

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Kṛṣṇa – Controlled by Love and Affection

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śrī śrī rādhā-dāmodarau-vijayatetanmam

Śrī Satyavrata Muni's

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Kṛṣṇa – Controlled by Love and Affection

written by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa

Dig-darśinī-tīkā

by the crest jewel among Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas
Śrīla Śrī-yukta Sanātana Gosvāmī

verse and tīkā translations and annotations

by nitya-līlā praviṣṭa-om-viṣṇupāda-paramahaṁsa-svāmī
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

and Dig-darśinī-vṛtti

by the best among his followers
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Appendix –

Śrī Dāmbandhana līlā from Śrī Gopāla-campuh
by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda



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Dedicated to my Holy Master



śrī gauḍīya-vedānta-ācārya-keśarī nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa
om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī

Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava
Gosvāmī Mahārāja

the best amongst the tenth generation
of descendants in the bhāgavata-paramparā
from Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu,
and the founder of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti
and its branches throughout the world.



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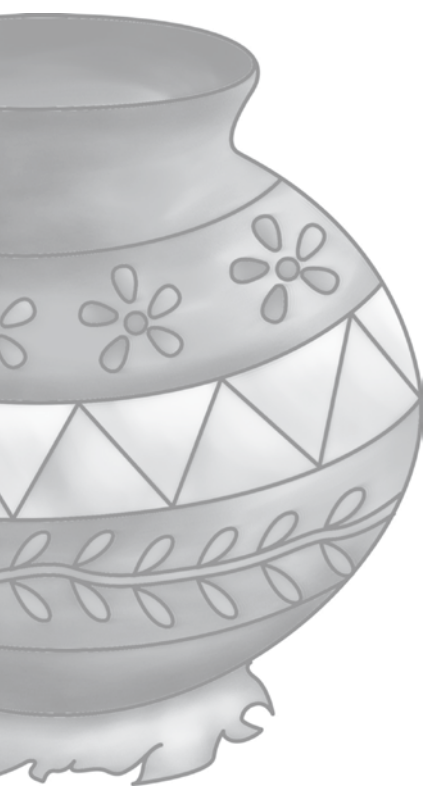
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Foreword

Śrī Dāmodara-vrata, which is observed for the entire month of Kārtika, is the most important *vrata* for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. It has become famous by the name Dāmodara because Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastime of being bound with rope by His mother took place during this month. *Dāma* means "rope" and *bandhana* means "to bind", thus this pastime is known as *śrī dāma-bhandana-līlā*.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni's eternally perfect *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* is part of the *Padma Purāṇa*, which was recorded by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa. This *aṣṭakam*, or prayer comprising eight verses, reveals many deep and fundamental secrets about this beautiful pastime. Therefore all of our Gauḍīya *ācāryas* have prescribed that we sing it every day during the month of Kārtika if we are serious about pleasing Kārtikī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the presiding Goddess of the month of Kārtika.

Singing this *aṣṭakam* every day during the month of Kārtika is so vital that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, the crest jewel among Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, has written a lucid and penetrating commentary on it, known as the *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā*. In 1954, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, the founder of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samitī, published this book in the Bengali language after very carefully translating and annotating Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary. And our own beloved *śrīla gurudeva, parivrājakācārya tridaṇḍī-svāmī* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is the best among the disciples of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, has translated the former edition into Hindi, with an additional commentary called the *Dig-darśinī-vṛtti*. Under his guidance this English rendition is now being presented.

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Once, during the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurudeva read *śrī dāmabhandana-līlā* from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda's *Gopāla-campūḥ* to his spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Upon hearing the pastime narrated by Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja exhibited rare ecstatic symptoms. With Śrīla Gurudeva's permission, we have included that same excerpt from *Gopāla-campūḥ*, translated into English for the first time, as an appendix to the present edition of *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, along with Śrīla Gurudeva's brief recount of the afore-mentioned history.

In the Bengali edition by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, there are many footnotes and parenthetical statements clarifying the *Dīg-darśinī-ṭīkā*. In this English edition therefore, all of these clarifications are marked by square brackets with the exception of two *pāda-ṭīkā*s (footnotes) in Verse Four, one in Verse Six and one in Verse Eight. We have marked all of our own footnotes in this English edition as "Editor's footnotes". Where direct English translations of Sanskrit terms have been provided, standard parentheses have been used.

- The editors

A few words on Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's
Preface to the original Bengali Edition

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, the original Supreme Lord, who possesses unlimited inconceivable potencies, allows Mother Yaśodā to bind His waist with rope. In this way He fully relishes the very essence of the sweetness of her immaculate humour of parental love (*vātsalya-prema-rasā*) for Him, and graces the world with the ultimate example of His subservience to His devotees. He manifests that supremely charming pastime of being bound around His waist (*śrī dāmabhandana-līlā*) during the month of Kārtika on the first day of the bright fortnight. This is the principle reason why the supremely blessed month of Kārtika has become famous by the name “Dāmodara”¹.

Ācāryapāda Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī compiled *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, which is the *smṛti-sāstra*, or “law-book”, of the Vaiṣṇavas. There, he has outlined the devotional activities to be observed during the month of Kārtika. He points out the injunction to daily worship Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara and to recite the *stotra* (prayer) Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam:

*rādhikāṁ pratimāṁ viprāḥ pūjayet kārṭtike tu yaḥ
tasya tuṣṭyati tat-prītyai śrīmān dāmodarau hariḥ
Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (16.197)*

O learned *brāhmaṇas*, one who worships the deity of Śrī Rādhikā for Her pleasure, during the month of Kārtika, equally satisfies Śrī Dāmodara Hari.

*“dāmodarāṣṭakam” nāma stotraṁ dāmodarārcanam
nityam dāmodarākarṣi paṭhet satya-vratoditam
Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (16.198)*

¹ **Editor's footnote:** Dāmodara means “He who has been bound by *dāma* (rope) around His *udara* (belly)”.

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

One who worships Śrī Dāmodara during Kārtika month by daily reciting the prayer *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, which was uttered by Śrī Satyavrata Muni as it arose in his heart, will perpetually attract Śrī Dāmodara Himself.

As stated above, Śrī Dāmodara Hari becomes pleased with those who worship Śrī Rādhikā for Her pleasure during the month of Kārtika.²

This *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam stava* is narrated in the *Padma Purāṇa*, where it is spoken by Śrī Satyavrata Muni in the context of a conversation between Śrī Nārada and other sages headed by Śrī Śaunaka Ṛṣi. In his commentary on this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmipāda has stated,

“This prayer is *nitya-siddha*, which means ‘eternally perfect’. It has manifested through Śrī Satyavrata Muni and is capable of attracting Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa.”

.....
² Editor’s footnote by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, from the preface to the Bengali edition: “By performing worship of Śrī Rādhikā for Her pleasure during the month of Kārtika, Śrī Dāmodara Hari becomes very pleased. This is because Ūrjeśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the controller of all potency, is the sole presiding Goddess of this month. Unless someone worships His *svarūpa-śakti* (internal potency), or *hlādinī-śakti* (pleasure potency), Dāmodara Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of all potencies, does not accept his worship. Moreover, Śrī Rādhā-devī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *antaraṅga-śakti* (internal potency), discards everything if She is worshipped alone without the Lord of Her life. Therefore, *svarūpa rūpānuga gauḍīya-vaiṣṇavas* (Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmīs) have exclusively adopted the worship of Yugala (the Divine Couple) in *rādhā-liṅgita-vigraha* – the form of Kṛṣṇa when He is tightly embraced by Śrīmatī Rādhikā. For the very same reason, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa has also offered his obeisances to Vārṣabhānavī Śrī Rādhikā and Her beloved Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa, the orchestrators of unlimited pastimes, in the last verse of this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*. In other words, he has established the supremacy of *śakti-* and *śaktimāna-tattva* (the *tattva* regarding the potency and the potent) on one basis.”

In his extensive explanation, which is replete with his personal realizations, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has thoroughly revealed this prayer's ability to attract Śrī Dāmodara.

For a long time, I have been nurturing the desire to publish this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*. When we used to gather together, especially every Kārtika month while observing Dāmodara-vrata, we would regularly become absorbed in singing this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* in unison. At such a time, the strong desire to make its secrets bloom within the hearts of all the *sādhakas* would arise within me. Furthermore, many *bhakti-sādhakas* have also insistently requested me to publish it. Now after so long, *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*'s original Sanskrit verses, synonyms and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda's Sanskrit commentary called *Diḡ-darśinī* have been published. For readers who do not know Sanskrit, the Bengali translations of the original verses and the above-mentioned commentary by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī have been included in this book.

In the present age it is noticed that many scholars whose intelligence has been spoiled by Kali have a spiteful outlook towards the propagation of the Sanskrit language. Nevertheless, we have still published this Sanskrit work, *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, desiring to benefit the entire country. Literary scholars of the Bengali language must always keep in mind that if we are to promote the Bengali language, Sanskrit is our only support. As Sanskrit literature is promoted, Bengali literature is also certain to progress. Those who imagine that Bengali will be promoted while overstepping Sanskrit literature are gravely mistaken. We notice that the language of such scholars is unsystematic in every respect. The freedom of the Bengali language is subordinate to Sanskrit. In other words, it is not absolutely autonomous; rather it is *paratantra-svatantra*, its independence relies on Sanskrit. With this principle in mind, we are presenting this book to intellectual circles.

If one examines the manner in which *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* conveys philosophical concepts, the excellence of its composition, the astonishing way in which it unfolds this pastime, and other aspects of this *aṣṭaka*, which was written down by Śrī Vyāsadeva, it is obvious that it is an excellent work in the world of literature.

Jagad-guru Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmipāda has written the detailed *Dig-darśinī* commentary on this *aṣṭaka*, or prayer of eight verses. Therein, based on the *sādhakas*' different eternal temperaments, he has revealed the deliberation on the gradation found within the realm of *sādhana*. Furthermore, he has established from every perspective the supremacy first of *vātsalya-rasa* (parental love) and finally *mādhurya-rasa* (conjugal love).

*Prākṛta-sahajiyās*³ discuss *rāsa-līlā* indiscriminately here and there, in whatever way they please. To expose the immorality of such activities, Gosvāmipāda has written the following at the end of his commentary on the eighth verse:

“*tataś ca tayā saha rāsa-kṛīḍādikam parama-stutitvenānte
varṇayitum icchan tac ca parama-gopyatvenānabhivyañjayan
‘madhureṇasamāpayed itinyāyena kiñcidevasaṅketenoddiśan
praṇamati.’*”

The translation of this part of the commentary, as well as a footnote, has been printed on page 160 of this book. There, an excellent deliberation is given in regard to such inappropriate discussions within *sahajiyā* congregations.

Since the *sahajiyās* are utterly unqualified, they cannot in any way be considered highly eligible candidates for relishing *rāsa-līlā*. As we know, *bhakti* is transcendental to the three worlds of material existence so topics like *rāsa-līlā* cannot be understood within any worldly realm of analysis. The *prākṛta-sahajiyās* think, “Dull matter can become *cit*, spiritual, and by the power of one’s *sādhana*, Bhagavān

.....
³ **Editor’s footnote:** Śrīla Sarasavatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda states: Endowed with material intelligence, *sahajiyās* cannot understand the topics concerning the transcendental, spontaneous occupation of the living entity. Their misdeeds invite immorality and prevent the proper delineation of the true variegatedness of the supremely pure (*viśuddha-sattva*) realm of Goloka. Such acts simply degrade their contaminated consciousness to indulge in sense gratification. As soon as confusion occurs about *sādhana* and *siddhi* (the stages of practice and perfection), the *jīva* becomes a *prākṛta-sahajiyā*.

can be seen with one's material eyes." This is their conception. They say, "Just as bell metal transforms into gold when mercury is added to it, this *prākṛta* (material) body becomes *aprākṛta* (transcendental) by the power of *bhajana*. Then, with these same material eyes, Bhagavān can be seen."

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has completely refuted this statement of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* in *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, as well as in his *Dig-darśinī* commentary on this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*.

Seeing Bhagavān within the Mind and Seeing Him Directly

In this regard, it is essential to carefully deliberate on the commentaries of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī on Verse Four and Verse Six of this book. From the concepts presented in those two verses, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* may infer that Śrīla Sanātana Gosvānipāda explained that seeing Bhagavān with one's eyes is superior to seeing Him within the mind during meditation. That Gosvānipāda has established Gopakumāra's direct perception of Bhagavān with his eyes as superior to Brahmā's vision of Bhagavān through meditation, must be carefully considered. In this example, Gosvānipāda is not referring to Gopakumāra seeing Bhagavān with material eyes. Only after Gopakumāra was situated within the realm of Vaikuṅṭha, the transcendental platform, is it described that he saw Bhagavān with his eyes. In the realm of Vaikuṅṭha the material senses do not exist. Therefore, the *gopas'* and *gopīs'* direct proximity with Śrī Bhagavān is in every respect transcendental and beyond the grasp of the material senses. This matter cannot be perceived by the senses of the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*.

I have already mentioned that *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* is to be sung and discussed daily while observing Ūrja-vrata, also known as Kārtika-vrata or Dāmodara-vrata. Those who wish to please Śrī Dāmodara in the month of Dāmodara should certainly read *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* daily and in its entirety. This is the specific injunction of *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Various ways of observing Dāmodara-vrata are found in the scriptures.

Ūrja-vrata comes within Cāturmāsya-vrata. It begins from Ekādaśī, Dvādaśī or Pūrṇimā and ends on those very days one month later. However, if these days are *viddhā* (penetrated) they should never be counted. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmipāda states, “In *vratas* observed by Vaiṣṇavas, *viddhā tithis* should be strictly rejected.” Therefore, even the days on which the Cāturmāsya and Ūrja-vratas begin or end, should be observed, discarding the *viddhā tithis*. The opinion of *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is that if Sūrya (the sun) rises and penetrates the commencing or concluding *tithi* of the Cāturmāsya-vrata and Ūrja-vrata, then they should not be counted.

In the following passages we are quoting a short article by Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda regarding Kārtika-vrata. This article clearly determines the day on which the duties involved in completing the *vrata* should be performed. The injunction given for those who begin their *vrata* on the day of Ekādaśī also applies to those who start on Dvādaśī or Pūrṇimā. The article is as follows:

“To observe Kārtika-vrata is a primary duty of a Vaiṣṇava.

*āśvīnasya tu māsasya yā śuklaikādaśī bhavet
kārttikasya vratān iha tasyām kuryād atandritaḥ
Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (16.168)*

Kārtika-vrata begins from the Ekādaśī that comes within the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvina (September – October), and should be observed with great self-restraint and discipline.

“According to this statement, every year, from the Ekādaśī that follows Vijayā Daśamī, one should begin one’s *vrata* and end it on the day of Utthāna Ekādaśī. The *vrata* observed during this particular month is called *niyama-sevā*. The rules of *niyama-sevā* are as follows: On every day of that month, during the last period of the night, one should purify oneself and perform the *maṅgala-ārati* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Later on in the morning, after bathing, one should perform *arcana* of Śrī Dāmodara. At night, one should offer burning wicks of ghee or sesame oil in Bhagavān’s temple, at the base of Tulasī, and towards the sky. In the month of Kārtika one should eat food that is strictly

vegetarian and offered to Bhagavān. One should not take stale rice or grains, sleep on another's bed, take oil or honey, or use bell-metal utensils. After honouring Bhagavān's remnants one should hear or study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures in the association of Vaiṣṇavas. One should incessantly perform *nāma-kīrtana* of Śrī Hari and remember Him. Following these rules, one should pass the entire month.

“Then, on the day of Utthāna Ekādaśī, one should fast, even from water, and spend that night awake, absorbed in hearing and chanting topics about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The next day, in the morning, one should purify oneself and then perform *hari-kīrtana*. Afterwards, one should distribute the Lord's *prasāda* among one-pointed, intimately related Vaiṣṇavas and finally honour some oneself. That day, at the end of the night, one will end the *vrata*.”

To please Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara is the primary purpose of observing Ūrja-vrata. Śrīmatī Rādhārānī is addressed as Ūrjeśvarī. Therefore, to please Śrī Śrī Dāmodara, Śrī Satyavrata Muni added the statement *namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai*, thereby implying that in observing Śrī Dāmodara-vrata, worship of Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara is one's exclusive obligation.

Among the sixty-four limbs of *bhakti* that are to be followed by the Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇavas, we find mention of *ūrjādāra* – honouring, or observing, Ūrja-vrata. One should understand that *ūrjādāra* refers to following the complete Cātur-māsya-vrata. Some say, “Since there is no mention of observing Cātur-māsya-vrata among the sixty-four limbs of *bhakti*, we will only observe Ūrja-vrata. We will not undergo the trouble of observing this four-month *vrata*.” People who try to perform *bhajana* in this manner, being unacquainted with the profound meanings of the scriptures, indulge in whimsical, undisciplined behaviour. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed us to observe this Cātur-māsya-vrata through His own example by following it Himself while in Śrī Raṅga-kṣetra (Śrī Raṅgam). We cannot count as *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas those who are unable to follow the teachings that were demonstrated and preached by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

We want to substantiate our above statement with an example. Of the six limbs of surrender (*śaraṇāgati*), only *ātmā-nivedana* (submission of one's very self) is mentioned among the nine types of *bhakti*, or *navadha-bhakti*. Will it then be concluded that the other five limbs of *śaraṇāgati* are prohibited or to be excluded from one's *sādhana*? Since *ātmā-nivedana* is topmost among the six ways of surrendering, one must understand that simply by its mention all the other ways of surrender have also been prescribed for the practising devotee. The six limbs of surrender are accepted as only one method of spiritual practice, although one is primary (*aṅgī*) and the others are its elements (*aṅga*).

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam is eternal; therefore we should study it, sing it out loud and discuss it, not just during the month of Kārtika, but every day throughout Cāturmāsya. It is so important that it is worth reading every month and indeed every day of the year. If this *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam* is glorified in a sublimely pure way, Śrī Dāmodara will become pleased. It is with this intention that with great effort we have compiled this book.

In doing so, we are especially indebted to the revered Paṇḍita Śrī-yuta Navīna-candra “*smṛti-vyākaraṇa-tīrtha*” Mahodaya. He has given valuable assistance in translating the *Dig-darśinī* commentary into Bengali and in the presentation of the synonyms and so forth. In some places, the *Dig-darśinī* commentary seemed so incomprehensible that it was almost impossible to unearth its true meaning. He therefore personally underwent great pains to consult *paṇḍitas* from Navadvīpa and many other places and discuss these sections with them, thereby ascertaining a perfectly relevant meaning. We are therefore especially indebted to him. The *Dig-darśinī* commentary has been published in several editions of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, Chapter Sixteen. After comparing the original verses with these commentaries, we have published everything in such a way so as to be consistent.

In his commentary on this book, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has mentioned the concepts presented in his *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛtam*. We have included those concepts as footnotes. There, we have published the original verses of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛtam* along

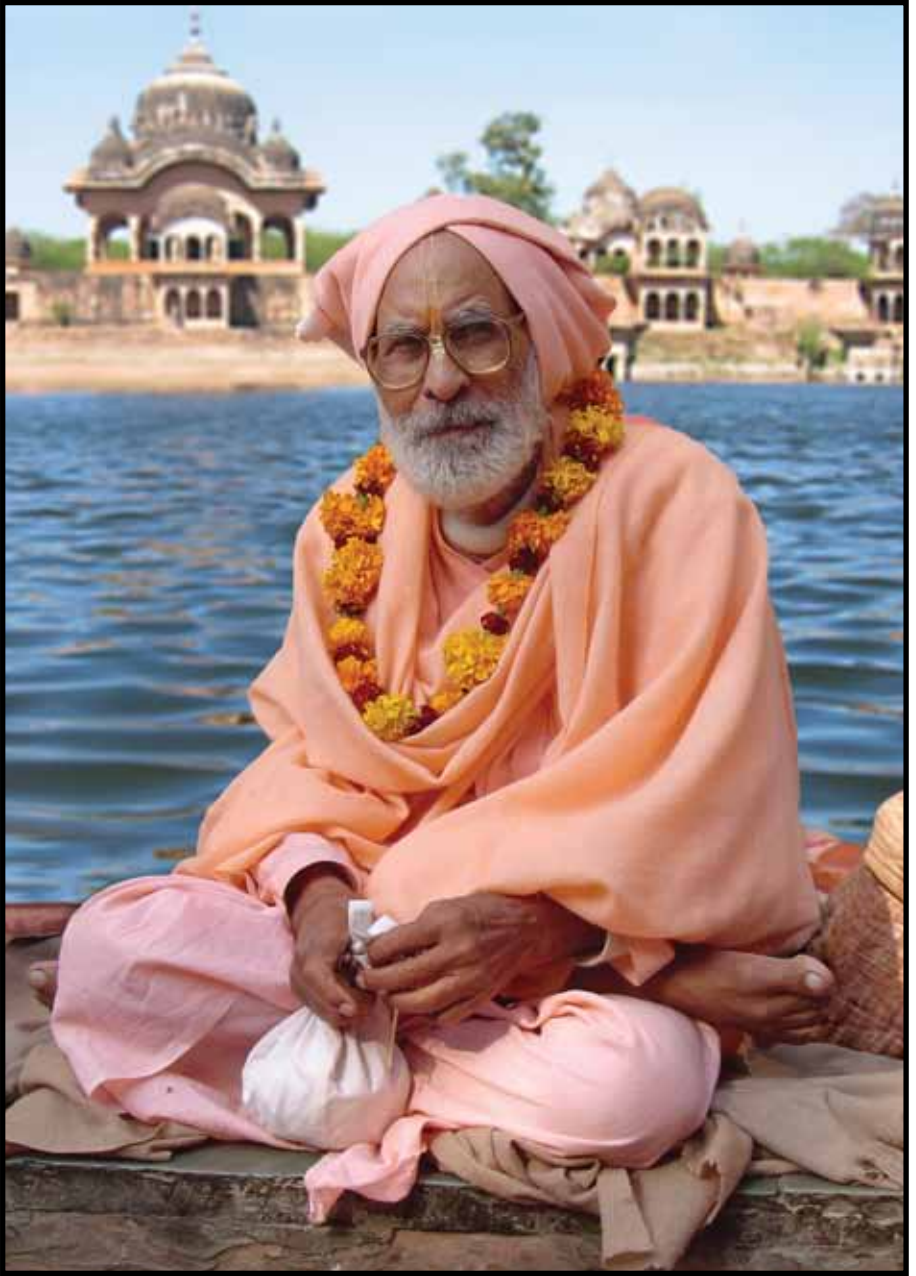
Preface

with their translations, explicitly conveying their deeper meaning for the readers' easy understanding.

Finally, my anguished prayer to the *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas is that they become pleased by reading and discussing this book during Cāturmāsya and Ūrja-vrata. I will then consider my efforts successful.

Thus I conclude,

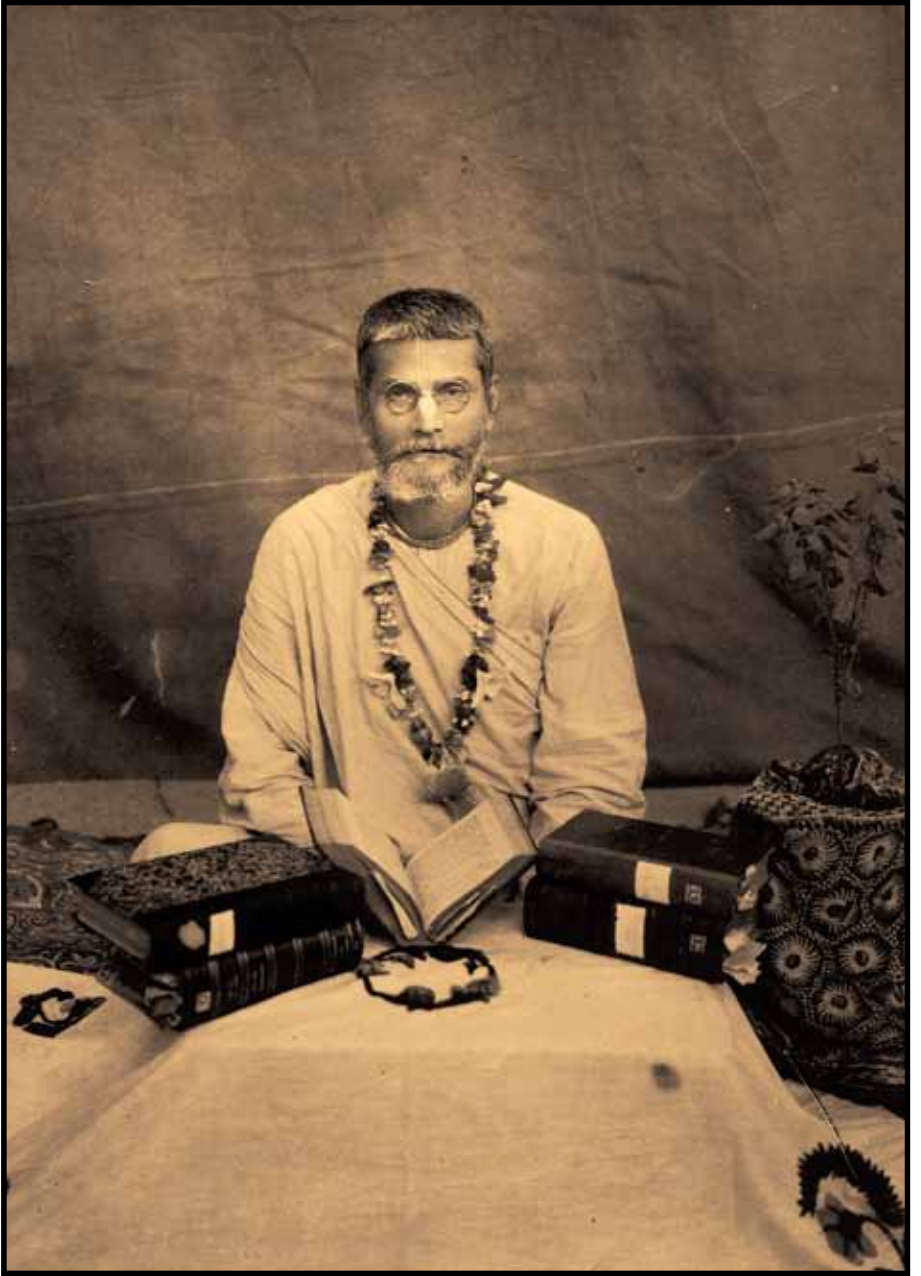
Śrī Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava
First day of Kārtika, 1954



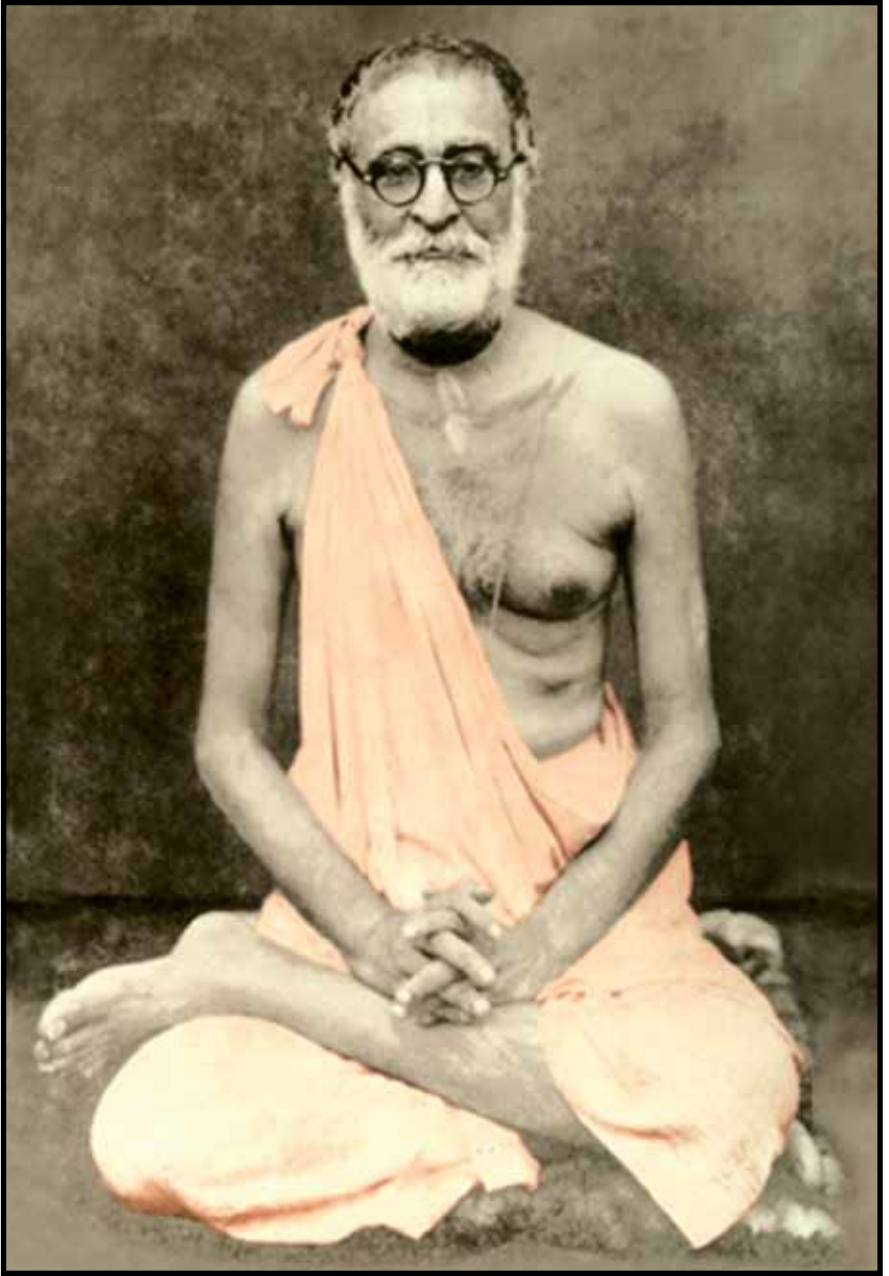
om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja
author of the Dig-darśinī-vṛtti



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja
who introduced Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam to the Western world



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja
annotator of the ṭīkā translations

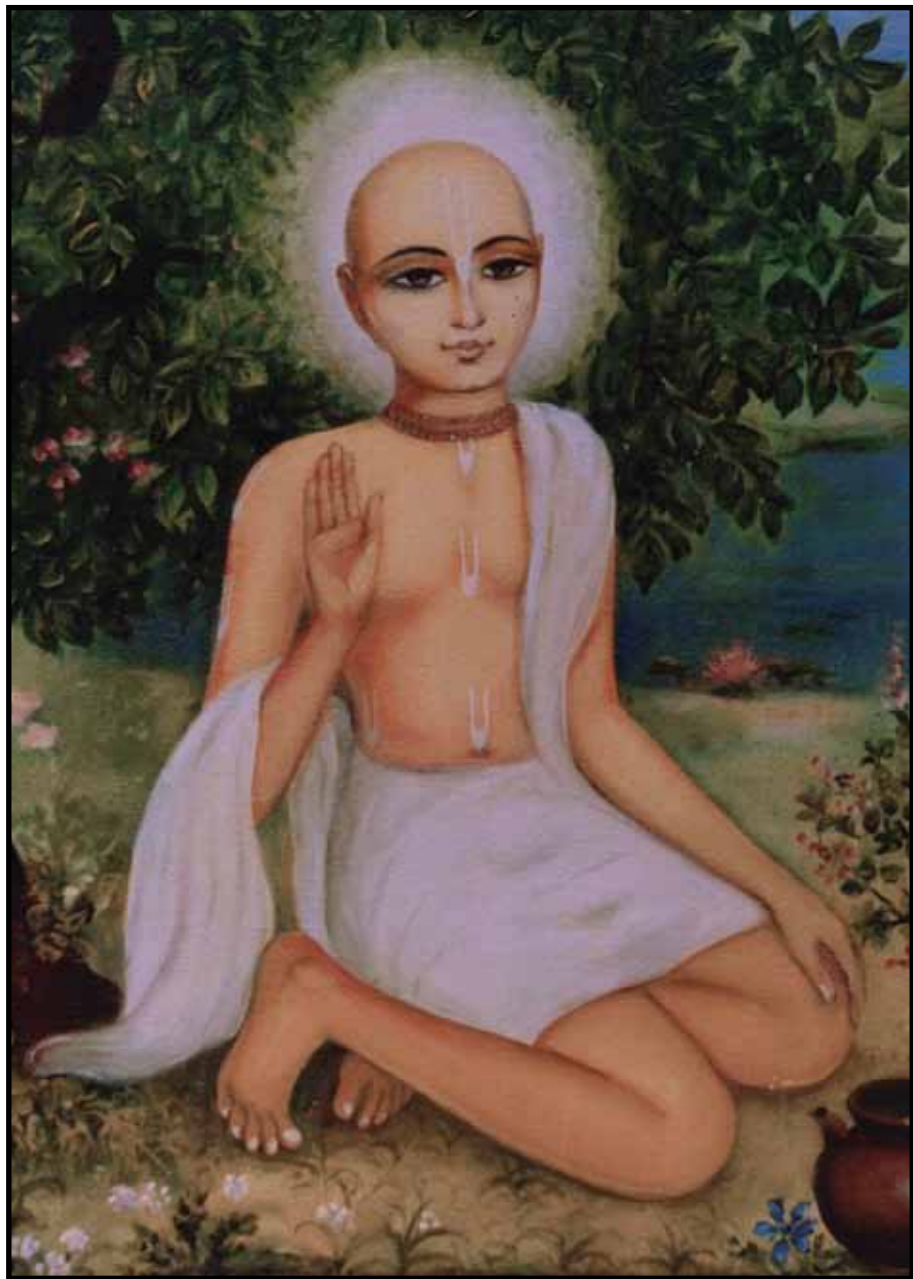


nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda

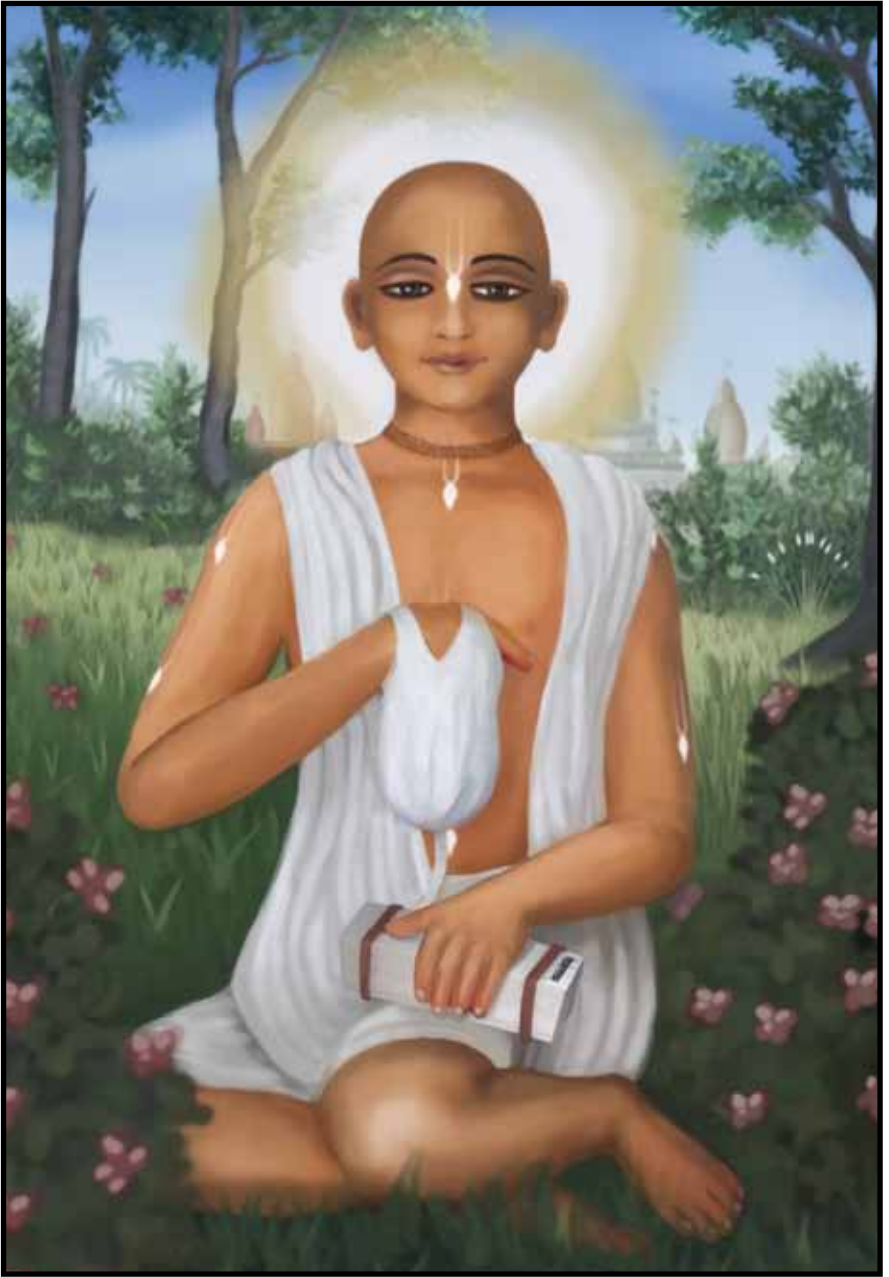
the spiritual master of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

and Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keṣava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda

❧ *author of Śrī Gopāla-campuh* ❧



the crest jewel among Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas
Śrīla Śrī-yukṭa Sanātana Gosvāmī
author of the Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā



the remains of the grinding mortar, with its pūjārī, in Gokula Mahāvana, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa delivered the twin arjuna trees



❧ Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodarajiu, in Vṛndāvana ❧

❧ Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam ❧

*namāmīśvaram saccidānanda-rūpaṁ
lasat-kuṇḍalam gokule bhīrāja-mānam
yaśodā-bhiyolūkhalād-dhāvamānam
parāmrṣtam atyaṁ tato drutya gopyā*

I offer obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of all potencies, whose beautiful form is the entirety of concentrated existence, knowledge and bliss. On His cheeks, *makara*-shaped earrings are swinging playfully. His infinite brilliance shines forth from His most splendid residence, the transcendental abode, Śrī Gokula. He was afraid of Mother Yaśodā (because He smashed the earthen pot of yoghurt). When He saw her coming He leapt down from the grinding mortar and ran away. Nevertheless, Mother Yaśodā ultimately caught hold of Him from behind, for she ran more swiftly than He did. (1)

*rudantaṁ muhur netra-yugmaṁ mr̥jantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātaṅka-netraṁ
muhurī svāsa-kampa-tri-rekḥāṅka-kaṇṭha-
sthita-graiva-dāmodaram bhakṭi-baddham*

[Seeing the stick in His mother's hand and fearful of being beaten] He is weeping incessantly and rubbing His eyes again and again with His two lotus-like hands. His eyes are extremely restless and filled with fear. He takes heavy breaths again and again that cause the pearls and other ornaments around His neck, which is marked by three gracefully curving lines, to tremble. O Dāmodara, You have been bound by Your mother's *vātsalya-bhakti*. [I offer my obeisances unto that Dāmodara.] (2)

*itīdr̥k̥ sva-līlābhir-ānanda-kuṇḍe
sva-ghoṣam nimajjantam-ākṣhyāpayantam
tadīyēsita-jñēsu bhaktair-jitat-tvaṁ
punaḥ prema-tas-taṁ śatāvṛtti vande*

By His childhood pastimes such as this *dāma-bandhana-līlā*, He perpetually drowns all the residents of Gokula – His *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves and so forth, who are all manifested by His pastime potency – in pools of bliss. He thus informs those who have knowledge of His absolute divinity that only the pure and simple love of these devotees can conquer Him. Again, hundreds of times, I offer loving obeisance unto Śrī Dāmodara Kṛṣṇa. (3)

*varam dēva mokṣam na mokṣāvadhīm vā
na cānyam vṛṇe 'ham vareśād apīha
idaṁ te vapur nātha gopāla-bālam
sadā me manasy āvirāstām kīṁ anyaiḥ*

O supremely effulgent and playful divinity, I do not ask You for freedom from mortal suffering (the fourth of human goals), nor do I ask for the ultimate limit of freedom (residence in *Vaikuṇṭha*, the abode of extraordinary, concentrated happiness). Nor do I seek any other benediction from You (even attaining *bhakti* characterized by *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, etc.) even though, as the supreme benefactor, You can easily grant all benedictions. O Lord of my life, may Your beautiful form as *Bāla-gopāla* (a little cowherd boy) in *Vraja* always remain visible within my heart. I have no use for any benediction other than this. (4)

*idaṁ te mukḥāmbhojam avyakṭa nīlair
vṛtam kuṅtalaiḥ snigdha rakṭaiś ca gopyā
muhūś cumbitaṁ bimba-rakṭādharam me
manasy āvirāstām alam lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

O Deva, Your lotus-like face, encircled by soft, blackish-blue curly locks of hair that have a reddish glow, is repeatedly kissed by the *gopī* Śrī Yaśodā. May Your supremely charming lotus face, with lips like red *bimba*-fruit, always remain manifest in my heart. I do not care about millions of other attainments. (5)

*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkṣha-jālābdhi-magnam
kṛpā-dr̥ṣṭi-vr̥ṣṭyāti-dīnam batānu
gr̥hāṇeśa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dr̥śyaḥ*

O Deva, O You who have a divine form, I offer my respectful obeisances to You. O You who are *bhakta-vatsala*, affectionate to Your devotees! Śrī Dāmodara, O Ananta, Lord of inconceivably magnificent potencies! O all-pervasive Viṣṇu, O Prabhu, my Master, be pleased with me. I am drowning in an ocean of incessant worldly miseries. Alas, I am extremely miserable and I do not know what to do. O Īśa, supremely independent controller, please deliver me by the nectarean shower of Your merciful glance and enliven me by becoming directly visible to my eyes. (6)

*kuverātmajau baddha-mūrtyaiva yadvat
tvayā mocitau bhakṭi-bhājau kṛtau ca
tathā prema-bhaktim svaḥm me prayaccha
na mokṣe graho me 'sti dāmodareha*

O Dāmodara, even though You were bound with a rope to the grinding mortar by Your mother, You set the two sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, free (from Śrī Nārada's curse that they live as twin *arjuna* trees), and enabled them to become recipients of the highest possible attainment – *bhakti*. In the same way, please profusely bestow upon me *prema-bhakti* for You. I long for this alone; I do not want any other kind of liberation. (7)

*namas te 'stu dāmne sphuraḍ dīpti-dhāmne
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai
namo 'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam*

O Dāmodara, I offer my respectful obeisances to the celebrated rope binding Your belly, for it is an abode of brilliant effulgence. I offer my respectful obeisances to Your belly, which supports the entire universe of moving and non-moving entities. I offer my respectful obeisances again and again to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Your most beloved, and I offer my respectful obeisances to You, my divine Lord who performs unlimited transcendental pastimes. (8)



❧ Verse One ❧

*namāmīśvaram saccidānanda-rūpam
lasat-kuṇḍalam gokule bhrāja-mānam
yaśodā-bhiyolūkhalād-dhāvamānam
parāmṛṣṭam atyam tato drutya gopyā*

SYNONYMS

namāmī – obeisances; *īśvaram* – to the Supreme Controller, the possessor of all potency; *sat-cit-ānanda-rūpam* – the origin of all incarnations, the very embodiment of eternity, knowledge and bliss, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *lasat-kuṇḍalam* – on whose cheeks *makara*-shaped earrings are frolicking; *gokule* – in the transcendental abode of Gokula, the home of the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves and so forth; *bhrāja-mānam* – He is splendidly situated as the brilliant conception; *yaśodā-bhiyā* – out of fear of Mother Yaśodā; *ulūkhalād* – after jumping from the the grinding mortar; *dhāvamānam* – running away; *parāmṛṣṭam* – forcefully seized from behind; *atyantataḥ* – ultimately; *drutya* – running very swiftly; *gopyā* – by Mother Yaśodā.

TRANSLATION

I offer obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of all potencies, whose beautiful form is the entirety of concentrated existence, knowledge and bliss. On His cheeks, *makara*-shaped earrings are swinging playfully. His infinite brilliance shines forth from His most

splendid residence, the transcendental abode, Śrī Gokula. He was afraid of Mother Yaśodā (because He smashed the earthen pot of yoghurt). When He saw her coming He leapt down from the grinding mortar and ran away. Nevertheless, Mother Yaśodā ultimately caught hold of Him from behind, for she ran more swiftly than He did.

❧ *Diḡ-darśinī-tīkā* ❧

*Śrī rādhā-sahitaṁ natvā śrī-dāmodaraṁ īśvaram
'dāmodarāṣṭaka'-vyākhyā digeṣā darśyate'dhunā*

*tatrāgre kim api prārthayitum ādau tasya 'tattva'-rūpa'-līlā'-guṇādi-
viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣaṁ, "gokula-prakaṭita-nija-bhagavattā-sāra-
'sarvasva-bhūtaṁ" varṇayan bhaktyādau namaskaroti- namāmīti. tacca
maṅgalārthaṁ sarva-karmasu prāgeva dāsyā-viśeṣeṇa vidhānādādau
nirdiṣṭam. kam? īśvaraṁ - sarva-saktimantaṁ, jagadeka-nāthaṁ, nija-
prabhūṁ vā. tatrādya-pakṣaḥ- stuty-ādi-śakty-arthah, dvitīyaḥ- para-
mandyatārthah, antyaśca - bhakti-viśeṣeṇeti dik. katham- bhūtaṁ?
sat-cit-ānanda-rūpaṁ sat-cit-ānanda-ghana-vigrahaṁ ity arthah - iti
'tattva'-viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣa uktah.*

*[rūpa]-saundarya-viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣam āha - lasantī śrī-
yaśodā-bhīyā dhāvamānāt, satata-bālyā-kṛīḍā-viśeṣa-paratvāt vā
nirantaraṁ lolatayā gaṅḍayoḥ kṛīḍantī kuṅḍale yasya taṁ - iti
'śrī-mukha-śobhā'-viśeṣa uktah; yadvā, śrī-gaṅḍa-cumbana-mahā-
saubhāgyataḥ kuṅḍalayoḥ sarva-bhūṣaṇeṣu mukhyatvāt tābhyāṁ
tāni sarvāṅyepopalakṣyante; tataśca lasantī śobhamāne kuṅḍale
yasmāt taṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam ity arthah.*

*ataevoktaṁ śrī-gopībhiḥ daśama-skandhe - "trailokya-
saubhagam-idaṅca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ, yad-go-dviija-druma-mrgāḥ
pulaḱānya-vibhṛan." Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.40) iti, uddhvena
ca tṛtīya-skandhe - "vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ, paraṁ
padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam" Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.12) iti.*

*'parivāra'-viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣam āha - gokule gopa-gopī-
govatsādi-nivāse, bhrājamānaṁ yogya-sthāna-viśeṣe pūrvato'pi*

utkarṣa-viśeṣa-prakaṭanena gokulasya svābhāvika-śobhā-viśeṣeṇa vā śobhamānam; tacca śrī-daśama-skandhādau – “cakāsa-gopī-pariṣad-gato’arcitas-trailokya-lakṣmy-eka-padaṁ vapur dadhat.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.14) ityādinoktam.

‘līlā’- viśeṣenotkarṣa-viśeṣam āha – yaśodeti sārddhena. yaśodāyā mātuḥ sakāśāt, bhīyā dadhi-bhāṇḍa-bhedanādyaparādha-kṛta-bhītyā, udūkhalāt śik-sthita-navanīta-cauryārthamudvarttya tale samārūḍhāt udūkhalataḥ dhāvamānaṁ tvarayāpasarantam. atra ca viśeṣāpekṣakaiḥ daśama-skandha-navamādhyāyoktam – “udūkhalāṅghrerupari vyavasthitaṁ, markāya kāmāṁ dadataṁ śici sthitaṁ. haiyaṅgavaṁ caurya-viśaṅkīteḥṣaṇaṁ, nirīkṣya paścāt sutam āgamacchanaiḥ. tāmāttayaṣṭiṁ prasamīkṣya satvaras-tato’varuhyāpasasāra bhītavat. gopyanvadhāvan na yamāpa yogināṁ, kṣamaṁ praveṣṭum tapaseritaṁ manaḥ” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.8–9) ityādy-anusandheyam.

tataśca atyantatodrutya vegena dhāvitvā; samāsaika-padyena yap-ādeśaḥ, gopyā śrī-yaśodayā, parā āmr̥ṣtam pṛṣṭhato dhṛtam; atra ca atyantato-drutyetyanena śrī-yaśodāyā api stana-nitambagauravādi-saundarya-viśeṣaḥ sneha-viśeṣaśca sūcitaḥ. gopyeti premokti-paripāṭyā gopa-jātīnāṁ eva tādṛṣaṁ mahā-saubhāgyam iti dhvanitam. parāmr̥ṣtam ityanena tasyāṁ bhagavataḥ sneha-viśeṣo dhvanita iti dik. atra ca – “anvañcamānā janāṁ bṛhac-calac-chronī-bharākrānta-gatiḥ sumadhyamā, javena visraṁsita-keśa-bandhana-cyuta-prasūnānugatiḥ parāmr̥ṣat.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.10) ityartho’anusandheyāḥ. (1)

iti śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake prathama-śloke śrīla-samāntana-gosvāmi-kṛtā digdarśinī-ñāmnī ṭikā samāptā.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭikā on the First Verse ~

Maṅgalācaraṇa

*ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana śalākayā
cakṣur-unmilitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

I offer my humble obeisances to *śrī guru*. With the torchlight of divine knowledge he has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

*namaḥ om viṣṇu-pādāya ācārya-simha-rūpiṇe
śrī-śrīmad-bhakti-prajñāna-keśava iti nāmine
atimartya-caritrāya svāśritānāñca pāline
jīva-duḥkhe sadārttāya śrī-nāma-prema dāyine*

I offer my humble obeisances to the lion-like *ācārya*, *jagad-guru* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who always resides at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. His character, which is completely beyond mortality, is such that he nurtures those who take shelter of him with immense divine affection. But moreover, he always feels distress because of the suffering of the conditioned souls, and he blesses them with *prema* for the holy name.

*gaurāśraya vigrahāya kṣṇa-kāmaika-cāriṇe
rūpānuga-pravarāya vinodeti svarūpine*

He is the personification of one who has taken complete shelter (*āśraya*) of Śrī Gaura and he is solely committed to satisfying the loving desires (*kāma*) of Śrī Kṣṇa. He is the foremost follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and by his constitutional identity (*svarūpa*) he is the pleasure (*vinoda*)¹ of Śrī Rādhā Kṣṇa.

*prabhupādāntaraṅgāya sarva-sad-guṇa-sāline
māyāvāda-tamoghnāya vedāntartha-vide namaḥ*

.....
¹ **Editor's footnote:** In *śrī kṣṇa-līlā*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja's eternal identity is Śrī Vinoda Mañjarī.

He is the intimate associate of Śrīla Prabhupāda and he is endowed with all auspicious qualities. He devours the dark ignorance of impersonalism by his knowledge of the true meaning of Vedānta. I offer my obeisances to him.

*vairāgya-yug-bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair-
apāyayan-mām-anabhipsum-andham
kṛpāmbudhiryaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanaṁ taṁ prabhun āśrayāmi*

Due to being blinded by ignorance, I was unwilling to drink *bhakti-rasa*, the nectar of devotion imbued with intense attachment for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the consequent detachment from worldly existence. But Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, with great effort, induced me to drink it because he is an ocean of causeless mercy and cannot tolerate seeing the suffering of others. I therefore take complete shelter of him.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāyate
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣenamah*

I offer my humble obeisances to that supremely magnanimous personality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. He is the original form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but now, as Śrī Gaurasundara, He has assumed the golden complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and He is freely bestowing *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema*. I bow to Him.

I offer prostrated obeisances again and again at the lotus feet of my *śrī gurudeva*, *āṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is an ocean of causeless mercy; to the *ācāryas* of the *śrī guru-paramparā*; and especially to *jagad-guru* Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmipāda, who is very distressed by the sorrow of others; as well as to the greatly magnanimous Śrī Śācinandana Gaurahari, who is imbued with the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. After begging for their mercy, I am now presenting the *bhāvānuvāda* of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Dig-darśinī* commentary on *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*.

❧ *Dig-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvānuvāda* ❧

*śrī rādhā-sahitaṁ natvā śrī-dāmodaram-īśvaram
'dāmodarāṣṭaka' vyākhyā digeṣā darśyate 'dhunā*

After offering obeisances to the Supreme Controller, Śrī Dāmodara accompanied by Śrī Rādhā, this explanation of *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, known as *Dig-darśinī* (the insight that guides us toward the inner meaning), is herewith presented.

With the intention of making his prayer, Śrī Satyavrata Muni first offers his devoted obeisances to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the word, *namāmī*, which invokes auspiciousness. He offers his obeisances by extolling Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supremacy through descriptions pertaining to the speciality of His *tattva* (profound fundamental truths related to Him), His form, His pastimes and His qualities. Thus, Śrī Satyavrata Muni declares the unique supremacy manifested by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Gokula, to be the very essence and entirety of Godhead.

It is vital to offer respects to one's worshipful deity before beginning any task. Also, by this gesture Śrī Satyavrata Muni exhibits his special feeling of *dāśya-bhakti*, devotion to Śrī Bhagavān in the mood of a servant. For this reason he begins his prayer by offering his obeisances to the Supreme Lord.



[The commentator, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, first discusses the profound fundamental truths underlying the identity of Śrī Bhagavān (*kṛṣṇa-tattva*). Herein he relates Śrī Satyavrata Muni's thoughts:]

“To whom am I offering obeisances? To Īśvara, the supreme controller. He is (1) *sarva-śaktimān* – the possessor of all potency; (2) *jagat-eka-nātha* – the sole Lord of the entire world; and (3) *nija-prabhu* – my own dear master. I am offering my obeisances to that Īśvara.” In the first facet of Īśvara, “the possessor of all potency”, Śrī Satyavrata Muni seeks the potency to offer prayers in glorification of Śrī Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord. The second facet, “the sole Lord of

the entire world”, conveys that Īśvara is alone his topmost worshipful and praiseworthy Lord. Finally, in relation to the last facet of Īśvara, that He is “my own dear master”, Śrī Satyavrata Muni expresses his own special *bhakti* for his Lord.

How is Īśvara manifest? Addressing this question, Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “Īśvara is manifest as the beautiful form of concentrated pure, eternal existence, full knowledge and unlimited bliss (*saccid-ānanda-rūpam*).” Thus the sage has explained the unrivalled supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of his prayers, by narrating the special, profound fundamental truths (*tattva*) underlying His identity.



[Now, the commentator discusses Śrī Bhagavān’s beautiful form.]

Śrī Satyavrata Muni shows the exceptional supremacy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by describing the unique beauty of His form. He describes how His earrings are swinging, *lasat-kunḍalam*. Because He is running away from His mother – Śrī Yaśodā – out of fear, or else because it is His nature to always make transcendental childish mischief due to unceasing restlessness; *makara*-shaped earrings constantly swing near His cheeks and seem to be playing there. In this way, the sage describes the speciality of the extraordinary splendour of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s worshipful face.

Yet another meaning of *lasat-kunḍalam* is, “Those two *makara*-shaped earrings have achieved the celebrated fortune of kissing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s cheeks and are therefore the most exalted of all His ornaments. Consequently, simply by mentioning Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s earrings, the special fortune of all other ornaments adorning His various limbs is implied.”

For this reason Śrī Satyavrata Muni is indicating, “I am offering obeisances to that personality whose bodily lustre beautifies His earrings.” In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s limbs even beautify their own ornaments. For this reason the *gopīs* have said:

*trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.40)

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Dear Kṛṣṇa, as a result of beholding Your beautiful form, which has enhanced the fortune of the three worlds, even the bodies of the cows, birds, trees, deer and others have erupted with horripilation. [Is it at all surprising, then, if Your beautiful form bewilders us?]

Also, while Śrī Uddhava was describing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form to Vidura, he said:

*vismāpanam svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
param padam bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.12)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is so captivating that even He is astonished when He sees Himself. His beautiful form embodies the topmost limit of exceedingly good fortune and opulence. Indeed, ornaments usually beautify the person wearing them, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is so beautiful that He actually increases the beauty of His ornaments. [In other words, compared to all other divine forms in existence, the beauty of His form is supremely divine.]



Next, Śrī Satyavrata Muni shows the extraordinary excellence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by describing His special associates present with Him in Gokula. He says, *gokule bhrāja-mānam* – how splendid it is when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is in Gokula (*gokule*), the home of His *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves and others. In this place, which is particularly befitting, He manifests the exceptional supremacy (*bhrāja-mānam*) of His pastimes which He has never manifested anywhere else [in any of the pastimes performed by His previous incarnations]. Another meaning is that the outstanding environment of Gokula is effulgent with the mood of natural love, so when Śrī Kṛṣṇa is situated there He is certainly most splendid (*bhrāja-mānam*).

This is also described in various places in *śāstra*. In the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is described as follows:

*cakāsa gopī-pariṣad-gato ’rcitas
trailokya-lakṣmy-eka-padam vapur dadhat
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.14)*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa [for whom perfected mystic *yogis* prepare a seat in their purified lotus-like hearts] appeared as the reservoir of all beauty unequalled within the three worlds. He accepted the seat offered by the *gopīs* and was worshipped by them. When He sat in their midst He appeared even more splendidous.



Now, in the remainder of this line, beginning with *yaśodā* as well as in the whole next verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni affirms the unparalleled excellence of his worshipful Lord by describing His extraordinary pastimes. Due to its surrounding context, *yaśodāyā* means “from His mother, Śrī Yaśodā”. The meaning of *bhīyā* is that “Śrī Kṛṣṇa feared being punished for breaking the earthen pot of butter, as well as raiding its contents and making other types of mischief”. A pot of butter had been hung from the ceiling, high above the ground for protection, but Kṛṣṇa had climbed upon an overturned grinding mortar and was stealing butter from it. The meaning of *ulūkhalāt* is, “When He saw His mother coming with a stick in her hand, He immediately leapt from the grinding mortar” and, *dhāvamānam*, “ran away very quickly”.

The Ninth Chapter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*’s Tenth Canto contains a detailed narration of this pastime. It is recommended that one reflect upon it.

*ulūkhalāṅghrer-upari vyavasthitam
markāya kāmam dadatam śici sthitam
haiyaṅgavam caurya-viśaṅkitekṣaṇam
nirīkṣya-paścāt sutamāgamacchanatī
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.8)*

After climbing on top of the overturned grinding mortar, Śrī Kṛṣṇa began feeding the monkeys to His great satisfaction,

giving them the butter from a pot that had been hung from the ceiling in order to protect it. Because He was stealing, He was anxiously looking here and there. Seeing Him like this, Mother Yaśodā slowly approached Him from behind.

*tām ātta-yaṣṭim prasamīkṣya satvaras
tato 'varuhyāpasasāra bhītavat
gopy anvadhāvan na yam āpa yoginām
kṣamaṁ praveṣṭum tapaseritam manaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.9)*

As soon as Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw His mother with a stick in her hand, He hastily jumped from the grinding mortar and began running away, as if totally overcome by fear. Great mystics whose hearts have been completely purified by performing austerities are qualified to merge with *brahma*, yet they fail to catch Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, considering Him to be her little child, Yaśodā-devī ran after that same Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in order to catch Him.

Seeing her son fleeing after being caught making mischief, Mother Yaśodā ran after Him. She ran much faster than He did, and seized Him from behind. By describing that she ran much faster than Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the words *atyanta-tato-drutya*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni alludes to the exceptional beauty of Mother Yaśodā's breasts, hips and full-figured body, and also indicates her special affection for her son.

The use of the loving address *gopyā*, instead of *yaśodayā*, signifies that only those who are born in cowherd families have the great fortune of seeing these pastimes. Furthermore, by saying *parāmrṣṭa*, that she caught Him from behind, Śrī Satyavrata Muni indicates Śrī Kṛṣṇa's special affection for Mother Yaśodā. In other words, he is declaring that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *bhakta-vatsala*, He has particular affection for His devotees.

Here also, it is beneficial to carefully study the following verse from the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*anvañca-mānā jananī bṛhac-cala-
chroṇibharā-krānta gatiḥ sumadhyamā
javena vistrānsita-keśa-bandhana-
acyuta-prasūnānugatiḥ parāmṛṣat
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.10)*

As slender-waisted Yaśodā chased Śrī Kṛṣṇa, her pace was slowed down by the weight of her large swaying hips. As she ran after Him, her hair loosened and the flowers that were woven into her braid fell to the ground, as if following behind her. Despite all of this, she continued to chase Kṛṣṇa and at last she caught hold of Him from behind.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of the
Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā on the First Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

In order to glorify his worshipful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and hopeful of attaining his most cherished desire, Śrī Satyavrata Muni starts his prayer with *maṅgalācaraṇa*, an auspicious invocation, beginning with the word *namāmī*. Invocations of auspiciousness are of three types: those which offer respects, those which point out the subject being discussed, and those which grant a benediction. Here, the sage invokes auspiciousness by first offering his respects through the word *namāmī*, and then continues his *maṅgalācaraṇa* by indicating the subject being discussed.

Īśvara – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Lord (*īśvara*) of all lords. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī provides the evidence for this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*ete cāṁśa-kalā puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇastu bhagavān svayam
indrari-vyākulaṁ lokam
mṛḍayanti yuge yuge
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28)*

Among the incarnations described in the preceding verses, some are expansions of the *puruṣa-avatāra*, Kāraṇārṇava-śāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu, and some are *āveśa-avatāras*. All of these incarnations descend in each age to protect the world when it is tormented by the demons. However, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of the King of Vraja, is Svayam Bhagavān, the only form of Bhagavān with no other source than Himself. He is the original, primeval personality, and Mahā-Viṣṇu is His expansion.

Śrī Brahmā, the original *guru* for our *sampradāya*, states in his prayers:

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
saccidānanda vīgrahaḥ*

*anādir-ādir-govindah
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā (5.1)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord and Master of all other lords and He is the embodiment of pure eternal existence, full knowledge and unlimited bliss. He is the primeval Lord, Govinda, for He has no beginning or origin, as He Himself is the source of everything, including all the incarnations of Viṣṇu and all His empowered servitors. He is the ultimate cause of all consequent causes.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of the masters of creation who are worshipped by the whole world, and He is the origin of all incarnations. However, in Vraja, He offers respects to his father Nanda Bābā, to Mother Yaśodā and to His other elders. He becomes blissful when He loses the games He plays with His friends and when He eats their remnants and feeds them His own. Even when He is defeated again and again in the assembly of the *gopīs*, He considers it His great fortune. It was because of His own desire to obtain the pleasing association of the beautiful damsels of Vraja that He called them at the time of the *rāsa-līlā*; they did not call Him. This Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *sat-cit-ānanda*, pure eternal existence, full knowledge and unlimited bliss.

Sat means “existence”. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s inherent nature is that He exists as a fresh youth who is the best of dancers. His extremely charming form as a tender youth is even more attractive than Dvārakādhīśa, the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He resides in Dvārakā. It is only because Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s original form, Vrajendra-nandana, exists that all other lords, as well as this whole world, have their existence.

Cit means “that knowledge which manifests all relationships (*sambandha*) and permanent spiritual emotions (*bhāva*)”. As *bhāva* condenses, it gradually passes through the progressive stages of *prema*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *bhāva*, and finally transforms into *mahābhāva*. *Mahābhāva* is Śrī Rādhā Herself. She is therefore known as *mahābhāva-svarūpiṇī*, the embodiment of *mahābhāva*.

When the three components – pure eternal existence (*sat*), full knowledge (*cit*) and unlimited bliss (*ānanda*) – are manifest in one combined form then the identity of that form is Śrī Rādhā-Kānta, the basis and entirety of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, and the beloved of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. This very entity is Himself the sublimely pure existential substance (*viśuddha-sattva*).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the object (the *viśaya*) of all *rasas* (loving sentiments) and His devotees (the *āśraya*) are the abodes of love for Him. As the object of love, He cannot comprehend the topmost transformations exhibited by His devotees, the abodes of love for Him, when they experience their various moods, such as *rūḍa* and *adhirūḍa*. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepts the form of Śrī Śācinandana Gaurahari and becomes radiant with the mood and bodily complexion of Śrī Rādhā, the supreme abode of love for Kṛṣṇa. In that form He fulfils His three longings².

In many places throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form (*rūpa*) has been described. However, among all of them, three specific descriptions are extraordinarily wonderful and touch the heart. The first description was spoken by Śrī Brahmā, the Grandfather of the universe:

*naumīḍya te 'bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya
guñjāvataṁsa-parīpiccha-lasan-mukhāya
vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viśāṇa-veṇu-
lakṣma-śrīye mṛdu-pade paśuṇpāṅgajāya
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.1)*

.....
² **Editor's footnote:** Śrī Kṛṣṇa's three longings are described by Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 1.7)*: "Desiring to know the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love for Him, what it is in Him that makes Her maddened with love, and the nature of the pleasure She experiences by loving Him, Bhagavān Śrī Hari, fully resplendent with Her emotions, appeared from Śrīmatī Śāci-devī's womb, just as the moon appeared from the ocean."

O master, in the entire universe, only You are worthy of being praised. O Vrajendra-nandana, son of the king of Vraja, Your body, appearing like a fresh rain-cloud, is adorned with a yellow cloth that glistens like lightening and appears amazingly brilliant.

Because You are wearing *makara*-shaped earrings and a peacock feather on Your head, Your lotus face radiates an uncommon splendour. Around Your neck is a garland made of innumerable kinds of forest flowers and leaves. Tucked under Your arm are a cane and a buffalo horn. Your flute, which is tied by Your waist-belt, looks very beautiful. In Your lovely, soft hands is a morsel of yoghurt and rice. Even You are attracted by this cowherd boy attire of Yours. I simply fall to the ground like a stick again and again at Your feet, which are softer than lotuses and which are marked with all the auspicious signs.

The second description was spoken by the wives of the *brāhmaṇas* of Mathurā:

*śyāmaṁ hiraṇya-paridhīm vanamālya-barha-
dhātu-pravāla-naṣa-veṣam anavratāṁse
vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjaṁ
karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.23.22)*

His complexion was dark bluish like a fresh monsoon rain-cloud, and the glistening yellow cloth that was draped on His shoulders subdued the splendour of gold. There was a garland of forest flowers around His neck, and a beautiful peacock feather splendidly adorned His head. Playful designs were painted on His limbs with coloured minerals, and He had decorated Himself with bunches of newly sprouted leaves. He looked just like a dramatic dancer. He was resting one hand on the shoulder of His friend, and with the other hand He was playfully twirling a lotus flower. Ornaments decorated His ears, and curls of black hair

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

were cascading down His cheeks as His lotus face blossomed with a mild, playful smile.

The third description found in *Veṅu-gīta* (when the *gopīs* sang about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute) was spoken by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Here, he is describing the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form as revealed in the hearts of the *vraja-gopīs*:

*barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīṁ ca mālām
randhrān veṅor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāranyaṁ sva-pada-ramaṇaṁ prāvīśad gīta-kīrtiḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.5)*

(Within their hearts, the damsels of Vraja began to see that) Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered the charming forest of Vṛndāvana accompanied by His cowherd boyfriends. A peacock feather decorated the top of His head and yellow *karṇikāra* (oleander) flowers were resting on top of His ears. He wore a golden yellow garment on His body, and a beautiful, fragrant garland strung from five kinds of forest flowers circled His neck and hung down to His knees. Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared like the best of dancers performing a supremely captivating drama upon a stage. He filled up the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips as the cowherd boys followed behind Him singing His glories, which purify the entire world. In this way, the forest of Vṛndāvana, which is more charming than the divine realm of Vaikuṅṭha, has become even more splendid from the impressions of His adorable lotus feet, which are marked with all the auspicious symbols like the conch and disc.

There is yet another description of His beauty within the five chapters of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that recount *rāsa-līlā*. The *gopīs*, allured by the bewildering potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute song, left their homes in the middle of the night and went to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Yet when they came before Him, He teased them and told them to return to their

homes. At that time, the *gopīs* described the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form:

*kā sṛy aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām
trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvīja-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.40)*

O Śrī Śyāmasundara, from Your flute come the most endearing, slowly rolling melodies. Your beautiful form brings auspiciousness upon the entire universe! Moreover, upon seeing Your beautiful form, even the bodies of the cows, birds, trees and deer erupt with horripilation. After hearing the sweet melodies of Your flute and beholding Your captivating form, is there any woman in all the three worlds who would not become attached to You and, leaving aside all proper conduct and shyness, deviate from her religious principles?

Upon hearing the sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute, the *gopīs* of Vraja forgot everything – their fear, hesitation, patience, dignity and so forth. Regardless of the condition they were in, they eagerly ran to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Without even calling their dear-most girlfriends, the *prāṇa-priya sakhīs*, they ran to Him. Each *gopī* thought, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is calling only me.” When Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw that the *gopīs*, who are the incomparable treasures of Vraja, had come to Him, He tried to bewilder them with His delightful art of speaking.

O beautiful cowherd girls, why have you come here alone at this time of night? Have you come to see nature's splendour and the beauty of this forest? If so, then return to your homes now. The duty of a lady of noble descent is to serve her husband, father, brothers and friends. Even if her husband is bad-natured, unfortunate, foolish, old, diseased or poor, her duty is to serve him. Go back to your homes.³

.....
³ Editor's footnote: C.f. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.29.19, 21–2, 24–5).

Hearing these unpleasant words from their dear-most beloved, the *gopīs* became morose and pained at heart. They answered:

Dear Śyāmasundara, Your advice is correct, but by instructing us, You have become our *guru*, and one should first serve one's *guru*. Now, please accept our service. Till this moment, our hearts were absorbed in household duties, but now You have stolen our hearts. How will we return to our homes?⁴

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa was concluding His manifest pastimes, He called upon Śrī Uddhava and told him, “Soon I will leave you behind in this world to propagate *bhagavat-dharma*.” After Śrī Kṛṣṇa actually disappeared from this world, Śrī Uddhava set out for Vraja, overwhelmed by separation from Him. On the way, he met Śrī Vidura and told him that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had concluded His pastimes. In that context, Śrī Uddhava described Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form as follows:

*yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā grhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.12)*

By the power of His internal potency (*yoga-māyā*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa exhibited His original, eternal form within this mortal sphere – a form which is perfectly suited for His human-like pastimes, a form so captivating that even He is astonished when He sees Himself. His beautiful form is the embodiment of the topmost limit of exceedingly good fortune and opulence. Indeed, ornaments usually beautify the person who wears them, but Kṛṣṇa's form is so beautiful that He actually beautifies His ornaments. In other words, compared to all other divine forms in existence, the beauty of His form is supremely divine.

.....
⁴ Editor's footnote: Paraphrased from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.29.31, 32, 34).

Furthermore, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the *gopīs* at the time of the *rāsa-līlā*, the *gopīs* sang about their separation from Him in deep lamentation. Hearing that *kīrtana*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, unable to restrain Himself, again appeared in their midst. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes His beauty at that time:

tāsām-āvirbhuc-chauriḥ
smaya-māna-mukhambujaḥ
pītāmbara-dharaḥ stragvī
sākṣān-manmatha-manmathaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.2)

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared before the *gopīs*, His lotus face blossomed with a mild smile. A beautiful forest flower garland decorated His neck and chest, and a yellow cloth graced His shoulders. He even churned the mind of the god of love, who agitates the minds of all, for He is directly the original transcendental God of love.

He says, *pītāmbara-dharaḥ*. At first, Kṛṣṇa was clasping the yellow cloth He wore as an upper-garment between His hands. The import of this is as follows:

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw the *gopīs*' moods of separation from Him, He wiped away their tears with His yellow cloth. He realised that He had given so much trouble to His dear beloveds, and thus He considered Himself an offender. Begging pardon for His offence, He then placed part of his yellow garment between His teeth as though biting a piece of straw (a sign of great humility). The appearance of His beautiful form at that time was capable of agitating the minds of millions and millions of Cupids.

When Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī spoke this verse, he became absorbed in the moods of the *gopīs*. In that state, forgetful of himself, He became perturbed and addressed Śrī Kṛṣṇa as *śauri*. By calling Kṛṣṇa *śauri* in the mood of an irritated *gopī*, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was saying "You are cruel like a warrior. You are not from the soft-hearted cowherd dynasty, otherwise You would not have left all of us."

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifesting all the splendour of His incomparable form, appeared in the assembly of the *gopīs*, they became completely overwhelmed with love for Him. The love that Śrī Bhagavān's associates have for Him within their hearts determines how much His immaculate beauty is revealed. Śrī Bhagavān manifests His personal sweetness according to the greatness of His associates' love for Him. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī further clarifies this:

cakāsa gopī pariśad-gato 'rcitus
trailokya-lakṣmyeka-padam vapur-dadhat
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.14)

As Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa sat among thousands upon thousands of *gopīs* who were all worshipping Him, He appeared so splendid. All the beauty throughout the three worlds, all the beauty ever manifest in the past, all the beauty manifest now, and all the beauty that will ever manifest in the future, is only the dim glow from a drop of Śrī Bhagavān's own beauty. He alone is the abode of all beauty.

Śrī Nārāyaṇa is also beautiful. Attracted by His beautiful form, Lakṣmī remains engaged in the service of His worshipful feet, day and night. However, as soon as she remembers the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa within her heart, she longs to see His sweet form directly and resolves, "Since I cannot obtain entrance into *rāsa-līlā*, I will watch it from a distance." What is the reason for this eagerness? It has been said that the incomparable form that Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested within the *rāsa-līlā* in the assembly of the *gopīs* was never exhibited anywhere else. What is that form like? His form churns the mind of even Cupid who agitates the minds of all, for He is directly the original transcendental Cupid.

In the first verse of *Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni describes the very same enchanting form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a two and a half-year-old baby running away from Mother Yaśodā. As He fled from His mother, He repeatedly looked behind Him with terrified glances. His

earrings shimmered on His cheeks, and His neck was decorated by three graceful lines. Other than the auspicious gold cord around His waist and the pair of ankle-bells clasping His worshipful lotus feet, resonating with unsurpassed charm, His tiny form was completely naked.

The conclusion that the manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty is relative to His devotee's love for Him is also established by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in his *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*: "The unique qualities of Śrī Bhagavān's beauty manifest in accordance with the unique qualities of His associates."

In order to bestow His mercy upon the souls who were indifferent to Him and to bless them with *vraja-prema* (the love exhibited by the eternal inhabitants of Vraja), Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His beautiful form as a fresh youth, the best of dancers, dressed as a cowherd boy holding a flute in His hands. This very form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin and basis of all His forms in Mathurā and Dvārakā and is also the source of all other *avatāras*.

Even though the main subject of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentary on this verse is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes, he has quoted a description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beautiful form exhibited at the time of the *rāsa-līlā*, in order to convey the extraordinary glory of that particular form.



In Chapter Nine of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, there is a description of *Śrī Dāmodara-līlā*:

Many *gopīs* constantly complained to Śrī Yaśodā, "Your son steals from our houses and eats our butter. O Yaśodā, worse than that, He throws milk, yoghurt and butter everywhere. If He actually ate it, it would be all right, but He doesn't. He smashes our pots of milk and yoghurt and unties the calves. How can we tolerate this daily loss of milk and yoghurt any longer? We have all decided to leave your settlement of Vraja and live elsewhere."

Mother Yaśodā heard these complaints every day. She began to wonder, "Could it be that my darling boy finds the butter that comes

from His own home not tasty? Is it sour? Is that why He doesn't eat it, but instead sneaks into the houses of other *gopīs* to steal their butter? If that is the case, then today I will prepare sweet butter for my dear son with my own hands. He will surely eat that and not go to others' houses to steal their butter." It was the festival of Dīpāvalī so she gave leave to all her servants and maidservants. She personally milked Maṅgalā, Gaṅgā, Piśāṅgī and other cows, and then boiled the milk until it started condensing. When it was the right warmth, she added yoghurt culture to it, and then, in the early morning, she personally set to churning the freshly cultured yoghurt. As she was churning, she became completely immersed in love for her darling son and began to sing.

As the churning rod rotated back and forth it made a deep reverberating sound, *dhik*, like the large drum-head of a *mṛdaṅga*, and also a tapping sound, *tān*, like the small drum-head. Thus, the full sound was *dhik-tān*, *dhik-tān*. The meaning implied is that any soul who does not worship and remember Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa leads a life that is so dull (*tān*) that he is no better than an animal. Such a soul is condemned (*dhik*).

As she churned, the ringing of her bangles sounded like the ringing of *kārtalas*. Lost in thoughts of her darling son, she started to sing. In his *stotram*, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura has also described how Mother Yaśodā began to sing in this pastime:

*kvacit prabhāte dadhi-pūrṇa-pātre
niḥśipya mantham yuvatī mukundam
ālokya gānam vividham karoti
govinda-dāmodara-mādhaveti*

Śrī Govinda-Dāmodara Stotram (19)

Once, at dawn as Yaśodā-devī was about to place the churning rod in a pot of yoghurt,⁵ she gazed upon her child, Mukunda.

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⁵ **Editor's footnote:** It is to be noted that there is a slight variation in Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura's description of this pastime because of his personal realization.

At once she became overwhelmed with love and sang this wonderful song, “O my Govinda, my Dāmodara, O my dear Mādhava.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the darling son of Mother Yaśodā, forever begs parental love from His mother. Mother Yaśodā was completely absorbed in the moods of her song and was brimming with affection for Kṛṣṇa. When He heard her singing, her voice saturated with love for Him, He could not restrain Himself. He began to think, “Every day, Mother sings little songs with great tenderness to awaken Me, but today she has not come and I am so hungry.” The Supreme Lord of everything, who is independently blissful and self-satisfied (*ātmarāma* and *āptakāmā*), was hungry. He began to cry loudly for His mother’s breast-milk.

My dear Lord, how glorious You are! On this day, the effect of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s crying remained unknown to anyone. It simply merged into the fathomless ocean of Mother Yaśodā’s parental affection, for she was so absorbed in her *saṅkīrtana* that she was unable to hear Him.

With great difficulty, Kanhaiyā, who was lying on His belly, moved little by little to the edge of His bed and then got down. Rubbing His eyes and crying, He somehow made it to where His mother was churning, tottering like an intoxicated elephant along the way. He caught hold of the churning rod and stopped it from twirling. Mother Yaśodā’s absorption broke. Seeing her darling son at her side, she immediately sat Him on her lap and began breast-feeding Him. Just by seeing her dear Kṛṣṇa, her limbs became decorated by all of the *aṣṭa-sāttvika bhāvas* (the eight types of bodily transformations arising from ecstatic love of God). Furthermore, the special emotion of motherly affection manifested – namely, milk began to flow from her breasts.

According to *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, baby Kṛṣṇa is the *viṣaya-ālabhana* of *vātsalya-rasa* – that is, He is the object upon which motherly love depends; His mother, Śrī Yaśodā, is the *āśraya-*

ālambana, or the reservoir of love for Him; baby Kṛṣṇa's gorgeous face is the *uddīpana*, or the stimulus that rouses motherly love; and Mother Yaśodā's tears, the standing on end of her bodily hairs, the flowing of milk from her breasts and so on are the *sāttvika-bhāvas*, or transformations of ecstasy in her body.

All of these ingredients of love, namely *vibhāva* (*viṣaya-ālambana*, *āśraya-ālambana* and *uddīpana*), *anubhāva* (deep emotions that are realized through outward expressions on the body) and so forth then combined with Mother Yaśodā's own *sthāyī-bhāva*, namely *vātsalya-rati*, and began to make her relish *vātsalya-rasa*.

Suddenly, the milk started boiling over as if it were thinking, "Mother Yaśodā's breasts are the source of all the milk contained within all the universes. Her supply of breast milk is inexhaustible and the stomach of baby Kanhaiyā is not at all small; all the universes can fit inside it. She will never tire of breast-feeding Him, and He can drink forever. In that case, I will always remain bereft of the opportunity to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, it is pointless to maintain my worthless life, a life devoid of service." Thinking like this, the milk began to sacrifice himself into the fire.

Practising devotees (*sādhakas*) should also have this type of anxiousness. They should think, "If while performing *bhajana*, we do not gain even a glimpse of Śrī Bhagavān or realize the mercy of His pastimes and divine abode, then our lives are worthless." Deprived of seeing Śrī Gaurasundara and His associates, Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura says:

pāṣāṇe kuṭība māthā, anale paśība
gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā gele pābo

Prārthanā (Song 41)

I shall dash my head upon a stone or enter into a blazing fire.
Where will I find that treasure-house of all wonderful qualities,
Śrī Gaurāṅga?



In this regard it is important to carefully deliberate on Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *uttamā-bhakti*, or pure devotion:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādhy anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir-uttamā
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)*

When *bhakti* is performed without any other desire than the aspiration to bring happiness to Kṛṣṇa; when it is not covered by the endeavour to accumulate dry knowledge, result-oriented work, or any other practice for attaining a goal unrelated to Him, and when it is cultivated solely with a favourable disposition towards Him and for His benefit, then it is *uttamā-bhakti*, supremely pure devotion.

In this verse, the characteristics which describe *bhakti* are divided into two categories: *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* and *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*. The first category, *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, includes the intrinsic qualities of *bhakti*. The second category, *taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*, includes the marginal qualities of *bhakti*.⁶

To communicate how our *bhakti* can be perfected, the modifier *ānukūlyena* (with a favourable disposition) has been used because one cannot perform *bhakti* with an unfavourable disposition. That is to say, one who acts in opposition to Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be performing *bhakti*.

Certain exalted, realized personalities have stated that *ānukūlyena* means the tendency to perform activities that bring pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that the inclination to please Him with a favourable disposition is *bhakti*. However, if this latter definition is accepted, one of two faults may arise. Some things are encompassed by this definition which should not be included within a description of *bhakti*. This is called *ativyapti-doṣa* (the fault of over-extending the definition). Similarly it

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⁶ **Editor's footnote:** The intrinsic qualities describe the direct nature of *uttamā-bhakti*, while the marginal qualities describe what must be avoided for the intrinsic qualities to qualify as *uttamā-bhakti*.

excludes things that should be included within the description. This is called *avyapti-doṣa* (the fault of under-extending the definition).

For example, in the wrestling match, Cāṇura, Muṣṭika and other demons were striking Śrī Kṛṣṇa's limbs. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was certainly enlivened by their attack and began to relish the mood of being a great hero (*vīra-rasa*). How can the attacks of the demons be understood as pleasurable for Śrī Kṛṣṇa? The answer to this is found in part of a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.13.30): “*manasvinām-iva sat-samprahāra* – Although in the eyes of ordinary people a terrifying battle with an enemy seems torturous, it is in fact exhilarating for the fighters.”

In that case, if we conclude that the demons' horrible attacks during the wrestling match were acts of *bhakti* because they gave pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then the fault of *ativyapti* (over-extension of the definition) arises. Even though these malevolent endeavours caused Śrī Kṛṣṇa to feel pleasure, which is apparently the quality of *bhakti*, they were actually strictly opposed to *bhakti*.

Conversely, consider the example of Mother Yaśodā breast-feeding Śrī Kṛṣṇa as He lay on her lap. At the same time, the milk she had kept on the stove was boiling over into the fire. After taking Kṛṣṇa, who was not yet satisfied, off of her lap, she went to save the milk. This caused Him to experience much displeasure. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.6), “*sañjāta-kopaḥ sphuritārūṇādharam* – His tiny reddish lips began quivering from anger.” Mother Yaśodā's action greatly displeased Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but if we conclude that her endeavour does not come within the definition of *bhakti*, then the fault of *avyapti* (under-extension of the definition) arises.



The nature of exalted devotees (*mahā-bhāgavatas*) is that they want to engage every soul in Kṛṣṇa's service. When Mother Yaśodā saw that the milk was sacrificing himself into the fire by boiling over because he was bereft of Kṛṣṇa's service, she immediately removed her darling boy from her lap and tried to save it.

With both of His hands, baby Kṛṣṇa firmly caught hold of His mother's breast and with His legs He clung to her waist. He held on to His mother in this way with all His might. Pūtanā, who had the strength of ten thousand elephants, could not free herself from His grip, but in the presence of Mother Yaśodā's *vātsalya-prema*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the possessor of all potency, could not stop her from putting Him down.

With one hand, Mother Yaśodā easily pushed Him from her breast. Then she removed Him from her lap, sat Him down nearby, and went to save the milk.

The *siddhānta* (perfect philosophical conclusion) behind this incident is that Mother Yaśodā's love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is much greater than His love for her. Indeed, Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes under the control of her love. In the presence of this motherly love imbued with deep possessiveness, all of Bhagavān's unlimited majestic potencies are defeated.

Here, another point is to be considered. Although the superlative manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unlimited opulence (*aiśvarya*) is found only in Vraja, it remains submerged in the fathomless ocean of sweetness contained within the Vraja pastimes. That is to say, even when Śrī Kṛṣṇa's infinite opulence is fully revealed, it easily fits within the all-accommodating embrace of Vraja's sweetness.

Mother Yaśodā splashed cold water into the pot of boiling milk as if to pacify it. "I am going to use you in Kṛṣṇa's service right now," she said. "Don't give up your life like this."



In the other room, however, baby Kṛṣṇa was in a fit of rage. He picked up a stone pestle lying nearby and hit the base of the earthen pot of yoghurt that His mother was churning, and made a hole in it. A thick stream of yoghurt began flowing all over the floor as Kṛṣṇa watched with fascination. Although He was captivated by the sight of the stream of yoghurt spilling on to the ground, it made Him remember His mother. Consequently, He fearfully ran into a nearby room that had a doorway leading outside. Hanging from the ceiling was a pot of butter that enticed His mind. He climbed on top of an overturned grinding

mortar and started eating the butter out of the pot and at the same time feeding some of it to the crows and monkeys who had come.

When Mother Yaśodā returned to the pot of yoghurt to continue her churning, she saw the stream of yoghurt flowing from the broken pot. She thought, “This is surely the work of my clever son.” Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.7), “Kṛṣṇa was highly skilful in breaking the earthen pot, for He did not make a sound, nor did His ornaments. Nor did He make any sound in the other room as He climbed on top of the grinding mortar to take butter.” Indeed, this could only have been the accomplishment of her intelligent son. By the tiny footprints of yoghurt on the floor, the sweet smell of butter coming from the room nearby and various other clues, Mother Yaśodā easily guessed: “My beloved son has entered that very room.” Peering inside, she saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa standing on the grinding mortar, stealing fresh butter. She took a small stick in her hand to punish her clever child, and tip-toed into the room like a cat. But as soon as she entered, the crows and monkeys fled. Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately understood, “Mother has come!” He leapt from the grinding mortar and fled outside towards the royal lane. Mother Yaśodā also ran on to the road, pursuing her son.

The silk cloth on Mother Yaśodā’s somewhat full, bluish limbs fluttered as she swiftly ran, and the beautiful fragrant flowers that were woven into her braid began to fall as if to say, “Mother, you are not alone; we also are with you. Catch Him! Quickly!” Mother Yaśodā’s pace exceeded Kṛṣṇa’s, and thus she caught Him from behind.



If we are to obtain Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then we must love Him more than He loves us. Only then can He be controlled. We will also have to love Him with great intimacy (*viśrambha-bhāva*) and with the same simple, natural attachment (*laukika-sadbandhuva*) as the residents of Vraja, especially the *gopas* and their wives. Śrī Kṛṣṇa may be pleased by love that is mixed with the moods of awe and reverence (*aiśvarya*), but He cannot be controlled by it.

Just see, with the mood of a simple mother, Śrī Yaśodā naturally regards Śrī Kṛṣṇa as her son and chastises Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is offered worship everywhere else, but when He is in Vraja, He is the servant and the inhabitants of Vraja are His masters. On the command of the *gopīs* He begins to dance. He puts Nanda Bābā's slippers on His head and delivers them to him. Under Yogamāyā's influence, He forgets His supremacy and enacts His pastimes as an ordinary human being. This is called *mādhurya-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's honey-like pastimes. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja are full of opulence, that opulence does not even slightly stifle the love that the inhabitants of Vraja have for Him. Instead, it invigorates their honey-like love causing it to condense even more. This is the speciality of the love in Vraja.

The practising devotee (*sādhaka*) should also desire to perform activities that will melt Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart. Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not be able to resist him for very long. He will accept that devotee with His whole heart and immerse him in His own sublime service.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛitti on the First Verse ~



❧ Verse Two ❧

*rudantam muhur netra-yugmam mrjantam
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātaṅka-netram
muhuh svāsa-kampa-tri-rekhāṅka-kaṅṭha-
sthita-graiva-dāmodaram bhakṭi-baddham*

SYNONYMS

rudantam – weeping; *muhuh* – incessantly; *netra-yugmam* – two eyes; *mrjantam* – and rubbing both simultaneously; *kara-ambhoja-yugmena* – with two lotus hands; *sātaṅka-netram* – with fear-filled eyes; *muhuh* – again and again; *svāsa* – heavy sobbing; *kampa* – trembling; *tri-rekha-aṅka* – with three curved lines that resemble the ringed grooves encircling the neck of a conch-shell; *kaṅṭha-sthita* – upon His neck; *graiva* – necklace; *dāmodaram* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who’s waist (*udara*) is bound by rope (*dāma*); *bhakti-baddham* – bound by loving devotion.

TRANSLATION

[Seeing the stick in His mother’s hand and fearful of being beaten] He is weeping incessantly and rubbing His eyes again and again with His two lotus-like hands. His eyes are extremely restless and filled with fear. He takes heavy breaths again and again that cause the pearls and other ornaments around His neck, which is marked by three gracefully curving lines, to tremble. O Dāmodara, You have been bound by Your mother’s *vātsalya-bhakti*. [I offer my obeisances unto that Dāmodara].

❧ Dig-darsinī-tīkā ❧

tadanantara 'līlā'-viśeṣaṁ vadan – “kṛtāgasanī tam prarudantam akṣiṇī karṣantam aṅjan-maṣiṇī sva-pāṇinā, udvikṣamāṇā bhaya-vihvalekṣaṇaṁ haste grhītvā bhiṣayanty-avāgurat.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.11) ityartham āha – rudantam iti.

[rudantam] mātr-haste yaṣṭim dṛṣtvatayā tāḍanam āśaṅkya bhītatvādi-pradarśanena tat-pariharaṇāya krandantam, ataeva karāmbhoja-yugmena netra-yugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ – yugapan mārjayantaṁ, etacca bālya-līlā-viśeṣa-svabhāvataḥ. yad vā – bhayāveśena sadyo'anugacchato'sruṇo niṣkāsanārthaṁ, yadvā, aśrudhārāpasāranārtham iti dik. yataḥ sātaṅke saśaṅke netre api, kim punar mano yasya tam; yadvā, sabhaya-nirīkṣaṇa-netra-yugam ity arthaḥ. tataśca tāḍana-parihārārtham idam api līlāntaram ūhyam. kiṅca, muhuḥ śvasena rodanāveśa-kṛtena, kampat kampamānaṁ, tri-rekhāṅke kambuvad-rekhā-traya-cinhe, kaṅṅhe sthitaṁ graivaṁ graiveyakam sarvaṁ grīvābhūsaṇaṁ muktā-hārādi yasya. [dāmodaraṁ] dāma udare yasya; anena ca – “gopikulūkhale dāmnā babandha prakṛtaṁ yathā” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.14) ityuktam.

dāmnodare ulūkhale cobhayato bandhana-muktaṁ, tadevābhivyaṅjayan bhakta-vaśyatā-viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣam āha – bhaktyaiva matuḥ sva-viśayakayā tasya vā mātr-viśayakayā, baddhaṁ svīkṛta-bandhanaṁ, na tu pāśa-varga-balāt, sarvataḥ samuccitairapy-anantaḥ pāśairnyūna-dvy-aṅgulāpūraṇāt. taccoktaṁ – “tad-dāma-badhyamānasya svārbhakasya kṛtāgasah, dvy-aṅgulonam abhūt tena sandadhe'nyacca gopikā. yadāsīt tadapi nyūnaṁ tenānyadapi sandadhe, tad-api dvy-aṅgulaṁ nyūnaṁ yad-yad-ādatta bandhanam. evaṁ sva-geha-dāmāni yaśodā sandadhatyapi” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.15–7) – ityādi. yadvā, dāmodaratve hetuḥ – bhaktyaiva baddhaṁ vaśīkṛtaṁ, tathāpi sa evārthaḥ paryavasyati. kiṅca, “sva-mātuḥ svinmagātrāyā visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ, dṛṣṭvā pariśramaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane. evaṁ sandarśitā hyaṅga hariṇā bhakta-vaśyatā, sva-vaśenāpi kṛṣṇena yasyedaṁ seśvaraṁ vaśe. nemaṁ viriṅco na bhavo na śrīrapyaṅga-saṁśrayā, prasādaṁ lebhīre gopī yat tat prāpa vimukti-dāt.

*nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān dehināṁ gopikā-sutaḥ, jñānināṁ cātma-
bhūtānāṁ yathā bhaktimatām iha.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.18–21)
ityeṣāṁ arthaḥ. tathā– “devarṣir me priyatamo yadīmau dhanadātmaḥ,
tat tathā sādhaiṣyāmi yad-gītaṁ taṁ-mahātmanā.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
(10.10.25) – ityāderarthaḥ pi śrī-nārada-bhakty-apekṣayā yamalārjuna-
bhañjanādi-tat-tal-lilā-rūpo’nena sūcitah. (2)*

*iti śrī dāmodarāṣṭake dvitīya-śloke śrīla-sanātana-gosvāmī-kr̥tā
digdarśinī-nāmnī ṭikā samāptā.*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭikā on the Second Verse ~

❧ *Diḡ-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda* ❧

The excellence of Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary *līlā* is depicted in this important verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.11):

*ḷṛtāgasam̐ tam̐ prarudantam̐ akṣiṇī
kaṣantam̐ aṅjan-maṣiṇī sva-pāṇinā
udvīkṣamāṇam̐ bhaya-vihvalekṣaṇam̐
haste ḡṛhītvā bhiṣayanty avāgurat*

Mother Yaśodā watched as her naughty child cried bitterly and rubbed His eyes with both His hands. The black ointment from around His eyes mixed with His tears and spread everywhere. Seeing her son with His eyes full of fear at the sight of the stick she was brandishing, Yaśodā took Him by the hand and began to gently reproach Him in order to instil fear in Him.

In the stanza beginning with *rudantam* Śrī Satyavrata Muni fully captured the meaning of this *Bhāgavatam* verse. In following with the second half of the previous stanza, he continues to establish his worshipful Lord's supremacy through descriptions of His unique pastimes. Appreciating the same pastime that is described in the above verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he spoke the present stanza thus: "When He saw His mother holding a stick, He became apprehensive, fearing that she would surely beat Him. Now He is hoping that by showing her how afraid He is, He can avoid being punished. So *rudantam*, He cries bitterly, and *karāmbhoja-yugmena netra-yugmam̐ mṛjantam*, He rubs His eyes again and again with both His lotus-like hands."

That He just keeps rubbing His eyes with both His hands is in keeping with the natural behaviour of a child. This is the special characteristic of His *balya-līlā* and it is one explanation of *karāmbhoja-yugmena netra-yugmam̐ mṛjantam*, but this phrase also indicates two alternative meanings. The first of these is that there are actual tears that instantly came to His eyes due to His fear. In order to make

these tears fall from His eyes, He continuously rubs them with both His hands. The second alternative meaning is that continuous streams of tears are already flowing from His eyes so He rubs His eyes with both His hands to wipe away the tears.

The meaning of *sātaṅka-netram* is that if even His eyes are expressing that He is afraid of being punished, His mind must be overwhelmed with fear. Otherwise, it may be taken to mean “He is casting His glance in all directions because He is greatly agitated by fear”. His attempt to avoid being beaten by His mother is another of His unique confidential pastimes.

And moreover, *muhuh-svasena*, because of His continuous crying and constant heavy sobs, *kaṅṭha-sthita-graivam*, the pearl necklace and other ornaments around His neck, which is marked with *tri-rekhāṅka*, three graceful lines like the ringed grooves on a conch, are also trembling (*kampat*). Śrī Dāmodara, whose belly becomes bound by ropes, appeared thus. By this description, Śrī Satyavrata Munī has captured the meaning of another verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.14):

*taṁ matvātmajam avyaktam
martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam
gopikolūkhale dāmnā
babandha prākṛtam yathā*

Just as an ordinary mother in this world may bind her mischievous son, so Mother Yaśodā, simply considering Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be her son, tied Him to the grinding mortar with a rope as if He were an ordinary child.

The above verse mentions that the rope was knotted both at His belly and at the grinding mortar.¹ Thus the sage has revealed Śrī

.....
¹ **Editor’s footnote:** Mother Yaśodā first tied one end of the rope around a heavy grinding mortar and then began to tie the other end around her child’s belly in order to keep Him securely bound.

Kṛṣṇa's unique supremacy by describing His *bhakta-vaśyatā-viśeṣa*, His special quality by which He allows His devotees to control Him.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni says *bhakti-baddham*. The meaning is “*bhaktyaiva baddham* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only bound by *bhakti* and nothing else.” In other words, it was not the strength of all the ropes that was able to bind Him. Rather, He submitted to being bound, on one hand, because of the power of Śrī Yaśodā's *bhakti* for Him in the form of motherly affection, and on the other hand, because of His own special quality of willingly being controlled by His *bhaktas*, like His mother, in the form of His *bhakti* for her. That is why, even when Mother Yaśodā tied all the ropes she had gathered together, she still failed to bind Him. There always remained an inexplicable gap of two fingers.

This is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.15–7):

*tad dāma badhyamānasya
svārbhakasya kṛtāgasah
dvy-aṅgulonam abhūt tena
sandadhe 'nyac ca gopikā*

When Mother Yaśodā tried to bind her mischievous child, the rope was two fingers too short, so she added another rope to it. (15)

*yadāsīt tad api nyūnam
tenānyad api sandadhe
tad api dvy-aṅgulaṁ nyūnam
yad yad ādatta bandhanam*

However, that also was two fingers short. In this way, each and every time she tied on another rope, it was always two fingers short. (16)

*evam̐ sva-geha-dāmāni
yaśodā sandadhaty api*

Although she had tied together all the ropes in her home, Mother Yaśodā could not bind Kṛṣṇa. (Seeing this, the *gopīs* started giggling. Utterly perplexed, she, also, began to laugh.) (17)

The other reason that His belly became bound with rope (*dāmodaratva*) is that “*bhakti-baddham* – He is completely enchanted exclusively by the *bhakti* of His devotees.” This meaning actually leads to the previous one: that He becomes bound because of His *bhakta-vaśyatā* (His willingness to be controlled by His devotees). In regard to this, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.18–21) further states:

*sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā
visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ
dṛṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ
kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane*

She had become exhausted by tying so many ropes together and her body had become covered with perspiration. The flowers woven into her hair had fallen from her loosened braid, and had scattered here and there. Seeing His mother’s fatigue and feeling compassionate, little Kṛṣṇa then allowed His mother to bind Him. (18)

*evam sandarśitā hy aṅga
hariṇā bhakta-vaśyatā
sva-vaśenāpi kṛṣṇena
yasyedam seśvaram vaśe*

O Mahārāja Parikṣit, this entire universe, along with the powerful demigods who control it, is completely under the control of the supremely independent Personality of Godhead, Śrī Hari. Yet He has allowed Himself to be bound, in order to show that He is willingly controlled by His devotees. (19)

*nemaṁ viriṅco na bhavo
na śrīr apy aṅga-saṁśrayā
prasādam lebhire gopī
yat tat prāpa vimuktidāt*

The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who bestows salvation upon all, never showed Lord Brahmā, Maheśvara (Śiva) or even His eternal

consort Lakṣmī-devī, who is half of His body, the kindness He showed this *gopī*, Yaśodā. (20)

*nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān
dehinām gopikā-sutaḥ
jñāninām cātma-bhūtānām
yathā bhaktimatām iha*

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of a *gopī* (*gopikā-sutaḥ*), is not at all easy to attain for the *aṣṭaṅga-yogīs*, who identify themselves with the body and who perform severe austerities. Nor is He easy to attain for self-realized *jñānīs*, who are absorbed in all-pervading, non-dual knowledge. But these loving associates who are absorbed in serving Him, simply considering Him to be the darling son of a *gopī*, have easily attained Him. [In other words, although the ascetics and impersonalists undergo great trouble, instead of attaining the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they merely attain an incomplete, or partial, expansion of Him.] (21)

These verses have conveyed the aforementioned reason for being bound.²

Later in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares:

*devarṣir me priyatamo
yad imau dhanadātmaḥ
tat tathā sādhaiṣyāmi
yad gūtaṁ tan mahātmanā*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.10.25)

Devarṣi Nārada is my dear devotee. Therefore, even though these two brothers, the sons of the most wealthy demigod Kuvera, had no devotion for me, still I must fulfil

.....
² **Editor's footnote:** The reason is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is bound due to His quality of *bhakta-vaśyatā*.

Śrī Nārada's words by appearing directly before them and granting them My devotional service.

The deep meaning of this statement spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that He enacted the pastime of delivering the two sons of Kuvera in the form of twin *arjuna* trees, because He was pleased by Śrī Nārada's devotion to Him. Indeed, He enacts all His pastimes because He is pleased with the *bhakti* of His devotees. This is yet another important meaning of *bhakti-baddham* – He is bound by *bhakti*.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā on the Second Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

On this day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the personality who causes the three worlds to tremble merely by the movement of His eyebrows, has become overwhelmed by fear of His mother. Seeing the tiny stick in her hand, He is trembling and stammers, “Mother, look, do not hit Me! I did not break the pot of yoghurt.”



Mother Yaśodā is slightly full-figured. As she was running, her braid came undone, and the flowers woven in her hair began falling out. It is as if the flowers were saying, “Mother, you are not alone; we are also with you.”

Those devotees who make their hearts spotless by endlessly drinking the nectar of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, imbued with extreme attachment and laced with renunciation of the material world, attain a state of meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa deep within their immaculate hearts, which are fully saturated by loving service.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of Nārāyaṇa sometimes appears in the meditations of Lord Brahmā (the creator of the universe) and the four Kumāras (the original sages). Still, even in their deepest meditation, they cannot capture Him in the form of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Yet, Mother Yaśodā actually bound Him – the complete embodiment of all nectarean humours of transcendental love. Unimaginably powerful warriors, despite their greatest valour, pose no threat to Kṛṣṇa. But Mother Yaśodā not only captured Him, she brandished a small stick in her hand and threatened Him, “Shall I beat You now?”

As Kanhaiyā rubbed His tear-filled eyes and tried to hide behind His mother, He cried out, “Mother, do not hit Me!” He did not look directly at her, He only looked fearfully at the stick in her hand.

“You monkey-friend!” she exclaimed. “*Cora!* Thief!”

To this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa replied, “Mother, there is no *cora* in My dynasty; there is only a ‘Cora’³ in your dynasty.”

“Oh, really?” she retorted. “If You did not steal the butter, then who was feeding the monkeys?”

Kanhaiyā replied, “He who made the monkeys was feeding them.”

“Is that so?” she said. “Tell me frankly, who broke this pot?”

“Look, Mother, when you ran to save the milk, your large ankle-bells hit the pot and it broke.”

“Then how did You get butter all over Your face?” she asked.

“Mother, the monkeys were eating the butter, so I was trying to scare them away. As they were running, they smeared butter all over My mouth.”

Hearing this exchange, all the *gopīs* began to laugh.

“I am not about to set You free so easily,” Mother Yaśodā said. “I am going to tie You up.”

Mother Yaśodā’s mood was grave. “If I don’t chastise Him,” she thought, “He will become quite a trouble maker.” With this in mind, she decided to bind Him. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa started to cry, she did not let Him go. She thought to herself, “I will keep Him tied up for a while, and when I have finished churning the yoghurt, I will untie Him and feed Him butter and breast-milk to calm Him down.”

Mother Yaśodā considered, “Kṛṣṇa is *khala*, a cunning and mischievous thief, and His accomplice is *ulūkhala*, this grinding mortar. Both deserve to be punished. I will tie them together in such away that Kṛṣṇa cannot untie Himself from the mortar.”

Thinking thus, she proceeded to bind Him.

*tad-dāma badhyamānasya
svārbhakasya kṛtāgasah
dyaṅgulonamabhūttena
sandadhe ’nyacca gopikāḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.15)*

.....
³ Editor’s footnote: Cora-ghoṣa Gopa was the name of one of Śrī Yaśodā’s ancestors. *Cora* literally means “thief”.

“When Mother Yaśodā tried to bind her mischievous child, the rope was two fingers too short, so she tied it to another rope.”

She had removed the silk ribbon from her braid in order to bind Kṛṣṇa with it. Other than the gold chain around His waist, Kṛṣṇa was quite naked. Although His tiny waist measured no more than twelve fingers, the ribbon could not be made to bind Him; it was two fingers too short. Mother Yaśodā asked her friend for another rope, but that was also too short. Time and again she gathered and added more rope, but it was always too short – and only two fingers too short – not more, not less.

There is an esoteric meaning in this. One finger represents the *sādhaka's* endeavours and the other finger represents the Lord's mercy. Śrī Bhagavān becomes controlled by His devotee only when both of these elements are present together.



The Rāmānuja *sampradāya* is divided in two according to whether they emphasize the Vedic scriptures or the Tamil scriptures. The former are known as Vaḍakalai and the latter as Teṅkalai. They have distinct opinions regarding the means of ultimate attainment. The view of Vaḍakalai Rāmānujas is based on grace arising from a cause. Their stance is compared to *markaṭa-nyāya*, the analogy of the baby monkey clinging to his mother for protection.

When the mother monkey moves about with her baby, she makes no effort to hold him. Instead, the baby clings on to her as she leaps from tree to tree, and if he falls, his mother will never accept him again.

Conversely, the view of Teṅkalai Rāmānujas is based on causeless grace. Their stance is compared to *mārjāra-nyāya*, the analogy of the cat carrying the kitten in her mouth. The mother-cat picks her kitten up with her teeth and carries him about. The kitten does not make any effort, and goes wherever she takes him.

Thus the followers of the Vaḍakalai school strive for the grace of Bhagavān by their own efforts, and conversely, the followers of the

Teṅkalai school rely solely on faith in the causeless grace of Bhagavān, considering their own endeavours ineffective.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava school asserts that both views are necessary. The following analogy is given to illustrate this stance. A person who has fallen into a well will cry, “Please help me! Pull me out!” Then, from above, someone may lower a rope into the well and say, “I am lowering down a rope. Catch hold of it and I will pull you out.” However, if the person in the well does not catch hold of the rope, he will not be freed. From his end, he must hold on to the rope, and from above, he must be pulled out.

In this example, the person in the well cries out for help and later firmly catches hold of the rope. These endeavours are the means of his deliverance. In other words they are his *sādhana*. From above, the person who is trying to pull him out is bestowing causeless mercy. For someone helplessly fallen in the well of material existence, Śrī Bhagavān’s causeless mercy descends, just like this rope, and by performing *sādhana*, one takes hold of that rope and achieves service to His lotus feet.

Mother Yaśodā did not give up in her attempt to bind Kṛṣṇa; she kept trying. All the *gopīs* began to clap their hands and say, “O Mother, the creator has not written on this boy’s forehead that He will be bound, so how can you tie Him up?” Mother Yaśodā felt ashamed. “This is so embarrassing,” she thought. “I have not been able to bind the child that came from my own womb.”

Taking shelter of Bhagavān Śrī Nārāyaṇa, she silently began to pray: “O Nārāyaṇa, please help me. If I cannot bind this boy today, it will be so shameful for me. Protect my honour.” Her face had become reddish like the rising sun, and drops of perspiration had begun to roll down her face, like pearls. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.18) describes this as follows:

*sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā
visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ
dṛṣṭvā pariśramam kṛṣṇaḥ
kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saw that His mother's body had become drenched with perspiration. The garlands woven into her braid had fallen out, and she had become utterly exhausted. Seeing His mother's fatigue, little Śrī Kṛṣṇa compassionately allowed Himself to be bound.

Sādhakas should perform *sādhana-bhajana* with the same unwavering determination and hard endeavour. Then Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart will melt and He will be compelled to bestow His sublime devotional service upon them. Indeed, when Kṛṣṇa saw his mother's firm resolve, His heart melted and His topmost potency – His mercy, the totality of all His powers combined – then manifested as His *bhakta-vātsalyata*, His affection for His devotees. At that very moment, His *aiśvarya-śakti* (His potency of supreme majesty) disappeared and He allowed Himself to be bound.

Mother Yaśodā made an intense endeavour with unflinching resolve. Following her example, *sādhakas* should try to melt Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart and by practising devotional service that is imbued with characteristics like sincere loving emotions (*bhāva*), great enthusiasm and anxiousness (*utkaṇṭha*), a deep sense of closeness and relationship (*sambandha*), a feeling of possessiveness (*mamata*) and intense affection for Him (*prīti*), they should compel Him to engage them in loving service to Him.



Regarding the previously mentioned verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* beginning with *sva-mātuḥ*, an important point must be considered. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains in his commentary on this verse:

Kṛṣṇa's waist measures only twelve fingers, and the length of the rope continually increased. Why, then, could His mother still not bind Him? Kṛṣṇa was thinking, "My important daily activities of stealing butter and playing with My friends will be stopped, so My mother should not tie Me up." Immediately, His *aiśvarya-śakti*,

which makes the impossible possible, manifested herself within Him and proceeded to serve Him. Consequently, although the size of His waist remained the same, and although the rope was made so long, His mother could not bind Him.

The *vraja-gopīs* who were witnessing this pastime along with Mother Yaśodā could not understand its mystery. Why was the rope two fingers too short?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not be bound by ordinary rope because all arrangements for His pastimes are made exclusively by His own intrinsic potency, *yogamāyā*. Furthermore, there is no outside or inside of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, nor is there any beginning or end of Him. He exists eternally in His *svarūpa*, both before the creation of the phenomenal universes and after their total destruction. In the interim, He pervades all the universes, residing within each of their atoms, yet all the while He remains *akhilarasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ*, the original form of condensed transcendent nectar in its totality. In fact, *raso vaiḥ saḥ* – He *is* nectar. Thus, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being forever beyond the purview of mundane sense perception, is thoroughly inconceivable. Yet, Mother Yaśodā simply regards Him as her son.

Thinking of Him in that way, she behaves with Him in such a natural and seemingly ordinary way that her relationship with Him may even appear to be like a relationship from this world. But because of that simple loving relationship, she was actually able to bind Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa can never be bound by someone who has not abandoned all separate interests for selfish enjoyment, which are in opposition with the tendency to please Him. He will only become bound by someone who cultivates *uttamā-bhakti*, which is the inherent function of one's perfected constitutional identity and which is uninhibited by fruitive acts, mystic *yoga* and dry knowledge. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān's power of compassion and mercy, the topmost among all His potencies, only becomes manifest by the performance of such *uttamā-bhakti*. In its presence, His *aiśvarya-śakti*, the power by which He displays His supreme majesty, becomes powerless. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests His mercy potency, He is controlled of His own accord.

In their previous lives, Devakī and Vasudeva performed extremely severe penances, but even they could not bind Śrī Kṛṣṇa.⁴ What, then, can be said of others who try to bind Him? He may willingly come under the control of a *sādhaka* when He sees them eagerly perform loving service to Him with great persistence, but He cannot be attracted by austerities alone. He is only attracted by sincere love.

Before the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *bhakti* was evident within the world, but not *bhakti-rasa*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī fulfilled the inner desire of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Within the sacred texts he compiled, especially *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, he perfectly delineated the meaning of *bhakti-rasa*, describing all of its divisions and subdivisions in full detail. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has propagated *bhakti-rasa* through His most confidential associates: Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, my own *śrīla gurudeva* – Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja – and others.



Mother Yaśodā wound the rope around Kṛṣṇa's belly, tied Him to the grinding mortar, and then went to churn the yoghurt, her mind remaining on her son all the while. Just then, Dāma, Śrīdāma, Sudāma, Madhumaṅgala and Kṛṣṇa's other *sakhās* arrived. Mother Rohiṇī also returned to Nanda-bhavana from the house of Upananda, along with her son Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, who then entered the group of *sakhās*. When He saw that His little brother was tied up and that He was crying, He became furious. Tears mixed with black cosmetic ointment were streaming from Kṛṣṇa's eyes. On one side, where the ointment had totally

.....
⁴ **Editor's footnote:** Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa awarded them their desired benediction by becoming their son, He performed all of His sweet childhood pastimes in Vraja, away from their vision. When He returned to them in His later pastimes, His identity as the Supreme Lord was revealed.

washed away, it looked like the clear river Gaṅgā. And on the other, where His tears were dark from mixing with the ointment, it looked like the blackish Yamunā. Thus the two rivers were cascading on to His chest. Enraged, Baladeva Prabhu asked Kanhaiyā and the *sakhās*, “Who bound Him?!” Baladeva Prabhu thought, “Whoever has bound My Kanhaiyā, I will punish this very day!” Then Madhumaṅgala whispered into Baladeva’s ear, “It was Mother Yaśodā who bound Kṛṣṇa.” As soon as He heard Mother Yaśodā’s name, He became silent.

After a few moments, He tried to open the knot. However, He was unable to untie Mother Yaśodā’s strong knot. This is because the love of devotees in *vātsalya-rasa* (parental love) is superior to the love of devotees in *sakhya-rasa* (friendship). Incidentally, had Baladeva Prabhu been situated in His form as Anaṅga Mañjarī, wherein He is devoted to Kṛṣṇa in the highest *rasa*, *madhura-rasa* (conjugal love), He could have untied the knot. But although all the *sakhās* kept working together to untie Kṛṣṇa, they were not successful.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa gradually stopped crying. Even He was unable to set Himself free. “Come on,” the *sakhās* told Him, “we will tip over the grinding mortar and drag it out of the courtyard and play.” At that moment He remembered the incident that occurred long ago between the two sons of Kuvera and His dear devotee, and He thought:

*devarṣir-me priyatamo yadimau dhanadātmajau
tat-tathā sādhiyiṣyāmi yad-gītaṁ tan-mahātmanā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.10.25)*

Devarṣi Nārada is My most dear devotee. Therefore, even though these two brothers, the sons of the most wealthy demigod Kuvera, had no devotion for Me, still I must fulfil Śrī Nārada’s words by appearing directly before them and granting them devotional service to Me.

Kuvera was the dear friend of Devarṣi Nārada, and his two sons were Nalakūvara and Maṅgrīva. One day, while they were bathing in the Mandākinī (celestial Gaṅgā) with heavenly damsels, their

intoxication from being wealthy, beautifully figured, youthful and of noble birth, became further inflamed by drinking wine. At that time Devarṣi Nārada passed by. When the ladies saw that he had come, they hurried out of the water, dressed themselves and offered him obeisances. But Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, blinded by arrogance, did not offer obeisances. In fact, they stood there naked and mused “Where has this person come from?” Ignoring the great sage, they shamelessly proceeded to call for the heavenly damsels to return.

When Śrī Nārada beheld the degraded behaviour of Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, he was overwhelmed with compassion for them. Outwardly, he feigned anger and shouted a curse: “Your behaviour befits that of trees. So be it! Become trees.”

Upon hearing the curse uttered by Devarṣi Nārada, they were filled with fear. Falling at his feet and weeping, they begged for pardon. “How can we be delivered?” they asked.

Śrī Nārada replied, “Both of you will become twin *arjuna* trees near the house of Nanda Mahārāja in Gokula. At the end of Dvāpara-yuga, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, will deliver you in the course of enacting His childhood pastimes.”

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa remembered His devotee’s curse, He was overwhelmed with compassion for the two sons of Kuvera. Just to deliver them, He dragged the heavy grinding mortar toward the extremely large *arjuna* trees⁵, with all of His friends. The trees were fused at their base, but somehow Śrī Kṛṣṇa passed between them. The grinding mortar, however, became lodged between the trees. As soon as Śrī Kṛṣṇa tugged at the grinding mortar with some force, the two trees were completely uprooted. At once, they began falling over and finally struck the ground, producing a deafening crash.

Then, from within the ancient trees, two divine personalities emerged. They circumambulated Śrī Kṛṣṇa and submitted prayers in

.....
⁵ **Editor’s footnote:** Ancient *arjuna* trees grow extremely large. According to Śrī Nārada’s curse, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva remained in the form of *arjuna* trees for one hundred celestial years, or about fifteen million earth years.

glorification of Him. After they begged to be forgiven for their offence, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explained:

“It is the unfailing result of seeing Śrī Nārada that even such rogues as the two of you are able to see Me face to face, and the sum total of all the sins you have committed in your countless births has fled far away from you. May you attain *bhāva-bhakti* for Me.”

By Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s causeless mercy, they resided in Goloka Vṛndāvana from that point onward. They became the famous reciters, Madhukaṅṭha and Snigdha-kaṅṭha. Thus, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s special associates, they eternally narrate His unlimited pastimes in the assemblies of Śrī Nanda Bābā or the *gopīs*.

That which cannot be obtained even after accumulating pious credit (*sukṛti*) for millions of lifetimes, can be achieved very quickly by the causeless mercy of *śrī guru*, Vaiṣṇavas and Śrī Hari. The devotees who are expert in relishing the loving moods of the *vraja-gopīs* are the treasure-house of *lobhamaya-bhakti*, devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is full of intense longing. Among them, some exemplify one’s own desired mood and are affectionate towards oneself (*sa-jātīya-snigdha*). If one gets their association then he should realize that they are the most dear friends of his soul. With his life and soul he should serve them and endeavour to purchase their mood.

But how can such moods be attained? When a person hankers for the same relationship (*sambandha*) that these great *rasika* devotees have with their *svāminī*, Śrī Rādhā, and with Her companions, and when he hankers to have the same deep, possessiveness (*mamatā*) for Her, and the same intense inclination to serve Her (*seva-vasanā*), then he can attain these moods. Only then can one truly serve such *rasika* personalities, and then is one’s life successful. There is no other way.



Nanda Bābā came running after he heard the deafening crash made when the massive *arjuna* trees fell. He saw Kanhaiyā, still tied up, standing between the fallen trees. Nanda Bābā was shaken to see Kṛṣṇa standing so close to the fallen trees and thought, “Today, Śrī

Nārāyaṇa has given us so much protection. What would have happened if Kanhaiyā had been underneath these trees when they fell!?”

Mother Yaśodā also came running. When she saw the horrible scene she entered into shock. Aghast, she thought, “Alas! What has happened?”

Nanda Bābā asked the children, “How did this happen?”

In their broken language, the children explained, “Bābā, as soon as Kanhaiyā pulled the grinding mortar against the two trees they fell over and two very beautiful people came out. They looked like demigods. They folded their hands and offered prayers to Kanhaiyā. Then they circumambulated Him and went north.”

But Nanda Bābā was not convinced. He took Kṛṣṇa on his lap. Kṛṣṇa had been keeping silent till now, but as soon as He sat on His father’s lap, He burst into tears and began to wail. When Nanda Bābā and the cowherd boys saw Kṛṣṇa crying, tears also started streaming from their own eyes. Nanda Bābā pacified his darling son, and untied the knot.

The knot that bound Kṛṣṇa was factually made of *vātsalya-rasa*, not rope. Consequently, only His associates in *vātsalya-rasa* or *madhura-rasa* (conjugal love) had the power to untie such a knot. Kṛṣṇa’s friends in *sakhyā-rasa* and His servants in *dāsya-rasa* or those situated in a passive or neutral relationship with Him in *śānta-rasa* could not have untied the knot tied by Mother Yaśodā. Even within *vātsalya-rasa* there is a gradation. The love of Mother Yaśodā, who actually bound Kṛṣṇa, is superior to the love of Nanda Bābā, who released Him.

When Mother Yaśodā saw what had happened to her Kanhaiyā, she could not move; she simply stood there like a statue. She could not even cry. Nanda Bābā made Kanhaiyā a little peaceful and then gave Him a sweet *laḍḍu* from his cloth bag.

“Kanhaiyā,” he asked. “Tell me, who tied You up?”

“Mother,” Kanhaiyā replied.

Becoming silent, Nanda Bābā then resolved to punish Mother Yaśodā with the greatest punishment a loved one can give. For the

entire remainder of the day, Nanda Bābā did not speak a single word to her. In a grave mood He took Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in his arms and went to bathe in Brahmāṇḍa-ghāṭa. After everyone had bathed, he returned with them to the *gośālā* (the grand shelter for the cows). Meanwhile Mother Yaśodā had become as dry and lifeless as a piece of dry wood.

In the *gośālā*, Nanda Bābā filled Kṛṣṇa's and Balarāma's bellies by giving Them rock candy and squirting milk into Their mouths directly from the cows' udders. When they came home, Mother Rohiṇī served them the food she had prepared and Nanda Bābā silently fed the children. After They had finished, he took some himself. Then they returned to the *gośālā*.

In the evening, Upananda's wife came to Nanda Bābā along with Mother Rohiṇī and the other older ladies of Vraja. Mother Rohiṇī told Balarāma, "Go now, and bring Kṛṣṇa."

That day, however, Kṛṣṇa had given Balarāma such a push that He fell quite far backward. Finally, Upananda's wife and Mother Rohiṇī spoke to Kanhaiyā.

"Look, Kanhaiyā," they said, "Your mother is crying so much; go to her."

"No. I will not go," He answered.

"Then come to me," Rohiṇī said.

But Kanhaiyā answered strongly, "No! I won't go near you. When Mother was tying Me up I called to you so loudly, but you did not come. I won't even go near you."

"With whom will You eat?" asked Mother Rohiṇī.

"With father." He answered.

"With whom will You play?" she asked.

"With Dāu Bhaiyā – My big brother Balarāma."

"But with whom will You sleep?"

"With father."

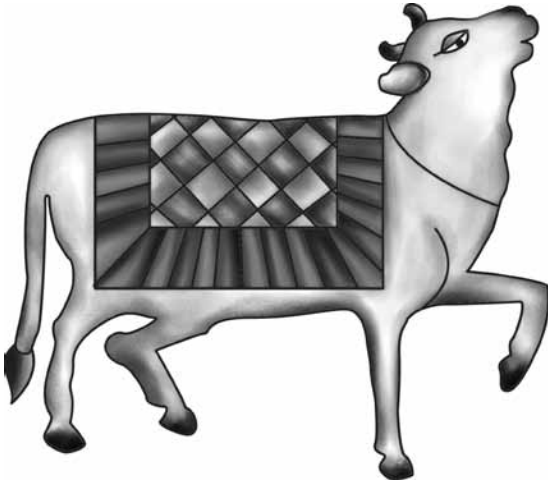
Rohiṇī said, "Until now, You have always slept next to Your mother, but today You will sleep by Your father? Your mother is crying for You."

Then Nanda Bābā said, “Should I beat your mother?” Upon hearing these words Kanhaiyā stopped His father’s raised hand in answer.

Then Rohiṇī said, “And if Mother suddenly dies, then...?” As soon as Kṛṣṇa heard this, He burst into loud sobs and ran into Mother Rohiṇī’s lap. She brought Him to Mother Yaśodā and when she placed Him on Yaśodā’s lap Yaśodā began to weep loudly. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also cried. Nanda Bābā’s heart melted and he began to cry. Rohiṇī and all the other resident of Vraja who were gathered there also began to cry. Weeping filled the entire atmosphere. Finally, the respected elders of Vraja pacified everyone.

That night, when it was time for dinner, Nanda Bābā told Kanhaiyā, “Go and bring Your mother to me.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately went and caught hold of His mother’s veil and, although she hesitated to go, Kṛṣṇa brought her to Nanda Bābā. She served dinner to everyone and they all took their meal with great joy. Thereafter, Mother Yaśodā took Śrī Kṛṣṇa up in her arms and went to her bedroom.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśini-vṛttī on the Second Verse ~



❧ Verse Three ❧

itīdr̥k sva-līlābhīr-ānanda-kuṇḍe
sva-ghoṣam nimajjantam-ākhyāpayantam
tadīyeśita-jñeṣu bhaktair-jitat-tvaṁ
punaḥ prema-tas-tam śatāvṛtti vande

SYNONYMS

itīdr̥k – like this (His supremely enchanting childhood pastimes such as *dāma-bandhana-līlā*, in which His belly was bound); *sva-līlābhīḥ* – by His unique and uncommon pastimes; *ānanda-kuṇḍe* – in fathomless pools of bliss; *sva-ghoṣam* – all the inhabitants of His abode of Gokula, or all the entities manifested by His pastime potency; *nimajjantam* – completely and incessantly submerging; *ākhyāpayantam* – informing; *tadīya-īśita-jñeṣu* – His associates those who have knowledge of His absolute divinity; *bhaktaiḥ* – by His loving devotees; *jitatvam* – He is conquered; *punaḥ* – again; *premataḥ* – with love; *tam* – unto Him; *śata-āvṛtti* – hundreds of times; *vande* – obeisance.

TRANSLATION

By His childhood pastimes such as this *dāma-bandhana-līlā*, He perpetually drowns all the residents of Gokula – His *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves and so forth, who are all manifested by His pastime potency – in pools of bliss. He thus informs those who have knowledge of His absolute divinity that only the pure and simple love of these devotees can conquer Him. Again, hundreds of times, I offer loving obeisance unto Śrī Dāmodara Kṛṣṇa.

❧ Dig-darśinī-ṭikā ❧

'guṇa'-viśeṣeṇotkarṣa-viśeṣam āha – itīti. evaṃ bhakta-vaśatayā, yadvā, iti anayā dāmodara-līlayā, īdṛṣibhiḥ ca dāmodara-līlā-sadṛṣibhiḥ parama-manoharābhiḥ śaiśavibhiḥ, svasya svābhīrvā asādhāraṇibhiḥ līlābhiḥ krīḍābhiḥ. “gopībhiḥ stobhito'nṛtyad-bhagavān bālavat kvacit, udgāyati kvacin mugdhas tad-vaśo dāru-yantravat. bibharti kvacid ājñaptaḥ pīṭhakommāna-pādukam, bāhu-kṣepaṃ ca kurute svānām prītiṃ samudvahan” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.11.7–8) ityādy-uktābhiḥ

sva-ghoṣaṃ nija-gokula-vāsi-prāṇijātaṃ sarvam eva, ānanda-kuṇḍe ānanda-rasamaya-gabhīra-jalāśaya-viśeṣe, nitarāṃ majjantaṃ majjayantaṃ. etadevoktam (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.11.8): “svānām prītiṃ samudvahan” iti. yadvā, ghoṣaḥ kīrttiḥ māhātmyotkīrttanam vā, svasya svānām vā, gopa-gopy-ādīnām ghoṣo yathā syāt tathā svayam evānanda-kuṇḍe nimajjantaṃ parama-sukha-viśeṣam anubhavantam ity arthaḥ.

kiñca, tābhīreva tadīyeṣita-jñeṣu bhagavad-aīśvarya-jñāna-pareṣu, bhaktair-jitatvam ātmano bhakta-vaśyatām, ākhyāpayantaṃ bhakti-parāṇām eva vaśyo'haṃ, na tu jñāna-parāṇām iti prathayantaṃ. anena ca (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.11.9) – “darśayanīstad-vidām loke ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām” ityasyārtho darśitaḥ. tasyārthaḥ – taṃ bhagavantaṃ, vidanti tathā teṣāṃ taj-jñāna-parāṇām ity arthaḥ; tān prati darśayan itī.

yadvā, tadīyānām bhāgavatānām prabhāvābhijñeṣeva, na ca anyeṣu ākhyāpayantaṃ, vaiṣṇava-māhātmya-viśeṣānabhijñeṣu kevala-jñāna-pareṣu bhakti-viśeṣatāstān-māhātmyasya ca parama-gopyatvena prakāśanāyogyatvāt. evaṃca “tad-vidām” iti bhṛtya-vaśyatā-vidām ity artho draṣṭavyaḥ. ataḥ premataḥ bhakti-viśeṣeṇa śatāvṛtti yathā syāt tathā śata-śata-vārān taṃ īśvaraṃ punaḥ vande.

ato bhaktānām avaśya-kṛtyaṃ bhakti-prakāra-viśeṣa-rūpaṃ vandanaṃ-eva mama prarthyaṃ, na tvaiśvarya-jñānādīti bhāvaḥ.

itī śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake tṛtīya-śloke śrī-sanātana gosvāmi-kṛtā dig-darśinī-nāmnī ṭikā samāptā

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭikā on the Third Verse ~

❧ *Diḡ-darsinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda* ❧

Śrī Satyavrata Muni begins this verse with *iīdrkḡ sva-līlābhiḡ* to establish his worshipful Lord’s unique glory. He accomplishes this by illustrating His wonderful character. In this verse, *iti* is used to mean “like this”.

Thus he begins: “Like this, by His *bhakta-vaśyatā*...” In this way he reiterates that it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s nature to come under the control of His devotees.

Alternatively, *iti* means “by this *dāmodara-līlā*” and, *īdrṣibhiḡ ca*, “by His supremely enchanting, extraordinary childhood pastimes like *dāmodara-līlā*, He is immersing all the residents of Gokula in great bliss”. The addition of *sva* in the phrase *sva-līlābhiḡ* conveys the greatness of His own pastimes, or it conveys the uncommon excellence of the playfulness of His pastimes. This has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.11.7) in statements such as the following:

*gopībhiḡ stobhito ’nṛtyad
bhagavān bālavat kvacit
udgāyati kvacin mugdhas
tad-vaśo dāru-yantravat*

The *gopīs* would encourage Kṛṣṇa to dance in various ways. They would clap their hands or say, “If You dance then we will give You a *laḡḡū*.” Although Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, the Supreme Omnipotent Godhead and the master of all opulences, baby Kṛṣṇa would dance for them like an innocent human child. Sometimes they would tell Him to sing, and like an ordinary, bewildered child, He would sing for them. Enchanted by them, He became like a wooden puppet in their hands.

*bibharti kvacid ājñaptaḡ pīḡhakonmāna-pāḡukam
bāhu-kṣepam ca kurute svānām ca prītim samudvahan
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.11.8)

Sometimes the *gopīs* would order Śrī Kṛṣṇa to bring them someone's shoes, wooden seats, measuring cups or the weights used for scales. At such times, He would act as if He was unable to lift these articles, and would simply stand there touching them, and then He would repeatedly strike His arms to show His mightiness. By such gestures He would fill His own kin with boundless joy.

It was in sole reference to the above statements of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that Śrī Satyavrata Muni said Śrī Kṛṣṇa causes *sva-ghoṣam*, His own kin, the residents of Gokula, to be totally submerged (*nimajjantam*) in a nectarean and incredibly deep pool of extraordinary happiness – *ānanda-kunḍa*. That is the indication of this verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “*svānānī prītiṁ samudvahan* – He thoroughly arouses deep love in His own dear kin.”

Alternatively, the word *ghoṣa* means “to loudly proclaim the glory of something”. Directing the word *ghoṣa* either to Himself (*svasya*) or to His own (*svānām*) the meaning becomes either “by broadcasting His own glories” or “by broadcasting the glories of His *gopas* and *gopīs*”. Certainly, by becoming absorbed in the mood of spreading His extraordinary glories, as well as the glories of His own loved ones, even Śrī Kṛṣṇa sinks in *ānanda-kunḍa*, and as a result He feels the highest limit of happiness.

In order to further describe the extraordinary qualities of Śrī Bhagavān, Śrī Satyavrata Munī then says, “By these pastimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is making it known (*ākhyāpayantam*) to all who are *tadīya-iṣṭa-jñeṣu*¹, who worship Him as the Supreme Controller and the master of all souls, that He is Himself controlled and defeated by the love of His pure devotees – *bhaktair-jitatvam*.” In other words, Kṛṣṇa is declaring, “I willingly become controlled by My *bhaktas* alone, who are intent on serving Me with pure devotion. I am never controlled by

¹ **Editor's footnote:** The phrase *tadīya-iṣṭa-jñeṣu* refers to those among His worshippers (*tadīya*) who know (*jñeṣu*) about His absolute supremacy (*iṣṭa*).

those who are inclined to worship Me while considering My supreme position and opulence.” Thus, the sage captures the meaning of the following statement from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.11.9):

*darśyaṁs tad-vidāṁ loka
ātmano bhṛtya-vaśyatām*

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed the community of those who know about His supreme position, that He only remains under the full control of His loving servants.

[The commentator, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, personally explains the above statement of *Bhāgavatam*, as follows.] Here, the word *tad* (about that, or about Him) is connected to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s position as Bhagavān, and when it is combined with *vidāṁ* (knowledge of) it becomes “knowledge of His position as Bhagavān”. Thus the meaning is clear: He is showing (*darśyaṁs*) those who know about His supreme opulence, that He willingly comes under the control of His loving servants.

[In other words, the original Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, is exhibiting that, in every respect, He is only controlled by His loving servants in Vraja, and among them, He is especially controlled by those in *unnata-ujjala-rasa*, the supremely pure humour of *mādhurya-rasa* (transcendental amour). He is not controlled by devotees who worship Him on the path of *aiśvarya-bhakti*, which is characterized by the mood of reverence; nor is He controlled by *jñānīs*, who know Him to be the self-sufficient, supremely powerful Lord; nor by those whose *bhakti* is mixed with such *jñāna*.]

But there is another meaning of *tadīyeṣita-jñeṣu bhaktair-jitatvam*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa only reveals (*ākhyāpayantam*) that He is willingly controlled (*jitatvam*) by His loving devotees only to those who have proper knowledge of such beloved devotees’ exalted position. This is because *bhakti*, and especially its glories, are very confidential, so He does not reveal it to everyone. It is inappropriate to explain it to anyone who is not specifically acquainted with the exalted glories of

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

the Vaiṣṇavas and who is only interested in impersonal knowledge. From this perspective, the previously cited verse should be interpreted by connecting *vidām* with *bhṛtya-vaśyatā*. Thus the general meaning of *tad-vidām* – those who know Śrī Kṛṣṇa's supreme position – becomes *bhṛtya-vaśyatā-vidām* – those who know that Śrī Kṛṣṇa willingly comes under the control of His loving servants.

Therefore Śrī Satyavrata Munī prays, “Overwhelmed with incomparable pure loving devotion for You (*premataḥ*), I offer You *vandanā*, my prayers of adoration, hundreds of times (*śata-āvṛtti*). To You (*tam*), the Supreme Lord, I offer *vandanā* again and again (*punah*).

Thus, in this verse the sage wishes to say, “Among the limbs of *bhakti*, which are required for all devotees, I only pray to perform one special limb of *bhakti*: *vandanā* – to constantly express my adoration for Śrī Bhagavān. I do not pray for knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān's opulence or anything else.”

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dīg-darśinī-ṭīkā on the Third Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are lakes of inexhaustible bliss in which He drowns the entire village of Gokula. The village of Gokula is known as *ghoṣa-pallī*, which refers to the place where all the animals, birds, cows, *gopas* and *gopīs* loudly sing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa without cessation. It is constantly resounding with the calls of the *gopas* and *gopīs*: "Milk the cows! Untie the calves! Bring the milk-pail." And all is entirely for the pleasure of Śrī Gopāla-kṛṣṇa.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa became a little bit bigger He discovered that He could go beyond the doorstep leading out of the house. One day, when He and His big brother Balarāma went outside, They saw that some bright red flowers had blossomed nearby. However, the flowers were surrounded by a fence of dry *ber* thorns. Somehow, They moved the thorny branches aside and went through to pick flowers. Meanwhile, the thorny branches fell back into place, blocking Their way out.

"How will We get out of here?" They wondered, and burst into tears. Mother Yaśodā heard Their loud sobbing and came out of the house. Finding Them trapped, she managed to move the thorny branches to the side and take Them out.

Sometimes Śrī Kṛṣṇa would hold on to the horns of huge bulls and swing on them. Other times, He would become astonished when He saw Himself reflected in the jewelled pillars of His home, and He would even try to speak with that reflection.

One day His mother said, "Kṛṣṇa, go fetch a calf and we will worship him." Kṛṣṇa found a calf and caught hold of him, but when He tried to bring him to His mother, the calf refused to move. Kṛṣṇa struggled to bring him along, tugging and pulling all the way. He finally reached the house, but when He noticed a pot of butter hanging from the ceiling, His mouth began to water. He climbed on to the calf's back and, taking hold of the pot, He began to empty it of its contents. Seeing his chance to escape, the calf fled from the spot, leaving Kṛṣṇa dangling. "Maiyā, Maiyā!" He cried. Mother Yaśodā, finding Kṛṣṇa hanging in the air, took Him down and scolded Him.



Early each morning the *gopīs* used to crowd into Mother Yaśodā's home just to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes, some *gopīs* would say, "Kṛṣṇa is so strong," while others would argue, "No, Balarāma is much stronger."

"How shall we definitely find out who is stronger? Let the two boys wrestle and the winner will get a big lump of butter."

On these occasions, just by seeing the butter, the two boys' mouths would water and They would start wrestling. The *gopīs* siding with Kṛṣṇa would clap their hands if He won, but if He lost, then the *gopīs* on Baladeva's side would clap victoriously.

Sometimes a *gopī* would tempt Kṛṣṇa with a *laḍḍū*, saying, "Kanhaiyā, if You dance for us I will give You this *laḍḍū*." Putting His hand on His waist, He would dance to the rhythm, *tā thaī, tā thaī*, and even sing a sweet little song. In various ways, the *vraja-gopīs* would make Kṛṣṇa dance. He became just like their puppet, for He came under their full control.

At other times, the *gopīs* who came to visit Mother Yaśodā would order Kṛṣṇa:

"Kṛṣṇa, bring us that wooden seat."

Their darling little Kṛṣṇa would try to lift the small seat, but when they saw that He could not, they swelled with sweet affection for Him. The same Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in His Varāha incarnation, lifted the entire earth on His tusks. Also, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a little older, He easily lifted Govardhana Hill on His little finger as if it were no more than a toy ball. But in His childhood pastimes in the same Vraja-dhāma, He could not even lift a small wooden seat. This is the nature of His sweet, human-like pastimes. He controls and maintains everything in creation, yet He is controlled by the residents of Vraja.

Although He is the master of unlimited potencies, including His *ghaṭana-aghāṭana-śakti*, which makes the impossible possible and the possible impossible, in Vraja He is unaware of His supreme, absolute position. There He is an innocent and simple child, nourished and cared for by His affectionate mother. As befitting an obedient

son, He brings His father's shoes, carrying them on His head, and considers, "Father will wear these shoes to attend the assembly of *gopas*."

What is the meaning of *itīdrkṣva-līlābhir-ānanda-kunḍe, sva-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantam?* Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet childhood pastimes are an ocean of *rasa*. That ocean is inexhaustible and it has no boundary, for it is absolutely unlimited. He drowns all of the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves and the entire settlement of Vraja in the vast ocean of these pastimes. Even He, in fact, drowns in the ocean of the sweetness of His own pastimes. Why does Śrī Kṛṣṇa perform these pastimes? Śrī Satyavrata Muni answers this question in relation to *tadīyeśīta-jñeṣu*, those who always retain knowledge of Bhagavān's supreme position.

A *tattva-jñānī* sees Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Śyāmasundara as the source of all incarnations and the essence and ultimate limit of Godhead. They know Him as the possessor of all six opulences in their fullness, and the Supreme Lord who has the power to make the impossible possible. Devotees such as Nārada and the four Kumāras have full knowledge of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's true position. Through these pastimes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is explaining to them, "Although I possess the potency to make the impossible possible, I am nonetheless controlled by the residents of Vraja. I am simply playing here in the mood of an ignorant child."



Itīdrkṣva-līlābhiḥ – His uncommon childhood pastimes, like this *dāmodara-līlā*, are supremely charming." One day, a fruit-seller from Mathurā came to Vraja to sell her fruit. She had heard of the pre-eminent sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Gokula and had become exceedingly eager to see Him directly. Although she came to Vraja often, she had never gotten the chance to see Kṛṣṇa. He was either asleep or in the lap of His mother. At other times He was surrounded by His friends or busy playing inside His home. She tried again and again, but she was always unable to see Him.

Direct vision of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is easily available to the residents of Vraja, but it is quite rare for the people of Mathurā. Still, the heart of the fruit-seller became so full of anxiety that she resolved, “If I do not see Kṛṣṇa today, I will not return to Mathurā.”

The *sādhaka*'s resolve should be exactly the same. He should think, “Day and night I will execute the limbs of devotion as instructed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. With love, I will chant a fixed number of Śrī Hari's names and serve *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas. Every day I will study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other devotional literatures. Every day I will recite *Gopī-gīta*, *Veṅṅū-gīta*, *Bhramara-gīta* and *Yugala-gīta*. If I come across a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava, I will give my life to serving him. I will visit the places where Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa performed Their confidential pastimes, in the groves and forests of Vraja. I will pray very piteously there and recite hymns and prayers that are full of longing. Then, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will surely give me His *darśana*; He is not far away.”

Having made her vow, the fruit-seller came to Nanda Mahārāja's cowherd settlement and wandered about near his house. She began crying out, “Come, take fruits! *Phala lo*, take fruits! Come, take mangoes, bananas and guavas! *Phala lo, phala lo!*” But within moments, she became so absorbed in thinking about Kṛṣṇa that instead of calling the names of the fruits, she cried out, “Come, take Gopāla, Govinda *lo*, Mādhava *lo*, Dāmodara *lo!*” At first she had been balancing the basket of fruit on her head with one hand, but eventually she forgot to hold the basket altogether. It kept from falling only due to her natural expertise. Finally, she sat down before the doorstep of Nanda's house.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard the cries of the fruit-seller, He could not remain sitting quietly on His mother's lap so He climbed down and went to a nearby mound of grain. After taking as much grain as He could hold in His joined palms, He started toward the fruit-seller, but His hands were so tiny that all the grain fell from them as He walked. When He reached the fruit-seller, all He had left were a few grains that were wedged between His palms and fingers. He poured them into

her basket and demanded, “Oh, give Me some fruit!” The fruit-seller became completely enchanted by the beautiful form of little Kṛṣṇa and just sat there looking at Him for some time.

The import of this pastime is that unless someone is intensely eager to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is absorbed in remembering Him, just as the fruit-seller was, He does not give them His *darśana*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa only gives His *darśana* to those *sādhakas* who desire nothing but to see Him and serve Him. In other words, He only appears before those who have become completely free from *anarthas*.

When the fruit-seller returned to external consciousness she said, “Lālā, my darling baby boy, I will only give You fruit if You sit on my lap just once, and call me Mā.”

Little Kṛṣṇa carefully looked in all directions, to make sure no one was watching. When He was sure no one could see, He jumped on to her lap:

“Mā!”

And then quickly jumped off again.

“Give Me fruit!”

All of the deepest desires within the heart of the fruit-seller had now been fulfilled. She wanted to give Kṛṣṇa all of her fruit, but she could only give Him as much as He could hold in His tiny arms and hands. When Kanhaiyā returned to where Mother Yaśodā was sitting in the courtyard, He placed the fruit in her veil.

“Lālā, where did You get these fruits from?” she asked.

Kṛṣṇa simply pointed toward the door. Mother Yaśodā became delighted to see such succulent and tasty fruits. She began to distribute them to all the *gopīs* present, but amazingly, even though there were only a few fruits, the quantity did not diminish.

When Kṛṣṇa left the fruit-seller near the doorstep of His house, she completely lost external awareness. Śrī Kṛṣṇa had stolen her heart and she simply sat in the very same spot until a *gopī* passing by shook her and brought her back to external consciousness. She slowly picked up her basket of fruit, placed it upon her head, and then set off for Mathurā.

As the fruit-seller walked along the bank of the Yamunā river, she realized that her basket had become much heavier than before. When she set it down and looked inside she was struck with wonder. Her basket was filled with a variety of valuable jewels. She picked up the basket, threw it into the Yamunā, and burst into tears.

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa has cheated me,” she cried. “I have been completely deprived of His real mercy.” Overwhelmed by love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, she lamented bitterly and never returned to her home. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa steals anyone’s heart, invariably, this becomes their condition.

*evan-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyah
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.40)*

Saintly people who have firmly devoted themselves to serving Bhagavān with deep love, constantly engage in *kīrtana* of their most beloved names of Kṛṣṇa. When deep attachment (*anurāga*) arises in them, their hearts thoroughly melt and they become mad in love of God. They laugh and cry loudly. Agitated by love, they sing about their Lord in sweet voices and just like madmen, without a trace of shyness, they dance and sing unaffected by the opinions of ordinary people.



The evil demoness Pūtanā, who would murder small children and drink their blood, beautifully disguised herself as a mother and entered Vraja intending to kill baby Kṛṣṇa. Despite her wicked deceit, merely on the basis of her motherly appearance, Śrī Kṛṣṇa granted her a position as a real nursemaid in Goloka. And in exchange for a morsel of worthless chipped rice, just see what He gave Sudāmā Vipra². Then

.....
² **Editor’s footnote:** In exchange for a few pieces of broken chipped rice, Śrī Kṛṣṇa awarded Sudāmā Vipra unimaginable opulence. See *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.81).

what will he not give this fruit-seller who was ready to give Him all her fruit? Even four-headed Śrī Brahmā, the creator of the universe, cannot imagine the answer to this question. Lord Brahmā says:

*eṣāṁ ghoṣa-nivāsinām uta bhavān kiṁ deva rāteti naś
ceto viśva-phalāt phalaṁ tvad-aparaṁ kutrāpy ayan muhyati
sad-veśād iva pūtanāpi sa-kulā tvām eva devāpitā
yad-dhāmārtha-suhṛt-priyātma-tanaya-prāṇāśayās tvat-kṛte
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.35)*

O Master who is most worshipful even for the demigods, now my mind is becoming bewildered by a doubt. How will You be able to reward the residents of Vraja for their service? You are the condensed form of the highest benediction; there is no reward superior to obtaining You. But even if You give Your very self to the Vrajavāsīs, You will not be freed from Your debt to them, because You have even given Yourself to Pūtanā. She was extremely cruel at heart, yet by deceitfully appearing before You in the form of a virtuous nursemaid, she has obtained You. Even her relatives, like Aghāsura and Bakāsura, have now obtained You. How can You give the same reward to the Vrajavāsīs who have given You everything? They have offered You their homes, wealth and relatives. They have even offered their own bodies, children, life and mind – everything – at Your lotus feet.

Every day, Śrī Kṛṣṇa would perform beautiful, sweet pastimes like these and immerse the residents of Vraja in an ocean of bliss.

There are those who know Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the controller of all others. They know Him as the possessor of all potencies; as the causeless, original cause of all other causes; as the Supreme Being who has no equal what to speak of a superior; and as He who makes the impossible possible. Yet, by these pastimes, He is showing such knowledgeable personalities that He can only be controlled by *bhakti*.

What kind of *bhakti* can control Him? The four Kumāras, Dhruva Mahārāja, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Śrī Nārada, Śrī Uddhava and the Yādavas, as well as many others all have some form of *bhakti*, but their *bhakti* can never control Him: “*aiśvarya-śīthila preme nāhi mora prīta* – I am not pleased by love that is weakened by awe and reverence (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 3.16).” Devotees who have reverential love for Kṛṣṇa stand before Him and, with folded hands, offer Him prayers. But if someone loves Him with a mood similar to one of the Vrajavāsīs, like Subala, Śrīdāma, Madhumaṅgala, Mother Yaśodā, Nanda Bābā or, above all, one of the *vraja-gopīs*, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa will come under his control. Among these Vrajavāsīs the *vraja-gopīs* are supreme, and among them Śrīmatī Rādhikā is topmost. If someone’s devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is like the devotion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s maidservants, then he can control Śrī Kṛṣṇa completely. The following verses celebrate these facts:

*anaṅga-raṅga-maṅgala-prasaṅga-bhaṅgura-bhruvāṁ
savibhramāṁ sasambhramāṁ dṛganta-bāṇa-pātanaīḥ
nirantaram vaśī-kṛta pratīti nanda-nandane
kadā kariṣyasiha mām kṛpā-katākṣa-bhājanam
Śrī Rādhā-kṛpā-katākṣa Stava-rāja (3)*

O Sarveśvarī (mistress of all controllers) Rādhikā, on the stage of amorous sport, in the course of an auspicious discussion, You express amazement by curving Your eyebrows like bows and then suddenly firing the arrows of Your sidelong glances, piercing the son of Śrī Nanda with amorous delusion and bringing Him under Your perpetual control. When will You make me the recipient of Your merciful sidelong glance?

Even Śrī Sītā, the wife of Bhagavān Śrī Rāma, could not control Śrī Rāma by her love. Śrī Rāma gave her up and sent her to the forest to live in exile. Could Śrī Kṛṣṇa ever banish Śrīmatī Rādhikā from His house in Nandagaon? Śrīmatī Rādhikā does not even live in His house with Him. He becomes so nervous in Her presence that He could never ask Her to leave His house, what to speak of banishing Her from it forever. The reason He

becomes so nervous around Her is because He is always impassioned with love for Her. When She instructs Him in the various arts, such as dancing, He fears that He may make some mistake.

*priya ko nacavata sikhavati pyārī
māna gumāna lakuṭi liye ṭhārī
ḍarapata kuñja bihārī*

While instructing Her beloved in the art of dancing, Śrī Rādhikā watches Him with a cane in hand, ready to chastise Him. Her cane is Her sulky, contrary mood, which causes Śrī Kuñja-bihārī to fear making any mistake.

When Śrī Rādhikā spontaneously becomes inflamed with *māna* (jealous anger), either with or without any cause, Śrī Kṛṣṇa prays:

*smara-garala-khaṇḍanam mama śirasi maṇḍanam
dehi pada-pallavam-udāraṇi*

Śrī Gīta-govinda (10.8)

O My beloved, Cupid's powerful poison is devastating me. Please be merciful to Me and place upon My head the cooling, tender petals of Your lotus feet.

What to speak of bowing at the lotus feet of Sarveśvarī Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa falls at the feet of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī, Her maidservants, when, on their *svamini*'s order, they forbid Him to enter Śrī Rādhā's *kuñja*. He begs them for permission to enter, pleads with them and flatters them just to pacify them. Just see the position of Śrī Rādhā's maidservants! Our worshipful Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī says:

*pādābjayos tava vinā vara dāsyam eva
nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devi yāce
sakhyaṅya te mama namo'stu namo'stu nityaṇi
dāsyāya te mama raso'stu raso'stu satyam*

Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (16)

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

O Goddess, You are capable of bestowing all benedictions, but I do not want anything other than service to Your lotus feet. I offer my obeisances – obeisances forever – to *sakhya* (the mood of friendship), but the essence of my life – the real essence of my life – is *dāsyā* (the mood of service).

Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī's eternal identity in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is Tuṅgavidyā Sakhī, one of Śrī Rādhā's eight principle *sakhīs*. But he is also praying to attain the position of being Śrī Rādhā's maidservant:

yat-kiṅkariṣu bahuśaḥ khalu kāku-vāṇī,
nityaṁ parasya puruṣasya śikhaṇḍa-mauleḥ
tasyāḥ kadā rasa-nidheḥ vṛṣabhānu-jāyās
tat-keli-kuñja-bhavanāṅgana-mārjanī syām
Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi (8)

O daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, ocean of *rasa*, that beautiful boy who wears a gracefully tilting peacock feather in His hair is actually the original Personality of Godhead. Still, He is always falling at the feet of Your maidservants and pitifully begging them with many humble words to gain entrance into Your *kuñja* where the two of You engage in Your playful loving pastimes. My life would be successful if I could even be one stick in the broom Your maidservants use to clean Your delightful *kuñja*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa rises when the *gopīs* order Him to rise, and He sits when they order Him to sit.

chachiyā-bhara chāca-para hari ko nacāveṇ
by Rasakhāna

Just see the glories of these ladies of Vraja, they make Śrī Hari dance for a mere palmful of buttermilk.

No other kind of *bhakti* has the power to control Kṛṣṇa in this way.



Mother Yaśodā may tell Kṛṣṇa, “Today, Kanhaiyā, do not take the cows to graze in the forest; it is Your birthday.” But He will not follow Her order. He will eagerly go out to graze the cows. What is in the forest that attracts Him so much? Within the forest, He can meet the young *vraja-gopīs* and play freely with them – especially with Śrī Rādhā. They meet together in secret places like Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Sūrya-kuṇḍa and Kusuma-sarovara.

The amorous love that the young *vraja-gopīs* have for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is greater even than parental love for Him. In fact, their love includes all the qualities of parental affection. Therefore, playing with the *gopas* or grazing His cows is not the primary reason He takes the cows into the forests every day. The main reason He enters the forest is to play with His dear-most *gopīs*.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.201–204)*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains that without the help of Śrī Rādhā’s *sakhīs*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s amorous pastimes will never develop in someone’s heart:

*rādhā-kṛṣṇera līlā ei ati gūḍhatara
dāsyā-vātsalyādi-bhāve nā haya gocara*

Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the groves of Vṛndāvana are extremely confidential. Such pastimes are beyond the grasp of anyone in the mood of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s affectionate servant, friend or parent. (201)

*sabe eka sakhī-gaṇera ihāṅ adhikāra
sakhī haite haya ei līlāra vistāra*

Only the damsels of Vraja are qualified to see these secret pastimes, and only they can make them expand. (202)

*sakhī vinā ei līlā puṣṭa nāhi haya
sakhī līlā vistāriyā, sakhī āsvādaya*

Only the *sakhīs* are qualified to nourish these secret pastimes and they take great pleasure in making them expand. (203)

*sakhī vinā ei līlāya anyera nāhi gati
sakhī-bhāve ye tāñre kare anugati
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kuñja-sevā-sādhyā sei pāya
sei sādhyā pāite āra nāhika upāya*

No one can see or participate in these pastimes without the help of the young *vraja-gopīs*. Only those fortunate souls who follow in their footsteps by adopting their exalted mood of amorous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa will attain the ultimate goal of directly serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the *kuñjas* of Vṛndāvana. There is no other way to obtain this. (204)



One day Mahādeva Śiva, the chief demigod, set off to see his supremely worshipful Lord who had just appeared in Vraja. Arriving at the gate of Nanda Mahārāja's home, he sang loudly, "*alakha nirañjana, alakha nirañjana!*"³ and played his *damru* (a kind of hand-drum).

Mother Yaśodā came to the door when she heard him singing and playing his drum, but when she saw the appearance of this unusual *yogī*, she became afraid. He wore robes of tiger-skin and a garland of human-skulls. Dangerous serpents adorned his hands, feet and neck, and he held a tall, fearful trident by his side. His body was smeared from head to toe with ashes from a cremation ground and his thoroughly matted hair made him look ancient and even more dreadful. His carrier, Nandī, a massive bull, accompanied him. Seeing that the terrible looking *yogī* was approaching her accompanied by Nandī, Yaśodā became utterly terrified. Nonetheless, she asked him dutifully, "Do you want some alms? Just wait and I will bring them to you."

.....
³ **Editor's footnote:** This phrase is used to beg alms in the name of Śrī Bhagavān or simply to make one remember Him. It is a description of Paramātmā, who is invisible (*alakha*) and aloof from *māyā* (*nirañjana*).

Mahādeva Śaṅkara replied, “O Mother, I have walked so far to come here from my home in Kailāśa. Just show me your baby; I just want to see your darling child.”

“Eat or drink whatever you like, and then go,” she said. “And do not play your *damru* so loudly. My child is sleeping.”

Śaṅkarajī said, “O innocent Mother, I do not want your flour and beans, or silk clothes and bags, nor do I want anything to eat, drink, wear or rest upon. I have come to see your darling son just once. This is the only donation I need.”

Mother Yaśodā hesitated and then said to him, “I am an adult, yet your appearance terrifies me. My darling boy is so young. He will become too afraid if He sees your form, so I will not show Him to you.” And she went inside the house.

Śrī Śaṅkara, the foremost demigod, was not about to leave without seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He sat down by the door and lit a ceremonial fire.

“When your beautiful son grows a little older,” he thought, “He will come outside to play and I will finally be able to see Him. I will not return to Kailāśa without seeing Him.”

To this day, the place near Nanda’s home where Mahādeva Śrī Śaṅkara was sitting is known as Yogiyā-kuṇḍa.

Mother Yaśodā entered the house and found her darling baby boy crying loudly. Nothing she tried would pacify Him so she consulted her friends. A respected elder *gopī* spoke.

“This is not an ordinary *yogī*; he is from the sacred mountains of Kailāśa. When your boy heard him playing his drum, He became afraid and now He has started to cry more and more loudly. It would be wise to show him your dear son at least once.”

Seeing no other recourse but to show her son to the extraordinary *yogī*, Yaśodā-maiyā placed Kṛṣṇa in a black basket and covered all of His limbs with black cloth to protect Him from inauspiciousness. She anointed His eyes with thick black eyeliner and marked His forehead with a black dot. Then she reluctantly brought Kṛṣṇa outside and allowed the *yogī* just a brief glimpse of Him. To her astonishment, when she was turning to enter her

house, she noticed that Kṛṣṇa had stopped crying. Śrī Śaṅkara, the king of mystics, spoke to her.

“Mother, I will light a ceremonial fire and stay nearby. If ever your beloved child falls prey to some evil, just call for me. I will chant *mantras* and ward off any evil effects with mustard seeds and salt, and He will be restored to health.”

Thereafter, whenever Kṛṣṇa would cry she would call the *yogī* from his dwelling.

*yogī! calo nanda-bhavana meṅ,
yaśomatī maiyā tumheṅ bulāve
vāke lāla ko najara lagī hai,
tai pai rāi nūm karavāveṅ
raha raha yogī! nanda-bhavana meṅ,
vraja meṅ vāsa sadā tū kījo
jaba jaba vāko lālā rove,
taba taba darasana dījo*

Yogī, come to Nanda-bhavana; Kṛṣṇa’s devoted mother, Yaśodā Maiyā, is calling you. Her dear son has come under an evil eye. Ward off its effect with mustard and salt. Stay here, *yogī*, just stay here in Nanda-bhavana. Please live in Vraja forever. Whenever her darling son cries, come and give Him your *darśana*.

Thus, the life of that ‘*yogī*’ became successful.



In his *Padyāvalī*, an anthology of verses written by many different *ācāryas*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī quotes the following pastime:

*rāmo nāma babhuva huṁ tad-balā sīteti huṁ tām pitur
vācā pañcavaṅī-vane nivasatas tasyāharad-rāvaṅaḥ
kṛṣṇayeti purātanīm nija-kathām ākarṇya mātrreritām
saumitre! kva dhanur dhanur dhanu-iti vyaghrā girah pāntu vaḥ*
Padyāvalī (150) Author Unknown

One night, Mother Yaśodā was tenderly stroking Kṛṣṇa and lulling Him to sleep with a story.

“Once there was a king,” she said.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa eagerly responded, “Yes, and...?”

“His name was Daśaratha,” she continued, “and he had four sons. When they grew up, Viśvāmitra took them to protect the arena of his sacred fire-sacrifice.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa murmured, “Mmm. Yes, and...?”

“After they saved the fire sacrifice, Viśvāmitra took them to Mithilā. The King of Mithilā, Mahārāja Janaka, had vowed to give his daughter’s hand in marriage only to the one who could string Śiva’s bow and break it, and not to anyone else.”

Again Śrī Kṛṣṇa murmured, “Mmmm.”

“Kings came from many far-off lands,” she continued, “but they all failed. Finally, Śrī Rāma strung Śiva’s massive bow and broke it. Then Princess Sītā was married to Lord Rāma.”

Kṛṣṇa murmured as she spoke, and whenever she paused, even for a brief moment, He eagerly inquired, “Mother, what happened next?”

“To carry out His father’s order, Śrī Rāma had to enter the forest in exile and Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa went with Him. When they were residing at a place called Pañcavaṭī, the demon Mārīca tricked Rāma and led Him into the forest. Meanwhile, back at their cottage, Rāvaṇa came and kidnapped Sītā.”

Just hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, absorbed in the mood of Rāma, sprang up from the bed, crying, “Lakṣmaṇa! Bring Me My bow! Where is My bow? My bow!”

May Śrī Hari’s impassioned cries when He is absorbed in this mood protect you.

One day, while Mother Yaśodā was churning yoghurt in an earthen pot, she attracted her darling son to her with sweet words. Then for a short time, she left to do something else. When Kṛṣṇa’s eyes suddenly fell upon the earthen pot, He saw the moon reflected on the

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

surface of the yoghurt. When Mother Yaśodā returned, He repeatedly demanded, “Mother, I want the moon. Give Me that toy.”

Mother Yaśodā took a lump of butter from the pot and gave it to Him. At first He became happy, but when He looked back into the pot, He saw that the moon was still there. Again, He began restlessly demanding it.

Mother Yaśodā said, “Look up, that is the moon.”

“I want it,” He demanded.

“There is poison on it,” she said.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked, “How did it get poison on it?”

“A long time ago, when the demigods and demons churned the great ocean of milk, poison came to the surface. That poison is on the moon. Do You see those black impressions on the moon? That is the poison. Tell me, who would play with that?”

Hearing this explanation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa became frightened.

Such are Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s unlimited pastimes. He drowns the residents of Vraja in the ocean of their sweetness, and He also drowns in that ocean.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛttī on the Third Verse ~



❧ Verse Four ❧

*varam deva mokṣam na mokṣāvadhim vā
na cānyam vṛṇe 'ham vareśād apīha
idam te vapur nātha gopāla-bālam
sadā me manasy āvirāstām kim anyaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

varam – benedictions; *deva* – O supremely effulgent and playful divinity; *mokṣam* – emancipation from the sufferings of transient existence (the fourth ultimate goal of human life); *na* – not; *mokṣa-avadhim* – the pinnacle of salvation: residence in Śrī Vaikuṅṭha-loka, the abode of extraordinary concentrated happiness; *vā* – or; *na* – not; *ca* – and; *anyam* – other [benedictions such as *navadhā-bhakti* characterized by *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*]; *vṛṇe aham* – I pray for; *vara-iśāt* – [from] You, the Supreme Controller, who can grant any benediction; *apī* – even though; *iha* – here [in Vraja]; *idam* – this; *te* – Your; *vapuḥ* – beautiful divine form; *nātha* – supreme refuge; *gopāla-bālam* – young cowherd boy; *sadā* – always; *me* – my; *manasi* – in the heart; *āvirāstām* – remain manifest; *kim* – of what use do I have for; *anyaiḥ* – other [benedictions].

TRANSLATION

O supremely effulgent and playful divinity, I do not ask You for freedom from mortal suffering (the fourth of human goals), nor do I ask for the ultimate limit of freedom (residence in Vaikuṅṭha, the abode of extraordinary, concentrated happiness). Nor do I seek any other benediction from You (even attaining *bhakti* characterized by

śravaṇa, kīrtana etc.) even though, as the supreme benefactor, You can easily grant all benedictions. O Lord of my life, may Your beautiful form as Bāla-gopāla (a little cowherd boy) in Vraja always remain visible within my heart. I have no use for any benediction other than this.

❧ Dig-darśinī-tīkā ❧

evam utkarṣa-viśeṣa-varṇanena stutvā prārthayate – varam iti dvābhyām. deva he parama-dyotamāna! he madhura-kriḍā-viśeṣa-pareti vā, vareṣāt sakala-vara-pradāna-samarthāt, api tvattaḥ mokṣam caturtha-puruṣārtham, mokṣasyāvadhim vā parama-kāṣṭhā-rūpam ghana-sukha-viśeṣātmakam śrī vaikuṅṭha-lokam, anyaṅca śravaṇādi-bhakti-prakāram aham varam prārthyam. yadvā, anyairvaraṇīyam api, yadvā, varatayā iha vṛndāvane na vṛṇe. ihetyasya pareṇāpi sambandhaḥ.

atra ca mokṣādi trayasya yathottara-śreṣṭhyamuhyam. tatra mokṣād-vaikuṅṭha-lokasya śraīṣṭhyam 'śrī bhāgavatāmṛtottara-khaṇḍe' [1.14–5] vyaktam evāsti. vaikuṅṭha-lokācchravaṇādi-prakārasya ca śraīṣṭhyam – “kāmaṁ bhavaḥ sva-vṛjīnairnirayeṣu nastāt” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.15.49) ityādi-vacanataḥ śravaṇādi-siddhyā narakādiṣvapi yatra tatra sarvatraiva vaikuṅṭha-vāsa-siddheriti dik.

tarhi kim vṛṇuṣe? tadāha – he nātha! iha vṛndāvane idam varṇitam 'gopāla-bāla-rūpam' te vapuḥ, sadā me manasi āvirāstām; antaryāmitvādinā sthītam api sāksādiva sarvāṅga-saundaryādi-prakāśanena prakātam bhūyāt.

namu, mokṣādayo'pi paramopādeyāstān api vṛṇu? tatrāha – kim anyairiti; [arthāt] anyair-mokṣādibhir mama prayojanam nāstītyarthaḥ, tasya sarvānanda-kadambātmakatvāt-tat-siddhyaiva sarva-siddheḥ. tathā tad-alābhe nijepsitāsiddhyā viśeṣataśca tuccha-lābhena śoka-viśeṣotpādanād-anyairapi kim iti bhāvaḥ.

yadvā, namu mokṣādayo na vṛiyantām nāma, paramāpekṣāṇi madīya-śrī-caturbhujādi-mūrtti-darśana-sambhāṣaṇādīni vṛiyatām? tatrāha – kim anyairiti. citte tvadetacchrīmad-vapuṣa sadā sphūrttāveva mamātyanta-prītirnānyatrete bhāvaḥ. antardarśana-māhātmyaṅca

Verse Four

*‘śrī bhāgavatāmṛtottara-khaṇḍe’ [2.86–96] tapo-loke śrīpippalāyanena
vivṛtyoktam asti. evaṁ tasya [satyavratasya] prārthanāpi stutāveva
paryavasyati, tasyaiva sarvotr̥ṣṭatvena prārthanāt, evam-agre’pi.*

*iti śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake caturtha-śloke śrī-sanātana gosvāmi-kṛtā dig-
darśinī-nāmnī ṭīkā samāptā.*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭīkā on the Fourth Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā Bhāvanuvāda* ❧

Up until this point, Śrī Satyavrata Muni has been praising Śrī Bhagavān by describing the supremacy of His unique characteristics. Now in Verse Four, beginning with *varam*, and in Verse Five, Śrī Satyavrata Muni begins to pray to obtain his most cherished object. “O Deva” means either “O supremely effulgent divinity” or “O Lord who always loves to perform certain charming pastimes”. Here *vara-īśat api* means: “Even though You can grant any benediction, I do not ask You for freedom from mortal suffering, *mokṣa*, the ultimate goal among the four goals of human life. Beyond the attainment of ordinary *mokṣa* is the attainment of the utmost limit of *mokṣa*, residence in Your transcendental abode, Śrī Vaikuṅṭhaloka. That abode is comprised of unending, concentrated bliss. I do not even ask You for residence in Vaikuṅṭha. Nor do I ask for *anyañ ca*.”

The words *anyañ ca*, “others also”, can be understood to mean either “the other benediction attained by performing the celebrated nine-fold system of devotional service (*navadhā-bhakti*) beginning with the process of *śravaṇam* (hearing about the Personality of Godhead); or simply “any other attainment generally considered worth asking for or considered superior by others”. However, considering the word *iha*, “in this place”, the meaning is “Because I am in Vṛndāvana, I do not have the slightest desire to accept all these benedictions.”¹

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¹ Editor’s footnote translated from the Bengali edition:

At the end of the *Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā* of Verse Three, it was said, “Among the limbs of *bhakti*, which are required for all devotees, I only pray to perform one special limb of *bhakti*: *vandana*, or expressing my adoration for Śrī Bhagavān. I do not pray for knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān’s opulence or anything else.”

Now, in this stanza, it has been said that the even the above-mentioned limbs of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *vandana* and so forth, are also not desirable. The meaning is that, from the perspective of gradated excellence, the *spḥūrti* of Śrī Bhagavān’s beautiful form within the heart (as revealed only in Vṛndāvana) is a superior *sādhyā*.

The word *iha* is also related to the latter half of the verse.

Here, the progressive superiority of the three benedictions is self-evident. The *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* clearly explains the superiority of residence in *Vaikuṅṭhaloka* over *mokṣa*.²

Previously, Śrī Satyavrata Muni resolved to perform *sādhana* of *vaidhi-bhakti* characterized by *śravaṇa* and so forth. However, in this stanza, even the above said *vaidhi-sādhana* is being discarded because it is devoid of the intense eagerness to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa which eventually results in a *sphūrti* of His beautiful form. Śrī Satyavrata Muni has offered this special prayer through *kīrtana-bhakti* saturated by intense attachment and eagerness to serve (*rāgāmuga-bhakti*) in order to bring about the *sādhya* of perpetually seeing such *sphūrtis* of Śrī Bhagavān's beautiful form within the heart. This is because without the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān, such a *sphūrti* will never occur.

² Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja:

Verses 1.14 and 1.15 of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*'s *Uttara-khaṇḍa* are presented herein:

*vaikuṅṭham durlabham muktaiḥ
sāndrānanda-cid-ātmakam
niṣkāma ye tu tad-bhaktō
labhante sadya eva tat*

Those who perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa devoid of any personal motive (*niṣkāma-bhaktas*), immediately achieve the abode of *Vaikuṅṭha*. That abode of *Vaikuṅṭha* is the embodiment of concentrated happiness, and it is made of transcendental cognizance. In other words, it is the concentrated embodiment of *brahma* (Absolute Reality) in His aspect of transcendental consciousness. That abode of *Vaikuṅṭha* is rarely achieved even by liberated personalities. (The deep meaning here is that those who propound oneness with the Absolute and arrogantly regard themselves as liberated souls can never attain that abode.) (14)

*tatra śrī-kṛṣṇa-pādābja-
sākṣāt-sevā sukham sadā
bahudhā nubhavantas te
ramante dhik kṛtāmṛtam*

In *Vaikuṅṭha*, the devotees, who are free from all hankering (*niṣkāma-bhaktas*), perpetually experience the variegated happiness of directly

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

and the performance of *navadhā-bhakti*, the celebrated nine-fold system of devotional service beginning with *śravaṇam*, is even superior to that. This is also described in the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*kāmaṁ bhavaḥ sva-vrjinair nirayeṣu naḥ stāc
ceto 'livad yadi nu te padayo rameta
vācaś ca nas tulasivad yadi te 'ṅghri-śobhāḥ
pūryeta te guṇa-gaṇair yadi karṇa-randhraḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.15.49)*

Śrī Sanat-kumāra and the other Kumāras prayed, “O Lord, if (because of the offence we made by cursing Your devotees, Jaya and Vijaya) we have to take birth in an extremely condemned species or even in hell, no harm. As long as our hearts and minds, like bees, are immersed in relishing the sweetness of serving Your lotus feet; our words are made beautiful by glorifying You, just as *tulasī* leaves are beautified when they are offered at Your feet; and our ears are eternally filled with descriptions of all Your transcendental qualities; then we do not care about where we take birth. In other words, may we eternally have the fortune of hearing (*śravaṇa*) and singing (*kīrtana*) about You.”

This statement specifically demonstrates that regardless of where one resides [as a result of his actions], even if he resides in hell, once he has attained final perfection, or *prema-bhakti*, by appropriately performing the limbs of *navadhā-bhakti* such as *śravaṇa*, he always experiences the fulfilment of residing in Vaikuṇṭha.

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa may have asked:] “If you do not want any of these benedictions, then what is it that you do want?” To this question, the

.....
serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. By performing various pastimes with Him they become immersed in an ocean of bliss. The happiness resulting from Śrī Bhagavān's service is the concentrated form of supreme bliss. Compared to this, the *amṛta* (the nectar of immortality) or the happiness of liberation seems extremely insignificant. (15)

sage replies: “O Master, may Your Bāla-gopāla form in Vṛndāvana, which I have just described, always remain manifest within my heart. Although You are present as the Supersoul, the omniscient witness in the cave-like hearts of all beings, kindly remain manifest in my heart in such a way that You seem to be appearing directly in front of me, and in that way reveal to me the beauty of Your entire form.”

[As though Śrī Kṛṣṇa is personally addressing His devotee, He speaks thus:] “Aho! Liberation, residence in Vaikuṅṭha, and eligibility to engage in *navadhā-bhakti* are also exceedingly worthy and rare benedictions. Why not accept them as well?” In reply, Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “*Kim anyaih?* – Of what use to me are these three boons?” In other words, Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “Although these attainments are eagerly sought after by others, they are of no use to me.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the essence of all bliss. If one attains Him, then everything has been attained. However, the result of obtaining something as insignificant as liberation instead of one’s most cherished form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only intense sorrow. It is for this reason that Śrī Satyavrata Muni has implied that all other benedictions are of no use.

[Now, In the following passages, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī reveals another meaning of *kim anyaih.*] Śrī Bhagavān asks the sage: “You may not want liberation and other boons, but why do you not accept the benediction of seeing Me and conversing with Me in any of My opulent, four-armed forms like Śrī Nārāyaṇa – a privilege greatly cherished by all?”

In this context, when Śrī Satyavrata Muni replies that he has no use for any other benediction, he means “I will only experience the greatest bliss if Your Bāla-gopāla form, the crown jewel of all beauty, remains forever manifest in my heart, and not otherwise.”

In *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta’s Uttara-khaṇḍa* (2.86–96) we find the statements of Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi. Therein, he extensively discusses the glories of beholding Śrī Bhagavān within the heart (*antara-darśana*).³

.....
³ Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja (see page 97).

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

In the previous stanzas, the sage has been singing the glories (*stuti*) of his Lord, yet this stanza is apparently a prayer (*prārthana*). However, even this prayer has culminated in glorifying Śrī Bhagavān. The sage's prayer for inner vision of Śrī Bhagavān shows that such vision is the highest goal.⁴ This should also be understood while considering the next verse.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭikā on the Fourth Verse ~

.....
⁴ **Editor's footnote:** In Verse Six however, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī sites further examples from his *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* to prove that the superiority of *darśana* within the mind only applies to *jñānī-bhaktas*. In relation to *śuddha-bhaktas* or *premī-bhaktas*, the conclusion is that *darśana* of Bhagavān with one's spiritually perfected senses is superior to *darśana* within the mind

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

Up till now, Śrī Satyavrata Muni has been describing the sweet pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and specifically the pastimes characterized by *vātsalya-rasa*. Consequently, his heart has been melting and he is becoming fully absorbed in them. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not especially pleased with the prayers offered by Lord Brahmā or the other demigods. On the other hand, if one sings about the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's devotees, and especially about the pastimes of the Vrajavāsīs, then Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not only be pleased, but He will even be controlled by them.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni then prayed, “O Dāmodara, Your mother has so much affection for You and above all others, You are by far her favourite. She is the very embodiment of boundless *vātsalya-prema* for You. With profound motherly affection, she cares for You and nurtures You considering You to be her dependent child. Naturally, just as a mother's qualities ordinarily appear in her children, her motherly quality of forgiveness and compassion also appears in You. Kindly ignore my offences, my sins, my *anarthas* and my bad qualities, and just be pleased with me. Kindly just grant me Your causeless mercy.”

It is as though Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being pleased by Śrī Satyavrata Muni's prayer, had asked the sage to accept his desired boons. And now, in the beginning of this stanza, the sage says, “*varam deva mokṣam na mokṣāvadhīm vā* – I do not want liberation or even the utmost limit of freedom – residence in Vaikuṅṭha-loka. Nor have I any need for other such benedictions.”

Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays, “O Bhagavān, You are the original Lord of all lords and the source of everything. Therefore, You are capable of granting all benedictions. Nothing is impossible for You. Although liberation is the cherished attainment of one who has realized the temporary nature of worldly existence and has consequently become detached, I have no need for the benediction of attaining liberation.”



There are five kinds of *mukti* described in the scriptures: *sālokya*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya*, *sārṣṭi* and *sāyujya*.⁵ The definition of *mukti* is found in Sāṅkhya *śāstra*: “*ātyantikī duḥkha nivṛttir eva mukti* – the final cessation of all forms of misery suffered during the endless cycle of birth and death is *mukti*.”

Resolving to permanently end their suffering, some people aspire for *sāyujya-mukti* – merging into the impersonal feature of *brahma*. This form of *mukti* is actually offensive and is fully opposed to *bhakti*. Previously, even the four Kumāras – Śrī Sanaka, Śrī Sanandana, Śrī Sanātana and Śrī Sanat-kumāra – desired this kind of *mukti*.⁶ However, as Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays for his desired boon, he discards the goal of *mokṣa* (*sāyujya-mukti*) with the words *varaṁ deva mokṣam*, and with the words *na mokṣāvadhim vā* he expresses that he does not even want the unending, concentrated happiness of residing in Vaikuṅṭha, the ultimate limit of freedom.

We should carefully consider the meaning of *mokṣāvadhim*. Unlike *sāyujya-mukti*, the other four kinds of *mukti* are not entirely unfavourable to *bhakti*. Those who accept these four kinds of *mukti* exist within the realm of Vaikuṅṭha in two classifications: In one class, *sva-sukhaiśvarya-uttarā-mokṣa*, the desire for one’s own happiness and opulence predominates, whereas in the other class, *prema-seva-uttarā-mokṣa*, one’s longing to render loving service to Śrī Bhagavān predominates over all other desires.

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⁵ **Editor’s Footnote:** The five kinds of *mukti* grant the following opulences: *sālokya* grants residence on the same planet as Bhagavān, *sāmīpya* grants constant nearness to Him, *sārūpya* grants a form like His, and *sārṣṭi* grants boundless fortune similar to His. The fifth type of liberation, *sāyujya*, is attained at the exclusion of the other four as it grants total cessation of the individual ego by merging into the existence of Bhagavān.

⁶ **Editor’s Footnote:** In Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī’s *Dig-darśinī-ṭikā*, the prayer from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.15.49) beginning with *kāmaṁ bhavaḥ* is spoken by the four Kumāras during their first direct *darśana* of Lord Nārāyaṇa at the gates of Vaikuṅṭha. Needless to say, by the time they spoke that prayer, they had long since abandoned their desire for *sāyujya-mukti*.

Those who long for *prema-sevottarā-mokṣa* never desire the inferior *sva-sukhaiśvaryottarā-mokṣa*. The example of the four Kumāras illustrates this. When the four Kumāras experienced the fragrance of the *tulasī* leaves that had been placed upon the lotus feet of Śrī Nārāyaṇa, they utterly abandoned their previous desires for impersonal liberation. They at once became *jñānī-bhaktas* (devotees who have knowledge of the Lord's absolute divinity) and began seeking after *prema-sevottarā-mokṣa*.



Śuddha-bhaktas, however, have one-pointed attachment for the loving service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They do not even aspire for *prema-sevottarā-mokṣa* wherein some desire for one's own happiness still remains. When Śrī Bhagavān offers such one-pointed devotees either of these classes of *mokṣa*, they never accept. Therefore, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.13) Śrī Bhagavān says, “*diyamānaṁ na grhṇanti vinā mat-sevanam janāḥ* – a pure devotee never accepts any kind of *mokṣa*, even if I personally offer it to him.” The unalloyed devotee's only desire is to engage in loving service to Śrī Bhagavān. In the history of Vṛtrāsura narrated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Vṛtrāsura rejected all varieties of *mokṣa* and prayed to be able to render service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān:

*na nāka-prṣṭhaṁ na ca pārameṣṭhyaṁ
na sārva-bhaumaṁ na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kāṅkṣe*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.25)

O ocean of all good fortune, apart from serving Your lotus feet I do not wish for anything. I do not wish to obtain the summit of heaven (Dhruvaloka – the Vaikuṅṭha planet situated at the zenith of the material cosmos) nor the highest seat of power within the universe (the seat of Lord Brahmā); nor have I any desire for sovereignty over all the earth, nor sovereignty of all

the planets down to Rasātala, which are flooding with sense-enjoyment; I do not long for mastery over all the *yoga-siddhīs* nor even for the end of repeated birth and death (*mokṣa*).

In the same way, Śrī Satyavrata Muni is not even asking for a boon related to the utmost limit of *mokṣa* – residence in Vaikuntha.



Śrī Satyavrata Muni continues: “*na ca anyam* – furthermore, I have no desire to obtain any other benediction.” By the word *anya* (other) in this phrase, Śrī Satyavrata Muni implies, “I do not even want the result of performing the nine kinds of *vaidhi-navadhā-bhakti*: hearing about Śrī Bhagavān (*śravaṇa*), chanting His names (*kīrtana*), remembering Him (*viṣṇu-smaraṇa*), serving His lotus feet (*pāda-sevana*), worshipping Him (*arcana*), praising Him (*vandana*), maintaining the attitude of serving Him (*dāśya*), nurturing a friendship with Him (*sakhya*), and submitting one’s very self to Him (*ātma-nivedana*).”

His response astonishes Śrī Kṛṣṇa who then asks, “The nine-fold system of devotional service (*navadhā-bhakti*) has been abundantly praised in the scriptures, yet you do not want to accept even that. What, then, is your desire?”

Then Śrī Satyavrata Muni utters his prayer: “My only desire is that Your form as little Bāla-gopāla manifest in my heart forever – that small cowherd boy who is afraid of His mother and who is looking here and there with fearful, suspicious eyes.” In the phrase *varēśad apīha* (*vara-iśat api-ihā*), the word *ihā* means “here”, or “in this place”. Thus the sage is praying, “May Your form as a little cowherd boy, which is present here in Vṛndāvana, appear within my heart. I have no need for any other benediction besides this.”

The form of Bāla-gopāla will only appear in one’s heart as a result of *prema-bhakti*. *Sādhakas* who perform *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa do not care if they go to heaven or hell. Their only desire is to engage in cultivating *prema-bhakti* under

the guidance of *tattvajñā*, *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas – Vaiṣṇavas who have realized the Absolute Truth and who are expert in relishing loving emotions. It is therefore said:

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-jana anugāmī
kālam nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram
Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (8)*

The *bhakti-sādhakas* should perform *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* (remembrance) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, character and pastimes. Thus they should gradually engage their tongues and minds, withdrawing them from absorption in sense objects which cause aversion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Residing in Vraja-maṇḍala, they should follow in the footsteps of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's associates who have deep attachment for Him, and fully utilize every moment of their time like this. This is the essence of all teachings.

Similarly, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.58), Śrī Uddhava says:

*etāḥ param tanu-bhrto bhuvi gopa-vadhvo
govinda eva nikhilātmani rūḍha-bhāvāḥ
vāñchanti yad bhava-bhīyo munayo vayam ca
kim brahma-janmabhir ananta-kathā-rasasya*

The young wives of the *gopas*, embodied here on earth, lead the topmost lives because they have *mahābhāva*, or full-blown selfless love for Śrī Govinda, the very soul of all. Their pure love is sought after by those sages who fear repeated birth and death, as well as by us. What is the use of being born even as Lord Brahmā if one does not have any taste for hearing the nectarean descriptions of Śrī Hari.

Vṛtrāsura also prays that he may gain the association of the Vaiṣṇavas and cultivate *prema-bhakti* under their guidance:

*mamottamaśloka-janeṣu sakhyam
samsāra-cakre bhramataḥ sva-karmabhiḥ
tvan-māyayātmātmaja-dāra-geheṣv
āsakta-cittasya na nātha bhūyāt*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.27)

O Master of my life, I am not seeking liberation. I am not concerned if I must repeatedly roam about in this vicious circle of birth and death as a result of my actions. However, wherever I go, and in whichever species I take birth, please grant me the loving friendship of Your dear devotees, for in their association I can cultivate *prema-bhakti*. My Lord, I only pray that I will not have to mingle with those who, bewildered by Your illusory potency, are always attached to their bodies, homes, children, families and so on.



Although the position of *navadhā-bhakti* is so elevated, Śrī Satyavrata Muni has no desire for it. Why? Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī reconciles this wonder. He explains that the fruit of one's practice of *navadhā-bhakti* depends upon the nature of one's practice. When the nine limbs of *bhakti* are performed according to *vaidhi-mārga* (the path of strict adherence to scriptural regulations based on fear), they enable the *sādhaka* to attain Vaikuṅṭha. On the other hand, when the same limbs of *bhakti* are performed in *rāga-mārga* (the path of spontaneous love), they enable the *sādhaka* to reach the abode of Vṛndāvana, where they attain loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

It is important to carefully understand the meaning of *rāga*. *Rāga* is defined as one's attraction to an object. If the soul's inherent capacity to be attracted is directed towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa – if He becomes the exclusive object of that attraction – it is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmipāda has defined *rāgātmikā-bhakti* in the following verse:

*iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tan-mayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ sātra rāgātmikoditā
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.272)*

Rāga is the unquenchable loving thirst for the object of one's affection that in turn gives rise to spontaneous and intense absorption in that object. Devotion that is performed with such *rāga* is known as *rāgātmikā-bhakti*.

Spontaneous, intense absorption in the object of one's love is referred to as *rāga*, and when *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* reaches this state of intense attachment it is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. Thus, in brief, *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is the loving thirst for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The topmost example of *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is found in the deeply loving emotions that the Vrajavāsīs feel for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and devotion that is aimed at attaining this stage of *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is called *rāgānugā-bhakti* (*bhakti* following in the wake of *rāgātmikā-bhakti*). Since the devotion of one following the *vaidhi-mārga* is dependent on the dictation of rules and regulations, it is weak. On the other hand, *rāgānugā-bhakti* is entirely independent, and therefore it is powerful by nature.

The topmost example of *anurāga* (incessant, deep loving attachment) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa only exists in the hearts of the Vrajavāsīs. The devotee should meditate on the associates of his beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa, who have the same mood for which he aspires. Furthermore, he should remain absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering the names and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja that are conducive to his own particular mood. Each devotee should reside in Vraja-maṇḍala following the associate who shares his own favoured mood, in the manner just described.

Those who aspire for a mood of friendship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa should follow the footsteps of His companions such as Śrīdāma and Subala; those who desire to have parental affection for Him should follow Śrī Nanda and Śrī Yaśodā; and those who hanker for conjugal love with Śrī Kṛṣṇa should follow Śrī Lalitā, Śrī Viśākhā and so on. Thus,

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each devotee, according to his own mood, should immerse himself in the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and live in Vraja. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmipāda has outlined this process of *bhajana* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.294–5):

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janāṁ cāsyā
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samāhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā*

The devotee should constantly remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with the dear-most associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa whom he chooses to follow. While permanently living in Vraja, he should become attached to always hearing about them. (If one is unable to live in Vraja by body, then one should live in Vraja by mind.) (294)

*sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ*

He who has developed greed for *rāgātmikā-bhakti* should closely follow in the footsteps of the particular associates in Vraja whose moods he aspires for. Under their guidance, he should engage in service both in his external form as a *sādḥaka*, and internally with his perfected spiritual body. (295)

If the *sādḥaka* longs to attain the fully blossomed, mature state of *prema*, he should take to heart the instruction of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī:

*yadīccher āvāsaṁ vraja-bhuvi sa-rāgaṁ prati-janur
yuva-dvandvaṁ tac cet paricaritum ārād abhilaṣeḥ
svarūpaṁ śrī rūpaṁ sa-gaṇam iha tasyāgrajam api
sphuṭaṁ premṇā nityaṁ smara nama tadā tvaṁ śṛṇu manaḥ
Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā (3)*

If you wish to live in the land of Vraja birth after birth, and if you crave the chance to perform direct service to the eternally youthful Divine Couple in Their *parakīya* affairs, full of *rāga*, then, my dear mind, listen to me. Realize deep love for Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, his older brother Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and all their associates. Remember them for all eternity and offer your obeisance to them in adoration. My dear mind, please listen to me.

It is thus clear that attaining *vraja-bhakti* is only possible by being under the guidance of the Vrajavāsīs. This is the opinion of the *ācāryas*.



Someone who wants *vraja-bhakti* will hear and chant according to his own specific mood. The following *mantra*, for example, enables devotees of all moods to relish the names especially dear to them. According to their specific *rasa*, devotees will cherish one name in particular within this *mantra*:

śrī kṛṣṇa gopāla hare mukunda
govinda he nanda-kiśora kṛṣṇa
hā śrī yaśodā-tanaya prasīda
śrī vallavī-jīvana rādhikeśa
Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta (2.4.7)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gopāla! Hari, Mukunda, Govinda, O youthful son of Nanda! O darling son of Śrī Yaśodā, be pleased with me. O life of the *gopīs*! O master of Śrī Rādhikā!

So one should engage in *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam*, but that *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam* should be of the names, form and qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that are in relation to His pastimes in Vraja, and it should be performed while under the guidance of *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas (followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī). Bāla-gopāla, Yaśodā's darling son

in Vraja, can only be attained by this process. He can never be attained by performing the limbs of *vaidhi-bhakti*.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni rejects the results of *vaidhi-navadhā-bhakti*. When the form of Bāla-gopāla manifests in one's heart, what else is there to attain? If one has achieved the abode of Vṛndāvana and the association of exalted *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas – the residents of Vraja – one's performance of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* in such association will naturally result in the highest attainment, and all of one's cherished desires will be fulfilled.



Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura chanted three hundred thousand holy names every day. Consequently, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself awarded him the title “Nāma-ācārya” – the most exemplary teacher of chanting the holy name. Although Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmī also performed *bhajana*, it is not written anywhere that they regularly chanted this many holy names. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura's chanting and the chanting of the Gosvāmīs each has their own unique speciality.

In a similar sense, the descriptions of the love exhibited by Lakṣmī-devī and the love exhibited by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, by Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, the crown jewel of devotees and Mahāprabhu's intimate associate, and by Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara respectively, each have their own unique specialities. At the time of the Rathā-yātrā festival, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita tried to establish the glories of Lakṣmī-devī's love for the Lord, but in response Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara established the supremacy of the love of his own *svāmīni* Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

It is also seen that when Pradyumna Miśra came to Jagannātha Purī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu sent him to hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā* from Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, not from Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura even though he was present in Purī at the time. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura is the combined form of Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Prahlāda, and his chanting of the holy name is absolutely pure. However, in any consideration, the particular moods, or *bhāvas*, of the Vaiṣṇavas are always the main factor in determining their exalted positions. Everything depends on mood. Śrī Prahlāda

Mahārāja is a *jñāni-bhakta*, and can never ascend beyond Vaikuṅṭha. Although those with a thirst for *vraja-bhakti* offer their deepest respects to the *bhajana* performed by Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, they always choose to follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

These topmost *rasika* Vrajavāsī Gosvāmīs always remained absorbed in *vraja-bhāva* and, in a mood of intense separation, they bathed in the nectarean ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes day and night. Our sole aim is to perform *bhajana* under their guidance.

The following statement has been heard directly from the mouths of some bygone worshipful Vaiṣṇavas:

bahiraṅga laiṅkā kare nāma-saṅkīrtana
antaraṅga laiṅkā kare premāsvādana

In public, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and privately, with His most intimate, internal associates, He would relish *vraja-prema*.

In the Gambhirā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu would relish *vraja-rasa* exclusively with Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda. These two most intimate associates of His would recite verses and songs according to His internal moods:

ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayaṁ tvad-aloka-kātaraṁ
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham

Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī

(quoted from *Śrī Padyāvalī*, 334)

O Master, Your heart always melts because of Your compassion for the destitute! O Lord of Mathurā, when will I see You again? O beloved Lord of my life, because I am hankering so fervently to see You, my heart has become intensely restless. What shall I do now?

*he deva! he dayita! he bhuvanaika-bandho!
he kṛṣṇa! he capala! he karuṇaika-sindho!
he nātha! he ramaṇa! he nayanābhirāma!
hā hā kadā nu bhavitāsi padam dṛṣor me
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (40)*

O my worshipful Lord, O dearest one, You are the only friend of the entire universe. O Kṛṣṇa, O restless one, You alone are the ocean of mercy. O my master, O my lover, O charmer of my eyes! Alas, alas, when will I behold Your lotus feet?

Only Śrī Rāya Rāmananda and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara could understand the deep meanings of these verses, and only they could console Mahāprabhu when He was overwhelmed by the sharp pangs of His intense mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa. In his commentary, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has certainly indicated the great importance and speciality of the moods of *rāgānuga-bhakti* over those of *vaidhi-bhakti*.



The *rūpānuga-sādhakas* should remember that our Gosvāmīs are all *rādhā-pakṣīya* (those who identify themselves as being part of Śrī Rādhā's intimate group). They are only pleased when Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes so absorbed in thinking about Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, Śrī Rādhā, that His darkish complexion becomes golden like Hers.

*rādhā-cintā-niveśena yasya kāntir-vilopitā
śrī kṛṣṇa caraṇam vande rādhāliṅgita-vigraham
Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārī-tattvāṣṭakam (3)*

When Śrīmatī Rādhikā was in *māna*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the mood of intense separation from Her, became so completely immersed in thinking about Her that His own darkish complexion became golden like Hers. I adore the lotus feet of that most glorious form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The *sādhaka* should develop an intimate relationship with his *guru*. He should have such profound affection for his *guru*'s external, *sādhaka* form as well as for his internal, *siddha* (perfected) form, that he becomes intensely attached to him. His attachment should be similar to the natural, worldly attachment one ordinarily has for well-wishing relatives or close friends. This type of natural relationship with one's *guru* is called *laukika sat-bandhuwat sambandha*. The *sādhaka* should accept that it is his *guru* alone who can fulfil all his most cherished spiritual desires. That is the only way he can enter into *rūpānuga-bhajana*⁷; there is no other way.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructs *sādhakas* who are inclined towards this high class of *bhajana*:

*trṇād api su-nīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka (3)*

In every respect the *sādhaka* should see himself as more lowly and helpless than the most insignificant, trampled blade of grass, and, becoming even more tolerant than a tree, expecting no honour for himself, he should give due respect to all. In this way, the *sādhaka* should always perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana*.



During His pastimes in Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself exemplified this instruction of Śrī Gaurahari. In one incident in particular, His conduct exemplifies this instruction. That incident goes like this:

Once, Durvāsā Ṛṣi arrived in Dvārakā. *Durvāsā* literally means “he who subsists solely on the juice of *durvā* grass”. At that time, Śrī

.....
⁷ **Editor's footnote:** *Rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas are those who follow in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The internal devotional service they perform in accordance with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's teachings is called *rūpānuga-bhajana*.

Kṛṣṇa was sitting in His palace. As soon as Durvāsā Ṛṣi arrived before Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he exclaimed, “I am very hungry. Make arrangements to feed me!” However, the moment his meal was ready, he went away. At midnight, he suddenly returned and asked for his meal, which was then served to him. When he had eaten only a little of it, he turned to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and said, “Smear this half-eaten sweet rice on Your body.” Silently, Śrī Kṛṣṇa smeared the half-eaten sweet rice over His entire body. He smeared it everywhere except on the soles of His feet. The residents of Dvārakā looked on infuriated, but they could not say a word.

“I want to ride around in a chariot pulled by Rukmiṇī,” said Durvāsā Ṛṣi. After Śrī Kṛṣṇa made the arrangements for this, Durvāsā Ṛṣi demanded that Śrī Kṛṣṇa become the charioteer. Śrī Rukmiṇī dragged the chariot along until, on the verge of fainting, she fell to the ground. Upon seeing this, the residents of Dvārakā were unable to tolerate any more, so Durvāsā Ṛṣi abruptly jumped from the chariot and fled. Śrī Kṛṣṇa began searching for him and calling out his name.

Durvāsā Ṛṣi again appeared. “O Dvārkaḍhīṣa,” he said, “even among the demigods, I have never seen anyone so self-composed and tolerant. Surely You are the Lord and benefactor of the *brāhmaṇas* (*brahmaṇya-deva*). I have enacted this pastime just to establish Your honour throughout the three worlds. O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on my order You smeared my half-eaten sweet rice all over Your body – everywhere except for the soles of Your feet. Your whole body has now become as strong as a thunderbolt, but the soles of Your feet are weak, and susceptible to being wounded.”

“O Rukmiṇī-devī,” he continued, “I am very pleased with you. Seeing your devotion for the Supreme Lord and your extreme tolerance, I am compelled to bless you.” Durvāsā Ṛṣi then blessed her saying, “You will be the most exalted of all the chaste ladies in the world, and you will have everlasting fortune.”

This pastime teaches the *sādhaka* the importance of tolerance and patience. Even the slightest mistake in one’s dealings can result in an offence to the Vaiṣṇavas and thus cause *bhakti* to disappear forever.



Leaving aside all other benedictions, Śrī Satyavrata Muni is praying that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Bāla-gopāla form remain manifest within his heart forever. He only wants the form of Śrī Dāmodara to appear there.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛttī on the Fourth Verse ~

.....

Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

(from the footnote on page 81):

Verses 2.86 through 2.96 of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta's Uttara-khaṇḍa* are presented herein:

*śrī pippalāyana uvāca
idaṁ mahat-padaṁ hitvā katham anyad yiyāsasi
katham vā bhramasi draṣṭuṁ drgbhyāṁ taṁ parameśvaram*

The son of Rṣabhadeva, Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi, said to Gopa-kumāra: Why do you want to leave Tapoloka and go elsewhere? The best of exalted *yogīs*, the unadulterated celibates, reside here. And why are you wandering to various places trying to see the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is beyond the grasp of the eyes and other senses, with your eyes? (86)

*samādhatva manaḥ svīyaṁ tato draṅsyasi taṁ svataḥ
sarvatra bahir antaś ca sadā sāṅśād iva sthitaṁ*

Fix your mind within meditation (*samādhi*) and you will naturally see Bhagavān. Although Svayam Bhagavān, the original Supreme Lord, resides everywhere, within and without, by the potency of *samādhi* you will always see Him as if He is directly present before you. (87)

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*paramātmā vāsudevaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
nitāntam śodhite citte sphuraty eṣa na cānyataḥ*

Vāsudeva is Paramātmā (the Supersoul), the presiding deity of the heart. He only reveals Himself in a heart that has been completely purified by *viśuddha-sattva* and nowhere else. In other words, because He is *sat-cit-ānanda vigraha* – the embodiment of pure existence, cognizance and bliss – He does not manifest before the eyes and other senses. (In other words, it is not possible to comprehend Him with the external senses because He manifests of His own accord and is unlimited.) (88)

Śrī Gopa-kumāra could argue: “Perceiving Śrī Bhagavān in the heart is only meditation. It cannot be considered the same as taking *darśana* of Him with one’s eyes. To see Him with my eyes, I must leave this Tapoloka and go elsewhere.” In response, Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi speaks the following verse:

*tadānīm ca mano-vṛtṭy-antarābhāvāt su-sidhyati
cetasā khalu yat sākṣāc-caḥṣuṣā darśanam hareḥ*

Furthermore, direct vision of Śrī Hari with one’s eyes (*darśana*) is in fact also accomplished by the mind alone. When Śrī Bhagavān reveals Himself within someone’s heart, their mind becomes completely absorbed in Him and they can think of nothing else. Consequently, they feel that they are perceiving Him directly with their eyes. (89)

In case someone argues, “I agree with this, but it is more pleasurable to see Śrī Bhagavān with one’s eyes,” then Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi makes the following assertion:

*manaḥ sukhe ’antar-bhavati sarvendriya sukham svataḥ
tad-vṛtṭiṣv api vāk-caḥṣuḥ-śruty-ādīndriya-vṛttayaḥ*

If joy arises in the mind, then it is not only the eyes that are pleased, rather all the senses become pleased. This is because the happiness of all the senses rests in the happiness of the mind. Moreover the actions of speech, eyes, ears and other senses rest in the actions of the mind. In other words, unless the mind grasps form, taste and other sense objects, the senses will fail to independently experience them. (90)

*mano-vṛtṭim vinā sarvendriyaṅgāni vṛttayo ’phalāḥ
kṛtāpīhā’ kṛtaiva syād ātmany anulabdhitāḥ*

Without the mind's activity, the functions of all the senses are futile. Even if the senses do contact their respective objects of enjoyment, they have no effect. This is because the embodied soul cannot experience anything without the mind's involvement. Therefore, actual *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān occurs within the heart when its disposition is completely pure (*viśuddha-citta-vṛtti viśeṣa*). Direct *darśana* of Him with the eyes is not real *darśana*, because He is beyond the perception of the senses. (91)

Although this may be so, we hear that Śrī Dhruva and Śrī Prahāda have seen Śrī Bhagavān with their eyes. What was that? In response, Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi gives the following explanation:

*kadācid bhakta-vātsalyād yāti ced dṛśyatāṁ dṛṣoḥ
jñāna-draṣṭyaiva taj-jātam abhimānaḥ paraṁ dṛṣoḥ*

It is true that Śrī Bhagavān possesses qualities such as *bhakta-vātsalya* (affection for His devotees), and on occasion He may make Himself visible to someone's external eyes, but such an incident is occasional and not a standard occurrence or rule. It is really their consciousness that enables this vision, not their physical eyes. [This is because the senses, being limited, cannot perceive something unlimited. Seeing Śrī Bhagavān with the eyes is of such repute because] When the living entity sees Śrī Bhagavān within the heart, which has become resplendent with *viśuddha-sattva* (supremely pure spiritual existence), he proudly assumes that he has seen Śrī Bhagavān with his eyes. In reality, however, he has not. (92)

*tasya kāruṇya-śaktyā vā dṛśyo'stv api bahir-dṛṣoḥ
tathāpi darśanānandaḥ sva-yonau jāyate hṛdi*

[Someone may say that] By His mercy potency (*kāruṇya-śakti*), Śrī Bhagavān sometimes becomes visible to the living entity's external eyes. Since He possesses all potency, what is not possible for Him? Although this may be so, the bliss of that *darśana* is found only in the heart or the mind. (93)

*anantaraṁ ca tatraiva vilasan paryavasyati
mana eva mahāpātraṁ tat-sukha-grahaṇocitam*

Even after Śrī Bhagavān disappears, the bliss of His *darśana* continues to play in one's heart resulting in the experience of many further visions there. Although the eyes have seen the Lord, the vision culminates in the

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mind. Furthermore, because *darśana* of Bhagavān is achieved by the mind, which is the only receptacle for experiencing the happiness of that vision, it is of no use to attempt to see Him with one's eyes. (94)

Someone may reason, "The eyes and other external senses are limited, but the mind is also limited. Therefore, it is impossible for the mind to see the absolutely unrestricted form of Śrī Bhagavān." Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi responds to this conclusion in the following verse:

*tat-prasādodayād yāvat sukham vardheta mānasam
tāvad-varhitum īṣita na cānyad bāhyam indriyam*

Although the mind is limited, when it becomes pure or when one receives the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān, the happiness within the mind caused by His *darśana* increases more and more and the mind expands to accommodate the magnitude of that joy. Only the subtle mind can expand like this because it is not gross like the external senses. (95)

In other words, the purified mind is so subtle that it has the ability to become transparent and attain resemblance with the soul. Then the mind can perceive the form of Śrī Bhagavān. It is well known that knowledge of an object only arises when the mind perceives its form. This attribute is not applicable to the other senses, because they are external, gross and confined by material limitations.

Someone may further argue, "It is agreed that vision of Śrī Bhagavān in the mind is superior to seeing Him with the eyes, but the supreme joy of requesting benedictions from Him and conversing with Him can only come when one sees Him with one's eyes." Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi replies to this in the following verse:

*antar-dhyānena dr̥ṣṭo'pi sāksād-dṛṣṭa iva prabhuḥ
kṛpā-viśeṣam tanute pramāṇam tatra 'padma-jah'*

When the mind becomes absorbed in uninterrupted meditation, and Śrī Bhagavān becomes visible within the heart, that vision is just like direct vision with the eyes. Only then, the all-potent Lord becomes pleased and bestows special mercy upon the *jñānī-bhaktas* in different ways, like granting them boons. The evidence of this is Śrī Bhagavān's behaviour toward the first created being, the lotus-born Lord Brahmā himself. (96)

When Lord Brahmā desired to create the universe full of living beings, he first became absorbed in meditating on Śrī Bhagavān. When he attained the final stage of meditation, *samādhi*, the Lord granted him *darśana*. Beholding Him in the ecstasy of his trance, Lord Brahmā offered prostrated obeisances. Śrī Bhagavān personally caught hold of his hand and said, “I am pleased with your austerity; ask for a benediction.” When Brahmā then requested a boon, he directly heard the *catuḥ-śloki*, or four original verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, from Śrī Bhagavān. This incident shows that after beholding Śrī Bhagavān in the state of *samādhi*, one experiences His most compassionate blessings like Him revealing His form to the devotee, granting benedictions, conversing with the devotee, touching the devotee, and so forth. For detailed information on this, one may deliberate on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Canto Two, Chapter Nine and Canto Three, Chapter Eight.



❧ Verse Five ❧

*idam te mukhāmbhojam avyakṭa nīlair
vṛtam kuntalaiḥ snigdha rakṭaiś ca gopyā
muhūś cumbitam bimba-rakṭādharam me
manasy āvirāstām alam lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

SYNONYMS

idam – this [supremely charming]; *te* – Your; *mukha-ambhojam* – lotus face; *avyakṭa-nīlaiḥ* – very dark blue; *vṛtam* – encircled; *kuntalaiḥ* – by curls of hair; *snigdha* – soft; *rakṭaiḥ* – reddened; *ca* – and; *gopyā* – by Śrī Yaśodā Gopī; *muhūś* – repeatedly; *cumbitam* – kissed; *bimba-rakta* – red like *bimba* fruit; *adharam* – lips; *me* – my; *manasi* – in the mind [or the heart which has been purified by *viśuddha-sattva*]; *āvirāstām* – may [that face] manifest; *alam* – I have no use for; *lakṣa-lābhaiḥ* – millions of other attainments.

TRANSLATION

O Deva, Your lotus-like face, encircled by soft, blackish-blue curly locks of hair that have a reddish glow, is repeatedly kissed by the *gopī* Śrī Yaśodā. May Your supremely charming lotus face, with lips like red *bimba*-fruit, always remain manifest in my heart. I do not care about millions of other attainments.

❧ Dig-darsinī-tīkā ❧

*tatra ca tava śrī-mukham parama-manoharam viśeṣeṇa didṛkṣe,
ityāha – idam iti. kadācit dhyāne'nubhūyamānam-anirvacanīya-*

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*saundaryādikaṁ, tadeva nirdiśati – mukham evāmbhojaṁ praphulla-
kamalākaratva-nikhila-santāpa-hāritva-paramānanda-rasavattvādinā,
tanme manasi muhurāvīrāstām.*

*kathambhūtaṁ? atyanta-nīlaiḥ parama-śyāmalaiḥ, snigdhaiśca
raktaiśca kuntalaiḥ keśairalakairvā vṛtaṁ kamalaṁ
bhramarairivopariveṣṭitam. gopyā śrī-yaśodayā, śrī-rādhayā vā
cumbitaṁ, muhurityasyātrāpi sambandhaḥ, yathā pāṭha-kramam-
atraiva sambandhaḥ; tataśca tayā mahā-dhanyayā muhuḥ cumbitam
api mama manasi sakṛdapyāvīrāstām-ityarthaḥ.*

yadvā, sadeti pūrva-gatasyātrāpyartha-balāt anvaya eva syāt.

*bimba-vad-raktau adharau yasmīn tat, tataśca lakṣa-lābhaiḥ
anyairlakṣa-saṅkhyairlabdhairapi [alaṁ] prayojanaṁ nāstītyarthaḥ.
likhitārtham evaitat.*

*iti śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake pañcama-śloke śrī-sanātana gosvāmi-kṛtā
dig-darśinī-nāmnī ṭikā samāptā*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭikā on the Fifth Verse ~

❧ *Diḡ-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda* ❧

In the previous verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prayed for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's whole form as Bāla-gopāla in Vṛndāvana to forever manifest in his heart. In this verse, he prays: "Among all the limbs of Your worshipful form (*śrī vighraha*) I especially yearn to behold Your supremely enchanting lotus face." Śrī Satyavrata Muni speaks this verse beginning with *idam te* in order to convey his desire to Śrī Bhagavān. Once, in his meditation, Śrī Satyavrata Muni had a momentary glimpse, or *sphūrti*, of the indescribable beauty of His worshipful Lord's lotus face. Now he expresses his experience in words by saying, "*mukhāmbhojanī* – Your face is just like a lotus flower. In fact Your face is the original source of the beauty found in the fully bloomed lotus flower. It soothes all suffering and it is permeated by the sweet nectar of supreme bliss." Then, he prays, "*me manasi muhur āvirāstām* – may that lotus face manifest within my heart again and again."

What is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face like? Śrī Satyavrata Muni continues, "Your lotus face is encircled by curls of extremely black, soft hair that have a reddish lustre. The word *vṛtam* suggests "Those curly locks seem like bumblebees around the lotus flower of Your face." He continues, "Your lotus face is kissed again and again by a *gopī*." The *gopī* mentioned here can be conceived of as either Śrī Yaśodā or Śrī Rādhā. Although the word *muhuh*, "again and again", can be applied to *me manasi āvirāstām* as before, it can also be applied here to *gopyā*. Thus it can be used twice: once regarding the *gopī*'s kisses (*gopyā muhuḥ cumbitam*) and once regarding the sage's vision of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face (*me manasi muhur āvirāstām*). Also, if we restrict the use of *muhuh* to *gopyā* based on its position within the verse, then a third sense is derived: "Your lotus face is kissed again and again by extremely fortunate Śrī Yaśodā, or by Śrī Rādhā Gopī. May that lotus face manifest in my heart – even if I can only see it one time."

Alternatively, the phrase *me manasy āvirāstām* is a partial repetition of the phrase *sadā me manasy āvirāstām* from the previous verse. Therefore, the word *sadā* (always) can also be applied

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here to derive the meaning: “May the vision of Your lotus face being kissed again and again by Śrī Yaśodā or by Śrī Rādhā remain manifest in my heart forever.”

Śrī Satyavrata Muni describes another beautiful feature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face with the words *bimba-vat raktādharam*, “May Your lotus face, with lips like red *bimba* fruit, remain visible in my heart forever. Then my life will be successful.” He ends the verse with *lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*, “Besides this, millions and millions of other attainments are of no importance to me.” The reconciliation of Śrī Satyavrata Muni’s rejection of millions of other attainments is the same as the one presented in the previous verse.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā on the Fifth Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

In the previous verse, it was as though Śrī Bhagavān had become pleased by Śrī Satyavrata Muni's devotional sentiments and said, "O sage, I am satisfied with you. Ask a benediction from Me." In response, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prayed: "O Prabhu, O Master of all those who grant benedictions, You are the most exalted. There is no limit to the blessings You can grant. But, my dear Lord, none of those boons are of any use to me."

In the present verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays "*idam te mukhāmbhojam* – All I want is to see Your exquisitely beautiful lotus face in my heart again and again." He is remembering the indescribable beauty of Śrī Bhagavān's lotus face in His form as Bāla-gopāla. Śrī Satyavrata Muni only had a glimpse of that form within his heart (*sphūrti*) during his meditation. What was it like? At first, the sage uses the word *avyakta*. "It is beyond the grasp of the material mind or material words." Further reflecting on what he saw in his *sphūrti*, he says, "His lotus face is encircled (*āvṛtam*) by dark-black curls of hair, which have a soft red glow that makes them look like bumblebees. Mother Yaśodā and the *gopīs* kiss that lotus face again and again."

In the previous verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prayed to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Bāla-gopāla form within his heart, but now he is praying specifically to see His beautiful lotus face, which he yearns to kiss. He wonders, "I want to achieve something so rare. Will this hope of mine ever be fulfilled?" The present verse marks an escalation of the intense longing developing within Śrī Satyavrata Muni's heart.



At first, by the power of *sādhu-saṅga*, an inclination to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters the heart. When one's *anarthas* are gradually driven away by performing *bhajana* in *sādhu-saṅga*, the inclination to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa will continue to increase and one's consciousness will blossom more and more through the progressive stages of love of God, beginning from *niṣṭha*, then through *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva* and finally *prema*.

However, a profound concept must be considered regarding each soul's ultimate development of love for Kṛṣṇa. If the intrinsic and eternal inclination of a particular soul is to dedicate himself to Śrī Bhagavān in the mood of a servant (*dāśya-rasā*), then his deepest inner hankerings will only be fulfilled by that mode of service. His service tendency will never proceed beyond *dāśya-rasa*.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni's prayers reveal that his mood is destined to develop beyond *dāśya-rasa*, and that is why this verse expresses increasing longing within his heart. We can understand his situation by considering the history of Gopa-kumāra. Even when Gopa-kumāra had attained residence in Vaikuṅṭha, his inner hankering was not satisfied. It was not even satisfied when he reached Ayodhyā or Dvārakā within Vaikuṅṭha. Finally he reached Goloka Vṛndāvana and when he experienced loving exchanges with Kṛṣṇa in the mood of friendship (*sakhya-bhāva*) all his desires were at last fulfilled. His mood never went any further. Similarly Śrī Satyavrata Muni's longing is advancing through progressive levels of *bhakti*.

Each *sādhaka* will relish the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes according to his own relationship (*sambandha*) with Him and also according to his qualification (*adhikāra*). Thus, in the description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face being kissed again and again, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains that the word *gopyā* can refer to either Mother Yaśodā or Śrī Rādhikā.

The phenomenon of relishing Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes according to one's own mood is illustrated in the following example. Once, upon seeing scratch marks on her son's limbs, Mother Yaśodā exclaimed, "Oh, where did all these scratches come from?" Kuṇḍalatā, who was standing nearby, heard this and commented, "Your son performs *rāsa* at night. These marks are from that."

Rāsa-līlā is the prominent pastime in *mādhurya-rasa* (conjugal love), so how could Mother Yaśodā be privy to this amorous pastime? The answer is that Mother Yaśodā was simply inquiring like an ordinary mother who was worried about the scratches on her son. Still, she is not necessarily unaware that her son is in fact performing *rāsa-*

līlā. *Vātsalya-rasa* assists and nourishes *mādhurya-rasa*. Nevertheless, as soon as Mother Yaśodā heard Kuṇḍalātā's reply, she at once said, "My darling boy is still breast-feeding. He does not even have His milk teeth! He can barely speak; He just talks in broken, childish language. But you are saying He engages in amorous affairs at night!? My dear young lady, you do not know. I will tell you how He got these marks. When He takes the cows into the forest to graze, He loses Himself in play with the other boys. Sometimes, while chasing stray calves, He runs through thorny bushes. He is so absorbed in playing at such times that He is not even aware that He is being scratched. That is where these marks come from."



The devotee will hanker for a particular *rasa* according to his own eternal mood. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī presents Śrī Satyavrata Muni as a perfect example of this. According to his own mood, Śrī Satyavrata Muni is trying to awaken within his own heart the *bhāva* of one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal *rāgātmika-jana* by performing *sādhana-bhajana* under their guidance.

Following in the footsteps of Śrī Satyavrata Muni, a *sādhaka* should think, "If earrings, which are only gold, can kiss the cheeks of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then why can't I? Certainly, I will also do this." With this yearning, he should endeavour to attain his goal with the conviction that he does not need any other benediction. Such endeavour is called *abhidheya*. When he at last attains his own eternal, constitutional mood of service in one of the five *rasas*, then he will attain the ultimate goal, the stage of *prayojana*.

Whose *prema* is stronger? Mother Yaśodā's *prema* for her darling son is certainly stronger than His *prema* for her. Her *prema* can control Kṛṣṇa and bind Him. If any devotee hears the pastimes of Mother Yaśodā binding Kṛṣṇa with her *prema* and of her kissing His lotus face again and again, a longing will enter his heart: "If I follow in the footsteps of Mother Yaśodā, perhaps I will also be able to kiss the lotus face of her darling boy."

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But who kisses Śrī Kṛṣṇa's face the most? More than anyone else, Śrīmatī Rādhikā drinks the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus face by kissing it again and again.

At the beginning of this *aṣṭakam*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni was praying in the mood of *dāsyā-rasa*. Now, in this verse, his prayers are imbued with a desire to enter the mood of *vātsalya-rasa*: “May that supremely charming lotus face, which is kissed again and again by Mother Yaśodā, manifest within my heart forever.” In the same way, every *sādhaka* will initially consider himself to be the servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in a general sense. However, by performing intimate service and by acquiring Śrī Bhagavān's mercy, he will gradually progress and a deep longing to perform service under the guidance of one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates (*anugāya-mayī sevā*) will begin to manifest within his heart.



Just like the omniscient Supersoul present in the core of everyone's heart, the *guru* has the special characteristic of perfectly knowing our heart. He knows the eternal constitutional mood of our soul – our eternal relationship with Bhagavān – and accordingly, he connects us with Him. Then, by supplying the water of hearing, chanting and remembering, he nourishes that relationship and cuts down anything that obstructs that nourishment with the sharp axe of his words. He does this so expertly that the *sādhaka* barely notices, but all the while the needful is accomplished.

This is what the bona fide *guru* and genuine Vaiṣṇavas do. They do not have bodies of flesh and bone, which are subject to change and which may die at any moment. They are the eternal associates of the most merciful incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who descended to deliver the fallen souls in this age of Kali. *Guru* and Vaiṣṇavas are among the intimate companions of the Divine Couple, Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The way Śrī Bhagavān extends His loving mercy to the souls bound by *māyā* is by sending associates like these in the form of Vaiṣṇavas.



Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lips have been compared to red *bimba* fruits – *bimbarakta-adharam*. Although ripened *bimba* fruit is extremely soft and beautiful, in reality, it is far excelled by the softness and beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lips. Still, even though Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lips are so beautiful, He constantly hankers to drink the nectar of the lips of His beloved *gopīs*. Then what must their lips be like? The most clear example of how Śrī Kṛṣṇa hankers to drink the nectar of the *gopīs*' lips is found in *Bhramara-gīta*, in the conversation between Śrīmatī Rādhikā and a bumblebee:

*sakṛd adhara-sudhām svām mohinīm pāyayitvā
 sumanasa iva sadyas tatyaje 'smān bhavādrk
 paricarati katham tat-pāda-padman nu padmā
 hy api bata hr̥ta-cetā hy uttamah-śloka-jalpaiḥ
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.13)*

Just as you abandon a flower after drinking its honey, Śrī Kṛṣṇa completely bewildered us by making us drink the nectar of His lips only once and then suddenly abandoned us. Why does Goddess Padma (Lakṣmī-devī), who Herself is just like a lotus flower, serve His lotus feet? It seems that Her mind has certainly been stolen by His cunning words. However, we are not naive like Lakṣmī-devī.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā spoke these words to the bumblebee in intense separation from Kṛṣṇa.

“O bumblebee, messenger of Śrī Kṛṣṇa,” she said, “your master knew that when He would leave us in the future to go to Mathurā and elsewhere, we, the young damsels of Vraja, would die from being separated from Him. He likes to see us writhing in the pain of separation so much that He forcefully made us drink the nectar of His lips just once, for only a few moments. He knew that death cannot come to anyone who drinks that nectar, and He knew that later, unable to die from the pain of separation, we would simply writhe in agony.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eyes, His eyebrows, His smile and His lips are the sharp arrows of Cupid. Once someone has seen them, he will remain wounded forever. Devotees who cultivate *rāgānuga-bhakti* (*bhakti* following in the wake of *rāgātmikā-bhakti*) or who are *rūpānuga* (followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī) remember all these moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā in separation as they perform *sādhana*, and thus lose all awareness of their bodies, their homes and so on.

Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī continued to angrily lament to the bumblebee as She burned in the blazing fire of separation:

*yad-anucarita-līlā-karṇa-pīyūṣa-vipruṭ-
sakṛd-adana-vidhūta-dvandva-dharmā vinaṣṭāḥ
sapadi gr̥ha-kuṭumbaṁ dīnam utsṛjya dīnā
bahava iha vihaṅgā bhikṣu-caryāṁ caranti
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.18)*

O messenger, descriptions of your master's pastimes are exactly like nectar. If someone accepts even one drop of that nectar through his ears, even once, then his sense of obligation to worldly dualities is utterly ruined. Because of that nectar, many people have quit their homes and families, leaving them utterly miserable, only to become miserable themselves. They live as mendicant beggars wandering through these forests of Vraja like birds without shelter.

As if Śrī Rādhikā heard the bumblebee ask for an example of this, she said, "We are the unavoidable proof that this is true; there is no need to look for evidence anywhere else. Simply by hearing about His pastimes, we have become homeless."

What becomes of such a miserable, homeless person? In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.40) it is described:

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta uccaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nr̥tyati loka-bāhyaḥ*

Saintly people who have firmly devoted themselves to serving Śrī Bhagavān with deep love, constantly engage in *kīrtana* of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa they most love. When deep attachment (*anurāga*) arises in them, their hearts thoroughly melt and they become mad in love of God. They laugh and cry loudly. Agitated by love, they sing about their Lord in sweet voices, and just like madmen without a trace of shyness, they dance and sing, unaffected by the opinions of ordinary people.

Even Śrī Kṛṣṇa's flute, a dry piece of bamboo, drives the three worlds mad when it is touched by the powerful nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lips. However, the *gopīs* regard the flute with spite as if it were their co-wife.

*gopyaḥ kim ācarad ayaṁ kuśalam sma veṅur
dāmodarādhara-sudhām api gopikānām
bhūṅkte svayaṁ yad avaśiṣṭa-rasaṁ hradīnyo
hṛṣyat-tvaco 'śru mumucus taravo yathāryaḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.9)*

O dear *sakhīs*! We cannot imagine what sort of *sādhana* and *bhajana* the flute must have performed in previous births that in our very presence it is drinking the nectar of Dāmodara's lips, which rightfully belongs to us alone. It is not even sparing a drop of that *rasa* for us. On the pretext of their blossoming lotus flowers, the rivers, which have nourished the flute with their water (*rasa*), are exhibiting symptoms of ecstatic horripilation. The trees, who are forefathers of the flute, are equal to the best of men. Seeing their descendant filled with such intense love for the Lord, they have become overjoyed, and tears of ecstasy are flowing from their eyes.



The strength to attain these exalted feelings will enter our hearts by reciting the prayers of the exalted *ācāryas* in our *guru-varga*

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headed by Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Raghunātha. Then, step by step we will make progress on the path of *bhakti*. In *Śrī Śrī Rādhikā Pāda-padme Vijñapti*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī prays:

*rādhe! jaya jaya mādharma-dayite
gokula-taruṇī-maṇḍala mahite*

O Rādhā! All glories to You, all glories to You, the most beloved of Mādhava. You are the most celebrated among all the young damsels of Gokula. (1)

*dāmodara-rati-varadhana-veśe
hari niṣkuṭa-vṛndā-vipineśe*

The beautiful way You dress causes Śrī Dāmodara's attachment to You to swell. You are the presiding Goddess of Śrī Hari's pleasure groves in the forests of Vṛndāvana. (2)

*vṛṣabhānu-dadhi-nava-śaśilekhe
lalita-sakhi-guṇa ramita viśākhē*

From the milk ocean of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja's affection, You have arisen like a beautiful young moon. O dear friend of Lalitā, by Your qualities of playfulness and friendship You have enchanted the heart of Your intimate *sakhī*, Viśākhā. (3)

*karuṇām kuru mayi karuṇā-bharite
sanaka-sanātana-varṇita-carite*

You are so full of mercy that great *yogīs* and *brahmacārīs* like Śrī Sanaka Kumāra and Sanātana Kumāra are always engaged in describing Your exalted nature, so please be merciful to me! (4)

*hā devi! kāku-bhara gad-gadayādya vācā
yāce nīpatya bhuvī daṇḍa-vad udbhaṭārtiḥ
asya prasādam abudhasya janasya kṛtvā
gāndharvike! nija-gaṇe gaṇanām vidhehi
Śrī Gāndharvā-samprārthanāṣṭakam (2)*

O Devī Gāndharvikā, I am suffering greatly. I have fallen at Your feet and I am lying on the ground in front of You just like a stick. With a choked voice I am begging You, please be merciful to this fool and count me as one of Your own.

As we sing these verses, we should meditate on our *guru-varga* and consider, “It is you who are actually submitting these prayers, it is you who are singing them. Without your mercy I will never be qualified to make such prayers.” It is only by their mercy that we can follow in their footsteps and pray like this and thus gradually attain loving service to the Divine Couple in Vraja.



There are two modes of meditation: *mantramayī upāsanā* and *svārasikī upāsanā*. When one deliberately concentrates on remembering only one particular pastime while performing *bhajana*, it is called *mantramayī upāsanā*. But when Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes manifest in one’s heart spontaneously, one after another, it is called *svārasikī upāsanā*. When performing *bhajana* in Vraja, only *svārasikī upāsanā* is present. In Vraja, wherever the *sādhaka* goes he has *sphūrtis* (momentary visions) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternally new pastimes.

Beholding new *sphūrtis* everywhere he looks, he exclaims, “Oh, Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed this pastime here.” He then beholds another *sphūrti*: “And He performed that pastime over there!” In an unbroken chain, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are stirred up in his heart. *Svārasikī upāsanā* is called *rāgānugā* or *lobhamayī-bhakti* (*bhakti* imbued with intense hankering). All our *guru-varga* are immersed solely in this mode of meditation.



Śrī Satyavrata Muni has prayed *alam-lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*, “Millions of other attainments are of no use to me.” While his prayers untill this point have reflected the mood of someone absorbed in *vātsalya-rasa*, we should not mistake these words to mean that he rejects the attainment

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of something higher than *vātsalya-prema*. Fortunately, however, if one obtains the association of one of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's companions, her mood will enter his heart and cause him to implore Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, if You are pleased with me and want to give me something..." and then he will submit this prayer:

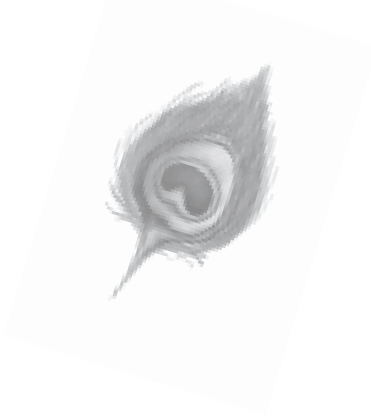
*śyāmasundara śikhaṇḍa śekhara
smera-hāsa muralī-manohara
rādhikā-rasika mām kṛpā-nidhe
sva-priyā-caraṇa-kiṅkarīṃ kuru*

(Śrī Viṭṭhalācārya)

O Śyāmasundara, O beautiful dark boy with a peacock-feather crown, Your playful smile and Your flute completely bewilder our minds. You are expert at tasting the nectar of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love, and You are an ocean of mercy. Please make me a maidservant of Your beloved's lotus feet.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is truly satisfied, He considers it His own success to bestow this benediction upon the *sādhakas* and *sādhikās*. This is how the process of *rūpānuga-bhajana* gradually unfolds. We pray that the fruit of our *bhajana* will be that He gives us this topmost benediction.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśini-vṛttī on the Fifth Verse ~



❧ Verse Six ❧

*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkḥa-jālābdhi-magnam
kṛpā-dr̥ṣṭi-vṛṣṭyāti-dīnam batānu
gṛhāṇeśa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dr̥śyaḥ*

SYNONYMS

namaḥ – respectful obeisance; *deva* – He who has a divine form; *dāmodara* – O *bhakta-vatsala* (You who are affectionate to Your devotees) Śrī Dāmodara; *ananta* – O Lord of inconceivable magnificent potencies; *viṣṇo* – O all-pervasive Lord; *prasīda* – be pleased; *prabho* – O my Master; *duḥkḥa* – sufferings ; *jāla* – a network; *abdhi* – in an ocean; *magnam* – drowning; *kṛpā-dr̥ṣṭi* – of Your compassionate glances; *vṛṣṭyā* – by the rain; *atidīnam* – extremely miserable; *bata* – alas!; *amugṛhāṇa* – treat me with kindness or enliven me by delivering me; *īśa* – O supremely independent controller; *mām* – me; *ajñam* – ignorant; *edhi* – please become; *akṣi* – my eyes; *dr̥śyaḥ* – visible.

TRANSLATION

O Deva, O You who have a divine form, I offer my respectful obeisances to You. O You who are *bhakta-vatsala*, affectionate to Your devotees! Śrī Dāmodara, O Ananta, Lord of inconceivably magnificent potencies! O all-pervasive Viṣṇu, O Prabhu, my Master, be pleased with me. I am drowning in an ocean of incessant worldly miseries. Alas, I am extremely miserable and I do not know what to do. O Īśa, supremely independent controller, please deliver me by the

nectarean shower of Your merciful glance and enliven me by becoming directly visible to my eyes.

❧ Dig-darśini-ṭīkā ❧

*evam stuti-prabhāvāt sadyaḥ samuditena prema-viśeṣeṇa sāksād-
didṛkṣamānas tatra caikam nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva parama-
sādhanam – manyamānas tathaiva sakātaryam prārthayate – nama iti.
tubhyam – ity adhyāhāryam eva, tac ca bhaya-gauravādinā prema-
vaikalyena vā sāksān na prayuktam.*

*he prabho! – he mad-īśvara! prasīda – prasādam evāha, duḥkham –
sāmsārikam tvad-darśana-jam vā, tasya jālam – paramparā, tad
evābdhiḥ ānanty-ādinā, tasmīn-magnam māmi, ataeva ati-dīnam –
paramārttam.*

*yad vā – tatra sat-sahāya-sādhanādi-hīnatvāt paramākiñcanam.
yad vā – mumūrṣum jīvan mṛtam vā, tatra cājnam tat-pratikārdy-
anabhijñam.*

*kṛpayā dṛṣṭir nirikṣanam, tasya vṛṣṭyā – paramparayā kṛpā-dṛṣṭi-
rūpāmṛta-vṛṣṭyā vā, anugrhāṇa – samuddhṛtya jīvayety arthaḥ. tad
evābhivyāñjayati. akṣi-dṛṣyo – mal-locana-gocavaḥ, edhi – bhava.*

*evam prārthanā-krameṇa prārthanam kṛtam, prārthyasya parama-
daurlabhyena sahasā prāg eva nirdeśārṇahatvāt. antar-darśanāt sāksād-
darśana-mahātmyam ca śrī- bhagavat-pārśadaiḥ sanyāyam uktam śrī
brhad-bhāgavatāmṛtottara-khaṇḍato [3.179–182] viśeṣato jñeyam.*

*tatra deva – he divya-rūpeti, didṛkṣāyām hetuḥ. dāmodareti –
bhakta-vātsalya-viśeṣeṇākṣi-darśana-yogyatāyām. ato nānto yasmād
ity ananteti kṛpā-dṛṣṭy-anugrahaṇe. prabho! – he acintyānantādbhuta-
mahā-śakti-yukteti, indriyāgrāhyasyāpy akṣi-dṛṣyatā-sambhāvanayām.
īśa! – he parama-svatantreti, ayogyam prati tādṛśānugraha-karaṇe
kasyacid anapekṣatāyām jñeyaḥ. kiñca – viṣṇo! – he sarva-vyāpaka!
yad vā – he vṛndāvana-nikuñja-kuharādi-praveśa-śīla! – iti cākṣi-
dṛṣyatārtham dūrāgamana-śramādikaṁ nāstīti.*

Verse Six

*athavā, he ananta! – aparichinna! viṣṇo! – sarva-vyāpin! tathāpi he
dāmodarety evaṁ parama-vātsalya-viśeṣeṇa tavākṛtaṁ kim api nāstīti
dhvanitam. anyat samānam ity eṣā dik.*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ūkā on the Sixth Verse ~

❧ Dig-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda ❧

By the power of his prayers an uncommon type of *prema* instantly arose within Śrī Satyavrata Muni's heart, and he now expresses his intense longing to see Śrī Bhagavān directly. Within his mind, he concluded that the best means to attain direct *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān is indeed *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana* and therefore, in this verse beginning with *namo deva*, he submits himself to his Lord through fervent prayers in the form of *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

One should understand that even though the sage intended to use the word *tubhyam* (unto You) after the word *namaḥ* to complete the grammatical construction, he left it out, either because of apprehension, reverence, or because he simply lost control of himself due to the *prema* arising within his heart. Consequently, he was unable to address Śrī Bhagavān so directly.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni addresses his Lord, “O Prabhu, my master! O Īśvara, O Supreme Controller!” He next says *prasīda*, “be pleased with me”. In other words, he explains what gracious favour he seeks from his Lord, if his Lord is pleased with him (*prasīda*). The reason he seeks the favour of his Lord is described in the words *duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnam*. Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “I am drowning (*magnā*) in an unbroken series (*jāla*) of miseries (*duḥkha*).” The miseries, or *duḥkha*, described here may be considered either the miseries born of material existence in the form of repeated birth and death or else the suffering he feels by not being able to see his Lord. Such miseries are boundless and are therefore compared to an ocean (*abdhi*). He says “*ati-dīnam* – tormented by such incessant misery, I am suffering greatly.” [“Therefore be pleased with me.”]

[Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now illuminates further meanings of *ati-dīnam*.] Śrī Satyavrata Muni also indicates, “Because I am deprived of the support of saintly association, I cannot perform *sādhana-bhajana*. I therefore remain extremely wretched and destitute.” Or, “Although I am somehow still alive, I am nearly dead because of my intense hankering to see You. I have no idea how to alleviate such incessant suffering.”

“Therefore,” he continues, “*krpā-dr̥ṣṭi* – please cast upon me Your uninterrupted compassionate glance, which is like a downpour (*vr̥ṣṭyā*) of nectar. In this way, *anugr̥hāṇa* – revive me by completely delivering me from this ocean of misery.”

With the words *edhi akṣi-dr̥ṣyaḥ*, the sage explains exactly what gracious favour he seeks from his master. He prays, “Please become directly visible to my eyes.”

Since there is nothing more rarely achieved than direct *darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it would not have been appropriate for Śrī Satyavrata Muni to request it at the very beginning of his prayers. This is the reason for the sequence of his prayers.¹

[Regarding direct *darśana*] With sound logic, Śrī Bhagavān’s associates have personally established how direct vision of Bhagavān is more glorious than vision of Him within the heart. The excellence of this goal is explained in *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta’s Uttara-khaṇḍa* (3.179–182)².

At the beginning of this stanza, Śrī Satyavrata Muni addresses the Lord with various names, beginning with the name Deva. Now the sage’s inner intention for using these addresses is revealed:

Deva – “O You whose form is divine, O most beautiful Lord.” The sage addresses Śrī Bhagavān in this way with the desire to see Him directly.

¹ Editor’s footnote adapted from the Bengali edition:

In the first and second verse Śrī Satyavrata Muni offers *praṇāma* to Śrī Dāmodara, who is controlled by the *prema* of His devotees. In the third verse he offers repeated *vandana*, or prayers, unto Him. In the fourth and fifth verses, he condemns all the goals of life beginning with *mokṣa*, and prays for the Bāla-gopāla form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to forever manifest within his heart. Only now, in the sixth verse, is he praying for direct *darśana* of Bhagavān. The sequence of prayers in this verse is as follows: *prasīda* – “kindly be pleased with me”; *anugr̥hāṇa* – “by the shower of Your compassionate glance upon me, completely deliver me from the ocean of sufferings”; and *akṣi-dr̥ṣyaḥ edhi* – “please become visible to my eyes.”

² Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja (see page 139).

Dāmodara – “O Bhagavān, You are known by the name Dāmodara because of Your exceptional quality of *bhakta-vātsalyatā*, deep affection for Your devotees. Because of this special quality, You agreed to be bound around Your waist by Your mother, and by this same quality You appear before the eyes of Your devotees and let them meet You face to face.” [Śrī Satyavrata Muni therefore considers, “Because of His *bhakta-vātsalyatā*, I too will be able to directly see Him with my own eyes.”]

Ananta – “O unlimited, endless Lord,” or, “O Lord, there is no end or limit to Your mercy.” The sage addresses Śrī Bhagavān with this name because he desires to attain His Lord’s favour in the form of His merciful glance.

Prabhu – “O Lord, Your inconceivable potencies are unlimited, astonishing and immensely powerful.” By addressing the Lord thus, the sage implies, “O Lord, by the influence of Your inconceivable potency, You can become visible to my eyes, even though You are beyond the grasp of the senses.”

Īśa – “O supremely independent controller.” By this, the sage implies, “You are the absolutely independent controller so You never rely on anyone or anything to exhibit mercy, even to such an unqualified person as me.”

Viṣṇu – “O all-pervasive One.” Or, “O You who are always inclined to enter the secluded caves and groves of Vṛndāvana.” Here the sage implies, “You are omnipresent so You do not have to undergo the difficulty of travelling a long distance to appear directly before my eyes.”

[Next, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī reveals another meaning implied by these names.] The sage says, “Although You are *ananta* (boundless) and *viṣṇu* (all-pervading), You are also *dāmodara* – You willingly allowed Your devotee to bind You around Your waist.” The meaning is: “out of extreme affection for Your devotees, there is nothing You will not do.” Thus the sage has indicated that this special meaning is present when the names Ananta, Viṣṇu and Dāmodara are considered together. The meanings of the remaining names are the same as before.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā on the Sixth Verse ~

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

In the fourth verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni refused to accept the results of performing *vaidhi-bhakti*, but in this verse, he expresses that he desires to attain the result of *rāgānuga-bhakti: vraja-prema*. He desires nothing else.

Those in the line of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and especially those who aspire for the type of *prema* conceived by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (*rūpānuga bhaktas*) must have this same kind of determination. This determination of the *bhakta* is exactly like that of the *cātaka* bird. The only water the *cātaka* bird accepts is the rainwater that falls when the *svāti-nakṣatra* constellation is prominent in the night sky. The *cātaka* bird thinks, “I do not care if I die of thirst. I do not even care if I am struck by a thunderbolt! I will only drink the water falling from the *svāti-nakṣatra*.”

The devotee should think, “I only want deep love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. I do not want anything else. I especially yearn to become the maidservant of Śrī Rādhā. May I serve Her under the guidance of Her intimate friends – Her *prāṇa-sakhīs* and *priya-narma-sakhīs*³ – and may I serve Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa under Her direction. I only want this. I do not need any other benediction.”



As streaks of *kājjala* (black cosmetic ointment) ran down His face along with His tears, Kṛṣṇa breathed heavily out of fear of His mother. On that day, Śrī Yaśodā bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa by her motherly affection. The Lord of all lords, the possessor of all potencies, He who makes the whole universe tremble by the slightest movement of His eyebrows, on that day, trembled out of fear of His mother. He

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³ **Editor’s footnote:** Śrī Rādhā’s *prāṇa-sakhīs* are Her *mañjarīs*, whom She considers more dear to Her than Her own life, and Her *priya-narma-sakhīs*, like Lalitā and Viśākhā, are Her most affectionate friends who are always dedicated to pleasing Her.

cried, “Maiyā, don’t hit Me!” This is the nature of the immaculate and sweet *vātsalya-prema* of Vraja.

In his meditation Śrī Satyavrata Muni saw how Mother Yaśodā was kissing Kṛṣṇa’s cheeks, how His earrings were doing the same, and especially how the *gopīs* were kissing Kṛṣṇa so sweetly. He yearns to see this little Gopāla directly. Astonishingly, even after such a sweet vision, his hankering has still not been satiated. Therefore, he will eventually express an even higher desire than what he expresses in this stanza.

He wonders, “How can I attain love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and consequently, *darśana* of Mother Yaśodā’s darling son with my eyes?” It is well known that loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is only attained by chanting His holy names. Therefore, in this stanza, Śrī Satyavrata Muni performs *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.



In the previous verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prayed, “May Your lotus face in Your form as little Gopāla, the same form in which You shed streams of tears in fear of Your mother, forever appear in my heart. I especially long to see Your face in my heart perpetually, as it is being kissed again and again by Your mother or by Śrī Rādhā. May that Śrī Kṛṣṇa who holds a flute to His lips and attracts the entire world – and even Himself – forever appear in my heart. Upon seeing His form, all moving beings become stunned and motionless, and all non-moving things give up their nature and begin to move.”

In this stanza however, Śrī Satyavrata Muni wishes to directly behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form with his own eyes. He realized that Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not appear before him unless he performs *nāma-kīrtana*, so now he prays through the medium of *nāma-kīrtana*, beginning with *namo deva dāmodara*.



Śrī Satyavrata Muni had heard about the *kīrtana* performed by the *vraja-gopīs*. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the *rāsa* dance, the

gopīs were unable to bear separation from Him and began to cry. The song they sang while weeping is famous by the name *Gopī-gīta* and is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. With deep love, Śrīman Mahāprabhu used to relish this song, especially during the period of His life when He remained in the Gambhīrā. The following verse is from *Gopī-gīta*:

*tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalam śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvī grṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.9)*

O Kṛṣṇa, we are always suffering in this material world, but just hearing the immortal nectar of Your words and narrations of Your pastimes gives us life. These narrations, coming from the lips of Your pure devotees, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow the ultimate benediction, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, upon whoever hears them with faith. Your pure devotees broadcast these narrations, which are full of spiritual beauty and opulence, all over the world. There is certainly no one more kind and compassionate than those souls who distribute this nectar.

But the *gopīs* were being tortured by the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa. They were actually saying, “The descriptions of Your pastimes are not nectar (*amṛta*); they are deadly poison (*mṛta*). If anyone hears them, their life becomes one of suffering. Poets have sung the glories of narrations about You in vain. At first the narrations seem to be full of charm and sweetness, but instead of bringing joy to someone's life, they plague him with sorrow. In fact, the people who recite Your pastimes are ruining everyone's lives.”

In this verse, the word *bhūridāḥ* (most munificent) indicates that those who broadcast narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa all over the world are the greatest of all generous people. However, in divine madness

(*divyomāda*) brought about by the severe pain of being separated from Kṛṣṇa, the *gopīs* spoke about Him sarcastically:

“Just see how these people are blazoning the activities of that black boy. They carry a copy of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and roam from street to street exclaiming, ‘We do not want money; we just want you to listen to us.’ For no charge they cast the net of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes over the living entities. Those people, now captured, are left to writhe in agony, weeping and wailing. Eventually they leave their homes, wealth, possessions, relatives and families. Like beggars or like birds, they live without any permanent residence and maintain themselves with whatever meagre eatables are given to them by others, and they sleep wherever they can find a place to lie down. They spend their days and nights in this way, constantly tortured by the pain of being separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

“My dear friend,” one *gopī* said, “those who recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are actually not to blame. The sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus face, beautiful form, flute, qualities and pastimes are responsible for these calamities. Even just hearing about His sweetness, one will enter this miserable condition.”

Another *gopī* exclaimed, “O *sakhī*, what to speak of others in this condition, just look at you! There are no hunters more merciless than those who narrate the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Persons who hear their narrations weep, and then they make their families weep by abandoning them.”

Yet another *gopī* protested, “Actually, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the greatest of all those who spread this propaganda. He is the one who made us run away from our homes to meet Him when He played on His flute. He drove us mad with love, turned us all into beggars, and then left us! Who is more ungrateful than He?”

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard them say all this, He burst into their midst, crying, “Oh, no, no! I am not ungrateful! You are My beloveds and I am yours. I only left all of you to make your remembrance of Me more intense. Do you know where I went? I did not actually leave you; I was right behind you, listening to your song of separation.”

Conversing in the indirect mode of communication called *parokṣa-vāda*⁴, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* relished their *prema* for each other. From this example it is clear that *parokṣa-vāda*, which is common throughout the Vedas, is also employed in the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

If anyone tries to adopt the moods of the *gopīs* and, hoping to achieve Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy, performs *nāma-saṅkīrtana* with great humility, Kṛṣṇa will not be able to restrain Himself; He will surely appear directly before that person.



Remaining conscious of one's relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and free from all *anarthas*, the *sādhaka* should perform *saṅkīrtana* of the holy names that are bestowed upon him by *śrī guru*. All of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with their inherent sweetness, as well as one's relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in that particular pastime, are associated with His corresponding holy names. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa's holy names, the corresponding pastime will begin to manifest in one's heart. It is for this reason that Śrī Śācinandana Gaurahari, who is absorbed in relishing *mahābhāva*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā's highest mood, propagated the holy name.

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

In the groves of Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rādhikā steals away Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mind. The word *haraṇa* means "to steal" and *harā* is the feminine form of "one who steals". According to Sanskrit grammar, when *harā* is uttered as a personal address to someone, it becomes *hare*. The root *kṛṣ* means "to attract" and *ṇa* means "bliss". Therefore, He who gives bliss to everyone with the sweetness of His beautiful form, qualities, flute and pastimes is known by the name "Kṛṣṇa".

⁴ **Editor's footnote:** In the same way that Śrī Bhagavān does not reveal Himself to unqualified people, the Vedas express confidential knowledge in an indirect, or concealed, manner because it is not meant to be openly distributed. This indirect form of communication is called *parokṣa-vāda*.

The *rāma* in this *mantra* is not Śrī Rāma, son of Daśaratha. He who enjoys (*ramaṇa*) with Śrī Rādhā is known as Rādhā-ramaṇa. The name *rāma* in this *mantra* is an abbreviated form of the name Rādhā-ramaṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute and attracts (*ākaraṣaṇa*) the minds of the *gopīs* to Him. He is therefore called “Kṛṣṇa”.

This *mantra* embodies so many sweet moods. There is no transcendental emotion or pastime of Kṛṣṇa that is not included within this *mahā-mantra*, but they will only dawn in one’s heart by the mercy of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas. Initially, by the mercy of these great personalities, one realizes the sweetness of the holy name: “Oh, these holy names are sweeter than the sweetest. Nothing is sweeter.” Thereafter, the possessor of the name (*nāmī*) personally awakens within one’s heart and enables one to enter into His pastimes.

What should the *sādhaka* do if he is not achieving perfection in *bhakti*? Regarding himself to be very fallen and destitute, he should piteously perform *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra*. For this reason it is said:

*harer nāma harer nāma
harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā
Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāṇa (Ādi 17.21)*

The name of Hari, the name of Hari, the name of Hari is the only way. In this age of Kali, there is no other way, there is no other way, there is absolutely no other way to achieve the ultimate destination.

This *mahā-mantra* is the infallible remedy for all the ill effects of Kali-yuga. By chanting this *mantra*, all of one’s desires are fulfilled without fail. What to speak of achieving something in this mundane realm, by this *mantra* one cannot help but achieve the highest spiritual attainment. Such is the glory of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

As already mentioned, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared at the time of the *rāsa* dance, the *gopīs* sang *Gopī-gīta* with the desire to see Him directly. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard their song, He could not check Himself and finally appeared before them. With this in mind, Śrī Satyavrata Muni also prays to directly behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*: “O Deva, You whose form is divine and astonishing; O *bhakta-vatsala* Dāmodara, You who were bound by the rope of Your mother’s love; O Ananta, You who have unlimited potencies; O Viṣṇu, You who pervade everything and reside as the witness in the hearts of all beings; O Prabhu, You who possess infinite, inconceivable potencies; O Īśa, my Master, You who are supremely independent.”



It is always advised that one should offer respects to one’s worshipful Lord before beginning a prayer or before beginning any other activity. Therefore, Śrī Satyavrata Muni first offers respects to his *iṣṭadeva* with the words *namo deva*. Deva means “He whose form is divine”. What is that divine form like?

*kastūrī-tilakaṁ lalāṭa-pāṭale vakṣaḥ-sthale kaustabhaṁ
nāsāgre vara-mauktikaṁ kara-tale veṅūḥ kare kaṅkaṇaṁ
sarvāṅge hari-candanaṁ sulalitaṁ kaṅṭhe ca muktāvalī
gopa-strī pariveṣṭito vijayate gopāla-cūdāmaṇiḥ
Śrī Gopāla-sahasra-nāma-stotra (28)*

His forehead is decorated with musk *tilaka*, the Kaustubha jewel rests upon His broad chest, and an exquisite pearl hangs from the tip of His nose. The flute gracefully rests in His lotus hands and bracelets adorn His wrists. His entire form is anointed with *candana*, and a necklace of pearls graces His attractive neck. All glories to the crest jewel of the *gopas* who is surrounded by all the young *vraja-gopīs*.

This form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by the young ladies of Vraja, is most beautiful and enchanting. Mother Yaśodā has bound Deva, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. She wrapped a rope around His waist, brought it behind His back, and tied it to the grinding mortar.

Deva can also mean “He who is playing”. In other words, in this pastime Śrī Kṛṣṇa is playing in a form of a child. Śrī Satyavrata Muni therefore says, “I want to see the divine beauty of this Gopāla, who has appeared as a little child, directly with my own eyes.”



Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains several meanings of *dāmodara* in his commentary. One way to understand this name is in relation to Mother Yaśodā. Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to relish Śrī Yaśodā’s motherly affection, so He submitted to being bound by the rope of her love. He thus became known as Yaśodā-Dāmodara, He whose waist is bound by Śrī Yaśodā.

Another way to understand this name is in relation to Śrī Rādhā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa eventually reappeared after leaving the *rāsa* dance, He somehow pacified Śrī Rādhā’s anger. One time this happened at Sevā-kuñja and another time at Māna-sarovara. Just before they started the *rāsa* dance again, Śrī Lalitā and Viśākhā tied Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s yellow *pūtāmbara* to Śrī Rādhā’s veil, binding Them and making it impossible for Him to escape.

Another time when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was on His way to meet with Śrī Rādhā, Padmā somehow brought Him to Gaurī-kuṇḍa and united Him with Candrāvalī. Meanwhile, Śrī Rādhā’s maidservants headed by Śrī Rūpa Mañjari noted that Śrī Rādhā was becoming increasingly anxious to meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They began to search for Him and finally found Him at Gaurī-kuṇḍa. “O Aghāri (slayer of the giant snake demon)” they exclaimed, “a demon has entered Vraja and is destroying everything!” (The demon was actually Śrī Rādhā’s separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa.)

As soon as Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard this, He spoke to Candrāvalī, comforting her, “My dear one, I will return immediately after killing the demon; just wait for Me.” In this way, the *mañjarīs* cleverly took Śrī Kṛṣṇa from Candrāvalī’s grove and united Him with Śrī Rādhā. There, the *mañjarīs* tied the ends of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa’s cloth in a knot.

On yet another occasion, Śrī Rādhā's friends tied the ends of Her and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's cloth in a knot. To this day, the place where that pastime occurred is called Gāṅṭholī⁵. It is because of all these pastimes that Śrī Kṛṣṇa became known as Rādhā-Dāmodara.



Generally, *viṣṇu* means “the all-pervading being”. Thus, it is understood that the sage is saying, “There is no place where You are not situated, and no heart in which You do not dwell; You are everywhere.” However, in his commentary, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has revealed another meaning of *viṣṇu*: “Śrī Kṛṣṇa eternally performs His confidential pastimes in all the secluded caves and groves of Girirāja-Govardhana.”

Although even the demigods are unable to see Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in those *kuñjas*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni addresses the Lord as Viṣṇu, with the hope that he may see Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly: “In Your pastimes, You reside in every grove and cave throughout this Vṛndāvana. Therefore, You do not have to undergo any pain by travelling a long distance to appear before my eyes.”

The name Viṣṇu is used in a similar way in a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39): *vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ*. In this verse, Viṣṇu refers to that Kṛṣṇa who, with the desire to relish the *gopīs'* love for Him, sounded His flute and lured all the *gopīs* from their homes. By pervading their hearts, He entirely won their love. Similarly, in Śrī Satyavrata Muni's prayer, Viṣṇu refers solely to Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



Śrī Satyavrata Muni says *duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnanāṁ*, “I am oppressed by the miseries of material existence. For an incalculable period of time I have been trapped in this vicious circle of birth and death, and consequently I mistake this body to be my actual self. I am wretched

.....
⁵ **Editor's footnote:** The name Gāṅṭholī comes from the Hindi word *gāṅṭha* which means “knot”.

and utterly foolish. I am drowning in the fathomless ocean of material existence and I am unable to rescue myself.” Furthermore the sage says, “I am suffering because I am not being supported by the mercy of saints and I do not have any strength to perform *sādhana*.”

In this regard Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, “*duḥkha madhye kona duḥkha haya gurutara* – of all sorrows, which is the most severe?” Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda replied, “*kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha vinā duḥkha nāhi dekhi para* – Other than the pain of being separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, I see no actual sorrow.” The sorrow of being separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s devotees is in fact the greatest agony. Therefore, from Śrī Satyavrata Muni’s words, “*duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnam* – I am drowning in an ocean of misery,” we can understand that he prays to attain *sādhu-saṅga*, the company of saintly personalities.

One can only attain Śrī Bhagavān’s mercy by the causeless compassion of saints. Śrī Nanda Mahārāja tells Śrī Gargācārya:

mahad-vicalanam nṛṇām

grhiṇām dīna-cetasām

niḥśreyasāya bhagavan

kalpate nānyathā kvacit

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.4)

Saintly personalities like you wander about visiting the homes of ordinary people and wretched and destitute householders like us. O exalted devotee, you never have any other reason to do this except to bestow mercy upon us.

One should note that it is because Nanda Mahārāja was acting like an ordinary human being that he addressed Gargācārya in this way. In reality, there is a vast gulf of difference between Nanda Bābā and Gargācārya. This kind of behaviour is exhibited by Śrī Bhagavān’s associates in the course of performing their human-like pastimes in order to show everyone that Śrī Bhagavān can only be achieved by the immense mercy of *sādhus*.

When even Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal associate, His mother, had to undergo so much endeavour to bind Him, then on what grounds can the conditioned souls complain about the troubles they encounter in trying to achieve Him?

There is no need to make a pompous display of devotion. We should simply act according to the method of *sādhana* taught to us by *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, and in this way perform *bhajana* following in the footsteps of our six Gosvāmīs:

*rādhā-kuṅḍa-taṭe kalinda-tamayā-tīre ca vaiṣṇī-vaṭe,
premonmāda-vaśād aśeṣa-daśayā grastau pramattau sadā
gāyantau ca kadā harer-guṇa-varaṇi bhāvābdhi-bhūtau mudā,
vande rūpa-sanātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau
Śrī Ṣad-Gosvāmyaṣṭākam (7)*

I worship Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. Intoxicated with love and gripped by the countless ecstasies arising from separation, they always used to roam the banks of Rādhā-kuṅḍa and the Yamunā, or the forest near Vaiṣṇī-vaṭa. They remained overwhelmed with spiritual ecstasies while incessantly enraptured by singing about Śrī Hari's most excellent qualities.

The words *aśeṣa-daśayā* in the above verse describe the six Gosvāmīs as being “gripped by the countless ecstasies arising from separation”. In other words, their bodies would erupt with horripilation, trembling and other ecstasies. They would even reach the stage in which one verges on death due to the intense pain of separation and begin to faint. How exalted is the *bhajana* of these great personalities? In comparison, where is our *sādhana-bhajana*? Not one single tear comes to our eyes, what to speak of us fainting. Therefore, we must strive to perform *bhajana* in *sādhu-saṅga* in such a way that we are constantly immersed in serving our worshipful Lord.

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

The Gosvāmīs, acting as *rāgāmuga-sādhakas*, were suffering because they could not see Śrī Bhagavān and His associates:

he rādhe! vraja-devike! ca lalite! he nanda-sūno! kutaḥ?

Śrī Ṣad-Gosvāmyāṣṭakam (8)

The six Gosvāmīs would cry out, “O Rādhā! O Goddess of Vṛndāvana! O Lalitā-devī! O Son of Nanda! Where are You?”

Far beyond the pain of separation experienced in the stage of *sādhana* is the indescribable pain of separation experienced by Śrī Bhagavān’s *rāgātmika-jana* (those whose hearts are imbued with *rāga*) in the stage of *prema*. In *Gopī-gīta* and *Bhramara-gīta* within the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has illustrated such separation by indirect hints. In the same way, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in his written work has merely alluded to the condition of someone separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Even *bhāva-bhakti* is extraordinary, for even after performing millions and millions of arduous spiritual practices, one cannot achieve it. For example, Śrī Uddhava went to Nandagrāma where he closely associated with *rāgātmika-jana* of all five *rasas*. However, he could only get the association of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the most exalted of all those associates, from a distance. However, he was able to achieve the company of Her friends, who are Her *kāya-vyūha*, or bodily manifestations. He had so much good fortune, but did he ever succeed in becoming a single plant in Vraja, or a creeper, or even a piece of straw? In the end, he could only praise the *gopīs*:

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ

vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauśadhinām

yā dustyajāṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā

bhejur mukunda-padaṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.61)

Aho, the *vraja-devīs* have given up everything for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They have abandoned the path of chastity, their families and

their children, which are all extremely difficult to give up. Now they have taken shelter of *prema-bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The personified scriptures (Śrutis) constantly search for that same *prema-bhakti* but rarely attain it. Let me just become a bush, a creeper, or a blade of grass in Vṛndāvana. Then I might attain the dust from the lotus feet of one of these *gopīs*.

*vande nanda-vraja-strīṇāṁ
pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
yāsāṁ hari-kathodgītāṁ
punāti bhuvana-trayam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.63)*

I bow down to the dust of the feet of the *gopīs* who reside in Nanda Bābā's Vraja. Oh, whatever these *gopīs* have sung about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes always has and always will purify the entire world.

Why is that we feel cheated of this *rasa* and cheated of these exalted moods even after we have obtained *sādhu-saṅga*? The reason is that we do not really want to taste what the saints long for us relish. Otherwise, why do we not become full of anxiety when we are separated from them? Why do we not perform *bhajana* with great eagerness?

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa concluded His pastimes in this world, a desire to attain *vraja-bhāva* awoke within Śrī Uddhava's heart. This desire came by the mercy of the Vrajavāsīs, and especially by the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Because Uddhava desperately wanted to become a particle of dust at Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, it is presumed that he is performing *bhajana* at Uddhava-kuṇḍa in Govardhana to this day. However, we do not know if he was able to become even a particle of dust in Vraja-dhāma.

Śrī Tulasī dāsa has said: “*aba pachatāye hota kyā, jaba cidīyā cuga gāi kheta*—What is the use of lamenting now? It is because of your own carelessness that birds have eaten your crops.” In other words, by

Śrī Bhagavān's grace you have taken a rare birth in the human species. If you waste it simply eating and sleeping like an animal, then you will have to remain wandering in the material world, taking birth in one of the eighty-four million species of life. Therefore, you should realize how trivial it is to simply exist like an animal, and you should stay determined to permanently be in *sādhu-saṅga*.

But our situation is so sad that even though we have attained the great fortune of associating with saints, our hearts remain unaffected. This is because we do not have full faith in Śrī Hari, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas and, as a result, we remain deprived of the grace of *śrī guru* and Śrī Bhagavān.



Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays *prasīda prabhu*, “O You who possess all inconceivable potencies! O Master, please be kind to me. Deliver me from my pitiable mundane existence and grant me the association of Your devotees. I have no hope but You.” We must also pray like this.

“O Prabhu, cast Your compassionate glance upon us. When we chant Your names, no tears come to our eyes, and our bodies do not tremble. We are unable to perform *sādhana*. We are only sustaining our ambition of attaining *vraja-prema* – and especially *gopī-bhāva*, the *prema* which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give – on the hope that we will receive Your merciful glance. It is only by the strength of that glance that we have any chance of attaining our goal. Even if we continue performing *sādhana-bhajana* as we are now doing for millions and millions of lifetimes, it will be in vain. It will still be completely impossible for us to attain *vraja-prema*, especially *gopī-bhāva*, the topmost love in Vraja. O Master, have mercy on us!”

With great anguish we should cry, “Let me attain just a drop of *gopī-bhāva*.” How can such a drop be obtained? It is obtained by the mercy of *sādhus* who are absorbed in the mood of Vraja. Thus Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “O Prabhu, kindly grant me the association of pure-hearted saints. In their association all of my cherished desires will be fulfilled.”



Śrī Satyavrata Muni addresses Śrī Bhagavān as Īśa, “You who are supremely independent” – in order to petition Him: “You are the master and controller of all, so I need not seek the mercy of others to achieve Your grace.⁶ O Lord, be kind to me – You do not depend on anyone or anything. If the *sādhaka* is completely surrendered, then You do not even pay attention to the formalities of his *sādhana*.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the best example of how the Lord distributes His causeless mercy while completely ignoring all considerations of qualification. If someone merely saw Him, even from a distance, *prema* would spontaneously manifest in their heart. Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not consider anyone’s qualifications or frailties. Without even considering the quality of anyone’s spiritual practices, He distributed *prema* to everyone.

A brilliant example of this is found in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. On His way to Vṛndāvana, Śrīman Mahāprabhu journeyed through the Jharikhaṇḍa forest. As He passed through the forest, He caused *prema* to awaken in the hearts of all the wild animals, birds, worms, insects, trees, and plants and creepers. All the creatures of the jungle were instantly granted *prema*. Alas, will the world ever see anyone else so merciful?

“Therefore, have mercy on me and grant me direct *darśana* of You.”



Śrī Satyavrata Muni entreats Śrī Bhagavān: “It is not enough for me to have but a momentary vision within my heart of little Gopāla crying out in fear of His mother as she binds Him to the grinding mortar. O master, I pray to see that form directly with my own eyes.”

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⁶ **Editor’s footnote:** It is generally seen that one obtains *kṛṣṇa-prema* by the mercy of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas (*bhakta-prasāda-ja-kṛpā*) although occasionally one receives the direct mercy of the Lord (*kṛṣṇa-prasāda-ja-kṛpā*).

In Verse Four, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī quoted Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi's explanation of *antara-darśana* found within *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*: “One first sees Śrī Bhagavān within one's mind and then with one's eyes. Brahmājī beheld Śrī Kṛṣṇa within his mind and received a benediction from Him, which fructified as the ability to create the material universe.” However, in reply to Pippalāyana Ṛṣi's reasoning, Śrī Gopa-kumāra said, “Your thoughts are excellent, but my desire is to see Śrī Madana-gopāla directly with my eyes.”

Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura states:

“First, Śrī Bhagavān is seen within the soul, and then that vision reflects in the mind. The form of the deity is the externally manifest reflection of the moods that *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas experience at such times. *Śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas mercifully plant the tendency to perform service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a person's heart as a seed. That seed gradually matures through the stages of *śraddhā*, *niṣṭhā*, *āsakti* and on, until it finally reaches its destination. But the seed can only develop like this if the *sādhaka* carefully proceeds in *sādhu-saṅga* without interruption.

“Even if Śrī Bhagavān personally appears to a devotee who is in the advanced stages of *prema*, he will think that he is seeing his worshipful Lord within his heart, due to being overwhelmed with *bhāva*. For example, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu left Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, He would personally come to eat the foodstuffs His mother cooked for Him, but she always considered her visions of Him to be hallucinations. Similarly, after Śrī Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana, He personally appeared before the *gopīs* again and again, but they also dismissed those meetings as mere visions.

“A devotee who progresses through the stages of *bhakti* by performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana* finally attains *prema*. Leaving this world behind, he enters the divine realm where he sees Śrī Bhagavān directly. This *darśana* eradicates the slightest scent of any remaining *anarthas* and gives him entrance into Bhagavān's eternal pastimes in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.”

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛttī on the Sixth Verse ~



.....
Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja
(from the footnote on page 121):

In the fourth verse of this *aṣṭaka*, verses 2.86 through 2.96 of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta's Uttara-khaṇḍa* were cited. Therein, Śrī Pippalāyana Ṛṣi, a resident of Tapoloka, explains to Gopa-kumāra that seeing Śrī Bhagavān within the mind is more rewarding than seeing Him with one's eyes. In the following verses however, Śrī Bhagavān's personal associates, who are residents of Vaikuṅṭha, prove that directly seeing Śrī Bhagavān is actually superior to seeing Him in meditation, for it grants the ultimate success of life.

Verses 3.179 through 3.182 of *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta's Uttara-khaṇḍa* are presented herein:

*ḍṛg bhyān prabhor darśanato hi sarvata
stut tat-prasādāvali-labdhir iksyate
sarvādhikaṁ sāndra-sukhaṁ ca jāyate
sādhyantad eva śravaṇādi-bhaktiḥ*

Śrī Bhagavān's personal associates addressed Gopa-kumāra: Only when one beholds Śrī Bhagavān directly, with his own eyes, does one attain His complete mercy without fail. [Kardama Ṛṣi, Dhruva and others who saw Śrī Bhagavān with their own eyes and won His abundant mercy

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

are examples of this]. By this mercy alone, we are also directly realizing that seeing Śrī Bhagavān with our eyes is the ultimate success of life. The most profound joy is only experienced when one sees Śrī Bhagavān in this way, directly, which can only be accomplished by performing *navadhā-bhakti*, the nine-fold system of devotional service beginning with *śravaṇa* (hearing) and *kīrtana* (chanting). (179)

Direct *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān is the ultimate success of life for the following reason:

*sarveṣāṁ sādhanānāṁ tat-sākṣātkāro hi sat-phalam
tadaivāmūlato māyā naśyetai premāpi vardhate*

The consummate result of all types of *sādhana* is to meet Śrī Bhagavān face to face. Thus meeting Him, one's entanglement in *māyā* will be completely destroyed at the root and simultaneously *prema* will swell within one's heart. (180)

In the next verse, the personal associates of Śrī Bhagavān further establish the unrivalled excellence of meeting the Lord face to face by citing an incident from ancient times.

*kāyādhavāder-hṛdi paśyato 'pi prabhuṁ sadākṣṇā kil tad-didrṣṣa
tatra pramāṇaṁ hi tathāvalokanād anantaram bhāva-viśeṣa-lābhaḥ*

Even though devotees like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu and Kayādhu, were able to behold the Lord within their heart, it is a fact that they always hankered to see Him, the master of all power, directly with their eyes. The evidence for this is that on the shore of the ocean one day, by seeing Śrī Bhagavān face to face, Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja attained an extraordinary state of love for Him. (181)

One should refer to *Śrī Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* for more details about this incident.

At this point, one may argue against this conclusion by quoting *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.15.44): “When Śrī Sanaka and the other Kumāras met Śrī Bhagavān face to face, they first looked upward at His smiling lotus face, and then cast their vision down to see the splendour of His toenails. When they realized that, due to the limitations of their eyes and other senses, they could not perceive the charm and splendour of all of Śrī Bhagavān's limbs at one time, they closed their eyes and began meditating on His entire form; they meditated on all of His limbs at once, from His head to His lotus feet.”

This shows that after seeing Śrī Bhagavān directly with their eyes, the sages became absorbed in meditation. Is this not proof that meditation is more excellent than direct visual perception? This argument is countered by Śrī Bhagavān's personal associates in the next verse beginning with *kṛṣṇasya*:

*kṛṣṇasya sākṣād api jāyate yat keṣāñcid-akṣi-dvaya-milamādi
dhyānani na tat kintu mūdāni bhareṇa kampādi-vat prema-vikāra eṣaḥ*

If someone's eyes close due to being overwhelmed by joy after directly seeing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and his other senses become stunned or inactive, it should not be assumed that he is meditating. Rather, this behaviour should simply be recognized as identical to the extraordinary transformations of *prema*. These transformations include trembling, crying and horripilation and are known as the *aṣṭa-sātvika bhāvas*, or the eight ecstatic symptoms of love of God. (182)

Considering these statements, the unquestionable conclusion is that the profound happiness of seeing Śrī Bhagavān directly or perceiving Him directly with one's other senses is far greater than the happiness of perceiving Him within one's mind through the process of meditation.



❧ Verse Seven ❧

*kuvera-ātmajau baddha-mūrtyaiva yadvat
tvayā mocitau bhakti-bhājau kṛtau ca
tathā prema-bhaktim svakām me prayaccha
na mokṣe graho me 'sti dāmodareha*

SYNONYMS

kuvera-ātmajau – the two sons of Kuvera (Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva); *baddha-mūrtyā* – by the divine form (*śrī vighraha*) which was bound; *eva* – certainly; *yadvat* – just as; *tvayā* – by You; *mocitau* – delivered both of them [from the species of tree as well as from bondage to the cycle of birth and death]; *bhakti-bhājau* – both recipients of *bhakti*; *kṛtau* – made them both; *ca* – and; *tathā* – similarly; *prema-bhaktim* – loving devotion; *svakām* – His own; *me* – upon me; *prayaccha* – please profusely bestow; *na mokṣe* – not for liberation; *grahaḥ* – yearning; *me* – for me; *asti* – there is; *dāmodara* – O *bhakta-vatsala* Dāmodara; *iha* – only for this.

TRANSLATION

O Dāmodara, even though You were bound with a rope to the grinding mortar by Your mother, You set the two sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, free (from Śrī Nārada's curse that they live as twin *arjuna* trees), and enabled them to become recipients of the highest possible attainment – *bhakti*. In the same way, please profusely bestow upon me *prema-bhakti* for You. I long for this alone; I do not want any other kind of liberation.

❧ Dig-darsinī-tīkā ❧

itthaṁ prema-viśeṣeṇa paramotkaṇṭhayā saha sāksād-darśanaṁ prārthya
tata eva sadyo jāta-prema-bhakti-viśeṣeṇa tasya parama-daurlabhyaṁ
manyamānas tatra ca paramopāya-bhūtāṁ prema-bhaktim abhijñāya.
yadvā, sakṛd-darśane mano'rtpiṇ viraha-duḥkhotaratāncāśaṅkya sadā
tad-vaśī-karaṇāya prema-bhaktim evaikam upāyam abhijñāya. tatra
ca paramāparādhino mama kathāṁ sā sambhavet ity āśaṅkya śrī-
bhagavad-vātsalya-mahimnā cāsambhāvyaṁ api sarvaṁ eva sambhaved
iti niścīya, mokṣa-tyāgena prema-bhaktim eva prārthayate – kuvereti.

baddhayā gopyā pāśairudūkhale śṅkhalitayā mūrtyā śrī-
vīgרהeṇaiveti, tayormadhye svayaṁ praveśāt parama-sundara-
līlādi-viśiṣṭasya bhagavataḥ sāksād-darśana-śparśanādikaṁ sūcitāṁ.
[kuverātmajau] mocitau śrī-nārada-śāpāt saṁsārācca. na kevalaṁ
tāvadeva, parama-bhaktiśca tābhyāṁ dattetyāha – [bhakti-bhājau]
bhaktiṁ bhajataḥ parama-sādhyatvenāśrayataḥ na kathaṅcidapi tyajata
iti tathā tau. evaṅca prema-bhaktireva dattetyabhīpretāṁ.

tathā ca śrī-bhagavad-vacanaṁ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.10.42) –
“sañjāto mayi bhāvo vāmīpsitaḥ paramo 'bhavaḥ” – iti. asyārthaḥ – vāmī
yuvayorīpsito 'pekṣitaḥ, paramo bhāvaḥ premā, mayi samyagjāta eva. na
bhavaḥ punar-janma saṁsāra-duḥkhaṁ vā yasmāt sa iti. he dāmodara!
tathā tadvat svakaṁ tvac-caraṇāravindaikāśrayāṁ etad rūpaika-viśayāṁ
vā [prema-bhaktiṁ] me mahyaṁ, prakarṣeṇa yaccha dehi.

nanu kim atrāgרהeṇa? kuberātmajavan-mokṣo 'pi gṛhyatāṁ,
anyathā janma-maraṇādi-saṁsārāpatteḥ. tatrāha – neti. iha asyāṁ
prema-bhaktāveva, mama graha āgraho 'sti na ca mokṣe graho 'sti.

ayam arthaḥ – prema-bhaktiḥ saṁsāra-dhvaṁso bhavati cettarhi
bhavatu nāma, na syāccet tarhi māstu nāma. tatra mamāpekṣā nāstīti.
atra gūḍho 'yaṁ bhāvaḥ – cintāmanau karasṭhe, sarvameva svayaṁ
setsyati; kiṁ tad-eka-mātra-tuccha-dravya-grahaṇeti.

yad-vā, he dāmodara! svakāṁ prema-bhaktiṁ prayacchetyevaṁ
pāśa-baddhodara-bhagavad-viśayaka-prema-bhakti-prārthanayā nityam
udare pāśa- bandhanāgrahamāśaṅkyāha – mokṣe pāśa-bandhanāt tava

*mocane mamāgraho nāsti kiṁ? kākvā asty-evety-arthaḥ. kintu iha
asminneva rūpe svakām asādhāraṇām prema-bhaktiṁ prayacchati.*

*yadvā, iha vṛndāvane prema-bhaktiṁ prayacchetyanvayaḥ. tataśca
tatraiva taśyāḥ sukha-viśeṣāvīrbhāvakatvāt prādurbhāva-viśeṣāc-ca tathā
taśya sākṣād-darśana-viśeṣākāratvācca tathā tatraiva tad-vihāri-śrī-
bhagavad-didrṅṣā-viśeṣācca tatra sadā nivāso 'pi prārthitaḥ ity ūhyam.
anyacca pūrvavadeva.*

*iti śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake saptama-śloke śrī-sanātana gosvāmi-kṛtā dig-
darśinī-nāmnī ṭikā samāptā.*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭikā on the Seventh Verse ~

❧ *Diḡ-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda* ❧

In the previous verse Śrī Satyavrata Muni prayed with great eagerness for direct *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān, because he was overcome by a special kind of *prema* (*prema-viśeṣā*). However, due to the extraordinary longing in his prayers, a form of *prema-bhakti* instantly awakened [indicating the sprout of *prema*, or the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*], causing him to realize that such direct *darśana* is only rarely accomplished. Therefore, having determined that *prema-bhakti* is certainly the only means to attain that *darśana*, he now prays to Śrī Bhagavān with the hope of attaining *prema-bhakti*.

Alternatively, the sage fears that his mind will not be satiated after having Śrī Bhagavān's *darśana* only once, and at the same time he dreads the agony of separation from Śrī Bhagavān when he will not be able to see Him the very next moment. He therefore prays to attain *prema-bhakti*, having ascertained that *prema-bhakti* is the sole means of capturing the Lord forever.

Despite this conclusion, he still felt apprehensive: “How can such a severe offender like me attain the most rare treasure of *prema-bhakti*?” However, he was comforted when he remembered Śrī Bhagavān's glorious quality of *bhakti-vātsalya*, by which Śrī Bhagavān makes the impossible possible. With this conviction he rejected all varieties of *mokṣa*, and now, in this verse beginning with *kuverātmaḡau*, he exclusively prays for *prema-bhakti*.

With the words *baddha-mūrtyaiḡa* the sage says, “Despite exhibiting the exceptional characteristic of allowing Śrī Yaśodā Gopī to bind You to a grinding mortar with rope, in Your divine form (*śrī vigraha*) of Śrī Dāmodara, [in other words, even in this exceptional form in which You are Yourself bound] You delivered the two sons of Kuvera from their bondage.” This statement reveals the incomparable fortune of the twin *arjuna* trees who were able to see and touch Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally while He enacted His supremely enchanting pastimes.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had pulled the grinding mortar behind Him and crawled between the two trees. Although He was Himself in a state of being

bound, He liberated (*mocitau*) the two sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva. But He did not just free them from Śrī Nārada's curse and liberate them from material existence, He also gave both of them *prema-bhakti* for Him.

If someone is addressed by the phrase *bhaktiṁ-bhājataḥ* (recipients of *bhakti*), it is understood that they have taken irrevocable shelter of *bhakti* as the ultimate goal and they will never neglect *bhakti* in any way. Therefore, when the sage says, “*bhakti bhājau kṛtau ca* – You made (*kṛtau*) both of them so dedicated to *bhakti*,” he is clearly indicating that Śrī Bhagavān granted them *prema-bhakti*.

In this regard, a statement found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.10.42), spoken to Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva by Śrī Bhagavān Himself is evidence of this:

sañjāto mayi bhāvo vāmīpsitaḥ paramo 'bhavaḥ...”

The *prema* for Me that you both greatly desired has now fully arisen within your hearts. Because of this *prema*, you will never again become trapped in material existence.

[Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains this verse as follows:] Śrī Bhagavān is saying, “O Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, the *prema* (*parama-bhāvaḥ*) for Me (*mayi*) that the two of you (*vāmī*) desired (*īpsitaḥ*) has now fully arisen (*sañjāto*) in you. Therefore, you will no longer have to suffer the pain of repeated birth and death in material existence (*abhavaḥ*).”

Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays, “O Dāmodara, [just as You granted *prema-bhakti* to the two sons of Kuvera, without any cause] similarly, please profusely bestow upon me *prema-bhakti* for You which is characterized by taking absolute shelter of Your lotus feet.” Or, “Please grant me *prema-bhakti* for Your beautiful form as a small child who is bound by Your mother's rope.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa may ask, “Why are you insisting on *prema-bhakti* to the exclusion of everything else? Why will you not accept liberation (*mokṣa*) as well, just as the two sons of Kuvera did? Otherwise, you

have to repeatedly suffer miseries like birth and death within material existence.” In reply to this, Śrī Satyavrata Muni explains: “I only insist on attaining this *prema-bhakti*; I do not want to accept *moksa*.”

The meaning of Śrī Satyavrata Muni’s words is, “If my repeated birth and death within material existence is destroyed by *prema-bhakti*, then let it be destroyed. And if it is not, then I do not care. I have no expectation either way.” The sage’s deep mood is understood by a simple example: If someone obtains a wish-fulfilling *cintāmaṇi* gem, then he will easily attain everything else. Therefore, in the presence of *prema-bhakti*, what is the use of accepting a single insignificant boon like *moksa*?

These words of the sage may also be understood in another way. He prays, “O Dāmodara, please grant me *prema-bhakti* specifically to You (*svakām*).” Here, by addressing his Lord as Dāmodara, the sage prays for *prema-bhakti* that is specifically related to the form of Bhagavān whose belly is bound by rope. It is possible to interpret this to mean that the sage selfishly wants Śrī Bhagavān’s waist to remain uncomfortably bound by rope forever. Fearing his prayer may be misunderstood in this way, he says, “*na mokṣe graho me ’sti* – Do You think that I want You to remain tied, that I do not want You to be released from the bondage of Your mother’s rope?” Overwhelmed with regret, the sage says, “I am certainly concerned for You. However, kindly grant me that uncommon *prema-bhakti*, which I fervently cherish, in relation to Your exceptional form as Dāmodara, who is bound by the *prema* of Mother Yaśodā.”

[Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī reveals yet another meaning of this verse:] One can also interpret the word *iha* (in this) to mean “here in Vṛndāvana”. By this interpretation, it is understood that the sage prays, “Please grant me *prema-bhakti* in Vṛndāvana.”

Accordingly, the special joy of that *prema-bhakti* only appears in Śrī Vṛndāvana. Because such *prema-bhakti* manifests predominantly in Śrī Vṛndāvana, the sage prays to see the bound form of Śrī Bhagavān there. This special form of Śrī Bhagavān when He is bound up can only be seen there. So in order to see this form directly, and also because of his extraordinary desire to see Vṛndāvana-bihārī Śrī Bhagavān

as He who blissfully enjoys in Vṛndāvana in His three-fold bending form], the sage is praying to reside in Śrī Vṛndāvana forever. All this is indirectly conveyed through the word *īha*. The other portions of this verse are not affected by this and should be understood according to the explanation already given.

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭīkā on the Seventh Verse ~

❧ Dig-darśinī-vṛtti ❧

In the previous verse, Śrī Satyavrata Muni performed *nāma-saṅkīrtana* with a melted heart. By the potency of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, he received direct *darśana* of his worshipful Dāmodara for just a moment. It is as if Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to him, “O sage, I am pleased with you. Request anything you wish.” Satyavrata Muni now says, “Even though You were Yourself bound, You freed the two sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṅigrīva, who had been cursed by Śrī Nārada to live as twin *arjuna* trees and You also delivered them from the repeated cycle of birth and death within material existence. Furthermore, You made them the recipients of the highest form of *bhakti* to You by granting them *prema-bhakti*. In the same way, please profusely bestow upon me *prema-bhakti* for You.”



Kuvera is the treasurer of the demigods, and his two sons, because of their vast wealth, became intoxicated by pride. The scriptures describe four characteristics that intoxicate a man who possesses them. Great opulence and wealth is one of these. The other three are beauty, learning and noble birth.

A curse given by a saint is identical to his blessing. Both are meant for our ultimate benefit, but we cannot always understand this. Śrī Nārada apparently cursed the sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṅigrīva: “Intoxicated by the pride of wealth, you have become so dull that you are acting like trees. So be it. Become trees!” The moment these words issued from Śrī Nārada’s mouth, the two sons of Kuvera could feel their bodies turning into trees. They fell at Śrī Nārada’s lotus feet and begged him to arrange for their deliverance. Śrī Nārada consoled them: “Listen, at the end of Dvāpara-yuga, Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the original personality of Godhead, will appear in Gokula and deliver you.” Saying this, Śrī Nārada left that place, and subsequently the two brothers took birth as twin *arjuna* trees in the courtyard of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja’s house.

After tying up Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Mother Yaśodā returned to the house to churn yoghurt. At that time Śrī Kṛṣṇa recalled this incident and the statement made by His dear devotee, Śrī Nārada, ordaining the deliverance of the two sons of Kuvera. Pretending that He was simply playing with His friends, He crawled over to the two *arjuna* trees to deliver them, pulling the grinding mortar behind Him. When He crawled between the two trees, the grinding mortar became lodged between them, and as Śrī Kṛṣṇa pulled it with great force, the massive trees came crashing to the ground, making a tumultuous sound.

From the ancient trees, two heavenly personalities at once emerged, circumambulated Śrī Kṛṣṇa and began offering prayers to Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa then blessed them both with *prema-bhakti*. Those two personalities became the famous narrators, Madhu-kaṅṭha and Snigdha-kaṅṭha in *aprakāṣa* Vraja (the unmanifest Vraja-dhāma situated in the heart of the spiritual sky). There, they eternally recite the sweet pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Śrī Nanda Maharāja's assembly.



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmipāda explains how one can attain *prema-bhakti*:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā ruciḥ tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15–6)*

In the heart of the *sādhaka*, first *śraddhā* (faith) develops. After that come *sādhu-saṅga* (association with saints), *bhajana-kriyā* (regulated devotional activities) and then *amartha-nivṛtti* (the clearing of unwanted habits). Next the *sādhaka* develops *niṣṭhā* in *bhajana* (fixed determination in devotional service), followed by *ruci* (taste). Then he develops *āsakti* (intense attachment) to *bhajana* and to the object of *bhajana*, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After this, *śuddha-sattva* (pure unalloyed transcendental existence) descends in the heart of the *sādhaka* in the form of

bhāva (spiritual emotions) and finally *prema* arises. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead.

Prema-bhakti actually develops in many sequences but the most celebrated process and the one that is delineated in the scriptures is described here. From time immemorial, all the souls who are averse to Śrī Bhagavān have been tossed about by the countless waves of misery in the fathomless ocean of material existence. They have simply been wandering aimlessly. However, when, by the special grace of Śrī Bhagavān, the time comes for their worldly entanglement to end, they attain the company of devotees. In the association of saints, a *sādhaka* obtains the great fortune of hearing the glories of the *bhaktas*, of *bhakti* and of Bhagavān, directly from the mouths of exalted personalities.

Next, as a result of *bhakti-unmukhī-sukṛti* (pious merits related to *bhakti*), transcendental faith, or *parmarthika-śraddhā*, arises within the *sādhaka*'s heart. The indication that this kind of *śraddhā* has awakened in his heart is that he firmly believes in the statements of the scriptures and longs to hear *hari-kathā*. Upon the dawning of such faith, in a sincere way, he begins to associate with devotees. At this point he begins to practise *bhajana* and his *anarthas* start to vanish. His *bhajana* soon becomes steadfast (*niṣṭhā*) and he subsequently acquires a taste (*ruci*) for the process. Eventually he develops profound attachment (*āśakti*) for his *bhajana* and for the object of his *bhajana*, his worshipful Lord. When this stage matures it becomes *bhāva*, the sprouting stage of ecstatic loving emotions. Then *prema* finally arises in his heart. This is the sequence in which *prema* appears within the heart of a *sādhaka*.

Hearing the prayers of Satyavrata Muni Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, "O sage, you should accept liberation, which includes complete freedom from all the miseries of material existence." The sage responds, "O my Lord, I may encounter innumerable troubles in this life, and according to my past deeds and impressions, I may have to take birth in any species of life or even in hell, but I have no concern for my material fate. I just beg You to give me abundant *prema-bhakti* for You. This is my only prayer."

All of our *ācāryas* explain that if a *sādhaka* wants to attain this *prema-bhakti*, he must always seek the association of those who have *prema-bhakti* for Śrī Bhagavān in their heart. Vṛtrāsura's prayer, found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.11.27) illustrates such a strong aspiration for this type of association:

*mamottamaśloka-janeṣu sakhyam
samsāra-cakre bhramataḥ sva-karmabhiḥ
tvan-māyayātmāmāja-dāra-geheṣv-
āsakta-cittasya na nātha bhūyāt*

O Master, I do not want liberation. I am not concerned if I must repeatedly roam about in this vicious circle of birth and death as a result of my actions. But I pray that wherever I go, and in whichever species I take birth, may I maintain loving friendships with Your dear devotees, who have *prema-bhakti* for You. O master, I pray that I will not have to maintain any relation with those who are subjected to Your illusory potency and are therefore attached to their bodies, homes, wives, children, families and others.

A genuine *sādhaka* should aspire to have such *lobha* (intense greed) to attain *prema-bhakti* for Śrī Bhagavān. This *lobha* can appear in anyone, in any stage of life. If *rāgānuga-bhakti* (spontaneous loving devotion), which is characterized by intense greed, arises in someone's heart, he becomes worshipful for the whole world. Furthermore, by his *prema-bhakti*, he even brings Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is unconquerable, under his control.

Thus, Śrī Satyavrata Muni prays, "O master, You are bound by the rope of Your mother's love. Please profusely bestow upon me *prema-bhakti* for Your form as Dāmodara who is bound by His devotee."

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛttī on the Seventh Verse ~



❧ Verse Eight ❧

*namas te 'stu dāmne sphurat dīpti-dhāmne
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai
namo 'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam*

SYNONYMS

namaḥ – respectful obeisance; *te* – Your; *astu* – let it be so; *dāmne* – to the celebrated rope binding Your belly; *sphurat* – splendrous; *dīpti-dhāmne* – an abode of spiritual effulgence; *tvadīya-udarāya* – unto Your belly; *atha* – furthermore; *viśvasya* – of the entire universe [of moving and non-moving entities]; *dhāmne* – to the support; *namaḥ* – I bow down; *rādhikāyai* – unto Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *tvadīya-priyāyai* – unto Your most beloved; *namaḥ* – respectful obeisance; *ananta-līlāya* – to Your unlimited pastimes; *devāya* – to the divine Lord; *tubhyam* – to You.

TRANSLATION

O Dāmodara, I offer my respectful obeisances to the celebrated rope binding Your belly, for it is an abode of brilliant effulgence. I offer my respectful obeisances to Your belly, which supports the entire universe of moving and non-moving entities. I offer my respectful obeisances again and again to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Your most beloved, and I offer my respectful obeisances to You, my divine Lord who performs unlimited transcendental pastimes.

❧ Dig-darsinī-tīkā ❧

evam stutiṁ samāpayan sva-prārthita-siddhaye bhakti-viśeṣeṇa vā tadīyāsādhāraṇa-parikarāvayava-parivārādīn api pratyekaṁ pṛthak praṇamati – namaste 'stuti. teta va, dāṁne udara-bandhana-mahāpāsāya namo 'stu. katham bhūtāya? sphurantiyā dīptestejaso dhāṁne āśrayāya. evam tasyāpi brahma-ghana-rūpatābhipretā.

athānantarāṁ tvadīyāya udarāya namo 'stu. pāśa-bandhane tenaiva saundaryādevātsalya-līlādeśca viśeṣataḥ prakāśanāt. katham bhūtāya? viśvasya carācara-prapañca-jātasya, dhāṁne ādhārāya. tata eva caturdaśa-bhuvanātmaka-kamalotpateḥ. tatraiva ca mātaraṁ prati vāra-dvayaṁ viśva-rūpa-pradarśanāditi dik. evam udara-bandhanena viśvasyāpi bandhanāpateḥ. śrī-yaśodayā viśvam api vaśi-kr̥tam iti dhvanitam.

tathā īśasya bandhanāsambhave 'pi bandhana-svikāreṇa bhakta-vātsalya-viśeṣas tathā bandhanena prapañcāsaṅkocāvasthityādi-samāveśasya tarkāgocaravat aiśvarya-viśeṣasca dhvanita iti dik.

dāma-namaskārānantaram udara-namaskāraścodaropari-dāmmo varttamānatvāt, yathottaram utkarṣa-vivakṣayā vā.

idānīṁ tadīya priyatama-jana-kr̥payai va vāṅchitam vāṅchātītam api sarvam eva su-siddhyed ityāśayena bhagavatīṁ śrī-rādhāṁ praṇamati nama iti. tathā ca sarvā eva gopikā upalakṣyante, kimvā tāsu mukhyata-mātra saivaikoktā. rādhiketi sarvadaiva śrī-bhagavad-ārādhana-viśeṣādanvartha-sañjñā. ataeva tvadīya-priyeti.

yad-vā – rādhiketi rūdhi-sañjñā. tataścārādhanaady-anapekṣayā sā nitya-priyai veti. tatra ca tvadīyā api sarve janāḥ priyāstvatprītyā yasyāḥ kīnuta vaktavyaṁ tvamīti. evam tasyās-tasmin prema-viśeṣaḥ sūcītaḥ. tasyai namaḥ, yadvā, tvat-priyāyai iti tataś-ca yasya tvam priyo 'si so'pi jagad-vandyāḥ syāt. eṣā ca tavaiva priyā atas-tasyai namo 'stu.

tataśca tayā saha rāsa-krīḍādikāṁ parama-stutitvenānte varṇayitum icchan tac ca parama-gopyatvenānabhivyāñjayan – 'madhureṇa samāpayediti' nyāyena kiñcīdeva saṅketenoddīśan praṇamati.

*devāya lokottarāyeti. līlānām api lokottaratābhipretā. yadvā, śrī-
rādhikayā saha nirantara-kṛīḍāparāya, atāevānanta-līlāya tubhyaṁ
nama iti. evaṁ gokula-viṣayikā sarvāpi līloddīṣṭā, tasmai ca nama iti.
bhāva ityeṣā dik.*

*iti śrī-dāmodarāṣṭake aṣṭama-śloke śrī-sanātana gosvāmi-kṛtā dig-
darśinī-nāmnī ṭīkā samāptā*

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī ṭīkā on the Eighth Verse ~

❧ Dig-darśinī-tīkā Bhāvanuvāda ❧

Now, in this verse beginning with *namas te 'stu*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni concludes his prayers. Either for the purpose of attaining his cherished goal, or else due to the exuberance of the uncommonly excellent form of *bhakti* that has arisen in his heart, he offers separate respectful obeisances to the extraordinary rope binding Śrī Bhagavān's waist, to His bodily limbs and to His associates.¹

The sage says, "I offer my respectful obeisances to the wondrous rope binding Your waist." What is that rope like? Considering this question, he adds, "It is the abode or refuge of all splendid effulgence." Here, he intends to establish that [due to being replete with unlimited effulgence] this extraordinary rope consists of the very nature of concentrated *brahma*.

The sage continues, "Next, I offer my obeisances to Your belly because Your beauty and Your *vātsalya-līlā* only manifest in matchless magnificence when Your belly is bound by rope in this way." What is Your belly like? The sage says, "Your belly is the basis of the entire universe consisting of all created beings both moving and non-moving. In fact, the lotus of the fourteen planetary systems arose from the lotus-like navel in the centre of Your belly." Furthermore, on two occasions, Śrī Kṛṣṇa showed His mother, Śrī Yaśodā-devī, His *viśvarūpa*, or universal form², while enacting His childhood pastimes in Vṛndāvana. It is therefore clearly understood that simply by binding Śrī Kṛṣṇa's belly, the entire universe becomes bound. In other words, the sage declares that by binding Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Yaśodā-devī had in fact brought the entire cosmos under her control.

Furthermore it is impossible to bind the all-pervading unlimited Lord, but He allowed Himself to be bound, thereby displaying His *bhakta-vātsalya*, or His exceptional affection for His devotees. By

¹ **Editor's footnote:** Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has indicated these three (the rope binding Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His limbs and His associates) with the words *parikara*, *avayava* and *parivāra*, respectively.

² **Editor's footnote:** See *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.7.35–6 and 10.8.37–9.

logic, it cannot be understood how all the unlimited universes are encompassed within Śrī Kṛṣṇa's belly, yet even this wonderful belly of His was bound! Thus, the sage implies here that by allowing Himself to be bound, and thereby allowing all the universes to be bound – a pastime completely beyond all logical considerations – Śrī Bhagavān displayed His unparalleled opulence and grandeur (*aiśvarya*).

After the sage offers obeisances to the rope, He next offers obeisances to the Lord's belly, thus implying that the rope is resting there. Also, it is implied that he is offering obeisances in order of increasing superiority.

At this point, the sage understands that only by the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān's loved ones can he attain his cherished goal and that which he cannot even conceive of. With this understanding, he offers obeisances to Śrī Bhagavān's most beloved, *bhagavatī* Śrīmatī Rādhikā, by the words *namo rādhikāyai*. In fact, by offering obeisances to Śrī Rādhikā, the sage actually conveys his obeisances to all the *gopīs*. Or, a different understanding is that the sage is offering his *pranāma* to Śrīmatī Rādhikā alone because he regards Her as the foremost of all the *gopīs*.

[Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī now sheds light on why the sage uses the word *rādhikā*:] Śrī Rādhā is constantly immersed in Śrī Bhagavān's worship (*ārāadhanā*). That is, She is forever rapt in arousing His pleasure. It is through this word alone, *ārāadhanā*, that one can understand the profound meaning of Śrī Rādhikā's name. Therefore, the sage says to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, “Śrī Rādhikā is *tvadīya-priyāyai* – Your most beloved.”

Alternatively, “Rādhikā” can be understood by its conventional sense without any consideration of etymology. In that case, it is understood that the sage says, “Even without considering Her worship (*ārāadhanā*) of You, She is simply Your *nitya-priyā* (eternal beloved).”

Furthermore, the sage says, “Due to the love that all Your devotees (*tvadīya*) have for You, they are very dear to Her, so what can be said about how dear You must be to Her!? In other words, You are Her *nitya-priya* (eternal beloved).” In this way, the sage is proclaiming Śrīmatī Rādhikā's exceptional love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

His words can be understood in two ways: “I offer my respectful obeisances to You, the beloved of Rādhikā.” Or, “I offer my obeisances to Your most beloved, Śrī Rādhikā. Whoever loves You is worthy of adoration by the whole universe. Therefore, since Śrī Rādhikā is Your most beloved, I offer my most respectful obeisances to Her.”

At the end of his prayers, he wanted to describe Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such as *rāsa-līlā*, which are most worshipful. However, recognizing that such pastimes are extremely confidential, he did not describe them explicitly.³ Instead, according to the popular

³ Annotation by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja:

Generally, the statement *namo ’nanta-līlāya* is understood to mean “I offer my obeisances exclusively to *ananta-līla* Bhagavān – that Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose pastimes have no end.” However, directing his attention towards Śrī Satyavrata Muni’s inner intention, and driven by his own personal *bhāva*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has revealed a confidential meaning of the above phrase. He explains that the sage is actually offering his obeisances directly to *śrī rāsa-līlā*.

The word *ananta* means “that which has no limit, or end”, or in other words, “eternal, unending, or innumerable.” According to Sanskrit grammar, the word *līlāya* is the singular fourth case of the word *līla* because it is conjuncted with *namaḥ*. The syllable *lī* means “to embrace”, and *la* means “to accept”. Thus with the word *līla*, it is understood that the sage is saying, “I offer my obeisances to *rāsa-līlā* and other pastimes in which Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepts the *gopīs*’ embraces.”

Therefore, in his above explanation, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī explains that *ananta-līlāya* also refers to all of Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes in Gokula, and thus it is understood that the sage is offering his obeisances to all of Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes. In this way, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also made meaningful his own statement, “*madhureṇa samāpayet* – all should end sweetly.”

Here, one more point must be carefully noted. In this final verse of *Dāmodarāṣṭakam*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda is informing us that although Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes such as *rāsa-līlā* are the most exalted of all His *līlas*, they are highly confidential and therefore not to be described directly. For this reason, Śrī Satyavrata Muni has offered his obeisances to such pastimes by just hinting at them. By this it is clearly understood that it is completely improper to hear and sing *rāsa-līlā* here and there, wherever and whenever one pleases. Moreover, if on the pretence of eradicating their lust, unqualified persons contemplate or imitate *rāsa-līlā*, even if only within their minds, they

.....
 will commit the offence of diminishing its honour and sanctity and will surely become degraded. Then, like the immature *prākṛta-sahajīyas*, they will become lusty and attached to a sensuous lifestyle.

In order to determine whether a person who desires to hear and sing *rāsa-līlā* has the proper motive and eligibility, one must carefully study what has been explained at the end of the description of *rāsa-līlā* itself found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*naitat samācarej jātu
 manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
 vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād
 yathārudro 'bdhi-jam viṣam
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.30)*

Those who are not *īśvaras*, who are powerless and helplessly controlled by the laws of *karma*, should never imitate the Lord's pastimes even within their minds. Like a person who foolishly imitates Lord Śiva by drinking poison generated from the churning of the ocean, they will certainly be destroyed.

This means that if a person is not truly qualified and competent, he should never contemplate, perform or imitate *rāsa-līlā* even within his mind. For example, when the demigods and demons were churning the ocean of milk and poison rose to its surface, only Lord Śiva himself was capable of consuming that poison.

So, if an ineligible person pretends to be extremely qualified and hears and sings *rāsa-līlā*, which will act just like poison for him, he will immediately die. That is, he will surely become entangled in the deadly grip of worldly life.

Since *rāsa-līlā* is the crown jewel of all of Śrī Bhagavān's pastimes, the fruit of hearing about it, singing it and remembering it is the crest jewel of all attainments. Therefore, those who are eligible to devotedly honour it must undoubtedly be the crest-jewels of all exalted devotees. Someone who is diseased at heart, who is lusty and unqualified, should not, in any way, indulge in discussing *rāsa-līlā*. For example, in order to dispel nescience it is compulsory to attain complete knowledge by seeking the highest education in a university. A kindergarten student, however, will not be allowed admission directly into the highest level of study. Similarly, it is inappropriate to impart the foremost transcendental teaching – the description of *rāsa-līlā* – to an

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

adage “*madhureṇa samāpayet* – all should conclude sweetly,” he submitted his obeisances to *madhura-rasa* through a slight hint, with the words *namo ’nanta līlāya*.

Next, Śrī Satyavrata Muni says “*devāya* – I offer my respectful obeisances to the playful divinity, or to He who is supra-mundane – Śrī Bhagavān.” By mentioning Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa’s divinity, the sage implies that all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are similarly *aprākṛta* (transcendental).

Otherwise, [since the word *deva* is derived from *div*, “he who is ever-rejoicing in playful sports”] the sage says, “O Deva, because You are eternally engaged in playful pastimes with Śrī Rādhikā, I offer my obeisances to You, the performer of unlimited pastimes (*ananta-līlā*).”

Here the word *ananta-līlā* certainly refers to all of Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes in Gokula as well. Thus, yet another meaning of the sage’s words is illuminated: “I offer my respectful obeisances to each and every one of Your transcendental pastimes.”

~ Thus ends the English Rendition of
the Dig-darśinī-ṭikā on the Eighth Verse ~

.....
ignorant person who is attached to gratifying his senses.

❧ *Dig-darsinī-vṛtti* ❧

As Śrī Satyavrata Muni was offering prayers to Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa, he considered, “In order to please Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa, I must first please His associates, and especially His most beloved, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. If I please Her, I will easily attain the mercy of Śrī Dāmodara-Kṛṣṇa.” With this consideration in mind, the sage proceeded to offer his respects to Śrīmatī Rādhikā with the words *namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai*.

In the fifth verse, in the course of Śrī Satyavrata Muni’s prayer, we notice an escalation in his mood of deep longing. The escalation of this mood culminates in this verse, in which he prays to Śrīmatī Rādhikā with wholehearted devotion for the perfection of his cherished goal. Following his example, the *rāgānuga sādḥaka*, after determining his cherished goal, should engage his time in praying, remembering and worshipping Śrī Bhagavān along with those associates of His who have the same sort of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa as he longs to attain. Therefore, it is stated in the scriptures:

*kṛṣṇam smaran janam cāsya
preṣṭham nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsam vraje sadā
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.294)*

The devotee should constantly remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa along with Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dear-most associates whom he chooses to follow. While permanently living in Vraja, he should become attached to always hearing the narrations of their pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The methodology of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is as follows: the devotee should remember his beloved, worshipful Lord, the youthful Nandanandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the Lord’s dear associates (such as Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī or any other associate) who possess the mood that the

devotee aspires for. Absorbed in hearing about their pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he should reside forever in the cowherd settlement of Śrī Nanda – including Śrī Vṛndāvana, Śrī Govardhana, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and so on – which are saturated with the particular humours of those pastimes. These pastime-places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are enriched with the *vrajavāsīs'* love, especially *śṛṅgāra-rasa* (conjugal love). Moreover, they act as stimulus to evoke a *sādhaka's* emotions in his own specific mood (*rasa-uddīpaka*) and prompt his remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (*līlā-uddīpaka*). Therefore, it is prescribed that, if possible, one should physically reside in places such as Śrī Vṛndāvana within the area of Śrī Nanda's Vraja. But if it is not possible for him to reside there physically, he should always reside there by mind:

*sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokāmusārataḥ
Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.295)*

Desiring to obtain their particular *bhāva*, he should closely follow in the footsteps of a particular associate in Vraja. Under their guidance, he should engage in service both in his external form as a *sādhaka*, and internally with his perfected spiritual body.

The devotee should mentally serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*manasī-sevā*) in the way that he most cherishes in his internally conceived, perfected spiritual body (*siddha-rūpa*), which is perfectly suited for rendering such service. He should perform such *manasī-sevā* under the guidance and direction of the *sakhīs*, such as Śrī Lalitā and Śrī Viśākhā, and of the *mañjarīs* like Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. With his physical body in which he performs *sādhana* (*sādhaka-rūpa*), he should serve in the footsteps of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and the other Gosvāmīs in their line.

Śrī Satyavrata Muni realizes that Śrī Bhagavān has never allowed Himself to be bound in any of His other incarnations. Even Śrī

Baladeva Prabhu, despite living in Vraja where He is always absorbed in natural human-like pastimes, has never allowed Himself to be bound. Yet the Lord of all lords, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa – the son of Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā – was bound with the rope of His mother’s affection (*vātsalya-premā*) for Him. Therefore, that rope is not an ordinary piece of string. Rather it is the direct embodiment of Śrī Yaśodā’s maternal affection. Eager to fulfil his cherished desire or to become as fortunate as the rope, the sage begins this verse by first praying to that rope – *namas te ’stu dhāmne*.

The sage says *tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne*, which indicates that Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s belly is boundless, endless, fathomless and indivisible. It has no limit, neither above nor below, so no one can bind it. Once when Śrī Kṛṣṇa was drinking His mother’s breast milk, He yawned and showed her the countless universes present within His mouth. On another occasion, He ate some dirt while playing with His friends. After they complained to His mother, she forced open His mouth to see whether or not He had actually eaten any. When she looked inside His mouth, she saw countless universes. She began to wonder, “Am I asleep or awake? Perhaps some illusion has overwhelmed me.” She then bathed Kṛṣṇa with cow dung and cow urine in order to ward off any evil spirits. She called for *brāhmaṇas* to recite special *mantras* in order to protect her child, and she also gave in charity to everyone so He would live a long, healthy life. Just see, the *vrajavāsīs* give in charity so that Kṛṣṇa will be blessed with a long and healthy life, yet Śrī Kṛṣṇa is He who blesses all the inhabitants of the three worlds. They perform so many rituals with vows and fervent prayers for His protection. Such are the sweet, intimate pastimes of Vraja. It is this intimacy that controls Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s belly is the shelter of all the universes full of moving and non-moving entities. It is therefore not possible to bind His belly. Yet, although it is boundless, it became limited because of His *bhakta-vātsalya*, and was bound. Therefore, Śrī Satyavrata Muni says, “I offer my obeisances to Your glorious belly.”

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Near the very end of his *aṣṭaka*, the sage pays his obeisances to Śrī Rādhikā: *namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai*. Who is Śrīmatī Rādhikā? It is said:

*kṛṣṇa-vāñchā-pūrti-rūpa kare ārādhane
ataeva 'rādhikā' nāma purāṇe vākhāne
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 4.87)*

Because She worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa by fulfilling all His desires, She has been called “Rādhikā” in all the Purāṇas.

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa eka ātmā, dui deha dhari'
anyonye vilase rasa āsvādana kari'
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 4.56)*

Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are one soul, but They have manifested two forms just to relish each other's love by performing various sweet pastimes.

Śrī Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī glorifies Śrī Rādhā as follows:

*yasya kadāpi vasanāñcala-khelanottha-
dhanyāti-dhanya-pavanena kṛtārtha-māni
yogīndra-durgama-gatir madhusūdanano 'pi
tasya namo 'stu vṛṣabhānu-bhuvo diśe 'pi
Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi (2)*

I offer my obeisances to even the direction facing the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja – Śrī Rādhikā. She completely captivates the heart of Madhusūdana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the performer of honey-like pastimes whom the greatest *yogīs* rarely attain. When a gentle gust of wind playfully touches Her cloth and carries its sweet fragrance towards Kṛṣṇa and touches His body, He embraces it to His heart and feels that His life has become blessedly fulfilled.

He also prays:

*venuṁ karān nīpatitaṁ skhalitaṁ śikhaṇḍaṁ
bhraṣṭaṁ ca pīta-vasanaṁ vraja-rāja-sūnoḥ
yasyāḥ kaṭāksa-śara-ghāta-vimūrcchitasya
tām rādhikāṁ paricarāmi kadā rasena
Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi (39)*

When the heart of Vrajarāja's son, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is pierced by the arrows of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's sidelong glance, He drops His flute, His peacock feather falls from His turban, and His upper cloth becomes dishevelled as He begins to faint. Oh, when will I render Her loving service that is saturated with *rasa*?

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.30.28), it is described that while the *gopīs* were anxiously searching for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they saw a young lady's footprints next to His, and exclaimed:

*anayārādhito nūnaṁ
bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ
prīto yām anayad rahaḥ*

Surely this *gopī* (Śrīmatī Rādhikā) has truly worshipped (*ārādhito*) Bhagavān Śrī Hari, the supreme autocrat. Otherwise why has Govinda left us all and only taken Her with Him?

Śrī Rādhā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal beloved. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī confirms this in his commentary by saying, "*tataś-cārāadhanādyanapekṣayā sā nitya-priyaiveti* – Even without considering Her worship of You, She is eternally Your dear-most beloved (*nitya-priyā*).” Consequently, Śrī Rādhā is dear to all.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī displays his firm dedication to Śrī Rādhā in *Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā* (9):

*madīṣa nāthatve vraja-vipina-candraim vraja-vaneśvarīm
tan nāthatve tad atula-sakhīve tu lalitām
viśākhām śikṣālī-vitarāṇa-gurutve priya-saro
girindrau tat-prekṣā lalitā-rati datve smara manaḥ*

O mind, always regard *vraja-vipina-candra* Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the life and soul of my worshipful Goddess, Śrī Rādhikā, the Queen of Vṛndāvana. Meditate on Her as my worshipful Goddess, and consider Śrī Lalitā to be Her peerless friend. Respect Śrī Viśākhā as my instructor in serving the Divine Couple, and regard Śrī Rādhā-kunḍa and Girirāja-Govardhana to be those who grant *darśana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and bestow sublime attachment to Their lotus feet.

Here, Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī's inner feeling is: "My most worshipful Goddess is Śrī Rādhikā alone, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the beloved of Her life. My relation with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and my love for Him, is based on my relationship with Śrīmatī Rādhikā."



Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unlimited intimate pastimes with Śrī Rādhikā are especially difficult to describe. For this reason, Śrī Satyavrata Muni uses the words *namo 'nanta līlāya* in order to offer his obeisances to the quintessence of all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's unlimited pastimes: *rāsa-līlā*. Śrīla Jīvā Gosvāmī writes, "Sporting in the water, feeding each other, roaming about in the forest, drinking honey-liquor and dancing are all included in *rāsa-līlā*." Moreover, by saying *namo 'nanta līlāya*, Śrī Satyavrata Muni is offering his obeisances to the performer of *ananta-līlā*, or to He whose pastimes have no end – Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Nothing but the mercy of the associates of Śrī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa can fulfil our longing. Even if Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to give us *prema*, He could only give us the *prema* that resides within His own heart, which is *viṣaya-jātiya prema* (or the type of love that is felt by He who is the object of everyone's devotion). But our aim is to attain the *prema* that the *gopīs* have, which is *āśraya-jātiya prema* (or the type of love

for Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is felt by the devotees). Especially for those of us following the *rūpānuga* line, only Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and other *mañjarīs*, the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, can make our deepest hopes come true, because they know the perfect art of serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Our final prayer is:

*bhajāmi rādhām aravinda-netraṁ
smarāmi rādhāṁ madhura-smitāsyām
vadāmi rādhāṁ karuṇā-bharādraṁ
tato mamānyāsti gatiṁ na kāpi
Śrī Viśākhānandadābhīdhā Stotram (131)*

I worship Śrīmatī Rādhikā who has lotus-petal eyes, I remember Śrīmatī Rādhikā whose face is sweetly smiling, and I speak of Her whose heart is melting with compassion. My life has no other purpose than serving Her.

~ Thus ends the Dig-darśinī-vṛttī on the Eighth Verse ~

SAMĀPTI



Appendix

The following account is an excerpt from
*Śrīla Bhakṭi Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī –
His Life and Teachings*

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

“Once, during the month of Kārtika, Śrīla Gurupādapadma had brought his noble presence to Śrī Keśavaji Gauḍīya Maṭha. One day, he was sitting in his *bhajana-kuṭīra* chanting *harināma*, absorbed in transcendental emotions. I had sat down nearby and was silently reading the chapter on *Śrī Dāma-bandhana-līlā* from *Śrī Gopāla-campūḥ*. As I read, I became completely fascinated with Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s beautiful description of this pastime. Finally, unable to restrain myself, I ran over to Śrīla Gurudeva and said, ‘Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī was a *mahāpuruṣa*, a most exalted personality, and an unrivalled philosopher. At the same time, he was a transcendental, *rasika* poet, whose work is eloquent, touching and descriptive. Although such a combination of vast erudition and poetic artistry is rarely found in this world, when we read his narration of *Śrī Dāma-bandhana-līlā*, we see the two unified in an astonishing manner.’

“I began to read that description aloud. As I neared the end of the story, my *śrīla gurudeva* suddenly began weeping. An incessant flow of tears cascaded down his cheeks, and other symptoms of spiritual ecstasy were clearly visible in his form. I have only seen such an expression of extraordinary spiritual emotions once or twice in my life.”



Dāma-bandhana-nibandhanam

The determination to bind Śrī Kṛṣṇa with rope



Yamaśa-arjuna-mocanam

The deliverance of the twin arjuna trees



From Chapter Eight of

Śrī Gopāla-campūḥ (pūrva)

by

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda

Editor's note: Every morning before Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes the cows out to graze an assembly of Vrajavāsīs gather together at Śrī Nanda Bābā's palace. For the pleasure of Śrī Nanda Bābā and his four brothers, as well as for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Balarāma, and the other Vrajavāsīs, Snigdha-kaṇṭha and Madhu-kaṇṭha narrate Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. What these twin brothers narrated one day is about to be described.

The next morning in that assembly when all the *gopas*, who are part of the *vaiśya* community, had gracefully taken their seats, Śrī Snigdha-kaṅṭha began:

The month of Kārtika was nearing conclusion. Early one morning, Śrī Yaśodā gladly beheld her sleeping little Gopāla, whose eyes, now closed, resemble two blue lotus flowers. Mother Yaśodā contentedly gazed upon her child and began to gently and lovingly stroke Him with her hands, which are as soft as fresh budding leaves. When she noted with relief that He was again in deep sleep, she slowly and silently left His bedside. She entered the courtyard on her own, tied her cloth tightly around her and started churning some yoghurt to use in her home.

Today, on the affectionate and insistent invitation of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja's elder brother Śrī Upananda, Śrī Rohiṇī-devī, accompanied by her son Baladeva, mounted a magnificent chariot and went to his home. The maidservants were also coming and going while performing their different services. There was quite a lot to do because the month of Mārga-śrīṣa, the topmost month of the year, was approaching and the annual festival of Indra-pūjā, which is observed by the people in general, and which has long been celebrated in traditional culture, was at hand. (1)

When all the maidservants were thus engaged in their respective tasks, the queen of Vraja, Śrī Yaśodā, personally set to churning the yoghurt with great care. To encourage her son's pleasant slumber, she sang sweetly as she churned. Absorbed in thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, with her mind and her soul fully offered to Him, she sang detailed descriptions of His childhood pastimes, as her eyes admired His lovely face. (2)

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has mentioned this in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.2): "One day when all the maidservants were engaged in various tasks, Śrī Yaśodā, the wife of Śrī Nanda, personally began to churn yoghurt. At that time, songs about Śrī Kṛṣṇa's childhood pastimes came to her mind, and she began to sing them." (3)

As dark complexioned Vrajeśvarī Śrī Yaśodā churned, her arms repeatedly moved back and forth. A series of girdles embedded with

jewels encircled her waist-cloth, and beautiful bangles adorned her arms. Her ornaments sounded in time with the vigorous movement of her waist and arms. Meanwhile, her son drowsily opened His eyes a little. As Śrī Vrajeśvarī beheld the charm of His lotus face, she churned with greater intensity and sang: (4)

*gokula-pati-kula-tilakaṁ tvam aśiḥa
kṛta-sukṛta-vraja racita-sukha-vraja! nayanānandi-saṁiḥa!*

O my darling son, You are the crest ornament of the dynasty of *gokula-pati* Śrī Nanda Mahārāja. The Vrajavāsīs must have performed greatly pious acts to witness You bringing joy to their hearts. Your activities delight the eyes of all.

*ānandodbhava-janma-mahotsava nandita-gopa-samāja!
pūtānikā-mṛti-nava-maṅgala-kṛti valayita gokula-rāja!*

You rouse the joy of the cowherd community by the blissful festival of Your birth. And by the recent and auspicious act of killing Pūtānā, You have spread the glory of Your father, the king of Gokula, far and wide.

*dhairya-nivartana-śakaṭa-vivartanam anubhavyena parīta!
sa-tṛṇāvartaka-vāyu-nivartaka parameśenānīta!*

After eliminating Śakaṭāsura, who made everyone lose all composure, You were blessed by the auspicious rituals of the *brāhmaṇas*. Later, Śrī Nanda's worshipful deity, Parameśvara, returned You to us after destroying Tṛṇāvarta along with His storm.

*madhura-prāṅgaṇa-viracita-riṅgaṇa jalaja-nayana supuṅya!
nānā-keliṣu nṛtya-kalāliṣu darśita-vara naipuṅya!*

O lotus-eyed boy of incomparable piety, You used to crawl about on Your tiny hands and knees in our charming courtyard. You have shown great expertise in playing various games and demonstrating many varieties of dance.

*tarṇaka-bāladhi śabalita-tanvadhi valayita mañjula-śobha!
jaratī-nivahe kautuka-kalahe prabalita-mithyā-lobha!*

When You used to grab the tails of the calves, they would run away, dragging You along. At those times, Your gorgeous form was pulled through the dust and cow-dung, which gave You an even more enchanting splendour. While playfully quarrelling with the elderly *gopīs*, You would frivolously increase everyone's confusion through Your antics.

*mānī mātarām anu-sukham udvitānu pratatānī satatānī kṛṣṇa!
drutam urarī kuru tanu-vṛddhīm puru-khelāvali-kṛta-tṛṣṇa!*

O Kṛṣṇa, since I am Your mother, forever continue to expand my already boundless joy. Quickly grow healthy and strong, and fulfil our desire by delighting our eyes with Your many, lively pastimes.

*tribhuvana-darśana vismaya-marśana niścita-vaiṣṇava-māya
hari-varivasyā sukha-datamaḥ syā vīgata-jarāmara-kāya*

At first, You caused bewilderment by displaying the three worlds within Your mouth. Later however, it was understood that by doing so, You confirmed the existence of Lord Viṣṇu's spiritual illusory potency – *vaiṣṇavī māyā*.¹ O Kṛṣṇa, may Your body be free from ageing and death, and may You become the bestower of bliss by serving Śrī Hari. (5)

Then, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of eternal charm, woke up and climbed down from the bed, crying. (6)

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¹ **Editor's footnote:** Even when Śrī Yaśodā saw the universe within Kṛṣṇa's mouth, she did not regard Him with awe and respect. Instead, as is shown here, she simply attributed everything to the Lord's spiritual potency, which she considered had been invoked by her and Nanda Mahārāja's sincere worship.

As He stretched His body, He took long breaths and rubbed His sleepy eyes. Now fully awake, He cried, “Mā, Mā.” Hearing the sound of the churning rod, Śrī Gopāla, tottered over to His mother. (7)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the best of the blessed and the king of beauty stopped the rod from churning. Śrī Yaśodā’s motherly affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa expanded within her heart, completely filling it with the desire to cradle Him, and in her mood there was a trace of fear and grief. As her motherly affection surged, she fed her young child the milk that spontaneously poured from her breasts in a stream. (8)

Mother Yaśodā is gracious and splendrous like the rainy season. Her breasts began to shower streams of milk that resembled a continuous downpour, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, like a *cātaka* bird, fittingly and gleefully began to drink that downpour. (9)

With great eagerness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa drank the milk of that blessed breast. He had only half satisfied His hunger when Mother Yaśodā noticed that the milk in the next room was boiling over. Although her child was eager for her breast-milk, she immediately put Him down, although it was apparently unwise of her to do so, and hastened inside to save the milk. She did not carry Him as she ran, fearing that He might fall. (10)

Madhu-kaṇṭha interrupted, “Snigdha-kaṇṭha, what are you saying, my brother? That is illogical. How could it be that Śrī Yaśodā left her starving baby to go elsewhere? She is the faultless ideal among all loving mothers within this universe.”

Snigdha-kaṇṭha laughed and said, “My dear elder brother, just wait and listen to me attentively. In reality, her leaving her child to save the milk is also a lovely pastime of motherly affection.”

Madhu-kaṇṭha was sceptical. “How?” he asked.

Snigdha-kaṇṭha replied:

In the absence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the residents of Vraja see that their bodies, homes and other possessions are more or less waning. From the day He was born, His parents, Śrī Nanda and Śrī Yaśodā, considered that all those residents of Vraja, as well as all the items used to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, have abundant *mamatā* for Him. Even Śrī Brahmā confirms

this in his prayers in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.35): “O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the residents of Vraja have completely offered their homes, their wealth, their relatives, their beloveds, their soul, their bodies, their children, their lives and their minds – everything – at Your feet. How, in all fairness, could You not award them a result superior to what You awarded Pūtanā and other demons?”

What can be said of the love that Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s own mother and father have for Him, when Śrī Brahmā himself has glorified the love of the other Vrajavāsīs? All of the Vrajavāsīs’ rich milk and yoghurt, as well as their bodies, homes and other possessions, are exclusively meant for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thus, while serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is befitting to have more *mamatā*, or attachment, for the objects used to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa than for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Thus it is specifically understood that Mother Yaśodā’s intention in leaving Kṛṣṇa to save the milk was most exalted. This has been sanctioned in the scriptures that advocate *bhakti*. The import is that it is appropriate for Mother Yaśodā to have more attachment for the objects that are dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than for Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Indeed, this is the eternal nature of an affectionate mother. (11)

Having concluded this, it is only fitting that Śrī Yaśodā first attend to those objects used in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At such times, she tolerates many personal inconveniences and remains unaware of her various household duties. With the loving mood born of her permanent emotion (*sthāyībhāva*) that “this is my son”, she is always aware of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s needs more than her own bodily or household needs. She is always conscious of His complete dependence on her and her perpetual attitude is, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s necessities are my necessities; and fulfilling them is my sole obligation.” Only the residents of Vraja know what is involved in expressing this type of affection. Even when they chastise Śrī Kṛṣṇa and punish Him, He knows that they are just taking care of Him. This is because a parent’s chastisement is considered part of loving and raising their children. There is no limit to what I can say about the boundless expression of their parental affection. (12)

And if the residents of Vraja feel angry with Kṛṣṇa out of their affection for Him, being the object of their extreme *mamatā*, He is even prepared to undergo bondage. Just see, even fire in the form of lightening sometimes appears in dense rain clouds.² (13)

The evidence for the above statement is that both Mother Yaśodā and her son benefit each other by their mutual love. Listen as I describe their affectionate dealings. When Mother Yaśodā went to take the milk off the stove, for the pleasure of her son, she first comforted Him saying, “My darling son, may all Your problems and difficulties come to me. Watch this pot of yoghurt for just a minute while I check on the boiling milk. I will return quickly.” (14)

Ahh, just as swiftly as she put her son aside and left that churning place, she returned. Even in that time, milk poured from her breasts out of deep motherly affection, wetting her blouse. It poured so much that it made the floor slippery. (15)

Still, Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s wishes had been checked and He was most perturbed. In anger He bit His trembling reddish lips and burst into tears. Then, picking up a small grinding stone, which was lying nearby, He broke the pot of half churned yoghurt. However He did not even get the slightest bit of butter from it. (16)

Poets have described His beauty at that time: “Little Kṛṣṇa’s white teeth, a series of moons, were enveloped by the reddish hue reflecting from His lips. His two eyes, resembling restless partridges, were full of tears, and His lotus hands shone as they vigorously sloshed yoghurt here and there. (17)

In this way, when the half-churned yoghurt from the pot covered the entire floor, another type of festival manifested. (18)

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² **Editor’s footnote:** Affection is part of the permanent emotion (*sthāyibhāva*) of *vātsalya-rasa*, and anger is a transitory emotion (*sañcārī-bhāva*) of that *rasa*. The superiors’ mood of *vātsalya-rasa* is nourished by the transitory emotion of anger, and it is part of their affection. Just as rain clouds become charming when lightening appears in them, sometimes anger appears in those with *vātsalya-rasa* making their mood more charming. Actually, without anger, the mood of parenthood would not be complete.

Just then His eyes caught sight of a pot of fresh butter hanging from the ceiling in the adjoining room. He ran to the door, slid the latch aside, and pushed it open. Then, moving the door-stopper back into place, He slipped into the room and closed the door behind Him. He used a nearby cot as a step, lowered the pot of butter and started to eat it. Thereafter, He took the remaining butter and secretly sneaked out through the window of that room. (19–20) -

Meanwhile, Mother Yaśodā had stopped the milk from boiling over into the fire. The milk cooled down to a simmer within seconds, and she took it off the stove. She dashed back to where she had left her son only to find that He was gone! However, seeing evidence of her son's activities, she laughed in mixed anger and amusement. (21)

At first, out of suspicion, she became perturbed. But then Yogamāyā manifested an aerial voice, which gave her knowledge and made her laugh. (22)

The aerial voice said, "Feeling hungry and thirsty, your little bumblebee made a hole in the bud of a lotus flower that had no pollen. When He saw that it was merely water that began dripping from that flower, He became disappointed and went to another lotus flower, where He has found a big supply of honey. The import is that in order to get fresh butter, your son performed all these deeds. He first broke the churning pot, but did not find butter there. He then found it hanging in the next room. (23)

"You have displayed your intelligence by deciding to leave your baby and go cool down the milk, but if you can calm the anger of your child, you will receive even more praise." (24)

Upon hearing the aerial voice Mother Yaśodā laughed and followed the thief's conspicuous yoghurt-footprints to the next room. She managed to force the doors open. Then she stepped inside, only to behold her son's other matchless mischief. Tracing His path of escape, she finally spotted Him, His eyes restless with fear. (25–26)

He was thinking, "I have just stolen fresh butter. If My mother sees Me here, how will I face her?" His eyes moved about so frantically

that they seemed to be on the verge of leaping into His ears. In other words His eyes and His ears were watching out for His mother. (27)

Mother Yaśodā saw Him sitting restless-eyed atop the grinding mortar that He had overturned with all His strength, feeding butter to the monkeys. Astonished by this, she smiled softly. (28)

She quietly crept up behind her guilty son. It is said that a wealthy person only has two eyes, but a thief has a hundred. That is to say, a wealthy person only has two eyes to look after his treasures, but a thief has a hundred to spot that person's wealth and steal it. Although a person may be extremely careful to protect his wealth, it is not inaccessible to a thief. (29)

By nature, monkeys are proud of exhibiting their strength, but today their bellies were fully satisfied, so when they saw Mother Yaśodā advancing, holding a stick covered with cloth, they immediately scampered up the nearby trees. This alerted Kṛṣṇa to what was happening, and He also fled. (30)

Seeing her son fleeing, Mother Yaśodā broke into a run and began to chase Him. A shower of flowers fell from her braid. "O king of thieves," she loudly called, "where are You going? Stop! Stop!" Hearing this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa uttered a faint cry and a smile appeared on His face, enhancing His beauty. Mother Yaśodā ran quickly after Him. Although she came close, she could not catch Him. It was as if two clouds, one big and one small, were being chased by the wind from west to east, across the sky, the larger cloud unable to catch up with the smaller one. Similarly, this mother could not catch her son.³ (31–32)

Little Kṛṣṇa was confident that His mother would never pursue Him beyond the main gate, for she would then be seen running in public. Therefore, He intentionally ran in that direction. Mother Yaśodā knew that at that time of day no one would be outside the gate so she just kept chasing Him. (33)

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³ **Editor's footnote:** Here Śrī Yaśodā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are appropriately compared to clouds because both of their complexions are dark, like rain clouds.

As long as Kṛṣṇa ran without looking back, His mother was unable to catch Him, but as soon as He turned His head back in fear, she caught Him by His hand. (34)

He frantically moved His eyes about as if trying to continue running away. He began crying in an attempt to reduce Mother Yaśodā's anger, and out of impudence He started trembling artificially, but He did not give up His childish pranks. Whenever she forcefully held His face so that she could look Him in the eye, Śrī Kṛṣṇa turned His face in such a way as to wipe the oily gloss of butter from His mouth and make it look dry. (35–36)

Threatening Him, Mother Yaśodā said, “O Kṛṣṇa, You have given me so much trouble. Before You steal from Your home, first look at this stick in my hand.” When she saw her lotus-eyed son's terror upon hearing these words, Śrī Vrajeśvarī tossed that stick aside. (37)

“Don't beat Me, Mother!” Kṛṣṇa beseeched her.

The queen of Vraja scorned Him, “But You are a thief, a thief!” Laughing to herself, she suddenly and forcefully instigated a quarrel with Him. (38)

“Ahh, You are the king of thieves (*cora*)!”

Kṛṣṇa protested, “No Mother, Cora took birth in *your* dynasty, not Mine.⁴ Why would we have a *cora* (thief) in our home?” In this way, Mother Yaśodā and her butter-stealing son argued with each other. (39)

“Oh, really? Well, who broke the pot of yoghurt?” she again inquired.

Kṛṣṇa replied, “The Supreme Lord. He was punishing you.”

“But,” she continued, “who fed butter to the monkeys?”

“He who created them.”

“No!” she exclaimed, “I suspect that You always feast with great relish on the fresh butter we prepare for use in religious sacrifices.”

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⁴ **Editor's footnote:** In the dynasty of Śrī Yaśodā's father, there was a *gopa* named Cora-ghoṣa. The literal meaning of *cora* is “thief”. Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa denounced Śrī Yaśodā's dynasty, considering Himself to belong exclusively to His father's dynasty.

Mother Yaśodā scolded her son as she would a thief, but finally her heart softened. She laughed with anger and said, “Just admit Your theft; give up Your arrogance.”

Thus pressed by His mother, Śrī Kṛṣṇa burst into tears. “Look, Mā,” He sobbed, “when you anxiously rushed to save the milk, your ankle-bells struck the pot of yoghurt and it broke. How is this My fault?” (40–43)

“And the monkeys,” He continued, “were inspired by the Supreme Lord to sneak into the house to steal. When they began taking the butter, I caught them. What did I do wrong?” (44)

“And then,” He retorted, “the stick in your hand frightened Me, so even though I am completely innocent, I fled like a thief. You saw I was so afraid, but still you mercilessly chased Me, all for no reason!” (45)

Mother Yaśodā spoke as if lamenting: “Oh, You who are the king of those skilled in argument.” she said. “You are the best of thieves. Although You are the son of Śrī Vraja-rāja, the most noble of men, Your nature has become like a monkey’s because You are fond of them.” When fearful Śrī Kṛṣṇa heard this, He pointed to the forest and said, “If I am a monkey, then I will live in the forest,” which slightly frightened His mother. (46)

“Who knows?” she thought, “this arrogant boy could easily put His threat into action. To keep Him from running into the forest, I must tie Him up; otherwise, it will be very difficult for me to single-handedly manage my household duties and this child.”(47)

Turning to Kṛṣṇa, she openly said, “You thief! You restless boy! You who bewilder one and all by the charm of Your flickering eyes, why don’t You simply accept my prohibitions? Look! I will tie You up and then quickly return to the house. If You have any strength left You can show it to me by trying to steal something else.” (48)

As she started to bind Him, His eyes became moist, and in fury He began to loudly cry out, “O Mother Rohiṇī!” He shrieked, “where have you gone with My big brother? Because you are not here today, this mother is tying Me up. Come quickly!” (49)

Since Śrī Rohiṇī was far away, she could not hear His cries. But the ladies from neighbouring homes who had previously complained about Kṛṣṇa and who had chastised Him, did hear His cries. They informed each other of the fun and assembled there. As if taunting her, they reminded Śrī Yaśodā of their complaints. “Has this thief done something mischievous in your home also?” they laughed. (50)

Mother Yaśodā, however, was bent on teaching her son a lesson, so she paid no heed to their remarks. Snatching up a silk ribbon that had fallen from her braid, she immediately began binding her son’s waist to a grinding mortar lying in the courtyard, with the same persistence it takes to bind the neck of a calf. But that silk ribbon was two fingers too short. (51)

She took another ribbon from her hair and joined it to the first one, but still the same problem confronted her. Amazed, she then tried to bind Kṛṣṇa’s waist with several churning ropes that the *gopīs* handed her, but still Vrajeśvarī could not make up that gap of two fingers. (52)

From a distance, a cloud that is actually touching the peak of a mountain may be mistakenly perceived as being quite far beyond it. In a similar sense, although the full length of rope was actually touching Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it could not bind His apparently tiny waist. The rope was always two fingers too short.⁵ (53)

Observing this, the ladies of Vraja laughed and remarked, “O Vrajeśvarī, we already told you that this boy surely has some extraordinary illusory potency. On account of it, He even surpasses Kaphallak, the foremost among thieves. He seems to be satisfied simply by eating stolen goods, or, by such acts He delights both the donors of

⁵ **Editor’s footnote:** Just as the cloud may appear to be far beyond the mountain’s peak when seen from a distance, it appeared to everyone present that there was so much rope being used to bind Śrī Kṛṣṇa that it could not possibly have all been touching His waist. However, just as the cloud is actually touching the mountain, the full length of rope was actually touching Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s waist. But no length of rope could equal the actual circumference of His waist, because, in truth, it is unlimited.

those goods and the enjoyers of them. He is gradually gaining quite a reputation as one who steals others' possessions."

Mother Yaśodā responded "What does this recently born child know [about being a thief]? He does not know good from bad. But it seems that you are the ones who know some evil trickery. Although you actually favour Him, externally you behave in a contrary way."

At this, the ladies laughed. "O respected Śrī Yaśodā," they said. "we take an oath at your feet that we have nothing to do with these astonishing powers."(54)

Finally, Śrī Yaśodā reasoned, "As Śrī Gargācārya said, surely some potency of Śrī Bhagavān surrounds my son. This infant boy cannot know what He is doing." (55)

Just to put an end to this bewilderment, Śrī Yaśodā repeatedly called for more and more churning ropes from the homes of those *gopīs*. Despite her persistence in her endeavour to bind her son, she could not find any way to accomplish the seemingly impossible task. Instead, Śrī Yaśodā, the queen of Vraja, dripped with perspiration, and curls of hair fell over her face again and again. Finally she became completely exhausted. (56-57)

As long as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was born in the Yadu dynasty,⁶ stubbornly refused to be bound, Mother Yaśodā's persistent efforts were fruitless, just as one whose fate is grasped by an unfavourable star is always unsuccessful in his endeavours. Finally Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart was touched by the sight of His mother being so overwhelmed, and almost immediately she successfully bound Him with the two ribbons she had initially used from her hair. It was clear to all present that it was only these two ribbons that bound Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The other ropes she had used to tie Him simply lay there. (58)

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⁶ **Editor's footnote:** Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has employed a simile by stating that Śrī Kṛṣṇa was born in the Yadu dynasty. Just as Yadu Mahārāja stubbornly refused to accept the order of his father, Yayāti Mahārāja, similarly Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who was born in that same Yadu dynasty, stubbornly refused to be bound by His mother.

It was actually Śrī Kṛṣṇa's maidservant, His *yogamāyā* potency, who had understood His mind and accomplished the task of binding Him. This made Mother Yaśodā feel that all those astonishing activities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa were an illusion. When that rope was finally tied tightly around Śrī Kṛṣṇa's waist, Mother Yaśodā knotted it to another long rope, which she then tied around the middle of the grinding mortar. (59)

She had taught her son Kṛṣṇa a lesson by tying Him up and thus showed Him how unmoved she could be by His stubbornness. To protect Him, she seated the other little boys around Him and, happily went inside with the giggling *gopīs* to complete her household chores. (60)

Within a moment of the *vraja-gopīs'* departure, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His pastime of crying, but He soon cheered up at the thought of pulling the grinding mortar around. He was tied up, but because He was surrounded by other little boys, He stimulated their desire for adventure. As He laughed and played with them, He slowly began to tug at the grinding mortar.

The *gopīs* who had gleefully brought ropes from their homes to bind Śrī Kṛṣṇa were now in Nanda-bhavana with Śrī Yaśodā. This meant that their homes were empty. Seizing that excellent opportunity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa directed His friends to steal the fresh butter hanging from the ceilings of their deserted homes and then eat it. Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa found pulling the grinding mortar so entertaining, He never even wanted to free Himself by His own hands, nor by the hands of His friends. (61)

Just then, His eyes fell on the twin *arjuna* trees which stood facing the main gate and which swayed, as if dancing, whenever there was a strong wind. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa pulled the mortar along, He eventually crawled towards the middle of the two trees. (62)

At this point, Snigdha-kaṇṭha, who had been loudly narrating all this with great excitement, suddenly realized, "If I tell them that Śrī Hari is the cause of the two trees falling, I will be glorifying His *aiśvarya*, or opulence. That would not at all be appropriate in this assembly of Vrajavāsīs, who are absorbed in Śrī Hari's *mādhurya*, or

sweetness. I will conceal this fact and just tell them another reason why the trees fell.” (63)

He continued:

Just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa came between the trees, He became filled with eagerness to proceed further and quickly crawled between them. The passage between the trees was narrow, and as He crawled away the mortar became stuck. (64)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa jerked and tugged at the mortar with the conscious intention of breaking the rope that bound Him to it, but instead the two trees made a crackling sound as they were uprooted and came crashing to the ground, falling in opposite directions. The sound was so tumultuous that it made the Vrajavāsīs feel more disoriented than deaf people, and it made their minds restless. (65–66)

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa had uprooted the twin *arjuna* trees, which were more powerful than thunderbolts, amazingly He was still unable to break the rope that embodied His mother’s intense attachment and relentless determination born of *vātsalya-prema*. (67)

In this regard, poets praise Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows:

*śyāmāṅga-dyuti-kiṅkiṇi-dhvani-dharaṇi riṅgātiraṅga-pradaṇi
karṣac chaśvad-udūkhalani khara-kharatkāra-prakāra-pratham
viṣphūrja-pratimārjuna-dvaya kaṭatkārārjitāt kautukāt
paryāvṛtta-nirīkṣaṇaṇi vraja-vadhū-lālyasya bālyani stuve*

I adore the childhood mood (*bālya-bhāva*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is nurtured by the ladies of Vraja. He is gloriously situated in His childhood mood in which His dark blue limbs are adorned by His tinkling ankle-bells. He bestows the greatest bliss as He crawls on His knees and repeatedly pulls at the grinding mortar, which clatters as He drags it along. Excited by the thunderous crackling of the two falling *arjuna* trees, He looks all around with His restless eyes. (68)

Terrified by that thunderous sound, all the inhabitants of Gokula fainted and remained unconscious for one *daṇḍa* (twenty-four

minutes). Only the children who had gathered around Śrī Kṛṣṇa did not faint. Being immersed in the utmost sweetness of His pastimes, they, like the figures in a painting, remained unaffected by fear. (69)

From a distance Śrī Vrajarāja and other cowherd men heard that tumultuous and terrifying sound. Fearing some calamity, they all rushed to the spot, speculating to each other along the way about what had happened. When they reached the spot, they became overcome with fear and doubt. “Oh, what could have uprooted these two trees?” they all cried. “There is no wind or rain, nor was there any lightening, nor has an elephant attacked them. Who has uprooted them?” (70–71)

Some remarked, “This is such a disaster, yet no one is here but us.”

“Well,” reasoned another, “that is probably because the tumultuous sound of the crashing trees knocked everyone in Vraja unconscious.” (72)

Just then, they noticed their little Gopāla near the trees, a playful smile beautifying His face as He tugged the grinding mortar, freely showering the bliss of His pastimes upon all. “What happened? What happened?” they asked as they surrounded Him, discussing the cause of the disaster. (73)

Seeing His father approaching from behind, little Mukunda began to cry. Although Śrī Nanda Mahārāja was still bewildered, he beamed a smile to pacify His darling child and quickly untied Him. (74–75)

Śrī Nanda Mahārāja kissed the face of his son Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who spoke to Nanda Bābā while crying, and although he knew why Kṛṣṇa had been bound, he repeatedly asked, “O my son, where is the wicked person who forcefully bound You to this grinding mortar?” Eventually, Kṛṣṇa, who was devoted to His father, climbed into his lap. With His arms around His father’s neck and His voice quivering, He slowly spoke into his ear, “Father, it was Mother who bound Me.” (76)

When Śrī Yaśodā had heard the deafening crash, she fainted. After regaining consciousness, she pitifully began to repent. Śrī Nanda Mahārāja came to know this, and therefore he did not want to immediately question her, even in private. He did not even bother to

ask the little children present. “What could these little infants possibly know about it?” he wondered.

But then the children spoke up. “Father, we saw everything ourselves. We clearly saw your son go between the trees. He saw that open space over there and wanted to play there. As He moved away from the trees, the grinding mortar became caught in between them. From an angle, He tugged at the grinding mortar. Immediately the trees made a loud cracking sound and came crashing to the ground. Two divine personalities adorned with armour, crowns and earrings emerged from the trees, their stout figures as bright as fire. After circumambulating your Kṛṣṇa and offering Him obeisances, they said something to please Him and then set off to the north.” Śrī Nanda Mahārāja and others who were completely absorbed in parental affection for Kṛṣṇa discarded the boys’ words as silly prattling. Others, however, were left doubtful. (77)

All the people of Vraja came there in ones and twos, and gradually a large crowd gathered. Decorating his chest with his son, Śrī Vrajarāja went with all of them to the Yamunā to finish his morning activities. He bathed in the river with his son on his lap, and after dressing, he arranged for the *brāhmaṇas* to chant *svasti-vācana* (specific *mantras* to invoke auspiciousness) in that very place. Afterwards he donated great wealth to them. He then returned to his home, ready to take his breakfast. (78)

Śrī Yaśodā, the wife of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja, felt so sad and embarrassed that she had bound Kṛṣṇa that she refused to leave the inner chambers of the house. She could not even speak with the *gopīs* who had come to see her. So, after they had all left, the respected Śrī Rohiṇī, who was expert in reconciling all situations, directed the head kitchen maids, who were all held in high esteem, in serving the morning meal. (79)

Beckoning Śrī Vasudeva’s son, Śrī Balarāma, and his own son Kanhaiyā to join him, Śrī Vrajarāja ate with Them in the midst of the endearing and indescribably sweet tumult They had made. He then rested for nearly an hour with the two brothers, who were the

personifications of supreme bliss. Soon it was evening, the charming time when the cows return from the fields. Having rested well, he felt happy and content. After coming to the *gośālā*, he directed the cowherds in milking the cows and caring for them. (80)

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were quite young, They still needed Their mother's breast-milk, and cows' milk is the best representative of breast-milk. Śrī Vrajarāja first asked for some excellent, white rock-candy to be brought from the house. After distributing it to Them and the other little boys like Subala, Nanda Bābā began squirting nourishing cow's milk from the cows' udders directly into the brothers' mouths. Then, as They sat in the cowshed, he taught Them how to make leaf cups and how to write letters on leaves. (81)

After some time he returned home, and in a blissful gathering he took his evening meal with the two boys. The wise elderly *gopīs*, who adorned their respective dynasties like jewels, or goddesses of wealth, always desired Śrī Vrajarāja's happiness. Therefore, after he had finished his meal, they approached him along with Śrī Rohiṇī and said, "O King, Kṛṣṇa's mother has not eaten anything all day, nor has she spoken with anyone. Seeing her condition, all the maids and other *gopīs* have also been sitting silently, and they, also, have not eaten anything." (82)

Śrī Vrajarāja was both sorry and amused. "What can I do?" he asked. "She herself can see the detrimental effect of submitting to her anger."

At this, tears began streaming down the *gopīs*' faces, and they sobbed, "Oh, no, she is so soft, internally and externally. Hearing these painful words of yours, she will become even more aggrieved." Smiling, Śrī Vrajarāja asked his son, "My dear boy, do You want to go to Your mother?"

Śrī Kṛṣṇa promptly responded, "No, no! I will stay with you only."

Giggling, the wife of Śrī Vrajarāja's elder brother, Śrī Upananda, questioned Him: "If You are only ever with Father, whose breast-milk will You drink?"

"I will drink warm squirts of cow's milk mixed with rock candy." Kṛṣṇa replied.

“With whom will You play?” all the *gopīs* asked.

“I will play with Father and My brother too.” He answered.

Śrī Vrajarāja then asked, “Why don’t You go to Your brother’s mother, Rohiṇī?”

Tears welled up in Kṛṣṇa’s eyes and He angrily said, “She was not there for Me when I needed her.”

At this, tearful eyed Śrī Rohiṇī spoke gently, “My dear son, why are You so harsh? Your mother is in so much anguish.” Kṛṣṇa pretended not to hear her words and, with moist eyes, simply gazed at the face of His father. (83)

Upon the motioning of Śrī Rohiṇī, Balarāma ran forward and seized Kṛṣṇa’s hand to bring Him to her, but He wrestled out of Balarāma’s grip, ran back to His father’s lap and tightly hugged him. While on the lap of Vrajarāja, He stood up and draped His arms around His father’s neck. Kṛṣṇa gazed into his eyes, which were now releasing a stream of tears, and absolutely captivated His father. (84)

Śrī Vrajarāja knew that really, Kṛṣṇa dearly loved His mother from the core of His heart. To unearth that inner love, he raised his hand and said, “If You tell me to, I will beat Your mother!” Śrī Kṛṣṇa could not tolerate this and tightly grabbed His father’s arm with both hands. This made Nanda Bābā laugh. Because he had the inherent *vātsalya-bhāva* of being a father, he compassionately thought of the condition of Mother Yaśodā’s heart, and said, “Son, what will You do if Your mother just...?” In this statement, Śrī Nanda Mahārāja jokingly implied the word that means the opposite of “lives”. (85)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa had the nature of a child, and therefore He became overwhelmed for want of His mother. With tear-filled eyes He said, “Where is My mother? I am going to her!” In this anxiety, He stumbled into Śrī Rohiṇī’s arms and a din arose as everyone began to laugh. Meanwhile, Śrī Rohiṇī, who bestows supreme joy upon all, entered into the house with teary-eyed Kṛṣṇa, who joyously embraced His mother. (86)

Śrī Yaśodā let forth deep sighs that resembled the lowing of a cow. She rested her chin on her darling child’s head and began to weep.

Her crying, which was full of love, completely melted her heart. Upon seeing her condition, everyone there also began to weep. (87)

The elderly *gopīs* consoled Śrī Yaśodā in various ways. Gradually, her heart began to feel relief, and the charm of her face began to reappear. Then Śrī Yaśodā, the daughter of Śrī Sumukha Gopa, fed her darling son her breast-milk to His great delight. After this, she took her meal with the wife of Śrī Upananda and the other ladies, who were her greatest well-wishers. As she ate, she kept Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His elder brother Śrī Balarāma right beside her. (88)

Śrī Yaśodā felt so utterly ashamed that for three days, she did not come before the eyes of Śrī Vrajarāja. Finally, Śrī Bāla-gopāla, who always carries out His father's orders, personally brought her before him, pulling her by her upper cloth. Also, from that day onward, the ladies of Vraja jokingly and blissfully began calling Śrī Kṛṣṇa "Dāmodara", and remarking, "Ah, this is our same enchanting blue boy, Śrī Śyāma-manohara." (89)

Although Śrī Yaśodā repeatedly witnesses Śrī Kṛṣṇa's superhuman majesty, this majesty never even slightly affects her *vātsalya*, or motherly affection, for Him. Which scholar on earth is really able to praise her? Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has even stated that what to speak of others, Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Lakṣmī have failed to achieve even a hundredth of the satisfaction and happiness of what Śrī Bāla-mukunda, He who bestows liberation, has awarded Śrī Yaśodā. In other words, from the perspective of *bhakti*, Śrī Brahmā, Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Lakṣmī have failed to achieve even a small fraction of a fraction of Śrī Yaśodā's *bhakti*. (90)

Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has thoroughly disclosed the splendid fame of Śrī Yaśodā, which reverberates like a drum throughout the three worlds. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.9.20) and other scriptures verify this. (91)

At this point, Śrī Balarāma turned to His younger brother, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and excitedly remarked, "Do You remember when We used to live in Mahāvana-Gokula?"

Śrī Kṛṣṇa smiled. "Yes, yes. We had such fun sporting there." (92)

Snigdha-kaṅṭha then concluded the day's narration: "O King of the cow-herders, your divine son is so amazing, He was even able to make twin *arjuna* trees His dedicated devotees."

The author, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, comments: "As all the members of the assembly returned to their respective homes after hearing *śrī dāmodara-līlā*, they felt as if they had directly witnessed that festive pastime." (94)



The next day, while seated amidst that effulgent assembly, Śrī Vrajarāja asked, "My dear son Snigdha-kaṅṭha, those two trees in Vraja that you mentioned used to grant all of one's cherished desires. In that way, they were like demigods. Who were these trees in their previous births, and why did they come to Vraja? Moreover, when they gave up their lives as trees, what form did they take, and where did they go?" (1)

Snigdha-kaṅṭha replied, "Those two trees were the sons of Śrī Śiva's friend, Śrī Kuvera, the king of the Yakṣas. Once, they behaved horrendously in front of the best of *ṛṣis*, Devarṣi Śrī Nārada. Consequently, he punished them to live as trees. This punishment was Śrī Nārada's extreme favour upon them because they achieved *bhakti* for Śrī Bhagavān. Whenever you descend to this world, they also come as twin *arjuna* trees in front of your home in Mahāvana. These trees later attained their ultimate destination and became the best of Śrī Bhagavān's devotees. However, at present they are illustriously situated in the abode of *premi-bhaktas*, where they reveal to others the results of performing *bhakti* to Śrī Bhagavān." (2)

His curiosity aroused, Śrī Vrajarāja again inquired. "Tell me frankly, son, where are they at present?"

At this moment Snigdha-kaṅṭha bowed his head and became silent. Then he started glancing at Madhu-kaṅṭha from the corners of his eyes. Śrī Vrajarāja pressed Snigdha-kaṅṭha even further. "Why are you embarrassed to speak?"

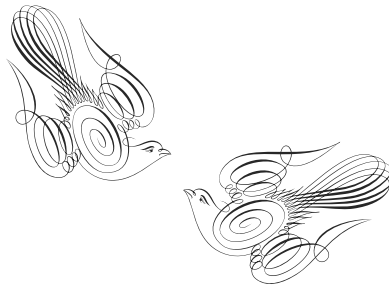
With great respect, Snigdha-kaṅṭha replied, "O King, what more can we say? Your distinguished self can understand everything."

Śrī Vrajarāja beamed. “It is true that your words will merely repeat what your silence is trying to say. By your virtuous disposition certainly we have all understood your meaning, but still, we want you to satisfy us by telling it to us yourselves.”

Snigdha-kaṅṭha said, “The twin trees, or the sons of Kuvera, Nalakūvara and Maṅgrīva, received the supreme destination of residing in Vraja in exchange for their insolence at the lotus feet of Devarṣi Śrī Nārada, which are a shower of all types of bliss. Those two are none other than we, the two present before you.” (3)

Hearing this with mixed feelings of curiosity and pleasure, Śrī Vrajarāja and all others present began gazing at their faces and happily embraced them, as if meeting them for the first time. (4)

After hearing his brother’s reply to Śrī Vrajarāja’s inquiry, Madhukaṅṭha took the opportunity to begin that day’s narration... (5)



❧ Glossary ❧

Abhidheya – the procedures of devotional service aimed at attaining the ultimate goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*

Ācārya – spiritual preceptor; one who teaches by example

Adhirūḍha-mahābhāva – the highest state of *mahābhāva*, found only in the *gopīs* of Vraja

Anartha – unwanted desire in the heart that impedes one's advancement in *bhakti*

Aṣṭakam – a prayer consisting of eight verses

Aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāva – the eight ecstatic bodily transformations: becoming stunned, perspiring, standing of the hairs on end, faltering of the voice, trembling, losing colour, shedding tears and fainting

Antaraṅga-śakti – Śrī Bhagavān's internal potency, also known as *svarūpa-śakti*

Anubhāva – emotions deep within the heart that are realized through various outward expressions; the thirteen *anubhāvas* are dancing, rolling on the ground, singing, loudly crying, writhing, roaring, yawning, breathing heavily, neglecting others, drooling, loudly laughing, staggering about, and hiccupping; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*

Anurāga – the stage of *prema* above *rāga*, characterized by continuously renewed attachment for Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Āsakti – the stage of *sādhana-bhakti* just preceding *rati*, or *bhāva*, wherein one experiences intense attachment to the process of *bhajana* and later to the object of *bhajana*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Āśraya – the person who is the abode of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa; one of the three components of *vibhāva*

Bhajana – transcendental service performed through spiritual practices, especially hearing, chanting, and meditating upon the holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Bhakta-vātsalya – Bhagavān's extraordinary affection for His devotees

Bhakti – loving devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Bhāva – transcendental emotion; the stage of *bhāva-bhakti* is compared to the first ray of the *prema*-sun appearing in the heart of the *bhakti-sādhaka* that marks the end of the stage of *sādhana*; *bhāva* is also the name of

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

the stage of *prema* above *anurāga* characterized by constant absorption in ecstatic transcendental emotion

Bhāvānuvāda – an expanded translation of a Sanskrit commentary in pursuance of its essential mood

Brahma – all-pervasive, impersonal spirit; the plane of undifferentiated cognizance, or knowledge; not to be confused with Lord Brahmā, the empowered creator of the material universe

Brāhmaṇa – the highest of the four *varṇas* (castes) in the *varṇāśrama* system; a priest or teacher of divine knowledge

Dāsya – the mood of being a servant

Darśana – direct vision of or audience with the Supreme Personality of Godhead

Dig-darśinī – literally, *dig* means “to point out the direction” and *darśinī* means “to become directly visible or known”; that which points out the way that will lead to direct knowledge

Divyonmāda – a state of wonderful, divine delusion, found predominantly in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī

Guru-varga – a succession of *ācāryas*

Jñānī-bhakta – a devotee who has knowledge of the Lord’s supreme position

Kīrtana – singing about or glorifying the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān; the most important limb of the celebrated nine-fold system of devotional service

Laukika-sadbandhuvat – a relationship based on natural intimacy, similar to the intimate relationships of this world

Lobhamayī bhakti – an intense greed to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in one of the four *rasas*: *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya*, following in the footsteps of the Vrajavāsīs

Mādhurya – the mood of conjugal love; the highest and sweetest mood

Mahābhāva – the final, unexcelled stage of *prema*

Makara – a rare sea creature, resembling a shark and a crocodile; a symbol of Kāmadeva.

Māna – the stage of *prema* above *sneha*, wherein the mood of transcendental jealousy or contrariness prevents uninhibited meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Niṣṭhā – the stage of *sādhana-bhakti* wherein all of the *sādhaka*’s *anarthas* have been cleared and he maintains a constant intensity of endeavour by his intelligence

Para-śakti – Śrī Bhagavān’s superior potency (*svarūpa-śakti*)

Parakīya-rasa – transcendental paramour love

Pītāmbara – Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s famous yellow sash

- Praṇaya** – the stage of *prema* above *māna*, characterized by unrestrained intimacy, known as *viśrambha*
- Prākṛta-sahajīya** – a capricious imitationist who unscrupulously propagates the notion that Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes can be relished with material senses
- Praṇāma** – completely offering oneself without a trace of false ego
- Prayojana** – the ultimate goal – *kṛṣṇa-prema*
- Prema** – the deep longing to satisfy the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa who, being more dear to one than one’s own soul, is the object of intense possessiveness
- Rāga** – deep attachment for the object of one’s affection; the stage of *prema* above *praṇaya*
- Rāgānuga-bhakti** – *bhakti* that follows in the wake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates in Vraja, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāgātmikā-jana*
- Rāgātmika** – deep, spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, existing naturally and eternally within the heart
- Rasa** – the astonishing experience of sublime liquid emotion when the five ingredients of love, beginning with *sthāyibhāva*, combine in the heart of the pure devotee
- Rāsa-līlā** – Svayam Bhagavān’s supremely immaculate pastime of dancing with unlimited *gopīs*
- Rasika-bhakta** – a Vaiṣṇava who has reached the stage of relishing *bhakti-rasa* within his heart, which is resplendent with *śuddha-sattva*
- Ruci** – the stage of *sādhana-bhakti* wherein one has become free from all *anarthas*, and taste for the process of *bhajana* has awakened
- Sādhaka** – one who is engaged in performing *sādhana*
- Sādhana** – the method one adopts in order to obtain a specific goal, or *sādhyā*; in *bhakti-sādhana*, the practitioner engages his external senses in serving Śrī Bhagavān
- Sādhu** – a saint; one who is perfect in *sādhana* and who engages others in *sādhana*
- Sādhu-saṅga** – association with saints; constant engagement in carrying out the orders and striving to fulfil the desires of advanced Vaiṣṇavas
- Sādhyā** – the final goal aimed at by the *sādhaka* – *kṛṣṇa-prema*
- Sakhya** – the mood of friendship
- Samādhi** – literally, *sama* means “equal” and *dhī* means “complete absorption of the intelligence”; a person in *samādhi* has the same level of consciousness as his worshipful deity, and on that platform he is doing service
- Sanākīrtana** – congregational chanting of the names of God
- Śānta** – the mood of tranquillity and neutral admiration

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

Śāstra – any sacred book or composition of divine authority

Sāttvika-bhāva – ecstatic bodily transformations; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*

Siddhānta – the consummate truth or perfect conclusion of all knowledge

Smaraṇa – remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes; one of the three most important limbs of *bhakti*

Sneha – the stage of *prema-bhakti* above [the stage of] *prema* characterized by intense affection that causes the heart to melt

Śraddhā – the firm conviction that all of one's obligations will be fulfilled by performing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*

Śravaṇa – hearing the transcendental descriptions of Bhagavān's names, forms, qualities, pastimes and associates from the mouths of advanced *bhaktas*; one of the three most important limbs of *bhakti*

Sthāyībhāva – one's eternal, fixed mode of service; the five *sthāyībhāvas* are *sānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *mādhurya*, or tranquillity, service, friendship, parental affection and conjugal love; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*

Stuti – a eulogy

Svāmīni – one's worshipful goddess to whom one has lovingly surrendered one's life

Svayaṁ-bhagavān – the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who has no other source than Himself

Svarūpa-śakti – Śrī Bhagavān's divine, intrinsic potency

Ṭika – commentary

Tithi – one day of the lunar calendar, which is the prominent calendar for astrological calculations

Uddīpana – stimulus that arouses *kṛṣṇa-prema*, such as Śrī Kṛṣṇa's anklebells, peacock feather, or garland

Unnatojjvala-rasa – *unnata* means highest, *ujjala* means brilliantly shining; the most sublime and radiant humour of conjugal love

Ūrja-vrata – literally “powerful or vigorous vow”; *ūrja-vrata* during the month of Kārtika indicates the vows one makes to maintain intense spiritual practices for the entire month; or the vows that invoke the mercy of the presiding Goddess of all spiritual power, Śrīmatī Rādhikā

Vaidhī-bhakti – devotion prompted by faith in the regulations of the scriptures, a sense of duty, and fear of sinful reaction

Vaiśya – the third *varṇa* of the *varṇāśrāma* system; merchants and agriculturalists

Vātsalya – the mood of parental love and affection

Vibhāva – the shelter of love, the object of love and the stimulus of love (*āśraya*, *viṣaya* and *uddīpana*) comprise *vibhāva*; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*

Viṣaya – the person who is the object of love (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); one of the three components of *vibhāva*

Viśrambha – literally, *vigīta* means “completely devoid of” and *śrambha* means “awareness of something’s majesty or greatness”; complete intimacy without feelings of inferiority or worship

Viśuddha-sattva – the state of existing in supremely pure goodness

Vraja-prema – the special form of *prema* that only the Vrajavāsīs have for Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Vrata – a vow undertaken for self-purification and spiritual benefit

Vṛtti – explanation

Vyabhicāri-bhāva – also known as *sañcāri-bhāva*; transitory spiritual emotions, which rise and fall like waves in the ocean of the *sthāyībhāva*; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*

