tigma-cakṣuṣā*

I have killed Kālanemi, reborn as Kamsa, as well as Pralamba and other enemies of the pious. And now, O King, this barbarian has been burnt to ashes by your piercing glance.

Text 42

*so 'haṁ tavānugrahārtham,
guhām etām upāgataḥ,
prārthitaḥ pracuram pūrvam,
tvayāham bhakta-vatsalaḥ*

Since in the past you repeatedly prayed to Me, I have personally come to this cave to show you mercy, for I am affectionately inclined to My devotees.

Text 43

*varān vṛṇīṣva rājarṣe,
sarvān kāmān dadāmi te,
mām prasanno janaḥ kaścīn,
na bhūyo 'rhati śocitum*

Now choose some benedictions from Me, O saintly King. I will fulfill all your desires. One who has satisfied Me need never again lament.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: We lament when we feel incomplete, when we have lost something or when we fail to achieve something desirable. In this verse Kṛṣṇa reassures his devotee, “The person who has satisfied Me does not have to lament. The benedictions given by others are perishable, and therefore the benefactor laments when the boon disappears. But for one who surrenders to Me, I give benedictions which are imperishable, and therefore he need not lament.”

Text 44

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity uktas taṁ praṇamyāha,
mucukundo mudānvitah,
jñātvā nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ,
garga-vākyam anusmaran*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Mucukunda bowed down to the Lord when he heard this. Remembering the words of the sage Garga, he joyfully recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Lord, Nārāyaṇa. The King then addressed Him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Remembering the words of the ancient sage Garga, “In the twenty-eighth millennium Kṛṣṇa will appear and become visible to you”, Mucukunda recognized Kṛṣṇa, bowed to Him and spoke.

Text 45

*śrī-mucukunda uvāca,
vimohito 'yaṁ jana īśa māyayā,
tvadīyayā tvām na bhajaty anartha-drk,
sukhāya duḥkha-prabhaveṣu sajjate,
grheṣu yoṣit puruṣaś ca vañcitaḥ*

Śrī Mucukunda said: O Lord, the people of this world, both men and women, are bewildered by Your illusory energy. Unaware of their real benefit, they do not worship You but instead seek happiness by entangling themselves in family affairs, which are actually sources of misery.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: That a person rejects Your devotional service and instead accepts the objects of lust is the power of Your *maya*. Mucukunda expresses this idea here. Mucukunda said, “Both men and women, bewildered by Your *maya*, become cheated and engage in family life.”

Text 46

*labdhvā jano durlabham atra mānuṣaṁ,
kathañcid avyaṅgam ayatnato 'nagha,
pādāravindaṁ na bhajaty asan-matir,
grhāndha-kūpe patito yathā paśuḥ*

That person has an impure mind who, despite having somehow or other automatically obtained the rare and highly evolved human form of life, does not worship Your lotus feet. Like an animal that has fallen into a blind well, such a person has fallen into the darkness of a material home.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just see how an unintelligent fool sells a touchstone for a few pennies. That is the essence of this verse. Mucukunda said, “Furthermore, material sense gratification is obtainable even among the hogs and beasts. Worship of the Supreme Lord, however, can only be attained in a human birth. Thus, if after obtaining the human form of life one fails to worship You, he is most foolish. Here in this field of fruitive work man has a highly evolved form of body (*avyaṅgam*). But if his mentality is absorbed in temporary sense pleasures and he is fallen into the blind well of household life, he is no better than an animal that falls into a blind well due to his greed for grass.”

Text 47

*mamaiṣa kālo 'jita niṣphalo gato,
rājya-śriyonnaddha-madasya bhū-pateḥ,
martyātma-buddheḥ suta-dāra-kośa-bhūṣv,
āsajjamānasya duranta-cintayā*

I have wasted all this time, O unconquerable one, becoming more and more intoxicated by my domain and opulence as an earthly king. Misidentifying the mortal body as the self, becoming attached to children, wives, treasury and land, I suffered endless anxiety.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Mucukunda said, “That person whom I am condemning is actually myself. I think of the mortal body as the self (*martyātma-buddheḥ*).”

Text 48

*kalevare 'smin ghaṭa-kudya-sannibhe,
nirūḍha-māno nara-deva ity aham,
vr̥to rathebhāśva-padāty-anīkapair,
gām paryaṭams tvāgaṇayan su-durmadaḥ*

With deep arrogance I took myself to be the body, which is a material object like a pot or a wall. Thinking myself a god among men, I traveled the earth surrounded by my charioteers, elephants, cavalry, foot soldiers and generals, disregarding You in my deluding pride.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Mucukunda said, “Due to identifying with this body, which is like a pot or wall (*kudya*), I have become badly intoxicated. I was very attached to material things, and thus I wasted all my time uselessly.”

Text 49

*pramattam uccair itikṛtya-cintayā,
pravṛddha-lobham viṣayeṣu lālasam,
tvam apramattaḥ sahasābhipadyase,
kṣul-lelihāno 'hir ivākhum antakaḥ*

A man obsessed with thoughts of what he thinks needs to be done,

intensely greedy, and delighting in sense enjoyment is suddenly confronted by You, who are ever alert. Like a hungry snake licking its fangs before a mouse, You appear before him as death.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In the form of time You devour those who do not worship You. That is the meaning of this verse. Mucukunda said, “Because of attachment to sense gratification, one becomes thoroughly deluded and inattentive (*pramattam*), and thus ignores You. Thinking that he must do certain actions in the world, one develops ever-increasing greed. Even though his desires are frustrated, he is still eager for those objects. You remain fully attentive (*apramattaḥ*) as time however, and confront that person as death (*antakaḥ*) to take away everything. As time You act just like a snake, licking its fangs out of hunger before overcoming a mouse.”

Text 50

*purā rathair hema-pariṣkṛtaiś caran,
matam-gajair vā nara-deva-samjñitaiḥ,
sa eva kālena duratyayena te,
kalevaro viṭ-kṛmi-bhasma-samjñitaiḥ*

The body that at first rides high on fierce elephants or chariots adorned with gold and is known by the name “king” is later, by Your invincible power of time, called “feces,” “worms,” or “ashes.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse describes how time seizes the body. Although one may be a famous king wandering about on a chariot or an elephant, he is eventually devoured by unavoidable death, and then takes the disgusting form of stool, worms or ashes.

Text 51

*nirjitya dik-cakram abhūta-vigraho,
varāsana-sthaḥ sama-rāja-vanditaḥ,
grheṣu maithunya-sukheṣu yoṣitām,
krīḍā-mṛgaḥ pūruṣa īśa nīyate*

Having conquered the entire circle of directions and being thus free of conflict, a man sits on a splendid throne, receiving praise from leaders who were once his equals. But when he enters the women’s chambers, where sex pleasure is found, he is led about like a pet animal, O Lord.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The previous verse stated that a person who achieves kingly status among his peers ends up as stool and worms by the force of time at the end of his life. This verse describes that even while living a king becomes a mere plaything in the hands of women. Having conquered his enemies, the king is worshiped by those who were once his equals. But in the private chambers of the queen, he is made to move about like a pet animal for sexual pleasure.

Text 52

*karoti karmāṇi tapaḥ-suniṣṭhito,
nivṛtta-bhogas tad-apekṣayādadat,
punaś ca bhūyāsam ahaṁ sva-rāḍ iti,
pravṛddha-tarṣo na sukhāya kalpate*

A king who desires even greater power than he already has strictly performs his duties, carefully practicing austerity and forgoing sense enjoyment. But he whose urges are so rampant, thinking “I

am independent and supreme,” cannot attain happiness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The man who does not worship the Lord is condemned for his enjoyment of worldly pleasures. But the same man is also condemned even when he does not have sense gratification, as stated in this verse. Such a man is fixed in austerities such as sleeping on the ground and observing celibacy with the urge to become an even more powerful king, or even Indra himself.

Text 53

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej,
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ,
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau,
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate matiḥ*

When the material life of a wandering soul has ceased, O Acyuta, he may attain the association of Your devotees. And when he associates with them, there awakens in him devotion unto You, who are the goal of the devotees and the Lord of all causes and their effects.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: It may be questioned, “When will *bhakti*, which destroys all suffering and bestows all bliss, appear? This question is answered in this verse.

Mucukunda said, “O Acyuta, when a wandering spirit soul’s bondage in material existence is destroyed (*bhavāpavargaḥ*), he gets the association of merciful *sadhus* (*sat-saṅgamaḥ*).”

The word *tadaiva* means then and only then. In this verse “when” (*yarhi*) and “then” (*tadā*) are spoken in regard to a broad conception of time. In a more accurate description of time, it would be more proper to say that saintly association comes first and cessation of material existence comes afterwards, since they are respectively the cause and

the effect (*kāraṇa-kāryayoḥ*). However, because the effect happens so quickly, the effect is mentioned before the cause to emphasize the quickness. This is an example of the fourth type of extreme statement known as *atiśayokti*. A statement in which the logical order of a cause and its effect is reversed should be understood as *atiśayokti*, emphasis by extreme assertion.

The *Vaiṣṇava-tosani* explains the word *sad gatau* (goal of the saintly): “In Him whose shelter are the devotees. This is shown in such phrases as *svecchā-mayasya*, ‘I am subordinate to My devotees.’ (SB 10.14.2) Actually everything Kṛṣṇa does is initiated by the desire of His devotees. Therefore His mercy is also dependent on the saintly devotees. In the phrase *sad-gatau*, it is implied that Kṛṣṇa is not the *gati* (goal) of those who are *asat* (temporary materialists). This means that Kṛṣṇa’s mercy can be received only when a succession of predecessor saints has been established. It did not arise all by itself some time in the past. This

point is confirmed in the *Srīmad Bhagavatam* 10.2.31:

*svayaṁ samuttīrya sudustaraṁ dyuman, bhavārṇavaṁ bhīmam
adabhra-sauhrdāḥ bhavat-padāmbhoruḥa-nāvam atra te, nidhāya
yātāḥ sad-anugraho bhavān*

“O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [*vāñchā-kalpataru*]. When *ācāryas* completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them.”

Text 54

*manye mamānugraha īśa te kṛto,
rājyānubandhāpagamo yadr̥cchayā,
yaḥ prārthyate sādhubhir eka-caryayā,*

vanam vivikṣadbhir akhaṇḍa-bhūmi-paiḥ

My Lord, I think You have shown me mercy, since my attachment to my kingdom has spontaneously ceased. Such freedom is prayed for by saintly rulers of vast empires who desire to enter the forest for a life of solitude.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda said, “That I unexpectedly gave up attachment to my kingdom and other things after association with Your devotees is certainly Your mercy.” This is expressed in this verse.

Vṛtrāsura said:

traī-varḡikāyāsa-vighātam asmat, patir vidhatte puruṣasya śakra, tato 'numeyo bhagavat-prasādo, yo durlabho 'kiñcana-gocarō 'nyaiḥ

“O Indra, my master the Lord destroys all attempts at *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* (religion, economic development and sense gratification) for His devotees. By that one can infer His mercy. Such mercy is only available to the selfless devotees of the Lord. It cannot be attained by those attached to material energy.” (SB 6.11.23)

Mucukunda prayed, “Saintly kings pray for the severing of attachment to family and kingdom. When it happens they travel alone for the sake of achieving devotional service in the form of uninterrupted meditation upon You.”

Text 55

*na kāmāye 'nyam tava pāda-sevanād,
akiñcana-prārthyatamād varam vibho,
ārādhyā kas tvām hy apavarga-dam hare,
vṛñīta āryo varam ātma-bandhanam*

O all-powerful one, I desire no boon other than service to Your lotus feet, the boon most eagerly sought by those free of material desire. O Hari, what enlightened person who worships You, the giver of liberation, would choose a boon that causes his own bondage?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Mucukunda replies to Kṛṣṇa’s offer to accept a benediction: “Those who want nothing material (*akincana*) pray for *bhakti*. But more worthy of prayer is *prema*, and the most worthy of prayer is the service of Your lotus feet. Thus I do not want liberation, what to speak of any other boon.”

The phrase *apavarga-dam* means the bestower of *bhakti-yoga*, since devotion is referred to by the term *apavarga* in the Fifth Canto. Mucukunda said, “What discriminating person would chose some ordinary material benediction leading to his own bondage, even if You were willing to grant it? I, however, am not interested even in liberation, so why would I choose such a thing?”

A second meaning: “Even one who worships You to get liberation, if he is intelligent, would he accept Your boons which create bondage to the world again? What to speak then of Your devotee?”

Text 56

*tasmād visrjyāśiṣa īśa sarvato,
rajas-tamaḥ-sattva-guṇānubandhanāḥ,
nirañjanam nirguṇam advayaṁ param,
tvām jñāpti-mātram puruṣam vrajāmy aham*

Therefore, O Lord, having put aside all objects of material desire, which are bound to the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness, I am approaching You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for shelter. You are not covered by mundane designations; rather, You are the Supreme Absolute Truth, full in pure knowledge and

transcendental to the material modes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Mucukunda makes it clear in this verse that he himself has no desire for anything material.

Mucukunda said, “I do not want any (*sarvataḥ*) of the fruits connected with the modes of passion, ignorance and goodness. I reject even liberation, which is mixed up with the mode of goodness because it is based on knowledge. I pray only for the service of Your lotus feet, which is transcendental to all the modes. It is said in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* that devotional service is beyond the three modes. Therefore, I am approaching (*vrajāmi*) You, the Supreme Person.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “But some say that My form as a person is Brahman covered by *māyā*.”

Mucukunda said, “No, You are without any material coverings (*nirāñjanam*) and completely transcendental to the material modes (*nirguṇa*)!”

Kṛṣṇa: “Yes, I may be without *guṇas*. But some people say that My present body is made of the *guṇas*.”

Mucukunda: “You and Your body are not different (*advayam*); rather Your body is You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Then what is the real identity of My body?”

Mucukunda: “It is made of pure knowledge (*cit-svarūpa-jñāpti-mātram*).”

Another meaning: “Because the world is made of Your energy it is nondifferent from You, and in that sense You are *advayam*. By Your internal energy (*svarūpa-sakti*) You exist in a transcendental body of pure knowledge (*jñāpti-mātram*).”

Text 57

*ciram iha vṛjinārtas tapyamāno 'nutāpair,
avitr̥ṣa-ṣaḍ-amitro 'labdha-śāntiḥ kathañcit,*

*śaraṇa-da samuṇetas tvat-padābjaṃ parātman,
abhayaṃ ṛtam aśokaṃ pāhi māpannam īśa*

For so long I have been pained by troubles in this world and have been burning with lamentation. My six enemies are never satiated, and I can find no peace. Therefore, O giver of shelter, O Supreme Soul, please protect me. O Lord, in the midst of danger I have by good fortune approached Your lotus feet, which are the truth and which thus make one fearless and free of sorrow.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Go ahead and enjoy sense gratification, and when that is finished I will personally give You the service of My feet.”

Fearing such enticement from Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda clasps the Lord’s feet and offers this prayer: “I have been pained by such disturbances as the eagerness of inimical opponents who wanted to defeat me in battle. Hari! Hari! I am burning with repentance. For all this time I have not worshiped You. There is no cessation of the desire for enjoyment of the six senses of eye, ear, nose tongue and skin and mind. Neither do I find any peace by my own intelligence nor by the knowledge given by others. If sense gratification is given to me, even if You give it, I will again become entangled like this, because that is the nature of material enjoyment. Therefore do not give that enjoyment!

“O Supersoul, who resides in everyone and therefore knows everything, I have taken shelter of Your lotus feet. The fear of enemies and disease comes along with winning the treasures of the earth. The treasures of heaven include impermanence, and the treasure of merging in Brahman cheats one of the service of Your lotus feet. The treasure of Your feet, however, awards fearlessness, freedom from lamentation and eternal life in Your loving service. Therefore please protect me, who am afflicted with calamity, and keep me sheltered at Your lotus feet.”

Text 58

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
sārvabhauma mahā-rāja,
matis te vimalorjitā,
varaiḥ pralobhitasyāpi,
na kāmair vihatā yataḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: O emperor, great ruler, your mind is pure and potent. Though I enticed You with benedictions, your mind was not overcome by material desires.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Your intelligence is strong (*urjjita*), not moving here and there.”

Text 59

*pralobhito varair yat tvam,
apramādāya viddhi tat,
na dhīr ekānta-bhaktānām,
āśīrbhir bhidyate kvacit*

Understand that I enticed you with benedictions just to prove that you would not be deceived. The intelligence of My unalloyed devotees is never diverted by material blessings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Know that by offering you benedictions, I am showing other worshipers how you will not be bewildered (*apramadaya*) by such things.” Or another meaning is: “You will not be distracted because the intelligence of My devotee is never attracted to material enjoyment.”

Text 60

*yuñjānānām abhaktānām,
prāṇāyāmādibhir manaḥ,
akṣīṇa-vāsanam rājan,
drśyate punar utthitam*

The minds of nondevotees who engage in such practices as prāṇāyama are not fully cleansed of material desires. Thus, O King, material desires are again seen to arise in their minds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those who worship other objects are attracted to material enjoyment. That is illustrated in this verse. For the nondevotee *jnanis* and *yogis* practicing *pranayama*, *sama* and *dama* attraction to material enjoyment awakens (*utthitam*) again.

Text 61

*vicarasva mahīm kāmam,
mayy āveśita-mānasaḥ,
astv evam nityadā tubhyaṁ,
bhaktir mayy anapāyinī*

Wander this earth at will, with your mind fixed on Me. May you always possess such unfailing devotion for Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I have already given you pure *bhakti*, but today I am giving it to you again.”

Text 62

*kṣātra-dharma-sthito jantūn,
nyavadhīr mṛgayādibhiḥ,
samāhitas tat tapasā,
jahy agham mad-upāśritaḥ*

Because you followed the principles of a kṣatriya, you killed living beings while hunting and performing other duties. You must vanquish the sins thus incurred by carefully executing penances while remaining surrendered to Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda thought, “Alas, alas, Kṛṣṇa wants to separate me from His association from now on. This can’t be! It just can’t be!”

Noticing Mucukunda’s great anxiety, Kṛṣṇa then thought as follows: “In this incarnation, he should not associate with Me directly. All the personal assistants in My pastimes have taken birth in Dvaparayuga such as Uddhava, Akrura, Arjuna and Yudhisthira. Mucukunda, however, is extremely old having taken birth at the very beginning of this *manvantara*. When people see him they will laugh and say, ‘Aha, who is this very tall and stout man who is such a poor match for the Lord?’

“Even now, during the pastime of fleeing from Jarasandha, as well as in later pastimes such as the kidnapping of Rukmini, it will not be at all fitting for this person to be associated with Me while I am fighting the likes of Salva and others. He will take these opponents of Mine and crush them in hands like mosquitoes. What excuse can I make up, therefore, to separate him from My association?”

After thinking like this, Kṛṣṇa decided that the only means to accomplish this would be to speak some false words in order to mislead Mucukunda. Thus He spoke this verse.

Text 63

*janmany anantare rājan,
sarva-bhūta-suhṛttamaḥ,
bhūtvā dvija-varas tvaṁ vai,
mām upaiṣyasi kevalam*

O King, in your very next life you will become an excellent brāhmaṇa, the greatest well-wisher of all creatures, and certainly come to Me alone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mucukunda asks, “When will I become Your associate?”

Kṛṣṇa answers in this verse. “After leaving this body you will go to My abode in Vaikuntha. I give liberation and also residence in Vaikuntha even to My enemies in this incarnation, so what then to speak of an exalted devotee like you? In My pastimes in a future incarnation (*janmany anantare*) you will associate with Me as an essential participant. In your very next birth you will be the best friend of all living entities (*sarva-bhūta-suhṛttamaḥ*). At that time you and I will act for their benefit by giving them transcendental knowledge as suits the circumstances. Becoming a universally respected and learned *brahmana* (*dvija-vara*), you will attain Me alone due to your lack of possessiveness and mood of renunciation. In other words, you will remain in My association.”

Chapter Fifty-two: Rukmiṇī's Message to Lord Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*rī-śuka uvāca,
itthaṁ so 'nagrahīto 'nga,
kṛṣṇenekṣvāku nandanah,
taṁ parikramya sannamya,
niścakrāma guhā-mukhāt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: My dear King, thus graced by Lord Kṛṣṇa, Mucukunda circumambulated Him and bowed down to Him. Then Mucukunda, the beloved descendant of Ikṣvāku, exited through the mouth of the cave.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes how Kṛṣṇa became invisible to His enemies, caused a mountain to be burned and went to Dvārakā. Kṛṣṇa then heard the message of Rukmiṇī from the mouth of a *brāhmaṇa* and accepted her as His wife.

Text 2

*saṁvīksya kṣullakān martyān,
paśūn vīrud-vanaspatīn,
matvā kali-yugaṁ prāptam,
jagāma diśam uttarām*

Seeing that the size of all the human beings, animals, trees and

plants was severely reduced, and thus realizing that the age of Kali was at hand, Mucukunda left for the north.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that Kali-yuga had almost arrived (*kali-yugam prāptam*), Mucukunda departed for the North.

Text 3

*tapaḥ-śraddhā-yuto dhīro,
niḥsaṅgo mukta-saṁśayaḥ,
samādhāya manaḥ kṛṣṇe,
prāviśad gandhamādanam*

The sober King, beyond material association and free of doubt, was convinced of the value of austerity. Absorbing his mind in Lord Kṛṣṇa, he came to Gandhamādana Mountain.

Text 4

*badary-āśramam āsādyā,
nara-nārāyaṇālayam,
sarva-dvandva-sahaḥ śāntas,
tapasārādhayad dharim*

There he arrived at Badarikāśrama, the abode of Lord Nara-Nārāyaṇa, where, remaining tolerant of all dualities, he peacefully worshiped the Supreme Lord Hari by performing severe austerities.

Text 5

*bhagavān punar āvrajya,
purīm yavana-veṣṭitām,
hatvā mleccha-balaṁ ninye,
tadīyaṁ dvārakām dhanam*

The Lord returned to Mathurā, which was still surrounded by Yavanas. Then He destroyed the army of barbarians and began taking their valuables to Dvārakā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa annihilated the enemy army, and then took (*ninye*) the booty to Dvaraka.

Text 6

*nīyamāne dhane gobhir,
nṛbhiś cācyuta-coditaiḥ,
ājagāma jarāsandhas,
trayo-vimśaty-anīka-paḥ*

As the wealth was being carried by oxen and men under Lord Kṛṣṇa's direction, Jarāsandha appeared at the head of twenty-three armies.

Text 7

vilokya vega-rabhasaṁ,

*ripu-sainyasya mādhavau,
manuṣya-ceṣṭām āpannau,
rājan dudruvatur drutam*

O King, seeing the fierce waves of the enemy’s army, the two Mādhavas, imitating human behavior, ran swiftly away.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Behaving like human beings, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama quickly fled upon seeing the great speed (*vega rabhasam*) of the advancing enemy troops.

Text 8

*vihāya vittam pracuram,
abhītau bhīru-bhīta-vat,
padbhyām padma-palāsābhyām,
celatur bahu-yojanam*

Abandoning the abundant riches, fearless but feigning fear, They went many yojanas on Their lotuslike feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the nature of Their “assuming the behavior of humans” (*manuṣya-ceṣṭām āpannau*). This is not the ultimate *siddhānta* of Kṛṣṇa-Balarama’s fleeing. Even though They exhibit human behavior, in many instances They exhibit Their omniscience and omnipotence. Neither can the explanation be given that this was some immature display due to *prema*, since none of Their loving devotees were present there. Nor can it be explained that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were simply pretending to be afraid. Sri Uddhava describes the inconceivable nature of Sri Kṛṣṇa in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (SB 3.4.16):

*karmāṇy anīhasya bhavo 'bhavasya te, durgāśrayo 'thāri-bhayāt
palāyanam kālātmano yat pramadā-yutāśrayaḥ, svātman-rateḥ khidyati
dhīr vidām iha*

“Although the Supreme Personality of Godhead has nothing to do, He nevertheless acts; although He is always unborn, He nevertheless takes birth; although He is time, fearful to everyone, He flees Mathurā in fear of His enemy to take shelter in a fort; and although He is self-sufficient, He marries 16,000 women.” Though situated in fearlessness (*abhītau*), Kṛṣṇa and Balarama decided to show fear by acting like fearful persons (*bhīru bhītavat*). This expresses a contradiction.

Text 9

*palāyamānau tau dṛṣṭvā,
māgadhaḥ prahasanaḥ balī,
anvadhāvad rathānīkair,
īśayor apramāṇa-vit*

When he saw Them fleeing, powerful Jarāsandha laughed loudly and then pursued Them with charioteers and foot soldiers. He could not understand the exalted position of the two Lords.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Jarasandha was unaware of Their greatness (*apramāṇa-vit*), so he foolishly pursued Kṛṣṇa and Balarama.

Text 10

*pradrutya dūraṁ saṁśrāntau,
tuṅgaṁ āruhatām girim,
pravaraṣaṇākhyam bhagavān,
nityadā yatra varaṣati*

Apparently exhausted after fleeing a long distance, the two Lords climbed a high mountain named Pravarṣaṇa, upon which Lord Indra showers incessant rain.

Text 11

*girau nilīnāv ājñāya,
nādhigamya padaṁ nr̥pa,
dadāha girim edhobhiḥ,
samantād agnim utsrjan*

Although he knew They were hiding on the mountain, Jarāsandha could find no trace of Them. Therefore, O King, he placed firewood on all sides and set the mountain ablaze.

Text 12

*tata utpatya tarasā,
dahyamāna-taṭād ubhau,
daśaika-yojanāt tuṅgān,
nipetatur adho bhuvi*

The two of Them then suddenly jumped from the burning mountain, which was eleven yojanas high, and fell to the ground.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama jumped off a

mountain (*tatah*), which was eleven *yojanas* (88 miles) high, and landed at a distant place beyond the location of Jarasandha's troops.

Text 13

*alaksyamāṇau ripuṇā,
sānugena yadūttamau,
sva-puraṁ punar āyātau,
samudra-parikhāṁ nṛpa*

Unseen by Their opponent or his followers, O King, those two most exalted Yadus returned to Their city of Dvārakā, which had the ocean as a protective moat.

Text 14

*so 'pi dagdhāv iti mṛṣā,
manvāno bala-keśavau,
balam ākṛṣya su-mahan,
magadhān māgadho yayau*

Jarāsandha, moreover, mistakenly thought that Balarāma and Keśava had burned to death in the fire. Thus he withdrew his vast military force and returned to the Magadha kingdom.

Text 15

*ānartādhīpatiḥ śrīmān,
raivato raivatīm sutām,
brahmaṇā coditaḥ prādād,
balāyeti puroditam*

As ordered by Lord Brahmā, Raivata, the opulent ruler of Ānarta, gave Lord Balarāma his daughter Raivatī in marriage. This has already been discussed.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Before describing Kṛṣṇa’s marriage, a brief mention is made of Baladeva’s marriage to Revati, the daughter of Raivata or Kakudmi. This marriage was alluded to in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* 9.3.33-36.

Texts 16–17

*bhagavān api govinda,
upayeme kurūdvaha,
vaidarbhīm bhīṣmaka-sutām,
śriyo mātrām svayam-vare,
pramathya tarasā rājñāḥ,
śālvādīmś caidyā-pakṣa-gān,
paśyatām sarva-lokānām,
tārksya-putraḥ sudhām iva*

O hero among the Kurus, the Supreme Lord Himself, Govinda, married Bhīṣmaka’s daughter, Vaidarbhī, who was a direct expansion of the goddess of fortune. The Lord did this by her desire, and in the process He beat down Śālva and other kings who took Śīśupāla’s side. Indeed, as everyone watched, Śrī Kṛṣṇa took Rukmiṇī just as Garuḍa boldly stole nectar from the demigods.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa married Rukmini, whose subtle, essential and original form (*matram:sūkṣma-svarūpam*) is Lakṣmi (*sriyah*), just as sound is the subtle quality of ether (*tan matra*). Since Kṛṣṇa is *svayam bhagavan*, the original Personality of Godhead, it is only fitting that He married Rukmini, the original goddess of fortune.

Text 18

*śrī-rājovāca,
bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutām,
rukmiṇīm rucirānanām,
rākṣasena vidhānena,
upayema iti śrutam*

King Parīkṣit said: The Supreme Lord married Rukmiṇī, the beautiful-faced daughter of Bhīṣmaka, in the Rākṣasa style—or so I have heard.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *Smṛti* says: *rākṣaso yuddha-haraṇāt*, “A Rākṣasa marriage takes place when the bride is stolen from one’s rival suitors by force.” Similarly, Sukadeva Gosvami himself has already said, *rājñah pramathya*: Kṛṣṇa forcefully subdued the opposing kings to kidnap Rukmiṇī (verse 17).

Text 19

*bhagavan śrotum icchāmi,
kṛṣṇasyāmita-tejasaḥ,
yathā māgadha-śālvādīn,
jītvā kanyām upāharat*

My lord, I wish to hear how the immeasurably powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa took away His bride while defeating such kings as Māgadha and Sālva.

Text 20

*brahman kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ puṇyā,
mādhvīr loka-malāpahāḥ,
ko nu tṛpyeta śṛṇvānaḥ,
śruta-jñō nitya-nūtanāḥ*

What experienced listener, O brāhmaṇa, could ever grow satiated while listening to the pious, charming and ever-fresh topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which cleanse away the world’s contamination?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Who could be satiated hearing (*sṛnavana*) the sweet (*madhvi: madhurāḥ*) topics of Kṛṣṇa?”

Text 21

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
rājāsīd bhīṣmako nāma,
vidarbhādhipatir mahān,
tasya pancābhavan putrāḥ,
kanyaikā ca varānanā*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: There was a king named Bhīṣmaka, the powerful ruler of Vidarbha. He had five sons and one daughter of lovely countenance.

Text 22

*rukmy agrajo rukmaratho,
rukmaḃāhur anantaraḥ,
rukmakeśo rukmamālī,
rukmiṇy eṣā svasā satī*

Rukmī was the first-born son, followed by Rukmaratha, Rukmaḃāhu, Rukmakeśa and Rukmamālī. Their sister was the exalted Rukmiṇī.

Text 23

*sopaśrutya mukundasya,
rūpa-vīrya-guṇa-śriyaḥ,
gṛhāgatair gīyamānās,
taṁ mene sadṛśaṁ patim*

Hearing of the beauty, prowess, transcendental character and opulence of Mukunda from visitors to the palace who sang His praises, Rukmiṇī decided that He would be the perfect husband for her.

Text 24

*tām buddhi-lakṣaṇaudārya-
rūpa-śīla-guṇāśrayām,
kṛṣṇaś ca sadṛśīm bhāryām,
samudvoḍhum mano dadhe*

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Rukmiṇī possessed intelligence, auspicious bodily markings, beauty, proper behavior and all other good qualities. Concluding that she would be an ideal wife for Him, He made up His mind to marry her.

Text 25

*bandhūnām icchatām dātum,
kṛṣṇāya bhaginīm nrpa,
tato nivārya kṛṣṇa-dvid,
rukmi caidyam amanyata*

Because Rukmī envied the Lord, O King, he forbade his family members to give his sister to Kṛṣṇa, although they wanted to. Instead, Rukmī decided to give Rukmiṇī to Śiśupāla.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmi disregarded his parents and other relatives, who wanted to give his sister Rukmini to Kṛṣṇa in marriage. He took it upon himself to prevent her from marrying Kṛṣṇa by giving her to Sisupala instead.

Text 26

*tad avetyāsitāpāṅgī,
vaidarbhī durmanā bhṛśam,
vicintyāptaṁ dvijaṁ kañcit,
kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇod drutam*

Dark-eyed Vaidarbhī was aware of this plan, and it deeply upset her. Analyzing the situation, she quickly sent a trustworthy brāhmaṇa to Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini sent a *brahmana* to bring Kṛṣṇa there.

Text 27

*dvārakām sa samabhyetya,
pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ,
apaśyad ādyaṁ puruṣam,
āsīnam kāñcanāsane*

Upon reaching Dvārakā, the brāhmaṇa was brought inside by the gatekeepers and saw the primeval Personality of Godhead sitting on a golden throne.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gatekeepers (*pratīhāraiḥ*) brought the *brahmana* inside the palace.

Text 28

*dr̥ṣṭvā brahmaṇya-devas tam,
avaruhya nijāsanāt,
upaveśyārhayām cakre,
yathātmānam divaukaśaḥ*

Seeing the brāhmaṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the brāhmaṇas, came down from His throne and seated him. Then the Lord worshiped him just as He Himself is worshiped by the demigods.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa worshiped the *brahmana* just as the demigods worship Him (*ātmānam:svam*).

Text 29

*taṁ bhuktavantam viśrāntam,
upagamya satām gatih,
pāninābhimṛśan pādāv,
avyagras tam apr̥cchata*

After the brāhmaṇa had eaten and rested, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the goal of saintly devotees, came forward, and while massaging the brāhmaṇa's feet with His own hands, He patiently questioned him as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa appeared calm (*avyagrah*), though He was anxious over the marriage. While massaging (*abhimṛśan*) the *brahmana's* feet, Kṛṣṇa inquired from him.

Text 30

*kaccid dvija-vara-śreṣṭha,
dharmas te vṛddha-sammataḥ,
vartate nāti-kṛcchreṇa,
santuṣṭa-manasaḥ sadā*

[The Supreme Lord said:] O best of exalted brāhmaṇas, are your religious practices, sanctioned by senior authorities, proceeding without great difficulty? Is your mind always fully satisfied?

Text 31

*santuṣṭo yarhi varteta,
brāhmaṇo yena kenacit,
ahīyamānaḥ svad dharmāt,
sa hy asyākhila-kāma-dhuk*

When a brāhmaṇa is satisfied with whatever comes his way and does not fall away from his religious duties, those very religious principles become his desire cow, fulfilling all his wishes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: If a *brahmana* is unwavering in his *dharma* (*ahīyamānaḥ svad dharmāt*), that *dharma* (*sah*) yields all desires.

Text 32

*asantuṣṭo 'sakraḥ lokān,
āpnoty api sureśvaraḥ,
akiñcano 'pi santuṣṭaḥ,*

śete sarvāṅga-vijvaraḥ

An unsatisfied brāhmaṇa wanders restlessly from one planet to another, even if he becomes King of heaven. But a satisfied brāhmaṇa, though he may possess nothing, rests peacefully, all his limbs free of distress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The unsatisfied *brahmana* wanders from planet to planet but never exhausts his thirst for enjoyment, even if he becomes Indra. There is an alternate reading: Even though he becomes Indra, he does not attain the higher worlds. In other words, even though attaining the supreme planets, he suffers as if not having attained them.

Text 33

*viprān sva-lābha-santuṣṭān,
sādhūn bhūta-suhrttamān,
nirahaṅkāriṇaḥ śāntān,
namasye śirasāsakṛt*

I repeatedly bow My head in respect to those brāhmaṇas who are satisfied with their lot. Saintly, prideless and peaceful, they are the best well-wishers of all living beings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A genuine *brahmana* is satisfied with whatever he obtains by gathering abandoned grains in the fields (*uñchavṛtti*). He does not yearn for anything else.

Text 34

*kaccid vaḥ kuśalam brahman,
rājato yasya hi prajāḥ,
sukham vasanti viṣaye,
pālyamānāḥ sa me priyaḥ*

O brāhmaṇa, is your King attending to your welfare? Indeed, that king in whose country the citizens are happy and protected is very dear to Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: That king is dear to Me in whose country (*viṣaye*) the people live happily.

Text 35

*yatas tvam āgato durgam,
nistīryeha yad-icchayā,
sarvaṁ no brūhy aguhyam cet,
kiṁ kāryam karavāma te*

Whence have you come, crossing the impassable sea, and for what purpose? Explain all this to Us if it is not a secret, and tell Us what We may do for you.

Text 36

*evam samprṣṭa-sampraśno,
brāhmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinā,
līlā-grhīta-dehena,*

tasmai sarvam avarṇayat

Thus questioned by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who incarnates to perform His pastimes, the brāhmaṇa told Him everything.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If you have any questions to ask Me, please ask.” Saying this, Kṛṣṇa then questioned the *brahmana*. By the actions of His *lila-sakti* Kṛṣṇa accepts His body (*dehena*) as His own.

Text 37

śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca,
śrutvā guṇān bhuvana-sundara śṛṇvatām te,
nirviśya karṇa-vivarair harato 'ṅga-tāpam,
rūpaṃ dṛśāṃ dṛśimatām akhilārtha-lābhaṃ,
tvayy acyutāviśati cittam apatrapaṃ me

Śrī Rukmiṇī said [in her letter, as read by the brāhmaṇa]: O beauty of the worlds, having heard of Your qualities, which enter the ears of those who hear and remove their bodily distress, and having also heard of Your beauty, which fulfills all the visual desires of those who see, I have fixed my shameless mind upon You, O Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Opening the seal of the letter which Rukmini had given him after writing it in her own hand in the privacy of her room, the *brahmana* showed it to Kṛṣṇa as a token of her love. On Kṛṣṇa’s request the *brahmana* read the letter out loud.” These are the statements of Sridhara Svami.

“But how can I accept you, a king’s daughter, whom I have never seen or heard about, and who is shamelessly writing a letter to Me as her

bridegroom with the intention of having Me marry her?”

If Kṛṣṇa says this, then Rukmini answers, “Yes, this is true, You can say that. But I will express the feelings of my heart. After You have heard this You may accept me or neglect me, favor me or reject me. Nevertheless, depending on whether I obtain You or not, I will either live happily forever or else die this very day or the next. For one in my condition there is no question of fear or shame. Therefore I now speak.” Then Rukmini expressed herself in seven verses (37-43).

Rukmini said [in her letter], “O Acyuta! Hearing about Your beauty and qualities, my mind has lost all shame. I have become completely attached to You. Your beauty and qualities are the two causes of my mind’s becoming shameless, and my two ears are also its cause. Therefore both You and I are at fault. Therefore You cannot criticize me and I cannot criticize You.”

The suggestion of the word *acyuta* (infallible Kṛṣṇa) is: “O Acyuta, my mind, becoming shameless, has approached You, but You are unmoved (*acyuta*). Now I have no idea what You want to do.”

Imagining Kṛṣṇa may respond, “Other men can have attractive forms and qualities, so why do you find fault with them?”

Rukmini said, “Please do not speak like this!” Then she mentions Kṛṣṇa’s unique qualities: “Having entered the ears of attentive young women, Your wonderful qualities completely destroy all their pains, both subtle and gross. Tell me, what other man exists who has qualities like You?”

Then Rukmini characterized Kṛṣṇa’s beauty: “Your form is more sweet and attractive than the best object for people who are observant. There is an assortment of colors: blue like sapphires or blue lotuses, yellow like gold ornaments and red *kunkuma* like rubies and *bandhuli* flowers, and white like moonstone and the moon. What other man possesses such exquisite beauty in limbs, tongue, lips, nails, and other bodily parts?” Therefore Rukmini addressed Kṛṣṇa appropriately, “O beauty of the worlds! You are the most attractive and handsome person in all the material and spiritual worlds!”

Text 38

*kā tvā mukunda mahatī kula-śīla-rūpa,
vidyā-vayo-draviṇa-dhāmabhir ātma-tulyam,
dhīrā patiṃ kulavatī na vṛṇīta kanyā,
kāle nṛ-simha nara-loka-mano-'bhirāmam*

O Mukunda, You are equal only to Yourself in lineage, character, beauty, knowledge, youthfulness, wealth and influence. O lion among men, You delight the minds of all mankind. What aristocratic, sober-minded and marriageable girl of a good family would not choose You as her husband when the proper time has come?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Granted, I may be the most incomparable man in the universe, but are you the only girl in the whole universe with eyes and ears? I do not see any other maidens with such shamelessness.”

Rukmini responds to this in this verse: “O Mukunda, whose face (*mukhe*) beams with a smile like jasmine flowers (*kunda-vat*).” The word Mukunda implies the idea, “You have given me an opportunity to smile too.”

“What intelligent, sober girl, endowed with beauty and good qualities coming from a respectable family, would not choose You as her husband?” This implies that only an ugly, ill-natured and unintelligent woman of bad lineage who has not heard about You would not choose You.

“Those with good qualities accept You, who are incomparable in attributes, beauty, knowledge, youth, wealth and power. There are many young marriageable women like me who will accept You when their time comes. But now it is my time. O lion among men (*nṛ-simha*)! You are as uncontrollable as a lion! But I have no desire to control You. Your

incomparable beauty and qualities play in the minds of all humans. So what fault is there if You also reside in my mind?”

Text 39

*tan me bhavān khalu vṛtaḥ patir aṅga jāyām,
ātmārpitaś ca bhavato 'tra vibho vidhehi,
mā vīra-bhāgam abhimarśatu caidya ārād,
gomāyuvan mṛga-pater balim ambujākṣa*

Therefore, my dear Lord, I have chosen You as my husband, and I surrender myself to You. Please come swiftly, O almighty one, and make me Your wife. My dear lotus-eyed Lord, let Śīsupāla never touch the hero's portion like a jackal stealing the property of a lion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “Since I am so attracted to You, I therefore have chosen You as my husband. It is not just now, but from the beginning I have selected only You. Both my body and soul have been offered to Your lotus feet. I have sent this letter to inform You of my mental state. If you accept me, I will maintain my life, and if you reject me, I will burn myself up. I will not give myself to anyone else, even if Brahma himself comes here and commands me.” “But,” Kṛṣṇa may object, “this offering of yourself to Me is not unmotivated like King Bali's offering. Indeed, you have an ulterior motive.”

Rukmini said, “True, my offering of myself to You is not like the surrender of Bali Maharaja, which was *nirbhāva*, without intense love. O all-mighty one! Please accept me as Your wife. Just as when a person gives food to someone else and says ‘You should eat this’, such a natural self-offering is understood to be superior to a non-motivated offering because it is affected by real love. You should quickly send back the *brahmana* with a reply so that I know whether You accept me

or not.

“Sisupala should not take the share meant for You. If Sisupala suddenly comes and touches this body, my hope of attaining You will be destroyed, and this body will burn to ashes in the fire of separation from You. My fear, however, is that You will lose Your prestige if Sisupala comes and takes Your share, like a jackal stealing from a lion. His impudence towards You will be broadcast everywhere.”

The address “O lotus-eyed one” (*ambuja-akṣa*) implies “At that time, even though my body is on fire, I will not experience any pain because I will be meditating on Your lotus eyes.”

Text 40

*pūrteṣṭa-datta-niyama-vrata-deva-vipra,
gurv-arcanādibhir alam bhagavān pareśaḥ,
ārādhito yadi gadāgraja etya pāṇim,
grhṇātu me na damaghoṣa-sutādayo 'nye*

If I have sufficiently worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead by pious works, sacrifices, charity, rituals and vows, and also by worshiping the demigods, brāhmaṇas and gurus, then may Gadāgraja come and take my hand, and not Damaghoṣa’s son or anyone else.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “O most difficult to attain person! You cannot be obtained simply by the good acts of one birth. Therefore, if I have performed pious acts in previous lives, whether with a desire to attain You or without a desire to attain You, let the results come now in the form of attaining You. This is my only prayer. If I have worshiped the Lord profusely by digging wells (*purta*), by sacrifices (*ista*), by giving charity (*dāna*), by regulations (*niyama*) such as bathing in holy places, observing vows like Ekadasi, and by

worshiping the demigods, *gurus* and *brahmanas*, which are corollaries to the worship of the Lord Himself, then may the Supreme Lord as a human, the elder brother of Gada, come here and accept me, a human in marriage. No one else should come, not even Narayana nor any of the demigods or human beings.”

That the son of Damaghosa (Sisupala) is indicated in Rukmini’s writing as the first of these “others” is because her marriage to him is imminent.

Text 41

*śvo bhāvini tvam ajitodvahane vidarbhān,
guptaḥ sametya pṛtanā-patibhiḥ paritāḥ,
nirmathya caidya-magadhendra-balaṁ prasahya,
mām rākṣasena vidhinodvaha vīrya-śulkām*

O unconquerable one, tomorrow when my marriage ceremony is about to begin, You should arrive unseen in Vidarbha and surround Yourself with the leaders of Your army. Then crush the forces of Caidya and Magadhendra and marry me in the Rākṣasa style, winning me with Your valor.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Yes, I accept you according to your past pious actions, but what can I do now that you have been given to Sisupala in marriage?” In response to this, Rukmini proposes a method in this verse. By saying “O Ajita” Rukmini implies that no one can possibly defeat Kṛṣṇa.

Rukmini said, “At the upcoming wedding, You should first enter the city unseen, without troops. Once having entered the city, You should surround Yourself with Your military commanders to show Your strength. If You don’t do this, then it will be difficult to enter the city quickly, for the troops will accost You outside the city. After entering the city, however, You can say that You have come just to see the

splendor of my marriage ceremony, and then the army will have no reason to fight with You.

“Then You can whisk me away at Your leisure. If they suspect an undesirable turn of events and start fighting with You, however, You should show Your heroism; just as You received Laksmi from churning (*nirmanthana*) the ocean. Then You should forcefully kidnap me, the reward for Your show of strength.”

Text 42

*antaḥ-purāntara-carīm anihatya bandhūn,
tvām udvahe katham iti pravādāmy upāyam,
pūrve-dyur asti mahatī kula-deva-yātrā,
yasyām bahir nava-vadhūr girijām upeyāt*

Since I will be staying within the inner chambers of the palace, You may wonder, “How can I carry you away without killing some of your relatives?” But I shall tell You a way: On the day before the marriage there is a grand procession to honor the royal family’s deity, and in this procession the new bride goes outside the city to visit Goddess Girijā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “Certainly I will destroy the military force of Sisupala and the others. Yet in kidnapping you, who live in the palace’s inner sanctum, won’t I have to also kill your relatives?”

Rukmini cleverly answered in this verse: “There is a temple of Girijā (Durgā) outside the city. You can easily kidnap me from there without killing my relatives.”

Text 43

*yasyāṅghri-pankaja-rajah-snapanam mahānto,
vāñchanty umā-patir ivātma-tamo-'pahatyai,
yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādam,
jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān 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 shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Princess, you may say that, but how can you get My mercy without having performed pious acts in the past to attain Me?”

To this Rukmini replies, “In order to attain You in a future life, in this life I will practice celibacy and austerities. If after one lifetime’s penances I do not attain You, then I will continue doing penances for even ten million lifetimes. I can never give up my desire to attain You. And if You tell me that there are many contaminations in me that prevent my attaining You, then let me dispel these with the dust particles of Your lotus feet, which are obtainable by performance of austerities.

“Great devotees like Siva desire to bathe in the dust of Your lotus feet in order to destroy the root of their ignorance. I will also destroy all my contaminations by bathing in the dust of Your lotus feet, which I will attain by austerities. If I do not attain Your mercy, then I will give up my life by fasting.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What will you accomplish by that?”

Rukmini: “I will give up my life time after time for hundreds of births until I attain Your mercy.”

By saying “O lotus-eyed one”, Rukmini implies, “It is my eagerness to

see Your beautiful lotus eyes which is the cause of these difficulties I am suffering.”

Text 44

*brāhmaṇa uvāca,
ity ete guhya-sandeśā,
yadu-deva mayāhṛtāḥ,
vimṛśya kartuṁ yac cātra,
kriyatām tad anantaram*

The brāhmaṇa said: This is the confidential message I have brought with me, O Lord of the Yadus. Please consider what must be done in these circumstances, and do it at once.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmana* said, “O Lord, I swear that I have not revealed this message (*guhya-sandeśā*) to anyone, since that would embarrass Rukmini. It is not necessary to consult with the Yadus, because You are their Lord (*yadu-deva*), and the source of their intelligence. After considering the matter You should immediately (*anantaram*) do the needful.”

Chapter Fifty-three: Kṛṣṇa Kidnaps Rukmini

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vaidarbhyāḥ sa tu sandeśam,
niśamya yadu-nandanah,
pragṛhya pāṇinā pāṇim,
prahasann idam abravīt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus hearing the confidential message of Princess Vaidarbhī, Lord Yadunandana took the brāhmaṇa’s hand and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa goes to Kundina city, is worshiped by Bhismaka and steals Rukmini when she leaves the city to worship Durga.

Rukmini was disturbed internally and externally by her attachment to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa however, though attached to Rukmini and moved internally, did not show that and instead smiled as He spoke.

Text 2

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tathāham api tac-citto,
nidrām ca na labhe niśi,
vedāham rukmiṇā dveṣān,
mamodvāho nivāritaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: Just as Rukmiṇī’s mind is fixed on Me, My mind is fixed on her. I can’t even sleep at night. I know that Rukmī, out of envy, has forbidden our marriage.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I know (*veda:vedmi*) that Rukmi has prevented his sister’s marriage to Me.”

Text 3

*tām ānayaṣya unmathya,
rājanyāpasadān mṛdhe,
mat-parām anavadyāṅgīm,
edhaso ’gni-śikhām iva*

She has dedicated herself exclusively to Me, and her beauty is flawless. I will bring her here after thrashing those worthless kings in battle, just as one brings a blazing flame out of firewood.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the fire lying dormant in wood bursts into flames, it consumes the wood. By saying *edhaso ’gni-śikhām iva*, Kṛṣṇa implies, “Rukmini, who is enveloped by wicked members of the royal order like Rukmi, will cause them all to become burned up. I, on the other hand, will only be the stimulus for that.”

Text 4

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
udvāharkṣam ca vijñāya,
rukmiṇyā madhusūdanaḥ,
rathaḥ saṁyujyatām āśu,*

dārukety āha sārathim

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Madhusūdana also understood the exact lunar time for Rukmiṇī’s wedding. Thus He told His driver, “Dāruka, ready My chariot immediately.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa understood through the mouth of a *brahmana* that the auspicious star for marriage would occur two nights in the future, so He called His charioteer.

Text 5

*sa cāśvaiḥ śaihya-sugrīva-
meghapuṣpa-balāhakaiḥ,
yuktam ratham upānīya,
tasthau prāñjalir agrataḥ*

Dāruka brought the Lord’s chariot, yoked with the horses named Śaihya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka. He then stood before Lord Kṛṣṇa with joined palms.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *Padma Purāṇa* describes the colors of Kṛṣṇa’s horses:

*śaihyas tu śuka-patrābhaḥ, sugrīvo hema-piṅgalaḥ meghapuṣpas tu
meghābhaḥ, pāṇḍuro hi balāhakaḥ*

“Śaihya was green like a parrot’s wings, Sugrīva yellow-gold, Meghapuṣpa the color of a cloud, and Balāhaka whitish.”

Text 6

*āruhya syandanam śaurir,
dviyam āropya tūrṇa-gaiḥ,
ānartād eka-rātreṇa,
vidarbhān agamad dhayaiḥ*

Lord Śauri mounted His chariot and had the brāhmaṇa do likewise. Then the Lord's swift horses took them from the Ānarta district to Vidarbha in a single night.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa heard the message of Rukmini in the evening, immediately left on His chariot, and arrived at Kundina early the next morning.

Text 7

*rājā sa kuṇḍina-patiḥ,
putra-sneha-vaśānugaḥ,
śiśupālāya svām kanyām,
dāsyaṅ karmāṅy akārayat*

King Bhīṣmaka, the master of Kuṇḍina, having succumbed to the sway of affection for his son, was about to give his daughter to Śiśupāla. The King saw to all the required preparations.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to attachment to his son, Bhismaka consented to marry his daughter to Sisupala, and then decorated the city accordingly.

Texts 8–9

*puram sammṛṣṭa-saṁsikta,
mārga-rathyā-catuṣpatham,
citra-dhvaja-patākābhis,
toraṇaiḥ samalaṅkṛtam,
srag-gandha-mālyābharāṇair;
virajo- 'mbara-bhūṣitaiḥ,
juṣṭam strī-puruṣaiḥ śrīmad,
grhair aguru-dhūpitaiḥ*

The king had the main avenues, commercial roads and intersections thoroughly cleaned and then sprinkled with water, and he also had the city decorated with triumphant archways and multicolored banners on poles. The men and women of the city, arrayed in spotless raiment and anointed with fragrant sandalwood paste, wore precious necklaces, flower garlands and jeweled ornaments, and their opulent homes were filled with the aroma of aguru.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The men and women wore spotless clothing, necklaces, scents and garlands, and covered their bodies with sandalwood paste. The main roads were cleaned, sprinkled with water, and decorated with various kinds of banners on flagpoles.

Text 10

*pitṛn devān samabhyarcya,
viprāmś ca vidhi-van nṛpa,
bhojayitvā yathā-nyāyam,
vācayām āsa maṅgalam*

O King, in accordance with prescribed rituals, Mahārāja Bhīṣmaka worshiped the forefathers, demigods and brāhmaṇas, feeding them

all properly. Then He had the traditional mantras chanted for the well-being of the bride.

Text 11

*su-snātām su-datīm kanyām,
kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalām,
āhatāmśuka-yugmena,
bhūṣitām bhūṣaṇottamaiḥ*

The bride cleaned her teeth and bathed, after which she put on the auspicious wedding necklace. Then she was dressed in brand-new upper and lower garments and adorned with most excellent jeweled ornaments.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini wore two pieces of new cloth fresh from the loom (*āhatāmśuka*). Lord Brahma states in the *Smṛti* scriptures that only spotless clothing fresh off the loom should be worn during auspicious ceremonies.

Text 12

*cakruḥ sāma-rg-yajur-mantrair,
vadhvā rakṣām dvijottamāḥ,
purohito 'tharva-vid vai,
juhāva graha-śāntaye*

The best of brāhmaṇas chanted mantras of the Āg, Sāma and Yajur Vedas for the bride's protection, and the priest learned in the

Atharva Veda offered oblations to pacify the controlling planets.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The verb *cakruh* (they did) can be taken as the verb of the last line of the previous verse as well as the verb of the present verse. Thus the *brahmanas* had Rukmini put on fresh cloth, and then they chanted *mantras* for her protection. *Atharva-vid* means “expert knower of the *mantras* of the *Atharva Veda*”, since the *Atharva Veda* very often deals with the pacification of unfavorable planets.

Text 13

*hiraṇya-rūpya vāsāmsi,
tilāṁś ca guḍa-miśritān,
prādād dhenūś ca viprebhyo,
rājā vidhi-vidāṁ varaḥ*

Outstanding in his knowledge of regulative principles, the King rewarded the brāhmaṇas with gold, silver, clothing, cows and sesame seeds mixed with raw sugar.

Text 14

*evam cedi-patī rājā,
damaghoṣaḥ sutāya vai,
kārayām āsa mantra-jñaiḥ,
sarvam abhyudayocitam*

Rājā Damaghoṣa, lord of Cedi, had also engaged brāhmaṇas expert

in chanting mantras to perform all rituals necessary to assure his son's prosperity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Damaghosa also performed ceremonies for his son's (*sutaya*) [Sisupala] marriage.

Text 15

*mada-cyudbhir gajānīkaiḥ,
syandanair hema-mālibhiḥ,
patty-aśva-saṅkulaiḥ sainyaiḥ,
parītaḥ kuṇḍīnaṃ yayau*

King Damaghoṣa traveled to Kuṇḍina accompanied by armies of elephants exuding mada, chariots hung with golden chains, and numerous cavalry and infantry soldiers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Liquid (*mada*) dripped from the foreheads of the elephants in procession.

Text 16

*taṃ vai vidarbhādhipatiḥ,
samabhyetyābhipūjya ca,
niveśayām āsa mudā,
kalpitānya-niveśane*

Bhīṣmaka, the lord of Vidarbha, came out of the city and met King Damaghoṣa, offering him tokens of respect. Bhīṣmaka then settled Damaghoṣa in a residence especially constructed for the occasion.

Text 17

*tatra śālvo jarāsandho,
dantavakro vidūrathaḥ,
ājagmuś caidyā-pakṣīyāḥ,
pauṇḍrakādyāḥ sahasraśaḥ*

Śiśupāla’s supporters—Śālva, Jarāsandha, Dantavakra and Vidūratha—all came, along with Pauṇḍraka and thousands of other kings.

Texts 18–19

*kṛṣṇa-rāma-dviṣo yattāḥ,
kanyām caidyāya sādhitum,
yady āgatya haret kṛṣṇo,
rāmādyair yadubhir vṛtaḥ,
yotsyāmaḥ samhatās tena,
iti niścita-mānasāḥ,
ājagmur bhū-bhujāḥ sarve,
samagra-bala-vāhanāḥ*

To secure the bride for Śiśupāla, the kings who envied Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma came to the following decision among themselves: “If Kṛṣṇa comes here with Balarāma and the other Yadus to steal the bride, we shall band together and fight Him.” Thus those envious kings went to the wedding with their entire armies and a full

complement of military conveyances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings came to insure (*sadhitum*) that Rukmini was given to Sisupala.

Texts 20–21

*śrutvaitad bhagavān rāmo,
vipakṣīya nṛpodyamam,
kṛṣṇaṁ caikaṁ gataṁ hartuṁ,
kanyāṁ kalaha-śaṅkitaḥ,
balena mahatā sārdham,
bhrātr-sneha-pariplutaḥ,
tvaritaḥ kuṇḍinaṁ prāgād,
gajāśva-ratha-pattibhiḥ*

When Lord Balarāma heard about these preparations of the inimical kings and how Lord Kṛṣṇa had set off alone to steal the bride, He feared that a fight would ensue. Immersed in affection for His brother, He hurried to Kuṇḍina with a mighty army consisting of infantry and of soldiers riding on elephants, horses and chariots.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing from a succession of persons (*jana-paramparayā*), Balarama (*bhagavān rāmo*), even though endowed with omniscience and omnipotency, feared an upcoming battle, and therefore went to Kundina with a huge contingent of troops. Balarama’s strong affection for His brother covered His natural omniscience. For it is human nature to worry about the dangers imminent for a friend.

Text 22

*bhīṣma-kanyā varārohā,
kāṅkṣanty āgamanam hareḥ,
pratyāpattim apaśyantī,
dvijasyācintayat tadā*

The lovely daughter of Bhīṣmaka anxiously awaited the arrival of Kṛṣṇa, but when she did not see the brāhmaṇa return she thought as follows.

Text 23

*aho tri-yāmāntarita,
udvāho me 'lpa-rādhasaḥ,
nāgacchaty aravindākṣo,
nāham vedmy atra kāraṇam,
so 'pi nāvartate 'dyāpi,
mat-sandeśa-haro dvijaḥ*

[Princess Rukmiṇī thought:] Alas, my wedding is to take place when the night ends! How unlucky I am! Lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa does not come. I don't know why. And even the brāhmaṇa messenger has not yet returned.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Even before sunrise Rukmini felt anxious because of fear and eagerness. Rukmini thought, “This night of three *yamas* (nine hours) has finished. Tomorrow night is the fixed time for the wedding of this most unfortunate woman.”

Text 24

*api mayy anavadyātmā,
dr̥ṣṭvā kiñcij jugupsitam,
mat-pāṇi-grahaṇe nūnaṁ,
nāyāti hi kṛtodyamaḥ*

Perhaps the faultless Lord, even while preparing to come here, saw something contemptible in me and therefore has not come to take my hand.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini expressed doubt with the word *api* (perhaps). Rukmini thought, “At first Kṛṣṇa was ready to come, and because the *brahmana* would accompany Him, He did not send the *brahmana*. However at the time of leaving, Kṛṣṇa saw some fault in my body or character, so He gave up His plan to come here. It would be improper for Him, who is faultless (*anavadya*) in body and mind to marry me who am full of faults. Being unsuccessful, the *brahmana* has not come to see me, out of fear that I would give up my body upon hearing the bad news.”

Text 25

*durbhagāyā na me dhātā,
nānukūlo maheśvaraḥ,
devī vā vimukhī gaurī,
rudrāṇī girijā satī*

I am extremely unfortunate, for the creator is not favorably disposed toward me, nor is the great Lord Śiva. Or perhaps Śiva’s wife, Devī, who is known as Gaurī, Rudrāṇī, Girijā and Satī, has

turned against me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse reveals the intense anxiety of Rukmini, who thought, “Maybe Kṛṣṇa did want to come, but He was stopped on the path by the creator, Brahmā, who is not favorably inclined toward me. But why should he be unfavorable? Perhaps the cause is Lord Śiva, who has become angry because of my failure to properly worship him on some occasion. But he is Maheśvara, the great controller, so why should he be angry with such an insignificant and foolish girl as me?

“Perhaps it is Śiva’s wife, Gaurī-devī, who is somehow displeased with me, even though I worship her everyday. Alas, alas! How have I offended her so that she has turned against me? But after all, she is Rudrāṅī, the wife of Rudra, and her very name means ‘one who makes everyone cry.’ So perhaps she and Śiva want me to cry. But seeing that I am so miserable that I am about to give up my life, why don’t they soften their hearts? There must be some fault in Gaurī’s heritage. The reason must be that Durga-devī is also called Girijā, the adopted daughter of a mountain (*girija*), so how could her heart melt, being so stone-like? In her incarnation as Satī she gave up her body, so perhaps she now wants me to give up my body too.”

Text 26

*evam cintayatī bālā,
govinda-hṛta-mānasā,
nyamīlayata kāla-jñā,
netre cāśru-kalākule*

As she thought in this way, the young maiden, whose mind had been stolen by Kṛṣṇa, closed her tear-filled eyes, remembering that there was still time.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini thought, “O fickle mind! Do not prepare to give up this body now, because the time of Kṛṣṇa’s coming has not yet passed. Therefore, before giving up this body, let me now see Kṛṣṇa’s face in meditation. Please do not prevent this, dear mind.” Then she closed her eyes.

Text 27

*evam vadhvāḥ pratīkṣantyā,
govindāgamanam nṛpa,
vāma ūrur bhujō netram,
asphuran priya-bhāṣiṇaḥ*

O King, as the bride thus awaited the arrival of Govinda, she felt a twitch in her left thigh, arm and eye. This was a sign that something desirable would happen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini’s left thigh and other bodily limbs trembled, which are signs of auspiciousness (*priya-bhāṣiṇaḥ*).

Text 28

*atha kṛṣṇa-vinirdiṣṭaḥ,
sa eva dvija-sattamaḥ,
antaḥpura-carīm devīm,
rāja-putrīm dadarśa ha*

Just then the purest of learned brāhmaṇas, following Kṛṣṇa’s order, came to see the divine Princess Rukmīṇī within the inner chambers

of the palace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *brahmana* was especially ordered (*kṛṣṇa-vinirdiṣṭaḥ*) by Kṛṣṇa: “Go quickly and tell Rukmini that I have reached the city gardens.” The word *devīm* means that in the rapture of seeing Kṛṣṇa in her meditation, Rukmini was glowing (*dyotamānām*). Due to her extreme absorption in meditation on Kṛṣṇa, Rukmini was walking inside her chambers with the purpose of going to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 29

*sā taṁ prahr̥ṣṭa-vadanam,
avyagr̥ātma-gatiṁ sati,
ālakṣya lakṣaṇābhijñā,
samapṛcchac chuci-smitā*

Noting the brāhmaṇa’s joyful face and serene movements, saintly Rukmiṇī, who could expertly interpret such symptoms, inquired from him with a pure smile.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “I, Sunanda *brahmana*, have come now from the side of your beloved. Please cast your glance upon me”, said the *brahmana* in a loud voice. Thus roused from her meditation, Rukmini looked at the *brahmana* as described in this verse. Noticing his serenity and the joy in his face, Rukmini’s anxiety disappeared. Rukmini was expert in reading omens (*lakṣaṇa-abhijñā*), so she understood that the *brahmana* was successful in his mission because of his blissful countenance and the twitching of her left eye. Rukmini then smiled slightly (*śuci-smitā*), indicating her genuine joy. Previously she had been falsely smiling to hide her inner suffering.

Text 30

*tasyā āvedayat prāptam,
śaśaṁsa yadu-nandanam,
uktaṁ ca satya-vacanam,
ātmopanayanam prati*

The brāhmaṇa announced to her the arrival of Lord Yadunandana and relayed the Lord’s promise to marry her.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: He announced to her that Yadunandana had arrived. He described how Kṛṣṇa had promised to marry her, relating His words such as *tām ānayaṣya*, “I will bring Rukmini here [to Dvaraka].” (SB 10.53.3)

Text 31

*tam āgatam samājñāya,
vaidarbhī hr̥ṣṭa-mānasā,
na paśyantī brāhmaṇāya,
priyam anyan nanāma sā*

Princess Vaidarbhī was overjoyed to learn of Kṛṣṇa’s arrival. Not finding anything at hand suitable to offer the brāhmaṇa, she simply bowed down to him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “What can I give to this *brahmana* to satisfy him as remuneration?” Thinking like this, Rukmini simply bowed down, since she did not see any dear thing (*priya*) to express her indebtedness, even the offering of her own self. But at that very moment, the house of the *brahmana* became filled with all sorts of

treasures. This was the response of Maha-Laksmi to show her gratitude.

Text 32

*prāptau śrutvā sva-duhitur,
udvāha-prekṣaṇotsukau,
abhyayāt tūrya-ghoṣeṇa,
rāma-kṛṣṇau samarhaṇaiḥ*

The King, upon hearing that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had come and were eager to witness his daughter's wedding, went forth with abundant offerings to greet Them as music resounded.

Text 33

*madhu-parkam upānīya,
vāsāmsi virajāmsi saḥ,
upāyanāny abhīṣṭāni,
vidhi-vat samapūjayat*

Presenting Them with madhu-parka, new clothing and other desirable gifts, he worshiped Them according to standard rituals.

Text 34

*tayor niveśanaṁ śrīmad,
upākalpya mahā-matiḥ,*

*sa-sainyayoḥ sānugayor,
ātithyaṁ vidadhe yathā*

Generous King Bhīṣmaka arranged opulent accommodations for the two Lords, and also for Their army and entourage. In this way he afforded Them proper hospitality.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bhisṁmaka is described as generous (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he was contented in his heart, knowing that Kṛṣṇa had come to marry his qualified daughter. Therefore he elaborately worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

Text 35

*evaṁ rājñām sametānām,
yathā-vīryam yathā-vayaḥ,
yathā-balaṁ yathā-vittam,
sarvaiḥ kāmāiḥ samarhayat*

Thus it was that Bhīṣmaka gave all desirable things to the kings who had assembled for the occasion, honoring them as befitted their political power, age, physical prowess and wealth.

Text 36

*kṛṣṇam āgatam ākarṇya,
vidarbha-pura-vāsinah,
āgatya netrāñjalibhiḥ,
papus tan-mukha-paṅkajam*

When the residents of Vidarbha-pura heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa had come, they all went to see Him. With the cupped palms of their eyes they drank the honey of His lotus face.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *papus tan-mukha-paṅkajam* means, “The people drank the incomparable sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face.” This indicates the unlimited quantity of honey contained in this lotus, and how wonderful it was that many parties could drink from just one lotus at the same time.

Text 37

*asyaiva bhāryā bhavitum,
rukmiṇy arhati nāparā,
asāv apy anavadyātmā,
bhaiṣmyāḥ samucitaḥ patih*

[The people of the city said:] Rukmiṇī, and no one else, deserves to become His wife, and He also, possessing such flawless beauty, is the only suitable husband for Princess Bhaiṣmī.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse combines statements made by different citizens of Vaidarbha. Seven statements have been combined in one: (1) For Him alone and no other; (2) As a wife, not as an enjoyable object; (3) Rukmini alone and no one else; (4) This certainly must be, and should not be avoided; (5) He alone and no one else; (6) For Rukmini and no one else; (7) He is perfectly suited (*samucitaḥ*), not at all unsuitable.

These seven statements have the negative qualifier “no one else” (*na aparā*) “nor nothing else” applied to each statement. Some said,

“Rukmini and no one else deserves to be Kṛṣṇa’s wife.” Others said, “She should be Kṛṣṇa’s wife and nothing else, such as an object of enjoyment.” Others said, “Rukmini alone and no one else should be Kṛṣṇa’s wife.”

In this way also four other statements could be made: “Rukmini should certainly be Kṛṣṇa’s wife, there is no question about it.” “Kṛṣṇa and only Kṛṣṇa should be Rukmini’s husband.” “Kṛṣṇa should be the husband of Rukmini only.” “Kṛṣṇa must be the husband of Rukmini.” To say it is a fault of contradiction because of the impossibility of combining seven statements in one is not correct because the authorities say: *sambhavaty eka-vākyatve vākya-bhedo hi gauravam*, “A divergence of statements can be spoken within one statement when it expresses the importance of the subject.”

Text 38

*kiñcit su-caritaṁ yan nas,
tena tuṣṭas tri-loka-kṛt,
anugṛhṇātu gṛhṇātu,
vaidarbhyāḥ pāṇim acyutaḥ*

May Acyuta, the creator of the three worlds, be satisfied with whatever pious work we may have done and show His mercy by taking the hand of Vaidarbhī.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The citizens said, “Let Kṛṣṇa be satisfied with whatever pious acts (*su-caritam:sukṛtam*) we have done. We offer all our pious credits to Rukmini so she can marry Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 39

*evam prema-kalā-baddhā,
vadanti sma puraukaṣaḥ,
kanyā cāntaḥ-purāt prāgād,
bhaṭair guptāmbikālayam*

**Bound by their swelling love, the city's residents spoke in this way.
Then the bride, protected by guards, left the inner palace to visit
the temple of Ambikā.**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The citizens spoke out due to their deep love (*prema-kalā-baddhā*) for Rukmini. The *Medinī* dictionary defines the word *kalā* as follows: *kalā mūle pravṛddhau syāc chilādāv amśa-mātrake*. “The word *kalā* means ‘a root’, ‘increase’, ‘a stone’ or ‘a mere part.’”

Texts 40–41

*padbhyām viniryayau draṣṭum,
bhavānyāḥ pāda-pallavam,
sā cānudhyāyatī samyañ,
mukunda-caraṇāmbujam,
yata-vāñ mātṛbhiḥ sārđham,
sakhībhiḥ parivāritā,
guptā rāja-bhaṭaiḥ sūraiḥ,
sannaddhair udyatāyudhaiḥ,
mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-panāvās,
tūrya-bheryaś ca jaghnire*

Rukmiṇī silently went out on foot to see the lotus feet of the deity Bhavānī. Accompanied by her mothers and girlfriends and protected by the King's valiant soldiers, who held their upraised

weapons at the ready, she simply absorbed her mind in the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. And all the while mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, paṇavas, horns and other instruments resounded.

Texts 42–43

*nānopahāra balibhir,
vāramukhyāḥ sahasraśaḥ,
srag-gandha-vastrābharanair,
dvija-patnyaḥ sv-alaṅkṛtāḥ,
gāyantyaś ca stuvantaś ca,
gāyakā vādya-vādakāḥ,
parivārya vadhūm jagmuḥ,
sūta-māgadha-vandināḥ*

Behind the bride followed thousands of prominent courtesans bearing various offerings and presents, along with well-adorned brāhmaṇas' wives singing and reciting prayers and bearing gifts of garlands, scents, clothing and jewelry. There were also professional singers, musicians, bards, chroniclers and heralds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini was carried in a palanquin from the city palace to the temple complex of Durga. Then she walked the fifteen foot distance into the temple, while surrounded by guards. *Mrdangas* and conches resounded auspiciously.

Text 44

*āsādyā devī-sadanam,
dhauta-pāda-karāmbujā,*

*upaspr̥śya śuciḥ śāntā,
praviveśāmbikāntikam*

Upon reaching the goddess’s temple, Rukmiṇī first washed her lotus feet and hands and then sipped water for purification. Thus sanctified and peaceful, she came into the presence of mother Ambikā.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini performed *acamana* (*upaspr̥śya*) and entered the inner sanctum (*devi* or *deva sadanam*). The masculine is sometimes used for female deities in their sanctum just as the masculine is used for female animals while they are still in the womb.

Text 45

*tām vai pravayaso bālām,
vidhi-jñā vipra-yoṣitaḥ,
bhavānīm vandayām cakrur,
bhava-patnīm bhavānvitām*

The older wives of brāhmaṇas, expert in the knowledge of rituals, led young Rukmiṇī in offering respects to Bhavānī, who appeared with her consort, Lord Bhava.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The elderly wives of the *brahmanas*, who were expert in *sastra* and knew of Rukmiṇī’s desire (*vidhi-jñāḥ*) to marry Kṛṣṇa, had her worship Durga along with Siva. They prompted Rukmini to pray thus: “O Durga, just as you, the wife of Siva, are always united with Siva, please make me Kṛṣṇa’s wife and keep me always united with Him.” Having seen Kṛṣṇa, they prayed in the same

way as the citizens did previously, “May the results of our pious acts be given to Rukmini.”

Text 46

*namasye tvāmbike 'bhīkṣṇam,
sva-santāna-yutām śivām,
bhūyāt patir me bhagavān,
kṛṣṇas tad anumodatām*

[Princess Rukmiṇī prayed:] O mother Ambikā, wife of Lord Siva, I repeatedly offer my obeisances unto you, together with your children. May Lord Kṛṣṇa become my husband. Please grant this!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The elderly wives of the *brahmanas* led her in chanting the *mantra* mentioned in this verse: “May Ganesa remove all the obstacles now facing me. May you consent that Kṛṣṇa will become my husband.”

Durga answered, “So be it! May Kṛṣṇa be your husband!”

Texts 47–48

*adbhir gandhākṣatair dhūpair,
vāsaḥ-sraṇ-mālya bhūṣaṇaiḥ,
nānopahāra-balibhiḥ,
pradīpāvalibhiḥ pṛthak,
vipra-striyaḥ patimatīs,
tathā taiḥ samapūjayat,
lavaṇāpūpa-tāmbūla-
kaṇṭha-sūtra-phalekṣubhiḥ*

Rukmiṇī worshiped the goddess with water, scents, whole grains, incense, clothing, garlands, necklaces, jewelry and other prescribed offerings and gifts, and also with arrays of lamps. The married brāhmaṇa women each performed worship simultaneously with the same items, also offering savories and cakes, prepared betel nut, sacred threads, fruit and sugar-cane juice.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Sran:srak* are flower garlands and *mālya* are jeweled necklaces. *Lavaṇa-āpūpa* (savory cakes) refers to what is known as *kacorikā*.

Text 49

*tasyai striyas tāḥ pradaduḥ,
śeṣām yuyujur āśiṣaḥ,
tābhyo devyai namaś cakre,
śeṣām ca jagrhe vadhūḥ*

The ladies gave the bride the remnants of the offerings and then blessed her. She in turn bowed down to them and the deity and accepted the remnants as prasādam.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini offered respects to Ambika and took her remnants (*śeṣām*) as *prasada*.

Text 50

*muni-vratam atha tyaktvā,
niścakrāmāmbikā-gṛhāt,
pragrhya pāṇinā bhrtyām,*

ratna-mudropaśobhinā

The princess then gave up her vow of silence and left the Ambikā temple, holding on to a maidservant with her hand, which was adorned with a jeweled ring.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Muni-vratam* means “vow of silence.”

Texts 51–55

*tām deva-māyām iva dhīra-mohinīm,
su-madhyamām kuṇḍala-maṇḍitānanām,
śyāmām nitambārpita-ratna-mekhalām,
vyañjat-stanīm kuntala-śaṅkitekṣaṇām,
śuci-smitām bimba-phalādhara-dyuti,
śoṇāyamāna-dvija-kunda-kuḍmalām,
padā calantīm kala-haṁsa-gāminīm,
siñjat-kalā-nūpura-dhāma-śobhinā,
vilokya vīrā mumuhuh samāgatā,
yaśasvinas tat-kṛta-hṛc-chayārditāḥ,
yām vīkṣya te nṛpatayas tad udāra-hāsa,
vrīdāvaloka-hṛta-cetasa ujjhitāstrāḥ,
petuh kṣitau gaja-rathāśva-gatā vimūḍhā,
yātrā-cchalena haraye ’rpayatīm sva-śobhām,
saivam śanaiś calayatī cala-padma-kośau,
prāptim tadā bhagavataḥ prasamīkṣamāṇā,
utsārya vāma-karajair alakān apaṅgaiḥ,
prāptān hriyaiḥkṣata nṛpān dadṛśe ’cyutam ca,
tām rāja-kanyām ratham ārurakṣatīm,
jahāra kṛṣṇo dviṣatām samīkṣatām*

Rukmiṇī appeared as enchanting as the Lord’s illusory potency, who enchants even the sober and grave. Thus the kings gazed upon her virgin beauty, her shapely waist, and her lovely face adorned with earrings. Her hips were graced with a jewel-studded belt, her breasts were just budding, and her eyes seemed apprehensive of her encroaching locks of hair. She smiled sweetly, her jasmine-bud teeth reflecting the glow of her bimba-red lips. As she walked with the motions of a royal swan, the effulgence of her tinkling ankle bells beautified her feet. Seeing her, the assembled heroes were totally bewildered. Lust tore at their hearts. Indeed, when the kings saw her broad smile and shy glance, they became stupefied, dropped their weapons and fell unconscious to the ground from their elephants, chariots and horses. On the pretext of the procession, Rukmiṇī displayed her beauty for Kṛṣṇa alone. Slowly she advanced the two moving lotus-whorls of her feet, awaiting the arrival of the Supreme Lord. With the fingernails of her left hand she pushed some strands of hair away from her face and shyly looked from the corners of her eyes at the kings standing before her. At that moment she saw Kṛṣṇa. Then, while His enemies looked on, the Lord seized the princess, who was eager to mount His chariot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The demons, who were inimical to the Lord, saw Rukmini, His internal potency (*cid-ānanda-mayī*) as Maya. This is described in two and a half verses.

(51) Seeing Rukmini as Kṛṣṇa’s *māyā* potency, the heroes became bewildered. This is the same thing that happened to the wrestlers in Mathura (SB 10.43.17), who saw Kṛṣṇa as a thunderbolt rather than as a tender young boy. They could not perceive Kṛṣṇa’s true identity. Similarly, the heroes present in Kuṇḍina were thinking that this beautiful girl Rukmini was no mortal, but rather the supreme *māyā* potency, who bewilders even the demigods (*deva-māyām*).

The following verse describes a *śyāmā* (*śyāmāṁ*) woman:

śīta-kāle bhaved uṣṇo, uṣṇa-kāle tu śītalā stanau su-kaṭhinau yasyāḥ, sā śyāmā parikīrtitā

“A woman is called *śyāmā* when her breasts are very firm and when someone in her presence feels warm in the winter and cool in the summer.” The warriors became overcome with lust on seeing Rukmini’s prominent breasts, and her unsteady eyes moving about as if afraid of her locks of hair.

(52-53) Rukmini’s teeth were finely shaped like jasmine buds and tinted red from the reflection of her *bimba*-fruit lips. Her moving feet were beautified by the glow of her skillfully crafted, tinkling ankle bells. The warriors were tormented by the lust (*hṛt-śaya:kāmaḥ*) generated by seeing Rukmini as *māyā*. This resembles Pururava, who became afflicted by lust when he saw Urvasi in the fiery image produced by the Gandharvas. Pururava became lusty, not by the fiery image, but the thought that it was Urvasi.

Similarly, the heroes’ lusty agitation was due to their perception of *māyā* and not due to perceiving Rukmini. Nondevotees can never perceive the beautiful form of Rukmiṇī, because she is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s internal energy. Thus the heroic kings assembled in Vidarbha became agitated with lust upon seeing the Lord’s illusory potency, an expansion of Rukmini. This explanation refutes any other contrary interpretation.

(54) The warriors became so bewildered that they fainted on seeing Rukmini, who had offered her beauty to Kṛṣṇa and no one else.

(55) Rukmini was walking slowly (*śanaiḥ-calayatī*) because she was searching for Kṛṣṇa. Upon seeing the other men present, however, she felt shy. But she would not show such bashfulness on seeing Kṛṣṇa. Then she saw Acyuta, who, it is implied, never left (*cyuta*) her heart.

Text 56

*ratham samāropya suparṇa-lakṣaṇam,
rājanya-cakram paribhūya mādavaḥ,
tato yayau rāma-purogamah śanaiḥ,
śṛgāla-madhyād iva bhāga-hṛd dhariḥ*

Lifting the princess onto His chariot, whose flag bore the emblem of Garuḍa, Lord Mādhava drove back the circle of kings. With Balarāma in the lead, He slowly exited, like a lion removing his prey from the midst of jackals.

Text 57

*taṁ māninaḥ svābhibhavaṁ yaśaḥ-kṣayaṁ,
pare jarāsandha-mukhā na sehire,
aho dhig asmān yaśa ātta-dhanvanām,
gopair hṛtaṁ keśariṇām mṛgair iva*

The kings inimical to the Lord, headed by Jarāsandha, could not tolerate this humiliating defeat. They exclaimed, “Oh, damn us! Though we are mighty archers, mere cowherds have stolen our honor, just as puny animals might steal the honor of lions!”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Finding the defeat intolerable, the angry kings abused the Yadavas, “We are unfortunate because our fame has been stolen by cowherd men.”

Chapter Fifty-four: Marriage of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti sarve su-saṁraddhā,
vāhān āruhya daṁśitāḥ,
svaiḥ svair balaiḥ parikrāntā,
anvīyur dhṛta-kārmukāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, all those infuriated kings donned their armor and mounted their conveyances. Each king, bow in hand, was surrounded by his own army as he went after Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa's defeating Jarasandha and others, the disfiguring of Rukmi, the consolation of Rukmini, and the wedding of Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini in Dvaraka.

Text 2

*tān āpatata ālokya,
yādavānīka-yūthapāḥ,
tasthus tat-sammukhā rājan,
visphūrjya sva-dhanūṁṣi te*

The commanders of the Yādava army, seeing the enemy racing to

attack, turned to face them and stood firm, O King, twanging their bows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the enemy pursuing them, the Yadava army turned to face them and stood firm, twanging (*visphūrjya*) their bows.

Text 3

*aśva-prṣṭhe gaja-skandhe,
rathopasthe 'stra kovidāḥ,
mumucuḥ śara-varṣāni,
meghā adriṣv apo yathā*

Mounted on the backs of horses, the shoulders of elephants and the seats of chariots, the enemy kings, expert with weapons, rained down arrows upon the Yadus like clouds pouring rain on mountains.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The shower of Jarasandha's arrows was totally insignificant, like rain falling on a mountain.

Text 4

*patyur balaṁ śarāsāraiś,
channaṁ vīkṣya su-madhyamā,
sa-vrīḍm aikṣat tad-vaktraṁ,
bhaya-vihvala-locanā*

Slender-waisted Rukmiṇī, seeing her Lord's army covered by

torrents of arrows, shyly looked at His face with fear-stricken eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini shyly glanced (*aiksat:aiksata*) at Kṛṣṇa’s face.

Text 5

*prahasya bhagavān āha,
mā sma bhair vāma-locane,
vinanṅsyaty adhunaivaitat,
tāvakaiḥ śātravaṁ balam*

In response the Lord laughed and assured her, “Do not be afraid, beautiful-eyed one. This enemy force is about to be destroyed by your soldiers.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa laughingly said, “You need not fear (*mā sma bhair*) because your army will defeat the enemy.” To express His great affection for Rukmiṇī, Kṛṣṇa gallantly referred to His own Yādava army as “your men” (*tāvakaiḥ*), indicating that the Kṛṣṇa’s entire dynasty was now the property of His beloved queen.

Text 6

*teṣāṁ tad-vikramaṁ vīrā,
gada-saṅkarṣanādayaḥ,
amṛṣyamāṇā nārācair,
jaghnur haya-gajān rathān*

The heroes of the Lord’s army, headed by Gada and Saṅkarṣaṇa,

could not tolerate the aggression of the opposing kings. Thus with iron arrows they began to strike down the enemy's horses, elephants and chariots.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not being able to tolerate the enemies' show of prowess, the Yadavas destroyed their chariots and horses with arrows.

Text 7

*petuḥ śirāmsi rathinām,
aśvinām gajinām bhuvi,
sa-kuṇḍala-kirīṭāni,
soṣṇīṣāṇi ca koṭīśaḥ*

The heads of soldiers fighting on chariots, horses and elephants fell to the ground by the millions; some heads wore earrings and helmets, others turbans.

Text 8

*hastāḥ sāsī-gadeṣv-āsāḥ,
karabhā ūravo 'nghrayaḥ,
aśvāśvatara-nāgoṣṭra-
khara-martya-śirāmsi ca*

Lying all around were thighs, legs and fingerless hands, along with hands clutching swords, clubs and bows, and also the heads of horses, donkeys, elephants, camels, wild asses and humans.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Karabhāḥ* is defined in the *Amara-kosa* dictionary: “The portion of the hand from the wrist to the base of the fingers.” The same word may also indicate an elephant’s trunk, and thus in this verse the implication is that the thighs lying on the battlefield resembled the trunks of elephants.

Text 9

*hanyamāna-balānikā,
vṛṣṇibhir jaya-kāṅkṣibhiḥ,
rājāno vimukhā jagmur;
jarāsandha-puraḥ-sarāḥ*

Seeing their armies being struck down by the Vṛṣṇis, who were eager for victory, the kings headed by Jarāsandha were discouraged and left the battlefield.

Text 10

*śiśupālam samabhyetya,
hṛta-dāram ivāturam,
naṣṭa-tviṣaṁ gatotsāham,
śuśyad-vadanam abruvan*

The kings approached Śiśupāla, who was disturbed like a man who has lost his wife. His complexion was drained of color, his enthusiasm was gone, and his face appeared dried up. The kings spoke to him as follows.

Text 11

*bho bhoḥ puruṣa-śārdūla,
daurmanasyam idaṁ tyaja,
na priyāpriyayo rājan,
niṣṭhā dehiṣu dr̥ṣyate*

[Jarāsandha said:] Listen, Śiśupāla, O tiger among men, give up your depression. After all, embodied beings' happiness and unhappiness is never seen to be permanent, O King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One does not see any permanence (*niṣṭhā*) of happiness and distress.

Text 12

*yathā dāru-mayī yoṣit,
nṛtyate kuhakecchayā,
evam īśvara-tantro 'yam,
īhate sukha-duḥkhayoḥ*

Just as a puppet in the form of a woman dances by the desire of the puppeteer, so this world, controlled by the Supreme Lord, struggles in both happiness and misery.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as puppets are controlled by the puppeteer (*kuhaka*), so the living entities receive happiness and distress under the direction of the Lord. Thus we see that even though the

demons accept the power of God, they are demoniac because of being inimical to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 13

*śaureḥ sapta-daśāham vai,
sāmyugāni parājitah,
trayo-vimśatibhiḥ sainyair,
jigye ekam aham param*

In battle with Kṛṣṇa I and my twenty-three armies lost seventeen times; only once did I defeat Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha said, “I have been defeated in seventeen battles with Kṛṣṇa using twenty-three armies. Finally in one battle I was victorious.”

Text 14

*tathāpy aham na śocāmi,
na prahr̥ṣyāmi karhicit,
kālena daiva-yuktena,
jānan vidrāvitaṁ jagat*

But still I never lament or rejoice, because I know this world is driven by time and fate.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Under the direction of fate, time moves and agitates everyone in this world.

Text 15

*adhunāpi vayan sarve,
vīra-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ,
parājitāḥ phalgu-tantrair,
yadubhiḥ kṛṣṇa-pālitaiḥ*

And now all of us, great commanders of military leaders, have been defeated by the Yadus and their small entourage, who are protected by Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha said, “I was defeated by the meager entourage (*phalgu-tantraiḥ*) of the Yadus.”

Text 16

*ripavo jigyur adhunā,
kāla ātmānusāriṇi,
tadā vayan vijeṣyāmo,
yadā kālaḥ pradakṣiṇaḥ*

Now our enemies have conquered because time favors them, but in the future, when time is auspicious for us, we shall conquer.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha said, “When time becomes favorable (*pradakṣiṇaḥ:anukūlaḥ*) to us, then we win.”

Text 17

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam prabodhito mitraiś,
caidyō 'gāt sānugaḥ puram,
hata-śeṣāḥ punas te 'pi,
yayuh svam svam puram nṛpāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus persuaded by his friends, Śīsupāla took his followers and went back to his capital. The surviving warriors also returned to their respective cities.

Text 18

*rukmi tu rākṣasodvāham,
kṛṣṇa-dviḍ asahan svasuh,
pṛṣṭhato 'nvagamat kṛṣṇam,
akṣauhinyā vṛto balī*

Powerful Rukmī, however, was especially envious of Kṛṣṇa. He could not bear the fact that Kṛṣṇa had carried off his sister to marry her in the Rākṣasa style. Thus he pursued the Lord with an entire military division.

Texts 19–20

*rukmy amarṣī su-saṁrabdhaḥ,
śṛṅvatām sarva-bhūbhujām,
pratijajñe mahā-bāhur,
damśitaḥ sa-śarāsanah,*

*ahatvā samare kṛṣṇam,
apratyūhya ca rukmiṇīm,
kuṇḍinaṁ na praveksyāmi,
satyam etad bravīmi vaḥ*

Frustrated and enraged, mighty-armed Rukmī, dressed in armor and wielding his bow, had sworn before all the kings, “I shall not again enter Kuṇḍina if I do not kill Kṛṣṇa in battle and bring Rukmiṇī back with me. I swear this to you.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmi, being intolerant (*amarṣī*) and very angry (*su-samrabdhaḥ*), took up his bow and said, “I will not enter Kundina without killing Kṛṣṇa and bringing back Rukmini.” Bhārātī (goddess Sarasvati) gives the following meaning: Rukmi said, “I will not enter Kundina because I do not understand (*ahatvā:ajñātvā*) Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, I will not try to stop Him or free (*apratyūhya:anirmocya*) Rukmini.”

Text 21

*ity uktvā ratham āruhya,
sārathiṁ prāha satvaraḥ,
codayāśvān yataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ,
tasya me saṁyugaṁ bhavet*

Having said this, he had mounted his chariot and told his charioteer, “Drive the horses quickly to where Kṛṣṇa is. He and I must fight.

Text 22

*adyāham niśitair bāṇair,
gopālasya su-durmateḥ,
nesye vīrya-madam yena,
svasā me prasabham hṛtā*

“This wicked-minded cowherd boy, infatuated with His prowess, has violently abducted my sister. But today I will remove His pride with my sharp arrows.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmi said, “Today with my sharp arrows I will remove (*nesye*) the heroic pride of that stupid cowherd boy who has forcibly abducted my sister.” From the viewpoint of goddess Sarasvati the meaning is: “Today the intoxication of pride I have in my own prowess will be removed by the sharp arrows of the cowherd boy whose beautiful mind is compassionate even toward the wicked (*durmateḥ*).”

Text 23

*vikatthamānaḥ kumatir,
īśvarasyāpramāṇa-vit,
rathenaikena govindam,
tiṣṭha tiṣṭhety athāhvayat*

Boasting thus, foolish Rukmī, ignorant of the true extent of the Supreme Lord’s power, approached Lord Govinda in his lone chariot and challenged Him, “Just stand and fight!”

Text 24

*dhanur vikṛṣya su-dṛḍham,
jaghne kṛṣṇam tribhiḥ śaraiḥ,
āha cātra kṣaṇam tiṣṭha,
yadūnām kula-pāmsana*

Rukmī drew his bow with great strength and struck Lord Kṛṣṇa with three arrows. Then he said, “Stand here for a moment, O defiler of the Yadu dynasty!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Kula-pāmsana* can mean “O defiler of Your dynasty.” But according to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, *kula-pāmsana* may be understood as a combination of the words *kula-pa*, “O protector of the Yadu dynasty,” and *amsana*, “O expert killer of enemies.” *Ātra kṣaṇam tiṣṭha* can mean “Stand here a moment.” It can also mean: *ara iksanam tistha*, “Stand so that I may glance upon You.”

Text 25

*yatra yāsi svasāraṁ me,
muṣitvā dhvāṅkṣa-vad dhaviḥ,
hariṣye ’dya madam manda,
māyinaḥ kūṭa-yodhinaḥ*

“Wherever You go, carrying off my sister like a crow stealing sacrificial butter, I will follow. This very day I shall relieve You of Your false pride, You fool, You deceiver, You cheater in battle!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmi said, “You are taking my

sister, just like a crow (*dhvāṅkṣa-vat*) steals a sacrificial offering. Today (*adya*), O fool, I will take away Your pride in being a false warrior and cheater.”

The other meaning is: “Since my sister is Mahālakṣmī and thus belongs to You, whether You steal her or not, wherever You go she is Your own essence (*sva saram*). After releasing my sister from You, I will bring her back to my house, just as a crow steals the sacrificial butter (*havih*). Please break the pride of this false warrior, myself, who is a fool (*manda*) and a cheater (*mayi*).”

The *Medinī* dictionary says that *havih* means ghee or a sacrificial offering. In both usages the word is neuter.

Text 26

*yāvan na me hato bāṅaiḥ,
śayīthā muñca dārīkām,
smayan kṛṣṇo dhanuś chittvā,
ṣadbhir vivyādha rukmiṇam*

“Release the girl before You are struck dead by my arrows and made to lie down!” In response to this, Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled, and with six arrows He struck Rukmī and broke his bow.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmi said, “Release this girl before You lie on the battlefield, having been killed (*me hatah*) by my arrows.” The other meaning is: “Because You are not killed by my arrows (*me ahatah*), do not release the girl.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Why should I keep this girl?”

Rukmi: “So You can lie down (*sayithah*).” Although Rukmi did not say it, the sentence becomes complete with the phrase, “with her on a bed of flowers.” In fact Kṛṣṇa was meant to lie down with Rukmiṇī on a beautiful bed of flowers, but out of shyness Rukmī did not directly

mention it.

Text 27

*aṣṭabhiś caturo vāhān,
dvābhyām sūtam dhvajam tribhiḥ,
sa cānyad dhanur ādhāya,
kṛṣṇam vivyādha pañcabhiḥ*

The Lord struck Rukmī's four horses with eight arrows, his chariot driver with two, and the chariot's flag with three. Rukmī grabbed another bow and struck Lord Kṛṣṇa with five arrows.

Text 28

*tais tāditaḥ śaraughais tu,
ciccheda dhanur acyutaḥ,
punar anyad upādatta,
tad apy acchinad avyayaḥ*

Although hit by these many arrows, Lord Acyuta again broke Rukmī's bow. Rukmī picked up yet another bow, but the infallible Lord broke that one to pieces as well.

Text 29

parigham paṭṭisam sūlam,

*carmāsī śakti-tomaraṁ,
yad yad āyudham ādatta,
tat sarvaṁ so 'cchinad dhariḥ*

Iron bludgeon, three-pointed spear, sword and shield, pike, javelin—whatever weapon Rukmī picked up, Lord Hari smashed it to bits.

Text 30

*tato rathād avaplutya,
khaḍga-pāṇir jighāṁsayā,
kṛṣṇam abhyadravat kruddhaḥ,
pataṅga iva pāvakaṁ*

Then Rukmī leaped down from his chariot and, sword in hand, rushed furiously toward Kṛṣṇa to kill Him, like a bird flying into the wind.

Text 31

*tasya cāpatataḥ khaḍgaṁ,
tilaśaś carma ceṣubhiḥ,
chittvāsim ādade tigmam,
rukmiṇaṁ hantum udyataḥ*

As Rukmī attacked Him, the Lord shot arrows that broke Rukmī's

sword and shield into small pieces. Kṛṣṇa then took up His own sharp sword and prepared to kill Rukmī.

Text 32

*dr̥ṣṭvā bhrāṭṛ-vadhodyogaṁ,
rukmiṇī bhaya-vihvalā,
patitvā pādāyor bhartur,
uvāca karuṇaṁ satī*

Seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa ready to kill her brother, saintly Rukmiṇī was filled with alarm. She fell at her husband’s feet and piteously spoke as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini thought, “What will people think if they know that my brother was killed before my eyes?” She was filled with fear because of this, not out of affection for her brother. The *prema* of the queens of Dvaraka, known as *samanjasa-prema* (proper love), is dependent on public opinion, whereas the *prema* of the Vrajagopis, known as *samartha-prema*, is much stronger because it is not dependent at all on the opinion of the public.

However, one should not think that the general characteristic of *prema*, namely exclusive possessiveness of Visnu in a loving relationship, is lacking in Rukmini, since within herself she actually had no affection at all for Rukmi and other demons like him. This will be described later in detail. Exclusive possessiveness is explained in *Bhakti-rasamṛta sindhu* IV 2.2:

ananya-mamatā viṣṇau, mamatā prema-saṅgatā bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma, prahlādoddhava-nāradaih, “When one is completely apathetic to all other objects, and has developed an exclusive sense of ownership or possessiveness in relation to Lord Viṣṇu, thinking of Viṣṇu and no

one else as His object of love, such an awakening is called *prema-bhakti* by Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada.”

Text 33

*śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca,
yogeśvarāprameyātman,
deva-deva jagat-pate,
hantuṁ nārhasi kalyāṇa,
bhrātaraṁ me mahā-bhujā*

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: O controller of all mystic power, immeasurable one, Lord of lords, master of the universe! O all auspicious and mighty-armed one, please do not kill my brother!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “You possess inconceivably great transcendental opulences, while Rukmi is the most insignificant of those who are controlled by You. You are the immeasurable one (*aprameyatma*) and he is like an insect among the limited. You are supreme among the demigods (*deva-deva*), and he is the lowest among humans because he is inimical to You. You are the protector of the universe (*jagat-pate*), and though he is evil, because he is within the universe, he is to be protected. Therefore O auspicious one (*kalyana*) with mighty arms (*maha-bhujā*), You should not kill this inauspicious person with no power in his arms.”

Text 34

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tayā paritrāsa-vikampitāṅgayā,
śucāvaśuṣyan-mukha-ruddha-kaṅṭhayā,*

*kātarya-visramsita-hema-mālayā,
grhīta-pādaḥ karuṇo nyavartata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī’s utter fear caused her limbs to tremble and her mouth to dry up, while her throat choked up out of sorrow. And in her agitation her golden necklace scattered. She grasped Kṛṣṇa’s feet, and the Lord, feeling compassionate, desisted.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Out of fear of the “worldly rule” that one’s sister is the personification of mercy (*dayāyā bhaginī mūrtiḥ*), Rukmini was compassionate toward Rukmi, even though Rukmi was wicked, opposed to her, and would have been the cause of her giving up her life if she had been forced to marry Sisupala. Kṛṣṇa shared Rukmini’s compassion.

Text 35

*cailena baddhvā tam asādhu-kārīṇam,
sa-śmaśru-keśam pravapan vyarūpayat,
tāvan mamarduḥ para-sainyam adbhutaṁ,
yadu-pravīrā nalinīm yathā gajāḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa tied up the evil-doer with a strip of cloth. He then proceeded to disfigure Rukmī by comically shaving him, leaving parts of his mustache and hair. By that time the Yadu heroes had crushed the extraordinary army of their opponents, just as elephants crush a lotus flower.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Rukmi should never come and do mischief again.” Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa showed his contempt for Rukmi by marking his body with some ugly features to let him remember his

defeat and dissolve his pride. Kṛṣṇa tied him up by the neck with a strip of cloth using His left hand. While holding up the two ends of that cloth, Kṛṣṇa took His sword in His right hand, knocked off Rukmi's turban, and then shaved off bits of his moustache, beard and hair at the root, drawing blood. With scraps of hair remaining here and there Rukmi looked completely disfigured.

Text 36

*kṛṣṇāntikam upavrajya,
dadṛśus tatra rukmiṇam,
tathā-bhūtaṁ hata-prāyaṁ,
dṛṣṭvā saṅkarsaṇo vibhuḥ,
vimucya baddhaṁ karuṇo,
bhagavān kṛṣṇam abravīt*

As the Yadus approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, they saw Rukmī in this sorry condition, practically dying of shame. When the all-powerful Lord Balarāma saw Rukmī, He compassionately released him and spoke the following to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Out of compassion, Balarama took the cloth that Kṛṣṇa was holding in His left hand and released Rukmi from the noose.

Text 37

*asādhv idaṁ tvayā kṛṣṇa,
kṛtam asmaj-jugupsitam,
vapanam śmaśru-keśānām,
vairūpyam suhṛdo vadhah*

[Lord Balarāma said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, You have acted improperly! This deed will bring shame on Us, for to disfigure a close relative by shaving off his mustache and hair is as good as killing him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Death itself would have been more proper than shaving him with Your sword, which has made his face ghastly.” Balarama gently reproached Kṛṣṇa in order to console the lamenting Rukmini. Internally, however, Balarama was thinking, “O most clever brother, You have done what is proper and acted quite rightly.”

Thus expressing satisfaction, Balarama spoke this verse. Though Rukmi is factually a *duhṛt* (an enemy, not a friend), in this verse Balarama sarcastically calls him *suhṛt*, which means a well-wisher, friend or a brother-in-law.

Text 38

*maivāsmān sādhy asūyethā,
bhrātur vairūpya-cintayā,
sukha-duḥkha-do na cānyo 'sti,
yataḥ sva-kṛta-bhuk pumān*

Saintly lady, please do not be displeased with Us out of anxiety for your brother’s disfigurement. No one but oneself is responsible for one’s joy and grief, for a man experiences the result of his own deeds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To dispel Rukmini’s sadness, Balarama reasons with her in this verse: “Everyone must enjoy or suffer the results of his acts. What is this useless affection for this most wicked

person who acts against your own husband?” Balarama gently scolded Rukmini.

Text 39

*bandhur vadhārha-doṣo 'pi,
na bandhor vadham arhati,
tyājyaḥ svenaiva doṣeṇa,
hataḥ kiṁ hanyate punaḥ*

[Again addressing Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma said:] A relative should not be killed even if his wrongdoing warrants capital punishment. Rather, he should be thrown out of the family. Since he has already been killed by his own sin, why kill him again?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to satisfy Rukmini, Balarama instructs Kṛṣṇa in morality in this verse: “A relative should not be killed by a relative, and a brother-in-law should not be killed by the sister’s husband.”

Text 40

*kṣatriyāṅām ayaṁ dharmah,
prajāpati-vinirmitaḥ,
bhrātāpi bhrātaram hanyād,
yena ghoratamas tataḥ*

[Turning to Rukmiṇī, Balarāma continued:] The code of sacred duty for warriors established by Lord Brahmā enjoins that one may have to kill even his own brother. That is indeed a most dreadful

law.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama speaks again to Rukmini, who was saying in her mind, “Your younger brother does not know this rule.” Balarama said, “The scriptures order that one should even kill one’s brother. What to speak then of a brother-in-law who is so vile?”

Text 41

*rājyasya bhūmer vittasya,
striyo mānasya tejasah,
mānino ’nyasya vā hetoḥ,
śrī-madāndhāḥ kṣipanti hi*

[Again Balarāma addressed Kṛṣṇa:] Blinded by conceit with their personal opulences, proud men offend others for the sake of such things as kingdom, land, wealth, women, honor and power.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But,” Rukmini is thinking to herself, “A *ksatriya* may have to kill his relative, but he should not disfigure him in such a ghastly way.” To satisfy her, Balarama then spoke to Kṛṣṇa: “O Kṛṣṇa! Proud fellows abuse others in order to get land, money and power. But We should not do this.”

Text 42

*taveyaṁ viṣamā buddhiḥ,
sarva-bhūteṣu durhṛdām,
yaṁ manyase sadābhadram,
suhṛdām bhadram ajña-vat*

[To Rukmiṇī Balarāma said:] Your attitude is unfair, for like an ignorant person you wish good to those who are inimical to all living beings and who have done evil to your true well-wishers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But this rule is for situations other than war. In war, however, the rule is that the enemy should be defeated and made insignificant.” Guessing that this was Kṛṣṇa’s internal thought, Balarama then spoke this verse to Rukmini: “The good done by Kṛṣṇa to your own well-wishers and family members such as Rukmi, namely shaving his hair, that you think is bad is an unfair attitude on your part. This is the biased attitude of you, who are nonetheless wise.”

Text 43

*ātma-moho nṛṇām eva,
kalpate deva-māyayā,
suhṛd durhṛd udāsīna,
iti dehātma-māninām*

The Supreme Lord’s Māyā makes men forget their real selves, and thus, taking the body for the self, they consider others to be friends, enemies or neutral parties.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “I know quite well that my brother is evil, but still I have some attachment as a relative. What can I do?” If Rukmini asks this, Balarama answers: “Certainly for an elevated person like you such bad judgment is not proper. But for worldly people this is their natural tendency. For those who think that their bodies are themselves, there is such bewilderment, but not for those in knowledge.”

Text 44

*eka eva paro hy ātmā,
sarveṣām api dehinām,
nāneva gr̥hyate mūḍhair,
yathā jyotir yathā nabhaḥ*

Those who are bewildered perceive the one Supreme Soul, who resides in all embodied beings, as many, just as one may perceive the light in the sky, or the sky itself, as many.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In two verses Balarama refutes the misconception of those who think the body is the self. First He states that the body is not the Supersoul. The Supreme Soul is certainly the only mover of the embodied souls. Two examples are given to show that one is the basis of many. It is like fire within wood and ether in a pot. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.32) gives a similar analogy concerning fire and wood:

*yathā hy avahito vahnir, dāruṣv ekaḥ sva-yoniṣu nāneva bhāti viśvātmā,
bhūteṣu ca tathā pumān*

“The Lord, as the Supersoul, pervades all things, just as fire permeates wood, and so He appears to be of many varieties, though He is the absolute one without a second.”

Text 45

*deha ādy-antavān eṣa,
dravya-prāṇa-guṇātmakah,
ātmany avidyayā kṛptaḥ,
saṁsārayati dehinam*

This material body, which has a beginning and an end, is composed of the physical elements, the senses and the modes of nature. The body, imposed on the self by material ignorance, causes one to experience the cycle of birth and death.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Balarama also explains that the body is not the soul: “This body, which you think is to be protected because he is a relative, or to be killed because he is an enemy, consists of three aspects: the physical elements (*dravya:adhibhuta*), the senses (*prana:adhyatma*) and the modes of nature (*guna:adhidaivam*). It is produced for the soul (*ātmani:jīva*) by ignorance and makes the soul rotate in the cycle of birth and death under the control of attraction and repulsion.”

Text 46

*nātmāno 'nyena saṁyogo,
vīyogaś casataḥ sati,
tad-dhetutvāt tat-prasiddher,
dṛg-rūpābhyām yathā raveḥ*

O intelligent lady, the soul never undergoes contact with or separation from insubstantial, material objects, because the soul is their very origin and illuminator. Thus the soul resembles the sun, which neither comes in contact with nor separates from the sense of sight and what is seen.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Because the soul is tainted by contact with the body, the body appears to be the self. Actually however, there is never any contact of the soul with the body. Neither the Supersoul nor the individual soul has any contact with the

body.”

First this verse can be explained as referring to the soul (*jivatma*) and matter. There is no contact of the soul with the material body which is impermanent, having a beginning and end. Because there is no contact there is no separation. How does this take place?

“The soul is the cause of matter assembling itself into a material body. Although the soul (*jivatma*) manifests the material body, it is not contaminated by it. How can the producer be contaminated by that which it manifests?”

The explanation is then given in regard to the Supersoul, Paramātmā. The Paramātmā (*ātmano*) has no contact with the individual soul (*anyena:jīva*) or his impermanent body (*asataḥ*) because the Paramatma is the source of the *jīva* and his body by His very nature as God. Therefore, the Paramatma is never contaminated by either the *jīva* or the body manifested from Him. The producer is never touched by that which is manifested from it.

The example of the sun applies in both cases. For the sun, situated in one place, there is no contact with the eye or the visible form manifested by that eye, which are both made manifest by itself. In this context the sun represents the Paramātmā, the sense of sight represents the *jīva* and the body represents visible form.

Text 47

*janmādayas tu dehasya,
vikriyā nātmanaḥ kvacit,
kalānām iva naivendor,
mṛtir hy asya kuhūr iva*

Birth and other transformations are undergone by the body but never by the self, just as change occurs for the moon’s phases but never for the moon, though the new-moon day may be called the

moon's "death."

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The soul has no connection with the body because it also has no birth or death. Balarama states this in this verse. Then how does the self experience, "I am born, I am a child, I am an old man?" This is explained with an example. Just as there is birth for the moon's phases, but not for the moon itself, similarly, due to the demise of phases, *kūhu* or the new moon day (*amavasyā*) is called the "death" of the moon. In the same way, when the material body is destroyed the term "death" is conventionally applied to the self.

Text 48

*yathā śayāna ātmānam,
viṣayān phalam eva ca,
anubhūṅkte 'py asaty arthe,
tathāpnoty abudho bhavam*

As a sleeping person perceives himself, the objects of sense enjoyment and the fruits of his acts within the illusion of a dream, so one who is unintelligent undergoes material existence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From the *śruti* statement, *asaṅgo hy ayaṁ puruṣaḥ*: "The living being has no intimate connection with the material world", it is understood that the self is never in contact with the body. But by the inconceivable potency of ignorance he imagines his connection with the body and experiences material life.

This is exemplified by an analogy in this verse. Although present within something which is unreal, a person who is dreaming experiences himself conquering countries with a vast army, and enjoying the fruits of victory such as garlands, sandalwood paste and beautiful women. Sometimes he also experiences defeat, bondage, beating and abuse. In

the same way, the unintelligent person experiences in an unreal way the world of happiness and distress due to his association with the material body.

A similar statement is found in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.22.56):
arthe 'hy avidyamāne 'pi, saṁsṛtir na nivartate dhyāyato viṣayān asya, svapne 'narthāgamo yathā

“Although material life has no factual existence, it does not go away for one who is meditating on sense enjoyment, just as the unpleasant experiences of a dream do not disappear.”

Text 49

*tasmād ajñāna-jaṁ śokam,
ātma-śoṣa-vimohanam,
tattva-jñānena nirhṛtya,
sva-sthā bhava śuci-smite*

Therefore, with transcendental knowledge dispel the grief that is weakening and confounding your mind. Please resume your natural mood, O princess of the pristine smile.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Because this is so, please become well-composed and resume your natural mood (*sva-sthā:svabhāva-sthā*). Please smile and show the natural blossoming of your face, rather than grieving like an ordinary material bride.”

Text 50

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ bhagavatā tanvī,
rāmeṇa pratibodhitā,*

*vaimanasyaṁ parityajya,
mano buddhyā samādadhe*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus enlightened by Lord Balarāma, slender Rukmiṇī forgot her depression and steadied her mind by spiritual intelligence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini composed herself by giving up the depression (*vaimanasyam:cintām*) of thinking, “What will people say about me?”

Text 51

*prāṇāvaśeṣa utsṛṣṭo,
dviḍbhir hata-bala-prabhaḥ,
smaran virūpa-karaṇaṁ,
vitathātma-manorathaḥ,
cakre bhojakaṭaṁ nāma,
nivāsāya mahat puram*

Left with only his life air, cast out by his enemies and deprived of his strength and bodily radiance, Rukmī could not forget how he had been disfigured. In frustration he constructed for his residence a large city, which he called Bhojakaṭa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Expelled by his enemies” (*utsṛṣṭo dviḍbhir*) means that Rukmi was insulted by the Yadu soldiers with abuses, curses and chastisement as he walked away from Kṛṣṇa.

Text 52

*ahatvā durmatim kṛṣṇam,
apratyūhya yavīyasīm,
kuṇḍinaṁ na pravekṣyāmīty,
uktvā tatrāvasad ruṣā*

Because he had promised “I will not reenter Kuṇḍina until I have killed wicked Kṛṣṇa and brought back my younger sister,” in a mood of angry frustration Rukmī took up residence at that very place.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmi constructed a large city which he named Bhojakata (verse 51). According to the *Nānārtha-varga* dictionary, the word *bhoja* means “experience” and the word *kaṭaḥ* means “vow.” Thus Bhojakata is the place where Rukmī experienced misery as a result of his vow to offer Rukmini to Sisupala.

Text 53

*bhagavān bhīṣmaka-sutām,
evaṁ nirjitya bhūmi-pān,
puram ānīya vidhi-vad,
upayeme kurūdvaha*

Thus defeating all the opposing kings, the Supreme Personality of Godhead brought the daughter of Bhīṣmaka to His capital and married her according to the Vedic injunctions, O protector of the Kurus.

Text 54

*tadā mahotsavo nṛṇām,
yadu-puryām gr̥he,
gr̥he abhūd ananya-bhāvānām,
kṛṣṇe yadu-patau nṛpa*

At that time, O King, there was great rejoicing in all the homes of Yadupurī, whose citizens loved only Kṛṣṇa, chief of the Yadus.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Dvarakavasis, who had exclusive love (*ananya-bhāvānām*) for Kṛṣṇa, began celebrating.

Text 55

*narā nāryaś ca muditāḥ,
pramṛṣṭa-maṇi-kunḍalāḥ,
pāribarham upājahrur;
varayoś citra-vāsasoḥ*

All the men and women, full of joy and adorned with shining jewels and earrings, brought wedding presents, which they reverently offered to the exquisitely dressed groom and bride.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They offered worthy gifts such as household utensils to the bride and groom (*varayoh*).

Text 56

sā vṛṣṇi-pury uttambhitendra-ketubhir;

*vicitra-mālyāmbara-ratna-toraṇaiḥ,
babhau prati-dvāry upakṣpta-maṅgalair,
āpūrṇa-kumbhāguru-dhūpa-dīpakaiḥ*

The city of the Vṛṣṇis appeared most beautiful: there were tall, festive columns, and also archways decorated with flower garlands, cloth banners and precious gems. Arrangements of auspicious, full waterpots, aguru-scented incense, and lamps graced every doorway.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There were tall flag poles erected in the city which appeared like architectural columns. They are called *indra-ketubhir* because the banners attached to them reached upward to the city of Lord Indra.

Text 57

*sikta-mārgā mada-cyudbhir,
āhūta-preṣṭha-bhūbhujām,
gajair dvāḥsu parāmrṣṭa-
rambhā-pūgopaśobhitā*

The city's streets were cleansed by the intoxicated elephants belonging to the beloved kings who were guests at the wedding, and these elephants further enhanced the beauty of the city by placing trunks of plantain and betel-nut trees in all the doorways.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The streets were sprinkled with the *mada* from the elephants of the friendly kings attending the wedding. The doorways were ornamented with tall banana and betel nut trees.

Text 58

*kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikeya,
vidarbha-yadu-kuntayah,
mitho mumudire tasmin,
sambhramāt paridhāvatām*

Those who belonged to the royal families of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya, Kaikeya, Vidarbha, Yadu and Kunti clans joyfully met one another in the midst of the crowds of people excitedly running here and there.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Gathering together (*paridhāvatām*) they rejoiced.

Text 59

*rukmiṇyā haraṇam śrutvā,
gīyamānam tatas tataḥ,
rājāno rāja-kanyās ca,
babhūvur bhṛśa-vismitāḥ*

The kings and their daughters were totally astonished to hear the story of Rukmiṇī's abduction, which was being glorified in song everywhere.

Text 60

dvāarakāyām abhūd rājan,

*mahā-modah puraukasām,
rukmiṇyā ramayopetaṁ,
dr̥ṣṭvā kṛṣṇaṁ śriyaḥ patim*

**Dvārakā's citizens were overjoyed to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all
opulence, united with Rukmiṇī, the goddess of fortune.**

Chapter Fifty-five: The History of Pradyumna

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kāmas tu vāsudevāṁśo,
dagdhaḥ prāg rudra-manyunā,
dehopapattaye bhūyas,
tam eva pratyapadyata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Kāmadeva [Cupid], an expansion of Vāsudeva, had previously been burned to ashes by Rudra’s anger. Now, to obtain a new body, he merged back into the body of Lord Vāsudeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Pradyumna, the son of Rukmini, is stolen by Sambara. Later Pradyumna kills him and returns with His wife. We should understand the sequence of events to be that Pradyumna was born prior to Kṛṣṇa’s marriages to Jambavati and the other queens. Then the marriages took place, and after that Pradyumna returned home. In this context, however, while the birth of Pradyumna is being described all of His activities are also recounted, since they deserve being related.

It is seen that when the eternal associates of the Supreme Lord (*svayam bhagavan*) appear in this world, by the Lord’s own desire they assume the reputations of the opulent potencies (*vibhūti*) Kṛṣṇa contains within Himself, rather than appearing according to their own reputations. This is done so that the materialistic men do not raise doubts and in order to protect the confidential nature of *bhakti*. This is stated by Kṛṣṇa Himself to Uddhava in the Eleventh Canto: *parokṣa-vādā rṣayaḥ parokṣam*

mama ca priyam, “The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions.” (SB 11.21.35) In this way the Vasu named Drona (Kṛṣṇa’s *vibhuti*) was merged into Nanda and Drona’s wife Dhara merged into Yasoda; the demigod named Vasu became Uddhava; Indra became Arjuna; Yamaraja became Vidura and

Kartikeya became Samba. Even the Supreme Lord Himself appears through the celebrity of His plenary portions (*amsas*), which actually merge within Him when He appears. For example, sometimes the Lord of Vaikuntha comes and takes birth in the home of Vasudeva, and sometimes it is Lord Vamana, or sometimes Rsi Narayana or Ksirodakasayi Visnu.

In this way Pradyumna, who is the third member of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal fourfold plenary expansion, the *catur-vyūha*, appeared according to the reputation of the mundane Cupid (Kamadeva), who is contained within Himself (Pradyumna) and is an expansion of His own opulence as stated in this verse.

This verse describes Kamadeva as an expansion or *vibhuti* of Kṛṣṇa or Vasudeva (*vāsudevāmśo*). In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa confirms that He is Kamadeva: *prajanaś cāsmi kandarpaḥ*, “Of progenitors I am Kandarpa (Cupid).” (Bg. 10.28) Kamadeva attained another body by entering into the body of Pradyumna. This he attained, not by his own powers, but by the will of the Lord, the ocean of variegated pastimes.

Text 2

*sa eva jāto vaidarbhyām,
kṛṣṇa-vīrya-samudbhavaḥ,
pradyumna iti vikhyātaḥ,
sarvato ’navamaḥ pituḥ*

He took birth in the womb of Vaidarbhī from the seed of Lord

Kṛṣṇa and received the name Pradyumna. In no respect was He inferior to His father.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kamadeva thus became famous as Pradyumna. Actually Pradyumna is part of the *catur-vyuha* with a spiritual *sac-cid-ānanda* body, whereas Kamadeva is just a *jīva* (conditioned soul) with special powers. The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.40) confirms this point:

yatrāsau samsthitaḥ kṛṣṇas, tribhiḥ śaktyā samāhitaḥ rāmāniruddha-pradyumnai, rukmiṇyā sahito vibhuh

“In Dvārakā, the almighty Sri Kṛṣṇa, endowed with His full potency, resided in the company of His three plenary expansions—Balarāma, Aniruddha and Pradyumna.”

This is also stated by Narada Muni in the *mantra* recited by him in the First Canto (SB 1.5.37):

*om namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ, vāsudevāya dhīmahi
pradyumnāyāniruddhāya, namaḥ saṅkarṣaṇāya ca*

“Let us all chant the glories of Vāsudeva along with His plenary expansions Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Saṅkarṣaṇa.”

The present verse mentions that Pradyumna was not less than his father Kṛṣṇa in any way (*sarvataḥ-anavamah-pituḥ*). The mundane Cupid (Kamadeva), the servant of Indra, can never be described in this way. Thus the proper explanation should be that he (Cupid) entered within Pradyumna by the will of the Lord and became situated there, just as the universe is situated within Kṛṣṇa, or as Drona merged with Nanda Maharaja.

Text 3

*taṁ śambarah kāma-rūpī,
hṛtvā tokam anirdaśam,
sa viditvātmanah śatruṁ,
prāsyodanvaty agād grham*

The demon Śambara, who could assume any form he desired, kidnapped the infant before He was even ten days old. Understanding Pradyumna to be his enemy, Śambara threw Him into the sea and then returned home.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sambara stole the infant before he was ten days old. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* says Pradyumna was kidnapped six days after His birth. Sambara understood Kamadeva was his enemy (*viditvā-ātmanah-śatrum*), because he learned from Narada that Kamadeva would kill him in the future.

Text 4

*taṁ nirjagāra balavān,
mīnaḥ so 'py aparaiḥ saha,
vṛto jālena mahatā,
gṛhīto matsya-jīvibhiḥ*

A powerful fish swallowed Pradyumna, and this fish, along with others, was caught in a huge net and seized by fishermen.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pradyumna was swallowed by a powerful fish (*balavān-mīnaḥ*). This was done by the desire of the Lord who likes to perform a variety of pastimes. It was not that the fish was stronger than Pradyumna.

Text 5

taṁ śambarāya kaivartā,

*upājahrur upāyanam,
sūdā mahānasam nītvā-,
vadyan sudhitinādbhutam*

The fishermen presented that extraordinary fish to Śambara, who had his cooks bring it to the kitchen, where they began cutting it up with a butcher knife.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The cooks cut open the fish with a big knife.

Text 6

*dṛṣṭvā tad-udare bālam,
māyāvatyai nyavedayan,
nārado 'kathayat sarvam,
tasyāḥ śaṅkita-cetasaḥ,
bālasya tattvam utpattim,
matsyodara-niveśanam*

Seeing a male child in the belly of the fish, the cooks gave the infant to Māyāvātī, who was astonished. Nārada Muni then appeared and explained to her everything about the child's birth and His entering the fish's abdomen.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Told her everything” (*akathayat-sarvam*) means Narada said, “Māyāvātī, this child is Cupid (Kamadeva), your husband!”

*sā ca kāmasya vai patnī,
ratir nāma yaśasvinī,
patyur nirdagdha-dehasya,
dehotpattim pratīkṣatī,
nirūpitā śambareṇa,
sā sūdaudana-sādhane,
kāmadevaṃ śiśuṃ buddhvā,
cakre snehaṃ tadārbhake*

Māyāvati was in fact Cupid’s renowned wife, Rati. While waiting for her husband to obtain a new body—his previous one having been burnt up—she had been assigned by Śambara to prepare vegetables and rice. Māyāvati understood that this infant was actually Kāmadeva, and thus she began to feel love for Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *Matsya Purana* explains why Mayavati was waiting for Kamadeva (Cupid) to take a new body. When Cupid’s body was burned to ashes by Lord Siva, Rati worshiped Lord Śiva to obtain another body for Cupid. Śambara, having also come to Śiva for a benediction, was recognized by the lord first, who told him, “You should now ask for your benediction.” Śambara, struck with lust at seeing Rati, replied that he wanted her as his benediction, and Śiva complied. Lord Śiva then comforted the weeping Rati, telling her, “Go with him, and in his very home you will attain what you desire.” Thereupon, Rati bewildered Śambara with her deluding power and, taking the name Māyāvati, remained in his house without being touched by him.

Text 9

nāti-dīrghena kālena,

*sa kārṣṇi rūḍha-yauvanaḥ,
janayām āsa nārīṇām,
vīkṣantīnām ca vibhramam*

After a short time, this son of Kṛṣṇa—Pradyumna—attained His full youth. He enchanted all women who gazed upon Him.

Text 10

*sā tam patim padma-dalāyatekṣaṇam,
pralamba-bāhum nara-loka-sundaram,
sa-vrīḍa-hāsottabhita-bhruvekṣatī,
prītyopatasthe ratir aṅga saurataiḥ*

My dear King, with a bashful smile and raised eyebrows, Māyavatī exhibited various gestures of conjugal attraction as she lovingly approached her husband, whose eyes were broad like the petals of a lotus, whose arms were very long and who was the most beautiful of men.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rati expressed conjugal attraction to Pradyumna by the dancing movements of her upraised eyebrows. Here is the truth about this: Intending to inform him of the entire truth of his identity either that very day or else the next day, she was thinking, “Then I will display full conjugal love for him.” But by the whim of destiny Māyavatī came under the sway of lust even before revealing the truth to Him in private, and spontaneously exhibited her conjugal feelings.

Text 11

*tām aha bhagavān kārṣṇir,
mātas te matir anyathā,
mātr̥-bhāvam atikramya,
vartase kāmīnī yathā*

Lord Pradyumna told her, “O mother, your attitude has changed. You are overstepping the proper feelings of a mother and behaving like a lover.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *bhagavān* (Supreme Lord) implies that even though Pradyumna (*kārṣṇir*) was endowed with qualities of omniscience, nevertheless by the will of Kṛṣṇa, the treasure house of transcendental pastimes, Pradyumna’s omniscience became covered and He spoke in this manner. The real meaning of His words is: “You should not have any other tendency than this ecstatic loving attraction you are displaying. After all, you have quite rightly transgressed the mood of a mother (*vatsalya-bhava*), and are actually my lover (*kāmīnī*) in conjugal *rasa*.”

Text 12

*ratir uvāca,
bhavān nārāyaṇa-sutaḥ,
śambareṇa hr̥to gr̥hāt,
ahaṁ te 'dhikṛtā patnī,
ratīḥ kāmo bhavān prabho*

Rati said: You are the son of Lord Nārāyaṇa and were kidnapped from Your parents’ home by Śambara. I, Rati, am Your legitimate

wife, O master, because You are Cupid.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mayavati considered him to be Kamadeva, so she said, “I am your wife.” Pradyumna made her (who was formerly Rati, the material wife of the material Kamadeva) his wife by touching her, just as a touchstone transforms objects by contact. However, she is actually His own eternal *sakti*, the mother of Aniruddha, according to the *Vaiṣṇava-tosani*. [Rukmavati was the actual mother.]

Text 13

*eṣa tvānirdaśam sindhāv,
akṣipac chambaro 'surah,
matsyo 'grasīt tad-udarād,
itaḥ prāpto bhavān prabho*

That demon, Śambara, threw You into the sea when You were not even ten days old, and a fish swallowed You. Then in this very place we recovered You from the fish’s abdomen, O master.

Text 14

*tam imam jahi durdharsam,
durjayam śatrum ātmanaḥ,
māyā-śata-vidam tam ca,
māyābhir mohanādibhiḥ*

Now kill this dreadful Śambara, Your formidable enemy. Although

he knows hundreds of magic spells, You can defeat him with bewildering magic and other techniques.

Text 15

*parīśocati te mātā,
kurarīva gata-prajā,
putra-snehākulā dīnā,
vivatsā gaur ivāturā*

Your poor mother, having lost her son, cries for You like a kurarī bird. She is overwhelmed with love for her child, just like a cow that has lost its calf.

Text 16

*prabhāṣyaivaṁ dadau vidyām,
pradyumnāya mahātmane,
māyāvātī mahā-māyām,
sarva-māyā-vināśinīm*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Speaking thus, Māyāvātī gave to the great soul Pradyumna the mystic knowledge called Mahāmāyā, which vanquishes all other deluding spells.

Text 17

*sa ca śambaram abhyetya,
saṁyugāya samāhvayat,
aviśahyais tam ākṣepaiḥ,
kṣīpan sañjanayan kalim*

Pradyumna approached Śambara and called him to battle, hurling intolerable insults at him to foment a conflict.

Text 18

*so 'dhikṣipto durvācobhiḥ,
padāhata ivoragaḥ,
niścakrāma gadā-pāṇiḥ,
amarṣāt tāmra-locanaḥ*

Offended by these harsh words, Śambara became as agitated as a kicked snake. He came out, club in hand, his eyes red with rage.

Text 19

*gadām āvidhya tarasā,
pradyumnāya mahātmane,
prakṣipyā vyanadan nādam,
vajra-niṣpeṣa-niṣṭhuram*

Śambara whirled his club swiftly about and then hurled it at the

wise Pradyumna, producing a sound as sharp as a thunder crack.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Throwing the club, Sambara produced a sound as sharp as a thunder crack. The phrase *vyanadan nādam*, “creating a resonance” is a valid statement in the same way as the phrase *vacanam avocat*, “he made a statement.”

Text 20

*tām āpatantīm bhagavān,
pradyumno gadayā gadām,
apāsya śatrave kruddhaḥ,
prāhiṇot sva-gadām nṛpa*

As Śambara’s club came flying toward Him, Lord Pradyumna knocked it away with His own. Then, O King, Pradyumna angrily threw His club at the enemy.

Text 21

*sa ca māyām samāśritya,
daiteyīm maya-darśitam,
mumuce ’stra-mayaṁ varṣam,
kāṛṣṇau vaihāyaso ’surah*

Resorting to the black magic of the Daityas taught to him by Maya Dānava, Śambara suddenly appeared in the sky and released a downpour of weapons upon Kṛṣṇa’s son.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While moving in the sky (*vaihayasah*) Sambara released weapons on Kamadeva.

Text 22

*bādhyamāno 'stra-varṣeṇa,
raukmiṇeyo mahā-rathaḥ,
sattvātmikām mahā-vidyām,
sarva-māyopamardinīm*

Harassed by this rain of weapons, Lord Raukmiṇeya, the greatly powerful warrior, made use of the mystic science called Mahā-māyā, which was created from the mode of goodness and which could defeat all other mystic power.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kamadeva used *sattvika* weapons. The verb of the sentence, *prāyuṅkta* (he used) is found in the next verse.

Text 23

*tato gauhyaka-gāndharva-
paiśācoraga-rākṣasīḥ,
prāyuṅkta śataśo daityaḥ,
kārṣṇir vyadhamayat sa tāḥ*

The demon then unleashed hundreds of mystic weapons belonging to the Guhyakas, Gandharvas, Piśācas, Urugas and Rākṣasas, but Lord Kārṣṇi, Pradyumna, struck them all down.

Text 24

*niśātam asim udyamya,
sa-kirīṭam sa-kuṇḍalam,
śambarasya śiraḥ kāyāt,
tāmra-śmaśrv ojasāharat*

Drawing His sharp-edged sword, Pradyumna forcefully cut off Śambara's head, complete with red mustache, helmet and earrings.

Text 25

*ākīryamāṇo divi-jaiḥ,
stuvadbhiḥ kusumot,karaiḥ bhāryayāmbara-cārinyā,
puraṁ nīto vihāyasā*

As the residents of the higher planets showered Pradyumna with flowers and chanted His praises, His wife appeared in the sky and transported Him through the heavens, back to the city of Dvārakā.

Text 26

*antaḥ-pura-varam rājan,
lalanā-śata-saṅkulam,
viveśa patnyā gaganād,
vidyuteva balāhakaḥ*

O King, Lord Pradyumna and His wife resembled a cloud accompanied by lightning as they descended from the sky into the inner quarters of Kṛṣṇa's most excellent palace, which were crowded with lovely women.

Texts 27–28

*taṁ dṛṣṭvā jalada-śyāmaṁ,
pīta-kausēya-vāsasam,
pralamba-bāhuṁ tāmṛākṣaṁ,
su-smitaṁ rucirānanam,
sv-alakṛta-mukhāmbhojaṁ,
nīla-vakrālakālibhiḥ,
kṛṣṇaṁ matvā striyo hrītā,
niliyus tatra tatra ha*

The women of the palace thought He was Lord Kṛṣṇa when they saw His dark-blue complexion the color of a rain cloud, His yellow silk garments, His long arms and red-tinged eyes, His charming lotus face adorned with a pleasing smile, His fine ornaments and His thick, curly blue hair. Thus the women became bashful and hid themselves here and there.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pradyumna looked like Kṛṣṇa with his abundant hair (*ālaka-ālibhiḥ*), which was both dark-blue and curly.

Text 29

avadhārya śanair īṣad,

*vailakṣaṇyena yoṣitah,
upajagmuḥ pramuditāḥ,
sa-strī ratnaṁ su-vismitāḥ*

Gradually, from the slight differences between His appearance and Kṛṣṇa’s, the ladies realized He was not the Lord. Delighted and astonished, they approached Pradyumna and His consort, who was a jewel among women.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Understanding (*avadhārya*) that Pradyumna was not Kṛṣṇa by his differing characteristics, the queens approached him and his consort Rati, who is described as “the jewel among women” (*strī ratnaṁ*).

Text 30

*atha tatrāsītāpāṅgī,
vaidarbhī valgu-bhāṣiṇī,
asmarat sva-sutaṁ naṣṭaṁ,
sneha-snuta-payodharā*

Seeing Pradyumna, sweet-voiced, dark-eyed Rukmiṇī remembered her lost son, and her breasts became moist out of affection.

Text 31

*ko nv ayam nara-vaidūryah,
kasya vā kamalekṣaṇah,
dhṛtaḥ kayā vā jaṭhare,*

keyam labdhā tv anena vā

[Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī-devī said:] Who is this lotus-eyed jewel among men? What man’s son is He, and what woman carried Him in her womb? And who is this woman He has taken as His wife?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “Whose (*kasya*) son is this best among men (*nara-vaidurya*)?”

Text 32

*mama cāpy ātmajo naṣṭo,
nīto yaḥ sūtikā-grhāt,
etat-tulya-vayo-rūpo,
yadi jīvati kutracit*

If my lost son, who was kidnapped from the maternity room, were still alive somewhere, He would be of the same age and appearance as this young man.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini continued, “My son, who was taken by some kidnapper (*bala-graham*, seizer of children), would be of the same age and appearance as this young man.”

Text 33

*katham tv anena samprāptam,
sārūpyam śārṅga-dhanvanam,
ākṛtyāvayavair gatyā,
svara-hāsāvalokanaiḥ*

But how is it that this young man so much resembles my own Lord, Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of Śārṅga, in His bodily form and His limbs, in His gait and the tone of His voice, and in His smiling glance?

Text 34

*sa eva vā bhaven nūnām,
yo me garbhe dhṛto 'rbhakaḥ,
amuṣmin prītir adhikā,
vāmaḥ sphurati me bhujāḥ*

Yes, He must be the same child I bore in my womb, since I feel great affection for Him and my left arm is quivering.

Text 35

*evam mīmāṃsamaṇāyām,
vaidarbhyām devakī-sutaḥ,
devaky-ānakadundubhyām,
uttamaḥ-śloka āgamat*

As Queen Rukmiṇī conjectured in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī, arrived on the scene with Vasudeva and Devakī.

Text 36

*vijñātārtho 'pi bhagavāms,
tūṣṇīm āsa janārdanaḥ,
nārado 'kathayat sarvaṁ,
śambarāharaṇādikam*

Although Lord Janārdana knew perfectly well what had transpired, He remained silent. The sage Nārada, however, explained everything, beginning with Śambara's kidnapping of the child.

Text 37

*tac chrutvā mahad āścaryam,
kṛṣṇāntaḥ-pura-yoṣitaḥ,
abhyanandan bahūn abdān,
naṣtam mṛtam ivāgatam*

When the women of Lord Kṛṣṇa's palace heard this most amazing account, they joyfully greeted Pradyumna, who had been lost for many years but who had now returned as if from the dead.

Text 38

*devakī vasudevaś ca,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau tathā striyaḥ,
dampatī tau pariṣvajya,*

rukmiṇī ca yayur mudam

Devakī, Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and all the women of the palace, especially Queen Rukmiṇī, embraced the young couple and rejoiced.

Text 39

*naṣṭam pradyumnam āyātam,
ākarnya dvāarakaukaṣaḥ,
aho mṛta ivāyāto,
bālo diṣṭyeti hābruvan*

Hearing that lost Pradyumna had come home, the residents of Dvārakā declared, “Ah, providence has allowed this child to return as if from death!”

Text 40

*yaṁ vai muhuḥ pitṛ-sarūpa-nijeṣa-bhāvās,
tan-mātarō yad abhajan raha-rūḍha-bhāvāḥ,
citram na tat khalu ramāspada-bimba-bimbe,
kāme smare 'kṣa-viṣaye kim utānya-nāryaḥ*

It is not astonishing that the palace women, who should have felt maternal affection for Pradyumna, privately felt ecstatic attraction for Him as if He were their own Lord. After all, the son exactly

resembled His father. Indeed, Pradyumna was a perfect reflection of the beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, and appeared before their eyes as Cupid Himself. Since even those on the level of His mother felt conjugal attraction for Him, then what to speak of how other women felt when they saw Him?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the beauty of Pradyumna. On seeing Him Rukmini thought of (*bhāvās*) her own Lord, Sri Kṛṣṇa, because His beauty was equal to that of Kṛṣṇa, His father. However, the word *tan-mātaro* (his mothers) refers to Rukmini alone, but appears in the plural form to show respect. Even before finding out Pradyumna’s identity, Rukmini developed full-blown ecstatic motherly love (*bhāvah:vātsalya-mayī prītiḥ*) for Him, as stated previously in verse thirty-four: *amuṣmin prītir adhikā*, “I feel great affection for Him.”

Rukmini displayed her parental affection in the privacy of her chambers (*raha*), since Kṛṣṇa’s other wives did not have the right to enter there. Concluding that Pradyumna must be her lost son, but still doubtful, Rukmini then “worshiped him” (*abhajan*) by inspecting his limbs, smelling his head, and stroking his body with her hands. It was not astonishing for her to act in this way with Pradyumna. Why? Because He was the shelter of the goddess of fortune (*ramāspada*), the abode of all beauty, and the most perfect reflection of the personal form of Kṛṣṇa (*bimba-bimbe:sri kṛṣṇa-gātram*) to be seen in all the three worlds. Thus Rukmini ascertained that Pradyumna was Kṛṣṇa’s son, and now had directly realized this herself. But only she, His mother, had such an attitude toward Him, and no other women as stated by the words beginning *kāme smare*. Pradyumna is called Kamadeva or Smara because whenever the palace women saw Pradyumna, they immediately remembered their consort, Sri Kṛṣṇa. Even without Pradyumna’s presence, lust would arise in the queens just by remembering (*smara*) Him. What to speak then of his personal presence? Could any other women behave like Rukmini towards Pradyumna (Kamadeva, Smara)? No, they could not, for they would become agitated by lust.

Chapter Fifty-six: The Syamantaka Jewel

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
satrājitaḥ sva-tanayām,
kṛṣṇāya kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ,
syamantakena maṇinā,
svayam udyamya dattavān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having offended Lord Kṛṣṇa, Satrājīt tried as best he could to atone by presenting Him with his daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa gets a bad reputation due to a false rumor, collects the Syamantaka jewel and Jambavati, the daughter of Jambavan, whom He marries upon returning to Dvaraka. The name Satrājīt sometimes ends in *akāra* (“a”) and sometimes in *takāra* (“ta”).

Text 2

*śrī-rājovāca,
satrājitaḥ kim akarod,
brahman kṛṣṇasya kilbiṣaḥ,
syamantakaḥ kutas tasya,
kasmād dattā sutā hareḥ*

Mahārāja Parīkṣit inquired: O brāhmaṇa, what did King Satrājīt do to offend Lord Kṛṣṇa? Where did he get the Syamantaka jewel, and why did he give his daughter to the Supreme Lord?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja asked, “Why did Satrājīt give his daughter to Hari?” The word *hareḥ* means *haraye* (Lord Hari).

Text 3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
āśīt satrājitaḥ sūryo,
bhaktasya paramaḥ sakhā,
prītas tasmai maṇim prādāt,
sa ca tuṣṭaḥ syamantakam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Sū rya, the sun-god, felt great affection for his devotee Satrājīt. Acting as his greatest friend, the demigod gave him the jewel called Syamantaka as a token of his satisfaction.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Satrajit was a respectful devotee of the sun-god, the sun-god treated him affectionately as a best friend (*paramaḥ sakhā*).

Text 4

*sa taṁ bibhran maṇim kaṅṭhe,
bhrājamāno yathā raviḥ,
praviṣṭo dvārakām rājan,
tejasā nopalakṣitaḥ*

Wearing the jewel on his neck, Satrājīit entered Dvāarakā. He shone as brightly as the sun itself, O King, and thus he went unrecognized because of the jewel's effulgence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The citizens did not recognize (*nopalakṣitaḥ*) Satrajit; they mistook him for the sun-god.

Text 5

*taṁ vilokya janā dūrāt,
tejasā muṣṭa-drṣṭayaḥ,
dīvyate 'kṣair bhagavate,
śaśamsuḥ sūrya-śaṅkitāḥ*

As the people looked at Satrājīit from a distance, his brilliance blinded them. They presumed he was the sun-god, Sū rya , and went to tell Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was at that time playing at dice.

Text 6

*nārāyaṇa namaḥ te 'stu,
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara,
dāmodarāravindākṣa,
govinda yadu-nandana*

[The residents of Dvāarakā said:] Obeisances unto You, O Nārāyaṇa, O holder of the conch, disc and club, O lotus-eyed Dāmodara, O Govinda, O cherished descendant of Yadu!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By chanting His names, the Dvarakavasis caught the attention of Kṛṣṇa, who was absorbed in a dice game.

Text 7

*eṣa āyāti savitā,
tvām didr̥kṣur jagat-pate,
muṣṇan gabhasti-cakreṇa,
nr̥ṇām cakṣūṃṣi tigma-guḥ*

Lord Savitā has come to see You, O Lord of the universe. He is blinding everyone’s eyes with his intensely effulgent rays.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They said, “Lord Savita is blinding (*muṣṇan*:stealing) our eyes with the network of His intense rays (*gabhasti-cakreṇa*).”

Text 8

*nanv anvicchanti te mārgam,
trī-lokyām vibudharṣabhāḥ,
jñātvādyā gūḍham yaduṣu,
draṣṭum tvām yāty ajaḥ prabho*

The most exalted demigods in the three worlds are certainly anxious to seek You out, O Lord, now that You have hidden Yourself among the Yadu dynasty. Thus the unborn sun-god has come to see You here.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa might object, “Why does the sun-god want to see Me, a mere mortal?” They answer, “Indeed (*nanu:niścitam*) the best of the demigods search for You, and today the unborn (*ajah*) sun-god has come to see You.”

Text 9

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
niśamyā bāla-vacanām,
prahasyāmbuja-locanaḥ,
prāha nāsau ravir devaḥ,
satrājīn maṇinā jvalan*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: Hearing these innocent words, the lotus-eyed Lord smiled broadly and said, “This is not the sun-god, Ravi, but rather Satrājīt, who is glowing because of his jewel.”

Text 10

*satrājīt sva-grham śrīmat,
kṛta-kautuka-maṅgalam,
praviśya deva-sadane,
maṇim viprair nyaveśayat*

King Satrājīt entered his opulent home, festively executing auspicious rituals. He had qualified brāhmaṇas install the Syamantaka jewel in the house’s temple room.

Text 11

*dine dine svarṇa-bhārān,
aṣṭau sa sṛjati prabho,
durbhikṣa-māry-ariṣṭāni,
sarpādhi-vyādhayo 'śubhāḥ,
na santi māyinas tatra,
yatrāste 'bhyarcito maṇiḥ*

Each day the gem would produce eight bhāras of gold, my dear Prabhu, and the place in which it was kept and properly worshiped would be free of calamities such as famine or untimely death, and also of evils like snake bites, mental and physical disorders and the presence of deceitful persons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Everyday the Syamantaka jewel produced eight *bhāras* of gold (*svaṇṇa-bhārān aṣṭau*). The measurement of a *bhāra* is defined as follows:

*caturbhir vrīhibhir guṅjām, guṅjāḥ pañca paṇam paeam aṣṭau
dharaṇam aṣṭau ca, karṣam tāṁś caturaḥ palam tulām pala-śatam
prāhur, bhāraḥ syād vimśatis tulāḥ*

“Four rice grains are called one *guṅjā*; five *guṅjās*, one *paṇa*; eight *paṇas*, one *karṣa*; four *karṣas*, one *pala*; and one hundred *palas*, one *tulā*. Twenty *tulās* make up one *bhāra*.” Since there are about 3,700 grains of rice in an ounce, the Syamantaka jewel was producing approximately 170 pounds (78 kgs.) of gold every day.” There can be no untimely death (*mari*) where this jewel is situated.

Text 12

*sa yācito maṇim kvāpi,
yadu-rājāya śauriṇā,
naivārtha-kāmukah prādād,
yācñā-bhaṅgam atarkayan*

On one occasion Lord Kṛṣṇa requested Satrājīto to give the jewel to the Yadu king, Ugrasena, but Satrājīto was so greedy that he refused. He gave no thought to the seriousness of the offense he committed by denying the Lord’s request.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked Satrajit to donate the jewel to the treasury of King Ugrasena (*yadu-rājāya*, the king of the Yadus). Satrajit refused without even considering the results of ignoring the Lord’s request (*yācñā-bhaṅgam atarkayan*). By not offering the jewel to Kṛṣṇa, but enjoying it himself instead, that object, which had the power to remove all misfortune, would instead become the cause of all misfortune. How much more this is so, then, when even though Kṛṣṇa Himself was requesting it for King Ugrasena, still Satrajit refused to offer it to Him.

Text 13

*tam ekadā maṇim kaṅthe,
pratimucya mahā-prabham,
praseno hayam āruhya,
mṛgāyām vyacarad vane*

Once Satrājīto’s brother, Prasena, having hung the brilliant jewel about his neck, mounted a horse and went hunting in the forest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Prasena, Satrajit’s brother, fixed

(*pratimucya*) the jewel around his neck and went hunting. This verse introduces a series of verses which describe the inauspicious results of Satrājīt's refusal of Kṛṣṇa's request.

Text 14

*prasenaṁ sa-hayaṁ hatvā,
maṇim ācchidya keśarī,
giriṁ viśan jāmbavatā,
nihato maṇim icchatā*

A lion killed Prasena and his horse and took the jewel. But when the lion entered a mountain cave he was killed by Jāmbavān, who wanted the jewel.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After killing Prasena, the lion seized (*ācchidya*) the jewel.

Text 15

*so 'pi cakre kumārasya,
maṇim krīḍanakam bile,
apaśyan bhrātaram bhrātā,
satrājīt paryatapyata*

Within the cave Jāmbavān let his young son have the Syamantaka jewel as a toy to play with. Meanwhile Satrājīt, not seeing his brother return, became deeply troubled.

Text 16

*prāyaḥ kṛṣṇena nihato,
maṇi-grīvo vanaṁ gataḥ,
bhrātā mameti tac chrutvā,
karṇe karṇe 'japan janāḥ*

He said, “Kṛṣṇa probably killed my brother, who went to the forest wearing the jewel on his neck.” The general populace heard this accusation and began whispering it in one another’s ears.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those people who were of a similar evil nature heard this and whispered about it to each other (*ajapan*).

Text 17

*bhagavāms tad upaśrutyā,
duryaśo liptam ātmani,
mārṣtuṁ prasena-padavīm,
anvapadyata nāgaraiḥ*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard this rumor, He wanted to remove the stain on His reputation. So He took some of Dvārakā’s citizens with Him and set out to retrace Prasena’s path.

Text 18

hataṁ prasenaṁ aśvaṁ ca,

*vīkṣya keśariṇā vane,
taṁ cādri-prṣṭhe nihataṁ,
ṛkṣeṇa dadṛśur janāḥ*

In the forest they found Prasena and his horse, both killed by the lion. Further on they found the lion dead on a mountainside, slain by Ākṣa [Jāmbavān].

Text 19

*ṛkṣa-rāja-bilaṁ bhīmam,
andhena tamasāvṛtam,
eko viveśa bhagavān,
avasthāpya bahiḥ prajāḥ*

The Lord stationed His subjects outside the terrifying, pitch-dark cave of the king of the bears, and then He entered alone.

Text 20

*tatra dṛṣtvā maṇi-preṣṭham,
bāla-krīḍanakam kṛtam,
hartuṁ kṛta-matis tasminn,
avatasthe 'rbhakāntike*

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that the most precious of jewels had been made into a child's plaything. Determined to take it away, He

approached the child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa saw the jewel, which had become a toy for the child.

Text 21

*tam apūrvam naram dṛṣṭvā,
dhātrī cukrośa bhīta-vat,
tac chrutvābhyadravat kruddho,
jāmbavān balinām varaḥ*

The child’s nurse cried out in fear upon seeing that extraordinary person standing before them. Jāmbavān, strongest of the strong, heard her cries and angrily ran toward the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The nurse “cried in fear” (*cukrośa bhīta-vat*) implies that she did not even see Kṛṣṇa’s intention to take away the jewel. In actuality, however, she was not afraid, since ecstasy arose in her as the natural effect of seeing Kṛṣṇa.

Text 22

*sa vai bhagavatā tena,
yuyudhe svāmīnātmanah,
puruṣam prākṛtaṁ matvā,
kupito nānubhāva-vit*

Unaware of His true position and thinking Him an ordinary man, Jāmbavān angrily began fighting with the Supreme Lord, his

master.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa never experienced the satisfaction of a good fight with such weaklings as Canura, Kamsa and Jarasandha. Therefore the Lord desired to fight with one of His own servants having similar strength as Himself, and thus achieve the happiness of battle. Kṛṣṇa also wanted to please His devotee, Jambavan, who had not attained a full taste of *vira-rasa* (heroism) even by fighting with the armies of Ravana. To fulfill His and Jambavan's desires, Kṛṣṇa ordered *yogamaya* to use His *lila-sakti* to cover His sweet (*madhurya*) aspect from Jambavan. Thus Jambavan thought of Kṛṣṇa as an ordinary human.

Text 23

*dvandva-yuddham su-tumulam,
ubhayor vijigīṣatoḥ,
āyudhāśma-drumair dorbhiḥ,
kravyārthe śyenayor iva*

The two fought furiously in single combat, each determined to win. Contending against each other with various weapons and then with stones, tree trunks and finally their bare arms, they struggled like two hawks battling over a piece of flesh.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They fought like two hawks fighting for flesh (*kravya*).

Text 24

āsīt tad aṣṭā-vimśāham,

*itaretara-muṣṭibhiḥ,
vajra-niṣpeṣa-paruṣair,
aviśramam ahar-niśam*

The fight went on without rest for twenty-eight days, the two opponents striking each other with their fists, which fell like the cracking blows of lightning.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They fought continuously for twenty-eight days and nights (*ahar-niśam*) without a moment’s rest; with blows (*niṣpeṣa*) as hard as the striking of thunderbolts.

Text 25

*kṛṣṇa-muṣṭi-viniṣpāta,
niṣpiṣṭāṅgoru bandhanaḥ,
kṣīṇa-sattvaḥ svinna-gātras,
tam āhātīva vismitaḥ*

His bulging muscles pummeled by the blows of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s fists, his strength faltering and his limbs perspiring, Jāmbavān, greatly astonished, finally spoke to the Lord.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Jambavan’s huge muscles were being beaten by Kṛṣṇa, he considered, “Who can be stronger than me except Rama?” Remembering those old thoughts, Jambavan became astonished and concluded that this must be his Lord.

Text 26

*jāne tvām sarva-bhūtānām,
prāṇa ojaḥ saho balam,
viṣṇuṁ purāṇa-puruṣaṁ,
prabhaviṣṇuṁ adhīśvaram*

[Jāmbavān said:] I know now that You are the life air and the sensory, mental and bodily strength of all living beings. You are Lord Viṣṇu, the original person, the supreme, all-powerful controller.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jambavan said, “If all the *prana* of the countless living entities in all the billions of universes were brought together, and if all the strengths of all the senses (*oja*), minds (*saha*) and bodies (*bala*) were brought together in one place, still I understand that all this would be You alone, since all these are Your *vibhūti*s. Thus how can Your strength be countered by the strength of one entity like me? It is like a butterfly trying to defeat Garuda. You are the all-pervading Lord Visnu and I am a single localized individual. You are the primeval person and I am a recently manifest person. You are all-powerful (*prabhaviṣṇuṁ*) and I am powerless. You are the supreme controller of all (*adhīśvaram*) and I am the controlled.”

Text 27

*tvam hi viśva-sṛjām sraṣṭā,
sṛṣṭānām api yac ca sat,
kālaḥ kalayatām īśaḥ,
para ātmā tathātmanām*

You are the ultimate creator of all creators of the universe, and of everything created You are the underlying substance. You are the

subduer of all subduers, the Supreme Lord and Supreme Soul of all souls.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jambavan said, “You are the creator of all creators of the universe, and I am only the creation of Brahma. You alone are the cause (*sat*) of all the entities created within the universe. Brahma and other creators are merely secondary creators. Of destroyers You are time, the ultimate destroyer (*kala*) capable of doing it, whereas I am subject to annihilation. You are the Supreme Soul of all living entities (*jīvas*), whereas I am only one of the *jīvas*.”

Text 28

*yasyeṣad-utkalita-roṣa-kaṭākṣa-mokṣair;
vartmādiśat kṣubhita-nakra-timīṅgalo 'bdhiḥ,
setuḥ kṛtaḥ sva-yaśa ujjvalitā ca laṅkā,
rakṣaḥ-śirāmsi bhuvī petur iṣu-kṣatāni*

You are He who impelled the ocean to give way when His sidelong glances, slightly manifesting His anger, disturbed the crocodiles and timiṅgila fish within the watery depths. You are He who built a great bridge to establish His fame, who burned down the city of Laṅkā, and whose arrows severed the heads of Rāvaṇa, which then fell to the ground.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jambavan said, “Since all these things are true, I know You are my worshipable Lord Ramacandra. By casting a slight glance of anger, You made the ocean, which was filled with agitated crocodiles and *timiṅgila* fish, give You passage to Lanka. You built a bridge as well, which is Your very fame, and Lanka was burned down. Your arrows severed Ravana’s ten heads, which then fell to the ground.”

Texts 29–30

*iti vijñāta-vijñānam,
ṛkṣa-rājānam acyutaḥ,
vyājahāra mahā-rāja,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
abhīmṛśyāravindākṣaḥ,
pāṇinā śam-kareṇa tam,
kṛpayā parayā bhaktam,
megha-gambhīrayā girā*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] O King, Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed the king of the bears, who had understood the truth. The lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, touched Jāmbavān with His hand, which bestows all blessings, and spoke to His devotee with sublime compassion, His grave voice deeply resounding like a cloud.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jambavan personally realized (*vijnata*) the knowledge (*vijñānam:visistha-jñāna*) of Bhagavan, so Kṛṣṇa touched him with His hand to relieve His devotee of his bodily pains.

Text 31

*maṇi-hetor iha prāptā,
vayam ṛkṣa-pate bilam,
mithyābhiśāpaṁ pramṛjann,
ātmano maṇināmunā*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is for this jewel, O lord of the bears, that we have come to your cave. I intend to use the jewel to disprove the false accusations against Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Many of us came to the entrance of this cave, and I have entered it in order to dispel the false rumors about Me concerning this jewel.”

Text 32

*ity uktāḥ svām duhitaram,
kanyām jāmbavatīm mudā,
arhaṇārtham sa maṇinā,
kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha*

Thus addressed, Jāmbavān happily honored Lord Kṛṣṇa by offering Him his maiden daughter, Jāmbavatī, together with the jewel.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Jambavan happily gave his virgin daughter to Kṛṣṇa along with the jewel.

Text 33

*adṛṣṭvā nirgamam śaureḥ,
praviṣṭasya bilam janāḥ,
pratīksya dvādaśāhāni,
duḥkhitāḥ sva-puram yayuḥ*

After Lord Śāuri had entered the cave, the people of Dvārakā who

had accompanied Him had waited twelve days without seeing Him come out again. Finally they had given up and returned to their city in great sorrow.

Text 34

*niśamya devakī devī,
rakmiṇy ānakadundubhiḥ,
suhṛdo jñātayo 'socan,
bilāt kṛṣṇam anirgatam*

When Devakī, Rukmiṇī-devī, Vasudeva and the Lord's other relatives and friends heard that He had not come out of the cave, they all lamented.

Text 35

*satrājitam śapantas te,
duḥkhitā dvāarakaukaṣaḥ,
upatasthuś candrabhāgām,
durgām kṛṣṇopalabdhaye*

Cursing Satrājit, the sorrowful residents of Dvārakā approached the Durgā deity named Candrabhāgā and prayed to her for Kṛṣṇa's return.

Text 36

*teṣām tu devy-upasthānāt,
pratyādiṣṭāśiṣā sa ca,
prādurbabhūva siddhārthaḥ,
sa-dāro harṣayan hariḥ*

When the citizens had finished worshiping the demigoddess, she spoke to them in response, promising to grant their request. Just then Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had achieved His purpose, appeared before them in the company of His new wife, filling them with joy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the Dvarakavasis finished worshiping Devi, she gave (*pratyādiṣṭa:dattāḥ*) a blessing, “You will see Kṛṣṇa.” However, if we substitute the word *āsavāḥ* (senses) for *āśiṣāḥ* (benediction), the verse means, “Kṛṣṇa, who is the dearest object of everyone’s senses, appeared.”

Text 37

*upalabhya hr̥ṣīkeśam,
mṛtam punar ivāgatam,
saha patnyā maṇi-grīvaṁ,
sarve jāta-mahotsavāḥ*

Seeing Lord Hṛṣīkeśa return as if from death, accompanied by His new wife and wearing the Syamantaka jewel on His neck, all the people were roused to jubilation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa was wearing the jewel which Jāmbavān had placed on His neck when offering his daughter in

marriage.

Text 38

*satrājitaṁ samāhūya,
sabhāyām rāja-sannidhau,
prāptiṁ cākhyāya bhagavān,
maṇiṁ tasmai nyavedayat*

Lord Kṛṣṇa summoned Satrājit to the royal assembly. There, in the presence of King Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa announced the recovery of the jewel and then formally presented it to Satrājit.

Text 39

*sa cāti-vr̥ḍito ratnaṁ,
grh̥ītvāvān-mukhas tataḥ,
anutapyamāno bhavanam,
agamat svena pāpmanā*

Hanging his head in great shame, Satrājit took the gem and returned home, all the while feeling remorse for his sinful behavior.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Satrajit was repentent (*anutapyamānaḥ*) for his offensive behavior.

*so 'nudhyāyaṁs tad evāghaṁ,
balavad-vigrahākulaḥ,
kathaṁ mṛjāmy ātma-rajāḥ,
prasīded vācyutaḥ katham,
kim kṛtvā sādhu mahyaṁ syān,
na śaped vā jano yathā,
adīrgha-darśanaṁ kṣudraṁ,
mūḍhaṁ draviṇa-lolupam,
dāsyē duhitaraṁ tasmai,
strī-ratnaṁ ratnam eva ca,
upāyo 'yaṁ samīcīnas,
tasya śāntir na cānyathā*

Pondering over his grievous offense and worried about the possibility of conflict with the Lord's mighty devotees, King Satrājīt thought, "How can I cleanse myself of my contamination, and how may Lord Acyuta become satisfied with me? What can I do to regain my good fortune and avoid being cursed by the populace for being so short-sighted, miserly, foolish and avaricious? I shall give my daughter, the jewel of all women, to the Lord, together with the Syamantaka jewel. That, indeed, is the only proper way to pacify Him."

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Satrajit was worried that the mighty followers of Kṛṣṇa would react inimically (*vigrahaḥ:virodhaḥ*) toward him. His meditation on this matter is described in two and a half verses.

Text 43

*evaṁ vyavasito buddhyā,
satrājīt sva-sutām śubhām,
maṇim ca svayam udyamya,*

kṛṣṇāyopajahāra ha

Having thus intelligently made up his mind, King Satrājīta personally arranged to present Lord Kṛṣṇa with his fair daughter and the Syamantaka jewel.

Text 44

*tām satyabhāmām bhagavān,
upayeme yathā-vidhi,
bahubhir yācitām śīla-
rūpaudārya-guṇānvitām*

The Lord married Satyabhāmā in proper religious fashion. Possessed of excellent behavior, along with beauty, broad-mindedness and all other good qualities, she had been sought by many men.

Text 45

*bhagavān āha na maṇim,
pratīcchāmo vyaṁ nrpa,
tavāstām deva-bhaktasya,
vyaṁ ca phala-bhāginah*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead told Satrājīta: We do not care to take this jewel back, O King. You are the sun-god's devotee, so let

it stay in your possession. Thus We will also enjoy its benefits.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: With a touch of irony, Kṛṣṇa said, “After all, you are a devotee of the sun-god (*deva-bhaktasya*), so let the jewel remain with you. Since you are without a son, Satyabhama is your greatest treasure, and now that treasure is Mine!”

Chapter Fifty-seven: Satrājīṭ Murdered, the Jewel Returned

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
vijñātārtho 'pi govindo,
dagdhān ākarṇya pāṇḍavān,
kuntīm ca kulya-karaṇe,
saha-rāmo yayau kurūn*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Although Lord Govinda was fully aware of what had actually occurred, when He heard reports that the Pāṇḍavas and Queen Kuntī had burned to death, He went with Lord Balarāma to the kingdom of the Kurus to fulfill the family obligations expected of Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Satrajit is murdered, Kṛṣṇa kills Satadhanva and receives the Syamantaka jewel from Akrura. Since the jewel was the cause of Satrajit's death, one learns that the object which ordinarily protects one can also kill him, if one offends Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa was quite aware that the Pāṇḍavas had escaped the assassination plot of Duryodhana. Yet upon hearing that Kunti and the Pandavas were burned, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama went to the Kurus to perform the necessary rites.

Text 2

*bhīṣmaṁ kṛpaṁ sa viduram,
gāndhārīm droṇam eva ca,*

*tulya-duḥkhau ca saṅgamyā,
hā kaṣṭam iti hocatuḥ*

The two Lords met with Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Vidura, Gāndhārī and Droṇa. Showing sorrow equal to theirs, They cried out, “Alas, how painful this is!”

Text 3

*labdhvaitad antaram rājan,
śatadhanvānam ūcatuḥ,
akrūra-kṛtavarmāṇau,
maniḥ kasmān na gṛhyate*

Taking advantage of this opportunity, O King, Akrū ra and Kṛtavarmā went to Śatadhanvā and said, “Why not take the Syamantaka jewel?”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking advantage of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama’s absence from Dvaraka, Akrura and Kṛtavarma went to Satadhanva and flattered him saying, “You are much braver than we are, so you should kill Satrajit.”

Text 4

*yo ’smabhyaṁ sampratiśrutya,
kanyā-ratnam vigarhya naḥ,
kṛṣṇāyādān na satrājīti,
kasmād bhrātaram anvīyāt*

“Satrājīṭ promised his jewellike daughter to us but then gave her to Kṛṣṇa instead, contemptuously neglecting us. So why should Satrājīṭ not follow his brother’s path?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Akrura and Kṛtavarma speak of Satrajit’s faults. According to previous statements in the *Bhagavatam*, many suitors requested Satyabhama as their bride, and Satrajit had promised her to each one. “Should he not follow his brother Prasena to death because of this?”

However, senior commentators say that Akrura and Kṛtavarma, two great devotees of the Lord, were furious with Satrajit because he had insulted Kṛṣṇa and spread false rumors about Him in Dvārakā. Therefore, they instigated Satadhanva to kill him.

Text 5

*evam bhinna-matis tābhyām,
satrājītam asattamaḥ,
śayānam avadhīl lobhāt,
sa pāpaḥ kṣīṇa jīvitaḥ*

His mind thus influenced by their advice, wicked Śatadhanvā murdered Satrājīṭ in his sleep simply out of greed. In this way the sinful Śatadhanvā shortened his own life span.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: With his mind confused (*bhinna-matis*) by Akrura and Kṛtavarma, Satadhanva, out of greed for the jewel, killed Satrajit while he was sleeping. The word *asattamaḥ* (most wicked) indicates that Śatadhanvā was basically evil-minded and a firm hater of Satrajit.

Text 6

*strīṅām vikrośamānānām,
krandantīnām anātha-vat,
hatvā paśūn saunika-van,
maṇim ādāya jagmivān*

As the women of Satrājīt's palace screamed and helplessly wept, Śatadhanvā took the jewel and left, like a butcher after he has killed some animals.

Text 7

*satyabhāmā ca pitaram,
hataṁ vīkṣya śucārpitā,
vyalapat tāta tāteti,
hā hatāsmīti muhyatī*

When Satyabhāmā saw her dead father, she was plunged into grief. Lamenting “My father, my father! Oh, I am killed!” she fell unconscious.

Text 8

*taila-droṇyām mṛtaṁ prāsya,
jagāma gajasāhvayam,*

*kr̥ṣṇāya vīditārthāya,
taptācakhyau pitur vadham*

Queen Satyabhāmā put her father’s corpse in a large vat of oil and went to Hastināpura, where she sorrowfully told Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was already aware of the situation, about her father’s murder.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Why did Satyabhama go to Hastinapura? People said that since her husband was the Supreme Lord, she could have Him bring her father back to life. For that reason Satyabhama went to Hastinapura, and not out of affection for her father, because her father disliked Kṛṣṇa. By her grieving (*tapta*) Satyabhama was encouraging Kṛṣṇa to appear to show grief as well.

Text 9

*tad ākarṇyeśvarau rājann,
anusṛtya nṛ-lokatām,
aho naḥ paramaṁ kaṣṭam,
ity asrākṣau vilepatuḥ*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma heard this news, O King, They exclaimed, “Alas! This is the greatest tragedy for Us!” Thus imitating the ways of human society, They lamented, Their eyes brimming with tears.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After hearing her words, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama made a show of lamentation just to satisfy the public, but They did not shed any real tears.

Text 10

*āgatya bhagavāms tasmāt,
sa-bhāryaḥ sāgrajaḥ puram,
śatadhanvānam ārebhe,
hantum hartum maṇim tataḥ*

The Supreme Lord returned to His capital with His wife and elder brother. After arriving in Dvārakā, He readied Himself to kill Śatadhanvā and retrieve the jewel from him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Satyabhama returned to Dvaraka she told her relatives that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama had tearfully lamented, “We cannot bring Satrajit back to life.”

Text 11

*so 'pi kṛtodyamaṁ jñātvā,
bhītaḥ prāṇa-parīpsayā,
sāhāyye kṛtavarmānam,
ayācata sa cābravīt*

Upon learning that Lord Kṛṣṇa was preparing to kill him, Śatadhanvā was struck with fear. To save his life he approached Kṛtavarmā and begged him for help, but Kṛtavarmā replied as follows.

Texts 12–13

*nāham īsvarayoḥ kuryām,
helanam rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ,
ko nu kṣemāya kalpeta,
tayor vṛjinam ācaran,
kaṁsah sahānugo 'pīto,
yad-dveṣāt tyājitaḥ śriyā,
jarāsandhaḥ saptadaśa-
sam̐yugād viratho gataḥ*

[Kṛtavarmā said:] I dare not offend the Supreme Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Indeed, how can one who troubles Them expect any good fortune? Kāṁsa and all his followers lost both their wealth and their lives because of enmity toward Them, and after battling Them seventeen times Jarāsandha was left without even a chariot.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Krtavarma told Satadhanva, “Indeed, I instigated you to murder Satrajit, but not out of enmity towards Kṛṣṇa. However, if you do not want to surrender to Kṛṣṇa, why should I follow you and also go against the Lord?”

Krtavarma said, “Kāṁsa and his followers died (*apītaḥ*) and thus lost their wealth.” Or the sentence can mean, “Kāṁsa and his company were already dead because of their enmity towards the Lord, and they were also rejected by Lakṣmi. Kṛṣṇa defeated Jarasandha in seventeen battles.”

Text 14

*pratyākhyātaḥ sa cākrūram,
pārṣṇi-grāham ayācata,
so 'py āha ko virudhyeta,
vidvān īśvarayor balam*

His appeal refused, Śatadhanvā went to Akrū ra and begged him for protection. But Akrū ra similarly told him, “Who would oppose the two Personalities of Godhead if he knew Their strength?”

Text 15

*ya idam līlayā viśvaṁ,
sṛjaty avati hanti ca,
ceṣṭām viśva-sṛjo yasya,
na vidur mohitājayā*

“It is the Supreme Lord who creates, maintains and destroys this universe simply as His pastime. The cosmic creators cannot even understand His purpose, bewildered as they are by His illusory Māyā.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrura’s use of the singular *yaḥ*, “He who”, indicates that the frequent references to “the two Lords, Kṛṣṇa and Rāma”, do not compromise the fact there is one Supreme Godhead, one Absolute Truth, who appears in His original form as Kṛṣṇa. The irregular connection (*sandhi*) of the phrase *mohita ājayā* to *mohitājayā* is poetic license.

Text 16

*yaḥ sapta-hāyanaḥ śailam,
utpātyaikena pāṇinā,
dadhāra līlayā bāla,
ucchilīndhram ivārbhakaḥ*

“As a child of seven, Kṛṣṇa uprooted an entire mountain and held it aloft as easily as a young boy picks up a mushroom.

Text 17

*namas tasmai bhagavate,
kṛṣṇāyādbhuta-karmaṇe,
anantāyādi-bhūtāya,
kūṭa-sthāyātmane namaḥ*

“I offer my obeisances to that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, whose every deed is amazing. He is the Supreme Soul, the unlimited source and fixed center of all existence.”

Text 18

*pratyākhyātaḥ sa tenāpi,
śatadhanvā mahā-maṇim,
tasmin nyasyāśvam āruhya,
śata-yojana-gaṁ yayau*

His appeal thus rejected by Akrū ra also, Śatadhanvā placed the precious jewel in Akrū ra’s care and fled on a horse that could travel one hundred yojanas [eight hundred miles].

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The term *nyasya* “leaving in the care

of” implies Śatadhanvā now believed the jewel was his; thus he left it in the care of his friend, Akrura. The special quality of the horse was its ability to run for hundreds of miles in an emergency. It will be stated that the horse went with great difficulty all the way from Dvaraka to a garden on the outskirts of Mithila and then died of exhaustion.

Text 19

*garuḍa-dhvajam āruhya,
ratham rāma-janārdanau,
anvayātām mahā-vegair,
aśvai rājan guru-druham*

My dear King, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma mounted Kṛṣṇa’s chariot, which flew the flag of Garuḍa and was yoked with tremendously swift horses, and pursued Their elder’s murderer.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama pursued Satadhanva, the killer of Their father-in-law (*guru*).

Text 20

*mithilāyām upavane,
visṛjya patitam hayam,
padbhyām adhāvat santrastah,
kṛṣṇo ’py anvadravad ruṣā*

In a garden on the outskirts of Mithilā, the horse Śatadhanvā was riding collapsed. Terrified, he abandoned the horse and began to flee on foot, with Kṛṣṇa in angry pursuit.

Text 21

*padāter bhagavāms tasya,
padātis tigma-neminā,
cakreṇa śira utkr̥tya,
vāsasor vyacinon maṇim*

As Śatadhanvā fled on foot, the Supreme Lord, also going on foot, cut off his head with His sharp-edged disc. The Lord then searched Śatadhanvā’s upper and lower garments for the Syamantaka jewel.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa, being omniscient, knew that Akrura had the jewel, He made a show of searching for it in order to confuse Balarama who was observing from a distance. By doing this Kṛṣṇa was able to separate Himself from Balarama, so that Balarama could give mercy to His pure devotee King Bahulasva in Mitihila.

Text 22

*alabdha-manir āgatya,
kṛṣṇa āhāgrajāntikam,
vṛthā hataḥ śatadhanur,
maṇis tatra na vidyate*

Not finding the jewel, Lord Kṛṣṇa went to His elder brother and said, “We have killed Śatadhanvā uselessly. The jewel isn’t here.”

Text 23

*tata āha balo nūnaṁ,
sa maṇiḥ śatadhanvanā,
kasmimścit puruṣe nyastas,
tam anveṣa puram vraja*

To this Lord Balarāma replied, “Indeed, Śatadhanvā must have placed the jewel in the care of someone. You should return to Our city and find that person.

Text 24

*ahaṁ vaideham icchāmi,
draṣṭuṁ priyatamaṁ mama,
ity uktvā mithilām rājan,
viveśa yada-nandanaḥ*

“I wish to visit King Videha, who is most dear to Me.” O King, having said this, Lord Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu, entered the city of Mithilā.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking that “Even though Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, He is acting like this to fool Me”, Balarama concealed His anger because He was supposed to be bewildered by Kṛṣṇa, and spoke this verse. Balarama said, “Now I would like to visit Mithila. You return to Dvaraka and give the jewel to Your beloved, but I will stay here.”

Text 25

*taṁ dṛṣṭvā sahasotthāya,
maithilāḥ prīta-mānasaḥ,
arhayām āsa vidhi-vad,
arhaṇīyaṁ samarhaṇaiḥ*

The King of Mithilā immediately rose from his seat when he saw Lord Balarāma approaching. With great love the King honored the supremely worshipable Lord by offering Him elaborate worship, as stipulated by scriptural injunctions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama was respected by the king.

Text 26

*uvāsa tasyām katicin,
mithilāyām samā vibhuḥ,
māniṭaḥ prīti-yuktena,
janakena mahātmanā,
tato 'śikṣad gadām kale,
dhārtarāṣṭraḥ suyodhanaḥ*

The almighty Lord Balarāma stayed in Mithilā for several years, honored by His affectionate devotee Janaka Mahārāja. During that time Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son Duryodhana learned from Balarāma the art of fighting with a club.

Text 27

*keśavo dvārakām etya,
nidhanam śatadhanvanaḥ,
aprāptim ca maṇeḥ prāha,
priyāyāḥ priya-kṛd vibhuh*

Lord Keśava arrived in Dvārakā and described the demise of Śatadhanvā and His own failure to find the Syamantaka jewel. He spoke in a way that would please His beloved, Satyabhāmā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kesava comforted His beloved (*priyāyāḥ priya-kṛd*) by affectionately saying, “I was unable to revive your father because he had a short life-span, but I have killed his murderer with My own hands.”

Text 28

*tataḥ sa kārayām āsa,
kriyā bandhor hatasya vai,
sākaṁ suhṛdbhir bhagavān,
yā yāḥ syuḥ sāmparāyikīḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then had the various funeral rites performed for His deceased relative, Satrājī. The Lord attended the funeral along with well-wishers of the family.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa personally performed the funeral rites for His relative (*bandhor*), Satrajit.

Text 29

*akrūrah kṛtavarmā ca,
śrutvā śatadhanor vadham,
vyūṣatur bhaya-vitrastau,
dvārakāyāḥ prayojakau*

When Akrura and Kṛtavarmā, who had originally incited Śatadhanvā to commit his crime, heard that he had been killed, they fled Dvārakā in terror and took up residence elsewhere.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Akrūra and Kṛtavarmā quickly fled from Dvaraka and went somewhere else, because they had inspired (*prayojakau*) Satadhanva to murder Satrajit.

Text 30

*akrūre proṣite 'riṣṭāny,
āsan vai dvārakaukasām,
śārīrā mānasās tāpā,
muhur daivika-bhautikāḥ*

In Akrū ra's absence ill omens arose in Dvārakā, and the citizens began to suffer continually from physical and mental distresses, as well as from disturbances caused by higher powers and by creatures of the earth.

Text 31

ity aṅgopadiśanty eke,

*vismṛtya prāg udāhṛtam,
muni-vāsa-nivāse kim,
ghaṭetāriṣṭa-darśanam*

Some men proposed [that the troubles were due to Akrū ra’s absence], but they had forgotten the glories of the Supreme Lord, which they themselves had so often described. Indeed, how can calamities occur in a place where the Personality of Godhead, the residence of all the sages, resides?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to his offense of taking Kṛṣṇa away from the Vraja-gopis, Akrura was forced to live in Kasi (Benares) among Kṛṣṇa’s enemies to suffer in separation from his worshipable Lord. As many years as Baladeva stayed in Mithila, Akrura stayed in Kasi. Hearing how Akrura was giving charity to many *brahmanas* and doing sacrifices on a gold altar, the Dvarakavasis gossiped that Kṛṣṇa, considering Akrūra a rival, had sent him into exile. Though Balarama, Rukmini and others did not believe the rumors, to dispel this new and incredible stain on His reputation, Kṛṣṇa created various calamities in Dvārakā, thus inducing the citizens to call for Akrūra’s return, which Kṛṣṇa then ordered.

After stating the sages’ proposition that Dvaraka was suffering due to the influence of time mentioned in verse thirty, Sukadeva Gosvami refutes it in verse thirty-one. Some (*eke*) *munis* such as Vaisampayana Rsi, forgetting their previous words (*prāg udāhṛtam*) in praise of Kṛṣṇa, began to speak. The scriptures state that if even a single sage is living in a town, then by his influence there can be no calamities there. Therefore, what calamity can possibly arise in the abode where Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all sages (*muni-vāsa*), is personally residing?

*deve 'varṣati kāśīśah,
śvaphalkāyāgatāya vai,
sva-sutām gāṇḍinīm prādāt,
tato 'varṣat sma kāśiṣu*

[The elders said:] Previously, when Lord Indra had withheld rain from Kāśī [Benares], the king of that city gave his daughter Gāṇḍinī to Śvaphalka, who was then visiting him. It soon rained in the kingdom of Kāśī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Once when Indra (*deve*) withheld the rain from Kasi, the king gave his daughter to Akrura's father (Svaphalka) in marriage. Then rain came. In his time of difficulty Akrura went to Kasi because of his relationship with his maternal grandfather, the King of Kāśī.

Text 33

*tat-sutas tat-prabhāvo 'śāv,
akrūro yatra yatra ha,
devo 'bhivarṣate tatra,
nopatāpā na mārīkāḥ*

Wherever his equally powerful son Akrū ra stays, Lord Indra will provide sufficient rain. Indeed, that place will be free of miseries and untimely deaths.

Text 34

*iti vṛddha-vacaḥ śrutvā,
naitāvad iha kāraṇam,
iti matvā samānāyya,
prāhākrūram janārdanaḥ*

Hearing these words from the elders, Lord Janārdana, though aware that the absence of Akrū ra was not the only cause of the evil omens, had him summoned back to Dvārakā and spoke to him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing the words of the elders to bring back Akrura, Kṛṣṇa thought within Himself, “Akrura’s absence is not the cause of the calamity, but rather My own desire is the real cause,” and then had Akrura brought back from Kasi.

Texts 35–36

*pūjayitvābhibhāṣyainam,
kathayitvā priyāḥ kathāḥ,
vijñatākhila-citta jñāḥ,
smayamāna uvāca ha,
nanu dāna-pate nyastas,
tvayy āste śatadhanvanā,
syamantako maniḥ śrīmān,
viditaḥ pūrvam eva naḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa honored Akrura, greeted him confidentially and spoke pleasant words with him. Then the Lord, who was fully aware of Akrura’s heart by virtue of His being the knower of everything, smiled and addressed him: “O master of charity, surely the opulent Syamantaka jewel was left in your care by Śatadhanvā and is still with you. Indeed, We have known this all along.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Supersoul knows everyone’s heart, but Kṛṣṇa knows all the Supersouls (*vijñatākhila-citta jñah*). Therefore what is so remarkable if Kṛṣṇa knows Akrura’s heart? Thus Kṛṣṇa was smiling as He said, “You had no enmity against Satrajit, nor did you steal the jewel. Moreover, you are not greedy for wealth. Rather you are My exalted devotee. I know even the Supersoul who resides within you, so why are you afraid of Me?”

(Text 36) Kṛṣṇa said, “What then can I ask in this regard, since I already know everything?”

Text 37

*satrājīto ’napatyatvād,
grhṇīyur duhituḥ sutāḥ,
dāyaṁ ninīyāpaḥ piṇḍān,
vimucyarnāṁ ca śeṣitam*

“Since Satrājīt had no sons, his daughter’s sons should receive his inheritance. They should pay for memorial offerings of water and piṇḍa, clear their grandfather’s outstanding debts and keep the remainder of the inheritance for themselves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Satrājīt had no sons (*anapatyatvāt:aputratvāt*), his wives all died along with him, and his daughter Satyabhama was not interested in the Syamantaka jewel, which constituted the inheritance, although it rightfully belonged to her sons. After offering water and *piṇḍa* to their maternal grandfather and clearing his debts, Satyabhama’s sons should accept the jewel.

The law of inheritance is defined in the *Smṛti* scriptures:

*patnī duhitaras caiva, pitaro bhrātaras tathā tat-sutā gotra-jā bandhuh,
śiṣyāḥ sa-brahmacāriṇaḥ.*

“The inheritance goes first to the wife, then [if the wife has passed away] to the daughters, then to the parents, then to the brothers, then to the brothers’ sons, then to family members of the same *gotra* as the deceased, and then to his disciples, including *brahmacārīs*.”

Texts 38–39

*tathāpi durdharas tv anyais,
tvayy āstām su-vrate maṇiḥ,
kintu mām agrajaḥ samyañ,
na pratyeti maṇim prati,
darśayasva mahā-bhāga,
bandhūnām śāntim āvaha,
avyucchinnā makhās te 'dya,
vartante rukma-vedayaḥ*

“Nevertheless, the jewel should remain in your care, O trustworthy Akrura, because no one else can keep it safely. But please show the jewel just once, since My elder brother does not fully believe what I have told Him about it. In this way, O most fortunate one, you will pacify My relatives. [Everyone knows you have the jewel, for] you are now continually performing sacrifices on altars of gold.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “All the Dvarakavasis know that you have the jewel. The evidence is your constant performance of sacrifices in Kasi on altars of gold.”

Text 40

*evam sāmabhir ālabdhaḥ,
śvaphalka-tanayo maṇim,*

*ādāya vāsasācchannaḥ,
dadau sūrya-sama-prabham*

Thus shamed by Lord Kṛṣṇa's conciliatory words, the son of Śvaphalka brought out the jewel from where he had concealed it in his clothing and gave it to the Lord. The brilliant gem shone like the sun.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being gently scolded by Kṛṣṇa, Akrura then gave the jewel to Kṛṣṇa, who touched it with His hand and returned it to him.

Text 41

*syamantakaṁ darśayitvā,
jñātibhyo raja ātmanaḥ,
vimrjya maṇinā bhūyas,
tasmai pratyarpayat prabhuh*

After the almighty Lord had shown the Syamantaka jewel to His relatives, thus dispelling the false accusations against Him, He returned it to Akrū ra.

Text 42

*yas tv etad bhagavata īśvarasya viṣṇor,
vīryādhyam vṛjina-haram su-maṅgalaṁ ca,
ākhyānaṁ paṭhati śṛṇoty anusmared vā,
duṣkīrtiṁ duritam apohya yāti śāntim*

This narration, rich with descriptions of the prowess of Lord Śrī Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, removes sinful reactions and bestows all auspiciousness. Anyone who recites, hears or remembers it will drive away his own infamy and sins and attain peace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse, Sukadeva Gosvami offers a benediction (*phala-śruti*) to all the readers of this narration: “Bad reputation and the sins (*duritam*) which caused it will be destroyed for one who hears this story.”

Chapter Fifty-eight: Kṛṣṇa Marries Five Princesses

Text 1

*rī-śuka uvāca,
ekadā pāṇḍavān draṣṭum,
pratītān puruṣottamaḥ,
indraprasthaṁ gataḥ śṛīmān,
yuyudhānādibhir vṛtaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, the supremely opulent Personality of Godhead went to Indraprastha to visit the Pāṇḍavas, who had again appeared in public. Accompanying the Lord were Yuyudhāna and other associates.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa visits the Pandavas in Indraprastha and marries five brides: Kalindi, Mitravinda, Satya, Bhadra and Laksmana. Seeing that the Pandavas had reappeared in the house of Drupada, Kṛṣṇa visited them with Satyaki and others. Actually Kṛṣṇa visited His beloved devotees in Indraprastha for the purpose of marrying Kalindi, who had performed severe austerities to attain Him.

Text 2

*dṛṣṭvā tam āgataṁ pārthā,
mukundam akhileśvaram,
uttasthur yugapad vīrāḥ,
prāṇā mukhyam ivāgatam*

When the Pāṇḍavas saw that Lord Mukunda had arrived, those heroic sons of Pṛthā all stood up at once, like the senses responding to the return of the life air.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When consciousness returns to the unconscious body, the five senses spring to life and start functioning. Similarly, the five Pāṇḍavas (five senses: *pranas*) all stood up at once, enlivened at the return of their Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa (*prāṇā mukhyam*).

Text 3

*pariṣvajyācyutaṁ vīrā,
aṅga-saṅga-hatainasah,
sānurāga-smitaṁ vaktraṁ,
vīkṣya tasya mudaṁ yayuh*

The heroes embraced Lord Acyuta, and the touch of His body freed them of sin. Looking at His affectionate, smiling face, they were overwhelmed with joy.

Text 4

*yudhiṣṭhirasya bhīmasya,
kṛtvā pādābhivandanam,
phālgunaṁ parirabhyātha,
yamābhyāṁ cābhivanditaḥ*

After the Lord bowed down at the feet of Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīma and firmly embraced Arjuna, He accepted obeisances from the twin brothers, Nakula and Sahadeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The twins Nakula and Sahadeva offered obeisances while Kṛṣṇa stood. Sometimes the word *abhivanditaḥ* is used in place of *abhivandanam* (obeisances).

Text 5

*paramāsana āsīnam,
kṛṣṇā kṛṣṇam aninditā,
navoḍhā vrīḍitā kiñcic,
chanair etyābhyavandata*

Faultless Draupadī, the Pāṇḍavas' newly married wife, slowly and somewhat timidly approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, who sat on an exalted seat, and offered Him her obeisances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Queen Draupadī, who was so devoted to Kṛṣṇa that she herself was called Kṛṣṇā (the feminine form of the name), also greeted Kṛṣṇa.

Text 6

*tathaiva sātyakiḥ pārthaiḥ,
pūjitaś cābhivanditaḥ,
niṣasādāsane 'nye ca,
pūjitāḥ paryupāsata*

Sātyaki also accepted a seat of honor after receiving worship and welcome from the Pāṇḍavas, and the Lord’s other companions, being duly honored, sat down in various places.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those accompanying Kṛṣṇa were also welcomed (*pūjitāḥ*) and seated. In an alternate reading *pūjitāḥ* means “they were seated by those who had offered respects (*namaskṛtaiḥ*) to them.”

Text 7

*prthām samāgatya kṛtābhivādanas,
tayāti-hārdādra-dṛśābhirambhitāḥ,
āpṛṣṭavāms tām kuśalam saha-snuṣām,
pitṛ-śvasāram paripṛṣṭa-bāndhavaḥ*

The Lord then went to see His aunt, Queen Kuntī. He bowed down to her and she embraced Him, her eyes moist with great affection. Lord Kṛṣṇa inquired from her and her daughter-in-law, Draupadī, about their welfare, and they in turn questioned Him at length about His relatives [in Dvārakā].

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing Kuntī approaching with great eagerness to see Him, Kṛṣṇa rose at once from His seat, quickly went up to her and offered His obeisances. Her eyes moistened with extreme love (*ati-hārdena:ati-premṇā*), Kuntī embraced Kṛṣṇa and smelled His head. The *Amara-kosa* dictionary says: *premā vā priyatā hārdam*, “*Priyatā* and *hārdam* are synonyms for pure love (*prema*) of Kṛṣṇa.” The word *abhirambhitāḥ* (embraced) means that Kuntī embraced Kṛṣṇa while saying, “I worship Your face with millions of lamps of my *pranas* (vital energy).” As Kuntī smelled Kṛṣṇa’s head, she asked about Vasudeva and His other relatives.

Text 8

*tam āha prema-vaiklavya-
ruddha-kaṅṭhāśru-locanā,
smarantī tān bahūn kleśān,
kleśāpāyātma-darśanam*

So overcome by love that her throat choked up and her eyes filled with tears, Queen Kuntī remembered the many troubles she and her sons had endured. Thus she addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appears before His devotees to drive away their distress

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti spoke to Kṛṣṇa, the sight of whose body (*ātma-darśanam: anga-darśanena*) extinguishes (*apāya:nāśaḥ*) all misery.

Text 9

*tadaiva kuśalam no 'bhūt,
sa-nāthās te kṛtā vayam,
jñātīn naḥ smaratā kṛṣṇa,
bhrātā me preṣitas tvayā*

[Queen Kuntī said:] My dear Kṛṣṇa, our welfare was assured only when You remembered us, Your relatives, and gave us Your protection by sending my brother to visit us.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “My brother (*bhrātā*)” refers to Akrura.

Text 10

*na te 'sti sva-para-bhrāntir,
viśvasya suhṛd-ātmanah,
tathāpi smaratām śaśvat,
kleśān hamsi hr̥di sthitaḥ*

For You, the well-wishing friend and Supreme Soul of the universe, there is never any illusion of “us” and “them.” Yet even so, residing within the hearts of all, You eradicate the sufferings of those who remember You constantly.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kunti recollected the majesty (*aiśvarya*) of Kṛṣṇa, realizing her own insignificance: “Being the well-wishing Soul of the universe, You do not think in terms of self and others, friends and enemies. Though this is true, from within the heart You destroy the miseries of those who always remember You.”

Text 11

*yudhiṣṭhira uvāca,
kiṁ na ācaritaṁ śreyo,
na vedāham adhīśvara,
yogeśvarāṅām durdarśo,
yan no dṛṣṭaḥ ku-medhasām*

King Yudhiṣṭhira said: O supreme controller, I do not know what pious deeds we fools have done so that we can see You, whom the masters of yogic perfection rarely see.

Text 12

*iti vai vārṣikān māsān,
rājñā so 'bhyarthitaḥ sukham,
janayan nayanānandam,
indraprasthaukasām vibhuḥ*

Requested by the King to stay with them, the almighty Lord remained happily in Indraprastha during the months of the rainy season, giving joy to the eyes of the city's residents.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa stayed there happily.

Texts 13–14

*ekadā ratham āruhya,
vijayo vānara-dhvajam,
gāṇḍīvaṁ dhanur ādāya,
tūṅau cākṣaya-sāyakau,
sākaṁ kṛṣṇena sannaddho,
vihartuṁ vipinaṁ mahat,
bahu-vyāla-mṛgākīrṇaṁ,
prāviśat para-vīra-hā*

Once Arjuna, the slayer of powerful enemies, donned his armor, mounted his chariot flying the flag of Hanumān, took up his bow and his two inexhaustible quivers, and went to sport with Lord Kṛṣṇa in a large forest filled with fierce animals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Once” (*ekadā*) means that this event took place after the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, since Arjuna was now using the Gāṇḍīva bow and other weapons he had acquired during that incident.

Text 15

*tatrāvidhyac charair vyāghrān,
śūkarān mahiṣān rurūn,
śarabhān gavayān khadḡān,
hariṇān śaśa-śallakān*

With his arrows Arjuna shot tigers, boars and buffalo in that forest, along with rurus, śarabhas, gavayas, rhinoceroses, black deer, rabbits and porcupines.

Text 16

*tān ninyuḥ kiṅkarā rājñe,
medhyān parvaṇy upāgate,
ṭṭ-parītaḥ pariśrānto,
bibhatsur yamunām agāt*

A crew of servants carried to King Yudhiṣṭhira the slain animals fit to be offered in sacrifice on some special occasion. Then, feeling thirsty and tired, Arjuna went to the bank of the Yamunā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: They presented the slain animals to

King Yudhisthira to be used in the Vedic sacrifice. Bibhatsur is Arjuna.

Text 17

*tatropaspr̥śya viśadam,
pītvā vāri mahā-rathau,
kṛṣṇau dadṛśatuḥ kanyām,
carantīm cāru-darśanām*

After the two Kṛṣṇas bathed there, they drank the river's clear water. The great warriors then saw an attractive young girl walking nearby.

Text 18

*tām āsādya varārohām,
su-dvijām rucirānanām,
papraccha preṣitaḥ sakhyā,
phālgunaḥ pramadottamām*

Sent by his friend, Arjuna approached the exceptional young woman, who possessed beautiful hips, fine teeth and a lovely face, and inquired from her as follows.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna was sent by Kṛṣṇa to inquire from Kalindi about her attachment to the Lord.

Text 19

*kā tvam kasyāsi su-śroni,
kuto vā kim cikīrṣasi,
manye tvām patim icchantīm,
sarvaṁ kathaya śobhane*

[Arjuna said:] Who are you, O fine-waisted lady? Whose daughter are you, and where do you come from? What are you doing here? I think you must be looking for a husband. Please explain everything, O beautiful one.

Text 20

*śrī-kālindy uvāca,
ahaṁ devasya savitur,
duhitā patim icchatī,
viṣṇuṁ vareṇyaṁ vara-dam,
tapaḥ paramam āsthitaḥ*

Śrī Kālindī said: I am the daughter of the sun-god. I desire to get as my husband the most excellent and munificent Lord Viṣṇu, and to that end I am performing severe penances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *vareṇyam* (most choice) implies that, “I am doing penance because I want the very beautiful Visnu, who can fulfill all my desires, as my husband.”

Text 21

*nānyam patim vṛṇe vīra,
tam ṛte śrī-niketanam,
tuṣyatām me sa bhagavān,
mukundo 'nātha-saṁśrayaḥ*

I will accept no husband other than Him, the abode of the goddess of fortune. May that Mukunda, the Supreme Personality, the shelter of the helpless, be pleased with me.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The beautiful Kālindī here reveals some apprehension as she speaks to negate any other person as her husband: “Visnu is the shelter (*anātha-saṁśrayaḥ*), master and protector of His devotees. With this faith I live alone and am not afraid of any man, though I am a helpless young girl.”

Text 22

*kālindīti samākhyātā,
vasāmi yamunā-jale,
nirmite bhavane pitrā,
yāvad acyuta-darśanam*

I am known as Kālindī, and I live in a mansion my father built for me within the water of the Yamunā. There I will stay until I meet Lord Acyuta.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kalindi said, “I am well known as Kalindi. Who does not know me, the daughter of the sun-god?” By this statement Kalindi indicates her high status. “Out of affection for me, my father built me a mansion in the river, so who can dare act inimically to me?”

Text 23

*tathāvadad guḍākeśo,
vāsudevāya so 'pi tām,
ratham āropya tad-vidvān,
dharma-rājam upāgamat*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Arjuna repeated all this to Lord Vāsudeva, who was already aware of it. The Lord then took Kālindī onto His chariot and went back to see King Yudhiṣṭhira.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said to Kalindi, “Ah, my dear beautiful one, I am your most desirable Lord Visnu. You should recognize Me from the descriptions of Visnu taught by your father, and by the ecstatic loving feelings (*bhāva*) arising within your pure heart.” After saying this, Kṛṣṇa lifted Kalindi onto His chariot because He knew (*tad-vidvan*) her mind right from the beginning.

Text 24

*yadaiva kṛṣṇaḥ sandiṣṭaḥ,
pārthānām paramādbutam,
kārayām āsa nagaram,
vicitram viśvakarmaṇā*

[Describing a previous incident, Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:] Upon the request of the Pāṇḍavas, Lord Kṛṣṇa had Viśvakarmā build them a most wonderful and amazing city.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indraprastha city was constructed before the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest and before Kṛṣṇa found His bride Kālindī.

Text 25

*bhagavāms tatra nivasan,
svānām priya-cikīrṣayā,
agnaye khāṇḍavaṁ dātum,
arjunasyāsa sārathiḥ*

The Supreme Lord stayed in that city for some time to please His devotees. On one occasion, Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to give the Khāṇḍava forest as a gift to Agni, and so the Lord became Arjuna’s charioteer.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The order of events is that first Visvakarma, under Kṛṣṇa’s order, constructed a city for the Pandavas, then the Khandava forest was burned, then the assembly hall of the demigods was presented, and then Kṛṣṇa took the hand of Kalindi.

Text 26

*so 'gnis tuṣṭo dhanur adād,
dhayān śvetān ratham nrpa,
arjunāyākṣayau tūṇau,
varma cābhedyam astriḥ*

Being pleased, O King, Lord Agni presented Arjuna with a bow, a set of white horses, a chariot, a pair of inexhaustible quivers, and armor that no fighter could pierce with weapons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa became Arjuna's chariot driver so that Arjuna could get his weapons. Khandava was a forest of Indra.

Text 27

*mayaś ca mocito vahneḥ,
sabhām sakhya upāharat,
yasmin duryodhanasyāsīj,
jala-sthala-dṛśi-bhramah*

When the demon Maya was saved from the fire by his friend Arjuna, Maya presented him with an assembly hall, in which Duryodhana would later mistake water for a solid floor.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maya gave the assembly hall to Arjuna, his friend who saved him from the fire. Within that assembly hall Duryodhana later became bewildered.

Text 28

*sa tena samanujñātaḥ,
suhṛdbhiś cānumoditaḥ,
āyayau dvārakām bhūyaḥ,
sātyaki-pramakhair vṛtaḥ*

Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, given leave by Arjuna and other well-wishing relatives and friends, returned to Dvārakā with Sātyaki and the rest of His entourage.

Text 29

*athopayeme kālindīm,
su-puṇya-rtv-ṛkṣa ūrjite,
vitanvan paramānandam,
svānām parama-maṅgalaḥ*

The supremely auspicious Lord then married Kālindī on a day when the season, the lunar asterism and the configurations of the sun and other heavenly bodies were all propitious. In this way He brought the greatest pleasure to His devotees.

Text 30

*vindyānuvindyāv āvantlyau,
duryodhana-vaśānugau,
svayaṁ-vare sva-bhaginīm,
kṛṣṇe saktām nyaṣedhatām*

Vindya and Anuvindya, who shared the throne of Avantī, were followers of Duryodhana's. When the time came for their sister [Mitravindā] to select her husband in the svayaṁvara ceremony, they forbade her to choose Kṛṣṇa, although she was attracted to Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Two verses describe Kṛṣṇa's marriage to Mitravinda, His fifth wife. Vinda and Anuvinda were two kings of Avanti.

Text 31

*rājādhivevyās tanayām,
mitravindām pitṛ-śvasuḥ,
prasahya hṛtavān kṛṣṇo,
rājan rājñām prapaśyatām*

My dear King, Lord Kṛṣṇa forcibly took away Princess Mitravindā, the daughter of His aunt Rājādhivevī, before the eyes of the rival kings.

Text 32

*nagnajin nāma kauśalya,
āsīd rājāti-dhārmikaḥ,
tasya satyābhavat kanyā,
devī nāgnajitī nrpa*

O King, Nagnajit, the very pious King of Kauśalya, had a lovely daughter named Satyā, or Nāgnajitī.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sixth marriage is described. Nagnajit was the king of Ayodhya (Kausalya). His daughter was called Satya.

Text 33

*na tām śekur nrpā voḍhum,
ajitvā sapta-go-vṛṣān,
tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān su-durdharṣān,
vīrya-gandhāsahān khalān*

The kings who came as suitors were not allowed to marry her unless they could subdue seven sharp-horned bulls. These bulls were extremely vicious and uncontrollable, and they could not tolerate even the smell of warriors.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Voḍhum* means “to marry.”

Text 34

*tām śrutvā vṛṣa-jil-labhyām,
bhagavān sātvatām patio,
jagāma kauśalya-puraṁ,
sainyena mahatā vṛtaḥ*

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of the Vaiṣṇavas, heard of the princess who was to be won by the conqueror of the bulls, He went to the capital of Kauśalya with a large army.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: No one could marry Satya without taming seven ferocious bulls.

Text 35

sa kośala-patiḥ prītaḥ,

*pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ,
arhaṇenāpi guruṇā,
pūjayan pratinanditaḥ*

The King of Kośala, pleased to see Lord Kṛṣṇa, worshiped Him by rising from his throne and offering Him a seat of honor and substantial gifts. Lord Kṛṣṇa also greeted the King respectfully.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The king worshiped Kṛṣṇa and He greeted him respectfully in return.

Text 36

*varam vilokyābhimataṁ samāgataṁ,
narendra-kanyā cakame ramā-patim,
bhūyād ayaṁ me patir āśiṣo 'nalaḥ,
karotu satyā yadi me dhṛto vrataḥ*

When the King's daughter saw that most agreeable suitor arrive, she immediately desired to have Him, the Lord of Goddess Rāma. She prayed, "May He become my husband. If I have kept my vows, may the sacred fire bring about the fulfillment of my hopes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Satya saw (*vilokya*) Kṛṣṇa through the lattice windows of the palace watch tower.

Text 37

*yat-pāda-paṅkaja-rajah śirasā bibharti,
śrīr abya-jah sa-giriśah saha loka-pālaih,*

*līlā-tanuḥ sva-kṛta-setu-parīpsayā yaḥ,
kāle 'dadhat sa bhagavān mama kena tuṣyet*

“Goddess Lakṣmī, Lord Brahma, Lord Śiva and the rulers of the various planets place the dust of His lotus feet on their heads, and to protect the codes of religion, which He has created, He assumes pastime incarnations at various times. How may that Supreme Personality of Godhead become pleased with me?”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Princess Satya prayed, “How can I please that person who appears in various transcendental forms within this world whenever there is necessity of upholding the principles of religion. He is now present before me in His original spiritual form.”

Text 38

*arcitaṁ punar ity āha,
nārāyaṇa jagat-pate,
ātmānandena pūrṇasya,
karavāṇi kim alpakaḥ*

King Nagnajit first worshiped the Lord properly and then addressed Him: “O Nārāyaṇa, Lord of the universe, You are full in Your own spiritual pleasure. Therefore what can this insignificant person do for You?”

Text 39

śrī-śuka uvāca,

*tam āha bhagavān hr̥ṣṭaḥ,
ṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ,
megha-gambhīrayā vācā,
sa-smitam kuru-nandana*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O beloved descendant of Kuru, the Supreme Lord was pleased, and after accepting a comfortable seat He smiled and addressed the King in a voice as deep as the rumbling of a cloud.

Text 40

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
narendra yācñā kavibhir vigarhitā,
rājanya-bandhor nija-dharma-vartinah,
tathāpi yāce tava sauhṛdecchayā,
kanyām tvadīyām na hi śulka-dā vayam*

The Supreme Lord said: O ruler of men, learned authorities condemn begging for a person in the royal order who is executing his religious duties. Even so, desiring your friendship, I ask you for your daughter, though We offer no gifts in exchange.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Even one who is an inferior *ksatriya* (*rājanya-bandhor*) should not beg from another *ksatriya*. Though I am the best of the royal order, I am asking for your daughter without offering a dowry (*śulka-dāḥ: dravyādi-dāyinaḥ*) in exchange.”

Text 41

*śrī-rājovāca,
ko 'nyas te 'bhyadhiko nātha,
kanyā-vara ihepsitaḥ,
guṇaika-dhāmno yasyāṅge,
śrīr vasaty anapāyinī*

The King said: My Lord, who could be a better husband for my daughter than You, the exclusive abode of all transcendental qualities? On Your body the goddess of fortune herself resides, never leaving You for any reason.

Text 42

*kintv asmābhiḥ kṛtaḥ pūrvam,
samayaḥ sātvatarṣabha,
pumśām vīrya-parīkṣārtham,
kanyā-vara-parīpsayā*

But to ascertain the proper husband for my daughter, O chief of the Sātvatas, we previously set a condition to test the prowess of her suitors.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here the king replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement, "We have no payment to give for the bride." The king said, "But I have made a rule (*samayah:niyama*) to test the strength of any groom desiring my daughter as his bride. Otherwise all the kings would ask for her and how could I agree to all of them? The actual purpose in setting up this test, however, is to attain You as my son-in-law, for

only You can subdue these wild bulls. Besides, without any doubt, You, whose outstanding beauty and character my daughter has already heard about, are the only desirable candidate for marrying her.”

Text 43

*saptaite go-vrṣā vīra,
durdāntā duravagrahāḥ,
etair bhagnāḥ su-bahavo,
bhinna-gātrā nṛpātmajāḥ*

These seven wild bulls are impossible to tame, O hero. They have defeated many princes, breaking their limbs.

Text 44

*yad ime nigrhītāḥ syus,
tvayaiva yadu-nandana,
varo bhavān abhimato,
duhitur me śriyaḥ-pate*

If You can subdue them, O descendant of Yadu, You will certainly be the appropriate bridegroom for my daughter, O Lord of Śrī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this sentence *yad* means “if” but the true meaning is “because” (*yasmāt*). “Because You controlled the seven bulls, You can marry my daughter.” By addressing Kṛṣṇa as the husband of Lakṣmi (*śriyaḥ-pate*), the king indicates, “This subduing of the bulls is not at all impossible for You. Thus You are already ascertained as the

suitable groom. These bulls are enemies of Yours and have been put here for their being killed.”

Text 45

*evaṁ samayam ākarṇya,
baddhvā parikaraṁ prabhuḥ,
ātmānaṁ saptadhā kṛtvā,
nyagrḥṇāl līlayaiva tān*

Upon hearing these terms, the Lord tightened His clothing, expanded Himself into seven forms and easily subdued the bulls.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into seven forms (*ātmānaṁ saptadhā kṛtvā*) not only to playfully defeat the seven bulls but also to show Princess Satya that she would not have to compete with His other queens, since He could enjoy with all of them simultaneously.

Text 46

*baddhvā tān dāmabhiḥ śaurir,
bhagna-darpān hataujasaḥ,
vyakarsal līlayā baddhān,
bālo dāru-mayān yathā*

Lord Śauri tied up the bulls, whose pride and strength were now broken, and pulled them with ropes just as a child playfully pulls wooden toy bulls.

Text 47

*tataḥ prītaḥ sutām rājā,
dadau kṛṣṇāya vismitaḥ,
tām pratyagrḥṇād bhagavān,
vidhi-vat sadṛśīm prabhuḥ*

Then King Nagnajit, pleased and astonished, presented his daughter to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Personality of Godhead accepted this suitable bride in the proper Vedic fashion.

Text 48

*rāja-patnyas ca duhituḥ,
kṛṣṇam labdhvā priyam patim,
lebhire paramānandaṁ,
jātas ca paramotsavaḥ*

The King's wives felt the greatest ecstasy upon attaining Lord Kṛṣṇa as the dear husband of the royal princess, and a mood of great festivity arose.

Text 49

*śaṅkha-bhery-ānakā nedur,
gīta-vādya-dvijāśiṣaḥ,*

*narā nāryaḥ pramuditāḥ,
suvāsaḥ-srag-alāṅkṛtāḥ*

Conchshells, horns and drums resounded, along with vocal and instrumental music and the sounds of brāhmaṇas, invoking blessings. The joyful men and women adorned themselves with fine clothing and garlands.

Texts 50–51

*daśa-dhenu-sahasrāṇi,
pāribarham adād vibhuḥ,
yuvatīnām tri-sāhasraṁ,
niṣka-grīva-suvāsasam,
nava-nāga-sahasrāṇi,
nāgāc chata-guṇān rathān,
rathāc chata-guṇān aśvān,
aśvāc chata-guṇān narān*

As the dowry, powerful King Nagnajit gave ten thousand cows, three thousand young maidservants wearing golden ornaments on their necks and bedecked in fine clothing, nine thousand elephants, a hundred times as many chariots as elephants, a hundred times as many horses as chariots, and a hundred times as many manservants as horses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The king gave Kṛṣṇa three thousand young women (*yuvatīnām*) as maidservants, who wore gold ornaments on their necks and beautiful clothing. In addition, he gave 9,000 elephants, 900,000 chariots, 90 million horses and 9 billion soldiers!

Text 52

*dampatī ratham āropya,
mahatyā senayā vṛtau,
sneha-praklinna-hṛdayo,
yāpayām āsa kośalaḥ*

The King of Kośala, his heart melting with affection, had the bride and groom seated on their chariot, and then he sent them on their way surrounded by a great army.

Text 53

*śrutvaitad rurudhur bhūpā,
nayantam pathi kanyakām,
bhagna-vīryāḥ su-durmarsā,
yadubhir go-vṛṣaiḥ purā*

When the intolerant kings who had been rival suitors heard what had happened, they tried to stop Lord Kṛṣṇa on the road as He took His bride home. But just as the bulls had broken the kings' strength before, the Yadu warriors broke it now.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Previously those kings had been defeated by the bulls. Now they were defeated by the Yadus.

Text 54

*tān asyataḥ śara-vrātān,
bandhu-priya-kṛd arjunaḥ,
gāṇḍīvī kālayām āsa,
simhah kṣudra-mṛgān iva*

Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow, was always eager to please his friend Kṛṣṇa, and thus he drove back those opponents, who were shooting torrents of arrows at the Lord. He did this just as a lion drives away insignificant animals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna easily (*kālayām āsa*) dispatched them.

Text 55

*pāribarham upāgrhya,
dvārakām etya satyayā,
reme yadūnām ṛṣabho,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ*

Lord Devakī-suta, the chief of the Yadus, then took His dowry and Satyā to Dvārakā and continued to live there happily.

Text 56

*śrutakīrteḥ sutām bhadram,
upayeme pitṛ-śvasuḥ,
kaikeyīm bhrātrbhir dattām,*

kṛṣṇaḥ santardanādibhiḥ

Bhadrā was a princess of the Kaikeya kingdom and the daughter of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s paternal aunt Śrutakīrti. The Lord married Bhadrā when her brothers, headed by Santardana, offered her to Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The seventh marriage is described. Bhadra was the daughter of Srutakirti.

Text 57

*sutām ca madrādhipater,
lakṣmaṇām lakṣaṇair yatām,
svayaṁ-vare jahāraikaḥ,
sa suparṇaḥ sudhām iva*

Then the Lord married Lakṣmaṇā, the daughter of the King of Madra. Kṛṣṇa appeared alone at her svayaṁvara ceremony and took her away, just as Garuḍa once stole the demigods’ nectar.

Text 58

*anyās caivam-vidhā bhāryāḥ,
kṛṣṇasyāsan sahasraśaḥ,
bhaumam hatvā tan-nirodhād,
āhṛtās cāru-darśanāḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa also acquired thousands of other wives equal to these

when He killed Bhaumāsura and freed the beautiful maidens the demon was holding captive.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word “thousands” (*sahasraśaḥ*) means 16,000 beautiful maidens.

Chapter Fifty-nine: The Killing of the Demon Naraka

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
yathā hato bhagavatā,
bhaumo yena ca tāḥ striyaḥ, niruddhā etad ācakṣva,
vikramaṁ śārṅga-dhanvaḥ*

[King Parīkṣit said:] How was Bhaumāśura, who kidnapped so many women, killed by the Supreme Lord? Please narrate this adventure of Lord Śārṅgadhanvā's.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa kills the demon Narakasura (Bhaumasura), the son of Bhūmī, at the request of Indra, and marries the 16,000 daughters of kings who were held captive by Narakasura. Kṛṣṇa also brings the *parijata* tree from Svargaloka.

Texts 2–3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
indreṇa hṛta-chatreṇa,
hṛta-kunḍala-bandhunā,
hṛtāmarādri-sthānena,
jñāpito bhauma-ceṣṭitam,
sa-bhāryo garuḍārūḍhaḥ,
prāg-jyotiṣa-puraṁ yayau,
giri-durgaiḥ śāstra-durgair;
jalāgny-anila-durgamam,*

*mura-pāśāyutair ghorair,
dṛḍhaiḥ sarvata āvṛtam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After Bhauma had stolen the earrings belonging to Indra’s mother, along with Varuṇa’s umbrella and the demigods’ playground at the peak of Mandara mountain, Indra went to Lord Kṛṣṇa and informed Him of these misdeeds. The Lord, taking His wife Satyabhāmā with Him, then rode on Garuḍa to Prāgjyotiṣa-pura, which was surrounded on all sides by fortifications consisting of hills, unmanned weapons, water, fire and wind, and by obstructions of mura-pāśa wire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The umbrella actually belonged to Varuna, but because of Indra’s superior position as the king of the demigods, the verse mentioned that it was stolen from Indra. Being informed about the activities of Bhauma by Indra, whose umbrella, mother’s earrings and jewel mountain were stolen, Kṛṣṇa went to Prāgjyotiṣa-pura, Bhauma’s capital, with His wife Satyabhama. [Bhauma’s capital still exists today as Tejpur in Assam.]

Why did Kṛṣṇa bring His wife along? Kṛṣṇa had promised Bhūmi that He would not kill her demoniac son without her permission. Since Bhūmi is an expansion of Satyabhāmā, the latter could authorize Kṛṣṇa to kill the unusually nasty Bhaumāśura if necessary during the heat of the battle. Kṛṣṇa took Satyabhama along for this purpose. In addition, Satyabhāmā had been miffed when Nārada Muni brought a heavenly *pārijāta* flower to Queen Rukmiṇī. At that time Kṛṣṇa promised Satyabhama, “I will give you a whole tree of these flowers.” Therefore Kṛṣṇa brought Satyabhama along to show her that He could take the tree from Indra.

*gadayā nirbibhedādrīn,
śastra-durgāṇi sāyakaiḥ,
cakreṇāgniṁ jalaṁ vāyuṁ,
mura-pāsāms tathāsinā*

With His club the Lord broke through the rock fortifications; with His arrows, the weapon fortifications; with His disc, the fire, water and wind fortifications; and with His sword, the mura-pāśa cables.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa used His *cakra* to destroy the walls of water, fire and wind.

Text 5

*śaṅkha-nādena yantrāṇi,
hṛdayāni manasvinām,
prākāraṁ gadayā gurvyā,
nirbibheda gadādharaḥ*

With the sound of His conchshell Lord Gadādhara then shattered the magic seals of the fortress, along with the hearts of its brave defenders, and with His heavy club He demolished the surrounding earthen ramparts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With the sound of His conch Kṛṣṇa pierced the mystic armor (*yantrani*) protecting the hearts of the warriors.

Text 6

*pāñcajanya-dhvanim śrutvā,
yugāntaśani-bhīṣaṇam,
muraḥ śayāna uttasthau,
daityaḥ pañca-śirā jalāt*

The five-headed demon Mura, who slept at the bottom of the city's moat, awoke and rose up out of the water when he heard the vibration of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Pāñcajanya conchshell, a sound as terrifying as the thunder at the end of the cosmic age.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *aśani* (thunderbolt) compares the sound of Kṛṣṇa's conchshell, which woke up the sleeping demon Mura, with the fearful sound of the thunderbolts at the time of universal devastation. The word *aśani* was also used earlier to describe how the wrestlers at Kamsa's arena saw Kṛṣṇa as a terrifying thunderbolt: *mallānām aśanir* (10.43.17).

Text 7

*tri-śūlam udyamya su-durnirīkṣaṇo,
yugānta-sūryānala-rocir ulbaṇaḥ,
grasaṁs tri-lokīm iva pañcabhir mukhair,
abhyadravat tārksya-sutaṁ yathoraḡaḥ*

Shining with the blinding, terrible effulgence of the sun's fire at the end of a millennium, Mura seemed to be swallowing up the three worlds with his five mouths. He lifted up his trident and fell upon Garuḡa, the son of Tārksya, like an attacking snake.

Text 8

*āvidhya śūlam tarasā garutmate,
nirasya vaktrair vyanadat sa pañcabhiḥ,
sa rodasī sarva-diśo 'mbaram mahān,
āpūrayann aṇḍa-kaṭāham āvṛṇot*

Mura whirled his trident and then hurled it fiercely at Garuḍa, roaring from all five mouths. The sound filled the earth and sky, all directions and the limits of outer space, until it reverberated against the very shell of the universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Mura demon waved his trident and made ferocious sounds (*vyanada*) that filled the universe.

Text 9

*tadāpatad vai tri-śikham garutmate,
hariḥ śarābhyām abhinat tridhojasā,
mukheṣu taṁ cāpi śarair atāḍayat,
tasmai gadām so 'pi ruṣā vyamuñcata*

Then with two arrows Lord Hari struck the trident flying toward Garuḍa and broke it into three pieces. Next the Lord hit Mura's faces with several arrows, and the demon angrily hurled his club at the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa broke the trident, which was approaching Garuda, into three pieces with two arrows. Mura then threw a club at Kṛṣṇa.

Text 10

*tām āpatantīm gadayā gadām mṛdhe,
gadāgrajo nirbibhīde sahasradhā,
udyamya bāhūn abhidhāvato 'jitaḥ,
śirāmsi cakreṇa jahāra līlayā*

As Mura's club sped toward Him on the battlefield, Lord Gadāgraja intercepted it with His own and broke it into thousands of pieces. Mura then raised his arms high and rushed at the unconquerable Lord, who easily sliced off his heads with His disc weapon.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mura raised his arms and ran towards Kṛṣṇa.

Text 11

*vyasuḥ papātāmbhasi kṛtta-śīrṣo,
nikṛtta-śṛṅgo 'drir ivendra-tejasā,
tasyātmajāḥ sapta pitur vadhāturāḥ,
pratikriyāmarṣa-juṣaḥ samudyatāḥ*

Lifeless, Mura's decapitated body fell into the water like a mountain whose peak has been severed by the power of Lord Indra's thunderbolt. The demon's seven sons, enraged by their father's death, prepared to retaliate.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mura fell like a mountain top cut off by Indra's thunderbolt (*indra tejasā*). Filled with anger to avenge their

father's death, Mura's seven sons prepared for battle.

Text 12

*tāmro 'ntarikṣaḥ śravaṇo vibhāvasur,
vasur nabhasvān aruṇaś ca saptamaḥ,
pīṭham puraskṛtya camū-patiṁ mṛdhe,
bhauma-prayuktā niragan dhṛtāyudhāḥ*

Ordered by Bhaumāśura, Mura's seven sons—Tāmra, Antarikṣa, Śravaṇa, Vibhāvasu, Vasu, Nabhasvān and Aruṇa—followed their general, Pīṭha, onto the battlefield bearing their weapons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They came out (*niragan*) of their fortress holding their weapons.

Text 13

*prāyuñjatāsādya śarān aśīn gadāḥ,
śakty-ṛṣṭi-śūlāny ajite ruṣolbaṇāḥ,
tac-chastra-kūṭam bhagavān sva-mārgaṇair,
amogha-vīryas tilaśaś cakarta ha*

These fierce warriors furiously attacked invincible Lord Kṛṣṇa with arrows, swords, clubs, spears, lances and tridents, but the Supreme Lord, with unfailing prowess, cut this mountain of weapons into tiny pieces with His arrows.

Text 14

*tān pīṭha-mukhyān anayad yama-kṣayaṁ,
nikṛtta-śīrṣoru-bhujāṅghri-varmaṇaḥ,
svānīka-pān acyuta-cakra-sāyakais,
tathā nirastān narako dharā-sutaḥ,
nirīkṣya durmarṣaṇa āsravan-madair,
gajaiḥ payodhi-prabhavair nirākramāt*

The Lord severed the heads, thighs, arms, legs and armor of these opponents led by Pīṭha and sent them all to the abode of Yamarāja. Narakāsura, the son of the earth, could not contain his fury when he saw the fate of his military leaders. Thus he went out of the citadel with elephants born from the Milk Ocean who were exuding mada from their foreheads out of excitement.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Yama-kṣayaṁ* means that Kṛṣṇa sent them all to the abode of Yamaraja (death). The real meaning is that Kṛṣṇa gave them liberation, for *yama* means the *yoga* process starting with *yama* and *niyama* and ending with liberation. Narakasura came out with elephants that were exuding *mada* [a viscous secretion produced from the foreheads of excited elephants].

Text 15

*dṛṣtvā sa-bhāryaṁ garuḍopari sthitam,
sūryopariṣṭāt sa-taḍid ghanam yathā,
kṛṣṇam sa tasmai vyasṛjac chata-ghnīm,
yodhās ca sarve yugapac ca vivyadhuh*

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His wife, mounted upon Garuḍa, looked like a

cloud with lightning sitting above the sun. Seeing the Lord, Bhauma released his Śataghñī weapon at Him, whereupon all of Bhauma's soldiers simultaneously attacked with their weapons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narakasura threw his Śataghñī (name of his śakti spear) weapon at Kṛṣṇa.

Text 16

*tad bhauma-sainyaṃ bhagavān gadāgrajo,
vicitra-vājair niśitaiḥ śilīmukhaiḥ,
nikṛtta-bāhūru-śirodhra-vigrahaṃ,
cakāra tarhy eva hatāśva-kuñjaram*

At that moment Lord Gadāgraja shot His sharp arrows at Bhaumāśura's army. These arrows, displaying variegated feathers, soon reduced that army to a mass of bodies with severed arms, thighs and necks. The Lord similarly killed the opposing horses and elephants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa decimated the enemy troops with colorfully feathered arrows (*vicitra-vājair*).

Texts 17–19

*yāni yodhaiḥ prayuktāni,
śastrāstrāṇi kurūdvaha,
haris tāny acchinat tīkṣṇaiḥ,
śarair ekaikaśas trībhiḥ,
uhyamānaḥ suparṇena,
pakṣābhyāṃ nighnatā gajān,*

*gurutmatā hanyamānās,
tuṅḍa-pakṣa-nakher gajāḥ,
puram evāviśann ārtā,
narako yudhy ayudhyata*

Lord Hari then struck down all the missiles and weapons the enemy soldiers threw at Him, O hero of the Kurus, destroying each and every one with three sharp arrows. Meanwhile Garuḍa, as he carried the Lord, struck the enemy's elephants with his wings. Beaten by Garuḍa's wings, beak and talons, the elephants fled back into the city, leaving Narakāsura alone on the battlefield to oppose Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having described the cutting off of the enemies' arms, now the cutting to pieces of their swords, hand weapons (*śastrās*), arrows and missiles (*astrāṇi*) is described. One by one Kṛṣṇa shot down each weapon with three arrows. Even before the weapons shot by the warriors reached their target, Kṛṣṇa first killed the throwers of the weapons and then destroyed the missiles while they were still in the air, each with three arrows. Kṛṣṇa's arrows were shot one after the other, not three at once.

Kṛṣṇa shot so rapidly that Sukadeva Gosvami cried out in extreme amazement, "O *kuru-udvaha!*" (O hero of the Kurus, King Parīkṣit) By this expression Sukadeva Gosvami implies that even among the Kurus, such personalities as Bhīma and Arjuna were not capable of knowing such swiftness in using weapons, in spite of the fact that Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself had taught them.

Text 20

*dṛṣṭvā vidrāvitam sainyaṁ,
garuḍenārditam svakaṁ,*

*taṁ bhaumaḥ prāharac chaktyā,
vajraḥ pratihato yataḥ,
nākampata tayā viddho,
mālāhata iva dvipaḥ*

Seeing his army driven back and tormented by Garuḍa, Bhauma attacked him with his spear, which had once defeated Lord Indra’s thunderbolt. But though struck by that mighty weapon, Garuḍa was not shaken. Indeed, he was like an elephant hit with a flower garland.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narakasura threw his spear, which had previously defeated Indra’s thunderbolt, but to Garuda it felt like a flower garland.

Text 21

*śūlaṁ bhaumo ’cyutaṁ hantum,
ādade vitathodyamaḥ,
tad-visargāt pūrvam eva,
narakasya śiro hariḥ,
apāharad gaja-sthasya,
cakreṇa kṣura-neminā*

Bhauma, frustrated in all his attempts, took up his trident to kill Lord Kṛṣṇa. But even before he could release it, the Lord cut off his head with His razor-sharp cakra as the demon sat atop his elephant.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Bhauma raised his invincible trident, Satyabhāmā, sitting beside Kṛṣṇa on Garuḍa, said, “Kill him

right away”, and Kṛṣṇa did just that.

Text 22

*sa-kuṇḍalam cāru-kirīta-bhūṣaṇam,
babhau pṛthivyām patitam samujjvalam,
ha heti sādhu ity ṛṣayaḥ sureśvarā,
mālyair mukundaṁ vikiranta tīdire*

Fallen on the ground, Bhaumāśura’s head shone brilliantly, decorated as it was with earrings and an attractive helmet. As cries of “Alas, alas!” and “Well done!” arose, the sages and principal demigods worshiped Lord Mukunda by showering Him with flower garlands.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages and demigods shouted *hā hā iti* (“alas, alas!”) which usually indicates sorrow but here it indicates condemnation according to Kṣira Swami. They said, “Oh what a sinful person, disturbing the whole world! It is good (*sādhu*) that you have been killed.” They covered Kṛṣṇa with garlands.

Text 23

*tataś ca bhūḥ kṛṣṇam upetya kuṇḍale,
pratapta-jāmbūnada-ratna-bhāsvare,
sa-vaijayantyā vana-mālayārpayat,
prācetasam chatram atho mahā-maṇim*

The goddess of the earth then approached Lord Kṛṣṇa and presented Him with Aditi’s earrings, which were made of glowing

gold inlaid with shining jewels. She also gave Him a Vaijayantī flower garland, Varuṇa’s umbrella and the peak of Mandara Mountain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bhumi returned everything stolen by her son, including the peak of Mandara Mountain (*mahā-manim*:Maṇi-parvata).

Text 24

*astauṣīd atha viśveśam,
devī deva-varārcitam,
prāñjaliḥ praṇatā rājan,
bhakti-pravaṇayā dhiyā*

O King, after bowing down to Him and then standing with joined palms, the goddess, her mind filled with devotion, began to praise the Lord of the universe, whom the best of demigods worship.

Text 25

*bhūmir uvāca,
namas te deva-deveśa,
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-dhara,
bhaktecchopātta-rūpāya,
paramātman namo ’stu te*

Goddess Bhū mi said: Obeisances unto You, O Lord of the chief demigods, O holder of the conchshell, disc and club. O Supreme

Soul within the heart, You assume Your various forms to fulfill Your devotees' desires. Obeisances unto You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bhumi addressed Kṛṣṇa as “O Supreme Soul!” (*parama-ātman*) which implies, “You know the sincerity of my heart, even though I am the mother of Your enemy.”

Text 26

*namaḥ paṅkaja-nābhāya,
namaḥ paṅkaja-māline,
namaḥ paṅkaja-netrāya,
namas te paṅkajāṅghraye*

My respectful obeisances are unto You, O Lord, whose abdomen is marked with a depression like a lotus flower, who are always decorated with garlands of lotus flowers, whose glance is as cool as the lotus and whose feet are engraved with lotuses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: By describing the sweet beauty (*mādhuryam*) of Kṛṣṇa, Bhumi indicated that just by His *darsana* her senses had attained perfection.

Text 27

*namo bhagavate tubhyaṁ,
vāsudevāya viṣṇave,
puruṣāyādi-bījāya,
pūrṇa-bodhāya te namaḥ*

Obeisances unto You, the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, the primeval person, the original seed. Obeisances unto You, the omniscient one.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Bhumi explains, “I am sporting now in the ocean of Your opulences (*aisvarya*). I pay respects to You, the omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead (*bhagavate*). Even though You are full of all powers and are the original form of Bhagavan, still You appear as the son of Vasudeva (*vasudevaya*). Though You are the son of Vasudeva, You are Visnu, the all-pervading one. Though You are all-pervading, You still appear as an individual person (*purusa*). Though You are an individual, You are the original source of all (*adi-bija*), even of Narayana, as shown during the *Brahma vimohana lila*. Though You are the original seed, You are the form of complete consciousness, Brahman itself (*pūrṇa-bodhāya*). In other words, though You are endowed with infinite spiritual qualities, You are also the impersonal Brahman.”

Text 28

*ajāya janayitre 'sya,
brahmaṇe 'nanta-śaktaye,
parāvarātman bhūtātman,
paramātman namo 'stu te*

Obeisances unto You of unlimited energies, the unborn progenitor of this universe, the Absolute. O Soul of the high and the low, O Soul of the created elements, O all-pervading Supreme Soul, obeisances unto You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Anticipating Kṛṣṇa may say, “But if such is the case, then is there no existence prior to My own coming into

being?” Bhumi replies in this verse.

“Though You are unborn (*ajāya*), You generate the universes. Though You generate the universes, You are the impersonal Brahman. Though You are impersonal and without qualities, You are endowed with a spiritual form and unlimited transcendental qualities and energies (*ananta-śaktaye*).

“Though You have unlimited energies, three are principal: *tatastha*, *bahiranga* and *antaranga*. You are the living entities (*jivas*) composed of all the elevated and degraded souls (*parāvarātman*). You are the soul of the material creation (*bhūtātman*) and You are the internal witness, *paramātman*.”

Text 29

*tvaṁ vai sisṛkṣur aja utkaṭaṁ prabho,
tamo nirodhāya bibharsy asaṁvṛtaḥ,
sthānāya sattvaṁ jagato jagat-pate,
kālah pradhānaṁ puruṣo bhavān paraḥ*

Desiring to create, O unborn master, You increase and then assume the mode of passion. You do likewise with the mode of ignorance when You wish to annihilate the universe and with goodness when You wish to maintain it. Nonetheless, You remain uncovered by these modes. You are time, the pradhāna, and the puruṣa, O Lord of the universe, yet still You are separate and distinct.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bhumi said, “According to the time, You carry out creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe through Your *maya-sakti*. You contain the activated *raja*, *tama* and *sattva gunas*, but You are not covered by them like the conditioned souls. You are time, *maya* and the living entities (*jivas*) since they are all Your energies. Nevertheless, by Your internal energy (*svarupa-*

sakti) You are separate and distinct (*paraḥ:anyaḥ*) from these above mentioned entities.”

Text 30

*aham payo jyotir athānilo nabho,
mātrāṇi devā mana indriyāṇi,
kartā mahān ity akhilaṁ carācaram,
tvayy advitīye bhagavan ayaṁ bhramaḥ*

This is illusion: that earth, water, fire, air, ether, sense objects, demigods, mind, the senses, false ego and the total material energy exist independent of You. In fact, they are all within You, my Lord, who are one without a second.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But,” Kṛṣṇa may object, “you say that this very body of Mine is composed of the material elements. Thus, since My eyes and other senses are expansions of false ego in the mode of goodness, I am called Brahman mixed with Maya (*māyā-sabalaṁ brahma*). How then am I distinct from these material elements?”

Bhumi replies in this verse. “Those people who say that earth and all the other elements, the senses, the sense objects (*mātrāṇi*), mind, false ego (*kartā*:the doer), consciousness (*mahān*), and the moving (mind and senses) and non-moving (dull matter and *prana*) exist in You are mistaken, because in You there is no difference (*advitīye*). Your body and senses are all spiritual. It cannot be that matter is the same as You.”

Text 31

*tasyātmaḥ 'yaṁ tava pāda-paṅkajam,
bhītaḥ prapannārti-haropasāditah,*

*tat pālayainam kuru hasta-paṅkajam,
śīrasy amuṣyākhila-kalmaṣāpaham*

Here is the son of Bhaumāśura. Frightened, he is approaching Your lotus feet, since You remove the distress of all who seek refuge in You. Please protect him. Place Your lotus hand, which dispels all sins, upon his head.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After praising Kṛṣṇa, Bhūmī made a request: “O remover of the distress of the surrendered! The son of Naraka named Bhagadatta is extremely afraid, so I am approaching Your lotus feet on his behalf.”

Text 32

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti bhūmy-arthito vāgbhir,
bhagavān bhakti-namrayā,
dattvābhayaṁ bhauma-gr̥ham,
prāviśat sakalarddhimat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus entreated by Goddess Bhūmī in words of humble devotion, the Supreme Lord bestowed fearlessness upon her grandson and then entered Bhaumāśura’s palace, which was filled with all manner of riches.

Text 33

tatra rājanya-kanyānām,

*ṣaṭ-sahasrādhikāyutam,
bhaumāhṛtānām vikramya,
rājabhyo dadṛṣe hariḥ*

There Lord Kṛṣṇa saw sixteen thousand royal maidens, whom Bhauma had taken by force from various kings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There were actually 16,100 royal maidens imprisoned in Bhauma's palace according to the *Viṣnu Purana* (5.29.31):

*kanyā-pure sa kanyānām, ṣoḍaśātulya-vikramah ṣatādhikāni dadṛṣe,
sahasrāṇi mahā-mate*

Bhauma had stolen 16,100 women not only from kings (*rājabhyaḥ*), but he also kidnapped the unmarried daughters of demigods, sages and demons as well.

Text 34

*tam praviṣṭam striyo vīkṣya,
nara-varyam vimohitāḥ,
manasā vavrire 'bhīṣṭam,
patim daivopasāditam*

The women became enchanted when they saw that most excellent of males enter. In their minds they each accepted Him, who had been brought there by destiny, as their chosen husband.

Text 35

*bhūyāt patir ayam mahyam,
dhātā tad anumodatām,
iti sarvāḥ prthak kṛṣṇe,
bhāvena hṛdayam dadhuḥ*

With the thought “May providence grant that this man become my husband,” each and every princess absorbed her heart in contemplation of Kṛṣṇa.

Text 36

*tāḥ prāhiṇod dvāravatīm,
su-mṛṣṭa-virajo-’mbarāḥ,
nara-yānair mahā-kośān,
rathāśvān draviṇam mahāt*

The Lord had the princesses arrayed in clean, spotless garments and then sent them in palanquins to Dvārakā, together with great treasures of chariots, horses and other valuables.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sent the women to Dvaraka in palanquins (*nara yanaih*).

Text 37

*airāvata-kulebhāś ca,
catur-dantāms tarasvinaḥ,
pāṇḍurāś ca catuḥ-śaṣṭim,
prerayām āsa keśavaḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa also dispatched sixty-four swift white elephants, descendants of Airāvata, who each sported four tusks.

Texts 38–39

*gatvā surendra-bhavanam,
dattvādityai ca kuṇḍale,
pūjitas tridaśendreṇa,
mahendryānyā ca sa-priyaḥ,
codito bhāryayotpāṭya,
pārijātaṁ garutmatī,
āropya sendrān vibudhān,
nirjityopānayat puram*

The Lord then went to the abode of Indra, the demigods’ king, and gave mother Aditi her earrings; there Indra and his wife worshiped Kṛṣṇa and His beloved consort Satyabhāmā. Then, at Satyabhāmā’s behest the Lord uprooted the heavenly pārijāta tree and put it on the back of Garuḍa. After defeating Indra and all the other demigods, Kṛṣṇa brought the pārijāta to His capital.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Instigated (*coditaḥ*) by Satyabhama, Kṛṣṇa took the *parijata* tree.

Text 40

*sthāpitaḥ satyabhāmāyā,
grhodyānopaśobhanaḥ,*

*anvagur bhramarāḥ svargāt,
tad-gandhāsava-lampaṭāḥ*

Once planted, the pārijāta tree beautified the garden of Queen Satyabhāmā’s palace. Bees followed the tree all the way from heaven, greedy for its fragrance and sweet sap.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa planted the tree in Satyabhama’s private garden.

Text 41

*yayāca ānamya kirīṭa-koṭibhiḥ,
pādau spr̥śann acyutam artha-sādhanam,
siddhārtha etena vigr̥hyate mahān,
aho surāṇām ca tamo dhig āḍhyatām*

Even after Indra had bowed down to Lord Acyuta, touched His feet with the tips of his crown and begged the Lord to fulfill his desire, that exalted demigod, having achieved his purpose, chose to fight with the Supreme Lord. What ignorance there is among the gods! To hell with their opulence!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit was astonished to hear that Indra fought with his worshipful Lord Kṛṣṇa. Sukadeva therefore condemned Indra’s character in this verse: “Although Kṛṣṇa fulfilled Indra’s desire (*artha sadhanam*) to kill Narakasura and bring back Aditi’s earrings, still Indra fought with Kṛṣṇa, even though he is the king of the demigods. What anger the demigods have! One who is really situated in *sattva-guna* would never do such a thing. Furthermore, Indra is not just any demigod, but the king of the demigods and even

he is manifesting the mode of ignorance. Therefore to hell with their wealth! What *anartha* does wealth not create?”

Text 42

*atho muhūrta ekasmin,
nānāgāreṣu tāḥ striyaḥ,
yathopayeme bhagavān,
tāvad-rūpa-dharo 'vyayah*

Then the imperishable Supreme Personality, assuming a separate form for each bride, duly married all the princesses simultaneously, each in her own palace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Returning to Dvaraka, Kṛṣṇa married all the women at the same time (*muhūrta ekasmin*) because the experts in astrology told Kṛṣṇa that the most auspicious time (*lagna*) for marriage was at that very moment. Kṛṣṇa manifested identical forms (*prakāśa-vigrahas:tāvad-rūpa-dharo*) of Himself to marry all the brides. Though Kṛṣṇa had one body, it appeared in separate forms and He controlled all of them. One should not explain the phrase *tāvad-rūpa-dharo* as simply a multiplication of bodies (*kaya-vyuha*). This is corroborated by Narada Muni in a later chapter:

citram bataitad ekena, vapuṣā yugapat pṛthak gr̥heṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasram, striya eka udāvahat

Nārada Muni thought, “It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace.” (SB 10.61.2)

According to Sridhara Swami, the phrase *yathopayeme*, “married properly” implies that Kṛṣṇa’s entire company of relatives, including Devaki and others, also appeared in each and every house simultaneously. By Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable energy all of His associates

also manifested identical forms. The word *āvyayaḥ* (imperishable) means in all circumstances they were complete, not present only in a partial expansion. The *Brhad-bhagavatamṛta* confirms this point: “The *prakāsa* forms of Kṛṣṇa are not different at all from the original form of Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 43

*gṛheṣu tāsām anapāyy atarka-kṛn,
nirasta-sāmyātiśayeṣv avasthitaḥ,
reme ramābhir nija-kāma-sampluto,
yathetaro gārhaka-medhikāms̄ caran*

The Lord, performer of the inconceivable, constantly remained in each of His queens’ palaces, which were unequaled and unexcelled by any other residence. There, although fully satisfied within Himself, He enjoyed with His pleasing wives, and like an ordinary husband He carried out His household duties.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Performing inconceivable activities (*atarka kṛt*), Kṛṣṇa was situated in each house of every wife so that each thought; “Kṛṣṇa is associating only with me, and all the other queens are suffering separation from Him.” Their houses had no equal or superior, even in Vaikuntha. What then to speak of the enjoyment there? The phrase *nija-kāma-sampluto* means, “Immersed in the lust (*kāma:kandarpeṇa*) which is innate in His own internal nature (*nija:svarūpa-bhūtena*)”, Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with thousands of the most pleasing goddesses of fortune (*ramābhiḥ*). This implies that since in Vaikuntha His plenary expansion Narayana enjoys with only one goddess of fortune, Dvārakā is far superior to Vaikunṭha. In Dvaraka, Kṛṣṇa carried out His household duties (*gārhaka-medhikāms̄*) with the addition of sweetness. In this regard, the Prabhāsa-khanda of the

Skanda Purāṇa says:

*ṣoḍaśaiva sahasrāṇi, gopyas tawra samāgatāḥ haṁsa eva mataḥ
kṛṣṇaḥ, paramātmā janārdanaḥ tasyaitāḥ śaktayo devi, ṣoḍaśaiva
prakīrtitāḥ candra-rūpī mataḥ kṛṣṇaḥ, kalā-rūpās tu tāḥ smṛtāḥ
sampūrṇa-maṇḍalā tāsāṁ, mālinī ṣoḍaśī kalā ṣoḍaśaiva kalā yāsu,
gopī-rūpā varāṅgane ekaikaśas tāḥ sambhinnāḥ, sahasreṇa pṛthak
pṛthak*

“At that place sixteen thousand gopīs were assembled with Kṛṣṇa, who is considered the Supreme, the Supersoul, the shelter of all living beings. These gopīs are His renowned sixteen potencies, O goddess. Kṛṣṇa is like the moon, the gopīs are like its phases, and the full contingent of gopīs is like the full sequence of the moon’s sixteen phases. Each of these sixteen divisions of gopīs, my dear Varāṅganā, is subdivided into one thousand parts.”

Furthermore, the *Kārttika-māhātmya* section of the *Padma Purāṇa* says: *kaiśore gopa-kanyās tā yauvane rāja-kanyakāḥ*, “Those who were the daughters of cowherds in their early youth became royal princesses in their maturity.” In other words, Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana is the most perfect and complete form of Godhead, and His plenary expansions (*prakasa-vigrahas*) in Dvaraka are perfect. Similarly, the Vraja-gopis are the supremely complete forms of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure potency (*hladini-sakti*) and their *prakasa* forms, the Queens in Dvaraka, are perfect.

Text 44

*itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patim striyas tā,
brahmādayo ’pi na viduḥ padavīm yadīyām,
bhejur mudāvīratam edhitayānurāga,
hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-jalpa-lajjāḥ*

Thus those women obtained as their husband the husband of the goddess of fortune, although even great demigods like Brahmā do

not know how to approach Him. With ever-increasing pleasure they experienced loving attraction for Him, exchanged smiling glances with Him and reciprocated with Him in ever-fresh intimacy, replete with joking and feminine shyness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Brahma and other demigods do not know the method of attaining Kṛṣṇa, who is the husband of those perfect Lakṣmīs, the Dvaraka *māhīsīs*. What chance is there for anyone else to directly know Kṛṣṇa; and what to speak of actually attaining Him? With continuously increasing joy the Queens of Dvaraka experienced Kṛṣṇa's smiling love-filled glances, intimate bodily contact and playful love talks. Kṛṣṇa's Queens exhibited their natural feminine shyness whenever He responded in kind to their sweet mutterings.

Text 45

*pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pada-śauca,
tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ,
keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ,
dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāśyam*

Although the Supreme Lord's queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching Him humbly, offering Him a seat, worshiping Him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging His feet, giving Him pān to chew, fanning Him, anointing Him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning Him with flower garlands, dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing Him, and presenting Him with various gifts.

Chapter Sixty: Kṛṣṇa Teases Rukmini

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
karhicit sukham āsīnam,
sva-talpa-sthaṁ jagad-gurum,
patim paryacarad bhaiṣṁī,
vyajanena sakhī-janaiḥ*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: Once, in the company of her maidservants, Queen Rukmiṇī was personally serving her husband, the spiritual master of the universe, by fanning Him as He relaxed on her bed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa grinds the fragrant camphor-like heart of Rukmini with the pestle of His words. In other words, the lovely, chaste qualities of Rukmini will become manifest as a result of Kṛṣṇa’s apparently insensitive words, just as camphor’s fragrance becomes manifest when crushed on a grinding stone. Rukmini is personally serving Kṛṣṇa for two reasons: Kṛṣṇa is her husband (*patim*), and He is the spiritual master of the universe (*jagad-gurum*).

Text 2

*yas tv etal līlayā viśvaṁ,
sṛjaty atty avatīśvaraḥ,
sa hi jātaḥ sva-setūnām,
gopīthāya yaduṣv ajah*

The unborn Personality of Godhead, the supreme controller, who creates, maintains and then devours this universe simply as His play, took birth among the Yadus to preserve His own laws.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: To prove that Kṛṣṇa's disturbing Rukmiṇī's mood of loving service, which is about to be described, was His pastime (*līlayā*) and nothing else, this verse states that the creation and destruction of the world is also Kṛṣṇa's *līla*. Though Kṛṣṇa is unborn, He appeared in the Yadu dynasty in order to protect (*gopīthāya:pālanāya*) and maintain the principles of religion. This implies that it can never be Kṛṣṇa's desire to stop the *prema-seva* of His beloved devotee, but rather He acts in such a way to strengthen that *prema*.

Texts 3–6

*tasmin antar-grhe bhrājan,
muktā-dāma-vilambinā,
virājite vitānena,
dīpair maṇi-mayair api,
mallikā-dāmabhiḥ puṣpair,
dvirepha-kula-nādite,
jāla-randhra-praviṣṭaiś ca,
gobhiś candramaso 'malaiḥ,
pārijāta-vanāmoda,
vāyunodyāna-śālinā,
dhūpair aguru-jai rājan,
jāla-randhra-vinirgataiḥ,
payah-phena-nibhe śubhre,
paryanke kaśipūttame,
upatasthe sukhāsīnam,*

jagatām īśvaram patim

Queen Rukmiṇī's quarters were extremely beautiful, boasting a canopy hung with brilliant strings of pearls, as well as effulgent jewels serving as lamps. Garlands of jasmine and other flowers hung here and there, attracting swarms of humming bees, and the spotless rays of the moon shone through the holes of the lattice windows. As aguru incense drifted out of the window holes, my dear King, the breeze wafting the scent of the pārijāta grove carried the mood of a garden into the room. There the Queen served her husband, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, as He reclined upon an opulent pillow on her bed, which was as soft and white as the foam of milk.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The palace is described in order to show that everything was perfectly arranged by Rukmini to please Kṛṣṇa with her loving service. The room was splendid with shining jewels and a canopy adorned with hanging clusters of dazzling pearls. The word *amalaiḥ* in this verse may also be read *aruṇaiḥ*, which indicates that when this pastime took place the ruddy rays of the rising moon were entering through the holes of the lattice windows, and clouds of *aguru* incense were streaming out of the windows. There Rukmini attentively served Kṛṣṇa, who was lying on the best of beds (*kaśipūttame*).

Text 7

*vāla-vyajanam ādāya,
ratna-daṇḍam sakhī-karāt,
tena vijayatī devī,
upāsām cakra īśvaram*

From her maidservant's hand Goddess Rukmiṇī took a yak-hair fan with a jeweled handle, and then she began to worship her master by fanning Him.

Text 8

*sopācyutaṁ kvaṇayatī maṇi-nūpurābhyām,
reje 'ṅgulīya-valaya-vyajanāgra-hastā,
vastrānta-gūḍha-kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāra,
bhāsā nitamba-dhṛtayā ca parārdhya-kāñcyā*

Her hand adorned with rings, bangles and the cāmara fan, Queen Rukmiṇī looked resplendent standing near Lord Kṛṣṇa. Her jeweled ankle-bells tinkled, and her necklace glittered, reddened by the kuṅkuma from her breasts, which were covered by the end of her sārī. On her hips she wore a priceless belt.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini appeared most attractive with her jeweled ankle bells as she stood next to Kṛṣṇa (*upa-acyutam*). She held a *camara* whisk in her hand which was adorned with golden rings and bracelets. As she fanned Kṛṣṇa with broad strokes, her jeweled bangles, waist bells and ankle bells tinkled sweetly. Rukmini looked extremely beautiful with her necklace glittering red from the *kuṅkuma* on her breasts, which were covered by the end of her *sārī*. She wore a priceless belt around her hips.

Text 9

tām rūpiṇīm śrīyam ananya-gatiṁ nirīkṣya,

*yā līlayā dhr̥ta-tanor anurūpa-rūpā,
prītaḥ smayann alaka-kuṇḍala-niṣka-kaṇṭha,
vaktrollasat-smita-sudhām harir ābabhāṣe*

As He contemplated her, the goddess of fortune herself, who desires only Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled. The Lord assumes various forms to enact His pastimes, and He was pleased that the form the goddess of fortune had assumed was just suitable for her to serve as His consort. Her charming face was adorned with curling hair, earrings, a locket on her neck, and the nectar of her bright, happy smile. The Lord then spoke to Her as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing Rukmini, who was much more beautiful than even Laksmi in Vaikuntha, Kṛṣṇa spoke. The reason is given here that for pastimes Rukmini had assumed a form corresponding to the form of Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Parāśara said in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*devatve deva-deheyam, manuṣyatve ca mānuṣī viṣṇor dehānurūpām vai,
karoty eṣātmanas tanum*

“When Visnu appears as a demigod, Laksmi takes the form of a demigoddess, and when He appears as a human being, she takes a humanlike form. Thus She assumes a form suitable to the form that the Lord assumes.”

As Kṛṣṇa is more beautiful than the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha, so Rukmini is more beautiful than Laksmi. The word *smayan* (smiled) implies that Kṛṣṇa smiled slightly while thinking, “It is proper that Rukmini has assumed a form appropriate to My form. Now I will joke with her and hear what she says.” The four directions were beautified by Rukmini’s charming smiling face, which was decorated with curling locks of hair, earrings and a locket on her neck.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
rāja-putrīpsitā bhūpair,
loka-pāla-vibhūtibhiḥ,
mahānubhāvaiḥ śrīmadbhī,
rūpaudārya-balorjitaiḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear princess, you were sought after by many kings as powerful as the rulers of planets. They were all abundantly endowed with political influence, wealth, beauty, generosity and physical strength.

Text 11

*tān prāptān arthino hitvā,
caidyādīn smara-durmadān,
dattā bhrātrā sva-pitrā ca,
kasmān no vavrṣe 'samān*

Since your brother and father offered you to them, why did you reject the King of Cedi and all those other suitors, who stood before you, maddened by Cupid? Why, instead, did you choose Us, who are not at all your equal?

Text 12

*rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru,
samudraṁ śaraṇaṁ gatān,*

*balavadbhiḥ kṛta-dveṣān,
prāyas tyakta-nṛpāsanān*

Terrified of these kings, O lovely-browed one, We took shelter in the ocean. We have become enemies of powerful men, and We practically abandoned Our royal throne.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By seeing Kṛṣṇa’s statements later on, His mentality here can be understood as follows: “When I gave Rukmini one flower from the heavenly *pārijāta* tree, Satyabhama became so full of anger and pride, that I could not pacify her even by falling at her feet. Only when I gave her a whole *pārijāta* tree was she satisfied. Rukmini, however, did not show any anger even when she saw Me give Satyabhama a whole tree. So how will I be able to taste the sweetness of Rukmini’s anger, when anger is not possible in her, because she is always sober and speaks sweet words?”

Thus considering, Kṛṣṇa decided, “If I speak like this to Rukmini, I will be able to provoke her anger.” This is how some authorities explain Kṛṣṇa’s speech to Rukmiṇī. Others explain that Kṛṣṇa spoke as He did to see how His beloved Rukmini would respond if He tried to uproot the tree of her *prema*. Thus Kṛṣṇa said, “My dear beloved, you think that you are very intelligent. Despite your being completely endowed with all transcendental qualities, actually you are ignorant of your own welfare. Therefore you are not intelligent. Now just listen as I explain this.”

Kṛṣṇa then speaks eleven verses (10-21). “O princess (verse 11), you are the daughter of a king and I am the penniless son of Vasudeva. Why did you choose Me as your husband? You cannot say that you accepted Me because there was no alternative, for many kings wanted you as their wife. Nor can you say that those kings were inferior in wealth, beauty and qualities to Me, for they were endowed with fabulous wealth, power, beauty and courage like the *lokapalas*, planetary rulers. They were not devoid of wealth and enjoyment like Rantideva and

others. You cannot say that they were far away (*prāptān*:nearby, verse 11) because they came to your place to request you. Nor can you say that your relatives were opposed, for your brother and father wanted to give you to them. You also failed to notice my cowardly nature, a great fault in one born as a *ksatriya*. I fled from the kings out of fear and now live in the ocean. You cannot say that though I showed fear, I have proper conduct, for I made enemies with many strong kings, and have only a few friends like Arjuna. Moreover, being a Yadava, it was not proper for Me to be a king. Although I was entitled to the throne after killing Kamsa, I abandoned that status (*tyakta-nṛpāsanān*) and gave the royal throne to My grandfather Ugrasena.”

Text 13

*aspaṣṭa-vartmanām puṁsām,
aloka-patham īyusām,
āsthītāḥ padavīm su-bhru,
prāyah sīdanti yoṣitāḥ*

O fine-browed lady, women are usually destined to suffer when they stay with men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Pious women who follow the path of men like us, whose course of action is unclear (*aspaṣṭa-vartmanām*); who are not strictly religious or irreligious; who sometimes steal others’ wives; who at other times follow the rules of Vedic conduct; and who do not follow even common social behavior, since I insulted your brother even in your presence, must almost always (*prayah*) suffer. If some do not suffer, that is to their credit.”

Text 14

*niṣkiñcanā vyaṁ śaśvan,
niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ,
tasmāt prāyeṇa na hy āḍhyā,
mām bhajanti su-madhyame*

We have no material possessions, and We are dear to those who similarly have nothing. Therefore, O slender one, the wealthy hardly ever worship Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By using the word *niṣkiñcanāḥ* (having no possessions) Kṛṣṇa is saying, “I have no interest at all in material sense gratification.”

Text 15

*yayor ātma-samaṁ vittaṁ,
janmaśvaryaḥkṛtir bhavaḥ,
tayor vivāho maitrī ca,
nottamāḍhamayoḥ kvacit*

Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Furthermore, according to *Niti-sastra* it is not proper that you are My wife. Since your father and grandfather are very wealthy, you have abundant personal wealth, whereas my father Vasudeva has no wealth. The only wealth I have is

what little I have been able to earn on My own. You hail from a great dynasty, whereas I do not have a good family background, being a Yadava. You have jurisdiction over many towns such as Kundina in the Vidarbha state, whereas I have only Dvaraka in the Anarta state. You are fair-complexioned and I am black. Your prosperity (*bhava*) is assured, whereas Mine is uncertain because I have many enemies. Those who are equal in wealth, birth, beauty, power and prosperity should marry and not those who are unequal in these matters.”

Text 16

*vaidarbhy etad avijñāya,
tvayādīrgha-samīkṣayā,
vṛtā vayaṁ guṇair hīnā,
bhikṣubhiḥ ślāghitā mudhā*

O Vaidarbhī, not being farsighted, you didn’t realize this, and therefore you chose Us as your husband, even though We have no good qualities and are glorified only by deluded beggars.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You have accepted Me as your husband because you are short-sighted (*ādīrgha-samīkṣayā*) and have not considered the overall picture.”

Text 17

*athātmano ’nurūpaṁ vai,
bhajasva kṣatriyaṛṣabham,
yena tvam āśiṣaḥ satyā,
ihāmutra ca lapsyase*

Now you should definitely accept a more suitable husband, a first-class man of the royal order who can help you achieve everything you want, both in this life and the next.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Moreover, whatever has happened has happened. But since you are still in the prime of youth, there is no loss for you even now. Indeed now (*atha*) you should use your intelligence and choose a suitable *ksatriya* husband.”

Text 18

*caidyā-śālva-jarāsandha,
dantavakrādayo nṛpāḥ,
mama dviṣanti vāmoru,
rukmi cāpi tavāgrajaḥ*

Kings like Śiśupāla, Śālva, Jarāsandha and Dantavakra all hate Me, O beautiful- thighed one, and so does your elder brother Rukmī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini may ask, “Then why did You take me as Your wife?” Kṛṣṇa therefore says, “I took you because Sisupala, Salva, Jarasandha, Dantavakra and your brother Rukmi were My enemies.”

Text 19

*teṣāṃ vīrya-madāndhānām,
dṛptānām smaya-nuttaye,
ānitāsi mayā bhadre,*

tejopaharatāsātām

It was to dispel the arrogance of these kings that I carried you away, My good woman, for they were blinded by the intoxication of power. My purpose was to curb the strength of the wicked.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I kidnapped you just to dispel the ignorance (*smaya-nuttaye*) of those conceited kings who were intoxicated with their power.”

Text 20

*udāsīnā vyaṁ nūnaṁ,
na sṛy-apatyārtha-kāmukāḥ,
ātma-labdhyāśmahe pūrṇā,
gehayor jyotir-akriyāḥ*

We care nothing for wives, children and wealth. Always satisfied within Ourselves, We do not work for body and home, but like a light, We merely witness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You shouldn’t worry that I will be unhappy if You accept another man as your husband. I am indifferent to both the body and home (*gehayoḥ*). Therefore I remain just as witness without action, like a flaming lamp (*jyotir-akriyāḥ*).”

Text 21

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
etāvad uktvā bhagavān,*

*ātmānam vallaḥmā iva,
manyamānām aviśleṣāt,
tad-darpa-ghna upāramat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Rukmiṇī had thought herself especially beloved by the Lord because He never left her company. By saying these things to her He vanquished her pride, and then He stopped speaking.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By speaking like this Kṛṣṇa broke Rukmini’s pride of thinking herself as Kṛṣṇa’s dearest queen due to her intense love (*param-ānurāga*). Because Kṛṣṇa was constantly with her, Rukmini thought, “Even though I am unfit to be Kṛṣṇa’s wife, by His own good qualities He made me His most fortunate wife. Thus I have acquired such a husband, who is an ocean of good qualities.” Though the word *vallaḥma* (beloved) would normally be masculine to agree with *ātmānam*, here it remains feminine to express that Rukmini was thinking herself as Kṛṣṇa’s most beloved wife. *Vaiṣṇava-tosani* states that Kṛṣṇa destroyed Rukmini’s pride by His joking words spoken later in verses 28-29.

Text 22

*iti trilokeśa-pates tadātmanah,
priyasya devy aśruta-pūrvam apriyam,
āśrutya bhītā hṛdi jāta-vepathuś,
cintām durantām rudatī jagāma ha*

Goddess Rukmiṇī had never before heard such unpleasantries from her beloved, the Lord of universal rulers, and she became frightened. A tremor arose in her heart, and in terrible anxiety she

began to cry.

Text 23

*padā su-jātena nakhāruṇa-śrīyā,
bhuvam̐ likhanty aśrubhir añjanāsitaīḥ,
āsiñcatī kuṅkuma-rūṣitau stanau,
tasthāv adho-mukhy ati-duḥkha-ruddha-vāk*

With her tender foot, effulgent with the reddish glow of her nails, she scratched the ground, and tears darkened by her eye makeup sprinkled her kuṅkuma-reddened breasts. There she stood, face downward, her voice choked up by extreme sorrow.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the symptoms of Rukmini's anxiety. She scratched the ground with her extremely tender (*su-jātena:su-komalena*) foot, which shone with the reddish glow of her nails.

Text 24

*tasyāḥ su-duḥkha-bhaya-śoka-vinaṣṭa-buddher,
hastāc chlathad-valayato vyajanam̐ papāta,
dehaś ca viklava-dhiyaḥ sahasaiva muhyan,
rambheva vāyu-vihato pravikīrya keśān*

Rukmiṇī's mind was overwhelmed with unhappiness, fear and grief. Her bangles slipped from her hand, and her fan fell to the ground. In her bewilderment she suddenly fainted, her hair

scattering all about as her body fell to the ground like a plantain tree blown over by the wind.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini became very unhappy (*su-duḥkha*) from hearing these unpleasant words. She became fearful (*bhaya*) that Kṛṣṇa might leave her. Due to this fear and sadness, Rukmini then became remorseful (*śoka*). Her intelligence thus destroyed (*vinaṣṭa-buddher*), Rukmini could not understand that Kṛṣṇa was only joking.

Her bracelets slipped off her hands (*hastāc chlathad-valayato*) because her body became thin due to the pain of impending separation. Then she lost consciousness (*viklava-dhiyaḥ*), fainted (*muhyan*) and fell on the floor. Thus Rukmini attained the ninth state of *bhāva*, ecstatic love. In this pastime Rukmini experienced the *sattvika-bhāvas* (devotional ecstasies) ranging from “becoming stunned” (*stambha*) to “dissolution” or fainting (*pralaya*).

Text 25

*tad dṛṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ,
priyāyāḥ prema-bandhanam,
hāsya-praudhim ajānantyāḥ,
karuṇaḥ so 'nvakampata*

Seeing that His beloved was so bound to Him in love that she could not understand the full meaning of His teasing, merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa felt compassion for her.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to ignorance the materialist is bound in the cycle of birth and death. Similarly, Rukmini could not understand the depth of Kṛṣṇa’s joking because she was bound by pure love of God (*prema-bandhanam*). As *kṛṣṇa-prema* increases to *anurāga*

(intense attraction), the devotee, who is the shelter of that *anurāga*, feels more and more humble and wretched at every moment. Overwhelmed by delusion, he thinks, “I am not worthy of Kṛṣṇa, and therefore I deserve to be rejected by Him.”

Text 26

*paryaṅkāḍ avaruhyāśu,
tām utthāpya catur-bhujah,
keśān samuhya tad-vaktraṁ,
prāmṛjat padma-pāṇinā*

The Lord quickly got down from the bed. Manifesting four arms, He picked her up, gathered her hair and caressed her face with His lotus hand.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa manifested four hands to simultaneously lift Rukmini, embrace her, wipe her face and retie her hair.

Texts 27–28

*pramṛjyāśru-kale netre,
stanau copahatau śucā,
āśliṣya bāhunā rājan,
ananya-viṣayām satīm,
sāntvayām āsa sāntva-jñāḥ,
kṛpayā kṛpaṇām prabhuh,
hāsya-prauḍhi-bhramac-cittām,
atad-arhām satām gatih*

Wiping her tear-filled eyes and her breasts, which were stained by tears of grief, the Supreme Lord, the goal of His devotees, embraced His chaste wife, who desired nothing but Him, O King. Expert in the art of pacification, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tenderly consoled pitiable Rukmiṇī, whose mind was bewildered by His clever joking and who did not deserve to suffer so.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa wiped Rukmini’s tear-filled eyes (*asru-kale*) and her breasts, which were stained with tears of sorrow (*śucā*).

Text 29

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
mā mā vaidarbhy asūyethā,
jāne tvām mat-parāyaṇām,
tvad-vacaḥ śrotu-kāmena,
kṣvelyācaritam aṅgane*

The Supreme Lord said: O Vaidarbhī, do not be displeased with Me. I know that you are fully devoted to Me. I only spoke in jest, dear lady, because I wanted to hear what you would say.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “If you give up your body how will I be able to bear such a great burden? I will then have to give up My body too.”

“Having already created problems for me while making such false displays of love by embracing me and wiping away my tears, do You now want to cause me further suffering?”

Fearing such a response from Rukmini, Kṛṣṇa spoke this verse: “O Vaidarbhi, do not be displeased with Me.”

Rukmini might have replied, “Oh, I am not displeased with You, who are the most merciful. But upon hearing You say that I should go to another man for my own benefit, after having suffered sorrow by staying beside You, I fainted in bliss. Why did You wake me from that swoon? If I had remained in that state a moment longer both You and I could have attained the supreme *nirvāna*.”

Fearing such sarcastic words from Rukmini, Kṛṣṇa then said, “I know that You are fully dedicated to Me, having no other goal than Me.”

Rukmini: “Then why did You speak such cruel words?”

Kṛṣṇa: “Desiring to hear some crooked words from you, O beautiful one, I spoke some joking, untrue words.”

Text 30

*mukhaṁ ca prema-samrambha,
sphuritādharam īkṣitum,
kaṭā-kṣepāruṇāpāṅgaṁ,
sundara-bhru-kuṭī-taṭam*

I also wanted to see your face with lips trembling in loving anger, the reddish corners of your eyes throwing sidelong glances and the line of your beautiful eyebrows knit in a frown.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Kṛṣṇa gives other reasons for joking with Rukmini. Kṛṣṇa said, “I wanted to see your face with lips trembling (*sphurita:kampita*) in loving anger (*prema samrambha:praṇaya-kopena*), your eyebrows furrowed, and your reddish eyes throwing angry sidelong (*kaṭā:kaṭākṣa*) glances.”

If that was Kṛṣṇa’s desire then why did Rukmini not comply and show anger? Kṛṣṇa’s *iccha-sakti* (desire potency) is under His control, but *prema* controls Kṛṣṇa. Consequently next to *prema*, His *iccha-sakti* has no power. In order to increase Kṛṣṇa’s ecstasy, *prema* sometimes goes

against the desire of the Lord. That is the situation here.

In the *sthayi-bhava* (permanent loving mellow) of *madhura-rasa* (conjugal love) Rukmini and Kṛṣṇa’s other consorts display seven types of love: *prema* (pure love), *sneha* (affection), *māna* (jealous anger), *pranaya* (attachment), *rāga* (passion), *anurāga* (intense attachment), and *bhāva* (ecstatic love). At the proper moment one of these seven *sthāyi-bhāvas* will manifest and become prominent. Thus, when Rukmini was fanning Kṛṣṇa the *sthayi-bhāva* of *anurāga* had arisen, and because it was predominated by the *sañcāri-bhāva* of “humility” (*dainyam*) she experienced remorse, anxiety and bewilderment. However, she did not experience affectionate anger or the casting of sidelong glances at Kṛṣṇa. These symptoms would arise later when the *sthayi-bhava* of *māna* (jealousy) would appear. Because Rukmini’s affection is *ghṛta-sneha* (ghee-like affection) her *māna* does not manifest in the extreme. Satyabhama however, with her *madhu-sneha* (honey-like affection) exhibits *māna* even in *anuraga*, and gives Kṛṣṇa immense pleasure with her trembling lips, angry glances and furrowed brows.

Text 31

*ayaṁ hi paramo lābho,
gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinām,
yan narmair īyate yāmaḥ,
priyayā bhīru bhāmini*

The greatest pleasure worldly householders can enjoy at home is to spend time joking with their beloved wives, My dear timid and temperamental one.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini might object, “You become unhappy with my services such as fanning, but derive pleasure when

I give up those services and speak angry words to You. You are not pleased to see my smiling face, but are pleased to see my face dried up in extreme misery, discolored by anger and displaying horrible grimaces. Why do You act like this?” Kṛṣṇa answers with this verse. “Householders derive the greatest pleasure from joking like this with their beloved wives.”

Text 32

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
saivaṁ bhagavatā rājan,
vaidarbhī parisāntvitā,
jñātvā tat-parihāsoktīm,
priya-tyāga-bhayaṁ jahau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Queen Vaidarbhī was fully pacified by the Supreme Personality of Godhead and understood that His words had been spoken in jest. Thus she gave up her fear that her beloved would reject her.

Text 33

*babhāṣa ṛṣabhaṁ puṁsām,
vīkṣantī bhagavan-mukham,
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-rucira-,
snigdhāpāṅgena bhārata*

Smiling bashfully as she cast charming, affectionate glances upon the face of the Lord, the best of males, Rukmiṇī spoke the following,

O descendant of Bharata.

Text 34

*śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca,
nanv evam etad aravinda-vilocanāha,
yad vai bhavān bhagavato 'sadṛśī vibhūmnaḥ,
kva sve mahimny abhirato bhagavāms try-adhīśaḥ,
kvāham guṇa-prakṛtir ajña-grhīta-pādā*

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: Actually, what You have said is true, O lotus-eyed one. I am indeed unsuitable for the almighty Personality of Godhead. What comparison is there between that Supreme Lord, who is master of the three primal deities and who delights in His own glory, and myself, a woman of mundane qualities whose feet are grasped by fools?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking the same statements by which Kṛṣṇa previously denigrated Himself and praised her, Rukmini now praises Kṛṣṇa by giving an opposite meaning to those arguments. First Rukmini responds to Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 11 of this chapter: *kasmān no vavrṣe 'samān*, "Why did you select Us, who are not equal to you?"

Rukmini said, "O lotus-eyed Lord! It is true that I can never be equal to You. You are the Supreme Lord endowed with six opulences, and You are the controller of the three supreme deities (*tryadhisa*). Whereas, I am a mundane woman (*guṇa-prakṛtir*) controlled by the three *gunas*. Therefore, I am vastly inferior to You, so how can I be even imagined as equal to You?"

Although Rukmiṇī is the goddess of fortune, due to her extreme humility she is identifying herself with Kṛṣṇa's external energy, which

in fact is her expansion.

Text 35

*satyaṁ bhayād iva guṇebhya urukramāntaḥ,
śete samudra upalambhana-mātra ātmā,
nityaṁ kad-indriya-gaṇaiḥ kṛta-vigrahas tvam,
tvat-sevakair nrpa-padam vidhutaṁ tamo 'ndham*

Yes, my Lord Urukrama, You lay down within the ocean as if afraid of the material modes, and thus in pure consciousness You appear within the heart as the Supersoul. You are always battling against the foolish material senses, and indeed even Your servants reject the privilege of royal dominion, which leads to the blindness of ignorance.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa said, *rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudram śaraṇaṁ gatān*: “Out of fear of the kings, We took shelter in the ocean.”

Rukmini responds to this by saying, “O Urukrama” (most powerful one). This name indicates Kṛṣṇa fearlessness. The *Viśva-kosa* dictionary says the word *krama* can mean power or sequence.

“It is true that actually You are fearless. You seem to have fear of the modes of nature (*guṇebhyaḥ*), which are the actual rulers (*rājabhyo*) of this world because they impel all living beings to act. Because You fear that Your devotee will come under the influence of these modes of nature and become entangled in sense gratification, You enter the internal ocean of their hearts, and remain as the omniscient Supersoul (*upalambhana-mātra ātmā*) to protect Your devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa may object, “What is the proof that I reside there?”

This is answered by the statements of Brahma: *nāpaiṣi nātha hrdayāmburuhāt sva-puṁsām*, “For Your pure devotees, You are never

separated from the lotus of their hearts.” (SB 3.9.5) Also Navayogendra Havi Rsi said: *praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ*, “The devotees bind Your lotus feet in their hearts with the ropes of love.” (SB 11.2.55)

Rukmini continued, “As the Supersoul (*atma: paramatma*) You are perceived in terms of the *matras* (sense objects) namely taste, form, sound and touch. Your transcendental beauty and other qualities are perceived by Your devotees through meditation.” In other words *upalambhana-mātraḥ* also indicates that Kṛṣṇa is the sole object of meditation for His devotees.

In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa also said, *balavadbhiḥ kṛta-dveṣān*: “We created enmity with the powerful.” Rukmini replies, “It is the material senses which are actually powerful in this world. You take up the battle (*kṛta-vigrahas*) against sense gratification (*indriya-gaṇaiḥ*) on the part of Your devotees, and thus You constantly try to help them in their struggle for spiritual purity. In the beginning the *sadhaka* realizes a little of Your sweetness through meditation, but does not see You directly. It appears that You enter their hearts and go to sleep as if out of fear of the sense objects. When the devotee’s attachment to You matures and he conquers the enemy senses, he loses his attraction for the sense objects. Then You manifest Yourself, as if rising up from sleep. You become directly visible to the devotee and give him Your full sweetness. At that time, the eternal loving relationship between You and Your devotees becomes an irrevocable fact.”

In the same verse Kṛṣṇa stated, *tyakta-nṛpāsanān*: “We renounced the royal throne.” Rukmini responds saying, “Yes that is quite proper. Your servants (*sevakaiḥ*) also give up royal positions and political posts because it gives rise to complete loss of discrimination. If they do so, what to speak of You?” By the reference to the servants (*sevakaiḥ*) here, it can be understood that the previous statements of this verse are in relation to Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, not the Lord. For Kṛṣṇa does not fear or battle with the senses, but He does so in relation to His devotee.

Text 36

*tvat-pāda-padma-makaranda-juṣām munīnām,
vartmāsphuṭam nr-paśubhir nanu durvibhāvyam,
yasmād alaukikam ivehitam īśvarasya,
bhūmaṁs tavehitam atho anu ye bhavantam*

Your movements, inscrutable even for sages who relish the honey of Your lotus feet, are certainly incomprehensible for human beings who behave like animals. And just as Your activities are transcendental, O all-powerful Lord, so too are those of Your followers.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Rukmini replies to Kṛṣṇa’s statement in Text 13: *aspaṣṭa-vartmanām puṁsām, aloka-patham īyūṣām, āsthitāḥ padavīm su-bhru, prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ*, “O fine-browed lady, women are usually destined to suffer when they stay with men whose behavior is uncertain and who pursue a path not approved by society.”

Rukmini said, “Yes it is true, because Your activities are always transcendental, they are unfathomable (*aspaṣṭa*) even to the sages. And certainly (*nanu*) they are incomprehensible to the animalistic men entangled in worldly behavior. It is true that You do not follow the customary path (*aloka-patham*). Your endeavors transcend (*alaukikam*) this world, therefore the endeavors even of those who follow You are also transcendental.”

Text 37

*niṣkiñcano nanu bhavān na yato ’sti kiñcid,
yasmai balim bali-bhujo ’pi haranty ajādyāḥ,
na tvā vidanty asu-trpo ’ntakam āḍhyatāndhāḥ,*

preṣṭho bhavān bali-bhujām api te 'pi tubhyam

You possess nothing because there is nothing beyond You. Even the great enjoyers of tribute—Brahmā and other demigods—pay tribute to You. Those who are blinded by their wealth and absorbed in gratifying their senses do not recognize You in the form of death. But to the gods, the enjoyers of tribute, You are the most dear, as they are to You.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Rukmini replies to Kṛṣṇa's statement in Text 14: *niṣkiñcanā vayaṁ śaśvan, niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ, tasmāt prāyeṇa na hy ādhyā, mām bhajanti su-madhyame*, “We have no material possessions, and We are dear to those who similarly have nothing. Therefore, O slender one, the wealthy hardly ever worship Me.”

Rukmini said, “You are indeed *niṣkiñcana* (*niṣkiñcano nanu*).” The word *kiñcana* means “something”, and the prefix *nir*—or, as it appears here, *niṣ*—indicates negation. Thus in the ordinary sense *niṣkiñcana* means “one who has nothing.”

Rukmini said, “You are *niskincana* in the sense that nothing is greater than You. And You are *niskincana* in the sense that You do not only have some (*kincana*) opulence, power, sweetness, fame, strength, knowledge and renunciation, but You possess all of these in complete measure, since You are the source of all emanations.

“The meaning of *niskincana* as poverty- stricken does not apply to You at all, because Brahma and all the greatest demigods, who are worshiped by all others, worship You.”

Rukmini replied to Kṛṣṇa's statement that wealthy men do not worship Him by saying, “Those materialistic men, blinded by wealth, whose very life is their money, do not know You as death, as the punisher. What to speak then, of their worshiping You?”

In Text 14 Lord Kṛṣṇa also stated, *niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ*: “I am dear to those who have nothing.” To this Rukmini replied, “Brahma

and other demigods, who are the wealthiest persons in the universe, regularly offer tribute to You. Since You are the dearest of the mixed devotees (*sakāma-bhaktas*) like Brahma, what to speak of the devotees devoid of material desires (*niskāma-bhaktas*).”

Those who do not desire to engage in anything else, acquire anything else or inquire into anything else other than the worship of the Lord are called *niskincana* by the wise. According to the statements of the *Puranas*, the word *niskincana* means the devotee of the Lord.

Text 38

*tvaṁ vai samasta-puruṣārtha-mayaḥ phalātmā,
yad-vāñchayā su-matayo viśṛjanti kṛtsnam,
teṣāṁ vibho samucito bhavataḥ samājah,
puṁsaḥ striyāś ca ratayoḥ sukha-duḥkhiṅor na*

You are the embodiment of all human goals and are Yourself the final aim of life. Desiring to attain You, O all-powerful Lord, intelligent persons abandon everything else. It is they who are worthy of Your association, not men and women absorbed in the pleasure and grief resulting from their mutual lust.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Rukmini refutes Kṛṣṇa’s statement in Text 15: *yayor ātma-samaṁ vittaṁ, janmaśvayākṛtir bhavaḥ, tayor vivāho maitrī ca, nottamādhamayoḥ kvacit*, “Marriage and friendship are proper between two people who are equal in terms of their wealth, birth, influence, physical appearance and capacity for good progeny, but never between a superior and an inferior.”

Rukmini said, “You have said that one should marry only a person equal in wealth. That is possible for others, but not for You. You are the end goal (*phalātmā*) of all human endeavors. The association (*samājah*) or relation is between the served and servitor, between Narayana and

Laksmi, between You and myself, not between a mundane man and woman who are attracted in mutual lust.”

Text 39

*tvam nyasta-daṇḍa-munibhir gaditānubhāva,
ātmatma-daś ca jagatām iti me vṛto 'si,
hitvā bhavad-bhruva udīrita-kāla-vega,
dhvastāśiṣo 'bja-bhava-nāka-patīn kuto 'nye*

Knowing that great sages who have renounced the sannyāsī’s daṇḍa proclaim Your glories, that You are the Supreme Soul of all the worlds, and that You are so gracious that You give away even Your own self, I chose You as my husband, rejecting Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the rulers of heaven, whose aspirations are all frustrated by the force of time, which is born from Your eyebrows. What interest, then, could I have in any other suitors?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Rukmini refutes Kṛṣṇa’s statement in Text 16: *bhikṣubhiḥ ślāghitā mudhā*, “O fool, I am praised only by beggars”, by explaining the superexcellence of being praised by beggars (*bhiksus*).

Rukmini said, “Those so-called beggars (*bhiksus*) are actually sages in the *paramahansa* stage of life who have reached the highest level of spiritual advancement and thus given up the *sannyāsī rod* (*danda*). Your powers are glorified (*gaditānubhāva*) by such *bhiksus* or *paramahamsas*. Everything becomes auspicious by praising You, the Soul of all souls (*ātmatma: paramatma*). Therefore, praising You is not foolish (*mudhā*). Rather if You say it is foolish, You are foolish (*mudhā*)!

“Knowing that You give Yourself to those in the universe (*ātma-daś ca jagatām*) who worship You, I have chosen You as my husband.

Nevertheless You have said *vaidarbhy etad avijñāya*: ‘My dear Vaidarbhī, out of ignorance you have chosen Me as your husband.’ “This shows You did not know my intelligence in this matter. I have chosen You after rejecting lesser personalities like Brahma and Siva, whose benedictions are all destroyed by the force of time emanating from the movement of Your eyebrows. What then to speak of my rejecting inferior persons like those kings? My dear husband, Your accusation that I lack foresight (*tvayādīrgha-samīkṣayā*, text 16) indicates that You did know of my deep insight into the situation. Actually, I chose You because I clearly understood Your true glories.”

Text 40

*jādyam vacas tava gadāgraja yas tu bhūpān,
vidrāvya śārṅga-ninadena jahartha mām tvam,
simho yathā sva-balim īśa paśūn sva-bhāgam,
tebhyo bhayād yad udadhim śaraṇam prapannah*

My Lord, as a lion drives away lesser animals to claim his proper tribute, You drove off the assembled kings with the resounding twang of Your Śārṅga bow and then claimed me, Your fair share. Thus it is sheer foolishness, my dear Gadāgraja, for You to say You took shelter in the ocean out of fear of those kings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In Text 12 Kṛṣṇa said, *rājabhyo bibhyataḥ su-bhru samudram śaraṇam gatān*: “Terrified of those kings, We went to the ocean for shelter.” Then suddenly Rukmini manifested the *sthayi-bhava* of *māna* (anger). Having already hinted at Kṛṣṇa’s ignorance of her knowledge and foresight, Rukmini became provoked to anger by hearing Kṛṣṇa glorifying other men who might have become her husband. Rukmini clearly indicates Kṛṣṇa’s ignorance while frowning and casting angry sidelong glances at Him.

Rukmini said, “Your words are foolish (*jāḍyam vacas tava*). Like a lion You defeated all the other kings and took me away as Your prize. Therefore, it is simply foolishness to say that out of fear of those same kings You went to the ocean.”

“But,” Kṛṣṇa may object, “earlier (verse 35) you said that it was true that I took shelter of the ocean out of fear.”

Rukmini, “Yes, but that was my foolishness.”

Text 41

*yad-vāñchayā nrpa-sikhāmaṇayo 'nga-vainya,
jāyanta-nāhuṣa-gayādaya aikya-patyam,
rājyaṁ viśrjya viviśur vanam ambujākṣa,
sīdanti te 'nupadavīm ta ihāsthitāḥ kim*

Wanting Your association, the best of kings—Aṅga, Vainya, Jāyanta, Nāhuṣa, Gaya and others—abandoned their absolute sovereignty and entered the forest to seek You out. How could those kings suffer frustration in this world, O lotus-eyed one?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Rukmini intends to tell Kṛṣṇa, “You said that, ‘Women who follow My path generally suffer’ (*āsthitāḥ padavīm su-bhru prāyaḥ sīdanti yoṣitaḥ*, text 13). That is also a foolish statement. You have also said that I, a king’s daughter, am unintelligent and frustrated because I married You. But how can You accuse all the great enlightened kings like Jāyanta (Bharata) of being unintelligent? They were the wisest of men, yet they gave up everything to follow You and were certainly not frustrated by the result. Indeed, they achieved the perfection of Your association.”

Text 42

*kānyam śrayeta tava pāda-saroja-gandham,
āghrāya san-mukharitam janatāpavargam,
lakṣmy-ālayam tv avigaṇayya guṇālayasya,
martyā sadoru-bhayam artha-vivikta-drṣṭih*

The aroma of Your lotus feet, which is glorified by great saints, awards people liberation and is the abode of Goddess Lakṣmī. What woman would take shelter of any other man after savoring that aroma? Since You are the abode of transcendental qualities, what mortal woman with the insight to distinguish her own true interest would disregard that fragrance and depend instead on someone who is always subject to terrible fear?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In two verses (42-43), Rukmini replies to Kṛṣṇa’s statement, “You should choose a more suitable husband” (*bhajasva kṣatriyaṣabham*, text 17).

Rukmini said, “Only a woman who has never heard Your glories would take shelter of another husband. What mortal woman, who has once smelled the fragrance of Your lotus feet or heard Your glories praised by sages (*san-mukharitam:stutam*) who are like bees, would accept anyone but You? One becomes liberated simply by hearing or chanting Your glories. Conversely, anyone who does not appreciate Your topics, such as a man-eater or the daughter of a witch, will take shelter of someone else and consequently always experience great fear. How could any sane, discriminating woman (*artha-vivikta-drṣṭih*) take shelter of anyone but You?”

In Text 16 Kṛṣṇa said that He was *guṇair hīnāḥ*, “bereft of all good qualities.” To refute this claim, Rukmiṇī states that Kṛṣṇa is *guṇālayasya*, “the abode of all transcendental qualities.”

*taṁ tvānurūpam abhajaṁ jagatāṁ adhīśam,
ātmānam atra ca paratra ca kāma-pūram,
syān me tavāṅghrir araṇaṁ śṛtibhir bhramantya,
yo vai bhajantam upayāty anṛtāpavargah*

Because You are suitable for me, I have chosen You, the master and Supreme Soul of all the worlds, who fulfill our desires in this life and the next. May Your feet, which give freedom from illusion by approaching their worshiper, give shelter to me, who have been wandering from one material situation to another.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “But I am the daughter of a human, however, so after hearing about Your qualities I have taken full shelter of You. Because You are suitable as My very Supersoul (*ātmānam*) I should surrender to You who are most favorable to me.” With the sudden appearance of the *sthāyi-bhāva* known as humility (*dainya*), Rukmini, though she is the eternally liberated consort of Kṛṣṇa, humbly thinks of herself as an ordinary human bound by *karma*. She then prays for the opportunity to worship the Lord: “May I attain the shelter of Your lotus feet after wandering for many births (*śṛtibhiḥ*).”

An alternate reading for the word *śṛtibhiḥ* is *śrutibhiḥ*, in which case the idea Rukmiṇī expresses is this: “O my beloved, I was bewildered by hearing about Your various incarnations. I heard that when You descended as Rāma, You abandoned Your wife Sītā, and that in this life You abandoned the *gopīs*. Also by hearing just now the way You have been speaking, I am experiencing delusion and various confusing doubts. Nevertheless, Your lotus feet have mercifully approached Your worshiper, coming of their own accord to destroy a multitude of illusions. May I surrender unto Your lotus feet, which give happiness and a continuous taste of nectar to persons like us.”

Rukmini hints that she would rather surrender to Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet than

His lotus face, because that face, with His mouth and words, sometimes emanates poison, even death-inflicting poison. At other times Kṛṣṇa's face gives life-restoring nectar.

Text 44

*tasyāḥ syur acyuta nṛpā bhavatopadiṣṭāḥ,
strīṇām gr̥heṣu khara-go-śva-vidāla-bhr̥tyāḥ,
yat-karṇa-mūlam ari-karṣaṇa nopayāyād,
yuṣmat-kathā mṛḍa-viriñca-sabhāsu gītā*

O infallible Kṛṣṇa, let each of the kings You named become the husband of a woman whose ears have never heard Your glories, which are sung in the assemblies of Śiva and Brahmā. After all, in the households of such women these kings live like asses, oxen, dogs, cats and slaves.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pointing her index finger at Kṛṣṇa with jealous anger, Rukmini spoke fiery words to condemn the kings whom Kṛṣṇa had praised in verse ten of this chapter. Rukmini said, “These so-called great kings are like asses because their wives sometimes kick them. They resemble dogs because they behave inimically toward outsiders in order to protect their home. They are like cats because they eat the remnants of their wives, and resemble slaves because they are servile in family affairs. Such kings may appear desirable to a foolish woman who has not heard or understood Your unlimited glories. O destroyer of enemies (*an-karṣaṇa: ari-karṣaṇa*), You drag my enemies like Sisupala to the kingdom of death.”

Text 45

*tvak-śmaśru-roma-nakha-keśa-pinaddham antar,
māmsāsthi-rakta-kṛmi-viṭ-kapha-pitta-vātam,
jīvac-chavaṃ bhajati kānta-matir vimūḍhā,
yā te padābja-makarandam ajighratī strī*

A woman who fails to relish the fragrance of the honey of Your lotus feet becomes totally befooled, and thus she accepts as her husband or lover a living corpse covered with skin, whiskers, nails, head-hair and body-hair and filled with flesh, bones, blood, parasites, feces, mucus, bile and air.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “On the authority of the scriptural statement *sa vai patiḥ syād akuto-bhayaḥ svayam*: ‘He indeed should become one’s husband who can remove all fear’, You alone qualify as the real husband for all women at all times. An ordinary husband’s body is covered on the outside by skin and hair. Otherwise it would become overwhelmed with flies and millions of other insects and vermin attracted by its foul smell and other offensive qualities. And inside the husband’s body is filled with blood, bones, feces, flesh, bile, worms and phlegm.

She who thinks of this living corpse as “my husband” and worships him is simply a fool. Why are they so foolish? The honey sweetness of Your lotus feet, and the fact that You possess an eternal transcendental body, full of knowledge and bliss is well known. Yet due to being whipped up into a tempest by the reciters of the *Puranas*, foolish women reject You.”

Text 46

*astv ambujākṣa mama te caraṇānurāga,
ātman ratasya mayi cānatirikta-dṛṣṭeh,
yārhy asya vṛddhaya upātta-rajo-’ti-mātro,*

mām ikṣase tad u ha naḥ paramānukampā

O lotus-eyed one, though You are satisfied within Yourself and thus rarely turn Your attention toward me, please bless me with steady love for Your feet. It is when You assume a predominance of passion in order to manifest the universe that You glance upon me, showing me what is indeed Your greatest mercy.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Here Rukmini replies to Kṛṣṇa’s statement regarding His indifference to family life, “Always satisfied within Ourselves, We care nothing for wives, children and wealth.” (Text 20)

Just by pondering over Kṛṣṇa’s indifference or neutrality Rukmini reached a state of calmness in the *sthayi-bhava* known as neutrality (*sthāna*). Then submerging in an ocean of humility, she spoke this verse: “Let me have loving attachment to Your feet even if You are indifferent. Your indifference to me is appropriate, since You glance on the entire universe with indifference. Because You take pleasure within Yourself (*ātman ratasya:ātmarāma*) You rarely look at me.”

Humbly identifying herself with Kṛṣṇa’s external energy, which is her expansion, Rukmini says, “Though You do not often look at me, when You are ready to manifest the material universe and thus begin to work through the mode of passion, which is Your potency, then You will certainly (*u*) glance upon me and I will rejoice (*ha*). It will be a great display of mercy for me, and I will accept it as my greatest fortune.”

The inner meaning of Rukmini’s statement is as follows: Rukmini said, “Actually You are very attached to me, as attested to by Your own words, ‘I am also thinking about her so much that I cannot sleep at night, *tathāham api tac-citto nidrām ca na labhe niśi.*’ (SB 10.53.2) Yet from Your statement *udāsīnā vayanī* (text 20), we see that You are indifferent. Therefore, if You are attracted to me then I must be Your supreme, internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Thus even though You are self-satisfied (*ātman ratasya*), You take pleasure in me. But if I am

Your external, material energy, then You will be indifferent to me. In this way You have both attitudes toward me, and I am in both kinds of relationship with You.”

Text 47

*naivālikam ahaṁ manye,
vacas te madhusūdana,
ambāyā eva hi prāyaḥ,
kanyāyāḥ syād ratiḥ kvacit*

Actually, I don't consider Your words false, Madhū sudana. Quite often an unmarried girl is attracted to a man, as in the case of Ambā.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini said, “Or else, You are teaching other men about ordinary female psychology by using me as an example since I am a woman.”

Having refuted everything Kṛṣṇa said, Rukmini, in a gracious frame of mind, now praises the truthfulness of His statements: “Thus I do not consider Your statements that I should marry a person of similar qualities to be false. After all, in this world sometimes a woman becomes attracted to some man before marriage. For example, of the three daughters of the king of Kasi, Ambika, Ambalika and Amba, Amba became attracted to Salva.”

Text 48

*vyūdhāyās cāpi puṁścalyā,
mano 'bhyeti navaṁ navam,
budho 'satīm na bibhṛyāt,*

tām bibhrad ubhaya-cyutaḥ

The mind of a promiscuous woman always hankers for new lovers, even if she is married. An intelligent man should not keep such an unchaste wife, for if he does he will lose his good fortune both in this life and the next.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini said, “Even married women may desire newer and newer lovers. An intelligent man will not marry such a woman, for he will suffer in this life and the next. You, being omniscient, would have rejected me already if You had known me to be like this.”

Text 49

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
sādhvy etac-chrotu-kāmais tvam,
rāja-putrī pralambhitā,
mayoditam yad anvāttha,
sarvaṁ tat satyam eva hi*

The Supreme Lord said: O saintly lady, O princess, We deceived you only because We wanted to hear you speak like this. Indeed, everything you said in reply to My words is most certainly true.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “We joked with you, wanting to hear (*chrotu:śrotu-kāmais*) your words.” *Śrotu-kāmais* is in the plural to indicate that not only Kṛṣṇa, but some of Rukmini’s maidservants also wanted to hear. The plural can also indicate that all the functions of Kṛṣṇa’s sense of hearing desired to enjoy the fun (*pralambhitā:upahasitā*) of hearing Rukmini’s statements.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Having been the object of My jokes, you interpreted whatever I said in another way (*anu-attha*) which was most certainly true.”

Text 50

*yān yān kāmāyase kāmān,
mayy akāmāya bhāmini,
santi hy ekānta-bhaktāyās,
tava kalyāṇi nityada*

Whatever benedictions you hope for in order to become free of material desires are ever yours, O fair and noble lady, for you are My unalloyed devotee.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “What benediction can I, who am supremely satisfied, give to her?” Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa said, “Whatever desires you have in regards to serving Me and Me alone in pure love, free from all self interest (*akāmāya:kāma-bhinnāya*) are all fulfilled. “O woman full of *prema* (*kāmini*)!” The alternate reading is *bhāmini*, “O angry one” indicating that Rukmini was angry because Kṛṣṇa obstructed her service with His crooked words. By describing Rukmini as *ekānta-bhaktāyās* “My unalloyed devotee,” Kṛṣṇa excludes any material meanings to the words *kāmāyase* and *kāmān*.

Text 51

*upalabdham pati-prema,
pāti-vratyaṁ ca te 'naghe,
yad vākyaiś cālyamānāyā,
na dhīr mayy apakarṣitā*

O sinless one, I have now seen firsthand the pure love and chaste attachment you have for your husband. Even though shaken by My words, your mind could not be pulled away from Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Even though you were somewhat disturbed by My words meant to break your love, your heart, which is filled with the most intense love for Me, did not decrease even a little in its love, what to speak of getting destroyed. Thus I have directly seen the sterling quality of your pure love. O sinless one (*anaghe*), who have committed no offense even through your servitors, please forgive Me for the offense I committed to you.”

The scriptures describe the pure love between Rukmiṇī and Kṛṣṇa as follows:

sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ, saty api dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe yad bhāva-bandhanaṁ yūnoḥ, sa premā parikīrtitaḥ

“When the love between a young man and a young woman can never be destroyed, even when there is every cause for the destruction of that love, that pure love is known as *prema*.”

Text 52

*ye mām bhajanti dāmpatyē,
tapasā vrata-caryayā,
kāmātmāno 'pavargeśam,
mohitā mama māyayā*

Although I have the power to award spiritual liberation, lusty persons worship Me with penance and vows in order to get My blessings for their mundane family life. Such persons are bewildered by My illusory energy.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Kṛṣṇa condemns materialistic devotees, who, for the sake of mundane pleasures in household life (*dampatyē*), worship the Lord with prayers like, “May my husband give me happiness” or “May my wife give me happiness.” According to a statement in the prose part of the Fifth Canto, the word *apavargeśam* means “the giver of *prema*.” Another meaning of *apavargeśam* is “The Lord who makes the four ordinary goals of human endeavor insignificant.”

Text 53

*mām prāpya māniny apavarga-sampadam,
vāñchanti ye sampada eva tat-patim,
te manda-bhāgā niraye 'pi ye nṛṇām,
mātrātmakatvāt nirayaḥ su-saṅgamaḥ*

O supreme reservoir of love, unfortunate are they who even after obtaining Me, the Lord of both liberation and material riches, hanker only for material treasures. These worldly gains can be found even in hell. Since such persons are obsessed with sense gratification, hell is a fitting place for them.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Kṛṣṇa elaborates upon what He said in the previous verse: “If after obtaining Me, the source of both inferior material wealth and the bliss of liberation, they want the paltry bliss which can be squeezed out of the mundane opulences gained from the four ordinary human endeavors, they are most unfortunate. After all, even in hell or in lower life forms like pigs and dogs one can very easily get happiness from association with women and other objects. Such unfortunate souls (*nṛṇām:jīvānām*) attached to sense gratification (*mātrā-ātmakatvāt:viśayātmakatvāt*) will take birth in

hell or as pigs and other low creatures (*niraye*) in order to be completely absorbed in sense enjoyment. Such a birth is quite suitable for them.”

Text 54

*diṣṭyā grheśvary asakṛṇ mayi tvayā,
kṛtānuvṛttir bhava-mocanī khalaiḥ,
su-duṣkarāsau sutarām durāśiṣo,
hy asuṁ-bharāyā nikṛtiṁ juṣaḥ striyāḥ*

Fortunately, O mistress of the house, you have always rendered Me faithful devotional service, which liberates one from material existence. This service is very difficult for the envious to perform, especially for a woman whose intentions are wicked, who lives only to gratify her bodily demands, and who indulges in duplicity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “You have performed devotion which releases one from the bondage of the material world (*bhava-mocani:samsāra-bandha-mocanī*). But since you are eternally liberated already, others will become liberated by executing such devotional service.”

Rukmini may object as follows: “But then will even low class women become liberated by devotion?”

Kṛṣṇa answers, “No! Women who are envious, duplicitous, and full of wicked motives for sensuous delights can never perform *bhakti*.”

Text 55

*na tvādrśīm praṇayinīm grhiṇīm grheṣu,
paśyāmi mānini yayā sva-vivāha-kāle,
prāptān nṛpān na vigaṇayya raho-haro me,*

prasthāpito dvija upaśruta-sat-kathasya

In all My palaces I can find no other wife as loving as you, O most respectful one. When you were to be married, you disregarded all the kings who had assembled to seek your hand, and simply because you had heard authentic accounts concerning Me, you sent a brāhmaṇa to Me with your confidential message.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O *mānini* (respectful one)! Among all My loving wives, you are the best. You sent me a confidential message (*raho-haro*) through a *brahmana* after hearing many true stories (*sat-kathasya*) about Me.”

Raho-haro means, “the bringer of something confidential,” as defined in the *Viśva-kosa* dictionary: *raho* ‘*ti-guhye surate*, “The word *rahas* can refer to a confidential secret or else to sexual relations.”

Text 56

*bhrātur virūpa-karaṇaṁ yudhi nirjitasya,
prodvāha-parvaṇi ca tad-vadham akṣa-goṣṭhyām,
duḥkhaṁ samuttham asaho ’smad-ayoga-bhītyā,
naivābravīḥ kim api tena vayaṁ jitās te*

When your brother, who had been defeated in battle and then disfigured, was later killed during a gambling match on Aniruddha’s wedding day, you felt unbearable grief, yet out of fear of losing Me you spoke not a word. By this silence you have conquered Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Your brother was killed by Baladeva at the gambling match during the wedding of Aniruddha.

Out of fear of separation from Me, you did not express your sorrow or say ‘You should not have done that.’ However, for the sake of common opinion you did display slight sadness. Great joy arose from that sorrow because violence was wreaked on Rukmi, My enemy.”
From this verse it is understood that Kṛṣṇa’s talks with Rukmiṇī must have taken place after the marriage of Aniruddha.

Text 57

*dūtas tvayātma-labhane su-vivikta-mantraḥ,
prasthāpito mayi cirāyati śūnyam etat,
matvā jihāsa idaṁ aṅgam ananya-yogyam,
tiṣṭheta tat tvayi vyaṁ pratinandayāmaḥ*

When you sent the messenger with your most confidential plan and yet I delayed going to you, you began to see the whole world as void and wanted to quit your body, which could never have been given to anyone but Me. May this greatness of yours remain with you always; I can do nothing to reciprocate except joyfully thank you for your devotion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “When the messenger sent by you for obtaining Me was delayed, you considered the whole universe vacant and thought of giving up your life since your body was not meant for anyone else. This is what you said in your message to Me: *yarhy ambujākṣa na labheya bhavat-prasādam/ jahyām asūn vrata-kṛśān śata-janmabhiḥ syāt*, ‘If I cannot obtain Your mercy, I shall simply give up my vital force, which will have become weak from the severe penances I will perform. Then, after hundreds of lifetimes of endeavor, I may obtain Your mercy.’ (SB 10.52.43)
“That action remains with you, and I cannot repay you in any way for it. I can simply rejoice (*pratinanda-yāmaḥ:harṣayāmaḥ*).”

Text 58

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ saurata-samlāpair,
bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ,
sva-rato ramayā reme,
nara-lokaṁ viḍambayan*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: And so the self-satisfied Supreme Lord of the universe enjoyed with the goddess of fortune, engaging her in lovers' talks and thus imitating the ways of human society.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this way the self-satisfied (*sva-rato*) Lord enjoyed through joking conjugal (*saurata*) conversations (*samlāpair*) with His wife (*ramayā reme*), His personal expansion. The word *viḍambayan* means “imitating” and also “ridiculing.” Thus Kṛṣṇa played like a husband of this world, but by His transcendental pastimes He condemned material life by showing its inferiority to His transcendental happiness.

Text 59

*tathānyāsām api vibhur,
gṛhesu gṛhavān iva,
āsthito gṛha-medhīyān,
dharmān loka-gurur hariḥ*

The almighty Lord Hari, preceptor of all the worlds, similarly behaved like a conventional householder in the palaces of His other

queens, performing the religious duties of a family man.

Chapter Sixty-one: Lord Balarāma Slays Rukmī

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ekaikaśas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya,
putrān daśa-daśābalāḥ,
ajījanann anavamān,
pituḥ sarvātma-sampadā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Each of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wives gave birth to ten sons, who were not less than their father, having all His personal opulence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the sons and grandsons of Kṛṣṇa, and Balarama’s killing of Rukmi at the dice game during the marriage of Aniruddha. This verse indicates that Sri Kṛṣṇa had 16,108 wives and begot 161,080 sons. These sons were not less than Kṛṣṇa in terms of their personal powers and qualities.

Text 2

*gṛhād anapagam vīkṣya,
rāja-putryo ’cyutaṁ sthītam,
preṣṭhaṁ nyamamsata svam svam,
na tat-tattva-vidaḥ striyaḥ*

Because each of these princesses saw that Lord Acyuta never left

her palace, each thought herself the Lord’s favorite. These women did not understand the full truth about Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa would leave the palaces only with the permission of His queens, and thus each one considered herself His favorite. By Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable *yogamaya* potency the queens did not know the full truth about how He creates the good fortune of all His beloved devotees.

Text 3

*cārv-abja-kośa-vadanāyata-bāhu-netra,
sa-prema-hāsa-rasa-vikṣita-valgu-jalpaiḥ,
sammohitā bhagavato na mano vijetum,
svair vibhramaiḥ samaśakan vanitā vibhūmnaḥ*

The Supreme Lord’s wives were fully enchanted by His lovely, lotus-like face, His long arms and large eyes, His loving glances imbued with laughter, and His charming talks with them. But with all their charms these ladies could not conquer the mind of the all-powerful Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s wives, who were controlled just by His spectacular beauty, had two types of conjugal affection: *prema-maya* (full of love) and *kāma-maya* (full of lust). Two verses (3-4) describe how they could not bring Kṛṣṇa under their control with their *kama-maya* affection. The queens were totally enchanted by Kṛṣṇa’s face, which was as charming as the whorl of a lotus, His long arms, elongated eyes, loving smile and His charming conversations. But none of the queens, even with all their seductive beauty, could conquer Kṛṣṇa’s mind. The reason for this is stated by the word *vibhūmnaḥ*, which means that by His very nature Kṛṣṇa, and not them, is the most

perfectly desirable object.

Text 4

*smāyāvaloka-lava-darsita-bhāva-hāri,
bhrū-maṇḍala-prahita-saurata-mantra-śauṇḍaiḥ,
patnyas tu ṣoḍaśa-sahasram anaṅga-bāṇair,
yasyendriyaṁ vimathitum karaṇair na śekuḥ*

The arched eyebrows of these sixteen thousand queens enchantingly expressed those ladies' secret intentions through coyly smiling sidelong glances. Thus their eyebrows boldly sent forth conjugal messages. Yet even with these arrows of Cupid, and with other means as well, they could not agitate Lord Kṛṣṇa's senses.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes their lusty allurements. Even sixteen thousand wives could not agitate Kṛṣṇa's senses with the Cupid arrows of their eyes. What type of arrows were they? They were arrows of sweet smiles showing their conjugal intentions through sidelong glances, and lusty messages sent by the movements of their attractive eyebrows. They boldly (*śauṇḍaiḥ:pragalbhaih*) expressed their desires to Kṛṣṇa by these and other ways described in the *Kama-sutra*.

Text 5

*itthaṁ ramā-patim avāpya patim striyas tā,
brahmādayo 'pi na viduḥ padavīm yadṭyām,
bhejur mudāviratam edhitayānurāga,
hāsāvaloka-nava-saṅgama-lālasādyam*

Thus these women obtained as their husband the master of the goddess of fortune, although even great demigods like Brahmā do not know how to approach Him. With ever-increasing pleasure, they felt loving attraction for Him, exchanged smiling glances with Him, eagerly anticipated associating with Him in ever-fresh intimacy and enjoyed in many other ways.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the intense conjugal attraction the queens felt for Kṛṣṇa. By showing their smiling glances full of *prema-maya* affection (*anurāga*), they enjoyed many ever-new and intimate physical exchanges (*nava-saṅgama*) with Kṛṣṇa, which were filled with great hankering because they could not be completely satisfied.

Thus it should be understood that Kṛṣṇa is controlled by the *prema-maya* (pure loving) dealings of His wives as seen in His pastime of stealing the *parijata* tree, and also from His own words: *tathāham api tac-citto nidrām ca na labhe niśi*, “I cannot sleep at night because of thinking of Rukmini.” (SB 10.53.2) Sukadeva Gosvami said, *īkṣito ’ntaḥ-pura-strīṅām, sa-vrīḍa-prema-vīkṣitaiḥ*, “Being enchanted by their [wives] shy, loving glances, Kṛṣṇa found it difficult to leave their palaces.” (SB 10.70.16) Also it is said, *reme strī-ratna-kūṭastho, bhagavān prākṛto yathā*, “Living amongst the jewel among women, Kṛṣṇa played like an ordinary person.” (SB 1.11.35)

Text 6

*pratyudgamāsana-varārhaṇa-pāda-śauca,
tāmbūla-viśramaṇa-vījana-gandha-mālyaiḥ,
keśa-prasāra-śayana-snapanopahāryaiḥ,
dāsī-śatā api vibhor vidadhuḥ sma dāsyam*

Although the Supreme Lord’s queens each had hundreds of maidservants, they chose to personally serve the Lord by approaching Him humbly, offering Him a seat, worshiping Him with excellent paraphernalia, bathing and massaging His feet, giving Him pān to chew, fanning Him, anointing Him with fragrant sandalwood paste, adorning Him with flower garlands, dressing His hair, arranging His bed, bathing Him and presenting Him with various gifts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse describes the queen’s actions of menial service to express their love (*anubhava*), having Kṛṣṇa as the object of their *prema*. They offered Kṛṣṇa the best items (*vara arhanam*) such as handfuls of flowers (*puṣpāñjali*) and handfuls of jewels (*ratnāñjali*).

Text 7

*tāsām yā daśa-putrāṇām,
kṛṣṇa-strīṇām puroditāḥ,
aṣṭau mahiṣyas tat-putrān,
pradyumnādīn grṇāmi te*

Among Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wives, each of whom had ten sons, I previously mentioned eight principal queens. I shall now recite for you the names of those eight queens’ sons, headed by Pradyumna.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Having described a related topic, now the main topic is introduced. Each queen had ten sons. First the sons of the eight principal queens are named.

Texts 8–9

*cārudeṣṇaḥ sudeṣṇaś ca,
cārudehaś ca vīryavān,
sucāruś cāruguptaś ca,
bhadracārus tathāparaḥ,
cārucandro vicāruś ca,
cāruś ca daśamo hareḥ,
pradyumna-pramukhā jātā,
rukmiṇyām nāvamāḥ pituḥ*

The first son of Queen Rukmiṇī was Pradyumna, and also born of her were Cārudeṣṇa, Sudeṣṇa and the powerful Cārudeha, along with Sucāru, Cārugupta, Bhadracāru, Cārucandra, Vicāru and Cāru, the tenth. None of these sons of Lord Hari was less than his father.

Texts 10–12

*bhānuḥ subhānuḥ svarbhānuḥ,
prabhānur bhānumāms tathā,
candrabhānur bṛhadbhānur,
atibhānus tathāṣṭamaḥ,
śrībhānuḥ pratibhānuś ca,
satyabhāmātmajā daśa,
sāmbaḥ sumitraḥ purujic,
chatajic ca sahasrajit,
viyayaś citraketuś ca,
vasumān draviḍaḥ kratuḥ,
jāmbavatyāḥ sutā hy ete,
sāmbādyāḥ pitṛ-sammataḥ*

The ten sons of Satyabhāmā were Bhānu, Subhānu, Svarbhānu, Prabhānu, Bhānumān, Candrabhānu, Bṛhadbhānu, Atibhānu (the eighth), Śrībhānu and Pratibhānu. Sāmba, Sumitra, Purujit, Śatajit, Sahasrajit, Vijaya, Citraketu, Vasumān, Draviḍa and Kratu were the sons of Jāmbavatī. These ten, headed by Sāmba, were their father's favorites.

Text 13

*vīraś candro 'śvasenaś ca,
citratur vegavān vṛṣaḥ,
āmaḥ śaṅku vasuḥ śrīmān,
kuntir nāgnajiteḥ sutāḥ*

The sons of Nāgnajitī were Vīra, Candra, Aśvasena, Citragu, Vegavān, Vṛṣa, Āma, Śaṅku, Vasu and the opulent Kunti.

Text 14

*śrutaḥ kavir vṛṣo vīraḥ,
subāhur bhadrā ekalaḥ,
śāntir darśaḥ pūrṇamāsaḥ,
kālindyāḥ somako 'varaḥ*

Śruta, Kavi, Vṛṣa, Vīra, Subāhu, Bhadrā, Śānti, Darśa and Pūrṇamāsa were sons of Kāṇḍī. Her youngest son was Somaka.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Among the sons of Kalindi, Bhadra was one and Somaka was the youngest (*avarah*).

Text 15

*praghoṣo gātravān simho,
balaḥ prabala ūrdhagaḥ,
mādryāḥ putrā mahāśaktiḥ,
saha ojo 'parājitaḥ*

Mādrā's sons were Praghoṣa, Gātravān, Simha, Bala, Prabala, Ūrdhaga, Mahāśakti, Saha, Oja and Aparājita.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This verse describes the sons of Lakṣmaṇā, who was also known as Mādrā.

Text 16

*vṛko harṣo 'nilo grdhro,
vardhanonnāda eva ca,
mahāmsaḥ pāvano vahnir,
mitravindātmajāḥ kṣudhiḥ*

Mitravindā's sons were Vṛka, Harṣa, Anila, Gṛdhra, Vardhana, Unnāda, Mahāmsa, Pāvana, Vahni and Kṣudhi.

Text 17

*saṅgrāmajid brhatsenaḥ,
śūraḥ praharaṇo 'rijit,
jayaḥ subhadro bhadrāyā,
vāma āyus ca satyakaḥ*

Saṅgrāmajit, Brhatsena, Śū ra, Praharāṇa, Arijit, Jaya and Subhadra were the sons of Bhadrā, together with Vāma, Āyur and Satyaka.

Text 18

*dīptimāms tāmrataptādyā,
rohiṇyās tanayā hareḥ,
pradyumnāc cāniruddho 'bhūd,
ruknavatyām mahā-balaḥ,
putryām tu rukmiṇo rājan,
nāmnā bhojakaṭe pure*

Dīptimān, Tāmratapta and others were the sons of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rohiṇī. Lord Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna fathered the greatly powerful Aniruddha in the womb of Ruknavatī, the daughter of Rukmī. O King, this took place while they were living in the city of Bhojakaṭa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having named the sons of the principal eight queens, Sukadeva Gosvami now mentions the sons of Rohini, the foremost of the remaining 16,100 queens.

Text 19

*eteṣām putra-pautrāś ca,
babhūvuḥ koṭiśo nṛpa,
mātarāḥ kṛṣṇa-jātīnām,
sahasrāṇi ca ṣoḍaśa*

My dear King, the sons and grandsons of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s children numbered in the tens of millions. Sixteen thousand mothers gave rise to this dynasty.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One can count the mothers of Kṛṣṇa’s offspring, but not the sons and grandsons. Kṛṣṇa’s queens numbered 16,108.

Text 20

*śrī-rājovāca,
katham rukmy arī-putrāya,
prādād duhitaram yudhi,
kṛṣṇena paribhūtas taṁ,
hantum randhram pratīkṣate,
etad ākhyāhi me vidvan,
dviṣor vaivāhikam mithaḥ*

King Parīkṣit said: How could Rukmī give his daughter to his enemy’s son? After all, Rukmī had been defeated by Lord Kṛṣṇa in battle and was waiting for an opportunity to kill Him. Please explain this to me, O learned one—how these two inimical parties became united through marriage.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pariksit Maharaja asked, “Why did Rukmi, who was waiting for the opportunity to kill Kṛṣṇa, give his

daughter in marriage (*vaivāhikam*) to Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna?

Text 21

*anāgatam atītam ca,
vartamānam atīndriyam,
viprakṛṣṭam vyavahitam,
samyak paśyanti yoginaḥ*

Mystic yogīs can perfectly see that which has not yet happened, as well as things in the past or present, beyond the senses, remote or blocked by physical obstacles.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Parikṣit expresses to Sukadeva, “You cannot say that you do not know.”

Text 22

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
vṛtaḥ svayaṁ-vare sāksād,
anaṅgo 'ṅga-yutas tayā,
rājñāḥ sametān nirjitya,
jahāraika-ratho yudhi*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: At her svayaṁ-vara ceremony, Rukmavatī herself chose Pradyumna, who was the re-embodiment of Cupid. Then, although He fought alone on a single chariot, Pradyumna defeated the assembled kings in battle and took her away.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: But fearing that he could not show convincingly that Rukmī would want to give his daughter to the son of his enemy, Sukadeva Gosvami explains how Rukmī held a *svayam̐-vara* ceremony for his daughter's marriage in order to escape the infamy of giving his daughter to his enemy's son.

Text 23

*yady apy anusmaran vairam,
rukmi kṛṣṇāvamāniḥ,
vyatarad bhāgineyāya,
sutām kurvan svasuḥ priyam*

Though Rukmī always remembered his enmity toward Lord Kṛṣṇa, who had insulted him, in order to please his sister he sanctioned his daughter's marriage to his nephew.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The answer to King Parīkṣit's question is given here. Ultimately Rukmī approved his daughter's marriage to Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna in order to please his sister, Rukmini, who had saved his life.

Text 24

*rukmiṇyās tanayām rājan,
kṛtavarma-suto balī,
upayeme viśālākṣm̐,
kanyām cārumatīm kila*

O King, Balī, the son of Kṛtavarmā, married Rukmiṇī's young

daughter, large-eyed Cārumatī.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Each queen had one daughter. In describing the marriage of Rukmini’s eldest daughter Carumati, to Krtavarma’s son Bali, the marriage of all the daughters is indicated.

Text 25

*dauhitrāyāniruddhāya,
pauṭrīm rukmy ādadād dhareḥ,
rocanām baddha-vairo ’pi,
svasuḥ priya-cikīrṣayā,
jānann adharmam tad yaunam,
sneha-pāśānubandhanaḥ*

Rukmī gave his granddaughter Rocanā to his daughter’s son, Aniruddha, despite Rukmī’s relentless feud with Lord Hari. Although Rukmī considered this marriage irreligious, he wanted to please his sister, bound as he was by the ropes of affection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmi agreed to the marriage (*yaunam*) of his granddaughter to Rukmini’s grandson Aniruddha, though it was considered irreligious (*adharmam*). According to worldly standards one should not give one’s beloved granddaughter to the grandson of one’s bitter enemy.

Thus we find the following injunction: *dviṣad-annam na bhoktavyam dviṣantam naiva bhojayet*. “One should not eat an enemy’s food or feed an enemy.” There is also the following prohibition: *asvargyam loka-vidviṣtam dharmam apy ācaren na tu*. “One should not execute religious injunctions if they will obstruct one’s elevation to heaven, or if they are condemned by human society.”

Text 26

*tasminn abhyudaye rājan,
rukmiṇī rāma-keśavau,
puram bhojakaṭam jagmuḥ,
sāmba-pradyumnakādayaḥ*

On the joyous occasion of that marriage, O King, Queen Rukmiṇī, Lord Balarāma, Lord Kṛṣṇa and several of the Lord’s sons, headed by Sāmba and Pradyumna, went to the city of Bhojakaṭa.

Texts 27–28

*tasmin nivṛtta udvāhe,
kāliṅga-pramukhā nṛpāḥ,
dṛptās te rukmiṇam procur,
balam akṣair vinirjaya,
anakṣa-jñō hy ayam rājann,
api tad-vyasanam mahat,
ity ukto balam āhūya,
tenākṣair rukmy adīvyata*

After the wedding, a group of arrogant kings headed by the King of Kāliṅga told Rukmī, “You should defeat Balarāma at dice. He’s not expert at dice, O King, but still He’s quite addicted to it.” Thus advised, Rukmī challenged Balarāma and began a gambling match with Him.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Deciding that it would be difficult to

defeat Kṛṣṇa even in gambling, they told Rukmi to invite Balarama (*balam*) to a game of dice.

Text 29

*śataṁ sahasram ayutaṁ,
rāmas tatrādade paṇam,
taṁ tu rukmy ajayat tatra,
kāliṅgaḥ prāhasad balam,
dantān sandarśayann uccair,
nāmṛṣyat tad dhalāyudhaḥ*

In that match Lord Balarāma first accepted a wager of one hundred coins, then one thousand, then ten thousand. Rukmī won this first round, and the King of Kaliṅga laughed loudly at Lord Balarāma, showing all his teeth. Lord Balarāma could not tolerate this.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: First the wager was a hundred gold coins, then a thousand gold coins and then ten thousand gold coins. The word *na amṛṣyat*, “could not tolerate” means that Balarama became inwardly angry when the King of Kaliṅga laughed and showed his teeth.

Text 30

*tato lakṣaṁ rukmy agrhṇād,
glaḥaṁ tatrājayad balah,
jītavān aham ity āha,
rukmi kaitavam āśritaḥ*

Next Rukmī accepted a bet of one hundred thousand coins, which Lord Balarāma won. But Rukmī tried to cheat, declaring “I’m the winner!”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Balarama won the wager of a hundred thousand coins, Rukmi tried to cheat saying he had won.

Text 31

*manyunā kṣubhitaḥ śrīmān,
samudra iva parvaṇi,
jātyārunākṣo 'ti-ruṣā,
nyarbudaṁ glaham ādade*

Shaking with anger like the ocean on the full-moon day, handsome Lord Balarāma, His naturally reddish eyes even redder in His fury, accepted a wager of one hundred million gold coins.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama accepted a wager of one hundred million gold coins (*nyarbudam*).

Text 32

*taṁ cāpi jītavān rāmo,
dharmeṇa chalam āśritaḥ,
rukṁī jītaṁ mayātreṁ,
vadantu prāśnikā iti*

Lord Balarāma fairly won this wager also, but Rukmī again resorted to cheating and declared, “I have won! Let these witnesses

here say what they saw.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Resorting to deceit, Rukmi said, “I have won. The witnesses (*prāśnikāḥ*) can testify to this.”

Text 33

*tadābravīn nabho-vāṇī,
balenaiva jito glahaḥ,
dharmato vacanenaiva,
rukmi vadati vai mṛṣā*

Just then a voice from the sky declared, “Balarāma has fairly won this wager. Rukmī is surely lying.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When the sinful kings were giving false testimony that Rukmi had won, a voice from the sky (*nabho-vāṇī*) proclaimed, “Balarama speaks correctly and has won. Rukmi is lying.”

Text 34

*tām anādr̥tya vaidarbho,
duṣṭa-rājanya-coditaḥ,
saṅkarṣaṇam parihasan,
babhāṣe kāla-coditaḥ*

Urged on by the wicked kings, Rukmī ignored the divine voice. In fact destiny itself was urging Rukmī on, and thus he ridiculed Lord Balarāma as follows.

Text 35

*naivākṣa-kovidā yūyam,
gopālā vana-gocarāḥ,
akṣair dīvyanti rājāno,
bāṇaiś ca na bhavādṛśāḥ*

[Rukmī said:] You cowherds who wander about the forests know nothing about dice. Playing with dice and sporting with arrows are only for kings, not for the likes of You.

Text 36

*rukmiṇaivam adhikṣipto,
rājabhiś copahāsitaḥ,
kruddhaḥ parigham udyamya,
jaghne taṁ nṛmṇa-saṁsadi*

Thus insulted by Rukmī and ridiculed by the kings, Lord Balarāma was provoked to anger. In the midst of the auspicious wedding assembly, He raised His club and struck Rukmī dead.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In the auspicious wedding assembly (*nṛmṇa-saṁsadi:maṅgala-sabhāyām*) Balarama raised his club and struck Rukmi dead.

Text 37

*kaliṅga-rājam tarasā,
grhītvā daśame pade,
dantān apātayat kruddho,
yo 'hasad vivṛtair dvijaiḥ*

The King of Kaliṅga, who had laughed at Lord Balarāma and shown his teeth, tried to run away, but the furious Lord quickly seized him on his tenth step and knocked out all his teeth.

Text 38

*anye nirbhinna-bāhūru-
śiraso rudhirokṣitāḥ,
rājāno dudravar bhītā,
balena paṅghārditāḥ*

Tormented by Lord Balarāma's club, the other kings fled in fear, their arms, thighs and heads broken and their bodies drenched in blood.

Text 39

*nihate rukmiṇi śyāle,
nābravīt sādhy asādhu vā,
rakmiṇī-balayo rājan,
sneha-bhaṅga-bhayād dhariḥ*

When His brother-in-law Rukmī was slain, Lord Kṛṣṇa neither applauded nor protested, O King, for He feared jeopardizing His affectionate ties with either Rukmiṇī or Balarāma.

Text 40

*tato 'niruddham saha sūryayā varam,
ratham samāropya yayuḥ kuśasthalīm,
rāmādayo bhojakaṭād daśārḥāḥ,
siddhākhilārthā madhusūdanāśrayāḥ*

Then the descendants of Daśārha, headed by Lord Balarāma, seated Aniruddha and His bride on a fine chariot and set off from Bhojakaṭa for Dvārakā. Having taken shelter of Lord Madhusūdana, they had fulfilled all their purposes.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With all their desires fulfilled, they put Aniruddha on a chariot with his new bride (*sūryayā*) and departed for Dvaraka. Even though Rukmiṇī was very dear to all the Dāśārhas, they were extremely satisfied with Rukmi's sudden death. Rukmini was also happy within, since her affection for Rukmi was only external. The statement in verse thirty-nine that Kṛṣṇa was silent out of fear of breaking His affectionate ties with Balarama and Rukmini is based on the fact that Rukmini had affection for Rukmi only externally.

Chapter Sixty-two: The Meeting of Üṣā and Aniruddha

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
bāṇasya tanayām ūṣām,
upayeme yadūttamaḥ,
tatra yuddham abhūd ghoram,
hari-śaṅkarayor mahat,
etat sarvaṁ mahā-yogin,
samākhyātuṁ tvam arhasi*

King Parīkṣit said: The best of the Yadus married Bāṇāsura's daughter, Üṣā, and as a result a great, fearsome battle occurred between Lord Hari and Lord Śaṅkara. Please explain everything about this incident, O most powerful of mystics.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter discusses the affair between Usa and Aniruddha, who was brought to her by Citralekha, and how Banasura arrested Aniruddha.

Text 2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
bāṇaḥ putra-śata-jyeṣṭho,
baler āsīn mahātmanaḥ,
yena vāmana-rūpāya,
haraye 'dāyi medinī,
tasyaurasaḥ suto bāṇaḥ,*

*śiva-bhakti-rataḥ sadā,
mānyo vadānyo dhīmāṁś ca,
satya-sandho dṛḍha-vrataḥ,
śoṇitākhye pure rāmye,
sa rājyam akarot purā,
tasya śambhoḥ prasādena,
kiṅkarā iva te 'marāḥ,
sahasra-bāhur vādyena,
tāṇḍave 'toṣayan mṛdam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bāṇa was the oldest of the hundred sons fathered by the great saint Bali Mahārāja, who gave the whole earth in charity to Lord Hari when He appeared as Vāmanadeva. Bāṇāsura, born from Bali's semen, became a great devotee of Lord Śiva. His behavior was always respectable, and he was generous, intelligent, truthful and firm in his vows. The beautiful city of Śoṇitapura was under his dominion. Because Lord Śiva had favored him, the very demigods waited on Bāṇāsura like menial servants. Once, when Śiva was dancing his tāṇḍava-nṛtya, Bāṇa especially satisfied the lord by playing a musical accompaniment with his one thousand arms.

Text 3

*bhagavān sarva-bhūteśaḥ,
śaraṇyo bhakta-vatsalaḥ,
vareṇa chandayām āsa,
sa taṁ vavre purādhipam*

The lord and master of all created beings, the compassionate

refuge of his devotees, gladdened Bāṇāsura by offering him the benediction of his choice. Bāṇa chose to have him, Lord Śiva, as the guardian of his city.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Banasura chose Siva to be the protector of his city.

Text 4

*sa ekadāha giriśam,
pārśva-sthaṁ vīrya-durmadah,
kirīṭenārka-varṇena,
saṁspr̥śams tat-padāmbujam*

Bāṇāsura was intoxicated with his strength. One day, when Lord Śiva was standing beside him, Bāṇāsura touched the lord’s lotus feet with his helmet, which shone like the sun, and spoke to him as follows.

Text 5

*namasye tvāṁ mahā-deva,
lokānām gurum īśvaram,
puṁsām apūrṇa-kāmānām,
kāma-pūrāmarāṅghripam*

[Bāṇāsura said:] 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Banasura said, “I offer respects to you who are just like a desire tree fulfilling all desires.”

Text 6

*doḥ-sahasraṁ tvayā dattaṁ,
paraṁ bhārāya me 'bhavat,
tri-lokyāṁ pratiyoddhāraṁ,
na labhe tvad ṛte samam*

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 to fight.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Banasura said, “Since you can fulfill all desires, you should dissipate my sorrow. Except for you, there is no one suitable for me to fight with.” The implied meaning is: “If you mercifully fight with me, then I will be freed of my sorrow from my unfulfilled urge to fight. Defeating you, I will become world-famous as the conqueror of all directions.”

Text 7

*kaṇḍūtyā nibhṛtair dorbhir,
yuyutsur dig-gajān aham,
ādyāyāṁ cūrṇayann adrīn,
bhītās te 'pi pradudruvuh*

Eager to fight with the elephants who rule the directions, O primeval lord, I went forth, pulverizing mountains with my arms, which were itching for battle. But even those great elephants fled in fear.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Banasura said, “With my arms intensely itching for battle, I became eager to fight against the elephants of the directions that hold up the bottom of the universe. O primeval one, I went out with the intention of conquering all the directions except the northeast where you reside. Seeing me pounding the mountains into powder in order to relieve the itching of my arms, the elephants of the directions became afraid. So tell me, unless I fight with you how can I relieve my itching? If it is not relieved, how can I remain peaceful? Therefore do not find fault with me.”

Text 8

*tac chrutvā bhagavān kruddhaḥ,
ketus te bhajyate yadā,
tvad-darpa-ghnaṁ bhaven mūḍha,
samyugaṁ mat-samena te*

Hearing this, Lord Śiva became angry and replied, “Your flag will be broken, fool, when you have done battle with one who is my equal. That fight will vanquish your conceit.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *kruddhaḥ* (angry) implies that at first Siva became angry on hearing those words and thought to kill Banasura. Then Lord Siva reflected, “It would be improper to kill my servant with my own hands. But if this foolish, intoxicated person, who has received my mercy, thinks his mighty thousand arms to be a burden, then my master, who relieves the world of its burden, will

indeed take away his burden.”

Considering this, Siva spoke angrily: “When your flag marked with a peacock is broken, you will fight with someone equal to (*samena*) me.” He states this to gratify Banasura. The real meaning however is: “You will fight a person with unlimited splendor (*samena:sa* means “with” and *ma* means “splendor”)

Text 9

*ity uktaḥ kumatir hr̥ṣṭaḥ,
sva-gr̥haṁ prāvīṣan nṛpa,
pratīkṣan giriśādeśam,
sva-vīrya-naśanam kudhīḥ*

Thus advised, unintelligent Bāṇāsura was delighted. The fool then went home, O King, to wait for that which Lord Giriśa had predicted: the destruction of his prowess.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva addressed Bana as “O fool (*kumatih*), your pride will be destroyed in battle.” At that time that fool fallaciously thought, “Of course, it is impossible that my pride can be destroyed in battle. But by Siva’s statement I can deduce that someone who is most powerful is going to come and relieve my itching for battle.”

Thinking this, Banasura became delighted. While waiting for that breaking of his flag indicated by Lord Girisa, by which his own prowess would be destroyed, Bana thought, “When will my flag be broken?” Thus Bana is *ku-dhī* (“having bad intelligence”) because he was eager without good reason.

Text 10

*tasyoṣā nāma duhitā,
svapne prādyumninā ratim,
kanyālabhata kāntena,
prāg adṛṣṭa-śrutena sā*

In a dream Bāṇa’s daughter, the maiden Üṣā, had an amorous encounter with the son of Pradyumna, though she had never before seen or heard of her lover.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the incidents leading up to the battle predicted by Siva. The cause of Usa’s enjoyment with Aniruddha in her dream is explained in the *Viṣnu Purana*:

*ūṣā bāṇa-sutā vipra, pārvatīm śambhunā saha krīḍantīm
upalakṣyoccaiḥ, sprhām cakre tad-āśrayām*

“O *brāhmaṇa*, when Üṣā, the daughter of Bāṇa, happened to see Pārvatī playing with her husband, Lord Śambhu, Üṣā intensely desired to experience the same feelings.”

*tataḥ sakala-citta-jña, gaurī tām aha bhāvinīm alam atyartha-tāpena,
bhartrā tvam api raṁsyase*

“At that time Goddess Gaurī [Pārvatī], who knows everyone’s heart, told the sensitive young girl, ‘Don’t be so disturbed! You will have a chance to enjoy with your own husband.’”

*ity uktā sā tadā cakre, kadeti matim ātmanaḥ ko vā bhartā mamety
enām, punar apy āha pārvatī*

“Hearing this, Üṣā thought to herself, ‘But when? And who will my husband be?’ In response, Pārvatī addressed her once more.”

*vaiśākha-śukla-dvādaśyām, svapne yo ’bhibhavaṁ tava kariṣyati sa te
bhartā, rāja-putri bhaviṣyati*

“O princess, the man who approaches you in your dream on the twelfth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the month Vaiśākha will become your husband.”

Text 11

*sā tatra tam apaśyantī,
kvāsi kānteti vādinī,
sakhīnām madhya uttasthau,
vihvalā vrīḍitā bhṛśam*

Losing sight of Him in her dream, Üṣā suddenly sat up in the midst of her girlfriends, crying out “Where are You, my lover?” She was greatly disturbed and embarrassed.

Text 12

*bāṇasya mantrī kumbhāṇḍaś,
citrālekhā ca tat-sutā,
sakhya apr̥cchat sakhīm ūṣām,
kautūhala-samanvitā*

Bāṇāsura had a minister named Kumbhāṇḍa, whose daughter was Citrālekhā. A companion of Üṣā’s, she was filled with curiosity, and thus she inquired from her friend.

Text 13

*kaṁ tvaṁ mṛgayase su-bhru,
kīdr̥śas te manorathaḥ,
hasta-grāham na te ’dyāpi,*

rāja-putry upalakṣaye

[Citralkhā said:] Who are you searching for, O fine-browed one? What is this hankering you're feeling? Until now, O princess, I haven't seen any man take your hand in marriage.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Citralkha said, "I do not see your husband (*hasta graham*) now, since you are not married."

Text 14

*dr̥ṣṭaḥ kaścīn naraḥ svapne,
śyāmaḥ kamala-locanaḥ,
pīta-vāsā bṛhad-bāhur,
yoṣitām hrdayam-gamaḥ*

[Üṣā said:] In my dream I saw a certain man who had a dark blue complexion, lotus eyes, yellow garments and mighty arms. He was the kind who touches women's hearts.

Text 15

*tam aham mṛgaye kāntam,
pāyayitvādharam madhu,
kvāpi yātaḥ sprhayatīm,
kṣiptvā mām vṛjinārṇave*

It is that lover I search for. After making me drink the honey of His

lips, He has gone elsewhere, and thus He has thrown me, hankering fervently for Him, into the ocean of distress.

Text 16

*citralekhovāca,
vyasanam te 'pakarṣāmi,
tri-lokyām yadi bhāvvyate,
tam āneṣye varam yas te,
mano-hartā tam ādiśa*

Citralekhā said: I will remove your distress. If He is to be found anywhere in the three worlds, I will bring this future husband of yours who has stolen your heart. Please show me who He is.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Citralekha said, “I will relieve your distress if he is to be found (*bhavyate*) in the three worlds.”

Text 17

*ity uktvā deva-gandharva,
siddha-cāraṇa-pannagān,
daitya-vidyādhārān yakṣān,
manujāms ca yathālikhat*

Saying this, Citralekhā proceeded to draw accurate pictures of various demigods, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Cāraṇas, Pannagas, Daityas, Vidyādharas, Yakṣas and humans.

Texts 18–19

*manujeṣu ca sāvṛṣṇīn,
śūram ānakadundubhim,
vyalikhad rāma-kṛṣṇau ca,
pradyumnaṁ vīkṣya lajjitā,
aniruddhaṁ vilikhitaṁ,
vīkṣyoṣāvān-mukhī hriyā,
so 'sāv asāv iti prāha,
smayamānā mahī-pate*

O King, among the humans, Citralekhā drew pictures of the Vṛṣṇis, including Śūrasena, Ānakadundubhi, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. When Ūṣā saw the picture of Pradyumna she became bashful, and when she saw Aniruddha’s picture she bent her head down in embarrassment. Smiling, she exclaimed, “He’s the one! It’s Him!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Citralekha asked, “Who among these men is yours?”

Seeing the picture of Pradyumna, Usa became embarrassed, understanding that he was her father-in-law. When she saw the picture of his son Aniruddha, her lover, she said twice, “This is him, this is him!” Her repeating these words is due to the manifestation of extreme surprise and joy in her heart. It is understood that Usa then wrote the words “Aniruddha, the son of Pradyumna” above the picture.

Text 20

*citralkhā tam ājñāya,
pautraṁ kṛṣṇasya yoginī,*

*yayau vihāyasā rājan,
dvāarakām kṛṣṇa-pālitām*

Citralekhā, endowed with mystic powers, recognized Him as Kṛṣṇa’s grandson [Aniruddha]. My dear King, she then traveled by the mystic skyway to Dvāarakā, the city under Lord Kṛṣṇa’s protection.

Text 21

*tatra suptam su-paryanke,
prādyumniṁ yogam āsthitā,
gṛhītvā śoṇita-puram,
sakhyai priyam adarśayat*

There she found Pradyumna’s son Aniruddha sleeping upon a fine bed. With her yogic power she took Him away to Śoṇitapura, where she presented her girlfriend Ūṣā with her beloved.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Citralekha found it impossible to enter Dvaraka, Narada Muni instructed her in the mystic art (*yogam āsthitā*) of entering Kṛṣṇa’s city. Some authorities also say that Citralekhā is herself an expansion of Yogamāyā. Citralekha returned to Sonitapura and presented Aniruddha to Ūsa.

Text 22

*sā ca taṁ sundara-varam,
vilokya muditānanā,*

*duṣprekṣye sva-gr̥he pumbhī,
reme prādyumninā samam*

When Üṣā beheld Him, the most beautiful of men, her face lit up with joy. She took the son of Pradyumna to her private quarters, which men were forbidden even to see, and there enjoyed with Him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase “forbidden even to see” (*duṣprekṣye*) actually means that Usa’s quarters were “impossible for other men to enter.”

Texts 23–24

*parārdhya-vāsaḥ-srag-gandha,
dhūpa-dīpāsanādibhiḥ,
pāna-bhojana-bhakṣyaiś ca,
vākyaiḥ śuśrūṣaṇārcitaḥ,
gūḍhaḥ kanyā-pure śaśvat,
pravṛddha-snehayā tayā,
nāhar-gaṇān sa bubudhe,
ūṣayāpahṛtendriyaḥ*

Üṣā worshiped Aniruddha with faithful service, offering Him priceless garments, along with garlands, fragrances, incense, lamps, sitting places and so on. She also offered Him beverages, all types of food, and sweet words. As He thus remained hidden in the young ladies’ quarters, Aniruddha did not notice the passing of the days, for His senses were captivated by Üṣā, whose affection for Him ever increased.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Usa honored Aniruddha with various

services described in this verse.

Texts 25–26

*tām tathā yadu-vīreṇa,
bhujyamānām hata-vratām,
hetubhir lakṣayām cakrur,
āprītām duravacchadaiḥ,
bhaṭā āvedayām cakrū,
rājaṃs te duhitur vayam,
viceṣṭitam lakṣayāma,
kanyāyāḥ kula-dūṣaṇam*

The female guards eventually noticed unmistakable symptoms of romantic involvement in Üṣā, who, having broken her maiden vow, was being enjoyed by the Yadu hero and showing signs of conjugal happiness. The guards went to Bāṇāsura and told him, “O King, we have detected in your daughter the kind of improper behavior that spoils the reputation of a young girl’s family.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the signs of sexual activity (*hetubhiḥ*), which were impossible to disguise (*duravacchadaiḥ*), the chief of which was her great joyfulness (*āprītām*), the female guards (*bhata*) reported to Banasura. The guards feared that if Bāṇāsura found out about Üṣā’s activities from some other source, he would severely punish them, and thus they personally informed him that his young daughter was no longer innocent.

Text 27

anapāyibhir asmābhir;

*guptāyās ca gr̥he prabho,
kanyāyā dūṣaṇam pumbhir,
dusprekṣyāyā na vidmahe*

“We have been carefully watching over her, never leaving our posts, O master, so we cannot understand how this maiden, whom no man can even see, has been corrupted within the palace.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *anapāyibhiḥ* can mean either “never leaving our posts” or “never deluded”.

Text 28

*tataḥ pravyathito bāṇo,
duhituḥ śruta-dūṣaṇaḥ,
tvaritaḥ kanyakāgāraṁ,
prāpto ’drākṣīd yadūdvaḥam*

Very agitated to hear of his daughter’s corruption, Bāṇāsura rushed at once to the maidens’ quarters. There he saw the pride of the Yadus, Aniruddha.

Texts 29–30

*kāmātmajam taṁ bhuvanaika-sundaram,
śyāmaṁ piśaṅgāmbaram ambujekṣaṇam,
br̥had-bhujam kuṇḍala-kuntala-tviṣā,
smitāvalokena ca maṇḍitānanam,
dīvyantam akṣaiḥ priyayābhinṛmṇayā,*

*tad-aṅga-saṅga-stana-kuṅkuma-srajam,
bāhvor dadhānam madhu-mallikāśritām,
tasyāgra āsīnam avekṣya vismitaḥ*

Bāṇāsura saw before him Cupid’s own son, possessed of unrivaled beauty, with dark-blue complexion, yellow garments, lotus eyes and formidable arms. His face was adorned with effulgent earrings and hair, and also with smiling glances. As He sat opposite His most auspicious lover, playing with her at dice, there hung between His arms a garland of spring jasmines that had been smeared with kuṅkuma powder from her breasts when He had embraced her. Bāṇāsura was astonished to see all this.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *abhinṛmṇayā* means with Usa who was “all-auspicious”. Banasura was amazed, thinking, “Ah, how audaciously this very bold one acts with her!”

Text 31

*sa tam praviṣṭam vṛtam ātatāyibhir,
bhaṭair anīkair avalokya mādhavaḥ,
udyamya maurvaṁ parighaṁ vyavasthito,
yathāntako daṇḍa-dharo jighāmsayā*

Seeing Bāṇāsura enter with many armed guards, Aniruddha raised His iron club and stood resolute, ready to strike anyone who attacked Him. He resembled death personified holding his rod of punishment.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Aniruddha (*madhva*) raised his club made of a special kind of iron called *muru* (*maurvam*).

Text 32

*jighrkṣayā tān paritah prasarpataḥ,
śuno yathā śūkara-yūthapo 'hanat,
te hanyamānā bhavanād vinirgatā,
nirbhinna-mūrdhoru-bhujāḥ pradudruvuh*

As the guards converged on Him from all sides, trying to capture Him, Aniruddha struck them just as the leader of a pack of boars strikes back at dogs. Hit by His blows, the guards fled the palace, running for their lives with shattered heads, thighs and arms.

Text 33

*taṁ nāga-pāśair bali-nandano balī,
ghnantam sva-sainyam kupito babandha ha,
ūṣā bhṛśam śoka-viṣāda-vihvalā,
baddham niśamyāśru-kalākṣy arautsīt*

But even as Aniruddha was striking down the army of Bāṇa, that powerful son of Bali angrily caught Him with the mystic nāga-pāśa ropes. When Üṣā heard of Aniruddha's capture, she was overwhelmed with grief and depression; her eyes filled with tears, and she wept.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Usa cried (*arautsīt*) torrents of tears. Banasura was able to capture Aniruddha, the Supersoul of all living entities, whose expansion is the Lord of Svetadvipa, only by the

influence of Kṛṣṇa's *lila-sakti*.

Chapter Sixty-three: Lord Kṛṣṇa Fights with Bāṇāsura

Text 1

*śṛī-śuka uvāca,
apaśyatām cāniruddham,
tad-bandhūnām ca bhārata,
catvāro vārṣikā māsā,
vyatīyur anuśocatām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O descendant of Bharata, the relatives of Aniruddha, not seeing Him return, continued to lament as the four rainy months passed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa is praised by Jvara and Rudra after defeating them. Kṛṣṇa then cuts off the arms of Banasura and returns to Dvaraka with Aniruddha. Starting from the month of Jyestha, Aniruddha disappeared for six months. Even after the four months of the monsoon season had passed, he still had not returned.

Text 2

*nāradāt tad upākarṇya,
vārtām baddhasya karma ca,
prayayuh śoṇita-puraṁ,
vr̥ṣṇayah kṛṣṇa-daivatāḥ*

After hearing from Nārada the news of Aniruddha’s deeds and His capture, the Vṛṣṇis, who worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa as their personal Deity, went to Śoṇitapura.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing news of Aniruddha and his activities, the Vrsnis went to Śoṇitapura.

Texts 3–4

*pradyumno yuyudhānaś ca,
gadaḥ sāmbo ’tha sāraṇaḥ,
nandopananda-bhadrādyā,
rāma-kṛṣṇānuvartinaḥ,
akṣauhiṇībhir dvādaśabhiḥ,
sametāḥ sarvato diśam,
rurudhur bāṇa-nagaraṁ,
samantāt sātvatarṣabhāḥ*

With Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa in the lead, the chiefs of the Sātvata clan—Pradyumna, Sātyaki, Gada, Sām̐ba, Sāraṇa, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra and others—converged with an army of twelve divisions and laid siege to Bāṇasura’s capital, completely surrounding the city on all sides.

Text 5

*bhajyamāna-purodyāna-
prākārāṭṭāla-gopuram,
prekṣamāṇo ruṣāviṣṭas,
tulya-sainyo ’bhiniryayau*

Bāṇāsura became filled with anger upon seeing them destroy his city’s suburban gardens, ramparts, watchtowers and gateways, and thus he went out to confront them with an army of equal size.

Text 6

*bāṇārthe bhagavān rudrah,
sa-sutaḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ,
āruhya nandi-vṛṣabham,
yuyudhe rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ*

Lord Rudra, accompanied by his son Kārtikeya and the Pramathas, came riding on Nandi, his bull carrier, to fight Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa on Bāṇa’s behalf.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rudra fought on behalf (*bāṇa-arthe*) of Banasura just to show Banasura his faults by making him experience suffering. Siva is addressed as *bhagavan* to indicate that by nature he is all-knowing and thus well aware of Kṛṣṇa’s greatness. Still, although Siva knew Kṛṣṇa would defeat him, he joined the battle against Him to demonstrate the glories of Kṛṣṇa. This is the opinion of ancient authorities.

Siva entered the battle for two reasons: first, to increase Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure and enthusiasm; and second, to demonstrate that Kṛṣṇa, although enacting human-like pastimes, is superior to other *avatāras*, such as Lord Rama. Kṛṣṇa’s internal potency, *yogamaya*, bewildered Lord Siva just as she had bewildered Brahmā. This is confirmed in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: brahma-rudrādi-mohanam*.

Text 7

*āsīt su-tumulaṁ yuddham,
adbhutaṁ roma-harṣaṇam,
kṛṣṇa-śaṅkarayo rājan,
pradyumna-guhayor api*

A most astonishing, tumultuous and hair-raising battle then commenced, with Lord Kṛṣṇa matched against Lord Śaṅkara, and Pradyumna against Kārtikeya.

Text 8

*kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇābhyām,
balena saha saṁyugaḥ,
sāmbasya bāṇa-putreṇa,
bāṇena saha sātyakeḥ*

Lord Balarāma fought with Kumbhāṇḍa and Kū pakarṇa, Sāmba with Bāṇa's son, and Sātyaki with Bāṇa.

Text 9

*brahmādayaḥ surādhīśā,
munayaḥ siddha-cāraṇāḥ,
gandharvāpsaraso yakṣā,
vimānair draṣṭum āgaman*

Brahmā and the other ruling demigods, along with Siddhas, Cāraṇas and great sages, as well as Gandharvas, Apsarās and Yakṣas, all came in their celestial airplanes to watch.

Texts 10–11

*śaṅkarānucarān śauriḥ,
bhūta-pramatha-guhyakān,
ḍākinīr yātudhānāmś ca,
vetālān sa-vināyakān,
preta-mātr-piśācāmś ca,
kuṣmāṇḍān brahma-rākṣasān,
drāvayām āsa tīkṣṇāgraiḥ,
śaraiḥ śārṅga-dhanuś-cyutaiḥ*

With sharp-pointed arrows discharged from His bow Śārṅga, Lord Kṛṣṇa drove away the various followers of Lord Śiva—Bhūtas, Pramathas, Guhyakas, Ōākinīs, Yātudhānas, Vetālas, Vināyakas, Pretas, Mātās, Piśācas, Kuṣmāṇḍas and Brahma-rākṣasas.

Text 12

*pr̥thag-vidhāni prāyuṅkta,
piṅāky astrāṇi śārṅgiṇe,
praty-astraiḥ śamayām āsa,
śārṅga-pāṇir avismitaḥ*

Lord Śiva, wielder of the trident, shot various weapons at Lord Kṛṣṇa, wielder of Śārṅga. But Lord Kṛṣṇa was not in the least perplexed: He neutralized all these weapons with appropriate counterweapons.

Text 13

*brahmāstrasya ca brahmāstram,
vāyavyasya ca pārvatam,
āgneyasya ca pārjanyaṁ,
naijam pāśupatasya ca*

Lord Kṛṣṇa counteracted a brahmāstra with another brahmāstra, a wind weapon with a mountain weapon, a fire weapon with a rain weapon, and Lord Śiva’s personal pāśupatāstra weapon with His own personal weapon, the nārāyaṇāstra.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The counteracting of Siva’s weapons is described in this verse. One *brahmāstra* was countered with another *brahmāstra*. The verb “released” is understood from the previous verse. Kṛṣṇa countered the *pāśupatāstra* weapon with His own weapon (*naijam*), the *nārāyaṇāstra*.

Text 14

*mohayivā tu giriśaṁ,
jṛmbhaṇāstreṇa jṛmbhitam,
bāṇasya pṛtanāṁ śaurir,
jaghānāsi-gadeṣubhiḥ*

After bewildering Lord Śiva by making him yawn with a yawning weapon, Lord Kṛṣṇa proceeded to strike down Bāṇāsura’s army with His sword, club and arrows.

Text 15

*skandaḥ pradyumna-bāṇaughair,
ardyamānaḥ samantataḥ,
asṛg vimuñcan gātrebhyaḥ,
śikhināpakramad raṇāt*

Lord Kārtikeya was distressed by the flood of Pradyumna’s arrows raining down from all sides, and thus he fled the battlefield on his peacock as blood poured from his limbs.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kartikeya (Skanda) left the battlefield on his peacock-carrier (*śikhinā:māyūreṇa saha*).

Text 16

*kumbhāṇḍa-kūpakarṇaś ca,
petatur muṣalārditau,
dudruvus tad-anīkani,
hata-nāthāni sarvataḥ*

Kumbhāṇḍa and Kū pakarṇa, tormented by Lord Balarāma’s club, fell down dead. When the soldiers of these two demons saw that

their leaders had been killed, they scattered in all directions.

Text 17

*viśīryamāṇam sva-balaṁ,
dṛṣṭvā bāṇo 'ty-amarṣitaḥ,
kṛṣṇam abhyadravat saṅkhye,
rathī hitvaiva sātyakim*

Bāṇāsura was furious to see his entire military force being torn apart. Leaving his fight with Sātyaki, he charged across the battlefield on his chariot and attacked Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 18

*dhanūṁsy ākṛṣya yugapad,
bāṇaḥ pañca-śatāni vai,
ekaikasmin śarau dvau dvau,
sandadhe raṇa-durmadaḥ*

Excited to a frenzy by the fighting, Bāṇa simultaneously pulled taut all the strings of his five hundred bows and fixed two arrows on each string.

Text 19

*tāni ciccheda bhagavān,
dhanūmsi yugapad dhariḥ,
sārathim ratham aśvānś ca,
hatvā śaṅkham apūrayat*

Lord Śrī Hari split every one of Bāṇāsura’s bows simultaneously, and also struck down his chariot driver, chariot and horses. The Lord then sounded His conchshell.

Text 20

*tan-mātā koṭarā nāma,
nagnā makta-śiroruhā,
puro ’vatasthe kṛṣṇasya,
putra-prāṇa-rirakṣayā*

Just then Bāṇāsura’s mother, Koṭarā, desiring to save her son’s life, appeared before Lord Kṛṣṇa naked and with her hair undone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bana’s mother, Kotarā, sometimes called Kotarī, is a form of Parvati worshiped by the demons. She appeared naked before Kṛṣṇa with a desire to save her son (*rirakṣaya*).

Text 21

*tatas tiryañ-mukho nagnām,
anirīkṣan gadāgrajah,
bāṇaś ca tāvad virathaś,
chinna-dhanvāviśat puram*

Lord Gadāgraja turned His face away to avoid seeing the naked woman, and Bāṇāsura—deprived of his chariot, his bow shattered—took the opportunity to flee into his city.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bana fled into his city while Kṛṣṇa was turning His face away to avoid seeing a naked woman.

Text 22

*vidrāvite bhūta-gaṇe,
jvaras tu trī-śirās trī-pāt,
abhyadhāvata dāśārhaṇ,
dahann iva diśo daśa*

After Lord Śiva’s followers had been driven away, the Śiva-jvara, who had three heads and three feet, pressed forward to attack Lord Kṛṣṇa. As the Śiva-jvara approached, he seemed to burn everything in the ten directions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Śiva-jvara ran towards Kṛṣṇa to fight. The form of Śiva-jvara is described in the following verse: *jvaras tri-padas tri-śirāḥ, ṣaḍ-bhujo nava-locanaḥ, bhasma-praharaṇo raudraḥ, kālāntaka-yamopamaḥ*, “The terrible Śiva-jvara had three legs, three heads, six arms and nine eyes. Showering ashes, he resembled Yamarāja at the time of universal annihilation.”

Text 23

atha nārāyaṇaḥ devaḥ,

*taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā vyasṛjaj jvaram,
māheśvaro vaiṣṇavaś ca,
yuyudhāte jvarāv ubhau*

Seeing this personified weapon approach, Lord Nārāyaṇa then released His own personified fever weapon, the Viṣṇu-jvara. The Śiva-jvara and Viṣṇu-jvara thus battled each other.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sent forth the cold fever weapon.

Text 24

*māheśvaraḥ samākrandan,
vaiṣṇavena balārditaḥ,
alabdhvābhayam anyatra,
bhīto māheśvaro jvaraḥ,
śaraṇārthī hr̥ṣīkeśam,
tuṣṭāva prayatāñjaliḥ*

The Śiva-jvara, overwhelmed by the strength of the Viṣṇu-jvara, cried out in pain. But finding no refuge, the frightened Śiva-jvara approached Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses, hoping to attain His shelter. Thus with joined palms he began to praise the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Śiva-jvara (fever weapon) cried out (*samākrandan*) in pain. He could not find relief even after going to his own master Siva. Then he left Lord Siva's side and directly took shelter of Sri Kṛṣṇa. Greatly frightened (*bhīta*), Śiva-jvara fell to the ground to offer his respects to Kṛṣṇa, and folding his hands praised the Lord with devotion.

Text 25

*jvara uvāca,
namāmi tvānanta-śaktim pareśam,
sarvātmānam kevalam jñapti-mātram,
viśvotpatti-sthāna-samrodha-heturin,
yat tad brahma brahma-liṅgam praśāntam*

The Śiva-jvara said: I bow down to You of unlimited potencies, the Supreme Lord, the Supersoul of all beings. You possess pure and complete consciousness and are the cause of cosmic creation, maintenance and dissolution. Perfectly peaceful, You are the Absolute Truth to whom the Vedas indirectly refer.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva-jvara said, “You have unlimited powers (*ananta-śakti*). I have understood that Your powers are greater than even those of Siva, my master.”

Siva-jvara then explains how this is true: “Siva is a controller, but You are the supreme controller (*pareśa*). You are the Supersoul of every living entity (*sarvātmānam*) including Lord Siva. You are composed of pure spiritual consciousness (*kevalam jñapti-mātram*) without any mixture of material *maya*, but my master Siva is mixed with *maya*. You are the creator, maintainer and destroyer (*viśvotpatti-sthāna-samrodha-heturin*), whereas my master Siva is only the destroyer. You are indicated by the *Vedas* and thus You are called *brahma lingam*, whereas Siva is represented merely by the sounds such as dentals and gutturals. You are the perfectly peaceful Brahman (*praśāntam brahman*), whereas Siva is the ferocious Brahman (*ugra-brahma*).”

Text 26

*kālo daivam karma jīvaḥ svabhāvo,
dravyam kṣetram prāṇa ātmā vikāraḥ,
tat-saṅghāto bīja-roha-pravāhas,
tvan-māyaiṣā tan-niṣedham prapadye*

Time; fate; karma; the jīva and his propensities; the subtle material elements; the material body; the life air; false ego; the various senses; and the totality of these as reflected in the living being’s subtle body—all this constitutes your material illusory energy, māyā, an endless cycle like that of seed and plant. I take shelter of You, the negation of this māyā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva-jvara elaborated on Kṛṣṇa being pure, concentrated spiritual consciousness (*sarvātmānam kevalam jñāpti-mātram*). First the objects excluded by the word “only” (*kevalam*) are enumerated. Time (*kala*) is the agitator. Action (*karma*) is the immediate subtle cause, and that which brings about the visible results is called destiny (*daiva*). Propensities (*svabhāva*) are the subtle traces (*saṁskāra*) of *karma*, which one carries from one body to the next. The *jīva* is the individual living entity who possesses this *karma*. *Dravyam* refers to the subtle forms of the elements (*bhūta-sūkṣmas:tan-mātras*). *Kṣetram* is the body or matter (*prakṛti*). *Prāṇa* is the life air (*sūtra*), *ātmā* is the false ego (*ahankara*), and *vikāraḥ* (transformation) is sixteen-fold, comprising the eleven senses and the five gross elements (*panca mahā-bhutas*). The totality of these is reflected in the living being’s subtle body (*liṅga-deha*).

“Action generated from the body (*bīja*) produces another body (*roha*). This continuous flow (*pravaha*) is Your *maya*. Though the living entity is different from *maya*, because of being controlled by *maya*, he is enamored by it. In summary, the phrase *bīja-roha-pravāha* means that the conditioned soul accepts a material body in order to enjoy the material world. The body is the seed (*bīja*) of his future material

existence, because when a person acts with the body he creates further reactions (*karma*) which grow (*roha*) into the obligation to accept another material body. In other words, material life is a chain of actions and reactions. Therefore, I take shelter of You, the limit of negation. Your body and senses (*tan-niṣedham*) are non-different from Your pure spiritual existence and are not *maya*.”

Text 27

*nānā-bhāvair līlayaivopapannair,
devān sādḥūn loka-setūn bibharṣi,
haṁsy unmārgān hiṁsayā vartamānān,
janmaitat te bhāra-hārāya bhūmeḥ*

With various intentions, You perform pastimes to maintain the demigods, the saintly persons and the codes of religion for this world. By these pastimes You also kill those who stray from the right path and live by violence. Indeed, your present incarnation is meant to relieve the earth’s burden.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa may object, “But if I am like this, then why is there seen in Me the material qualities of attachment and hatred revealed by My showing favor?”

Siva-jvara responds, “You desire, ‘Let Me protect the devotees who are favorable to Me and kill the demons who are inimical to My devotees.’ You accept such intentions out of affection for Your devotees. In Your pastimes, You protect the demigods such as Indra, the devotees and saintly persons, who act as the shelter for the people of the world (*loka setūn: lokāśraya-bhūtān*), and You destroy those who transgress the path of religion. Therefore, Your liking and disliking, being aspects of Your quality of affection for Your devotees, are not products of *māyā*. Thus I have understood that You have appeared to relieve the burden of

the earth, who is Your exalted devotee.”

Text 28

*tapto 'ham te tejasā duḥsahena,
śāntogreṇāty-ulbaṇena jvareṇa,
tāvat tāpo dehinām te 'nghri-mūlam,
no severan yāvad āśānubaddhāḥ*

I am tortured by the fierce power of Your terrible fever weapon, which is cold yet burning. All embodied souls must suffer as long as they remain bound to material ambitions and thus averse to serving Your feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva-jvara said, “I cannot praise You any longer because the weapon sent by You is tormenting me with both cold and burning.”

Someone may say, ‘It is fitting that you suffer since you cause suffering to others.’ He answers, “Those who do not surrender to Your feet deserve to suffer. But now I have become Your devotee.”

Text 29

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tri-śiras te prasanno 'smi,
vyetu te maj-jvarād bhayam,
yo nau smarati samvādam,
tasya tvan na bhaved bhayam*

The Supreme Lord said: O three-headed one, I am pleased with

you. May your fear of My fever weapon be dispelled, and may whoever remembers our conversation here have no reason to fear you.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “He who remembers this conversation between you and Me will have no fear of you.” Kṛṣṇa says this rather than ordering Siva-jvara, ‘Do not give him fever at all.’ Thus the statement means “Even when sometimes fever may come to one who has heard this conversation, still it will not create fear in him. It will be insignificant for him.”

Text 30

*ity ukto 'cyutam ānamya,
gato māheśvaro jvaraḥ,
bāṇas tu ratham ārūḍhaḥ,
prāgād yotsyan janārdanam*

Thus addressed, the Māheśvara-jvara bowed down to the infallible Lord and went away. But Bāṇāsura then appeared, riding forth on his chariot to fight Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bana, who was intending to fight (yotsyan), then mounted his chariot and approached Janardana.

Text 31

*tato bāhu-sahasreṇa,
nānāyudha-dharo 'surah,
mumoca parama-kruddho,
bāṇāmś cakrāyudhe nṛpa*

Carrying numerous weapons in his thousand hands, O King, the terribly infuriated demon shot many arrows at Lord Kṛṣṇa, the carrier of the disc weapon.

Text 32

*tasyāsyato 'strāṅy asakṛc,
cakreṇa kṣura-neminā,
ciccheda bhagavān bāhūn,
śākhā iva vanaspateḥ*

As Bāṇa continued hurling weapons at Him, the Supreme Lord began using His razor-sharp cakra to cut off Bāṇāsura's arms as if they were tree branches.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Bana (*tasya*) was throwing weapons (*asyatah*), Kṛṣṇa cut off his arms.

Text 33

*bāhuṣu chidyamāneṣu,
bāṇasya bhagavān bhavaḥ,
bhaktānakampy upavrajya,
cakrāyudham abhāṣata*

Lord Śiva felt compassion for his devotee Bāṇāsura, whose arms were being cut off, and thus he approached Lord Cakrāyudha

[Kṛṣṇa] and spoke to Him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: But, it may be questioned, should not Siva be ashamed to come forward and praise that person with whom he had fought? No, because Siva is *bhagavan*, omniscient. He knew that it was not at all astonishing to be bewildered by the *maya* of Kṛṣṇa who was superior to himself as well as Brahma and all others. Therefore why should he be embarrassed in front of his Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself?

Text 34

*śrī-rudra uvāca,
tvam hi brahma param jyotir,
gūḍhaṁ brahmaṇi vān-maye,
yam paśyanty amalātmāna,
ākāśam iva kevalam*

Śrī Rudra said: You alone are the Absolute Truth, the supreme light, the mystery hidden within the verbal manifestation of the Absolute. Those whose hearts are spotless can see You, for You are uncontaminated, like the sky.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Siva prayed, “You are the Supreme Brahman (*para brahman*), the original transcendental form of spiritual light.” This is confirmed in *Śrī Hari-vamśa* wherein Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna:

*tat-param paramam brahma, sarvam vibhajate jagat mamaiva tad
ghanam tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata*

“Superior to the total material nature is the Supreme Brahman, from which this entire creation expands. O descendant of Bharata, you should know that the Supreme Brahman consists of My concentrated

effulgence.”

Anticipating that Kṛṣṇa may ask “If you know that I am the Supreme Brahman then why did you fight with Me?” Siva replied, “This Brahman is disguised even in the sound manifestation of Brahman, the *Vedas (brahmaṇi vāñ-maye)*. So how can You be directly recognized as Brahman itself?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Then can no one know Me?”

Siva answered, “Only pure souls free from the contamination of *maya* can see You. Therefore, how can I, who am filled with ignorance, see You, who are just like the sky that contains the ether. Though You are the shelter of *maya*, You are not tainted by *maya*.

Texts 35–36

*nābhir nabho 'gnir mukham ambu reto,
dyauḥ śīrṣam āśāḥ śrutir aṅghrir urvī,
candro mano yasya dṛg arka ātmā,
ahaṁ samudro jaṭharam bhujendraḥ,
romāṇi yasyauśadhayo 'mbu-vāhāḥ,
keśā viriñco dhiṣaṇā visargaḥ,
prajā-patir hṛdayaṁ yasya dharmah,
sa vai bhavān puruṣo loka-kalpaḥ*

The sky is Your navel, fire Your face, water Your semen, and heaven Your head. The cardinal directions are Your sense of hearing, herbal plants the hairs on Your body, and water-bearing clouds the hair on Your head. The earth is Your foot, the moon Your mind, and the sun Your vision, while I am Your ego. The ocean is Your abdomen, Indra Your arm, Lord Brahmā Your intelligence, the progenitor of mankind Your genitals, and religion Your heart. You are indeed the original puruṣa, creator of the worlds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In these verses Lord Siva explains, “You are directly the Supreme Absolute, while this whole world, including myself and everything else is Your expansion.”

Lord Siva said, “Your navel is the sky; earth is Your foot and the sun is Your eyes. I, Siva, am Your ego (*ātmā:ahaṅkāraḥ*). Indra is Your arms and the herbs are Your bodily hairs. Brahma is Your intellect (*dhiṣaṇā*), Prajapati Dakṣa is Your genital (*visarga*), and religion (*dharma*) is Your heart.”

The repetition of the word *yasya* (*yasyauśadhayo*) is to make it clear that they all belong to Kṛṣṇa.

“All these visible manifestations are opulent expansions (*vibhūti*s) of You, whose body is eternal, fully conscious and perfectly blissful. You create the worlds (*loka kalpa*) in the sense that You create the material elements like fire from Your own transcendental navel, face and other bodily parts.”

Text 37

*tavāvatāro 'yam akunṭha-dhāman,
dharmasya guptyai jagato hitāya,
vayaṁ ca sarve bhavatānubhāvitā,
vibhāvayāmo bhuvanāni sapta*

Your current descent into the material realm, O Lord of unrestricted power, is meant for upholding the principles of justice and benefiting the entire universe. We demigods, each depending on Your grace and authority, develop the seven planetary systems.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Lord Siva said, “Though You are not visible because You are directly the Supreme Absolute Truth, still You become visible to the people of the material world due to the supreme mercy arising from Your inconceivable energy.” This is the intent of this

verse.

Siva continued, “Though You are the Supreme Brahman, You reveal Yourself to us because it is impossible to grasp Your powers by logical arguments (*akuṅṭha-dhāman:kuṅṭhī-kartum*). You appear in this world to protect *dharma* in the form of devotion to You, to destroy opposing philosophies, and to liberate even such materialists as the *karmis*, *jnanis* and sinners. You appear not just for the ordinary protection of the universe. This is being done by the ten rulers of the directions (*vayam*), who are authorized by You to protect the seven worlds. So what need is there for You to appear in this world for this purpose?”

Text 38

*tvam eka ādyaḥ puruṣo ’dvitīyas,
turyaḥ sva-dṛg dhetur ahetur īśaḥ,
pratīyase ’thāpi yathā-vikāraṁ,
sva-māyayā sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai*

You are the original person, one without a second, transcendental and self-manifesting. Uncaused, you are the cause of all, and You are the ultimate controller. You are nonetheless perceived in terms of the transformations of matter effected by Your illusory energy—transformations You sanction so that the various material qualities can fully manifest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replied, “Since you are all My expansions (*vibhutis*), you are non-different from Me.” In this verse Siva answers, “No no! You are one (*tvam ekah*) devoid of distinctions of similarity, since there is no other supreme controller than You. Even among the incarnations of Matsya and others, who are identical with You, You are the origin although appearing in a human-like form (*puruṣo*). Though You are different from the *jīva-sakti* and *māya-sakti*,

You are also without difference (*advitīyaḥ*) since everything comes from You. There are four chief forms of Godhead (*catur-vyūha*) arising from Your *svarupa*. Among these four, You are the fourth member of the quadruple expansion (*turīya*) known as Vasudeva.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “But no one else is capable of seeing Me.”

Siva replied, “You are visible only to Yourself (*svadrk*). Because You are the greatest of all, You are the cause (*hetu*) of everything and yet You are without cause (*ahetu*). Therefore You are the supreme controller (*isa*) since all the chief powers are Yours. Though You are full of such powers, still You assist the insignificant material modes as follows. According to the transformations within every material body, You manifest Yourself by the agency of Your *māyā* for the successful functioning of the intelligence, mind and senses (*sarva-guṇa-prasiddhyai*). You are perceived as the Supersoul in all things. If You did not accept the role of Supersoul within all of them, then there could be no manifestation of the material modes, and thus they would be without any purpose.”

Text 39

*yathaiva sūryaḥ pihitaś chāyayā svayā,
chāyām ca rūpāṇi ca sañcakāsti,
evam guṇenāpihito guṇāms tvam,
ātma-pradīpo guṇinaś ca bhūman*

O almighty one, just as the sun, though hidden by a cloud, illuminates the cloud and all other visible forms as well, so You, although hidden by the material qualities, remain self-luminous and thus reveal all those qualities, along with the living entities who possess them.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: An example is given to show how,

though the Lord is invisible as Paramatma, He is revealed through the qualities of *maya*. Siva said, “From the observer’s point of view the sun appears to be covered by the clouds, yet it is the sun that allows us to see the clouds and all other things as well. Though the observing living entity is covered by the false ego (*gunena*), which is produced by You as the Supersoul, You reveal (*pradipah*) the intelligence, senses and sense objects (*gunāms*) as well as the living entity (*guninah*).”

Text 40

*yan-māyā-mohita-dhiyaḥ,
putra-dāra-grhādiṣu,
unmajjanti nimajjanti,
prasaktā vṛjinārṇave*

Their intelligence bewildered by Your māyā, fully attached to children, wife, home and so on, persons immersed in the ocean of material misery sometimes rise to the surface and sometimes sink down.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva said, “Being merciful, You appear in this world to deliver the living entities. The living entities however, remain submerged (*nimajjanti*) in the ocean of material existence (*samsara*).”

Text 41

*deva-dattam imam labdhvā,
nṛ-lokam ajitendriyaḥ,
yo nādrīyeta tvat-pādaḥ,
sa śocyo hy ātma-vañcakaḥ*

One who has attained this human form of life as a gift from God, yet who fails to control his senses and honor Your feet, is surely to be pitied, for he is only cheating himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse Siva condemns those who do not worship Kṛṣṇa: “Having attained a human body given by You (*deva dattam imam*), the living entity absorbs himself in sense-pleasure and disrespects Your feet.”

Text 42

*yas tvām visṛjate martya,
ātmānaṁ priyam īśvaram,
viparyayendriyārthārthaṁ,
viṣam aty amṛtaṁ tyajan*

That mortal who rejects You—his true Self, dearest friend, and Lord—for the sake of sense objects, whose nature is just the opposite, refuses nectar and instead consumes poison.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Siva said, “He is most pitiable who rejects (*visṛjate:tyajati*) You for the sake of sense objects such as children, which are just the opposite (*viparyayā:viparītāḥ*); not spiritual (*anātma*), not dear (*apriya*) and ungodly (*anīśvara*).”

Text 43

*aham brahmātha vibudhā,
munayaś cāmalāśayāḥ,*

*sarvātmanā prapannās tvām,
ātmānaṁ preṣṭham īśvaram*

I, Lord Brahmā, the other demigods and the pure-minded sages have all surrendered wholeheartedly unto You, our dearest Self and Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “I have forgiven whatever you did, so now what do you and the demigods accompanying you intend to do?” By describing Kṛṣṇa as the Supersoul, the dearest Supreme Lord, Siva informs Kṛṣṇa that “My fighting against You for the sake of Banasura, who is not the Supersoul, not dear and not the supreme controller, means that I myself have rejected nectar and taken poison. Thus in the previous verse it was myself whom I was condemning.”

Text 44

*taṁ tvā jagat-sthity-udayānta-hetuṁ,
samaṁ prasāntaṁ suhṛd-ātma-daivam,
ananyam ekaṁ jagad-ātma-ketaṁ,
bhavāpavargāya bhajāma devam*

Let us worship You, the Supreme Lord, to be freed from material life. You are the maintainer of the universe and the cause of its creation and demise. Equipoised and perfectly at peace, You are the true friend, Self and worshipable Lord. You are one without a second, the shelter of all the worlds and all souls.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Siva prays for *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*: “O Kṛṣṇa, birth after birth I worship You alone to attain

the highest liberation (*bhavāpavarga*) of pure love of Godhead, characterized by unalloyed devotional service unto You, which is described in the Fifth Canto.” The imperative case is used to express supplication.

With this intention Siva gives a description of Kṛṣṇa: “Because of Your supreme position, You are the cause of creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe, whereas others are not supreme. You are perfectly objective and balanced (*samam*), whereas other living beings, having an incomplete grasp of reality, cannot be perfectly objective. You are peaceful whereas all others are not. You are the friend and well-wisher of all whereas others are not benefactors. You are the Supreme Soul (*atma daivam*), whereas others are not Paramatma and therefore not brilliant (*daivam:dyotamānaḥ*). You are unique (*ananya*) whereas all others are not unique. But You are attached to Your devotee, as You have stated, *sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam, sādḥūnām hṛdayam tv aham*, ‘The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee.’ (SB 9.4.68) You are one, whereas others are many. You are the shelter (*ketam:āśrayam*) of all souls in all worlds, whereas others are not the shelter.”

Text 45

*ayam mameṣṭo dayito ’nuvartī,
mayābhayaṁ dattam amuṣya deva,
sampādyatām tad bhavataḥ prasādo,
yathā hi te daitya-patau prasādah*

This Bāṇāsura is my dear and faithful follower, and I have awarded him freedom from fear. Therefore, my Lord, please grant him Your mercy, just as You showed mercy to Prahlāda, the lord of the demons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “O Siva, I am pleased with you. Please choose a boon.”

Siva replied, “O Lord, I cannot give up my attachment for my sinful follower Banasura. What can I do? Please be merciful to him. That is the benediction I choose.” Then he speaks this verse: “Make Banasura fearless.”

Kṛṣṇa: “Why?”

Siva: “There is actually no good reason for Your favoring him. It is all just Your mercy.”

Kṛṣṇa: “What type of mercy should I give?”

Siva: “The same mercy that You gave to Prahlada, the chief of the demons.”

Text 46

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
yad āttha bhagavaṁs tvam naḥ,
karavāma priyam tava,
bhavato yad vyavasitam,
tan me sādhv anumoditam*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear lord, for your pleasure We must certainly do what you have requested of Us. I fully agree with your conclusion.

Text 47

*avadhyo 'yam mamāpy eṣa,
vairocāni-suto 'surah,
prahrādāya varo datto,*

na vadhyo me tavānvayaḥ

I will not kill this demonic son of Vairocani, for I gave Prahlāda Mahārāja the benediction that I would not kill any of his descendants.

Text 48

*darpopaśamanāyāsya,
pravṛkṇā bāhavo mayā,
sūditam ca balaṁ bhūri,
yac ca bhārāyitam bhuvaḥ*

It was to subdue Bāṇāsura's false pride that I severed his arms. And I slew his mighty army because it had become a burden upon the earth.

Text 49

*catvāro 'sya bhujāḥ śiṣṭā,
bhaviṣyaty ajarāmarah,
pārṣada-mukhyo bhavato,
na kutaścīd-bhayo 'suraḥ*

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.

Text 50

*iti labdhvābhayaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ,
praṇamya śirasāsuraḥ,
prādyumniṁ ratham āropya,
sa-vadhvo samupānayat*

Thus attaining freedom from fear, Bāṇāsura offered obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa by touching his head to the ground. Bāṇa then seated Aniruddha and His bride on their chariot and brought them before the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Banasura put Aniruddha on a chariot with his bride (*sa vadhva*).

Text 51

*akṣauhinyā parivṛtaṁ,
su-vāsaḥ-samalaṅkṛtaṁ,
sa-patnīkaṁ puras-kṛtya,
yayau rudrānumoditaḥ*

At the front of the party Lord Kṛṣṇa then placed Aniruddha and His bride, both beautifully adorned with fine clothes and ornaments, and surrounded them with a full military division. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa took His leave of Lord Śiva and departed.

Text 52

*sva-rājadhānīm samalaṅkṛtām dhvajaiḥ,
sa-toraṇair ukṣita-mārga-catvarām,
viveśa śaṅkhānaka-dundubhi-svanair;
abhyudyataḥ paura-suhrd-dvijātibhiḥ*

The Lord then entered His capital. The city was lavishly decorated with flags and victory arches, and its avenues and crossways were all sprinkled with water. As conchshells, ānakas and dundubhi drums resounded, the Lord’s relatives, the brāhmaṇas and the general populace all came forward to greet Him respectfully.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa entered the city of Dvaraka.

Text 53

*ya evaṁ kṛṣṇa-vijayaṁ,
śaṅkareṇa ca saṁyugam,
saṁsmaret prātar utthāya,
na tasya syāt parājayah*

Whoever rises early in the morning and remembers Lord Kṛṣṇa’s victory in His battle with Lord Śiva will never experience defeat.

Chapter Sixty-four: The Deliverance of King Nṛga

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
ekadopavanaṁ rājan,
jagmur yadu-kumārakāḥ,
vihartuṁ sām̐ba-pradyumna,
cāru-bhānu-gadādayaḥ*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: O King, one day Sām̐ba, Pradyumna, Cāru, Bhānu, Gada and other young boys of the Yadu dynasty went to a small forest to play.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa rescues King Nṛga from a well, and hears about his giving charity. In this way Kṛṣṇa instructed His duly frightened devotees about charity and devotion to *brahmanas*.

Text 2

*krīḍitvā su-ciraṁ tatra,
vicinvantaḥ pipāsitāḥ,
jalaṁ nirudake kūpe,
dadṛśuḥ sattvam adbhutam*

After playing for a long time, they became thirsty. As they searched for water, they looked inside a dry well and saw a peculiar creature.

Text 3

*kṛkalāsam giri-nibham,
vīkṣya vismita-mānasāḥ,
tasya coddharāṇe yatnam,
cakrus te kṛpayānvitāḥ*

The boys were astonished to behold this creature, a lizard who looked like a hill. They felt sorry for it and tried to lift it out of the well.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys were astonished upon seeing such a huge lizard.

Text 4

*carma-jais tāntavaiḥ pāsair,
baddhvā patitam arbhakāḥ,
nāśaknuran samuddhartuṁ,
kṛṣṇāyācakahyur utsukāḥ*

They caught on to the trapped lizard with leather thongs and then with woven ropes, but still they could not lift it out. So they went to Lord Kṛṣṇa and excitedly told Him about the creature.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The boys tied the lizard with ropes made of leather and threads, and tried to lift it out of the well.

Text 5

*tatrāgatyāravindākṣo,
bhagavān viśva-bhāvanaḥ,
vīkṣyojjahāra vāmena,
taṁ kareṇa sa līlayā*

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, maintainer of the universe, went to the well and saw the lizard. Then with His left hand He easily lifted it out.

Text 6

*sa uttamaḥ-śloka-karābhimṛṣṭo,
vihāya sadyaḥ kṛkalāsa-rūpam,
santapta-cāmīkara-cāru-varṇaḥ,
svargy adbhutālaṅkaraṇāmbara-srak*

Touched by the hand of the glorious Supreme Lord, the being at once gave up its lizard form and assumed that of a resident of heaven. His complexion was beautifully colored like molten gold, and he was adorned with wonderful ornaments, clothes and garlands.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After giving up the lizard body he assumed the form of a demigod (*svargy:devaḥ*) with a molten gold complexion (*cāmīkara:suvarṇam*), dazzling ornaments, dress and garlands.

Text 7

*papraccha vidvān api tan-nidānam,
janeṣu vikhyāpayituṁ mukundaḥ,
kas tvam mahā-bhāga vareṇya-rūpo,
devottamaṁ tvāṁ gaṇayāmi nūnam*

Lord Kṛṣṇa understood the situation, but to inform people in general He inquired as follows: “Who are you, O greatly fortunate one? Seeing your excellent form, I think you must surely be an exalted demigod.

Text 8

*daśām imām vā katamena karmaṇā,
samprāpito 'sy atad-arhaḥ su-bhadra,
ātmānam ākhyāhi vivitsatām no,
yan manyase naḥ kṣamam atra vaktum*

“By what past activity were you brought to this condition? It seems you did not deserve such a fate, O good soul. We are eager to know about you, so please inform us about yourself—if, that is, you think this the proper time and place to tell us.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “If you think it fitting, then please tell us about yourself because we are eager to know (*vivitsatam*).

Text 9

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti sma rājā samprṣṭaḥ,
kṛṣṇenānanta-mūrtinā,
mādhavaṁ praṇipatyāha,
kirītenārka-varcasā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by Kṛṣṇa, whose forms are unlimited, the King, his helmet as dazzling as the sun, bowed down to Lord Mādhava and replied as follows.

Text 10

*nṛga uvāca,
nṛgo nāma narendro 'ham,
ikṣvāku-tanayaḥ prabho,
dāniṣv ākhyāyamāneṣu,
yadi te karṇam asprśam*

King Nṛga said: I am a king known as Nṛga, the son of Ikṣvāku. Perhaps, Lord, You have heard of me when lists of charitable men were recited.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *yadi* (perhaps) in this case indicates “there is no doubt” as in the usage, “If the *Vedas* are authoritative evidence” which means “Since the *Vedas* are authoritative evidence.”

Text 11

*kiṁ nu te 'viditaṁ nātha,
sarva-bhūtātma-sākṣiṇaḥ,
kālenāvyāhata-dṛśo,
vakṣye 'thāpi tavājñayā*

What could possibly be unknown to You, O master? With vision undisturbed by time, You witness the minds of all living beings. Nevertheless, on Your order I will speak.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Nrga said, “What is unknown to You? Rather, You know everything!”

Text 12

*yāvatyah sikatā bhūmer,
yāvatyo divi tārakāḥ,
yāvatyo varṣa-dhārāś ca,
tāvatīr adadaṁ sma gāḥ*

I gave in charity as many cows as there are grains of sand on the earth, stars in the heavens, or drops in a rain shower.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to the previous authorities, these phrases indicate only that the King gave innumerable cows in charity. Others say that Nrga’s statements about the number of cows donated are exactly true because a single cow given in charity at such a sacred place as Kuruksetra or at such times as an eclipse of the sun is equivalent to giving ten million cows in charity.

Text 13

*payasvinīs taruṇīḥ śīla-rūpa,
guṇopapannāḥ kapilā hema-sṛṅgīḥ,
nyāyārjitā rūpya-khurāḥ sa-vatsā,
dukūla-mālābharaṇā dadāv aham*

Young, brown, milk-laden cows, who were well behaved, beautiful and endowed with good qualities, who were all acquired honestly, and who had gilded horns, silver-plated hooves and decorations of fine ornamental cloths and garlands—such were the cows, along with their calves, that I gave in charity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the king describes the particulars of the cows he gave in charity.

Texts 14–15

*sv-alaṅkṛtebhyo guṇa-śīlavadbhyaḥ,
sīdat-kuṭumbebhya ṛta-vratebhyaḥ,
tapaḥ-śruta-brahma-vadānya-sadbhyaḥ,
prādām yuvabhyo dvija-puṅgavebhyaḥ,
go-bhū-hiraṇyāyatanāśva-hastinaḥ,
kanyāḥ sa-dāsīs tīla-rūpya-śayyāḥ,
vāsāmsi ratnāni paricchadān rathān,
iṣṭam ca yajñaiś caritam ca pūrtam*

I first honored the brāhmaṇas who were recipients of my charity by decorating them with fine ornaments. Those most exalted brāhmaṇas, whose families were in need, were young and possessed

of excellent character and qualities. They were dedicated to truth, famous for their austerity, vastly learned in the Vedic scriptures and saintly in their behavior. I gave them cows, land, gold and houses, along with horses, elephants and marriageable girls with maidservants, as well as sesame, silver, fine beds, clothing, jewels, furniture and chariots. In addition, I performed Vedic sacrifices and executed various pious welfare activities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse gives the details of Nrga’s acts of charity. King Nrga said, “I gave to *brahmanas* who were well known for austerity (*tapa sruta*), and well-versed in the *Vedas* (*brahma-vadānya*) because of their diligent studies.”

Verse fifteen describes other things he gave in charity. Besides giving (*pradam*) to the *brahmanas*, he also built (*caritam*) water tanks and wells for the general populace.

Text 16

*kasyacid dvija-mukhyasya,
bhraṣṭā gaur mama go-dhane,
sampṛktāviduṣā sā ca,
mayā dattā dvijātaye*

Once a cow belonging to a certain first-class brāhmaṇa wandered away and entered my herd. Unaware of this, I gave that cow in charity to a different brāhmaṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Please tell us what sin led to your becoming a lizard?” King Nrga answers in this verse: “One cow belonging to a *brahmana* strayed from the herd and mixed with my herd. Not knowing (*āviduṣā*) that it belonged to that *brahmana*, I gave the cow to another *brahmana*.”

Text 17

*tām nīyamānām tat-svāmī,
dṛṣṭrovāca mameti tam,
mameti pariḡrāhy āha,
nṛgo me dattavān iti*

When the cow’s first owner saw her being led away, he said, “She is mine!” The second brāhmaṇa, who had accepted her as a gift, replied, “No, she’s mine! Nṛga gave her to me.”

Text 18

*vīprau vivadamānau mām,
ūcatuḥ svārtha-sādhakau,
bhavān dātāpaharteti,
tac chrutvā me ’bhavad bhramaḥ*

As the two brāhmaṇas argued, each trying to fulfill his own purpose, they came to me. One of them said, “You gave me this cow,” and the other said, “But you stole her from me.” Hearing this, I was bewildered.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The second *brahmana* who had accepted the gift said, “You have given the cow to me.” The first owner said, “You took her away from me.” Hearing that, I was put in extreme perplexity (*bhramaḥ*).

Texts 19–20

*anunītāv ubhau viprau,
dharma-kṛcchra-gatena vai,
gavām lakṣaṁ prakṛṣṭānām,
dāsyāmy eṣā pradīyatām,
bhavantāv anugṛhṇītām,
kiṅkarasyāvijānataḥ,
samuddharataṁ mām kṛcchrāt,
patantaṁ niraye 'śucau*

Finding myself in a terrible dilemma concerning my duty in the situation, I humbly entreated both the brāhmaṇas: “I will give one hundred thousand of the best cows in exchange for this one. Please give her back to me. Your good selves should be merciful to me, your servant. I did not know what I was doing. Please save me from this difficult situation, or I’ll surely fall into a filthy hell.”

Text 21

*nāhaṁ pratīcche vai rājann,
ity uktvā svāmy apākramat,
nānyad gavām apy ayutam,
icchāmīty aparo yayau*

The present owner of the cow said, “I don’t want anything in exchange for this cow, O King,” and went away. The other brāhmaṇa declared, “I don’t want even ten thousand more cows [than you are offering],” and he too went away.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “I do not accept gifts from kings.”
Saying this, the *brahmana* gave up his cow and left. The other
brahmana refused also saying, “I am not willing to give up this cow for
the *lakh* of cows you mention or even for another ten thousand cows in
addition to that.” He also left.

Text 22

*etasminn antare yāmair,
dūtair nīto yama-kṣayam,
yamena pṛṣṭas tatrāham,
deva-deva jagat-pate*

**O Lord of lords, O master of the universe, the agents of Yamarāja,
taking advantage of the opportunity thus created, later carried me
to his abode. There Yamarāja himself questioned me.**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The description in this verse took place
after Nṛga died. The Yamadutas brought him to the abode of Yamaraja
(*yama-kṣayam*) known as Samyamani.

Text 23

*pūrvam tvam aśubham bhukṣa,
utāho nṛpate śubham,
nāntam dānasya dharmasya,
paśye lokasya bhāsvataḥ*

[Yamarāja said:] My dear King, do you wish to experience the

results of your sins first, or those of your piety? Indeed, I see no end to the dutiful charity you have performed, or to your consequent enjoyment in the radiant heavenly planets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Yamarāja said, “Do you first want to experience the sinful reaction for unknowingly taking away the *brahmana*’s cow, or the pious reactions of your charities? I do not see an end to the results of your charity. Nor do I see an end to your living in Svargaloka (*bhasvataḥ lokasya*).”

Text 24

*pūrvam devāsubham bhuñja,
iti prāha pateti saḥ,
tāvad adrākṣam ātmānam,
kṛkalāsam patan prabho*

I replied, “First, my lord, let me suffer my sinful reactions,” and Yamarāja said, “Then fall!” “At once I fell, and while falling I saw myself becoming a lizard, O master.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: King Nrga said, “First I will experience the results of my sins.” Yamarāja said, “Then fall.”

Text 25

*brahmaṇyasya vadānyasya,
tava dāsasya keśava,
smṛtir nādyāpi vidhvastā,
bhavat-sandarśanārthinaḥ*

O Keśava, as Your servant I was devoted to the brāhmaṇas and generous to them, and I always hankered for Your audience. Therefore even till now I have never forgotten [my past life].

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Nṛga was performing *karma* mixed with a little devotion (*karma-misra-bhakti*). Taking shelter of this mixed *bhakti*, Nṛga thus expressed himself humbly before Kṛṣṇa as His servant (*tava dāsasya*).

The phrase *bhavat-sandarśana-arthinaḥ*, “always hankered to see You” refers to a great devotee King Nṛga had once met. This devotee wanted to build a temple for a beautiful Deity of Govinda, and obtain scriptures like the *Gīta* and *Bhagavatam*. Being very generous, Nṛga readily supplied these things. The devotee was so satisfied that he blessed Nṛga: “O King, I give blessings that you may see the Lord.” From that time on, Nṛga had a great desire to see the Lord.

Text 26

*sa tvam katham mama vibho 'kṣi-pathaḥ parātmā,
yogeśvaraḥ śruti-drśāmala-hṛd-vibhāvyaḥ,
sākṣād adhokṣaja uru-vyasanāndha-buddheḥ,
syān me 'nudrśya iha yasya bhavāpavargaḥ*

O almighty one, how is it that my eyes see You here before me? You are the Supreme Soul, whom the greatest masters of mystic yoga can meditate upon within their pure hearts only by employing the spiritual eye of the Vedas. Then how, O transcendental Lord, are You directly visible to me, since my intelligence has been blinded by the severe tribulations of material life? Only one who has finished his material entanglement in this world should be able to see You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The memory “of me” completes the idea. Nrga did not openly say “of me” due to his humility and for other reasons. Even today, both in the body of a lizard and in the body of a very proud demigod, which also is unfavorable for such remembrance, that memory has not been lost. Astonished at his seeing Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely seen, Nrga thrilled at his good fortune.

He said, “How did You become visible to my eyes, since even great mystic *yogis* such as Sanaka can only meditate upon You through the eyes of the *Upanisads* in their purified hearts? What is more, You are directly Adhoksaja, the Personality of Godhead Himself who broke the cart demon. Yet You have shown Yourself to such a lowly person as me, whose intelligence has been blinded by great suffering. Furthermore, You are usually only visible to those who have destroyed the bondage of *samsara* (*bhavāpavargah*). So why are You visible to me? It should not be so. It happened only by the blessing of some great devotee.”

Texts 27–28

*deva-deva jagan-nātha,
govinda puruṣottama,
nārāyaṇa hṛṣīkeśa,
puṇya-ślokācyutāvyaya,
anujānīhi mām kṛṣṇa,
yāntam deva-gatiṁ prabho,
yatra kvāpi sataś ceto,
bhūyān me tvat-padāspadam*

O Devadeva, Jagannātha, Govinda, Puruṣottama, Nārāyaṇa, Hṛṣīkeśa, Puṇyaśloka, Acyuta, Avyaya! O Kṛṣṇa, please permit me to depart for the world of the demigods. Wherever I live, O master, may my mind always take shelter of Your feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: His faith emboldened upon receiving Kṛṣṇa’s mercy and thus attaining the status of servitude, King Nṛga begins to recite the Lord’s names and then asks permission to leave. The spirit of his prayer is as follows: “You are Devadeva, God even of the gods, and Jagannātha, the master of the universe, so please be my master. O Govinda, please make me Your property with the same merciful glance You use to enchant the cows. You can do this because You are Puruṣottama, the supreme form of Godhead. O Nārāyaṇa, since You are the foundation (*ayanam:adhiṣṭhānam*) of the living entities (*nārāḥ:jīvāḥ*), please be my support even though I am a fallen living entity (*jīvā*). O Hṛṣīkeśa (master of the senses), please make my senses concentrate on You. O Puṇyaśloka, now You have become famous as the deliverer of Nṛga. O Acyuta, please never leave my heart. You will not suffer any loss (*avyaya*) in doing so. May my mind always have Your feet as its object of meditation.”

Text 29

*namas te sarva-bhāvāya,
brahmaṇe ’nanta-śaktaye,
kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya,
yogānām pataye namaḥ*

I offer my repeated obeisances unto You, Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva. You are the source of all beings, the Supreme Absolute Truth, the possessor of unlimited potencies, the master of all spiritual disciplines.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “I have an attitude of servitude toward You, but You are the object of all types of love. Therefore, I offer respects to You, within whom exist all *bhāvas*, loving relationships.” Nṛga first declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of neutrality

(*santa-bhāva*) by calling Kṛṣṇa the personified form of Brahman (*brahmane*). Next Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of servitude (*dasya-bhāva*) when he says *ananta-śaktaye*, “You are the possessor of unlimited powers” or “the form of grandeur.” Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the mood of friendship (*sakhya-bhāva*) by saying *kṛṣṇāya*, “He who gives constant bliss”, which is also the name of Arjuna, who had a similar name, form and qualities as Kṛṣṇa, being treated equally by Him. This is confirmed in the *Mahābhārata, Udyoga-parva* 71.4:

*kṛṣir bhū-vācakaḥ śabdo, naś ca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ tayor aikyaṁ param
brahma, kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate*

“The word *kṛṣ* is the attractive feature of the Lord’s existence and *na* means ‘spiritual bliss.’ When the verb *kṛṣ* is added to *na* it becomes *kṛṣṇa*, which indicates the Absolute Truth.”

Nṛga declares Kṛṣṇa to be the shelter of the parental mood (*vatsalya-bhāva*) by saying *vāsudevāya*, “to the son of Vasudeva.” Nṛga states that Kṛṣṇa is the shelter of the mood of conjugal love (*madhurya-bhāva*) by saying “to the husband” (*pataye:bhartre*), of those women who have deep devotion (*yogānām:bhakti-yoga-mayīnām*) like Rukmini.

Text 30

*ity uktvā taṁ parikramya,
pādaṁ spr̥ṣtvā sva-maulinā,
anujñāto vimānāgryam,
āruhat paśyatām nṛṇām*

Having spoken thus, Mahārāja Nṛga circumambulated Lord Kṛṣṇa and touched his crown to the Lord’s feet. Granted permission to depart, King Nṛga then boarded a wonderful celestial airplane as all the people present looked on.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Granting Nṛga permission to leave, Kṛṣṇa instructed him, “After your enjoyment is finished, you will attain Me.”

Text 31

*kṛṣṇaḥ parijanaṁ prāha,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
brahmaṇya-devo dharmātmā,
rājanyān anuśikṣayan*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead—Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī—who is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas and who embodies the essence of religion, then spoke to His personal associates and thus instructed the royal class in general.

Text 32

*durjaram bata brahma-svaṁ,
bhuktam agner manāg api,
tejīyaso 'pi kim uta,
rājñāṁ īśvara-māninām*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] How indigestible is the property of a brāhmaṇa, even when enjoyed just slightly and by one more potent than fire! What then to speak of kings who try to enjoy it, presuming themselves lords.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “The property of

a *brahmana*, being enjoyed even a little by theft or other means, is indigestible even for a person as powerful as fire due to great austerities or mystic perfections.”

Text 33

*nāham hālāhalaṁ manye,
viṣaṁ yasya pratikriyā,
brahma-svaṁ hi viṣaṁ proktaṁ,
nāsya pratividhir bhuvi*

I do not consider hālāhala to be real poison, because it has an antidote. But a brāhmaṇa’s property, when stolen, can truly be called poison, for it has no antidote in this world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “If it is like indigestible food, it cannot be as severe as actual poison.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Siva could digest the *hālāhala* poison so that was not real poison. But there is no antidote for stealing from the *brahmana*.”

Text 34

*hinasti viṣaṁ attāraṁ,
vahnir adbhiḥ praśāmyati,
kulaṁ sa-mūlaṁ dahati,
brahma-svāraṇi-pāvakaḥ*

Poison kills only the person who ingests it, and an ordinary fire may be extinguished with water. But the fire generated from the kindling wood of a brāhmaṇa’s property burns the thief’s entire family

down to the root.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Even taking poison is preferable to taking a *brahmana*’s property, because poison only destroys the drinker.”

“Can taking a *brahmana*’s property be compared to fire in terms of its killing a conditioned soul by placing him in the cycle of birth and death?”

Kṛṣṇa answered, “A fire leaves the roots of a tree intact, but the fire whose kindling wood is a *brahmana*’s property is a special kind of fire, since it cannot be extinguished. It is just like the fire burning within the cavity of an old tree, which in the course of time grows to a great size and cannot be put out even with the water of numerous rainfalls. Rather it burns the whole tree from within, all the way down to the roots. Similarly, the fire ignited by stealing a *brāhmaṇa*’s property is the most deadly because it burns one’s family to the root.”

Text 35

*brahma-svaṁ duranujñātaṁ,
bhuktaṁ hanti tri-pūruṣam,
prasahya tu balād bhuktaṁ,
daśa pūrvān daśāparān*

If a person enjoys a brāhmaṇa’s property without receiving due permission, that property destroys three generations of his family. But if he takes it by force or gets the government or other outsiders to help him usurp it, then ten generations of his ancestors and ten generations of his descendants are all destroyed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “My friend and helper, without my giving it, is enjoying my wealth, therefore let him enjoy it.” This is

the meaning of not receiving permission (*durānujñātam*). Enjoying in this way destroys oneself, one’s sons and one’s grandsons (*tri-pūruṣa*). If one enjoys by using force or the influence of the king, then ten generations in the past and future will suffer.

Text 36

*rājāno rāja-lakṣmyāndhā,
nātma-pātaṁ vicakṣate,
nirayaṁ ye ’bhimanyante,
brahma-svaṁ sādhu bālīśāḥ*

Members of the royal order, blinded by royal opulence, fail to foresee their own downfall. Childishly hankering to enjoy a brāhmaṇa’s property, they are actually hankering to go to hell.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Those who desire a *brahmana*’s property for themselves also desire hell. They are foolish, not seeing their own downfall.”

Texts 37–38

*gṛhṇanti yāvataḥ pāṁsūn,
krandatām aśru-bindavaḥ,
viprāṇām hr̥ta-vṛttīnām,
vadānyānām kuṭumbinām,
rājāno rāja-kulyāś ca,
tāvato ’bdān niraṅkuśāḥ,
kumbhī-pākeṣu pacyante,
brahma-dāyāpahāriṇaḥ*

For as many years as there are particles of dust touched by the tears of generous brāhmaṇas who have dependent families and whose property is stolen, uncontrolled kings who usurp a brāhmaṇa's property are cooked, along with their royal families, in the hell known as Kumbhīpāka.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings and those born in his family must suffer in hell.

Text 39

*sva-dattām para-dattām vā,
brahma-vṛttim harec ca yaḥ,
ṣaṣṭi-varṣa-sahasrāṇi,
viṣṭhāyām jāyate kṛmiḥ*

Whether it be his own gift or someone else's, a person who steals a brāhmaṇa's property will take birth as a worm in feces for sixty thousand years.

Text 40

*na me brahma-dhanam bhūyād,
yad grdhvālpāyuṣo narāḥ,
parājītāś cyutā rājyād,
bhavanty udvejino 'hayaḥ*

I do not desire brāhmaṇas' wealth. Those who lust after it become

short-lived and are defeated. They lose their kingdoms and become snakes, who trouble others.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “One loses life-span just by hankering after a *brahmana*’s property, then what to speak of actually taking it.”

Text 41

*vipraṁ kṛtāgasam api,
naīva druhyata māmakāḥ,
ghnantam bahu śapantam vā,
namas-kuruta nityaśaḥ*

My dear followers, never treat a learned brāhmaṇa harshly, even if he has sinned. Even if he attacks you physically or repeatedly curses you, always continue to offer him obeisances.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But,” Kṛṣṇa’s followers might question, “if a *brahmana* steals our property or is inimical without cause, what is to be done?” Kṛṣṇa answers in two verses: “O My followers (*māmakāḥ*), I am instructing anyone who is My devotee, not just you. Otherwise such persons should no longer think of themselves as My followers.”

Text 42

*yathāham praṇame viprān,
anukālam samāhitāḥ,
tathā namata yūyaṁ ca,
yo ’nyathā me sa daṇḍa-bhāk*

Just as I always carefully bow down to brāhmaṇas, so all of you should likewise bow down to them. I will punish anyone who acts otherwise.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Just as I pay respects (*pranama*), you should pay respects.”

Text 43

*brāhmaṇārtho hy apahrto,
hartāraṁ pātayaty adhaḥ,
ajānantam api hy enaṁ,
nṛgaṁ brāhmaṇa-gaur iva*

When a brāhmaṇa’s property is stolen, even unknowingly, it certainly causes the person who takes it to fall down, just as the brāhmaṇa’s cow did to Nṛga.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This is not an exaggeration to instill fear. There is direct proof as stated in this verse.

Text 44

*evaṁ viśrāvya bhagavān,
mukundo dvāarakaukaṣaḥ,
pāvanaḥ sarva-lokānām,
viveśa nija-mandiram*

Having thus instructed the residents of Dvārakā, Lord Mukunda, purifier of all the worlds, entered His palace.

Chapter Sixty-five: Balarama goes to Vrndavana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
balabhadraḥ kuru-śreṣṭha,
bhagavān ratham āsthitaḥ,
suhṛd-didr̥kṣur utkaṅṭhaḥ,
prayayau nanda-gokulam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O best of the Kurus, once Lord Balarāma, eager to visit His well-wishing friends, mounted His chariot and traveled to Nanda Gokula.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Balarama visits Vrndavana, associates with His friends, plays with His *gopis*, and drags the River Yamuna. Why did Kṛṣṇa, the great ocean of *prema*, not go to Vraja? This is answered as follows:

*preyasīḥ prema-vikhyātāḥ, pitarāv ati-vatsalau prema-vaśyaś ca kṛṣṇas
tāms, tyaktvā naḥ katham eṣyati iti matvaiva yādavaḥ, pratyabadhnan
harer gatau vraja-prema-pravardhi sva-, līlādhīnavam īyusaḥ*

The Yadus thought, “The *gopis* are famous for their pure, ecstatic love, and Kṛṣṇa’s parents have intense love for Him. Kṛṣṇa is controlled by pure love, so if He goes to see the Vrajavasis, how will He be able to leave them and come back to us? With this in mind, the Yadus prevented Kṛṣṇa from going, knowing that He becomes subservient to the pastimes in which He reciprocates the ever-increasing love of the Vrajavasis.”

But then neither should Baladeva be able to leave His brother Kṛṣṇa, who is dearer to Him than His own life. This argument is settled

by saying that Balarama had such eagerness (*utkaṅṭhaḥ*) that His discrimination and sense control disappeared.

Text 2

*pariṣvaktāś cirotkāṅṭhair;
gopair gopībhir eva ca,
rāmo 'bhivādya pitarāv,
āśīrbhir abhinanditaḥ*

Having long suffered the anxiety of separation, the cowherd men and their wives embraced Lord Balarāma. The Lord then offered respects to His parents, and they joyfully greeted Him with prayers.

*Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: nityānanda-svarūpo 'pi, prema-tapto
vrajaukasām, yayau kṛṣṇam api tyaktvā, yas taṁ rāmaṁ muhuḥ stumaḥ:*
“Let us repeatedly glorify Balarāma. Although He is the original form of eternal bliss, Nityānanda, due to the pangs of love in separation from the residents of Vraja, He went to see them, even at the cost of leaving Kṛṣṇa.”

Balarama was embraced by elder *gopis* (*gopībhiḥ*) the age of His mother. He greeted His parents, and they greeted Him with words of blessing according to their parental love.

Text 3

*ciraṁ naḥ pāhi dāśārha,
sānujo jagad-īśvaraḥ,
ity āropyāṅkam āliṅgya,
netraiḥ siṣicatur jalaiḥ*

[Nanda and Yaśodā prayed,] “O descendant of Daśārha, O Lord of the universe, may You and Your younger brother Kṛṣṇa ever protect us.” Saying this, they raised Śrī Balarāma onto their laps, embraced Him and moistened Him with tears from their eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Everywhere we hear that You along with Your brother are the Lords of the universe. Then why do You not protect Your elderly parents?” Saying this, first Nanda Maharaja and then Yasoda put Rama on their laps by force, kissed and embraced Him, and drenched Him with their tears.

Texts 4–6

*gopa-vṛddhāṁś ca vidhi-vad,
yaviṣṭhair abhivanditaḥ,
yathā-vayo yathā-sakhyam,
yathā-sambandham ātmanaḥ,
samupetyātha gopālān,
hāśya-hasta-grahādibhiḥ,
viśrāntam sukham āsīnam,
papracchuḥ paryupāgatāḥ,
prṣṭās cānāmayam sveṣu,
prema-gadgadayā girā,
kṛṣṇe kamala-patrākṣe,
sannyastākhila-rādhasaḥ*

Lord Balarāma then paid proper respects to the elder cowherd men, and the younger ones all greeted Him respectfully. He met them all with smiles, handshakes and so on, dealing personally with each one according to age, degree of friendship, and family relationship. Then, after resting, the Lord accepted a comfortable

seat, and they all gathered around Him. With voices faltering out of love for Him, those cowherds, who had dedicated everything to lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, asked about the health of their dear ones [in Dvārakā], and Balarāma in turn asked about the cowherds' welfare.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After greeting the elder cowherd men, Balarama was welcomed by the younger men, according to proper order. According to age, friendship and relationship Balarama associated intimately with them with smiles, handshakes and embraces. Having rested after eating, Balarama again sat down comfortably, and they asked about His welfare. Balarama's voice choked with *prema* for His beloved cowherd friends as He asked about their welfare in return. The cowherd men had completely renounced (*sannyasta*) their daily bodily functions. In other words, beginning from the very day Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndavana, they no longer carried out the natural activities of dressing, eating and sleeping.

Text 7

*kaccin no bāndhavā rāma,
sarve kuśalam āsate,
kaccit smaratha no rāma,
yūyaṁ dāra-sutānvitāḥ*

[The cowherds said:] O Rāma, are all our relatives doing well? And Rāma, do all of you, with your wives and children, still remember us?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The elder cowherd men asked, “Are our friends the Yadavas well?”

The men of the same age asked, “Do You remember us (*kaccit smaratha*

nah)?”

Text 8

*diṣṭyā kaṁso hataḥ pāpo,
diṣṭyā muktāḥ suhrj-janāḥ,
nihatya nirjitya ripūn,
diṣṭyā durgam samāśrītāḥ*

It is our great fortune that sinful Kāṁsa has been killed and our dear relatives freed. And it is also our good fortune that our relatives have killed and defeated their enemies and found complete security in a great fortress.

Text 9

*gopyo hasantyaḥ papracchū,
rāma-sandarśanāḍṛtāḥ,
kaccid āste sukhaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ,
pura-strī-jana-vallabhaḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Honored to have the personal audience of Lord Balarāma, the young gopīs, smiled and asked Him, “Is Kṛṣṇa, the darling of the city women, living happily?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The smiling (*hasantyaḥ*) of the *gopis* was a sign of their *unmada*, transcendental madness in *prema*. Otherwise how would it be possible for such extremely shy girls suffering such intense pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa to smile in front

of Baladeva? Understanding that this was a sign of their *mahābhāva*, Balarama gave them great respect, rather than disregarding them. Thus it is described that Balarama honored (*āḍṛtāḥ*) them with His affectionate glance (*rama sandarsana*), because He understood that these *gopis* were the dearly beloved devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and were filled with pure love for His younger brother.

The *gopis* asked, “Is Kṛṣṇa happy there in Dvaraka?”

Balarama said, “How could Kṛṣṇa be happy being separated from you?”

The *gopis* replied, “Kṛṣṇa is enjoying with many beautiful women in the city. So how could He be suffering any unhappiness of separation from us village girls? Certainly He must be happy.”

Text 10

*kaccit smarati vā bandhūn,
pitaram mātaram ca saḥ,
apy asau mātaram draṣṭum,
sakṛd apy āgamiṣyati,
api vā smarate 'smākam,
anusevām mahā-bhujāḥ*

“Does He remember His family members, especially His father and mother? Do you think He will ever come back even once to see His mother? And does mighty-armed Kṛṣṇa remember the service we always did for Him?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* said, “Well, Kṛṣṇa might not remember us, but perhaps He remembers His paternal and maternal relatives, and His father Nanda and mother Yasoda.”

We know for a fact that the women of the city cannot be better than us at giving Kṛṣṇa conjugal pleasures. Kṛṣṇa must remember us for our making flower garlands, smearing sandalwood on His body, and

making fans, beds and canopies of flowers and young leaves. With this in mind the *gopis* asked, “Does Kṛṣṇa sometimes remember the services (*smarate 'smākam anusevām*) we did for Him? We do not know if Kṛṣṇa’s strong arms (*mahā-bhujah*) are still smeared with *kunkuma* and unguents now that He is no longer devoted to us.” In other words, the *gopis* are saying, “We cannot imagine to what extent Kṛṣṇa is involved in conjugal dealings now that He is separated from us.”

Texts 11–12

*mātaram pitaram bhrātṛn,
patīn putrān svasṛṇ api,
yad-arthe jahima dāśārha,
dustyajān sva-janān prabho,
tā naḥ sadyaḥ parityajya,
gataḥ sañchinna-sauhrdaḥ,
katham nu tādrśam strībhir,
na śraddhīyeta bhāṣitam*

“For Kṛṣṇa’s sake, O descendant of Dāśārha, we abandoned our mothers, fathers, brothers, husbands, children and sisters, even though these family relations are difficult to give up. But now, O Lord, that same Kṛṣṇa has suddenly abandoned us and gone away, breaking off all affectionate ties with us. And yet how could any woman fail to trust His promises?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “But, most beloved *gopis* of Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa is full of love for you and always remembers you.”

Denying this the *gopis* replied, “No, we do not have faith in Kṛṣṇa’s love, since He rejected us, who were solely devoted to Him.” They express this in a verse and a half. The *gopis* continued, “Though we

gave up everything for Kṛṣṇa, He gave us up immediately and left.”
Balarama, “Why didn’t you do something to prevent Him from going away? Or why didn’t you go with Him?”

Gopis: “Kṛṣṇa just tore our bonds of love (*sauhrdah*) to shreds like a blade of grass and left. Therefore, tell us what we should have done?”

Balarama: “Since you are maintaining your lives without Him, you also must have broken your ties of love for Him.”

Gopis: “Not at all. By His words, ‘I will return to you’, repeatedly sent through messengers, Kṛṣṇa retied the fetters of love even after they were broken. Again He took hold of our life airs as they were about to leave us and reestablished them.”

Balarama: “If you believe Kṛṣṇa will return, then why are you so disturbed?”

Gopis: “No, this is not correct. Since even now Kṛṣṇa has still not come, we have concluded that whatever He said was false.”

Balarama: “Why did you believe what He said in the first place?”

Gopis: “How could unintelligent, straightforward women like us not believe His words?”

Text 13

*katham nu grhṇanty anavasthitātmano,
vacaḥ kṛta-ghnasya budhāḥ pura-striyaḥ,
grhṇanti vai citra-kathasya sundara,
smitāvalokocchvasita-smarāturāḥ*

“How can intelligent city women possibly trust the words of one whose heart is so unsteady and who is so ungrateful? They must believe Him because He speaks so wonderfully, and also because His beautiful smiling glances arouse their lust.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some *gopīs* speak the first two lines

of this verse, “Furthermore, we women of the forest are unintelligent, but how can the intelligent city women believe Kṛṣṇa’s words?” Other *gopis* reply in the second two lines: “Though Kṛṣṇa speaks lies, it sounds very wonderful (*citra kathasya*) and enjoyable when those words come from His mouth. Not being able to give up the taste of those talks, the queens continue to listen. There is also another reason. They are disturbed by the lust which arises and grows to prominence (*ucchvasita*) from Kṛṣṇa’s smiling glance.”

Text 14

*kiṁ nas tat-kathayā gopyaḥ,
kathāḥ kathayatāparāḥ,
yāty asmābhir vinā kālo,
yadi tasya tathaiva naḥ*

“Why bother talking about Him, dear gopī? Please talk of something else. If He passes His time without us, then we shall similarly pass ours [without Him].”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Other *gopis*, agitated by love in the mood of jealousy (*māna*), address the *gopis* who have already spoken. They said, “Time passes for both Kṛṣṇa and us, but the difference is that He passes His time happily and we pass our time miserably. We are also different from other women. If other women are together with their lovers, they live, and if they are separated, they die. But we neither live nor die. This is the fate Providence has written on our foreheads. Alas, what remedy can we find?”

Text 15

*iti prahasitaṁ śaurer,
jalpitaṁ cāru-vīkṣitaṁ,
gatiṁ prema-pariṣvaṅgaṁ,
smarantyo ruruduḥ striyaḥ*

While speaking these words, the young cowherd women remembered Lord Śauri’s laughter, His pleasing conversations with them, His attractive glances, His style of walking and His loving embraces. Thus they began to cry.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *gopis* thought, “After piercing our hearts with the five arrows of His sweet smiles, sweet talks, enticing glances, graceful gait and His loving embraces (*prema-pariṣvaṅgaṁ*), the Kṛṣṇa moon disappeared from us. So how will the city women not die when He does the same to them?” Overwhelmed with these thoughts, the distressed young *gopis* started crying right in front of Balarama.

Text 16

*saṅkarṣaṇas tāḥ kṛṣṇasya,
sandeśair hrdayaṁ-gamaih,
sāntvayāṁ āsa bhagavān,
nānānunaya-kovidah*

The Supreme Lord Balarāma, the attractor of all, being expert at various kinds of conciliation, consoled the *gopīs* by relaying to them the confidential messages Lord Kṛṣṇa had sent with Him. These messages deeply touched the *gopīs*’ hearts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: It should be understood that Kṛṣṇa

dispatched Baladeva and Uddhava with His intimate messages (*kṛṣṇasya sandeśair*) because they were both His trusted friends (*sakhya-bhāva*), without consideration of their other sentiments of servitude (*dasya-bhāva*, Uddhava) and parental love (*vatsalya-bhāva*, Baladeva). The use of the plural form (*sandeśair*) indicates that Kṛṣṇa sent many messages not one. Some messages instructed the *gopīs* in transcendental knowledge, some were sweet and apologetic, and some were dignified. Being heartfelt (*hr̥dayam-gamaiḥ*), Kṛṣṇa’s messages could not be revealed publicly because of their confidential nature. Balarama boldly exclaimed, “Dear *gopīs*, now that I have consoled you, I will go to Dvaraka and bring Kṛṣṇa here by force. I am not exclusively under Kṛṣṇa’s control like Uddhava.” In this way Balarama displayed His expertise in conciliation (*nānānunaya-kovidah*).

Text 17

*dvau māsau tatra cāvātsīn,
madhuṁ mādhaveṁ eva ca,
rāmaḥ kṣapāsu bhagavān,
gopīnām ratim āvahan*

Lord Balarāma, the Personality of Godhead, resided there for the two months of Madhu and Mādhava, and during the nights He gave His cowherd girlfriends conjugal pleasure.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to Sridhara Swami, the month of Madhu is Caitra and Mādhava is Vaiṣākha, the first two months (spring) of the year. Sridhara Swami states that the *gopīs* who enjoyed conjugal affairs with Balarāma during His visit to Gokula had not taken part in Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa* dance, being too young at that time. Sri Jiva Gosvami says that during the pastime of Holī when Kṛṣṇa killed Śaṅkhacūḍa, the *gopīs* Balarāma enjoyed with were different from the

ones Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with.

Text 18

*pūrṇa-candra-kalā-mṛṣṭe,
kaumudī-gandha-vāyunā,
yamunopavane reme,
sevite strī-gaṇair vṛtaḥ*

In the company of numerous women, Lord Balarāma enjoyed in a garden by the Yamunā River. This garden was bathed in the rays of the full moon and caressed by breezes bearing the fragrance of night-blooming lotuses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Balarama enjoyed in a garden beside the Yamuna which was bright with the rays of the full moon, fragrant with the scent of blooming white lotuses, and served by refreshing cool breezes. Balarāma’s conjugal pastimes took place in a small forest alongside the Yamunā known as Śrīrāma-ghaṭa, which is far from the site of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa* dance.

Text 19

*varuṇa-preṣitā devī,
vāruṇī vṛkṣa-koṭarāt,
patantī tad vanam sarvaṁ,
sva-gandhenādhyavāsayat*

Sent by the demigod Varuṇa, the divine Vāruṇī liquor flowed from a tree hollow and made the entire forest even more fragrant with its

sweet aroma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The presiding goddess of that liquor, Vārunī, the daughter of Varuna, flowed luxuriantly from a hole in the trunk of a *kadamba* tree (*vṛkṣa-koṭarāt*). According to *Śrī Hari-vamśa*, Varuni said to Balarama: *samīpaṃ preṣitā pitrā varuṇena tavānagha*, “My father, Varuṇa, has sent me to You, O sinless one.”

Sridhara Swami says that *varuni*, a type of liquor distilled from honey, arose along with the nectar of the demigods. The sweet aroma of the *varuni* made the entire forest even more fragrant (*adhyavāsayat*).

Text 20

*taṃ gandhaṃ madhu-dhārāyā,
vāyunopahrtaṃ balaḥ,
āghrāyopagatas tatra,
lalanābhiḥ samam papau*

The wind carried to Balarāma the fragrance of that flood of sweet liquor, and when He smelled it He went [to the tree]. There He and His female companions drank.

Text 21

*upagīyamāno gandharvair,
vanitā-śobhi-maṇḍale,
reme kareṇu-yūtheśo,
māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ*

As the Gandharvas sang His glories, Lord Balarāma enjoyed within the brilliant circle of young women. He appeared just like Indra's elephant, the lordly Airāvata, enjoying in the company of she-elephants.

Text 22

*nedur dundubhayo vyomni,
vavr̥ṣuḥ kusumair mudā,
gandharvā munayo rāmaṁ,
tad-vīryair īḍire tadā*

At that time kettledrums resounded in the sky, the Gandharvas joyfully rained down flowers, and the great sages praised Lord Balarāma's heroic deeds.

Text 23

*upagīyamāna-carito,
vanitābhir halāyudha,
vaneṣu vyacarat kṣīvo,
mada-vihvala-locanaḥ*

As His deeds were sung, Lord Halāyudha wandered as if inebriated among the various forests with His girlfriends. His eyes rolled from the effects of the liquor.

Texts 24–25

*sragvy eka-kuṇḍalo matto,
vaijayantī ca mālayā,
bibhrat smita-mukhāmbhojam,
sveda-prāleya-bhūṣitam,
sa ājuhāva yamunām,
jala-krīḍārtham īśvaraḥ,
nijam vākyam anādrtya,
matta ity āpagām balah,
anāgatām halāgreṇa,
kupito vicakarṣa ha*

Intoxicated with joy, Lord Balarāma sported flower garlands, including the famous Vaijayantī. He wore a single earring, and beads of perspiration decorated His smiling lotus face like snowflakes. The Lord then summoned the Yamunā River so that He could play in her waters, but she disregarded His command, thinking He was drunk. This angered Balarāma, and He began dragging the river with the tip of His plow.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Beads of perspiration decorated Balarama’s smiling lotus face like snowflakes (*praleya*). Yamuna did not respect Balarama’s words because she thought that the words of an intoxicated (*matta*) person have no authority. Therefore, she disregarded Him and did not come, thinking, “If Balarama calls me, wanting to enjoy in my water, then let Him come to me.”

Text 26

pāpe tvam mām avajñāya,

*yan nāyāsi mayāhutā,
neṣye tvām lāṅgalāgreṇa,
śatadhā kāma-cāriṇīm*

[Lord Balarāma said:] O sinful one disrespecting Me, you do not come when I call you but rather move only by your own whim. Therefore with the tip of My plow I shall bring you here in a hundred streams!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Because you did not answer My call (*āhutā*), I will divide you into a hundred streams with the tip of My plow.”

Text 27

*evam nirbhartsitā bhītā,
yamunā yadu-nandanam,
uvāca cakitā vācam,
patitā pādayor nrpa*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus scolded by the Lord, O King, the frightened river-goddess Yamunā came and fell at the feet of Śrī Balarāma, the beloved descendant of Yadu. Trembling, she spoke to Him the following words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Yamuna, who appeared before Balarama in the form of a river, is the wife of the ocean and an expansion of Kalindi (one of Kṛṣṇa’s queens in Dvārakā), but she was not Kalindi herself. The *Hari-vaṁśa* confirms *pratyuvācārṇava-vadhūm*, “Goddess Yamunā is the wife of the ocean.”

Text 28

*rāma rāma mahā-bāho,
na jāne tava vikramam,
yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā,
jagatī jagataḥ pate*

[Goddess Yamunā said:] Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Goddess Yamuna said, “With a single portion of Your self (Śeṣa) You hold up the earth.” The phrase *ekāṁśena* (“with a single portion”) refers to the Balarama’s expansion as Śeṣa.

Text 29

*paraṁ bhāvaṁ bhagavato,
bhagavan mām ajānatīm,
muktum arhasi viśvātman,
prapannāṁ bhakta-vatsala*

My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn’t understand Your position as the Supreme Godhead, but now I have surrendered unto You, and You are always kind to Your devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yamuna said, “You should release me as I was ignorant of Your supreme status (*paraṁ bhāvaṁ*).” *Paraṁ bhāvaṁ* refers to Balarama’s original identity as Mahā-Sankarṣaṇa.

Text 30

*tato vyamuñcad yamunām,
yācito bhagavān balaḥ,
vijagāha jalam strībhiḥ,
kareṇubhir ivebha-rāṭ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thereupon Lord Balarāma released the Yamunā and, like the king of the elephants with his entourage of she-elephants, entered the river’s water with His female companions.

Text 31

*kāmaṁ vihr̥tya salilād,
uttīrṇāyāsītāmbare,
bhūṣaṇāni mahār̥hāṇi,
dadau kāntiḥ śubhām srajam*

The Lord played in the water to His full satisfaction, and when He came out Goddess Kānti presented Him with blue garments, precious ornaments and a brilliant necklace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kanti is a particular form of Goddess Laksmi, the consort of Balarama’s plenary expansion Saṅkarṣaṇa who belongs to the second *catur-vyūha* expansion. The *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* states: *varuṇa-prahitā cāsmāi, mālām amlāna-paṅkajām samudrābhe tathā vastre, nīle lakṣmīr ayacchata*

“Sent by Varuna, Goddess Lakṣmī then presented Balarama with a

garland of unfading lotuses and a pair of garments colored blue like the sea.”

Text 32

*vasitvā vāsasī nīle,
mālām āmucya kāñcanīm,
reya sv-alañkṛto lipto,
māhendra iva vāraṇaḥ*

Lord Balarāma dressed Himself in the blue garments and put on the gold necklace. Anointed with fragrances and beautifully adorned, He appeared as resplendent as Indra’s royal elephant.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Anointed with sandalwood paste and other pure, fragrant substances, Balarāma resembled Airāvata, the great elephant (*vāraṇaḥ*) of Lord Indra.

Text 33

*adyāpi dṛśyate rājan,
yamunākṛṣṭa-vartmanā,
balasyānanta-vīryasya,
vīryam sūcayatīva hi*

Even today, O King, one can see how the Yamunā flows through the many channels created when it was dragged by the unlimitedly powerful Lord Balarāma. Thus she demonstrates His prowess.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Even today Yamuna is marked with

paths made by Balarama's plow.

Text 34

*evam sarvā niśā yātā,
ekeva ramato vraje,
rāmasyākṣipta-cittasya,
mādhuryair vraja-yoṣitām*

Thus for Lord Balarāma all the nights passed like a single night as He enjoyed in Vraja, His mind enchanted by the exquisite charm and beauty of Vraja's young ladies.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For Balarama all the nights passed as if they were a single night (*sarvā niśā yātā ekeva*), since each night brought a completely new experience of joy in association with the beautiful damsels of Vraja.

Chapter Sixty-six: auṇḍraka, the False Vasudeva

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
nanda-vrajaṁ gate rāme,
karūṣādhipatir nṛpa,
vāsudevo 'ham ity ajño,
dūtaṁ kṛṣṇāya prāhiṇot*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, while Lord Balarāma was away visiting Nanda’s village of Vraja, the ruler of Karūṣa, foolishly thinking “I am the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva,” sent a messenger to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Paundraka, the king of Karusa, shows his powers in the name of Vasudeva to cheat the people and sends a messenger to Dvaraka. Kṛṣṇa then annihilates Paundraka, kills his friend and his friend’s son, and burns down the city of Kasi with His disc.

Since Balarama had gone to Vraja, Paundraka stupidly thought that Kṛṣṇa would be alone and therefore easy to challenge. Thus he dared to send the Lord his crazy message, “I am Vasudeva.”

Text 2

*tvam vāsudevo bhagavān,
avatīrno jagat-patiḥ,
iti prastobhito bālair;*

mena ātmānam acyutam

Paunḍraka was emboldened by the flattery of childish men, who told him, “You are Vāsudeva, the Supreme Lord and master of the universe, who have now descended to the earth.” Thus he imagined himself to be the infallible Personality of Godhead.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Paunḍraka foolishly accepted the flattery (*prastobhitaḥ*) of ignorant persons, and thus considered himself the Supreme Lord.

Text 3

*dūtām ca prāhiṇon mandah,
kṛṣṇāyāvvyakta-vartmane,
dvāarakāyām yathā bālo,
nṛpo bāla-kṛto 'budhaḥ*

Thus slow-witted King Paunḍraka sent a messenger to the inscrutable Lord Kṛṣṇa at Dvāarakā. Paunḍraka was acting just like an unintelligent child whom other children are pretending is a king.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The reason Sukadeva Gosvami repeats here for the second time that Paunḍraka sent a message to Sri Kṛṣṇa is that the great sage was astonished at Paunḍraka’s extreme foolishness. Paunḍraka was just like a child who is imagined to be a king by other children while playing.

Text 4

*dūtas tu dvārakām etya,
sabhāyām āsthitaṁ prabhum,
kṛṣṇaṁ kamala-patrākṣaṁ,
rāja-sandeśam abravīt*

Arriving in Dvārakā, the messenger found lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa in His royal assembly and relayed the King’s message to that almighty Lord.

Text 5

*vāsudevo ’vatīrno ’ham,
eka eva na cāparaḥ,
bhūtānām anukampārthaṁ,
tvaṁ tu mithyābhidhām tyaja*

[On Paundraka’s behalf, the messenger said:] I am the one and only Lord Vāsudeva, and there is no other. It is I who have descended to this world to show mercy to the living beings. Therefore give up Your false name.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: These verses relaying the message of Paundraka have another true meaning as revealed by Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning. In the word *avatīrṇaḥ* (descend) the prefix “a” has been deleted in accordance with a grammatical rule as pointed out by the authority named Bhāguri. Therefore, the negative “na” can also be omitted. Thus the meaning of Paundraka’s statement is, “I am not Vāsudeva incarnate, but rather You alone and no one else are Vāsudeva. Since You have descended to show mercy to the living beings, please make me give up my false designation, which is like that of an oyster

claiming to be silver.” Complying with his request, Kṛṣṇa will say, “I will certainly make you give up your false designations (*abhidhām*).”

Text 6

*yāni tvam asmac-cihnāni,
mauḍhyād bibharṣi sātvata,
tyaktvaihi mām tvaṁ śaraṇam,
no ced dehi mamāhavam*

O Sātvata, give up my personal symbols, which out of foolishness You now carry, and come to me for shelter. If You do not, then You must give me battle.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Goddess Sarasvati has inspired the following interpretation of Paundraka’s words. Paundraka said, “Out of foolishness I have assumed an imitation conchshell, disc, lotus and club, and You are maintaining these by allowing me to use them. It is unjust that You have not yet subdued me and removed these imitation symbols. As the giver of liberation, You are the shelter (*tvam śaraṇam*) and the protector from material existence of demons like ourselves. Therefore, please fight with me, take away these symbols, and mercifully grant me liberation by killing me.”

Text 7

*śrī-śuka uvāca katthanam tad upākāṇya,
pauṇḍrakasyālpamedhasaḥ,
ugrasenādayaḥ sabhyā,
uccakair jahasus tadā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: King Ugrasena and the other members of the assembly laughed loudly when they heard this vain boasting of unintelligent Pauṇḍraka.

Text 8

*uvāca dūtaṁ bhagavān,
parihāsa-kathāṁ anu,
utsrakṣye mūḍha cihnāni,
yais tvam evaṁ vikatthase*

The Personality of Godhead, after enjoying the jokes of the assembly, told the messenger [to relay a message to his master:] “You fool, I will indeed let loose the weapons you boast of in this way.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “O fool, I will indeed let loose these weapons when we meet on the battlefield, and make you give up those symbols (*utsrakṣye*) by which you falsely glorify yourself. Or I will throw (*utsrakṣya*) My weapons such as the Sudarsana disc at you and at those with whom you are talking.” The Sanskrit word *utsrakṣye* means “I will hurl, throw, let loose and abandon.”

Text 9

*mukhaṁ tad apidhāyājña,
kaṅka-grdhra-vatair vṛtaḥ,
śayiṣyase hatas tatra,
bhavitā śaraṇaṁ śunām*

“When you lie dead, O fool, your face covered by vultures, herons and vaṭa birds, you will become the shelter of dogs.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “That face from which you are now speaking will be covered by meat-eating herons, vultures and *vaṭas* (birds similar to herons). At that time, instead of becoming My shelter as you have demanded, you will be eaten by these low-born birds, and then your body will become the shelter of dogs who will eat it with great pleasure.”

Text 10

*iti dūtas tam ākṣepaṁ,
svāmine sarvam āharat,
kṛṣṇo 'pi ratham āsthāya,
kāśīm upajagāma ha*

When the Lord had thus spoken, the messenger conveyed His insulting reply to his master in its entirety. Lord Kṛṣṇa then mounted His chariot and went to the vicinity of Kāśī.

Text 11

*pauṇḍrako 'pi tad-udyogam,
upalabhya mahā-rathaḥ,
akṣauhiṇībhyām saṁyukto,
niścakrāma purād drutam*

Upon observing Lord Kṛṣṇa's preparations for battle, the mighty warrior Pauṇḍraka quickly went out of the city with two full military divisions.

Texts 12–14

*tasya kāśī-patir mitram,
pārṣṇi-grāho 'nvayān nṛpa,
akṣauhiṇībhis tiṣṭbhir,
apaśyat paṇḍrakam hariḥ,
śaṅkhāry-asi-gadā-śārṅga,
śrīvatsādy-upalakṣitam,
bibhrāṇam kaustubha-maṇim,
vana-mālā-vibhūṣitam,
kauśeya-vāsasī pīte,
vasānam garuḍa-dhvajam,
amūlya-mauly-ābharaṇam,
sphuran-makara-kunḍalam*

Pauṇḍraka's friend, the King of Kāśī, followed behind, O King, leading the rear guard with three akṣauhiṇī divisions. Lord Kṛṣṇa saw that Pauṇḍraka was carrying the Lord's own insignia, such as the conchshell, disc, sword and club, and also an imitation Śārṅga bow and Śrīvatsa mark. He wore a mock Kaustubha gem, was decorated with a garland of forest flowers and was dressed in upper and lower garments of fine yellow silk. His banner bore the image of Garuḍa, and he wore a valuable crown and gleaming, shark-shaped earrings.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa saw that Paundraka was wearing

a cheap crown and imitation ornaments (*amūlya-mauly-ābharaṇam*), and had the image of Garuda on his flag.

Text 15

*dr̥ṣṭvā tam ātmanas tulyam,
veṣam kṛtrimam āsthitam,
yathā naṭam raṅga-gaṭam,
vijahāsa bhṛśam harīḥ*

Lord Hari laughed heartily when He saw how the King had dressed up in exact imitation of His own appearance, just like an actor on a stage.

Text 16

*śulair gadābhiḥ pariḡhaiḥ,
śakty-ṛṣṭi-prāsa-tomaraiḥ,
asibhiḥ paṭṭisair bāṇaiḥ,
prāharann arayo harim*

The enemies of Lord Hari attacked Him with tridents, clubs, bludgeons, pikes, ṛṣṭis, barbed darts, lances, swords, axes and arrows.

Text 17

*kṛṣṇas tu tat pauṇḍraka-kāśirājayor,
balaṁ gaja-syandana-vāji-patti-mat,
gadāsi-cakreṣubhir ārdhayad bhṛśaṁ,
yathā yugānte huta-bhuk pṛthak prajāḥ*

But Lord Kṛṣṇa fiercely struck back at the army of Pauṇḍraka and Kāśirāja, which consisted of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry. The Lord tormented His enemies with His club, sword, Sudarśana disc and arrows, just as the fire of annihilation torments the various kinds of creatures at the end of a cosmic age.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa attacked them like the fire of annihilation (*huta bhuk*) attacks all types of living entities (*pṛthak prajāḥ*) without discrimination.

Text 18

*āyodhanam tad ratha-vāji-kuñjara,
dvīpat-kharoṣṭrair ariṇāvakhaṇḍitaiḥ,
babhau citam moda-vaham manasvinām,
ākrīḍanam bhūta-pater ivolbaṇam*

The battlefield, strewn with the dismembered chariots, horses, elephants, humans, mules and camels that had been cut to pieces by the Lord’s disc weapon, shone like the gruesome playground of Lord Bhutapati, giving pleasure to the wise.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The battlefield (*āyodhanam:yuddha-sthānam*) appeared splendid, strewn (*citam*) with chariots and other objects by Kṛṣṇa’s disc (*ariṇā*).

Text 19

*athāha pauṇḍrakam śaurir,
bho bho pauṇḍraka yad bhavān,
dūta-vākyena mām āha,
tāny astrāny utsrjāmi te*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then addressed Pauṇḍraka: My dear Pauṇḍraka, the very weapons you spoke of through your messenger, I now release unto you.

Text 20

*tyājaiṣye 'bhidhānam me,
yat tvayājñā mṛṣā dhṛtam,
vrajāmi śaranam te 'dya,
yadi necchāmi saṁyugam*

O fool, now I shall make you renounce My name, which you have falsely assumed. And I will certainly take shelter of you if I do not wish to fight you.

Text 21

*iti kṣiptvā śitair bāṅair,
virathī-kṛtya pauṇḍrakam,
śiro 'vṛścad rathāṅgena,*

vajreṇdro yathā gireḥ

Having thus derided Pauṇḍraka, Lord Kṛṣṇa destroyed his chariot with His sharp arrows. The Lord then cut off his head with the Sudarśana disc, just as Lord Indra lops off a mountain peak with his thunderbolt weapon.

Text 22

*tathā kāśī-pateḥ kāyāc,
chira utkr̥tya patribhiḥ,
nyapātayat kāśī-puryām,
padma-kośam ivānilaḥ*

With His arrows, Lord Kṛṣṇa similarly severed Kāśirāja’s head from his body, sending it flying into Kāśī city like a lotus flower thrown by the wind.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Why did Kṛṣṇa throw Kasiraja’s head into the city? The reason is as follows: As he went off to battle, the King of Kāśī had promised the citizens: “My dear residents of Kāśī, today I will bring the enemy’s head into the midst of the city. Have no doubt of this.” The King’s sinful, proud queens had also boasted to their maidservants: “Today our master will certainly bring the head of the Lord of Dvārakā.” For this reason the playful Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa threw the King’s head into the city of Kasi to astonish the inhabitants.

Text 23

*evam matsariṇam hatvā,
pauṇḍrakam sa-sakham hariḥ,
dvārakām āviśat siddhair,
gīyamāna-kathāmṛtaḥ*

Having thus killed envious Pauṇḍraka and his ally, Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvārakā. As He entered the city, the Siddhas of heaven chanted His immortal, nectarean glories.

Text 24

*sa nityam bhagavad-dhyāna-
pradhvastākhila-bandhanaḥ,
bibhrāṇaś ca hare rājan,
svarūpaṁ tan-mayo 'bhavat*

By constantly meditating upon the Supreme Lord, Pauṇḍraka shattered all his material bonds. Indeed, by imitating Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance, O King, he ultimately became Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By continually meditating (*nityam bhagavad-dhyāna*) on the four-handed form of the Lord, Paundraka achieved *sārūpya-mukti* (*svarūpaṁ*) and was promoted to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, where the devotees have the same bodily features as Viṣṇu with four hands holding the four symbols (*sankha, gada, padma, cakra*).

Text 25

śiraḥ patitam ālokya,

*rāja-dvāre sa-kuṇḍalam,
kim idaṁ kasya vā vaktram,
iti saṁśīṣire janāḥ*

Seeing a head decorated with earrings lying at the gate of the royal palace, the people present were puzzled. Some of them asked, “What is this?” and others said, “It is a head, but whose is it?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: First they asked “What is this?” and then they doubted, “Whose head is it?”

Text 26

*rājñāḥ kāśī-pater jñātvā,
mahīsyāḥ putra-bāndhavāḥ,
paurās ca hā hatā rājan,
nātha nātheti prārudan*

My dear King, when they recognized it as the head of their King—the lord of Kāśī—his queens, sons and other relatives, along with all the citizens of the city, began to cry pitifully: “Alas, we are killed! O my lord, my lord!”

Texts 27–28

*sudakṣiṇas tasya sutaḥ,
kṛtvā saṁsthā-vidhiṁ pateḥ,
nihatya piṭṛ-hantāraṁ,
yāsyāmy apacitiṁ pituḥ,*

*ity ātmanābhisandhāya,
sopādhyāyo maheśvaram,
su-dakṣiṇo 'rcayām āsa,
parameṇa samādhinā*

After the King's son Sudakṣiṇa had performed the obligatory funeral rituals for his father, he resolved within his mind: "Only by killing my father's murderer can I avenge his death." Thus the charitable Sudakṣiṇa, together with his priests, began worshipping Lord Maheśvara with great attention.

Text 29

*prīto 'vimukte bhagavāms,
tasmai varam adād vibhuḥ,
pitṛ-hanṭṛ-vadhopāyam,
sa vavre varam īpsitam*

Satisfied by the worship, the powerful Lord Śiva appeared in the sacred precinct of Avimukta and offered Sudakṣiṇa his choice of benedictions. The prince chose as his benediction a means to slay his father's killer.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mahadeva Siva (*avimukta*) asked Sudaksina, the king's son, to choose a boon (*vavre varam*).

Texts 30–31

dakṣiṇāgnim paricara,

*brāhmaṇaiḥ samam ṛtvijam,
abhicāra-vidhānena,
sa cāgniḥ pramathair vṛtaḥ,
sādhayisyati saṅkalpam,
abrahmaṇye prayojitaḥ,
ity ādiṣṭas tathā cakre,
kṛṣṇāyābhicaran vratī*

Lord Śiva told him, “Accompanied by brāhmaṇas, serve the Dakṣiṇāgni fire—the original priest—following the injunctions of the abhicāra ritual. Then the Dakṣiṇāgni fire, together with many Pramathas, will fulfill your desire if you direct it against someone inimical to the brāhmaṇas.” So instructed, Sudakṣiṇa strictly observed the ritualistic vows and invoked the abhicāra against Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Siva said, “Serve the *dakṣiṇa-agnim* (the Dakṣiṇa fire), which is like the priest (*ṛtvijam*) who carries out rituals on his own behalf.” This is confirmed in the *Rg Veda* (1.1.1): *yajñasya devam ṛtvijam*, “The fire is the *ṛtvijam* or lord of the sacrifice.” When Siva said the Dakṣiṇāgni fire should only be used against one inimical to *brahmanas*, he hinted that used against Kṛṣṇa, who maintains the *brahmanas*, the fire would have the opposite effect. Hearing that *brahmanas* offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Sudaksina foolishly thought that since Kṛṣṇa was greedy for respect from the *brahmanas*, that He had no respect for the *brahmanas*.

Texts 32–33

*tato 'gnir utthitaḥ kuṇḍān,
mūrtimān ati-bhīṣaṇaḥ,
tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśrur;*

*aṅgārodgāri-locanaḥ,
daṁṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-daṇḍa,
kaṭhorāsyah sva-jihvayā,
ālihan sṛkvaṇī nagno,
vidhunvaṁs tri-śikhaṁ jvalat*

Thereupon the fire rose up out of the altar pit, assuming the form of an extremely fearsome, naked person. The fiery creature's beard and tuft of hair were like molten copper, and his eyes emitted blazing hot cinders. His face looked most frightful with its fangs and terrible arched and furrowed brows. As he licked the corners of his mouth with his tongue, the demon shook his flaming trident.

Text 34

*padbhyāṁ tāla-pramāṇābhyāṁ,
kampayann avanī-talam,
so 'bhyadhāvad vṛto bhūtair,
dvārakāṁ pradahan diśaḥ*

On legs as tall as palm trees, the monster raced toward Dvārakā in the company of ghostly spirits, shaking the ground and burning the world in all directions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Turning towards Dvaraka, the fiery demon ran forward burning up the directions.

Text 35

*tam ābhicāra-dahanam,
āyāntam dvāarakaukaṣaḥ,
vilokya tatrasuḥ sarve,
vana-dāhe mṛgā yathā*

Seeing the approach of the fiery demon created by the abhicāra ritual, the residents of Dvārakā were all struck with fear, like animals terrified by a forest fire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing him approaching from a distance, the residents of Dvaraka became frightened, like animals terrified by a forest fire.

Text 36

*akṣaiḥ sabhāyām krīḍantam,
bhagavantam bhayāturāḥ,
trāhi trāhi tri-lokeśa,
vahneḥ pradahataḥ puram*

Distraught with fear, the people cried out to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was then playing at dice in the royal court: “Save us! Save us, O Lord of the three worlds, from this fire burning up the city!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They cried out, “Please save us! Please save us!”

Text 37

*śrutvā taj jana-vaiklavyam,
dṛṣṭvā svānām ca sādhasam,
śaraṇyaḥ samprahasyāha,
mā bhaiṣṭety avitāsmi aham*

When Lord Kṛṣṇa heard the people’s agitation and saw that even His own men were disturbed, that most worthy giver of shelter simply laughed and told them, “Do not fear; I shall protect you.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing the bewilderment of the citizens of the city and the fear in its rulers, the Yadavas, who though His own men did not know the cause of that fire, Kṛṣṇa spoke.

Text 38

*sarvasyāntar-bahiḥ-sākṣī,
kṛtyām māheśvarīm vibhuḥ,
vijñāya tad-vighātārtham,
pārśva-stham cakram ādiśat*

The almighty Lord, the internal and external witness of all, understood that the monster had been produced by Lord Śiva from the sacrificial fire. To defeat the demon, Kṛṣṇa dispatched His disc weapon, who was waiting at His side.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa, playing the part of a king, was enjoying a gambling match and did not want to be disturbed by such an insignificant matter as the attack of a fiery demon. So Kṛṣṇa simply ordered His disc weapon to take the necessary steps.

Text 39

*tat sūrya-koṭi-pratimam sudarśanam,
jājvalyamānam pralayānala-prabham,
sva-tejasā kham kakubho 'tha rodasī,
cakram mukundāstram athāgnim ārdayat*

That Sudarśana, the disc weapon of Lord Mukunda, blazed forth like millions of suns. His effulgence blazed like the fire of universal annihilation, and with his heat he pained the sky, all the directions, heaven and earth, and also the fiery demon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Spreading out through heaven and earth, Kṛṣṇa's Sudarsana *cakra* tormented (*ārdayat*) the fiery demon (*agnim*).

Text 40

*kṛtyānalaḥ pratihataḥ sa rathānga-pāṇer,
astraujasā sa nrpa bhagna-mukho nivṛttaḥ,
vārāṇasīm parisametya sudakṣiṇam tam,
sartvig-janam samadahat sva-kṛto 'bhicārah.*

Frustrated by the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa's weapon, O King, the fiery creature produced by black magic turned his face away and retreated. Created for violence, the demon then returned to Vārāṇasī, where he surrounded the city and then burned Sudakṣiṇa and his priests to death, even though Sudakṣiṇa was his creator.

Text 41

*cakraṃ ca viṣṇoḥ tad-anupraviṣṭam,
vārāṇasīm sātṭa-sabhālayāpaṇām,
sa-gopurāṭṭālaka-koṣṭha-saṅkulām,
sa-kośa-hasty-aśva-rathāṇna-sālinīm*

Lord Viṣṇu's disc also entered Vārāṇasī, in pursuit of the fiery demon, and proceeded to burn the city to the ground, including all its assembly halls and residential palaces with raised porches, its numerous marketplaces, gateways, watchtowers, warehouses and treasuries, and all the buildings housing elephants, horses, chariots and grains.

Text 42

*dagdhvā vārāṇasīm sarvām,
viṣṇoś cakram sudarśanam,
bhūyaḥ pārśvam upātiṣṭhat,
kṛṣṇasyākliṣṭa-karmaṇaḥ*

After burning down the entire city of Vārāṇasī, Lord Viṣṇu's Sudarśana cakra returned to the side of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose actions are effortless.

Text 43

ya enam śrāvayen martya,

*uttamaḥ-śloka-vikramam,
samāhito vā śṛṇuyāt,
sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate*

Any mortal who recounts this heroic pastime of Lord Uttamaḥ-śloka's, or who simply hears it attentively, will become freed from all sins.

Chapter Sixty-seven: Lord Balarāma Slays Dvidida Gorilla

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
bhuyo 'haṁ śrotum icchāmi,
rāmasyādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ,
anantasyāprameyasya,
yad anyat kṛtavān prabhuḥ*

The glorious King Parīkṣit said: I wish to hear further about Śrī Balarāma, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose activities are all astounding. What else did He do?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Baladeva enjoys with the Vraja-gopis on Raivataka Mountain. When Dvidida disturbs this, Baladeva kills him.

Being fully absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-līla*, Sukadeva Gosvami had skipped over some of Balarama's pastimes. Therefore, Parikṣit Maharaja asked him this question hinting that he not proceed so fast. Balarama's astonishing activities (*ādbhuta-karmaṇaḥ*) were such incidents as pulling the Yamuna River in order to take bath. Who else could do that? Because Balarama is unlimited (*anantasya*), even Sukadeva cannot know His activities completely. Balarama is called *aprameyasya* (immeasurable) because it is impossible for persons like Parikṣit to fully know Him with their finite intelligence.

Text 2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
narakasya sakhā kaścid,
dvivido nāma vānaraḥ,
sugrīva-sacivaḥ so 'tha,
bhrātā maindasya vīryavān*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: There was an ape named Dvidida who was a friend of Narakāsura's. This powerful Dvidida, the brother of Mainda, had been instructed by King Sugrīva.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narakasura is described as the friend (*narakasya sakhā*) of Dvidida to show that though Dvidida was the minister of the great devotee Sugrīva and an associate of Lord Rāmacandra, he became corrupted by the bad association of Naraka and this caused *anarthas* to arise in him. This bad association was the reaction for an offense Dvidida had committed when he disrespected Lakṣmaṇa, due to being proud of his strength.

The Mainda and Dvidida mentioned here are actually the eternally liberated devotees addressed as attendant deities during the worship of Lord Rāmacandra. The Lord arranged their degradation to show the evil of the bad association that results from offending great personalities. Thus the falldown of Dvidida and Mainda can be compared to that of Jaya and Vijaya.

Text 3

*sakhyuḥ so 'pacitiṁ kurvan,
vānaro rāṣṭra-viplavam,
pura-grāmākarān ghoṣān,
adahad vahnim utsrjan*

To avenge the death of his friend [Naraka], the ape Dvidida ravaged the land, setting fires that burned cities, villages, mines and cowherd dwellings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To retaliate (*apacitim*) the death of his friend Narakasura, Dvidida burned down the cowherd villages in order to destroy Sri Kṛṣṇa's flourishing kingdom.

Text 4

*kvacit sa śailān utpātya,
tair deśān samacūrṇayat,
ānartān sutarām eva,
yatrāste mitra-hā hariḥ*

Once Dvidida tore up a number of mountains and used them to devastate all the neighboring kingdoms, especially the province of Ānarta, wherein dwelt his friend's killer, Lord Hari.

Text 5

*kvacit samudra-madhya-stho,
dorbhyām utkṣipyā taj-jalam,
deśān nāgāyuta-prāṇo,
velā-kūle nyamajjayat*

Another time he entered the ocean and, with the strength of ten thousand elephants, churned up its water with his arms and thus submerged the coastal regions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dvividā flooded the coastal regions (*velā-kūle*) by fiercely churning the seawater with his mighty arms.

Text 6

*āśramān ṛṣi-mukhyānām,
kṛtvā bhagna-vanaspatīn,
adūṣayac chakṛn-mūtrair,
agnīn vaitānikān khalah*

The wicked ape tore down the trees in the hermitages of exalted sages and contaminated their sacrificial fires with his feces and urine.

Text 7

*puruṣān yoṣito dṛptaḥ,
kṣmābhṛd-dronī-guhāsu saḥ,
nikṣīpya cāpyadhāc chailaiḥ,
peśaṣkārīva kīṭakam*

Just as a wasp imprisons smaller insects, he arrogantly threw both men and women into caves in a mountain valley and sealed the caves shut with boulders.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He sealed (*apyadhāt*) the opening of the caves with stones.

Text 8

*evam deśān viprakurvan,
dūṣayamś ca kula-striyaḥ,
śrutvā su-lalitāṁ gītāṁ,
giriṁ raivatakaṁ yayau*

Once, while Dvividā was thus engaged in harassing the neighboring kingdoms and polluting women of respectable families, he heard very sweet singing coming from Raivataka Mountain. So he went there.

Texts 9–10

*tatrāpaśyad yadu-patim,
rāmaṁ puṣkara-mālinam,
sudarśanīya-sarvāṅgaṁ,
lalanā-yūtha-madhya-gam,
gāyantāṁ vāruṇīm pītvā,
mada-vihvala-locanam,
vibhrājamānaṁ vapuṣā,
prabhinnam iva vāraṇam*

There he saw Śrī Balarāma, the Lord of the Yadus, adorned with a garland of lotuses and appearing most attractive in every limb. He was singing amidst a crowd of young women, and since He had drunk vāruṇī liquor, His eyes rolled as if He were intoxicated. His body shone brilliantly as He behaved like an elephant in rut.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: He saw Balarama fuming like a mad elephant.

Text 11

*duṣṭaḥ śākhā-mrgaḥ śākhām,
ārūḍhaḥ kampayan drumān,
cakre kilakilā-śabdān,
ātmānam sampradarśayan*

The mischievous ape climbed a tree branch and then revealed his presence by shaking the trees and making the sound kilakilā.

Text 12

*tasya dhārṣṭyam kaper vīkṣya,
taruṇyo jāti-cāpalāḥ,
hāsya-priyā vijahasur,
baladeva-parigrahāḥ*

When Lord Baladeva's consorts saw the ape's impudence, they began to laugh. They were, after all, young girls who were fond of joking and prone to silliness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: By nature (*jāti:svabhāvena*) the young ladies accompanying Balarama were not very serious (*cāpalāḥ*). Being fond of joking, they laughed loudly at the monkey's impudence.

Text 13

*tā helayām āsa kapiḥ,
bhrū-kṣepair sammukhādibhiḥ,
darśayan sva-gudaṁ tāsām,
rāmasya ca nirīkṣitaḥ*

Even as Lord Balarāma looked on, Dvidida insulted the girls by making odd gestures with his eyebrows, coming right in front of them, and showing them his anus.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He ridiculed (*helayām āsa*) the ladies by walking in a funny way, moving his eyebrows, making odd gestures, standing directly in front of them and urinating. He disrespected Balarama by not even glancing at Him.

Texts 14–15

*taṁ grāvṇā prāharat kruddho,
balaḥ praharatām varaḥ,
sa vañcayitvā grāvāṇaṁ,
madirā-kalaśaṁ kapiḥ,
grhītvā helayām āsa,
dhūrtas taṁ kopayan hasan,
nirbhidyā kalaśaṁ duṣṭo,
vāsāmsy āsphālayad balam,
kadarthī-kṛtya balavān,
vipracakre madoddhataḥ*

Angered, Lord Balarāma, the best of fighters, hurled a rock at him, but the cunning ape dodged the rock and grabbed the Lord's pot

of liquor. Further infuriating Lord Balarāma by laughing and by ridiculing Him, wicked Dvidida then broke the pot and offended the Lord even more by pulling at the girls' clothing. Thus the powerful ape, puffed up with false pride, continued to insult Śrī Balarāma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He insulted (*vipracakre*) the ladies by pulling the garments off their beds and ripping them.

Text 16

*taṁ tasyāvinayaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā,
deśāṁś ca tad-upadrutān,
kruddho muṣalam ādatta,
halaṁ cāri-jighāṁsayā*

Lord Balarāma saw the ape's rude behavior and thought of the disruptions he had created in the surrounding kingdoms. Thus the Lord angrily took up His club and His plow weapon, having decided to put His enemy to death.

Text 17

*dvivido 'pi mahā-vīryaḥ,
śālam udyamya pāṇinā,
abhyetya tarasā tena,
balaṁ mūrdhany atāḍayat*

Mighty Dvidida also came forward to do battle. Uprooting a śāla tree with one hand, he rushed toward Balarāma and struck Him on

the head with the tree trunk.

Text 18

*taṁ tu saṅkarṣaṇo mūrdhni,
patantam acalo yathā,
pratijagrāha balavān,
sunandenāhanac ca taṁ*

But Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa remained as motionless as a mountain and simply grabbed the log as it fell upon His head. He then struck Dvidida with His club, named Sunanda.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama struck him with His *musala* (pestle or club) called Sunanda.

Texts 19–21

*mūṣalāhata-mastiṣko,
vireje rakta-dhārayā,
giriṁ yathā gairikayā,
prahāraṁ nānucintaya,
punar anyam samutkṣipya,
kṛtvā niṣpatram ojasā,
tenāhanat su-saṅkrudhas,
taṁ balaḥ śatadhācchinat,
tato 'nyena ruṣā jaghne,
taṁ cāpi śatadhācchinat*

Struck on the skull by the Lord’s club, Dvidida became brilliantly decorated by the outpour of blood, like a mountain beautified by red oxide. Ignoring the wound, Dvidida uprooted another tree, stripped it of leaves by brute force and struck the Lord again. Now enraged, Lord Balarāma shattered the tree into hundreds of pieces, upon which Dvidida grabbed yet another tree and furiously hit the Lord again. This tree, too, the Lord smashed into hundreds of pieces.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama struck him on a particular part of the head (*mastiska*). *Gairikayā* means “with a red oxide” and *nanucintayan* means “not taking seriously”.

Text 22

*evam yudhyan bhagavatā,
bhagne bhagne punaḥ punaḥ,
ākṛṣya sarvato vṛkṣān,
nirvṛkṣam akarod vanam*

Thus fighting the Lord, who again and again demolished the trees He was attacked with, Dvidida kept on uprooting trees from all sides until the forest was left treeless.

Text 23

*tato ’muñcac chilā-varṣam,
balasyopary amarṣitaḥ,
tat sarvaṁ cūrṇayām āsa,
līlayā muṣalāyudhaḥ*

The angry ape then released a rain of stones upon Lord Balarāma, but the wielder of the club easily pulverized them all.

Text 24

*sa bāhū tāla-saṅkāśau,
muṣṭī-kṛtya kapīśvaraḥ,
āsādyā rohiṇī-putraṁ,
tābhyām vakṣasy arūrujat*

Dvidida, the most powerful of apes, now clenched his fists at the end of his palm-tree-sized arms, came before Lord Balarāma and beat his fists against the Lord's body.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dvidida beat (*arurujat*) Balarama with his fists (*muṣṭī-kṛtya*).

Text 25

*yādavendro 'pi taṁ dorbhyām,
tyaktvā muṣala-lāṅgale,
jatrāv abhyardayat kruddhaḥ,
so 'patad rudhiraṁ vaman*

The furious Lord of the Yādavas then threw aside His club and plow and with His bare hands hammered a blow upon Dvidida's collarbone. The ape collapsed, vomiting blood.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since Dvividā was striking Him with his hands, Balarama did not strike him back with His weapons like the club or plow. Simply with His fists Balarama crushed the gorilla’s collarbone and killed him.

Text 26

*cakampe tena patatā,
sa-ṭaṅkaḥ sa-vanaspatiḥ,
parvataḥ kuru-śārdūla,
vāyunā naur ivāmbhasi*

When he fell, O tiger among the Kurus, Raivataka Mountain shook, along with its cliffs and trees, like a wind-tossed boat at sea.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Raivataka Mountain began to shake along with its trees, cliffs and fissures. According to Amarasimha’s *Trikanda* dictionary, the word *ṭaṅka* means leg, mountain cliff, shovel, a stone-cutting chisel, or the wood apple fruit.”

Text 27

*jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ,
sādhu sādhu iti cāmbare,
sura-siddha-munīndrāṅṅām,
āsīt kusuma-varṣiṅṅām*

In the heavens the demigods, perfect mystics and great sages cried out, “Victory to You! Obeisances to You! Excellent! Well done!” and

showered flowers upon the Lord.

Text 28

*evam nihatya dvividam,
jagad-vyatikarāvaham,
samstūyamāno bhagavān,
janaiḥ sva-puram āviśat*

Having thus killed Dvidida, who had disturbed the whole world, the Supreme Lord returned to His capital as the people along the way chanted His glories.

Chapter Sixty-eight: The Marriage of Sāmba

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
duryodhana-sutām rājan,
lakṣmaṇām samitiṁ-jayaḥ,
svayaṁvara-sthām aharat,
sāmba jāmbavatī-sutaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Jāmbavatī's son Sāmba, ever victorious in battle, kidnapped Duryodhana's daughter Lakṣmaṇā from her svayaṁ-vara ceremony.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Samba abducts Laksmāna, the daughter of Duryodhana, during her marriage ceremony. When the Kurus arrest Samba, Balarama becomes angered by their harsh words, and drags the city of Hastinapura toward the Ganga.

Text 2

*kauravāḥ kupitā ūcur,
durvinīto 'yam arbhakaḥ,
kadarthī-kṛtya naḥ kanyām,
akāmām aharad balāt*

The angry Kurus said: This ill-behaved boy has offended us, forcibly kidnapping our unmarried daughter against her will.

Text 3

*badhnītemaṁ durvinītaṁ, kiṁ kariṣyanti vṛṣṇayaḥ, ye 'smat-
prasādupacitāṁ, dattāṁ no bhuñjate mahīm*

**Arrest this ill-behaved Sāmba! What will the Vṛṣṇis do? By our
grace they are ruling land that we have granted them.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Yadavas enjoy the land given by
us. They are not kings.

Text 4

*nigṛhītaṁ sutāṁ śrutvā,
yady eṣyantīha vṛṣṇayaḥ,
bhagna-darpāḥ śamaṁ yānti,
prāṇā iva su-saṁyatāḥ*

**If the Vṛṣṇis come here when they learn that their son has been
captured, we will break their pride. Thus they'll become subdued,
like bodily senses brought under strict control.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They will become peaceful like
controlled senses (*prana*).

Text 5

*iti karṇaḥ śalo bhūrir,
yajñaketuḥ suyodhanaḥ,
sāmbam ārebhire yoddhum,
kuru-vṛddhānumoditāḥ*

After saying this and having their plan sanctioned by the senior member of the Kuru dynasty, Karṇa, Śala, Bhū ri, Yajñaketu and Suyodhana set out to attack Sāmba.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Somadatta had three sons: Sala, Bhuri and Bhurisvara, also called Yajnaketu. These three went with Karna and Duryodhana. Bhisma (*kuru-vṛddha*) gave them permission: “Since Samba has touched this maiden already, he must be the husband, for it would be improper to marry her to anyone else. To show our bravery and his impropriety, however, we should capture him but not kill him.” Bhisma together with these six bound up Samba.

Text 6

*dr̥ṣṭvānudhāvataḥ sāmba,
dhārtarāṣṭrān mahā-rathaḥ,
pragr̥hya ruciraṁ cāpam,
tasthau simha ivaikalāḥ*

Seeing Duryodhana and his companions rushing toward him, Sāmba, the great chariot-fighter, took up his splendid bow and stood alone like a lion.

Text 7

*taṁ te jighrkṣavaḥ kruddhās,
tiṣṭha tiṣṭheti bhāṣiṇaḥ,
āsādya dhanvino bāṇaiḥ,
karṇāgranyaḥ samākiran*

Determined to capture him, the angry bowmen led by Karṇa shouted at Sāmba, ‘Stand and fight! Stand and fight!’ They came straight for him and showered him with arrows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Samba was covered completely (*samakiran*) with arrows.

Text 8

*so ’paviddhaḥ kuru-śreṣṭha,
kurubhir yadu-nandanaḥ,
nāmṛṣyat tad acintyārbhaḥ,
simha kṣudra-mṛgair iva*

O best of the Kurus, as Kṛṣṇa’s son Sāmba was being unjustly harassed by the Kurus, that darling of the Yadu dynasty did not tolerate their attack, any more than a lion would tolerate an attack by puny animals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The child of the Supreme Lord (*acintaysa arbhah*) did not tolerate being struck so unjustly (*apaviddha*).

*visphūrjya ruciraṃ cāpaṃ,
sarvān vivyādha sāyakaiḥ,
karṇādīn ṣaḍ rathān vīras,
tāvadbhir yugapat prthak,
caturbhiś caturo vāhān,
ekaikena ca sārathīn,
rathinaś ca maheṣvāsāms,
tasya tat te 'bhyapūjayan*

Twanging his wonderful bow, heroic Sāmba struck with arrows the six warriors headed by Karṇa. He pierced the six chariots with as many arrows, each team of four horses with four arrows, and each chariot driver with a single arrow, and he similarly struck the great bowmen who commanded the chariots. The enemy warriors congratulated Sāmba for this display of prowess.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Samba killed the four horses of each chariot with four arrows. The enemy praised him for this act.

Text 11

*taṃ tu te viratham cakruś,
catvāraś caturo hayān,
ekas tu sārathim jaghne,
cicchedaṇyaḥ śarāsanam*

But they forced him down from his chariot, and thereupon four of them struck his four horses, one of them struck down his chariot driver, and another broke his bow.

Text 12

*taṁ baddhvā virathī-kṛtya,
kṛcchreṇa kuravo yudhi,
kumāraṁ svasya kanyām ca,
sva-puraṁ jayino 'viśan*

Having deprived Sāmba of his chariot during the fight, the Kuru warriors tied him up with great difficulty and then returned victorious to their city, taking the young boy and their princess.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They entered the city after seizing the boy and the girl.

Text 13

*tac chrutvā nāradoktena,
rājan sañjāta-manyavaḥ,
kurūn praty udyamaṁ cakrur,
ugrasena-pracoditāḥ*

O King, when the Yādavas heard news of this from Śrī Nārada, they became angry. Urged on by King Ugrasena, they prepared for war against the Kurus.

Texts 14–15

*sāntvayitvā tu tān rāmaḥ,
sannaddhān vṛṣṇi-puṅgavān,
naicchat kurūnām vṛṣṇīnām,
kaliṁ kali-malāpahaḥ,
jagāma hāstina-puram,
rathenāditya-varcasā,
brāhmaṇaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca,
vṛtaś candra iva grahaiḥ*

Lord Balarāma, however, cooled the tempers of the Vṛṣṇi heroes, who had already put on their armor. He who purifies the age of quarrel did not want a quarrel between the Kurus and Vṛṣṇis. Thus, accompanied by brāhmaṇas and family elders, He went to Hastināpura on His chariot, which was as effulgent as the sun. As He went, He appeared like the moon surrounded by the ruling planets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having pacified the Vrsnis, Balarama along with a group of *brahmanas* and elders went to Hastinapura because He did not want a quarrel between the Kauravas and Vrsnis.

Text 16

*gatvā gajāhvayaṁ rāmo,
bāhyopavanam āsthitaḥ,
uddhavaṁ preṣayām āsa,
dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ bubhutsayā*

Upon arriving at Hastināpura, Lord Balarāma remained in a garden outside the city and sent Uddhava ahead to probe King Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s intentions.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama sent Uddhava to learn the intentions of Dhrtarastra.

Text 17

*so 'bhivandyāmbikā-putraṁ,
bhīṣmaṁ droṇaṁ ca bāhlikam,
duryodhanaṁ ca vidhi-vad,
rāmam āgataṁ abravīt*

After he had offered proper respects to the son of Ambikā [Dhṛtarāṣṭra] and to Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Bāhlika and Duryodhana, Uddhava informed them that Lord Balarāma had arrived.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since there is no mention of Uddhava offering respects to Yudhiṣṭhira and the other Pandavas, it is understood that they were now living in Indraprastha.

Text 18

*te 'ti-prītās tam ākarṇya,
prāptaṁ rāmam suhṛt-tamam,
tam arcayitvābhiyayaḥ,
sarve maṅgala-pāṇayaḥ*

Overjoyed to hear that Balarāma, their dearest friend, had come, they first honored Uddhava and then went forth to meet the Lord, carrying auspicious offerings in their hands.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: They welcomed Uddhava (*tam arcayitvā*) and then went to meet Balarama.

Text 19

*tam saṅgamyā yathā-nyāyam,
gām arghyam ca nyavedayan,
teṣām ye tat-prabhāva-jñāh,
praṇemuḥ śirasā balam*

They approached Lord Balarāma and worshiped Him with gifts of cows and arghya, as was fitting. Those among the Kurus who understood His true power bowed down to Him, touching their heads to the ground.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Those among them such as Bhīṣma, who knew Balarama’s power, offered their respects by bowing down.

Text 20

*bandhūn kuśalinaḥ śrutvā,
prṣtvā śivam anāmayam,
parasparam atho rāmo,
babhāṣe ’viklavam vacaḥ*

After both parties had heard that their relatives were doing well and both had inquired into each other’s welfare and health, Lord Balarāma forthrightly spoke to the Kurus as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Both sides heard and asked about each

other's welfare.

Text 21

*ugrasenaḥ kṣiteśeśo,
yad va ājñāpayat prabhuḥ,
tad avyagra-dhiyaḥ śrutvā,
kurudhvam avilambitam*

[Lord Balarāma said:] King Ugrasena is our master and the ruler of kings. With undivided attention you should hear what he has ordered you to do, and then you should do it at once.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “You are kings but Ugrasena is the ruler of everyone (*kṣita-īśa*). Why? Because he is the master (*prabhu*), whose order even Indra and others carry out, offering him tribute in the form of the Sudharma hall and the *parijata* tree. Yayati forbade the Yadus from being kings, but he did not forbid them from being rulers of kings. You should listen carefully to his order, otherwise he will punish you.”

Text 22

*yad yūyam bahavas tv ekam,
jivādharmaṇa dhārmikam,
abadhnītātha tan mṛṣye,
bandhūnām aikya-kāmyayā*

[King Ugrasena has said:] Even though by irreligious means several of you defeated a single opponent who follows the religious

codes, still I am tolerating this for the sake of unity among family members.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Ugrasena speaks in this verse. “I am tolerating that you unjustly defeated Samba.” His meaning is: “Therefore you should immediately bring him forward and give him back.” He did not complete this statement however, because just on hearing it the opposing side would utter foul words.

Text 23

*vīrya-śaurya-balonnaddham,
ātma-śakti-samaṁ vacaḥ,
kuravo baladevasya,
niśamyocuḥ prakopitāḥ*

Upon hearing these words of Lord Baladeva’s, which were full of potency, courage and strength and were appropriate to His transcendental power, the Kauravas became furious and spoke as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They became angry upon hearing Balarama’s words, which were filled with influence (*virya*), courage (*saurya*) and strength (*balam*), befitting His transcendental position.

Text 24

*aho mahac citram idaṁ,
kāla-gatyā duratyayā,
āruruṣaty upānad vai,
śiro mukuṭa-sevitam*

[The Kuru nobles said:] Oh, how amazing this is! The force of time is indeed insurmountable: a lowly shoe now wants to climb on the head that bears the royal crown.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Kuru leaders said, “How astonishing! Just see the insurmountable movement of time (*kāla-gatyā duratyayā*)! Now the shoe wants to climb on the head that bears the royal crown.” In other words, they thought that the lowly Yadus now wanted to rise above the royal Kurus.

Text 25

*ete yaunena sambaddhāḥ,
saha-śayyāsanāśanāḥ,
vṛṣṇayas tulyatām nītā,
asmad-datta-nṛpāsanāḥ*

It is because these Vṛṣṇis are bound to us by marital ties that we have granted them equality, allowing them to share our beds, seats and meals. Indeed, it is we who have given them their royal thrones.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They are related to us only by the marriage of Kunti to Pandu. Therefore, they are only brothers-in-law.

Text 26

*cāmara-vyajane śaṅkham,
ātapatraṁ ca pāṇḍuram,
kirīṭam āsanam śayyām,*

bhuñjate 'smad-upekṣayā

Only because we looked the other way could they enjoy the pair of yak-tail fans and the conchshell, white umbrella, throne, and royal bed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Kurus thought, “Showing concern about their use of these items of royalty would have been a sign of respect, but in fact we do not have such respect for them. Since they are of inferior families, they are not to be respected, and therefore we pay no regard to them.”

Text 27

*alam yadūnām naradeva-lāñchanair,
dātuḥ pratīpaiḥ phaṇinām ivāmṛtam,
ye 'smat-prasādopacitā hi yādavā,
ājñāpayanty adya gata-trapā bata*

No longer should the Yadus be allowed to use these royal symbols, which now cause trouble for those who gave them, like milk fed to poisonous snakes. Having prospered by our grace, these Yādavas have now lost all shame and are daring to command us!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse they state that they should no longer ignore their offenses. “We shall take away their royal symbols.”

Text 28

*katham indro 'pi kurubhir,
bhīṣma-droṇārjunādibhiḥ,
adattam avarundhīta,
simha-grastam ivoraṇaḥ*

How would even Indra dare usurp anything that Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Arjuna or the other Kurus have not given him? It would be like a lamb claiming the lion's kill.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O Yadavas! As you proudly think yourselves favored by Indra, then please listen. How can Indra dare take anything which is not given by the Kauravas? He is like a sheep in comparison to a lion. If Indra is like a sheep, what are you?”

Text 29

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
janma-bandhu-śrīyonnaddha,
madās te bharatarṣabha,
āśrāvya rāmaṁ durvācyam,
asabhyāḥ puram āviśan*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: O best of the Bhāratas, after the arrogant Kurus, thoroughly puffed up by the opulence of their high birth and relations, had spoken these harsh words to Lord Balarāma, they turned and went back to their city.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being intoxicated over their high birth and wealth, Bhisma and other relatives spoke so harshly to Balarama.

Text 30

*dr̥ṣṭvā kurūnām dauḥśīlyam,
śrutvāvācyāni cācyutaḥ,
avocat kopa-saṁrabdho,
duṣprekṣyaḥ prahasana muhuḥ*

Seeing the bad character of the Kurus and hearing their nasty words, the infallible Lord Balarāma became filled with rage. His countenance frightful to behold, He laughed repeatedly and spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this circumstance Balarama thought, “Let them say and do what they want” but remained silent. After the Kauravas left however, Balarama, in the presence of the city people, said and did what He wanted by showing His anger (*kopa-saṁrabdho*).

Text 31

*nūnaṁ nānā-madonnaddhāḥ,
śāntim necchanty asādhavaḥ,
teṣāṁ hi praśamo daṇḍaḥ,
paśūnām laguḍo yathā*

[Lord Balarāma said:] “Clearly the many passions of these scoundrels have made them so proud that they do not want peace. Then let them be pacified by physical punishment, as animals are with a stick.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Because the Kauravas [Kurus] are puffed-up due to their wealth and other assets, only physical

punishment (*daṇḍaḥ*) will pacify (*praśamaḥ*) their pride. *Sama*, *dana* and other forms of negotiation will not work.”

Texts 32–33

*aho yadūn su-saṁrabdhān,
kṛṣṇaṁ ca kupitaṁ śanaīḥ,
sāntvayitvāham eteṣāṁ,
śamam icchann ihāgataḥ,
ta ime manda-matayaḥ,
kalahābhiratāḥ khalāḥ,
taṁ mām avajñāya muhur;
durbhāṣān mānino ’bruvan*

“Ah, only gradually was I able to calm the furious Yadus and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was also enraged. Desiring peace for these Kauravas, I came here. But they are so dull-headed, fond of quarrel and mischievous by nature that they have repeatedly disrespected Me. Out of conceit they dared to address Me with harsh words!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Although I am famous as their well-wisher, they have insulted Me with bad words.”

Text 34

*nograsenaḥ kila vibhur,
bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ,
śakrādayo loka-pālā,
yasyādeśānuvartinaḥ*

“King Ugrasena, the lord of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, is not fit to command, when Indra and other planetary rulers obey his orders?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In six verses (34-39) Balarama remembers their foul words.

Text 35

*sudharmākramyate yena,
pārijāto 'marāṅghripaḥ,
ānīya bhujyate so 'sau,
na kilādhyāsanārhaṇaḥ*

“That same Kṛṣṇa who occupies the Sudharmā assembly hall and for His enjoyment took the pārijāta tree from the immortal demigods—that very Kṛṣṇa is indeed not fit to sit on a royal throne?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Balarama angrily states, “Never mind these audacious Yadus—these rascal Kauravas even dare to insult Kṛṣṇa! Is Kṛṣṇa not even fit for the king’s throne?” Balarama states this in three verses.

Text 36

*yasya pāda-yugaṁ sākṣāc,
chrīr upāste 'khileśvarī,
sa nārhati kila śrīśo,
naradeva-paricchadān*

“The goddess of fortune herself, ruler of the entire universe, worships His feet. And the master of the goddess of fortune does not deserve the paraphernalia of a mortal king?”

Text 37

*yasyāṅghri-pañkaja-rajo 'khila-loka-pālair,
mauly-uttamair dhṛtam upāsita-tīrtha-tīrtham,
brahmā bhavo 'ham api yasya kalāḥ kalāyāḥ,
śrīś codvahoma ciram asya nṛpāsanam kva*

“The dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, which is the source of holiness for all places of pilgrimage, is worshiped by all the great demigods. The principal deities of all planets are engaged in His service, and they consider themselves most fortunate to take the dust of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa on their crowns. Great demigods like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, and even the goddess of fortune and I, are simply parts of His spiritual identity, and we also carefully carry that dust on our heads. And still Kṛṣṇa is not fit to use the royal insignia or even sit on the royal throne?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “The dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet, which is a place of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) for the masters of *yoga* who themselves are personified *tīrthas*, is held on the costly crowns of all the planetary rulers. Brahma, your creator, whose power is greater than Indra and Siva, and even I, what to speak of Laksmi, the Lord’s internal potency who possesses more opulence than all of us put together, are all just expansions of Kṛṣṇa or expansions of His expansions. Yet all of us carefully carry the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet on our heads. Still to obtain His throne Kṛṣṇa must beg the Kauravas for their mercy.” This is a sarcastic

statement.

Text 38

*bhuñjate kurubhir dattam,
bhū-khaṇḍam vṛṣṇayaḥ kila,
upānahaḥ kila vayam,
svayam tu kuravaḥ śiraḥ*

“We Vṛṣṇis enjoy only whatever small parcel of land the Kurus allow us? And we are indeed shoes, whereas the Kurus are the head?”

Text 39

*aho aiśvarya-mattānām,
mattānām iva māninām,
asambaddhā giṛo rukṣāḥ,
kaḥ sahetānuśāsītā*

“Just see how these puffed-up Kurus are intoxicated with their so-called power, like ordinary drunken men! What actual ruler, with the power to command, would tolerate their foolish, nasty words?”

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Having joked with sarcastic words, Balarama now speaks the facts in one and a half verses: “What punisher such as Myself can tolerate such rough, inappropriate words from proud people bewildered by their power as if intoxicated with wine? Others may tolerate, but not Me.”

Text 40

*adya niṣkauravaṃ pṛthvīm,
kariṣyāmīty amarṣitaḥ,
gṛhītvā halam uttasthau,
dahann iva jagat-trayam*

“Today I shall rid the earth of the Kauravas!” declared the furious Balarāma. Thus He took His plow weapon and rose up as if to set the three worlds ablaze.

Text 41

*lāṅgalāgreṇa nagaram,
udvidārya gajāhvayam,
vicakarṣa sa gaṅgāyām,
prahariṣyann amarṣitaḥ*

The Lord angrily dug up Hastināpura with the tip of His plow and began to drag it, intending to cast the entire city into the Ganges.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By Balarama’s desire His plow had increased in size. As He dragged Hastināpura toward the water, He ordered the Ganges, “Except for Sāmba, you should attack and kill everyone in the city with your water.” Thus Balarama would fulfill His promise to rid the earth of the Kauravas while making sure that nothing bad would happen to Sāmba.

Texts 42–43

*jala-yānam ivāghūrṇam,
gaṅgāyām nagaram patat,
ākṛṣyamāṇam ālokya,
kauravāḥ jāta-sambhramāḥ,
tam eva śaraṇam jagmuḥ,
sa-kuṭumbā jijīviṣavaḥ,
sa-lakṣmaṇam puras-kṛtya,
sāmbam prāñjalayaḥ prabhum*

Seeing that their city was tumbling about like a raft at sea as it was being dragged away, and that it was about to fall into the Ganges, the Kauravas became terrified. To save their lives they approached the Lord for shelter, taking their families with them. Placing Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā in front, they joined their palms in supplication.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing their city rolling about like a boat and about to fall into the Ganga, the Kauravas became fearful. To quickly appease Balarama, they immediately brought Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā and placed them in front. The extra syllable in the word *jijīviṣavaḥ* is not a mistake, since there is a statement in the *Bhāṣā-vṛtti*, a commentary on Pāṇini’s grammar written by Puruṣottama in the twelfth century: *navākśaraika-pādo vṛtti-bhedo’sti*, “It is an acceptable variation of meter for one line to have nine syllables instead of the usual eight.”

Text 44

*rāma rāmākhilādhāra,
prabhāvaṁ na vidāma te,*

*mūḍhānām naḥ ku-buddhīnām,
kṣantum arhasy atikramam*

[The Kauravas said:] O Rāma, Rāma, foundation of everything! We know nothing of Your power. Please excuse our offense, for we are ignorant and misguided.

Text 45

*sthity-utpatty-apyayānām tvam,
eko hetur nirāśrayaḥ,
lokān krīḍanakān īśa,
krīḍatas te vadanti hi*

You alone cause the creation, maintenance and annihilation of the cosmos, and of You there is no prior cause. Indeed, O Lord, authorities say that the worlds are mere playthings for You as You perform Your pastimes.

Text 46

*tvam eva mūrdhnīdam ananta līlayā,
bhū-maṇḍalam bibharsī sahasra-mūrdhan,
ante ca yaḥ svātma-niruddha-viśvaḥ,
śeṣe 'dvitīyaḥ pariśiṣyamāṇaḥ*

O unlimited one of a thousand heads, as Your pastime You

carry this earthly globe upon one of Your heads. At the time of annihilation You withdraw the entire universe within Your body and, remaining all alone, lie down to rest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Kurus said, “As You sleep on the bed of Sesa, You are one without a second (*advitīyaḥ*), since at that time there is no one else but You existing within the three worlds.”

Text 47

*kopas te 'khila-sikṣārtham,
na dveṣān na ca matsarāt,
bibhrato bhagavan sattvaṁ,
sthiti-pālana-tatparaḥ*

Your anger is meant for instructing everyone; it is not a manifestation of hatred or envy. O Supreme Lord, You sustain the pure mode of goodness, and You become angry only to maintain and protect this world.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Kurus meant to say, “The anger which You, who protect (*pālanārthakam*) the world by sustaining the mode of goodness, are now exhibiting is simply for the purpose of instructing everyone by maintaining the principles of civilized conduct. Your display of anger has now made us civilized, whereas previously we were wicked and blinded by pride.” If we read *tatparaḥ* as not having a *visargaḥ*, it would make the phrase vocative: “O Lord whose object is maintenance of correct behavior!”

Text 48

*namas te sarva-bhūtātman,
sarva-śakti-dharāvyaya,
viśva-karman namas te 'stu,
tvām vyaṁ śaraṇaṁ gatāḥ*

We bow down to You, O Soul of all beings, O wielder of all potencies, O tireless maker of the universe! Offering You obeisances, we take shelter of You.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In case Balarama says, “I will kill you evil people”, the Kurus reply, “O holder of all potencies, You have the power to either kill us or protect us. In either case, O inexhaustible one, whether we live or die there is no loss for You. But this universe is a result of Your actions, and therefore You should let us live.”

Text 49

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ prapaṇaiḥ saṁvignair,
vepamānāyanair balaḥ,
prasāditaḥ su-prasanno,
mā bhaiṣṭety abhayaṁ dadau*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus propitiated by the Kurus, whose city was trembling and who were surrendering to Him in great distress, Lord Balarāma became very calm and kindly disposed toward them. “Do not be afraid,” He said, and took away their fear.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Balarama was pleased by the Kauravas, whose city (*ayanaiḥ*) was trembling (*vepamana*).

Texts 50–51

*duryodhanaḥ pāribarhaṃ,
kuñjarān ṣaṣṭi-hāyanān,
dadau ca dvādaśa-śatāny,
ayutāni turaṅgamān,
rathānām ṣaṭ-sahasrāṇi,
raukmāṇām sūrya-varcasām,
dāsīnām niṣka-kaṅṭhīnām,
sahasraṃ duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ*

Duryodhana, being very affectionate to his daughter, gave as her dowry 1,200 sixty-year-old elephants, 120,000 horses, 6,000 golden chariots shining like the sun, and 1,000 maidservants with jeweled lockets on their necks.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Duryodhana gave 1,200 elephants and 120,000 horses.

Text 52

*pratigṛhya tu tat sarvaṃ,
bhagavān sātvataṛṣabhaḥ,
sa-sutaḥ sa-snuṣaḥ prāyāt,
suhṛdbhir abhinanditaḥ*

The Supreme Lord, chief of the Yādavas, accepted all these gifts and then departed with His son and daughter-in-law as His well-wishers bid Him farewell.

Text 53

*tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ sva-puraṁ halāyudhaḥ,
sametya bandhūn anurakta-cetasah,
śaśaṁsa sarvaṁ yadu-puṅgavānām,
madhye sabhāyām kuruṣu sva-ceṣṭitam*

Then Lord Halāyudha entered His city [Dvārakā] and met His relatives, whose hearts were all bound to him in loving attachment. In the assembly hall He reported to the Yadu leaders everything about His dealings with the Kurus.

Text 54

*adyāpi ca puraṁ hy etat,
sūcayad rāma-vikramam,
samunnataṁ dakṣiṇato,
gaṅgāyām anudrśyate*

Even today the city of Hastināpura is visibly elevated on its southern side along the Ganges, thus showing the signs of Lord Balarāma's prowess.

Chapter Sixty-nine: Nārada Muni Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa's Palaces in Dvārakā

Texts 1– 6

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
narakam nihataṁ śrutvā,
tathodvāhaṁ ca yoṣitām,
kṛṣṇenaikena bahvīnām,
tad-didr̥kṣuḥ sma nāradaḥ,
citram bataitad ekena,
vapuṣā yugapat prthak,
gṛheṣu dvy-aṣṭa-sāhasraṁ,
striya eka udāvahat,
ity utsuko dvāravatīm,
devarṣir draṣṭum āgamat,
puṣpitopavanārāma,
dvijāli-kula-nāditām,
utphullendīvarāmbhoja,
kahlāra-kumudotpalaiḥ,
churiteṣu saraḥsūccaiḥ,
kūjitām haṁsa-sārasaiḥ,
prāsāda-lakṣair navabhir,
juṣṭām sphāṭika-rājataiḥ,
mahā-marakata-prakhyaiḥ,
svarṇa-ratna-paricchadaiḥ,
vibhakta-rathyā-patha-catvarāpanaiḥ,
śālā-sabhābhī rucirām surālayaiḥ,
saṁsikta-mārgāṅgana-vīthi-dehalīm,
patat-patāka-dhvaja-vāritātapām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing that Lord Kṛṣṇa had killed Narakāsura and had alone married many brides, Nārada Muni desired to see the Lord in this situation. He thought, “It is quite amazing that in a single body Lord Kṛṣṇa simultaneously married sixteen thousand women, each in a separate palace.” Thus the sage of the demigods eagerly went to Dvārakā.

The city was filled with the sounds of birds and bees flying about the parks and pleasure gardens, while its lakes, crowded with blooming indīvara, ambhoja, kahlāra, kumuda and utpala lotuses, resounded with the calls of swans and cranes. Dvārakā boasted nine hundred thousand royal palaces, all constructed with crystal and silver and splendidly decorated with huge emeralds. Inside these palaces, the furnishings were bedecked with gold and jewels. Traffic moved along a well laid-out system of boulevards, roads, intersections and marketplaces, and many assembly houses and temples of demigods graced the charming city. The roads, courtyards, commercial streets and residential patios were all sprinkled with water and shaded from the sun’s heat by banners waving from flagpoles.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Narada fulfills his desire to see (*didrksuh*) how Kṛṣṇa expanded His one transcendental form into each of the palaces in Dvaraka.

It was indeed astonishing how Kṛṣṇa married with one body at one time each of the sixteen thousand queens in separate courtyards of separate houses surrounded by separate walls. Persons like Saubhari enjoyed with many women at once only after expanding into separate bodies, but not in a single body. For this reason (*iti*) Narada went to see Kṛṣṇa in Dvaraka, which is described in three and a half verses. The city of Dvaraka resounded with the loud cries of swans and herons in lakes filled with lotuses. The palace turrets and spires were glistening with emeralds. The palace attendants wore splendid clothing of gold and

jewels. The city was charming with wide roads, lanes, intersections, marketplaces, assembly halls and temples. It was shaded by the many colorful flags flapping in the wind.

Texts 7–8

*tasyām antaḥ-puraṁ śrīmad,
arcitaṁ sarva-dhiṣṇya-paiḥ,
hareḥ sva-kauśalaṁ yatra,
tvaṣṭrā kārtsnyena darśitam,
tatra ṣoḍaśabhiḥ sadma,
sahasraiḥ samalan̄kṛtam,
viveśaikatomaṁ śaureḥ,
patnīnām bhavanam mahat*

In the city of Dvārakā was a beautiful private quarter worshiped by the planetary rulers. This district, where the demigod Viśvakarmā had shown all his divine skill, was the residential area of Lord Hari, and thus it was gorgeously decorated by the sixteen thousand palaces of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s queens. Nārada Muni entered one of these immense palaces.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dvaraka was beautified with thousands of ornately decorated palaces. Narada entered one of the queen’s palaces.

Texts 9–12

*viṣṭabdham vidruma-stambhair,
vaidū rya-phalakottamaiḥ,
indranīla-mayaiḥ kuḍyair,*

*jagatyā cāhata-tviṣā,
vitānair nirmitais tvaṣṭrā,
muktā-dāma-vilambibhiḥ,
dāntair āsana-paryāṅkair,
maṇy-uttama-pariṣkṛtaiḥ,
dāsībhir niṣka-kaṅṭhībhiḥ,
su-vāsobhir alaṅkṛtam,
pumbhiḥ sa-kañcukoṣṇīṣa,
su-vastra-maṇi-kuṇḍalaiḥ,
ratna-pradīpa-nikara-dyutibhir nirasta,
dhvāntam vicitra-valabhīṣu śikhaṇḍino 'ṅga,
nṛtyanti yatra vihitāguru-dhūpam akṣair,
niryāntam īkṣya ghana-buddhaya unnadantaḥ*

Supporting the palace were coral pillars decoratively inlaid with vaidū rya gems. Sapphires bedecked the walls, and the floors glowed with perpetual brilliance. In that palace Tvaṣṭā had arranged canopies with hanging strands of pearls; there were also seats and beds fashioned of ivory and precious jewels. In attendance were many well-dressed maidservants bearing lockets on their necks, and also armor-clad guards with turbans, fine uniforms and jeweled earrings. The glow of numerous jewel-studded lamps dispelled all darkness in the palace. My dear King, on the ornate ridges of the roof danced loudly crying peacocks, who saw the fragrant aguru incense escaping through the holes of the latticed windows and mistook it for a cloud.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The palace is described in four verses. It had coral pillars supporting roofs of *lapis lazuli*, walls covered with sapphires, and floors inlaid with so many sapphires that they always sparkled with radiance. Seeing the smoke of *aguru* incense streaming through the lattice windows, the peacocks mistook it for clouds.

Text 13

*tasmin samāna-guṇa-rūpa-vayaḥ-su-veṣa,
dāsī-sahasra-yutayānusavaṁ gr̥hinyā,
vipro dadarśa camara-vyajanena rukma,
daṇḍena sātvata-patim parivījayantyā*

In that palace the learned brāhmaṇa saw the Lord of the Sātvatas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, together with His wife, who fanned Him with a gold-handled yak-tail fan. She personally served Him in this way, even though she was constantly attended by a thousand maidservants equal to her in personal character, beauty, youth and fine dress.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada saw Kṛṣṇa in the palace along with His wife, who was continuously (*anusavam*) fanning Him with a *camara*.

Text 14

*taṁ sannirīkṣya bhagavān sahasotthita-śrī,
paryaṅkataḥ sakala-dharma-bhṛtām variṣṭhaḥ,
ānamya pāda-yugalaṁ śirasā kirīṭa,
juṣṭena sāñjalir avīviśad āsane sve*

The Supreme Lord is the greatest upholder of religious principles. Thus when He noticed Nārada, He rose at once from Goddess Śrī's bed, bowed His crowned head at Nārada's feet and, joining His palms, had the sage sit in His own seat.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sat (*avīviśat*) Narada on His

own seat.

Text 15

*tasyāvanijya caraṇau tad-apah sva-mūrdhnā,
bibhraj jagad-gurutamo 'pi satām patir hi,
brahmaṇya-deva iti yad guṇa-nāma yuktaṁ,
tasyaiva yac-caraṇa-śaucam aśeṣa-tīrtham*

The Lord bathed Nārada’s feet and then put the water on His own head. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme spiritual authority of the universe and the master of His devotees, it was proper for Him to behave in this way, for His name is Brahmaṇya-deva, “the Lord who favors the brāhmaṇas.” Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa honored the sage Nārada by bathing his feet, even though the water that bathes the Lord’s own feet becomes the Ganges, the ultimate holy shrine.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa, the master of the devotees (*satām patir*), bathed Narada’s feet and then addressed him. The main verb “spoke” is in verse sixteen. Someone may protest that it is not proper for Kṛṣṇa to wash the feet of His servant. But Kṛṣṇa is called *brahmaṇya-deva*, indicating His quality of being respectful to the *brahmanas*. Thus, since Narada is a *brahmana*, it is appropriate that Kṛṣṇa bathed his feet. It should not be said that Kṛṣṇa behaved like this to purify Himself, since the Ganges, which is the ultimate purifying place (*aśeṣa-tīrtham*), bathes His feet. Even though Narada is Kṛṣṇa’s servant, it should be understood that he did not reveal Kṛṣṇa’s superiority in order not to obstruct the Lord’s desire to serve the *brahmanas*.

Text 16

*sampūjya deva-ṛṣi-varyam ṛṣiḥ purāṇo,
nārāyaṇo nara-sakho vidhinoditena,
vāṅyābhibhāsyā mitayāmṛta-miṣṭayā tam,
prāha prabho bhagavate karavāma he kim*

After fully worshipping the great sage of the demigods according to Vedic injunctions, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is Himself the original sage—Nārāyaṇa, the friend of Nara—conversed with Nārada, and the Lord’s measured speech was as sweet as nectar. Finally the Lord asked Nārada, “What may We do for you, Our lord and master?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa happily worshiped His pure devotee Nārada Muni according to the Vedic injunction (*vidhinoditena*) that *kṣatriyas* must honor the *brāhmaṇas*. Kṛṣṇa is *ṛṣiḥ purāṇaḥ*, the oldest supreme spiritual master. Although Kṛṣṇa is the oldest because of His being the Personality of Godhead, He is also new as He comes as Narayana, the friend of Nara (*nara-sakhaḥ*), in order to broadcast the scriptural injunctions. Kṛṣṇa spoke with measured words saturated with the sweetest nectar: “You are Our master (*prabho*) because you are a learned *brahmana*. What can I do for you?”

Text 17

*śrī-nārada uvāca naivādbhutaṁ tvayi vibho 'khila-loka-nāthe,
mairī janeṣu sakaleṣu damaḥ khalānām,
niḥśreyasāya hi jagat-sthiti-rakṣaṇābhyām,
svairāvatāra urugāya vidāma suṣṭhu*

Śrī Nārada said: O almighty Lord, it is no surprise that You, the ruler of all worlds, show friendship for all people and yet subdue

the envious. As we well know, You descend by Your sweet will in order to bestow the highest good on this universe by maintaining and protecting it. Thus Your glories are widely sung.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “In the material world, if the object of worship worships the worshiper, it will not be beneficial for the worshiper. However, because You are independent, it is always beneficial whether You worship Your devotee, accept his worship or punish him.” This is expressed in this verse.

Narada said, “It is not at all amazing that You are the benefactor (*maitri*) of all people. Because You are the monarch of all worlds and because all living entities are in the status of dependent *jīvas*, they must factually be Your servants.”

The following verse from the *Padma Purāṇa* explains the meaning of the *mantra Om*:

*a-kāreṇocyate viṣṇuḥ, śrīr u-kāreṇa kathyate ma-kāras tu tayor dāsaḥ,
pañca-vimśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ*

“The letter *a* signifies Lord Viṣṇu, the letter *u* signifies the goddess Śrī, and the letter *m* refers to their servant, who is the twenty-fifth element.” Narada continued, “For *brahmanas* like me who constantly worship You with devotion, Your worshiping us gives displeasure. For others who serve You like Vidura and Uddhava, You distress their minds by refusing to accept their worship. For the ordinary people who are like animals within the cycle of material life and who never worship You, You bestow Your merciful glance. And You punish the envious like Jarasandha. Ultimately You benefit all these persons by Your appearance in the material world. I know that You bestow the highest benefit upon everyone by maintaining and protecting the universe, and by giving them *prema-bhakti* and liberation.”

Text 18

dr̥ṣṭam tavāṅghri-yugalam janatāpavargam,

*brahmādibhir hr̥di vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ,
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam,
dhyāyaṁś carāmy anugr̥hāṇa yathā smṛtiḥ syāt*

Now I have seen Your feet, which grant liberation to Your devotees, which even Lord Brahmā and other great personalities of unfathomable intelligence can only meditate upon within their hearts, and which those who have fallen into the well of material existence resort to for deliverance. Please favor me so that I may constantly think of You as I travel about. Please grant Me the power to remember You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O great sage! For what purpose have you come? Do you intend to stay here or go elsewhere?” Anticipating this question, Narada speaks this verse.

Text 19

*tato 'nyad āviśad geham,
kṛṣṇa-patnyāḥ sa nāradaḥ,
yogeśvareśvarasyāṅga,
yoga-māyā-vivitsayā*

Nārada then entered the palace of another of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wives, my dear King. He was eager to witness the spiritual potency possessed by the master of all masters of mystic power.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With a desire to perceive (*vivitsaya*) Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya*, Narada went to another queen’s palace.

Texts 20–22

*dīvyantam akṣais tatrāpi,
priyayā coddhavana ca,
pūjitaḥ parayā bhaktyā,
pratyutthānāsanādibhiḥ,
prṣṭaś cāviduṣevāsau,
kadāyāto bhavān iti,
kriyate kiṃ nu pūrṇānām,
apūrṇair asmad-ādibhiḥ,
athāpi brūhi no brahman,
janmaitac chobhanaṃ kuru,
sa tu vismita utthāya,
tūṣṇīm anyad agād grham*

There he saw the Lord playing at dice with His beloved consort and His friend Uddhava. Lord Kṛṣṇa worshiped Nārada by standing up, offering him a seat, and so on, and then, as if He did not know, asked him, “When did you arrive? What can needy persons like Us do for those who are full in themselves? In any case, My dear brāhmaṇa, please make My life auspicious.” Thus addressed, Nārada was astonished. He simply stood up silently and went to another palace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At Satyabhama’s palace, Narada saw Kṛṣṇa playing dice. Kṛṣṇa spoke to Narada who was standing silently in great astonishment.

Text 23

*tatrāpy acaṣṭa govindam,
lālayantam sutān śiśūn,*

*tato 'nyasmin gr̥he 'paśyan,
majjanāya kṛtodyamam*

This time Nāradaḥ saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa was engaged as an affectionate father petting His small children. From there he entered another palace and saw Lord Kṛṣṇa preparing to take His bath.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In all the palaces Nārada visited, Kṛṣṇa worshiped and honored him. This should be understood, though not mentioned in the verses. Narada saw (*acaṣṭa*) Kṛṣṇa playing with His infant sons. Fourteen and a half verses describe what Narada observed. Just as Narada saw numerous manifestations with various moods and activities of Kṛṣṇa's one body, similarly he also saw numerous manifestations of the single bodies of Uddhava and others. Narada, who went at the speed of the mind in a single moment to each of the sixteen thousand palaces, saw Kṛṣṇa performing different activities at different times. In other words, within a single moment the time span of sixty *ghaṭikās* (comprising an entire day) entered, manifesting in the various locations the various phases of dawn and so on and the corresponding activities of these times. Thus Narada understood that all the times of the whole day and all the different activities were occurring simultaneously. The phrase *majjanāya kṛtodyamam* (preparing to bathe) indicates it was early morning or dawn in that palace.

Text 24

*juhvantam ca vitānāgnīn,
yajantam pañcabhir makhaiḥ,
bhojayantam dvijān kvāpi,
bhujjānam avaśeṣitam*

In one place the Lord was offering oblations into the sacrificial fires; in another, worshiping through the five mahā-yajñas; in another, feeding brāhmaṇas; and in yet another, eating the remnants of food left by brāhmaṇas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: All the different times of the day were occurring simultaneously in Kṛṣṇa’s palaces. Thus in one palace Narada saw Kṛṣṇa offering oblations into the sacrificial fires (*vitāna-agnīn*), a morning ritual. In another palace Kṛṣṇa was performing the five *mahā-yajñas*, or great sacrifices compulsory for a householder: reciting the *Vedas*; offering oblations into the sacrificial fire; waiting on guests; making offerings to the forefathers; and offering a share of one’s food to living entities in general. In that palace it was noon. In another palace Narada saw Kṛṣṇa feeding the *brāhmaṇas* and accepting their remnants—an afternoon activity.

Text 25

*kvāpi sandhyām upāsīnam,
japantaṁ brahma vāg-yatam,
ekatra cāsi-carmābhyām,
carantam asi-vartmasu*

Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was observing the rituals for worship at sunset by refraining from speech and quietly chanting the Gāyatrī mantra, and elsewhere He was moving about with sword and shield in the areas set aside for sword practice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Elsewhere, Kṛṣṇa was performing sunset rites (*sandhyām upāsīnam*). In another palace it was dawn, and Kṛṣṇa was moving about with His sword and shield (*asi-carmābhyām*)

carantam).

Text 26

*aśvair gajai rathaiḥ kvāpi,
vicarantaṁ gadāgrajam,
kvacic chayānaṁ paryanke,
stūyamānaṁ ca vandibhiḥ*

In one place Lord Gadāgraja was riding on horses, elephants and chariots, and in another place He was resting on His bed while bards recited His glories.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Riding on horses and elephants is a noon activity, whereas one lies down during the latter part of night.

Text 27

*mantrayantaṁ ca kasmimścin,
mantribhiś coddhavādibhiḥ,
jala-krīdā-rataṁ kvāpi,
vāramukhyābalāvṛtam*

Somewhere He was consulting with royal ministers like Uddhava, and somewhere else He was enjoying in the water, surrounded by many society girls and other young women.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa met with Uddhava and His counselors around dusk and enjoyed water sports in the afternoon.

Text 28

*ku|acid dvija-mukhyebhyo,
dadataṁ gāḥ sv-alan̄kṛtāḥ,
itihāsa-purāṇāni,
śṛṇvantaṁ maṅgalāni ca
| |*

Somewhere He was giving well-decorated cows to exalted brāhmaṇas, and elsewhere He was listening to the auspicious narration of epic histories and Purāṇas.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Giving cows in charity occurs in the morning. The *Smṛti sastras* say, *itihāsa-purāṇābhyāṁ śaśṭha-saptamakau nayet*, “One should pass the sixth and seventh parts of the day (afternoon and evening) in hearing the histories (*Itihasas*) and the *Puranas*.”

Text 29

*hasantaṁ hāsa-kathayā,
kadācit priyayā gr̥he,
kvāpi dharmāṁ sevamānam,
artha-kāmau ca ku|acit*

Somewhere Lord Kṛṣṇa was found enjoying the company of a particular wife by exchanging joking words with her. Somewhere else He was found engaged, along with His wife, in religious ritualistic functions. Somewhere Kṛṣṇa was found engaged in matters of economic development, and somewhere else He was found enjoying family life according to the regulative principles of

the śāstras.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Joking conversations (*hāsa-kathayā*) take place during the night-time, whereas religious rituals, economic development and family enjoyment (*dharmam artha-kāmau*) occur during both the day and the night.

Text 30

*dhyāyantam ekam āsīnam,
puruṣam prakṛteḥ param,
śuśrūṣantam gurūn kvāpi,
kāmair bhogaiḥ saparyayā*

Somewhere He was sitting alone, meditating on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental to material nature, and somewhere He was rendering menial service to His elders, offering them desirable things and reverential worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The activity of meditation indicates the *brāhma-muhūrta* (*dhyāyantam*), the early morning hours before sunrise.

Text 31

*kurvantam vighrahaṁ kaiścit,
sandhiṁ cānyatra keśavam,
kutrāpi saha rāmeṇa,
cintayantam satām śivam*

In one place He was planning battles in consultation with some

of His advisers, and in another place He was making peace. Somewhere Lord Keśava and Lord Balarāma were together pondering the welfare of the pious.

Text 32

*putrāṅnām duhitṛṅnām ca,
kāle vidhy-upayāpanam,
dārair varais tat-sadṛśaiḥ,
kalpayantaṁ vibhūtibhiḥ*

Nārada saw Lord Kṛṣṇa engaged in getting His sons and daughters married to suitable brides and bridegrooms at the appropriate time, and the marriage ceremonies were being performed with great pomp.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa married His sons and daughters according to religious principles (*vidhy-upayāpanam*) using many opulent materials (*vibhūtibhiḥ*).

Text 33

*prasthāpanopanayanair,
apatyānām mahotsavān,
vīkṣya yogeśvareśasya,
yeṣāṁ lokā visismire*

Nārada observed how Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all yoga masters, arranged to send away His daughters and sons-in-law, and also to

receive them home again, at the time of great holiday celebrations. All the citizens were astonished to see these celebrations.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At the end of yearly festivals Kṛṣṇa sent His daughters and their husbands from His home back to their own houses. At the beginning of the festivals He brought them from their houses. Seeing this, people were astonished (*visismire*).

Text 34

*yajantaṁ sakalān devān,
kvāpi kratubhir ūrjitaiḥ,
pūrtayantaṁ kvacid dharmam,
kūrpārāma-maṭhādibhiḥ*

Somewhere He was worshiping all the demigods with elaborate sacrifices, and elsewhere He was fulfilling His religious obligations by doing public welfare work, such as the construction of wells, public parks and monasteries.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sometimes Kṛṣṇa would worship the demigods (*yajantaṁ devān*) during Caitra (spring), Caturmasya and other auspicious months or holy days. At other times such as the day commemorating the beginning of a *yuga*, such as *akṣaya-tṛtīya* which marks the start of Treta-yuga, Kṛṣṇa would perform works of public piety such as digging wells for drinking water.

Text 35

*carantaṁ mṛgayām kvāpi,
hayam āruhya saindhavam,*

*ghnantam tatra paśūn medhyān,
parītam yadu-puṅgavaiḥ*

In another place He was on a hunting expedition. Mounted on His Sindhī horse and accompanied by the most heroic of the Yadus, He was killing animals meant for offering in sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In another place Kṛṣṇa was mounting a horse born in the Sindh (*saindhavam*) province (North India).

Text 36

*avyakta-lingam prakṛtiṣv,
antaḥ-pura-grhādiṣu,
kvacic carantam yogeśam,
tat-tad-bhāva-bubhutsayā*

Somewhere Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of mystic power, was moving about in disguise among the homes of ministers and other citizens in order to understand what each of them was thinking.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Disguising Himself in some other dress (*avyakta-lingam*), Kṛṣṇa visited the homes of His ministers and His own inner chambers in order to know the mentalities (*tat-tad-bhāva-bubhutsayā*) of the people there. Though Kṛṣṇa is all-knowing (*yogeśam*), being immersed in *prema*, He covered His knowledge potency (*sarvajnatva-sakti*) with His pastimes potency (*līlā-sakti*) in order to act like this.

Text 37

*athovāca hṛṣīkeśam,
nāradaḥ prahasann iva,
yoga-māyodayaṁ vīkṣya,
mānuṣīm īyuso gatim*

Having thus seen this display of the Lord’s Yogamāyā, Nārada mildly laughed and then addressed Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, who was adopting the behavior of a human being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nārada fully understood Kṛṣṇa’s omniscience, so when he saw Kṛṣṇa trying to detect the mood of His ministers by moving about in disguise, he could not help laughing (*prahasann*). But remembering Kṛṣṇa’s majesty (*aiśvarya*), he somewhat restrained his laughter. The phrase “seeing the rise of Kṛṣṇa’s *yogamaya*” (*yoga-māyodayaṁ vīkṣya*) as Kṛṣṇa was absorbed in His own human-like pastimes (*mānuṣīm īyuso gatim*) indicates Narada’s astonishment.

Text 38

*vidāma yoga-māyās te,
durdarśā api māyinām,
yogeśvarātman nirbhātā,
bhavat-pāda-niṣevayā*

[Nārada said:] Now we understand Your mystic potencies, which are difficult to comprehend, even for great mystics, O Supreme Soul, master of all mystic power. Only by serving Your feet have I been able to perceive Your powers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Naradaji said, “O master of mystic power (*yogeśvara*)! By serving Your lotus feet may we know (*vidama:vedama*) the mystic potencies (*yoga-māyās*) present within You?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “But Narada, why should such all-knowing persons as you have any lack of knowledge?”

Narada: “Even mystic *yogīs* like Siva and Brahma cannot see (*durdarśā*) Your mystic powers, what then to speak of understanding them? And what to speak of their acting within them.”

Text 39

*anujānīhi mām deva,
lokāms te yaśasāplutān,
paryaṭāmi tavodgāyan,
līlā bhuvana-pāvanīh*

O Lord, please give me Your leave. I will wander about the worlds, which are flooded with Your fame, loudly singing about Your pastimes, which purify the universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Narada said, “Seeing Your astonishing pastimes, I cannot maintain my steadiness. Therefore permit me to leave so I can tell this to my dear friends in various places.”

Text 40

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
brahman dhannasya vaktāham,
kartā tad-anumoditā,
tac chikṣayan lokam imam,*

āsthitaḥ putra mā khidaḥ

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: O brāhmaṇa, I am the speaker of religion, its performer and sanctioner. I observe religious principles to teach them to the world, My child, so do not be disturbed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “Although I am Your devoted servant, I have experienced great sorrow in Your presence because with Your lotus hands You have washed my unfortunate feet, hardened by traveling.”

In response, Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse: “I observe religious principles to instruct the world. After all, I am a householder *ksatriya* and you are a *brahmana*. If I did not worship you when you came to My house, then how can the *dharma* preached by Me through proper conduct be established? As I state in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janah*: ‘Whatever a great person does, ordinary people follow.’

“Thus I bathed your feet today to propagate the principles of religion. Before I began My pastimes of directly teaching religious principles, you came and offered prayers to Me after I had killed the Keśī demon. At that time, I simply listened to your elaborate glorification but did nothing to honor you. Just remember this and consider.”

Narada replied, “That may be, but in washing my feet, I have committed an offense in letting You drink the water that touched my feet.”

Kṛṣṇa pacified Narada with affectionate words: “O son! (*putra*). Do not think that you have committed an offense by allowing Me to bathe your feet today and accept the water as holy remnants. Just as a son does not offend his father by touching him with his foot while sitting on the father’s lap, so you should understand that in the same way you have not offended Me.”

Text 41

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ācarantaṁ sad-dharmān,
pāvanān gṛha-medhinām,
tam eva sarva-geheṣu,
santam ekaṁ dadarśa ha*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus in every palace Nārada saw the Lord in His same personal form, executing the transcendental principles of religion that purify those engaged in household affairs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse summarizes the ideas which were previously discussed. As stated in Text 2 of this chapter, all of Kṛṣṇa's activities in the many palaces were performed by Kṛṣṇa's single spiritual form (*ekena vapuṣā*), which manifested in each of the sixteen thousand palaces. This vision was revealed to Nārada because of his desire to see it and Kṛṣṇa's desire to show it to him. The other residents of Dvārakā could see Kṛṣṇa only in the particular part of the city they themselves occupied, and not anywhere else, even if they would sometimes go to another precinct on some business. Thus the Lord gave a special view of His pastimes to His beloved devotee Nārada Muni.

Text 42

*kṛṣṇasyānanta-vīryasya,
yoga-māyā-mahodayam,
muhur dṛṣṭvā ṛṣir abhūd,
vismito jāta-kautukaḥ*

Having repeatedly seen the vast mystic display of Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose power is unlimited, the sage was amazed and filled with wonder.

Text 43

*ity artha-kāma-dharmeṣu,
kṛṣṇena śraddhitātmanā,
samyak sabhājitaḥ prītas,
tam evānusmaran yayau*

Lord Kṛṣṇa greatly honored Nārada, faithfully presenting him with gifts related to economic prosperity, sense gratification and religious duties. Thus fully satisfied, the sage departed, constantly remembering the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada was worshiped with devotion by Kṛṣṇa, whose mind was filled with faith (*śraddhitātmanā*) in economic development, sense gratification and religious duties (*artha-kāma-dharmeṣu*).

Text 44

*evam manuṣya-padavīm anuvartamāno,
nārāyaṇo 'khila-bhavāya grhīta-śaktiḥ,
reme 'ṅga ṣoḍaśa-sahasra-varāṅganānām,
sa-vrīḍa-sauhṛda-nirīkṣaṇa-hāsa-juṣṭaḥ*

In this way Lord Nārāyaṇa imitated the ways of ordinary humans,

manifesting His divine potencies for the benefit of all beings. Thus He enjoyed, dear King, in the company of His sixteen thousand exalted consorts, who served the Lord with their shy, affectionate glances and laughter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Someone may object, “Why should Kṛṣṇa have any faith in economic development and sense gratification (*artha* and *kama*)? And why does Kṛṣṇa imitate the ways of human beings?” This verse answers these questions.

“Kṛṣṇa’s human-like activities are meant for the welfare of all people (*akhila-bhavāya*). By remembering His pastimes people become free from the cycle of material existence.”

“But why should Kṛṣṇa care to stop their material existence?”

“Because Kṛṣṇa is endowed with mercy (*krpa-śaktiḥ:grhīta-śaktiḥ*). But this is not the only purpose for Kṛṣṇa’s permanently engaging in human activities. Kṛṣṇa engages in blissful pastimes with His beloved human-like consorts who comprise His internal energy and are superior even to Lakṣmi, the goddess of fortune. Or else Kṛṣṇa performs these activities to eternally enjoy (*reme*) with His unalloyed devotees who worship His human form, the original source of all the Viṣnu forms in Vaikuntha.”

Text 45

*yānīha viśva-vilayodbhava-vṛtti-hetuḥ,
karmāṇy ananya-viṣayāṇi harīś cakāra,
yas tv aṅga gāyati śṛṇoty anumodate vā,
bhaktir bhaved bhagavati hy apavarga-mārge*

Lord Hari is the ultimate cause of universal creation, maintenance and destruction. My dear King, anyone who chants about, hears about or simply appreciates the extraordinary activities He performed in this world, which are impossible to imitate, will surely

develop devotion for the Supreme Lord, the bestower of liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa's human-like pastimes are not meant only to liberate mankind from the material world, but also to bestow *prema-bhakti* upon one and all. Kṛṣṇa causes the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. The term *ananya-viṣayāṇi* may indicate that Kṛṣṇa performed activities in Dvārakā that were unusual even for His plenary expansions, to say nothing of others. Or the term can be understood to indicate that Kṛṣṇa performed these activities for the sake of His pure, exclusive devotees. In any case, one who recites or hears Kṛṣṇa's pastimes will attain *prema-bhakti* for the Lord. Devotion for Kṛṣṇa is obtainable for those on the path of liberation (*apavarga:moksa-mārge*). Here liberation means devotional service. Actually liberation from material existence occurs even at the beginning of devotional practice.

Chapter Seventy: Lord Kṛṣṇa’s Daily Activities

Text 1

*śrī-śuka,
uvāca athośasy upavṛttāyām,
kukkuṭān kūjato ’śapan,
grhīta-kaṅṭhyaḥ patibhir,
mādhavyo virahāturāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As dawn approached, the wives of Lord Mādhava, each embraced around the neck by her husband, cursed the crowing roosters. The ladies were disturbed that now they would be separated from Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes Kṛṣṇa’s early morning activities as well as consideration of the business presented to Him in the Sudharma assembly by Narada and a messenger. In the previous chapter it was stated that Kṛṣṇa faithfully observed the principles of economic development, religion and sense gratification. This verse explains how Kṛṣṇa carried out the principles of religion. As sunrise approached (*upavṛttāyām*) the roosters began crowing. Kṛṣṇa’s wives (*madhavyah*) such as Rukmini, who were embraced by their husbands, cursed the roosters: “O roosters! For announcing the arrival of the sun, which brings separation from our beloved Kṛṣṇa, you should die immediately!” The word *patibhiḥ* is plural because Kṛṣṇa was appearing in multiple forms.

Text 2

*vayāmsy aroruvan kṛṣṇam,
bodhayantīva vandinaḥ,
gāyatsv aliṣv anidrāṇi,
mandāra-vana-vāyubhiḥ*

The bees' buzzing, caused by the fragrant breeze from the parijāta garden, roused the birds from sleep. And when the birds began to sing loudly, they woke Lord Kṛṣṇa like court poets reciting His glories.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Awakened by the fragrant breezes, the bees started singing, which in turn roused the birds. Kṛṣṇa woke up from hearing the sweet chirping of these birds, which sounded like bards.

Text 3

*muhūrtam taṁ tu vaidarbhī,
nāmṛṣyad ati-śobhanam,
parirambhaṇa-viśleṣāt,
priya-bāhv-antaram gatā*

Lying in her beloved's arms, Queen Vaidarbhī did not like this most auspicious hour, for it meant she would lose His embrace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Because of losing the embrace of her husband, Rukmini (Vaidarbhī) did not consider the auspicious *brahma-muhurta* period to be auspicious. Rukmini shows the attitude of all the queens.

Texts 4–5

*brāhme muhūrta utthāya,
vāry upasprśya mādhaveḥ,
dadhyau prasanna-karaṇa,
ātmānaṁ tamasaḥ param,
ekam svayam-jyotir ananyam avyayam,
sva-saṁsthayā nitya-nirasta-kalmaṣam,
brahmākhyam asyodbhava-nāśa-hetubhiḥ,
sva-śaktibhir lakṣita-bhāva-nirvṛtim*

Lord Mādhava would rise during the brahma-muhūrta period and touch water. With a clear mind He would then meditate upon Himself, the single, self-luminous, unequaled and infallible Supreme Truth, known as Brahman, who by His very nature ever dispels all contamination, and who through His personal energies, which cause the creation and destruction of this universe, manifests His own pure and blissful existence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as some other person meditates during the *brahma-muhurta* period, Kṛṣṇa also meditated on Himself (*ātmānam:svam*), as the one Supreme Lord who reveals Himself (*svayam-jyotir*) beyond the darkness of material nature (*tamasah param*). But, it may be objected that others such as Sankarsana are also the Lord. Yes, but there is no other (*ananyam*) *avatara* compared to Kṛṣṇa. Moreover, since Kṛṣṇa’s plenary *avataras* such as Sankarsana and others are each individually and eternally present within Him, Kṛṣṇa is perfectly complete (*avyayam:paripūrṇam*). The reason, however, for Kṛṣṇa’s appearance is His mercy. By making Himself directly visible to all persons, Kṛṣṇa removes their ignorance. The impersonal Brahman (*brahmākhyam*) also comes from Kṛṣṇa. This is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (8.24.38):

*madīyam mahimānam ca, param brahmeti śabditam vetsyasy
anugr̥hītam me, sampraśnair vivṛtam hṛdi*

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me. Because of your inquiries everything about My glories, which are known as *param brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.” And also the *Bhagavad-gita* (14.27) says: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, “I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman.” *Brahmākhyam* can also mean *brahmākhyam brahmanāmakam*, “He who is called Brahman” or *brahmeti paramātmēti, bhagavān iti śabdyate*, “The Absolute Truth is known as Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan.” (SB 1.2.11)

Kṛṣṇa’s superexcellence is described in this verse. By His energies Kṛṣṇa bestows knowledge and devotion, and He creates and destroys the universe. *Lakṣita-bhāva-nirvṛtim* means that Kṛṣṇa gives pleasure to the created beings through His various energies. Specifically, for the devotees, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness by filling them with ecstatic love, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. For the followers of *dharma*, who carefully observe the religious principles, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness. To the sinful, Kṛṣṇa gives happiness by killing them and granting liberation.

Text 6

*athāpluto ’mbhasy amale yathā-vidhi,
kriyā-kalāpaṁ paridhāya vāsasī,
cakāra sandhyopagamādi sattamo,
hutānalo brahma jajāpa vāg-yataḥ*

That most saintly of personalities would then bathe in sanctified water, dress Himself in lower and upper garments and perform the entire sequence of prescribed rituals, beginning with worship at dawn. After offering oblations into the sacred fire, Lord Kṛṣṇa would silently chant the Gāyatrī mantra.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa executed an entire sequence of rituals (*kriyā-kalāpaṁ*). After expertly (*sattama*) performing all the *sandhya* rites, Kṛṣṇa silently chanted the Brahma *gayatri*.

Texts 7–9

*upasthāyārkam udyantaṁ,
tarpayitvātmanaḥ kalāḥ,
devān ṛṣīn pitṛn vṛddhān,
viprān abhyarcya cātmavān,
dhenūnām rukma-śṛṅgīnām,
sādhvīnām mauktika-srajām,
payasvinīnām gr̥ṣṭīnām,
sa-vatsānām su-vāsasām,
dadau rūpya-khurāgrāṇām,
kṣaumājīna-tilaiḥ saha,
alaṅkṛtebhyo viprebhyo,
badvaṁ badvaṁ dine dine*

Each day the Lord worshiped the rising sun and propitiated the demigods, sages and forefathers, who are all His expansions. The self-possessed Lord would then carefully worship His elders and the brāhmaṇas. To those well-attired brāhmaṇas He would offer herds of tame and peaceful cows with gold-plated horns and pearl necklaces. These cows were also dressed in fine cloth, and the fronts of their hooves were plated with silver. Providers of abundant milk, they had each given birth only once and were accompanied by their calves. Daily the Lord gave many groups of 13,084 cows to the learned brāhmaṇas, together with linen, deerskins and sesame seeds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa executed His daily duties with great self-control (*atmavan*). Everyday (*dine dine*) Kṛṣṇa donated one hundred and seven groups (*badvam badvam*) of 13,084 cows [totaling 1,400,000] with first born calves (*gr̥ṣṭīnām*) to the *brahmanas*!

Text 10

*go-vipra-devatā-vṛddha,
gurūn bhūtāni sarvaśaḥ,
namaskṛtyātma-sambhūtīr,
maṅgalāni samaspr̥śat*

Lord Kṛṣṇa would offer obeisances to the cows, brāhmaṇas and demigods, His elders and spiritual masters, and all living beings—all of whom are expansions of His supreme personality. Then He would touch auspicious things.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: *Ātma-sambhūtīr* means “His own opulences”, and *maṅgalāni* “auspicious things” refers to such objects as a brown cow.

Text 11

*ātmānaṁ bhūṣayām āsa,
nara-loka-vibhūṣaṇam vāsobhir bhūṣaṇaiḥ svīyair,
divya-srag-anulepanaiḥ*

He would decorate His body, the very ornament of human society, with His own special clothes and jewelry and with divine flower garlands and ointments.

Text 12

*avekṣyājyaṁ tathādarśaṁ,
go-vṛṣa-dvija-devatāḥ,
kāmaṁś ca sarva-varṇānām,
paurāntaḥ-pura-cāriṇām,
pradāpya prakṛtīḥ kāmaiḥ,
pratoṣya pratyanandata*

He would then look at ghee, a mirror, the cows and bulls, the brāhmaṇas and the demigods and see to it that the members of all the social classes living in the palace and throughout the city were satisfied with gifts. After this He would greet His ministers, gratifying them by fulfilling all their desires.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa greeted His ministers (*prakṛtīḥ*).

Text 13

*samvibhajyāgrato viprān,
srak-tāmbūlānulepanaiḥ,
suhṛdaḥ prakṛtīr dārān,
upāyuṅkta tataḥ svayam*

After first distributing flower garlands, pān and sandalwood paste to the brāhmaṇas, He would give these gifts to His friends, ministers and wives, and finally He would partake of them Himself.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After distributing these items to the *brahmanas* and others, Kṛṣṇa accepted them (*upāyunkta*) for His own pleasure.

Text 14

*tāvat sūta upānīya,
syandanam paramādbhutam,
sugrīvādyair hayair yuktaṁ,
praṇamyāvasthito 'grataḥ*

By then the Lord's driver would have brought His supremely wonderful chariot, yoked with Sugrīva and His other horses. His charioteer would bow down to the Lord and then stand before Him.

Text 15

*grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇī,
sārathes taṁ athāruhat,
sātyaky-uddhava-samyuktaḥ,
pūrvādrim iva bhāskaraḥ*

Holding on to His charioteer's hands, Lord Kṛṣṇa would mount the chariot, together with Sātyaki and Uddhava, just like the sun rising over the easternmost mountain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Daruka (Kṛṣṇa's driver) stood beside the chariot with joined palms. Kṛṣṇa held his joined hands with His right hand and mounted the chariot.

Text 16

*īkṣito 'ntaḥ-pura-strīṇām,
sa-vrīḍa-prema-vīkṣitaiḥ,
kṛcchrād visrṣṭo niragāj,
jāta-hāso haran manaḥ*

The palace women would look upon Lord Kṛṣṇa with shy, loving glances, and thus He would get free from them only with difficulty. He would then set off, His smiling face captivating their minds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa was accompanied by Satyaki, Uddhava and others, the queens glanced at Him with shy loving glances hinting at their agitation. Their glances implied, “How can we tolerate the torment of being separated from You?” Captivated by their affection, Kṛṣṇa smiled, indicating “My dear restless ladies, why are you so overwhelmed by this little bit of separation? I am coming back later today to enjoy with you.” Enchanting their minds with His sweet smile, Kṛṣṇa somehow freed Himself from the bondage of their loving glances with great difficulty.”

Text 17

*sudharmākhyām sabhām sarvair,
vṛṣṇibhiḥ parivāritaḥ,
prāviśad yan-niviṣṭānām,
na santy aṅga śaḍ ūrmayaḥ*

The Lord, attended by all the Vṛṣṇis, would enter the Sudharmā

assembly hall, which protects those who enter it from the six waves of material life, dear King.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: When Kṛṣṇa would exit separately from each of His many palaces, each individual form would be visible to the persons present on those particular palace grounds and to the neighboring residents, but not to others. Coming along the main road up to the entrance of the Sudharma assembly hall, all the forms of Kṛṣṇa would merge into a single form, and thus He would enter the hall surrounded (*parivāritaḥ*) by the Vrsnis.

Text 18

*tatropavistaḥ paramāsane vibhur,
babhau sva-bhāsā kakubho 'vabhāsayan,
vṛto nṛ-simhair yadubhir yadūttamo,
yathoḍu-rājo divi tārakā-gaṇaiḥ*

As the almighty Supreme Lord would seat Himself upon His exalted throne there in the assembly hall, He shone with His unique effulgence, illuminating all the quarters of space. Surrounded by the Yadus, lions among men, that best of the Yadus appeared like the moon amidst many stars.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa was attended by the Yadus, who were lions among men (*nṛ-simhair*).

Text 19

*tatropamantriṇo rājan,
nānā-hāsya-rasair vibhum,*

*upatasthur naṭācāryā,
nartakyas tāṇḍavaiḥ pṛthak*

And there, O King, jesters would entertain the Lord by displaying various comic moods, expert entertainers would perform for Him, and female dancers would dance energetically.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Separate groups of jesters (*upamantriṇaḥ*), dancers and magicians (*naṭācāryāḥ*) performed one after the other for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure in the assembly of great kings.

Text 20

*mṛdaṅga-vīṇā-muraja,
veṇu-tāla-dara-svanaiḥ,
nanṛtur jagus tuṣṭuvuś ca,
sūta-māgadha-vandinaḥ*

These performers would dance and sing to the sounds of mṛdaṅgas, vīṇās, murajas, flutes, cymbals and conchshells, while professional poets, chroniclers and panegyrists would recite the Lord's glories.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some groups danced and others sang. The professional poets (*sūtas*) offered praises.

Text 21

*tatrāhur brāhmaṇāḥ kecid,
āsīnā brahma-vādinaḥ,
pūrveṣām puṇya-yaśasām,*

rājñām cākathayan kathāḥ

Some brāhmaṇas sitting in that assembly hall would fluently chant Vedic mantras, while others recounted stories of past kings of pious renown.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmanas* recited (*brāhmaṇāḥ āhur*) Vedic *mantras* and those expert at speaking (*vādinah*) related stories of pious kings.

Text 22

*tatraikaḥ puruṣo rājann,
āgato 'pūrva-darśanaḥ,
vijñāpito bhagavate,
pratīhāraiḥ praveśitaḥ*

Once a certain person arrived in the assembly, O King, who had never been seen there before. The doorkeepers announced him to the Lord and then escorted him inside.

Text 23

*sa namaskṛtya kṛṣṇāya,
pareśāya kṛtāñjaliḥ,
rājñām āvedayad duḥkham,
jarāsandha-nirodha-jam*

That person bowed down to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and with joined palms he described to the Lord how a number of kings were suffering because Jarāsandha had imprisoned them.

Text 24

*ye ca dig-vijaye tasya,
sannatiṁ na yayur nrpāḥ,
prasahya ruddhās tenāsann,
ayute dve girivraje*

Twenty thousand kings who had refused to submit absolutely to Jarāsandha during his world conquest had been forcibly imprisoned by him in the fortress named Girivraja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse says that Jarasandha imprisoned twenty-thousand kings in the Girivraja fort because they did not submit (*sannatim*) to him by paying taxes. The *Mahabharata* explains that Jarāsandha wanted to please Mahā-bhairava by offering him 100,000 kings in a human sacrifice.

Text 25

*rājāna ūcuḥ kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇāprameyātman,
prapanna-bhaya-bhañjana,
vayaṁ tvāṁ śaraṇaṁ yāmo,
bhava-bhītāḥ pṛthag-dhiyaḥ*

The kings said [as related through their messenger]: O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, O immeasurable Soul, destroyer of fear for those surrendered to You ! Despite our separatist attitude, we have come to You for shelter out of fear of material existence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Six verses (25-30) explain their request to Kṛṣṇa. First the kings took shelter, uttering “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” twice out of respect. The word *aprameya-ātman* (immeasurable Soul) implies, “Though we do not understand Your true form, we know You are the protector of those who surrender (*prapanna*) unto You and therefore we surrender. Due to having a separate interest (*prthag-dhiyaḥ*) from You, however, we desired deliverance from our misery instead of praying for devotion to You.”

Text 26

*loko vikarma-nirataḥ kuśale pramattaḥ,
karmaṇy ayam tvad-udite bhavad-arcane sve,
yas tāvad asya balavān iha jīvitāśāṁ,
sadyaś chinatty animiṣāya namo 'stu tasmai*

People in this world are always engaged in sinful activities and are thus bewildered about their real duty, which is to worship You according to Your commandments. This activity would truly bring them good fortune. Let us offer our obeisances unto the all-powerful Lord, who appears as time and suddenly cuts down one's stubborn hope for a long life in this world.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the kings offer respects while describing their fear of material existence. The kings said, “Persons like us are inattentive to activities for our own benefit (*kuśale*). Does this mean pious works? No, it means those actions suggested

by You (*tvad-udite*). Does it mean the activities of mind and sense control, and the major and minor regulative principles which lead to the advancement of *jñāna-yoga*? No, we are inattentive to Your worship (*bhavad-arcane:tvad-bhajane*), which is the real treasure (*sve*) of everyone. Such worship relieves one of material miseries and bestows the transcendental pleasure of Your love.

“Instead we are engaged in unlawful acts (*vikarma*), which produce material happiness from wives and children. Moreover such unfortunate souls as us never achieve any real happiness, because You appear as invincible time (*animiṣāya*) to suddenly shatter (*chinatty*) our hopes for long life. It is proper that we, who are not Your devotees, offer respects to You in Your form as time.”

Text 27

*loke bhavāñ jagad-inaḥ kalayāvatīrṇaḥ,
sad-rakṣaṇāya khala-nigrahaṇāya cānyaḥ,
kaścit tvadīyam atiyāti nideśam īśa,
kiṁ vā janaḥ sva-kṛtam rcchati tan na vidmaḥ*

You are the predominating Lord of the universe and have descended into this world with Your personal power to protect the saintly and suppress the wicked. We cannot understand, O Lord, how anyone can transgress Your law and still continue to enjoy the fruits of his work.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings said, “It is greatly astonishing to us why someone like Jarasandha, who hates You and Your devotees, is not destroyed. O Lord of the universe (*jagad-inaḥ*)! You have descended along with Your elder brother Balarama (*kalayā*) to protect the pious and destroy the evil.” According to the *Nānārtha-kośa* dictionary, the word *kalā* can mean either time, the act of impelling, or

together with Baladeva.

“However, some wicked persons like Jarasandha surpass Your law, persecute the devotees and protect the wicked. Though You have appeared to destroy evil men, are they happy and prosperous due to their past pious acts? And though You come to protect Your devotees, are they suffering now due to their past misdeeds? We cannot understand this. It should not be that the mundane law of *karma* should be more powerful than You.”

Text 28

*svapnāyitaṁ nṛpa-sukhaṁ para-tantram īśa,
śaśvad-bhayena mṛtakena dhuraṁ vahāmaḥ,
hitvā tad ātmani sukhaṁ tvad-anīha-labhyaṁ,
kliśyāmahe 'ti-kṛpaṇās tava māyayeha*

O Lord, with this corpse-like body, always full of fear, we bear the burden of the relative happiness of kings, which is just like a dream. Thus we have rejected the real happiness of the soul, which comes by rendering selfless service to You. Being so very wretched, we simply suffer in this life under the spell of Your illusory energy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked the kings, “Then are you My devotees or My enemies?”

The kings replied, “We are neither, but rather conditioned souls engulfed in the material world who have now surrendered to You.” That is the import of this verse.

The kings said, “The happiness which we derive from thinking ourselves kings (*nṛpa-sukhaṁ*) is dependent on our ministers, friends and troops. Such pleasure is temporary like a dream (*svapnāyitaṁ*). Actually, we are carrying a great burden (*dhuram*) from our intense endeavors at alliance and war with our corpse-like bodies that are

filled with constant fear. Alas! How miserable we are because of not becoming free from material desires by taking shelter of You!
 “We gave up that happiness which is forever praised by all saintly persons, and not condemned by them like our kingly happiness. Spiritual happiness is innate within the self and not dependent on others. Such transcendental joy comes from You alone, not from gross material objects. It is obtained (*labhyam*) by Your selfless devotees (*anīha:akiñcana-bhaktaiḥ*), but not by those who are full of lust. Abandoning that happiness, we wretched persons experience intense suffering (*kliśyāmahe*).”

Text 29

*tan no bhavān praṇata-śoka-harāṅghri-yugmo,
 baddhān viyuñkṣva magadhāhvaya-karma-pāśāt,
 yo bhū-bhujo 'yuta-mataṅgaja-vīryam eko,
 bibhrad rurodha bhavane mṛga-rād ivāvīḥ*

Therefore, since Your feet relieve the sorrow of those who surrender to them, please release us prisoners from the shackles of karma, manifest as the King of Magadha. Wielding alone the prowess of ten thousand maddened elephants, he has locked us up in his house just as a lion captures sheep.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the kings pray that Kṛṣṇa will release them from the bondage of *karma* created by His *maya*. The kings said, “Please release (*viyuñkṣva:vimocaya*) us from the bondage of *karma* in the form of Jarasandha.”

If Kṛṣṇa counters, “But you can get out of this bondage of Jarasandha by yourselves”, the kings reply, “Having the power of ten thousand maddened elephants, Jarasandha alone has imprisoned all of us kings, as a lion catches sheep.”

Text 30

*yo vai tvayā dvi-nava-kṛtva udātta-cakra,
bhagno mṛdhe khalu bhavantam ananta-vīryam,
jītvā nṛ-loka-nirataṁ sakṛd ūḍha-darpo,
yuṣmat-prajā rujati no 'jīta tad vidhehi*

O wielder of the disc! Your strength is unlimited, and thus seventeen times You crushed Jarāsandha in battle. But then, absorbed in human affairs, You allowed him to defeat You once. Now he is so filled with pride that he dares to torment us, Your subjects. O unconquerable one, please rectify this situation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Your enemy, Jarasandha, knowing that we have surrendered to You, now persecutes us even more day by day.” That is expressed in this verse.

The kings said, “O you who hold the Sudarsana *cakra* high! In the eighteen battles Jarasandha fought with You, he was defeated seventeen times. Only once he defeated You, who were absorbed in playing within the world of human beings (*nṛ-loka-nirataṁ*). Then he swelled with pride and began persecuting us who are Your subjects. Therefore please do the needful in this matter.”

Text 31

*dūta uvāca,
iti māgadha-saṁruddhā,
bhavad-darśana-kaṅkṣiṇaḥ,
prapannāḥ pāda-mūlaṁ te,
dīnānām śaṁ vidhīyatām*

The messenger continued: This is the message of the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha, who all hanker for Your audience, having surrendered to Your feet. Please bestow good fortune on these poor souls.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The messenger speaks this verse.

Text 32

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
rāja-dūte bruvatv evaṃ,
devarṣiḥ parama-dyutiḥ,
bibhrat piṅga-jaṭā-bhāraṃ,
prādurāsīd yathā raviḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When the kings' messenger had thus spoken, the sage of the demigods, Nārada, suddenly appeared. Bearing a mass of golden matted locks on his head, the supremely effulgent sage entered like the brilliant sun.

Text 33

*taṃ drṣtvā bhagavān kṛṣṇaḥ,
sarva-lokeśvareśvaraḥ,
vavanda utthitaḥ śīrṣṇā,
sa-sabhyaḥ sānugo mudā*

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable master of even planetary rulers like Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva, yet as soon as He saw that Nārada Muni had arrived, He joyfully stood up along with His ministers and secretaries to receive the great sage and offer His respectful obeisances by bowing His head.

Text 34

*sabhājayitvā vidhi-vat,
kṛtāsana-parigraham,
babhāṣe sunṛtair vākyaibh,
śraddhayā tarpayan munim*

After Nārada had accepted the seat offered to him, Lord Kṛṣṇa honored the sage according to scriptural injunctions and, gratifying him with His reverence, spoke the following truthful and pleasing words.

Text 35

*api svid adya lokānām,
trayāṇām akuto-bhayam,
nanu bhūyān bhagavato,
lokān paryaṭato guṇaḥ*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] It is certain that today the three worlds have attained freedom from all fear, for that is the influence of such a great personality as you, who travel at will throughout all the

worlds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Since it is impossible for you to suffer any misfortune, it would be improper to ask about your well-being. Therefore, I will ask you if the three worlds are now free from fear.”

“But,” Narada might object, “how would I know this?”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Your great quality as a powerful personality (*bhagavataḥ*) is that you wander everywhere. Thus from you one can obtain knowledge of the all the planets. For that reason I am inquiring from you.”

Text 36

*na hi te 'viditam kiñcil,
lokeṣv īśvara-kartṛṣu,
atha pṛcchāmahe yuṣmān,
pāṇḍavānām cikīrṣitam*

There is nothing unknown to you within God’s creation. Therefore please tell Us what the Pāṇḍavas intend to do.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Nothing is unknown to you in all the worlds created by the Lord. That being so, I asked you what the Pandavas desire to do, since you know how Jarasandha can be killed by Bhima.”

Text 37

*śrī-nārada uvāca,
dṛṣṭā māyā te bahuśo duratyayā,*

*māyā vibho viśva-sṛjaś ca māyinaḥ,
bhūteṣu bhūmaṁś carataḥ sva-śaktibhir,
vahner iva cchanna-ruco na me 'dbhutam*

Śrī Nārada said: I have seen many times the insurmountable power of Your Māyā, O almighty one, by which You bewilder even the creator of the universe, Brahmā. O all-encompassing Lord, it does not surprise me that You disguise Yourself by Your own energies while moving among the created beings, as a fire covers its own light with smoke.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Naradaji said, “By Your own *maya* You bewilder the three worlds. Therefore it is astonishing that You are asking about the fearlessness of the people there. But for one playing the role of an ordinary human being such pastimes of Yours are not amazing.” This is the idea expressed in this verse.

Narada said, “I have seen many times Your insurmountable *maya* by which You bewilder (*māyinaḥ*) even Brahma (*viśva-sṛjaś*). Furthermore, O all-pervading one, You are present within all created beings as the indwelling controller by Your potencies of *māyā* and Your form as Paramātmā. I have come this time out of eagerness to see You covering up Your omniscience in Your human-like pastimes. Therefore it is not surprising for me that You ask such a question.”

Text 38

*tavehitam ko 'rhati sādhu veditum,
sva-māyayedam sṛjato niyacchataḥ,
yad vidyamānātmatayāvabhāsate,
tasmai namas te sva-vilakṣaṇātmane*

Who can properly understand Your purpose? With Your material energy You expand and also withdraw this creation, which thus appears to have substantial existence. Obeisances to You, whose transcendental position is inconceivable.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Narada said, “Moreover, who can understand the intention (*ihitam*) of You who sometimes create and sometimes destroy the universe, which gets its life from You residing within it as the Paramātmā? Therefore I offer my respects to You whose unique nature and characteristics (*sva-vilakṣaṇātmāne*) are completely inconceivable.”

Text 39

*jīvasya yaḥ saṁsarato vimokṣaṇam,
na jānato 'nārtha-vahāc charīrataḥ,
līlāvatāraih sva-yaśaḥ pradīpakam,
prājvālayat tvā tam aham prapadye*

The living being caught in the cycle of birth and death does not know how he can be delivered from the material body, which brings him so much trouble. But You, the Supreme Lord, descend to this world in various personal forms, and by performing Your pastimes You illumine the soul’s path with the blazing torch of Your fame. Therefore I surrender unto You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Narada said, “Furthermore, if You say that it is proper to ask me about the fearlessness of the universe then I reply as follows. You kindle the flame of Your fame (*sva-yaśaḥ pradīpakam*), and reveal Your true nature by appearing in various pastime incarnations to benefit the conditioned souls (*jīvasya*) who do not know how to become liberated from the bondage of the material

body. Therefore I surrender unto You (*tva*). I see many people in this world bewildered by Your *maya* and afflicted by fear. There are also many people who have become fearless by hearing and chanting about Your glories.” This was hinted at in the above three verses.

Text 40

*athāpy āśrāvaye brahma,
nara-loka-vidambanam,
rājñāḥ paitṛ-śvasreyasya,
bhaktasya ca cikīrṣitam*

Nonetheless, O Supreme Truth playing the part of a human being, I shall tell You what Your devotee Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the son of Your father’s sister, intends to do.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Now Narada answers Kṛṣṇa’s second question about the intentions of the Pandavas in five verses (41-45). Narada said, “O Supreme Truth! O form of Brahman!” (Both *brahma* and *Brahman* readings are correct as they are alternatives of the vocative case). “Even though You know everything, I will tell (*āśrāvaye*), since You are imitating the characteristics of an ordinary human being (*nara-loka-vidambanam*).”

This is an example of the literary ornament called (*vyatireka*), which means comparison of contrasting things. Thus, Narada praises Kṛṣṇa’s expertise by citing the low qualities of the human being.

Text 41

*yakṣyati tvām makhendreṇa,
rājasūyena pāṇḍavaḥ,*

*pārameṣṭhya-kāmo nr̥patis,
tad bhavān anumodatām*

Desiring unrivaled sovereignty, King Yudhiṣṭhira intends to worship You with the greatest fire sacrifice, the Rājasū ya. Please bless his endeavor.

Text 42

*tasmin deva kratu-vare,
bhavantaṁ vai surādayaḥ,
didṛkṣavaḥ sameṣyanti,
rājānaś ca yaśasvinaḥ*

O Lord, exalted demigods and glorious kings, eager to see You, will all come to that best of sacrifices.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “You should not just give Your approval for the ceremony and remain here, but You should go there so they can see You.”

Text 43

*śravaṇāt kīrtanād dhyānāt,
pūyante 'nte-vasāyinaḥ,
tava brahma-mayasyeśa,
kim utekṣābhimarśinaḥ*

O Lord, even outcastes are purified by hearing and chanting Your glories and meditating upon You, the Absolute Truth. What then to speak of those who see and touch You?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa may ask, “But what purpose will they achieve by seeing Me?” Narada Muni answers in this verse: “Even the outcastes become purified by hearing and chanting Your glories, what to speak of seeing You, the concentrated form of the Absolute Truth (*brahma-mayasya:brahma-ghana-mūrteḥ*).”

Text 44

*yasyāmalaṁ divi yaśaḥ prathitaṁ rasāyāṁ,
bhūmau ca te bhuvana-maṅgala dig-vitānam,
mandākinīti divi bhogavatīti cādho,
gaṅgeti ceha caraṇāmbu punāti viśvam*

My dear Lord, You are the symbol of everything auspicious. Your transcendental name and fame is spread like a canopy all over the universe, including the higher, middle and lower planetary systems. The transcendental water that washes Your lotus feet is known in the higher planetary systems as the Mandākinī River, in the lower planetary systems as the Bhogavatī and in this earthly planetary system as the Ganges. This sacred, transcendental water flows throughout the entire universe, purifying wherever it goes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “Why are they so eager to see Me?”

Narada replied, “Your fame, which is spread throughout heaven, earth and the subterreanean region like a canopy decorating the universal directions, purifies the whole universe. In the same way, the water which emanates from Your feet sanctifies the universe. They desire to

see You because their minds have been purified.”
Or else, “You, whose fame and foot water purify the universe, have been invited to Yudhisthira’s sacrifice in order to sanctify everything.”

Text 45

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tatra teṣv ātma-pakṣeṣv a,
grṇatsu vijigīṣayā,
vācaḥ peśaiḥ smayan bhṛtyam,
uddhavaṁ prāha keśavaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When His supporters, the Yādavas, objected to this proposal out of eagerness to defeat Jarāsandha, Lord Keśava turned to His servant Uddhava and, smiling, addressed him with fine words.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The assembled Yadavas, Kṛṣṇa’s allies, were not interested in Narada’s proposal because they were intent on conquering Jarasandha. Kṛṣṇa used skillful words to impress upon Uddhava His own desires in this matter. Kṛṣṇa smiled (*smayan*) because He was about to demonstrate Uddhava’s brilliant ability to give counsel in difficult situations.

Text 46

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
tvam hi naḥ paramaṁ cakṣuḥ,
suhṛn mantrārtha-tattva-vit,
athātra brūhy anuṣṭheyaṁ,
śraddadhmaḥ karavāma tat*

The Personality of Godhead said: You are indeed Our best eye and closest friend, for you know perfectly the relative value of various kinds of counsel. Therefore please tell Us what should be done in this situation. We trust your judgment and shall do as you say.

Text 47

*ity upāmanrito bhartrā,
sarva-jñenāpi mugdha-vat,
nideśam śirasādhāya,
uddhavaḥ pratyabhāṣata*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus requested by his master, who, though omniscient, acted as if perplexed, Uddhava took this order upon his head and replied as follows.

Chapter Seventy-one: Lord Kṛṣṇa Travels to Indraprastha

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity udīritam ākarṇya,
devaṛṣer uddhavo 'bravīt,
sabhyānām matam ājñāya,
kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-matiḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard the statements of Devarṣi Nārada, and understanding the opinions of both the assembly and Lord Kṛṣṇa, the great-minded Uddhava began to speak.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa accepts Uddhava's advice, and goes with His army and His beloved queens to Indraprastha [part of New Delhi], where He delights all the inhabitants. Uddhava heard the statements and spoke after understanding the wishes of Kṛṣṇa, Nārada Muni, the assembly members, and the messenger from the imprisoned kings. Uddhava is very intelligent (*mahā-matiḥ*) because he could satisfy everyone by keeping their wishes intact. Specifically, Nārada wanted Kṛṣṇa to go to Indraprastha to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. The assembly and the messenger wanted Kṛṣṇa to kill Jarasandha, and Kṛṣṇa wanted both.

Text 2

śrī-uddhava uvāca,

*yad uktam ṛṣinā deva,
sācivyaṃ yakṣyatas tvayā,
kāryaṃ paitṛ-ṣvasreyasya,
rakṣā ca śaraṇaiṣiṇām*

Śrī Uddhava said: O Lord, as the sage advised, You should help Your cousin fulfill his plan for performing the Rājasū ya sacrifice, and You should also protect the kings who are begging for Your shelter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “You should help Yudhisthira perform the sacrifice (*yakṣyataḥ*), which was mentioned by Narada. You should also protect those who desire Your shelter by killing Jarasandha, which is the opinion of the assembly and the messenger.”

Text 3

*yaṣṭavyam rājasūyena,
dik-cakra-jayinā vibho,
ato jarā-suta-jaya,
ubhayārtho mato mama*

Only one who has conquered all opponents in every direction can perform the Rājasū ya sacrifice, O almighty one. Thus, in my opinion, conquering Jarāsandha will serve both purposes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “The best strategy is that by which both purposes can be achieved by a single act.” That is expressed in this verse.

Uddhava said, “Both purposes, completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice and protecting the kings are accomplished by defeating Jarasandha. After

all, without conquering all the directions the Rājasūya sacrifice cannot occur, and without killing Jarasandha one cannot conquer the directions. First You should accept the invitation to the Rājasūya sacrifice. The request to protect the kings, on the other hand, will be fulfilled as a secondary result of fulfilling that first request. In this way two aims will be achieved by a single act.”

Text 4

*asmākaṁ ca mahān artho,
hy etenaiva bhaviṣyati,
yaśaś ca tava govinda,
rājñō baddhān vimuñcataḥ*

By this decision there will be great gain for us, and You will save the kings. Thus, Govinda, You will be glorified.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “For us members of the assembly there is great gain in Your going to the Rājasūya sacrifice for Jarasandha will be killed.”

Text 5

*sa vai durviṣaho rājā,
nāgāyuta-samo bale,
balinām api cānyeṣām,
bhīmaṁ sama-balaṁ vinā*

The invincible King Jarāsandha is as strong as ten thousand elephants. Indeed, other powerful warriors cannot defeat him. Only

Bhīma is equal to him in strength.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing that the Yadavas were extremely eager to immediately kill Jarasandha, Uddhava spoke this verse: “Other warriors may be stronger, but they cannot defeat Jarasandha. Even though Bhīma is only equal in strength, he can kill Jarasandha. I have previously deduced this from the *Jyotīr-rāga* and other astrological scriptures I learned from Bṛhaspati.”

Text 6

*dvai-rathe sa tu jetavyo,
mā śatākṣauhiṇī-yutaḥ,
brāhmaṇyo 'bhyarthito viprair,
na pratyākhyāti karhicit*

He will be defeated in a match of single chariots, not when he is with his hundred military divisions. Now, Jarāsandha is so devoted to brahminical culture that he never refuses requests from brāhmaṇas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “Jarasandha should be defeated by Bhīma alone in single combat, because he cannot be defeated when he is joined by his army of one hundred *aksauhinis*.” But how could Jarāsandha be persuaded to give up the support of his powerful army? Here Uddhava gives the clue: “Jarāsandha will never refuse a request from *brāhmaṇas*, since he is devoted to *brahminical* culture.”

Text 7

*brahma-veṣa-dharo gatvā,
taṁ bhikṣeta vṛkodarah,
haniṣyati na sandeho,
dvai-rathe tava sannidhau*

Bhīma should go to him disguised as a brāhmaṇa and beg charity. Thus he will obtain single combat with Jarāsandha, and in Your presence Bhīma will no doubt kill him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “Bhīma should beg as charity a one-to-one fight with Jarāsandha.”

Kṛṣṇa objected, “But since they are equal in strength, they are evenly matched and thus neither is likely to win over the other.”

Uddhava replied, “Therefore, if Bhīma fights in Your presence, he will be able to kill Jarasandha.”

Text 8

*nimittam param īśasya,
viśva-sarga-nirodhayoḥ,
hiraṇyagarbhaḥ śarvaś ca,
kālasyārūpiṇas tava*

Even Lord Brahmā and Lord Śiva act only as Your instruments in cosmic creation and annihilation, which are ultimately done by You, the Supreme Lord, in Your invisible aspect of time.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “But what will be the effect of My merely being present without doing anything?”

Uddhava replied, “Just as time alone creates and destroys the universe with Brahma and Siva merely acting as instruments, so You alone will

be killing Jarasandha simply by Your presence, and Bhima will only be the instrument. Just as You do this for the glorification of Brahma and Siva, so You will act only for the purpose of bestowing fame on Bhima.”

Text 9

*gāyanti te viśada-karma gr̥heṣu devyo,
rājñām sva-śatru-vadham ātma-vimokṣaṇām ca,
gopyaś ca kuñjara-pater janakātmajāyāḥ,
pitroś ca labdha-śaraṇā munayo vayaṁ ca*

In their homes, the godly wives of the imprisoned kings sing of Your noble deeds—about how You will kill their husbands’ enemy and deliver them. The gopīs also sing Your glories—how You killed the enemy of the elephant king, Gajendra; the enemy of Sīta, daughter of Janaka; and the enemies of Your own parents as well. So also do the sages who have obtained Your shelter glorify You, as do we ourselves.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though the devotees have already perfectly sung Your glories in punishing the wicked and protecting the righteous, now, in killing of Jarasandha Your glories will be even greater. This is expressed in this verse.

Uddhava said, “The wives (*devyaḥ:patnyaḥ*) of the kings imprisoned by Jarasandha sing about Your splendid activities in their homes, while taking care of children and performing other domestic chores. What are those activities? They sing about Your future killing of Jarasandha and freeing of their husbands, having been informed of this by the omniscient sages. When their children cry for their fathers, their mothers tell them, ‘Child, do not cry. Sri Kṛṣṇa will save your father.’ ” Uddhava gives an analogy. “It is just as the gopīs consoled one

another by singing about the killing of their enemy Sankhacuda and their deliverance from captivity: ‘O friends, be calm. Do not give up your lives by crying endlessly. That same one who saved us from the devouring tiger called Sankhacuda, that same ocean of compassion will remember us and save us from the snake bite of time, which has brought the great calamity of separation from Him.’

“Thus, in the same way You should protect these ladies and reunite them with their husbands by killing Jarasandha. Then after completing the Rājasūya sacrifice, and while returning here You should secretly go to Vraja and save the gopis by giving them Your company. Then we and the others will sing Your glories.”

Having taken the opportunity, Uddhava gave the advice that was in his mind. Uddhava continued, “Moreover just as the wives and gopis sing about You, the sages who have surrendered to You, the self-satisfied devotees and we, your *dasya-bhaktas*, will also sing Your glories in the course of relishing our own relationships such as servitude. What are these glories? You killed the crocodile enemy of the king of elephants and delivered him. You killed Ravana, the enemy of Sita, and Kamsa, the enemy of Your parents, and freed Vasudeva and Devaki.

“O fellow *tapasvis*! O friends, O ecstatic devotees! Just as Kṛṣṇa saved Gajendra from the crocodile, Sita from Ravana, and Vasudeva and Devaki from Kamsa by bestowing His personal *darsana* and granting them the particular devotional service they hankered for, so He will grant the same to us.”

Text 10

jarāsandha-vadhaḥ kṛṣṇa,
bhūry-arthāyopakalpate,
prāyaḥ pāka-vipākena,
tava cābhimataḥ kratuḥ

O Kṛṣṇa, the killing of Jarāsandha, which is certainly a reaction of his past sins, will bring immense benefit. Indeed, it will make possible the sacrificial ceremony You desire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Uddhava said, “Killing Jarasandha will bring great benefits (*bhūry-artha*), namely protecting the kings; the killing of Sisupala and executing the Rājasūya sacrifice, which You desire to perform; and also the accomplishment of the goals which I have hinted at. With the completion of the Rājasūya sacrifice the kings will be saved as a result of their piety (*pāka*), and Jarāsandha will die as a result (*vipākena*) of his wickedness.”

The *Medinī* dictionary says *Pāka* refers to ‘a consequence’ or ‘an infant’ and *vipāka* refers to ‘cooking’, ‘perspiration’, or ‘the contrary result of an action’. Uddhava used equivocal words (*pāka-vipākena*) so that the assembled Yadavas and Kauravas would not understand his intention. If we take the alternate reading of *pāpa-vipākena*, it means “due to the consequence of the sins of Sisupala and others, they would die”. The word *prāyah* (certainly) is used to express conjecture.

Text 11

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity uddhava-vaco rājan,
sarvato-bhadram acyutam,
devarṣir yadu-vṛddhāś ca,
kṛṣṇaś ca pratyapūjayan*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, Devarṣi Nārada, the Yadu elders and Lord Kṛṣṇa all welcomed Uddhava’s proposal, which was entirely auspicious and infallible.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *acyutam* (infallible)

indicates that Uddhava’s proposal was “fortified by logical reasoning”. Furthermore, Śukadeva Gosvāmī specifically indicates by the term *yadu-vṛddhāḥ* that it was the senior members, not the junior ones, who welcomed the proposal. Young princes such as Aniruddha did not like Uddhava’s proposal, since they were eager to fight Jarāsandha’s army immediately.

Text 12

*athādiśat prayāṇāya,
bhagavān devakī-sutaḥ,
bhr̥tyān dāruka-jaitrādīn,
anujñāpya gurūn vibhuḥ*

The almighty Personality of Godhead, the son of Devakī, begged His superiors for permission to leave. Then He ordered His servants, headed by Dāruka and Jaitra, to prepare for departure.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa took permission from the elders such as Vasudeva, and then ordered His servants to prepare for departure.

Text 13

*nirgamayyāvarodhān svān,
sa-sutān sa-paricchadān,
saṅkarṣaṇam anujñāpya,
yadu-rājaṁ ca śatru-han,
sūtopanītaṁ sva-ratham,
āruhad garuḍa-dhvajam*

O slayer of enemies, after He had arranged for the departure of His wives, children and baggage and taken leave of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa and King Ugrasena, Lord Kṛṣṇa mounted His chariot, which had been brought by His driver. It flew a flag marked with the emblem of Garuḍa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa arranged for His wives (*avarodhān*) to go along, since they had also been invited to the Rājasūya sacrifice and were eager to attend. *Avarodhān* means those who reside in the women's quarters.

Text 14

*tato ratha-dvipa-bhaṭa-sādi-nāyakaiḥ,
karālayā parivṛta ātma-senayā,
mṛdaṅga-bhery-ānaka-śaṅkha-gomukhaiḥ,
praghoṣa-ghoṣita-kakubho nirakramat*

As the vibrations resounding from mṛdaṅgas, bherīs, kettledrums, conchshells and gomukhas filled the sky in all directions, Lord Kṛṣṇa set out on His journey. He was accompanied by the chief officers of His corps of chariots, elephants, infantry and cavalry and surrounded on all sides by His fierce personal guard.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Bhaṭa* means infantry soldiers and *sādi* means cavalry. Together with the leaders of His chariot corps, and surrounded by His own fierce (*karālayā:tīvrayā*) army, Kṛṣṇa went out of the city wherein all the directions (*kakubhā*) were filled with musical vibrations of horns and *mṛdaṅgas*. *Kakubhā*, a feminine form, is also seen sometimes.

Text 15

*nṛ-vāji-kāñcana-sibikābhir acyutam,
sahātmajāḥ patim anu su-vratā yayuḥ,
varāmbārābharaṇa-vilepana-srajaḥ,
su-saṁvṛtā nṛbhir asi-carma-pāṇibhiḥ*

Lord Acyuta’s faithful wives, along with their children, followed the Lord on golden palanquins carried by powerful men. The queens were adorned with fine clothing, ornaments, fragrant oils and flower garlands, and they were surrounded on all sides by soldiers carrying swords and shields in their hands.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The faithful queens followed their husband in golden palanquins carried by powerful men (*nṛvāji*).

Text 16

*naroṣṭra-go-mahiṣa-kharāśvatary-anaḥ,
kareṇubhiḥ parijana-vāra-yoṣitaḥ,
sv-alāṅkṛtāḥ kaṭa-kuṭi-kambalāmbarādy,
upaskarā yayur adhiyujya sarvataḥ*

On all sides proceeded finely adorned women—attendants of the royal household, as well as courtesans. They rode on palanquins and camels, bulls and buffalo, donkeys, mules, bullock carts and elephants. Their conveyances were fully loaded with grass tents, blankets, clothes and other items for the trip.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The term *parijana-vāra-yoṣitaḥ*,

“attendants of the royal household” includes washerwomen and other helpers. The huts were made of *usīra* grass.

Text 17

*balam̐ br̥had-dhvaja-paṭa-chatra-cāmarair,
varāyudhābharaṇa-kirīṭa-varmabhiḥ,
divāmśubhis tumula-ravaṁ babhau raver,
yathārṇavaḥ kṣubhita-timīṅgilormibhiḥ*

The Lord’s army boasted royal umbrellas, cāmara fans and huge flagpoles with waving banners. During the day the sun’s rays reflected brightly from the soldiers’ fine weapons, jewelry, helmets and armor. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa’s army, noisy with shouts and clatter, appeared like an ocean stirring with agitated waves and timiṅgila fish.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: During the day the army shone with the rays of the sun, displaying the splendor of their weapons, jeweled helmets and glittering golden ornaments.

Text 18

*atho munir yadu-patinā sabhājitaḥ,
praṇamya taṁ hṛḍi vidadhad vihāyasā,
niśamya tad-vyavasitam āhṛtārhaṇo,
mukunda-sandaraśana-nirvṛtendriyaḥ*

Honored by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, Nārada Muni bowed down to the Lord. All of Nārada’s senses were satisfied by his

meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus, having heard the decision of the Lord and having been worshiped by Him, Nārada placed Him firmly within his heart and departed through the sky.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada departed by the path of the sky (*vihāyasā*). Although the verb is missing, it is understood.

Text 19

*rāja-dūtam uvācedaṁ,
bhagavān prīṇayan girā,
mā bhaiṣṭa dūta bhadraṁ vo,
ghātayiṣyāmi māgadham*

With pleasing words the Lord addressed the messenger sent by the kings: “My dear messenger, I wish all good fortune to you. I shall arrange for the killing of King Magadha. Do not fear.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said to the messenger, “Do not fear. I will kill Jarasandha.” The phrase *ma bhaiṣṭa*, “do not fear”, is in the plural because Kṛṣṇa is addressing both the messenger and the kings.

Text 20

*ity uktaḥ prasthito dūto,
yathā-vad avadan nṛpān,
te 'pi sandarśanaṁ śaureḥ,
pratyaikṣan yan mumukṣavaḥ*

Thus addressed, the messenger departed and accurately relayed the Lord's message to the kings. Eager for freedom, they then waited expectantly for their meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The imprisoned kings eagerly waited for Kṛṣṇa to liberate them.

Text 21

*ānarta-sauvīra-marūms,
tīrtvā vinaśanaṁ hariḥ,
girīn nadīr atīyāya,
pura-grāma-vrajākarān*

As He traveled through the provinces of Ānarta, Sauvīra, Marudeśa and Vinaśana, Lord Hari crossed rivers and passed mountains, cities, villages, cow pastures and quarries.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa passed through the provinces of Anarta, Sauvira, Maru and Kuruksetra (*vinaśanaṁ*), as He crossed mountains, rivers, cities, villages, pastures and quarries.

Text 22

*tato dṛṣadvatīm tīrtvā,
mukundo 'tha sarasvatīm,
pañcālān atha matsyāṁś ca,
śakra-prastham athāgamat*

After crossing the rivers Dṛṣadvatī and Sarasvatī, He passed

through Pañcāla and Matsya and finally came to Indraprastha.

Text 23

*tam upāgatam ākarṇya,
prīto durdarśanam nṛnām,
ajāta-śatrur niragāt,
sopadhyāyaḥ suhrd-vṛtaḥ*

King Yudhiṣṭhira was delighted to hear that the Lord, whom human beings rarely see, had now arrived. Accompanied by his priests and dear associates, the King came out to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 24

*gīta-vāditra-ghoṣeṇa,
brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā,
abhyayāt sa hr̥ṣīkeśam,
prāṇāḥ prāṇam ivādrtaḥ*

As songs and musical instruments resounded along with the loud vibration of Vedic hymns, the King went forth with great reverence to meet Lord Hṛṣīkeśa, just as the senses go forth to meet the consciousness of life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As the senses (*prāṇāḥ:indriyāṇi*) follow the life airs, Yudhisthira went out to meet Kṛṣṇa (*hr̥ṣīkeśa*, the Lord of the senses).

Text 25

*dṛṣṭvā viklinna-hṛdayaḥ,
kṛṣṇam snehena pāṇḍavaḥ,
cirād dṛṣṭam priyatamaṁ,
sasvaje 'tha punaḥ punaḥ*

The heart of King Yudhiṣṭhira melted with affection when he saw his dearest friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa, after such a long separation, and he embraced the Lord again and again.

Text 26

*dorbhyām pariṣvajya ramāmalālayam,
mukunda-gātram nṛ-patir hatāśubhaḥ,
lebhe parām nirvṛtim aśru-locano,
hṛṣyat-tanur vismṛta-loka-vibhramaḥ*

The eternal form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the everlasting residence of the goddess of fortune. As soon as King Yudhiṣṭhira embraced Him, the King became free of all the contamination of material existence. He immediately felt transcendental bliss and merged in an ocean of happiness. There were tears in his eyes, and his body shook due to ecstasy. He completely forgot that he was living in this material world.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He embraced the limbs of Mukunda, which are the faultless (*amala*) shelter of all beauty (*ramā*). By this

he submerged in the bliss of prema, forgot all worldly pleasure (*loka-vibhramaḥ:loka-vilāsaḥ*), and crossed the ocean of birth and death.

Text 27

*taṁ mātuleyaṁ parirabhya nirvṛto,
bhīmaḥ smayan prema-jalākulendriyaḥ,
yamau kirīṭī ca suhṛttamaṁ mudā,
pravṛddha-bāṣpāḥ parirebhire 'cyutam*

Then Bhīma, his eyes brimming with tears, laughed with joy as he embraced his maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna and the twins—Nakula and Sahadeva—also joyfully embraced their dearest friend, the infallible Lord, and they cried profusely.

Text 28

*arjunena pariṣvaktō,
yamābhyāṁ abhivāditāḥ,
brāhmaṇebhyo namaskṛtya,
vṛddhebhyaś ca yathārhataḥ,
mānino mānayāṁ āsa,
kuru-sṛñjaya-kaikayān*

After Arjuna had embraced Him once more and Nakula and Sahadeva had offered Him their obeisances, Lord Kṛṣṇa bowed down to the brāhmaṇas and elders present, thus properly honoring the respectable members of the Kuru, Sṛñjaya and Kaikaya clans.

Text 29

*sūta-māgadha-gandharvā,
vandinaś copamantriṇaḥ,
mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-paṭaha,
vīṇā-paṇava-gomukhaiḥ,
brāhmaṇāś cāravindākṣaṁ,
tuṣṭuvur nanrtur jaguḥ*

Sutas, Māgadhas, Gandharvas, Vandīs, jesters and brāhmaṇas all glorified the lotus-eyed Lord—some reciting prayers, some dancing and singing—as mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, kettledrums, vīṇās, paṇavas and gomukhas resounded.

Text 30

*evaṁ suhṛdbhiḥ paryastaḥ,
puṇya-śloka-śikhāmaṇiḥ,
saṁstūyamāno bhagavān,
viveśālaṅkṛtaṁ puram*

Thus surrounded by His well-wishing relatives and praised on all sides, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of the justly renowned, entered the decorated city.

*saṁsikta-vartma kariṇām mada-gandha-toyaiś,
citra-dhvajaiḥ kanaka-toraṇa-pūrṇa-kumbhaiḥ,
mr̥ṣāt̥mabhir nava-dukūla-vibhūṣaṇa-srag,
gandhair nṛbhir yuvatibhiś ca virājamānam,
uddīpta-dīpa-balibhiḥ prati-sadma jāla,
niryāta-dhūpa-ruciraṁ vilasat-patākam,
mūrdhanya-hema-kalaśai rajatoru-śṛṅgair,
juṣṭam dadarśa bhavanaiḥ kuru-rāja-dhāma*

The roads of Indraprastha were sprinkled with water perfumed by the liquid from elephants’ foreheads, and colorful flags, golden gateways and full waterpots enhanced the city’s splendor. Men and young girls were beautifully arrayed in fine, new garments, adorned with flower garlands and ornaments, and anointed with aromatic sandalwood paste. Every home displayed glowing lamps and respectful offerings, and from the holes of the latticed windows drifted incense, further beautifying the city. Banners waved, and the roofs were decorated with golden domes on broad silver bases. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa saw the royal city of the King of the Kurus.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The city of Indraprastha is described in two verses. Each house was splendid (*virajamanam*) with rows of flowers and burning lamps, colorful flags, full water pots and gold gateways, richly attired men and women, and clouds of fragrant incense streaming from the lattice windows. Kṛṣṇa saw the city and the many palaces and houses of the kings of the Kurus.

Text 33

*prāptam niśamya nara-locana-pāna-pātram,
autsukya-viślathita-keśa-dukūla-bandhāḥ,*

*sadyo visṛjya gr̥ha-karma patīmś ca talpe,
draṣṭuṁ yayur yuvatayaḥ sma narendra-mārge*

When the young women of the city heard that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of pleasure for human eyes, had arrived, they hurriedly went onto the royal road to see Him. They abandoned their household duties and even left their husbands in bed, and in their eagerness the knots of their hair and garments came loose.

Text 34

*tasmin su-saṅkula ibhāśva-ratha-dvipadbhiḥ,
kṛṣṇam sa-bhāryam upalabhya gr̥hādhirūḍhāḥ,
nāryo vikīrya kusumair manasopaguhya,
su-svāgatam vidadhur utsmaya-vīkṣitena*

The royal road being quite crowded with elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers, the women climbed to the top of their houses, where they caught sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His queens. The city ladies scattered flowers upon the Lord, embraced Him in their minds and expressed their heartfelt welcome with broadly smiling glances.

Text 35

*ūcuḥ striyaḥ pathi nirīkṣya mukunda-patnīs,
tārā yathoḍupa-sahāḥ kim akāry amūbhiḥ,
yac cakṣuṣām puruṣa-maulir udāra-hāsa,*

līlāvaloka-kalayotsavam ātanoti

Observing Lord Mukunda’s wives passing on the road like stars accompanying the moon, the women exclaimed, “What have these ladies done so that the best of men bestows upon their eyes the joy of His generous smiles and playful sidelong glances?”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The women are like stars accompanying the moon (*uḍu-pa-sahāḥ*). What piety has been performed by them?

Text 36

*tatra tatropasaṅgamyā,
paurā maṅgala-pāṇayah,
cakruḥ saparyām kṛṣṇāya,
śreṇī-mukhyā hatainasah*

In various places citizens of the city came forward holding auspicious offerings for Lord Kṛṣṇa, and sinless leaders of occupational guilds came forward to worship the Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The heads of the various communities (*śreṇī-mukhyā*), who earn their livings by particular arts, worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

Text 37

*antah-pura-janaiḥ prītyā,
mukundaḥ phulla-locanaiḥ,*

*sa-sambhramair abhyupetaḥ,
prāviśad rāja-mandiram*

With wide-open eyes, the members of the royal household came forward in a flurry to lovingly greet Lord Mukunda, and thus the Lord entered the royal palace.

Text 38

*prthā vilokya bhrātreyam,
kṛṣṇam tri-bhuvaneśvaram,
prītātmothāya paryankāt,
sa-snuṣā pariśasvaje*

When Queen Prthā saw her nephew Kṛṣṇa, the master of the three worlds, her heart became filled with love. Rising from her couch with her daughter-in-law, she embraced the Lord.

Text 39

*govindam grham ānīya,
deva-deveśam ādṛtaḥ,
pūjāyām nāvidat kṛtyam,
pramodopahato nṛpaḥ*

King Yudhiṣṭhira respectfully brought Lord Govinda, the Supreme God of gods, to his personal quarters. The King was so overcome

with joy that he could not remember all the rituals of worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Overcome with joy, Yudhisthira forgot the proper details (*kṛtyam*) of worshipping Kṛṣṇa.

Text 40

*pitṛ-svasur guru-strīṅām,
kṛṣṇaś cakre 'bhivādanam,
svayam ca kṛṣṇayā rājan,
bhaginyā cābhivanditaḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa bowed down to His aunt and the wives of His elders, O King, and then Draupadī and the Lord's sister bowed down to Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Draupadi (*kṛṣṇayā*) and Subhadra then welcomed Kṛṣṇa.

Texts 41–42

*śvaśṛvā sañcoditā kṛṣṇā,
kṛṣṇa-patnīś ca sarvaśaḥ,
ānarca rukmiṇīm satyām,
bhadram jāmbavatīm tathā,
kāḷindīm mitravindām ca,
śaibyām nāgnajitīm satīm,
anyāś cābhyāgatā yās tu,
vāśaḥ-srañ-maṇḍanādibhiḥ*

Encouraged by her mother-in-law, Draupadī worshiped all of

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s wives, including Rukmiṇī; Satyabhāmā; Bhadrā; Jāmbavatī; Kāḷindī; Mitravindā, the descendant of Śibi; the chaste Nāgnajitī; and the other queens of the Lord who were present. Draupadī honored them all with such gifts as clothing, flower garlands and jewelry.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Encouraged by her mother-in-law (śvaśṛvā), Draupadi worshiped all of Kṛṣṇa’s queens.

Text 43

*sukhaṁ nivāsayām āsa,
dharma-rājo janārdanam,
sa-sainyaṁ sānugāmatyaṁ,
sa-bhāryaṁ ca navam navam*

King Yudhiṣṭhira arranged for Kṛṣṇa’s rest and saw to it that all who came along with Him—namely His queens, soldiers, ministers and secretaries—were comfortably situated. He arranged that they would experience a new feature of reception every day while staying as guests of the Pāṇḍavas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira arranged for Kṛṣṇa’s stay there in such a way that each day was a new experience.

Texts 44–45

*tarpayitvā khāṇḍavena,
vahniṁ phālguna-samyutaḥ,
mocayitvā mayam yena,
rājñe divyā sabhā kṛtā,*

*uvāsa katicin māsān,
rājñāḥ priya-cikīrṣayā,
viharan ratham āruhya,
phālgunena bhaṭair vṛtaḥ*

Desiring to please King Yudhiṣṭhira, the Lord resided at Indraprastha for several months. During His stay, He and Arjuna satisfied the fire-god by offering him the Khāṇḍava forest, and they saved Maya Dānava, who then built King Yudhiṣṭhira a celestial assembly hall. The Lord also took the opportunity to go riding in His chariot in the company of Arjuna, surrounded by a retinue of soldiers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While Kṛṣṇa resided in Indraprastha, He liberated Maya Danava from the forest fire. Out of gratitude Maya Danava built a celestial assembly hall for Yudhisthira. Although these events were already related in chapter fifty-eight, Sukadeva Gosvami repeats them due to his absorption in the topic.

The chronological sequence is as follows: Kṛṣṇa stayed in Indraprastha for the four months of the rainy season. During this time Kṛṣṇa burned the Khandava forest, won the Gandiva bow for Arjuna and obtained Kalindi while hunting. Then Kṛṣṇa returned to Dvaraka, married Kalindi, Bhadra and other queens, killed Naraka and performed other deeds. Then Kṛṣṇa was invited to the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Chapter Seventy-two: The Slaying of the Demon Jarāsandha

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ekadā tu sabhā-madhya,
āsthito munibhir vṛtaḥ,
brāhmaṇaiḥ kṣatriyair vaiśyair,
bhrātr̥bhiś ca yudhiṣṭhirah,
ācāryaiḥ kula-vṛddhaiś ca,
jñāti-sambandhi-bāndhavaiḥ,
śṛṇvatām eva caiteṣām,
ābhāṣyedam uvāca ha*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: One day, as King Yudhiṣṭhira sat in the royal assembly surrounded by eminent sages, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas and vaiśyas, and also by his brothers, spiritual masters, family elders, blood relations, in-laws and friends, he addressed Lord Kṛṣṇa as everyone listened.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa approves of Yudhisthira’s plans, and deliberately taking his permission has Bhima kill Jarasandha. After sitting properly (*āsthitaḥ*) Yudhisthira inquired from Kṛṣṇa while others listened. The locative case is used for “the listeners” (*śṛṇvatām*) to emphasize that Yudhisthira was absorbed in speaking to Kṛṣṇa.

Text 3

*śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca,
kratu-rājena govinda,
rājasūyena pāvanīḥ,
yakṣye vibhūtīr bhavatas,
tat sampādaya naḥ prabho*

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: O Govinda, I desire to worship Your auspicious, opulent expansions by the Rājasū ya sacrifice, the king of Vedic ceremonies. Please make our endeavor a success, my Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira said, “I want to worship Your opulent expansions in this world like the demigods and other empowered beings (*vibhūtis*).” This statement hints that Yudhisthira is exclusively devoted to Kṛṣṇa, just like the great King Bharata. The word *pāvanīḥ* (purifying) means that by seeing Kṛṣṇa the demigods and sages being worshiped in the sacrifice will become purified. Yudhisthira implies by this that the Rājasūya should be performed so that they too can become all-successful.

Text 4

*tvat-pāduke avirataṁ pari ye caranti,
dhyāyanty abhadra-naśane śucayo grṇanti,
vindanti te kamala-nābha bhavāpavargam,
āśāsate yadi ta āśiṣa īśa nānye*

Purified persons who constantly serve, meditate upon and glorify Your shoes, which destroy everything inauspicious, are sure to obtain freedom from material existence, O lotus-aveled one. Even if they desire something in this world, they obtain it, whereas

**others—those who do not take shelter of You—are never satisfied,
O Lord.**

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira said, “We feel no great urgency to perform the Rājasūya sacrifice, nor do we have any personal interest, because by Your boundless mercy we are already seeing Your lotus feet and relishing Your personal association. But in this world there are many evil persons who think You are not the Supreme Godhead but an ordinary human being. Or else they find fault with You and even criticize Your behavior. This is an arrow piercing our heart. “Therefore, to extract this arrow from our heart we must call to this place—on the pretext of the Rājasūya—Brahmā, Siva and other demigods, and the wise *brahmacārīs* residing in each of the fourteen planetary systems. When such an exalted congregation has assembled, it will be incumbent upon them to arrange the *agra-pūjā*, the first worship for the most worthy person present. Then when they are directly shown that You, Sri Kṛṣṇa, are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the arrow piercing my heart will be removed.” Yudhisthira expresses this in three verses. Dividing *pari* and *caranti* is poetic license. Yudhisthira said, “Meditation on Your slippers destroys all inauspiciousness, including that of ignorance. Those desiring material enjoyment obtain that by worshiping You, but not those who do not worship You. Both fruitive workers (*karmis*) and pure devotees worship Your lotus feet, but Your devotees never desire material results. What to speak of us, who have no material desires, having taken shelter of Your feet and directly seen You.”

Text 5

*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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Yudhisthira said, “Therefore, when Your status as the Supreme Godhead has been established by the distinguished assembly headed by Brahma, the people of earth will understand the power of serving Your lotus feet. Then to dispel their illusion, please show the positions of those Kurus and Sṛñjayas who worship You as God and those who do not worship You, thinking You to be a human being. If You give Your consent, this will be shown at the proposed sacrifice.”

Text 6

*na brahmaṇaḥ sva-para-bheda-matis tava syāt,
sarvātmanaḥ sama-dṛśaḥ sva-sukhānubhūteḥ,
samsevatām sura-tarora iva te prasādaḥ,
sevānurūpam udayo na viparyayo 'tra*

Within Your mind there can be no such differentiation as “This one is mine, and that is another’s,” because You are the Supreme Absolute Truth, the Soul of all beings, always equipoised and enjoying transcendental happiness within Yourself. Just like the heavenly desire tree, You bless all who properly worship You, granting their desired fruits in proportion to the service they render You. There is nothing wrong in this.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: If Kṛṣṇa were to ask, “But will I not be

displaying malice if I show the superiority of those who are favorable to Me and the inferiority of those who are against Me?”

In this verse Yudhisthira replies, “You do not have a mentality of prejudice, distinguishing on the basis of “My side” and “the other side” (*sva para*), since You are the completely pure (*brahmanah*) Absolute Truth. Moreover, as the Supersoul dwelling within all living entities, You engage them all in their particular actions according to the endless flow of their *karma*. You alone are the supreme controller, and without partiality (*sama-dṛśaḥ*) You give them good or bad results suitable to their acts. Since You relish the greatest joy (*sva-sukhānubhūti*) within Yourself, You have nothing to gain or lose in relation to conditioned souls. Rather, You reciprocate with them according to how they approach You.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then who are the recipients of My qualities of compassion and generosity?”

Yudhisthira: “You show compassion (*prasadah*) to those who worship You with their hearts. By cutting the bondage of their karma and giving them everything, even Your own self, You show Your generosity.”

Kṛṣṇa: “But then do I not show some prejudice there?”

Yudhisthira: “You are just like the desire tree (*sura-taror*), which bestows its fruits upon those who take shelter of it, without considering one’s faults or merits. You also show mercy to anyone who serves You. Thus even though You remain impartial, You especially favor Your devotee, being controlled by his affection. As one is relatively disposed in favorable or unfavorable ways towards You, You respond favorably or unfavorably toward him.”

Text 7

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
samyag vyavasitaṁ rājan,
bhavatā śatru-karśana,
kalyāṇī yena te kīrtir;*

lokān anubhaviṣyati

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Your decision is perfect, O King, and thus your noble fame will spread to all the worlds, O tormentor of your enemies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “O great cloud showering the nectar of My glories! O king! Certainly you have My permission to perform the sacrifice.” Kṛṣṇa says this in the mood of being a normal human being. By addressing King Yudhiṣṭhira as *śatru-karśana*, “tormentor of enemies”, Kṛṣṇa is imparting to him the potency to conquer all the enemy kings and become world-famous.

Text 8

*ṛṣīṅāṃ piṭṛ-devānām,
suhṛdām api naḥ prabho,
sarveṣām api bhūtānām,
īpsitaḥ kratu-rāḍ ayam*

Indeed, My lord, for the great sages, the forefathers and the demigods, for Our well-wishing friends and, indeed, for all living beings, the performance of this king of Vedic sacrifices is desirable.

Text 9

*vijitya nṛpatīn sarvān,
kṛtvā ca jagatīm vaśe,
sambhṛtya sarva-sambhārān,*

āharasva mahā-kratum

First conquer all kings, bring the earth under your control and collect all the required paraphernalia; then execute this great sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “What do I or anyone else need to do in this connection, since you yourself can easily arrange everything for the Rajasuya? After collecting the items you can perform (*aharasva*) the sacrifice.”

Text 10

*ete te bhrātaro rājal,
loka-pālāmśa-sambhavāḥ,
jito 'smy ātmavatā te 'ham,
durjayo yo 'kṛtātmabhiḥ*

These brothers of yours, O King, have taken birth as partial expansions of the demigods ruling various planets. And you are so self-controlled that you have conquered even Me, who am unconquerable for those who cannot control their senses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Ātmavatā* means “who has conquered his senses”, or else it means “for whom I Myself (*ātmā: aham*) am always present as his all-in-all”. Thus Kṛṣṇa is saying, “By such a person I have been conquered and brought under his control. I cannot be conquered by those who have not controlled their senses (*akṛta-ātmabhiḥ*).”

Text 11

*na kaścīn mat-param loke,
tejasā yaśasā śriyā,
vibhūtibhir vābhibhaved,
devo 'pi kim u pārthivaḥ*

No one in this world, even a demigod—what to speak of an earthly king—can defeat My devotee with his strength, beauty, fame or riches.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “With great confidence I declare that you should not fear defeat by the other side. Even if he is lacking some power, My devotee cannot be conquered by anyone; what then to speak of you?”

Text 12

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
niśamya bhagavad-gītām,
prītaḥ phulla-mukhāmbujāḥ,
bhrātṛṇ dig-vijaye 'yuṅkta,
viṣṇu-tejopabr̥mhitān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Upon hearing these words sung by the Supreme Lord, King Yudhiṣṭhira became joyful, and his face blossomed like a lotus. Thus he sent forth his brothers, who were empowered with Lord Viṣṇu’s potency, to conquer all directions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *sandhi* of *tejaḥ* (potency) and *opabr̥mhitān* (fortified) is poetic license. Otherwise, the word can be

taken as *tejah* in which case there would be normal *sandhi* according to rule.

Text 13

*sahadevaṃ dakṣiṇasyām,
ādiśat saha sṛñjayaiḥ,
diśi pratīcyām nakulam,
udīcyām savyasācinam,
prācyām vṛkodaram matsyaiḥ,
kekayaiḥ saha madrakaiḥ*

He sent Sahadeva to the south with the Sṛñjayas, Nakula to the west with the Matsyas, Arjuna to the north with the Kekayas, and Bhīma to the east with the Madrakas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The connection of Nakula with the Matsyas as his helpers follows the principle of one group of warriors with each brother, even though there are two clans, the Kekayas and Madrakas, mentioned in the last line.

Text 14

*te vijitya nṛpān vīrā,
ājāhrur digbhya ojasā,
ajāta-śatrave bhūri,
draviṇaṃ nṛpa yakṣyate*

After defeating many kings with their prowess, these heroic brothers brought back abundant wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja,

who was intent on performing the sacrifice, O King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They brought back the wealth and gave it to Yudhisthira.

Text 15

*śrutvājitaṃ jarāsandham,
nṛpater dhyāyato hariḥ,
āhopāyaṃ tam evādya,
uddhavo yam uvāca ha*

When King Yudhiṣṭhira heard that Jarāsandha remained undefeated, he set to pondering, and then the primeval Lord, Hari, told him the means Uddhava had described for defeating Jarāsandha.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hari, the original Lord (*ādyah*), told him the means of conquering Jarasandha.

Text 16

*bhīmaseno 'rjunaḥ kṛṣṇo,
brahma-linga-dharās trayah,
jagmur girivrajaṃ tāta,
bṛhadratha-suto yataḥ*

Thus Bhīmasena, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa disguised themselves as brāhmaṇas and went to Girivraja, my dear King, where the son of Bṛhadratha was to be found.

Text 17

*te gatvātithya-velāyām,
gṛheṣu gṛha-medhinam,
brahmaṇyaṁ samayāceran,
rājanyā brahma-liṅginaḥ*

Disguised as brāhmaṇas, the royal warriors approached Jarāsandha at home during the appointed hour for receiving guests. They submitted their entreaty to that dutiful householder, who was especially respectful to the brahminical class.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They begged from Jarasandha at the time meant for ritual hospitality.

Text 18

*rājan viddhy atithīn prāptān,
arthino dūram āgatān,
tan naḥ prayaccha bhadrām te,
yad vyaṁ kāmayaṁmahe*

[Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma said:] O King, know us to be needy guests who have come to you from afar. We wish all good unto you. Please grant us whatever we desire.

Text 19

*kiṁ durmarṣaṁ titikṣūṅhām,
kiṁ akāryam asādhubhiḥ,
kiṁ na deyaṁ vadānyānām,
kaḥ paraḥ sama-darśinām*

**What can the tolerant not bear? What will the wicked not do?
What will the generous not give in charity? And who will those of
equal vision see as an outsider?**

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Jarāsandha might be thinking, “What if you request my son, from whom separation would be intolerable?” To this possible objection, Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas reply, “Nothing is intolerable for a tolerant person. We see the example of Dasaratha giving his son Rama to Visvamitra.”

“But if the householder refuses you, then what is the result?”

They reply, “What cannot be done (*kiṁ akāryam*) by one without principles?”

Similarly, Jarāsandha could object, “What if you ask me to give my body or my precious jewels and other ornaments, which are meant to be given to my sons, not to ordinary beggars?”

To this they reply, “For the generous, what is not to be donated in charity?” In other words, everything is to be given. There are examples of such persons as Dadhīci, who gave his own body when requested by the demigods.”

Jarāsandha might also object that he could be giving charity to his enemies. To this his guests counter with the statement *kaḥ paraḥ sama-darśinām*: “For those with equal vision, who is a stranger?”

Text 20

*yo 'nityena śarīreṇa,
satām geyam yaśo dhruvam,
nācinoti svayam kalpaḥ,
sa vācyah śocyā eva saḥ*

He indeed is to be censured and pitied who, though able to do so, fails to achieve with his temporary body the lasting fame glorified by great saints.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One is despicable if he does not gain (*na acinoti*) fame with this temporary body.

Text 21

*hariścandro rantideva,
uñchavṛttiḥ śibir baliḥ,
vyādhaḥ kapoto bahavo,
hy adhruveṇa dhruvam gatāḥ*

Hariścandra, Rantideva, Uñchavṛtti Mudgala, Śibi, Bali, the legendary hunter and pigeon, and many others have attained the permanent by means of the impermanent.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To pay off his debts to Viśvāmītra, Hariścandra sold everything he had, including his wife and children. Yet even after attaining the status of a *caṇḍāla*, he did not become discouraged. Thus he went to heaven, together with all the inhabitants of Ayodhyā. After going without even water for forty-eight days Rantideva somehow obtained some food and water. But when some beggars suddenly appeared, he gave it all to them. In this way Rantideva attained Brahmaloaka. Mudgala followed the practice of gathering grains

left behind in the fields (*uñcha-vṛttih*) after the harvest. Yet still he was hospitable toward uninvited guests, even after his family had been suffering in poverty for six months. Thus he also went to Brahmaloaka. King Śibi attained heaven by giving his own flesh to a hawk in order to protect a pigeon who had taken shelter of him. Bali Mahārāja gained the Lord’s personal association by giving all his property to Vamanadeva when the Lord disguised Himself as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*. A pigeon and his mate gave their own flesh to a hunter as a show of hospitality, and thus they were taken to heaven in a celestial airplane. Rising to the mode of goodness, the hunter understood their situation. He then became renounced, gave up hunting and went off to perform severe austerities. Becoming freed of all sins, he was promoted to heaven after he burned to death in a forest fire. Thus many personalities have attained enduring life (*dhruvaṁ gatāḥ*) on higher planets by sacrificing their temporary material bodies.

Text 22

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
svarair ākṛtibhis tāms tu,
prakoṣṭhair jyā-hatair api,
rājanya-bandhūn vijñāya,
drṣṭa-pūrvān acintayat*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: From the sound of their voices, their physical stature and the marks of bowstrings on their forearms, Jarāsandha could tell that his guests were of the royal order. He began to think he had seen them somewhere before.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From the calluses on their forearms (*jyā-hatair*) caused by drawing bowstrings, as well as their deep voices and strong statures, Jarasandha recognized them as *ksatriyas* or rather

low-class *ksatriyas* (*rājanya-bandhūn*), since they were begging in the disguise of *brahmanas*. He had seen them before at the *svayam-vara* of Draupadi.

Text 23

*rājanya-bandhavo hy ete,
brahma-liṅgāni bibhrati,
dadāni bhikṣitam tebhya,
ātmānam api dustyajam*

[Jarāsandha thought:] These are surely members of the royal order dressed as brāhmaṇas, but still I must grant their request for charity, even if they beg me for my own body.

Texts 24–25

*baler nu śrūyate kīrtir,
vitatā dikṣv akalmaṣā,
aiśvaryād bhraṁśitasyāpi,
vipra-vyājena viṣṇunā,
śriyaṁ jihīrṣatendrasya,
viṣṇave dvija-rūpiṇe,
jānann api mahīm prādād,
vāryamāṇo 'pi daitya-rāṭ*

Indeed, the spotless glories of Bali Mahārāja are heard throughout the world. Lord Viṣṇu, wishing to recover Indra's opulence from Bali, appeared before him in the guise of a brāhmaṇa and made

him fall from his powerful position. Though aware of the ruse and forbidden by his guru, Bali, king of the demons, still gave Viṣṇu the whole earth in charity.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But what is to be gained by giving charity to cheaters?” This verse answers.

Jarasandha thought, “Indeed (*nu*), the fame of Bali, who lost everything to Visnu disguised as a dwarf *brahmana*, is heard and spread throughout the world.”

Na is sometimes seen instead of *nu*. In that case the meaning is “Is not the fame of Bali heard and spread everywhere? Bali Maharaja gave the earth to Vamanadeva even though he knew He was Visnu, and even though he was forbidden by Sukracarya.”

Text 26

*jīvatā brāhmaṇārthāya,
ko nv arthaḥ kṣatra-bandhunā,
dehena patamānena,
nehatā vipulaṁ yaśaḥ*

What is the use of an unqualified kṣatriya who goes on living but fails to gain everlasting glory by working with his perishable body for the benefit of brāhmaṇas?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha thought, “Of what use is the life of a fallen *ksatriya* if he does not desire fame by donating his perishable (*patamānena*) body to the *brahmanas*? Such a *ksatriya* is useless.”

Text 27

*ity udāra-matiḥ prāha,
kṛṣṇārjuna-vṛkodarān,
he viprā vriyatām kāmo,
dadāmy ātma-śiro 'pi vaḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus making up his mind, the generous Jarāsandha addressed Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and Bhīma: “O learned brāhmaṇas, choose whatever you wish. I will give it to you, even if it is my own head.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus considering, Jarasandha spoke.

Text 28

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
yuddham no dehi rājendra,
dvandvaśo yadi manyase,
yuddhārthino vayaṁ prāptā,
rājanyā nānya-kāṅkṣiṇaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: O exalted King, give us battle in the form of a duel, if you think it fitting. We are princes and have come to beg a fight. We have no other request to make of you.

Text 29

*asau vṛkodaraḥ pārthas,
tasya bhrātārjuno hy ayam,*

*anayor mātuleyaṁ mām,
kṛṣṇaṁ jānīhi te ripum*

**Over there is Bhīma, son of Pṛthā, and this is his brother Arjuna.
Know Me to be their maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, your enemy.**

Text 30

*evam āvedito rājā,
jahāsoccaiḥ sma māgadhaḥ,
āha cāmarṣito mandā,
yuddhaṁ tarhi dadāmi vaḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus challenged, Magadharāja laughed out loud and contemptuously said, “All right, you fools, I’ll give you a fight!

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Jarasandha laughed because he felt satisfied within by seeing the humiliation of his enemies, who had come in the dress of *brāhmaṇas*. Jarasandha said, “O fools (*mandā*)! You weaklings! Why should you fight at all? I will give you my head. Your bravery is already destroyed by your dressing as *brahmanas* begging charity. However, if you still have any courage, I will gladly fight with you.”

Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, intends the phrase *amarṣito mandāḥ* to read *amandāḥ*, which means that Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas are *amandāḥ*, “never foolish”. For that reason, they chose the best tactic for doing away once and for all with the cruel Jarāsandha.

Text 31

*na tvayā bhīruṇā yotsye,
yudhi viklava-tejasā,
mathurām sva-purīm tyaktvā,
samudram śaraṇam gataḥ*

“But I will not fight with You, Kṛṣṇa, for You are a coward. Your strength abandoned You in the midst of battle, and You fled Your own capital of Mathurā to take shelter in the sea.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The actual meaning is: “I will not fight with You, who are fearless and very strong (*tvayā abhīruṇā*), as my heart is now distressed (*viklava-tejasā: vihvala-cetasa*). By Your own will You left Mathura and went to live in Your house by the sea.”

Text 32

*ayam tu vayasātulyo,
nāti-sattvo na me samaḥ,
arjuno na bhaved yoddhā,
bhīmas tulya-balo mama*

“As for this one, Arjuna, he is not as old as I, nor is he very strong. Since he is no match for me, he should not be the contender. Bhīma, however, is as strong as I am.”

Text 33

*ity uktvā bhīmasenāya,
prādāya mahatīm gadām,
dvitīyām svayam ādāya,
nirjagāma purād bahiḥ*

Having said this, Jarāsandha offered Bhīmasena a huge club, took up another himself and went outside the city.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “It is expected that I should satisfy you, my guest, so please accept this huge (*mahatīm*) club. I will be successful in this fight, however, even with the smaller club.” These words revealed Jarasandha’s pride.

Text 34

*tataḥ samekhale vīrau,
saṁyuktāv itaretaram,
jaghnatur vajra-kalpābhyām,
gadābhyām raṇa-durmadau*

The two heroes thus began battling each other on the level fighting grounds outside the city. Maddened with the fury of combat, they struck each other with their lightning-bolt-like clubs.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the fighting arena (*samekhale*) they struck each other with clubs.

Text 35

maṅḍalāni vicitrāṇi,

*savyam dakṣiṇam eva ca,
caratoḥ śuśubhe yuddham,
naṭayor iva raṅginoh*

As they skillfully circled left and right, like actors dancing on a stage, the fight presented a magnificent spectacle.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They moved from left to right (*maṅḍalāni*) like actors dancing on a stage. Both fighters were fearless and steady even in the rage of battle.

Text 36

*tataś caṭa-caṭā-śabdo,
vajra-niṣpesa-sannibhaḥ,
gadayoḥ kṣiptayo rājan,
dantayor iva dantinoḥ*

When Jarāsandha’s and Bhīmasena’s clubs loudly collided, O King, the sound was like the impact of the big tusks of two fighting elephants, or the crash of a thunderbolt in a flashing electrical storm.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Caṭa-caṭā* is the onomatopoetic sound clubs make when striking against each other. It was like the cracking of lightning bolts or the clashing sound of the tusks of fighting elephants.

Text 37

te vai gade bhuja-javena nipātyamāne,

*anyonyato 'msa-kaṭi-pāda-karoru-jatrum,
cūrṇī-babhūvatur upetya yathārka-śākhe,
sam̐yudhyator dviradayor iva dīpta-manvyoḥ*

They swung their clubs at each other with such speed and force that as the clubs struck their shoulders, hips, feet, hands, thighs and collarbones, the weapons were crushed and broken like branches of arka trees with which two enraged elephants furiously attack each other.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Their anger was totally inflamed (*dīpta-manvyoḥ:uddīpta-kopayoḥ*). When the clubs contacted the opponent's shoulder or waist, they became crushed to powder.

Text 38

*ittham̐ tayoḥ prahatayor gadayor nṛ-vīrau,
kruddhau sva-muṣṭibhir̐ ayaḥ-sparaśair̐ apiṣṭām,
śabd̐as̐ tayoḥ praharator̐ ibhayor̐ ivāsīn,
nirghāta-vajra-paruṣas̐ tala-tāḍanotthaḥ*

Their clubs thus ruined, those great heroes among men angrily pummeled each other with their iron-hard fists. As they slapped each other, the sound resembled the crash of elephants colliding or harsh thunderclaps.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After breaking their clubs they pounded each other with their fists.

Text 39

*tayor evaṁ praharatoḥ,
sama-śikṣā-balaujasoḥ,
nirviśeṣam abhūd yuddham,
akṣīṇa-javayor nṛpa*

As they thus fought, this contest between opponents of equal training, strength and stamina reached no conclusion. And so they kept on fighting, O King, without any letup.

Text 40

*śator janma-mṛtī vidvāñ,
jīvitam ca jarā-kṛtam,
pārtham āpyāyayan svena,
tejasācintayad dhariḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa knew the secret of His enemy Jarāsandha’s birth and death, and also how he had been given life by the demoness Jarā. Considering all this, Lord Kṛṣṇa imparted His special power to Bhīma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa knew that Jarasandha was born in two pieces, and that he could be killed by separating the pieces. Kṛṣṇa also knew that the witch named Jarā had given Jarasandha life by joining the two pieces. Empowering Bhima with His own potency, Kṛṣṇa thought how to inform Bhima that Jarasandha was joined in two parts.

Text 41

*sañcintyārī-vadhopāyaṁ,
bhīmasyāmogha-darśanaḥ,
darśayām āsa viṭapam,
pāṭayann iva samjñayā*

Having determined how to kill the enemy, that Lord of infallible vision made a sign to Bhīma by tearing in half a small branch of a tree.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa took a branch in His hand within the vision of Bhīma and made a gesture suggesting, “Just as I am tearing apart this branch, so should you tear him apart.” *Iva* here means *eva* certainly.

Text 42

*tad vijñāya mahā-sattvo,
bhīmaḥ praharatām varaḥ,
gṛhītvā pādayoḥ śatruṁ,
pāṭayām āsa bhū-tale*

Understanding this sign, mighty Bhīma, the best of fighters, seized his opponent by the feet and threw him to the ground.

Text 43

ekam pādām padākramya,

*dorbhyām anyam pragrhya saḥ,
gudataḥ pāṭayām āsa,
śākham iva mahā-gajaḥ*

Bhīma pressed down on one leg with his foot while grabbing Jarāsandha’s other leg in his hands, and just as a great elephant might break the branch of a tree, Bhīma tore Jarāsandha apart from the anus upward.

Text 44

*eka-pāḍoru-vr̥ṣana,
kaṭi-pr̥ṣṭha-stanāmsake,
eka-bāhv-akṣi-bhrū-karṇe,
śakale dadṛśuḥ prajāḥ*

The King’s subjects then saw him lying in two separate pieces, each with a single leg, thigh, testicle, hip, shoulder, arm, eye, eyebrow and ear, and with half a back and chest.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The citizens saw the two parts each with one leg, one arm and one ear.

Text 45

*hāhā-kāro mahān āsīn,
nihate magadheśvare,
pūjayām āsatur bhīmam,
parirabhya jayācyatau*

With the death of the lord of Magadha, a great cry of lamentation arose, while Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa congratulated Bhīma by embracing him.

Text 46

*sahadevaṁ tat-tanayaṁ,
bhagavān bhūta-bhāvanaḥ,
abhyaṣiñcad ameyātmā,
magadhānām patim prabhuḥ,
mocayām āsa rājanyān,
saṁruddhā māgadhenā ye*

The immeasurable Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sustainer and benefactor of all living beings, coronated Jarāsandha’s son, Sahadeva, as the new ruler of the Magadhas. The Lord then freed all the kings Jarāsandha had imprisoned.

Chapter Seventy-three: Lord Kṛṣṇa Blesses the Liberated Kings

Texts 1–6

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ayute dve śatāny aṣṭau,
niruddhā yudhi nirjitāḥ,
te nirgatā giridronyām,
malinā mala-vāsasaḥ,
kṣut-kṣāmāḥ śuṣka-vadanāḥ,
samrodha-parikarśitāḥ,
dadṛśus te ghana-śyāmaḥ,
pīta-kausēya-vāsasam,
śrīvatsāṅkaḥ catur-bāhuḥ,
padma-garbhāruṇekṣaṇam,
cāru-prasanna-vadanam,
sphuran-makara-kunḍalam,
padma-hastaḥ gadā-śaṅkha,
rathāṅgair upalakṣitam,
kirīṭa-hāra-kaṭaka,
kaṭi-sūtrāṅgadāñcitam,
bhrājad-vara-maṇi-grīvaḥ,
nivītaḥ vana-mālayā,
pibanta iva cakṣurbhyām,
lihanta iva jihvayā,
jighranta iva nāsābhyām,
rambhanta iva bāhubhiḥ,
praṇemur hata-pāpmāno,
mūrdhabhiḥ pādayor hareḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Jarāsandha had defeated 20,800 kings in combat and thrown them into prison. As these kings emerged from the Giridronī fortress, they appeared dirty and shabbily dressed. They were emaciated by hunger, their faces were dried up, and they were greatly weakened by their long imprisonment.

The kings then beheld the Lord before them. His complexion was dark blue like the color of a cloud, and He wore a yellow silk garment. He was distinguished by the Śrīvatsa mark on His chest, His four mighty arms, the pinkish hue of His eyes, which resembled the whorl of a lotus, His lovely, cheerful face, His gleaming makara earrings and the lotus, club, conchshell and disc in His hands. A helmet, a jeweled necklace, a golden belt, and golden bracelets and armlets decorated His form, and on His neck He wore both the brilliant, precious Kaustubha gem and a garland of forest flowers. The kings seemed to drink His beauty with their eyes, lick Him with their tongues, relish His fragrance with their nostrils and embrace Him with their arms. Their past sins now eradicated, the kings all bowed down to Lord Hari, placing their heads at His feet.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa frees the kings imprisoned by Jarasandha. The kings were emaciated by thirst and aggrieved due to their long imprisonment. Upon leaving the prison the kings saw Kṛṣṇa, who mercifully revealed to them His effulgent personal form resplendent with the color of a fresh rain cloud. Kṛṣṇa's neck was adorned with a fragrant flower garland and His famous Kaustubha gem, which glowed brilliantly as the best of jewels. Seeing Kṛṣṇa's incomparable beauty the kings seemed to be (*iva*) embracing (*rambhantaḥ*) the Lord with their arms. Feeling most satisfied, the kings praised the Lord. Kṛṣṇa then blessed them with objects of enjoyment befitting kings and sent them off to their respective kingdoms. Sri Kṛṣṇa then returned to Indraprastha.

Text 7

*kṛṣṇa-sandarśanāhlāda,
dhvasta-saṁrodhana-klamāḥ,
praśaśaṁsur hṛṣīkeśaṁ,
gīrbhiḥ prāñjalayo nṛpāḥ*

The ecstasy of beholding Lord Kṛṣṇa having dispelled the weariness of their imprisonment, the kings stood with joined palms and offered words of praise to that supreme master of the senses.

Text 8

*rājāna ūcuḥ,
namas te deva-deveśa,
prapannārti-harāvyaya,
prapannān pāhi naḥ kṛṣṇa,
nirviṅṅān ghora-saṁsṛteḥ*

The kings said: Obeisances to You, O Lord of the ruling demigods, O destroyer of Your surrendered devotees' distress. Since we have surrendered to You, O inexhaustible Kṛṣṇa, please save us from this terrible material life, which has made us so despondent.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Deva-deveśa* indicates Kṛṣṇa's supreme position as the Lord. The phrase *prapannārti-harā* (remover of the distress of the surrendered) indicates Kṛṣṇa's affection for His devotees. *Avyaya* (inexhaustible) expresses Kṛṣṇa's unchanging, transcendental nature.

Text 9

*nainam nāthānusūyāmo,
māgadham madhusūdana,
anugraho yad bhavato,
rājñām rājya-cyutir vibho*

O master, Madhusū dana, we do not blame this King of Magadha, since it is actually by Your mercy that kings fall from their royal position, O almighty Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings said, “We do not find fault (*na anusūyāmo*) with Jarasandha for usurping our kingdoms, because by this we have obtained Your mercy.”

Text 10

*rājyaiśvarya-madonnaddho,
na śreyo vindate nṛpaḥ,
tvan-māyā-mohito 'nityā,
manyate sampado 'calāḥ*

Infatuated with his opulence and ruling power, a king loses all self-restraint and cannot obtain his true welfare. Thus bewildered by Your illusory energy, he imagines his temporary assets to be permanent.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In three verses the kings prove how losing a kingdom is due to the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. “With unrestrained (*unnaddhaḥ*) pride in his wealth and power, the king thinks his

temporary wealth to be permanent.”

Text 11

*mṛga-trṣṇām yathā bālā,
manyanta udakāśayam,
evam vaikārikīm māyām,
ayuktā vastu cakṣate*

Just as men of childish intelligence consider a mirage in the desert to be a pond of water, so those who are irrational look upon the illusory transformations of Māyā as substantial.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings said, “Furthermore, the wealth of kingdom and other things are not real wealth. Unintelligent persons (*ayuktāḥ:avivekinaḥ*) see the illusory (*māyām*) enjoyments arising from the transformations (*vaikārikīm*) of the sense objects such as sound, form and touch as real. Just as a fool sees a mirage as water, although it is actually light, foolish kings see the distress arising from the objects of enjoyment as happiness.”

Texts 12–13

*vayaṁ purā śrī-mada-naṣṭa-dṛṣṭayo,
jigīṣayāsyā itaretara-sprdhah,
ghnantah prajāḥ svā ati-nirghṛṇāḥ prabho,
mṛtyuṁ puras tvāvigaṇayya durmadāḥ,
ta eva kṛṣṇādya gabhīra-ramhasā,
duranta-vīryeṇa vicālitāḥ śriyah,
kālena tanvā bhavato 'nukampayā,*

Previously, blinded by the intoxication of riches, we wanted to conquer this earth, and thus we fought one another to achieve victory, mercilessly harassing our own subjects. We arrogantly disregarded You, O Lord, who stood before us as death. But now, O Kṛṣṇa, that powerful form of Yours called time, moving mysteriously and irresistibly, has deprived us of our opulences. Now that You have mercifully destroyed our pride, we beg simply to remember Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings said, “We ourselves exemplify this. Wanting to conquer the earth (*āsyā*), we competed with each other, not seeing You standing before us as death. Previously we were intoxicated with pride, and today we have lost our power by the influence of time, which is none other than You. Please give us Your mercy so that we will always remember Your lotus feet. We realize that losing our kingdoms was all due to Your mercy.”

Text 14

*atho na rājyam mṛga-trṣṇi-rūpitam,
dehena śaśvat patatā rujām bhuvā,
upāsitavyam sprhayāmahe vibho,
kriyā-phalam pretya ca karṇa-rocanam*

Never again will we hanker for a mirage-like kingdom—a kingdom that must be slavishly served by this mortal body, which is simply a source of disease and suffering and which is declining at every moment. Nor, O almighty Lord, will we hanker to enjoy the heavenly fruits of pious work in the next life, since the promise of

such rewards is simply an empty enticement for the ears.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The kings said, “Henceforth (*atha*) we no longer desire a beautiful (*rūpitam:sundarī-kṛtam*) kingdom, which is desired by men under the spell of illusion.” The accusative case is poetic license.

“These kingdoms have to be served by the body, which itself can be destroyed at any moment, and which is the home of disease (*rujām bhuvā:roga-mandireṇa*). Such kingdoms only give sorrow. Moreover one who has acquired a kingdom is obliged to perform *Aṣvamedha-yajñas* and other costly sacrifices. Neither do we desire to attain Svargaloka (*kriyā-phalam*), which only sounds pleasurable to the ears. Because of the continuous competition in heaven, like here on earth, there is no happiness there either.”

Text 15

*taṁ naḥ samādiśopāyaṁ,
yena te caraṇābjayoḥ,
smṛtir yathā na viramed,
api saṁsaratām iha*

**Please tell us how we may constantly remember Your lotus feet,
though we continue in the cycle of birth and death in this world.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa replies, “Then here just take the boon of *sayujya-mukti*.”

“No, no,” they reply in this verse, “please teach us the exact method that we can understand and execute by which we will never forget Your lotus feet? We have no desire to end the *samsara*, nor do we desire that which is most sought after, namely *prema-bhakti*.” It is due to the rise of humility in them that they do not desire this.

“Nor do we even desire remembrance of You which is one limb of *bhakti* (*smaranam*). We only desire the means for such remembrance.” The kings do not use the term “please give it to us” (*dehi*) but rather say *samādiśa*, “please instruct us” which shows clearly the highest degree of qualities like humility, sense control, and freedom from material desire which are necessary qualifications for *bhakti*.

Text 16

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya,
haraye paramātmane,
praṇata-kleśa-nāśāya,
govindāya namo namaḥ*

Again and again we offer our obeisances unto Lord Kṛṣṇa, Hari, the son of Vasudeva. That Supreme Soul, Govinda, vanquishes the suffering of all who surrender to Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings laid down with all eight limbs touching the ground to offer respect to Kṛṣṇa. They then engaged in Kṛṣṇa *nama-sankirtana* (*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya, haraye, govindāya*) while requesting the Lord to mercifully teach them even though they were unqualified.

The kings sang, “We offer our repeated obeisances unto Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, who appeared from Vasudeva out of compassion for all living entities; to Hari, who delivers even the demons from the suffering of the material world; to the Paramatma, who appears as the Supersoul for the devotees in *santa-rasa*, and as the source of supreme prema for the devotees in *dasya-rasa*; to the destroyer of the miseries (*kleśa-nāśāya*), which create obstacles to *bhakti* for the *sadhaka-bhaktas* (*praṇata*); and to Govinda, who reaches out to (*vindate*) our senses (*gāḥ*) such as the eyes, ears

and nose in order to give the nectar of His beauty, fragrance and sweet-sounding voice.”

Text 17

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
samstūyamāno bhagavān,
rājabhir mukta-bandhanaiḥ,
tān āha karuṇas tāta,
śaranyah ślakṣṇayā girā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus the kings, now freed from bondage, glorified the Supreme Lord. Then, my dear Parīkṣit, that merciful bestower of shelter spoke to them in a gentle voice.

Text 18

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
adya prabhṛti vo bhūpā,
mayy ātmany akhileśvare,
su-dṛḍhā jāyate bhaktir,
bāḍham āśamsitaṁ tathā*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: From now on, my dear kings, you will have firm devotion to Me, the Supreme Self and the Lord of all that be. I assure you this will come to pass, just as you desire.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By addressing the kings as *bhūpā*,

“O rulers and nourishers of the earth” Kṛṣṇa implies, “Since you revealed your true nature as My devotees in your statement *taṁ naḥ samādiśopāyam* (v.15), therefore you will nourish the entire earth by spreading upon it the nectar of the practice of bhakti. I promise (*bāḍham*) that just as you desired (*āśamsitam*), your devotion will become very fixed. I will instruct and you will understand, practice, and then attain firm remembrance of Me. *Prema-bhakti* (*dṛḍhā-bhaktir*) will gradually appear from such uninterrupted remembrance. At the present time you will attain steadiness in practice (*sadhana*) and quickly attain (*jayate*) the goal (*sadhya*). From today on (*adya prabhṛti*) you will experience ever-fresh spiritual realizations.”

Text 19

*diṣṭyā vyavasitam bhūpā,
bhavanta ṛta-bhāṣiṇaḥ,
śrīy-aiśvarya-madonnāham,
paśya unmādakam nṛṇām*

Fortunately you have come to the proper conclusion, my dear kings, and what you have spoken is true. I can see that human beings’ lack of self-restraint, which arises from their intoxication with opulence and power, simply leads to madness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “You are very fortunate to have the resolve that devotional service alone should be performed. Most worldly kings are mad after sense enjoyment and bound by Maya. From wealth (*sri*) comes the concept of power (*aiśvarya*), from *aiśvarya* comes intoxication (*mada*), and from intoxication comes bondage (*unnāham*).” The word *paśya* (see) is a poetic form of *paśyami*.

Text 20

*haihayo nahuṣo veṇo,
rāvaṇo narako 'pare,
śrī-madād bhramśitāḥ sthānād,
deva-daitya-nareśvarāḥ*

Haihaya, Nahuṣa, Veṇa, Rāvaṇa, Naraka and many other rulers of demigods, men and demons fell from their elevated positions because of infatuation with material opulence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Many kings have fallen from their positions (*sthānāt:sva-padāt*) due to the intoxication of wealth.”

Text 21

*bhavanta etad vijñāya,
dehādy utpādyam anta-vat,
mām yajanto 'dhvarair yuktāḥ,
prajā dharmeṇa rakṣyatha*

Understanding that this material body and everything connected with it have a beginning and an end, worship Me by Vedic sacrifices, and with clear intelligence protect your subjects in accordance with the principles of religion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “You should observe the customs of ordinary society in accordance with My order.”

Text 22

*santanvantaḥ prajā-tantūn,
sukhaṁ duḥkhaṁ bhavābhavau,
prāptaṁ prāptaṁ ca sevanto,
mac-cittā vicariṣyatha*

As you live your lives, begetting generations of progeny and encountering happiness and distress, birth and death, always keep your minds fixed on Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “You should spend your time producing sons (*praja-tantun*), tolerating happiness and distress and encountering birth and death (*bhava-abhava*).” *Prāptaṁ* (encountered) is not in the dual form because of the abundance of terms, so only one form remains according to the rule (*eka-śesa*).

Text 23

*udāsīnāś ca dehādāv,
ātmārāmā dhṛta-vratāḥ,
mayy āveśya manaḥ samyañ,
mām ante brahma yāsyatha*

Be detached from the body and everything connected to it. Remaining self-satisfied, steadfastly keep your vows while concentrating your minds fully on Me. In this way you will ultimately attain Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Text 24

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity ādiśya nṛpān kṛṣṇo,
bhagavān bhuvaneśvaraḥ,
teṣāṃ nyayukta puruṣān,
striyo majjana-karmaṇi*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus instructed the kings, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all the worlds, engaged male and female servants in bathing and grooming them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa engaged men and women in rubbing oil on the king's bodies, bathing them and other services.

Text 25

*saparyāṃ kārayāṃ āsa,
sahadevena bhārata,
naradevocitair vastrair;
bhūṣaṇaiḥ srag-vilepanaiḥ*

O descendant of Bharata, the Lord then had King Sahadeva honor them with offerings of clothing, jewelry, garlands and sandalwood paste, all suitable for royalty.

Text 26

*bhojayitvā varānnena,
su-snātān samalaṅkṛtān,
bhogaiś ca vividhair yuktāms,
tāmbūlādyair nṛpocitaiḥ*

After they had been properly bathed and adorned, Lord Kṛṣṇa saw to it that they dined on excellent food. He also presented them with various items befitting the pleasure of kings, such as betel nut.

Text 27

*te pūjitā mukundena,
rājāno mṛṣṭa-kuṇḍalāḥ,
virejur mocitāḥ kleśāt,
prāvṛḍ-ante yathā grahāḥ*

Honored by Lord Mukunda and freed from tribulation, the kings shone splendidly, their earrings gleaming, just as the moon and other celestial bodies shine brilliantly in the sky at the end of the rainy season.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Now that they were relieved of their distress, the kings appeared resplendent like the moon and other planets (*grahah*) after the rainy season.

Text 28

*rathān sad-aśvān āropya,
maṇi-kāñcana-bhūṣitān,*

*prīṇayya sunṛtair vākyaiḥ,
sva-deśān pratyayāpayat*

Then the Lord arranged for the kings to be seated on chariots drawn by fine horses and adorned with jewels and gold, and pleasing them with gracious words, He sent them off to their own kingdoms.

Text 29

*ta evaṁ mocitāḥ kṛcchrāt,
kṛṣṇena su-mahātmanā,
yayus tam eva dhyāyantāḥ,
kṛtāni ca jagat-pateḥ*

Thus liberated from all difficulty by Kṛṣṇa, the greatest of personalities, the kings departed, and as they went they thought only of Him, the Lord of the universe, and of His wonderful deeds.

Text 30

*jagaduḥ prakṛtibhyas te,
mahā-puruṣa-ceṣṭitam,
yathānvaśāsad bhagavāms,
tathā cakrur atandritāḥ*

The kings told their ministers and other associates what the

Personality of Godhead had done, and then they diligently carried out the orders He had imparted to them.

Text 31

*jarāsandham ghātayitvā,
bhīmasenena keśavaḥ,
pārthābhyām saṁyutaḥ prāyāt,
sahadevena pūjitaḥ*

Having arranged for Bhīmasena to kill Jarāsandha, Lord Keśava accepted worship from King Sahadeva and then departed with the two sons of Pṛthā.

Text 32

*gatvā te khāṇḍava-prastham,
śaṅkhān dadhmur jitārayaḥ,
harṣayantaḥ sva-suhṛdo,
durhṛdām cāsukhāvahāḥ*

When they arrived at Indraprastha, the victorious heroes blew their conchshells, bringing joy to their well-wishing friends and sorrow to their enemies.

Text 33

*tac chrutvā prīta-manasa,
indraprastha-nivāsinaḥ,
menire māgadham śāntam,
rājā cāpta-manorathaḥ*

The residents of Indraprastha were very pleased to hear that sound, for they understood that now the King of Magadha had been put to rest. King Yudhiṣṭhira felt that his desires were now fulfilled.

Text 34

*abhivandyātha rājānaṁ,
bhīmārjuna-janārdanaḥ,
sarvam āśrāvayām cakrur,
ātmanā yad anuṣṭhitam*

Bhīma, Arjuna and Janārdana offered their respects to the King and informed him fully about what they had done.

Text 35

*niśamya dharmā-rājas tat,
keśavenānukampitam,
ānandāśru-kalām muñcan,
premnā novāca kiñcana*

Upon hearing their account of the great favor Lord Keśava had mercifully shown him, King Dharmarāja shed tears of ecstasy. He felt such love that he could not say anything.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Stunned in bliss, Yudhisthira could not speak.

Chapter Seventy-four: The Deliverance of Śiśupāla at the Rājasūya Sacrifice

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ yudhiṣṭhiro rājā,
jarāsandha-vadham vibhoḥ,
kṛṣṇasya cānubhāvaṁ taṁ,
śrutvā prītas tam abravīt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus heard of the killing of Jarāsandha, and also of almighty Kṛṣṇa’s wonderful power, King Yudhiṣṭhira addressed the Lord as follows with great pleasure.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter the *brahmanas* worship Kṛṣṇa with the *agra-pūjā* during the Rājasūya sacrifice, Kṛṣṇa beheads Sisupala, and Duryodhana’s pride is injured. Hearing about the killing of Jarasandha and the power of Kṛṣṇa, King Yudhisthira was pleased and spoke.

Text 2

*śrī-yudhiṣṭhira uvāca,
ye syus trai-lokya-guravaḥ,
sarve lokā maheśvarāḥ,
vahanti durlabham labdvā,
śirasaivānuśāsanam*

Śrī Yudhiṣṭhira said: All the exalted spiritual masters of the three worlds, together with the inhabitants and rulers of the various planets, carry on their heads Your command, which is rarely obtained.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Yudhisthira said, “The exalted spiritual masters of the three worlds like Sanaka, the directors of universal affairs like Brahma, Siva and Indra, and all the inhabitants of the planets carry Your orders upon their heads.” By the phrase *durlabham labdvā* (rarely obtained) Yudhisthira implies that one receives Kṛṣṇa’s orders only by great good fortune, and thus the king shows his respect.

Text 3

*sa bhavān aravindākṣo,
dīnānām īśa-māninām,
dhatte ’nuśāsanam bhūmaṁs,
tad atyanta-vidāmbanam*

That You, the lotus-eyed Supreme Lord, accept the orders of wretched fools who presume themselves rulers is a great pretense on Your part, O all-pervading one.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira said, “It is certainly a disgrace (*atyanta vidāmbanam*) for us that You accept the orders of us low persons (*dīnānām*). People will mock us for making the Supreme Lord Himself our order-carrier.”

Text 4

*na hy ekasyādvitīyasya,
brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ,
karmabhir vardhate tejo,
hrasate ca yathā raveḥ*

But of course the power of the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul, the primeval one without a second, is neither increased nor diminished by His activities, any more than the sun’s power is by its movements.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Even though You execute the orders of *jivas* like us, You do not suffer any loss of position.” That is expressed in this verse.

Yudhisthira said, “Because all Your forms are only the Lord with similar quality You are called one, *eka*. Because *maya* and the *jivas* are Your energies (*saktis*) there is nothing different from You. Therefore You are called *ādvitīyasya*, without a second. Therefore, how is it possible for You to lose Your exalted position? Moreover though You are the all-pervading Absolute Truth (*brahmaṇaḥ*), there is no reduction in Your position. Since You are the Supersoul (*paramātmanaḥ*) controlling all *jivas*, You cannot possibly come under the regulation of such a *jiva* as myself.”

Yudhisthira makes this statement out of humility. In fact Kṛṣṇa is controlled by His devotees, but this does not diminish the Lord’s position in the least. Rather this is Kṛṣṇa’s greatest exaltation because it reveals the profound mercy of the Lord which He is always exhibiting. This is seen in such statements as *darśayaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka, ātmano bhr̥tya-vaśyatām*, “The Supreme Lord exhibited how much He can be subdued by His devotees.” (SB 10.11.9) Yudhisthira’s words, “He is like the sun” (*yathā raveḥ*), implies that God never decreases His power, just as the sun shines on earth on the home of the dog-eater as well as illuminating the home of the supreme demigod, Brahma, on the top of

Sumeru Mountain.

Text 5

*na vai te 'jita bhaktānām,
mamāham iti mādharma,
tvaṁ taveti ca nānā-dhīḥ,
paśūnām iva vaiḥṛtī*

O unconquerable Mādhava, even Your devotees make no distinctions of “I” and “mine,” “you” and “yours,” for this is the perverted mentality of animals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Why are you not thinking that since I am thus the Supreme Lord, it is improper for Me to be engaging in such low activities?”

Yudhisthira answers in this verse: “O unconquerable one! Even Your devotees do not have the perverted (*vaiḥṛtī*) intelligence of ignorant men, who think like animals (*paśūnām*) in terms of “I and mine”, “You and yours”, and “Being vastly learned, I am the best and need not follow anyone’s order.” Nor do they think, “Because you have no scriptural knowledge you are a fool, and must render service to everyone else.”

Avaiḥṛtī is sometimes seen in the text instead of *vaiḥṛtī*. By this word Yudhisthira says, “Your devotees have no material mentality of making distinctions, and so their mentality is purely spiritual (*cin-mayī*). What then to speak of Your mentality?”

Text 6

śrī-śuka uvāca,

*ity uktvā yajñiye kāle,
vavre yuktān sa ṛtvijaḥ,
kṛṣṇānumoditaḥ pārtho,
brāhmaṇān brahma-vādinah*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having said this, King Yudhiṣṭhira waited until the proper time for the sacrifice was at hand. Then with Lord Kṛṣṇa’s permission he selected suitable priests, all expert authorities on the Vedas, to execute the sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At the proper time for the sacrifice, namely spring, Yudhisthira took Kṛṣṇa’s permission and appointed suitable *brahmanas* to do it.

Texts 7–9

*dvaipāyano bharadvājaḥ,
sumantur gotamo ’sitaḥ,
vasiṣṭhaś cyavanaḥ kaṇvo,
maitreyaḥ kavaśas tritaḥ,
viśvāmitro vāmadevaḥ,
sumatir jaiminiḥ kratuḥ,
pailaḥ parāśaro gargo,
vaiśampāyana eva ca,
atharvā kaśyapo dhaumyo,
rāmo bhārgava āsuriḥ,
vītihotro madhucchandā,
vīraseno ’kṛtavraṇaḥ*

He selected Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana, Bharadvāja, Sumantu, Gotama and Asita, along with Vasiṣṭha, Cyavana, Kaṇva, Maitreya, Kavaśa and

Trita. He also selected Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, Sumati, Jaimini, Kratu, Paila and Parāśara, as well as Garga, Vaiśampāyana, Atharvā, Kaśyapa, Dhaumya, Rāma of the Bhārgavas, Āsuri, Vītihoṭra, Madhucchandā, Vīrasena and Akṛtavraṇa.

Texts 10–11

*upahūtās tathā cānye,
droṇa-bhīṣma-kṛpādayaḥ,
dhṛtarāṣṭraḥ saha-suto,
viduraś ca mahā-matiḥ,
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ,
śūdrā yajña-didṛkṣavaḥ,
tatreyuḥ sarva-rājāno,
rājñām prakṛtayo nṛpa*

O King, others who were invited included Droṇa, Bhīṣma, Kṛpa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra with his sons, the wise Vidura, and many other brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śū dras, all eager to witness the sacrifice. Indeed, all the kings came there with their entourages.

Text 12

*tatas te deva-yajanaṁ,
brāhmaṇāḥ svarṇa-lāṅgalaiḥ,
kṛṣṭvā tatra yathāmnāyaṁ,
dīkṣayām cakrire nṛpam*

The brāhmaṇa priests then plowed the sacrificial ground with golden plowshares and initiated King Yudhiṣṭhira for the sacrifice in accordance with the traditions set down by standard authorities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The brahmanas purified the sacrificial arena (*deva-yajanam:yajña-bhūmim*) by plowing it with a golden plough and by performing various rituals. They purified Yudhisthira through initiation.

Texts 13–15

*haimāḥ kilopakaraṇā,
varuṇasya yathā purā,
indrādayo loka-pālā,
viriñci-bhava-samyutāḥ,
sa-gaṇāḥ siddha-gandharvā,
vidyādhara-mahoragāḥ,
munayo yakṣa-rakṣāṁsi,
khaga-kinnara-cāraṇāḥ,
rājānaś ca samāhūtā,
rāja-patnyaś ca sarvaśaḥ,
rājasūyaṁ samīyuh sma,
rājñāḥ pāṇḍu-sutasya vai,
menire kṛṣṇa-bhaktasya,
sūpapannam avismitāḥ*

The utensils used in the sacrifice were made of gold, just as in the ancient Rājasū ya performed by Lord Varuṇa. Indra, Brahmā, Śiva and many other planetary rulers; the Siddhas and Gandharvas with their entourage; the Vidyādharas; great serpents; sages; Yakṣas; Rākṣasas; celestial birds; Kinnaras; Cāraṇas; and earthly kings—all were invited, and indeed they all came from every

direction to the Rājasū ya sacrifice of King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Pāṇḍu. They were not in the least astonished to see the opulence of the sacrifice, since it was quite appropriate for a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They were not astonished (*avismitāḥ*) to see the abundance of golden utensils as was previously seen in the ancient Rājasūya performed for Lord Varuṇa. They simply thought, “What is impossible for Kṛṣṇa’s devotee?”

Text 16

*ayājayan mahā-rājam,
yājakā deva-varcasah,
rājasūyena vidhi-vat,
pracetasam ivāmarāḥ*

The priests, as powerful as gods, performed the Rājasuya sacrifice for King Yudhiṣṭhira in accordance with the Vedic injunctions, just as the demigods had previously performed it for Varuṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as the demigods performed Rājasūya of Varuna, so the priests performed the sacrifice for Yudhisthira.

Text 17

*sūtye ’hany avanī-pālo,
yājakān sadasas-patīn,
apūjayan mahā-bhāgān,
yathā-vat su-samāhitah*

On the day of extracting the soma juice, King Yudhiṣṭhira properly and very attentively worshiped the priests and the most exalted personalities of the assembly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira worshiped the priests on the day of extracting *soma* (*sūtye 'hany*).

Text 18

*sadasyāgryārhanārham vai,
vimṛśantaḥ sabhā-sadaḥ,
nādhyagacchann anaikāntyāt,
sahadevas tadābravīt*

The members of the assembly then pondered over who among them should be worshiped first, but since there were many personalities qualified for this honor, they were unable to decide. Finally Sahadeva spoke up.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The undecided members (*na adhyagacchan*) of the assembly were the less intelligent ones, and not such exalted personalities as Brahmā, Śiva and Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva, who thought, “Since today no one is asking our opinion, why should we say anything? Furthermore, Sahadeva is here and he is renowned for his sharp skill in analyzing all sorts of circumstances. He can help appoint the person who is to be worshiped first. Only if he somehow fails to speak or cannot understand the situation will we speak up, despite no one’s having inquired from us.” Having made up their minds in this way, these great personalities remained silent.

Text 19

*arhati hy acyutaḥ śraīṣṭhyam,
bhagavān sātvatām patiḥ,
eṣa vai devatāḥ sarvā,
deśa-kāla-dhanādayaḥ*

[Sahadeva said:] Certainly it is Acyuta, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and chief of the Yādavas, who deserves the highest position. In truth, He Himself comprises all the demigods worshiped in sacrifice, along with such aspects of the worship as the sacred place, the time and the paraphernalia.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sahadeva said, “Acyuta factually possesses supremacy (*śraīṣṭhyam*) in both the absolute and relative sense. It goes without saying that Kṛṣṇa is supreme among all demigods, sacred places, time and wealth.”

Texts 20–21

*yad-ātmakam idaṁ viśvaṁ,
kratavaś ca yad-ātmakāḥ,
agnir āhutayo mantrā,
sāṅkhyam yogaś ca yat-paraḥ,
eka evādvitīyo 'śāv,
aitad-ātmyam idaṁ jagat,
ātmanātmāśrayaḥ sabhyāḥ,
sṛjaty avati hantya ajaḥ*

This entire universe is founded upon Him, as are the great

sacrificial performances, with their sacred fires, oblations and mantras. Sāṅkhya and yoga both aim toward Him, the one without a second. O assembly members, that unborn Lord, relying solely on Himself, creates, maintains and destroys this cosmos by His personal energies, and thus the existence of this universe depends on Him alone.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Sahadeva expands on his previous statement: “Kṛṣṇa alone is the aim (*yat parah*) of *jnana* (*sankhya*) and *astanga yoga*. Kṛṣṇa is *advitīyaḥ*, one without a second, and nothing is different from Him since He is one with everything (*aitad-ātmyam*). O members of the assembly, being His own shelter (*ātma-āśrayaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa is not dependent on anyone else. As the original unborn (*ajah*) Lord, Kṛṣṇa creates, maintains and destroys (*śṛjaty avati hanti*) the universe. If you have differing opinions then present them and I will settle them.”

Text 22

*vividhānītha karmāṇi,
janayan yad-avekṣayā īhate yad ayaṁ sarvaḥ,
śreyo dharmādi-lakṣaṇam*

He creates the many activities of this world, and thus by His grace the whole world endeavors for the ideals of religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sahadeva said, “By the mercy of Sri Kṛṣṇa all the *karmic* activities of the entire world and their fruits as well are realized. For this reason alone it is proper to worship Him first. Furthermore, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy alone on this earth planet (*iha: bhūr-loke*) (*avekṣayā: anugraheṇa*) one can perform austerities, *yoga* and

other practices (*vividhānīha karmāṇi*) for self-realization. And from Kṛṣṇa alone all people gain auspicious results in pursuit of their *dharma*. Both the action and the result depend on Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 23

*tasmāt kṛṣṇāya mahate,
dīyatām paramārhaṇam,
evam cet sarva-bhūtānām,
ātmanas cārhaṇam bhavet*

Therefore we should give the highest honor to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord. If we do so, we will be honoring all living beings and also our own selves.

Text 24

*sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtāya,
kṛṣṇāyānanya-darśine,
deyam śāntāya pūrṇāya,
dattasyānantyam icchatā*

Anyone who wishes the honor he gives to be reciprocated infinitely should honor Kṛṣṇa, the perfectly peaceful and perfectly complete Soul of all beings, the Supreme Lord, who views nothing as separate from Himself.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sahadeva said, “This principle applies not only to this time in this kingdom, but for all times in all places.

Dwelling within all living beings, Kṛṣṇa sees nothing separate from Himself (*ānanya-darśine*).”

Text 25

*ity uktvā sahadevo 'bhūt,
tūṣṇīm kṛṣṇānubhāva-vit,
tac chrutvā tuṣṭuvuḥ sarve,
sādhu sādhu iti sattamāḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Having said this, Sahadeva, who understood Lord Kṛṣṇa’s powers, fell silent. And having heard his words, all the saintly persons present congratulated him, exclaiming “Excellent! Excellent!”

Text 26

*śrutvā dvijeritaṁ rājā,
jñātvā hārdam sabhā-sadām,
samarhayad dhṛṣṭikeśam,
prītaḥ pranaya-vihvalaḥ*

The King was delighted to hear this pronouncement of the brāhmaṇas, from which he understood the mood of the entire assembly. Overwhelmed with love, he fully worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of the senses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing the brahmana’s pronouncement (*dvija-īritam*) *sādhu sādhu iti*, “excellent, excellent”,

Yudhisthira understood that the assembly approved, so he worshiped Kṛṣṇa.

A messenger from Yudhisthira said, “My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, now You are absorbed in the duty of washing everyone’s feet, which You have taken upon Yourself. But the king wants to demonstrate the truth, being very eager to wash the feet of You who are worthy of worship by all, including Brahma and Siva. Therefore, please quickly go there.”

Yudhisthira then worshiped Hṛṣīkeśaṁ (Kṛṣṇa), the attractor of all his senses, by bathing His feet. In loving anger Kṛṣṇa protested, “No, don’t do this, don’t do this!”

Texts 27–28

*tat-pādāv avanijyāpaḥ,
śirasā loka-pāvanīḥ,
sa-bhāryaḥ sānujāmātyaḥ,
sa-kuṭumbo vahan mudā,
vāsobhiḥ pīta-kaṣeyair,
bhūṣaṇaiś ca mahā-dhanaiḥ,
arhayitvāśru-pūrṇākṣo,
nāśakat samavekṣitum*

After bathing Lord Kṛṣṇa’s feet, Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira joyfully sprinkled the water upon his own head, and then upon the heads of his wife, brothers, other family members and ministers. That water purifies the whole world. As he honored the Lord with presentations of yellow silken garments and precious jeweled ornaments, the King’s tear-filled eyes prevented him from looking directly at the Lord.

Text 29

*ittham sabhājitaṁ vīkṣya,
sarve prāñjalayo janāḥ,
namo jayeti nemus taṁ,
nipetuḥ puṣpa-vrṣṭayah*

When they saw Lord Kṛṣṇa thus honored, nearly all who were present joined their palms reverentially, exclaiming “Obeisances to You! All victory to You!” and then bowed down to Him. Flowers rained down from above.

Text 30

*ittham niśamya damaghoṣa-sutaḥ sva-pīṭhād,
utthāya kṛṣṇa-guṇa-varṇana-jāta-manyuḥ,
utkṣipyā bāhum idam āha sadasy amarṣī,
saṁśrāvayan bhagavate paruṣāṇy abhītaḥ*

The intolerant son of Damaghoṣa became infuriated upon hearing the glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental qualities. He stood up from his seat and, angrily waving his arms, fearlessly spoke to the entire assembly the following harsh words against the Supreme Lord.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sisupala’s intention in keeping quiet during the worship and speaking only afterwards is herein revealed: Sisupala thought, “If I object before the worship and give many reasons why Kṛṣṇa is ineligible, I certainly cannot be defeated in argument. Upon hearing my points the assembly will stop worshipping Kṛṣṇa and

worship a qualified person instead. Then the sacrifice will proceed properly. I will remain silent for now, but after Kṛṣṇa is worshiped I will establish His lack of qualification, and thus demonstrate how the sacrifice is now spoiled. After fulfilling my desire amidst cries of dismay, I will depart with my associates, allied kings, learned *brahmanas* and relatives like Duryodhana.”

In this regard the *smṛti* says: *apūjyā yatra pūjyante pūjyānām ca vyatikramah*, “In the place where those who are not to be worshiped are worshiped, there is offense to those who are actually worshipable.” There is also the following statement: *pratibadhnāti hi śreyah pūjyapūjya-vyatikramah*, “Improperly understanding who is to be worshiped and who is not to be worshiped will impede one’s progress in life.”

Text 31

*īśo duratyayaḥ kāla,
iti satyavatī srutiḥ,
vṛddhānām api yad buddhir,
bāla-vākyair vibhidyaite*

[Śiśupāla said:] The statement of the Vedas that time is the unavoidable controller of all has indeed been proven true, since the intelligence of wise elders has now become diverted by the words of a mere boy.

Text 32

*yūyam pātra-vidām śreṣṭhā,
mā mandhvaṁ bāla-bhāṣitam,*

*sadasas-patayaḥ sarve,
kṛṣṇo yat sammato 'rhaṇe*

O leaders of the assembly, you know best who is a fit candidate for being honored. Therefore you should not heed the words of a child when he claims that Kṛṣṇa deserves to be worshiped.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sisupala said, “O leaders of the assembly! Do not accept the words of a child by which Kṛṣṇa was selected for the first worship.” According to the inspiration of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, there is another meaning to Sisupala’s statement. Speaking to Duryodhana and other members of the opposition, Sisupala said, “Do not regard these as a child’s words. They are factually the words of the *Vedas*.”

Texts 33–34

*tapo-vidyā-vrata-dharān,
jñāna-vidhvasta-kalmaṣān,
paramarṣīn brahma-niṣṭhāl,
loka-pālais ca pūjitān,
sadas-patīn atikramya,
gopālah kula-pāmsanaḥ,
yathā kākaḥ puroḍāśam,
saparyām katham arhati*

How can you pass over the most exalted members of this assembly—topmost sages dedicated to the Absolute Truth endowed with powers of austerity, divine insight and strict adherence to severe vows, sanctified by knowledge and worshiped even by the rulers of the universe? How does this cowerd boy, the disgrace of

His family, deserve your worship, any more than a crow deserves to eat the sacred puroḍāśa rice cake?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Text 33) Sisupala is trying to win the assembly members over to his side by flattering them with words like *tapo-vidyā*.

(Text 34) Sisupala calls Kṛṣṇa a disgrace to His dynasty (*kula-pāmsanaḥ*) because Kṛṣṇa killed His uncle Kamsa. But the word may also be analyzed as *ku-lapām amsana*, giving a totally different meaning. *Ku-lapāḥ* means those who criticize or engage in harmful gossip. The word *amsana*, derived from the verb *amsayati*, means “destroyer”. Therefore *ku-lapām amsana* means Kṛṣṇa destroys those who speak ill words.

Similarly, Sisupala compared Kṛṣṇa to a crow with the words *yathā kākāḥ*. But these words may also be divided *yathā a-kākāḥ*. Then the meaning is that Kṛṣṇa, who is forever situated on the pure transcendental platform, is beyond all material happiness (*ka*) and misery (*āka*). Finally, Śiśupāla was right in saying that Kṛṣṇa, who is completely transcendental to all material dualities, does not deserve merely the *puroḍāśa* rice cake offered to lesser demigods like Indra. Rather, Kṛṣṇa deserves the offering of one’s very life and soul.

Text 35

*varṇāśrama-kulāpetah,
sarva-dharma-bahiṣ-kṛtaḥ,
svaira-varṭi guṇair hīnaḥ,
saparyāṁ katham arhati*

How does one who follows no principles of the social and spiritual orders or of family ethics, who has been excluded from all religious duties, who behaves whimsically, and who has no good qualities—

how does such a person deserve to be worshiped?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Superficially, *varṇāśrama-kulāpetah* means “He is a person who has transgressed (*apeta*) *varṇa*, *asrama* and *kula*.” The other meaning is: Kṛṣṇa is the person obtained (*itaḥ:prāptaḥ*) as a son by Vasudeva who was *varṇāśrama-kulāpāḥ*, a strict follower of the standards of *varṇa*, *āśrama* and *kula*.

By the phrase *sarva-dharma-bahiṣ-kṛtaḥ svaira*, Sisupala said, “He is devoid of all religious behavior and moves independently.” The other meaning is: “Because Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller He acts independently. He is beyond all the *gunas* (material qualities) such as *sattva* because His nature is situated in pure transcendental goodness. How can such a person deserve mere ordinary worship? He is deserving of complete surrender by all.”

Text 36

*yayātinaiṣām hi kulam,
śaptam sadbhir bahiṣ-kṛtam,
vr̥thā-pāna-ratam śasvat,
saparyām katham arhati*

Yayāti cursed the dynasty of these Yādavas, and ever since then they have been ostracized by honest men and addicted to liquor. How, then, does Kṛṣṇa deserve to be worshiped?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The inner meaning of Sisupala’s words shows how he is glorifying Kṛṣṇa and His Yadu dynasty: “The Yadu dynasty was cursed by Yayati but then reinstated by saintly persons. Therefore Kārtavīrya-arjuna and others became emperors.”

Outer meaning: “The Yadus are addicted (*ratam*) to wantonly (*vr̥thā*) drinking (*pāna*) liquor.” The inner meaning is: “As rulers the Yadus

have become absorbed in *pāna*, protecting the earth. Considering all this, how does Kṛṣṇa, the chief of the Yadus, deserve useless (*vṛthā*) worship? Rather, He deserves the most opulent worship.”

Text 37

*brahmaṛṣi-sevitān deśān,
hitvaite 'brahma-varcasam,
samudraṁ durgam āśritya,
bādhante dasyavaḥ prajāḥ*

These Yādavas have abandoned the holy lands inhabited by saintly sages and have instead taken shelter of a fortress in the sea, a place where no brahminical principles are observed. There, just like thieves, they harass their subjects.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sisupala said, “These Yadus are thieves taking shelter in a fortress within the ocean called Dvārāka, which is devoid of *brahminical* potency. There they harass their subjects (*prajāḥ*).”

The alternate meaning is: “After abandoning the district of Mathura because it provided no protecting fortress, they took shelter of a fortress within the sea called Dvārakā, which is full of *brahminical* potency (*brahma-varcasam:brahma-tejo-mayam*). Now they suppress unlawful persons like us [Sisupala] who have been born (*jā*) with great power (*pra*).”

Text 38

*evam-ādīny abhadrāṇi,
babhāṣe naṣṭa-maṅgalāḥ,*

*novāca kiñcid bhagavān,
yathā simhaḥ śivā-rutam*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Bereft of all good fortune, Śiśupāla spoke these and other insults. But the Supreme Lord said nothing, just as a lion ignores a jackal’s cry.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: As a lion listens to jackals’ cries (*śivā-rutam*) without responding, Kṛṣṇa listened to Sisupala without replying. The other meaning is: “As Nṛsimhadeva (*simhaḥ*) hears the prayers (*rutam:stutiṁ*) spoken by Siva but remains silent because there is nothing more auspicious, Kṛṣṇa remained silent hearing those praises (unintended of course) from Sisupala.”

Text 39

*bhagavan-nindanaṁ śrutvā,
duḥsahaṁ tat sabhā-sadaḥ,
karṇau pidhāya nirjagmuḥ,
śapantaś cedi-paṁ ruṣā*

Upon hearing such intolerable blasphemy of the Lord, several members of the assembly covered their ears and walked out, angrily cursing the King of Cedi.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The assembly cursed Sisupala, “Oh Sisupala, you should immediately die!” and then left the hall.

Text 40

*nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṅvaṁs,
tat-parasya janasya vā,
tato nāpaiti yaḥ so 'pi,
yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ*

Anyone who fails to immediately leave the place where he hears criticism of the Supreme Lord or His faithful devotee will certainly fall down, bereft of his pious credit.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse gives scriptural evidence supporting their leaving the hall.

Text 41

*tataḥ pāṇḍu-sutāḥ kruddhā,
matsya-kaikaya-sṛṅjayāḥ,
udāyudhāḥ samuttasthuḥ,
śiśupāla-jighāṁsavaḥ*

Then the sons of Pāṇḍu became furious, and together with the warriors of the Matsya, Kaikaya and Sṛṅjaya clans, they rose up from their seats with weapons poised, ready to kill Śiśupāla.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sons of Pandu, headed by Bhima, became very angry and suddenly sprang to their feet.

Text 42

*tataś caidyas tv asambhrānto,
jagrhe khaḍga-carmaṇī,*

*bhartsayan kṛṣṇa-pakṣīyān,
rājñāḥ sadasi bhārata*

Undaunted, Śiśupāla then took up his sword and shield in the midst of all the assembled kings, O Bhārata, and hurled insults at those who sided with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 43

*tāvad utthāya bhagavān,
svān nivārya svayaṁ ruṣā,
śiraḥ kṣurānta-cakreṇa,
jahāra patato ripoḥ*

At that point the Supreme Lord stood up and checked His devotees. He then angrily sent forth His razor-sharp disc and severed the head of His enemy as he was attacking.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s intention was as follows: “If I remain silent, then they will fight amongst each other and fill the sacrificial arena with blood. And if I mount My chariot and fight him with My army, then also this place will become contaminated by blood. Either way, the Rājasūya sacrifice of My dear most Yudhisthira will be spoiled. Reconciliation at this point is too difficult. Therefore this must be done.” Deciding thus, Kṛṣṇa immediately stood up and cut off Sisupala’s head with His razor-sharp disc in such a way that not a drop of blood fell within the sacrificial arena.

Text 44

*śabdaḥ kolāhalo 'thāsīc,
chīśupāle hate mahān,
tasyānuyāyino bhūpā,
dudruvur jīvitaiṣiṇaḥ*

When Śīśupāla was thus killed, a great roar and howl went up from the crowd. Taking advantage of that disturbance, the few kings who were supporters of Śīśupāla quickly left the assembly out of fear for their lives.

Text 45

*caidyā-dehotthitam jyotir,
vāsudevam upāviśat,
paśyatām sarva-bhūtānām,
ulkeva bhūvi khāc cyutā*

An effulgent light rose from Śīśupāla's body and, as everyone watched, entered Lord Kṛṣṇa just like a meteor falling from the sky to the earth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: That effulgent light, containing the eternal spiritual body within it, rose in the sky all the way up to Vaikuntha. After appreciating the non-difference of Vaikuntha-natha and Sri Kṛṣṇa, it again merged with Kṛṣṇa, like a comet falling from the sky. Śīśupāla remained within Kṛṣṇa until the end of the Lord's earthly pastimes at Prabhasa-ksetra, and then returned to the side of his master, the Supreme Lord of Vaikuntha. The popular view however is that Śīśupāla achieved impersonal liberation by merging into Kṛṣṇa's bodily

effulgence (*sayujya-mukti*).

Text 46

*janma-trayānugūṇita-
vaira-saṁrabdhayā dhiyā,
dhyāyaṁs tan-mayatām yāto,
bhāvo hi bhava-kāraṇam*

Obsessed with hatred of Lord Kṛṣṇa throughout three lifetimes, Śisupāla attained the Lord’s transcendental nature. Indeed, one’s consciousness determines one’s future birth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse answers the question, “How could such a blasphemer enter into Lord Vasudeva?” By absorbing his thoughts in enmity of the Lord for three births, Sisupala attained a similar form as the Lord. This means that he regained his position as a personal associate of the Lord in Vaikuntha. The reason is given: one’s thoughts (*bhāvaḥ*) are the cause of attaining (*bhava-kāraṇam*) the next body. In this connection, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (SB 7.1.47) states: *vairānubandha-tīvreṇa, dhyānenācyuta-sātmatām nītau punar hareḥ pārśvam, jagmatur viṣṇu-pārśadau*

“These two associates of Lord Viṣṇu—Jaya and Vijaya—maintained a feeling of enmity for a very long time. Because of always thinking of Kṛṣṇa in this way, they regained the shelter of the Lord, having returned home, back to Godhead.”

Text 47

*rtvigbhyaḥ sa-sadasyebhyo,
dakṣiṇām vipulām adāt,*

*sarvān sampūjya vidhi-vac,
cakre 'vabhṛtham eka-rāt*

Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira gave generous gifts to the sacrificial priests and the members of the assembly, properly honoring them all in the manner prescribed by the Vedas. He then took the avabhṛtha bath.

Text 48

*sādhayitvā kratuḥ rājñah,
kṛṣṇo yogeśvareśvaraḥ,
uvāsa katicin māsān,
suhṛdbhir abhiyācitaḥ*

Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of all masters of mystic yoga, saw to the successful execution of this great sacrifice on behalf of King Yudhiṣṭhira. Afterwards, the Lord stayed with His intimate friends for a few months at their earnest request.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all lords of *yoga* (*yogeśvareśvaraḥ*) such as Siva. Out of great love for Yudhisthira, however, Kṛṣṇa became controlled by him and thus obeyed his command. Kṛṣṇa personally arranged all the details of the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Text 49

*tato 'nujñāpya rājānam,
anicchantam apīśvaraḥ,*

*yayau sa-bhāryaḥ sāmātyaḥ,
sva-puraṁ devakī-sutaḥ*

Then the Lord, the son of Devakī, took the reluctant permission of the King and returned to His capital with His wives and ministers.

Text 50

*varṇitaṁ tad upākhyānaṁ,
mayā te bahu-vistaram,
vaikuṅṭha-vāsinor janma,
vipra-śāpāt punaḥ punaḥ*

I have already described to you in detail the history of the two residents of Vaikuṅṭha who had to undergo repeated births in the material world because of being cursed by brāhmaṇas.

Text 51

*rājasūyāvabhṛthyena,
snāto rājā yudhiṣṭhiraḥ,
brahma-kṣatra-sabhā-madhye,
śuśubhe sura-rāḍ iva*

Purified in the final, avabhṛthya ritual, which marked the successful completion of the Rājasū ya sacrifice, King Yudhiṣṭhira shone among the assembled brāhmaṇas and kṣatriyas like the King

of the demigods himself.

Text 52

*rājñā sabhājitāḥ sarve,
sura-mānava-khecarāḥ,
kṛṣṇam kratum ca śamsantāḥ,
sva-dhāmāni yayur mudā*

The demigods, humans and residents of intermediate heavens, all properly honored by the King, happily set off for their respective domains while singing the praises of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the great sacrifice.

Text 53

*duryodhanam ṛte pāpaṁ,
kalim kuru-kulāmayam,
yo na sehe śrīyam sphītām,
dṛṣṭvā pāṇḍu-sutasya tām*

[All were satisfied] except sinful Duryodhana, the personification of the age of quarrel and the disease of the Kuru dynasty. He could not bear to see the flourishing opulence of the son of Pāṇḍu.

Text 54

*ya idaṁ kīrtayed viṣṇoḥ,
karma caidyā-vadhādikam,
rāja-mokṣaṁ vitānaṁ ca,
sarva-pāpaiḥ pramucyate*

One who recites these activities of Lord Viṣṇu, including the killing of Śiśupāla, the deliverance of the kings and the performance of the Rājasuya sacrifice, is freed from all sins.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *vitānaṁ* means sacrifice.

Chapter Seventy-five: Duryodhana Humiliated

Texts 1–2

*śrī-rājovāca,
ajāta-śatros tam dr̥ṣṭvā,
rājasūya-mahodayam,
sarve mumudire brahman,
nṛ-devā ye samāgatāḥ,
duryodhanam varjayitvā,
rājānaḥ sarṣayaḥ surāḥ,
iti śrutam no bhagavams,
tatra kāraṇam ucyatām*

Mahārāja Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, according to what I have heard from you, all the assembled kings, sages and demigods were delighted to see the wonderful festivities of King Ajātaśatru’s Rājasuya sacrifice, with the sole exception of Duryodhana. Please tell me why this was so, my lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the details of the Rājasūya sacrifice. After the sacrifice Yudhisthira took the *avabhṛtha* bath with Draupadī. At that time Duryodhana, being the object of joking, felt offended and became angry.

Parikṣit Maharāja said, “Please tell me why everyone except Duryodhana was pleased?” Sukadeva already mentioned that Duryodhana was envious (*yo na sehe śrīyam sphītām* SB 10.74.53). That was one reason why he was not pleased. Sukadeva wanted to describe another reason as it arose in his mind which he had not previously mentioned. Now he describes the supplementary part of the

sacrifice, looking backwards so to speak, since he already described the completion of the sacrifice and the departure of the guests.

Text 3

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
pitāmahasya te yajñe,
rājasūye mahātmanaḥ,
bāndhavāḥ paricaryāyām,
tasyāsan prema-bandhanāḥ*

Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: At the Rājasuya sacrifice of your saintly grandfather, his family members, bound by their love for him, engaged themselves in humble services on his behalf.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *prema-bandhanāḥ* (bound by love) implies that Yudhisthira’s relatives engaged in different tasks at the sacrifice out of their own free will. The king did not have to force them to accept different duties.

Texts 4–7

*bhīmo mahānasādhyakṣo,
dhanādhyakṣaḥ suyodhanaḥ,
sahadevas tu pūjāyām,
nakulo dravya-sādhane,
guru-śuśrūṣaṇe jiṣṇuḥ,
kṛṣṇaḥ pādāvanejane,
pariveṣaṇe drupada-jā,
karṇo dāne mahā-manāḥ,
yuyudhāno vikarṇaś ca,*

*hārdikyo vidurādayaḥ,
bāhlīka-putrā bhūry-ādyā,
ye ca santardanādayaḥ,
nirūpitā mahā-yajñe,
nānā-karmasu te tadā,
pravartante sma rājendra,
rājñāḥ priya-cikīrṣavaḥ*

Bhīma supervised the kitchen, Duryodhana looked after the treasury, while Sahadeva respectfully greeted the arriving guests. Nakula procured needed items, Arjuna attended the respectable elders, and Kṛṣṇa washed everyone’s feet, while Draupadī served food, and generous Karṇa gave out the gifts. Many others, such as Yuyudhāna; Vikarṇa, Hārdikya; Vidura; Bhuriśravā and other sons of Bāhlīka; and Santardana, similarly volunteered for various duties during the elaborate sacrifice. They did so because of their eagerness to please Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, O best of kings.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa engaged Himself in washing feet because those who had pride could not do so.

Text 8

*ṛtvik-sadasya-bahu-vitsu suhṛttameṣu,
sv-iṣṭeṣu sūnṛta-samarhāna-dakṣiṇābhīḥ,
caidye ca sātva-pateś caraṇaṁ praviṣṭe,
cakrus tatas tv avabhītha-snapanaṁ dyu-nadyām*

After the priests, the prominent delegates, the greatly learned saints and the King’s most intimate well-wishers had all been properly honored with pleasing words, auspicious offerings and various gifts

as remuneration, and after the King of Cedi had entered the lotus feet of the Lord of the Sātvatas, the avabhṛtha bath was performed in the divine river Yamunā.

Text 9

*mṛdaṅga-śaṅkha-panava-
dhundhury-ānaka-gomukhāḥ,
vāditrāṇi vicitrāṇi,
nedur āvabhṛthotsave*

During the avabhṛtha celebration, the music of many kinds of instruments resounded, including mṛdaṅgas, conchshells, panavas, dhundhuris, kettledrums and gomukha horns.

Text 10

*nārtakyo nanṛtur hr̥ṣṭā,
gāyakā yūthaśo jaguh,
vīnā-veṇu-talonnādas,
teṣām sa divam aspr̥ṣat*

Female dancers danced with great joy, and choruses sang, while the loud vibrations of vīnās, flutes and hand cymbals reached all the way to the heavenly regions.

Text 11

*citra-dhvaja-patākāgrair,
ibhendra-syandanārvabhiḥ,
sv-alañkṛtair bhaṭair bhūpā,
niryayū rukma-mālināḥ*

All the kings, wearing gold necklaces, then set off for the Yamunā. They had flags and banners of various colors and were accompanied by infantrymen and well-adorned soldiers riding lordly elephants, chariots and horses.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings went out with four parts of the army: elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers preceded by flagbearers carrying colorful banners on poles.

Text 12

*yadu-sṛñjaya-kāboja-
kuru-kekaya-kośalāḥ,
kampayanto bhuvanṁ sainyair,
yajamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ*

The massed armies of the Yadus, Sṛñjayas, Kābojas, Kurus, Kekayas and Kośalas made the earth tremble as they followed Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, the performer of the sacrifice, in procession.

Text 13

*sadasyartvig-dvija-śreṣṭhā,
brahma-ghoṣeṇa bhūyasā,
devarṣi-pitr-gandharvās,
tuṣṭuvuḥ puṣpa-varṣiṇaḥ*

The assembly officials, the priests and other excellent brāhmaṇas resoundingly vibrated Vedic mantras, while the demigods, divine sages, Pitās and Gandharvas sang praises and rained down flowers.

Text 14

*sv-alanḁṛtā narā nāryo,
gandha-srag-bhūṣaṇāmbaraiḥ,
vilimpantyo 'bhisiṅcantlyo,
vijahrur vividhai rasaiḥ*

Men and women, all adorned with sandalwood paste, flower garlands, jewelry and fine clothing, sported by smearing and sprinkling one another with various liquids.

Text 15

*taila-gorasa-gandhoda-,
haridrā-sāndra-kuṅkumaiḥ,
pumbhir liptāḥ pralimpantyo,
vijahrur vāra-yoṣitaḥ*

The men smeared the courtesans with plentiful oil, yogurt, perfumed water, turmeric and kuṅkuma powder, and the courtesans playfully smeared the men with the same substances.

Text 16

*guptā nṛbhir niragamann upalabdhum etad,
devyo yathā divi vimāna-varair nṛ-devyo,
tā mātuleya-sakhibhiḥ pariṣicyamānāḥ,
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vikasad-vadanā virejuh*

Surrounded by guards, King Yudhiṣṭhira’s queens came out on their chariots to see the fun, just as the demigods’ wives appeared in the sky in celestial airplanes. As maternal cousins and intimate friends sprinkled the queens with liquids, the ladies’ faces bloomed with shy smiles, enhancing the queens’ splendid beauty.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The wives (*nr devya*) of Yudhisthira such as Draupadi went out of the city on chariots to take part in the fun, just as the wives of the demigods enjoy riding in their celestial airplanes. *Mātuleya*, maternal cousins, refers to the cousins on the husband’s side (though commonly it refers to those on the wife’s side) such as the sons of Vasudeva, the brother of Kunti. The wives actually joked and played with their husbands, as will be seen in the next verse, because that would be proper. It would be improper for them to joke with even Kṛṣṇa, the most famous of the cousins. Therefore the wives joked with the friends of their cousins, meaning Bhima, Arjuna and others who were their husbands. Thus *matuleya* refers to Kṛṣṇa, Gada and Sāraṇa, and *sakhibhiḥ* (friends) refers to Bhima and Arjuna.

Text 17

*tā devarān uta sakhīn siṣicur dṛtībhiḥ,
klinnāambarā vivṛta-gātra-kucoru-madhyāḥ,
autsukya-mukta-kavarāc cyavamāna-mālyāḥ,
kṣobham dadhur mala-dhiyām rucirair vihāraiḥ*

As the queens squirted water from syringes at their brothers-in-law and other male companions, their own garments became drenched, revealing their arms, breasts, thighs and waists. In their excitement, the flowers fell from their loosened braids. By these charming pastimes they agitated those with contaminated consciousness.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They sprinkled water on their brothers-in-law using leather bags (*dṛtībhiḥ*) filled with water. These actions generated lusty thoughts in persons with impure minds (*mala-dhiyām*) like Duryodhana, but not in pure persons.

Text 18

*sa samrāḍ ratham āruḍhaḥ,
sad-aśvam rukma-mālinam,
vyarocata sva-patnībhiḥ,
kriyābhiḥ kratu-rāḍ iva*

The emperor, mounted upon his chariot drawn by excellent horses wearing golden collars, appeared splendid in the company of his wives, just like the brilliant Rājasū ya sacrifice surrounded by its various rituals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes events after they had finished their water sports. Otherwise it can refer to events before the water sports. Just as the king of sacrifices, Rajasuya, looks resplendent with its component activities and rituals, so Yudhisthira looked resplendent with his queens.

Text 19

*patnī-samyājāvabhṛthyaiś,
caritvā te tam ṛtvijaḥ,
ācāntaṁ snāpayām cakrur,
gaṅgāyām saha kṛṣṇayā*

The priests led the King through the execution of the final rituals of patnī-samyāja and avabhṛthya. Then they had him and Queen Draupadī sip water for purification and bathe in the Ganges.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The priests performed the *patnī-samyāja* (a ritual done by the sponsor of a sacrifice and his wife), which consists of oblations to Agni, Soma, Tvaṣṭā, and the wives of certain demigods. They also arranged the *avabhṛthya bath* (the ritual which solemnizes the completion of the sacrifice) for Yudhisthira and his wives.

Text 20

*deva-dundubhaya nedur,
nara-dundubhibhiḥ samam,
mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi,
devarṣi-pitr-mānavāḥ*

The kettledrums of the gods resounded, along with those of human beings. Demigods, sages, forefathers and humans all poured down showers of flowers.

Text 21

*sasnuḥ tatra tataḥ sarve,
varṇāśrama-yutā narāḥ,
mahā-pātaky api yataḥ,
sadyo mucyeta kilbiṣāt*

All the citizens belonging to the various orders of varṇa and āśrama then bathed in that place, where even the most grievous sinner can immediately be freed from all sinful reactions.

Text 22

*atha rājāhate kṣaume,
paridhāya sv-alankṛtaḥ,
ṛtvik-sadasya-viprādīn,
ānarcābharaṇāmbaraiḥ*

Next the King put on new silken garments and adorned himself with fine jewelry. He then honored the priests, assembly officials, learned brāhmaṇas and other guests by presenting them with ornaments and clothing.

Text 23

*bandhūñ jñātīn nṛpān mitra-
suhṛdo 'nyāms ca sarvaśaḥ,
abhīkṣnam pūjayām āsa,
nārāyaṇa-paro nṛpaḥ*

In various ways King Yudhiṣṭhira, who had totally dedicated his life to Lord Nārāyaṇa, continuously honored his relatives, his immediate family, the other kings, his friends and well-wishers, and all others present as well.

Text 24

*sarve janāḥ sura-ruco maṇi-kuṇḍala-srag-
uṣṇīṣa-kañcuka-dukūla-mahārghya-hārāḥ,
nāryaś ca kuṇḍala-yugālaka-vṛnda-juṣṭa-
vaktra-śriyaḥ kanaka-mekhalayā virejuh*

All the men there shone like demigods. They were adorned with jeweled earrings, flower garlands, turbans, waistcoats, silk dhotīs and valuable pearl necklaces. The lovely faces of the women were beautified by their matched earrings and locks of hair, and they all wore golden belts.

Texts 25–26

*athartvijo mahā-śīlāḥ,
sadasyā brahma-vādināḥ,
brahma-kṣatriya-viṭ-śudrā,
rājāno ye samāgatāḥ,
devarṣi-pitr-bhūtāni,
loka-pālāḥ sahānugāḥ,
pūjitās tam anujñāpya,
sva-dhāmāni yayur nrpa*

Then the highly cultured priests, the great Vedic authorities who had served as sacrificial witnesses, the specially invited kings, the brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śudras, demigods, sages, forefathers and mystic spirits, and the chief planetary rulers and their followers—all of them, having been worshiped by King Yudhiṣṭhira, took his permission and departed, O King, each for his own abode.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira worshiped the priests of exalted character (*mahā-śīlāḥ*) and others.

Text 27

*hari-dāsasya rājarṣe,
rājasūya-mahodayam naivātrpyan praśamsantaḥ,
piban martyo 'mṛtam yathā*

As they all glorified the wonderful Rājasū ya-yajña performed by that great saintly King and servant of Lord Hari, they were not satiated, just as an ordinary man is never satiated when drinking nectar.

Text 28

*tato yudhiṣṭhiro rājā,
suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān,
preṃṇā nivārayām āsa,
kṛṣṇam ca tyāga-kātarah*

At that time Rājā Yudhiṣṭhira stopped a number of his friends, immediate family members and other relatives from departing, among them Lord Kṛṣṇa. Out of love Yudhiṣṭhira could not let them go, for he felt the pain of imminent separation.

Text 29

*bhagavān api tatrāṅga,
nyāvātsīt tat-priyam-karah,
prasthāpya yadu-vīrāmś ca,
sāmbādīmś ca kuśasthalīm*

My dear Parīkṣit, the Supreme Lord remained there for some time to please the King, after first sending Sāmba and the other Yadu heroes back to Dvārakā.

Text 30

ittham rājā dharmā-suto,

*manoratha-mahārṇavam,
su-dustaram samuttīrya,
kṛṣṇenāsīd gata-jvaraḥ*

Thus King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was at last relieved of his burning ambition, having by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa successfully crossed the vast and formidable ocean of his desires.

Text 31

*ekadāntaḥ-pure tasya,
vīkṣya duryodhanaḥ śriyam,
atapyad rājasūyasya,
mahitvaṁ cācyutātmanaḥ*

One day Duryodhana, while observing the riches of King Yudhiṣṭhira’s palace, felt greatly disturbed by the magnificence of both the Rājasūya sacrifice and its performer, the King, whose life and soul was Lord Acyuta.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how Duryodhana’s pride was broken. Duryodhana became disturbed by seeing the greatness of the Rājasūya sacrifice and the opulent palace of Yudhisthira, who was completely attached to Kṛṣṇa (*acyuta-ātmanaḥ*).

Text 32

*yasmims narendra-ditijendra-surendra-lakṣmīr,
nānā vibhānti kila viśva-sṛjopakṣptāḥ,*

*tābhiḥ patīn drupada-rāja-sutopatasthe,
yasyām viṣakta-hṛdayaḥ kuru-rāḍ atapyat*

In that palace all the collected opulences of the kings of men, demons and gods were brilliantly manifest, having been brought there by the cosmic inventor, Maya Dānava. With those riches Draupadī served her husbands, and Duryodhana, the prince of the Kurus, lamented because he was very much attracted to her.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the chambers were various types of treasures that Maya Dānava had collected from the kings of humans, demons and demigods. Draupadi served her husbands with those opulences in that place. Seeing those opulences Duryodhana became overcome with envy (*viṣakta-hṛdayaḥ:mātsaryāviṣṭa-cittaḥ*) and his heart burned (*atapyat*).

Text 33

*yasmin tadā madhu-pater mahiṣī-sahasraṁ,
śroṇī-bhareṇa śanakaiḥ kvaṇad-aṅghri-śobham,
madhye su-cāru kuca-kuṅkuma-śoṇa-hāraṁ,
śrīman-mukhaṁ pracala-kuṇḍala-kuntalāḍhyam*

Lord Madhupati’s thousands of queens were also staying in the palace. Their feet moved slowly, weighed down by their hips, and the bells on their feet tinkled charmingly. Their waists were very slender, the kuṅkuma from their breasts reddened their pearl necklaces, and their swaying earrings and flowing locks of hair enhanced the exquisite beauty of their faces.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: That place was resplendent with

thousands of Kṛṣṇa’s queens having lovely faces, earrings and locks of hair. In other words, “they appeared beautiful.”

Texts 34–35

*sabhāyām maya-klptāyām,
kvāpi dharma-suto ’dhirāt,
vṛto ’nugair bandhubhiś ca,
kṛṣṇenāpi sva-cakṣuṣā,
āsīnaḥ kāñcane sākṣād,
āsane maghavān iva,
pārameṣṭhya-śrīyā juṣṭaḥ,
stūyamānaś ca vandibhiḥ*

It so happened that Emperor Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, was sitting just like Indra on a golden throne in the assembly hall built by Maya Dānava. Present with him were his attendants and family members, and also Lord Kṛṣṇa, his special eye. Displaying the opulences of Brahma himself, King Yudhiṣṭhira was being praised by the court poets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Yudhisthira was surrounded by friends, attendants and Sri Kṛṣṇa, who acted as his eyes (*sva-cakṣuṣā*) since Kṛṣṇa advised the king on what was beneficial and what was not.

Text 36

*tatra duryodhano mānī,
parīto bhrātrbhir nṛpa,
kirīṭa-mālī nyaviśad,
asi-hastaḥ kṣīpan ruṣā*

Proud Duryodhana, holding a sword in his hand and wearing a crown and necklace, angrily went into the palace in the company of his brothers, O King, insulting the doorkeepers as he entered.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Kṣīpan* “insulting” means abusing the doorkeepers with sharp words.

Text 37

*sthale 'bhyagrḥṇād vastrāntam,
jalaṁ matvā sthale 'patat,
jale ca sthala-vad bhrāntyā,
maya-māyā-vimohitaḥ*

Bewildered by the illusions created through Maya Dānava’s magic, Duryodhana mistook the solid floor for water and lifted the end of his garment. And elsewhere he fell into the water, mistaking it for the solid floor.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Duryodhana mistook the solid ground for water, so he lifted his lower cloth to keep it from getting wet. Then thinking that the water was solid ground, he fell into the water. He was bewildered by Maya Danava’s mystic power, which revealed who was hostile in the assembly hall.

Text 38

*jahāsa bhīmas taṁ dṛṣṭvā,
striyo nṛpatayo 'pare,*

*nivāryamāṇā apy aṅga,
rājñā kṛṣṇānumoditāḥ*

My dear Parīkṣit, Bhīma laughed to see this, and so did the women, kings and others. King Yudhiṣṭhira tried to stop them, but Lord Kṛṣṇa showed His approval.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Yudhiṣṭhira tried to check the laughter of the women, and so did Bhīma who gestured with his eyes saying, “Don’t laugh”. Kṛṣṇa, however, encouraged them with the movement of His eyebrows. What could be done? By this Kṛṣṇa sowed the seed of dissension within Duryodhana in order to remove the burden of wicked kings from the earth.

Text 39

*sa vr̥ḍīto ’vag-vadano ruṣā jvalan,
niṣkramya tūṣṇīm prayayau gajāhvayam,
hā-heti śabdaḥ su-mahān abhūt satām,
ajāta-śatrur vimanā ivābhavat,
babhūva tūṣṇīm bhagavān bhuvo bharam,
samujjihīrṣur bhramati sma yad-dṛśā*

Humiliated and burning with anger, Duryodhana turned his face down, left without uttering a word and went back to Hastināpura. The saintly persons present loudly cried out, “Alas, alas !” and King Yudhiṣṭhira was somewhat saddened. But the Supreme Lord, whose mere glance had bewildered Duryodhana, remained silent, for His intention was to remove the burden of the earth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa bewildered Duryodhana simply

by His glance, and He engaged the magic power of Maya Danava as a secondary cause.

Text 40

*etat te 'bhihitam rājan,
yat prṣṭo 'ham iha tvayā,
suyodhanasya daurātmyam,
rājasūye mahā-kratau*

I have now replied to your question, O King, concerning why Duryodhana was dissatisfied on the occasion of the great Rājasuya sacrifice.

Chapter Seventy-six: The Battle Between Śālva and the Vṛṣṇis

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
athānyad api kṛṣṇasya,
śṛṇu karmādbhutaṁ nṛpa,
krīḍā-nara-śarīrasya,
yathā saubha-patir hataḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Now please hear, O King, another wondrous deed performed by Lord Kṛṣṇa, who appeared in His human-like body to enjoy transcendental pastimes. Hear how He killed the master of Saubha.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Salva obtains a boon from Siva and enters a battle with the Yadus. Dyuman strikes Pradyumna so that he must leave the battlefield.

“O king! Just hear the exploits of Kṛṣṇa, who takes a human form and engages mainly in playing (*kridā pradhānaḥ*).” The compound *krīḍā-nara-śarīrasya* is analyzed in the same way as such compounds as *śāka-pārthiva*, which means “a king who enjoys vegetables”.

Text 2

*śiśupāla-sakhaḥ śālvo,
rukmiṇy-udvāha āgataḥ,
yadubhir nirjitaḥ saṅkhye,
jarāsandhādayas tathā*

Śālva was a friend of Śiśupāla's. When he attended the wedding of Rukmiṇī, the Yadu warriors defeated him in battle, along with Jarāsandha and the other kings.

Text 3

*śālvaḥ pratijñām akaroc,
chṛṇvatām sarva-bhūbhujām,
ayādavām kṣmām kariṣye,
pauruṣam mama paśyata*

Śālva swore in the presence of all the kings: “I will rid the earth of Yādavas. Just see my prowess!”

Text 4

*iti mūdhaḥ pratijñāya,
devam paśu-patim prabhum,
ārādhayām āsa nṛpaḥ,
pāmśu-muṣṭim sakṛd grasan*

Having thus made his vow, the foolish King proceeded to worship Lord Paśupati [Śiva] as his deity by eating a handful of dust each day, and nothing more.

Text 5

*saṁvatsarānte bhagavān,
āśu-toṣa umā-patiḥ,
vareṇa cchandayām āsa,
śālvaṁ śaraṇam āgatam*

The great Lord Umāpati is known as “he who is quickly pleased,” yet only at the end of a year did he gratify Śālva, who had approached him for shelter, by offering him a choice of benedictions.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After a year, Siva offered Salva the boon that he intended (*cchandayām āsa*) to give, and thus brought the demon under control. The *Amara-kośa* dictionary gives the definition *abhiprāya-vaśau chandau*, “The verb *chand* can indicate intention or subordination.”

Text 6

*devāsura-manuṣyāṇām,
gandharvoraḡa-rakṣasām,
abhedyam kāmagaṁ vavre,
sa yānam vṛṣṇi-bhīṣaṇam*

Śālva chose a vehicle that could be destroyed by neither demigods, demons, humans, Gandharvas, Uragas nor Rākṣasas, that could travel anywhere he wished to go, and that would terrify the Vṛṣṇis.

Text 7

*tatheti giriśādiṣṭo,
mayaḥ para-puraṁ-jayaḥ,
puraṁ nirmāya śālvāya,
prādāt saubham ayas-mayam*

Lord Śiva said, “So be it.” On his order, Maya Dānava, who conquers his enemies’ cities, constructed a flying iron city named Saubha and presented it to Śālva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maya Danava gave Salva a flying city made out of iron (*ayas-mayam*) called Saubha.

Text 8

*sa labdhvā kāma-gaṁ yānaṁ,
tamo-dhāma durāsadam,
yayau dvāravatīm śālvo,
vairam vṛṣṇi-kṛtaṁ smaran*

This unassailable vehicle was filled with darkness and could go anywhere. Upon obtaining it, Śālva went to Dvārakā, remembering the Vṛṣṇis’ enmity toward him.

Texts 9–11

nirudhya senayā śālvo,

*mahatyā bharatarṣabha,
purīm babhañjopavanān,
udyānāni ca sarvaśaḥ,
sa-gopurāṇi dvārāṇi,
prāsādāṭṭāla-tolikāḥ,
vihārān sa vimānāgryān,
nipetuḥ śastra-vrṣṭayah,
śilā-drumās cāsanayah,
sarpā āsāra-śarkarāḥ,
pracaṇḍas cakravāto 'bhūd,
rajasācchāditā diśaḥ*

Śālva besieged the city with a large army, O best of the Bharatas, decimating the outlying parks and gardens, the mansions along with their observatories, towering gateways and surrounding walls, and also the public recreational areas. From his excellent airship he threw down a torrent of weapons, including stones, tree trunks, thunderbolts, snakes and hailstones. A fierce whirlwind arose and blanketed all directions with dust.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Salva's ground troops destroyed the walls (*tolikā*) and recreational parks (*vihārān*), while Salva bombarded the city with various weapons from his excellent Saubha aircraft.

Text 12

*ity ardyamānā saubhena,
kṛṣṇasya nagarī bhṛśam,
nābhyapadyata śam rājaṃs,
tri-pureṇa yathā mahī*

Thus terribly tormented by the airship Saubha, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s city had no peace, O King, just like the earth when it was attacked by the three aerial cities of the demons.

Text 13

*pradyumno bhagavān vīkṣya,
bādhyamānā nijāḥ prajāḥ,
ma bhaiṣṭety abhyadhād vīro,
rathārūḍho mahā-yaśāḥ*

Seeing His subjects so harassed, the glorious and heroic Lord Pradyumna told them, “Do not fear,” and mounted His chariot.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Balarama wanted to go out and fight, Pradyumna said, “We will kill Salva. You should remain inside comfortably.” Saying this, he went out with Samba and others.

Texts 14–15

*sātyakiś cārudeṣṇaś ca,
sāmbho ’krūraḥ sahānujaḥ,
hārdikyo bhānuvindaś ca,
gadaś ca śuka-sāraṇau,
apare ca maheṣv-āsā,
ratha-yūthapa-yūthapāḥ,
niryayur daṁśitā guptā,
rathebhāśva-padātibhiḥ*

The chief commanders of the chariot warriors—Sātyaki, Cārudeṣṇa, Sāmba, Akrū ra and his younger brothers, along with Hārdikya, Bhānuvinda, Gada, Śuka and Sāraṇa—went out of the city with many other eminent bowmen, all girded in armor and protected by contingents of soldiers riding on chariots, elephants and horses, and also by companies of infantry.

Text 16

*tataḥ pravavṛte yuddham,
śālvānām yadubhiḥ saha,
yathāsurāṇām vibudhais,
tumulaṁ loma-harṣaṇam*

A tumultuous, hair-raising battle then commenced between Śālva's forces and the Yadus. It equaled the great battles between the demons and demigods.

Text 17

*tās ca saubha-pater māyā,
divyāstrai rukmiṇī-sutaḥ,
kṣaṇena nāśayām āsa,
naiśaṁ tama ivoṣṇa-guḥ*

With His divine weapons Pradyumna instantly destroyed all of Śālva's magic illusions, in the same way that the warm rays of the sun dissipate the darkness of night.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just as the sun (*uṣṇa-guḥ*) destroys darkness (*naisam*), so Pradyumna destroyed the magical illusions of Salva.

Texts 18–19

*vivyādha pañca-vimśatyā,
svarṇa-puṅkhair ayo-mukhaiḥ,
śālvasya dhvajinī-pālam,
śaraiḥ sannata-parvabhiḥ,
śatenātāḍayac chālvam,
ekaikenāsya sainikān,
daśabhir daśabhir netṛn,
vāhanāni tribhis tribhiḥ*

Lord Pradyumna’s arrows all had gold shafts, iron heads and perfectly smooth joints. With twenty-five of them He struck down Śālva’s commander-in-chief [Dyumān], and with one hundred He struck Śālva himself. Then He pierced Śālva’s officers with one arrow each, his chariot drivers with ten arrows each, and his horses and other carriers with three arrows each.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pradyumna pierced Dyumān, the commander-in-chief (*dhvajinī-pālam*) of the army, with twenty five arrows having smooth joints. With ten arrows each he pierced the chariot drivers (*netṛn*).

Text 20

tad adbhutaṁ mahat karma,

*pradyumnasya mahātmanah,
dṛṣṭvā taṁ pūjayām āsuḥ,
sarve sva-para-sainikāḥ*

When they saw the glorious Pradyumna perform that amazing and mighty feat, all the soldiers on both sides praised Him.

Text 21

*bahu-rūpaika-rūpaṁ tad,
dṛśyate na ca dṛśyate,
māyā-mayaṁ maya-kṛtaṁ,
durvibhāvyaṁ parair abhūt*

At one moment the magic airship built by Maya Dānava appeared in many identical forms, and the next moment it was again only one. Sometimes it was visible, and sometimes not. Thus Śālva's opponents could never be sure where it was.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In one form or many forms the Saubha aircraft (*tad*) was sometimes visible and sometimes not.

Text 22

*kvacid bhūmau kvacid vyomni,
giri-mūrdhni jale kvacit,
alāta-cakra-vad bhrāmyat,
saubhaṁ tad duravasthitam*

From one moment to the next the Saubha airship appeared on the earth, in the sky, on a mountain peak or in the water. Like a whirling, flaming baton, it never remained in any one place.

Text 23

*yatra yatropalakṣyeta,
sa-saubhaḥ saha-sainikaḥ,
śālvas tatas tato 'muñcañ,
charān sātvata-yūthapāḥ*

Wherever Śālva would appear with his Saubha ship and his army, there the Yadu commanders would shoot their arrows.

Text 24

*śarair agny-arka-samsparśair,
āśī-viṣa-durāsadaīḥ,
pīḍyamāna-purānīkaḥ,
śālvo 'muhyat pareritaiḥ*

Śālva became bewildered upon seeing his army and aerial city thus harassed by his enemy's arrows, which struck like fire and the sun and were as intolerable as snake venom.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Both the flying city of Saubha and the troops of Salva were severely afflicted by the Yadu's arrows which

burned like fire, struck simultaneously from all sides like the sun's rays, and, like snake venom, were lethal by a single touch. Thus Salva became bewildered.

Text 25

*śālvānīkapa-śāstraughair,
vṛṣṇi-vīrā bhṛśārditāḥ,
na tatyajū raṇaṁ svaṁ svaṁ,
loka-dvaya-jigīṣavaḥ*

Because the heroes of the Vṛṣṇi clan were eager for victory in this world and the next, they did not abandon their assigned posts on the battlefield, even though the downpour of weapons hurled by Śālva's commanders tormented them.

Text 26

*śālvāmātyo dyumān nāma,
pradyumnaṁ prak prapīditāḥ,
āsādya gadayā maurvyā,
vyāhatya vyanadad balī*

Śālva's minister Dyumān, previously wounded by Śrī Pradyumna, now ran up to Him and, roaring loudly, struck Him with his club of black steel.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having been first struck by a hand weapon of Pradyumna, Dyuman attacked Pradyumna with a club made

of carbonized iron (*maurvyā*).

Text 27

*pradyumnaṁ gadayā sīrṇa-
vakṣaḥ-sthālam arim-damam,
apovāha raṇāt sūto,
dharma-vid dārukātmajaḥ*

Pradyumna’s driver, the son of Dāruka, thought that his valiant master’s chest had been shattered by the club. Knowing well his religious duty, he removed Pradyumna from the battlefield.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Actually the spiritual chest of Pradyumna cannot be pierced (*sīrṇa-vakṣaḥ-sthālam*) by the material club of Dyuman. However Kṛṣṇa’s *lila-sakti* instantly arranged all of this in order to increase the taste for enthusiastic fighting. Consequently, his charioteer thought that Pradyumna’s chest had been shattered, so he took him off the battlefield because he knew the proper course of action (*dharma-vid*). This is stated later in verse 32, *sūtaḥ kṛcchra-gataṁ rakṣed*, “The chariot driver must protect the master of the chariot when he is in danger.”

However by grammatical rule of *sandhi* the charioteer can also be described as *adharmā vit* (not knowing the truth), since he didn’t know that Pradyumna had an eternal, spiritual form (*sac-cid-ānanda vigraha*) that could never be wounded by mundane weapons. This ignorance on his part is quite appropriate, since he was the son of Daruka. The *Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu* says *parīkṣiti bhaved rāgo dāruke ca tathoddhave*, “Parikṣit, Daruka and Uddhava had intense spiritual love for the Lord.” Similarly, the son of Daruka had so much affection for Pradyumna that *yogamāyā* covered his realization of the indestructible nature of the Lord’s transcendental body. Fearing the safety of his

master, he hastily removed Him from the battlefield.

Text 28

*labdha-samjño muhūrtena,
kārṣṇiḥ sārathim abravīt,
aho asādhv idam sūta,
yad raṇān me 'pasarpaṇam*

Quickly regaining consciousness, Lord Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna said to His charioteer, "O driver, this is abominable—for Me to have been removed from the battlefield!"

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In a moment, Pradyumna regained full consciousness (*labdha-samjño*), and realized that he had been taken away from the battlefield. Or the meaning can be: Obtaining a hint (*samjño*) about what happened from the charioteer who said that He had fainted and was therefore taken away, Pradyumna angrily rebuked him.

Text 29

*na yadūnām kule jātaḥ,
śrūyate raṇa-vicyutaḥ,
vinā mat klība-cittena,
sūtena prāpta-kilbiṣāt*

"Except for Me, no one born in the Yadu dynasty has ever been known to abandon the battlefield. My reputation has now been stained by a driver who thinks like a eunuch.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Pradyumna said, “Only I have abandoned the battlefield because of this infamous act done by my feeble charioteer.”

Text 30

*kiṁ nu vakṣye ’bhisāṅgamyā,
pitarau rāma-keśavau,
yuddhāt samyag apakrāntaḥ,
prṣṭas tatrātmanaḥ kṣamam*

“What will I say to My fathers, Rāma and Keśava, when I return to Them after having simply fled the battle? What can I tell Them that will benefit My honor?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Pradyumna said, “On meeting Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, what suitable (*ksamam*) reply can I give Them when asked about this?”

Text 31

*vyaktaṁ me kathayiṣyanti,
hasantyo bhrāṭṛ-jāmayāḥ,
klaibyaṁ kathaṁ kathaṁ vīra,
tavānyaiḥ kathyatām mṛdhe*

“Certainly My sisters-in-law will laugh at Me and say, ‘O hero, tell us how in the world Your enemies turned You into such a coward in battle.’”

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Pradyumna said, “My sisters-in-law (*bhrātr-jāmayah*) will ask while laughing, “O warrior, please tell us how you became so cowardly in fighting with others?” The word *katham* (please) is repeated twice to show their astonishment.

Text 32

*sārathir uvāca,
dharmam vijānatāyusman,
kṛtam etan mayā vibho,
sūtaḥ kṛcchra-gataṁ rakṣed,
rathinam sārathim rathī*

The driver replied: O long-lived one, I have done this knowing full well my prescribed duty. O my Lord, the chariot driver must protect the master of the chariot when he is in danger, and the master must also protect his driver.

Text 33

*etad viditvā tu bhavān,
mayāpovāhito raṇāt,
upasṛṣṭaḥ pareṇeti,
mūrccchito gadayā hataḥ*

With this rule in mind, I removed You from the battlefield, since You had been struck unconscious by Your enemy’s club and I thought You were seriously injured.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The charioteer said, “I removed You from the battlefield because You fell unconscious (*mūrcchitaḥ*) from the blows of the enemy’s club. Afterwards, you said, “Damn you, fool! You do not understand Me properly!”

Chapter Seventy-seven: Lord Kṛṣṇa Slays the Demon Śālva

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sa upaspr̥śya salilam,
dam̐sito dhṛta-kārmukah,
naya mām dyumataḥ pārśvam,
vīrasyety āha sārathim*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After refreshing Himself with water, putting on His armor and picking up His bow, Lord Pradyumna told His driver, “Take Me back to where the hero Dyumān is standing.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa returns to Dvaraka from Indraprastha and quickly kills Salva, who was flying in his magical vehicle. Pradyumna, who was well-versed in *ksatriya-dharma*, sipped *acamana* (*upaspr̥śya salilam*) and then put on his armor. Then he returned to the battlefield in order to correct the fault of fleeing from the battlefield incurred by his charioteer while executing his duty of protecting him.

Text 2

*vidhamantaṁ sva-sainyāni,
dyumantaṁ rukmiṇī-sutaḥ,
pratihatya pratyavidhyān,
nārācair aṣṭabhiḥ smayan*

In Pradyumna’s absence, Dyumān had been devastating His army, but now Pradyumna counterattacked Dyumān and, smiling, pierced him with eight nārāca arrows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pradyumna challenged Dyumān, saying “Now see if you can strike Me!” After saying this and allowing Dyumān to shoot his weapons, Pradyumna counter-attacked (*pratihatya*) with His own deadly arrows.

Text 3

*caturbhiś caturo vāhān,
sūtam ekena cāhanat,
dvābhyam dhanuś ca ketum ca,
śareṇānyena vai śiraḥ*

With four of these arrows He struck Dyumān’s four horses, with one arrow, his driver, with two more arrows, his bow and chariot flag, and with the last arrow, Dyumān’s head.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes how he dispensed the eight arrows.

Text 4

*gada-sātyaki-sāmbādyā,
jaghnuḥ saubha-pater balam,
petuḥ samudre saubheyāḥ,
sarve sañchinna-kandharāḥ*

Gada, Sātyaki, Sāmba and others began killing Śālva’s army, and thus all the soldiers inside the airship began falling into the ocean, their necks severed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The soldiers riding in the Saubha aircraft (*saubheyah*) fell in the ocean with their heads cut off.

Text 5

*evam yadūnām śālvānām,
nighnatām itaretaram,
yuddham tri-nava-rātram tad,
abhūt tumulam ulbaṇam*

As the Yadus and Śālva’s followers thus went on attacking one another, the tumultuous, fearsome battle continued for twenty-seven days and nights.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The amalgamation of nine nights is called *nava-rātram*, and three such *nava-rātras* is called *tri-nava-rātram*. In other words, they fought for twenty seven days and nights. *Tumulam* means “tumultuous”, and *ulbaṇam* means “terrible”.

Texts 6–7

*indraprastham gataḥ kṛṣṇa,
āhūto dharmasūnunā,
rājasūye ’tha nivṛtte,
śiśupāle ca samsthite,*

*kuru-vṛddhān anujñāpya,
munīmś ca sa-sutām pṛthām,
nimittāny ati-ghorāṇi,
paśyan dvāravatīm yayau*

Invited by Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Dharma, Lord Kṛṣṇa had gone to Indraprastha. Now that the Rājasūya sacrifice had been completed and Śiśupāla killed, the Lord began to see inauspicious omens. So He took leave of the Kuru elders and the great sages, and also of Pṛthā and her sons, and returned to Dvārakā.

Text 8

*āha cāham ihāyāta,
ārya-miśrābhisaṅgataḥ,
rājanyāś caidya-pakṣīyā,
nūnam hanyuḥ purīm mama*

The Lord said to Himself: Because I have come here with My respected elder brother, kings partial to Śiśupāla may well be attacking My capital city.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse expresses Kṛṣṇa’s thoughts: “I have come here with Balarama, My most respected and worshipable (*miśra:pūjyaḥ*) elder (*arya*) brother.” This statement is not the opinion of Sukadeva, but rather expresses the opinions of others, as Sukadeva explains in verse thirty.

Text 9

*vīkṣya tat kadanam svānām,
nirūpya pura-rakṣaṇam,
saubham ca śālva-rājam ca,
dārukam prāha keśavaḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] After He arrived at Dvārakā and saw how His people were threatened with destruction, and also saw Śālva and his Saubha airship, Lord Keśava arranged for the city’s defense and then addressed Dāruka as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking thus, Kṛṣṇa arrived at Dvaraka. Kṛṣṇa saw the Salva aircraft and the decimation of His own forces. Then Kṛṣṇa appointed a special guard for Rukmiṇī and the other queens inside the palaces. Selected generals used a secret route to convey the queens to safety in the inner chambers of the city.

Text 10

*ratham prāpaya me sūta,
śālvasyāntikam āśu vai,
sambhramas te na kartavyo,
māyāvī saubha-rāḍ ayam*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] O driver, quickly take My chariot near Śālva. This lord of Saubha is a powerful magician; don’t let him bewilder you.

Text 11

*ity uktaś codayām āsa,
ratham āsthāya dārukaḥ,
viśantaṁ dadṛśuḥ sarve,
sve pare cāruṇānujam*

Thus ordered, Dāruka took command of the Lord’s chariot and drove forth. As the chariot entered the battlefield, everyone there, both friend and foe, caught sight of the emblem of Garuḍa.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dāruka took full control (*āsthāya*) of Kṛṣṇa’s chariot, which had the emblem of Garuda, the younger brother of Aruṇa (*aruṇa-anujam*), on its flag.

Text 12

*śālvaś ca kṛṣṇam ālokya,
hata-prāya-baleśvaraḥ,
prāharat kṛṣṇa-sūtaya,
śaktim bhīma-ravām mṛdhe*

When Śālva, the master of a decimated army, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching, he hurled his spear at the Lord’s charioteer. The spear roared frighteningly as it flew across the battlefield.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Salva was the lord of an army which was almost completely devastated.

Text 13

*tām āpatantīm nabhasi,
maholkām iva raṁhasā,
bhāsayantīm diśaḥ śauriḥ,
sāyakaiḥ śatadhācchinat*

Śālva's hurtling spear lit up the whole sky like a mighty meteor, but Lord Śauri tore the great weapon into hundreds of pieces with His arrows.

Text 14

*taṁ ca ṣoḍaśabhir viddhvā,
bānaiḥ saubhaṁ ca khe bhramat,
avidhyac chara-sandohaiḥ,
khaṁ sūrya iva raśmibhiḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa then pierced Śālva with sixteen arrows and struck the Saubha airship with a deluge of arrows as it darted about the sky. Firing His arrows, the Lord appeared like the sun flooding the heavens with its rays.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With its dark blue color and rapid movements the Saubha aircraft appeared like the sky (*kham*). Kṛṣṇa's arrows are compared to the sun's rays in terms of their being countless and creating unbearably scorching heat. Kṛṣṇa Himself is compared to the sun, in terms of His being all-potent and victorious over opponents.

Text 15

*śālvaḥ śaures tu doḥ savyam,
sa-śārṅgam śārṅga-dhanvanah,
bibheda nyapatad dhastāc,
chārṅgam āsīt tad adbhutam*

Śālva then managed to strike Lord Kṛṣṇa’s left arm, which held His bow Śārṅga, and, amazingly, Śārṅga fell from His hand.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verse 15 and 16 are not the opinion of Sukadeva Gosvami. The apparent fault of using the phrase *doḥ savyam* “left arm” in the neuter gender is also seen in the poetry of Raghu. It was astonishing that Kṛṣṇa’s bow fell from His hands, since Kṛṣṇa’s arm has unlimited strength.

Text 16

*hāhā-kāro mahān āsīd,
bhūtānām tatra paśyatām,
ninadya saubha-rāḍ uccair,
idam āha janārdanam*

Those who witnessed this all cried out in dismay. Then the master of Saubha roared loudly and addressed Lord Janārdana.

Texts 17–18

*yat tvayā mūḍha naḥ sakhyur,
bhrātur bhāryā hr̥tekṣatām,
pramattaḥ sa sabhā-madhye,*

*tvayā vyāpāditāḥ sakhā,
taṁ tvādya niśitair bāṇair,
aparājita-māninam,
nayāmy apunar-āvṛttim,
yadi tiṣṭher mamāgrataḥ*

[Śālva said:] You fool! Because in our presence You kidnapped the bride of our friend Śisūpāla, Your own cousin, and because You later murdered him in the sacred assembly while he was inattentive, today with my sharp arrows I will send You to the land of no return! Though You think Yourself invincible, I will kill You now if You dare stand before me.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Salva said, “O fool! I will send You to death (*apunar-āvṛttim:mṛtyum*).” According to the inspiration of Bhārati, the goddess of learning, the idea is: “Because there is no confusion (*yat tvayā mūḍha*) for You, You took Lakṣmi, who is actually Your rightful wife, while we and our friend Sisupala, Your paternal cousin, were completely ignored by You.” Here the genitive case implies disregard. “With my sharp arrows I will make You lead me to liberation (*tvam apunar-āvṛttim:mṛtyum*). Or “I will attain You, who gives liberation (*tvam apunar-āvṛttim:mṛtyum*), and never be born again.”

Text 19

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca vṛthā tvam katthase manda,
na paśyasy antike ’ntakam,
paurusaṁ darśayanti sma,
śūrā na bahu-bhāṣiṇaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: O dullard, you boast in vain, since you fail to see death standing near you. Real heroes do not talk much but rather show their prowess in action.

Text 20

*ity uktvā bhagavāñ chālvaṁ,
gadayā bhīma-vegayā,
tatāḍa jatrau saṁrabdhah,
sa cakampe vamann asṛk*

Having said this, the furious Lord swung His club with frightening power and speed and hit Śālva on the collarbone, making him tremble and vomit blood.

Text 21

*gadāyām sannivṛttāyām,
śālvas tv antaradhīyata,
tato muhūrta āgatya,
puruṣaḥ śirasācyutam,
devakyā prahito 'smīti,
natvā prāha vaco rudan*

But as soon as Lord Acyuta withdrew His club, Śālva disappeared from sight, and a moment later a man approached the Lord. Bowing his head down to Him, he announced, “Devakī has sent me,” and, sobbing, spoke the following words.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The opinion of others is expressed from here to verse twenty nine.

Text 22

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-bāho,
pitā te pitṛ-vatsala,
baddhvāpanītaḥ śālvena,
saunikena yathā paśuḥ*

[The man said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, mighty-armed one, who are so affectionate to Your parents! Śālva has seized Your father and taken him away, as a butcher leads an animal to slaughter.

Text 23

*niśamya vipriyaṁ kṛṣṇo,
mānusīm prakṛtiṁ gataḥ,
vimanasko ghrṇī snehād,
babhāṣe prākṛto yathā*

When He heard this disturbing news, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who was playing the role of a mortal man, showed sorrow and compassion, and out of love for His parents He spoke the following words like an ordinary conditioned soul.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Ghrṇī* means compassionate.

īśāś cet pāhi bālīśa

[Śālva said:] Here is Your dear father, who begot You and for whose sake You are living in this world. I shall now kill him before Your very eyes. Save him if You can, weakling!

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Salva said, “Right before Your eyes I will kill Your father who gave You birth (*janitā*).”

Text 27

*evam nirbhartsya māyāvī,
khaḍgenānakadundubheḥ,
utkr̥tya śira ādāya,
kha-stham saubham samāviśat*

After he had mocked the Lord in this way, the magician Śālva appeared to cut off Vasudeva’s head with his sword. Taking the head with him, he entered the Saubha vehicle, which was hovering in the sky.

Text 28

*tato muhūrtaṁ prakṛtāv upaplutaḥ,
sva-bodha āste sva-janānuṣaṅgataḥ,
mahānubhāvas tad abudhyad āsurīm,
māyām sa śālva-prasṛtām mayoditām*

By nature Lord Kṛṣṇa is full in knowledge, and He possesses unlimited powers of perception. Yet for a moment, out of great affection for His loved ones, He remained absorbed in the mood of an ordinary human being. He soon recalled, however, that this was all a demoniac illusion engineered by Maya Dānava and employed by Śālva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa remained overcome (*upaplutaḥ*) with the sentiments of an ordinary human (*prakṛtau*). However, due to His immense powers of perception (*mahā-anubhāvaḥ*) Kṛṣṇa concluded that Salva was using a demoniac illusion created by Maya Danava.

Text 29

*na tatra dūtam na pituḥ kalevaram,
prabuddha ājau samapaśyad acyutaḥ,
svāpnam yathā cāmbara-cāriṇam ripum,
saubha-stham ālokya nihantum udyataḥ*

Now alert to the actual situation, Lord Acyuta saw before Him on the battlefield neither the messenger nor His father’s body. It was as if He had awakened from a dream. Seeing His enemy flying above Him in his Saubha plane, the Lord then prepared to kill him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Therefore, as if awaking from a dream, Kṛṣṇa no longer saw His father’s body or the messenger.

Text 30

*evam vadanti rājarse,
ṛṣayaḥ ke ca nānvitāḥ,*

*yat sva-vāco virudhyeta,
nūnaṁ te na smaranty uta*

Such is the account given by some sages, O wise King, but those who speak in this illogical way are contradicting themselves, having forgotten their own previous statements.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having presented the story told by others (Verses 21-29), Sukadeva Gosvami now refutes it with this verse: “Some sages who lack proper discrimination of logical premises and conclusions have related this story. They did not consider that their words were contradictory to other statements of the *Bhagavatam*. Sri Kṛṣṇa did not go to participate in the Rājasūya sacrifice in the company of Balarama, since it was previously stated: *saṅkarṣaṇam anujñāpya*, “Kṛṣṇa went to Indraprastha after taking leave of Balarama.” (SB 10.71.13)

“Thus how can the statements of Kṛṣṇa related by them be reconciled? Even if they were true, how could Kṛṣṇa say such things as *katham rāmam asambhrāntam jitvājeyam surāsuraiḥ*: “How could a weakling like Salva defeat Balarama, who is unconquerable by demigods or demons, and take away My father?” (SB 10.77.24)

Text 31

*kva śoka-mohau sneho vā,
bhayaṁ vā ye 'jñā-sambhavāḥ,
kva cākhaṇḍita-vijñāna-,
jñānaiśvaryaś tv akhaṇḍitāḥ*

How can lamentation, bewilderment, material affection or fear, all born out of ignorance, be ascribed to the infinite Supreme Lord,

whose perception, knowledge and power are all similarly infinite?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Moreover, it is not actually possible for Kṛṣṇa to experience bewilderment on account of the illusory magic of Salva. How then did Kṛṣṇa manifest affection and lamentation in regard to Vasudeva, which are both based on such bewilderment? If it was impossible for Kṛṣṇa to be afraid of Salva, then how did Kṛṣṇa's Sarnga bow fall from His hands, which was apparently caused by Salva's magic?

Sukadeva Gosvami answers these questions in this verse. Lamentation and other emotions are of two types: caused by ignorance and caused by knowledge. The emotions described here are possible in people who are ignorant, or do not know everything, or who are dependent on wrong sources of knowledge. But how is it possible in the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa who has unlimited knowledge? Transcendental lamentation and other such spiritual emotions are possible in those who have perfect awareness of the world beyond illusion. This applies to the devotees and the Lord Himself who is the original source of all nectarean *rasas* arising as *sancari-bhavas* which are a part of *rasa*.

This is clearly seen in Kṛṣṇa's *damodara-līlā* wherein the Lord cried in fear of mother Yasoda's stick, and in the preliminary loving attraction (*purva-raga*) of the *gopīs* during the *rasa-līlā*. In the case of fear, the particular fear which caused Kṛṣṇa to run away from Kalayavana should be understood as distinct from both the fear rising out of ignorance and transcendental fear. This is stated by Uddhava, *āri-bhayāt palāyanam*, "You flee out of fear of the enemy." (SB 3.4.16) However, if it were real fear then the intelligence of the wise would be erroneous, according to the *Bhagavatamṛta*. Such stories prevent the tasting of nectar, like restricting a horse with a halter.

Text 32

yat-pāda-sevorjitayātma-vidyayā,

*hinvanty anādyātma-viparyaya-graham,
labhanta ātmīyam anantam aiśvaram,
kuto nu mohaḥ paramasya sad-gateḥ*

By virtue of self-realization fortified by service rendered to His feet, devotees of the Lord dispel the bodily concept of life, which has bewildered the soul since time immemorial. Thus they attain eternal glory in His personal association. How, then, can that Supreme Truth, the destination of all genuine saints, be subject to illusion?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The impossibility of Kṛṣṇa's being fooled by Salva's tricks is further explained in this verse, which states that Kṛṣṇa's devotees can never be bewildered, so what to speak of the Lord. Therefore, how was it possible for Salva, a mundane mortal, to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Sri Kṛṣṇa is the goal of the saintly devotees, who remove the endless delusion of being happy or sad by knowledge of the Lord nourished (*ūrjitayā:puṣṭā*) by service to His lotus feet. Such devotees attain the opulence of having an eternal personal relationship (*labhanta ātmīyam anantam aiśvaram*) with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. How could any type of illusion possibly affect the Supreme Personality of Godhead at any time? Therefore these statements are not true.

Text 33

*taṁ śāstra-pūgaiḥ praharantam ojasā,
śālvaṁ śaraiḥ śaurir amogha-vikramaḥ,
viddhvācchinad varma dhanuḥ śiro-maṇim,
saubhaṁ ca śator gadayā ruropa ha*

While Śālva continued to hurl torrents of weapons at Him with

great force, Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose prowess never fails, shot His arrows at Śālva, wounding him and shattering his armor, bow and crest jewel. Then with His club the Lord smashed His enemy's Saubha airship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After defeating the opinion of others, Sukadeva continues the story. Kṛṣṇa broke (*ruroja*) Salva's aircraft with His club.

Text 34

*tat kṛṣṇa-hasteritayā vicūrṇitam,
papāta toye gadayā sahasradhā,
visrjya tad bhū-talam āsthito gadām,
udyamya śālvo 'cyutam abhyagād drutam*

Shattered into thousands of pieces by Lord Kṛṣṇa's club, the Saubha airship plummeted into the water. Śālva abandoned it, stationed himself on the ground, took up his club and rushed toward Lord Acyuta.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Saubha craft (*tat*) fell into the water after being smashed into a thousand pieces by Kṛṣṇa's club.

Text 35

*ādhāvataḥ sa-gadam tasya bāhum,
bhallena chittvātha rathāṅgam adbhutam,
vadhāya śālvasya layārka-sannibham,
bibhrad babhau sārka ivodayācalah*

As Śālva rushed at Him, the Lord shot a bhalla dart and cut off his arm that held the club. Having finally decided to kill Śālva, Kṛṣṇa then raised His Sudarśana disc weapon, which resembled the sun at the time of universal annihilation. The brilliantly shining Lord appeared like the easternmost mountain bearing the rising sun.

Text 36

*jahāra tenaiva śiraḥ sa-kuṇḍalam,
kirīṭa-yuktaṁ puru-māyino hariḥ,
vajreṇa vṛtrasya yathā purandaro,
babhūva hāheti vacas tadā nṛṇām*

Employing His disc, Lord Hari removed that great magician’s head with its earrings and crown, just as Purandara had used his thunderbolt to cut off Vṛtra’s head. Seeing this, all of Śālva’s followers cried out, “Alas, alas!”

Text 37

*tasmin nipatite pāpe,
saubhe ca gadayā hate,
nedur dundubhayo rājan,
divi deva-gaṇeritāḥ,
sakhīnām apacitīm kurvan,
dantavakro ruṣābhyagāt*

With the sinful Śālva now dead and his Saubha airship destroyed, the heavens resounded with kettledrums played by groups of demigods. Then Dantavakra, wanting to avenge the death of his friends, furiously attacked the Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After performing the last rites for his friends like Sisupala, Dantavakra took revenge by angrily attacking Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter Seventy-eight: The Killing of Dantavakra, Vidūratha and Romaharṣaṇa

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
śiśupālasya śālvasya,
pauṇḍrakasyāpi durmatih,
para-loka-gatānām ca,
kurvan pārakṣya-sauhṛdam,
ekah padātiḥ saṅkruddho,
gadā-pāṇiḥ prakampayan,
padbhyām imām mahā-rāja,
mahā-sattvo vyadrśyata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Acting out of friendship for Śiśupāla, Śālva and Pauṇḍraka, who had all passed on to the next world, the wicked Dantavakra appeared on the battlefield in a great rage, O King. All alone, on foot and wielding a club in his hand, the mighty warrior shook the earth with his footsteps.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Kṛṣṇa kills Dantavakra and Viduratha, and Balarama kills the son of Romaharsana during His pilgrimage. These two verses describe how Dantavakra took revenge for the death of his friends. Though they were not present, out of friendship Dantavakra wanted to complete their death rites by killing Kṛṣṇa.

Text 3

*taṁ tathāyāntam ālokya,
gadām ādāya satvaraḥ,
avaplutya rathāt kṛṣṇaḥ,
sindhunṁ veleva pratyadhāt*

Seeing Dantavakra approach, Lord Kṛṣṇa quickly picked up His club, jumped down from His chariot and stopped His advancing opponent just as the shore holds back the ocean.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing His opponent on foot, Kṛṣṇa dismounted (*avaplutya*) from His chariot. Kṛṣṇa stopped Dantavakra just as the shore checks (*vela*) the ocean waves.

Text 4

*gadām udyamya kārūṣo,
mukundaṁ prāha durmadaḥ,
diṣṭyā diṣṭyā bhavān adya,
mama drṣṭi-pathaṁ gataḥ*

Raising his club, the reckless King of Karū ṣa said to Lord Mukunda, “What luck! What luck—to have You come before me today!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dantavakra, who was born in Karusa (*kārūṣo*), raised his club. Goddess Sarasvati has revealed the following hidden meaning of this verse: Being freed of false pride (*durmada*), Dantavakra spoke to Mukunda, who had come in his third lifetime to give him liberation (*mukti-dānārtham*). Dantavakra said, “After waiting three lifetimes for the *brahmana*’s curse to run its course, today (*adya*) I am seeing my master who gives liberation. This is very

auspicious (*diṣṭyā diṣṭyā:bhadraṁ bhadraṁ*)!” *Diṣṭyā* is repeated twice in jubilation.

Text 5

*tvam mātuleyo naḥ kṛṣṇa,
mitra-dhruṅ māṁ jighāṁsasi,
atas tvāṁ gadayā manda,
haniṣye vajra-kalpayā*

“You are our maternal cousin, Kṛṣṇa, but You committed violence against my friends, and now You want to kill me also. Therefore, fool, I will kill You with my thunderbolt club.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *mātuleya* indicates that Kṛṣṇa was a maternal cousin of Dantavakra because his mother, Śrutaśravā, was the sister of Kṛṣṇa’s father, Vasudeva. Dantavakra said, “Though You are my Lord, You have now appeared as my cousin. Nevertheless, it is proper that You desire to kill me, who am envious (*mitra-dhruṅ*) of my own cousin.”

If one takes an alternate grammatical division of the third line of this verse as: *atas tvāṁ gadayā amanda*, then Dantavakra says, “My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are *amanda* (not foolish). Therefore, with Your club, which is as powerful as a thunderbolt (*vajra-kalpayā*), You will kill me and I will attain (*haniṣye:prāpsyāmi*) You by going back home, back to Godhead. I am describing Your club in this way to attract the common people. However, the real power of Your club is not exhibited in killing such an insignificant person as myself.”

Text 6

*tarhy ānr̥ṇyam upaimy ajña,
mitrāṇām mitra-vatsalah,
bandhu-rūpam arim hatvā,
vyādhim deha-caram yathā*

“Then, O unintelligent one, I who am obliged to my friends will have repaid my debt to them by killing You, my enemy disguised as a relative, who are like a disease within my body.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Dantavakra said, “Furthermore, that person who attains You by thinking of You will deliver his friends. No one is more intelligent (*ajña*) than You! Out of affection for my friends, I will free myself of my debt to them by liberating them through knowledge (*hatvā jñātvā*) of You. According to mundane perception You seem to be an enemy, but actually You are the true friend (*bandhu-rūpam*) of everyone. Situated within one’s body (*deha-caram*) as the Supersoul, You are the supreme object of meditation (*vyādhim*).” *Vyādhim* also means one who takes away all mental distress, suffering and sickness.

Text 7

*evam rūkṣais tudan vākyaih,
kṛṣṇam totrair iva dvipam,
gadayātādayan mūrdhni,
simha-vad vyanadac ca saḥ*

Thus trying to harass Lord Kṛṣṇa with harsh words, as one might prick an elephant with sharp goads, Dantavakra struck the Lord on the head with his club and roared like a lion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After harassing the Lord with harsh words, as one pricks an elephant with a sharp goad, Dantavakra hit Kṛṣṇa on the head with his club. In this verse the events are described according to material vision.

Text 8

*gadayābhihato 'py ājau,
na cacāla yadūdvaḥaḥ,
kṛṣṇo 'pi tam ahan gurvyā,
kaumodakyā stanāntare*

Although hit by Dantavakra's club, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer of the Yadus, did not budge from His place on the battlefield. Rather, with His massive Kaumodakī club the Lord struck Dantavakra in the middle of his chest.

Text 9

*gadā-nirbhinna-hṛdaya,
udvaman rudhiraṁ mukhāt,
prasārya keśa-bāhv-aṅghrīn,
dharāṇyām nyapatad vyaśuḥ*

His heart shattered by the club's blow, Dantavakra vomited blood and fell lifeless to the ground, his hair disheveled and his arms and legs sprawling.

Text 10

*tataḥ sūkṣmataram jyotiḥ,
kṛṣṇam āviśad adbhutam,
paśyatām sarva-bhūtānām,
yathā caidyā-vadhe nrpa*

A most subtle and wondrous spark of light then [rose from the demon's body and] entered Lord Kṛṣṇa while everyone looked on, O King, just as when Śiśupāla was killed.

Text 11

*vidūrathas tu tad-bhrātā,
bhrāṭṛ-śoka-pariplutaḥ,
āgacchad asi-carmābhyām,
ucchvasams taj-jighāmsayā*

But then Dantavakra's brother Viduratha, immersed in sorrow over his brother's death, came forward breathing heavily, sword and shield in hand. He wanted to kill the Lord.

Text 12

*tasya cāpatataḥ kṛṣṇaś,
cakreṇa kṣura-neminā,
śiro jahāra rājendra,*

sa-kirītaṁ sa-kunḍalam

O best of kings, as Viduratha fell upon Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa used His razor-edged Sudarśana disc to remove his head, complete with its helmet and earrings.

Texts 13–15

*evam saubham ca śālvaṁ ca,
dantavakraṁ sahānujam,
hatvā durviṣahān anyair,
īḍitaḥ sura-mānavaiḥ,
munibhiḥ siddha-gandharvair,
vidyādhara-mahoragaiḥ,
apsarobhiḥ pitṛ-gaṇair,
yakṣaiḥ kinnara-cāraṇaiḥ,
upagīyamāna-vijayaḥ,
kusumair abhivarṣitaḥ,
vṛtaś ca vṛṣṇi-pravarair,
viveśālankṛtām purīm*

Having thus destroyed Śālva and his Saubha airship, along with Dantavakra and his younger brother, all of whom were invincible before any other opponent, the Lord was praised by demigods, human beings and great sages, by Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and Mahoragas, and also by Apsarās, Pitās, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and Cāraṇas. As they sang His glories and showered Him with flowers, the Supreme Lord entered His festively decorated capital city in the company of the most eminent Vṛṣṇis.

Text 16

*evam yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo,
bhagavān jagad-īśvaraḥ,
īyate paśu-dṛṣṭīnām,
nirjito jayatīti saḥ*

Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master all mystic power and Lord of the universe, is ever victorious. Only those of beastly vision think He sometimes suffers defeat.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s victories were not amazing for materialists like Duryodhana, who was inimical to the Lord. To those whose vision is like that of animals (*paśu-dṛṣṭīnām*), Kṛṣṇa seems to have abandoned Mathura and then been defeated two or three times by Jarasandha and others. Specific details about the killing of Dantavakra are found in the Uttara-khaṇḍa (279) of the *Padma Purāṇa*: *atha śiśupālaṁ nihataṁ śrutvā dantavakraḥ kṛṣṇena saha yoddhum mathurām ājagāma. kṛṣṇas tu tac chrutvā ratham āruhya mathurām āyayau.* “Upon hearing that Śiśupāla had been killed, Dantavakra went to Mathurā to fight Kṛṣṇa. Hearing about this, Kṛṣṇa mounted his chariot and went to Mathura.”

Taylor dantavakra-vāsudevayor aho-rātraṁ mathurā-dvāri saṅgrāmaḥ samavartata. kṛṣṇas tu gadayā taṁ jaghāna. sa tu cūrṇita-sarvāṅgo vajra-nirbhinno mahīdhara iva gatāsur avani-tale nipapāta. so ’pi hareḥ sārūpyeṇa yogi-gamyam nityānanda-sukha-dam śāśvatam paramam padam avāpa: “Day and night Kṛṣṇa and Dantavakra fought at the gate of Mathura. Kṛṣṇa beat Dantavakra with His club until he fell lifeless to the ground, all his limbs smashed like a mountain shattered by a lightning bolt. Dantavakra received an eternal blissful form similar to Hari’s, and thus he also achieved the abode of the Lord

attainable by perfect *yogīs*, which bestows the happiness of everlasting spiritual bliss.”

Itthaṁ jaya-vijayau sanakādi-śāpa-vyājena kevalaṁ bhagavato līlārthaṁ saṁsṛtāv avatūrya janma-traye 'pi tenaiva nihatau janma-trayāvasāne muktim avāptau: “Thus Jaya and Vijaya, on the pretext of the curse of the four Kumaras, appeared on earth three times to facilitate the pastimes of the Lord. In three consecutive lifetimes they were killed by the Lord Himself, and then they attained liberation.” [Hiranyaksa, Hiranyakasipu; Ravana, Kumbhakarana; Sisupala, Dantavakra]

In this passage from the *Padma Purāṇa* the words *kṛṣṇas tu tac chrutvā*, “when Kṛṣṇa heard this”, indicate that Kṛṣṇa heard from Nārada, who travels as swiftly as the mind, that Dantavakra had gone to Mathurā.

Therefore immediately after killing Śālva, without first entering Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa reached Mathurā in a single moment on His chariot, which also moves as swiftly as the mind, and there He saw Dantavakra. Thus it is that even today, by the gate of Mathurā facing the direction of Dvārakā, there is a village known in the vernacular as Datihā, a name derived from the Sanskrit *dantavakra-ha*, “killer of Dantavakra”. This village was founded by Kṛṣṇa’s great-grandson Vajranabha.

The same section of the *Padma Purāṇa* also includes the following words: *kṛṣṇo 'pi taṁ hatvā yamunām uttūrya nanda-vrajaṁ gatvā sotkaṅṭhau pitarāv abhivādyāśvāsya tābhyām sāsru-sekam āliṅgitaḥ sakala-gopa-vṛddhān praṇamya bahu-vastrābharaṇādibhis tatra-sthān santarpayām āsa.* “After killing the wicked demon Viduratha, Kṛṣṇa crossed the Yamuna and went to Nanda Vraja, where He greeted and consoled His aggrieved parents. Nanda Baba and Yasoda drenched Kṛṣṇa with tears and embraced Him. Kṛṣṇa then offered obeisances to the elder cowherd men, and satisfied all the residents with abundant gifts of clothing, ornaments and so on.”

kālindyāḥ puline rāmye, puṇya-vṛkṣa-samācīte gopa-nārībhir anīsaṁ, krīḍayām āsa keśavaḥ rāmya-keli-sukhenaiva, gopa-veśa-dharaḥ prabhūḥ bahu-prema-rasenātra, māsa-dvayam uvāsa ha

“Kesava sported continuously with the Vraja-gopis on the beautiful bank of the Kalindi, which was embellished with auspicious trees.

Dressed as a cowherd boy, Kṛṣṇa stayed there for two months immersed in deep love enjoying various pastimes of blissful reciprocation.”

Atha tatra-sthā nanda-gopādayaḥ sarve janāḥ putra-dārādi-sahitā vāsudeva-prasādena divya-rūpa-dharā vimānam ārūḍhāḥ paramaṁ vaikuṅṭha-lokam avāpuḥ. kṛṣṇas tu nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām sarveṣāṁ nirāmayam sva-padam dattvā divi deva-gaṇaiḥ samstūyamāno dvāravatīm viveśa:

“Then Nanda Maharaja, all the cowherd men with their wives and children, all in their transcendental forms, boarded a celestial airplane and went to the supreme Vaikuṅṭha planet [Goloka Vṛndāvana] by Vasudeva’s mercy. Kṛṣṇa, however, after bestowing on Nanda Gopa and all the Vrajavasis His own transcendental abode, which is free of all disease, returned to Dvārakā as the demigods in the sky chanted His glories.” Crossing over the Yamuna, which is stated above in the *Padma Purana*, means Kṛṣṇa bathed in the Yamuna. After killing the demon Viduratha it was proper to bathe before going to Vraja.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī comments on this in *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.488–89):

vrajesāder amśa-bhūtā, ye droṇādyā avātaran kṛṣṇas tān eva vaikuṅṭhe, prāhiṇod iti sāmpratam preṣṭhebhyo ‘pi priyatamair, janair gokula-vāsibhiḥ vṛndāranye sadaivāsau, vihāraṁ kurute hariḥ

“Since Droṇa and other demigods had previously descended to earth to merge as partial expansions into Nanda Maharaja, the King of Vraja, and other devotees in Vṛndāvana, at this time it was these demigod expansions whom Kṛṣṇa sent off to Vaikuṅṭha. Sri Kṛṣṇa is perpetually enjoying pastimes in Vṛndāvana with His intimate devotees, the residents of Gokula, who are dearer to Him than any other devotees.”

In the passage from the *Padma Purāṇa* cited above, the word *putra* in the phrase *nanda-gopādayaḥ sarve janāḥ putra-dārādi-sahitāḥ*, “Nanda Gopa and the others, together with their children and wives” refers to such sons as Kṛṣṇa, Śrīdāmā and Subala, while the word *dāra* refers to such wives as Śrī Yaśodā and Kīrtidā, the mother of Rādhārāṇī. All the people (*sarve janāḥ*) living in Vraja-mandala went to Goloka, which is the supreme Vaikuṅṭha planet. The phrase *divya-rūpa-dharāḥ* indicates

that in Goloka they engage in pastimes appropriate to demigods, not those suited to humans, as in Gokula. Just as the inhabitants of Ayodhya went to Vaikuntha in their self-same bodies during Rama’s advent, similarly, during Kṛṣṇa’s appearance those living in Vraja went in their bodies to the spiritual world.

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* confirms Kṛṣṇa’s journey from Dvārakā to Vraja in the following verse: *yarhy ambujākṣāpasasāra bho bhavān kurūn madhūn vātha suhrd-didrṁṣayā/ tatrābda-koṭi-pratimaḥ kṣaṇo bhavet*, “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.” (SB 1.11.9)

Sri Kṛṣṇa had been harboring a desire to go see His friends and relatives in Vraja ever since Balarama had gone there, but His mother, father and other elders in Dvārakā had refused to give Him permission. Now, however, after the killing of Śālva, when Kṛṣṇa heard from Nārada that Dantavakra had gone to Mathurā, no one could object to His going there immediately without first entering Dvārakā. After killing Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa would have the opportunity to meet with His friends and relatives living in Vraja.

Considering this, and also remembering Uddhava’s allusion to the *gopīs* in the words *gāyanti te viśada-karma* (SB 10.71.9), Kṛṣṇa went to Vraja to dispel the feelings of separation of the inhabitants. For two months Kṛṣṇa enjoyed in Vṛndāvana just as before, previous to His leaving there to kill Kaṁsa in Mathurā. Then, at the end of two months, Kṛṣṇa withdrew His Vraja pastimes from mundane eyes by taking the demigod portions of His parents and other relatives and friends to Vaikuṅṭha. Thus, in one complete plenary manifestation Kṛṣṇa went to Goloka in the spiritual world, in another He remained perpetually enjoying in Vraja while invisible to material eyes, and in yet another form Kṛṣṇa went alone on His chariot back to Dvaraka.

The people of Śaurasena province thought that after killing Dantavakra, Kṛṣṇa had paid a visit to His parents and other dear ones and now was returning to Dvārakā. The people of Vraja, on the other hand, could not understand where Kṛṣṇa had suddenly gone, so they were totally

astonished.

Śukadeva thought that Parīkṣit Mahārāja might think, “How is it that the same Kṛṣṇa who caused the cowherds to attain Vaikuṅṭha in their self-same bodies also caused the residents of Dvārakā to attain such an inauspicious condition in the course of His *mauṣala-līlā*?” Understanding that this would upset Parikṣit because he identified with the Yadus, Sukadeva Gosvami did not tell him this story from the *Padma Purana*. However, Sukadeva Gosvami vaguely suggests the story by using the verb *viveśā* (entered) in verse 15, which means, “Kṛṣṇa finally entered Dvaraka with His associates after having performed other pastimes that are already known, so I will not mention them.”

Since *Srimad Bhagavatam* does not describe how Kṛṣṇa’s *vraja-līla* ended, the account given in the *Padma Purana* should be accepted as true by all. Thus *Śrī Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Sanātana Gosvāmī’s commentary on the Tenth Canto, gives the following sequential list of pastimes: First was the journey on the occasion of the solar eclipse, then the Rājasūya assembly, then the gambling match and attempted disrobing of Draupadī, then the Pāṇḍavas’ exile to the forest, then the killing of Śālva and Dantavakra, then Kṛṣṇa’s visit to Vṛndāvana and His winding up of the Vṛndāvana pastimes.

Text 17

*śrutvā yuddhodyamaṁ rāmaḥ,
kurūṇāṁ saha pāṇḍavaiḥ,
tīrthābhiṣeka-vyājena,
madhya-sthaḥ prayayau kila*

Lord Balarāma then heard that the Kurus were preparing for war with the Pāṇḍavas. Being neutral, He departed on the pretext of going to bathe in holy places.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa killed all the wicked demons up to Viduratha and then put aside His weapons. But Balarama did this only after killing Balvala and Romaharsana. Hearing that the Kauravas wanted to fight the Pandavas, Balarama thought, “Since I have friendship with Duryodhana and Yudhisthira, surely they will both invite Me on their side. But whose side should I choose?” Thus Balarama left on the pretext of bathing in holy places.

Text 18

*snātvā prabhāse santarpya,
devarṣi-pitṛ-mānavān,
sarasvatīm prati-srotam,
yayau brāhmaṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ*

After bathing at Prabhāsa and honoring the demigods, sages, forefathers and prominent human beings, He went in the company of brāhmaṇas to the portion of the Sarasvatī that flows westward into the sea.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Balarama went to the Sarasvati and bathed in the part that flows westward into the sea.

Texts 19–20

*prthūdakaṁ bindu-saras,
tritakūpaṁ sudarśanam,
viśālaṁ brahma-tīrtham ca,
cakram prācīm sarasvatīm,
yamunām anu yāny eva,*

*gaṅgām anu ca bhārata,
jagāma naimiṣaṁ yatra,
ṛṣayaḥ satram āsate*

Lord Balarāma visited the broad Bindu-saras Lake, Tritakū pa, Sudarśana, Viśāla, Brahma-tīrtha, Cakra-tīrtha and the eastward-flowing Sarasvatī. He also went to all the holy places along the Yamunā and the Ganges, O Bhārata, and then He came to the Naimiṣa forest, where great sages were performing an elaborate sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: *Cakram* here refers to Cakra-tīrtha. Balarama visited all the holy places along the Ganga and Yamuna.

Text 21

*tam āgatam abhipretya,
munayo dīrgha-satrināḥ,
abhinandya yathā-nyāyam,
praṇamyotthāya cārcayan*

Recognizing the Lord upon His arrival, the sages, who had been engaged in their sacrificial rituals for a long time, greeted Him properly by standing up, bowing down and worshiping Him.

Text 22

*so 'rcitaḥ sa-parīvāraḥ,
kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ,*

*romaharṣaṇam āsīnam,
maharṣeḥ śiṣyam aikṣata*

After being thus worshiped along with His entourage, the Lord accepted a seat of honor. Then He noticed that Romaharṣaṇa, Vyāsadeva’s disciple, had remained seated.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama saw Romaharsana, the disciple of the Vyasadeva (*maharṣeḥ*), the greatest of sages.

Text 23

*apratyutthāyinaṁ sū tam,
akṛta-prahvaṇāñjalim,
adhyāsīnam ca tān viprāṁś,
cukopodvīkṣya mādhaveḥ*

Lord Balarāma became extremely angry upon seeing how this member of the sū ta caste had failed to stand up, bow down or join his palms, and also how he was sitting above all the learned brāhmaṇas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to arrogance, Romaharsana sat higher than the assembly of learned *brahmanas*.

Text 24

*yasmād asāv imān viprān,
adhyāste pratiloma-jah,
dharma-pālāṁś tathaivāsmān,*

vadham arhati durmatih

[Lord Balarāma said:] Because this fool born from an improperly mixed marriage sits above all these brāhmaṇas and even above Me, the protector of religion, he deserves to die.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Romaharsana is sitting on a seat higher than Us and is refusing to stand up.”

Texts 25–26

*ṛṣer bhagavato bhūtvā,
śiṣyo 'dhītya bahūni ca,
setihāsa-purāṇāni,
dharma-śāstrāṇi sarvaśaḥ,
adāntasyāvīnītasya,
vṛthā paṇḍita-māninaḥ,
na guṇāya bhavanti sma,
naṭasyevājītatmanah*

Although he is a disciple of the divine sage Vyāsa and has thoroughly learned many scriptures from him, including the lawbooks of religious duties and the epic histories and Purāṇas, all this study has not produced good qualities in him. Rather, his study of the scriptures is like an actor’s studying his part, for he is not self-controlled or humble and vainly presumes himself a scholarly authority, though he has failed to conquer his own mind.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama continued, “Perhaps he is doing so out of ignorance. No, that cannot be because he is the disciple of Vyasadeva (ṛṣer bhagavato bhūtvā śiṣyo). Unfortunately, his study

of scriptures has not produced any good qualities such as self-control (dāntasyā).”

Text 27

*etad-artho hi loke 'sminn,
avatāro mayā kṛtaḥ,
vadhyā me dharmā-dhvajinas,
te hi pātakino 'dhikāḥ*

The very purpose of My descent into this world is to kill such hypocrites who pretend to be religious. Indeed, they are the most sinful rascals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Someone may object, “Romaharsana may offend the *brahmanas*, but how can You, the Supreme Lord, kill him when You are supposed to be without anger and pride?” Balarama answers this in the present verse: “I appear in this world to kill hypocrites who make a show of religiosity (*dharmā-dhvajinas*), and thereby establish real religious principles.”

Text 28

*etāvad uktvā bhagavān,
nivr̥tto 'sad-vadhād api,
bhāvitvāt tam kuśāgreṇa,
kara-sthenāhanat prabhuh*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Although Lord Balarāma had stopped killing the impious, Romaharṣaṇa’s death was inevitable.

Thus, having spoken, the Lord killed him by picking up a blade of kuśa grass and touching him with its tip.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since Romaharsana’s death was destined and inevitable (*bhāvītvāt*), Balarama killed him with a piece of *kusa* grass.

Text 29

*hāheti-vādinah sarve,
munayah khinna-mānasāḥ,
ūcuḥ saṅkarṣaṇam devam,
adharmas te kṛtaḥ prabho*

All the sages cried out, “Alas, alas !” in great distress. They told Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, “O master, You have committed an irreligious act!

Text 30

*asya brahmāsanam dattam,
asmābhir yadu-nandana,
āyus cātmāklamam tāvad,
yāvat satram samāpyate*

“O favorite of the Yadus, we gave him the seat of the spiritual master and promised him long life and freedom from physical pain for as long as this sacrifice continues.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the *brahmanas* answer the hypothetical question, “How can the killing of an irreligious son born of an improperly mixed marriage [a *kṣatriya* father and *brāhmaṇa* mother] be irreligious?”

The *brahmanas* said, “We granted him the boon of no fatigue and long life for the duration of the sacrifice.”

Texts 31–32

*ajānataivācaritas,
tvayā brahma-vadho yathā,
yogeśvarasya bhavato,
nāmnāyo 'pi niyāmakah,
yady etad-brahma-hatyāyāḥ,
pāvanam loka-pāvana,
cariṣyati bhavāu loka-,
saṅgraho 'nanya-coditaḥ*

“You have unknowingly killed a brāhmaṇa. Of course, even the injunctions of revealed scripture cannot dictate to You, the Lord of all mystic power. But if by Your own free will You nonetheless carry out the prescribed purification for this slaying of a brāhmaṇa, O purifier of the whole world, people in general will greatly benefit by Your example.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Text 31) The *brahmanas* said, “Although You are omniscient, You have acted just like an ignorant man. Of course, for You there is no possibility of sin because You are the Lord of all mystic power (*yogeśvarasya*).”

(Text 32) “However, if You perform some purifying atonement for killing this *brahmana*, then the common people will be benefited and nothing more, since You are not motivated by anyone (*ananya-coditaḥ*)

other than Yourself.”

Text 33

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
carīṣye vadha-nirveśam,
lokānugraha-kāmyayā,
niyamaḥ prathame kalpe,
yāvān sa tu vidhīyatām*

The Personality of Godhead said: I will certainly perform the atonement for this killing, since I wish to show compassion to the people in general. Please, therefore, prescribe for Me whatever ritual is to be done first.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “I will carry out this atonement (*nirvesam:prāyaścittam*) for killing the *brahmana* according to the primary ritual (*prathame kalpe:mukhya-kalpe*).”

Text 34

*dīrgham āyur bataitasya,
sattvam indriyam eva ca,
āśāsitaṁ yat tad brūte,
sādhaye yoga-māyayā*

O sages, just say the word, and by My mystic power I shall restore everything you promised him—long life, strength and sensory power.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Balarama said, “Since the *brahmanas* are My mouth, I should not do anything which will break your promise. Please tell Me how I may make whatever you have spoken come true? Simply ask and I will give Romaharsana long life, strength (*sattvam*) and sharpness of the senses (*indriyam*).”

Text 35

*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ astrasya tava vīryasya,
mṛtyor asmākam eva ca,
yathā bhaved vacaḥ satyam,
tathā rāma vidhīyatām*

The sages said: Please see to it, O Rāma, that Your power and that of Your kuśa weapon, as well as our promise and Romaharṣaṇa’s death, all remain intact.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *brahmanas* said, “You should arrange things in such a way that Your position, Your *kusa* grass weapon, the killing of Romaharsana, and our words as well will remain true.”

Text 36

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
ātmā vai putra utpanna,
iti vedānuśāsanam,
tasmād asya bhaved vaktā,
āyur-indriya-sattva-vān*

The Supreme Lord said: The Vedas instruct us that one’s own self takes birth again as one’s son. Thus let Romaharṣaṇa’s son become the speaker of the Purāṇas, and let him be endowed with long life, strong senses and stamina.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Balarama fulfills their request by saying, “The *Vedas* say:

aṅgād aṅgāt sambhavasi, hṛdayād abhijāyase ātmā vai putra-nāmāsi, sañjīva śaradaḥ śatam

‘You have taken birth from my various limbs and have arisen from my very heart. You are my own self in the form of my son. May you live through a hundred autumns.’ (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* 6.4.8)

“Therefore Romaharsana’s son, Ugrasrava, will recite the *Puranas* for you, and he will be blessed with long life and energy. Thus the weapon and Romaharsana’s death will remain true. Yet at the same time in the form of his son, Romaharsana’s long life and energy are assured and your promise will remain intact.”

Text 37

*kiṁ vaḥ kāmo muni-śreṣṭhā,
brūtāham karavāṇy atha,
ajānatas tv apacitiṁ,
yathā me cintyatām budhāḥ*

Please tell Me your desire, O best of sages, and I shall certainly fulfill it. And, O wise souls, please carefully determine My proper atonement, since I do not know what it might be.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “First I should give some gift to you wise *brahmanas* who will instruct Me on atonement. After that, you should think carefully and establish the proper

atonement for Me, who am ignorant about this.”

Text 38

*ṛṣaya ūcuḥ,
ilvalasya suto ghorō,
balvalo nāma dānavaḥ,
sa dūṣayati naḥ satram,
etya parvaṇi parvaṇi*

The sages said: A fearsome demon named Balvala, the son of Ilvala, comes here every new-moon day and contaminates our sacrifice.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brah-manas* said, “On every dark moon day (*parvani parvani*) a demon contaminates our sacrifice.”

Text 39

*taṁ pāpaṁ jahi dāśārha,
tan naḥ śuśrūṣaṇaṁ param,
pūya-śoṇita-vin-mūtra-
surā-māmsābhivarṣiṇam*

O descendant of Daśārha, please kill that sinful demon, who pours down pus, blood, feces, urine, wine and meat upon us. This is the best service You can do for us.

Text 40

*tataś ca bhāratam varṣam,
parītya su-samāhitaḥ,
caritvā dvādaśa-māsāms,
tīrtha-snāyī viśudhyasi*

Thereafter, for twelve months, You should circumambulate the land of Bhārata in a mood of serious meditation, executing austerities and bathing at various holy pilgrimage sites. In this way You will become purified.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *brahmanas* specify Balarama’s atonement in this verse. “You should travel around (*parītya*) Bharata [India] for one year undergoing penance (*caritvā*) with fully concentrated mind and senses (*su-samāhitaḥ*). By this You will be purified.”

Chapter Seventy-nine: Lord Balarāma Goes on Pilgrimage

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tataḥ parvaṇy upāvṛtte,
pracaṇḍaḥ pāmśu-varṣaṇaḥ,
bhīmo vāyur abhūd rājan,
pūya-gandhas tu sarvaśaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Then, on the new-moon day, O King, a fierce and frightening wind arose, scattering dust all about and spreading the smell of pus everywhere.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Balarama kills Balvala, goes on pilgrimage and returns to see the fighting of Bhima and Duryodhana. Afterwards, He returns to Dvaraka. When the dark moon arrived (*upavṛtte*) there was a strong wind filled with dust and the stench of pus.

Text 2

*tato 'medhya-mayaṁ varṣaṁ,
balvalena vinirmitam,
abhavad yajña-śālāyāṁ,
so 'nvadrśyata śūla-dhṛk*

Next, onto the sacrificial arena came a downpour of abominable

things sent by Balvala, after which the demon himself appeared, trident in hand.

Texts 3–4

*tam vilokya bṛhat-kāyam,
bhinnāñjana-cayopamam,
tapta-tāmra-śikhā-śmaśrum,
damṣṭrogra-bhru-kuṭī-mukham,
sasmāra mūśalaṁ rāmaḥ,
para-sainya-vidāraṇam,
halaṁ ca daitya-damanam,
te tūrṇam upatasthatuḥ*

The immense demon resembled a mass of black carbon. His topknot and beard were like molten copper, and his face had horrible fangs and furrowed eyebrows. Upon seeing him, Lord Balarāma thought of His club, which tears to pieces His enemies' armies, and His plow weapon, which punishes the demons. Thus summoned, His two weapons appeared before Him at once.

Text 5

*tam ākṛṣya halāgreṇa,
balvalaṁ gagane-caram,
mūśalenāhanat kruddho,
mūrdhni brahma-druhaṁ balaḥ*

With the tip of His plow Lord Balarāma caught hold of the demon Balvala as he flew through the sky, and with His club the Lord angrily struck that harasser of brāhmaṇas on the head.

Text 6

*so 'patad bhuvī nirbhinna-
lalāṭo 'sṛk samutsrjan,
muñcann āṛta-svaram śailo,
yathā vajra-hato 'ruṇaḥ*

Balvala cried out in agony and fell to the ground, his forehead cracked open and gushing blood. He resembled a red mountain struck by a lightning bolt.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The demon appeared reddish with blood, like a mountain red with oxide.

Text 7

*saṁstutya munayo rāmaṁ,
prayujyāvitathāśiṣaḥ,
abhyaṣiñcan mahā-bhāgā,
vṛtra-ghnaṁ vibudhā yathā*

The exalted sages honored Lord Rāma with sincere prayers and awarded Him infallible blessings. Then they performed His ritual bath, just as the demigods had formally bathed Indra when he killed Vṛtra.

Text 8

*vaijayantīm dadur mālām,
śrī-dhāmāmlāna-pañkajām,
rāmāya vāsasī divye,
divyāny ābharaṇāni ca*

They gave Lord Balarāma a Vaijayantī garland of unfading lotuses in which resided the goddess of fortune, and they also gave Him a set of divine garments and jewelry.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They gave Balarama a Vaijayanti garland of unfading lotuses in which resided the goddess of fortune (*śrī-dhāma amlāna-pañkajām*).

Text 9

*atha tair abhyanujñātaḥ,
kauśikīm etya brāhmaṇaiḥ,
snātvā sarovaram agād,
yataḥ sarayūr āsravat*

Then, given leave by the sages, the Lord went with a contingent of brāhmaṇas to the Kauśikī River, where He bathed. From there He went to the lake from which flows the river Sarayū.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama went to the lake from which the river Sarayu flows.

Text 10

*anu-srotena sarayūm,
prayāgam upagamyā saḥ,
snātvā santarpya devādīn,
jagāma pulahāśramam*

The Lord followed the course of the Sarayū until He came to Prayāga, where He bathed and then performed rituals to propitiate the demigods and other living beings. Next He went to the āśrama of Pulaha Āṣi.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By following the course (*anu-srotena*) of the Sarayu, Balarama eventually arrived in Prayaga.

Texts 11–15

*gomatīm gaṇḍakīm snātvā,
vipāśām śoṇa āplutaḥ,
gayām gatvā pitṛn iṣtvā,
gaṅgā-sāgara-saṅgame,
upaspr̥śya mahendrādrau,
rāmaṁ dr̥ṣṭvābhivādyā ca,
sapta-godāvarīm veṇām,
pampām bhīmarathīm tataḥ,
skandaṁ dr̥ṣṭvā yayau rāmaḥ,
śrī-śailaṁ giriśālayam,
draviḍeṣu mahā-puṇyam,
dr̥ṣṭvādrim veṅkaṭam prabhuh,
kāma-koṣṇīm purīm kāñcīm,*

*kāverīm ca sarid-varām,
śrī-rangākhyam mahā-puṇyam,
yatra sannihito hariḥ,
ṛṣabhādrim hareḥ kṣetram,
dakṣiṇām mathurām tathā,
sāmudram setum agamat,
mahā-pātaka-nāśanam*

Lord Balarāma bathed in the Gomatī, Gaṇḍakī and Vipāśā rivers, and also immersed Himself in the Śoṇa. He went to Gayā, where He worshiped His forefathers, and to the mouth of the Ganges, where He performed purifying ablutions. At Mount Mahendra He saw Lord Paraśurāma and offered Him prayers, and then He bathed in the seven branches of the Godāvarī River, and also in the rivers Veṇā, Pampā and Bhīmarathī. Then Lord Balarāma met Lord Skanda and visited Śrī-śaila, the abode of Lord Giriśa. In the southern provinces known as Draviḍa-deśa the Supreme Lord saw the sacred Veṅkaṭa Hill, as well as the cities of Kāmakoṣṇī and Kāñcī, the exalted Kāverī River and the most holy Śrī-raṅga, where Lord Kṛṣṇa has manifested Himself. From there He went to Āṣabha Mountain, where Lord Kṛṣṇa also lives, and to the southern Mathurā. Then He came to Setubandha, where the most grievous sins are destroyed.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama visited and bathed in each of the rivers such as the Gomati, Gandaki and Vipasa. Although His father and grandfather were still alive, it was on His father's order that Balarama carefully worshiped (*pitṛn iṣṭvā*) His forefathers at Gayā. After bathing (*upasṛṣya*) at Ganga Sagara, Balarama should have gone to Sri Purusottama-ksetra [Jagannatha Puri], which is nearby. But Balarama did not go there. According to *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Balarama wanted to avoid the embarrassment of having to worship Himself among the forms of Sri Kṛṣṇa, Balabhadra and Subhadrā. At Mahendra

He offered prayers (*abhivādya*) to Parasurama (*rāmam*).

Texts 16–17

*tatrāyutam adād dhenūr,
brāhmaṇebhyo halāyudhaḥ,
kṛtamālām tāmraparṇīm,
malayaṁ ca kulācalam,
tatrāgastyam samāsīnam,
namaskṛtyābhivādya ca,
yojitas tena cāśīrbhir,
anujñāto gato 'rṇavam,
dakṣiṇam tatra kanyākhyām,
durgām devīm dadarśa saḥ*

There at Setubandha [Rāmeśvaram] Lord Halāyudha gave brāhmaṇas ten thousand cows in charity. He then visited the Kṛtamālā and Tāmraparṇī rivers and the great Malaya Mountains. In the Malaya range Lord Balarāma found Agastya Āṣi sitting in meditation. After bowing down to the sage, the Lord offered him prayers and then received blessings from him. Taking leave from Agastya, He proceeded to the shore of the southern ocean, where He saw Goddess Durgā in her form of Kanyā-kumārī.

Text 18

*tataḥ phālgunam āsādya,
pañcāpsarasam uttamam,
viṣṇuḥ sannihito yatra,
snātvāsparśad gavāyutam*

Next He went to Phālguna-tīrtha and bathed in the sacred Pañcāpsarā Lake, where Lord Viṣṇu had directly manifested Himself. At this place He gave away another ten thousand cows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bathing at Pañca-apsarasam, Balarama gave (*asparśat*) ten thousand cows in charity.

Texts 19–21

*tato 'bhivrajya bhagavān,
keralāms tu trigartakān,
gokarṇākhyam śiva-kṣetram,
sānnidhyam yatra dhūrjateḥ,
āryām dvaipāyanīm dr̥ṣṭvā,
śūrpārakam agād balah,
tāpīm payoṣṇīm nirvindhyām,
upaspr̥śyātha daṇḍakam,
praviśya revām agamad,
yatra māhiṣmatī purī,
manu-tīrtham upaspr̥śya,
prabhāsam punar āgamat*

The Supreme Lord then traveled through the kingdoms of Kerala and Trigarta, visiting Lord Śiva's sacred city of Gokarṇa, where Lord Dhū rjaṭi [Śiva] directly manifests himself. After also visiting Goddess Pārvatī, who dwells on an island, Lord Balarāma went to the holy district of Śū rpāraka and bathed in the Tāpī, Payoṣṇī and Nirvindhyā rivers. He next entered the Daṇḍaka forest and went to the river Revā, along which the city of Māhiṣmatī is found. Then He bathed at Manu-tīrtha and finally returned to Prabhāsa.

Text 22

*śrutvā dvijaiḥ kathyamānam,
kuru-pāṇḍava-saṁyuge,
sarva-rājanya-nidhanam,
bhāram mene hṛtam bhuvah*

The Lord heard from some brāhmaṇas how all the kings involved in the battle between the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas had been killed. From this He concluded that the earth was now relieved of her burden.

Text 23

*sa bhīma-duryodhanayor,
gadābhyām yudhyator mrdhe,
vārayiṣyan vinaśanam,
jagāma yadu-nandanah*

Wanting to stop the club fight then raging between Bhīma and Duryodhana on the battlefield, Lord Balarāma went to Kurukṣetra.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama went to the battlefield (*vināśanam*) of Kuruksetra to prevent Bhima and Duryodhana from fighting.

Text 24

*yudhiṣṭhiras tu taṁ dṛṣṭvā,
yamau kṛṣṇārjunāv api,
abhivādyābhavaṁs tuṣṇīm,
kiṁ vivakṣur ihāgataḥ*

When Yudhiṣṭhira, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna and the twin brothers Nakula and Sahadeva saw Lord Balarāma, they offered Him respectful obeisances but said nothing, thinking “What has He come here to tell us?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They remained silent, worried about what Balarama had come there to say.

Text 25

*gadā-pāṇī ubhau dṛṣṭvā,
saṁrabdhau vijayaīṣṇau,
maṇḍalāni vicitrāṇi,
carantāv idam abravīt*

Lord Balarāma found Duryodhana and Bhīma with clubs in their hands, each furiously striving for victory over the other as they circled about skillfully. The Lord addressed them as follows.

Text 26

yuvām tulya-balau vīrau,

*he rājan he vṛkodara,
ekam prāṇādhikam manye,
utaikam śikṣayādhikam*

[Lord Balarāma said:] King Duryodhana! And Bhīma! Listen! You two warriors are equal in fighting prowess. I know that one of you has greater physical power, while the other is better trained in technique.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Bhima is greater in physical strength and Duryodhana is greater in knowledge of club fighting.”

Text 27

*tasmād ekatarasyeha,
yuvayoḥ sama-vīryayoḥ,
na lakṣyate jayo 'nyo vā,
viramatv aḥhalo raṇaḥ*

Since you are so evenly matched in fighting prowess, I do not see how either of you can win or lose this duel. Therefore please stop this useless battle.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama said, “Because you are equally matched, neither of you can win this battle (*raṇaḥ*).”

Text 28

na tad-vākyam jagṛhatur;

*baddha-vairau nṛpārthavat,
anusmarantāv anyonyam,
duruktaṁ duṣkṛtāni ca*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] They did not accept Lord Balarāma’s request, O King, although it was logical, for their mutual enmity was irrevocable. Each of them constantly remembered the insults and injuries he had suffered from the other.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: However, they did not listen to Balarama’s meaningful (*artha-vat*) words.

Text 29

*diṣṭam tad anumānvāno,
rāmo dvāravatīm yayau,
ugrasenādibhiḥ prītair;
jñātibhiḥ samupāgataḥ*

Concluding that the battle was the arrangement of fate, Lord Balarāma went back to Dvārakā. There He was greeted by Ugrasena and His other relatives, who were all delighted to see Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *diṣṭam*, “fate”, indicates that the battle between Bhīma and Duryodhana had been enjoined by Kṛṣṇa and set into motion by Him.

Text 30

*taṁ punar naimiṣaṁ prāptam,
ṛṣayo 'yājayan mudā,
kratv-aṅgaṁ kratubhiḥ sarvair;
nivr̥ttākḥila-vigrahaṁ*

Later Lord Balarāma returned to Naimiṣāraṇya, where the sages joyfully engaged Him, the embodiment of all sacrifice, in performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice. Lord Balarāma was now retired from warfare.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages engaged Balarama, the embodiment of all sacrifices (*kratv-aṅgaṁ*), in performing Vedic sacrifices.

Text 31

*tebhyo viśuddhaṁ vijñānaṁ,
bhagavān vyatarad vibhuḥ,
yenaivātmāno do viśvam,
ātmānaṁ viśva-gaṁ viduḥ*

The all-powerful Lord Balarāma bestowed upon the sages pure spiritual knowledge, by which they could see the whole universe within Him and also see Him pervading everything.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Balarama bestowed wisdom on the sages so they could understand that the universe was within the Paramatma (*atmani*), and that the Paramatma was within the universe.

Text 32

*sva-patyāvabhṛtha-snāto,
jñāti-bandhu-suhṛd-vṛtaḥ,
reje sva-jyotsnayevenduḥ,
su-vāsāḥ suṣṭhv alaṅkṛtaḥ*

After executing with His wife the avabhṛtha ablutions, the beautifully dressed and ornamented Lord Balarāma, encircled by His immediate family and other relatives and friends, looked as splendid as the moon surrounded by its effulgent rays.

Text 33

*īdṛg-vidhāny asaṅkhyāni,
balasya bala-śāliṅaḥ,
anantasyāprameyasya,
māyā-martyasya santi hi*

Countless other such pastimes were performed by mighty Balarāma, the unlimited and immeasurable Supreme Lord, whose mystic Yogamāyā power makes Him appear to be a human being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There are many stories about Balarama whose human form was His *svarupa* (*māyā-martyasya*). *Svarupa* can be equated with the word *maya* because the *śruti*, or *Vedic mantras*, state: *svarūpa-bhūtayā nitya-śaktyā māyākhyayā*, “The Supreme Lord possesses His own eternal potency known as *māyā*, which manifests from His own transcendental form.”

Text 34

*yo 'nusmareta rāmasya,
karmāṇy adbhuta-karmaṇaḥ,
sāyaṁ prātar anantasya,
viṣṇoḥ sa dayito bhavet*

All the activities of the unlimited Lord Balarāma are amazing. Anyone who regularly remembers them at dawn and dusk will become very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Viṣṇu.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One who regularly remembers the amazing pastimes of Balarama at dawn and dusk will become very dear to Kṛṣṇa (*visnoḥ*), the younger brother of Balarama.

Chapter Eighty: The Brāhmaṇa Sudāmā Visits Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
bhagavan yāni cānyāni,
mukundasya mahātmanah,
vīryāṇy ananta-vīryasya,
śrotum icchāmi he prabho*

King Parīkṣit said: My lord, O master, I wish to hear about other valorous deeds performed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, whose valor is unlimited.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Sudama comes to Dvaraka and is worshiped by Kṛṣṇa. After questioning him lovingly, Kṛṣṇa reminisces about their life together in *gurukula*. Parikṣit Maharaja said, “O master, I want to hear other exploits of Mukunda.”

Text 2

*ko nu śrutvāsakṛd brahmann,
uttamaḥśloka-sat-kathāḥ,
virameta viśeṣa-jñō,
viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ*

O brāhmaṇa, how could anyone who knows the essence of life and is disgusted with endeavoring for sense gratification give up the transcendental topics of Lord Uttamaḥśloka after hearing them repeatedly?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: We see many persons who, even after hearing the topics of Kṛṣṇa repeatedly, nevertheless cease from hearing. The *jnanis* fixed on the impersonal Brahman are an example of those who give up those topics. But one who has realized that the essence of life (*viśeṣa-jñō*) is to constantly relish Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form, qualities and pastimes never gives up those topics. One who experiences the taste of hearing about Kṛṣṇa’s fascinating pastimes automatically becomes disgusted with the inferior taste of material pleasure (*viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ*). Hearing anything other than topics of Kṛṣṇa is useless.

Text 3

*sā vāg yayā tasya guṇān grṇīte,
karau ca tat-karma-karau manaś ca,
smared vasantaṁ sthira-jaṅgameṣu,
śṛṇoti tat-puṇya-kathāḥ sa karṇaḥ*

Actual speech is that which describes the qualities of the Lord, real hands are those that work for Him, a true mind is that which always remembers Him dwelling within everything moving and nonmoving, and actual ears are those that listen to sanctifying topics about Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Parikṣit Maharaja said, “Not only the ears, but all organs of the body become useless without a connection with Kṛṣṇa.” In the Second Canto, Third Chapter, verse 20 Śaunaka Āṣi

made a similar statement: *jihvāsati dārdurikeva sūta*, “The tongues of those who fail to sing of the Lord are useless as those of frogs.” The senses should work together in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In other words, whatever the eyes or the ears experience, the mind should simply remember Kṛṣṇa, who is within all things.

Text 4

*śiras tu tasyobhaya-liṅgam ānamet,
tad eva yat paśyati tad dhi cakṣuḥ,
aṅgāni viṣṇor atha taj-janānām,
pādodakam yāni bhajanti nityam*

An actual head is one that bows down to the Lord in His manifestations among the moving and nonmoving creatures, real eyes are those that see only the Lord, and actual limbs are those which regularly honor the water that has bathed the Lord’s feet or those of His devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The eyes which see both the Deity form of Visnu and His devotees, the head which bows to those two forms (*ubhaya-liṅgam*), and the limbs which receive the foot water of Visnu and His devotees are fortunate. The word *aṅgāni*, “limbs” refers to those limbs which are above the navel, since pouring *caranamṛta* on one’s body lower than the navel is offensive.

Text 5

*sūta uvāca,
viṣṇu-rātena samprṣṭo,
bhagavān bādarāyaṇiḥ,*

*vāsudeve bhagavati,
nimagna-hṛdayo ’bravīt*

Suta Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by King Viṣṇurāta, the powerful sage Bādarāyaṇi replied, his heart fully absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva.

Text 6

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kṛṣṇasyāsīt sakhā kaścid,
brāhmaṇo brahma-vittamaḥ,
virakta indriyārtheṣu,
praśāntātmā jitendriyaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Kṛṣṇa had a certain brāhmaṇa friend [named Sudāmā] who was most learned in Vedic knowledge and detached from all sense enjoyment. Furthermore, his mind was peaceful and his senses subdued.

Text 7

*yadṛcchayopapannena,
vartamāno gṛhāśramī,
tasya bhāryā ku-cailasya,
kṣut-kṣāmā ca tathā-vidhā*

Living as a householder, he maintained himself with whatever came of its own accord. The wife of that poorly dressed brāhmaṇa suffered along with him and was emaciated from hunger.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama’s wife exhibited the same qualities (*tathā-vidhā*) such as tolerating hunger (*kṣut-kṣāmā*). The word *ca* implies that she was even more tolerant than Sudama, because whatever she received as food she served to him, remaining hungry herself.

Text 8

*pati-vratā patim prāha,
mlāyatā vadanena sā,
daridram sīdamānā vai,
vepamānābhigamya ca*

The chaste wife of the poverty-stricken brāhmaṇa once approached him, her face dried up because of her distress. Trembling with fear, she spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: She was distressed (*sīdamānā*) because she could not obtain any food for her husband. Out of fear of her husband she was also trembling (*vepamānā*), because she knew that he did not want to beg the Lord for anything other than devotion.

Text 9

*nanu brahman bhagavataḥ,
sakhā sākṣāc chriyaḥ patiḥ,
brahmaṇyaś ca śaraṇyaś ca,*

[Sudāmā’s wife said:] O brāhmaṇa, isn’t it true that the husband of the goddess of fortune is the personal friend of your exalted self? That greatest of Yādavas, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, is compassionate to brāhmaṇas and very willing to grant them His shelter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From her statements quoted here one can see that Sudama’s wife anticipated every possible objection her husband might make to her request that he go to Kṛṣṇa to beg charity. If Sudama might say, “How could the husband of the goddess of fortune befriend a fallen soul like myself?” his wife replies by saying, “Sri Kṛṣṇa is *brahmaṇya*, very favorably disposed toward the *brāhmaṇas*.”⁴ Sudama: “But I do not have the qualities of such a *brahmana*.” Wife: “Kṛṣṇa gives shelter (*śaraṇyaś*) to anyone who surrenders to Him.”

Sudama: “Since I have no devotion, I do not even have the quality of surrender.”

Wife: “Kṛṣṇa is the omniscient Bhagavan, therefore, He will take note of your unhappiness and be merciful to you.”

Sudama: “Kṛṣṇa is equally disposed to all the countless unhappy conditioned souls suffering the fruits of their own *karma*, so why should He give wealth to me?”

Wife: “Kṛṣṇa is the master (*ṛṣabhaḥ:patiḥ*) of the devotees (*sātvatas*). He may not give but the devotees who serve Him by fanning and other actions will mercifully give you some charity. Since Kṛṣṇa maintains the Yadus (*sātvaṛṣabhaḥ*), what burden or fault is it for Him to maintain you?”

*tam upaihi mahā-bhāga,
sādhūnām ca parāyaṇam,
dāsyati draviṇam bhūri,
sīdate te kuṭumbine*

O fortunate one, please approach Him, the real shelter of all saints. He will certainly give abundant wealth to such a suffering householder as you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama’s wife continued, “You may not consider yourself a *sadhu*, but you are definitely in a wretched condition. Seeing that you are struggling to support your family and are worthy of charity, Kṛṣṇa will surely give generously.” The word *ca* following *sadhunam* implies that Kṛṣṇa is also the final shelter of those who are wretched.

Text 11

*āste ’dhunā dvāravatyām,
bhoja-vṛṣṇy-andhakeśvaraḥ,
smarataḥ pāda-kamalam,
ātmānam api yacchati,
kiṁ nv artha-kāmān bhajato,
nāty-abhīṣṭān jagad-guruḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa is now the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas and is staying at Dvārakā. Since He gives even His own self to anyone who simply remembers His lotus feet, what doubt is there that He, the spiritual master of the universe, will bestow upon His sincere worshiper prosperity and material enjoyment, which are not even very desirable?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudama said, “But Kṛṣṇa may be in Indraprastha, Dvaraka or some other place killing the demons.”

His wife replied, “Kṛṣṇa has now put aside His weapons and does not leave His capital of Dvārakā. Since Kṛṣṇa is the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, if these opulent rulers merely acknowledge you as a personal friend of Kṛṣṇa’s, they will give you everything you need.” Sudama: “But I am embarrassed to ask anything from Kṛṣṇa.”

Wife: “Kṛṣṇa gives Himself unto any person who just remembers (*smarataḥ*) Him even without asking for anything.” The genitive case *smarataḥ* stands for the dative case *smarate* (unto the person who remembers).

“What to speak of Kṛṣṇa giving material wealth and sense gratification to His devotee, which are not very much desirable (*nāty-abhīṣṭān*) for Him to give because in the long run they are tasteless. Moreover Kṛṣṇa is the benefactor of the universe (*jagad-guruḥ*), and thus He gives to those who entreat Him, even what they have not specifically begged for. Therefore, if you go to Dvaraka and just remain silent, Kṛṣṇa will give you the abundant wealth you desire. Since He is your true benefactor, He will also give you the sweetness of His lotus feet.”

Texts 12–13

*sa evaṁ bhāryayā vipro,
bahuśaḥ prārthito muhuḥ,
ayaṁ hi paramo lābha,
uttamaḥśloka-darśanam,
iti sañcintya manasā,
gamanāya matiṁ dadhe,
apy asty upāyanam kiñcid,
gr̥he kalyāṇi dīyatām*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] When his wife thus repeatedly implored him in various ways, the brāhmaṇa thought to himself, “To see Lord Kṛṣṇa is indeed the greatest achievement in life.” Thus he decided to go, but first he told her, “My good wife, if there is anything in the house I can bring as a gift, please give it to me.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Due to his natural humility, Sudama was initially dissatisfied with his wife’s constant requests. Finally he pacified his mind and decided to go by thinking, “I will become very fortunate by seeing my Lord.” (Text 13) Sudama asked, “If there is some gift in the house, please give it.” The idea is, “How can I go empty-handed to my friend’s house?”

Text 14

*yācitvā caturo muṣṭīn,
viprān pṛthuka-taṇḍulān,
caila-khaṇḍena tān baddhvā,
bhartre prādād upāyanam*

Sudāmā’s wife begged four handfuls of flat rice from neighboring brāhmaṇas, tied up the rice in a torn piece of cloth and gave it to her husband as a present for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Text 15

*sa tān ādāya viprāgryah,
prayayau dvārakām kila,
kṛṣṇa-sandarśanam mahyam,
katham syād iti cintayan*

Taking the flat rice, the saintly brāhmaṇa set off for Dvārakā, all the while wondering “How will I be able to have Kṛṣṇa’s audience?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Sudama thought, “How will I enter, since I will be stopped by the gatekeepers?”

Texts 16–17

*trīṇi gulmāny atīyāya,
tisraḥ kakṣāś ca sa-dvijah,
vipro ’gamyāndhaka-vṛṣṇīnām,
gṛheṣv acyuta-dharminām,
gṛham dvya-aṣṭa-sahasrāṇām,
mahiṣīṇām harer dvijah,
viveśaikatamaṁ śrīmad,
brahmānandaṁ gato yathā*

The learned brāhmaṇa, joined by some local brāhmaṇas, passed three guard stations and went through three gateways, and then he walked by the homes of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s faithful devotees, the Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis, which ordinarily no one could do. He then entered one of the opulent palaces belonging to Lord Hari’s sixteen thousand queens, and when he did so he felt as if he were attaining the bliss of liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama passed through three encampments of soldiers (*gulmani*) protecting the outer gates, and three tall tower houses at the inner gates (*kakṣāś*) of the city. Accompanied by local *brahmanas* (*sa-dvijah*), Sudama passed near the houses of

the unconquerable Vrsnis and Andhakas. He entered the main palace among the palaces of Kṛṣṇa’s sixteen thousand queens. It was the palace of Rukmini according to the *Padma Purana*, Uttara-khaṇḍa: *sa tu rukmiṇy-antaḥ-pura-dvāri kṣaṇam tūṣṇīm sthitaḥ*, “He stood silently at the doorway of Queen Rukmiṇī’s palace.” Sudama momentarily forgot everything because he felt as if he had attained the bliss of liberation (*brahma-ānandam*).

Text 18

*taṁ vilokyācyuto dūrāt,
priyā-paryāṅkam āsthitaḥ,
sahasotthāya cābhyetya,
dorbhyāṁ paryagrahīn mudā*

At that time Lord Acyuta was seated on His consort’s bed. Spotting the brāhmaṇa at some distance, the Lord immediately stood up, went forward to meet him and with great pleasure embraced him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Seeing him, Kṛṣṇa got up and went forward (*abhyetya*) into the courtyard where He embraced (*paryagrahīt*) Sudama in great bliss.

Text 19

*sakhyuḥ priyasya viprarṣer,
aṅga-saṅgāti-nirvṛtaḥ,
prīto vyamuñcad ab-bindūn,
netrābhyāṁ puṣkarekṣaṇaḥ*

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord felt intense ecstasy upon touching the body of His dear friend, the wise brāhmaṇa, and thus He shed tears of love.

Texts 20–22

*athopaveśya paryaṅke,
svayam sakhyuḥ samarhaṇam,
upahr̥tyāvanijyāśya,
pādau pādāvanejanīḥ,
agrahīc chirasā rājan,
bhagavāl loka-pāvanah,
vyalimpad divya-gandhena,
candanāguru-kuṅkamaiḥ,
dhūpaiḥ surabhibhir mitram,
pradīpāvalibhir mudā,
arcitvāvedya tāmbūlam,
gām ca svāgatam abravīt*

Lord Kṛṣṇa seated His friend Sudāmā upon the bed. Then the Lord, who purifies the whole world, personally offered him various tokens of respect and washed his feet, O King, after which He sprinkled the water on His own head. He anointed him with divinely fragrant sandalwood, aguru and kuṅkuma pastes and happily worshiped him with aromatic incense and arrays of lamps. After finally offering him betel nut and the gift of a cow, He welcomed him with pleasing words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sprinkled the water that He used to wash Sudama’s feet (*pāda-avanejanīḥ*) on His head.

Text 23

*ku-cailaṁ malinaṁ kṣāmaṁ,
dvijaṁ dhamani-santatam,
devī paryacarat sākṣāc,
cāmara-vyajanena vai*

By fanning him with her cāmara, the divine goddess of fortune personally served that poor brāhmaṇa, whose clothing was torn and dirty and who was so thin that veins were visible all over his body.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Rukmini personally (devī sākṣāc) fanned Sudama with a camara. In another version of the text the word sākṣāc is replaced by the word Saibya, which would mean that another queen [Saibya] fanned Sudama. But this does not agree with the Padma Purana, Uttara-khaṇḍa.

Text 24

*antaḥ-pura-jano dṛṣṭvā,
kṛṣṇenāmala-kīrtinā,
vismīto 'bhūd ati-prītyā,
avadhūtaṁ sabhājitam*

The people in the royal palace were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of spotless glory, so lovingly honor this shabbily dressed brāhmaṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *amala-kīrtinā* (spotless fame) implies that henceforth Kṛṣṇa's fame, which personally attends

Him, would assume the form of the glories of His having delivered Sudama from poverty. *Avadhūtam* means “whose clothes were unclean.”

Texts 25–26

*kim anena kṛtaṁ puṇyam,
avadhūtena bhikṣuṇā,
śriyā hīnena loke 'smin,
garhitenādhamena ca,
yo 'sau tri-loka-guruṇā,
śrī-nivāsenā sambhṛtaḥ,
paryaṅka-sthām śriyaṁ hitvā,
pariṣvaktō 'gra-jo yathā*

[The residents of the palace said:] What pious acts has this unkempt, impoverished brāhmaṇa performed? People regard him as lowly and contemptible, yet the spiritual master of the three worlds, the abode of Goddess Śrī, is serving him reverently. Leaving the goddess of fortune sitting on her bed, the Lord has embraced this brāhmaṇa as if he were an older brother.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: These two verses describe the astonishment of the Dvarakavasis. Sudama was lowly (*adhamena*) in the sense that he was dressed in shabby clothes.

Text 27

*kathayām cakratur gāthāḥ,
pūrvā guru-kule satoḥ,
ātmanor lalitā rājan,*

karau gr̥hya parasparam

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Taking each other’s hands, O King, Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā talked pleasantly about how they once lived together in the school of their guru.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Sudama talked about their school days while holding (*gr̥hya*) hands with each other.

Text 28

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
api brahman guru-kulād,
bhavatā labdha-dakṣiṇāt,
samāvṛttena dharma-jña,
bhāryodhā sadṛśī na vā*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you know well the ways of dharma. After you offered the gift of remuneration to our guru and returned home from his school, did you marry a compatible wife or not?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Sudama was dressed as a householder, he did not appear to be enjoying any material pleasure. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa asked him if he was married or not. Kṛṣṇa said, “You know well the religious principle (*dharma-jña*) that after graduating from school one should get married in order to prevent the fault of having no *āśrama*.”

Text 29

*prāyo grheṣu te cittam,
akāma-vihitam tathā,
naivāti-prīyase vidvan,
dhaneṣu viditam hi me*

Even though you are mostly involved in household affairs, your mind is not affected by material desires. Nor, O learned one, do you take much pleasure in the pursuit of material wealth. This I am well aware of.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Even though you are not speaking out of embarrassment, I know the actual situation.” Kṛṣṇa reveals this in this verse. “Sudama, though you are a householder, your heart is not disturbed by lust. O wise one (*vidvan*), I know that because you understand the temporary nature of material enjoyment, you have little attraction for wealth, clothing and other things. Therefore, these material things have not been given to you.”

The two words *prāyo* (for the most part) and *ati* (very much) imply that “for the sake of your wife you are displaying a favorable disposition toward material wealth.” This indicates that Kṛṣṇa will give these things later.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Just see! Though this man is a householder, he is without desires and does not want anything from others. Even if he is given some charity by force, still he will not accept it.”

At this time Kṛṣṇa thought, “To broadcast Sudama’s fame in Dvaraka, I will not reveal his desire to anyone, nor outwardly give any charity to him here.”

Text 30

kecit kurvanti karmāṇi,

*kāmair ahata-cetasah,
tyajantaḥ prakṛtīr daivīr,
yathāham loka-saṅgraham*

Having renounced all material propensities, which spring from the Lord’s illusory energy, some people execute worldly duties with their minds undisturbed by mundane desires. They act as I do, to instruct the general populace.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I know very well that you did not take *sannyasa* like others, even though you are renounced. Those who are detached engage in work even though their minds are not attracted by material desires. By working in this way they give up the perverted propensity of the mind to create desires for material enjoyment. As a householder, I act according to the scriptural injunctions in order to teach the people in general.”

Text 31

*kaccid guru-kule vāsam,
brahman smarasi nau yataḥ,
dvijo vijñāya vijñeyam,
tamasah pāram aśnute*

My dear brāhmaṇa, do you remember how we lived together in our spiritual master’s school? When a twice-born student has learned from his guru all that is to be learned, he can enjoy spiritual life, which lies beyond all ignorance.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In his mind, Sudama doubted,

“Because Kṛṣṇa worships me in this way though I am so lowly, does He actually recognize who I am or not?” To dispel this doubt, Kṛṣṇa reminds Sudama of their school days together in twelve verses (31-43). Kṛṣṇa said, “Do you remember our living at the *gurukula*? By knowing (*viññeyam*) the true nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead a *brahmana* can transcend material existence (*tamasah*).”

Text 32

*sa vai sat-karmaṇām sākṣād,
dvijāter iha sambhavaḥ,
ādyo 'ṅga yatrāśramaṇām,
yathāham jñāna-do guruḥ*

My dear friend, he who gives a person his physical birth is his first spiritual master, and he who initiates him as a twice-born brāhmaṇa and engages him in religious duties is indeed more directly his spiritual master. But the person who bestows transcendental knowledge upon the members of all the spiritual orders of society is one's ultimate spiritual master. Indeed, he is as good as My own self.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “In human life there are three *gurus*: one's father, the one who gives *upanayanam*, and the one who teaches about Me. Of these the last is most worshipable. The father, who makes possible our birth (*sambhavaḥ*) in this world (*iha*), is the first *guru* (*adyah*). He who gives *upanayanam*, teaches *Gayatri mantra*, and engages one in sanctified activities (*sat-karmaṇām*) is the second *guru*. But he who gives knowledge to the people in the four *asramas*, and who teaches about Me is to be worshipped on the same level as Me (*yathāham:mat-tulyaḥ*).”

Text 33

*nanv artha-kovidā brahman,
varṇāśrama-vatām iha,
ye mayā guruṇā vācā,
taranty añjo bhavārṇavam*

Certainly, O brāhmaṇa, of all the followers of the varṇāśrama system, those who take advantage of the words I speak in My form as the spiritual master and thus easily cross over the ocean of material existence best understand their own true welfare.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Kṛṣṇa describes how the third *guru* delivers his student from the material world. Kṛṣṇa said, “Certainly (*nanu: niṣcitam eva*), among those following the *varnasrama* system, they who know the highest truth easily cross the ocean of material existence by hearing from a bona fide *guru* who teaches about Me and initiates them into My *mantra*. Such a *guru* is My very form (*mayā guruṇā*).”

Text 34

*nāham ijyā-prajātibhyām,
tapasopāśamena vā,
tuṣyeyam sarva-bhūtātām,
guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā*

I, the Soul of all beings, am not as satisfied by ritual worship, brahminical initiation, penances or self-discipline as I am by faithful service rendered to one’s spiritual master.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Therefore the *guru* who teaches about Me is most worthy of being faithfully served. Even though I am the Soul of all beings (*sarva-bhūtātmā*), I am not as satisfied by ritual worship, *brahminical* initiation, penances or self-discipline as I am by faithful service rendered to one’s spiritual master.”

Texts 35–36

*api naḥ smaryate brahman,
vṛttaṁ nivasatām gurau,
guru-dāraiś coditānām,
indhanānāyane kvacit,
praviṣṭānām mahāraṇyam,
apartau su-mahad dvija,
vāta-varṣam abhūt tīvraṁ,
niṣṭhurāḥ stanayitnavah*

O brāhmaṇa, do you remember what happened to us while we were living with our spiritual master? Once our guru’s wife sent us to fetch firewood, and after we entered the vast forest, O twice-born one, an unseasonal storm arose, with fierce wind and rain and harsh thunder.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Do you remember the incident that happened while we were living (*nivasatām*) with our *guru*? It was winter and a great storm suddenly arose with wind, rain and thundering clouds although it was unseasonal (*apa-ṛtau*).”

Text 37

*sūryaś cāstam gatas tāvat,
tamasā cāvṛtā diśaḥ,
nimnam kūlam jala-mayaṁ,
na prājñāyata kiñcana*

Then, as the sun set, the forest was covered by darkness in every direction, and with all the flooding we could not distinguish high land from low.

Text 38

*vayaṁ bhṛśam tatra mahānilāmbubhir,
nihanyamānā mahur ambu-samplave,
diśo 'vidanto 'tha parasparam vane,
gṛhīta-hastāḥ paribabhrimāturāḥ*

Constantly besieged by the powerful wind and rain, we lost our way amidst the flooding waters. We simply held each other's hands and, in great distress, wandered aimlessly about the forest.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The verb *paribabhrima* may be understood to be the prefix *pari* with either the verb *bhṛ* or *bhram*. The word *bhram* indicates that Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā wandered all about. The prefix *bhṛ*, which means “to carry”, indicates that while wandering about, the two boys continued carrying the wood they had collected for their spiritual master.

Text 39

*etad viditvā udite,
ravau sāndīpanir guruḥ,
anveṣamāṇo naḥ śiṣyān,
ācārya 'paśyad āturān*

Our guru, Sāndīpani, understanding our predicament, set out after sunrise to search for us, his disciples, and found us in distress.

Text 40

*aho he putrakā yūyam,
asmad-arthe 'ti-duḥkhitāḥ,
ātmā vai prāṇinām preṣṭhas,
tam anādr̥tya mat-parāḥ*

[Sāndīpani said:] O my children, you have suffered so much for my sake! The body is most dear to every living creature, but you are so dedicated to me that you completely disregarded your own comfort.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sandipani Muni speaks three verses (40-42).

Text 41

*etad eva hi sac-chiṣyaiḥ,
kartavyaṁ guru-niṣkṛtam,
yad vai viśuddha-bhāvena,
sarvārthātmārpaṇaṁ gurau*

This indeed is the duty of all true disciples: to repay the debt to their spiritual master by offering him, with pure hearts, their wealth and even their very lives.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sandipani Muni said, “All true disciples (*sat śiṣyāiḥ*) should repay the debt to their *guru* by offering their body (*ātmā*), which is the basis of the material conception of “I”, and all their assets (*sarvārthā*), which is the basis of the conception of “mine”.

Text 42

*tuṣṭo 'haṁ bho dvija-śreṣṭhāḥ,
satyāḥ santu manorathāḥ,
chandāmsy ayāta-yāmāni,
bhavantv iha paratra ca*

You boys are first-class brāhmaṇas, and I am satisfied with you. May all your desires be fulfilled, and may the Vedic mantras you have learned never lose their meaning for you, in this world or the next.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sandipani Muni said, “Your knowledge of scriptures will remain ever fresh in your minds and never grow old (*ayāta-yāmāni*) in this life or the next.” The *Amara-kosa* dictionary says, *jīrṇam ca paribhuktaṁ ca yāta-yāmam idaṁ dvayam*: “*yāta-yāmam* means worn out or used up.”

Text 43

*ittham-vidhāny anekāni,
vasatām guru-veśmani,
guror anugraheṇaiva,
pumān pūrṇaḥ praśāntaye*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa continued:] We had many similar experiences while living in our spiritual master’s home. Simply by the grace of the spiritual master a person can fulfill life’s purpose and attain eternal peace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “Many such incidents happened to us while living in *gurukula*.”

Text 44

*śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca,
kim asmābhir anirvṛttaṁ,
deva-deva jagad-guro,
bhavatā satya-kāmena,
yeṣām vāso guror abhūt*

The brāhmaṇa said: What could I possibly have failed to achieve, O Lord of lords, O universal teacher, since I was able to personally live with You, whose every desire is fulfilled, at the home of our spiritual master?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama said, “What lack of bliss was there for us? It was completely blissful for us to live in the *gurukula* with You, whose every desire becomes fulfilled (*satya-kāmena*). Living in the *gurukula* was by Your wish alone. The difficulties of wind and rain we encountered while fetching wood were due to Your own desire,

since You wanted to teach devotion to the spiritual master. Other than that, what power do the wind and rain have over You? The *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8) says: *bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate*, ‘The wind blows out of fear of You.’ It was my great fortune to have lived there with You.”

Text 45

*yasya cchando-mayaṁ brahma,
deha āvapanam vibho,
śreyasām tasya guruṣu,
vāso 'tyanta-vidambanam*

O almighty Lord, Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedas and is thus the source of all auspicious goals of life. That You took up residence at the school of a spiritual master is simply one of Your pastimes in which You play the role of a human being.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama said, “Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the *Vedas*, and it is the source (*āvapanam:kṣetram*) of all auspicious goals. You lived in the *gurukula* only to teach others.”

Chapter Eighty-one: The Lord Blesses Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa

Texts 1–2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sa itthaṁ dvija-mukhyena,
saha saṅkathayan hariḥ,
sarva-bhūta-mano-’bhijñāḥ,
smayamāna uvāca tam,
brahmaṇyo brāhmaṇaṁ kṛṣṇo,
bhagavān prahasanaṁ priyam,
premnā nirīkṣaṇenaiva,
prekṣan khalu satām gatiḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī said:] Lord Hari, Kṛṣṇa, perfectly knows the hearts of all living beings, and He is especially devoted to the brāhmaṇas. While the Supreme Lord, the goal of all saintly persons, conversed in this way with the best of the twice-born, He laughed and spoke the following words to that dear friend of His, the brāhmaṇa Sudāmā, all the while smiling and looking upon him with affection.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa takes food from Sudama and, without Sudama’s knowledge, rewards him with unlimited treasure to repay His debt to him. The words *sarva-bhūta-mano-abhijñā* indicate that since Kṛṣṇa knows the minds of everyone, He immediately knew that His friend Sudāmā had brought some flat rice for Him and was ashamed to present it. Kṛṣṇa smiled (*smayamāna*) at this moment, thinking “Yes, I am going to make you show what you brought for Me.” Kṛṣṇa’s smile then turned to laughter (*prahasana*) as He thought, “How

long are you going to keep this precious gift hidden in your cloth?” Kṛṣṇa looked at the bundle hidden under Sudama’s garment. Then with His loving glance (*preṃṇā nirīkṣaṇena*) Kṛṣṇa conveyed, “The veins showing through your emaciated skin and your ragged clothes astonish everyone in Dvaraka. However, these symptoms of poverty will last only until tomorrow morning.”

Although Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇo bhagavān*) is the supreme independent Lord, He happily reciprocates with those who are *priyam*, His cherished servants. Being devoted to the *brāhmaṇas* (*brahmaṇyaḥ*), Kṛṣṇa especially enjoys favoring them because they possess unconditional devotion to Him.

Text 3

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
kim upāyanam ānītaṃ,
brahman me bhavatā grhāt,
any apy upāhṛtaṃ bhaktaiḥ,
preṃṇā bhury eva me bhavet,
bhūry apy abhaktopahṛtaṃ,
na me toṣāya kalpate*

The Supreme Lord said: O brāhmaṇa, what gift have you brought Me from home? I regard as great even the smallest gift offered by My devotees in pure love, but even great offerings presented by nondevotees do not please Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa asked, “Have you brought anything for Me? I surmise that you, having such affection for Me, would not come empty-handed so far from your house to see Me, who have such affection for you.”

Sudama replied, “I am very embarrassed to show it because it is

meager.”

Kṛṣṇa responded, “Even if My devotee offers only a little (*aṇu*) with pure love, it becomes plenty for Me.”

Text 4

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam,
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati,
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam,
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama said, “When I took this from my house to present to You, I did not think about it at all. But now I think that it is unsuitable for You to eat, so I am not giving it.”

The present verse, which Sri Kṛṣṇa spoke in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.26) is Kṛṣṇa’s reply to Sudāmā’s anxiety that his bringing such an unfit offering was ill-considered. The phrases *bhaktyā prayacchati* and *bhakty-upahṛtam* may seem redundant, since they both mean “offered with devotion”. The word *bhaktyā* can indicate how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates the devotional mood of whoever offers Him something with love. In other words, Kṛṣṇa emphasizes here that His reciprocation in pure love is not dependent on the external quality of what is offered.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Something may or may not be tasty and pleasing in its own right. However, if My devotee offers it to Me in love with the expectation that I will enjoy it, I eat it with great pleasure without thinking twice about it.” The verb *aśnāmi*, “I eat”, implies that Kṛṣṇa eats even a flower, which though acceptable is not edible, bewildered as He is by the ecstatic love He feels for His devotee.

Someone might question, “Kṛṣṇa, will You refuse an offering made to

You by persons who are devotees of the demigods?” Kṛṣṇa answers, “Yes, I will refuse to eat it. I only eat from the hand of My devotee, who has a pure heart (*prayata-ātmanaḥ*) and whose mind is fixed in devotion. I accept his offering and no one else’s.”

Text 5

*ity ukto 'pi dviyas tasmai,
vrīḍitaḥ pataye śriyaḥ,
pṛthuka-prasṛtīm rājan,
na prāyacchad avāñ-mukhaḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Even after being addressed in this way, O King, the brāhmaṇa felt too embarrassed to offer his palmfuls of flat rice to the husband of the goddess of fortune. He simply kept his head bowed in shame.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama refused to give his four handfuls (*prasṛtim*) of chipped rice to Kṛṣṇa due to embarrassment (*vrīḍitaḥ*). The phrase *pataye śriyaḥ* “husband of the goddess of fortune” indicates that Sudama was thinking, “How can the Lord of Śrī eat this hard, tasteless flat rice?”

By bowing his head Sudama revealed his meditation: “O Lord, do not mock me. Though You have requested me many times, I have decided that I will not give it to You.” On the other side, Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “But you are My devotee so you should do as you decided to do when you left home and give it to Me.”

Texts 6–7

sarva-bhūtātma-dṛk sākṣāt,

*tasyāgamana-kāraṇam,
vijñāyācintayan nāyaṁ,
śrī-kāmo mābhajat purā,
patnyāḥ pati-vratāyās tu,
sakhā priya-cikīrṣayā,
prāpto mām asya dāsyāmi,
sampado 'martya-durlabhāḥ*

Being the direct witness in the hearts of all living beings, Lord Kṛṣṇa fully understood why Sudāmā had come to see Him. Thus He thought, “In the past My friend has never worshiped Me out of a desire for material opulence, but now he comes to Me to satisfy his chaste and devoted wife. I will give him riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa, the direct witness in the hearts of all living beings (*sarva-bhūtātma-dṛk sākṣāt*) or the seer of all souls, overwhelmed with love, momentarily wondered, “Though I know everything, how has My devotee become so poor?” Then, quickly understanding the situation, Kṛṣṇa spoke to Himself the words related in this verse.

The result of performing *bhakti* without material desires is spiritual enjoyment. This point is explained in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (SB 1.2.9):

*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya, nārtho arthāyopakalpate nārthasya
dharmaikāntasya, kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ*

“All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, according to sages, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification.” There are two types of renounced devotees (*niṣkāma bhaktas*): one kind is inimical to sense gratification, and the other is indifferent to it. According to the different natures of these *niṣkāma*

bhaktas, there are two kinds of results. The devotee who is extremely averse to worldly enjoyments will not get such enjoyments from Kṛṣṇa. Jada Bharata is an example of this type of a renounced devotee. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa may give limitless wealth and power to a devotee who is neither repelled nor attracted by material things, such as Prahlāda Mahārāja. Up to this point in his life, Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa was totally averse to sense gratification. But now, out of compassion for his faithful wife, and also because he hankered to see his dear friend Kṛṣṇa, he went to beg from the Lord.

Then again Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself. “Even the desire of Sudama’s wife was motivated by loyalty to her husband (*pati-vratāyās*) alone. Thus she is also without personal desire at all. Therefore I will give them riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain.”

Text 8

*itthaṁ vicintya vasanāc,
cīra-baddhān dvi-janmanaḥ,
svayaṁ jahāra kim idam,
iti pṛthuka-taṇḍulān*

Thinking like this, the Lord snatched from the brāhmaṇa’s garment the grains of flat rice tied up in an old piece of cloth and exclaimed, “What is this?”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa snatched the flat rice which Sudama had hidden in a strip of old cloth tied around his waist.

Text 9

nanv etad upanītaṁ me,

*parama-prāṇanam sakhe,
tarpayanty aṅga mām viśvam,
ete pṛthuka-taṇḍulāḥ*

“My friend, have You brought this for Me? It gives Me extreme pleasure. Indeed, these few grains of flat rice will satisfy not only Me but also the entire universe.”

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Do not think that this flat rice is unsuitable for Me because it is stale and tasteless. I like it very much. Moreover do not think it is not enough, for it will satisfy not only Me but the entire universe.”

Text 10

*iti muṣṭim sakṛj jagdhvā,
dvitīyām jagdhum ādade,
tāvaca chrīr jagṛhe hastam,
tat-parā parameṣṭhinaḥ*

After saying this, the Supreme Lord ate one palmful and was about to eat a second when the devoted goddess Rukmiṇī took hold of His hand.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By grabbing Kṛṣṇa’s hand, Rukmiṇī implied, “If You eat all of this wonderful treat Your friend brought from his house, what will remain for my friends, co-wives, sisters-in-law, servants and myself? There will not be enough left to distribute even one grain to each of us. Even if I distribute one particle of rice to each person, it will not be sufficient.”

This was Rukmini’s indication for Sudama. To her personal

maidservants Rukmini said by her gesture, “This hard rice will upset my Lord’s tender stomach.”

Text 11

*etāvatālam viśvātman,
sarva-sampat-samṛddhaye,
asmin loke ’tha vāmuṣmin,
puṁsas tvat-toṣa-kāraṇam*

[Queen Rukmiṇī said:] This is more than enough, O Soul of the universe, to secure him an abundance of all kinds of wealth in this world and the next. After all, one’s prosperity depends simply on Your satisfaction.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Through her eyes Rukmini conveyed her intentions to Kṛṣṇa: “You have eaten enough (*etāvatālam*), so be satisfied with that and do not eat any more. O Soul of the universe (*viśva-ātman*)! If You are satisfied, the whole universe will be satisfied.” Kṛṣṇa spoke through His eyes, “In order to give My dear friend great wealth, I must eat more than one handful.”

Rukmini replied, “Your satisfaction alone is the cause of one’s increasing his wealth in this life and the next. Therefore You need not chew much of this hard, tasteless rice.” Rukmini’s statement was communicated internally. It was not spoken externally, because if it were, then Sudama would understand her words and not speak verse twenty.

Text 12

brāhmaṇas tām tu rajanīm,

*uṣṭivācyuta-mandire,
bhuktvā pītvā sukhaṁ mene,
ātmānaṁ svar-gataṁ yathā*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The brāhmaṇa spent that night in Lord Acyuta’s palace after eating and drinking to his full satisfaction. He felt as if he had gone to the spiritual world.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Eating and drinking sufficiently, Sudama felt as if he had attained the heavenly planets (*sva-gataṁ*).

Text 13

*śvo-bhūte viśva-bhāvena,
sva-sukhenābhivanditaḥ,
jagāma svālayaṁ tāta,
pathy anavrajya nanditaḥ*

The next day, Sudāmā set off for home while being honored by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied maintainer of the universe. The brāhmaṇa felt greatly delighted, my dear King, as he walked along the road.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *abhivanditaḥ*, “honored” means that Sri Kṛṣṇa honored or respected Sudama by accompanying him on the road for a short distance. Kṛṣṇa is perfectly complete in His own bliss (*sva-sukhena*) and He is the maintainer of the universe (*viśva-bhāvena*). Therefore, since Kṛṣṇa can create the whole universe by His mere wish, what endeavor is it for Him to create a luxurious palace for Sudama? Kṛṣṇa abounds in bliss, so how difficult is it for Him to fill the heart of Sudama with unlimited joy (*nanditaḥ*)?

Text 14

*sa cālabdhvā dhanam kṛṣṇān,
na tu yācitavān svayam,
sva-grhān vrīḍito 'gacchan,
mahad-darśana-nirvṛtaḥ*

Although he had apparently received no wealth from Lord Kṛṣṇa, Sudāmā was too shy to beg for it on his own. He simply returned home, feeling perfectly satisfied to have had the Supreme Lord's audience.

Text 15

*aho brahmaṇya-devasya,
dṛṣṭā brahmaṇyatā mayā,
yad daridratamo lakṣmīm,
āśliṣṭo bibhratorasi*

[Sudāmā thought:] Lord Kṛṣṇa is known to be devoted to the brāhmaṇas, and now I have personally seen this devotion. Indeed, He who carries the goddess of fortune on His chest has embraced the poorest beggar.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama expresses his bliss in four verses (15-18). Sudama said, "I have directly seen Kṛṣṇa's affection for the *brahmanas* because He embraced me to His chest, the residence place of Lakṣmi-devi."

Text 16

*kvāhaṁ daridraḥ pāpīyān,
kva kṛṣṇaḥ śrī-nīketanaḥ,
brahma-bandhur iti smāhaṁ,
bāhubhyāṁ parirambhitaḥ*

Who am I? A sinful, poor friend of a brāhmaṇa. And who is Kṛṣṇa? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in six opulences. Nonetheless, He has embraced me with His two arms.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama said, “Though I am so fallen that I am not even fit to be called a *brāhmaṇa* (*brahma-bandhuḥ*), I was embraced by Kṛṣṇa’s arms.

Text 17

*nivāsitaḥ priyā-juṣṭe,
paryāṅke bhrātaro yathā,
mahiṣyā vījitaḥ śrānto,
bāla-vyajana-hastayā*

He treated me just like one of His brothers, making me sit on the bed of His beloved consort. And because I was fatigued, His queen personally fanned me with a yak-tail cāmara.

Text 18

*śuśrūṣayā paramayā,
pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ,
pūjito deva-devena,
vipra-devena deva-vat*

Although He is the Lord of all demigods and the object of worship for all brāhmaṇas, He worshiped me as if I were a demigod myself, massaging my feet and rendering other humble services.

Text 19

*svargāpavargayoḥ puṁsām,
rasāyām bhuvī sampadām,
sarvāsām api siddhīnām,
mūlaṁ tac-caraṇārcanam*

Devotional service to His lotus feet is the root cause of all the perfections a person can find in heaven, in liberation, in the subterranean regions and on earth.

Text 20

*adhano 'yam dhanam prāpya,
mādyann uccair na mām smaret,
iti kāruṇiko nūnam,
dhanam me 'bhūri nādadāt*

Thinking “If this poor wretch suddenly becomes rich, he will forget Me in his intoxicating happiness,” the compassionate Lord did not grant me even a little wealth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudāmā’s statement that Kṛṣṇa gave him “not even a little wealth” (*dhanam me abhūri nādadāt*) may also be taken to mean “That Kṛṣṇa did not give me anything is my great wealth (*ādadāt bhuri me dhanam*).” Or it can mean that instead of giving Sudama wealth that was *abhuri*, “slight”, Kṛṣṇa in fact gave him the immense treasure of His association.

Texts 21–23

*iti tac cintayann antaḥ,
prāpto nija-grhāntikam,
sūryānalendu-saṅkāśair,
vimānaiḥ sarvato vṛtam,
vicitropavanodyānaiḥ,
kūjad-dvija-kulākulaiḥ,
protphulla-kamudāmbhoja,
kahlārotpala-vāribhiḥ,
juṣṭam sv-alanḱṛtaiḥ pumbhiḥ,
strībhiś ca hariṇākṣibhiḥ,
kim idam kasya vā sthānam,
katham tad idam ity abhūt*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thinking thus to himself, Sudāmā finally came to the place where his home stood. But that place was now crowded on all sides with towering, celestial palaces rivaling the combined brilliance of the sun, fire and the moon. There were splendid courtyards and gardens, each filled with flocks of

cooing birds and beautified by ponds in which kumuda, ambhoja, kahlāra and utpala lotuses grew. Finely attired men and doe-eyed women stood in attendance. Sudāmā wondered, “What is all this? Whose property is it? How has this all come about?”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Sudama approached his own house, he saw the effulgence of the place and thought, “What is this?” Seeing the palatial towers, he said, “Whose place is this?” Finally recognizing it as his own house he wondered, “How did this happen?”

Text 24

*evam mīmāṃsamānam taṁ,
narā nāryo ’mara-prabhāḥ,
pratyagrḥṇan mahā-bhāgam,
gīta-vādyena bhūyasā*

As he continued to ponder in this way, the beautiful men-and maidservants, as effulgent as demigods, came forward to greet their greatly fortunate master with loud song and instrumental music.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *pratyagrḥṇan*, “the servants acknowledged in turn” indicates that first Sudāmā accepted the servants within his mind, deciding, “My Lord must want me to have them.” Noticing the change in Sudama’s attitude, the servants then approached him as their master.

Text 25

*patim āgatam ākarṇya,
patny uddharṣāti-sambhramā,*

*niścakrāma grhāt tūrṇam,
rūpiṇī śrīr ivālayāt*

When she heard that her husband had arrived, the brāhmaṇa's wife quickly came out of the house in a jubilant flurry. She resembled the goddess of fortune herself emerging from her divine abode.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The night before, Sudama's wife went to sleep with a wasted body, withered breasts and worn out clothes in a house with broken walls and a crumbling roof. When she woke up in the morning, however, she found herself and her house wonderfully changed. She was astonished for a moment, and then concluded that all this wealth had been given to Sudama by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then she went out to greet her husband.

Text 26

*pati-vratā patim dr̥ṣṭvā,
premotkaṇṭhāśru-locanā,
mīlitāksy anamad buddhyā,
manasā pariṣasvaje*

When the chaste lady saw her husband, her eyes filled with tears of love and eagerness. As she held her eyes closed, she solemnly bowed down to him, and in her heart she embraced him.

Text 27

*patnīm vīkṣya visphurantīm,
devīm vaimānikīm iva,
dāsīnām niṣka-kaṅṭhīnām,
madhye bhāntīm sa vismitaḥ*

Sudāmā was amazed to see his wife. Shining forth in the midst of maidservants adorned with jeweled lockets, she looked as effulgent as a demigoddess in her celestial airplane.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama still had his old cloth and protruding veins. Kṛṣṇa kept him in his wretched state so that his wife would recognize him.

Text 28

*prītaḥ svayaṁ tayā yuktaḥ,
praviṣṭo nija-mandiram,
maṇi-stambha-śatopetaṁ,
mahendra-bhavanam yathā*

With pleasure he took his wife with him and entered his house, where there were hundreds of gem-studded pillars, just as in the palace of Lord Mahendra.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudāmā was simply astonished at the sight of his wife. As he wondered, “Who is this demigod’s wife approaching such a fallen soul as me?” the maidservants informed him, “This is indeed your wife.” Immediately Sudāmā’s body became young and beautiful, bedecked in fine clothing and jewelry. The word *prītaḥ* here indicates that these changes gave Sudama considerable pleasure. Sudama and his wife then entered the house which rivaled Indra’s

celestial abode in opulence.

The *Viṣṇu-sahasranam*, “Thousand Names of Viṣṇu” contained in the *Mahābhārata*, describes Kṛṣṇa as the one who brought the treasure of Indra to earth for His devotee beggar Sridama (*śrīdāmā-raṅka-bhaktārtha-bhūmy-ānītendra-vaibhavaḥ*).

Texts 29–32

*payah-phena-nibhāḥ śayyā,
dāntā rukma-paricchadāḥ,
paryāṅkā hema-daṇḍāni,
cāmara-vyajanāni ca,
āsanāni ca haimāni,
mṛdūpastaraṅāni ca,
muktādāma-vilambīni,
vitānāni dyumanti ca,
svaccha-sphaṭika-kudyeṣu,
mahā-mārakateṣu ca,
ratna-dīpān bhrājamānān,
lalanā ratna-saṁyutāḥ,
vilokya brāhmaṇas tatra,
samṛddhīḥ sarva-sampadām,
tarkayām āsa nirvyagraḥ,
sva-samṛddhim ahaitukīm*

In Sudāmā’s home were beds as soft and white as the foam of milk, with bedsteads made of ivory and ornamented with gold. There were also couches with golden legs, as well as royal cāmara fans, golden thrones, soft cushions and gleaming canopies hung with strings of pearls. Upon the walls of sparkling crystal glass, inlaid with precious emeralds, shone jeweled lamps, and the women in the palace were all adorned with precious gems. As he viewed this

luxurious opulence of all varieties, the brāhmaṇa calmly reasoned to himself about his unexpected prosperity.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama reflected upon the sudden (*ahaitukīm*) increase in his fortune.

Text 33

*nūnaṁ bataitan mama durbhagasya,
śaśvad daridrasya samṛddhi-hetuḥ,
mahā-vibhūter avalokato 'nyo,
naivopapadyeta yadūttamasya*

[Sudāmā thought:] I have always been poor. Certainly the only possible way that such an unfortunate person as myself could become suddenly rich is that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supremely opulent chief of the Yadu dynasty, has glanced upon Me.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sudama thought, “The great opulence of me and this house has happened only by the glance of Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 34

*nany abruvāṇo diśate samakṣam,
yāciṣṇave bhūry api bhūri-bhojaḥ,
parjanya-vat tat svayam īkṣamāṇo,
dāsārhakāṇām ṛṣabhaḥ sakhā me*

After all, my friend Kṛṣṇa, the most exalted of the Dāsārhas and the enjoyer of unlimited wealth, noticed that I secretly intended to beg

from Him. Thus even though He said nothing about it when I stood before Him, He actually bestowed upon me the most abundant riches. In this way He acted just like a merciful rain cloud.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudama thought, “If Kṛṣṇa has bestowed this wealth upon me, then why did He not tell me about it when we met in Dvaraka? Certainly my friend directly speaks and gives abundant wealth to beggars like myself. I surmise that Kṛṣṇa did not mention how He was going to fulfill my unspoken request because at that time He was thinking, ‘My dear friend has given Me these grains of rice, which are greater than all the treasures I own. Even though in his own house he had no such gift to bring Me, he took the trouble of begging it from a neighbor. Therefore it is only proper that I give him something more valuable than all My possessions. But nothing is equal to or greater than what I possess, so all I can do is give him such meager things as the treasures of Indra, Brahmā and other demigods.’”

Embarrassed at being unable to properly reciprocate Sudama’s offering, Sri Kṛṣṇa bestowed His favor on him silently. Kṛṣṇa acted just like a magnanimous rain cloud which provides the necessities of life for everyone near and far but feels ashamed that its rain is too insignificant a gift to give in return for the abundant offerings that farmers make to it. Out of shame the cloud may wait until night-time when the farmers are asleep before watering their fields. This is the position of Kṛṣṇa, the best of the generous dynasty of Yadus (*dāśārhakāṇām ṛṣabhah*).

Text 35

*kiñcit karoty urv api yat sva-dattam,
suhṛt-kṛtam phalgv api bhūri-kārī,
mayopanītam pṛthukaika-muṣṭim,
pratyagrahīt prīti-yuto mahātmā*

The Lord considers even His greatest blessings to be insignificant, while He magnifies even a small service rendered to Him by His well-wishing devotee. Thus with pleasure the Supreme Soul accepted a single palmful of the flat rice I brought Him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudama thought, “Kṛṣṇa thought that what He was giving me, though great (*uru*), was small, and that what I was giving, though insignificant (*phalgu*), was great. For that reason He accepted the rice offered by me with devotion.”

Text 36

*tasyaiva me sauhṛda-sakhya-maitrī-
dāsyam punar janmani janmani syāt,
mahānubhāvena guṇālayena,
viśajjatas tat-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ*

The Lord is the supremely compassionate reservoir of all transcendental qualities. Life after life may I serve Him with love, friendship and sympathy, and may I cultivate such firm attachment for Him by the precious association of His devotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sudama thought, “May I have affection (*sauhṛdam:sneha*) toward Kṛṣṇa who is so compassionate to His devotees.” The word *sakhyam* means affinity manifested in the desire to live in Kṛṣṇa’s association. *Maitrī* means the attitude of intimate comradeship, and *dāsyam* means the urge to do service.

Text 37

bhaktāya citrā bhagavān hi sampado,

*rājyaṃ vibhūtīr na samarthayaty ajaḥ,
adīrgha-bodhāya vicakṣaṇaḥ svayaṃ,
paśyan nipātaṃ dhaninām 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone might ask, “So you have devotion and the result of that devotion is gaining wealth?” In this verse Sudama replies by saying, “No, I do not have *bhakti*, and attaining material wealth is not the result of *bhakti*.”

Sudama thought, “A great saint like Prahāda Mahārāja can avoid becoming contaminated by immeasurable wealth, power and fame, but I must always be wary of temptation in my new situation.” After obtaining wealth, Sudama thought, “What is the use of it?”

Although surrounded by material opulence, Sudama only enjoyed what was necessary to maintain himself. Fixed in his vows, Sudama continued sleeping on the earth. He became completely absorbed in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and rendering other forms of devotional service. Kṛṣṇa does not give as much material wealth as a neophyte devotee may desire, but only what will promote his spiritual advancement. However some say that Kṛṣṇa will give unlimited wealth to assist the devotional service of His *premi-bhaktas*, loving devotees.

Text 38

*itthaṃ vyavasito buddhyā,
bhakto 'tīva janārdane,
viśayān jāyayā tyakṣyan,*

bubhuje nāti-lampāṭaḥ

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus firmly fixing his determination by means of his spiritual intelligence, Sudāmā remained absolutely devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of all living beings. Free from avarice, he enjoyed, together with his wife, the sense pleasures that had been bestowed upon him, always with the idea of eventually renouncing all sense gratification.

Text 39

*tasya vai deva-devasya,
harer yajña-pateḥ prabhoh,
brāhmaṇāḥ prabhavo daivaṁ,
na tebhyo vidyate param*

Lord Hari is the God of all gods, the master of all sacrifices, and the supreme ruler. But He accepts the saintly brāhmaṇas as His masters, and so there exists no deity higher than them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Though Kṛṣṇa is affectionate to His devotees, He is famous for being affectionate to the *brahmanas*. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme master (*prabhoh*) of everyone, yet He accepts the *brāhmaṇas* as His masters (*prabhavaḥ*). Even though Kṛṣṇa is the God of all gods (*deva-devasya*), the *brāhmaṇas* are His deities. Kṛṣṇa is the master of all sacrifices (*yajña-pateḥ*), but He happily worships the *brahmanas*.

Text 40

*evam sa vipro bhagavat-suhṛt tadā,
dṛṣṭvā sva-bhṛtyair ajitam parājitam,
tad-dhyāna-vegodgrathitātma-bandhanas,
tad-dhāma lebhe 'cirataḥ satām gatim*

Thus seeing how the unconquerable Supreme Lord is nonetheless conquered by His own servants, the Lord's dear brāhmaṇa friend felt the remaining knots of material attachment within his heart being cut by the force of his constant meditation on the Lord. In a short time he attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode, the destination of great saints.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse shows how Sudama got free from material attachment and attained the wealth of Kṛṣṇa's abode. Seeing that the unconquerable Lord is conquered by His servants, Sudama returned to his previous nature and meditated on Kṛṣṇa.

Text 41

*etad brahmaṇya-devasya,
śrutvā brahmaṇyatām naraḥ,
labdha-bhāvo bhagavati,
karma-bandhād vimucyate*

The Lord always shows brāhmaṇas special favor. Anyone who hears this account of the Supreme Lord's kindness to brāhmaṇas will come to develop love for the Lord and thus become freed from the bondage of material work.

Chapter Eighty-two: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma Meet the Inhabitants of Vṛndāvana

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
athaikadā dvāravatyām,
vasato rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ,
sūryoparāgaḥ su-mahān,
āsīt kalpa-kṣaye yathā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, while Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa were living in Dvārakā, there occurred a great eclipse of the sun, just as if the end of Lord Brahmā’s day had come.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter there is a meeting of friends at Kuruksetra during a solar eclipse, and Kṛṣṇa immerses the Vrajavasis in an ocean of prema.

The words *atha* (then) and *ekadā* (on one occasion) are commonly used in Sanskrit literature to introduce a new topic. Here they especially indicate that the reunion of the Yadus and Vṛṣṇis at Kurukṣetra is being narrated out of chronological sequence. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains in his *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary that the events of this chapter occur after Balarama’s visit to Vraja (Chapter 65) and before Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira’s Rājasūya sacrifice (Chapter 74). This must be so because at Kuruksetra, Dhrtarastra, Vidura, Yudhisthira, Bhishma and Drona were still on friendly terms and happy to see Kṛṣṇa. At the Rājasūya-yajña, on the other hand, Duryodhana became extremely jealous of the Pandavas and afterwards challenged them to a gambling match. By cheating, Duryodhana exiled the Pandavas to the forest.

According to the Vana Parva of the *Mahabharata*, Salva and Dantavakra were also killed at this time. As soon as the Pāṇḍavas returned from exile the Battle of Kurukṣetra took place, during which Bhīṣma and Droṇa were killed. Therefore, it is not logically possible for the solar eclipse at Kurukṣetra to have happened after the Rājasūya sacrifice.

Text 2

*taṁ jñātvā manuḷā rājan,
purastād eva sarvataḥ,
samanta-pañcakaṁ kṣetraṁ,
yayuh śreyo-vidhitsuḷā*

Knowing of this eclipse in advance, O King, many people went to the holy place known as Samanta-pañcaka in order to earn pious credit.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They went to Kuruksetra (*samanta-pañcakaṁ kṣetraṁ*) because they had heard that one gains pious merit by being there at the time of a solar eclipse.

Texts 3–6

*niḥkṣatriyāṁ mahīm kurvan,
rāmaḥ śastra-bhṛtām varaḥ,
nṛpāṇām rudhiraugheṇa,
yatra cakre mahā-hradān,
īje ca bhagavān rāmo,
yatrāsprṣṭo 'pi karmanā,
lokaṁ saṅgrāhayann īśo,*

*yathānyo 'ghāpanuttaye,
mahatyām tīrtha-yātrāyām,
tatrāgan bhāratīḥ prajāḥ,
vṛṣṇayaś ca tathākrūra,
vasudevāhukādayaḥ,
yayur bhārata tat kṣetraṁ,
svam aghaṁ kṣapayiṣṇava,
gada-pradyumna-sāmbādyāḥ,
sucandra-śuka-sāraṇaiḥ,
āste 'niruddho rakṣāyām,
kṛtavarmā ca yūtha-paḥ*

After ridding the earth of kings, Lord Paraśurāma, the foremost of warriors, created huge lakes from the kings' blood at Samantaka-pañcaka. Although he is never tainted by karmic reactions, Lord Paraśurāma performed sacrifices there to instruct people in general; thus he acted like an ordinary person trying to free himself of sins. From all parts of Bhārata-varṣa a great number of people now came to that Samanta-pañcaka on pilgrimage. O descendant of Bharata, among those arriving at the holy place were many Vṛṣṇis, such as Gada, Pradyumna and Sāmba, hoping to be relieved of their sins; Akrūra, Vasudeva, Āhuka and other kings also went there. Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā with Sucandra, Śuka and Sāraṇa to guard the city, together with Kṛtavarmā, the commander of their armed forces.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Text 3) This verse indicates the great deeds of Parasurama at Samanta-pancaka, which rids one of sin. People came there from all parts of Bharata-varsa. Kṛṣṇa's grandson Aniruddha remained in Dvārakā to protect the city because He is Lord Viṣṇu's original manifestation as the guardian of the spiritual planet Śvetadvīpa.

Texts 7–8

*te rathair deva-dhiṣṇyābhair,
hayaiś ca tarala-plavaiḥ,
gajair nadadbhir abhrābhair,
nṛbhir vidyādhara-dyubhiḥ,
vyarocanta mahā-tejāḥ,
pathi kāñcana-mālinaḥ,
divya-srag-vastra-sannāhāḥ,
kalatraiḥ khe-carā iva*

The mighty Yādavas passed with great majesty along the road. They were attended by their soldiers, who rode on chariots rivaling the airplanes of heaven, on horses moving with a rhythmic gait, and on bellowing elephants as huge as clouds. Also with them were many infantrymen as effulgent as celestial Vidyādharas. The Yādavas were so divinely dressed—being adorned with gold necklaces and flower garlands and wearing fine armor—that as they proceeded along the road with their wives they seemed to be demigods flying through the sky.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Shining like the airplanes of the demigods (*deva dhiṣṇya*), the Yadavas’ chariots appeared very effulgent (*mahā-tejāḥ*) while moving in procession.

Text 9

*tatra snātvā mahā-bhāgā,
upoṣya su-samāhitāḥ,
brāhmaṇebhyo dadur dhenūr,
vāsaḥ-srag-rukma-mālīnīḥ*

At Samanta-pañcaka, the saintly Yādavas bathed and then observed a fast with careful attention. Afterward they presented brāhmaṇas with cows bedecked with garments, flower garlands and gold necklaces.

Text 10

*rāma-hradeṣu vidhi-vat,
punar āplutya vṛṣṇayah,
dadaḥ sv-annam dvijāgryebhyaḥ,
kṛṣṇe no bhaktir astv iti*

In accordance with scriptural injunctions, the descendants of Vṛṣṇi then bathed once more in Lord Paraśurāma’s lakes and fed first-class brāhmaṇas with sumptuous food. All the while they prayed, “May we be granted devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After the eclipse was over, they bathed again (*punar aplutya*) on the following day to complete their fast.

Text 11

*svayaṁ ca tad-anujñātā,
vṛṣṇayah kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ,
bhuktvopaviviśuḥ kāmam,
snigdha-cchāyāṅghripāṅghriṣu*

Then, with the permission of Lord Kṛṣṇa, their sole object of worship, the Vṛṣṇis ate breakfast and sat down at their leisure beneath trees that gave cooling shade.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They sat down comfortably in the cooling (*snigdha:śītalā*) shade under the trees.

Texts 12–13

*tatrāgatāms te dadṛśuḥ,
suhṛt-sambandhino nṛpān,
matsyośīnara-kaśālya,
vidarbha-kuru-sṛñjayān,
kāmbōja-kaikayān madrān,
kuntīn ānarta-keralān,
anyāms caivātma-pakṣīyān,
parāms ca śataśo nṛpa,
nandādīn suhṛdo gopān,
gopīs cotkaṅṭhitās ciram*

The Yādavas saw that many of the kings who had arrived were old friends and relatives—the Matsyas, Uśīnaras, Kauśālyas, Vidarbhas, Kurus, Sṛñjayas, Kāmbōjas, Kaikayas, Madras, Kuntīs and the kings of Ānarta and Kerala. They also saw many hundreds of other kings, both allies and adversaries. In addition, my dear King Parīkṣit, they saw their dear friends Nanda Mahārāja and the cowherd men and women, who had been suffering in anxiety for so long.

Text 14

*anyonya-sandarśana-harṣa-ramhasā,
protphulla-hṛd-vaktra-saroruha-śriyaḥ,
āśliṣya gādham nayanaiḥ sravaj-jalā,
hṛṣyat-tvaco ruddha-giro yayur mudam*

As the great joy of seeing one another made the lotuses of their hearts and faces bloom with fresh beauty, the men embraced one another enthusiastically. With tears pouring from their eyes, the hair on their bodies standing on end and their voices choked up, they all felt intense bliss.

Text 15

*striyaś ca saṁvīkṣya mitho 'ti-sauhṛda-
smitāmalāpāṅga-dṛśo 'bhirebhire,
stanaiḥ stanān kuṅkuma-pañka-rūṣitān,
nihatya dorbhiḥ praṇayāśru-locanāḥ*

The women glanced at one another with pure smiles of loving friendship. And when they embraced, their breasts, smeared with saffron paste, pressed against one another as their eyes filled with tears of affection.

Text 16

*tato 'bhivādya te vṛddhān,
yaviṣṭhair abhivāditāḥ,*

*sv-āgataṁ kuśalaṁ pṛṣṭvā,
cakruḥ kṛṣṇa-kathā mithaḥ*

They all then offered obeisances to their elders and received respect in turn from their younger relatives. After inquiring from one another about the comfort of their trip and their well-being, they proceeded to talk about Kṛṣṇa.

Text 17

*pṛthā bhrātṛṇ svasṛṇ vīkṣya,
tat-putrān pitarāv api,
bhrātṛ-patnīr mukundaṁ ca,
jahau saṅkathayā śucaḥ*

Queen Kuntī met with her brothers and sisters and their children, and also with her parents, her brothers' wives and Lord Mukunda. While talking with them she forgot her sorrow.

Text 18

*kunty uvāca ārya bhrātar ahaṁ manye,
ātmānam akṛtāśiṣam,
yad vā āpatsu mad-vārtāṁ,
nānusmaratha sattamāḥ*

Queen Kuntī said: My dear, respectable brother, I feel that my

desires have been frustrated, because although all of you are most saintly, you forgot me during my calamities.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Queen Kunti said, “I think myself devoid of pious acts (*akṛtāśiṣam:akṛta-sukṛtam*), since you my dear brother (Vasudeva), though so proper in conduct, did not remember me when I was in difficulty. It was my bad fortune; it was not your fault.”

Text 19

*suhṛdo jñātayaḥ putrā,
bhrātarāḥ pitarāv api,
nānusmaranti sva-janaṁ,
yasya daivam adakṣiṇam*

Friends and family members—even children, brothers and parents—forget a dear one whom Providence no longer favors.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kuntī did not blame her relatives for her suffering. Thus she addressed them as “most saintly persons” (*sat-tamāḥ*) in verse eighteen, and here alludes to her own bad fortune as the cause of her unhappiness.

Text 20

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca,
amba māsmān asūyethā,
daiva-krīḍanakān narān,
īśasya hi vaśe lokāḥ,
kurute kāryate 'tha vā*

Śrī Vasudeva said: Dear sister, please do not be angry with us. We are only ordinary men, playthings of fate. Indeed, whether a person acts on his own or is forced by others, he is always under the Supreme Lord’s control.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva replied, “O most affectionate one (*amba*), my dear younger sister! Do not find fault in us who are like playthings in the hands of fate. One acts on his own, or is made to act under the control of the Lord.”

Text 21

*kāṁsa-pratāpitāḥ sarve,
vayaṁ yātā diśaṁ diśaṁ,
etarhy eva punaḥ sthānaṁ,
daivenāsāditāḥ svasaḥ*

Harassed by Kāṁsa, we all fled in various directions, but by the grace of Providence we have now finally been able to return to our homes, my dear sister.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva said, “Tormented by Kāṁsa, we all fled to various places.” This statement refers to other Yadavas who had fled in fear of Kāṁsa. (Vasudeva was imprisoned so he could not flee.) “O sister (*svasaḥ*)! We have just now (*etarhi eva*) returned to our homes.”

Text 22

śrī-śuka uvāca,

*vasudevograsenādyair,
yadubhis te 'rcitā nṛpāḥ,
āsann acyuta-sandarśa-
paramānanda-nirvṛtāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Vasudeva, Ugrasena and the other Yadus honored the various kings, who became supremely blissful and content upon seeing Lord Acyuta.

Texts 23–26

*bhīṣmo droṇo 'mbikā-putro,
gāndhārī sa-sutā tathā,
sa-dārāḥ pāṇḍavāḥ kuntī,
sañjayo viduraḥ kṛpāḥ,
kuntībhojo virāṭas ca,
bhīṣmako nagnajin mahān,
puruḥit drupadaḥ śalyo,
dhṛṣṭaketuḥ sa kāśi-rāṭ,
damaghoṣo viśālākṣo,
maithilo madra-kekayau,
yudhāmanyuḥ suśarmā ca,
sa-sutā bāhlikādayaḥ,
rājāno ye ca rājendra,
yudhiṣṭhiram anuvratāḥ,
śrī-niketam vapuḥ śaureḥ,
sa-strīkam vīkṣya vismitāḥ*

All the royalty present, including Bhīṣma, Droṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī and her sons, the Pāṇḍavas and their wives, Kuntī,

Sañjaya, Vidura, Kṛpācārya, Kuntībhoja, Virāṭa, Bhīṣmaka, the great Nagnajit, Purujit, Drupada, Śalya, Dhṛṣṭaketu, Kāśirāja, Damaghoṣa, Viśālākṣa, Maithila, Madra, Kekaya, Yudhāmanyu, Suśarmā, Bāhlika with his associates and their sons, and the many other kings subservient to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira—all of them, O best of kings, were simply amazed to see the transcendental form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of all opulence and beauty, standing before them with His consorts.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At this time Yudhisthira had been given half the kingdom. Therefore all these kings are described as being subservient (*anuvratah*) to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira.

Text 27

*atha te rāma-kṛṣṇābhyām,
samyak prāpta-samarhaṇāḥ,
praśaśaṃsur mudā yuktā,
vṛṣṇīn kṛṣṇa-parigrahān*

After Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa had liberally honored them, with great joy and enthusiasm these kings began to praise the members of the Vṛṣṇi clan, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s personal associates.

Text 28

*aho bhoja-pate yūyam,
janma-bhājo nṛṇām iha,
yat paśyathāsakṛt kṛṣṇam,
durdarśam api yoginām*

[The kings said:] O King of the Bhojas, you alone among men have achieved a truly exalted birth, for you continually behold Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is rarely visible even to great yogīs.

Texts 29–30

*yad-viśrutih śruti-nutedam alam punāti,
pādāvanejana-payaś ca vacaś ca śāstram,
bhūh kāla-bharjita-bhagāpi yad-aṅghri-padma,
sparśottha-śaktir abhivarṣati no 'khilārthān,
tad-darśana-sparśanānupatha-prajalpa,
śayyāsanāśana-sayauna-sapiṇḍa-bandhaḥ,
yeṣām gr̥he niraya-vartmani vartatām vaḥ,
svargāpavarga-viramaḥ svayam āsa viṣṇuḥ*

His fame, as broadcast by the Vedas, the water that has washed His feet, and the words He speaks in the form of the revealed scriptures—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 lie down to rest, sit at ease and take your meals.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Text 29) “Furthermore, not only do you regularly see Kṛṣṇa, but due to your piety you have His constant

personal association.” This is stated in these two verses.

The kings said, “Sri Kṛṣṇa, whose fame (*visrutih*) is praised by the *Vedas* (*śruti-nute:vedaiḥ stutā*), thoroughly purifies this universe. Kṛṣṇa’s foot water, the Ganga, and His words contained in the *Vedas* also purify the universe. Though time has ravaged the fortune of the earth, the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet has revived her. Thus she is raining down upon us to fulfill all our material needs.”

(Text 30) The kings said, “Kṛṣṇa, with whom you have relation through marriage and descent, has appeared in your house. Thus you always get the chance to personally see Him, touch Him, walk with Him, talk with Him, sleep, sit and eat with Him. Within the sinless, Kṛṣṇa creates a distaste for attaining heaven and liberation.”

The word *bandhaḥ* in *sa-piṇḍa-bandhaḥ* (connections in blood relationships) besides its more obvious meaning of “relation”, can also be understood in the sense of “capture”, expressing that the love the Yadus feel for Kṛṣṇa obliges Him always to stay with them.

Text 31

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
nandas tatra yadūn prāptān,
jñātvā kṛṣṇa-purogamān,
tatrāgamad vṛto gopair,
anah-sthārthair didrkṣayā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Nanda Mahārāja learned that the Yadus had arrived, led by Kṛṣṇa, he immediately went to see them. The cowherds accompanied him, their various possessions loaded on their wagons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Nanda Maharaja was accompanied by cowherd men on carts loaded with milk products and other food items,

which they intended to feed Kṛṣṇa and Balarama while living with Them at Kuruksetra.

Text 32

*taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā vṛṣṇayo hr̥ṣṭās,
tanvaḥ prāṇam ivotthitāḥ,
pariśasvajire gādham,
cira-darśana-kātarāḥ*

Seeing Nanda, the Vṛṣṇis were delighted and stood up like dead bodies coming back to life. Having felt much distress at not seeing him for so long, they held him in a tight embrace.

Text 33

*vasudevaḥ pariśvajya,
samprītaḥ prema-vihvalaḥ,
smaran kaṁsa-kṛtān kleśān,
putra-nyāsam ca gokule*

Vasudeva embraced Nanda Mahārāja with great joy. Beside himself with ecstatic love, Vasudeva remembered the troubles Kaṁsa had caused him, forcing him to leave his sons in Gokula for Their safety.

Text 34

*kṛṣṇa-rāmau pariṣvajya,
pitarāv abhivādya ca,
na kiñcanocatuh premṇā,
sāsru-kañṭhau kurūdvaha*

O hero of the Kurus, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma embraced Their foster parents and bowed down to them, but Their throats were so choked up with tears of love that the two Lords could say nothing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *pariṣvajya*, “embracing” implies that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were first embraced by Their parents, and then They embraced Their parents in return. After Nanda and Yasoda released Kṛṣṇa and Balarama from their loving embrace, the brothers offered obeisances to them. Kṛṣṇa and Balarama could not say anything because Their throats were choked up with tears of love (*premṇā-āsru*).

Text 35

*tāv ātmāsanam āropya,
bāhubhyām parirabhya ca,
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā,
satau vijahatuh śucaḥ*

Raising their two sons onto their laps and holding Them in their arms, Nanda and saintly mother Yaśodā forgot their sorrow.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva led Nanda and Yaśodā into his tent as they held the hands of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Following them inside were Rohiṇī, other women and men of Vraja, and a number of attendants. Then what did Nanda and Yasoda do? This verse answers.

First Nanda and then Yasoda eagerly welcomed their sons. How was it possible for them to offer their own seats to their sons who now showed such opulence? This is answered by the word *sutau* (sons), which implies that Nanda and Yasoda, due to their spontaneous parental love, always thought of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama as their eight-year-old sons, even though they had heard about and seen their opulences and powers. While sitting with Nanda and Yasoda and being embraced by them, Kṛṣṇa fully transformed into a cowherd boy. Thus it is stated that Nanda and Yasoda gave up (*vijahatuḥ*) their sorrow (*śucaḥ*) in separation.

Text 36

*rohiṇī devakī cātha,
pariṣvajya vrajeśvarīm,
smarantyaū tat-kṛtām maitrīm,
bāṣpa-kaṇṭhyau samūcatuḥ*

Then Rohiṇī and Devakī both embraced the Queen of Vraja, remembering the faithful friendship she had shown them. Their throats choking with tears, they addressed her as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At this time, Vasudeva called Nanda outside to meet Ugrasena and the other elder Yadus. Taking this opportunity, Rohiṇī and Devakī talked with Queen Yaśodā.

Text 37

*kā vismareta vām maitrīm,
anivṛttām vrajeśvari,
avāpyāpy aindram aiśvaryaṁ,
yasyā neha pratikriyā*

[Rohiṇī and Devakī said:] What woman could forget the unceasing friendship you and Nanda have shown us, dear Queen of Vraja? There is no way to repay you in this world, even with the wealth of Indra.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: While keeping Kṛṣṇa and Balarama on her lap and embracing them, Yasoda’s mind became completely bewildered and stunned in bliss. Tears and milk poured from her eyes and breasts in continuous streams like the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. Of the two ladies seated before her, Rohini spoke first: “Even if we attain the wealth of Indra, there is no way to repay you for your friendship.” The opulence of Dvaraka far exceeded that of Indra, but since this expression is for the common man, Rohini only mentioned Indra’s wealth.

Text 38

*etāv adṛṣṭa-pitarau yuvayoḥ sma pitroḥ,
samprīnanābhyudaya-poṣaṇa-pālanāni,
prāpyoṣatur bhavati pakṣma ha yadvad akṣṇor,
nyastāv akutra ca bhayau na satām paraḥ svaḥ*

Before these two boys had ever seen Their real parents, you acted as Their parents and gave Them all affectionate care, training, nourishment and protection. They were never afraid, good lady, because you protected Them just as eyelids protect the eyes. Indeed, saintly persons like you never discriminate between outsiders and their own kin.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Before speaking this verse, Devakī

thought, “Alas, for so long these two sons of mine had Yaśodā as Their guardian and mother. Because They were immersed in such a vast ocean of ecstatic loving dealings with her, now that she is here They do not even look at us, even though we are standing before Them. Blinded by her love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, Yasoda is behaving as if insane. She is showing millions of times more motherly affection than I could ever possess. Thus Yasoda simply keeps staring at us, her friends, without even recognizing us. So let me bring her back to reality on the pretext of some affectionate words.”

Devaki then spoke in a somewhat loud voice: “Having not seen their real parents (*adr̥ṣṭa-pitarau*) these two boys received great affection from you two as parents. I placed Them safely with you and They lived there without fear. You protected Them, just as the eyelids protect the eye, because great devotees do not distinguish between their own or other children (*nas satam parah svah*).”

The actual fact, however, is that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama “had not seen Their parents” (*adr̥ṣṭa-pitarau*) for two reasons: because of Their exile in Vraja, and also because They are never actually born and therefore have no parents. When Devakī failed to get any response from Yaśodā even after addressing her, Rohiṇī said, “My dear Devakī, it is impossible just now to rouse Yasoda out of this ecstatic trance. We are crying in the wilderness, as her two sons are also bound up by the ropes of affection for her. Let us now go outside to meet with Kunti, Draupadī and other friends who are very eager to see us. Because of having to meet with so many people on this pilgrimage, we simply do not have enough time to stay long in only one place.” After saying this, Rohini went outside with Devaki.

Text 39

*śrī-śuka uvāca gopyaś ca kṛṣṇam upalabhya cirād abhīṣṭam,
yat-prekṣaṇe dr̥śīṣu pakṣma-kṛtam śapanti,
dṛgbhir hṛdī-kṛtam alam parirabhya sarvās,*

tad-bhāvam āpur api nitya-yujām durāpam

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While gazing at their beloved Kṛṣṇa, the young gopīs used to condemn the creator of their eyelids, [which would momentarily block their vision of Him]. Now, seeing Kṛṣṇa again after such a long separation, with their eyes they took Him into their hearts, and there they embraced Him to their full satisfaction. In this way they became totally absorbed in ecstatic meditation on Him, although those who constantly practice mystic yoga find such absorption difficult to achieve.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Just then Baladeva saw the *gopīs* standing a short distance away. Seeing them trembling with eagerness to meet Kṛṣṇa, and apparently ready to give up their lives if they could not, Balarama, the crest jewel of expert gentlemen, tactfully decided to get up and involve Himself elsewhere. The gopīs then attained the ecstatic state described in this verse.

In some editions, Sukadeva Gosvami is referred to by the phrase *ṛṣi uvāca*. By designating Sukadeva as a *ṛṣi* (great sage), there is indication that he will here reveal the highest truth. In the phrase *gopyaś ca* the word *ca* (and) carries the meaning of the word *tu* (but) to distinguish the special position of the gopīs from all others. Who were these gopīs? In answer to this, their extraordinary quality is then described.

The Vraja-gopīs were the ones who cursed the creator Brahma for making eyelids which obstructed their vision of Kṛṣṇa. Though as women the gopīs ordinarily would have shown the highest respect to any demigod, but under the impulse of ecstatic love they even cursed the chief of all the demigods. Such was the intolerance of their separation from seeing Kṛṣṇa. Here Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives vent to his own subtle jealousy of the gopīs, to whom Kṛṣṇa had bestowed such intense feelings of separation.

Pulling Kṛṣṇa toward themselves with their glances (*dr̥gbhir:avalokanaiḥ*), the gopīs took Him into their hearts through the

doorway of their eyes. They wrapped Him in a tight embrace, and then attained a rare state of *mahābhāva*, ecstatic absorption in Kṛṣṇa (*tad-bhāvam*). Overwhelmed with a sense of oneness with Kṛṣṇa, the gopis then made such statements as *kṛṣṇo 'ham paśyata gatim*, “I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!” (SB 10.30.19)

Another meaning: The gopis achieved a state that is rarely (*durāpam*) attained even by the crest jewel of self-satisfied sages (*nitya-yujām*) and the great masters of *yoga* such as Siva. This statement, together with the idea that even though the gopis are of such a status, Kṛṣṇa will now teach them *adhyātma-jñāna* (knowledge of the self), as He did in His message sent through Uddhava, is a further expression of Sukadeva Gosvami’s jealousy.

Or else the meaning is: The *gopis* attained *mahābhāva*, which is rarely achieved even by the *nitya-yujām*, which can refer to Kṛṣṇa’s principal queens in Dvaraka like Rukmini, who tend to be proud of their constant association with Him.

Text 40

*bhagavāms tās tathā-bhūtā,
vivikta upasaṅgataḥ,
āśliṣyānāmayam pṛṣtvā,
prahasann idam abravīt*

The Supreme Lord approached the gopīs in a secluded place as they stood in their ecstatic trance. After embracing each of them and inquiring about their well-being, He laughed and spoke as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then getting up from Yasoda’s lap, Kṛṣṇa went to a secluded place to talk and mingle freely with the gopis, who were stunned in ecstasy as described in the previous verse. Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself by His *vibhūti-śakti* to embrace each of the *gopīs*

individually. Kṛṣṇa embraced them so tightly that each *gopi* woke up from her ecstatic trance. He inquired, “Are you now relieved of your pain of separation?” and laughed to help lighten their spirits.

Text 41

*api smaratha naḥ sakhyaḥ,
svānām artha-cikīrṣayā,
gatāmś cirāyitāñ chatru-
pakṣa-kṣapaṇa-cetasah*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] My dear girlfriends, do you still remember Me? It was for My relatives’ sake that I stayed away so long, intent on destroying My enemies.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “For the sake of My relatives such as Vasudeva, I went off to kill Kamsa and other demons. Due to being absorbed in vanquishing the armies of the demons, I have been delayed and have not found an opportunity to return to Vraja. Nevertheless, do you still remember Me?”

Text 42

*apy avadhyāyathāsmān svid,
akṛta-jñāviśaṅkayā,
nūnam bhūtāni bhagavān,
yunakti viyunakti ca*

Do you perhaps think I’m ungrateful and thus hold Me in contempt? After all, it is the Supreme Lord who brings living beings

together and then separates them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: At this point the gopis were thinking: “We are not like You, who, with Your heart shattered by remembering us day and night, gave up all sense enjoyment in Your distress of separation. Rather, we have not remembered You at all; in fact, we have been quite happy without You.”

Seeing that the gopis were answering angrily by moving their eyebrows to suggest the above words, Kṛṣṇa spoke: “Do you perhaps hold Us in contempt because of the suspicion (*āviśāṅkayā*) that ‘He is ungrateful?’ Well, if that is the case, what can I do about this? Please listen to the facts. It is the Supreme Lord who unites and separates all living beings.”

Text 43

*vāyur yathā ghanānīkaṁ,
tṛṇaṁ tūlaṁ rajāṁsi ca,
saṁyojyākṣipate bhūyas,
tathā bhūtāni bhūta-kṛt*

Just as the wind brings together masses of clouds, blades of grass, wisps of cotton and particles of dust, only to scatter them all again, so the creator deals with His created beings in the same way.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa cites an analogy to explain His point. Just as the wind unites and separates (*akṣipate*) clouds, grass, dust and cotton, the Lord unites and separates all living entities.

Text 44

mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām,

*amṛtatvāya kalpate,
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho,
bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ*

Rendering devotional service to Me qualifies any living being for eternal life. But by your good fortune you have developed a special loving attitude toward Me, by which you have obtained Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The gopis replied, “O crest jewel of clever speakers! That Supreme Lord You are blaming is none other than Yourself. Everyone in the world knows this! Why should we be ignorant of this fact?”

“But My dear girlfriends,” Kṛṣṇa replied, “if this is true, I must be God, but still I am conquered by your loving affection.”

Thus Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse: “Just by devotion to Me, one can achieve liberation (*amṛtatvāya*). But that you have attained affection for Me is My good fortune (*diṣṭyā*), since it causes you to attain Me (*mad apanaḥ*).” The hidden meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s words is as follows: “Your affection drags Me to you by force. It brings Me close to you, and it assures that very soon I will come to remain permanently with you.”

Text 45

*ahaṁ hi sarva-bhūtānām,
ādir anto ’ntaram bahiḥ,
bhautikānām yathā khaṁ vār,
bhūr vāyur jyotir aṅganāḥ*

Dear ladies, I am the beginning and end of all created beings and exist both within and without them, just as the elements ether, water, earth, air and fire are the beginning and end of all material

objects and exist both within and without them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “In this way (*evam hi*) the material elements such as ether exist in the bodies (*bhūtānām*) of all created beings, and the soul (*ātmā:jīva*) pervades the body in his own true form (*ātmanā:svarūpeṇa*). You should see that the material elements, their products and the living entities are all manifested (*ābhātam:prakāśitam*) within and pervaded by Me, the imperishable, perfectly complete Supreme Soul (*pare:paramātmā*) and underlying reality (*adhiṣṭhāna-tattva*) of everything. Thus it is established that your bodies and souls exist within Me at all times. Therefore, what is the source of your feelings of separation from Me? It is simply caused by your lack of discrimination.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Furthermore, if you know that I am the Supreme Lord, then you should not feel any suffering in separation from Me. Your unhappiness must be due to a lack of discrimination. Therefore please take this instruction from Me, which will remove your ignorance. Actually the truth of the matter is that you *gopīs* were great masters of *yoga* in your previous lives, and thus you must already know this science of *jñāna-yoga*. Furthermore, whether I try to teach you personally or through My representative such as Uddhava, it will not produce the desired result. *Jñāna-yoga* simply causes suffering for those who are fully immersed in pure love of Godhead.” With this idea in mind Kṛṣṇa speaks this verse.

Kṛṣṇa said, “Of all beings, namely demigods, humans and animals I am the beginning and end. I am present both inside and outside of them, just as the five primary elements (earth, water, air, fire, ether) exist within all bodies from beginning to end. O young ladies (*anganah*)! Since you are only women, you do not understand this truth about Me.”

Text 46

evam hy etāni bhūtāni,

*bhūteṣv ātmātmanā tataḥ,
ubhayaṁ mayy atha pare,
paśyatābhātam akṣare*

In this way all created things reside within the basic elements of creation, while the spirit souls pervade the creation, remaining in their own true identity. You should see both of these—the material creation and the self—as manifest within Me, the imperishable Supreme Truth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The esoteric meaning of the above five verses (42-46) is found in *Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇi*. These instructions on spiritual knowledge (*adhyātma-śikṣayā*) enlightened (*śikṣitāḥ:bodhitāḥ*) the gopis. The scorching sun of the gopis' incessant meditation (*anusmaraṇa*) on Kṛṣṇa arising from their feelings of separation from Him destroyed the inner essence (*kośa:antar-bhāgaḥ*) of their night blooming, lotus-like lives (*jīvana-kumudasya*), just as a flower is destroyed by excessive sunlight. The only thing that kept the gopis alive was their hope of attaining Kṛṣṇa.

The gopis realized (*adhyagan*) that “He who taught us about *dharma* at the beginning of the *rasa* dance, even though we had not inquired about it, and who instructed us in the principles of theoretical knowledge through Uddhava, is now again teaching us philosophical knowledge (*adhyātma-śikṣayā*). We should know that this is Kṛṣṇa's nature and it is hard for Him to give it up.”

It is not correct to say that *jīva-kośās* means the subtle material body (*linga-deha*) of the gopis, because the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa do not have material bodies. It cannot be accepted that even the *sadhana-siddha gopis* who enjoyed with Kṛṣṇa had material bodies.

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
adhyātma-śikṣayā gopya,
evam kṛṣṇena śikṣitāḥ,
tad-anusmaraṇa-dhvasta-
jīva-kośās tam adhyagan*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus been instructed by Kṛṣṇa in spiritual matters, the gopīs were freed of all tinges of false ego because of their incessant meditation upon Him. And with their deepening absorption in Him, they came to understand Him fully.

Text 48

*āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam,
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ,
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam,
geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ*

The gopīs spoke thus: Dear Lord, whose navel is just like a lotus flower, Your lotus feet are the only shelter for those who have fallen into the deep well of material existence. Your feet are worshiped and meditated upon by great mystic yogīs and highly learned philosophers. We wish that these lotus feet may also be awakened within our hearts, although we are only ordinary persons engaged in household affairs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Āhuś ca, “the gopis said” implies that these seemingly reverential words were actually spoken by the gopis in the following mood of anger: “O Supreme Lord, O directly manifest Supersoul, O crest jewel of teachers of philosophical knowledge!

Understanding that we have great attachment to house, wealth and family, You previously had Uddhava instruct us and now personally You are purifying our hearts with knowledge to destroy that ignorance. Thus we understand that Your pure love for us is free from any motivation other than assuring our liberation. But how can we unintelligent cowherd women fix that knowledge in our hearts? We cannot even meditate steadily on Your feet, the focus of realization for great souls like Brahmā. Therefore please be merciful to us and do something to make that possible.

“We are still suffering the reactions of our *karma*, so how can we meditate on Your feet, which are the object of meditation for the masters of *yoga* (*yogeśvarair*). Such *yogīs* are immeasurably wise, but we are mere feeble-minded women. Please do something to get us out of this deep well of suffering in material life.”

The gopis statement, “May Your lotus feet arise in the minds (*manasy udiyāt*) of us who are so attached to family life” reveals their hidden anger. The following verses illustrate that pure devotees are never motivated by a desire for material elevation or spiritual liberation. Even if Kṛṣṇa offers such benedictions, they often refuse to accept them.

*na pārameṣṭhyam na mahendra-dhiṣṇyam, na sārvaabhaumaṁ
na rasādhipatyam na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā, mayy
arpitātmecchati mad vinānyat*

“One who has fixed his consciousness on Me desires neither the position or abode of Lord Brahmā or Lord Indra, nor an empire on the earth, nor sovereignty in the lower planetary systems, nor the eightfold perfection of *yoga*, nor liberation from birth and death. Such a person desires Me alone.” (SB 11.14.14)

*na kiñcit sādhave dhīrā, bhaktā hy ekāntino mama vāñchanty api mayā
dattān, kaivalyam apunar-bhavam*

“Because My devotees possess saintly behavior and deep intelligence, they completely dedicate themselves to Me and do not desire anything besides Me. Indeed, even if I offer them liberation from birth and death, they do not accept it.” (SB 11.20.34)

svagāpavarga-narakeṣv, api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ

“My pure devotees regard heaven and hell as one and the same.” (SB 6.17.28) Kṛṣṇa’s devotees never accept liberation, which is the result of jnana, even if it is offered by the Supreme Lord Himself. How then could the gopis, the crest jewels of all devotees, accept this knowledge? Thus it is appropriate that they express anger in this verse (Text 48) upon hearing the unbearable teachings of spiritual knowledge (adhyatma-jñāna) from the mouth of their most beloved. It is clear that such interpretations of this verse, which come through oral tradition, are valid for this scripture which is full of double meanings.

The words the gopis speak in this verse may also be interpreted as follows: “O sun who directly destroys the darkness of ignorance, we are scorched by the heat of this philosophical knowledge. We are *cakora* birds who live only on the moonlight radiating from the moon of Your beautiful face. Therefore come back to Vṛndavana and bring us to life with Your pastimes such as *rasa-lila*.

“The masters of *yoga* meditate upon Your lotus feet within their hearts, but we hold them above our hearts, upon our breasts. Only by holding them are we able to maintain our lives and not otherwise. Those with deep intelligence (*agādha-bodhaiḥ:gambhīra-buddhibhiḥ*) meditate on Your feet, but we have shallow intelligence. Therefore, as soon as we start meditating on Your lotus feet we drown in the ocean of swooning, so what is the question of meditating? Furthermore, meditation upon them is the means of upliftment from the well of material existence. But such meditation cannot uplift us who have fallen into an ocean of separation from You. Certainly we gopis have not fallen in the well of material life, having renounced the happiness of husband, home and children from an early age.”

If Kṛṣṇa says, “Come to Dvaraka and I will enjoy with you there”, the gopis reply, “Śrī Vṛndāvana is our home, and we are too attached to it to take up residence anywhere else. It is there alone that You attract us by wearing peacock feathers in Your turban and playing enchanting music on Your flute. We can be saved only by seeing You in Vraja, and not by any other kind of meditation or theoretical knowledge of the self (*ātmā-jñāna*).”

Chapter Eighty-three: Draupadī Meets the Queens of Kṛṣṇa

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tathānugṛhya bhagavān,
gopīnām sa gurur gatiḥ,
yudhiṣṭhiram athāpṛcchat,
sarvāmś ca suhṛdo 'vyayam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the gopīs and the very purpose of their life, showed them His mercy. He then met with Yudhiṣṭhira and all His other relatives and inquired from them about their welfare.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa is praised by His relatives. On inquiry from Draupadi, the queens of Kṛṣṇa describe how He married them. Just as Kṛṣṇa satisfied the gopīs, He was also merciful to others. Kṛṣṇa inquired from Yudhisthira and all His relatives about their welfare (*avyayam: kuśalam*). The words *gurur gatiḥ* (spiritual master and goal) means that Kṛṣṇa is the *guru* and goal for all devotees, but for the *gopīs* specifically Kṛṣṇa is the greatest (*guru*) object (*gatiḥ*) of love.

Text 2

*ta evaṁ loka-nāthena,
paripṛṣṭāḥ su-sat-kṛtāḥ,
pratyūcur hr̥ṣṭa-manasas,*

tat-pādekṣā-hatāmhasaḥ

Feeling greatly honored, King Yudhiṣṭhira and the others, freed of all sinful reactions by seeing the feet of the Lord of the universe, gladly answered His inquiries.

Text 3

*kuto 'śivaṁ tvac-caraṇāmbujāsavaṁ,
mahan-manasto mukha-niḥśṛtaṁ kvacit,
pibanti ye karṇa-putair alaṁ prabho,
dehaṁ-bhṛtām deha-kṛd-asmṛti-cchidam*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa's relatives said:] O master, how can misfortune arise for those who have even once freely drunk the nectar coming from Your lotus feet? This intoxicating liquor pours into the drinking cups of their ears, having flowed from the minds of great devotees through their mouths. It destroys the embodied souls' forgetfulness of the creator of their bodily existence.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa's relatives said, "What can be inauspicious for those with material bodies who drink through their ears the nectar of Your lotus feet, which flows from the minds of great devotees (*mahan-manasto*) out through their mouths to destroy the ignorance (*asmṛti: avidyā*) which produced our bodies?"

Text 4

hi tvātma dhāma-vidhutātma-kṛta-try-avasthām,

*ānanda-samplavam akhaṇḍam akunṭha-bodham,
kālopasrṣṭa-nigamāvana ātta-yoga,
māyākṛtiṁ paramahaṁsa-gatiṁ natāḥ sma*

The radiance of Your personal form dispels the threefold effects of material consciousness, and by Your grace we become immersed in total happiness. Your knowledge is indivisible and unrestricted. By Your Yogamāyā potency You have assumed this human form for protecting the Vedas, which had been threatened by time. We bow down to You, the final destination of perfect saints.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa’s relatives said, “Certainly we bow down to You, who simply by the effulgent light emanating from Your beautiful form (*ātma dhama:sva-vigraha-prakāśena*) sever (*vidhuta:khaṇḍitāḥ*) the *jivas*’ entanglement in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance. How then can we ever suffer any misfortune? For we are always submerged in ecstasy by seeing You. “The knowledge (*bodham:jñānam*) You possess is completely unaffected by time or other elements. Thus You know that our hearts are always inclined to surrender unto You. Utilizing Your divine power of illusion (*yogamaya*), You perform pastimes (*kṛtiṁ*) of destroying demons and protecting Your devotees in order to uphold (*avane*) the Vedic standards which have become ruined (*upasrṣṭa:naśtānām*) by time. In other words, You give happiness to everyone.”

Text 5

*śrī-rṣir uvāca ity uttamah-śloka-sikhā-maṇiṁ janeṣv,
abhiṣṭuvatsv andhaka-kaurava-striyaḥ,
sametya govinda-kathā mitho ’gṛnaṁs,
tri-loka-gītāḥ śṛṇu varṇayāmi te*

The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: As Yudhiṣṭhira and the others were thus praising Lord Kṛṣṇa, the crest jewel of all sublimely glorified personalities, the women of the Andhaka and Kaurava clans met with one another and began discussing topics about Govinda that are sung throughout the three worlds. Please listen as I relate these to you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Now I will tell you the topics they discussed that are sung throughout the three worlds.”

Texts 6–7

*śrī-draupady uvāca,
he vaidarbhy acyuto bhadre,
he jāmbavati kauśale,
he satyabhāme kālindī,
śaibye rohiṇi lakṣmaṇe,
he kṛṣṇa-patnya etan no,
brūte vo bhagavān svayam,
upayeme yathā lokam,
anukurvan sva-māyayā*

Śrī Draupadī said: O Vaidarbhī, Bhadrā and Jāmbavatī, O Kauśalā, Satyabhāmā and Kālindī, O Śaibya, Rohiṇī, Lakṣmaṇā and other wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, please tell me how the Supreme Lord Acyuta, imitating the ways of this world by His mystic power, came to marry each of you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Draupadi said, “O queens, please tell us in truth how Kṛṣṇa (*acyuto*) married you.” Or else, “Please tell how

He married you without cheating.” *Kauśale* refers to Queen Nāgnajitī.

Text 8

*śrī-rukmiṇy uvāca,
caidyāya mārpayitum udyata-kārmukeṣu,
rājasv ajeya-bhaṭa-śekharitāṅghri-reṇuh,
ninye mṛgendra iva bhāgam ajāvi-yūthāt,
tac-chrī-niketa-carāṇo 'stu mamārcanāya*

Śrī Rukmiṇī said: When all the kings held their bows at the ready to assure that I would be presented to Śiśupāla, He who puts the dust of His feet on the heads of invincible warriors took me from their midst, as a lion forcibly takes his prey from the midst of goats and sheep. May I always be allowed to worship those feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the abode of Goddess Śrī.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Rukmini said, “To make sure I would be offered to Sisupala, kings such as Jarasandha were standing with bows ready to shoot. Kṛṣṇa however, whose foot dust is held on the heads of the invincible warriors, took me away just as a lion takes away his share from a herd of goats or sheep. May Kṛṣṇa’s feet, which are the abode of Lakṣmi, be the goal of my worship.”

Text 9

*śrī-satyabhāmovāca,
yo me sanābhi-vadha-tapta-hṛdā tatena,
liptābhiśāpam apamārṣtum upājahāra,
jitvarkṣa-rājam atha ratnam adāt sa tena,
bhītaḥ pitādiśata mām prabhava 'pi dattām*

Śrī Satyabhāmā said: My father, his heart tormented by his brothers death, accused Kṛṣṇa of killing him. To remove the stain on His reputation, the Lord defeated the king of the bears and took back the Syamantaka jewel, which He then returned to my father. Fearing the consequences of his offense, my father offered me to the Lord, even though I had already been promised to others.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Satyabhama said, “In order to remove the ill fame created by my father (*tatena*) who, aggrieved by the killing of his brother (*sanabhi*) Prasena, accused Him of the deed, Kṛṣṇa defeated Rksaraja and brought back the Syamantaka jewel. Kṛṣṇa then gave the jewel to my father. Fearing his offense, my father gave me to Kṛṣṇa (*prabhava*), even though I had already been promised (*dattam*) to Akura and other suitors.”

Text 10

*śrī-jāmbavatī uvāca,
prājñāya deha-kṛd amuṁ nija-nātha-daivaṁ,
sītā-patiṁ tri-navahāny amunābhyayudhyat,
jñātvā parīkṣita upāharad arhaṇaṁ mām,
pādau pragṛhya maṇināham amuṣya dāsī*

Śrī Jāmbavatī said: Unaware that Lord Kṛṣṇa was none other than his own master and worshipable Deity, the husband of Goddess Sītā, my father fought with Him for twenty-seven days. When my father finally came to his senses and recognized the Lord, he took hold of His feet and presented Him with both me and the Syamantaka jewel as tokens of his reverence. I am simply the Lord’s maidservant.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Jambavati said, “Not knowing that Kṛṣṇa was his master and the Supreme Lord, my father (*deha-kṛd*) fought with Him for twenty-seven days. When his discrimination awakened, Jambavan understood “this is the Lord of Sita”, and taking hold of His feet, he offered me along with the jewel to Kṛṣṇa.”

The other queens said, “Now we recognize you as the girl whom we heard about in the ancient narrations. Jambavan had once offered you to Lord Rama to be His wife. Since Rama had taken a vow to have only one wife, He refused to accept you then, but did so when He returned in Dvāpara-yuga as Kṛṣṇa. Now you have been accepted by Kṛṣṇa, who has vowed to take many wives, and thus you are the best of women.” Hearing this, Jambavati became embarrassed and humbly replied, “I am only Kṛṣṇa’s servant.” In the word *tri-navahāny*, the *a* is short to comply with the rules of meter.

Text 11

*śrī-kāḷindī uvāca,
tapaś carantīm ājñāya,
sva-pāda-sparśanāśayā,
sakhyaopetyāgrahīt pāṇim,
yo 'haṁ tad-grha-mārjanī*

Śrī Kāḷindī said: The Lord knew I was performing severe austerities and penances with the hope of one day touching His lotus feet. So He came to me in the company of His friend and took my hand in marriage. Now I am engaged as a sweeper in His palace.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kāḷindī said, “Kṛṣṇa approached me with His friend (*sakhya*) Arjuna.”

Text 12

śrī-mitravindovāca,
yo mām svayaṁ-vara upetya vijitya bhū-pān,
ninye śva-yūtha-gaṁ ivātma-baliṁ dvipāriḥ,
bhrātṛmś ca me 'pakurutah sva-puraṁ śriyaukas,
tasyāstu me 'nu-bhavam aṅghry-avanejanatvam

Śrī Mitravindā said: At my svayaṁ-vara ceremony He came forward, defeated all the kings present—including my brothers, who dared insult Him—and took me away just as a lion removes his prey from amidst a pack of dogs. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, brought me to His capital city. May I be allowed to serve Him by washing His feet, life after life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Mitravinda said, “As a lion (*dvipariḥ:simha*) takes his share from a pack of dogs, Kṛṣṇa defeated the kings and my offensive brothers and carried me, the abode of Lakṣmi (*sriyaukah:lakṣmī-nivāsaḥ*), off to His city. Life after life (*anubhavam:prati-janma*) may I attain the service of washing His lotus feet.”

Texts 13–14

śrī-satyovāca,
saptokṣaṇo 'ti-bala-vīrya-su-tīkṣṇa-śṛṅgān,
pitṛā kṛtān kṣitipa-vīrya-parīkṣaṇāya,
tān vīra-durmada-hanas tarasā nigṛhya,
krīḍan babandha ha yathā śisavo 'ja-tokān ya,
itthaṁ vīrya-śulkām mām,

*dāsībhiś catur-angiṇīm,
pathi nirjitya rājanyān,
ninye tad-dāsyam astu me*

Śrī Satyā said: My father arranged for seven extremely powerful and vigorous bulls with deadly sharp horns to test the prowess of the kings who desired my hand in marriage. Although these bulls destroyed the false pride of many heroes, Lord Kṛṣṇa subdued them effortlessly, tying them up in the same way that children playfully tie up a goat's kids. He thus purchased me with His valor. Then He took me away with my maidservants and a full army of four divisions, defeating all the kings who opposed Him along the road. May I be granted the privilege of serving that Lord.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Satya said, “Seven strong bulls that had power, vitality and very sharp horns were arranged by my father for testing the prowess of the kings so that he could give me to the strongest suitor. Kṛṣṇa, however, destroyed the false pride of those heroes by quickly binding those bulls as easily as children tie up baby goats.

(Text 14) Having paid the price with His courage (vīrya-śulkām), Kṛṣṇa took me to His city along with my maidservants and a full army consisting of four divisions: chariots, horses, elephants and infantry (catuḥ-angiṇīm).”

Texts 15–16

*śrī-bhadrovāca,
pitā me mātuleyāya,
svayam āhūya dattavān,
kṛṣṇe kṛṣṇāya tac-cittām,
akṣauhiṇyā sakhī-janaiḥ,*

*asya me pāda-saṁsparśo,
bhavej janmani janmani,
karmabhir bhrāmyamāṅāyā,
yena tac chreya ātmanaḥ*

Śrī Bhadrā said: My dear Draupadī, of his own free will my father invited his nephew Kṛṣṇa, to whom I had already dedicated my heart, and offered me to Him as His bride. My father presented me to the Lord with an akṣauhiṇi military guard and a retinue of my female companions. My ultimate perfection is this: to always be allowed to touch Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet as I wander from life to life, bound by my karma.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Queen Bhadra said, “O Draupadi (*kṛṣṇe*), my father offered me to Kṛṣṇa, the son of my maternal uncle. [Bhadra was the daughter of Jayasena and Rajadhidevi, the sister of Vasudeva.]

“Although I am rotating in the *samsara* birth after birth due to my *karma* (*karmabhiḥ*), may I receive the touch of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet by which I will attain my ultimate perfection (*chreya ātmanaḥ*).” Since Bhadra actually had no *karma*, this was merely an expression of her humility in playing the part of a human being.

Text 17

*śrī-lakṣmaṇovāca,
mamāpi rājñy acyuta-janma-karma,
śrutvā muhur nārada-gītam āsa ha,
cittaṁ mukunde kila padma-hastayā,
vṛtaḥ su-sammṛśya vihāya loka-pān*

Śrī Lakṣmaṇā said: O Queen, I repeatedly heard Nārada Muni glorify the appearances and activities of Acyuta, and thus my heart also became attached to that Lord, Mukunda. Indeed, even Goddess Padmahastā chose Him as her husband after careful consideration, rejecting the great demigods who rule various planets.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “My heart became (*āsa ha*) attached to Mukunda. Therefore I, who carry a lotus in my hand, chose Mukunda after rejecting various planetary rulers.”

Text 18

*jñātvā mama mataṁ sādhi,
pitā duhitṛ-vatsalaḥ,
br̥hatsena iti khyātaḥ,
tatropāyam acīkarat*

My father, Br̥hatsena, was by nature compassionate to his daughter, and knowing how I felt, O saintly lady, he arranged to fulfill my desire.

Text 19

*yathā svayaṁ-vare rājñi,
matsyaḥ pārtheṣayā kṛtaḥ,
ayaṁ tu bahir ācchanno,
dṛśyate sa jale param*

Just as a fish was used as a target in your svayaṁ-vara ceremony,

O Queen, to assure that you would obtain Arjuna as your husband, so a fish was also used in my ceremony. In my case, however, it was concealed on all sides, and only its reflection could be seen in a pot of water below.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Lakṣmana said, “A fish was also arranged for your (Draupadī) *svayam-vara* wherein you had the desire of obtaining Arjuna (*pārtheṣayā: arjuna-prāptīchayā*). In some editions of *Bhagavatam* the word *pārtheṣayā* is replaced by *pārtheṣv-apākṛtaḥ*, which means “struck by the arrows of Arjuna.”

“But” one may ask, “why couldn’t Arjuna pierce the fish in Lakṣmana’s case?”

Lakṣmana answers saying, “In my case the fish, which was moving very quickly, could only be seen by looking at its reflection in a pot of water placed at the bottom of a pillar. It could not be seen by looking up. To shoot my target it was necessary to aim by looking up and down at the same time, an impossible feat for any mortal. Therefore only Kṛṣṇa could strike the target. But the fish arranged by your father, though covered, could be aimed at by looking straight up the pillar, and thus be pierced by the expert marksman Arjuna.

Text 20

*śrutvaitat sarvato bhū-pā,
āyayur mat-pituḥ puram,
sarvāstra-śastra-tattva-jñāḥ,
sopādhyāyāḥ sahasraśaḥ*

Hearing of this, thousands of kings expert in shooting arrows and in wielding other weapons converged from all directions on my father’s city, accompanied by their military teachers.

Text 21

*pitṛā sampūjitāḥ sarve,
yathā-vīryam yathā-vayaḥ,
ādaduḥ sa-śaram cāpaṁ,
veddhum parṣadi mad-dhiyaḥ*

My father properly honored each king according to his strength and seniority. Then those whose minds were fixed on me took up the bow and arrow and one by one tried to pierce the target in the midst of the assembly.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Hoping to attain (*dhiyaḥ:prāpty-āśā*) me, the kings took up the bow and arrow in that assembly (*parṣadi*).”

Text 22

*ādāya vyaśjan kecit,
sajyam kartum anīśvarāḥ,
ā-koṣṭham jyām samutkr̥ṣya,
petur eke ’munāhatāḥ*

Some of them picked up the bow but could not string it, and so they threw it aside in frustration. Some managed to pull the bowstring toward the tip of the bow, only to have the bow spring back and knock them to the ground.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Some were able to

pull the string to the tip of the bow, but being unable to tie it, they were hit by the bow and fell to the ground.”

Text 23

*sajyam kṛtvāpare vīrā,
māgadhāmbaṣṭha-cedipāḥ,
bhīmo duryodhanaḥ karṇo,
nāvidamaṁ tad-avasthitim*

A few heroes—namely Jarāsandha, Śiśupāla, Bhīma, Duryodhana, Karṇa and the King of Ambaṣṭha—succeeded in stringing the bow, but none of them could find the target.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Jarasandha and other kings had the power to string the bow, but they were not skillful enough to find the target.”

Text 24

*matsyābhāsam jale vīkṣya,
jñātvā ca tad-avasthitim,
pārtho yatto ’srjad bāṇam,
nācchinat paspr̥ṣe param*

Then Arjuna looked at the reflection of the fish in the water and determined its position. When he carefully shot his arrow at it, however, he did not pierce the target but merely grazed it.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “With great

concentration Arjuna detected the target reflected (*ābhāsam*) in the water and carefully released his arrow, which touched the fish but did not pierce the center. This was known by seeing the arrow mark on the side of the fish.”

Some say that even though Arjuna was expert in the knowledge of finding targets, he could not pierce it because he lacked the strength.

Texts 25–26

*rājanyeṣu nivṛtṣeṣu,
bhagna-māneṣu māniṣu,
bhagavān dhanur ādāya,
sajyaṁ kṛtvātha līlayā,
tasmin sandhāya viśikhaṁ,
matsyaṁ vīkṣya sakṛj jale,
chittveṣuṅāpātayat taṁ,
sūrye cābhijiti sthite*

After all the arrogant kings had given up, their pride broken, the Supreme Personality of Godhead picked up the bow, easily strung it and then fixed His arrow upon it. As the sun stood in the constellation Abhijit, He looked at the fish in the water only once and then pierced it with the arrow, knocking it to the ground.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Kṛṣṇa pierced the fish at noon (*cābhijiti*), despite the fact that the fish was difficult to detect because the sun was overhead.” The lunar constellation Abhijit marks the period most auspicious for victory.

Text 27

*divi dundubhayo nedur,
jaya-śabda-yutā bhuvī,
devās ca kusumāsārān,
mumucur harṣa-vihvalāḥ*

**Kettledrums resounded in the sky, and on the earth people shouted
“Jaya! Jaya!” Overjoyed, demigods showered flowers.**

Text 28

*tad raṅgam āviśam ahaṁ kala-nūpurābhyām,
padbhyām praḡrhya kanakoijvala-ratna-mālām,
nūtne nivīya paridhāya ca kauśikāgrye,
sa-vrīḍa-hāsa-vadanā kavārī-dhṛta-srak*

**Just then I walked onto the ceremonial ground, the ankle bells on
my feet gently tinkling. I was wearing new garments of the finest
silk, tied with a belt, and I carried a brilliant necklace fashioned of
gold and jewels. There was a shy smile on my face and a wreath of
flowers in my hair.**

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Remembering her joy on that occasion, Queen Lakṣmana describes her choosing Kṛṣṇa at that time in two verses. She said, “I carried a brilliant necklace fashioned of gold and jewels. A belt was tied around my upper and lower garments, which were of excellent silk.”

Text 29

*unnīya vaktram uru-kuntala-kunḍala-tviḍ,
gaṇḍa-sthalaṁ śīsira-hāsa-kaṭāksa-mokṣaiḥ,
rājño nirīksya paritaḥ śanakair murārer,
amse 'nurakta-hṛdayā nidadhe sva-mālām*

I lifted my face, which was encircled by my abundant locks and effulgent from the glow of my earrings reflected from my cheeks. Smiling coolly, I glanced about. Then, looking around at all the kings, I slowly placed the necklace on the shoulder of Murāri, who had captured my heart.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Due to the joy which arose in me at that time, my beauty underwent a transformation. My cheeks were illuminated by glittering earrings and abundant locks of hair hung near my ears.”

Text 30

*tāvan mṛdaṅga-paṭahāḥ,
śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ,
ninedur naṭa-nartakyo,
nanṛtur gāyakā jaguḥ*

Just then there were loud sounds of conchshells and mṛdaṅga, paṭaha, bherī and ānaka drums, as well as other instruments. Men and women began to dance, and singers began to sing.

Text 31

*evam vṛte bhagavati,
mayeṣe nrpa-yūthapāḥ,
na sehire yājñaseni,
spardhanto hṛc-chayāturāḥ*

The leading kings there could not tolerate my having chosen the Supreme Personality of Godhead, O Draupadī. Burning with lust, they became quarrelsome.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “O Draupadi (*yājñaseni*), when Kṛṣṇa was chosen by me the kings became quarrelsome (*spardhanto*).”

But, it may be asked, how is it that those who saw Kṛṣṇa’s supreme power became angry? Laksmana answered by saying, “They were burning with lust (*hṛc-chayāturāḥ:kāmena*).” Thus it is implied that the contamination of lust caused the kings to quarrel foolishly with Kṛṣṇa.

Text 32

*mām tāvad ratham āropya,
haya-ratna-catuṣṭayam,
śārṅgam udyamya sannaddhas,
tasthāv ājau catur-bhujah*

The Lord then placed me on His chariot, drawn by four most excellent horses. Donning His armor and readying His bow Śārṅga, He stood on the chariot, and there on the battleground He manifested His four arms.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “Assuming four hands, Kṛṣṇa embraced me, who was very frightened, and with two arms He

held His bow and arrows.”

Text 33

*dārukaś codayām āsa,
kāñcanopaskaram ratham,
miṣatām bhū-bhujām rājñi,
mṛgāṇām mṛga-rāḍ iva*

Dāruka drove the Lord’s gold-trimmed chariot as the kings looked on, O Queen, like small animals helplessly watching a lion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana said, “As animals watch a lion, the kings looked on while Kṛṣṇa went away.” Using the sixth case for *miṣatām* (watch) indicates Kṛṣṇa’s disregard for the kings.

Text 34

*te ’nvasajjanta rājanyā,
niṣeddhum pathi kecana,
saṁyattā uddhṛteṣv-āsā,
grāma-simhā yathā harim*

The kings pursued the Lord like village dogs chasing a lion. Some kings, raising their bows, stationed themselves on the road to stop Him as He passed by.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The kings pursued Kṛṣṇa from behind (*anvasajjanta*) to stop Him, like dogs chasing a lion. Some went ahead, stationed themselves on the road, and lifted their bows (*uddhṛteṣv-āsā*),

just like dogs raising their tails (*āsā*).

Text 35

*te śārṅga-cyuta-bāṅghaiḥ,
kṛtta-bāhv-aṅghri-kandharāḥ,
nipetuḥ pradhane kecid,
eke santyajya dudruvuḥ*

These warriors were deluged by arrows shot from the Lord's bow, Śārṅga. Some of the kings fell on the battlefield with severed arms, legs and necks; the rest gave up the fight and fled.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Some fell in the battlefield and others gave up (*santyajya*) and fled.

Text 36

*tataḥ purīm yadu-patir aty-alāṅkṛtām,
ravi-cchada-dhvaja-paṭa-citra-toraṇām,
kuśasthalīm divi bhuvī cābhisamstutām,
samāviśat taraṇir iva sva-ketanam*

The Lord of the Yadus then entered His capital city, Kuśasthalī [Dvārakā], which is glorified in heaven and on earth. The city was elaborately decorated with flagpoles carrying banners that blocked the sun, and also with splendid archways. As Lord Kṛṣṇa entered, He appeared like the sun-god entering his abode.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa entered Dvaraka which was

decorated with wonderful arches and banners that blocked the rays of the sun. The abode (*ketanam*) of the sun is in the western mountains where he sets each evening.

Text 37

*pitā me pūjayām āsa,
suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavān,
mahārha-vāso- 'laṅkāraiḥ,
śayyāsana-paricchadaiḥ*

My father honored his friends, family and in-laws with priceless clothing and jewelry and with royal beds, thrones and other furnishings.

Text 38

*dāsībhiḥ sarva-sampadbhir;
bhaṭebha-ratha-vājibhiḥ,
āyudhāni mahārḥāṇi,
dadau pūrṇasya bhaktitāḥ*

With devotion he presented the perfectly complete Lord with a number of maidservants bedecked with precious ornaments. Accompanying these maidservants were guards walking on foot and others riding elephants, chariots and horses. He also gave the Lord extremely valuable weapons.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Lakṣmana said, “Out of love

(*bhaktitaḥ*) my father gave priceless weapons along with female servants to the Lord, even though Kṛṣṇa is already perfect and complete (*pūrṇa*) in Himself. After all, Kṛṣṇa happily accepts even a small gift of flowers, *tulasī* leaves and water when it is offered in love.”

Text 39

*ātmārāmasya tasyemā,
vayaṁ vai grha-dāsikāḥ,
sarva-saṅga-nivṛttyāddhā,
tapasā ca babhūvima*

Thus, by renouncing all material association and practicing austere penances, we queens have all become personal maidservants of the self-satisfied Supreme Lord.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Laksmana felt embarrassed after describing profusely about herself in her state of absorption in Kṛṣṇa. Now, to satisfy her elders headed by Rukmini, she spoke this verse praising her co-wives.

Laksmana said, “We eight queens cannot control Kṛṣṇa like other wives can control their husbands.” She says this out of great humility. In fact, the queens of Dvaraka are direct expansions of Kṛṣṇa’s internal pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), and actually control Him with their *prema*.

Text 40

*mahiṣya ūcuḥ bhaumaṁ nihatya sa-gaṇaṁ yudhi tena ruddhā,
jñātvātha naḥ kṣiti-jaye jīta-rāja-kanyāḥ,
nirmucya saṁsṛti-vimokṣaṁ anusmarantīḥ,
pādāmbujaṁ pariṇināya ya āpta-kāmaḥ*

Rohiṇī-devi, speaking for the other queens, said: After killing Bhaumāśura and his followers, the Lord found us in the demon’s prison and could understand that we were the daughters of the kings whom Bhauma had defeated during his conquest of the earth. The Lord set us free, and because we had been constantly meditating upon His lotus feet, the source of liberation from material entanglement, He agreed to marry us, though His every desire is already fulfilled.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Someone might say, “If Kṛṣṇa has accepted you as His wives, then certainly He fulfilled all your desires, as you have surrendered to His lotus feet.” The queens reply to this in this verse.

Rohiṇī-devi said, “Knowing us to be the imprisoned daughters of the kings who were defeated by Bhauma when he conquered the earth, Kṛṣṇa freed us after killing Bhauma. Although Kṛṣṇa is full in His desires (*āpta-kāmaḥ*), He kindly made us His wives. We simply desire (*kāmayāmahe*) the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet.” [The verb *kāmayāmahe* appears in verse forty-two.]

Kṛṣṇa married the queens because they were constantly remembering His lotus feet (*anusmarantīḥ pādāmbujam*), which give liberation from material life (*saṁsṛti-vimokṣam*). And for this reason also Kṛṣṇa freed them from the prison.

Texts 41–42

*na vyaṁ sādḥvi sāmṛāyaṁ,
svārāyaṁ bhaujyaṁ apy uta,
vairāyaṁ pārameṣṭhyaṁ ca,
ānanyaṁ vā hareḥ padam,
kāmayāmaha etasya,*

*śrīmat-pāda-rajah śriyaḥ,
kuca-kuṅkuma-gandhādhyam,
mūrdhnā voḍhum gadā-bhrtaḥ*

O saintly lady, we do not desire dominion over the earth, the sovereignty of the King of heaven, unlimited facility for enjoyment, mystic power, the position of Lord Brahmā, immortality or even attainment of the kingdom of God. We simply desire to carry on our heads the glorious dust of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s feet, enriched by the fragrance of kuṅkuma from His consort’s bosom.

The queens said, “We do not want lordship of the earth, of Indraloka (*sva rajyam*), nor the enjoyment of all material pleasures (*bhaujyam*) or mystic powers (*vividham virājate*), nor the position of Lord Brahma (*pārameṣṭhyam*), nor immortality (*ānantyam*), nor any type of liberation such as living on the same planet as Hari (*hari padam*).”

“Then what do you desire?”

“We want the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s (*etasya*) lotus feet, enriched with the fragrance of *kunkuma* from the breast of the goddess of fortune (*śriyaḥ*).”

The goddess of fortune mentioned here is not Lakṣmī, the consort of Nārāyaṇa. For Lakṣmi-devi also desired to attain Kṛṣṇa as stated by the wives of Kaliya: “*yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo*, “To attain the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet the goddess of fortune performed austerities for centuries, giving up all other desires and taking austere vows.” (SB 10.16.36) Uddhava has said: *nāyam śriyo ’nga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādah*, “The gopīs received benedictions from Kṛṣṇa that neither Lakṣmi-devi nor the most beautiful dancers in the heavenly planets could attain.” (SB 10.47.60) From this we can understand that Lakṣmi-devi never received that benediction.

*vraja-striyo yad vāñchanti,
pulindyas tṛṇa-vīrudhaḥ,
gāvaś cārayato gopāḥ,
pada-sparśam mahātmanaḥ*

We desire the same contact with the Supreme Lord’s feet that the young women of Vraja, the cowherd boys and even the aborigine Pulinda women desire—the touch of the dust He leaves on the plants and grass as He tends His cows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Śrī in the word *śrīyaḥ* (verse 42) cannot refer to Rukmini either. The present verse says that the women of Vraja (*vraja-striyo*) also desire the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. Once the Vraja-gopis confessed their anxiety to Uddhava: *kasmāt kṛṣṇa ihāyāti prāpta-rājyo hatāhitaḥ narendra-kanyā udvāhya*, “Why should Kṛṣṇa come back here after winning a kingdom, killing His enemies and marrying the daughters of kings?” (SB 10.47.45) The gopis said this with envy towards Rukmini and the other queens who are their competitors for Kṛṣṇa’s love. Thus, the gopis could not desire anything related to Rukmini. The *Śrī* referred to here is none other than Srimati Radhika, the supreme goddess of fortune identified by the *Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra*:

*devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā, rādhikā para-devatā sarva-lakṣmī-mayī sarva,
kāntiḥ sammohinī parā*

“The transcendental goddess Rādhikā is the direct counterpart of Kṛṣṇa. Radha contains within Her all the goddesses of fortune. Radhika possesses all the attractiveness to attract Sri Kṛṣṇa, reality the beautiful. Srimati Radhika is the primeval internal potency of Sri Kṛṣṇa.”

The queens of Dvaraka said, “The intimate girlfriends of Radha desire to touch the dust of Kṛṣṇa’s feet, which is enriched with the fragrance of the *kunkuma* from Sri Radha’s beautiful breasts. Even the aborigine women of Vṛndāvana (Pulindas) also desire this reddish powder when

they see it smeared on the grass and plants (*tr̥ṇa-vīrudhaḥ*) as stated by the phrase (*tr̥ṇa-rūṣitena*) in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*: (10.21.17).

“While Kṛṣṇa tends the cows (*gāvaś*) His intimate cowherd boyfriends (*priya-narma-sakhas*) also desire this dust. Some boys like Subala, having thoughts of attaining sentiments like the gopis, not only desire it but they also want to be directly touched by Kṛṣṇa’s feet as described here by the word (*pada-sparśam*). Therefore, we queens of Dvaraka also hanker for this.”

The word *pada-sparśam* (touch of the feet) can also be a modifier of the word *pāda-rajah* in verse 42 which means foot dust. Thus the meaning would be: “The gopis desire the dust which touches Kṛṣṇa’s feet.”

The eight principal queens headed by Rukmiṇī felt so fortunate and satisfied in their relationship with Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā that they had no desire to attain the dust of His feet. However, the sixteen thousand lesser queens, after meeting Uddhava in a secluded place and hearing about the *prema-rasa* of Vraja, became very attracted to touching the dust that falls from Kṛṣṇa’s feet onto the grass and plants of Vṛndāvana. These queens became especially eager after hearing about the superexcellent quality of Sri Radha’s beauty, character, loving devotion, good fortune and sweetness by which She brings Sri Kṛṣṇa under Her control.

Thus some commentators give this as the reason why, after the *mauṣala-līlā* (Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance pastime), these sixteen thousand queens were stolen from Arjuna on the road by Kṛṣṇa Himself in the disguise of sixteen thousand cowherds, who then took them away to Gokula.

Chapter Eighty-four: The Sages' Teachings at Kurukṣetra

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
śrutvā prthā subala-putry atha yājñasenī,
mādhavy atha kṣitipa-patnya uta sva-gopyaḥ,
kṛṣṇe 'khlātmani harau praṇayānubandham,
sarvā visismyur alam aśru-kalākulākṣyaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Prthā, Gāndhārī, Draupadī, Subhadrā, the wives of other kings and the Lord's cowherd girlfriends were all amazed to hear of the queens' deep love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and Soul of all beings, and their eyes filled with tears.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa and the sages praise one another, Vasudeva asks questions and performs sacrifices, and Nanda Maharaja departs for Vraja.

Though Gandhari (*subala-putry*), Draupadi (*yājñasenī*) and Subhadra (*mādhavy*) all heard the discussions of the queens, those such as Gandhari did not hear directly since it would have been inappropriate in their presence for Draupadi and Kṛṣṇa's queens to have freely indulged in such joking, questions and answers. However, Draupadi and Subhadra were intimate friends of the same age as the queens, so it was proper that they heard directly. The Vraja-gopis, whose attitude toward the queens of Dvaraka was not particularly sympathetic, heard even more indirectly. The word (*uta*) indicates this separation of distance. By the word *sva* in *sva-gopyaḥ* (own *gopis*) we can understand that because the Vraja-gopis identified themselves as Kṛṣṇa's intimate

associates, they normally would have gone off secretly each night to enjoy with Kṛṣṇa in pastimes of conjugal pleasure. But since Kuruksetra is a holy place of pilgrimage, one should understand that the Vraja-gopis were obliged to observe celibacy and did not engage in such activities. The gopis were also astonished and shed tears (*aśru*) on hearing the queens' pastimes because they were reminded of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. The gopis saw there a very slight similarity to their own emotions. But we should not think that there was any loving affinity (*anurāga*) shared between the queens of Dvaraka and the Vraja-gopis.

Texts 2–5

*iti sambhāṣamāñāsu,
 strībhiḥ strīṣu nṛbhir nṛṣu,
 āyayur munayas tatra,
 kṛṣṇa-rāma-didṛkṣayā,
 dvaipāyano nāradaś ca,
 cyavano devalo śitaḥ,
 viśvāmitraḥ śatānando,
 bharaadvājo 'tha gautamaḥ,
 rāmaḥ sa-śiṣyo bhagavān,
 vasiṣṭho gālavo bhṛguḥ,
 pulastyah kaśyapo 'triś ca,
 mārkaṇḍeyo bṛhaspatiḥ,
 dvitas tritaś caikataś ca,
 brahma-putrās tathāṅgirāḥ,
 agastyo yājñavalkyaś ca,
 vāmadevādayo 'pare*

As the women thus talked among themselves and the men among themselves, a number of great sages arrived there, all of them eager to see Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma. They included Dvaipāyana,

Nārada, Cyavana, Devala and Asita, Viśvāmitra, Śātānanda, Bharadvāja and Gautama, Lord Paraśurāma and his disciples, Vasiṣṭha, Gālava, Bhṛgu, Pulastya and Kaśyapa, Atri, Mārkaṇḍeya and Bṛhaspati, Dvita, Trita, Ekata and the four Kumāras, and Aṅgirā, Agastya, Yājñavalkya and Vāmadeva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While the men were talking to the men and the women were conversing with the women, the *munis* came to see Kṛṣṇa.

Text 6

*tān dṛṣṭvā sahasothhāya,
prāg āsīnā nṛpādayaḥ,
pāṇḍavāḥ kṛṣṇa-rāmau ca,
praṇemur viśva-vanditān*

As soon as they saw the sages approaching, the kings and other gentlemen who had been seated immediately stood up, including the Pāṇḍava brothers and Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They all then bowed down to the sages, who are honored throughout the universe.

Text 7

*tān ānarcur yathā sarve,
saha-rāmo 'cyuto 'rcayat,
svāgatāsana-pādyārghya-
mālya-dhūpānulepanaiḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma and the other kings and leaders properly worshiped the sages by offering them words of greeting, sitting places, water for washing their feet, drinking water, flower garlands, incense and sandalwood paste.

Text 8

*uvāca sukham āsīnān,
bhagavān dharmā-guṇa-tanuḥ,
sadasas tasya mahato,
yata-vāco 'nuśṛṅvataḥ*

After the sages were comfortably seated, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose transcendental body protects religious principles, addressed them in the midst of that great assembly. Everyone listened silently with rapt attention.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa sat in the assembly (*sadasaḥ:sadasi*) of sages and began speaking. The use of the genitive case in the word *sadasaḥ* is with the meaning of the locative case.

Text 9

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
aho vayanāṁ janma-bhṛto,
labdham kārtsnyena tat-phalam,
devānāṁ api duṣprāpaṁ,
yad yogeśvara-darśanam*

The Supreme Lord said: Now our lives are indeed successful, for we have obtained life’s ultimate goal: the audience of great yoga masters, which even demigods only rarely obtain.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Now Our birth has become successful (*janma-bhṛtaḥ*), for We are seeing the masters of *yoga*, which is rare even for the demigods, what to speak of humans.”

Text 10

*kiṁ svalpa-tapasām nṛṇām,
arcāyām deva-caṅṣuṣām,
darśana-sparśana-praśna-
prahva-pādārcanādikam*

How is it that people who are not very austere and who recognize God only in His Deity form in the temple can now see you, touch you, inquire from you, bow down to you, worship your feet and serve you in other ways?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Verse eight mentioned Kṛṣṇa as the protector of religion (*dharma-guṇ-tanuḥ*). Beginning with verse nine, Kṛṣṇa’s words illustrate His upholding of *dharma* by praising the sages as if He were an ordinary human being.

Kṛṣṇa said, “For men of little intelligence who see God only in the Deity form, and not in you saintly persons, it is your mercy alone that they get the opportunity to see you.”

Text 11

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni,

*na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ,
te punanty uru-kālena,
darśanād eva sādhavah*

Mere bodies of water are not the real sacred places of pilgrimage, nor are mere images of earth and stone the true worshipable deities. These purify one only after a long time, but saintly sages purify one immediately upon being seen.

Text 12

*nāgnir na sūryo na ca candra-tārakā,
na bhūr jalaṁ khaṁ śvasano 'tha vāñ manaḥ,
upāsītā bheda-kṛto haranty aghaṁ,
vipāścito ghnanti muhūrta-sevayā*

Neither the demigods controlling fire, the sun, the moon and the stars nor those in charge of earth, water, ether, air, speech and mind actually remove the sins of their worshipers, who continue to see in terms of dualities. But wise sages destroy one's sins when respectfully served for even a few moments.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: That speech and the mind are also not fit objects of worship is stated in the *Chandogya Upanisad* (7.2.13): *yo vācaṁ brahmety upāste mano brahmety upāste*, “He who worships the voice as Brahman is free to speak as he wishes within the realms reached by speech,” and “He who worships the mind as Brahman is free to act in the realms reached by the mind.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “One who sees difference (*bheda-kṛto*) between himself and others, who are actually similar, because of urges like hunger,

thirst, and the desire for honor cannot destroy his sins (*agham*) such as envy, disrespect, and contempt arising from seeing difference by such worship. But he can destroy those sins by serving great devotees.”

Text 13

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke,
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ,
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij,
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

One who identifies his self as the inert body composed of mucus, bile and air, who assumes his wife and family are permanently his own, who thinks an earthen image or the land of his birth is worshipable, or who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there, but who never identifies himself with, feels kinship with, worships or even visits those who are wise in spiritual truth—such a person is no better than a cow or an ass.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse states that one who avoids saintly persons and instead identifies his self with other objects is very foolish.

Kṛṣṇa said, “He who thinks that the corpse-like body (*kuṇape*), composed of mucus, bile and air (*tridhatuke*) is the object of love (*atma*), who thinks that his wife and children are his own (*sva-dhīḥ*), or that images made of earth (*bhauma*) are worthy of worship (*ijya dhīḥ*), and who sees a holy place (*tīrtha buddhiḥ*) as merely the water there, but never associates with self-realized (*abhijñeṣu*) men is equal to a cow or an ass (*go-kharaḥ*).”

Cows and asses are classed as one object because of their similarity. Or *go-kharaḥ* can mean the asses that carry grass and other items for the service of cows. In the *Bṛhaspati-saṁhitā*, it is said:

*ajñāta-bhagavad-dharmā, mantra-vijñāna-samvidaḥ narās te go-khara
jñeyā, api bhū-pāla-vanditāḥ*

“Men who are expert in Vedic *mantras* but do not know about *bhāgavata-dharma* are known as cows and asses even if they are worshiped by kings.”

From the statement “those who identify with the body (*yasyātma-buddhiḥ*) and not with wise men” (*janeṣv abhijñeṣu*), one can conclude that those who identify with both the body and with wise men are not cows and asses. However, those who identify themselves only with wise men and consider them sacred and worthy of worship are the most excellent of all. The phrase *bhauma ija-dhīḥ*, “who thinks an image made of earth is worshipable,” refers not to the Deity form of Kṛṣṇa but to deities of demigods. In this regard, the Eleventh Canto states:

*arcāyām eva haraye, pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate na tad-bhakteṣu
cānyeṣu, sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

“A devotee who faithfully engages in Deity worship but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a *prākṛta-bhakta*, or *kaniṣṭha-adhikāri*, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.” (SB 11.2.47)

Such persons who worship Kṛṣṇa but not His devotees are said to be *kaniṣṭha-bhaktas* and not cows or asses (*go-kharaḥ*). Similarly, the phrase *yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile*, “who sees a place of pilgrimage as merely the water there”, refers not to sacred rivers like the Ganges or Yamunā but to lesser rivers. There are thousands of authoritative statements in the scriptures to prove this.

Text 14

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
niśamyetthaṁ bhagavataḥ,
kṛṣṇasyākuṇṭha-medhasaḥ,
vaco duranvayaṁ viprās,
tūṣṇīm āsan bhramad-dhiyaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Hearing such unfathomable words from the unlimitedly wise Lord Kṛṣṇa, the learned brāhmaṇas remained silent, their minds bewildered.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Hearing those inscrutable (*durānvayam*) words of Kṛṣṇa (starting with verse nine), which were so uncharacteristic of the Lord, the sages remained silent.

Text 15

*ciraṁ vimṛśya munaya,
īśvarasyeśitavyatām,
jana-saṅgraha ity ūcuḥ,
smayantas taṁ jagad-gurum*

For some time the sages pondered the Supreme Lord’s behavior, which resembled that of a subordinate living being. They concluded that He was acting this way to instruct the people in general. Thus they smiled and spoke to Him, the spiritual master of the universe.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After considering Kṛṣṇa’s statement that He was subservient (*īśvarasyeśitavyatām*) to them, the sages could not see any logic in His words. Therefore they explained that Kṛṣṇa’s words and actions were for enlightening the common man (*jana saṅgraha*) since He is the supreme teacher (*jagad-gurum*) of spiritual surrender.

Text 16

*śrī-munaya ūcuḥ,
yan-māyayā tattva-vid-uttamā vayanā,
vimohitā viśva-sṛjām adhīśvarāḥ,
yad īśitavyāyati gūḍha īhayā,
aho vicitram bhagavad-viceṣṭitam*

The great sages said: Your power of illusion has totally bewildered us, the most exalted knowers of the truth and leaders among the universal creators. Ah, how amazing is the behavior of the Supreme Lord! He covers Himself with His humanlike activities and pretends to be subject to superior control.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “Although You are none other than the Supreme Lord, You act as if You were a controlled living entity, hidden by Your human-like behavior. Such pastimes result in Your being supremely glorified (*bhaga-vat:parama-yaśas-karam*).” The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says: *bhagaṁ śrī-kāma-māhātmya-vīrya-yatnārka-kīrtiṣu*, “*Bhaga* means wealth, desire, glory, courage, endeavor, fame and the sun.”

Text 17

*anīha etad bahudhaika ātmanā,
sṛjaty avaty atti na badhyate yathā,
bhaumair hi bhūmir bahu-nāma-rūpiṇī,
aho vibhūmnas caritam viḍambanam*

Indeed, the human-like pastimes of the Almighty are simply a pretense! Effortlessly, He alone sends forth from His Self this variegated creation, maintains it and then swallows it up again, all without becoming entangled, just as the element earth takes on

many names and forms in its various transformations.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The sages said, “Your displaying and hiding Your powers are beyond comprehension. By Yourself (*ātmanā:svenaiva*) You create this variegated universe, yet You are not bound. Although one, You become the universe, appearing with many names and forms, as the element earth, although one becomes many by its various transformations of pots and cloths. Ah, how amazing it is that You, the perfectly complete Personality of Godhead, engage in the pastime of worshiping the *brahmanas*, imitating ordinary persons’ activities in the material world. Thus You simply pretend to be under higher control.”

Text 18

*athāpi kāle sva-janābhiguptaye,
bibharṣi sattvaṁ khala-nigrahāya ca,
sva-līlayā veda-pathaṁ sanātanam,
varṇāśramātmā puruṣaḥ paro bhavān*

Nonetheless, at suitable times You assume the pure mode of goodness to protect Your devotees and punish the wicked. Thus You, the Soul of the varṇāśrama social order, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, maintain the eternal path of the Vedas by enjoying Your pleasure pastimes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In three verses the sages explain how Kṛṣṇa puts on the pretense of imitating ordinary behavior in order to protect the devotees, destroy the demons and establish *dharma*. The sages said, “Nonetheless, even though You are the perfectly complete Personality of Godhead, You manifest a form of pure goodness (*bibharṣi sattvaṁ:viśuddha-sattva*), and uphold the eternal

path of the *Vedas* by Your own behavior (*sva-līlayā*). You do this by instituting the divine system of occupational and spiritual divisions of society (*varṇāśrama*). But still You remain the Supreme Personality of Godhead, which is the topmost (*puruṣaḥ paro*) among all the different forms that You manifest.”

Text 19

*brahma te hṛdayam śuklam,
tapaḥ-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ,
yatropalabdham sad vyaktam,
avyaktam ca tataḥ param*

The Vedas are Your spotless heart, and through them one can perceive—by means of austerity, study and self-control—the manifest, the unmanifest and the pure existence transcendental to both.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “You follow the path of the *Vedas* because the *Vedas* are very dear to You. The pure (*śuklam*) *Vedas* (*brahma*) are Your heart in which the unmanifest, subtle causes of creation (*avyaktam*), the manifest products of material creation (*vyaktam*) and existence itself, Brahman (*param*), are realized through austerity, study and sense control.”

Text 20

*tasmād brahma-kulam brahman,
śāstra-yoneḥ tvam ātmanah,
sabhājayasi sad dhāma,
tad brahmanyāgraṇīr bhavān*

Therefore, O Supreme Brahman, You honor the members of the brahminical community, for they are the perfect agents by which one can realize You through the evidence of the Vedas. For that very reason You are the foremost worshiper of the brāhmaṇas.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “Therefore, because the *Vedas* are Your heart, You fully worship (*sabhājayasi:sampūjayasi*) the community of *brahmanas* who distribute the *Vedas*, and who are the best source of realization (*sad dhama:sreṣṭha-uplabdhi-sthānam*) of Yourself (*ātmanah*) who are known by the *Vedas* (*śāstra-yones:veda-pramāṇakasya*). For that very reason (*tad:tasmād eva kāraṇāt*), You are the fore-most (*āgraṇīr:mukhyaḥ*) worshiper of the *brahmanas* and always engage Yourself in pure activities.”

Text 21

*adya no janma-sāphalyam,
vidyāyās tapaso drśaḥ,
tvayā saṅgamyā sad-gatyā,
yad antaḥ śreyasām paraḥ*

Today our birth, education, austerity and vision have all become perfect because we have been able to associate with You, the goal of all saintly persons. Indeed, You Yourself are the ultimate, supreme blessing.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “Our vision, knowledge and austerity have become successful today by attaining association with You, the very form of the ultimate goal (*sad-gatyā:sad-gati-svarūpeṇa*), because You are the ultimate limit (*antaḥ:sīmā*) of

auspiciousness (*śreyasām parah*).”

Text 22

*namas tasmai bhagavate,
kṛṣṇāyākuṅṭha-medhase,
sva-yogamāyayācchanna,
mahimne paramātmane*

Let us offer obeisances unto that Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the infinitely intelligent Supersoul, who has disguised His greatness through His mystic Yogamāyā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Therefore You may praise or offer respects to us to teach the common man, but we must bow down to You, our worshipable Lord.” Thus the sages offer their obeisances in this verse.

Text 23

*na yaṁ vidanty amī bhū-pā,
ekārāmāś ca vṛṣṇayaḥ,
māyā-javanikācchannam,
ātmānam kālam īśvaram*

Neither these kings nor even the Vṛṣṇis, who enjoy Your intimate association, know You as the Soul of all existence, the force of time and the supreme controller. For them You are covered by the curtain of Māyā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The sages said, “The Vrsnis, whom You enjoyed intimately with in sitting and resting, did not realize that You are the Supersoul residing in the heart of every created being. And the kings at Kurukṣetra who were not Your devotees could not recognize You as time, the annihilator of everything. Why is this? The curtain of *maya* covered their knowledge.”

It should be concluded however that it was material ignorance (*mahamaya*) which covered the kings. But for the Vrsnis it was the internal spiritual potency, *yogamaya*, which covered their awareness of Kṛṣṇa’s majesty and engaged them in His eternal pleasure pastimes.

Texts 24–25

*yathā śayānaḥ puruṣa,
ātmānaṁ guṇa-tattva-dṛk,
nāma-mātrendriyābhātāṁ,
na veda rahitaṁ param,
evaṁ tvā nāma-mātreṣu,
viśayeṣv indriyehayā,
māyayā vibhramac-citto,
na veda smṛty-upaplavāt*

A sleeping person imagines an alternative reality for himself and, seeing himself as having various names and forms, forgets his waking identity, which is distinct from the dream. Similarly, the senses of one whose consciousness is bewildered by illusion perceive only the names and forms of material objects. Thus such a person loses his memory and cannot know You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Furthermore, this universe, comprised of many names and forms, is actually You alone, though You are transcendental to it. But the common people do not know this.” In two

verses the sages explain this with an analogy.

A sleeping person sees the objects in a dream as reality and is aware of the names and forms (*mātra:rūpādi*) of a tiger, snake and a king which are manifest by the sense of hearing. But he does not know himself who has become those forms; rather he identifies himself as something other than his real form. Similarly, the ignorant man, bewildered by *maya* through the action of his senses like the ear, knows You by the names of *deva* or man having a material form and qualities. This is explained using an example in two verses.

Similarly, a person sees the designations and forms of demigods and humans as real because his consciousness, from which originate the activities of his senses of hearing and perception, is bewildered by *maya*. Because His intelligence is covered (*smṛty-upaplavāt:viveka-dhvaṁsāt*) he does not know Your true form, which is separate and distinct (*rahitam:bhinnam*) from the many names and forms that You assume as the embodiment of the universe.

Text 26

*tasyādyā te dadṛśimāṅghrim aghaughā-marṣa,
tīrthāspadam ḥṛdi kṛtam su-vipakva-yogaiḥ,
utsikta-bhakty-upahatāśaya jīva-kośā,
āpur bhavad-gatim athānugṛhāna 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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The sages said, “Though explaining this knowledge, we are Your devotees, since without devotion it would have been impossible to see You in this way. We see Your lotus feet, which are the shelter of holy places like the Ganga which destroy (*marsa*) all sins (*agha*). Even great *yogis* advanced in meditation can only see Your lotus feet in their hearts. They cannot see You directly.” Kṛṣṇa may object, “That may be, but one must resort to *jñāna* in order to destroy the subtle body.”

The sages reply, “Only those *yogis* who have destroyed their material mind and ego (*jīva-kośā*) by intense devotion to You can attain perfection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore please be merciful to us and accept us as Your devotees.”

Text 27

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ity anujñāpya dāśārhaṁ,
dhṛtarāṣṭraṁ yudhiṣṭhiraṁ,
rājarṣe svāśramān gantuṁ,
munayo dadhire manaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having thus spoken, O wise king, the sages then took leave of Lord Dāśārha, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira and prepared to depart for their āśramas.

Text 28

*tad vīkṣya tān upavrajya,
vasudevo mahā-yaśāḥ,
praṇamya copasaṅgrhya,*

babhāṣedam su-yantritaḥ

Seeing that they were about to leave, the renowned Vasudeva approached the sages. After bowing down to them and touching their feet, he spoke to them with carefully chosen words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Grasping their feet, Vasudeva spoke. The *sandhi* of *babhāṣe* with *idam* (*babhāṣedam*) is poetic license. Vasudeva thought, “Such sages are difficult to bring, even if invited. Without their help, I will never be able to destroy the doubts in my heart. Therefore now I should ask some questions to keep them from leaving.”

Text 29

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca,
namo vaḥ sarva-devebhya,
ṛṣayaḥ śrotum arhatha,
karmaṇā karma-nirhāro,
yathā syān nas tad ucyatām*

Śrī Vasudeva said: Obeisances to you, the residence of all the demigods. Please hear me, O sages. Kindly tell us how the reactions of one’s work can be counteracted by further work.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here Vasudeva addresses the sages as *sarva-devebhya*, “the residence of all the demigods.” His statement is confirmed in the *śrutis*, which declare, *yāvatīr vai devatās tāḥ sarvā veda-vidi brāhmaṇe vasanti*: “All the demigods reside in a *brāhmaṇa* who knows the *Vedas*.”

Vasudeva said, “Please tell me how can I destroy the bondage of

karma? Since I am so attached to my wives, children and home, I am not qualified for *jnana* or *bhakti*.”

Text 30

*śrī-nārada uvāca,
nāti-citram idaṁ viprā,
vasudevo bubhutsayā,
kṛṣṇam matvārbhakaṁ yan naḥ,
pṛcchati śreya ātmanaḥ*

Śrī Nārada Muni said: O brāhmaṇas, it is not so amazing that in his eagerness to know, Vasudeva has asked us about his ultimate benefit, for he considers Kṛṣṇa a mere boy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages, feeling astonished, said “Ah, even though Vasudeva is the Lord’s father, he thinks himself caught up in the cycle of material existence. And even if he is asking for the benefit of others, why is he ignoring Kṛṣṇa and asking us?” Narada Muni answers them in this verse: “It is not surprising that Vasudeva, thinking of Kṛṣṇa as his son (*arbhakam*) and not the Lord, asks us about his ultimate good, *śreya ātmanaḥ*.”

Text 31

*sannikarṣo ’tra martyānām,
anādarāṇa-kāraṇam,
gāṅgam hitvā yathānyāmbhas,
tatratyo yāti śuddhaye*

In this world familiarity breeds contempt. For example, one who lives on the banks of the Ganges might travel to some other body of water to be purified.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Indeed, Vasudeva knew that Kṛṣṇa was the Lord from His very birth, but living close to Him bred familiarity. That is expressed in this verse. Narada knew that the cause of Vasudeva not seeing Kṛṣṇa as God was Vasudeva’s prema, but still at that great gathering Narada explained things according to the common man’s level in order to maintain the extreme confidentiality of the highest truths about pure love of God, prema-siddhānta. It is certain that hearing this verse from Narada would increase Vasudeva’s respect for Kṛṣṇa as the Lord. In this context the word anādara means “disregarding greatness”.

Texts 32–33

*yasyānubhūtiḥ kālena,
layotpatty-ādināsyā vai,
svato ’nyasmāc ca guṇato,
na kutaścana riṣyati,
taṁ kleśa-karma-paripāka-guṇa-pravāhair,
avyāhatānubhavam īśvaram advitīyam,
prāṇādibhiḥ sva-vibhavair upagūḍham anyo,
manyeta sūryam iva megha-himoparāgaiḥ*

The Supreme Lord’s awareness is never disturbed by time, by the creation and destruction of the universe, by changes in its own qualities, or by anything else, whether self-caused or external. But although the consciousness of the Personality of Godhead, who is the supreme one without a second, is never affected by material distress, by the reactions of material work or by the constant flow of

nature's modes, ordinary persons nonetheless think that the Lord is covered by His own creations of *prāṇa* and other material elements, just as one may think that the sun is covered by clouds, snow or an eclipse.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Narada said, “O most venerable *brahmanas*, not only Vasudeva is subject to this criticism. Almost all the people here do not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord.” This is explained in two verses.

“Materialistic people think that Kṛṣṇa, whose knowledge is never destroyed by any cause, can be covered by *prāṇa* and other elements just like themselves.” The verb is found in the second verse.

“Kṛṣṇa’s knowledge cannot be destroyed by time which causes the creation and destruction of the universe as in the case of a *karkaṭikā* fruit which grows and decays. Kṛṣṇa’s knowledge is not destroyed by itself like lightning; or by any means other than Himself like a hammer which destroys a clay pot; or by the mode of ignorance which destroys the universe.”

(Text 33) Narada repeats the same idea to strengthen his statement in this verse. “Kṛṣṇa’s consciousness (*anubhavam*) is never destroyed by the afflictions (*kleśa*) of attachment, by the karmas which caused these afflictions, by the consequent (*paripāka*) happiness and distress which are the by-products of karma, nor by the constant flow of the three modes (*guna*). But ignorant men think that Kṛṣṇa, who appears to be covered by His own expansions (*sva-vibhava*) of the subtle body made of *prana*, mind, intelligence, to be a person like themselves. This can be compared to the sun, which appears covered by its own products in the form of clouds, snow (*hima*) or the eclipses (*uparāgaḥ*) of Rahu. In reality the sun is the cause of the cloud because the cloud is made of water, which comes from light (*tejas*) in the original process of elemental creation. Water is the cause of snow. Rāhu is made from the sun’s light because his nature is to destroy the darkness of the misfortunes of wicked persons, and because darkness is perceived by the sense of sight.”

Text 34

*athocur munayo rājann,
ābhāṣyānakadundubhim,
sarveṣām śṛṅvatām rājñām,
tathaiivācyuta-rāmayoḥ*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The sages then spoke again, O King, addressing Vasudeva while all the kings, along with Lord Acyuta and Lord Rāma, listened.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages spoke again to Vasudeva while Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and the kings listened.

Text 35

*karmaṇā karma-nirhāra,
eṣa sādhu-nirūpitaḥ,
yac chraddhayā yajed viṣṇum,
sarva-yajñeśvaraṁ makhaiḥ*

[The sages said:] It has been definitely concluded that work is counteracted by further work when one executes Vedic sacrifices as a means of worshipping Viṣṇu, the Lord of all sacrifices, with sincere faith.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse the sages reply to Vasudeva's question about eliminating *karma*. Without understanding that fire sacrifices are meant for worshipping Visnu, it is not possible to

eradicate *karma*.

Text 36

*cittasyopaśamo 'yam vai,
kavibhiḥ śāstra-cakṣusā,
darśitaḥ su-gamo yogo,
dharmaś cātma-mud-āvahaḥ*

Learned authorities who see through the eye of scripture have demonstrated that this is the easiest method of subduing the agitated mind and attaining liberation, and that it is a sacred duty which brings joy to the heart.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “The worship of Viṣṇu pacifies the heart (*cittasyopaśamo*), and it is easily performed (*su-gamo*) because it is based on material inclinations. It is both liberation (*yogo*) and *dharma*, sacred duty, in the sense that it is obligatory, because otherwise one would incur contamination due to not doing what is prescribed. And it pleases the mind (*ātma-mud-āvahaḥ*).”

Text 37

*ayam svasty-ayanaḥ panthā,
dvi-jāter gṛha-medhinaḥ,
yac chraddhayāpta-vittena,
śuklenejyeta pūruṣaḥ*

This is the most auspicious path for a religious householder of the twice-born orders—to selflessly worship the Personality of Godhead

with wealth honestly obtained.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Purely obtained wealth” (*āpta-vittena śuklene*) means lawfully obtained through the occupations of the three higher castes.

Text 38

*vittaiṣaṇām yajña-dānair,
gṛhair dāra-sutaiṣaṇām,
ātma-lokaiṣaṇām deva,
kālena visṛjed budhaḥ,
grāme tyaktaiṣaṇāḥ sarve,
yayur dhīrās tapo-vanam*

An intelligent person should learn to renounce his desire for wealth by performing sacrifices and acts of charity. He should learn to renounce his desire for wife and children by experiencing family life. And he should learn to renounce his desire for promotion to a higher planet in his next life, O saintly Vasudeva, by studying the effects of time. Self-controlled sages who have thus renounced their attachment to household life go to the forest to perform austerities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: One cannot destroy *karma* without giving up all material desires, and freedom from material desires arises by the following process mentioned in this verse which describes how worship of Kṛṣṇa brings auspiciousness (*svasty-ayanam*:v. 37). The sages said, “One should give up the desire for wealth (*vittaiṣaṇām*) by charity and sacrifice which are based on the fruits of wealth. By acts of charity and sacrifice one will come to the realization, ‘What use do I have for wealth?’ One should renounce his desires to enjoy female association and begetting children by enjoying according to the rules of

household life (*grhair:grhocitair bhogaiḥ*). By the experience itself one will lose the desire for it.

“O saintly Vasudeva (*deva*), by perceiving the destructive influence of time, or by realizing that the demigods also die (*deva-kālena*) one should renounce the desire for attaining the heavenly planets.” In this connection the example of practical behavior is cited by stating that wise men renounce their attachment to household life (*grāme-tyakta*) and go to the forest to perform austerities.

Text 39

*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.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *śruti* says: *jāyamāno vai brāhmaṇas tribhir ṛṇavāñ jāyate brahmacaryeṇa ṛṣibhyo yajñena devebhyaḥ prajayā pitṛbhyaḥ*, “A *brahmana* is born with three debts. By celibacy (*brahmacarya*) and studying the *Vedas* (*ādhyayana*) he pays his debt to the sages. By sacrifice and by producing children he is freed from his debts to the demigods and forefathers (*pitṛṇām*).”

Text 40

*tvaṁ tv adya mukto dvābhyāṁ vai,
ṛṣi-pitror mahā-mate,
yajñair devarṇam unmucya,
nirṛṇo 'śaraṇo bhava*

But you, O magnanimous soul, are already free from two of your debts—those to the sages and the forefathers. Now absolve yourself of your debt to the demigods by executing Vedic sacrifices, and in this way free yourself completely of debt and renounce all material shelter.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages said, “You are freed from two debts (*nirṛṇo*) by studying and producing offspring. Now execute sacrifices to become free from your debts to the demigods and then renounce family life (*aśaraṇo bhava:grhāt pravraja*).”

Text 41

*vasudeva bhavān nūnaṁ,
bhaktyā paramayā harim,
jagatām īśvaraṁ prārcaḥ,
sa yad vām putratām gataḥ*

O Vasudeva, without doubt you must have previously worshiped Lord Hari, the master of all worlds. Both you and your wife must have perfectly worshiped Him with supreme devotion, since He has accepted the role of your son.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The mood of the sages in this verse is as follows: “You have asked a question posing as an ordinary person, and we have answered according to ordinary scriptural rules. Actually

since you are the eternally liberated (*nitya-siddha*) father of the Supreme Lord neither worldly customs nor the injunctions of scripture have any authority over you. But if you think that you are only qualified for following the rules of scripture then listen to what we have said.” The sages said, “O Vasudeva, you are resplendent (*deva:dīvyati*) with the topmost wealth (*vasu:dhanam śreṣṭham*) of pure devotion. Previously You intensely worshiped Kṛṣṇa with the most excellent devotion. Therefore, why should you now fall to a lower standard of action? If it is not so, then our words mean nothing. The proof is that Kṛṣṇa Himself has appeared as your son. Nevertheless, if out of humility you think of yourself as a fallen soul and thus want to execute rituals, then do so just to teach the people in general, just as the Lord Himself does.”

Text 42

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
iti tad-vacanaṁ śrutvā,
vasudevo mahā-manāḥ,
tān ṛṣṭīn ṛtvijo vavre,
mūrdhnānamya prasādyā ca*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing these statements of the sages, generous Vasudeva bowed his head to the ground and, praising them, requested them to become his priests.

Text 43

*ta enam ṛṣayo rājan,
vṛtā dharmeṇa dhārmikam,*

*tasminn ayājayan kṣetre,
makhair uttama-kalpakaiḥ*

Thus requested by him, O King, the sages engaged the pious Vasudeva in performing fire sacrifices at that holy place of Kurukṣetra according to strict religious principles and with most excellent ritual arrangements.

Texts 44–45

*tad-dīkṣāyām pravṛttāyām,
vṛṣṇayaḥ puṣkara-srajaḥ,
snātāḥ su-vāsaso rājan,
rājānaḥ suṣṭhv-alaṅkṛtāḥ,
tan-mahiṣyaś ca muditā,
niṣka-kaṇṭhyaḥ su-vāsasaḥ,
dīkṣā-śālām upājagmur,
āliptā vastu-pāṇayaḥ*

When Mahārāja Vasudeva was about to be initiated for the sacrifice, O King, the Vṛṣṇis came to the initiation pavilion after bathing and putting on fine clothes and garlands of lotuses. The other kings also came, elaborately ornamented, as well as all their joyful queens, who wore jeweled lockets around their necks and were also clad in fine garments. The royal wives were anointed with sandalwood paste and carried auspicious items for the worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Carrying various auspicious items in their hands (*vastu-pāṇayaḥ*), the queens (*mahiṣyaḥ*) entered the arena.

Text 46

*nedur mṛdaṅga-paṭaha-,
śaṅkha-bhery-ānakādayaḥ,
nanṛtur naṭa-nartakyaḥ,
tuṣṭuvuḥ sūta-māgadhaḥ,
jaguḥ su-kaṅthyo gandharvyaḥ,
saṅgītaṁ saha-bhartṛkāḥ*

Mṛdaṅgas, paṭahas, conchshells, bherīs, ānakas and other instruments resounded, male and female dancers danced, and sūtas and māgadhas recited glorifications. Sweet-voiced Gandharvīs sang, accompanied by their husbands.

Text 47

*tam abhyaṣiṅcan vidhi-vad,
aktam abhyaktam ṛtvijaḥ,
patnībhir aṣṭā-daśabhiḥ,
soma-rājam ivodubhiḥ*

After Vasudeva's eyes had been decorated with black cosmetic and his body smeared with fresh butter, the priests initiated him according to scriptural rules by sprinkling him and his eighteen wives with sacred water. Encircled by his wives, he resembled the regal moon encircled by stars.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: With his eyes anointed with mascara and his body smeared with newly-churned butter, Vasudeva along with

His eighteen wives appeared like the king of moons (*soma rajam*) encircled by the stars.

Text 48

*tābhir dukūla-valayair;
hāra-nūpura-kuṇḍalaiḥ,
sv-alan̄kṛtābhir vibabhau,
dīkṣito 'jina-saṁvṛtaḥ*

Vasudeva received initiation along with his wives, who wore silk sārīs and were adorned with bangles, necklaces, ankle bells and earrings. With his body wrapped in a deerskin, Vasudeva shone splendidly.

Text 49

*tasyartvijo mahā-rāja,
ratna-kauśeya-vāsasaḥ,
sa-sadasyā virejus te,
yathā vṛtra-haṇo 'dhvare*

My dear Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Vasudeva's priests and the officiating members of the assembly, dressed in silk dhotīs and jeweled ornaments, looked so effulgent that they seemed to be standing in the sacrificial arena of Indra, the killer of Vṛtra.

Text 50

*tadā rāmaś ca kṛṣṇaś ca,
svaiḥ svair bandhubhir anvitau,
rejatuḥ sva-sutair dārair;
jīveśau sva-vibhūtibhiḥ*

At that time Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, the Lords of all living entities, shone forth with great majesty in the company of Their respective sons, wives and other family members, who were expansions of Their opulences.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, the Lords of all living entities (*jīveśau*), appeared.

Text 51

*īje 'nu-yajñam vidhinā,
agni-hotrādi-lakṣaṇaiḥ,
prākṛtair vaikṛtair yajñair;
dravya-jñāna-kriyeśvaram*

Performing various kinds of Vedic sacrifice according to the proper regulations, Vasudeva worshiped the Lord of all sacrificial paraphernalia, mantras and rituals. He executed both primary and secondary sacrifices, offering oblations to the sacred fire and carrying out other aspects of sacrificial worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva worshiped Visnu, the Lord of all sacrificial paraphernalia (*dravya*), mantras (*jnana*) and rituals (*kriyā*) by primary sacrifices such as Jyotiṣṭoma and Darśa-pūrṇamāsa,

which are prescribed in detail in revealed scriptures, and by secondary sacrifices such as the Saurya and Satra which are modified in form and rule. The word *dravyam* refers to the sacrificial rice cakes (*puroḍāśa*), which are offered when *soma* is not offered.

Text 52

*athartvigbhyo 'dadāt kāle,
yathāmnātaṁ sa dakṣiṇāḥ,
sv-alakṛtebhyo 'lakṛtya,
go-bhū-kanyā mahā-dhanāḥ*

Then, at the appropriate time and according to scripture, Vasudeva remunerated the priests by decorating them with precious ornaments, though they were already richly adorned, and offering them valuable gifts of cows, land and marriageable girls.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva (*sa*) gave donations (*daksina*) in the form of gold, jewels, cows, land and virgin girls (*kanyā*).

Text 53

*patnī-saṁyājāvabhr̥thyaiś,
caritvā te maharṣayaḥ,
sasnū rāma-hrade viprā,
yajamāna-puraḥ-sarāḥ*

After supervising the patnī-saṁyāja and avabhr̥thya rituals, the great brāhmaṇa sages bathed in Lord Paraśurāma's lake with the

sponsor of the sacrifice, Vasudeva, who led them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *patnī-samyāja* is the ritual in which the sponsor of the sacrifice offers oblations together with his wife. The *brahmanas* also supervised the final rituals known as *avabhr̥thya*.

Text 54

*snāto 'laṅkāra-vāsāmsi,
vandibhyo 'dāt tathā striyaḥ,
tataḥ sv-alan̄kṛto varṇān,
ā-śvabhyo 'nnena pūjayat*

His sacred bath complete, Vasudeva joined with his wives in giving the jewelry and clothes they had been wearing to the professional reciters. Vasudeva then put on new garments, after which he honored all classes of people by feeding everyone, even the dogs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having bathed, Vasudeva, along with his wives, gave cloth and ornaments to the reciters and fed everyone down to the horses and dogs.

Texts 55–56

*bandhūn sa-dārān sa-sutān,
pāribarheṇa bhūyasā,
vidarbha-kośala-kurūn,
kāśi-kekaya-sṛṅjayān,
sadasyartvik-sura-gaṇān,
nṛ-bhūta-pitr̥-cāraṇān,*

*śrī-niketam anujñāpya,
śamsantaḥ prayayuh kratum*

With opulent gifts he honored his relatives, including all their wives and children; the royalty of the Vidarbha, Kosala, Kuru, Kāśī, Kekaya and Śrñjaya kingdoms; the officiating members of the assembly; and also the priests, witnessing demigods, humans, spirits, forefathers and Cāraṇas. Then, taking permission from Lord Kṛṣṇa, the shelter of the goddess of fortune, the various guests departed as they all chanted the glories of Vasudeva’s sacrifice.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva worshiped everyone from his relatives to the Caranas, a class of minor demigods, with gifts (*pāribarheṇa:prīti-dānena*) as tokens of his affection, and then they all departed (*prayayuh*).

Texts 57–58

*dhṛtarāṣṭro ’nujaḥ pārthā,
bhīṣmo droṇaḥ pṛthā yamau,
nārado bhagavān vyāsaḥ,
suhṛt-sambandhi-bāndhavāḥ,
bandhūn pariṣvajya yadūn,
sauhṛdāklinna-cetasah,
yayur viraha-kṛcchreṇa,
sva-deśāms cāpare janāḥ*

The Yadus were all embraced by their friends, close family members and other relatives, including Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his younger brother, Vidura; Pṛthā and her sons; Bhīṣma; Droṇa; the twins Nakula and Sahadeva; Nārada; and Vedavyāsa, the

Personality of Godhead. Their hearts melting with affection, these and the other guests left for their kingdoms, their progress slowed by the pain of separation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Anuja refers to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's younger brother Vidura.

Text 59

*nandas tu saha gopālair,
br̥hatyā pūjayārcitaḥ,
kṛṣṇa-rāmograsenādyair,
nyavātsīd bandhu-vatsalaḥ*

Nanda Mahārāja showed his affection for his relatives, the Yadus, by remaining with them a little longer, together with his cowherds. During his stay, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Ugrasena and the others honored him with especially opulent worship.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *tu* (and) indicates that Nanda was worshiped much more elaborately even than the sons of Pandu by Vasudeva, because even when everyone else went away, Nanda Maharaja did not leave for a long time.

Text 60

*vasudevo 'ñjasottīrya,
manoratha-mahārṇavam,
suhṛd-vṛtaḥ prīta-manā,
nandam āha kare spr̥śan*

Having so easily crossed over the vast ocean of his ambition, Vasudeva felt fully satisfied. In the company of his many well-wishers, he took Nanda by the hand and addressed him as follows.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Crossing the great ocean of his desires to perform Vedic sacrifices, Vasudeva felt satisfied and spoke to Nanda.

Text 61

*śrī-vasudeva uvāca bhrātar īśa-kṛtaḥ pāśo,
nṛnām yaḥ sneha-samjñitaḥ,
taṁ dustyajam ahaṁ manye,
śūrāṇām api yoginām*

Śrī Vasudeva said: My dear brother, God Himself has tied the knot called affection, which tightly binds human beings together. It seems to me that even great heroes and mystics find it very difficult to free themselves from it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “I think these bonds of affection are hard to cut (*durbhidam*) for warriors by their strength and for yogis by their knowledge.” The extra verb (*durbhidam*) should be added. The meaning is “Throughout the day and night the two of you are tightly bound by the rope of affection for my sons.”

Text 62

*asmāsv apratikalpeyam,
yat kṛtājñeṣu sattamaiḥ,
maitry arpitāphalā cāpi,*

na nivarteta karhicit

Indeed, the Supreme Lord must have created the bonds of affection, for such exalted saints as you have never stopped showing matchless friendship toward us ingrates, although it has never been properly reciprocated.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “This friendship which has been offered by such exalted saints as you, by bestowing the great treasure of firm affection for Rama and Kṛṣṇa is incomparable and will certainly never cease. Who are we? We are ungrateful (*kṛta-ajñeṣu*), not acknowledging the help you rendered to us. Hence, how can we, who are so wicked, be so shameless to even speak this to you, who are the most saintly?”

Text 63

*prāg akalpāc ca kuśalam,
bhrātar vo nācarāma hi,
adhunā śrī-madāndhākṣā,
na paśyāmaḥ puraḥ sataḥ*

Previously, dear brother, we did nothing to benefit you because we were unable to, yet even now that you are present before us, our eyes are so blinded by the intoxication of material good fortune that we continue to ignore you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Vasudeva explains his failure to show gratitude. Vasudeva said, “Previously, because of being imprisoned by Kamsa I did nothing to help you. Now even though Kamsa has been killed and I am free, still due to the intoxication of

wealth I continue to ignore you.”

Text 64

*mā rājya-śrīr abhūt puṁsaḥ,
śreyas-kāmasya māna-da,
sva-janān uta bandhūn vā,
na paśyati yayāndha-dṛk*

O most respectful one, may a person who wants the highest benefit in life never gain kingly opulence, for it leaves him blind to the needs of his own family and friends.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A person should not (*ma abhūt*) obtain wealth and kingdom. The addition of “a” in *abhut* is poetic license. Submerging Nanda in the ocean of supreme humility by his praises, Vasudeva also became submerged in humility as indicated by his words.

Text 65

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam sauhṛda-śaithilya-
citta ānakadundubhiḥ,
ruroda tat-kṛtām maitrīm,
smarann aśru-vilocanaḥ*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: His heart softened by feelings of intimate sympathy, Vasudeva wept. His eyes brimmed with tears as he remembered the friendship Nanda had shown him.

Text 66

*nandas tu sakhyuḥ priya-kṛt,
preṃṇā govinda-rāmayoḥ,
adya śva iti māsāṃs trīn,
yadubhir mānito 'vasat*

And on his part, Nanda was also full of affection for his friend Vasudeva. Thus during the following days Nanda would repeatedly announce, “I will be leaving later today” and “I will be leaving tomorrow.” But out of love for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma he remained there for three more months, honored by all the Yadus.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “*Tu*” indicates Nanda’s different intention. Vasudeva’s intention was different from Nanda’s. The phrase *adya śva* “today, tomorrow” means that even after settling in the night that he would leave first thing in the morning after breaking Vasudeva’s misconception that Kṛṣṇa was his son, Nanda would then decide, “I’ll go later today”, and then, when the afternoon came, he would say, “I’ll just stay until tomorrow and take my son and go back to Vraja.” Nanda Maharaja was procrastinating due to his affection (*priya-kṛt*) for Vasudeva because he did not want to break his heart. Thus Nanda Maharaja stayed there for three months sharing his ecstatic love (*preṃṇā*) with Kṛṣṇa and Balarama (*govinda-rāmayoḥ*).

Texts 67–68

tataḥ kāmaiḥ pūryamāṇaḥ,

*sa-vrajaḥ saha-bāndhavaḥ,
parārdhyābharāṇa-kṣauma,
nānānarghya-paricchadaiḥ,
vasudevo-grasenābhyām,
kṛṣṇoddhava-balādibhiḥ,
dattam ādāya pāribarham,
yāpito yadubhir yayau*

Then, after Vasudeva, Ugrasena, Kṛṣṇa, Uddhava, Balarāma and others had fulfilled his desires and presented him with precious ornaments, fine linen and varieties of priceless household furnishings, Nanda Mahārāja accepted all these gifts and took his leave. Seen off by all the Yadus, he departed with his family members and the residents of Vraja.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Then, after three months, Vrajaraja Nanda declared, “O Kṛṣṇa, for one drop of the perspiration from Your divine face I am ready to give up millions of lives. Let us leave now for Vraja; I cannot stay here any longer.”

Nanda continued, “My dear friend Vasudeva, please send Kṛṣṇa off to Vraja. O King Ugrasena, please order my dear friend to do this. Otherwise, before your very eyes we will give up our lives in this holy place of Kuruksetra by drowning ourselves in Parasurama’s lake. We did not come here on the occasion of the solar eclipse to gain some pious credits. Rather, we Vrajavasis came here with the conviction in our hearts that if we cannot get Kṛṣṇa back we will die.” Hearing these desperate words from Nanda, Vasudeva and the others tried to pacify him with costly jewelry and valuable gifts.

Well-versed in the arts of diplomacy, Vasudeva consulted with his most trustworthy friends and then satisfied Nanda by telling him, “My dearest friend, O Vrajaraja, it is true that none of you can live without Kṛṣṇa. And how can we allow you to kill yourselves? Therefore, by all means I must send Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja. I will do so right after we accompany

Him and His relatives, helpless wives and friends back to Dvārakā. Then, the very next day, without obstructing Him in any way, I will let Kṛṣṇa leave for Vraja at an auspicious time of the day. This I swear to you a thousand times over. After all, how can we who came here with Kṛṣṇa go home without Him? What will people say about us? You are vastly learned in all these matters, so please forgive this offense of mine for making this request of you.”

Ugrasena said, “O king of Vraja, I vouch for the surety of this. I solemnly vow to send Kṛṣṇa back to Vraja even if I have to do it by force.”

Then Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by Uddhava and Balarama, spoke to Nanda in private. Kṛṣṇa said, “Dear father, if I go directly to Vraja today, leaving aside all these Vṛṣṇis, they will die from the pain of separation from Me. Then thousands of enemies stronger than Kesi or Arista will kill these kings. Being omniscient, I know My own future. Please listen while I describe it to you. After returning to Dvārakā, I will receive an invitation from Yudhiṣṭhira and go to Indraprastha to participate in his Rājasūya sacrifice. There I will kill Śiśupāla, after which I will again return to Dvārakā and kill Śālva. Next I will travel to a place just south of Mathurā to save you by killing Dantavakra. I will then return to Vraja, see all My old friends and again sit on your lap with great pleasure. Indeed, with great happiness I will spend the rest of My life with you. The creator has written this fate on My forehead, and it has been written on your foreheads that until the day I return you must tolerate separation from Me. Neither of our destinies can possibly be changed, so give up your stubbornness and return to Vraja.

“If in the meantime, you, My dear parents and My beloved friends, are distressed by the pain of separation from Me, then whenever you wish to feed Me some delicacy or play some game with Me or simply see Me, just close your eyes and I will appear before you to make all your difficulties insignificant and to fulfill all your desires. I promise you this, and the young friends of Mine whose lives I saved in a forest fire can vouch for it.”

Convinced by all these arguments that his son’s happiness was of prime

importance, Nanda told Vasudeva and the others, “I agree.” Accepting the gifts which his friends offered him as they all shed incessant tears, Nanda Maharaja was seen off by a large army of Yadavas.

This explanation has been given based on the two words *kāmaih*, (desirable objects) and *pūryamāṇaḥ* (satiated). Otherwise, these words would make no sense unless there was such an explanation of Nanda being completely satisfied. For Nanda and Yasoda, who could not believe at all that Kṛṣṇa was the son of Vasudeva and Devaki, even if testified by Brahma or his sons and daughters, and for who all material wealth and ornaments were considered trifling in comparison to just the remembrance of the treasure of the happiness attained by touching the back of their finger to Kṛṣṇa’s chin, how would it be possible to satisfy them with millions of silks and valuable furnishings given by Vasudeva?

For argument’s sake even if they were satisfied or could be satisfied, the text also mentions that not only Nanda and his wife, but all the inhabitants of Vraja, including the gopas, gopis and all his friends were satisfied. If one were to make the bold supposition that Kṛṣṇa’s mother and father, and also all His beloved gopis and gopas were satisfied simply by getting valuable ornaments, cloth and jewels and then went back to Vraja, we would be left with the conclusion that the prema of all the Vrajavasis must have disappeared. We should consider this matter in light of the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, which states that one characteristic of prema is ananya-mamatā, “the unflinching sense of possessiveness towards one’s beloved, wherein one is completely apathetic to other objects”. Therefore, such an explanation must be rejected.

Text 69

*nando gopās ’ca gopyaś ca,
govinda-caraṇāmbuje,*

*manaḥ kṣiptam punar hartum,
anīśā mathurām yayuh*

Unable to withdraw their minds from Lord Govinda's lotus feet, where they had surrendered them, Nanda and the cowherd men and women returned to Mathurā.

Text 70

*bandhuṣu pratiyāteṣu,
vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-devatāḥ,
vīkṣya prāvṛṣam āsannād,
yayur dvāravatīm punaḥ*

Their relatives having thus departed, and seeing that the rainy season was approaching, the Vṛṣṇis, whose only Lord was Kṛṣṇa, went back to Dvārakā.

Text 71

*janebhyaḥ kathayām cakrur,
yadu-deva-mahotsavam,
yad āsīt tīrtha-yātrāyām,
suhṛt-sandarśanādikam*

They told the people of the city about the festive sacrifices performed by Vasudeva, lord of the Yadus, and about everything

else that had happened during their pilgrimage, especially how they had met with all their loved ones.

Chapter Eighty-five: Lord Kṛṣṇa Instructs Vasudeva and Retrieves Devakī's Sons

Text 1

*śrī-bādarāyaṇir uvāca,
athaikadātmaṅṅau prāptau,
kṛta-pādābhivandanau,
vasudevo 'bhinandyāha,
prītyā saṅkarṣaṅācyutau*

**Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said: One day the two sons of Vasudeva—
Saṅkarṣaṅa and Acyuta—came to pay him respects, bowing down
at his feet. Vasudeva greeted Them with great affection and spoke
to Them.**

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this chapter Kṛṣṇa instructs His
father Vasudeva on *jñāna* and brings back Devakī's six sons. Kṛṣṇa and
Balarama visit Bali's home and receive praises.

Text 2

*munīnām sa vacaḥ śrutvā,
putrayor dhāma-sūcakam,
tad-vīryair jāta-viśrambhaḥ,
paribhāṣyābhyabhāṣata*

Having heard the great sages' words concerning the power of his

two sons, and having seen Their valorous deeds, Vasudeva became convinced of Their divinity. Thus, addressing Them by name, he spoke to Them as follows.

Text 3

*kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa mahā-yogin,
saṅkarṣaṇa sanātana,
jāne vām asya yat sākṣāt,
pradhāna-puruṣau parau*

[Vasudeva said:] O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, best of yogīs, O eternal Saṅkarṣaṇa! I know that You two are personally the source of universal creation and the ingredients of creation as well.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “I know You two to be the Supreme Personalities of Godhead who (*yat*) are superior (*parau*) to the *pradhana* and *purusa* that cause this universe (*asya*).” Or, “I know that You, Vāsudeva and Sankarsana, are the two original *purusas* of the universe who are producing the *pradhana*.”

Text 4

*yatra yena yato yasya,
yasmāi yad yad yathā yadā,
syād idaṁ bhagavān sākṣāt,
pradhāna-puruṣeśvaraḥ*

You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who manifest as

the Lord of both nature and the creator of nature [Mahā-Viṣṇu]. Everything that comes into existence, however and whenever it does so, is created within You, by You, from You, for You and in relation to You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “You are this universe, as it is caused by You.” This verse is in the singular since the two brothers act as one. “Wherever objects such as a pot or cloth exist, by whatever cause they exist, from whatever they arise, whatever they belong to, to whomever such objects are given, in whatever manner they exist and in whatever time they exist, the effect is You, O Lord, who are the predominator of the *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*, nature and its creator (Mahā-Viṣṇu).”

Text 5

*etan nānā-vidham viśvam,
ātma-sṛṣṭam adhokṣaja,
ātmanānupraviśyātman,
prāṇo jīvo bibharṣy aja*

O transcendental Lord, from Yourself You created this entire variegated universe, and then You entered within it in Your personal form as the Supersoul. In this way, O unborn Supreme Soul, as the life force and consciousness of everyone, You maintain the creation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “Moreover You are the maintainer of this universe. By entering within the universe in Your personal form as the Supersoul, O Supreme Soul, You expand Yourself into the subtle energy of action (*kriyā-śakti*) which is the *sūtra-tattva*, or original vital air (*prāṇa*) and also into the creative energy (*buddhi-tattva*)

or *jñāna-śakti*) of consciousness (*jīvaḥ*). In other words, You maintain the universe in Your form as the vital air, the intelligence and the active and perceiving senses.”

Text 6

*prāṇādīnām viśva-sṛjām,
śaktayo yāḥ parasya tāḥ,
pāratantryād vaisādrṣyād,
dvayoś ceṣṭaiva ceṣṭatām*

Whatever potencies the life air and other elements of universal creation exhibit are actually all personal energies of the Supreme Lord, for both life and matter are subordinate to Him and dependent on Him, and also different from one another. Thus everything active in the material world is set into motion by the Supreme Lord.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “But it is well known that it is the *prana* and *jiva* who assume these various forms and maintain the universe, not Me.”

Vasudeva responds to this in this verse. The word *ādī* is used in the phrase *prāṇādīnām* because *prāṇa* (vital air of life) consists of many subcategories. The word *viśva-sṛjām* indicates that not only are *prana* and *jiva* famous as the maintainers of the universe, but they are also famous as the creators. In reality, however, the potencies which belong to the *prāṇa* and its expansions are all derived from the supremely subtle Paramātmā (*parasya:parameśvarasyaiva*). Thus *prāṇa* is dependent (*pāratantryāt*) in the same way as the piercing power of an arrow is derived from the strength of the bowman who shoots it and not from the arrow itself.

“But,” someone may argue, “even if we grant that the principles of

prāṇa and *jīva* are subordinate to their own presiding deities, why must we necessarily conclude that they are subordinate to a Supreme Lord, the Supersoul?”

Vasudeva answers with the words *vaisādr̥ṣyād*: Certainly (*vai:niścitam*) they are similar because each of these material elements are just like the particular demigods who rule over them. In the same way as the active and perceiving senses, designated respectively by the terms *prāṇa* and *jīva* are non-living matter, so the demigods who regulate them are also material because their bodies and minds are material. Therefore, since the Personality of Godhead is purely spiritual whereas the deities presiding over these various elements are all material, and since we can clearly see that nonliving things must be subordinate to a living force, we conclude that these potencies must all belong to the Supreme Lord. Such is the proper logical sequence of the statement.

Text 7

*kāntis tejah prabhā sattā,
candrāgny-arkarkṣa-vidyutām,
yat sthairyam bhū-bhṛtām bhūmer,
vṛttir gandho 'rthato bhavān*

The glow of the moon, the brilliance of fire, the radiance of the sun, the twinkling of the stars, the flash of lightning, the permanence of mountains and the aroma and sustaining power of the earth—all these are actually You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse Vasudeva cites the *śruti* and *smṛti* to show that whatever potencies belong to any sort of existing entity actually belong to Kṛṣṇa. The word *kantis* means that Kṛṣṇa is the essence of the attractive radiance of the moon, stars and lightning. It also applies to the sun and fire during the cold season and

to the sun at sunset. *Tejaḥ* is the quality of being impossible to touch, which belongs to all of them. *Prabhā* means the ability to reveal itself at a great distance, and the quality of *sattā* belongs to the moon, sun, stars and lightning. All of these items have *prabhā* and *sattā* (particular existence). Factually these are all You.

“The *Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad* (6.14), for example, states:

na tatra sūryō bhāti na candra-tāraḥ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto 'yam agniḥ tam eva bhāntam anu bhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvaṁ idaṁ vibhāti

“In the spiritual world the sun does not shine, nor does the moon, the stars or lightning as we know them, what to speak of ordinary fire. It is by the reflection of the spiritual sky’s effulgence that everything else gives light, and thus through its radiance this entire universe becomes luminous.”

And in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (15.12), Sri Kṛṣṇa says, *yad āditya-gataṁ tejo, jagad bhāsayate 'khilam yac candramasi yac cāgnau, tat tejo viddhi māmakaṁ*

“Know that the splendid light of the sun, the moon and fire, which dissipate the darkness, come from Me.” Vasudeva said, “Whatever (*yat*) steadiness is in the mountain, and the power of the earth to sustain (*vṛttih*) the living entities and to produce pleasant aromas are Your energy.” The word *yat* (which) applies to each of the entities being exemplified with the appropriate adjustment of gender.

Text 8

*tarpaṇaṁ prāṇanam apāṁ,
deva tvaṁ tās ca tad-rasaḥ,
ojaḥ saho balaṁ ceṣṭā,
gatir vāyos taveśvara*

My Lord, You are water, and also its taste and its capacities to quench thirst and sustain life. You exhibit Your potencies through

the manifestations of the air as bodily warmth, vitality, mental power, physical strength, endeavor and movement.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: What is the need to elaborate extensively? You alone are all the objects and their essential qualities. Vasudeva explains this in four verses: “Furthermore, O Lord (*deva*), the capacity of water to generate satisfaction (*tarpaṇam:tr̥pti-janakatvam*), possess taste and act as the basis of life (*prāṇanam:jīva-hetutvam*) are all You alone. The *ojaḥ* (bodily warmth and vitality), *saho* (mental strength), *balam* (physical strength), *ceṣṭā* (endeavor) and *gatir* (movement) of the air element are all Your energies.”

Text 9

*diśām tvam avakāśo 'si,
diśaḥ kham sphoṭa āśrayaḥ,
nādo varṇas tvam om-kāra,
ākṛtīnām pṛthak-kṛtiḥ*

You are the directions and their accommodating capacity, the all-pervading ether and the elemental sound residing within it. You are the primeval, unmanifested form of sound; the first syllable, om; and audible speech, by which sound, as words, acquires particular references.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “You are the directions and the space created by the conditioning of ether. You are ether (*kham*) and the pure quality of sound (*sphoṭa:śabda-tan-mātra*) in its primeval stage known as *parā* in the ether. The *pasyanti* (unmanifest vibration) and *madhyama* (first syllable *om-kāra*) stages of sound are You. You are also the final stage of audible sound or speech called *vaikharī*, which consists of syllables and words denoting particular objects (*ākṛtīnām*).”

The *Āg Veda* (1.164.45) says:

*catvāri vāk-parimitā padāni, tāni vidur brāhmaṇā ye manīṣiṇaḥ
guhāyām trīṇi nihitāni neṅgayanti, turīyaṁ vāco manuṣyā vadanti*

“Wise *brahmanas* know four stages of sound. Three of these remain hidden in the heart as imperceptible vibrations; while the fourth is what people ordinarily understand as speech.”

Text 10

*indriyaṁ tv indriyāṅgāṁ tvaṁ,
devāś ca tad-anugrahaḥ,
avabodho bhavān buddher,
jīvasyānusmṛtiḥ satī*

You are the power of the senses to reveal their objects, the senses’ presiding demigods, and the sanction these demigods give for sensory activity. You are the capacity of the intelligence for decision-making, and the living being’s ability to remember things accurately.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “You are the power of the senses to reveal objects, as well as the presiding demigods of the senses, who by their mercy (*anugrahaḥ*) and their power of rule (*adhiṣṭhāna-śakti*) sanction the working of one’s senses. You are the power of decision (*avabodho: adhyavasāya-śakti*), and the power of recollection (*anusmṛtiḥ: anusandhāna-śakti*) whereby one recognizes himself as an eternal spirit soul.”

Text 11

bhūtānām asi bhūtādir,

*indriyāṅām ca taijasaḥ,
vaikāriko vikalpānām,
pradhānam anuśāyinam*

You are false ego in the mode of ignorance, which is the source of the physical elements; false ego in the mode of passion, which is the source of the bodily senses; false ego in the mode of goodness, which is the source of the demigods; and the unmanifest, total material energy, which underlies everything.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “You are the *tamasika ahankara*, false ego in the mode of ignorance, which causes the five physical elements. You are the *rajasika ahankara*, false ego in the mode of passion, which causes the senses, and also the *sattvika ahankara*, false ego in the mode of goodness, which produces the creative demigods (*vikalpanam*). As the *pradhāna*, the unmanifest, total material energy, You are the underlying (*anuśāyinam*) cause of the living entities’ material existence.”

Text 12

*naśvareṣv iha bhāveṣu,
tad asi tvam anaśvaram,
yathā dravya-vikāreṣu,
dravya-mātraṁ nirūpitam*

You are the one indestructible entity among all the destructible things of this world, like the underlying substance that is seen to remain unchanged while the things made from it undergo transformations.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva said, “What is more, You are the one indestructible entity who remains permanently among the fallible entities in this world. This resembles the transformation of substances like clay or gold into pots and earrings which are subject to destruction. Nevertheless, the basic substances (*dravya-mātram*), namely the clay and gold, remain without being destroyed. Thus the *pradhāna* is indestructible (*anaśvaram*).”

Text 13

*sattvam rajas tama iti,
guṇās tad-vṛttayaś ca yāḥ,
tvayy addhā brahmaṇi pare,
kalpitā yoga-māyayā*

The modes of material nature—namely goodness, passion and ignorance—together with all their functions, become directly manifest within You, the Supreme Absolute Truth, by the arrangement of Your Yogamāyā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa interjects, “If I am *pradhana*, the cause of this universe, how is it, then, that I will not be subject to change just as the *pradhana* transforms into objects of this world.” Vasudeva refutes this in two verses, saying: “The three *gunas* which are also called *pradhana*, and which undergo transformations such as *mahat-tattva*, have been produced by *yogamaya*, the inconceivable, spiritual energy within You, who are transcendental (*pare*) to the three modes of material nature. The three modes of nature are not actually within You, for they have been produced under Your glance.”

Text 14

*tasmān na santy amī bhāvā,
yarhi tvayi vikalpitāḥ,
tvaṁ cāmīṣu vikāreṣu,
hy anyadāvyāvahārikah*

Thus these created entities, transformations of material nature, do not exist except when material nature manifests them within You, at which time You also manifest within them. But aside from such periods of creation, You stand alone as the transcendental reality.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “Therefore when at the time of final dissolution, these entities which are arranged by Yogamaya, who embodies Your desires, are separated from Your glance by her, then they no longer exist within You. You are never “within” these objects in any material sense, but You mercifully pervade them all as the impersonal Brahman, and, You manifest Yourself as Your expansions of Supersoul, so they can perform their mundane activity. As it is said in the *Bhagavad-gita* (9.4-5):

*mayā tataṁ idaṁ sarvaṁ, jagad avyakta-mūrtinā mat-sthāni sarva-
bhūtāni, na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni, paśya
me yogam aiśvaram bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho, mamātmā bhūta-
bhāvanaḥ*

“By Me, in My unmanifest form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am not in them. And yet everything that is created does not rest in Me. Behold My mystic opulence! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, I am not part of this cosmic manifestation, for My Self is the very source of creation.” Therefore You do not exist there in Your *svarupa*, as the *pradhana* is made of the three modes of nature. Therefore for You there are no material transformations.”

Text 15

*guṇa-pravāha etasminn,
abudhās tv akhilātmanaḥ,
gatiṁ sūkṣmām abodhena,
saṁsaranātha karmabhiḥ*

They are truly ignorant who, while imprisoned within the ceaseless flow of this world’s material qualities, fail to know You, the Supreme Soul of all that be, as their ultimate, sublime destination. Because of their ignorance, the entanglement of material work forces such souls to wander in the cycle of birth and death.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vasudeva said, “Therefore, in this flow of the three modes of material life, those who are ignorant of the subtle goal, characterized by liberation described above by You, the Supreme Soul of all, take birth repeatedly in this world impelled by their material activities.”

Text 16

*yadṛcchayā nṛtām prāpya,
su-kalpām iha durlabhām,
svārthe pramattasya vayo,
gatam tvan-māyayeśvara*

By good fortune a soul may obtain a healthy human life—an opportunity rarely achieved. But if he is nonetheless deluded about what is best for him, O Lord, Your illusory Māyā will cause him to waste his entire life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva laments for those in the human form of life, who, though having the possibility to gain such knowledge by devotion to Kṛṣṇa, do not attain it. After receiving the rare human form of life with acute senses (*sukalpām*), if a person madly pursues sense pleasure due to Your *maya*, then his life is wasted.”

Text 17

*asāv aham mamaivaite,
dehe cāsyānvayādiṣu,
sneha-pāśair nibadhnāti,
bhavān sarvam idaṁ jagat*

You keep this whole world bound up by the ropes of affection, and thus when people consider their material bodies, they think, “This is me,” and when they consider their progeny and other relations, they think, “These are mine.”

Text 18

*yuvām na naḥ sutau sākṣāt,
pradhāna-puruṣeśvarau,
bhū-bhāra-kṣatra-kṣapaṇa,
avatīrṇau tathāttha ha*

You are not our sons but the very Lords of both material nature and its creator [Mahā-Viṣṇu]. As You Yourself have told us, You have descended to rid the earth of the rulers who are a heavy burden upon her.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Vasudeva said, “My wife and I are excellent examples of those who are materially deluded, due to our egotistic and possessive attachment for our bodies, sons and families. Although You two are not our sons, still we are attached to thinking that You are our sons, despite the fact that You told us at Your birth that You have descended to remove the burden of demoniac kings from the earth.”

Text 19

*tat te gato 'smy araṇam adya padāravindam,
āpanna-saṁsṛti-bhayāpaham āṛta-bandho,
etāvātālam alam indriya-lālasena,
martyātma-dṛk tvayi pare yad apatya-buddhiḥ*

Therefore, O friend of the distressed, I now approach Your lotus feet for shelter—the same lotus feet that dispel all fear of worldly existence for those who have surrendered to them. Enough! Enough with hankering for sense enjoyment, which makes me identify with this mortal body and think of You, the Supreme, as my child.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “But,” Sri Kṛṣṇa might object, “go ahead and enjoy sense pleasures; what is the question of your being materially entangled?”

Vasudeva replied, “Now I take shelter (*araṇam*) of Your lotus feet. By so much sense gratification, I think that my body is my self, and that You, the Supreme Lord, are my child. Indeed, due to ignorance I am really entangled in material existence.”

Text 20

*sūtī-gr̥he nanu jagāda bhavān ajo nau,
sañjajña ity anu-yugam̐ nija-dharma-guptyai,
nānā-tanūr gagana-vad vidadhaj jahāsi,
ko veda bhūmna uru-gāya vibhūti-māyām*

Indeed, while still in the maternity room You told us that You, the unborn Lord, had already been born several times as our son in previous ages. After manifesting each of these transcendental bodies to protect Your own principles of religion, You then made them unmanifest, thus appearing and disappearing like a cloud. O supremely glorified, all-pervading Lord, who can understand the mystic, deluding potency of Your opulent expansions?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Since I am the Supreme Lord and I became your son, how can you be entangled in material existence?”

Vasudeva replied, “In the maternity room You told us, ‘I have appeared from both of you age after age (*anu-yugam*); as Sutapa and Prsni; Kasyapa and Aditi, and now as Vasudeva and Devaki.’ Creating all those bodies for us, You became our son, but being unattached like the sky, You gave us up. You do not stop being born. Therefore, who can understand the inconceivable powers (*vibhuti mayam*) of the Supreme Lord (*bhumnah*)?”

Text 21

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ākarnyetham pitur vākyam,
bhagavān sātvarṣabhaḥ,
pratyāha praśrayānamraḥ,
prahasan ślakṣṇayā girā*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Having heard His father’s words, the Supreme Lord, leader of the Sātvatas, replied in a gentle voice as He bowed His head in humility and smiled.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By gently bending His head and smiling Kṛṣṇa indicated that, “There will be no overlapping of devotional mellows (*rasābhāsa*) in your words directed to us two sons who worship you; I will wisely give those words another meaning.”

Text 22

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
vaco vaḥ samavetārtham,
tātaitad upamanmahe,
yan naḥ putrān samuddiśya,
tattva-grāma udāhṛtaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear father, I consider your statements appropriate, since you have explained the various categories of existence by referring to Us, your sons.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “I consider your words highly consistent, for you are pointing out your son as the highest truth just to teach others. This is in accordance with the *Chāndogya Upanisad* which says: *tat tvam asi śvetaketo* ‘You are that, O Śvetaketu.’”

Text 23

aham yūyam asāv ārya,

*ime ca dvārakāukasah,
sarve 'py evaṁ yadu-śreṣṭha,
vimrgyāḥ sa-carācaram*

Not only I, but also you, along with My respected brother and these residents of Dvārakā, should all be considered in this same philosophical light, O best of the Yadus. Indeed, we should include all that exists, both moving and nonmoving.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “One should only consider one’s son such as Me to be the Paramatma. You should see everyone as such. Everyone should be considered (*vimrgyah*) by his quality as the Paramatma.” An alternate version of this verse substitutes the word *drastavyah* for *vimrgyah*. “Having received your teachings, we should see everywhere, in persons such as Pradyumna, the Paramatma.”

Text 24

*ātmā hy ekaḥ svayaṁ-jyotir,
nityo 'nyo nirguṇo guṇaiḥ,
ātma-sṛṣṭais tat-kṛteṣu,
bhūteṣu bahudheyate*

The supreme spirit, Paramātmā, is indeed one. He is self-luminous and eternal, transcendental and devoid of material qualities. But through the agency of the very modes He has created, the one Supreme Truth manifests as many among the expansions of those modes.

Text 25

*khaṁ vāyur jyotir āpo bhūḥ,
tat-kṛteṣu yathāśayam,
āvis-tiro- 'lpa-bhūry eko,
nānātvam yāty asāv api*

The elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth become visible, invisible, minute or extensive as they manifest in various objects. Similarly, the Paramātmā, though one, appears to become many.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verses twenty-four and twenty-five can be understood as follows: Kṛṣṇa said, “The one Paramātmā appears to be many by the influence of the modes of nature that He Himself creates. How is that? Though the Soul is self-illuminating, he appears as an object of vision; though he is eternal, he appears temporary; though he is transcendent to matter, he joins with it; though he is without material qualities, he appears as covered by the modes. Just as the five elements like ether, when manifesting in forms like a pot, have a beginning and end in that limited condition, so similarly the one Paramatma assumes the statuses of manifestation and non-manifestation although He is always in the same changeless status (*eka-raso 'pi*). Similarly, although the Paramatma is all-pervading, He assumes the relative statuses of smallness and greatness, and although He is one, He becomes many.”

Text 26

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam bhagavatā rājan,
vasudeva udāhṛtaḥ,
śrutvā vinaṣṭa-nānā-dhīs,*

tūṣṇīm prīta-manā abhūt

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: O King, hearing these instructions spoken to him by the Supreme Lord, Vasudeva became freed from all ideas of duality. Satisfied at heart, he remained silent.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The phrase *vinaṣṭa-nānā-dhīs*, “His dualistic mentality destroyed” means that Vasudeva thought, “Yes, the entire universe is one Brahman. So in that way my two sons are also the Supreme Absolute Truth.” Upon realizing this Vasudeva fell silent.

Texts 27–28

*atha tatra kuru-śreṣṭha,
devakī sarva-devatā,
śrutvānītam guroḥ putram,
ātmajābhyām su-vismitā,
kṛṣṇa-rāmau samāśrāvya,
putrān kaṁsa-vihimsitān,
smarantī kṛpaṇam prāha,
vaiklavyād aśru-locanā*

At that time, O best of the Kurus, the universally worshiped Devakī took the opportunity to address her two sons, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Previously she had heard with astonishment that They had brought Their spiritual master’s son back from death. Now, thinking of her own sons who had been murdered by Kaṁsa, she felt great sorrow, and thus with tear-filled eyes she beseeched Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Text 29

*śrī-devaky uvāca,
rāma rāmāprameyātman,
kṛṣṇa yogeśvareśvara,
vedāham vām viśva-sṛjām,
īśvarāv ādi-pūruṣau*

**Śrī Devakī said: O Rāma, Rāma, immeasurable Supreme Soul!
O Kṛṣṇa, Lord of all masters of yoga! I know that You are the
ultimate rulers of all universal creators, the primeval Personalities
of Godhead.**

Text 30

*kala-vidhvasta-sattvānām,
rājñām ucchāstra-vartinām,
bhūmer bhārāyamāṇānām,
avatīrṇau kilādya me*

**Taking birth from me, You have now descended to this world in
order to kill those kings whose good qualities have been destroyed
by the present age, and who thus defy the authority of revealed
scriptures and burden the earth.**

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devaki said, “You two appeared in
my womb for killing the kings whose good qualities (*sattvānām:sattva-
guṇam*) had been destroyed by the influence of the age (*kala*).”

Text 31

*yasyāmśāṁśāṁśā-bhāgena,
viśvotpatti-layodayāḥ,
bhavanti kila viśvātmaṁs,
taṁ tvādyāham gatiṁ gatā*

O Soul of all that be, the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe are all carried out by a fraction of an expansion of an expansion of Your expansion. Today I have come to take shelter of You, the Supreme Lord.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Devaki said, “Today I take shelter of You, whose portion is the great Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, the portion of whom is the Mahā-puruṣa (Mahā-Viṣṇu), the portion of whom is the total material nature (*prakṛti*), which is divided into the three divisions of *sattva*, *raja* and *tama*.”

Texts 32–33

*cirān mṛta-sutādāne,
guruṇā kila coditau,
āninyathuḥ pitṛ-sthānād,
gurave guru-dakṣiṇām,
tathā me kurutaṁ kāmāṁ,
yuvām yogeśvareśvarau,
bhoja-rāja-hatān putrān,
kāmaye draṣṭum āhṛtān*

It is said that when Your spiritual master ordered You to retrieve his long-dead son, You brought him back from the forefathers’

abode as a token of remuneration for Your guru’s mercy. Please fulfill my desire in the same way, O supreme masters of all yoga masters. Please bring back my sons who were killed by the King of Bhoja, so that I may see them once again.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Devakī said, “As a form of *guru-dakṣiṇām* (a token of thanks for *guru*’s grace), You brought back the sons of Sandipani Muni from the abode of Yamarāja (*pitṛ-sthānāt*).”

Text 34

*ṛṣīḥ uvāca,
evaṁ sañcoditau mātrā,
rāmaḥ kṛṣṇaś ca bhārata,
sutalaṁ saṁviviśatur,
yoga-māyām upāśritau*

The sage Śukadeva said: Thus entreated by Their mother, O Bhārata, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa employed Their mystic Yogamāyā potency and entered the region of Sutala.

Text 35

*tasmin praviṣṭāv upalabhya daitya-rāḍ,
viśvātma-daivam sutarām tathātmanaḥ,
tad-darśanāhlāda-pariplutāśayaḥ,
sadyaḥ samutthāya nanāma sānvayaḥ*

When the King of the Daityas, Bali Mahārāja, noticed the arrival of

the two Lords, his heart overflowed with joy, since he knew Them to be the Supreme Soul and worshipable Deity of the entire universe, and especially of himself. He immediately stood up and then bowed down to offer respects, along with his entire entourage.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Seeing the entrance of Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, who are the Supreme Soul and also the worshipable Deity of the universe (*viśvātma-daivam*), Bali Maharaja, the king of the demons (*daitya-rāḍ*), offered respects. *Viśvātma-daivam* is in the singular form to express that Kṛṣṇa and Balarama are one in the sense of Their both being the Supreme Lord.

Text 36

*tayoḥ samānīya varāsanam mudā,
niviṣṭayos tatra mahātmanos tayoh,
dadhāra pādāv avanijya taj jalam,
sa-vṛnda ā-brahma punad yad ambu ha*

Bali took pleasure in offering Them elevated seats. After They sat down, he washed the feet of the two Supreme Personalities. Then he took that water, which purifies the whole world even up to Lord Brahmā, and poured it upon himself and his followers.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Bali poured the *caranamṛta* from Kṛṣṇa and Balarama, which purifies the whole world up to Brahmāloka, on his head and on the heads of his followers.

Text 37

samarhayām āsa sa tau vibhūtibhir,

*mahārha-vastrābharaṇānulepanaiḥ,
tāmbūla-dīpāmṛta-bhakṣaṇādibhiḥ,
sva-gotra-vittātma-samarpaṇena ca*

He worshiped Them with all the riches at his disposal—priceless clothing, ornaments, fragrant sandalwood paste, betel nut, lamps, sumptuous food and so on. Thus he offered Them all his family’s wealth, and also his own self.

Text 38

*sa indraseno bhagavat-padāmbujam,
bibhran muhuḥ prema-vibhinnayā dhiyā,
uvāca hānanda-jalākulekṣaṇaḥ,
prahr̥ṣṭa-romā nṛpa gadgadākṣaram*

Taking hold of the Lords’ lotus feet again and again, Bali, the conqueror of Indra’s army, spoke from his heart, which was melting out of his intense love. O King, as tears of ecstasy filled his eyes and the hair on his limbs stood on end, he began to speak with faltering words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bali (*indrasena*) then spoke in a choked voice.

Text 39

*balir uvāca namo ’nantāya br̥hate,
namaḥ kṛṣṇāya vedhase,*

*sāṅkhya-yoga-vitānāya,
brahmaṇe paramātmāne*

King Bali said: Obeisances to the unlimited Lord, Ananta, the greatest of all beings. And obeisances to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the creator of the universe, who appears as the impersonal Absolute and the Supersoul in order to disseminate the principles of sāṅkhya and yoga.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Obeisances to Ananta” (namo ’nantāya bṛhate) refers to the supreme Ananta, Balarama, from whom expands the divine serpent Ananta Śeṣa. Vedhase refers to Kṛṣṇa, the creator and original cause of everything. Impersonal Brahman is the source of the jñāna-śāstras, the texts of the sāṅkhya philosophers, while the Paramātmā disseminates the yoga-śāstras, the textbooks of yoga.

Text 40

*darśanaṁ vām hi bhūtānām,
duṣprāpaṁ cāpy adurlabham,
rajas-tamaḥ-svabhāvānām,
yan naḥ prāptau yadṛcchayā*

Seeing You Lords is a rare achievement for most living beings. But even persons like us, situated in the modes of passion and ignorance, can easily see You when You reveal Yourself by Your own sweet will.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bali said, “Although it is difficult for living beings in general to attain, Your *darsana* is easily obtained (*adurlabham*) even for demons situated in the modes of passion and

ignorance because of Your own sweet will.”

Texts 41–43

*daitya-dānava-gandharvāḥ,
siddha-vidyādhra-cāraṇāḥ,
yakṣa-rakṣaḥ-piśācās ca,
bhūta-pramatha-nāyakāḥ,
viśuddha-sattva-dhāmny addhā,
tvayi śāstra-śarīriṇi,
nityaṁ nibaddha-vairās te,
vayaṁ cānye ca tādrśāḥ,
kecanodbaddha-vaireṇa,
bhaktyā kecana kāmataḥ,
na tathā sattva-saṁrabdhāḥ,
sannikṛṣṭāḥ surādayaḥ*

Many who had been constantly absorbed in enmity toward You ultimately became attracted to You, who are the direct embodiment of transcendental goodness and whose divine form comprises the revealed scriptures. These reformed enemies include Daityas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Cāraṇas, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Piśācas, Bhūtas, Pramathas and Nāyakas, and also ourselves and many others like us. Some of us have become attracted to You because of exceptional hatred, while others have become attracted because of their mood of devotion based on lust. But the demigods and others infatuated by material goodness feel no such attraction for You.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “Ah, how amazing it is! Even though we have the natures of *rajas* and *tamas*, we have become more fortunate than the demigods in *sattva-guna*.” Bali expresses this in three verses.

Bali Maharaja said, “The demigods endowed with goodness (*sattva-samraddhāḥ*) have not attained such attraction to You, who are the eternal embodiment of transcendental knowledge and bliss (*viśuddha-sattva-dhāmy*), and whose body comprises the revealed scriptures about devotion (*śāstra-śarīriṇi*).” The phrase *śāstra-śarīriṇi* is in accordance with the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (6.16.33): *sātvata-śāstra-vigraham*, “who is the personified form of the holy scriptures on devotional service.” Kṛṣṇa replied, “But Bali, you are one of My greatest devotees .”

Bali: “No, we and our sons such as Bana, who are well known as descendants of Hiranyakasipu, are on the side of the Daityas, Your eternal sworn enemies. There are also other extremely envious persons such as the Danavas and Raksasas, and the Gandhavras who are Your *sakāma bhaktas*, devotees filled with material desires.” Bali’s ascribing demoniac qualities to himself is a characteristic of the most elevated devotion.

The word *sannikṛṣṭāḥ*, “attracted” implies, “By Your mercy You always give us Your *darsana* by remaining as our doorkeeper in Sutala-loka. To others You grant Your *darsana* by killing and liberating them, and to the Gandharvas You give Your *darsana* by allowing them to sing Your glories in order to please You and Your devotees. To the lusty demigods, however, You give sense gratification, which makes them forget You, and thus they fail to become attracted to You.”

Text 44

*idam ittham iti prāyas,
tava yogeśvareśvara,
na vidanty api yogeśā,
yoga-māyām kuto vayam*

What to speak of ourselves, O Lord of all perfect yogīs, even the

greatest mystics do not know what Your spiritual power of delusion is or how it acts.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Well why do I do that? It seems very astonishing that those in the modes of passion and ignorance are more attracted than those in the mode of goodness.”

Bali answers this by stating, “No one knows the truth about You. Even the masters of *yoga* (*yoga-īśāḥ*) do not understand the essential identity (*svarūpa*) of Your *yogamaya*, its attributes (*viśeṣas*) or actions, what to speak of us.”

Text 45

*tan naḥ prasāda nirapekṣa-vimṛgya-yuṣmat,
pādāravinda-dhiṣaṇānya-grhāndha-kūpāt,
niṣkrāmya viśva-śaraṇāṅghry-upalabdha-vṛttih,
śānto yathaika uta sarva-sakhaiś carāmi*

Please be merciful to me so I may get out of the blind well of family life—my false home—and find the true shelter of Your lotus feet, which selfless sages always seek. Then, either alone or in the company of great saints, who are the friends of everyone, I may wander freely, finding life’s necessities at the feet of the universally charitable trees.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In response to Bali’s prayers, Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “O my dear one, please ask for a benediction?”

Bali Maharaja replied, “May I get free from my home, which is a blind well apart from the shelter (*dhiṣaṇa*) of Your lotus feet, which are searched for even by the self-satisfied (*nirapekṣa:ātmārāmaiḥ*) sages. May I wander about, being peaceful and satisfied living (*vṛttih:jīvikā*) off the fruits obtained (*upalabdha:prāptā*) from the universally

charitable (*viśva-saraṇā:upakāra-kāḥ*) trees. And if You are more merciful, then allow me to wander along with Your devotees, who are the friends of everyone (*sarva-sakhaiś*).”

Text 46

*śādhy asmān īśitavyeśa,
niṣpāpān kuru naḥ prabho,
pumān yac chraddhayātiṣṭhamś,
codanāyā vimucyate*

O Lord of all subordinate creatures, please tell us what to do and thus free us of all sin. One who faithfully executes Your command, O master, is no longer obliged to follow the ordinary Vedic rites.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bali Maharaja said, “O Lord of all the *jīvas*, who are subject to being controlled! Now please tell me why You have appeared before me like this? O master, please give Your order.” Kṛṣṇa replied, “But what is your qualification for carrying out My order?”

Bali replied, “Please make me sinless, though I am incapable of doing so myself. I will become purified just by hearing that order. By executing Your order, one becomes freed from all the injunctions and prohibitions of the scriptures (*codanāyāḥ*). In other words, he is no longer a servant of rules and regulations.”

Text 47

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
āsan marīceḥ ṣaṭ putrā,
ūrṇāyām prathame 'ntare,*

*devāḥ kaṁ jahasur vīkṣya,
sutaṁ yabhitum udyatam*

The Supreme Lord said: During the age of the first Manu, the sage Marīci had six sons by his wife Ürnā. They were all exalted demigods, but once they laughed at Lord Brahmā when they saw him preparing to have sex with his own daughter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa states the reason for His coming in five verses (47-51). During the reign of Svāyambhuva Manu, Urna, the wife of Marici, produced six sons, who once laughed at Brahma for attempting to enjoy his daughter.

Texts 48–49

*tenāsurīm agan yonim,
adhunāvadya-karmaṇā,
hiraṇyakaśīpor jātā,
nītās te yoga-māyayā,
devakyā udare jātā,
rājan kaṁsa-vihimsitāḥ,
sā tān śocaty ātmajān svāms,
ta ime 'dhyāsate 'ntike*

Because of that improper act, they immediately entered a demoniac form of life, and thus they took birth as sons of Hiraṇyakaśipu. The goddess Yogamāyā then took them away from Hiraṇyakaśipu, and they were born again from Devakī's womb. After this, O King, Kaṁsa murdered them. Devakī still laments for them, thinking of them as her sons. These same sons of Marīci are now living here with you.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: By that improper act (*avadya-karmaṇā*) they were immediately (*ādhuna*) put in the womb of a demon (*āsurīm agan yonim*). They were taken from Hiranyakasipu and then born to Kālanemi's wife. *Hiraṇyakaśīpor jātā*, meaning "born of Hiranyakasipu" is used in this case to indicate closeness of relationship rather than as direct sons, since they were born as the sons of the wife of Kalanemi.

The purport of Sri Jiva Gosvami to *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.2.4-5) makes this clear because it refers to this verse. He gives an alternate explanation as well: being born of Hiranyapakasipu means they were born as his sons in another *kalpa*. He also mentions Kalanemi as the son of Hiranyakasipu, but the *Bhagavatam* only mentions four sons and not him. The translator has put him as the son of Hiranyaksa. The *Vaiṣṇava-abhidāna* mentions him as son of Hiranyakasipu. Other sources say that Kalanemi was the son of Virocana, the son of Prahlada, who was the grandson of Hiranyakasipu. Who is right? Yogamāyā first made them pass through one more life as children of another great demon, Kālanemi, and then she finally transferred them to the womb of Devakī. Devaki lamented for her sons, while Bali, the most glorious of Kṛṣṇa's *bhaktas* to see the Lord, pointed them out individually with His forefinger. The idea is that Bali Maharaja brought the sons there to be seen by Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Text 50

*ita etān praṇeṣyāmo,
mātr-śokāpanuttaye,
tataḥ śāpād vinirmaktā,
lokaṁ yāsyanti vijvarāḥ*

We wish to take them from this place to dispel their mother's

sorrow. Then, released from their curse and free from all suffering, they will return to their home in heaven.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Being freed from the curse of Hiranyakasipu that they would be killed by their father, and brought back by Me, they then will go to the heavenly planets (*lokam:deva-lokam*).”

Text 51

*smarodgīthaḥ pariṣvaṅgaḥ,
pataṅgaḥ kṣudrabhṛd ghrṇī,
ṣaḍ ime mat-prasādena,
punar yāsyanti sad-gatim*

By My grace these six—Smara, Udgītha, Pariṣvaṅga, Pataṅga, Kṣudrabhṛt and Ghrṇī—will return to the abode of pure saints.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa names the sons according to the names they had as sons of Marici.

Text 52

*ity uktvā tān samādāya,
indrasenena pūjitaḥ,
punar dvāravatīm etya,
mātuḥ putrān ayacchatām*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] After saying this, Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarāma, having been duly worshiped by Bali Mahārāja,

took the six sons and returned to Dvārakā, where They presented them to Their mother.

Text 53

*tān dr̥ṣṭvā bālakān devī,
putra-sneha-snuta-stanī,
pariṣvajyāṅkam āropya,
mūrdhny ajighrad abhīkṣṇasāḥ*

When she saw her lost children, Goddess Devakī felt such affection for them that milk flowed from her breasts. She embraced them and took them onto her lap, smelling their heads again and again.

Text 54

*apāyayat stanam prītā,
suta-sparśa-parisnutam,
mohitā māyayā viṣṇor;
yayā sṛṣṭiḥ pravartate*

Lovingly she let her sons drink from her breast, which became wet with milk just by their touch. She was entranced by the same illusory energy of Lord Viṣṇu that initiates the creation of the universe.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being bewildered by the *yogamaya* of Visnu (*māyayā viṣṇor*) by which the enactment of the Lord's spiritual

pastimes and associates takes place, Devaki fed them her breast milk. In other words, it was not the *maya* by which the creation of Brahma takes place.

Texts 55–56

*pītvāmṛtaṁ payas tasyāḥ,
pīta-śeṣaṁ gadā-bhṛtaḥ,
nārāyaṇāṅga-saṁsparśa,
pratilabdhātma-darśanāḥ,
te namaskṛtya govindaṁ,
devakīṁ pitaraṁ balam,
miśatām sarva-bhūtānām,
yayur dhāma divaukasām*

By drinking her nectarean milk, the remnants of what Kṛṣṇa Himself had previously drunk, the six sons touched the transcendental body of the Lord, Nārāyaṇa, and this contact awakened them to their original identities. They bowed down to Govinda, Devakī, their father and Balarāma, and then, as everyone looked on, they left for the abode of the demigods.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Devaki’s milk is described as nectar (*amṛtaṁ payas*) because it was the remnants of what had been drunk by Lord Gadā-bhṛtaḥ (Kṛṣṇa, the wielder of the club). By contacting the body of Narayana, they realized their original identity (*ātma-darśanāḥ*) as demigods, and went to the heavenly planets (*dhāma*).

In accordance with the statement, *pitroḥ sampaśyatoḥ sadyo babhūva prākṛtaḥ śiśuḥ*, “Before the eyes of Vasudeva and Devaki, Kṛṣṇa immediately transformed Himself into a small human child,” (SB 10.3.46), we can understand from the current verse, even though it is not explicitly stated, that after the Lord appeared in Mathura, mother

Devakī suckled Kṛṣṇa once so that He would not feel thirsty during the long trip to Nanda-vraja.

Text 57

*taṁ dr̥ṣṭvā devakī devī,
mṛtāgamana-nirgamam,
mene su-vismitā māyām,
kṛṣṇasya racitām nṛpa*

Seeing her sons return from death and then depart again, saintly Devakī was struck with wonder, O King. She concluded that this was all simply an illusion created by Kṛṣṇa.

Text 58

*evaṁ-vidhāny adbhutāni,
kṛṣṇasya paramātmanah,
vīryāny ananta-vīryasya,
santy anantāni bhārata*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Soul, the Lord of unlimited valor, performed countless pastimes just as amazing as this one, O descendant of Bharata.

Text 59

*śrī-sūta uvāca,
ya idam anuśṛṅnoti śrāvayed vā murāreś,
caritam amṛta-kīrter varṇitam vyāsa-putraiḥ,
jagad-agma-bhid alaṁ tad-bhakta-sat-karṇa-pūraṁ,
bhagavati kṛta-citto yāti tat-kṣema-dhāma*

Śrī Sū ta Gosvāmī said: This pastime enacted by Lord Murāri, whose fame is eternal, totally destroys the sins of the universe and serves as the transcendental ornament for His devotees' ears. Anyone who carefully hears or narrates this pastime, as recounted by the venerable son of Vyāsa, will be able to fix his mind in meditation on the Supreme Lord and attain to the all-auspicious kingdom of God.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse speaks of the wonderful nature of Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are full of nectar (*amṛta-kīrter*). Stories of Kṛṣṇa destroy the sins of universe (*jagad-agma-bhid*) and the disease of repeated birth and death. For the devotees who have already transcended material existence, they are the ornament of their ears (*karṇa-pūraṁ: karṇa-bhūṣaṇam*).

Chapter Eighty-six: Arjuna Kidnaps Subhadrā, and Kṛṣṇa Blesses His Devotees

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
brahman veditum icchāmaḥ,
svasārām rāma-kṛṣṇayoḥ,
yathopayeme vijayo,
yā mamāsīt pitāmahī*

King Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, we would like to learn how Arjuna married Lord Balarāma’s and Lord Kṛṣṇa’s sister, who was my grandmother.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Arjuna disguises himself as a *sannyasi* to gain Subhadra as his wife. Kṛṣṇa goes to Mithila in order to please two of His devotees, a king and a *brahmana*. King Parikṣit could understand from Sukadeva Gosvami’s gestures that the narration was reaching its end, so he said, “O master, although we have heard about the marriages of everyone from Baladeva to Aniruddha, we have not heard anything about Subhadra’s marriage.” Therefore he speaks this verse. “How did Arjuna (*vijayo*) marry her? I must ask you about this because Subhadra is my grandmother.”

Texts 2–3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
arjunas tīrtha-yātrāyām,*

*paryaṭann avanīm prabhuh,
gataḥ prabhāsam aśṛṇon,
mātuleyīm sa ātmanaḥ,
duryodhanāya rāmas tām,
dāsyatīti na cāpare,
tal-lipsuḥ sa yatir bhūtvā,
tri-daṇḍī dvārakām agāt*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: While traveling far and wide visiting various holy places of pilgrimage, Arjuna came to Prabhāsa. There he heard that Lord Balarāma intended to give his maternal cousin Subhadrā to Duryodhana in marriage, and that no one else approved of this plan. Arjuna wanted to marry her himself, so he disguised himself as a renunciant, complete with triple staff, and went to Dvārakā.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna heard that Balarama wanted to marry His cousin Subhadra to Duryodhana. However, Vasudeva and others did not want to give Subhadra to Duryodhana. Desiring to (*tal-lipsuḥ*) marry her, and being encouraged by his co-conspirator, his dear friend Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna dressed himself as a most worshipful *sannyasi* (*tri-daṇḍī*) to deceive Balarama.

Text 4

*tatra vai vārṣitān māsān,
avātsīt svārtha-sādhakaḥ,
pauraiḥ sabhājito 'bhīkṣṇam,
rāmeṅājānatā ca saḥ*

He stayed there during the monsoon months to fulfill his purpose.

Lord Balarāma and the other residents of the city, not recognizing him, offered him all honor and hospitality.

Text 5

*ekadā gr̥ham ānīya,
ātithyena nimantrya tam,
śraddhayopahṛtam bhaikṣyam,
balena bubhuje kila*

One day Lord Balarāma brought him to His home as His invited dinner guest, and Arjuna ate the food the Lord respectfully offered him.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: From the word *ekadā* (once) it should be understood that Arjuna in his *sannyāsī* role had just finished the four-month vow (*catur-masya*) of the rainy season and could now again accept general invitations from householders.

Text 6

*so 'paśyat tatra mahatīm,
kanyām vīra-mano-harām,
prīty-utphullekṣaṇas tasyām,
bhāva-kṣubdham mano dadhe*

There he saw the wonderful maiden Subhadrā, who was enchanting to heroes. His eyes opened wide with delight, and his mind became agitated and absorbed in thoughts of her.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: That wonderfully, attractive maiden was enchanting to heroes (*vīra-mano-harām*) like Arjuna. In some editions the phrase is written *dhīra manoharam*, which means “enchanting to a sober, self-controlled saint”.

Text 7

*sāpi taṁ cakame vīkṣya,
nārīṇām hṛdayaṁ-gamam,
hasantī vrīḍitāpaṅgī,
tan-nyasta-hṛdayekṣaṇā*

Arjuna was very attractive to women, and as soon as Subhadrā saw him, she wanted to have him as her husband. Smiling bashfully with sidelong glances, she fixed her heart and eyes upon him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upon seeing Arjuna, who was very attractive to women, Subhadra confirmed in her mind by his characteristics that Arjuna was not a *sannyasi*, and thus she fell in love with him.

Text 8

*tām param samanudhyāyann,
antaram prepsur arjunaḥ,
na lebhe śaṁ bhramac-cittaḥ,
kāmenāti-balīyasā*

Meditating only on her and waiting for the opportunity to take her

away, Arjuna had no peace. His heart trembled with passionate desire.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Waiting for the right opportunity (*antaram*) to take her away, Arjuna had no peace (*śam*).

Text 9

*mahatyām deva-yātrāyām,
ratha-sthām durga-nirgatām,
jahārānumataḥ pitroḥ,
kṛṣṇasya ca mahā-rathaḥ*

Once, on the occasion of a great temple festival in honor of the Supreme Lord, Subhadrā rode out of the fortresslike palace on a chariot, and at that time the mighty chariot warrior Arjuna took the opportunity to kidnap her. Subhadrā’s parents and Kṛṣṇa had sanctioned this.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna kidnapped Subhadra during the annual Ratha-yātrā for Lord Viṣṇu on the occasion of His rising from mystic sleep at the end of Cāturmāsya. Arjuna did this with the permission of Kṛṣṇa and Subhadra’s parents, Vasudeva and Devaki.

Text 10

*ratha-stho dhanur ādāya,
śūrāmś cārundhato bhaṭān,
vidrāvya krośatām svānām,
sva-bhāgam mṛga-rād iva*

Standing on his chariot, Arjuna took up his bow and drove off the valiant fighters and palace guards who tried to block his way. As her relatives shouted in anger, he took Subhadrā away just as a lion takes his prey from the midst of lesser animals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Ignoring Subhadra’s crying relatives, Arjuna whisked her away. The genitive case of the word *krośatām*, “they shouted in anger”, expresses the idea of contempt.

Text 11

*tac chrutvā kṣubhito rāmaḥ,
parvaṇīva mahārṇavaḥ,
grhīta-pādaḥ kṛṣṇena,
suhṛdbhiś cānusāntvitaḥ*

When He heard of Subhadrā’s kidnapping, Lord Balarāma became as disturbed as the ocean during the full moon, but Lord Kṛṣṇa respectfully took hold of His feet and, together with other family members, pacified Him by explaining the matter.

Text 12

*prāhiṇot pāribarhāṇi,
vara-vadhvor mudā balaḥ,
mahā-dhanopaskarebha-,
rathāśva-nara-yoṣitaḥ*

Lord Balarāma then happily sent the bride and groom very valuable wedding gifts consisting of elephants, chariots, horses and male and female servants.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Balarama offered many wedding gifts (*pāribarhāṇi*) as tokens of His affection.

Text 13

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
kṛṣṇasyāsīd dvija-śreṣṭhaḥ,
śrutadeva iti śrutah,
kṛṣṇaika-bhaktyā pūrṇārthaḥ,
śāntaḥ kavir alampataḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued: There was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa’s known as Śrutadeva, who was a first-class brāhmaṇa. Perfectly satisfied by rendering unalloyed devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was peaceful, learned and free from sense gratification.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thākura: Here, without being asked, Sukadeva starts narrating a special pastime of Kṛṣṇa’s, which he had witnessed and now spontaneously remembered. The word *kṛṣṇasyā* means that the *brahmana* accepted Kṛṣṇa as his master (*kṛṣṇa-svāmikaḥ*).

Text 14

*sa uvāsa videheṣu,
mithilāyām grhāśramī,
anīhayāgatāhārya-
nirvartita-nija-kriyaḥ*

Living as a religious householder in the city of Mithilā, within the kingdom of Videha, he managed to fulfill his obligations while maintaining himself with whatever sustenance easily came his way.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He lived in Mithila in the province of Videha, and maintained himself by accepting whatever food (*āhārya*: *bhojyam*) came of its own accord, while absorbed in worshiping (*nija kriyah*) Sri Kṛṣṇa.

Text 15

*yātrā-mātram tv ahar ahar,
daivād upanamaty uta,
nādhikam tāvatā tuṣṭaḥ,
kriyā cakre yathocitāḥ*

By the will of Providence he obtained each day just what he needed for his maintenance, and no more. Satisfied with this much, he properly executed his religious duties.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa, only as much as was necessary to support his body and that of his family came to him, and nothing more.

Text 16

*tathā tad-rāṣṭra-pālo 'nga,
bahulāśva iti śrutaḥ,
maithilo niraham-māna,*

ubhāv apy acyuta-priyau

Similarly free from false ego was the ruler of that kingdom, my dear Parīkṣit, a descendant of the Mithila dynasty named Bahulāśva. Both these devotees were very dear to Lord Acyuta.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There was a ruler coming in the line of King Janaka of Mithila named Bahulasva, who was not falsely proud (*niraham-mānaḥ*) over being the king.

Text 17

*tayoḥ prasanno bhagavān,
dārukeṇāhṛtaṁ ratham,
āruhya sākāṁ munibhir,
videhān prayayau prabhuh*

Pleased with both of them, the Supreme Personality of Godhead mounted His chariot, which Dāruka had brought, and traveled to Videha with a group of sages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *tayoḥ prasanno*, “satisfied with both of them” implies that both King Bahulasva and the *brahmana* Srutadeva could not come to Dvaraka to see Kṛṣṇa because they were duty bound to serve their family Deities. Therefore, Sri Kṛṣṇa personally went out of His way to visit those two eager devotees and give them His *darsana*. While leaving Dvaraka, Kṛṣṇa saw the sages walking behind Him. Understanding that they would become fatigued, Kṛṣṇa forcibly placed them on His chariot and then sped off to Mithila.

Text 18

*nārado vāmadevo 'triḥ,
kṛṣṇo rāmo 'sito 'ruṇiḥ,
aham bṛhaspatiḥ kaṇvo,
maitreyaś cyavanādayaḥ*

Among these sages were Nārada, Vāmadeva, Atri, Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa, Paraśurāma, Asita, Aruṇi, myself, Bṛhaspati, Kaṇva, Maitreya and Cyavana.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa (*kṛṣṇaḥ*), Parasurama (*rāmo*), and Sukadeva (*aham*) were among the sages.

Text 19

*tatra tatra tam āyāntam,
paurā jānapadā nṛpa,
upatasthuh sārghya-hastā,
grahaiḥ sūryam ivoditam*

In every city and town the Lord passed along the way, O King, the people came forward to worship Him with offerings of arghya water in their hands, as if to worship the risen sun surrounded by planets.

Text 20

ānarta-dhanva-kuru-jāṅgala-kaṅka-matsya,

*pāñcāla-kuntī-madhu-kekaya-kośalārṇāḥ,
anye ca tan-mukha-sarojam udāra-hāsa,
snigdhekṣaṇam nṛpa papur dr̥śibhir nr-nāryaḥ*

The men and women of Ānarta, Dhanva, Kuru-jāṅgala, Kaṅka, Matsya, Pañcāla, Kuntī, Madhu, Kekaya, Kośala, Arṇa and many other kingdoms drank with their eyes the nectarean beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s lotuslike face, which was graced with generous smiles and affectionate glances.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The residents of Anarta and other kingdoms, who were near Kṛṣṇa’s path, and even others who were far away gathered along the route to drink (*papur: āsvādayām*) with their eyes (*dr̥śibhiḥ:netraiḥ*) the sweet nectar from Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face.

Text 21

*tebhyāḥ sva-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dṛgbhyaḥ,
kṣemaṁ tri-loka-gurur artha-dṛśaṁ ca yacchan,
śṛṇvan dig-anta-dhavalam sva-yaśo ’śubha-ghnam,
gītāṁ surair nṛbhir agāc chanakair videhān*

Simply by glancing at those who came to see Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual master of the three worlds, delivered them from the blindness of materialism. As He thus endowed them with fearlessness and divine vision, He heard demigods and men singing His glories, which purify the entire universe and destroy all misfortune. Gradually, He reached Videha.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: How could they relish the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental form with their mundane vision? This

is explained in this verse. Kṛṣṇa destroyed the ignorance in their eyes (*dr̥gbhyaḥ:netrāṇi*) by His merciful glance (*sva-vīkṣaṇa:sva-kṛpāvalokaḥ*), and bestowed upon them realization of the supreme object (*artha-dr̥śam:paramārtha-vastv-anubhāvam*) and devotion (*kṣemam:bhakti-yoga*) to Himself, which is the only means of realizing His sweetness.

Kṛṣṇa Himself states this in the Uddhava-Gita: *bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ*, “I am only attainable by bhakti.” (SB 11.14.21) By the grammatical rule of compound formation known as *eka-śeṣa*, the term *sva-vīkṣaṇa-vinaṣṭa-tamisra-dr̥gbhyaḥ*, although in its primary sense inflected as a masculine noun, may be understood in this context as referring to both men and women.

Text 22

*te 'cyutam prāptam ākarṇya,
paurā jānapadā nr̥pa,
abhīyur muditās tasmai,
gr̥hītārhaṇa-pāṇayaḥ*

Hearing that Lord Acyuta had arrived, O King, the residents of the cities and villages of Videha joyfully came forth to receive Him with offerings in their hands.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They went out (*abhīyuh*) of the city to meet Kṛṣṇa.

Text 23

*dr̥ṣṭvā ta uttamaḥ-ślokaṁ,
prīty-utphulānanāśayāḥ,*

*kair dhṛtāñjalibhir nemuḥ,
śruta-pūrvāms tathā munīn*

As soon as the people saw Lord Uttamaḥśloka, their faces and hearts blossomed with affection. Joining their palms above their heads, they bowed down to the Lord and to the sages accompanying Him, whom they had previously only heard about.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They offered respect to Kṛṣṇa and the sages by placing their folded hands above their heads.

Text 24

*svānugrahāya samprāptam,
manvānau taṁ jagad-gurum,
maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca,
pādayoḥ petatuḥ prabhoḥ*

Both the King of Mithilā and Śrutadeva fell at the Lord's feet, each thinking that the spiritual master of the universe had come there just to show him mercy.

Text 25

*nyamantrayetām dāsārham,
ātithyena saha dvijaiḥ,
maithilaḥ śrutadevaś ca,
yugapat saṁhatāñjalī*

At exactly the same time, King Maithila and Śrutadeva each went forward with joined palms and invited the Lord of the Daśārhas to be his guest, along with the brāhmaṇa sages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The form of the verb *nyamantrayetām*, “invited” (*atmanepada*) is poetic license.

Text 26

*bhagavāṁs tad abhipretya,
dvayoḥ priya-cikīrṣayā,
ubhayor āviśad geham,
ubhābhyām tad-alakṣitaḥ*

Wanting to please them both, the Lord accepted both their invitations. Thus He simultaneously went to both homes, and neither could see Him entering the other’s house.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Understanding that both Srutadeva and Bahulasva wanted Him to visit their homes, Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself and all the sages in duplicate forms, and entered both houses without the other person seeing it. The king thought “Merciful Kṛṣṇa has accepted my invitation only and is coming to my house, and Srutadeva is returning home alone, deprived of the Lord’s association.” And Srutadeva thought, “Kṛṣṇa is accepting my invitation and the king is going home alone.”

The king and the brahmana thus manifested two forms, one joyful with Kṛṣṇa and one despondent without Kṛṣṇa. The neighbors of that manifestation of the king who was enjoying Kṛṣṇa’s association went to Srutadeva’s home and saw him unhappy in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the assistants of Srutadeva, who was with Kṛṣṇa, saw the

king alone in his home despondent without Kṛṣṇa.

Texts 27–29

*śrāntān apy atha tān dūrāj,
janakaḥ sva-grhāgatān,
ānīteṣv āsanāgryeṣu,
sukhāsīnān mahā-manāḥ,
pravṛddha-bhaktyā uddharṣa,
hṛdayāsrāvilekṣaṇaḥ,
natvā tad-aṅghrīn prakṣālya,
tad-āpo loka-pāvanīḥ,
sa-kuṭumbo vahan mūrdhnā,
pūjayām cakra īśvarān,
gandha-mālyāambarākāpa-
dhūpa-dīpārghya-go-vṛṣaiḥ*

When King Bahulāśva, a descendant of Janaka, saw Lord Kṛṣṇa approaching his house from a distance with the sages, who were somewhat fatigued from the journey, he immediately arranged to have seats of honor brought out for them. After they were all comfortably seated, the wise King, his heart overflowing with joy and his eyes clouded by tears, bowed down to them and washed their feet with intense devotion. Taking the wash water, which could purify the entire world, he sprinkled it on his head and the heads of his family members. Then he worshiped all those great lords by offering them fragrant sandalwood paste, flower garlands, fine clothing and ornaments, incense, lamps, arghya and cows and bulls.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bahulasva’s eyes were filled with tears (*asrāvilekṣaṇaḥ*). The word *īśvarān*, “great lords” refers not only to Kṛṣṇa but also to the exalted sages in His company who were in a sense

equal to the Lord, and thus the king worshiped them together.

Text 30

*vācā madhurayā prīṇann,
idam āhānna-tarpitān,
pādāv anka-gatau viṣṇoḥ,
saṁsprśaṅ chanakair mudā*

When they had eaten to their full satisfaction, for their further pleasure the King began to speak slowly and in a gentle voice as he held Lord Viṣṇu’s feet in his lap and happily massaged them.

Text 31

*śrī-bahulāśva uvāca,
bhavān hi sarva-bhūtānām,
ātmā sākṣī sva-dṛg vibho,
atha nas tvat-padāmbhojaṁ,
smaratām darśanaṁ gataḥ*

Śrī Bahulāśva said: O almighty Lord, You are the Soul of all created beings, their self-illuminated witness, and now You are giving Your audience to us, who constantly meditate on Your lotus feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: At this time King Bahulasva was thinking, “You are the inspiring Soul of all life and consciousness, and thus by Your mercy You have awakened devotion to You within an inert dullard like me. You are the witness of all pious and impious actions,

so I am sure that You remember whatever little devotional service I have ever done. You are self-illuminated (*sva-dṛk*), so there is no need to inform You of anything. Therefore (*atha*), I can receive Your audience only if You come by Your free will, because we cannot neglect the worship of Your Deity form in our home for even a second. We have always been thinking (*smaratam*) of You with a long-cherished secret desire to see You, and now You have come.”

Text 32

*sva-vacas tad ṛtaṁ kartum,
asmad-dṛg-gocaro bhavān,
yad ātthaikānta-bhaktān me,
nānantaḥ śrīr ajaḥ priyaḥ*

You have said, “Neither Ananta, Goddess Śrī nor unborn Brahmā is dearer to Me than My unalloyed devotee.” To prove Your own words true, You have now revealed Yourself to our eyes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: King Bahulasva said, “You have said that even Your brother Balarama (*ānantaḥ*), Your wife (*śrīr*) and Your son Brahma (*ajaḥ*) are not as dear to You as Your unalloyed devotee (*aikānta-bhaktān*). By Your coming so far away from Dvaraka with no other purpose than to show Yourself to me, my doubt as to whether I am truly your unconditional devotee is now dispelled.”

Or it can mean: “You have mercifully appeared before me because You want to make me Your pure devotee.”

Text 33

ko nu tvac-caraṇāmbhojam,

*evam-vid visrjet pumān,
niṣkiñcanānām śāntānām,
munīnām yas tvam ātma-dah*

What person who knows this truth would ever abandon Your lotus feet, when You are ready to give Your very self to peaceful sages who call nothing their own?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bahulasva said, “How can one who knows this truth (*evam-vid*) ever give up Your lotus feet?”

Text 34

*yo 'vatīrya yador vaṁśe,
nṛṇām saṁsaratām iha,
yaśo vitene tac-chāntyai,
trai-lokya-vrjināpaham*

Appearing in the Yadu dynasty, You have spread Your glories, which can remove all the sins of the three worlds, just to deliver those entrapped in the cycle of birth and death.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The King said, “Appearing in the Yadu dynasty, You spread Your fame which destroys all the sins of the three worlds, and stops (*tac-chāntyai*) the cycle of repeated birth and death of mankind.”

Text 35

namas tubhyaṁ bhagavate,

*kṛṣṇāyākuṅṭha-medhase,
nārāyaṇāya ṛṣaye,
su-śāntam tapa īyuse*

Obeisances to You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose intelligence is ever unrestricted. Obeisances to the sage Nara-Nārāyaṇa, who always undergoes austerities in perfect peace.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The King praises Kṛṣṇa to encourage the Lord to stay in his home for a few days.

The King thought, “Since contact with Kṛṣṇa can free anyone from doubts and misconceptions, the Lord’s presence in my home will strengthen my intelligence so that I cannot be pierced by the arrows of material enjoyment. In His expansion as Nara-Nārāyaṇa Āṣi, Kṛṣṇa always resides in Badarikāśrama for the good fortune of the land of Bharata, and so He should reside in my house for some days for the good fortune of Mithila. Since Kṛṣṇa’s propensity is toward peace and simplicity (*su-śāntam tapa*), He will certainly prefer my simple home to the lavish opulence of Dvārakā.”

Text 36

*dināni katicid bhūman,
grhān no nivasa dvijaiḥ,
sametaḥ pāda-rajasā,
punīhīdam nimeḥ kulam*

Please stay a few days in our house, along with these brāhmaṇas, O all-pervading one, and with the dust of Your feet sanctify this dynasty of Nimi.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The King said, “Along with (*sametah*) the sages, You should stay in my house and purify it with the dust of Your lotus feet.”

Text 37

*ity upāmanrito rājñā,
bhagavāu loka-bhāvanaḥ,
uvāsa kurvan kalyāṇam,
mithilā-nara-yoṣitām*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus invited by the King, the Supreme Lord, sustainer of the world, consented to stay for some time to bestow good fortune on the men and women of Mithilā.

Text 38

*śrutadevo 'cyutaṁ prāptam,
sva-grhāñ janako yathā,
natvā munīn su-saṁhr̥ṣṭo,
dhunvan vāso nanarta ha*

Śrutadeva received Lord Acyuta into his home with as much enthusiasm as that shown by King Bahulāśva. After bowing down to the Lord and the sages, Śrutadeva began to dance with great joy, waving his shawl.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The word *dhunvan* “waving” means

that in his ecstasy Srutadeva held his *chādar* in his hands and waved it above his head while dancing in joy over Kṛṣṇa's arrival in his home.

Text 39

*tṛṇa-pīṭha-bṛṣīṣv etān,
ānīteṣūpaveśya saḥ,
svāgatenābhinandyānghrīn,
sa-bhāryo 'vanije mudā*

After bringing mats of grass and darbha straw and seating his guests upon them, he greeted them with words of welcome. Then he and his wife washed their feet with great pleasure.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Srutadeva offered them the few *kuśa asanas* that he had. But even to provide this simple welcome he had to go next door to his neighbors and borrow extra mats.

Text 40

*tad-ambhasā mahā-bhāga,
ātmānam sa-grhānvayam,
snāpayām cakra uddharṣo,
labdha-sarva-manorathaḥ*

With the wash water, the virtuous Śrutadeva copiously sprinkled himself, his house and his family. Overjoyed, he felt that all his desires had now been fulfilled.

Text 41

*phalārhaṇośīra-sivāmṛtāmbubhir,
mṛdā surabhyā tulasī-kuśāmbuyaiḥ,
ārādhayām āsa yathopapannayā,
saparyayā sattva-vivardhanāndhasā*

He worshiped them with offerings of auspicious items easily available to him, such as fruits, uśīra root, pure, nectarean water, fragrant clay, tulasī leaves, kuśa grass and lotus flowers. Then he offered them food that increases the mode of goodness.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: He worshiped them with fruits such as *amalaki*, *arghya*, *usira* root, musk scented clay, fragrant camphor, water which was as cool and sweet as nectar, pure food (*andhasā*) which increased *sattva-guna*, and other items easily obtainable (*upapannayā*), in the sense that they had been gotten without committing violence to living creatures.

Text 42

*sa tarkayām āsa kuto mamānv abhūt,
gṛhāndha-kupe patitasya saṅgamah,
yaḥ sarva-tīrthāspada-pāda-reṇubhiḥ,
kṛṣṇena cāsyātma-niketa-bhūsuraiḥ*

He wondered: How is it that I, fallen into the blind well of family life, have been able to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa? And how have I also been allowed to meet these great brāhmaṇas, who always carry the Lord within their hearts? Indeed, the dust of their feet is the shelter of all

holy places.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Srutadeva wondered for what reason (*kuto mamānv abhūt*) he was able to meet Kṛṣṇa. In the word *ānv:anu*, “indeed” the syllable *ā* indicates his thinking process, and *nu* indicates his astonishment. “And how did I get to meet these sages, who are the special residence places of Kṛṣṇa’s personal form, and whose foot dust is the abode of all holy places?”

Text 43

*sūpaviṣṭān kṛtātithyān,
śrutadeva upasthitāḥ,
sa-bhārya-svajanāpatya,
uvācāṅghry-abhimarśanaḥ*

When his guests were seated comfortably, having each received a proper welcome, Śrutadeva approached them and sat down nearby with his wife, children and other dependents. Then, while massaging the Lord’s feet, he addressed Kṛṣṇa and the sages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sitting along with his wife, children, relatives and his advisers (*apatya:amātya*), Srutadeva massaged Kṛṣṇa’s feet.

Text 44

*śrutadeva uvāca,
nādyā no darśanaṁ prāptaḥ,
paraṁ parama-pūruṣaḥ,
yārhidāṁ śaktibhiḥ sṛṣṭvā,*

praviṣṭo hy ātma-sattayā

Śrutadeva said: It is not that we have attained the audience of the Supreme Person only today, for we have in fact been associating with Him ever since He created this universe with His energies and then entered it in His transcendental form.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “O best of the *brahmanas*, Srutadeva, how is it that I have the good fortune of meeting you today?” When Kṛṣṇa said this, Srutadeva replied with cleverly composed words: “O Supreme Lord, not only today did You get to see us. But beginning from the very time You created the universe and entered it by Your own presence, we, Your *tatastha-sakti jivas* enjoying the fruits of our *karma*, have always been seen by You. But only today do we see You.” This is an example of *uttara alankara*, the poetic ornament wherein a question is mimicked by its answer.

Text 45

*yathā śayānaḥ puruṣo,
manasaivātma-māyayā,
sṛṣṭvā lokam param svāpnam,
anuviśyāvabhāsate*

The Lord is like a sleeping person who creates a separate world in his imagination and then enters his own dream and sees himself within it.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Srutadeva said, “O Lord, You created the universe just by Your mind and entered it. I am an example of the *jivas* mentioned above. Thus it is fitting that I am seen by You.” He

speaks again using clever words.

The meaning is as follows: “Just as a sleeping person by his mind, immersed in the ignorance of a dream (*ātma-māyayā*), creates villages and cities and then enters them to see, feel and experience. Similarly, in the same way, You also perceive this world as manifest only by Your *māyā*. Thus, from the beginning of creation until now, You have always been seeing me. I, however, beginning from the creation until today have not seen even a trace of You. But today by Your mercy I have seen You.”

Text 46

*śṛṅvatām gadatām śaśvad,
arcatām tvābhivandatām,
ṅṅṅām saṁvadatām antar,
hr̥di bhāsy amalātmanām*

You reveal Yourself within the hearts of those persons of pure consciousness who constantly hear about You, chant about You, worship You, glorify You and converse with one another about You.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “But persons like you, who are engaged in hearing and singing about Me, certainly attain sight of Me.” Srutadeva responds in this verse: “You appear within those persons who talk about You among the devotees. But this is for those whose minds (*ātmanām*) are spotless (*amala*), devoid of such contaminations as envy, whereas I am full of contamination. Nevertheless, by appearing here in person You have shown the quality of Your wonderful mercy (*vicitra-kṛpā-caritram*).”

Text 47

*hṛdi-stho 'py ati-dūra-sthaḥ,
karma-vikṣipta-cetasām,
ātma-śaktibhir agrāhyo,
'py anty upeta-guṇātmanām*

But although You reside within the heart, You are very far away from those whose minds are disturbed by their entanglement in material work. Indeed, no one can grasp You by his material powers, for You reveal Yourself only in the hearts of those who have learned to appreciate Your transcendental qualities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Srutadeva continued, “Moreover, I have noticed You display other wonderful qualities. Though You reside in the hearts (*hṛdi-stho*) of both the devotees and non-devotees, You are visible to the devotees and invisible to the non-devotees.”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “How is it possible for Me to be both in their hearts and also far away?”

Srutadeva answered, “You are very far away (*ati-dūra-sthaḥ*) from those immersed in ignorance, with its covering of pride and envy. But You are very near (*anty*), and can be easily realized by those humble souls who forever think of Your qualities in their hearts (*upeta-guṇātmanām*).”

Text 48

*namo 'stu te 'dhyātma-vidām parātmāne,
anātmāne svātma-vibhakta-mṛtyave,
sa-kāraṇākāraṇa-liṅgam īyuse,
sva-māyayāsamvṛta-ruddha-drṣṭaye*

Let me offer my obeisances unto You. You are realized as the Supreme Soul by those who know the Absolute Truth, whereas in Your form of time You impose death upon the forgetful souls. You appear both in Your causeless spiritual form and in the created form of this universe, thus simultaneously uncovering the eyes of Your devotees and obstructing the vision of the nondevotees.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Elaborating on the idea already expressed, Śrutadeva offers his respects: “I offer respects to Kṛṣṇa, who the *śānta-bhaktas* (devotees in the mood of neutral admiration), meditate on as having a divine personal form (*ātmā:śrī-vigrahaḥ*), which is supreme and transcendental to *māyā*. O Kṛṣṇa, the impersonal philosophers (*jñānīs*) conceive of You as formless (*anātmā*). In Your form as time (*sva-ātma*) You appear as death to the envious demons. By appearing both in Your causeless spiritual form made of unlimited, transcendental knowledge and bliss, and in the material universal form (*sa-kāraṇam liṅgam:virāṭ-rūpa*), You simultaneously uncover the eyes of Your devotees and obstruct the vision of the nondevotees.”

Text 49

*sa tvam śādhi sva-bhr̥tyān naḥ,
kim deva karavāma he,
etad-anto nṛṇām kleśo,
yad bhavān akṣi-gocaraḥ*

O Lord, You are that Supreme Soul, and we are Your servants. How shall we serve You? My Lord, simply seeing You puts an end to all the troubles of human life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Please instruct (*śādhi:anuśikṣaya*) me.”

Text 50

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
tad-uktam ity upākarnya,
bhagavān praṇatārti-hā,
grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇim,
prahasāms tam uvāca ha*

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: After hearing Śrutadeva speak these words, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who relieves His surrendered devotees’ distress, took Śrutadeva’s hand in His own and, smiling, spoke to him as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The phrase *grhītvā pāṇinā pāṇim*, “taking his hand in His own” implies that Kṛṣṇa intended, by making Śrutadeva hear His clever words, to drown him in *sakhya-rasa*. Kṛṣṇa smiled broadly (*prahasāms*) to indicate, “Yes, you know the truth about Me, and I also know all about you. So now I will tell you something special.”

Text 51

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
brahmaṁs te ’nugrahārthāya,
samprāptān viddhy amūn munīn,
sañcaranti mayā lokān,
punantaḥ pāda-reṇubhiḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you should know

that these great sages have come here just to bless you. They travel throughout the worlds with Me, purifying them with the dust of their feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “I have heard you praise Me but not the *brahmanas* accompanying Me. Being favorable to the *brahmanas*, I will personally praise them in order to teach devotion to the *brahmanas*.” By saying this Kṛṣṇa implies, “Even though I am Your object of praise, the *brahmanas* are Mine.” By addressing Srutadeva with *brahmanas*, “O *brahmana*” Kṛṣṇa indicates that since Srutadeva himself is a *brahmana*, he need not show as much respect as He does.

Text 52

*devāḥ kṣetrāṇi tīrthāni,
darśana-sparśanārcanaiḥ,
śanaiḥ punanti kālena,
tad apy arhattamekṣayā*

One can gradually become purified by seeing, touching and worshiping temple deities, places of pilgrimage and holy rivers. But one can attain the same result immediately simply by receiving the glance of exalted sages.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: “Moreover, the *brahmanas*, who immediately purify one just by their *darsana*, are even greater than temple deities who slowly purify one.” This is confirmed in the words of the sons of King Prācīnabarhi:

teṣām vicaratām padbhyām, tīrthānām pāvanecchayā bhītasya kim na roceta, tāvakānām samāgamah

“Dear Lord, Your devotees wander all over the world to purify even the

holy places of pilgrimage. Is not such activity pleasing to those who are actually afraid of material existence?” (SB 4.30.37)

Text 53

*brāhmaṇo janmanā śreyān,
sarveṣām prāṇinām iha,
tapasā vidyayā tuṣṭyā,
kim u mat-kalayā yutaḥ*

By his very birth, a brāhmaṇa is the best of all living beings in this world, and he becomes even more exalted when he is endowed with austerity, learning and self-satisfaction, what to speak of devotion to Me.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa continued, “By birth, austerity, peace and knowledge the *brahmana* is the best of all living entities. He is even more so when he has attained direct realization of Me by intensely worshipping Me.”

Text 54

*na brāhmaṇān me dayitaṁ,
rūpam etac catur-bhujam,
sarva-veda-mayo vipraḥ,
sarva-deva-mayo hy aham*

Even My own four-armed form is no dearer to Me than a brāhmaṇa. Within himself a learned brāhmaṇa comprises all the Vedas, just as within Myself I comprise all the demigods.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The phrase *sarva-veda-mayo viprah* means that the *brāhmaṇa* sages, who are the *Vedas* personified, can reveal Kṛṣṇa who embodies all the demigods and *viṣṇu-tattva* expansions of Nārāyaṇa.

Text 55

*duṣprajñā aviditvaivam,
avajānanty asūyavaḥ,
guruṁ mām vipram ātmānam,
arcādāv ijya-drṣṭayaḥ*

Ignorant of this truth, foolish people neglect and enviously offend a learned brāhmaṇa, who, being nondifferent from Me, is their spiritual master and very self. They consider worshipable only such obvious manifestations of divinity as My Deity form.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Foolish people who are ignorant of this truth find fault (*asūyavaḥ*) with *brahmanas*, and think that deities are worshipable but not *brahmanas*.”

Text 56

*carācaram idaṁ viśvaṁ,
bhāvā ye cāsya hetavaḥ,
mad-rūpāṇīti cetasy,
ādhatte vipro mad-īkṣayā*

Because he has realized Me, a brāhmaṇa is firmly fixed in the

knowledge that everything moving and nonmoving in the universe, and also the primary elements of its creation, are all manifest forms expanded from Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse describes the qualities of the *brahmana*. Kṛṣṇa said, “Special *brahmanas* like Narada Muni, who are endowed with direct realization of Me (*mad-īkṣayā*), know that this universe and its causes (*hetavaḥ*), the primary elements (*bhāvāḥ*) such as *mahat-tattva*, are all manifest forms expanded from Me.”

Text 57

*tasmād brahma-ṛṣīn etān,
brahman mac-chraddhayārcaya,
evam ced arcito 'smy addhā,
nānyathā bhūri-bhūtibhiḥ*

Therefore you should worship these brāhmaṇa sages, O brāhmaṇa, with the same faith you have in Me. If you do so, you will worship Me directly, which you cannot do otherwise, even with offerings of vast riches.

Text 58

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sa ittham prabhunādiṣṭaḥ,
saha-kṛṣṇān dvijottamān,
ārādhyaikātma-bhāvena,
maithilāś cāpa sad-gatim*

Śrī Śuka said: So instructed by his Lord, with single-minded devotion Śrutadeva worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the topmost brāhmaṇas accompanying Him, and King Bahulāśva did the same. Thus both Śrutadeva and the King attained the ultimate transcendental destination.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Srutadeva then worshiped Kṛṣṇa and the sages with undivided attention (*aikātma-bhāvena*). Or another meaning is: he worshipped Kṛṣṇa and the sages with the understanding that they were non-different.

Text 59

*evam sva-bhaktayo rājan,
bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān,
uṣitvādiśya san-mārgam,
punar dvāratīm agāt*

O King, thus the Personality of Godhead, who is devoted to His own devotees, stayed for some time with His two great devotees Śrutadeva and Bahulāśva, teaching them the behavior of perfect saints. Then the Lord returned to Dvārakā.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa stayed with these two devotees and taught them the path of devotion (*mārgam*) practiced by the realized souls (*sat*), and then returned to Dvaraka.

Chapter Eighty-seven: Prayers by the Personified Vedas

Text 1

*śrī-parīkṣid uvāca,
brahman brahmaṇy anirdeśye,
nirguṇe guṇa-vṛttayaḥ,
katham caranti śrutayaḥ,
sākṣāt sad-asataḥ pare*

Śrī Parīkṣit said: O brāhmaṇa, how can the Vedas directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? The Vedas are limited to describing the qualities of material nature, but the Supreme is devoid of these qualities, being transcendental to all material manifestations and their causes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: All glories to Sri Govinda! In this chapter the superiority of Kṛṣṇa’s form over all others is indicated by the *Vedas* personified. Narada hears this from Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi and then explains it to his disciple, Srila Vyasadeva.

Let me offer the following invocation:

*mama ratna-vaṇig-bhāvaṃ, ratnāny aparicinvataḥ hasantu santo
jihremi, na sva-svānta-vinoda-kṛt*

“The saintly devotees may laugh at me for becoming a jewel merchant though I know nothing about precious jewels. But I feel no shame, for at least I may entertain them.”

*na me ’sti vaiduṣy api nāpi bhaktir, virakti-raktir na tathāpi laulyāt su-
durgamād eva bhavāmi veda- stuty-artha-cintāmaṇi-rāśi-gr̥dhnuḥ*

“Though I have no wisdom, devotion or detachment from material energy, I am still greedy to take the touchstone of the *Vedas*’ prayers

from the fortress in which it is being kept.”

*mām nīcatāyām aviveka-vāyuh, pravartate pātayitum balāc cet likhāmy
ataḥ svāmī-sanātana-śrī-, kṛṣṇānghri-bhā-stambha-kṛtāvalambaḥ*

“If the wind of indiscretion—my failure to acknowledge my lowly position—threatens to knock me down, then while writing this commentary I must hold on to the effulgent pillars of the feet of Śrīdhara Svāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

*praṇamya śrī-guruṁ bhūyaḥ, śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ karuṇārṇavam loka-nāthaṁ
jagac-cakṣuḥ, śrī-śukaṁ tam upāśraye*

“Repeatedly bowing down to my divine spiritual master and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of mercy, I take shelter of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the protector of the world and its universal eye.”

At the end of the preceding chapter, Śukadeva Gosvāmī told Parīkṣit Mahārāja: *evam sva-bhaktayo rājan, bhagavān bhakta-bhaktimān,
uṣitvādiśya san-mārgaṁ, punar dvāravatīm agāt*, “Thus, O King, the Personality of Godhead, who is the devotee of His own devotees, stayed for some time with His two great devotees, teaching them the behavior of perfect saints. Then He returned to Dvārakā.”

In this verse the word *san-mārgam* can be understood in at least three ways. In the first, *sat* is taken to mean “devotee of the Supreme Lord,” and thus *san-mārgam* means “the path of *bhakti-yoga*, devotional service”. In the second, with *sat* meaning “a seeker of transcendental knowledge”, *san-mārgam* means “the path of *jnana-yoga*”, which has impersonal Brahman as its object. And in the third, with *sat* referring to the transcendental sound of the *Vedas*, *san-mārgam* means “the process of following Vedic injunctions.” Both the second and the third of these interpretations of *san-mārgam* lead to Parikṣit’s question of how the *Vedas* can describe the Absolute Truth.

“Brahman cannot be defined (*anirdesyā*) because it has no class, substance, quality or action (*jati, dravya, guna, kriya*) Therefore, how can the *Vedas* indicate Brahman by direct meaning (*saksat*), rather than by indirect reference? Brahman is beyond qualities (*nirguna*); it is beyond substance (*sat*) such as earth, and beyond the action of an object, whose nature is incomplete (*asat*). It is also beyond class (*jati*),

since that inheres in substance, action and quality.”

Or the statement can mean “Brahman is beyond substance (*sat*) and everything else which is not substance (class and actions:*asat*). How can the *Vedas*, whose existence depends on class, substance and actions, or in other words the aspects of quality (*guṇa-vṛttayah*), deal with this Brahman which is devoid of class, object, quality and action?”

In philosophy, *padarthas* or real things are enumerated: substance (*dravya*) such as earth, water, fire, time and space; quality (*guṇa*) such as color, taste and smell; action of objects (*kriya*) and prototype or genus (*jati*) such as humanness, cow-ness and so on. Different philosophies will add or subtract items from this list. Impersonalists admit only one *padartha*, namely Brahman. Thus King Parīkṣit is puzzled as to how the material words of the *Vedas* can directly describe the Absolute Truth, the transcendental, Supreme Brahman.

Text 2

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
buddhīndriya-maṇḍa-prāṇān,
janānām asṛjat prabhuḥ,
mātrārthaṁ ca bhavārthaṁ ca,
ātmane 'kalpanāya ca*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The Supreme Lord manifested the material intelligence, senses, mind and vital air of the living entities so that they could indulge their desires for sense gratification, take repeated births to engage in fruitive activities, become elevated in future lives and ultimately attain liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: This is the reply: “The Lord (*prabhuḥ*) created the intelligence, mind, senses and *prana* of the *jivas* (*jananam*) for their enjoyment (*mātrārthaṁ*) of perceivable objects arising from

their *karma*, and for their causing actions leading to repeated births (*bhavārtham*). He did this so that the *jivas* would make an offering (*kalpanaya*) of their intelligence, mind, senses and *prana* to the Lord in the form of Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan (*atmane*).”

Or another meaning is: “The Lord did this in order to make the *jivas* use their mind, intelligence, senses and *pranas* to worship Him.” The word *ca* “and” is repeated three times to show the importance of all of what the Lord provides—not only the path of liberation, but also the paths of gradual elevation through religious life and appropriate sense enjoyment.

The meaning is this: “In all their endeavors the living entities depend on Kṛṣṇa’s mercy for success. Without intelligence, senses, mind and vital air, the living entities cannot achieve anything—neither elevation to heaven, purification through *jñāna* (knowledge) with its limbs of mind control (*sama*) and sense control (*dama*), perfection of the eightfold meditational *yoga* system, nor pure devotion through following the process of *bhakti-yoga* beginning with hearing and chanting the names of God.”

But, it may be questioned, “Your answer is like saying, ‘Today I ate sweet rice’ when someone asks ‘Where are you going now?’ Similarly to the question, ‘How are the *Vedas* capable of describing Brahman?’ an irrelevant answer has been given: ‘The Lord created intelligence, senses, mind and *pranas* for the *jivas*’ enjoyment and liberation.’”

In answering this objection, we say, “No that is not the case. Answers to subtle questions must often be phrased indirectly. As Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself said to Uddhava: *parokṣa-vādā ṛṣayaḥ parokṣam mama ca priyam*, ‘The Vedic seers and *mantras* deal in esoteric terms, and I also am pleased by such confidential descriptions.’ (SB 11.21.35) Therefore, it is quite appropriate that in replying to this direct question the answer has been given through hidden suggestion.”

The impersonalists cannot appreciate the direct answer, so instead Sukadeva Gosvami gives an indirect reply: “You impersonalists say that the transcendental Brahman is indescribable by words. But if Kṛṣṇa had not created the intelligence, mind and senses, then sound and the

other objects of perception would all be just as indescribable as your Brahman. Henceforward, for a person like you, who has been blind and deaf since birth, all physical sounds and forms are inconceivable, what to speak of Brahman. Just as Kṛṣṇa has given us all faculties of perception for experiencing and describing to others the sensations of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, in the same way He may mercifully give someone the ability to realize Brahman. If Kṛṣṇa chooses, He may create some extraordinary way for words to function—apart from their ordinary references to material substances, qualities, categories and actions—that may make even Brahman expressible by words. After all, Kṛṣṇa is the almighty Lord (*prabhuh*), and He can easily make the indescribable describable.”

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (8.24.38), Lord Matsya assures King Satyavrata that the Absolute Truth can be known from the words of the *Vedas*:

*madīyaṁ mahimānaṁ ca, paraṁ brahmeti śabditam vetsyasy
anugrahītaṁ me, sampraśnair vivṛtaṁ hṛdi*

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *paraṁ brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.”

Someone may ask, “But how will I know it?”

Lord Matsya replies, “You will know Brahman directly, defined by sound (*śabditam: sākṣāt sabda-nirdiṣṭī-kṛtam*) manifesting as the statements of great sages recorded in the Vedic literatures which say ‘Brahman is like this’, in answer to your question ‘What is Brahman like?’ Only by receiving My mercy (*anugrahītaṁ: prasādī-kṛtam*) is it possible to realize Brahman through the words of the *Vedas*.”

One should not interpret this verse spoken by Matsya to mean some indirect or metaphorical understanding of Brahman. Otherwise, the words “by My mercy” would be meaningless. If it were indirect understanding, then the word *śabditam* (expressed through sound) also becomes meaningless.

In the same way as Lord Matsya said, “By My grace you will directly

realize that Brahman in your heart”, similarly, by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna was also able to directly perceive the impersonal Brahman. The *Sri Hari-vamṣa* narrates the story of the kidnapping of the learned *brahmana*’s sons wherein Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna: “O best of the Bharatas! The brilliant, divine and vast Brahman which you have now seen is none other than Myself, because it is My eternal effulgence. It constitutes My everlasting spiritual energy, manifest and unmanifest. The most expert *yogis* of this world become liberated on entering it. It is the supreme goal of those practicing Sankhya, *yoga* and austerity. That supreme, transcendental Brahman has manifested all the differentiated varieties of this world. You should know it to be the total amalgamation of My power.”

Or another meaning of the answer is as follows. “O king! The *Vedas* never delineate the impersonal Brahman. Lord Brahma says *śabda na yatra puru-kāraḥ kriyārtho*, ‘Brahman is beyond sound.’ (SB 2.7.47) Thus the *Vedas* cannot touch upon the Brahman in His personal *sac-cid-ananda* form because He is transcendental to mundane terms like substance, class, quality and action. Furthermore, the *Viṣṇu Purāna* (1.9.44) says: *sattvādayo na santīṣe yatra ca prākṛtā guṇāḥ*, ‘The material modes of goodness and so on do not exist within the Supreme Lord.’ From this absence of mundane qualities, however, one can deduce that there must be transcendental qualities within Kṛṣṇa. And the *Svetasvatara Upaniṣad*’s (6.11) saying: *sākṣī cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇas ca*, ‘He is the unique, fully aware witness without material qualities’ indicates that *nirguṇa* must mean only without material qualities since being a witness is a quality. The *smṛti Bhagavad-gīta* says: *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*, ‘I am known by the *Vedas*.’ (15.15)

“It can be understood from this statement that since the Lord possesses spiritual varieties, qualities, forms and actions, which can be expressed through the function of sound, the *Vedas* can directly describe that Lord who has infinite spiritual qualities.”

The word *buddhi* in the present verse indicates the *mahat-tattva*, from which evolve the various expansions of ether such as sound which are designated here as *indriya*. *Mātrārtham* then means “for the sake of

using transcendental sound to describe Brahman”, since for that precise purpose Sri Kṛṣṇa inspired *prakṛti* to evolve ether and sound.

Therefore the second meaning is as follows: “Sri Kṛṣṇa creates the *mahat-tattva*, the senses, sense objects, elements, mind and *prana* for their functioning in relation to the soul (*atmane*) and for the welfare of the *jivas*. Thus a person can engage the spiritual (in the case of the perfected devotee) and material (in the case of the practicing devotee), intelligence, mind, senses and vital energy (*buddhi, mana, indriya, prana*) in the worship of the Lord.”

“*Mātrā*” can mean “function, division, place or ear ornament” according to the teachings. The word “*bhava*” can mean “auspiciousness, Siva or attainment.” Because speaking is not possible without the *prana*, mind and senses, they are created for the function of speaking.

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 12) says:

*sat-puṅḍarīka-nayanam, meghābham vaidyutāmbaram dvi-bhujam
mauna-mudrādhyam, vana-mālinam īśvaram*

“The Supreme Lord, appearing in His two-armed form, had divine lotus eyes, a complexion the color of a cloud, and garments that resembled lightning. He wore a garland of forest flowers, and His beauty was enhanced by His pose of meditative silence.”

In this context, the transcendental intelligence and senses of the *siddha* (perfected, devotee) can correctly perceive Kṛṣṇa’s purely spiritual beauty. It is his realizations that are echoed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī*’s comparison of Kṛṣṇa’s eyes, body and clothing to a lotus, a cloud and lightning. For the *sadhaka* (neophyte devotee), however, Sri Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual eyes, body and clothing are not actually perceivable to his intelligence and senses. Nevertheless, by reading verses such as this one from the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, the *sadhaka* thinks of the wonderful beauty of Kṛṣṇa. Concentrating his mind in this way, he gradually becomes joyful under the impression that he is meditating on the Lord, though he is not fully realized and cannot even meditate steadily on the effulgence surrounding Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental body.

But Sri Kṛṣṇa on the other hand, being moved by the waves of His boundless mercy, thinks “Oh how wonderful that My devotee is

meditating on Me.” Then when the *sadhaka*’s devotion matures Kṛṣṇa brings that beloved devotee to His feet and engages him in confidential service. Thus it is concluded that only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa can the *Vedas* convey the transcendental form and identity of the Lord.

Text 3

*saiṣā hy upaniṣad brāhmī,
pūrveśāṁ pūrva-jair dhṛtā,
śraddhayā dhārayed yas tām,
kṣemaṁ gacched akiñcanaḥ*

Those who came before even our ancient predecessors meditated upon this same confidential knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Indeed, anyone who faithfully concentrates on this knowledge will become free from material attachments and attain the final goal of life.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “These two famous verses (1, 2) in the form of a question and answer can be considered an *Upaniṣad* on the topic of Brahman (*Brahmopanisaḍ*). These verses were not created by us, but simply made their appearance, because this *Upaniṣad* was spoken previously by Nārada Muni, who himself heard it from Sanaka Kumāra.”

Text 4

*atra te varṇayiṣyāmi,
gāthāṁ nārāyaṇānvitām,
nāradasya ca saṁvādam,
ṛṣer nārāyaṇasya ca*

In this connection I will relate to you a narration concerning the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa. It is about a conversation that once occurred between Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi and Nārada Muni.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: To reinforce Parikṣit’s faith in his words, Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Concerning this subject, I will tell the history (*gāthām:itihāsam*) in the form of a dialogue which shows Narayana as supreme.”

Text 5

*ekadā nārado lokān,
paryātan bhagavat-priyaḥ,
sanātanam ṛṣim draṣṭum,
yayau nārāyaṇāśramam*

Once, while traveling among the various planets of the universe, the Lord’s beloved devotee Nārada went to visit the primeval sage Nārāyaṇa at His āśrama.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada went to see the eternally (*sanatanam*) liberated Narayana Rsi, the son of Dharma.

Text 6

*yo vai bhārata-varṣe ’smin,
kṣemāya svastaye nṛṇām,
dharma-jñāna-śamopetam,
ā-kalpād āsthitas tapah*

From the very beginning of Brahmā's day Lord Nārāyaṇa Āṣi has been undergoing austere penances in this land of Bhārata while perfectly performing religious duties and exemplifying spiritual knowledge and self-control—all for the benefit of human beings in both this world and the next.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narayana Rsi has been performing austerities from the beginning of the first day of Brahma (*akalpat*) for the welfare of men now (*kṣemāya*) and in the next life (*svastaye*).

Text 7

*tatropaviṣṭam ṛṣibhiḥ,
kalāpa-grāma-vāsibhiḥ,
parītaṁ praṇato 'pṛcchad,
idam eva kurūdvaha*

There Nārada approached Lord Nārāyaṇa Āṣi, who was sitting amidst sages of the village of Kalāpa. After bowing down to the Lord, O hero of the Kurus, Nārada asked Him the very same question you have asked me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada offered his respects to Narayana who was seated there, and asked about this topic: “O *brahmana*, how can the *śrutis* describe the indescribable Brahman?”

Text 8

tasmai hy avocad bhagavān,

*ṛṣīnām śṛṅvatām idam,
yo brahma-vādaḥ pūrveṣām,
jana-loka-nivāsinām*

As the sages listened, Lord Nārāyaṇa Āṣi related to Nārada an ancient discussion about the Absolute Truth that took place among the residents of Janaloka.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Supreme Lord, seated among sages, told Narada about how the sages on Janaloka had previously discussed this topic of the Absolute Truth.

Text 9

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
svāyambhuva brahma-satram,
jana-loke 'bhavat purā,
tatra-sthānām mānasānām,
munīnām ūrdhva-retasām*

The Personality of Godhead said: O son of self-born Brahmā, once long ago on Janaloka, wise sages who resided there performed a great sacrifice to the Absolute Truth by vibrating transcendental sounds. These sages, mental sons of Brahmā, were all perfect celibates.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, “O son of Brahma (*svayambhuva*), the qualified inhabitants of Janaloka, the mental sons of Lord Brahma, previously held a discussion on Brahman.” The word *satram* here refers to a Vedic sacrifice in which all the participants are equally qualified to serve as priests. When all

of them can speak equally well on the topic of Brahman it is called a *brahma satra*.

Text 10

*śvetadvīpaṃ gatavati,
tvayi draṣṭum tad-īśvaram,
brahma-vādaḥ su-saṁvṛtaḥ,
śrutayo yatra śerate,
tatra hāyam abhūt praśnas,
tvam mām yam anupṛcchasi*

At that time you happened to be visiting the Lord on Śvetadvīpa—that Supreme Lord in whom the Vedas lie down to rest during the period of universal annihilation. A lively discussion arose among the sages on Janaloka as to the nature of the Supreme Absolute Truth. Indeed, the same question arose then that you are asking Me now.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada asked, “Where did I go? Why I did not know about it?”

Lord Nārāyaṇa Āṣi answered, “You went to Svetadvīpa to see Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. The same question arose then that you are asking Me now.”

Text 11

*tulya-śruta-tapaḥ-śīlās,
tulya-svīyāri-madhyamāḥ,
api cakruḥ pravacanam,
ekam śuśrūṣavo 'pare*

Although these sages were all equally qualified in terms of Vedic study and austerity, and although they all saw friends, enemies and neutral parties equally, they chose one of their number to be the speaker, and the rest became eager listeners.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada said, “But since all of them were filled with knowledge, who became the speaker and who asked the questions?” In this verse, Narayana Rsi answers, “Since there was no difference in their learning, austerity and character, and although they all saw friends, enemies and neutral parties equally, they randomly chose one of their members to be the speaker and the rest asked questions.”

Texts 12–13

*śrī-sanandana uvāca,
sva-sṛṣṭam idam āpīya,
śayānaṁ saha śaktibhiḥ,
tad-ante bodhayām cakrus,
tal-liṅgaiḥ śrutayaḥ param,
yathā śayānaṁ samrājam,
vandinas tat-parākramaiḥ,
pratyūṣe 'bhetya su-ślokair,
bodhayanty anujīvinaiḥ*

Śrī Sanandana replied: After the Supreme Lord withdrew the universe He had previously created, He lay for some time as if asleep, and all His energies rested dormant within Him. When the time came for the next creation, the personified Vedas awakened Him by chanting His glories, just as the poets serving a king approach him at dawn and awaken him by reciting his heroic

deeds.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: According to the words of Sukadeva, the question that Parikṣit asked in verse one: “How can the *Vedas* directly describe the Supreme Absolute Truth, who cannot be described in words? (*brahmany anirdeśye*)” was previously asked by Narada to Narayana Rsi (verse seven), and, according to the statement of Narayana Rsi, the same question was asked first on Janaloka by Sanaka and other sages to Sananda.

Then Sananda, speaking from the *Uttara* portion of the *Brahmopanisad*, replied with the second verse of this chapter (*buddhīndriya-maṇaḥ-prāṇān*). In relation to that, in the present verse, he then recited a history in order to establish that the *śrutis* are self-proven, the original proof. After destroying the universe He Himself created (*sva-sṛṣṭam idam*), the Lord lay in *yoga-nidra* like a sleeping person. Then at the end of this period, at the time of creation, the *Vedas* woke Him up with words describing His characteristics (*tal lingaih*). Even though the *Vedas* knew that the Lord, being omniscient, does not need to be informed of His glories, they enthusiastically took this opportunity to praise Him.

Text 14

śrī-śrutaya ūcuḥ,
jaya jaya jahy ajām ajita doṣa-grbhīta-guṇām,
tvam asi yad ātmanā samavaruddha-samasta-bhagaḥ,
aga-jagad-okasām akhila-śakty-avabodhaka te,
kvacid ajayātmanā ca carato 'nucaren nigamaḥ

The śrutis said: Victory, victory to You, O unconquerable one! By Your very nature You are perfectly full in all opulences; therefore please defeat the eternal power of illusion, who assumes control over the modes of nature to create difficulties for conditioned souls.

O You who awaken all the energies of the moving and nonmoving embodied beings, sometimes the Vedas can recognize You as You sport with Your material and spiritual potencies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: The *śrutis* said, “O unconquerable Lord! May You remain in all Your glories (*jaya jaya*), and reveal all Your superexcellent qualities.” The word *jaya* is repeated out of either reverence or joy.

“How should I reveal My glories?” the Lord might ask.

Śrutis: “Be merciful to all the moving and non-moving living beings by destroying their ignorance and helping them to attain the sweetness of Your lotus feet.”

Lord Maha-visnu: “But Māyā, who imposes ignorance on the *jīvas*, is full of good qualities (*gr̥bhīta-guṇām*), so how does she prevent the *jīvas* from attaining Me?”

Śrutis: “With the three modes of nature she bewilders the conditioned souls and makes them falsely identify with their material bodies.”

Another meaning: “Moreover, *maya*’s modes of goodness, passion and ignorance produce *anarthas* (*doṣa-gr̥bhīta*) which are not favorable for attainment of Your lotus feet.” In the word “*gr̥bhīta*,” *bh* is substituted for *h* (*gr̥hīta*), as is permitted in prayers. “Only You cannot be conquered (*ajīta*) by *maya*, whereas others like Brahmā are vanquished by their own faults.”

Lord Maha-visnu: “But what proof do you have that she cannot conquer Me?”

Śrutis: “The proof lies in the fact that in Your original state (*ātmanā: svarūpa*) You have already realized the perfection of all opulences.”

Lord Maha-visnu: “But even if ignorance slackens, I am not attained without devotional service, as I Myself have stated: *bhakti-yāham ekayā gr̥hīyah*, ‘I am obtained only by unalloyed devotion.’” (SB 11.14.21)

Śrutis: “My Lord, O You who awaken all energies, after creating the intelligence and senses of the living entities You inspire them to work hard and enjoy the fruits of their labor. In addition, by Your mercy You

awaken their ability to pursue the progressive paths of knowledge, mystic *yoga* and devotional service, which enable them to advance toward You in Your aspects of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān respectively. When *jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti* mature, You empower the living beings to directly realize You in each of Your three aspects.” Maha-visnu: “What authoritative evidence do you have to support this statement?”

Śrutis: “We ourselves are the evidence. On some occasions—such as now, the time of creation—You consort with Your external, Māyā potency, whereas You are always present with Your internal energy. It is at times such as the present, when Your activity is outwardly manifest, that we, the *Vedas*, can recognize You in Your play. Therefore the statement of the *Brahma Upaniṣad* is correct in saying that You created the senses, mind and intelligence for the benefit of the *jīvas*.”

In many places the *Vedas* glorify the transcendental, personal qualities of the Supreme Lord: *nityam vijñānam ānandaṁ brahma*, “The Absolute Truth is eternal knowledge and bliss.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3.9.28) The following verse appears in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.11), the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Uttara 97), and the *Brahma Upaniṣad* (4.1):

eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ, sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ, sākṣī cetāḥ kevalo nirguṇaś ca
“The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.”

Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa’s personal qualities are further described in the following quotations from the *Upaniṣads*: *Yaḥ sarva-jñāḥ sa sarva-vid yasya jñāna-mayaṁ tapaḥ*. “He who is all-knowing, from whom the potency of all knowledge comes—He is the wisest of all” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.9); *sarvasya vaśī sarvasyeśānaḥ*: “He is the Lord and controller of everyone” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.22); and *yaḥ pṛthivyām tiṣṭhan pṛthivyā āntaro yaṁ pṛthivī na veda*: “He who resides

within the earth and pervades it, whom the earth does not know.”

(Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.3)

Lord Viṣnu’s role in creation is mentioned in many statements of the *śruti*. The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.4) states, *so ’kāmayata bahu syām*: “He desired, ‘I will become many.’” The phrase *so ’kāmayata* (He desired) here implies that the Lord’s personality is eternal, for even prior to the creation the Absolute Truth experienced desire, and desire is an attribute unique to persons.

The *Aitareya Upaniṣad* (3.11) similarly states, *sa aikṣata tat-tejo ’ṣṛjata*: “He saw and His power sent forth the creation.” Here the word *tat-tejah* refers to the Lord’s partial expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu, who glances upon Māyā and thus manifests the material creation. Or *tat-tejah* may refer to the Lord’s impersonal Brahman feature, His potency of all-pervasive, eternal existence. As described in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.40):

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḍa-koṭi,koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi-vibhūti-bhinnam tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa-bhūtam, govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is endowed with great power. The glowing effulgence of His transcendental form is the impersonal Brahman, which is absolute, complete and unlimited and which displays the varieties of countless planets, with their different opulences, in millions and millions of universes.”

madīyam mahimānam ca, param brahmeti śabdītam vetsyasy anugrahītam me, sampraśnair vivṛtam hr̥di

“You will be thoroughly advised and favored by Me, and because of your inquiries, everything about My glories, which are known as *param brahma*, will be manifest within your heart. Thus you will know everything about Me.” (SB 8.24.38)

satyam jñānam anantam yad, brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam yad dhi paśyanti munayo, guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ

“Sri 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.”(SB 10.28.15)

brahmano hi pratiṣṭāham, amṛtasyāvyayasya ca śāśvatasya ca dharmasya, sukhasyaikāntikasya ca

“And I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, which is immortal, imperishable, and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness.” (Bg. 14.27) These statements show Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa as Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan, and their relationship.

Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante yena jātāni jīvanti yat prayanty abhisam- viśanti tad brahma tad vijijñāsasva, “He from whom this cosmic manifestation has emanated, and in whom everything will merge after annihilation.” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.1) This verse shows Lord Viṣṇu’s creative aspect.

Such statements as: *akṣayyaṁ ha vai cāturmasya-yājinaḥ sukrtam bhavati*, “One who has worshiped by means of the vows of Caturmasya attains pious credits which never become depleted”, validate the process of *karma*. Such statements as *brahma-vid āpnoti param iti*, “Attaining knowledge of Brahman one attains the supreme” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.1), and *tam eva viditvāti mṛtyum eti*, “By realizing Him one transcends death” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 3.8) validate the process of *jñāna*.

śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyas, tāsāṁ mūrdhānam abhiniḥsṛtaikā, tayordhvam āyann amṛtatvam eti, viśvag anyā utkramaṇe bhavanti

“There are one hundred and one subtle nerve channels (*nāḍīs*) which emanate from the heart, by which the soul may quit the body. One of these, the *suśumṇā*, extends to the top of head. By passing up through it one transcends death. The others lead to a variety of destinations.” (*Katha Upaniṣad* II.6.16) This verse shows the process of *yoga*.

bhaktir evainam nayati, bhaktir evainam darśayati bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo, bhaktir eva bhūyasī

“*Bhakti*, devotional service, alone leads the living entity to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and enables him to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sri Kṛṣṇa is controlled by *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is best of all.” (*Māṭhara Śruti*)

sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati, “My human-like form, which is eternal and full of transcendental knowledge and blissful *rasas*,

is revealed when My devotees serve Me with devotion.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 2.79) These two verses demonstrate the process of devotional service, *bhakti*.

Text 15

*bṛhad upalabdham etad avayanty avāśeṣatayā,
yata udayāstam-ayau vikṛter mṛdī vāvikṛtāt,
ata ṛṣayo dadhus tvayi mano-vacanācaritaṁ,
katham ayathā bhavanti bhuvi datta-padāni nṛṇām*

This perceivable world is identified with the Supreme because the Supreme Brahman is the ultimate foundation of all existence, remaining unchanged as all created things are generated from it and at last dissolved into it, just as clay remains unchanged by the products made from it and again merged with it. Thus it is toward You alone that the Vedic sages direct all their thoughts, words and acts. After all, how can the footsteps of men fail to touch the earth on which they live?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Maha-Visnu said, “But you, the *śrutis*, call not only Me the Supreme Lord but you say that other demigods are the Supreme in verses like the following: *indro yāto ’vasitasya rājā*: ‘Indra is the supreme king of all moving and nonmoving beings’ (*Āg Veda* 1.32.15), and *agnir mūrdhā divaḥ*, ‘Agni is the chief of the heavens.’ These and other *mantras* point to different deities as the Absolute. It would seem, then, that the *Vedas* present a polytheistic world view.”

The *śrutis* replied, “Yes, this is true, but it is a logical necessity that there can be only one source of universal creation, called Brahman or Bṛhat, “the greatest”, which is the singular truth underlying and pervading all existence. No finite demigod like Indra or Agni can fulfill

this unique role. Lord Viṣṇu alone is the Absolute Truth. Indra and other demigods may be glorified in various ways, but they possess only those powers Lord Śrī Viṣṇu has granted them.” With this intention the *śrutis* speak this verse.

The *śrutis* said, “This entire world—including Indra, Agni, and everything else perceivable by the eyes, ears and other senses—is identical with the one Supreme Truth, the Personality of Godhead, who is called Bṛhat, ‘the greatest,’ because He is *avaśeṣa*, ‘the ultimate substance that remains.’ There is a famous analogy regarding clay (*mṛdī vā*). A mass of clay is the ingredient cause of various pots, statues and so on, but the clay itself remains in its essence unchanged. Eventually, the pots and other objects will be destroyed and return to the clay from which they came. Similarly, as the Supreme Lord, You are the total ingredient cause, yet You remain eternally untouched by the generation and dissolution of the universe.”

Lord Visnu: “Doesn’t that mean that I must be subject to transformation?”

Śrutis: “No, because you are devoid of transformation (*avikṛtāt*).

Indeed, it is certainly astonishing that You are not transformed even though You are the ingredient cause of the universe. As the great devotee Gajendra prayed: *namo namas te ’khila-kāraṇāya, niṣkāraṇāyādbhuta-kāraṇāya*, ‘Obeisances again and again to You, the source of all creation. You are the inconceivable cause of all causes, and of You there is no other cause.’ (SB 8.3.15)

“Even the substance clay remains without change while serving as an ingredient cause, and therefore You are not at all transformed while creating, maintaining and destroying the universe. The demigods have confirmed this in such statements as *srjasi pāsi harasi*, ‘You create, maintain and annihilate this cosmic manifestation by Yourself.’ We also say the same thing. Although *prakṛti*, material nature, is often considered the ingredient cause of creation, this does not contradict the truth that You are the final cause, since *prakṛti* is Your energy and is herself subject to change. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.24.19) Sri Kṛṣṇa says,

*prakṛtir yasyopādānam, ādhāraḥ puruṣaḥ paraḥ sato 'bhivyañjakaḥ
kālo, brahma tat tritayam tv aham*

‘The material universe is real, having *prakṛti* as its original ingredient and final state. Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the resting place of nature, which becomes manifest by the power of time. Thus nature, the almighty Viṣṇu and time are not different from Me, the Supreme Absolute Truth.’
“The material nature undergoes change because she is not Your internal (*svarūpa-bhūta*) energy, which like You is never subject to change. Therefore the sages have directed their minds, words and activities to serving You and meditating upon You alone, rather than to such separated transformations of nature as Indra and other empowered demigods. There is an example to illustrate this point. Just as a man’s footsteps, whether placed on mud, stone or bricks, cannot fail to touch the surface of the earth, so whatever the *Vedas* discuss within the realm of material generation, it is actually You alone, the cause of all and the supreme controller. As the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.4.1) affirms in its statements: *vācārambhanam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛttikety eva satyam*, ‘The objects of the material world exist merely as names, transformations defined by language, whereas the ingredient cause, like the clay from which pots are made, is the actual reality,’ and *sarvam khalv idam brahma*, ‘Reality is understood properly when everything is seen to be dependent on Brahman, the Absolute, for its existence.’
Thus the meaning of the verse cited above from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* beginning *vācārambhanam* is as follows: that which is initiated, a transformation or product (*vikāraḥ: kāryam*). Such a product is named by words (*vācā*) such as “pot” or so on, while it is the clay which is the cause (*satyam:kāraṇam*) and reality.

Text 16

*iti tava sūrayas try-adhipate 'khila-loka-mala,
kṣapaṇa-kathāmṛtābdhim avagāhya tapāmsi jahuh,
kim uta punaḥ sva-dhāma-vidhutāśaya-kāla-guṇāḥ,*

parama bhajanti ye padam ajasra-sukhānubhavam

Therefore, O master of the three worlds, the wise get rid of all misery by diving deep into the nectarean ocean of topics about You, which washes away all the contamination of the universe. Then what to speak of those who, having by spiritual strength rid their minds of bad habits and freed themselves from time, are able to worship Your true nature, O supreme one, finding within it uninterrupted bliss?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By citing the behavior of saintly persons (*sūrayas*) in this verse, the *śrutis* confirm their assertion that Kṛṣṇa is worshipable because He is the Supreme Lord.

The *śrutis* prayed, “O Lord of all in the upper, middle and lower worlds! Because You are the supreme, those with discernment (*surayah*) dive in the nectarean ocean of Your pastimes which destroy the contamination of *karma* even in its subtlest forms (*vāsanā-paryanta*). They abandon the troublesome austerities (*tapāmsi*) that are part of the process of *jñāna*, and transcend all the miseries of material life.” This refers to advancing devotees (*sādhakās*) practicing the rules and regulations of spiritual life.

“What to speak (*kim uta: kim punar vaktavyam*) of the perfected devotees, who by spiritual strength (*sva-dhāmnā:sva-prabhāvenaiva*) have dispelled the bad qualities of their minds, such as attachment and all the effects of time such as old age (*kāla-guṇāḥ*). O supreme one (*parama*)! By immersing themselves fully within the nectarean ocean of Your glories, these mature devotees achieve unimaginable perfection and transcend all material miseries.”

In this regard the *Āg Veda* (1.154.1) says: *viṣṇor nu kaṁ vīryāṇi pravocaṁ yaḥ pārthivāni vimame rajāmsi*, “Only he may fully enunciate the heroic deeds of Lord Viṣṇu who can count all the particles of dust in the world.” Many *śruti-mantras* glorify devotional service to the Lord, such as *eko vaśī sarva-go ye ’nubhajanti dhīrās, teṣāṁ*

sukham śāśvataṁ netareṣām: “He is the one omnipresent Lord and controller; only those wise souls who worship Him obtain eternal happiness, not anyone else.” (*Gopala-tapani Upanisad*, Purva 2.1)

Text 17

*ḍṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te ’nuvidhā,
mahad-aham-ādayo ’ṅḍam asṛjan yad-anugrahataḥ,
puruṣa-vidho ’nvayo ’tra caramo ’nna-mayādiṣu yaḥ,
sad-asataḥ param tvam atha yad eṣv avaśeṣam ṛtam*

Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by Your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the mahat-tattva and false ego, created the egg of this universe. Among the manifestations known as anna-maya and so forth, You are the ultimate one, entering within the material coverings along with the living entity and assuming the same forms as those he takes. Distinct from the gross and subtle material manifestations, You are the reality underlying them all.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This verse answers the question: “What happens to people who fail to perform the worship mentioned in the previous verse?”

The *śrutis* said, “Those devoid of devotion to You resemble dead corpses, and though alive their breathing is no better than the breathing of a blacksmith’s bellows. But if they act favorably (*anuvidha:anukula*) and become Your obedient devotees, then they can be called living (*asu-bhṛto:prāṇa-dhāriṇaḥ*).”

“But”, one may object, “the bodies and minds of materialistic nondevotees seem to display the symptoms of life.”

The *śrutis* respond, “Through the mercy gained by worshipping the

Lord, the *mahat-tattva* (consciousness), false ego, intelligence, mind and all the senses, which produce the gross and subtle bodies, create this universal body in totality and individuality. In other words, the demigods of the elements, such as consciousness and *ahankara*, worshiped the Lord and received His mercy, which empowered them to create. This is described in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (3.5.39):

*devā ūcuḥ nanāma te deva padāravindam, prapanna-
tāpopaśamātapatram yan-mūla-ketā yatayo 'ñjasoru- samsāra-
duḥkham bahir utkṣipanti*

“The demigods said, ‘O Lord, Your lotus feet are like an umbrella for the surrendered souls, protecting them from all the miseries of material existence. All the sages under that shelter throw off all material miseries. We therefore offer our respectful obeisances unto Your lotus feet.’”

Śrutis: “The elements of consciousness and false ego are seen to be engaged in worshiping You, Lord Visnu. Therefore the bodies of those whose consciousness, ears and senses are not worshiping You do not in truth possess consciousness, *ahankara* and senses. Thus they are like dead bodies.”

Lord Visnu: “Then what form of Mine should they worship?”

Śrutis: “He whose form resembles that of a man (*puruṣa*). Therefore You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are also the Supersoul in all living beings and the great form of bliss called Brahman. But in relation to the *anna-maya* gross body, *prana-maya* life air, *mano-maya* mind, *vijnana-maya* jiva and *ananda-maya* Paramatma; (described in the *Brahmānanda-vallī* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as *vasti-puccha*, *pr̥thivī-puccha*, *atharvāgirā-puccha*, *mahaḥ-puccha* and *brahma-puccha*, or the five *puruṣas*); You are the ultimate person (*puruṣa*), the *ānanda-maya brahma puccha*.”

Lord Visnu: “Why am I not all the other *puruṣas* such as the *anna-maya puruṣa* as well?”

Śrutis: “You are inherently connected with these other coverings like *anna-maya* in that You are the cause (*avaśeṣam ṛtam*), and *anna-maya* and the other *puruṣas* are effects. Thus as the cause of everything, You

are in one sense identical with the manifest products of creation, but in Your original form (*svarūpa*) as the *ānanda-maya purusa* (Supersoul) You remain distinct. Furthermore, among all these, You are the ultimate essence (*avaśeṣam*).”

“Thus Sri Kṛṣṇa is distinct and transcendental to all the gross and subtle manifestations (*sad-asataḥ param*) of *anna-maya* and so on.” Or another meaning of *sad-asataḥ param* “distinct from gross and subtle matter” is: “You are separate (*param: anyat*) and superior even to the *ānanda-maya purusa* (*sad*) as well as the lower *vijnana*, *mana*, *prana* and *anna-maya purusas* (*asataḥ*).”

The last word of all authoritative scripture (*sarvāntima-śruti*) is contained in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) *sutra: raso vai saḥ*, which proclaims Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the infinitely expanding embodiment of divine pleasure (*sarva-bṛhattamānanda*). The *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.43.17) describes Kṛṣṇa as Cupid incarnate: *strīṅām smaromūrtimān*. The *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* (Uttara 96) states: *yo 'sau jāgrat-svapna-susuptim atītya turyātīto gopālaḥ*, “The cowherd boy Gopala transcends not only the material consciousness of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, but also the fourth realm of pure, spiritual awareness.” By saying *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, “I am the basis of Brahman,” the *Bhagavad-gita* (14.27) clearly establishes that the personal form of Sri Kṛṣṇa is the most exalted entity of all.

The *śrutis* continued, “We have definitively perceived this truth (*ṛtam*).” Or *ṛtam* “reality” can mean: “Having attained our forms as *śrutis* by austerity, we have realized this.” The verb *ṛtam* means “to go,” and “to go” can

further refer to obtaining or knowing. Therefore, *ṛtam* means that which is perceived or obtained.

In this connection, the following statements of *śruti* describe the results of turning away from the Lord:

asuryā nāma te lokā, andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ tām̐s te pretyābhigacchanti, ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ

“The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.”

(Śrī Īśopaniṣad v.3)

According to the *Agni Purana* and the *Viṣṇu Dharmottara Upa-Purana*, the word *asuryā* means a person devoid of *visnu-bhakti*. This definition is stated in the *Agni Purāṇa*:

dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin, daiva āsura eva ca viṣṇu-bhakti-paro daiva, āsuras tad-viparyayah

“There are two kinds of created beings in this world, godly and demoniac. Those dedicated to the devotional service of Lord Viṣṇu are godly, and those opposed to such service are demoniac.”

The positive value of *visnu-bhakti*, devotion for Lord Viṣṇu, is expressed in the following *śruti* verses:

nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām, eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān tam pīṭha-gaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās, teṣām śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām

“Among all the eternal, conscious beings, there is one who supplies the needs of everyone else. The wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace. Others cannot.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13)

The following verses from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* establish the nature of the soul, Supersoul and Brahman:

sa vā eśa puruṣo anna-rasa-mayas tasyedam eva sirah, ayam dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ ayam uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ, ayam ātmā idaṁ pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā,

“After the *puruṣa* is ascertained to consist of the *anna-maya*, *prana-maya*, *mano-maya* and *vijñāna-maya* coverings, then the fifth manifestation, *ānanda-maya*, is elucidated.” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.2.3)

tasmād vā etasmād vijñāna-mayād anyo 'ntara ātmā ānanda-mayas tasya priyam eva siro modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ pramoda uttaraḥ pakṣa ānanda ātmā brahma-pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā

“The Lord has assumed the form of a man. This is His head. That is His right side. That is His left side. That is His torso. This is His lower portion or feet, the shelter of all. (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.1.3)

More specifically, the indwelling Supersoul of the living entity is referred to in the words: *yo vijñāne tiṣṭhan vijñānāntaro yasya vijñānam sarīram*, “Who, standing within the conscious entity, pervades him, and who assumes the conscious entity as His own body.” (*Brhad-Aranyaka Upaniṣad* 3.7.22)

By the reference given in a different *śruti*, *ātmani tiṣṭhan*, the term *vijñāna-maya* refers to the *jīvātma*. And *ānanda-maya* refers to the indwelling Supersoul of all beings, the Paramatma, who is the supreme object of worship. This is the Vaisnava conclusion.

The words *priya*, *moda*, *pramoda* and *ananda* quoted above from the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.1.3) should not be explained in terms of the happiness generated from seeing a son. Rather, it is according to the progressive degrees of the manifestation of ecstasy in the Supersoul, the exclusive embodiment of all ecstasy, that the four terms *priyam*, *modaḥ*, *pramodaḥ* and *ānanda* are given as various names of Brahman, who is the underlying basis of all ecstasy because He possesses the most extensive (*brhattama*) ecstasy of all. *Pratiṣṭhā* means “shelter” in the sense that “it is established within it” as in the statement *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*.”

After the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* makes the final Upanisadic statement “*rasah vai sah*,” establishing that *rasa* is the highest, the *Gopal-tapani Upaniṣad* declares that Kṛṣṇa, the highest form of bliss, is distinct even from the fourth level of consciousness (*atītya turyātīto gopālaḥ*), and states that His body, which is filled with *prema rasa*, is the topmost object of worship. The *ānanda-maya* Supersoul is simply one of Kṛṣṇa’s expansions as stated by Him, *viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat*: “With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe.” (Bg. 10.42)

Therefore the crest-jewels of the *śrutis* worship Sri Kṛṣṇa, as shown in the *Bṛhad-Vamana Purana*, wherein it describes how the *śrutis* attained the service of Kṛṣṇa as gopis. This will also be shown in verse twenty-three of this chapter recited by the *śrutis*: *striya urugendra bhoga bhujā daṇḍa*.

Thus the *śrutis* conclude that Kṛṣṇa is the most attractive among all the personal forms of Godhead. Understanding this, Nārada Muni will later offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa in the words *namas tasmai bhagavate*, *kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye*: “I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa,” (Text 46) even though he is standing in front of Lord Sri Narayana Rsi.

Text 18

*udaram upāsate ya ṛṣi-vartmasu kūrpa-dṛśaḥ,
parisara-paddhatiṁ hṛdayam āruṇayo daharam,
tata udagād ananta tava dhāma śiraḥ paramaṁ,
punar iha yat sametya na patanti kṛtānta-mukhe*

Among the followers of the methods set forth by great sages, those with less refined vision worship the Supreme as present in the region of the abdomen, while the Āruṇis worship Him as present in the heart, in the subtle center from which all the prāṇic channels emanate. From there, O unlimited Lord, these worshipers raise their consciousness upward to the top of the head, where they can perceive You directly. Then, passing through the top of the head toward the supreme destination, they reach that place from which they will never again fall to this world, into the mouth of death.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Verses 16 and 17 spoke of *bhakti* with the object of worship being Bhagavan for the devotees. The present verse speaks about *yoga* with Paramatma as the object of worship for the *yogis*. The *Bhagavad-gīta* (Bg. 15.14) says:

ahaṁ vaiśvānaro bhūtva, prāṇinaṁ deham āsthitaḥ prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ, pacāmy annaṁ catur-vidham

“I am the fire of digestion in the bodies of all living entities, and I join with the air of life, outgoing and incoming, to digest the four kinds of food.” The word *udaram* (abdomen) in this verse refers to the Paramatma in the form of Lord Vaisvanara situated in the stomach region, who bestows *kriya-sakti*, the energy for activity.

“Those of the *sampradaya* of sages who limit their meditation to this form of the Lord are less intelligent, *kūrpa-dṛśaḥ*, meaning literally “having eyes clouded by dust.” This is because the abdomen is grosser

than the heart. *Kūrpa* can also mean subtle or acute vision. Then the meaning would be: “Those sages worship the Lord in the abdomen with the vision of later approaching the more subtle heart region.”

“The superior *yogīs* known as *Āruṇis*, on the other hand, worship the Supersoul in His form as the indwelling companion of the *jīva* in the heart, the Lord who bestows *jnana-sakti*, the power of knowledge, and inspires one with all varieties of practical intelligence. This form of the Lord in the heart is very subtle and difficult to perceive (*daharam*). The heart is the place from which the *nadis* (numerous channels of *prāṇa*) emanate and extend outward to all parts of the body.

“O Ananta! The soul rises up toward the head, the effulgent location where You, the Paramatma, are perceived.” In other words, beginning from the *muladhara cakra* and passing through the heart, the soul rises up to the *brahma-randhra* (the topmost *cakra* at the roof of the brain). In actual fact, the *dhāma* or place of the Supersoul appears in all three of these locations. Having attained that topmost *dhāma* on the top of the head, they do not fall down again into the cycle of material existence (*kṛtānta-mukhe:samsāre*). This description is corroborated by several *śruti-mantras*: *Udaram brahmeti śārkarākṣā, upāsate hṛdayam brahmeti āruṇayo, brahmā haivaitā ita ūrdhvam, tv evodasarpāt tac-chiro śrayate*, “Those whose vision is clouded identify Brahman with the abdomen, while the *Āruṇis* worship Brahman in the heart. One who is truly Brahman-realized travels upward from the heart to take shelter of the Lord who is manifested at the top of the head.’

The *Upaniṣads* refer repeatedly to the indwelling Paramātmā. *Śrī Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.12–13) describes Him as follows: *mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ, sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ su-nirmalām imām prāptim, īśāno jyotir avyayaḥ aṅguṣṭha-mātraḥ puruṣo ’ntar-ātmā, sadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ hṛdā manīṣā manasābhikṣpto, ya etad vidur amṛtās te bhavanti*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes the Puruṣa to initiate the expansion of this cosmos. He is the perfectly pure goal that *yogīs* strive to reach, the effulgent and infallible ultimate controller. Measuring the size of a thumb, the Puruṣa is always present as the

Supersoul within the hearts of all living beings. By exercising proper intelligence, one can realize Him within the heart. Those who learn this method will gain immortality.”

*śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyas, tāsāṁ mūrdhānam abhiniṣṛtaikā
tayordhvam āyann amṛtatvam eti, viśvaṅṅ anyā utkramaṇe bhavanti*
“There are one hundred and one subtle *prāṇic* channels emanating from the heart. One of these—the *suṣumṇā*—extends to the top of the head. By passing up through this channel, one transcends death. The other channels lead in all directions, to various kinds of rebirth.” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.6.6)

Text 19

*sva-kṛta-vicitra-yoniṣu viśann iva hetutayā,
taratamataś cakāṣy anala-vat sva-kṛtānukṛtiḥ,
atha vitathāsv amūṣv avitathāṁ tava dhāma samāṁ,
viraja-dhiyo ’nuyanty abhivipanyava eka-rasam*

Apparently entering among the variegated species of living beings You have created, You inspire them to act, manifesting Yourself according to their higher and lower positions, just as fire manifests differently according to the shape of what it burns. Therefore those of spotless intelligence, who are altogether free from material attachments, realize Your undifferentiated, unchanging Self to be the permanent reality among all these impermanent life forms.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Someone may object, “If the Supersoul enters countless varieties of material bodies, then He would seem to become limited according to the body, and thus be similar to the *jīvas*. Therefore, how can He be worthy of worship?” This verse answers. The *śrutis* said, “After creating the many species of material life, You expand into Your own creation as the Supersoul in order to provide the

intelligence and inspiration every living being needs for his day-to-day existence.

“As stated in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6.2), *tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat*: ‘After creating this world, He then entered within it.’ The Lord enters the material world, however, without forming any binding connection to it; therefore, the word *viśann iva* is used to express “only seeming to enter.” *Taratamataś cakāssi* means that the Paramātmā enters the body of every living being, from the great demigod Brahmā down to the insignificant germ, and exhibits differing degrees of His potency according to each soul’s capacity for enlightenment. *Analavat sva-kṛtānukṛtiḥ*: Just as fire ignited in several objects burns according to the different forms of those objects, so the Supreme Soul, entering the bodies of all living creatures, illuminates the consciousness of each conditioned soul according to his individual capacity. Thus among these impermanent species, Your personal form, with its particular qualities (*dhama:svarūpam sa-viśeśam*), remains permanently as the supreme reality.

“Therefore those of pure intelligence (*viraja dhiyah*) know Your eternal (*avitatham*), supreme and undifferentiated (*samam*) *svarupa*. Your personal form is the unchanging (*eka-rasam*) embodiment of pure ecstatic enjoyment (*kevala-ānandā svāda-svarūpa*) residing in all the temporary bodies (*vitathāsv amūṣv*).” In other words, Sri Kṛṣṇa eternally maintains His personal form of immeasurable, unalloyed spiritual pleasure.

“Who are they who know? They are those who are completely free of material dealings, and devoid of *karmic* results in this life and the next. Because You are the source of everything, Your designations of being independent are not subject to any ranking of hierarchy. Since Your opulences never fail, You are worthy of worship.” The following *śrutis* illustrate this verse:

tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānuprāviśat, “Having created the universe, He then entered it.” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.6.1)

eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ, sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā karmādhyakṣaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ, sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca

“The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.11)

Text 20

*sva-kṛta-pureṣv amīṣv abahir-antara-samva raṇam,
tava puruṣam vadanty akhila-śakti-dhṛto 'mśa-kṛtam,
iti nṛ-gatiṁ vivicya kavayo nigamāvapanam,
bhavata upāsate 'ṅghrim abhavam bhuvi viśvasitāḥ*

The individual living entity, while inhabiting the material bodies he has created for himself by his karma, actually remains uncovered by either gross or subtle matter. This is so because, as the Vedas describe, he is part and parcel of You, the possessor of all potencies. Having determined this to be the status of the living entity, learned sages become imbued with faith and worship Your lotus feet, to which all Vedic sacrifices in this world are offered, and which are the source of liberation.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having established the Supreme Soul (Paramatma) as the proper object of all worship, this verse establishes the position of the subordinate *jīva* soul, a finite expansion of the Lord, as His worshiper. The enjoyer (*purusam*), the *jīva*, is in the singular form to express a class that exists in all bodies of men and other living beings created by their *karma*. The personified *Vedas* refer to the finite enjoyer of the material body (the *jīva* soul) as an expansion (*amsa*) of the transcendental reservoir of all potencies, the Supreme Lord. Actually the *jīva* is well known as the Lord's *tatastha-sakti*, marginal potency situated between spirit and matter, but he is not an independent

Viṣṇu expansion.

This is stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāna* (6.7.61): *viṣṇu-saktiḥ parā proktā, kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā*, “The internal potency of Lord Viṣṇu is spiritual, as verified by the *śāstras*. There is another spiritual potency, known as *kṣetra-jñā*, or the living entity.” And the *Bhagavad-gīta* (7.5) states: *prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām jīva-bhūtām*, “Beyond this inferior energy, there is another superior energy known as the living entity, *jīva-bhūtām*.” The *Śrī Nārada Pañcarātra* says:

yat taṭa-sthaṁ tu cid-rūpaṁ, sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam rañjitaṁ guṇa-rāgeṇa, sa jīva iti kathyate

“The marginal potency, who is spiritual by nature, who emanates from the self-cognizant *saṁvit* energy, and who becomes tainted by his attachment to the modes of material nature, is called the *jīva*.” Although the *jīva* is thus the Lord’s marginal potency (*tatastha-sakti*), he is sometimes referred to as an *amsa*, as stated by Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gīta* (15.7): *mamaivāṁso jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ*, “The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts.”

The *Mahāvarāha Purāṇa* explains how the soul is similar to an *amsa*: *svāṁśaś cātha vibhinnāṁśa, iti dvidhā śa iṣyate aṁśino yat tu sāmārthyam, yat-svarūpaṁ yathā sthitiḥ tad eva nāṇu-mātro ’pi, bhedaṁ svāṁśāṁśinoḥ kvacit vibhinnāṁśo ’lpa-śaktiḥ syāt, kiñcit sāmārthya-mātra-yuk*

“The Supreme Lord is known in two ways: in terms of His plenary expansions and His separated expansions. Between the plenary expansions and Their source of expansion there is never any essential difference in terms of either Their capabilities, forms or situations. The separated expansions, on the other hand, possess only minute potency, being endowed only to a small extent with the Lord’s powers.”

What is the minute *jīva* soul like? The soul is never totally covered by either the external potency of *maya* (*bahih:bahiraṅga-māyā-saktyā*) or the internal spiritual potency (*antareṇa: antaraṅga-cic-chaktyā*). Or else, the soul is he who is covered both internally and externally by the subtle and gross coverings. Thus (*iti*), considering (*vivicya:vicārya*) the

status (*nṛ-gatim*) of the *jiva* being bound up by *maya* or his marginal position, the faithful (*viśvasitāḥ*) sages living on this earth worship the desire trees of Your feet (*aṅghrim:bhavac-carāṇa-kalpa-tarum*) growing in the field of the *Vedas* to destroy the bondage of material life (*abhavam*). Faithful (*viśvasitāḥ*) means those who have full belief in Kṛṣṇa’s own words: *mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etām taranti te*, “He who surrenders to Me crosses the ocean of *maya*.” (Bg 7.14) The following statements from the *śrutis* support this verse:

dvau suparṇau bhavato brahmaṇo ’mśa-bhūtas tathetaro, bhoktā bhavati anyo hi sākṣī bhavatīti

“On the tree of the body are two birds. One is an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the witness and the other is an enjoyer.” (*Gopala-tapani Upanisad* 2.23)

mathurā-maṅḍale yas tu, jambūdvīpe sthito ’tha vā yo ’rcayet pratimām prati, sa me priyataro bhuvi

“One who worships Me in My Deity form while living in the district of Mathurā or, indeed, anywhere in Jambūdvīpa, becomes most dear to Me in this world.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, Uttara 47)

Text 21

*duravagamātma-tattva-nigamāya tavātta-tanoś,
carita-mahāmṛtābdhi-parivarta-pariśramaṇāḥ,
na parilaṣanti kecid apavargam apīśvara te,
carāṇa-saroja-haṁsa-kula-saṅga-visṛṣṭa-gṛhāḥ*

My Lord, some fortunate souls have gotten relief from the fatigue of material life by diving into the vast nectar ocean of Your pastimes, which You enact when You manifest Your personal forms to propagate the unfathomable science of the self. These rare souls, indifferent even to liberation, renounce the happiness of home and family because of their association with devotees who are like flocks

of swans enjoying at the lotus of Your feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In order to indicate the superexcellence of *bhakti-yoga*, which has as its object the Personality of Godhead (*bhagavan*), and that such devotional service is what the personified *Vedas* themselves accept as the best process, they again glorify *bhakti* in four verses (21-24).

Śrutis: “O Lord, to distribute (*nigamāya*) *ātma-tattva* (the confidential mystery of Your personal forms, qualities, pastimes and sweetness), which is difficult for the *jīvas* to understand (*duravagama*), You compassionately appear in this world to display Your pastimes which are vast oceans of nectar.”

The word *parīśramaṇāḥ* (fatigue) refers to those rare (*kecit*) devotees who, although becoming fatigued after repeatedly diving (*parivartāḥ: tarāṅga-bhrami-puñjāḥ*) into the endless waves and whirlpools in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa’s ecstatic pleasure pastimes, do not desire even the happiness of liberation (*apavargam: mokṣa-sukham*), what to speak then, of the material happiness of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* (piety, wealth, sense enjoyment). Rather, their very fatigue becomes pleasure for them, just as young materialistic persons, though incapable of tolerating hard work, consider the fatigue produced by sex indulgence to be the highest pleasure of all.

Similarly, the Lord’s pure devotees become enthused by relishing the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and feel impelled to dance, sing, kick their heels together, faint, shed tears, cry out in lamentation, and run about like madmen. Immersed in ecstasy, they are unaware of any bodily discomfort. Indeed, they think the happiness of Brahman to be like the pleasure animals derive from chewing grass.

This is also stated by Śrīdhara Swāmī:

*tvat-kathāmṛta-pāthodhau, viharanto mahā-mudaḥ kurvanti kṛtinaḥ
kecic, catur-vargam tṛṇopamam*

“Those rare, fortunate souls who blissfully play in the nectar ocean of Your pastimes consider the four great goals (*catur-vargam*) of life [piety, wealth, sense pleasures and liberation] to be no more important

than a blade of grass.”

The *śrutis* more specifically describe the cause of attaining happiness from the Lord: “By the association of saintly, swan-like (*hamsa*) Vaiṣṇavas, who forever relish the sweet nectar of serving Your lotus feet, a devotee becomes so absorbed in tasting that nectar that He loses all attraction for his wife and family (*grhāḥ*).”

There are many verses from the *Upanisads* and other *śrutis* proclaiming the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti*. The *Nṛsimha-pūrva-tāpanī Upaniṣad* says, *yaṁ sarve vedā namanti mumukṣavo brahma-vādināś ca*: “To Him all the *Vedas*, all seekers of liberation and all students of the Absolute Truth offer their obeisances.” Commenting on this *mantra*, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya admits, *muktā api līlayā vigrahaṁ kṛtvā bhagavantam bhajanti*: “Even the liberated souls have form. They worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead and enjoy pastimes with Him.” Śrīla Madhvācārya Ānandatīrtha, cites his own favorite *śruti-mantras* in this regard, such as *muktā hy etam upāsate, muktānām api bhaktir hi paramānanda-rūpiṇī*: “Even those who are liberated worship Him, and even for them devotional service is the embodiment of supreme bliss.” The *Taittirīya Brahmana* (3.12.3) says, *amṛtasya dhārā bahudhā dohamānam/ caraṇam no loka su-dhitām dadhātu*: “May the abundant streams of nectar flowing from His feet (*caraṇāmṛta*) flood the world with nectar.”

Text 22

*tvad-anupatham kulāyam idam ātma-suhṛt-priya-vac,
carati tathonmukhe tvayi hite priya ātmani ca,
na bata ramanty aho asad-upāsanayātma-hano,
yad-anuśayā bhramanty uru-bhaye ku-śarīra-bhṛtaḥ*

When this human body is used for Your devotional service, it acts as one’s self, friend and beloved. But unfortunately, although You

always show mercy to the conditioned souls and affectionately help them in every way, and although You are their true Self, people in general fail to delight in You. Instead they commit spiritual suicide by worshiping illusion. Alas, because they persistently hope for success in their devotion to the unreal, they continue to wander about this greatly fearful world, assuming various degraded bodies.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: After describing the devotees who renounce the enjoyments of hearth and home, the *śrūti*s lament for the *jīvas* who are attached to home and do not perform devotional service. This body (*kulāyam*), which is the nest of the *jīvātmā* bird, is the ideal facility (*anupatham*) for reviving one’s spiritual consciousness. The bodies’ organs—ears, tongue, eyes and hands—are quite suitable for hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa, worshiping Him, and practicing the limbs of devotional service.

One’s material body is destined to remain intact for only a short time, and so it is called *kulāyam*, subject to “dissolving into the earth” (*kauḷīyate*). This body appears as one’s self, friend and beloved. But such appearance is not found in a dead body.

“Ah! How sad it is that they do not find pleasure in humbly serving You, by whose connection the body seems to be one’s self. Nevertheless, due to Your compassionate nature You are favorably disposed toward them and always act as their benefactor. You ever remain their beloved, well-wishing friend.

“In reality, as the ever-present, indwelling Supersoul (*ātmani*), You are a greater object of affection than even the body and the soul itself, and are thus very easily served. By worshiping illusion (*asad-upāsanā*) due to the bad training received from studying and teaching false materialistic scriptures or by having too much affection for sons, wife and family they maintain material desires (*anusayaḥ: vāsanā*) that carry them into more degraded bodies (*ku-śarīra*) like jackals and animals in each successive life. Such people commit spiritual suicide, and continually rotate in the terribly fearful cycle of material existence (*uru-bhaye*).”

The *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.15) states: *ārāmam asya paśyanti*

na tam paśyati kaścana. na tam vidātha ya imā jajānānyad yuṣmākam antaram babhūva. nīhāreṇa prāvṛtā jalpyā cāsu-tṛpa uktha-śāsaś caranti: “Everyone can see the place where the Lord manifested Himself in this world for His own pleasure, but still no one sees Him. None of you know Him who generated all these living beings, and thus there is a great difference between your vision and His. Covered by the fog of illusion, you performers of Vedic rituals indulge in useless talk and live only to gratify your senses.”

The *Īsopaniṣad* (3) declares:

asuryā nāma te lokā, andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ tāmś te pretyābhigacchanti, ye ke cātma-hano janāḥ

“The killer of the soul, whoever he may be, must enter into the planets known as the worlds of the faithless, full of darkness and ignorance.”

Text 23

*nibhṛta-marun-mano- 'kṣa-dṛḍha-yoga-yujo hr̥di yan,
munaya upāsate tad arayo 'pi yayuḥ smaraṇāt,
striya uragendra-bhoga-bhuja-daṇḍa-viṣakta-dhiyo,
vayam api te samāḥ sama-dṛśo 'ṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ*

Simply by constantly thinking of Him, the enemies of the Lord attained the same Supreme Truth whom sages fixed in yoga worship by controlling their breath, mind and senses. Similarly, we śrutis, who generally see You as all-pervading, will achieve the same nectar from Your lotus feet that Your consorts are able to relish because of their loving attraction to Your mighty, serpentine arms, for You look upon us and Your consorts in the same way.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In order to speak of the supreme position of *bhakti-yoga* directed only to Kṛṣṇa, and of the superexcellence of Kṛṣṇa among all the personal forms of God, the

śrutis first denigrate *jnana-yoga* which has impersonal Brahman as its goal.

The *śrutis* said, “The sages who engage in steadfast *yoga* with fully controlled (*nibhṛtaiḥ:samyamitaiḥ*) breathing, mind and senses, meditate in their purified hearts on that same Paramātmā, the personal form of Brahman, which the demons, who appeared when Kṛṣṇa descended, attained simply by remembrance of the Lord with animosity. Ah, such is the greatness of Kṛṣṇa that even demons like Kamsa and others, though they saw Kṛṣṇa briefly with mundane vision and impure hearts obsessed with enmity, and though they were devoid of any realization of the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s body, still they quickly obtained the perfection of liberation simply by remembering Sri Kṛṣṇa’s personal form. We cannot even imagine how long it will take those meditative sages to attain that Brahman.”

Speaking for themselves, however, the personified *Vedas* here state that they wish to taste the sweet mellows of *kṛṣṇa-prema* that are relished by Kṛṣṇa’s intimate friends such as the young gopis of Vraja. The *śrutis* said, “The minds of the damsels of Vraja (*striyah*) were attracted with great love to the powerfully soft arms of Kṛṣṇa, which resemble the body of the king of snakes. They lovingly served and relished the sweet nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet (*aṅghri-saroja-sudhāḥ*) by holding them on their breasts (*hr̥di:vakṣaḥ-sthale*).”

This is described in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.31.19):

*yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṃ staneṣu, bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi
karkaṣeṣu tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kim svit, kūrpādibhir
bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyuṣām naḥ*

“O dearly beloved! Your lotus feet are so soft that we place them gently on our breasts, fearing that Your feet will be hurt. Our life rests only in You. Our minds, therefore, are filled with anxiety that Your tender feet might be wounded by pebbles as You roam about on the forest path.”

In the second half of this verse the *śrutis*, hankering in ecstatic eagerness, imagine that they have attained Kṛṣṇa’s feet in the same way (*vayam api*) as the *gopis* of Vrndavana. The *śrutis* said, “We will attain You by performing austerities to obtain forms just like (*samāḥ*) the

Vraja-gopis.”

“But”, Kṛṣṇa might question, “how will you do this?”

Śrutis: “With undivided attention (*sama-dṛśaḥ*), we will faithfully follow in the footsteps of the damsels of Vraja.”

In this verse four groups have been described. The sages and the demons mentioned in the first half attained impersonal realization of Kṛṣṇa. In the last part of the verse, the *gopis* and *śrutis* both achieved Kṛṣṇa in the mood of conjugal love. This is understood from using the word *api* (also) twice.

In the supplement to the *Bṛhad-vāmana Purāṇa*, Lord Brahmā relates a history regarding this incident:

*brahmānanda-mayo loko, vyāpī vaikuṅṭha-samjñītaḥ tal-loka-vāsī
tatra-sthaiḥ, stuto vedaiḥ parāt-paraḥ*

“The infinite world of spiritual bliss is called Vaikuṅṭha. There the Supreme Truth lives, being glorified by the personified *Vedas* who reside there too.”

*ciraṁ stutvā tatas tuṣṭaḥ, paroḁṣaṁ prāha tān girā tuṣṭo 'smi brūta bho
prājñā, varam yaṁ manasepsitam*

“Once, after the *Vedas* had elaborately praised Him, the Lord felt especially satisfied and spoke to them in a voice whose source remained invisible: ‘My dear sages, I am very satisfied with you. Please ask of Me some benediction that you secretly desire.’ ”

*śrutaya ūcuḥ yathā tal-loka-vāsīnyaḥ, kāma-tattvena gopikāḥ bhajanti
ramaṇaṁ matvā, cikīrṣājani nas tathā*

“The *śrutis* replied, ‘We have developed the desire to become like the Vraja-gopis of the mortal world who, inspired by lust, worship You in the mood of a lover.’ ”

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca durlabho durghaṭas caiva, yuṣmākaṁ sa
manorathaḥ mayānumoditaḥ samyak, satyo bhavitum arhati*

“The Lord then said, ‘This desire of yours is difficult to fulfill. Indeed, it is almost impossible. But since I am sanctioning it, your wish must inevitably come true.’ ”

*āgāmini viriñcau tu, jāte sṛṣṭy-artham udite kalpaṁ sāraśvataṁ prāpya,
vraje gopyo bhaviṣyatha*

“When the next Brahmā takes birth to faithfully execute his duties of creation, and when the day of his life called the Sārasvata-kalpa arrives, you will all appear in Vraja as gopīs.”

*pr̥thivyām bhārate kṣetre, māthure mama maṇḍale vṛndāvane
bhaviṣyāmi, preyān vo rāsa-maṇḍale*

“On the earth, in the land of Bhārata, in My own district of Mathurā, in the forest of Vṛndāvana, I will become your beloved in the circle of the *rāsa* dance.”

*jāra-dharmaṇa su-sneham, su-dṛḍham sarvato ’dhikam mayi
samprāpya sarve ’pi, kṛta-kṛtyā bhaviṣyatha*

“Thus obtaining Me as your paramour, you will all gain the most exalted and steadfast pure love for Me, and in this way you will fulfill all your ambitions.”

*brahmovāca śrutvaitac cintayantyas tā, rūpaṁ bhagavataś ciram ukta-
kālam samāsādya, gopyo bhūtvā hariṁ gatāḥ*

Lord Brahmā said: “After hearing these words, the *śrutis* meditated on the Lord’s beautiful form for a long time. When the designated time ultimately arrived, they became gopīs and obtained the association of Lord Hari.”

The following verse from the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.5.6) supports the topic of this verse: *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*, “One must see the Lord, hear about Him, think about Him, and meditate upon Him with fixed concentration.”

The idea here is that one should directly see (*draṣṭavyaḥ:sāksāt kartavyaḥ*) the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The means for achieving this are then stated: First one must hear from a bona fide *guru* and take the words of such a spiritual master into one’s heart by offering him humble service and striving in all ways to please him. One should then continuously ponder the divine message of the spiritual master with the aim of dispelling all one’s doubts and misconceptions. Then one can proceed to meditate on Sri Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet with total conviction and determination.

The *jnanis* conclude that impersonal realization (*nirviśeṣa*) of the Supreme is more complete and final than personal worship (*sa-viśeṣa*)

of the Supreme Godhead. The Vaisnavas, however, conclude that the essential meaning of the *Vedas* refers to the personal form of Godhead, who possesses wonderful spiritual variety and distinct transcendental qualities. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.23) explains this point: *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas/ tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām*, “One cannot understand the Supreme Soul by studying the *Vedas* or by hearing many scriptures or by one’s mental energy. The Lord reveals His personal form to the person who accepts the Lord as his master. That person alone attains the Lord.”

A further understanding of the verse quoted above from the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad* (4.5.6): *ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ*, is given as follows: One should realize and see (*draṣṭavyaḥ*) the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who possesses a body (*tanūm*) full of auspicious qualities. This can be achieved by hearing (*śrotavyo*) the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* from the mouth of the divine spiritual master. *Śrutis* such as the *Krama-dīpikā* state that the *mantra* and the *svarupa* of the Lord are identical: *mantra-maya-vapuṣaḥ*. The word *mantavyaḥ* refers to the process of remembering, which consists of paying careful attention to the sound and the meaning of the *mantra*. The word *nididhyāsitavyaḥ* can be understood according to the statement of the *Amara-kosa* dictionary: *nirvarṇam tu nirdhyānam darsana ālokanekṣaṇam*, the word *nirdhyānam* means “seeing” (*darsanam*). The desire to see the Deity mentioned in the *mantra* is called *nididhyāsanam*.

In other words, by regularly chanting one’s *dikṣa-mantra* as *japa* while carefully thinking about its meaning, one should cultivate the desire to see one’s worshipable Lord. By cultivating the desire to see Him, then Sri Kṛṣṇa, reality the beautiful, will manifest Himself one day before the eyes of the devotee. In regard to the personified *Vedas*’ desire to attain the Vraja-gopis’ mood of conjugal desire, Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Uttara 4):

apūtaḥ pūto bhavati yaṁ mām smṛtvā, avratī vratī bhavati yaṁ mām smṛtvā niṣkāmaḥ sa-kāmo bhavati yaṁ mām smṛtvā, aśrotrī śrotrī bhavati yaṁ mām smṛtvā

“By remembering Me, one who is impure becomes pure. By remembering Me, one who follows no vows becomes a strict follower of vows. By remembering Me, one who is desireless develops desires to serve Me. By remembering Me, one who has studied no Vedic mantras becomes an expert knower of the *Vedas*.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (12) also states: *vraja-strī-jana-sambhūtaḥ śrutibhyo brahma-saṅgataḥ*, “The *śrutis* took birth among the women of Vraja.” Or it means that Sri Kṛṣṇa achieved the association of all the divisions (*brahma-saṅgataḥ:prāpta-vedāṅga-saṅgo ‘bhūt*) of the *Vedas* by meeting the *śrutis* when they appeared in Vṛndavana as *gopis*.

Text 24

*ka iha nu veda batāvara-janma-layo 'gra-saram,
yata udagād ṛṣir yam anu deva-gaṇā ubhaye,
tarhi na san na cāsad ubhayaṁ na ca kāla-javaḥ,
kim api na tatra śāstram avakṛṣya śayīta yadā*

Everyone in this world has recently been born and will soon die. So how can anyone here know Him who existed prior to everything else and who gave rise to the first learned sage, Brahmā, and all subsequent demigods, both lesser and greater? When He lies down and withdraws everything within Himself, nothing else remains—no gross or subtle matter or bodies composed of these, no force of time or revealed scripture.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Here the *śrutis* express that devotional service, *bhakti-yoga*, as described in these prayers of the personified *Vedas*, is the surest and easiest path to knowledge of the Lord and to liberation. On the other hand, the path of *jñāna-yoga*, the philosophic search for knowledge, is very difficult to traverse.

The *śrutis* said, “O Lord! The men in this world are relatively recent productions, so how can they completely know You, who existed before all? Besides, from You first appeared the *Veda*, which is the source of whatever little knowledge can be had of You. According to the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, even the *Vedas* are searching after You, “*veda-guhyāni hṛt-pateḥ*, “The Lord of the heart (Paramatma) hides Himself deep within the confidential recesses of the Vedic sound.” (SB 1.3.35) Following the *Veda*, the presiding demigods of the senses like the demigods of the directions, wind and sun, and the planetary rulers like Lord Brahma appeared from You. Certainly those who have appeared even more recently than them cannot easily know You.

“At the time of dissolution when You withdraw everything and lie down, then there is no means for the *jīvas*, who also lie down within You, to acquire knowledge, since at that time neither the gross elements like ether nor the subtle elements like the *mahat-tattva* are manifest. Nor is there the material body or the movements and effects of time. Therefore, at that time there is nothing; no senses, life airs, and no revealed scriptures to give knowledge.”

The intended idea is as follows: “As long as the creation lasts, living beings face many obstacles created by the coverings of material bodies. Even though they have divine scriptures to guide them and the opportunity to execute various methods of *sadhana*, the conditioned souls have but little power for gaining knowledge of You. When the time of annihilation comes, even though there are no more obstructions, the Vedic scriptures and their regulative injunctions become unmanifest, leaving the dormant *jīvas* completely in ignorance of You. Therefore we should abandon our quest for knowledge of You and simply engage in Your devotional service.”

The *śrutis* speak on the same subject:

ko 'ddhā veda ka iha pravocat, kuta āyātāḥ kuta iyaṁ viśṛṣṭiḥ arvāg devā visarjanenā- thā ko veda yata ā babhūva

“Who in this world actually knows, and who can explain whence this creation has come? The demigods, after all, are younger than the creation. Who, then, can tell whence this world has come into being?”

(Āg Veda 3.54.5)

Text 25

*janim asataḥ sato mṛtim utātmani ye ca bhidām,
vipaṇam ṛtam smaranty upadiśanti ta ārupitaiḥ,
tri-guṇa-mayaḥ pumān iti bhidā yad abodha-kṛtā,
tvayi na tataḥ paratra sa bhaved avabodha-rase*

Supposed authorities who declare that matter is the origin of existence, that the permanent qualities of the soul can be destroyed, that the self is compounded of separate aspects of spirit and matter, or that material transactions constitute reality—all such authorities base their teachings on mistaken ideas that hide the truth. The dualistic conception that the living entity is produced from the three modes of nature is simply a product of ignorance. Such a conception has no real basis in You, for You are transcendental to all illusion and always enjoy perfect, total awareness.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The followers of Vaiśeṣika, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Yoga and Mīmāṃsā philosophies all have their own incorrect ideas, which the personified *Vedas* point out in this prayer. The *śrutis* said, “Not only is the truth about You, the Personality of Godhead, difficult to understand, but because there is no unity of opinion among the learned, true knowledge about the supreme goal of life is also virtually impossible to acquire for the *jiva* souls. “Patañjali Āṣi’s *yoga* philosophy teaches one how to achieve Brahman liberation by a mechanical process (*janim asataḥ*) of exercise and meditation. The logicians (Naiyāyikas) following Gautama Rsi speak of liberation as the destruction of the soul’s innate consciousness (*sato mṛtim*), with its twenty-one different causes of suffering: the six senses, the six sense objects, the six whirlpools (heat, cold, hunger, thirst, greed

and illusion), happiness, distress and the body. Sankhya philosophers say that the soul's status of being free from qualities is his liberation. In truth, the soul is both conscious and active, but the Sāṅkhyites wrongly separate these two functions of the living force (*ātmani ye ca bhidām*), ascribing consciousness to the soul (*puruṣa*) and activity to material nature (*prakṛti*). The Mīmāṃsakas (proponents of Karma-mīmāṃsā) of Jaimini Āṣi say (*smaranti:vadanti*) that material work (*karma*) and its results are the only reality (*rtam*). The cycle of *karma* is perpetual, and the best one can aim for is higher birth among the demigods.

All these philosophies teach by attribution, not by seeing the truth. If the living entity were in fact composed of the three modes of nature, then all these erroneous philosophies would be valid, but this is not the fact. Rather, the living entity is in truth devoid of material qualities. With this implication in mind the *śrutis* conclude this verse by saying, “The dualistic idea that the living entity is composed of the three material modes is a creation of Your ignorance potency (*avidya-sakti:abodha-kṛtā*) and thus is not a fact. Furthermore, that duality affects only the *jīvātmā* and not You, the Paramatma.

“The covering of ignorance of the *jīva* does not take place in You (*tvayi na tataḥ*) because You are completely transcendental (*paratra*). Ignorance is a function of *maya* and *maya* is under Your control. You are exclusively imbued with total consciousness (*avabodha-rase:sampūrṇa-cid-eka-rase*). Darkness cannot cover the unlimited light of the sun, but it can cover objects like gold or silver which have small portions of light. Similarly, ignorance cannot cover the Supersoul but it can cover the individual spirit soul. Thus the fallacious conclusions of these speculative philosophers prove that even great scholars and sages are often bewildered by ignorance.”

As the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.5) says,

avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ, svayam dhīrāḥ paṇḍitam-manyamānāḥ jaṅghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā, andhenaiva nīyamānā yathāndhāḥ

“Caught in the grip of ignorance, self-proclaimed experts consider themselves learned authorities. Befooled, they wander about this world engaging in arguments and counter-arguments, like the blind leading the

blind.”

Text 26

*sad iva manas tri-vṛt tvayi vibhāty asad ā-manujāt,
sad abhimṛśanty aśeṣam idam ātmatayātma-vidaḥ,
na hi vikṛtīm tyajanti kanakasya tad-ātmatayā,
sva-kṛtam anupraviṣṭam idam ātmatayāvasitam*

The three modes of material nature comprise everything in this world—from the simplest phenomena to the complex human body. Although these phenomena appear real, they are only a false reflection of the spiritual reality, being a superimposition of the mind upon You. Still, those who know the Supreme Self consider the entire material creation to be real inasmuch as it is nondifferent from the Self. Just as things made of gold are indeed not to be rejected, since their substance is actual gold, so this world is undoubtedly nondifferent from the Lord who created it and then entered within it.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A Māyāvādī philosopher would take the words spoken by the personified *Vedas* in the preceding prayer—*tri-guṇa-mayaḥ pumān iti bhidā*—as negating any distinction between the Paramātmā and the *jīva* soul. He would claim that since the *jīva*’s material embodiment is a temporary display of the three modes of nature, when the *jīva*’s ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, he becomes the Paramātmā, the Supreme Soul. Bondage, liberation and the manifest world are all unreal creations of ignorance. In response to such ideas, the *śrutis* speak this verse to clarify the factual relationship between *sat* and *asad*.

The whole universe comprised of the three modes and including the living entity seems to be real, but actually it is not because it is simply

an imagined production of the mind. The *śrutis* say, *asato 'dhimano śrjyata, manaḥ prajāpatim asṛjat, prajāpatiḥ prajā asṛjat, tad vā idam manasy eva paramaṁ pratiṣṭhitam yad idam kim ca*: “The supreme mind was originally created from *asat*. This mind created Prajāpati, and Prajāpati created all living beings. Thus mind alone is the ultimate foundation of everything that exists in this world.”

“This statement is in accordance with the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1), *asad vā idam agra āsīt*: ‘In the beginning of this creation, only *asat* was present.’ By the agency of Brahman (*asato*), as the active cause, there evolved ignorance, which manifested in the form of the mind (*manaḥ*). That total mind of the creation then manifested Prajāpati Brahma, who identifies with it as his body, since the economy of creation is such that no material body is created until some living entity wants to inhabit it. Therefore this world is created by the mind.”

“But the learned knowers of the self say the world is real. How can you say it is unreal?”

“They understand it to be real in the sense that it is the product of the real; in other words, it is nondifferent from it. Indeed, when a particular created object has a particular ingredient cause, it appears in the very form of that cause, and in that way can be utilized in a practical way.” They illustrate this with a common example in the third line: “When gold transforms into an earring, it is not rejected by those wanting gold, because the earring is in essence gold.” True *jñānīs* see in this mundane example an analogy to the different-yet-nondifferent relationship of the Supreme Lord and His emanations, both material and spiritual. Thus this transcendental knowledge frees them from the bondage of illusion, for they can then see Sri Kṛṣṇa throughout His creation.

Text 27

*tava pari ye caranty akhila-sattva-niketatayā,
ta uta padākramanty avigaṇayya śiro nirṛteḥ,
parivayase paśūn iva girā vibudhān api tāms,*

tvayi kṛta-sauhrdāḥ khalu punanti na ye vimukhāḥ

The devotees who worship You as the shelter of all beings disregard Death and place their feet on his head. But with the words of the Vedas You bind the nondevotees like animals, though they be vastly learned scholars. It is Your affectionate devotees who can purify themselves and others, not those who are inimical to You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In the previous two verses regarding the supreme goal of life, the personified *Vedas* presented five different schools of erroneous philosophies: the *asad-utpatti-vāda*, proponents of Patanjali's *yoga* system, who say one can attain Brahman by material exercises; the *sad-vināśa-vāda* of the Naiyāyikas, who advocate destruction of the *jiva*'s consciousness; the *saguṇatva-bheda-vāda* of the Sāṅkhyas, who say liberation is achieved when the soul is separated from all his apparent qualities; the *vipaṇa-vāda* of the Mīmāṃsakas, who condemn the soul to eternal involvement in the mundane business of *karma*; and the *vivarta-vāda* of the Māyāvādīs, who claim the soul's real life in this world is an illusion.

Having rejected all these concepts, the personified *Vedas* now present *paricaryā-vāda*, the philosophy of devotional service in this verse. The Vaisnava philosophy teaches that the *jiva* soul is an atomic particle of spiritual personality who possesses minute knowledge. He is not independent and has no material qualities. Being minute, he is prone to come under the control of the material energy, where he suffers the pains of material life. Only by *bhakti*, and not by fruitive work, mental speculation or any other process, can one destroy the suffering of material existence and attain the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As Sri Kṛṣṇa says in His own words,

*daiivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī, mama māyā duratyayā mām eva ye
prapadyante, māyām etām taranti te*

“My divine energy consisting of the three modes of material nature is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can

easily cross beyond it.” (Bg. 7.14)

bhakti-yāham ekayā grāhyaḥ, śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā, śva-pākān api sambhavāt

“Only by practicing unalloyed devotional service with full faith in Me can one obtain Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I am naturally dear to My devotees, who take Me as the only goal of their loving service. By engaging in such pure devotional service, even the dog-eaters can purify themselves from the contamination of their low birth.” (SB 11.14.21)

According to these statements of Sri Kṛṣṇa, *bhakti* is the only process. By such statements as the twenty-first verse beginning with *duravagamātma* (difficult to understand), the *śrutis* also indicate that devotional service itself is the supreme goal of life (*parama-puruṣārtha*). Thus propounding the Vaisnava philosophy as superior to all others, the *śrutis* place the Vaisnavas in the topmost category and condemn all other philosophers in this verse. The genitive form of *tava* is used here in the sense of the accusative case. The intervention of other words between the *upasarga* and the verb in the phrase *tava pari ye caranti*, which is equivalent to *tvām ye paricaranti*, is not a mistake, rather it is permissible for metrical reasons in the verse according to the rule of the great grammarian Pāṇini: *chandasi vyavahitās ca*. The *śrutis* said, “The Vaisnavas worship You as the shelter (*niketa: āsrayaḥ*) of everything that exists (*akhila-sattva*). Moreover, the devotees themselves can be called *akhila-sattva-niketa* in the sense that they serve You with the mood of accepting the reality (*sattvam*) of both the material and spiritual worlds. In his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, Śrīpāda Madhvācārya gives evidence of this fact by quoting the *śruti-mantra: satyaṁ hy evedaṁ viśvam asṛjata*, “He created this world as real.” The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.1.11) refers to the Supreme Lord as *pradhāna-pumbhyām naradeva satya-kṛt*, “the creator of a real universe of matter and living entities.”

There is another more confidential meaning of *akhila-sattva-niketa*: *Akhila* may be analyzed as follows: The word *khila* means impure or inferior, therefore *akhila* means pure or perfect, though its common

meaning is “all.” Then the phrase means that Supreme Lord’s personal abodes in Vaikuntha are perfectly pure realms free of anxiety and restriction. Therefore, the Vaisnavas who serve the Supreme Lord simply step on the head of death and transcend material existence without paying much attention.

“But,” it may be questioned, “the proponents of the above-mentioned philosophies can also surpass death.”

The *śrutis* answer, “No, they cannot! Those so-called wise philosophers (*vibudhān*) who are inimical (*vimukha*) to the Lord are bound in illusion like animals tied by the ropes of such Vedic statements as *asato ’dhimano ’srjyata, manaḥ prajāpatim asrjat*. Thus they are kept in ignorance by the same words of the *Vedas* that enlighten the surrendered devotees.”

One should not think, however, that Vaisnavas are ignorant because they may not be expert in philosophical analysis and argument. The Vaisnavas acquire perfect knowledge by receiving the Lord’s favor, not through their own efforts at mental speculation. This is confirmed in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23):

yasya deve parā bhaktir, yathā deve tathā gurau tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

“Unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master, all the imports of Vedic knowledge are automatically revealed.”

The *śrutis* continue, “Therefore, those who have manifested love (*sauhrdāḥ:prema*) for You are themselves purified and by their instructions they purify others. However, those who are not devotees (*vimukhaḥ:abhaktah*) do not become pure.” The following *sastric* statements confirm these points: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām, eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*, “There is one eternal, supreme conscious being among all the other eternal, conscious beings who supplies the needs of everyone else.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13)

taṁ pīṭha-gaṁ ye tu yajanti dhīrās, teṣāṁ sāntiḥ sāsvatī netareṣāṁ
“Those wise souls who worship Him in His abode attain everlasting peace; others cannot.” (*Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 22)

*juṣṭam yadā paśyaty anyam īśam, asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ ṛco
'kṣare pare vyoman, yasmin devā adhi viśve niṣeduh*

“When the Lord is served with loving affection (*juṣṭam:prītyā*), one realizes (*pasyati:anubhavati*) His glory. By such means one becomes free of sorrow, victorious over death, and ascends to the eternally manifest (*akṣare:nitya-rūpe*) spiritual sky called Maha-vaikuntha (*pare vyoman*).” (*Śrī Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 4.7–8)

Text 28

*tvam akaraṇaḥ sva-rāḍ akhila-kāraka-śakti-dharas,
tava balim udvahanti samadanty ajayānimiṣāḥ,
varṣa-bhujo 'khila-kṣiti-pater iva viśva-srjo,
vidadhāti yatra ye tv adhikṛtā bhavataś cakitāḥ*

Though You have no material senses, You are the self-effulgent sustainer of everyone’s sensory powers. The demigods and material nature herself offer You tribute, while also enjoying the tribute offered them by their worshipers, just as subordinate rulers of various districts in a kingdom offer tribute to their lord, the ultimate proprietor of the land, while also enjoying the tribute paid them by their own subjects. In this way the universal creators faithfully execute their assigned services out of fear of You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The personified *Vedas* conclude, “All intelligent living beings should acknowledge their dependence on You, the supreme independent controller, and willingly engage in Your service.”

But Lord Narayana might object, “No, this is not so. Because I possess eyes, ears, hands and so forth, I am just as dependent on the senses as the living beings. What question is there of My independence or almighty power?”

Śrutis: “No, You have no material senses, yet You are the absolute controller of all.”

Lord Narayana: “Then where do My eyes, ears and mind come from?”

Śrutis: “Your hands, feet, eyes and ears are not like those of an ordinary, conditioned soul, which are derived from false ego, a material substance. Rather, Your transcendently beautiful features are direct manifestations of Your internal nature (*sva-rād*).”

The phrase *akhila-śakti-dhara*, “maintainer of everyone’s sensory powers,” has an alternative explanation: The power that Lord Narayana maintains within Himself is *akhila*, free from the limitations of all that is *khila*, inferior and insignificant. The Supreme Lord energizes the living being’s senses, as described by the *Kena Upaniṣad* (1.2): *cakṣuṣas cakṣur uta śrotrasya śrotram, manaso mano yad vāco ha vācam*. “He is the eye’s eye, the ear’s ear, the mind’s mind, and the voice’s capacity of speech.”

Śrutis: “You bestow the power (*śakti*) of hearing and seeing to the material senses. Though You have no material senses, You do have spiritual senses arising from Your *svarupa-śakti*, internal energy.” The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8) declares:

na tasya kāryam karaṇam ca vidyate, na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca drśyate parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate, svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

“He has no material work to perform, nor any material senses with which to perform it. No one can be found who is equal to or greater than Him. From the *Vedas* we hear how that Supreme Lord possesses multifarious energies—the potencies of knowledge, strength and action—each of which acts autonomously.”

Next the *śrutis* speak of Lord Narayana’s great power: “The demigods like Brahma, whose eyes do not blink (*animisah*), bring You articles of worship (*balim*), along with even *maya* (*ajaya*), their authority, who also makes offerings to You. By Your mercy the demigods eat the various sacrificial offerings presented to them by human beings, just as the leaders of various provinces give offerings made by the citizens to the king. These powerful controllers of the universe perform their

assigned duties in fear of You.” As the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.8.1) states:

bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate, bhīṣād eti sūryaḥ bhīṣāsmād agniś cendraś ca, mṛtyur dhāvati pañcamah

“The wind blows out of fear of Him. The sun rises out of fear of Him. The fire, moon and death, the fifth of their number, run out of fear of Him.”

Text 29

*sthira-cara-jātayaḥ syur ajayottha-nimitta-yujo,
vihara udīkṣayā yadi parasya vimukta tataḥ,
na hi paramasya kaścid aparo na paraś ca bhaved,
viyata ivāpadasya tava śūnya-tulām dadhataḥ*

O eternally liberated, transcendental Lord, Your material energy causes the various moving and nonmoving species of life to appear by activating their material desires, but only when and if You sport with her by briefly glancing at her. You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, see no one as an intimate friend and no one as a stranger, just as the ethereal sky has no connection with perceptible qualities. In this sense You resemble a void.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having spoken of the power and independence of Lord Narayana as reasons for His being worthy of worship, now the *śrutis* speak of the reasons for the *jiva* being His worshiper, namely his lack of power and lack of independence. The *śrutis* said, “O ever-liberated (*vimukta:nitya-mukta*) Lord! When You, who remain far away from (*parasya:dūre*) *maya* and do not associate with her, play (*viharah:vihāraḥ krīḍā*) with Mahā-Māyā (the energy of material creation) by slightly glancing (*udīkṣayā:īkṣaṇa-lesena*) at her, then the *jivas* develop bodies endowed with movement or

inertia.” Lord Narayana: “But if all the *jivas* are merged in Me, how can they appear again?”

Śrutis: “By Your glance the *jivas* manifest (*syur:āvīrbhūtāni*) the subtle bodies needed for material activities. The *jivas* merge into You because of a merging of their illusory identities (*upadhis*) at the time of devastation (*pralaya*). The *jivas* again appear when their *upadhis* manifest through Your glance. In this way, the *jiva*’s lack of power is indicated by his being controlled by *karma*.”

Lord Narayana: “But then this awakening to activity takes place simply by My whim?”

Śrutis: “No, because You are free from partiality, You cannot produce an unfair creation. You are the faultless Supreme Personality of Godhead (*paramasya:nirdoṣa-puruṣottamasya*), so there cannot be any sense of “mine” and “others” (*aparō na paraś*), just as the ethereal sky (*viyataḥ*), which because of not being touched by anything, does not allow any partiality to abide in it. But this does not mean that You are exactly like the ether; rather ether has some similarity (*śūnya-tulām*) to You.”

In this connection, the *Bṛhad-āranyaka Upanisad* (2.1.20) states:

yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ sarve prāṇāḥ sarve lokāḥ sarve devāḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti,

“Just as small sparks emanate from a big fire, similarly all living entities, all planets, all the demigods, and all material elements such as the earth emanate from the supreme soul, Śrī Govinda.”

Text 30

*aparimitā dhruvās tanu-bhṛto yadi sarva-gatās,
tarhi na śāsyateti niyamo dhruva netarathā,
ajani ca yan-mayaṁ tad avimucya niyantr bhavet,
samam anujānatām yad amataṁ mata-duṣṭatayā*

If the countless living entities were all-pervading and possessed

forms that never changed, You could not possibly be their absolute ruler, O immutable one. But since they are Your localized expansions and their forms are subject to change, You do control them. Indeed, that which supplies the ingredients for the generation of something is necessarily its controller because a product never exists apart from its ingredient cause. It is simply illusion for someone to think that he knows the Supreme Lord, who is equally present in each of His expansions, since whatever knowledge one gains by material means must be imperfect.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *śrutis* said, “There are widely differing theories among the various philosophers about this *jīva* who has accepted different moving and non-moving bodies. The Advaita Māyāvādīs, for example, propose that there is only one living being and one power of illusion (*avidyā*) that covers him, producing the appearance of plurality.”

“But this hypothesis leads to the absurd conclusion that when any one *jīva* becomes liberated, everyone obtains liberation. If, on the other hand, there are many *avidyās* to cover the one *jīva*, each *avidyā* will cover only some part of him, and we would have to talk about his becoming partly liberated at particular times while his other parts remain in bondage. This is also obviously absurd. Thus the plurality of living beings is an unavoidable conclusion.”

“The advocates of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika claim that the *jīva* soul is infinite in size. If souls were infinitesimal, they would not pervade their own bodies, whereas if they were of medium size they would be divisible into parts and thus could not be eternal. Therefore, the numerous eternal *jīva* souls are each infinitely large, so how can they be covered by any power of bondage, whether belonging to *avidyā* or to the Supreme Lord Himself?” The *śrutis* then explain in this verse that others do not accept this opinion of the Nyāya philosophers.

The *śrutis* said, “If the countless (*aparimitāḥ:asankhyata*) living entities (*tanu-bhrto*) were eternal (*dhruvāḥ:nityāḥ*), rather than being generated from You and also all-pervading, then because they would thus be equal

to You, the scriptures would not say that they are under Your control. O Lord, You are perpetually in Your original form (*dhruvās:nitya-svarūpa*), not otherwise (*netarathā*). That is to say, if they were generated from You, then they would not be all-pervading, and thus would be under Your control.”

Lord Narayana: “How is this?”

Śrutis: “Since the *jīvas* come into existence as an effect of Brahman, Brahman would be their controller. On account of being their source, He does not separate Himself from the *jīvas*.”

Lord Narayana: “What is this Brahman?”

Śrutis: “He is equal (*samam:tulam*) toward all the *jīvas* in His expansion as Paramatma.”

If someone asks what is known by the word “*tad*” (from that), the *śrutis* answer: “For those who say ‘we know it’ (*anujānatām*), it is for all extents and purposes unknown (*amatam*), because the *Vedas* say that knowledge gained by sense perception is imperfect (*mata-duṣṭatayā*).”

This is confirmed in the *Kena Upaniṣad* (2.3):

*yasyāmataṁ tasya mataṁ, mataṁ yasya na veda saḥ avijñātām
vijānatām, vijñātām avijānatām*

“Whoever denies having any opinion of his own about the Supreme Truth is correct in his opinion, whereas one who has his own opinion about the Supreme does not know Him. He is unknown to those who claim to know Him, and can only be known by those who do not claim to know Him.”

The *śrutis* also say *avacanaenaiva provāca*, “Although He cannot be described in words, the *Vedas* have described Him.” Also it is said, *saha tūṣṇīm babhūva*, “By not speaking He spoke and then became silent.”

The *Śrī Kena Upaniṣad* (2.1) states: *yadi manyase su-vedeti dabhram evāpi nūnaṁ tvaṁ vettha brahmaṇo rūpaṁ, yad asya tvaṁ yad asya deveṣu*: “If you think you know Brahman well, then your knowledge is very meager. If you think you can identify Brahman’s form from among the demigods, indeed you know but little.”

Text 31

*na ghaṭata udbhavaḥ prakṛti-pūruṣayor ajayor,
ubhaya-yujā bhavanty asu-bhr̥to jala-budbuda-vat,
tvayi ta ime tato vividha-nāma-guṇaiḥ parame,
sarita ivārṇave madhuni lilyur aśeṣa-rasāḥ*

Neither material nature nor the soul who tries to enjoy her are ever born, yet living bodies come into being when these two combine, just as bubbles form where water meets the air. And just as rivers merge into the ocean or the nectar from many different flowers blends into honey, so all these conditioned beings eventually merge back into You, the Supreme, along with their various names and qualities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: It is seen that others criticize this doctrine. If you say that the *jivas* are born from the Paramatma, then that means the *jivas* are not eternal. Everyday, things created would be destroyed and uncreated things would come into being. Moreover, liberation would consist of the destruction of the *jiva*'s essential identity. But his essential identity (*svarūpa*) is Brahman. Just as the unlimited sky becomes limited by a pot, and when the pot is broken the sky is again unlimited, similarly, when the designative coverings (*upadhis*) of the *jiva* are broken, then liberation is attained. What is called the "birth" of the *jivas* is simply the birth of these *upādhis*; for the *jiva* itself is not born. In this verse, the *śrutis*, while glorifying the Lord, relate the philosophy of those who speak like this.

In this connection the question arises: "Does the form of the *jiva* arise from *prakṛti*, from the *purusa* or from both?" If the *jiva* arises from *prakṛti*, then the *jiva* would be without consciousness. If the *jiva* arises from the *purusa*, then the *purusa* is subject to transformation. In the first line of this verse, the *śrutis* reject the third alternative that the *jiva* arises from both *prakṛti* and the *purusa*, because the *śrutis* declare that the *jiva*

is unborn (*ajayor*).

This is confirmed in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.5):

ajām ekām lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇām, bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānām sa-rūpāḥ ajo hy eko juṣamāṇo 'nuśete, jahāty enām bhukta-bhogam ajo 'nyah
“Material nature consists of three modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance and is the mother of the innumerable living beings within the universe. It is brought into existence and supported by the one unborn Lord, who is full in self-knowledge. That unborn Lord, however, does not consort with His material energy. He independently enjoys the pleasure of His transcendental pastimes. The living entity, however, enjoys her and thus becomes perpetually bound.” “The combination of material nature (*prakṛti*) and her controller (*purusa*) that produces the countless conditioned souls in material creation is compared here to the combination of water and air that produces limitless bubbles (*budbuda*) of foam on the surface of the sea. Just as the efficient cause, air, impels the ingredient cause, water, to form itself into bubbles, so by His glance the Supreme Puruṣa inspires *prakṛti* to transform herself into the array of material elements and the innumerable material forms that manifest from those elements. Because the scriptures speak of the *upadhīs*, designative coverings, merging into Brahman again when they are destroyed, even their birth is not actual.” This the *śrutis* state in the third line of the verse.

The words beginning with *tato* (therefore) state that since the *jīvas* (*te ime*) are not actually born, therefore (*tato*), they merge along with their various names and qualities into You. The dissolution of the living being's (*jīvas*) material condition occurs in two ways, partial and complete. In liberation (*mukti*) or the ultimate dissolution (*ātyantika-laya*), the *jīva's* designative coverings (*upādhīs*) of the gross and subtle bodies and also the *upādhīs* of ignorance (*avidyā*), which is their cause, all become dissolved, just as rivers (*sarita:nadyaḥ*) merge into the ocean. In other words, all the false material designations of the *jīvas* are given up at the time of liberation.

Partial dissolution occurs when the soul experiences deep, dreamless sleep (*suṣupti*) and appears to leave his body. Partial dissolution also

occurs when all souls re-enter the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu at the time of universal annihilation (*pralaya*). In deep sleep and during the annihilation of the universe, however, only the designative coverings (*upādhis*) of the gross and subtle bodies are dissolved, and not that of their cause, *avidyā*, ignorance. These different types of dissolution are just like honey, which contains the tastes of the nectar of different flowers (*aśeṣa-rasāḥ:sakala-kusuma-rasāḥ*). Even though these tastes are not individually perceivable, they are perceived in a general sense. These points are corroborated in the following *śrutis*:

yathā nadyaḥ syandamānāḥ samudre, 'stam gacchanti nāma-rūpe vihāya tathā vidvān nāma-rūpād vimuktaḥ, parāt-param puruṣam upaiti divyam

“As rivers flow to their dissolution in the sea, giving up their names and forms at their destination, so the wise man who becomes free from material names and forms attains to the Supreme Absolute, the wonderful Personality of Godhead.” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 3.2.8)

yathā saumya madhu madhu-kṛto nistiṣṭhanti nānātyayānām vṛkṣānām rasān samavahāram ekatām saṅgayanti. te yathā tatra na vivekaṁ labhante amuṣyāhaṁ vṛkṣasya raso 'smṛy amuṣyāham raso 'smṛity evam eva khalu saumyemāḥ sarvāḥ prajāḥ sati sampadya na viduḥ sati sampadyāmahe

“My dear boy this partial dissolution resembles what happens when honeybees collect honey by extracting the nectar from the flowers of various kinds of trees and merge it all into a single mixture. Just as the mixed nectars cannot distinguish, ‘I am the juice of such-and-such a flower’, or ‘I am the juice of another flower’, so, dear boy, when all these living entities merge together they cannot consciously think, ‘Now we have merged together.’” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.9.1–2)

The verse quoted above from the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* refers to liberation, and the verse from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* refers to universal annihilation (*pralaya*).

*nṛṣu tava mayayā bhramam amīṣv avagatya bhṛśam,
tvayi su-dhiyo 'bhave dadhati bhāvam anuprabhavam,
katham anuvartatām bhava-bhayaṁ tava yad bhru-kuṭiḥ,
sṛjati muhus tri-nemir abhava-charaṇeṣu bhayam*

The wise souls who understand how Your Māyā deludes all human beings render potent loving service to You, who are the source of liberation from birth and death. How, indeed, can fear of material life affect Your faithful servants? On the other hand, Your furrowing eyebrows—the triple-rimmed wheel of time—repeatedly terrify those who refuse to take shelter of You.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having proposed various philosophies and rejected them, the *śrutis* now establish the Vaisnava philosophy. The eloquent proponents of the various contending materialistic philosophies mentioned in the previous two verses may consider themselves very wise, but they are in fact all deluded by Kṛṣṇa's illusory potency, *maya*. Recognizing this pattern of general delusion, Vaisnavas offer their pure love (*bhāvam*) to Kṛṣṇa in the devotional moods of servitude, friendship and other mellows. Such pure Vaiṣṇavas experience delight (*prabhavaḥ:ullāsaḥ*) at every moment (*anu:pratikṣaṇam*) because the object of their love is He who brings an end to material entanglement.”

Or an alternate explanation: “They perform (*dadhati:kurvanti*) devotional service life after life (*anuprabhavam:prati-janmaiva*).” This point is mentioned in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

*nātha yoni-sahasreṣu, yeṣu yeṣu bhramāmy aham tatra tatrācyutā
bhaktir, acyutāstu dṛḍhā tvayi*

“O Lord Acyuta! Wherever I may wander among the thousands of species of life, may I always have undeviating devotion to You.”

Some philosophers will question how the Vaiṣṇavas can overcome their material entanglement without thorough analytic knowledge of the *jīva*

and the Supreme Brahman, and without being disgusted with material life.

The personified *Vedas* answer, “There is no chance of material illusion continuing to act on Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, because even in the earliest stages of devotional service all fear and attachment are removed by the Lord’s grace. Only because of the extreme desirelessness and the deep feelings of humility that arise from their cultivation of devotion do the Vaisnavas still identify themselves as fallen in the material world. Thus, the razor sharp sword of time, in the form of the furrowing of Your eyebrows (*bhru-kuṭiḥ*), with its three divisions of past, present and future creates fear of disease, death and hellish suffering only for those who fail to worship Your feet. As Lord Rāma Himself says in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Lankā-khaṇḍa* 18.33):

sakṛd eva prapanno yas, tavāsmṛti ca yācate abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai, dadāmy etad vrataṁ mama

“If anyone even once surrenders to Me, pleading ‘I am Yours’, I will give him eternal fearlessness. This is My solemn vow.” Furthermore, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14) Sri Kṛṣṇa says,

daiivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī, mama māyā duratyayā mām eva ye prapadyante, māyām etām taranti te

“This divine energy of Mine consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it.” The idea behind this is as follows:

“Vaisnavas are not eager to defeat others’ opinions and establish their own, as other philosophers are prone to do. The Vaisnavas, however, are very eager to worship You, and for that they need not quarrel with any adverse philosophers. The Vaisnava philosophy is the essence of all scriptures. Their conception of the Supreme Absolute Truth as the infinite ocean of personality and loving pastimes in His worshipable forms of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and other divine manifestations, and their conception of themselves as His eternal servants, amount to the perfect conclusion of Vedānta philosophy in terms of the entities, God (*tat*) and the self (*tvam*).”

The Personality of Godhead and His emanations, such as the *jīva* souls,

are simultaneously different and nondifferent, just like the sun and its expanding rays. Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself affirms this: *sūkṣmāṇām apy aham jīvo*, “Among subtle things I am the spirit soul.” (SB 11.16.11)

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) also describes the measurement of the atomic spirit soul:

eṣo ’nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadhā saṁviveśa

“The soul is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence.

This atomic soul is floating in the five kinds of air (*prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, samāna and udāna*).”

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) states:

bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya śatadhā kalpitasya ca bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sa cānantyāya kalpate

“If the tip of a hair were divided into one hundred parts, and if one of those parts were again divided into a hundred parts, that one ten-thousandth part of the tip of the hair would be the dimension of the living entity.”

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.8) says: *ārāgra-mātro hy aparo ’pi dr̥ṣṭaḥ*, “The spirit soul appears in such a small size that he measures only the width of the tip of an arrow.” From these Vedic statements one can understand the infinitesimal size of the soul and its ability to pervade the whole body. The power of this minute *jīva* in the body can be compared to the healing power of a precious gem or a potent medicinal herb which can infuse invigorating energy throughout the body simply by being placed on the head or chest.

The *jīva*’s traveling through various species of life in heaven or hell is due to the influence of his material coverings. This is mentioned by Dattatreya who says that by *prāṇa* a man takes repeated birth in the world (*yena saṁsarate pumān*).

There are more *jīvas* than anyone can count, and each of them is eternally alive with consciousness, as the *śrutis* confirm: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām* (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 5.13). When the *jīvas* are sent forth from the body of Mahā-Viṣṇu at the beginning of material creation, they are all equal in the sense that they are all atomic particles of the Lord’s marginal potency (*tatastha-sakti*). But according to their

differing conditions, they divide into four groups: Some are covered by ignorance, which obscures their vision like a cloud, and others become liberated from ignorance by knowledge mixed with devotion. A third group of souls become endowed with pure devotion, with a slight mixture of desire for speculative knowledge and fruitive activity. Those souls attain purified bodies composed of perfect knowledge and bliss with which they can engage in the Lord's service. Finally, there are Sri Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates who never had any connection with ignorance.

The marginal position of the *jīva* soul is described in the *Nārada Pañcarātra*:

yat taṭa-sthaṁ tu cid-rūpaṁ, sva-saṁvedyād vinirgatam rañjitaṁ guṇa-rāgeṇa, sa jīva iti kathyate

“The marginal potency, who is spiritual by nature, who emanates from the self-cognizant *saṁvit* energy, and who becomes tainted by his attachment to the modes of material nature, is called the *jīva*.””

The śruti, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (2.1.20) says: *yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphulingā vyuccaranti*, “As many tiny sparks are manifested from a great fire, so many individual spirit souls are manifested from the Supreme.”

If the *jīva* comes outside from the Personality of Godhead (*cid-rūpaṁ*), who is the amalgamation of all living consciousness (*sva-saṁvedyād:cit-puñjāt*), then he becomes colored by the influence of the three modes of the external energy, *Māyā*, and assumes various material forms. Because the minute *jīva* lives within the border between the Lord's external, illusory potency, *Māyā*, and His internal, spiritual potency, *cit*, the *jīva* is called *taṭa-stha*, “marginal”.

When he earns liberation by cultivating devotion to the Lord, however, he comes completely under the shelter of the Lord's internal potency (*cit-sakti*). At that time he takes on a spiritual form produced by his great attachment to the Lord, and is no longer tainted by the modes of material nature. Such is the description of a worshiper (*upāsaka*) of the Lord.

Thus, in the same way as a person working for the king (*rājakīya-*

puruṣa) is called *rāja-puruṣa*, the living entity (*tvam:jiva*) stands in a relationship with the supreme entity (*tat:Supreme Lord*). Therefore, some authorities say the phrase *tat tvam asi* (You are that:Brahman) means “You belong to Him”. The word *tat* stands for the possessive case (his) as an element in a compound word. Thus *tat tvam asi* means “You are His.”

The object (*upāsya*) of the soul’s worship is realized in three aspects: Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān. Impersonal Brahman is like the radiant effulgence of the sun; the Supersoul, or Paramātmā, is like the sun globe; and the Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān, with His associates is like the presiding deity within the sun, who has his personal chariot, charioteer, assistants, and beautiful form, face, eyes, hands and feet.

Or, to cite another analogy: Travelers approaching a city from a distance cannot at first distinguish its features but rather see something vaguely shining ahead of them. As they come closer, they may discern a few of the taller buildings, trees, flagpoles and flags. Then, when they are sufficiently close, they will see the city as it is—a bustling metropolis with many citizens, residences, public buildings, highways and parks. In the same way, persons inclined to impersonal meditation may at best gain some realization of the Supreme Lord’s effulgence (Brahman); those who approach closer can learn to see Him as the Lord in the heart (Paramātmā), but they will have scanty knowledge of His spiritual qualities. When they enter into intimate association however, and experience the unprecedented sweetness of God, they can know His full personality as Bhagavān Sri Kṛṣṇa.

In this connection, the *Nṛsimha Purana* states: *brahma-samjñam abhūd ekaṁ, jyotir yat sarva-kāraṇam*, “What is called Brahman is one light that is the cause of all. The *Hari-vamsa Purana* says: *mama eva tad ghaṇaṁ tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata*, “You should know the Brahman to be My condensed effulgence.”

The *śrutis* say:

cayas tviṣām ity avadhāritaṁ purā tatā sarīrīti vibhāvitākṛtim, vibhur vibhaktāvayavaṁ pumān iti kramād amuṁ nārada ity abodhi saḥ

“Narada gradually recognized the Lord, first perceiving Him as a mass of light, then as an embodied person, and then as the almighty Personality of Godhead with variously defined limbs.”

Some Vaisnavas take great care to understand their philosophy. Others however give no regard for it, and yet others always make it a point to ignore it. But they always give special attention to their own style of worship.

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.22) states the same point.

*etad viṣṇoḥ param padam ye, nityodyuktāḥ saṁyajante na kāmāt teṣām
asau gopa-rūpaḥ prayatnāt, prakāśayed ātma-padam tadaiva*

“To they who always diligently worship Lord Viṣṇu’s transcendental form without any trace of material motivation, the Lord, in His original form as a cowherd boy (*gopa-rūpaḥ*), shows His lotus feet.

Text 33

*vijita-hṛṣīka-vāyubhir adānta-manas tura-gam,
ya iha yatanti yantum ati-lolam upāya-khidāḥ,
vyasana-śatānvitāḥ samavahāya guroś caranam,
vañija ivāja santy akṛta-karṇa-dharā jaladhau*

The mind is like an impetuous horse that even persons who have regulated their senses and breath cannot control. Those in this world who try to tame the uncontrolled mind, but who abandon the feet of their spiritual master, encounter hundreds of obstacles in their cultivation of various distressful practices. O unborn Lord, they are like merchants on a boat in the ocean who have failed to employ a helmsman.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But,” the Lord may say, “even a Vaisnava should follow the eightfold system of *yoga* to make his mind steady while worshipping Me.”

Śrutis: “No, this is not necessary! Just by firm devotion to the feet of the divine spiritual master he can easily keep his mind steady. This has been stated already in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (7.15.25): *etat sarvaṁ gurau bhaktyā puruṣo hy añjasā jayet*, ‘One can easily obtain all these goals simply by *guru-bhakti* (serving the spiritual master with faith and devotion).’

“Otherwise, one may conquer his senses and vital air by the *yoga* process and still fail to tame his mind, which will continue to run like a wild horse. Nondevotees who try to control the mind without serving the feet of a spiritual master (*guroś caraṇam*) will suffer unending anxiety (*vyasana-śātānvitāḥ*) over the troublesome execution (*upāyakhidāḥ*) of various spiritual practices. And in the end they will drown in the vast ocean of material life. O unborn Lord, they are like merchants on a boat in the ocean who have failed to hire a competent helmsman.” In this regard the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (1.2.12) states: *tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet, samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*, “To understand thoroughly about God, one must humbly approach, with firewood in his hands, a spiritual master who is learned in the *Vedas* and firmly devoted to the Supreme Lord.” The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (6.14.2) says: *ācāryavān puruṣo veda*, “One who approaches a bona fide spiritual master can understand everything about spiritual realization.”

The *Svetasvatara Upaniṣad* (6.23) states:

yasya deva parā bhaktir, yathā deve tathā gurau tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ, prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

“One who has unflinching faith in the Supreme Lord and the spiritual master, all the purports of the scriptures become revealed.”

Text 34

svajana-sutātma-dāra-dhana-dhāma-dharāsu-rathais,
tvayi sati kiṁ nr̥ṇām śrayata ātmani sarva-rase,
iti sad ajānatām mithunato rataye caratām,

sukhayati ko nv iha sva-vihate sva-nirasta-bhage

To those persons who take shelter of You, You reveal Yourself as the Supersoul, the embodiment of all transcendental pleasure. What further use have such devotees for their servants, children or bodies, their wives, money or houses, their land, good health or conveyances? And for those who fail to appreciate the truth about You and go on pursuing the pleasures of sex, what could there be in this entire world—a place inherently doomed to destruction and devoid of significance—that could give them real happiness?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this way, the *śrutis* have spoken about the pure *bhakti* of the Vaiṣnavas, which is not mixed with *yoga* or other processes. Now they establish that such *bhakti* must be devoid of other desires.

The *śrutis* said, “For one who has taken shelter of Your loving service and realized You as the Supersoul (*ātmani: paramātmani*), what use does he have for the various objects of worldly success such as servants, *svajanāḥ*; virtuous sons, *sutāḥ*; a beautiful body, *ātmā*; an attractive wife, *dārāḥ*; fabulous wealth, *dhanam*; a luxurious, celestial home, *dhāma*; a vast estate, *dharā*; health and vitality, *asavaḥ*; and costly conveyances, *rathāḥ*? One who experiences the ecstasy of devotional service loses all attraction for these things, since he finds real satisfaction in the Supreme Lord, the reservoir of all pleasure (*sarve rase: ananda*).

In this regard, the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (4.3.32) states: *eṣāsyā paramā gatir, eṣāsyā paramā sampad eṣāsyā paramo loka, eṣāsyā parama ānanda etasyaivānandasyānyāni, bhūtāni mātram upajīvanti.*

“Devotional service is the supreme goal, the supreme wealth, the supreme abode and the supreme bliss. All varieties of ecstasy arise from it.”

Śrutis: “For those who cannot appreciate the supreme spiritual

happiness attained by realizing the Absolute Truth, and instead remain attached to the pleasure of sex life, what is there worthwhile to be found in this world?” The implied answer is that they derive pleasure from their servants, house, land and wealth.

One may object, “But why can’t these material things give pleasure?” Śruti: “They are perishable, being under the grip of time (*sva-vihate*). Therefore, by their nature they are insignificant (*sva-nirasta-bhage*) even from their inception. And they are condemned by saints who understand the changeable nature of the material world.”

The *Amara-kosa* dictionary gives the definition of *bhagam*: *srī-kāma-māhātmya-vīrya-yatnārka-kīrtiṣu*, “The word *bhaga* can mean fortune, lust, greatness, potency, effort, the sun or fame. The words *sva vihate* and *sva nirasta bhaga* also have the alternative reading *sva vihite* and *sva nirasta bhage*. In that case these words modify the word “*iha*” and mean, “The house and servants give pleasure to the materialistic people in this world (*iha*), which is temporary and devoid of good qualities by nature.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 15) concludes: *bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam*, “Devotional service is the process of worshiping the Supreme Lord. It consists of fixing one’s mind upon Him by renouncing all material desires (*upādhi:sakāmatvam*) for enjoyment in this world and the next. Indeed, this is true renunciation.”

Text 35

*bhuvi puru-puṇya-tīrtha-sadanāny rṣayo vimadās,
ta uta bhavat-padāmbuja-hrdo ’gha-bhid-aṅghri-jalāḥ,
dadhati sakṛn manas tvayi ya ātmani nitya-sukhe,
na punar upāsate puruṣa-sāra-harāvasathān*

Sages free from false pride live on this earth by frequenting the

sacred pilgrimage sites and those places where the Supreme Lord displayed His pastimes. Because such devotees keep Your lotus feet within their hearts, the water that washes their feet destroys all sins. Anyone who even once turns his mind toward You, the ever-blissful Soul of all existence, no longer dedicates himself to serving family life at home, which simply robs a man of his good qualities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: In this verse, the *śrutis* state that saintly persons abandon their wives, homes and the other items mentioned above, and live peacefully in sacred places of pilgrimage which are favorable for worshiping Sri Kṛṣṇa.

The *śrutis* said, “The prideless (*vimadās*) devotees (*ṛṣayah*) live in the holy abodes of the Lord (*sadanāni: bhagavad-dhāmāni*). Because such devotees have realized the Lord’s lotus feet in the core of their hearts (*bhavat-hṛdo-padāmbuja: manasi-tvat-padāmbujam dadhānāḥ*), the water that washes their feet has the power to sanctify others. It goes without saying that such devotees have put aside all affection for their wives, children, friends and followers in order to absorb their minds in Your eternally blissful form.

“Even those Vaiṣṇavas who have meditated upon You for a moment lose interest in the pleasures of a materialistic family life (*vasathān: grhān*), which steals away the very essence of a man (*puruṣa-sāra-harā*); namely his good qualities of discretion, determination, sobriety, tolerance and peace of mind.”

In this connection the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.26) says,
sakāmyā meroḥ śṛṅge yathā, sapta-pūryo bhavanti tathā niṣkāmyāḥ
sakāmyās ca bhūgola-cakre, sapta-pūryo bhavanti tāsām madhye
sākṣād brahma gopāla-purī hīti

Lord Nārāyaṇa said: “As on the summit of Mount Meru there are seven cities that fulfill all desires, similarly, on the earth planet there are seven cities that fulfill desires and grant liberation. Among them the city of Gopāla-purī (Mathurā) is directly the spiritual world.”

The *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 54-55 says,
mathurāyām sthitir brahman, sarvadā me bhaviṣyati śaṅkha-cakra-

gadā-padma, vana-mālāvṛtastu vai

Lord Nārāyaṇa continued, “O Brahma, decorated with a forest-flower garland, and holding a conch, disk, mace and lotus, I will reside eternally in Mathura.”

*viśva-rūpaṁ param jyotiḥ, svarūpaṁ rūpa-varjitam hṛdā mām
saṁsmaran brahman, mat-padaṁ yāti niścitam*

“O Brahma, he who with all his heart meditates on Me, whose form is the resting place of all forms, whose form is supremely powerful and splendid, whose form is wonderful, and who has no material form, goes to My abode. Of this there is no doubt.”

Text 36

*sata idaṁ utthitaṁ sad iti cen nanu tarka-hataṁ,
vyabhicarati kva ca kva ca mṛṣā na tathobhaya-yuk,
vyavahṛtaye vikalpa iṣito 'ndha-paramparayā,
bhramayati bhāratī ta uru-vṛttibhir uktha-jaḍān*

It may be proposed that this world is permanently real because it is generated from the permanent reality, but such an argument is subject to logical refutation. Sometimes, indeed, the apparent nondifference of a cause and its effect fails to prove true, and at other times the product of something real is illusory. Furthermore, this world cannot be permanently real, for it partakes of the natures of not only the absolute reality but also the illusion disguising that reality. Actually, the visible forms of this world are just an imaginary arrangement resorted to by a succession of ignorant persons in order to facilitate their material affairs. With their various meanings and implications, the learned words of Your Vedas bewilder all persons whose minds have been dulled by hearing the incantations of sacrificial rituals.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Someone may object, “But how can you criticize the home for taking away the good qualities of men (verse 34), and at the same time praise the home for giving men good qualities (verse 35)? It cannot be said that a mirage of water is both dry and thirst-quenching.”

The *śrutis* that adhere to the philosophy of *sat-kārya-vāda* (that the universe is a real manifestation of Brahman) speak in agreement with the *śrutis* who adhere to *asat-kārya-vāda* (the philosophy that this universe is unreal), saying that the visible world (*idam:visvam*) is permanently real because it is generated from the permanent reality, but not that it is *sat*, permanent, in its own right. Just as a pot when resolved to its cause is not a pot, but merely the reality expressing itself through the pot.”

The Sanskrit ablative expression *sataḥ*, “from the eternal reality,” implies a definite separation of cause and effect. Therefore, what is created from *sat*, the permanent reality, must be significantly different from it—in other words, temporary. In this way the argument of the materialists is flawed because it proves just the opposite of what it is intended to prove (*tarka-hatam*), namely that the world as we know it is all that exists, that it is eternal, and that there is no separate, transcendental reality.

The Karma mīmāṃsā logicians may argue, “We do not propose that they are the same. But we are denying their difference, since they are produced from the *sat*, just as golden earrings arise from gold. Effects can never exist without existence of a cause.”

Anticipating this reply, the Vaiṣṇavas refute it by the phrase *vyabhicarati kva ca* (some cases are inconsistent). “There are counter-examples that deviate from the general rule. Indeed, sometimes the source is very different from what it produces, as in the case of a man and his young son, or of a hammer and the destruction of a clay pot.” Then Mimamsakas say, “But just as illusory silver has no existence separate from the real existence of the oyster shell, so the material creation has no existence of its own separate from that of its foundation, the Supreme Lord.”

The personified *Vedas* reply “No, this universe is not false in the same way as such illusions as the appearance of silver seen in an oyster shell; rather it is real, being called *ubhaya-yuk* because the source and its expanded manifestation (*kāraṇa-kāryayaḥ*) both join together in it.” In other words, the *śrutis* say, “Both the Lord and the world are real (*tat satyam*). But, the existence of the cause (Supreme Lord) is eternal and the existence of effect (material world) is temporary, as is empirically perceived. Without the reality of the effect (this world), the ordinary dealings (*vyavahṛtaye*) of this world could not take place. So for the purpose of effecting ordinary activities the created product (*vikalpaḥ:kāryam*) is “desirable” (*iṣitaḥ*) in the sense of “real”, since with real objects such as pots ordinary activities can be performed. The carrying of water and similar engagements cannot be done with imaginary pots.” “But,” the Karma-mīmāṃsakas counter, “sometimes we see business conducted even with counterfeit coins.”

Śrutis: “That business, the illusion of this world’s permanence [which the Karma-mīmāṃsakas believe], is sustained by a succession of blind philosophers (*andha-paramparayā*), who learn this materialistic idea from their predecessors and pass on this illusion to their descendants. It is not perpetuated through a succession of wise men. Foolish people may be willing to exchange counterfeit coins among one another, but a wise man knows that such money is useless for the practical business of buying food, medicine and other necessities. Medicine purchased with counterfeit money will not yield good results. If such money is given in charity, it will not earn any pious credit.

“Therefore the material universe is real. According to the teachings of wise men like Narada Muni and Rsi Dattatreya, the world is real because it manifests meaningful activity. If the world were not real, the actions would also be unreal, just like the illusory silver seen in an oyster shell. By this teaching these learned authorities assert that the material world is real but not eternal, due to its being subject to destruction.”

Karma-mīmāṃsakas: “But the *Vedic Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* establish that the fruits of *karma* are eternal. For example, *apāma somam amṛta*

babhūma: “We have drunk the *soma rasa* and become immortal.” (Āg Veda 8.43.3) Therefore the world is eternal and will never be otherwise!”

Thus the Karma-mimamsakas do not believe in the creation or destruction of the material universe. In this verse the *śrutis* reply to the *karma-vadis*: “This proposition is invalid! O Lord! Your words of wisdom (*bhāratī*), comprising the *Vedas*, with their confusing variety of meanings in the semantic functions (*uru-vṛttibhiḥ*) of *gauṇa* and *lakṣaṇā* can be interpreted in many ways, either literally or metaphorically. Thus Your learned words bewilder (*bhramayati:mohayati*) those whose intelligence has been dulled (*jaḍān*) by too much faith in *karmic* rituals (*uktha*).”

The meaning of this is as follows: The *Vedas* never claim that the fruits of *karma* are eternal, but only indirectly they mention in metaphors the praiseworthiness of regulated sacrifices. Otherwise there would be a contradiction between one statement and another. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.1.16) clearly states that the results of ritual *karma* are impermanent: *tad yatheha karma-cito lokah kṣīyate evam evāmutra puṇya-cito lokah kṣīyate*, “Just as whatever benefit one works hard to attain in this world is eventually depleted, so whatever life one earns for oneself in the next world by his piety will also eventually end.” Therefore, the philosophy of those intoxicated with *karma* is erroneous.

In this connection the *śrutis* proclaim:

yathorṇa-nābhiḥ sṛjate grhṇate ca, yathā pṛthivyām ośadhayaḥ sambhavanti yathā sataḥ puruṣāt keśa-lomāni, tathākṣarāt sambhavadīha viśvam

“As a web is expanded and withdrawn by a spider, as plants grow from the earth, and as hair grows from a living person’s head and body, so this universe is generated from the inexhaustible Supreme.” (*Munḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.7) The word *ākṣarāt* in this verse indicates the cause of the universe’s creation, which is being compared to different analogies, is eternal, while the created effect is real but not eternal. This verse states the opinion of the Vaisnavas.

Text 37

*na yad idam agra āsa na bhaviṣyad ato nidhanād,
anu mitam antarā tvayi vibhāti mṛṣaika-rase,
ata upamīyate draviṇa-jāti-vikalpa-pathair,
vitatha-mano-vilāsam ṛtam ity avayanty abudhāḥ*

Since this universe did not exist prior to its creation and will no longer exist after its annihilation, we conclude that in the interim it is nothing more than a manifestation imagined to be visible within You, whose spiritual enjoyment never changes. We liken this universe to the transformation of various material substances into diverse forms. Certainly those who believe that this figment of the imagination is substantially real are less intelligent.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The personified *Vedas* repeat what they previously said with logic and clarity by presenting positive evidence to prove that this world is unreal in that it is temporary.

Śrutis: “This known universe did not exist before its creation, and it will not exist after the upcoming annihilation. It exists only between these two as an object of knowledge (*mitam:pramāṇa-viṣayī-bhūtam*).” Lord Narayana asks, “Where does this happen?”

Śrutis: “It happens within You, the Supreme Lord who considers, ‘Let Me create such an illusory world.’ This world cannot be eternal since it did not exist before and will be destroyed in the future. It is shown to be real by comparing it with clay and gold which transform into pots and golden earrings. It is not false like the silver seen in an oyster shell or the rope mistaken for a snake.” The *vi* in *vibhāti* (appears) indicates the perceivable nature of the creation.

“Moreover, the *jñānis* who think (*avayanti*) that this world is false, a mere mental fantasy, and the Karma-mimamsakas, who think that it is real and eternally existing, are both unintelligent (*abudhāḥ:apaṇḍitāḥ*).”

Text 38

*sa yad ajayā tv ajām anuśayīta guṇāṁś ca juṣan,
bhajati sarūpatām tad anu mṛtyum apeta-bhagaḥ,
tvam uta jahāsi tām ahir iva tvacam ātta-bhago,
mahasi mahīyase 'ṣṭa-guṇite 'parimeya-bhagaḥ*

The illusory material nature attracts the minute living entity to embrace her, and as a result he assumes forms composed of her qualities. Subsequently, he loses all his spiritual qualities and must undergo repeated deaths. You, however, avoid the material energy in the same way that a snake abandons its old skin. Glorious in Your possession of eight mystic perfections, You enjoy unlimited opulences.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having declared the reality of the world composed of the three modes of material nature and designated by the term *idam*, the *śrutis* now speak of the *jiva*. Although the *jiva* is pure spirit, qualitatively equal with God, he becomes degraded under the power of material illusion, *maya*.

The *śrutis* said, “Entranced by the allurements of Māyā, the pure *jiva* soul becomes covered by ignorance and the qualities of material nature. Thus tainted by material designations, he accepts (*bhajati*) bodies and senses produced from the raw material of Māyā’s three modes—goodness, passion and nescience. Subsequently (*tad anu*), his qualities like bliss become covered, and he undergoes repeated birth and death (*mṛtyum*) in this world.”

Lord Narayana said, “But since I, the Supreme Soul, share the same spiritual nature as the individual spiritual soul (*jiva*), do I also get covered by ignorance?”

Śrutis: “No, this can never happen! The *jiva* is an infinitesimal particle

of consciousness, whereas You are the vast repository of consciousness. Smoke may engulf the glow of a small molten sphere of gold, brass or copper, but it can never cover the vast light of the sun. You, on the other hand (*tvam uta:tvam punaḥ*), leave Maya aside (*jahāsi*).”

The meaning is this: The material Māyā potency is the outward expansion of Kṛṣṇa’s internal Yogamāyā potency. Her powers are described in the *Nārada Pañcarātra* in a conversation between Śruti and Vidyā,

asyā āvarika-śaktir, mahā-māyākhileśvarī yayā mugdham jagat sarvaṁ, sarve dehābhimāninaḥ

“The covering potency derived from Yogamaya is called Mahā-māyā, the controller of the world. She bewilders the entire universe, and thus every living being falsely identifies with his material body.”

The *śrutis* continued, “Maha-maya is only a partial expansion of Your Yogamaya, and is not regarded by You as part of Your internal energy; thus she becomes separated from You and left aside. She is called Your external (*bahir-aṅgā*) *maya-sakti*. Just as a snake casts aside his old skin, knowing that it is not part of his essential identity, so You always avoid Maha-maya because You are eternally endowed with intrinsic glories (*ātta-bhagaḥ:nitya-prāptaisvaryah*).”

To further reinforce their statement, the *śrutis* said, “You are worshiped (*mahīyase:pūjyase*) in Your eightfold mystic opulences (*mahasi:paramaisvarye*), such as *aṇimā* (the power to become infinitesimal) and *mahimā* (the ability to become infinitely large). What is their nature? You have unlimited powers, unlike the powers of others which are limited by time and space. And Your power is immeasurable because it is intimately related to Your internal nature.”

In this regard the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (4.5.) says:

ajām ekām lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇām, vahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānām sarūpāḥ ajo hy eko juṣamāno ’nuśete, jahaty enām bhukta-bhogām ajo ’nyah

“One unborn person, the *jīva*, is serving the unborn material nature, which generates numerous material bodies for the living entities and is composed of goodness, passion and ignorance. The other unborn person, the Paramātmā, is detached from the enjoyment of material

nature.”

Text 39

*yadi na samuddharanti yatayo hr̥di kāma-jaṭā,
duradhigamo 'satām hr̥di gato 'smṛta-kaṇṭha-maṇiḥ,
asu-tr̥pa-yoginām ubhayato 'py asukham bhagavann,
anapagatāntakād anadhirūḍha-padād bhavataḥ*

Members of the renounced order who fail to uproot the last traces of material desire in their hearts remain impure, and thus You do not allow them to understand You. Although You are present within their hearts, for them You are like a jewel worn around the neck of a man who has totally forgotten it is there. O Lord, those who practice yoga only for sense gratification must suffer punishment both in this life and the next: from death, who will not release them, and from You, whose kingdom they cannot reach.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus in three verses it was established that mundane homes steal away a man’s essential qualities. The sages who were mentioned in the verses are of two kinds: the worshipers of formless (*nirguna*) Brahman called *jñānis*, and the worshipers of qualitative (*sa-guṇa*) Brahman called *bhaktas* or devotees. Both attain success by remaining free from delusion and by strict adherence to their paths. However, if these aspiring transcendentalists misbehave, then they attain the disastrous results described in these two verses. The *śrutis* said, “O Bhagavan! If the *sannyasi* worshipers of the impersonal Brahman do not uproot the lusty desires in their hearts, then You, though residing in their hearts, become most difficult to attain for such impure persons. How is this? Because You become like a forgotten jewel around their necks. Though the jewel is hanging there, because a person forgets about it, it is as good as not being there. Although

such *sannyasis* make a pretense of *yoga*, they are primarily interested in sense enjoyment, so they only experience unhappiness and misery both in this life and the next.” In this connection, the personified *Vedas* describe how the impersonalistic renunciants, who have failed to attain liberation, must suffer life after life as a result of their painful endeavors to acquire name, fame, wealth and sense gratification.

The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.2) confirms the statements of this verse:

kāmān yaḥ kāmāyate manyamānaḥ sa karmabhir jāyate tatra tatra.

“Even a thoughtful renunciant, if he maintains any worldly desires, he will be forced by his *karmic* reactions to take birth again and again in various circumstances.”

Text 40

*tvad avagamī na vetti bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor,
guṇa-viguṇānvayāms tarhi deha-bhṛtām ca girah,
anu-yugam anv-ahaṁ sa-guṇa gīta-paramparayā,
śravaṇa-bhṛto yatas tvam apavarga-gatir manu-jaiḥ*

When a person realizes You, he no longer cares about his good and bad fortune arising from past pious and sinful acts, since it is You alone who control this good and bad fortune. Such a realized devotee also disregards what ordinary living beings say about him. Every day he fills his ears with Your glories, which are recited in each age by the unbroken succession of Manu’s descendants, and thus You become his ultimate salvation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse, the *śrutis* explain how neophyte devotees on the other hand, even though they may misbehave, still do not suffer in this life and the next like the impersonal *sannyasis*. Rather, they attain success.

“One whose nature is to recognize You as his object of worship

(*tvad-avagamī:tvām bhajanīyatvenāvagantum sīlam yasya saḥ*) is not aware of the good or bad actions produced by You. In this regard the *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* (Pūrva 15) states: *bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manah-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam.* ‘*Bhakti*, devotional service, is the process of worshipping the Supreme Lord by concentrating the mind upon Him, and renouncing all material desires (*upadhi*) for enjoyment both in this life and the next. *Bhakti* destroys all *karmas*.’

“Since a devotee becomes free from all *karmic* reactions by worshipping You, the apparent good and bad events he experiences are not the result of his *karma*, but rather they are personally arranged by You (*bhavad-uttha-śubhāśubhayor*). You do this in order to protect the confidentiality of devotion to You, or to avoid uprooting the opinions of the atheists, or to increase the longing in Your devotee. Or these apparently auspicious and inauspicious material reactions appear as the results of offenses against Your devotees (*vaisnava-aparadha*). You make these experiences appear in such a way that the devotee seems to be suffering the reactions of his *karma*.

“However, the devotee ignores the apparent good and bad reactions of the work he does only for Your pleasure. In other words, if someone praises him, ‘This devotee is merciful, tolerant and generous’, or condemns him, ‘This devotee is greedy, hypocritical and attached to sense enjoyment’, the devotee is not overly concerned about it. At these times, the humble devotee does not pay much attention to the words of any person (*deha-bhṛtām*), be he high or low, which praise or denounce him. He thinks to himself, ‘If these people mistakenly see good qualities in me and express praise, let them do it. If others see my real qualities of being attached to sense gratification and criticize me, then this is perfectly appropriate.’”

The *śrutis* then explain the reasoning behind this: “By continually singing day after day (*anv-aham:ahani ahani*) about You, who incarnate in every *yuga* (*anu-yugam*) and are the ocean of transcendental qualities (*sa-guṇa*), the mighty current of Your *nama-sankirtana* fills up the devotee’s ears (*śravaṇa-bhṛto*), and thus he quickly attains love, *kṛṣṇa-*

prema, for You, the ultimate goal of liberation (*apavarga-gatir*).”

According to the prose statement in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (4.30.30), the phrase *apavarga-gatir* (goal of liberation) means the bestower of pure loving service, or else that destination in comparison with which even the four goals of life (*dharma, artha, kama, moksa*) are most despicable.

As Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa states in the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (51-53):
tair aham pūjanīyo vai, bhadrakṛṣṇa-nivāsibhiḥ tad-dharma-gati-hīnā ye, tasyām mayi parāyaṇāḥ kalinā grasitā ye vai, tesām tasyām avasthitiḥ yathā tvam saha putrais ca, yathā rudro gaṇaiḥ saha yathā śrīyābhīyukto 'ham, tathā bhakto mama priyaḥ

“For those who live in Bhadrakṛṣṇa [Mathurā district], I am the object of all worship. Even if the residents of that place fail to properly cultivate the religious principles that one should observe in the holy land, they still become devoted to Me just by virtue of living there. Even if Kali [the present age of quarrel] has them in his grip, they still get credit for living in this place. My devotee who lives in Mathurā is just as dear to Me as you [Brahmā] and your sons—Rudra and his followers—and Goddess Śrī and My own self.”

In this verse, the phrases *tad-dharma-gati-hīnāḥ* and *kalinā grastāḥ* indicate wicked behavior, implying the idea “if one is wicked but lives in that Mathura.” Thus, between the two worshipers, the fallen *sannyasi* and the fallen devotee living in Mathura, the impersonalist *sannyasi* is criticized and the devotee is praised by the Lord.

This point is confirmed by Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (SB 11.18.40–41):

yas tv asaṁyata-ṣaḍ-vargaḥ, pracaṇḍendriya-sārathiḥ jñāna-vairāgya-rahitas, tri-daṇḍam upajīvati surān ātmānam ātma-sthaṁ, nihnute mām ca dharma-hā avipakva-kaṣāyo 'smād, amuṣmāc ca vihīyate

“One who has not controlled the six forms of illusion [lust, anger, greed, envy, false pride and intoxication], whose intelligence, the leader of the senses, is extremely attached to material things, who is bereft of knowledge and detachment, who adopts the *sannyāsa* order of life to make a living, who denies the worshipable demigods, his own self and

the Supreme Lord within himself, thus ruining all religious principles, and who is still infected by material contamination, is deviated and lost both in this life and the next.”

And in the *Bhagavad-gita*, Sri Kṛṣṇa encourages His devotee: *api cet su-durācāro, bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ, samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.” (Bg. 9.30)

In this way Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa praises His devotee. By all means, the Lord agrees with the *śrutis* who are His followers at the end of their praises of Him.

Text 41

*dyu-pataya eva te na yayur antam anantatayā,
tvam api yad-antarāṇḍa-nicayā nanu sāvaraṇāḥ,
kha iva rajāmsi vānti vayasā saha yac chrutayas,
tvayi hi phalanty atan-nirasanena bhavan-nidhanāḥ*

Because You are unlimited, neither the lords of heaven nor even You Yourself can ever reach the end of Your glories. The countless universes, each enveloped in its shell, are compelled by the wheel of time to wander within You, like particles of dust blowing about in the sky. The śrutis, following their method of eliminating everything separate from the Supreme, become successful by revealing You as their final conclusion.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *śrutis* were attempting to define the Absolute Truth on the pretext of glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the vast ocean of eternity, knowledge and bliss. But since they could not reach the limit of His qualities, they gave up and concluded

their praises by indicating they were all in agreement.

The following conversation between Lord Nārāyaṇa and the personified *Vedas* illuminates the meaning of this final prayer of the *śrutis*: The *Vedas* said, “Lord Brahmā and the other rulers of the heavenly planets (*dyu-pataya*) cannot find the end of Your glories. What can we do, then, since we are insignificant in comparison to these great demigods?”

Lord Narayana replied, “No, you *śrutis* are gifted with more sublime vision than those demigods. You will be able to reach the end of My glories if you do not stop now.”

Śrutis: “But even You cannot find Your own limit!”

Lord Narayana: “If that is the case, what do you mean when you say that I am all-knowing and all-powerful?”

Śrutis: “We conclude that You possess these features from the very fact that You are limitless. Certainly if one is ignorant of something that does not even exist, like a rabbit’s horn, that does not detract from his omniscience. And if one fails to find such a nonentity, that does not limit his omnipotence. You are so vast that multitudes of universes float within You. Each of these universes is surrounded by seven shells composed of the material elements, and each of these concentric shells is ten times larger than the one within it. Although we can never fully describe the truth about You, we perfect our existence by declaring that You are the true topic of the *Vedas*.”

Lord Narayana: “But why do you seem dissatisfied?”

Śrutis: “Because in the *Vedas* Śrīla Vyāsadeva has described the transcendental existence of Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān only briefly. When he saw the need to elaborate on his description of the Supreme, he chose to concentrate on the subject of Brahman, the impersonal aspect of the Supreme known as *tat* “that”. He described Brahman by negating whatever is different from it. Just as in a field where a chest of jewels has been accidentally spilled, the jewels can be recovered by removing unwanted stones, twigs and refuse. Similarly, within the visible realm of Māyā and her creations the Absolute Truth can be found by a process of elimination.

“We *Vedas* cannot possibly enumerate every material category,

individual entity, quality and motion in the universe from the beginning to the end of time. Even if we tried to describe all these things and then discarded them, the truth concerning Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān would still remain untouched. Therefore, by this means of investigation we can never expect to reach a final definition of You. Only by Your mercy can we make some attempt to approach You, the supremely inaccessible Absolute Truth.” This idea has been indicated previously in verses 14 (*akhila-sakty-avabodhaka te*); 27 (*tava pari ye paricaranti*); 32 (*nṛṣu tava māyayā*); and 2 (*upaniṣat brāhmī*). There are many statements of *śruti* that describe the process of distinguishing the Supreme from everything inferior (*atan-nirasanam*). The *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.8.8), for example, states, *asthūlam anaṇu ahrasvam adīrgham alohitam asneham acchāyam atamo ’vāyv anākāśam asaṅgam arasam agandham acakṣuṣkam aśrotram agamano ’tejaskam aprāṇam asukham amātram anantaram abāhyam*. “It is neither big nor small, short nor long, hot nor cool, in shadow nor in darkness. Nor is it the wind or the ether. It is not in contact with anything, and it has no taste, smell, eyes, ears, motion, potency, life air, pleasure, measurement, inside or outside.”

Text 42

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
ity etad brahmaṇaḥ putrā,
āśrutyātmānuśāsanam,
sanandanam athānarcuḥ,
siddhā jñātvātmano gatim*

The Supreme Lord, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi, said: Having heard these instructions about the Supreme Self, the Personality of Godhead, the sons of Brahmā now understood their final destination. They felt perfectly satisfied and honored Sanandana with their worship.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By hearing the twenty-eight prayers of the personified *Vedas*, which comprise the elucidation of the *Brahma Upanisad* spoken in verse two of this chapter (*buddhīndriya-maṇḍ-prāṇān*), the sons of Brahma assembled in Brahmaloḥa made great progress toward their goal (*ātmano gatim*) of pure love of God (*bhagavat-prema*).

Text 43

*ity aśeṣa-samāmnāya-
purāṇopaniṣad-rasaḥ,
samuddhṛtaḥ pūrva-jātair,
vyoma-yānair mahātmabhiḥ*

Thus the ancient saints who travel in the upper heavens distilled this nectarean and confidential essence of all the Vedas and Purāṇas.

Text 44

*tvaṁ caitad brahma-dāyāda,
śraddhayātmānuśāsanam,
dhārayaṁś cara gāṁ kāmam,
kāmanām bharjanaṁ nṛṇām*

And as you wander the earth at will, My dear son of Brahmā, you should faithfully meditate on these instructions concerning the science of the Self, which burn up the material desires of all men.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi said, “O Narada, son of Brahma (*brahma-dāyāda*)! With great faith take this supreme teaching which destroys attachment to the world, and wander on this earth as you desire.”

Text 45

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam sa ṛṣiṇādiṣṭam,
gṛhītvā śraddhayātmavān,
pūrṇaḥ śruta-dharo rājann,
āha vīra-vrato munīḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: When Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi ordered him in this way, the self-possessed sage Nārada, whose vow is as heroic as a warrior’s, accepted the command with firm faith. Now successful in all his purposes, he thought about what he had heard, O King, and replied to the Lord as follows.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Meditating on the meaning of what he had heard (*śruta-dharo*), Narada held strongly to his promise (*vrataḥ:pratijñā*) and replied to Lord Narayana Rsi.

Text 46

*śrī-nārada uvāca,
namas tasmai bhagavate,
kṛṣṇāyāmala-kīrtaye,
yo dhatte sarva-bhūtānām,
abhavāyośatīḥ kalāḥ*

Śrī Nārada said: I offer My obeisances to Him of spotless fame, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who manifests His all-attractive personal expansions so that all living beings can achieve liberation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Narada, discerning the real meaning of the *Vedas*’ prayers, then openly acknowledges in this verse the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa, even above Narayana.

Among the different spiritual paths such as *jnana* and *yoga* mentioned in the *śrutis*’ praises, *bhakti* is the best. Among the different worshipers, the devotees are the best. Among the objects of worship, namely Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan, Bhagavan is the best. Narada Muni has concluded this from all the statements of the *śrutis*. He has further concluded that even in Bhagavan, however, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme as understood from verses 17 and 23.

To indicate this, Narada loudly recites this verse directly in front of Narayana: *namas tasmai bhagavate*, “I offer my respects to Bhagavan Sri Kṛṣṇa.” To say *namas tubhyam nārāyāṇāya*, “I offer my respects to Narayana” would have been contrary to his feelings. Narada said, “I offer my respects to He who is famous for removing the contamination (*āmala-kīrtaye*) of ignorance by giving liberation even to the demons.” Lord Nārāyaṇa Āṣi asked, “Why are you offering your respects to Kṛṣṇa instead of Me, your *guru*, who am standing here before you?”

Narada replied, “Sri Kṛṣṇa accepts various beautiful forms (*uśatīḥ kalāḥ*) such as yourself to end the conditioned souls’ material life (*abhavāya*).”

By offering obeisances to Sri Kṛṣṇa, therefore, Nārada honors Nārāyaṇa Āṣi and all other incarnations of Godhead as well. This prayer of Nārada’s is the essential nectar he has extracted from the personified *Vedas*’ prayers, which themselves were churned from the sweet ocean of all secrets contained in the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*. As the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Pūrva 50) recommends, *tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet taṁ rasayet taṁ bhajet taṁ yajed iti. om tat sat*: “Therefore

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Godhead. One should worship Kṛṣṇa, surrender fully to Kṛṣṇa, meditate on Kṛṣṇa, and relish the taste of reciprocating loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa.”

Text 47

*ity ādyam ṛṣim ānamya,
tac-chiṣyāṁś ca mahātmanaḥ,
tato 'gād āśramaṁ sākṣāt,
pitur dvaipāyanasya me*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] After saying this, Nārada bowed down to Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi, the foremost of sages, and also to His saintly disciples. He then returned to the hermitage of my father, Dvaipāyana Vyāsa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The word *iti* can mean either method or completion. Thus there are two meanings of this verse.

Narada paid respects to Narayana Rsi in this manner (*iti*) by reciting prayers to Kṛṣṇa. Then he left his asrama (*tataḥ*:Nārāyaṇāśrama) and went to Vyasadeva’s asrama.

Or the meaning can be: After completing (*iti*) his prayers to Kṛṣṇa, Narada Muni offered his respects to Narayana Rsi and went to the asrama of Vyasadeva.

Text 48

*sabhājito bhagavatā,
kṛtāsana-parigrahaḥ,
tasmai tad varṇayām āsa,
nārāyaṇa-mukhāc chrutam*

Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of the Personality of Godhead, respectfully greeted Nārada Muni and offered him a seat, which he accepted. Nārada then described to Vyāsa what he had heard from the mouth of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Āṣi.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being honored by Vyasa (*bhagavatā*) with a respectable seat, Narada sat down and described to Vyasa (*tasmai*) the knowledge of God he had heard from Narayana Rsi.

Text 49

*ity etad varṇitam rājan,
yan naḥ praśnaḥ kṛtas tvayā,
yathā brahmaṇy anirdeśye,
nīrguṇe 'pi manaś caret*

Thus I have replied to the question You asked me, O King, concerning how the mind can have access to the Absolute Truth, which is indescribable by material words and devoid of material qualities.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “O King Parikṣit! I have replied to you how the mind can conceive of God who is beyond material conceptions and without material qualities.” The answer is: The mind can perceive God by the power of devotion (*bhakti*) arising from the mercy of the Supreme Lord.

Text 50

*yo 'syotprekṣaka ādi-madhya-nidhane yo 'vyakta-jīveśvaro,
yaḥ srṣṭvedam anupraviśya ṛṣiṇā cakre puraḥ śāsti tāḥ,
yaṁ sampadya jahāty ajām anuśayī suptaḥ kulāyaṁ yathā,
taṁ kaivalya-nirasta-yonim abhayaṁ dhyāyed ajasraṁ harim*

He is the Lord who eternally watches over this universe, who exists before, during and after its manifestation. He is the master of both the unmanifest material energy and the spirit soul. After sending forth the creation He enters within it, accompanying each living entity. There He creates the material bodies and then remains as their regulator. By surrendering to Him one can escape the embrace of illusion, just as a dreaming person forgets his own body. One who wants liberation from fear should constantly meditate upon Him, Lord Hari, who is always on the platform of perfection and thus never subject to material birth.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Summarizing the meaning of all the prayers of the personified *Vedas*, Sukadeva makes us again remember the facts: “By glancing (*utprekṣakaḥ*) upon the dormant universe at the time of sending forth the *jīva* souls into creation, the Supreme Lord provides all their necessities: For the fruitive workers (*karmis*), Kṛṣṇa provides the intelligence, mind, senses and *prana* needed to achieve the fruits of their *karma*, namely material sense enjoyment. For the *jñānis*, the Lord provides the intelligence by which they can attain liberation by merging into His spiritual effulgence. And for the devotees (*bhaktas*), the Lord helps them attain His association in an eternal loving relationship. Thus in each of these ways the Supreme Lord thinks of where He can send each *jīva* in the material realm.

“It is the Supreme Lord alone who is constantly present before, during and after the manifestation of the created cosmos. Lord Nārāyaṇa Himself states this in the *Catuḥ-ślokī* of the *Bhāgavatam*:

*aham evāsam evāgre, nānyad yat sad-asat-param paścād ahaṁ yad
etac ca, yo 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham*

“It is I, the Personality of Godhead, who was existing before the creation, when there was nothing but Myself. Nor was there the material nature, the cause of this creation. That which you see now is also I, the Personality of Godhead and after annihilation what remains will also be I, the Personality of Godhead.” (SB. 2.9.33)

Next Sukadeva describes how the Supreme Lord is the cause and controller (‘*vyakta-jīveśvaro*) of everything in the entire universe, which is composed of *maya* and the *jiva*. Because they are both His energies and because His energies are not different from their source, the *saktiman*, the unmanifest nature, *maya*, and the *jiva* are both Him alone. This establishes that the Supreme Lord is the ingredient cause of creation (*upādāna-kāraṇam*), the efficient cause (*nimitta-kāraṇam*) and also the supreme controller.

Sukadeva Gosvami then speaks how the Supreme Lord also acts by entering the universe to effect the secondary creation (*visarga*): “After creating this universe the Supreme Lord creates the bodies (*purah*) of the demigods, men, animals and others through the agency of Brahma (*ṛṣiṇā*), and He controls them by His expansion as the Paramatma, who, like a Vedic sage (*ṛṣiṇā*), is untouched by material contamination.” The word *ṛṣiṇā* therefore has two functions here.

Then Sukadeva explains how the *jiva* can transcend material existence by devotion to the Lord: “By surrendering (*sampadya:prapadya*) to the Supreme Lord, the *jiva*, who is helplessly bound up in the embrace of illusion (*anuśayī:avidyāśliṣṭaḥ*), falls like a rod to pay obeisances at the Lord’s feet. By that surrender the soul becomes totally free from *maya* (*ajām:māyām*), who creates all the objects of this world.” According to Sridhara Swami, the word *anuśayī* means that the *jiva* lies down paying *dandavats* again and again (*anu-sayi*) to the Lord.

But, it could be argued that the devotee, even though he has surrendered to the Lord, still has a material body.

Therefore Sukadeva says, “A liberated soul pays no more regard to his body (*kulāyam:sva-sarīram*) than a sleeping (*suptaḥ*) man pays to his body while busily engaged far, far away in his dream world.” This means that the devotee gives up ignorance by abandoning his false

identification with his material body. It should be understood however that sometimes this giving up of ignorance is not based on proper surrender to the Lord as in the case of impersonalists.

But in some cases the Lord may show special consideration for one He favors, regardless of whether any *sādhana* has been performed or not. Even if a *jiva* has not practiced solitary *bhajana* (*kaivalya*) for attaining liberation, still the merciful Lord causes the “womb” (*yonim*) of the living entity’s illusion to be dispelled (*nirasta*). In the words of Śrī Bhīṣmadeva, *yam iha nirīkṣya hatā gatāḥ svarūpam*: “Those who simply saw Kṛṣṇa on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra attained their original forms after being killed.” (SB 1.9.39) That even demons like Agha, Baka and Keśī were liberated by Sri Kṛṣṇa without having performed any spiritual practices is an indication of Sri Kṛṣṇa’s unique position as the original Personality of Godhead.

Knowing this, one should abandon all his doubts and fear of the various philosophers who speak nonsense under the sway of their own *karma* and the force of time. One should then incessantly meditate upon Lord Hari, who by His charming sweetness steals away the mind of those endowed with *prema*.

I [Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura] take the opportunity to offer this humble prayer:

*he bhaktā dvāry ayaṁ cañcad, vāladhī rauti vo manāk prasādam
labhatām yasmād, viśiṣṭaḥ śveva nāthati*

“O devotees! This person with an unsteady, dull mind is offering praises at your door. You should let him have a little mercy since he is expert and quickly does the soliciting.”

The word *cañcad-vāladhī* can also mean “wagging tail,” since *vāladhī* means tail according to the *Amara-kosa* dictionary. Thus the meaning would be as follows: “O devotees, this poor creature standing at your doorway is wagging his tail and barking. Please let him have a little *prasādam* so that he may become exceptional among dogs and get the best of masters as his owner.”

Embedded in the last line of the verse above is the word “*visvanatha*.” The word *viś* (*viśiṣṭaḥ*) means “exceptional”, *śva iva* (*śveva*) means

“like a dog”, and the word *nātha* (*nāthati*) means “having a master”. Therefore, *visvanatha* means, “An exceptional dog having a master.” Or the meaning of *visvanatha* can be, “one who begs in a special way”. Or it can mean: “This is the method of achieving the association of the Lord of the universe, Visvanatha.” Thus Visvanatha concludes his commentary on the prayers by the personified *Vedas*.

Chapter Eighty-eight: Lord Śiva Saved from Vṛkāsura

Text 1

*śrī-rājovāca,
devāsura-manuṣyesu,
ye bhajanty aśivaṁ śivam,
prāyas te dhanino bhojā,
na tu lakṣmyāḥ patiṁ harim*

King Parīkṣit said: Those demigods, demons and humans who worship Lord Śiva, a strict renunciant, usually enjoy wealth and sense gratification, while the worshipers of the Supreme Lord Hari, the husband of the goddess of fortune, do not.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter states that only Visnu is worthy of worship because He is beyond the three modes of material nature. Lord Siva, however, touches the material modes, and was put into danger by his own devotee, Vṛka. Visnu and His devotees are always exchanging bliss on the transcendental platform, whereas Siva and his devotees, caught up in the modes, only experience suffering. The personified *Vedas* have already stated that among the primary forms of Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan, Bhagavan and His devotee are the best. Now in a chapter and a half it will be pointed out that amongst Brahma, Visnu and Siva, Visnu is the most excellent and most worthy of service.

Parikṣit Maharaja said, “You ended the preceding chapter with the recommendation that one should always meditate on Lord Hari (*dhyāyed ajasraṁ harim*), the bestower of liberation. Why then do ordinary people fear that they will lose their wealth and social status by

worshipping Lord Hari and therefore instead worship Lord Hara [Siva]? Persons with materialistic vision perceive Siva as inauspicious (*aśivam*) because he covers his body with ashes from the crematorium and wears inauspicious items like skulls. But we see that the worshipers of Siva enjoy abundant sense gratification (*bhojāḥ*), whereas the worshipers of Visnu, the husband of the goddess of fortune, enjoy neither wealth nor sense gratification.”

Text 2

*etad veditum icchāmaḥ,
sandeho 'tra mahān hi naḥ,
viruddha-śīlayoḥ prabhvor,
viruddhā bhajatām gatīḥ*

We wish to properly understand this matter, which greatly puzzles us. Indeed, the results attained by the worshipers of these two lords of opposite characters are contrary to what one would expect.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Visnu and Siva are of opposite (*viruddha*) natures in the sense that those who worship Siva, who lives like a beggar, become rich and powerful, while those who worship Visnu, the master of the goddess of fortune, often become reduced to abject poverty.

Text 3

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śāśvat,
tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ,
vaikārikas taijasaś ca,*

tāmasaś cety aham tridhā

Śrī Śukadeva said: Lord Śiva is always united with his personal energy, the material nature. Manifesting himself in three features in response to the entreaties of nature’s three modes, he thus embodies the threefold principle of material ego in goodness, passion and ignorance.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva is associated with the material energy (*śakti-yutaḥ*). He is surrounded by the modes, because they pleaded with him to be accepted. Although by that covering Siva appears to be made of the three modes, he is not forcibly bound up by these modes like the *jīva*. Siva’s relation with the three modes is elaborated upon in the words beginning with *vaikārikas* (false ego in the mode of goodness). The words *aham tridhā* indicate that Siva embodies the three types of false ego in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance.

Text 4

*tato vikārā abhavan,
ṣoḍaśāmīṣu kañcana,
upadhāvan vibhūtīnām,
sarvāsām aśnute gatim*

The sixteen elements have evolved as transformations of that false ego. When a devotee of Lord Śiva worships his manifestation in any one of these elements, the devotee obtains all sorts of corresponding enjoyable opulences.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sukadeva Gosvami said, “There are

sixteen transformations of false ego: the mind, ten senses (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, hands, feet, voice, genitals and anus), and five physical elements (earth, water, fire, air and ether). People pursuing enjoyment of any of these, such as the genital, tongue or mind, worship Siva and obtain the essence (*gatim:svarūpam*) of all types of material enjoyment (*vibhūtīnām sarvāsām: sampatīnām*).

“This means that because of the interdependence of all these elements, by attaining one, the *siva-bhakta* obtains all varieties of sense gratification. The attainment of pleasures is in proportion to the amount of worship. Thus, since Lord Siva embodies the modes of material nature, and since material pleasures are manifestations of these three modes, it is by worshipping Siva that one obtains them. Therefore what you said is not wrong.”

Text 5

*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt,
puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ,
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā,
taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet*

Lord Hari, however, has no connection with the material modes. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the all-seeing eternal witness, who is transcendental to material nature. One who worships Him becomes similarly free from the material modes.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: How is Visnu untouched by the three modes (*nirguṇa*) of material nature? He is situated in His own transcendental position, beyond the material energy. Therefore by worshipping Visnu, who is beyond the modes, how can one get enjoyment produced by the material modes?

From Visnu comes everyone’s knowledge, including that of Siva. Thus

Lord Viṣṇu’s worshiper gains the eye of transcendental knowledge instead of being blinded by mundane assets. The word *upadraṣṭā* (witness) indicates that because Visnu is not contaminated by the material modes, He remains aloof, merely witnessing. Therefore by worshiping Visnu one also becomes *nirguṇa*, untouched by the modes. Thus it will be stated later on, *yataḥ śāntir yato ’bhayam, dharmah sāksād yato jñānam, vairāgyam ca tad-anvitam*, “From Him comes peace, fearlessness, religion, knowledge and renunciation.” (SB 10.89.14-15)

Text 6

*nivr̥ttesv aśva-medheṣu,
rājā yuṣmat-pitāmahaḥ,
śṛṇvan bhagavato dharmān,
apṛcchad idam acyutam*

Your grandfather, King Yudhiṣṭhira, after completing his Aśvamedha sacrifices, asked Lord Acyuta this very same question while hearing the Lord’s explanation of religious principles.

Text 7

*sa āha bhagavāms tasmai,
prītaḥ śuśrūṣave prabhuh,
nṛṇām niḥśreyasārthāya,
yo ’vatīrṇo yadoḥ kule*

This question pleased Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the King’s Lord and master, who

had descended into the family of Yadu for the purpose of bestowing the highest good on all men. The Lord replied as follows as the King eagerly listened.

Text 8

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi,
hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ,
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya,
svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

The Personality of Godhead said: If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: A man suffers when he loses his wealth, and due to poverty he suffers even more due to being rejected by his relatives. Devotees of the Supreme Lord experience both happiness and distress—not as the fruits of their *karma* (material work) but as incidental effects of their loving reciprocation with the Lord. As stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (1.2.9): *dharmasya hy āpavargyasya*, “All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain.”

This is also demonstrated in the words of Bhismadeva who said that devotees engage only in devotional service. Devotional scriptures such as *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explain how a Vaiṣṇava is relieved of all *karmic* reactions, including those that have not yet begun to manifest (*aprārabdha*), those that are just about to manifest (*kūṭa*), those that are barely manifesting (*bīja*) and those that have manifested fully

(*prārabdha*). As a lotus gradually loses its many petals, so a person who practices *bhakti-bhajana* has all his *karmic* reactions destroyed. That *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* destroys all *karmic* reactions is confirmed in the *Gopāla-tāpanī śruti* (Pūrva 15): *bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam etad eva naiṣkarmyam*, “Devotional service is the process of worshipping the Supreme Lord. It consists of fixing the mind upon Him by becoming disinterested in all material designations, both in this life and the next. It results in the dissolution of all *karma*.”

The meaning of this statement is that by becoming freed from material desires, a devotee can fix his mind and senses (*manaḥ-kalpanam*) in Kṛṣṇa’s service (*bhakti-bhajanam*) and become free from *karma* (*naiṣkarmyam*). This must be the meaning because of the grammatical agreement of the words *bhajanam*, *manaḥ kalpanam* and *naiṣkarmyam*. Therefore, by doing *bhajana* all *karmas* are destroyed, even though the devotee is still situated in the material body. This happens due to the inconceivable mercy of the Lord, who bestows the fruits of devotion. Although the happiness and distress devotees experience resemble ordinary *karmic* reactions (*prārabdha*), they are in fact given by the Lord Himself. As the *Bhāgavatam* (10.87.40) states, *bhavad-utthāśubhāśubhayoḥ*: A mature devotee recognizes the superficially good and bad conditions he encounters as signs of the direct guidance of his ever well-wishing Lord.

“But if the Lord is so compassionate to His devotees, why does He expose them to special suffering?” This is answered by an analogy: A very affectionate father takes the responsibility of restricting his children’s play and making them go to school. He knows that this is a genuine expression of his love for them, even if the children cannot appreciate it. Similarly, the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu is mercifully strict with all His dependents, not only with immature devotees struggling to become qualified. Even perfect saints like Prahlāda and Dhruva were subjected to great tribulations, but in the end the Lord gave them profuse enjoyment of wealth and material happiness. On the other hand, persons like Yudhisthira, the crest jewel of perfected saints, experienced

great unhappiness. After the Battle of Kurukṣetra, Bhīṣmadeva described to King Yudhiṣṭhira his wonder at this:

*yatra dharma-suto raja, gadā-pānir vṛkodaraḥ kṛṣṇo 'strī gāṇḍivam
cāpam, suhr̥t kṛṣṇas tato vipat na hy asya karhicid rājan, pumān vetti
vidhīsitam yad-vijijñāsayā yuktā, muhyanti kavayo 'pi hi*

“Oh, how wonderful is the influence of inevitable time! It is irreversible—otherwise, how can there be reverses in the presence of King Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of the demigod controlling religion; Bhīma, the great fighter with a club; the great bowman Arjuna with his mighty weapon Gāṇḍīva; and above all, the Lord, the direct well-wisher of the Pāṇḍavas? O King, no one can know the plan of Sri Kṛṣṇa. Even though great philosophers inquire exhaustively, they are bewildered.” (SB 1.9.15–16)

Thus the conclusion is that only the Lord Himself, being affectionate to His devotees, knows His intentions and no one else. One should refer to Bhismadeva’s prayers in the First Canto to consider all the points mentioned here. “But,” it may be questioned, “what distinguishes the happiness and distress caused by one’s own *karma* and that brought about by the Personality of Godhead?” Material happiness and distress, arising from *karma*, leave a subtle residue—the seed of desire (*karma-bīja*) which causes future entanglement. Such enjoyment and suffering tend toward degradation and increase the danger of falling into hellish oblivion. The happiness and distress generated from the Supreme Lord’s will, however, and not the *jiva*’s desires, leave no trace after their immediate purpose has been served. Moreover, the Vaiṣṇava who enjoys such reciprocation with the Lord is in no danger of falling down into hell. As Yamarāja, the lord of death, declares:

*jihvā na vakti bhagavad-guṇa-nāmadheyam cetaś ca na smarati tac-
caraṇāravindam kṛṣṇāya no namati yac-chira ekadāpi tān ānayadhvam
asato 'kṛta-viṣṇu-kṛtyān*

“My dear servants, please bring to me only those sinful persons who do not use their tongues to chant the holy name and qualities of Kṛṣṇa, whose hearts do not remember the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa even once, and whose heads do not bow down even once before Sri Kṛṣṇa. Send me

those who do not perform their duties toward Viṣṇu, which are the only duties in human life. Please bring me all such fools and rascals.” (SB 6.3.29)

Because the devotees are objects of the Lord’s affection, their suffering is never extreme. How can one consider the suffering arising from *karma* and that due to the Lord to be equal? One is like the pain arising from receiving a beating from an enemy, and the other is like that caused by one’s mother; one is like poison and the other is like nectar. “But is it that the Lord, who can do anything, cannot accomplish His purposes without giving distress to His devotees?”

“Yes, He, the reservoir of unlimited pastimes, cannot accomplish His purposes without this. But when He sometimes gives suffering to His beloved devotees, that suffering gives rise to great pleasure, just as a stinging ointment applied by a physician cures his patient’s infected eye. In addition, suffering protects the confidentiality of devotional service, prevents the disruption of the beliefs of the various categories of outsiders, and increases the eagerness with which the devotees call upon the Lord to appear. Moreover, if the devotees were complacently happy all the time, the Lord would never have a reason to appear in this world as Kṛṣṇa, Rāmacandra and Nṛsimha, since They come to protect the devotees and destroy the demons. As Kṛṣṇa Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8):

paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām, vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām dharmasamsthāpanārthāya, sambhavāmi yuge yuge

“To deliver the pious and annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I appear millennium after millennium.”

Without the Lord’s showing Himself on earth in His original form of Kṛṣṇa and other incarnations, how would the devotees in this world be able to enjoy playing in the nectar ocean of the *rasa-līla* and His other pastimes? “But what fault would there be in God’s incarnating for some other reason than to deliver saintly persons from suffering?”

“Yes, my dear brother, this makes good sense, but you are not expert in understanding spiritual moods. Please listen: The sunrise appears

attractive because of the darkness of night. During the hot summer cold water gives comfort, and during the cold winter months warm water is pleasing. Lamplight appears attractive in darkness, not in the glaring light of day, and when one is distressed by hunger, food tastes especially good. There is no need to elaborate more.”

Text 9

*sa yadā vitathodyogo,
nirviṇṇaḥ syād dhanehayā,
mat-paraiḥ kṛta-maitrasya,
kariṣye mad-anugraham*

When he becomes frustrated in his attempts to make money and instead befriends My devotees, I bestow My special mercy upon him.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “I will give My mercy (*kariṣye mad-anugraham*) to him. This is the second mercy. I will cause an extraordinary shower of sweet *bhakti-rasa* to rain down on My devotees. It was for this purpose that My first mercy bore the fruit of tormenting pain.” In this verse the statement *kariṣye mad-anugraham*, “I give My mercy” can be better stated that “I give mercy in the form of My very self.”

Text 10

*tad brahma paramaṁ sūkṣmaṁ,
cin-mātraṁ sad anantakam,
vijñāyātmatayā dhīraḥ,
saṁsārāt parimucyate*

A person who has thus become sober fully realizes the Absolute as the highest truth, the most subtle and perfect manifestation of spirit, the transcendental existence without end. In this way realizing that the Supreme Truth is the foundation of his own existence, he is freed from the cycle of material life.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this verse, Sri Kṛṣṇa explains how His special mercy is equal to Himself. Sri Kṛṣṇa said, “My mercy is equal to Brahman, because it is supremely great and because it is imperceivable to persons with material vision. It is superexcellent (*paramam*) and subtle (*sūkṣmam*) in the sense it is inconceivable even to the devotee who is being shown mercy. It is purely spiritual (*cin-mātram*) because of its ability to give experience of *prema-rasa* (the mellow of pure love), and because it is devoid of any material happiness. It exists through all time (*sat*), and because of it one has no fear of death (*anantakam*). As a secondary result, My mercy destroys the cycle of birth and death (*saṁsārāt parimucyate*).” Sometimes the half-verse beginning with *vijñāyātmatayā* is read as part of this verse, but that is against the opinion of our *sampradaya*, according to *Sri Vaisnava-tosani* of Sanatana Gosvami.

Text 11

*ato mām su-durārādhyam,
hitvānyān bhajate janah,
tatas ta āśu-toṣebhyo,
labdha-rājya-śriyoddhatāḥ,
mattāḥ pramattā vara-dān,
vismayanty avajānate*

Because I am difficult to worship, people generally avoid Me and instead worship other deities, who are quickly satisfied. When people receive kingly opulences from these deities, they become arrogant, intoxicated with pride and neglectful of their duties. They dare to offend even the demigods who have bestowed benedictions upon them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa is difficult to worship because He destroys the happiness of mundane interactions. The person who worships demigods lacks insight (*pramattah*), becomes proud, and then offends those who bestow benedictions.

Text 12

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
śāpa-prasādayor īśā,
brahma-viṣṇu-śivādayaḥ sadyaḥ śāpa-prasādo 'ṅga,
śivo brahmā na cācyutaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Śiva and others are able to curse or bless one. Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā are very quick to curse or bestow benedictions, my dear King, but the infallible Supreme Lord is not.

Text 13

*atra codāharantīmam,
itihāsaṁ purātanam,
vṛkāsūrāya giriśo,
varam dattvāpa saṅkaṭam*

In this connection, an ancient historical account is related concerning how the Lord of Kailāsa Mountain was put into danger by offering a choice of benedictions to the demon Vṛka.

Text 14

*vṛko nāmāsuraḥ putraḥ,
śakuneḥ pathi nāradam,
dṛṣṭvāśu-toṣaṁ papraccha,
deveṣu triṣu durmatih*

The demon named Vṛka, a son of Śakuni's, once met Nārada on the road. The wicked fellow asked him which of the three chief gods could be pleased most quickly.

Text 15

*sa āha devaṁ giriśam,
upādhāvāśu siddhyasi,
yo 'lpābhyāṁ guṇa-doṣābhyām,
āśu tuṣyati kupyati*

Nārada told him: Worship Lord Śiva and you will soon achieve success. He quickly becomes pleased by seeing his worshiper's slightest good qualities—and quickly angered by seeing his slightest fault.

Text 16

*daśāsya-bāṇayos tuṣṭaḥ,
stuvator vandīnor iva,
aiśvaryam atulaṁ dattvā,
tata āpa su-saṅkaṭam*

He became pleased with ten-headed Rāvaṇa, and also with Bāṇa, when they each chanted his glories, like bards in a royal court. Lord Śīva then bestowed unprecedented power upon each of them, but in both cases he was consequently beset with great difficulty.

Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Śiva encountered serious difficulty from Ravana’s uprooting his residence on Kailāsa-parvata, and because of having to guard Banasura’s capital.

Text 17

*ity ādiṣṭas tam asura,
upādhāvat sva-gātrataḥ,
kedāra ātma-kavyeṇa,
juhvāno gñi-mukhaṁ haram*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus advised, the demon proceeded to worship Lord Śīva at Kedāranātha by taking pieces of flesh from his own body and offering them as oblations into the sacred fire, which is Lord Śīva’s mouth.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Vrkasura worshiped Siva by cutting off pieces of his own flesh (*ātma-kravyeṇa*) and offering them to Lord Siva.

Texts 18–19

*devopalabdhim aprāpya,
nirvedāt saptame 'hani,
śiro 'vṛścat sudhitinā,
tat-tīrtha-kinna-mūrdhajam,
tadā mahā-kāruṇiko sa dhūrjaṭiḥ,
yathā vyaṃ cāgnir ivotthito 'nalāt,
nigrhya dorbhyaṃ bhujayor nyavārayat,
tat-sparśanād bhūya upaskṛtākṛtiḥ*

Vṛkāsura became frustrated after failing to obtain a vision of the lord. Finally, on the seventh day, after dipping his hair into the holy waters at Kedāranātha and leaving it wet, he took up a hatchet and prepared to cut off his head. But at that very moment the supremely merciful Lord Śiva rose up out of the sacrificial fire, looking like the god of fire himself, and grabbed both arms of the demon to stop him from killing himself, just as we would do. By Lord Śiva's touch, Vṛkāsura once again became whole.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Taking a hatchet (*sudhitinā*), the demon was about to cut off his head, which was wet with water from that holy place. Glowing brilliantly like fire, Siva appeared and stopped him, just as we would prevent someone from killing himself due to grief. After restoring (*upaskṛtākṛtiḥ*) Vrkasura's body, Siva spoke to the demon.

Text 20

*tam āha cāṅgālam alam vṛṇīṣva me,
yathābhikāmaṁ vitarāmi te varam,
prīyeya toyena nṛṇāṁ prapadyatām,
aho tvayātmā bhṛśam ardyate vṛthā*

Lord Śiva said to him: My friend, please stop, stop! Ask from me whatever you want, and I will bestow that boon upon you. Alas, you have subjected your body to great torment for no reason, since I am pleased with a simple offering of water from those who approach me for shelter.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Siva said, “Enough, enough (alam alam) of this cutting off your head!”

Text 21

*devaṁ sa vavre pāpīyān,
varam bhūta-bhayāvaham,
yasya yasya karaṁ śīrṣṇi,
dhāsyē sa mriyatām iti*

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The benediction sinful Vṛka chose from the lord would terrify all living beings. Vṛka said, “May death come to whomever I touch upon the head with my hand.”

Text 22

tac chrutvā bhagavān rudro,

*durmanā iva bhārata,
om̐ iti prahasāms tasmai,
dade 'her amṛtam yathā*

Upon hearing this, Lord Rudra seemed somewhat disturbed. Nonetheless, O descendant of Bharata, he vibrated om̐ to signify his assent, granting Vṛka the benediction with an ironic smile, as if giving milk to a poisonous snake.

Text 23

*sa tad-vara-parīkṣārtham,
śambhor mūrdhni kilāsurah,
sva-hastam dhātum ārebhe,
so 'bibhyat sva-kṛtāc chivaḥ*

To test Lord Śambhu's benediction, the demon then tried to put his hand on the Lord's head. Thus Śiva was frightened because of what he himself had done.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Siva became afraid (*abibhyat bhayam prāpa*) of the benediction he himself had given (*sva-kṛtāc*). The word *abibhyat* is an alternative reading for *abibhyet*, and is justified by the poetic license of the sages.

Text 24

*tenopasṛṣṭaḥ santrastaḥ,
parādhāvan sa-vepathuḥ,*

*yāvad antaṁ divo bhūmeḥ,
kaṣṭhānām udagād udak*

As the demon pursued him, Lord Śiva fled swiftly from his abode in the north, shaking with terror. He ran as far as the limits of the earth, the sky and the corners of the universe.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Being chased by the demon, Siva started running very quickly from his abode in the north (*udak*), and went to the limits of the directions in heaven and earth.

Texts 25–26

*ajānantaḥ prati-vidhim,
tūṣṇīm āsan sureśvarāḥ,
tato vaikuṅṭham agamad,
bhāsvaram tamasaḥ param,
yatra nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣān,
nyāsinām paramo gatih,
śāntānām nyasta-danḍānām,
yato nāvartate gataḥ*

The great demigods could only remain silent, not knowing how to counteract the benediction. Then Lord Śiva reached the luminous realm of Vaikuṅṭha, beyond all darkness, where the Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa is manifest. That realm is the destination of renunciants who have attained peace and given up all violence against other creatures. Going there, one never returns.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Brahma and other leaders of the demigods (*sureśvarāḥ*) could not find a remedy so they kept silent. Lord

Siva then went to Vaikuntha, far beyond the darkness of the material world (*tamasah param*).

Texts 27–28

*taṁ tathā vyasanam dr̥ṣṭvā,
bhagavān vṛjinārdanaḥ,
dūrāt pratyudiyād bhūtvā,
baṭuko yoga-māyayā,
mekhalājina-daṇḍākṣais,
tejasāgnir iva jvalan,
abhivādayām āsa ca taṁ,
kuśa-pāṇir vinīta-vat*

The Supreme Lord, who relieves His devotees’ distress, had seen from afar that Lord Śiva was in danger. Thus by His mystic Yogamāyā potency He assumed the form of a brahmacārī student, with the appropriate belt, deerskin, rod and prayer beads, and came before Vṛkāsura. The Lord’s effulgence glowed brilliantly like fire. Holding kuśa grass in His hand, He humbly greeted the demon.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Visnu, assuming the dress of a *brahmacari*, came before (*pratyudiyāt*) Vrkasura. Visnu greeted him by offering blessings and paying His respects.

The phrase *abhivādayām āsa*, “He respectfully greeted” can also mean the disguised Lord Nārāyaṇa said, “For Us seers of the Absolute Truth, all created beings are worthy of respect. Since you are the son of Śakuni, a wise man and a performer of great austerities, you certainly deserve the respectful greeting of a young *brahmacārī* like Myself.”

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
śākuneya bhavān vyaktaṁ,
śrāntaḥ kiṁ dūram āgataḥ,
kṣaṇaṁ viśramyatām puṁsa,
ātmāyaṁ sarva-kāma-dhuk*

The Supreme Lord said: My dear son of Śakuni, you appear tired. Why have you come such a great distance? Please rest for a minute. After all, it is one’s body that fulfills all one’s desires.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Narayana said, “This body (*atma*) fulfills all of our desires (*sarva-kāma-dhuk*). Therefore do not torment it by the fatigue of running excessively.”

Text 30

*yadi naḥ śravaṇāyālam,
yuṣmad-vyavasitaṁ vibho,
bhānyatām prāyaśaḥ pumbhir;
dhṛtaiḥ svārthān samīhate*

O mighty one, please tell Us what you intend to do, if We are qualified to hear it. Usually one accomplishes his purposes by taking help from others.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Narayana continued, “One’s work becomes successful by the help of others (*pumbhir dhṛtaiḥ*). Therefore you should tell Me your intention, so that I can assist you with the strength of My *brahma-tejas* (*brahminical* potency).”

Text 31

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evaṁ bhagavatā pṛṣṭo,
vacasāmṛta-varṣiṇā,
gata-klamo 'bravīt tasmai,
yathā-pūrvam anuṣṭhitam*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by the Personality of Godhead in language that poured down upon him like sweet nectar, Vṛka felt relieved of his fatigue. He described to the Lord everything he had done.

Text 32

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
evaṁ cet tarhi tad-vākyam,
na vyaṁ śraddadhīmahi,
yo dakṣa-śāpāt paiśācyam,
prāptaḥ preta-piśāca-rāṭ*

The Supreme Lord said: If this is the case, We cannot believe what Śiva says. Śiva is the same lord of the Pretas and Piśācas whom Dakṣa cursed to become like a carnivorous hobgoblin.

Text 33

*yadi vas tatra viśrambho,
dānavendra jagad-gurau,
tarhy aṅgāśu sva-śirasi,
hastam nyasya pratīyatām*

O best of the demons, if you have any faith in him because he is the spiritual master of the universe, then without delay put your hand on your head and see what happens.

Text 34

*yady asatyam vacaḥ śambhoḥ,
kathañcid dānavarṣabha,
tadainam jahy asad-vācam,
na yad vaktāṅṛtam punaḥ*

If the words of Lord Śambhu prove untrue in any way, O best of the demons, then kill the liar so he may never lie again.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Narayana said, “Though Lord Siva may have the mystic power to revive himself even after being killed, you should kill him, so at least he will be dissuaded from lying again.”

Text 35

*ittham bhagavataś citrair,
vacobhiḥ sa su-peśalaiḥ,
bhinna-dhīr vismṛtaḥ śīrṣṇi,*

sva-hastam kumatir nyadhāt

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Thus bewildered by the Personality of Godhead’s enchanting, artful words, foolish Vṛka, without realizing what he was doing, placed his hand on his head.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Forgetting about (*vismrtih*) Siva’s benediction, the demon touched his own head.

Text 36

*athāpatad bhinna-śirāḥ,
vrajāhata iva kṣaṇāt,
jaya-śabdo namaḥ-śabdaḥ,
sādhu-śabdo ’bhavad divi*

Instantly his head shattered as if struck by a lightning bolt, and the demon fell down dead. From the sky were heard cries of “Victory!” “Obeisances!” and “Well done!”

Text 37

*mumucuḥ puṣpa-varṣāṇi,
hate pāpe vṛkāsura,
devarṣi-pitr-gandharvā,
mocitaḥ saṅkaṭāc chivaḥ*

The celestial sages, Pitās and Gandharvas rained down flowers to

celebrate the killing of sinful Vṛkāsura. Now Lord Śiva was out of danger.

Texts 38–39

*muktaṁ giriśam abhyāha,
bhagavān puruṣottamaḥ,
aho deva mahā-deva,
pāpo 'yaṁ svena pāpmanā,
hataḥ ko nu mahatsv īśa,
jantur vai kṛta-kilbiṣaḥ,
kṣemī syāt kim u viśveśe,
kṛtāgasko jagad-gurau*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead then addressed Lord Giriśa, who was now out of danger: “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?”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This statement of Lord Viṣṇu’s implies a mild scolding: “My dear possessor of unlimited vision, O you of clear intelligence, benedictions should not be given to wicked demons in this way. You could have been killed! But you were only concerned about saving this poor soul, so you disregarded what would happen to you as a result.” By this mild rebuke, Lord Narayana is also highlighting the exceptional compassion of the powerful Lord Siva.

Text 40

*ya evam avyākṛta-śakty-udanvataḥ,
parasya sākṣāt paramātmāno hareḥ,
gītrā-mokṣam kathayec chr̥ṇoti vā,
vimucyate saṁsṛtibhis tathāribhiḥ*

Lord Hari is the directly manifest Absolute Truth, the Supreme Soul and unlimited ocean of inconceivable energies. Anyone who recites or hears this pastime of His saving Lord Śiva will be freed from all enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: He who hears or tells the story of Śiva's deliverance by Hari, the unlimited ocean (*udanvataḥ*) of inconceivable (*avyakṛta*) energies, will be freed from enemies and the repetition of birth and death.

Chapter Eighty-nine: Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna Retrieve a Brāhmaṇa's Sons

Text 1

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sarasvatyās taṭe rājann,
ṛṣayaḥ satram āsata,
vitarkaḥ samabhūt teṣām,
triṣv adhīśeṣu ko mahān*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, O King, as a group of sages were performing a Vedic sacrifice on the banks of the Sarasvatī River, a controversy arose among them as to which of the three chief deities is supreme.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, the supremacy of Visnu over Brahma and Siva is shown through a test by Bhrgu Muni. The superiority of Sri Kṛṣṇa even above Lord Visnu is shown by Lord Maha-Visnu's stealing a *brahmana*'s sons. Beginning with the words *sarasvatyās taṭe rājann*, another story is told to demonstrate that Lord Visnu alone should be served because He is Supreme above all.

Text 2

*tasya jijñāsayā te vai,
bhṛguṃ brahma-sutam nṛpa,
taj-jñaptyai preṣayām āsuḥ,
so 'bhjagād brahmaṇaḥ sabhām*

Eager to resolve this question, O King, the sages sent Lord Brahmā's son Bhṛgu to find the answer. First he went to his father's court.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The sages sent Bhṛgu to the court of Brahma in order to find an answer (*taj jnanaya*).

Text 3

*na tasmai prahvaṇam stotram,
cakre sattva-parīkṣayā,
tasmai cukrodha bhagavān,
prajvalan svena tejasā*

To test how well Lord Brahmā was situated in the mode of goodness, Bhṛgu failed to bow down to him or glorify him with prayers. The lord became angry at him, inflamed into fury by his own passion.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Bhṛgu did not bow down (*prahvanam*) in order to test Brahma's quality of *sattva-guna* or his greatness (*sattva-parīkṣayā*).

Text 4

*sa ātmany utthitam manyum,
ātmajāyātmanā prabhuh,
aśīśamad yathā vahniṁ,
sva-yonyā vāriṇātma-bhūḥ*

Though anger toward his son was now rising within his heart, Lord Brahmā was able to subdue it by applying his intelligence, in the same way that fire is extinguished by its own product, water.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Out of anger, Brahma intended to kill his son Bhr̥gu. As fire is subdued by that which has fire itself as its cause of generation (*sva-yonyā:utpatti-kāraṇam*), namely water, similarly, Brahma subdued his anger by his own expansion (his son). Or, just as fire is extinguished by its cause water (*yonya:kāraṇena*), so Brahma extinguished his anger by its cause, the mind (*ātmanā*). Since we see Agni-deva (the god of fire) is called Āsu-yoni (born from air) and Kapīṭa-yoni (born from wood), it is a well-known fact that sometimes fire is generated from water.

Text 5

*tataḥ kailāsam agamat,
sa taṁ devo maheśvaraḥ,
parirabdhum samārebha,
utthāya bhrātaraṁ mudā*

Bhr̥gu then went to Mount Kailāsa. There Lord Śiva stood up and happily came forward to embrace his brother.

Texts 6–7

*naicchat tvam asy utpatha-ga,
iti devaś cukopa ha,*

*śūlam udyamya taṁ hantum,
ārebhe tigma-locanaḥ,
pativā pādayor devī,
sāntvayām āsa taṁ girā,
atho jagāma vaikuṅṭhaṁ,
yatra devo janārdanaḥ*

But Bhṛgu refused his embrace, telling him, “You are a deviant heretic.” At this Lord Śiva became angry, and his eyes burned ferociously. He raised his trident and was about to kill Bhṛgu when Goddess Devī fell at his feet and spoke some words to pacify him. Bhṛgu then left that place and went to Vaikuṅṭha, where Lord Janārdana resides.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Upon testing Brahma by committing a mental offense to him, Bhṛgu understood that Brahma could not overcome the mode of passion. Bhṛgu then went to the superior Siva and committed a more serious offense by verbally insulting him. This is described in two verses.

Bhṛgu saw the mode of ignorance in Siva, and the mode of goodness in his expansion Parvatī. By testing Siva, Bhṛgu understood that he could not overcome his ignorance. Then Bhṛgu left Mount Kailasa and went to Vaikuntha (Śvetadvīpa), where he committed an even greater offense, namely a bodily offense against Lord Viṣṇu, the best person.

Texts 8–9

*śayānam śriya utsaṅge,
padā vakṣasy atādayat,
tata utthāya bhagavān,
saha lakṣmyā satām gatih,
sva-talpād avaruhyātha,*

*nanāma śirasā munim,
āha te svāgataṁ brahman,
niṣīdātrāsane kṣaṇam,
ajānatām āgatān vaḥ,
kṣantum arhatha naḥ prabho*

There he went up to the Supreme Lord, who was lying with His head on the lap of His consort, Śrī, and kicked Him on the chest. The Lord then rose, along with Goddess Lakṣmī, as a sign of respect. Coming down from His bedstead, that supreme goal of all pure devotees bowed His head to the floor before the sage and told him, 'Welcome, brāhmaṇa. Please sit in this chair and rest awhile. Kindly forgive us, dear master, for not noticing your arrival.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Not only did Bhṛgu commit an offense to the Lord, but he did it while Visnu was lying on a flower bed with His head in His wife's lap. For Bhṛgu to strike Lord Visnu in this position—and not with his hand but with his foot—was worse than any other offense Bhṛgu could have imagined. Bhṛgu did this in order to see if Visnu was in the mode of goodness. However, he saw Visnu display not even ordinary goodness but rather *śuddha-sattva*, transcendental goodness. This is explained in four verses.

The phrase *bhagavān saha lakṣmyā*, “Together with the goddess of fortune” implies that even though this offense happened when Visnu was with His consort Lakṣmī, moreover in the seclusion of her private quarters, and moreover with the possibility that Bhṛgu could have seen Lakṣmī-devi's limbs, yet nonetheless she did not have even a trace of anger against the sage; this is a function of the mode of goodness. Because Lakṣmī understood the mentality of her beloved consort, she did not feel angry within herself even when she saw Visnu being insulted; this is a function of transcendental goodness. The phrase *satām gatiḥ* indicates that even the associates of Visnu who reside in Vaikuntha have the same nature. “I will not accept this seat from You

since You failed to honor me by standing up and coming forward to greet me.” In response to such an anticipated statement from the sage Bhr̥gu, Visnu says, “I have committed an offense to you. Your mercy is My only shelter, so kindly forgive Us for not noticing your arrival.”

Texts 10–11

*punīhi saha-lokaṁ mām,
loka-pālāmś ca mad-gatān,
pādodakena bhavatas,
tīrthānām tīrtha-kāriṇā,
adyāhaṁ bhagavaū lakṣmyā,
āsam ekānta-bhājanam,
vatsyaty urasi me bhūtir,
bhavat-pāda-hatāmhasaḥ*

“Please purify Me, My realm and the realms of the universal rulers devoted to Me by giving us the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is indeed what makes all places of pilgrimage sacred. Today, my lord, I have become the exclusive shelter of the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī; she will consent to reside on My chest because your foot has rid it of sins.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Lord Visnu said, “If you have forgiven this grave offense, then please purify Us with the water that has washed your feet. This holy water is indeed what turns rivers like the Ganga into places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha-kāriṇā*).”

Visnu’s forgiveness for even so severe an offense committed by Bhr̥gu is a sign of *sattva-guna*. On the other hand, Visnu’s thinking Himself an offender and His pacifying Bhr̥gu is a sign of *suddha-sattva*, transcendental goodness. Responding to this, Bhr̥gu said, “But for giving pain to You and Your beloved consort, Lakṣmi, I will have to live

in hell for a whole day of Brahma. I am such a fallen sinful *brahmana* that I put my filthy foot on Your chest.”

Replying to Bhrgu’s words of remorse, Lord Visnu said, “O dear sage, O ocean of mercy, you have actually made Us both most happy today (*adyāham*).”

Text 12

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
evam bruvāṇe vaikuṅṭhe,
bhṛgus tan-mandrayā girā,
nirvṛtas tarpitas tūṣṇīm,
bhakty-utkaṅṭho ’śru-locanaḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Bhṛgu felt satisfied and delighted to hear the solemn words spoken by Lord Vaikuṅṭha. Overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy, he remained silent, his eyes brimming with tears.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Pleased by the Lord’s solemn (*mandrayā*) words, Bhrgu remained silent, unable to recite praises as his throat was choked up with tears. Thus, according to the opinion of ancient authorities, Bhrgu did not commit an offense, since he was like a puppet being made to dance on the stage of the Lord’s transcendental pleasure pastimes by the puppeteer named Visnu.

Text 13

*punaś ca satram āvrajya,
munīnām brahma-vādinām,
svānubhūtam aśeṣeṇa,
rājan bhṛgur avarṇayat*

O King, Bhṛgu then returned to the sacrificial arena of the wise Vedic authorities and described his entire experience to them.

Texts 14–17

*tan niśamyātha munayo,
vismitā mukta-samśayāḥ,
bhūyāmsaṁ śraddadhur viṣṇuṁ,
yataḥ śāntir yato 'bhayam,
dharmaḥ sāksād yato jñānam,
vairāgyam ca tad-anvitam,
aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā yasmād,
yaśaś cātma-malāpaham,
munīnām nyasta-daṇḍānām,
śāntānām sama-cetasām,
akiñcanānām sādḥūnām,
yam āhuḥ paramām gatim,
sattvaṁ yasya priyā mūrtir,
brāhmaṇās tv iṣṭa-devatāḥ,
bhajanty anāśiṣaḥ śāntā,
yaṁ vā nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ*

Amazed upon hearing Bhṛgu's account, the sages were freed from all doubts and became convinced that Viṣṇu is the greatest Lord. From Him come peace; fearlessness; the essential principles of religion; detachment with knowledge; the eightfold powers of mystic yoga; and His glorification, which cleanses the mind of all impurities. He is known as the supreme destination for those who are peaceful and equipoised—the selfless, wise saints who have

given up all violence. His most dear form is that of pure goodness, and the brāhmaṇas are His worshipable deities. Persons of keen intellect who have attained spiritual peace worship Him without selfish motives.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Text 15) The sages understood Viṣṇu the supreme, from whom comes the direct manifestation (sākṣād) of dharma, characterized by hearing, chanting and other activities; knowledge (jñānam) or realization of the Personality of Godhead; and along with that (tad-anvitam), detachment. The word sākṣād should be understood to accompany all the items in this list.

That by *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* one easily attains transcendental knowledge and detachment is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (11.2.42):

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir, anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus, tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-
gḥāsam*

“Devotion, direct experience of the Supreme Lord, and detachment from other things—these three occur simultaneously for one who has taken shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in the same way that pleasure, nourishment and relief from hunger come simultaneously and increasingly, with each bite, for a person engaged in eating.”

This verse shows that devotion, realization of the Lord and renunciation appear simultaneously. There is an alternative reading of *catur-vidham* for *tad-anvitam*. Then the idea is that this is not dry renunciation, but rather renunciation of the four ordinary goals of human endeavor (*artha, dharma, kama* and *moksa*).

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (SB 3.25.37) Kapila Muni says the eightfold mystic powers (*aiśvaryaṁ cāṣṭadhā*) of *yoga* are also coincidental fruits of devotional service:

*atho vibhūtiṁ mama māyāvīnas tām, aiśvaryaṁ aṣṭāṅgam
anupravṛttam śrīyaṁ bhāgavatīm vāsprḥayanti bhadrām, parasya me te
'śnuvate hi loka*

“Because he is completely absorbed in thought of Me, My devotee does not desire even the highest benediction obtainable in the upper

planetary systems, including Satyaloka. He does not desire the eight material perfections obtained from mystic yoga, nor does he desire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. Yet even without desiring them, My devotee enjoys, even in this life, all the offered benedictions.” Also from Visnu comes fame (yaśaś), which destroys all contamination in the mind (ātma-malāpaham) of the hearer. (Text 16) This verse names three kinds of transcendentalists: the munis, the śāntas and the sādhus. The scriptures say that Visnu is the shelter of those striving for liberation (munīnām), those who have attained liberation (śāntānām), and those who are serving the Lord in devotion (sādhūnām). (Text 17) Though Visnu is transcendental to the three modes of nature, He is affectionate to those in the mode of goodness (sattvaṁ priyā mūrtir). Among them, He is even more affectionate to the brahmanas, whom He honors as His own worshipable deities. Indeed, even the desireless saints (anāśiṣaḥ), the peaceful sages (śāntāḥ) and the intellectuals (nipuṇa-buddhayaḥ) worship Visnu alone (yaṁ vā).

Text 18

*tri-vidhākṛtayas tasya,
rākṣasā asurāḥ surāḥ,
guṇinyā māyayā sṛṣṭāḥ,
sattvaṁ tat tīrtha-sāadhanam*

The Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings—the Rākṣasas, the demons and the demigods—all of whom are created by the Lord’s material energy and conditioned by her modes. But among these three modes, it is the mode of goodness which is the means of attaining life’s final success.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “But Visnu is beyond the *gunas* (*nirguna*), so how then can He be affectionate to someone in the *gunas*?

He should be indifferent to everything concerning the *gunas*.” This objection is answered in this verse. “Although the Lord expands into three kinds of manifest beings conditioned by the modes of nature, the mode of goodness, according to Srila Sridhara Swami, is the means of attaining the goal of life (*tīrtha-sādhanam*).” From the point of view of benefiting the *jivas*, *sattva-guna* appears to be dearer to the merciful, sustaining Lord, though actually it is not. In reality, Visnu is indifferent to all the *gunas*, modes of nature.

Text 19

*śrī-śuka uvāca ittham sārasvatā viprā,
nṛṇām saṁśaya-nuttaye,
puruṣasya padāmbhoja-
sevayā tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The learned brāhmaṇas living along the river Sarasvatī came to this conclusion in order to dispel the doubts of all people. Thereafter they rendered devotional service to the Supreme Lord’s lotus feet and attained His abode.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thus engaged in dispelling (*nuttaye*) the doubts of men, the sages attained liberation.

Text 20

*śrī-sūta uvāca,
ity etan muni-tanayāsyā-padma-gandha-
pīyūṣam bhava-bhaya-bhit parasya puṁsaḥ,
su-ślokaṁ śravaṇa-putaiḥ pibaty abhīkṣṇam,
pāntho ’dhva-bhramaṇa-pariśramam jahāti*

Śrī Suta Gosvāmī said: Thus did this fragrant nectar flow from the lotus mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of the sage Vyāsadeva. This wonderful glorification of the Supreme Person destroys all fear of material existence. A traveler who constantly drinks this nectar through his ear-holes will forget the fatigue brought on by wandering along the paths of worldly life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *padma-gandha pīyūṣam* “nectar with the aroma of lotuses” implies that, since this narration is nectarean, it is an effective tonic to cure the disease of illusion, and since it has the fragrance of a lotus, it attracts the bee-like devotees.

Text 21

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
ekadā dvāravatyām tu,
vipra-patnyāḥ kumārakah,
jāta-mātro bhuvanṁ spr̥ṣtvā,
mamāra kila bhārata*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Once, in Dvārakā, a brāhmaṇa’s wife gave birth to a son, but the newborn infant died as soon as he touched the ground, O Bhārata.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: In this chapter, Lord Viṣṇu has been glorified as the Supreme Godhead. Now Sukadeva Gosvami relates one story to highlight Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s unequalled position as the topmost among all the forms of Godhead.

Text 22

*vipro gr̥h̥tvā mṛtakam,
rāja-dvāry upadhāya saḥ,
idaṁ provāca vilapann,
āturo dīna-mānasah*

The brāhmaṇa took the corpse and placed it at the door of King Ugrasena’s court. Then, agitated and lamenting miserably, he spoke the following.

Text 23

*brahma-dviṣaḥ śaṭha-dhiyo,
lubdhasya viṣayātmanah,
kṣatra-bandhoḥ karma-doṣāt,
pañcatvaṁ me gato ’rbhakaḥ*

[The brāhmaṇa said:] This duplicitous, greedy enemy of brāhmaṇas, this unqualified ruler addicted to sense pleasure, has caused my son’s death by some discrepancies in the execution of his duties.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The brāhmaṇa said, “I have no fault. Therefore, it is the king’s fault that my sons have died.”

Text 24

himsā-vihāraṁ nrpatim,

*duḥśīlam ajitendriyam,
prajā bhajantyaḥ sīdanti,
daridrā nitya-duḥkhitāḥ*

Citizens serving such a wicked king, who takes pleasure in violence and cannot control his senses, are doomed to suffer poverty and constant misery.

Text 25

*evam dvitīyaṃ vipraṁśis,
tṛtīyaṃ tv evam eva ca,
viṣṛjya sa nṛpa-dvāri,
tām gāthām samagāyata*

The wise brāhmaṇa suffered the same tragedy with his second and third child. Each time, he left the body of his dead son at the King's door and sang the same song of lamentation.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmana* loudly declared such words (*tām gāthām*) as “You are a hater of *brahmanas*” (*brahma-dviṣaḥ*) when his second and third sons died.

Texts 26–27

*tām arjuna upaśrutya,
karhicit keśavāntike,
parete navame bāle,
brāhmaṇaṁ samabhāṣata,*

*kiṁ svid brahmanṁs tvan-nivāse,
iha nāsti dhanur-dharaḥ,
rājanya-bandhur ete vai,
brāhmaṇāḥ satram āsate*

When the ninth child died, Arjuna, who was near Lord Keśava, happened to overhear the brāhmaṇa lamenting. Thus Arjuna addressed the brāhmaṇa: “What is the matter, my dear brāhmaṇa? Isn’t there some lowly member of the royal order here who can at least stand before your house with a bow in his hand? These kṣatriyas are behaving as if they were brāhmaṇas idly engaged in fire sacrifices.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “There isn’t even a low-grade warrior (*rājanya-bandhur*) here, what to speak of one who is devoted to the *brahmanas*.” Thus speaking arrogantly, Arjuna glanced around at the people standing there.

“But tell me, what can members of the royal order do in this dire situation?”

Pointing accusingly with his index finger, Arjuna answered sarcastically, “The *kṣatriyas* here are behaving as if they were *brāhmaṇas* idly engaged in fire sacrifices. What will happen to those they are supposed to protect? Therefore, the *kṣatriyas* sitting in this court deserve to be killed.”

Text 28

*dhana-dārātmajāprktā,
yatra śocanti brāhmaṇāḥ,
te vai rājanya-veṣeṇa,
naṭā jīvanty asum-bharāḥ*

“The rulers of a kingdom in which brāhmaṇas lament over lost wealth, wives and children are merely imposters playing the role of kings just to earn their livelihood.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna continued, “Hear the proof of how unqualified are the *ksatriyas* present here. Where *brahmanas* lament the loss of their wealth, wives or children, the *ksatriyas* living there are merely imposters posing as rulers.”

Text 29

*aham prajāḥ vām bhagavan,
rakṣiṣye dīnayoṛ iha,
anistīrṇa-pratijño 'gnim,
pravekṣye hata-kalmaṣaḥ*

“My lord, I will protect the progeny of you and your wife, who are in such distress. And if I fail to keep this promise, I will enter fire to atone for my sin.”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna addresses the husband and wife (*vām*). Though the wife was present she was silent because of her grief. Arjuna said, “If I break my promise (*anistīrṇa-pratijño*), then I will enter the fire, and thereby become free of the sin (*hata-kalmaṣaḥ*) for having broken my promise.”

Texts 30–31

*śrī-brāhmaṇa uvāca,
saṅkarṣaṇo vāsudevaḥ,*

*pradyumno dhanvinām varah,
aniruddho 'prati-ratho,
na trātum śaknuvanti yat,
tat katham nu bhavān karma,
duṣkaram jagad-īśvaraiḥ,
tvam cikīrṣasi bālisyāt,
tan na śraddadhmahe vayam*

The brāhmaṇa said: Neither Saṅkarṣaṇa; Vāsudeva; Pradyumna, the best of bowmen; nor the unequalled warrior Aniruddha could save my sons. Then why do you naively attempt a feat that the almighty Lords of the universe could not perform? We cannot take you seriously.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The brāhmaṇa said, “We do not believe this (*na śraddadhmahe:na viśvasimāḥ*).”

Text 32

*śrī-arjuna uvāca,
nāham saṅkarṣaṇo brahman,
na kṛṣṇaḥ kārṣṇir eva ca,
aham vā arjuno nāma,
gāṇḍivam yasya vai dhanuḥ*

Śrī Arjuna said: I am neither Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, O brāhmaṇa, nor Lord Kṛṣṇa, nor even Kṛṣṇa’s son. Rather, I am Arjuna, wielder of the Gāṇḍīva bow.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: While saying, “I am the wielder of the Gandiva bow”, Arjuna showed his bow.

Text 33

*māvamaṁsthā mama brahman,
vīryaṁ tryambaka-toṣaṇam,
mṛtyuṁ vijitya pradhane,
āneṣye te prajāḥ prabho*

Do not minimize my ability, which was good enough to satisfy Lord Śiva, O brāhmaṇa. I will bring back your sons, dear master, even if I have to defeat Death himself in battle.

Text 34

*evaṁ viśrambhito vipraḥ,
phālgunena parantapa jagāma sva-grhaṁ prītaḥ,
pārtha-vīryaṁ niśāmayan*

Thus convinced by Arjuna, O tormentor of enemies, the brāhmaṇa went home, satisfied by having heard Arjuna's declaration of his prowess.

Text 35

*prasūti-kāla āsanne,
bhāryāyā dvija-sattamaḥ,
pāhi pāhi prajāṁ mṛtyor;*

ity āhārjunam āturaḥ

When the wife of the elevated brāhmaṇa was again about to give birth, he went to Arjuna in great anxiety and begged him, “Please, please protect my child from death!”

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna resided for one year in Dvaraka waiting for the birth. Or else Arjuna returned to Dvaraka upon learning of the approaching birth. When the *brahmana*’s wife ordered, “Bring Arjuna”, the *brahmana* came in the night and spoke this verse to Arjuna.

Text 36

*sa upaspr̥śya śucy ambho,
namaskṛtya maheśvaram,
divyāny astrāṇi saṁsmṛtya,
sajyam gāṇḍīvam ādade*

After touching pure water, offering obeisances to Lord Maheśvara and recollecting the mantras for his celestial weapons, Arjuna strung his bow Gāṇḍīva.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Since the *brāhmaṇa* had disrespected Kṛṣṇa, Arjuna, due to his feelings of friendship for Kṛṣṇa, tactfully offered his obeisances instead to Lord Śiva.

Text 37

nyaruṇat sūtikāgāraṁ,

*śarair nānāstra-yojitaiḥ,
tiryag ūrdhvam adhaḥ pārthaś,
cakāra śara-pañjaram*

Arjuna fenced in the house where the birth was taking place by shooting arrows attached to various missiles. Thus the son of Pṛthā constructed a protective cage of arrows, covering the house upwards, downwards and sideways.

Text 38

*tataḥ kumāraḥ sañjāto,
vipra-patnyā rudan muhuḥ,
sadyo 'darśanam āpede,
sa-śarīro vihāyasā*

The brāhmaṇa's wife then gave birth, but after the newborn infant had been crying for a short time, he suddenly vanished into the sky in his selfsame body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *āpede sa-śarīro* “his body disappeared” shows that without Kṛṣṇa desiring it, neither the celestial weapons of Arjuna nor the blessings of Lord Siva could protect the infant's body.

Text 39

*tadāha vipro vijayaṁ,
vinindan kṛṣṇa-sannidhau,*

*mauḍhyam paśyata me yo 'ham,
śraddadhe klība-katthanam*

The brāhmaṇa then derided Arjuna in front of Lord Kṛṣṇa: “Just see how foolish I was to put my faith in the bragging of a eunuch !

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmana* criticized Arjuna in front of Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-sannidhau*), because he would not be able to relish the same pleasure by criticizing him in the privacy of his own home.

Text 40

*na pradyumno nāniruddho,
na rāmo na ca keśavaḥ,
yasya śekuḥ paritrātum,
ko 'nyas tad-aviteśvaraḥ*

“When neither Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Rāma nor Keśava can save a person, who else can possibly protect him?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The *brahmana* said, “Who can possibly protect he whom (*yasya*) Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Balarama or Kṛṣṇa failed to protect?”

Text 41

*dhig arjunam mṛṣā-vādam,
dhig ātma-ślāghino dhanuḥ,
daivopasṛṣṭam yo mauḍhyād,*

āninīṣati durmatih

“To hell with that liar Arjuna! To hell with that braggart’s bow! He is so foolish that he has deluded himself into thinking he can bring back a person whom destiny has taken away.”

Text 42

*evam śapati viprarṣau,
vidyām āsthāya phālgunaḥ,
yayau saṁyamanīm āśu,
yatrāste bhagavān yamaḥ*

While the wise brāhmaṇa continued to heap insults upon him, Arjuna employed a mystic incantation to go at once to Saṁyamanī, the city of heaven where Lord Yamarāja resides.

Texts 43–44

*viprāpatyam acakṣānas,
tata aindrīm agāt purīm,
āgneyīm nairṛtīm saumyām,
vāyavyām vāruṇīm atha,
rasātalam nāka-prṣṭham,
dhiṣṇyāny anyāny udāyudhaḥ,
tato ’labdha-dvija-suto,
hy anistīrṇa-pratiśrutaḥ,
agnim vivikṣuḥ kṛṣṇena,*

pratyuktaḥ pratiṣedhatā

Not seeing the brāhmaṇa’s child there, Arjuna went to the cities of Agni, Nirṛti, Soma, Vāyu and Varuṇa. With weapons at the ready he searched through all the domains of the universe, from the bottom of the subterranean region to the roof of heaven. Finally, not having found the brāhmaṇa’s son anywhere, Arjuna decided to enter the sacred fire, having failed to keep his promise. But just as he was about to do so, Lord Kṛṣṇa stopped him and spoke the following words.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Arjuna went in all directions starting with Yamaloka in the south. He went north (*saumyam*) to the moon planet; northwest, (*vayavya*), south east (*agneya*), south west (*nairrtya*), east (*aindri*), and west (*varuni*). Because Arjuna trusted Lord Śiva implicitly as his *guru*, he did not bother to search the northeast, which is the celestial abode (*anyānyam*) of Lord Siva.

(Test 44) Arjuna was prevented (*pratyuktaḥ*) from entering fire by Kṛṣṇa who stopped him (*pratiṣedhatā*).

Text 45

*darśaye dvija-sūnūms te,
māvajñātmānam ātmanā,
ye te naḥ kīrtim vimalām,
manuṣyāḥ sthāpayisyanti*

[Lord Kṛṣṇa said:] I will show you the brāhmaṇa’s sons, so please don’t despise yourself like this. These same men who now criticize us will soon establish our spotless fame.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa said, “Arjuna, do not belittle (*māvajña*) yourself like that.”

Arjuna replied, “Do not stop me. Otherwise, people will criticize me as a *ksatriya*.”

Kṛṣṇa: “The same ones who are criticizing will establish our fame.”

Or alternately, “Even those who criticize will establish our glory.” There is another version *yeneha kīrtim vimalām*, but according to Sridhara Swami this is an interpolation brought about to preserve the correct meter.

Text 46

*iti sambhāṣya bhagavān,
arjunena saheśvaraḥ,
divyaṁ sva-ratham āsthāya,
praticīṁ diśam āviśat*

Having thus advised Arjuna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead had Arjuna join Him on His divine chariot, and together they set off toward the west.

Text 47

*sapta dvīpān sa-sindhūmś ca,
sapta sapta girīn atha,
lokālokaṁ tathātītya,
viveśa su-mahat tamaḥ*

The Lord’s chariot passed over the seven islands of the middle

universe, each with its ocean and its seven principal mountains. Then it crossed the Lokāloka boundary and entered the vast region of total darkness.

Texts 48–49

*tatrāśvāḥ śaihya-sugrīva,
meghapuṣpa-balāhakāḥ,
tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo,
babhūvur bharatarṣabha,
tān dr̥ṣṭvā bhagavān kṛṣṇo,
mahā-yogeśvareśvaraḥ,
sahasrāditya-saṅkāśaṁ,
sva-cakram prāhiṇot puraḥ*

In that darkness the chariot’s horses—Śaihya, Sugrīva, Meghapuṣpa and Balāhaka—lost their way. Seeing them in this condition, O best of the Bhāratas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme master of all masters of yoga, sent His Sudarśana disc before the chariot. That disc shone like thousands of suns.

Viśvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: By the phrase *tamasi bhraṣṭa-gatayo*, “the horses lost their way in the darkness”, we should understand the following: Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental horses had descended from Vaikuṅṭha to participate in His earthly pastimes. Since Sri Kṛṣṇa was pretending to be a finite human being, His steeds now acted confused to astonish Arjuna, and to enhance the drama of the situation for all who would one day hear this pastime.

Text 50

*tamaḥ su-ghoraṁ gahanam kṛtaṁ mahad,
vidārayad bhūri-tareṇa rociṣā,
mano-javam nirviviṣe sudarśanam,
guṇa-cyuto rāma-śaro yathā camūḥ*

The Lord’s Sudarśana disc penetrated the darkness with its blazing effulgence. Racing forward with the speed of the mind, it cut through the fearsome, dense oblivion expanded from primeval matter, as an arrow shot from Lord Rāma’s bow cuts through His enemy’s army.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Piercing that great dense (*gahanam*) darkness, a transformation of material nature (*kṛtam:prakṛti*), the *cakra* entered it.

Text 51

*dvāreṇa cakrānupathena tat tamaḥ,
param param jyotir ananta-pāram,
samaśnuvānam prasamīkṣya phālgunaḥ,
pratāḍitākṣo pidadhe ’kṣiṇī ubhe*

Following the Sudarśana disc, the chariot went beyond the darkness and reached the endless spiritual light of the all pervasive brahma-jyoti. As Arjuna beheld this glaring effulgence, his eyes hurt, and so he shut them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: After breaking through each of the eight concentric shells of the universe, the Sudarśana disc led Kṛṣṇa’s chariot into the limitless, self-effulgent atmosphere of the spiritual sky.

There Arjuna saw the brilliant effulgence of the *brahmajyoti* beyond the darkness (*tat tamaḥ*) of material nature. Seeing that most excellent spiritual light (*param:cin-mayam*) spread everywhere (*samaśnuvānam*), Arjuna closed his eyes. Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna’s journey to Vaikuṅṭha is also narrated in *Śrī Hari-vamśa*, wherein Sri Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna about the nature of this brilliant light known as His Brahman effulgence:
brahma-tejo-mayaṁ divyaṁ, mahat yad dṛṣṭavān asi ahaṁ sa bhārata-śreṣṭha, mat-tejas tat sanātanam

“The divine expanse of Brahman effulgence you have seen is none other than Myself, O best of the Bhāratas. It is My own eternal effulgence.”
prakṛtiḥ sā mama parā, vyaktāvyaktā sanātani tām praviśya bhavantīha, muktā yoga-vid-uttamāḥ

“It comprises My eternal, spiritual energy, both manifest and unmanifest. The foremost *yoga* experts of this world enter within it and become liberated.”

sā sāṅkhyānām gatiḥ pārtha, yoginām ca tapasvinām tat param paramaṁ brahma, sarvaṁ vibhajate jagat mamaiva tad ghanam tejo, jñātum arhasi bhārata

“It is the supreme goal of the followers of Sāṅkhya, O Pārtha, as well as that of the *yogīs* and ascetics. It is the Supreme Absolute Truth, manifesting the varieties of the entire created cosmos. You should understand this *brahma-jyoti*, O Bhārata, to be My concentrated personal effulgence.”

Text 52

*tataḥ praviṣṭaḥ salilam nabhasvatā,
balīyasaijad-brhad-ūrmi-bhūṣaṇam,
tatrādbhutam vai bhavanam dyumat-tamaṁ,
bhrājan-maṇi-stambha-sahasra-śobhitam*

From that region they entered a body of water resplendent with

huge waves being churned by a mighty wind. Within that ocean Arjuna saw an amazing palace more radiant than anything he had ever seen before. Its beauty was enhanced by thousands of ornamental pillars bedecked with brilliant gems.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: They entered the Causal Ocean (*salilam*), ornamented with huge waves agitated by a strong wind, and saw a wondrous abode (*ādbhutam bhavanam*) called Mahākāla. Sridhara Swami describes this city by quoting from the *Mṛtyuñjaya-tantra*: *brahmāṇḍasyordhato divi, brahmaṇaḥ sadanam mahat tad-ūrdham divi viṣṇunām, tad-ūrdham rudra-rūpiṇāmtad-ūrdham ca mahā-viṣṇor, mahā-devyās tad-ūrdha-gam pāre puri mahā-devyāḥ, kālah sarva-bhayāvahaḥtataḥ śrī-brahma-pīyūṣa, vāridhir nitya-nūtanah tasya tīre mahā-kālah, sarva-grāhaka-rūpa-dhṛk* “O Devi, above this universe is the great celestial abode of Brahma. Above that are the abodes of the expansions of Lord Visnu, and above this are the abodes of the Rudra expansions of Lord Siva. Above this is the abode of Maha-Visnu, above which is the supreme residence of Mahā-devī. Above her abode lies time, who strikes fear in all. Beyond it is the ever-fresh spiritual ocean of the nectar of Brahman, along whose shore Lord Mahākāla appears as the supreme controller of all beings.”

In this context, Brahma’s abode is Satyaloka. The abode of the expansions of Visnu refers to a material planet called Vaikuntha, where the demigod sons of mother Vikuntha reside. The abode of the expansions of Rudra is Rudraloka located within the covering shell of false ego, ahaṁkara. The abode of Maha-Visnu is the Mahavisnu-loka located within the covering shell of the mahat-tattva. The abode of Mahā-devī is Mahādevī-loka located within the covering shell of unmanifest prakṛti. The ocean of the nectar of Brahman is the Causal Ocean. Mahākāla (Mahā-vaikuṇṭha-nātha) is the Lord of Maha-vaikuṇṭha (Mahākāla-puram), situated in the spiritual sky within the water of the Causal Ocean.

The verb *dadarśa* “saw” appearing in verse fifty-four is understood in this and the following verse. This abode was the most dazzling (*dyumat-*

tamaṁ) among all effulgent things.

Text 53

*tasmin mahā-bhogam anantam adbhutam, sahasra-mūrdhanya-phaṇā-
maṇi-dyubhiḥ, vibhrājamānaṁ dvi-guṇekṣaṇolbaṇaṁ, sitācalābhaṁ
śiti-kaṇṭha-jihvam*

In that palace was the huge, awe-inspiring serpent Ananta Śeṣa. He shone brilliantly with the radiance emanating from the gems on His thousands of hoods and reflecting from twice as many fearsome eyes. He resembled white Mount Kailāsa, and His necks and tongues were dark blue.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: First in the palace, Arjuna saw the huge serpent Ananta, who was as white and effulgent as mount Kailasa (*sitācalābhaṁ*). Ananta’s necks and tongues were dark blue (*śiti*). The *Amara-kośa* dictionary says, *śiti dhavala-mecakau*, “*Śiti* can mean white or dark blue.”

Texts 54–56

*dadarśa tad-bhoga-sukhāsanam vibhum,
mahānubhāvam puruṣottamottamam,
sāndrāmbudābhaṁ su-piśaṅga-vāsasam,
prasanna-vaktraṁ rucirāyate,
kṣaṇam mahā-maṇi-vrāta-kirīṭa-kuṇḍala,
prabhā-parikṣipta-sahasra-kuntalam,
pralamba-cārv-aṣṭa-bhujam sa-kaustubham,
śrīvatsa-lakṣmam vana-mālayāvṛtam,
sunanda-nanda-pramukhaiḥ sva-pārṣadais,*

*cakrādibhir mūrti-dharair nijāyudhaiḥ,
puṣṭyā śrīyā kīrti-ajayākhilardhibhir,
niṣevyamānam parameṣṭhinām patim*

Arjuna then saw the omnipresent and omnipotent Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mahā-Viṣṇu, sitting at ease on the serpent bed. His bluish complexion was the color of a dense raincloud, He wore a beautiful yellow garment, His face looked charming, His broad eyes were most attractive, and He had eight long, handsome arms. His profuse locks of hair were bathed on all sides in the brilliance reflected from the clusters of precious jewels decorating His crown and earrings. He wore the Kaustubha gem, the mark of Śrīvatsa and a garland of forest flowers. Serving that topmost of all Lords were His personal attendants, headed by Sunanda and Nanda; His cakra and other weapons in their personified forms; His consort potencies Puṣṭi, Śrī, Kīrti and Ajā; and all His various mystic powers.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: (Texts 54-55) Arjuna saw Visnu relaxing upon the comfortable seat (sukhāsanam) of Ananta's body (bhoga). Among the three purusas (Brahma, Siva and Visnu), the gunavatara, Ksirodakasayi Visnu, is supreme. Greater than Him, however is Maha-Visnu, the creator of the mahat-tattva. And greater than Him is Lord Puruṣottama (puruṣottamottamam), Visnu in Vaikuntha, who is herein called Mahakala.

(Text 56) The personified forms of Visnu's weapons such as the cakra were there, each displaying their respective symbols above their own heads.

Text 57

vavanda ātmānam anantam acyuto,

*jiṣṇuś ca tad-darśana-jāta-sādhvasaḥ,
tāv āha bhūmā parameṣṭhinām prabhur,
beddhāñjalī sa-smitam ūrjayā girā*

Lord Kṛṣṇa offered homage to Himself in this boundless form, and Arjuna, astonished at the sight of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, bowed down as well. Then, as the two of them stood before Him with joined palms, the almighty Mahā-Viṣṇu, supreme master of all rulers of the universe, smiled and spoke to them in a voice full of solemn authority.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: As Kṛṣṇa offered obeisances to His own Deity during the worship of Govardhana Hill in *vraja-līla*, so now also Kṛṣṇa paid homage to Himself (*vavanda ātmānam*) in His Viṣṇu expansion for the purpose of playing out His pastimes. This is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (10.24.36): *tasmai namo vraja-janaiḥ, saha cakra ātmanātmane*, “Together with the Vrajavasis, Sri Kṛṣṇa bowed down to this form of Govardhana Hill, thus in effect offering obeisances to Himself.”

Kṛṣṇa is *ananta*, possessed of countless manifestations, and this eight-armed form of Maha-Visnu is among them. Kṛṣṇa is *acyuta*, “infallible”, in the sense that He never fails to act like a human being in His pastimes as a cowherd boy of Vraja. Thus in order to preserve the human-like quality of His pastimes, Kṛṣṇa bowed down to this eight-armed form of Visnu, who, though actually Kṛṣṇa’s own plenary expansion, did not offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa because he was playing the role of the Supreme Lord. Arjuna perceived that this form of Visnu had even more opulence than Kṛṣṇa, and thus he became astonished (*jāta-sādhvasaḥ*). The word *bhūmā* (abundant power of the earth) indicates that Maha-Visnu was exhibiting even more personal majesty than Kṛṣṇa Himself by appearing before Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna as the Lord of multitudes of Brahmās (*parameṣṭhinām prabhuḥ*) ruling over millions of universes.

Maha-Visnu then spoke confident words (*ūrjayā girā*) in order to bewilder Arjuna, in obedience to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s intention. Visnu’s smile (*smitam*) indicates that He was privately thinking: “My dear Kṛṣṇa, by Your desire I will describe My superiority, even though I am Your expansion. At the same time, however, I will subtly imply in My statements the supreme position of Your beauty, character and power and the fact that You are the source from whom I emanate. Just see how clever I am—that in front of Arjuna I am confidentially divulging My true identity as nondifferent from You.”

Maha-Visnu’s smile indicates His request that Kṛṣṇa later reveal to Arjuna the truth about His actual position.

Text 58

*dvijātmajā me yuvayor didṛkṣuṅā,
mayopanītā bhuvī dharmā-guptaye,
kalāvātīrṅāv avaner bharāsurān,
hatveha bhūyas tvarayetam anti me*

[Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu said:] I brought the brāhmaṇa’s sons here because I wanted to see the two of you, My expansions, who have descended to the earth to save the principles of religion. As soon as you finish killing the demons who burden the earth, quickly come back here to Me.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maha-Visnu said, “You two who have appeared as My parts, please come back (*itam*) quickly (*tvaraya*) to Me (*me anti*).” He says this to bewilder Arjuna.

The real meaning is, “You two, who have descended along with your *kalās*, your personal energies (*kalās:sva-śaktibhiḥ*), should kindly return to Me after killing the demons who burden the earth. Please quickly send these demons here to Me for the sake of their liberation.” The

verb is a dual imperative form. *Anti* is an un-declined word, meaning “towards proximity.” “Let them come here and be liberated.” It is stated in *Śrī Hari-vaṁśa* and in the Second Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that the path of gradual liberation passes through the intermediate station of Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu’s abode, outside the eighth shell of the universe.

Text 59

*pūrṇa-kāmāv api yuvām,
nara-nārāyaṇāv ṛṣī,
dharmam ācaratām sthityai,
ṛṣabhau loka-saṅgraham*

Although all your desires are completely fulfilled, O best of exalted personalities, for the benefit of the people in general you should continue to exemplify religious behavior as the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Maha-Visnu said, “Follow *dharmā* (*ācaratām*) to teach others.”

Texts 60–61

*ity ādiṣṭau bhagavatā,
tau kṛṣṇau parame-ṣṭhīnā,
om ity ānamya bhūmānam,
ādāya dvija-dārakān,
nyavartetām svakām dhāma,
samprahrṣtau yathā-gatam,
viprāya dadatuḥ putrān,
yathā-rūpam yathā-vayaḥ*

Thus instructed by the Supreme Lord of the topmost planet, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna assented by chanting om̐, and then they bowed down to almighty Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu. Taking the brāhmaṇa’s sons with them, they returned with great delight to Dvārakā by the same path along which they had come. There they presented the brāhmaṇa with his sons, who were in the same infant bodies in which they had been lost.

Text 62

*niśāmya vaiṣṇavaṁ dhāma,
pārthaḥ parama-vismitaḥ,
yat kiñcit pauruṣaṁ puṁsām,
mene kṛṣṇānukampitam*

Having seen the domain of Lord Viṣṇu, Arjuna was totally amazed. He concluded that whatever extraordinary power a person exhibits can only be a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Astonished to see the extraordinary grandeur of Maha-Visnu, Arjuna said “Just see! Even though I am a mere mortal, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy I have seen the Supreme Godhead, the root cause of everything.” Then, after a moment, Arjuna thought again, “But why did Lord Viṣṇu say that He took away the *brāhmaṇa*’s children out of a desire to see Kṛṣṇa? Why would the Supreme Personality of Godhead hanker to see His own expansion? Perhaps, it is some temporary whim of His.

“But since He said *didṛkṣuṇā* instead of *didṛkṣatā*—where the specific suffix *-ṣuṇā* carries the sense of a permanent characteristic, not a

temporary one—it has to be concluded that He has always desired to see Kṛṣṇa and myself. Even granted that this is so, why couldn't He simply see Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā? After all, Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu is the all-pervading creator of the universe, which He holds like an *āmalaki* fruit in His hand.

“Is it that He could not see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā because Kṛṣṇa does not allow anyone to see Him without His special sanction? Well, maybe He doesn't have that power, but still, He comes to Dvaraka every year to steal the children of the *brahmana*. Why does He not at that time see Kṛṣṇa, who is visible even to the oil-seller and the betel nut-peddler living there? Perhaps He could not see Kṛṣṇa in Dvaraka because Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen without Kṛṣṇa's desiring it.

“And why, also, would Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, the compassionate master of all *brāhmaṇas*, have repeatedly tormented an elevated *brāhmaṇa*, year after year? He must have perpetrated such a vile act only because of His strong desire to see Kṛṣṇa. All right, He may have acted improperly for that reason, but why couldn't He have sent a servant to kidnap the *brāhmaṇa*'s sons? Why did He Himself have to come to Dvārakā? Was stealing them out of Kṛṣṇa's capital so difficult that no one but Viṣṇu Himself could hope to accomplish it?

“I can understand that He intended to cause so much distress to a *brāhmaṇa* of Kṛṣṇa's city that Kṛṣṇa would be unable to tolerate it; then He would grant Lord Viṣṇu His audience. Inspired by Visnu's form as the Supersoul within, the distressed *brāhmaṇa* came to pour out his complaints to Kṛṣṇa in person after the demise of each of his infant sons. Thus it is clear that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's status of Godhood is superior to Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's.”

Having thought in this way, Arjuna was totally amazed (*parama vismitah*). Then Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa whether these were actually the facts of the matter. Sri Kṛṣṇa's reply is related in the *Hari-vamśa*: *mad-darśanārtham te bālā, hṛtās tena mahātmanā viprārtham eṣyate kṛṣṇo, mat-samīpam na cānyathā*

“It was to see Me that He, the Supreme Soul, stole the children. He believed, ‘Only on a *brāhmaṇa*'s behalf will Kṛṣṇa come to see Me, not

otherwise.’ ”

Kṛṣṇa further told Arjuna, “I did not go there, however, for the *brāhmaṇa*’s sake; I went there, My friend, just to save your life. If it had been for the *brāhmaṇa*’s sake that I traveled to Vaikuṅṭha, I would have done so after his first child was abducted. The reason I went after the ninth child was stolen, was not from obligation to Visnu, but out of obligation to you.”

Thus hearing the full truth from Kṛṣṇa’s mouth, Arjuna thought that whatever prowess (*pauruṣam*) is possessed by any person (*pumsāmare*), even including the Lord of the spiritual sky, has been obtained only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

In this way we should understand that in this last portion of the Tenth Canto, from the prayers of the personified *Vedas* through the end of the narration, is found the description of the supreme position of Kṛṣṇa, the *asraya-tattva*, who is the subject of the Tenth Canto. According to Śrīla Śrīdhara Swāmī, although this pastime occurred before the Battle of Kurukṣetra, it is recounted here at the end of the Tenth Canto under the general heading of the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa’s glories.

Text 63

*itīdṛśāny anekāni,
vīryāṇīha pradarśayan,
bubhuje viṣayān grāmyān,
īje cāty-urjitair makhaiḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited many other, similar heroic pastimes in this world. He apparently enjoyed the pleasures of ordinary human life, and He performed greatly potent fire sacrifices.

Text 64

*pravavarṣākḥilān kāmān,
prajāsu brāhmaṇādiṣu,
yathā-kālaṁ yathaivendro,
bhagavān śraiṣṭhyam āsthitaḥ*

The Lord having demonstrated His supremacy, at suitable times He showered down all desirable things upon the brāhmaṇas and His other subjects, just as Indra pours down his rain.

Text 65

*hatvā nṛpān adharmiṣṭhān,
ghāṭayitvārjunādibhiḥ,
añjasā vartayām āsa,
dharmaṁ dharma-sutādibhiḥ*

Now that He had killed many wicked kings and engaged devotees such as Arjuna in killing others, the Lord could easily assure the execution of religious principles through the agency of such pious rulers as Yudhiṣṭhira.

Chapter Ninety: Summary of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Glories

Texts 1–7

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
sukhaṁ sva-puryām nivasan,
dvāarakāyām śriyaḥ patiḥ,
sarva-sampat-samṛddhāyām,
juṣṭāyām vṛṣṇi-puṅgavaiḥ,
strībhiś cottama-veśābhir,
nava-yauvana-kāntibhiḥ,
kandukādibhir harmyeṣu,
krīḍantībhis taḍid-dyubhiḥ,
nityaṁ saṅkula-mārgāyām,
mada-cyudbhir mataṅ-gajaiḥ,
sv-alaṅkṛtair bhaṭair aśvai,
rathaiś ca kanakojjvalaiḥ,
udyānopavanādhyāyām,
puṣpita-druma-rājiṣu,
nirviśad-bhṛṅga-vihagair,
nāditāyām samantataḥ,
reme ṣoḍaśa-sāhasra,
patnīnām eka-vallabhāḥ,
tāvad vicitra-rūpo 'sau,
tad-geheṣu maharddhiṣu,
protphullotpala-kahlāra,
kumudāmbhoja-reṇubhiḥ,
vāsitāmala-toyeṣu,
kūjad-dvija-kuleṣu ca,
vijahāra vigāhyāmbho,
hradinīṣu mahodayaḥ,*

*kuca-kuṅkuma-liptāṅgaḥ,
parirabdhaś ca yoṣitām*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: The master of the goddess of fortune resided happily in His capital city, Dvārakā, which was endowed with all opulences and populated by the most eminent Vṛṣṇis and their gorgeously dressed wives. When these beautiful women in the bloom of youth would play on the city’s rooftops with balls and other toys, they shone like flashing lightning. The main streets of the city were always crowded with intoxicated elephants exuding mada, and also with cavalry, richly adorned infantrymen, and soldiers riding chariots brilliantly decorated with gold. Gracing the city were many gardens and parks with rows of flowering trees, where bees and birds would gather, filling all directions with their songs.

Lord Kṛṣṇa was the sole beloved of His sixteen thousand wives. Expanding Himself into that many forms, He enjoyed with each of His queens in her own richly furnished residence. On the grounds of these palaces were clear ponds fragrant with the pollen of blooming utpala, kahlāra, kumuda and ambhoja lotuses and filled with flocks of cooing birds. The almighty Lord would enter those ponds, and also various rivers, and enjoy sporting in the water while His wives embraced Him, leaving the red kuṅkuma from their breasts smeared on His body.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: This chapter describes the *prema-vaicittya* of the Dvaraka Mahiṣīs (Queens of Dvārakā) during their water sports with Kṛṣṇa, the power of the Yadu dynasty, and the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

[*Prema-vaicittya* is one of the four states of love in separation (*vipralambha*) wherein even in the beloved’s presence, the lover, out of intense love, fails to perceive the presence of the beloved and is thus aggrieved with feelings of separation.]

According to the maxim *madhureṇa samāpayet*, “all things should end sweetly” Sukadeva Gosvami has described Sri Kṛṣṇa’s water sports in the attractive setting of Dvārakā, followed by the rapturous prayers of the Dvaraka Mahiṣīs, which are known as the *mahiṣī-gīta*. In the first verse, Sukadeva describes the attractiveness of Dvaraka to serve as an *uddipana*, stimulator for loving sentiments. He elaborately describes how Kṛṣṇa enjoyed in all those palaces, sported in the royal ponds full of pure, fragrant water, and then played in the clear rivers. While enjoying in the water, Kṛṣṇa embraced His consorts (*parirabdhas’ ca yoṣitām*).

Texts 8–9

*upagīyamāno gandharvair,
mṛdaṅga-pañavānakān,
vādayadbhir mudā vīṇām,
sūta-māgadha-vandibhiḥ,
sicyamāno ’cyutas tābhir;
hasantībhiḥ sma recakaiḥ,
pratiṣiñcan vicikrīḍe,
yakṣībhir yakṣa-rāḍ iva*

As Gandharvas joyfully sang His praises to the accompaniment of mṛdaṅga, paṇava and ānaka drums, and as professional reciters known as Sūtas, Māgadhas and Vandīs played vīṇās and recited poems praising Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa would play with His wives in the water. Laughing, the queens would squirt water on Him with syringes, and He would squirt them back. Thus Kṛṣṇa would sport with His queens in the same way that the lord of the Yakṣas sports with the Yakṣī nymphs.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens soaked Kṛṣṇa’s body

with water from their water guns (*recakaih*). They are compared to the Yaksis because of the ferocity of their sporting.

Text 10

*tāḥ klinna-vastra-vivṛtoru-kuca-pradeśāḥ,
siñcantya uddhṛta-br̥hat-kavara-prasūnāḥ,
kāntam sma recaka-jihīrsayayopaguhya,
jāta-smarotsmaya-lasad-vadanā virejuh*

Under the drenched clothing of the queens, their thighs and breasts would become visible. The flowers tied in their large braids would scatter as they sprayed water on their consort, and on the plea of trying to take away His syringe, they would embrace Him. By His touch their lusty feelings would increase, causing their faces to beam with smiles. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa’s queens shone with resplendent beauty.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The flowers fell (*uddhṛta*) from their long hair braids.

Text 11

*kṛṣṇas tu tat-stana-viṣajjita-kuṅkuma-srak,
krīḍābhiṣaṅga-dhuta-kuntala-vṛnda-bandhaḥ,
siñcan muhur yuvatibhiḥ pratiṣicyamāno,
reme kareṇubhir ivebha-patiḥ parītaḥ*

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s flower garland would become smeared with kuṅkuma from their breasts, and His abundant locks of hair would become

disheveled as a result of His absorption in the game. As the Lord repeatedly sprayed His young consorts and they sprayed Him in turn, He enjoyed Himself like the king of elephants enjoying in the company of his bevy of she-elephants.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa's garland was smeared with the *kunkuma* from their breasts.

Text 12

*naṭānām nartakīnām ca,
gīta-vādyopajīvinām,
krīḍālaṅkāra-vāsāmsi,
kṛṣṇo 'dāt tasya ca striyaḥ*

Afterward, Lord Kṛṣṇa and His wives would give the ornaments and clothing they had worn during their water sports to the male and female performers, who earned their livelihood from singing and from playing instrumental music.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Afterwards, Kṛṣṇa and His queens gave the ornaments and clothing used during their water sports to the musical performers (*natanam*). In the word *naṭānām* (male performers) the genitive case is used for the dative case.

Text 13

*kṛṣṇasyaivam viharato,
gaty-ālāpekṣita-smitaiḥ,
narma-kṣveli-pariṣvaṅgaiḥ,
strīṇām kila hṛtā dhiyaḥ*

In this way Lord Kṛṣṇa would sport with His queens, totally captivating their hearts with His gestures, talks, glances and smiles, and also with His jokes, playful exchanges and embraces.

Text 14

*ūcur mukundaika-dhiyo,
gira unmatta-vaj jaḍam,
cintayantyo 'ravindākṣam,
tāni me gadataḥ śṛṇu*

The queens would become stunned in ecstatic trance, their minds absorbed in Kṛṣṇa alone. Then, thinking of their lotus-eyed Lord, they would speak as if insane. Please hear these words from me as I relate them.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Thinking of lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa, who was visible right before them, the Queens spoke as if mad (*unmattavat*) in words devoid of judgment (*jaḍam:vicāra-śūnyam*).

This superficial appearance of insanity in Kṛṣṇa's queens, as if they had become intoxicated by *dhatūra* or some other hallucinogenic drug, was in fact the manifestation of the sixth stage of *prema*, a variety of *anurāga* known as *prema-vaicittya*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī refers to this variety of *anurāga* in his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (15.134):

*priyasya sannikarṣe 'pi, premotkarṣa-svabhāvataḥ yā viśleṣa-dhiyārtis
tat, prema-vaicitryam ucyate*

“When, as a natural by-product of one's extreme love, one feels the distress of separation even in the direct presence of the beloved, this state is called *prema-vaicitrya*.”

Text 15

*mahiṣya ūcuḥ,
kurari vilapasi tvam vīta-nidrā na śeṣe,
svapīti jagati rātryām īśvaro gupta-bodhaḥ,
vayam iva sakhi kaccid gāḍha-nirviddha-cetā,
nalina-nayana-hāsodāra-līlekṣitena*

The queens said: O kurarī bird, you are lamenting. Now it is night, and 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, like us, you have had your heart pierced to the core by the lotus-eyed Lord’s munificent, playful smiling glances?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The transcendental madness (*unmāda*) of the queens filled them with such ecstasy that they saw their own mood reflected in everyone and everything else. This is expressed in ten verses (15-24) known as the *mahiṣī-gīta*.

The Queens said, “O *kurari* (osprey)! You are sorrowing in separation from your beloved and therefore cannot sleep. But that person, the Supreme Lord and our husband, has no love for you; for He is sleeping, and does not hear your lamentations. Thus the mercy of His that might arise from hearing your lamentation, and by which He might associate with you, will not manifest.”

If the *kurari* bird were to ask, “Well then, is Kṛṣṇa sleeping with you?” the Queens would respond, “No, not at all! His whereabouts are unknown (*gupta-bodhaḥ*) to us. He is out in the world somewhere this night, but we have no idea where to go looking for Him. O Siva! Siva! Oh, dear bird, even though you are a simple creature, your heart has been deeply pierced, just like ours. You must have had some contact, then, with our Kṛṣṇa and become attracted to His lotus eyes, broad

smile and playful glances. Due to your hopeless attachment, you cannot stop thinking, ‘Certainly I will meet Him.’”

Text 16

*netre nimīlayasi naktam adṛṣṭa-bandhus,
tvam roravīṣi karuṇaṁ bata cakravākī,
dāsyam gata vayam ivācyuta-pāda-juṣṭām,
kim vā srajam sprhayase kavareṇa voḍhum*

Poor cakravākī, even after closing your eyes, you continue to cry pitifully through the night for your unseen mate. Or is it that, like us, you have become the servant of Acyuta and hanker to wear in your braided hair the garland He has blessed with the touch of His feet?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O *cakravaki*, are you unable to find your husband (*adṛṣṭa-bandhuḥ*)? Alas, such a painful cry must be due to separation from your children.” They then speak of an alternative reason for lamenting. “Perhaps you are like us, who have become servants of Acyuta (*dāsyam gata*), and desire to bind in our hair the garland which touched His feet.”

Text 17

*bho bhoḥ sadā niṣṭanase udanvann,
alabdha-nidro 'dhigata-prajāgaraḥ,
kim vā mukundāpahṛtātma-lāñchanah,
prāptām daśām tvam ca gato duratyayām*

Dear ocean, you are always roaring, not sleeping at night. Are you suffering insomnia? Or is it that, as with us, Mukunda has taken your insignias and you are hopeless of retrieving them?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O ocean, giving up your gravity, you are making loud sounds like a disturbed person. Not being able to sleep, you keep tossing and turning and crying with loud shrieks. Please tell us the reason? Well, even if you do not tell us the reason, we know it anyway. Just as, on the pretext of enjoying conjugal love with us, that thief stole our kunkuma-smearred pearl necklaces and flower garlands, similarly, He has stolen Laksmi, the Kaustubha jewel and the other things which arose from you.”

Text 18

*tvam yakṣmaṇā balavatāsi gr̥hīta indo,
kṣīṇas tamo na nija-dīdhitibhiḥ kṣiṇoṣi,
kaccin mukunda-gaditāni yathā vayaṁ tvam,
vismṛtya bhoḥ sthagita-gīr upalakṣyase naḥ*

My dear moon, having contracted a severe case of tuberculosis, you have become so emaciated that you fail to dispel the darkness with your rays. Or is it that you appear dumbstruck because, like us, you cannot remember the encouraging promises Mukunda once made to you?

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O moon, are you becoming thin and losing your power to remove darkness because of emaciation from tuberculosis? No, this cannot be the cause, but rather we know the cause. You have forgotten those clever words and profuse promises that Mukunda made at the beginning of separation. Due to the extremely distraught condition you were in, you did not pay attention to

them at that time.

“Now you cannot remember those words of Mukunda. Because of this great calamity you are all choked up and appear dumbstruck. Therefore, since you do not answer our question, and simply cry like the osprey and *cakravaki*, you must be feeling the separation we feel from Kṛṣṇa. Thus, you are lamenting over having forgotten His words and just remain here silent and shattered.”

Text 19

*kiṁ nv ācaritam asmābhir,
malayānila te 'priyam,
govindāpāṅga-nirbhinne,
hṛdīrayasi naḥ smaram*

O Malayan breeze, what have we done to displease you, so that you stir up lust in our hearts, which have already been shattered by Govinda’s sidelong glances?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O Malayan breeze, have we committed some offense (*apriyam:vairam*) to you? It seems that you are taking revenge by inciting lust in us at this time of distress.”

Text 20

*megha śrīmaṁs tvam asi dayito yādavendrasya nūnam,
śrīvatsāṅkaṁ vayam iva bhavān dhyāyati prema-baddhaḥ,
aty-utkaṅthaḥ śavala-hṛdayo 'smad-vidho bāṣpa-dhārāḥ,
smṛtvā smṛtvā viṣṭjasi muhur duḥkha-das tat-prasaṅgaḥ*

O revered cloud, you are indeed very dear to the chief of the Yādavas, who bears the mark of Śrīvatsa. Like us, you are bound to Him by love and are meditating upon Him. Your heart is distraught with great eagerness, as our hearts are, and as you remember Him again and again you shed a torrent of tears. Association with Kṛṣṇa brings such misery!

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O cloud, you are Kṛṣṇa’s friend (dayito), and being bound by love you always meditate upon Him. Although you share Kṛṣṇa’s blue complexion, it is Kṛṣṇa’s distinctive features, such as His Śrīvatsa mark (śrīvatsāṅkaṁ), that especially attract you. But what is the result? Simply unhappiness: Your heart is tainted by depression (śavala-hṛdayo:viṣāda-malina-cetāḥ), and you are constantly shedding tears on the pretext of raining. Why did you become attracted to Kṛṣṇa, since association with Him brings only suffering?”

Text 21

*priya-rāva-padāni bhāṣase,
mṛta-sañjīvikayānaya girā,
karavāṇi kim adya te priyaṁ,
vada me valgita-kaṇṭha kokila*

O sweet-throated cuckoo, in a voice that could revive the dead you are vibrating the same sounds we once heard from our beloved, the most pleasing of speakers. Please tell me what I can do today to please you.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O cuckoo, your sweet words (*priya-rāva*) deliver us from the pain of separation

(*padāni*) from Kṛṣṇa.” The word *pada* can mean determination, deliverance, foot, mark, article or place according the *Amara-kosa* dictionary which says: *padam vyavasiti-trāṇa-sthāna-lakṣmāṅghri-vastuṣu*. In reality, the sweet song of the cuckoo is painful because it reminds the Queens of their beloved Kṛṣṇa and exacerbates their distress of separation. Therefore, words like *priya-rāva* (pleasant sound) have a sarcastic intention.

Thus the implied meaning is, “O sweet-throated one (*valgita-kaṅṭha*)! What may I do to please you, who are making me burn in torment by your songs? I should set your beak on fire!”

Text 22

*na calasi na vadasy udāra-buddhe,
kṣiti-dhara cintayase mahāntam artham,
api bata vasudeva-nandanāṅghriṁ,
vayam iva kāmāyase stanair vidhartum*

O magnanimous mountain, you neither move nor speak. You must be pondering some matter of great importance. Or do you, like us, desire to hold on your breasts the feet of Vasudeva’s darling son?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O holder of the earth, Raivataka Mountain! Certainly you must be thinking about your desired goal (*mahāntam artham*), and thus you remain silent and unmoving. Perhaps (*api bata*) this is your desire: Just as we hanker to hold Śyāmasundara’s lotus feet on our raised breasts (*stanaiḥ*), you desire to place them on your raised peaks (*stanaiḥ*). If that is so, then you will end up in the same predicament as us.”

Text 23

*śuṣyad-dhradāḥ karaśitā bata sindhu-patnyah,
sampraty apāsta-kamala-śriya iṣṭa-bhartuḥ,
yadvad vayaṁ madhu-pateḥ praṇayāvalokam,
aprāpya muṣṭa-hṛdayāḥ puru-karśitāḥ sma*

O rivers, wives of the ocean, your pools have now dried up. Alas, you have shriveled to nothing, and your wealth of lotuses has vanished. Are you, then, like us, who are withering away because of not receiving the affectionate glance of our dear husband, the Lord of Madhu, who has cheated our hearts?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Queens said, “O rivers, wives of the ocean, your pools have all dried up and we know the cause. By not obtaining the loving glance of your husband, the Lord of Madhu, who bestows all desired happiness even for you, the wives of the ocean, you have become just like us, who have failed to obtain Syama’s loving glance, and whose hearts have thus been cheated (*muṣṭa-hṛdayāḥ.vañcita-cittāḥ*). Thus like us you have become lean and thin, and are no longer beautified by blooming lotus flowers.”

Text 24

*haṁsa svāgatam āsyatām piba payo brūhy aṅga śaureḥ kathām,
dūtām tvām nu vidāma kaccid ajitaḥ svasty āsta uktaṁ purā,
kim vā naś cala-sauhṛdaḥ smarati taṁ kasmād bhajāmo vayaṁ,
kṣaudrālāpaya kāma-daṁ śriyam rte saivaika-niṣṭhā striyām*

Welcome, swan. Please sit here and drink some milk. Give us some news of the descendant of Śū ra, dear one. We know you are His messenger. Is that invincible Lord doing well, and does that

unreliable friend of ours still remember the words He spoke to us long ago? Why should we go and worship Him? O servant of a petty master, go tell Him who fulfills our desires to come here without the goddess of fortune. Is she the only woman exclusively devoted to Him?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Imagining that some swan was a messenger, the queens addressed him as follows: “Is the unconquerable Lord doing well?”

The swan replied, “How can Kṛṣṇa be happy without you, His beloved consorts?”

Queens: “But does Kṛṣṇa even remember the affectionate words that He once told one of us, Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī? Does He recall that He said, ‘In all My palaces I see no other wife as dear as you’? (*na tvādr̥śīm praṇayiṇīm grhiṇīm grheṣu paśyāmi*, SB 10.60.55) Being unwavering in His love, does He remember this assurance?”

Swan: “He does indeed remember this, and that is just why He sent me here. You should all go to Kṛṣṇa and worship Him.”

Queens: “If Kṛṣṇa does remember, why is He not responding by coming here. Therefore, why should we go worship Him if He refuses to come here to be with us?”

Swan: “But my dear oceans of compassion, Kṛṣṇa is suffering so much in your absence! How can He be saved from this distress?”

Queens: “Just listen, O servant of a petty master (*kṣaudra*). Tell Kṛṣṇa to come here, as He should. If He is tormented by lusty desires, He has only Himself to blame, since He Himself is the creator of Cupid’s power. We self-respecting ladies are not going to yield to His demand that we go seek Him out.”

Swan: “So be it; then I will take my leave.”

Thinking that the swan would agree and go call Kṛṣṇa, the queens addressed him once more: “No, one minute, dear swan. Ask Kṛṣṇa to come here to us, but without the goddess of fortune, who always cheats us by keeping Him all to herself.”

Swan: “Don’t you know that Goddess Lakṣmī is devoted exclusively

(*eka-niṣṭhā*) to the Lord? How could He give her up like that?” Queens: “And is she the only woman (*striyām*) in the world who is completely sold out (*eka-niṣṭhā*) to Him? What about us?” Though the word *striyām* is singular, it represents a whole category. If we take the alternate reading *kṣaudrālāpam akāma-dam*, the word *kṣaudra* means “honey”. Then the meaning is: “Why should we worship Him who simply speaks sweetly (*mandhurālāpa-mātram*) but does not fulfill our desires for love? The goddess of fortune will continue to worship Him time and time again even if she is dishonored, whereas such proud women as us are *eka-niṣṭhā* in the sense that we are interested only in our reputation and gaining respect.”

Text 25

*śrī-śuka uvāca,
itīdṛśena bhāvena,
kṛṣṇe yogeśvareśvare,
kriyamāṇena mādhavyo,
lebhire paramām gatim*

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: By thus speaking and acting with such ecstatic love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all masters of mystic yoga, His loving wives attained the ultimate goal of life.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: “What goal was attained by these women who possessed such pure ecstatic love?” This verse answers. [note: In Visvanatha Cakravartipada’s edition of *Bhagavatam*, the last words in the verse are *vaiṣṇaviṃ gatim*, rather than *paramām gatim* (ultimate goal), therefore, he comments on the words *vaiṣṇaviṃ gatim*.] The supreme goal (*paramām gatim*) attained by the Dvaraka Mahiṣīs was not the liberation of the impersonal *yogīs*, but they attained the supreme goal obtainable by Vaisnavas (*vaiṣṇaviṃ gatim*), namely

prema-bhakti, pure loving devotion. Indeed, since the queens were already imbued with divine love of God from the very beginning, they possessed transcendental bodies of eternity, knowledge and bliss, in which they fully relished the pleasure of associating with Kṛṣṇa in His most intimate pastimes. Having already tasted the blissful sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s sublime association, which far surpasses the taste of merging in Brahman, it would be impossible for these exalted women to again obtain such fruits as liberation, the ultimate goal (*paramām gatim*) mentioned in this verse. Therefore, their attainment could only be more intense *prema*.

The word *vaiṣṇavi* can also mean “of Visnu or of Kṛṣṇa.” Therefore, the phrase *vaiṣṇaviṁ gatim* means that the Dvaraka Mahiṣīs attained the position (*gatim*) of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, their *prema* matured into the ecstasy of madness in pure love (*bhāvonmada*), just as the *gopīs*’ love did when Kṛṣṇa disappeared from their midst during the *rāsa* dance. At that time the *gopīs* experienced the full development of ecstatic madness in which they completely identified themselves with Kṛṣṇa. Inquiring from the various creatures of the forest, the *gopīs* said, *kṛṣṇo ’haṁ paśyata gatim*: “I am Kṛṣṇa! Just see how gracefully I move!” (SB 10.30.19) In the same way, the Dvaraka Mahiṣīs attained the topmost goal (*paramām gatim*) of becoming fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa after asking questions to the osprey (*kurari*) and others. Dvārakādhīśa’s principal queens reached a level of *prema* known as *anurāga*, wherein the *vilāsa* (flourishing transformations) of their ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa produced the *prema-vaicittya* symptoms they have exhibited here. The stage of *anurāga* is described in *Ujjvala-nilamani*.

Text 26

*śruta-mātro ’pi yaḥ strīṇām,
 prasahyākarṣate manah,
 uru-gāyoru-gīto vā,
 paśyantīnām ca kiṁ punaḥ*

The Lord, whom countless songs glorify in countless ways, forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about Him. What to speak, then, of those women who see Him directly?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Kṛṣṇa, being excellently glorified by many songs (*gāyoru:gāna-prabandhaiḥ*), forcibly attracts the minds of all women who simply hear about Him. But (*va*) what to speak of those women who see Him directly?

Text 27

*yāḥ samparyacaran premṇā,
pāda-saṁvāhanādibhiḥ,
jagad-guruṁ bhartṛ-buddhyā,
tāsāṁ kim varṇyate tapaḥ*

And how could one possibly describe the great austerities that had been performed by the women who perfectly served Him, the spiritual master of the universe, in pure ecstatic love? Thinking of Him as their husband, they rendered such intimate services as massaging His feet.

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: One may ask, “How can their austerities be described?”

“They cannot be described because they were *nitya-siddhas*, eternally perfect devotees, and did not have to perform any austerities.”

Or one may ask, “For those among them who were *sadhana siddhas* (attained perfection by regulative practice), what type of austerities did they perform in their past lives to get that position?”

This verse answers by saying, “Thinking of Kṛṣṇa as their husband,

they served Him by massaging His feet.”

Text 28

*evam vedoditam dharmam,
anutisṭhan satām gatiḥ,
gṛham dharmārtha-kāmānām,
muhus cādarśayat padam*

Thus observing the principles of duty enunciated in the Vedas, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the goal of the saintly devotees, repeatedly demonstrated how one can achieve at home the objectives of religiosity, economic development and regulated sense gratification.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Kṛṣṇa showed that one’s home can be a place (*padam: sthānam*) for achieving *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* (religiosity, wealth and regulated sense pleasure).

Text 29

*āsthitasya param dharmam,
kṛṣṇasya gṛha-medhinām,
āsan ṣoḍaśa-sāhasram,
mahiṣyaś ca śatādhikam*

While fulfilling the highest standards of religious householder life, Lord Kṛṣṇa maintained more than 16,100 wives.

Text 30

*tāsām strī-ratna-bhūtānām,
aṣṭau yāḥ prāg udāhṛtāḥ,
rukmiṇī-pramukhā rājāms,
tat-putrās cānupūrvaśaḥ*

Among these jewellike women were eight principal queens, headed by Rukmiṇī. I have already described them one after another, O King, along with their sons.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those eight of whom the principal queen was Rukmini were previously described (*udāhṛtāḥ:uktāḥ*), as well as their sons.

Text 31

*ekaikasyām daśa daśa,
kṛṣṇo 'jījanad ātmajān,
yāvatya ātmano bhāryā,
amogha-gatir īśvaraḥ*

The Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose endeavor never fails, begot ten sons in each of His many wives.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: There is an alternate version *amogha ratih* instead of *amogha-gatir*. In that case the meaning is “one whose desires do not go in vain and are always fulfilled.”

Text 32

*teṣāṃ uddāma-vīryāṅām,
aṣṭā-daśa mahā-rathāḥ,
āsann udāra-yaśasas,
teṣāṃ nāmāni me śṛṇu*

Among these sons, all possessing unlimited valor, eighteen were mahā-rathas of great renown. Now hear their names from me.

Texts 33–34

*pradyumnaś cāniruddhaś ca,
dīptimān bhānur eva ca,
sāmbho madhur bṛhadbhānuś,
citrabhānur vṛko 'ruṇaḥ,
puṣkaro vedabāhuś ca,
śrutadevaḥ sunandanaḥ,
citrabāhur virūpaś ca,
kavir nyagrodha eva ca*

They were Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Dīptimān, Bhānu, Sāmba, Madhu, Bṛhadbhānu, Citrabhānu, Vṛka, Aruṇa, Puṣkara, Vedabāhu, Śrutadeva, Sunandana, Citrabāhu, Virūpa, Kavi and Nyagrodha.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The Aniruddha mentioned here is Kṛṣṇa's son, not His well-known grandson through Pradyumna.

Text 35

*eteṣām api rājendra,
tanu-jānām madhu-dviṣaḥ,
pradyumna āsīt prathamah,
pitṛ-vad rukmiṇī-sutaḥ*

O best of kings, of these sons begotten by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Madhu, the most prominent was Rukmiṇī's son Pradyumna. He was just like His father.

Text 36

*sa rukmiṇo duhitaram,
upayeme mahā-rathaḥ,
tasyām tato 'niruddho 'bhūt,
nāgāyata-balānvitaḥ*

The great warrior Pradyumna married Rukmī's daughter [Rukmavati], who gave birth to Aniruddha. He was as strong as ten thousand elephants.

Text 37

*sa cāpi rukmiṇaḥ pautrīm,
dauhitro jagṛhe tataḥ,
vajras tasyābhavad yas tu,
mauśalād avaśeṣitaḥ*

Rukmī's daughter's son [Aniruddha] married Rukmī's son's daughter [Rocana]. From her was born Vajra, who would remain among the few survivors of the Yādus' battle with clubs.

Text 38

*pratibāhur abhūt tasmāt,
subāhus tasya cātmajāḥ,
subāhoḥ śāntaseno 'bhūc,
chatasenas tu tat-sutaḥ*

From Vajra came Pratibāhu, whose son was Subāhu. Subāhu's son was Śāntasena, from whom Śatasena was born.

Text 39

*na hy etasmin kule jātā,
adhanā abahu-prajāḥ,
alpāyuṣo 'lpa-vīryās ca,
abrahmanyās ca jajñire*

No one born in this family was poor in wealth or progeny, short-lived, weak or neglectful of brahminical culture.

Text 40

*yadu-vaṁśa-prasūtānām,
puṁsām vikhyāta-karmaṇām,
saṅkhyā na śakyate kartum,
api varṣāyutair nṛpa*

The Yadu dynasty produced innumerable great men of famous deeds. Even in tens of thousands of years, O King, one could never count them all.

Text 41

*tisraḥ koṭyaḥ sahasrāṇām,
aṣṭāśīti-śatāni ca,
āsan yadu-kulācāryāḥ,
kumārāṇām iti śrutam*

I have heard from authoritative sources that the Yadu family employed 38,800,000 teachers just to educate their children.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The teachers (*ācāryāḥ: adhyāpakāḥ*) for the thousands (*sahasrāṇām*) of children numbered 38,800,000.

Text 42

*saṅkhyānam yādavānām kaḥ,
kariṣyati mahātmanām,
yatrāyutānām ayuta-
lakṣeṇāste sa āhukāḥ*

Who can count all the great Yādavas, when among them King Ugrasena alone was accompanied by an entourage of thirty trillion attendants?

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The plural number of the word *ayutānām* (tens of thousands) indicates that King Ugrasena had specifically thirty trillion attendants, rather than an indefinite number of tens of trillions. This can be understood by applying the interpretational rule of *kapiñjalādhikaraṇa*, the logic of “referring to pigeons”: Somewhere in the *Vedas* is found the injunction that “one should sacrifice some pigeons.” This plural number should be taken to mean not an indiscriminate number of pigeons, but precisely three of them, since the *Vedas* never leave any matter vague. Thus *āyutānām ayuta-lakṣeṇa* “with a *lakh* of *ayutas* of *ayutas*” means three times 10,000 (*ayuta*) times 10,000 (*ayuta*) times 100,000 (*lakṣa*), or 30,000,000,000,000, which is three *sankhas*. The description is in the present tense to express Sukadeva’s realization of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

Text 43

*devāsurāhava-hatā,
daiteyā ye su-dāruṇāḥ,
te cotpannā manuṣyeṣu,
prajā dr̥ptā babādhire*

The savage descendants of Diti who had been killed in past ages in battles between the demigods and demons took birth among human beings and arrogantly harassed the general populace.

Text 44

*tan-nigrahāya hariṇā,
proktā devā yadoḥ kule,
avatīrṇāḥ kula-śataṁ,
teṣāṁ ekādhikāṁ nṛpa*

To subdue these demons, Lord Hari told the demigods to descend into the dynasty of Yadu. They comprised 101 clans, O King.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: The phrase *kula-śataṁ ekādhikāṁ*, “A dynasty of one hundred and one clans” is the enumeration of the clans, not of the individual persons, since they were countless.

Text 45

*teṣāṁ pramāṇaṁ bhagavān,
prabhutvenābhavad dhariḥ,
ye cānuvartinas tasya,
vavṛdhuḥ sarva-yādavāḥ*

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Yādavas accepted Him as their ultimate authority. And among them, all those who were His intimate associates especially flourished.

Viṣvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Those who were Kṛṣṇa’s intimate associates (*anuvartinaḥ*), all in the form of Yadavas, increased (*vavṛdhuḥ*) the numbers of Yadus. Kṛṣṇa alone could count their

numbers because such counting was beyond the comprehension of even persons like Lord Brahma.

Text 46

*śayyāsanāṭanālāpa,
krīḍā-snānādi-karmasu,
na viduḥ santam ātmānaṁ,
vṛṣṇayaḥ kṛṣṇa-cetasah*

The Vṛṣṇis were so absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that they forgot their own bodies while sleeping, sitting, walking, conversing, playing, bathing and so on.

Text 47

*tīrtham cakre nṛponam yad ajani yaduṣu svaḥ-sarit pāda-śaucam,
vidviṭ-snigdḥāḥ svarūpam yayur ajita-para śrīr yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ,
yan-nāmāmaṅgala-ghnam śrutam atha gaditam yat-kṛto gotra-
dharmah,
kṛṣṇasyaitan na citram kṣiti-bhara-haraṇam kāla-cakrāyudhasya*

The heavenly Ganges is a holy place of pilgrimage because her waters wash Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet. But when the Lord descended among the Yadus, His glories eclipsed the Ganges as a holy place. Both those who hated Kṛṣṇa and those who loved Him attained eternal forms like His in the spiritual world. The unattainable and supremely self-satisfied goddess of fortune, for the sake of whose favor everyone else struggles, belongs to Him alone. His name

destroys all inauspiciousness when heard or chanted. He alone has set forth the principles of the various disciplic successions of sages. What wonder is it that He, whose personal weapon is the wheel of time, relieved the burden of the earth?

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: Summing up the Tenth Canto, the jewel-mine of Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes, Sukadeva mentions five unique qualities distinguishing Sri Kṛṣṇa from all His other expansions, plenary portions and incarnations.

First, Kṛṣṇa's reputation as a sacred place of pilgrimage (*tīrtham*) eclipsed that of the holy Ganges when He descended into the Yadu dynasty. Previous to this, Ganga-devī was the most sacred of all *tīrthas*, being the water that had bathed Lord Vāmanadeva's lotus feet.

Second, Kṛṣṇa gave liberation not only to His surrendered devotees but also to His enemies. Loving devotees like the Vraja-gopis attained the opportunity to enjoy pastimes of conjugal love with Kṛṣṇa's personal form (*svarupam*) in the spiritual world. Whereas, inimical demons like Kamsa, who were killed by Kṛṣṇa, attained the *sāyujya-mukti* of merging into His divine form.

Third, Lakṣmī-devī, Lord Nārāyaṇa's constant companion, whom great demigods such as Brahma serve menially to win her slight favor, could not conquer (*ajita*) Kṛṣṇa. Even by severe austerities she could not bring Kṛṣṇa under control and enjoy the *rasa-līla* as the Vraja-gopis did.

Fourth, the name Kṛṣṇa is superior to the name Nārāyaṇa and to the names of all Kṛṣṇa's other expansions. These two syllables—*kṛṣ* and *ṇa*—combine together to destroy all inauspiciousness and illusion.

Or, chanting that holy name eradicates all ignorance (*nāmāmaṅgala-ghnam*) of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position, thus capturing even the liberated souls. Recitation of Kṛṣṇa's holy name is *śruta-mathā* in the sense that it totally crushes (*mathnāti*) the excellence of all other spiritual practices described in the revealed scriptures (*śruta*).

In the words of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, *sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām, trīr āvṛtṭyā tu yat phalam ekāvṛtṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya, nāmaikam tat prayacchati*

“By uttering the single name of Kṛṣṇa just once, one attains the same benefit as that gained by reciting Lord Viṣṇu’s thousand names three times.” Fifth, Kṛṣṇa solidly reinstated *dharma*, the bull of religion (*gotra-dharma*) on his four legs of compassion, austerity, cleanliness and truth. Thus *dharma* could once again become *go-tra*, the protector of the earth. At the end of Dvapara-yuga, *dharma* was lacking three legs as is stated in the words of mother earth, in the form of a cow, to the personality of religious principles in the form of a bull: *caturbhir vartase yena, pādair loka-sukhāvahaiḥ*, “Once you too were maintained by your four legs, and you increased happiness all over the universe by the mercy of the Lord.” (SB 1.16.25)

Since Kṛṣṇa alone possesses these five wonderful characteristics, His removing the earth’s burden is not at all astonishing; though it may be for the common man.

Text 48

*jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo,
yadu-vara-pariṣat svair dorbhir asyann adharmam,
sthira-cara-vrjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena,
vraja-pura-vanītānām vardhayan kāma-devam*

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is He who is known as jana-nivāsa, the ultimate resort of all living entities, and who is also known as Devakīnandana or Yaśodā-nandana, the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty, and with His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious, as well as every man who is impious. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert. His blissful smiling face always increases the lusty desires of the gopīs of Vṛndāvana. May He be all glorious and happy!

Viṣvanatha Cakravartī Thakura: If someone says, “Alas! Alas! What misfortune that Kṛṣṇa did not continue to manifest His intimate pastimes down to the present time.” To console such persons, Sukadeva Gosvami has composed this beautiful verse.

“Living (*nivāso*) among human beings (*jana:manuṣyeṣu*) such as the cowherds and the Yādavas, Kṛṣṇa remains the most glorious (*jayati*) for all time.”

The word *jayati*, “He is victorious” means that Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in this world—in His holy abode, His holy name and the recitation of His glories. This is indicated by the word *jayati*, which is in the present tense rather than the past. One should not expect Sukadeva to have used the imperative case, *jayatu* instead of *jayati*, because being Kṛṣṇa’s devotee, it would be improper for him to demand blessings from the Lord. All his desires were already fulfilled because the Lord’s blessings are always available.

Sukadeva Gosvami continued, “It is definitively concluded that Kṛṣṇa took birth from two Devakis, the wives of Nanda and Vasudeva (*devakī- janma-vādo*).” That Devakī is a second name for mother Yasoda is

confirmed in *Brhad-viṣṇu Purāṇa*:

dve nāmnī nanda-bhāryāyā, yaśodā devakīti ca ataḥ sakhyam abhūt tasya, devakyā śauri-jāyayā

“The wife of Nanda had two names, Yaśodā and also Devakī. Therefore it was natural that Yasoda, the wife of Nanda, develop friendship with Devakī, the wife of Śauri [Vasudeva].”

Sukadeva Himself has said conclusively that Kṛṣṇa was born from both Devakis: *devakyām iva yaśodāyām*. (SB 10.2.9)

Sri Kṛṣṇa Himself states, *vādaḥ pravadatām aham*: “I am the natural conclusion (*vādaḥ*) of all arguments.” (Bg. 10.32) The word *vādaḥ* also refers to “philosophical theory”, as in *ārambha-vāda* (the theory that the creation has no beginning) and *pariṇāma-vāda* (the theory of the creation emanates from the Supreme).

Sukadeva Gosvami said, “Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates were the best of the Yadu dynasty (*yadu-vara-pariṣat*), some of whom were cowherd men in Vraja and others were *ksatriyas* in Mathura and Dvaraka. With His own

arms, or by His devotees like Arjuna who are just like His own arms, Kṛṣṇa kills the demons opposing religion (*asyann adharmam*). Thus Kṛṣṇa destroys the misery (*vrjina:samsāra-duḥkham*) of material life of all nonmoving and moving entities, and removes the suffering due to separation of the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvaraka.

“With His blissful smiling face, Kṛṣṇa, who is lust personified (*kāma-devam*), always increases the lusty desires (*vardhayan kāma-devam*) of the damsels of Vraja and the city women of Mathura and Dvaraka, who are completely attracted to Him. In this way Kṛṣṇa remains eternally glorious (*jayati*).” The transcendental Kāmadeva (god of love) is a brilliant spiritual personality arising from Kṛṣṇa’s own internal spiritual nature. The word *devam* in *kāma-devam* means bright or spiritual. Thus Sukadeva Gosvami has stated that all the pastimes occurring in Vraja, Mathura and Dvaraka, which are described in the Tenth Canto, are eternal. The detailed dynamics of the eternal nature of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are thoroughly described with logical reasoning in my commentary on *Ujjvala-nīlāmaṇi*. And at the end of the Eleventh Canto, it will be more elaborately commented under the topic of Kṛṣṇa’s disappearance.

Text 49

*itthaṁ parasya nija-vartma-rirakṣayātta-
līlā-tanos tad-anurūpa-vidāmbanāni,
karmāṇi karma-kaṣaṇāni yadūttamasya,
śrūyād amuṣya padayor anuvṛttim icchan*

To protect the principles of devotional service to Himself, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the best of the Yadus, accepts the pastime forms that have been glorified here in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. One who desires to faithfully serve His lotus feet should hear of the activities He performs in each of these incarnations—activities that suitably

imitate those of the forms He assumes. Hearing narrations of these pastimes destroys the reactions to fruitive work.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: Having established that the pastimes of Sri Kṛṣṇa are eternal, Sukadeva Gosvami prescribes hearing about them in this verse. How can it be described (verse 47) that all Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates became situated in His exclusive abode? This is answered here that even those who merely listen (*śrūyāt*) to the pastimes Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with His associates will also attain eternal residence in the spiritual world.

As previously described, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests His personal forms (*tanos:nija-vigrahaḥ*) in this material world in order to protect His own principles of religion (*nija-vartma*), namely devotional service. Sri Kṛṣṇa appears simply out of His mercy; otherwise He remains imperceptible to everyone. One should hear about the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa's various incarnations, which display activities befitting that particular *avatara*. Though these incarnations may appear to be engaged in inferior, mundane activities, nevertheless, one should hear about their pastimes, which actually display unequaled and unexcelled majesty. Such hearing will destroy the reactions (*karma-kaṣaṇāni*) to fruitive work.

Text 50

*martyas tayānusavam edhitayā mukunda-
śrīmat-kathā-śravaṇa-kīrtana-cintayaiti,
tad dhāma dustara-kṛtānta-javāpavargam,
grāmād vanam kṣiti-bhujo 'pi yayur yad-arthāḥ*

By regularly hearing, chanting and meditating on the beautiful topics of Lord Mukunda with ever-increasing sincerity, a mortal being will attain the divine kingdom of the Lord, where the inviolable power of death

holds no sway. For this purpose, many persons, including great kings, abandoned their mundane homes and took to the forest.

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura: For the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam’s Tenth Canto, this verse is the phala-śruti (fruit of hearing), the promise of success. How can one attain the success of entering the spiritual world (tad dhāma)? By steadily hearing and chanting about the beautiful topics (śrīmat-kathā) of Kṛṣṇa, one will begin to meditate (cintayaiti) on them, and then start continuously (edhitayā:vardhitayā) thinking, “By what method will I attain Kṛṣṇa and when?” This verse states that Kṛṣṇa’s abode is beyond the influence of time since it destroys (apavargaḥ:nāśaḥ) the unavoidable force of death. One method of attaining Sri Kṛṣṇa’s eternal domain is mentioned beginning with the word grāmāt (home). The phrase (kṣiti-bhujāḥ) “kings” implies that kings such as Svāyambhuva Manu and Priyavrata renounced their homes and kingdoms and went to the forest in search of Kṛṣṇa. navatitamo ‘trādhyāyo, daśame sārārtha-darśinyām, saṅgata eṣa skandho ‘py astu, satām saṅgato hṛdi me

“The Sārārtha-darśinī commentary on the ninetieth chapter of the Tenth Canto has now gradually reached its completion, and so has the Canto. This has been accomplished by the association given to me by the devotees of the Lord from within my heart.”

mad-gavīr api gopālaḥ, svī-kuryāt kṛpayā yadi, tadaivāsām payāḥ pītvā, hr̥ṣyeyus tat-priyā janāḥ

“O Gopala, please accept and maintain the cows in the form of my words. Please experience the pleasure of personally drinking that milk, and inspire others to do the same.”

māghasya kṛṣṇa-dvādaśyām, rādḥā-kṛṣṇa-sāras-taṭe, daśama-skandha-ṭīkeyam, apūri kṛpaya prabhoḥ

“By the mercy of the Lord, I completed this commentary on the Tenth Canto on the twelfth day (Dvadasi) of the dark fortnight of Māgha (Jan.-Feb.) on the banks of Radha-kunda.”