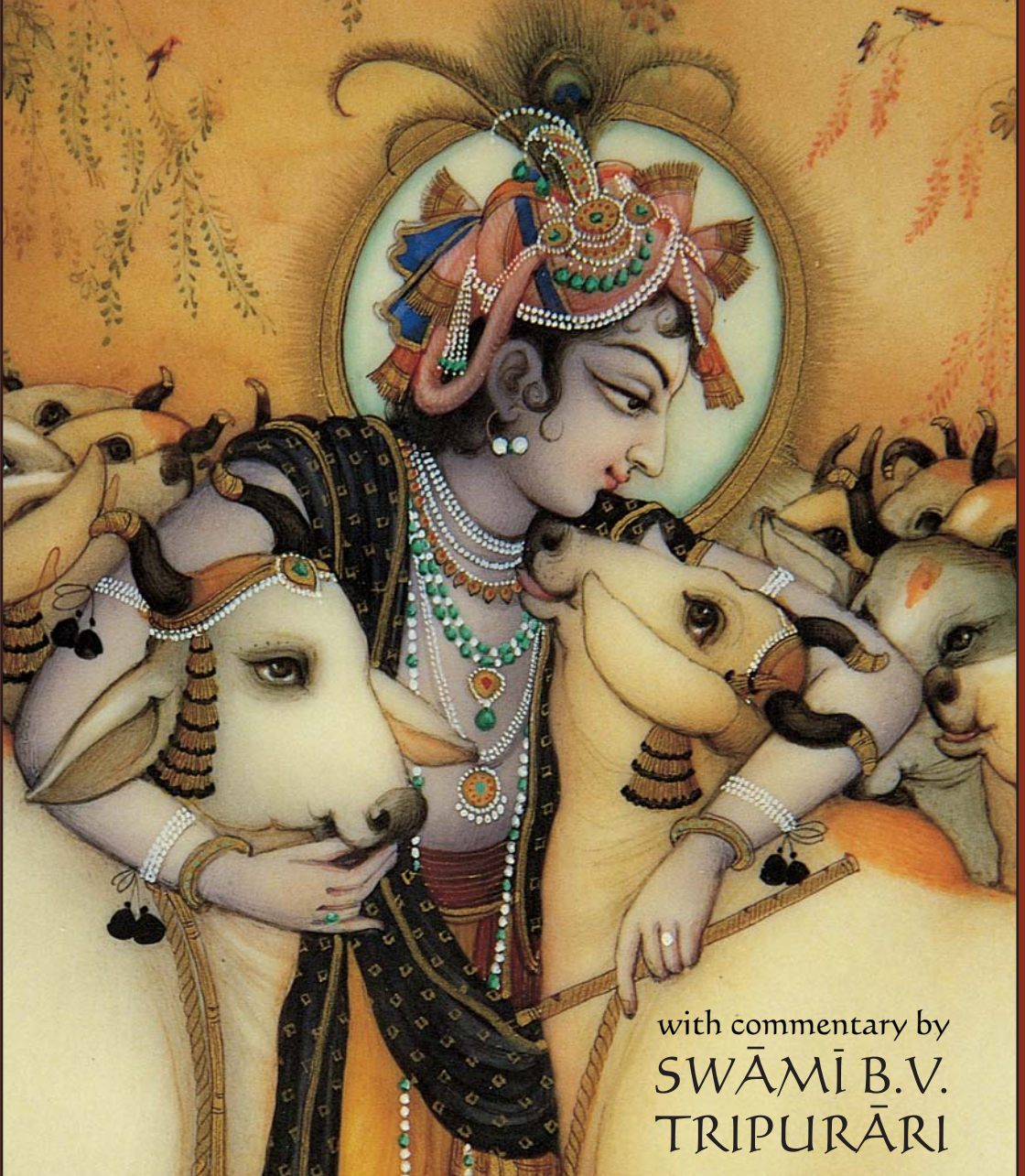


# Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad



with commentary by  
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AUTHOR OF AESTHETIC VEDĀNTA AND JOY OF SELF



## *Gopāla-tāṇi Upaniṣad*

गोपालतापनीयोपनिषद्

# *Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad*

SWĀMĪ B.V. TRIPURĀRI

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*To my gurus, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda  
and Pūjyapada Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī.*





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## Preface

I first developed an interest in the *Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* when I was living in Vṛndāvana, India, in the fall of 1993. At that time I gathered as much information as I could on the text, discussing it with devotee pundits and looking for editions in print. It struck me that there was no edition in English to date and, indeed, no contemporary edition in any language. Although I later found an English edition, it did not contain any of the commentaries of the Gauḍīya *ācāryas* other than a very brief gloss attributed to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. This edition did not satisfy my desire for a contemporary English rendering with a significant commentary, and by this time I had already committed myself to bringing one out.

*Gopāla-tāpani* is very esoteric. So too are the commentaries on it, dating back five hundred years or more. The discussion on the *kāma-bija* and Kṛṣṇa *mantra* is guarded, and one is reminded of the comments of the father of the Gauḍīya lineage, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, in this regard. In his *Dig-darśinī* commentary on *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, he writes that such *mantras* should be chanted only by qualified persons who have received them through proper initiation. He says that even when books discuss these *mantras*, special efforts are often made to disguise their exact syllables, or the explanation is purposely made impossible to understand by those unfamiliar with the cryptic code the author has used.

The *Gopāla-tāpani* has not disguised the syllables of the eighteen-syllable Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, but it has explained them in a cryptic fashion, and its principal commentators, while explaining it, have also left much to be desired in the way of a transparent, modern explanation. It has certainly been my objective to bridge this gap, yet in doing so, I cannot stress enough the importance of hearing this *mantra* from a *sad-guru* and applying oneself accordingly in spiritual practice. This process is the means of realizing the *mantra*'s significance. Indeed, I have no doubt that *Gopāla-tāpani* was initially intended to assist the initiated in taking advantage of this traditionally *guru*-given *mantra*. Nonetheless, my hope in making this particular commentary widely available, extending beyond the circle of the duly initiated, is that the text

will compel its readers to seek out ritualistic entrance into devotional Vedānta, the likes of which Śrī Caitanya's Gauḍīya lineage represents.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Gauḍīya lineage and all other schools of Vedānta is that while other systems of Vedānta stress the most worshipable object, Brahman/Kṛṣṇa, the Gauḍīyas emphasize the worshipable object *of* Brahman, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa's principal consort, Śrī Rādhā. In the *pūrva* section of the book, we find significant references to her importance as the primal *śakti* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; in the *uttara* section, she plays a leading role in the circle of Kṛṣṇa's milkmaids. Gāndharvī, as she is addressed in *Gopāla-tāpanī*, leads us into the romantic life of the Absolute, and the text emphasizes the underlying theology and philosophy of this love affair. It is no wonder, then, that the Gauḍīyas have embraced this text as their own. Among the *Upaniṣads*, it most lends itself to a Gauḍīya explanation.

A number of Śrī Caitanya's devotees took part in bringing out this edition. My friend Jagadānanda translated the Sanskrit verses into English. He also translated summaries of the commentaries that I drew from: the principal Gauḍīya commentaries and two commentaries from other lineages. In places where I quoted any of these commentaries, I used his translation. I sincerely hope that his contribution will be appreciated as much by others as it has been by me. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with him on this publication.

As much as I could not have completed this manuscript and brought it into print without Jagadānanda's help, so too am I indebted to my editor and designer Vṛndāraṇya, who tirelessly dedicated herself, as she has with all of my publications, in overseeing every aspect of its development. All of the others who helped, Kamalākṣa and Kṛṣṇāṅgī in the interior design, Caitanya-dayā and Kaiśorī in editing, Bṛghumuni in Sanskrit editing, and Citta Hari, Dayāl Govinda, Gaura Kṛṣṇa, Jagadīśvara, and Śyāmasundara in proofreading, are to be commended for their sincere efforts. May Śrī Gāndharvī and Madana Gopāla show them their favor. Jaya Radhe!

Swāmī B.V. Tripurārī

Rādhāṣṭamī 2003

## Introduction

If our mentor were to call us with the words, “Sit near and listen carefully,” implying that he or she had a secret to share with us, our excitement and anticipation would no doubt focus our attention. Pay attention! For this is the spirit behind this secret doctrine. The word *Upaniṣad* means, “To sit near and listen.” Monier Williams also defines *Upaniṣad* as an esoteric treatise that “sets to rest ignorance by revealing knowledge of God.” It speaks of the mystery that lies beneath our sensual, mental, and intellectual experience and describes that which animates the world—the self and ultimately the Supreme Self.

“Gopāla” means one who protects (*pala*) cows (*go*), in other words, a cowherd. “Tāpani” means to shed light. Thus *Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* is that esoteric doctrine that sheds light on the cowherd Kṛṣṇa. As we know from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the cowherd Kṛṣṇa is Brahman, replete with inconceivable *śakti*. Knowing him requires knowing oneself to be other than what one can understand by the sensual, mental, and intellectual faculties.

*Upaniṣads* are many and vary in their importance from sect to sect. The famous list of 108 *Upaniṣads*, found in the *Muṇḍaka*, includes *Gopāla-tāpani*, and thus this *Upaniṣad* is among the most well known. By its own definition, it is a Vaiṣṇava *Upaniṣad*, and among Vaiṣṇava sects it is most at home with Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, the followers of Śrī Caitanya.

Several of Śrī Caitanya’s followers have commented on *Gopāla-tāpani*. The first to have done so was Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, whose commentary is by far the most important. Indeed, the later commentaries attributed to Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura follow the lead of Śrī Prabodhānanda and only nuance his work. Although Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa’s commentary does not follow the lead of Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, it adds little to what has been written before him.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī’s commentary was clearly influenced by the preceding commentary of Viśveśvara Tīrtha, although his doctrine, a mix of monism and theism, is not that of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Viśveśvara Tīrtha’s lineage is unknown, but it is possible that he followed a lineage

much like that of the famed Śrīdhara Svāmī, whose *Bhāgavata* commentary was greatly revered by Śrī Caitanya.

All of these commentaries were written long ago, and with all the interest in the Gauḍīya tradition in the world today, a contemporary commentary is long overdue. Swāmī B. V. Tripurārī's work, like his predecessors', follows the lead of Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī. It is lucid and insightful in its own right and will likely be considered an important commentary on this *Upaniṣad* for some time to come.

—*The Publishers*



पूर्वतापनी



*Pūrvā-tāpanī*



I. सच्चिदानन्दरूपाय कृष्णायकृष्टकारिणे ।  
नमो वेदान्तवेद्याय गुरवे बुद्धिसाक्षिणे ॥१॥

*sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya kṛṣṇāyākṛṣṭa-kāriṇe*  
*namo vedānta-vedyāya gurave buddhi-sākṣiṇe*

*sac-cid-ānanda-rūpāya* — to the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; *kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *ākṛṣṭa-kāriṇe* — to him whose every act is wonderful/untroubled; *namah* — obeisances; *vedānta-vedyāya* — to him who is to be known by the *Vedānta*; *gurave* — to the spiritual master; *buddhi-sākṣiṇe* — to the witness present in the intelligence.

**I offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, whose every act is wonderful, who is the object of knowledge identified by the *Vedānta*, and who is the *guru*, the witness present in the intelligence.**

Hail to the goddess as we begin this sacred commentary on *Gopāla-tāpanī*! May the wise, as well as those without wisdom, heed her call to devotion. Blessed are the devotees! May they take pleasure in this effort despite its faults, and may those devotees senior to me in knowledge and devotion, and the pure-hearted commentators Śrī Jīva, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, and Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī in particular, be merciful to me. Above all, I offer my *praṇāmas* to Śrī Guru, Gaurāṅga, Govinda, and Gāndharvikā.

Just as it is standard in modern times to preface a book with a statement that introduces the text and explains its scope and intention, similarly ancient Hindu texts were customarily prefaced with an introductory statement known as a *maṅgalācaraṇa* that accomplishes the same purpose and more. A *maṅgalācaraṇa* invokes auspiciousness and, by so doing, creates a sacred atmosphere. When applied to sacred texts, an auspicious invocation technically consists of four elements: the subject of the text (*viśaya*), the relationship between the text and its subject (*sambandha*), the goal to be attained by its study (*prayojana*), and the person who is qualified to enter into

its mysteries (*adbikārin*).<sup>1</sup> The first verse of *Gopāla-tāpani* contains all of these elements in the form of a prayer that offers obeisances to Kṛṣṇa.

The subject of *Gopāla-tāpani* is Kṛṣṇa. The relationship between the text of *Gopāla-tāpani* and its subject is that the text reveals the spiritual practices that directly lead to realization of Kṛṣṇa as the highest truth. The goal to be attained is love of Kṛṣṇa, or pure devotion, and the person qualified to study the text is one motivated to cultivate such pure devotion. Let us now examine how these four elements are present within *Gopāla-tāpani*'s *maṅgalācaraṇa* verse.

It is clear from this introductory verse that Kṛṣṇa is the subject (*viśaya*) of *Gopāla-tāpani*, for he is propitiated at its onset. It is significant that there is no mention of any fruit to be attained from studying the text, for this implies that those qualified to study the text are uninterested in acquiring material gain or attaining liberation as a result of their study. Their aim is devotion for its own sake. Thus the goal (*prayojana*) of the text is pure devotion. The relationship (*sambandha*) between the text and its object (that the text reveals Kṛṣṇa as the highest truth) is implied within the *maṅgala* verse. The very name of this *Upaniṣad* implies the same, for *Gopāla-tāpani Upaniṣad* suggests “the esoteric doctrine (*upaniṣad*) that sheds light (*tāpani*) on Gopāla (Kṛṣṇa).”

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī says further that the overall import of the first verse is that Kṛṣṇa alone is worthy of refuge, as is apparent from the verse's description of his form, nature, and qualities. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī attributes the speaking of this *maṅgala* verse to the goddess of revealed knowledge, Śruti-devī, who salutes the Supreme God as she begins to manifest this sacred text with the homage, “I offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa.” Wisdom and its revelation are thus subordinate to and dependent on Kṛṣṇa, and therefore Śruti-devī prostrates herself before him (*namah*) with body, mind, and words, clearly demonstrating that the path to enlightenment lies in this act alone.

1. A *maṅgalācaraṇa* often consists of more than one verse and may also involve offering of obeisances (*namaskāra*), stating in essence what the text concerns (*vastu-nirdeśa*), and offering a blessing (*āśīrvāda*).

Stunned by the truth about the Lord, the goddess, well known as a lady of distinction and discrimination, words and wisdom, is left nearly speechless. Nonetheless, she manages to solemnly declare something inconceivable: Kṛṣṇa is the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He has given shape to these much sought-after ideals—not one, but all three of them—through both example and precept as portrayed and preached in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Bhagavad-gītā*, respectively. Moreover, Kṛṣṇa’s nature defies and thus belittles logic. We are to think about this truth as much as we can, until the mind stops and we arrive at knowing beyond thinking.

This form known as Kṛṣṇa is not limited by time or space (*sat*). Kṛṣṇa is self-luminous (*cit*), and joy finds its fullest expression in him (*ānanda*). His nature being such, he is known by the two syllables *kṛṣ* (eternity and knowledge) and *na* (bliss). As Kṛṣṇa himself explains in *Bhagavad-gītā*, he is the form of all-pervasive, self-illuminated joy, even as he taxis Arjuna on that great bowman’s chariot during the battle of Kurukṣetra. He is the all-pervasive moving from place to place, knowledge serving his deluded disciple, and joy in the midst of Arjuna’s agony. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which deals exclusively with Kṛṣṇa and devotion to him, describes him similarly as the controller of his own form of time, he in whom all knowledge is contained, and the supreme bliss.<sup>2</sup>

Śruti-devī next describes Kṛṣṇa’s potency (*śakti*), by which he effortlessly accomplishes everything and through which he frees his devotees from misery. It is said that behind every great man is a great woman. Similarly, behind the *parama-puruṣa* is *parama-prakṛti*, Kṛṣṇa’s primal *śakti*, Rādhā. He moves wonderfully under her influence. The goddess is no doubt partial to Rādhā, being one of her expansions, and she introduces Rādhā as the best of Kṛṣṇa’s milkmaids in the *uttara* section of this *Upaniṣad*, addressing her by her *śruti* name, Gāndharvī. In this verse Śruti-devī describes Kṛṣṇa as *ākliṣṭa-kārin*, “one who acts wonderfully,” the best example

2. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites ŚB 10.3.26, 10.9.13, and 10.14.32 in support of this point, showing that Kṛṣṇa’s *lilā* practically demonstrates that he is the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

of which is his becoming the intimate friend of his devotees. Despite his exalted position, he is subordinated by love. Such is the influence of his primary *śakti*. When she touches one's soul, the finite conquers the infinite.

His acts are wonderful, being joy in celebration of itself, and thus they are not enacted out of any necessity or motivated by any outside influence. Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are one soul in two bodies. Merely hearing their wonderful activities liberates one from the illusory demands of material life, for they shed light on the possibility of enlightened life beyond the constraints of matter and its masks of repeated birth and death.

Turning her thoughts back to reason, Śruti-devī suggests that if one insists on logical proof in support of Kṛṣṇa's supremacy, it is given in the treatise known as *Vedānta-sūtra*. Kṛṣṇa is the personified object of knowledge that the *Vedānta* speaks of, as he himself proclaims in *Bhagavad-gītā* (15.15). As for the *guru*, the guide under whom one studies the scripture, Śruti-devī says that Kṛṣṇa is the *guru* who instructs us on the meaning of the *Upaniṣads*. This too is clear from his discourse to Arjuna in *Gītāpaniṣad*. Moreover, it is Kṛṣṇa who manifests as the inner ability to recognize the external manifestation of *guru*, for he is the witness present in the intelligence (*buddhi-sākṣiṇe*). As the presiding Deity of intelligence, Kṛṣṇa is also the cause of the ability to understand what is being explained by scripture. Thus he is represented in the *guru* who appears before us in the form of a saint as well as the indwelling guide who presides over the intellect, mind, and senses, enabling them to act as instruments of perception and understanding, both material and spiritual.

2.      ॐ मुनयो ह वै ब्राह्मणमूचुः । कः परमो देवः । कुतो मृत्युर्बिभेति ।  
         कस्य विज्ञानेनाखिलं विज्ञातं भावति । केनेदं विश्वं संसरतीति ॥२॥

*om* | *munayo ha vai brāhmaṇam ūcuḥ* | *kaḥ paramo devaḥ* |  
*kuto mṛtyur bibheti* | *kasya vijñānenākḥilam vijñātaṁ bhavati* |  
*kenedam viśvaṁ saṁsaratīti* | |

*om* — Om; *munayaḥ* — the sages; *ha vai* — indeed; *brāhmaṇam* — the *brāhmaṇa* (Brahmā); *ūcuḥ* — said; *kaḥ* — who; *paramaḥ devaḥ* — Supreme

Deity; *kutaḥ* — of what; *mṛtyuḥ* — death; *bibheti* — fears; *kasya* — whose; *vijñānena* — by realization; *akḥilam* — unlimited; *vijñātam* — known; *bhavadati* — becomes; *kena* — by whom; *idaṁ viśvaṁ* — this universe; *saṁsarati* — turns; *iti* — thus.

**Om. The sages, it is recalled, asked of Brahmā, “Who is the Supreme Deity? Of what is death afraid? By knowing what can all things be fully known? By whom is the universe made to turn?”**

Sacred texts often reveal spiritual insight through narrative, and Śruti-devī follows this common practice here in *Gopāla-tāpanī*. She recalls a conversation of yore between the creator Brahmā and his four sons, the Kumāras, in which the import of the eighteen-syllable Gopāla *mantra* was explained. This conversation together with the *maṅgala* verse and this second stanza constitutes the entirety of the *pūrva* section of the *Gopāla-tāpanī*.

The goddess begins her narrative with the sacred syllable Om in order to further invoke auspiciousness. Om is considered the source of all sound; it contains all the holy names of God along with all related *mantras*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has identified *praṇava omkāra* with himself in *Śrī Gītāpaniṣad* (7.8), and it is the first word to appear from Brahmā’s mouth at the dawn of creation.

Both Brahmā and the Kumāras are well-known figures from the sacred Hindu texts. Brahmā is the god of creation, and his four sons are perpetually youthful celibates (*kumāra*). They chose the ascetic path early in life, and their sober presence in this *Upaniṣad* underscores the mindfulness necessary to unlock the secrets of the text.<sup>3</sup> One gains access to the love play of Kṛṣṇa and Gāndharvikā, the Deities of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, by taking a path that requires considerable sobriety and sensual restraint.

The Kumāras are thus fertile soil in which to plant the seed of love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, for they have come to the path of love with hearts unclut-

3. Gauḍīya *ācārya* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned the Kumāras in *Śrī-Śrī-Rādbikā-stava*, a hymn glorifying Śrī Rādhā. By referring to the Kumāras, he implies that the youthful village girl of Gokula is more than she appears to be at first glance. She represents the end of all knowledge, and thus sober sages like the Kumāras offer praise to her.

tered by material desire. They are persons of wisdom (*jñānins*) about to tread the path of spiritual love. It is the *jñānin* that Śrī Kṛṣṇa singles out in his sermon to Arjuna, describing him as most dear among the four types of pious persons who approach him.<sup>4</sup> When *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.2) states that those who study its contents make rapid spiritual advancement, it refers to the *jñānin* who takes to *bhakti*.<sup>5</sup> Its principal speaker, the learned and pure-hearted Śukadeva, serves as a prime example. Brahmā too is no fool. He represents the embodiment of all Vedic knowledge. In this text he speaks from the vantage point of the love of Kṛṣṇa he has attained by meditating on the Gopāla *mantra*. Thus Śruti-devi refers us to a conversation between highly positioned persons in the spiritual hierarchy to further substantiate her solemn declaration about the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa. The Kumāras' questions elicit a particular response from Brahmā, which highlights her chosen Deity's extraordinary characteristics.

3. तदु होवाच ब्राह्मणः । कृष्णो वै परमं दैवतम् ।  
 गोविन्दान्मृत्युर्बिभेति । गोपीजनवल्लभज्ञानेन तज्ज्ञानं भवति ।  
 स्वाहयेदं संसरतीति ॥३॥

*tad u hovāca brāhmaṇaḥ | kṛṣṇo vai paramam daivatam |*  
*govindān mṛtyur bibheti | gopījanavallabha-jñānena taj jñānam*  
*bhavati | svāhayedam saṁsaratīti |*

*tat u* — then; *ha* — certainly; *uvāca* — said; *brāhmaṇaḥ* — the *brāhmaṇa* (Brahmā); *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *vai* — verily; *paramam* — supreme; *daivatam* — Deity; *govindāt* — from Govinda; *mṛtyuḥ* — death; *bibheti* — fears; *gopī-jana-vallabha-jñānena* — by knowledge of Gopī-jana-vallabha; *taj jñānam* — that knowledge, knowledge of that; *bhavati* — becomes; *svāhaya* — by *svāhā*; *idam* — this; *saṁsarati* — revolves; *iti* — thus.

4. Bg. 7.17.

5. See the commentary of Jīva Gosvāmi.



**Brahmā answered: Verily, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity. Death is afraid of Govinda and by knowing Gopi-jana-vallabha one knows all things. This world turns through *svābhā*.**

The process of spiritual initiation (*dikṣā*) involves the preceptor's imparting a *dikṣā mantra* to the disciple. The principal *dikṣā mantra* of the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava lineage is the eighteen-syllable (*aṣṭādaśākṣara*) Gopāla *mantra*, which consists of five distinct sections<sup>6</sup> and is prefaced by the *kāma-bija*.<sup>7</sup> While the five sections of the Gopāla *mantra* are mentioned in this verse (*kṛṣṇāya, govindāya, gopī-jana, vallabhāya*, and *svābhā*), the *kāma-bija*, which is also the eighteenth syllable of the *mantra*, is not. This *bija*—the seed of the *mantra*—will be explained later in this text, as will the *mantra* in considerable detail.

Along with imparting the *mantra* at the time of initiation, the *guru* explains its significance, and this is exactly what Brahmā does in this and the following verses of the first section of *Gopāla-tāpanī*. Thus we are privileged to witness through the written record of this *Upaniṣad* the sacred rite of spiritual initiation: Brahmā imparting and explaining the Gopāla *mantra* to the Kumāras. It should be noted, however, that witnessing initiation and being initiated are two different things.

Śruti-devī introduces Brahmā with the word *brāhmaṇaḥ*. Brahmā is the perfect *brāhmaṇa*—the leader of the learned priestly class, the upper strata of Vedic society. Brahmā's standing as a *brāhmaṇa* involves much more than mere ordination into the priesthood and knowledge of religious ritual and metaphysical theory. An actual *brāhmaṇa* is one who knows Brahman, the Absolute. Thus the intention of the goddess in referring to Brahmā with the word *brāhmaṇaḥ* is clear: she is stressing that Brahmā is highly spiritually qualified. He knows Brahman, the supreme object of worship. Thus when Brahmā answers the sages' first question by stating that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity, *kṛṣṇo vai paramam daivatam*,

6. *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.3) considers this *mantra* to be sixfold, dividing *svābhā* into two syllables.

7. A *bija* (seed) is a single-syllable element essential to all *mantras*. Each Deity has its own *bija*—Kṛṣṇa's being *klīm*.

he is saying that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman. “How is that so?” Śrī Prabodhānanda asks, then answers his own question: “Because worship of Kṛṣṇa corresponds with the form of all varieties of divine joy (*brahmānanda*) combined. There is no difference between what is known as *brahmānanda* (the bliss of Brahman) and *camatkāra* (sacred aesthetic rapture, *rasa*).” Furthermore, he goes on to say, Brahmā’s being a knower of Brahman in the full sense of the term makes him “helplessly driven to contemplate the question, ‘How can a special taste in devotional practice be attained?’”

Well-known scriptural evidence for this opinion of Śrī Prabodhānanda is found in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1) when that esoteric doctrine proclaims *raso vai saḥ*, “He (Brahman) is sacred aesthetic rapture (*rasa*).” As much as Brahman is *rasa*, Kṛṣṇa is Brahman, because he embodies all possibilities for reciprocal dealings in transcendental love. He has therefore been described by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi in his seminal work *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) as *akḥila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, “the embodiment of the ambrosia of immortal joy known as *rasa*.” Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity because the liberated bliss of Brahman is attained in its entirety by worshiping him and, moreover, because all potential for reciprocal dealings with God in sacred aesthetic rapture can be realized through his worship. While Nārāyaṇa (God) and Kṛṣṇa are one *tattva*, one entity, when analyzed in terms of attractiveness and capacity to reciprocate in love, Kṛṣṇa surpasses Nārāyaṇa and all of his *avatāras*. The well-known *pada* of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.3.28) says as much, *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam*: “But Kṛṣṇa is the original Godhead.”

Having answered the sages’ question concerning the Supreme God, Brahmā turns his attention to the Kumāras’ second question. As learned sages, the Kumāras undoubtedly already had high regard for the liberating effects of knowledge and devotion. Death is transcended by the culture of devotion and the knowledge to which it gives rise. Thus the sages are asking Brahmā for something more than an explanation of the standard path by which one can gradually transcend death. They want to know whom death itself fears, by the invocation of whose name death is made to flee. In

other words, is there any practice by which as a mere by-product one is able to transcend death?

Brahmā replies that death is afraid of Govinda, a reference to Kṛṣṇa relative to his cowherding *lilā* in the village of Vraja. While the name Kṛṣṇa also refers to this *lilā*, it is not exclusively tied to his life among the cowherds but extends to his princely *lilā* as well. Thus by telling the sages that death is afraid of Govinda, Brahmā extols the path of unalloyed love, *rāga-mārga*. This path is tread by the devotees of Vraja, who know Govinda as their intimate friend, his godhood suppressed by the intensity of their love.

The nature of the Vraja devotees' love for Govinda is so overwhelming that it causes the Supreme God to lose sight of his own supremacy. The greater part of the devotional world regards him with awe, and in this world people usually pray to him for entrance into heaven and emancipation from death. While God readily grants such requests, neither these petitions nor reverential devotion attracts him personally. The ideal of the Vraja *bhaktas*, on the other hand, completely captivates him. His *lilā* with them is so spiritually pleasing that simply by remembering these pastimes and identifying with them one can transcend death without making any separate effort.

Even the *asuras* killed by Govinda in Vraja attained freedom from the cycle of birth and death, what to speak of his devotees. Furthermore, Jīva Gosvāmī comments that Govinda—the cowherd—is completely unreserved and thus sometimes even grants the *asuras* he kills love of God, a postliberated position in sacred aesthetic rapture.<sup>8</sup> These Vraja *lilās* are a complete contrast to Kṛṣṇa's *lilās* in Mathurā and Dvārakā, where he is not a cowherd but a prince. There he is more restrained and respectful of the religious system; he thus grants the demons he kills only heaven or liberation. For these reasons, death is particularly afraid of Govinda, whose *lilā* of love is the essence of the *Vedas* (*go*).

Within the transcendental drama of Vraja *lilā*, the cowherd Govinda has a love affair with the village milkmaids, the *gopīs*. Knowing the details

8. The demon Pūtānā is the best example of a recipient of Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

of this aspect of his *lilā*, which is a privilege not even granted to all his Vraja devotees, leaves nothing remaining to be known about the Absolute. Thus, as Brahmā confirms here in his answer to the Kumāras' third question, by knowing Gopī-jana-vallabha, the lover of the *gopīs*, one knows everything.

*Gautamiya-tantra* states that the word *gopī* can also refer to the material nature and *jana* to its twenty-five elements, *gopīti prakṛtiṁ vidyāj janas tattva-samūhakaḥ*. He who is the resting place of these two, who pervades them and is the cause of their manifesting as the world, is known as their master, or *vallabha*. He is joy personified. Only one who also knows Gopī-jana-vallabha in this sense truly knows the significance of his love affair with the *gopīs*. Thus Brahmā tells the sages that by knowing Gopī-jana-vallabha one knows all things, material and spiritual.

In response to the Kumāras' fourth question Brahmā says, "This world turns through *svābhā*." The word *svābhā* is uttered when offering oblations to the sacrificial fire and thus indicates sacrifice. Sacrifice is the principle by which we both live happily in this world and transcend it altogether. We truly gain only through giving. When we give of our possessions, we gain in the realm of material acquisition; to the extent that we give of ourselves, we gain understanding of our true nature.

*Svābhā* also makes the drama of Kṛṣṇa *lilā* turn in the spiritual world, for as we shall see further on in Brahmā's explanation of the Gopāla *mantra*, the two syllables *svā* and *bā* are also identified with the primary *śakti* of Kṛṣṇa, which fuels his *lilā*. When the spirit of self-sacrifice turns to self-forgetfulness in love, it is called *prema-śakti*. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that this *prema-śakti* embodied in the *gopīs* is indicated by the syllable *svā*, while the syllable *bā* signifies devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Taken together, they suggest that the *gopīs* belong only to Kṛṣṇa.

Thus the *mantra* under discussion propitiates the Supreme Deity, brings an end to death, and reveals all knowledge culminating in the highest love. It is to be chanted in a spirit of self-sacrifice reposed in the Supreme Deity. The names Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, and Gopī-jana-vallabha indicate a progression ascending from Kṛṣṇa (the all-attractive) to Govinda (the cowherder in

Vṛndāvana) to Gopī-jana-vallabha (that same cowherder conquered by the *gopīs*' love).

4. तदु होचुः । कः कृष्णः । गोविन्दश्च कोऽसाविति ।  
गोपीजनवल्लभः कः । का स्वाहेति ॥४॥

*tad u bocuḥ | kaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ | govindaś ca ko 'sāv iti |*  
*gopījanavallabhaḥ kaḥ | kā svāheti ||*

*tat u* — then; *ha* — certainly; *ūcuḥ* — they said; *kaḥ* — who is; *Kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *govindaḥ* — Govinda; *ca* — and; *kaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *iti* — thus; *gopī-jana-vallabhaḥ* — Gopī-jana-vallabha; *kaḥ* — who; *kā* — who; *svābā* — *svābhā*; *iti* — thus.

**The sages then asked: Who is Kṛṣṇa? Who is Govinda? Who is Gopī-jana-vallabha? And who is *svābhā*?**

After receiving the *dikṣā mantra* from the *guru* and hearing his explanation of it, the disciple is free to seek clarification of its meaning. Indeed, relevant inquiry is encouraged as it gives proof of the disciple's keen interest in the subject matter. In this text, the sages continue their inquiry into the eighteen-syllable *mantra* without the slightest hesitation. Although wise and self-controlled, they are eager to delve into the mystery of the *mantra*. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas call this eagerness spiritual greed (*lobha*).

“Greed” appropriately describes the quality of the Vraja devotees' love for Kṛṣṇa. This love obscures the gulf that separates infinitesimal individual souls (*jīvas*) from the infinite Godhead, just as worldly greed obscures an individual's decorum and leads him to act inappropriately. Similarly, it is generally considered inappropriate to treat God with anything other than veneration, but when he appears as Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, he places himself in the hands of his devotees, allowing them to do with him as they please.

It appears from this *Upaniṣad* that the Kumāras, who are usually portrayed by the Gauḍīyas as *jñāni-bhaktas*, have a less well-known connection

with the Vraja *lilā* and Gopāla *mantra*. Rūpa Gosvāmi has also mentioned them in relation to Śrī Rādhā in his *Śrī-Śrī-Rādhikā-stava*.<sup>9</sup> At the very least, such keen interest in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *lilā* on the part of these four sober sages serves to underscore the *lilā*'s deeply spiritual nature despite its superficial similarity of a material love affair.

5. तान् उवाच ब्राह्मणः । पापकर्षणो गोभूमिवेदविदितो विदिता  
गोपीजनविद्याकलाप्रेरकस्तन्माया चेति सकलं परं ब्रह्मैव तत् ॥५॥

*tān uvāca brāhmaṇaḥ* | *pāpa-karṣaṇo go-bhūmi-veda-vidito viditā*  
*gopī-jana-vidyā-kalā-prerakas tan-māyā ceti sa-kalan*  
*param brahmaiva tat* | |

*tān* — to them; *uvāca* — said; *brāhmaṇaḥ* — Brahman; *pāpa-karṣaṇaḥ* — who destroys sins; *go* — cows; *bhūmi* — earth; *veda* — *Veda*; *viditaḥ* — known by; *viditā* — the knower; *gopī-jana* — cowherd girls; *vidyā* — wisdom; *kalā* — arts; *prerakaḥ* — inspirer; *tan-māyā* — his *māyā*; *ca* — and; *iti* — thus; *sa-kalan* — taken together; *param brahma* — Supreme Brahman; *eva* — certainly; *tat* — that.

**Brahmā answered:** Kṛṣṇa is he who destroys our sins; Govinda is the knower of the cows, the earth, and the *Vedas* and is also known to them; and Gopī-jana-vallabha is he who inspires the wisdom and arts of the *gopīs*. *Svābhā* is his *māyā*. All these taken together are the Para-brahman in his full glory.

Inspired by the sages' ardent inquiry, Brahman continues to enthusiastically explain the significance of the *mantra*, defining each of the three epithets of the Lord that make up the *mantra*. He says that Kṛṣṇa is the Deity who

9. The Kumāras are also portrayed as *rāga-mārga* devotees by the *svakiya-vāda* lineage of Dvaitādvaita. Known today as the Nimbārka *sampradāya*, the Dvaitādvaita lineage was originally founded by the Kumāras themselves.

destroys sins, implying that because he is constituted of knowledge, eternity, and bliss, he easily destroys sinful karmic reactions. Kṛṣṇa's capacity to destroy sin knows no limit; it includes in its scope the sins of the demoniac (*asurāparāḍha*), which are perpetrated directly against him, the Supreme Deity. Not only is Kṛṣṇa capable of destroying their offenses, he sometimes does so to such an extent that the demoniac are forever freed from the capacity to commit sin again and, moreover, become his devotees. Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa adds that the name Kṛṣṇa indicates "he whose transcendental pastimes attract the minds of even the sinful."

Brahmā next explains the name Govinda, *go-bhūmi-veda-vidito viditā*: "Govinda is he who is known (*vidita*) to the cows (*go*), the earth (*bhūmi*), and the personified scriptures (*veda*), all of which are meanings for the word *go*." Govinda is well known on earth, where he appears in his human-like *nara-līlā*. There, he is eternally identified with the cows of earthly Gokula Vṛndāvana, and this *līlā* is what all the revealed scriptures point to.

Brahmā defines Gopi-jana-vallabha as *gopi-jana-vidyā-kalā-prerakaḥ*. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī explains this definition as follows: "The words *gopi-jana* are interpreted to mean 'the forms or parts (*kalāḥ*) of perfect knowledge (*vidyā*).' This knowledge, in turn, means loving devotion in a specific mood. He who inspires such devotion and engages the *gopīs* in his personal pastimes is their lover, or *vallabha*." Prabodhānanda supports his interpretation of *vidyā* as devotion by referring to the *Gītā*, where devotion is called the king of knowledge and the king of secrets (*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam*). He also quotes the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.37) to support the interpretation of *kalāḥ* as "forms": "I worship the original person, Govinda, who, though the soul of all creation, dwells in his abode of Goloka in his own personal form, accompanied by his expanded portions (*kalāḥ*), or energies, who are overcome by a special mood of love that is both ecstatic and transcendental."

With the words *tan-māyā*, Brahmā explains that *svābhā* is the *māyā* of Gopi-jana-vallabha; it is that potency under whose influence his *līlā* is conducted, *yogamāyā*. It is his transcendental energy and also his mercy, for *māyā* also means mercy. As explained earlier, *svābhā* (sacrifice) is the heart

of actual life, which animates the world. Under its influence the illusory representation of real life dissipates. *Gautamīya-tantra* explains: “*Svā* refers to the knower of the field; *hā* is the higher, spiritual nature. From the combination of these two arises the sacred word *svābhā* appearing on the lips. Therefore, the dissolution of the universe takes place in the ocean of *svābhā*.”

6. यो ध्यायति रसति भजति सोऽमृतो भवति सोऽमृतो भवतीति ॥६॥

*yo dhyāyati rasati bhajati so 'mṛto bhavati so 'mṛto bhavatīti*

*yaḥ* — whoever; *dhyāyati* — meditates; *rasati* — takes pleasure, chants the *mantra*; *bhajati* — worships; *saḥ* — he; *amṛtaḥ* — immortal; *bhavati* — becomes.

**Whoever meditates upon him, chants his *mantra*, and worships him becomes immortal. He becomes immortal.**

Here the fruit of meditating on Kṛṣṇa, chanting his *mantra*, and worshipping him is revealed: one becomes immortal. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that immortality means that one will attain a spiritual body. He explains that *rasati* (takes pleasure) should be understood in relation to *bhajati* (worships). Whoever worships Kṛṣṇa with relish will attain this result.

Thus Brahmā speaks to the sages of *uttamā bhakti*, or unalloyed devotion, as defined in Nārada’s essential treatise on devotional *tantra*, *Nārada-pañcarātra*.<sup>10</sup> Nārada’s definition forms the basis of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s definition of *bhakti* penned at the onset of his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11). Such *bhakti* is open to all. The word *yaḥ* (whoever) in this verse implies that absolutely anyone has the right (*adbikāra*) to tread the *bhakti-mārga*, should such a person develop the faith that through *bhakti*’s culture alone he or she will attain the ambrosia of eternality, *bhakti-rasāmṛta*.

10. See *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12.



7. ते होचुः । किं तद्रूपम् । किं रसनम् । कथं वाहो तद्भजनम् ।  
तत्सर्वं विविदिषतामाख्याहीति ॥७॥

*te hocuḥ | kiṁ tad-rūpam | kiṁ rasanam |  
katham vāho tad-bhajanam |  
tat sarvaṁ vividiṣatām ākhyāhīti | |*

*te ha ūcuḥ* — the sages asked; *kiṁ* — what; *tat* — his; *rūpam* — form; *kiṁ* — what; *rasanam* — relish, *japa*; *katham* — how; *vā* — or; *aho* — please; *tat bhajanam* — his worship; *tat sarvaṁ* — all that; *vividiṣatām* — to us who wish to learn; *ākhyāhi* — explain; *iti* — thus.

**The sages asked: What is his form? How does one relish him? And how does one engage in his worship? Please explain all these things to us, for we are eager to learn.**

8. तदु होवाच हैरण्यः । गोपवेशमभ्राभं तरुणं कल्पद्रुमाश्रितम् ॥८॥

*tad u hovāca hairanyaḥ | gopa-veśam abhrābham  
taruṇam kalpa-drumāśritam | |*

*tad u ha* — then; *uvāca* — said; *hairanyaḥ* — the golden one (Brahmā); *gopa-veśam* — dressed as a cowherd; *abhrābham* — has the color of a cloud; *taruṇam* — youthful; *kalpa-druma* — desire tree; *āśritam* — has taken shelter.

**The golden one answered: [That form is] dressed as a cowherd, has the color of a cloud, is youthful, and has taken refuge under a desire tree.**

Kṛṣṇa's complexion is dark like a rain cloud and is called *śyāma*, the color that corresponds to the mood of conjugal love (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*) in Indian aesthetic theory. Kṛṣṇa's youthfulness refers to his eternal adolescent form in Vṛndāvana, where he has the disposition and dress of a cowherd (*gopa-veśa*).

The words *kalpa-drumāśritam* refer to the legendary wish-fulfilling tree of Vṛndāvana, under which Kṛṣṇa often stands. This tree is also symbolic of the *Vedas*, from which one can acquire all knowledge and thus whatever one desires, as knowledge enables one to perform action properly and thus realize its fruit. In describing itself, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* extends the metaphor of a desire tree, saying that the *Vedas* represent the tree itself and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the tree's ripened fruit. The principal subject of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Rādhā's love for Kṛṣṇa, and this is the fruit of the desire tree of the *Vedas*, which Kṛṣṇa has taken shelter of and can be attained through.

१-११. तदिह श्लोका भवन्ति ।

सत्पुण्डरीकनयनं मेघाभं वैद्युताम्बरम् ।

द्विभुजं ज्ञानमुद्राढ्यं वनमालिनमीश्वरम् ॥९॥

गोपगोपीगवावीतं सुरद्रुमतलाश्रयम् ।

दिव्यालङ्कारणोपेतं रत्नपङ्कजमध्यगम् ॥१०॥

कालिन्दीजलकलोलसङ्गिमारुतसेवितम् ।

चिन्तयन् चेतसा कृष्णं मुक्तो भवति संसृतेः ॥ इति । ॥११॥

*tad iha ślokā bhavanti*

*sat-puṇḍarika-nayanam meghābham vaidyutāmbaram ।*

*dvi-bhujam jñāna-mudrāḍhyam vana-mālinam īśvaram ।।*

*gopa-gopī-gavāvitaṁ sura-druma-talāśrayam ।*

*divyālaṅkaraṇopetaṁ ratna-paṅkaja-madhyagaṁ ।।*

*kālindī-jala-kallola-saṅgi-māruta-sevitam ।*

*cintayan cetasā kṛṣṇam mukto bhavati saṁsṛteḥ ।। iti ।*

*tad* — then; *iha* — here; *ślokāḥ* — verses; *bhavanti* — are; *sat* — perfect; *puṇḍarika* — lotus; *nayanam* — eyes; *meghābham* — the color of a cloud; *vaidyuta* — lightning-like; *ambaram* — clothes; *dvi-bhujam* — two arms; *jñāna-mudrāḍhyam* — hands held in the sign of knowledge; *vana-mālinam* — wearing a garland of forest flowers; *īśvaram* — the Lord; *gopa-gopī-gavāvitaṁ* — surrounded by cowherds, milkmaids, and cows; *sura-druma-*

*talāśrayam* — standing at the foot of a heavenly tree; *divyālaṅkaraṇopetaṁ* — covered in divine ornaments; *ratna-paṅkaja-madhya-gaṁ* — in the middle of jewels and lotuses; *kālindī-jala* — the water of the Yamunā; *kallola-saṅgi* — the spray coming from the waves; *māruta-sevitam* — fanned by the breezes; *cintayan* — meditating upon; *cetasā* — with the mind; *kṛṣṇaṁ* — Kṛṣṇa; *muktaḥ* — liberated; *bhavati* — becomes; *saṁsṛteḥ* — from the cycle of birth and rebirth; *iti* — thus.

**The following verses are a meditation on Kṛṣṇa’s form that are meant to accompany the eighteen-syllable *mantra*:**

**Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eyes are like perfect lotus petals, his bodily color is that of a monsoon cloud, and his garments are the color of lightning. He has two arms, and his hands are held in the *jñāna-mudrā*. He is wearing a garland of forest flowers.**

**He is surrounded by cowherd men, cowherd girls, and cows, and sits decorated with divine ornaments on a jeweled lotus at the foot of a heavenly desire tree.**

**He is fanned by pleasant breezes moistened by spray from the waters of the Kālindī. Anyone who meditates on Kṛṣṇa in this way will be liberated from repeated birth and death.**

This meditation represents how Kṛṣṇa appeared to Brahmā. Prabodh-ānanda Sarasvatī comments, “The clothes Kṛṣṇa wears seem to have been made out of lightning. The *jñāna-mudrā* refers to his silence, for as *śruti* says, ‘He spoke without words’ (*avacanenaiva provāca*). All Kṛṣṇa’s behavior is based on knowledge, yet he is completely absorbed in the delights of playing his flute, surrounded by the cowherds headed by Śrīdāmā, the cowherd girls headed by Rādhā, and the cows like Kapilā.”

12. तस्य पुना रसनमिति । जलभूमीन्दुसम्पातकामादिकृष्णायेत्येकं पदम् ।  
 गोविन्दायेति द्वितीयम् । गोपीजनेति तृतीयम् । वह्नुभायेति तुरीयम् ।  
 स्वाहेति पञ्चममिति । पञ्चपदं जपन् पञ्चाङ्गं द्यावाभूमी सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ  
 साग्री तदूपतया ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते ब्रह्म सम्पद्यत इति ॥ ११२॥

*tasya punā rasanam iti ।  
 jala-bbhūmindu-sampāta-kāmādi-kṛṣṇāyety ekaṁ padam ।  
 govindāyetye dvitīyam । gopījaneti tṛtīyam ।  
 vallabhāyetye turīyam । svāheti pañcamam iti ।  
 pañca-padam japan pañcāṅgam dyāv-ābbhūmi sūryācandramasau sāgni  
 tad-rūpatayā brahma sampadyate brahma sampadyata iti ।।*

*tasya* — his; *punaḥ* — further; *rasanam* — relishing, *mantra*; *iti* — now; *jala* — water; *bbhūmi* — earth; *indu* — moon; *sampāta* — combination; *kāmādi* — beginning with the *kāma-bija*; *kṛṣṇāya* — the word *kṛṣṇāya*; *iti* — thus; *ekaṁ* — one; *padam* — part; *govindāya iti dvitīyam* — the second is *govindāya*; *gopījana iti tṛtīyam* — the third is *gopī-jana*; *vallabhāya iti turīyam* — the fourth is *vallabhāya*; *svāhā iti pañcamam* — the fifth is *svāhā*; *iti* — thus; *pañca-padam* — five-part; *japan* — chanting; *pañcāṅgam* — five limbs; *dyāv-ābbhūmi* — in heaven and on earth; *sūryā-candramasau* — the sun and the moon; *sa-agni* — along with fire; *tad-rūpatayā* — possessing this form; *brahma* — Brahman; *sampadyate* — is attained.

Furthermore, with regard to relishing Kṛṣṇa in *mantra dhyāna*, the *kāma-bija* is the combination of water, earth, the vowel *i*, and the moon. The first section consists of *kṛṣṇāya* preceded by this *kāma-bija*. The second consists of *govindāya*; the third, *gopī-jana*; the fourth, *vallabhāya*; and the fifth, *svāhā*. By chanting this five-sectioned incantation, one attains the five-limbed Brahman, which is made up of heaven, earth, sun, moon, and fire.

In text 7, after the sages ask Brahmā about Kṛṣṇa's form, they inquire how one relishes this form. Here Brahmā begins his answer to this second

question. Briefly, the answer is that one can relish the form of Kṛṣṇa by meditating on the fivefold *mantra*, *kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāhā*, preceded by the seed of the *mantra* (*kāma-bija*, or *klim*) introduced in this verse.

*Klim* is the seed of desire, from which the world above and the world below manifest. Ultimately, it reveals the secret life of the Absolute. Kṛṣṇa's secret life, or *līlā*, arises out of spiritual desire and is thus the result of Brahman's fullness, the joyous celebration of being fulfilled. Unlike material desire, Kṛṣṇa *līlā* arises out of completeness rather than out of necessity born of incompleteness. Material life based on desire for sense objects, on the other hand, arises out of the sense of incompleteness that results from the soul's misidentification with dull matter. By uttering the Gopāla *mantra* prefaced by the *kāma-bija*, one can move from the world of material desire to the heart of the Absolute and thereby enter the love life of Kṛṣṇa.

As discussed in *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* as well as later on in *Gopāla-tāpanī*, Brahmā chanted the Gopāla *mantra* preceded by the *kāma-bija* for success in creation. Because his desire to create was not entirely unrelated to the selfless desire to serve the Absolute in love, he was successful not only in the work of creation but also in gradually transcending material desire. Through the continued chanting of his *dikṣā mantra* he was able to attain the spiritual world. He thus progressed from *sakāma-bhakti*, devotion with material desire, to *niṣkāma-bhakti*, pure devotion devoid of material desire. He combined worldly aspiration with a desire to serve the Absolute and thus taught by example how to dovetail one's desires in devotion by uttering the sacred *mantra* and thereby realizing the heart of the *kāma-bija*. This twofold power of the *kāma-bija* that Brahmā experienced is described by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in his commentary on *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.24):

One aspect is that it tends to make the pure soul run after the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord of Gokula and of the divine milkmaids. This is the acme of the spiritual tendency of the *jīva*. When the devotee is free from all sorts of mundane

desires and is willing to serve the Lord, he attains the fruition of his heart's desire, viz., the Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But in the case of the devotee who is not of unmixed motive, this superexcellent *mantra* fulfills his heart's desire also. The transcendental *kāma-bija* is inherent in the divine Logos located in Goloka; and the *kāma-bija* pervertedly reflected in worldly affairs satisfies all sorts of desires of this mundane world.

The *kāma-bija* and Gopāla *mantra* facilitated Brahmā's mundane affair of creation inasmuch as the letters of the *kāma-bija* and the other elements of the Gopāla *mantra* represent various aspects of the creation in the form of sound. Brahmā thus employed these sounds in his act of creation. How the various aspects of the creation are represented in the syllables of this esoteric *mantra* is explained in this verse as well as in verse 26. At the same time, *Gopāla-tāpanī* recognizes that there are other scriptural explanations of how the elements of the *mantra* correspond with different aspects of the creation. Therefore, more important than the specific correspondence is the fact that Brahmā saw the subtle forms of the material ingredients within the *mantra* and was able to manifest them by chanting.

As important as the act of creation was to Brahmā, creation is not the principal focus of *Gopāla-tāpanī*. Its primary concern is the spiritual efficacy of the Gopāla *mantra*—that is, the power of the *mantra* that enabled Brahmā to attain emancipation and love of God. However, an explanation of the letters of the *kāma-bija* in terms of their transcendental significance is not found in the text. Other texts have discussed more esoteric meanings for the letters of the *kāma-bija*, so we shall now briefly turn to them.

The *Rāsollāsa-tantra* states that the *kāma-bija* is Kṛṣṇa himself, the transcendental Cupid, Kāmadeva. *Bṛhad Gautamīya-tantra* informs us that the letter *ka* indicates Kṛṣṇa, the supreme *puruṣa* and embodiment of eternality, knowledge, and bliss. In the same text, the letter *i* in *klīm* is said to indicate the supreme *prakṛti*, Śrī Rādhā. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's mutual ecstatic exchange of transcendental love is implied by *la*, and the *anusvara* and *bindu* indicate the ecstatic sweetness of their most blissful kiss.

The *Sanat-kumāra-saṁbitā* explains further: “O Nārada, this *kāma-bīja* is not simply a combination of sounds; it is the body of the Lord himself. The *ka* contains Kṛṣṇa’s scalp, forehead, eyebrows, nose, eyes, and ears. *La* is his cheeks, chin, jaws, neck, throat, and back. *Ī* is his shoulders, arms, elbows, hands, fingers, and fingernails. The half-moon is his chest, belly, sides, navel, and waist. The *bindu* is his thighs, knees, hips, calves, ankles, feet, soles, toes, and toenails.”

Although Brahmā himself does not provide us with any explanation of how his spiritual ideal is represented in the letters of the *kāma-bīja*, he does mention in this verse that by chanting the Gopāla *mantra* “one attains the five-limbed Brahman, which is made up of heaven, earth, sun, moon, and fire.” Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī explains that by this statement Brahmā implies that when chanting the five-sectioned *mantra*, one should meditate on the presiding deities of each of the five sections, starting with heaven, considering them to be different forms of the Lord. He comments that the fundamental name of the Supreme Brahman is Kṛṣṇa, and thus this name appearing as the first section of the *mantra* indicates that he stands above all. Because heaven also stands above all in this world, it is appropriate to equate the two. The second section of the *mantra* is identified with the earth because the name Govinda indicates one who gives joy to the earth. Śrī Govinda does so by enacting his *līlā* on her surface, and in doing so, reveals the earth’s glory: it facilitates the pursuit of his *līlā*. The third section of the *mantra*, *gopī-jana*, represents the most effulgent truth of the *gopīs*, who are the *śaktis* of Kṛṣṇa and in whose presence he appears most complete. Thus it is appropriately identified with the sun, which is the light of lights.

The fourth section of the *mantra*, *vallabha*, refers to the husband of the *gopīs*, who charmed them by his mastery of the flute during the harvest moon. When Parikṣit Mahārāja asked Śukadeva how Kṛṣṇa could dance with the *gopīs* when it appeared that they were already married to other men, Śukadeva replied that Kṛṣṇa is the husband of everyone, even the so-called husbands of the *gopīs*. Because the moon’s rays bring joy to everyone, Brahmā identifies the moon with the fourth section of the *mantra*.

The fifth section of the *mantra*, *svābhā*, is appropriately identified with fire because it implies surrender—the fire of sacrifice—by which our eternal relationship with the Deity is revealed.

Furthermore, the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda in the *mantra* represent the resting place of all beings, gods and humans alike. Thus these names are appropriately identified with heaven and earth. The other three sections of the *mantra*—*gopījana*, *vallabha*, and *svābhā*—represent sources of revelation. Thus they are appropriately identified with the sun, moon, and fire.

Meditation on this five-sectioned *mantra* preceded by the *kāma-bija* enables one to relish delight. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī says that this delight (*tasya punā rasanam*) implies *prema*, in which the effect, the experience of relishing, is assimilated with its cause. In other words, the relish itself becomes one with Kṛṣṇa.

१३. तदेष श्लोकः ।

क्लीमित्येतदादावादाय कृष्णाय

गोविन्दाय गोपीजनवल्लभायैति ।

बृहद्भानव्यासकृदुच्चरेद्योऽसौ

गतिस्तस्यास्ति मंक्षु नान्या गतिः स्यात् ॥ इति ॥ १३॥

*tad eṣa ślokaḥ* ।

*klīm ity etad ādāv ādāya kṛṣṇāya*

*govindāya gopījanavallabhāyeti* ।

*bṛhad-bhānavyāsakṛd uccaret yo 'sau*

*gatis tasyāsti maṅkṣu nānyā gatiḥ syāt* ।। *iti* ।

*tat* — then; *eṣaḥ* — this; *ślokaḥ* — verse; *klīm* — the seed syllable *klīm*; *iti* — thus; *etat* — this; *ādau* — at first; *ādāya* — taking; *kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *govindāya* — to Govinda; *gopī-jana-vallabhāya* — to Gopī-jana-vallabha; *iti* — thus; *bṛhad-bhānavyā* — great daughter of the sun (*svābhā*); *asakṛt* — frequently; *uccaret* — would utter; *yaḥ* — whoever; *asau* — that; *gatiḥ* — destination; *tasya* — his; *asti* — is; *maṅkṣu* — quickly; *na* — no; *anyā* — other; *gatiḥ* — destination; *syāt* — is possible; *iti* — so it is said.



In this connection, the following verse is given:

One first utters the seed *klīm*, following it with *kṛṣṇāya, govindāya*, and then *gopijana-vallabhāya*. One who utters this *mantra* even once, concluding with the “great daughter of the sun” (i.e., *svābhā*), will attain the supreme destination; he will know no other destination.

One who chants the Gopāla *mantra* preceded by the *kāma-bija*, understanding its meaning as explained by the spiritual preceptor, can directly attain the highest destination. Such a devotee can thus circumvent the usual course of gradual elevation through different planes leading to liberation. This is what *Gopāla-tāpani* implies in stating that simply by chanting this *mantra* once, one will attain the supreme destination and no other.

In *Śrī Gītopaniṣad*, Kṛṣṇa informs Arjuna that his devotees need not be concerned with passing from the world through the path of light as opposed to that of darkness.<sup>11</sup> The path of light gradually elevates one by the grace of the presiding *ativāhika-devas*—the deities of fire, light, day, the bright lunar fortnight, and the six months of the sun’s northern solstice. While this is the auspicious yogic path leading to liberation, Kṛṣṇa’s devotees need not be concerned with it, because their concern for Kṛṣṇa causes him to personally deliver them. He does so with the help of the daughter of the sun.

In this verse the words “great daughter of the sun” (*brhad-bhānavi*) tell us something more about the word *svābhā* (previously identified with sacrifice and *yogamāyā*) in terms of its illuminating the path to liberation and love of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>12</sup> In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.58.20), Kṛṣṇa’s wife Kālindī states that she is the daughter of the sun, *aham devasya savitur dubitā*. This same Kālindī is the goddess of the sacred river Yamunā.

11. See Swāmī B. V. Tripurāri, *Bhagavad-gītā: Its Feeling and Philosophy* (San Rafael, CA: Mandala, 2001), 278–81.

12. The words *brhad-bhānavi* are unusual as they have no dictionary meaning, only this esoteric meaning, which has not been recorded anywhere else.

Yamunā-devī is identified microcosmically and macrocosmically with the *suṣūmnā nāḍī*, the mystic pathway to liberation. Microcosmically, the *suṣūmnā nāḍī* appears in the subtle body as the channel from the heart to the top of the head through which successful *yogīs* travel when leaving their bodies in the course of attaining liberation. Macrocosmically, the *suṣūmnā* is the path of light passing through the sun that represents the yogic pathway to liberation on leaving the material body. Yamunā-devī thus illumines the yogic path to liberation.

While the daughter of the sun lights the path to the world beyond the material sky in her form as the *suṣūmnā nāḍī*, she is also present in Kṛṣṇa's abode manifest here on earth—Bhauma Vṛndāvana. As we shall see later in *Gopāla-tāpanī*, this abode is as much or more about the possibilities of liberated life as it is a potent place from which to perform spiritual practice with a view to attaining liberation. It is the land of *līlā* that lies beyond the microcosmic and macrocosmic sense of existence, even while appearing within the world of the mind and senses. In that sacred mystical terrain, Śrī Yamunā-devī flows freely in love of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa's devotees who religiously bathe in her water float blissfully if not effortlessly on her devotional current into the heart of liberated life. She is also known by the name Tapatī or Tapanī, and thus she too sheds light on Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, as does this *Upaniṣad*.<sup>13</sup>

After accepting the *sannyāsa* order, which is considered synonymous with liberation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya offered the following prayer to the Yamunā as he desired to enter Vṛndāvana:

*cid-ānanda-bhānoḥ sadā nanda-sūnoḥ  
para-prema-pātrī drava-brahma-gātrī  
aghananī lavitrī jagat-kṣema-dhātrī  
pavitri-kriyān no vapur mitra-putrī*

O daughter of the sun, although you have appeared in the form of water, you are most dear to the son of Nanda, who is

13. See ŚB 6.6.41, 9.22.4. *Tap*, the verbal root of *tāpanī*, means “to illuminate.”

the spiritual sun. You dispel the sins of all sinners. Please purify this mortal body (Cc. 2.3.28).<sup>14</sup>

Yamunā-devī is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's *śakti-tattva*, the fountainhead of which is Śrī Rādhā. Thus the "great daughter of the sun" is ultimately identified with Rādhārāṇī. It is Śrī Rādhā who more than anyone illumines the path to love of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, in the final analysis the words *bṛhad-bhānavī* (*svābhā*) point to Rādhārāṇī, who is commonly known as Vārṣabhānavī-devī. One who gets her favor conquers Kṛṣṇa, making liberation seem insignificant, if even desirable.

Rādhā's father's name is Vṛṣabhānu, and the name Vārṣabhānavī means "daughter of Vṛṣabhānu." Rādhā is also known as Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, "she who gives joy to Vṛṣabhānu." *Bhānu* indicates the sun, and *vṛṣa* means "the greatest" or "best of its kind." Brahman is the greatest sun, and thus Rādhā is the joy of the brightest sun (Brahman/Kṛṣṇa). *Vṛṣa* also means "bull." The bull is the symbol of *dharma* (righteousness). Thus Rādhā is the joy (*hlādinī-śakti*) of the brightest *dharma*—the *prema-dharma* of Śrī Caitanya.

Because Rādhā was born at the rising of the constellation known as Rādhā, she was also appropriately named after it. Rādhā appeared in Vrajabhūmi in the year that followed Kṛṣṇa's birth and under the stellar influence that marks the happiest day in his astrological chart. The name Rādhā also indicates worship (*ārādhana*). She is the best worshiper of Kṛṣṇa.<sup>15</sup> While she is the Supreme Goddess, she is at the same time the supreme example of devotion to God. She personifies the highest expression of self-sacrifice, which is synonymous with *svābhā*. Rādhā also personifies the *hlādinī-śakti*, the potency of Kṛṣṇa that gives joy. Similarly, true self-sacrifice is joy. Thus Rādhā is further identified with *svābhā*. Understanding *svābhā* in this way while chanting the Gopāla *mantra* deepens the devotee's identification with Rādhārāṇī and the *hlādinī-śakti*.

14. *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka* 5.35.

15. ŚB 10.30.28.

14. भक्तिरस्य भजनम् । तदिहामुत्रोपाधिनैरास्येनामुष्मिन्  
मनःकल्पनम् । एतदेव च नैष्कर्म्यम् ॥ १४॥

*bbaktir asya bbajanam | tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin  
manah-kalpanam | etad eva ca naiṣkarmyam ||*

*bbaktiḥ* — devotion; *asya* — his; *bbajanam* — worship; *tat* — that; *iba* — here in this world; *amutra* — in the next world; *upādhi* — desires; *nairāsyena* — by the eradication; *amuṣmin* — in him; *manah-kalpanam* — absorbing the mental faculties; *etat* — this; *eva* — emphatically; *ca* — and; *naiṣkarmyam* — salvation, freedom from the bondage of actions.

**Devotion is worship of him. Such worship consists of absorbing the mental faculties in him without desiring anything in this life or the next. This worship verily is salvation, or freedom from the bondage of one's actions.**

Here Brahmā answers the sages' third question, found in verse 7. How does one worship Kṛṣṇa? One worships through devotion, which is briefly defined here in terms of its marginal characteristics (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) and primary characteristics (*svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*). The marginal characteristics of unalloyed *bbakti* (*śuddha-bbakti*) are threefold. *Śuddha-bbakti* is devoid of any innate tendency to act for a purpose other than *bbakti* itself, and it is not encumbered by a desire for *jñāna* or *karma*. In defining *śuddha-bbakti*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī says, *anyābbilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. *Anyābbilāṣitā-sūnyam* means that *śuddha-bbakti* is devoid of extraneous endeavor, and the words *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam* explain that *śuddha-bbakti* is not fettered (*anāvṛtam*) by a desire for material acquisition (*karma*) or liberation (*jñāna*).<sup>16</sup> Here in *Gopāla-tāpanī*, Brahmā speaks of these mar-

16. Unfettered by *karma* also means not thinking that one's *bbakti* will be hampered if one forgoes mandatory (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) acts enjoined in *dharma-sāstra*. It also means not thinking that performing such acts will enhance one's *bbakti*.

ginal symptoms of pure devotion when he says that it is devoid of desire for anything in this life or the next.

Rūpa Gosvāmī says further, *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*: “The primary symptom of pure devotion is the ongoing culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*) that is exercised in a manner favorable (*ānukūlyena*) to him.” Brahmā speaks of *bhakti*’s primary symptom when he says that it involves absorbing one’s mind in Kṛṣṇa. Absorbing one’s mind in Kṛṣṇa implies that one must identify with his will and act in accordance with it. Both action and emotion are involved. Sanskrit verbal roots imply both of these as well, and thus the word *anuśīlanam* indicates the culture of external practices (*sādhana-bhakti*) and the spiritual emotions they awaken (*bhāva-bhakti*). Practice leads to spiritual emotion—the flowering stage of love—which in turn matures into the full fruit of love of God (*prema-bhakti*), the final stage of *śuddha-bhakti*.

All three of these divisions of *śuddha-bhakti* are further divided into orientations of reverence (*vaidhī*) and intimacy (*rāgānugā*). Rūpa Gosvāmī identifies the two kinds of devotional service in practice as *vaidhī-sādhana* and *rāgānugā-sādhana*. *Vaidhī-sādhana* is the culture of pure devotion that is governed by the intellect—that is, the motivation to act comes from scriptural injunctions or logic in support of *bhakti*. Its limitation is that its culture culminates in a reverential type of love for God. *Rāgānugā-sādhana*, on the other hand, is governed by emotion. It is the culture of devotion inspired by the love exhibited by Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates in his Vraja *līlā*. The culture of *rāgānugā-sādhana* culminates in intimate, confidential love of God.

Although it is necessary to absorb one’s mind in God in both of these divisions, *rāgānugā-sādhana* is particularly concerned with *smaraṇa* (meditation), and it is thus this division of *śuddha-bhakti* that is being indicated in this verse. Here the word *kalpanam* implies the meditative visualization employed in advanced stages of *rāgānugā-sādhana*. This is underscored in the first line of this verse by the words *bhaktir asya bhajanam*, “Devotion is worship of him.”

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that Brahmā’s conclusion that worship of Kṛṣṇa is devotion is clearly indicated by the use of the dative

case in the principal Kṛṣṇa *mantra* (*kṛṣṇāya, govindāya, gopī-jana-vallābhāya*) as well as through the word *svābhā*. The word *svābhā* will be further defined as self-surrender in the following verse. A word in the dative case tells to or for whom something is done. Thus the *mantra* is saying, “I offer myself in surrender to Kṛṣṇa, to Govinda, to Gopī-jana-vallabha.”

Surrender is the stage on which the drama of *bhakti* is performed. It involves not relying on our physical, mental, or intellectual faculties in and of themselves but rather using them in giving support to the soul’s surrender. Self-surrender is the underlying root of the tree of *bhakti*, whereas *bhakti*’s branches are the various uses of our human faculties in the service of devotion. The flowers that grow on these branches are the spiritual emotions (*bhāva*), which then ripen into the fruit of pure love (Kṛṣṇa *prema*).

The previous verse mentions that by chanting the Gopāla *mantra* one very quickly (*manikṣu*) attains freedom from karmic bondage. This result is a by-product of the culture of pure devotion and *rāgānugā-bhakti* in particular.<sup>17</sup> Although the ripened fruit of *rāgānugā-bhakti* is difficult to attain, liberation comes about through the ongoing culture of devotion without the practitioner’s consciously aspiring for it. Rūpa Gosvāmī lists “making small of liberation” (*mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt*) as one of the characteristics of *śuddha-bhakti*. Thus liberation is contained within pure devotion. In this verse devotion is described as *naiṣkarmya*, which means “exemption from the necessity to perform religious or worldly acts.”

Thus the *bhakti* of *Gopāla-tāpani* is not a means to an end, upon attaining which *bhakti* herself is abandoned. This *Upaniṣad* advocates *bhakti* for *bhakti*’s sake. However, those who employ *bhakti* to attain nondevotional liberation easily attain it by the grace of Bhakti-devī, who manifests a *sattva-guṇa* form of herself (*sāttviki-bhakti*) to assist them.

१५. कृष्णं तं विप्रा बहुधा यजन्ति  
गोविन्दं सन्तं बहुधाऽऽराधयन्ति ।

17. Whereas in *vaidhī-bhakti* devotional liberation is aspired for, in *rāgānugā-bhakti* such an aspiration is considered an impediment to attaining *priti*, intimate spiritual love of Kṛṣṇa.

गोपीजनवल्लभो भुवनानि दधे  
स्वाहाश्रितो जगदैजत्सुरेताः ॥१५॥

*kṛṣṇam tam viprā babudhā yajanti  
govindam santam babudhārādhayanti |  
gopi-jana-vallabho bbuvanāni dadhre  
svāhāśrito jagad aijat suretāḥ | |*

*kṛṣṇam* — to Kṛṣṇa; *tam* — him; *viprāḥ* — the *brāhmaṇas*; *babudhā* — copiously; *yajanti* — sacrifice; *govindam* — Govinda; *santam* — being; *babudhā* — in many ways; *ārādhayanti* — worship; *gopi-jana-vallabhaḥ* — Gopi-jana-vallabha; *bbuvanāni* — the worlds; *dadhre* — has taken hold; *svāhā-āśritaḥ* — taking refuge in *svāhā*; *jagat* — the universe; *aijat* — quickened; *suretāḥ* — the virile semen.

**The *brāhmaṇas* have copiously sacrificed to that Kṛṣṇa. They have worshiped him as Govinda. He is Gopi-jana-vallabha, who has taken hold of the planets. Taking shelter of *svāhā*, he became the virile semen that quickened the universe.**

As Brahmā continues, he describes a gradation of worship that corresponds to the *mantra*'s three names: Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, and Gopi-jana-vallabha. In so doing, he demonstrates how the scope of the *mantra* includes the entirety of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, with each of the three names of God representing different entry points into that *līlā*. Kṛṣṇa is he whom the *brāhmaṇas* have ascertained to be the Supreme God, and thus they worship him in the form of the Deity. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī understands the word *yajanti* connected to the name Kṛṣṇa in this verse to mean *pūjayanti*, implying the path of ritualistic worship (*arcana-mārga*), which is generally tempered with reverence.

In contrast to the names Govinda and Gopi-jana-vallabha, the name Kṛṣṇa in the *mantra* corresponds more with love of Kṛṣṇa experienced in *vaidhī-bhakti*, a spiritual practice in which ritualistic worship (*arcana*) is

more prominent, leading to love of God tinged with reverence. Devotees who aspire to serve Kṛṣṇa in his *lilās* in Dvārakā—where a stronger sense of his majesty prevails—worship him through the *sādhana* of *vaidhī-bhakti*. They experience the *mantra* to be speaking primarily of Kṛṣṇa, who is also known for his Vraja *lilā*, in which he is a cowherder (Govinda) and the lover of the *gopīs* (Gopī-jana-vallabha).

While the name Kṛṣṇa is the least specific of the three names and pertains to all manifestations of his divine *lilā*, the name Govinda refers only to his Vraja *lilā*. There Govinda is the friend of the cows and one of the cowherds himself. With his many friends he wanders throughout the forest herding Nanda's cows. His cowherd friends are on an equal footing with him. They know no distinction between his body and theirs, and thus they never hesitate to embrace him or even climb on his shoulders. Those who aspire for this ideal in *rāgānugā-bhakti* experience the Gopāla *mantra* to be speaking primarily of Govinda, who is also known as Kṛṣṇa and Gopī-jana-vallabha.<sup>18</sup>

In the second *pada* of this verse, the word *ārādhayanti* is used in relation to Govinda, as opposed to *yajanti*, which is used in relation to the name Kṛṣṇa in the first *pada*. *Ārādhayanti* implies a worship that is superior to that indicated by the word *yajanti*, again distinguishing the *rāga-mārga* from the path of *vaidhī-bhakti*. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that while many *brāhmaṇas* worship Kṛṣṇa and follow the path of the *śāstras* (*vaidhī-sādhana*), many others follow the path of spontaneous love (*rāgānugā-sādhana*), worshiping Govinda as the hero of Gokula, just as its eternal residents do. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī similarly suggests that the word *viprāṇ* in relation to the word *ārādhayanti* means, “those *brāhmaṇas* who have attained the taste of passion, or *rāga*.”

Govinda also means one who gives joy to the *gopas* and *gopīs*, such as his father and mother, Nanda and Yaśodā. They worship him in parental love, and those who follow in their footsteps will see the names

18. Other than the *priya-narma-sakhās*, Govinda's friends do not directly participate in his pastimes as the lover of the *gopīs*.



Kṛṣṇa and Gopī-jana-vallabha in the Gopāla *mantra* as aspects of their Govinda.<sup>19</sup>

The name Gopī-jana-vallabha means “the lover of the *gopīs*.” Brahmā says that Gopī-jana-vallabha is the one who has taken hold of the planets. By this he means that in this form God has bestowed his mercy on the universe. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is this same Gopī-jana-vallabha. He is Kṛṣṇa, the lover of the *gopīs*, aspiring to experience the love of his principal *gopī*, Rādhā. His name is Viśvambhara, maintainer of the universe. He nourishes the universe with the distribution of extraordinary love of God, *unnatojjvala-rasa-sva-bhakti-śrīyam*. One who comes in connection with his lineage, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*, and thus worships Govinda and Gopī-jana-vallabha in the *guru-paramparā*, receives the full measure of divine mercy.

Śrī Caitanya, while representing all the four spiritual sentiments of Vraja *bhakti*—subservient, fraternal, parental, and conjugal love—is Kṛṣṇa in search of the highest reach of Rādhā’s love for him. The experiences of all three other spiritual sentiments of Vraja are present in the sentiment of conjugal love. Those who aspire for this spiritual sentiment in Kṛṣṇa’s Vraja *līlā* understand the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda in the Gopāla *mantra* to be aspects of Gopī-jana-vallabha. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu himself chanted the ten-syllable Gopāla *mantra*, *klīm gopī-jana-vallabhāya svābhā*, rather than the full eighteen-syllable Gopāla *mantra* given here in *Gopāla-tāpanī*. Thus it is to be understood that the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda in the *mantra* are not absolutely necessary for those who aspire for conjugal love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Brahmā concludes this verse by refining his definition of the word *svābhā*. He whom Kṛṣṇa has taken shelter of is his devotee (Śrī Guru). The devotee is the shelter (*āśraya*) of a particular sentiment of divine love. He is the embodiment of that love and thus the role model for those who aspire for it. He is its shelter, and that love is a particular manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s

19. The fact that Kṛṣṇa is the lover of the *gopīs* is known to those in parental love and secretly approved by them. However, they do not acknowledge it openly in order to facilitate the highest sentiment of unwedded love (*parakīyā*).

own nature, his *svatūpa-sakti*. Kṛṣṇa places himself in his devotee through his *svatūpa-sakti* and is thereby purchased by him. The *guru* is such a devotee, the embodiment of self-surrender. Through his agent in whom he has taken shelter, Kṛṣṇa becomes the “virile semen that quickens the universe.” Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī says this means that “by the intensity of his love he causes all the universes to be helplessly overcome by trembling and other ecstatic symptoms.” Such symptoms were exhibited by Śrī Caitanya in his *ācārya-līlā*, his pastime of teaching the path of *rāga-bhakti* by his own example.

16. वायुर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो  
जान्ये जान्ये पञ्चरूपो बभूव ।  
कृष्णस्तथैकोऽपि जगद्वितार्थं  
शब्देनासौ पञ्चपदो विभातीति ॥१६॥

*vāyur yathaiko bbuvanam praviṣṭo*  
*janye janye pañca-rūpo babbūva* |  
*kṛṣṇas tathaiko 'pi jagad-dhitārtham*  
*śabdenāsau pañcapado vibhāti* || *iti* |

*vāyuh* — the air; *yathā* — as; *ekah* — one; *bbuvanam* — the world; *praviṣṭaḥ* — entered; *janye janye* — in each body or manifestation of the creation; *pañca-rūpaḥ* — five-formed; *babbūva* — becomes; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *tathā* — so too; *ekah* — one; *api* — even though; *jagat* — [of] the universe; *hitārtham* — for the welfare; *śabdena* — by the sound; *asau* — that; *pañca-padaḥ* — five-sectioned; *vibhāti* — illumines; *iti* — so it is said.

**Just as the air enters into the universe and takes five forms in each body, so too does Kṛṣṇa, though one, take this five-sectioned form of sound for the welfare of the world.**

Brahmā further stresses that the *mantra*, although fivefold, represents one entity, Parabrahman. Thus he gives an example: air is essentially one sub-

stance but expresses itself in five forms within the material body to facilitate bodily functions.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Parabrahman is essentially one entity, yet for the welfare of the world manifests in a fivefold way to give spiritual life to the world's inhabitants.

17. ते होचुः । उपासनमेतस्य परमात्मनो  
गोविन्दस्याखिलाधारिणो ब्रूहीति ॥१७॥

*te hocuḥ | upāsanam etasya paramātmāno  
govindasyākṣhilādhārīṇo brūhīti | |*

*te ha* — they; *ūcuḥ* — said; *upāsanam* — worship; *etasya* — his; *paramātmānaḥ* — of the Supreme Soul; *govindasya* — of Govinda; *akṣhila-ādhārīṇaḥ* — of he who contains all; *brūhi* — tell; *iti* — end of question.

**The sages said: Tell us the means of worshipping (*upāsana*) the Supreme Soul, Govinda, who contains everything.**

Having heard about the nature of worship in the previous verse, the sages now ask about the method of worship.

18. तान् उवाच । यत्तस्य पीठं हैरण्याष्टपलाशमम्बुजं  
तदन्तरालिकेऽनलाम्रयुगं तदन्तराद्यर्णाखिलबीजं  
कृष्णाय नम इति बीजार्यं सब्रह्माणमाधाय  
अनुङ्गायत्रीं यथावद्व्यालिख्य भूमण्डलं शूलवेष्टितं  
कृत्वाङ्गवासुदेवरुक्मिण्यादिखशकीन्द्रादि  
वसुदेवादिपार्थादिनिध्यावीतं यजेत् ।  
सन्ध्यासु प्रतिपत्तिभिरुपचारैस्तेनास्याखिलं  
भवत्यखिलं भवतीति ॥१८॥

20. According to the yogic worldview, the life air is one substance, but within the body it appears fivefold as *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna*, and *samāna*. See *Gopala-tāpani* 2.79.

*tān uvāca | yat tasya pīṭham bairanyaṣṭa-palāśam ambujam tad-antarālike  
 'nalāsra-yugam tadantarādy-arṇākhila-bijam kṛṣṇāya nama iti bijārtham sa-  
 brahmānam ādhāya | anaṅga-gāyatrīm yathāvad vyālikhya bhū-maṇḍalam  
 sūla-veṣṭitam kṛtvāṅga-vāsudeva-rukmiṇy-ādi-kha-śaktindrādi-vasudevādi-  
 pārbhādi-nidhi-āvitam yajet | sandhyāsu pratipattibhir upacārais  
 tenāsyākhilam bhavaty akhilam bhavatiti | |*

*tān* — to them; *uvāca* — he said; *yat* — what; *tasya* — his; *pīṭham* — seat; *bairanya* — golden; *aṣṭa-palāśam* — eight-petaled; *ambujam* — lotus; *tad-antarālike* — in the whorl thereof; *anala-asra-yugam* — a six-pointed star of two inverted triangles; *tad-antarā* — in the center of which; *ādi-arṇākhila-bijam* — preceded by the foremost of seed *mantras*; *kṛṣṇāya nama iti* — and the words *kṛṣṇāya namaḥ*; *bijārtham* — the meaning of the seed *mantra*; *sa-brahmānam* — with the [full] *mantra*; *ādhāya* — placing; *anaṅga-gāyatrīm* — the *kāma-gāyatri mantra*; *yathāvat* — properly; *vyālikhya* — writing; *bhū-maṇḍalam* — the orb of the earth; *sūla-veṣṭitam* — encircled by tridents; *kṛtvā* — doing; *āṅga* — limb; *vāsudeva* — Vāsudeva; *rukmiṇi* — Rukmiṇi; *ādi* — and so on; *kha* — the sky; *śakti* — the potencies; *indrādi* — gods like Indra; *vasudevādi* — Vasudeva and others; *pārbhādi* — Arjuna and others; *nidhi* — treasures; *āvitam* — covered; *yajet* — should worship; *sandhyāsu* — in the [three] junctures of the day; *pratipattibhiḥ* — signifying surrender; *upacāraiḥ* — with offerings; *tena* — with that; *asya* — his; *akhilam* — boundless; *bhavati* — becomes; *iti* — thus.

**Brahmā replied:** One should sacrifice (*yajet*) to the seat (*pīṭham*) [of the *mantra*] (i.e., the *yantra*), which should be made according to the following specifications: It should have the shape of a golden lotus flower with eight petals, within which should be a six-pointed star made of two inverted triangles. At the center of this star, the *mantra kṛṣṇāya namaḥ* should be written, preceded by the foremost of all seeds (i.e. *klīm*). One should also write the *mantra* that gives the root meaning of the seed (i.e., the eighteen-syllable *mantra*) and then in the proper place the *kāma-gāyatri*. One should then surround the en-

tire field on which the *yantra* has been drawn with protective tridents, and so on. In the spaces between the petals, the various other expansions, deities, and energies are to be worshiped in the *āvaraṇa-pūjā*, starting with the bodily limbs, then followed by Vāsudeva, Rukmiṇi, the energies of the sky, Indra, his parents, Vasudeva, his friends like Arjuna, and so on. By making appropriate offerings signifying surrender [to this *yantra*] at the three junctures of the day, the *mantra* will bestow upon the worshiper boundless rewards; it will bestow boundless rewards.

This text gives a brief description of the Gopāla *yantra*—the worshipable, mystical diagram corresponding to the *mantra*. It is recommended that one imprint this *yantra* on a gold or copper plate and consecrate it for worship. All the commentaries on this verse follow Viśveśvara Tīrtha, who has given a detailed description of how to establish this *yantra*.

The conviction that sounds have corresponding forms or that sound creates form is not exclusive to mystics. In the field of cymatics, the study of the interrelationship between energy and matter, it has been demonstrated that sounds can be seen. Hans Jenny, a Swiss doctor and author of *Cymatics: The Structure and Dynamics of Waves and Vibrations*, invented the tonoscope about which he says, “The tonoscope was constructed to make the human voice visible without any electronic apparatus as an intermediate. This yielded the amazing possibility of being able to see the physical image of the vowel, tone, or song a human being produced directly. Not only could you hear a melody—you could see it.” By precisely controlling the rate of vibration, which was not possible without the tonoscope, Jenny attained identical results in repeated experiments. Relative to the *yantra* and sacred sound, further experiments showed that when the syllable Om was intoned, the image produced was a circle filled with concentric squares and triangles, closely resembling a *yantra*.

A *yantra* corresponding with a particular sacred sound, such as the Gopāla *mantra*, is thus a geometric diagram somewhat analogous to a blueprint that forms the basis of a plane of spiritual experience, in this case

the realm of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. This sacred realm has sometimes been described as a hexagonal figure. For example, in *Śrī Brahma-sambitā* 5.3 we find the following verse:

The center of the divine lotus is Kṛṣṇa's residence. It is presided over by *puruṣa* (Kṛṣṇa) and *prakṛti* (Rādhā) and mapped as a hexagonal mystic symbol in which the eighteen-syllable *mantra* is manifest in six divisions together with the *kāma-bīja*. The self-effulgent Kṛṣṇa stands like a diamond in the lotus's central pivot. He is the reservoir of *rasa*, the greatest bliss, the joy of love.

Before entering such a sacred realm, the spiritual practitioner becomes acquainted with its blueprint (*yantra*) or an approximation of that realm in the form of an altar on which the Deity of the *mantra* is installed. The spiritual practice of meditating on the *yantra* or altar of the Deity is what Brahma advocates in this verse in response to the spirit of the sages' inquiry in verse 17.

In their inquiry, the sages use the word *upāsana*, which implies *arcana*. As mentioned earlier, *arcana* is more closely related to *vaidhī-bhakti* than *rāgānugā-bhakti*. However, Rūpa Gosvāmī recommends a refined standard of *arcana* intended to nourish one's culture of *rāga-bhakti*.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Śrī Rūpa and his contemporaries established Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and engaged their followers in *arcana*. While they themselves were engaged in *bhāva-sevā* of the Deity and thus were involved in direct service unobstructed by the medium of ritual, they simultaneously established standards of ritualistic worship for beginners on the *rāga-mārga*.

When such devotees initiated into the chanting of the Gopāla *mantra* engage in ritualistic temple worship of the Deity of Kṛṣṇa (*arcā-vigraha*), such worship serves as an aid to the internal visualization of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. The ritual of *ārati*, for example, is performed at specific times that roughly

21. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.296.

correspond with the daily *lilās* of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Attending the early morning *ārati* of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities, devotees offer various items and sing songs that correspond to the *lilās* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa taking place simultaneously in the invisible world of Goloka. Although the *lilā* itself is spontaneous and ever flowing on the waves of spiritual emotion (*bhāva*), those in whose hearts this flow has not begun envision the *ārati* ritual as a single frame—a still picture—in the entire motion picture of the *lilā*. Jīva Gosvāmī has termed this still-picture meditation *mantra-mayī upāsana*, which eventually gives way to *svārasikī*, or spontaneous visualization of the free flow of Kṛṣṇa’s divine play. Thus *arcana* can serve as a medium to direct service. From *arcana* one can develop eligibility for *bhajana*, the culture of inner life in pursuit of entering the *lilā* of Kṛṣṇa. Here Brahmā recommends this approach to the sages.

19. तदिह श्लोका भवन्ति  
 एको वशी सर्वगः कृष्ण ईड्य  
 एकोऽपि सन् बहुधा यो विभाति ।  
 तं पीठगं येऽनुयजन्ति धीरा  
 तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥१९॥

*tad iha ślokā bhavanti*  
*eko vaśī sarvagah kṛṣṇa īḍya*  
*eko 'pi san babudhā yo vibhāti |*  
*taṁ pīṭhagaṁ ye 'nuyajanti dbirāś*  
*teṣāṁ sukhaṁ śāśvataṁ netareṣāṁ | |*

*tat* — so; *iha* — in this connection; *ślokāḥ* — verses; *bhavanti* — are; *ekah* — one; *vaśī* — controller; *sarvagah* — all-pervading; *kṛṣṇah* — Kṛṣṇa; *īḍyah* — worshipable; *ekah* — one; *api* — though; *san* — being; *babudhā* — in many forms; *yah* — who; *vibhāti* — appears; *taṁ* — him; *pīṭhagaṁ* — upon his throne; *ye* — those who; *anuyajanti* — worship constantly; *dbirāḥ* — sages; *teṣāṁ* — their; *sukhaṁ* — happiness; *śāśvataṁ* — permanent; *na* — not; *itareṣāṁ* — of others.

**In this connection, there are a number of verses:**

**The one, all-pervading controller is the worshipable Kṛṣṇa. Although one, he appears in multiple forms. Those sages who constantly worship him seated upon his throne attain permanent happiness, and not others.**

This next group of verses (19–24) continues the discussion of *arcana*. Here Brahmā says that he will cite several verses concerning the worship of Parabrahman in the form of the five-sectioned *mantra*,<sup>22</sup> implying that the verses represent his own experience, as no particular scripture is cited. However, Brahmā's verses, while original, are based on those found in the *Vedas* and in some cases are only slightly different from well-known Upaniṣadic statements about the Parabrahman.

In this verse, Kṛṣṇa is described as simultaneously one and many. He is one in that he is nondual consciousness and thus devoid of any internal or external distinctions.<sup>23</sup> He is not constituted of parts that are different from him. His form is nondifferent from himself, and thus there is no internal difference (*svagata-bheda*) in him. Nor is Kṛṣṇa different in substance from his *avatāras*, who are all of the same *tattva*. Difference between objects of the same class is called *sajātiya-bheda* in the language of Vedānta. If he were different from his *avatāras*, he would suffer from *sajātiya-bheda* and thus not be nondual in the Vedāntic sense. This is not the case with Kṛṣṇa.

However, one may ask, “Is Kṛṣṇa not different from his *māyā* and the individual souls (*jīvas*) who worship him?” Rephrased in Vedāntic terminology: “Is Kṛṣṇa not subject to *vijātiya-bheda*, or difference between one class of objects and another?” According to Brahmā, the answer is no. As fire is nondifferent from heat and light, Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from his

22. Variants of the *mantra* cited here in verse 19 can be found in *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (2.2.12) and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.12).

23. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.11) describes the absolute truth as nondual consciousness (*advaya-jñāna-tattva*). Much of the Gauḍīya understanding of the *tattva* of the *Bhāgavatam* is based on this verse.



*māyā* and the individual souls, both of whom are dependent on him. In the sense that there is no difference between the energetic and the energy it generates, there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and his *śakti*.

This is the metaphysical truth of the nature of the Parabrahman, who nonetheless expresses himself in apparent difference for the sake of his *līlā*. Thus when scripture speaks of the Parabrahman, it speaks of the inconceivable: concomitant difference within nondifference. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has termed this metaphysic *acintya-bbedābbheda-tattva*. While essentially one, Kṛṣṇa is at the same time all-pervading. He is thus beyond time and space, and controls both of them and everything else within their jurisdiction. Although Kṛṣṇa is one, by his inconceivable powers he appears as many. In addition to his appearance in the world in the form of the five-sectioned Gopāla *mantra*, he appears in many other forms, such as his numerous expansions during the *rāsa-līlā* and the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*.

Whereas those who worship him attain permanent happiness, those whose worship is focused on things within time and space cannot attain enduring joy, for such things are here today and gone tomorrow. Because they are impermanent, they cannot be worshiped in the true sense of giving one's self to them entirely and thus realizing a dynamic union with them. Something that is unable to free one from the limitations of time and space cannot bring enduring happiness.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the word “one” in this verse indicates that Kṛṣṇa is *svayam bhagavān*: he is without equal or superior.<sup>24</sup> He cites the statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.2.21), “He is the Lord of the three worlds, who is neither equaled nor excelled.” Thus Kṛṣṇa is also the controller (*vaśī*). The adjective “all-pervading” (*sarvagah*) in this verse further confirms this assertion.

Brahmā stresses that sober, discriminating people (*dhīra*) have reached this conclusion about Kṛṣṇa. He is not alone in his opinion but is joined by sages like Śukadeva, the narrator of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and all those in

24. *Svayam* = original = God. One who is *svayam* is the singular source of many expressions of God.

the *Bhāgavatam* that Śukadeva mentions who accept Kṛṣṇa as their *iṣṭa-devatā* (worshipful Deity). This list includes all the principal inquirers and those who answer their inquiries.<sup>25</sup> Because Kṛṣṇa is their *iṣṭa-devatā*, they experience a joy unknown even to those great devotees who worship Nārāyaṇa. This is the implication of the words *sukhaṁ śāśvataṁ netareṣāṁ* in this verse. Use of the word *sukha* as opposed to *ānanda* refers to transcendental humanlike happiness, which is possible only in relation to Kṛṣṇa, not Nārāyaṇa.

२०. नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनाना  
मेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् ।  
तं पीठगं येऽनुभवन्ति धीरा  
स्तेषां सिद्धिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥२०॥

*nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām  
eko babūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān ।  
taṁ pīṭha-gaṁ ye 'nubhavanti dbīrās  
teṣāṁ siddhiḥ śāśvati netareṣāṁ ।।*

*nityaḥ* — eternal being; *nityānām* — of eternal beings; *cetanaḥ* — conscious being; *cetanānām* — of conscious beings; *ekaḥ* — one; *babūnāṁ* — of many; *yaḥ* — who; *vidadbāti* — fulfills; *kāmān* — desires; *taṁ* — him; *pīṭhagaṁ* — upon his throne; *ye* — those who; *anubhavanti* — worship; *dbīrāḥ* — sages; *teṣāṁ* — their; *siddhiḥ* — success; *śāśvati* — permanent; *na* — not; *itareṣāṁ* — of others.

**There is but a single eternal being among all eternal beings, a single conscious entity among all conscious entities, only one who fulfills the desires of the many. Those sages who constantly worship him seated upon his throne attain everlasting perfection, and not others.**

25. Parikṣit and Śukadeva, Vyāsa and Nārada, Śaunaka and Sūta Gosvāmī, Maitreya and Uddhava, and so on.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.57 as an explanation of the first two lines of this verse. This *Bhāgavatam* verse is one of the prayers spoken by Brahmā in praise of Kṛṣṇa after the cowherd Kṛṣṇa revealed his godhood during the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*. At that time Brahmā said, “Everything has an essential value; the value of that value is Kṛṣṇa. Just try to describe something other than him.” In the same way, Brahmā says here that it is only because Kṛṣṇa is eternal that individual souls can experience eternity; because he is consciousness that individual souls are also consciousness.

The one singular eternal (*nityaḥ*) is the source of eternity for the many eternal (*nityānām*). Similarly, this singular consciousness is the source of the consciousness in the many who are conscious. It is significant that a plurality of eternal is mentioned in this verse. The plurality of individual souls is not merely an illusory perception but an eternal fact.

Śrī Prabodhānanda poses the following question while explaining the second half of this verse: “There are unlimited numbers of worshipers. Will Kṛṣṇa’s relations with them be limited by his oneness mentioned in the previous verse?” The answer given: “He is the one who fulfills the desires of many.” Thus his being essentially one does not inhibit him from the unlimited reciprocation required to satisfy all souls in terms of their desire for *prema*, or perfection in love of God. In his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.6.211–12), Sanatāna Gosvāmī says that each of Kṛṣṇa’s eternal cowherds feels that Kṛṣṇa loves him the most and that it is indeed wonderful that each of them is correct. All souls can attain everlasting perfection through devotion to him.

२१. एतद्दि विष्णोः परमं पदं ये  
नित्योद्युक्ताः संयजन्ते न कामान् ।  
तेषामसौ गोपरूपः प्रयत्नात्  
प्रकाशयेदात्मपदं तदैव ॥२१॥

*etad dhi viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam ye  
 nityodyuktāḥ saṁyajante na kāmān |  
 teṣāṁ asau gopa-rūpaḥ prayatnāt  
 prakāśayed ātma-padam tadaiva ||*

*etad hi* — this certainly; *viṣṇoḥ* — of Viṣṇu; *paramaṁ* — supreme; *padam* — situation; *ye* — those who; *nitya-udyuktāḥ* — making a constant effort; *saṁyajante* — worship; *na* — not; *kāmān* — desires; *teṣāṁ* — of them; *asau* — that; *gopa-rūpaḥ* — in the form of a cowherd; *prayatnāt* — taking care; *prakāśayet* — reveals; *ātma-padam* — his own abode; *tadā* — then; *eva* — most assuredly.

**To those who are constantly engaged in worshiping this supreme abode of Viṣṇu rather than their material desires, he immediately appears in the form of a cowherd boy and carefully reveals his own abode (*ātma-padam*) at that very time.**

The worshipable altar of the Gopāla *mantra* introduced in text 18 (*pīṭha/yantra*) is further described in this verse as the “supreme abode of Viṣṇu” (*viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*). The highest plane of consciousness is God consciousness, and within that plane Kṛṣṇa consciousness is superlative. While Kṛṣṇa appears as a cowherd, he is actually God (Viṣṇu), and it is because he is God that his humanlike *līlā* is so sweet and attractive.

Kṛṣṇa’s carefree play, which is aloof from involvement with the material world, is perhaps the best evidence of his supremacy. In order to play, one must have power. He who plays the most has the most freedom and power. In *Śrī Gitopaniṣad* Kṛṣṇa says that he sustains the entire universe by a mere portion of himself. This portion (*ekāṁśa*) is Viṣṇu.<sup>26</sup> While Viṣṇu has some involvement in the material world as its maintainer, Govinda is that manifestation of God who, lost in divine play with his devotees, has forgotten about his godhood. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39) advises its

26. See Swāmi Tripurāri, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 355–56.

readers to note that while Kṛṣṇa appears to dance with unmarried milkmaids as if he were an ordinary human, he is Viṣṇu (God). It teaches that those who listen with firm faith to descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's conjugal love affairs attain a state of devotion that frees them from material conditioning and establishes them in transcendental love of God.

The stage of constant worship referred to in this verse corresponds to the stage of firm faith (*niṣṭhā*). Ardent listening to descriptions of Kṛṣṇa *līlā* from the lips of realized souls and worshiping Kṛṣṇa under their guidance begets revelation of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and his abode. Such revelation is possible in the stage of uninterrupted spiritual practice, even before one attains spiritual perfection. Kṛṣṇa reveals himself in this way to help the spiritual practitioner advance systematically in terms of a specific spiritual focus.<sup>27</sup>

Here *Gopāla-tāpani* is also saying that *ajāta-ruci rāgānugā-bhakti* appropriately supported by the limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti*—such as hearing, chanting, remembering, and worshiping the Deity—results in revelation of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and his abode and thereby eligibility for *rāgānugā* proper (*jāta-ruci rāgānugā-bhakti*). The mature culture of *rāgānugā-bhakti* involves living meditatively in Kṛṣṇa's abode. Jīva Gosvāmi renders the words *ātma-padam* in this verse as “his own abode.”

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa has cited this verse in his *Govinda-bhāṣya* (4.3.16) to corroborate the *Brahma-sūtras*' conclusion that upon passing at death, devotees who are very dear to God go directly to his abode. They do not have to take the gradual course via the *ātivāhika* deities, nor do they need to be concerned with passing at an auspicious time.<sup>28</sup> This, however, does not entirely apply to those following the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, although their position is hardly less exalted. They take birth in the earthly manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*, where they cultivate further developments of Kṛṣṇa *prema* in the association of Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates before entering Kṛṣṇa's abode along with him when he leaves the world.<sup>29</sup>

27. Nārada Muni is an example of this in *vaidhī-mārga*. See ŚB 1.6.16–18.

28. See Swāmī Tripurārī, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 278–81.

29. *Sneha, praṇaya, māna, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, mahābhāva*.

22. यो वै ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं  
 यो विद्यास्तस्मै गोपायति स्म कृष्णः ।  
 तं ह दैवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं  
 मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमनुव्रजेत ॥२२॥

*yo vai brahmāṇaṁ vidadhāti pūrvam*  
*yo vidyās tasmai gopāyati sma kṛṣṇaḥ ।*  
*taṁ ha devam ātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ*  
*mumukṣur vai śaraṇam anuvrajeta ।।*

*yaḥ vai*— he who; *brahmāṇaṁ* — Brahmā; *vidadhāti* — ordained, created; *pūrvam* — previously; *yaḥ* — who; *vidyās* — knowledge; *tasmai* — to him; *gopāyati sma* — entrusted; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *taṁ* — him; *ha* — certainly; *devam* — divine being; *ātma-buddhi-prakāśaṁ* — the revealer of self-understanding; *mumukṣuḥ* — the seeker of liberation; *vai* — definitely; *śaraṇam* — refuge; *anuvrajeta* — should take.

**He who at the beginning of the creation brought Brahmā into being and then entrusted him with all knowledge is Kṛṣṇa. One seeking liberation should take refuge in that divine being who is the revealer of the spiritual intelligence by which one knows the self.<sup>30</sup>**

The knowledge entrusted to Brahmā is the eighteen-syllable (five-sectioned) Gopāla *mantra*, from which he derived all material and spiritual knowledge—the knowledge of both creation and emancipation in love of God. Thus Kṛṣṇa, who is nondifferent from the *mantra*, is described in this verse as both the creator of Brahmā and his deliverer as well. The spiritual intelligence (*ātma-buddhi*) mentioned here also refers to the Gopāla *mantra*. It is from this *mantra* that Brahmā acquired his spiritual insight, and thus Brahmā appropriately portrays himself as the spiritual aspirant and Kṛṣṇa as he who is permanently situated in transcendence, the giver of the *mantra*.

30. This verse is based on *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.18.

23. ॐकारेणान्तरितं ये जपन्ति  
गोविन्दस्य पञ्चपदं मनुम् ।  
तेषामसौ दर्शयेदात्मरूपं  
तस्मान्मुमुक्षुरभ्यसेन्नित्यशान्त्यै ॥२३॥

*omkāreṇāntaritam ye japanti*  
*govindasya pañca-padam manum ।*  
*teṣām asau darśayed ātma-rūpaṁ*  
*tasmān mumukṣur abhyasen nitya-śāntyai । ।*

*omkāreṇa* — by *omkāra*; *antaritam* — prefaced and followed; *ye* — those who; *japanti* — chant; *govindasya* — of Govinda; *pañca-padam* — five-part; *manum* — *mantra*; *teṣām* — theirs; *asau* — he; *darśayet* — will show; *ātma-rūpaṁ* — his own form; *tasmāt* — therefore; *mumukṣuḥ* — the seeker of liberation; *abhyaset* — should practice; *nitya-śāntyai* — for eternal peace.

**To those who chant this five-sectioned Govinda *mantra* preceded and followed by *omkāra* he shows his personal form. Therefore, anyone who seeks liberation should constantly repeat this *mantra* to gain eternal peace.**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that by prefacing the chanting of the Gopāla *mantra* with *pranava omkāra*, one achieves the same result as that of performing the elaborate ritual of establishing the Gopāla *yantra*. He also points out that this verse makes it clear that one need not attain the qualifications of a Brahmacārī to derive benefit from this *mantra*. Its efficacy is open to anyone who chants or meditates upon it after having received it from an appropriate spiritual lineage.

24. एतस्मादन्ये पञ्चपदादभूवन्  
गोविन्दस्य मनवो मानवानाम् ।  
दशार्णाद्यास्तेऽपि संक्रन्दनाद्यै  
रभ्यस्यन्ते भूतिकामैर्यथावत् ॥२४॥

*etasmād anye pañca-padād abbūvan  
govindasya manavo mānavānām |  
daśārṇādyās te 'pi saṅkrandanādyair  
abhyasyante bhūti-kāmair yathāvat | |*

*etasmāt* — from this; *anye* — others; *pañca-padāt* — five-part *mantra*; *abbūvan* — have come into being; *govindasya* — of Govinda; *manavaḥ* — *mantras*; *mānavānām* — of human beings; *daśārṇādyāḥ* — such as the one containing ten syllables; *te* — they; *api* — also; *saṅkrandana-ādyaiḥ* — by Indra and others; *abhyasyante* — are practiced; *bhūti-kāmair* — desiring worldly power and opulence; *yathāvat* — just as.

**All other Govinda *mantras* used by humankind, such as that of ten syllables, are derived from this five-part *mantra*. Meditation on it should be practiced as was done by Indra and others who sought material power and opulence.**

This verse further glorifies the eighteen-syllable Gopāla *mantra* by stating that it is the seed *mantra* from which all other Kṛṣṇa *mantras* are derived. The fact that all desires for opulence and material power can be fulfilled from chanting this *mantra* speaks of its universality. The implication is that Kṛṣṇa should be approached regardless of one's desire, be it for material gain, liberation, or devotion.

The ten-syllable *mantra* mentioned here is also prominent in the Gauḍīya lineage. Śrī Caitanya himself was initiated with this *mantra*, as was Gopa Kumāra, the hero of Sanatāna Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*. In the case of Śrī Caitanya, the ten-syllable *mantra*, *gopī-jana-vallabhāya svābhā*, was considered sufficient because his personal spiritual ideal was clearly to pursue the spiritual emotions (*bhāva*) of the *gopīs*. Thus the names Kṛṣṇa and Govinda in the eighteen-syllable *mantra*, which represent love in servitude, friendship, or parenthood, were unnecessary for him.

Gopa Kumāra, however, realized fraternal love of Kṛṣṇa. There are two possible explanations for this, the first being the simplest: while the name



Gopī-jana-vallabha primarily represents romantic love of Kṛṣṇa, one can derive from it any of the four primary spiritual sentiments found in Vraja, Kṛṣṇa’s world of spiritual emotion. This is so because romantic love is objectively the most complete and includes all the excellences of the other varieties of love within it.

The second explanation requires a brief discussion on the varieties of fraternal love of Kṛṣṇa, one of which involves the cowherds’ participation in Kṛṣṇa’s romantic affairs with the Vṛndāvana milkmaids. Among the fraternal devotees of Kṛṣṇa, four groups are mentioned by Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: *subhṛt*, *sakhā*, *priya-sakhā*, and *priya-narma-sakhā*.

Those cowherds known as *subhṛt* serve Kṛṣṇa in fraternity that is accented by paternal love. They are his well-wishing friends. Those whose love is accented by servitude are known as *sakhās*. The cowherds whose love is purely fraternal are known as *priya-sakhās*, dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. The *priya-narma-sakhās* are Kṛṣṇa’s most intimate cowherd friends, and thus their fraternal love is accented by *ṣṛṅgāra-rati*, the sentiment of romantic love. They assist Kṛṣṇa in his exploits with the *gopīs*. They are the bearers of secret messages that Gopī-jana-vallabha whispers into their ears—messages of love intended for Rādhā. They also deliver messages from the *gopīs* to Kṛṣṇa.

Rūpa Gosvāmī gives the following example of the nature of the *priya-narma sakhās*’ involvement in Kṛṣṇa’s romantic life:

*rādhā-sandeśa-vṛndam kathayati subalaḥ paśya kṛṣṇasya karṇe  
śyāmā-kandarpa-lekhaṇi nibhṛtam  
upabaraty ujjalaḥ pāṇi-padme |  
pālī-tāmbūlam āsye vitarati caturaḥ kokilo mūrdhni dhatte  
tārā-dāmeti narma-praṇayi-sahacarās  
tanvi tanvanti sevām | |*

Just look at Subala whispering all of Rādhārāṇī’s messages in Kṛṣṇa’s ear. And Ujjala brings Śyāmā-devī’s love letters and

secretly places them in his lotus hand. Catura places Pāli-devī's *tambūla* in Kṛṣṇa's mouth, and Kokila places the garlands made by Tārā-devī on his head. O thin-waisted one, this is how the *priya-narma sakhās* render service to Kṛṣṇa (Brs. 3.2.44).

This verse implies that each of the *gopas* mentioned has taken shelter of a *gopī* group leader (*yūtheśvari*). Similarly, *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* describes how each of the principal *priya-narma sakhās* dedicates his forest bower at Śyāma-kuṇḍa to a particular *gopī*: Subala's Subalānandada is dedicated to Rādhā; Madhumaṅgala's Madhumaṅgala-śanda is dedicated to Lalitā; Ujjvala's Ujjvalānandada is dedicated to Viṣakhā, and so on.

Thus although these cowherds are immersed in *sakhyā bhāva*, their fraternal love is mixed with conjugal love like that of a *sakhī*. Therefore, their *bhāva* is sometimes referred to as *sakhī bhāva* because they are involved in Kṛṣṇa's romantic life.

*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, while never directly stating that Gopa Kumāra loves Kṛṣṇa as a *priya-narma-sakhā*, leaves room for reaching this conclusion, harmonizing in a charming fashion the fact that Gopa Kumāra's *mantra* was the ten-syllable Gopāla *mantra*, although it could just as well have been the *aṣṭādaśākṣara* Gopāla *mantra* of *Gopāla-tāpanī*.<sup>31</sup> Gopa Kumāra attained perfection in fraternal love of Kṛṣṇa through the *dhyāna* of his Gopāla *mantra* and the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. In accordance with the method of Gauḍīya practice, as Gopa Kumāra developed a liking for a particular spiritual sentiment, he sang names of Kṛṣṇa relative to that sentiment, names that would nourish it. In *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.4.7) he sings:

31. Although Gopa Kumāra (known as Svarūpa in his spiritual body) is identified with the family of Śrīdāmā, a *priya-sakhā*, this does not preclude his being a *priya-narma-sakhā*. Vidagdha, another *priya-narma-sakhā*, is a member of Sudāmā's family, and Sudāmā is a *priya-sakhā*. Moreover, Svarūpa is closely associated with Rādhārāṇī, taking her orders with great delight. See *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.7.9–11.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa gopāla hare mukunda  
govinda he nanda-kīśora kṛṣṇa  
ha śrī-yaśodā-tanaya prasāda  
śrī-ballavi-jīvana rādhikeśa*

O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla, Hari, Mukunda! Govinda! O Nanda-kīśora! Kṛṣṇa! O darling son of Śrī Yaśodā, please show me your favor! O life of the divine cowherd girls! O Lord of Rādhikā!

The names Śrī-ballavi-jīvana and Rādhikeśa speak of Kṛṣṇa's romantic life and thus indicate Gopa Kumāra's acquaintance with and affection for it. Furthermore, throughout *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* Gopa Kumāra's Deity, the Deity of his *mantra*, is identified not just as Gopāla, but Madana Gopāla, "romantic Gopāla."

25. यदेतस्य स्वरूपार्थं वाचा वेदयेति ते पप्रच्छुः । तदु होवाच ।  
ब्रह्मसवनं चरतो मे ध्यातः स्तुतः परमः परार्धान्ते सोऽबुध्यत  
गोपवेशो मे पुरुषः पुरस्तादविर्बभूव ॥२५॥

*yad etasya svarūpārthan̄ vācā vedayeti te papracchuḥ |  
tad u hovāca | brahma-savanam̄ carato me dhyātaḥ stutaḥ  
paramaḥ parārdhānte so 'budhyata |  
gopa-veśo me puruṣaḥ purastād āvirbabbhūva | |*

*yad* — because; *etasya* — his; *svarūpa-arthan̄* — the essential form; *vācā* — with words; *vedaya* — please reveal; *iti* — thus; *te* — they; *papracchuḥ* — asked; *tad u hovāca* — he then said; *brahma-savanam̄* — the Brahma sacrifice; *carataḥ* — performing; *me* — me; *dhyātaḥ* — meditated; *stutaḥ* — praised; *paramaḥ* — supreme; *parārdhānte* — at the end of my long night; *saḥ* — he; *abudhyata* — awoke; *gopa-veśaḥ* — dressed as a cowherd; *me* — me; *puruṣaḥ* — person; *purastāt* — before; *āvirbabbhūva* — appeared.

The sages then said: Please reveal in words the essential meaning of this *mantra*.

**Brahmā replied:** As I performed the *brahma-savana*, I meditated and praised that Supreme Person who awoke [from his *yoga-nidrā*] at the end of my long night. That Supreme Person appeared before me in the dress of a cowherd boy.

The sages were amazed to hear Brahmā recite verses 19–24, which further reveal the glory of the Gopāla *mantra*. Here they ask Brahmā to say something more about the *mantra*’s essential meaning. In this and the next two verses, Brahmā relates some details about his experience of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Godhead and his initiation into the chanting of the eighteen-syllable *mantra*. According to the principal commentators, Brahmā’s performance of *brahma-savana* refers to the passing of the first half of his life in meditation and prayer, the result of which was that Nārāyaṇa became sympathetic to Brahmā and thus began to instruct him.<sup>32</sup> A version of Nārāyaṇa’s instruction to Brahmā is related later in *Gopāla-tāpanī*, where it makes up the greater balance of the *pūrva-tāpanī*.

As a result of Nārāyaṇa’s instruction, Brahmā realized that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is the supreme form of Godhead, one with yet simultaneously superior in transcendental excellence to his form as Nārāyaṇa. As is clear from the verse under discussion, at that time Kṛṣṇa appeared before him in the dress of a cowherd (*gopa-veśāb*). Thus Kṛṣṇa first appeared before Brahmā in the form of Nārāyaṇa and then again in his original form as Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. As mentioned in the following verse, Kṛṣṇa then gave Brahmā the eighteen-syllable *mantra* and disappeared only to reappear later and explain the significance of the *mantra* with regard to creation.

Other than *Gopāla-tāpanī*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Brahma-sambitā* also relate with some variation the *brahma-savana* and Brahmā’s subsequent

32. *Brahma-savanam* is interpreted by most commentators as *brahma-samaya*, “the time of Brahmā,” or the first half of Brahmā’s life (Cf. ŚB 3.11.34–39). *Savanam* as *samaya* (time) is also found in ŚB 8.16.48.

revelation of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s narration of the *brahma-savana*, it is not obvious that Kṛṣṇa himself appeared before Brahmā. Therein it is described that the four-headed Brahmā searched in all directions for his source and while earnestly searching heard the Sanskrit syllables *ta* and *pa*. He understood this sound to be a divine instruction in answer to his searching, and thus he engaged himself in *tapa*, penance.<sup>33</sup> After some time, God appeared before him in a four-handed form and revealed his abode. The description of the abode of God (*tasmai sva-lokaṁ bhagavān sabhājitaḥ*)<sup>34</sup> and his form (*kiriṭinaṁ kuṇḍalinaṁ catur-bhujam pītāmśukam vakṣasi lakṣitaṁ śriyā*)<sup>35</sup> indicates that it was Nārāyaṇa who appeared before Brahmā. However, following this incident Brahmā asks, "Please inform me how, in spite of your transcendental form, you assume an ordinary form, although you have no such form at all" (ŚB 2.9.30). While Nārāyaṇa's four-handed form is overtly transcendental, Kṛṣṇa's two-handed form appears humanlike. It seems from Brahmā's question that Kṛṣṇa had already appeared to Brahmā in his humanlike form dressed as a cowherd and at this point he shook hands with Brahmā (*prita-manāḥ kare spṛśan*).<sup>36</sup> It is not customary for Nārāyaṇa, who is worshiped in reverential love, to shake hands with his devotees as one would with a friend, which is how Brahmā described this incident, *yāvat sakḥā sakhyur ivaśa te kṛtaḥ*: "You have shaken hands with me just as a friend does with a friend."<sup>37</sup> Following this, Kṛṣṇa also told Brahmā, "All of me—my eternal form, nature, color, qualities, and activities—let everything be awakened within you out of my causeless mercy." Thus nothing about the form of God remains to be realized by Brahmā. Therefore, it should be understood that in this conversation two-handed Gopāla Kṛṣṇa adorned with the dress of a cow-

33. Here penance indicates spiritual discipline in a life of self-sacrifice. The result of such practice is mystic insight. When such self-sacrifice is mature, it manifests as divine love.

34. ŚB 2.9.9–15.

35. ŚB 2.9.16–17.

36. ŚB 2.9.19.

37. ŚB 2.9.30. In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda stresses that this exchange involved the intimacy of fraternal love (*sakhyā-rasa*), which is not expressed between Nārāyaṇa and his devotees, but rather between Kṛṣṇa and his devotees.

herd appeared before Brahmā and that it is this supreme form of God who further instructed Brahmā in the confidential secrets of his own worship, which constitute the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *jñānam parama-guhyam me yad vijñāna-samanvitam sa-rabasyam*.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s *namaskāra* verse, Vyāsa offers his obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, and goes on to say that it was this son of Vasudeva (*vāsudeva*) who illuminated Brahmā's heart: *tene brahma brdā ya ādi-kavaye*.<sup>39</sup> It is mentioned in the *Purāṇas* that Vasudeva is another name for Nanda Mahārāja, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa's cowherd father. Thus the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* confirms the *Gopāla-tāpanī*'s opinion that it was Kṛṣṇa in his characteristic *gopa-veśa* who enlightened Brahmā from within his heart and appeared before him.

In *Brahma-samhitā* this scenario is described somewhat differently. There it is said that after Brahmā underwent penance and meditation, he received divine knowledge (*divya-sarasvatī*) in the form of the Gopāla *mantra*, presumably from Gopāla Kṛṣṇa himself. Upon chanting this *mantra* for some time and visualizing in meditation the *yoga-pīṭha* of Goloka, he heard the flute of Kṛṣṇa and thus underwent further initiation into the chanting of *omkāra*, which is synonymous with the *kāma-bīja*, implying that he chanted the *kāma-gāyatrī*. This *kāma-gāyatrī* is the *gāyatrī* that should be chanted along with the Gopāla *mantra*.

As mentioned earlier, a version of Brahmā's enlightenment is also related in the second section of *Gopāla-tāpanī*. In that section Durvāsā describes to Gāndharvī the conversation between Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa. It is not explicitly described that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa himself appeared before Brahmā at that time. However, from this section in *Gopāla-tāpanī* it is clear that following Brahmā's conversation with Nārāyaṇa, Gopāla Kṛṣṇa himself gave Brahmā his *darśana* and instructed him in the secrets of the eighteen-syllable *mantra*.

38. ŚB 2.9.31. This verse indicating *rāga-bhakti* prefaces the famous *catuṣ-śloki* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Thus it is clear that in the *catuṣ-śloki* Kṛṣṇa himself and not Nārāyaṇa is speaking about the supreme secret of *rāga-bhakti* (*parama-guhyam/sa-rabasyam*), the underlying metaphysical of which is *acintya-bbedābhedā*.

39. ŚB 1.1.1.

26. ततः प्रणतो मयाऽनुकूलेन हृदा  
 मह्यमष्टादशार्णं स्वरूपं सृष्टये दत्त्वान्तर्हितः ।  
 पुनः सिमृक्षतो मे प्रादुरभूत् ।  
 तेष्वक्षरेषु भविष्यज्जगदूपं प्रकाशयन्  
 तदिह ककारादापो लकारात्पृथिवी  
 ईतोऽग्निर्बिन्दोरिन्दुस्तत्सम्पातात्तदर्क इति किं कारादसृजम् ।  
 कृष्णायपदादाकाशं खाद्यायुरित्युत्तरात्सुरभिं विद्यां प्रादुरकार्षम् ।  
 तदुत्तरात्स्त्रीपुंसादि चेदं सकलमिदं सकलमिदमिति ॥२६॥

*tataḥ praṇato mayānukūlena hṛdā mahyam aṣṭādaśārṇaṁ svarūpaṁ  
 sṛṣṭaye dattvāntarhitāḥ | punaḥ sisṛkṣato me prādurabhūt |  
 teṣu akṣareṣu bhaviṣyaj-jagad-rūpaṁ prakāśayan |  
 tad iha ka-kārāt āpo la-kārāt pṛthivī ito 'gnir bindor indus  
 tat-sampātāt tad-arka iti klīm-kārāt asṛjam | kṛṣṇāya-padād  
 ākāśaṁ kbād vāyur ity uttarāt surabbhiṁ vidyāṁ prādurakārṣam |  
 tad-uttarāt strī-puṁsādi cedan sakalam idan sakalam idam iti | |*

*tataḥ* — then; *praṇataḥ* — bowed down to; *mayā* — by me; *anukūlena* — with a favorable; *hṛdā* — heart; *mahyam* — to me; *aṣṭādaśārṇaṁ* — eighteen-syllable *mantra*; *svarūpaṁ* — identity; *sṛṣṭaye* — to create; *dattvā* — giving; *antarhitāḥ* — disappeared; *punaḥ* — again; *sisṛkṣataḥ* — desiring to create; *me* — me; *prādurabhūt* — appeared; *teṣu* — in these; *akṣareṣu* — letters; *bhaviṣyat* — the future; *jagad-rūpaṁ* — form of the universe; *prakāśayan* — causing to appear; *tat* — that; *iba* — here; *ka-kārāt* — from the letter *k*; *āpaḥ* — water; *la-kārāt* — from the letter *l*; *pṛthivī* — earth; *i-taḥ* — from the letter *i*; *agniḥ* — from fire; *bindoḥ* — from the *bindu*; *indus* — the moon; *tat-sampātāt* — from the combination; *tat* — that; *arkaḥ* — the sun; *iti* — thus; *klīm-kārāt* — from the syllable *klīm*; *asṛjam* — I created; *kṛṣṇāya-padāt* — from the word *kṛṣṇāya*; *ākāśaṁ* — the sky; *kbād* — from the sky; *vāyus* — the air; *iti* — thus; *uttarāt* — from the next word; *surabbhiṁ* — sweet (adj.) or the heavenly Surabhī cow (noun); *vidyāṁ* — wisdom; *prādurakārṣam* — I caused to appear; *tad-uttarāt* — after that; *strī-puṁsādi* — male and female manifestation; *ca* — and; *idan* — this; *sakalam* — all.

Then, as I offered him my obeisances, he became favorable to me and, after giving me the eighteen-syllable form of himself for the sake of engaging in the creation, he disappeared. When I wished to engage in the activity of creation, he reappeared to me and revealed that the form of the future universe was present in the very letters of the eighteen-syllable *mantra*. That is, water arises from the letter *k*, the earth from the letter *l*, fire from *i*, and the moon from the *bindu*. From the combination of all these letters, the sun arises. So I created all these things out of the sacred syllable *klīm*. Then, from the word *kṛṣṇāya*, I manifested the sky, followed by the air. From the next word, I produced the numerous wish-fulfilling cows and various types of knowledge. After that came this entire creation of male and female forms.

Brahmā is the purest of those souls under the influence of the principle of *karma*, as well as the embodiment of all such beings. He is thus both a *jīva* soul and the *samaṣṭi-jīva*.<sup>40</sup> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describes both his lotus seat sprouting from the navel of Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā himself as the collective of all materially conditioned souls. Brahmā alone is born from the lotus, but his desire to create the world is largely a result of his being the embodiment of innumerable *jīvas*, whose desires necessitate the creation of the world for their fulfillment. In this sense the materially conditioned soul is first born as Brahmā after each cycle of creation.

The Hindu, scripturally based notion of the world expanding and contracting in perpetual cycles with no beginning or end in time is not contradictory to modern scientific thinking. The same observations that support the big bang theory also support the theory that the so-called bang has no beginning in time and results in an expansion of the universe over trillions of years until it reaches a point of return and contracts, only to be expanded again ad infinitum. The astrophysicist Paul Stein-

40. ŚB 3.20.16. The *samaṣṭi-jīva* is the collective of all *jīva* souls at the dawn of each creation before they emerge into differentiated states under the influence of the principle of *karma*.



hardt has recently put forth such a scientifically credible explanation called the cyclical universe theory, which seeks to explain recently uncovered flaws in the current theory of the origin and evolution of all known things.

Among other things, the big bang theory does not explain the “beginning of time,” the initial conditions of the universe, or what will happen in the far-distant future. In Steinhardt’s model, space and time exist forever, and the big bang is not the beginning of time but rather a bridge to a pre-existing contracting era.

The cyclical universe theory has roots in even more complex ideas like the so-called superstring theory, which suggests there are as many as ten spatial dimensions, not just the three we know of. Several theorists believe that the seemingly inexplicable physics of a big bang and a big crunch, or subsequent contraction of the universe, might be explained with the aid of these extra dimensions, which are otherwise invisible to us. Such scientifically credible speculations about invisible dimensions leave room for rationally legitimizing the ontological reality of persons like Brahmā and his lotus birth, who are otherwise thought of as merely mythological. Perhaps his chanting of the Gopāla *mantra* can itself be construed as the big bang. After all, those in the scientific community who have embraced the superstring theory describe the world poetically as a concert of musical vibrations, a song in the mind of God.

In the course of Brahmā’s work of creation under Kṛṣṇa’s direction, which facilitates the conditioned souls, he simultaneously demonstrates the means for their deliverance by combining his desire for worldly interaction with the desire to follow Kṛṣṇa’s direction. Through the medium of the *kāma-bija* and Gopāla *mantra*, Brahmā dovetailed his desire for creation such that it was ultimately transformed into unmotivated love of God. Thus he engaged in *gauṇa-bhakti*, indirect devotion, with regard to his work of creation. In doing so, he teaches us that when our ordinary worldly activities are performed so that they are conducive to *sādhana-bhakti*, they do not implicate us further in karmic reactions. Moreover, they help to support the culture of love of God. Śrī Jiva Gosvāmī describes this as *tena īśa-tyaktena*

*viśiṣṭena*.<sup>41</sup> As Brahmā became purified through engagement in *gauṇa-bhakti*, he proportionally took up *mukhyā bhakti*, or direct service to Kṛṣṇa.

In this verse Brahmā describes how he saw the subtle form of the universal elements within the Gopāla *mantra*. It should be noted that Brahmā's creation is a secondary creation in which he arranges the universal elements through the power derived from the Gopāla *mantra*. The original source of the elements is Nārāyaṇa.

27. एतस्यैव यजनेन चन्द्रध्वजो गतमोहमात्मानं  
वेदेत्योकारान्तरालिकं मनुमावर्तयेत्स्मरहितोऽभ्यानयत् ॥२७॥

*etasyaiva yajanena candra-dhvajo gata-moham ātmānaṁ vedety  
omkāraṅtarālikam manum āvartayet saṅga-rabito 'bhyānayat* । ।

*etasya* — of him; *eva* — verily; *yajanena* — by sacrificing; *candra-dhvajaḥ* — Śiva, whose insignia is the moon; *gata-moham* — free of illusion; *ātmānaṁ* — self; *veda* — knew; *iti* — thus; *omkāra* — Om; *antarālikam* — both before and after it; *manum* — *mantra*; *āvartayet* — repeats; *saṅga-rabitaḥ* — free from attachment; *abhyānayat* — attained realization of the Supreme Deity.

**By practicing this very same *mantra*, he whose symbol is the moon came to know himself, free from illusion. Thus anyone who repeats this *mantra* with *praṇava* both before and after it, free from attachment, realizes the Parameśvara who is beyond material sensory experience.**

To add to his own experience with the Gopāla *mantra*, Brahmā also relates Śiva's experience. In doing so, Brahmā explains that just as he attained the direct *darśana* of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa by chanting this *mantra*, so too did Śiva. Therefore, people today should also take advantage of it. Śiva is “he whose

41. See *Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.61 and Śrī Jīva's commentary. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura comments on the significance of this statement: “If whatever is accepted is received as a favor vouchsafed by the Supreme Lord, that worldly activity will cease to be such and will turn into *bbakti*.” In this connection, he cites a similar statement from *Īśopaniṣad*, *tena tyaktena bbuñjithā*.

symbol is the moon (*candra-dhvaṇa*).” He is also characterized as being free from material attachment, and thus one who follows his example in this regard while performing *japa* of the Gopāla *mantra* prefaced by the sacred syllable Om quickly realizes the Supreme Deity. The words “free from attachment” imply that to attain this result one must chant the *mantra* with total concentration.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the sacrifice of *japa* mentioned in this verse is distinguished from other sacrifices in terms of the speed with which it rewards the practitioner. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.25), Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Of sacrifices, I am *japa*.”

28. तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः । दिवीव चक्षुराततम् ।  
तस्मादेनं नित्यमभ्यसेन्नित्यमभ्यसेदिति ॥२८॥

*tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ |*  
*divīva cakṣur ātatam |*  
*tasmād enaṁ nityam abhyasen nityam abhyased iti ||*

*tat* — that; *viṣṇoḥ* — of Viṣṇu; *paramaṁ* — supreme; *padam* — station; *sadā* — always; *paśyanti* — see; *sūrayaḥ* — the gods; *divi* — in the heavens; *iva* — like; *cakṣuḥ* — an eye; *ātatam* — expanding; *tasmāt* — therefore; *enaṁ* — it; *nityam* — always; *abhyaset* — repeat.

**The godly always see that supreme abode of Viṣṇu, which is like the sun expanding through the infinite sky. Therefore, one should always repeat this *mantra*. One should always repeat this *mantra*.<sup>42</sup>**

Here the setting of Lord Śiva’s *darsana* of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is described. This setting is the supreme abode of God, Mahā Vaikuṇṭha. Brahmā compares that place to the sun, whose influence expands everywhere throughout the sky even while remaining localized.

42. The first two sentences of this verse are found in *Rg Veda* 1.2.2.20.

This supreme abode is also known as Goloka. Those who “always see it” are the godly, whose every action is performed under the vigilant yet loving eye of God. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the word *cakṣus* (eye) is a synonym for the sun, for it is said in the prayers to Sūrya Nārāyaṇa that are to accompany the chanting of the *gāyatrī mantra*, *namaḥ savitre jagad-eka-cakṣuṣe*: “Homage to the sun, the one eye of the universe.”

The first line of this verse can also be translated as “the godly always see through the eye of devotion the supreme abode of Viṣṇu in that plane of transcendence.” Just as the sun shines in the sky and sustains the world in a material sense, persons of wisdom know from the spiritual perspective that it is Viṣṇu who sustains the universe.

In this verse Brahmā concludes the present lesson of this *Upaniṣad* by urging everyone to chant the Gopāla *mantra*. The repetition of the words *nityam abhyaset* is meant to emphasize that one must make this practice a daily function to achieve the desired result.

29. तदाहुरेके यस्य प्रथमपदाद्भूमिर्द्वितीयपदाद्भूलं  
तृतीयपदात्तेजश्चतुर्थपदाद्वायुश्चरमपदाद्वयोम इति  
वैष्णवपञ्चव्याहृतिमयं मन्त्रं कृष्णावभासकं कैवल्यसुप्त्यै  
सततमावर्तयेत्सततमावर्तयेदिति ॥२९॥

*tad āhur eke yasya prathama-padād bhūmir dvitiya-padāj jalam tṛtiya-padāt  
tejaś caturtha-padād vāyuś carama-padād vyoma iti vaiṣṇava-  
pañca-vyāhṛti-mayaṁ mantram kṛṣṇāvabhāsakam kaivalya-sṛtyai  
satatam āvartayet satatam āvartayed iti ||*

*tat* — it; *ābuh* — say; *eke* — some people; *yasya* — whose; *prathama-padāt* — from the first element; *bhūmiḥ* — the earth; *dvitiya-padāt* — from the second element; *jalam* — water; *tṛtiya-padāt* — from the third; *tejaḥ* — fire; *caturtha-padāt* — from the fourth; *vāyuḥ* — the air; *carama-padāt* — from the last; *vyoma* — the ether; *iti* — thus; *vaiṣṇava-pañca-vyāhṛti-mayaṁ* — made up of five utterances related to Viṣṇu; *mantram* — *mantra*;

*kṛṣṇābhāsakam* — revealing Kṛṣṇa; *kaivalya-sṛtyai* — for the attainment of liberation; *satatam* — constantly; *āvartayet* — repeat.

Some say that earth arose from the *mantra*'s first element, water from the second, fire from the third, air from the fourth, and ether from the final element. One who wishes to attain the *kaivalya* state of liberation should constantly repeat this Vaiṣṇava *mantra*, which is uttered in five portions and reveals Kṛṣṇa.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that up to this point the discourse has been directed at those who lack faith in the effects of chanting the Gopāla *mantra*. Thus the importance of this form of spiritual practice was emphasized. Now, having awakened faith in this practice and its rationale, it is appropriate to consider an alternative understanding of the *mantra*. The alternative understanding mentioned in this verse is negligible, however, and only concerns which sections of the *mantra* correspond to which aspects of creation. Otherwise, with regard to alternative understandings of the *mantra* in general, Śrī Prabodhānanda says it is reasonable to assume that devotees may experience things differently.

Even after stating a slightly different opinion regarding the *mantra*'s secondary effect in regard to creation, *Gopāla-tāpanī* continues to stress the efficacy of chanting the Gopāla *mantra* with regard to its primary effects of liberation and love of God. Brahmā describes it as a Vaiṣṇava *mantra*. The words *kaivalya-sṛti* thus imply “the devotional path by which Kṛṣṇa is attained.” Although the word *kaivalya* is quite common in the *jñāna-mārga*, it is found infrequently in Vaiṣṇava scripture. The common understanding of the word is repulsive to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Indeed, Prabodhānanda has said, *kaivalyaṁ narakāyate*: “*Kaivalya* appears like hell.”<sup>43</sup> In this case, the understanding of *kaivalya* that is compared to hell is the liberated status of *sāyujya*, in which there is no opportunity to serve

43. *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* 5.

God. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.20.23), Pṛthu Mahārāja also expresses his distaste for this kind of liberation, *tān īśa kaivalya-pate vṛṇe na ca*.

According to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas consider the ultimate scriptural evidence in support of their ideal, there are five kinds of *mukti*, four of which involve service to Nārāyaṇa. Living on the same planet with Nārāyaṇa (*sālokya*), attaining opulences like those of Nārāyaṇa (*sārṣṭi*), becoming a personal servant of Nārāyaṇa (*sāmīpya*), and attaining a form like Nārāyaṇa's (*sārūpya*) are liberated statuses acceptable to most Vaiṣṇavas. The first three of these involve inward meditation on Nārāyaṇa, while the fourth, *sāmīpya*, involves serving in his manifest presence. Thus it is superior. The fifth type of liberation, which involves identification with Brahman (*sāyujya*), is not acceptable to devotees of Nārāyaṇa in and of itself, although the identification with the Absolute that it involves is included in the other four types of liberation. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa on the *rāga-mārga*, however, find all five of these types of liberation undesirable inasmuch as the desire for any of them is considered an obstacle to attaining love of Kṛṣṇa, which is marginally characterized as being devoid of the desire for liberation.<sup>44</sup>

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.10.6) also uses the word *mukti* in a positive sense, meaning not only freedom from implication in the negative plane of karmic involvement but also the positive attainment of love of God, *muk-tir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih*. There is a gradation in the *Bhāgavatam*'s concept of devotion. At the lower end it entails *vaidhī-bhakti*, culminating in reverential love of God. The four kinds of Vaiṣṇava liberation are included within this kind of love of God. At the higher end is *rāga-bhakti*, culminating in spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa, where reverence is overshadowed by intimacy.

It is noteworthy, however, that the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (12.13.12) uses the same word, *kaivalya*, to describe its ultimate goal: *kai-valyaika-prajojana*. Jīva Gosvāmī argues in *Bhakti-sandarbbha* (1) that true knowledge means to know that one has no existence separate from Kṛṣṇa.

44. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11.

It is ignorance of this relationship that is the source of our bondage in the world. Thus *kaivalya* does have a devotional application. Indeed, it speaks of oneness in love the likes of which can only be found in *rāga-bhakti*.

In his *Tattva-sūtra*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also offers a novel understanding of *sāyujya mukti* for Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas, one that identifies *kai-  
valya* with *rāga-bhakti*. In his comments on *sūtra* 19 he writes, “*Sāyujya* means union with Brahman. Those Vaiṣṇavas who are engaged in the *sādhana* of the sentiments of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana can also refer to their practice as *brahma-sāyujya-sādhana*.”

३०-३१. तदत्र गाथाः ।

यस्य पूर्वपदाद्भूमिर्द्वितीयात्सलिलोद्भवः ।

तृतीयात्तेज उद्भूतं चतुर्थाद्गन्धवाहनः ॥३०॥

पञ्चमादम्बरोत्पत्तिस्तमेवैकं समभ्यसेत् ।

चन्द्रध्वजोऽगमद्विष्णोः परमं पदमव्ययम् ॥३१॥

*tad atra gāthāḥ* ।

*yasya pūrva-padād bhūmir dvitīyāt salilodbhavaḥ* ।

*tṛtīyāt teja udbbhūtaṁ caturthād gandha-vāhanaḥ* ।

*pañcamād ambarotpattis tam evaikam samabhyaset* ।

*candradhvajo 'gamad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam avyayam* । ।

*tat* — that; *atra* — here; *gāthāḥ* — verses; *yasya* — whose; *pūrva-padāt* — from the first word; *bhūmiḥ* — earth; *dvitīyāt* — from the second; *salila-  
udbhavaḥ* — the production of water; *tṛtīyāt* — from the third; *tejaḥ* — fire; *udbhūtaṁ* — arose; *caturthāt* — from the fourth; *gandha-vāhanaḥ* — the air, which carries fragrances; *pañcamāt* — from the fifth; *ambara-utpattiḥ* — the creation of the sky; *tam* — that; *eva* — certainly; *ekam* — alone; *samabhyaset* — one should cultivate; *candradhvajaḥ* — Śiva; *agamat* — went; *viṣṇoḥ* — of Viṣṇu; *paramam* — supreme; *padam* — station; *avyayam* — the imperishable abode of Viṣṇu.

The following verses give confirmation of the preceding statements: One should exclusively culture this *mantra*. Its first segment produced the earth; its second segment, water; its third segment, fire; its fourth segment, air, which carries fragrances; and its fifth segment, sky. By so doing, Candradhvaja went to the supreme imperishable abode of Viṣṇu.

This verse emphasizes exclusive culture of the *dikṣā mantra*. We should generally cultivate only one *mantra* (*ekam kevalam mantrābhyāsa-mātram kuryāt*). The reason for this is that such culture promotes the kind of single-mindedness (*ekāgrata*) necessary for successful meditation. Through exclusive culture of the Gopāla *mantra*, from which the creation ensues, Śiva (Candradhvaja) attained Kṛṣṇa's abode.

32. ततो विशुद्धं विमलं विशोक  
मशेषलोभादिनिरस्तसङ्गम् ।  
यत्तत्पदं पञ्चपदं तदेव  
स वासुदेवो न यतोऽन्यादस्ति ॥३२॥

*tato viśuddham vimalam viśokam*  
*aśeṣa-lobbhādi-nirasta-saṅgam* ।  
*yat tat-padam pañca-padam tad eva*  
*sa vāsudevo na yato 'nyad asti* । ।

*tataḥ* — therefore; *viśuddham* — completely pure; *vimalam* — spotless; *viśokam* — free from grief; *aśeṣa-lobbhādi-nirasta-saṅgam* — untouched by any contact with greed or desire; *yat* — that which; *tat-padam* — that place; *pañca-padam* — the five-part *mantra*; *tat* — it; *eva* — certainly; *saḥ* — he; *vāsudevaḥ* — Vāsudeva; *na* — not; *yataḥ* — than whom; *anyat* — anything else; *asti* — is.

The five-part *mantra* is the abode of the completely pure and untainted Supreme, where there is no grief and in which contact with greed



and desire have been absolutely defeated. Verily, it is Vāsudeva, other than whom there is nothing.

The purpose of this verse is to stress that the *mantra*, Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa), and his abode (Goloka) constitute a single truth appearing in three forms. Goloka is forever free from the influence of the *guṇas* of material nature: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. It is the ultimate reality, which is nondifferent from Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. This plane of consciousness is also known as *va-sudeva*—*sattvaṁ viśuddhaṁ vasudeva-śabditam*.<sup>45</sup> In this plane of consciousness there is no lamentation, greed, or material desire.

This verse says that other than Vāsudeva, nothing exists. This is supported by *Śrī Gītāpaniṣad* (7.19), which states that Vāsudeva is everything (*vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti*). This means that the person Vāsudeva replete with his potencies, which are nondifferent from him, is the totality of existence. Reality is a person. He is both majestic and charming. His majesty is such that he is all-pervasive and nothing exists outside of him. His charm is such that he defeats the lust of material desire in general and the charms of Cupid in particular.

33. तमेकं गोविन्दं सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहं  
पञ्चपदं वृन्दावनसुरभूरुहतलासीनं  
सततं समरुद्गणोऽहं परमया स्तुत्या तोषयामि ॥३३॥

*tam ekaṁ govindam sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ  
pañca-padam vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāśinam  
satataṁ samarud-gaṇo 'haṁ paramayā stutyā toṣayāmi* | |

*tam* — him; *ekaṁ* — alone; *govindam* — Govinda; *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ* — body of eternity, knowledge, and bliss; *pañca-padam* — fivefold; *vṛndāvana-sura-bhūruha-talāśinam* — seated beneath a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana; *satataṁ* — constantly; *sa-marud-gaṇaḥ* — with the Maruts;

45. ŚB 4.3.23.

*aham* — I; *paramayā* — with glorious; *stutya* — hymns; *toṣayāmi* — I endeavor to please.

**I, along with the Maruts, constantly endeavor to please with glorious hymns that one supreme Lord, Govinda, whose fivefold form is transcendental existence, consciousness, and bliss, and who is seated at the base of a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana.**

With this and the previous verse, Brahmā begins to bring his instruction to the sages to a conclusion. In so doing, he begins his salutation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which continues in verses 34–45. Brahmā says that the object of his meditation is Govinda, who is *sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*. Govinda’s fivefold form is the fivefold *mantra* consisting of eighteen syllables, which is non-different from Govinda himself—the form of eternality, knowledge, and bliss (as opposed to the formless Brahman). Govinda is the fullest expression of joy within the reality of nondual consciousness.

Gauḍīya Vedāntins experience ultimate reality as nondual consciousness, which on account of its being joy itself<sup>46</sup> is experienced in three realizations through three paths to transcendence. These realizations of the Absolute are experienced as Bhagavān, Paramātmā, and Brahman to devotees, *yogīs*, and *jñānīs*, respectively. The Absolute is joyful by nature. In order to be so, it must also exist and be cognizant of its existence. While there can be an existence that is not cognizant of itself, as well as a cognizant existence that is not joyful, there cannot be a joyful reality that either does not exist or is not cognizant of its existence. When existence becomes cognizant of the extent to which it exists—of its purpose—it has reason for celebration.

From the joyful Bhagavān, who is absorbed in divine play, an aura of pure, undifferentiated consciousness emanates. This aura is Bhagavān appearing as Brahman. Paramātmā is Bhagavān manifesting in relation to material existence, which consists of the individual souls and matter.

46. *ānanda-mayo ’bhyāsāt* (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.12).

Paramātmā expands and oversees this existence. In this sense, Bhagavān represents the joy of the Absolute, Brahman consciousness or cognizance, and Paramātmā existence.

While the joyful Bhagavān exists and is cognizant of his existence, his joy is so pronounced that in his most complete manifestation as Kṛṣṇa he appears unconscious of anything else, including his own supremacy. As Brahman, Bhagavān is primarily only cognizant. The joy of Brahman is that of peace, and there is little if anything that resembles existence with all its variety and movement in this feature of Bhagavān. Paramātmā is fully involved with material existence. Although he is cognizant and joyful, these two qualities are less apparent in him. In the Paramātmā the play that expresses joy is called *śṛṣṭi* (creation). As Paramātmā plays and thus manifests the material existence, he also enters into every aspect of this existence as a witness. The stillness of Brahman lies in between the movement in the spiritual world that Bhagavān is concerned with and the movement of the material world that Paramātmā is concerned with. Thus while all three—joy, cognizance, and existence—are present in all three features of Godhead, each feature is distinguished from the other by the prominence of one of the three qualities.

According to this understanding, Bhagavān represents joy (*ānanda*), Brahman cognizance (*cit*), and Paramātmā existence (*sat*). However, Paramātmā can also be conceived of as existence characterized by cognizance of itself, and Brahman as existence in general. When viewed in this way, Paramātmā represents *cit* rather than *sat*, and Brahman represents *sat* rather than *cit*. Brahman is almost always described in scripture as pure consciousness, so it would seem natural to associate it with *cit*. However, since consciousness normally requires an object one can be cognizant of, it would seem more logical to describe Brahman as simple existence. Paramātmā implies variety and therefore greater cognizance.

From this angle of vision, Paramātmā is a more developed manifestation of Godhead primarily representing *cit* and Brahman is the lowest of the three manifestations primarily representing *sat*. As mentioned, Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān can be further understood in terms of

their being manifestations of Godhead corresponding with three approaches to him. Again, the Godhead appears as Brahman to the *jñānī*, as Paramātmā to the *yogī*, and as Bhagavān to his devotee.

In this verse Brahmā's realization is that of a devotee. His object of meditation is Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. While we often think of form as a contracting factor, it can just as well be conceived of as that which facilitates and thus expands one's capacity to express oneself. Indeed, beauty without form is hardly beautiful; beauty requires someone to know about it and celebrate it. Brahmā's object of meditation, Govinda, is the form of beauty itself. He is ever-existing, all-knowing joy personified.

In this verse, the words *marud-gaṇāḥ* can be understood in two ways. Overtly, they speak of Brahmā's worldly associates, the Maruts, or worldly gods in charge of the wind. Jīva Gosvāmī comments that this understanding of *marud-gaṇāḥ* implies that Brahmā is worshiping Govinda along with the Maruts, whom he takes with him mentally, for on their own they are not qualified to enter Govinda's abode and have his *darśana* beneath the desire tree. This abode is only for the desireless.

Śrī Jīva offers the alternative possibility that *marud-gaṇāḥ* indicates the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa, by whom he is ever surrounded in love. In this connection, he cites a verse from *Padma Purāṇa* based on the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, in which the words *sādhvī viśvadevāḥ sanātanaḥ* appear.<sup>47</sup> "Previously the Sādhvīs, the eternal lords of the universe, and so on, with beautiful forms, lived in that highest heavenly abode (*nāka*), taking on its glories." Śrī Jīva's *pramāṇa* verse in support of this alternative understanding is based on the *Rg Veda*: *te ha nākaṁ mahimānaṁ sacanto yatra pūrve sādhyāḥ santi devāḥ*. The term *sādhyāḥ* in this *pramāṇa* verse can be taken to mean either the material demigods of that name or those who have achieved the goal of perfection and are eternal associates of the Lord in his supreme abode, the highest heaven.

47. *atra pūrve ye ca sādhyā viśvadevāḥ sanātanaḥ |*  
*te ha nākaṁ mahimānaḥ sacantaḥ śubha-darśanaḥ ||*

Brahmā's own words in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also lend support to the understanding of *marud-gaṇāḥ* as eternal associates of Govinda. After experiencing Kṛṣṇa's supremacy in Vṛndāvana, Brahmā aspired to become a resident of Kṛṣṇa's abode even in the most insignificant role as a stone or blade of grass. Such desire is *akāma* (desirelessness). The Sanskrit letter *a* represents Kṛṣṇa, who says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Of letters I am *a*." Thus *a-kāma* means both no desire and the desire for Kṛṣṇa, who is attained by loving service. Great souls and gods of this world desire this service and demonstrate that any position in Kṛṣṇa's abode, however insignificant, is far superior to even the highest position attainable in the material world. Brahmā says that attaining any position in Vṛndāvana constitutes the highest fortune (*tad bhūri-bhāgyam*).<sup>48</sup> Gods of this world who have realized this truth attain that supreme abode.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments further, "Govinda is seated on a throne placed on a jeweled podium at the foot of a wish-fulfilling tree in Vṛndāvana. There he is engaged in various pastimes with his associates. The words *marud-gaṇāḥ* refer to these godly devotee companions, for nondevotees have no license to enter therein. Brahmā says that he praises the Lord in their company because he identifies so strongly with these eternally liberated knowers of Brahman who have the everlasting association of the Lord."

For those who aspire to attain Kṛṣṇa's abode, his eternal associates are more important than Kṛṣṇa himself. This is so because they embody the love that the spiritual aspirant desires to attain. This love is itself nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, for his appearance in his form of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (*śac-cid-ānanda-vigraha*) beneath the desire tree in Vṛndāvana is in reciprocation with that love. The two, the pure heart of the devotee and Govinda himself, are one and different simultaneously. The former illustrates how to attain the latter, and the effect lies latent within its cause. Attaining Kṛṣṇa means attaining love like that of the inhabitants of

48. ŚB 10.14.34.

Vṛndāvana. Attaching ourselves in service to one of his eternal associates, we experience the full sense of love of Kṛṣṇa through the medium of such an associate (*tad-bhāva*). This point is appropriately emphasized here, as Brahmā concludes his instructions on *rāgānugā-bhakti* to the sages.

34. ॐ नमो विश्वरूपाय विश्वस्थित्यन्तहेतवे ।  
विश्वेश्वराय विश्वाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥३४॥

*om namo viśva-rūpāya viśva-sthity-anta-hetave ।  
viśveśvarāya viśvāya govindāya namo namaḥ । ।*

*om* — Om; *namaḥ* — salutations; *viśva-rūpāya* — to the form of the universe; *viśva-sthity-anta-hetave* — to the cause of universal preservation and dissolution; *viśveśvarāya* — to the Lord of the universe; *viśvāya* — to the universe; *govindāya* — to Govinda; *namo namaḥ* — repeated salutations.

**Om. Salutations to the form of the universe, the cause of universal preservation and destruction. Salutations to Govinda, the Lord of the universe, who is indeed the universe itself.**

Here Brahmā begins his salutations to Govinda, remembering various *līlās* that Kṛṣṇa performed on earth. Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that Brahmā's salutations glorify both Kṛṣṇa's majesty (*aiśvarya*) and his charm (*mādhurya*). Thus both divisions of devotional spiritual culture, *vaidhī* and *rāgānugā*, are addressed.

After his initial enlightenment, Brahmā again had the *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa when he appeared on earth. At that time, as if playing hide and seek with his devotee, Kṛṣṇa hid the truth of his divinity from Brahmā, much like he did to Arjuna before enlightening him in his *Bhagavad-gītā* discourse. Brahmā's bewilderment (*brahma-vimohana*) brought out the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa in no uncertain terms.<sup>49</sup> Interfering with Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* by kidnapping

49. See ŚB 10.12–14.

his young friends and calves, Brahmā witnessed Kṛṣṇa's power to expand himself into replicate forms of all the stolen boys and calves so precisely that their mothers could not detect that their actual sons and calves were not present. Such is the nature of Kṛṣṇa's love for his devotees: he knows their hearts and thus everything about them.<sup>50</sup> Seeing this, Brahmā was astonished, and all the more so when Kṛṣṇa caused all the replicated calves and boys to appear before Brahmā in innumerable four-armed forms of Nārāyaṇa, whose lotus navel was his birthplace. Thus Kṛṣṇa revealed not only that the universe was contained within himself, but that innumerable universes were within him as well as innumerable forms of Nārāyaṇa from whom the universes originally emanated. Brahmā's use here of the word *viśva-rūpa* indicates that he is remembering this particular pastime, which had served to underscore his realization of Kṛṣṇa's supreme position. Chapters 11-14 of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*'s tenth canto, in which the *brahma-vimohana-līlā* is related, are the most important chapters of the text in terms of establishing the Gauḍiya *tattva* of Kṛṣṇa's supremacy (*kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svāyam*).

35. नमो विज्ञानरूपाय परमानन्दरूपिणे ।  
कृष्णाय गोपीनाथाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥३५॥

*namo vijñāna-rūpāya paramānanda-rūpiṇe* ।  
*kṛṣṇāya gopīnāthāya govindāya namo namaḥ* । ।

*namaḥ* — salutations; *vijñāna-rūpāya* — to the embodiment of realized knowledge; *paramānanda-rūpiṇe* — who possesses a form of supreme bliss; *kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *gopīnāthāya* — to the Lord of the *gopīs*; *govindāya* — to Govinda; *namo namaḥ* — repeated salutations.

50. It is also noteworthy that these replicas of the cowherds and calves were not capable of satisfying Kṛṣṇa to the extent that the actual calves and cowherds were. The former appeared before Brahmā as Viṣṇu *tattva*, whereas the latter were *śakti-tattva* (*svarūpa-śakti*).

I offer salutations to Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the *gopīs*, the master of the cows and cowherds. He is the embodiment of realized knowledge and possesses a form of supreme bliss.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments, “The embodiment of realized knowledge’ means that everything is known perfectly through him.”

36. नमः कमलनेत्राय नमः कमलमालिने ।  
नमः कमलनाभाय कमलपतये नमः ॥३६॥

*namaḥ kamala-netrāya namaḥ kamala-māline ।*  
*namaḥ kamala-nābhāya kamalā-pataye namaḥ ।।*

*namaḥ* — salutations; *kamala-netrāya* — to the lotus-eyed; *namaḥ* — salutations; *kamala-māline* — to the one wearing a lotus garland; *namaḥ* — salutations; *kamala-nābhāya* — to the lotus-navel; *kamalā-pataye* — to the husband of Lakṣmī; *namaḥ* — salutations.

**Salutations to the lotus-eyed Lord! Salutations to the lotus-garlanded Śyāmasundara! Salutations to the Lord from whose navel the creation lotus sprouted! Salutations to the husband of the Goddess of Fortune!**

37. बर्हापीडाभिरामाय रामायाकुण्ठमेधसे ।  
रमामानसहंसाय गोविन्दाय नमो नमः ॥३७॥

*barbāpīḍābbhirāmāya rāmāyākunṭha-medhase ।*  
*ramā-mānasa-haṁsāya govindāya namo namaḥ ।।*

*barbāpīḍa-abbhirāmāya* — to one who is beautified by a crown of peacock feathers; *rāmāya* — to Rāma; *akunṭha-medhase* — whose intelligence is unrestricted; *ramā* — Lakṣmī; *mānasa-haṁsāya* — the swan of the mind; *govindāya* — to Govinda; *namo namaḥ* — salutations again and again.



**I bow down repeatedly to Govinda, [who is also known as] Rāma. He is adorned with a crown of peacock feathers; his intelligence is unrestricted. He is like a swan in the pool of the Goddess of Fortune's, Ramā's, mind.**

Govinda's natural decorations such as his peacock feather crown indicate his unrivaled beauty, which truly needs no ornamentation to shine forth. This is the meaning of his simple decorations of forest wildflowers and unguents made from different colored soils and minerals. Although the peacock feather is a common ornament among Vṛndāvana's cowherds, it is particularly dear to Kṛṣṇa. Thus although Balarāma and other cowherds may adorn themselves with peacock plumes from time to time, they do so in imitation of their comrade.

The name Rāma in this verse directly refers to Balarāma, but it is also indirectly used as an epithet of Kṛṣṇa, just as it is in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī gives its indirect meaning as “Kṛṣṇa with the enchanting form, who brings pleasure to his devotees.” When Rāma is used as a name of Kṛṣṇa, it refers particularly to the lover (or *ramaṇa*) of Rādhā. This is indicated by the word Ramā in this verse, which is an indirect reference to the *gopīs* and Rādhā, the source of Lakṣmī. Govinda, like a swan, swims in the pure mind of Rādhā (Ramā).

This verse of *Gopāla-tāpanī* is reminiscent of the famous verse from the *Bhāgavatam*'s *Veṇu-gīta*, which attracted the monist Śukadeva to the recitation of the *Bhāgavatam* and marked the beginning of his conversion to Vaiṣṇavism. He subsequently recited it himself to Rāja Parikṣit.

*barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ  
bibhṛad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapīṣaṁ vaijayantīm ca mālām  
randbrān veṇor adbara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair  
vṛndāranyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ*

Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon his head, blue *karnikāra* 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 (ŚB 10.21.5).

In this verse the Vraja *gopīs* are meditating on Kṛṣṇa entering the forest with his cowherd friends and cows. In the *Veṇu-gītā*'s seventh verse, they actually begin to voice their love:

*akṣaṇvatām phalam idam na param vidāmaḥ  
sakhyaḥ paśūn anaviveśayator vayasyaib  
vaktram vrajēśa-sutayor anaveṇu-juṣṭam  
yair vā nipitam anurakta-kaṭākṣa-mokṣam*

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 on the residents of Vṛndāvana. For those who possess eyes, we think there is no greater object of vision than this (ŚB 10.21.7).

In these verses the *gopīs* ostensibly glorify the love of the cowherds for Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, describing the supreme object of vision as the sight of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa entering the forest with their friends and cows. How much better is it, then, to be in that picture and enter the forest along with them? This is the *gopas'* great fortune, and this wistful statement by the *gopīs* indicates a certain jealousy toward Kṛṣṇa's friends, for whom there are no obstacles to spending the entire day with Kṛṣṇa. These verses thus support the cowherds' subjective reality, in which they consider fraternal love to be most desirable.

However, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa together are not the object of love for the *gopīs* headed by Rādhā. They mention Rāma in this verse only to veil their love for Kṛṣṇa, which they cannot express as openly as the cowherds can. By mentioning Balarāma and the cowherds along with Kṛṣṇa, they dissimulate their conjugal paramour love for Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore, if a practitioner's heart follows the love of the *gopīs*, these verses will speak to him accordingly and he will have no difficulty making Balarāma disappear from the poetry of this *Bhāgavatam* verse altogether.<sup>51</sup> Those in *gopī-bhāva* will hear the *gopīs* in these verses speaking of only Kṛṣṇa.

In the present *Gopāla-tāpanī* verse, Brahmā says that Govinda's intelligence is unrestricted (*akunṭha-medhas*). This is a reference to the knowing that is automatic within love: when one loves, one knows what to do. This is the intelligence Kṛṣṇa gives to his unalloyed devotees (*dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam*) such that they can overcome all obstacles and come to him even, as in the case of the *gopīs*, in the dead of night.<sup>52</sup>

38. कंसवंशविनाशाय केशिचाणूरघातिने ।  
वृषभध्वजवन्द्याय पार्थसारथये नमः ॥३८॥

*kaṁsa-vanśa-vināśāya keśi-cāṇūra-ghātine* ।  
*vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandyāya pāṛtha-sāṛathaye namaḥ* । ।

*kaṁsa-vanśa-vināśāya* — to him who destroyed Kaṁsa and his retinue; *keśi-cāṇūra-ghātine* — who killed the demons Keśi and Cāṇūra; *vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandyāya* — who is the object of Lord Śiva's prayers; *pāṛtha-sāṛathaye* — the charioteer of Arjuna; *namaḥ* — salutations.

**Salutations to the Lord who destroyed Kaṁsa and all his retinue, who killed Keśi and Cāṇūra, who is the object of Śiva's prayers, and who is the charioteer of Arjuna.**

51. See the commentary of Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura in particular.

52. Bg. 10.10. See Swāmi Tripurāri, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 335–37.

*Kaṁsa-varṁśa-vināśāya* refers to Kṛṣṇa's destruction of Kaṁsa and his associates, such as the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. Remembering Kṛṣṇa today in relation to these demon-slaying pastimes will destroy one's own evil tendencies. To achieve this result, the *sādhaka* must think deeply and introspectively on the significance of these *līlās* and make a conscious effort to remove from his heart whatever is unfavorable for spiritual culture.

After Kṛṣṇa defeated Śiva's devotee Bāṇāsura, Lord Śiva recognized Kṛṣṇa's supremacy and prayed to him. This *līlā* is referred to here with the words *vṛṣabha-dhvaja-vandya*.<sup>53</sup> As Pārtha-sārathī, Arjuna's charioteer, Kṛṣṇa demonstrates his most endearing quality of loving submission to his own devotees, *bhakta-vātsalya*.

39. वेणुवादनशीलाय गोपालयाहिमर्दिने ।  
कालिन्दीकूललोलाय लोककुण्डलधारिणे ॥३९॥

*veṇu-vādana-śīlāya gopālāyāhi-mardine* ।  
*kālindī-kūla-lolāya lola-kuṇḍala-dhāriṇe* । ।

*veṇu-vādana-śīlāya* — attached to playing his flute; *gopālāya* — the cowherd; *āhi-mardine* — chastiser of the snake; *kālindī-kūla-lolāya* — who enjoys playing on the banks of the Yamunā; *lola-kuṇḍala-dhāriṇe* — who wears swinging earrings.

**Salutations to the cowherd who is addicted to playing his flute, who defeated the snake Aghāsura, who enjoys playing on the banks of the Kālindī, and who wears swinging earrings.**<sup>54</sup>

One of the most charming aspects of Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* is his flute playing, which has amazing powers. Kṛṣṇa is said to have perfected this art on the full moon night of the harvest moon. At that time he was able to attract the

53. Śiva's prayers are found in ŚB 10.69.

54. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the alternative reading, *valgave* for *dhāriṇe*, which emphasizes the added charm brought by Kṛṣṇa's earrings rather than their simple presence.

*gopīs* and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in particular to join him in the forest by sounding the fifth note of his flute. Each *gopī* heard her own name called when this sound entered her heart through the right ear. This sweet sound awakened such identification with Kṛṣṇa that all the *gopīs* were able to abandon all their household duties—even the nursing of their infant children—without a second thought. The fifth note of Kṛṣṇa’s flute is identified with the *kāma-gāyatrī mantra*, which is to be chanted in connection with the Gopāla *mantra*. Thus there is a connection between Kṛṣṇa’s flute and spiritual initiation (*mantra-dikṣā*), both of which exercise a fascinating and attractive power on all living entities.

In the poetry of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs, the slaying of Aghāsura, commemorated in Kṛṣṇa’s epithets like Agha-damana,<sup>55</sup> Agha-bhit,<sup>56</sup> Aghahara,<sup>57</sup> and so on, are often juxtaposed with Kṛṣṇa’s *līlās* of love with the *gopīs*. The word *agha* means sin, and Aghāsura symbolizes the composite of all sin. Love of Kṛṣṇa results in the removal of all sin.

40. वल्लवीनयनाम्भोजमालिने नृत्यशालिने ।  
नमः प्रणतपालाय श्रीकृष्णाय नमो नमः ॥४०॥

*vallavi-nayanāmbhoja-māline nṛtya-sāline |*  
*namaḥ praṇata-pālāya śrī-kṛṣṇāya namo namaḥ | |*

*vallavi-nayana* — the eyes of the *gopīs*; *āmbhoja-māline* — who is garlanded by lotuses; *nṛtya-sāline* — who likes to dance; *namaḥ* — salutations; *praṇata-pālāya* — who protects those who surrender to him; *śrī-kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *namo namaḥ* — I make repeated salutations.

**I make repeated salutations to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, garlanded by the lotus eyes of the cowherd girls, the joyous dancer who protects those who surrender to him.**

55. *Namāṣṭakam* 5.

56. *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 2.14.

57. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 3.3.50.

According to Śrī Prabodhānanda, the lotus eyes of the *gopīs* are compared to Kṛṣṇa's perpetual garland because they are always fixed on him.

41. नमः पापप्रणाशाय गोवर्धनधराय च ।  
पूतनाजीवितान्ताय तृणावार्तासुहारिणे ॥४१॥

*namaḥ pāpa-praṇāśāya govardhana-dharāya ca ।  
pūtanā-jīvitāntāya tṛṇāvartāsu-hāriṇe ।।*

*namaḥ* — salutations; *pāpa-praṇāśāya* — the destroyer of sin; *govardhana-dharāya* — the lifter of Govardhana; *ca* — and; *pūtanā-jīvitāntāya* — who puts an end to the life of Pūtanā; *tṛṇāvartāsu-hāriṇe* — the killer of Tṛṇāvarta.

**Salutations to you, O Lord, the destroyer of sin, the lifter of Govardhana. Salutations to you who put an end to the lives of Pūtanā and Tṛṇāvarta.**

42. निष्कलाय विमोहाय शुद्धायाशुद्धवैरिणे ।  
अद्वितीयाय महते श्रीकृष्णाय नमो नमः ॥४२॥

*niṣkalāya vimohāya śuddhāyāśuddha-vairiṇe ।  
advitīyāya mahate śrī-kṛṣṇāya namo namaḥ ।।*

*niṣkalāya* — who cannot be divided; *vimohāya* — in whom there is no illusion; *śuddhāya* — to the pure; *aśuddha-vairiṇe* — the enemy of the impure; *advitīyāya* — to the one without a second; *mahate* — to the great; *śrī-kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *namo namaḥ* — I make repeated salutations.

**I offer repeated salutations to the incomparably great Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who cannot be divided, in whom there is no illusion, who cannot be equaled, who is pure, and who is the enemy of all impurity.**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī explains that the word *niṣkala* means “free from *māyā*.” It literally means “without parts.” Thus he implies that freedom from illusion involves transcending material designations (*upādhis*) and understanding all parts in relation to the whole (*advaya-jñāna-tattva*). Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that *niṣkala* can also mean one who causes others to take up the path of religion. *Kalayati* means “to enchant,” and the prefix *niṣ* means “completely.” Kṛṣṇa is he who completely enchants all living beings. Such is the force of charm and affection by which he draws others to *dharma*. He is enchanting because of his adeptness in the art (*kalā*) of love. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī offers yet a third meaning for *niṣkala*: “One around whose neck hangs (*lāti*) a golden ornament (*niṣka*).” Kṛṣṇa wears such an ornament in the form of a locket holding a picture of Śrī Rādhā, just as Rādhā wears one containing a picture of Kṛṣṇa.

The word *vimoha* indicates that Kṛṣṇa is so far beyond illusion that he cannot be bewildered by great gods like Brahmā, who tested his powers to delude Kṛṣṇa during the *brahma-vimohana-līlā* only to find him entirely impervious to them. Indeed, the gods themselves are bewildered by Kṛṣṇa (*muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ*).<sup>58</sup> While he is completely transcendental to illusion, he nonetheless appears like a human being subject to the delusions of love. Thus he is also bewildering even within the context of giving enlightenment. Kṛṣṇa is so high that he appears low, so enlightened that he appears deluded.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura maintains that Kṛṣṇa’s being the enemy of impurity (*aśuddha-vairin*) implies that he removes material impurities from the hearts of those attached to hearing and chanting his glories. In this he has no equal, and indeed Brahmā says here that no one can equal him in anything. This is so because he is *svayaṁ bhagavān*.

43. प्रसीद परमानन्द प्रसीद परमेश्वर ।  
आधिव्याधिभुजङ्गो न दष्टं मामुद्धर प्रभो ॥४३॥

58. See ŚB 1.1.1.

*prasida paramānanda prasida parameśvara |*  
*ādbi-vyādbi-bhujāṅgena daṣṭam mām uddhara prabho | |*

*prasida* — be merciful; *paramānanda* — O supreme joy; *prasida* — be merciful; *parameśvara* — O Supreme Lord; *ādbi-vyādbi-bhujāṅgena* — by the snake of disease and distress; *daṣṭam* — bitten; *mām* — me; *uddhara* — lift up; *prabho* — O Lord.

**Be merciful to me, O supreme joy! Be merciful to me. Deliver me, O Lord, for I have been bitten by the snake of disease and distress.**

In the midst of offering Kṛṣṇa praise and remembering his wonderful *līlās*, Brahmā spontaneously demonstrates the effects of such salutations. Contemplating and praising Kṛṣṇa's greatness—both the majesty of his Godhood and the charm of his subordination to love—the great, highly intelligent, four-headed Brahmā realizes his own insignificance and breaks down in tears.

The words *vyādbi* and *ādbi* represent the sum and substance of material life. Physical pain (*vyādbi*) is the inevitable result of pursuing material desires, whereas one experiences mental pain (*ādbi*) when such desires remain unfulfilled. The solution to this predicament is to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, as Brahmā teaches by his own example in this verse. Brahmā is, in fact, a great devotee who demonstrates his humility with this prayer, and any suffering he feels is born of feelings of love in separation from Kṛṣṇa.

44. श्रीकृष्ण रुक्मिणीकान्त गोपीजनमनोहर ।  
संसारसागरे मग्नं मामुद्धर जगद्गुरो ॥४४॥

*śrī-kṛṣṇa rukmiṇī-kānta gopī-jana-manohara |*  
*saṁsāra-sāgare magnam mām uddhara jagad-guro | |*

*śrī-kṛṣṇa* — O Kṛṣṇa; *rukmiṇī-kānta* — O husband of Rukmiṇī; *gopī-jana-manohara* — O stealer of the *gopīs*' minds; *saṁsāra-sāgare* — in the ocean of



material existence; *magnam* — immersed; *mām* — me; *uddhara* — lift up; *jagad-guro* — O spiritual master of the universe.

**O Kṛṣṇa! Husband of Rukmiṇī! Stealer of the *gopīs*' minds! O spiritual master of the universe! Deliver me, for I have fallen into the ocean of repeated birth and death.**

Śrī Prabodhānanda comments, “The word *śrī* preceding Kṛṣṇa's name in this verse indicates that he possesses all excellences and that by his beauty he attracts the entire universe.” His beauty is so extraordinary that it casts a spell of attraction on himself. When he sees the effects of his beauty on Rādhā, he desires to experience it himself through her eyes. Once in Dvārakā, he saw his reflection in a jeweled pillar and found himself irresistibly drawn to it. In Dvārakā, Kṛṣṇa is the husband of Rukmiṇī, Mahā Lakṣmī herself. Thus in her company he is, in the words of Śrī Prabodhānanda, “the possessor of the greatest riches and the king of kings.”

Kṛṣṇa alone is the *jagad-guru*, or the macrocosmic expression (*samaṣṭi*) of the *guru* principle (*guru-tattva*), because he is the source of the knowledge that all *gurus* disseminate; indeed, he *is* that knowledge. Whereas Kṛṣṇa is the *samaṣṭi-guru*, all others who represent him are called *vyāṣṭi*, or microcosmic manifestations of *guru-tattva*. Thus Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *gurus* generally do not adopt the title *jagad-guru*, which they reserve for Kṛṣṇa and even more so for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa in *ācārya-līlā*, the role of world teacher.

45. केशव क्लेशहरण नारायण जनार्दन ।  
गोविन्द परमानन्द मां समुद्धर माधव ॥४५॥

*keśava kleśa-haraṇa nārāyaṇa janārdana* ।  
*govinda paramānanda mām samuddhara mādhaba* । ।

*keśava* — O Keśava; *kleśa-haraṇa* — deliverer from distress; *nārāyaṇa* — O Nārāyaṇa; *janārdana* — Janārdana; *govinda* — Govinda; *paramānanda* — O

supreme form of bliss; *mām* — me; *samuddhara* — deliver; *mādhava* — O Mādhava.

**O Keśava! Deliverer from distress! Nārāyaṇa! O Janārdana! O Govinda! Supreme form of bliss! Mādhava! Please deliver me.**

Here Brahmā concludes his salutations and in the remaining three verses of the first section of *Gopāla-tāpanī* gives his final instructions.

46. अथ हैवं स्तुतिभिराराधयामि यथा यूयं तथा पञ्चपदं जपन्तः  
श्रीकृष्णं ध्यायन्तः संसृतिं तरिष्यथेति होवाच हैरण्यः ॥४६॥

*atha haivaṁ stutibhir ārādhayāmi yathā yūyaṁ tathā pañca-pādaṁ  
japantaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ dhyāyantaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ tariṣyatheti hovāca hairanyaḥ* ||

*atha ha* — so then; *evaṁ* — in this way; *stutibhiḥ* — with these hymns; *ārādhayāmi* — I worship; *yathā* — just as; *yūyaṁ* — you all; *tathā* — in the same way; *pañca-pādaṁ* — the five-part *mantra*; *japantaḥ* — chanting; *śrī-kṛṣṇaṁ* — Kṛṣṇa; *dhyāyantaḥ* — meditating on; *saṁsṛtiṁ* — the material world; *tariṣyatha* — you will cross over; *iti* — thus; *ha uvāca* — spoke; *hairanyaḥ* — Brahmā.

**In this way I worshiped him with these hymns. Now you should meditate on Kṛṣṇa in the same way, chanting the fivefold *mantra*. By so doing, you will cross over the ocean of material existence. Thus Brahmā concluded his discourse to the sages.**

According to Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, after chanting the hymns in salutation to Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā became immersed in love for Kṛṣṇa as the import of his praise penetrated his heart. As a result, the knowledge of how to please Kṛṣṇa became fully manifest in his heart. Brahmā then chanted more hymns not found in the text of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, which were not only more joyful and filled with wonder, but which revealed his desire to serve

Kṛṣṇa in a particular sentiment.<sup>59</sup> This is the implication of the word *ārādhayāmi* (I worship) in this verse.

47. अमुं पञ्चपदं मन्त्रमावर्तयेद्यः  
स यात्यनायासतः केवलं पदं तत् ।  
अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो दे  
नैतद्देवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्शदिति ॥४७॥

*amunī pañca-padam mantram āvartayed yaḥ sa yāty  
anāyāsataḥ kevalam padam tat |  
anejad ekaṁ manaso javiyo  
naitad devā āpnuvan pūrvam arśad iti ||*

*amunī* — that; *pañca-padam* — fivefold; *mantram* — incantation; *āvartayet* — should repeat; *yaḥ* — whoever; *saḥ* — he; *yāti* — goes; *anāyāsataḥ* — easily; *kevalam* — exclusive; *padam* — destination; *tat* — that; *anejat* — reached; *ekaṁ* — one; *manasaḥ* — than the mind; *javiyaḥ* — more rapid; *na* — not; *etat* — this; *devāḥ* — the gods; *āpnuvan* — attained; *pūrvam* — previously; *arśat* — knows; *iti* — thus.

**Whoever chants the fivefold *mantra* will easily attain the undivided realm of liberation [described in the *Īśopaniṣad*]: “The Lord, though fixed in his abode, is swifter than the mind, so none of the gods can capture him, however quickly they may run. He knows all before everyone else.”**

Liberation for the devotees (*vaiṣṇava-mukti*) is here identified with attaining the undivided realm (*kevalam padam*), Kṛṣṇa’s abode. Although this is

59. Gauḍīya commentators differ on which sentiment this is. Most understand it to be the sentiment of *mañjari-bhāva*, which is the predominant sentiment of the *sampradāya*, while others, such as Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda, understand it to be that of a *gopa*, *sākhya-bhāva*. Commenting on ŚB 2.9.30 (*yāvat sakhā sakhyur ivesā te kṛtaḥ*), Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “Brahmā is definitely situated in the humor of friendship with the Lord. . . . It is clearly exhibited herein that Lord Brahmā is related to the Personality of Godhead in the transcendental humor of friendship.”

the acme of spiritual accomplishment, the devotee nonetheless easily attains it (*anāyāsataḥ*) because simply hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa with love or without ulterior motive is itself synonymous with such liberation.

The third and fourth lines of this verse also appear in *Īśopaniṣad* (4), which is another well-known Vaiṣṇava *Upaniṣad*. These lines stress the transcendental nature of Kṛṣṇa and his abode, which are not limited by time and space, being swifter than or beyond the mind. Kṛṣṇa pervades all time and space and thus cannot be captured, nor can his abode be attained by those remaining within the material cell and sentence of space and time, even if they are gods of this world. In this regard, Śrī Prabodhānanda refers to the instance in which Kṛṣṇa revealed his abode to the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana in response to Nanda's questions about their next life. In particular he refers to ŚB 10.28.14–15, verses often cited by Jīva Gosvāmi when he writes about Goloka.<sup>60</sup>

When Nanda heard Varuṇa praise Kṛṣṇa, describing him as the Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān of the *advaya-jñāna-tattva* that constitutes ultimate reality, he was astonished. He related this wonderful incident to the cowherd community and later, on their behalf, asked Kṛṣṇa what they could expect in their next life. Kṛṣṇa took them to Akrūra Ghāṭa, and as they immersed themselves in the water of the Yamunā under his direction, he gave them a mystic vision of Goloka Vṛndāvana, the heavenly expression of earthly Vṛndāvana. He revealed to them that they would go from his humanlike *lilā* (*nara-lilā*) to his godly *lilā* (*deva-lilā*), which are essentially nondifferent from one another. They are, that is, constituted of the same *bhāvas*, although there are some differences in the details of the *lilās*' expression.

Upon receiving this revelation, the cowherd community was overjoyed to know that they would be together with one another, along with their children, cows, and houses, in a setting much like their present surroundings. The natural environment would be the same as that found along the

60. See *Gopāla-campū* 2.29.80, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 3.4.76, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 15.3.19, and *Brahma-saṁbitā* 5.5 as examples.

banks of the Yamunā and at the foot of Mount Govardhana, surrounded by lush forest. Such is the mystery of Kṛṣṇa's abode. Intimate involvement with the infinite requires that the infinite take on a finite appearance.

Kṛṣṇa's descent (*avatāra*) to the material plane of experience involves the manifestation of all that is dear to him, his *svarūpa-śakti*. His *svarūpa-śakti* represents his singular nature expressed in a plurality of family members, friends, lovers, and so on—expressions in celebration of his own completeness, his delight. The *svarūpa-śakti* is his primary *śakti*, the fountainhead of all of his innumerable *śaktis*, by which the Absolute expresses itself, even by creating and maintaining the world in all of its facets. For example, the *śakti* involved in sustaining the world has its origin in Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti* in the form of his divine mother, Yaśodā. She is a manifestation of his *ādhāra-śakti* within the general category of his *svarūpa-śakti*.<sup>61</sup> What we know as the sustaining force has at its source a personified expression of motherhood in the drama of Kṛṣṇa *lilā*, where the person who is reality plays. When this divine play manifests within the material plane, we have an instance of the cause appearing within the effect and, in doing so, appearing in many respects as an aspect of the effect.

Appearances, however, can be deceiving. Fire is not a product of wood, although it may appear to be so when we rub two sticks together and sparks manifest. Ṛṣis conceived of fire as a manifestation of the sun stored in wood, which is also a product of the sun, as a tree cannot grow without the sun. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa is indirectly the cause of the world and directly the cause of his *lilā*'s manifestation within the world. This *lilā* is the fire of the sun of his unmanifest *lilā*. As fire is the essence of the sun, so too is Kṛṣṇa's earthly manifestation the essence of his transcendental reality. His humanlike *lilā* is the essence of his godly *lilā*.

Transcendence is generally considered the result of culturing detachment. Attachment to ephemeral material names and forms on the part of one who is eternal is illusion. When we stand back and view the material

61. *Ādhāra-śakti* is a subcategory of the *sandhini-śakti*, which is one of the three principal constituents of the *svarūpa-śakti*.

predicament with the unbiased eye of detachment, we get a clearer picture of the nature of material existence. We see that all material manifestations are here today but gone tomorrow. Only that which sees remains, not that which is seen. Yet the seer does not see himself in all of this, and thus his identification with the seen leaves him in a perpetual identity crisis life after life, as one material manifestation transforms into another. Thus ignorance is attachment, and knowledge expresses itself in detachment.

How then are we to understand the attachment of the cowherds for Kṛṣṇa, for one another, for their hearth and home? How can this be the acme of transcendental experience? The answer lies in distinguishing between knowledge and love. While knowledge expresses itself as detachment, love is about attachment. Is love, then, necessarily material and only knowledge the domain of the spirit? If this were so, the domain of the spirit would hardly be a home, but more like a peaceful state of hovering in suspended animation.

However, if we look more closely at knowledge, we will see that love is concealed within it. Refraining from lustful exploitation of our partner is also an expression of love, even though all the overt signs of loving affection may be absent. Similarly, the seed of love is concealed within the transcendental knowledge that arises from a life of insightful detachment and spiritual practice. It will manifest in the pure hearts of the truly wise when they interact with the world in knowledge of its proprietor. Such healthy interaction finds all material manifestations venerable in relation to their source. All problems are transformed into opportunities for service, which is the basis of true love. The ongoing cultivation of this love of God in the company of advanced devotees involves seeing everything in relation to him and results in meeting him on intimate terms. This result is played out in perfection within the drama of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, where forms and relationships are all expressions of the will of Kṛṣṇa—his delight manifesting through his *svarūpa-śakti*.

Thus Goloka, Kṛṣṇa's abode, is beyond time and space. Although Kṛṣṇa himself resides there forever fixed, never stepping foot outside, he is at the

same time moving faster than the mind and thus is never to be apprehended by any mental or intellectual exercise. Stop the mind and allow the soul to live its own life—the life that Kṛṣṇa alone knows is best for you in his service. That which is known to him, he will reveal to you and it will manifest in your heart purified through spiritual culture as if it were your own desire to associate with him on intimate terms as a member of the cowherd community. Such enlightened life is transcendental bewilderment in which the godhood of Kṛṣṇa is suppressed by the bond of intimate love. When in such bewilderment (*yogamāyā*) Nanda asked Kṛṣṇa about the cowherds’ next life, he showed them, to their delight, that it does not get any better than this—life in Kṛṣṇa *lilā*.

48. तस्मात्कृष्ण एव परो देवस्तं ध्यायेत्तं रसयेत्तं  
यजेत्तं भजेदिति ॐ तत्सदिति ॥४८॥

*tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devas taṁ dhyāyet taṁ rasayet  
taṁ yajet taṁ bhajet iti om tat sad iti | |*

*tasmāt* — therefore; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *eva* — most certainly; *paraḥ* — the supreme; *devaḥ* — Deity; *taṁ* — him; *dhyāyet* — should meditate upon; *taṁ* — him; *rasayet* — should chant his *mantra*; *taṁ* — him; *yajet* — should sacrifice to him; *taṁ* — him; *bhajet* — should worship; *iti* — thus; *om tat sat* — *om tat sat*; *iti* — thus.

**Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity. One should meditate upon him, one should relish him, and one should engage in his worship with a desire to serve. *Om tat sat*.**

This *Upaniṣad* began with the question, “Who is the Supreme Deity?” In consideration of all that has been discussed thus far, Śruti-devī makes the learned conclusion: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity. What follows logically from this conclusion is that one should meditate on him and thereby relish him in aesthetic rapture (*rasa*), the foundation of which is the service ego.

The words *om tat sat* designate the supreme reality and serve here as a solemn declaration in his name that everything stated in this *Upaniṣad* is the absolute truth.<sup>62</sup>

62. For a detailed explanation of the significance of *om tat sat*, see Swāmi Tripurāri, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 516–19.





उत्तरतापनी

*Uttara-tāpanī*



I. एकदा हि व्रजस्त्रियः सकामाः शर्वरीमुषित्वा  
सर्वेश्वरं गोपालं कृष्णमूचिरे । उवाच ताः कृष्णः ॥१॥

*ekadā hi vraja-striyaḥ sakāmāḥ śarvarim uṣitvā  
sarveśvaram gopālaṁ kṛṣṇam ūcire | uvāca tāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ |*

*ekadā* — once; *hi* — certainly; *vraja-striyaḥ* — the women of Vraja; *sakāmāḥ* — possessed by desire; *śarvarim* — the night; *uṣitvā* — having spent; *sarveśvaram* — the all-powerful Lord; *gopālaṁ* — the cowherd; *kṛṣṇam* — Kṛṣṇa; *ūcire* — said; *uvāca* — said; *tāḥ* — to them; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa.

**Once the passionate cowherd women of Vraja spent the night with the cowherd Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Lord of all. In the morning, they engaged in a conversation with him as follows:**

In the first part of this *Upaniṣad*, the *pūrva-tāpanī*, the goddess of revealed knowledge, Śruti-devī, states that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme God. The *pūrva-tāpanī* ends with the words *tasmāt kṛṣṇa eva paro devaḥ*: “Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Deity.” Here in the *uttara-tāpanī*, the second part of this *Upaniṣad*, the goddess seeks to further demonstrate this truth. To that end she recounts another narrative, beginning with a conversation that once took place between Kṛṣṇa and the milkmaids of Vraja, the *gopīs*.

In the *uttara-tāpanī*, we dive deeply into the mystery of spiritual love. The primacy of Kṛṣṇa, his devotees, residence, *mantras*, and more will be explained through the medium of Śruti-devī’s narrative. The *gopīs* will question Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa will answer them and direct them to the sage Durvāsā for further instruction. Durvāsā will answer questions asked by the *gopīs’* group leader, Gāndharvī, and in so doing narrate the history of his own conversation with Brahmā and Brahmā’s discussion with Nārāyaṇa.

In these opening sentences, the scene for this narrative is set. It is the morning after one of Kṛṣṇa’s nightlong trysts with the *gopīs* in the forests of Vṛndāvana. The word *uṣitvā* indicates not only that the *gopīs* had spent

the entire night in Kṛṣṇa's company but that they desired these *līlās* with him to be constant and uninterrupted. Just as young girls are spontaneously attracted to young boys and any impediment put in the way of their union serves only to intensify their desire to be together, the *gopīs* were similarly endowed with the spontaneous desire to be united with Kṛṣṇa. Although such desire on their part superficially appears to be the antithesis of desirelessness, it is in fact completely devoid of self-interest. The *gopīs* approached Kṛṣṇa with the intensity of young girls who have fallen deeply in love, and no one so passionate about God can remain attached to the ephemeral.

Drawing from the world of our experience, Śruti-devī speaks to us about the measure of the *gopīs*' love with a word intended to help us understand its all-consuming nature: *sa-kāmaḥ*. *Sa-kāmaḥ* means "with passionate love." A more compelling force to compare their spiritual intensity to is not to be found in this world. It is passionate yet desireless love that corresponds to the Absolute's appearance as an adolescent cowherd—the Supreme Deity. He is supreme in terms of charm and affection, his power implied in his freedom to play. Kṛṣṇa is the infinite uniting in love with the finite, appearing as if finite for the sake of intimacy.

2. अनु कस्मै ब्राह्मणाय भक्ष्यं दातव्यं भवति ॥२॥

*anu kasmai brāhmaṇāya bhakṣyaṁ dātavyaṁ bhavati* |

*anu* — then; *kasmai* — to which; *brāhmaṇāya* — *brāhmaṇa*; *bhakṣyaṁ* — edible; *dātavyaṁ* — to be given; *bhavati* — is.

[The *gopīs* said:] To which *brāhmaṇa* should food be given?

The *gopīs* appear to be uneducated village girls. On the surface they are religious, superstitious, and above all, human. Here they ask a religious question of their young lover, the cowherd Kṛṣṇa. They want to know which *brāhmaṇa*, or saintly person, in their village is most worthy of re-

ceiving an offering of rice boiled in milk and sugar. Their objective is not overtly spiritual. They want a benediction. They want Kṛṣṇa as their husband, even though this is not acceptable in religious society. They are, after all, already married—or so it seems.

The *lilā* of Kṛṣṇa is, however, not what it seems to be on the surface, for he is no ordinary cowherd but rather the grave subject of the *Upaniṣads*. He is Brahman in its fullest expression, full in love and affection, full in aesthetic rapture (*rasa*), a connoisseur of love. He is *rasa*—*raso vai sah*. Kṛṣṇa's devotees like the *gopīs* belong to him alone; indeed, nothing exists outside of him. He is reality existing for himself and by himself. He and his energy, his *śakti*, are one and different simultaneously. The *gopīs* represent his *śakti*, and they energize him such that the “one” appears as “many,” a unity of multiplicity. The *gopīs*' desire to be perpetually in his company is part of the drama of his divine play.

Nothing is separate from Kṛṣṇa at any time, yet within the drama of material life units of consciousness that are particles of his *śakti* can be unaware of their connection with him. Through spiritual culture they can become aware of their real position as parts and parcels of the whole and unite with him in celebration of this truth. This celebration expresses itself in endless varieties of eternal pastimes through which Kṛṣṇa tastes his own joy in relation to his devotees/*śaktis*. In this spiritual drama, the *gopīs* sometimes meet personally with Kṛṣṇa and at other times experience the spiritual illusion of separation from him. Touching both banks of the river of divine love as they flow spontaneously in love's embrace, the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa relish the shores of union and separation.

The *gopīs* represent the pinnacle of spiritual culture. Their selfless love takes center stage in the love life of the Absolute. Yet in appearance they seem to be nothing more than religious girls who are not even all that good at following the religious injunctions. Appearances aside, the philosophical truth underlying their question is that they want nothing other than to be united in love with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Brahman, at every moment. To that end they engage in various religious acts. Thus while they worship others (*brāhmaṇas*, gods, and goddesses) within the *lilā*, their reli-

gious ideal transcends anything that can ordinarily be attained by such worship, and they themselves have already attained that ideal. Experiencing God as Kṛṣṇa, the young cowherd, they are fully immersed in apparently ordinary religious life with human shortcomings, when in reality they have attained the zenith of spiritual experience.

The esoteric message of the *gopīs*' question is that one can be fully immersed in the world but with different motives than those of the illusioned beings who pursue various material desires. The *gopīs* interact with the world only out of love for Kṛṣṇa. The result of such Kṛṣṇa conscious immersion in the world is the realization that enlightened life is not about running away from or denying the world but fully participating in it with the proper motive—being in it but not of it. After all, there is really no place else to go. Spirituality is about changing our angle of vision.

3. दुर्वाससेति ॥३॥

*durvāsaseti* |

*durvāsase* — to Durvāsā; *iti* — thus.

**[Kṛṣṇa answered:] To Durvāsā.**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī paraphrases Kṛṣṇa's thoughts as he answers the *gopīs*: "On the pretext of offering food to Durvāsā, I am sending the *gopīs* to him. However, Durvāsā will explain to them the nature of their desired perfection in life. Durvāsā received an understanding of my *Gopāla-tāpani* in disciplic succession from Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa, and having recently come to live for some time in this land of my appearance, he has developed affection for the *gopīs*. He is well known for being outspoken, so he is sure to tell them exactly what they need to know. Therefore, it is desirable that they be instructed by no one but him."

Not all commentators agree on who the Durvāsā of *Gopāla-tāpani* is. While some feel that he is not the Durvāsā of *Mahābhārata* and *Bhāgav-*



ata *Purāṇa* fame, who is a partial incarnation of Śiva, others disagree, despite Durvāsā's well-known enmity toward Kṛṣṇa's devotees, such as the Pāṇḍavas and Mahārāja Ambariṣa. This opinion seems to be confirmed in text 7, where Durvāsā is identified as "the fiery-tempered son of Rudra."

4. कथं यास्यामोऽतीर्त्वा जलं यमुनाया यतः श्रेयो भवति ॥४॥

*katham yāsyāmo 'tirtvā jalam yamunāyā yataḥ śreyo bhavati* ।

*katham* — how; *yāsyāmaḥ* — will we go; *atirtvā* — without crossing; *jalam* — the water; *yamunāyāḥ* — of the Yamunā; *yataḥ* — as a result of which; *śreyaḥ* — the ultimate good; *bhavati* — comes about.

**[The *gopīs* said:] How will we be able to cross the Yamunā's waters to achieve our goal?**

The *gopīs* were residing on the southern side of the Yamunā, and Durvāsā lived on the northern bank. If the *gopīs* were to serve the sage, they would have to cross the river. There were no boats, and the current of the Yamunā was swift, her waters deep. It is likely that the *gopīs* did not even know how to swim. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī hears the *gopīs* say, "We would be unable to cross even a shallow pool, what to speak of a wide river filled with whirlpools and high waves." Thus the *gopīs* ask Kṛṣṇa how they will be able to cross the Yamunā.

The words *śreyo bhavati* in this verse indicate that while ostensibly the *gopīs* wanted to attain the benediction of marrying the cowherd Kṛṣṇa, their desire for union with Kṛṣṇa represents the ultimate spiritual ideal. The word *śreyaḥ* indicates "ultimate benefit," as opposed to the immediate superficial benefit of material gain.

It is also implied in this verse that the *gopīs* believed that Kṛṣṇa could do the impossible—that he was wonderful in every respect. They were aware that at Kṛṣṇa's childhood name-giving ceremony Gargamuni had indicat-

ed that Nārāyaṇa (God) would do wonderful things through him.<sup>1</sup> They had also heard of Kṛṣṇa's miracles from his cowherd friends.

5. कृष्णेति ब्रह्मचारीत्युक्ता मार्गं वो दास्यति ॥१॥

*kṛṣṇeti brahmacārīty uktvā mārgam vo dāsyati*

*kṛṣṇa* — Kṛṣṇa; *iti* — named; *brahmacārī* — is a *brahmacārī*; *iti* — thus; *uktvā* — saying; *mārgam* — the way; *vah* — to you; *dāsyati* — will give.

**[Kṛṣṇa answered:] Just say that Kṛṣṇa is a *brahmacārī*, and the river will give way.**

By answering the *gopīs* in this way, Kṛṣṇa planted a seed of doubt in their hearts that will be fully resolved later when they inquire from the learned Durvāsā. Kṛṣṇa's answer seems preposterous, and not for the obvious reason that it is extraordinary for a river's current to part merely by uttering something. After all, the *gopīs* had seen many miracles, which they attributed to the well-known fact that Nārāyaṇa had graced Kṛṣṇa with his powers. The cause of the *gopīs*' hesitation was that Kṛṣṇa had just spent the entire night in the forest with them. How could he be a celibate student?

While words of truth have power, what power is there in stating an untruth? Still the *gopīs* believed that following Kṛṣṇa's instruction would bring about the desired result. They did not understand how he could be considered a celibate, but they were charmed by him nonetheless. Thus after hearing the following verse, in which Kṛṣṇa offers a partial answer by speaking of his prowess, they followed his advice.

1. The *bhāva* of the cowherd community is that Kṛṣṇa is one of them. The cowherds feel that Nārāyaṇa has chosen to perform miracles through Kṛṣṇa because of the piety of his parents. However, the *tattva*, or philosophical truth, that this *bhāva* hides is that Kṛṣṇa is transcendently superior to Nārāyaṇa, and thus it is Nārāyaṇa who derives all of his power from Kṛṣṇa.

6. यं मां स्मृत्वागाधा गाधा भवति ।  
 यं मां स्मृत्वापूतः पूतो भवति ।  
 यं मां स्मृत्वाव्रती व्रती भवति ।  
 यं मां स्मृत्वा सकामो निष्कामो भवति ।  
 यं मां स्मृत्वाऽश्रोत्रियः श्रोत्रियो भवति ॥६॥

*yaṁ mām smṛtvāgādhā gādhā bhavati* |  
*yaṁ mām smṛtvāpūtaḥ pūto bhavati* |  
*yaṁ mām smṛtvāvratī vratī bhavati* |  
*yaṁ mām smṛtvā sakāmo niṣkāmo bhavati* |  
*yaṁ mām smṛtvāśrotriyaḥ śrotriyo bhavati* | |

*yaṁ* — whom; *mām* — me; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *agādhā* — deep; *gādhā* — shallow; *bhavati* — becomes; *yaṁ* — whom; *mām* — me; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *apūtaḥ* — impure; *pūtaḥ* — pure; *bhavati* — becomes; *yaṁ* — whom; *mām* — me; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *avratī* — unregulated; *vratī* — regulated; *bhavati* — becomes; *yaṁ* — whom; *mām* — me; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *sakāmaḥ* — filled with desire; *niṣkāmaḥ* — free from desire; *bhavati* — becomes; *yaṁ* — whom; *mām* — me; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *aśrotriyaḥ* — unlearned, deaf; *śrotriyaḥ* — learned in the *Vedas* or able to hear; *bhavati* — becomes.

**By remembering me, one can find the bottom of the unfathomable. By remembering me, an impure person is purified. By remembering me, one who is unregulated adopts a regulated life. By remembering me, one who is filled with desire becomes desireless. By remembering me, one unlearned in the *Vedas* becomes learned.**

Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that some manuscripts of *Gopāla-tāpanī* offer an alternate reading of this text: *niṣkāmaḥ sakāmo bhavati*, which means that someone who is an *ātmārāma*, a spiritually self-satisfied soul, becomes filled with desire to see Kṛṣṇa upon remembering him. He also offers a novel understanding of the word *aśrotriya*, which in its conventional use

refers to one who is not learned in the scriptures, or one who has not heard sufficiently from the *Vedas*. He says that here *asrotriya* refers to one who is devoid of the sense of hearing and by extension devoid of all sense powers. He cites as examples the *ātmārāma*, whose senses are controlled and not in touch with sense objects, and the lower nonmoving forms of life, such as trees. Such souls gain a sense of hearing by the influence of Kṛṣṇa's flute or the spiritually potent recitation of his *līlā*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śukadeva is an example of an *ātmārāma* whose spiritual senses became awakened and attracted to the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, underscoring the postliberated status of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also gives evidence that remembrance of Kṛṣṇa causes the nonmoving beings to move: "From forest to forest, as Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma lead the cows with the help of the other cowherds, they play sweet tunes on their flutes causing the moving creatures to become paralyzed while the unmoving creatures tremble in ecstasy. How beautiful they are with their ropes and sticks and other cowherd paraphernalia!" (ŚB 10.21.19)

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's explanation of the two kinds of *asrotriya* represents the two ends of the spectrum of living beings: those that are liberated and those that are bound. The former, out of spiritual knowledge, do not move in relation to ephemeral objects, whereas the latter, out of ignorance, do move in relation to ephemeral objects. Neither, however, is acquainted with the postliberated movement of spiritual love at the heart of reality. Thus all living beings truly come to life only after coming in contact with Kṛṣṇa. Such contact involves making a connection with his devotees, who give the Gopāla *mantra* and *kāma gāyatri*—the fifth note of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa's flute—and explain its significance through discourses on the narrative of Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.

7. श्रुत्वा तद्वाचं हि वै रौद्रं स्मृत्वा तद्वाक्येन  
तीर्त्वा तत्सौर्यां हि गत्वाश्रमं पुण्यतमं हि  
नत्वा मुनिं श्रेष्ठतमं हि वै रौद्रं चेति ॥७॥

*śrutvā tad-vācani hi vai raudraṁ smṛtvā tad-vākyena tīrtvā tat-sauryāṁ hi  
gatvāśramaṁ puṇyatamaṁ hi natvā munim śreṣṭhatamaṁ hi vai raudraṁ ceti ।*

*śrutvā* — on hearing; *tat* — his; *vācani* — words; *hi vai* — verily; *raudraṁ* — fiery tempered; *smṛtvā* — remembered; *tad-vākyena* — by his instruction; *tīrtvā* — crossed; *tat* — then; *sauryāṁ* — the Yamunā; *hi* — certainly; *gatvā* — went; *āśramaṁ* — to the hermitage; *puṇyatamaṁ* — most holy; *hi* — certainly; *natvā* — bowed down; *munim* — to the sage; *śreṣṭhatamaṁ* — the best of all; *hi vai* — most emphatically; *raudraṁ* — son of Rudra; *ca* — and; *iti* — period.

**As soon as they heard these words, the *gopīs* remembered the fiery-tempered son of Rudra (Durvāsā) and, doing as Kṛṣṇa had told them, crossed over the Yamunā. Upon their arrival at that great sage’s most sanctified hermitage, they offered him their obeisances.**

Although the *gopīs* had not fully understood the import of Kṛṣṇa’s contention that he was celibate, being inspired by the affirmation of his prowess, they nonetheless uttered the words “Kṛṣṇa is a *brahmacārī*” as he had told them to. The Yamunā then immediately gave them passage.

Their initial hesitation to follow Kṛṣṇa’s instruction arose partially from Kṛṣṇa’s claim to celibacy and partially from their knowledge of Durvāsā’s reputation for having a fiery temper. Kṛṣṇa’s description of his extraordinary prowess enabled them to overcome their fear of Durvāsā, who, being extremely religious and filled with mystic insight, might have cursed them for their trysts with Kṛṣṇa. Thus they went to him and offered him respect, food, and service without any reservation. In actuality, the *gopīs*’ spiritual standing surpassed that of Durvāsā, but the *līlā* of Kṛṣṇa dictated that they serve and learn from him.

8. दत्त्वास्मै ब्राह्मणाय क्षीरमयं घृतमयमिष्टतमं ह वै मिष्टतमम् ।  
तुष्टः स त्वाभुक्त्वा हित्वाशिषं प्रयुज्यान्वाज्ञां त्वदात् ॥८॥

*dattvāsmāi brāhmaṇāya kṣīra-mayaṁ ghṛta-mayaṁ  
iṣṭatamaṁ ha vai miṣṭatamam ।  
tuṣṭaḥ sa tv ābhuktvā hitvāśīṣaṁ prayujyānvājñāṁ tv adāt ।*

*dattvā* — having given; *asmāi* — to this; *brāhmaṇāya* — to the *brāhmaṇa*; *kṣīra-mayaṁ* — made of milk; *ghṛta-mayaṁ* — made with ghee; *iṣṭatamaṁ* — most desirable; *ha vai* — most certainly; *miṣṭatamam* — sweetest; *tuṣṭaḥ* — satisfied; *saḥ* — he; *tu* — but; *ābhuktvā* — eating completely; *hitvā* — put it aside; *āśīṣaṁ* — blessings; *prayujya* — gave; *anu* — after which; *ājñāṁ* — permission to leave; *tu* — but; *adāt* — gave.

**They gave the *brāhmaṇa* a most desirable sweet rice pudding with clarified butter. Durvāsā happily ate the sweet rice, then gave the girls his remnants and blessed them before giving them permission to return.**

The word *ābhuktvā* in this verse indicates that Durvāsā ate everything the *gopīs* offered him. The implication is that he was completely satisfied with them. Thus he thought, “These girls are Kṛṣṇa’s beloveds. It is through good fortune that today I have been able to eat foodstuffs cooked by their hands, which they have brought to me personally.”

While Durvāsā was well aware that Kṛṣṇa was the Supreme God and that the *gopīs* were his dearest devotees, the *gopīs* themselves were not conscious of these truths. Absorbed as they were in spiritual love of Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* experienced a kind of divine ignorance that suppressed the divinity of Kṛṣṇa for the sake of intimacy. Durvāsā felt honored by the *gopīs*’ presence. He gave them permission to go, but out of great respect for them otherwise remained silent.

9. कथं यास्यामोऽतीर्त्वा सौर्याम् ॥९॥

*katham yāsyāmo ’tīrtvā sauryām ।*

*katham* — how; *yāsyāmaḥ* — will we go; *atīrtvā* — without crossing; *sauryam* — the Yamunā.

**[The *gopīs* asked Durvāsā:] How can we cross the Yamunā to get back?**

Here the *gopīs* seem to think that Kṛṣṇa’s instruction was only valid for crossing the Yamunā to see Durvāsā, but not for returning. Thus they ask Durvāsā how they will return, faced with having to cross the Yamunā to do so. Durvāsā’s reply in the following verse is similar to Kṛṣṇa’s instruction, and as Durvāsā subsequently explains, both his and Kṛṣṇa’s cryptic answers address foundational spiritual truths. Realizing these truths makes all things possible.

१०. स होवाच मुनिः । दूर्वाशिनं मां स्मृत्वा मार्गं वो दास्यतीति ॥१०॥

*sa hovāca muniḥ | dūrvāśīnaṁ māṁ smṛtvā mārgaṁ vo dāsyatīti ||*

*saḥ* — he; *hovāca* — said; *muniḥ* — the sage; *dūrvāśīnaṁ* — one who has eaten nothing but grass (who has fasted); *māṁ* — me; *smṛtvā* — thinking; *mārgaṁ* — way; *vaḥ* — you; *dāsyati* — will give you; *iti* — end of quotation.

**[The sage said to the *gopīs*:] Think of me as having eaten nothing but *dūrvā* grass and the river will make a path for you.**

The word *dūrvāśīnaṁ* means either one who has eaten *dūrvā* grass or one for whom foodstuffs have remained distant (*dūre aśanaṁ yasya tam*)—i.e., one who has fasted. Thus Durvāsā replies to the *gopīs*, “If you think of me as one who has fasted, the river will part and give you passage.”

Although the *gopīs* were about to depart, Durvāsā’s answer caused them to pause and question him about the significance of the similar instructions he and Kṛṣṇa had given them. How could Durvāsā be said to have fasted after eating what they had offered him? What was the mystic truth behind the apparently contradictory statements made by both Durvāsā and Kṛṣṇa?

११. तासां मध्ये हि श्रेष्ठा गान्धर्वी ह्युवाच तं ह वै ताभिरेवं विचार्य ॥११॥

*tāsāṁ madhye hi śreṣṭhā gāndharvī hy uvāca*  
*taṁ ha vai tābbir evaṁ vicārya* ।

*tāsāṁ* — of the *gopīs*; *madhye* — among; *hi* — certainly; *śreṣṭhā* — the best; *gāndharvī* — Gāndharvī (Rādhā); *hi* — certainly; *uvāca* — said; *taṁ* — him; *ha vai* — certainly; *tābbir* — with them; *evaṁ* — thus; *vicārya* — deciding.

**The best among the *gopīs*, Gāndharvī, spoke to the sage after considering several questions with the other *gopīs*.**

In this verse the best among the *gopīs*, Gāndharvī, is introduced. As will be mentioned in verse १३, all the *gopīs* accepted the leadership of Gāndharvī. The Gauḍīyas consider these verses to be *śruti-pramāṇa*—scriptural evidence from the *Upaniṣads* (as opposed to that found in the *smṛti* literature such as the *Purāṇas*)—for the primacy of Rādhā over all the other *gopīs*.

The idea that Rādhā is the best of the *gopīs* is clearly mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa* and other *smṛti* texts. It is also mentioned covertly in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (१०.३०.२८). Drawing on this text of *Gopāla-tāpani*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi refers to Rādhā by the names Gāndharvā and Gāndharvikā in his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (७.५१, ११.९६). In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* ४.४ he cites this *Gopāla-tāpani* text as evidence from the *Upaniṣads* that one of the *gopīs* is considered preeminent. Gauḍīya *ācārya* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was fond of this epithet for Rādhā, as it underscores the sober Upaniṣadic basis of the Gauḍīya doctrine, in which the divine service of Rādhā constitutes the zenith of spiritual attainment.

१२. कथं कृष्णो ब्रह्मचारी कथं दूर्वाशिनो मुनिः ॥१२॥

*katham kṛṣṇo brahmacārī katham dūrvāśīno muniḥ* ।



*katham* — how is; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *brahmacārī* — chaste; *katham* — how is; *dūrvāśīnaḥ* — fasting; *muniḥ* — the sage.

**[Gāndharvī asked:] How can Kṛṣṇa be called a *brahmacārī*? And how can you be said to be a fasting sage?**

13. तां हि मुख्यां विधाय पूर्वमनु कृत्वा तूष्णीमासुः ॥१३॥

*tām hi mukhyāṁ vidhāya pūrvam anu kṛtvā tūṣṇīm āsuḥ* । ।

*tām hi* — her alone; *mukhyāṁ* — the best of them; *vidhāya* — choosing; *pūrvam* — in front of them; *anu* — placing; *kṛtvā* — doing; *tūṣṇīm-āsuḥ* — become silent.

**Having made Gāndharvī their spokeswoman, the other *gopīs* simply stood behind her and remained silent.**

14-15. शब्दवानाकाशः । शब्दाकाशाभ्यां भिन्नः । तस्मिन्नाकाशस्तिष्ठति ।  
आकाशे तिष्ठति । स ह्याकाशस्तं न वेद ।  
स ह्यात्माऽहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥१४॥

स्पर्शवान् वायुः । स्पर्शवायुभ्यां भिन्नः । तस्मिन् वायौ तिष्ठति ।  
वायुर्न वेद तं हि स ह्यात्माहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥  
रूपवदिदं हि तेजः । रूपाग्निभ्यां भिन्नः । तस्मिन्नाग्निस्तिष्ठति ।  
अग्निर्न वेद तं हि स ह्यात्माहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥  
रसवत्य आपः । रसाब्जो भिन्नः । तस्मिन्नापस्तिष्ठति । अप्सु तिष्ठति ।  
आपस्तं न विदुः । स ह्यात्माहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥  
गन्धवतीयं भूमिः । गन्धभूमिभ्यां भिन्नः । तस्मिन् भूमिस्तिष्ठति ।  
भूमौ तिष्ठति । भूमिस्तं न वेद । स ह्यात्माहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥१५॥

*śabdavān ākāśaḥ* । *śabdākāśābhyāṁ bhinnah* ।

*tasminn ākāśas tiṣṭhati* । *ākāśe tiṣṭhati* । *sa hy ākāśas tam na veda* ।

*sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi* । ।

*sparsāvān vāyuh | sparsā-vāyubhyām bhinnah |*  
*tasmin vāyau tiṣṭhati | vāyur na veda tam hi*  
*sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |*

*rūpavad idam hi tejah | rūpāgnibhyām bhinnah |*  
*tasmin agnis tiṣṭhati | agnir na veda tam hi*  
*sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |*

*rasavatya āpah | rasābbhyo bhinnah |*  
*tasmin āpas tiṣṭhanti | apsu tiṣṭhāti | āpas tam na viduh |*  
*sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |*

*gandhavatyaṁ bhūmiḥ | gandha-bhūmibhyām bhinnah |*  
*tasmin bhūmis tiṣṭhati | bhūmau tiṣṭhāti | bhūmis tam na veda |*  
*sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi |*

*śabdavān* — possessing sound; *ākāśah* — space; *śabdākāśābhyām* — from sound and space; *bhinnah* — distinct; *tasmin* — in him; *ākāśah* — space; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *ākāśe* — in the sky; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ākāśah* — sky; *tam* — him; *na veda* — does not know; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ātmā* — soul, self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bhoktā* — the enjoyer; *bhavāmi* — be; *sparsāvān* — possessing touch; *vāyuh* — the air; *sparsā-vāyubhyām bhinnah* — distinct from both the sense of touch and the air; *tasmin vāyau tiṣṭhati* — situated in that air; *vāyuh* — the air; *tam* — him; *na veda* — does not know; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ātmā* — soul, self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bhoktā* — the enjoyer; *bhavāmi* — be; *rūpavad* — possessing form; *idam* — this; *hi* — very; *tejah* — fire; *rūpāgnibhyām* — from form and fire; *bhinnah* — distinct; *tasmin* — in him; *agnih* — fire; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *agnih* — fire; *tam* — him; *na veda* — does not know; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ātmā* — soul, self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bhoktā* — the enjoyer; *bhavāmi* — be; *rasavatya* — possessing taste; *āpah* — water; *rasābbhyah* — from water; *bhinnah* — distinct; *tasmin* — from him; *āpah* — water; *tiṣṭhanti* — is situated; *apsu* — water; *tiṣṭhāti* — is situated; *āpah* — water; *tam* — that; *na*

*viduḥ* — does not know; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ātmā* — soul, self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bboktā* — the enjoyer; *bbhavāmi* — be; *gandhacatīyaṁ* — possessing scent; *bhūmiḥ* — earth; *gandha-bhūmibhyāṁ* — from scent and earth; *bhinnaḥ* — distinct; *tasmin* — in him; *bhūmiḥ* — earth; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *bhūmau* — in the earth; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *bhūmiḥ* — earth; *tam* — him; *na veda* — does not know; *saḥ* — that; *hi* — very; *ātmā* — soul, self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bboktā* — the enjoyer; *bbhavāmi* — be.

[Durvāsā answered:] Sound is the quality present in space. The *ātmā* is distinct from both sound and space. Space is situated in that *ātmā*, and the *ātmā* is in space. That very same space, however, does not know the *ātmā*. Since I am verily that *ātmā*, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

Touch is the quality associated with the air. The *ātmā* is distinct from both touch and air. The air is situated in that *ātmā*, and the *ātmā* is in the air. The air, however, does not know the *ātmā*. Since I am verily that *ātmā*, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

Form is the quality present in fire. The *ātmā* is distinct from both form and fire. Fire is situated in that *ātmā*, and the *ātmā* is in fire. Fire, however, does not know the *ātmā*. Since I am verily that *ātmā*, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

Flavor is the attribute of water. The *ātmā* is distinct from both flavor and water. Water is situated in that *ātmā*, and the *ātmā* is in the water. The water, however, does not know the *ātmā*. Since I am verily that *ātmā*, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

Scent is the attribute of the earth. The *ātmā* is distinct from both scent and earth. The earth is situated in that *ātmā*, and the *ātmā* is in the earth. The earth, however, does not know the *ātmā*. Since I am verily that *ātmā*, how can I be considered an enjoyer?

Durvāsā answers Gāndharvī's questions with Upaniṣadic wisdom, and thus from deep within the esoteric *lilā* of Kṛṣṇa, *Gopāla-tāpanī* speaks to us about a fundamental spiritual principle: there is a categorical difference between the soul and the body, consciousness and matter. It is also noteworthy that the charm of Kṛṣṇa *lilā* is grounded in spiritual knowledge and thus has the power to bring about disenchantment with material life and extricate the soul from its worldly entanglement.

In answering Rādhā, Durvāsā gives an example here and in the following verse to illustrate that the soul is different from the body. The example shows that the soul is not the enjoyer and experiencer of sense objects, for only the senses and the sense objects are interacting as the soul looks on. If this is true for the materially conditioned soul, how much more is it the case for self-realized souls and God himself? The distinction between self-realized souls and materially illusioned souls, as well as the distinction between the individual soul and God, lies ahead in this important section.

In the meantime, Durvāsā's example involves a comparison between matter and spirit. Because Durvāsā speaks in abstract language common to the *Upaniṣads*, some explanation is required. When he mentions the material elements, he is really referring to the senses. For example, the material element of space corresponds with the sense of hearing. Air represents the sense of touch, fire the sense of sight, water the sense of taste, and earth the sense of smell. Durvāsā compares these elements/senses with the position of the soul. The soul, *ātmā*, is present within each of the elements because it is present within the material body that possesses the senses. The material elements are also present within the soul because the material forms that are constituted of material elements are in one sense conceptions of the soul. When the soul desires to hear, the sense of hearing and its object of sound are manifest by material nature.

Thus material nature in the form of the body becomes the container of the soul. However, while the soul can become aware of matter and its own conditioning under the influence of matter, matter cannot know the soul. In this example, the container cannot know the contained, but the con-

tained can know the container. The *ātmā* is therefore categorically different from matter. This being the case, how can the soul enjoy or suffer in relation to sense objects when the sense objects and the entire material experience are but a virtual reality? When the soul dons the material body, it thinks that it is suffering or enjoying in relation to sense objects. In truth, however, it is aloof from the sense objects and only witnesses the material phenomena.

16. इदं हि मनस्तेष्वेवं मनुते । तानीदं हि गृह्णाति ॥१६॥

*idaṁ hi manas teṣu evedaṁ manute | tānidaṁ hi grhṇāti |*

*idaṁ* — this; *hi* — definitely; *manas* — mind; *teṣu* — among these; *eva* — verily; *idaṁ* — this; *manute* — thinks; *tāni* — them; *idaṁ* — this; *hi* — certainly; *grhṇāti* — grasps.

**It is the mind alone that considers itself the enjoyer of sense objects, because it alone grasps them.**

Durvāsā has anticipated Gāndharvī's question, "If the self is not the enjoyer of sense objects, who is? And why does the soul think that it is the enjoyer?"

The mind is matter, yet it is more subtle matter than the senses and their objects. It is more closely related to consciousness and thereby has the capacity to grasp sense objects through its functions of thinking and conceiving. The mind presides over the five senses and is thus commonly referred to as the sixth sense. Its capacity for perception is greater than the capacity of the other five senses. The mind is the link between consciousness—the soul—and the senses and their objects. It is the subjective connection to the objective world. Its influence over the materially conditioned soul causes the soul to think itself the enjoyer of sense objects and the doer of acts in relation to them, when in reality the soul is merely the witness to the movements of material nature.

17. यत्र सर्वमात्मैवाभूत्तत्र वा कुत्र मनुते । क्व वा गच्छतीति  
स ह्यात्माहं कथं भोक्ता भवामि ॥१७॥

*yatra sarvam ātmaivābhūt tatra vā kutra manute ।  
kva vā gacchatīti sa hy ātmāham katham bhoktā bhavāmi ।*

*yatra* — where; *sarvam* — everything; *ātmā* — the self; *eva* — verily; *abhūt* — has become; *tatra* — there; *vā* — or; *kutra* — where; *manute* — thinks; *kva vā* — and where else; *gacchati* — goes; *iti* — thus; *saḥ* — he; *hi* — certainly; *ātmā* — the self; *aham* — I; *katham* — how; *bhoktā* — the enjoyer; *bhavāmi* — become.

**In the realization that everything has become the self alone, how can the self think itself the enjoyer, and of what? Where indeed will the self go? In consideration of this, how could I, being that self, be the enjoyer of the sense objects?**

Lest the *gopīs* think that Durvāsā's position is no different from anyone else's and that by the force of his mind he too thinks himself the enjoyer of sense objects, the sage states here that his own position, that of a liberated soul, is fundamentally different from that of materially conditioned souls. He does not identify himself with either the knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriya*) or those of action (*karmendriya*). Thus how can he think himself the enjoyer or sufferer of material interactions? His experience is that "everything has become the self," in other words, he realizes that in reality there is only God and nothing separate from him.

Realizing oneself to be of the nature of consciousness and the self and even material nature to be manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, one experiences reality as nondual consciousness—*tattvam yaj jñānam advayam* (ŚB 1.2.11). Such realization, however, is not a static experience of nondual consciousness in which there is no diversity. One realizes that reality is a person (Kṛṣṇa) replete with potency—the energetic (*śaktimān*) and its energy (*śakti*), by which it fully experiences and expresses itself. The individual soul is con-

stituted of the *śakti* of Kṛṣṇa, and because this *śakti* has no existence independent of Kṛṣṇa, in this sense it is one with him.

Śrī Prabodhānanda paraphrases the import of Durvāsā's reply thus: "Because I am situated in knowledge, I have absolutely no sense of being the enjoyer in connection with this body. Even so, if I am seen to be enjoying ecstasies of an unlimited variety, it is through my relationship with you who are the most dearly beloved of Śrī Bhagavān." Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī adds to this by citing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.10, where it is said that the sage Śukadeva was distracted from his meditation on Brahman upon hearing a recital of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's qualities.

These comments bring out the deepest lesson in this section of *Gopālātāpanī*. The basic instruction is that the soul is not the body and that the bodily activities are only the movements of material nature activated by the soul's presence. The soul merely witnesses and does not actually take part in these movements. The deeper instruction is that in the highest reality, within Kṛṣṇa's divine play, all movement is still in relation to material nature. Witnessing material nature in absolute peace, unmoved by the ocean of material emotions, sages like Śukadeva and Durvāsā, not to speak of the *gopīs*, move in devotional trance—not out of ignorance, material desire, or perceived material necessity, but in celebration of the fullness of the Absolute. As Nietzsche said, "I would believe only in a God who could dance." Such is the play of Kṛṣṇa.

18. अयं हि कृष्णो यो वो हि प्रेष्ठः शरीरद्वयकारणं भवति ॥१८॥

*ayam hi kṛṣṇo yo vo hi preṣṭhaḥ śarīra-dvaya-kāraṇam bhavati |*

*ayam* — this; *hi* — very; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *yaḥ* — who; *vaḥ* — you; *hi* — certainly; *preṣṭhaḥ* — dearmost; *śarīra-dvaya-kāraṇam* — the cause of both the gross and subtle bodies; *bhavati* — become.

**This very Kṛṣṇa, who is your most dearly beloved, is the cause of both bodies.**

Understanding the *gopīs*' primary interest in Kṛṣṇa, Durvāsā says that he who is their most dearly beloved is the cause of all causes. Both the subtle and gross material bodies that implicate the soul in the karmic law of material nature are subordinate to Kṛṣṇa and can have no influence over him. All power is derived from him, and thus no power can overcome him. His dalliance with the *gopīs* is not born out of any necessity on his part—it is not under the jurisdiction of *karma*. His body is spiritual, as are those of the *gopīs*, and their dance of love is selfless and giving in the most complete sense. Indeed, it is the *gopīs*' selflessness reposed in God that affords them the spiritual bodies that correspond with the heart of the Absolute appearing in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

19. द्वा सुपर्णौ भवतो ब्रह्मणोऽशभूतस्तथेतरो भोक्ता भवति ।  
 अन्यो हि साक्षी भवतीति । वृक्षधर्मे तौ तिष्ठतः । अतो भोक्त्रभोक्तरौ ।  
 पूर्वो हि भोक्ता भवति तथेतरोऽभोक्ता कृष्णो भवतीति ॥१९॥

*dvā suparṇau bhavato brahmaṇo 'mśa-bhūtas tathetaro bhoktā bhavati ।  
 anyo hi sākṣi bhavatīti । vṛkṣa-dharme tau tiṣṭhataḥ ।  
 ato bhoktr-abboktārau । pūrvo hi bhoktā bhavati  
 tathetaro 'bhoktā kṛṣṇo bhavatīti ।*

*dvā* — two; *suparṇau* — beautifully plumed birds; *bhavataḥ* — are; *brahmaṇaḥ* — of Brahman; *mśa-bhūtaḥ* — fragmentary portion; *tathā* — similarly; *itaraḥ* — the other; *bhoktā* — the enjoyer; *bhavati* — is; *anyaḥ* — the other; *hi* — definitely; *sākṣi* — witness; *bhavati* — is; *iti* — thus; *vṛkṣa-dharme* — in the body, which is meant to be felled like a tree; *tau* — they; *tiṣṭhataḥ* — are situated; *ataḥ* — therefore; *bhoktr-abboktārau* — the enjoyer and nonenjoyer; *pūrvāḥ* — the former; *hi* — certainly; *bhoktā* — enjoyer; *bhavati* — is; *tathā* — similarly; *itaraḥ* — the other; *abboktā* — the nonenjoyer; *bhavati* — is; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *bhavati* — is; *iti* — thus.

**There are two beautifully plumed birds making their home in this body, which, like a tree, is meant to be felled. The lesser of the two is**



the fragmentary portion of Brahman who enjoys and suffers; the other is merely an observer. They are thus enjoyer and nonenjoyer. The former is the enjoyer; the latter, the nonenjoyer, is Kṛṣṇa.

In the previous passage, Durvāsā spoke of Kṛṣṇa's position from a macrocosmic point of view. In this stanza he continues to extol Kṛṣṇa's virtues by speaking of his exalted position from the microcosmic point of view. Kṛṣṇa is the indwelling soul that accompanies the finite soul throughout its material sojourn, life after life, body after body. The finite soul (*jīvātmā*) in the ignorance of bodily identification thinks itself the enjoyer of the fruits of the bodily tree. The indwelling Supersoul (*paramātmā*) merely witnesses the plight of the finite soul. Thus Kṛṣṇa in his manifestation as the indwelling Supersoul, although within the material body, is not identified with it. He thus is not the enjoyer of the fruits of material life, which lead to misery and thus speak to the wise as to the need to fell the bodily tree, ending the cycle of birth and death.

Śrī Prabhodhānanda comments, "Durvāsā thought, 'From the microcosmic point of view, Kṛṣṇa and other *jīvas* appear similar. However, there is a great difference between a *jīva* like myself and Kṛṣṇa, the indwelling soul of all beings.' To clarify the difference between them, he then spoke this passage. By saying 'two birds,' he indicates that the soul and Supersoul are inseparable companions. By saying that they are 'beautifully plumed,' he further implies that they are both conscious. By saying 'there are,' he shows that they both exist without beginning. However, of the two, the lesser one is the *jīva*, who is comparable to the rays of the other, who is like the sun globe of Brahman while simultaneously being the indwelling soul of the sum total of all *jīvas*."

20. यत्र विद्याविद्ये न विदामो विद्याविद्याभ्यां भिन्नः ।  
विद्यामयो हि यः स कथं विषयी भवतीति ॥२०॥

*yatra vidyāvidye na vidāmo vidyāvidyābhyāṁ bhinnah |*  
*vidyāmayo hi yaḥ sa katham viṣayi bhavatīti |*

*yatra* — where; *vidyāvidye* — knowledge and ignorance; *na vidāmaḥ* — we do not know; *vidyāvidyābhyām* — from knowledge and ignorance; *bhinnaḥ* — different; *vidyāmayaḥ* — knowledge in essence; *hi* — certainly; *yaḥ* — one who; *saḥ* — he; *katham* — how; *viṣayi* — a sensualist; *bhavati* — be; *iti* — end of section.

**Whereas we understand neither knowledge nor ignorance, he is distinct from both knowledge and ignorance. How can one who is knowledge in essence be a sensualist?**

Here Durvāsā elaborates further on the position of both the conditioned souls and Kṛṣṇa, whose partial manifestation is the indwelling Supersoul. The conditioned souls understand neither complete knowledge of their self nor the extent of their ignorance. However, both Kṛṣṇa and those who identify with him through devotion are beyond the self-knowledge of *sattva-guṇa* as well as the ignorance of this world, both of which are functions of the material potency.

Transcending the material potencies of knowledge and ignorance is the result of knowing that Kṛṣṇa is the source of the indwelling Supersoul, who in turn is the source of the knowledge and ignorance of this world. As stated in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.9.52), *yasyā yutāyu tām śāṁśe viśva-śaktir iyaṁ sthitā*: “The creative power of this universe is situated in the portion of a portion [of Viṣṇu].”

In the present passage of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, Durvāsā explains how Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to knowledge and ignorance: “He is knowledge in essence.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself says it thus to Uddhava, *vidyāvidye mama tanū*: “Both knowledge and ignorance are my potencies” (ŚB 11.11.3). Thus Kṛṣṇa is transcendental to the knowledge arising from *sattva-guṇa*, and he never becomes bewildered by the ignorance of material identification. Therefore, he cannot fall prey to the illusory notion of being the enjoyer of what is actually misery. He is the essence of knowledge—love.

21. यो ह वै कामेन कामान् कामयते स कामी भवति ।  
यो ह वै त्वकामेन कामान् कामयते सोऽकामी भवति ॥२१॥

*yo ha vai kāmēna kāmān kāmāyate sa kāmī bhavati ।*  
*yo ha vai tv akāmēna kāmān kāmāyate so 'kāmī bhavati ।*

*yaḥ* — one who; *ha vai* — verily; *kāmēna* — with selfish desire; *kāmān* — sense pleasures; *kāmāyate* — desires; *saḥ* — he; *kāmī* — a sensualist; *bhavati* — is; *yaḥ* — one who; *ha vai* — verily; *tu* — on the other hand; *akāmēna* — with no selfish intent; *kāmān* — sense pleasures; *kāmāyate* — desires; *saḥ* — he; *akāmī* — not a sensualist; *bhavati* — is.

**A sensualist is one who desires sense gratification with a yearning to enjoy. A nonsensualist is one who desires sense objects without any such motivation.**

Under scrutiny, it is clear from the *līlās* of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* recorded in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* that Kṛṣṇa is not a sensualist. All of his interactions with the milkmaids of Vraja are selfless acts of giving. Such is the position of the *gopīs* as well. Durvāsā's words are meant to counter the *gopīs'* doubt, "Well, we seem to experience Kṛṣṇa as a sensualist."

The word *kāma* appears in different forms in this sentence: a *kāmī* means a sensualist, or *viṣayī*; the object *kāmān* refers to the objects of sense gratification; and the instrumental *kāmēna* means "with a desire to enjoy." In contrast, *akāmēna* means "without a desire to enjoy," by which we should understand a love that is exclusively dedicated to the pleasure of the other (*kevalenānukūlya-mayena premṇā*). There are several statements in the *Bhāgavata* that indicate that this attitude is true of Kṛṣṇa, such as *āt-mārāma 'py arīramat*: "Though completely self-fulfilled, he enjoyed [with the *gopīs*]" (ŚB 10.29.42).

A person who takes pleasure in the self (*āt-mārāma*) finds actual pleasure. Should he act in relation to others, he does so not to find pleasure in them but to give of himself spiritually. In this connection, sage Śukadeva de-

scribes Kṛṣṇa's interaction with the *gopīs* thus, *prāṁṛjat karuṇaḥ premṇā śantamenāṅga pāṇinā*: "With his gentle hand, the compassionate one lovingly wiped the *gopīs*' perspiring foreheads" (ŚB 10.33.20).

22. जन्मजराभ्यां भिन्नः स्थाणुरयमच्छेद्योऽयं योऽसौ सौर्ये  
तिष्ठति योऽसौ गोषु तिष्ठति योऽसौ गाः पालयति ।  
योऽसौ गोपेषु तिष्ठति । योऽसौ सर्वेषु वेदेषु तिष्ठति ।  
योऽसौ सर्ववेदैर्गीयते । योऽसौ सर्वेषु भूतेष्वाविश्य  
भूतानि विदधाति स वो हि स्वामी भवति ॥२२॥

*janma-jarābhyāṁ bhinnāḥ sthānur ayam acchedyo 'yaṁ yo 'sau saurye tiṣṭhati*  
*yo 'sau goṣu tiṣṭhati yo 'sau gāḥ pālayati | yo 'sau gopeṣu tiṣṭhati | yo 'sau*  
*sarveṣu vedeṣu tiṣṭhati | yo 'sau sarva-vedair gīyate | yo 'sau sarveṣu bhūteṣu*  
*āviśya bhūtāni vidadbāti sa vo hi svāmī bhavati |*

*janma-jarābhyāṁ* — from birth and old age; *bhinnāḥ* — distinct; *sthānuḥ* — immovable; *ayam* — this; *acchedyaḥ* — cannot be cut; *ayam* — this; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *saurye* — in the effulgence of the sun; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *goṣu* — among the cows; *tiṣṭhati* — resides; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *gāḥ* — the cows; *pālayati* — herds; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *gopeṣu* — among the cowherds; *tiṣṭhati* — resides; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *sarveṣu vedeṣu* — in all the *Vedas*; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *sarva-vedair gīyate* — glorified in all the *Vedas*; *yaḥ* — who; *asau* — that; *sarveṣu bhūteṣu* — in all living beings; *āviśya* — entering; *bhūtāni* — beings; *vidadbāti* — ordains; *saḥ* — he; *vaḥ* — your; *hi* — most certainly; *svāmī* — husband; *bhavati* — is.

**He is beyond birth and old age, immovable, and unseverable. He is situated in the effulgence of the sun. He resides among the cows, herds the cows, and associates with the cowherds. He is found in and glorified by all the *Vedas*. He enters into all living beings and brings them life. That person is Kṛṣṇa, your husband.**

Having explained that Kṛṣṇa is not the enjoyer or sufferer of *karma*, Durvāsā further explains Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental position to the *gopīs*: “Although appearing as your husband, he is not subject to the six kinds of transformations that affect ordinary living beings.” This means (1) he is not subject to birth; (2) being immovable, he is not subject to growth; (3) he is not subject to maturation; (4) he is not subject to reproduction; (5) being beyond old age, he is not subject to decline; and (6) since he cannot be cut into pieces, he is not subject to destruction.<sup>2</sup> The *gopīs*’ relationship with Kṛṣṇa is thus not an ordinary love affair. They are wedded to God. What must their position be? Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that Durvāsā is saying to the *gopīs*, “Because you are Kṛṣṇa’s *svarūpa-śaktis* and your worship of Kṛṣṇa is without material desire, it is incorrect to say that you are unfaithful wives or lusty girls.” Indeed, the *gopīs* are wedded to the supreme object of love.

Being situated in the effulgence of the sun, Kṛṣṇa is the object of veneration in the *gāyatri mantra*, the prototype of all Vedic *mantras*. As explained in the first section of this book, the river Yamunā that flows through Kṛṣṇa’s pastoral home is considered to be the sun’s daughter, another name for whom is Sauri. Thus as Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī points out, Kṛṣṇa’s being situated in the effulgence of the sun (*saurya*) also indicates that he is situated in Vraja. The *ācārya* remarks further, “In the *Sahasra-nāma*, Kṛṣṇa’s epithet *suyāmuna* is found. Yāmuna is explained in the commentary to mean the residents of Vraja who live on the banks of the Yamunā River.” Thus Kṛṣṇa’s being “situated in the effulgence of the sun” also means that he is situated within the embrace of the inhabitants of Vraja.

After describing the truth about the name Kṛṣṇa, Durvāsā comments on the epithet Govinda. Out of compassion for the cows, Govinda resides among them as a cowherd, although the words *bhūtāni vidadhāti* clarify that he is not an ordinary cowherd but he who enters all beings and gives them life (God).

2. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī cites ŚB 10.14.23 in this regard. See Śrīdhara Svāmī’s commentary.

Regarding the epithet *gopī-jana-vallabha*, Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that in saying that Kṛṣṇa is the husband of the *gopīs* Durvāsā indicates that their apparent marriage to other men is simply an illusory appearance created by the influence of *yogamāyā*. The truth is that they are eternally wedded to Kṛṣṇa but appear otherwise for the sake of the *līlā*.

23. सा ह्युवाच गान्धर्वी कथं वास्मासु जातोऽसौ गोपालः ।  
 कथं वा ज्ञातोऽसौ त्वया मुने कृष्णः ।  
 को वास्य मन्त्रः । किं वास्य स्थानं ।  
 कथं वा देवक्यां जातः । को वास्य ज्यायान् रामो भवति ।  
 कीदृशी पूजास्य गोपालस्य भवति । साक्षात्प्रकृतिपरो योऽयमात्मा  
 गोपालः कथं त्ववतीर्णो भूयां हि वै ॥२३॥

*sā hy uvāca gāndharvī katham vāsmāsu jāto 'sau gopālaḥ |*  
*katham vā jñāto 'sau tvayā mune kṛṣṇaḥ | ko vāsya mantraḥ |*  
*kiṁ vāsya sthānam |*  
*katham vā devakyām jātāḥ | ko vāsya jyāyān rāmo bhavati |*  
*kidrśī pūjāsyā gopālasya bhavati |*  
*sākṣāt-prakṛti-paro yo 'yam ātmā gopālaḥ katham tv*  
*avatirṇo bhūmyām hi vai | |*

*sā* — she; *hi* — verily; *uvāca* — spoke; *gāndharvī* — Gāndharvī; *katham vā* — how then; *asmāsu* — among us; *jātāḥ* — born; *asau* — that; *gopālaḥ* — cowherd Kṛṣṇa; *katham vā* — and how; *jñātāḥ* — become known; *asau* — he; *tvayā* — by you; *mune* — O sage; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *kaḥ* — what; *vā* — furthermore; *asya* — his; *mantraḥ* — mantra; *kiṁ vā* — and what; *asya* — his; *sthānam* — place; *katham vā* — and how; *devakyām* — to Devakī; *jātāḥ* — born; *ko vā* — and who; *asya* — his; *jyāyān* — older brother; *rāmaḥ* — Balarāma; *bhavati* — is; *kidrśī* — what type; *pūjā* — worship; *asya gopālasya* — of this cowherd Kṛṣṇa; *bhavati* — is; *sākṣāt* — directly; *prakṛti-parāḥ* — beyond material nature; *yaḥ* — he who; *ayam* — this; *ātmā* — self; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *katham* — why, how; *tu* — furthermore; *avatirṇaḥ* — descended; *bhūmyām* — to earth; *hi vai* — verily.

Gāndharvi then asked: How did Gopāla come to take birth among us cowherds? And how did you, O sage, come to recognize him for who he is? What is his *mantra*? What is his place, and how did he take birth as the son of Devakī? Who is his older brother, Rāma? By which rituals should this Gopāla be worshiped? And how could this cowherd, who is the soul of all and is beyond material nature, have descended onto this earth?

Durvāsā will answer these questions by referring to a conversation between Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa, which Brahmā himself related to him. Brahmā's conversation with Nārāyaṇa makes up the balance of this *Upaniṣad*. Gāndharvi's first question will be addressed in texts 25 and 35, the second in text 38, the third in text 36, the fourth in text 25, questions 5 and 6 in text 35, question 7 in text 36, and question 8 in text 25.

24. स होवाच तां ह वै । एको ह वै पूर्वं नारायणो देवः ।  
यस्मिन् लोका ओताश्च प्रोताश्च । तस्य  
हृत्पद्माङ्गातोऽब्जयोनिस्तपित्वा तस्मै हि वरं ददौ ।  
स कामप्रश्नमेव वव्रे । तं हास्मै ददौ ॥२४॥

*sa hovāca tāṁ ha vai | eko ha vai pūrvam nārāyaṇo devaḥ | yasmin lokā otāś ca protāś ca | tasya hṛt-padumāṅgātō 'bjayonis tapitvā tasmai hi varam dadau | sa kāma-praśnam eva vavre | taṁ hāsmāi dadau |*

*saḥ* — he; *hovāca* — said; *tāṁ* — her; *ha vai* — verily; *ekaḥ* — alone; *ha vai* — verily; *pūrvam* — in the beginning; *nārāyaṇaḥ* — Nārāyaṇa; *devaḥ* — God; *yasmin* — in whom; *lokāḥ* — the worlds; *otāḥ* — lengthwise; *ca* — and; *protāḥ* — crosswise; *tasya* — his; *hṛt-padumāṅg* — from the lotus of his heart; *jātāḥ* — born; *abja-yoniḥ* — Brahmā, the lotus-born; *tapitvā* — austerities; *tasmai* — him; *hi* — certainly; *varam* — boon; *dadau* — awarded; *saḥ* — he; *kāma-praśnam* — any question he would like; *eva* — certainly; *vavre* — chose; *taṁ* — that; *hāsmāi* — to him; *dadau* — gave.

**Durvāsā answered: In the beginning, only Lord Nārāyaṇa existed. The worlds were contained within him, interwoven in him like the thread in a cloth. Born in the lotus of his heart, Brahmā performed austerities until Nārāyaṇa awarded him a boon. Brahmā asked for permission to pose any question he chose and Nārāyaṇa granted him this wish.**

The beginning referred to in this text is the time prior to the manifestation of the material world, when the cosmos lie within Nārāyaṇa, like a web within a spider, waiting to manifest once again. Nārāyaṇa is the form of Kṛṣṇa from whose navel the lotus of Brahmā's birth sprouted.

In Brahmā's own words (found in ŚB 10.14.14),<sup>3</sup> Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa means the refuge (*āyana*) of the aggregate of all beings (*nāra*), whereas Kṛṣṇa is the refuge of all Nārāyaṇas. The Nārāyaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha is the source of the three Nārāyaṇas, or Viṣṇus, who appear in connection with the material manifestation, and this Nārāyaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha is the *vilāsa* expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *svayaṁ bhagavān*.<sup>4</sup>

The transcendental superiority of Kṛṣṇa over Vaikuṇṭha's Nārāyaṇa is also established in Kṛṣṇa's name-giving ceremony (ŚB 10.8.19). Gargācārya told Nanda that “by dint of his virtues, Nārāyaṇa is Kṛṣṇa's equal,” *tasmān nandātmaṇo 'yaṁ te nārāyaṇa-samo guṇaiḥ*. By reading Gargācārya's statement as a *babu-vrihi* rather than a *tat-puruṣa* compound, Kṛṣṇa's superiority over Nārāyaṇa is revealed.

The superiority of Kṛṣṇa over his expansion Nārāyaṇa is described as follows by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

3. Brahmā spoke this verse to Kṛṣṇa after seeing Kṛṣṇa manifest innumerable Nārāyaṇas. This takes place at the end of the pastime known as *Brahmā-vimohana-līlā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī calls this verse the *paribhāṣā śloka* of the *Bhāgavatam*—the one verse that unlocks its true import. It can be understood as an explanation of ŚB 1.3.28, which Śrī Jīva calls the *paribhāṣā śloka*.

4. ŚB 1.3.28. This verse follows a number of verses in which Sūta Gosvāmī describes the distinguishing characteristics of various *avatāras*. The distinguishing characteristic of Kṛṣṇa, however, is that he is the source of all the *avatāras* (*svayaṁ bhagavān*). This includes the *puruṣa avatāras*, from whom the other *avatāras* manifest, as well as their source, Nārāyaṇa of Vaikuṇṭha.



*siddhāntatas tv abbēde 'pi śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ  
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpam eṣā rasa-stbitiḥ*

In terms of metaphysical truth (*tattva*), there is no difference between Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa; in terms of aesthetic rapture (*rasa*), however, Kṛṣṇa surpasses Nārāyaṇa (Brs. 1.2.59).

Both Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa are the same person: God. Nonetheless, Kṛṣṇa is a superior expression of divinity when we consider these two forms of the Godhead from the vantage point of their capacity to relish and exchange loving sentiments with their devotees.

25. स होवाचाब्जयोनिः । योऽवताराणां मध्ये श्रेष्ठोऽवतारः  
को भविता । येन लोकास्तुष्टा देवास्तुष्टा भवन्ति ।  
यं स्मृत्वा मुक्ता अस्मात्संसाराद्भवन्ति ।  
कथं वास्यावतारस्य ब्रह्मता भवति ॥२५॥

*sa hovācābjayoniḥ |*  
*yo 'vatārāṇāṁ madhye śreṣṭho 'vatāraḥ ko bhavitā |*  
*yena lokāḥ tuṣṭā devāḥ tuṣṭā bhavanti |*  
*yaṁ smṛtvā muktā asmāt saṁsārād bhavanti |*  
*katham vāsyāvatārasya brahmatā bhavati |*

*sa hovācābjayoniḥ* — the lotus-born said; *yaḥ* — one who; *avatārāṇāṁ* — of all incarnations; *madhye* — among; *śreṣṭhaḥ* — the best; *avatāraḥ* — *avatāra*; *kaḥ* — who; *bhavitā* — would be; *yena* — by whom; *lokāḥ* — the world; *tuṣṭāḥ* — is satisfied; *devāḥ* — the gods; *tuṣṭāḥ* — satisfied; *bhavanti* — become; *yaṁ* — whom; *smṛtvā* — remembering; *muktāḥ* — liberated; *asmāt* — from this; *saṁsārāt* — world of entanglement; *bhavanti* — become; *katham* — how; *vā* — or; *asya* — of this; *avatārasya* — incarnation; *brahmatā* — nature of Brahman; *bhavati* — is.

**The lotus-born then began his inquiries: Among all *avatāras*, which is paramount? By which *avatāra* are the people of the world and the gods most pleased? And by remembering which *avatāra* does one become liberated from the cycle of birth and death? How can such an *avatāra* be considered to possess the characteristics of Brahman?**

Here Durvāsā relates Brahmā's questions to Nārāyaṇa. In his first question Brahmā indicates that there is a gradation within divinity. He wants to know which of the *avatāras* is the supreme personal aspect of Brahman (*bhagavān svayam*) and what this *avatāra*'s distinguishing characteristics are. Brahmā wonders, "Even though all the forms of Godhead are essentially one, being existence, consciousness, and ecstasy, which one is worthy of praise in absolutely every respect? Which one is the source of all being and the soul in all entities? Which is all-pervading and completely pure?"

Brahmā then asks, "By which *avatāra* are the people of the world and the gods most pleased?" It should be clear that Kṛṣṇa and his *līlā* are far more captivating and charming than anything we know about Nārāyaṇa or any of his *avatāras*. Even the Muslims' general disdain for the Hindu gods did not stop a number of the Moghul rulers from commissioning artists to celebrate Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* in art. The world over, people are charmed by Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, and pastimes even without serving and surrendering to Kṛṣṇa in devotion. Indeed, even the gods and goddesses of Hindu scripture are in no short supply of praise for Kṛṣṇa.

Brahmā's next question regarding which *avatāra* if remembered leads one beyond birth and death is most perfectly answered by referring to Kṛṣṇa, who if remembered even in enmity grants liberation. Furthermore, the liberation afforded to certain *asuras* (such as Pūtanā) is extraordinary.

Brahmā's final question as to how the *pūrṇa-avatāra* can be understood to possess the characteristics of Brahman is answered ahead. Brahmā's other questions will also be answered in greater detail.

26. स होवाच तं हि नारायणो देवः । सकाम्या मेरोः शृङ्गो यथा  
सप्तपुर्यो भवन्ति । तथा निष्काम्याः सकाम्याश्च भूगोलचक्रे  
सप्तपुर्यो भवन्ति । तासां मध्ये साक्षाद्ब्रह्म गोपालपुरीति ॥२६॥

*sa hovāca taṁ hi nārāyaṇo devaḥ ।  
sakāmyā meror śṛṅge yathā sapta-pūryo bhavanti ।  
tathā niṣkāmyāḥ sakāmyāś ca bhūgola-cakre sapta-pūryo bhavanti ।  
tāsāṁ madhye sākṣād brahma gopāla-purīti ।।*

*saḥ* — he; *ha uvāca* — said; *taṁ* — to him; *hi* — alone; *nārāyaṇaḥ* — Nārāyaṇa; *devaḥ* — Lord; *sa-kāmyāḥ* — those with desirable things; *meror* — of Mount Meru; *śṛṅge* — on the peak; *yathā* — just as; *sapta-pūryaḥ* — seven cities; *bhavanti* — there are; *tathā* — so too; *niṣkāmyāḥ* — bestowing freedom from desire; *sakāmyāḥ* — bestowing sense enjoyment; *ca* — and; *bhūgola-cakre* — around the world; *sapta-pūryaḥ* — seven cities; *bhavanti* — there are; *tāsāṁ madhye* — among them; *sākṣād* — directly; *brahma* — the Absolute itself; *gopāla-purī* — the city of the cowherds; *iti* — end of statement.

**Lord Nārāyaṇa then answered Brahmā: Just as on the peak of Mount Meru there are seven heavenly or wish-fulfilling (*sakāmyāḥ*) cities, similarly, on the surface of the earth there are also seven cities, some of which are sources of sensual enjoyment, others that are sources of liberation and freedom from desire. Of these, the city of the cowherds, Gopāla Purī, is directly Brahman itself.**

There are seven well-known cities on earth that are capable of bestowing liberation: Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Haridvāra, Vārāṇasī, Kāñcīpuram, Jagan-nātha Purī, and Dvārakā.<sup>5</sup> Gopāla Purī is another name for Mathurā. Any city that can bestow liberation can also bestow material enjoyment. Thus each of these cities is both *sakāmya* and *niṣkāmya*. However, Śrī Jīva Gos-

5. Some commentators include Avantī in the list of cities, thus bringing the count to eight cities.

vāmi comments that the enjoyments they bestow are the four types of devotional liberation that satisfy one's spiritual senses: attaining opulence like that of Nārāyaṇa (*sāṅṣṭi*), living in his abode (*sālokyā*), serving him personally (*sāmīpyā*), and attaining a form like his (*sārūpyā*).

Thus just as there are seven heavenly cities that fulfill one's material desires, after which one returns to earth, similarly there are seven cities on earth capable of fulfilling one's material desires. Moreover, these cities grant freedom from material desire and, subsequently, liberation. Furthermore, these cities on earth offer the spiritual enjoyment of devotional liberation. What, then, is the value of pursuing heavenly attainment when earth offers so much more? This is especially true in regard to Mathurā, which is in a category of its own.

In this text Nārāyaṇa distinguishes Gopāla Purī, or Mathurā, from the six other cities by stating that it is directly Brahman (*sākṣād brahma gopāla-purī*), even while appearing on earth. Nārāyaṇa's glorification of Mathurā is for the purpose of establishing that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman. If Mathurā is itself *sākṣād-brahma*, how much more so is its Deity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa? This is his logic.

In citing Nārāyaṇa's reply, Durvāsā further establishes that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman—the most complete expression of Godhead. At the same time, he answers Gāndharvī's questions regarding Kṛṣṇa's birth among the cowherds, his abode, and the nature of his descent into the material world. Regarding Kṛṣṇa's birth among the cowherds, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī refers to text 22, which preceded Gāndharvī's questions, and states that Durvāsā implies in this section of his narration that "Kṛṣṇa enjoys eternally in your [the *gopīs*'] association. Now in the course of events, he has appeared with you here in this world; this appearance (*prakaṭi-bhāva*) is called his birth. You have become so absorbed in your pastimes with him that you are unable to recognize this."

Because Kṛṣṇa is Brahman, his abode is that city which is also Brahman—Mathurā—and because this is the city of the cowherds, he is a cowherd. His descent is thus like that of his abode in that he appears in the material world but is not influenced by it. This nature of his descent

is clarified by the example of the lotus, which will be given in the following text.

What follows is an extensive glorification of Mathurā by Nārāyaṇa, in which the balance of Gāndharvī's questions are addressed.

27. सकाम्या निष्काम्या देवानां सर्वेषां भूतानां भवति ।  
यथा हि वै सरसि पद्मं तिष्ठति तथा भूम्यां तिष्ठतीति चक्रेण  
रक्षिता हि वै मथुरा तस्माद् गोपालपुरी भवति ॥२७॥

*sakāmyā niṣkāmyā devānām sarveṣām bhūtānām bhavati ।  
yathā hi vai sarasi padmaṁ tiṣṭhati tathā bhūmyām tiṣṭhatīti  
cakreṇa rakṣitā hi vai mathurā tasmād gopāla-purī bhavati ।*

*sakāmyā* — bestowing sense enjoyments; *niṣkāmyā* — bestowing liberation; *devānām* — of the gods; *sarveṣām* — of all; *bhūtānām* — creatures; *bhavati* — it is; *yathā* — just as; *hi vai* — verily; *sarasi* — on a pond; *padmaṁ* — lotus flower; *tiṣṭhati* — stands; *tathā* — so; *bhūmyām* — on the earth; *tiṣṭhatīti* — stands; *iti* — thus; *cakreṇa* — by the discus; *rakṣitā* — protected; *hi vai* — verily; *mathurā* — Mathurā; *tasmāt* — therefore; *gopāla-purī* — the city of the cowherds; *bhavati* — is.

**This Gopāla Puri bestows both sense enjoyment and liberation on all the gods and the inhabitants of this world. Just as a lotus flower sits on a pool of water, so Mathurā is situated on this earth, ever protected by Viṣṇu's sudarśana discus. Therefore, Mathurā is verily Gopāla's city.**

The beauty of a lotus is not affected by the muddy water of the pond it sits upon. Similarly, the spiritual nature of Mathurā is not affected by its appearance on earth. The word *hi* in this verse indicates certainty in this regard, and the word *vai* indicates that this conclusion is well reasoned.

Śrī Prabodhānanda states that there are no special qualifications necessary to enter Mathurā, such as detachment from the material world or attachment to Kṛṣṇa. It is for this reason that Nārāyaṇa says that Mathurā

blesses all the inhabitants of the world. Residence in Mathurā Puri even as a blade of grass is more auspicious than birth among the gods, including birth as the creator, Brahmā.<sup>6</sup> Even those who resist devotion to Kṛṣṇa in Mathurā are nonetheless granted devotion. Whatever faults are perceived to exist in Mathurā are those of perception, nothing more. Indeed, no sinful reaction arises there when ordinary sins are performed.<sup>7</sup>

28. बृहद्बृहद्वनं मधोर्मधुवनं तालस्तालवनं काम्यं काम्यवनं  
बहुला बहुलवनं कुमुदं कुमुदवनं खदिरः खदिरवनं  
भद्रो भद्रवनं भाण्डीर इति भाण्डीरवनं श्रीवनं लोहवनं  
वृन्दाया वृन्दावनमेतैरावृता पुरी भवति ॥२८॥

*br̥had br̥had-vanam madhor madhu-vanam tālas  
tāla-vanam kāmyaṁ kāmya-vanam  
babulā bahula-vanam kumudaṁ kumuda-vanam  
khadiraḥ khadira-vanam bhadro bhadra-vanam  
bhāṇḍīra iti bhāṇḍīra-vanam śrī-vanam loba-vanam  
vṛndāyā vṛndā-vanam etair āvṛtā purī bhavati | |*

*br̥hat* — being great; *br̥had-vanam* — named Bṛhadvana; *madhor* — of the demon named Madhu; *madhu-vanam* — named Madhuvana; *tālaḥ* — *tala* fruit; *tāla-vanam* — Tālavana; *kāmyaṁ* — desirable; *kāmya-vanam* — Kām-yavana; *babulā* — Bahulā; *bahulā-vanam* — Bahulāvana; *kumudaṁ* — lily; *kumuda-vanam* — Kumudavana; *khadiraḥ* — *khadira* trees; *khadira-vanam* — Khadiravana; *bhadraḥ* — blessed; *bhadra-vanam* — Bhadravana; *bhāṇḍīra iti* — the *bhāṇḍīra* tree; *bhāṇḍīra-vanam* — Bhāṇḍīravana; *śrī-vanam* — Śrīvana; *loba-vanam* — Lohavana; *vṛndāyāḥ* — of Vṛndā-devi; *vṛndā-vanam* — Vṛndāvana; *etair* — by them; *āvṛtā* — covered; *purī* — the city; *bhavati* — is.

6. See ŚB 10.14.34, where Brahmā himself aspires for a birth in Mathurā-maṇḍala.

7. This excludes offenses to Kṛṣṇa’s name, devotees, the holy city of Mathurā itself, and so on, all of which do have consequences when committed in Mathurā.

That abode of Gopāla is surrounded by twelve forests. The first is the largest and is therefore known as Bṛhadvana (great forest). The second is named Madhuvana after the demon known as Madhu; the third is known as Tālavana for the *tāla* palm trees that fill it; the fourth is known as Kāmyavana because it fulfills desires; the fifth is Bahulāvana, the forest of Bahulā; the sixth is Kumudavana, the forest filled with *kumuda* flowers; the seventh is Khadiravana, the forest of *khadira* trees; the eighth is Bhadravana, the forest of *bhadra* trees; the ninth is Bhāṇḍiravana, the forest of *bbāṇḍira* trees; the tenth is Śrīvana, the forest of Lakṣmī; the eleventh is Lohavana; and the twelfth is Vṛndāvana, the forest of Vṛndā.

Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda comments on the twelve forests surrounding Kṛṣṇa's abode in his purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 2.17.193: "Vṛndāvana is the name given to the forest where Śrīmatī Vṛndā-devī (Tulasī-devī) grows profusely. There are twelve such *vanas* in Vṛndāvana. Some are located on the western side of the Yamunā and others on the eastern side. The forests situated on the eastern side are Bhadravana, Bilvavana, Lohavana, Bhāṇḍiravana, and Mahāvana. On the western side are Madhuvana, Tālavana, Kumudavana, Bahulāvana, Kāmyavana, Khadiravana, and Vṛndāvana. These are the twelve forests of the Vṛndāvana area." The names Mahāvana and Bilvavana are other names for Bṛhadvana and Śrīvana, respectively.

Later *Gopāla-tāpanī* will state that these forests can be considered two rather than twelve: Bhadravana and Kṛṣṇavana, distinguished by their relationship with either Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. Those on the eastern side of the Yamunā are more closely associated with Rāma (Bhadravana), and those on the western side are more closely associated with Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇavana).<sup>8</sup>

All of these forests facilitate Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in his cowherd *līlās* and his rendezvous with the *gopīs*. Among them Vṛndāvana is the most important, and for this reason it is mentioned last in the list given here in *Gopāla-*

8. Opinions on the grouping of these forests differ among *ācāryas*.

*tāpani*. The word *vr̥nda* also means group, and it is to be understood that Vṛndāvana is the group leader of all twelve of Gopāla Purī's forests. Among other things, it supplies all of the flowers for Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and is personified as the forest nymph Vṛndā who shares in Yogamāyā Paur̥ṇamāsī's service of orchestrating Kṛṣṇa's *lilā*.

29. तत्र तेष्वेव गहनेष्वेवं देवा मनुष्या गन्धर्वा  
नागाः किन्नरा गायन्तीति नृत्यन्तीति ॥२९॥

*tatra teṣv eva gabaneṣv evaṁ devā manuṣyā gandharvā  
nāgāḥ kinnarā gāyantīti nṛtyantīti |*

*tatra* — there; *teṣu* — among them; *eva* — certainly; *gabaneṣu* — in these deep; *evaṁ* — thus; *devāḥ* — gods; *manuṣyāḥ* — humans; *gandharvāḥ* — heavenly singers; *nāgāḥ* — divine serpents; *kinnarāḥ* — monkeys; *gāyanti* — sing; *iti* — it is said; *nṛtyanti* — dance; *iti* — so it is said.

**In the midst of these deep forests, gods, humans, Gandharvas, Nāgas, and Kinnaras sing and dance together.**

The forests of Gopāla Purī are deep in the sense that their secrets concerning Kṛṣṇa *lilā* are unknown even to the *Vedas* and great sages who follow the *Upaniṣads*. Although its secrets are hidden from great sages, they are known to Kṛṣṇa's devotees who reside there in the form of simple, uneducated villagers whose sole wealth is love for Kṛṣṇa. It is said elsewhere that these forests abound with wish-fulfilling trees. However, their real opulence is their inhabitants, who have no wish to fulfill due to their love for Kṛṣṇa.

Gods also dwell in these spiritual forests, and their singing and dancing mentioned here indicate their absorption in love of Kṛṣṇa. *Śrī Brahmasamhitā* describes that in the abode of Kṛṣṇa all talking is song and all movement dance. What, then, must the singing and dancing there be like? Such poetic spiritual life of the eternal inhabitants of Kṛṣṇa's abode causes the gods themselves to sing and dance.



30. तत्र द्वादशादित्या एकादश रुद्रा अष्टौ वसवः  
 सप्तमुनयो ब्रह्मा नारदश्च पञ्च विनायका  
 वीरिश्चरो रुद्रेश्चरो अम्बिकेश्वरो गणेश्वरो  
 नीलकण्ठेश्वरो विश्वेश्वरो गोपालेश्वरो भद्रेश्चर  
 आद्यानि लिङ्गानि चतुर्विंशतिर्भवन्ति ॥३०॥

*tatra dvādaśāḍityā ekādaśa rudrā aṣṭau vasavaḥ sapta munayo brahmā nāradaś  
 ca pañca vināyakā vireśvaro rudreśvaro ambikeśvaro gaṇeśvaro nīlakaṇṭheśvaro  
 viśveśvaro gopāleśvaro bhadreśvara ādyāni liṅgāni caturviṁśatiḥ bhavanti ।*

*tatra* — there; *dvādaśa* — twelve; *āḍityā* — Ādityas; *ekādaśa* — eleven; *ru-  
 drāḥ* — Rudras; *aṣṭau* — eight; *vasavaḥ* — Vasus; *sapta* — seven; *munayaḥ*  
 — sages; *brahmā* — Brahmā; *nāradaḥ* — Nārada; *ca* — and; *pañca* — five;  
*vināyakāḥ* — Vināyakas; *vireśvaraḥ* — Vireśvara; *rudreśvaraḥ* — Ru-  
 dreśvara; *ambikeśvaraḥ* — Ambikeśvara; *gaṇeśvaraḥ* — Gaṇeśvara;  
*nīlakaṇṭheśvaraḥ* — Nīlakaṇṭheśvara; *viśveśvaraḥ* — Viśveśvara;  
*gopāleśvaraḥ* — Gopāleśvara; *bhadreśvara* — Bhadreśvara; *ādyāni* — etcet-  
 era; *liṅgāni* — *liṅga-mūrtis*; *caturviṁśatiḥ* — twenty-four; *bhavanti* —  
 there are.

The twelve Ādityas, eleven Rudras, eight Vasus, seven sages, Brahmā, Nārada, and Śiva *liṅgas*, such as the five Vināyakas, Vireśvara, Rudreśvara, Ambikeśvara, Gaṇeśvara, Nīlakaṇṭheśvara, Viśveśvara, Gopāleśvara, and Bhadreśvara reside there. Altogether, there are twenty-four *liṅgas* including these.

In some form or another all these divine personalities reside in Kṛṣṇa's abode. The Rudras listed here indicate *liṅga-mūrtis* perpetually worshiped in the *dhāma*.

31. द्वे वने स्तः कृष्णवनं भद्रवनम् ।  
 तयोरन्तर्द्वादशवनानि पुण्यानि पुण्यतमानि ।  
 तेष्वेव देवास्तिष्ठन्ति सिद्धाः सिद्धिं प्राप्ताः ॥३१॥

*dve vane staḥ kṛṣṇa-vanaṁ bhadra-vanam |*  
*tayor antar dvādaśa-vanāni puṇyāni puṇyatamāni |*  
*teṣu eva devās tiṣṭhanti siddhāḥ siddhiṁ prāptāḥ |*

*dve* — two; *vane* — woods; *staḥ* — are; *kṛṣṇa-vanaṁ* — Kṛṣṇavana; *bhadra-vanam* — Bhadravana; *tayor* — of these two; *antar* — within; *dvādaśa-vanāni* — twelve forests; *puṇyāni* — holy; *puṇyatamāni* — most holy; *teṣu* — in them; *eva* — verily; *devāḥ* — gods; *tiṣṭhanti* — live; *siddhāḥ* — perfected beings; *siddhiṁ* — perfection; *prāptāḥ* — attained.

**There are in fact only two forests in Mathurā. These are named Kṛṣṇavana and Bhadravana. It is within these two forests that the aforementioned twelve forests, some of which are pure and holy and others of which are most pure and holy, are contained. The gods live there, and the perfected souls attained their perfections there.**

Other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal retinue, other devotees have attained the status of residing in his abode as cowherds. According to the scriptural record, these devotees include those who descended to earth from among the gods during Kṛṣṇa's manifest *lilā* and perfected their spiritual lives at that time as cowherds, as well as spiritual practitioners from earth who attained this same perfection through spiritual practice (*sādhana-siddha*).

The scriptures give several examples of such *sādhana-siddhas*. The *Vāmana Purāṇa* describes how the presiding deities of certain *Upaniṣads* desired to attain the spiritual status of *gopīs* and were blessed by Kṛṣṇa to take birth in his manifest *lilā* to fulfill their desire. Gāyatrī-devī also attained this status by Kṛṣṇa's blessing. According to the *Padma Purāṇa*, she had been kidnapped from the cowherd community to assist Brahmā in a religious ritual, and when the cowherds objected, Viṣṇu promised to appear among them in the future as a concession. Later Gāyatrī herself worshiped Kṛṣṇa and received his benediction that she could take birth on earth during his manifest *lilā* and become one of his *gopīs*. Furthermore, the sages of the Daṇḍakāraṇya forest who had the *darśana* of Śrī Rāmacandra were

blessed by him in accordance with their *sādhana* to take birth as *gopīs* at the time of Kṛṣṇa's manifest *līlā*. Notably, their *mantra* was the eighteen-syllable Gopāla *mantra* of this *Upaniṣad*.

32. तत्र हि रामस्य राममूर्तिः प्रद्युम्नस्य प्रद्युम्नमूर्तिः  
रनिरुद्धस्यानिरुद्धमूर्तिः कृष्णस्य कृष्णमूर्तिः ।  
वनेष्वेवं मथुरास्वेवं द्वादशमूर्तयो भवन्ति ॥३२॥

*tatra hi rāmasya rāma-mūrtiḥ pradyumnasya pradyumna-mūrtir  
aniruddhasyāniruddha-mūrtiḥ kṛṣṇasya kṛṣṇa-mūrtiḥ ।  
vaneṣu evaṁ mathurāsu evaṁ dvādaśa-mūrtayo bhavanti ।*

*tatra* — there; *hi* — verily; *rāmasya* — Balarāma's; *rāma-mūrtiḥ* — Rāma's Deity form; *pradyumnasya* — Pradyumna's; *pradyumna-mūrtiḥ* — Pradyumna's Deity form; *aniruddhasya* — Aniruddha's; *aniruddha-mūrtiḥ* — Aniruddha's Deity form; *kṛṣṇasya* — Kṛṣṇa's; *kṛṣṇa-mūrtiḥ* — Kṛṣṇa's Deity form; *vaneṣu* — in the forests; *evaṁ* — thus; *mathurāsu* — in those of Mathurā; *evaṁ* — so; *dvādaśa-mūrtayah* — twelve Deity forms; *bhavanti* — are present.

**In the forests of Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa is present in different forms. Rāma's form as Rāma-mūrti, Pradyumna's form as Pradyumna-mūrti, Aniruddha's form as Aniruddha-mūrti, and Kṛṣṇa's form as Kṛṣṇa-mūrti are all present. In this way, twelve different forms of Kṛṣṇa are present there.**

This text implies that Kṛṣṇa is eternally present in the twelve forests of Gopāla Purī. It also informs us that he is present there in twelve different forms and introduces the famed *catur-vyūha* consisting of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa Rāma, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.

Regarding the twelve different forms, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the description in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.43.17) of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa entering Kāṁsa's wrestling arena to fight the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika. In Śrī Śukadeva's description, all those who were blessed with the *darśana*

of Kṛṣṇa saw him differently. Like a priceless gem with many facets, he showed himself in different ways to everyone present. Each of them saw Kṛṣṇa in relation to one of the five primary or seven secondary *rasas*. Their varied perceptions bear out the truth of Kṛṣṇa's position as *rasa-rāja*, the king of connoisseurs of love. He tastes and is tasted in all five primary and seven secondary flavors of sacred aesthetic rapture (*bhakti-rasa*).

After citing this *Bhāgavata* verse, Śrī Prabodhānanda concludes, "This, then, is why there are twelve different forms in the different forests of Mathurā-maṇḍala." While it may seem that Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī is leaning toward an esoteric understanding of this verse in which the twelve Deities are identified with the twelve expressions of sacred aesthetic rapture (*rasa*), he does not actually say this, nor does the text ahead bear it out. Nonetheless, the fact that the text speaks of twelve Deities and the verse cited by the *ācārya* explaining it involves twelve *rasas*, all of whom have titular Deities, leads one to make a connection between the twelve Deities of Mathurā and the titular Deities of the twelve *rasas*. Indeed, there are a number of other verses that could have been cited to explain this verse that would not have brought this connection to mind and at the same time would have made clear what the text of *Gopāla-tāpanī* is emphasizing here.<sup>9</sup> Thus it is worth considering that the titular Deities of the twelve *rasas* may also reside in Mathurā-maṇḍala and that this may have been on the *ācārya*'s mind.<sup>10</sup> It is certainly acceptable for an *ācārya* to imply this, for more important than what the text itself says on the surface is what it says to such souls.

This possibility aside, the *Gopāla-tāpanī* text itself emphasizes that God appears to different devotees relative to their approach to him. Thus there are numerous forms of God even as God is essentially one.

9. Bg. 4.11 immediately comes to mind.

10. According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the titular Deities of the five direct (*mukhya*) and seven indirect (*gauṇa*) *rasas* are Kapila (*śānta*/neutrality), Mādhava (*dāsyā*/servitude), Upendra (*śakhya*/fraternal love), Nṛsiṃha (*vātsalya*/parental love), Nandanandana (*śṛṅgāra*/conjugal love), Balarāma (*bāsyā*/laughter), Kūrma (*adbhuta*/wonder), Kalki (*vīrya*/chivalry), Rāmacandra (*kāruṇya*/empathy), Paraśurāma (*krodha*/anger), Varaha (*bbaya*/fear), and Matsya (*vibhatsa*/disgust).

33. एकां हि रुद्रा यजन्ति । द्वितीयां हि ब्रह्मा यजति ।  
 तृतीयां ब्रह्मजा यजन्ति । चतुर्थी मरुतो यजन्ति ।  
 पञ्चमी विनायका यजन्ति । षष्ठी वसवो यजन्ति ।  
 सप्तमीमृषयो यजन्ति । अष्टमी गन्धर्वा यजन्ति ।  
 नवमीमप्सरसो यजन्ति । दशमी वै ह्यन्तर्धाने तिष्ठति ।  
 एकादशमेति स्वपदं गता । द्वादशमेति भूम्यां हि तिष्ठति ॥३३॥

*ekām hi rudrā yajanti | dvitīyām hi brahmā yajati | tṛtīyām brahmajā yajan-  
 ti | caturthīm maruto yajanti | pañcamīm vināyakā yajanti | ṣaṣṭhīm vasavo  
 yajanti | saptamīm ṛṣayo yajanti | aṣṭamīm gandharvā yajanti | navamīm ap-  
 saraso yajanti | daśamī vai hy antardhāne tiṣṭhati | ekādaśāmeti svapadam  
 gatā | dvādaśāmeti bhūmyām hi tiṣṭhati | |*

*ekām* — the first; *hi* — specifically; *rudrāḥ* — Rudras; *yajanti* — is wor-  
 shipped; *dvitīyām* — the second; *hi* — specifically; *brahmā* — Lord Brah-  
 mā; *tṛtīyām* — the third; *brahmajāḥ* — the sons of Brahmā; *caturthīm* —  
 the fourth; *marutaḥ* — the wind gods; *pañcamīm* — the fifth; *vināyakāḥ*  
 — the Vināyakas; *ṣaṣṭhīm* — the sixth; *vasavaḥ* — the Vasus; *saptamīm* —  
 the seventh; *ṛṣayaḥ* — the seers; *aṣṭamīm* — the eighth; *gandharvāḥ* — the  
 Gandharvas; *navamīm* — the ninth; *apsarasas* — the heavenly courtes-  
 ans, the Apsarās; *daśamī* — the tenth; *vai hi* — most certainly; *antard-  
 hāne* — in an invisible state; *tiṣṭhati* — remains; *ekādaśamā* — the elev-  
 enth; *iti* — known as; *svapadam* — to his own abode; *gatā* — gone;  
*dvādaśamā* — the twelfth; *iti* — known as; *bhūmyām* — on earth; *hi* —  
 verily; *tiṣṭhati* — remains.

The first of these twelve forms is worshiped by the Rudras, the second  
 by Brahmā, the third by the sons of Brahmā, the fourth by the Maruts,  
 the fifth by the Vināyakas, the sixth by the Vasus, the seventh by the  
 seven Āsis, the eighth by the Gandharvas, the ninth by the Apsarās.  
 The tenth is invisible, the eleventh has gone to the Vaikuṇṭha abode,  
 and the twelfth is on earth.

Brahmā is perplexed by this section of the text, and in the section beginning with text 75 he will voice his doubts, which Nārāyaṇa will subsequently address. The basic point Nārāyaṇa is making here is that the one Supreme God appears in different forms. Of the twelve forms mentioned here, the eleventh is the most important, as will be explained later in this *Upaniṣad*.

34. तां हि ये यजन्ति ते मृत्युं तरन्ति मुक्तिं लभन्ते ।  
गर्भजन्मजरामरणापत्रयात्मकं दुःखं तरन्ति ॥३४॥

*tām hi ye yajanti te mṛtyuṁ taranti muktiṁ labhante | garbha-janma-jarā-marāṇa-tāpa-trayātmakaṁ duḥkhaṁ taranti ||*

*tām* — that; *hi* — one; *ye* — those who; *yajanti* — worship; *te* — they; *mṛtyuṁ* — death; *taranti* — cross over; *muktiṁ* — liberation; *labhante* — attain; *garbha* — in the womb; *janma* — from birth; *jarā* — from old age; *marāṇa* — from death; *tāpa-trayātmakaṁ* — the threefold miseries; *duḥkhaṁ* — miseries; *taranti* — cross over.

**Those who worship any one of these forms will conquer death and attain liberation. They conquer over the threefold miseries, suffering in the womb, and suffering during birth, old age, and death.**

35. तदप्येते श्लोका भवन्ति ।  
सम्प्राप्य मथुरां रम्यां सदा ब्रह्मादिसेविताम् ।  
शङ्खचक्रगदाशार्ङ्गरक्षितां मुसलादिभिः ॥३५॥

*tad apy ete ślokā bhavanti |*  
*samprāpya mathurāṁ ramyāṁ sadā brahmādi-sevitām |*  
*śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-śārṅga-rakṣitām musalādibhiḥ |*

*tat* — therefore; *api* — also; *ete* — these; *ślokāḥ* — verses; *bhavanti* — are; *samprāpya* — coming; *mathurāṁ* — the land of Mathurā; *ramyāṁ* — love-

ly; *sadā* — always; *brahmādi* — by Brahmā and others; *sevitām* — frequented; *śaṅkha* — the conch; *cakra* — the discus; *gadā* — the mace; *śārṅga* — the bow; *rakṣitām* — protected; *musalādibhiḥ* — with clubs, and so on.

**There are a number of verses in this connection:**

**Coming to the lovely land of Mathurā, which is always frequented by Brahmā and other gods and protected by the Lord’s weapons—the conch, discus, mace, bow, and various clubs—[one is fulfilled].**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments, “Nārāyaṇa will now recite some *mantras* that confirm the statements he has already made. As this verse does not make a complete sentence, one should understand the author’s intention to be that ‘those who come to Mathurā attain complete fulfillment.’ ”

36. यत्रासौ संस्थितः कृष्णस्त्रिभिः शक्त्या समाहितः ।  
रामानिरुद्धप्रद्युम्नैरुक्मिण्या सहितो विभुः ॥३६॥

*yatrāsau saṁsthitāḥ kṛṣṇas tribhiḥ śaktyā samāhitāḥ* ।  
*rāmāniruddha-pradyumnaiḥ rukmiṇyā sahito vibhuḥ* । ।

*yatra* — there; *asau* — he; *saṁsthitāḥ* — remains; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *tribhiḥ* — with three; *śaktyā* — by his *śakti*; *samāhitāḥ* — attended; *rāma* — Rāma; *aniruddha* — Aniruddha; *pradyumnaiḥ* — Pradyumna; *rukmiṇyā* — Rukmiṇi; *sahitaḥ* — with; *vibhuḥ* — the powerful Lord.

**The powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa resides there eternally with his three expansions, Rāma, Aniruddha, and Pradyumna, and his *śakti*, Rukmiṇi.**

Nārāyaṇa’s words to Brahmā in this verse partially answer Gāndharvī’s question concerning Kṛṣṇa’s older brother. They also indirectly answer her questions concerning Kṛṣṇa’s birth from Devakī, and, once again, how he took birth among the cowherds.

Kṛṣṇa's elder brother Rāma is his immediate expansion (*vaibhava-prakāśa*), from whom the *catur-vyūha* consisting of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa Rāma, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha expand for the sake of *līlās* in the city of Mathurā. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same person. Their complexion and emotional makeup differ slightly, but they are the same Supreme God. Here Nārāyaṇa tells Brahmā that Rāma is a member of the *catur-vyūha*. In subsequent verses he will reveal that Rāma is synonymous with the *praṇava omkāra* (Om). Thus Nārāyaṇa speaks here of Rāma's majesty.

By mentioning Rukmiṇī as the *śakti* of Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa implies that she represents the entirety of his *śakti*. All of Kṛṣṇa's innumerable *śaktis* emanate from his *svayam-śakti*. Although Kṛṣṇa's *svayam-śakti* is Rādhā, this *śakti* appears as Śrī Rādhā in Vṛndāvana and as Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā/Mathurā, *rukmiṇī dvāravatyaṁ tu rādhā vṛndāvane vane*.<sup>11</sup>

When Nārāyaṇa says that Kṛṣṇa resides with his *śaktis*, he implies that Kṛṣṇa eternally resides in all his *līlās* with a host of devotees, all of whom are *śakti-tattva*. One such devotee is his mother Devakī. Kṛṣṇa's birth from Devakī is an expression of his *āvīrbhāva-śakti*, the power to manifest himself. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa refers to this power when he says, *sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā*: "I manifest by my own power." Kṛṣṇa appeared to Devakī in Mathurā in a four-armed form. This form is his Vāsudeva expansion, a member of the original *catur-vyūha* mentioned in this verse, which corresponds with the sentiment of his *śakti* Devakī.

In contrast to his four-armed appearance in Mathurā, Kṛṣṇa appears in Vṛndāvana in a two-armed form, the form that Gāndharvī is most familiar with. This two-armed form is his original form (*svayam bhagavān*), whereas his appearance before Devakī is a partial manifestation of this form, *athāham amśa-bhāgena devakyāḥ putratām śubhe* (ŚB 1.2.9).

What follows is a more detailed explanation of Kṛṣṇa's expansions and *śaktis*, emphasizing the *catur-vyūha*'s identity with the syllable Om.

11. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites this verse in his commentary on verse 50. He attributes it to both the *Skanda* and *Matsya Purāṇas*. Rūpa Gosvāmi brings out the connection between Rādhā/Satyabhāmā and Candrāvalī/Rukmiṇī in his works *Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Lalita-mādhava*.



37. चतुःशब्दो भवेदेको ह्योङ्कारस्यांशकैः कृतः ॥३७॥

*catuḥ-śabda bhaved eko hy oṃkārasyaṃśakaiḥ kṛtaḥ* । ।

*catuḥ-śabdaḥ* — that which consists of four words; *bhaved* — would be; *ekaiḥ* — one; *hi* — certainly; *oṃkārasya* — of *oṃkāra*; *aṃśakaiḥ* — the constituent elements; *kṛtaḥ* — composed of.

**The one is verily made up of four words that are derived from the elements of the syllable Om.**

In this verse Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī finds the answers to Gāndharvī's questions concerning the *mantra* and rituals by which Gopāla Kṛṣṇa should be worshiped. Durvāsā, through Nārāyaṇa's instructions to Brahmā, instructs Gāndharvī on the significance of the *praṇava oṃkāra*. The *praṇava oṃkāra* is the seed form of all Vedic *mantras*, and both precedes and follows their utterance. It contains the essential and singular import of all four *Vedas*.

The “one” mentioned in this verse is the Supreme Brahman, whom Nārāyaṇa has equated with Kṛṣṇa. This one is also known as the fourfold *vyūha*: Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. They, in turn, are identified with the syllable Om, which consists of the three Sanskrit letters *a*, *u*, *m*, and their vibration. By establishing Kṛṣṇa's identity with the *catur-vyūha* and the *catur-vyūha*'s identity with *oṃkāra*, it is clear that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Brahman.

38. तस्मादेवं परो रजसेति सोऽहम्  
इत्यवधार्यात्मानं गोपालोऽहमिति भावयेत् ॥३८॥

*tasmād evaṃ paro rajaseti so 'ham*  
*ity avadbhāryātmānaṃ gopālo 'ham iti bhāvayet* ।

*tasmāt* — therefore; *evaṃ* — in this way; *paraḥ* — beyond; *rajasā* — the modes of passion; *iti* — thus; *so 'ham* — I am he; *iti* — thus; *avadbhārya* —

being conscious; *ātmanān* — self; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *aḥam* — I; *iti* — thus; *bhāvayet* — one should think.

**Therefore, in the consciousness that “I am the divine Lord beyond the mode of passion,” one should meditate on the self, [thinking], “I am Gopāla.”**

It has been stressed earlier in this text (1.14) that *bhakti*, when purely expressed, includes liberation. Ahead in *Gopāla-tāpanī* (2.78), we also find that the object of *bhakti*, Kṛṣṇa’s form, is eternal, *ghanāḥ sac-cid-ānandaikarase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati*: “[His form] is permanently situated in *bhakti-yoga*, exclusively characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.” *Gopāla-tāpanī* (2.73) also states, *sa mukto bhavati tasmai svātmānān ca dadāmi vai*: “Once he is liberated, I most certainly give myself to him.” The act of giving oneself is not possible if the giver and receiver are absolutely one. Thus both the beginning and the end of this Vaiṣṇava *Upaniṣad* teach a devotional form of Vedānta in which the liberated perfection of life involves an eternal relationship between God and his devotees.<sup>12</sup> When the beginning and the end of a text teach one thing, the middle portion of the text cannot teach something different.

In the case of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, the beginning and end of the text teach us that the individual soul and God experience a dynamic union in love in which the two, while one in will, nonetheless remain distinct from one another. Thus here in its middle portion this *Upaniṣad* is not teaching something different, such as the notion of absolute identity between the individual soul and Brahman. Indeed, no Vaiṣṇava sect teaches that the individual soul and Brahman are one in all respects. Thus the meditation (*so ’ham/gopālo ’ham*) recommended in this verse must be understood in light of Vaiṣṇava philosophy and the context in which it appears in the text itself. The spirit of this meditation is: “My existence is to God’s as the rays of the sun are to the sun itself. The satisfaction of the root of existence re-

12. *Gopāla-tāpanī* (1.29) refers to the *mantra* of this *Upaniṣad* as a Vaiṣṇava *mantra*.

sults in the complete satisfaction of the twigs and branches; in this consciousness, whatever is to be done for oneself should be done as an offering to him.”

*Vedānta-sūtra* 4.4.17 (*jagad-vyāpāra-varjyam*) offers scriptural evidence in support of the Vaiṣṇava position on the difference between the individual soul and God. The phrase *jagad-vyāpāra-varjyam* states that the liberated soul has the powers of God “with the exception (*varjyam*) of the power to create (*vyāpāra*) the world (*jagat*).” Another *sūtra* worth citing is 3.3.46, *pūrva-vikalpaḥ prakaraṇāt syāt kriyā mānasavat*: “This *so ’ham* is a form of that previously mentioned (*bhakti*), because of the context [in which it appears in the *Upaniṣads*], just as worship, meditation, and so on, [are forms of *bhakti*].” *Sūtra* 3.3.47 then goes on to establish that the individual soul and Brahman are not one in all respects. There, Bādarāyaṇa writes, *atideśāc ca*: “And on account of comparison.” By this he means that in the *Upaniṣads* God’s relationship with his devotees is compared with the relationship that Brahmā has with his sons. Thus just as Brahmā’s sons are dear to him and one with him in this sense, they are still his sons and thus not one with him in every respect. Similarly, God’s devotees are dear to him and in this sense one with him, yet being his devotees they are not one with him in every respect. For example, in *Gopāla-tāpani* 2.49 Nārāyaṇa says to Brahmā: “My devotee is dear to me just as you are to your sons, Rudra is to his associates, and I am to Lakṣmī.”

To further explain the appropriate orientation to the meditation recommended in this verse, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī refers to the meaning of a similar *mantra*, *asāv adom*. This *mantra* says that the Supreme Soul (*asau*) is one with the individual soul (*adaḥ*), yet it goes on to qualify this statement with the word *Om*. Here *Om* indicates Brahman/Gopāla, the root of all existence, and thus according to Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, this *mantra* teaches that the *jīva* and God are one in the sense that God is the origin of the *jīva*, just as the sun is the origin of its rays.

The Purāṇic record also supports the Vaiṣṇava understanding of this text. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is clearly the most sophisticated theological treatise among the *Purāṇas*, we find the milkmaids of Vraja chant-

ing so 'ham at the height of their love in separation from Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. After Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the circular love dance, the *gopīs*, lost in thought of him, declared themselves to be Kṛṣṇa (*asāv aham*) (ŚB 10.30.3). However, even as they declared themselves to be Kṛṣṇa, they were searching for him. They did not actually become Kṛṣṇa, for if they had there would have been no further possibility to enjoy *rasa* with him for which they were so eager. Thus their feelings of oneness with him are described in the same *Bhāgavata* verse as being *vibhrama*, mistaken. Theirs was a case of mistaken identity caused by love. Moreover, *vibhrama* means beauty. Thus they experienced a nuance of love within a beautiful pastime (*vibhrama-vilāsa*) of lover and beloved. In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* 11.28–30, Rūpa Gosvāmī identifies this nuance as the *anubhāva* called *līlā*, which he understands in this instance to mean “imitation of the beloved.”

39. स मोक्षमश्नुते । स ब्रह्मत्वमधिगच्छति । स ब्रह्मविद्भवति ॥३९॥

*sa mokṣam aśnute* | *sa brahmatvam adbigacchati* | *sa brahmanavid bhavati* |

*saḥ* — he; *mokṣam* — the liberated state; *aśnute* — enjoys; *saḥ* — he; *brahmatvam* — the status of Brahman; *adbigacchati* — attains; *saḥ* — he; *brahmanavit* — knower of Brahman; *bhavati* — becomes.

**Such a person enjoys the liberated state. He attains the status of Brahman. He becomes a knower of Brahman.**

The result of perfecting the devotional meditation recommended in the previous verse is described here: one attains liberation by being delivered from the karmic web of ignorance, one attains divine status, and one comes to know Brahman in the fullest sense. Knowing Brahman in the fullest sense is understood to be knowing him as Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, since the recommended meditation specifically refers to him (*gopālo 'ham*) and not a generic sense of Brahman. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that attaining the status of Brahman means realizing a spiritual relationship with

Brahman in which one possesses a form of pure consciousness. Being delivered from the negative influence of *karma* and attaining one's spiritual identity constitutes the twofold standard of *mukti* (liberation) spoken of in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (2.10.6), *muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavas-thitiḥ*. *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55) speaks of this twofold development as well when Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that by attaining Brahman (*brahma-bhūta*) one transcends the material conditions of hankering and lamenting (*na śocati na kāṅkṣati*) and thus becomes qualified for a life of devotion proper (*mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*).

The *svarūpa* (spiritual form) of the liberated soul exists eternally in a dormant condition and is awakened through the cultivation of *bhakti*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī says the following about this form in his *Prīti-sandarbhā* (10): “In the spiritual world, there are innumerable spiritual forms expanding from the effulgence of Bhagavān. When liberated souls attain these forms, Bhagavān enjoys pastimes with them.” Each of these spiritual forms is constituted of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. These forms are embodiments of Kṛṣṇa *prema*, through which liberated souls participate in Kṛṣṇa *līlā*. They exist in a dormant condition prior to the individual soul's attainment of liberation and are activated by the grace of Bhakti-devī. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* explains the same idea thus, *nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema* ‘*sādhya*’ *kabhu naya śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya*: “Love of Kṛṣṇa exists in eternal perfection. It is not something that is “attained” [as the fruits of *karma* are]. By engaging in hearing and other forms of *bhakti*, one's consciousness is purified and *prema* awakens.”

It is important to note that the spiritual *svarūpa* of the *jīva* is manifest in an act of grace. Regardless of how hard or how well one practices meditation on one's *svarūpa*, actual *svarūpāveśa* is entirely dependent on revelation. It is *sva-prakāśa*, self-manifest. Therefore *śaraṇāgati*, the surrender of resigning oneself to a life of devotion, must be emphasized more than anything else for those who desire to attain their *svarūpa*.

Other than the first two fruits derived from worshiping Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, deliverance from *karma* and attainment of spiritual identity, which can also be attained by worshiping other forms of Godhead, a third fruit per-

tains to his worship alone: knowledge of Brahman in the form of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who represents the heart of Brahman—Brahman in full, appearing in humanlike form (*narākṛti param brahma*).<sup>13</sup>

40. यो गोपान् जीवान् वै आत्मत्वेनामुष्टिपर्यन्तमालाति  
स गोपालो भवति हि । ॐ तद्यत्सोऽहं । परं ब्रह्म  
कृष्णात्मको नित्यानन्दैकरूपः सोऽहम् । ॐ तद्गोपाल  
एव परं सत्यमबाधितं सोऽहमित्यात्मानमादाय  
मनसैक्यं कुर्यात् । आत्मानं गोपालोऽहमिति भावयेत् ।  
स एवाव्यक्तोऽनन्तो नित्यो गोपालः ॥४०॥

*yo gopān jīvān vai ātmatvenāsṛṣṭi-paryantam ālāti sa gopālo bhavati hi । om  
tad yat so 'ham । param brahma kṛṣṇātmako nityānandaika-rūpaḥ so 'ham ।  
om tad gopāla eva param satyam abādhitam । so 'ham ity ātmānam ādāya  
manasaikyam kuryāt । ātmānam gopālo 'ham iti bhāvayet । sa evāvyahto 'nan-  
to nityo gopālaḥ ।।*

*yaḥ* — one who; *gopān* — the cowherds; *jīvān* — the living beings; *vai* — certainly; *ātmatvena* — as his very self; *āsṛṣṭi-paryantam* — from the beginning of creation; *ālāti* — takes; *saḥ* — he; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *bhavati* — is known as; *hi* — verily; *om* — Om; *tat* — that; *yat* — which; *so 'ham* — I am he; *param* — supreme; *brahma* — Brahman; *kṛṣṇātmakaḥ* — the essence of whom is Kṛṣṇa; *nityānanda* — eternal bliss; *eka-rūpaḥ* — one with; *so 'ham* — I am he; *om* — Om; *tat* — that; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *eva* — certainly; *param* — supreme; *satyam* — truth; *abādhitam* — unobstructed; *so 'ham* — I am he; *iti* — thus; *ātmānam* — self; *ādāya* — controlling; *manasā* — with the mind; *aikyam* — oneness; *kuryāt* — should do; *ātmānam* — the self; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *aham* — I am; *iti* — thus; *bhāvayet* — should think; *saḥ* — he; *eva* — certainly; *avyaktaḥ* — unmanifest; *anantaḥ* — unlimited; *nityaḥ* — eternal; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

13. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī uses the term *narākṛti param brahma* for Gopāla Kṛṣṇa throughout his writing. He attributes it to the *Bṛbat-sahasra-nāma-stotra* of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*.

He who from the very beginning of creation takes the living entities, known as the *gopas*, as his very self is verily Gopāla. One should think: The truth is identical with the sacred syllable Om, and I am he. I am he who is the Supreme Brahman, the essence of whom is Kṛṣṇa, whose only form is one of eternal bliss. That Gopāla is the unobstructed Supreme Truth. Thinking, “I am he,” one should take control of the self and concentrate the mind. One should then meditate on the self, thinking, “I am Gopāla.” Verily Gopāla is unmanifest, infinite, and eternal.

The cowherd people of Kṛṣṇa *lilā* are all examples of perfected spiritual forms of pure consciousness engaged in divine sport with Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. Among them, Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd friends in particular serve him in the spirit of equality. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmi describes the principal ingredient of their sentiment with the word *viśrambha*: *viśrambha-pradbhāna sakhya* (Cc. 2.19.224). *Viśrambha* means familiarity, intimacy, and absence of restraint, and it implies a strong sense of equality. Thus the cowherd friends of Kṛṣṇa think of themselves as his equals. Their love for him is an example of *prañaya*, the sense that there is no difference between Gopāla Kṛṣṇa’s body and their own. Thus they never hesitate to touch him, the Parabrahman, even with their feet. Indeed, within the *lilā* they often defeat him in play fighting, the consequence of which is that Kṛṣṇa must carry them on his shoulders. Sometimes they serve him and sometimes they accept service from him, *kṛṣṇe seve, kṛṣṇe karāya āpana-sevana* (Cc. 2.19.223).

Śrī Prabodhānanda says that in this verse Nārāyaṇa tells Brahmā that the name Gopāla means “he who accepts the *gopas*, or those who are entirely dependent on him for their existence, as his very self, with unequalled affection as though nondifferent from him throughout all time.”<sup>14</sup> He comments further on the spirit of Nārāyaṇa’s statement: “Just as the cowherds are always by Gopāla Kṛṣṇa’s side in the spirit of oneness with him, so too do all living beings remain with him.” All living beings remain

14. Viśveśvara Tirtha explains “Gopāla” thus: he who from the very beginning (*a*) accepts (*alati*) the *jīvas* (*gopan*) as identical with himself.

with him as his loving devotees in potential, and the principal path for them chalked out here in *Gopāla-tāpanī* is one that culminates in loving him in the oneness characterized by the cowherds of Vraja. On this path devotees progress from worshipping to actually being worship itself in the form of becoming the *bhāva*, or spiritual emotion, they cultivate. This spiritual emotion for Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from him, inasmuch as Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is that face of Brahman that corresponds with the *bhāva* of Vraja *bhakti* that this spiritual plane's inhabitants are constituted of. The dynamic nature of *advaya-jñāna-tattva* (nondual consciousness) that is experienced by the enlightened is fully expressed as Goloka—the dynamic union of love between Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and his cowherds, who know *svayam bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their very own in a compact of love.

In this verse Nārāyaṇa further describes Gopāla Kṛṣṇa as the “unobstructed Supreme Truth.” By this he implies that his own position is subordinate to that of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa when considered in terms of potential for experiencing and being experienced in aesthetic rapture. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's being the unobstructed Supreme Truth implies that he is *akhila rasāmṛta mūrti*, the reservoir of sacred aesthetic rapture (Brs. 1.1.1). He is the Deity of *abaituki* (causeless), *apratibatā* (unobstructed) love. It is this love alone that fully satisfies him (*yayātmā samprasīdati*).<sup>15</sup>

Devotees should worship Gopāla Kṛṣṇa thinking themselves to be spiritual in nature and thus qualitatively one with him, and moreover, they should feel that he is their very life. Nārāyaṇa advises that this is the way to attain mastery over the lower self and be delivered from the oppression of the mind and senses. When Nārāyaṇa says, “Verily he is unmanifest, infinite, and eternal,” Śrī Prabodhānanda concludes that Nārāyaṇa means Gopāla is whole in himself (*svayam-siddha*), not revealed by anyone other than himself, and thus self-manifesting.

41. मथुरायां स्थितिर्ब्रह्मन् सर्वदा मे भविष्यति ।  
शङ्खचक्रगदापद्मवनमालावृतस्तु वै ॥४१॥

15. See ŚB 1.2.6.



*mathurāyām sthitir brahman sarvadā me bhaviṣyati ।  
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padma-vana-mālā-vṛtas tu vai ॥*

*mathurāyām* — in Mathurā; *sthitir* — living; *brahman* — O Brahṁā; *sarvadā* — always; *me* — my; *bhaviṣyati* — will become; *śaṅkha* — conch; *cakra* — discus; *gadā* — club; *padma* — lotus; *vana-mālā* — a forest-flower garland; *vṛtaḥ* — surrounded by; *tu* — but; *vai* — certainly.

**O Brahṁā, I will remain forever in Mathurā, surrounded by my symbols—the conch, discus, club, lotus, and flower garland.**

Here Nārāyaṇa continues to praise Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and underscore Kṛṣṇa’s superior position by stating that he will forever reside in Gopāla Kṛṣṇa’s abode.

42. विश्वरूपं परं ज्योतिःस्वरूपं रूपवर्जितं ।  
हृदा मां संस्मरन् ब्रह्मन् तत्पदं याति निश्चितम् ॥४२॥

*viśva-rūpaṁ param jyotiḥ-svarūpaṁ rūpa-varjitam ।  
hṛdā mām saṁsmaran brahman tat-padam yāti niścitam ॥*

*viśva-rūpaṁ* — the universal form; *param jyotiḥ* — the supreme effulgence; *svarūpaṁ* — the form; *rūpa-varjitam* — without form; *hṛdā* — with the heart; *mām* — me; *saṁsmaran* — remembering; *brahman* — O Brahṁā; *tat-padam* — that abode; *yāti* — goes; *niścitam* — certainly.

**O Brahṁā, by remembering me with a devoted heart as the universal form, the supreme form of effulgence, who is yet devoid of form, you will certainly attain that supreme abode.**

In this verse Nārāyaṇa speaks about how one can attain eternal residence in Mathurā. Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that some readings have *cit-svarūpaṁ* in place of *viśva-rūpaṁ*, in which case the text changes from “the universal form” to “who possesses a spiritual form as his identity.” Other-

wise, *viśva-rūpam* means “he in whom the universe is contained” or “he in whom all forms are contained,” in which case it is a reference to Kṛṣṇa within whom his form as Nārāyaṇa resides. In either case, his form is extraordinary and effulgent, unlike material forms. So much is this the case that Nārāyaṇa describes himself as formless here only to emphasize that his spiritual form has no material qualities. Descriptions of God as formless are found throughout the *Upaniṣads*, as are descriptions of his spiritual form. Thus it should be clear that when the *śruti* describes God as formless, it speaks of his being without material form.

In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (6.8) it is said:

He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between his body and his soul. He is absolute. All his senses are transcendental. Any one of his senses can perform the action of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than him or equal to him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus his deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence.<sup>16</sup>

Elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.22) Brahmā tells Kṛṣṇa, “O Kṛṣṇa, your eternal transcendental form is full of knowledge and bliss.”

43. मथुरामण्डले यस्तु जम्बुद्वीपे स्थितोऽपि वा ।  
योऽर्चयेत्प्रतिमां मां च स मे प्रियतरो भुवि ॥४३॥

*mathurā-maṇḍale yas tu jambu-dvīpe sthito 'pi vā |*  
*yo 'rcayet pratimāṁ mām ca sa me priyatara bhuvī | |*

*mathurā-maṇḍale* — in the district of Mathurā; *yaḥ* — one who; *tu* — on the other hand; *jambu-dvīpe* — on the island of Jambu; *sthitah* — residing;

16. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, trans., *Bhagavad-gītā: As it Is* (Los Angeles: BBT, 1983), 188.

*api* — even; *vā* — or; *yaḥ* — one who; *arcayet* — worships; *pratimām* — Deity form; *mām* — me; *ca* — and; *saḥ* — he; *me* — my; *priyatarāḥ* — most dear; *bhuvī* — in the world.

**Or simply by residing in the region of Mathurā in Jambūdvīpa and worshipping my Deity form, one becomes most dear to me.**

Whereas in the previous verse Nārāyaṇa speaks of meditation (*smaraṇam*), in this verse he speaks of ritualistic worship (*arcanam*), which is generally recommended for those who are not yet qualified to sit in meditation. Ritualistic worship of Kṛṣṇa is very common in Mathurā and has been for centuries. The most important Deities of Kṛṣṇa, dating back to the time of his grandson Vajra, were worshiped by the principal followers of Śrī Caitanya, who through their devotional zeal were able to secure the patronage of Hindu monarchs and thus establish large temples for these Deities. In this way, they attracted many pilgrims to Mathurā, making it one of the most important places of pilgrimage on earth (referred to here by its ancient scriptural name, Jambūdvīpa).

44. तस्यामधिष्ठितः कृष्णरूपी पूज्यस्त्वया सदा ।  
चतुर्था चास्याधिकारभेदत्वेन यजन्ति माम् ॥४४॥

*tasyām adhiṣṭhitaḥ kṛṣṇa-rūpī pūjyas tvayā sadā ।*  
*caturdhā cāsyādbikāra-bhedatvena yajanti mām । ।*

*tasyām* — in that place; *adhiṣṭhitaḥ* — that resides; *kṛṣṇa-rūpī* — the form of Kṛṣṇa; *pūjyaḥ* — is worshipable; *tvayā* — by you; *sadā* — always; *caturdhā* — in four ways; *ca* — and; *asya* — his; *adbikāra-bhedatvena* — according to the differences of qualification; *yajanti* — worships; *mām* — me.

**The Deity form of Kṛṣṇa situated in Mathurā is to be always worshiped by you. People worship me in four ways according to their qualifications.**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that through the words of Nārāyaṇa, “Durvāsā stresses Kṛṣṇa’s *pūjā* as being above all others. He is saying to the *gopīs*: ‘For those like you who are the most qualified (*paramādbhikārī*), Kṛṣṇa’s form in Mathurā is the most worshipable, not the other Viṣṇu forms present there, such as Padmanābha.’ Some people also worship Kṛṣṇa as one of the members of the *catur-vyūha*. For them, it is said here that there are different levels of qualification that correspond with the particular object of their worship.” He also emphasizes that when Nārāyaṇa says *mām* in this verse, he means himself in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

45. युगानुवर्तिनो लोका यजन्तीह सुमेधसः ।  
गोपालं सानुजं रामरुक्मिण्या सह तत्परम् ॥४५॥

*yugānuvartino lokā yajantīha sumedhasaḥ* ।  
*gopālaṁ sānujaṁ rāma-rukmiṇyā saha tat-param* । ।

*yugānuvartinah* — those following the principles of religion according to the age; *lokāḥ* — people; *yajanti* — worship; *īha* — in this world; *sumedhasaḥ* — truly intelligent; *gopālaṁ* — Gopāla; *sānujaṁ* — with his brother; *rāma-rukmiṇyā* — with Rāma and Rukmiṇī; *saha* — with; *tat-param* — thereafter.

**In this world, the most intelligent people following the principles of religion for the age will worship Gopāla and those born after him, such as his brother Rāma and Rukmiṇī for whom he has great affection.**

The word *anuja* in this verse should not be understood to indicate that Rāma was born after Kṛṣṇa, for within the *līlā* he is his elder brother. It should be understood in terms of Balarāma being an expansion of Kṛṣṇa and in this sense appearing after him.

The worship of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa in the current age of quarrel (Kali-yuga) is best performed through congregational chanting of his name (*saṅkīrtanam*), as demonstrated by him in his appearance as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya

(Gaura) some five hundred years ago. The word *sumedhasaḥ* in this verse also appears in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.32, where the *avatāra* for the Kali-yuga is described along with the method of his worship. While *sumedhasaḥ* literally refers to those endowed with very good intelligence, it refers more to those who have acquired spiritual merit in relation to *bhakti* (*bhakti-unmukhi-sukṛti*) in this and previous lives. They thus have subtle theistic intellect and a psychological makeup that enables them to embrace the worship of Gaura and Gopāla.

46. गोपालोऽहमजो नित्यः प्रद्युम्नोऽहं सनातनः ।  
रामोऽहमनिरुद्धोऽहमात्मानमर्चयेद्बुधः ॥४६॥

*gopālo 'ham ajo nityaḥ pradyumno 'ham sanātanaḥ* ।  
*rāmo 'ham aniruddho 'ham ātmānam arcayed budhaḥ* । ।

*gopālo 'ham* — I am Gopāla; *ajaḥ* — unborn; *nityaḥ* — eternal; *pradyumno 'ham* — I am Pradyumna; *sanātanaḥ* — everlasting; *rāmo 'ham* — I am Rāma; *aniruddho 'ham* — I am Aniruddha; *ātmānam* — self; *arcayet* — worships; *budhaḥ* — the wise man.

**I am Gopāla, unborn and eternal. I am the everlasting Pradyumna. I am Rāma and I am Aniruddha. The wise man thus worships the ātmā.**

Śrī Prabodhānanda understands *ātmā* in this verse to refer to the *paramātmā*, as it often does throughout the *Upaniṣads*. Thus as discussed earlier, one should worship God thinking I am Gopāla in the sense that the individual soul is ultimately of the same spiritual nature as God (*abbedopāśanam*). Śrī Prabodhānanda comments further that the wise person referred to here “is one who is fixed in the mood he personally prefers” (*svasyeṣṭa-bhāvanā-sudṛḍhab*).

47. मयोक्तेन स्वधर्मेण निष्कामेण विभागशः ।  
तैरयं पूजनीयो वै भद्रकृष्णनिवासिभिः ॥४७॥

*mayoktena sva-dharmeṇa niṣkāmeṇa vibhāgaśaḥ* ।  
*tair ayaṁ pūjaniyo vai bhadrā-kṛṣṇa-nivāsibhiḥ* । ।

*mayā* — by me; *uktena* — enunciated; *sva-dharmeṇa* — by the performance of one's prescribed duties; *niṣkāmeṇa* — without desire; *vibhāgaśaḥ* — in their various divisions; *taiḥ* — by them; *ayaṁ* — this person; *pūjaniyaḥ* — worshipable; *vai* — verily; *bhadrā-kṛṣṇa-nivāsibhiḥ* — by those living in Bhadravana and Kṛṣṇavana

**Those living in the forests of Bhadravana and Kṛṣṇavana should worship this form of the Lord without material desire by personal religious principles, which I myself have enunciated in their various divisions.**

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī suggests that books such as *Brhad-gautamiya-tantra* contain the methods for the worship of Kṛṣṇa that he himself teaches. The religious principles are those acts by which Kṛṣṇa is attained that are characterized by desirelessness.

48. तद्धर्मगतिहीना ये तस्यां मयि परायणाः ।  
कलिना ग्रसिता ये वै तेषां तस्यामवस्थितिः ॥४८॥

*tad-dharma-gati-bīnā ye tasyām mayi parāyaṇāḥ* ।  
*kalinā grasitā ye vai teṣāṁ tasyām avasthitiḥ* । ।

*tad-dharma-gati-bīnāḥ* — without any direction in these religious principles; *ye* — those who; *tasyām* — in Mathurā; *mayi* — to me; *parāyaṇāḥ* — devoted; *kalinā* — by the age of Kali; *grasitā* — swallowed up; *ye* — those who; *vai* — most certainly; *teṣāṁ* — their; *tasyām* — in Mathurā; *avasthitiḥ* — situated.

**Even those who are without any direction in these religious principles and who are swallowed up by the argumentative character of this age may still reside in Mathurā if they are devoted to me.**

Here the zenith of Mathurā's glory is revealed: it overflows with benevolence. It is supreme among holy places because residence there is not limited to pious souls. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī cites the *Ādivarāha Purāṇa* in this regard, *yeṣāṁ kvāpi gatiḥ nāsti teṣāṁ madhupuri gatiḥ*: “Those who have no other refuge can find shelter in Mathurā.”

In this verse Nārāyaṇa also underscores the value of devotion. The power of affinity for Kṛṣṇa is unmatched in terms of how easily it affords spiritual progress, as well as the degree of spiritual advancement it culminates in. Furthermore, Nārāyaṇa's statement expresses the very nature of love: those who have love for Kṛṣṇa, however lacking in other areas, are special to him. This is something we all experience within the scope of humanity. Loving eyes can never see, and for good reason.

49. यथा त्वं सह पुत्रैस्तु यथा रुद्रो गणैः सह ।  
यथा श्रियाभियुक्तोऽहं तथा भक्तो मम प्रियः ॥४९॥

*yathā tvam sāha putrais tu yathā rudro gaṇaiḥ sāha* ।  
*yathā śriyābhiyukto 'haṁ tathā bhakto mama priyaḥ* । ।

*yathā* — just as; *tvam* — you; *sāha* — with; *putrais* — sons; *tu* — but; *yathā* — just as; *rudraḥ* — Rudra Śiva; *gaṇaiḥ* — associates; *sāha* — with; *yathā* — just as; *śriyā* — with Lakṣmī; *abhiyuktaḥ* — joined with; *ahaṁ* — I; *tathā* — so; *bhaktaḥ* — devotee; *mama* — my; *priyaḥ* — dear.

**My devotee is dear to me just as you are to your sons, Rudra is to his associates, and I am to Lakṣmī.**

50. स होवाचाब्जयोनिः । चतुर्भिर्देवैः कथमेको देवः स्यात् ।  
एकमक्षरं यद्विश्रुतमनेकाक्षरं कथं भूतम् ॥५०॥

*sa hovācābjayoniḥ* । *caturbbir devaiḥ katham eko devaḥ syāt*  
*ekam akṣaram yad viśrutam anekākṣaram katham bhūtam* ।

*saḥ* — he; *hovāca* — said; *abjayoniḥ* — Brahmā, the lotus-born; *caturbbiḥ* — with four; *devaiḥ* — Deities; *katham* — how; *ekaḥ* — one; *devaḥ* — Deity; *syāt* — could be; *ekam* — one; *akṣaram* — letter; *yat* — what; *viśrutam* — famous; *aneka* — many; *akṣaram* — letter; *katham* — how; *bbūtam* — became.

**Then the lotus-born asked: How can four Deities make a single God? And how does the single syllable Om, which has been explained as being unique in the *śrutis*, become fourfold?**

After hearing Nārāyaṇa's explanation, the four-headed Brahmā expresses his doubts.

51. स होवाच तं ह वै । पूर्वं हि एकमेवाद्वितीयं ब्रह्मासीत् । तस्मादव्यक्तमेवाक्षरम् ।  
तस्मादक्षरान्महत्तत्त्वम् । महतो वै हंकारः । तस्माद् एवाहंकारात्पञ्चतन्मात्राणि ।  
तेभ्यो भूतानि । तैरावृतमक्षरं भवति ॥५१॥

*sa hovāca taṁ ha vai pūrvam hi ekam evādvitīyaṁ brahmāsīt |*  
*tasmād avyaktam evākṣaram | tasmād akṣarāt mahat-tattvam |*  
*mahato vai haṁkāraḥ | tasmād evāhaṁkārāt pañca-tanmātrāṇi |*  
*tebhyo bhūtāni | tair āvṛtam akṣaram bhavati |*

*saḥ* — he; *hovāca* — said; *taṁ* — to him; *ha vai* — certainly; *pūrvam* — originally; *hi* — verily; *ekam* — one; *eva* — only; *advitīyaṁ* — without a second; *brahma* — Brahmā; *āsīt* — was; *tasmāt* — from that; *avyaktam* — the unmanifest; *eva* — certainly; *akṣaram* — indestructible syllable; *tasmāt* — from that; *akṣarāt* — syllable; *mahat-tattvam* — *mahat-tattva*; *mahataḥ* — from the *mahat*; *vai* — certainly; *haṁkāraḥ* — ego; *tasmāt* — from that; *eva* — verily; *ahaṁkārāt* — from the ego; *pañca-tanmātrāṇi* — the five sense objects; *tebhyah* — from them; *bbūtāni* — the elements; *taiḥ* — with them; *āvṛtam* — covered; *akṣaram* — imperishable sound; *bhavati* — became.



**Nārāyaṇa answered: Originally there was only one truth without a second. That was Brahman. From that Brahman came the unmanifest and indestructible syllable Om̐. From that indestructible sound vibration came the *mahat-tattva*. From the *mahat* came the ego. From the ego, the five *tanmātras*, or sense objects; from them, the elements. The imperishable sound Om̐ is covered by the elements.**

Nārāyaṇa begins his answer to Brahmā's submissive inquiry by explaining that the entire varied creation expands from a singular source. Thus it should not be difficult to understand that if the singular Brahman, which is represented in sound by the syllable Om̐, can manifest a variegated universe that is different in nature from himself, being unconscious, certainly he can manifest expansions of himself who are, like himself, pure consciousness. Nārāyaṇa goes on to say that the *praṇava om̐kāra* and by extension any of its expansions, such as the *catur-vyūha* and their particular representation in sound, are covered by the material elements. By this he means that they are covered in the sense that they are the hidden keys to freeing one from the influence of these elements, for they can never be covered by the material elements in the way illusioned beings are. Nārāyaṇa's statement can also be understood to mean that the material elements cover the materially conditioned souls *from* God.

In Nārāyaṇa's statement that Brahman is originally one without a second, the word "one" indicates that he is free of *sajātiya-bheda*, or difference from an object of the same category as himself. The word "only" indicates that he has no internal differences and is thus free of *svagata-bheda*; the words "without a second" indicate that nothing exists which is different from him, indicating that he is free of *vijātiya-bheda*, or difference from an object categorically different from himself. He is *advaya-jñāna-tattva*, nondual consciousness, even while possessed of *śakti*.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī points out that while Nārāyaṇa says that originally there was only one Brahman and does not mention his *svarūpa-śakti*, this is appropriate because God's *svarūpa-śakti* is nondifferent from himself. His *svarūpa-śakti* is his nature and the source of all other *śaktis*, by which he ex-

periences and expresses the joy that he is. She is his power, which is inseparable from the powerful himself, *śakti-śaktimator abhinna-vastutvāt*.<sup>17</sup>

52. अक्षरोऽहमोकारोऽहमजरोऽमरोऽभयोऽमृतो  
ब्रह्माभयं हि वै स मुक्तोऽहमस्मि । अक्षरोऽहमस्मि ॥५२॥

*akṣaro 'ham omkāro 'ham ajaro 'maro 'bhayo 'mṛto*  
*brahmābhayaṁ hi vai sa mukto 'ham asmi | akṣaro 'ham asmi | |*

*akṣaraḥ* — imperishable; *aham* — I; *omkāraḥ* — *omkāra*; *aham* — I; *ajaraḥ* — never grow old; *amaraḥ* — never die; *abhayaḥ* — fearless; *amṛtaḥ* — immortal; *brahma* — Brahman; *abhayaṁ* — fearless; *hi vai* — most certainly; *saḥ* — he; *muktaḥ* — liberated; *aham* — I; *asmi* — am; *akṣaraḥ* — indestructible; *aham* — I; *asmi* — am.

**I am imperishable. I am *omkāra* that never grows old, dies, or knows fear. I am immortal. I am verily the fearless Brahman. Therefore, I am liberated and indestructible.**

The word *akṣara* means both “imperishable” and “syllable.” The characteristics of the syllable *omkāra* mentioned are also shared by *akṣara*, the imperishable Brahman. Thus the two are one, and in turn, both Brahman and *omkāra* are identified with Nārāyaṇa. Nārāyaṇa is both imperishable and represented by the syllable Om. He tells Brahmā as much in this verse: *akṣaro 'ham, omkāro 'ham*.

In this way Nārāyaṇa is building on his answer to Brahmā, as he begins in this verse to move from his example of the variegated universe arising from the singular Brahman back to the actual question as to the fourfold nature of Brahman/*omkāra* that gives rise to the *catur-vyūha*.

17. Jīva Gosvāmī quotes this statement from an unidentified source.

53. सत्तामात्रं विश्वरूपं प्रकाशं व्यापकं तथा ।  
एकमेवाद्वयं ब्रह्म मायया तु चतुष्टयम् ॥५३॥

*sattā-mātraṁ viśva-rūpaṁ prakāśaṁ vyāpakam tathā ।  
ekam evādvayaṁ brahma māyayā tu catuṣṭayam । ।*

*sattā-mātraṁ* — pure existence only; *viśva-rūpaṁ* — the universal form; *prakāśaṁ* — light; *vyāpakam* — all-pervasive; *tathā* — so; *ekam* — one; *eva* — only; *advayaṁ* — nondual; *brahma* — Brahman; *māyayā* — through *māyā*; *tu* — however; *catuṣṭayam* — fourfold.

**Brahman is pure existence, the universal form, and light. He is all-pervasive and one without a second, but through *māyā* he becomes fourfold.**

Brahman is pure existence, which is joyful and thus free from all misery. Through his *śakti* he becomes the form of the universe (*viśva-rūpaṁ*). It is stated in the *Vedānta-sūtra* that Brahman's motivation for expanding himself as the universe is to express joy in the form of divine play (*lokavat tu līlā kaivalyam*), the *līlā* of creation (*śṛṣṭi-līlā*).

The word *viśva* also means unlimited, and the word *rūpaṁ* can be extrapolated to include not only form but also attributes, pastimes, and powers. In this sense, Brahman is said to be pure existence that is possessed of unlimited form, attributes, and powers by which he engages in limitless pastimes. Being light (*prakāśa*), he reveals himself everywhere for the benefit of others and is thus all-pervading (*vyāpaka*).

The four characteristics attributed to Brahman in this verse are personified by the four aspects of the *catur-vyūha*. Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa personifies pure consciousness (*sattā-mātra*), Saṅkarṣaṇa (Rāma) personifies existence (*viśva-rūpaṁ*), Pradyumna personifies revelation (*prakāśa*), and Aniruddha personifies all-pervasiveness (*vyāpaka*). Vāsudeva is further identified with Nārāyaṇa, Saṅkarṣaṇa with Mahā Viṣṇu, Pradyumna with Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Aniruddha with Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. These four are fur-

ther identified with consciousness, ego, intelligence, and mind, respectively, as well as with the four directions.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the word *māyā* is defined in the *Viśva-prakāśa* lexicon as both pride and mercy, *māyā dambhe kṛpāyāni ca*. While it is commonly used to indicate the external *śakti* of God, here it indicates his internal energy dwelling in the hearts of his devotees. By his internal *śakti* and out of mercy for his devotees, the singular Brahman becomes four-fold, appearing in various forms that correspond with his devotees' love for him.

54-55. रोहिणीतनयो रामो अकाराक्षरसम्भवः ।  
तैजसात्मकः प्रद्युम्ना उकाराक्षरसम्भवः ॥५४॥  
प्राज्ञात्मकोऽनिरुद्धो मकाराक्षरसम्भवः ।  
अर्धमात्रात्मकः कृष्णो यस्मिन् विश्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥५५॥

*rohiṇī-tanayo rāmo a-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* ।  
*taijasātmakaḥ pradyumna u-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* । ।  
*prājñātmako 'niruddho ma-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* ।  
*ardhamātrātmakaḥ kṛṣṇo yasmin viśvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam* । ।

*rohiṇī-tanayaḥ* — the son of Rohiṇī; *rāmaḥ* — Rāma; *a-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* — arises out of the letter *a*; *taijasātmakaḥ* — composed of fire; *pradyumnaḥ* — Pradyumna; *u-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* — arises out of the letter *u*; *prājñātmakaḥ* — identified with the *prajñā* state; *aniruddhaḥ* — Aniruddha; *ma-kārākṣara-sambhavaḥ* — arises out of the letter *m*; *ardha-mātrātmakaḥ* — the half syllable; *kṛṣṇaḥ* — Kṛṣṇa; *yasmin* — in whom; *viśvaṁ* — the universe; *pratiṣṭhitam* — is established.

The son of Rohiṇī, Rāma, comes out of the first part of the *praṇava*, produced from the letter *a*. Pradyumna, who is composed of fire, is produced from the vowel *u*.

Aniruddha is identified with the *prajñā* state and is produced from the letter *m*, the third element of *omkāra*. The half syllable that cuts off the vowel is Kṛṣṇa, in whom the entire universe is seated.

Having established Brahman's identity with Om, Nārāyaṇa begins to explain how the four Deities of the *catur-vyūha* are contained within this sacred syllable and how they manifest from it. Om represents the entire conscious reality manifest in the four stages of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and beyond. The first three of these represent covered material stages of consciousness, while the fourth represents enlightenment.

The “waking” state (*viśva*/universe) is so-called because it involves the sensual experience common to all. In this state, souls look outward, identifying with sense objects. The “dream” state, (*taijasa*/luminous) is so-called because it involves looking inward while the senses other than the mind rest. The stage of “deep dreamless sleep” (*prajñā*/knowing) is so-called because it involves existence in which all of the senses including the mind are at rest, a condition likened to self-realization in which the self unconsciously lives momentarily in itself, unfettered by the mind and senses. The “fourth” state (*turiya*/the fourth), involves transcendence of the other three stages, a permanent condition of self- and God-realization.

The four Deities of the *catur-vyūha* contained within the syllable Om are the tutelary Deities presiding over these four stages of consciousness. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.1.1.21–22 describes this as follows:

*vāsudevaḥ saṅkarṣaṇaḥ  
pradyumnaḥ puruṣaḥ svayam  
aniruddha iti brahman  
mūrti-vyūho 'bbhidhīyate*

Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha are the names of the direct personal expansions of the Supreme Godhead, O *brāhmaṇa* Śaunaka.

*sa viśvas taijasaḥ prājñas  
turiya iti vṛttibhiḥ  
arthendriyāśaya-jñānair  
bhagavān paribhāvya*

One can conceive of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in terms of awakened consciousness, sleep, and deep sleep—which function respectively through external objects, the mind, and material intelligence—and also in terms of the fourth, transcendental level of consciousness, which is characterized by pure knowledge.<sup>18</sup>

Rāma, being Rohiṇī’s son, is Balarāma and thus is not to be confused with the *catur-vyūha* headed by Rāmacandra. He presides over the waking state of consciousness. Pradyumna presides over the dream state of consciousness, and Aniruddha presides over deep dreamless sleep. These three are represented within *omkāra* by the letters *a*, *u*, and *m*, respectively.

Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa presides over the fourth, or enlightened, stage of consciousness. He is represented by the entire *omkāra*. Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that the half syllable mentioned in the verse “refers to the entire *praṇava* taken as a whole, because it cannot be pronounced on its own. Thus by this device of equating Kṛṣṇa with the *praṇava* as a whole, it is indicated that he is the complete manifestation of the Supreme Person. Therefore, Nārāyaṇa says, ‘in whom the entire universe is established.’ ” Another thing to be noticed about the language of these verses is that rather than using the word *sambhava* (produced from) as in the previous three lines, in this last line the word *ātmaka* is used to denote the direct relationship of the letter to the divine manifestation. This gives added glory to the *praṇava* in its entirety by emphasizing its nondifference from Kṛṣṇa.

*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 9–12, which it appears a number of commentators have drawn from in commenting on this verse, concludes its discussion on

18. Disciples of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, trans. and eds., *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, canto 12 (Los Angeles: BBT, 1987), 325–26.

the four stages of consciousness as follows: “The word Om as one sound is the fourth state of supreme consciousness. It is beyond the senses and the end of evolution. It is nonduality and love. He goes with his self to the Supreme Self who knows this, who knows this.”

56. कृष्णात्मिका जगत्कर्त्री मूलप्रकृतिरुक्मिणी ।  
 व्रजस्त्रीजनसम्भूतश्रुतिभ्यो ब्रह्मसङ्गतः ।  
 प्रणवत्वेन प्रकृतिं वदन्ति ब्रह्मवादिनः ॥५६॥

*kṛṣṇātmikā jagat-kartrī mūla-prakṛti rukmiṇī ।  
 vraja-stri-jana-sambhūta-śrutibhyo brahma-saṅgataḥ ।  
 praṇavatvena prakṛtiṁ vadanti brahma-vādinah ॥*

*kṛṣṇātmikā* — having Kṛṣṇa as her essence; *jagat-kartrī* — the creator of the universe; *mūla-prakṛtiḥ* — the basis of the material nature; *rukmiṇī* — Rukmiṇī; *vraja-stri-jana* — the wives of Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs*; *sambhūta* — arise; *śrutibhyaḥ* — from the revealed scriptures; *brahma-saṅgataḥ* — through contact with Brahman; *praṇavatvena* — *omkāra*; *prakṛtiṁ* — nature; *vadanti* — say; *brahma-vādinah* — the philosophers who say all is Brahman.

**Having Kṛṣṇa as her essence, Rukmiṇī is the basis of the material nature (*mūla-prakṛti*) and the creator of the universe. Based on the revealed knowledge (*śruti*) arising from the questions of the women of Vraja and also on account of her being associated with Brahman, Kṛṣṇa’s potency (Rukmiṇī) is identified with *praṇava* by the Brahmovādins.**

Having explained how the *catur-vyūha* is inherent within *omkāra*, Nārāyaṇa goes on to explain how Kṛṣṇa’s principal *śakti* also inheres therein. She is represented alphabetically within *omkāra* by the *bindu*, and theologically speaking she is present because God and his *śakti* are nondifferent, just as energy and its energetic source are one.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments elsewhere that some philosophers think that *māyā* is only that aspect of Brahman that manifests the world, which

they, in turn, think is ultimately unreal (*asat*). Śrī Jīva says, however, that they are mistaken and cites several verses and Sanskrit lexicons to establish that the word *māyā*, while referring to the illusory world of material names and forms, also refers to God’s spiritual energy (*cit-śakti*). Here, this *śakti* is addressed as Rukmiṇī and described as being Kṛṣṇa’s essence, the basis of the material energy, and the creator of the universe.

Śrī Jīva also explains that the use of the name Rukmiṇī does not refer to her alone but to the internal *śakti* of Kṛṣṇa in general. In this connection, he cites the following statement that he attributes to both the *Matsya* and *Skanda Purāṇas*, *rukmiṇī dvāravatyāṁ tu rādhā vṛndāvane vane*: “The *sva-rūpa-śakti* appears in Dvārakā as Rukmiṇī and in Vṛndāvana as Rādhā.”

Thus by extension it can be concluded that the name Rukmiṇī used in this verse includes other forms of Kṛṣṇa’s internal *śakti* and Śrī Rādhā in particular since the *Gopāla-tāpanī* deals ultimately with the kind of *bhakti* that is centered on Kṛṣṇa’s original form, the form standing next to Rādhā. However, because the subject here is overtly the *catur-vyūha*, Rukmiṇī’s name is mentioned, as she is the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s *śakti* in relation to his form within the *catur-vyūha*.

The primacy of Rādhā, however, is further implied in this verse when Nārāyaṇa attributes this *Upaniṣad* to the questions of the *gopīs* headed by Gāndharvī.<sup>19</sup> Without their questions and level of interest in Kṛṣṇa, this text would not be known to human society. They are not interested in Kṛṣṇa’s appearance within the *catur-vyūha*; they are attached to him in his original form, the most complete expression of Parabrahman.

Jīva Gosvāmī comments elsewhere that *para* means “supreme” and *mā* means “mother.”<sup>20</sup> The *gopīs* are the supreme mothers who rightfully stand next to Brahman, making him whole. They alone, and among them Rādhā

19. The *śruti* is considered to be eternal, although it manifests within human society through sages, whose names are often attached to those *śrutis*. Thus although the conversation between Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā cited by Durvāsā took place long before the *gopīs* asked Durvāsā their questions about Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa still knows of *Gopāla-tāpanī*’s future appearance and considers the *gopīs*’ questions to be the source of this section of it.

20. See Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary on the first verse of *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*.



in particular, can reveal all there is to know about him. Indeed, it is for her sake—to shed light on the measure of her love—that Kṛṣṇa manifests as the *catur-vyūha* and conducts his *līlā* in Mathurā and Dvārakā. In these *līlās* he apparently leaves her behind, but under scrutiny it becomes clear that he did so only to highlight her love in separation as surpassing all other expressions of love for him and endearing him the most. Thus it should be clear that she is his *svayam-śakti*, and as much as he is represented within the *praṇava omkāra*, so too is she.

Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments further in this regard that the words *vraja-stri* can be read as connected to the previous line, breaking up the word *vraja-stri-jana-sambhūta*. The verse then reads, “Having Kṛṣṇa as her essence, Rukmiṇī is the basis of the material nature and the creator of the universe. She is a woman of Vraja. In the *śrutis* that were produced among the people, her association with Brahman is celebrated. For this reason and because the *praṇava-mantra* glorifies the divine nature, the Brahmovādins call her *prakṛti*.” This reading—“She is a woman of Vraja”—serves to further emphasize the position of Rādhārāṇī in terms of her being the supreme manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s *śakti* (*svayam-śakti*), even while Rukmiṇī’s name is used in the verse.

57. तस्मादोकारसम्भूतो गोपालो विश्वसंस्थितः ॥५७॥

*tasmād omkāra-sambhūto gopālo viśva-saṁsthitaḥ* |

*tasmāt* — therefore; *omkāra-sambhūtaḥ* — proceeds from *omkāra*; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla; *viśva-saṁsthitaḥ* — in whom the universe is situated.

**Therefore, Gopāla, in whom the entire universe is situated, proceeds from the *omkāra*.**

This verse concludes *uttara-tāpanī*’s instruction on the significance of *omkāra* in relation to Gopāla Kṛṣṇa and the *catur-vyūha*, which began with verse 37. “Therefore” (*tasmāt*) marks the conclusion. The word *viśva-*

*saṁsthitaḥ* can also mean that Gopāla Kṛṣṇa manifests in different forms or that all forms are within him.

58. क्लीमोकारस्यैक्यत्वं पठ्यते ब्रह्मवादिभिः ।  
मथुरायां विशेषेण मां ध्यायन् मोक्षमश्नुते ॥५८॥

*klīm-omkārasyaikyatvaṁ paṭhyate brahma-vādidbhiḥ ।*  
*mathurāyām viśeṣeṇa mām dhyāyan mokṣam aśnute ।।*

*klīm* — the *kāma-bīja* syllable; *omkārasya* — of *omkāra*; *aikyatvaṁ* — identity; *paṭhyate* — is read; *brahma-vādidbhiḥ* — by those knowledgeable about Brahman; *mathurāyām* — in Mathurā; *viśeṣeṇa* — especially; *mām* — me; *dhyāyan* — meditating; *mokṣam* — the state of liberation; *aśnute* — enjoy.

**Those who are knowledgeable about Brahman utter the syllable *klīm* in the understanding that it is one with Om. All who meditate on me, especially those in the land of Mathurā, enjoy the state of liberation.**

This verse prefaces Nārāyaṇa’s instructions on *pūjā* and meditation that begin with the following verse and conclude in verse 62 with the words *veṇu-śṛṅga-dharam tu vā*. In this preface Nārāyaṇa stresses the value of *pūjā* and meditation performed in Mathurā, making it clear that location influences one’s spiritual practice and that the best location in which to worship and meditate on Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is Mathurā.

The liberation spoken of here is freedom from obstacles in attaining Kṛṣṇa. The two seed *mantras* *om* and *klīm* have the identical essence, identical power, and designate the same reality. Thus the foregoing analysis of the *praṇava omkāra* also applies to *klīm*.

59. अष्टपत्रं विकसितं हृत्पद्मं तत्र संस्थितम् ।  
दिव्यध्वजातपत्रैस्तु चिह्नितं चरणद्वयम् ॥५९॥

*aṣṭa-patram vikasitam hṛt-padman tatra samsthitam |*  
*divya-dhvajātapatrais tu cibnitam caraṇa-dvayam ||*

*aṣṭa-patram* — eight petals; *vikasitam* — blossoming; *hṛt-padman* — lotus in the heart; *tatra* — there; *samsthitam* — situated; *divya* — divine; *dhvaja* — flag; *ātapatraiḥ* — parasol; *tu* — well; *cibnitam* — marked; *caraṇa-dvayam* — lotus feet.

**One should visualize me situated on a blooming, eight-petaled lotus in the heart and meditate on my feet, which are marked with the divine signs of the flag and parasol.**

Prabodhānanda suggests that the spirit of this verse is that one should meditate on Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa being situated in Mathurā as if one's heart were that sacred abode.

60. श्रीवत्सलाञ्छनं हृत्स्थं कौस्तुभप्रभया युतम् ।  
चतुर्भुजं शङ्खचक्रशङ्खपद्मगदान्वितम् ॥६०॥

*śrīvatsa-lāñchanam hṛt-stham kaustubha-prabhayā yutam |*  
*catur-bhujam śaṅkha-cakra-śārṅga-padma-gadānvitam ||*

*śrīvatsa-lāñchanam* — marked with the sign known as *śrīvatsa*; *hṛt-stham* — situated in the heart; *kaustubha* — the *kaustubha* jewel; *prabhayā* — by the effulgence; *yutam* — combined; *catur-bhujam* — four-armed; *śaṅkha-cakra-śārṅga-padma-gadānvitam* — holding the conch, discus, bow, lotus, and mace.

**[Meditate on me] with the sign of *śrīvatsa* on my chest, with the effulgent *kaustubha* jewel over my heart, and holding with four arms my weapons and symbols: the conch, discus, bow, lotus, and mace.**

In his four hands Nārāyaṇa sometimes holds five articles. At such times he

holds the lotus and bow in the same hand. At other times, he places the bow before him and holds only four articles.

61. सुकेयुरान्वितं बाहुं कण्ठं मालामुशोभितम् ।  
द्युमत्किरीटवल्यं स्फुरन्मकरकुण्डलम् ॥६१॥

*sukeyurānvitam bāhum kaṇṭham mālā-susobhitam ।  
dyumat-kirīṭa-valayaṁ sphuran-makara-kunḍalam । ।*

*sukeyura* — with armbands; *anvitam* — decorated; *bāhum* — arm; *kaṇṭham* — neck; *mālā* — garland; *susobhitam* — decorated; *dyumat-kirīṭa-valayaṁ* — armband and bracelets; *sphuran-makara-kunḍalam* — dangling dolphin earrings.

**[One should meditate on me] decorated with armbands, a beautiful garland, an effulgent crown, and dangling, dolphin earrings.**

In his commentary on the *Dāmodarāṣṭakam* of *Padma Purāṇa*, Sanātana Gosvāmi states that the *gopīs* consider Kṛṣṇa's earrings his most fortunate ornaments because they are free to kiss his cheeks on a regular basis.

62. हिरण्मयं सौम्यतनुं स्वभक्तायाभयप्रदम् ।  
ध्यायेन्मनसि मां नित्यं वेणुशृङ्गाधरं तु वा ॥६२॥

*hiraṇmayam saumya-tanum sva-bhaktāyābhaya-pradam ।  
dhyāyen manasi mām nityam veṇu-śṛṅga-dharam tu vā । ।*

*hiraṇmayam* — golden; *saumya-tanum* — beautiful body; *sva-bhaktāya* — to his own devotee; *abhaya-pradam* — bestowing fearlessness; *dhyāyet* — should meditate; *manasi* — in the mind; *mām* — me; *nityam* — always; *veṇu-śṛṅga-dharam* — holding the flute and horn; *tu* — but; *vā* — or.

**One should always meditate on me in this effulgent form, which is**

beautiful and awards fearlessness to my devotees. Or, alternatively, one should meditate on my form holding a flute and buffalo horn.

Here Nārāyaṇa concludes his description of the meditation he recommends to Brahmā. Having described himself in the previous verses, in this verse he suggests as an alternative that one can meditate on *svayaṁ bhagavān* Śrī Gopāla Kṛṣṇa, who bears the flute and buffalo horn in his two hands. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is crowned with a colorful peacock feather, garlanded with forest flowers, and decorated with different colored clays from the rich Vṛndāvana soil. His sweet and charming attire is less majestic than that of Nārāyaṇa.

The two separate meditations recommended in these verses differentiate the *vidbhī-mārga* from the *rāga-mārga*, both of which, as we have seen, are discussed throughout *Gopāla-tāpanī*.

63. मथ्यते तु जगत्सर्वं ब्रह्मज्ञानेन येन वा ।  
तत्सारभूतं यद्यस्यां मथुरा सा निगद्यते ॥६३॥

*mathyate tu jagat sarvaṁ brahma-jñānena yena vā |*  
*tat-sāra-bhūtaṁ yad yasyāṁ mathurā sā nigadyate | |*

*mathyate* — is churned; *tu* — but; *jagat* — the world; *sarvaṁ* — the whole; *brahma-jñānena* — by knowledge of Brahman; *yena* — by which; *vā* — or; *tat-sāra-bhūtaṁ* — its manifest essence; *yad* — which; *yasyāṁ* — in it; *mathurā* — Mathurā; *sā* — it; *nigadyate* — is said.

**The name Mathurā has been given to this land because the manifest essence of the knowledge of Brahman, by which the entire universe has been churned, appears there.**

In verses 63–74, Nārāyaṇa gives his own explanation of the meditation recommended in the previous five verses. He extends the meditation such that it becomes identified with the *viśva-rūpa*, thus revealing the universality of the object of contemplation. In meditation on the *viśva-rūpa*, which

is recommended for beginners, the universe itself is conceived of as a form of God.

Verses 58 and 59 spoke of meditating on Kṛṣṇa while residing in Mathurā, if not physically, at least within one's heart. Before Nārāyaṇa begins to speak about meditating on a universal form of himself in which natural phenomena are identified as his bodily parts, he further glorifies Mathurā as that place within the universe that, being one with himself/ Kṛṣṇa, brings an end to one's material entanglement. He also explains why Mathurā is so named. All the commentators have written on the etymology of the word Mathurā in their explanation of this verse, and in doing so they have taken poetic license.<sup>21</sup>

The Sanskrit verbal root *math* means “to churn,” as in churning butter from milk. Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments as follows: “The act of churning produces butter from cream; similarly, knowledge of the Supreme Person—the personal form of Brahman—is revealed through the churning of the entire universe. The word *vā* (or) indicates an alternative that is not openly mentioned in the verse, namely *bhakti-yoga*. The place where both knowledge of the Lord and *bhakti-yoga* are revealed in their fullest, most perfect manifestation is known as Mathurā. In other words, *mathurā* refers to the practices of knowledge and devotion (*jñāna-bhakti-sādhana*).” He suggests that this meaning derived from the etymology of the word Mathurā can be established from the *Uṇādi-sūtra*.<sup>22</sup>

Viśveśvara Tīrtha comments, “That by which the entire universe is churned is called *matha*, or knowledge of Brahman. That knowledge is the person Gopāla.” He adds that the word *vā* implies that “the universe is churned by Madana Gopāla.”

This Gopāla conquers *manmatha* (Cupid, who churns the mind). The *gopīs* have referred to him in the midst of their moonlight rendezvous re-

21. Scholars have not been able to find conclusive etymology for Mathurā. The word *matha* does not have a corresponding meaning in the dictionary, and there is no suffix *-urā* in usage in Sanskrit.

22. *Uṇādi-sūtra* is a predecessor of Pāṇini's grammar. It describes the usage of affixes.

corded in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.32.2) as *sākṣān-manmatha-manmathaḥ*, “He who bewilders or churns the mind of Cupid.” For this reason he is also known as Madana Gopāla.

If Cupid churns the world, as he no doubt does, he who captivates Cupid churns the impurity of lust out of one’s heart and leaves pure love of God. This purified substance is the king of knowledge: *prema-bhakti (rāja-vidyā)*.<sup>23</sup> It is this knowledge that makes it possible to understand the world perfectly, transcend it, and enter the land of love.

The status of Kṛṣṇa as the transcendental Cupid, however, is qualified by the maidservants of Rādhā. Her parrot sings thus:

*rādhā-saṅge yadā bhāti  
tadā ‘madana-mohanaḥ’  
anyathā viśva-mobo ’pi  
svayaṁ ‘madana-mobitaḥ’*

When Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhārāṇī he shines brightly and is thus known as the enchanter of Cupid; otherwise, he himself is enchanted by erotic feelings [for her], even though he enchants the entire world. (*Govinda-līlāmṛta* 13.32)

Jaya Rādhē! Madana-mohana-mohini!

64. अष्टदिक्पालिभिर्भूमिः पद्मं विकसितं जगत् ।  
संसारार्णवसञ्जातं सेवितं मम मानसे ॥६४॥

*aṣṭa-dik-pālibhir bhūmiḥ padmaṁ vikasitaṁ jagat ।  
saṁsārārṇava-sañjātaṁ sevitaṁ mama mānase ।।*

*aṣṭa-dik-pālibhiḥ* — by the guardians of the eight directions; *bhūmiḥ* — land; *padmaṁ* — lotus; *vikasitaṁ* — blooming; *jagat* — the world;

23. See Swāmi Tripurārī, *Bhagavad-gītā*, 283–84.

*saṁsārārṇava* — the ocean of material life; *sañjātani* — produced from; *sevitani* — served; *mama* — my; *mānase* — in mind.

**The blooming lotus is the earth and is identical with the universe; it grows from the waters of the ocean of *saṁsāra* and is dwelt in by the eight lords of the directions. It exists in my mind.**

Nārāyaṇa here explains the meditation suggested in verse 58 in terms of the *virāṭa-rūpa*. The earth is an auspicious place within the universe because it offers humanity the opportunity for spiritual practice as well as material enjoyment. The impetus it provides for spiritual advancement is unparalleled throughout the universe because on earth Śrī Kṛṣṇa enacts his humanlike pastimes (*nara-līlā*) and reveals the highest reach of love. Thus the earth dwells like a blooming lotus in the mind of Nārāyaṇa. Its blooming represents Nārāyaṇa's mental blessing, issuing forth in all eight directions throughout the universe. This lotus grows from the waters of *saṁsāra* and rests above its waves of illusion. Those who wish to contemplate the world as the form of God should think in this way about his mind.

65. चन्द्रसूर्यत्विषो दिव्यध्वजा मेरुर्हिरण्मयः ।  
आतपत्रं ब्रह्मलोकमधोर्ध्वं चरणं स्मृतम् ॥६५॥

*candra-sūrya-tviṣo divyā dbvajā merur hiraṇmayāḥ* ।  
*ātapatram brahma-lokam adhordhvam caranam smṛtam* । ।

*candra-sūrya-tviṣaḥ* — the light of the moon and sun; *divyāḥ* — divine; *dhvajāḥ* — flags; *meruḥ* — Mount Meru; *hiraṇmayāḥ* — golden; *ātapatram* — parasol; *brahma-lokam* — Brahmaloaka; *adhordhvam* — above and below; *caranam* — feet; *smṛtam* — are held to be.

**The feet of that universal form are said to be both above and below. The splendors of the sun and moon are the divine flags that decorate**



them, and Mount Meru is the golden staff holding up the parasol, **Brahmaloka**.

Here Nārāyaṇa elaborates on verse 58. Similar descriptions with varying details can be found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Another description of the *viśva-rūpa* is found in the eleventh chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Because this form is considered imaginary, serving as a tool for meditation, differing descriptions are of little consequence.

66. श्रीवत्सं च स्वरूपं च वर्तते लाञ्छनैः सह ।  
श्रीवत्सलाञ्छनं तस्मात्कथ्यते ब्रह्मवादिभिः ॥६६॥

*śrīvatsaṁ ca svarūpaṁ ca vartate lāñchanaiḥ saha ।*  
*śrīvatsa-lāñchanam tasmāt kathyate brahma-vādidbhiḥ । ।*

*śrīvatsaṁ* — the sign known as *śrīvatsa*; *ca* — and; *svarūpaṁ* — identity; *ca* — and; *vartate* — remains; *lāñchanaiḥ* — symbols; *saha* — with; *śrīvatsa-lāñchanam* — the epithet “Śrīvatsa-lāñchana”; *tasmāt* — therefore; *kathyate* — is said; *brahma-vādidbhiḥ* — by the knowers of Brahman.

**Both my form and the universal form have their identifying marks, such as the *śrīvatsa*. Therefore, I am known to the philosophers of Brahman by the name Śrīvatsa-lāñchana.**

Nārāyaṇa mentioned his *śrīvatsa*, a marking on his chest, in verse 60. This mark consists of curling white hairs that approximate the shape of the moon and indicate his relationship with his consort. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi describes it thus: “The *śrīvatsa* is said to be either a white mark in the shape of the moon on the Lord’s chest (according to the *Gautamīya-tantra*) or hairs that curl to the right (according to *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* and other sources).”

Based on this verse, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī has further identified the *śrīvatsa* as the *vairāja-jīva svarūpa*, or the *samaṣṭi-jīva* of the universal form

of God. The *samaṣṭi-jīva* is the collective status of individual souls just prior to their individual manifestations in accordance with the rule of *kar-ma*.<sup>24</sup> The *jīva* souls are merged in a state of deep sleep (*suṣupti*) within Mahā Viṣṇu, and when the time for the creation to manifest arises, these *jīvas* move toward differentiation by first appearing as a collective within Brahmā and then expressing their individuality in accordance with their latent *kar-ma*. As mentioned earlier, it is in this sense that the *baddha-jīva* first takes birth as Brahmā. This Brahmā, the *vairāja-puruṣa* or *vairāja-jīva*, represents the *śrīvatsa* of Nārāyaṇa when the universe is conceived of as Nārāyaṇa's form.

67. येन सूर्याग्निवाक्चन्द्रं तेजसा स्वस्वरूपिणा ।  
वर्तते कौस्तुभाख्यं हि मणिं वदन्तीशमानिनः ॥६७॥

*yena sūryāgni-vāk-candram tejasā sva-svarūpinā ।*  
*vartate kaustubbākhyam hi maṇim vadantiśa-māninaḥ ।।*

*yena* — by those; *sūrya* — the sun; *agni* — fire; *vāk* — speech; *candram* — moon; *tejasā* — by light; *sva-svarūpinā* — possessing this identity; *vartate* — exists; *kaustubbākhyam* — named *kaustubha*; *hi* — certainly; *maṇim* — jewel; *vadanti* — say; *śa-māninaḥ* — those who accept me as God.

**Those who accept that I am God (as the *virāṭa-rūpa*) say that the word and the power of the Lord to illuminate, from which the sun, fire, speech, and the moon have their beginnings, is the *kaustubha* jewel.**

Those who worship the *virāṭa-rūpa* conceive of the celestial lights and speech's power to illuminate as the *kaustubha* jewel. In verse 60, Nārāyaṇa mentions that the *kaustubha* jewel decorates his chest. This jewel is also considered to represent all *jīvas*, whom Nārāyaṇa keeps close to his heart. Because the celestial realms give shelter to the pious, they too are consid-

24. See ŚB 11.3.12 commentary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. See also ŚB 3.20.16 and *Gopāla-tūpanī* 1.26.

ered the refuge of the *jīvas*, as is the illuminating power of speech on account of its capacity to give solace.

The etymology of the word *kaustubha* is explained by Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī as follows: “*Ka* refers to the sun and fire, due to its similarity with the sun. The letter *a* refers to the word (*vāk*) due to its being the first sound from which all words are formed. The vowel *au* refers to the moon, because the word *glau* (which means moon) partially contains this sound, and the etymologists say *apy akṣara-sāmyena nirbrūyāt*, ‘One can also explain the meaning of a word by a similarity of syllables.’”

68. सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति अहंकारश्चतुर्भुजः ।  
पञ्चभूतात्मकं शङ्खं करे रजसि संस्थितम् ॥६८॥

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti ahaṅkāraś catur-bhujah* ।  
*pañca-bhūtātmakaṁ śaṅkhaṁ kare rajasi saṁsthitam* ।।

*sattvaṁ* — the mode of goodness; *rajaḥ* — passion; *tamaḥ* — darkness; *iti* — thus; *ahaṅkāraḥ* — ego; *catur-bhujah* — four arms; *pañca-bhūtātmakaṁ* — five elements; *śaṅkhaṁ* — conch shell; *kare* — in the hand; *rajasi* — in the mode of passion; *saṁsthitam* — situated.

**The material ego (*ahaṅkāra*) and the modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance are the four arms [of my universal form]. The hand that holds the conch shell, which is identified with the five elements, represents the mode of passion.**

In this verse Nārāyaṇa explains how devotees of the *virāṭ-rūpa* conceive of his arms, which were previously mentioned in verse 60. He also begins to describe the *virāṭ-rūpa*’s paraphernalia. Three of his four arms represent the three modes of nature. The fourth arm represents *ahaṅkāra*, or the material sense of identity (ego). The hand identified with the mode of passion bears the conch, and the conch itself is identified with the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space.

Śrī Prabodhānanda adds to this the idea that because these modes of nature and the material ego are considered the four arms of the *virāṭ-rūpa*, they are worshipable. In his commentary to the subsequent verses describing the universal form, he concludes that all things conceived of as bodily parts of the *virāṭ-rūpa* are venerable.

69. बालस्वरूपमत्यन्तं मनश्चक्रं निगद्यते ।  
आद्या माया भवेच्छङ्खं पद्मं विश्वं करे स्थितम् ॥६९॥

*bāla-svarūpam atyantam manaś cakram nigadyate ।  
ādyā māyā bhavet chārṇgam padmaṁ viśvaṁ kare sthitam ।।*

*bāla-svarūpam* — the nature of a child; *atyantam* — exceedingly; *manaḥ* — the mind; *cakram* — the discus; *nigadyate* — is said to be; *ādyā* — the original; *māyā* — *māyā*; *bhavet* — shall be; *śārṇgam* — Kṛṣṇa’s bow; *padmaṁ* — the lotus; *viśvaṁ* — the universe; *kare* — in the hand; *sthitam* — placed.

**The mind, whose nature is exceedingly like that of a child, is said to be the universal form’s discus. The original energy, known as *māyā*, is his bow, Śārṇga, and the universe is the lotus situated in his hand.**

The mind in and of itself is innocent or pure. However, just as children are colored by their association, and this often at the cost of innocence, the mind becomes colored by its association and loses its purity or neutrality.

Following the description of the conch in the previous verse, this verse continues the explanation of Nārāyaṇa’s weapons. Śrī Nārāyaṇa identifies the mind with the *virāṭa-rūpa*’s discus. The discus of the *virāṭa-rūpa* is held in his hand that represents the *sattva-guṇa*. Both the bow and the lotus are held together in the hand that represents the *tamo-guṇa*.<sup>25</sup> The bow and lotus in this hand are identified, respectively, with *māyā-śakti*’s power to throw the *jīva* into illusion (*vikṣepātmika*) and the universe itself.

25. Śrī Prabodhānanda has stated in his commentary to verse 60 that the bow is lying before the Lord and is not in any hand.

Nārāyaṇa's description of how devotees conceive of the *virāṭa-rūpa*'s mace continues in the following verse.

70. आद्या विद्या गदा वेद्या सर्वदा मे करे स्थिता ।  
धर्मार्थकामकेयूरैर्दिव्यैर्दिव्यमहीरितैः ॥७०॥

*ādyā vidyā gadā vedyā sarvadā me kare sthitā* ।  
*dharmārtha-kāma-keyūrain divyair divya-mahīritaiḥ* । ।

*ādyā* — original; *vidyā* — knowledge; *gadā* — the mace; *vedyā* — to be known; *sarvadā* — always; *me kare* — in my hand; *sthitā* — situated; *dharmārtha-kāma-keyūraiḥ* — with the armlets of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*; *divyaiḥ* — with the divine; *divya-mahī-iritaiḥ* — praised by the residents of the divine world.

**The original knowledge is to be known as the mace, which is always situated in my hand. My arm is decorated with divine armlets, praised by the residents of the transcendental world, which are the three goals of life: *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*.**

The original knowledge (*ādyā vidyā*) is knowledge of the self. Nārāyaṇa identifies it with the mace of the *virāṭa-rūpa*, which is held in the hand of the universal form of God identified in verse 68 with the material ego (*abhaṅkāra*). The armlets of Nārāyaṇa, described earlier in verse 61, are identified here in relation to the three common goals of life: *dharma* (religion), *artha* (economic development), and *kāma* (sense enjoyment). Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the fourth goal, *mokṣa* (liberation) is implied in this description. These four are the armlets of the universal form. They are praised by transcendentalists because they are the blessings of life.

The balance of Nārāyaṇa's ornaments mentioned in text 61 are elaborated on in the following two verses.

71. कण्ठं तु निर्गुणं प्रोक्तं मात्यते आद्ययाजया ।  
माला निगद्यते ब्रह्मंस्तव पुत्रैस्तु मानसैः ॥७१॥

*kaṇṭhaṁ tu nirguṇaṁ proktaṁ mālyate ādyayājayā ।  
mālā nigadyate brahmaṁs tava putrais tu mānasaiḥ ।।*

*kaṇṭhaṁ* — neck; *tu* — but; *nirguṇaṁ* — free from material qualities; *proktaṁ* — said; *mālyate* — adorned with a garland; *ādyayā* — by the original; *ajayā* — unborn; *mālā* — garland; *nigadyate* — said; *brahman* — O Brahmā; *tava* — your; *putraiḥ* — by sons; *tu* — but; *mānasaiḥ* — by mind.

**O Brahmā, my neck is said to be free of material qualities. It is encircled by my unborn, original energy, which your mind-born sons call a garland.**

The neck of the universal form is *nirviśeṣa-brahma* and his garland is the covering aspect (*āvaraṇātmikā*) of his *māyā-śakti*.

72. कूटस्थं सत्स्वरूपं च किरीटं प्रवदन्ति माम् ।  
क्षरोत्तमं प्रस्फुरन्तं कुण्डल्युगलं स्मृतम् ॥७२॥

*kūṭa-sthaṁ sat-svarūpaṁ ca kirīṭaṁ pravadanti mām ।  
kṣarottamaṁ prasphurantaṁ kuṇḍala-yugalaṁ smṛtaṁ ।।*

*kūṭa-sthaṁ* — unchangeable; *sat-svarūpaṁ* — whose form is truth; *ca* — and; *kirīṭaṁ* — crown; *pravadanti* — they say; *mām* — me; *kṣarottamaṁ* — supreme aspect of the mutable; *prasphurantaṁ* — appearing; *kuṇḍala* — earring; *yugalaṁ* — pair; *smṛtaṁ* — are said to be.

**They also say of me, whose divine form is unchangeable, that I am the crown. My earrings are the supreme aspect of the mutable world.**

Here Nārāyaṇa identifies himself as the crown of the *virāṭ-rūpa* and his earrings with the supreme aspect of the material world, that which brings

about the liberation of the living beings from the world's clutches. Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments on the universal form's earrings: "In the perishable universe, the two things that are supreme are *sāṅkhya* and *yoga*; they are the Lord's earrings. This is confirmed by the *Bhāgavata* (12.11.11), *bibharti sāṅkhyam yogam ca devo makara-kunḍale*: 'The Lord wears *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* as a pair of *makara*-shaped earrings.' Wherever different spiritual paths are mentioned in the *Vedas* or *Purāṇas*, it should be understood that the same fundamental teaching is being presented according to different schools."

*Śrī Gītopaniṣad* (5.5) describes *sāṅkhya* and *yoga* as one because they lead to the same goal. In the *Gītā* these two terms imply contemplative practice and selfless action, respectively. They can also be understood to mean external and internal processes of self-realization. In this understanding, *sāṅkhya* involves distinguishing the self from material nature through an external process of elimination, whereas *yoga* speaks of an internal process of elimination beginning with *yama-niyama* and ending in *samādhi*. In either case, the fulfillment of these two well-known systems is a passport to leave the material atmosphere, whereas Bhakti-devī herself is the visa to Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.

73. ध्यायेन्मम प्रियो नित्यं स मोक्षमधिगच्छति ।  
स मुक्तो भवति तस्मै स्वात्मानं च ददामि वै ॥७३॥

*dhyāyet mama priyo nityam sa mokṣam adbigacchati* ।  
*sa mukto bhavati tasmai svātmānam ca dadāmi vai* ।

*dhyāyet* — should meditate; *mama* — my; *priyaḥ* — dear; *nityam* — constantly; *saḥ* — he; *mokṣam* — liberation; *adbigacchati* — attains; *saḥ* — he; *muktaḥ* — liberated; *bhavati* — becomes; *tasmai* — to him; *svātmānam* — my self; *ca* — and; *dadāmi* — I give; *vai* — most certainly.

**The dear devotee who constantly meditates on me in this way will attain liberation. Once he is liberated, I most certainly give myself to him.**

This is an important verse in which this *Upaniṣad* once again makes it clear that love of God is a postliberated status. This was stated earlier in the commentary to verse 38 of the *uttara-tāpanī*. Furthermore, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa cites it in his *bhāṣya* to Vyāsadeva’s *Vedānta-sūtra* 3.3.47. This *sūtra*, *atideśāc ca*, establishes that there is an eternal distinction between the individual soul and Brahman, even while the two are united in love. Here Nārāyaṇa says it thus: “Once my devotee attains liberation, I most certainly subordinate myself to him.”

74. एतत्सर्वं भविष्यद्वै मया प्रोक्तं विधे तव ।  
स्वरूपं द्विविधं चैव सगुणं निर्गुणात्मकम् ॥७४॥

*etat sarvaṁ bhaviṣyad vai mayā proktaṁ vidhe tava ।*  
*svarūpaṁ dvividhaṁ caiva saḡuṇaṁ nirḡuṇātmaḡam ।।*

*etat* — this; *sarvaṁ* — all; *bhaviṣyat* — will be; *vai* — certainly; *mayā* — by me; *proktaṁ* — spoken; *vidhe* — O Brahmā; *tava* — your; *svarūpaṁ* — identity; *dvividhaṁ* — two kinds; *ca* — both; *eva* — verily; *saḡuṇaṁ* — with attributes; *nirḡuṇātmaḡam* — without attributes.

**O Brahmā, all that I have spoken to you regarding the two types of form, *saḡuṇa* and *nirḡuṇa*, will come to be.**

The fruit of the meditation Nārāyaṇa has been describing is delineated in this and the preceding verse, bringing this section to its conclusion. Two types of meditation have been prescribed for those initiated into the chanting of the Gopāla *mantra*, one leading to the other. Meditation on the *virāṭ-rūpa*, described in this verse as *saḡuṇa* (with material qualities), leads to meditation on the actual form of Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa, described here as *nirḡuṇa* (without material qualities).

This latter meditation on the spiritual form of Gopāla Kṛṣṇa accompanied by the chanting of the Gopāla *mantra* results in mature realization of Parabrahman—his form, qualities, and pastimes—from the vantage point



of one's particular service identity. What Nārāyaṇa has recommended in this section for those not qualified to engage in such internal meditation is a method of fixing the mind on himself in conjunction with the world of the senses—the external universe. Contemplation of the worldly creation as the body of Nārāyaṇa by identifying aspects of it with his spiritual form leads naturally to internal meditation on that form.

75. स होवाचाब्जयोनिः । व्याक्तानां मूर्तीनां प्रोक्तानां कथं  
 त्वाभरणानि भवन्ति । कथं वा देवा यजन्ति रुद्रा यजन्ति  
 ब्रह्मा यजति ब्रह्मजा यजन्ति विनायका यजन्ति  
 द्वादशादित्या यजन्ति वसवो यजन्ति गन्धर्वा यजन्ति ।  
 स्वपदानुगान्तर्धाने तिष्ठति का । कां मनुष्या यजन्ति ॥७५॥

*sa hovācābjayoniḥ | vyaktānām mūrtinām proktānām katham tv ābharāṇāni  
 bhavanti | katham vā devā yajanti rudrā yajanti brahmā yajanti brahmajā  
 yajanti vināyakā yajanti dvādaśādityā yajanti vasavo yajanti gandharvā  
 yajanti | svapadānugāntarbhāne tiṣṭhati kā | kām manuṣyā yajanti |*

*saḥ* — he; *ha* — then; *uvāca* — said; *abjayoniḥ* — the lotus-born (Brahmā); *vyaktānām* — of the manifest; *mūrtinām* — forms; *proktānām* — spoken of; *katham* — how; *tu* — but; *ābharāṇāni* — ornaments; *bhavanti* — being; *katham vā* — or how; *devāḥ* — the gods; *yajanti* — worship; *rudrāḥ* — the Rudras; *yajanti* — worship; *brahmā* — Lord Brahmā; *yajanti* — worship; *brahmajā* — the sons of Brahmā; *yajanti* — worship; *vināyakāḥ* — the Vināyakas; *yajanti* — worship; *dvādaśādityā* — the twelve Ādityas; *yajanti* — worship; *vasavaḥ* — the Vasus; *yajanti* — worship; *gandharvāḥ* — the Gandharvas; *yajanti* — worship; *sva-padānuga* — gone to his own abode; *antardhāne* — after passing from this world; *tiṣṭhati* — is situated; *kā* — which; *kām* — whom; *manuṣyāḥ* — human beings; *yajanti* — worship.

**The lotus-born Brahmā asked: How is it possible for the manifest *mūrtis* of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments? And how do gods such as the Rudras, Brahmā, the sons of**

**Brahmā, the Vināyakas, the twelve Ādityas, the Vasus, and the Gandharvas worship them? Which *mūrti* returns to his own abode and which remains after disappearance? Which *mūrti* do human beings worship?**

As this new section of the text begins, Brahmā expresses the doubts that arose in him on hearing Nārāyaṇa's description of the twelve Deities of Mathurā's twelve forests (2.32). The text in the manuscript that this translation and commentary are derived from reads *vyaktānām mūrtinām* (manifest Deities). However, both Viśveśvara Tirtha's commentary and the following verse leave room to reasonably conjecture that the manuscript he was working with may have read *avyaktānām mūrtinām* (unmanifest Deities). Thus Brahmā may have asked, "How is it possible for the unmanifest *mūrtis* of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments?" Prabodhānanda also comments that some manuscripts read *vyaktānām mūrtinām* (separate Deities), which would then make the verse say, "How is it possible for the separate *mūrtis* of the Lord that were previously mentioned to have ornaments?"

Brahmā wants to know in what manner the gods worship these Deities. The word *vā* (or) implies that he also wants to know which gods worship which Deities. His confusion arises partly from the teaching that Nārāyaṇa/Kṛṣṇa is worshipable by everyone, while previously, in verse 33, it was mentioned that certain gods worship certain Deities. Brahmā also wants to better understand Nārāyaṇa's description of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth Deities of the Mathurā forests, who were respectively described as being invisible (*antardhāne*), as having returned to Vaikuṇṭha (*sva-pade*), and as remaining on the earth (*bhumiṣṭhe*) and being worshiped by humans.

76. स होवाच तं हि वै नारायणो देवः ।  
आद्या अव्यक्ता द्वादशमूर्तयः सर्वेषु लोकेषु  
सर्वेषु देवेषु सर्वेषु मनुष्येषु तिष्ठन्ति ॥७६॥

*sa hovāca tam hi vai nārāyaṇo devaḥ | ādyā avyaktā dvādaśa-mūrtayaḥ  
sarveṣu lokeṣu sarveṣu deveṣu sarveṣu manuṣyeṣu tiṣṭhanti |*

*saḥ* — he; *hovāca* — spoke; *taṁ* — to him; *hi vai* — certainly; *nārāyaṇaḥ devaḥ* — Lord Nārāyaṇa; *ādyāḥ* — original; *avyaktāḥ* — unmanifest; *dvādaśa-mūrtayaḥ* — twelve forms; *sarveṣu lokeṣu* — in all the worlds; *sarveṣu deveṣu* — among all the gods; *sarveṣu manuṣyeṣu* — among all humans; *tiṣṭhanti* — are situated.

**Lord Nārāyaṇa said to Brahmā: The twelve originally unmanifest forms are present in all worlds, among all gods and all humans.**

Here Nārāyaṇa responds to the first question: “How can these Deities be decorated when they are unmanifest in form?” Nārāyaṇa tells Brahmā that these Deities, while unmanifest in the sense that they only manifest to those who worship them, are nonetheless eternally existing in all worlds among both gods and humans. They are *ādyā*, original, or eternally existing without beginning. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the word *ādyā* means *anādi-siddha*, “existing in the same perfect state without any beginning.” He adds that the word *avyakta* means that they are unmanifest to anyone other than those who worship them and that the word *tiṣṭhanti* underscores the idea that these Deities are manifest only to their worshipers.

Thus Brahmā’s first question concerning how Deities that are unmanifest can be ornamented is answered by Nārāyaṇa in conjunction with describing how they are worshiped by the various gods. By their worship, the Deities become manifest. If Brahmā’s question is how the twelve manifest Deities can be worshiped when the teaching thus far has emphasized the exclusive worship of the one Supreme Brahman—a question about how one Deity can also be many—Nārāyaṇa begins his answer in this verse and concludes it in the following one.

77. रुद्रेषु रौद्री ब्रह्मण्येवं ब्राह्मी देवेषु दैवी  
मनुष्येषु मानवी विनायकेषु विघ्ननाशिनी

आदित्येषु ज्योतिर्गन्धर्वेषु गान्धर्वी अप्सरःस्वेवं  
गौर्वसुषेवं काम्या अन्तर्धाने प्रकाशिनी ॥७७॥

*rudreṣu raudrī brahmaṇi evaṁ brāhmī deveṣu daivī  
manuṣyeṣu mānavī vināyakeṣu vighna-nāśinī ādityeṣu jyotir  
gandharveṣu gāndharvī apsaraḥsv evaṁ  
gaur vasuṣv evaṁ kāmīā antardhāne prakāśinī | |*

*rudreṣu* — among the Rudras; *raudrī* — the form of a Rudra; *brahmaṇi* — to Brahmā; *evaṁ* — in the same way; *brāhmī* — a Brahmā-like form; *deveṣu* — among the gods; *daivī* — a godlike form; *manuṣyeṣu* — among humans; *mānavī* — a human form; *vināyakeṣu* — among the Vināyakas; *vighna-nāśinī* — a form that destroys obstacles; *ādityeṣu* — among the Ādityas; *jyotiḥ* — light; *gandharveṣu* — among the Gandharvas; *gāndharvī* — a Gandharva form; *apsaraḥsv* — among the Apsarās; *evaṁ* — in the same way; *gaur* — the singer; *vasuṣv* — among the Vasus; *evaṁ* — in the same way; *kāmīā* — desirable; *antardhāne* — after becoming invisible; *prakāśinī* — Prakāśinī, or Aprakāśinī (if *sandhi* is considered to have been applied).

I am worshiped by the Rudras in my form as Rudra, on Brahmāloka as Brahmā, to the gods as God, to humans as a human. Among the Vināyakas my form is that of the remover of obstacles, Gaṇeśa; to the Ādityas I am light; to the Gandharvas I appear as a Gandharva; to the Apsarās I appear as Gau, whose form is revealed in song; to the Vasus I appear as the desirable Vāsavi; and after I disappear, I then appear in the invisible form Aprakāśinī [or the form that sometimes reveals itself, Prakāśinī].

These twelve forms are different manifestations of the same God as he appears to specific groups of worshipers. Their appearance and ornamentation reflect the hearts of their devotees. The many forms of the one God are one with the pure hearts of his devotees. God is fully present within love of

God, and there is no meaning to God independent of love of God. Indeed, we are well advised to venerate love of God more than God himself.

This truth accounts for the spiritual bias that fuels the liberated worlds of sacred aesthetic rapture (*rasānanda*). Thus this obscure yet important section of *Gopāla-tāpanī* provides a *śruti* reference for this experience of the Vaiṣṇavas.

The word *gauḥ*, which usually means “cow,” is the cause of some confusion. Does this mean that God appears to the Apsarās as a cow? Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī solves this problem in the following way: “The word *gauḥ* should be understood here to be derived from the verbal root *gai*, ‘to sing.’ The name thus means ‘one whose form is revealed by song.’ ” It is explained here that the Deity described as invisible is called Prakāśinī, visible only in the heart of his devotees. The Deity that remains on earth is the one worshiped by the human beings who are Brahman-realized.

78. आविर्भावतिरोभावा स्वपदे तिष्ठति ।  
तामसी राजसी सात्त्विकी मानुषी  
विज्ञानघनानन्दघनः सच्चिदानन्दैकरसे  
भक्तियोगे तिष्ठति ॥७८॥

*āvirbhāva-tirobhāvā sva-pade tiṣṭhati* ।  
*tāmasī rājāsī sāttvikī mānuṣī vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghanah*  
*sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati* । ।

*āvirbhāva* — appearance; *tirobhāvā* — disappearance; *sva-pade* — own abode; *tiṣṭhati* — stands; *tāmasī* — in the mode of ignorance; *rājāsī* — in the mode of passion; *sāttvikī* — in the mode of goodness; *mānuṣī* — human; *vijñāna* — spiritual realization; *ghanah* — solid; *ānanda* — joy; *ghanah* — embodied; *sac-cid-ānanda* — eternity, knowledge, and bliss; *eka-rase* — exclusively characterized; *bhakti-yoge* — in *bhakti-yoga*; *tiṣṭhati* — stands.

The *mūrti* that is sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest remains in his own abode. His forms, whether human or in the modes of ignorance, passion, or goodness, are the embodiment of spiritual realization and joy, and are permanently situated in *bhakti-yoga*, exclusively characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.

More details are given here about the Deity who in texts 33 and 75 was described as having gone to his own abode (Vaikuṇṭha). Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that this *mūrti*, which is “sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest,” occasionally descends to this world and at other times remains situated in his own abode (*sva-pade*). The word *sva-pade* is taken as significant by Śrī Prabodhānanda and indicates that in his opinion this Deity is the source of Mathurā’s other eleven Deities. “His own abode” is Goloka, which, Śrī Prabodhānanda says, is a special manifestation of earthly Vṛndāvana.

Śrī Prabodhānanda hears this Deity speaking about his manifest and unmanifest pastimes in Vṛndāvana in the following verses, which he attributes to the *Gautamiya-tantra*.<sup>26</sup>

This beautiful land of Vṛndāvana is my eternal abode. The woods that extend for five *yojanas* are veritably my own body. The Kālindī River, which flows through it, is the Suṣumnā channel that carries the currents of pure nectar. Living there in subtle form are the gods and other beings, and I, who am the essence of all the gods, never abandon this wood at any time. In every age, I am sometimes manifest and sometimes unmanifest, but this effulgent, transcendental aspect of my abode is not perceptible to the mundane sense of sight.

Although his different forms appearing in the world are apparently in different modes of nature (animal forms, godly forms, and so on), they are not un-

26. I have not been able to find these verses in the extant edition of *Gautamiya-tantra*, but it is in *Padma Purāṇa* (4.75.8–13).

der the influence of material nature. His form is described here as being “the embodiment of spiritual realization and joy” and “permanently situated in *bhakti-yoga*, exclusively characterized by eternity, knowledge, and bliss.”

He can be perceived in the pure condition of *bhakti-yoga* by those who have knowledge (*viññāna*) characterized by realization of his form, qualities, and pastimes, which are the antithesis of unconscious matter. In explaining this, Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī comments that the word *ghanāḥ* in this verse means “solid” or “dense,” and thus *ānanda-ghanāḥ* means “solidified spiritual energy” or “spiritual energy that has taken form.” *Ānanda-ghanāḥ* (solidified joy) also indicates a form that is the antithesis of all distress. As Kṛṣṇa is constituted of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, so too is pure devotion.

79. ॐ तत्प्राणात्मने ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्त्यस्यै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥७९॥

*om tat prāṇātmane*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvāḥ svaḥ tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*om* — Om; *tat* — that; *prāṇātmane* — the soul of the life breath; *om tat sat* — this is the truth; *bhūḥ bhuvāḥ svaḥ* — the earth, the atmosphere, and heaven; *tasmai* — to him; *vai* — definitely; *prāṇātmane* — to the soul of the life breath; *namo namaḥ* — repeated obeisances.

**I offer obeisances to the soul of the life breath. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.**

With this verse Nārāyaṇa begins a seventeen-verse prayer (*stuti*) glorifying Gopāla Kṛṣṇa as the essence of all forms of God, the Supreme Brahman. Previously it was shown that the *praṇava omkāra* represents Kṛṣṇa. Here Nārāyaṇa states that he is *prāṇātmā*, the soul (*ātmā*) of one’s life air (*prāṇa*).

Śrī Prabodhānanda says that “Kṛṣṇa is deserving of the commitment of one’s entire life breath. That which is designated by the *praṇava* is not *prāṇa*, which is, after all, unconscious matter, but that supreme substance possessing multiple energies, Brahman.”

The word *prāṇa* is often used to refer to the fivefold life air, which the soul is said to be floating on within the body. The fivefold division of this life air is *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *udāna*, *vyāna*, and *samāna*. The movements of the body are generated from the heart, and all subsequent movement, which is made possible by the senses, is powered by the life airs. The main air passing through the nose in breathing is called *prāṇa*. The air that passes through the rectum as evacuated bodily air is called *apāna*. The air that pervades the entire body and adjusts the foodstuff within the stomach is called *samāna*. The air that passes through the throat during breathing is called *udāna*. The air that governs muscular functioning is called *vyāna*.

In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.1.9) the situation of the soul in relation to *prāṇa* is explained as follows:

*eṣo ’ñur ātmā cetasā veditavyo  
yasmin prāṇaḥ pañcadbhā saṁviveśa  
prāṇaiś cittānī sarvaṁ otam prajānānī  
yasmin viśuddhe vibhavaty eṣa ātmā*

The atomic soul is floating in five kinds of bodily airs. When purified from the influence of these airs, it shines forth and can be known by perfect intelligence.

*Prāṇa* is mentioned in all but one of the verses in this *stuti*. The other four life airs, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *udāna*, and *samāna*, are mentioned in verses 81, 83, 85, and 87, respectively. Śrī Prabodhānanda comments that because *prāṇa* is situated in the heart and *vyāna* pervades the entire body, these two airs are predominant and are thus related more closely to Kṛṣṇa himself. *Apā-*



na, samāna, and udāna, on the other hand, are more closely related to his secondary features or expansions.

Nārāyaṇa points out that along with his being the soul of everyone's life air, Kṛṣṇa is also the soul of the three worlds—*bbūh*, *bhuvah*, *svah*—which represent the physical, mental, and intellectual planes of experience. Since the *jīvas* in which he dwells as the inner soul pervade the three worlds, he is the soul of all *jīvas* and the entire world.

The fact that it is Kṛṣṇa whom Nārāyaṇa is glorifying and equating with *praṇava omkāra* is clear from the following verse, in which his names Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, and Gopī-jana-vallabha are once again used and identified with the *praṇava omkāra*, the Supreme Brahman.

80. ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय गोविन्दाय गोपीजनवल्लभाय ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८०॥

*om śrī-kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*om* — Om; *śrī-kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *govindāya* — to the Lord of the cows; *gopī-jana-vallabhāya* — to the lover of the *gopīs*.

**Om. Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Lord of the cows and lover of the *gopīs*.  
Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated  
obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.**

81. ॐ अपानात्मने ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८१॥

*om apānātmane*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*apānātmane* — to the downward breath.

**Om.** Obeisances to the soul of the downward breath. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

82. ॐ कृष्णाय रामाय प्रद्युम्नायानिरुद्धाय ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८२॥

*om kṛṣṇāya rāmāya pradyumnāyaniruddhāya*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*kṛṣṇāya* — to Kṛṣṇa; *rāmāya* — to Rāma; *pradyumnāya* — to Pradyumna; *aniruddhāya* — to Aniruddha.

**Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.** Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

83. ॐ व्यानात्मने ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८३॥

*om vyānātmane*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*vyānātmane* — to the bodily airs that govern muscular functioning.

**Om.** Obeisances to the soul of the breath that governs muscular functioning (*vyāna*). Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

84. ॐ श्रीकृष्णाय रामाय ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८४॥

*om śrī-kṛṣṇāya rāmāya*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*śrī-kṛṣṇāya rāmāya* — to Kṛṣṇa and Rāmacandra.

**Om.** Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa who is the same as Rāmacandra (or Balarāma). Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

85. ॐ उदानात्मने ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८५॥

*om udānātmane*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*udānātmane* — to the breath that passes through the throat.

**Om.** Obeisances to the soul of the breath that passes through the throat (*udāna*). Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

86. ॐ कृष्णाय देवकीनन्दनाय ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८६॥

*om kṛṣṇāya devakī-nandanāya*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*kṛṣṇāya devakī-nandanāya* — to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī.

**Om.** Obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

87. ॐ समानात्मने ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८७॥

*om samānātmane*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*samānātmane* — the life air that pervades the whole body.

**Om.** That Gopāla is the soul of the life air that pervades the whole body. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

88. ॐ गोपालाय निजस्वरूपाय ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८८॥

*om gopālāya nija-svarūpāya*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*gopālāya* — to Gopāla; *nija-svarūpāya* — the Supreme Truth's own form.

**Om.** Obeisances to Gopāla, the true form of the Supreme Truth. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

89. ॐ योऽसौ प्रधानात्मा गोपालः ।

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥८९॥

*om yo 'sau pradhānātmā gopālaḥ*

*om tat sad bhūr bhuvaḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *pradhānātmā* — the soul of the material energy; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om.** That Gopāla is the soul of the source of the material energy (*pradbāna*). Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

१०. ॐ योऽसाविन्द्रियात्मा गोपालः ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९०॥

*om yo 'sāv indriyātmā gopālaḥ*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *indriyātmā* — the soul of the senses; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om.** That Gopāla is the soul of all the senses. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

११. ॐ योऽसौ भूतात्मा गोपालः ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९१॥

*om yo 'sau bhūtātmā gopālaḥ*  
*om tat sad bhūr bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ ।*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *bhūtātmā* — the soul of the material elements; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om.** That Gopāla is the soul of the material elements. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

१२. ॐ योऽसावुत्तमपुरुषो गोपालः ।  
ॐ तत्सद्गर्भुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९२॥

*om̐ yo 'sāv uttama-puruṣo gopālaḥ*

*om̐ tat sad bhūr bhuvāḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ |*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *uttama-puruṣaḥ* — the Supreme Person; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om̐. That Gopāla is the Supreme Person. Om̐, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.**

93. ॐ योऽसौ परं ब्रह्म गोपालः

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९३॥

*om̐ yo 'sau param brahma gopālaḥ*

*om̐ tat sad bhūr bhuvāḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ |*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *param brahma* — the Supreme Spirit; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om̐. That Gopāla is the Parabrahman. Om̐, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.**

94. ॐ योऽसौ सर्वभूतात्मा गोपालः

ॐ तत्सद्गुरुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९४॥

*om̐ yo 'sau sarva-bhūtātma gopālaḥ*

*om̐ tat sad bhūr bhuvāḥ svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ |*

*yaḥ* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *sarva-bhūtātma* — the soul of all beings; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om.** That Gopāla is the soul of all beings. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

95. ॐ योऽसौ जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिमतीत्य तुर्यातीतो गोपालः ।  
ॐ तत्सद्ब्रुवःस्वस्तस्मै वै प्राणात्मने नमो नमः ॥९५॥

*om yo 'sau jāgrat-svapna-suṣṭim atitya turyātīto gopālaḥ |*  
*om tat sad bhūv bhuvah svas tasmai vai prāṇātmane namo namaḥ | |*

*yah* — the one who; *asau* — that person; *jāgrat-svapna-suṣṭim* — the three states of consciousness; *atitya* — transcends; *turyātītaḥ* — beyond the fourth state of consciousness; *gopālaḥ* — Gopāla.

**Om.** Gopāla transcends the three states of consciousness: wakefulness, dream, and deep sleep; he is even beyond the fourth state of divine consciousness. Om, this is the truth throughout the three worlds. I offer repeated obeisances to him who is verily the soul of *prāṇa*.

Among the Hindu sages, consciousness is generally considered to encompass four dimensions: waking (*jāgrata*), dreaming (*svapna*), dreamless deep sleep (*suṣṭi*), and transcendence, referred to simply as the “fourth” (*turiya*). Each dimension represents a successively more profound experience of the nature of being.

The first two dimensions represent the experience of the physical and mental planes, in which consciousness perceives itself through the medium of the senses and the mind. The physical world is the world of everyday experience, and the mental world is the world of greater possibilities drawn from the experience of the physical or waking state but not limited by its jurisdiction. It affords a greater sense of the freedom that corresponds with the nature of the self. Each of these dimensions, however, conceals to a large extent the possibility of the soul, which exists indepen-

dently of the senses and mental system. Should these two—the mind and senses—shut down, the soul itself can rest.

In a limited way, we experience this in dreamless deep sleep. Similarly, when the world of physical and mental experience begins to withdraw and ultimately shut down, as the expansion of the world represented by the outgoing breath of Viṣṇu reverses with his inhalation, all materially conditioned souls enter *susupti*. In dreamless deep sleep, they exist in restful experience independent of the world of the mind and senses until the world again manifests. At that time in conformance with the constraints of *karma* under which they are still bound, all materially conditioned souls again enter the stream of life. If they are fortunate, in one of their innumerable lives they can reach the shore of transcendence, the fourth dimension: *turiya*, self- and God-realization. In this dimension, being is experienced from the vantage point of the Godhead.

*Gopāla-tāpanī*, however, seeks to take us to a fifth dimension, and thus here in its next-to-concluding words it states, *turyātito gopālaḥ*. *Mokṣa*, liberation, including devotional liberation, is *turiya* (the fourth dimension), but Vraja *prema* in which Gopāla Kṛṣṇa is realized is beyond the “fourth.” It is the fifth goal of life, *pañcama-puruṣārtha—prema vastu*. This *prema*, or selfless, spontaneous love, is the highest ideal, to which Gopāla Kṛṣṇa bows and through which he is realized.

96. एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः  
सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।  
कर्माध्यक्षः सर्वभूताधिवासः  
साक्षी चेताः केवलो निर्गुणश्च ॥६॥

*eko devaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ*  
*sarva-vyāpī sarva-bhūtāntarātmā ।*  
*karmādhyaśaḥ sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ*  
*sākṣī cetā kevalo nirguṇaś ca । ।*



*ekaḥ* — one; *devaḥ* — Deity; *sarva-bhūteṣu* — in all beings; *gūḍhaḥ* — hidden; *sarva-vyāpi* — all-pervading; *sarva-bhūtāntarātmā* — the indwelling soul of all creatures; *karmādhyaḥ* — the director of *karma*; *sarva-bhūtādhivāsaḥ* — the resort of all beings; *sākṣi* — the witness; *cetā* — the consciousness; *kevalaḥ* — only; *nirguṇaḥ* — without material qualities; *ca* — and.

**One Supreme Deity is hidden in every living being. He is the all-pervading, indwelling soul of all creatures. He is the director of the activities of creation, the resort of all beings, the witness, and consciousness, unique and free from material qualities.<sup>27</sup>**

In his conversation with Nārāyaṇa, Brahmā questioned how the singular Supreme Brahman can at the same time be fourfold, as in the case of the *catur-vyūha*. In this verse Nārāyaṇa anticipates further doubts from Brahmā regarding the Supreme Soul's becoming many, as in the case of the innumerable *jīva* souls. How does he do so? Here Nārāyaṇa explains that he enters into each soul and hides within them. *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.6.1) states that Brahman desired to become many, *so 'kāmayata, babu syāṁ prajāyeyeti*. He then created and entered his creation, *tat sṛṣṭvā tad evānu-praviśat*. He became the many souls and also entered into them, where he hides waiting to be discovered as the *jīva* realizes its brightest prospect in life: to meet its master and know his love.

Because God is all-pervasive, his entrance into the world is different from that of ordinary *jīvas*, who are limited by time and space. Such *jīvas* perceive the material sky to be all-pervasive, but God's all-pervasiveness is not merely like that of the sky, for he is indwelling at the same time that he is all-pervading. He rests in the heart of all *jīvas*, and indeed, within every atom of material existence, while he simultaneously pervades the entirety of the material world. Furthermore, being the director of all beings, he is not like the God of the Mīmāṃsākas, who sets up the world but remains uninvolved in it, allowing it to be ruled by the principle of *karma*. Because

27. This text is also found in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.11.

he is the resort of all beings, no being is equal to him, unlike what the Nyāya philosophers hold. He is both the efficient and ingredient cause of the world. He is not transformed from his transcendent status into the world of matter, for he is witness to it all and thus remains unchanged. The world is the transformation of his *śakti*. He, being *nirguṇa*, is pure consciousness free from material qualities and unique in that he possesses innumerable potencies.

97. रुद्राय नमः । आदित्याय नमः । विनायकाय नमः ।  
 सूर्याय नमः । विद्यायै नमः । इन्द्राय नमः ।  
 अग्नये नमः । यमाय नमः । निर्ऋतये नमः ।  
 वायवे नमः । कुवेराय नमः । ईशानाय नमः ।  
 ब्रह्मणे नमः । सर्वेभ्यो देवेभ्यो नमः ॥९७॥

*rudrāya namaḥ* | *adityāya namaḥ* | *vināyakāya namaḥ* | *sūryāya namaḥ* |  
*vidyāyai namaḥ* | *indrāya namaḥ* | *agnaye namaḥ* | *yamāya namaḥ* | *nirṛtaye*  
*namaḥ* | *vāyave namaḥ* | *kuverāya namaḥ* | *īśānāya namaḥ* | *brahmaṇe*  
*namaḥ* | *sarvebhyaḥ devebhyaḥ namaḥ* |

*rudrāya* — to Rudra; *namaḥ* — salutations; *adityāya* — to Āditya; *vināyakāya* — to Vināyaka (Ganeśa); *sūryāya* — to Sūrya, the sun god; *vidyāyai* — to the goddess of learning (Sarasvatī); *indrāya* — to Indra; *agnaye* — to the god of fire (Agni); *yamāya* — to the god of death; *nirṛtaye* — to the goddess of the lower regions; *vāyave* — to the wind god Vāyu; *kuverāya* — to the treasurer of the gods, Kuvera; *īśānāya* — to Lord Śiva; *brahmaṇe* — to Lord Brahmā; *sarvebhyaḥ* — to all; *devebhyaḥ* — to the gods; *namaḥ* — salutations.

**Salutations to Rudra. Salutations to Āditya. Salutations to Vināyaka. Salutations to Sūrya. Salutations to Sarasvatī. Salutations to Indra. Salutations to Agni. Salutations to Yamarāja. Salutations to Nirṛti. Salutations to Vāyu. Salutations to Kuvera. Salutations to Īśāna. Salutations to Brahmā. Salutations to all the gods.**

In this text consisting of fourteen salutations, Nārāyaṇa shows Brahmā how to worship the one Supreme God as he appears in different forms. Śrī Prabodhānanda considers all the personalities mentioned to be *vibhūti*s, or manifestations of God's divine power. By this power, others are able to do God's work.

98. दत्त्वा स्तुतिं पुण्यतमां ब्रह्मणे स्वस्वरूपिणे ।  
कर्तृत्वं सर्वभूतानामन्तर्धाने बभूव सः ॥९८॥

*dattvā stutim puṇyatatām brahmaṇe sva-svarūpiṇe ।*  
*kartṛtvaṁ sarvabhūtānām antardhāne babbūva saḥ ।।*

*dattvā* — having offered; *stutim* — these hymns; *puṇyatatām* — most holy; *brahmaṇe* — to Lord Brahmā; *sva-svarūpiṇe* — his own original identity; *kartṛtvaṁ* — mastery; *sarva-bhūtānām* — over all living beings; *antardhāne* — invisible; *babbūva* — became; *saḥ* — he (Nārāyaṇa).

**After giving this most sacred hymn, Nārāyaṇa accepted Brahmā as a manifestation of himself and bestowed on him mastery over all creatures. Then Nārāyaṇa disappeared.**

With this and the following verse, Durvāsā concludes his teaching to Gāndharvī and the *gopī*s, having recited the sacred conversation between Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā. He mentions here that after receiving Nārāyaṇa's instruction Brahmā was empowered by him for the work of creation and thereby accepted by Nārāyaṇa as an empowered manifestation of himself, *aveśāvatāra*.

99. ब्रह्मणे ब्रह्मपुत्रेभ्यो नारदाय यथाश्रुतम् ।  
तथा प्रोक्तस्तु गान्धर्वि गच्छध्वं स्वाख्यान्तिकम् ॥ इति ॥ ९९॥

*brahmaṇe brahma-putrebhyo nārādāya yathā śrutam ।*  
*tathā proktas tu gāndharvi gacchadhvaṁ svālayāntikam ।। iti ।।*

*brahmaṇe* — to Lord Brahmā; *brahma-putrebhyaḥ* — to the sons of Brahmā; *nāradaḥ* — to Nārada; *yathā* — just as; *śrutam* — heard; *tathā* — so; *proktaḥ* — spoken; *tu* — so; *gāndharvī* — O Gāndharvī; *gacchadbvaṁ* — you *gopīs*; *svālayāntikam* — to your own homes; *iti* — thus concludes Durvāsā's speech.

**I have told you, Gāndharvī, exactly what was said to Brahmā, to Brahmā's sons, and to Nārada, just as I have heard it. You and all the *gopīs* may now go home.**

Thus *Gopāla-tāpanī-śruti* rests. May all who read it now go home following the teaching of this text, which points us in the proper direction. May Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, and the host of commentators whose work preceded this commentary be pleased with it. I offer it unto my divine guardians, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī, on this Purnimā day in the month of July 2003, which corresponds with the day commemorating the disappearance of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, the divine architect of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya*. May he also be pleased with this commentary and mercifully bestow *sambandha-jñāna* on those who study it carefully in the mood of devotion to Śrī Gaura-Gopāla.





THE UPANIṢADS inform us that we should move from mortality to immortality. However, *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* takes us further still, from immortality to the *nectar* of immortality. It speaks to us of an experience of immortality that is both positive and progressive. Rather than an experience of immortality that involves only the cessation of mortality, retiring the soul in eternal passivity, the passages of *Gopāla-tāpanī* underscore the potential of the soul to experience divine play in a realm where reason finds dignity not merely in suppressing sensual passions but, more so, in bowing to divine passion. Although Kṛṣṇa's divine play is the ideal of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, being an *Upaniṣad*, the text is true to its genre and therefore sober. It stresses the discipline of freedom—the *mantra*—and its fruit, the music that sets God in motion. As Nietzsche would have it, so too does *Gopāla-tāpanī*: freedom is disciplined in that it is a product of a very long period of constraining oneself. Where *Gopāla-tāpanī* differs, of course, is that its eternity is not a euphemism for death. It is the doorway to a land beyond time through which one enters to participate in God's play, where God, believe it or not, has become a dancer.

Apply yourself in the discipline of *Gopāla-tāpanī*, the *yoga* of devotion that sheds light (*tāpanī*) on the cowherd Kṛṣṇa (Gopāla), and learn to love like you could never have imagined or reasoned was possible. This eternal text of revelation descends from a land of love far beyond the reach of the mind—where words cannot reach—and thus about which we cannot say enough.

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