

The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Lord Brahma

Srimad Bhagavatam 10th Canto Chapter 13 Purports Only

This chapter describes Lord Brahmā's attempt to take away the calves and cowherd boys, and it also describes the bewilderment of Lord Brahmā and finally the clearance of his illusion.

Although the incident concerning Aghāsura had been performed one year before, when the cowherd boys were five years old, when they were six years old they said, "It happened today." What happened was this. After killing Aghāsura, Kṛṣṇa, along with His associates the cowherd boys, went for a picnic within the forest. The calves, being allured by green grasses, gradually went far away, and therefore Kṛṣṇa's associates became a little agitated and wanted to bring back the calves. Kṛṣṇa, however, encouraged the boys by saying, "You take your tiffin without being agitated. I shall go find the calves." And thus the Lord departed. Then, just to examine the potency of Kṛṣṇa, Lord Brahmā took away all the calves and cowherd boys and kept them in a secluded place.

When Kṛṣṇa was unable to find the calves and boys, He could understand that this was a trick performed by Brahmā. Then the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the cause of all causes, in order to please Lord Brahmā, as well as His own associates and their mothers, expanded Himself to become the calves and boys, exactly as they were before. In this way, He discovered another pastime. A special feature of this pastime was that the mothers of the cowherd boys thus became more attached to their respective sons, and the cows became more attached to their calves. After nearly a year, Baladeva observed that all the cowherd boys and calves were expansions of Kṛṣṇa. Thus He inquired from Kṛṣṇa and was informed of what had happened.

When one full year had passed, Brahmā returned and saw that Kṛṣṇa was still engaged as usual with His friends and the calves and cows. Then Kṛṣṇa exhibited all the calves and cowherd boys as four-armed forms of Nārāyaṇa. Brahmā could then understand Kṛṣṇa's potency, and he was astonished by the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, his worshipable Lord. Kṛṣṇa, however, bestowed His causeless mercy upon Brahmā and released him from illusion. Thus Brahmā began to offer prayers to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

SB 10.13.1

Unless one is very advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one cannot stick to hearing the pastimes of the Lord constantly. Nityam nava-navāya-mānam: even though advanced devotees hear continually about the Lord for years, they still feel that these topics are coming to them as newer and fresher. Therefore such devotees cannot give up hearing of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti. The word santaḥ is used to refer to persons who have developed love for Kṛṣṇa. Yam śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi (Bs. 5.38). Parīkṣit Mahārāja, therefore, is addressed as bhāgavatottama, the best of

devotees, because unless one is very much elevated in devotional service, one cannot feel ecstasy from hearing more and more and appreciate the topics as ever fresher and newer.

SB 10.13.2

Paramahāṁsas, devotees who have accepted the essence of life, are attached to Kṛṣṇa in the core of their hearts, and He is the aim of their lives. It is their nature to talk only of Kṛṣṇa at every moment, as if such topics were newer and newer. They are attached to such topics, just as materialists are attached to topics of women and sex.

PURPORT

The word sāra-bhṛtām means paramahāṁsas. The hāṁsa, or swan, accepts milk from a mixture of milk and water and rejects the water. Similarly, the nature of persons who have taken to spiritual life and Kṛṣṇa consciousness, understanding Kṛṣṇa to be the life and soul of everyone, is that they cannot give up kṛṣṇa-kathā, or topics about Kṛṣṇa, at any moment. Such paramahāṁsas always see Kṛṣṇa within the core of the heart (santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti). Kāma (desires), krodha (anger) and bhaya (fear) are always present in the material world, but in the spiritual, or transcendental, world one can use them for Kṛṣṇa. Kāmaṁ kṛṣṇa-karmārpaṇe. The desire of the paramahāṁsas, therefore, is to act always for Kṛṣṇa. 'Krodha' bhakta-dveṣi jane. They use anger against the nondevotees and transform bhaya, or fear, into fear of being deviated from Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way, the life of a paramahāṁsa devotee is used entirely for Kṛṣṇa, just as the life of a person attached to the material world is used simply for women and money. What is day for the materialistic person is night for the spiritualist. What is very sweet for the materialist—namely women and money—is regarded as poison by the spiritualist.

sandarśanaṁ viṣayinām atha yoṣitām ca

ha hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣaṇato 'py asādhu

[Cc. Madhya 11.8]

This is the instruction of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. For the paramahāṁsa, Kṛṣṇa is everything, but for the materialist, women and money are everything.

SB 10.13.3

O King, kindly hear me with great attention. Although the activities of the Supreme Lord are very confidential, no ordinary man being able to understand them, I shall speak about them to you, for spiritual masters explain to a submissive disciple even subject matters that are very confidential and difficult to understand.

SB 10.13.4

Then, after saving the boys and calves from the mouth of Aghāsura, who was death personified, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, brought them all to the bank of the river and spoke the following words.

SB 10.13.5

The description of Vṛndāvana forest as given herewith was spoken by Kṛṣṇa five thousand years ago, and the same condition prevailed during the time of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas three or four hundred years ago. Kūjat-kokila-hamsa-sārasa-gaṇākīrṇe mayūrākule. Vṛndāvana forest is always filled with the chirping and cooing of birds like cuckoos (kokila), ducks (hamsa) and cranes (sārasa), and it is also full of peacocks (mayūrākule). The same sounds and atmosphere still prevail in the area where our Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple is situated. Everyone who visits this temple is pleased to hear the chirping of the birds as described here (kūjat-kokila-hamsa-sārasa).

SB 10.13.6

I think we should take our lunch here, since we are already hungry because the time is very late. Here the calves may drink water and go slowly here and there and eat the grass.

SB 10.13.7

Accepting Lord Kṛṣṇa's proposal, the cowherd boys allowed the calves to drink water from the river and then tied them to trees where there was green, tender grass. Then the boys opened their baskets of food and began eating with Kṛṣṇa in great transcendental pleasure.

SB 10.13.8

To a pure devotee, Kṛṣṇa is always visible, as stated in the Brahmā samhitā (santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti) and as indicated by Kṛṣṇa Himself in Bhagavad-gītā (sarvataḥ pāṇi-pādam tat sarvato 'kṣi-śiro-mukham). If by accumulating pious activities (kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ [SB 10.12.11]) one is raised to the platform of pure devotional service, Kṛṣṇa is always visible in the core of one's heart. One who has attained such perfection is all-beautiful in transcendental bliss. The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is an attempt to keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, for if this is done all activities will automatically become beautiful and blissful.

SB 10.13.9

Among the cowherd boys, some placed their lunch on flowers, some on leaves, fruits, or bunches of leaves, some actually in their baskets, some on the bark of trees and some on rocks. This is what the children imagined to be their plates as they ate their lunch.

SB 10.13.10

Sometimes one friend would say, "Kṛṣṇa, see how my food is relishable," and Kṛṣṇa would take some and laugh. Similarly, Balarāma, Sudāmā and other friends would taste one another's food and laugh. In this way, the friends very jubilantly began to eat their respective preparations brought from home.

SB 10.13.11

When Kṛṣṇa was eating with His cowherd boyfriends, a certain bumblebee came there to take part in the eating. Thus Kṛṣṇa joked, "Why have you come to disturb My brāhmaṇa friend Madhumāṅgala?"

You want to kill a brāhmaṇa. This is not good." All the boys would laugh and enjoy, speaking such joking words while eating. Thus the inhabitants of the higher planets were astonished at how the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who eats only when yajña is offered, was now eating like an ordinary child with His friends in the forest.

SB 10.13.12

O Mahārāja Parīkṣit, while the cowherd boys, who knew nothing within the core of their hearts but Kṛṣṇa, were thus engaged in eating their lunch in the forest, the calves went far away, deep into the forest, being allured by green grass.

SB 10.13.13

In the presence of Kṛṣṇa's friendship, a devotee cannot have any fear. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller, the controller of even death, which is supposed to be the ultimate fear in this material world. Bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syāt (SB 11.2.37). This fear arises because of lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise there cannot be any fear. For one who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, this material world of fear becomes hardly dangerous at all.

bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padaṁ paraṁ padaṁ

padam padam yad vipadam na tesam

Bhavāmbudhiḥ, the material ocean of fear, becomes very easy to cross by the mercy of the supreme controller. This material world, in which there is fear and danger at every step (padam padam yad vipadam), is not meant for those who have taken shelter at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Such persons are delivered from this fearful world.

samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavam

mahat-padam puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ

bhavāmbudhir vatsa-padam paraṁ padam

padam padam yad vipadam na tesam

(SB 10.14.58)

Everyone, therefore, should take shelter of the Supreme Person, who is the source of fearlessness, and thus be secure.

SB 10.13.14

The Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) assert that the Supreme Personality of Godhead has nothing to do personally (na tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate) because He is doing everything through His energies and potencies (parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate [Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport]). Nonetheless, here we see that He took personal care to find the calves of His friends. This was Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy. Mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ sūyate sa-carācaram: [Bg. 9.10] all the affairs of the entire world and

the entire cosmic manifestation are working under His direction, through His different energies. Still, when there is a need to take care of His friends, He does this personally. Kṛṣṇa assured His friends, "Don't be afraid. I am going personally to search for your calves." This was Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy.

SB 10.13.15

When Aghāsura was being killed by Kṛṣṇa, who was accompanied by His associates, Brahmā was astonished, but when he saw that Kṛṣṇa was very much enjoying His pastimes of lunch, he was even more astonished and wanted to test whether Kṛṣṇa was actually there. Thus he became entangled in Kṛṣṇa's māyā. After all, Brahmā was born materially. As mentioned here, ambhojanma janiḥ: he was born of ambhoja, a lotus flower. It does not matter that he was born of a lotus and not of any man, animal or material father. A lotus is also material, and anyone born through the material energy must be subject to the four material deficiencies: bhrama (the tendency to commit mistakes), pramāda (the tendency to be illusioned), vipralipsā (the tendency to cheat) and karaṇāpāṭava (imperfect senses). Thus Brahmā also became entangled.

Brahmā, with his māyā, wanted to test whether Kṛṣṇa was actually present. These cowherd boys were but expansions of Kṛṣṇa's personal self (ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ [Bs. 5.37]). Later Kṛṣṇa would show Brahmā how He expands Himself into everything as His personal pleasure, ānanda-cinmaya-rasa. Hlādinī śaktir asmāt: Kṛṣṇa has a transcendental potency called hlādinī śakti. He does not enjoy anything that is a product of the material energy. Brahmā, therefore, would see Lord Kṛṣṇa expand His energy.

Brahmā wanted to take away Kṛṣṇa's associates, but instead he took away some other boys and calves. Rāvaṇa wanted to take away Sītā, but that was impossible, and instead he took away a māyā Sītā. Similarly, Brahmā took away māyārbhakāḥ: boys manifested by Kṛṣṇa's māyā. Brahmā could show some extraordinary opulence to the māyārbhakāḥ; but he could not show any extraordinary potency to Kṛṣṇa's associates. That he would see in the very near future. Māyārbhakasya īsītuḥ. This bewilderment, this māyā, was caused by the supreme controller, prabhavataḥ—the all-potent Supreme person, Kṛṣṇa—and we shall see the result. Anyone materially born is subject to bewilderment. This pastime is therefore called brahma-vimohana-līlā, the pastime of bewildering Brahmā. Mohitaṁ nābhijānāti mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam (Bg. 7.13). Materially born persons cannot fully understand Kṛṣṇa. Even the demigods cannot understand Him (muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ). Tene brahmā hṛdā ya ādikavaye (SB 1.1.1). Everyone, from Brahmā down to the small insect, must take lessons from Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.16

Kṛṣṇa could immediately understand that Brahmā had taken away both the calves and the boys, but as an innocent child He searched here and there so that Brahmā could not understand Kṛṣṇa's māyā. This was all a dramatic performance. A player knows everything, but still he plays on the stage in such a way that others do not understand him.

SB 10.13.17

Although Kṛṣṇa is viśva-vit, the knower of everything happening in the entire cosmic manifestation, as an innocent child He showed ignorance of Brahmā's actions, although He could immediately understand that these were the doings of Brahmā. This pastime is called brahma-vimohana, the bewilderment of Brahmā. Brahmā was already bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's activities as an innocent child, and now he would be further bewildered.

SB 10.13.18

Although Brahmā was already entangled in bewilderment, he wanted to show his power to the cowherd boys; but after he took away the boys and their calves and returned to his abode, Kṛṣṇa created further astonishment for Brahmā, and for the mothers of the boys, by establishing the lunch pastimes in the forest again and replacing all the calves and boys, just as they had appeared before. According to the Vedas, *ekam bahu syām*: the Personality of Godhead can become many, many millions upon millions of calves and cowherd boys, as He did to bewilder Brahmā more and more.

SB 10.13.19

As stated in the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.33):

advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam

ādyam purāṇa-puruṣam nava-yauvanam ca

Kṛṣṇa, *param brahma*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is *ādyam*, the beginning of everything; He is *ādi-puruṣam*, the ever-youthful original person. He can expand Himself in more forms than one can imagine, yet He does not fall down from His original form as Kṛṣṇa; therefore He is called *Acyuta*. This is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Sarvam viṣṇumayaṁ jagat. Sarvam khalv idam brahma.* Kṛṣṇa thus proved that He is everything, that He can become everything, but that still He is personally different from everything (*mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ* [Bg. 9.4]). This is Kṛṣṇa, who is understood by *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* philosophy. *pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate*: [Īśo Invocation] Kṛṣṇa is always complete, and although He can create millions of universes, all of them full in all opulences, He remains as opulent as ever, without any change (*advaitam*). This is explained by different Vaiṣṇava ācāryas through philosophies such as *viśuddhādvaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita* and *dvaitādvaita*. Therefore one must learn about Kṛṣṇa from the ācāryas. *Ācāryavān puruṣo veda*: one who follows the path of the ācāryas knows things as they are. Such a person can know Kṛṣṇa as He is, at least to some extent, and as soon as one understands Kṛṣṇa (*janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ* [Bg. 4.9]), one is liberated from material bondage (*tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*).

SB 10.13.20

Kṛṣṇa usually stayed in the forest and pasturing ground, taking care of the calves and cows with His associates the cowherd boys. Now that the original group had been taken away by Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa Himself assumed the forms of every member of the group, without anyone's knowledge, even the knowledge of Baladeva, and continued the usual program. He was ordering His friends to do this and that, and He was controlling the calves and going into the forest to search for them when they went astray, allured by new grass, but these calves and boys were He Himself. This was Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potency. As explained by Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmāt. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are the same. Kṛṣṇa, by expanding His pleasure potency, becomes Rādhārāṇī. The same pleasure potency (ānanda-cinmaya-rasa) was expanded by Kṛṣṇa when He Himself became all the calves and boys and enjoyed transcendental bliss in Vrajabhūmi. This was done by the yogamāyā potency and was inconceivable to persons under the potency of mahāmāyā.

SB 10.13.21

Kṛṣṇa had many, many friends, of whom Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā and Subala were prominent. Thus Kṛṣṇa Himself became Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā and Subala and entered their respective houses with their respective calves.

SB 10.13.22

Although all the elderly gopīs knew that Kṛṣṇa was the son of Mother Yaśodā, they still desired, "If Kṛṣṇa had become my son, I would also have taken care of Him like Mother Yaśodā." This was their inner ambition. Now, in order to please them, Kṛṣṇa personally took the role of their sons and fulfilled their desire. They enhanced their special love for Kṛṣṇa by embracing Him and feeding Him, and Kṛṣṇa tasted their breast milk to be just like a nectarean beverage. While thus bewildering Brahmā, He enjoyed the special transcendental pleasure created by yogamāyā between all the other mothers and Himself.

SB 10.13.23

TEXT 23

SB 10.13.24

All the dealings between the calves and their respective mothers taking care of them were enacted by Kṛṣṇa Himself.

SB 10.13.25

The distinction between one's own son and another's son is not unnatural. Many elderly women have motherly affection for the sons of others. They observe distinctions, however, between those other sons and their own. But now the elderly gopīs could not distinguish between their own sons and Kṛṣṇa, for since their own sons had been taken by Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa had expanded as their sons. Therefore, their extra affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa Himself, was due to bewilderment resembling that of Brahmā. Previously, the mothers of Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, Subala and Kṛṣṇa's other friends did not have the same affection for one another's sons, but now the gopīs treated all the boys

as their own. Śukadeva Gosvāmī, therefore, wanted to explain this increment of affection in terms of Kṛṣṇa's bewilderment of Brahmā, the gopīs, the cows and everyone else.

SB 10.13.26

Although the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi, the cowherd men and cowherd women, previously had more affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own children, now, for one year, their affection for their own sons continuously increased, for Kṛṣṇa had now become their sons. There was no limit to the increment of their affection for their sons, who were now Kṛṣṇa. Every day they found new inspiration for loving their children as much as they loved Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.27

Everything was Kṛṣṇa. The calves, the cowherd boys and their maintainer Himself were all Kṛṣṇa. In other words, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself in varieties of calves and cowherd boys and continued His pastimes uninterrupted for one year. As stated in Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa's expansion is situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. Similarly, instead of expanding Himself as the Supersoul, He expanded Himself as a portion of calves and cowherd boys for one continuous year.

SB 10.13.28

Thereafter, while pasturing atop Govardhana Hill, the cows looked down to find some green grass and saw their calves pasturing near Vṛndāvana, not very far away.

SB 10.13.30

Generally the calves and cows are pastured separately. The elderly men take care of the cows, and the small children see to the calves. This time, however, the cows immediately forgot their position as soon as they saw the calves below Govardhana Hill, and they ran with great force, their tails erect and their front and hind legs joined, until they reached their calves.

SB 10.13.31

The cows had given birth to new calves, but while coming down from Govardhana Hill, the cows, because of increased affection for the older calves, allowed the older calves to drink milk from their milk bags and then began licking the calves' bodies in anxiety, as if wanting to swallow them.

SB 10.13.32

Everyone was increasing in affection for Kṛṣṇa. When the cowherd men coming down from the hill saw their own sons, who were no one else than Kṛṣṇa, their affection increased.

SB 10.13.33

After Brahmā stole the original cowherd boys and calves, Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself to become the boys and calves again. Therefore, because the boys were actually Kṛṣṇa's expansions, the cowherd men were especially attracted to them. At first the cowherd men, who were on top of the hill, were angry,

but because of Kṛṣṇa the boys were extremely attractive, and therefore the cowherd men immediately came down from the hill with special affection.

SB 10.13.34

In the beginning the cowherd men were angry that the cows were being attracted by the calves, but when the men came down from the hill, they themselves were attracted by their sons, and therefore the men embraced them. To embrace one's son and smell his head are symptoms of affection.

SB 10.13.35

The cows had younger calves who had started sucking milk from their mothers, and some of the cows had newly given birth, but now, because of love, the cows enthusiastically showed their affection for the older calves, which had left off milking. These calves were grown up, but still the mothers wanted to feed them. Therefore Balarāma was a little surprised, and He wanted to inquire from Kṛṣṇa about the reason for their behavior. The mothers were actually more anxious to feed the older calves, although the new calves were present, because the older calves were expansions of Kṛṣṇa. These surprising events were taking place by the manipulation of yogamāyā. There are two māyās working under the direction of Kṛṣṇa-mahāmāyā, the energy of the material world, and yogamāyā, the energy of the spiritual world. These uncommon events were taking place because of the influence of yogamāyā. From the very day on which Brahmā stole the calves and boys, yogamāyā acted in such a way that the residents of Vṛndāvana, including even Lord Balarāma, could not understand how yogamāyā was working and causing such uncommon things to happen. But as yogamāyā gradually acted, Balarāma in particular was able to understand what was happening, and therefore He inquired from Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.36

This increase of affection was not māyā; rather, because Kṛṣṇa had expanded Himself as everything and because the whole life of everyone in Vṛndāvana was meant for Kṛṣṇa, the cows, because of affection for Kṛṣṇa, had more affection for the older calves than for the new calves, and the men increased in their affection for their sons. Balarāma was astonished to see all the residents of Vṛndāvana so affectionate toward their own children, exactly as they had been for Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the cows had grown affectionate toward their calves—as much as toward Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma was surprised to see the acts of yogamāyā. Therefore He inquired from Kṛṣṇa, "What is happening here? What is this mystery?"

SB 10.13.37

Balarāma was surprised. This extraordinary show of affection, He thought, was something mystical, performed either by the demigods or some wonderful man. Otherwise, how could this wonderful change take place? "This māyā might be some rākṣasī-māyā," He thought, "but how can rākṣasī-māyā have any influence upon Me? This is not possible. Therefore it must be the māyā of Kṛṣṇa." He thus concluded that the mystical change must have been caused by Kṛṣṇa, whom Balarāma considered His worshipable Personality of Godhead. He thought, "It was arranged by Kṛṣṇa, and even I could not

check its mystic power." Thus Balarāma understood that all these boys and calves were only expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.38

Every individual is different. There are even differences between twin brothers. Yet when Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself as the boys and calves, each boy and each calf appeared in its own original feature, with the same individual way of acting, the same tendencies, the same color, the same dress, and so on, for Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself with all these differences. This was Kṛṣṇa's opulence.

SB 10.13.39

Inquiring from Kṛṣṇa about the actual situation, Lord Balarāma said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, in the beginning I thought that all these cows, calves and cowherd boys were either great sages and saintly persons or demigods, but at the present it appears that they are actually Your expansions. They are all You; You Yourself are playing as the calves and cows and boys. What is the mystery of this situation? Where have those other calves and cows and boys gone? And why are You expanding Yourself as the cows, calves and boys? Will You kindly tell Me what is the cause?" At the request of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa briefly explained the whole situation: how the calves and boys were stolen by Brahmā and how He was concealing the incident by expanding Himself so that people would not know that the original cows, calves and boys were missing. Balarāma understood, therefore, that this was not māyā but Kṛṣṇa's opulence. Kṛṣṇa has all opulences, and this was but another opulence of Kṛṣṇa.

"At first," Lord Balarāma said, "I thought that these boys and calves were a display of the power of great sages like Nārada, but now I see that all these boys and calves are You." After inquiring from Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma understood that Kṛṣṇa Himself had become many. That the Lord can do this is stated in the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.33). Advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam: although He is one, He can expand Himself in so many forms. According to the Vedic version, ekaṁ bahu syām: He can expand Himself into many thousands and millions but still remain one. In that sense, everything is spiritual because everything is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa; that is, everything is an expansion either of Kṛṣṇa Himself or of His potency. Because the potency is nondifferent from the potent, the potency and the potent are one (śakti-śaktimatayor abhedah). The Māyāvādīs, however, say, cid-acit-samanvayaḥ: spirit and matter are one. This is a wrong conception. Spirit (cit) is different from matter (acit), as explained by Kṛṣṇa Himself in Bhagavad-gītā (7.4-5):

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ

khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca

ahankāra itiyam me

bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

apareyam itas tv anyām

prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām

jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho

yayedam dhāryate jagat

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego—all together these eight comprise My separated material energies. But besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which consists of all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe." Spirit and matter cannot be made one, for actually they are superior and inferior energies, yet the Māyāvādīs, or Advaita-vādīs, try to make them one. This is wrong. Although spirit and matter ultimately come from the same one source, they cannot be made one. For example, there are many things that come from our bodies, but although they come from the same source, they cannot be made one. We should be careful to note that although the supreme source is one, the emanations from this source should be separately regarded as inferior and superior. The difference between the Māyāvāda and Vaiṣṇava philosophies is that the Vaiṣṇava philosophy recognizes this fact. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy, therefore, is called acintya-bhedābheda—simultaneous oneness and difference. For example, fire and heat cannot be separated, for where there is fire there is heat and where there is heat there is fire. Nonetheless, although we cannot touch fire, heat we can tolerate. Therefore, although they are one, they are different.

SB 10.13.40

Lord Brahmā had gone away for only a moment of his time, but when he returned, a year of human time had passed. On different planets, the calculation of time is different. To give an example, a man-made satellite may orbit the earth in an hour and twenty-five minutes and thus complete one full day, although a day ordinarily takes twenty-four hours for those living on earth. Therefore, what was but a moment for Brahmā was one year on earth. Kṛṣṇa continued to expand Himself in so many forms for one year, but by the arrangement of yogamāyā no one could understand this but Balarāma.

After one moment of Brahmā's calculation, Brahmā came back to see the fun caused by his stealing the boys and calves. But he was also afraid that he was playing with fire. Kṛṣṇa was his master, and he had played mischief for fun by taking away Kṛṣṇa's calves and boys. He was really anxious, so he did not stay away very long; he came back after a moment (of his calculation). When Brahmā returned, he saw that all the boys, calves and cows were playing with Kṛṣṇa in the same way as when he had come upon them; by Kṛṣṇa's display of yogamāyā, the same pastimes were going on without any change.

On the day when Lord Brahmā had first come, Baladeva could not go with Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys, for it was His birthday and His mother had kept Him back for the proper ceremonial bath, called śāntika-snāna. Therefore Lord Baladeva was not taken by Brahmā at that time. Now, one year later,

Brahmā returned, and because he returned on exactly the same day, Baladeva was again kept at home for His birthday. Therefore, although this verse mentions that Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa and all the cowherd boys, Baladeva is not mentioned. It was five or six days earlier that Baladeva had inquired from Kṛṣṇa about the extraordinary affection of the cows and cowherd men, but now, when Brahmā returned, Brahmā saw all the calves and cowherd boys playing with Kṛṣṇa as expansions of Kṛṣṇa, but he did not see Baladeva. As in the previous year, Lord Baladeva did not go to the woods on the day Lord Brahmā appeared there.

SB 10.13.41

For one year Lord Brahmā kept the calves and boys lying down in a cave by his mystic power. Therefore when Brahmā saw Lord Kṛṣṇa still playing with all the cows and calves, he began trying to reason about what was happening. "What is this?" he thought. "Maybe I took those calves and cowherd boys away but now they have been taken from that cave. Is this what has happened? Has Kṛṣṇa brought them back here?" Then, however, Lord Brahmā saw that the calves and boys he had taken were still in the same mystic māyā into which he had put them. Thus he concluded that the calves and cowherd boys now playing with Kṛṣṇa were different from the ones in the cave. He could understand that although the original calves and boys were still in the cave where he had put them, Kṛṣṇa had expanded Himself and so the present demonstration of calves and boys consisted of expansions of Kṛṣṇa. They had the same features, the same mentality and the same intentions, but they were all Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.42

Although appearing like calves, cows and cowherd boys, these were all Viṣṇu. Actually they were viṣṇu-tattva, not jīva-tattva. Brahmā was surprised. "The original cowherd boys and cows," he thought, "are still where I put them last year. So who is it that is now keeping company with Kṛṣṇa exactly as before? Where have they come from?" Brahmā was surprised that his mystic power had been neglected. Without touching the original cows and cowherd boys kept by Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa had created another assembly of calves and boys, who were all expansions of viṣṇu-tattva. Thus Brahmā's mystic power was superseded.

SB 10.13.43

Brahmā was puzzled. "The original boys and calves are still sleeping as I have kept them," he thought, "but another set is here playing with Kṛṣṇa. How has this happened?" Brahmā could not grasp what was happening. Which boys were real, and which were not real? Brahmā was unable to come to any definite conclusion. He pondered the matter for a long while. "How can there be two sets of calves and boys at the same time? Have the boys and calves here been created by Kṛṣṇa, or has Kṛṣṇa created the ones lying asleep? Or are both merely creations of Kṛṣṇa?" Brahmā thought about the subject in many different ways. "After I go to the cave and see that the boys and calves are still there, does Kṛṣṇa go take them away and put them here so that I come here and see them, and does Kṛṣṇa then take them from here and put them there?" Brahmā could not figure out how there could be two sets of

calves and cowherd boys exactly alike. Although thinking and thinking, he could not understand at all.

SB 10.13.44

Brahmā wanted to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, who bewilders the entire universe. The whole universe is under Kṛṣṇa's mystic power (mama māyā duratyayā [Bg. 7.14]), but Brahmā wanted to mystify Him. The result was that Brahmā himself was mystified, just as one who wants to kill another may himself be killed. In other words, Brahmā was defeated by his own attempt. In a similar position are the scientists and philosophers who want to overcome the mystic power of Kṛṣṇa. They challenge Kṛṣṇa, saying, "What is God? We can do this, and we can do that." But the more they challenge Kṛṣṇa in this way, the more they are implicated in suffering. The lesson here is that we should not try to overcome Kṛṣṇa. Rather, instead of endeavoring to surpass Him, we should surrender to Him (sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja [Bg. 18.66]).

Instead of defeating Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā himself was defeated, for he could not understand what Kṛṣṇa was doing. Since Brahmā, the chief person within this universe, was so bewildered, what is to be said of so-called scientists and philosophers? Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja. We should give up all our tiny efforts to defy the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa. Instead, whatever arrangements He proposes, we should accept. This is always better, for this will make us happy. The more we try to defeat the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa, the more we become implicated in Kṛṣṇa's māyā (daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā). But one who has reached the point of surrendering to the instructions of Kṛṣṇa (mām eva ye prapadyante) is liberated, free from kṛṣṇa-māyā (māyām etāṁ taranti te [Bg. 7.14]). The power of Kṛṣṇa is just like a government that cannot be overcome. First of all there are laws, and then there is police power, and beyond that is military power. Therefore, what is the use of trying to overcome the power of the government? Similarly, what is the use of trying to challenge Kṛṣṇa?

From the next verse it is clear that Kṛṣṇa cannot be defeated by any kind of mystic power. If one gets even a little power of scientific knowledge, one tries to defy God, but actually no one is able to bewilder Kṛṣṇa. When Brahmā, the chief person within the universe, tried to bewilder Kṛṣṇa, he himself was bewildered and astonished. This is the position of the conditioned soul. Brahmā wanted to mystify Kṛṣṇa, but he himself was mystified.

The word viṣṇum is significant in this verse. Viṣṇu pervades the entire material world, whereas Brahmā merely occupies one subordinate post.

yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam athāvalambya

jīvanti loma-vila-jā jagadaṇḍa-nāthāḥ

(Bs. 5.48)

The word nāthāḥ, which refers to Lord Brahmā, is plural because there are innumerable universes and innumerable Brahmās. Brahmā is but a tiny force. This was exhibited in Dvārakā when Kṛṣṇa called for Brahmā. One day when Brahmā came to see Kṛṣṇa at Dvārakā, the doorman, at Lord Kṛṣṇa's

request, asked, "Which Brahmā are you?" Later, when Brahmā inquired from Kṛṣṇa whether this meant that there was more than one Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa smiled and at once called for many Brahmās from many universes. The four-headed Brahmā of this universe then saw innumerable other Brahmās coming to see Kṛṣṇa and offer their respects. Some of them had ten heads, some had twenty, some had a hundred and some had a million heads. Upon seeing this wonderful exhibition, the four-headed Brahmā became nervous and began to think of himself as no more than a mosquito in the midst of many elephants. Therefore, what can Brahmā do to bewilder Kṛṣṇa?

SB 10.13.45

When one wants to supersede a superior power, one's own inferior power becomes ludicrous. Just as a glowworm in the daytime and snow at night have no value, Brahmā's mystic power became worthless in the presence of Kṛṣṇa, for greater mystic power condemns inferior mystic power. On a dark night, the darkness produced by snow has no meaning. The glowworm appears very important at night, but in the daytime its glow has no value; whatever little value it has is lost. Similarly, Brahmā became insignificant in the presence of Kṛṣṇa's mystic power. Kṛṣṇa's māyā was not diminished in value, but Brahmā's māyā was condemned. Therefore, one should not try to exhibit one's insignificant opulence before a greater power.

SB 10.13.46

While Brahmā was contemplating, all the calves and cowherd boys immediately transformed into viṣṇu-mūrtis, having bluish complexions and wearing yellow garments. Brahmā was contemplating his own power and the immense, unlimited power of Kṛṣṇa, but before he could come to a conclusion, he saw this immediate transformation.

SB 10.13.47, SB 10.13.48, SB 10.13.47-48

All the Viṣṇu forms had four arms, with conchshell and other articles, but these characteristics are also possessed by those who have attained sārūpya-mukti in Vaikuṅṭha and who consequently have forms exactly like the form of the Lord. However, these Viṣṇu forms appearing before Lord Brahmā also possessed the mark of Śrīvatsa and the Kaustubha gem, which are special characteristics possessed only by the Supreme Lord Himself. This proves that all these boys and calves were in fact directly expansions of Viṣṇu, the Personality of Godhead, not merely His associates of Vaikuṅṭha. Viṣṇu Himself is included within Kṛṣṇa. All the opulences of Viṣṇu are already present in Kṛṣṇa, and consequently for Kṛṣṇa to demonstrate so many Viṣṇu forms was actually not very astonishing.

The Śrīvatsa mark is described by the Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī as being a curl of fine yellow hair on the upper portion of the right side of Lord Viṣṇu's chest. This mark is not for ordinary devotees. It is a special mark of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

SB 10.13.49

The word bhūri-puṇyavad-arpitaiḥ is significant in this verse. These forms of Viṣṇu were worshiped by those who had performed pious activities (sukṛtibhiḥ) for many births and who were constantly engaged in devotional service (śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ [SB 7.5.23]). Bhakti, devotional service, is the engagement of those who have performed highly developed pious activities. The accumulation of pious activities has already been mentioned elsewhere in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.12.11), where Śukadeva Gosvāmī says,

ittham satām brahma-sukhānubhūtyā

dāsyam gatānām para-daivatena

māyāśritānām nara-dārakeṇa

sākam vijahruḥ kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ

"Those who are engaged in self-realization, appreciating the Brahman effulgence of the Lord, and those engaged in devotional service, accepting the Supreme Personality of Godhead as master, as well as those who are under the clutches of māyā, thinking the Lord an ordinary person, cannot understand that certain exalted personalities—after accumulating volumes of pious activities—are now playing with the Lord in friendship as cowherd boys."

In our Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple in Vṛndāvana, there is a tamāla tree that covers an entire corner of the courtyard. Before there was a temple the tree was lying neglected, but now it has developed very luxuriantly, covering the whole corner of the courtyard. This is a sign of bhūri-puṇya.

SB 10.13.50

Those Viṣṇu forms blessed the devotees with Their clear glances and smiles, which resembled the increasingly full light of the moon (śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam). As maintainers, They glanced upon Their devotees, embracing them and protecting them by smiling. Their smiles resembled the mode of goodness, protecting all the desires of the devotees, and the glancing of Their eyes resembled the mode of passion. Actually, in this verse the word rajaḥ means not "passion" but "affection." In the material world, rajo-guṇa is passion, but in the spiritual world it is affection. In the material world, affection is contaminated by rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa, but in the śuddha-sattva the affection that maintains the devotees is transcendental.

The word svakārhānām refers to great desires. As mentioned in this verse, the glance of Lord Viṣṇu creates the desires of the devotees. A pure devotee, however, has no desires. Therefore Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that because the desires of devotees whose attention is fixed on Kṛṣṇa have already been fulfilled, the Lord's sidelong glances create variegated desires in relation to Kṛṣṇa and devotional service. In the material world, desire is a product of rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa, but desire in

the spiritual world gives rise to a variety of everlasting transcendental service. Thus the word svakārtānām refers to eagerness to serve Kṛṣṇa.

In Vṛndāvana there is a place where there was no temple, but a devotee desired, "Let there be a temple and sevā, devotional service." Therefore, what was once an empty corner has now become a place of pilgrimage. Such are the desires of a devotee.

SB 10.13.51

Innumerable living entities are engaged in different types of worship of the Supreme, according to their abilities and karma, but everyone is engaged (jīvera 'svarūpa' haya-kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāsa' [Cc. Madhya 20.108]); there is no one who is not serving. Therefore the mahā-bhāgavata, the topmost devotee, sees everyone as being engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa; only himself does he see as not engaged. We have to elevate ourselves from a lower position to a higher position, and the topmost position is that of direct service in Vṛndāvana. But everyone is engaged in service. Denial of the service of the Lord is māyā.

ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya

yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya

"Only Kṛṣṇa is the supreme master, and all others are His servants. As Kṛṣṇa desires, everyone dances according to His tune.' (Cc. Ādi 5.142)

There are two kinds of living entities—the moving and the nonmoving. Trees, for example, stand in one place, whereas ants move. Brahmā saw that all of them, down to the smallest creatures, had assumed different forms and were accordingly engaged in the service of Lord Viṣṇu.

One receives a form according to the way one worships the Lord. In the material world, the body one receives is guided by the demigods. This is sometimes referred to as the influence of the stars. As indicated in Bhagavad-gītā (3.27) by the words prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni, according to the laws of nature one is controlled by the demigods.

All living entities are serving Kṛṣṇa in different ways, but when they are Kṛṣṇa conscious, their service is fully manifest. As a flower in the bud gradually fructifies and yields its desired aroma and beauty, so when a living entity comes to the platform of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the beauty of his real form comes into full blossom. That is the ultimate beauty and the ultimate fulfillment of desire.

SB 10.13.52

In this verse the word mahimabhiḥ means aiśvarya, or opulence. The Supreme Personality of Godhead can do whatever He likes. That is His aiśvarya. No one can command Him, but He can command everyone. Ṣaḍ-aiśvarya-pūrṇam. The Lord is full in six opulences. The yoga-siddhis, the perfections of

yoga, such as the ability to become smaller than the smallest (aṅgīma-siddhi) or bigger than the biggest (mahīmaā-siddhi), are present in Lord Viṣṇu. Śaḍ-aiśvaryaīḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān (Cc. Ādi 1.3). The word ajā means māyā, or mystic power. Everything mysterious is in full existence in Viṣṇu.

The twenty-four elements mentioned are the five working senses (pañca-karmendriya), the five senses for obtaining knowledge (pañca-jñānendriya), the five gross material elements (pañca-mahābhūta), the five sense objects (pañca-tanmātra), the mind (manas), the false ego (ahankāra), the mahat-tattva, and material nature (prakṛti). All twenty-four of these elements are employed for the manifestation of this material world. The mahat-tattva is divided into different subtle categories, but originally it is called the mahat-tattva.

SB 10.13.53

No one but Viṣṇu has any independence. If we develop consciousness of this fact, then we are in actual Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We should always remember that Kṛṣṇa is the only supreme master and that everyone else is His servant (ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya). Be one even Nārāyaṇa or Lord Śiva, everyone is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa (śiva-viriñci-nutam). Even Baladeva is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa. This is a fact.

ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya

yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nr̥tya

[Cc. Ādi 5.142]

One should understand that no one is independent, for everything is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa and is acting and moving by the supreme desire of Kṛṣṇa. This understanding, this consciousness, is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

yas tu nārāyaṇam devam

brahma-rudrādi-daivataih

samatvenaiva vīkṣeta

sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam

[Cc. Madhya 18.116]

"A person who considers demigods like Brahmā and Śiva to be on an equal level with Nārāyaṇa must certainly be considered an offender." No one can compare to Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is Nārāyaṇa, and Nārāyaṇa is also Kṛṣṇa, for Kṛṣṇa is the original Nārāyaṇa. Brahmā himself addressed Kṛṣṇa, nārāyaṇas tvam na hi sarva-dehinām: "You are also Nārāyaṇa. Indeed, You are the original Nārāyaṇa." (SB 10.14.14)

Kāla, or the time factor, has many assistants, such as svabhāva, saṁskāra, kāma, karma and guṇa. Svabhāva, or one's own nature, is formed according to the association of the material qualities. Kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni janmasu (Bg. 13.22). Sat and asat-svabhāva—one's higher or lower nature—is formed by association with the different qualities, namely sattva-guṇa, rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa. We should gradually come to the sattva-guṇa, so that we may avoid the two lower guṇas. This can be done if we regularly discuss Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and hear about Kṛṣṇa's activities. Naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā (SB 1.2.18). All the activities of Kṛṣṇa described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, beginning even with the pastimes concerning Pūtanā, are transcendental. Therefore, by hearing and discussing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa are subdued, so that only sattva-guṇa remains. Then rajo-guṇa and tamo-guṇa cannot do us any harm.

Varṇāśrama-dharma, therefore, is essential, for it can bring people to sattva-guṇa. Tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye (SB 1.2.19). Tamo-guṇa and rajo-guṇa increase lust and greed, which implicate a living entity in such a way that he must exist in this material world in many, many forms. That is very dangerous. One should therefore be brought to sattva-guṇa by the establishment of varṇāśrama-dharma and should develop the brahminical qualifications of being very neat and clean, rising early in the morning and seeing maṅgala-ārātrika, and so on. In this way, one should stay in sattva-guṇa, and then one cannot be influenced by tamo-guṇa and rajo-guṇa.

tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ

kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye

ceta etair anāviddham

sthitaṁ sattve prasīdati

(SB 1.2.19)

The opportunity for this purification is the special feature of human life; in other lives, this is not possible. Such purification can be achieved very easily by rādhā-kṛṣṇa-bhajana, devotional service rendered to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and therefore Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura sings, hari hari viphale janama goṇāinu, indicating that unless one worships Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, one's human form of life is wasted. Vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ/ janayaty āśu vairāgyam (SB 1.2.7). By engagement in the service of Vāsudeva, one very quickly renounces material life. The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, for example, being engaged in vāsudeva-bhakti, very quickly come to the stage of being nice Vaiṣṇavas, so much so that people are surprised that mlecchas and yavanas are able to come to this stage. This is possible by vāsudeva-bhakti. But if we do not come to the stage of sattva-guṇa in this human life, then, as Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura sings, hari hari viphale janama goṇāinu—there is no profit in gaining this human form of life.

Śrī Vīrarāghava Ācārya comments that each of the items mentioned in the first half of this verse is a cause for material entanglement. Kāla, or the time factor, agitates the modes of material nature, and svabhāva is the result of association with these modes. Therefore Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, bhakta-sane vāsa. If one associates with bhaktas, then one's svabhāva, or nature, will change. Our

Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to give people good association so that this change may take place, and we actually see that by this method people all over the world are gradually becoming devotees.

As for saṁskāra, or reformation, this is possible by good association, for by good association one develops good habits, and habit becomes second nature. Therefore, bhakta-sane vāsa: let people have the chance to live with bhaktas. Then their habits will change. In the human form of life one has this chance, but as Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura sings, hari hari viphale janama goñāinu: if one fails to take advantage of this opportunity, one's human life is wasted. We are therefore trying to save human society from degradation and actually elevate people to the higher nature.

As for kāma and karma—desires and activities—if one engages in devotional service, one develops a different nature than if one engages in activities of sense gratification, and of course the result is also different. According to the association of different natures, one receives a particular type of body. Kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya sad-asad-yoni janmasu (Bg. 13.22). Therefore we should always seek good association, the association of devotees. Then our life will be successful. A man is known by his company. If one has the chance to live in the good association of devotees, one is able to cultivate knowledge, and naturally one's character or nature will change for one's eternal benefit.

SB 10.13.54

The Supreme Lord is not obtained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, or even by much hearing. He is obtained only by one whom He Himself chooses. To such a person, He manifests His own form."

One description given of Brahman is satyaṁ brahma, ānanda-rūpam: "Brahman is the Absolute Truth and complete ānanda, or bliss." The forms of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Brahman, were one, but They were manifested differently. The followers of the Upaniṣads, however, cannot understand the varieties manifested by Brahman. This proves that Brahman and Paramātmā can actually be understood only through devotion, as confirmed by the Lord Himself in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ (SB 11.14.21). To establish that Brahman indeed has transcendental form, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives various quotations from the śāstras. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.8), the Supreme is described as āditya-varṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt, "He whose self-manifested form is luminous like the sun and transcendental to the darkness of ignorance." Ānanda-mātram ajaraṁ purāṇam ekam santam bahudhā dṛṣyamānam [Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.19]: "The Supreme is blissful, with no tinge of unhappiness. Although He is the oldest, He never ages, and although one, He is experienced in different forms." Sarve nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca dehās tasya parātmanah: "All the forms of that Supreme Person are eternal." (Mahā-varāha Purāṇa) The Supreme Person has a form, with hands and legs and other personal features, but His hands and legs are not material. Bhaktas know that the form of Kṛṣṇa, or Brahman, is not at all material. Rather, Brahman has a transcendental form, and when one is absorbed in it, being fully developed in bhakti, one can understand Him (premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena [Bs. 5.38]). The Māyāvādīs, however, cannot understand this transcendental form, for they think that it is material.

Transcendental forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His person are so great that the impersonal followers of the Upaniṣads cannot reach the platform of knowledge to understand them. Particularly, the transcendental forms of the Lord are beyond the reach of the impersonalists, who can only understand, through the studies of the Upaniṣads, that the Absolute Truth is not matter and that the Absolute Truth is not materially restricted by limited potency.

Yet although Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen through the Upaniṣads, in some places it is said that Kṛṣṇa can in fact be known in this way. Aupaniṣadam puruṣam: "He is known by the Upaniṣads." This means that when one is purified by Vedic knowledge, one is then allowed to enter into devotional understanding (mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām [Bg. 18.54]).

tac chraddadhānā munayo

jñāna-vairagya-yuktayā

paśyanty ātmani cātmānam

bhaktiyā śruta-grhītayā

"The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service in terms of what he has heard from the Vedānta-śruti." (SB 1.2.12) The word śruta-grhītayā refers to Vedānta knowledge, not sentimentality. Śruta-grhīta is sound knowledge.

Lord Viṣṇu, Brahmā thus realized, is the reservoir of all truth, knowledge and bliss. He is the combination of these three transcendental features, and He is the object of worship for the followers of the Upaniṣads. Brahmā realized that all the different forms of cows, boys and calves transformed into Viṣṇu forms were not transformed by mysticism of the type that a yogī or demigod can display by specific powers invested in him. The cows, calves and boys transformed into viṣṇu-mūrtis, or Viṣṇu forms, were not displays of viṣṇu-māyā, or Viṣṇu energy, but were Viṣṇu Himself. The respective qualifications of Viṣṇu and viṣṇu-māyā are just like those of fire and heat. In heat there is the qualification of fire, namely warmth; and yet heat is not fire. The manifestation of the Viṣṇu forms of the boys, cows and calves was not like the heat, but rather like the fire—they were all actually Viṣṇu. Factually, the qualification of Viṣṇu is full truth, full knowledge and full bliss. Another example may be given with material objects, which may be reflected in many, many forms. For example, the sun is reflected in many waterpots, but the reflections of the sun in many pots are not actually the sun. There is no actual heat and light from the sun in the pot, although it appears as the sun. But each and every one of the forms Kṛṣṇa assumed was fully Viṣṇu.

We should discuss Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam daily as much as possible, and then everything will be clarified, for Bhāgavatam is the essence of all Vedic literature (nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalam [SB 1.1.3]). It was written by Vyāsadeva (mahā-muni-kṛte) when he was self-realized. Thus the more we read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the more its knowledge becomes clear. Each and every verse is transcendental.

SB 10.13.55

By this incident, Lord Brahmā was able to see how Kṛṣṇa maintains the entire universe in different ways. It is because Kṛṣṇa manifests everything that everything is visible.

SB 10.13.56

Brahmā was stunned because of transcendental bliss (muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ). In his astonishment, all his senses were stunned, and he was unable to say or do anything. Brahmā had considered himself absolute, thinking himself the only powerful deity, but now his pride was subdued, and he again became merely one of the demigods—an important demigod, of course, but a demigod nonetheless. Brahmā, therefore, cannot be compared to God—Kṛṣṇa, or Nārāyaṇa. It is forbidden to compare Nārāyaṇa even to demigods like Brahmā and Śiva, what to speak of others.

yas tu nārāyaṇam devam

brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ

samatvenaiva vīkṣeta

sa pāṣaṇḍi bhaved dhruvam

[Cc. Madhya 18.116]

"One who considers demigods like Brahmā and Śiva to be on an equal level with Nārāyaṇa must certainly be considered an offender." We should not equate the demigods with Nārāyaṇa, for even Śaṅkarācārya has forbidden this (nārāyaṇaḥ paro'vyaktāt). Also, as mentioned in the Vedas, eko nārāyaṇa āsīn na brahmā neśānaḥ: "In the beginning of creation there was only the Supreme Personality, Nārāyaṇa, and there was no existence of Brahmā or Śiva." Therefore, one who at the end of his life remembers Nārāyaṇa attains the perfection of life (ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ [SB 2.1.6]).

SB 10.13.57

Brahmā was completely mystified. He could not understand what he was seeing, and then he was not even able to see. Lord Kṛṣṇa, understanding Brahmā's position, then removed that yogamāyā covering. In this verse, Brahmā is referred to as ireśa. Irā means Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and Ireśa is her husband, Lord Brahmā. Brahmā, therefore, is most intelligent. But even Brahmā, the lord of Sarasvatī, was bewildered about Kṛṣṇa. Although he tried, he could not understand Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the beginning the boys, the calves and Kṛṣṇa Himself had been covered by yogamāyā, which later displayed the second set of calves and boys, who were Kṛṣṇa's expansions, and which then displayed so many four-armed forms. Now, seeing Brahmā's bewilderment, Lord Kṛṣṇa caused the disappearance of that yogamāyā. One may think that the māyā taken away by Lord Kṛṣṇa was mahāmāyā, but Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that it was yogamāyā, the potency by which Kṛṣṇa is sometimes manifest and sometimes not manifest. The potency which covers the actual reality and displays something unreal is mahāmāyā, but the potency by which the Absolute Truth is

sometimes manifest and sometimes not is yogamāyā. Therefore, in this verse the word ajā refers to yogamāyā.

Kṛṣṇa's energy—His māyā-śakti, or svarūpa-śakti—is one, but it is manifested in varieties. Parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8 [Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport]). The difference between Vaiṣṇavas and Māyāvādīs is that Māyāvādīs say that this māyā is one whereas Vaiṣṇavas recognize its varieties. There is unity in variety. For example, in one tree, there are varieties of leaves, fruits and flowers. Varieties of energy are required for performing the varieties of activity within the creation. To give another example, in a machine all the parts may be iron, but the machine includes varied activities. Although the whole machine is iron, one part works in one way, and other parts work in other ways. One who does not know how the machine is working may say that it is all iron; nonetheless, in spite of its being iron, the machine has different elements, all working differently to accomplish the purpose for which the machine was made. One wheel runs this way, another wheel runs that way, functioning naturally in such a way that the work of the machine goes on. Consequently we give different names to the different parts of the machine, saying, "This is a wheel," "This is a screw," "This is a spindle," "This is the lubrication," and so on. Similarly, as explained in the Vedas,

parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate

svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

[Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport]

Kṛṣṇa's power is variegated, and thus the same śakti, or potency, works in variegated ways. Vividhā means "varieties." There is unity in variety. Thus yogamāyā and mahāmāyā are among the varied individual parts of the same one potency, and all of these individual potencies work in their own varied ways. The saṁvit, sandhinī and āhlādinī potencies—Kṛṣṇa's potency for knowledge, His potency for existence and His potency for pleasure—are distinct from yogamāyā. Each is an individual potency. The āhlādinī potency is Rādhārāṇī. As Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī has explained, rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmāt (Cc. Ādi 1.5). The āhlādinī-śakti is manifested as Rādhārāṇī, but Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī are the same, although one is potent and the other is potency.

Brahmā was mystified about Kṛṣṇa's opulence (nija-mahimani) because this opulence was atarkya, or inconceivable. With one's limited senses, one cannot argue about that which is inconceivable. Therefore the inconceivable is called acintya, that which is beyond cintya, our thoughts and arguments. Acintya refers to that which we cannot contemplate but have to accept. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has said that unless we accept acintya in the Supreme, we cannot accommodate the conception of God. This must be understood. Therefore we say that the words of śāstra should be taken as they are, without change, since they are beyond our arguments. Acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet: "That which is acintya cannot be ascertained by argument." People generally argue, but our process is not to argue but to accept the Vedic knowledge as it is. When Kṛṣṇa says, "This is superior, and this is inferior," we accept what He says. It is not that we argue, "Why is this superior and that inferior?" If one argues, for him the knowledge is lost.

This path of acceptance is called avaroha-panthā. The word avaroha is related to the word avatāra, which means "that which descends." The materialist wants to understand everything by the āroha-panthā—by argument and reason—but transcendental matters cannot be understood in this way. Rather, one must follow the avaroha-panthā, the process of descending knowledge. Therefore one must accept the paramparā system. And the best paramparā is that which extends from Kṛṣṇa (evam paramparā-prāptam [Bg. 4.2]). What Kṛṣṇa says, we should accept (imaṁ rājarṣayo viduḥ). This is called the avaroha-panthā.

Brahmā, however, adopted the āroha-panthā. He wanted to understand Kṛṣṇa's mystic power by his own limited, conceivable power, and therefore he himself was mystified. Everyone wants to take pleasure in his own knowledge, thinking, "I know something." But in the presence of Kṛṣṇa this conception cannot stand, for one cannot bring Kṛṣṇa within the limitations of prakṛti. One must submit. There is no alternative. Na tāṁs tarkeṇa yojayet. This submission marks the difference between Kṛṣṇa-ites and Māyāvādīs.

The phrase atan-nirasana refers to the discarding of that which is irrelevant. (Atat means "that which is not a fact.") Brahman is sometimes described as asthūlam anaṅv ahrasvam adīrgham, "that which is not large and not small, not short and not long." (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.8.8) Neti neti: "It is not this, it is not that." But what is it? In describing a pencil, one may say, "It is not this; it is not that," but this does not tell us what it is. This is called definition by negation. In Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa also explains the soul by giving negative definitions. Na jāyate mriyate vā: "It is not born, nor does it die. You can hardly understand more than this." But what is it? It is eternal. Ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre: "It is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying and primeval. It is not slain when the body is slain." (Bg. 2.20) In the beginning the soul is difficult to understand, and therefore Kṛṣṇa has given negative definitions:

nainam chindanti śastrāṇi

nainam dahati pāvakaḥ

na cainam kledayanty āpo

na śoṣayati mārutaḥ

"The soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can it be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind." (Bg. 2.23) Kṛṣṇa says, "It is not burned by fire." Therefore, one has to imagine what it is that is not burned by fire. This is a negative definition.

SB 10.13.58

We actually do not die. At death, we are merely kept inert for some time, just as during sleep. At night we sleep, and all our activities stop, but as soon as we arise, our memory immediately returns, and we think, "Oh, where am I? What do I have to do?" This is called suptotthita-nyāya. Suppose we die.

"Die" means that we become inert for some time and then again begin our activities. This takes place

life after life, according to our karma, or activities, and svabhāva, or nature by association. Now, in the human life, if we prepare ourselves by beginning the activity of our spiritual life, we return to our real life and attain perfection. Otherwise, according to karma, svabhāva, prakṛti and so on, our varieties of life and activity continue, and so also do our birth and death. As explained by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, māyāra vaṣe, yāccha bhese', khāccha hābuḍubu bhāi: "My dear brothers, why are you being washed away by the waves of māyā?" One should come to the spiritual platform, and then one's activities will be permanent. Kṛta-puṇya-puñjāḥ: [SB 10.12.11] this stage is attained after one accumulates the results of pious activities for many, many lives. Janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate (Cc. Madhya 8.70). The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement wants to stop koṭi-janma, repeated birth and death. In one birth, one should rectify everything and come to permanent life. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

SB 10.13.59

Janājīvyā-drumākīrṇam: trees and vegetables are essential, and they give happiness all year round, in all seasons. That is the arrangement in Vṛndāvana. It is not that in one season the trees are pleasing and in another season not pleasing; rather, they are equally pleasing throughout the seasonal changes. Trees and vegetables provide the real means of livelihood recommended for everyone. Sarva-kāma-dughā mahī (SB 1.10.4). Trees and vegetables, not industry, provide the real means of life.

SB 10.13.60

The word vana means "forest." We are afraid of the forest and do not wish to go there, but in Vṛndāvana the forest animals are as good as demigods, for they have no envy. Even in this material world, in the forest the animals live together, and when they go to drink water they do not attack anyone. Envy develops because of sense gratification, but in Vṛndāvana there is no sense gratification, for the only aim is Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. Even in this material world, the animals in Vṛndāvana are not envious of the sādhus who live there. The sādhus keep cows and supply milk to the tigers, saying, "Come here and take a little milk." Thus envy and malice are unknown in Vṛndāvana. That is the difference between Vṛndāvana and the ordinary world. We are horrified to hear the name of vana, the forest, but in Vṛndāvana there is no such horror. Everyone there is happy by pleasing Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇotkīrtana-gāna-nartana-parau. Whether a gosvāmī or a tiger or other ferocious animal, everyone's business is the same—to please Kṛṣṇa. Even the tigers are also devotees. This is the specific qualification of Vṛndāvana. In Vṛndāvana everyone is happy. The calf is happy, the cat is happy, the dog is happy, the man is happy—everyone. Everyone wants to serve Kṛṣṇa in a different capacity, and thus there is no envy. One may sometimes think that the monkeys in Vṛndāvana are envious, because they cause mischief and steal food, but in Vṛndāvana we find that the monkeys are allowed to take butter, which Kṛṣṇa Himself distributes. Kṛṣṇa personally demonstrates that everyone has the right to live. This is Vṛndāvana life. Why should I live and you die? No. That is material life. The inhabitants of Vṛndāvana think, "Whatever is given by Kṛṣṇa, let us divide it as prasāda and eat." This mentality cannot appear all of a sudden, but it will gradually develop with Kṛṣṇa consciousness; by sādhana, one can come to this platform.

In the material world one may collect funds all over the world in order to distribute food freely, yet those to whom the food is given may not even feel appreciative. The value of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, will gradually be very much appreciated. For instance, in an article about the temple of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement in Durban, South Africa, the Durban Post reported, "All the devotees here are very active in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the results are obvious to see: happiness, good health, peace of mind, and the development of all good qualities." This is the nature of Vṛndāvana. Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇāḥ: without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, happiness is impossible; one may struggle, but one cannot have happiness. We are therefore trying to give human society the opportunity for a life of happiness, good health, peace of mind and all good qualities through God consciousness.

SB 10.13.61

The word agādha-bodham, meaning "full of unlimited knowledge," is significant in this verse. The Lord's knowledge is unlimited, and therefore one cannot touch where it ends, just as one cannot measure the ocean. What is the extent of our intelligence in comparison to the vast expanse of water in the ocean? On my passage to America, how insignificant the ship was, like a matchbox in the midst of the ocean. Kṛṣṇa's intelligence resembles the ocean, for one cannot imagine how vast it is. The best course, therefore, is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Don't try to measure Kṛṣṇa.

The word advayam, meaning "one without a second," is also significant. Because Brahmā was overcast by Kṛṣṇa's māyā, he was thinking himself the Supreme. In the material world, everyone thinks, "I am the best man in this world. I know everything." One thinks, "Why should I read Bhagavad-gītā? I know everything. I have my own interpretation." Brahmā, however, was able to understand that the Supreme Personality is Kṛṣṇa. Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ [Bs. 5.1]. Another of Kṛṣṇa's names, therefore, is parameśvara.

Now Brahmā saw Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appearing as a cowherd boy in Vṛndāvana, not demonstrating His opulence but standing just like an innocent boy with some food in His hand, loitering with His cowherd boyfriends, calves and cows. Brahmā did not see Kṛṣṇa as catur-bhuja, the opulent Nārāyaṇa; rather, he simply saw an innocent boy. Nonetheless, he could understand that although Kṛṣṇa was not demonstrating His power, He was the same Supreme person. People generally do not appreciate someone unless he shows something wonderful, but here, although Kṛṣṇa did not manifest anything wonderful, Brahmā could understand that the same wonderful person was present like an ordinary child, although He was the master of the whole creation. Thus Brahmā prayed, govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi **: "You are the original person, the cause of everything. I bow down to You." This was his realization. Tam aham bhajāmi. This is what is wanted. Vedeṣu durlabham: one cannot reach Kṛṣṇa merely by Vedic knowledge. Adurlabham ātma-bhaktāu: but when one becomes a devotee, then one can realize Him. Brahmā, therefore, became a devotee. In the beginning he was proud of being Brahmā, the lord of the universe, but now he understood, "Here is the Lord of the universe. I am simply an insignificant agent. Govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi **."

Kṛṣṇa was playing like a dramatic actor. Because Brahmā had some false prestige, thinking that he had some power, Kṛṣṇa showed him his real position. A similar incident occurred when Brahmā went to see Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā. When Kṛṣṇa's doorman informed Lord Kṛṣṇa that Lord Brahmā had arrived, Kṛṣṇa responded, "Which Brahmā? Ask him which Brahmā." The doorman relayed this question, and Brahmā was astonished. "Is there another Brahmā besides me?" he thought. When the doorman informed Lord Kṛṣṇa, "It is four-headed Brahmā," Lord Kṛṣṇa said, "Oh, four-headed. Call others. Show him." This is Kṛṣṇa's position. For Kṛṣṇa the four-headed Brahmā is insignificant, to say nothing of "four-headed scientists." Materialistic scientists think that although this planet earth is full of opulence, all others are vacant. Because they simply speculate, this is their scientific conclusion. But from the Bhāgavatam we understand that the entire universe is full of living entities everywhere. Thus it is the folly of the scientists that although they do not know anything, they mislead people by presenting themselves as scientists, philosophers and men of knowledge.

SB 10.13.62

Lord Brahmā bowed down like a stick, and because Lord Brahmā's complexion is golden, he appeared to be like a golden stick lying down before Lord Kṛṣṇa. When one falls down before a superior just like a stick, one's offering of obeisances is called daṇḍavat. Daṇḍa means "stick," and vat means "like." It is not that one should simply say, "daṇḍavat." Rather, one must fall down. Thus Brahmā fell down, touching his foreheads to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and his crying in ecstasy is to be regarded as an abhiṣeka bathing ceremony of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

He who appeared before Brahmā as a human child was in fact the Absolute Truth, Para-brahman (brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate [SB 1.2.11]). The Supreme Lord is narākṛti; that is, He resembles a human being. It is not that He is four-armed (catur-bāhu). Nārāyaṇa is catur-bāhu, but the Supreme Person resembles a human being. This is also confirmed in the Bible, where it is said that man was made in the image of God.

Lord Brahmā saw that Kṛṣṇa, in His form as a cowherd boy, was Para-brahman, the root cause of everything, but was now appearing as a human child, loitering in Vṛndāvana with a morsel of food in His hand. Astonished, Lord Brahmā hastily got down from his swan carrier and let his body fall to the earth. Usually, the demigods never touch the ground, but Lord Brahmā, voluntarily giving up his prestige as a demigod, bowed down on the ground before Kṛṣṇa. Although Brahmā has one head in each direction, he voluntarily brought all his heads to the ground and touched Kṛṣṇa's feet with the tips of his four helmets. Although his intelligence works in every direction, he surrendered everything before the boy Kṛṣṇa.

It is mentioned that Brahmā washed the feet of Kṛṣṇa with his tears, and here the word sujalah indicates that his tears were purified. As soon as bhakti is present, everything is purified (sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam [Cc. Madhya 19.170]). Therefore Brahmā's crying was a form of bhakty-anubhāva, a transformation of transcendental ecstatic love

. SB 10.13.63

"Let others study the Vedas, smṛti and Mahābhārata, fearing material existence, but I shall worship Nanda Mahārāja, in whose courtyard is crawling the Supreme Brahman. Nanda Mahārāja is so great that the Para-brahman is crawling in his yard, and therefore I shall worship him." (Padyāvalī 126)

Brahmā was falling down in ecstasy. Because of the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who exactly resembled a human child, Brahmā was naturally astonished. Therefore with a faltering voice he offered prayers, understanding that here was the Supreme Person.

SB 10.13.64

Brahmā, being very joyful, began to shed tears, and he washed the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with his tears. Repeatedly he fell and rose as he recalled the wonderful activities of the Lord. After repeating obeisances for a long time, Brahmā stood up and smeared his hands over his eyes. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments that the word locane indicates that with his two hands he wiped the two eyes on each of his four faces. Seeing the Lord before him, Brahmā began to offer prayers with great humility, respect and attention.

Thus end the Bhaktivedanta purports of the Tenth Canto, Thirteenth Chapter, of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, entitled "The Stealing of the Boys and Calves by Brahmā."