

śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

KṚṢṂA —
THE BUTTER THIEF

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa
Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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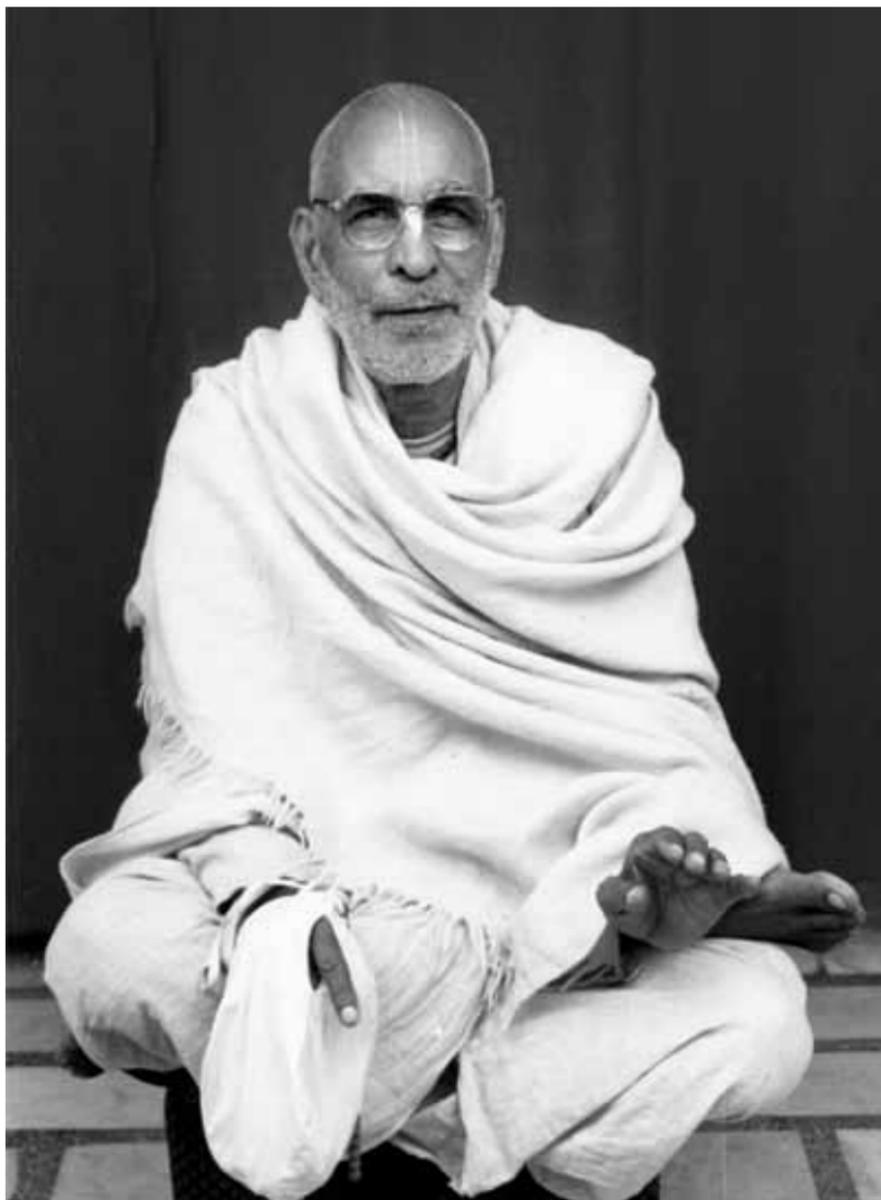
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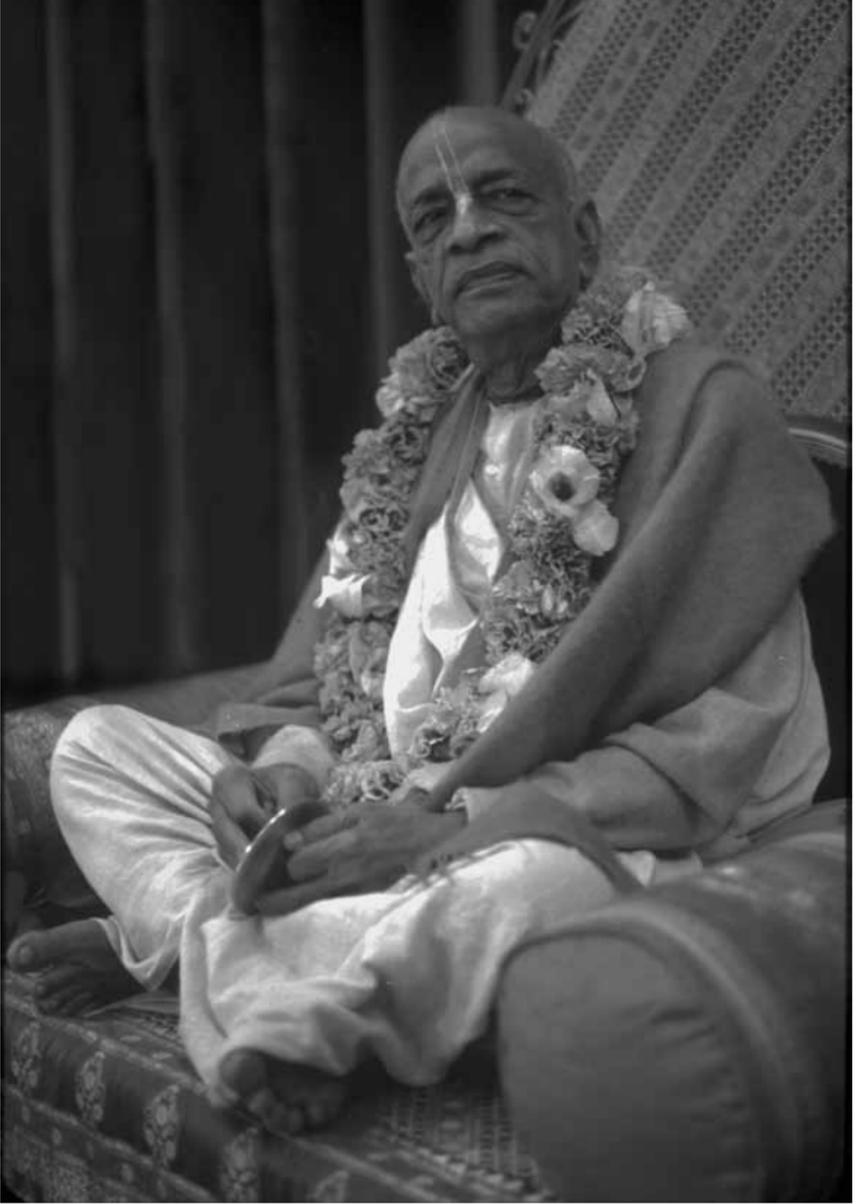
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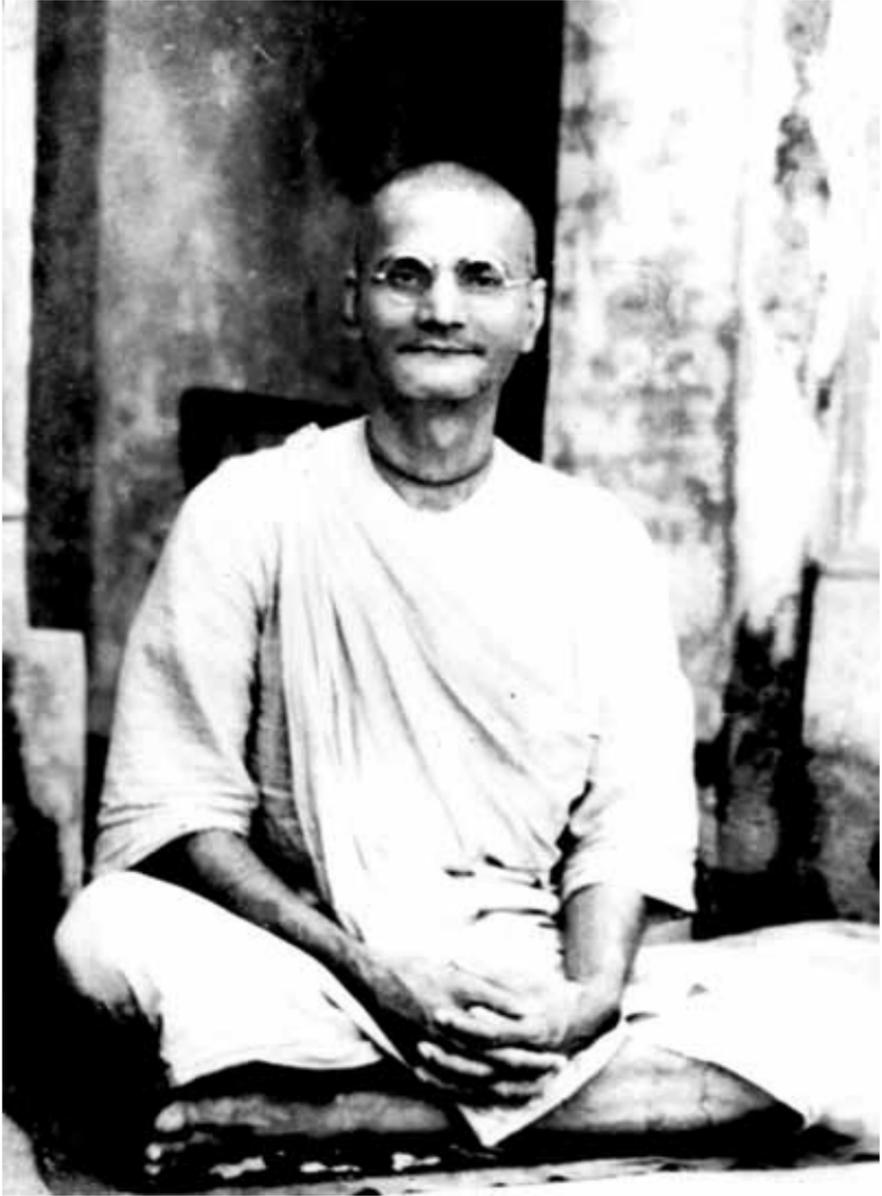
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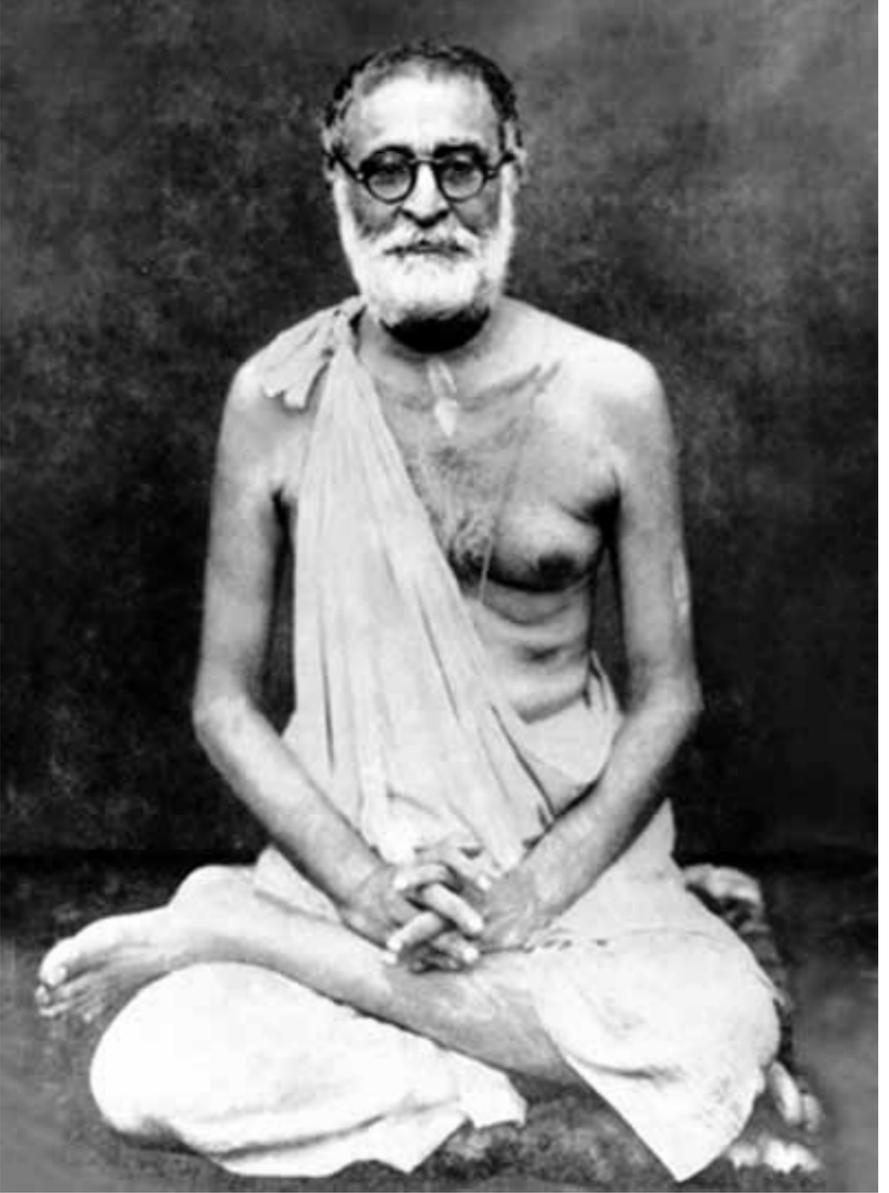
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA
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GOSVĀMĪ PRABHUPĀDA

Introduction

This small book, “The Butter Thief,” is a summary study of one of the most remarkable and illuminating pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This pastime is found in the venerable *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, considered by self-realized authorities and scholars as the ripened fruit of the vast tree of Vedic literature. There are many religious scriptures that aim to help the conditioned souls living in this world, to realize their divine spiritual nature, and their eternal, loving relationship with God. However, nowhere except the Vedas and specifically the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, will one find such detailed revelation of the personal aspect of God, His transcendental world, and the sublimely sweet, loving pastimes performed by Him and His eternal, liberated associates.

To help the conditioned souls to awaken their attraction to the Lord, He mercifully descends to this world along with His associates and His abode, to display His magnificent transcendental pastimes. By hearing and contemplating these pastimes with attention and honor, a desire to be with the Lord and to serve Him will stir within the heart.

This book is compiled from a series of lectures delivered by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja in Vṛndāvana, India, the place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine birth and childhood pastimes. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is a life-long devotee and self-realized scholar, deeply immersed in the sublime spiritual truths contained in Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes and instructions. The intention of these discourses is to reveal the extraordinary quality of the love that devotees feel for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that He feels for them.

That love may be exhibited in different moods. Some may express their love for the Lord as servants, or friends, or as parents, and even as wives or lovers. These roles are not imaginary or temporary, but are the actual eternal identity of the liberated souls. In these identities, the devotees exchange an infinite variety of enthralling spiritual sentiments with the ultimate object of their love, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By hearing of these loving exchanges, one may be elevated to that same plane of transcendent love.

This pastime of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, where he is known as the Butter Thief, is particularly charming. Absorbed by His own desire, in the role of a naughty young boy, Kṛṣṇa delights His mother and all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana with His sweet, child-like activities. One of His favorite pastimes is to stealthily enter into the homes of the other mothers in Vṛndāvana, and eat the butter that they have made and carefully hidden from Him. This butter, which they have churned with their own hands, is made while entranced in a mood of great love for Kṛṣṇa. By stealing and eating this butter, He is actually tasting their love for Him, and stealing their very hearts as well.

Mother Yaśodā is concerned that her child is becoming too mischievous, and in order to keep Him from growing into a young rascal, decides to punish Him by binding Him to a large grinding mortar. The Supreme Lord, Who possesses unlimited, inconceivable potencies, thus agrees to be bound like an ordinary child, in order to experience the superlatively sweet mood of parental love and concern displayed by His mother. He thus becomes controlled by the love of His own devotee. This is the highest mystery in transcendental science. The Supreme Lord is the Controller of all controllers, yet He becomes submissive to the love of His dear devotees.

In this engaging narrative spoken by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we get a glimpse of that eternal divine realm of the Lord, where every word is a song, and every step a dance, where Kṛṣṇa and His devotees eternally engage in an ever-changing, ever fresh drama of sweet loving pastimes. May the Lord and His divine associates bestow Their mercy and grant us entrance into that most sacred Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma.

This book is based entirely on the first edition compiled and edited by Śrīmatī Syāmarāṇī didi. The book follows the first edition with some minor changes based on additional information gleaned from more recent lectures and literature translated by Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Humbly in the service of Śrī Guru & Vaiṣṇavas,

Bhaktivedānta Vaikhanas Mahārāja

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī,
8th September, 2008
Bangalore, India

Chapter One

Hearing Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes

Reliable and Essential Knowledge

The Vedic culture of India is steeped in esoteric knowledge, and has developed to such a degree that the sages in this culture have discovered the soul. They have also discovered God within and without, and through research into the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they have even discovered and realised different relationships with God. We can never imagine or realise transcendental relationships with the Supreme Personality of Godhead through our imperfect material senses and knowledge.

However, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself transmits transcendental knowledge through an unbroken succession of spiritual masters and disciples. He personally imparted this transcendental knowledge to Brahmā (the creator of the material universe). Brahmā then gave it to Nārada, Nārada to Vyāsa, and Vyāsa to Śukadeva. This process of disciplic succession established a body of transcendental knowledge that has descended to us from the perfect source. We should trust this disciplic succession and try our best to follow it.

What is God's transcendental nature? What can we know of His omnipotence and mercy? What relationship do we have with Him, and how can we realise this relationship and serve Him eternally? These topics have been elaborately described and explained in the great scripture *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which contains the essence of all Vedic literature. There are twelve cantos in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and its most important instructions

are contained in the Tenth Canto. The purpose of this booklet is to explain the essence of the Tenth Canto. It is very attractive and enjoyable to read, and will help you to practise *bhakti-yoga*, linking with God through love and devotion.

Bhakti-yoga

We must practise *bhakti-yoga* in order to understand and realise the Absolute Truth. Otherwise, we cannot realise anything transcendental. In order to appreciate what *bhakti* (devotion) is, we must first know that the soul and Supersoul exist eternally. Kṛṣṇa is eternally the one Supersoul, and the innumerable individual souls like us, are also eternal.

Two pure souls (the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, Kṛṣṇa) can only come together through the medium of love and affection. This love and affection is called *bhakti-yoga*. There are many categories of transcendental love and affection, or *prema*. The liberated souls serve Kṛṣṇa eternally in the pure and transcendental realm of Vaikuṅṭha. Within Vaikuṅṭha is Kṛṣṇa's supreme abode, which is called Goloka-Vṛndāvana. He is served there with the most perfect moods of transcendental love and affection (*prema*).

Conditioned souls are materially bound, and covered by *māyā* or illusion. They are only qualified to serve bodies which are made of matter, not spirit. Conditioned souls are always unhappy because they are suffering in the chain of birth and death. How can they realise their eternal transcendental identity and relationship with God? They have to practise *bhakti-yoga* from the beginning stages, and develop progressively and regularly from the stage of faith. This progresses to steadiness in devotional practices, then to awakening of spiritual taste, and to deepening transcendental attachment that matures into transcendental ecstasy. Finally one achieves full, pure love of God. This is the way.

The Descent of The Lord

It is only through *bhakti-yoga* that we can realise the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We cannot do so by any other means. The Supreme Lord is so merciful that He personally descends to this world to bestow His mercy on the conditioned souls who inhabit it. The Lord descends in various incarnations (*avatāras*) throughout history. The original form of the Lord from which all these other forms come is Kṛṣṇa. Thus He is known as the original Personality of Godhead (*svayam-bhagavān*).

When Kṛṣṇa descends to this world, He appears in His original transcendental form, which is attractive to all living beings. What to speak of human beings, He also attracts the animals, deer, birds, and trees. Kṛṣṇa attracts all creatures, because He attracts the soul, which is present in all living things, even in water particles and dust. The soul is present everywhere. If you practise *bhakti-yoga*, you can see and realise this fact, and you will gradually develop devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

People generally do not appreciate hearing philosophical conclusions alone. For this reason I want to explain about *prema*, pure transcendental love of God, by narrating Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. This *bhakti-yoga* will appear more attractive if we explain the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* - how Kṛṣṇa descends to this world, how He protects the saintly persons and kills the demons, and how He performs His supremely attractive pastimes.

The Blessings of Hearing Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes

Kṛṣṇa's name and pastimes are not mundane things of this mortal world; they are transcendental. Hearing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is not an ordinary activity; it is also transcendental.

There is a vast difference between the mortal world and the

(4) The Butter Thief

transcendental world. When we glorify Kṛṣṇa's qualities and pastimes, or chant His holy names, the transcendental sound vibration is extremely auspicious. Even if one is covered with ignorance and his heart is full of unwanted material thoughts and desires, still, if he has a little honour — just a very little — these transcendental vibrations will come through his ears to his heart. These are not words in the common sense; Kṛṣṇa Himself comes in these transcendental sound vibrations. How? His transcendental world comes into the heart of any person who has a slight fraction of faith (*śraddhā*). As one gains realisation, his whole heart becomes clean and pure, and his faith (*śraddhā*) becomes more condensed. Transcendental devotion (*bhakti*) then manifests in his heart, and he becomes a devotee.

This process actually begins when a devotee acquires faith in Śrī Gurudeva and accepts initiation from him. Under the guidance of Śrī Guru, one begins the practice of devotional service (*bhajana-kriyā*). All the unwanted material conceptions and desires flee from his heart, and all his bad habits go away (*anartha-nivṛtti*). Then he develops fixed and stable practice of devotional principles (*niṣṭhā*). This matures into a genuine spiritual taste for devotional practices (*ruci*) which evolves into transcendental attachment for the Lord (*āsakti*).

After that, his devotion develops to the stage of transcendental ecstasy (*bhāva*), and then fully ripened transcendental love for Kṛṣṇa, or *prema*. At some point, he will give up his material body, mind, false ego, etc., and be situated in his pure spiritual identity. In a transcendental body, the devotee associates with Kṛṣṇa as an eternal resident of Vraja, and becomes happy forever.

Chapter Two

The Lord's Childhood Pastimes

Introduction

The Vedic literatures — including the first nine cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* — describe the extraordinary pastimes of the Supreme Lord, which are not at all possible for human beings, or even for the demigods. In these pastimes, it is clear to all that He is the Absolute, Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reveals confidential pastimes that only take place in Vraja, or Vṛndāvana. There the Supreme Lord appears like an ordinary human being, and His devotees do not think that He is the Supreme Lord. Rather, they see Him as the supremely attractive personality, and they can therefore serve Him in intimate moods of love and affection. This would not be possible if His devotees thought that He is God.

In these Vraja pastimes, Kṛṣṇa appeared to take birth, perform pastimes as a helpless baby, and then mature into childhood and youth. However, unlike us, He is not subject to the changes imposed by material nature. He only acts as an ordinary child to delight His affectionate devotees. He is always the same unchanging, all-knowing, all-powerful, transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead. But to facilitate these pastimes, His pastime potency Yogamāyā, covers His knowledge, so that even He forgets that He is God. Thus, He and His devotees can become completely absorbed in these intimate, loving exchanges.

One Absolute Truth Appearing as Two

Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One may ask how two Personalities can both be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We should understand that although They manifest two bodies, Baladeva is actually non-different from Kṛṣṇa. They are both One. Kṛṣṇa has appeared in the body of Baladeva, and the purpose of this incarnation is to teach us how to serve Kṛṣṇa.

Baladeva Prabhu is the sum total of the eternal principle of *guru*. He imparts all the eternal truths and principles, and teaches us how to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, that is, Kṛṣṇa with His eternal consort.

When The Absolute Truth Grows Up

We, conditioned souls, start life as babies; then grow into children, youths and adults, and from adulthood, we advance to old age. Kṛṣṇa, however, does not go through these stages. In His eternal pastimes in the spiritual world, He is always a very beautiful teenage boy. He never becomes older or younger. However, when He displays His pastimes in the material world, He manifests all these stages of growth in order to increase the love and affection of the devotees and to attract the minds and hearts of the conditioned souls in this world.

Although Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, They played in Vraja as naked babies, and crawled everywhere on Their hands and knees. Kṛṣṇa's mother is called Yaśodā, and Baladeva's mother is called Rohiṇī.

Sometimes, Kṛṣṇa or Baladeva would see a snake and catch it. When Yaśodā and Rohiṇī saw this, they became afraid. Sometimes the boys would put Their hands in the mouths of wild dogs, and the dogs became very calm.

They learned a very good game; They would seize the tail of a dog or a calf, and hold on tightly, and the dog or calf would playfully drag Them around the yard. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva would catch the horns of very large and ferocious bulls, and wrestle and play with them, and the bulls would lovingly play with Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva.

Yaśodā Remembers Kṛṣṇa

While Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva were still very young babies, They sometimes crawled to the outer gate of the house. If They saw anyone, They became afraid. They remembered Their mothers, and at once turned back, and rushed to sit in their laps. And what did Yaśodā, and Rohiṇī do then? They put Them in their laps, covered Them with their veils, and caressed Their hair; and then with tears in their eyes, and with melting hearts, they put their breasts in the mouths of Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva.

Sometimes a neighbor would come into Yaśodā Maiyā's courtyard. What did she see? Yaśodā Maiyā engaged in churning butter and performing other duties, just to prepare something for Kṛṣṇa. She had no other occupation. She was always engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa, and whenever she was performing service, she always remembered him and sang: "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti."

Kṛṣṇa was crawling in the house and courtyard, and she was making everything neat and clean to protect Him. While she did so, she was singing like this: "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti."

Sometimes she was engaged in grinding something with a pestle and mortar, and as she did so, she sang: "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti."

Sometimes she engaged her servants in various tasks. At other times, she gave some pomegranate seeds to the parrots and told them, “You should sing like me. Sing this song: Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti.”

Yaśodā Maiyā was not the only one who remembered Kṛṣṇa while she performed her household duties. All the *gopīs* (cowherd ladies) of Vraja always thought of Kṛṣṇa while they were in their homes. They carried on their everyday activities eagerly waiting for Him to come to their houses and steal some butter.

They used to think, “He must surely come, and then, somehow I will play a trick and catch hold of Him.” The Vraja *gopīs* spent all their time serving Kṛṣṇa by performing their activities in this mood.

Sometimes, at about seven in the morning, they would stop what they were doing and gather together at Yaśodā’s house. Why? To see Kṛṣṇa. He was so beautiful that they had more love and affection for Him than they had even for their own sons. They longed for Kṛṣṇa so much: “Oh, we want Kṛṣṇa to be our son, so that we can give Him our breast milk, and serve Him with so much love and affection.”

Baby Wrestlers

All the *gopīs* felt this way, and the cows did, too! Sometimes, the cows would come into the cowherd town of Nandagrāma, and stand waiting. Then Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva used to go out, and lie down on the ground beneath them, and the cows udders would spontaneously pour milk into Their mouths. The cows would think, “If only Kṛṣṇa were my son! Then I could give Him my milk, and show Him my love.” This mood was everywhere in Vraja.

Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva began growing up, and when They were about one and a half years old, They could stand up, and walk a

little. Sometimes They fell down, as well. The *gopīs* who came to see Them were divided into two parties. One party took Baladeva's side and the other supported Kṛṣṇa. The *gopīs* on Kṛṣṇa's side announced, "Kṛṣṇa is so strong that He can defeat Baladeva." Then Baladeva Prabhu's party would disagree: "No, no, Baladeva is stronger than Kṛṣṇa." The *gopīs* on Kṛṣṇa's side said, "If Kṛṣṇa defeats Baladeva, I will give Kṛṣṇa a *laḍḍu*." And the *gopīs* in Baladeva Prabhu's party said, "If Baladeva wins this battle, then we will give Baladeva a *laḍḍu*."

Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva could understand what was going on, and in this way, the *gopīs* inspired the two brothers to wrestle with each other. Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva were naked, and stood opposite each other. They began to slap Their thighs and chests like adult wrestlers. Then They caught hold of each other and tried to bring each other to the ground. They were equally matched and sometimes Baladeva would almost defeat Kṛṣṇa but then, Kṛṣṇa would turn just in time to defeat Baladeva. Then Baladeva would defeat Him. They were going on like this — back and forth — and everyone would sing and clap to see the fun. All the *gopīs* were overjoyed to see this play.

Complaining in Love

As Kṛṣṇa grew older and bigger, He often wore only a golden chain around His waist, which tinkled and jangled as he walked. He always wondered, "Where is that sound coming from?" He used to look here and there, not realising that He was making the sound Himself.

The *gopīs* still came to see Kṛṣṇa, but now they came to Yaśodā Ma to complain about her son: "Sometimes Kṛṣṇa comes to our houses, and He steals our butter, even though we have hidden it

in different places. He has so many friends — Sudāmā, Śrīdāmā, Subala, Madhumaṅgala — and they're always with Kṛṣṇa. They're just like mischievous little monkeys.” Kṛṣṇa's baby friends were all naked, and they were His constant companions.

When the *gopīs* came to Mother Yaśodā to complain about Kṛṣṇa, they were not at all angry. On the contrary, they felt sorry for Yaśodā. They thought, “Yaśodā is not as fortunate as we are. Kṛṣṇa comes to our houses and plays here and there, and steals things according to His own sweet will; but He doesn't steal things in His own house, and He does not play so sweetly there. So Yaśodā is not as fortunate as we are, because she doesn't see all these sweet pastimes. We are so blessed.” It seemed as if they were coming to complain to Yaśodā. But really, they were only pretending to complain, so they could relish sharing stories about Kṛṣṇa, and let Yaśodā know how sweet her son was.

Here are some of the stories that Yaśodā's friends would tell her: “Oh! Your boy has become so naughty! He enters our houses, and plays so many mischievous tricks. He steals our butter, and then He hands it out to his friends, and even to the monkeys.

“Sometimes He makes a crafty plan, and tells one of His friends, ‘You go to your mother, while we hide in the shelter of a tree, or another good hiding place just outside the house. Say to your mother, Oh, come quickly! Someone has untied the calf's tether, and it's running free. Now it's taking its mother's milk, and soon there won't be any left.’

“When the boy tells his mother, the *gopī* goes chasing after the calf, and while she is away, Kṛṣṇa and His friends enter her home, and steal butter and whatever else they want.”

Sometimes a *gopī* would hide in her own house thinking, “Kṛṣṇa must come, and then I will catch Him.” Sure enough,

Kṛṣṇa would creep in and put His hand in the pot of butter. The *gopī* would suddenly pounce on Kṛṣṇa and scold Him:

“Oh! You are stealing in my house?”

Kṛṣṇa would say, “Oh, Mother, I came here because I thought this was My home and you are My mother. It never occurred to Me that you’re not My mother, and I certainly didn’t think you’d catch hold of Me and beat Me.” Saying this He smiled, and the *gopī*’s heart melted. Although she had caught hold of Kṛṣṇa’s wrist, He wrenched His hand free and ran away.

The Runaway Calf

One day a *gopī* told Mother Yaśodā, “Today, I caught your son Kṛṣṇa in the act, with His hand right in a pot of butter. I asked Him, ‘Why have You come here? Did You come to steal butter?’

“No, no mother! I was searching for My calf. I was playing with him today, and he ran away. So I followed him, but he jumped into this pot.’

“Oh, your calf has jumped in this pot, has he?”

“Yes, Mother’, your son replied very innocently. And when He pulled His hand out of the butter pot, He was holding a marble toy calf! Then He and His friends all began to laugh, and they quickly ran away.”

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He always wants to please His devotees. Kṛṣṇa’s other incarnations are not like He is. Everyone can worship Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa Himself wants to worship His pure devotees, serve them, and fulfil their desires. Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees in Vraja think, “I really want Kṛṣṇa to come to my house and steal butter from me,” and that is why Kṛṣṇa comes. Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa will never come to any home.

Kṛṣṇa Only Accepts Love And Affection

Kṛṣṇa will only accept an offering that is made with love and affection. One incident that shows this took place many years later in Hastināpura.

It is well known that Arjuna and his four brothers were Kṛṣṇa's very dear friends and devotees. Duryodhana, who also lived in Hastināpura, was the sworn enemy of Arjuna and his brothers (later they fought each other at the Battle of Kurukṣetra), but he wanted to invite Kṛṣṇa to a feast. Duryodhana was very wealthy, so he served preparations of delicious foodstuffs — such as *Iaddu*, *perā*, *kachori*, *sandeśa* and *mākhan* — in golden dishes, and water in golden cups. Then he requested Kṛṣṇa, “Please come and take Your meal with Me.”

Kṛṣṇa objected, “I can't eat anything, because I have no appetite. I only eat anything where there is love and affection, I can never eat with you, because you have no love and affection for Me! I came to Hastināpura to ask you to make peace with Arjuna and his brothers, but you have not complied. How can I take My meal with you? I'm not a beggar, and I'm not hungry.”

Delicious Banana Peels

Shortly after rejecting Duryodhana's opulent feast, Kṛṣṇa went to Vidura's house. Vidura was Kṛṣṇa's devotee, and was also very affectionate to Arjuna and his four brothers. In fact, on several occasions he had saved them from great danger.

Because of this, Kṛṣṇa was very fond of Vidura. When Kṛṣṇa got to Vidura's house, Vidura was not there, so Kṛṣṇa pleaded with his wife Vidurāṇī, “Oh, Vidurāṇī Maiyā, I am so hungry! Please give Me something to eat.” Vidurāṇī was very affectionate to Kṛṣṇa, and she was anxious to serve Him. She

began to offer Him bananas, but in her confusion, she threw away the fruit and gave Him the peels. Kṛṣṇa affectionately accepted the peels, and relished them joyfully. They tasted sweeter to Him than all the preparations and offerings made in Dvārakā by his chief queens Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā.

While Kṛṣṇa was completely absorbed in accepting Vidurāṇī's offering of banana peels, Vidura came in. He was astonished at what he saw, and exclaimed, "Oh, Vidurāṇī! What are you doing?"

Kṛṣṇa tried to caution him, "Don't speak to her. She is not in her external senses. She is fully absorbed in transcendental love and affection." Vidurāṇī, however, came back to external consciousness when she heard her husband speak, and soon realised what was happening. She then gave Kṛṣṇa the fruit of the bananas and threw away the peels.

Kṛṣṇa was a little disappointed. "Oh! This fruit is not as tasty as the peels were."

From this pastime, we can see that Kṛṣṇa never becomes hungry. He doesn't want to taste banana, or sweets, or milk or anything. He just wants to take the essence of all the fruits.

What is that essence? It is simply love and affection, the mood of *bhakti* in the offering. Kṛṣṇa will never accept anything from someone who has no deep love and affection for Him. On the other hand, He will forcibly take what He wants from a devotee who has love and affection for Him, if that devotee does not give Him enough.

When Kṛṣṇa appeared in the form of His own devotee as Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He used to quarrel with His dear devotee Śrīdhara, and take the things that Śrīdhara was selling.

Śrīdhara used to protest, "No! I won't give you these things without payment! I'm a very poor person. You shouldn't take these things. Go and get them from someone else."

But Mahaprabhu used to take his banana flowers and other items anyway. That is Kṛṣṇa's nature. Kṛṣṇa is not a beggar. He is full in all opulence, but still He comes to Vraja to serve all His associates, and to play with them.

Kṛṣṇa is Let Down

Now Kṛṣṇa became somewhat bigger. One day Yaśodā told Him, "It's Your birthday today. Go and bring a female calf here and worship her."

Kṛṣṇa became very happy. He went out and chose a very beautiful she-calf. She was as white as a swan. The calf was very healthy, stout and strong, and was jumping here and there. Kṛṣṇa wanted to catch her, but couldn't because she was jumping so much. After a great struggle He managed to catch hold of her, intending to bring her into the courtyard. He tried to tie up her four legs, but the calf refused to let Him, and they had another wrestling match. Somehow or other, Kṛṣṇa managed to bring her into the courtyard. As He was doing so, He noticed a pot hanging from a rope. He immediately understood that this pot was full of sweet butter. In an instant, His intense greed for the butter made Him forget that He was supposed to bring the calf in. But how could He reach the butter? It was hanging high up in the rafters, and there was no ladder or anything to stand on.

When He was with His friends, He would climb on their backs, one by one, higher and higher, until He could reach the butter. However, none of His friends were with Him, and He had no stick. What to do?

After considering carefully, Kṛṣṇa thought, "I can reach the butter very easily if I stand on this calf." He climbed up on the calf's back, and when He stood upright He was just high

enough to put His hand into the pot. At that moment, the calf suddenly jumped away. Kṛṣṇa had put His whole arm into the pot, so when the calf ran away, He was left dangling there. Now He called out fearfully, “O Mother! Mother! Mother!” and cried bitterly.

Mother Yaśodā was churning butter, and when she heard Kṛṣṇa weeping and crying for her, she smiled and ran out to help Him. As soon as she saw Him hanging high above the ground, she understood what had happened.

“You stay like that!” she told Him. “I’m not going to touch You. And I’ll punish You for being naughty. I’ll never help You!”

Kṛṣṇa began to weep more loudly: “Mother! Mother! Mother!” Of course, Yaśodā brought Him down. Kṛṣṇa was charmingly mischievous in His boyhood, and that is why He garnered so much love and affection from all the *gopīs*, especially His mother.

Caught in the Act

One day, Yaśodā’s *gopī* friend told her a story about Kṛṣṇa’s mischievous activities. “Early this morning, Kṛṣṇa came to my house to steal butter. When He got there, He saw that everything had been stored very carefully, and there was no butter lying about for Him to steal. My little baby son was asleep, but Kṛṣṇa pinched him so much that he woke up and began to cry. If we don’t keep butter in our houses for Him to steal, then He will do such terrible things. And if He finds butter and doesn’t like it, He breaks all the pots.”

When Yaśodā heard this story she thought, “I think that Kṛṣṇa has become wayward, stealing butter in other people’s houses. I must teach Him a good lesson.”

Meanwhile, her *gopī* friend thought, “Yaśodā doesn’t really believe us when we tell her what her son has done. I’ll wait for Kṛṣṇa in my house, and when He comes, I’ll catch Him in the act, and take Him to Yaśodā. Then she’ll see how naughty her boy is.”

In the very early morning, while it was still dark, Kṛṣṇa came alone to the house. He was stealing butter here and there, and thinking, “No one can catch me.” However, that *gopī* was hidden from view, and waiting to catch Him. When Kṛṣṇa came and ate her butter, she was watching Him from her hiding-place. She pounced on Him, and caught Him with butter still on his hands and mouth. “Oh, I will take you to Mother Yaśodā!” she exclaimed in great excitement. “Then she’ll have to believe us when we tell her that her boy is a great thief.”

The *gopī* covered Kṛṣṇa with a shawl to take Him as a captive to Yaśodā Maiyā. When she arrived at Yaśodā’s house, she called out, “Oh Yaśodā! Oh Yaśodā! Just see! I have caught your son stealing butter! He has become a thief! You’ve never believed me up till now, but today you’ll have to believe me.”

Yaśodā came out to meet her friend, and on the way, she saw that Kṛṣṇa was asleep on the bed. Puzzled, she asked, “Where is my son?” In response, the *gopī* took off the cloth that she had used to wrap up Kṛṣṇa when she caught Him. “Oh!” She was amazed to see that it was not Kṛṣṇa, but her own son who was wrapped in the shawl! Kṛṣṇa came out of the bedroom, and started weeping. “O Mother! O Mother! Just see! They are all telling lies about Me. I have never been to that house. They are all liars! Now I will *have to* go and steal some butter!”

Chapter Three

Bound By Love

Yaśodā Maiyā's Beauty

While Yaśodā performed her household chores, she wondered how to satisfy Kṛṣṇa's desire for butter. "All the other *gopīs* prepare butter with their own hands to give to Kṛṣṇa with love and affection," she thought. "Their butter is so sweet. Until now, I haven't made butter myself; my servants and maidservants have done it for me. From now on, I'll milk the cows with my own hands, put the milk on the fire and then I'll personally make very sweet yoghurt from it. I'll churn the yoghurt myself, so that my butter will be very sweet and tasty, and Kṛṣṇa will take it with great delight."

Having made this decision, on the day of Diwali, Yaśodā sent all her servants and maidservants to the house of Nanda Bābā's older brother, Upananda. She even sent Rohiṇī Maiyā off with Baladeva, because there was no one to help with the Diwali preparations at Rohiṇī's palace. At dawn, as the reddish sun rose in the peace and calm of the early morning, Yaśodā was all alone, churning yoghurt. Yaśodā was very beautiful. If she were not, how could Kṛṣṇa be beautiful? The son cannot be so beautiful if the mother is not.

How can we describe Yaśodā's beauty? Her breasts were so broad, that it seemed as if her slim waist would break if she bent down. She wore fine silk clothes. In India at that time, the art of making silk cloth was highly developed. A standard cloth sari for a lady was about ten yards. The weavers were so

expert and the cloth so fine, that a full sari could be pulled through a hole no wider than one's finger-nail. Yaśodā had put on especially fine silken cloth for the Diwali festival, and her feminine beauty shone through her clothing.

Mother Yaśodā prepared for churning by putting the pot of yoghurt next to a pillar, and supported the churning rod in the pot with thin ropes attached to the pillar. She then began to churn by pulling on the ends of the rope that was wrapped around the churning rod. She was very beautiful, resourceful and intelligent. That is why Kṛṣṇa was so attractive. If thousands of people were watching His activities, He would completely capture everyone's attention.

What was Yaśodā's mood while she was churning? She was remembering the sweet childhood pastimes of Bāla Kṛṣṇa and singing: "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti." Yaśodā was absorbed in singing, and thinking of Kṛṣṇa. Her heart was melting, her eyes were closed, and tears of love were flowing down her cheeks.

Yaśodā's Singing

When Vaiṣṇavas sing in glorification of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they accompany themselves with a special drum called the *mṛdaṅga*. The large end of the *mṛdaṅga* resounds deeply, "Tan! Tan!" and the small end gives a high sound, "Dik! Dik!" The singers also play small hand cymbals called *karatālas*, which chime sweetly.

While Mother Yaśodā was singing and churning, the rhythmic motion of the churning rod in the deep pot of yoghurt made a sound like the drum: "Dik, dik, tan! Dik, dik, tan!" At the same time, the golden chain on her neck, and the bangles on

her wrists chimed in time like very sweet cymbals. Yaśodā was singing in time with the sounds of her bangles and the yoghurt pot. The ‘Dik tan’ sound of the churning was singing, “Fie on those who don’t worship Kṛṣṇa, and who don’t remember Kṛṣṇa! Fie on them! Fie on them! Dik-tan! Dik-tan!”

Kṛṣṇa Searches for Yaśodā

Yaśodā was totally absorbed. In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa awoke in the bed where He slept with His mother. His eyes were still closed, but He was searching for His mother with His hands, and whimpering softly: “Ma! Ma! Ma!” When He found that His mother was not there, He began to cry a little louder and rub His sleepy eyes with His little fists. At first, there were no tears. He just smeared the black *kajal* (eye-liner) that His mother had applied to His big eyes, which were very long, like the petals of a lotus flower.

When Kṛṣṇa could not find His mother, He began to weep: “I’ve just woken up, and I’m so hungry, but Mother has gone somewhere and left Me.” He cried, as babies do when they want their mother. After a while, he heard the sound of the churning and He realised that His mother could not hear Him. “Oh, she’s over there churning, ‘Dik-tan!’ ‘Dik-tan!’ and she’s singing, ‘Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti’, and that’s why she can’t hear Me.”

He began to cry more loudly, but still His mother did not come. Now He wanted to climb down from the bed, but it was high, so how could He get down? As the Supreme Lord, He is limitless, and the whole universe is within His body. However, playing the part of a small child, He could hardly get down from His bed. Kṛṣṇa lay on His stomach, put His feet over the side of the bed, and very carefully began to let Himself down, feet first.

Slowly He slid off the bed until His feet touched the ground, and then He began to walk towards His mother.

He was walking very unsteadily, staggering first to one side and then to the other, because He was still quite sleepy. He was crying, and tears were rolling down His cheeks. His tears were white like the River Ganges, and the streaks of smeared *kajal* (eye-liner) running down His face were black like the River Yamunā. He was weeping loudly now, but Yaśodā was so absorbed in her own singing and churning, that she could not hear Him.

At last, baby Kṛṣṇa came right up to Yaśodā. He caught hold of the churning stick with His left hand and the end of her veil with His right hand. Yaśodā, still absorbed, wondered, “What has stopped my churning?” Then she looked down and saw her baby Kṛṣṇa.

“Oh, Kṛṣṇa has come, and He’s crying.”

Yaśodā stopped churning at once, and took Kṛṣṇa in her lap. He was still weeping, so she wiped His tears with her veil, and began to relieve Him of His distress. She pacified Him, caressed Him, and put her breast in His mouth.

Desperate Milk

Now Kṛṣṇa stopped crying, but Yaśodā began to softly weep, and tears of love flowed gently down her cheeks. At the same time, her hair began to stand on end in her transcendental loving ecstasy. Advanced devotees experience eight bodily symptoms of transcendental ecstasy, and these symptoms all began to appear in Yaśodā.

Tears poured profusely from her eyes, her body trembled, and she began to perspire heavily. She was completely absorbed in her ecstasy of transcendental maternal affection for Kṛṣṇa,

and Kṛṣṇa was fully savouring that love. Kṛṣṇa sucked Yaśodā's breast for some time, but He was still not satisfied, because He had been hungry for a long while.

Meanwhile, Yaśodā looked at the pot of milk that she had left heating, and saw that the milk was boiling over into the fire. Yaśodā realised that this milk was also a devotee, who was thinking, "I want to serve Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa's stomach is so vast that it can contain the whole universe, and there is enough milk in Yaśodā's breasts to fill millions of oceans. Kṛṣṇa's appetite is limitless, His stomach is limitless, and Yaśodā has an endless supply of milk. If Kṛṣṇa takes Yaśodā's milk for millions of years, it will never be depleted. I will never have a chance to serve Kṛṣṇa in this lifetime, so what is the use of maintaining my life? It's better if I die now." That is why the milk was boiling over into the fire.

Gurudeva Engages Devotees

Wherever you find devotees, one symptom of their *bhakti* is that they feel humble and inadequate in their service to Kṛṣṇa: "My body, my mind and my senses are not engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa. What is the use of my life?"

We are not thinking like these devotees because we do not practice *bhakti* properly. When this intense desire for service arises during one's practice, Kṛṣṇa will appear at once and award us His service. Or a devotee like Yaśodā will come and give us a chance to serve Kṛṣṇa.

When Yaśodā understood that this milk was desperately jumping into the fire, she told it, "All right, I will engage you in Kṛṣṇa's service and I will serve Kṛṣṇa afterwards." A real *bhakta* — a *guru* like this — engages newer and newer devotees

in serving Kṛṣṇa. Gurudeva's service is to engage qualified souls — those who are eager — in Kṛṣṇa's service.

Yaśodā Maiyā is like a *guru*, teaching how to serve in the mood of parental love for Kṛṣṇa. In order to help the milk serve Kṛṣṇa, she had to put Kṛṣṇa down quickly, and run to the fire. This is the *guru's* inclination and mood — to increase the service to Kṛṣṇa by engaging others. It is the first duty. That is why Yaśodā Maiyā wanted to put Kṛṣṇa aside.

Yaśodā Defeats Kṛṣṇa

Just after Kṛṣṇa was born, when He was only six days old, a demoness called Pūtanā came to Vṛndāvana to try to kill Him. She put poison on her breast, and took the form of a very beautiful woman. When she offered her breast to baby Kṛṣṇa, He began to suck out her life. The demoness had the strength of many thousands of elephants, but even though she tried to pull Kṛṣṇa from her breast, she could not escape from His grasp, and she died.

Now Kṛṣṇa was much older and stronger. When He saw that Yaśodā wanted to put Him down, He caught hold of her like a baby monkey. He wrapped His arms and legs tightly around her body, and fastened His mouth on her breast. All His senses were completely engaged, and He resolved, “I won't give up My position in Yaśodā's lap!”

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He possesses the sum total of all opulence. He has the power to defeat the whole world, including all sorts of mighty demons such as Keśī, Agha, Baka, Pūtanā, Hiraṇyakaśipu and Rāvaṇa. Still, He could not prevent His mother from putting Him down! Yaśodā Maiyā defeated Him without any difficulty.

“You should sit here,” she told Him, and despite Kṛṣṇa’s best efforts, she quickly and easily lifted Him off her lap with one hand, and put him down. Kṛṣṇa was helpless. This is a good lesson for everyone. If anyone has such deep and strong *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa becomes like a baby. By the arrangement of His pastime potency *Yogamāyā*, His limitless power deserts Him, and He becomes helpless.

Yaśodā left Kṛṣṇa, even though He wanted to keep drinking her breast milk. He began to weep loudly and He became angry: “She hasn’t satisfied My hunger, and yet she has left Me to save that milk.”

The Servant of the Servant

It is clear from this pastime that those who serve Kṛṣṇa also take care of the articles with which Kṛṣṇa is served: the utensils, the clothes, the flute, the peacock feather and all the paraphernalia. Yaśodā *Maiyā* gave more attention to these than she did to Kṛṣṇa. Why? This is the nature of the *bhakta* (devotee) in this world. It is not so easy to understand, but there are some examples that will help us.

Yaśodā would sometimes chastise Kṛṣṇa when He got mud and earth on His clothes. “Oh, You are so naughty!” she would say. “I have just washed Your clothes, and now You’ve made them dirty again.”

Now, when the milk jumped into the fire, Yaśodā had to put Kṛṣṇa aside to go and save it, even though Kṛṣṇa was weeping. Why? What was so special about this milk? The whole purpose of the milk was to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, but Yaśodā’s priority was exactly the opposite: she was ready to satisfy the milk before she satisfied Kṛṣṇa.

Why did she put Kṛṣṇa aside, and go to save the milk — even though He wept when she did so? For the same reason that she

sometimes disciplined Him for making His clothes dirty: the milk was for Kṛṣṇa's service, just as the clothes were for Kṛṣṇa's service.

This is the nature of pure *bhakti* (transcendental devotional service). Kṛṣṇa has more affection for those who serve His *bhakta* (devotee) than He does for those who serve Him directly. He becomes very pleased with the servant of the devotee. We must try to understand this concept; it is essential.

For example, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's dearest devotee, so Kṛṣṇa is more pleased with one who is serving Her than He is with someone who is serving Him directly. And if someone is serving Rūpa Mañjarī, who is the servant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa will say, "You are a servant of Rūpa Mañjarī? Oh, I shall give you everything. What do you want?"

This is the nature of *bhakti*.

Weakened by Love

Yaśodā went to save the milk, which was especially for Kṛṣṇa. Yaśodā needed that milk, as well as her breast milk. "My breast milk alone is not enough for Kṛṣṇa," she thought. "I can't make sweet yoghurt from my milk, and I cannot use my milk to make butter." Since she couldn't make butter from her breast milk, it was essential to save the milk in the pot from overflowing into the fire, so off she went. But Kṛṣṇa was weeping.

Now, what should we understand if Kṛṣṇa is weeping? Is He angry or not? Externally, it seems that He was angry, but internally He was so happy — Oh! so happy — even though He was weeping.

Kṛṣṇa then thought, "My mother has gone away and left Me here without satisfying Me, so I will teach her a lesson. I'll get into mischief." He stood up and tried to upset a nearby vessel containing yoghurt, but He was not strong enough to move it. Although He

had previously killed the witch Pūtanā, Yaśodā's maternal love for Him now made Him become like a small boy, and He was so weak that He could not move the pot, or even shake it.

Where love and affection are prominent, Kṛṣṇa can forget all His divine opulence, and everything to do with being the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That is why He had no strength to overturn the vessel, and was child-like and weak.

Breaking The Yoghurt Pot

“What should I do?” Kṛṣṇa thought. “I can't turn the pot over, so I'll try to break it. The top of the pot is very thick, but the bottom is quite thin, so if I hit it there with the pestle, it will break.” And that's what He did; He took the pestle and smashed a hole in the bottom of the pot. A beautiful stream of white yoghurt squirted out of the pot across the kitchen floor.

When Kṛṣṇa saw the yoghurt flowing everywhere, He was delighted. He clapped His hands, and laughed. But the next moment He thought, “Oh! If Mother sees Me, she will punish Me.” He immediately became very fearful, and decided that it was best to leave the scene of the crime.

Kṛṣṇa left that room and went into an adjacent room. He thought, “I will hide so that Mother will not find Me.” By the influence of His pastime potency Yogamāyā, he was playing the part of an ordinary small boy. Consequently, He did not notice that after He had paddled in the stream of yoghurt, He left a trail of very adorable little footprints for His mother to follow.

Kṛṣṇa Rewards His Devotees

Kṛṣṇa went into the next room, and saw a grinding mortar, above which a pot of butter hung in a swing. When he saw the

butter, His mouth watered. He climbed on top of the grinding mortar, and took the butter and fed it to the monkeys and crows, who had gathered in great numbers. Kṛṣṇa was very happy. He thought, “In my previous incarnation as Rāmacandra, the monkeys came and helped Me when I was living in the forest. They worked very hard day and night to build the bridge to Lanka. I couldn’t feed them or satisfy them properly at that time, but now I’ll give them this butter. These crows have appeared in the dynasty of My very old and dear servant Kakabhūsaṅḍhi, so I will feed them as well.”

In the meantime, while Kṛṣṇa was joyfully feeding the crows and monkeys, Mother Yaśodā came back to the room where she had been sitting with Him, and saw the broken pot of yoghurt. She followed the Butter Thief’s trail of footprints, and approached the room where Kṛṣṇa was feeding the monkeys.

This room had two doors, one coming from the inner rooms of the house, and the other opening into the outer courtyard. Kṛṣṇa had entered the room from the inner compound, and now had His back towards it. Mother Yaśodā came through this door, and began to carefully and quietly sneak up on Him, like a cat walking silently on dry leaves.

Kṛṣṇa did not notice His mother coming closer, but when the monkeys and crows saw her, they began to scatter and fly away in all directions. When Kṛṣṇa saw the birds and monkeys leaving, at first He thought, “Oh, where are you going?” Then He realised, “Aha! Someone else is in the room!” As Yaśodā Maiyā was just about to catch Him, He looked over His shoulder and saw her. “Oh, Maiyā is coming!” Quickly He jumped down from the grinding mortar, and began to run away.

The Zigzag Course Of The Absolute

Kṛṣṇa ran as fast as He could, and Yaśodā Maiyā began to run after Him. “Oh, You friend of a monkey!” she called after Him, “You come here!” Kṛṣṇa was running in a zigzag way, and Mother Yaśodā could not run so fast because of her heavy breasts and slim waist.

Kṛṣṇa was so nimble that it was difficult for her to run after Him and catch Him. Still, He saw that she would catch Him in the end, so He had an idea: “I won’t run around the room; I’ll go outside.” In the Vedic culture, ladies don’t appear in public places alone. Kṛṣṇa knew that it would be very embarrassing for His mother to chase Him in the street. He thought, “I will run outside so that she won’t chase after Me.”

The Speed Of Love

Kṛṣṇa ran outside to escape his mother. Mother Yaśodā came to the door and thought, “Oh! What to do?” She looked left and right, and seeing that no one was watching, quickly ran outside in pursuit of her naughty son. With great effort, she finally caught the mischievous Kṛṣṇa. Holding Him tightly with one hand, she raised the stick she was carrying in her other hand. Kṛṣṇa was so afraid of the stick, that He dodged this way and that around her legs.

There is a good lesson here. We all want to capture Kṛṣṇa by our love. When Kṛṣṇa was running away from Yaśodā Maiyā, she had to run faster than Kṛṣṇa to catch Him. Devotees should practice in such a way that their love and affection surpasses Kṛṣṇa’s.

Kṛṣṇa has affection for His devotees and the devotees have affection for their beloved Kṛṣṇa. If the love is equal —if Kṛṣṇa loves the devotee as much as the devotee loves Kṛṣṇa

— then Kṛṣṇa will not be controlled. However, if a devotee has more love and affection for Kṛṣṇa than Kṛṣṇa has for her, that devotee can control Him. Kṛṣṇa was very loving towards His mother, but Mother Yaśodā has even more affection for Him, and that is how she captured Him, by her love. This is the hidden message in this story.

A Loving Quarrel

Mother Yaśodā held Kṛṣṇa, and began to scold Him. “I’ll give You such a beating!” she threatened. “I know You go from house to house to steal. You are a thief!”

Kṛṣṇa replied, “Oh! Why are you saying that I am a thief? There is no thief in My dynasty, in the lineage of my father Nanda Bābā. Perhaps there is a thief in your dynasty.”

He was so cheeky. He had heard Yaśodā Maiyā and Nanda Bābā talking about Mother Yaśodā’s forefather called Cora Ghosh. *Cora* also means thief. Kṛṣṇa now remembered that there was someone called Cora in his mother’s dynasty. That is why He told Her, “There is no *cora* (thief) in My dynasty, but there is a *cora* in your dynasty.”

“Why are you chastising me?” Kṛṣṇa protested innocently. “What have I done?”

“How was the yoghurt pot broken?” His mother replied angrily.

“That was the punishment of the Supreme Lord,” Kṛṣṇa said.

“And who fed the butter to the monkeys?”

“He who made the monkeys, feeds the monkeys,” Kṛṣṇa said.

Yaśodā Maiyā was a little angry, but she was laughing as well. “Now tell me the truth!” she said. “Who broke the yoghurt pot?”

Kṛṣṇa explained, “Oh Mother! You jumped up to pacify the milk that was boiling over. When you rushed into the kitchen,

you were in such a hurry that your heavy ankle bells hit the yoghurt pot and broke it. I haven't done anything.”

“Is that the truth? In that case, how is it that You have butter all over Your face?”

Kṛṣṇa said, “Oh Maiyā! Every day a monkey comes and puts his hand in the pot to eat the butter, but today I caught him. He pulled his hand out of the pot and began to run away, but the butter on his hand smeared all over My face. Tell Me honestly, am I to blame for this? But still you call Me a thief and you want to beat Me.”

“Oh! You are a liar,” she retorted.

Binding Kṛṣṇa with Love and Affection

Yaśodā Maiyā considered in her mind, “What shall I do? My boy is so restless, that He might try to run away. Besides, if I don't punish Him for His misbehaviour, He might become a bandit when He grows up. Then she came to a decision and told Kṛṣṇa, “This grinding mortar helped You to steal the butter, so I will punish You and Your accomplice by tying You both together.”

Yaśodā Maiyā took a silk ribbon, which she used to tie up her hair and tried to bind Kṛṣṇa to the mortar, but it was short by the width of two fingers. Her servant brought additional ropes, but surprisingly, when the ropes were tied together, they were still two fingers too short. Now her friends, who were happily witnessing this amazing scene, began to bring ropes from their homes. But no matter how many ropes they tied together, the ropes were always two fingers short.

The *gopīs* were all laughing and clapping their hands. They told Yaśodā Maiyā, “Oh dear friend, we have told you that this

boy possesses some extraordinary illusory potency. He is more clever than the greatest of thieves.” Yaśodā thought, “He is my child. He came from my womb. It will be so embarrassing if I cannot bind him.”

From early morning until noon, she tried again and again to tie Kṛṣṇa. She was becoming more and more fatigued. Her face was red, and she was breathing heavily. She was perspiring, and the flowers were falling from her hair. As long as Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, refused to be bound, Mother Yashoda’s persistent efforts were fruitless.

Finally, Kṛṣṇa’s heart was touched by the sight of His mother being so overwhelmed. Her desire to bind Him was born of her intense love and desire for His well-being. Kṛṣṇa agreed to become bound by that love.

His pastime potency Yogamāyā immediately expanded her influence. Yaśodā Maiyā then took the same ribbon from her hair that she had first used unsuccessfully, and now very easily tied Kṛṣṇa. What is the significance of the rope always being two fingers short? One finger represents our own hard endeavours to practise devotional service. The second finger represents Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. When Kṛṣṇa sees our repeated and sincere endeavour to serve Him, His heart melts with compassion. At that time, by His causeless mercy, He allows himself to be bound by the devotee’s *prema* (pure transcendental love).

Chapter Four

A Flood Of Affection

Yaśodā's Doubt

Having successfully bound Kṛṣṇa, Yaśodā Maiyā went into the house to continue her household duties. She resumed her churning, but her mind was distracted and upset, thinking about her son who was now bound to the mortar. “Why did I tie Him up?” she thought. “I should not have done that. But actually, I was right to bind Him. If I hadn't, He would have done something even naughtier.” Then again, she thought that she was not justified. “He is so soft and sweet, and I have given Him too much pain. No, not only to Him; I have given myself too much pain as well. I have given too much trouble to my own heart.

“What can I do? Kṛṣṇa is so angry, and I am afraid that if I untie Him, He will go roaming all over Vraja, and I won't be able to control His movements. It's best to let Him remain there for the time being.” However, she was not peaceful. She maintained a constant vigil from inside the house to see what He was doing.

The Opposition Party

In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa's cowherd friends had gathered round, and they began to joke with Him. Since they were laughing and clapping, Kṛṣṇa began to laugh with them. The mixture of tears and black eye-liner that had run down his face

and body was now dry. In the company of His friends, Kṛṣṇa became somewhat happy, and He forgot what His mother had done. The boys said to each other, “Why don’t we untie Kṛṣṇa’s ropes and free Him?” Kṛṣṇa was enthusiastic. “Yes, yes! My hands won’t reach all the way around the grinding mortar to untie the ropes, so you should do it.” All His friends came one by one to try, but the knot was so tight that none of them could untie it. Still, they were trying, one after another. When one was unsuccessful, the others would say, “Oh you can’t untie it, but I can,” and then he would wrestle the knot away from the others and try himself.

Each of them failed several times, but they still persisted in pushing each other out of the way, and trying yet again. Kṛṣṇa’s funny friend Madhumaṅgala was especially determined. “You are all bogus! You have no idea at all. I can untie it.” He quickly came forward, pushing all the others out of the way, and tried himself, but he also failed. All the others laughed at him in great amusement.

Amidst all the clamour and hubbub, the boys were thinking, “If Baladeva were here, He could untie Kṛṣṇa in a moment. Then this would all be finished, and we could do something else.”

Meanwhile, Mother Rohiṇī was coming with Baladeva Prabhu. Baladeva found the boys playing with Kṛṣṇa in the courtyard, and when He saw that Kṛṣṇa was tied up to the grinding mortar, He became furious. “Who has done this? I will certainly punish him!” He was so upset that His eyes became reddish, and His hands were shaking with rage. Then Subala came close to Him and whispered in His ear, “Oh brother, don’t be so upset. Mother Yaśodā has done this.”

“Maiyā did it? Oh. If she did it, I can’t do anything.”

Baladeva backed away thinking, “There must be some reason behind all this.”

The Plan for Deliverance

While this was going on, Kṛṣṇa was thinking. He is all-knowing, and He remembered a pastime that had taken place in the previous millennium. “Now I recall how My dear devotee Nārada cursed Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva.” Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were sons of the powerful demigod Kuvera, who was a friend of Lord Śiva, and Śiva is very near and dear to Kṛṣṇa, so there was a relationship. The very exalted, saintly devotee Nārada was also a friend of Kuvera.

One day, Nārada saw Kuvera’s two sons playing in a lake with a number of beautiful young women from the heavenly planets. The women and the two young demigods were naked, and they were playing various games, such as hide-and-seek. When Nārada approached, the women became ashamed. Coming out of the water, they hastily put on their clothes, and offered obeisances repentantly. The two young men, however, were stubborn, and did not change their behaviour. They were madly intoxicated from drinking wine, and they began to brazenly abuse Nārada and the girls. “Why has this madman come here? He is completely ignorant. And you are all so faithless that you left the lake when you saw him. Now the mood has been completely spoiled.”

The young men stood in front of the great devotee Nārada without any clothes on. They had lost their shame and knowledge. They did not know how to respect a superior, or a saintly person. Nārada saw that they were like dry trees. He thought, “These young men are very near and dear to Śivajī, so I should teach them a good lesson.”

A Strong Lesson

A person who has had a thorn under the skin knows what pain is, but someone who has not experienced such pain can give pain to others very easily, and without remorse. We see that people can cut off a fish's head, and cut the throats of goats, cows and other animals, just to eat their flesh. If anyone gives such hard-hearted people even a little injection of awareness, they can come to their senses and understand, "I should not do this." One who understands nature's laws realises that the pain of cutting one's finger is simply the pain that we have given to others coming back to us. We should note the spelling of the word 'meat': M E A T. It contains the words 'me' and 'eat': it means, "Those whose flesh I eat will return to eat me." Every action has its reaction. If you abuse anyone, you will receive abuse. If you give someone else a slap, someone will slap you. Animals that have been slaughtered will receive a human body, and will eat those who killed them in their previous life. We should therefore avoid eating meat and fish.

Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva had taken birth in an aristocratic family, and they were very beautiful and wealthy. They were also highly cultured and educated. Such people often have so much opulence that they don't believe in God at all, and certainly don't want to perform *bhajan* of Kṛṣṇa and offer their hearts to Him with devotion. They are puffed up with false ego, thinking, "I am so educated and so beautiful. I come from an aristocratic family; I am a *brāhmaṇa* I am very wealthy." Those who think like that can never do *bhajan* of Kṛṣṇa.

Nārada understood how degraded the two young men had become, and he decided to teach them a lesson. "You are acting exactly like trees, standing naked, and not caring for your

superior. You are behaving in a nonsensical way! You shall become trees.”

His words were very powerful! Maṅigrīva and Nalakūvara immediately sensed that they were undergoing some transformation; they were becoming trees. Quickly realising how serious the situation was, they fell down at Nārada Ṛṣi’s feet. “Oh, Nārada Ṛṣi, we never knew that you were so powerful. We were always immersed in false ego. Now we understand that Kṛṣṇa has given us this human body for *bhajan*, so that we can realise who is God. We have misused our time, always drinking and making merry. Please be merciful to us. Surely it can’t be true that we are going to be trees?”

Nārada said, “What I have said will certainly happen. Once spoken, the intent of my words cannot be checked. Still, I will mitigate the punishment, because you are now realising how foolish you have been and you are the sons of my friend. You will have to become two trees, but you will be in Vṛndāvana. After some time, Kṛṣṇa will appear in the neighbourhood where you are standing. When He is playing as a boy, He will personally touch you both, and then you will not only have liberation, but *bhakti* as well.” Hearing his words, the two young men became pacified and peaceful.

The Liberation of Nalakūvara and Maṅigrīva

Kṛṣṇa remembered Nārada Ṛṣi’s prediction, and thought, “I must fulfil My devotee’s desire.” Kṛṣṇa is so expert, that He can accomplish many goals and fulfil many desires with one action. Kṛṣṇa immediately asked His friends to push the grinding mortar out of Nanda Bābā’s compound, and they began to push it and pull it towards the gate. Just outside the main gate were

two very tall *arjuna* trees. These trees cast cooling shade over a wide area, and thousands of birds were taking shelter in their broad branches.

The two trees stood close together, with only a narrow passageway between them. Kṛṣṇa crawled through the narrow passage between the two trees, but the grinding mortar was wider than He was. As the cowherd boys pushed and pulled, it became stuck between the two trees. When the mortar touched the trees, they became connected to Kṛṣṇa. It was as if a current flowed from Kṛṣṇa through the rope to the mortar and from the mortar to the two *arjuna* trees. Anyone who touched the mortar would receive that transcendental current.

As Kṛṣṇa continued to pull at the mortar, by Nārada's grace, the two trees surrendered to Kṛṣṇa's touch, and fell with a tremendous crash. Kṛṣṇa's friends had been playing with Him, pulling, shouting, and joking happily. But when the trees unexpectedly fell, the boys became very frightened. What had happened? As the trees toppled over, the two beautiful demigods appeared before Kṛṣṇa. They offered prayers and obeisances to Him, and He blessed them that they would both go to His eternal abode, where they would sing about His wonderful pastimes. They circled Kṛṣṇa with folded palms, and then proceeded to their glorious destination.

Yaśodā's Fear And Shock

The whole of Vraja trembled with the sound of the *arjuna* trees falling, and all the inhabitants of Vraja ran towards the terrible noise from wherever they were.

Meanwhile, Mother Yaśodā had been restless, and unable to concentrate on what she was doing. She became very fearful

when she heard the frightful sound. “Where is that sound coming from? Oh! It is very close to where Kṛṣṇa is — very close.” Her heart began to pound with fear, and at once she began running toward the source of the sound. All the other residents of Vraja came quickly. When they arrived at the spot, they were deeply relieved and thankful at their good fortune.

The trees had fallen to the left and right of Kṛṣṇa, and not on Him, so He was not even slightly hurt. Still, they were afraid. Yaśodā saw it all from a distance. “Oh, those two trees have been uprooted, and Kṛṣṇa is in the middle. What would have happened if they had fallen on Him?” She could not bear to think of anything at all after this, and became completely stunned, with no sense at all — just like dry wood. There were no tears, and she was not even breathing. She just stood there like a pillar.

Nanda Bābā Releases the Supreme

Nanda Bābā had been bathing in Brahmāṇḍa-ghāṭa, and he also came running to see what had caused that sound. When he saw Kṛṣṇa tied to the grinding mortar, he was dumbstruck and angry. He took Kṛṣṇa in his lap and asked Him, “Who did this?”

Meanwhile, the small boys gathered around and clamoured, “Bābā! Bābā! Bābā! Kṛṣṇa touched the two trees and they were uprooted. Two very beautiful people like gods or sunrays came out of the trees. They began to pray, and Kṛṣṇa said something to them. Then they walked around Kṛṣṇa, fell flat on the ground in front of Him, and left to the North.”

Nanda Bābā did not believe them. “These boys are so simple,” he thought. “How could Kṛṣṇa uproot two great trees? Maybe those two were demons sent by Kāṁsa to kill Kṛṣṇa. Suddenly

he considered the unthinkable: “What would have happened if Kṛṣṇa had been killed?” He could not think any more after that.

Just after the trees had fallen down, Kṛṣṇa had been laughing happily. However, when He saw Nanda Bābā coming in the distance, He began to weep more and more loudly. When Nanda Bābā arrived, Kṛṣṇa told him piteously, “Mother said she would beat Me!” He was sobbing now, catching long breaths between His speech and His cries. Nanda Bābā tried to pacify Him, but Kṛṣṇa wept even more. Nanda Bābā wiped Kṛṣṇa’s tears with his shawl and asked him, “My dear son, who tied You up?” But Kṛṣṇa would not tell him.

Nanda Bābā repeated, “Who tied You up? Tell me! I will punish whoever it was.”

He kept asking again and again, as he untied the knots in the rope binding Kṛṣṇa to the mortar. Finally, Kṛṣṇa put His mouth very close to Nanda’s ear and whispered, “Mother tied Me.”

Nanda Bābā was astonished by Kṛṣṇa’s revelation. “Your mother tied you up? Oh! I never knew that she was so cruel-hearted.”

He gave Kṛṣṇa a *ladḍu*, and Kṛṣṇa took it in His hand, but He did not eat it. Still, He was pacified a little, and the tears had almost stopped, although not completely. Nanda Bābā caressed Kṛṣṇa’s head and body, and Kṛṣṇa became very grave, looking at Mother Yaśodā with fearful eyes.

Mother Yaśodā was not in external consciousness. She sat motionless, and her *gopī* friends waited around her. They could read Yaśodā’s heart, and they were deeply unhappy. How they wished that Kṛṣṇa would come to Yaśodā’s lap. Nanda Bābā looked very grave now. He took Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva on his shoulders — Baladeva on his right shoulder and Kṛṣṇa on his

left shoulder — and went to Brahmāṇḍa-ghāṭa to bathe in the Yamunā. He, Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva bathed at the *ghāṭa* so that they would be purified after this inauspicious event.

Then he lifted Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva onto his shoulders and returned home. It was well after midday, but no one had cooked anything at Yaśodā's house that day. Who would cook? Yaśodā and her friends were so upset that they were just staring into space. None of them had even thought of cooking, much less eating.

A Meal in the Cow Barn

When Mother Rohiṇī saw Nanda Bābā coming with the two boys, she quickly went to the kitchen and cooked a little sweet porridge. She gave it to Nanda Bābā, and he fed the boys — first Baladeva, and then Kṛṣṇa. When They were satisfied, he began to take a little himself. He was still very grave, but he ate something, and then went outdoors.

Homes in India — especially the homes of wealthy people — are divided into two parts. The inner part of the house is reserved for the ladies, and it contains the kitchen and other rooms where they do the household work. The outer part is for the men, and it has a courtyard or meeting hall, as well as a drying-room, where clothes can dry without being stolen by the monkeys. It was to these outer quarters that Nanda Bābā went now.

The afternoon passed, and it was time for the evening meal. Still nobody had cooked, so Nanda Bābā went to the cows' barn with the boys. There he milked the cows directly into the mouths of Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva, and gave Them some sugar-candy. The two boys ate and drank until Their stomachs were full, and then Nanda Bābā returned home with Them. By that time, it was night.

“Bring Kṛṣṇa to Yaśodā Maiyā”

By now, all of Yaśodā’s friends — especially Rohiṇī and Upananda’s wife - were very worried. All the older ladies came with Mother Rohiṇī to where Nanda Bābā was sitting with Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa in his lap.

The older *gopīs* said to Baladeva, “You are stronger than Kṛṣṇa, and He will listen to You because You are His older brother. Quickly, take Him straight to Yaśodā Maiyā’s lap.” Baladeva went to pull Kṛṣṇa, but Kṛṣṇa gave Him such a strong push that Baladeva fell down. Kṛṣṇa wrapped His arms tightly around Nanda Bābā’s neck. Rohiṇī said, “O King Nanda! Kṛṣṇa’s mother has not taken anything to eat. She is sitting in a corner as still and silent as stone. All the *gopīs* in the house are so sad, and they are also sitting silently, without eating or drinking.”

“What can I do?” said Nanda Bābā. “She should realise that this is the result of her anger. She has acted cruelly.” Tears flowed from the eyes of the elderly *gopīs*. “Alas! Alas! You shouldn’t call her cruel. It’s not right to use a word like that for her. She is extremely soft, both inside and out.”

Hearing this, King Nanda became more emotional. “Lāla! Will You go to Maiyā?”

“No! No! I will stay with you,” replied Kṛṣṇa emphatically.

“I’ll Stay With Father!”

Then Rohiṇī Maiyā came to Kṛṣṇa, “Kṛṣṇa, where will You spend the night? Where will you sleep?”

“I’ll sleep with Father.”

“Not with Your Mother?”

“No.”

Upananda’s wife said, “You may stay with Bābā, but what will you eat? Who will breastfeed You?”

“I will drink milk straight from the udders of the cows. My Bābā will give it to Me, and he will give Me sugar candy, too.”

“Who will You play with?”

“I will play with My brother and Nanda Bābā.”

“Won’t You go to Your Mother?”

“No, I will never go to her.”

Nanda Bābā said, “Why don’t You go to Rohiṇī Maiyā?”

Kṛṣṇa sobbed and declared angrily, “I was calling out to my mother to come and untie Me, but she didn’t come, and Rohiṇī Maiyā didn’t come either.”

When Rohiṇī heard this, tears flowed down her face, and she said softly, “Lāla! Don’t be so cruel-hearted. Your mother is crying for You.”

Kṛṣṇa’s eyes brimmed with tears when He heard this. He turned around, and looked at his father’s face. A shower of tears began to fall from Bābā’s eyes as well. “Lāla! Should I slap your mother?” Nanda asked Kṛṣṇa. He raised his hands and made a gesture as if he were beating someone. Kṛṣṇa could not tolerate this, and He caught hold of His father’s hands. At that moment, Nanda Bābā remembered the anguish in Yaśodā’s heart.

Then Rohiṇī Maiyā said to Kṛṣṇa, “And what if your mother...? She paused and snapped her fingers above her head, as if to say, “What if she passes away?”

Oh! Seeing this, Kṛṣṇa became very anxious. He began to cry out loudly, “Oh, Mother! Mother!” He jumped down off His father’s lap, and began to run towards His mother with outstretched arms. Rohiṇī Maiyā was weeping. Picking up Kṛṣṇa — who was also crying — she quickly took Him into the ladies’ quarters, and placed Him in Mother Yaśodā’s lap.

Until now, Mother Yaśodā had been as senseless as a statue, but when Rohiṇī Maiyā placed Kṛṣṇa in her lap, she came to life and became very relieved.

“My dear son! My dear son!” she cried again and again. Trembling, and with her heart melting, she covered Kṛṣṇa with her veil and began weeping and weeping like a *kurarī* bird.

Kṛṣṇa began consoling her. “Mother! Mother! Mother!” Rohiṇī Maiyā and all the other *gopīs* had gathered there by this time, and they all began to weep and cry loudly. Yaśodā was weeping; Kṛṣṇa was weeping; Rohiṇī was weeping; and all the *gopīs* were weeping. In the meeting room, Nanda Bābā was weeping as well. Everyone was weeping, and the whole area was over-flooded with the condensed moods of parental love and affection.

After some time, when Yaśodā was somewhat pacified, she gave Kṛṣṇa her breast, and in the meantime, some food was prepared. Nanda Bābā was quickly called to take his meal and he sat down, with Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva to his left and his right. Nanda Bābā said, “Kṛṣṇa, go and call your Mother. If she doesn’t come, I will not take anything.” Yaśodā was so ashamed and embarrassed that she would not come, but Kṛṣṇa caught hold of her veil and pulled, so she could not resist, and He brought her to Nanda Bābā. Nanda Bābā ate his meal, gave some to Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and left some remnants which were distributed to everyone in Yaśodā’s house. Kṛṣṇa was now sitting in Yaśodā’s lap, and that night, He slept with her very peacefully.

Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, performs so many sweet pastimes. Why? To enhance the love and affection of those who love Him dearly.

Chapter Five

The Glorious Fruit-Seller

Attracted by Nanda-Nandana

At the same time that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was performing His pastimes in Vṛndāvana, there was a lady in the nearby city of Mathurā who used to sell exceptionally sweet fruits. She would go to the country villages where small children lived and walk through the narrow lanes calling out, “Mangos! Oranges! Bananas! Guava!” She had such lovely, ripe fruits, that many children would run to her, and ask for them in a beautiful way.

They would all collect around her, and watch her with greedy eyes, saying, “Mother, mother! I want to take that fruit.” She was very popular with the children. One day, this fruit-seller lady heard the name Nanda-nandana, which means ‘the son of Nanda’, and she became very much attracted. Someone told her, “Yaśodā has given birth to a very lovely boy, and His name is Kṛṣṇa. He is so beautiful and so attractive, that those who go to Gokula and see Him just once, cannot think of anything else. They give their minds and hearts to that boy and return home without them.” When the fruit-seller heard this, she wanted to see that boy.

Calling Out To Kṛṣṇa

One day she took a basketful of fruits, and with some difficulty crossed the river Yamunā in a makeshift boat, made of banana trees and branches tied together. Then she set off

for Gokula, which was only seven miles from where she had crossed the Yamunā.

The fruit-seller went to Gokula, and began calling out to attract people to buy her fruits. She wanted to call out, “Fruit! Bananas! Mangos! Oranges! Guava!” but she was thinking of Kṛṣṇa, so instead she called out, “Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhaveti, Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhaveti.”

She began to cry out more loudly, “Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!” as she walked along with her basket on her head. Indian ladies can carry baskets on their heads without touching them with their hands. They can carry two, three, or even four pots of water stacked on top of their heads without holding them. *Vraja gopīs* are expert in this.

The fruit-seller went on like this, her heart crying, “Kṛṣṇa! Govinda! Dāmodara!” For the whole day she made the rounds in Nandagrāma, where Kṛṣṇa lived with His parents, but Kṛṣṇa did not come. She returned the next day, and the next, but she still did not see Him.

The Fruit-Seller’s Vow

After the third day, she vowed, “If Kṛṣṇa does not allow me to see Him today, I will not return. I will just give up my life.” With this conviction, she was so absorbed in singing, “Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!” that Kṛṣṇa could not check Himself when He heard her calling. He was sitting in Mother Yaśodā’s lap, but He quickly jumped off to go to the fruit-seller.

Kṛṣṇa had seen adults bartering, and He knew that the fruit-seller would give Him some fruit, if He gave her something in return. On the way out, He saw a sack of grains, and He picked

some up in His little hands, and ran into the courtyard. “Oh, I want some fruits, I want some! Give Me fruits!”

This fruit-seller was from a lower class, so she was waiting outside the gate. She could not come into Mother Yaśodā’s house, or even into the courtyard. Although Kṛṣṇa had tried to bring some grains for bartering, His little hands would not hold many, and most of the grains that He had picked up fell to the ground as He ran out. There were only a few grains left, but Kṛṣṇa did not notice this; He thought that His hands were so full of grains that the fruit-seller would give Him plenty of fruit.

Kṛṣṇa Reciprocates His Devotee’s Love

When the fruit-seller saw Kṛṣṇa, she became completely captivated by the wonderful sight. She just sat looking and looking at Him. In a moment, she had given her heart to Kṛṣṇa.

“Give Me fruits! Give Me fruits!” Kṛṣṇa told her.

“What will You give me in return?”

“I’ve brought lots of grains with Me.”

The fruit-seller smiled and said, “Oh Boy, there are no grains in Your hands.”

Kṛṣṇa looked at His hands, and was surprised to see that all the grains were gone. He still wanted the fruits, though. The fruit-seller looked at Kṛṣṇa’s face, and said, “If you call me ‘Mother’ and sit on my lap, I will give You all the fruits You want.”

Kṛṣṇa looked up and down, this way and that, to see if anyone was watching. He is very affectionate to all His devotees, and is not even slightly concerned what caste or class they are born in. Still, He was playing the part of the son of the King of Vraja. “I don’t know what will happen if My mother or anyone in Vraja sees Me sitting on the lap of this lady,” He thought. “And

what would My friends say if they found out that I had called Her ‘Mother?’” That’s why He was looking here and there, to see if anyone was watching. When He saw that no one else was around, He quickly jumped onto the lady’s lap and said, “Mother!” Then just as quickly, He jumped off of her lap and demanded, “Now, you should give Me some fruits.”

The fruit-seller lady was delighted. Kṛṣṇa had fulfilled all of her desires. She wanted to give Him everything — all of her fruits — but His hands were so small that He could only take two mangos and a banana. He held the fruits against His chest with both hands, and went off dancing, as small boys do.

Kṛṣṇa went to his mother and put all the fruits in her veil. She began to distribute them to her friends, and she became so happy, for there was an endless and inexhaustible supply. She gave fruits to all the *gopīs*, and when everyone had received fruits, there were still fruits left.

And what happened to that fruit seller? When Kṛṣṇa sat on her lap and called her ‘Mother’, she was overcome with transcendental sentiments and emotions. She had given her whole heart and mind to Kṛṣṇa. She didn’t move for a long time, but sat there outside the gate, motionless in disbelief. When someone approached her and asked. “Why are you just sitting here?” she did not reply; she couldn’t.

A Basket Of Jewels

Eventually, towards evening-time, the fruit-seller took her basket on her head, and started for home. When she came to the banks of the Yamunā River, she thought, “My basket is so heavy. What is in it?” When she put the basket down and looked into it, she was amazed at what she saw. The basket was filled

with wonderful jewels, each one equal in value to the whole of King Kāmsa's treasury.

The fruit-seller was completely fixed in her meditation on Kṛṣṇa. Standing on the bank of the Yamunā, she cried out, "What is the use of all these jewels?" Then she threw them all into the Yamunā, and with her hands above her head, she began to sing like a mad woman, "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti."

She had no veil — it had come off. She collapsed, and fell on the earth, weeping. She had no sense — only the sense that Kṛṣṇa was there. Tears were pouring from her eyes, and her heart was melting. No one knew where she went after that, for she never returned to her house. Where had she gone? Can anyone say? Kṛṣṇa knew her heart completely. He thought, "Oh, she would like to be My mother!" He gave her a very beautiful spiritual body and quickly took her to His supreme abode, Goloka Vṛndāvana, where she could be like His mother eternally. Only her material body was left lying on the banks of the Yamunā, and someone came and gave it to fire.

Singing From The Heart

It is very wonderful to follow that fruit-seller, if you want to. Your Gurudeva has come to give you this, to sprinkle this mercy. You cannot repay him with wealth, or reputation, or anything of this world. You have nothing that you can give to Gurudeva that could repay him. You should meditate on Śrī Guru's glory, and try to understand who he is. He wants to give you the same wealth that Kṛṣṇa gave to that fruit-seller, so try to take what he wants to give you. Don't waste your valuable time, and don't waste this valuable human body. At once, from this moment,

you should try to be like that most fortunate fruit seller, always absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa, and always singing, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti, Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti.

How should you sing? Not as if you are singing an ordinary song. You should pray to Kṛṣṇa with all your heart, and then Kṛṣṇa will hear. Otherwise, you may be singing like a professional. Kṛṣṇa doesn't need that kind of music. He already knows many songs. He wants your heart. An inferior devotee may be able to sing expertly, but Kṛṣṇa wants more.

Try to pray like this — with your full heart — and Kṛṣṇa will hear. However you chant, whatever *kīrtana* you sing, you should be absorbed in it. If you are singing just to make music, Kṛṣṇa will not hear, but if you are chanting and hearing in a heartfelt way, Kṛṣṇa will come at once, and give you His wealth.



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